TOWARDS A PARADIGM FOR CEDA

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A scenario kept reoccurring this year. "How are your teams doing?", someone would ask me.

"Well, they went 1-7 this weekend. But last weekend they went 6-2 and were eliminated in quarters. I don't understand it."

"They must be debating CEDA. You have to expect that."

Maybe! But do we have to accept that? The current lack of judging paradigms in CEDA has facilitated the growth of "random bullet" ballots. These ballots are based solely on the judges' preferences and may or may not reflect what actually occurred in the round. What possible educational function may debate have if, in one round, the debaters are rewarded for their research and use of evidence, only to be punished in the following round for doing the same.

Please allow a disclaimer at this point. This article is not seeking rigid standards for judging. Nor is this article seeking to cry "incompetence" among CEDA judges. However, judging guidelines in CEDA could eliminate or at least reduce the frequency of random bullet ballots.

The Survey

A seven question survey was mailed to eighty-six colleges and universities in the mid-section of the country. A reproduction of the survey may be found in the appendix. Twenty-three usable surveys were returned. The responses were from a variety of programs, school sizes and areas of the surveyed region. The survey sought what coaches believe to be the most important issues to be resolved in a CEDA round. The survey included one open question and six forced answer questions.

The first question asked for a hierarchy of items they considered to be voting concerns in CEDA. A content analysis placed each comment in one of eight categories: topicality, values, direct clash, evidence, logic and analysis, presentational skills, prima faciality, and other.[1] Each comment was assigned a number equivalent corresponding with its position in the hierarchy. The item listed first was assigned a "1", the item listed second was assigned a "2", etc.

The second, third, fourth and fifth questions were forced answer questions, requiring the coaches to answer whether they would vote affirmative or negative. Question two dealt with topicality. Question three approached the acceptability of hypothesis testing. Questions four and five determined which is most vital: case or off-case.

Questions six and seven were designed to get a feel for where coaches stand in regards to standardized voting criteria.

Results

There are at least three ways to examine the data gathered in response to question one. The first is by looking at the modal rankings of each category, the most often cited issue was values. Values were cited on fifteen of the twenty-three usable surveys. Comments which fit into this category include "clash of values," "defense of respective values," and "most compelling value option presented." The second most often cited item was logic and analysis. Ten coaches included comments pertaining to the debater's logic and analysis. Presentational skills and evidence tied for the third most often cited position with eight citations. These two were followed by topicality with seven responses, direct clash with five responses, and prima faciality with three responses.

The second way to analyze this data is to look at the means for each category. This method of analysis examines how high in the "hierarchy" an item is listed. Topicality had the lowest mean (1.43) followed by logic and analysis (2.30), values (2.33), direct clash (2.40), evidence (2.89), prima faciality (3.33), and presentational skills (3.77).

The third way to examine this data is to combine the two rankings to produce an overall ranking. Using this method, logic and analysis and values tied for first with a combined ranking of four. These two were followed by topicality with a combined ranking of six, evidence with a combined ranking of eight, direct clash and presentational skills both with combined scores of ten, and finally, prima faciality with a combined ranking of thirteen. A summary of this information may be found in the appendix.

Turning to the forced answer questions, 94% indicated on question two that the negative would receive the ballot. Question three found that 62% of the respondents would vote negative. 79% of question four respondents indicated an affirmative response, while question five found 100% of the respondents siding with the negative.

On questions six and seven coaches were almost unanimous in their claim that there are appropriate voting issues in CEDA.

Discussion

It appears logic, analysis, evidence, and topicality are the most important issues for judges in CEDA rounds. It is interesting to note none of the

judges surveyed indicated any of the "stock issues" that have been derived for value debate.[2] One can surmise that CEDA judges are not as interested in standard debate theorizing as with the actual clash of ideas in the round.

Topicality is an overwhelmingly important issue as is indicated by the response to question two. Not surprisingly, CEDA judges require the affirmative to remain topical. One interesting unsolicited comment on question two was that "...most topicality attacks in CEDA aren't really attacks on the affirmative, but on the syntax of the resolution...."

