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Speaker & Gavel

Featured Articles

All Good and Well?: The State of Forensic Health and Wellness Scholarship (*Kay*) 7

(Re)Designing the Debate Tournament for Civic Life (*Rief*) 36

Enacting Compassion: Enactment and the Theory of Image Restoration in Monica Lewinsky's TED Talk, "The Price of Shame." (*Mishne*) 60

Alumni Corner

Beverly Mahone-Gibbs: What forensics did for me (*Mahone-Gibbs*) 73

Jason Berke: What forensics did for me (*Berke*) 76



Speaker & Gavel is the publication of
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1. Submission deadlines are January 15th and July 15th of each year. It is never too early to submit your article.
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7. Please provide information about any special funding the research received or conventions or conferences at which previous drafts have been presented so it can be noted in the publication.
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Editor's Note: S&G went to an entire online format with volume 41/2004 of the journal. The journal will be available online at: www.dsr-tka.org/ The layout and design of the journal will not change in the online format. The journal will be available online as a pdf document. A pdf document is identical to a traditional hardcopy journal. We hope enjoy and utilize the format.

Table of Contents

All Good and Well?: The State of Forensic Health and Wellness Scholarship (<i>Kay</i>)	7
(Re)Designing the Debate Tournament for Civic Life (<i>Rief</i>)	36
Enacting Compassion: Enactment and the Theory of Image Restoration in Monica Lewinsky’s TED Talk, “The Price of Shame.” (<i>Mishne</i>)	60
Alumni Corner	
Beverly Mahone-Gibbs: What forensics did for me (<i>Carter</i>)	73
Jason Berke: What forensics did for me (<i>Berke</i>)	76

All Good and Well?: The State of Forensic Health and Wellness Scholarship



Carson S. Kay – Ohio University



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The author would like to thank Jessica L. Ford, PhD for her research guidance.

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All Good and Well?: The State of Forensic Health and Wellness Scholarship

Carson S. Kay

Page | 7

Forensic educators and students face many competitive challenges while vying for trophies and titles. However, maintaining one's health while preparing, traveling, and competing too often falls by the wayside. Although scholars have examined the health of forensic educators and students in the past, few current research agendas address the health concerns of the forensic community. With the exception of Carmack (2016) and her collaboration with Holm (2005, 2013, 2015), forensic scholars have not actively discussed how the activity affects student and educator wellbeing since 2004. Questions still remain regarding how the speech and debate community might feasibly promote a healthy lifestyle among its constituents. This exhaustive review examines the 58 published articles on forensic health-related topics to identify the human bodies addressed, methodological approaches utilized, and themes present. In doing so, this review reveals the gaps in forensic literature and suggests future research endeavors to reinvigorate scholarship and improve the wellbeing of participants within the speech and debate community.

Keywords: forensics, wellness, health communication, organizational initiatives

Wellness has long been deemed a critical component of organizational communication (Berlinguer, Falzi, & Figa-Talamanca, 1996; Farrell & Geist-Martin, 2005; Real, 2010; Zoller, 2003a). Its benefits of mitigating member stress (Christiansen, 1999), coping with burnout (Omdahl & Fritz, 2006), and fostering a sense of belonging (Dailey & Zhu, 2017) and gratitude (Zoller, 2003a) within the organization have been documented in professional (e.g., Tracy, 2000; Zoller, 2003a) and academic (e.g., Boren, 2013; Rummell, 2015) contexts alike. The forensic community is no exception, addressing organizational sensemaking (Carmack, 2016) and concerns of relational (Schnoor & Green, 1989) and psychological tensions (Carmack & Holm, 2013; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992) faced by those engaged in the competitive field of speech and debate. Although forensic researchers have scrutinized the strains placed upon forensic directors, coaches, and educators (e.g., Burnett, 2002; Carmack & Holm, 2013; Chouinard & Kuyper, 2010; Dickmeyer, 2002; Gill, 1990; Leland, 2004; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992; Pettus & Danielson, 1994; Richardson, 2005; Wickelgren & Phillips, 2008), less work has probed the physical tensions of the speech and debate lifestyle on both the teacher *and* the student (e.g., Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992). The negative impacts of diet, insufficient exercise, and extraneous substances (i.e., tobacco and alcohol use) on forensic *student* wellness have been incorporated far too little in forensic literature (e.g., Leland, 2004; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992).

All Good and Well?

Apart from the occasional, individual submission to *Speaker & Gavel* (e.g., Carmack, 2016), the *National Forensic Journal* (e.g., Carmack & Holm, 2015), and the *Forensic* (e.g., Rogers & Rennels, 2008), few avenues have published health-focused forensic scholarship. In fact, the *National Forensic Journal* has not published a special issue on health and wellness since 2004 (see Alexander, 2004; Hatfield, 2004; Leland, 2004; Olson, 2004a, 2004b; Schnoor, 2004; Trejo, 2004; Workman, 2004), nor a review of forensic health communication scholarship. As such, an embodied research initiative is needed to determine what we know, what we do not know, and what measures we may take to provide answers and improve the wellness of both our educators and our students.

Page | 8

This need stems from two observations, the current states of American health and forensic wellness research. Current United States health trends spark the first concern. Many reports have elaborated upon current issues in American health, such as an increase in obesity (Hales, Carroll, Fryar, & Ogden, 2017; Ogden, Carroll, Fryar, & Flegal, 2015), chronic illness (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017), and psychological stress (American Psychological Association, 2017; Bethune & Lewan, 2017; Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012). According to a 2017 Centers for Disease Control report, nearly 40% (39.8%) of American adults struggle with obesity (Hales et al., 2017). Similarly, 16.1 million adults in the U.S. experienced “at least one major depressive episode that year” (National Institute of Mental Health, n.d.), leading to approximately \$210 billion spent on healthcare costs annually (Greenberg, 2015). Alternatively stated, Americans, as a whole, struggle to maintain physically and mentally healthy lifestyles.

Despite this concerning health climate in our country, forensic research on wellness has not, since the early 2000s, fully dissected the impact of the activity and related way of living on the physical health of its participants: educators and students. Currently, contemporary commentary — with the exception of Carmack and Holm (2015) and Carmack (2016) — is limited to introductory remarks, implications, and future research suggestions. Although psychological health has indeed been addressed from quantitative (e.g., Carmack & Holm, 2013, 2015) and qualitative (e.g., Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992) perspectives, the wear of the forensic lifestyle on coaches’ and students’ bodies has not been aggressively examined in forensic literature in over a decade. As forensic alumni have reported reflective concerns about the activity’s impact on health, this area of inquiry needs revisiting (Billings, 2011). Furthermore, forensic scholars have yet to synthesize speech and debate wellness research to identify areas in need of academic inquiry. Therefore, this expansive report reviews health communication contributions to forensic scholarship to identify gaps and advance forensic inquiry in two ways. The first objective is to summarize current forensic literature on health-related topics. Identifying trends will allow the sub-discipline to a) better comprehend the state of scholarship in forensic participant health and b) recognize gaps in need of evaluation. This latter intention leads to this review’s second objective: to spark inspiration for future research agendas in forensic arenas. This work will identify established findings and direct interest to unanswered questions.

Kay

Ultimately, it may function as a resource from which forensic scholars may draw direction for future projects.

My impetus for penning this review stems from my own past experience as a forensic competitor and present experience as a forensic coach. As a forensic student, my health was never my priority; my weight skyrocketed due to stress-eating, while my anxiety over my impending performance left me with prohibitory headaches and gastrointestinal upsets. I often presented with and through pain. Perhaps one might argue I inflicted such health implications upon myself. One would be right, for I chose to eat poorly, sleep little, and sacrifice my time at the gym for time in the team room. I do not deny that I, like many forensic students, made choices to improve my competitive potential at the expense of my physical and mental wellbeing. I do not intend to absolve the student from responsibility, but rather question whether the forensic community has adequately continued its academic response to the health challenges forensic competitors face. As a coach, I still fight these unhealthy tendencies and as I reflect upon my social interactions with current and past students, I feel ever the more strongly that re-examining the state of forensic health scholarship is vital to confirm what we know, what we do not know, and how we might construct new research agendas to better the wellbeing of our students and our educators. In the following review, I proceed in three sections. First, I explain my methodological process. Second, I provide general information by defining often-used terminology, presenting the bodies addressed in current scholarship, and identifying the methodological approaches used thus far in existing literature. Third, I identify predominant themes in both what we know and what we have yet to dissect. Specifically, I focus on themes arising in literature on educator health and student wellbeing. For each of these emphases, I identify the gaps present and suggest aspects that have yet to be answered. Finally, I elaborate upon these gaps and present potential research agendas for forensic inquiry into health and wellness initiatives.

Page | 9

Methods

To identify the methodological variation, current trends, and research gaps, I conducted a comprehensive search for pertinent articles published in forensic journals. Four journals contained health communication research on forensic topics: *The National Forensic Journal (NFJ)*, *Argumentation and Advocacy*, *The Forensic*, and *Speaker & Gavel*. I identified relevant articles directly from the *NFJ* website, *nationalforensicjournal.org*, and I located the other outlets' articles through Google Scholar and the EBSCOhost databases (i.e., *ArticlesPlus*, *Communication and Mass Media Complete*, and *Communication Abstracts*). Research arising from searches for “health,” “wellness,” “burnout,” “stress,” “obesity,” “smoking,” “diet,” “exercise,” and/or “exhaustion” in forensic contexts appears in this review. To ensure relevance to this project, I reviewed the abstracts of potential articles and removed those that did not emphasize

From the final 58 articles, distinct themes emerged regarding the voices addressed and content examined.

All Good and Well?

health topics and issues in the speech and debate community. After multiple intensive searches, 64 relevant articles made it into the final review sample. However, upon further examination of article content, I removed six more articles from the sample as they addressed argumentation in general rather than focusing on the forensic context. From the final 58 articles, distinct themes emerged regarding the voices addressed and content examined. To fully comprehend the research gaps, the articles' acknowledgement of health-related issues (or lack thereof) must be addressed. Therefore, I identify the perspectives acknowledged, discuss the predominant themes researched within those perspectives, and note the gaps present.

Terminology, Participants, and Past Methodologies

However, before I delve into the sample themes, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of terminology that shall arise, as well as describe the participants present and the methodologies that other scholars have utilized to explore health-related topics in the forensic community.

Terminology and Definitions

Throughout this discussion, I incorporate four terms from workplace-focused organizational communication research. Therefore, it is prudent to understand these recurring terms: burnout, social support, co-rumination, and workplace health programs (WHPs).

First, burnout is essentially the state of emotional, psychological, and physical fatigue caused by one's occupation or workplace interactions. Typically, this state is comprised of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization of — or cynicism directed at — others, and decreased sense of personal accomplishment (Maslach, 1976, 1982; Maslach & Jackson, 1981). In forensic literature, burnout primarily appears in discussions about director/coach/educator stamina and intent to leave the profession (Carmack & Holm, 2013; Gill, 1990; Richardson, 2005). Typically, the presence of burnout indicates an underlying organizational and/or relational tension in the individual's work life. As Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001) emphasize, burnout is “a psychological syndrome *in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job*” (p. 399, emphasis added). Burnout occurs when workplace stressors become too much to bear.

The second term is social support, which refers to interactions, both potential and experienced, in which individuals feel a sense of belonging with and love from another person (Zimmerman & Applegate, 1994). Examples of social support include emotional support (Zimmerman & Applegate, 1994), resource support (Zimmerman & Applegate, 1994), and coach availability (Chouinard & Kuyper, 2010). In forensic scholarship, social support predominantly manifests in team space interactions, such as in the team squad room (Carmack & Holm, 2005) and van (Rowe & Cronn-Mills, 2005). Social support is beneficial within organizations as it is often attributed as a means of coping with workplace stress (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Uchino, 2004). In short, this support can combat the factors that contribute to burnout.

However, social support's positive effects are muted when the third term, co-rumination, is at play. Co-rumination refers to conversations in which two or more individuals engage in venting sessions (Rose, 2002). More specifically, co-ruminators may be found “frequently

Kay

discussing problems, discussing the same problem repeatedly, [mutually encouraging] discussing problems, speculating about problems, and focusing on negative feelings” (Rose, 2002, p. 1830). Sharing organizational concerns can be potentially beneficial, strengthening relationships between individuals. Nevertheless, when the negative talk leaves those involved feeling emotionally drained, any positivity that might arise from the social interaction is negated (Boren, 2013; Uchida & Yamasaki, 2008). In other words, co-rumination does not improve individuals’ moods; instead, it creates a negative environment (Boren, 2013). Forensic teams may see co-rumination arise in conversations identified by Rowe and Cronn-Mills (2005) as “van talk,” interactions in which students re-enter the backstage, take off the mask of tournament professionalism, and express competitive frustration (McNabb & Cabara, 2006). However, when these conversations dwell upon the negative, they may be doing more harm to forensic students than good.

Page | 11

In attempt to prevent burnout and co-rumination while fostering positive social support, organizations implement the fourth term, workplace health promotions or WHPs. WHPs attempt to meet the embodied needs of those who comprise the organization, including the need for exercise (Proper, Koning, van der Beek, Hildebrandt, Bosscher, & van Mechelen, 2003; Zoller, 2003b), nutrition courses (Farrell & Geist-Martin, 2005), and health screenings (Farrell & Geist-Martin, 2005). The programs also strive to create spaces for physical activity (i.e., gyms; Scarduzio & Geist-Martin, 2016; Zoller, 2003b), psychological wellbeing resources (i.e., free, on-site, counseling services; meditation; and mental health resources; Benefits, 2014; Scarduzio & Geist-Martin, 2016), and support for tobacco and alcohol cessation (Scarduzio & Geist-Martin, 2016). Additionally, whole-person WHPs seek to recognize, respect, and provide resources for physical, psychological, social, and spiritual wellbeing (Scarduzio & Geist-Martin, 2016). Some forensic literature proposes WHP-like ideology for tournament structure, suggesting that competitions acknowledge competitor and coach health (Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992; Olson, 2004a; Workman, 2004). Although time, cost, and participant pushback are all potential barriers to whole-person wellness initiatives (Geist-Martin, Horsley, & Farrell, 2003; Scarduzio & Geist-Martin, 2016), “it is essential for organizations to consider a whole-person approach to their wellness campaigns for the success of the employees and of the organization as a whole” (Scarduzio & Geist-Martin, 2016, p. 182). As state and national forensic programs tend to identify as associations, they also hold responsibility for the wellbeing of their members.

Bodies Addressed

These members vary in age, stage of life, and experiences. As such, to simply address members is not enough. Rather, specific discussions of member types and their needs are necessary. Two kinds of members, in particular, currently manifest in preexisting forensic literature: forensic educators and forensic students.

Forensic Directors/Assistant Directors/Coaches/Educators. The most visible employees in forensic programs include (assistant) directors of forensics, coaches, and graduate assistants. We shall christen this group “forensic educators.” These individuals are, in essence,

All Good and Well?

perceived as the leaders of speech and debate programs. As such, they hold the responsibilities of guiding students in their events, registering for tournaments, and maintaining the team finances. However, these individuals wear many more hats in their programs. In addition to fulfilling the roles of coaches and administrators, they often act as counselors, drivers, problem-solvers, academic advisors, and nurturers (Chouinard & Kuyper, 2010), identities that are not always in agreement. Due to these many roles, several scholars have identified forensic educators as the heads of their forensic family, the parental units of their teams (Chouinard & Kuyper, 2010; White, 2005).

Page | 12

As such, the forensic educator's role falls directly under the umbrella of emotion labor, in which the individual must balance real self and performed self while on the clock (Hochschild, 1983; Tracy, 2000). Consequently, the line between occupational and familial is often blurred, leaving forensic professionals to navigate relational tensions at work, at home, and for the graduate student, at school (Chouinard & Kuyper, 2010; Colvert, 1997; Nelson, 2010; Outzen, 2016; Pettus & Danielson, 1994; Wickelgren & Phillips, 2008). In addition to psychological tensions regarding relationships, forensic educators face physical trials during their terms. They often drive long distances at late hours, frequently eat fast-food, have an irregular sleep cycle, and struggle to find time to regularly exercise (Dickmeyer, 2002; Gill, 1990, Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992; Richardson, 2005). Thus, these educators often navigate physical tribulations, such as obesity, nicotine addiction, and exhaustion. Working 16 hours a day, including weekends and late nights on campus, takes its toll on both mind and body (Carmack & Holm, 2013). Consequently, it is not surprising that forensic educators receive the most attention in forensic health literature. Their wellness is at risk.

