

often viewed as confusing, unreliable, and time-consuming (Kamil, 2003), rubrics serve an important purpose for educators. Much like in forensics, teachers often do not generate well-thought-out evaluative criteria, instead relying on institutional momentum, norms, and what they have been instructed to believe as "good"; justification is often muddled for students in both these situations. Rubrics help ease the confusion about why grades are given (Gschwend, 2000). This is why in forensics, written feedback on ballots is highly encouraged to increase student learning and to help clarify the ranks and ratings given; a judging philosophy will directly help a judge's ability to provide such detailed feedback. Not only do rubrics help teachers provide valuable feedback and accurate assessment to student work, but students then also know what the teacher is using for his/her evaluative criteria. Once the teacher understands the learning objectives and grading criteria, his/her evaluation can come easier and be more poignant. Similarly, if a student receives specific feedback from a teacher that focuses on the learning objectives and grading criteria, they are more likely to learn from that than from vague comments that do not clearly explain success or failure at the assignment. If forensic judges knew their own personal "grading criteria," perhaps we would see enhanced pedagogical gains in our students similar to what teachers can observe with using rubrics.

Reeves and Stanford (2009) discussed the pedagogical justification behind rubrics noting rubrics can greatly help students increase their level of performance. Gschwend (2000) summarizes how rubrics help students:

So, how does using rubrics increase students' levels of performance success? In summary, effective rubrics raise students' performance levels in six basic ways. First, rubrics clearly discriminate between competency levels of performance (i.e., in progress, basic, proficient, advanced). Second, rubrics select key products, skills, and behaviors to be measured. Third, rubrics describe in specific but student-comprehensible-language the exact qualities those key products, skills, and behaviors should possess. Fourth, rubrics focus on qualities of students' work rather than solely upon quantities of errors. Fifth, rubrics are based upon concrete models or exemplars of students' work which instruct by displaying existing gradients between levels of performance (O'Rourke & O'Rourke, 1997). Six, rubrics take the mystery out of the grading process by clarifying exactly what skills students need to display in order to succeed. Indeed, rubrics possess many assets. Clearly these assets set rubrics apart from typical grading practices. (p. 5)

Essentially, rubrics represent not only a simple method to communicate the learning objectives, but they also can articulate how well a student is meeting those objectives (Nelson & Lindley, 2004). By cre-

ating a rubric, or IEJP, an educator can think carefully and critically about the important things students should be learning and how to determine the “level at which students have learned” (Cooper & Gargan, 2009, p. 55). Scholars have shown that when students understand the assessment criteria, they become more actively involved in the learning process (Holmes & Smith, 2003; Marzano, 2000).

Stevens and Levi (2005) noted that rubrics help teachers refine teaching skills. By questioning how we view the teaching we can reevaluate how we teach it. Stevens and Levi give an example of if the majority of students in a class struggle with source citations, it might be a time for a wake-up call. If students are not learning from how we approach something as teachers, teachers can reevaluate how we go about teaching it. Rubrics offer us the chance to see how we view our learning objectives and how we measure those objectives. This is also extremely valuable in forensics, as judges should reevaluate how they judge in order to improve their assessment skills and strategies. If judges are unaware of their own judging philosophy, they cannot go back and evaluate how they assess students; rubrics and judging philosophies offer this advantage.

Stevens and Levi (2005) also noted that rubrics help level the playing field for students because all are assessed with the same expectations. Teachers ideally do not show favoritism in their assessment because rubrics clearly lay out how the students are being assessed. Forensic judges with an IEJP will have the same advantage in that a clear judging philosophy means feedback and assessment of student performances will be performed in the same manner, leveling the competitive playing field. A student or coach may still disagree with a judge’s comments, but at least all students are being assessed in the same way. Ideally, the judge’s approach will be pedagogically sound so all students will receive a justified and educative ballot.

Rubrics reflect what teachers want their students to learn, thus reflecting their pedagogical perspective. Since rubrics provide feedback to assist students in their pedagogical growth and are created from teachers’ learning objectives, the comparison can easily be made with evaluative forms in competitive academic debate and forensics. When a judge offers feedback, it reflects their judging philosophy. Students take comments from judges to heart and use them to change their performances for the better. If students are doing this, judges must take care to provide rationale that accurately reflects his/her personal judging philosophy. Debate judges typically know their judging philosophy (paradigm), but individual event judges tend to be a little looser with the particulars. The following section will explore the differences between approaching debate and IE judging philosophies.

