FORENSICS COACHING AS SELF-REWARD

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The literature researched in this paper focuses on the forensic coach and the importance he or she plays in the speech education process. The paper concentrates on three areas of research: (a) characteristics, (b) responsibilities, and (c) rewards for the forensic coach. Characteristics include the level of education and experience of a forensic director. The section on responsibilities reviews representative studies regarding many issues. Finally, personal reward systems for individual coaches are discussed.

Forensics is an activity offered by a school to enhance students' abilities in areas of speech communication. There are two branches of forensics: debate and individual events. Debate focuses on the skills of argumentation and logical thinking; whereas, individual events focuses on enhancing creativity and speaking delivery. For example, students write and deliver their own speeches, or students may choose a popular prose selection to deliver. This literature review is of the Forensic director, one who coaches both debate and individual events.

The forensic team may have more than one coach. There may be a coach for the debate branch and a separate coach for the individual events branch of the forensics team. For this reason, research on the forensics coach is scarce. There is an abundance of research on coaching debate; however, much literature regarding coaches who direct both branches of forensics is not available.

The following literature review consists of the scant amount of research from the 1980s and 1990s. This is surprising since a great deal of research was done on forensics up to the mid-1950s. Why does there appear to be a significant lack of forensic coaching research over the past 10 - 20 years? I propose to propose to examine possible reasons for this situation.

The terms "coach" and "director" were not given any differentiation in the literature found. Therefore, this literature review will use the terms as synonyms.

This literature review includes research published about three specific aspects of the forensic director: characteristics, responsibilities, and rewards. In all, they will show the important role the director plays in the speech education process.

Characteristics

In 1975, at the Speech Communication Association convention, Dr. James McBath reported that the American Forensic Association (A.F.A.) and other national forensic associations identified certain qualifications that would be ideal for forensic directors. These qualifications were not mandatory; they were merely suggestions that the A.F.A. offered to those who wanted a successful coaching career.

A director who fulfilled these qualifications possessed characteristics of a strong coach. These recommendations were: (a) directors should have formal instruction; (b) they should have participated in forensics during college; (c) they should have had a class in the philosophy and direction of forensics; (d) they should participate in state, regional and national professional organizations; and (e) they should take part in workshops and courses to keep them updated with other directors.

In regard to the second qualification recommended by the A.F.A., two surveys showed that many directors did, in fact, participate in forensics during their college years. Cameron (1964) conducted a survey of 214 directors, discovering that 84% of them competed during college. In a later survey of 112 coaches, over half reported that they did take part on a college forensic team (Hensley, 1972).

The American Forensic Association also recommended that coaches at the collegiate level should hold at least a Master's degree with a major in Speech Communication (McBath, 1975). This criterion was also suggested in Cameron's 1964 study. Of the 214 directors examined, 90% of them held a Master's or Doctorate degree in Speech Communication (McBath, 1975). In a similar survey, 85% of the coaches also held Master's or Doctoral degrees (Prochaska, 1981). The areas of expertise among these directors varied from Argumentation to Theory; however, many had concentrations in Public Address. Fifty-two percent of these directors reported, on a survey to have also earned education hours in the direction of forensics (Prochaska, 1981).

There are forensic directors who do not have an education in Speech Communication, such as the ones reported in Cameron's 1964 survey. This survey showed that even though a school did not have a Speech major, the English department supported the forensic team. The director, in this case, had a degree in English Literature.

The American Forensic Association suggested that if a school has a strong Speech Communication program, it should have a strong forensic team. The program should include in its curriculum the opportunities for students to gain the skills and characteristics to be a successful forensic coach. The program should not only include formal lecture regarding theory but also competition. Students should be given the chance to (a) organize a tournament, (b) coach and (c) judge (McBath, 1975).

Hensley (1972) claimed that college coaches have an advantage over high school coaches. He explains this by discussing the different opportunities college coaches are given due to their extensive traveling. The college coaches have the advantage of meeting many different directors with different characteristics. They can learn from these other coaches to better themselves. The high school coach does not experience this to the same extent. They, instead, are with the same directors week after week, season after season, due to district and state tournament guidelines.

The main, and most important, characteristics from the literature are that the forensic director should be well educated and experienced. The information gathered focuses on the level of education held by the coach (i.e., Master's or Doctorate degree) and the number of years as an experienced competitor. The research concluded that these two criteria, when combined with formal training in forensics, create a successful coach.