Student Competitors. The second group of bodies is comprised of college student competitors. Although travel schedules differ depending on funding and interest, forensic team members are often on the road at least twice a month during the fall semester and even more frequently during the spring's national competition season. For example, my own team travels to approximately eight competitions in the spring, two of which are each one week long. Furthermore, my team is not the exception; it is not uncommon for larger programs to travel even more frequently in both fall and spring semesters.

This travel schedule creates challenges similar to those that student athletes face. Speech team members have less time to study, fewer weekends to rest, and potentially less break time than non-competing college students. Nevertheless, forensic programs rarely receive the same supportive resources granted to athletic teams. For example, one large, midwestern university's student-athlete handbook (Ohio University, 2017) details that student athletes will have access to tutors and study halls to help them navigate the challenges of a bustling travel schedule. In contrast, this same institution's forensic team handbook (Ohio University, 2016) does not indicate that the university provides the same resources for speech team members. While forensic team members do not experience the same physical exhaustion athletes face, they are prone to mental exhaustion and, like student athletes, would benefit from academic resources to

help them balance their lives as competitors and as students. After all, if a forensic student wishes to be a successful competitor, s/he/they must both maintain his/her/their grade point average and perform well at tournaments.

Forensic competitors experience both academic and competitive stress on a regular basis. As stress has been found to depress the immune system's tenacity (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004) and increase the potential for depression (van Praag, 2005), its presence in the forensic students' lives has real, negative health implications. Therefore, some scholars have postulated ways to decrease student stress (e.g., Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992). However, little work has examined the causes (e.g., poor diet, lack of exercise, and addiction) and negative impacts (e.g., obesity) of the forensic lifestyle on the students' bodies (e.g., Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992). Inquiry into the negative health trends these students face is overdue and just as significant as those faced by forensic educators. After all, with the exception of student-run teams, neither coach nor competitor exists without the other.

Methodological Approaches in Forensic Wellness Scholarship

Fortunately, some scholarship does exist with varying degrees of methodological diversity. The most dominant methodologies in health-related forensic research are surveys and reflective essays. Out of the 58 articles found on wellness-type topics in forensics, 14 employed a survey methodology in gathering and analyzing data (e.g. Billings, 2011; Carmack, 2016; Croucher, Thornton, & Eckstein, 2006; Carmack & Holm, 2005, 2013, 2015; Hughes, Gring, & Williams, 2006; Gill, 1990; Kosloski, 1994; Littlefield, 1991; Littlefield & Larson-Casselton, 2004; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992; Rogers & Rennels, 2008; Swift, 2007; Williams, McGee, & Worth, 2001). More specifically, five studies incorporated quantitative survey methodology (e.g., Carmack & Holm, 2013, 2015; Croucher, Thornton, & Eckstein, 2006; Gill, 1990; Rogers & Rennels, 2008), five employed qualitative questionnaires with open-ended questions (e.g., Carmack, 2016; Hughes, Gring, & Williams, 2006; Kosloski, 1994; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992; Williams, McGee, & Worth, 2001), and four engaged in a mixed methods approach (e.g., Billings, 2011; Carmack & Holm, 2005; Littlefield & Larson-Casselton, 2004; Swift, 2007). By far, the most prominent body of survey research is Carmack and Holm's (2005, 2013, 2015) work in team socialization, coach burnout, and social support of forensic educators.

Although most commonly used, survey methodology is not the only means by which forensic wellness issues are examined. In this literature review sample, I identified 20 reflective essays, including theoretical essays (e.g., Derryberry, 1995, 2005; Epping & Labrie, 2005; Friedley & Manchester, 2005; Orme, 2012; Richardson, 2005; Rowe & Cronn-Mills, 2005; Sellnow, 1994), state of the activity papers (e.g., Burnett, 2001; Dickmeyer, 2002; Gaer, 2002; Kirch, 2005; Leland, 2004; Olson, 2004a, 2004b; Preston, 1995; Schnoor, 2004; Trejo, 2004; White, 2005; Workman, 2004), and literature reviews (e.g., Hatfield, 2004; Littlefield, Sellnow, & Meister, 1994). Additionally, qualitative methods, such as interviews, historiographies, and rhetorical analyses, have been used to examine the negotiation of family and forensics (Wickelgren & Phillips, 2008), complaining culture (McNabb & Cabara, 2006), organizational

All Good and Well?

progression (Swift, 2007), and gendered ballot commentary (Hobbs, Hobbs, & Paine, 2007). Furthermore, several (auto)ethnographic and performance pieces have examined tensions within speech and debate, such as first-year and/or graduate coach trials (Chouinard & Kuyper, 2010; Colvert, 1997; Nelson, 2010; Outzen, 2016), emotion labor (Gilstrap & Gilstrap, 2003), and general concerns about forensic wellness (Alexander, 2004; Miller, 2011). In short, while established forensic scholarship reflects methodological diversity, a continuation of multiple research perspectives will establish rich findings that will improve both student and educator health.

Themes Within the Literature

Just as forensic health scholarship still needs diverse methodological practices, forensic wellness research calls for inquiry into diverse health issues. By identifying the current themes in existing scholarship, I indicate not just the areas in need of deeper consideration, but the voices that have and have not been heard in forensic literature. The two voices of interest in this review are educators and students.

Educators

What We Know. The first voice of interest in forensic scholarship is that of the educator. Also known as director of forensics, assistant director of forensics, or simply coach, the forensic educator provides leadership for the team and is responsible for its functionality, funding, and performance. Because educators are part of the team's core, their presence in the speech and debate community is critical. However, to be fully present requires a certain degree of personal wellness. As such, it is in the activity's best interest to acknowledge the trials faced by educators and suggest means of improving educator wellness. Within the 12 articles focused on the forensic educator's health, three main topics of discussion emerged: burnout, stress, and relational tension (see Appendix, Table 1).

Burnout. In the field of organizational communication, burnout has been broadly defined as "a psychological syndrome in response to chronic interpersonal stressors on the job" (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 399). While the concept can be simplified to "wearing out at work" (Maslach et al., 2001, as cited in Boren, 2013, p. 254), there is nothing simple about the impact of burnout on employee performance and wellbeing. Maslach et al. (2011) propose that burnout is a three-part concept comprised of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and lack of personal accomplishment. These three components are more apt to affect individuals who regularly interact with clients, such as teachers working with students (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Considering that forensic educators often work long hours (Carmack & Holm, 2013; Richardson, 2005), it is unsurprising that these coaches become physically, emotionally, and psychologically exhausted from their occupation's demands. This exhaustion may manifest as "intense reactions of anger, anxiety, restlessness, depression, tiredness, boredom, cynicism, guilt feelings, psychosomatic symptoms, and, in extreme cases, nervous breakdown" (Friedman, 1991, p. 325). Coaches may disengage and even resent their job due to an internal belief that they are

neither recognized nor supported by their institution nor their peers. Without social support, educators may be apt to trade in the team lifestyle for that of an assistant professor, lecturer, or in the case of the graduate student, teaching or research assistant.

Stress. Another area of inquiry revolves around forensic educator stress. Although *burnout* and *stress* could be perceived as synonymous descriptors of forensic educator exhaustion, “stress should not be equated with burnout” (Richardson, 2005, p. 108). Rather, stress *contributes* to burnout (Richardson, 2005) and can arise from a variety of sources. Preston (1995) explains that burnout can be sparked by pay and funding, recruitment, pressure to publish research while coaching winning teams, season length, and lack of support for forensics. Indeed, these financial, social, and occupational expectations and tensions can easily overwhelm the forensic educator, causing him/her/them to feel underappreciated, overworked, and unwanted by his/her/their department and/or institution.

Furthermore, this stress impacts more than one’s sense of accomplishment, self-worth, and self-potential. The need to educate, to win, to please the department, and to fight for funding all at once can have a catastrophic impact on the forensic educator’s body. As the Mayo Clinic (2016) explains, the human body does not differentiate between occupational and survival stressors; it perceives the everyday stress of the forensic lifestyle just as it would perceive a panther poised to pounce. Thus, when the forensic educator faces a chronic stressor, part of his/her/their brain sends the panic alarm to the kidney’s adrenal glands, which secrete high concentrations of cortisol. This hormone inhibits body systems like the immune system (Mayo Clinic, 2016) so the educator has more energy to fight or flee. This process is only supposed to be temporarily triggered, allowing the body to return to homeostasis after the threat is neutralized. However, when the stressors persist, the body maintains this fight-or-flight state of being. Consequently, the human body continues to secrete cortisol and will become more vulnerable to health conditions, including “anxiety, depression, digestive problems, headaches, heart disease, sleep problems, weight gain, [and/or] memory and concentration impairment” (Mayo Clinic, 2016, para. 9). Simply stated, the stress a forensic educator frequently feels may cause significant physical and psychological harm (Carmack & Holm, 2013; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992). Over time, these stressors will just continue to smolder.

Relational Tension. Burnout and stress both play significant roles in the forensic educator’s life. Another tension just as pertinent is the relational struggles forensic educators face with their families. The travel requirements of the job often keep coaches away from their families. Speech and debate is a unique field “in that the travel and time demands of the activity are different from the demands of a ‘regular’ faculty member or a typical nine-to-five job” (Pettus & Danielson, 1994, p. 48). Essentially, those who invest in the coaching career must balance forensic educator and parent identities and expectations. Dual coach-mothers express that they feel guilt after spending time away from their family. Mothers who coach “felt that they had to choose between extensive coaching and spending time at home — a perpetual dilemma which causes a great deal of stress” (Pettus & Danielson, 1994, p. 50). The mother who coaches

All Good and Well?

is basically caught in a double-bind of her dual role, for to mother is to take time away from her forensic family, yet to coach is to keep her from her own family.

Nevertheless, mothers are not the only forensic educators affected by this separation from family. Forensic educators will, at multiple points in their career, have to sacrifice time with family to prepare and travel with their teams (Jensen & Jensen, 2007b; Williams, McGee, & Worth, 2001). This is not just because of the time required to prepare, travel, and chaperone, but because of organizational norms, expectations, and insufficient support. Wickelgren and Phillips (2008) provide perhaps the clearest explanation, stating

Awareness of work and family roles and the hegemony that creates and maintains these roles is important for redefining the intersection between work and family. We entered this study expecting to find that forensics coaches were under tremendous pressure to place forensics at the top of their priorities and that work and family were incompatible. For the most part this is what we found. (p. 92)

Undeniably, exceptions exist. For years, forensic educators have coached teams and raised families simultaneously. One could argue that these educators know the lifestyle when they sign their contracts and enter into the speech and debate community and thus have exempted their right to vocalize dissatisfaction over relational tensions and occupational stressors that consequently arise. Nevertheless, just because someone signs a document does not mean the organization is not responsible for maintaining a quality workplace experience and promoting healthy and achievable expectations for its members. Organizational hegemony is ingrained, yet the messages and initiatives it projects can be modified to ensure speech associations illustrate that a) they care for the wellbeing of involved members and b) they are committed to decreasing forensic educator burnout.

What We Don't Know. Thus far in the literature on forensic educator wellness, scholars have focused on burnout, stress, and relational tensions coaches weather during the course of their careers. However, two significant gaps exist in the overarching research agenda: first, the financial tension between food and funding and second, the management of chronic health conditions while traveling (see Appendix, Table 2).

Food and Funding. A common complaint in forensic literature is the poor nutrition coaches consume during tournament weekends (Carmack & Holm, 2013). Often, fast food becomes the staple of the forensic diet due, in part, to its sheer ease. However, accessibility is not the only reason forensic educators fill their plates with greasy, fried goods. Many cannot afford healthier alternatives. A concern spanning years of forensic research is that of budgetary restriction and management (Kirch, 2005). Indeed, models have been proposed to navigate this challenging terrain (see Kirch, 2005), as have recommendations for maintaining quality relationships with university administration (Cunningham, 2005). A persistent concern among forensic educators is the stark reality of program defunding, which spurs educators to prove the value of their program to university administration. However, prior inquiry indicates that programs fold not because the administration fails to see the significance of speech and debate.

Rather, programs liquidize because of insufficient funding to support the team (Littlefield, 1991). Still, forensic educators strive to illustrate how speech and debate programs provide experiential education for students (Sellnow, 1994) in an attempt to maintain what funding they have. With this monetary concern in mind, forensic educators often opt for a cheaper diet when using the university's money to emphasize the program's financial conscientiousness. Essentially, educators pay the health price of fast food to afford the entry fees and keep the team afloat.

Although this health-budget tension is common knowledge to those who coach in the speech and debate community, little research has recently examined the relationship between program budget and health of the forensic educator, nor the personal perspectives regarding coach diet and overall wellbeing. Contemporary research is needed to contribute to previously established lines of coach health inquiry, as well as provide new insight into the logic of eating cheaply.

Chronic Health Conditions and Travel. An additional line of research that forensic scholars have yet to dissect is the forensic educator's management of chronic health conditions during travel. As previously mentioned, the stressful lifestyle of speech and debate can trigger many significant health concerns, including depression and anxiety, heart disease, and gastrointestinal upsets (Mayo Clinic, 2016). Furthermore, far more health issues unrelated to stress may manifest in a person's life. Despite these health tensions, however, forensic educators must spend many hours on the road and out of town. Consequently, coaches with underlying chronic health conditions — like diabetes, asthma, and arthritis — may face situations in which their health should be prioritized, but is brushed aside due to the demands of the forensic activity. Thus, academic inquiry is greatly needed to contemplate the challenges coaches with chronic illnesses face, examine the ways in which they have handled these tensions, and consider how speech and debate organizations might support these individuals as they navigate the dual needs of supporting the team and caring for themselves.

Students

Nevertheless, while inquiry of forensic educator wellness is critical to the team's ability to function, forensic educators are largely outnumbered by those who compete. Namely, forensic students also warrant scholarship. Although addressed less than educators, the student population has entered the conversation.

What We Know. Also known as the competitor or participant, the student is a critical component of the team. Indeed, without students, teams would not exist. If the educator is the heart, the student is everything else. Nevertheless, research on the student is primarily limited to student performance, both in general terms (e.g., Gaer, 2002; Olson, 2010) and gendered concerns (e.g., Croucher, Thornton, & Eckstein, 2006; Furgerson & Rudnick, 2014; Dhillon & Larson, 2011; Donovan, 2012; Manchester & Friedley, 2003; White, 1997). Fewer studies have examined student health issues (e.g., Hatfield, 2004; Kosloski, 1994; Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992; Olson, 2004b; Trejo, 2004). Thus, the speech and debate community is greatly in need of

All Good and Well?

not only research on coach wellness, but on student health, as well (see Appendix, Tables 1 and 2).

Stress. Like educators, forensic students are exposed to highly stressful scenarios on a regular basis. Some stress may be partially attributed to communication apprehension, also known as speech anxiety (Littlefield, Sellnow, & Meister, 1994). However, much stress stems from environmental factors. Forensic students may fret that their access to food and water, sleep deprivation, rushed tournament schedule, and inability to exercise will influence their performances (Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992). Indeed, the first issue is of particular concern. The degree to which the team covers students' food costs differs between universities and is largely dependent upon the budget of the program. Some schools give each student a small stipend for the entirety of the tournament. Others fully cover the cost of meals. However, even universities who pay for student meals often cap the amount a student may spend. Thus, some students must supplement their meal costs. In more severe cases, students must fend for themselves during tournaments. One forensic educator observed students gathering pecans from a tree because they did not have access to food during the tournament (Trejo, 2004). Although this is an extreme anecdote, the reality remains that students wish to focus on their events, but additional, justified worries often distract them from giving their best performances. Hunger, thirst, and exhaustion do not help students reach their final round goals. While students may engage in routines to decrease stress caused by communication apprehension, they often are at the mercy of environmental factors when it comes to food-related anxiety.

Relational Tensions. Environmental stress is a significant struggle for the forensic student, but relational tensions are just as prominent. More specifically, interaction with family members — or lack thereof — is a matter addressed in forensic literature. Part of this tension comes from family pressure (Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992), both perceived and real. However, much strife arises from time spent traveling. Simply stated, students spend about 75% of their academic year preparing and performing away from family (Jensen & Jensen, 2007b). On the macro-level, students sacrifice much of their year to become better communicators and earn additional accolades. The same can be said for the micro-level, as well. Weekends are not sacred family time for forensic competitors, nor are holidays. As Jensen and Jensen (2007b) note, “it is not unusual for participants to choose between sharing holidays with family or forensic colleagues” (p. 19). Becoming a champion requires one to make sacrifices, including time spent relaxing with one's family. Although this sacrifice is ultimately a student's choice, that does not mean such a lifestyle is easy.

