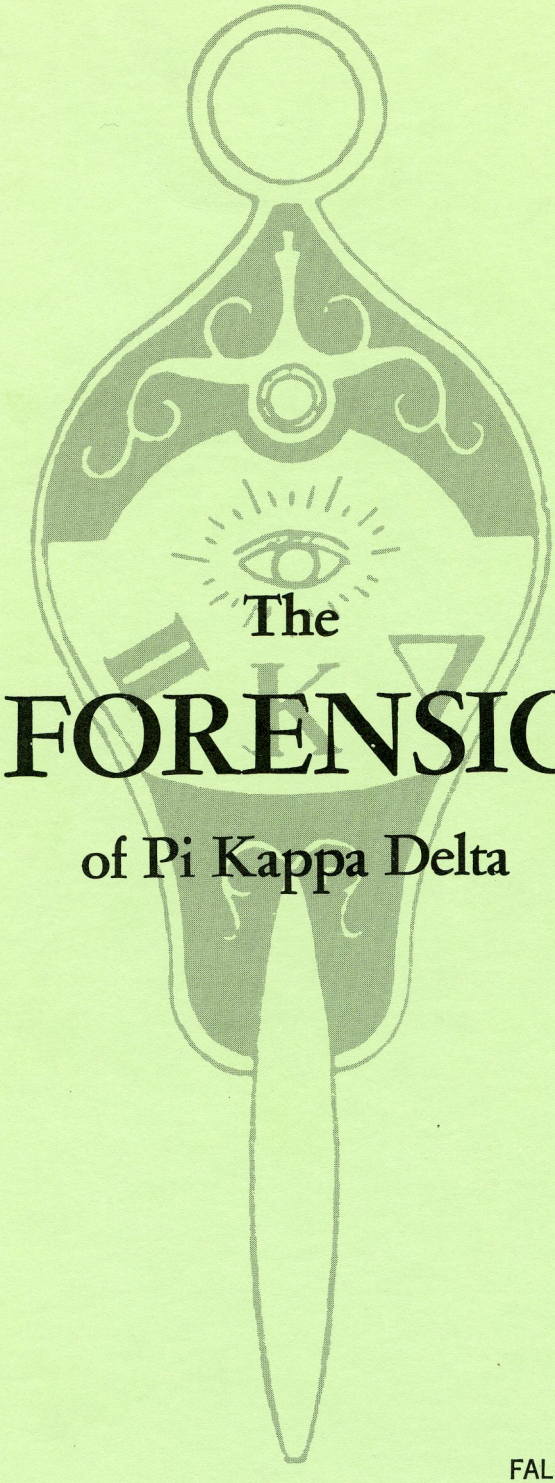

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DEBATE DOWNUNDER: ARGUMENTATION IN NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

By Don Brownlee
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Debate has the potential to serve a variety of purposes. As an educational device, intercollegiate debate in the United States is used to teach both communication and critical thinking skills and to provide training in policy analysis. In both New Zealand and Australia debate functions to enhance speaking competence, but does so in a context where audience involvement is a vital component. The Wellington (NZ) Speaking Union refers to debate as "a team PUBLIC speaking event involving a conflict of opinion and evidence on a clearly defined motion."[1] The focus on the rhetorical component of debate is more clearly emphasized in Australia:

> The essence of debate is persuasion, and that needs a balanced combination of elements. A brilliant and witty personality may draw the audience to its person, but is of no use (in winning debates, anyway) if it doesn't draw them also to his arguments; A speech chock-a-block with information will not persuade those who are put to sleep by its delivery.[2]

It is this combined, co-equal stress on content and style that pervades debate Downunder.

While the objective of debate is not radically different, the structure of debate in both New Zealand and Australia varies considerably from that in the United States. The standard debate in either country involves two three-person teams. That debate, however, rarely occurs in a tournament. Since New Zealand has only seven universities, and since typically only three or four of the schools have active debate programs, it would be difficult to run even a six-rounds-to-quarters competition. Normally, only the national tournament will bring competitors from the several active programs together. Instead of the tournament format, interscholastic debating Downunder occurs in remarkably the same fashion that it did in this country during the early part of this century. Students from one university will travel to another for debates before campus and community audiences, with these encounters often attracting hundreds of observers. Much audience debating also occurs between student clubs within the same university.

