

course? If so, would you please enclose a copy with this survey.

One hundred thirty coaches returned the survey providing for a return rate of 52 percent representing schools from 38 states.

Table 2

Survey Respondents by State

Alabama (4)
Arizona (3)
California (14)
Colorado (2)
Florida (2)
Georgia (1)
Idaho (1)
Illinois (2)
Indiana (6)
Iowa (7)
Kansas (4)
Louisiana (2)
Maryland (1)
Michigan (1)
Minnesota (9)
Mississippi (1)
Missouri (5)
Montana (2)
Nebraska (4)
Nevada (1)
New Jersey (2)
New Mexico (2)
New York (1)
North Carolina (1)
North Dakota (2)
Ohio (1)
Oklahoma (6)
Oregon (6)
Pennsylvania (3)
South Dakota (4)
Tennessee (2)
Texas (5)
Utah (1)
Virginia (4)
Washington (6)

West Virginia (1)

Wisconsin (7)

Wyoming (4)

In addition to the recording of demographic data, a content analysis was conducted to summarize the responses to questions regarding the nature of the participation course and difficulties faced by the instructors of the participation course.

Perceived Purpose of the Participation Course

The initial question posed in this paper is designed to explore the operational purpose of the participation course as viewed by coaches responding to the survey. While the amount of information provided by the respondents varies, the following areas can be identified: forensic competition; preparation; practice; and on-campus activities.

Table 3

Perceived Purposes of Participation Course

	<i>Number of Respondents</i>
Preparation purpose	
IE research and development	30
Lectures	28
Debate research and development	19
Practice purpose	
Individual events	42
Debate	23
Individual sessions	
scheduled	23
Review ballots/evaluation	3
Videotape	2
On-Campus activities purpose	
Host tournaments	6
Non-competitive (speaker's bureau)	6
Judging high school events	6

Pi Kappa Delta meetings	3
Competition purpose	
Tournament competition	45
Team meetings and administration	18

Forensic competition is the most obvious and frequently mentioned purpose of the participation course. This includes attending a specified number of tournaments during a quarter or semester and competing in one or more events. The repeatable nature of some participation courses allows for a student to be virtually receiving academic credit for participation throughout his or her college career.

The purpose of the participation course involving preparation would include lectures to familiarize students new to forensics with the various events included in tournament competition. Both individual events and debate may be isolated as preparation areas and would include researching topics, selecting materials, developing content, and writing cases.

Using the course for practice time is also identified as a purpose for the participation course. For some, the class focuses on individual speaking events and/or debate. Actual practice sessions are conducted with team members listening to each other as part of the learning process. For these programs with a less-structured participation course, individual practice sessions for reviewing ballots, evaluating, or videotaping are also cited as dimensions of practice.

Finally, some schools give credit for participation in on-campus ac-

tivities, such as assisting with the hosting of tournaments, non-competitive speaking, organizational meetings, and assisting high school forensic programs by serving as judges.

In short, the participation courses that are currently being offered use forensic participation at tournaments, preparation, practice, and on-campus activities as dimensions of their purposes.

Existing Difficulties with the Participation Course

The coaches responding to the survey identified a number of problems facing them as instructors of the participation course. These concerns can be grouped into three general subject areas: Time, content, and commitment.

Table 4
Existing Difficulties

	<i>Number of Respondents</i>
Time problem	
Need more time to coach	29
More time for recruiting	7
Scheduling difficulties	6
Meeting time conflicts	4
Content problem	
How to evaluate students	12
"Team" vs. "Course"	4
Differing experience levels	3
Squad meeting subjects	1
"Win Ethic"	1
Maintenance of class rapport	1
Covering both debate and IE	1
Not enough competitive opportunities	1
Not really a course	1
Commitment problem	
Motivation of students	8
Not enough support from other faculty or ad-	

ministrators	6
Budget	4
Too little credit	3
Limited repeatability	2
Rivalry with other campus events/activities	2
Voluntary program	1
Too much work	1
Enforcing practice	1

The problem listed most frequently was time. The focus of these responses centered around the time needed to work with the students in practice situations. For the most part, one full-time coach seems to be serving a larger student population.

