

AT THE INTERSECTION OF ABLEISM, ENTELECHY, AND POLICY DEBATE

Alex McVey and Matthew Gerber

Alex McVey (Kansas State University)



Dr. McVey is an Assistant Professor and Director of Debate. Alex is a critical-cultural communication scholar who works at the intersection of rhetoric, argumentation, and media studies to examine the relationship between power, inequality, and discourse. Alex's work focuses on mediated representations of policing in the United States as well as the rhetorical dynamics of visual, digital, and surveillant media.

Matthew Gerber (Baylor University)



Dr. Gerber is an Associate Professor who retired from his debate-related duties at Baylor in the Fall of 2022, after 20 years as the Director of Debate. His research interests include argumentation, debate, rhetorical criticism, and disability studies. He holds the Ph.D. from the University of Kansas.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). This Article is brought to you for free and open access through Cornerstone: A Collection of Scholarly and Creative Works at Minnesota State University, Mankato. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Speaker & Gavel* by the Editor and Editorial Board of *Speaker & Gavel*.

Proper APA citation for this article is:

McVey, A., & Gerber, M. (2023). At the Intersection of Ableism, Entelechy, and Policy Debate. *Speaker & Gavel*, 59(1), 13-33.

At the Intersection of Ableism, Entelechy, and Policy Debate

Alex McVey and Matthew Gerber

Page | 13

Abstract

This article investigates the causes of ableism and inaccessibility in policy debate, and also envisions alternatives to the current conception of debate that could open doors to more participants at all levels of ability. We argue that the rhetorical theories of Kenneth Burke help to illuminate symbolic practices in debate which function to exclude disabled voices. We also forward the argument that the competitive nature of policy debate, along with its dominant discursive practices and speech codes, constitutes an example of what Kenneth Burke calls 'entelechy'. We further argue that the entelechial nature of policy debate is at the root of ableism in the activity. Finally, we further employ Burke's theory of the comic frame to elucidate how the institutions and individuals in the policy debate community might engage in self-reflection as a way to generate fresh approaches to the problem of ableism and exclusion in policy debate.

KEY TERMS: Debate, Disability, Entelechy, Kenneth Burke, Comic Frame

This essay argues that despite increasing attempts at inclusion, policy debate remains a hostile place for people with intellectual disabilities. We hold that policy debate's persistent ableism cannot be disentangled from the activity's ongoing investment in a telos of competition as primary value of intercollegiate policy debate. We employ Kenneth Burke's theories of entelechy to examine how policy debate's tendencies toward competition and perfection cultivate modes of exclusion toward disabled people. We illuminate both the institutional symbolic structures and rhetorical practices that contribute to the unsatisfactory or unsafe experience of disabled debaters in the activity. Entelechy is Burke's term for the human tendency to pursue perfection (even to sometimes disastrous ends, and often with rotten means) in all actions, discourses, and ideas. The rhetorical theories of Burke illuminate symbolic and material practices in the debate community that function to marginalize disabled voices and condition debate coaches and competitors to normalize the exclusion of disabled bodies from the spaces of debate. We also employ Burke's theory of the comic frame to elucidate ways in which the people who constitute the debate community might engage in critical self-reflection as a way to generate fresh approaches to the problem of ableism in policy debate. The notion of the comic frame is a Burkean way of looking at the world through a lens of human fallibility and inevitable error, and is often cast as a symbolic alternative to the tragic framework, wherein entelechy and the more extreme, damaging human motives and tendencies lie.

The marginalization of debaters with intellectual disabilities is a pressing problem for the policy debate community. Despite increasing levels of awareness, as well as in-round argumentation centering on issues of disability, the response of policy debate to disabled people continues to be a work in progress. In particular, the policy debate space has continually proven to be less than accommodating to people who are intellectually or developmentally disabled (Gerber, 2016; Richter, 2016).¹ In a survey of 378 college debate coaches and students, Paul Mabrey and Keith Richards (2017) found that 38% of respondents identified as having some form of disability, and of that group, 12.2% categorized their disability as “psychological” in nature (p.8). Lack of access or a bad experience in policy debate has negative outcomes for disabled people who are seeking the educational, civic, and social benefits associated with debate participation. The impact of these shortcomings should not be understated. In a follow-up question related to overall satisfaction with the NDT/CEDA debate community, “significant differences existed with those identifying a disability showing lower satisfaction than those indicating no disability” (Mabrey & Richards, 2017, p.26). The authors found this data to be “troubling” for the NDT/CEDA community in that “traditionally marginalized groups are not experiencing the same satisfaction as others” (p.26). The divergence in quality of experience (or even participation in the first place) for students and coaches with disabilities must compel the members of the community to “continue to discuss and address inaccessibility in debate” (Miller, 2016, p.4). Indeed, there is a significant need not only for scholars to “attempt to identify why these kinds of asymmetrical experiences are happening,” but also for educational institutions to undertake concrete measures to guarantee that disabled students are not shut out in the first place, and to ensure that they “do not experience hostile and less satisfying debate participation” (Mabrey & Richards, 2017, p.27). We argue that one enduring feature of college debate’s exclusion and hostility towards disabled people is the continued emphasis on speed-reading, or spreading. We locate debate’s continued compulsion towards speed within a broader entelechial obsession with competition and argumentative ability that privileges exceptional bodily performance as the norm against which disabled bodies are judged to be lacking. We remain unsatisfied with what we view as a limited and limiting view of debate’s ends, gesturing towards comic alternatives to debate’s rotten perfection. We hope this essay contributes to ongoing efforts to subvert the entelechial obsession with competition and speed at the cost of access and inclusion.

¹ This article is primarily concerned with the experience of those with intellectual or cognitive disabilities in policy debate. While this article talks in general terms about intellectual and cognitive disabilities, we define those here as including but not limited to: autism spectrum disorders (ASDs), pervasive developmental disorders (PDD-NOS), Down Syndrome, aphasia, attention deficit, dyslexia, dyscalculia, memory loss, and Tourette’s Syndrome, among a host of others.