Another substantial difference between debate in the United States and Downunder is the nature of the topic. Unlike their counterparts in the US, debaters in New Zealand and Australia do not concentrate on only one topic each year or semester. Rather students may face a new topic for each public debate, although topic areas are frequently repeated. The topic selection may be done by joint participation of the two teams or at the discretion of the host school. The primary criteria for

topic selection appears to be the current interests of the potential audience, with most motions worded as propositions of value.[3]

Each of the six debaters, beginning with an affirmative advocate, presents a ten-minute speech. There is no cross-examination following the speech. After the six presentations, there is a five or six-minute rebuttal by the initial negative speaker, and finally the initial affirmative speaker has a rebuttal of similar length. As with debate in this country, the affirmative both begins and concludes each encounter.

The procedural rules for the six speakers are only partly prescribed by custom. The first affirmative speaker, or leader, generally prefaces the case, as would an American counterpart, with definitions of the vital terms. In the remaining ten minutes, the leader identifies the major claims to be advanced by the affirmative and then develops a portion of the case. This typically involves no more than three or four primary arguments.

The leader of the negative then initiates the opposition's case. As with the previous speaker, the negative leader defines those terms deemed necessary along with observing any fault with the affirmative's interpretations. The conflict over the topic's meaning is an integral part of the strategy of debates Downunder. The Wellington NZ) Speaking Union suggests that "each leader should try to get the motion fought on the grounds most embarrassing to his opponents."[4]

While the American first negative speaker normally clashes directly with the affirmative case, the negative leader instead outlines the negative's position on the topic and the division of that case among the negative team. Australian negative debaters are advised that they must present a separate case, as well as attempting to undermine the affirmative's.[5] Once the case has been outlined, the negative leader will develop three or four main arguments in the remaining time.

The second affirmative speaker focuses on expanding the case, with an emphasis on his segment. If the affirmative's definitions have been challenged, they must be defended at this time, but the second affirmative is advised not to place inordinate attention on responding to any but the most damaging negative attacks. Instead the speaker should refer constantly to the thesis of the team's case.

The second negative speaker is known as the "destructive speaker," though hopefully not self-destructive. This speech is to be divided, almost evenly, between refuting the previous two affirmative presentations and advancing the negative case. The second negative "should attempt to put forward two or three good points which demand an answer in order to keep the third affirmative speaker busy and not leave him free rein for invective."[6]

The third speakers for each team, referred to in Australia as the "whips," primarily practice refutation. They each have similar re-

sponsibilities, the first of which is to identify and hammer at the flaws in the opposition's case. These weaknesses are contrasted with the strength of the speaker's own case, for which he may make one or two new arguments.

The final speech for each team, sometimes labeled the "summing-up" or the "reply," is presented by the team's leader. As mentioned previously, the negative speaks first, followed by the affirmative. The task for both leaders is essential identical, "to attack the opposing team's case, reply to damaging criticism, restate their own case and convince the audience of the soundness of it."[7] It is intended in this speech, as with rebuttals in the U.S., that no new arguments be presented.

The six students are not the only ones who may speak during the debate, as both the audience and a chairman for the debate may become involved in the confrontation. In most locations interjections may be heard from the floor during the first three speeches for each team. Comments from the audience are often not permitted, however, during the leaders' final replies.

The chairman, much like a referee, may speak during a debate if called upon to resolve a point of order. Such a point may be raised by any speaker at any time during the debate. A point of order may be made on grounds that another contestant is acting in an "unseemly manner," using abusive or offensive language, misquoting a previous speaker on a matter of substance, introducing matters not relevant to the motion of the debate, failing to observe a rule of conduct for the debate, or when a leader introduces new arguments in a speech of reply.[8] The chairman may hear each side briefly speak to the point of order, but then must immediately rule on the matter. Following the chairman's ruling the speaker, if interrupted, will resume. While the chairman serves a purpose similar to the judge in an American courtroom, such as deciding whether to uphold an objection, the chairman is not the judge, or adjudicator, of the debate.

