

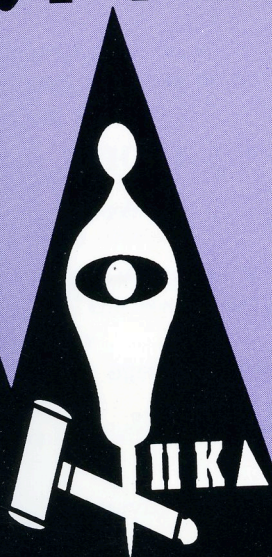
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A STUDY COMPARING THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATION CLASSES AND COMPETITIVE FORENSIC EXPERIENCE ON CRITICAL THINKING IMPROVEMENT

by

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This manuscript reports the results of a study comparing the impact of semester courses in argumentation, public speaking, and introduction to interpersonal communication, to a semester of participation in competitive forensics on critical thinking improvement. Results demonstrate that the most improvement in critical thinking occurred after participating in forensics, followed by completing an argumentation course. Least improvement in critical thinking occurs after completing an introductory interpersonal communication course.

Proponents of competitive forensics claim that the activity improves the skills of the participants (Fryar & Thomas, 1980; Hill, 1993; Patterson & Arefsky, 1983). Improving skill of forensic participants serves as one basis for educational institutions to offer competitive forensic opportunities. Educators in communication and speech departments believe that participation in competitive forensics improves the public communication skills of the participants as well as other skills (the ability to use the library, outlining and organization of materials, critical thinking and listening skills). Many institutions not only offer competitive forensics, but in addition, permit academic credit for such participation. This study reports an empirical inquiry comparing the impact of forensic participation to academic classes when considering improvement in some of these skills.

A central value of forensics comes from participation in the activity to promote reasoned thinking toward public controversies (Hunt, 1994). Hunt suggests that forensic participation can lead to improvement in knowledge and skills in ten ways (pp. 7-9): (1) learning about the functioning of democratic societies that will improve citizenship and leadership potential, (2) increasing critical, reflective, and creative thinking, (3) enhancing the understanding and application of research, (4) learning about proof for claims, (5) mastering the skills of organization and arrangement, (6) learning about

language usage and style, (7) developing listening and note taking skills, (8) improving public speaking skills, (9) learning about the ethics of advocacy, and (10) thinking about current events and controversies. While forensics potentially provides many improvements for participants, this investigation considers only one of these (critical thinking).

Hill (1993) argues that the need to provide educational accountability requires that the forensic community provide authoritative evidence for the value of competition. One justification for offering academic credit comes from the belief that participation in competitive forensics generates improvement in the skills of the competitor (Hunt & Inch, 1993). If competitive forensics to remain justified within the academic community as something worthy of academic credit, evidence should be offered that forensics experience provides improvement in skills. The forensics community needs to provide proof that competitive forensics creates improvement in skills.

In fact, the benefits claimed for communication courses in general should stand up to similar scrutiny. Communication departments assume that participation in courses in argumentation improve students' skill. The claim is that improvement in critical thinking skills comes from involvement in the examination of public discourse as a listener, advocate, and researcher. The question to investigate is how participation in competitive forensics compares to traditional education offered within argumentation courses. Since argumentation courses are theoretical and some courses require participants to actively engage in oral disputes. Competitive forensics, because of the intensity of involvement, arguably creates a superior laboratory for the purposes of teaching of skills. One would expect, quite reasonably, that forensics participation should demonstrate the largest degree of improvement in critical thinking because of that intensity.

Another important comparison is how participation in forensic argumentation courses stacks up against other courses like public speaking and interpersonal or organizational communication. The pedagogical claim is that courses focusing on public communication require the students to engage in critical thinking. The focus and the goal of public advocacy situations is to generate a forum for students that improves their ability to generate and consume public discourse. It is less clear that participation in interpersonal communication, organizational communication, interviewing, small group processes, or other non-public address courses requires an explicit focus on critical thinking. Thus, we should expect to see least improvement in student critical thinking skills following completion of these courses.

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE ABOUT FORENSICS AND CRITICAL THINKING

Follert and Colbert (1983), using meta-analysis, concluded that improvement in critical thinking as a result of competitive forensics experience is not large. They reviewed a total of 47 studies and found that 19 favored debate training as a means of improving critical thinking ability and 19 did not. The conclusion of the review claims that the results did not support debate as a means of improving critical thinking ability. Hill (1993) updates the empirical evidence assessing the impact of forensics on critical thinking improvement. Using a qualitative narrative review technique, Hill concludes that, "the results of our research are, at best, inconclusive" (p. 8). Hill argues

that we need additional research on this issue and suggests that the issue is far from being resolved empirically.