Burke, Entelechy and the Comic Frame

Western culture's broader obsession with entelechy, the drive to perfection, is deeply interwoven with the rhetorical norms of ableism, or the privileging of the perspectives and needs of able-bodied subjects over and against those of disabled people. Normalization is a rhetorical practice that defines human bodies through a telos of accomplishment, achievement, and success, with disabled bodies situated as the perverse underside of human capacity and ability. In this section, we read Burkean theory through the lens of disability studies to theorize entelechy as a rhetorical vehicle for the normalization of ableist practices under the ideological guise of the natural and inevitable force of competition and perfection. We show how entelechialism defines the ideological territory of debate, even as current practitioners may seek to redefine debate beyond its entelechial ends. Page | 15

According to Burke, entelechy is a uniquely human tendency. Burke characterized humans as not only “separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making” (symbol systems), but also as being “rotten with perfection” (Burke, 1963-1964, p.507). Burke argued that “there is a principal of perfection implicit in the nature of symbol systems; and in keeping with his nature as a symbol-using animal, man is moved by this principle” (Burke, 1963-1964, p.508). The continual striving for perfection, the pursuit of the continued clarification and elevation of our terministic screens and symbols into final fruition, thus informs the definition of entelechy. Rowland and Jones (2001) refer to this as “terministic compulsion” or the tendency to “take one’s terminology to the end of the symbolic line” (p.57). Burke, drawing on Aristotle, posited that anything which comes into existence tends to symbolically move toward its entelechial end, and that “this state of completion is its full actuality” (Burke, 1969, p.261). For Burke, the “finishedness” of a thing, helps to classify and create symbolic order according to the states of perfection or final form that make up the essence of that thing (Burke, 1950, p.14). Jan Hovden (2006) argued that for Burke, “entelechy is the force of symbol systems to compel their adherents to see them to completion, and he believes that this compulsion contains within it numerous dangers” (p.507). The authors are in solidarity with Hovden’s characterization of Burke’s concept of entelechy. We also agree with Rowland and Jones, who argued that entelechy is a slippery rhetorical construct, and one that is often difficult to apply because humans do not always engage in extreme entelechy (2001, p.57). Indeed, entelechial compulsion undergirds the normalization of extremism in the name of human perfection. In a case study about the discursive structure of video games, Soukup (2007) deployed Burke’s concept of perfection to describe the “entelechial motivational system” which appeared in most popular video games with “remarkable uniformity” (p.159). This motivational system, which encourages the “finishing” of the game, and the pursuit of one’s personal competitive objectives to completion is not unlike the entelechial nature of policy debate. Using entelechy as a critical tool helps us to name discourses which promote a “dangerous mix of competition, conquest, hierarchy, and aggressive domination” (Soukup, 2007, p.159).

Humans often stretch their symbol systems to extremist ends that go beyond mere fulfillment and completion. Indeed, entelechy “results from our ability to use symbols to envision the extreme ends of behavior” (Hubbard, 1998, p.360). In his essay on entelechy and the rhetoric of religious cults, Stan Lindsay argued that Burke “implicitly recognizes the possibility of this extremist type of entelechy- what might be called psychotic entelechy” (Burke, 1968, p.180; Lindsay, 1999, p.270). For Lindsay, the characteristics of “psychotic entelechy” entail a proclivity by some to be “so desirous of fulfilling or bringing to perfection the implications of their terminologies that they engage in very hazardous or damaging actions” (1999, p.272). In tracing the rhetoric of cult leader David Koresh, Lindsay found that the dangerous part of his discourse was not that he was necessarily irrational, but rather that his symbol system was “super rational” (at least as it appeared to the members of his community) and that he had carried his “meaning to the extreme” (p.279). By advocating for the ultimate finishedness of the biblical prophecies which were foretold in his preaching, Koresh “laid out his own telos” and was thus compelled to “literally live out the entelechy” (Lindsay, 1999, p.277). Another potentially minacious aspect of extreme entelechialism is its potential to obfuscate alternative outcomes and the discursive means by which to reach them. As Bryan Hubbard (1998) postulated in his study of the entelechial aspects of the deliberation surrounding the development and ultimate detonation of the nuclear bomb in the 1940s, “entelechy prevents the exploration of alternatives and informed discussion by maintaining a steady course for the decision.” (p.360). The relentless pursuit of entelechial perfection produces narrowed, constrained futures and potentialities.

The normalization of perfection and competition functions as a pervasive constraint against the agency and positionality of disabled persons in policy debate. As Timothy Dolmage argues, ableism is a rhetorical phenomenon, operating on the level of deeply inscribed, everyday discourse and vernacular, and predicated on the “mythical able-bodied norm” (2014, p.22). For Dolmage, the rhetorical construction of normalcy, and the ways in which it controls and inscribes bodies, is coupled with the cultural valorization of able-bodiedness; making disability “abject, invisible, disposable, less than human, while able-bodiedness is at once ideal, normal, and the mean or default” (2014, p.22). Communities reproduce ableism in subtle and insidious ways. Norms are transmitted to subsequent generations not as intentional modes of exclusion but as solidified expectations regarding bodily competence and ability. As James Cherney argues, “the ways of interpreting disability and assumptions about bodies that produce ableism are learned” and are handed down by “the previous generation” (2011, para. 2). We argue that the inherited ideologies and taken-for-granted assumptions of debate may perpetuate harmful assumptions about disability, even as programs actively fight to pursue new motivations and justifications for debate. Likewise, toward the end of identifying rhetorical practices that undergird these tendencies, especially in the case of extreme examples, Cherney’s approach to ableism aids in understanding the historical origins of long-ingrained assumptions about disability in an argument community.

Fortunately, the negative outcomes associated with entelechial extremism are not inevitable. Burke's notions of the tragic and comic frames provide guidance here. For Burke, "the tragic frame is marked by individuals committed to pushing their ideas to a rotten end" and by "the tragic tendency to push toward perfection regardless of the consequences" (Renegar & Dionisopoulos, 2011, p.325). On the other hand, the comic perspective proceeds from the assumption of human fallibility, inherent imperfection, and flaw. The purpose of the comic frame is to generate self-reflection and the creation of "argumentative space in the middle ground between opposites, recognizing that an absolutist frame is too rigid to allow for cooperative societal action" (Madsen, 1993, np). The comic perspective allows for humans to see through the narrow confines of their own terministic screens and to ostensibly help "those who possess these screens from being compelled to take them to their entelechial ends" (Hovden, 2006, p.507). Burke's comic frame is also useful as a method by which critics and members of a community might offer "minor repairs" to the current system without throwing out an entire institution (Toker, 2002). As Hovden put it, the comic frame "allows for the challenging of pieties without causing the destruction of the order itself" (2006, p.507). Along similar lines, Travis Cram argued that the comic perspective functions to "rein in the dangers of tragic thinking by correcting rather than banishing antagonists and emphasizing inclusion within a community" (2017, p.80). Cram's postulation is helpful here, in that the authors do not seek to "exile" those coaches and debaters who exhibit extreme entelechialism in debate; but nor do we seek to gloss over the glaring problem of ableism in the name of community harmony. Rather, we view our arguments here as part of an ongoing, long-term project designed to amend the activity in ways that render it more accessible to all. In the conclusion, we point to nascent practices and discursive interventions that seek to subvert the ingrained entelechial norms of policy debate, diverting the compulsion towards perfection into the comic possibilities of imperfection.

