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## **This house would ethically engage: a critical examination of competitor and coach leadership in National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) debate**

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THIS HOUSE WOULD ETHICALLY ENGAGE: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF  
COMPETITOR AND COACH LEADERSHIP IN NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE  
ASSOCIATION (NPDA) DEBATE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
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in  
The Department of Communication Studies

by,  
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~cls~

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## Abstract

This dissertation explores the relationship between ethics, pedagogy, and rhetoric through the relationship between NPDA partnerships and how forensic coaches impact these relationships. The main argument which is introduced is that directors of forensics and NPDA debaters are currently in a state of tension, and arguably in a state of crisis. This dissertation aims to heighten the level of intellectual discussion in this subfield as well as add to both the quantity and quality of research. The study begins with an introduction and review of the relevant literature. These chapters are focused on the philosophical and pragmatic underpinnings of theory in forensics as well as the existing studies in this subfield. Next, there is a quantitative study to assess how argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness influence competitive relational satisfaction within NPDA partnerships. The original human subject study in this dissertation begins with the student/debaters because of the bottom-up nature of the subculture of forensics. Following the quantitative portion, there is a qualitative follow-up with the coaches of these partnerships, and finally, I explore the rhetorical and pedagogical impacts of the findings. It is concluded that especially in forensics, there is no one model pedagogy or ethic, just as there is no one way to garnering competitive success. It is argued that further theoretically and historically grounded study must be conducted in this area in order to bolster the credibility of forensic literature as well as to provide further understanding in this area.

## Chapter One: Inherency

As a first-year NPDA (National Parliamentary Debate Association) debater, with absolutely no background in forensics (intercollegiate speech and debate) whatsoever, I had the pleasure of debating with a different partner every single tournament. While I suspect there are a number of reasons for this, I think the primary reason was that my coaches knew I would not complain about it (or at least not very much). This variance of partners was beneficial for me in many ways, and one of those ways is it sparked my interest in NPDA debate partnership relationships, which eventually evolved into a catalyst for the present study. The last year that I debated, at California Baptist University, I finally had the privilege of a year-long partnership which was equally beneficial for my development as a forensicator, scholar, and person, albeit in a much different way. Ethical practices come into question when directors of forensics address specific issues of partnerships and those interactions. NPDA is a forensic event which I hold very dear because I believe more than any other forensic event; it provides the clearest links between rhetoric, ethics, and pedagogy. For example, audience adaptation is one of the most useful real-world skills that debaters gain from NPDA. It is the extemporaneous nature and the wide variety of experience in the judging pool which forces NPDA debaters to adapt, helping them in their real lives. In the words of Bartanen and Frank (1999):

In the rhetorical tradition, students are expected to face diverse audiences, knowing as well that different audiences and individual audience members require different kinds of proof. Because audiences and audience members hold different values and use a variety of modes of inquiry, students were taught the art of adaptation. Students were expected to study sociological pluralism and the various logics at work in the world. p. 43.

Because other forms of academic debate are much more highly specialized and arguably univocal, NPDA stands out as a form of debate more easily connected to its rhetorical roots, as well as more encouraging of sound pedagogy. Parliamentary debate is primarily concerned with



extemporaneous critical thinking skills because of the limited preparation time, as opposed to traditional forms of academic debate which require very constricted and exhaustive types of research (Crossman, 1996; Galizio & Chuen, 1995; Kuster, 2002; O'Niell, 1986; Puchot, 2002; Stris, 1996; Theodore, Sheckels, & Warfield, 1990; Williams, & Guajardo, 1998). Furthermore, Rutledge (n.d.) explained that one way to reach out to a larger community and enable growth on a parliamentary debate team is to involve non-forensic faculty. He argued that that non-forensic faculty would be interested in parliamentary debate is that students must have a broad base of theoretical, rhetorical, and pragmatic knowledge and simultaneously be understandable to a non-debate audience. The study of training within the field of rhetoric dates back thousands of years. The roots of forensics in particular began with the Ancient Greeks. As Olbrys (2006) stated:

Disputation was the anchoring practice for Sophistic education, a commitment to winning the case that led Plato to condemn the Sophists as practitioners of mere eristic rather than dialectic (Sophist 225c\_226a; Meno 75c\_75d), Aristotle to criticize them as those who make the weaker argument the stronger (Goldin, 2002), and even Isocrates (who himself was trained by the Older Sophists) to criticize several of them for a lack of integrity. Indeed, as Enos (1993, p. 63) demonstrates, the distinction between Sophistic disputation and Platonic dialectic is important to draw out, for while they might share grammatical and structural similarities, the former concerns only the phenomenal world, while the latter concerns a transcendent world of Forms. Sophistic disputation promoted individual agency, but with a recognition that any individual act rules out opportunities to convince particular audiences, particularly if a performer's timing was off. Sophistic pedagogy was hence designed to help pupils minimize the chances of bad timing and utilize the rhetorical resources at their disposal in any particular circumstance, all of which was necessary to influence public policy. (p. 360).

Argumentation over what the best rhetorical practices in communication and forensics in particular continue today. This dissertation addresses the ethical practices of the Director of Forensics through the specific issue of NPDA debate partnerships and interactions. I begin with this introduction to provide the inherency or impetus behind this study. Next, I review relevant literature. Next, I present a quantitative study regarding NPDA debate partnerships, answered by debaters. Next, I provide a follow-up qualitative study with coach reactions to the quantitative

study. Finally, I provide a model of praxis regarding the ethical Director of Forensics before providing concluding remarks.

### Theoretical and Pragmatic Ethics

The question of ethics in forensics became interesting to me my first year of forensic competition at Palomar Community College, when I consistently overheard remarks such as, “It is unethical to use a visual aid in persuasive speaking” or, “It is against the rules to use a case brief in NPDA debate.” To me, these statements were clearly and obviously empirically denied. I saw no moral implications to use of posters in persuasion, or lack thereof, and I knew for certain that the written NPDA rules did not actually ban case briefs. As I came to learn, though the aforementioned statements describe opinions, they are important, deep seated opinions which describe norms of the respective events. Hence, I was led to my thesis research, where I tested the conflation of the concepts of rules, norms, and ethics particularly in individual events. I naively thought that coaches and students alike simply did not realize the conceptual errors they were making and would want to correct them. As it turned out, I was wrong. The conceptual conflations occurred, but, in short, no one cared. The forensic community, as a whole, seems concerned with recognizing violations of expectations, regardless of their conceptual roots. However, there is an overwhelming concern in the community for exploring and understanding ethics. Hence, I have spent much of my scholarship studying this concept as it applies to the theorizing about, training, and practice of forensics. The study of ethics is essential in any field of study. I believe that in forensics, it is particularly important because at the end of the day, all any of us really has is the words we say and the behaviors we engage in. That premise coupled with the fact that forensic competitors are trained to speak and are also highly concerned with regulating behavior is what leads me to the conclusion that ethics is of the utmost importance in

forensics. What follows here is a philosophical and pragmatic ethical grounding and how this applies specifically to forensics and even more specifically, NPDA debate.

### Philosophical and Pragmatic Ethical Grounding

While continental ethics may seem an odd place to begin when attempting to uncover what it is that we should do, what constitutes ethical behavior in forensics; it is actually an apropos place to start. In NPDA debate in particular, many of the following philosophers are cited or at least appealed to when determining a paradigm for judgment. Hence, many debaters and directors of forensics alike look toward continental ethics for a theoretical grounding when determining which behaviors to condemn and which to condone. Nietzsche (1977) was most concerned with denying traditional accounts of life, responsibility, and reality in general. Nietzsche maintained that life is simply a series of chaotic events, without cause or good and evil. There are simply events that enhance life and those that do not. One's goal ought to be, then, to enhance one's life as much as possible. For NPDA debate, because it exists in such a state of fragmentation, debaters' goals tend to be to continue to engage in behaviors that win them rounds and not to engage in behaviors that lose those rounds. Of course, this becomes problematic because each round of debate is so separated from the last in this particular forum. In each round, there is a different topic, a different opponent, and a different critic. This in particular is why the role of the NPDA debate coach becomes paramount. The coach is the one who must provide guidance, regardless of the frustrations that NPDA debate provides.

While Nietzsche's philosophy is helpful in understanding the philosophical underpinnings behind behavior in NPDA debate rounds themselves, Heidegger's (1996) work spoke much more toward the relationship between coach and student as well as the principles behind behaviors (as opposed to the particulars of behaviors within each instance). Essentially,

Heidegger called for a re-emphasis on the being of beings rather than on beings themselves. This re-evaluation encourages us to be concerned with our being, which is authentic and inherently ethical. Likewise, in NPDA debate, ethical debate coaches will focus on their students as people, rather than simply as tools for winning rounds.

Along Heideggerian lines, Levinas (1998) was concerned with the process and the being of people. His focus shifts us to the relational aspect of ethics. Because there are so many people involved in NPDA debate, the relational aspect of ethics is essential to incorporate in debate training. Levinas's impact is that ethics lie with the Other. When we deny the fact that the Other lies beyond our control, we are partially negating the being of Others, and therefore committing a violent act. No matter what the nature of our interaction with the Other is, we cannot ever completely possess him or her. "The relationship to the face, an event of collectivity—speech—is a relationship to a being itself, as a pure being" (Levinas, 1998, p. 10). When we reflect on our being, we are simultaneously returning to and fleeing from ourselves. This is our inherent paradox. Through this argument, Levinas set a new precedent in philosophy. Because the Other has a face, we all have an obligation. This obligation is one that NPDA coaches already likely understand that they have to their students. However, it is an important obligation for NPDA debaters to understand that they have to their partner.

Derrida's (2000) philosophy regarding ethics applies directly to the way in which directors of forensics can productively conceptualize ethics for themselves and for their teams. Derrida established through deconstruction that ethics are aporetic. From Derrida's perspective, traditional discourse on ethics and responsibility simply mask true ethics, which lie within the gap in the aporia. Continuing to deny the gap is inherently unethical because this is not dealing with the gap and calls for deconstruction. In true Levinasian fashion, Derrida suggested the

ways in which we as individuals and as societies can operate ethically within the aporia: through hospitality and forgiveness. Directors of forensics are constantly in situations where they are forced to be hospitable and grant forgiveness to their students. Derrida stated that the self must forgive the other even when the other does not ask, which is build off of Levinas's theory of the dissymmetrical relation to the other. The self must go as far as to forgive the unforgivable, in fact, because if it is forgivable, it has already been forgiven. Forgiving does not erase nor transform the unforgivable act. Forgiveness is impossible and radical purity; there is no traditional logic to it. "Even if this radical purity can seem excessive, hyperbolic, mad? Because if I say, as I think, that forgiveness is mad, and that it must remain a madness of the impossible, this is certainly not to exclude of disqualify it" (Derrida, 2001, p. 39). This lack of incremental reasoning is what makes forgiveness actually forgive. To forgive the unforgivable is illogical and mad, but completely necessary. This madness is similar to the madness that directors of forensics experience as they constantly strive to keep their teams supported and together.

Philosophical grounding is essential behind any academic pursuit. However, because forensics is arguably practice first, theory second, a pragmatic grounding is also needed. Pragmatic action is often conflated with practical action, and though these are similar, they are not the same. Practical occurs out of necessity and pragmatic is doing with the ends in mind. The ideas of responsibility, obligation to the other, and authenticity are clearly at the heart of Dewey's *How We Think*. He explored how education ought to train students to think. In order to do so effectively, teachers must have an ethical foundation. Though Dewey addressed specifically the intellectual institution of education generally, his assessment and prescriptions are easily extended to debate. "Intellectual organization originates and for a time grows as an accompaniment of the organization of the acts required to realize an end, not as the result of a

direct appeal to thinking power” (p. 41). Through the demand to perform every round, debaters put into practice what their coach has taught them, and eventually, through enough experience take ownership of their own thinking. Debate is designed specifically for training critical thought, involving arguments for and against a variety of subjects, regardless of anyone’s personal opinion. NPDA in particular also involves a high level of on-your-feet decisions and audience analysis/adaptation. “Everything the teacher [or coach] does, as well as the manner in which he [or she] does it, incites the child [or debater] to respond in some way or other, and each response tends to set the child’s [or debater’s] attitude in some way or other” (Emphasis in original, p. 47). The influence of a director of forensics goes far beyond the scope of a constricted classroom. The most literal illustration of the expanded classroom of a director of forensics is the physical space he or she teaches in. This space includes the home school, other schools, hotels, restaurants, automobiles, airplanes, etc. The importance and potential for impact regarding ethics is compounded for the director of forensics, so he or she must be constantly cognizant of his or her actions.

There are implications to be drawn from the theoretical and pragmatic realms. From the theoretical ethical literature we have explored, it seems quite clear that both debaters and directors of forensics are charged with responsibility, obligation to the other, and authenticity. The first theoretical implication for debaters and directors of forensics is responsibility. Regardless of the outcome of decisions made, it is imperative for debaters and coaches alike to own up to the decisions they make. Instead of casting external blame, debaters must take ownership of their actions. As described by Herrick (2007):

Our specific concern is the ethical conduct of argumentation and advocacy. Argumentation, like medicine or music, is one of those beneficial endeavors that constitute our social lives, so it would be worthwhile to identify the virtues that will improve the practice of advocacy and argument. Argument virtues are those moral

qualities and skills that help people think and act morally in an argumentative situation, and thus pursue argumentation in a manner that promotes and improves its practice. The moral qualities would also assist our perceptions of and our responses to the ethical issues that an argumentative situation raises. (pp. 51-52).

Suffice it to say, because of the social aspect of argumentation, there is a need for self-reflexivity in argumentative contexts. This is heightened in competitive NPDA debate, given that debaters and judges have no access to written evidence in chambers. Hence, the possibility of error on the part of debaters is quite possibly greater in this extemporaneous form of debate than in CEDA/NDT. Therefore, coaches must train their debaters to take responsibility for the arguments they are advancing in-round.

The second theoretical implication for debaters and directors of forensics is obligation to the other. Coaches are obviously obligated to their teams because of their job. However, they are in a unique position because they have so much interpersonal contact with their team in a variety of contexts. Likewise, debaters have an ethical obligation to their partner on a personal, professional, and practical level. Herrick (2007) supported this position by explaining that argument virtue is concerned with “honesty,” “[c]ourage in argument,” “cooperation,” “respect for persons,” and “regard for contexts” (pp. 52-54). These concerns contained in Herrick’s argumentation text reveal the necessity to take advice from the Levinasian notion that the heart of ethics is centered on concern for the Other. Being Other or audience-centered encourages NPDA debaters to uphold the utmost integrity.

The third theoretical implication for debaters and directors of forensics is authenticity. Though debaters do not have to personally agree with every position they are forced to debate, they must be honest in the arguments they present in support of those positions. Directors of forensics can train this behavior best by modeling honesty at all times. The very nature of rhetorical argumentation requires authenticity. As described by Johnson (2000):

Genuine dialogue requires not merely the presence of the Other, or speech between the two, but the real possibility that that the logos of the Other will influence one's own logos. An exchange is dialectical when, as a result of the intervention of the Other, one's own logos (discourse, reasoning, or thinking) has the potential of being affected in some way. Specifically, the arguer agrees to let the feedback from the Other affect the product. The arguer consents to take criticism and take it seriously. (p. 161).

By agreeing to compete in NPDA debate, debaters are consenting to the ruptures in argumentation that the Other (in this case, the opposing team) will provide. The fact that cross-examination occurs during constructive speeches forces an unmasked authenticity perhaps not as prevalent in other formats of debate.

Pragmatically speaking, it seems quite clear that both debaters and directors of forensics are charged with critical thought, action in process, and balance. The first pragmatic implication for debaters and directors of forensics is critical thought. The entire idea behind debate is to train critical thought. Directors of forensics can train this at least partially through modeling this process when they make decisions with ethical implications.

The second pragmatic implication for debaters and directors of forensics is action in process. Ethics is a complex, fluid thing with no clear answer or application at any given moment. Dewey supports that process is important, but at the same time, coaches are required to continually make judgments and take action. Hence, coaches and debaters should continue to learn through the process of doing, making necessary revisions as they learn and as they go along. NPDA provides a particularly unique opportunity for action in process, because all decisions made regarding strategy by debaters must be made in the moment, and modified while the argumentation is taking place. "An interest in assumptions and beliefs of audiences leads us to consider the environments in which audiences assess and make their judgments" (Tindale, 2004, p. 22). Because judges tend to reveal a judging paradigm prior to the round and debaters



do not have fully prepared cases prior to the preparation time allowed by the tournament, NPDA debaters have the opportunity to actually engage in audience analysis and adaptation.

The third pragmatic implication for debaters and directors of forensics is balance.

“Whenever a piece of work becomes drudgery, the process of doing loses all value for the doer; he cares solely for what is to be had at the end of it . . . To be playful and serious at the same time is possible, and it defines the ideal mental condition” (Dewey, 1997, p. 218). In order to avoid drudgery, there must be a balance of fun and work. Dewey (1997) continued:

A final exemplification of the required balance between near and far is found in the relation that obtains between the narrower field of experience realized in an individual's own contact with persons and things, and the wider experience of the race that may become his through communication. (p. 224).

The sentiment expressed by Dewey here makes it clear that forensics is on to something of the utmost importance. Forensic coaches are training communicative and argumentative skills in their students. Especially in NPDA debate, students must learn to think on their feet and on their own. By developing communicative skills through forensics, coaches are fostering the balanced democratic leaders of tomorrow, who are the debaters of today.

#### Existing Studies on Ethics in Forensics

The aforementioned philosophical and pragmatic stances express how complex and apparently unmanageable the study of ethics can be. Because forensics is arguably practice first, theory second, ethics become even more indecipherable. Regardless of disagreement over the definition of ethics in the forensic community (e. g. Swift, 2006), it is clear that the forensic community strives to teach and practice ethical behaviors. Many forensic scholars agree that we, as forensic participants have an obligation to call attention to the ethical implications of forensics, no matter what our particular differences. A number of scholars who study forensics have attempted to uncover the ethical implications of the activity, including: Cronn-Mills (2000),

Cronn-Mills and Golden (1997), Endres (1988), Frank (1983), Friedley (1983), Gaskill (1998), Green (1988), Grisez (1965), Hanson (1986), Kuster (1998), Lewis (1988), Littlefield (1986), Pratt (1998), Rice and Mummert (2001), Rosenthal (1985), Sanders (1966), Stewart (1986), Thomas (1983), Thomas and Hart (1983), and VerLinden (1997). Subject matters that have been addressed by forensic researchers regarding ethics include plagiarism (Anderson, 1989; Frank, 1983; Ulrich, 1984), source citation concerns (Anderson, 1989; Frank, 1983; Friedley, 1982; Greenstreet, 1990), coaches writing platform speeches for students (Kalanquin, 1989; Ulrich, 1984), and whether or not tournament administration ought to include competitors and other undergraduate students (Ulrich, 1984).

Perhaps the clearest justification for study in this area comes from Friedley (1983), who stated, “while textbooks provide little focus on the ethical use of evidence in original speech events [platform speeches], the forensics community as a whole has clearly demonstrated a concern for the ethics issue” (p. 110). There is a prevalent concern in the forensic community for rules, norms, and ethics. As far as choice of topic is concerned, Summers (1923) complained that persuasion speakers choose topics based on their likelihood to win, rather than their relevance to the audience. However, Summers also stated that the subject matter must be original as well as less abstract. Kay and Aden (1989) placed blame on the AFA and NFA written rules for communication analysis/rhetorical criticism, claiming that the rules themselves were to blame for lack of guidance, because they are far too vague. The forensic community as well as communication studies as a whole has had a recent increase in interest and concern regarding ethics. Anderson (2000) stated that because the area of communication studies does not usually aim to prepare students for one, specific career, the ethical responsibilities of the field are ambiguous. He reported that the National Communication Association (NCA)—at the time the

Speech Communication Association (SCA)—formed a committee on communication ethics in 1984 and drafted a credo regarding the subject in 1999, which was adopted that same year. The fact that organization that governs, or at least enables communicative studies of all sorts has an ethics credo indicates that ethics is of great importance to many communication scholars.

There have been many debates over seeming inconsistencies in the study of communicative ethics. For example, in their article regarding how ethics are defined for students in various areas in communication, Barnes and Keleher (2006) concluded:

As has been shown in the sources surveyed here, business, technical, and interpersonal communication textbooks offer students differing, at times oppositional viewpoints on ethical communication. This pedagogical strategy, whose purpose is perhaps to offer students unambiguous instruction, is problematic because these sources tend to oversimplify a complex subject, leading to conflicts and contradictions on a broad scale, as students enrolled in one of these courses are given only partial insight into the complexities of ethical communication. (p. 154).

Oversimplifying ethics may be needed at times, but an ongoing, honest conversation regarding the subject is quite needed. This complex concept, ethics, arises every day, and there seem to be no easy answers. However, Brembeck and Howell (1952) set the norm for persuasion texts to have a chapter regarding ethics. Additionally, Anderson (1979) found seven consistent unethical behaviors as defined by speech text books: 1) being unprepared, 2) letting audience adaptations overtake convictions, 3) being insincere, 4) the fallacy of suppressing evidence, 5) lying, 6) using pathos (emotions) to mask truth, and 7) not listening critically. These behaviors are consistent with behaviors viewed as unethical by forensic scholars and practitioners (e. g. Swift, 2006). Those who instill ethics are teachers and professors, which is a constant struggle and negotiation (Kuther, 2003; Potter, 2001; Rotenburg, 2005; Shulman, 1986; Shulman, 2005; Shulman & Sherin, 2004; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). In the forensic community, those teachers are coaches, who have even more challenges to consider.

## Tension in NPDA Debate

Suffice it to say, forensics is simultaneously concerned with equipping students with the tools necessary to succeed in the competition itself and in life post forensic competition. Debate is clearly a skill students need to learn to effectively participate in a democratic society. Hence, the connection between theory and practice is an important one. The culture of forensics today has roots that date back to the Ancient Greeks. Though the particular norms and behaviors are clearly different today, the argumentative and ethical underpinnings of the activity arguably remain intact. Currently practiced traditions in debate started long before the modern contest speaking we are familiar with today. For example, the assumed burden of proof of the government team in NPDA goes back to the dawn of argumentation. Because of this requirement, opposition teams are afforded presumption, or the default win, should the government team not uphold this burden. Rutledge (2000) argued that these elements “owe their origin when applied to argumentation theory to Archbishop Richard Whately who wrote extensively on presumption and burden of proof in his 1828 text, *Elements of Rhetoric*, which was subsequently expanded” (<http://debate.uvm.edu/rutledge.html>). Instead of traditional presumption, some scholars and practitioners of debate argue that ties should be afforded to both teams, when presumption is a possibility (e. g. Thomas, 1987), or at least questioned (Unruh, 1997), which others vehemently disagree with (e. g. Brydon, 1986; Ehninger & Brockriede, 1963). Most authors who write on the subject of presumption in debate support it psychologically (Brydon, 1986; Sproule, 1976; Zeuschner & Hill, 1977), politically (Whedbee, 1998) or in terms of hypothesis testing in a round of debate (Zarefsky, 1979; Zarefsky 1987).

NPDA is a format of debate analogous to the work of the Sophists. This format of debate, like the Sophists is concerned with style, performance, and entertainment. Especially

early NPDA topics encouraged these aspects of this form of debate. This aspect of the style of NPDA is useful because it is inclusive, promotes good public speaking skills, enables interaction with the audience, and is fun. Conversely, this style inhibits discussion of substantive issues, logical argumentation, use of efficient terms (jargon), and can make meaningful deliberation difficult to reach.

Simultaneously, NPDA is a format of debate analogous to the work of the Archbishop Whately, who trained his students logic, the importance of content, and speed in thought as well as delivery. CEDA/NDT (Evidentiary-based debate) is more clearly linked to the work of Whately, but the upper echelons of NPDA utilize these principles as well. This aspect of debate style is useful because it teaches research skills, efficient terminology (jargon), depth of knowledge on meaningful issues, and forces engagement in meaningful, logical deliberation. This style's drawbacks include exclusion, very little audience analysis, no breadth of knowledge, and it is not very communicative.

Given the conflicting and competing views on what ought to be valuable in debate and debate training, there is a need for an integrated view in NPDA debate. We must consider the deliberative rhetorical tradition, the logic of good reasons, and public/social knowledge in order to promote engaged, democratic citizens through debate. For example, Wallace (1963) explained that the most complete rhetorical theory deals not only with structure and style, but also with the substance of discourse. This substance must be concerned with information relevant to morals and ethics, and by ethics he meant, "ethics deals with the theory of goods and values, and from ethics rhetoric can make adaptations that will result in a modern system of topics" (Wallace, 1963, p.240). Truly ethically sound debate practices involve more than just

cold, technical argumentation. In fact, the narrative paradigm is closer to an integrated view for NPDA. As explained by Fisher (1989a):

In short, the narrative paradigm is a philosophical statement that is meant to offer an approach to interpretation and assessment of human communication—assuming that all forms of human communication can be seen fundamentally as stories, as interpretations of aspects of the world occurring in time and shaped by history, culture, and character. (p. 57).

NPDA debate encourages a full-service approach to argumentation. NPDA debaters are not expected to know everything about anything, but something about most things. Hence, the style in which they debate is similar to story telling.

NPDA debate is personally valuable to me because I believe that, more than any other forensic event, it provides the most opportunity for developing skills that will be useful in students' futures on personal, professional, and intellectual levels. More than its proceeding formats of cross-examination debate, NPDA has a clear connection to its rhetorical roots. The Sophists used an extemporaneous form of debate and claimed that they could train anyone to practice their form of debate. Similarly, Johnson, Johnson, and Trapp (n.d.) explained that a major impetus for starting NPDA was the motivation for any and all forensic students to be able to participate. "Al [Johnson] was concerned that the changes in CEDA had made it almost impossible for bright students with little, or no, experience in debate to compete." (An Early History of the NPDA, NPDA website, <http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/comm/npda/history.html>). Hence, NPDA was adopted as the (arguably) primary debate form of the West. Because NPDA is such a young organization, there is relatively little written on the organization. What is written tends to focus on strategy, training, or opinions on procedures. This study aims to focus on the legitimacy of the organization itself, re-rooting NPDA with its rhetorical origins, and investigating motivations behind current coaching practices with the motivation for evaluating

said practices, and if necessary, prescribing more ethically and pedagogically sound practices. Argumentation over what the best rhetorical practices in communication and forensics in particular thrive today. Scholars tend to agree that there are both costs and benefits to comprehensive (offering both speech and debate events) forensic programs (Alexander, 1997; Backus, 1997; Biles, 1997; Burnett-Pettus & Danielson, 1992; Derryberry, 1996, Jensen, 1993; Jensen, 1996; Jensen, 1998b; McGee & Simerly, 1997; Preston, 1997; West, 1997). NPDA debate, in particular, is currently in a state of crisis. In support of my assessment, Jensen (1996) observed:

Practice impacts norms much more significantly than do rules or ideals. Even though some rules governing parliamentary debate may be geared toward one end, I look to style and strategy played out in rounds for evidence of existing norms in this growing debate format. The overwhelming message I receive from reading ballots, adjudicating rounds, and interacting with educators and students of parliamentary debate is that parliamentary debate is not CEDA debate. While this seems simple enough, it translates into behaviors and attitudes that are troubling for this forensic educator. (p. 2).

Various forensic scholars and forensic practitioners alike have found and continue to find flaws in the structure and practice of NPDA debate. I join the voices that have critiqued this format of debate, though be it with what I believe is a distinct motivation. My motivation for critiquing NPDA is to continue the tradition and continue to improve the practice of NPDA debate. NPDA tends to be kritiked (critiqued) for being too much like its predecessors and not enough like its predecessors. These kritiks come back on the NPDA coaches because they influence how norms change in forensics (through reward and punishment on ballots) and they train their debaters how to debate, which necessitates a discussion of the ethical implications of coaching practices.

#### Kritiks (Critiques) of NPDA

Parliamentary debate was specifically designed to expand the potential base of competitors to include those students who were not completely debate-centric. This expansion

forced a shift in focus for students and coaches alike. Though research skills are, of course, considered as valuable as ever, the aim changed from depth to breadth. This shift, in some coaches' and students' minds alike was not a good one because many proponents of competitive debate in general stress in-depth research as its primary value. Most traditional critiques of NPDA stem from a comparison, usually involving the differences in the burdens of evidence, between NPDA and its more traditional policy counterparts such as Oxford, NDT, CEDA and Lincoln-Douglas (L/D). One of these comparisons was made explicit by Berube (n. d.):

While the arguments for the dissuasion the "specialized knowledge" seem easy to deduce from the definitions of parliamentary debate, especially how it is distinguished from cross-examination (policy) debate, two others are unstated. First, the access to information remains a function of privilege in the worldwide marketplace of ideas. Second, debating education is not a necessary function of "specialized information", especially when it entails discrete secondary source materials. Secondary sources have invaded the Internet. What was once a tool for academic and weapons experts to communicate has become an indispensable tool for libraries to coordinate and extend their research resources . . . The good news from what I can glean from actual parliamentary debating in the United States is that charge of "specialized knowledge" is relatively rare. Where it does occur is at regional and smaller tournaments before inexperienced critics with the charge made by unsophisticated debaters. Opponents claim it cannot be. There is the problem of identifying "specialized" but not "personal" knowledge. There is the difficulty associated with determining what "working" or "common" or "general" knowledge may be. There is the inequity associated with restricting the charge of "specialized knowledge" as an Opposition tactic when the Opposition could devise a strategy of "specialized knowledge" for every topic being debated. There is the inherent difficulty of determining when enough contexts are enough contexts and whether some arbitrary rule of thumb like the two-minute rule is feasible. There is the nearly totally absent discussion of motive here: is the restriction imposed on "specialized knowledge" pedagogically justified or is it there to make debate less challenging to direct, less academic, and less curricular, or it may simply be a way to differentiate itself away from cross-examination (policy) debating. It seems that the last consideration is the most true. In an effort to make parliamentary debate unlike its policy alternative, the ban of research in the debating round wasn't enough. The inclusion of information from researched secondary sources needed to be discouraged. The simplest way was to ban 'specialized knowledge'. (Berube, n. d., <http://debate.uvm.edu/berube1000.html>).

Berube's argument points out a frustration felt by many coaches and students. Because of the coupling of 1) the burden of proof for debaters and 2) the explicit rule:



Any published information (dictionaries, magazines, etc.), which may have been consulted before the debate, cannot be brought into the debating chambers for use during the debate. Except for notes that the debaters themselves have prepared during preparation time and a copy of the NPDA “Rules of Debating and Judging,” no published materials, prepared arguments, or resources for the debaters’ use in the debate may be brought into the debating chambers. (NPDA rules of debating, NPDA website, <http://cas.bethel.edu/dept/comm/npda/npdarules.html>).

debaters are left in a state of confusion. Debate, by its very nature requires informed argumentation. However, the extemporaneous nature of NPDA specifically allows students—with limited knowledge on the topic of the given round—the option of simply arguing that the other team’s case is “specialized knowledge.” Disallowing printed evidence in chambers may, in fact, teach students bad habits, because as Hollihan and Baaske (1994) pointed out, “. . . no matter how well read you are, or even how well you have lived, there will come a time when your personal knowledge will be insufficient to convince an audience” (p. 109). Many coaches have proposed that simply allowing print evidence in NPDA would solve this frustration for all involved. This is not a feasible option in NPDA, however, because the lack of cards (print sources in chambers), among a few other practices, is precisely what separates this format of debate from its predecessors.

Another traditional critique of NPDA is the lack of cross-examination in this format of debate. NPDA does allow questions during constructive speeches, but as Wilbanks and Church (1991) pointed out, this may not be enough:

An effective cross examination period can focus the debate on the issues one considers important and to clarify any ambiguity that lingers after the opposition has spoken. With the time constraints in place during most debates, any additional opportunity to accomplish those goals should not be squandered (p. 175).

Because the speaker has control over when questions will be answered, how many he or she will take, and whether or not he or she will yield for any questions at all, the above reported need for cross-examination may not be met at all by NPDA.

In place of the traditional cross-examination period after each constructive speech in the debate round, NPDA offers the opportunity for debaters to raise Points of Information (POI) and Points of Clarification (POC) during all but the first and last minute of each constructive speech, as well as Points of Order (POO) during anytime in the debate, if rules are being broken. POOs tend to be utilized primarily during rebuttal speeches, if the team who is speaking is making a new argument. Additionally, NPDA allows for Points of Personal Privilege (POPP) to be raised at anytime during the debate, if a debater feels he or she or his or her partner is being personally attacked. POOs and POPP are also a source of critique for NPDA as explained by Jones (2000):

Points of Personal Privilege and Point of Order appear destined to be a part of Parliamentary debate, at least for the near future. However, further research is needed to better understand the depth of the devotion to these procedures. Additional surveys/research should explore the sentiments expressed by the two respondents who advocated the creation of a cross-examination period into parliamentary debate. While that inclusion may or may not have to be at the expense of POPP and/or POO, there may be merit to the claim. Additionally, a clearer explanation of the definitions of both a POPP and a POO appear justified. The differences found between current published material and the NPDA constitution, although minimal, can and does create confusion on the debating circuit. Once clearly defined and explained, coaches need to engage their teams in mastering these procedures for optimal use in debate rounds. While the future of POPP and POO may not be to suffer a similar fate bestowed upon "time-space" cases or the urgency of defining "This House," preliminary research does indicate that further clarification and attention is not only clearly warranted, but justified as well. (Jones, 2000, <http://debate.uvm.edu/jones1100.html>).

Jones's study raised an important concern for NPDA to consider. While traditional advocates of NPDA tend to rigidly reject any changes to the rules and procedures of the debate format, it is important to continually revisit the traditions and revise as appropriate for its participants. In fact, many authors argue in favor of evolving debate formats (Adams & Cox, 1995; Cox & Jenson, 1989; Huebner, 1995; Jenson, 1996; Ryan, 1985). Along this vein of changes in practices, particularly addressing the increase in jargon and speed, Rutledge (1993) wrote:

My real fear, as someone accepting a paycheck for teaching a subject associated with the language arts, concerns the deleterious impact upon new or potentially interested debaters

or coaches upon hearing the incomprehensible jargon or terminology which permeates our activity. My greatest challenge in developing a debate squad is encouraging new debaters to stay with the activity after they watch a "real" debate round . . . Debate is, after all, in many regards an elitist activity and debaters will likely always collect and display new and/or bizarre, cutting edge terms and phrases as if they were merit badges hierarchically elevating "enlightened" debaters above the uninformed masses. (<http://debate.uvm.edu/encouragenov.html>)

Though the above commentary was written specifically to address CEDA debate, a similar sentiment is beginning to apply to NPDA. Jensen (1998a) observed that a major difference in adjudication between CEDA/NDT and NPDA debate seems to be that NPDA critics write more comments than do CEDA/NDT critics, but he concluded that more empirical investigation was needed in this aspect. The NPDA debate coaches and judges of today are largely comprised of the CEDA/NDT debaters of yesterday. Hence, many practices rewarded in NPDA have bled over from trends in CEDA/NDT. Another major concern for NPDA stems from concern over topic writing (Jenson, 1996).