Though the debate is directed to the audience as a whole, a judge or panel of judges generally sits to select a winner. The criteria for this decision, however, are by no means uniform as most speaking unions have developed their own ballot. At the University of Sydney points are assigned to each speaker on three categories—matter, manner, and method. Matter refers to the speaker's argument and analysis as supported with facts, figures and various forms of reasoning. Manner is the style of presentation, while method is the structure or logical sequence of the case. Method accounts for 20 rating points, while both matter and manner account for 40 points each. Judges are cautioned, nevertheless, "not to be so influenced by a team's superior manner as to be in danger of overlooking any deficiencies in its matter and method. A team which provides greater entertainment is not necessarily the one which wins."[9] The ballot for the

Norwood Trophy, New Zealand's national team championship, assigns 50 points to argument, 30 points to presentation, and 20 points to persuasion, defined as the degree to which the audience has been moved toward conviction by the speaker.

The judge is expected to be a person skilled in the techniques of debating, and this often means selecting a more experienced debater to be the adjudicator. There is little expectation, however, that the evaluation of debating will be consistent from one judge to another, as the Wellington Speaking Union explains:

> While basis of awarding marks should come as no surprise to the debaters, it should be expected that individual adjudicators will emphasize different aspects of debating and call attention to different high-lights and shortcomings.[10]

The responsibilities of the judge extend beyond announcing the winner of the debate and include providing an oral critique of the entire debate along with ranking the speakers in order of their merit.

The nature of debate in New Zealand and Australia, when contrasted with debate in the United States, illustrates several distinctions in the philosophy of the activity. Debating Downunder has little to do with a national team or school championship, as debating during the year neither familiarizes students with a particular topic nor qualifies them for end-of-the-year competition. Neither is debating intentionally designed to train students in particular competencies, though it is generally acknowledged as exceptional practice for public speaking and politics.

Instead of maximizing these objectives, debating seems to be a non-contact, intellectual spectator sport. Debater's presence and support on campuses Downunder is a function of its popularity among potential audiences and participants. Debate Downunder serves its highest purpose when it is enjoyable and challenging for the student participants and entertaining for the campus and community audiences. Students at universities in New Zealand and Australia will not find courses labeled "Argumentation and Debate" or "Forensic Activities" in their school's curriculum, for institutions in neither country deem the activity worthy of academic credit. But the students do find that they are able to attract hundreds to listen to an evening of debating, undoubtedly a credit in itself.

NOTES

[1]*Guidelines for Adjudicators and Debaters for Debating Within the Wellington Speaking Union's Jurisdiction*, 1976, p. 2.

[2]*Prevailing Conventions of Debate in New South Wales Generally, and at the University of Sydney in Particular*, 1983, p. 2.

[3]For example, this author observed a debate at Massey University in Palmerston North, New Zealand, on the motion that: "Big Government is the best government."

[4]Guidelines, p. 3.

[5]Prevailing, p. 2.

[6]Guidelines, p. 4.

[7]Guidelines, p. 5.

[8]New Zealand Council of Debating Unions, *Competition Rules, p. 1.*

[9]New South Wales Department of Education, *Public Speaking and Debating Guide*, 1981, p. 3.

[10]Guidelines, p. 9.

THE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSION AND DEBATE: SELECTION PROCESS AND PROCEDURES

By Larry S. Richardson, Western Washington University
Chair, Committee on International Discussion and Debate

The tradition of international debate team exchanges is now a well established aspect of the collegiate debating scene in the United States. Under the auspices of the Committee on International Discussion and Debate, exchanges are active on a regular basis between such countries as the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan.