The Entelechial Tendencies of Policy Debate

This section examines the entelechial tendencies of policy debate, and how these tendencies reproduce ableist norms and practices within the activity. In particular, we name three rhetorical norms of entelechy that have, over time, come to define modern policy debate: Competition, Speed, and Rhetorical Ability. Our argument in this section is not that all policy debaters, programs, or coaches actively participate in the construction and maintenance of these ideologies. We name these forces entelechial tendencies to emphasize the way that these ideological norms have influenced the history of policy debate, not to state that these drives function as universal or unquestioned commands mindlessly repeated by policy debate automatons. We recognize that policy debate has created space for divergent voices and motivations that challenge many of the taken-for-granted assumptions of policy debate. We will revisit some of the challenges that have emerged to the entelechial forces of policy debate in the next section of the essay. Nevertheless, we hope the examples gathered here, collected from both published and public records of policy debate, as well as decades of personal experience from the authors as policy debate coaches, point towards pervasive norms that continue to shape how debaters perceive themselves and their communities. This critique emerges out of a practice of

self-reflexivity, seeking to understand the way our own coaching and debating experiences reflect, are shaped by, and participate in norms of ableist exclusion. Our argument is not that the whole of the debate community is engaged in win-at-all-costs extreme entelechy; or that every debater strives with fury to cram as many words-per-minute into every speech in a debate. Instead, we argue that under entelechial systems, the extreme becomes normalized, so even extreme examples of entelechial ideology become regularized guideposts for judging the performances of bodies in debate, with devastating effects for those whose bodies cannot meet the ideals of exceptional debate performance.

Entelechy of Competition

Policy debate has always been competitive in nature. As William Keith argued in his Keynote Address to the National Developmental Debate Conference at Wake Forest in 2009, “NDT-style debate is intensely focused on competition, almost, one might say, in a warlike way” (2010). Debaters compete in front of trained judges who render a win or loss at the conclusion of the round. The competitive nature of policy debate creates a rhetorical situation in which winning functions as the ultimate entelechial end of participation. This all-in commitment to competitive success and victory is evidence, in and of itself, of the ways in which entelechy discursively operates. This argument is not novel; significant existing scholarship in debate laments the rise of competition as the overarching telos of debate competition (Mitchell et al 2010). Much of the focus in existing critique of debate’s competitive drive focuses on the ways that competition functions to insulate debate from public audiences, blunting the impact of debate as an activity aimed at civic participation and diminishing the possible value of debate for watchful institutional audiences. As Mitchell et al argue, “Once an enterprise born from the difficulties of engagement with public audiences, academic debate became estranged from its audience-centered origins during the mid-twentieth century. The rise of tournament competition as an organizing telos augured debate’s ascetic turn, characterized by heightened specialization, intensified insularity, and fetishization of technique” (2010, 107). While we agree generally that the competitive telos of debate makes it inaccessible for broader public audiences, we believe that these criticisms themselves ignore the differential inaccessibility of debate’s competitive practices. Centering disability in our examination of policy debate’s exclusionary practices allows us to see how debate’s competitive drive does not just isolate the activity from broader, dominant publics, but also how it performs a doubled exclusion of those disabled bodies and voices who are always/already excluded from the public itself.

The institutional practices and symbol systems that point participants toward “winning ways” are at the root of ableism in policy debate, and the exclusion of disabled students and coaches from the activity. While there are many examples which support our argument, we will focus primarily on two: first, the entelechial commitment to attaining victory at all costs, and to accumulating wins in debate; and second, the rapid rate of delivery (or “spreading”) which has emerged as an extreme entelechial speech code that has become both a requirement for success and a tool of exclusion, particularly for students and coaches with intellectual disabilities. Policy

debate is a competitive game, and the game model of debate has pervaded the judging and coaching culture of the activity since its inception. The late Tuna Snider (1984) argued that the game approach to judging a debate (and ultimately rendering either a win or a loss) was the “silent”/default decision-making paradigm for most judges (p.19). The competitive gaming model of judging continues to be the overwhelming prevailing approach (Gerber & Nagel, 2017, p.45). Even critiques of the gaming model of debate concede that at root, “debaters are in fact, contestants involved in a competition and not agents of a government agency in an effort to simulate plan adoption” (Warner, 2003, p.65). According to Maxwell Schnurer, “in the 1980s debaters used gaming to defend speaking quickly in debates” (2003, p.46). While an examination of the notion of debate as a game is not the focus of the present essay, it is worth noting that the game metaphor “crowds out other ways of viewing debate”, and this fact may warrant separate interrogation into its effects and impacts on the activity (Kaylor, 2015, p.33).

From the moment they are introduced to the policy debate game, some novice students are subject to both the entelechial aspirations of their coaches, and to their own human desire to maximize personal potential (measured, of course, by the number of times they defeat their opponents). They are exhaustively trained in the strategic trappings of winning; out-smarting and out-talking one’s opponent and gaining a victory, one granted by an expertly trained judge who has been long-immersed in the arcane and recondite symbolic structures of the activity. The continued development of novice debaters (who inevitably flounder and stumble in their initial forays) into something approaching a competent competitor (one who wins regularly), requires even deeper immersion into the rules, speech techniques, and strategy of debate. Thus, through the machinations of entelechy, the novice debater can engage in “the process of changing from what something is into what something should become” (Lindsay, 1999, p.270). While entelechialism is a uniquely human tendency, and is thus endemic to most competitive games, it is particularly pronounced and obvious as it appears in some segments of policy debate, an activity that along with its university sponsors and private donors, has nurtured an “unacceptable preoccupation with competition” (Hlavacik, Lain, Ivanovic, & Ontiveros-Kersch, 2016, p.395). The implication of this entelechial obsession is that many debaters either self-select out of the activity when the true nature of what it means to succeed becomes apparent, or they continue to participate in a system in which perpetual disappointment ensues because of an inability to reach the idealized norms of bodily performance. This is particularly true of debaters with disabilities.

Other examples of the entelechial nature of winning in policy debate abound. Take for instance the narrative history of policy debate, which is saturated with legendary stories of students or coaches who engage in herculean feats of self-deprivation and sacrifice: coaches staying up all night to research, cut evidence, and strategize to outsmart and defeat one’s opponent in elimination rounds; students staying up all week before a big tournament to get a competitive edge and notch another win over a rival team; graduate assistant coaches who skip the readings for the Master’s seminar, but who instead spend their finite time researching esoteric topics with sometimes little bearing on their chosen course of study. In the experience of the authors, while that research may be enjoyable (because of the promise of the thrill of

victory), it is often not particularly contributory to academic success, and often trades off with other projects or life priorities. These are the mythic heroes of contemporary intercollegiate policy debate, placed on a pedestal because they are/were willing to sacrifice their mental and physical well-being in order to get the “W.” Tragically, and throughout the history of policy debate, too many coaches and competitors have “died for the cause” from “too much stress over wins and losses, the bottom line” (Gerber, 2009, p.90). A renewed commitment to self-regulation, indeed self-preservation in policy debate could be actualized if extreme entelechial tendencies were held in check and generationally filtered out of debate pedagogy.