This area of contention — dwindling interaction with family — is an area in need of additional inquiry. Williams and Hughes (2003) state,

. . . intuitively, we suspect that student satisfaction among forensic students increases as their family communication increases. Our contention is that forensic students will have greater overall student satisfaction if forensics (and other activities) do not excessively impede communication with family members. (p. 35)

Separation from family can cause students stress, so further research is needed to identify possible ways of establishing a stronger balance between forensics and family (Jensen & Jensen, 2007b). Coach suggestions for increased communication — like encouraging parents to send care packages, inviting parents to forensic events, and reminding students to keep their families informed of their performances — have been proposed (Williams & Hughes, 2003).

Furthermore, educators have been urged to interact directly with family members, including making phone calls, sending emails, and distributing newsletters with information about the team's successes and endeavors (Williams & Hughes, 2003). Although such engagement does not compensate for lost time, it does keep a channel of communication open between students' and families' lives. Suggestions like these could benefit the students' sense of connection with their families. However, as the dates of these studies illustrate, forensic scholarship is long overdue for inquiry into navigating the family-forensic dialectic in an era of communicative technological advances.

Team Identification. The third area of known scholarship focuses on team identification. Forensic researchers have examined means of socializing teams and fostering a sense of camaraderie, shared group identity, and tradition (e.g., Carmack & Holm, 2005; Derryberry, 2005; Friedley & Manchester, 2005; Jensen & Jensen, 2007a; Orme, 2012; Rowe & Cronn-Mills, 2005). Indeed, team identification can ultimately motivate (Derryberry, 1995). Overarching social support is beneficial for the forensic student, but when negative interactions arise, time spent with teammates becomes another source of stress. This stress may stem from struggles with team cohesion (Miller, 2011) and/or verbal abuse within the team family, such as unrelenting criticism and trivialization (Hobbs, Hobbs, Veuleman, & Redding, 2003). Team members may verbally pressure others to conform to team norms because they wish to protect the team image, ensure the journey toward the team goal is not slowed, and/or avoid deviant behavior that makes team members feel uncomfortable (Clark, 1979). Unfortunately, the effects of peer rejection are strongly related to depression (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Rudolph, Hammen, & Burge, 1994), meaning that team rejections of deviant behavior may deleteriously impact the targeted members' mental wellbeing. As Kopala-Sibley et al. (2013) explain,

When children are left out of activities by friends or are explicitly told they will be liked only if they act a certain way (i.e., are relationally victimized), they may believe that this is due to some fault with them that may be corrected. They may then try to alter their behaviour in the belief that altering one's behaviour can garner social status, which may ultimately lead to the development of feelings of inadequacy following setbacks, and the belief that altering one's behaviour may correct this. (p. 45)

Although collegiate forensic competitors are not children, they too may be negatively impacted when peers reject ideas and behavior that deviate from expectations. As simple a phrase as “you did what?” (Epping & Labrie, 2005, p. 18) may contribute to the member's sense of belonging and self-esteem.

All Good and Well?

Just as peer rejection may contribute to negative mental health outcomes, stress may also stem from identification with the team itself. After all, if students' self-concepts become so intertwined in the group identity that they must negate their own personal boundaries to fit into the group dynamic, such as by self-disclosing more personal information than they so desire, they have "relinquished a portion of [their] own identit[ies] to mesh with the rest of [their] team" (Rowe & Cronn-Mills, 2005, p. 104). Furthermore, high identification with a peer group prone to

Page | 20

Ultimately, forensic literature on student wellbeing is lacking.

risky behavior (i.e., tobacco use) tends to direct members to engage in that behavior (Fuqua et al., 2012). The strong sense of team identity and belonging is, by no means, an innately negative phenomenon.

However, with it comes the potential for peer pressure to manifest, even indirectly, and contribute to students feeling pressured to adhere to group behaviors, such as complaining (McNabb & Cabara, 2006) and engaging in traditions (Rowe & Cronn-Mills, 2005). Consequently, students may feel a sense of lost self, a sense of inauthenticity when on the road. By becoming one with the team, they lose sight of who they are as individuals.

Although this primary research on group identity and team cohesion has greatly contributed to the community's understanding of team identity development, additional research is needed to examine, sadly, the darker side of team identity that impacts the students' social and psychological wellbeing. For example, inquiry into the tension arising from social media conversations — often out of the forensic educator's sight — that demean, bully, and/or harass other students is greatly needed in the field to help forensic educators form team policies and protect students from deleterious online interactions that might tarnish their speech and debate experience.

What We Don't Know. Ultimately, forensic literature on student wellbeing is lacking. Although I have mentioned several research gaps already, there are two predominant areas in need of elaboration. Future research needs to address first, the challenges faced by differently-abled and chronically ill students and second, current trends in obesity and tobacco use (see Appendix, Table 2).

Differently-Abled and Chronically Ill Students. Despite heralding the forensic community's mission for social justice and inclusivity, forensic research has yet to fully examine the challenges faced by differently-abled and/or chronically ill students competing in speech and debate. On a functional, practical level, tournaments are typically accommodating of the needs of such students and want to ensure they have a positive experience. However, little theoretical work has examined the limitations these students face on the bus, in the hotel, and during the tournament. Only two articles in this sample explicitly focus on differently-abled forensic students (e.g., Einerson, 1971; Kosloski, 1994). Considering the rise of chronic illness in the United States, scholarly conversations about policy and practice are needed in forensic literature to ensure all students have access to a positive tournament experience.

Kay

Obesity and Tobacco Use. Similarly, the lack of research on student struggles with obesity and tobacco use is also of considerable concern. The last time a research team explicitly discussed forensic student obesity was in the early 1990s (e.g., Littlefield & Sellnow, 1992). While references to weight and substance use occasionally grace the pages of forensic articles on general wellness, little scholarship addresses the physical state of our forensic students *today*. From casual observation as a forensic educator, I have noticed many students struggle with weight gain by their junior year of competition. As a former competitor, I can say that I am *still* battling the pounds I accrued during my competition days. Furthermore, obesity is not the only concern. Tobacco use is also a topic the forensic community must begin to address. I rarely attend a tournament without seeing at least one group of students smoking along the sidewalks. Nevertheless, my word is simply not enough. Both quantitative and qualitative research is needed to identify the trends in obesity and tobacco use among forensic students, hear the narratives of those struggling with addiction and weight gain, and outline organizational means of supporting students in improving their wellbeing. As medical knowledge and nation-wide trends in health continue to evolve, the forensic community must keep up with the wellness times to ensure the survival of its students and itself.

Page | 21

Future Research

The forensic world has begun the journey in protecting educator and student wellbeing, but the trek is far from complete. There are many potential research agendas in need of elaboration — and initiation — to determine best practices for forensic participants, programs, and organizations. These agendas include academic and financial student stress, team co-rumination, student burnout, forensic whole-person WHPs, differently-abled and/or chronically ill student challenges, obesity and tobacco trends in the forensic community, financial tension between food and funding, the management of chronic health conditions while traveling, family-forensic dialectic and technology, and the dark side of team identity online (see Appendix, Table 2). I present these agendas based on the most significant gaps I identified in the preexisting literature. Furthermore, as a forensic educator, I have unfortunately individually witnessed situations that fall into each of these categories. By conducting research about these concerns, scholars may discover data to support anecdotal evidence and spur organizational initiatives.

The first area in need of inquiry pertains to the student. Seven agendas, in particular, warrant further scrutiny. First, students, like educators, experience forensic burnout. Identifying the causes of forensic student burnout could provide programs and organizations invaluable information to mitigate tensions and properly address the emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and/or feelings of insufficient accomplishment that impact the students' experience. Second, like burnout, health is often tied to secondary stressors, such as academic performance and college finances. These two stressors are largely ignored in forensic research and should be examined to understand the students' struggle to balance speech and school time, as well as living and forensic expenses. After all, suits do not pay for themselves, nor their dry-cleaning. Third, although related to the well-examined concept of stress, co-rumination is a fairly recent research

All Good and Well?

agenda in the field of communication studies. It would behoove forensic scholars to incorporate this concept into their scholarly inquiries to improve the psychological and social wellbeing of students. Fourth, the experiences and challenges faced by differently-abled and/or chronically ill forensic students demand acknowledgement. Only two research articles focus on these competitors, making them perhaps the most overlooked population in forensic literature. To truly embrace inclusivity, the activity should listen to these students and propose policy for improving their experiences. Fifth, forensic scholars should also evaluate the wellness trends of students, especially trends that are of current concern nationwide (i.e., smoking and obesity) to determine where we are lacking most. Sixth, technology has significantly changed since the 1990s and early 2000s. As such, studies examining how forensic students navigate the tension between forensic success and family participation through online media would provide current context to the conversation of balancing team and home. Seventh, the dark side of technology, such as negative social media communication between team members, deserves consideration, as well. The dark side of computer-mediated communication (CMC) is of significant interest in the field of communication studies today, so incorporating this literature into a forensic context could grant educators insight into handling online tensions between team members.

Page | 22

Without question, more research on the student experience is needed in the forensic world. Less literature focuses on student health than educator health. Nevertheless, despite the breadth of research on forensic educators, deeper inquiry is still needed. Obesity and tobacco usage trends, financial tension between diet and budget, and management of chronic health conditions all warrant further research to provide evidence and advocate for wellness changes in speech and debate organizations. Coaches are often the folks who have the wheel, the judging pen, and students' backs, so their wellbeing is truly of the utmost importance.

Finally, forensic organizations must begin to consider whole-person WHPs to protect their students and their educators. Fortunately, this component of the forensic community has not gone unacknowledged. In 1997, the American Forensic Association presented a set of NIET wellness initiatives for that year's individual events tournament (AFA, 1991). Furthermore, forensic scholars presented a set of four wellness recommendations at the First Developmental Conference on Individual Events based on the findings of Hatfield, Hatfield, and Carver's (1989) study. The Tournament Management Practice Division recommended 1) "to create a shared vision of what a tournament experience should include for healthy competition," 2) "to enhance awareness of the stressful nature of forensic tournaments and provide guidance through information for stress reduction and management," 3) "to provide information to the forensic community on the wellness approach to forensics by having all national organizations promote programs on that orientation," and 4) "to encourage tournament hosts to analyze and meet the need of the forensic community even if it places more demands on the host" (Hatfield, Hatfield, & Carver, 1989, p. 32). However,

... forensic organizations must begin to consider whole-person WHPs to protect their students and their educators.

Kay

recommendations are but empty words without active initiative. Thus far, very few of these suggestions have been put into practice. As Carmack (2016) reflects, AFA and NFA qualification requirements can conflict with healthy tournament praxis. Too often, students sacrifice wellness on their journey for a spot at the national table. Therefore, contemporary forensic scholars must begin the publication push to encourage forensic organizations to act upon these previously established best practices and ensure we truly practice what we so often preach.

Page | 23

Conclusion

Coaches and students should never have to brush their health aside to pursue their passion. Health should be a recognized right and be supported by both speech organizations and individual programs. After refreshing our forensic knowledge of general information and terminology, the bodies addressed in forensic literature, and utilized methodologies; identifying themes to establish areas in need of further examination; and presenting future research agendas for forensic scholars, this paper granted a stronger conceptualization of the areas in which health-related forensic scholarship and practices must improve. Health conversations may have started in the forensic community, but these conversations must not be left in the early 2000s. Just as students approach their persuasive speeches should forensic scholars address these gaps and anecdotal concerns. Scholars must solidify both the problems and causes of wellness issues in the activity, propose achievable solutions on the organizational and team levels, and advocate for the activity to enact these initiatives so that students and educators may personally benefit. Carmack (2016) notes the paradox of students calling for healthy choices in their rounds, only to walk out the door to the embrace of a cigarette, the smell of poor quality food, or the absence of sustenance entirely. It is all good and well to articulate a call to action and even better to write in response. However, I urge you, fellow educators, to write with the intent to apply. Write with the intent to enact. Write until we are well.



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Appendix

Table 1: Themes Within the Literature			
Bodies of Interest	Themes	Authors	Publication
Forensic Educators*	Burnout	Carmack & Holm (2013)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Dickmeyer (2002)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Gill (1990)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Richardson (2005)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Rogers & Rennels (2008)	<i>The Forensic</i>
Forensic Educators	Stress	Burnett (2001)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Chouinard & Kuyper (2010)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Dickmeyer (2002)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Littlefield & Sellnow (1992)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Preston (1995)	<i>The Forensic</i>
Forensic Educators	Relational Tensions	Carmack & Holm (2015)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Colvert (1997)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Gilstrap & Gilstrap (2003)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Nelson (2010)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Outzen (2016)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Pettus & Danielson (1994)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Rogers & Rennels (2008)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Schnoor & Green (1989)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		White (2005)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Wickelgren and Phillips (2008)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Williams, McGee, & Worth (2001)	<i>Argumentation and Advocacy</i>
Forensic Educators	Basic Health	Alexander (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Dickmeyer (2002)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Leland (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Performance	Gaer (2002)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Olson (2010)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Gender	Croucher, Thornton, & Eckstein (2006)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Dhillon & Larson (2011)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Donovan (2012)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Furgerson & Rudnick (2014)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Manchester & Friedley (2003)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
White (1997)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>		
<i>Continue to next page.</i>			

Forensic Students	Health Issues	Billings (2011)	<i>Argumentation and Advocacy</i>
		Hatfield (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Kosloski (1994)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Littlefield & Sellnow (1992)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Olson (2004b)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Trejo (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Stress	Littlefield & Larson-Casselton (2004)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Littlefield & Sellnow (1992)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Littlefield, Sellnow, & Meister (1994)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Trejo (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Relational Tensions	Hughes, Gring, & Williams (2006)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Jensen & Jensen (2007b)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Littlefield & Sellnow (1992)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Williams & Hughes (2003)	<i>The Forensic</i>
Forensic Students	Team Identification	Carmack & Holm (2005)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Derryberry (1995)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Derryberry (2005)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Epping & Labrie (2005)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Friedley & Manchester (2005)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Hobbs et al. (2003)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Jensen & Jensen (2007a)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Miller (2011)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		McNabb & Cabara (2006)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Orme (2012)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Rowe & Cronn-Mills (2005)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Organizations	Gendered Ballots	Hobbs, Hobbs, & Paine (2007)	<i>The Forensic</i>
Forensic Organizations	Organizational Progression	Swift (2007)	<i>Speaker & Gavel</i>
* Forensic Educator includes (Assistant) Directors of Forensics, Specialized Coaches, and Graduate Assistants.			

All Good and Well?

Table 2: Agendas in Need of Further Inquiry			
Bodies of Interest	Themes	Authors	Publication
Forensic Educators*	Funding & Food	Carmack & Holm (2013)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Cunningham (2005)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Kirch (2005)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Littlefield (1991)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Sellnow (1994)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Educators	Chronic Health Conditions & Travel	No research found.	
Forensic Educators	Obesity & Tobacco Use	Littlefield & Sellnow (1992)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Differently-Abled and/or Chronically Ill Students	Einerson (1971)	<i>The Forensic</i>
		Kosloski (1994)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Obesity & Tobacco Use	Littlefield & Sellnow (1992)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Nutrition	Trejo (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Burnout	No research found.	
Forensic Students	Academic Stress	No research found.	
Forensic Students	Financial Stress	No research found.	
Forensic Students	Co-rumination	McNabb & Cabara (2006)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
Forensic Students	Family-Forensic Dialectic & Technology	No research found.	
Forensic Students	Dark Side of Team Identity Online	No research found.	
Forensic Organizations	Wellness Health Programs/ Tournament Practices	Carmack (2016)	<i>Speaker & Gavel</i>
		Hatfield, Hatfield, & Carver (1989)	<i>Perspectives on Individual Events: Proceedings of the First Developmental Conference on Individual Events</i>
		Olson (2004a)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Schnoor (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
		Workman (2004)	<i>National Forensic Journal</i>
*Forensic Educator includes (Assistant) Directors of Forensics, Specialized Coaches, and Graduate Assistants.			



