

Advancing in Debate:
Skills & Concepts

**Teacher's
Manual**

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INTRODUCTION

As students advance in debate and their need for more specialized and sophisticated guidance increases, teachers of debate can sometimes find themselves overwhelmed by all that is expected of them. This manual is intended to help teachers meet those expectations more easily. We attempt to do this in two ways. First, we offer a brief essay on the role of the teacher in light of the changing needs of advancing debaters. Second, we provide lesson plans for each chapter in the textbook. The cognitive and behavioral objectives to be achieved are identified. Additional classroom activities, beyond those offered at the end of each chapter in the textbook, are presented, and suggested quiz questions with answers are also provided. To facilitate further research into each of the topic areas, a bibliography of additional reference sources is included.

The context in which advanced debate is taught is different from one institution to another, so it is difficult to give detailed suggestions to fit every situation. Nevertheless, we hope that our suggestions will be useful in a variety of contexts. Where advanced debate classes exist, many of the suggestions given in this guide can be applied directly. Where advanced students and beginning students are taught together in a single debate class, some adjustments and adaptations will be required. Even in a combined class, the stated objectives can be achieved, and the suggested quiz questions will still be appropriate. Many of the skill training exercises (briefing, cross-examination, refutation, and communication) can be easily adapted to include both advanced and beginning debaters. While beginning debaters need to be introduced to some of the more advanced theoretical concepts (topicality, disadvantages, counterplans), it is our experience that too detailed discussions of these topics before they are ready for them can confuse and frustrate beginning debaters. For this reason, we suggest that the class be divided when considering these topics. The critique and judging paradigms are not necessary concerns of beginning debaters but will be important to advanced students. Where instruction of advanced debaters must occur exclusively outside the regular classroom, students can be assigned a single chapter of the textbook to read as the need arises. If all of the advanced debaters read the same chapter at the same time, lively discussions regarding the ideas presented can be initiated on the way to a tournament or after a practice debate. Group discussions and the conscious application of concepts during practice sessions and critiques are important no matter what the setting.

In any context, the most important factor for a successful learning experience is, of course, an informed teacher. Hopefully, this guide will provide some useful suggestions on how to present advanced techniques and concepts to students in interesting and revealing ways, but the better your understanding of the materials presented in the textbook, the more informed your students are likely to be. This suggests that the most important first step is a careful reading of the textbook itself.

TEACHING ADVANCED DEBATE

The needs of beginning and advanced debaters are somewhat different, and the role of the teacher must change accordingly. While beginning debaters tend to look upon their teachers as all-knowing, advanced debaters may be more skeptical about their coach's absolute wisdom. Beginning debaters are comfortable with the "rules" of debate, but more advanced debaters need to be taught how to function in a world where guidelines are less fixed. The mastery of fundamental skills is important to both beginning and advanced debaters, but experienced students require more specific guidance and more rigorous discipline. In order to describe the special responsibilities of teachers of advanced debate in greater detail, it is helpful to examine the three major areas of debate instruction: theory, skills development, and the construction of arguments.

THEORY

One of the biggest differences between novice and varsity debate is the greater knowledge of theory required of advanced debaters. Because beginning debaters seldom confront counterplans, a basic knowledge of what a counterplan is and what it does is usually sufficient. However, advanced debaters are required to have a much deeper understanding of counterplan theory. They must understand mutual exclusivity, net benefits, and permutations. In addition, they must be prepared to argue for and against international counterplans, topical counterplans, agent counterplans, and so on. A depth of knowledge regarding other areas of theory such as topicality, paradigm, and critiques is also required. It is difficult for students to succeed in varsity debate without a reasonable understanding of these concepts, and it is difficult for students to gain this understanding without guidance from a teacher.