After all, according to the “The Speech” by the late Scott Deatherage (the winningest coach in the history of NDT debate) preparing for debate competition must begin “when the topic is released [in July] until the final debate is concluded [in April] and continues at all points in between” (Snider, 2011, np). Later in “The Speech” Deatherage famously laid out his opinion on the proper way to conduct a winning cross-examination. “Don’t ask, argue!” he implored, and then he repeated that phrase several times. “Don’t ask, argue!”. For Deatherage (and for generations of his former students and coaches), the cross-examination was wasted if one simply asked questions for clarification, or for the organizational sake of one’s flowsheet, or for a deeper understanding of an opponent’s position, simply for the sake of understanding. Rather, the cross-examination period should optimally be used strategically to set up one’s own arguments and to expose and exploit weaknesses in the arguments of the adversaries. Like “spreading,” the “proper” way to conduct a winning cross-examination (by foregrounding one’s own arguments rather than by asking questions for true clarification or understanding) is a speech code, circulated through policy debate’s past and present. This speech code, this “best practice” of cross-examination, sacrifices understanding and clarity for a competitive advantage; it enshrines misunderstanding, opacity, and deception; it foregrounds winning over the edification of the parties involved; and it is entelechial insofar as it unreflexively carries out a dangerous symbolic practice to its extreme. This speech code is also ableist in that it complicates the in-round experience for students, coaches, or judges who have intellectual disabilities. This speech code encourages debaters with disabilities to actively avoid asking the very types of questions that might make their experience in policy debate more navigable.

The drive for entelechial perfection comes to define how the policy debate community advocates for the value of debate to stakeholders within colleges and high schools that fund and resource policy debate programs. Many studies have pointed to the positive impact of policy debate competition on student academic achievement, the development of critical thinking skills, higher rates of civic engagement, and matriculation to college or higher education (Colbert, 1995; Kennedy, 2007; Breger, 1998; Lee, 1998). However, the measurement of those achievements is most often based on “win/loss records, speaker points, or placement in a given tournament” (Stone-Watt, 2012, p.81). While there should be multiple metrics by which universities assess and track student outcomes related to their participation in policy debate (Partlow-LeFevre, 2012), the reality is that most debate coaches feel that they are “rewarded more by their university for focusing on competitive success” rather than for foregrounding those

aforementioned ancillary pedagogical advantages (Hlavacik, Lain, Ivanovic, & Ontiveros-Kersch, 2016, p.394). Many universities that field debate programs expect wins, because those are measurable metrics, and because defeating opponents is a point of pride to be celebrated. Thus, it is notoriously hard for coaches to generate publicity for teams that don't advance beyond the preliminary rounds. Coaches often struggle to explain the NDT first-round at large process to administrators who fail to see why being ranked 16th in the country is even noteworthy. Universities also find themselves caught up in entelechy as they assess and represent the quality of their institution to educational accrediting organizations. They must be able to portray the debate program, for example, as being successful (and blossoming toward perfection), and the easiest way to do that is to point to wins, particularly over peer institutions or ivy league schools who also support policy debate programs.

Entelechy of Speed

One of the most emblematic characteristics of policy debate is the discursive practice known as “spreading”: a speech code that is inculcated in college debaters (and also in high school and middle school students) who are taught that “speed kills” and that overwhelming one’s opponent with a blizzard of arguments, evidence, and debate theory is one of the keys to winning. Thinking and talking faster than one’s opponents opens new doors to the entelechial pinnacle of debate victory. University hosted summer debate camps, including the ones we have hosted and taught at, spend hours teaching debaters how to keep up with the norms of high-tempo bodily debate performance that participants may expect to see at the highest echelons of debate competition. Even as many debaters have questioned what gets called the “flogo-centric” paradigm of debate practice, the normalized way of teaching policy debate holds that dropped arguments are assumed to be true arguments, thus creating added incentive to speak and deliver arguments quickly, in hopes that opponents will “drop” or concede arguments and lose the debate. Training one’s body to speak, think, and write at greater speeds than one’s opponent normalizes bodily perfection and a drive towards competition as the paradigm of what constitutes desirable debate practice. Even the so-called critical styles of debate (an ideological alternative to the expectation of strict fidelity to policy content in debate) often retain the same sound and rapid delivery mechanisms. Indeed, to the “uninitiated observer, this type of critical debate would not sound much different from traditional policy debate” (Solt, 2004, p.52). Often, even debaters who make the aforementioned in-round arguments about disability adhere to the discursive practice of spreading.

One need not look far for an example of how these speech codes are weaponized against students with disabilities. In a recent article published in the *Rostrum* (the official publication of the National Speech and Debate Association, and one read by thousands of high school speech and debate instructors), the two authors (both attorneys specializing in the Americans with Disabilities Act) made it clear that any debate competitor with a fine-motor impairment who requests that their opponent slow down (not spread) so that they can “keep up while flowing” is not seeking a legitimate, protected accommodation, but is rather seeking a competitive

advantage, which would be unfair to the debater who has mastered the art of speaking quickly and wants to overwhelm their opponent with speed (Mayes & Zirkel, 2018, p.42). This amounts to institutionally sanctioned discrimination against students with auditory processing disorders or fine-motor impairment who wish to compete in the policy debate activity. Those types of disabilities are common in people with dyslexia, autism spectrum disorders, Tourette's Syndrome, or other learning disabilities, and in people who simply process information at a slower pace than their neuro-typical peers. A more recent article from the *Rostrum* focused on ways that the debate community could be more inclusive for people with visible/physical disabilities, but stopped short of offering solutions to the intractable problem of the ongoing exclusion of those with intellectual disabilities (Freeman & Pizzo, 2020, p.20). We argue that debaters with so-called "invisible" disabilities are more acutely impacted by extreme entelechialism in policy debate, and this article attempts to engage in the hard work needed to generate solutions to the dilemma.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the practice of debaters simply saying "more evidence" during a speech, rather than labelling and briefly explaining what their evidence says by way of a "tagline", became common. This practice, akin to simply "piling on" one's opponent with an ever-growing mountain of evidence, is yet another example of entelechy in which the content of the argument or evidence is not as important as the creation of more ink on a judge's flowsheet. Indeed, "policy debate has developed its own shorthand jargon and even a specialized method of notetaking (called "flowing") to accommodate and account for the rapid delivery" employed in most policy debate rounds (Gerber, 2009, p.82). Thus, the mere suggestion of "more evidence" creates a corresponding visual marker on a judge's flowsheet which denotes the symbolic presence of an argument which even without explanation, is often deemed to be true if not directly addressed. The extreme entelechial end of this speech code would envision a judge's flow to be covered with these symbolic notations of evidence, preferably on both the front and back sides of the legal-size flow paper, thus "burying" the opposing team and "crushing them" under the weight of multiple unaddressed (thus True) arguments or pieces of evidence.