Greenstreet (1993) argues that the empirical evidence fails to support a claim of competitive forensics improving critical thinking skills because, "the debate community has failed to adequately document claims of such benefit" (p. 24). Greenstreet does not claim that no effect exists for participation in academic debate; his claim is that the current scientific studies fail to provide adequate evidence for such a conclusion. His belief is that, if and when additional evidence becomes available, the scientific support for a conclusion of causality becomes warranted.

HYPOTHESES

In Hill's (1993) article he articulates the possibility that argumentation courses and forensic participation might improve different critical thinking skills. The use of the Watson-Glaser (1961) Critical Thinking Appraisal (CTA) suggests that critical thinking is not a unitary construct. The test is divided into various sections so that both an overall score and a separate score for different subtests is possible. Previous evidence has not considered the ability of improvement to be reflected only on some subtest results. This investigation tests not only the overall analysis provided by the CTA but consider the subtests. However, the expectation is that there will exist the following order of hypothesized effects: (a) **largest improvement will occur for students in forensic participation, (b) the second largest improvement will occur for those students in an argumentation course, (c) the third largest improvement will occur for students involved in public speaking, and (d) the least improvement will be demonstrated for those students involved in an introductory interpersonal course.**

METHODS

Participants

Undergraduate students at five universities and colleges in the United States (Lewis and Clark College, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Wayne State University, Wake Forest University) participated in this investigation. There were four different classifications of students: (a) 34 persons taking an introduction to interpersonal communication course, (b) 37 students in a public speaking course, (c) 32 students in an argumentation course, and (d) 35 students involved in some aspect of competitive forensics (National Debate Tournament, 12 [NDT]; Cross Examination Debate Association, 6 [CEDA]; mock trial, 9; individual events, 4 [IE's]; or some combination, 4).

Measures

This study uses a pre-test to post-test design, comparing gain scores of persons across a semester. Participants were given a modified version of the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal Test—Form YM (1961) (CTA) at the beginning of a semester or season and then given a posttest at the end of the semester. The CTA provides an objective test (each question has a correct kind incorrect answer) of reasoning skills. The 100 questions (standardized alpha reliability, pretest .84, posttest .83) are divided into the following questions: (a) inference (20 questions with a standardized alpha reliability,

pretest .65, posttest .66), (b) recognizing assumptions (16 questions with standardized alpha reliability, pretest .64, posttest .58), (c) deduction (16 questions with a standardized alpha reliability, pretest .70, posttest .74), (d) interpretation (24 questions with a standardized alpha reliability, pretest .68, posttest .71), and (e) evaluation of argument strength (15 questions with a standardized alpha reliability, pretest .42, posttest .27). The evaluation of argument strength subtest demonstrated such a low reliability that its results are not reported separately.

The parts of the CTA address a different aspect of critical thinking: (a) inference ability, (b) ability to recognize assumptions of a conclusion, (c) appropriateness of a conclusion drawn from premises, (d) ability to link a conclusion to evidence, and (e) evaluating the strength of an argument. The inference test explores what kinds of conclusions (inferences) one can reasonably draw from the information. The participant is given a fact sentence of information and then a series of conclusions. The conclusions can be rated as: (a) true, (b) probably true, (c) insufficient data to determine, (d) probably false, or (e) definitely false. The second test determines the ability of the person to recognize the assumptions of a conclusion. A conclusion is presented and then an assumption stated. The subject must determine if the assumption is: (a) made or (b) not made to reach the conclusion. The third test examines the ability of the participant to judge the appropriateness of a conclusion given two premises. The conclusion is either rated as: (a) follows from the premises or (b) does not follow from the premises. The fourth test considers whether a conclusion logically follows from a set of information. The participant is asked to assume that everything in the information paragraph is true. The test item considers whether the conclusion presented: (a) follows from the data, or (b) does not follow from the data. The final test is an evaluation of the strength of an argument. A fact is provided and then a conclusion drawn. The person is asked to assume that everything in the assumption is true. The rating is whether the reasons provided in the answer are: (a) strong or (b) weak.

