

## Personal Contact

The late Dr. W. David Bemmels served as Academic Dean of Ottawa University, having joined the Department of Physics in 1940 and later founding the campus radio station KTJO. Esther Bemmels is former director of Alumni relations at the university. Both Bemmels met John Shields on June 1, 1963 at the class of 1913's golden-anniversary reunion. This author and Ottawa University senior student Cindy Tinsley interviewed the Bemmels in their Ottawa home in 1991.

Esther Bemmels: I met him at the time that Pi Kappa Delta was celebrating its 50th anniversary in Ottawa. It was also the 50th anniversary of John Shields' graduating class. They had arranged for a gala noon luncheon on that weekend, and there were many members of Pi Kappa Delta. I think John Shields was the master of ceremonies. He was a rather short, stout man, very businesslike. He wasn't cracking jokes, but he was very personable with the rest of the guests. You could tell that they were old friends, but there wasn't the show of emotion that you see today when old friends meet.

Cindy Tinsley: It was my understanding that Ottawa University was the original chapter of Pi Kappa Delta, but I understand from you that there may be some controversy about that.

Dave Bemmels: Yes, well John Shields and E.R. Nichols were the co-sponsors of the organization. Nichols was a faculty member from 1909-1911, while Shields was a student during that time. Then Nichols went to Ripon college and they kept working at it. They finished the national constitution early in 1913, which made provision for the local chapters. And Shields went ahead and got a chapter going here at Ottawa. The reason I learned about a controversy was that when I was Dean in the early 1960s I was looking at the Ripon catalog and noticed that they claimed the founding of Pi Kappa Delta. But I wrote to Shields at that time and he wrote me a six-page handwritten letter in which he stated that Ottawa had the first chapter. Ripon had a faculty ruling against fraternities, which had to be modified and they did get a chapter. But there's no doubt in our mind that we were the first chapter, although Nichols was working with Shields in creating the whole thing (W. D. Bemmels and E. Bemmels, personal interview, February 12, 1991).

John Shields' 1938 letter to Claude Webb notes that Ottawa chapter members received the first five membership certificates and the first five numbered keys of the honorary. Esther Bemmels recalled their names without prompting: Leland Jenks, Jess Elder, John Shields, Charles Battin, and Sam Marsh (Bemmels and Bemmels, personal interview, February 12, 1991). For his part, Dave Bemmels was honored with Pi Kappa Delta membership in the 1960s, receiving key number 39,807.

In 1923 E.R. Nichols acknowledged Ottawa's claim as the Alpha chapter, but with a caveat. In an article later incorporated into Larry Norton's (1987) *The History of Pi Kappa Delta: 1913-1987*, Nichols



states: "Naturally it was expected that Ripon College, which had a local chapter already organized, would enter the national organization first... [were it not for its faculty ruling against fraternities]" (p. 18). Though organized, this unofficial "chapter" was not recognized by Ripon College until Ottawa and several other chapters had been sanctioned by their schools and then granted national membership. Moreover, Ottawa was just as fully "organized" and had been working to create the new fraternity even before Nichols' arrival at Ripon. Although the name Pi Kappa Delta (Peitho Kale Dikaia) was coined by the sister of a Ripon debater, the college's continued claim that the national honorary was "Founded...." there (Ripon College, 2004, n.p.) remains questionable.

### Fulfilling the Promise

After leaving Ottawa with his bachelor's degree in 1913, John Shields continued his busy and successful life. He moved to Seymore, Indiana, and soon became secretary and director of Bliss Milling Company, as well as Secretary-Treasurer of Pi Kappa Delta from 1913-1916. He later earned his doctorate, became director of the United States Chamber of Commerce, Chairman of the Board of the National College Student Foundation, President of Greendale Mills, President of the Indiana Manufacturing Association, President of the Indiana Millers and Grain Dealers Association, and a charter member of the Pi Kappa Delta Hall of Fame. The only setback one can find in Shield's dizzying life was that he slipped and broke his arm while preparing an article for *The Forensic*.