Regardless of whether or not debaters enjoy the activity they are a part of, it is paramount for their coaches as well as the debaters themselves to be able to articulate precisely why the debate they take part in is of value. NPDA debate is unique, because despite differing views on how the participants ought to debate, it remains a format in which many forensic competitors can participate at varying levels of commitment. While critiques of NPDA seem to abound, it is also essential to note that many scholars and practitioners alike argue in favor of NPDA. For example, Jensen (1998b) offered five benefits to NPDA participation for forensic students: 1) "parliamentary debate affords a dialectical activity for individual event students," 2) "parliamentary debate allows for development of analytical refutation skills in policy debaters," 3) "parliamentary debate affords comprehensive forensics opportunities on a limited budget," 4) "tournaments allow parliamentary debaters to participate in individual events", and 5)

“parliamentary debate allows students to experience growth in their advocacy skills” (pp. 4, 6, & 7). “Students who desire a broad-based approach to forensics are finding that parliamentary debate and individual events may be the best logistical combination of activities for them” (Jensen, 1998b, p. 3). After all, forensics should be first and primarily concerned with communication. Rutledge (2000) argued:

Parliamentary debate is undergoing similar growing pains to what CEDA experienced when it was relatively new. Not all the practices and theoretical applications from CEDA’s predecessor (what has become known as NDT debate) fit exactly with the desired paradigm set forth for CEDA debate in its embryonic stages. It was necessary to carefully analyze theoretical implications and practices based on the template of the desired paradigm for the new activity. Likewise, NPDA will need to pay particular attention to which aspects of debate theory and practice from previous forms of the activity will logically apply to and enhance parliamentary debate, and conversely which areas need to be revised to fit this new paradigm. It would be foolish and self destructive to automatically reject all that was CEDA or NDT in an effort to define this new form simply through negation. There is after all a wealth of argumentation theory and practice from over a century of intercollegiate debate from which to draw insights. But it might be just as ill conceived to assume that virtually all past practice and theory will exactly cross apply to the new format. If that were true, why even begin a new format in the first place? (Rutledge, 2000, <http://debate.uvm.edu/rutledge.html>).

Rutledge’s observation is an important and critical one to take into consideration. Those advocates who support translating all CEDA/NDT practices into NPDA rounds are ignoring the fact that NPDA was created as a different format altogether. Conversely, those who reject any and all CEDA/NDT practices as possibilities in NPDA are ignoring the fact that NPDA, just like its counterpart debate formats is likely to grow from a bottom-up pattern: students will continually experiment with different strategies, borne from different theories, and continue those strategies which garner them competitive success. Regardless of the particular format of debate, however, as Cirlin (1996) pointed out, it is important for all debaters and coaches alike to remember that “theory should not be the essence of the performance; it should be for the benefit

of the performer” (p. 62). NPDA fulfills this call because debaters are forced to think and advance/defend arguments on the spot.

Additionally, many critics (e. g. Jenson, 1996) agree that time/space shifts ought to be explicitly disallowed in NPDA. Broda-Bahm (1995) gave an excellent justification for such a reform:

. . . the presentation of counterfactual claims within a debate context is often met with confusion. It seems that we are capable of handling the implicit counterfactual arguments which are contained within all casual statements with little difficulty, but when the counterfactual components of those claims become explicit, they are treated as uniquely incomprehensible arguments. Clearly what is needed is a template for understanding counterfactual claims. (p. 76).

The trend in NPDA to present absolutely ridiculous claims which have no connection to anything resembling the real world provide NPDA critics the fodder necessary to reject NPDA debate outright. Obscure, hard to understand arguments and pr-planned case briefs are a large part of many NPDA debaters’ strategy, to give them an edge over the competition. Because print research is explicitly disallowed in chambers and the topic is not revealed until 15-20 minutes before the debate takes place, simply knowing more about a particular situation can give the government team an upper hand. On the other hand, it might be argued that this NPDA trend is a healthy one that wants to inject a little lateral thinking into the old linear tyranny.

#### Competitive Success vs. Ethical Training Tension

Directors of Forensics exist in the midst of an interesting and trying tension. Those who choose forensics as a career long pursuit no doubt have a passion for the activity and likely much higher goals than simply accumulating trophies. Unfortunately, because of the logistical challenge in forensics of needing money to sustain the activity and bringing in virtually no revenue for the departments and institutions in which they are housed, trophies are of great importance. A forensic team’s local, state, and national competitive success are usually the

difference between a budget that can sustain the team's travel and one that cannot. Hence, those in charge of forensic teams must hold competitive success as a priority, regardless of the coaches' personal, professional, and intellectual values. This tension of how much priority to place on competitive success and how to incorporate ethical forensic training is one felt by every director of forensics.

The tension in values which coaches of NPDA exist in is not the only ambiguous area of NPDA. Because of the nature of this format of debate and particularly the vagueness of its rules, many participants—coaches and students alike—exist in a state of ambiguity regarding what counts as ethical and unethical behavior in NPDA. Jones (2000) explained:

The National Parliamentary Debate Association has gone to great lengths to keep the "official" rules of the activity to a minimum. This desire has allowed the activity to evolve over the years and explore how to best meet the needs of students and coaches alike. To that extent, the NPDA Constitution devotes only two pages to official "Rules of Debating and Judging." Some of the rules presented in this section of the Constitution are written somewhat loosely which allows for various interpretations. This openness, however, could contribute to some of the inconsistencies in the execution of these procedures. Additionally, the explanations of these procedures, which have appeared in print, have differed thus allowing for more misunderstanding. (Jones, 2000, <http://debate.uvm.edu/jones1100.html>).

As this level of misunderstanding continues, NPDA coaches remain the primary source of clarification for NPDA debaters, and judges remain the enforcers of positive and negative behaviors, through the wins and losses they assign on ballots at debate tournaments. Students are likely to repeat behaviors that gain wins and stop behaviors which gain losses. Hence, reflexivity for coaches and judges, in terms of ethics, is highly warranted.

Unfortunately, there is an on-going need for trophies to justify funding for forensic programs. Additionally, there are a variety of national, regional, and local level forensic organizations, all of which have vague rules, which tend to lead to misunderstandings and ambiguity. All of these concerns and tensions justify the need for on-going and honest scholarly

conversation. In addition to organizing, administrating, and coaching their programs, Directors of Forensics are usually in a position where they must constantly justify and re-justify their forensic programs. Sometimes, the only justification which translates to a college or university's administration is competitive success. However, an excellent justification for forensic programs which does not focus exclusively on wins comes from Treadaway (n. d.):

The Speech and Debate program provides an important part of our school's experience. Specifically, the program enhances each of the five listed criteria you have identified as important.

1. Enrich, support and add to the formal academic curriculum. The program and the courses in forensics we offer enhance the academic curriculum in at least three ways. First, students learn to discuss, research and study important issues like military intervention, media coverage of politics, and human rights policies. Second, students engage in more stimulating discussions in classes that they take because they have had real world practice researching, studying and communicating about these important issues. Third, students turn in better research and analysis for papers because they have practiced researching and organizing their work into the most effective manner possible. These benefits are not isolated to any one discipline. Rather, students in any academic program on campus gain skills in presenting their subject matter more effectively.

Overall, students become better educated and more involved citizens of our society. 2. Foster opportunities for students to develop to their fullest potential and to provide for their physical and emotional well-being

Students learn to be the best speakers that they can be. By being able to communicate better, students are able to better express their needs thereby enhancing their ability to achieve their fullest potential. Students have a group of friends which they can depend upon and who share their desire to discuss issues and to speak effectively.

3. Provide a forum for students to use skills gained in the classroom (i.e. critical reasoning, writing, speaking, organizing, and analyzing) other settings. Speech and debate obviously achieve these goals. Students engage in critical reasoning by discussing, refuting, rebuilding, and refining ideas and arguments. Students learn to write persuasive cases and speeches, as well as informative essays, analyses of communication, and humorous stories. They learn how to speak by practicing and competing in speaking and debating events against some of the best young speakers in the country. Students learn to organize huge files of evidence and briefs, arguments in their cases and persuasive points in their speeches. Students learn to analyze the claims other students make and to refine their arguments so that they are rhetorically and logically sound arguments.

4. Enhance the College's reputation. Our program contributes to the liberal arts atmosphere by providing an activity in which virtually every field of the liberal arts curriculum is addressed via researching and communicating its subject matter. Students learn about politics (debates on U.S. domestic and foreign policy), sociology (speeches on the role of sexuality in contemporary society), philosophy (analysis of topics by discussing such thinkers as Nietzsche), literature (the interpretation of plays, poetry and

prose), science (speeches on the invention of telecommunications, debates on the development of nanotechnology), and we could go on. Needless to say, this broad based learning experience adheres to the liberal arts reputation of Our school. In addition, the program is expanding this year to include on-campus debates. This kind of campus dialogue on vital social, political and academic issues can make the school an even more vibrant and intellectually stimulating atmosphere. Coupled with the program's already recognized national reputation, the team definitely offers unique features that enhance the school's reputation. (Teadway, n. d., <http://debate.uvm.edu/valueofbib.html>).

Obviously, there are a myriad of reasons that an administration should extend support to a forensic program. However, because trophies tend to translate most easily into financial support, coaches continue to be face with the dilemma, false though it may be, of competitive success verses ethical training. Coaches can ethically train their students and gain competitive success at the same time, of course. However, instilling ethics becomes a daily challenge, especially if students witness unethical or questionably ethical practices gaining competitive victory.

Because forensics is arguably practice first, theory second, ethics become even more indecipherable. Oversimplifying ethics may be needed at times, but an ongoing, honest conversation regarding the subject is quite needed. This complex concept, ethics, arises every day, and there seem to be no easy answers. Debate coaches are constantly held accountable for their decisions. Rutledge (1993) provided yet another angle to this challenge which debaters and coaches face:

New debaters and coaches, please do not get discouraged. Debate really is fun. Despite a growing number of detractors and disillusioned coaches and critics pining for the good old days when every inconsequential argument issued did not immediately invite twelve independent links leading to thermonuclear destruction of the planet at the hands of politically sensitive though highly unstable roaming bands of psycho-narco-feminist-skinhead terrorists debate really is still fun . . . the game of debate teaches all the participants (coaches, judges, and competitors alike) the importance of staying well versed in both national and international current affairs (Rutledge, 1993, <http://debate.uvm.edu/encouragenov.html>).

In order to remain competitive, coaches are nearly forced to train their debaters in the ever-complexifying and ever-expanding jargon that continues to grow in debate, regardless of how the



coach and students feel about this jargon. This negotiation between training students to argue ethically and effectively and garnering competitive success is constant while forensic coaches are judging and when they are training their own forensic team. Of course, the negotiation between ethics and competitive success is more impactful between directors of forensics and their own teams.

### Conclusion

In the study that follows, I intend to strengthen the theoretical relationship between forensics, rhetoric, ethics, and pedagogy through an examination of the parliamentary debate partnership and the coaches who foster such relationships. The philosophical and ethical grounding provided in this paper has provided a foundation for exploring the tensions which have arisen and continue to arise in NPDA debate. The tensions in NPDA debate will likely never completely subside, nor do they necessarily need to subside. However, through further investigation in papers like this one and others, it would be ideal to strengthen the credibility of forensic scholarship as a whole. Currently, there are numerous critiques and doubts surrounding the value of NPDA as a whole. These attacks will hopefully lead those of us who value the activity to respond with theoretically sound argumentation and scholarship in order to help justify our activity and model excellent research and argumentation skills to our debaters.

Along this vein, I proceed with the current study. In chapter two, I will review the relevant literature pertaining to forensics, NPDA debate, argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, relational satisfaction, leadership, and ethics. In chapter three, I will report on the quantitative inquiry portion of this study, the central question of which is: How do Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness impact competitive relational satisfaction within parliamentary debate partnerships? In chapter four, I will convey the qualitative/ethnographic

follow-up portion of this study, the central question of which is: How do the results from the quantitative study impact or inform coaches' decision-making when it comes to debate partnerships? In chapter five, I will give a rhetorical analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data, to answer the following questions: What are the ethical implications of parliamentary debate partnerships and the responsibility of coaches to their students in this matter? How does this study help to (re)bridge forensics competition to its rhetorical roots? Finally, in chapter six, I will delve into a summation and grounded theory of the ethical debate coach based on information in chapters three, four, and five.

## Chapter Two: Status Quo

This chapter will summarize the nature and variety of debate research. The research on competitive academic debate has been growing in communication journals since the early 1900s, and continues to grow. The role of the Director of Forensics has been explored in some studies, but is a subject in need of more academic study. In this review of literature, special emphasis will be placed on the areas most relevant to the subject of this dissertation. Those areas such as leadership styles, argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, forensics, and the role of the Director of Forensics will be given particular attention. The strengths and weaknesses of this research will also be addressed. The chapter will conclude with a justification for the present study based on the outcome of the review of research presented.

### Forensics as a Particular Rhetorical Culture

Forensics is an activity which has an impressive longevity in the field of communication field. Hunt (1997) explained that the earliest roots of forensics date back to the practice the Sophists engaged in regarding emotion and argumentation. Today, forensic competition is a “rhetorical culture” in which students are trained to argue effectively given the constraints of this particular culture. As Farrell (1993) explained:

A rhetorical culture is an institutionalized formation in which motives of competing parties are intelligible, audiences available, expressions reciprocal, norms translatable, and silences noticeable. It may seem odd, even confounding, to introduce certain norms or “goods” where the notoriously crafty business of rhetoric is concerned. Today we have spin doctors and image consultants, audience-manipulators of every ideological stripe—hence the much discussed flight of audiences from the public arena. But this is not really so surprising. Rhetoric has always been a practiced imperfection, the worst fear of idealized reason and the best hope for whatever remains of civic life. This is another way of saying that, regardless of circumstance, a rhetorical culture is first and foremost an idea. (p. 1).

One of the primary goals of communication education generally and forensics specifically is to equip students with the ability to communicate and to argue effectively (Dannels, 2001). In terms of the goals of today's forensic practices, Hunt (1997) stated:

Forensics has an ancient and honorable twenty-five hundred year history as the heart of The Western Intellectual Tradition. But, what is it today? Forensics, broadly construed, is many things. It is an intellectual tradition and perspective. It is a series of curricular and co-curricular activities. And, it is a great intellectual game like bridge or chess, but infinitely more complicated and pertinent to the managing of society. It is a contest played both for contest and in reality. (p. 5).

Suffice it to say, forensics is simultaneously and equally concerned with equipping students or competitors with the tools necessary to succeed in the competition itself and in life post forensic competition. More specifically in the vein of equipping students with skills for real life, another goal of forensics is to foster the leaders of tomorrow. Directors of forensics are the forensic team leaders whose role is demanding, exhausting, and difficult. Since so much of the research has been done, an examination of the literature in the field of leadership may be useful to scholars who work to improve the practice of debate and strive to find an effective way of leading the forensic team.

There are a number of ways that scholars have studied forensics. For example, in terms of education in forensics, researchers have addressed a lack of creativity (Aden, 1991; Derryberry, 1991, Fryar, 1981; Greenstreet, 1990; Reynolds, 1991; Samosky & Baird, 1982), repetition of the same audience (Derryberry, 1991; Reynolds, 1991), vague rules (Greenstreet, 1990), norms that garner competitive success without necessarily helping the student to learn (Endres, 1989; Green & Ford, 1989; Reynolds and Fay, 1987), and a primary focus on competition over education (Burnett, Brand, & Meister, 2003; Derryberry, 1991; Fryar, 1981; Greenstreet, 1990; Hamm, 1993; Hough, 2007; Ulrich, 1984). Additionally, West (1997) argued that there are as many unwritten rules, or norms, in debate as there are in individual events. The impact of

communication and rhetorical studies affects the students of all fields, but particularly those in the forensic community. Communication skills are arguably the most important real-world skill for students to learn (Becker & Eckdom, 1980; Crawley & Klomparens, 2000; Harrell & Harrell, 1984; Winsory, Curtis, & Stephens, 1997), and these skills are precisely what forensics is centered on teaching students. Ridgley (2003) wrote that too many college students graduate without being able to argue effectively. The rhetorical scholars of tomorrow come from the classrooms of today, and more frequently, perhaps, from the forensic teams of today.

Debate is an activity supported by many communication scholars. A number of scholars have written in support of forensics generally, and debate in particular (Anderson, 1974; Barntanen & Frank, 1991; Bennett, 1972; Bradley, 1959; Branham, 1991; Colbert, 1987; Colbert & Biggers, 1985; Cox & Willard, 1982; Freeley, 1960; Freeley, 1996; Freeley & Steinberg, 2000; Greenstreet, 1993; Hill, 1982; Hill, 1993, Hill & Leeman, 1997; Inch & Warnick, 1998; Kruger, 1960; Lahman, 1936; Madsen & Loudon, 1987; McBurney, O'Neil, & Mills, 1951; Nichols, 1936; Podgurshi, 1983; Reike & Sillars, 1997; Reinard, 1984; Reinard, 1991; Tuman, 1987; Walton, 1995; Walton, 1995; Willard, 1989; Windes, 1960; Wood & Goodnight, 1990). Snider (2003) explained that “. . . the game of debating is now jumping format boundaries with ease, with parliamentary debate, Lincoln-Douglas debate, Karl Popper debate, public debate, Ted Turner debate, debate across the curriculum, and many others” (p. 44). The fluidity and constant cultural norm shifts are an illustration of the real-worldness of debate participation. Rowland and Fitch (1989) justified academic debate to the larger communicative, academic community as follows:

For many argumentation theorists, debate is simply a game that they outgrew or perhaps never attempted. From their perspective, the literature concerning debate theory and practice is particularly stultifying. It might be compared to the literature on a particular war-game. For those who play the game, that literature may seem fascinating, but to

anyone outside the club it seems meaningless. And in fairness, much of the analysis of the theory and practice of academic debate is extremely narrow. However, while debate is a restricted academic game, it also can serve as a model for testing important issues relating to a broader theory of argument. (pp.462-463).

When viewed from the above perspective, competitive, academic debate participation seems easily justifiable. Unfortunately, many forensic programs are missing support financially and otherwise. However, because as revealed by Snider (2003), “argumentation is all-pervasive in our lives and is totally at the forefront in almost any debate,” it seems that communicative scholars would naturally support competitive, academic debate participation (p. 43).

Perhaps the most frequently cited justification for forensic competition comes from McBath (1975):

Forensics is an educational activity primarily concerned with using an argumentative perspective in examining problems and communicating with people. An argumentative perspective on communication involves the study of reason giving by people as justification for acts, beliefs, attitudes, and values. From this perspective, forensics activities, including debate and individual events, are laboratories for helping students to understand and communicate various forms of argument more effectively in a variety of contexts with a variety of audiences. (p. 11).

While the above passage seems to make a convincing case for forensics, Bellon (2000) argued that more research needs to be done to make a stronger case for adopting debate in more fields. There has been a recent trend to incorporate communication across the curriculum, so Bellon conjectured that debate will be soon to follow. Along this vein, Morreale (1997) wrote in favor of communication across the curriculum. She explained:

CXC [communication across the curriculum] does strike close to home. It is about what we are, how we teach, and how we are perceived by the broader academic community. As a form of instruction, CXC has rested at the eye of the storm of integrity and identity for our field. Given that importance and the controversy surrounding CXC, our colleagues are to be commended. They have weathered the maelstrom and moved to some resolution of this approach to communication pedagogy (p. 14).

NPDA is an excellent tool for attracting and training those undergraduate students outside of the communication major. Directors of Forensics could incorporate CXC strategies in the recruiting and pedagogical practices.

Debate is an excellent forum for argument training—in any classroom. “If all argumentation involves the creative resolution (and the resolute creation) of uncertainty, then an academic policy debate is in some respects the purest example of argument” (Goodnight, 1982, p. 416). This sentiment regarding debate as good argumentation training was echoed by Windes (1960):

One cannot study the history of argumentation without becoming aware of a striking fact. Whenever free societies have existed, there also debate has abounded. Debate, or advocacy if you will, is an intrinsic part of democracy’s decision making, and the making of decisions the democratic means is vital if free people are to govern themselves wisely (in Hunt, 1997, p. 7).

Debate is clearly a skill students need to learn to effectively participate in a democratic society. “The practice of debating both sides does not warrant support simply because it is ethical, but does so because it is an effective pedagogical technique for inculcating the communicative competencies necessary for democratic citizenship” (Hicks & Greene, 1999, p.305). The most effective way for students to learn is through immersion, personally meaningful challenges, and intensive analysis (Bellon, 2000). Students are also more likely to connect theory to practice when debating.

Clearly, the connection between theory and practice is an important one in any academic field. For example, Toulmin’s (1958) model of a complete argument is used in nearly every round of debate simultaneously as a basis for constructing arguments on the government side, constructing off-case positions on the opposition side, and as a counter to incomplete arguments by the opposing side. Suffice it to say that the Toulmin model without application is interesting,

but not very useful. Hence, debaters are trained to put it into practice in debate rounds. Rowland and Fritch (1989) explained that part of the value of academic debate is that this practice serves as a laboratory for experimentation with both traditional and contemporary argumentation theory.

Specifically, Rowland and Fritch (1989) argued:

Academic debaters and judges work hard at taking careful notes (flowsheets) on all of the arguments presented in a given debate. Over the last twenty years any number of particular systems for flowsheeting have been tried, including the use of the Toulmin model. What has become clear, however, is that the process of describing a given argument is and must be somewhat idiosyncratic. It is a commonplace that only the person who actually took a particular flowsheet can interpret it completely. Moreover, it is routine for several debaters or judges to hear a single argument but interpret it in quite different ways. Thus, Judge A may interpret the negative disadvantage in one way, while Judge B may draw a wholly different conclusion. In many cases, judges and debaters even may differ about whether a particular argument was raised in a debate. While some of this confusion may be traced to excessive speed, much of it relates to inherent ambiguities involved in the argument interpretation process. (p. 458).

It is the ambiguities and unanswered questions that debaters and coaches are left with which can help to encourage extended dialogue and teaching moments beyond the actual debate rounds themselves. Directors of forensics cannot simply theorize about ethics because of the practical demands of their job. Similarly, debaters must begin with the doing, even if their coach has taught them theory.

There is, nevertheless, a general line of cleavage which, deciding upon the whole what things fall within the limits of familiar acquaintance and what without, marks off the concrete and the abstract in a more permanent way. These limits are fixed mainly by the demands of practical life . . . By contrast, the abstract is the theoretical, or that not intimately associated with practical concerns. (Emphasis in original, p. 137).

Forensics is action based. In the context of forensics, regardless of the amount of time spent studying and talking about theory, it remains meaningless until something is done.

Neither directors of forensics nor debaters have reached the pentacle with mastery of ethical or debate theory. As Dewey (1997) stated:



When thinking is used as a means to some end, good, or value beyond itself, it is concrete; when it is employed simply as a means to more thinking, it is abstract . . . Interest in knowledge for the sake of knowledge, in thinking for the sake of the free play of thought, is necessary then to the emancipation of practical life — to make it rich and progressive. (Emphasis in original, pp. 138-139).

The ends involved with debate thinking can be as small as winning a particular argument and as large as training for future political office. Either way, or some way in between is up to the coach and the student alike. These goals in mind help to keep thought training in forensics meaningful. Revision of thought and action in forensics is a constant, on going process. This includes many facets of the activity. For example, interpersonally, Dewey (1997) offered support for a balanced debate partnership, “The aim of education should be to secure a balanced interaction of the two types of mental attitude, having sufficient regard to the disposition of the individual not balance to hamper and cripple whatever powers are naturally strong in him” (p. 143). By partnering debaters with complementary skills together, directors of forensics allow students to play to their own strengths and learn from each other.

Learning from experience is also key both to Dewey and to forensic educators. Dewey (1997) explained:

Apart from the development of scientific method, inferences depend upon habits that have been built up under the influence of a number of particular experiences not themselves arranged for logical purposes . . . The more numerous the experienced instances and the closer the watch kept upon them, the greater is the trustworthiness of constant conjunction as evidence of connection among the things themselves. (pp. 145 & 147).

Debaters improve in thought by doing. They encounter the same or similar arguments, judges, and opponents. Hence, the more experience they garner in competition, the more effective and efficient their thought becomes. In a similar sense, directors of forensics base ethical choices and behaviors more on personal and professional experience than on theoretical quandary.

Debaters are trained primarily by winning or losing the ballot. Whether their thinking and performance is good or bad, they repeat the behaviors that they learn will win, which can, unfortunately conflict with ethics. A danger arises when norms, conventions, or that which is winning, governs all. As Dewey (1997) pointed out, “Certain men or classes of men come to be the accepted and to guardians and transmitters—instructors— of established doctrines. To question the beliefs is to question their authority; to accept the beliefs is evidence of loyalty to the powers that be, a proof of good citizenship” (p. 149). This sentiment is reflected in the behavior of debaters who model their own behavior after the winning conventions. On this point regarding practices in debate, Rhodes (1991) reported mixed feelings on the pedagogical nature of immediate disclosure during tournaments. It seems unclear as to whether disclosure immediately after a round is pedagogically sound, and whether it actually influences competitive success. In any case, it is clear that debate is valuable training for more debate, the real world, and the theoretical world.

### Some Styles of Leadership

Coaches’ styles of leadership are highly influential on the ways that debaters debate and the ways that speakers speak. The coach of a team provides both the model for ethical behavior as well as instructions to the competitors concerning how they should conduct they should construct and deliver arguments. Much of the research done on leadership is related to one or all of the categories of: traits (Bass 1990a), situations (Bass 1990b), and behavior (Bass 1990c). According to research, one of the most positive traits of an effective communicator is argumentativeness, whereas one of the most negative traits is verbal aggressiveness, the negative personality trait which is expressed through attacking the self-concept of another individual (Anderson & Martin, 1999; Beatty, Zelle, Dobos, & Rudd, 1994; Infante, Riddle Horvath, &

Tumlin 1992; & Martin & Anderson, 1997). For instance, communication research has indicated a link between high levels of verbal aggressiveness and low levels of relational satisfaction (Anderson & Martin, 1999). Specifically, Teven, Martin, and Neupauer (1998) concluded that verbal aggressiveness makes a significant, detrimental impact on sibling relationships and how siblings communicate. Leaders have many tasks to fulfill. One of the most important, daily tasks to accomplish is effective decision-making; the most effective decision-making process seems to be one in which the most voices are considered by the leader (Kantor, 1981). Participatory decision-making can increase morale and increase the effectiveness of the organization. Another, one found in highly reliable organizations, is concern with the surrounding environment (Roberts, 1990). Whether the surrounding environment in consideration is the physical environment or the people surrounding the group or organization, highly effective leaders are aware of the environment.

Many leaders take on an attitude of supporting democratic values (e. g. freedom, dialog, individualism, etc.) in order to achieve participatory decision-making. For example, Vickrey (1968) surveyed the Florida State Legislature to test Stodgill's leadership trait theory. He found that the legislators largely self-identified as democratic leaders, meaning that they thought of themselves as valuing the perspectives of others, but their responses to the leadership scale classified them as authoritarian leaders, meaning that they preferred to simply dictate orders without the input of others. The legislators also reported that capacity, responsibility, specific skill, and task goal were the most important traits for a leader to possess. Additionally, Kolb (1998) reported that self-monitoring can promote emergent leadership and encourage more accurate perceptions of leadership.

Another way to promote participation in decision-making is to demonstrate care for followers. Kropiewnicki and Shapiro (2001) found that female principals enacted the ethic of care in their leadership roles. Through interviews, the researchers reported a seven-part model of the principals' collective leadership style. The common themes found in the interviews were teaching and learning, creating child-centered schools, listening then deciding, doing what was right, developing and empowering others, and making a difference combined to make up the ethic of care for these female principals. The underlying assumption of this research is "care and responsibility for others is the approach females tend to use when resolving ethical or moral dilemmas" (Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001, p. 3). While this research is limited to female principals a similar ethic is used by many forensic coaches. Because of the family-like orientation of a forensics team, many team members and coaches alike are forced to trust and care for each other throughout their competitive careers (Swift, 2006).

#### Team Leadership

A trend on the rise is to delegate and diffuse leadership by creating smaller, more focused teams or groups. Jessup (1990) reported that one way to distribute leadership among a team is to create roles with manageable responsibility in order to increase positive team responsibility. This is essential for forensics coaches to be able to manage their teams. Directors of forensics may have assistant directors, assistant coaches, and team officers. The director of forensics is usually a full-time faculty member with a full-time teaching schedule in addition to coaching and traveling responsibilities. Without delegation of tasks, the leadership burden of directing a team can become unmanageable (McDonald, 2001). Hence, allowing team members to take on some leadership responsibilities seems essential.

Kolb (1996) studied the differences between high-performance and average performance teams could be distinguished primarily by four behaviors that the team leader engaged in: obtaining external support, tolerating uncertainty, dealing appropriately with inadequate team members, or what Hersey, Blanchard, and Natemeyer (2001) would call immature followers, and engaging in a variety of positive behaviors. Teamwork is on the rise, and the level to which a group or organization engages in teamwork reflects on a leader's effectiveness (Barrett , 1987; Bettenhausen, 1991; Galagan, 1988). Through extended observation, Ables and Bosworth (2004) recommended that open communication between students and teachers is essential, especially in establishing team-based learning as favorable to individual-based learning.

The literature on team leadership is expanding. For instance, Kinnick and Parton (2005) reviewed and coded 15 episodes of *The Apprentice* to determine the necessary communication skills in a workplace setting involving both teams and competition. The researchers found that an over-emphasis was placed on persuasion skills. In order to be a successful team-leader in the show, individuals had to persuade their team members to complete tasks in a certain way. In the show, the leadership skills that were praised and criticized were communication skills, such as teamwork and negotiation. Finally, leadership skills were viewed positively when the person could communicate effectively. While *The Apprentice* is a television show, these lessons can be applied to the role of the forensics coach. Especially because most forensic teams exist within a communication department, the communication skills of the forensic coach are constantly under scrutiny. In order to be an effective forensic leader, therefore, it seems that coaches must have exemplarily communication skills.

## Directors of Forensics Leadership

Directors of forensics are the leaders of their forensic teams. Confusion within the literature and the community indicates that further exploration of leadership and ethics in forensics is warranted. Bell (2002) covered several specific issues within his text. These include: passion, risk taking, faith, relationships, inspiration, and wisdom. Bell's thesis was simply this: ethics and ambition do not have to be mutually exclusive. In fact, he argued, the most ambitious are simultaneously ethical. Communicative ethics have been established in communication journals and textbooks alike as an important subject of inquiry (e.g. Anderson, 2000; Anderson 1979; Barrett 1993; Beebe & Beebe, 1991; Bettinghaus & Cody, 1994; Bormann, 1961; Brembeck & Howell, 1952; Christians & Traber, 1997; Ehniger & Gronbeck, 1984; Freely, 1996; Gamble & Gamble, 1994; Haiman, 1984; Johannesen, 1997; Lucas, 1992; Lundsford, Ruszkiewicz, & Walters; Meany & Shuster, 2002; Nelson & Pearson, 1990; Osborn & Osborn 1991; Peterson, Stephen, & White, 1992; Reinard, 1991; Ross, 1992; Samovar & Mills, 1980; Simmons, 1986; Sproule, 1991; Verderber, 1994; Warnick & Inch, 1994; Weaver, 1985; Wilson, Arnold, & Wertimer, 1990; Wolvin, Berko, & Wolvin, 1993; Zeuschner, 1992; Ziegelmuller, Kay, & Dause, 1990). Forensic ethics are also seen as important and simultaneously, a point of contention (Madsen, 1984; McBeth, 1975; VerLinden, 1996).

Directors of forensics are simultaneously charged with two equally difficult and valid responsibilities: ethics and success. Regarding a possible ethical conflict, Rowland and Fitch (1989) explicated the difficulty faced by judges and coaches in rendering a debate decision:

Debate demonstrates what could happen to the decision making process if a purely dialectical perspective were used. In debate, the judge is forced to render a decision at the end of the round, but dialectic as a method for decision-making cannot necessarily function successfully in any limited time period. Dialectic may be our most powerful process for testing arguments, but it still depends upon application of standards created elsewhere. In an instance when a decision must be made in a limited time period, pure

reliance on a dialectical approach is problematic, since it assumes that all "reasons" are equally valid. Over time, the power of the process could sift the weak reasons from the strong, but as experience with academic debate amply proves, this does not necessarily occur in a particular situation. Thus, the requirements of debate as an academic game suggest that decision making, whether in debate or elsewhere, inherently requires standards that go beyond the dialectic, and that total reliance on a dialectical process of testing rationality may lead to unfortunate side effects. (Emphasis in original, p. 459).

Debate coaches are constantly held accountable for these decisions and others. Cronkite (1966) argued in favor of propositions of fact and value, making note that judging debate requires both a subjective and an objective evaluation. Flaningam (1982) found this to be problematic, and pointed out that the decision-rule perspective allows judges to be uniform in decision making. This also needs exist in policy decisions (Benoit, Wilson, & Follert, 1986). In terms of what is considered ethical in debate rounds, Chapel and Cariker (1961) claimed that straightforward, polite, and education-focused arguments are appropriate. In studies regarding ethics in debate, researchers have found that there is a significant level of disagreement over what is considered ethical (Klopf & McCroskey, 1964; Larson & Griffin, 1964). Morello and Soenksen (1989) discussed the future of policy debate, asserting that policy debate has become unruly and new rules should be constructed. One possible solution is for policy debate to move toward a civil process (Feteris, 1990). With the continued disagreement that exists regarding debate ethics, a resolution must be found at some point.

On the point of decision making, Hicks and Greene (1999) extrapolated based on their reading of Day (1966):

"A commitment to debate as the method of democratic decision-making demands an overriding ethical responsibility to promote the full confrontation of opposing opinions, arguments, and information relevant to decision. Without the confrontation of opposing ideas debate does not exist, and to the extent that that confrontation is incomplete so is debate incomplete" (Day, 1966, p. 6). Two practical obligations are entailed in the acceptance of this ethic. First, the fora for public deliberation must be fully inclusive, encouragement and incentive must be provided those who hold unpopular views to express themselves. Second, and more importantly, "all must recognize and accept

personal responsibility to present, when necessary, as forcefully as possible, opinions and arguments which they may personally disagree” (Day, 1966, p. 7). (Hicks & Greene, 1999, pp. 304-305).

This negotiation between training students to argue effectively and fostering advocacy within students is constant while forensic coaches are judging and when they are training their own forensic team. Of course, the negotiation between ethics and competitive success tends to be more influential between directors of forensics and their own teams than between judges and the students they are judging. Bergem (1990) pointed out that a teacher playing the role of a moral agent has the potential to be problematic. Hence, directors of forensics have a particularly difficult role because of their close proximity to their students. To attempt to define ethics is a challenge.

Within forensics, ethics tend to be contextual (e.g. Swift, 2006). It is paramount to make decisions about what is ethical before coaching begins. Ethics has long been an important issue for forensic education. In terms of philosophical ethics, in his work, Heidegger was primarily concerned with the ontology and existentialism of Dasein. His ethics deal mostly with the authenticity (or inauthenticity) of the existence of Dasein. “Dasein” literally means “being there.” Heidegger explained that there is a distinction essentially betwixt human beings and other beings. Dasein is a being which is concerned about its being. “Da-sein is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned about its very being” (emphasis in original, Heidegger, 1996, p. 10). This being has an understanding of his or her being. Dasein is human. Debate coaches are faced with training human beings, people with the capacity to understand the implications of their actions, or at the very least, that their actions do, in fact, have implications.