In order to help students learn about theory, you must anticipate what theoretical constructs are necessary for them to know, and you must be able to direct them to appropriate sources. You need to learn enough about the major theoretical constructs so that you can answer basic questions and direct student discussions about them. Because discussions involve students in active participation, they are generally a better way of teaching about theory than are lectures. Discussions force students to attempt to explain concepts and to defend their interpretations. They also provide checks on misinterpretations, and they create situations which force deeper analysis and understanding. The textbook identifies major aspects of each of the primary theoretical constructs and can serve as an organizing basis for class discussions.

As advanced students become better informed about debate theory, they will quickly realize that debate authors and teachers don't all share the same perspectives regarding theory. It is important that students accept the fact that theoretical issues in debate are no different from substantive issues and that both sets of issues are subject to debate and disagreement. As teachers, we all have preferences and biases regarding certain theoretical issues. As knowledgeable people in the field, it is appropriate for us to hold such beliefs, but we must also guard against closing our students' minds to contradictory points of view. Just as a student's understanding of a particular debate topic is enhanced by debating both sides of the topic, so a student's insight into debate theory can be deepened by being encouraged to consider a variety of theoretical perspectives.

While advanced students should be encouraged to explore different viewpoints, this exploration should be motivated by something other than pure gamesmanship. Students should be helped to understand that debate theory serves much the same purpose as procedural law. The aim of both debate theory and procedural law is to establish standards of fairness and openness so that the truth of a controversy can ultimately emerge. Thus students should be taught to evaluate theory not simply from a strategic perspective but also from the point of view of fairness and truth seeking.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Advanced students' intellectual curiosity and the demands of the competitive situation assure that at least modest attention will be directed toward learning more about the theoretical constructs of debate. An enhanced mastery of fundamental skills is not so readily encouraged, however. In fact, the increased research demands of advanced debate and the greater focus on theory sometimes push skills training into the background. Students often fail to appreciate how important the technical skills of briefing, communication, cross-examination, and refutation are. To them, good cards and fast delivery are the only things that matter.

While many teachers complain about the poor technical skills of today's debaters, not enough teachers devote sufficient time or effort to helping students improve their skills. Students may be able to learn much about the debate topic or about debate theory on their own, but it is much more difficult for them to improve their technical skills without the guidance, evaluation, and discipline provided by a coach. A teacher's ability to guide the development of superior debate skills requires three things: (1) A strong belief in the importance of basic skills; (2) A clear knowledge of what desirable practices are; and (3) A willingness to work with students in repeated practice and drill sessions.

Skills training is not old-fashioned or unimportant. All good athletic coaches stress fundamental skills training. Although athletes may need to understand the rules and strategies of their sports, they will never become star players until they develop the technical skills to execute the planned strategies. Good strategies and sloppy play may be enough to win at certain levels of competition, but at the highest levels of all sports, sound execution of fundamental skills is absolutely necessary. In academic debate, technical ability without substance will never be sufficient, and in some instances, substance and modest skills are enough to assure victory. The more equal the debaters' knowledge of the subject matter and the theories of debate, however, the more important such skills as cross-examination and refutation become. As a teacher of debate, you need to be confident of the importance of skills development so your students will be motivated to give the technical skills of debating the attention they require.

Simply telling students that they are poor communicators or lousy cross examiners does not give them direction in how to improve their skills. It is not enough for debate teachers to know what good communication is when they hear it. They must also be able to analyze what specific practices were utilized. The chapters in the textbook which are concerned with skills development are intended to provide specific methods and standards to use in developing students' skills. Your own critical analysis of students' efforts may provide additional insights and suggestions.

Perhaps the most critical aspect of skills training is repeated practice under the critical eyes of a coach. Practice sessions provide students the opportunity to try different techniques and to concentrate on specific skills. In tournament competition, students are concerned with the substance of the controversy and have little time to focus on specific methods of refutation or communication skills. In practice sessions, however, students can be interrupted, and specific problems can be immediately identified and corrected. Even when students understand what good practices are, they are often unaware that what they are doing is not correct. At a very minimum, practice sessions call attention to poor practices and help students develop a greater awareness of what they are doing. Practice sessions also reinforce desirable practices. Complimenting students on good skills helps to encourage the repetition of the rewarded behavior. When practice debates are combined with rebuttal redos and cross-examination redos, skills improve rather rapidly.

