WHAT WE ARE TRYING TO TEACH

Reconnecting Collegiate Forensics to the Communication Discipline

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INTRODUCTION

For decades the assessment of what constitutes "quality performance" in collegiate forensics has been rooted in a mysterious and unsupported collective conception of unwritten rules and performance practices related to a very narrow and instinctive set of standards. This casual system for documenting the efficacy of teaching practice in collegiate forensics is insufficient to meet the standards and expectations for higher education *assessment* in the 21st century. What was formerly a trend toward considerations of assessment in higher education has become the dominant model demonstrating the relationship between teaching and learning outcomes. This document marks a concerted attempt by the National Forensic Association to move away from assessment standards that reflect the tapered view of a specific community, and toward pedagogical prerogatives fully relevant and strongly tied to the foundations of the Communication discipline. The treatment of each element is rooted in the realities of current practice. Prerogative components are not oriented toward reshaping the scene (i.e. altering the circumstances of competitive collegiate tournaments, etc.), but rather toward defining pedagogical expectations for coach, teacher, student and competitor.

The document features descriptive analysis of prerogatives for collegiate forensics pedagogy organized in two tiers. A third tier that would address each event individually is strongly suggested during the course of future development.

Each section is fashioned as a series of "statements of purpose." The term *purpose,* in this regard, is related to roots and motivations for teaching. This document recognizes the shaping of *best practices in forensics pedagogy* as a central goal for the collegiate forensics community. The full measure of the components in each tier work to shape the *purpose* of teaching and coaching practices that resist replication of past performances and move toward speechmaking and performance development founded in the root principles and rhetorical foundations celebrated in the scholarly and professional study of human communication.

Tier one represents broadly conceived statements of purpose relevant to rhetoric and performance pedagogy in the Communication discipline. The statement set relates to elements of public communication that are large in scope and constitute common considerations in the practice of effective public speaking and performance. Key areas of emphasis in this section include the critical nature of considering audience, occasion, topic/text, etc. in successful public speech.

Tier two emphasizes the performance genres common to forensics pedagogy in individual events at the collegiate level: public address, limited preparation speaking and oral interpretation. Tier two narrows the focus of the statements of purpose so as to consider unique aspects of each genre. While many of the same subject elements (i.e. topic/text selection) that appear in tier one are

addressed in tier two, the utility of the tiered approach is revealed in the increasingly intricate analytic content.

While not addressed in this document, tier three would emphasize the selection of individual events independently. This section would be unique in comparison to the previous tiers in its content construction. In this tier, only elements that are specifically relevant to an individual event, but not emphasized in a previous tier, would be addressed. Therefore, for example, the discussion of prose interpretation would only feature analytic content related to the establishment of clear and distinct pedagogical prerogatives for that particular event.

Development of tier three analytic material would constitute the *next step* in the development of common assessment measures for the National Forensic Association.

ACADEMIC LEARNING COMPACT (ALC)

The National Forensic Association Academic Learning Compact incorporates student learning outcome activity across five domains that should characterize the skills and abilities of a successfully trained student/competitor in collegiate forensics, regardless of the program, which they represent. The Academic Learning Compact [1]should align with the following five domains.

- DISCIPLINE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (ALC 1)
    - (ALC 1.1) Use communication technology effectively.
    - (ALC 1.2) Describe and apply communication concepts and principles from the following areas:
        - Rhetorical theory
        - Fundamentals of speech
        - Audience analysis
        - Fundamentals of oral interpretation of literature
        - Argumentation
- COMMUNICATION (ALC 2)
    - (ALC 2.1) Adapt style and delivery to communication clearly and memorably.
    - (ALC 2.2) Deliver effective presentations with well-defined introductions, main points, supporting information, and conclusions.
    - (ALC 2.3) Establish credibility with audience.
    - (ALC 2.4) Use information technology effectively to conduct research.
- CRITICAL THINKING (ALC 3)
    - (ALC 3.1) Apply rhetorical, relational and critical theories to understand communication events.
    - (ALC 3.2) Evaluate effective and ineffective communication.
    - (ALC 3.3) Suggest audience-centered strategies for improvement in public speaking and performance that are considerate of the speaker
    - (ALC 3.4) Identify trustworthy evidence and information.
- INTEGRITY/VALUES (ALC 4)
    - (ALC 4.1) Distinguish between ethical and unethical behavior in human communication.
    - (ALC 4.2) Describe and adhere to the principles of ethical practice in public speaking, performance, scholarly activity and citizenship.

The ALC establishes the broadly-based outcome goals for learning in collegiate forensics. The descriptive analytic content outlined in the tiers 1 and 2 are aligned with the ALC.

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[1] The domains in the *Academic Learning Compact* are drawn from those approved by the Florida Board of Governors, which oversees the Florida State University system (11 public universities).   The ALC presented in this document reflects the spirit of the content specifically utilized in the Department of Communication Arts at the University of West Florida.

TIER ONE
COMPREHENSIVE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

PRAXIS FOUNDED IN DISCIPLINARY PRINCIPLES: Comprehensive performance evaluation as "best practice" in forensics pedagogy

The duty of educators is to help students strive to achieve an array of educational learning objectives. Thus, speech and performance critics should guard against the tendency to let any one learning objective – the desire to stay "in time," the desire to see students speak "without notes," etc. - dominate the judging decision to the exclusion of other important learning objectives. That is not to say that a single factor, element or consideration cannot emerge as the dominant factor in a critique. However, an adjudicator in collegiate forensics must ensure that the general basis for critique and evaluation be reflective of a multiplicity of factors. Effective human communication is not reliant on the successful performance of a single communicative facet. Therefore standards for evaluation of speech and performance must reflect a comprehensive consideration of scene, act, agent, agency, and purpose.