The main purpose of this article is to inform members of the forensic community regarding procedures and preparation for possible participation in the C.I.D.D. program of activities. While the number of applicants has increased dramatically during the past three years, there is room for expansion of the whole activity through increased interest and support. While a brief overall description of the activity follows, the primary goal is to inform potential participants regarding procedures used in the student selection process.

A good example of the current level of activity is indicated by the 1984-85 academic year's activity. In the fall of 1984 a two man team from Great Britain toured the Western U.S., culminating their tour with an appearance at the Speech Communication Association convention in Chicago. Their travels included the Pacific Northwest, the Midwest, and the Southwest with stops at perhaps 30 institutions.

A January tour of major U.S. cities by a team from the Soviet Union was postponed at the request of the Soviets. The CIDD is negotiating for a tour in the fall of 1985.

Meanwhile, auditions were held by the committee for two U.S. tours. Tryouts were held at the Chicago SCA convention for the winter tour of Great Britain. Walter Schonfeld of Wilkes College and Milton Bolton of the University of Illinois were selected from a field of six finalists. For the spring tour of Japan, seven finalists auditioned in Evanston during the day prior to the Northwestern tournament. Zac Grant, a former Kansas University debater and University of North Carolina M.A. Candidate, and Leonard Gail, a Dartmouth College Senior and former NDT Champion, were selected from a field of seven applicants.

The pattern of debate exchanges is not a new phenomenon and a bit of the history and development may provide valuable perspective for those who would wish to participate in committee activities. The committee celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1972. By then it had hosted exchanges between the United States and Britain, Ireland, Japan, Poland, Australia, New Zealand, India, and Pakistan. Audiences in many countries had been entertained and enlightened regarding both the issues debated

and the character and approaches to debate and argument of the respective participants.[1]

Credited with initiating the exchanges are A. Craig Baird, Brooks Quimby, and Ralph M. Carson. The first tour was by Oxford University and included campus appearances at Bates, Swarthmore, Columbia, Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and Pennsylvania. Reciprocity was established when Bates appeared at the Oxford Union to debate the resolution, "This House approves the American policy of non-intervention in European affairs."[2]

Recognizing a need for coordination, the National Association of Teachers of Speech in 1928 initiated the Committee on International Debating and thus was founded the Speech profession's abiding sponsorship of the exchange activity.[3]

Exchanges with British schools were accomplished annually except during the six-year interruption of World War II. Late in the 60's additional tours were arranged with the first Japanese exchange in 1969 and the first U.S.S.R. tour in 1972. The committee recognized that increased activity necessitated clearer coordination and Dr. Robert B. Hall of SCA was designated the first coordinator.[4] Today, Dr. Donald Boileau serves in the capacity of CIDD coordinator in addition to his duties as Director of Educational Services. The offices of the SCA in Annadale, Virginia serve as the center for distribution and collection of information, applications, and publicity for the tours, auditions, and administrative arrangements. Dr. Boileau is able to deal directly with foreign embassies in the Washington area, thus facilitating the exchanges.

Audition Procedures Used by the Commitee

Procedures for auditions follow a pattern but are also adapted to the specific requirements of each tour. Thus, all tours feature an interview by the committee of each candidate. Individual speaking formats vary as do the debate formats. The principle is to approximate the situations that students will face on tour. We shall examine the components of each tour audition, then describe the individual components.

Each applicant for each tour must submit an applifation on the form supplied by the SCA office in Annadale, Virginia. Most directors of forensics receive the forms along with the announcements of each tour. The committee hopes that directors of forensics and debate post the announcement and application instructions on a bulletin board as a means for promoting interest in specific tours and participation in general. We also appreciate specific discussion of opportunities during team meetings. The application is mailed to SCA by the appropriate deadline date along with a complete set of college transcripts and three letters of recommendation. Applicants should give their choice of recommenders careful consideration. In general, roommates and debate colleagues

may be perceived as low in credibility compared with major professors, administrators, and directors of forensics.