Moreover, with philosophical ethics, an error often made is the conflation of life and philosophy, which muddies the motivations of our studies. “When philosophy and life are confused, we no longer know whether we are interested in philosophy because it is life, or whether we care about life because it is philosophy” (Levinas, 1998, p. 3). Like Heidegger, Levinas argued that the core of being is to understand that there is being. Beings are concerned about their being. All acts have a level of awkwardness. Too much awkwardness in an act is bad. When the means interfere with the ends, it is problematic. No matter what our intentions, the ends of our act is still within our realm of responsibility. When we are open to being, we understand more clearly that we do in fact exist. It is this shift, for coaches, to process-orientation, rather than results-orientation which will aid in fostering democratic citizens from NPDA debaters rather than simply fostering winning debaters. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Levinas took a very action-oriented ethical stance, which NPDA debaters and coaches alike are forced into during preparation for and performance at forensic tournaments. The actions engaged in by forensic students and coaches demonstrate their theoretical ethical stances, whether these people intend that to be the case or not.

Further, in terms of philosophical ethics, Derrida (2001) posited that true hospitality occurs when the host is continually open to the foreigner. Hospitality for Derrida is not a question among questions, but the question. The heart of the matter of ethics and being human is hospitality. One is exposed to an event of otherness, affecting one’s threshold to others. Derrida’s goal was to further develop Levinasian hospitality. Hospitality is the welcome of the other. The host becomes the guest and hostage to the other. Derrida radicalized this notion. He grappled with the issue of who the foreigner is:

Isn’t the question of the foreigner [l’etranger] a foreigner’s question? Coming from the foreigner, from abroad [l’etranger]? Before we say the question of the foreigner, perhaps

we should also specify: the question of the foreigner. How should we understand the difference of [emphasis]? There is, we were saying, a question of the foreigner. It is urgent to embark on it as such. (Emphasis in original, p. 3).

Derrida's question is not explicitly answered. However, implicitly, it turns out that we are all foreigners. The political context involved stem from issues of immigration. The status of immigrants and those without homes and issues of homelessness are of the utmost concern to Derrida. Victimization and violence against those who are displaced shape our understanding of nations. Hence, Derrida offers that we need an ethical conversion toward hospitality. Hospitality is an ethical response to violence. Because of the nature of NPDA debate, directors of forensics are able to freely welcome any and all students to take part in it, without making these students feel like foreigners. We have an ethical duty to welcome the other. This duty to the other is infinite, unconditional, and hyperbolic. Derrida (2001) defined the "Great Law of Hospitality" as "an unconditional Law, both singular and universal, which ordered that the borders be open to each and every one, to every other, to all who might come" (p. 1). Derrida points out that hospitality and ethics cannot be contained in a law because though laws protect hospitality, they also limit hospitality. Likewise, the ethical practices engaged in by directors of forensics cannot be contained in written rules.

Thought processes regarding ethics and many other things are simultaneously and constantly consuming our minds. Dewey (1997) remarked that though he outlined three functions of thought: whatever is in our minds, sense-based thought, and evidentiary thought, there are "no sharp lines of demarcation between the various operations" of thought (p. 6). These operations are inseparable, further complicating the thought and decision-making process. Dewey (1997) described the process of reflective thinking: "(a) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; and (b) an act of search or investigation directed toward bringing to light further facts

which serve to corroborate or nullify the suggested belief” (p. 9). In essence, a problem arises, the thinker searches for evidence upon which to base his or her belief, “reflection is aimed at discovery of facts that will serve this purpose,” and the thinker will come to a conclusion based on those facts. “Demand for the solution of a perplexity is the steadying and guiding factor in the entire process of reflection” (Emphasis in original, p. 11). Regardless of the difficulty, pragmatic demands of life force us to continually make decisions. “To maintain the state of doubt and to carry on systematic and protracted inquiry—these are the essentials of thinking”(p. 13). Ethics is an ongoing problem of perplexity, one where there is not always clear-cut evidence to support one solution or another.

Unfortunately, as a whole, the forensics community has not clearly defined ethical behaviors. For instance, Hanson (1986) noted that the lack of nationally accepted rules creates variance in perception of what behaviors are allowable and what behaviors are not. Most literature on debate does not address a specific format of debate by name. Rather, the nature of debate competition in general is addressed. Gow (1967) noted that the most significant ethical problem with debate is citing evidence. Dresser (1964) noted the same problem, after analyzing 10 championship debates. Dresser concluded that the definition of evidence was too vague and difficult to apply, and debaters tended to use opinion evidence. Additionally, in a study of a final round of debate, Newman and Sanders (1965) concluded that accuracy was insufficiently employed. Regarding debate practices, Crampton (1967) set forth that requiring students to argue both sides of a given resolution or proposition is unethical and supports “questionable goals” (p. 91). Duffy (1983) agreed that ethics in debate extend to students’ beliefs and values. Snider (1984) responded that the gaming perspective is best. Littlefield (1986) claimed that undergraduate judges are more likely to be biased, or at least more likely to vote in favor of their

friends rather than the best speaker, and therefore should not be allowed to judge. However, written rules in national forensics organizations do not address this issue. Forensics literature labeled as addressing ethics usually implicitly addresses either norms or rules by the author or by the respondents.

Providing perhaps the most clarity concerning universal speech ethics, Nilsen (1966) noted that ethical matters have to do with keeping more good than evil, which is a teleological perspective, concerned with outcomes. He also states that the deontological perspective is concerned with processes equally as much as ends. Ethical issues clarify right (that which supports good) and wrong (that which perpetuates bad). Nilsen further stated that good is that which contributes to a person's well-being while bad is the antithesis, that which is a detriment to a person's well-being. He argued that ethical public discourse must uphold democracy, express enough information to be truthful, and provide alternatives. He also argued that the first line of ethical judgment lies within whether or not the speaker is honest.

Jensen (1997) took a more situational perspective, by arguing in favor of supporting individual freedom of expression, balance and prioritization of motivation (considering the audience equally to the speaker), resolution of conflicts (regarding the audience's and speaker's opinion of the message), and truthfulness, rejection of manipulative behaviors, and equal opportunity and participation for speakers. Unethical behaviors defined by Jensen include: ghostwriting without explicit credit to the writer and one-sided argumentation, as well as whistleblowing being unresolved points of contention. Truthfulness and sound reasoning are considered paramount ethical behaviors by Jensen. Specifically regarding public speaking, Jensen stated that speakers are unethical when they are ignorant of the appropriate time to commence

speaking. Intentionally using language for power or injury is defined by Jensen as unethical; particularly racist, sexist, and fallacious language choices.

There is usually no formal leadership training for directors of forensics. However, Cocker (1971) explained that leadership training for directors of forensics begins not when they are granted the authority to lead through their title, but when they are competitors, judges, and instructors. He created a three-prong explanation for what motivates future directors of forensics in pursuing their dreams. He stated that forensics liberates, integrates, and stimulates. While Cocker was specifically addressing forensics, these principles apply to leadership more generally, as well. There is a strange power dynamic between the director and assistant director of forensics, primarily because of a lack of both formal definitions of roles and formal leadership training (Dreibelbis, 1989; Elton, 1989; Green & Schnoor, 1989).

### Conclusion

Overall, the literature directly addressing the leadership role of the director of forensics is, at best, thin. A few conclusions seem warranted. Leadership and forensic literature, suggest that the most successful forensic programs will have the most effective directors of forensics. These effective forensic leaders tend to delegate tasks to their assistants and capable competitors, and are high in argumentativeness and low in verbal aggressiveness. These leaders would also likely present their entire team or the officers of their team with dilemmas that needed to be resolved, so that the team could engage in participatory decision-making and strive for integration when making decisions and resolving conflicts. This study is intended to help build the body of literature as well as provide practical instruction for new directors of forensics, among other things.

This chapter has addressed the literature relevant to the present study. It has been established that forensic involvement is a worth while pursuit, which helps students to learn skills vital to argumentation and democratic participation. Leadership literature has also been explored. There is an important connection between the inherent values imbedded within forensic competition and leadership. Both pursuits involve a great deal of ethical implications and support democratic values. Because the free-flow of information is essential for leaders to be effective, communicative skills are of the utmost importance. Unfortunately, specific practices which uphold ethics seem rather unexplored or at least unclearly defined. The present study aims to bolster the literature regarding ethics, leadership, and the role of the director of forensics. The next chapter is a quantitative exploration of the relationship between NPDA debate partners and how their levels of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness affect their levels of competitive relational satisfaction. This quantitative data will serve as a starting point for discovering the ethics coaches consider when making decisions regarding their forensic teams, which will be addressed in chapter four.

### Chapter Three: Plan, Plank One: Argumentativeness, Verbal Aggressiveness, and Competitive Relational Satisfaction in the Parliamentary Debate Dyad

This chapter is a quantitative study of the NPDA debate partnership. As established in the preceding chapter, 1) debate is justified primarily by its contribution to democratic values, 2) verbal aggressiveness is a negative personality trait, which adversely affects leadership capabilities, and 3) a major goal of forensic training is to foster effective democratic leaders. It is with these premises in mind that I conducted this portion of the present study. By exploring NPDA debaters' levels of argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and competitive relational satisfaction, I can draw conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the forensic training process and the effect of forensic coach decision making on their NPDA debaters. This chapter begins with a grounding in literature very specific to this quantitative study, then presents the hypotheses and research question, method, results, and discussion regarding the results, limitations, and concludes with possible directions for future research regarding this matter.

#### National Parliamentary Debate Association (NPDA) Debate

Parliamentary debate was specifically designed to expand the potential base of competitors to include those students who were not completely debate-centric. This expansion forced a shift in focus for students and coaches alike. Though research skills are, of course, considered as valuable as ever, the aim changed from depth to breadth. The focus on critical thinking skills and thinking on one's feet also increased. Forensic team participation in intercollegiate parliamentary debate has been on the rapid rise for some time now (Bingle, 1978; Crossman, 1996), and schools are continuously looking to expand their parliamentary debate programs (Dittus, 1998; Kuster, Olson & Loging, 2001). The National Parliamentary Debate Association was started in 1993. Since that time, the activity has expanded to include hundreds of participants from colleges and universities throughout the nation.

NPDA debate is unique, because despite differing views on how the participants ought to debate, it remains a format in which many forensic competitors can participate at varying levels of commitment. One of the primary goals of communication education generally and forensics specifically is to equip students with the ability to communicate and to argue effectively (Dannels, 2001). The evidence allowed in NPDA (Kuster, 2002), the way that debaters behave (Bartenen & Frank, 1999; Johnson 1994), and how judges assess debates (Kuster, Olson, & Loging, 2001; Swift, 2005; Weaver, 1977) support the notion that parliamentary debate is a valuable activity for students. Many scholars have written in defense of the importance of academic debate (e. g. McGee & Simerly, 1994; McKean, 1934; Williams, McGee, & Worth, 2001). Epstein (1992) has argued that the enthusiasm and interest of NPDA to debaters, judges, and audiences promises future growth for forensics programs. The expectations of each forensic competitor tend to be rather rigid and unchanging (Maddex, 2005; Swift, 2006). Participation in NPDA debate seems to hone skills and sharpen identity of those involved (Derryberry, 2005; Galizio & Chuen, 1995; Limon & LaFrance, 1995; Stamm, 1975; Swift & Vourvoulias, in press). Overall, NPDA participation is beneficial to all involved (Bellon, 2000; Mitchell, 1998; Williams, Hagy, & McLane-Hagy, 1996; Williams, McGee, & Worth, 2001).

#### Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness

Research shows that one of the most positive traits of an effective communicator is argumentativeness; whereas one of the most negative traits is verbal aggressiveness (Anderson & Martin, 1999; Beatty, Zelle, Dobos, & Rudd, 1994; Infante, Riddle Horvath, & Tumlin 1992; & Martin & Anderson, 1997). For instance, communication research has indicated a link between high levels of verbal aggressiveness and low levels of relational satisfaction (Anderson & Martin, 1999). Specifically, Teven, Martin, and Neupauer (1998) concluded that verbal



aggressiveness makes a significant, detrimental impact on sibling relationships and how siblings communicate. Swift and Vourvoulias (2006) found that similar levels of both argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness correlate with higher levels of relational satisfaction. The primary limitation of that study, however, was a lack of focus on competition as a variable for relational satisfaction. Hence, in this study, we are interested in discovering the associations between argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness and competitive relational satisfaction in parliamentary debaters.

#### Distinctions between Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness

Verbal Aggressiveness is destructive, while argumentativeness is constructive (Martin & Anderson 1997), which is of particular interest to debaters and their coaches (Swift & Vourvoulias, 2006). Many people, particularly outside of communication studies, tend to mistakenly conflate these two distinct concepts. Moreover, “verbally aggressive individuals attack the self concepts of others, attempting to cause psychological pain” (Infante and Wigley, 1986 as cited in Daly, 2002 p.150). Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, and Seeds (1984) furthered that “Infante and Rancer...conceptualized argumentativeness as a personality trait which predisposes an individual to recognize controversial issues, to advocate positions on them, and to refute other positions. In contrast, in their model, verbal aggressiveness is a personality trait which leads one to attack the self-concept of others instead of or in addition to refuting their positions on issues” (p. 68). A vast amount of scholarship has been conducted on argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness (Daly, 2002; Swift & Vourvoulias, 2006). Because verbal aggressiveness is such a negative trait, it is imperative for debaters to be trained against these destructive tendencies.

Most culprits of verbal aggressiveness blame others for their ad hominem attacks.

“Reasons people give for being verbally aggressive include reciprocity and socialization- being

taught to be verbally aggressive” (Infante, et al., 1992; Martin, Anderson, & Horvath, 1996, as cited in Martin & Anderson, 1997 p. 303). The most commonly given reasons by people who are high in trait verbal aggressiveness were wanting to appear tough, being in rational discussions that degenerate into verbal fights, wanting to be mean to the message receiver, and wanting to express disdain for the message receiver (Infante, et al., 1992). Alternatively, Infante (1989) explained that the four feasible reasons for verbal aggressiveness—psychopathology, disdain, social learning, and argumentative skill deficiency—may or may not be inherently linked. Furthermore, Infante (1987) helped to categorize verbal aggressiveness by explaining that it comes about as a part of hostility, which is an intrinsic aspect of personality. Infante’s categorization is supported by the findings of McCroskey, Heisel, & Richmond (2001) who assert that both neurotic introverts and psychotics tend to report high levels of verbal aggressiveness. It has been explained that “there are numerous types of verbally aggressive messages . . . character attacks, competence attacks, insults, maledictions, teasing, ridicule, profanity, and nonverbal emblems” (Infante & Wigley, 1986, p. 61). Generally, scholars agree that verbal aggressiveness is a negative trait (Anderson & Martin, 1999; Beatty, Zelle, Dobos, & Rudd, 1994; Infante et al., 1992; Infante, Myers, & Burkel, 1994; Infante, Rancer, & Jordan, 1996). For instance, Edwards, Bello, Brandau-Brown, and Hollems (2001) found that when presented with ambiguous messages, people high in verbal aggressiveness are more likely to perceive them as negative messages, and are more likely to have difficulty communicating.

Verbal aggressiveness and argumentativeness differ in a number of ways. For example, Ifert and Bearden (1998) concluded that verbally aggressive individuals reported a greater number of non-evidentiary appeals than evidentiary appeals, meaning that they were more likely to make a statement or a claim and not back it up with any support. In further support of this

conceptual distinction, Infante et al. (1984) found that people who are highly argumentative are less likely to use verbal aggressiveness when confronting an obstinate opponent than are people who are moderate and low in argumentative skill. The research also showed that when an opponent was adaptable, males were more likely than females to use verbal aggressiveness; however, when the opponent was obstinate, males and females were about equally as likely to use verbally aggressive messages. In addition, Infante (1989) found that people tend to prefer argumentative strategies over verbally aggressive strategies. Moreover, Infante et al. (1992) indicated that people high in trait verbal aggressiveness are more likely to use competence attacks, teasing, nonverbal emblems, and swearing. It is thought that verbal aggressiveness, a negative personality trait, could be passed on from generation to generation (Beatty, et al., 1994). A lack of argumentation training can lead to higher levels of verbal aggressiveness (Infante, 1989). Furthermore, no matter the reason, it is clear that verbal aggressiveness is particularly harmful to debaters; debate as an activity, and according to Swift and Vourvoulias (2006) harmful to the interpersonal relational satisfaction between NPDA partners.

Counter wise, aggressiveness is considered by scholars to be destructive, argumentativeness is considered to be constructive (e.g. Erwin, 1989; Neer, 1994). People with higher levels of argumentativeness may feel a need to argue freely, and if they are allowed to do this, they will develop more positive perceptions of communicative outcomes (Anderson and Martin, 1999). Furthermore, Schullery and Schullery (2003) suggested that the older a person is, the less argumentative, and the more educated one is, the more argumentative; the older one is, the less they tend to want to argue and the more educated, the more they tend to want to argue according to the study. However, the interaction between age and education was not tested, so it is unclear whether an older, educated person would be higher or lower in argumentativeness.

## Verbal Aggressiveness and Argumentativeness in the Communication Classroom

Without an understanding of the distinction between argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness, these concepts are easily conflated, especially within a debate context. Argumentation has been thought to increase students' ability to think critically (Sanders & Wiseman, 1994). Infante (1982) conducted a study on traits of the communication student. The variable that most distinctly differentiated between high and low argumentativeness was time of argument training in high school. Students with higher levels of argumentativeness were born earlier in their family birth order and had higher GPAs. Males tended to be more argumentative than females in Infante's study. Moreover, Myers and Knox (2000) studied perceived instructor argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness and found that argumentativeness did seem to increase students' satisfaction with their course as well as the instructor. Additionally, perceived Instructor verbal aggressiveness negatively influences student involvement in the communication classroom, but instructor argumentativeness seems to have no impact on student involvement (Myers, Edwards, Wahl, & Martin, 2007; Myers & Knox, 2000).

## Forensics: A Culture of Argumentativeness

Although this study deals specifically with debaters, it may be useful to have an understanding of forensic competitors in general. Colbert (1993) found that more forensics training yielded higher levels of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. In agreement, Stamm (1975) indicated that all forensics competitors differ in personality from their non-forensic counterparts. With an understanding of forensics competitors in general, we must more specifically look toward debaters. Ifert and Bearden (1998) suggested that a lack of evidentiary appeals indicate high levels of verbal aggressiveness. More specifically, Smither (1970) found that inexperienced debaters were more likely than experienced debaters to rate non-evidence

statements as relevant and experienced debaters were more consistent than inexperienced debaters in evaluating relevance. Hence, it seems that as Infante (1989) suggested, higher levels of argumentation training could lead to lower levels of verbal aggressiveness. Kuster (2002) argued that the reason NPDA is valuable is because of its “public” nature. By public, he means that it does not use technical jargon or outside research. Epstein (1992) rejected the forms of debate that required specialized jargon and insurmountable amounts of research. Johnson (1994) argued against punishing students for not knowing the technical jargon of debate. Swift (2007b) identified that the 2005 NPTE judges fit into the categories of tabula rasa, kritikal, ultra-liberal, stock-issues, communication-centered, and interventionalist.

Parliamentary debate is primarily concerned with critical thinking skills because of the lack of research used in debate rounds by debaters, as opposed to traditional forms of academic debate (Crossman, 1996; Galizio & Chuen, 1995; Kuster, 2002; O’Niell, 1986; Puchot, 2002; Stris, 1996; Theodore, Sheckels, & Warfield, 1990; Williams, & Guajardo, 1998). Resolutions define side for debaters; without them, the roles in a debate are hopelessly ambiguous (Herrick, 1998; Hill & Leeman, 1997). Brodak & Taylor, (2002) argue in favor of a very progressive form of NPDA, moving away from more traditional training and coaching practices. Rieke and Smith (1968) argued that while debaters ought to use evidence in academic debate, there is a legitimate concern for the ethics behind using outside research. It is essential that debaters be truthful in their representations of outside research.

Mitchell (1998) discussed the way debate educators teach academic debate. He argued that there is a need for more agency in argumentation because argumentative agency fuels academia through the pursuit of democracy. It enables students to apply the argumentation skills in academic debate to real-world situations. Argumentation agency links skills together and

provides understandable contexts in which these skills can be employed by making use of pragmatic action. As Mitchell suggested, debaters need to be more involved in the world around them. Therefore, our survey is solely for competitive debaters. Additionally, most studies with reports of perception report on the perception students have of instructors or superiors. Weaver (1977) discovered that there is a great disparity between perceptions that coaches have and those of debaters. Hence, this study addresses student perceptions of each other. This study could increase awareness of the needs and opinions of debaters. Adaptation and goal-directed action, as Berger (2002) argued permeates human interaction. Cognition is shaped by goal setting and the playing out of tactics intended to achieve these goals. Suffice it to say, guidance toward goals is necessary because we are programmed that way. Language is a potentially powerful tool for achieving goals (Jacobs, 2002). Because of the nature of competitive debate, it is likely that competitive goals influence debaters' relational satisfaction with one another. The ability to coordinate goal execution with others is beneficial, for individuals tend to pursue many goals at once.

#### Hypotheses and Research Question

The literature leads us to conclude that debaters will have high levels of argumentativeness because of their training. Argumentation training also seems to decrease verbal aggressiveness. We would expect that debaters would score low in verbal aggressiveness. The literature also supports a strong connection between high levels of verbal aggressiveness and low levels of relational satisfaction. This link leads us to expect that if there are high levels of verbal aggressiveness reported within the dyad, the level of reported relational satisfaction will be low. While there have been studies on debaters versus the general population, there is no current research on debaters perceptions of each other or debaters versus other debaters. Within

debate, students frequently encounter argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. These concepts, along with relational satisfaction, are well established. Hence, we pose the following hypotheses and research question:

H1: Debate dyads with similar levels of self-report and perceived partner argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness will have higher levels of competitive relational satisfaction than dyads with incongruent levels of self-report and perceived partner argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness.

H2: Debate dyads that do not fit the aforementioned hypothesis will have low competitive relational satisfaction if they have high levels of verbal aggressiveness and low levels of argumentativeness.

RQ1: Will biological sex have an impact on argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and competitive relational satisfaction in debate dyads?

## Methods

### Instruments

In this study, I measured debate partner dyads' perceptions of argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and competitive relational satisfaction. I employed an adapted version of the scale used in the Swift and Vourvoulias (2006) scale, which was a variation of the Argumentativeness Scale, the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale, and the Interpersonal Solidarity Scale. Argumentativeness was defined as "a personality trait that predisposes an individual to recognize controversial issues, to advocate positions on them, and to refute other positions" (Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, & Seeds, 1984, p.68). Verbal aggressiveness is conceptually defined as "an exchange of messages between two people where at least one person in the dyad attacks the self-concept of the other person in order to hurt the person psychologically" (Infante

& Wigley, 1986, p.67). Interpersonal satisfaction is being measured by the level of solidarity reported in the dyad. We have conceptually defined interpersonal solidarity according to Wheelless (1978) as “a global measure of closeness that captures several affective dimensions particularly relevant to friendship....solidarity provides an appropriate and ‘meaningful criterion by which to assess the importance of interpersonal communication phenomena in interpersonal relationships’” (p. 154, as cited in Cupach & Messman, 1999, p.14).

I took the previously adapted Argumentativeness, Verbal Aggressiveness, and Relational Satisfaction in the Parliamentary Debate Dyad Scale and added the word “competitive” to the last ten items which were adapted from the Wheelless’s (1978) Interpersonal Solidarity Scale. I also collected demographic data regarding school, biological sex, age, and forensics experience of both partners. I asked the participant about his or her own length of time in intercollegiate forensics competition and which individual events he or she had competed in or currently competes in. I also asked the participant to report the aforementioned demographics about his or her partner. To transform the scales, I calculated the mean of all of the items that corresponded with each variable. All of the scales demonstrated excellent internal validity: argumentativeness ( $\alpha = .89$ ), verbal aggressiveness ( $\alpha = .86$ ), partner argumentativeness ( $\alpha = .89$ ), partner verbal aggressiveness ( $\alpha = .90$ ), and competitive relational satisfaction ( $\alpha = .94$ ). To calculate the difference of argumentativeness scale, I subtracted the mean of partner argumentativeness from the mean of argumentativeness; to calculate the difference of verbal aggressiveness scale, I subtracted the mean of partner verbal aggressiveness from the mean of verbal aggressiveness.

#### Procedure

Surveys were administered at the 2007 Point Loma Nazarene University Sunset Cliffs Invitational and the 2007 Louisiana State University Mardi Gras Classic and Tri State



Championships. Judges handed out 320 surveys at Point Loma at the beginning of debate round three, and I collected them throughout the tournament. The tournament director continuously reminded debaters throughout the tournament during central topic announce to turn in the surveys. I received 127 completed, usable surveys, which was a 40% return. At the Mardi Gras tournament, I handed out 80 surveys to debaters at registration and continuously reminded debaters throughout the tournament during central topic announce to return the surveys. I received 24 completed, usable surveys, which was a 30% rate of return. I distributed a total of 400 surveys and received a total of 151 which was an overall 38% rate of return.

### Demographics

Of the 151 participants in the survey, 90 were male and 61 were female. The participants ranged in age from 17 to 28, with a mean age of 20.11; the participants' partners ranged in age from 17 to 40, with a mean age of 20.47. Participants reported competing in intercollegiate forensics from one semester to four years, with a mean of 1.61 years of competition, and their partners competing for one semester to four years with a mean of 1.58 years of competition. Of the participants, 19% (28) were freshmen, 32% (49) were sophomores, 19% (28) were juniors, and 30% (45) were seniors; of the partners of the participants, 22% (33) were freshmen, 27% (41) were sophomores, 22% (33) were juniors, and 27% (41) were seniors. Participants reported that 49% (74) of them competed in limited preparation events, 25% (38) in platform events, 23% (34) in interpretation of literature events, 19% (29) in unlimited preparation debate events, and 21% (31) in other limited preparation debate events; of the partners, 45% (68) of them competed in limited preparation events, 26% (39) in platform events, 15% (23) in interpretation of literature events, 19% (29) in unlimited preparation debate events, and 20% (30) in other limited preparation debate events. Seventeen percent (26) of the participants reported competing for a

community college and 83% (125) reported competing for a four year university. Fifty six percent (84) of the participants chose to be partners with their current NPDA partner and 43% (65) were assigned by their coach to be partners. Partnerships ranged from one semester to three years in length, with a mean of .79 years of time as partners.

## Results

To answer the research question, will biological sex have an impact on argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, or competitive relational satisfaction, as well as to test whether the type of institution or choosing partners had an impact, I ran independent samples univariate analysis of variance for the participant's sex, whether the participant competed for a community college or four year university, and whether the participant had chosen his or her partner or was assigned a partner by his or her coach. For males, the mean argumentativeness was 5.35,  $SD=.16$  and for females the mean argumentativeness was 5.93,  $SD=.13$ ; ( $f$  1, 141=8.10,  $p<.01$ ,  $\eta^2= .05$ ). For males, the mean verbal aggressiveness was 3.78,  $SD=.18$  and for females the mean verbal aggressiveness was 2.14,  $SD=.14$ ; ( $f$  1, 141=54.87,  $p=.00$ ,  $\eta^2= .28$ ). No other variables showed a significant difference due to sex of the participant. For community college students, the mean of argumentativeness was 5.93,  $SD=.19$  and for four year university students, the mean of argumentativeness was 5.36,  $SD=.08$ ; ( $f$  1, 141=7.93,  $p<.01$ ,  $\eta^2= .05$ ). For community college students, the mean of verbal aggressiveness was 2.40, and for four year university students, the mean of verbal aggressiveness was 3.01 ( $t= -2.70$ ,  $p < .01$ ). No other variables showed a significant difference due to whether the student attended a community college or four year university. For those who chose to be partners, the mean verbal aggressiveness was 2.51,  $SD=.14$  and for those who were assigned to be partners the mean verbal aggressiveness was 3.41,  $SD=.17$ ; ( $f$  1, 141=16.47,  $p=.00$ ,  $\eta^2= .11$ ). For those who chose to be

partners, the mean partner argumentativeness was 5.49,  $SD=.16$ , for those who were assigned to be partners, the mean partner argumentativeness was 4.74,  $SD=.18$ ; ( $f$  1, 141=9.75,  $p<.01$ ,  $\eta^2=.07$ ). For those who chose to be partners, the mean partner verbal aggressiveness was 2.98,  $SD=.21$ , for those who were assigned to be partners, the mean partner verbal aggressiveness was 3.72,  $SD=.24$ ; ( $f$  1, 141=5.51,  $p=.02$ ,  $\eta^2=.04$ ). For those who chose to be partners, the mean competitive relational satisfaction was 5.61,  $SD=.20$  and for those who were assigned to be partners the mean competitive relational satisfaction was 3.96,  $SD=.24$ ; ( $f$  1, 141=28.12,  $p=.00$ ,  $\eta^2=.17$ ). No other variables showed a significant difference due to whether the partners chose to debate together or were assigned by their coach to be partners.

To test the first hypothesis, debate dyads with similar levels of self-report and perceived partner argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness will have higher levels of competitive relational satisfaction than dyads with incongruent levels of self-report and perceived partner argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness, I ran a regression analysis. Because one of the independent variables in the regression analysis was the difference of argumentativeness score, I assumed that it would be correlated with the argumentativeness score, due to the fact that half of the difference of argumentativeness score was the argumentativeness score. The same applies to the difference of verbal aggressiveness and verbal aggressiveness. This raises problems with what is known as auto-correlation or part-whole correlation. However, Jacc and Turrisi (2003) argued that this method of testing interacting variables, subtracting the mean of one variable from the mean of another variable, which they called centered variable was the most desirable method of doing so. In order to empirically test if the auto correlation was in fact a problem in the regression analysis, I ran multicollinearity diagnostics.

As revealed in table 1, the VIF scores are statistically viable in that they are below 10. Kennedy (1985) cited that VIF scores above 10 are harmful to collinearity. Tolerances were sufficiently large as opposed to small values thus inflating the standard error of the coefficient. Hence, the first hypothesis is supported by the data. Table 1 presents the regression coefficients for the difference of argumentativeness, the difference of verbal aggressiveness, argumentativeness, and verbal aggressiveness. There was a significant regression model for these variables,  $F(4, 146) = 17.82, p = .00$ , that accounted for 33% of the variance. As revealed in table 1, by the Beta coefficients, competitive relational satisfaction was predicted by the lack of a difference between self and partner argumentativeness, lack of own verbal aggressiveness, but positively associated with own argumentativeness as well as a positive difference in verbal aggressiveness between self and partner. In other words, a person is more satisfied with their debate partner to the extent that they self identify as argumentative while not being verbally aggressive. The more there is a discrepancy between self and partner's level of argumentativeness, the less competitive relational satisfaction there is.

Table 1 also revealed support for the hypothesis, debate dyads that do not fit the aforementioned hypothesis will have low competitive relational satisfaction if they have high levels of verbal aggressiveness and low levels of argumentativeness. Indeed, the Beta coefficients demonstrate support for a negative association between competitive relational satisfaction and verbal aggressiveness ( $B = -.316$ ) and a positive association between competitive relational satisfaction and argumentativeness ( $B = .594$ ).

### Discussion

The data showed that many forensic competitors are participating in multiple genres of events, which is encouraging to those of us who reject the debate/individual event divide.

Table 1

Regression Analysis of Competitive Relational Satisfaction on Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness Variables

Variable	B	Standard Error	Beta	t	p	Tolerance	VIF
Difference of Argumentativeness	-.597	.092	-.623	-6.520	.000	.505	1.982
Difference of Verbal Aggressiveness	.213	.079	.229	2.689	.008	.634	1.578
Argumentativeness	.870	.138	.594	6.325	.000	.521	1.918
Verbal Aggressiveness	-.413	.110	-.316	-3.768	.000	.652	1.533

Preston (2006) argued that of all of the reformed formats of debate, NPDA is the most community-oriented because of its encouragement to develop both public speaking and argumentative skills. Swift (2007a/2007c) argued that parliamentary debate is accepting of a variety of judging paradigms, which encourages the participants to be constantly engaged with their audience and judge, necessitating a variety of perspective and adaptability. Audience adaptation is a demand and advantage of NPDA (Bartenen & Frank, 1999), which may be gained from participation in a variety of events. In order to gain support financially and attitudinally from administration and the larger community, many scholars have advocated that forensic teams must show unity and be understandable to larger publics than simply the forensic circuit (Rutledge, n. d., Johnson, 1994). Participation in multiple genres can boost team members' respect for fellow teammates and competitors (Epstein, 1992; Kuster, Olson, & Logging 2001),

strengthening the family-oriented nature of forensics which many scholars observe (Derryberry, 2005). The sample consisted primarily of debaters with a small amount of forensic experience. A longitudinal study or a study consisting of participants with more forensic experience altogether may show different results.

#### Differences in Argumentativeness and Verbal Aggressiveness

This sample supported previous findings in argumentativeness literature which indicate that there are differences in argumentativeness which are predictable by biological sex differences (e. g. Infante, 1987; Infante, 1989; Infante & Rancer, 1982; Infante, Rancer, & Jordan, 1996; Swift & Vouvoulias, 2006). In support of Swift and Vouvoulias (2006) and contradicting Infante, Rancer, and Jordan (1996), this study showed that females reported significantly higher levels than males. Gender norms tend to suggest that males are more argumentative than females. In forensic competition, it is possible that females consciously fight this stereotype by working even harder than males to improve their argumentative skills. The data also supports existing literature in verbal aggressiveness which shows that males tend to score higher in verbal aggressiveness than females (e. g. Beatty, Zelle, Dobos, & Rudd, 1994; Infante, 1989). In this study, males scored significantly higher in verbal aggressiveness than their female counterparts. While this sample was not evenly divided between community college and university students, there was a significant difference in the verbal aggressiveness scores. University students reported significantly higher verbal aggressiveness scores than did community college students. This may indicate that people who choose to attend community college simply tend to be less verbally aggressive than those who choose to attend university or that community college coaches are more skilled at helping their students to overcome this negative trait. Finally, those participants who chose their partner reported significantly higher

levels of perceived partner argumentativeness, significantly lower levels of perceived partner verbal aggressiveness, and significantly higher competitive relational satisfaction than those participants who were assigned by their coach to their partnership. This supports the findings of Swift and Vourvoulias (2006) who found similar results. It seems intuitive that in the Swift and Vourvoulias study that debaters would be more generally relationally satisfied when they choose their debate partner. This study further suggests, however, that debaters are more competitively relationally satisfied when they choose their partner as well. Additionally, debaters who choose their partners may either view their debate partner as highly argumentatively skilled or simply like their debate partner. Either way, this accounts for the higher reports of perceived partner argumentativeness than those who were assigned a debate partner.