RATIONALE: COMMUNICATION ETHICS

The basis for assessing collegiate forensics education is founded in the rhetorical tradition. To that end, the National Forensic Association commits to a series of principles that focus competitive and educational practice toward ethical rhetoric.

Rhetoric:

1. serves the end of self-discovery, social knowledge, or public action more than personal ambition;
2. avoids intolerance and acknowledges audience freedom of choice and freedom of assent;
3. is reflexive in including self-scrutiny of one's own evidence, reasoning and motives;
4. is attentive to data through use of accurate, complete, and relevant evidence and reasoning and through use of appropriate field-dependent tests for soundness of evidence and reasoning;
5. is bilateral, meaning it includes mutuality of personal and intellectual risk, openness to the possibility of self-change, and openness to scrutiny of others;
6. is self-perpetuating. Disagreement on a subject leaves open the possibility of deliberation on other subjects and of later deliberation on the disputed subject. Also, human capacities for persuasion, in ourselves and in others, are nurtured through what Henry Johnstone terms the habits of resoluteness, openness, gentleness, and compassion;
7. embodies [an] attitude of reasonableness, including willingness to present reasons in support of our views, tolerance of presentation of reasons by

others, respect for the intrinsic worth of the other person as a human, and avoidance of personalizing the controversy. (Johannesen, Valde and Whedbee, p. 62)

RATIONALE: TEACHING

Collegiate forensics is, at its core, an extremely effective model for teaching communication principles. As such, the National Forensic Association aligns itself with the ethical standards of the discipline at large. The practice of forensic pedagogy shall align with the National Communication Association's (NCA) *Code of Professional Ethics for the Communication Scholar/Teacher*. The tenets of this code of ethics should inform casual and formal coaching practices, pedagogical goal setting, and standards of excellence in forensic teaching. While the NCA code was designed for traditional classroom pedagogy, the unique tutor-style teaching mode inherent in forensic pedagogy neatly links to the more broadly based articulation of ethical principles for the communication discipline.

CODE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR THE COMMUNICATION SCHOLAR/TEACHER

Our primary responsibilities as communication teachers rest in being knowledgeable, communicating what we know in a fair and accurate manner, acting as ethical role models for students, and establishing relationships with students that enhance learning and encourage students to behave ethically.

Most important is the area of academic integrity. As teachers, we maintain high standards of academic integrity by:

- Teaching only those courses for which we have academic credentials, that is, preparation in the subject matter area and knowledge of current thinking and research related to the course material.

- Helping all students to develop their fullest academic potential; encouraging them to become engaged in learning, to think critically about readings and lectures, to reflect on what they learn and, when appropriate, to disagree with what is presented; and to participate with faculty and other students in research projects and activities.

- Acknowledging scholarly debates where they exist and helping students understand the nature of scholarly controversy, rather than presenting controversial material as "truth."

- Engaging in classroom practices only to the extent that one is qualified to do so. For example, communication teachers should not assign exercises requiring self-disclosure by students, unless they have provided ways for students to avoid making significant disclosures without penalty. Nor should communication teachers attempt to lead exercises designed to reduce communication apprehension without being trained to do so. In

designing classroom activity, the ethical communication teacher avoids putting students at psychological or emotional risk.

- Using with care exercises or assignments that may conflict with the closely held values of students. Instructors must be open to allowing alternative assignments when students object for personal reasons.

Communication teachers display personal integrity in the classroom by their own use of ethical behaviors and by refusing to encourage or tolerate unethical behavior.

As communication teachers, we strive to treat all students fairly and we are always concerned with fairness. We model fairness in the classroom and require that students value fairness by insisting on respectful and civil expression when discussing differing viewpoints. We encourage listening to others and presenting ideas accurately, while acknowledging differences in points of view and personal biases. We provide, and encourage students to provide, constructive feedback to others in the class while acknowledging the value of opposing arguments and evidence. We try to foster freedom of expression and a safe classroom environment in which students communicate candidly and thrive intellectually.

We respect and honor culturally based differences in communication and presentational styles in and outside the classroom. That respect calls for encouraging students to communicate in multiple ways, depending on what is most appropriate and effective for given contexts and communication goals. We strive to treat all students equally by not allowing personal pre-dispositions or biases to influence how we teach and interact with students.

We demonstrate respect for students by acts of confidentiality, keeping grades and other personal information about students private. In other matters we are honest and open. We present course objectives and requirements fully and communicate clear criteria for grading and evaluating student achievement. We present ourselves honestly to students and others, accurately describing our professional credentials, qualifications, and knowledge.

We endeavor to assess student learning using methods and instruments that are free of bias and that provide an equal opportunity for all students to perform well. We assess students' work based on the quality of content, not the viewpoints presented.

Finally, we accept our professional and social responsibilities as communication educators by endeavoring to improve public understanding of communication theory, research, and practice. When the opportunity presents itself, we provide information and instruction to students and others about ethical communication and how to think and behave as ethical communicators.

BEST PRACTICE-STUDENT SCHOLAR/COMPETITOR

Collegiate forensics is designed to provide students a unique set of educational opportunities in which they are challenged to make communication choices (performance-based, analytic, political, etc.) in public forums. The basic premise

that must function as the foundation for this form of learning is a stringent code that compels students to make ethical choices as a foundational consideration of audience.

