

tial, as is the application of appropriate good humor. An axial coaching characteristic is the ability to sense when to interject an appropriate anecdote and when to remain silent.

*Knowing the client's organization enhances the coach's ability to establish and develop the coaching relationship.* Basic information about a corporate entity is readily available from a multitude of sources. For example, a corporation's annual report to stockholders is a primary document that will explain the mission, philosophy, output and future plans of the organization that your client must represent externally and adapt to internally. Initial coach/client relationship building conversation is expedited by having a basic knowledge of the organization.

*Successful coaching requires that essential coaching structure be established.* The client wishes to know what to expect. The three basic steps previously developed should be discussed with the client including some detailed explanation of what each step may entail. It is important to set a time-line expectation. For example, the client who anticipates that one or two coaching sessions will have a lasting impact is probably not setting realistic expectations.

*Active listening that effectively reflects back to the client the degree to which understanding is shared is an essential coaching skill.* Proud persons in positions of power and influence find it difficult to acknowledge shortfalls in their personal performance. When improvement issues are discussed, it needs to take the form of transactional communication where the client has substantial influence in defining the issue. The skillful coach listens between the lines and employs probe questions that draw out the client's concerns.

*It is important for the coach to accept the fact that the coach may not be in control of the interaction.* The forensic coach can be quite directive with students, but that approach may need to be tempered with an executive coachee. After the establishment of basic structural expectations, the most effective flow of the coaching session may be set by the client's concerns. Most executives are accustomed to controlling events and often wish to manipulate the performance improvement agenda. Successful coaches blend non-directive and directive approaches. It is also important to realize that the executive coach is not expected to attempt therapy, but executives do expect the coach to do some counseling around their problems.

*Successful coaches pay careful attention to their own nonverbal demeanor.* Executives are accustomed to watching and learning appropriate communication behaviors from those in their environment that they respect. The coach, therefore, is often considered a model of communication behavior and it seldom works to ask a client to use a communication behavior that the coach does not, or cannot, personally apply.

*Finally, it is important for the executive communication coach to adopt a mature coaching style that may be unique from that employed with forensic students.* Forensic coaching is more prescriptive and directive.



Successful coaching in the corporate world requires a realization that the goal is to put the focus on coaching, not evaluation. Positive feedback, encouragement and the enhancement of communication strengths, is at the heart of successful executive coaching.

### Concluding thoughts

Executive coaching is an established feature of executive performance development in many American corporations. The need for competent coaches is evident. There are numerous persons with varied backgrounds who pass themselves off as coaches, but their skills often fail to include those of the forensic coaches. Forensic educators typically have extensive coaching and performance evaluation experience coupled with a substantial ability to motivate and foster attitude adjustment. This sort of experience is valued in the executive coaching domain.

The foregoing discussion infers that the forensic educator who aspires to do executive communication coaching should be "seasoned." Does that suggest that only the veteran with many years of coaching experience should attempt executive coaching? Not necessarily. Executive coaching success is most likely related to a blend of rhetorical sensitivity, pragmatic experience, and teaching skill. A requisite understanding of how corporate culture mediates perceptions of executive success combined with the application of relevant rhetorical features of intercollegiate coaching may well prompt success for the forensic coach who enters the "real world" of the corporate environment.

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# Competition and Control: The Open Hand of Dialogue in a Closed-Fist Tradition

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*In the face of criticisms that traditional argumentation pedagogy promotes overly-adversarial discursive inquiry that negatively affects decision-making processes, this article investigates the possibilities made available by considering dialogic modes of communication as complementary to the dialectical practices used to train advocates. Not wishing to privilege dialogue over dialectic, this analysis embraces a both-and orientation that affirms the enabling aspects of both of these modes of discourse and recognizes the potential for these approaches to complement and inform one another. To this end, this study first explores the nature of the criticisms of competitive approaches to argument and suggests the possibilities that emerge out of these critiques. Next, this essay examines the continuing suitability of traditional argumentation pedagogy for preparing advocates even in the wake of the criticisms discussed in the first section. Finally, this analysis considers dialogue, a mode of discourse that could possibly be fully integrated into contemporary argumentation practices to better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse public.*

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In her 1998 book, *The Argument Culture*, Deborah Tannen lodges an attack against “an atmosphere of unrelenting contention” enveloping American discourse that “urges us to approach the world—and the people in it—in an adversarial frame of mind” (3). By Tannen’s assessment, the adversarial paradigm, reflected in our culture’s persistent use of war metaphors, has the potential for “creating more problems than it solves, causing rather than avoiding damage” (4). Tannen is not alone in her criticism of adversarial or competitive approaches to argument. Other critics also have suggested that argumentation is typified by a combative, win-lose philosophy (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Makau, 1990, 1992; Palczewski, 1996). Makau (1990), in particular, has maintained that participants in debate often have their own interests at stake and as a result “competition in these settings sometimes discourages, rather than fosters, reasoned decision making” (49).