Table 1 also suggests that there is a negative association between the difference of argumentativeness and competitive relational satisfaction. This supports Swift and Vourvoulias (2006), who found that the difference of argumentativeness and relational satisfaction negatively correlated. It seems that debaters are more competitively relationally satisfied when they perceive that they and their partner have similar levels of argumentative skill. Conversely, in direct contradiction to Swift and Vourvoulias (2006), the data indicates that there is a positive association between the difference of verbal aggressiveness and competitive relational satisfaction. The particular sample of this present study indicates that the more unlike one's debate partner one scores in verbal aggressiveness the more competitively relationally satisfied one will be. While this may seem counterintuitive *prima facie*, it may in fact be reasonable. Because I was testing relational satisfaction in terms of competition, it is important to consider debate strategy in this discussion. It is possible that some debaters use a "good cop/bad cop" strategy to disarm their opposing team. In this case, it is perfectly logical that "good cop"

debaters (those low in verbal aggressiveness) would be competitively relationally satisfied when partnered with “bad cop” debaters (those high in verbal aggressiveness), and the inverse would also be logical. In support of existing literature regarding relationships, argumentativeness, and verbal aggressiveness, (e. g. Infante, 1987; Infante, 1989; Infante, Myers, & Buerkel, 1994; Infante, Rancer, & Jordan, 1996; Infante, Trebing, Shepherd, & Seeds, 1984; Infante, & Wigley, 1986), the data points toward a positive relationship between argumentativeness and competitive relational satisfaction and a negative association between verbal aggressiveness and competitive relational satisfaction. Previous studies do not address the competitive nature of the debate partnerships that this particular study is interested in. However, the data from this study does support the findings of other studies which posit that argumentativeness positively relates with relational satisfaction and verbal aggressiveness negatively links with relational satisfaction. Also in support of existing literature, this data suggests that there is a negative connection between argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. Those participants who reported high levels of argumentativeness reported low levels of verbal aggressiveness, and those participants who reported low levels of argumentativeness reported high levels of verbal aggressiveness.

#### Limitations

This study has a few limitations, which consist of sample representation, lack of a control group, and a no clarification of competitive success. First, though the sample was a rather good size, it was not as representative of community college students as it could have been, if I had sampled more tournaments. There are hundreds, and possibly thousands of community college NPDA debaters throughout the nation. Should a similar study be replicated and administered at NPDA and Phi Rho Pi (the community college forensic organization) nationals, more of these debaters could be represented. Second, I surveyed no non-debaters. Though the sample seems



to report overall high levels of argumentativeness and low levels of verbal aggressiveness, there is no point of comparison with any general population. Conversely, there may be no need for a control group. Whether future studies aim to generalize the findings to a non-debate population or not will determine whether or not a control group is needed. Finally, there was no definition of competitive success. In the Swift and Vourvoulias (2006) study, one of the limitations addressed was the fact that “relational satisfaction” was operationally defined by an adapted version of Wheelless’s (1979) Interpersonal Solidarity Scale, which tests interpersonal connectedness between interlocutors. Swift and Vourvoulias reported that “our survey consisted of no inquiry of the value of competition in general or about the value of competitive success” (2006, p. 14). While the present study attempts to address this by clarifying the scale (adding the term “competitive” or “competition” to each item), there is no report of the teams’ records or inquiry into what the participants define as competitive success.

#### Directions for Future Research

In the future, researchers should further investigate the differences between community college and university debaters as well as further clarify the importance of competitive success to debaters. Community college coaches strive to train their debaters to ready them for university competition. Future studies could address whether community college coaches’ practices are congruent with university coaches’ practices and whether community college students feel prepared for university competition. Additionally, it may be useful for future studies to inquire as to what debaters perceive to be competitive success, whether they feel that their own performance meets their own definition, and what effect that may or may not have on the way they feel about their debate partner.

## Conclusion

This chapter has established four important findings which serve as the basis for chapter four: 1) high levels of argumentativeness and perceived partner argumentativeness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships, 2) high levels of verbal aggressiveness and perceived partner verbal aggressiveness predict low levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships, 3) similar levels of argumentativeness and dissimilar levels of verbal aggressiveness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships, and 4) the strongest predictor of high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships is debaters choosing their own partner. These findings can be useful to forensic coaches when determining debate partnerships. As expressed in their “practical applications” section, Swift and Vourvoulias (2006) concluded:

Our findings could assist coaches and argumentation instructors alike. Williams, Hagy, and McLane-Hagy (1996) argued that parliamentary debate can be and should be taught in the argumentation classroom. Instructors could administer the Argumentativeness Scale and the Verbal Aggressiveness Scale in order to determine compatibility and use this to assign partners in the classroom. This practice could be replicated by coaches. Additionally, perhaps parliamentary debaters should be given more freedom in partner selection. If relational satisfaction is highly valued to instructors or coaches, perhaps directors of forensics and instructors of argumentation should allow competitors and students alike to choose their partners. In any case, this area needs to be further investigated so that coaches can help train debaters to minimize verbal aggressiveness and increase argumentation skills. (p. 14).

Akin to the aforementioned study, the present results help to reinforce the above conclusions, and show that these conclusions can be drawn regarding not only debaters’ interpersonal satisfaction, but also the way they view the competitive aspect of their debate relationships. Because it is virtually impossible to divorce any aspect of an interpersonal relationship from other aspects, it seems that debaters’ satisfaction with their partner interpersonally as well as competitively are equally important.

In any case, the results reported in this chapter can be applied to NPDA debate partnerships, and perhaps eventually, beyond. These results are the starting point for the qualitative study presented in the next chapter. The aggregate level of these studies will enable a grounded theory regarding the role of the Director of Forensics and the ethical implications of this role.

## Chapter Four: Plan, Plank Two: Coach Reactions to NPDA Competitor Argumentativeness, Verbal Aggressiveness, and Competitive Relational Satisfaction

In the last chapter, I discovered from the quantitative inquiry that debaters are more competitively relationally satisfied when they and their partner are highly argumentative, low in verbal aggressiveness, have similar levels of both argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness, and when they get to choose their debate partner. In order to discover whether these results are of interest to and could influence coaches' decision making, I developed an open-ended survey for coaches to respond to. With the aforementioned results of the quantitative portion of this study in mind, I developed a qualitative follow-up questionnaire for coaches to complete. Based on the results of the student reactions, it was important to see whether coaches are already aware of the state of their students' opinions, and if not, whether the coaches believe these opinions are, in fact, of value. The results which I questioned coaches about are specifically:

1. High levels of argumentativeness and perceived partner argumentativeness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships.
2. High levels of verbal aggressiveness and perceived partner verbal aggressiveness predict low levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships.
3. Similar levels of argumentativeness and dissimilar levels of verbal aggressiveness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships.
4. The strongest predictor of high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships is debaters choosing their own partner

These results are all issues which NPDA coaches have the potential to influence from at least slightly to quite dramatically. Coaches have the power to make decisions for their teams, and

because of the high rate of debaters who were assigned a debate partner by their coach in this sample, as well as the literature reviewed in chapter two which indicates that team leadership and decision making is important for highly effective organizations, it is logical to conclude that coaches may be able to give their team members more say in some areas of decision making. Along this vein, Marmo (2006-07) encouraged coaches to allow competitors to have more freedom in their forensic environment. She provided a definition: “The term freedom in regard to a forensic environment means that students should be able to accomplish their own personal goals and enjoy the process (not just the end results)” (p. 26).

Walton (1989) made an important argumentative distinction, which may or may not exist within a non-forensicator’s paradigm:

The quarrel represents the lowest level of argument. Reasonable standards of good argument should be designed to prevent argument from deteriorating into the personal quarrel . . . The forensic debate is more regulated than the quarrel . . . The debate is regulated by rules of procedure that determine when each arguer may speak, and how long each may speak. (p. 4).

This distinction is one which is essential for NPDA coaches to understand and take into consideration when deciding how to partner debaters on their team. Should debate partners experience interpersonal conflict, this conflict will inevitably be of the quarrel variety, which, as Walton indicates goes against, and it therefore counter-productive to the forensic debate, NPDA. Marmo (2006-07) perhaps put it best: “A [forensic] coach has the ability to teach interpersonal skills directly” (p. 27). Encouraging students to reflect on and explore the nature of the personal component of the interpersonal relationship which they share with their debate partner, beyond the competitive side may be an effective way to directly teach these skills. In support of open communication with students, Swift (2006-07) concluded:

It does seem of value . . . to begin to dialogue about these [ethical] issues. While we may not have all of the perfect answers, the only way to come up with the best way to deal

with ethics is to discuss as many options as possible, which is the entire point behind forensics, after all. (Emphasis added, p.16).

In addition to teaching interpersonal skills and/or encouraging competitive success, NPDA coaches strive to foster critical thinking debaters. As explained by Barnet and Bedau (2005):

By itself, thinking can mean almost any sort of mental activity, from idle daydreaming . . . to careful analysis . . . In short, when we add the adjective critical to the noun thinking, we pretty much eliminate reveries, just as we eliminate snap judgments. We are talking about searching for hidden assumptions, noticing various facets, unraveling different strands, and evaluating what is most significant. (Emphasis in original, p. 3).

In order to encourage this brand of thinking, an excellent strategy is to, in fact, model this type of thinking. An issue about which debate coaches may be able improve their own critical thinking about their own decisions is in the area of who to partner together in debate partnerships.

Regarding argumentation skills, which are inherently linked to critical thinking skills, Swift (2007a) argued that:

Debate enables students to apply the argumentation skills in academic debate to real-world situations. Argumentation agency links skills together and provides understandable contexts in which these skills can be employed by making use of pragmatic action.  
([http://www.cddebate.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=112&Itemid=32](http://www.cddebate.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=112&Itemid=32)).

However, NPDA students are only able to have as much agency as their coaches allow them to have. Because Hunt (1997) argued that “Forensics is concerned with deliberative and forensic speaking; in modern terms, public forum decision making, which is at the heart of democracy,” it seems quite clear that students and coaches should work closely together to make decisions (p. 5). After all, forensics should be first and primarily concerned with communication.

#### Method

I handed this survey (see appendix B) out at the September 14-16 2007 Pussycat Swing at

the University of Houston, which Louisiana State University co-hosted. I also sent an electronic version of the survey out to coaches all over the nation via the NPDA listserv. I hoped to collect 30-60 completed, usable surveys. Once collected, I planned to analyze responses in a combined deductive/inductive approach, in order to develop a grounded theory regarding NPDA debate coaches' pedagogical perspectives. To begin the analysis, I applied Bartanen's (1994) three primary coaching perspectives: 1) forensics as primarily competition, 2) forensics as primarily rhetorical training, and 3) forensics as primarily an intellectual game. I coded answers that fell into each of these categories, then inductively assigned categories to answers that fell outside of these three categories.

## Results

### Demographics

Of all of the surveys handed out, I received 22 completed, usable surveys. There were 18 Directors of Forensics/Directors of Debate and four Assistant Coaches. There were six community college coach and 16 four-year college/university coaches. Of the respondents, 18 were in charge of their forensic team's NPDA partnerships and four were not.

### Team Values

Coaches were asked to list the three most important values on their forensic team. For all three values listed, I started with a deductive approach, using Bartanen's (1994) three perspectives on forensics: competition, rhetorical training, and intellectual game. I grouped values based on these categories and found emergent categories as well. There were answers that fit into rhetorical training or education as well as competition or competitive success. However, instead of finding the expected intellectual game category, I found two emergent categories: ethics and interpersonal skills. All of the answers were categorized into four

categories including: education, ethics, competitive success, and interpersonal skills. These categories were developed based on the written feedback the coaches gave. The terms that were synonymous or at least very similar were grouped together. Terms were grouped into the education category because they all deal with the process of gaining knowledge. Competitive success was developed as a category from the goal-oriented terms. Terms were put under the ethics category, because regardless of disagreement about ethics, scholars generally agree that ethics deals with truth and honesty. The interpersonal skills category was developed for all of the terms coaches wrote that dealt with communicative skills beyond those that directly relate to the activity of forensics.

Table 2

Top Three Forensic Team Values

Value	First	Second	Third
Education	12	5	5
Ethics	4	5	2
Competitive Success	3	4	11
Interpersonal Skills	3	8	4

For the first value, there were a variety of answers including: education, family ethic, working hard, wide knowledge, honesty, respect for self and others, responsibility, commitment, competitive success, working as a team, ethics, and academics. These answers were categorized into four categories including: education, ethics, competitive success, and interpersonal skills.

The education category was comprised of the descriptors education, academics, and wide knowledge. The ethics category was comprised of honesty, responsibility, and ethics. The competitive success category was comprised of competitive success, commitment, and working



hard. The interpersonal skills category was comprised of respect for self and others, working as a team, and family ethic.

For the second value, there were also a variety of answers, including: ethics, Pi Kappa Delta tenets, improving, collaboration, fun, honesty, respect, argumentation skill, speaking skills, hard work, unity, community, teamwork, education, event knowledge, and personal (i.e. relative) success. These answers were also categorized into the four categories of education, ethics, competitive success, and interpersonal skills. The education category was comprised of the descriptors argumentation skill, speaking skills, and education. The ethics category was comprised of honesty and ethics and Pi Kappa Delta tenets. The competitive success category was comprised of improving, hard work, personal (i.e. relative) success, and event knowledge. The interpersonal skills category was comprised of collaboration, respect, unity, fun, community, and teamwork.

Finally, for the third value, there were also a variety of answers, including: excellence, success that follows hard work and commitment to learning, fun, individuality, the educational values of forensics, winning, competitiveness, competitive drive, academics, effectiveness with public audience, ethics, willingness to take risks, achievement, growth, competitive success, education, interpersonal skills, team unity, and passion. These answers were also categorized into the four categories of education, ethics, competitive success, and interpersonal skills. The education category was comprised of the descriptors education, individuality, academics, the educational values of forensics, and willingness to take risks. The ethics category was comprised of ethics and passion. The competitive success category was comprised of excellence, winning, competitiveness, competitive drive, effectiveness with public audience, achievement, competitive success, and success that follows hard work and commitment to learning. The

interpersonal skills category was comprised of interpersonal skills, team unity, fun, and growth. The results are reported in table 2.

### Things to Consider for NPDA Partnerships

Next, respondents were asked to report the three most important things to consider when partnering NPDA debaters together. All of these words were organically categorized.

Table 3

Top Three Things to Consider when Partnering NPDA Debaters Together

Consideration	First	Second	Third
Choice	5	0	2
Compatibility	11	4	7
Skill Level	4	12	7
Potential for	2	6	6
Competitive Success			

For the first consideration, there were a variety of answers including: student choices, personality compatibility, their mutual consent, social compatibility, workability, student preferences, potential for wins, compatibility—do they want to debate with each other, ability to work together, compatibility of personalities, each debater’s strengths and weaknesses, personalities involved, personal compatibility, commitment, experience, compatibility, temperament, cohesiveness, chemistry. These answers were categorized into four categories including: choice, compatibility, skill level, and potential for competitive success. The choice category was comprised of the following descriptors: student choices, their mutual consent, and student preferences. The compatibility category was comprised of: workability, personal compatibility, personality compatibility, social compatibility, compatibility—do they want to debate with each other, ability to work together, compatibility of personalities, personalities

involved, compatibility, temperament, cohesiveness, and chemistry. The skill level category was comprised of: each debater's strengths and weaknesses and experience. The potential for competitive success category was comprised of: potential for wins and commitment.

For the second consideration, there were also a variety of answers including: compatibility, win-ability, skills, commensurate talents in debating, competitiveness, speaking positions strengths, obligatory division placements (not pairing novice with open), approximately equal skills, speaking strengths, complementary skills, complementary educational/experiential backgrounds, complementary knowledge and perspectives, level of experience, speaking and debating style, experience, commitment to activity, partner strength/weakness, and work ethics. These answers were categorized into only three categories including: compatibility, skill level, and potential for competitive success. The compatibility category was comprised of: compatibility and complementary knowledge and perspectives. The skill level category was comprised of: obligatory division placements (not pairing novice with open), complementary educational/experiential backgrounds, skills, speaking and debating style, approximately equal skills, complementary skills, level of experience, commensurate talents in debating, speaking strengths, and experience. The potential for competitive success category was comprised of: commitment to activity, speaking positions strengths, competitiveness, win-ability, partner strength/weakness, and work ethics.

For the third consideration, there were also a variety of answers including: competitiveness, mentoring potential, will do well together (competitively, work well together), personal likes/dislikes (overlaps with #1), compatibility interpersonally, (at times) mentoring relationship, competitive ability, level of ability, complementary skills/chemistry, past success, the tournament, likeability, interpersonal dynamics, skill level, working together, specialization

of knowledge, interpersonal compatibility, their preferences, work ethic, and balance. These answers were categorized into four categories including: choice compatibility, skill level, and potential for competitive success. The choice category included the following descriptor: personal likes/dislikes (overlaps with #1) and their preferences. The compatibility category was comprised of: interpersonal dynamics, working together, compatibility interpersonally, likeability, and balance. The skill level category was comprised of: level of ability, mentoring potential, specialization of knowledge, skill level, (at times) mentoring relationship, complementary skills/chemistry, and the tournament. The potential for competitive success category was comprised of: competitiveness, competitive ability, will do well together (competitively, work well together), work ethic, and past success. The results are reported in table 3.

#### Allowing NPDA Debaters to Choose Partnerships?

Of the respondents, nine reported that they (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) do, three do not allow their NPDA debaters to choose their own partner, and two coaches reported that they sometimes do and sometimes do not allow students to choose. The reason for this varied. Four categories for the reason behind allowing, disallowing, or negotiating the decision behind partnerships emerged: coach knows best, student freedom, process over product, and other. Results are reported in table 4.

Do Allow Students to Choose. There were 13 coaches who reported allowing students to choose partnerships for themselves. For the coaches who reported that they do allow students to choose their partner, the reasons fell into the categories of: coach knows best, student freedom, process over product, and other.

Coach Knows Best. Only one coach fell into this category. One coach wrote: “(with reserve) With older students, they are more apt to work with people they desire to work with. That said, I will also break up unhealthy pairs.” This coach expressed that he or she has an understanding of the growth of the students on his or her team. He or she believes that he or she know what is best for the students by being committed to breaking up pairings that he or she deems “unhealthy,” or not in the best interest of the students.

Table 4

To Choose or Not to Choose Your NPDA Partner

Reason	Allowed to	Not Allowed to	Negotiate Partnerships
	Choose	Choose	
Coach Knows Best	1	2	1
Student Freedom	5	2	0
Process Over Product	6	1	2
Other	1	1	0

Student Freedom. Five coaches fit into this category. One coach wrote, “I do later in the season when they have picked someone. It gives them a sense of ownership.” This coach expressed that he or she allows the students to choose who they would prefer to debate with, which upholds the value of student freedom or ownership. Another coach who allows students to choose partnerships and fit in this category wrote:

It makes for less complaining about partnerships. In early partnerships (say beginning of the year when neither I nor the competitors know each other) I let them choose their own partners. However, if I see deficits in the chosen partnerships then I re-arrange. For example, we are going into our second tournament and I have one person complaining about his partner, and I'm seeing another team that love working together but have the same strengths and weaknesses so there is no winnability -- so I'm switching partnerships. Hopefully, the partners with personality difficulties will get with other partners and the two that are too similar will get partners that have strengths they are lacking and it becomes a more equitable partnership.

This coach is concerned about the well-being of his or her students, and allows for some negotiation, but ultimately makes the decisions about partnerships if students are not making the best decisions for themselves. He or she is taking into consideration the interpersonal and competitive aspects of NPDA debate partnerships, with the end-goal of student freedom in mind. Students who are happy and have a good chance at competitive success are likely to be the most free to do their very best at NPDA. A third coach in this category simply wrote, “If forensics isn’t fun for the students, there is no point.” This coach allows students to choose for themselves because this freedom gives the students the most enjoyment from forensics. Another coach wrote:

Generally I want partners to choose to debate with each other. When I was a college undergrad I was forced to pair with partners who were not to my preference. I promised myself that I would not be the kind of coach who did this. Education and fun is more important to me than competitive success. The goals of education and fun can be met by partners controlling their own pairings.

This coach is concerned with the freedom of his or her students based on his or her own experience in forensics. This coach wants his or her students to value the educational opportunity and fun in forensics. These are achieved, in this coach’s opinion best by students having the freedom of choice. In agreement with this sentiment, a final coach in this category wrote, “It is important that students enjoy what they are doing. I reserve my trump card for debate partnerships when I see students not being supportive of one another or of the rest of the team.” This final coach wants his or her students to have freedom of choice and will only veto these choices when he or she sees negative outcomes.

Process over Product. There were six coaches who fit into this category who allow their students to choose their NPDA debate partner. One coach in this category wrote, “Early season: do—later season I have assigned partners. Early season experimentation may produce some

surprises; if we enter competitive tournaments at year's end partnering is joint debater/coach decision, to field strongest teams.” This coach values experimentation with NPDA debate partnerships in order to find the most competitively successful NPDA debate teams. Though this may sound product-oriented, it is the process of finding those partnerships that this coach is stressing in this particular answer. Another coach in this category wrote, “I want my students to work with those they feel comfortable with while at the same time balancing each other out. If partnership is not working then I change the partners based on ability to achieve success and balancing each other out and if they have mutual goals.” This coach is expressing a need to be process-oriented. He or she is taking into consideration goals from him or herself as well as goals from the students, and always entertaining the possibility of change throughout the process. A third coach in this category wrote, “It’s a foundation for building comfort and respect.” This reflects the interpersonal aspect of debate partnerships, which is embedded within the process of debating. One coach offered this as his or her reason for allowing debaters to choose their partners:

Because so far we've agreed with the pairings. Instead of arbitrarily pairing students (which does still happen), when 2 students want to be paired we try to accommodate but reserve the right to veto. If they want to be partnered then they potentially can get along with each other. Whether they can win, are both eligible to travel, or other factors might necessitate a veto but not necessarily.

This answer reflects the process-aspect of NPDA debate partnerships. This coach is concerned about the entire process of forensic competition, including the interpersonal relationship between debate partners, the travel involved, and any other potentially unanticipated factors. Along this line of process-orientation, another coach responded:

We allow them to choose partners with approval from the coaching staff. We allow this because we feel that the team will work better if they are with someone they enjoy working with. We have also found that the students typically will pick someone who has relatively the same level of ability that can help them grow as a debater.

This coach is concerned with students' growth. The NPDA debate partnership, in this coach's view is an integral part of the growth and process of each student as a forensic competitor. A final coach in this category wrote:

In general, we will make suggestions for partnerships, but because our team is not as big as some, partnerships will also depend on who is going to a tournament. We allow the debaters final say in their partnerships because we know that if things don't work out or their styles don't mesh as well as they had liked, then they will fix this for the next tournament.

This coach is concerned with the big-picture of the process of debate partnerships. He or she is considering the entire team and allowing for the possibility of change in partnerships as the forensic season progresses.

Other. Only one coach who allows students to choose their NPDA debate partner fit into this category, because he or she articulated no reason for this.

Do not Allow Students to Choose. There were six coaches who reported not allowing students to choose partnerships for themselves. For the coaches who reported that they assign partners for their students, the reasons fell into the categories of: coach knows best, student freedom, process over product, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first responded:

In fairness I often do allow them to choose, but I hold final veto rights. Their feedback is very important to me. But I value my perspective born of many years of experience in the close calls, and this also allows me to honor member requests without revealing the negatives that potential partners have revealed to me – in essence it allows face saving for the team members, and I don't mind appearing to be the heavy if it preserves peace on the team.

This coach believes that he or she knows what is best for the team because of the extensive experience he or she has with forensics. Another coach expressed that he or she knows what is



best for his or her debaters by simply writing, “I can best determine the partnerships that could do well.” He or she has faith in his or her ability to do what is best for the team.

Student Freedom. There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first wrote, “There are several reasons, but the primary reason is that students want their privacy protected. They want to remain friends with someone who wants to be their partners who they do not want as a partner.” This coach believes he or she can best uphold student freedom by taking the power out of the students’ hands. Students remain free to pursue interpersonal relationships without having to take blame for the NPDA debate partnerships, because the coach made that choice rather than the students. The other coach in this category responded, “1) It would mean a few kids would get left out; hurt feelings. 2) It does not maximize partner preferences. 3) It does not maximize competitiveness and compatibility.” Like the other coach in this category, this one is concerned with the students’ feelings, as well as their freedom to do the best they can in competition.

Process over Product. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she responded as follows:

The team members have much more input into the partner decision than they often realize (their concerns, preferences, etc. typically make the decision for partners – though those decisions are officially articulated by me), though I make the actual declarations of partnerships. The primary reason for this approach is to ensure that if the situation occurs (which has occurred only rarely) where I believe two people would be better paired together (because of their complementary/supplementary understandings and/or the need to put someone with lesser experience with someone with more experience – in order to learn from them), then the decision could be made without an apparent change in policy. Additionally, this allows for disciplinary actions (leaving a person home for a tournament if they have not put in the necessary preparation time) without having to involve other students in the disciplinary process.

This coach is considering the far-reaching implications of debate partnership decisions. He or she is concerned that the process of forensic competition can be best facilitated by the coach choosing the NPDA debate partnerships.

Other. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote, “People either want to debate with their friend or the best debater on the team. Friendships often are ruined in this competitive environment. Only one person can debate with the best debater, and that should be the second-best debater.” This coach is clearly most concerned with competitive success for his or her NPDA debaters, and believes that he or she can best foster that competitive success for his or her team.

Negotiate Partnerships. There were three coaches who reported that they sometimes do, sometimes do not allow students to choose their own NPDA debate partner. These coaches fit into the categories of coach knows best and process over product.

Coach Knows Best. One coach fit into this category, and he or she responded in regard to why as follows:

I let their choices come first but if I feel they are not gelling well together and/or there could be a better pairing for a better chance at success, I will trump their preferences. I do, however, allow each debater at least a couple tournaments where they are paired with their preferences, mainly early in the year.

This coach takes into consideration what his or her students want in terms of an NPDA debate partner. However, this coach believes that his or her judgment is most reliable.

Process over Product. There were two coaches that fit into this category. The first wrote the following:

I combine the two approaches - we practice with a variety of pairings, and the debaters can request those they would like to try rounds with, as well as those they do not think they can debate with. At the end of practices, I again have them list their favorite partner prospects and any who they cannot debate with. I then do my best to coordinate their preferences. In most cases, debaters end up paired with their first or second choice (since frequently choices are not mutual - I sometimes have one person whose first choice does not wish to even consider them as a partner).

This coach clearly values the experimentation and process aspect of debate. The negotiation of partnerships is a process because the debaters actually get experience debating with multiple

debate partners in practice before the final decision regarding a tournament partnership is made. In agreement, the second coach in this category wrote simply, “It is a collaborative effort—they have great input and I make the final decision.” This coach is stressing collaboration, or process when it comes to making decisions about NPDA debate partnerships.

### High Levels of Argumentativeness Predict High Competitive Relational Satisfaction

In response to the question, “In a recent quantitative study, researchers found that high levels of argumentativeness and perceived partner argumentativeness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships. How informative and/or important do you find this information?,” and the follow-up, “Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?,” coaches wrote a variety of answers. The following categories arose from the answers: influential, not influential, maybe influential, and already influential. The coaches’ interpretation of the quantitative results fit into four emergent categories: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other. Results are reported in table 5.

Table 5

#### High Argumentativeness Leads to High Competitive Relational Satisfaction

Coaches’ Interpretation	Influential	Not Influential	Maybe Influential	Already Influential
Coach Knows Best	1	3	1	4
Process Over	1	1	1	0
Product				
Suspect Data	1	3	2	0
Other	1	2	0	1

Influential. There were four coaches who reported finding the data reported in this prompt as influential on the way that they determine debate partnerships. The four respondent's answers fit into the categories of coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There was one coach who fit into this category, and he or she responded as follows:

If you mean that people who are participating in an argumentative competitive activity are likely to be happier (about their competitiveness) with a highly argumentative partner rather than a less argumentative partner then I think that you're stating the obvious. It's not important to me since it doesn't inform about the noncompetitive issues that might exist. I was once on a team where we fought each other constantly and won a lot. Socially and emotionally displeasing but I was satisfied/confident in our competency but hated my partner as a person. Yes I am influenced by the principles involved here but not 100%

This coach is expressing that he or she knows what is best for the team, regardless of what the data says. Though this coach is willing to state that he or she is influenced by this data somewhat, the coach is not willing to allow this information to override anything that he or she already knows about forensics and his or her particular team.

Process over Product. There was one coach who fit into this category, and he or she responded as follows:

I believe that this information provides a piece of the puzzle, but does not complete the picture (other variables such as their compatibility play an equally significant role). Accordingly, it is useful information, but not a sole determining factor that I would apply to the decision making process. I would definitely take this aspect into consideration (again, as a part of the process, but not a sole determining factor).

This coach is willing to accept that the data is valid and potentially helpful, but he or she is highly concerned that this cannot become the only determining factor, because debate partnerships are, from this coach's view, a process.

Suspect Data. There was one coach who fit into this category, and he or she responded as follows:

I take this to mean that the more argumentative the people are or are perceived to be the more likely they are to succeed as a pair. If that interpretation is correct, as a general rule, I would agree but all generalizations have exceptions. Officially, though, in my experience, this is the case. Each team needs to have a least one partner who is highly predisposed to argumentativeness, not both. Although having both as such does increase the chance of success. Indirectly [influential], yes. When I want our teams to win I put the most argumentative together and when there are new people who need a learning experience I pair them with the argumentative in practices and, on rare occasions, in a tournament. If I have an odd number of argumentative personalities, say five, I would put the least one of the five with one who needs to learn but in rotate in the other four across the next four tournaments so all have a chance to be a strong team.

This coach does not want to grant that the data is entirely valid. Though he or she reports being influenced by the information, the coach feels it necessary to express his or her discontent with the data.

Other. There was one coach who fit into this category, and he or she simply wrote, “It is helpful when selecting partners.” This coach did not explain why the data is helpful, only that it is helpful.

Not Influential. There were nine coaches who fit into this group. There reasons for not being influenced by the data fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were three coaches who fit into this category. One wrote, “It sounds interesting but it does not make me rethink how I pick partners.” This coach feels confident in his or her current practices, so the information doesn’t matter. Another coach wrote, “I think it has some merit, but it won’t change the way I pair teams. To some extent I am doing this already.” Like the first coach in this category, this coach clearly has faith in his or her own practices when it comes to decisions regarding NPDA debate partnerships. Along this vein, the final coach in this category wrote:

This information does nothing for me as I see argumentativeness as a natural part of the activity and people will be teamed up based on similar interest in sociopolitical issues,

styles of making arguments (positions they like/dislike to run). No [in reference to influential]: I allow or put together teams based on how I see them working, ability to balancing each other, and similar competitive goals.

This coach does not seem to like the information presented, and clearly expressed his or her faith in current partnering techniques for his or her team.

Process over Product. There was one coach who fit into this category, and what he or she wrote in response follows:

I'm not sure I understand this question in regard to my answer of the above. I guess I'm influenced to find people who are willing and able to work together. I'm going to say not so true on my team. My team wants good interpersonal relationships for good partnerships -- I think most of my team feels that collegiate respect is more important than argumentativeness. In fact, thinking about this I will say that the people on my teams hate argumentativeness in their partnerships -- that is the number one reason they ask for coach intervention in partnerships.

This coach is clearly in tune with the needs and desires of his or her team. This coach is concerned with the process on his or her team beyond just the competitive aspect of debate. He or she sees the big picture including the interpersonal aspects of relationships on his or her forensic team.

Suspect Data. There were three coaches who fit into this category. The first wrote, "I would have to see how they defined 'argumentativeness' before I make a decision regarding this information. It's unlikely [to be influential]. Again, it would depend on how they have defined the word, but I always believe in striking a balance." This coach does not want to allow the information to influence his or her decisions because it is not understandable. Along this reasoning, a second coach wrote:

I am not informed on the correlations in the study, therefore it is irrelevant in it current brief statement. I would have to see how competitiveness is operationalized. I have known some students who do not like argumentativeness in their partners (when aimed at

them). Not really [influential]- I would have to understand why complete relational satisfaction is a higher value than my coaching values.

This coach is allowing for the possibility that the information is important or useful, but as it is presented it is unclear, so he or she finds his or her current practices to be preferable. In agreement, a final coach wrote simply, “The information as stated is unclear and I do not understand it.”

Other. There were two coaches who fit into this category. One wrote, “Not important,” and the other, “Not at all.” These coaches gave no specific reason, but clearly did not find the information to be helpful in the least.

Maybe Influential. There were four coaches who fit into this group. Their reasons for not being influenced by the data fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, and suspect data.

Coach Knows Best. There was one coach who fit into this category, and he or she wrote, “It would mean a lot more to me if I knew how these concepts were operationalized in the research. I would rather not choose to partner debaters.” Though the coach began his or her answer by critiquing the data, the end of the answer reveals that the coach has faith in his or her own practices over any new data.

Process over Product. There was one coach who fit into this category, and he or she responded, “It is important only to the extent that these traits, if present, can be joined in a cooperative spirit that allows for respect among each partner with the other. Potentially [influential] . . . not definitively as a major factor.” This coach is only interested in incorporating the information into his or her coaching practices if the information can be used in a process-oriented fashion.

Suspect Data. There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first responded as follows:

I'm not sure what "argumentativeness" means, nor what "competitive relational satisfaction" means, so I am uncertain how informative/important this information is. If it means that if a debater thinks her partner is good at arguing, that debater will be happier, it seems pretty self-evident. If the partners admire each other's skills, that can be one of the reasons to put them together.

This coach reported that the information might be influential, but he or she does not have access to the definitions of the concepts set forth in the prompt. He or she is quite concerned that the data be perfectly clear before he or she considers allowing the data to influence his or her coaching practices. The other coach in this category wrote:

I find it interesting and consider that to fall into a category of balance—if not chemistry because "chemistry" doesn't always entail peaceful interaction. The "perceived" aspect of this study makes me wonder about a performed argumentativeness, though . . . Possibly [influential]. I can't really say.

This coach also questions the data, but in a different way. Instead of being concerned about the definitions of concepts, he or she is concerned that the research may be dealing with the wrong concepts altogether.

Already Influential. There were five coaches who fit into this group. Their reasons for not being influenced by the data fit into the categories of: coach knows best and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were four coaches who fit into this category. The first responded this way:

To me, this relates to the issue of compatibility of styles, which is part of what I already consider. It agrees with what I have observed - that debaters who are very competitive dislike being paired with those they perceive as being less self-assured or competitive. Compatibility in terms of personality and style is already part of what I consider first. (The other area in which this really manifests is in prepping together.)



This coach expressed that he or she already knew this information from experience and that he or she is already acting in the best interest of his or her team. Another coach in this category wrote, “I suppose that I always assumed this to be the case. So it doesn’t make much difference. I probably take it into consideration already, though perhaps not with those particular words in mind.” Without much explanation two other coaches expressed that they know what is best for their teams. One wrote the reason that this data is already influential to him or her is because, “I already thought this was the case,” and the other wrote, “This is similar to what I would suspect.”

Other. One coach fit into this category by simply writing, “Interesting.” He or she indicated that this information is already influential on the team, but offered no specific reason as to why.