Evaluation in Speech and Debate: The Judging Paradigm VS the Judging Philosophy

While this paper does not pretend to cover the full spectrum of

literature on judging paradigms in debate, it will briefly address those relevant to this topic. To begin with, a debate judge often has a way of judging the debate and giving feedback—this is known as his/her judging paradigm. While the American Forensic Association (AFA) has attempted to bring some standardization to judging, the history of the activity is rife with an emphasis only on the outcome of the debate (Lain, 2010). By looking at judging paradigms, we focus not on competitive outcomes, but instead on the pedagogical practices of debate judges.

Freeley and Steinberg (2009) outline several judging paradigms for debate, noting a judge can take several different forms: a skills judge, an issues judge, a policymaker judge, an hypothesis-testing judge, an evaluator of an argument, a current practice judge, or a tabula rasa judge. Essentially paradigms can be divided into two ways of thinking: debate is a testing ground for real world arguments, or debate is an activity in and of itself in which students are taught argumentation skills (Beyond objectivity, 1987). Rowland (1982) and Zarefsky (1982) debated the merits of both of these ways of viewing paradigms, arguing one view provided more educational benefits than the other and vice versa.

The most traditional approach to judging policy debate is the stock issues paradigm (Minch & Borchers, 1996). Ziegelmueller, Harris, and Bloomingdale (1995) explained a stock issues judge evaluates on the significance (harms), inherency (causes), solvency (solution), advantages/disadvantages, and topicality. Even though the stock issue paradigm is the most traditional, “No consensus exists within the debate community as to what is an ideal paradigm” (Minch & Borchers, 1996, p. 23). While one of the goals of collegiate debate is to teach argumentation, how judges should best approach a debate round in an educational fashion is still open for wide interpretation.

Lehtreck (1995) outlined a way to go about creating a personal debate judging philosophy, so judges can provide the best educational experience for the students. The approach, if not the execution, is quite similar with individual events. For forensic speech competition, McBath (1975) and Mills (1983) argued that every judge should provide honest and responsible feedback to students. However, as most coaches and competitors can attest, judges often do not write the best ballots for students. Morris (2005) and Mills have attempted to provide guidelines for how to judge intercollegiate forensics. Morris argued that many judges are simply taking the wrong approach to providing feedback. Instead of judges being critics (applying a formula and deciding if something is or is not, but not if something is good or bad) as Morris recommends, Morris contends that judges are too often evaluators, giving their opinion and measuring the value of a performance. While most forensic professionals can sympathize with Morris', and Mills' intentions of attempting to level the playing field with specific guidelines in order to make judging less subjective and more formulaic, we have to question whether there is one correct

way to judging an intensely subjective activity. There is no doubt we want to be fair to all student-competitors, but seeking such uniformity in forensics will only stifle creativity.

This is not to say that anything goes in forensic competition; rules and norms regulate competitive and educational outcomes. There is no doubt that there are rules to our events, and numerous scholars have discussed norms, showing they do, in fact, exist (Brown, 2008; Epping & Labrie, 2005; Gaer, 2002). The difference between rules and norms, as Paine (2005) noted, is that:

Rules are often formal and explicit whereas norms tend to be informal and implicit. Rules may be enacted at a particular moment by an official governing body, while norms are habits or patterns which evolve over time among the members of a community. Rules are relatively more 'hard and fast' or invariant in their enforcement, while norms tend to be more flexible in their application. (p. 79-80).

Paine noted that while some norms have been blasted amongst the forensic community as unsound competitively and pedagogically, most norms can help students learn many positive lessons if explained properly by a judge or a coach. This is why IEJPs are important to have: so forensic judges can articulate the learning objectives or pedagogical rationale behind the rules and norms, explain how the student did or did not meet the judge's assessment criteria of those learning objectives, and elaborate on how to go about improving the performance. Without a clear IEJP a judge may struggle with the complicated expectations that a pedagogically sound ballot demands.

Individual event judging philosophies are talked about, but rarely seen in the forensic community. Most likely, the majority of forensic professionals do not have a written, well-thought-out version of their IEJP. This is a problem because unless the IEJP is carefully constructed and recorded, details are often neglected and our justifications get sloppy. Hoffman (1996) and Przybylo (1997) attempted to jumpstart the IE community into using judging philosophies with little effect; however, the adoption of IEJPs may have stalled because debate and IEs are fundamentally different when discussing judging. The most important pedagogical differences are outlined by Minch and Borchers (1996). First, IE judges are more pedagogically focused on a variety of communication standards. While the debate judge's primary focus is on which team presented the best argumentation, IE judges often bases their rankings, ratings, and feedback on organization, source use, appealing aesthetics, clarity of message, and a host of other criteria. Second, IE judges have far less defined and publicized paradigms. This represents the IE focus on "real-life" in which a speaker may or may not know the audience particularly well. We avoid advertising our thoughts on judging in writing because we want students to adapt to a wide variety of audiences. It also may be that forensic professionals do not wish to spend valuable time writing something down, believing their criteria are valid and do not warrant careful thought and analysis. Third, IE judges never allow students to set the evalua-