Germane to concerns about potentially negative effects on decision-making processes resulting from competition are feminist critiques of argument. For some feminist theorists, competitive approaches to argumentation are rooted in patriarchal rhetorical strategies. Gearhart (1979) holds that “any intent to persuade is an act of violence” (195) and Foss and Griffin (1995) tell us that “the act of changing others not only establishes the power of the rhetor over others but also devalues the lives and perspectives of those others” (3). These criticisms claiming that persuasion necessitates relations of

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domination (offered by both Gearhart and Foss and Griffin) coupled with the suggestion that competitive approaches to argument can be counter-productive (made by Tannen and Makau) urge, at the very least, a reassessment of contemporary argumentation pedagogy.

As educators in the field of speech communication, we would do well to (re)consider the ways we train advocates both in light of these critiques and in the face of the contemporary social issues confronting citizens in the public sphere. As Mitchell (2000) aptly notes, "the ripples of today's teaching efforts will undulate far into the future, as citizens draw upon their schooling experiences to shape their contributions to the public arguments of tomorrow" (135). With Mitchell's sentiment close to mind, this paper considers the tension between dialectic as a competitive approach and dialogue as an "invitational" approach to discursive inquiry. In particular, this article is concerned with the pedagogical implications of integrating these respective modes of discourse within argumentation practices.

Rather than suggesting a remedy that presupposes an exigence within competitive debate practices emerging out of their reliance upon traditional theories of argumentation, this paper aims to explore the possibilities made available by considering dialogic modes of communication as complementary to the dialectical practices used to train advocates. The objective of this analysis is not to denigrate traditional approaches to argumentation or to suggest alternatives that would undermine the benefits afforded students by involvement in competitive debate activities. Unlike standpoints that privilege either dialectic or dialogic modes of communication, this author favors a both-and orientation that recognizes the potential for dialectic and dialogic modes of discourse to complement and inform one another.

In what follows, this article first explores the nature of the criticisms of competitive approaches to argument and suggest the possibilities that emerge out these critiques. Next, this study examines the continuing suitability of traditional argumentation pedagogy for preparing advocates even in the wake of the criticisms elaborated upon in the first section. Finally, dialogue as an alternative mode of discourse that might be given emphasis that is equal to traditional argumentative forms within communication pedagogy is considered in order to better meet the needs of an increasingly diverse public.

### Criticism of traditional approaches

Feminist contributions to the discussion of argumentation pedagogy have been important in calling into question foundationalist assumptions and broadening the scope of argumentation theory to include diverse perspectives (see Bruner, 1996; Condit & Williams, 1995; Crenshaw, 1995, 1996; Fulkerson, 1996; Palczewski, 1996). Many of these contemporary contributions emerge out of the theoretical groundwork set by the controversial positions taken by Gearhart (1979), Gilligan (1982), and Foss and Griffin (1995). These



foundational theorists are noteworthy both for the ways they have opened the door for the kind of dialogic inquiry explored in this paper, and for the ways they have generated scholarly response that supported, criticized, developed, and adapted their ideas.

In "The Womanization of Rhetoric," Gearhart (1979) indicts persuasion on the grounds that it reveals a "conquest/conversion mentality" that is masculine and violent (195). In place of traditional views of rhetoric, Gearhart advocates a "womanization" of rhetorical practices in which there is "deliberate creation or co-creation of an atmosphere in which people and things, if and only if they have the internal basis for change, may change themselves; it can be a milieu in which those who are ready to be persuaded persuade themselves, may choose to hear or choose to learn" (198). While Gearhart's move to dichotomize male and female communication behaviors is problematic, she points to a need to interrogate potentially harmful rhetorical practices and ferret out viable alternatives to persuasion.