The initial set of guidelines that shall govern practice in this realm is the *National Forensic Association Code of Ethics.*

ALC Alignment: ALC 4.1; ALC 4.2

THE AUDIENCE MUST ALWAYS BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

RATIONALE:

It is widely agreed that "effective public speakers are continuously audience-centered" (Sellnow, p. 58). This concern for the audience extends "throughout the speechmaking and presentation process" and has an impact on the speaker's choices concerning content, structure, delivery, and so on (Sellnow, p. 58). Even speeches that are presented multiple times must remain flexible living organisms, which adapt to the demands of the immediate context (occasion and audience). As Jaffe (p. 71) explains, "even politicians, salespersons, or university recruiters, who present the same material repeatedly, adapt their material to each audience and each setting." As explained by Gregory (p. 67), "many people find it helpful to view such analysis and adaptation as a form of *customizing*, a popular strategy in the business world....Customizing in public speaking means tailoring a speech to a listeners' knowledge level, needs, and interests....In public speaking, as in clothing, it isn't true that 'one size fits all.'"

Unfortunately, the challenge to develop audience analysis skills is severely constrained by the current nature of forensics tournaments, where students are challenged to speak to basically the same amorphously defined audience of professional forensics coaches mixed with widely assorted lay judges week after week. This constraint is made still more daunting by the fact that contest rules generally require public address speeches to be fully researched, composed, and memorized in advance. The ability of students to make on-the-spot audience adjustments mid-presentation is thus somewhat limited. This draws our attention to a consideration of the similarities and differences between "the audience of the moment" (the particular judge or judges in the room) and the larger more extended community or audience who the critic is being asked to represent, and reminds us of the responsibility of adjudicators to prioritize the targeting of audiences-as-groups over the targeting of audiences-as-individuals. This also suggests that tournament organizers and judges can promote the educational needs of students in this area by looking for innovative ways to confront students with diverse audiences (mock or real in nature). Operating within this constraint, however, it is still important to recognize audience analysis as an important learning goal. A demonstration of a speaker's consideration of audience must be reflected in all performance choices (topic choice, physical and vocal performance variables, etc.)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

The student will demonstrate that they have studied and adhered to relevant principles of audience analysis. It is understood that any given presentation cannot possibly take into account the specific tastes and background of the particular judge(s) assigned to adjudicate a particular section of competition, and that students should not be expected to anticipate or satisfy the purely personal interests and preferences of individual critic judges. However, students should

demonstrate their awareness of, concern for, and focus on reaching the general community embodied by the "listening other."

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.2; ALC 2.3; and ALC 3.3

THE SPECIFIC OCCASION MUST ALWAYS BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

RATIONALE:

As noted by O'Hair, Stewart and Rubenstein (p. 99), speakers must consider "the logistics of the actual speech setting – size of audience, location, time, seating arrangement, and speech context." In some ways, the situations encountered by students in collegiate forensics routinely replicate themselves. Regardless of the time of year or the particular tournament host, many elements of the speaking situation are highly standardized. However, these speaking occasions can be highly diverse in other ways.   The sheer logistics of room size, furniture layout, lighting, extraneous noise, external distractions and so on may significantly impact the speaking situation. Audience size can vary from one (the critic judge) to a few (in an average preliminary round) to many (in average elimination rounds). The time of day, the geographical region, recent world events, and many other factors may operate to modify the speaking situation. A demonstration of a speaker's consideration of occasion must be reflected in all performance choices (topic choice, physical and vocal performance variables, etc.)

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

To the maximum reasonable extent, students should demonstrate an awareness of, a concern for, and an ability to adjust to the unique demands and constraints of the particular speaking situation.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.3; ALC 3.1; ALC 3.2 & ALC 4.1

TIER TWO
GENERAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES: PUBLIC ADDRESS

AREA ONE: AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

RATIONALE:

See full explanation provided under the Tier 1 objectives, #1.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

The student will demonstrate that they have studied and adhered to relevant principles of audience analysis. It is understood that any given presentation cannot possibly take into account the specific tastes and background of the particular judge(s) assigned to adjudicate a particular section of competition, and that students should not be expected to anticipate or satisfy the purely personal interests and preferences of individual critic judges. However, students should demonstrate their awareness of, concern for, and focus on reaching the general community embodied by the "listening other."

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.2; ALC 2.3; and ALC 3.3

AREA TWO: ANALYSIS OF THE OCCASION

RATIONALE:

Even though forensics competitors may memorize the speeches they present at forensics tournaments, and even though those tournaments may possess a great number of similarities, it is still undeniably true that each individual round of competition confronts speakers with a situation that is "unique" in many ways. The time of day, the season of the year, recent world events, physical traits of the room, the size and nature of the audience, and many other factors combine to make each speaking situation different from any other. Thus, forensics speakers should not look at their pre-memorized public addresses as unchanging fossils, which have been "locked in amber." Rather, the speech must remain open to adjustments in language (Verderber and Verderber, p. 62), adjustments to the physical environment (Verderber and Verderber, p. 84), adjustments to the time of day (Jaffe, p. 80), and so on.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

To the maximum reasonable extent, students should demonstrate an awareness of, a concern for, and an ability to adjust to the unique demands and constraints of the particular speaking situation. (This replicates Learning Objective 1:2).