After written applications are received, the committee members review the information individually, then consult to choose a group of finalists. All applicants are notified and successful candidates are informed as to place and time of the tryout. Expenses for the tryout are the responsibility of each successful candidate. We have noted that forensic programs, institutional foundations, and individual benefactors often provide for the audition trip of the successful candidates. After all, it is a significant honor to be selected for the final tryout and programs with successful students should mark such selections with the same enthusiasm as national tournament achievements.

In most cases, the finalists stay at a central location, often sharing rooms to hold down costs. Friendships develop immediately and the atmosphere is one of mutual support and cooperation.

An opening meeting for all applicants is held, where the procedures for the tryout are explained and questions are answered. A time schedule is established for the one or two-day affair. The criteria for selection are explained. These are: 1)broad general knowledge, 2)debating ability, 3)ability to speak clearly and appropriately to the needs of the tour, 4)ability to relate to strangers likely to be encountered on the tour, 5)ability to travel in a foreign country with sensitivity and judgement, 6)overall personality traits, particularly in the area of cooperation.

Specific Activities for Various Countries

The tours of Great Britain, New Zealand, and Australia are quite similar. Students tour unaccompanied by coach or faculty and are guests of the student association of the host country. In New Zealand, considerable debating is done before community groups in such settings as pubs, restaurants and community clubs. Topics are selected from a list of perhaps ten philosophic and humorous resolutions.

The auditions include the interview, an after-dinner speech and a sample of debating. For the Australian and New Zealand tours we have used Lincoln-Douglas style while the British tours involved team debate. Debaters are expected to use an audience-oriented style of delivery where good argument is supported by interesting speech which includes lively discourse and appropriate humor. In addition a social hour is held with cocktails or wine and cheese where committee members observe the social interaction skills of the applicants.

The Japanese tours include a visiting professor who is asked to join with the two touring debaters in presenting post debate lectures, seminars, and question-answer sessions. Thus, following the individual interviews, the applicants are asked to present talks of eight to ten minutes where they explain a

concept in argumentation. These are drawn as topics in the style of extemporaneous speaking. There is a two to three hour time period for preparation and students generally have a supply of their favorite debate and argumentation texts. The Japanese tryouts also include team debate. Partners are assigned and each team debates twice, once on each side of the resolution which has been proposed by the Japanese for the tour. The 1983 topic called for a halt in industrial exploitation of Japanese costal lands while the 1985 topic called upon the Japanese government to dispose of its control of the national railroads.

The 1983 U.S. delegation to Japan was composed of Melaine Gardner of Samford University, James O'Brien of Macalester College, and Dr. Scott Nobles of Macalester College. The 1985 group included Zac Grant of the University of North Carolina, Leonard Gail from Dartmouth College, and Dr. Larry S. Richardson of Western Washington University.

The tour of the U.S.S.R. places special demands on applicants because the symposium appearances of the three successful candidates are in the Russian language. For this reason, publicity regarding the tours is sent to U.S. Russian language centers and institutes in universities known to have significant curricular work in the area. Applicants are screened for fluency in the language by cooperating interviewers who phone the students for a twenty to thirty minute conversation. This procedure has worked with increasing success—the most recent delegation to the U.S.S.R. featured three students not only highly fluent in the language but very familiar with the culture and ways of the Soviet Union as well. Michelle Berdy, Mary Holland, and Matt Mosner represented the U.S. with distinction and expertise as they visited major centers throughout the Soviet Union. Dr. Scott Nobles accompanied the three students. The tour requires sensitivity and judgement by all participants. It is reported that Soviet audiences seem quite impressed by the diversity of views expressed within the American delegation.

Characteristics Common to All Auditions

Having discussed the formats of the various national tour auditions, some comments on the common characteristics of the tryouts are in order.