Answers are scored as either correct or incorrect, and the sum of correct answers across items provides a score or rating of the skill of the individual on their reasoning ability for each test. Those persons tested receive an overall score as well as a score for each part of the test.

In addition, participants completed a number of demographic items. These included the prior experience with argumentation, public speaking classes, debate, and logic classes (both in college and high school), and the extent and type of forensic experience.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis considers the gain score between the pre- and posttest. The issue is the degree to which the various forms of forensic or academic experience improve the student's critical thinking skill. This test was conducted using an effects coded model for the gain scores. The model described above was used as the basis for the test, significant one tailed t-test would demonstrate that the model accurately represents the data. The data considered statistical corrections for possible selection bias.¹

RESULTS

An examination of the history of these forensic participants shows that fourteen lacked prior experience (this was the first year of participation), eight had one year of high school participation, four had two years of high school participation, and only three had any prior college experience. This sample makes the comparison directly meaningful in the sense that the improvement in gain score comes by comparing groups comparable at the start. The correlation across all groups for prior courses in logic, argumentation, public speaking, and debate classes provided a nonsignificant positive correlation with total critical thinking improvement ($r_{(136)} = .10, p > .05$).

Overall

The test of overall results using an omnibus one-way analysis of variance for test score differences demonstrates no difference among the groups ($F_{(3,134)} = 2.08, p = .07$). However, using the effects coded model reflecting the hypothesis indicates that the group differences are consistent with the data ($t_{(136)} = 3.17, p < .05$). The means for both pre- and posttests are available in Table 1. The difference scores demonstrate the largest increase occurred in the students participating in forensics followed by the students taking an argumentation class. The students in the public speaking and introductory interpersonal communication class show a drop in test scores. The results indicate that the largest improvement occurs among the forensic participants, followed by the argumentation class students, then the public speaking students and finally the introduction to interpersonal students.

Inference

The omnibus F test results demonstrate a nonsignificant difference between groups ($F_{(3,134)} = 0.52, p = .63$) as well as a nonsignificant test for the effects coded model ($t_{(136)} = -.28, p > .05$). The test demonstrates no significant differences in gain scores between groups.

Recognizing Assumptions

A nonsignificant difference between groups was observed on the overall test ($F_{(3,134)} = 0.94, p = .47$). The hypothesized model test ($t_{(136)} = 1.82, p > .05$) demonstrates a significant effect. The ability to recognize whether or not an argument makes a particular assumption did depend on the group of participants considered. The order of results is as predicted by the hypotheses.

Deduction

No difference in the overall test ($F_{(3,134)} = 1.90, p = .15$) existed among the groups, but the test of the model provided significant findings ($t_{(136)} = 2.37, p < .05$). The gain scores when comparing pre- and post-tests using the overall test demonstrate differences between the groups in the ability to identify conclusions that follow from premises consistent with the hypotheses.

Interpretation

The final subtest considers the ability to determine whether the groups differ in the ability to determine whether a conclusion follows from the data. The overall test demonstrates no significant difference among the group gain scores ($F_{(3,134)} = 4.07, p = .01$). The test of the hypothesized model however demonstrates significant differences in the proposed direction ($t_{(136)} = 3.66, p$

< .05). This subtest demonstrates the significant improvement gained from both argumentation classes as well as forensic participation. The hypothesized model fit the data.

CONCLUSIONS

Results demonstrate the nature of improvement for various methods of communication instruction on critical thinking ability. Both argumentation classes and forensic participation increased the ability in critical thinking compared to introductory interpersonal communication and public speaking classes. The results of the model tested suggests that participation in competitive forensics demonstrates the largest gain in critical thinking skill. The analysis of subtests indicates a gain in critical thinking ability in every subtest group but the inference portion of the test.

Results provide evidence that there exists a clear benefit to participation in competitive forensics. The strength of this investigation is that the comparison in the gain of critical thinking is comparable to other academic experiences of the same length. If the activity is to claim a benefit, and academic credit is to be offered, then the activity must be able to provide evidence for those benefits. These results demonstrate that the gain is large for a semester of competitive forensic participation than a similar time period spent in an argumentation class (and the argumentation class was superior to public speaking or an introduction to interpersonal communication course). This is not to argue that identical benefits or experiences derive from a class or competitive forensics. The argument is that competitive forensics provides a demonstrable gain in critical thinking ability justifying the status as an educational activity.