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.3; ALC 3.1; ALC 3.2 & ALC 4.1

AREA THREE: TOPIC SELECTION

RATIONALE:

Topic selection is always an important issue for speakers to confront. And while the degree to which a topic holds potential interest for the audience to be addressed is certainly an important component of this decision, it is far from the only thing to be considered. As students move into the world beyond college, they will often be asked to address topic areas they would not otherwise have selected. And no matter how broad or how narrow the choice parameters speakers are given to work with may be, they will universally face challenges concerning the narrowing of those topics, the choice of a perspective to take on those topics, and the choice of which topic components to highlight or privilege. Thus, Gregory suggests that topic selection reflect what the speaker truly cares about (p. 90) and be researchable (p. 92). This implies that speakers should demonstrate passion toward and a breadth of knowledge concerning the topic they consider. Furthermore, given the fact that forensics presentations are offered up within the context of a shared community experience, rather than in a purely personal one-on-one conversational context, the selection of "socially significant" topics, which are important to the larger community, is to be expected. Students bear the burden of establishing for the audience the social (as opposed to the personal) significance they believe resides in the selected topic.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students should select a socially significant topic which they demonstrate a personal concern for, which they demonstrate a rich understanding of, and which can reasonably be assumed to be of interest to the targeted audience. The scope of the student's discussion of this topic should be optimally narrow/broad, and the student should adopt a clear and comprehensible perspective toward that topic.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.3; ALC 3.1; ALC 3.2 & ALC 4.1

AREA FOUR: RESEARCH

RATIONALE:

It is a basic ethical requirement of public speaking that speakers be as fully informed as possible concerning the topics they discuss with audiences.   Plato stressed this requirement, and theorists ever since have similarly emphasized it. For example, Everett Lee Hunt reminds us that the duty of speakers is to help audiences make "enlightened choices," and notes that "an enlightened choice is a choice based upon a wide knowledge of all the alternatives….Such dignity as man may have is achieved by the exercise of free choice through the qualities of learning….The man who lacks learning is often narrow-minded, ignorant, and dogmatic...(p. 114)."   In order to achieve even a minimally acceptable level of knowledge, research is obviously required. This is particularly true for student speakers, who typically discuss topics relative to which their personal expertise is severely limited. Thus, student speakers are forced to "borrow" both knowledge and credibility from others.

In order to amass an appropriate knowledge base, students must absorb a substantial quantity of information. However, the sheer quantity of sources cited is not by itself a sufficient means of measuring the quality of a research effort. Beyond this baseline expectation, the student is responsible for evaluating the materials gathered in terms of their accuracy, credibility, relevance, and so on (Verderber and Verderber, p. 314).   Nor is the recency of source cites by itself an absolute evaluation criteria, since older information may still be accurate, relevant, and important to the speech's argument.

Once the student has determined what material to include in their speech, proper credit needs to be given to all sources from whom information has been drawn. Thus, students are expected to provide sufficiently detailed source citations as needed. Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by general academic standards concerning oral and/or written plagiarism. All information drawn from research sources should be cited, and the bibliographic information provided in those source cites must be accurate. Thus, one resolution passed by the Summer 2008 National Developmental Conference on Individual Events states that:

1. Plagiarism, distortion, and falsification must be opposed by the community and by individual coaches who model the highest possible standards.

   a. The community should take additional steps to ensure that speeches are genuinely the work of the students presenting those speeches, noting the ethical threats posed by over-involved coaches and peers.

   b. The community should educate students about the nature of plagiarism and should take steps to enforce plagiarism standards.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students must be well informed on the topic at hand, and demonstrate detailed and coherent knowledge of the topics discussed, making use of appropriate (credible and relevant) research sources and providing accurate source citation information. Oral plagiarism must be strictly avoided.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.3; ALC 2.4; ALC 3.4 & ALC 4.2

AREA FIVE: ORGANIZATION

RATIONALE:

According to Gregory (p. 202), speakers should employ clear organization in order to make their speeches easier to understand, easier for audiences to remember, and more likely to be believed.   Thus, as noted by Sellnow, "clear organization is important to any message you send…You will not make sense to your listeners if your ideas are not clearly organized (p. 171)." As described by Sellnow, this organization involves such macrostructural issues as the use of a standard tripartite structure (introduction/body/conclusion), an appropriately chosen organizational pattern (topical, chronological, spatial, etc.), transitions, internal previews and summaries, and so on. While the forensics community may practice certain conventions at any given time, there is a clear distinction between "unwritten conventions" and general learning goals. Forensics seeks to teach students the importance of understanding and employing appropriate organizational patterns, which maximize the audience's ability to understand, remember, and act on the information provided in the speech.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students should employ organizational structures, which incorporate such basic elements as a clear specific purpose (and/or thesis statement), an appropriate structure-forecasting device, adequately developed transitions, and a discernable introduction/body/conclusion structure.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.2; ALC 2.3 & ALC 3.2

AREA SIX: LANGUAGE (STYLE)

RATIONALE:

The classical canon of style emphasizes the importance of word choice, of the language we select to clothe our ideas. It calls on speakers to pay attention to more than content alone, and to recognize that the precise words we use to

convey that content have a powerful effect on the audiences we speak to. In ancient times, Hermogenes' *On Types of Style* avowed that the seven key qualities of style are clarity, grandeur, beauty, rapidity, character, sincerity, and force (Golden, Berquist, Coleman and Sproule, p. 100) Today, according to Jaffe (pp. 240-246), the most basic stylistic requirements faced by the speaker involve choosing language that is accurate, appropriate, concise, clear, concrete, and interesting. Relative to the last of these, Jaffe argues that speakers should "use colorful, vivid language to keep listeners' attention and interest…by incorporating alliteration, rhyming, repetition, personification, hyperbole, metaphors, and similes." One specific topic that falls within the realm of style is the issue of elitist language (sexist, ageist, ethnocentric, etc.).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students should employ language, which is accurate, appropriate, concise, clear, concrete, interesting, aesthetically pleasing, and supports and enhances the content of the speech. Students should avoid the use of elitist language.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 3.2 & ALC 3.3

