

the education involved in the activity of debate takes place. There is much to be learned in competition as well, but it is in the day-in and day-out business of practice and preparation that critical thinking and public speaking skills are developed and honed.

CLUB LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

In its infancy, a new debate club will depend heavily on the leadership and expertise of adults acting as teachers and coaches. But after programs become established and grow, a fair amount of leadership can devolve upon the students themselves. Some successful teams seem to be self-perpetuating, although this is only truly possible when they are multi-generational. That is, such teams include younger as well as older students. In well-established programs, the older students joined when they, too, were young. In the last year of their careers as debaters, these students have had three or four years of experience and have developed some wisdom and expertise with that experience. As 17- or 18-year-olds, they meet 14-year-old neophytes who are starting where they started and must learn what they learned. They are positioned to be effective and sympathetic teachers. In practical terms, this means they can act as judges when younger debaters are practicing; they can watch them compete in actual competitions and share notes with them afterward. During preparation sessions, they can work with younger debaters as they craft their cases. What is more, the reverse is also profitable: as they start their careers as debaters, novices can benefit from listening to more seasoned debaters argue. With this kind of organization, team members naturally feel more involved with the organization as a whole. Specifically, older members come to take pride in the accomplishments of their younger peers and feel a sense of responsibility for them, and younger members follow the careers of their mentors with enhanced interest.

The team broadly shares the leadership roles described above. In addition, many teams have more carefully defined roles for individuals. In other words, they have students who are elected president, secretary, treasurer, director of recruitment and orientation, and so forth. The students who fill these roles are not necessarily the most successful debaters in competition. They are students who have shown significant commitment to the well being of the team. In their various roles, they can be responsible for many of the administrative duties involved in running a team. For example, preparing tournament registrations, keeping club records, collecting dues or travel payments, etc.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The first task demanded in the recruitment of members for a debate club is education. Many students (and teachers) simply do not know what debate is. It is essential to inform them. Many people who don't really know about debate think that it is for students who are aggressive or naturally argumentative. They may associate it with slickness of style, rather than solidity of substance. They need to see that debate offers benefits to a broad range of personalities and draws its inspiration from political philosophers, not from smooth-talking politicians.