Similar to Gearhart's (1979) position is Gilligan's (1982) theory of human communication that establishes particular communicative practices as either male or female. In her book, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan (1982) critiques what she views as a tendency for the experiences of male human development to be generalized to the experiences of women. Gilligan holds that male perspectives that are made to stand for female perspectives ignore the fundamental differences between male and female moral voices. According to Gilligan, the male moral voice is characterized by an "ethic of justice" while the female moral voice is characterized by an "ethic of care." Specifying that the quality of being attentive to the needs of others inherent within the female moral voice should be valued, Gilligan (1982) offers a care-based ethic of communication as a viable alternative to justice-centered ways of communicating. Although Gilligan's theory of ethics has been charged with essentializing male and female behaviors (see Wood 1992, 1994), it cautions us against universalizing male standards.

In addition to the contributions of Gearhart (1979) and Gilligan (1982), another feminist perspective adding to the discussion on argument is Foss and Griffin's (1995) attempt to move beyond rhetoric-as-persuasion and embrace an "invitational" approach to rhetoric. The tenets of an "invitational" rhetoric are explained by Foss and Griffin (1995) in the following:

Invitational rhetoric is an invitation to understanding as a means to create a relationship rooted in equality, immanent value, and self-determination. Invitational rhetoric constitutes an invitation to the audience to enter the rhetor's world and to see it as the rhetor does. In presenting a particular perspective, the invitational rhetor does not judge or denigrate others' perspectives but is open to and tries to appreciate and validate those other perspectives, even if they differ dramatically from the rhetor's own (5).

Foss and Griffin's emphasis on equality, respect, and openness is a



departure from rhetoric-as-persuasion which they describe as imposing the views of an "expert" rhetor upon a "naïve" audience (7). In Foss and Griffin's estimation, persuasion *may* be the result of invitational rhetoric but it is not the object of the participants' endeavor. The move by Foss and Griffin toward "invitational" rhetoric has been criticized on the grounds that it has the effect of dichotomizing male and female communication styles (Bruner, 1996; Palczewski, 1996).

In short, the positions advanced by Gearhart (1979), Gilligan (1982), and Foss and Griffin (1995) have received both positive and negative scholarly responses. Each of these theoretical stances are challenged by critics claiming that their perspectives are grounded in essentialist assumptions about male and female communication styles. While this author agrees that gendering communicative practices into binary oppositions is problematic and should be avoided, many of the ideas developed in the writings of Gearhart, Gilligan, and Foss and Griffin sketched above still have import for a project investigating diverse perspectives of argument. At a minimum, these contributions work to de-center approaches to argument characterized by relations of domination and make room for conceptions of argument that are less competitive and adversarial.

In the same way that these feminist contributions should not be shunned entirely based on their seemingly essentialist assumptions, competitive approaches to argument should not be rejected wholesale because particular aspects are deemed undesirable by some of these very same feminist theorists. However successful they are in drawing attention to negative aspects of traditional conceptions of argumentation, the perspectives offered by Gearhart, Gilligan, and Foss and Griffin ignore the positive aspects of competitive argument. In their zeal to offer womanly, caring, and invitational perspectives to argumentation theory, they have been largely dismissive of traditional approaches. Palczewski (1996) aptly suggests that the impulse of these feminist theorists to dismiss all traditional approaches to argumentation "throws out the baby with the bathwater (even though the scum in the bathwater did, indeed, come off the baby)" (167). In the section that follows, support for the enduring appropriateness of competitive forms of argument for training advocates is given and suggestions are made that either-or approaches to argumentation pedagogy forego the benefits of blending seemingly disparate approaches to argumentation practices.

### Defending tradition: From either-or to both-and

While feminist perspectives have been useful in pointing out the limitations of traditional approaches to argumentation, they do not adequately account for the capacity of competitive debate activities to train advocates to effectively participate within wider spheres of deliberation. The role of competitive debate in enriching students' lives has been well-documented. While there are varying approaches to directing and coaching debate programs, there is little dispute that



debate activities offer numerous benefits to students of varying levels of experience. Corcoran (1998) appropriately describes the benefits attained from active involvement in academic debate:

In the academic world, few activities compare to debate in terms of academic and personal benefits. A serious debate student acquires skills in critical thinking, research, speaking, organization, writing, cross examination, critical listening, and leadership. The student also learns the theory and practice of argumentation and debate, a body of knowledge that has application in nearly every field of inquiry and employment (2).