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ARGUMENTS

One aspect of teaching advanced debaters which is not specifically addressed in the textbook is the role of the teacher in case development and argument construction. Some teachers direct their primary instructional efforts to this aspect of coaching while others largely ignore it. In our judgment, both extremes are equally misguided. While case construction and argument development are unquestionably critical to success in debate, they are not the only important elements. It can be argued that understanding theory and skills development have as much—or perhaps greater—long term value to students than do the time-bound arguments of any specific debate topic. On the other hand, to leave students completely on their own with regards to argument development is to deny them the advantage of an experienced,

critical perspective and may limit their opportunities for success in the activity. It seems reasonable to assume that teachers have as much responsibility for what their students' say as they have for how they say it.

The reluctance of teachers to become involved in their students' development of arguments is sometimes due to feelings of inadequacy regarding the subject matter being debated. Such feelings are usually unfounded and where justified, can be overcome fairly easily. If debate teachers fulfill their judging obligations at tournaments, they are bound to hear a variety of different cases and arguments. Each round of debate becomes, in a sense, an opportunity for judges to learn more about the topic. If a judge makes a conscious effort to learn from these debates, knowledge of the debate topic can't help but be enhanced. In addition, every debate teacher should do minimal reading about the topic. It is difficult to teach students how to apply concepts such as refutation, cross-examination, briefing, and counterplans without some understanding of the topic being debated. Personal subscriptions to some of the better news magazines and such national newspapers as the *New York Times* and the *Christian Science Monitor* make it easier to be informed on the debate topic.

A debate teacher doesn't have to become an expert on the topic to contribute to students' argument building. With a modest knowledge of the topic, a good teacher can direct student discussions on possible affirmative cases or negative arguments. A teacher's presence can assure a more systematic and orderly exchange of ideas. In addition, a teacher can often provide needed perspective on the arguments. A good teacher can also make case discussions fun and help motivate increased work. During practice debates, teachers can frequently suggest responses to arguments that the debaters may not have previously considered. It is helpful to go over flowsheets of past debates with the debaters. In this way, the debater can learn about arguments from other debaters.

The question of how deeply involved a teacher should become in case development is an appropriate one. If a teacher becomes too involved in the research and writing of cases and arguments, those efforts may make students feel that their own work is not as important. In most instances, however, the many competing personal and professional demands that are placed on teachers serve as a natural check on such overzealous behavior.

Chapter 1: Debate Paradigms

COGNITIVE OBJECTIVES

- (1) To understand the historical roots of debate theory.
- (2) To know the various paradigms which influence debate theory.
- (3) To understand that debate theory is not bound by static rules and is constantly evolving.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES

- (1) To be able to identify the analogies from which paradigms are derived.
- (2) To be able to articulate the strengths and weaknesses of various models of debate.
- (3) To be able to identify the influences of paradigms on debate practice.
- (4) To be able to articulate and evaluate values promoted by debate.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- (1) Have students identify themselves with a particular judging paradigm (policy maker, hypothesis tester, argument critic, tabula rasa) and defend why debates should be judged from that perspective.
- (2) Have students judge a debate from the perspective with which they have identified themselves. Have the students discuss how the different perspectives influence the way arguments are resolved.
- (3) Identify various theoretical problems which arise in debates and have the students discuss how they would resolve them. It may be easier to identify problems after the students have read all of the book.
- (4) Divide the students into small groups, assigning each group a paradigm to defend. Have each group construct a list of rules which their paradigm suggests for resolving different theoretical issues. Have the groups argue over which set of rules would make for better debates.
- (5) Have each group create a list of rules which they think should guide debate without relying on a paradigm for guidance. Have the groups argue over which set of rules would make for better debates.

