

national forensics tournament which includes oral interpretation events will reveal the growing popularity, on a national scale, of the "teaser" technique. While this can be a legitimate technique for introducing certain types of literature, it has become an abused and overused one. It is the intent of the authors to set forth several guidelines to follow when deciding whether or not a "teaser" can help provide the most appropriate introduction to a particular selection: In order to logically reach our conclusions, we will introduce several standards which can aid the interpreter and coach in determining whether or not the literature selected warrants the use of a "teaser." These standards will also aid judges in evaluating oral interpretation performances in competitive forensics. It is our hope that after reading this synopsis, the reader will become more critical when creating and evaluating introductions for competitive oral interpretation of literature speaking events.

Obviously, it is the purpose of any introduction to establish audience attention. As Bacon (1979) states, "A good introduction will put you and the work you are reading in proper position with the audience, and make you both eager to begin" (p. 183). Hopkins and Long (1982) further clarify the purpose of an introduction:

If you give an introduction to the selection, congruity again is the watchword. Develop an introduction that "sets up" the

literary text . . . avoid the cute or precious, the inflated, global abstraction, the irrelevant, the patronizing, or the mechanical (p. 131).

Undoubtedly, the goal of an introduction is to prepare the audience for the selection to be heard. At the 1984 Developmental Conference on Forensics, a resolution containing a number of general standards for evaluating individual events was adopted. The resolution included standards for both public address and oral interpretation events. Several of the oral interpretation standards set forth help to clarify the goals the interpreter of literature should strive for when introducing his or her material.

1. The interpreter's program should communicate an apparent purpose/justification for the literature selected.
2. The interpreter's program should communicate a motivational link (relevance factor) between the selection and the audience.
3. The interpreter's program should maintain the ethical integrity of the literature.
4. The interpreter's program should display an understanding of thematic development and a sense of continuity in the presentation. (Resolution One, 1984, p. 90)

By evaluating the interpreter's use of a "teaser" according to these standards, it is possible to determine whether the individual

is abusing or making effective use of this introductory technique. We have selected these standards for two reasons. First, they represent a review and summary of much of the data available on evaluating competitive oral interpretation of literature. Second, these standards, accepted by a near unanimous vote at this decade's Developmental Conference on Forensics, represent a foundation for the eventual development of a universally accepted set of detailed standards regarding the evaluation of competitive oral interpretation events.

Ideally, when considering the use of a "teaser," interpreters should initially ask themselves why they feel a "teaser" is appropriate. Answers such as, "A 'teaser' would help the audience understand my cutting by explaining an event which took place earlier in the literature," or "The situation my characters are in is unique to the audience, and a 'teaser' is the most time-efficient means of relating my selection's setting to them," are two potentially acceptable explanations. On the other hand, a student may answer, "I'm not good at writing introductions. 'Teasers' make my introduction shorter and easier to write," or "If I don't use a 'teaser,' I'll be perceived as a beginner." Unfortunately, it has been the experience of the authors that a growing number of contestants using "teasers" fall victim to the latter set of explanations. To curb this abuse of "teasers," the pre-

viously mentioned standards can serve as a checklist to contestants, coaches, and judges.

In the first two standards, the interpreter is required to justify the actual literature selected and provide a statement making the material relevant to the audience. Satisfying these standards communicates to the judge that the contestant has made an appropriate selection of literature and has a clear understanding of its intent. Meeting these standards requires that the contestant display insight into the social relevance of the chosen material. This information can only be communicated through the original portion of the contestant's introduction. Along with this insight, the interpreter must offer a brief description of the characters and setting of the selection. A "teaser," in itself, contributes only to this description. The interpreter who is uncomfortable communicating insightful, original statements will find no relief in the use of a "teaser." A "teaser" may be of assistance in the less difficult task of describing the setting of a selection, but it is not a substitute for insightful commentary. It has been the experience of the authors that many students make use of "teasers" at the expense of providing original insight into their literature. When deciding whether or not to use a "teaser," interpreters should remember that it is a descriptive tool, and that they will still be expected to display an awareness of the social

message provided by the literature.