This study, as with all scientific investigations, contains limitations and issues deserving of consideration before accepting the results as definitive. The sample of participants, as in any study, may or may not generalize to the entire population. Even though multiple institutions from a wide geographic area contributed to the study, the representativeness of the sample is unknown. Whether the courses included typical or standard argumentation, public speaking, or introduction to interpersonal communication practices are unknown. But such limitation only call for future research and do not necessarily call into question these findings.

It might be argued that the sample size was relatively small and therefore the results questionable. However, the sample size does not impact on the results of the significance test. A small sample size reduces the power to obtain significant results, therefore it is the nonsignificant results that are effected by the small sample size. Had the sample size been larger it is quite conceivable that the results for the remaining tests would have been significant.

There exist a number of problems in the current quantitative summary, or meta-analysis, of the literature (Follert & Colbert, 1983). The summary occurred at a time prior to the development of many statistical formulas for the correction of various artifacts (restriction in range, regression to the mean, dichotomization of independent and dependent variables). The impact of these artifacts is to **reduce** the observed impact of the training in pre- and post-test designs (Allen, Hunter, & Donohue, 1989; Hunter & Schmidt, 1990). Strong potential exists that the previous studies and subsequent summary of those studies underestimated the actual impact of debate training. In addition, the meta-analysis relies on use of z-score interpretation of a binomial test.

significant test findings, such a procedure is inefficient and likely to underestimate the existence of positive average effects. The net results is that the results reported in the earlier meta-analysis underestimate the benefits that competitive forensic participation has on critical thinking improvement.

Not only does the meta-analysis deserve reconsideration and recalculation, but the original data base remains limited. Expansion of that data base justifies continued investigation, consideration, and research. Direct comparison of gain scores to other academic class settings permits an assessment of the relative merits of forensic participation on improvement in critical thinking.

The current analysis requires expansion and replication. This investigation did not consider differences between types of forensic experience (individual events, mock trial, NDT or CEDA debate) due to small sample sizes. Future investigations should consider whether different forensic experiences generate different levels of improvement in critical thinking ability. However, considering the test of critical thinking in this investigation, most public speaking classes address issues of performance and spend relatively little time (perhaps a few weeks on persuasion speeches with two assigned chapters) on issues that may improve critical thinking. It should be surprising that public speaking classes generate smaller increments of improvement in critical thinking. Critical thinking, while it plays a part in public speaking, is not the focus of the course.

Additional research should consider the other values articulated by Hunt (1994) about what forensic participation offers. Critical thinking is one area of improvement that forensics participation offers. Other types of improvement should occur and each of those can be the subject of empirical investigation. Future research should consider those other areas of skill improvement.

The investigation points to some hopeful and potentially desirable possibilities of forensic participation benefiting students. The need exists for additional research and the consideration of how competitive forensics should become part of the academic curriculum rather than set apart from it. Such an approach would provide the potential for benefits to all students, not simply those choosing to participate in competitive forensics.

FOOTNOTES

The problem with the sampling technique, particularly in forensics, is that the sample process may be self-selected on a relevant systematic basis that biases the results of the investigation. As mentioned earlier in the critique of the Follert and Colbert (1983) meta-analysis, the failure to consider and correct for this selection bias **reduces**, on a systematic basis, the observed effect. If there exists a known population estimate, then the impact of the selection bias can be statistically corrected for. Such corrections are common and the statistical formulas for them well developed (Hunter & Schmidt, 1990). This analysis proceeds by estimating a comparison score and then performing the appropriate statistical correction. The statistical correction considers the pretest mean score of a particular group. That mean can be compared to the mean for the original validation study. If the mean and standard deviation differ from the mean and standard deviation of the validation study, the degree of deviation can be estimated. The sample of participants in this investigation did **not** demonstrate any mean differences

when compared to the other groups on the basis of the pretest. Therefore, correction was required. Given the lack of prior forensic experience by the participants this result may not be surprising.