Entelechy of Argumentative Ability

The privileging of extreme bodily performance as the desired norm of argumentative ability functions as a pervasive mode of exclusion for those bodies that fail to meet these standards of normalization. Our argument is not that judges and coaches actively and consciously exclude those who cannot or will not participate in speed, but rather that the norm of bodily and cognitive competence comes to define our expectations regarding proper debate performance. In the opening sequence of her article about ableism in the field of communication studies, Vanessa Beasley (2021) argued that rhetoricians, and particularly former policy debaters who continue to populate the ranks of the communication discipline, not only "want to win" (p.291), but are also at least subconsciously excluding disabled voices from the realm of deliberation because "we do not expect them to win" (p.293). Students with intellectual disabilities are often not recruited into the activity or encouraged to try policy debate in the first place, because of the presumption that

they might “not be able to follow (as in cognitively track) the logic of rules or arguments in a manner that would enable them to participate” (Beasley, 2021, p.300). The prevailing model of policy debate as a competitive game is exclusionary of students and coaches with disabilities because the members of the policy debate community have themselves “made a priori decisions that people with disabilities will almost always lose” (Beasley, 2021, p.294). While the sole focus of Beasley’s article is not policy debate, the authors are in solidarity with her extended opening examples about the activity, as they resonate deeply with our own personal experiences both in the academy and in debate.

The entelechial drive toward winning is also self-perpetuating in that students who demonstrate the bodily and intellectual competencies of winning debaters often may receive more attention, more coaching, and more academic benefit from the activity because they are perceived, consciously or subconsciously, as winners. In this framework students with intellectual disabilities may face invisible or de facto external barriers, or may even not seek inclusion in the first place, given the tendency for norms of bodily and cognitive excellence to be highlighted as exemplars of proper policy debate performance. Similarly, the other trappings of winning and entelechialism discussed previously are equally ableist and exclusive. Many people disabled or not, are not capable of the super-human feats of mental and physical stamina required for success in policy debate. That said, the kind of sustained, up-all-night, prepping at all times, approach to policy debate will, by definition, be tougher (or impossible) for people with intellectual disabilities when compared with their neuro-typical peers.

The benefits associated with participation are celebrated to justify funding for policy debate programs, but the purported academic, civic, and social profit of participation is often reserved for able-bodied students who can compete and win. Those with intellectual disabilities are confronted with structural obstacles to their very participation in the activity (not to mention the barriers they face with regard to actual competitive success or winning policy debates regularly). Policy debate describes itself as an activity committed to emancipation, equality, and the creation of an accessible, supportive discursive space for people with disabilities. Yet, speech codes like “spreading,” a discursive practice that is emblematic of the policy debate activity, have frequently been employed to deter participation or to “exclude traditionally disenfranchised voices” based on (dis)ability, race, and location (Nelson & Miller, 2016, p.5; Ryan & Sovacool, 2006, p.48-49; Pack-Jordan & Jordan, 2018). Simply put, “the speed and complex jargon in debate continues to become increasingly- dare I say- exclusive” (Ferguson, 2016, p.8).

Comic Frame Correctives

This article has attempted to draw readers attention toward damaging entelechial tendencies in the policy debate activity, proclivities which function to suppress meaningful participation for students and coaches with intellectual disabilities. Here, we utilize Burke’s theories of the comic frame to interrogate alternatives to the entelechial and ableist discourse patterns that undergird policy debate. As mentioned previously, Burke’s comic frame of acceptance allows for members of a discourse community to dig up, analyze, and reform their

own harmful rhetorical practices. By proceeding from the assumption of human imperfection, inadequacy, and proneness to error, the comic frame “can serve as a vehicle for self-examination” and create cognizance of “the possibility that unexamined routine habits and trends could lead to a disastrous future” (Renegar & Dionisopoulos, 2011, p.325). By examining the harmful and exclusionary discursive habits of the policy debate community, one can also begin to envision correctives to that behavior and alternatives to the ableist underpinnings of the activity. The comic perspective thus acts as a tempering check on human entelechial tendencies.

Community Self-regulation

Eliminating ableism in policy debate will not be a simple fix, but within a comic framework those repairs do not seem as daunting and unattainable. Toward that end, we offer a few suggestions as starting points for further deliberation. Initially, and simply put, policy debate and its constituents must make a determined effort to hold their own extreme entelechial tendencies in check. Instead of “pushing their ideas toward a rotten end” and striving to transform debaters who experience disability into perfect debating machines, the comic frame of acceptance allows us to accept those people for who they are, and to meet them where they are in terms of coaching and instruction (Renegar & Dionisopoulos, 2011, p.325). Not all students will be able to experience policy debate in the same way, and the one-size-fits-all approach to teaching, judging, and competing in policy debate must give way to a more diverse, hyper-subjective, localized method by which each student can approach the activity on their own terms.

There are several encouraging developments on this front, such as the Healthy Debater Initiative, as well as other self-regulatory movements in the community such as the move to six preliminary rounds at most major tournaments (instead of the standard eight). The majority of the community has decided that the loss of data points from those two missing prelim rounds did not outweigh the benefits of ending the day early, and building in more time to relax after rounds, or sleep just a little later in the morning. Thus, inroads can be cut into the entelechial tendencies of policy debate. While this may seem like an insignificant example, it proves that the humans who inhabit the debate space can mutually agree to dull the sharp edges that characterize the entelechial tendencies of the activity; the rottenness that co-mingles with the pursuit of competitive perfection.

The authors also argue that the COVID-19 protocols instituted by the NDT and CEDA, and the high degree of community compliance with those rules, demonstrates the ability of the community to acknowledge and step back from, its own entelechial practices. In 2021, the national championship tournaments achieved nearly universal adherence to in-person masking mandates, no small feat given that wearing a facemask likely compelled debaters to slow down a little, enunciate more clearly, and breathe differently as compared to speaking without a mask. At once, this small change both protected people with compromised immune systems (people whose bodies were different than the discursively constructed able-bodied norm), but also helped to demonstrate that at least in some cases, the dominant speech code could be deviated from without catastrophic results. This is not to equate the dangers of spreading with the dangers of

the pandemic, or to debate the scientific merits of masking; rather, we simply argue that when the policy debate community is in peril (and we believe it is, for a number of reasons that are beyond the scope of this essay), it has shown an ability to self-regulate in ways that are beneficial and healthy. These changes are helpful for students and coaches who do not, or cannot, meet the standard assumptions and expectations about bodily and cognitive performance that are baked into contemporary policy debate.