The third standard refers to the interpreter's maintaining the ethical integrity of the literature. This standard is designed to protect the literature. At no point should the contestant distort the author's intent for the material. While this standard weighs most heavily on the actual editing process of the selection, it also has special relevance with regard to the use of "teasers." If, for example, the interpreter reads a portion of the literature in the form of a "teaser" to establish the conflict between characters or to describe a past event that is significant to the main performance, the interpreter is obviously not violating the literature's integrity. If, however, the contestant were to take an event from the literature out of context to be performed in a "teaser" simply for dramatic effect, that contestant's actions would be in violation of the literature's integrity. An actual example of a violation of this sort involved a contestant opening his performance by reading a grotesque description of a fatal automobile mishap. Although this incident was taken from the source of literature performed by the contestant, it had nothing to do with the cutting he went on to perform. A "teaser" of this nature is an obvious violation of author's intent. The oral interpretation of literature innately possesses a code of ethics. This code should not be suspended with regard to

"teasers."

The fourth standard requires the contestant to display an understanding of the thematic development and a sense of continuity in the presentation. It is in the failure to satisfy this standard that perhaps the greatest abuse of "teasers" can be seen. Since a "teaser" appears at the beginning of the contestant's performance, it obviously must be designed to catch the audience's attention. Unfortunately, many contestants, anxious to follow the norm of "teaser" use, simply read the first few lines of their selection in the form of a "teaser." This may be appropriate if the lines capture the audience's attention, but, all too often, a "teaser" of this sort lacks the ability to stimulate the audience. The result not only fails to satisfy any requirements of the introduction, but actually proves detrimental. This misused "teaser" breaks the continuity of the interpreter's performance. With this continuity factor in mind, another trap interpreters tend to fall into regards the selection of exciting or humorous "teasers." There is no inherent problem with this type of "teaser" if it is warranted by the literature. However, contestants often perform a "teaser" in a manner which is not congruent with the main portion of their selections. For example, the contestant may read a "teaser" which has a frenzied focus followed by a low-keyed opening of the main selection. Along the same line, the contestant could read a hilarious

"teaser" followed by a sober reading. In both cases, the fault is subtle, yet significant. Such a radical change in mood offsets the continuity and thematic development of the interpreter's program. In short, if the interpreter cannot catch the audience's attention with a "teaser" that is congruent with the major portion of the program, that interpreter should seriously consider abandoning the use of a "teaser" altogether.

Competitive oral interpretation of literature, and Forensics in general, is a constantly evolving activity. The use of a "teaser" in the introduction of a competitive oral interpretation performance has recently gained in popularity and come under scrutiny. The technique, itself, can be creative and bolstering to a performance. However, as with any technique, the abuse of a "teaser" can have disastrous effects. Surely, every technique used in competitive oral interpretation events could be debated. By using the standards discussed earlier and by closely analyzing the selection or performance, the interpreter or judge can honestly determine whether or not a "teaser" is appropriate for the literature in question.

It is the hope of the authors that this article will deter students who may be tempted by the growing popularity of "teaser" use (both appropriate and inappropriate) from making improper use of this technique. The authors further aspire that forensics coaches and judges will be conscious of the

"teaser" issue and appropriately encourage or reward its proper use and discourage or penalize its misuse. The introduction is a vital element to any performance of literature. Deciding how to introduce a particular piece of literature should involve as careful consideration as the act of selecting the material itself.

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THE COMPETITIVE ATMOSPHERE: ITS EFFECTS IN FORENSIC SPEECHES

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Competition theory is not a new research area for social theorists and psychologists; but with regard to competitive speaking, this is not the case. Providing students with many opportunities to apply and learn communicative skills seems to be a worthy idea, and competition can serve as an extension for theory learned in the classroom. Whereas competition could help students polish communication skills, it can also promote styles or techniques that may not be taught in communication coursework. To better understand the competitive atmosphere in forensic speaking, the effects should be examined in order to benefit both the classroom and forensics. As Margaret Clifford noted in 1971: "... it would seem both profitable and practical to research in greater detail the effects of competition both as a prevailing atmosphere resulting from the present educational and cultural patterns and as specific motivational treatments which may be used in classroom situations" (15).