(Re)Designing the Debate Tournament for Civic Life

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(Re)Designing the Debate Tournament for Civic Life

John J. Rief

Page | 36

The presence of public audiences in competitive contest rounds, a central feature of early intercollegiate debate practice, was largely eliminated during the ascent of the tournament model over the last century. However, audience participation in tournament designs has recently become a topic of conversation among those committed to transforming the activity in line with the emerging civic and public attitudes of higher education. Given the preliminary nature of this conversation, we currently lack robust models for and scholarly reflection about the role audiences might play within the calcified and secluded structures of tournament debating. Building on recent work in American intercollegiate debate scholarship and practice, this essay recovers a little noted multimodal adjudication system or MAS (i.e., the use of multiple judging styles simultaneously) implemented at Stanford University on April 2, 1925 as an historical design resource for visualizing the role of audiences in debate competitions. Recovering this system provides a context to employ an historical antecedent as a small-scale case study to inform one approach to tournament redesign in the present. In addition, this essay reflects on numerous advantages of translating the Stanford system into contemporary tournament designs, especially: (1) the value of revisiting historical practices to rediscover pedagogical and competitive elements that have been forgotten over time; (2) the importance of acknowledging critical differences between the activity's past and present; and, (3) implementing experimental tournament designs that generate novel features of interest for debate, argumentation, and rhetorical scholars.

Key Words: civic education, civic and public debate, intercollegiate debate, multimodal judging, tournament design

Few words could adequately capture the experience of participating in an intercollegiate debate tournament. Though my focus here is on U.S. competitions, the same could be said for numerous international debate competitions as well. Tournament participants can readily supply endless anecdotes including the cultivation of powerful professional and personal relationships (Batt & Schulz, 2005; Zarefsky, 2017), unparalleled learning opportunities (Louden, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2010a, 2010b), stories of wins and losses both deserved and unfair, and numerous other experiences with lasting significance in their lives (“Alumni Testimonials,” 2010; Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014). Mitchell (2000) expressed the potency of tournament debating in the preface to his award-winning book on missile defense, a scholarly achievement he attributed in part to his participation in National Debate Tournament (NDT) events: “policy debate is an odd and magical place, where a keen spirit of competition drives

(Re)Designing Debate

debaters to amass voluminous research . . . and where the resulting density of ideas spurs speakers to cram arguments into strictly timed presentation periods” (p. xvi). Whether at the NDT or other formats currently practiced in the U.S., tournament debating shapes the intellectual and relational growth of its participants yielding many benefits including critical thinking, research, organization, writing, and civic engagement (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Batt & Schulz, 2005; O’Donnell et al., 2010; Panetta et al., 2010).

Page | 37

However, tournament debating has invited numerous criticisms over the last century, especially in terms of its narrow pedagogical impact on a small cadre of participants in largely empty classrooms (Batt & Schulz, 2005; Llano, n.d.; Mitchell, 1998), competitive vicissitudes (Atchison & Panetta, 2009; Keith, 2007, 2010; Llano, n.d., 2017; Mitchell, 1998; Panetta et al., 2010), and controversial practices (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Greene & Hicks, 2005; Keith, 2007). One of the most durable critiques has been the seclusion of tournaments from the public square. Mitchell (1998) famously invoked Felski’s phrase “hermetically sealed forums” (as quoted in Mitchell, 1998, p. 46) to describe the reclusive characteristics of modern tournament life, a feature he attempted to overcome by advocating for public and community outreach. Llano (n.d.) introduced the metaphor of “the singularity” (p. 1) to characterize “the tournament . . . as a rhetorical black hole, a force that all rhetoric uttered about debating must gravitate toward, eliminating space for other conceptions of debate” (p. 2), thus noting how the tournament model has limited the landscape of pedagogical innovation in intercollegiate debate. These downsides of tournament participation have been and will continue to be of major concern for debate practitioners, especially given growing calls to transform higher education into a space for civic engagement (Albiniak, 2010; Keith, 2010; New, 2016; Rief & Wilson, in press).

Indeed, tournament debating does not easily fit into the increasingly civic attitude not only of higher education but also of intercollegiate debate scholarship (Albiniak, 2010; Hogan, Kurr, Bergmaier, & Johnson, 2017; Keith, 2010). Recent projects to recover historical models of debating clearly more integrated into civic and public life (Hogan & Kurr, 2017a, 2017b; Keith, 2007, 2010; Llano, n.d., 2017; McKown, 2017) raise major questions about the value of debating in the secluded space of tournaments. For example, Hogan and Kurr (2017b) recently articulated the formidable work of “Progressive Era” practitioners “to promote more public deliberation” in an effort to find “solutions to their problems in the collective wisdom of the people” (p. 6). Recovering this era’s vision of public deliberation might, they suggested, reveal methods to ameliorate the “Civic Malaise” that has brought widespread “political apathy and civic decay” to our democratic culture (Hogan & Kurr, 2017b, p. 3). Crucially, as Bartanen and Littlefield (2014) observed, the principles of the Progressive Era, which they dated from 1880-1914, framed the development of what they called the “Public Oratory Era” (pp. 27-53) of debating, a period that extended past the early days of Progressivism until WWII (see also Keith, 2007, 2010). Notably, throughout a significant portion of this time, intercollegiate debate was not locked in isolated classrooms but practiced with and for audiences, thus making it a powerful educational crucible for student participants *and* the public at large (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Keith, 2007, 2010; Llano, n.d., 2017; McKown, 2017).

Critiques of the tournament and a renewed interest in historical intercollegiate debate practices have opened up new ground for engaging in what I call the *civic restoration of the activity*, a phrase I use to highlight historically inspired modes of practice tethering debate to civic dialogue, community discussion, and public deliberation. However, the move to restore the civic, community, and public status of intercollegiate debate tournaments faces at least one major barrier: the assumption that tournaments are not the right modality for engaging publics given their designed inaccessibility (Keith, 2010). Working from this assumption, many contemporary debate practitioners have advanced “public debate” and other community-oriented programs as more appropriate antidotes to the insularity of tournaments (Albiniak, 2010; Llano, n.d.; Rief & Wilson, in press). However, if we exclude tournament debating from the ongoing project to achieve closer ties with our surrounding communities, we will fail to embrace the opportunity to (re)envision one of the most powerful pedagogical forms, and one of the most popular (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Mabrey & Richards, 2017), developed by intercollegiate debate as a tool for the activity’s renewal in the 21st century. Moreover, such a failure would ignore significant efforts to redesign tournament debating that have recently begun to value and, in some rare instances, achieve the inclusion of public audiences.

In light of these nascent efforts, this paper investigates potential synergies between competition and education, insularity and public impact, and expert and civic decision making simultaneously. In the sections that follow, I first detail emergent experimental efforts throughout the activity that challenge the divide between tournament and public debating. Second, following Batt and Schulz (2005), I argue such experimentation should include attention to the process of design and the resources necessary to manifest pedagogically valuable events. Third, I recover an event held at Stanford University in 1925 and employ it as an historical design resource for re-envisioning tournament competition as a simultaneously public and competitive activity. In particular, I focus on the use of a *multimodal adjudication system* or MAS (i.e., the use of expert judges *and* public audience members to adjudicate a debate) at this event. Notably, multimodal adjudication has not received significant attention in recent histories of the activity (see e.g., Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Keith, 2007). Thus, its recovery promises to change our understanding of both the history of the activity and current efforts to achieve the inclusion of audiences in contest rounds. This essay concludes with an extended consideration of the potential benefits of multimodal adjudication in terms of the shifting grounds of higher education and public deliberation in the 21st century.



“I recover an event held at Stanford University in 1925 and employ it as an historical design resource for re-envisioning tournament competition as a simultaneously public and competitive activity.”

Challenging a “Paradigm Difference”: Embracing the *Reality* of Audiences at Tournaments

In their practitioner guide to hosting public debates, Broda-Bahm, Kempf, and Driscoll (2004) noted “a ‘paradigm difference’” between public and tournament debating: “rather than being centered upon competition or upon a judge, public debates ought to be centered on the audience” (p. 73). As noted earlier, the assertion of this difference is justified by the traditional exclusion of audiences from tournament designs (Llano, n.d.). And yet, debate practitioners have begun to recognize tournament structures are in fact flexible and open to renegotiation. Significant efforts to reform tournaments to align with at least the *ideal* of public relevance emerged from the 1970s to 1990s (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Cirlin, 2002; McGee, 2002; Preston, 2006) and continue to the present day. For example, British Parliamentary debate has recently gained serious traction in the U.S., bringing a renewed commitment to “public reasoning” (Eckstein & Bartanen, 2015, pp. 465-466) as a tool for the civic education of student-participants. While such reforms and emergent formats have been criticized for their embrace of “a presumed audience” who “gains no benefits from the debate” while “the real public remains untouched” (Broda-Bahm et al., 2004, p. 21), they do indicate an “experimental” (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, p. 297; Keith, 2007) spirit and attentiveness to civic life in the competitive domain of tournaments.

What’s more, this spirit of experimentation was at least in part a catalyst for the emergence of public debating. Tournament practitioners seeking to break down the wall between the classroom and the public square were central players in the promotion of public debate (DeLancey & Ryan, 1990; Mitchell, 1998; Newman, 1970). As early as the 1970s, Newman (1970) and Wenzel (1971) articulated the need for building community-oriented and public events to expand the debating experience beyond the tournament site. Notably, Newman (1970) attached tournament debating to public debating, arguing that the former can and should inform skills development relevant, even necessary, for the latter. As pointed out by Rief and Wilson (in press), 21st efforts to promote a public interface for intercollegiate debate have yielded significant reflection on the state of the activity at major conferences and in recent debate scholarship (Hogan & Kurr, 2017a; 2017b; Loudon, 2010). Furthermore, public and tournament debating have increasingly become complementary modes of practice in what Zarefsky (2017) recently called “the comprehensive speech and debate program,” a framework offering “both curricular and cocurricular components, featuring both competitive and noncompetitive activities, involving both speech and debate, on the local and national circuits, oriented both to the campus as a protopublic space and to public life generally” (p. xvi). However, despite mounting calls for “comprehensive” programmatic design, significant concerns remain about fusing public and tournament debating rather than practicing them as complementary but clearly separate activities. For example, Llano (n.d.) warned against the deleterious consequences of adopting tournament practices (e.g., styles of delivery, argumentative strategies, and formats) for public events, especially in terms of adequately addressing non-debate, public audiences. In response to this risk, Llano (n.d.) suggested “offering tournaments as one portion of a larger

Rief

debate menu” (p. 25), thus envisioning the activities of comprehensive programs as a series of discrete options rather than synergistic endeavors. Llano’s concerns are certainly justified; however, if taken to the end of the line, they occlude possibilities for rethinking tournament designs with public audiences in mind.

Taking a different perspective on the more “comprehensive” vision of intercollegiate debate, some practitioners and scholars have argued for tournament reform aimed at enhancing public and civic engagement opportunities for participants. For example, Atchison and Panetta (2009) recommended “tournament experimentation” (p. 325) including utilizing “lay audiences” (p. 331) in contest rounds. Leeper et al. (2010) argued for “changes in judging” and “alter[ing] the structure of tournaments to require that one or more rounds be judged by a member of the community” (p. 150; see also Keith, 2010). Innovations resembling those summarized above have been implemented at major invitational tournaments. For example, the Lafayette Debates hosted by George Washington University and the French Embassy fosters a “unique dialogue that emerges not only between the competing students, but also between the students and the French and U.S. professionals, scholars, soldiers, diplomats and others serving as judges for the competitions” (“The Lafayette Debates,” 2018, para. 1). In addition, students competing at the Madison Cup at the James Madison Commemorative Debate and Citizens Forum are judged by “a three to seven member panel, or jury . . . comprised of local residents, students, professors, distinguished JMU alumni, and special invited guests” (“2018 Madison Cup,” 2018, para. 11).

Page | 40

The emergence of tournaments like those noted in the previous paragraph have inspired a recognition that innovative tournament designs, including audience participation and judges with expertise outside of debate, may yield major dividends. For example, Mabrey and Richards (2017) documented support for changing tournament designs among students in policy-based formats. They argued debate practitioners should continue to innovate in order to foster pedagogical dexterity and serve ever more diverse stakeholders (Mabrey & Richards, 2017). Furthermore, efforts are underway to promote and sustain reflective experimentation as a cornerstone of what some have taken to calling “civic debate.” For example, the Civic Debate Directors Conference, originally conceived by John Meany of the Claremont Colleges and Paul Hayes of The George Washington University, offers practitioners a forum to design tournaments and other events specifically aimed at achieving civic impact and, in some cases, the inclusion of public audiences (“Civic Debate Directors Conference,” 2016). This annual event, referred to in its most recent iteration as the Civic Debate Conference, has been crucial in the development of “civic debate” including a variety of approaches to planning experimental events that bring debaters into contact with a wide array of academic, community, and government actors (“Civic Debate Conference,” 2018).

The innovations detailed above suggest intercollegiate debate is beginning to cross a threshold into a period of transformative rethinking, one Bartanen and Littlefield (2014) argued is evidenced by, “the presence of multiple frameworks” (p. 304). From their perspective, this multiplicity “marks the entry of forensics into the postmodern era. Instead of unity as an

(Re)Designing Debate

overarching value in a zero-sum environment, allowance for paradoxes to coexist within the community to sustain its viability has become the more dominant perspective” (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, p. 304). I endorse this postmodern trajectory of tournament and format design; however, while new formats, initiatives, and scholarly discussions aimed at integrating the public back into the contest round are gaining ground, scholars and practitioners have yet to engage in sustained and historically informed reflection about the stakes of the choices being made. What we lack is a robust account of how to include public audiences into the competitive atmosphere of tournament debating that both promotes civic education for participants and retains the “competitive spirit” (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, p. 34) that has driven the participation of students in the activity. Building such an account requires significant reflection on the pedagogical and competitive goals of our new designs, the topic of the next section.

Cultivating Resources for Tournament (Re)Design

At the 2003 Alta Argumentation Conference, Batt and Schulz (2005) attempted to reinvigorate what they viewed as a largely defunct conversation about tournament practices by proposing a set of “Design Principles” (p. 510) for reconsidering what we do and what we hope to accomplish when we host tournaments and public events. While Snider (1984) had framed the “tournament host” as a “designer” (p. 123) in an earlier article, he did not imagine the transformative conceptualization of design advanced by Batt and Schulz. Indeed, their account went much further than Snider’s in terms of thinking creatively about the design possibilities that might help tournament practitioners move beyond the divide between competitive and public approaches to the activity. For example, at the outset of their account Batt and Schulz (2005) noted, “an overly rigid boundary between competitive forensics practices and broader communication practices of public deliberation and civic engagement” (p. 510). In response, they introduced “the designed debate tournament” (Batt & Schulz, 2005, p. 513) which, they hoped, would inspire reflection about the elements of tournament practice that tend to undermine public access and participation. In this and other ways, Batt and Schulz were prescient. Over the next decade, innovative tournament designs would evolve along many of the trajectories they noted in their paper. However, the reflective intentionality they defended has not always been in evidence in our scholarship or our practices.

Batt and Schulz’s paper not only described a different and more reflective perspective on tournament debating but also tapped into a growing awareness of *design* as a way to (re)conceptualize rhetorical and argumentation theory (Buchanan, 2001; Jackson, 2015; Kaufer & Butler, 1996). They built their argument from a series of insights developed by Buchanan (2001), who was at that time a faculty member in the School of Design at Carnegie Mellon University. Batt and Schulz (2005) noted characteristic connections between debate and the art of rhetoric, emphasizing a series of necessary components for successful design detailed in Buchanan’s (2001) germinal paper: “the useful, usable, and desirable” (p. 198). They expounded on these components to argue in favor of practice changes integrating the competitive and civic dimensions of debate while simultaneously enhancing the satisfaction of the activity’s broader

Rief

stakeholders. They ultimately argued tournament designs should be relevant, accessible, and ultimately enjoyable for a wider array of stakeholders than previously imagined. Only this, they forcefully argued, could make the activity a powerful context for both the revitalization of debate, argumentation, and communication scholarship and the transformation of public deliberation.