AREA SEVEN: VOCAL DELIVERY

RATIONALE:

For public speakers, the significance of possessing strong delivery skills is beyond question. Sellnow (p. 256) urges, "don't underestimate the importance of delivery. According to research, listeners tend to be influenced more by delivery than by the actual content of speeches (Decker, 1992). In fact, some 55 to 90 percent of the meaning listeners grasp is essentially derived from delivery." As Sellnow (pp. 257-259) goes on to observe, "nonverbal communication is inevitable" (every message contains nonverbal components), "nonverbal communication is culturally and situationally bound" (the same cues may mean different things to different people in different situations), "nonverbal cues are believed" (the power of nonverbal communication can and does trump the power of words to convey meaning) and "nonverbal cues are seldom isolated" (multiple cues are transmitted simultaneously by the voice and body). This reality requires speakers to develop excellence in both vocal and physical skills.

In relation to vocal delivery specifically, the various skills that contribute to the success or failure of speakers are legion. Jaffe (pp. 261-265) highlights such specific issues as pronunciation, articulation, stress, accents and dialects, clarity, volume, pitch, rate, and the use of pauses. O'Hair, Stewart and Rubenstein (pp. 243-245) supplement this list with their discussion of "natural delivery," enthusiasm, attitudes of confidence and competence, tone (and monotone),

rhythm, and vocal fillers. Sellnow (pp. 268-272) stresses the issues of intelligibility, vocal variety, and conversational style.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students should employ vocal delivery, which is intelligible, varied, conversational, enthusiastic and confident. In order to do so, students should demonstrate the effective use of pronunciation, articulation, stress, accents and dialects, volume, pitch, rate, pauses, tone and rhythm while avoiding vocal fillers and distracting vocal patterns.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.3;

AREA EIGHT: PHYSICAL DELIVERY

RATIONALE:

Effective delivery demands excellence not only in terms of vocal nonverbal skills, but equally well-developed physical delivery skills as well. Again, the issues related to physical delivery which challenge the speaker are multiple and diverse. Sellnow (pp. 260-) highlights the importance of space (taking into account the size of the audience, the cultural context of the speech, the size of the room, the group's density, seating arrangements, and the speaker's distance from the audience), time (arriving at an appropriate time and adhering to established time limits), appearance ("studies show that a neatly groomed and professional appearance does send important messages about a speaker's commitment to the topic and occasion as well as about their credibility"), eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and body movements.   Speakers need to take into account not only what <u>should</u> be done, but also what <u>should not</u> be done. For example, Gregory (p.314) warns speakers to "make sure they do nothing to distract the audience: don't…jingle keys or coins, riffle note cards, fiddle with a watch or jewelry, adjust clothing, smooth your hair, rub your chin, or scratch any part of your body."

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students should demonstrate effective physical delivery skills, taking into account such issues as the use of space, time, professional appearance, eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, posture, stance, and body movements. Students should avoid distracting physical actions.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 3.2 & ALC 3.3

AREA NINE: MEMORIZATION

RATIONALE:

Memory was one of the five basic canons of rhetorical study considered by the ancient Greek and Roman scholars (Golden, Berquist, Coleman and Sproule, 2007). Defined as vivid recall of the speech at the moment of utterance, the canon of memory stressed the importance of the speaker's "being able to utter the words in the actual moment of presentation to the audience" (Golden, Berquist, Coleman and Sproule, p. 9). Today, "memoria means practice, practice, and more practice, so that the orator may be ready to express what had been planned" (Golden, Berquist, Coleman and Sproule, p. 9). As we attempt to help student speakers accomplish this task, speech communication teachers discuss the relative benefits and drawbacks of the manuscript vs. fully memorized vs. extemporaneous vs. impromptu methods of speaking in any given context. While the formal rules which regulate any given speech contest may differ, the goals being sought by the speaker remain quite consistent. Irrespective of how memorized (or not) the speech is, the speaker should deliver a speech which satisfies the learning objectives already identified. In other words, the speech should be clear, intelligible, well organized, employ effective eye contact and gestures, sound natural and conversational, cite sources accurately, and so on.

If the rules for a particular contest allow or advocate the use of extemporaneous or impromptu delivery in public address events, then the adjudicator should evaluate the degree to which the learning objectives specified elsewhere in this document are indeed satisfied.

If the rules allow or advocate the use of manuscript delivery, the speaker should still demonstrate a high degree of familiarity with the script, which evidences a substantial preparation effort and enables strong vocal and physical delivery skills.

If the rules allow or advocate a completely memorized presentation, then students should demonstrate thorough memorization, which facilitates the comprehension of the speech. While "perfectly flawless memorization" may be the ideal, striving for this level of memorization should not be allowed to exonerate the student from meeting other learning objectives. Thus, seamless memorization should not be allowed to excuse factual errors, source citation mistakes, or "robotic" delivery. Furthermore, memory "glitches" must be considered in relation to the degree to which the student satisfies (or fails to satisfy) other learning challenges.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

The degree of memorization evidenced by the student should satisfy the rules of the contest, and should demonstrate that the student has invested an appropriately rigorous amount of time in practice sessions.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.3 & ALC 3.2

TIER TWO

GENERAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES: ORAL INTERPRETATION

AREA ONE: FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE CRITICISM

RATIONALE:

As taught in contemporary forensics, teachers and students draw from and make use of theories provided by two primary historically evolving bodies of theory, typically referred to as "oral interpretation" and "performance studies." Both of these bodies of thought are well grounded in existing research, and thus any given interpreter may well demonstrate performance choices supported by one or both of these traditions. The key question is not "which paradigm does a student adhere to," but rather "are the performance choices justifiable in relation to an overarching disciplinary theory?"