The purpose of this paper is to explore the effects of the competitive atmosphere found at individual events tournaments. The author contends that competition provides students with a successful and enjoyable method to apply communication theory. Forensic

competition can be examined by first discussing the nature of competition, secondly explaining the competitive speaking process, and finally outlining specific effects.

The Nature of Competition

Margaret Clifford defined competition as "... a situation in which subjects are encouraged to surpass each other but are unable to directly affect the absolute score of their competitors" (12). This definition accurately applies to the forensic atmosphere as individual competitors are primarily concerned with their own performance but are unable to directly influence others. However, the relationship between competitors is a definite consideration. David and Roger Johnson explain: "Under purely competitive conditions, an individual can obtain his goal if, and only if, the others with whom he is linked cannot obtain their goals" (Instructional" 214).

Besides the relationship to other competitors, central to the competitive atmosphere are the reinforcement strategies in effect (Scott and Cherington 748). In 1981, Deci, et al. discussed the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and their relation to competition.

Intrinsic motivation is generally distinguished from extrinsic

motivation on the basis of the reward that is associated with the activity. The reward for intrinsically motivated behavior is the feeling of competence and self-determination that is associated with the behavior. The reward for extrinsically motivated behavior is something that is separate from and follows behavior. (79)

Extrinsic rewards could be trophies, applause, recognition, qualifying to national tournaments, advancing into finals, or receiving a first place rank. Intrinsically, forensics can provide improvements in communication skills and self-confidence. Deci et. al. claim that the extrinsic aspects of competition become more salient than people's intrinsic motivation (80). The authors qualify their stance claiming that: "This does not mean that competition does not motivate and it does not discredit competition. It simply helps to clarify the nature of the motivational processes which are involved with competition" (83).

Competitive Speaking Process

Competition can positively and negatively influence a learning environment, and unfortunately general theory cannot claim when competition will be beneficial. However, by recognizing the relationship between competitors, the desire for awards and competence, and how these ideas relate to forensics; we can more accurately assess the effects of the competitive atmosphere. The process of

competitive speaking can be examined in three steps:

1. Students learn communication theory.
2. Students, who most accurately follow what is taught, will be rewarded.
3. Speeches are modified by studying judges' comments, imitating winners, and utilizing selective innovation. The process returns to step one as students are learning communication theory, and this cyclical pattern continues.

The initial step in the process is addressed in the classroom or by a forensic coach. In either case, the student is taught the basics in speech structure and in oral interpretation. For example, in impromptu speaking the student becomes familiar with how to structure ideas following the format: introduction, body and conclusion. Without a knowledge of the communication "essentials," the student will have trouble continuing the competitive process. The first step exemplifies individualistic competition whereas the student is actually competing with him/herself. The emphasis is not on defeating other competitors but in mastering the application of communication theory. When forensics is viewed in this light, learning becomes more of a challenge without the need for identification of an enemy that needs to be beaten. In fact, forensic competition is not head to head battle, but in many ways is in-

dividualistic. Students attempt to write the best speech, find the best material, and perform flawlessly. If a student does not receive an award, responses should be in the direction of: "The speech was not strong enough," and not, "I lost." The student's most difficult competitor can be him/herself. Giving the best possible speech is a helpful guideline instead of "good enough to pick up a trophy," or in the classroom: "good enough to get an A." In the event impromptu speaking, this is especially true. The speaker will not see other competitors before his/her speech, so the emphasis is on giving the best possible speech and not on defeating the other speakers. But whatever the event, learning the theory is a necessary first step.