tion standards of the round. Some debate judges embrace the *tabula rasa* (clean slate) paradigm, meaning they allow for students to dictate the judging criteria; IE judges always have their own interpretations of how to judge. IE forensic professionals believe in the evaluative power of the judge as expert. Perhaps they believe this because the prepared nature of the activity makes it more difficult to adapt to a judge, but most likely it is because of the belief that there is a set of criteria that permeates the activity or each event dictating that the judge must be the final “grader” of these criteria.

The issue is not that IE judges do not have a judging philosophy; rather, IE judges are unaware of the nuances of their philosophy. Just like teachers without a clear rubric, judges without a philosophy are often unable to give quality feedback to students because they are unaware of their own learning objectives and grading criteria. Compounding the issue is the fact that unlike debate judges, who can focus on a smaller set of judging criteria, IE judges have a plethora of communication variables to provide feedback on for students, making it difficult to clearly articulate valuable critiques without a discernable judging philosophy. With a variety of different criterion to evaluate on, IE judges would do well to have an IEJP so assessment and feedback are as pedagogically sound and justified as possible. If IE judges are to be perceived as experts, as Minch and Borchers (1996) insinuated, they must be able to articulate, apply criteria, and provide suggestions to reach stated learning objectives.

Paine (2005) noted the forensic community needs to find the optimal pedagogical approach to judging. Instead of looking for a set of golden rules, we need to advocate for each judge to find his or her own individual events judging philosophy. Much like rubrics with teachers, an IEJP would provide forensic judges with predetermined, pedagogically sound, communicative judging standards, maximizing the educational benefits a student could receive from judges’ ballots. How to go about this is often met with confusion in the community. The next section will outline how to go about creating a personal IEJP.

Creating An Individual Events Judging Philosophy

Creating a personal IEJP may at first seem daunting, but it does not have to be. As Quinlan (2006) noted, we make casual rubrics for assessing things in our daily life all the time. How we determine what restaurant to attend or what constitutes a good driver is constructed by simple rubrics in our minds. More formal rubrics require a bit more thought but the premise is still the same. Turning to the educational literature can help forensic professionals find guidance to help create their personal IEJP. Stevens and Levi (2005) explained their four steps to creating an effective rubric: reflecting, listing, grouping and labeling, and application.

Reflecting

Stevens and Levi (2005) argued a teacher must first reflect on what

he/she wants from the students and why the assignment was created before diving into rubric creation. Similarly, before creating an IEJP, a judge must first consider what they want from a student performance and what they believe the event is intended to teach. Teachers go through a similar process. Reeves and Stanford (2009) noted that "Before beginning development of a rubric, the teacher should clearly visualize what is expected from the written project, product or process" (p. 25). Once teachers know what they want, they should then turn to their students and ask what they want to learn from the assignment. Listening to students' personal learning objectives can help teachers develop a rubric that both they and the students can take ownership over (Skillings & Ferrell, 2000; Wilhelm, 2008). Some studies suggest that involving students in the development of rubrics can improve academic performance (Petkov & Petkova, 2006; Reitmeier, Svendsen, & Vrchota, 2004), but Green and Bowser (2006) found no differences in student achievement with or without rubrics. Reddy & Andrade (2010) concluded that simply using rubrics is not enough and students need to be taught about rubrics for them to be effective. Forensic judges should talk to coaches and students and have an open discussion about what is educational. Many judges do not understand the rationale behind many norms of the activity; having discussions with veteran members of the activity will provide a broad range of perspectives. Even though a judge does not have to agree with all these perspectives, understanding where people are coming from can help judges rethink their personal IEJPs. By engaging others in the discussion, judges not only help themselves form a better idea of what they want to see in a performance, but the discussion spurs critical thinking in other judges and students as well.

Listing

Once the judge has an idea of the learning objectives they want to focus on, they can move to the Listing stage which focuses "on the particular details of the assignment and what specific learning objectives [you] hope to see in the completed assignment" (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p. 29). For IE judges, this can simply occur mentally when discussing the events with others. Take note of what seems most educational, most prudent, and most fair. Organize thoughts from the discussions you have; this stage should act as the outlining process of the IEJP. Once a judge sits down to finalize his/her thoughts, the outline will be fleshed out to provide detail to these thoughts. Most likely, as more care is put into the final IEJP, ideas from the Listing outline will morph or be altered slightly to fit the judge's pedagogical viewpoint. In the Listing stage, however, merely organize thought, but be prepared to edit and change them in the next stage if necessary.