An area of study which was not found concerns the personality traits of the forensic coach. Does the forensic director tend to be an outgoing person? Does he or she have a tendency to be an aggressive or passive person? Would an aggressive coach be more successful than a passive coach? How would these different traits affect the success of the team? The an-

swers to these questions would not only be interesting but beneficial to the person hiring the director.

Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the forensic coach are abundant and time consuming. Quimby (1963) asked if directing forensics is a profession. He concluded that the only thing keeping the forensic director from considering his or her duties as a profession was the need to meet certain criteria. For examples, Quimby uses the professions of a Minister and Lawyer. These people have to pass tests in order to be considered professional. However, the Forensic coach does not need an advanced degree.

Quimby (1963) continued his conclusion by addressing the fact that the forensic director is an educator. The research will later show that the director is, indeed, an educator; therefore, coaching forensics is a profession.

McBath (1975) reported that forensic associations believed that individual forensic directors should work closely with speech department administrators. This relationship would require meetings (outside of those with the team members) and memo/letter writing. Additional responsibilities may then be created by the administrator, such as sending information to all staff regarding the team's successes or needs.

A second goal is to make forensics diverse by encouraging (a) all cultures, (b) races, (c) areas of study to participate. This is a very time-consuming responsibility. The forensic coach must advertise the team to a great many people. This includes, but not limited to, making and hanging signs; soliciting other teachers to announce forensic activities; arranging forensic practices to accommodate student schedules; and even speaking to English or Business classes about the reward of participating in forensics. Certainly, these are important and timely responsibilities.

Another goal suggested was motivating the community to be willing to help when needed (McBath, 1975). This responsibility requires the coach to advertise the team in the community and offer public performances. The members of the team should be encouraged by the coach to be active in the community. For an example, students could volunteer to read to children in the library or perform at city functions. This requires the director to schedule performances and encourage students to participate.

Along with these responsibilities, the forensic director is an educator. He or she has to teach the students skills that may not be taught in the formal classroom. Skills of reasoning and cooperation are among the many lessons taught (Windes, 1960). The coach must teach the students to speak clearly and consciously, The coach must offer students tools of research and teach honesty, integrity, and the value of fairness.

Dobkin (1958) reported that the most important thing a forensic director can teach is good citizenship. Students learn the quality of being good to one another through team unity and competing with peers.

In 1964, Hildreth reported on a Forensic Institute that took place during the summer. This, in itself, is an additional responsibility for those who wish to strengthen their skills because they must attend these workshops on their own time.

During this institute, a decision was made to add forensics to the curriculum of speech students (Hildreth, 1964). The directors agreed that the formal classes were sufficient for education; however, the students also needed to experience formal communication. Just as a chemist or biology student has to attend a laboratory class once a week, so should a speech student. Forensics would be the perfect laboratory experience to enhance the Speech Communication curriculum (Hildreth, 1964).

If this proposal were to be enacted, the responsibilities of the school's Forensic director would increase due to the number of students participating (Kay, Borchers, & Williams, 1992). If there were more competitors, more time would be needed for (a) researching, (b) coaching and (c) scheduling.

The amount of time that a forensic coach dedicates to his or her responsibilities is phenomenal. On the average, a forensic coach spends 18.7 hours a week on forensics. These hours are in addition to the number of credit hours assigned by administration (Klopf & Rieves, 1965).

Many educators feel that coaching forensics is a waste of valuable education time (Huston, 1924). They feel that the director should spend the time helping students who need help in classes, instead of in the school library with the team. The other educators said that if the coach is in the school for so many extra hours, they should be willing to tutor a student in need of help.

Huston (1924) concluded that the negative attitudes of other educators are biased due to the fact that forensics does not bring in money for the school. In fact, forensics only uses the school's money. He stated that the football coach could spend as much time on the field and still maintain a great deal of respect. This is because the team is a profit generating sport. The football coach is not expected to stay after school for hours to tutor students. The coaches are expected to be on the field with the team. Due to the fact that the forensic coach is in the building creates different expectations from teaching colleagues.

Huston (1924) continued his conclusions by clarifying that the forensic coach would not turn away a student who needed help in his or her class. Forensic directors would be more than willing to stay after hours to assist a student, even more so than the football coach because, they would already be in the school building as opposed to on the field.