Best practices in performance criticism in collegiate forensics must represent a consideration for the complete spectrum of conceptions of value, since each of these evaluation measures contributes to the education of a student-competitor. It is a basic ethical requirement for adjudicators in collegiate forensics to engage in performance criticism on the basis of foundational principles, which support the scholarly and professional study of human communication. This brand of founding is particularly challenging in the realm of oral interpretation because the nature of "founding" for the subject area is persistently a subject of debate among professionals. However, common practice in performance criticism has emerged in the predominance of universal validity of essentialist categories. Whitaker Long (1991) references Barbara Herrnstein Smith's perspective on the suspect inherency in "value": "All value is radically contingent, being neither a fixed attribute, an inherent quality, or an objective property of things but, rather, an effect of multiple, continuously changing, and continuously interacting variables or, to put this another way, the product of the dynamics of a system, specifically an economic system" (Whitaker Long, B. 1991, p. 107). Whitaker Long suggests that value in performance is not fixed in individual activities and social/institutional practices (p. 109). Rather, "it is produced and sustained by continuous evaluation, which may include 1) self-appraisals, 2) individual responses, 3) implicit endorsements, 4) casual judgments, and 5) institutionalized forms of evaluation" (p. 109). The recognition that performance criticism is a continuous process in which conceptions of value and learning outcomes emerge from a variety of evaluative sources is essential to ensuring a high level of pedagogical integrity.

Whitaker Long (1977) Article published in Doyle and Floyd's Studies in Interpretation VII (1977) argues that a critic's reasons for evaluation and assessment must be "grounded in the demands of the particular text performed,

and observable to be those a critic can translate in terms of the performer's audible and visible behaviors" (p.270). The assessment of performed literature requires a critic to provide clear reasoning for a verdict. Moreover, that verdict must be grounded in an evaluative system that exists outside of personal preference. "The pluralistic critic recognizes the diversity of literature and searches for the fairest and most illuminating critical method with which to approach a given text" (Whitaker Long, p. 272). As such, the practice of performance of literature within forensics is informed by both traditional approaches to Oral Interpretation as well as more recent developments in Performance Studies.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Student oral interpretation performances shall be informed by traditional principles of Oral Interpretation and/or more recent approaches to performance articulated in the field of Performance Studies.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.3 & ALC 4.2

AREA TWO: TEXT SELECTION

RATIONALE:

Given that all interpretation of literature begins with the selection of a text, attention should be given to issues related to identifying subject matter that has what Gura and Lee (2005) refer to as "literary worth" (p. 15). They explain that it is not enough for one to simply *like* a piece of literature; the text itself must demonstrate qualities as good literature. Gura and Lee (2005) suggest the touchstones of *universality, individuality* and *suggestion* should be the primary factors to consider when determining if a text has literary worth. Universality means the "idea expressed" in the selected literature "touches on a common experience" and "the emotional response it evokes is one that most readers (and listeners) have felt at one time or another" (Gura & Lee, 2005, p. 15). This factor is, however, present in even the most sophomoric of writing, so Gura and Lee (2005) stress the importance of the second factor of individuality. Individuality is "the writer's own fresh approach to a universal subject" which is "revealed in choice of words, images, and method of organization" (Gura & Lee, 2005 p. 16). They add that one's ability to recognize individuality is highly dependent on one's exposure to a wide variety of literature. In other words, the more our students read and see literature performed the better equipped they should become at recognizing individuality in literature. The final factor Gura and Lee (2005) suggest one consider is suggestion, which is present when "readers are left with something to do, with room to inhabit the work" (p. 16). Quality literature allows the reader, and in turn the performer, the opportunity to "enrich the subject matter from their own backgrounds...Once the possibilities for relevant association are realized, however, the writing continues to grow in meaning and in emotional

impact for both the interpreter and the audience" (Gura & Lee, 2005, p. 16). An awareness of these factors of quality literature can assist students in making wise choices regarding text selection.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students should be able to discern if a text demonstrates "literary worth" based on the literature's ability to recall a common emotional experience, reveal the presence of unique content and structure and leave room for individual imagination.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.3

AREA THREE: TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

RATIONALE:

The disciplinary origins of Communication Studies as a field are found in English Departments. As such, the practice of oral interpretation of literature is one of the earliest signs of the evolution of a new field. Core to oral interpretation's roots in English is the practice of textual analysis of literature. This focus on textual analysis remains a fundamental first step in creating a successful performance of literature. Yordon (2002) defines interpretation as "an artistic process of studying literature through performance and sharing that study with an audience" (p. 14). The close study of a text allows a performer to make "well-reasoned performance decisions" as well as introduce listeners to possible new insights the performer has revealed through that analysis (Jaffe, 2006, p. 52). As performance theorists have noted, "we have moved away from the bifurcation of script analysis and performance, as if the two were discrete processes, and we are confident that performance analyzes the text instead of being merely a product of analysis" (Hopkins & Long, 1981, p. 237). Therefore, within forensic practice we recognize the interdependent nature of analysis and performance. Although there are a multitude of analytic methods one can use to analyze literature, Gura and Lee (2005) argue a basic understanding of the key structural and aesthetic components of a literary work is what is needed to create a performance of literature. Regardless of which components are explored, the textual analysis of literature is fundamental to all interpretation events in forensics.