When listing, teachers should also offer students examples of what is quality work. Since the teacher knows what good work is and has a general idea of what the qualities are, finding examples of this exemplary work seems prudent. Ward and Murray-Ward (1999) suggested

using samples from past student work that demonstrated excellence for the assignment. Teachers should also show examples of work that is poorly done to juxtapose the levels of quality and highlight the differences. This is difficult to do as a forensic judge, but keep in mind when you are creating your IEJP what presentations you find to be stellar and weak—these are the performances you want to use as your baseline for what is superior and what is subpar. Again, talk to other judges and to students about what they think is “good” or “bad,” and then engage in discussion as to why they think a performance was of a specific quality.

Writing the rubric itself can be challenging, but Popham (1997) described a rubric as having three features: evaluation criteria, quality definitions, and a scoring strategy. Evaluation criteria are factors that a teacher takes into consideration when determining the quality of a student’s work; these reflect the content deemed as important learning objectives. Quality definitions explain what a student must do to demonstrate mastery of the learning objectives. Scoring strategy refers to a scale that provides points of some kind based off the quality definitions. Forensic ballots certainly have a scoring strategy due to the competitive nature of the activity, but the evaluation criteria and quality definitions are left up to the judge’s discretion, which is why an IEJP is needed.

Grouping and Labeling

The next stage is to write your own IEJP. Stevens and Levi (2005) explained Grouping and Labeling to be where a teacher would “organize the results of ...reflections in Stages 1 and 2, grouping similar expectations together in what will probably become the rubric dimensions” (p. 29-30). Essentially, educators must come up with the details of their rubric; this includes Popham’s (1997) evaluation criteria and quality definitions. Similarly, IE judges must now come up with the details of their IEJPs to be thorough enough to effectively judge a round of competition. Thinking about the minutia of the activity takes time and editing. This stage should not be rushed and should be under constant revision; formulating ideas used to provide feedback and evaluation should be taken seriously, but those ideas may change over time. In this stage, judges must accept that the ideas put forth for their IEJPs may go about small or significant revisions as their rounds, tournaments, semesters, seasons, or careers progress.

Individual event judges have it tough, because the discussion of how judging occurs is often less transparent than debate, where judges often are more knowledgeable about their judging approaches and how these tie to the activity. After generating discussion with other judges, coaches, and students, a judge should create an IEJP for themselves. As mentioned earlier, Gschwerd (2000) provided a checklist for an effective rubric. While no rubric theory will completely fit the needs of a forensic judge, synthesizing Gschwerd’s ideas along with Minch and Borchers (1996) observations about the differences

between IE and debate judging, the process can provide a framework from which a forensic judge can create an effective IEJP. The following are steps to take when creating an IEJP:

1) Sort by event or genre

Judges need to first determine if they are going to specifically address each event or genre of event (interpretation, public address, limited preparation). While having a general philosophy for each genre is encouraged, getting as specific as possible will increase the odds of finding the little judging criteria we often forget about. A good place to start is with genre-specific criteria that was generated from discussions and then sort those criteria into the proper events in their respective genres.

2) Describe performance objectives

The next step is to then flesh out what you want to see in each genre and event. Be as specific as possible. As Minch and Borchers (1996) noted, this step can be tricky for IE judges because of the many judging criteria used in the activity. When fully describing what you want to see in a performance, remember that you may think of new criteria; write those down as well, explain them, and find where the new idea fits into the establishing philosophy for the event/genre.

Each event will likely have specific guidelines in your IEJP, but the genre as a whole may have overarching criteria as well. Make sure to explain what the performance objectives are for both the event and for the genre as a whole. For example, use of time may be something to address at the genre level, but topic selection may be something to address at the specific individual event level.

3) Provide justifications

The final step is to clearly articulate justification for why you wish to see those attributes in student performances. This is the most important step. You do not need to provide advanced communication theory behind your performance objectives (although those are recommended), but a justification as to why those performance objectives are important is critical. These are the justifications we teach in courses to our communication studies students. Think about how you would explain certain public speaking/communication theory, or performance of literature norms, to students in your class; these teaching explanations are exactly what we need to be sharing with the student-competitors. Preparing those thoughts now can help you write a more efficient and educative ballot.