Additionally, in order to cut into the entelechial ways in which debate is evaluated by administrators and decisionmakers who are in control of resource allocation, the community must change how it frames and represents the activity. Success in policy debate should be presented based on individual student development, and on the extra education that participation in debate affords competitors. Speaker awards and win-loss percentages are important, but they should be framed as a secondary metric when advocating for one's program. Most colleges and universities are ostensibly deeply concerned with and committed to undergraduate research, and yet "debaters have been doing 'undergraduate research' for years, but our programs are rarely (if ever) mentioned when university administrators start talking about undergraduate research initiatives" (Morello, 1997, para.8). If participation in policy debate was more often lauded as a boon to undergraduate research and the enrichment of student knowledge, rather than being tied to success in tournament competition, it could undermine the forces of entelechy which co-produce both ableism in debate and in the evaluation of debate programs by administrators. Policy debate has grappled with "public relations" problems since its inception, but those issues become more acute when the problem is "in-house" at one's own college or university. A shift in the metrics of evaluation and representation from one of quantitative success (accumulation of wins and awards) to one at least partially based on individual student edification is needed, although the authors recognize from our own experience that this may be a difficult task. That said, once again Burke's notion of the comic frame provides critics with the "adventurous equipment" needed to upend standards of judgement which rest solely on "the somewhat empty accumulation of facts" (Burke, 1984, p.170-171).

Changes in Policy Debate Adjudication

We have argued that the dominant speech-code in policy debate, "spreading," is ableist and exclusionary at multiple levels. A comic frame of acceptance helps us to envision ways to renew or at least revise those discursive speech practices as "entrenched conventions that might be redefined, reimagined, or transcended. (Renegar & Dionisopoulos, 2011, p.326)". In other words, the comic frame provides argument communities with a tool for self-reflection; a path to admitting that the current approach, to judging, for example, is missing the mark. Specifically, a comic frame allows us to envision new modes of judging and evaluating policy debates which both captures and co-opts the tremendous influence judges hold over the symbolic structures and practices of the activity (Rowland & Deatherage, 1998). The delivery and speaking practices that judges choose to reward with higher speaker points is one area where it may be possible to harness the entelechial drive toward winning and mobilize it against itself. If judges began

rewarding a style of delivery which was slower and less reliant on debate jargon, those students and coaches who were interested in winning would most certainly adapt their approach, creating new entry points for previously excluded students (Rowland & Deatherage, 1988, 248-249). Additionally, judges have the authority to enforce requested accommodations like asking for one's opponent to slow down, or even requesting additional prep time. Judges should continue to use that enforcement power to make changes in the debate space that would improve the experience of debaters with disabilities.

It is the judging community in policy debate which holds the power to effectuate changes in discursive practices that have been normalized in the name of competitive success. As Scott Harris argues, unsurprisingly “debaters utilize communication strategies which maximize their individual success” (entelechy), a tendency which foregrounds “information processing over delivery” (which can lead to extreme entelechy, as we have described it here) (1995, p.129). As Rowland confirmed, “we cannot expect debaters to take a long-term perspective on the activity in an environment that is inherently competitive”, meaning that change from within must come from the judges of the activity. This is a project that has been attempted before (and should be revisited and expanded) as a way to increase meaningful participation for black debaters in the activity. Shanara Reid-Brinkley argued that one aspect of the Louisville debate project in the early 1990s was to replace “expert judges with lay judges” as a method to destabilize “common research and speech delivery practices in policy debate”, practices which functioned to exclude black debaters from meaningful participation (2023, p.4-5). We argue that many of those same discursive practices and approaches to judging are also exclusionary to people with disabilities who seek meaningful participation in policy debate, and that changes in how debates are adjudicated may warrant additional scholarly and community investigation. Similarly, Steven Combs (1993) maintained that to square the purported pedagogical benefits of policy debate with the reality of how debate operates in practice, the community ought to reorient itself toward a more “public advocacy perspective” which envisions the use of lay judges instead of highly trained argumentation technocrats who reward and encourage the rapid delivery which pervades policy debate (p. 43). Finally, judges, students and coaches should consider a pause in order to self-examine their own ableist predispositions, and to determine the depth of their “own identities as the smartest people in the room when it comes to understanding how, when, and why some kinds of rhetoric win” (Beasley, 2021, p.297). As Gilbert noted, comic frames of judgement are needed in times of public and community crisis, particularly as they relate to questions regarding which course of action or trajectory that an argument community should pursue (2014, p.275).

Changes in Competition

In line with the comic frame of interpretation, we would be remiss if we did not close with at least a few descriptions of the types of radical new worlds of policy debate that could center disability justice and simultaneously destabilize the entelechy driving policy debate. While the most obvious solution, and the one which extends directly from the line of logic laid

out in the article, is to simply remove the wins and losses from the activity, the authors believe that suggestion falls prey to the same critique of entelechialism that we have laid out herein. Totally removing the competitive aspect of the policy debate game would potentially undercut the reason many are attracted to the debate endeavor in the first place, and would risk further closing off the activity at a moment when it can ill afford such a thing. At the same time, a conscious tempering of the drive for competitive success, coupled with a shift toward a model of policy debate which focuses more on the fostering of publicly accessible communication and delivery styles, is not necessarily incommensurate with a drive to increase the number of people and programs who do what we do. Toward this end, Foote (2022) suggested that a shift toward a metric of program evaluation in which civic engagement, and debate as a vehicle for social change, was foregrounded as an alternative to the base accumulation of wins and trophies, might aid in increasing participation and by extension, accessibility. Indeed, within this framework, both neuro-typical and intellectually disabled debaters could find success by harnessing and developing their innate power as advocates.

The authors also suggest other incremental steps which could chip away at the foundations of entelechy that undergird the activity, even if it does not obliterate the last vestiges of it altogether. In line with the earlier suggestion about changes in judging, it is worth considering a tournament or competition in which the only evaluation was based on speaker points. This might induce competitors to change their speaking style (albeit temporarily), if there was some aforementioned notification or agreement that the expectation was for a more oratorical style of presentation. Debaters would be striving for the rank of one, two, three, or four during the debate, and looking to maximize their speaker points rather than on the goal of winning, per se. There is no ballot at the end, only a ranking of one's speeches in comparison to the opponents, and an assignation of numerical speaker points. We would like to believe that debaters would genuinely participate in good faith, but admittedly there is a lack of research to support this claim, and it represents a radical departure from the normalized speech codes which we have detailed here. Would this idea rupture extreme entelechialism and alter the speech code in intercollegiate policy debate? Probably not, but if this idea was expanded and adopted for one round at every tournament, for example, it might begin to gradually diminish the powerful grasp that spreading has on the policy debate community, thus increasing access and improving the experience for debaters with disabilities.

