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Editor's Note

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What are we teaching? The question, though rarely explicitly posed by forensic practitioners, has pervaded the foundational underpinnings of forensic scholarship for the past four decades. It looms behind numerous journal articles and conference presentations devoted to such topics as the nature of the various individual events, use of evidence, ballot writing, coaching, ethics and rules (both written and unwritten).

What are we teaching? The question lies just below the surface of three insightful articles offered by impressive young scholars in this issue. Sharples invites educators to consider the wealth of humor philosophy and scholarship when approaching after-dinner speaking. Mendes revives the issue of evidence misuse in persuasive speaking, an issue which challenges the validity and value of forensic activity. Kellam reminds rhetorical critics of the crucial connection between forensic language and forensic pedagogy. And while all three provide valuable additions to the scholarly lexicon of the various targeted events, the larger lessons offered to forensic professionals affirm principles which should anchor forensic philosophy and shape competitive practice. Namely, that **intercollegiate forensic education should be grounded in scholarship, preoccupied with ethics, and rhetorically sound.**

In recent years, national forensic organizations have explored pedagogical ground in writing and rewriting event descriptions. In 2010, the National Forensic Association released a report on pedagogy that addressed the teaching question directly. It represents a starting point for pedagogical assessment, not a final destination. In response to increasing institutional demands for learning assessment, and as a means of specifically documenting the educational value of forensic activity for forensic professionals, college administrators, professional colleagues and other interested parties, the National Forensic Association formed a committee to address the topic of forensic pedagogy. The report is not intended to be a handbook on how to do forensics the correct way. In fact, issues of performance methodology are, for the most part, avoided. The report was viewed as a way to connect the learning outcomes of forensics with those of communication departments and other academic disciplines. The report is included as an addition to this volume. While this is not a peer-reviewed document, it is the intention of the editors that the report will provide a useful reference for forensic educators.

Randy Richardson
Co-Editor