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Appendix

POLICY DEBATE TRANSCRIPT 1992 NFL NATIONALS FINAL ROUND

(The debate was between David Reymann and Jonathan Reymann from Vestavia Hill High School in Alabama on the affirmative, and Joel Klein and Colby Evans from St. Mark's School in Texas on the negative.)

1st Affirmative Constructive: We are keenly aware of the fact that homelessness is a national disgrace which represents the inability of our nation to reach even minimally decent living standards for all of its citizens. The government's major attempt to ameliorate the perpetual suffering that compromises the homeless lifestyle has been a strategy plagued by inconsistency and uncertainty. Millions of dollars are dealt out annually to federally funded homeless shelters; however, this money is given without regard to the conditions of these shelters. The result is a horribly variant system that ranges from a few good shelters to an abundance of shelters that only further homeless suffering. In order to raise the homeless' standard of living to one of uniform decency, David and I present the following plan.

Resolved, the federal government should significantly increase social services to homeless individuals in the United States. All federally funded homeless shelters in the U.S. will maintain a minimum standard of decency by offering the following social services.

- a. Procedures for assisting residents in making applications for and providing for the convenient delivery of income entitlements for public benefits such as public assistance, food assistance, SSI, Title 20, or child welfare or unemployment benefits. Help will also be available for job applications or searches.
- b. Procedures for maintaining sanitary and safe conditions in shelters including the cleaning of sheets, bathrooms and dining facilities, and the placement of beds 50 sq. ft. apart to maintain privacy and decrowding.
- c. Procedures for daily symptomatic screening of residents for detectable communicable disease and subsequent referral transfer to appropriate medical facilities for treatment to the point of non-communicability. Medical regimen compliance shall be a condition for shelter admittance. Shelter access to all shall entail either alternate placement or capacity expansion. Funding enforcement is guaranteed and intent will be clarified in later affirmative speeches.

Please follow us to Contention I: "The federal shelter system fails the homeless in the status quo." Current federal funds are given blindly to shelters. There is no minimum standard of decency. Greg Evans of the Notre Dame Law School on the National Coalition for the Homeless explains this debacle in Volume 4 of the 1989 *Notre Dame Journal of Law Ethic and Public Policy* on page 326." Presently, there is no federal minimum standard of decency requiring recipients of federal assistance to establish and maintain emergency shelters for the homeless which provide good, healthy and safe care. Instead, recipients of federal assistance need only complete grant requests and comply with minimal accounting verification. The lack of any federal standard has resulted in shelters that perpetuate sadistic suffering of the homeless." Evans continues on page 327, "In the absence of any federal standard of decency, the assistance provided to the homeless varies from the good, safe and clean to the brutal, filthy, vicious, and even sadistic. While the conditions may vary where federal funds are received, they should not. Federal shelters currently destroy the privacy, health and dignity of the residents." Evans continues on page 325, "Privacy in shelters is not usually protected. Belongings are not usually guarded. Beds are often left soiled and neither sheets nor pillows are provided. The air can be poor and the ventilation bad. Children of homeless families were not usually provided separate, less dangerous quarters. In some cities shelters are so violent or offer such deplorable conditions the homeless would rather sleep out on the street."

Fortunately, our plan would solve for these horrible problems. A federal standard of decency would insure safe shelters and relief of homeless suffering. Evans continues on page 329, "The goal of decent housing for all Americans has yet to be realized. In order to relieve the suffering of multitudes of homeless individuals and families we must swiftly ensure suitable

temporary assistance to the homeless. Homelessness has not become a conspicuous symbol of our country's failure to meet even minimal standards of equity in the distribution of its resources. Emergency shelters and services must be continued, expanded and approved in order to preserve the lives of America's homeless poor while more permanent solutions are being debated. Most immediately, we must promulgate and enforce a standard requiring decent treatment of the homeless both in name and in substance."