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Table 1
Average Gain Score for Each Test

	Mean Gain Score				
	Total	Inference	Assumptions	Deduction	Interpretation
Interpersonal	-2.5	-0.8	0.0	-1.3	-0.7
Public Speaking	-0.7	-0.4	0.1	-0.2	0.2
Argumentation	0.8	-1.2	0.4	1.2	0.3
Forensics	5.2	-0.9	0.8	1.6	3.1

"JUDGING INDIVIDUAL EVENTS: ART OR SCIENCE?"

by

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In today's increasingly complex world of individual events, competitors routinely use teasers in oral interpretation, contributions to theory in communication analysis, and flashy visual aids in after dinner speaking. At one point, each of these competitive strategies was a cutting edge development. Yet today, they have become routine, if not expected. At the same time, the individual events community keeps searching for templates which might reduce judge variability to insure fairness. As a result, the individual events community is experiencing a dialectical tension between art and science. This tension, exemplifies a dichotomy that is deeply rooted within the history of the speech communication discipline (see for example, Hunt, 1916; Woolbert, 1916)) and continues today (Condit, 1990; Prelli, 1990; Craig, 1990). That conflict, one of art vs. science, provides a framework for understanding the struggle as we, in the forensics community, seek to promote creativity and innovation from competitors, and simultaneously search for evaluative norms, to promote standardization and reliability in the rankings and ratings from judges. The purpose of this essay is to examine this tension, first by explicating how the individual events community has moved toward contradictory practices in both art and science. Second we will examine recent trends in each realm before suggesting ways both can be achieved simultaneously.

Individual Events as Art

Initially, creative changes help the individual events community evolve and develop. It is this creative element in individual events that we characterize as "art." There can be little doubt that competitive individual events is void of any sense of art. The very nature of the performance of oral interpretation and the classical canon of invention in public address events reflect the inherent nature of the art of communication. With the advent of the oral interpretation events, the artistic element has become institutionalized. Instead of becoming increasingly restrictive, as the number of interpretative events proliferated, greater and greater freedom has been encouraged. Perhaps the greatest expression of artistic license came when the publication requirement for literature was lifted and original material was sanctioned. While initially controversial (Green & Ford, 1989), this practice has been approved by both national individual events tournaments (DeBoer, 1987; Endres, 1987; Nicolai, 1987).

Art is not only expressed in interpretation, but it is also integral to public address. In fact, the first winner of the Interstate Oratory Contest in 1874 addressed the necessity of art in oratory. Today, we find that students rely on

the classical canon of invention as a means for demonstrating the artist. Competitors understand and strive for uniqueness and novelty in topics. Within the structure of the speeches we also find that students heighten their arguments with new information and evidence that is unfamiliar to us. It is these insights such as these that have promoted the creative element in public address events as well.

As individual events grow and change, so does the individual events community. And in competition, creativity can be rewarded beyond a potential high rank and rate; perhaps its cooption by other competitors, its becoming the norm, is the ultimate homage paid to the individual. If such is the case, then the idea of creativity evolving into convention seems non divisive and healthy for the activity. Yet there is the potential for the scientific element of competition to thwart innovation.

Individual Events as Science

The scientific movement in individual events is characterized by the individual events community's attempts to reduce judge variability. The obvious example of science in individual events can be found in the traditional organizational patterns of public address events. A persuasive speech that ignores the problem - cause - solution format rarely is found in elimination rounds. Limited preparation events are characterized by three points of analysis. And what was once an innovation in forensics, the teaser, has now become the norm in interpretation events. The promotion of and adherence to standardization in events, especially when the aim is to provide for a more objective comparison of competitors, is what we term "science."

The scientific movement in forensics extends beyond recognizing traditional structures in competitive events. We ask judges to provide objective analysis by applying standardized measures, by transforming the individualized evaluations into ranks and rates. And in the last decade, for example, numerous efforts have been made to promote greater uniformity in judging (Allen & Dennis, 1989; Congalton, Bruschke & Gass, 1990; Congalton, Gass, & Bruschke, 1993; Gass, Bruschke, & Congalton, 1990; Hanson, 1987; Kay & Aden, 1984; Olson, 1989a; Olson, 1992; Olson & Wells, 1988; Presto, 1990; Sellnow, 1987). Other issues that have emerged from the scientific movement focus on establishing criteria for evaluating events or for training judges so as to reduce disparity in the evaluation of speeches. There is no question that efforts to explore the science of individual events are based on concerns for establishing greater consistency in the evaluation of competitors.

Dialectical Tension Between Art and Science

Given the myriad of ways the individual events community is encouraging art, while at the same time imposing scientific restrictions, it is clear that contemporary practice results in a dialectical tension. For example, when originality, uniqueness, creativity, and innovation, the "art" of individual events, become tangled with a critic's need for normative standards for evaluation, tension occurs. This tension results from an attempt to employ specific criteria when evaluating new and creative endeavors. In other words, the time tested "science" of evaluation has yet to provide standardized measures to account for the "art."