If the forensic coach is a teacher or a professor, he or she must certainly have to uphold the responsibilities of an educator. Helping students, keeping office hours and conducting classes are all responsibilities of the forensic coach, who is also a teacher (Huston, 1924). Contrary to many educators' opinions, which were reported in Huston's literature, the forensic director is aware of the responsibilities outside of forensics, and upholds them just as well as any other educator.

Attaway (1977) suggested that other educators have negative attitudes towards the forensic director because they see forensics as only a game. Those coaches who take forensics seriously do not have the time to spend convincing others that forensics is much more than just a game.

As far back as 1936, McCall reported forensic coaches sometimes found that their duties were a burden if they also carried a full teaching curriculum. The coaches claimed that if the administration wanted a strong successful team, a lighter class load should be assigned. Trying to fulfill responsibilities of both a full time teacher and coach can become overbearing.

A Forensics coach is not only an educator, but also a salesperson. The director has to sell his or her self to (a) administration, (b) fellow faculty, (c) students, and (d) parents (Windes, 1960). Directors have to

interest faculty members in the team's activities so that they will assist in coaching and help during tournaments. In order to have a team, the coach must sell the team to students. Finally, the coach must sell forensics to the student's parents. They must justify why their children travel all over the state and, in some cases, around the country to compete. They have to justify to administrators why they are using the school's money and how it is contributing to education.

Forensic directors reported that the most stressful responsibility is creating and maintaining a budget (McCall, 1936). McCall states that directors felt this was a difficult responsibility because the budget should reflect the number of participants. However, the budget is normally determined prior to knowing the size of the team. A team may be very small with an appropriate budget; however, the director or administration may want to expand the program. Without the extra money, expansion is difficult. Once the team becomes larger and request more money, the administration needs to see that the team is successful enough to deserve the money. In order for the team to prove its success, they may need the money first. Forensic directors feel that this responsibility places them "between a rock and a hard place."

A study done in 1942 by Lewis addressed this same issue and further explained the element of time. Due to the amount of time necessary for individual student/coach interaction, the coach may be apprehensive about enlarging the team. If the size of the team increases, more time is taken to coach; therefore, less time is available to use the money for competition, recruiting, or workshops. The extra time needed to recruit students and to organize tournaments is no longer available (McCall, 1936).

Another important responsibility of the forensics director is taking students to the tournaments (Windes, 1960). A majority of the time directing forensics is spent researching with students, watching students perform and critiquing the students' performances. All of this time is spent so that the student can succeed at a tournament. The coach is given this responsibility because tournaments motivate students to do well. They give students the chance to meet others with similar skills and interests from who they can learn. Although this responsibility is crucial to the learning experience, coaches have to take students to tournaments because they want to attend.

In conjunction with taking the students to the tournaments, the forensics director must judge at these tournaments (Stein, 1964). A Director is required to supply one judge per number of students competing. For example, for every five students a team has competing, one judge must be supplied. The forensic director not only has the responsibility to the team as a judge, but also to the school hosting the tournament (Stein, 1964). This school depends on the coaches to fulfill this responsibility by being competent and fair judges. In many cases, the coach will have to supply more than one judge. This is when friends, faculty and community members may contribute their time as supporters of the forensics team (Stein, 1964).

Windes (1960) suggested that coaches suffer from much stress due to the amount and variety of their responsibilities. In 1983, Shekels proposed a method to reduce stress on the forensics director. He came up with Computer-Assisted Instruction (CAI) for coaching debate. Although this program is only for the debater, the program can relieve stress from the director. Instead of the coach spending time on case structure and argument format, coaches can focus on building a winning case and argument with the student. The computer program can help the student with the semantics of the debate, giving the coach more time to attend to other responsibilities.

Considering the level of stress reported, it would be expected that the literature to reveal that a great deal of forensic directors depend on their students to help manage the team. However, a survey taken by 1200 forensic teams reported only 1% of them allowed students to assist direction (Klopf & Rieves, 1965).

Due to coaching forensics being such a stressful job, it is difficult to understand why a person would choose such a position. Cameron (1974) suggested that most coaches become interested in forensics from having a (a) friend, (b) teacher, or (c) relative who introduced them to the activity of competitive speaking.