#### High Verbal Aggressiveness Predicts Low Competitive Relational Satisfaction

In response to the question, “In the same quantitative study, researchers found that high levels of verbal aggressiveness and perceived partner verbal aggressiveness predict low levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships. How informative and/or important do you find this information?,” and the follow-up, “Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?,” coaches wrote a variety of answers. These answers fell into the following categories: influential, not influential, maybe influential, and already influential. The interpretations or reasons for these answers fell into the following emergent categories: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other. Results are reported in table 6.

Influential. There was one coach who fit into this group, and his or her answer also fit into the coach knows best category. He or she responded, “I would expect as much . . . verbal aggressiveness is too easily seen as disrespectful . . . takes listening and cooperativeness too far

out of the equation when partners are working together.” This coach is concerned with the issues raised in the prompt, and believes that he or she knows in regard to this information what is best for his or her team.

Not Influential. There were eight coaches whose responses fit into this group. Their responses fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were three coaches who fit into this category. The first responded as follows:

My initial reaction would be the assumption that perceptions of verbal aggressiveness are often relative to one’s position (i.e. a debater with a verbally aggressive partner who typically shares the same point of view would perceive a lower level of verbal aggressiveness than if the person predominantly had dissimilar points of view – with all things equal). This information would not play a significant role in my decision making process, primarily because I try to teach our competitors the difference between aggressiveness and assertiveness – and urge them to adopt an assertive stance. Accordingly, those displaying high levels of verbal aggressiveness typically would not be partnered with another (nor would they travel with the program) and thereby, this data would not have an impact on choosing partnerships.

This coach is expressing his or her knowledge on the subject to assure that he or she knows what is best for the team. The answer defends his or her current coaching practices, which shows that he or she does not need the data. Another coach in this category responded, “Not knowing the differences encoded between argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness, it is hard to say. I would rather not choose to partner debaters.” This coach is illustrating his or her faith in his or her current practices because he or she is committed to not assigning partnerships. A final coach in this category wrote, “I’m not surprised. People who are hard to get along with are no fun to be around. No [not influential], but it does tell me that I won’t allow people to treat their partners

poorly.” This coach is not entirely discounting the importance of the data and simultaneously expressing his or her belief in his or her current coaching practices.

Process over Product. There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first responded, “It is important in the fact debate should be about education not competition.” This coach is stressing the imperative of education and process in forensic competition. The second coach in this category wrote:

Definitely the ones that are good debaters but don’t have their emotions in check, ie, come across as overly aggressive and borderline spiteful and condescending, so not do well. They may break into out rounds but will be quickly voted down in Octos or Quarters. The more debaters I have at my disposal the more likely it would but now, with only 4 Open and 4 Novice Debaters, I do not have that option. I prefer to deal with character development and help the one reflect on how they let people get under her skin, how her personality comes across abrasively and crass, and how that is why they lose, not because of their argumentation so much.

This coach is concerned with the process of the holistic process of growth of his or her debaters. He or she is allowing for the possibility that this information may one day be helpful, but this coach has a great understanding of where his or her team is currently in the process of forensics.

Table 6

High Verbal Aggressiveness Leads to Low Competitive Relational Satisfaction

Coaches’ Interpretation	Influential	Not Influential	Maybe Influential	Already Influential
Coach Knows Best	1	3	1	4
Process Over Product	0	2	1	1
Suspect Data	0	2	1	1
Other	0	1	1	3

Suspect Data. There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first wrote, “Again, not enough information here to provide clear information.” This coach does not want to incorporate the information from the prompt into his or her coaching practices unless the information is more clear. The second coach in this category wrote:

What does this mean? What is the context? How are the terms being identified/defined? Terms need to be defined. People do not want to argue every time after a round. However, each debater has a different way of viewing the debate and arguments between partners will occur. No [not influential]: I avoid people being teamed if they are constantly in-fighting.

This coach rejected the data because he or she felt that it was unclear.

Other. There was one coach in this category who simply wrote, “Not at all.” Instead of a specific reason, this person simply stated that the data was not helpful.

Maybe Influential. There were four coaches whose responses fit into this group. Their responses fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote as follows:

This also bears out my own observations - students who are verbally aggressive generally seem to be dissatisfied with everything around them - their partners, their coaches, their classes, and so on. Maybe [influential] - it would certainly make me think about whether a potential partner could withstand a very verbally aggressive person.

This coach expresses a faith in his or her own abilities and shows that he or she has observed similar behaviors as reported by the data from the prompt.

Process over Product. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote as follows:

This one is a bit more clear. I'd say that this more informative because people often equate verbal aggressiveness with skill in argumentation, when that's not the case. Seeing actual research that will back up that this trait is not necessarily a positive one is nice. It

could influence the way that I make suggestions for partnerships, but as with any of our teams, I wouldn't make absolute decisions based on this or any other information.

This coach agrees that the information may be valid, but sees it as only a piece of a much larger process.

Suspect Data. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she responded as follows:

It would be more helpful if I knew whether you were referring to one or both partners. In finding complimenting partnerships I tend to try to balance teams with one partner being more verbally aggressive than the other. One stirs things up and the other is adept at smoothing the waters, ideally.

This coach is not discrediting the data entirely, but wants more information before deciding whether it should or should not influence his or her coaching practices.

Other. There was one coach who fit into this category, who simply responded, "Interesting." This coach said that he or she might be influenced by the information in the prompt, but gave no reason as to why or why not.

Already Influential. There were nine coaches whose responses fit into this group. Their responses fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were four coaches who fit into this category. The first wrote the following:

It seems obvious that if you are interpersonally involved with a jerk you would like it less regardless of context. Infante clarifies this type of destructive argumentation in his book "arguing constructively" I already cover this information with all of my debaters in hopes they will be kind to each other. I already put destructive debaters with other debaters who can take their abrasiveness.

This coach is intent on demonstrating his or her mastery of these concepts. This answer illustrates that he or she feels that he or she is doing what is best for the team. Another coach, in agreement, responded:

Well, that frankly matches up with what I already see. Kids who are verbally aggressive are hard to partner; they are also typically the most picky and so they wind up getting a low preferred partner—sometimes, the only person willing to debate with them. It basically already does but no, it will not change the way I do partners.

Like the first coach in this category, this coach is describing his or her understanding of the concepts and his or her faith that he or she is acting in the best interest of the team already. Along this line, another coach simply wrote, “I thought this was true without the study. It already does [influence].” This sentiment was also shown in the final coach’s response in this category: “I agree that there can be problems with highly aggressive people in partnerships and I pay more attention to aggressive team members to stop any problems before they escalate. It influences my decisions now.” This coach is expressing that he or she already knows about these concepts and trusts him or herself to deal with these issues.

Process over Product. There was one coach in this category. He or she responded as follows:

I think this is significant. I coach at a fairly conservative religiously affiliated liberal arts university; I find that the females on my team think the males are more aggressive toward them, and that they don't like it. I also find that the males on the team (the more assertive ones) find the females less qualified (co-related to their lack of aggressiveness I feel). I think I try to put the stronger females with the stronger males so that they (the females) are better able to fend for themselves.

This coach is more concerned about the big-picture and entire process than the minute details when it comes to debate partnerships.

Suspect Data. There was one coach in this category. He or she responded to this prompt this way: “Same comment regarding the meanings of these terms. I suppose if a debater thinks his partner is an uncivil jerk, he will not enjoy being partnered with that partner. We do not tolerate uncivil debaters on our team.” This coach was not willing to discredit the data entirely, but was concerned that the information was unclear.

Other. There were three coaches in this category. One wrote, “I already thought this was the case.” Another coach responded, “This is similar to what I would suspect.” The final coach in this category responded, “This is very informative, but not surprising.” These coaches said that the information in this prompt already influences their coaching practices, but gave no specific reason as to why.

#### Congruent Argumentativeness and Incongruent Verbal Aggressiveness Equals Relational Satisfaction

In response to the question, “In the same quantitative study, researchers found that similar levels of argumentativeness and dissimilar levels of verbal aggressiveness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships. How informative and/or important do you find this information?” and the follow-up, “Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?,” coaches wrote a variety of answers. These answers fell into the following categories: influential, not influential, maybe influential, and already influential. The coaches’ interpretations or reasons for these answers fell into the following emergent categories: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other. Results are reported in table 7.

Influential. There were three coaches who reported that the information in this prompt was influential to them. Their reasons for this fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, and other.

Table 7

Congruent Argumentativeness and Incongruent Verbal Aggressiveness Leads to High Competitive Relational Satisfaction

Coaches' Interpretation	Influential	Not Influential	Maybe Influential	Already Influential
Coach Knows Best	1	2	0	2
Process Over Product	1	0	1	1
Suspect Data	0	4	1	0
Other	1	4	1	3

Coach Knows Best. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote, “Again--I would have expected as much and have coached based on this potential.” This answer reveals that the coach has faith in his or her own knowledge and experience to make the best decisions for his or her forensic team.

Process over Product. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote, “This data would be useful to the same extent as the data about levels of argumentativeness (as that would be the only portion of relevance for our situation). For the aforementioned reasons, only the first portion of this data would be relevant.” This coach is not discounting the data completely, but expressing that it is only a piece of a much larger process.

Other. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote, “It is helpful.” Though the coach expressed that the information in the prompt would be influential on his or her practices, there was no specific reason given.



Not Influential. There were 10 coaches who reported that the information in this prompt was influential to them. There reasons for this fit into the categories of: coach knows best, suspect data, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were two coaches in this category. One wrote, “Not surprising; debaters with similar approaches probably appreciate each other. Not much [influence]. Whether or not similar debaters or complementary debaters make better teams is probably determined by other factors.” This coach expressed that he or she already understands the information and is acting in the best interest of his or her team. The other coach in this category responded, “Not knowing the differences encoded between argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness, it is hard to say. I would rather not choose to partner debaters.” Though he or she is expressing dissatisfaction with the way the data is presented, it seems that this coach is even more concerned with keeping his or her debate coaching practices the same as they are now.

Suspect Data. There were four coaches in this category. The first coach in this category responded as follows:

Again, interesting but that’s it. Frankly, this appears to assume the two partners want equal amounts of argumentativeness. Some kids like a more dominant partner and are unhappy when placed into an “equal” situation. I think these study results are homogenizing kids and so I don’t even really trust these results for any specific, individual decision but then I haven’t seen these results so I am just speculating.

Instead of considering the information in the prompt, this coach expressed that the data was likely collected or analyzed in an insufficient manner. A second coach agreed that the data is suspect:

This contradicts the previous two studies’ claims so, I would have to find this claim illogical and unwarranted based upon its own discoveries and question the entirety of the study. Unless, the argumentativeness is suggested to trump out the verbal aggressiveness, which I would disagree with from my experience with the girl I mentioned above.

Perhaps, if I had more debaters. But, it would be the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> level of consideration. This coach expressed that the entire study that the information in the prompt is based on is likely suspect. A lighter critique came from a third coach: “Synopses provided here are too brief and unexplained to be useful.” This coach is willing to consider the information, but suggests that there is not enough information to consider. The final coach in this category agreed: “As with my above statements, this would depend on the definition of the first term. I’m assuming, though, that this one is fairly obvious. No [not influential], but it might change the way that I hold practice and give advice.” This coach wanted more clearly defined terms.

Other. There were four coaches in this category. One wrote, “Not important.” Another coach responded, “No.” A third coach wrote, “Once again, I am not surprised.” The final coach in this category responded, “Not at all.” Though these coaches expressed that the information in the prompt would not be influential on their coaching practices, there were no specific reasons given.

Maybe Influential. There were three coaches who reported that the information in this prompt was influential to them. There reasons for this fit into the categories of: process over product, suspect data, and other.

Process over Product. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote, “This too makes sense, as it would correlate to partner satisfaction (My partner gets it, or is like me . . .) but I would love to see if that correlates to higher levels of success. I still think a balance of complimenting levels of verbal aggressiveness is ideal.” This coach is interested in the bigger picture, and discovering what this data could relate to.

Suspect Data. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote, “Again, interesting. But, this doesn’t tell me much about the concept of “respect” between partners.

That, to me, is what is key. I can't say [if it is influential]." This coach's critique of the data centers on whether the research is centered on the right concepts.

Other. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she wrote, "Interesting." Though the coach expressed that the information in the prompt might be influential on his or her practices, there was no specific reason given.

Already Influential. There were six coaches who reported that the information in this prompt was influential to them. There reasons for this fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first wrote, "I have already observed that like personalities seems to have better relationships. The research would not change current practice." This coach is expressing that his or her expertise in doing what is best for the team comes from his or her experience. The other coach in this category wrote, "I agree. While I don't have high levels of argumentativeness or aggressiveness in most members of my team -- I find that partners who are at equal levels find more satisfaction." Like the aforementioned coach, this person clearly believes in his or her own experience.

Process over Product. There was one respondent in this category, who wrote, "It reinforces my own observations, and also helps to quantify my own sense of what happens in partnerships. It does also give me some helpful data to share with the team members to explain my perspectives on partnerships." This coach expressed that this information already influences his or her practices, but saw a bigger picture and an opportunity to share this information with his or her team as a part of the forensic coaching process.

Other. There were three coaches in this category. One wrote, "I already thought this was the case." Another coach responded, "This is similar to what I would suspect." The final coach

in this category responded, “I think it’s predictable Already does [influence me] to an extent.” Though these coaches expressed that the information in the prompt already influences their coaching practices, there were no specific reasons given.

#### Choice as the Strongest Predictor of High Competitive Relational Satisfaction

In response to the question, “In the same quantitative study, researchers found that the strongest predictor of high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships is debaters choosing their own partner. How informative and/or important do you find this information?,” and the follow-up, “Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?,” coaches wrote a variety of answers. These answers fell into the following categories: influential, not influential, maybe influential, and already influential. The interpretations or reasons coaches gave for these answers fell into the following emergent categories: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other. Results are reported in table 8.

**Influential.** There were six coaches who expressed that the information in this prompt would be influential on their coaching practices. Their responses as to why fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, and other.

**Coach Knows Best.** There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first wrote, “Again--20+ years of experience has helped me to know this.” The second coach in this category wrote, “I see the truth in this -- as stated earlier, unless there is reason for coach intervention -- I let students choose their own partners.” Both of these coaches are expressing their faith and belief in their own abilities to coach their teams well.

**Process over Product.** There were three coaches in this category. The first responded as follows:

It makes perfect sense for those that choose one another in an ideal world, but doesn't help the partner that others don't like. Would this approach say that there is no room on the team for the outcast, or that they must debate NFA LD? I also have noticed much conflict when several partners all want the same team member as their partner, and that partner is often reticent to make a call. So it is helpful in a limited way, and does not work in all situations.

This coach is concerned about a situational and process approach to forensics. The coach agrees that the information may be helpful sometimes, but it is only a small piece. A second coach wrote, "I find this information to be very important. I strongly believe in this principle, which is the reason that my primary concerns (as previously discussed) are the desires of the competitors (within the constraints of team policies)." This coach is also taking into consideration a much larger picture than debate partnerships. This sentiment was echoed in the third coach in this category: "Mostly, but if things are not working well they subtly, or sometimes directly, cry out for intervention so as not to come across confrontationally to the partner they wish to switch from." This response indicates a concern for the whole team and the whole process.

Table 8

Choice Leads to High Competitive Relational Satisfaction

Coaches' Interpretation	Influential	Not Influential	Maybe Influential	Already Influential
Coach Knows Best	2	2	0	2
Process Over Product	3	0	0	3
Suspect Data	0	0	0	1
Other	1	1	2	5

Other. There was one coach in this category who simply wrote, “Very important.” Though this coach expressed that the information in the prompt is influential on their coaching practices, there were no specific reasons given.

Not Influential. There were three coaches who expressed that the information in this prompt would be influential on their coaching practices. Their responses as to why fit into the categories of: coach knows best and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were two coaches who fit into this category. One wrote, “Not knowing the differences encoded between argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness, it is hard to say. I would rather not choose to partner debaters.” This coach is set on his or her current practices. The other coach in this category wrote, “I think it’s interesting but I’m not going to change the way I do things. No. Just because the have relational satisfaction doesn’t mean they will be successful.” This coach also expresses his or her faith in current practices.

Other. There was one coach in this category who simply wrote, “Not at all.” Though this coach expressed that the information in the prompt is not influential on their coaching practices, there were no specific reasons given.

Maybe Influential. There were two coaches who expressed that the information in this prompt might be influential on their coaching practices. Their responses as to why fit into the category of other. One coach wrote, “Interesting,” and the other wrote, “No surprise. Maybe [influential].” Though these coaches agree that the information in the prompt might influence their coaching practices, they gave no specific reason.

Already Influential. There were 11 coaches who expressed that the information in this prompt would be already influences their coaching practices. Their responses as to why fit into the categories of: coach knows best, process over product, suspect data, and other.

Coach Knows Best. There were two coaches who fit into this category. The first wrote, “Okay, again, not surprising although I’m guessing the kids that don’t get picked are going to be unhappy. It does not influence me particularly. My system is similar; it just isn’t a free for all with the kids doing the entire process of choosing partners.” The second coach in this category wrote, “It is exactly what I would expect and is in keeping with the way I currently shape partnership decisions. Not [influential] beyond what I already know/do.” These coaches are clear in their expression of already knowing this information and putting it to use for their forensic teams.

Process over Product. There were three coaches whose responses fit into this category.

The first wrote:

It is informative as to individual partnerships, but doesn't give me a lot to work with in terms of overall team function. I do work hard to meld individual choice with overall team good. The biggest problem I have seen in actual practice is, as I noted above, fairly often I have one person who really wants to debate with another individual who would not even consider them as a partner. It seems to me to avoid hurt feelings and animosity among squad members if I have a system that keeps that kind of hidden under the surface. In my system, the one person doesn't have to deal with outright rejection by their favorite partner - I'm the 'bad guy.'

This coach is expressing a concern for the big picture of the process of forensics. Another coach agreed:

That’s interesting, not surprising. That’s why (as stated above) after season is well underway partnering decisions are not purely coaches’ decisions, but joint debater/coach decisions. When season starts (as stated above) the coach may assign partners for mentoring reasons or to experiment with partner “chemistry.” I don’t anticipate any change. Probably these findings reinforce what we have been doing all along.

This coach expresses a need for the partnering decisions to be on-going, fluid, and viewed as a process rather than as a product. Along this line, a final coach in this category wrote:

As stated earlier people want to feel comfortable and work with others who have similar goals. However, choosing your own partner can cause people to pick similar styles

(speaking, arguments) and thus a team can be deficient and lack success. Reinforces my way of seeing partnerships.

This coach is taking the entire process and the whole team into consideration in this answer.

Suspect Data. There was one coach who fit into this category. He or she responded as follows:

Once again I need to see the operational definition for competitive relational satisfaction. The goal of debate may not be to have this type of satisfaction, but instead debaters may need how to collaborate with other they don't pick. Debaters may have greater relationships if they pick their partners but may not get the maximum effect out of their education. For example, I have known debaters who wanted a certain partner because they had the same substance abuse problem. In this case, having a better relationship with the partner may involve more destructive behavior. This means instead of debate helping the student become a better person, the activity becomes just another context for getting high. It does not change current practices for me.

This coach is concerned about the data being of use because he or she does not have all of the details of the study.

Other. There were five coaches who fit into this category. One wrote, "I already thought this was the case." A second coach responded, "This is similar to what I would suspect."

Another coach wrote, "This is only somewhat informative as we already assumed this information." A third coach responded, "I find this very important, but I might be biased because this is how we currently do things." The final coach in this category wrote, "I generally agree with that statement and all self choice for the most part. (I reserve the right to veto as mentioned before but I typically don't)." Though these coaches agree that the information in the prompt already influences their coaching practices, they gave no specific reason.

### Importance of Ethics

In response to the question, "How important are ethics to you as a forensic coach?," coaches wrote a variety of answers. These answers fell into the categories of most important,



important, and unimportant. The reasons behind these answers fell into the categories of: defensive, example, and no explanation. Results are reported in table 9.

Most Important. There were 15 coaches who reported that ethics are of the utmost importance. The reasons behind this fell into the categories of: defensive, example, and no explanation.

Defensive. There was one coach who wrote a defensive reason as to why ethics are of the utmost importance on his or her forensic team. This coach wrote, "Very, very important. If this is not the case, the program should go out of existence." This coach is defending that ethics should be the most important value by attacking anyone who does not agree with his or her perspective.

Example. There were three coaches who gave examples as reasons for holding ethics as the most important value on their forensic team. The first responded, "Extremely so - for example, I have taken a very strong line on issues like not allowing students to carry pre-flowed materials into rounds (even when it seemed that many other students around them were getting away with it)." This coach gave the example of the norm of rejecting case briefs as an ethical dilemma. The second coach in this category wrote, "Extremely, we are teaching life skills not just game skills. Color me deontological rather than utilitarian here. This area should not be impacted by ones drive to succeed." This person gave the example of the far-reaching life skills that forensic participation can contribute to as a reason for valuing ethics. The final coach in this category responded as follows:

Very. While we encourage significant preparation in terms of write-ups and general familiarity with important world organizations and events, I highly disapprove of canned cases and I find it detrimental to the extemporaneous nature of the activity. I also find making up information to support a case highly suspect.

This coach gave the example of lying as a reason to instill high ethical standards in his or her students.

No Explanation. There were 11 coaches who reported that ethics were the most important value without providing a reason why. One coach wrote, "It is a primary value." Two other coaches wrote, "Extremely." Another coach wrote, "Extremely important. Critically so." Another coach responded, "Extremely important. The first thing." Another coach wrote, "Crucial." Another coach responded, "Probably the most important value." Another coach agreed, "A primary value." Another coach wrote, "Ethics are extremely important." Another coach responded, "The most important thing." The final coach in this category wrote, "Very important!" These coaches expressed that ethics are of the utmost importance but gave no specific reason as to why.

Important. There were five coaches who reported that ethics are important. Their reasons for this fell into the categories of example and no explanation.

Example. There were two coaches who gave examples as to why they find ethics important. The first wrote, "Ethics are one of the things that our activity can teach that can be directly applied in any endeavor that the student pursues in their lives. To that extent, high ethical standards are of importance to me." This coach gave the example of the life skills that students can garner from forensics as the reason why ethics are important to his or her coaching. The other coach in this category responded, "Ethics are important to me, that's why I generally refrain from forcing partner pairings on my students." This coach gave an example of a coaching practice as to why ethics are important.

No Explanation. There were three coaches who gave no explanation as to why ethics are important to them. The first wrote, “Important.” Another coach responded, “It is important.” The final coach in this group wrote, “Significantly important.”

Unimportant. There were two coaches who reported that ethics are unimportant, both of which offered defensive reasons as to why they feel this way. The first in this group responded as follows:

Depends on each situation and needs to be more specific. Overall, yes, but in instances where my debaters clearly come across teams with canned cases and off case arguments I tell them, for survival purposes, to “when in Rome,” but we only do this with teams who are clearly doing so and not with teams who are not.

This coach is defending the practices which his or her debaters engage in which he or she views as ethical grey area. The other coach in this group wrote, “It is a part of being a leader/coach of a team to help instill them but they are not my highest priority. Students know generally what is right/wrong in life. When it comes to forensics I guide them to specific instances.” This coach is defending his or her current practices by explaining that he does not see ethics as his or her responsibility to instill in his or her students.

Table 9

Importance of Ethics in Forensics

Level of Importance	Defensive	Example	No Explanation
Most Important	1	3	11
Important	0	2	3
Unimportant	2	0	0

Importance of Competitive Success

In response to the question, “How important to you is competitive success as a forensic coach?,” coaches wrote a variety of answers. These answers fell into the categories of most

important, important, and unimportant. The reasons behind these answers fell into the categories of: defensive, example, and no explanation. Results are reported in table 10.

Most Important. There were six coaches who reported that competitive success is of the utmost importance. The reasons for these answers fell into the categories of defensive, example, and no explanation.

Defensive. There was one coach who provided defensive reasons as to why they find competitive success to be of the utmost importance. This coach responded as follows:

It's very important in terms of the continuation of the program, since I have to "market" us to my administration and local alumni supporters. I am very up-front about this with the members of the team when I have to make choices based upon what I perceive as the probability of our success (choosing partnerships, tournaments to attend, etc.)

This coach is defending his or her reason for valuing competitive success in terms of prolonging the existence of his or her forensic program.

Table 10

Importance of Competitive Success in Forensics

Level of Importance	Defensive	Example	No Explanation
Most Important	1	2	3
Important	6	2	4
Unimportant	1	2	1

Example. There were two coaches who provided examples to back up finding competitive success to be of the utmost importance. The first coach in this category responded as follows:

Competitive success is important for a few reasons: 1) For the student-It often provides a reward for the student, and can become a motivating factor; 2) For the team-It can become a method for enhancing / promoting teamwork (doing your best to help out your teammates); 3) For the administration-It is a method of promoting the program and establishing easy to quantify benchmarks.

This coach provided a series of examples when competitive success becomes important to the survival of his or her forensic team. The other coach in this group wrote:

Very important. It provides a measure of respect for the program and allows us an opportunity to inform the school that we represent the school well. It is also a measure, albeit an imperfect one, of student improvement or success, and provides motivation for improved student performance.

This coach provided the examples of the survival of the program and a measure of student growth for reasons as to why competitive success should be considered of the utmost importance.

No Explanation. There were three coaches who reported that competitive success was of the utmost importance without giving reasons as to why they feel this way. The first coach in this group wrote, "It is a primary value." Another coach responded, "More important [than ethics]." The final coach in this category responded, "Highly." These coaches expressed that competitive success is of the utmost importance but gave no specific reason as to why.

Important. There were 12 coaches who reported that competitive success is of importance. The reasons for these answers fell into the categories of defensive, example, and no explanation.

Defensive. There were six coaches who provided defensive reasons as to why they find competitive success to be important. The first wrote, "I see victory in more than just trophies. That said, I do love to win. In fact, in order to prove the 'value' of our team, trophies are pretty essential." This coach felt it necessary to define victory more broadly than competitive success in order to defend his or her answer. Another coach wrote, "I would be lying if I said it wasn't important. It is after all a competitive activity. However, I do not use competitive success as the only way to monitor my students' success. Seeing the students' growth is more important than competitive success." This coach felt the need to place something above competitive success in

order to defend his or her value of competitive success. A third coach in this group responded, “Competitive success is important, but not at the expense of relationships or ethics.” This coach defended his or her answer by assuring that competitive success was not his or her most closely held value. Another coach responded as follows:

Since our team is only in its second year, not much, but as we progress it will become much more important. Winning keeps the administration happy, makes recruitment and retention for the team better, and boosts general morale. I don't mind losing when we are clearly beaten but get irked/vexed when we illegitimately lose due to inexperienced or biased judges. WKU's tournament was so saturated with WKU members that 13 of 16 Octos teams in Open were from WKU debate, which is highly suspect.

This coach explained that competitive success was important and was defensive about his or her team's losses. Another coach wrote, “Important, but at a secondary level.” This coach defended his or her answer by writing that competitive success would not trump other values. The final coach in this category responded, “Relatively...not at the expense of engaging all comers or shortcutting learning.” Like other coaches in this category, this coach defended his or her answer by placing other values above competitive success.

Example. There were two coaches who gave examples as reasons that competitive success is important to them. The first coach in this group wrote, “Important but less important than say ethics, education, and interpersonal successes. Forensics, to me, is a tool that prepares for future life, winning in forensics is only part of the equation. Don't get me wrong -- I accept every win the team gets:).” This coach is explaining the example of real life as to how competitive success is a part, and an important part, of the big picture. The other coach in this group responded as follows:

Besides learning how to express oneself and improve certain skills, competitive success plays a motivational factor in how a student/team does. If one is not pushing themselves to achieve success in the events, attitude tends to suffer. However, competitive success can and should be defined by the coach and the individual.

This coach explained the example of motivation as a reason that competitive success is important and also brought his or her explanation back to the big picture by explaining that the coach and student should define what competitive success means for them.

No explanation. There were four coaches who reported that competitive success is important without giving reasons as to why they feel this way. The first coach in this group wrote, "It is important." Two coaches responded, "Somewhat." The final coach in this category responded, "Moderately important." These coaches expressed that competitive success is important but gave no specific reason as to why.

Unimportant. There were four coaches who reported that competitive success is unimportant. The reasons for these answers fell into the categories of defensive, example, and no explanation.

Defensive. There was one coach who gave a defensive reason for finding competitive success to be unimportant. He or she responded as follows:

Honestly, it's not very important at all. Of course, I'm proud of my debaters when they do break or win a speaker award, but if they come out of a tournament feeling that they've learned something, improved in some aspect of their debate skills, or simply did their best, I'm happy.

This coach defended his or her reason by explaining that though he or she finds competitive success to be unimportant, he or she will still celebrate victory with the team.

Example. There were two coaches who provided examples as reasons for finding competitive success unimportant, the first of which wrote the following:

It's fun and when achieved we exploit it heavily for purposes of promoting our program, but whether or not we achieve competitive success, it is far less important than the educational value of our program. We are fortunate in that everyone involved in our program, including the administrators who support it, understand that.

This coach gave the example of education as a reason for competitive success being unimportant. The other coach in this category wrote, “Not very important. Someone has to go home without trophies. But everyone can learn and have fun.” This coach gave the example of losing as a reason to find competitive success unimportant.

No Explanation. There was one coach who gave no explanation as to why he or she feels competitive success is unimportant, and he or she simply wrote, “Not very important.”

### Balancing Ethics and Competitive Success

In response to the question, “What do you do (if anything) to balance the values of competitive success and ethics on your forensic team?,” coaches wrote a variety of answers. The answers fell into the categories of ethics first, education first, and no balance required. The reasons described behind these fell into the categories of: integration, segregation, and no explanation. Results are reported in table 11.

Table 11

#### Balancing Ethics and Competitive Success in Forensics

Way to Balance	Integration	Segregation	No Explanation
Ethics First	2	5	1
Education First	2	3	0
No Balance Required	2	2	3

Ethics First. There were eight coaches who fell into the ethics first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success in forensics. Their reasons for this perspective fell into the categories of: integration, segregation, and no explanation.



Integration. There were two coaches who reported integration as the reason or explanation behind their ethics first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in forensics. The first coach in this category responded as follows:

Ethics comes first but I can't really think of anyway that interferes with competitive success. I suppose kids could make up cards to read and win more but there is no way I would let that happen (and frankly, it would be found out and that will kill our competitiveness). For me, ethics is more about treating each other with respect and care rather than debating expectations. Debate has basic rules, follow them and you are set.

This coach explained that though ethics is his or her first priority, that ethics are integrated with competitive success, because these concepts are not in conflict. The other coach in this category wrote:

We operate ethically when those around us do. At Hillsdale, Marquette, Webster, Loyola, Perdue, NIU, and such, we hold ethics highly because those tournaments' participants do but when we go to TSU or WKU, not so much. I tell the debaters to adjust no matter it going against our normal practices but, refreshingly, they are still pure and choose not to. They have yet to learn the pure and idealistic get trampled over but the opposites because they lack real life and workforce experience. I don't tell them about that until a situation arises where they need to know that after graduation, when applying for jobs and such.

This coach explained that there is an integrated approach to the goals on his or her team.

Thought ethics are the first priority, there is a need to integrate that priority with the priority of competitive success.

Segregation. There were five coaches who reported segregation as the reason or explanation behind their ethics first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in forensics. The first coach in this category responded, "We monitor the content and actions of our team, and are always discussing ethics within forensics." This coach explained that ethics are held as most important, and feels the need to monitor his or her team to make sure that no other values trump ethical practices. A second coach in this category wrote:

This is a long list. I have discussions on ethics throughout the year. We discuss the unethical practices of other squads. I correct unethical behavior on the spot. I have

suspended and kicked-off students who have habitual violations. I try to live an ethical life with honesty. I have researched ethics and presented papers at convention (one to be published). I have other coaches on my team model ethics. I have had extensive discourse with debaters and coaches from other teams. I have made comments on ballots about unethical behavior. I have made entries on net-benefits on ethics.

This coach clearly sees ethics as in-conflict, or segregated from other values, and strives through his or her actions to hold ethics in the highest regard. A third coach wrote:

We emphasize that learning is winning. We travel all students regardless of competitive success . . . we ask for a certain level of preparedness they must meet. We engage discussions about the differences between coach and teacher and why we are educators first and coaches second. We also engage discussions about ethics and discuss infractions we see with other programs.

This coach sees that ethics and competitive success are conflicting goals and provides his or her team with examples of what he or she deems to be unethical. Another coach provided a list of things he or she does to place ethics first:

- (1) encourage risk-taking even if it may not lead to predictable success,
- (2) consistently stress in all comments the importance of ethics over success
- (3) refuse to sanction or support any unethical options/decisions
- (4) support my debaters for efforts invested far beyond success achieved
- (5) stress the primacy of at-home values and goals over and above at-tournament "wins"

This coach engages in a variety of actions to encourage ethics to be held above other values. The final coach in this category wrote, "We talk about success in many terms other than competition. Ethics is always number one." This coach, like the other coaches in this group views ethics as segregated from other values and stresses to his or her team that it should be the most important value.

No Explanation. There was one coach who reported no explanation behind their ethics first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in forensics. He or she wrote, "I think everyone is clear that ethics come before success."

Education First. There were five coaches who fell into the education first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success in forensics. Their reasons for this perspective fell into the categories of: integration and segregation.

Integration. There were two coaches who reported integration as the reason or explanation behind their education first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in forensics. The first coach in this category responded, “I try to instill a pride in my students for the way they play the game, not just whether or not they win.” This coach focuses on the educational process, integrating ethics and competitive success. A second coach wrote, “If I place education and personal growth above competition, competitive success will happen in the end 90% of the time.” This coach places education first, but believes that education will beget competitive success.

Segregation. There were three coaches who reported integration as the reason or explanation behind their ethics first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in forensics. The first coach in this category responded as follows:

This is why we have switched to WUDC debating. We find it much more educationally valuable, despite smaller chances of gaining competitive awards. NPDA has been becoming more specialized and "CEDA-fied" for years. The public debate orientation of worlds debating, and international focus, is much more valid pedagogically.

This coach is so concerned about placing education first that he or she has moved on to another format of debate, which he or she believes is more educationally sound. Another coach wrote, “I focus more on how my students are doing in terms of individual growth. If they’re growing and improving then they are becoming more competitive. But the effort involved and the rules they have to follow are ethical not competitive considerations.” This coach is interested in the holistic educational growth of his or her students. The final coach in this category responded:

I make them do their own research. In prep time I make them come up with their own cases -- I am there to "coach" answer questions -- maybe point out weaknesses in their argumentation -- make suggestions. Win they win, it's because they did the work, not because I gave them a case and I'm smarter than the other team. I think it is unethical for coaches or grad assistants to just lay out a winning case that involves no or limited involvement from the student themselves.

This coach offered examples of how he or she upholds education first.

No Balance Required. There were seven coaches who fell into the no balance required perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success in forensics. Their reasons for this perspective fell into the categories of: integration, segregation, and no explanation.