The question becomes whether more scientific standards for evaluating individual events are in conflict with or are compatible with the development of the art of innovation in individual events. That is, can the individual events community provide for an environment that promotes creativity (the artistic) yet provides for reliability in evaluation (the science)? We next outline the ways in which this tension has manifested itself in current practice. First we review those attempts to "scientifically" regulate the artistic. We then turn to an examination of how the community, determined to standardize individual events, reacts to artistic influence in the field.

Standardization of Events

In an effort to enhance the pedagogical nature of forensics, various developmental conferences have called for standardization of practices, particularly within individual events. Manchester and Friedley (1981), for example, isolated standards in prose interpretation and persuasive speaking by explaining several criteria used by judges. In 1984, at the Second National Developmental Conference on Forensics, the work group on individual events drafted Resolution 45. This resolution provides general standards of evaluation for public address and oral interpretation. However, this group took an admittedly middle ground approach, "the standards presented in the first resolution [45] are simply intended to be a framework for criticism." (Parson, 1984, p. 90). An even stronger cry was echoed at the Second National Development Conference on Individual Events in 1990 when forensic educators unanimously called for all tournament committees to employ descriptive rationale for each of the national events. In essence forensics educators were calling for some means to make individual events more precise, to become more scientific.

One means for establishing some similarity between competitive performances has been to codify those elements that constitute acceptable evaluative criteria in each event (Allen & Dennis, 1988; Hanson, 1987a; Manchester & Friedley, 1981; Olson, 1989a; Sellnow, 1987; Wilcox, 1988). Prescriptive event descriptions provide the basic building blocks for both coaches and competitors to follow. And these event descriptions yield nuances of information that can help students as they refine their events (e.g. use of manuscript is required; notes are permitted but not encouraged). Some, however, might speculate that such guidelines limit a student's ability to innovate.

Judging

It stands to reason that establishing precision in event descriptions indicates a desire for more "scientific" decisions in judging. Yet research in individual events competition reveals little sense of comparative precision in judging (Congalton, Bruschke, & Gass, 1990; Congalton, Gass & Bruschke, 1993; Gass, Bruschke, & Congalton, 1990; Gass & Congalton 1991). Studies, for instance, direct our attention to the fact that critics offer a variety of reasons for ranking and rating competitors in various events. Numerous content analyses of ballots (Bartanen, 1987; Carey & Rodier, 1987; Jensen, 1989; Olson & Wells, 1988; Pratt, 1987; Preston, 1990; Scott & Birkholt, 1993) reveal that sometimes judges offer contradictory reasons for their rankings and ratings of contestants.

Others (Kay & Aden, 1984; Gass, Bruschke, & Congalton, 1990; Bruschke, Congalton, & Gass, 1990) have argued that the variability can be attributed to the judges themselves. These studies reveal a range of judge variability for the different competitive events. The implicit assumption underlying the conclusions of such research point to the fact that the subjective interpretation of judges has great influence upon round by round evaluation of competitors. In essence, the subjectiveness of judges seems to undercut any idea that individual events truly can be regularized, thus contributing to the dialectical tension.

Competitive Environment

The competitive environment, a context which is the product of both coaches and competitors, is also a contributing factor to the tension between art and science. Training students merely to compete, for example, as opposed to fully educating them hinders true innovation. We stay within the accepted norms to ensure that our students advance to elimination rounds. Rarely do we encourage our students to explore stretching the parameters of an event, especially when such innovation might incur the wrath of a more traditional judge. In other words, as forensics educators, our competitive blinders promote teaching students only those formulaic equations that guarantee placing in the finals.

At a second level, we find that competitors are often quick to imitate the one which wins. That copy cat syndrome can be detected not only in choice of topics and arrangement or development of public address speeches, but in the technical interpretation of literature as well. If flipping a scriptbook wins, then everyone flips scriptbooks. Perhaps at the expense of exploring the subtext of the literature to understand and appreciate an individual's artistic interpretation, students overly focus on technique. In public address events instead of finding a stylistically and argumentatively sound means to explaining a concept, visual aids are added because of the unwritten expectation that one must have them to win.