Hypothesis testing[3] seems to be accepted in CEDA though not by an overwhelming percentage. It should be noted that the example given was not a clear case of hypotesting. Were it labeled hypotesting, the response may have been entirely different.

Questions four and five indicate a clear superiority of case over off-case. This is especially interesting in light of the importance of its NDT counterpart: plan-side. One could almost surmise that first affirmative rebuttal could "drop" offcase and center on case arguments, though this action would not be recommended.

So What?

The survey utilized was admittedly primitive. At the same time, this survey indicates that there are definite skills and techniques which should be emphasized in working with CEDA scholars. These skills and techniques are also ones which should be rewarded in a debate round.

But perhaps a more important aspect of this survey deals with questions six and seven. Questions six and seven deal with standardized voting issues for CEDA. A sample of some of the comments mentioned in response to question seven may illustrate this point.

> "...some standardization would be helpful."
> "perhaps some field dependent 'stock issues' but no rules like NDT policy making...."
> "...but I don't think it's up to the debaters in the round to tell me — I can figure them out myself."

The first two comments indicate that some sort of guidelines would be desirable. The final comment represents the problem. Too many judges are "figuring it out" for themselves by applying arbitrary standards to determine who "wins." This, too many times, results in 6-2 tournaments followed by 1-7 tournaments. This phenomenon is embarrassing to coaches. But much more importantly, it is demoralizing for the debater.

NOTES

1. The "other" category includes the following: case, off-case, same as NDT, definitions, ethics, and focus on voting issues. None of these were mentioned more than twice.

2. See David A. Thomas and Maridell Fryar, "Value Resolutions, Presumption, and Stock Issues," in Dimensions of Argument: Proceedings of the Second Summer Conference on Argumentation (Ziegelmueller & Rhodes, eds.) Annandale, VA: Speech Communication Association, 1981, pp. 513-531. For stock issues in general, see Robert Rowland, "Debate Paradigms: A Critical Evaluation," in Dimensions of Argument cited above, pp. 448-470. See also Craig A. Dudczak, "Neo-Stock Issues: A New Application to an Old Perspective," Paper for Central States Speech Communication Association Convention, Chicago, April, 1980.

3. See Rowland, pp. 462-469. See also Bill Henderson, "Debate as a Paradigm for Demonstrating Truth through Hypothesis Testing," in Advanced Debate (David Thomas ed.). Skokie IL: National Textbook, 1979, pp. 419-426; and David Zarefsky, "Argument as Hypothesis Testing," in Advanced Debate (David Thomas ed.). Skokie IL: National Textbook, 1979, pp. 427-437.

SURVEY OF COACHES

As you known, much has been published concerning voting criteria in NDT debate. However, to date, little has been done to establish what is a voting issue in CEDA. By filling out this survey perhaps we can take a step in the right direction in terms of achieving that goal. Your answers WILL REMAIN ANONYMOUS. They will be compiled and released with the respoinses of other coaches participating in this survey.

1. List a hierarchy of items which you consider to be voting concerns in CEDA.

2. Negative drops all case arguments and centers their attacks on topicality. Negative wins topicality argument. From the information given, I would be most inclined to vote for the

    ___Affirmative   ___Negative

3. Negative ignores case structure and spends both constructives giving off-case arguments. Affirmative does not defeat these arguments. From the information given, I would be most inclined to vote for the

    ___Affirmative   ___Negative

4. Affirmative wins case. Negative wins off-case. From the information given, I would be most likely to vote for the

    ___Affirmative   ___Negative

5. Affirmative wins off-case. Negative wins case. From the information given, I would be most likely to vote for the

    ___Affirmative   ___Negative

6. Do you think there are voting issues in CEDA? (feel free to explain)

    ___Yes   ___NO

7. Do you think there should be voting issues in CEDA? (feel free to explain)

    ___Yes   ___No