Page | 42

While Batt and Schulz provided a powerful argument in favor of tournament redesign, they left a central theme from ongoing discussions about design in rhetoric and argumentation theory largely unaddressed: the development of “design thinking” (Buchanan, 2001, p. 188; Jackson, 2015, p. 244) or a mode of thought geared for ingenuity in the processes related to design. Adopting “design thinking” requires not only renewed attention to how the elements of a communicative event structure the experience for stakeholders but also a carefully developed thought process that informs the choices made by the designer (Buchanan, 2001; Jackson, 2015; Kaufer & Butler, 1996). Of course, this sort of thinking cannot emerge without a more thorough accounting of elements that drive its successful adoption. According to Buchanan (2001), at least one critical attribute of such thinking was the ability to shepherd a design from ideal to reality, a process catalyzed by “visualization” which involves “artful consideration at each stage . . . of design thinking” often in the form of “sketches, diagrams, and preliminary prototypes” (p. 199). In short, for Buchanan, creating a design required the ability to *visualize* the desired outcome ahead of *manifesting* it in reality and revising it based on the experiences of stakeholders.

“Design thinking” and its attendant process of “visualization” raise a crucial question: What should we be visualizing in contemporary efforts to transform intercollegiate debate? The recent turn to the history of intercollegiate debate noted earlier provides a starting point. Our progenitors experienced a similarly postmodern period of design experimentation when the older classroom and society modes of debating morphed into intercollegiate versions of the activity (Potter, 1954, 1972). This period was characterized by oscillation between the activity’s role in producing civic education and public engagement, a hallmark of Progressive Era pedagogical philosophy (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, 2017; Hogan & Kurr, 2017a, 2017b; Keith, 2007, 2010), and its competitive features, which reached their apotheosis with the invention of the tournament (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, 2017; Keith, 2007; Llano, n.d.). Thus, the work of debate practitioners during the early history of intercollegiate debate provides a way to visualize how we might address our current efforts to negotiate a combination of public and competitive debate designs (Keith, 2010). In the next section, I reconstruct an event that addressed the design quandaries involved in fusing public and competitive debating that may provide grist for the inventional mill of contemporary tournament redesign.

History as a Resource for *Visualizing* the Civic Restoration of Tournament Debating: The 1925 Stanford Adjudication “System”

During the early history of intercollegiate debate, judging became an animating theme in conversations about the countervailing pedagogical designs and desires of the activity (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, 2017; Keith, 2007, 2010; Llano, n.d., 2017; Nichols, 1937; Potter, 1972).

(Re)Designing Debate

Cowperthwaite and Baird (1954) detailed several distinct approaches to adjudication practiced from the 1880s to the 1920s including: (1) “the critic judge” (p. 271), more recognizable to us today as the debate coach judge (see below); (2) the omission of formal adjudication (that is, decisions were not rendered at the end of the event); (3) audience voting; (4) shift balloting, a way to capture any changes in the audience’s opinion by measuring it at different points in time; and (5) eminent professionals, experts, politicians, and citizens. We should also note the widespread use of panels, often comprised of three judges, who were significant members of their profession or the community (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Cowperthwaite & Baird, 1954). Each assumed different pedagogical and competitive (or non-competitive) orientations and they were thus viewed as competing paradigms (Cowperthwaite & Baird, 1954; Nichols, 1937). For example, the debate coach judge would be taken as a hallmark of competitive design and would eventually make tournament debating possible, framing it as a more “technical” affair (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014, pp. 55-77, 119-141), whereas audience-centered formats, sometimes without any formal adjudication, were seen as better for public events framed as less or non-competitive (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Broda-Bahm et al., 2004; Keith, 2007). Unfortunately, extant accounts of the history of intercollegiate debate adjudication have largely eschewed conversation about moments when different modes of judging were used simultaneously. In the following paragraphs, I recover an event that embraced a combination of adjudication methods, a strategy with the potential to help us visualize innovative events that cross the divide between competitive contest rounds and public deliberative encounters.

On April 2, 1925 in the Little Theater on Stanford’s campus (“Immigration Debate,” 1925), just two years after the first recorded tournament at Southwestern University in 1923 (Sorber, 1956, as cited in Llano, n.d.; see also Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Nichols, 1937), the Stanford intercollegiate debate team faced off in a contest with Utah Agricultural College. The public event attracted the attention of the campus newspaper, *The Daily Palo Alto*, and was featured in several front-page stories. The teams agreed to debate: “Resolved, that the immigration act of 1924 should be so amended as to admit Japanese on the same basis as Europeans” (“Utah Aggies,” 1925, p. 1). This resolution focused on the Immigration Act of 1924, a law constructed around racist views of immigrant populations, including those from Japan, and buttressed by the virulent nativism taking hold at the time (Ngai, 1999). Notably, the issue of Japanese immigration was significant in California where powerful forces converged in support of the act (Daniels, 1973). This may explain why the topic was chosen for this debate.

As per the agreement before the debate, Utah Agricultural College proposed and Stanford opposed (“Immigration Debate,” 1925). Unfortunately, as documented in the coverage, the Stanford debaters employed the nativist and racist paradigms that supported the law’s passage as a backdrop for their arguments (“Utah Aggies,” 1925). Utah Agricultural College ultimately prevailed in the contest (see below) but did so by defending a limited view of Japanese immigration that was itself embedded in the dangerous and groundless racial, cultural, and socioeconomic anxieties of many white Americans, especially those in California, during the first part of the 20th century (Daniels, 1973). They elected to “repeal the act of total exclusion and

Rief

return to the ‘Gentlemen’s Agreement’ in force between the two nations since President Roosevelt’s administration in 1907” (“Utah Aggies,” 1925, p. 1). This agreement significantly limited immigration from Japan, which, President Theodore Roosevelt had hoped, would appease anti-immigrant activists and reduce rising discrimination and violence against Japanese immigrants already in the U.S. (especially in California), though it was ultimately unsuccessful in doing so (Daniels, 1973). Thus, the topic wording and argument construction for this debate reveal the highly problematic terrain not only of U.S. public culture but also the activity of intercollegiate debate at the time, an issue I address again later in this essay.

Page | 44

While the topic for the debate was discussed numerous times in the coverage, the central theme in most of the articles, and my focus in this section, was the experimental design of the event. Key features of this design point to important controversies that drove both the inclusion of audiences in and their eventual exclusion from most competitive events. One can discern this experimental theme in the following article title: “Cardinal Debaters Will Change Style for Utah Contest” (“Cardinal Debaters,” 1925, p. 1). This article noted, “The Oxford Style of informal, direct argument will characterize the style of the Stanford Debating Team” (“Cardinal Debaters,” 1925, p. 1). The stylistic choice was consistent with the expanding use of British debating methods in the U.S. by the 1920s, a style that foregrounded audience participation and adjudication (Cowperthwaite & Baird, 1954). This shift in practice is largely attributable to Baird’s work at Bates College beginning in 1905 to cultivate exchange events with Oxford and other British institutions (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014). Thus, the use of this style is not surprising from an historical point of view. However, its use by Stanford might have been controversial for the chairperson of the debate, William Hawley Davis (“Immigration Debate,” 1925). He had recently transferred from Bowdoin College to Stanford during the 1924-1925 academic year, just as this event was being planned and implemented (“William Hawley Davis,” 1963). In an essay 10 years earlier, Davis (1915) had openly questioned the value of British debating: “in England, where the motive of mere enjoyment so largely supplants that of competition, in athletics and elsewhere, this device of debating is less successful” (p. 107). While Davis certainly could have changed his mind during the intervening years, his concern about the need to retain a competitive *modus operandi* sheds light on a second and more important experimental feature of the Stanford vs. Utah Agricultural College debate: the use of an adjudication method that differed from the purely audience-driven style of British debating.

The method of judging used in the debate was variously described in the journalistic coverage as “unique” (“Cardinal Debates,” 1925, p. 1), “novel” (“Utah Aggies,” 1925, p. 6), and “different from any ever tried at Stanford previously” (“Immigration Debate,” 1925, p. 1). Interestingly, there is evidence that the “Stanford Euphronia debating team” had used essentially the same adjudication process in a debate against Mills College on March 10, 1925, three weeks before the debate recounted here (“Euphronia Debaters,” 1925, p. 1). In fact, the coach from Mills College, Willard Smith, was one of the judges in the April 2 debate, thus making the lack of attribution to Euphronia striking. Regardless of its point of origin, the strategy was innovative, bringing together several modes of adjudication:

(Re)Designing Debate

The chairman of the evening will be William Hawley Davis, former coach of debate at Bowdoin College and now of the Stanford Food Research Institute. The system of judging will be different from any ever tried at Stanford previously. There will be three units to the decision, two voted by judges and the third the decision of the audience.

One of the judges will be a ‘critic judge’ who will appear on the platform and explain his decision. Dr. Willard M. Smith, the debating coach at Mills College, will occupy this position tonight. The other judge will have the same vote, but not explain his decision. Professor Robert T. Crane of the Political Science Department of the University of Michigan will be the second judge. (“Immigration Debates,” 1925, p. 1)

Page | 45

As described in the passage above, there were three “units” of the panel: (1) a “critic judge,” who was a debate coach; (2) a judge with “the same vote” (that is one vote on the panel) who, in a separate article, was referred to as “a ‘balance judge’” (“Cardinal Debaters,” 1925, p. 1); and, (3) an audience vote that also counted as one vote on the panel. Only the critic judge (Smith) offered feedback during the debate. The second judge (Crane) might have been considered a topic expert given his profession as a political scientist but his official title as the “balance judge” indicates his role was to provide balance between the expertise of the coach and the unpredictable decision making styles of the audience. No explanation is provided for why Crane did not deliver a rationale for his decision. We learn very little from the coverage about the audience vote except for the fact it was counted.

The final decision of the panel provides context for understanding how it functioned and why it was designed in this seemingly peculiar way. Utah Agricultural College prevailed “by a two to one decision” (“Utah Aggies,” 1925, p. 1):

Dr. Willard M. Smith . . . based his decision on the superior organization, evidence, and rebuttal of the affirmative speakers, but giving the negative credit for skillful delivery and argument. Professor Robert C. Crane . . . gave his decision as balance judge to Utah, while the audience voted 44 to 64 for the losing Stanford team. (“Utah Aggies,” 1925, p. 6)

The point of disagreement in the decision was between the two votes for Utah Agricultural College, delivered by the critic judge (Smith) and the balance judge (Crane), and the vote for Stanford delivered by the audience. The split dramatized the reasons behind the publically stated purpose of the adjudication method. As noted in the coverage: “Due to the difficulties that have arisen in the past to the fairness of a decision either by judges or the audience, in this debate there will be two judges, and the vote of the audience will be considered as the vote of a third judge” (“Stanford to Debate,” 1925, p. 1). In other words, the event designers wanted to avoid both an audience-driven decision and a decision made solely by selective judges.

That the Stanford event designers were concerned with both methods is crucial. As noted earlier, debate designers have typically preferred one to the other based on different pedagogical and competitive goals; however, in the case of this debate, concerns over fairness drove a

Rief

synergistic innovation. This raises the intriguing question as to the specific reasons this innovation was deemed necessary. As previewed earlier, Davis' (1915, 1916) scholarly work provides a starting point for framing an answer. While at Bowdoin College, Davis had advocated for a civically oriented and simultaneously competitive debate paradigm that would hold debaters accountable to public standards of performance (Davis, 1915, 1916; Keith, 2007; Llano, n.d., 2017). Moreover, Davis had railed against the use of debate coach judges given their tendency to reward practices public audiences would find inappropriate, troubling, confusing, or impenetrable (Davis, 1915; Keith, 2007; Llano, 2017). Curiously, given his interest in developing debate events with public impact, when Davis addressed the question of judging, he refused to endorse audience adjudication. Instead, he defended a selective jury drawn from a larger audience that would apply appropriate public norms and modes of reasoning when reaching its decision (Davis, 1915; Llano, 2017). In an instructive passage, Davis (1915) explained his thinking: "the verdict of a debate audience, except under extraordinary conditions, is not reliable" (p. 111). Davis' comment here was grounded in the growing opposition to audience judging during this time. When audiences were tasked with judging they often made unexpected decisions that ran counter to the assumptions and expectations of debaters and their coaches. In order to maintain the legitimacy of the activity, not to mention fair competition and student participation, the use of audiences as judges slowly disappeared (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014; Keith, 2007, 2010; Llano, 2017, n.d.; Potter, 1972).

Page | 46

Writing much later, Hicks (2002) identified a second risk associated with the use of public audiences as judges: their decisions might ultimately be "simply a reflection of current public sentiment" rather than grounded in a more robust notion of "public reason" (p. 157). From Hicks' (2002) point of view, audiences were not only unreliable in the competitive sense that Davis worried about but also in the sense that they might bring popular (mis)conceptions or deeply problematic beliefs into play when making decisions. Widely held views in favor of Japanese exclusion at the time, especially in California (Daniels, 1973; Ngai, 1999), may explain the results of the audience vote in support of the Immigration Act of 1924 at the end of the Stanford vs. Utah Agricultural College debate. However, due to the adjudication system put in place by the event designers, the prevailing views of the audience were counter-balanced by other judges. We should not find the ultimate outcome of the debate acceptable given that Utah Agricultural College advocated continued restrictions on Japanese immigration informed by disturbing racist and nativist attitudes. However, the adjudication method put in place for this debate contained a design feature with the potential to avoid the concerns of both Davis and Hicks: the possibility of challenging prevailing public opinions rather than merely confirming them wholesale.

We are now in a position to consider some of the potential sensibilities that informed the decision by the Stanford event designers to use what I call a multimodal adjudication system (MAS), a system that applies multiple modes of judging in order to craft decisions that avoid (or at least soften) the pitfalls of any one mode practiced in isolation. Admittedly, there is some evidence of various combinational forms that emerged in other contexts. Potter (1972) noted the

(Re)Designing Debate

interaction between specially selected judges and audiences “employed at the Cliosophic Society of Princeton in the 1870s” (p. 76). Nichols (1937) described a system at “the Practice Tournament of 1935 held preceding the Convention of the Western Association of Teachers of Speech” in which “members of the various teams ranked their opponents in addition to the judges’ decision” (p. 277). But the specific combination of design features within the Stanford MAS has not been described in any detail elsewhere. Thus, it suggests new avenues for expanding our discussion of adjudication procedures in intercollegiate debate. The Stanford event designers, in line with Davis’ views about debate, were invested in hosting a public event focused on a salient issue that would retain both competition and public participation. To achieve this end, they created a panel that intermingled public engagement, attention to argumentative technique, and expert knowledge. Whether they fully contemplated all of the implications of their design or not, it would, at least ideally, deter debaters from pursuing argumentative strategies designed only with an experienced professional coach in mind or, alternatively, crafted to draw upon and largely confirm “public sentiment” (Hicks, 2002, p. 157). Given these features, the MAS used by the Stanford event designers offers conduits for visualizing event designs that work across the competitive and public dimensions of debate, a subject I turn to in the next section.



“The MAS used by the Stanford event designers offers conduits for visualizing event designs that work across the competitive and public dimensions of debate.”

The Stanford MAS and a “New Golden Age” of Tournament Debating

The disappearance of the Stanford MAS and the more general decline of audience-oriented contest debating from the 1920s onward could be taken as evidence of design evolution as the activity moved on to methods more fitted to its goals and aspirations (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014). This response is grounded in a view of historical development as progress, a view that has significant purchase in the arena of design. For example, according to Jackson (2015), “Taking a design perspective means, among other things, recognizing contemporary argumentation as a set of historically situated practices that have been building from invention over invention, for many centuries” (p. 244). This passage foregrounds the centrality of progress in Jackson’s (2015) account, an understandable feature because one of her primary examples is science, a perspective commonly set apart as a paradigmatic case of continuous improvement. While Jackson (2015) left room for critical reflection on and even rejection of new practices that fail to work, the general impulse to see contemporary practices as more advanced than historical ones is powerful.

Adopting such a perspective in response to the Stanford MAS is potentially justifiable for several reasons. First, we should note that some choices made in the intervening years were pursued in the interests of justice, inclusion, and fairness. For example, the activity of debate was a segregated and exclusionary space for much of its history. Indeed, significant portions of the

Rief

intercollegiate debating activity during its early history followed racist and sexist policies aimed at excluding African Americans and women from participation as debaters in events just like the one recovered in this essay (Atchison & Panetta, 2009; Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014). Though still far from ideal, contemporary intercollegiate debate has eliminated such policies, offering a more inclusive understanding of participation. Second, the Stanford event designers crafted a topic that, while salient for its audience, was also deeply troubling. Contemporary coaches often assist their students in the development of topics and arguments that to some extent transcend the political, cultural, and social currents of their time, at least in terms of rejecting racism and nativism as legitimate frameworks for advocacy. Third, there are numerous pedagogical and logistical reasons for the development of tournament practices over the last century, none of which are rendered moot by my recovery of the Stanford MAS. Indeed, the value of traditional tournament participation opened this essay and it deserves continued support.