A final summary of the research found on the responsibilities of the forensic director focuses mainly on the issue of time. All of the responsibilities discussed, such as (a) recruiting new students, (b) teaching many difficult skills and (c) traveling, are very time consuming, especially when there are other responsibilities of being a teacher.

The stress level reported is very understandable when examining the numerous responsibilities. These responsibilities are all very important when directing a strong team. There is reason to report that there is a significant amount of unnecessary stress caused by unsupportive administration and faculty.

The research on forensics examines various types of responsibilities; however, it fails to record to what extent coaches take part in researching with the students. Do a majority of coaches assign works (i.e., plays, prose, poetry, and evidence) or, do they encourage students to obtain their own competition piece? I feel that it is important for the coach to encourage the students to do their own research. However, there may be a student who has wonderful talent, but little ability to research. In this case, which is more important to the forensic coach: focusing on improving the students' talented skills or teaching tools of research?

Rewards

The forensic coach suffers from a great deal of stress (Windes, 1960). However, Winds also added that the coaches should be proud of their work. Due to the work being so stressful, the rewards are very much appreciated. Because directors are frequently overworked, administrators ought to find ways to reward the efforts of coaches (McBath, 1975).

One suggestion made by forensic organizations (McBath, 1975) was that the administration lighten the director's class load. Another suggestion was that the director be treated with the same respect as all other staff. As previous research stated (Huston, 1924), attitudes of faculty towards the forensic director can be negative. If administrators give the forensic director positive feedback during departmental meetings a different attitude may be taken by staff members. This positive attention would be much appreciated by the director. Most importantly, the suggestion was made that the administration be sensitive towards the coach (McBath, 1975). Considering the amount of time and energy devoted to a school activity, the administration should recognize this person as a hard worker.

In addition to these rewards, Klopf and Rieves (1965) reported that 13% of 1200

forensic directors received an increase in salary for their time and energy. On the average, an increase of a two to three credit hour salary was given to these coaches.

Most commonly, directors are rewarded by the accomplishments of their students. A coach can watch for improvement within a particular student (Campbell, 1934). During practice the coach may keep a log of notes commenting on a student's performance. As the season progresses, the director can return to previous notes to compare and look for improvement. The reward lies in the visibility of improvement due to the coach's training.

A coach can set personal goals using this system of note taking during a student's practice (Campbell, 1934). At the beginning of the season, the coach may have wanted to improve a particular student's facial expressions. When, at the end of the season, the student received a ballot commenting on great facial expressions, the coach's goal is reached. This can be a very rewarding experience for a forensics director.

For many coaches, watching their students advance to state and national competition is rewarding (McCall, 1936). When a student does advance to this level of competition, the director is rewarded through the self-satisfaction of the knowledge the student could not have done it without good coaching.

Quimby (1963) believed that the letters he received from past students were all the rewards he needed. He discussed letters written in which students expressed gratitude toward forensics. Quimby stated that knowing his forensic direction helped someone in his or her later life was, in itself, all the reward necessary.

Huston's (1924) article agrees with Quimby regarding the rewards of the forensic coach. Huston received letters from former students who displayed forms of gratitude. One particular student commented that his forensic experience had covered all subjects in school although he never realized it until years later.

Outside of the team and school lie other opportunities for a forensic director to receive rewards. If the team is active in the community, members of the town will publicly recognize the coach (Wenzel, 1971).

The rewards noted in the research were all quite attainable for most forensic directors. If the director devotes the time and energy required, the rewards will come. Cooperating with administration and faculty, creating practice logs and interaction with the community are all successful ways of establishing a personal reward system.

There are other rewards which the literature may not have reported because some rewards are very individualized. Every forensic coach has his or her own personal reward system. One director may find that having a team with five returning students a strong reward; another coach may find that to be an unsatisfactory goal.

Conclusion

The three areas of discussion in this literature review (characteristics, responsibilities and rewards) give an extensive view of the forensic director. The successful coach is a well-educated, stressed, proud educator with not much extra time.

A majority of the research examined, as stated in the introduction, is not recent literature. This proposes a major question: has all of the information been found out or is the topic not of an interest to researchers?

In sum, the literature shows how the forensic coach plays a very important role in the department of Speech Communication by giving students (a) the chance to practice all that they learn, (b) teaching students the value of competition and cooperation, and (c) working with administration to give input on what skills the students lack. The forensic director is an educator, and a very important one.

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