Undeniably, competitive debate activities hold considerable educational value in fostering the development of skills and knowledge that can be successfully applied in future academic and non-academic endeavors. Winkler and Cheshier (2000) emphasize the role of argumentation pedagogy in preparing students to "emerge as active contributors within society's political, legal, educational, and business contexts" (101). These observations are echoed by Panetta (1990) who argues that competitive policy debate "will prepare students to be societal leaders" (76). Because of the numerous benefits attained through regular engagement in competitive argumentation, it seems ill-advised to move toward a pedagogy that eliminates traditional theories of argument.

While it is clear that, as Schiappa and Keehner (1990) note, "inter-collegiate debate offers students many rewards" (82), this article grounds its inquiry in the possibility that more might be made of the college debate experience. The educational promise found within the competitive debate realm notwithstanding, many critics legitimately maintain that forensic organizations and argumentation courses focusing exclusively on competitive debate activities might serve both students and communities better by emphasizing cooperative modes of discourse (see Mallin & Anderson, 2000; Williams & McGee, 2000). Implied here is not a move from debate to dialogue, as is sometimes suggested, but rather toward pedagogy inclusive of *both* debate *and* dialogue. Williams and McGee (2000) underscore this point by emphasizing that participants in competitive debate frequently engage dialogic skills. They note, "When advocates in competitive debates cooperate, as they often do, positing an either-or choice between competition and cooperation seems unsatisfactory" (Williams and McGee, 109). It is clear that dialectic and dialogic approaches to argument are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, are implicated in one another. McPhail (1996) cautions that we must not make the mistake of replacing one discourse or agenda with another (41). A push toward dialogism that forces a choice between dialogic and dialectic modes of discourse only serves to re-entrench the binary oppositions it seeks to escape. A fully dialogic posture embraces and encourages *both* dialogic and dialectic ways of thinking. Hawes (1999) suggests that the project of thinking both dialogically and dialectically is an ethical undertaking. He explains:



The intellectual and ethical task is to think both dialogically, in thirds, and dialectically, in halves. One of the ways possibility is produced as thirds is through self-implication and self-reflexivity. Making consciousness about protean and partial self is one way to move from the possibilities and dilemmas of narcissism, self-preoccupation, and dialectic conversation to the possibilities and dilemmas of self-implication, self-reflexivity, and dialogic conversation (234-235).

Thinking in thirds and in halves, as Hawes suggests, allows for the possibility of a creative willingness to listen to understand. For Hawes, dialogics is centered on an affirmation of difference "rather than a will to truth, which ultimately is a will to be right, and in the process to make others wrong, a will to control and to dominate" (234). On this point, Hyde and Bineham (2000) offer a helpful distinction between "being right" and "being committed":

Being right about one's position on an issue makes other positions wrong; being committed to an authentic inquiry, on the other hand, gives room to engage productively with other points of view. Being right is a function of personal identity and its survival. Dialogue is the possibility of a commitment to something larger than one's identity" (216).

Rather than attending to notions of "both sides," dialogics works both within and outside dualisms to emphasize "all sides." The dialogic turn, then, sets aside the impulse to be right and centers upon and marks a commitment to actively engaging multiple perspectives. To be fully dialogic is to be fully present with others. Affirming dialectic as a one way of thinking (i.e. in halves) that is compatible with and implicated in dialogic modes of discourse, this article now explores how the contemporary conditions within the public sphere might appropriately be addressed by a dual emphasis on dialectic and dialogic modes of inquiry.

### Dialogue and the public sphere

The public sphere is one of three spheres identified by Goodnight (1987) in his discussion of the types of discourse. Goodnight (1987) classified discourse as having three distinct types: The Conversation, The Trial/Experiment, and The Public Address (429). According to Goodnight, these types of discourse occur within the personal sphere, the technical sphere, and the public sphere, respectively. The public sphere, he argues, produces discourse that "is necessary to address those topics that can be resolved neither through personal conversation nor state of the art procedure" (429). As a domain separate from the private and technical spheres, the concept of the public sphere has been described in idealistic terms while in reality, its current state is a source of great concern. Holub (1991) explains Jürgen Habermas's idealized notion of the public sphere as being that of a democratic space in which "individuals gather to participate in open discussions. Potentially everyone has access to it; no one enters into discourse in



the public sphere with an advantage over another”(3). Agreeing that the public sphere is often conceptualized as a barrier free environment, Phillips (1996) notes that the public sphere is theoretically configured as “an open space in which impartial citizens come to intersubjective understanding through reasoned discussions of public issues” (233). As a result of the public sphere’s emphasis on openness, Weiss (1995) holds that public deliberation is “deeply intertwined with the values of democracy, where decisions are made in light of what people think and where everyone’s voice is heard in the decision-making”(12). Reiterating this sentiment, Holub (1991) argues that “the public sphere promises democratic control and participation”(4).