Page | 48

However, I also find many defensible reasons to view the Stanford MAS as a potentially productive way to visualize new public and civic debate designs. Given its inclusion of audiences and expert judges within a single system, multimodal adjudication may be valuable in realizing what Keith (2010) called “the new golden age for debate” (p. 21) in which competition and public deliberation are once again fused (see also Bsumek, 2009). Notably, Keith envisioned this “age” as emerging from greater awareness of the history of the activity. Below, I map several implications of my effort to unite historical experimentation with contemporary practices, noting how numerous challenges, if overcome, may invite pedagogical and scholarly innovations fitted to our time. My focus throughout the following subsections is on the many options facing contemporary debate directors, coaches, and event designers when considering the use of multimodal adjudication at their tournaments or choosing to attend any number of debate tournaments with public and civic designs.

Pedagogical and Logistical Challenges of Translation

The first challenge practitioners are confronted with when assessing the contemporary use of the Stanford MAS is the inherent risk involved in experimenting with debate’s designs, especially when our goals are more pedagogical than competitive in nature. In their extensive history of the activity, Bartanen and Littlefield (2014) noted, “each well-intentioned effort to increase the educational benefits of debate at the expense of competition resulted in a decline in student interest and participation” (p. 137). Brigham (2017a) offered a similar assessment, demonstrating how Davis’ criticisms of “debate as a game” (p. 84) briefly adumbrated earlier may invite the denigration of enjoyment as a critical driver for both participation and education (see also Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014). I take these warnings seriously. However, translating the Stanford MAS for contemporary tournament design provides an opportunity to embrace both competitive and educational goals. Recall that the Stanford event designers’ innovation arose primarily out of a concern for fairness rooted in the problems associated with debate coach and audience judging when practiced in isolation. As such, the Stanford event designer’s goals were

(Re)Designing Debate

as much about promoting competition as about potentially adding pedagogical value or realizing more effective civic engagement.

A second major challenge has to do with the distinction between the Stanford MAS as originally implemented and the tournament model with its numerous rounds of competition. While debate coaches are fixtures at tournaments and other expert judges would not be difficult to acquire on college campuses populated by numerous faculty and researchers, retaining sufficient audiences for each round of competition at a tournament is no easy task. A recent experimental design offers one potential solution to this challenge. At Duquesne University, we have been piloting an event, the Duquesne Debating Society Public Debate Forum (DDSPDF), inspired by the debate across the curriculum literature (especially Snider & Schnurer, 2006). The DDSPDF offers a classroom-based solution to the audience problem. Instead of recruiting individual audience members, we sought out instructors who were willing to offer their classes to host debates. During the first iteration of our event in 2015, we secured nine classrooms (three each for three rounds of debate), thus offering space for six teams. A public audience composed of students, faculty, and community members composed the audience for the final round.

While our design innovation at Duquesne offers one pathway for guaranteeing audiences in a tournament structure, it does raise two counterarguments. First, one could argue classroom audiences are not public and do not offer a real context for civic engagement. This argument imagines the classroom as a non-civic environment, a view debate scholars have found problematic (Snider & Schnurer, 2006). In fact, using college classes as audiences might provide an important avenue for reinventing the classroom as a site for rhetorically constructing civic identity and encouraging public engagement (Fleming, 2010; Walker, 2011). Doing so may also remind those of us currently tasked with becoming more engaged (i.e., university faculty and staff) that engagement does not require leaving our classrooms. Instead, our classrooms could become spaces of deliberative encounter for our campus communities. Second, one could argue tournament debating should not enter into classroom settings given its tendency to highlight conflict and technical modes of argumentation we would not want our students to imitate (Merrell, Calderwood, & Flores, 2015). While I do not have space to address the risks associated with translating competitive debate into the context of the classroom fully in this section, having student audiences judge debates could potentially control for such risks by incentivizing audience adaptation within the design. Further research would be needed to support this claim. In addition, while student debaters might not immediately embrace audience adaptation, coaches could emphasize different pedagogical and competitive goals during the preparation process, thus assisting students to approach competitions with public audiences differently. This is already a strategy used by public debate practitioners (Broda-Bahm et al., 2004) and could be easily imported into the context of coaching students for competitive public tournaments.

In addition to the use of classrooms, tournament designers might also consider the role of new communication technologies in reaching out to potential audiences. Indeed, the use of new communication technologies to enhance audience access to intercollegiate debating has a long

Rief

history. For example, Stanford debaters engaged in a radio-facilitated debate against Oregon in 1925 on a similar topic to the one used at the Utah Agricultural College event, “thus not only surmounting the breach of distance, but also giving a larger audience an opportunity to hea[r] the debate than could be possible if it were given in an auditorium” (“Gosslin, Frazier,” 1925, p. 1). In fact, the use of radio to facilitate the public uptake of debate was common during the early 20th century (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014). At the time, collecting audience feedback would have been difficult and the article about the Stanford vs. Oregon debate in the *Daily Palo Alto* did not suggest the radio audience was polled; however, the contemporary growth of online debating suggests avenues for resolving this problem. For example, Mabrey and Richards (2017) noted online debate events hosted by Binghamton University and the University of Southern California. As far as I can tell, these and other online events do not currently use public audience adjudication methods, but doing so does not represent an insurmountable design quandary. Audience recruitment would require some ingenuity in the areas of public relations and advertising, but the possibility of asynchronous viewership would eliminate the need to have all audience members tuned in simultaneously, thus potentially increasing participation. The primary question is whether online interactivity would offer the same pedagogical value to all of the participants, a point worthy of future research (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2014).

Page | 50

A third challenge has to do with the limited resources and time debate programs have available to participate in competitions like those contemplated here. Crucially, there are numerous design choices that either ameliorate or make up for such tradeoffs. First, many non-traditional tournaments, including the Lafayette Debates, Madison Cup, and DDSPDF are scheduled late in the season, thus making it easier to place them into an already extensive travel schedule. Second, given their various formats, styles, and rules, civic and public debate tournaments are exciting opportunities to work outside the parameters of more calcified formats. This variety has the effect of leveling the playing field between teams given that students and coaches have not had years to craft format specific expertise, one of the elements of traditional tournament participation that has been criticized by public debate practitioners (see e.g., Broda-Bahm et al., 2004). In this way, the structural unfairness of traditional tournament models (e.g., research support, expert coaching, and pre-round strategizing) might be softened, thus cultivating less predictable and, at least in theory, more equitable outcomes to the advantage of smaller programs. Third, designers of civic and public tournaments can seek funding to reduce or defray food and registration costs and offer low cost or free housing to teams in attendance, design features that have been used successfully by many of the tournaments described in this essay. Fourth and finally, debate directors might benefit from adding tournaments with innovative designs to their calendars as the diversity of options would give them the ability to identify and serve students with a broader array of skills and interests. In short, while there are important resource and time tradeoffs that cannot be fully resolved here, there are already significant efforts underway to make civic and public debating more accessible. These efforts could and should be incorporated into events using multimodal adjudication.

Pedagogical and Scholarly Benefits of Translation: Prospects for Further Innovation

While there are many challenges confronting the implementation of tournaments that make use of multimodal adjudication, there are also fascinating opportunities for innovation that may incentivize participation. First, there are multiple trajectories for reimagining the Stanford MAS. To begin, tournament designers might consider different methods of interaction between judges, audiences, and debaters. Recall that the original Stanford design invited direct feedback only from the debate coach judge. Designers could instead contemplate versions of the MAS involving dynamic interaction, for example, by inviting audience questions and commentary (Broda-Bahm et al., 2004; Merrell et al., 2015) or including feedback from all judges at the end of the debate. Changes to the composition of the panel might also be contemplated. At the DDSPDF, we have used debate coach judges combined with an audience vote and a shift-ballot. The design places significant value on the audience, thus offering a more egalitarian and less expert-driven experience. Moreover, the composition of the audience itself might be worthy of further consideration. Designers might elect to cultivate diverse audiences that include not only direct stakeholders of the topic but also members of populations with very different views of the issues.

Beyond changes to the style of participation and composition of the judging panel, multimodal adjudication also opens up interesting implications for topic and format selection. There are as many theories of effective topic and format selection as there are potential event designers; however, there are a few basic ideals with which most debate practitioners would likely agree. Topics should be of interest to all participants (including the audience), timely, controversial, and debatable (Broda-Bahm et al., 2004). Similarly, formats should be designed to facilitate the specific roles of the debaters, judges, and audience at the event (Broda-Bahm et al., 2004; Snider & Schnurer, 2006). When using multimodal adjudication, questions regarding whether topic experts can easily be recruited, the accessibility of different sorts of audiences, and the specific balance the designer hopes to cultivate between expert and public methods of decision making can and should drive both the choice of topic(s) and format. For example, at the first DDSPDF, we selected the theme of “college life” for the construction of topics specifically tailored to the challenges facing the debaters at the competition and the students in our classroom audiences. We used a modified parliamentary format to make the debate more accessible and audience-centered. In short, the use of multimodal adjudication brings with it the prospect of topic and format flexibility bounded by audience and judge adaptation, thus offering students unique experiences that simply cannot be replicated at traditional tournaments.

Second, and more importantly, the contemporary implementation of the Stanford MAS, or variations on it, raises prospects for innovation beyond those directly relevant to the tournament experience. This is the case in large part because multimodal adjudication reflects and addresses one of the most pressing issues facing public deliberation today: “heterogeneous expertise” (Jackson, 2015, p. 258-259). Jackson (2015) detailed the problem, noting that differential layers of expertise make it more difficult for interlocutors engaged in a deliberation

Rief

to understand one another. She also suggested one outcome of heterogeneous deliberative encounters is the rise of technocracy as experts come to dominate conversation about ever more complicated public affairs. Designs for tournament competition that creatively address questions of expertise by promoting multimodal pathways for feedback, judgment, and interaction between experts and members of the public (Rief & Wilson, in press) could become testing grounds for addressing the quandary of “heterogeneous expertise” (Jackson, 2015, p. 258-259). They might also assist in generating a more nuanced and productive approach to negotiating between expert and public modes of decision making, one better fitted to the challenges of contemporary deliberation and realizing more effective civic education for our students (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2017; Keith, 2010). Using the tournament space in this way also offers the possibility of multiple iterative encounters with the same or related topics, different argumentative strategies, and even different instantiations of the MAS all during a single event, thus suggesting the unique benefits of applying multimodal adjudication in the tournament setting rather than at single public debate events.

Page | 52

The iterative experience of tournament debating framed through the application of an MAS fitted to the realities of public deliberation might also invite novel approaches to achieving the more robust commitment to debate scholarship many authors have called for during the 21st century (Batt & Schulz, 2005; Brigham, 2017b; Goodnight & Mitchell, 2008; Mitchell et al., 2010a, 2010b). Again, using multimodal adjudication in a tournament setting yields unique benefits. Indeed, such tournaments could inspire approaches to debate research grounded in comparative analysis of different adjudication methods and the creation of arguments fitted to diverse stakeholders. In addition, the use of multimodal adjudication at tournaments (as opposed to at single public events) would offer multiple opportunities for data collection over the course of a single weekend. Transforming tournaments into sites for “collective knowledge production” (Goodnight & Mitchell, 2008, p. 89; see also Mitchell et al., 2010b) relevant to public deliberation would potentially garner newfound support for their existence including enhanced buy-in from stakeholders in government, academia, and civil society. While such benefits would not have entered into the minds of the Stanford event designers, they are increasingly essential in the uncertain waters of contemporary higher education (Leeper et al., 2010).

Finally, because it involves the inclusion of public audiences, multimodal adjudication might broaden the work of debate assessment (Mabrey & Richards, 2017; O’Donnell, 2011; O’Donnell et al., 2010) by expanding the number of stakeholders included as potential beneficiaries of the civic education the activity provides (Rief & Wilson, in press). The impact of debate events on wider publics has been a largely unexplored element of debate assessment (Rief & Wilson, in press). Tournaments with multimodal adjudication would offer not only opportunities to see how students adapt argumentation in response to “heterogeneous expertise” (Jackson, 2015, p. 258-259) but also how audiences respond to and potentially learn from participation in these events. Students would also learn about new methods of assessing their tournament performances that value both their ability to interact with various publics and their efforts to address experts in argumentation and other fields of study. Furthermore, interacting

(Re)Designing Debate

with large audiences and/or with experts during tournaments could become a major selling point when assessing their outcomes. For example, noting the size and composition of audiences, the quality of expert judges, and/or the impact of debates on public decision making in pre and post-tournament descriptions would offer programs added prestige and create new opportunities for framing the benefits of debate tournaments to ever more diverse audiences, a practice already utilized in the world of public debate (Broda-Bahm et al., 2004). In short, multimodal adjudication could augment the role of intercollegiate debate tournaments in creatively approaching the challenges of contemporary public deliberation, producing relevant and significant scholarship, and driving innovative assessment strategies that provide evidence for its importance to the increasingly civic environment of higher education. In all, these are major incentives for program directors, coaches, and students to participate in the development of multimodal adjudication in the years to come.

Conclusion

Throughout this essay, I have argued the civic restoration of the debate tournament should involve a balancing act between competition and education, efforts to include public audiences, and adjudication systems offering opportunities to develop skills cutting across different layers of expertise and public engagement. These arguments do not assume the elimination of tournament formats without public audiences, the need to place civic engagement ahead of all other potential goals in tournament design, or a singular focus on multimodal adjudication. Instead, I have offered multimodal adjudication as one potential design resource with major benefits both in terms of realizing our refurbished civic attitudes and articulating new ways to employ and justify the more competitive dimensions of intercollegiate debating. These benefits also suggest major incentives for debate coaches seeking to expand the civic and public components of their programs. In short, I agree with Bartanen and Littlefield's (2014) appraisal of the postmodern moment we are experiencing. There is no need to find one path; multiple opportunities will present themselves (Keith, 2010). Visualizing new opportunities for tournament redesign through the lens of our history and the exigencies of the present offers endless possibilities for the civic restoration of intercollegiate tournament debate.



“Visualizing new opportunities for tournament redesign through the lens of our history and the exigencies of the present offers endless possibilities for the civic restoration of intercollegiate tournament debate.”

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Enacting Compassion: Enactment and the Theory of Image Restoration in Monica Lewinsky's TED Talk, "The Price of Shame."



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Mishne

Enacting Compassion: Enactment and the Theory of Image Restoration in Monica Lewinsky's TED Talk, "The Price of Shame."

Page | 60

Eric Mishne

Cyberbullying is an ever-growing concern, and its effects are not escaping the public eye. Monica Lewinsky spoke at TED Vancouver in 2015 about the effects of cyberbullying and suggested a change in the cultural attitude online toward one of compassion. This paper argues that components of William Benoit's Theory of Image Restoration (TIR) are relevant to understanding Lewinsky's speech, but principles of enactment (Daughton, 1989) are more salient to her message and achievement of her mission. In light of the complexity of Lewinsky's story, the author explores an expansion of TIR labeled image renovation that adds variance to the function of TIR strategies.

Key Words: Enactment, Theory of Image Restoration, Lewinsky, Rhetoric, TED Talk, Speeches, Cyberbullying

When Monica Lewinsky's name first appeared in the media, impressions of her were far from positive. For the intern who had an affair with the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, there was no shortage of malicious insults broadcasted by the media. Her public image was instantly marred by all manner of crass and vulgar remarks one can imagine about a woman, and due to Clinton's refusal to say her name in public, she became known as "that woman." However, while the President was elusive in his word choice, the media adhered to no such discretion. The "media maelstrom," (Lewinsky, 2015) as Lewinsky calls it, played a significant role in her downward spiral into depression and self-destructive emotions. In the about-to-boom early days of the Internet, online public shaming was only just beginning, and Monica Lewinsky was one of its first victims.