A federal standard of decency is not only enforceable, but it is a fact of being constitutional. Evans continues on page 329, "Just as Congress has successfully employed the power of the purse in other important situations, so too can it be used to bring about more merciful and safe shelters for the homeless. A clearly promulgated standard of decency is constitutionally permissible, and given the economics involved, it is likely to bring about substantial improvements."

Finally, we must have a federal standard of decency to end arbitrary suffering of the homeless. Evans concludes our first contention on page 327, "Without any guidance and oversight it is impossible to compel better treatment of the homeless in temporary shelters. Some shelters are so bad that the conditions actually further homeless suffering rather than relieve it. If the federal government undertakes to assist the homeless, it must do so effectively. It is not an effective help to the homeless to assist in the creation of homeless shelters which, if left undirected, cause additional harm or perpetrate distress among the homeless."

Unfortunately, there are more devastating harms to the status quo as we see in Contention II: Tuberculosis. After decades of decline, tuberculosis is poised for another deadly epidemic. The cause of this resurgence is the horrible condition of shelter and homeless living. *Newsweek* notes on March 16, 1992, on page 53, "The return of TB is not a fluke or a mystery but the predictable outcome of a glaring social failure. Over the past decade, homelessness, drug abuse and AIDS have left a huge population defenseless against the germ that causes the disease. By ignoring these people's medical needs and cramming thousands of them into prisons, shelters and holding pens, America has essentially cultivated the contagion. We knew how to cure it, we had it in our hands, but we dropped the ball." The crowded conditions in shelters guarantees the spread of tuberculosis to shelter residents. The *San Francisco Examiner* notes on March 31, 1991, on page D-13, "The shelter setting, people sleeping right next to each other virtually guarantees others will be exposed whenever someone with active tuberculosis stays in a shelter." This tuberculosis easily spreads from the homeless to society at large. Dixie Snyder notes in the *Subcommittee on Health and Environment*, April 5, 1989, on page 193, "Tuberculosis continues to cost the United States hundreds of millions of dollars each year. These costs will continue and tuberculosis cases may continue to increase among persons infected with HIV, the homeless, the foreign born, the elderly, and in prisoners. There is already evidence that tuberculosis can spread from these defined population groups to the rest of the community. If we do not act now, tuberculosis will attack the middle class as well. This would be a huge costly social disaster." *Newsweek* continues on page 53, "So far, few middle class Americans are directly threatened by the disease, but that is no argument for complacency. A TB epidemic will cost the nation dearly, even if it never reaches the middle class, and there is no reason to assume that it won't. The public doesn't have a sense yet of just how serious the TB issue really is. When we look back at the 1980s, I think the two social failures will stand out from all the others—the savings and loan crisis and the return of TB."

Fortunately, our plan solves for tuberculosis, A federal standard decreasing crowding in shelters would contain the spread of the disease. Phillip Brickner notes in *Under the Safety Net* on page 236 in 1990, "The Boston Department of Health and Hospitals established a shelter-based TB control program. The TB case rate within the shelter fell steadily. In 1980 the inn was relocated to a larger site and between 1980 and 1983 the case rate continued to decline at this shelter, presumably because of improved space and ventilation. In addition, federal standards would initiate prompt and effective treatment of diseases such as tuberculosis." Gary (?) notes in *Public Health Reports*, Vol. 101, No. 5 in 1986 on page 483, "Successful management of the homeless or itinerant TB patient begins with notification of the health department as soon as diagnosis is determined or highly suspected." The homeless must be our nation's top priority. They are a horrific problem which must be addressed as soon as possible. Mary Hoags (sp?) notes in *Opposing Viewpoints*, 1990, on page 20, "We are very patient with evils like hunger and homelessness because they have not yet touched us or affected us; at least not where it counts, not in the context of our relationships and certainly not in our own flesh. We must begin to act as though it is our sister or brother or mother or father or son or daughter, or we ourselves who huddle silently, shivering in the rain or the cold. The challenge facing us today is to bring quickly into reality politically, philosophically and programmatically the right of every man, woman and child in America to adequate and accessible shelter offered in an atmosphere of reasonable dignity."