Table 5
Number of Full-Time Staff Coaching Forensics

0	(10)
1	(87)
2	(19)
3	(10)
4	(3)
5	(1)

Table 6
Average Number of Students Enrolled each Offering

<i>Students</i>	<i>Respondents</i>
0-5	(22)
6-10	(34)
11-15	(15)
16-20	(12)
21-25	(14)
26-30	(4)
31-35	(1)
36-40	(1)
46-50	(1)
71-75	(1)

A related topic is recruitment because of the time necessary to find new students. For groups with a larger number of student par-

ticipants, finding a common meeting time is also a problem.

A second concern raised by those responding to this question is the content of the participation course. Should the course be available only for competitors or should other topics be raised, as well. Among the problems identified here was the method used for grading or evaluation. For some, the issue of grading was resolved with a contract system; for others, simply participating solved the problem. The issue of purpose perhaps become further complicated when the "team" gets in the way of the "class." Also, the differing experience levels are problematic in developing content. Addressing the issue of getting everyone together for a meeting, dealing with what one respondent labeled "the win ethic" in evaluation, covering both individual events and debate, maintaining a class rapport, and not having enough competition for students are concerns raised by the respondents when developing content in the participation course.

Commitment is a third general area including a number of responses identified by coaches. Finding ways to motivate those who take the participation course is an area of concern for several coaches. Receiving support from other faculty and administrators is an area which some coaches view as troublesome. Budgetary problems, too little credit or the inability to repeat the course, and rivalry with other on-campus events pose problems for coaches

trying to keep students involved in the participation course. The voluntary nature of the activity, along with the amount of work required of an active competitor, make it difficult for instructors to reach their intended goals.

It would appear that time, content, and commitment are three general problem areas that make it difficult for coaches who teach the participation course.

Some Thoughts on the Purpose of a Participation Course

Through a discovery of what coaches operationally perceive the purpose of their participation courses to be, any problems they face as they teach such a course, it becomes useful to generate some suggestions regarding what purposes the participation course should fulfill.

Initially, coaches must decide if they are giving "participation credit" or teaching a participation course. In other words, should the participation course be a team meeting or a class? A reasonably sound case can be made for both—approaches. It may be difficult to do both simultaneously. Therefore, to be most effective, a coach should decide if the purpose is simply to get everyone together once a week or if a class on forensics is the objective. While there are advantages to using a class as a meeting time, there are those who would argue that this is not pedagogically sound. If a participation course is going to be called a class and award students academic credit,

then coaches have an obligation to follow certain guidelines.

Table 7
Credits Earned Each Offering

<i>Credits</i>	<i>Respondents</i>
1/6	(1)
1/4	(4)
1/3	(1)
1/2	(1)
1	(71)
2	(39)
3	(19)
4	(3)
5	(1)

The participation course should have objectives, use a syllabus, provide for preparation and practice sessions, encourage tournament competition, and have an appropriate format for evaluating a student's performance.

Cognitive and behavioral objectives should be prepared for any participation course. These should include an understanding of the concepts underlying good composition principles, aesthetic dimensions of interpretation, demonstrable mastery of speaking skills in events with different presentation-al requirements, and evaluate competency.

A syllabus would seem to be a reasonable expectation for a student entering a participation course.

Table 8
Courses Using A Syllabus

Yes	(38)
No	(72)

Thirty-four percent of the coaches using a syllabus to identify such information as the description and format of the course, objec-

tives, staff class hours and coaching hours, text (if any), requirements of competition and the events offered, and the evaluation or grading system to be used. Included as content should be the individual events found at most intercollegiate forensic competitions, including the interpretative events or prose, poetry, drama, and dramatic duo. Public speaking events, both prepared (informative, persuasive, communication analysis, and after dinner speaking) and the limited preparation events (extemporaneous speaking and impromptu), should be discussed. Different debate formats could be presented to allow for increased awareness and potential involvement, even in schools traditionally labeled as "individual events" programs.