2018 marks the 20 year anniversary of the scandal that rocked the Clinton presidency. Monica Lewinsky's role in this scandal began as an intern in the White House. In early 1998, rumors of an affair between Lewinsky and Clinton were shared with a committee investigating a wholly separate issue related to the president. However, throughout the following months, the extensive federal investigation into the alleged affair led by Kenneth Starr dominated news media and continued to cast shame and guilt on Lewinsky. Grand jury testimonies, recorded

Enacting Compassion

phone conversations, and a 445-page report (Waxman & Fabry, 2018) resolved in early 1999 with an impeachment trial and full acquittal for President Clinton. *TIME* magazine reports that over 2,000 minutes of broadcast time had been devoted to the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal (Waxman & Fabry, 2018).

No doubt, Lewinsky's self-concept as well as her public identity were shaped by the prevalence of media influence. Spurred on by news media and the Internet, her identity was marred by all manner of degrading terms. In her 2015 TED Talk, Lewinsky explains that the "mobs of virtual stone throwers" branded her "as a tramp, tart, slut, whore, bimbo, and, of course, that woman." In the late 90s, Lewinsky, who was at the time 22-years-old, became the personification of an adulteress. Even the music industry tapped into her story with over 70 songs containing direct sexual references in conjunction with her name (Davis, 2015). Finally, shrouded in shame and humiliation, she retreated from the spotlight and avoided the public eye. However, her reputation followed her relentlessly.

Although several publications and even HBO approached Monica Lewinsky over the past two decades (Lewinsky, 2014), she often declined any formal interviews or stories. The few times she granted an interview in hopes that someone will finally listen to her side of the story, it backfired, confirming that people only wanted to make a spectacle out of the events of 1998. In her 2014 *Vanity Fair* article, "Survival and Shame," she shares a side of the story that describes her difficult journey since 1998. She recounts how even when seeking employment, her past would come up. Lewinsky describes how some interviewers even made jokes about what she may or may not do on the job – a not-so-subtle reference to sexual favors (Lewinsky, 2014). Monica Lewinsky had a public image problem. She was trapped in an identity that she desperately wanted to change.

When Lewinsky published her article in *Vanity Fair*, she was able to tell the story in her own way and made efforts to change that identity. In addition to recounting some of the struggles she has had since 1998 and the sexist treatment that was magnified due to her reputation, her article makes strong claims that she is ready to "burn the beret and bury the blue dress, and move forward" (Lewinsky, 2014, para. 56). Her dedication to put the past behind her and look toward more important social issues is what set the stage for her 2014 presentation at the *Forbes' 30 under 30 Summit*, and for her TED Talk in Vancouver in 2015.

This article explores Lewinsky's TED Talk as a form of image restoration by suggesting that she engages in rhetorical enactment to build her reputation. Her talk titled "The Price of Shame" focuses on internet harassment, and online shaming, encompassed by the term *cyberbullying*. She uses her own experiences to describe the pain felt when it feels like the entire world is able to lash out at you and demean your very existence. The speech moves seamlessly from her personal narrative, to a critique of cultural values that permit shaming and harassment to exist online, to a proposed solution for this "epidemic." Her critique appropriately presumes a lack of compassion from media producers and Internet users. She calls her audience to "communicate online with compassion, consume news with compassion, and click with

Mishne

compassion.” This theme of a compassionless climate on the Internet permeates her talk, and she identifies it as the primary cause of cyberbullying. Lewinsky enacts compassion throughout her speech as she shows compassion for her former boss, for the victims of cyberbullying, and for the perpetrators of internet shaming.

The Possibility of the Theory of Image Restoration

Page | 62

When considering a damaged public image such as Monica Lewinsky’s, rhetoricians often turn to William Benoit’s Theory of Image Restoration (TIR; Benoit & Hanczor, 1994). This theory posits five strategies rhetors use when attempting to restore their image (Benoit & Hanczor, 1994). TIR is largely used to explain how public figures who have held a positive reputation overcome events that have tarnished their public image (Benoit, 1997). When a public figure is caught in a scandal, or is perceived to have done something disagreeable, they engage strategies that would restore their former reputation.

In order for this theory to be applicable, two criteria must be fulfilled. First, the individual in question must be guilty of the infraction. Or at least, they must be perceived to be guilty by many people (Benoit, 1997). Additionally, the offense must be distasteful to a salient audience (Benoit, 1997). Once the individual meets these criteria, they begin attempts to repair the damage that has been done. There are five strategies that Benoit suggests one employs to restore their image in the aftermath of an accusation: *Denial*, *evasion of responsibility*, *reducing offensiveness of event*, *corrective action*, and *mortification* (Benoit, 1997). One could deny that the event occurred at all, eliminating the possibility of their involvement (Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002), or one could engage in denial by shifting the blame off of themselves and onto someone else (Benoit & Brinson, 1999). Second, a rhetor may engage in the evasion of responsibility, in which they may assert that they were provoked to do the action or say they were simply reacting to something done against them therefore absolving them of responsibility (Benoit & Hanczor, 1994), claim that they acted without proper information or without control over the situation (Benoit & Hanczor, 1994; Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002), or claim the incident was an accident (Benoit & Hanczor, 1994; Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002). When attempting to reduce the offensiveness of an event, a rhetor can attempt “to identify himself with something viewed favorably by the audience” (Ware & Linkugel, p. 277, 1973) or, similarly, attempt to minimize the negative feelings toward the action (Benoit & Hanczor, 1994). A more aggressive approach is for the rhetor to vilify their accuser in an attempt to make themselves seem like a victim (Benoit, 1997) or offer “payment or restitution to the victim of the offensive act” (Blaney, Benoit, & Brazeal, 2002, p. 381). The fourth strategy rhetors could employ in their efforts to restore their image is corrective action. This is when one pledges or attempts to restore things to the “state of affairs existing before the offensive action” (Benoit, p. 254, 1997). The final strategy of image restoration is mortification, and suggests that one might confess and acknowledge their wrongdoing as an effort to regain respect (Benoit & Hanczor, 1994). Taking responsibility for your actions can mitigate negative repercussions from the wrongdoing (Benoit, 1997).

Enacting Compassion

There is potential for TIR to be applied to Lewinsky's TED Talk as she seems to have engaged in a number of the strategies outlined by TIR. For example, she engages in evasion of responsibility saying "so like me, at 22, a few of you may have also taken wrong turns and fallen in love with the wrong person, maybe even your boss." She names "love" as the guilty party. She also engages in reducing the offensiveness of the action by attacking her accusers, the media. Statements like "news sources plastered photos of me all over to sell newspapers, banner ads online, and to keep people tuned to the TV" make it clear that she is unhappy with the way the situation was handled by those in the media and on the Internet. She also engages in mortification, explicitly saying "not a day goes by that I'm not reminded of my mistake, and I regret that mistake deeply."

"Considering her lack of existing positive image, and the lack of urgency in the exigence, this speech does not serve as an attempt at image restoration, but perhaps of image renovation."

However, use of TIR in this way presents three challenges, requiring three divergences from traditional TIR analysis. First, there is no exigence for Lewinsky to begin repairing her reputation. Lewinsky is under no urgency to repair her image. By her own admission, there is

nothing external that prompts her to re-enter the spotlight. She simply said "it's time" (Lewinsky, 2014). Second, Lewinsky's positive public image cannot be restored since it never existed. From the first time the public heard her name, Monica Lewinsky had a negative reputation. Therefore, saying that she could "restore" her image would be inaccurate. Finally, it does not seem that her primary intention is to change her own public image. Her TED Talk dissects the tragic phenomenon of cyberbullying and proposes ideological shifts toward a more compassionate and empathetic Internet that, if accepted and acted on, would reduce the amount of online harassment and abuse.

Considering her lack of existing positive image, and the lack of urgency in the exigence, this speech does not serve as an attempt at image restoration, but perhaps of image renovation. The idea of renovation encompasses taking something and making it significantly better. Consider a home renovation, wherein the goal is not only to repair, but to improve function and add value.

Principles of Enactment

Lewinsky's oration employs narrative accounts and empathetic pleas for the general population to join her in stopping the practice of internet shaming. Lewinsky exemplifies this message by engaging in an empathetic inspection of the causes and repercussions of cyberbullying – a message that would not be as poignant had she not taken time to recount her narrative in the speech. She discusses people and events from her past and connects them to the topic at hand. She offers both compassionate critique and empathetic admonition toward those

Mishne

who might engage in malicious online activity. Her address is not angry, hateful, or even aggressive in her reproaches. Throughout her address, she personifies rhetorical principles of enactment.

The principle of enactment concerns a rhetor who exemplifies the message that they are sharing (Charland, 2007). Daughton (1989) discusses how Angelina Grimke spoke at Pennsylvania Hall in 1838 on the topic of abolition and feminism encouraging her female audience to become active in the fight against these injustices. Grimke's act of speaking was in and of itself an enactment of her message (Daughton, 1989). The way a rhetor presents their message can both demonstrate a need, and satisfy that need (Darr, 2005). For example, when a speaker addresses civility in a civil way, they are both identifying the need and satisfying it (Darr, 2005). Similarly, since at that time of Grimke's Pennsylvania Hall speech, rhetoric was an activity shared only by men (Daughton, 1989), Grimke's speech defied expected gender roles, directly aligning with her message and serving as "the proof" of her own rhetoric (Campbell & Jamieson, 1978). Grimke "enacts her advice to the audience and serves as an inspirational example to the sympathetic" (Daughton, 1989, p. 6). Grimke put herself into the public eye as an advocate for women's involvement in abolition and demonstrated the very type of involvement for which she was advocating. As a woman in the 1830s, Grimke was a part of an oppressed group speaking out on behalf of another oppressed group. Additionally, Grimke was a slave owner turned abolitionist. In light of her own experiences on both sides of oppression, her message carried power. Her own experiences "make her an expert" (Daughton, 1989, p. 8) and gives credence to her enacted message. When a rhetor embodies the strength of their message they "can empower themselves, and listeners who identify with them, as they speak" (Daughton, 1989, p. 7).

Enacting Compassion

Compassion is "a strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for other people's suffering or bad luck and a desire to help" (Cambridge Dictionary). The concept of compassion hinges on one harboring feelings of hurt for another's misfortune or pain and includes not only empathetic feelings, but the desire to minimize someone's pain. The commonly confused empathy and sympathy culminate at compassion and Lewinsky demonstrates the difference as she shows sympathy by expressing her concern for victims of cyberbullying, and shares her empathy by recounting her own similar experiences that allow her to relate to those victims.

While Lewinsky's primary directive may not be to change her public image, she uses the events that shaped her reputation as the platform from which she begins her mission. Her speech begins by relaying a simplified version of her tragic story. In re-counting these events, she does not paint herself as a victim, but rather positions herself to be the ideal spokesperson to defend the cyberbullied and publicly shamed. Without this narrative, her enactment of compassion would not carry the weight that she desires. While recounting her own pain is emotionally

Enacting Compassion

difficult for her, it's inclusion in her oration is essential to her goals. With that in mind, it becomes easy to identify the rhetorical significance of her choices.

Lewinsky demonstrates compassion in two ways. The first is in how she speaks about certain people or groups of people with active words of kindness, and omission of malice. Her word choice is careful and kind. The presence of caring words and conscientious content is one way she shows compassion. She demonstrates the same kindness that she asks of her listeners fulfilling what Daughton calls enactment of the message (1989). The second method of demonstrating compassion is a little more unconventional. Lewinsky enacts compassion through omission. By avoiding certain attitudes and comments in her oration, and by being sagacious in her critique of the status quo, she demonstrates that she wants to spare her audience the humiliation that she still carries with her.

Compassion Toward Bill Clinton

As one examines Lewinsky's talk and notices various ways she enacts compassion, what stands out quite clearly is the absence of name dropping. Lewinsky offers her perspective on the 1998 controversial affair with Bill Clinton. However, she does not once mention the name "Bill Clinton." She does not even say "Clinton." She only mentions him as her "boss" two times in the speech, and she uses the titles "President of the United States," or "President" only once each. When setting up her story she says, "At the age of 22, I fell in love with my boss." This reference is necessary to illustrate the significance and novelty of her experience, but still leaves his name out of the narrative. One of the traditional strategies, for TIR is to shift blame or suggest that one is not as responsible as the public perceives (Benoit, 1997). In leaving Clinton's name out of the narrative she excludes him from her own shame and humiliation in contrast to TIR strategies. Another mention of Mr. Clinton is as a joke, when she suggests that some in her audience may have even fallen in love with their boss, followed with "though your boss probably wasn't the President of the United States of America." Even through her wit, she is respectful toward Mr. Clinton by not using his name. Her entire narrative, which takes up the first eight and a half minutes of her speech, focuses on her own experience and emotions in the aftermath of the affair. It would have been easy for her to put some of the blame on Mr. Clinton. However, she shows compassion for him by leaving him out of the conversation, and sparing him from more drama and negative talk.



"The compassion she shows for the person who she could justifiably be angry with, is a powerful illustration of her desire to spread compassion to others, not a desire to shift blame."

She delivers a speech that, when referring to Mr. Clinton, has a soft and kind tone. Immediately after the joke about falling in love with the President of the United States, she comments "life is full of surprises." Her lighthearted delivery is not condemning, but rather is empathetic and kind toward his role in the affair. Lewinsky presents her situation as an

Mishne

“improbable romance” and her own “mistake.” She does not blame Mr. Clinton, but rather takes responsibility herself. The compassion she shows for the person who she could justifiably be angry with, is a powerful illustration of her desire to spread compassion to others, not a desire to shift blame.

As Lewinsky demonstrates compassion, specifically toward Mr. Clinton, she addresses the unique situation she is in and acknowledges that she is not unaware of her past. This tactic is helpful to her as she establishes her credibility in the way Grimke describes her status as a former slave owner (Daughton, 1989). Not only does Lewinsky enact compassion, but she positions herself as one who can speak to the specific context of cyberbullying. Her enacting of compassion begins not with strangers on the Internet, but in her darkest memories.

Page | 66

Compassion Toward Victims of Internet Shaming

In a speech about cyberbullying, one would expect a speaker to come alongside the bullied. This is certainly the case in this speech. In her closing remarks she emboldens those who suffer from cyberbullying with the encouragement that “you can survive it...you can insist on a different ending to your story.” Additionally, she defends the privacy of celebrities like “Jennifer Lawrence and several others” asserting that public humiliation through private moments has “maximum public embarrassment.” Her positive tone and uplifting attitude display the type of

empathy and compassion for which she advocates.



“[Lewinsky’s] enacting of compassion begins not with strangers on the Internet, but in her darkest memories.”

Additionally, Lewinsky enacts compassion toward the victims of online harassment in how she talks about young people who are bullied.

She shows compassion when she addresses some of the reasons that population is specifically affected. Lewinsky suggests that younger victims are “not developmentally equipped to handle this.” The acknowledgment of a lack of maturity and emotional development is not a slight, or a critique of the bullied, but rather an expression of understanding. She is addressing a contributing factor to the emotional turmoil felt by victims of cyberbullying. At the same time, she is pulling the focus off of the victim and onto the reason the effects of bullying are so great.

Second, we not only see compassion enacted through the presence of encouragement, but also in the absence of blaming or further victimization. When Lewinsky talks about specific examples of victims of cyberbullying, her emotions are raw and visible. She does not hide her passion and heartache. At one point her voice cracks and she begins to cry. Her primary illustration is the story of Tyler Clementi. She tells his story in as little detail as possible, giving her audience only enough background to know what led to the tragic end of Tyler’s life. She describes the situation without using phrases like “gay,” “homosexual,” or “suicide,” words that can sensationalize the situation. Instead of a blunt and insensitive description for the events that

Enacting Compassion

led to Tyler's bullying, she says that he was "secretly webcammed while being intimate with another man." Similar to the way in which she leaves out details related to Mr. Clinton's involvement in the scandal, she also leaves out details of Tyler Clementi's story. Her tact in the specifics of her storytelling and her soft-spoken delivery enacts compassion.

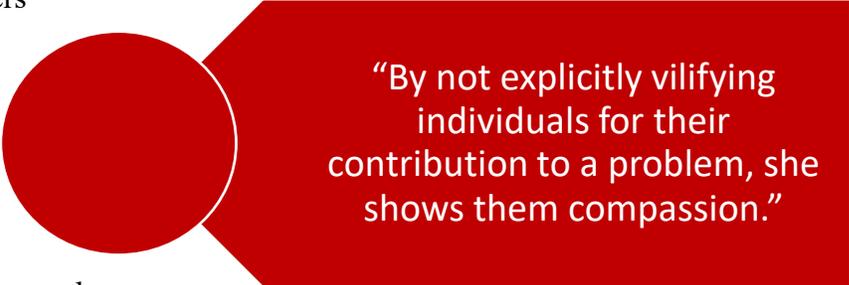
Compassion Toward the Bullies

Page | 67

One of the biggest surprises of Lewinsky's talk is the way she addresses the perpetrators of internet shaming. The expected tone to be taken toward a bully is one of condescension and criticism. However, Lewinsky takes a different approach. She states that "compassionate comments help abate the negativity." She enacts that compassion even toward the "mobs of virtual stone-throwers" by first, not speaking in direct condemnation of the individuals who carry out this injustice, and second, by not placing the blame on individuals.

