

achieved only through a lucky combination of people. Rather, it is something that can be created by concrete steps. These steps involve the management of space, the management of time, and the organization of the club structure.

CLUB SPACE

It is important for a debate club to have a home, a room that is largely devoted to the club and its activities. The club room should be a place where serious work can be done—where issues can be discussed and speeches written. It should provide resources for debaters: dictionaries, reference books, periodicals—whatever the club's funds allow. It should also function as the repository of the club's history. It is a place to keep tournament records, both formal and anecdotal; it is a place to store copies of cases and notes; it is a place to display trophies and pictures. Ideally, the resources should be directly available to the debaters, without the intercession of a coach or teacher.

The club room should also be a place that permits the casual interaction of students on the team. A sense of camaraderie can be built on the experience of collaborative work, but it also needs an infusion of fun. Friendships cannot be manufactured by decree. They can, however, be encouraged; providing students with a friendly place to meet is one simple step. When they go to the debate room, debaters should feel that they are entering a space that belongs to them, where they will find friends who share their enthusiasm for debating.

CLUB MEETINGS AND WORKING SESSIONS

Needless to say, the club space is of little value if there are no activities to fill it. Debate clubs should meet regularly. One model is to have a mandatory weekly meeting for all club members. Even if members are not involved in an upcoming competition (or even if there is no competition in the immediate future), they join together with their partners on the team to find out what issues or events are affecting the team as a whole.

But it should also go without saying that a significant amount of time must be devoted to regular working sessions. In the sporting world, there are varying practice to performance ratios. In some sports, teams practice very little but play constantly; in others, a week of practice will precede a single game. The routine of a good debate team is more like the latter model. Good cases cannot be thrown together at the last minute; they require thinking and discussion. Ideas must be mulled over and distilled; speeches must be drafted and revised. Of course, every school must operate within the constraints of its own schedule, but in some successful programs, debate clubs have daily working sessions involving at least some of the team members.

Working sessions are devoted, in part, to preparation: that is, to constructing arguments and strategies for a particular competition. But they are also given, in part, to practice. Members of the team spend time debating each other, either with a pending resolution or with resolutions composed or selected for the occasion. We must emphasize that practice and preparation time are where most of