Of all his many contributions, John Shields' most enduring legacy may have been the creation of Pi Kappa Delta, an accomplishment he spoke of proudly for the rest of his life. Because of his talent, tirelessness, and perseverance, John A. Shields personifies the spirit of Pi Kappa Delta.

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# Primary Trait Analysis for Debate

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**Abstract:** *Primary trait analysis - an assessment method asking the participants about the nature of the activity, the assignment, or the course - is considered as a method of evaluating debate. Performance assessment - designed to judge students' abilities to actively demonstrate specific knowledge and skills- is discussed. In addition, authentic assessments - designed to engage the student in a simulation of analysis and discussion of problem that they must solve using the knowledge and skills they have gained while participating in the activity - are surveyed. An earlier version of this article was presented at 90th Annual Convention of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL, November 2004*

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Primary trait analysis is an assessment method that asks the participants about the nature of the activity, the assignment, or the course. What does the student learn when using this form of analysis? Debate is an activity that has been with us for many generations, so it should be relatively easy to determine what the nature of the activity is and what gains we expect from participation.

Performance assessment is designed to judge students' abilities to actively demonstrate specific knowledge and skills. Performance assessment is sometimes called *authentic assessment* because it involves tasks in an authentic situation or a context that simulates a real-life activity.

Authentic assessments are designed to engage the student in a simulation of analysis and discussion of problem that they must solve using the knowledge and skills they have gained while participating in the activity.

The first step in the development of the primary trait according to Walvoord and Anderson (1998) is to make clear to yourself the objectives for the activity, what you want your students to learn.

Items to consider might include:

- critical reasoning
- structure of argument
- prepare a case and defend it

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- use of evidence and documentation
- critical analysis of the status quo
- development of a plan that reflects understanding of federal policy and law
- delivery skills
- listening
- note taking skills
- cross examination skills
- attack an opponent's case
- refutation skills
- understanding of the topic
- critical reading skills
- organization of thoughts and arguments

Next, you need to identify the criteria or "traits" that will count in your evaluation of assignment products or performances. Ask yourself, "What are the characteristics or primary traits that I want to measure?" This requires the development of a list of behaviors that demonstrate each of the traits. A simple A, B, C, or Superior, Excellent rating is not adequate. The actual behaviors that we expect from a Superior or A performance need to be described.

The third step is to construct for each trait a four to five point scale with statements describing each point on the scale. For example, for a superior rating in refutation, the debater must be able to repeat the opponents argument, state what is wrong with it, state his or her position, and provide supporting evidence with an internal summary in a clear and easy to understand manner. For a poor rating in refutation, the debater may only tell the critic that he disagrees with the opponent.

A single project can be structured to assess both mastery of course content and attainment of program or major goals as well as certain general education goals. These general goals might include communication skills, life-long learning skills, critical thinking skills, and social and education values.

Why the interest in competitive debate? Since this author's days in collegiate debate, we have seen debate evolve into policy debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, value debate, parliamentary debate, educational debate, public debate, etc. All of these forms of debate have tried to focus on one item: teaching critical thinking, argumentation, and refutation skills. At the same time, the instrument used for evaluation has not changed.



1 - poor					2 - fair					3 - average	4 - excellent					5 - superior				
1st Affirmative					2nd Affirmative					1st Negative					2nd Negative					
(Name)					(Name)					(Name)					(Name)					
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
										Analysis										
										Reasoning										
										Evidence										
										Organization										
										Refutation										
										Delivery										
Total	Rank				Total	Rank				Total	Rank				Total	Rank				

Rank each debater in order of excellence (1st for best, 2nd for next best, etc.)

The ballot indicates areas that could be used as criteria; however, what does a 5 indicate on an individual item or a total score of 26, when the critic does not check any of the boxes, which is now more the norm than the exception.