Another "radical" example that we suggest is the creation or expansion of policy debate leagues at the high school and college level which are designed to specifically serve the needs of disabled students. In this world, we could at least start to tell new stories about who the policy debate community is, and what we aspire to be. One example which helps to illustrate this point is the debate program at Gallaudet University, a college dedicated to serving students from the deaf and signing community. Their website describes the program as "dedicated to fostering disagreement, debate, and civic engagement in ASL and English" (<https://gallaudet.edu/center-democracy-deaf-america/debate-team/>). Gallaudet does not participate in NDT-CEDA style debate, and thus they are not bound by the same gatekeeping speech codes and entry barriers

which govern that particular format. Rather, their program is focused on fomenting public speaking skills while also retaining a competitive component to incentivize participation. While the format may be different, Gallaudet's debaters most certainly engage in policy debate, most recently on the topic of whether deaf people should be allowed to serve in the military. In this public debate, which took place in April of 2023 and was adjudicated by a three-person panel composed of a columnist from the Washington Post, a retired colonel from the U.S. Army, and a local attorney (rather than by debate experts or argumentation scholars) deaf debaters from Gallaudet were paired with hearing (non-deaf) debaters from the U.S. Naval Academy. While the authors concede that we do not know which side won the debate, that point is immaterial. A public policy debate occurred in which half of the competitors were disabled, yet were able to meaningfully participate because of changes in the style of delivery, changes in who judged the debate, and changes in the reasoning for why the debate happened in the first place (for the education of both the students and the audience, rather than to defeat an opponent and put another win in the "W" column). While the differences between the public style of policy debate engaged in by disabled debaters at Gallaudet and the current practices that characterize most policy debate at the college level are vast, those differences themselves point to a broader conclusion that is informed by Burke's comic frame. As Tom Jesse argued, embracing a comic frame in which people admit their own tendencies toward being wrong, can compel humans to open themselves to difference, and to interrogate "other positions in the world, even positions which would typically reside outside the border of our frame of acceptance" (2013, para.15). A perspective based on human tendencies to engage in mistake rather than in malice helps to resolve the dilemma of what ought be done about the continued perpetration and practice of ableism in policy debate.

Conclusion

This essay lays out a critique of the way that ableist norms and tendencies in policy debate emerge out of debate's entelechial drives. We developed a theoretical foundation for understanding how ableism is perpetuated in debate in both conscious and unconscious ways by situating Burkean theories of entelechy alongside critiques of structural ableism developed in disability studies. This framework draws attention to the way that norms of expected bodily performance come to be defined around the pursuit of perfection, positing the extreme as the norm and judging that which falls short of these extremes as lacking. We documented myriad ways that entelechial norms of competition, speed, and argumentative ability manifest in debate practices and speech codes that are exclusionary toward debaters with intellectual disabilities. However, we view these norms not as inevitable, but as subject to challenge and alternative ways of imagining and conceptualizing debate. By turning to the comic frame in Burkean writing, we explore new ways of inhabiting debate that might subvert debate's entelechial drives toward more inclusive ends.

The goal of this paper is not to call for a wholesale rejection of policy debate, competition, or even the use of speed and spreading in policy debate. Nor do we articulate this

argument from a position of purity, imagining ourselves as outside of these norms and ideologies. Instead, we offer this critique as a self-reflexive examination of the way that our own debating and coaching experiences are inflected by communal drives and desires that produce hostilities and exclusions towards disabled people that have gone unchallenged for far too long. We hope that calling into question the way that debate's drive towards competitive excellence reifies norms and practices that generalize bodily expectations against which disabled people are judged as lacking may help create new spaces to rethink what inclusion of different identities may look like in debate.

The academic, civic, and social benefits associated with competitive debate in general, and with policy debate in particular, should be available and accessible to all. While the authors believe this essay provides some potential starting points and enriches the ongoing conversation about ableism in debate, we recognize that future research is needed to more deeply interrogate all of the questions and problems raised herein. Toward that end, additional studies which centered on ways the dominant gaming metaphor of policy debate could be destabilized or amended would be welcome. Similarly, future scholarship which explored the ways in which disability could be “weaponized” in debate, as an in-round tactic, would be useful. For example, research which examined the prevalence and success of debate teams who make accommodations part of their strategy (such as asking opponents to slow down, or asking judges for additional prep time) would be insightful. Finally, more inquiry into disability-specific debate leagues or contests (along the lines of the Gallaudet project), would provide a useful blueprint for the pursuit of tangible, pragmatic changes in debate competition.

REFERENCES

- Batterman, B. (2021, May 4). How fast do debaters speak? A study. *The 3NR: A Blog About High School Debate*, retrieved from <https://the3nr.com/2021/05/04/how-fast-do-fast-debaters-speak-a-study/>
- Beasley, V. (2021). Communication's ableism problem. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 24(1-2), 291-306.
- Breger, B. (1998). Building open societies through debate. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 19, 66-68.
- Burke, K. (1950). *A Rhetoric of Motives*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.
- Burke, K. (1963-1964, Winter). Definition of man. *The Hudson Review*, 16(4), 491-514.
- Burke, K. (1968). *Counter-statement*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.
- Burke, K. (1969). *A Grammar of Motives*. University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA; London, U.K.
- Burke, K. (1984). *Attitudes Toward History* (Third edition). University of California Press. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.
- Cherney, J.L. (2011). The rhetoric of ableism. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, 31(3), retrieved from <https://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1665/1606>
- Colbert, K.R. (1995). Enhancing critical thinking activity through academic debate. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 16, 52-72.
- Combs, S.C. (1993). The parallel crises in democracy and debate. In, *Argument and the Postmodern Challenge: Proceedings of the Eighth SCA/AFA Conference on Argumentation*. Speech Communication Association, Annandale, VA. Ed. Raymie McKerrow, p.43-49.
- Cram, T. (2017). "An open door": Responsibility and the comic frame in Obama's foreign policy rhetoric on Iran. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, 20(1), 69-108.
- Dolmage, J.T. (2014). *Disability Rhetoric*. Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, NY.
- Ferguson, C.L.S. (2016). Deaf debaters. *National Journal of Speech & Debate*, 4(3-4), 8-9.
- Foote, J. (2022). Forensics in times of crisis: Reframing citizenship and social change as 'winning'. *Speaker & Gavel*, 58(1), 1-10.