Practice times and tournament dates should be included for students desiring to compete. The coaches who prefer individual work sessions over group practice sessions may wish to schedule them in addition to the class meetings. However, as long as a class is being used to award a student academic credit, some structured sessions should be included.

An original purpose of the participation course and the one used most often by respondents to the survey reflects the desire to reward competitors academically for their involvement on the forensic team. This should continue to be an important, overriding dimension of the participation course. However, avenues should be in-

cluded for the non-competitive student who seeks ways to exhibit his or her skills at public speaking or reading.

A number of respondents to the survey provided a variety of ways for evaluating their students. These ranged from giving everyone a letter grade of "A" for participation, to the establishment of a detailed point scheme for preparation, practice, competition, and winning event. Whatever system is selected, the coach should make the information available to the student at the outset of the course in order to reduce any misconceptions leading to disagreements regarding the awarding of a particular grade. The problem of students repeating the participation course may complicate the grading process. If speeches are prepared during one quarter how should that reflect upon the grade during the following quarter?

For best results, coaches should reflect upon each of these items (objectives, a syllabus, preparation and practice sessions, competition, and evaluation) when developing the structure of the participation course.

CONCLUSION

The effort of coaches to academically reward students who compete on forensic teams has been an initial motivation for the development of the participation course. These coaches have operationally defined their courses to include among the following: Preparation; practice; on-campus activities; and competition. While not

universal, these purposes can be found in many programs. Difficulties by instructors of the participation courses include time constraints, content, and commitment. Some suggestions for improving the participation course include providing objectives, a syllabus, content that is instructional, practice sessions, competitive and non-competitive opportunities, and an appropriate method of evaluation. Whatever the purpose of the par-

ticipation course, one thing is clear: For students who commit themselves to the work required of a competitor, the participation course they take should provide them with more than "team spirit." As reflected through the responses to the survey, the course should provide instruction for the student, direction, and serve a useful educational function for forensic programs at institutions offering participation credit.

HOW TO EVALUATE DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

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Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind.

This statement made by Samuel Johnson in the preface to *The Plays of William Shakespeare* succinctly illustrates the overall objective of those who perform dramatic literature. It is the responsibility and pleasure of an interpreter to capture the essence of the drama and convey it in a mature and convincing manner to an audience. In the forensic environment the judge also has a responsibility as well as a pleasure. The critic must adjudicate the performance of those who have chosen to bring dramatic literature to life. It is, therefore, the purpose of this paper to assimilate criteria which a judge might find helpful in evaluating the performance of dramatic literature.

The choice of a material is a major consideration when judging a

contestant. First and foremost I consider the literary quality of the selection. Regardless of how well a piece of literature is performed, I am not impressed with the works which do not have sharply delineated characters dealing with universal themes and well developed plots. A student who performs mediocre literature well frequently does not have the competitive advantage of a student who chooses good literature, even though the latter's level of performance may not be as polished as that of his or her competitor. It seems such a waste of time and effort for a talented student to perform poor literature. Furthermore, quality literature, is easier to work with and usually results in a better performance. Second, the material selected should compliment the physical, mental, and emotional personality of the performer. While this is not as significant in oral interpretation as it is in acting, I find it dif-

ficult to envision a 300 pound man in the role of Tennessee Williams' Chance Wayne or Brick Pollitt. I also have to strain my imagination when I see a petite, sweet-tempered young lady struggling with the passions of Medea. A third criterion which some judges place considerable emphasis on is the uniqueness of the material. Frequently, our students receive ballots which point out, sometimes in cynical terms, that a certain piece of literature is overused. I question the appropriateness of this judgment, especially when the material is performed well. Unique material sometimes comes as a "fresh breeze," particularly at the end of a long day of judging. However, to use this as a major guideline in evaluating a dramatic performance seems an injustice to the contestant. Since the judge is obviously familiar with the literature, why not evaluate the nuances of interpretation that this particular reader brings to the material, thus turning a negative criticism into a positive one. Finally, the selection of literature which depends heavily on scenery, costumes, make-up, lighting, sound or excessive physical action for its dramatic impact should be discouraged.