The interview is always the initial challenge for each candidate. It covers a wide range of topics and questions and has several purposes. First, it provides the committee with a sense of the total person. The speech patterns, vocabulary, general knowledge, and social interaction skills of the individual are revealed. Questions often include specific items regarding the political, social, artistic, cultural, and economic makeup of the country to be visited. Then, questions on the general education of the applicant often reveal the general effects of the educational

achievements of the candidate. The committee is seeking representatives of the U.S. who are literate, well informed in such general areas as literature and the arts, and able to carry on an intelligent conservation at a sophisticated and intelligent level. Questions on poetry, music, and art, accompany questions on American politics, race relations, social problems, and culture.

Students should prepare for these interviews. Of course, the best preparation is a good liberal education with work in appreciation of some of the areas that add depth and diversity to the university experience. Some time spent contemplating good interview behavior and tactics should be time well spent. Above all, the most embarrasing situation is to have a student attempt to fake knowledge he does not really have under control. Such an effort is generally disastrous since the committee members are quite accomplished in the art of cross examination.

Students should anticipate some confrontational questions during the interview process. They should not be defensive or hostile in this situation. The appropriate response is to display competence and calm under pressure and adversity. Such techniques of interviewing are not unique to the C.I.D.D. The experience is good practice for other interviews and oral examinations.

The individual speeches are intended, above all, to demonstrate the overall speaking skills of the individual. This is obvious but elusive. In the situation of the serious lecture, the student should avoid informational overload to the detriment of effective delivery and, in the case of humorous speaking, should avoid "joke overload" to the detriment of development of ideas and/or themes.

Debate performance should be audience oriented. Applicants should probably practice in audience situations before appearing at the auditions. The best applicants speak at a comprehensible rate, present arguments which seem plausible with and without evidence, limit their arguments to those that can be extended and explained, and select arguments that have audience appeal in addition to tactical utility.

For the social gatherings, it would appear that students are at their best when they are natural and like themselves. The committee members are looking for representatives who are courteous, natural, friendly, genuine, unpretentious, and at ease in social situations. They hope that those selected will mix well with a wide variety of people, handle potentially difficult situations with poise and maturity, and generally represent the American college generation in a wholesome and authentic way. Thus, candidates should not try to be pretentious or someone they are not. The committee assumes that anyone who survived the selection process will be an interesting and valuable individual and thus, the second purpose of the social hour, is recognition and social interaction

with some very nice individuals. The best advice, then, is not to take the social hour as a contest or a trial but rather, just what it is, a social gathering for some like-minded people wishing to become better acquainted.

The committee members are always amazed at the high quality students who audition for the international tours. It is one of the high honors of committee membership to be able to interact with such fine students.

If this essay has served to better orient some additional participants as to the potential and procedures for participation, it has served its purpose. We would hope the very best American students who, through their forensic and debate activity sharpen their communication skills to a high level, will be able to participate in international debate on an increasing scale. It is well worth the effort.

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[2]Ibid., p. 7.

[3]Ibid., pp. 5-22.

[4]"Ethics Statement," National Development Conference on Forensics, Evanston, Ill., September 14, 1984. In Press.

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RESPONSE TO A CALL FOR A SCHOLAR'S DIVISION

Timothy Pappas, Assistant Debate Coach
Michael F. Smith, Director of Individual Events
Central Michigan University

Criticism of college debate has increased over the years, and much of the criticism is warranted, as Sheldon points out in his article "A Call for a Scholars Division" (The *Forensic,* Winter, 1984). Whereas the need for a scholar's division has some merit, it is hard to believe that such a division will necessarily be the cure all for what ails college debate today. Sheldon's answer, we believe, does not adequately address the issues he raises and, in fact, might create additional problems for the forensic activity. First, we shall examine the issues which Sheldon raises and then the extent to which a scholar's division would address these issues.

The claim that the division could be an open forum for criticism and change in college debate is somewhat over-exaggerated. The outcome of a debate on any particularly controversial issue (such as counterwarrants) could possibly drive the rift between any opposing sides of the issue even greater, causing a split in debate again as it did with N.D.T. and C.E.D.A. Placing the relative merit of any particular issue in the confines of a time-limited debate restricts the amount of analysis necessary to resolve these complex issues. A superficial treatment results. The forum for deciding these issues should not rest with debates on the issues.