According to Virginia Sutherland, "...the problem could be significantly ameliorated by one rather simple measure: redesign the debate ballot to reflect the behaviors we value most and the relative degree of valuation of each. The ... criteria together with weighting and explaining each should increase the communication between the judge and the debater" (N. pag. – accessed online).

The ballot for parliamentary debate is slightly less vague. Here are the ballot categories with an indication of what the judge should consider in evaluating the debate.

## Analysis & Organization /20

- Speeches should be organized effectively
- It must be evident that the debaters have planned their approach to the topic
- Debaters should provide clear appraisals of both sides of the argument
- Debaters should clearly recognize the key issues in the debate

Logic & Evidence /20

- Debaters must present logical arguments
- All arguments must be supported with sound evidence and / or examples, bearing in mind that the debate is impromptu

### Clash & Refutation /20

- Points presented by opposing speakers should be directly refuted
- Each speaker should aim to fully discredit the essence their opponent's argument



**Delivery /30**

- The presentation of the material should be clear, purposeful and convincing
- The debater should be able to hold your attention using eye contact, voice, gestures etc.

**Teamwork /10**

- Debaters must work together and support each other's points
- There should be no contradiction, nor unnecessary repetition of points between speakers

What Sutherland is suggesting is the core of the idea for primary trait analysis. What is the event? What happens in the event? What do we want to have happen? What skills are we teaching and are debaters learning?

Performance assessment is especially useful when it involves an ill-structured, or an ill-defined problem. The term "ill-structured" is used because often the debaters are doing what they think will win and often the debaters may be providing more of the structure than the coach or the activity.

How do we improve the quality of the experience and teach skills that are useful outside of the "game context" of collegiate debate? Ashmore (1981) and Sutherland (1994) suggest that the ballot is what needs to be changed. Presently the current ballot is instructing the judge to write an arbitrary number from 6-30. Most comments are justification of the decision, or "why I voted affirmative or negative." The critic may be demonstrating more critical analysis with the justification than the debaters did during the activity. Very few comments are made about the skills, areas for improvement or of mistakes. When a teacher places a "C" on a paper with no comments does this help the student or result in a better product on the next assignment?

Durkee (1996) asserts that, "Judges seem to be valued for their partiality, inside knowledge, and willingness to go along with trends set by our cultural elites" (p. 6). He goes on to say, "We've given judges too much latitude, no longer requiring reflective thought, only emotional responses" (p. 6). The ballot does not provide perimeters on the judges' decision-making and the only comment on the knowledge and skill is the win then it is equivalent to the C on a paper. If I win, what I did was correct and good, liked by the judge; if I lose then the judge did not like me!

Ashmore (1981) believed that if the coaches involved with the activity care about critical thinking, delivery, or reasoned discourse, then it must be communicated to the student through the ballot. The ballot is the only thing that matters to the debater because they want to win the debate. The ballot communicates what is necessary to win. Currently the ballot is not adequate to solve the problem, hence the majority of debaters would like to know what the judges' philosophy is or what do they need to do to win, so they ask.



As we reflect on the past of this activity we can conclude as does Durkee (1996) with "...debaters grown contemptuous of judges" (p. 6) and will do whatever is necessary to win and, in many cases, this may not be quality debating. The activity has made twists and turns to find a solution, "College debate has selected Parliamentary Debate as an alternative to thoughtful reform, eliminating the substance of debate in order to preserve the form" (p. 38).

The future of the activity demands that coaches/judges view themselves as teachers. Performance problems do not have a clear-cut prescribed solution; however, the solution is in the hands of those most closely associated with the assessment of the individual debate and the activity in general. Should a ballot that places parameters on decision-making and a ballot that communicates with the debater on knowledge and skills replace what is currently used? If it is not who won the debate, is it who did the better debating?

Primary trait analysis is designed around the assessment of the activity and it is through this process that we can start to define the problem and then move to some form of corrective action. The future of the activity demands that coaches/judges view themselves as teachers.