Individualistic competition is vital to acquisition of theory, however the relationship to other competitors cannot be ignored. In step two, it is not necessarily the students who compete against each other; but actually their speeches. Judges will determine which speech best demonstrates communication precepts and award those that do so. Once again, the emphasis is not on the ideas that "this student lost," or "this student was the winner;" but instead "this speech was the strongest according to what is being taught," or "other speeches were stronger than this one." The focus is placed on speech quality, preparation, and performance and not on the speaker's self concept. While the extrinsic motivation of trophies contributes to

the student's competitive drive and supplies definite reinforcement, intrinsic motivators have no specific end. A student could always be more competent; a speech could always be improved. In forensics, extrinsic rewards do provide students with specific goals, while at the same time they will have a long range intrinsic objective: competence.

The competitive environment motivates students to excel, but since only one speech receives a first place award, the vast majority of participants will be trying to improve for the next tournament. Even the first place student may have to improve in order to stay ahead of the competition. In any case, modification of a speech plays a central role in competitive speaking, which is the third step in the process. One advantage that forensics has over classroom speaking is that students know which students are successful. In a noncompetitive class, direct comparison is not possible. Students rarely know which speeches received A's; and if two speeches were given A's, which one was better. The student relies on the comments from the instructor for improvement. Besides learning from judges' comments, students in competition are able to directly compare their own speech with others. As Johnson and Johnson point out: "Sometimes students may wish to compete in order to appraise their skills since competition is one way to make comparative judgments and to learn what

one is really capable of doing" ("Instructional" 231). When a competitor does not gain the top award, improvements are considered; and since a student has the opportunity to see which competitors were successful, modeling or imitation is a viable option. According to Edward O'Connell Jr., subjects might conclude that imitation was truly the only way to insure a degree of success, so they may simply imitate their obviously competent models (181). Imitation can be used in all events for some improvements, and this is true for impromptu speaking as well. Structure, amount of preparation time, and movement during the speech can be imitated, to name only a few.

Unfortunately the answer to how students can best learn in a competitive atmosphere is not that easy. In competitive environments, simple imitation of a person receiving rewards would frequently result in the frustration of seeing that person consume the limited rewards available (O'Connell 173). Modeling a winning speech could result in a performance that is lower quality than the original being imitated. Therefore, a student must be somewhat innovative, as well. Many of the basic skills can be learned through imitation, but the competitive process would stagnate without new challenges and risks by the speakers. So, both imitation and innovation should be used to gain speaking competence. As Walker points out: "The competi-

tor wishes to fulfill both his need to be special and distinctive and his need to be accepted and secure" (7).

The competitive process in forensics is complex but by looking at the nature of competition, the three step process of learning, motivation, and modification; the effects of competition can be analyzed. Most importantly, past research has recognized the connection between competition and competence. Walker contends:

To the extent that [competitors] understand themselves and improve their control of themselves, they will attain competence (control of their game), and competence leads to courage, creativity, and fun. Lack of understanding and lack of control lead to fear, depression, and incompetence—and no fun. Competition is too good to waste. (xiv)

Forensics can teach communication through the application of material learned, and mastering the skills involved should be the primary concern. But just as vital as the desire for skill mastery is the need for enjoyment. "Students should master the skills to compete with enjoyment" (Johnson and Johnson *Learning* vi). According to Walker: "... champions find joy in the competition" (41). Champion Jack Nicklaus says that at the age of ten he discovered that "hitting a ball well was a lot more fun than hitting it badly, which made me want to get better as soon as possible" (Walker 17).

As Walker stated: "The game is fun—if it is played without excessive concern for the outcome. The acquisition and display of competence is fun. Winning is fun. And being part of the group is fun" (35).

Not everyone would agree with Walker's exuberance; in fact much of the research has pointed out negative aspects of competition. Herbert Gurnee, in 1968, tested college students as they found their way through a maze in either a competitive or cooperative situation. Gurnee found that: "Twenty-one of the 32 said they tried harder when competing, on the other hand, 22 subjects said they found collaborating more pleasant than competing while ten thought competing was more pleasant" (31). It is interesting to note that of the ten who enjoyed competing, all but one was a winner. It comes as no surprise to note that competition is more enjoyable for the students who are winning. As Marvin Shaw discovered in 1958: "Competitive situations arouse a stronger motivation to achieve than cooperative situations" (167). However, competition also resulted in decreased interpersonal attraction (Scott and Cherrington 756) and an increase in anxiety (Johnson and Johnson "Instructional" 227-28).