Integration. There were two coaches who reported integration as the reason or explanation behind their ethics first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in forensics. The first coach in this category wrote, "We do not view them as requiring balance—as if one must be sacrificed to achieve the other. We hope and expect that everyone on the team understands this. (Frankly, I wonder about the professionalism of any coach who answers this question as you asked it.)" This coach believes that there is no balance required and that these concepts should be integrated so strongly that he or she is chastising other coaches for disagreeing. The second coach in this category responded, "We encourage hard work and a work ethic to pursue success, but insist upon a foundational rock of ethical pursuits of success." This coach clearly values both ethics and competitive success, and works to integrate these concepts on his or her team. Another coach responded, "I teach students well and coach them to be honest and hard working. Students with that focus end up winning at tournaments." This coach trust him or herself to do what is best for the team when it comes to balancing and integrating these values.

Segregation. There were two coaches who reported integration as the reason or explanation behind their ethics first perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in forensics. The first coach in this category responded as follows:

There's no balance in the sense that one gives way to the other. Ethics is absolutely important and should never give way to allow for a team to win. I try to enforce this on my own team as well as in the tournaments that I judge at. If we reach the point where the standard is teams acting unethically in order to win, I'll give up on the activity altogether.

This coach sees that ethics and competitive success are separate, or segregated issues, but sees no reason to attempt to balance these issues. Another coach reported:

For our program, there is not a balance. We have a multi-page document detailing ethical practices that every competitor is introduced to on their first day with the team, and that introduction is coupled with an explanation of our zero-tolerance policy. While the document details things ranging from fabrication or distortion of evidence to ad hominem attacks, it is not exhaustive of all possible ethical dilemmas (though it establishes a framework and when coupled with regular discussions a relatively complete picture is formed). As our team members learn from their first day in the program – 1 violation of these ethical practices will get you removed from the team (regardless of one's competitive value to the program). Fortunately, I have only had to remove a couple of people for this type of a violation – but those removed have ranged from limited competitive success to one of our top competitors.

This coach agrees that ethics and competitive success are separate issues, but has a written document in place so that there is no need for him or her to address balancing these concepts on his or her team. The final coach in this group responded:

I push my students to strive to be the best, ethics is just a part of it. This question assumes ethics is not a part ones' competitive success or that people intentionally look to violate the rules. If someone is doing something extremely offensive then I stop the action. However, there needs to be a balance between "rules" of forensics and its "norms" and how this changes from team to team.

This coach sees no need to balance the concepts. He or she sees these concepts as separate but ethics, in his or her opinion, is not the central value in forensics.

No Explanation. There were three coaches who reported no explanation behind their no balance required perspective on balancing ethics and competitive success perspective in

forensics. The first coach wrote, “I don’t see these as in conflict.” The second coach responded, “This is not an issue.” The final coach in this category wrote, “If a team went to all their rounds, they have had a good tournament. If they won some rounds, that’s even better. If they broke, I’m ecstatic.” Though these coaches agree that there is no balance needed between ethics and competitive success, they gave no reason behind this perspective.

#### Role of the Director of Forensics

The final item on the coach survey asked respondents to rank the following in the order of importance as you see their role as a forensic coach: Leader, Pedagogue, and Ethicist (1=most important, 3=least important).

Table 12

#### Role of the Director of Forensics

Role	First	Second	Third
Leader	9	5	8
Pedagogue	11	8	3
Ethicist	2	9	11

Each coach reported his or her answers, which are shown in table 12. Overall, most coaches reported viewing their role as a director of forensics as a pedagogue first and ethicist last. Most respondents did not see themselves as an ethicist first or a pedagogue last, and there was significant disagreement on where the priority of leader fell. Further for this item on the survey, in order to test for statistically significant rank orderings among the coaches, I ran a Kendall’s W coefficient of concordance analysis. This is a nonparametric statistic that reveals if there is an underlying common preference in ranking each of the debate coaching roles. The Kendall’s W coefficient of concordance was not significant (Kendall’s W (2) = .11, p = .094).

Therefore, this means that the coaches were equally likely to rank any of the roles as the most important. Given that I only surveyed 22 coaches, the preference did approach statistical significance. A larger sample of coaches may reveal statistically significant preferences. While this was not particularly statistically significant, it further makes the point that the director of forensics is a complex role. These coaches as a group realize that all of these sub-roles are of importance for the director of forensics. Results are reported in table 12.

## Discussion

### Demographics

There were 22 coaches who completed my survey, most of which were directors and in charge of the debate partnerships on their teams. Though this may seem like a small number of coaches, it is a representative number considering the number of students who filled out the quantitative survey for the data reported in chapter three. There were 151 students who filled out the quantitative survey, which means that there were 6.86 students to each coach in this project overall, which is a good ratio, considering that there are usually more than seven students on an intercollegiate forensic team.

### Team Values

Of the team values that coaches reported, there was significant agreement overall that education comes first, interpersonal skills come second, and competitive success comes third. Interestingly, the least reported team value by coaches was ethics. This seems to conflict with the overwhelming body of forensic research which suggests that ethics are at the center of concern for forensic scholars and practitioners alike (e. g. Cronn-Mills, 2000; Cronn-Mills & Golden, 1997; Endres, 1988; Frank, 1983; Friedley, 1983; Gaskill, 1998; Green, 1988; Grisez,

1965; Hanson, 1986; Kuster, 1998; Lewis, 1988; Littlefield, 1986; Pratt, 1998; Rice & Mummert, 2001; Rosenthal, 1985; Sanders, 1966; Stewart, 1986; Swift, 2006; Swift, 2006-07; Swift & Rybold, 2007; Thomas, 1983; Thomas & Hart, 1983; VerLinden, 1997). This disparity between existing studies and the reports in the present study by coaches may be due to the fact that forensic coaches see ethics as embedded within the values of education, interpersonal skills, and competitive success, or perhaps coaches focus more on rules and norms. In any case, the values reported by coaches in this study reveal a concern for students which places student learning and growth, academically and interpersonally above competitive success, which is one way that coaches have justified their forensic programs to administrations. Regarding education, Dewey (1997) outlined the three genres of subject matter: performance-based, acquiring knowledge, and disciplinary. Forensic education is particularly challenging because it quite clearly spans all three of these genres. “The ideal of the product, as against that of the process by which the product is attained, shows itself in both instruction and moral discipline” (Emphasis in original, p. 53). Directors of forensics and students alike are constantly faced with deciding what their motivation for forensic involvement is. The product aim that Dewey was referring to would coincide with those involved in forensics for the trophies or competitive success and the process he referred to would coincide with aiming for rhetorical training or simply playing the intellectual game of forensics. Coaches have influence on their students beyond their forensic skill level, and the fact that these particular forensic coaches are aware of and focused on this is encouraging for students. Future studies could question coaches’ definitions of the aforementioned concepts, to determine whether coaches agree on definitions and whether there is any overlap between these concepts in the minds of coaches.



## Things to Consider for NPDA Partnerships

The coaches in this study, as a whole, reported that the first thing they consider for NPDA debate partnerships is compatibility, the second is skill level, and the third is potential for competitive success. This logically follows from the team values reported by coaches. If coaches are truly concerned with their students' education and interpersonal skills before their students' competitive success, it makes sense that coaches would consider their students' compatibility and skill level before their potential for competitive success. Interestingly, very few coaches reported student choice as a factor for determining debate partnerships. This may be due to the fact that coaches trust themselves to do what is best for their forensic teams, which seems true from later items reported in this particular survey as well as many of the themes I discovered in my thesis work (Swift, 2006). Debate coaches are required explicitly to train critical thinking, and the best do so in a similar fashion to what Dewey described. Dewey (1997) explained that humans are separated from animals largely because of thought. Because of the ability to think, humans can use things in the present as representatives/representations of the past and the future. These symbols of past outcomes and possible future consequences enable humans to draw reasonable conclusions, using inferences, even when not all of the facts are known. Dewey (1997) applied this principle directly to education:

While it is not the business of education to prove every statement made, any more than to teach every possible item of information, it is its business to cultivate deep-seated and effective habits of discriminating tested beliefs from mere assertions, guesses, and opinions; to develop a lively, sincere, and open-minded preference for conclusions that are properly grounded, and to ingrain into the individual's working habits methods of inquiry and reasoning appropriate to the various problems that present themselves. (p. 28).

Debate is a method of training thought. The activity enables students to practice the weighing of link, brink, and impact of proposed action. Each round of debate serves as practice in the

hypothetical and theoretical realm, so that students will eventually be prepared to apply their skills in the real world. Directors of forensics train their students both debate skills as well as ethics through debate coaching. Future studies could go deeper into these concepts to determine whether coaches agree on what these things mean and whether they see interactions between these considerations.

#### Allowing NPDA Debaters to Choose Partnerships?

Most coaches in this study reported allowing their students to choose their debate partner or allowing for a collaborative effort on the matter. The reasons for this varied from coach knows best, student freedom, and process over product. These coaches viewed the partner selection process as a pedagogical opportunity. Even the coaches who reported knowing what is best for their team reported this from what seemed like a student-centered approach. Coaches wanted their students to have the best experience possible with their debate partner, and the student choice or negotiated process was what the coaches determined was the best approach for achieving this outcome. This approach supports existing literature on team leadership and participatory decision-making (e. g. Ables & Bosworth, 2004; Barrett, 1987; Bettenhausen, 1991; Galagan, 1988; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 2001; Jessup, 1990; Kinnick & Parton, 2005; Kolb, 1996; Kolb, 1998; Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001; McDonald, 2001; Vickrey, 1968). Leaders have more highly effective organizations when they delegate responsibilities, involve team leadership, and allow for participatory decision-making. The coaches who reported disallowing their students to select their own NPDA debate partners, however, seemed to have their students' best interests at heart as well. They reported selecting partners for their students in order to avoid hurt feelings and in-fighting. Either approach, as described by this particular sample, came from an ethically and pedagogically motivated reason. Directors of forensics must

train their debaters in beginning stages primarily in the realm of the logical, so that they may have an understanding of what to do. However, as the students progress, the director of forensics may shift to encompassing the psychological as well, so that debaters may develop their own individual voice for advocacy as well rounded democratic citizens. “The aim of education is precisely to develop intelligence of this independent and effective type—a disciplined mind” (Dewey, 1997, p. 63). The most disciplined mind encompasses more than one subject or another. Instead, the disciplined mind has the capability to utilize strategies learned and apply them to any subject matter presented. Future studies could investigate the specific practices that directors of forensics engage in to determine NPDA debate partnerships.

#### High Levels of Argumentativeness Predict High Competitive Relational Satisfaction

There was significant disagreement as to whether high levels of argumentativeness leading to high relational satisfaction was of any importance to this particular population of forensic coaches when it comes to determining NPDA debate partnerships. This may be because there is not widespread understanding of what argumentativeness is, or, more specifically, that there is a conflation of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness in the forensic community. However, this particular data may also simply be unimportant to coaches who find competitive relational satisfaction to be of little importance. Based on the answers to the prompts regarding both team values and considerations in partnering debaters, it seems that the coaches in this study value their students’ educational and interpersonal well-being and development over their competitive success. Hence, it follows that these coaches may be thrown by the competitive aspect of relational satisfaction, or simply find it to be rather inconsequential. However, existing studies maintain that the interaction between argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and relational satisfaction are significant (e. g. Infante, 1987; Infante, 1989; Infante, Myers, &

Buerkel, 1994; Infante, Rancer, & Jordan, 1996; Infante, Swift & Vourvoulias, 2006; Trebing, Shepherd, & Seeds, 1984; Infante, & Wigley, 1986). Future studies could delve into coaches' interpretations of all three of these concepts as well as how they believe these concepts should and do interact.

#### Verbal Aggressiveness Predicts Low Competitive Relational Satisfaction

Most coaches in this study reported that high verbal aggressiveness leading to low competitive relational satisfaction would have no influence on their coaching decisions regarding NPDA debate partnerships or that this was already a factor that they considered. The reasons for this varied quite a bit. These results indicate a divide in understanding of the concepts of verbal aggressiveness and competitive relational satisfaction. Many coaches in this study, for instance, found this particular data to be suspect. These coaches are acting in the best interest of their students because they do not want to act without understanding. Those coaches who are already familiar with these concepts already act in a way that attempts to limit verbal aggressiveness. In support of existing literature, whether the coaches in this study realize it or not, however, they are all likely helping their students to lower their levels of verbal aggressiveness through debate training (Colbert, 1993; Ifert and Bearden, 1998; Infante, 1989; Smitter, 1970; Swift & Vourvoulias, 2006). Future studies could explore how coaches interpret verbal aggressiveness and whether this is a major factor in determining debate relationships or how they train their debaters in terms of interpersonal skills or how to debate.

#### Congruent Argumentativeness, Incongruent Verbal Aggressiveness, Relational Satisfaction

The coaches in this study reported that congruent levels of argumentativeness and incongruent levels of verbal aggressiveness leading to high levels of competitive relational satisfaction would not be influential on their coaching decisions regarding NPDA debate

partnerships. The reasons for this were either that the data was suspect or no explanation. Some coaches reported that this was already influential on their decisions without explanation. Like the preceding prompt, coaches may have been confused with this information. Because there is usually no formal training for forensic coaches, and forensic coaches have a variety of educational and academic backgrounds, there is no reason that they would all be familiar with argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and competitive relational satisfaction. Furthermore, without explanation beyond the short prompt on this survey, this particular item may have seemed counterintuitive. The previous two prompts, read together, claimed that high argumentativeness and low verbal aggressiveness yielded high competitive relational satisfaction. This prompt stated that congruent levels of argumentativeness and incongruent levels of verbal aggressiveness yielded high competitive relational satisfaction. As one coach pointed out on his or her survey, this seems contradictory. Had there been more explanation on the survey, the answers may have been clearer. This item is referring to congruent levels between self report and perceived partner levels of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness, while the previous two items were referring solely to self reports of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness. The coaches who responded were acting in good faith by not assuming that they knew exactly what the prompt was referring to. Future studies could re-test this prompt with further clarification.

#### Choice as the Strongest Predictor of High Competitive Relational Satisfaction

Most coaches in this study reported that choices leading to high levels of competitive relational satisfaction either would be or already is influential on their coaching practices, and most offered no explanation as to why. This follows logically from these particular coaches' answers to the item on the survey which questioned whether or not they allowed their debaters to

choose their own NPDA debate partner. Because most of the coaches in this survey reported either totally allowing their debaters to choose or allowing for negotiation on this point, it follows that they would agree that the information in this prompt is influential on their coaching practices. These coaches seem highly concerned with their students as people and maintain their freedom, which supports the existing literature which stresses a need for participatory decision making generally (e. g. Ables & Bosworth, 2004; Barrett, 1987; Bettenhausen, 1991; Galagan, 1988; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 2001; Jessup, 1990; Kinnick & Parton, 2005; Kolb, 1996; Kolb, 1998; Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001; McDonald, 2001; Vickrey, 1968) and student freedom and agency in communication, debate, and forensics specifically (e. g. Marmo, 2006-07; Mitchell, 1998; Olbrys, 2006). Future studies could explore techniques that forensic coaches utilize to uphold the agency of their forensic students.

#### Importance of Ethics

The respondents in this study overwhelmingly agreed that ethics is the most important thing in forensics, and offered very little explanation as to why, which counters what they reported as their teams' values. Very few coaches in this particular study reported that ethics was one of the top three values on their forensic teams. However, as I alluded to previously, this may be because these coaches see education, interpersonal skills, and competitive success as inherently linked. Especially in regard to interpersonal skills, there are obvious ethical implications. Within NPDA debate partnerships, there are interpersonal ethical obligations. For instance, Levinas (1998) established that our relation with the Other is active. To understand the being of the self, one must go outside of the self to the very edge of being. Freely letting oneself be is the way to understand one's being. With the Other, however, this level of understanding is not possible. One can only gain understanding of the Other while simultaneously engaging in

discourse with the Other. One cannot first understand the Other then interact with him. One can grasp the concept of being while engaging the Other beyond his own understanding. This can only be accomplished while talking to the Other, however. At the same time one begins to understand the Other, he cannot help but reveal his understanding of the Other to the Other. When training NPDA debaters, it is essential that coaches require debaters to treat their debate partner with a high level of respect, as if it is an obligation. In Levinasian fashion, Derrida (2001) explained that the absolute, constant openness to the other transforms traditional hospitality completely. “The guest (hote) becomes the host (hote) of the host (hote). These substitutions make everyone into everyone else’s hostage. Such are the laws of hospitality” (emphasis in original, Derrida, 2000, p. 125). Because of this constant, absolute openness that the self must engage in toward the other, the self becomes the other’s hostage. Derrida switched the roles so that no host has power over the guest. In fact, the host is no longer the host but also a guest in his or her own home. It is this sentiment which is expressed and illustrated by a great number of directors of forensics when dealing with their students; there is usually a very family essence on forensic teams. In debate partnerships, there are constant ethical issues within that particular interpersonal relationship. Future studies could further explore the ethical challenges in NPDA debate partnerships.

#### Importance of Competitive Success

Most coaches in this study reported that competitive success was, indeed important and not the most important thing in forensics. They generally provided either no explanation or a defensive reason as to why they took this perspective. This may be due to the fact that the idea that winning is everything is not an ideology popular within forensic scholarship nor in the forensic community as a whole, but forensics is undeniably a competition. Forensic educators

are forced into a position of training their students to do well in competition and educate them in life skills at the same time. Though these are not mutually exclusive, they can entail both different modes of training and different motivations. In terms of overlap in these areas, through the practice of exploring hypothetical situations in each debate round, debaters learn a formula for making logical and persuasive arguments. This formula is one that can be used to win the immediate round, of course, but it can also be used when facing real situations in the future.

Regarding formula, Dewey (1997) explained that:

Thinking involves (as we have seen) the suggestion of a conclusion for acceptance, and also search or inquiry to test the value of the suggestion before finally accepting it. This implies: (a) a certain fund or store of experiences and facts from which suggestions precede; (b) promptness, flexibility, and fertility of suggestions; and (c) orderliness, consecutiveness, and appropriateness in what is being suggested. (p. 30).

In order to train and educate their students effectively, directors of forensics are constantly in the process of drawing upon their own and others' experiences to make the soundest choice when a dilemma arises. Through their own example, and the structure of argument that they teach their debaters, they are, in fact, instilling ethics into their students. Hence, the coaches in this study are balancing, in their own minds, the competitive and life skills perspectives of forensics. Their defensive or non-explanatory answers are likely derived from critiques they have received in the past for being too competitive or not competitive enough. Future studies could explore what forensic coaches deem to constitute competitive success.

#### Balancing Ethics and Competitive Success

Most coaches in this study reported viewing ethics, competitive success, and education as separate or segregated concepts but provided a variety of strategy for balancing these concepts. Though these three concepts, may, in fact, constitute a false trichotomy, these particular coaches saw these concepts as distinct. However, the way that these coaches work to incorporate all of



these concepts into their coaching strategies were quite different. Some put ethics first, some put education first, and though they reported seeing these as segregated concepts, some coaches reported not having to do anything to balance these things on their teams. This is an ongoing battle for coaches to deal with, for many reasons. Directors of forensics must balance work and play on their teams because many teams have no external motivation (e. g. scholarships, units/credit hours, etc.) Along this line, debaters cannot take their competitive rounds too seriously, because forensics will no longer be fun. In terms of balancing work and play, Dewey (1997) offered:

Were it not that the false theory of the relation of the play and the work attitudes has been connected with unfortunate modes of school practice, insistence upon a truer view might seem an unnecessary refinement. But the sharp break that unfortunately prevails between the kindergarten and the grades is evidence that the theoretical distinction has practical implications. Under the title of play, the former is rendered unduly symbolic, fanciful, sentimental, and arbitrary; while under the antithetical caption of work the latter contains many tasks externally assigned. The former has no end and the latter an end so remote that only the educator, not the child, is aware that it is an end. (Emphasis in original, pp.164-165).

Directors of forensics have to teach the ethics, rules, and norms of forensics while simultaneously encouraging imaginations and creativity. In a similar way, debaters are constantly adapting to audiences, which means that they keep their coach's advice in mind while tweaking it to fit the judge. Because forensics is public speaking and debate, directors of forensics must teach how to use language, and how to dissect and critique language while using language to communicate. Additionally, because nothing exists in a vacuum, and because forensics is especially already in flux, meanings and things exist in a jumble, particularly for beginning students. Hence, directors of forensics must decipher the jumble for their debaters. Dewey (1997) stated:

The primary motive for language is to influence (through the expression of desire, emotion, and thought) the activity of others; its secondary use is to enter into more

intimate sociable relations with them; its employment as a conscious vehicle of thought and knowledge is a tertiary, and relatively late, formation. (p. 179).

This sentiment is especially poignant to forensics, because the activity is completely language and persuasion based.

In order to train debate, coaches may use the technique of observation integrated with the doing of debate. Debaters want to learn more in order to improve. An effective method for improvement is for debaters to watch then actually debate. Similarly, directors of forensics will learn by observing then doing as well. Dewey (1997) explained the value of these techniques this way:

When one is doing something, one is compelled, if the work is to succeed (unless it is purely routine), to use eyes, ears, and sense of touch as guides to action . . . As problems emerge and are dwelt upon, observation is directed less to the facts that bear upon a practical aim and more upon what bears upon a problem as such. (Emphasis in original, pp. 190 & 191).

Suffice it to say, information should be communicated in a variety of ways, and students will only begin to master skills when they begin to actually use those skills.

Due to the variety of requirements placed on directors of forensics, there is an immense amount of pressure and needed preparation. Dewey (1997) explained the importance of teacher preparation: “Lack of any preparation on the part of a teacher leads, of course, to a random, haphazard recitation, its success depending on the inspiration of the moment, which may or may not come” (p. 204). Directors of forensics are in a particularly unique situation, because their classroom is carried with them, everywhere they go. This “classroom” includes, but is not limited to their home school, the tournament school, the van/bus/train/car/plane, hotel rooms, etc. Therefore, directors of forensics must always be prepared to teach, regardless of the situation they are in. Future studies could explore more in-depth the specific strategies forensic coaches utilize to train their students in terms of ethics, competition, and education.

## Role of the Director of Forensics

There was some disagreement over how these particular coaches view their role as the director of forensics, director of debate, or assistant coach. There was significant agreement that these coaches saw themselves, overall, as pedagogues first and ethicists third. This indicates that forensic coaches see their roles as educators most important. Of course, due to the variety of situations forensic coaches must be educators in, what the term “pedagogue” means for each coach may be different. However, as Vandenberg (2002) explained:

What is crucial is that irrespective of the varying pedagogical emphases, the transcendental phases of learning are present, for encounter, awareness; making connections; co-disclosure and enactment are not so much phases of learning as they are the sine qua non of learning. To that extent the so-called transcendental phases of learning are actually the essential characteristics of learning, if not the essence of learning. If the essence of learning is simply becoming aware of something in the world of which one was previously unaware, it is grounded in the being of students when it occurs through the phases to an embodiment in the students’ engagements with the world in which they gradually become who they can become, themselves, by ‘re-creating that knowledge’ in their being in the world, to reiterate Freire’s phrase. (p. 341).

The nature of forensic education transcends the archaic banking model of education to the transactional perspective of learning. It is not the information being given to the student which is of primary concern, but the transaction itself, the relationship between information, teacher, and student. Because of this shift in educational perspective, and the variety of situations in which forensicators must operate, it seems logical that the coaches in this study may have viewed “leader” and “ethicist” as encompassed by “pedagogue.” Future studies could explore more open-ended means of defining the role of the director of forensics.

## Unexpected Findings

Though unsolicited, four coaches wrote objections to the last item on the survey, which asked them to rank their role of leader, pedagogue, and ethicist. These objections centered

around the idea that this forced choice stemmed from a false trichotomy. The first objector wrote, “Although I marked the above as instructed, I object to the choice it forces. The role of ‘ethicist’ cannot be separated from those of ‘pedagogue’ and ‘leader.’ I would consider myself first an ‘ethical teacher’ and second an ‘ethical leader.’ This remark supports my conjecture as to why so many coaches viewed themselves as an “ethicist” last. This is not due to forensic coaches being unethical or unconcerned with ethics; in fact, quite the opposite. Forensic coaches probably view ethics as intertwined into everything they do. In agreement with this analysis the second coach to object to this forced choice wrote, “This last question is unfair. The role of leader must have ethics at core, but requires so many other actions. As a teacher I must model ethics. But to be an ethicist first would mean to sacrifice other aspects.” A final coach to agree with these objectors wrote, “This ranking is not an absolute, as I see each of these elements as being interdependent.” He or she agreed that ethics is a part of the other roles.

The final coach to write an unsolicited response had a different sentiment: “They come in with their own values rooted in their rearing and I don’t tamper with that unless they ask for my advice on specific situations.” This explanation was offered as a reason for not placing “ethicist” higher than a third priority. This coach is concerned that the most ethical thing for him or her to do is to not impose his or her own ethics on the students on the forensic team.

#### Limitations

This study found some significant and useful results. However, there were two areas of limitations: sample size and confusion. In terms of sample size, though I think this is a significant number of coaches given the number of student participants in the quantitative study, it would be ideal to have a sample size triple or quadruple this number, to get a more generalizable group of answers. The fact that there were so few responses, I think is due to the

demanding nature of the jobs of these coaches, which is part of the reason that forensic scholarship is such a small subfield in communication studies generally. Simply put, coaches don't really have time to fill out surveys or conduct research usually.

In terms of confusion, this happened on a couple of levels. First, the survey was not written as understandably as it could have been. Second, forensic coaches are not generally familiar with these concepts. These limitations speak to each other. I should have either questioned coaches on what they know about argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and competitive relational satisfaction or simply defined the terms on the survey. I did not do this, however, in part due to the aforementioned limitation. Forensic coaches do not have a lot of time, so, logistically, in order to maximize the potential for responses; I felt it necessary to keep the survey as short as possible. In addition, the people I was surveying are my colleagues, mentors, and friends. They are extremely smart individuals who I did not want to insult by providing definitions, especially since they probably do understand these concepts; they simply haven't heard them referred to in these particular terms.

#### Directions for Future Research

The results of this study, coupled with its limitations provide a large potential for future studies. These studies could question coaches' definitions of ethics, education, interpersonal skills, and competitive success, to determine whether coaches agree on definitions and whether there is any overlap between these concepts according to forensic coaches. Second, future studies could go deeper into the concepts of choice, compatibility, skill level, and potential for competitive success, to determine whether coaches agree on what these things mean and whether they see interactions between these considerations for partnering NPDA debaters. Future studies could also investigate the specific practices that directors of forensics engage in to determine

NPDA debate partnerships or how they train their debaters in terms of interpersonal skills or how to debate. Additionally, future studies could delve into coaches' interpretations of argumentativeness, verbal aggressiveness, and competitive relational satisfaction, as well as how they believe these concepts should and do interact. Moreover, future studies could explore techniques that forensic coaches utilize to uphold the agency of their forensic students. Future studies could further explore the ethical challenges in NPDA debate partnerships or go more in-depth the specific strategies forensic coaches utilize to train their students in terms of ethics, competition, and education. Finally, future studies could explore more open-ended means of defining the role of the director of forensics.

### Conclusion

This chapter reported the findings from the qualitative portion of this dissertation. The results of this chapter indicated that directors of forensics are highly concerned with their training practices and the well-being of their students. Additionally, the coaches in this study seem to have a high level of trust in themselves for making the best decisions for their forensic students. The next chapter will lay out a rhetorical/grounded theory of the role of the director of forensics, and the final chapter will draw impacts from the entirety of this project.

## Chapter Five: Solvency: The Director of Forensics: Leader, Pedagogue, and Ethicist

The preceding chapter reported coaches' qualitatively recorded reactions to their students' quantitatively recorded perspectives on NPDA debate. The present chapter will synthesize these qualitative results, coupled with the quantitative results, into a theoretical framework and suggestions for practices for the Director of Forensics. Overall, the original research in this study indicates that NPDA debaters are not competitively relationally satisfied. As discussed in chapter three, the correlating factors for this lack of satisfaction include low levels of argumentativeness, high levels of verbal aggressiveness, incongruent levels of both of the aforementioned, and no choice in their debate partnerships. That said, it is also important to note that coaches in this study are unconvinced that competitive relational satisfaction is of importance for their debaters. The three dominant perspectives on the nature of the activity will be presented, followed by the three primary functions of the Director of Forensics. This chapter will conclude with prescriptions for pragmatic action for the Director of Forensics.

Many authors within the forensic community have attempted to pinpoint a social theory at work in our activity (e. g. Cronn-Mills, 2000; Cronn-Mills and Golden, 1997; Crossman, 1996; Endres, 1988; Frank, 1983; Friedley, 1983; Galizio & Chuen, 1995; Gaskill, 1998; Green, 1988; Grisez, 1965; Hanson, 1986; Kuster, 1998; Kuster, 2002; Lewis, 1988; Littlefield, 1986; O'Niell, 1986; Pratt, 1998; Puchot, 2002; Rice & Mummert, 2001; Rosenthal, 1985; Sanders, 1966; Stewart, 1986; Stris, 1996; Swift, 2006; Swift, 2007a; Swift 2007b; Swift, 2007c; Swift & Vourvoulias 2006; Theodore, Sheckels, & Warfield, 1990; Thomas, 1983; Thomas & Hart, 1983; VerLinden, 1997; Williams, & Guajardo, 1998). The problem with the existing studies overall is that there is no one way to explain or make sense of the social phenomena which is forensic competition. Forensic culture is one that consists simultaneously

of “universal” social norms as well as regional and local norms which never transcend their specific regions, which can create points on contention for coaches and students alike when they come into conflict with expectations that particular forensicators are unfamiliar with. The political economy of forensics is extremely varied from national organization to national organization, region to region, and even within regions. The basics of how forensics is organized are rather similar, but the particular structures, process, and physical and mental resources give it its character and distinctiveness vary quite a bit. There is a vast range of resources which vary from team to team and those who make forensics a career, the coaches, usually have highly differing and very strong opinions about the activity.

The director of a forensics team is charged with a significantly challenging role. He or she must balance the three dominant perspectives of the purpose of forensics with the prescribed goals of his or her institution and his or her personal views. Specifically in terms of how to coach NPDA debate, Swift (2007b) argued in favor of a balanced perspective:

. . . NPDA seems to be on the right track . . . There are opportunities to learn the perspectives of different judges from many sources . . . there are a variety of perspectives currently at work within NPDA. Overall, NPDA is going to continue to grow as long as coaches continue to teach their students how to adapt to a variety of audiences. Debate coaches may uphold the status quo in terms of their opinions regarding admissibility of evidence, as long as they clearly communicate these expectations to debaters. The change which must occur, and soon, however is the quarrelling over which perspective is the best perspective. If we, as debate coaches and rhetorical educators are going to uphold our duty to our students, we must train them to argue in front of a variety of audiences, without insisting upon pushing our own opinions regarding evidence in debate as the only or the best opinion. (<http://www.phirhopi.org/spts/spkrpts11.1/swift.html>).

The above passage comes from a study directly concerned with the types of evidence which ought to be allowed in NPDA debate, but the same principle applies to coaching NPDA and forensics, generally. There are a variety of opinions regarding how forensic coaches should coach. The three main purposes for forensic coaching are competition, rhetorical training, and



intellectual game. Those who ascribe to the competition perspective tend to see forensics as academic sport, putting the goal of winning first. The rhetorical training perspective involves coaches fostering students as democratic citizens, in an attempt to prepare them for their futures beyond forensics. Finally, the intellectual game perspective promotes play with and within the perceived game of forensics. While these categories read as completely mutually exclusive may promote a false trichotomy, each area emphasizes certain values above others, and when further explored and understood, can promote clearer and more honest communication between students and coaches.

### Forensics as Competition

The competition perspective advocates competitive success as the most important outcome of forensic participation. Arguments surrounding why forensics is valuable abound at both forensic tournaments as well as in forensic journals. The coaches in this study which make up this perspective are those who in chapter four indicated that they choose debate partnerships from the motivating factor of potential for competitive success and view competitive success as a primary team value. The reasoning that coaches who likely fit into this perspective provided for agreement or disagreement with the prompts provided on the qualitative survey was coach knows best. The debaters who agree with this view likely fit into the congruent and good skill leading to high levels of competitive relational satisfaction. Regardless of the many arguments made in favor of forensics as education, there remain those who argue that forensics is only valuable because of its competitive nature. “. . . we conclude that the notion of forensics as education is a myth; the reality is that forensics is a game or competition” (Burnett, Brand, & Meister, 2003, p. 22). Additionally, Allen and Wilmington (1972) pointed out a perspective that expresses the forensics as competition position quite poignantly:

Debate is not appropriate for every student. Because it is an intellectually rigorous activity, it is most appropriate for students who are highly intelligent and for students who have above average interest in problems of social concern . . . Debate by definition is competitive. Competitive activities in education have long been defended by the phrase, 'Competition is life.' (pp. 248-49).

This dispute over whether debate and speech should be seen as primarily competition or something else, like rhetorical training, etc. goes back to the dawn of speech communication as a discipline (e. g. Hunt, 1915a; Hunt, 1915b; Hunt, 1917; Hunt, 1922; Hunt, 1923; Hunt, 1936; Woolbert, 1915; Woolbert, 1916; Woolbert, 1917; Woolbert, 1918; Woolbert, 1919a; Woolbert, 1919b; Woolbert, 1920; Woolbert, 1923). This perspective is helpful for programs in need of more funding, because (fortunately or unfortunately) trophies encourage both college (or university) administration and the larger community to financially support the given forensic program. This perspective is also good for fostering self-efficacy and motivation in students. When students work to achieve competitive success and are rewarded, they usually come away with a can-do attitude and are motivated to continue to have a strong work ethic. There are also problems with this perspective. When competitive success is the first goal, competitors can easily translate this perspective into winning at all cost, which usually encourages a disregard for rules and ethics. However, further investigation and understanding of this particular perspective can promote an in-depth investigation of the purpose of education. In our larger democratic, competitive culture, students may benefit immensely from learning how to compete and win. This perspective, if misappropriated, can promote a counterproductive application. As Goodnight (1982) argued:

If debate only involved the application of theoretical principles to particular subject matter, then its contribution to theoretical issues in argumentation would be minimal. Each particular debate would involve only amassing materials, formulating contentions, communicating ideas, and deciding which advocates exhibited fewer flaws. Seen in this light, debate could become nothing more or less than instances of rule applications. (p. 424).

Unfortunately, trophies can become a greater reward than individual and collective integrity. Additionally, it is easy for coaches to be consumed by this winning at all cost mantra, which causes a disregard for ethics and sound pedagogy. Instead of viewing students as future citizens of a larger society, coaches can easily commodify their competitors into subjects to be used for gaining glory.

### Forensics as Rhetorical Training

The second perspective is the rhetorical training perspective. This perspective puts training for the real world as its foremost goal, and is as old as our discipline (e. g. Woolbert, 1923). The coaches in this study which make up this perspective are those who in chapter four indicated that they allow their debaters to choose partnerships from the motivating factors of student choice and compatibility, and view both education and interpersonal skills as primary team values. In terms of the ethical importance of interpersonal skills, Levinas (1998) brought to light the importance of relationships between people as they apply to philosophy. He posited that ontology is the most important concept in philosophy:

The primacy of ontology among the branches of knowledge would appear to rest on the clearest evidence, for all knowledge of relations connecting or opposing being to one another implies an understanding of the fact that these beings and relations exist. (p. 1).

