

*CAD FORUM*  
**INVITATIONAL DEBATE**  
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Long familiar with Daniel O'Keefe's famous distinction between argument<sub>1</sub> (a claim with a reason) and argument<sub>2</sub> (a dispute or altercation), those of us who have built our careers on the instruction of effective argumentation are understandably dismayed to find that the two are in danger of being conflated not only in the public mind but in academic circles as well. With the appearance of Deborah Tannen's *Argument Culture* as well as several similar works, speech and debate professionals are confronting the possibility that our current paradigm of argumentation, if not argumentation itself, is coming to be viewed as conflictual, divisive, and ultimately counterproductive to the development of a civil and humane society. If an argument culture risks trading the reasoned exchange of views for a winner-take-all campaign of personal triumph, then the current collegiate policy debate round might be seen as its paradigm case. As an event grounded in the metaphors of verbal combat and possessing at least the appearance of stylistic aggression, collegiate policy debate may be a natural focus for critics of the argument culture.

This special forum critically examines the culture produced by academic debate and specifically explores an alternate model based upon the concepts of invitational rhetoric. Rather than being patterned on conquest, invitational rhetoric is instead conceptualized as an offering of different perspectives and an invitation for another to share one's view of the world. This outlook was applied to academic debate in a very unique and innovative panel presented at the 1999 National Communication Association Convention in Chicago, Illinois. In a large meeting room in which every seat was taken, participants in this forum section outlined, demonstrated, and critiqued a model of invitational debate.

The participants of that ground-breaking panel have revisited, modified, and extended their ideas for this special forum section. First, the rationale and model for invitational debate is explored in an essay jointly authored by **Jeffrey Dale Hobbs, Jodee Hobbs, Jeffrey Thomas Bile, Sue Lowrie, Amanda Wilkins, Virginia Milstead, and Kristina Campos Wallace**. Second, three professors of rhetoric and communication who have pioneered the development of alternatives to competitive models of argument and persuasion. **Sonja K. Foss, Cindy L. Griffin, and Josina M. Makau**, add their thoughts to this project. Finally, **Jeffrey Thomas Bile** reacts to the ideas presented by Foss, Griffin,

and Makau. The project of redefining debate is of course a comprehensive one. Taken as a whole, these contributions cannot be expected to answer all questions or address all issues in a way that is complete and unproblematic. These contributions can, however, serve as the start to a very important conversation.

**Works Cited**

- O'Keefe, Daniel J. "Two Concepts of Argument." *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 13 (1977): 121-28.
- Tannen, Deborah. *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue*. New York: Random House, 1998.