Miller (1998) argues current practice is better represented by the term "performance of literature" as it represents the presentation of a wider collection of works than the earlier emphasis given to classics.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Through performance, students should be able to demonstrate they have analyzed the structural and aesthetic components of the selected text.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 3.1; ALC 3.2; ALC 3.3 & ALC 4.2

AREA FOUR: TEXTUAL CONTINUITY AND INTEGRITY

RATIONALE:

"Asked how far a conductor's liberties extend, one music critic answered: as far as his imagination takes him -- so long as he preserves the known characteristics of the music" (Whitaker Long, p. 276 in Doyle and Floyd). Performed literature supplies students with a multitude of opportunities to reconceive a text through performance. However, this process of possessing, reshaping and, often, reconceptualizing a text should not alter the text so fully that the performance fails to honor the point of view devised by the author. While the term "author's intent" problematizes some of the fundamental foundations of performed literature, the notion of *honoring the literary voice* of the author captures the spirit of the idea (yet relieves the conception of troubling components). Whitaker Long (1977) alludes to the fact that literary texts contain some *certainties*. These are aspects or characteristics of a text that "undoubtedly exist" (p.276). These aspects of the text are excluded from categories of textual aspects that are dependent on interpretation.   At the other end of the scale, *distortions* are performance choices, which violate these certainties, and thus need to be avoided. Between these two poles lie the concepts of *probabilities* and *possibilities,* which constitute the literary ground which a performer of literature can and must "interpret" in order to embody the inherent life of a text. A performer is challenged to honor the literary voice, while creatively engaging a personal, individualized and audience-centered performative interpretation of the literature.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students, following intensive study of the relationship between literature and the interpretation and performance thereof, will demonstrate and honor the literary voice inherent in the selection of literature. This shall be evident in cutting and physical performance choices.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.2; ALC 3.3; ALC 3.4; ALC 4.1 & ALC 4.2

AREA FIVE: CHARACTER PERFORMANCE CONTINUITY AND INTEGRITY

RATIONALE:

A performance of literature needs to clearly present the narrator of the text, therefore an understanding of point of view is crucial to developing the continuity and integrity of the performed characters. Gura and Lee (2005) define point of view as "a way to experience the world from a particular vantage point. Every narrator sets for us – by the position from which the action is viewed *and* by his or her unique personality - a characteristic way of showing and telling" (p. 233). Forensic performers must be aware of the different aspects of point of view in order to clearly communicate a text's narrator(s). Once a narrator has been identified, the performer's responsibility shifts to developing the use of voice and body to effectively present the voices in the text. Yordon (2002) states, "each narrator will have a unique voice, body, psychology, and emotional make-up. Analyzing the narrator's point of view and particular attitude toward the story and the characters in it is the first step toward developing a voice, body and emotional response for that narrator" (p. 189).

The divergence of contemporary theories of Performance Studies from traditional theories of Oral Interpretation is arguably most vivid in relation to the issue of the physical dimension of performance. Yet the diversity of opinion concerning what boundaries performers can and/or should operate within while reading literature aloud are not a strictly modern phenomenon. Tracing his analysis back to the Elocutionists and the school of Delsarte, Robert Beloof (1966) notes that "[o]f all the aspects of reading aloud, perhaps the problem of the proper handling of the body is most controversial. For this immediately involves questions of taste and of style, two highly variable, in fact, two inevitably variable, aspects of any appreciation or practice of art" (p. 68). Yet within this diversity, all would agree that the interpreter's body plays a key role in the performance of literature. According to Gura and Lee (2005), this understanding of the body's role in performance involves such issues as posture, gesture, kinesics, muscle memory, muscle tone, sense imagery, empathy, and so on. These physical choices are intimately enmeshed with the choices made by the reader in terms of vocal performance. Thus, Beloof (1966) explains that oral interpretation "is the handmaid of a verbal art, an enormous and subtle system of available signs, already existing at the other extreme from the emblematic. The interpreter's task is to bring those abstract signs to life. He [or she] must illuminate or intensify in the imagination of the listener, by means of vocal and bodily gestures, the reality which the author's imagination saw" (p. 73).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

Students should be able to differentiate between first-person, second person and third-person point of view and apply this to the development of a narrator voice in a performance of literature through the use of appropriate vocal and physical expression.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.2; ALC 2.3

TIER TWO
GENERAL LEARNING OBJECTIVES: LIMITED PREP

AREA ONE: LIMITED PREPARATION

RATIONALE:

Public speaking with limited time to prepare encompasses a vast array of contexts on the public speech landscape, but occupies only a small corner of forensic practice. Limited preparation events, impromptu speaking and extemporaneous speaking, are unique among the forensic canon in that they are the only events primarily identified by modes of presentation rather than content genre. Communication textbook authors from Andrews (2008) to Zarefsky (2007) discuss impromptu and extemporaneous speaking as types of delivery, providing a valuable starting point for generic justification.