- Freeman, V.; Pizzo, J. (2020, September-October). Giving people who experience disability a seat at the speech and debate table. *Rostrum*, 20-21.
- Gerber, M.G. (2009). Toward public sphere intercollegiate policy debate: The path to participation? *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 30, 80-93.
- Gerber, M.G. (2016, October). Debating with/about disability: A rejoinder. *National Journal of Speech & Debate*, 1, 16-23. Retrieved from https://www.theforensicsfiles.com/files/ugd/9896ec_ab328c07257a4ehead01956cee0ee893.pdf
- Gerber, M.G., & Nagel, J. (2017). Final frontiers: Exploring the perpetual explanatory power of Alfred Snider's gaming theories for contemporary intercollegiate policy debate. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 37, 45-56.
- Gilbert, C.J. (2014, July-October). The ridiculous in rhetorical judgement. *The Review of Communication*, 14(3-4), 270-287. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15358593.2014.939707>
- Harris, S. (1995). The changing face of community. The impact of electronic listservs on argument within the debate community. *Argumentation and Values*, Proceedings of the 1995 Alta Conference on Argumentation, NCA, 128-132.
- Hlavacik, M., Lain, B., Ivanovic, M., & Ontiveros-Kersch, B. (2016). The state of college debate according to a survey of its coaches: Data to ground the discussion of debate and civic engagement. *Communication Education*, 64(4), 382-396. <http://doi.org/10.1080/03634523.2016.1203006>
- Hovden, J.M. (2006). Debate and the comic frame: A Burkean take on the educational value of NDT/CEDA debate. In, *Engaging Argument*, Ed. Patricia Riley, Washington, National Communication Association.
- Hubbard, B. (1998, Summer). Reassessing Truman, the bomb, and revisionism: The burlesque frame and entelechy in the decision to use atomic weapons against Japan. *Western Journal of Communication*, 62(3), 348-385.
- Jesse, T. (2013). Kenneth Burke, Louis Zukofsky, and the comic framing of "A"-23. Retrieved from <https://tomjesse.com/2013/10/05/kenneth-burke-louis-zukofsky-and-the-comic-framing-of-a-23/>
- Kaylor, B. (2015). It's all fun and games until someone loses the idea: Implications of the 'game' metaphor for competitive debate. *The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta*, 100(1), 33-44.
- Keith, W. (2010). Keynote address: A new golden age – Intercollegiate Debate in the twenty-first century. In A. D. Loudon (Ed.), *Navigating opportunity: Policy debate in the 21st century* (pp. 11-26). New York, NY: International Debate Education Association.

- Kennedy, R. (2007). In-class debate: fertile ground for active learning and the cultivation of critical thinking. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 19(2), 183-190.
- Lee, E. (1998). Memoir of a former Urban Debate League participant. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 19, 93-96.
- Lindsay, S. (1999). Waco and Andover: An application of Kenneth Burke's concept of psychotic entelechy. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 85, 268-284.
- Mabrey, P., & Richards, K. (2017, March). Evidence based decision making and assessment for the Cross-Examination Debate Association. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 1, 1-30.
- Madsen, A. (1993, Spring). The comic frame as a corrective to bureaucratization: A dramatic perspective on argumentation. *Argumentation & Advocacy*, 29(4), 164-178.
- Mayes, T.A., & Zirkel, P.A. (2018, February-March). Ensuring access to speech and debate for students with disabilities. *Rostrum*, 39-43.
- Miller, J.H. (2016, April). Introducing a conversation on accessibility, disability, and debate. *National Journal of Speech & Debate*, 4(3-4), 3-4.
- Mitchell, G.R., Bsumek, P., Lundberg, C., Mangus, M., Voth, B., Hobeika, M., & Jensen, M. (2010). Pathways to innovation in debate scholarship. In A. Loudon (Ed.), *Navigating opportunity: Policy debate in the 21st century* (pp.93-122). New York, NY: International Debate Education Association.
- Morello, J.T. (1997). The future of the National Debate Tournament. Retrieved from <https://groups.wfu.edu/NDT/Articles/morello.html>
- Nelson, N., & Miller, J.H. (2016). Dyslexia and debate. *National Journal of Speech & Debate*, 4(3), 5-7.
- Pack-Jordan, E., & Jordan, J. (2018). Remembering rural debate. *Texas Speech Communication Journal*, 43, 13-25.
- Partlow-Lefevre, S.T. (2012). Arguing for debate: Introducing key components of assessment for intercollegiate debate programs. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 33, 31-74.
- Reid-Brinkley, S. (2023). Celebrating the legacy of the Louisville Project and grappling with the antiblackness still plaguing college policy debate. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 38, 3-10.
- Renegar, V.R., & Dionisopoulos, G.N. (2011). The dream of a cyberpunk future? Entelechy, dialectical tension, and the comic corrective in William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. *Southern Communication Journal*, 76(4), 323-341. DOI: 10.1080/1041794x.2010.500342

Richter, Z. (2016, April). The disabled person's struggle in round and beyond: Taking back formerly ableist educational spaces in the post-ADA generation. *National Journal of Speech & Debate*, 4(3-4). Retrieved from https://www.theforensicsfiles.com/_files/ugd/9896ec_5803f9251e6f457aac82f738f099d2ab.pdf

The Rostrum (2012, March), 86(7), 1-92. Retrieved from https://www.speechanddebate.org/wp-content/uploads/March-2012_Mar_Rostrum_Complete.pdf

Rowland, R.C., & Deatherage, S. (1988, Spring). The crisis in policy debate, *Journal of the American Forensics Association*, 24, 246-250.

Rowland, R.C., & Jones, J. (2001). Entelechial and reformative symbolic trajectories in contemporary conservatism: A case study of Reagan and Buchanan in Houston and beyond. *Rhetoric & Public Affairs*, (4)1, 55-84. ISSN: 1094-8392.

Ryan, S.E., & Sovacool, B.K. (2006). Uncovering the intellectual diversity of common lines of argument in modern policy debate: Discovering an answer to the media's call for renewed discussion in post-secondary education. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 27, 48-69.

Schnurer, M. (2003). Gaming as control: Will to power, the prison of debate, and game called potlatch. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 24, 46-60.

Snider, A.C. (1984). Games without frontiers: A design for communication scholars and forensic educators. *Journal of the American Forensics Association*, 20, 162-170.

Snider, A.C. (2011, May 23). The Speech: Scott Deatherage on Debating. Retrieved from <http://globaldebateblog.blogspot.com/2011/05/speech-scott-deatherage-on-debating.html>

Solt, R.E. (2004, September). Debate's culture of narcissism. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 25, 43-65.

Soukup, C. (2007, Summer). Mastering the game: Gender and the entelechial motivational system of video games. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 30(2), 157-178.

Stone-Watt, S. (2012). Authentic assessment in in debate: An argument for using ballots to foster talent-development and promote authentic learning. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 33, 75-104.

Toker, C.W. (2002). Debating 'what ought to be': The comic frame and public moral argument. *Western Journal of Communication*, 66(1), 53-83.

Warner, E. (2003). Go homers, makeovers, or takeovers? A privilege analysis of debate as a gaming simulation. *Contemporary Argumentation & Debate*, 24, 65-80.