First, Lewinsky does not once attack any specific person, or even call out bullies as individuals. There is no call to action for people to stop bullying. While at first glance this was bothersome, an examination through the lens of enactment hints at this being strategic. By not explicitly vilifying individuals for their contribution to a problem, she shows them compassion. She uses phrases like "millions of people," "culture," and "we" to illustrate that it is not a problem with a few individuals, but is a problem facing the entirety of society.

There is no shortage of criticism against social villains, and it is counter-cultural to show compassion toward someone who has done something wrong. However, putting someone on the defensive is certainly not the most compassionate way of encouraging change, no matter how egregious the offense. Instead of demanding that people stop doing something, Lewinsky implores all of us to work toward a common goal together saying the issue is "not just about saving myself... what we need is a cultural revolution." Her call to "return to a long-held value of compassion" and to be "upstanders" implores her audience to join her in being compassionate toward those experiencing "ridicule and cyberbullying." She asks all of us to imagine "walking a mile in someone else's headline." This compassionate approach to bringing people together is to Lewinsky's credit as she exemplifies enactment.



"By not explicitly vilifying individuals for their contribution to a problem, she shows them compassion."

Second, instead of vilifying these bullies, she discusses internet shaming as a symptom of our culture. She is not blaming any one person, any one type of person, or any specific establishment, but rather is pointing out that we have "slowly been sowing the seeds of shame and public humiliation in our cultural soil." Her condemnation is not against those "stone throwers" who she mentions early in her speech, but rather at society's enabling of such practice. She refrains from throwing her own stones at any particular organization or entity. In speaking to unite her audience from all walks of life, she avoids alienating those who may most need to hear

Mishne

the message. This method of enactment may very well be her most effective strategy for uniting people under the umbrella of “a long-held value of compassion – compassion and empathy.”

Implications for the Extension of TIR

Because Lewinsky’s strategies’ closely align with TIR, we must consider implications that call for an expansion of TIR. It is noteworthy to see strategies of TIR such as mortification and evasion of responsibility being used in a situation that does not neatly line up with previous TIR analysis. Yet, in light of Monica Lewinsky’s past, and her long sabbatical from anything that would draw public attention, her recent return to the public eye functions to renovate her public image. Her article in *Vanity Fair* and talks given at *Forbes* and TED may not be intentional efforts to reshape her image, but they certainly serve her to that end. Not only do those appearances reshape her public image, but they direct attention away from herself and onto issues she believes are important. Lewinsky uses both the written word and the spoken word to influence the way the public views her. However, given Lewinsky’s 20-year separation from the events that first propelled her into the spotlight, and knowing that her image could not be restored, we must contemplate an extension of the principles of TIR.

I argue that scholars could use TIR to understand how Lewinsky, or anyone finding themselves in the public eye under similar circumstances, attempts to renovate a negative public image into a positive one. When someone enters the public eye under less negative circumstances, they will engage in these strategies of TIR. However, with the goal of renovation one’s purpose would be to establish a positive identity and credibility where such characteristics did not previously exist. George Zimmerman entered the public eye after he killed Trayvon Martin in 2012 (Glynn, 2013). Though he was acquitted of charges for the murder, Zimmerman still has a negative image in many people’s eyes. Paris Hilton entered the public eye amidst a controversial sex tape, and though has since made a name for herself in reality TV, she emerged with a less than reputable image (McLaughlin, 2011). Anthony Weiner was largely unknown outside of his congressional district until a sex scandal propelled him into the spotlight (CNN, 2011). Individuals who have become infamous due to some negative action or accusation must either accept their bad reputation, or make attempts to change it. If the strategies these individuals use to change their public image were to be examined, a theoretical foundation of image renovation would be suitable, and the strategies of TIR can be used if they are reframed. Thus, I argue that the principles of TIR could be extended to include renovation of public image.

An extension of TIR to include image renovation includes two components. First, the reason for engaging in strategies of TIR must be found in a situation where a person desires to change the only public image they have ever held, not return their image to a former state. In other TIR literature, each individual examined has at one time held a generally positive reputation. The approach of “image renovation” would open the door for the actions of individuals like Lewinsky, Zimmerman, and Hilton to be examined. Thus, the second component of image renovation requires that the rhetor be striving to show that they are a person worthy of a positive image. Lewinsky achieves this by attaching herself to a social justice issue. However,

Enacting Compassion

one could also strive for this goal by highlighting the accomplishments of their past and emphasizing their continued and improved work in that area. In either case, individuals may engage in these same strategies of TIR in an effort to reshape their image, and to shed the only public identity that they hold. Further nuances in the differences between how one attempts to rebuild their identity and how one may attempt to renovate their identity may provide valuable insights into how public figures treat undesirable situations. More concentrated study of image renovating scenarios is required for a robust understanding of this extension of Benoit's theory.

Conclusion

Monica Lewinsky's rhetoric in "The Price of Shame" compels her audience to rethink how they view online harassment and cyberbullying. But more than the practical takeaway of showing compassion toward people, one can also understand her demonstration of compassion as a strong illustration of enactment. The compassion she shows toward her former boss, the victims of internet shaming, and the perpetrators of these actions, urges us to take her message to heart, and to judge her rhetoric consistent and compelling.

The principles of TIR that are observed in Lewinsky's talk are insightful and in alignment with the enactment of compassion, but take a new form divergent from former applications. Thus, a new application of TIR is warranted. Enactment as a rhetorical concept is also seen to take a different form throughout Lewinsky's talk. Her cautious omission of certain topics and rhetorical devices lead to the conclusion that enactment could also take form through inaction.

While Monica Lewinsky is still not a respected public figure in the entirety of the public eye she has started renovating an image of a passionate advocate. Her platform will undoubtedly continue to draw attention and inspire others to live out compassion both in their lives and rhetoric. Lewinsky asks her audience to "acknowledge the difference between speaking up with intention and speaking up for attention." The former is what her rhetoric revolves around, and she embodies this concept as she enacts compassion in her words and actions.

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Enacting Compassion

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Alumni Corner

Beverly Mahone-Gibbs: What Forensics Did For Me Ohio University (Athens, OH) Forensic Alumni (1976-1979)

Beverly Mahone-Gibbs



Beverly is a veteran journalist, author, coach, and motivational speaker. Her broadcasting career has taken her to Ohio, West Virginia, Boston, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and Saudi Arabia. Beverly has appeared on numerous radio and talk programs including MSNBC-TV and the locally-produced *My Carolina Today*. She was also featured in the New York Times for her first book. She has written five books total including the Amazon Best Sellers, *How to Get on the News Without Committing Murder* and *The Baby Boomer/Millennial Divide: Making it Work at Work*. She has written for, or been covered by the *Huffington Post*, *Forbes*, and *Newsweek*. She says that while she loved duo, poetry, and prose, her greatest accomplishment was placing 7th in After dinner speaking at the National Tournament in 1977. "I never knew I was a closet comedian!"

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Beverly Mahone-Gibbs: What Forensics Did For Me

Beverly Mahone-Gibbs
Communications Coach
BAMedia

Page | 73

ALUMNI CORNER: The forensic community is filled with alumni who will tout the benefits they received through their participation in intercollegiate speech and debate activities. As directors of forensics programs face battles for budgets and sometimes for their program's very existence, having a collection of published testimonies about the positive influence of forensics can be a tremendous help. To that end, Speaker & Gavel is setting aside space in each issue for our alumni to talk about how forensics has helped them in their professional life. These are our alumni's stories.

Keywords: forensics, benefits of forensics, Alumni Corner

Forensics in college taught me about life and how to navigate through challenges and disappointments. It prepared me, as an African-American, for the real world where I would always find myself in competition with others on some level. It taught me how to bring my communication “A-game” to every job interview and performance evaluation, every public speaking presentation, every networking event, every book I’ve written, every parent-teacher conference, my marriage, and just about every other aspect of my life.

I came to the Ohio University Forensics team as a freshman in 1975. Prior to that, I enjoyed success as a competitor in high school, where I was a state and national qualifier three years in a row (Original Oratory). But college was different. I found myself competing on a much larger stage with others who were equally as good as or even better than me. College was also a lot different for me because my high school team was very diverse and I walked into a college program as one of just two people of color out of our 30 plus roster.

To be honest, I had a hard time acclimating because of the lack of diversity and the feeling that no one really cared if I was there or not. There was some unspoken rule on the team at the time that freshmen didn’t get to compete at the big tournaments so I spent much of my first year trying to get to know the “who’s who” of OU Forensics and to fit in. It was during that “fitting in” period that I got to study my white peers to try to understand them better. A number of them gave me the impression they had little or no interaction with other races prior to coming to OU so their opinion of young blacks in America could easily be shaped by their impressions of me. I was a part of the “Say it loud, I’m black and I’m proud” movement so I was a personality that had to grow on them if they were

I credit my 30 plus year career as a radio and television journalist to being a member of a forensics team.

open-minded enough to accept me. Thankfully, an assistant coach by the name of Janet Bury helped bridge that gap and to this day some of my dearest friends came from that group.

I credit my 30 plus year career as a radio and television journalist to being a member of a forensics team. Competition in Original Oratory taught me how to write and tell a story effectively. As the other half of the dramatic and humorous duo teams, I learned about voice inflection for my on-camera appearances and, believe it or not, how to make an interview guest feel at ease in sharing their news story with me. Forensics gave me the vocabulary tools and poise necessary to allow me to compete on the same levels as my white colleagues during newsroom meetings, as well as being able to debate my points without coming across as an angry black woman or a belligerent imbecile.

Page | 74

I developed a powerful voice in a world where I might, otherwise, be considered voiceless. I can extemporaneously articulate my thoughts and ideas with clarity when necessary. I have gone into job interviews with confidence and I have never meet a stranger at a networking event because of the ease I feel when presenting myself.

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When I was a part of Toastmasters, we were told to look just above the head of the people in the audience so we wouldn't feel nervous and they would still think we were looking at them. As a motivational speaker, I look everyone in the eye and make them feel as if I'm only talking to them. That's the power of forensics.

I am proud to say I have passed on what I learned from forensics to my daughter, who won her own public speaking contest when she was in high school. Today, I am a Communications and Vocabulary Coach, working primarily with high school students to help them prepare for their futures. I also encourage them to join their school's speech and debate team if they have one. (Sadly, many do not in the urban areas). In addition, I credit the fact that I became a best-selling author to my experience in forensics. Not only did forensics teach me how to research and write clearly and concisely, it taught me how to market myself and my ideas to judges and readers.

I can't imagine what my life would've been like without having the opportunity to be a part of a forensics team in high school and college. I'm so glad there were those who were willing to invest their time and energy into my future success.





Alumni Corner

Jason Berke : What Forensics Did For Me Illinois State University (1991-1995)

Jason Berke



Jason is the Director of Design for Soft Home Décor at Target Corporation Headquarters. He competed for Illinois State (1991-1995) and he coached at Arizona State as he completed graduate studies (1995-1997). His favorite event was Informative Speaking which he finaled at NFA Nationals all four years. His favorite ballot feedback was from Dan Smith (Bradley University) who simply told him that he needed bring more heart and connection to his Prose and push himself to be the best he could be. Dan spoke the truth. Jason's greatest achievement was his (and his team's) finish at NFA Nationals in 1995. Jason took nine events to nationals that year and seven of them moved to quarter finals and six moved on to finals. That year Jason was the national champion in Rhetorical Criticism and Duo (w/ La'Mont Vaughn '95). He won Pentathlon (his second time doing so) and Illinois State University won the Open Sweepstakes National Championship as a team for the first time.

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Jason Berke: What Forensic Did for Me

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Soft Home Décor at Target Corporation Headquarters

Page | 76

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I consider myself really fortunate because I have a career that I really love. I am currently the Director of Design for Soft Home Décor at Target Corporation. I have the completely fun opportunity to lead talented Product Designers as we create things that make people's lives better at home. We make the linens for the tables that will host joyful and memorable family dinners. We make affordable rugs that a new apartment renter will use to ground their first "real" living room. We make the throw blankets that someone will use to cozy up on their sofa with a cup of tea and their favorite novel. But most of all, I get to bring forth my creative side, my analytical side, and the fun side of me that shines with passion. It is a tall order and big business, but I know that I couldn't be successful at my job today if it was not for forensics.

I initially joined the speech team in high school and I was hooked. I loved working hard on an activity that was so fun and rewarding (and that gave me focus and purpose). I went on to complete my education in Communication Studies at Illinois State University, an amazing school with a very successful forensics program. Joining the ISU Speech Team changed my life in more ways than I can articulate. I made lifelong friends, learned to be humble and roll with life's ups and downs. But most tangibly, forensics taught me to package my ideas, put structure around loosely defined situations and engage other's with joy and passion. These learnings would set me up for a dynamic career path that would land me in product design at Target.

I loved so many individual events and had the chance to compete in limited preparation, public address and interpretation categories. All three areas taught me the importance of having a framework in place to best package my ideas for others. In my job as a Design Director, I have to set a creative vision for our designs and present that vision to my team members, leaders, and colleagues. It requires the ability to quickly prioritize the most important elements of trend and product direction and share it visually and verbally with many stakeholders. It can be a difficult task to persuade my business partners to take risks on trends and designs that will move the needle a year or more out in the future. Many millions of dollars are at stake. My ability to

confidently present well organized, creative thoughts and read my audience has been priceless as I have increasingly taken on bigger roles over the years in Product Design & Development.

Forensics taught me how to verbally facilitate a meeting or presentation that may be going off the rails. This ability to put structure around a loosely defined situation has a huge payback in the world of retail and design.

Limited preparation events were so valuable in teaching me how to make a quick assessment of any situation and to be decisive and confident in front of others. Operating as a creative person in a corporate environment can be tough. You need to be nimble and fast on your feet. Forensics taught me how to verbally

Page | 77

facilitate a meeting or presentation that may be going off the rails. This ability to put structure around a loosely defined situation has a huge payback in the world of retail and design. Months of work can end up on the cutting room floor if the design reviews spin far off topic or stir up unnecessary concern. I can't tell you how many times a strong concluding statement has set all parties up for success on next steps and set clear expectations for success. In the end, it may be toss pillows we are making- but to those involved they are very important toss pillows.

One of the most amazing parts of being in forensics is that you have a platform to share your truth, express your feelings, and move others. The interpretation events let me explore my vulnerable side and put some of my deepest emotions out in the world for others to hear and judge. Developing a certain fearlessness in self-expression is more relevant in leadership today than ever. I am fortunate to work for an employer that celebrates bringing your whole and authentic self to work every day. I express my joy and passion for what I do, quite often, to great result. I am known for my relatability, humor, and collaborating with each colleague as an individual with their own passions and motivations. At this point, I can't imagine any other way of being present at work.

I recently returned to Illinois State and spent a day with the current ISU Redbird Individual Events Team. I had a blast watching them prepare for their national tournaments. It reminded me of something. All of these professional benefits from the speech team aside,

The interpretation events let me explore my vulnerable side and put some of my deepest emotions out in the world for others to hear and judge. Developing a certain fearlessness in self-expression is more relevant in leadership today than ever.

forensics connected me with some of the best people and best friends that I have encountered in my life. We grew up together and began our life of adulthood. I was fortunate to have a competitively successful forensics career with memorable performances and national finals. I have the amazing memory of sharing with my teammates the first national team title for Illinois State at the National Forensics Association National Championship Tournament in 1995. It is the people, though, that fill me up the most. It is the memories shared with those coaches, judges,

competitors and friends that leave the lasting mark. The rest is just icing on the cake. (And if you want to know a place to find a great cake stand, I'm ready and willing to help you out.)

Jason's Advice

Love what you do. If you don't love it, change it. If you still don't love it, find something else you love to do and do that. If you love what you do, people will fall in love with you.