Sheldon's idea that debates among the coaches could provide a stylistic form of debate superior to the form that exists today is interesting, and possibly true. The real problem can be addressed much more comprehensively by every judge in a forensics round. Every time a judge rewards a team with high speaker points when they are performing behaviors which detract from the activity, such as rapid reading, misconstrued evidence, etc., they are reinforcing these behaviors. It is the responsibility of the judges to award certain behaviors high speaker points and punish the behaviors which hurt the activity. We would recommend changing ballots to reflect this attitude.

One major issue raised by the concept of a scholar's division is the idea of the coach's credibility. Sheldon suggests that coaches could sharpen their skills, which would help them better coach their debaters. Often, it is easier to formulate arguments while judging than it is while actually debating, and at least the coaches could become more sympathetic to debaters who are "missing the easy argument." But what happens to the coach's credibility when he or she misses a relatively easy argument or debates poorly? Are the students to model these behaviors, or will they judge themselves to be superior to a coach who has just acted foolishly? This issue seems to be

particularly important for new coaches or coaches who are moving to a new school, where building ethos is essentially to good coach/student relationship.

One must also question the educational benefit of having a scholar model the proper behaviors and advocate the proper theories. If the ultimate objective of competitive forensics is to educate the student, a coach must allow students to formulate their own style, to explore theories with which they are most comfortable, and to openly question what tactics and techniques they might utilize. This is the means by which students, and ultimately the activity, develop.

All is not well in the debate world. When all four rebuttals and the second negative constructive of the 1984 N.D.T. championship debate contained many unintelligible phrases (Boaz, 1984) , one must question the communicative value of the activity. But to oppose a scholar's division, which has more problems than just logistics, seems to be an inadequate solution to the problem. Sheldon's call for a scholar's division is justified merely for those former competitors who still enjoy the challenge of forensics. But as a cure-all for the problems of the activity, it falls significantly short.

* * *

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NFL CONFERENCE ON STATE OF DEBATE
Are Debate Handbooks Proper Educational Materials For High School Debaters?

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In recent years, the role of debate handbooks as being educationally and/or competitively desirable has come under close scrutiny. Handbooks have been met with disfavor for a variety of reasons which range from poor quality or possible fabrication of the evidence they contain, to a judgment that handbooks are the "lazy debater's crutch," and that an attempt to get evidence ends when the budget for handbooks has been depleted. It is probably safe to say that no coach gives blanket endorsement to the use of handbooks. On the other hand, to give blanket disapproval and try to prevent any use of handbooks, (e.g. by announcing the topic so late in the year that none could be produced by the start of the competitive season) ignores the educational benefits that handbooks can provide.

This paper will address the purpose of a handbook, offer criteria to maximize its use for educational purposes, refute the most common indictments of handbooks, and offer the benefits handbooks can provide by promoting debate as an activity recognized as educationally valuable. When a handbook is used responsibly, as is intended, there are several educational benefits that aid not only the debaters, but their coaches too.

A debate handbook, in and of itself is not educational or anti-educational. The educational value of any material is determined by the way coaches and students use or abuse it. Most criticism of handbooks has little to do with the books themselves, but rather with the shoddy way they are used. Handbooks are not meant to be the ultimate answer, a ready made way to be educated or win in debate, and there are producers of handbooks who would say the same. Before enumerating the advantages of handbooks, it is necessary to remind those considering handbooks that there are ways to select them that make it more likely that they will be educationally useful.[1] Not all handbooks are created equal. Those which have earned a good reputation can be educationally valid when used judiciously. Even producers of handbooks encourage comparison to promote educational value. The following criteria can be used to judge whether or not a handbook has educational promise:

1) Who is the author? If the author/editor is a recognized and respected expert in debate with other publications to his/her credit, the handbook will probably be of better quality.

2) What does the handbook contain? Is the book just page after page of cut and paste evidence or does it provide more? Some handbooks contain lengthy bibliograpraies, sections of theory, articles