A very relevant negative influence to forensics is hypothesized by Deci, et. al.: "... in general the controlling aspect of competition will tend to undermine intrinsic motivation for the activity itself"

(80). Students could easily view forensics as an instrument for winning rather than an activity which is mastery-oriented and rewarding in its own right. In 1980 Milton Rosenbaum and associates conducted a block building experiment where college students built structures in a competitive and cooperative atmosphere. In competition, the students were so concerned about being better as quickly as possible that quality was sacrificed (Rosenbaum et. al. 634). This idea is supported by Shaw who also noticed that competition resulted in poorer performance (167). The same problem could occur in speaking competition. Students could strive to win so quickly that concern for competence would be secondary. Walker explains this potential problem: [Some competitors need] "to be approved first and to be competent second" (19).

Failure is an effect that is more common than success in a competitive environment. There is only one first place trophy, and the person receiving it will most likely have other events where first place was not achieved. In any case, students must deal with this reality; and accepting criticism becomes a necessary attribute that is invaluable, as well.

CONCLUSION

Some competitors may find the negative effects to be too overwhelming and choose not to compete. In a study conducted by Steigleder, subjects manipulated a ball through a maze without having it fall into a hole. The experi-

ment revealed that subjects would learn an instrumental response to offset competition (1299). Hopefully, avoidance is not always the answer when deciding when and if to compete, but competition will be viewed as an effective environment for gaining competence. There are definite negative effects; but with the right perspective on competition, learning can be successful and enjoyable.

Competition is not appropriate for every environment, and Johnson and Johnson state: "Most of the competition in classrooms is inappropriate" (vi), and yet the authors feel that: ". . . students should be taught the basic skills necessary to function in all three types of situations: cooperative, competitive, and individualistic" (213). Participating in competitive speaking activities outside the classroom does seem to be an excellent option for some college students. In 1982 Holloway reported that forensic competition was successful at his college. The success was *not* due to the "emphasis on extrinsic rewards such as trophies, but most likely to formation of good student-teacher relationships, a productive organizational psycho-environment and careful teaching of public speaking fundamentals" (166). In this case, forensics was used to complement theory from the communication classroom, and students had a reasonable outlook on competition: "[Students] were successful, they said, because 'forensics was fun' and 'winning was considered un-

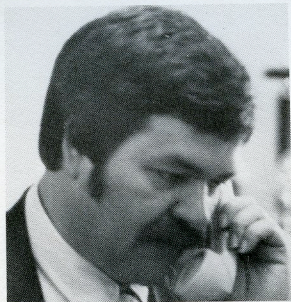
important'" (Holloway 168). Past research has shown competition as being a very positive learning environment on one hand, and as a situation that should be avoided on the other. The evidence suggests that to determine the worthiness of a competitive atmosphere, more research is required. Since there has not been any specific research conducted with regard to competition and forensics, many questions remain unanswered. Do students and coaches find the competitive atmosphere useful for learning? Is it enjoyable? Do intrinsic or extrinsic motivators dominate a student's desire to excel? Specifically what motivators are responsible? Will an understanding of competition theory benefit students and coaches? Are there specific types of people that thrive on competition? Colleges have taken pride in their forensic programs, and hopefully a better understanding of competition and its effects on forensics will serve to enhance that quality even further.

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PRESIDENT'S NOTE



Gary Horn President

The 1985 season is official history, but the accomplishments of Pi Kappa Delta will be retained as one of our best years. The Fayetteville convention is still being applauded in forensic circles, and the National Council is looking forward to attaining and sharing an even better year for 1986 through the effort of all Pi Kappa Delta members.

The national council met in Denver at the Speech Convention and spent several hours discussing the direction of our organization. I left the meeting with a feeling that much had been accomplished and that Pi Kappa Delta remains an exciting, worthwhile order in which I am proud to be a member.