A second consideration in the judging of dramatic interpretation is the effectiveness of the performer's introduction to the literature. Most authorities in the field suggest that the introduction is that part of the communication act which links the speaker to the au-

dience, as well as giving the audience a glimpse of the performer's personality. If this be the case, then, the introduction of a dramatic interpretation becomes a vital aspect of the total impression created by the performer. Frequently, in the forensic environment, much of a contestant's introduction consists of a mini-scene wherein the reader presents a short monologue or dialogue. Thus, we have a performance in the introduction as well as in the text of the literature. While these monologues or dialogues may be instrumental in gaining attention of the audience, they sometimes take up time which could be better utilized to accomplish other requirements of a good introduction such as establishing the mood and atmosphere of the selection, relating the context of the particular scene to be performed, and introducing the characters to the audience — in short, preparing the listeners for what Charlott Lee calls the "intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic entirety" of "a work of literary art." (Lee, *Oral Interpretation*, 3rd edition, 1965, p. 3).

A third consideration in the judging of dramatic interpretation is the cutting and/or adapting techniques used by the performer. Admittedly, this is a difficult aspect of evaluation. Frequently, a judge is only vaguely familiar, if familiar at all, with the selection. However, certain guidelines seem applicable. First, there should be a unity to the cutting. Charlott Lee and Timothy Gura, point out that when

adapting material one should be careful to select a scene which, "when taken on its own, displays a totality of action, theme, or characters." (Lee-Gura, *Oral Interpretation*, 6th edition, 1982, p. 192). A judge might ask the following questions. Does the cutting develop a plot characterized by rising action, climax, and a resolution of the dramatic conflict? Does the cutting insure thematic unity? Does the cutting allow character development? Second, the cutting should establish the proper mood and atmosphere demanded by the scene. Third, the cutting should be characterized by economy of language. In a ten minute selection only the best of the scene should be used. Dialogue which contributes little, if anything, to the total impact of the performance, minor characters, or other extraneous material should be eliminated.

While the aforementioned criteria are important considerations in evaluating dramatic interpretation, the most significant criticism should be directed at the performance itself. How the performer brings the literature to life is the most crucial and meaningful aspect of evaluation. Six guidelines seem pertinent.

First, how effectively does the performer develop the characters in the scene? Does he or she create the character in a distinctive manner? Are the performer's foci appropriate and unobstrusive? Are the character's physical, emotional, and intellectual traits carefully delineated? Are the characters be-

lievable? How well are the characters developed? Good dramatic literature presents well-defined, three dimensional characters. Superficial suggestion of these characters should be pointed out to the contestant. An aspect of character development which sometimes goes unnoticed by a judge is the relationships characters have between or among themselves. A performer should clearly establish not only how one character feels toward another, but what motivates those feelings.

A second factor to consider in evaluating dramatic interpretation is how well the plot of a scene is developed. Dramatic literature deals with conflict between or among individuals. It is the responsibility of the performer to clearly indicate the nature of this conflict. What initiates the conflict? What are the episodes leading to the pinnacle of the conflict? How is the conflict resolved? The "what", "how", and "why" of plot development must be effectively demonstrated by the performer. Further, a judge should pay particular attention to how the performer uses his voice and his body in building to the climax. Some performers begin the intensity at such a high level, they have nowhere to go. Others never achieve the intensity demanded of the scene. Still others stay at the same emotional level throughout the scene. There are no peaks and valleys in their performances. Finally, there are those who substitute loudness for intensity. It is the performer who

recognizes and projects with gradual intensity the conflict of the drama who deserves the applause of the judge.

A third consideration is how well the mood and atmosphere of the scene are conveyed to the audience. As indicated earlier a performer might begin establishing this aspect of the performance in the introduction of the material. However, dialogue, character development, and pace of the scene, when performed effectively, can add considerable dimension to this element of the performance.

