Extemporaneous speaking is an event often avoided by coaches, students and judges. Much mystique surrounds the thirty to sixty minutes in which speakers prepare their speeches. However, there are several valuable instructional tools that can help dispel fears about the event. One of these tools is a twenty-five minute videotape produced by the National Federation of State High School Associations. Clinician Matthew Sobnosky outlines the necessary elements of an
extemporaneous speech. Mary Trouba, a former student of his, provides a sample speech. The tape concludes with a coach-student critique session based on the sample speech. Three strengths of the N.F. extemp videotape are particularly noteworthy. First, the tape distinguishes between informative and argumentative approaches to the event. Second, the tape presents a practical view of extemporaneous instruction. Third, the video is instructive for students, coaches and judges.

Sobnosky effectively distinguishes between informative and argumentative extemporaneous speaking. He notes that many speakers simply "re-hash" their research in the speech. These speakers provide a news report instead of news analysis. Sobnosky argues speakers should analyze and explain the news. That is, the speaker should break the news event into its essential parts for understanding and argument. He presents a view that allows students to gain valuable experience from the event.

A second strength of the videotape is its practical emphasis. The clinician avoids speaking in abstract terms, opting instead to provide a detailed, practical description of how to compete in extemp. Sobnosky provides instruction in how to prepare to speak, how to organize a speech, and how to deliver the speech. His discussion of organization is a point-by-point description of what the speech should accomplish. Special emphasis is put on documentation. Trouba's speech exemplifies the points stressed by Sobnosky in his previous discussion. Thus, students and coaches are able to watch Trouba's speech and understand how it conforms to the standards Sobnosky sets forth.

Finally, the videotape is an excellent instructional tool for students, coaches and judges alike. Dick Fawcett of the National Federation says in the introduction, "We hope this videotape will be of assistance to students, coaches and contest judges who will be working with the extemporaneous speaking event" For students, Sobnosky presents a step-by-step approach and Trouba provides an example students may observe and critique. While her speech is solid, it will not frighten novice extempers. There are several weaknesses to Trouba's address. Coaches may use the critique session to observe a way they may critique their own students' speeches. Most instructors probably have their own method for coaching, but Sobnosky's
critique demonstrates several helpful strategies. He is complimentary of the speaker's performance, identifying her analysis and organization as strengths. Sobnosky also allows Trouba the chance to identify what she thinks were the strengths and weaknesses of her speech. He further lets her know a limited number of items to improve on: in this case, her delivery. By identifying one or two items for improvement at the end of the critique session, a coach presents a realistic goal for the student to achieve. Judges may use the sample speech as a chance to view a solid extemporaneous speech. But the speech has room for criticism and, thus, is a good example to observe in a judging workshop.

There are several areas in which the videotape could be improved. First, Sobnosky's initial presentation on extemp may be clarified by visual aids. His discussion of organization would be clearer if the audience could see the outline of the speech. Further, an instructional booklet accompanying the tape would allow students and coaches to closely follow Sobnosky's advice as well as Trouba's speech. An outline of her speech would further illuminate a strength of her speech — organization. Perhaps an advanced extemporaneous videotape would be able to address the more intricate parts of extemporaneous speaking.

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