Offering education opportunities in speaking with limited preparation provides students with valuable practice in the most common, practical and useful realms of public speech. In reference to extemporaneous speaking, O'Hair, Stewart and Rubenstein (2004) observe, "Probably more public speeches - from business presentations to formal public addresses - are delivered by extemporaneous delivery than by any other method (p. 255). Zarefsky (2007) comments, "[t]his mode is recommended for most speakers and speeches because it encourages a conversational quality and is flexible enough to permit adaptation to feedback" (253-54). Beebe and Beebe (2000) conclude, "[e]extemporaneous speaking is the approach most communication teachers recommend for most situations" (p. 280). And while there is great agreement among text authors on the practicality of extemporaneous speaking in the public speaking context, most authors point out that impromptu speaking is the most common genre for everyday speech. Lucas (1998) argues, "[i]n fact, many of the speeches you give in life will be impromptu" (294). From classrooms to boardrooms, town hall meetings to business meetings, dinner toasts to job interviews, impromptu speaking skills enhance the rhetorical effectiveness of numerous vital public speech efforts. Education, training and practice in limited preparation speaking contexts play a major role in comprehensive public communication education.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

The student, constrained by strict time limitations, will be able to prepare and deliver speeches.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.2; ALC 2.3; ALC 3.1; ALC 3.2; ALC 3.3

AREA TWO: SPEECH CONTENT

RATIONALE:

The fact that limited preparation events are primarily distinguished and described as presentational modes renders scholarly discussion of limited preparation speech content limited, at best. Preston (1992) reaffirms this observation and notes that even as types of delivery the terms "impromptu" and "extemporaneous" are often confused or used interchangeably. In the forensic context, the central content expectation of limited preparation speeches is that the speech should function as an argument (Pratt, 1981). This foundational premise provides focus and direction for speech content while prescribing that speakers have a worthwhile purpose for their utterance. An argumentative perspective suggests that speakers should offer a discernible thesis drawn specifically from the topic or question at hand. A clearly structured argument should be previewed and developed.   Pratt's (1981) description of limited preparation final round contestants describes the argumentative process.

> …they advance, support and criticize claims and they give reasons as justification for acts, beliefs, attitudes and values. They use a variety of supporting data to try to establish subordinate claims; once established, those subordinate claims serve as data for a central claim they have made, either in answering their extemp question or in responding to their impromptu topic (p. 380).

An argumentative model of competitive limited preparation speaking invites comparison of argumentative depth and sophistication (Petrello, 1990). Beyond simply filling time, students are expected to articulate clear positions and develop well-supported arguments within the given time constraints.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

In response to a given topic or question, the student will present a clear, cogent, developed argument.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.3; ALC 2.4; ALC 3.1; ALC 3.4; ALC 4.1; ALC 4.2

AREA THREE: CRITICAL THINKING

RATIONALE:

The ability to offer clear, cogent, well-reasoned argumentation in a limited time frame requires the development and refinement of critical thinking skills. In reference to extemporaneous speaking, Aden and Kay (1988) argue that "success… requires contestants to understand complicated subjects of worldly

importance, to analyze and synthesize, and to display their intellectual wares by powerfully and persuasively presenting their judgments to a myriad of critical listeners" (p. 43). Contest extemporaneous speaking challenges students to critically consider the significant international and domestic issues of the day. Aden (1992) further explains the critical thinking process in the following way:

> Analysis forces the speaker to select from among the most essential components of an issue. Synthesis requires the speaker to pull together a coherent whole out of the essential elements. Persuasive appeal encourages the speaker to make choices under analysis and synthesis that will create the most compelling speech for the particular audience. (p. 178)

Critical thinking is essential in analyzing the social, political and/or economic context of the topic as well as the immediate rhetorical situation of the speech itself.

Impromptu speaking provides unique challenges that are equally dependent on critical thinking skills. The Aristotelian concepts of invention and memory play central roles in the impromptu process (Reynolds and Fay, 1987). The discovery of ideas engages the student in a search of one's own "storehouse of knowledge" (memory) for the selection of the most salient ideas. This discovery sets in motion the analysis and synthesis of information that is essential for the development of argument. Rhetorical choices are made related to critical inquiry encompassing both topic and audience. The connotative, ambiguous nature of language reflected in impromptu topics (often quotations) stimulates critical and creative thought processes.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

The student will demonstrate effective rhetorical choices grounded in critical inquiry regarding topic and rhetorical situation.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.3; ALC 2.4; ALC 3.1; ALC 3.2; ALC 3.3 & ALC 3.4

AREA FOUR: SPEECH DELIVERY

RATIONALE:

The terms "impromptu" and "extemporaneous" are most often employed by communication scholars when considering modes of speech delivery. While it is common for the terms to be used interchangeably (Preston, 1992), most textbook authors clearly delineate their differences. The definitions offered by Lucas (1998) typify scholarly categorization. An impromptu speech refers to a "speech delivered with little or no immediate preparation," while an extemporaneous

address is described as "a carefully prepared and rehearsed speech that is presented from a brief set of notes" (294-95). The major definitional difference between the two would appear to be preparation time, rehearsal and the use of notes. However, when offering advice on impromptu speaking, many textbook authors, (Osborn and Osborn, O'Hair, Stewart and Rubenstein, to name a few) recommend the use of brief notes. On the other hand, Beebe and Beebe (2000) allow for the exclusion of notes in extemporaneous style, claiming that it involves "[s]peaking from a written or memorized speech outline without having memorized the exact wording of the speech" (280). Textbook authors commonly contrast the conversational nature and flexibility of impromptu and extemporaneous modes with the relative rigidity of manuscript and memorized styles. They also point out that audience expectations regarding delivery fluency and polish are generally lowered in limited preparation contexts.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME:

The student will be able to deliver a conversational, reasonably fluent speech with the aid of limited notes, if desired.

ALC Alignment: ALC 1.2; ALC 2.1; ALC 2.2; ALC 2.3 & ALC 4.1

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