As a result, although the competitive environment provides the forum for innovations to be presented, successful innovations quickly become regularized. If medical topics are winning, then medical topics it is. As communication analyses that employ multiple, and sometimes incommensurate theoretical assumptions win, then we will witness proliferation in the use of multiple methods for analysis. If "surprise ending" in interpretation events wins, then we can expect to judge "surprise ending." We would argue that unfortunately, "trends" as regularization can lead to "bad science." In other words, the need to win (often reflected in the "do it the way" approach of coaching) can and often does supersede the "gee, that's interesting, so let's try it" approach to forensics education.

The individual events community, then, puts itself into a quandary of sorts. We continue to call for and in some instances reward innovation, and as judges, we need the security of standard guidelines to allow us to evaluate the competition and ensure a standard of fairness for all competitors. It seems that too rigid an adherence to the science of individual events precludes innovation. On the other hand, too much devotion to the artistic elements of individual events precludes the reliability of evaluating particular events. Given the tension between the art and science of individual events, it

incumbent upon us as forensic educators, those who seek to educate students and whose role it is to train judges, to embrace a peaceful coexistence between the art and science of individual events. What is necessary, then, is not a regression toward the mean, but to develop both the art AND the science of individual events simultaneously, confident that overlap will occur as a result of their coexistence. As forensics educators understand this tension, they can then act appropriately. We offer the following suggestions in an attempt to promote "good science" which can pave the way for "good art" and still reduce judge variability.

Perhaps an effort at "good science" must start with the way we train judges. Though varied training programs exist, even leading to some states requiring certification (i.e. Colorado has created a videotaped certification training workshop for judges at the secondary level), there has been little coordinated effort to explain the variety of possible ways to evaluate and score contestants, as well as what constitutes appropriate comments. Many studies, (see for example, Dean, 1988; Olson, 1989a; Ross, 1984; Swarts & Wilson, 1989) conclude that judge training workshops provide a means for critics to understand the specifics of each event and ensure some level of similarity in performance evaluation. While the concept of judge training workshops exists in the literature, we conclude in practice on the college and university level, it is a rarity.

A second strategy to promote "good science" is to create event descriptions that are suggestive and not normative. While event rules are purposefully brief, descriptions should work to contextualize particular conventions, and stress rewarding the artistic innovations our students present. Such descriptions should highlight uniqueness, emphasizing originality while remaining true to the foundational principles of good rhetoric and performance. It is critical that each event be given its own set of guidelines, so that these descriptions are specific and do not just lump together "interpretation events" or "public address events." Within suggested guidelines, critics could be reminded that such guidelines are only "suggested," thus encouraging some creativity from students. District IX of the AFA-NIET drafted a set of evaluative criteria for each event which appears as a cover sheet on ballots for each round of competition. These instructions not only outline an event's rules, but provide parameters for judges and suggestions for specific aspects of an event to critique. A portion of the District IX description for persuasion serves as an example:

This speech should be an original work of the student designed to shape, reinforce, or change attitudes, beliefs, values, and/or actions on the part of the audience. The speech should present a significant problem with a realistic solution. The audience should receive new information about the topic, not just hear arguments on controversial issues common in society. The best speeches discuss a new problem facing a significant segment of society, problems are best which directly affect/relate to the immediate audience. If a well-known problem is used, the topic should have a new approach so the competitor doesn't risk presenting only well-known arguments and facts. The structure should include a reality identifiable introduction,

body, and conclusion. A memorable introduction should be followed by a thesis statement and an organizational preview. The speaker should explicate the problem in sufficient detail to create a need for the solution. The body of the speech should be well organized, and use sound argument." Many forms of evidence from a wide variety of sources should be integrated into the reasoning of the speech and be appropriately documented. . . Delivery should be smooth, conversational, yet in a presentational and professional style. The speech should be free of lapses in memory or disfluencies. Poor enunciation or incorrect grammar or pronunciation should be penalized. The speaker should make effective use of sound public speaking conventions such as rate, volume, pauses, etc. to create a sense of concern and urgency about the topic. Time limit is 10 minutes. Excesses should be penalized appropriately according to the severity of the violation.

There are a variety of ways such descriptions can be used, both for judges and as basic expectations for training students what judges will be looking for. Attaching a copy to a ballot provides a ready reference for relatively inexperienced judges to have a source of potential comments ready before evaluating a round.