In Appendix A this author is offering a rubric for your consideration. It is only a beginning to help in the analysis and assessment of a problem that we have been dealing with for a number of years, that of going to debate which evolved into policy debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, value or CEDA debate, parliamentary debate, educational debate, public debate, etc. Each iteration of the activity tries to focus on teaching critical thinking, argumentation, refutation and delivery skills. The instrument used for evaluation has not changed; maybe the future of the activity demands that coaches/judges view themselves as teachers and look at how we are grading the activity.

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## Appendix A

	Highly competent	Competent	Minimally Competent	Not Competent
<b>Structure of argument</b>	Clear statement of the condition describing a problem, with a significant harm and a clearly identified cause of the condition. All of the evidence supports the arguments, consistent and logical	Good statement of condition describing the problem with a harm that appears to be significant and identified cause of the condition. Evidence supports most of the arguments, some inconsistent reasoning	Inconsistent reasoning in describing the condition and harm, claims are made but not supported, the cause is not clearly identified	Poorly structured claims with some minimal description of the condition and harm. The significant claims are not justified and the cause is not clearly identified.
<b>Prepared case</b>	Effectively answers opponent's criticism and reestablishes case arguments.	Answers opponent's criticism and establishes case arguments.	Inconsistently answers criticism and minimally establishes case arguments.	Does not answer the opponent's criticism and does not establish case arguments.
<b>Time management</b>	Uses time affectively enabling critical decisions predicated upon word economy leading to an increase of coverage and a decrease of 'Time Rush'	Uses time efficiently enabling complex decisions avoiding contradictory positions leading to an adequate coverage of positions.	Inadequate use of time resulting in poor decisions; inconsistent and duplication of coverage Resulting in dropped arguments and no responses.	Unaware of how to use time management in discussing case, arguments, and responses.
<b>Use of evidence &amp; documentation</b>	Documentation is clearly stated, complete and the evidence can be understood. Good supporting evidence.	Documentation is not clearly stated (may be complete), evidence can be understood	Inconsistent documentation, not complete and evidence is not supporting	Inconsistent documentation, evidence is not used to support a claim
<b>Critical analysis of status quo/ Inherency</b>	Demonstrates an understanding of the complexity of structural and attitudinal inherency and the indictment of the status quo.	Demonstrates an understanding of structural and attitudinal inherency while indicting the status quo.	The cause that is identified is not structurally inherent in the status quo.	No indictment of the status quo.
<b>Critical reasoning</b>	Presentation clearly adapted to the audience and situation; approach and structure highly consistent with overall purpose; strong evidence of critical thinking.	Some evidence of adaptation to the audience and situation; approach and structure consistent with overall purpose; some evidence of critical thinking.	Inconsistent adaptation to audience and situation; approach and structure inconsistent with overall purpose; inconsistent evidence of critical thinking.	Limited adaptation to audience and situation; approach and structure not appropriate for the overall purpose; lacks evidence of critical thinking.