If you do not know why something is done a certain way, find out. There are normally rationales behind why certain things are done in forensics. Many forensic professionals are familiar with public speaking and know much of the theory and rationale behind it, but very few are well versed in the theory behind interpretation of literature. If you are unsure of the reason why there are transition walks in Public Address (PA) and Limited Preparation (LP) events or why black books are seemingly required in Oral Interpretation events, ask around and

read about the subject. Knowing why you believe something is important, especially when you should be justifying why you are expecting students to do certain things in a performance. Having a pedagogically sound rationale for your performance objectives not only increases learning, but increases the likelihood that students will be willing to make a performative change.

Once you are fully informed on a matter, if you disagree with how the community does something, make sure your IEJP reflects your beliefs. By clinging to performance objectives that one cannot educationally justify, a judge is doing a disservice to both themselves and to the students. This is a subjective activity; as long as a judge supports his/her beliefs with a sound justification, there is no need to cave to the pressure of those that disagree with you. Stand up for what you believe in and explain those beliefs on ballots and in discussions. This will help justify any departures from the norms in your IEJP and help students see why they should consider your performance objectives as important.

Application

The final stage to Stevens and Levi's (2005) rubric construction guide is Application. This stage involves constructing an actual rubric, which is something teachers can do but forensic judges cannot perform. While teachers can essentially see their philosophy in a measurable form ready to grade student assignments, IE judges are limited by the tournament ballot and thus must find a way to apply their IEJP in another way. The best way to do this is to simply judge a tournament with the new IEJP in mind, and see if the ranking/ratings/feedback improves presentations in a pedagogical and justifiable way. If a marked improvement is seen in justification for students in feedback and ranking, the IEJP may be doing its job. Concentrate on outcomes desired to articulate the valued learning objectives, to what level the performance achieved them, and how the student can improve upon the performance to correct any deficiency or bolster areas of strength.

It might seem odd at first to actively use your IEJP when judging at a tournament. To help with keeping ballot feedback and ranking/ratings consistent, a judge might bring along his/her written IEJP to reference when watching student performances. Keeping your IEJP handy for easy reference will make it easier to remember to adhere to what the judge has articulated as his/her judging philosophy. Do not be overly concerned if it at first seems uncomfortable; as educators become more practiced with rubrics, their comfort levels grow (Simpson, Stahl, & Anderson, 2004). As your beliefs change, so too will your IEJP.

Caveats

A couple things should be noted about the application of an IEJP. First, even if every judge adopts an IEJP, there will still be judging

variety because everyone can interpret expectations and performances differently—which is the beauty of an IEJP. Dahl (2001) noted even with the exact same rubric, scores on performance assessments might not be reliable when assigned by different raters. Forensic judges and students must know that even with IEJPs in place, each judge will have their own philosophy and every interpretation will be different. IEJPs will not make the frustrating experience of different judges saying dissimilar things disappear, so we should not expect IEJPs to magically make everyone agree on which performances are the best. IEJPs will not create a coalescence of forensic judges' opinions forming a singular learning outcome assessment; rather, they will hopefully increase judges' awareness of their evaluative criteria, thus making it easier to rank and rate the student performances as well as provide the most educative feedback possible.

Next, I am not advocating for the posting of IEJPs. In fact, I would strongly urge judges not to show their IEJP to student competitors. As Minch and Borchers (1996) pointed out, unlike debate, the IE community is not built to have students craft prepared speeches for particular judges. Doing so might transform the unique broad audience analysis learning objective into merely a competitive tool to win over specific judges. Instead, providing educational feedback and justification allows students and coaches to determine if the judge's philosophy fits with what competitor wants to do with the performance. While we can never eliminate all those that solely focus on competitive success, coaches and judges ideally should exchange ideas about judging and share thoughts on events. This dialogue is critical to the growth of an individual's IEJP. Experienced judges should have discussions with novice judges, especially young forensic professionals such as graduate students and new directors, to share explanations and experiences about the events and genres. Coaches should also listen to their students. Having discussion about what your students think about the events is a great way to share perspectives and learn from each other; these discussions with students can enhance their understanding of the activity, further increasing the pedagogical value of the discussions. Keeping written IEJPs private but having them as a part of open discussion encourages open dialogue and hopefully discourages subversive competitive-driven planning on the part of students and coaches.

Finally, it is important to note that the precise nature of rubrics in the classroom does not perfectly fit with forensic judging, which makes it necessary for IEJPs to be vague at times. As Cooper and Gargon (2009) noted, there is some subjective nature when translating qualitative comments and observations into a score. While you can quantify certain things in the classroom as learning objectives, doing the same thing in forensics is not realistic. Not all things can be measured quantitatively and the competitive aspect of the activity makes it difficult to claim a laundry list of objectives as the only way to judge. Determining how many points each criterion is worth for every performance seems tedious and unwise for such a subjective