In order to understand anything at all in the world, we must understand and agree that there is existence. Levinas stated it is the understanding that there is being in a temporal manner that constitutes our existence. The negotiation that man deals with on a daily basis regarding his existence accomplishes ontology. It is a constant, not-winnable battle. Ontology is not just intellectualism or consciousness, but in fact the totality of the human experience, including behavior. Being is a truth, and intelligible. This is why there is humanity. Humanity did not

cause truth or being. The understanding of the ontology of self and Other is a constant negotiation during NPDA debate training, for coaches and students alike.

The reasoning that coaches who likely fit into this perspective provided for agreement or disagreement with the prompts provided on the qualitative survey was process over product. The debaters who agree with this view likely fit into the choice leading to high levels of competitive relational satisfaction. “[O]n its most practical level . . . a college instructor’s best investment is in the face-time they have with students in and out of the classroom, and in the depth and quality of interactions they share with those students” (Waldeck, 2007, p. 430). This perspective is useful because coaches and students focus on long-term, life-long benefits of the activity rather than short-term success. Rowland and Fitch (1989) drew the following conclusion regarding pedagogy when it comes to coaching debate:

The foregoing analysis of the relationship between debate practice and argument pedagogy has suggested a number of implications for a broader theory of argument. Viewed as a whole, these implications point to two main conclusions regarding argumentation theory. First, the driving force in any argumentative activity is purpose; purpose influences arguers and judges to make argumentative choices to achieve that purpose. Second, the pragmatic approach of the informal logic movement seems well-adapted to the general purposes of argument pedagogy. A number of the conclusions that we have drawn in regard to academic debate clearly support such a pragmatic approach to argument pedagogy. Debate theorists would be well-advised to closely consider the theoretical and practical implications of the study of informal logic for debate. (p. 460).

It is this consideration of long-term purpose which is considered at the forefront by forensic coaches operating from the rhetorical training perspective. Mitchell (2000) advocated role-play as an effective form of argumentation training. “This process is particularly crucial in the public argument context, since a key generator of inequality and exploitation in contemporary society is the widespread and uncritical acceptance by citizens of politically inert self-identities” (Mitchell, 2000, p. 143). NPDA debate fulfills this type of argumentation training because competitors are assigned speaking roles in each round of debate. Directors of forensics are contributing to the

rhetorical training of their students when training them to argue effectively in NPDA debate. These skills will spill into the students' character building and political habits.

The way in which to pragmatically train students of rhetoric and communication is a point of contention in the field, but debate seems a viable method. Our culture is inundated with communicative acts labeled as debate or argumentation. These communicative acts are difficult for students to critically analyze without training in argumentation, debate, and critical thinking. However, competing points of view are essential to the world at large, and especially poignant in our democratic republic. An advantage of the communication classroom and especially the forensic tournament is that these venues provide students with a relatively safe laboratory to present controversial arguments and practice disputation. As Olbrys (2006) stated:

Implementation of *dissoi logoi* within classroom practice is not simple. It requires an appreciation of the social contexts of education (in knowledge and in citizenship) as a kind of apprenticeship rather than as unchallenged instruction. The positions of power that distinguish students from professors would also require earnest address. While most formulations of academic freedom provide for assignments that require students to represent viewpoints with which they disagree as long as there is a reason germane to the subject matter and no hostility wrought upon the student, *dissoi logoi* necessitates a further step of open communication with students about the nature of pedagogy itself—for example, its structure and aims—if not involvement by the students in deciding upon controversies to engage, appropriate ways to assess their achievements, the possibility of conscientious objection, the shared responsibilities for safe expression, and the means to address inevitable tensions. (p. 362).

In order to achieve an effective laboratory for *dissoi logoi*, professors and directors of forensics must essentially “practice what they preach” by interrogating their own understandings, beliefs, and practices. It is acceptance without question which we are training our students to reject in general, so we must demonstrate how this is done. Interestingly, it seems that disagreement is the point of agreement communication scholars and directors of forensics can come to. Because this disagreement on a scholarly and pedagogical level necessitates debate between those who

are training the students of debate, it is debate itself which may be the most efficient and effective method for rhetorical training.

However, the problem with the perspective of forensics as rhetorical training generally, is that this rhetorical training can be gained outside of the forensic setting, so the motivation for participating in forensics in particular becomes unclear for all involved. Contrarily, as the aforementioned argument reveals, it appears that while students can garner rhetorical training generally through alternate avenues, the most effective for democratic engagement may be forensics. Forensics provides a space in which regardless of the specific argumentation, the worst consequences are losing the tournament. Hence, students are truly able to experiment and practice communicative and debate skills without an unreasonable risk.

#### Forensics as an Intellectual Game

Finally, there is the intellectual game perspective. This perspective advocates learning to operate within the forensic setting with the highest skill level possible for the sake of playing the game. The coaches in this study which make up this perspective are those who in chapter four indicated that they negotiate debate partnerships from the motivating factor of skill level and view ethics as a primary team value. The reasoning that coaches who likely fit into this perspective provided for agreement or disagreement with the prompts provided on the qualitative survey were student freedom and suspect data. The debaters who agree with this view likely fit into the congruent and good skill leading to high levels of competitive relational satisfaction. While life skills and competitive success are seen as beneficial, these benefits never outweigh the goal of participation in and improvement of the game itself. In support of the game perspective, Frank (2003) presented Snider's (1981) perspective:

In most theoretical respects, and in many aspects related to academic debate, the students are far in front of the teachers. While respected forensic intellects argue about appropriate

paradigms, debaters don't waste their valuable time on such pursuits. They use whatever paradigm they need to get the job done. (Snider, 1981, p. IV:1, as cited in Frank, 2003, p. 35).

Viewing forensics as a game, particularly in NPDA debate is helpful, because it bolsters the need and value of audience analysis and adaptation. "The game of debate is not a solipsistic endeavor, but a very empathic one. It is flexible enough to look at the needs of the situation and adapt to them" (Snider, 2003, p. 43). In order to play the game successfully, debaters must effectively analyze and adapt to each judge they debate in front of. The perspective of debate as a game enables the other two perspectives outlined here to be incorporated throughout the training and execution of the actual debates. A long term supporter, and arguably the father of the intellectual game perspective on academic, competitive debate, Snider (1982a) explained:

Any regular witness to academic debates over the last five years would have to notice this process at work - - with students discussing the merits or demerits of economic growth, the population explosion, the mathematical probabilities of nuclear war in differing situations, and any number of examples. Academic debate is operating, within the gaming format, to allow students to explore these alternative futures. (p. 109).

The intellectual game perspective on forensic participation allows for freedom in exploration of ideas, trial and error in performance, and a true laboratory experience for the students involved. "The game of debate I have outlined . . . is a freewheeling game, and not a simulation of some other advocacy situation. Baseball, poker, and television shows are examples of games that are decidedly not simulation games" (Snider, 1987, p. 125). This simulation of advocacy is a game to be played for the gain of the students, the judges, and the coaches alike. In further support of his position, Snider (1982b) pontificated:

Since debate takes place purely in the realm of symbols, it would seem fruitless to discuss the difference between what IS 'really happening' and 'what is happening in the debate only.' Rather, the two seem to be together – what is really happening IS what is happening in the debate. (p. 16).

The intellectual game perspective is exactly what Snider has described: forensicators suspend reality outside of the round itself throughout the duration of the round.

The problem with this perspective is that the implications of the game outside of the game become lost, and coaches and competitors alike can become bogged down with the rules and norms of the game. While a popular perspective, especially with debate coaches in particular, not all involved agree that forensics in general, and debate in particular, is in fact a game. For instance, Frank (2003) wrote regarding his critique of the game perspective as follows:

Stripped of its connection to simulations and the possibility of audiences outside the activity, the pedagogical assumptions under girding Snider's version of the gaming paradigm are revealed as barren. Initially, Snider equivocates on the educational objectives the game of academic debate ought to achieve. At the end of reading his written work, I can't detect a coherent pedagogy as the solipsism enveloping his paradigm produces this tautological justification for debate: the game of debate is good because it is a game of debate. In his National Forensic Journal contribution to the editor's forum, Snider draws from a 1955 Karl Wallace article to suggest that the "only prescriptive standard of ethics in the game should be HONESTY" (Snider, 1984, p. 121). Again, if one can persevere through the capital letters at the end of the sentence to the end of the article, one is left with the conclusion that Snider truly does need Wallace and his Aristotelian ethic, imposed as it is from outside the debate round, to secure the integrity of debate. (pp. 34-35).

Those who disagree with the game perspective entirely may be missing the fact that the process of forensic competition being "merely" a game does not negate the possible educational implications and possible competitive success.

While the game perspective is my primary perspective, I think that the most successful way to run a team is to balance these perspectives, and realize that we, as the director of forensics, are a part of a larger collective. As argued by Moorthy (1985) "The essence of competition is interdependence" (p. 262). Because forensics—whether valued as competition first or not—is, in fact, a form of competition, interdependence is essential to making it work. In



order to be as successfully interdependent as possible, and to teach through example, being willing and able to listen to, analyze, and synthesize differing views on forensics is a vital element to any effective director of forensics. A cooperative game theory can help debaters to discard optimal strategies for groups and individuals, and instead embrace a love of the game. The college or university has place particular goals and demands upon you based on many factors, and only through open communication and constant negotiation can you uphold your role to the best of your ability.

### The Role of the Director of Forensics

While different directors of forensics are as dissimilar as different professors, they all face many of the same challenges, including what parts of their role to emphasize most, or value most highly. All directors are faced with leading a team, teaching students, and playing the game which is forensics. However, the ways in which they do these things vary greatly. From my perspective, in agreement with Barttanen (1994), there are three equally important roles a director of forensics must uphold: leader, pedagogue, and ethicist.

#### Director of Forensics as Leader

As a leader, the director of forensics must train students to be competitively successful. Coaches who see their role primarily as that of a leader view ethics as unimportant and competitive success as most important. Debate partnerships, for these coaches, are motivated from a desire for competitive success as a team. There is usually no formal leadership training for directors of forensics. However, Cocker (1971) explained that leadership training for directors of forensics begins not when they are granted the authority to lead through their title, but when they are competitors, judges, and instructors. All directors of forensics, regardless of

how they perceive their own role are likely perceived by others as leaders or what Ziegelmüller (1968) defined as “professionals”:

The forensic coach’s role extends beyond his teaching and counseling activities to include his obligations as a member of a professional group. As a professional person, the coach must be specially trained and qualified. He must conduct himself in a manner which will bring credit to his profession and set a good example for his students. He should also be interested in the activities of his professional organizations, and he should be concerned with his professional future. (pp. 87-88).

Analogous to a leader of any organization or team, directors of forensics inadvertently lead best through setting a positive precedent for their students to follow.

Most of the research done on leadership is related to one or all of the categories of: traits (Bass 1990a), situations (Bass 1990b), and behavior (Bass 1990c). Leaders have many tasks to fulfill. One of the most important, daily tasks to accomplish is effective decision-making; the most effective decision-making process seems to be one in which the most voices are considered by the leader (Kantor, 1981). Participatory decision-making can increase morale and increase the effectiveness of the organization. Another, one found in highly reliable organizations, is concern with the surrounding environment (Roberts, 1990). Whether the surrounding environment in consideration is the physical environment or the people surrounding the group or organization, highly effective leaders are aware of the environment.

Many leaders take on an attitude of supporting democratic values in order to achieve participatory decision-making. For example, Vickrey (1968) surveyed the Florida State Legislature to test Stodgill’s leadership trait theory. He found that the legislators largely self-identified as democratic leaders, but their responses to the leadership scale classified them as authoritarian leaders. The legislators also reported that capacity, responsibility, specific skill, and task goal were the most important traits for a leader to possess. Additionally, Kolb (1998)

reported that self-monitoring can promote emergent leadership and encourage more accurate perceptions of leadership.

Another way to promote participation in decision-making is to demonstrate care for followers. Kropiewnicki and Shapiro (2001) found that female principals enacted the ethic of care in their leadership roles. Through interviews, the researchers reported a seven-part model of the principals' collective leadership style. The common themes found in the interviews were teaching and learning, creating child-centered schools, listening then deciding, doing what was right, developing and empowering others, and making a difference combined to make up the ethic of care for these female principals. The underlying assumption of this research is "care and responsibility for others is the approach females tend to use when resolving ethical or moral dilemmas" (Kropiewnicki & Shapiro, 2001, p. 3). While this research is limited to female principals a similar ethic is used by many forensic coaches. Because of the family-like orientation of a forensics team, many team members and coaches alike are forced to trust and care for each other throughout their competitive careers (Swift, 2006).

The director of forensics uses his or her set of experiences as competitor and as coach to his or her students in an attempt to render their performances predictable according to the rules of forensic participation. Coaching sessions and reading materials, as well as participation in forensic competitions will continually discipline and refine the behaviors of the competitors to continually improve in competition. The common sense ideal for leadership is one in which the leader is able to motivate a team to achieve the most possible. In order to fulfill this ideal, directors of forensics usually establish some level of expectation setting on their forensic squad, which may come in the form of a handbook or meetings, and depending on the director, may involve dictation, group decision-making or some combination of the two methods. Expectation

or goal setting provides a relevant and contemporary opportunity to utilize the rhetorical cannon of creative invention. When problems arise, directors of forensics must find unique solutions, identity definitions for the empowered, mission and goals, model effective communication, and are always looking to communicate to their students how to improve performing. Those directors who view themselves as a leader first may or may not view their team as a sort of family, but are also likely to view their forensic teams more akin to sports teams.

#### Director of Forensics as Pedagogue

Second, as an educator or pedagogue, the director of forensics must consider the way in which he or she is preparing the students for the rest of their lives and the “real” world. Coaches who see their role primarily as that of a pedagogue will view ethics and competitive success as important. Debate partnerships, for these coaches, are motivated from a desire for their debaters to develop both character and interpersonal skills. Regardless of their self-definition in terms of their role, all directors of forensics are perceived by outsiders as pedagogues to some degree because they are connected to pedagogical institutions. Ziegelmuller (1968) explained that forensic coaches are more than sports-like coaches who train a team to win; they are also “teachers”:

As a teacher, the forensic coach is faced with a number of special problems by the very nature of his field of endeavor. The many areas of knowledge associated with coaching debaters, speakers, and readers create problems regarding what to teach and what to emphasize in teaching. The competitive environment in which the activities exist raises the question of how much the teacher should do for the student, and the largely extracurricular nature of the teaching situation results in numerous problems of the teaching method. (p. 80).

Suffice it to say, the forensic teaching situation is different than the traditional classroom model. Directors of forensics are always teaching their students, whether it be in a classroom, on another campus, in a van, on an airplane, or in a hotel room. The variety of situational challenges raises

methodological issues and challenges for forensic coaches whenever faced with pedagogical decisions.

In terms of education in forensics, researchers have addressed a lack of creativity (Derryberry, 1991, Fryar, 1981; Greenstreet, 1990; Reynolds, 1991; Samosky & Baird, 1982), repetition of the same audience (Derryberry, 1991; Reynolds, 1991), vague rules (Greenstreet, 1990), norms that garner competitive success without necessarily helping the student to learn (Reynolds, 1991), and a primary focus on competition over education (Derryberry, 1991; Fryar, 1981; Greenstreet, 1990; Hamm, 1993; Ulrich, 1984). Education seeks to prepare an individual for a wide range of roles. Waldeck (2007) reported six behaviors in which professors engage which are perceived as personalized education by students: 1) sharing time outside of class, 2) counseling students, 3) competent communication skills, 4) fostering personal, social relationships with students, 5) providing flexible course requirements, and 6) doing special favors for students. More specifically, she wrote:

Keefe and Jenkins (2000) suggest several general elements of personalized education: (1) an evolving, deepening relationship between teacher and student; (2) a collegial school culture based, in part, on lowered class sizes; (3) the diagnosis of student learning characteristics; (4) an interactive learning environment; and (5) flexible scheduling and assignments. (In Waldeck, 2007, p. 412).

Waldeck (2007) further specified this explanation this way:

The mandate to deliver personalized education poses challenges to faculty that range from extra work for teachers in the form of numerous independent study arrangements and special projects geared toward students' individualized learning needs, to confused and resentful students who misunderstand flexible course requirements. (p. 410).

Directors of Forensics are particularly challenged because their role is so overly personalized with their students due to the time and place their interactions with students occur. Here is where the pedagogy of the director of forensics comes into play. He or she must treat his or her students as persons preparing for life, not just commodities to win tournaments. Each success

and failure can be treated as a teaching moment to build life skills, instead of the implications ending with the tournament results. Lederman, Stewart, and Russ (2007) provided this encouragement:

A curriculum infusion approach positions faculty differently in relation to the subject. It allows faculty to guide students in the development of their own decision-making skills. The pedagogical strategy shows students how to take the information and experiences provided to them in a course and apply them to their own lives. (p. 490).

Through explaining their own experiences, directors of forensics can help their competitors make sense of their forensic experiences.

Throughout their debate training, directors of forensics who view themselves as educators first aim to instill character and integrity into their debaters. Along this sentiment, Heidegger stated that beings (as nouns) show themselves while their being (as a verb) has been forgotten. Dasein is different than any other being, because of the level of understanding and questioning of its being, and is always unsettled. For Heidegger, ethics is located in Dasein's concern with his or her being. Heidegger agreed with Nietzsche in the sense that everything is an interpretation and there is hence no inherent reality. Heidegger maintained that everything must question itself because the senses rest upon ontology. Dasein can question things because our being is in question:

If the interpretation of the meaning of being is to become a task, Da-sein is not only the primary being to be interrogated; in addition to this it is the being that always already in its being is related to what is sought in this question" (emphasis in original, Heidegger, 1997, p. 12).

We don't question simply because we can. Heidegger was all about the process, especially the process of questioning being. In NPDA debate, for coaches to have the most effect on their students' character, they, too must be process-oriented. There is a constant need for

interpretation, re-interpretation, and reflexivity on the part of debate coaches when training their NPDA debaters.

Authenticity, for Heidegger, lies in questioning our being. “Not only does an understanding of being belong to Da-sein, but this understanding also develops or decays according to the actual manner of being of Da-sein at any given time; for this reason it has a wealth of interpretations at its disposal” (Heidegger, 1996, p. 14). We have the choice whether or not we fully question and interpret our being. We don’t necessarily gain answers, but the process of questioning is essential to our authenticity. In Heideggerian terms, traditionally, there has been far too much emphasis on beings rather than on being. This is primarily because beings are visible while their existence is invisible. Hence, Heidegger’s focus was on this fundamental level of existence:

But what remains concealed in an exceptional sense, or what falls back and is covered up again, or shows itself only in a distorted way, is not this or that being but rather, as we have shown in our foregoing observation, the being of beings. (Emphasis in original, Heidegger, 1996, p. 31).

A stringent call for authenticity, within this perspective, I think, is akin to what hooks (1994) and Freire (2006) call educators to do. hooks says that engaged pedagogy goes beyond the simple transfer of information and promotes a holistic and total well-being in students. Freire, who inspired hooks immensely, states that this transfer of information method is the banking model of education, and must be abandoned in order to promote freedom with students. We do this in forensics, as Hough (2007) argued:

. . . we must defend that collegiate forensics, while competitive in structure does not promote a myth of education. When this defense is properly made, collegiate forensics will gain increased respect and usage as an activity that provides the educational skills our students will need to be competitive and competent in any communication environment. (p. 9).

Essentially, directors of forensics who view themselves as a pedagogue first are actually in a difficult position. Forensics is competitively structured, and most communication departments offer courses in the events available at forensic tournaments (e. g. oral interpretation of literature, argumentation and debate, public speaking, readers' theatre, etc.). Hence, the proponents of forensics as education first must demonstrate the unique educational benefits which their students acquire from specifically forensic participation. This demonstration of education benefits can come from examining the relationships and situations in the activity of forensics. For example, because of the unique relationship between the director of forensics and his or her students, he or she is in a prime position to fulfill hooks's and Freire's call through hands-on, meaningful education.

#### Director of Forensics as Ethicist

Finally, the director of forensics must be a highly skilled ethicist. He or she plays a unique role in each and every one of his or her students schooling, or the totality of experiences that occur within the institution called school not all of which are educational. Along this vein, Ziegelmuller (1968) explained that the role of the forensic coach always entails ethical implications because of the intimate interpersonal role the coach inevitably takes on, or the role of the "counselor":

In addition to his role as an academic instructor, the forensic coach is frequently called upon to act as a personal counselor. The very nature of the coach's role requires him to be concerned with the ethos of the speaker and to be prepared to offer advice on such matters as appearance and good manners. Moreover, the informal and personal relationship which tends to develop between forensic students and coaches makes it likely that students will turn to their coach when they have personal difficulties or are in any way in need of counsel. (pp. 84-85).

Due to the propinquity between coaches and their students, it is essential for coaches to have an ethical framework from which to operate. The emotional and mental closeness of the forensic



coach and student relationship involves constant ethical implications, questions, and accountability. Likely, coaches will be forced to make decisions with potential ethical consequences without much time to mull over their actions. Hence, coaches should and probably do constantly think about their ethical positions and what kinds of actions are (un)acceptable for them to take.

Coaches who see their role primarily as that of an ethicist view ethics as the most important thing, and competitive success as unimportant. Debate partnerships, for these coaches, are motivated from a desire for the love and fun of the game. “If debate as a technology of decision-making and self-formation is imbued with ethical substance, it follows that its conditions, procedures, and results are also conceptualized in ethical terms” (Hicks & Greene, 1999, p. 304). There are a number of perspectives on what constitutes ethical behavior. For example, in their interpersonal communication text, Beebe, Beebe, and Redmond (2005) pointed out:

We learn who we are by interacting with others, much as we look into a mirror and see our reflection. Like [Charles] Cooley, George Herbert Mead also believed that our sense of who we are is a consequence of our relationship with others. And Harry Stack theorized that from birth to death our self changes primarily because of how people respond to us. One sage noted, “We are not only our brother’s keeper; we are our brother’s maker.” (p. 37).

According to this perspective, it is our interactions with other human beings which condition and mold our reality. We do not rely on a priori knowledge for determining right from wrong. We develop our interpretation and perspective based on our observation of the behavior of others and the instruction we receive from authorities. This makes the role of the Director of Forensics particularly challenging, because he or she is responsible for regulating the behavior of his or her team. On that particular point Verderber and Verderber provided a possible way to view one’s “personal ethic”:

Your personal ethic is based on your belief and acceptance of what the communities or groups with which you most closely identify consider moral and ethical. When you behave ethically, you voluntarily act in a manner that complies with expected behavior. (p. 39)

The norms of the forensic community are highly influential on the personal ethics of the members, both coaches and competitors alike. While not every argument or speech presented in forensic competition can or should be interpreted as representative of the actual beliefs of the competitor or his or her coach, the manner in which the speech is researched, written, and delivered is representative of the ethical training between coach and competitor.

In terms of defining ethics, Anderson (1979) found seven consistent unethical behaviors as defined by speech text books: 1) being unprepared, 2) letting audience adaptations overtake convictions, 3) being insincere, 4) the fallacy of suppressing evidence, 5) lying, 6) using pathos to mask truth, and 7) not listening critically. Those who instill and foster ethics are teachers and professors, which is a constant struggle and negotiation (Kuther, 2003; Potter, 2001; Rotenburg, 2005; Shulman, 1986; Shulman, 2005; Shulman & Sherin, 2004; Shulman & Shulman, 2004). These behaviors are just a few of the behaviors that a director of forensics must instill as wrong in his or her students. Specifically regarding “original work” for platform speech writing, Swift and Rybold (2007) concluded:

Though many of our participants pointed out that our definitions were un-clear, the consistency in their answers shows that they may have clear definitions of these variables. Overall the results of the study lead us to conclude that the inclusion of word ‘original’ by Phi Rho Pi will have little effect on coaching practices. Quite simply, coaches do not agree on definition of what constitutes ethical behavior in collaboration on platform speech writing. Therefore, al-though a majority of Phi Rho Pi voted to specify ‘original’ in the rule, nothing really changed. So even though, some may have voted for the rule to stop the use of unattributed collaboration, others who believe that unattributed collaboration is their coaching duty will not be deterred. If Phi Rho Pi, on the whole, wants to move in the general direction of the rest of academia to label unattributed collaboration as plagiarism, then a specific bright line standard must be established. Even if a clear standard was codified, enforcement may still present a problem. (p. 38).

This illuminates the constant ethical dilemma facing Directors of Forensics and the forensic community at large, the question of: What is ethical? The community does not seem to agree yet, and may never agree.

Though agreement may not ever be reached theoretically, there remains a necessity to continually take pragmatic action on a daily basis. Suffice it to say, regardless of the fact that scholars may never agree on what theoretically constitutes ethics, directors of forensics and other educators are forced to face students every day and continually make decisions with ethical implications all the time. Along this vein, Barnes and Keleher (2006) provided a theoretically sound conclusion about how to teach ethics:

Although it is unnecessary and unrealistic to expect academics to agree upon a uniform theory of ethics, it is problematic that students are not introduced to the essential features of this dialectic, features that would allow them to determine their own positions on the subject in a meaningful and intellectually sound fashion. (pp. 155).

While this may, in fact, be a larger issue with education generally, or even our culture as a whole, it seems most pertinent for communication scholars and pedagogues, especially directors of forensics, to confront this conundrum because we are the (at least perceived) experts at communication. All we and our students have at the end of the day is our words and actions which enable us to communicate with the rest of world, and especially those near us. If we are to give our students and our world anything at all, it must be given in the spirit of integrity. If we are not genuine in our communicative acts and principles, we can expect no one to be. In order to best train our students to lead the world toward honest and meaningful communication, it is absolutely essential that we continue a discussion, and even debate, regarding ethics.

Communication educators generally, and directors of forensics specifically are in an excellent position to present a variety of perspectives on ethics so that students can debate about them and

gain a greater understanding of the theoretical, rhetorical, and pragmatic consequences of their (communicative) actions. It seems that continual debate on this subject is warranted, necessary, and healthy. We may never have all of the ethical answers, but continual self-reflexivity may be our most ethical course of action.

### The Balanced Director of Forensics

Directors of Forensics are in a unique position for influencing their students. The idea that professors of communication need to incorporate a variety of perspectives into their methods of teaching goes back to the beginning of speech education (e. g. Hunt, 1923; Hunt, 1936, Hunt, 1915a; Hunt 1917; Hunt, 1922; Hunt, 1923; Woolbert, 1917 Woolbert, 1918; Woolbert, 1919a; Woolbert, 1919b; Woolbert, 1920; Woolbert, 1923). The vary nature of the job of the director of forensics forces these people into tensions. There are goals from within and without which work with and against each other. The goals, values, and needs of various parties like the administration, coaching staff, and students, pile up daily. Because these demands come from so many different people and places, the director of forensics always already is in a state of conflict. In order to please as many people as often as possible, Directors of Forensics must carefully prioritize, and often defend themselves. This became evident in the unsolicited responses reported in chapter four. I propose to motivate and please as many people as possible, we transform from a competitive success to competitive satisfaction model, so that we keep our highs low, lows high, and continue to increase support for our forensic teams. To accomplish this, it is essential that there be explicit definitions of success/satisfaction that the parties with the power and the parties with the responsibility, agree to. Teacher-scholars tend to agree that student-oriented learning is essential; instructors must adapt to the needs of their students (Barnes, & Keleher, 2006; Dannels, 2001; Dewey, 1997; Freire, 2006; hooks, 1994; Kuther,

2003; Marmo, 2006-07; Mitchell, 1998; Olbrys, 2006; Potter, 2001; Puchot, 2002; Rotenberg, 2005; Sanders & Wiseman, 1994; Sellnow, 2006; Shulman, 1986; Shulman, 2005; Shulman, & Sherin, 2004; Shulman, & Shulman, 2004; Witkin, 1978; Witkin, Dyk, Faterson, Goodenough, & Karp, 1962; Witkin, Moore, Goodenough, & Gox, 1977). This sentiment can and should be extended from the classroom to forensic teams. The Director of Forensics position can easily be used to foster ethical, democratic leaders and citizens. According to Olbrys (2006) “. . . communication education—and particularly practice in rhetoric—offers a means to treat seriously and to respond to these calls for spirited intellectual diversity and the problematic question of training in citizenship” (p. 354). The nature of forensic competition encourages and rewards critical thinking and expression of voice. In their article regarding how debate empowers individual and collective forensic competitors, Warner and Brusckke (2001) explained:

In a very direct way, many underachieving students, once “gone on debating,” may become better academic performers. In a more indirect way others may choose to meet the debate team’s academic eligibility requirements because they want to keep participating on the squad. Further, the interscholastic model accelerates learning in an exponential way. Interscholastic debate differs from debate in the classroom (sometimes referred to as “debate across the curriculum”). The difference between the two is analogous to the difference between a regular gym class and a school’s basketball team that competes against other schools. The philosophy behind the gym class is that all students will benefit from some exposure to physical fitness; in a similar vein, the idea behind classroom debate is that all students will benefit from an exposure to the basic precepts of argument and debate. The philosophy behind the basketball team is that the very best athletes will excel to vastly greater levels of development by competing against the very best athletes of other schools. Although most debate teams are more open to widespread participation than most basketball teams, tournament debate offers the student most “gone on” academic debating a chance to sharpen and refine their skills to truly advanced degrees by competing in tournament formats against the best speakers and debaters from other institutions. (pp. 8-9).

From this particular point of view, it is the aggregate level of competition, rhetorical training, and intellectual game which most empowers forensic students. Regardless of how forensic educators

talk and theorize about how to educate and what pedagogy practices are best, these attitudes will remain meaningless until put into practice. This idea was clearly supported by Sellnow (2006), who claimed that “the debate regarding how to best educate students is far from new. In fact, arguments about what constitutes effective pedagogy can be traced back more than 2000 years, to ancient Greece and the works of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates” (p. 164). However, even with the ongoing theoretical interrogations regarding effective teaching, the pedagogical practices are nearly the same as they were hundreds of years ago. Hence, directors of forensics must act in the best interest of their students, putting their research and experience into practice.

### Conclusion

The director of forensics plays a role between authority figure and friend. His or her interpretive lens through which he or she attempts to organize his or her experiences intentionally or unintentionally shapes his or her students. Because of the massive (at least potential) influence the director of forensics has (or can have) on his or her students, it is imperative for him or her to carefully consider the ethical stance from which he or she is operating. “Whether a coach decides to remain in forensics throughout his teaching career or whether he wishes to leave the activity after several years of experience, he will find important opportunities and challenges awaiting him” (Ziegelmueller, 1968, pp. 93-94). Suffice it to say, there is no one comprehensive definition or even a rule book which will work for all directors. In fact, part of why directors of forensics are able to be effective with their students may be because they, by necessity, deny definition and conformity.

This chapter has addressed the three prominent perspectives on the purpose of the activity of forensics and the way in which Directors of Forensics can implement strategies to suit the needs of their students. The results of the quantitative and qualitative studies have been

synthesized and incorporated to show how those results should affect Directors of Forensics. The next and final chapter will draw implications from the entirety of the present dissertation project.

## Chapter Six: Impact Calculus

The part of rhetoric that we, as members of the forensic community are primarily concerned with is the doing of rhetoric. Of course, that which we ask of are students on a daily basis is an arguably insurmountable task and analogous to the task we place on our public speaking classes. We ask forensic students, like public speaking students to master the doing before or concurrent with the learning of theories and logics which inform our doing. Not only do we want, and sometimes demand student mastery of the doing, but that our students' doing be (at least perceived as) better than the doing of students from other colleges and universities. In training our students, we are left with an exhausting tension which must be constantly and earnestly negotiated. We, the directors of our forensic teams, are exactly that: directors. It is paramount that just as directors of plays embed theoretical, performative, and logistical reasons within their explanations of directions to actors, we embed our thoughts behind why we tell students to do the things we tell them to do. Very rarely are we afforded the opportunity to make grandiose explanations to our teams as to why the choices we make on their behalf or the directions we instruct them to fulfill are in their best interest. Hence, our interpersonal communication with our students as we, too are engaged in the doing substitutes for the lecture spaces our non-forensic colleagues utilize. But unlike our non-forensic colleagues, our theoretical frames may be tacit or (at best) opaque. Our way of defining the meaning, purpose, function, and benefit of the doing may be seen as "the way" rather than one intellectual frame among many. This is sometimes overlooked because our identity as coaches is constituted by the expression which are said to be its results. Suffice it to say, regardless of the immense amount of thought and thoughtfulness behind the actions we take, the value of our forensic teams are reduced by many outsiders to the trophies we garner from competition.



The doing and the thinking about why we are doing are by necessity simultaneous in our activity. Logistically, it is impossible to constantly pause for explanation as to why we make the choices we make. This is perhaps one of the most valuable real-world skills we give our forensic students. In their future endeavors, students will likely not be afforded the opportunity to constantly explain why they make the choices they make. For NPDA debaters, this performed simultaneous thinking and doing become an excellent model for students to model their behavior after. The nature of NPDA debate demand simultaneous and often absolutely spontaneous thinking and doing. We, the coaches of NPDA, are preparing our students for what Rutledge (2002) calls a “role” (p. 18). Our debaters may or may not believe in the arguments they make, so debate is essentially a “role-playing game” (Rutledge, 2002, p. 18). Additionally, instead of training our debaters a set of one-to-one instructions, NPDA coaches must actually educate debaters on principles, because the specific content which will be argued each round is unknown until that round begins. Hence, we are not training debaters simply to memorize specific pieces of evidence or content. Instead, we are training them in a skill set that will enable them to collect, analyze, and act upon information. Because NPDA focuses on breadth of knowledge and argumentative technique, students who master these debate skills will be well equipped for their futures. For example, students who choose to take a corporate career path will not be able to explain to clients the theoretical reasons they have chosen particular sales techniques. Instead, their employers and clients will likely only appreciate and question results. It will be up to the student to internally justify and understand his or her choices. Similarly, students who choose a legal or political career path will not be offered time to pontificate upon why they choose particular legal or political backing; they will simply be expected to be effective. The skills we pass on to our students are skills they can learn to apply to future scenarios. Because of the

nature of NPDA debate especially students are able to truly experiment with their debate skills and are given feedback in the form of an oral critique, written ballot, and sometimes both. In any case, this experimentation and feedback combined helps students to continually hone their communicative and analytical skills.

### Debate Partnerships

The coaches' and students' feedback in this study indicates that the purpose behind partnering a particular debater with another varies. There appears to be two primary motivating factors between debate partnership decisions: debate skills and interpersonal skills. In terms of student responses, this study found that 1) high levels of argumentativeness and perceived partner argumentativeness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships, 2) high levels of verbal aggressiveness and perceived partner verbal aggressiveness predict low levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships, 3) similar levels of argumentativeness and dissimilar levels of verbal aggressiveness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships, and 4) the strongest predictor of high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships is debaters choosing their own partner. The first three of those findings speak primarily to debate skills, and the last speaks primarily to interpersonal skills. Overall, students who perceive that they and their debate partners are equally skilled in argument are more satisfied with their partner and those who see a disparity in skills or that either they or their partner is deficient argumentatively overall are less satisfied with their partner. Hence, if the director of a particular forensic team is most concerned with debate skills, partnering based on levels of argumentativeness and verbal aggressiveness can possibly lead to more satisfied debaters. Interestingly, very few coaches in this study found these particular results to be of high

importance. Most coaches reported that these findings were either not influential to them at all or that they already understood this information. Either way, coaches in this study overall seemed to have faith in their own debate skills and coaching ability. Along these lines, some coaches in the qualitative portion of this study indicated that the most important things to consider when partnering debaters together are skill level and potential for competitive success. These concerns are quite debate skill oriented. Further, for various reasons there were several coaches who reported that it is important for them to partner debaters together themselves rather than allowing their students to choose their partner. Most coaches in this study also reported that competitive success was either important or the most important value in forensics, indicating that coaches in this study have a high level of commitment to instilling good debate skills in their students.