With its emphasis on openness, considerations of voice, equal power relations, and co-creation of meaning through shared understandings, this idealized vision of the public sphere very much resembles a dialogic model of communication. While the visions of the public sphere may seem idealistic, it does not mean that these ideals are not of a quality worth striving to attain. There seems to be some consensus that the public sphere is the domain in which important issues are discussed and resolved through democratic decision-making processes. Zieglmueller and Kay (1997) tell us that “the notion of full and free public debate on the vital issues facing society is deeply rooted in the documents and ideas comprising the American conscience”(6). In this regard, it seems essential that the public sphere be nurtured as place central to a healthy democracy. It is important, however, to recognize the realities of civic disengagement and power differentials that complicate the attainment of the democratic ideals of the public sphere. In recognizing the circumstances that currently mitigate the full achievement of these goals, we can better identify what measures should be taken to address them.

There are several factors that complicate the realization of the theoretical model of the public sphere. The first factor is the steep decline in civic involvement. Although the public sphere is the realm for “deciding and discussing priorities, constraining and protecting habituated prejudgments, and indulging and confronting common problems” (Goodnight 429), evidence indicates that participation within the public sphere is waning. As a society we are becoming less and less involved in public deliberation. It is significant to note that “by almost every measure, Americans’ direct engagement in politics and government has fallen steadily and sharply over the last generation” (Putnam,68). In addition to forsaking the right to vote, the public at large, according to Putnam’s (1995) analysis, has withdrawn from the affairs of their communities (68). Putnam (1995) cites a dramatic decline in organizational memberships over the last few decades. This erosion of social connectedness and civic engagement marks what Putnam describes as our nation’s declining social capital. The following comparison amplifies Putnam’s notion of social capital:

By analogy with notions of physical capital and human capital—tools and training that enhance individual productivity—



'social capital' refers to features of social organization such as networks, norms, and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (67).

Lamenting the deterioration of the social capital needed for cooperative exchange, Putnam (1995) argues that "high on America's agenda should be the question of how to reverse these adverse trends in social connectedness, thus restoring civic engagement and civic trust" (77). Echoing Putnam's call to reverse these trends, Mitchell (1998) reasons that "the continuing desertification of the public sphere is a phenomenon that serves as an urgent invitation for argumentation scholars to develop remedial responses" (57).

It seems imperative, based on its current state, that the public sphere be revitalized. Additionally, Hauser (1987) emphasizes the need for publics to civically engage as a means to affirm our perceptions of reality:

In our private lives, we can never be certain that we have more than our own perceptions of the way things are. But in our public lives single concerns appear before a host of diverse observers, each with a unique perspective, who collectively may assert that they see the same thing, thereby affirming its reality (440).

In sum, it is clear that there are serious consequences to civic disengagement including declining social capital, waning social trust, and diminishing ability to check perceptions and affirm reality. These trends put at risk the theoretical model of the public sphere that has been demonstrated to be essential to the democratic process and call upon forensics educators to enact counteractive measures.

In addition to public discourse being crippled by the continuing decline of civic engagement, other realities problematize the realization of an ideal public sphere. The power differentials that exist within the public sphere are frequently in tension with the ideals of openness and equality. To develop a rationale for striving toward these idealistic notions of the public sphere without recognizing obstacles inherent within the current system reifies the existing oppression and promotes untenable solutions. Given this fact, it seems necessary to point out ways the public sphere has been criticized for failing to meet its promises of openness and equality. Some critics are understandably suspicious of the public sphere's emphasis on openness (see Phillips, 232). Although it has been asserted that the public sphere is a barrier-free space, the reality is that not every person has equal access to the public sphere. Phillips (1996) contends that declaring the public sphere open when it cannot be does "the practical work of marginalizing those who are unable or unwilling to enter this allegedly 'barrier free' space of discourse" (238). The marginalization suggested by Phillips points to broader issues of privilege and marginalization that shape public discourse. Weiss (1995) suggests that disputatious voices are sometimes never heard because many decisions are never brought before the public. Weiss (1995) explains that "many situations exist in our society where both sides



are not represented and debate is hardly encouraged at all. Members of the elite have the power to make decisions for the rest of us and frequently do not appreciate the scrutiny of the public" (18). It seems clear that ideal of a free and open public sphere is not so easily realized as many voices are denied access.