<b>Delivery skills</b>	Voice varied in pitch, volume, rate, and emphasis; appropriate enthusiasm; free of fillers (ahs, uhms, ers); highly effective articulation and pronunciation. Delivery is slow enough so that it can be flowed, understood.	Some variation in pitch, volume, rate, and emphasis; some fillers (ahs, uhms, ers); effective articulation and pronunciation. Reading of evidence is too fast for comprehension.	Limited variation in pitch, volume, rate, and emphasis; some distracting fillers (ahs, uhms, ers); minimally effective articulation and pronunciation. Very fast hard to understand arguments and evidence.	No variation in pitch, volume, rate, or emphasis; fillers (ahs, uhms, ers) detract from the presentation; lack of clear articulation and pronunciation. Very fast hard to understand arguments and evidence. Unaware of the audience/judge
<b>Nonverbal Delivery</b>	Read from notes and/or audio visual materials as necessary; clearly engaged audience through consistent eye contact and gestures; responsive to audience reaction.	Referred occasionally to notes and/or audio visual materials; engaged audience through eye contact and gestures; aware of audience reaction.	Relied heavily on notes and/or audiovisual materials; exhibited minimal awareness of audience; infrequent eye contact or gestures; some distracting mannerisms.	Read directly from notes and/or audiovisual materials; exhibited little or no audience awareness, gestures, or eye contact; frequent, distracting mannerisms.
<b>Listening</b>	Actively listens/able to paraphrase the opponents arguments; uses information gained to reestablish their own position.	Listens attentively to opponents arguments but is unable to correctly paraphrase them.	Pays little attention to the wording of the arguments and is unable to paraphrase them.	Ignores opponent's arguments and has no understanding of their position.
<b>Note taking</b>	Able to track both aff/neg arguments, evidence and sources	Able to track the majority of the aff/neg arguments, evidence & sources	Inconsistent in tracking the aff/neg arguments and evidence	Able to get a few of the aff/neg arguments
<b>Cross Examination skills</b>	Well structured questions, good control of the CX and gained information/admissions	Questions appear to be well structured with a purpose, controls the CX and gains information	Inconsistent in the process of asking questions, has some control of the CX and has minimal gains.	Questions asked had no purpose, did not control the CX, and gained nothing
<b>Refutation skills</b>	Indicates clearly what the opponents argument is and how it is flawed, states a position that is in opposition and supports it with reasoning and evidence	States clearly the opponents arguments, takes a position and supports it with evidence	Responsive to some of the arguments and able to support the position with evidence	Confused about the opponents arguments and not responsive to the argument
<b>Understanding of the topic/ Critical analysis</b>	Demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the multiple ramification of the topic and is able to debate all germane cases.	Demonstrates a good understanding of the issues and is able to debate most germane cases.	Inconsistent preparation of topic creating a poor ability to handle a variety of cases.	Limited understanding of the scope of the topic not prepared to debate a variety of cases.



<b>Organizational skills</b>	Arrangement of ideas clearly related to topic; well organized with introduction, body, conclusion; good transitions; introduction includes attention-getter, statement of thesis, credibility information; conclusion includes summary and closure.	Conveyed a central idea or topic; most information presented in logical structure; adequate introduction, body, conclusion; adequate transitions	Attempted to focus on an idea or topic; ideas were loosely connected to topic; structure unclear; introduction, body, conclusion detectable but not comprehensive; transitions unclear.	Had little or no focus on central idea or topic; no apparent logical structure; introduction, body, or conclusion absent; lacked transitions.
<b>Team work</b>	Appropriate division of labor both members engage in active construction and defense of case.	Adequate division of labor both members engage in construction and defense of case.	Inconsistent division of labor one member appears to contribute more to the team effort.	Poor division of labor "my partner will respond to that"
<b>Structure of plan/solution</b>	Plan is grammatically correct it adheres to the resolution and addresses the cause, workability, and funding resulting in solvency.	Plan is written well it adheres to the resolution but is vague when addressing the cause, workability, and funding/solvency.	Plan is written poorly it tangentially applies to the resolution and does not establish the cause, workability, or funding/solvency.	Plan is devoid of grammar, not germane to the topic and provides no assessment of the cause, workability or funding/solvency.

- This rubric was developed with the help of John Hansen, graduate student and graduate assistant coach at Eastern New Mexico University.
- Additional input from Kara Dillard, graduate student and coach at Eastern New Mexico University.







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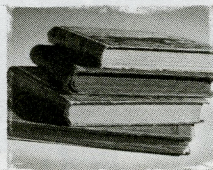
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### Possible topics?

- \*Diverse populations' participation in forensics (e.g.: race, ethnicity, gender, geographical differences, etc....)
- \*Administrative skills learned through directing of forensics
- \*Formal argumentation skills that can be used effectively in interpersonal settings

Themed issues with a theme of your choice





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