A fourth factor to be considered when evaluating dramatic interpretation is the manner in which the reader balances vocal and body action in conveying the essence of the text. Judges in the forensic environment, in my opinion, have traditionally placed too much emphasis on vocal technique. Some judges, while excusing excessive vocal action, still rigidly insist on limited body action. I strongly reject this judging philosophy. A performer cannot achieve maximum dramatic impact unless both the voice and body work together to bring life to literature. Wallace Bacon substantiates this philosophy when he writes,

An ineffective reader is sometimes said to read from his neck up, as if there were a divorce between mind and body. While of course no one performs without a body, a reader may do so little to reinforce concepts with feeling that the reading will appear lifeless and inert—will

seem not to mean what is said. (Bacon, *The Art of Interpretation*, 3rd edition, 1979, p. 10).

I applaud the performer who gets physically as well as vocally involved.

Ballots which encourage body involvement sometimes bring up the age-old acting versus interpretation controversy. Some literary purists get extremely excited when the interpreter invades the sacrosanct world of the theatre. As I have stated on other occasions, if a reader, holding a manuscript, utilizing an off stage focus, dressed in regular clothing, without the benefit of make-up, lighting, and scenery is not sufficient to let an audience know that *presentation*, not *representation*, is taking place, what is? (*The Forensic, Spring*, 1984, p. 6).

When evaluating body and vocal action in the interpretation of dramatic literature, a judge should always consider how effectively the performer utilizes technique. Frequently, technique hinders rather than enhances a performance. In fact, one of the most adverse criticism of performance in the forensics environment is in this area. In the "Report of the Action Caucus on Oral Interpretation," published in the Spring, 1983, issue of *The National Forensic Journal*, Thomas Colley writes,

The competitors all sounded the same. I have the clear impression that there is a standard vocal, and physical attack that is recommended to the students.

They all used a standard vocal and physical attack; the same resonant tone, the same pace and rate, the same whole body movements to support transitions, and the same head-high sober expression, direct gaze . . . Judging was reduced to a matter of technique, [a] degree of slickness. (*The National Forensics Journal*, Volume 1, Spring, 1983, p. 44).

When technique becomes this obvious it should be pointed out to the contestant. On the other hand, a brilliant performance which relegates technique to its proper perspective should be praised.

A fifth aspect of evaluation which I consider significant is the element of professionalism the contestants and judge(s) demonstrate in the performance environment. First, I like for a contestant to be a performer or communicator from the time he or she starts to the platform until he or she return to his or her seat. Rita Willock in her article in the Winter, 1984, issue of *The Forensic* comments on this matter. She states,

Sloppy preparation and disclaimers before the notebook is even opened can forecast negative comments on the ballot. Performers should spend time learning how to set up for the performance as well as how to gracefully end the selection. A wealth of information has supported the notion that first and last impressions do make a difference." (*The Forensic*, Winter 1984, p. 7).

Equally as important as the impression made, is the effect that a positive performer attitude contributes to the total environment of the performance. A judge can sense, sometimes only subconsciously, this attitude and it has impact on the rank and rating the contestant receives. Second, this concept of professionalism should apply to others. The behavior of the listening contestants and the judge(s) may influence the overall performance of a contestant. The members of the audience who make a point of not empathizing with the performer; the contestant who rehearses, albeit it silently, his or her own selection; the contestant who never laughs, even though the dialogue is downright funny; the contestant who brings his or her own clique to the performance; probably deserve a reprimand from the judge. Furthermore, the judge who writes furiously with downcast eyes throughout the reading does a disservice to the performer and demonstrates less than professional behavior.

A sixth and final consideration in judging any interpretative event is the overall impact of the performance. Rita Willock wants the performer to sell the "selection through any means available within the limitation of the contest rules as long as [the performer is] faithful to the author." (*The Forensic*, Winter, 1984, p. 7). Anthony B. Schroeder suggests that "the audience came for an emotional experience. Touch them!" (*The*