Also, council meetings were attended by several guests that provided a great deal of additional enthusiasm to our group. Most of the guests desired information on how to become affiliated with Pi Kappa Delta. The council answered a variety of questions and provided suggestions that started several new reaffiliating chapters through the chartering process. If you know of a school that is interested in becoming associated with Pi Kappa Delta, please contact Terry Cole, Chairperson of Charter and Standards Committee.

In addition, the council discus-

sed the revision of the constitution which is an item that everyone needs to be aware of. If you have suggestions or recommendations of changes you would like to see made in our constitution, contact Michael Bartanen, chairperson of the Constitutional Revision Committee.

A final area that could use your help is finding a site for the 1989 convention. If you have ideas you would like to share concerning location, please contact David Ray, Chairperson of the Site Selection Committee.

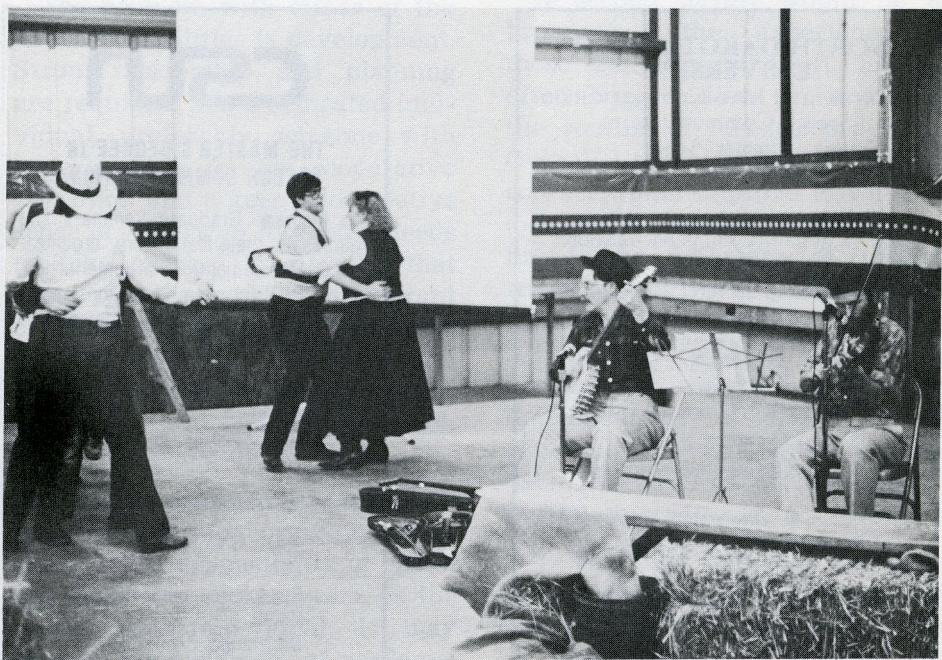
The staff of the Forensic informs me that they would dearly love to have more chapter news and notes to share in every issue. I would like to encourage you to send pictures and stories to the *Forensic* telling about your chapter's activities. Dr. Anthony Schroeder, our editor, has done such an outstanding job with our publication. If you see him around the Forensic community, tell him thanks and let him know that his efforts are appreciated.

In my last note I told you that one of my goals was to achieve an increase in membership. I am happy to report that all indicators point to continued growth of membership and chapters. Let's all look forward to seeing new faces at La-Crosse in 1987.

Furthermore, every tournament I have attended this year has brought encouraging news about Pi Kappa Delta. People of the Forensic world are discussing the organization and asking questions

that indicate interest in our fraternity. If possible, my experience this year has made me even more committed to Pi Kapp. I hope each and everyone of you have had similar experiences.

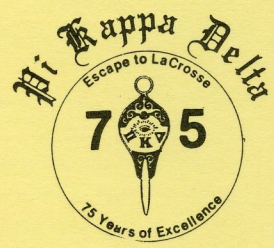
A final item that points to great things happening in Pi Kappa is the enthusiasm for the upcoming province tournaments. Never have I witnessed this kind of support and dedication for the province meets. I want to wish each of you the best of luck in your province tournament and hope you have a wonderful 1986 season.





1982

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