Yet another way to get judges to reflect on their own "scientific" criteria through the use of judging philosophies—i.e. communicating them to competitors before a round begins. The Pacific Northwest has developed a judging philosophy booklet in which judges provide their philosophy for the evaluation of public address, interpretation, and limited preparation events. This booklet provides an excellent opportunity for judges to identify both for themselves and competitors what criteria they believe to be most important for respective events. Until printed philosophies become standard, judges could give students their personal philosophies prior to a round. While the suggestion can be difficult given today's practice of multiple entries per conflict pattern, as well as the difficulty of greatly modifying memorized performances, it does offer students the ability to honor and practice the foundational principle of audience analysis. For example, some judges prefer a clearly articulated argument for the choice of a given selection of literature while others merely enjoy a topical introduction which prefaces the literature. To adapt, students may wish to have several introductions prepared to suit given judge's preference.

Finally, the dialectical process can continue through the use of oral critiques following rounds. The judge can, and should, act as teacher, perhaps not only ON the ballots, but also in the context of a round. Without revealing decisions, judges could provide students with brief oral critiques. Students would then receive both written and immediate oral feedback from a judge. Moreover, students could actively engage in the process of learning about judges, their immediate audience for competition. Such oral critiques would have the added benefit of fostering discussions among contestants and judges about the nature of the activity. Perhaps not only would students learn more about their judges and their speeches, but judges might also gain insight as to why students selected strategies for a particular competitive event.

Given that thought, forensic educators must appropriately train students to understand the tension between art and science. Again, several specific strategies encourage coexistence. Initially, it is key that students have a thorough understanding of each event, not only what "fits" into the event, but a working knowledge of performance choices, persuasive and rhetorical strategies employed, etc. Too often, students just mimic what is successful and learn via osmosis instead of asking pertinent why questions about their events. For example, the evolution of the performance studies element in the communication discipline has added a new dimension to the analysis of oral interpretation and to interpretation events as well. Students regularly engage in reinterpreting the text of literature. Artistic innovation can occur not only in performance dimensions given the technicalities of performance, but also in the way literature is selected, the opportunity to juxtapose characters and scenes, and in the arrangement of texts to create arguments. As students become aware of their textual selections, their ability to subtext material will also become more acute and performances will be more meaningful both for performer and audience.

Naturally, students can break free from the rigors of regimentation and repetition of events by changing each performance based on the reaction of the audience. Learning a newfound respect of the audience is key to embracing the dialectical tension between art and science. As Shineman (1993) explains, the audience is an essential ingredient in each performance. Since audience, as well as time and place, always vary, making the audience the focus of the performance allows the audience to become integrated into the performance. At that level, each performance will differ and the artistic endeavor of each performance is enhanced.

Students can also flag innovations for audience members, letting them know that they may experience something "unexpected" or "out of the ordinary." This can be done in the introduction, or by including a specific disclaimer before the innovation, such as "Now, this may depart from a traditional oratory," or "While atypical for an ADS. . . ." While removing the element of surprise from certain innovations may limit their effectiveness, in many instances, this can signal a judge to pay particular attention to some unique artistic element of the speech or performance.

A final way to embrace the tension is through the implementation of experimental events. While Wickelgren (1989) notes that throughout history, experimental events quickly become regularized into the national tournament format, within the last decade, both the AFA and NFA have called for experimental events at the national tournament. Though the AFA-NIET began offering an experimental event in 1987, this five year practice ceased as the tournament size become prohibitive. Programs that gear students to "national competition," would naturally favor following those events established at national tournaments. However, at a local and regional level, experimental events can be tried on a district-wide basis before any wide scale introduction occurs. This allows innovation as well as pilot testing before events are exposed to a national audience.

Conclusion

Our contention, then, is that both art AND science are necessary in the perspective they give to contemporary individual events. While a certain tension between them exists, that tension has produced some outstanding performances, while at the same time clouding the pedagogical process.

Throughout this examination, we have sought to discuss the many ways the dialectical tension is manifested and offer some pragmatic suggestions for the peaceful coexistence, not resolution of, this tension. As the individual event community continues to grow, the question becomes how we implement a scientific approach to judging individual events with the innovations beyond the classical canon of invention. Competitors should not be denied the opportunity to introduce new ways of practicing old events. Simultaneously, judges must be willing to empower competitors to explore creative expression in competition. Only when forensic educators recognize this tension and embrace it, armed with the full knowledge of the influence they marshal, will individual events maximize its potential for all participants.

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