Additionally, the last of these four quantitative findings indicates that those debaters who are primarily interpersonal skill oriented are more satisfied when they choose their own partner. There were a number of coaches who reported this particular finding as influential, indicating that perhaps interpersonal skills and student voice are of importance to them. Along these lines, some coaches in the qualitative portion of this study indicated that the most important things to consider when partnering debaters together are choice and compatibility. These concerns are quite interpersonal skill oriented. Further, for various reasons there were several coaches who reported that it is important for their students to choose their own partner or to negotiate partnerships with their students rather than the coach to partner debaters together themselves. Almost all of the coaches in this study indicated that ethics was either important or the most important value in forensics, indicating that coaches in this study have a high level of

commitment to instilling integrity into their students, which can contribute to interpersonal skill development in students.

Because of the nature of NPDA specifically and forensics generally, students must learn the theory behind what they are doing as they are doing that very thing. Hence, they are simultaneously learning and applying theory. In a similar fashion, their coaches are learning ethics and implementing ethics at the same time. The logic of arguments and the practice of arguments, whether the content addresses a specific debate round, why one competitor placed over another, or implementing an action with ethical implications, are concurrent. Like the aim of a liberal education in general, NPDA debate is an encyclopedic preparation for eventual future situations. This critical self-conscious orientation makes the student a junior colleague in the “debate about debate” rather than just a contestant. Students who can critique their own practice have crossed the line between training and education. The focus is on breadth rather than depth. Hence, there is no one-to-one preparation. The function of NPDA debate is quite similar. The focus is less on specific content and more on structure. There is no one answer. Instead, there is only stipulation and possibility. NPDA debate prepares students for the unknown. Debaters won’t know what to do precisely until the time comes.

### Coaches

Forensic coaches exist in an extremely difficult position. They are constantly experiencing, creating, and resolving tensions. As indicated by the values and the self-definition of roles reported by coaches, there simply is no one correct method or model for forensic coaches to follow. In fact, because there is very little direction or training given to forensic coaches, it is unlikely that one model of a forensic coach will emerge. As explained by Bartanen

(1994), there is no one definition or role of the director of forensics, because there is no one definition or role of the forensic program:

There is no one prototypical forensics program. Each program shares some general characteristics but remains unique. A program is unique because it is only a part of the broader organizational climate of its sponsoring school, and each school has different bureaucratic structures and educational values . . . Assuming there is only one kind of program is foolhardy. A program must exist compatibly with all other systems that influence it. (pp. 49-50).

Based on the myriad of expectations, values, and logistics which a director of forensics must consider, his or her role is always already in the midst of tension. These people all have different perspectives as well. In the qualitative portion of this study, coaches reported that they saw themselves as leaders, pedagogues, and ethicists. In fact, there were a couple of coaches who reported disliking having to choose between these roles as descriptors of their role; they see these as integrated.

Directors of Forensics clearly have a deep passion for the activity of forensics. Otherwise, they would not have chosen a career which requires so much emotional, mental, financial, and spiritual investment with so little apparent reward. Coaches are concerned with the character of their students, what kind of person each student is becoming. Heidegger (1996) argued that in order to do anything authentically, one must engage thoughtfully. Forensic coaches work hard to instill a thinkingness and self-reflexivity in their students. These coaches embody a level of caring, faith, and accommodation not expected of most non-forensic professors. Directors of forensics exist in a liminal space of ethical boundedness. There is a constant, arguably irreconcilable tension surrounding all of their decisions. Coaches are always already faced with the question of to whom do they owe loyalty, and are usually faced with the answer: everyone. They must produce results which will cause the university to continue to support their program, while at the same time, upholding their responsibilities to themselves and their

students. This is compounded by the fact that forensic coaches are often held to the same publication standards as their non-forensic faculty counterparts. Suffice it to say, directors of forensics are expected to produce more (publications, teaching, coaching, travel, trophies) with less (time, money, understanding/respect).

### Defining the Ethical Director of Forensics

What constitutes an ethical director of forensics will continue to be debated, contested, and likely never completely resolved because those descriptors are rather accurate linguistic constructs for defining the nature of that position. The ethical director of forensics, I have learned through this dissertation process is a director who acts ethically, and does not necessarily consider him or her self to be an “ethicist.” Those who are ethical in their actions call for themselves, other coaches, and their students to also be ethical. They act and speak with integrity, model ethical behavior, and engage in self reflexivity. These directors know that a test of good philosophy is how it operates in the real world. In this particular study, those coaches who fit the category of “coach knows best” in chapter four likely believe that they are acting ethically. As a community and as a broader culture, we have an ideal for leadership. However, implementation of the ideal is anything but a simple task. The pressures and tensions in which forensic coaches exist is fairly antithetical to the ideal of the university. The university, as an institution, tends to pay lip service to academic freedom. However, forensic coaches must answer to a number of levels of bureaucracy in addition to their students, fellow coaches, and their own conscious. Because of these pressures, coaches are left in a state of constant flux, while having no choice but to act any how, making change slow. “Radical change is the ultimate goal, but if the available options are reformist acts or political paralysis the choice seems clear. Incremental change should be valued as the means to a goal; the global begins in our backyard

but obviously does not end there” (Hall, 1993, p. 166). It is the transaction which occurs between thoughts and actions which becomes the impetus for real, meaningful change to finally occur. In order for students to continually effect their communities and give them the impetus to do so in the future, directors of forensics instill persuasive skills into their students. These skills enable students to broaden the debate about debate throughout their communities, both forensic and non.

An excellent theorist to aid our understanding and development as directors of forensics is Dewey. Dewey’s instrumentalism tells us that thought leads to actions, and thought is the intention to act. Pragmatism is doing with the ends in mind; pragmatism entails the knowing that comes from doing. Dewey (1997) explained what thought is and how it ought to be effectively trained. “Everything that comes to mind, that ‘goes through our heads,’ is called a thought . . . In the loosest sense, thinking signifies everything that, as we say, is ‘in our heads’ or that ‘goes through our minds’” (Dewey, 1997, pp. 1-2). Because they are intangible and complex, thoughts are difficult to pin down. Along this line, Dewey (1997) wrote that imaginative thoughts “. . . do not aim at knowledge, at belief about facts or in truths; and thereby they are marked off from reflective thought even when they most resemble it” (emphasis in original, p. 3). Analogously, ethics are not concrete and fixed. Ethics are difficult to understand and agree upon because they are fluid and permeable, like thought. Dewey (1997) continued, “Active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought” (emphasis in original, p. 7). It is reflective thought which is necessarily after the fact. The idea of coming to a conclusion regarding ethics becomes an especially sticky thought experiment because the evidence most thinkers have to rely upon is lived experience and perhaps some reading regarding

the issue. Often, even though ethics are hard to understand and make decisions about, these types of decisions are the kinds of decisions which must be made in the now, without much time for discussion or guidance.

Additionally, the need for the logical is explained by Dewey (1997): “Argument is perhaps needed to show that the intellectual (as distinct from the moral) end of education is entirely and only the logical in this sense; namely, the formation of careful, alert, and thorough habits of thinking” (Emphasis in original, pp. 57-58). He further expounded that usually the logical and the psychological are seen as distinct, however, there is an intrinsic connection between the two within education. In forensics, debate in particular, the logical and the psychological are at work simultaneously. The best directors of forensics will address both in training their debaters. Due to receiving a different topic every round, NPDA debate is ripe for disciplining the minds of debaters. In support, Dewey (1997) argued:

Genuine freedom, in short, is intellectual; it rests in the trained power of thought, in ability to “turn things over,” to look at matters deliberately, to judge whether the amount and kind of evidence requisite for decision is at hand, and if not, to tell where and how to seek such evidence. (Emphasis in original, pp. 66-67).

It is not the substantive part of each debate which fulfills Dewey’s call for training thought and disciplining the mind, but the formula instilled through directors of forensics’ coaching and debaters’ performances in competition. Each practice or competitive round of NPDA involves steps from preparation through the end of the speeches. “The disciplined, or logically trained, mind — the aim of the educative process — is the mind able to judge how far each of these steps needs to be carried in any particular situation” (p. 78). Because coaching ends with the preparation stage at most tournaments, and at the practice rounds with other tournaments, the director of forensics must train his or her debaters to know on their own how far to take each of the aforementioned steps during a competitive round of debate.



Dewey explained thoughts must connect and reconcile matters which may not appear connected or reconcilable at first glance. Ethics, particularly in forensics is a fluid, gray area, which is constantly negotiated, with no certain conclusion. As long as there is continuing thought, discourse, and genuine reflexivity in this area, directors of forensics are doing their job well. Dewey continued that it is essential, yet difficult to find continuity in meaning. “The importance of connections binding isolated items into a coherent single whole is embodied in all the phrases that denote the relation of premises and conclusions to each other” (Emphasis in original, p. 80). These connections require synthesis of meaning in order to draw meaningful conclusions. Inferences are constantly performed in debate rounds, and directors of forensics must make them on a daily basis regarding ethical dilemmas on their forensic teams. “The object of bringing into consideration a multitude of cases is to facilitate the selection of the evidential or significant features upon which to base inference in some single case” (Emphasis in original, p. 89). Directors of forensics are in constant negotiation with multitudes of perspectives on ethics, including ethical positions from their school, national organizations, tournaments, students, fellow coaches, and self. Decisions must be made on the spot in some cases, and therefore, directors of forensics must be well versed in these perspectives in order to make the most informed and best decision for all involved. Just as debaters must explain to their judge how to make the decision at the end of a debate round, directors of forensics are charged with making judgments constantly. Judges of debates and directors of forensics alike must come to a conclusion somehow regarding who won a debate or how to act, respectively.

Directors of forensics are forced to act, regardless of the fact that they are uncertain. Ethics must have meaning in order to regulate behavior, but the very nature of ethics leaves their meaning vague and open to multiple interpretations. Because of the inherent vagueness of

ethics, directors of forensics exist in a challenging and incessant tension. They must act in the now, but are simultaneously in the midst of deciphering meaning. Luckily, Dewey gave hope along these lines. “The acquisition of definiteness and of coherency (or constancy) of meanings is derived primarily from practical activities” (p. 122). The practical activity of making decisions, regardless of the incompleteness of understanding actually bolsters the understanding that directors of forensics already have.

Directors of forensics are constantly in danger of making wrong or unethical decisions, not because they are unethical, but because they are forced to act while in the midst of the process. Instead of simply looking for or fabricating an easy answer, directors of forensics must constantly negotiate and revisit ethical decisions. Many theorists agree with the Deweyan perspective on thought, training, and education. For example, Vanderstraeten (2002) argued:

Dewey’s approach to epistemological issues is first of all founded on a rejection of the dualistic assumptions that underlie modern philosophy . . . Instead, he takes his point of departure as the organism–environment transaction, thereby securing the relationship between organism and environment in terms of action. (pp. 241-242).

It is not the organism of the debater or the environment of the activity of debate which is important on its own, but the transaction between which enables meaningful discourse and training. In further support, Garrison (2001) explained:

Once we begin to think of mental functioning, intentionality, as non-teleological, transactional, and functional coordination, we may give up the dualism of inner and outer. Once we do, we may begin to learn how to live creatively in an eventful, durational-extensional, hence distributed, world without within. (p. 295).

From the nature of their job, directors of forensics must be process-oriented and understand that it is the transactions between themselves, their students, and the information that they are sharing with their students which is the utmost importance. “This orientation to practical transformation of the world is a key feature of Dewey’s theory of inquiry and activity . . . [and is] a potential

point of departure for further dialogue between pragmatism and cultural–historical theory of activity” (Miettenin, 2001, p.306). Directors of forensics are not simply training their debaters to debate, but also how to interact with, interpret, and affect their world.

#### Call for Future Research

In order to continue to justify our activity to outsiders, we, the members of the forensic community, must recurrently engage in what Carse (1986) called the infinite game. He explained that those who play finite games are limited by the rules. These are the people simply playing within the rules, to win or lose, while those playing infinite games are players, playing within and with the rules. “There are two kinds of games, finite and infinite games. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, and infinite game for the purpose of continuing the play” (Carse, 1986, p. 3). The finite game is one that is constrained by time, space, and its rules. There is an ends of winners and losers. When the game is over; it is over. However, the infinite game is a meta-game. There can be play not only within rules but also play with rules themselves. The ends is to perpetuate the game, so that play can continue. Rather than winners and losers, everyone in the infinite game is simply a player. To continue the possibility of the finite game of NPDA, coaches must continue to engage in the infinite game of meta-debate. Because we are a group of debaters ourselves, debate coaches tend to be good at debate about debate. We just want to be careful that our meta debate never slips into non-theoretical bickering. While NPDA debaters (quite likely) engage in each debate round with the goal of winning the finite game in play each round, those invested in forensics for the long haul (e. g. directors of forensics, their assistant coaches, and the future coaches they are currently training as debaters) are always already engaged in an infinite game. This infinite game includes recruiting future debaters, training debaters, researching in our field of forensics, and taking on

leadership positions. These parts of the game test and revise the rules of our game of NPDA as well as forensics as a whole. I propose that there are two ways in which we can help to justify our own programs and help others to justify their programs aside from the trophies which our teams may or may not win. After all, without the game itself, any possibility of competitive success dissolves. These areas include: 1) theoretical and historical grounding and 2) pragmatic catalysts.

### Theoretical and Historical Grounding

One way to theoretically and historically ground NPDA debate is to move toward a Sophistic definition of NPDA. Many of the practices we engage in as well as train our debaters to engage in seem to naturally flow from the practices of the Sophists. Though the Sophists were not exactly theoretically uniform, Isocrates claimed that there was unity in the practice of the Sophists. The practices of the Sophists were aimed at winning in an argumentative forum, which was dependent on the principles that 1) justice comes from who is in power, 2) the world is evocative of *logos*; language essentially makes the world, and 3) relativism and communalism is what keeps us human. Though the Sophists did not argue in favor or against the ideals of democracy, they did step into the opportunity of democracy by taking advantage of what democracy had to offer. Sophistic training involved *imatatio*, which involved imitation, not of specific words or speeches, but instead, commonplace ways of inhabiting. Students would be required to act out pretend situations in order to garner the skills and principles necessary to eventually step into the real, which is precisely the opportunity that NPDA debate provides for its participants.

Poulakos (1999) wrote a proposal for a Sophistic rhetoric, which can be directly applied to the world of NPDA. Sophistic rhetoric is a rhetoric concerned with practice before theory,

which—because of the extemporaneous nature of NPDA—is the way NPDA debaters are trained as well. “[B]ecause came about as an activity grounded in human experience, not in philosophical reflection, we must approach it by looking at those who practiced it before turning to those who reflected about it” (emphasis in original, Poulakos, 1999, p. 25). He explained that the elements of “*kairos* (the opportune moment), *to prepon* (the appropriate), and *to dynaton* (the possible)” are what makes rhetoric Sophistic (emphasis in original, Poulakos, 1999, p. 26).

Directly applied, currently in NPDA, we have a fabricated opportunity, dictated appropriateness, and a stifled possible. In terms of opportunity, Poulakos explained that extemporaneous speaking encompasses the Sophistic opportune moment, because this type of speech only occurs when the time necessitates that a speech be made; there is an immediacy and an urgency. “Clearly, speaking involves a temporal choice. The choice is not whether to speak but whether to speak now; more precisely, it is whether now is the time to speak” (Poulakos, 1999, p. 28). In NPDA, we fabricate the timeliness of argumentation in each round, because each round of NPDA has a different topic, unknown to the debaters until 15 to 20 minutes before the debate actually takes place. There is no organic need to speak. Instead, debaters speak when they are told to speak because that is when the tournament tells them to speak, and that is how the game is played. However, in the vein of the Sophistic tradition, this pretend timeliness serves as practice and preparation for debaters to respond to genuine *kairos* in the future.

Second, in terms of appropriateness, Poulakos argued that there are boundaries from the audience, occasion, etc. for what can be said in any given situation, or at least what can be said and be effective. “[Appropriateness] points out that situations have formal characteristics, and demands that speaking as a response to a situation be suitable to those very characteristics” (Poulakos, 1999, p. 29). There is a playfulness in Sophistic appropriateness. Constraints both

limit and enable play; there is a freedom within bounds. Constraints, based on appropriateness, narrow focus and are similar to the principle of moving from agreement to disagreement in persuasive speaking. The appropriateness in NPDA is dictated by the national organization, by the tournament, and by the judge. The national organization provides written rules, which all participants are to abide by, and each individual tournament has the option to amend those rules (to some degree). Additionally, the NPDA judge may or may not provide a judging paradigm before the debate takes place, but either way, the debaters are expected to adapt to that judge's expectations and what he or she sees as appropriate for the round.

Third and finally, in terms of the possible, Poulakos wrote that the possible is the exact opposite of reality, or what is currently occurring in the status quo. "Consideration of the possible affirms in man the desire to be at another place or at another time and takes him away from the world of actuality and transports him in that of potentiality" (Poulakos, 1999, p. 30). NPDA debate empowers debaters to be creative and craft a hypothetical world, through the debate game constructed power of fiat, so that the logic of decisions and their potential consequences can be argued, rather than arguing about the pragmatics. Instead of debating about how we should proceed, debaters usually are able to argue about should we proceed at all. The possible is limited by the preparation provided by the debaters' coach(es). Debate coaches have the opportunity to influence their debaters during preparation time, which at its most extreme involves coaches simply "feeding" their debaters a case. Suffice it to say, the energy and experience is influenced by that topic and the short preparation in which debaters and their coaches engage in before the debate.

Another way for us to theoretically ground our activity is to explicitly show connection between what we do and the theorists we constantly cite. For example, I have observed many

debaters name-drop philosophers in debate rounds without an (apparent) understanding of the philosopher. “There is no error more dangerous than confusing the effect with the cause: I call it the genuine corruption of reason” (emphasis in original, Nietzsche, 1997, p. 30). Nietzsche argued that life is essentially chaos and events simply occur without clear cause. In NPDA debate, because of its extemporaneous nature, debaters are at a great risk of drawing causes from insufficient or even untrue examples. Particularly in the harms section of policy rounds of NPDA, it is essential that NPDA debaters be well-informed on the issues they are debating so that the warrants they claim exist are actually there. Based on this concern, Nietzsche set forth a new responsibility. The only responsibility humans have is to live life:

The good conscience has as a preliminary stage the bad conscience—the latter is not the opposite: for everything good was once new, consequently unfamiliar, contrary to custom, immoral, and gnawed at the heart of its fortunate inventor like a worm. (Emphasis in original, Nietzsche, 1977, p. 82).

He created a distinction between actions which are life affirming and those actions which are life negating. Any action or belief that perpetuates guilt is life negating. For NPDA debate, norms evolve based on what is rewarded and not rewarded in competition. In essence, actions are evaluated by debaters in terms of win affirming and win negating. Through teaching philosophy more thoroughly or simply encouraging our debaters to only argue positions that they fully understand, we can also encourage a new responsibility.

### Pragmatic Catalysts

As the spokespeople of our forensic teams, directors of forensics are consistently and constantly under the microscope from our departments and larger administration. Pragmatically speaking, our teams bring very little tangible reward to our institutions. In the debate between Woolbert and Hunt (Hunt, 1915a; Hunt, 1915b; Hunt, 1917; Hunt, 1922; Hunt, 1923; Hunt, 1936; Woolbert, 1915; Woolbert, 1916; Woolbert, 1917; Woolbert, 1918; Woolbert, 1919a;

Woolbert, 1919b; Woolbert, 1920; Woolbert, 1923), Woolbert claimed that we must become specialists and research only finite matters. This position essentially supports depth over breadth. Hunt said that we should use our talent and become the great clearing house of ideas for the university. This position essentially supports that we should be able to carry out a nearly infinite number of tasks. In microcosm, we have the roots to many debates about debate here. Unfortunately, as of late, the university or college has been hijacked by an obsession with capitalism. As Weaver (1948) argued, the university is the place intellectual pursuits to be experienced and explored. However, culturally, we have moved closer and closer to the corporate model in our institutions. Hence, the new forensic coach is under surveillance and essentially guilty until proven innocent. He or she must justify the forensic program over and over again to those who provide the team with funding. As Dunham (1968) explained:

It is difficult to ascertain whether some forensic programs are meeting the needs of their students, the teacher, the administration, or meeting no needs at all. While almost all programs claim to meet student needs, in many cases the needs are never really identified. (p. 97).

This makes it increasingly hard for coaches to focus on process rather than outcome. In our rhetorical laboratories of forensic competition, with the possibility of victory is an equal possibility of failure. The pressure to be victorious increases as the financial cost to get to those laboratories increases. As Klopf and Lahman (1967) explained:

The wise coach institutes a training program that is educationally based yet geared toward success. He recognizes the strengths and weaknesses of his squad and deploys its members accordingly . . . He realizes that contest debating justifies its existence not as an interscholastic display of his students' talents, but as a truly educational enterprise. It is an activity for the many. (pp. 90-91).

While the above sentiment is encouraging and effective within the forensic community, directors of forensics are constantly challenged with the demand to justify their teams to their non-forensic colleagues, administration, and other outsiders. In order to fulfill this demand, we need to



continue to research and write about our activity and community. Frankly, we must improve the quantity and quality of our literature and intellectual conversation in order to be supported and taken seriously by scholars who never have been involved with forensics.

While it would be nice to simply outline what makes the ideal debate coach, that is rather unattainable. Just like there is no one way to teach any given subject, there is also no one way to coach a forensic team. With that in mind, it is important to realize that through writing about and discussing our experiences with each other, it is possible to come up with suggestions and even some answers. As Lewis (1944) argued, if we continue to look through things, it is the equivalent of being blind. There are obviously some situations with ethical implications that each forensic coach will have to make a different decision for, but there are other situations with far more universal answers. Regardless of the situations and the suggestions, continuing to further forensic scholarship will help all of our forensic teams. We must continue to see what is in front of us, careful to avoid over-analyzing to the point that our conclusions are unusable. In order to sustain our teams, we must produce positive results and in order to sustain our dreams, we must ethically engage our students who are the productive democratic citizens of tomorrow.

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Appendix A

Informed Consent and Quantitative Survey

Title of Research Project: Argumentativeness, Verbal Aggressiveness, and Competitive Relational Satisfaction in the Parliamentary Debate Dyad.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The primary purpose of this research project is to understand student perceptions of themselves and their debate partners in intercollegiate forensics competition. This research will benefit intercollegiate forensics coaches and students, with recommendations for addressing appropriately and effectively the challenges and opportunities associated with communicating about these issues in forensics teams as well as the community as a whole.

You will be asked to complete a survey, which will take 10-15 minutes. We are most interested in getting your perceptions of your debate partner and your perception of that relationship, so please answer the questions honestly and openly. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. The information from the survey will be analyzed through a computer program. Your name and any other identifiers will not be associated with the data in any way. Be assured that once the research team has analyzed the answers, the surveys will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice from the researchers. Please feel free to ask any questions before signing this form.

For more information about this research project, please contact Crystal Lane Swift (crystallaneswift@hotmail.com). Should you feel that you have experienced any harm from this study, please contact:

Robert C. Mathews, Chairman  
LSU Institutional Review Board  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.6792  
irb@lsu.edu

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in this research project examining student perceptions of debate relationships. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

Please answer the following questions about yourself:

I am \_\_\_ male \_\_\_ female I am \_\_\_ years old

I am a freshman/sophomore/junior/senior

I have competed in intercollegiate forensics for \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time (please check one):

\_\_\_ one semester \_\_\_ one year \_\_\_ two years \_\_\_ three years

I have competed in/currently compete in the following genres of intercollegiate forensics events (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_ Limited Preparation Events (Impromptu/Extemporaneous)

\_\_\_ Platform/Public Address Events(Informative/Persuasion/Speech to Entertain[After Dinner Speaking]/Rhetorical Criticism[Communication Analysis])

\_\_\_ Interpretation of Literature Events (Readers' Theatre/Poetry/Duo/Prose/Faith Literature/Program Oral Interpretation/Dramatic Interpretation)

\_\_\_ Unlimited Preparation Debate (LD/CEDA/NDT/ADA/NEDA)

\_\_\_ Other Limited Preparation Debate(APDA/IPDA)

Please answer the following about your partner:

My partner is \_\_\_ male \_\_\_ female My partner is \_\_\_ years old

My partner is a freshman/sophomore/junior/senior

My partner has competed in intercollegiate forensics for \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time (please check one):

\_\_\_ one semester \_\_\_ one year \_\_\_ two years \_\_\_ three years

My partner has competed in/does compete in the following genres of intercollegiate forensics events (please check all that apply):

\_\_\_ Limited Preparation Events (Impromptu/Extemporaneous)

\_\_\_ Platform/Public Address Events(Informative/Persuasion/Speech to Entertain[After Dinner Speaking]/Rhetorical Criticism[Communication Analysis])

\_\_\_ Interpretation of Literature Events (Readers' Theatre/Poetry/Duo/Prose/Faith Literature/Program Oral Interpretation/Dramatic Interpretation)

\_\_\_ Unlimited Preparation Debate (LD/CEDA/NDT/ADA/NEDA)

\_\_\_ Other Limited Preparation Debate(APDA/IPDA)

Please answer the following questions about you and your partner:

My Partner and I compete for a \_\_\_ community college \_\_\_ four-year college/university

My partner and I \_\_\_ chose to be partners \_\_\_ were assigned by our coach to be partners

My partner and I have competed in intercollegiate debate for \_\_\_\_\_ amount of time as partners (please check one):

\_\_\_ one semester \_\_\_ one year \_\_\_ two years \_\_\_ three years

Please answer the following items on a scale of 1-7, where 1 means “never,” 2 means “almost never,” 3 means “rarely,” 4 means “sometimes,” 5 means “often,” 6 means “almost always,” and 7 means “always”:

1. I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. Arguing with a person creates more problems for me than it solves.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. When I finish arguing with someone, I feel nervous and upset.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. I feel excitement when I expect that a conversation I am in is leading to an argument.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. I do not like to miss the opportunity to argue a controversial issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. I consider an argument an intellectual challenge.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. I find myself unable to think of effective points during an argument.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I try to avoid getting into arguments.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. Arguing over controversial issues improves my critical thinking ability.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. If individuals I am trying to influence deserve it, I attack their character.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. I am careful to avoid attacking individuals’ intelligence when I attack their ideas.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I try to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when I attempt to influence them.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. When I am not able to refute others' positions, I try to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I try to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance, I lose my temper and say rude things to them.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. When individuals insult me, I get a lot of pleasure out of telling them off.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. When people criticize my shortcomings, I take it in good humor and do not try to get back at them.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I refuse to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. When people behave in ways that are in poor taste, I insult them in order to shock them into proper behavior.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. My partner enjoys defending his/her point of view on an issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. My partner thinks that arguing with a person creates more problems for my partner than it solves.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. When my partner finishes arguing with someone, he/she feels nervous and upset.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. My partner feels excitement when he/she expects that a conversation he/she is in is leading to an argument.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. My partner prefers being with people who rarely disagree with him/her.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
26. My partner does not like to miss the opportunity to argue a controversial issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

27. My partner considers an argument an intellectual challenge.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. My partner finds himself/herself unable to think of effective points during an argument.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. My partner tries to avoid getting into arguments.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. My partner thinks that arguing over controversial issues improves his/her critical thinking ability.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
31. If individuals my partner is trying to influence deserve it, he/she attacks their character.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32. My partner is careful to avoid attacking individuals' intelligence when he/she attacks their ideas.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33. My partner tries to avoid having other people feel bad about themselves when he/she attempts to influence them.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
34. When my partner is not able to refute others' positions, he/she tries to make them feel defensive in order to weaken their positions.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35. My partner tries to make people feel good about themselves even when their ideas are stupid.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
36. When people simply will not budge on a matter of importance, my partner loses his/her temper and says rude things to them.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
37. When individuals insult my partner, he/she gets a lot of pleasure out of telling them off.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
38. When people criticize my partner's shortcomings, he/she takes it in good humor and does not try to get back at them.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
39. My partner refuses to participate in arguments when they involve personal attacks.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. When people behave in ways that are in poor taste, my partner insults them in order to shock them into proper behavior.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
41. I willingly and honestly disclose positive and negative things about my competitive debate abilities to my partner.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
42. My partner does not really understand my debate style.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
43. My partner willingly and honestly discloses positive and negative things about his or her competitive debate abilities to me.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
44. I know that I can count on my partner during debate competition.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
45. I like my partner more than most people I know because of our competitive record.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
46. Sometimes, I feel like I don't really understand my partner's debate style.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
47. There are some things I dislike about my partner's debate style.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
48. My partner and I are not very debate competitively compatible at all.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
49. I have little in common with my partner in terms of debate.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
50. I feel very close to my partner in debate competition.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Thank you very much for participating in our study. If you are interested in the results, please email Crystal Lane Swift ([crystallaneswift@hotmail.com](mailto:crystallaneswift@hotmail.com)), and we will be happy to send you a copy of our final paper.

Appendix B

Informed Consent and Qualitative Survey

Title of Research Project: Coach Reactions to NPDA Competitor Argumentativeness, Verbal Aggressiveness, and Competitive Relational Satisfaction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research project. The primary purpose of this research project is to understand coach perceptions of themselves and NPDA debaters in intercollegiate forensics competition. This research will benefit intercollegiate forensics coaches and students, with recommendations for addressing appropriately and effectively the challenges and opportunities associated with communicating about these issues in forensics teams as well as the community as a whole.

You will be asked to complete a survey, which will take 10-15 minutes. We are most interested in getting your perceptions of your forensic philosophy and your perception of study results mentioned on the survey, so please answer the questions honestly and openly. There are no correct or incorrect answers.

There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in this study. The information from the survey will be analyzed through an inductive analytical process. Your name and any other identifiers will not be associated with the data in any way. Be assured that once the research team has analyzed the answers, the surveys will be destroyed.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time without prejudice from the researchers. Please feel free to ask any questions before signing this form.

For more information about this research project, please contact Crystal Lane Swift (crystallaneswift@hotmail.com). Should you feel that you have experienced any harm from this study, please contact:

Robert C. Mathews, Chairman  
LSU Institutional Review Board  
203 B-1 David Boyd Hall  
P: 225.578.8692  
F: 225.578.6792  
irb@lsu.edu

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I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to participate in this research project examining coach perceptions of NPDA debaters. I have read the description of this project and give my consent to participate.

\_\_\_\_\_  
signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

Please answer the following about yourself:

I am a(n) \_\_\_ Director of Forensics/Director of Debate \_\_\_ Assistant Coach.

I coach for a \_\_\_ community college \_\_\_ four-year college or university.

I \_\_\_ am \_\_\_ am not in charge of NPDA partnerships on my forensic team.

The three most important values on my forensic team are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The three most important things to consider when partnering NPDA debaters together are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

I (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) \_\_\_ do \_\_\_ do not allow my NPDA debaters to choose their own partner.

The reason for this is:

In a recent quantitative study, researchers found that high levels of argumentativeness and perceived partner argumentativeness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships. How informative and/or important do you find this information?

Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?

In the same quantitative study, researchers found that high levels of verbal aggressiveness and perceived partner verbal aggressiveness predict low levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships. How informative and/or important do you find this information?

Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?

In the same quantitative study, researchers found that similar levels of argumentativeness and dissimilar levels of verbal aggressiveness predict high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships. How informative and/or important do you find this information?

Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?

In the same quantitative study, researchers found that the strongest predictor of high levels of competitive relational satisfaction in NPDA debate partnerships is debaters choosing their own partner. How informative and/or important do you find this information?



Could this influence the way you (or the coach in charge of NPDA debate partnerships) insofar as the way you choose to partner debaters?

How important are ethics to you as a forensic coach?

How important to you is competitive success as a forensic coach?

What do you do (if anything) to balance the values of competitive success and ethics on your forensic team?

Rank the following in the order of importance as you see your role as a forensic coach:

1=most important, 3=least important

\_\_\_ Leader

\_\_\_ Pedagogue

\_\_\_ Ethicist

## Vita

Crystal Lane Swift was born and raised in San Diego, California, where, due to moving around quite a bit, she attended Scripps Ranch High School, Rancho Bernardo High School, and San Pasqual High School, from which she graduated in June, 2000. In August, 2000 she began her college career at Palomar College in San Marcos, California, where she served as president of the forensic team, earning regional, state, and national competitive success, student delegate to the Associated Student Government, Hallmark Chair to Phi Theta Kappa, Vice President to Alpha Gamma Sigma, and graduated with Associate in Arts degrees in general studies, speech communication, and theatre arts in May, 2002.

In June 2002, Crystal Lane began attending California Baptist University, where she served as captain of the forensic team, earning regional championships in parliamentary debate and national titles in individual events. She also graduated both Magna Cum Laude and Alpha Chi in May, 2003 with her Bachelor of Arts in communication arts with an emphasis in speech. Next, Crystal Lane began work on her Master in Arts in communication liberal arts and sciences at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. At Ball State, she was an assistant coach to the individual events team, coaching state and national award winning individuals and teams. She also resurrected Lincoln Douglas debate for a year as well as occasionally coached the parliamentary debate team, gave mass lectures to the basic course students, taught six sections of the basic course, and gave demonstration speeches for her own section and others' sections of the basic course. Crystal Lane graduated with her master's in May, 2005 after completing her course work and thesis, "Conflating Rules, Norms, and Ethics in Intercollegiate Forensics."

After earning her master's, Crystal Lane returned to Palomar College as an adjunct speech professor in summer 2005, teaching two sections of the basic course, after which she

began her doctorate work at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Her first year, she taught five sections of the basic course and volunteer coached the forensic team. The next year, she was promoted to director of forensics, coaching the team full-time in addition to her course work. She also returned to Palomar in summer 2007, to teach two sections of the basic course, publishing her own course packet, ISB # 1-59159-708-0, and has secured two more sections to teach at Palomar to teach during summer 2008.

Crystal Lane has also contributed service to the universities she has taught at. She has conducted a number of guest lectures and demonstration speeches and debates in public speaking, argumentation and debate, communication theory, and advanced public speaking courses. She has also served as an invited respondent to multiple live performances, performed in two graduate student show cases as well as in a live performance, which she also contributed to the construction of the script and set, screened two films in film festivals, which she wrote, directed, and starred in, and hosted/co-hosted multiple forensic invitational tournaments on the high school and college level. She is also functional in both Spanish and American Sign Language.

Additionally, Crystal Lane has published and presented at conferences much of her academic writing. Thus far, she has presented 25 papers at conferences and published eight articles. Crystal Lane Swift will be a professor of communication and forensics coach at Mount San Antonio College in the Los Angeles area starting fall, 2008.