Of the voices that are given access to the public sphere, not all are given the same attention or credibility. Some voices are afforded privilege within the public realm while other voices are frequently discounted or ignored entirely. As Starhawk (1988) explains, social conditioning plays a large role in the privileging of certain voices and the marginalizing of others:

It is not that the men, or the middle-class people, or the white people, or the highly-educated people consciously conspire to keep others silent—it is that they have been subtly conditioned since childhood to believe that their opinions, and those of people like them, are valuable. Women, working class people, people of color, and people without formal education are conditioned to think of their opinions and feelings as valueless (101).

The adversarial tendency to embrace our own perspectives while simultaneously rejecting the perspectives of others does damage to the task of listening to understand. When people position themselves "in the right," they make others wrong and marginalize these "other" voices. Declaring the public sphere a barrier-free space and rejecting the voices of those with whom they do not have shared perspectives "obscures the differences that make communities diverse and justifies blaming the victims of exclusion for their status" (Phillips 238). This process of blaming further marginalizes the victim and prevents alternative perspectives from emerging within public discussions. Despite the reality that the goal of universal consensus is an impossibility, dissenting voices are cast out during the process decision-making (Phillips, 243). This tenet of "consent or be marginalized" along with the "blame game" serve to re-entrench the oppression found within other spheres from which the public sphere is theoretically supposed to be free in its promise of openness.

Unmistakably, marginalization of voice is a condition of the present system that problematizes public discourse. This factor working in concert with the conditions of declining social capital, waning social trust, and diminishing ability to check perceptions and affirm reality associated with civic disengagement impede the fulfillment of the theoretical model of the public sphere. Hopefully, the above analysis will not be construed as a critique of the public sphere and its ideals, but rather as a kind of "reality check" that highlights the special conditions affecting public discourse within the public sphere. An investigation of how the ideals of the public sphere are thwarted by civic disengagement and power differentials complicates and deepens our understandings of the public sphere and underscores the importance of alternatives to competitive argument in helping resolving



these tensions. In light of the civic disengagement (i.e. declining social capital) and adversarial processes (i.e. marginalization, unequal power relations) that inhibit free and open exchange within the public sphere, we have yet another impetus to consider expanding the role of academic debate to include dialogic modes of discourse that enact the idealistic qualities of the public sphere.

The intentions of dialogic inquiry to give voice to multiple perspectives, to affirm difference, and to listen to understand have important applications in projects to reinvigorate public discourse, particularly in a time when the "ideal" public sphere is not reflected in contemporary social relations. As a way to bridge the gap between the "ideal" and the "real," dialogue makes available new possibilities for advocates. Strictly dialectical approaches, with their emphasis on either-or thinking, can not account for the contemporary needs of the public sphere. This point is also made by Hide and Bineham (2000) who have questioned the suitability of strictly dialectical approaches in "a culture whose increasing diversity has dramatically increased the number of voices and perspectives that demand to be heard" (209). Given the diversity of perspectives that need to be given voice in order for the theoretical model of the public sphere to be realized, it is appropriate and necessary that dialogic approaches, geared toward affirming difference, find their way into American public discourse. Educators in the field of speech communication are in a unique position to build upon the tradition of successfully preparing academic debaters to be future leaders in society by coaching students to develop the dialogic skills that so urgently need to be enacted within the public realm.

This article does not offer any definitive or final answer on the appropriate relationship between dialectic and dialogue. Instead, as part of the process of living in the question, this article considers the tension between dialectic as a competitive approach and dialogue as an "invitational" approach to discursive inquiry. This analysis has explored the nature of the criticisms of competitive approaches to argument and suggested the possibilities for dialogue that grow out of these critiques. Furthermore, this author has discussed the continuing relevance of traditional argumentation pedagogy for preparing advocates and suggested that a choice between either dialectic or dialogue unduly limits the scope of what debate activities can be. Finally, this article considered dialogue as an alternative mode of discourse that might be further explored by debate educators as means of addressing the needs of a public sphere crippled by declining "social capital," unequal power relations, and marginalized voices.

In short, this paper invites a re-evaluation of argumentation pedagogy that focuses exclusively on dialectical modes of discourse. In a time when civic engagement and social trust are waning, when both competitive debate activities and American public discourse are criticized as being overly-adversarial, it seems worthwhile to consider alternative ways of preparing advocates to face these challenges. This author's position is not that competitive debate should be abandoned