Finally, we can't offer ridiculous scenarios and probable list of disadvantages to absolve us from addressing our pressing social ills. We have real people with real problems, let's debate in reality. Robert Shaw concludes the case in April 1989, *Commentary* on page 52, "It goes without saying that clean air and water, the retention of farmland and forest, a satisfactory ozone layer, and the avoidance of nuclear war are all desirable things. But the pursuit of these goals through the rhetoric of hellfire renders more immediate political concerns, mundane is secondary. Many other societies that have mistracted from the actual dangers they face are the allure of disasters fully imaginary. That consideration aside, our obsession with distant and unprovable catastrophes is so stultifying but for the moral and the intellectual point of view as they constitute a cultural disaster in its own right." Please vote affirmative.

Negative Cross-examination: So, John, right now shelters crowd people in and don't provide certain services because there is no federal standard?

Affirmative: That's correct.

Negative: Now, I'm a little confused. What if a shelter run by a church or something like that can't afford to do the things in the plan, can't afford to hire the people, what do they do?

Affirmative: Well, this shelter that you are talking about would be receiving federal funding in the status quo anyway. The reason they applied for federal funding in the first place was for operating expenses for the shelter. So, I would contend that they already have money. The problem is that money is being wasted in the status quo because there is no standard of decency.

Negative: What are they wasting it on?

Affirmative: Well, they are certainly not providing services to the homeless with it. That's what the Evans' on Contention 1 indicates.

Negative: So, there is enough money to build shelters with 50 sq. ft. for every . .

Affirmative: First of all, it hasn't been stipulated that we would even need to build new shelters. Because part of the plan is directed toward raising the homeless out of poverty so that they don't have to stay in the shelters for their lives, so that they can get a house and escape the cycle of poverty. So, the plan only specifies that we won't throw people out because of the crowded . .

Negative: So, let's say there is a shelter that hypothetically cannot afford to deal with the regulations you've given them. What do they then do? Apply for more money?

Affirmative: You know as well as I do that the plan says that shelter access denial shall entail either alternative placement or capacity expansion. Which means that we don't kick anyone out. If we need to expand a shelter to fill all the homeless people, then we will.

Negative: What exactly does the plan provide to do the things you were talking about earlier, i.e., get them out of homelessness?

Affirmative: Well, if you look at A Subpoint of the plan then it specifically indicates that we are going to network them to public entitlements that they are eligible for in the status quo but are not enrolled in, such as food assistance, SSI, child welfare, unemployment benefits, etc. Also, we are going to give them help in networking them for jobs, doing job applications and searches, so that they can get a stable existence.

Negative: What evidence in the case indicates that if you do those kinds of things they will get jobs and get out of homelessness?

Affirmative: There is no evidence in the 1AC. We can debate it if you like?

Negative: The shelters are paid for by the federal government. Who usually runs them? Operates them?

Affirmative: Most of them are run by private organizations.

Negative: And you only affect shelters that are funded by the federal government?

Affirmative: We only affect shelters that are explicitly funded by the federal government.

Negative: So, if a shelter is funded by more than one organization, do you affect it, like the state?

Affirmative: If it receives federal funding, then the Evans evidence indicates that the federal government has the right to dictate certain standards of decency in that shelter.

Negative: If it receives any federal funding at all, then these will be imposed in order to get funding.

Affirmative: Exactly.

1st Negative Constructive: We have two observations that we wish to make about the affirmative plan and then we have some arguments that we would like to make against the plan itself.

The first observation is topicality. The A subpoint is the definition, Tangible things are social services. This is from Wrens (sp?) in the book *Social Workers* in 1982, p. 152, "Activities take the form of soft or relationship services such as social case work and counseling, and hard or tangible services such as day care, domestic assistance, meal-on-wheels, and residential