Instructional Videos for Forensics: The National Federation Speech Series

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In this era of the instructional video, it is not surprising that entries to that market are increasing in the area of forensics. Today a number of videotapes related to forensics are available, ranging from model speeches taped during the final rounds of the National Forensic Association I.E. Nationals and the National Forensic League Tournament to complete instructional videotape packages developed by leading publishing houses.

This review examines a series of instructional videotape packages produced by the National Federation of State High School Associations. These tapes offer quality material which can be useful to students and coaches of contest individual events. The tapes are 30 minutes in length and are suitable for classroom, small group, as well as individual instruction. Although geared to the high school audience, the tapes have been used successfully by both high school and college instructors. The instructional packages reviewed in this article include serious prose interpretation, dramatic interpretation, extemporaneous speaking, and oratory. In addition, the National Federation of State High School Associations produces videotape instructional packages for Lincoln-Douglas and policy debate.

**Serious Prose Interpretation**

This instructional videotape package concentrates on the analytical and presentational skills involved in oral interpretation of narrative prose. Dr. Marion Kleinau of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale is the commentator on the videotape. Taking the position that narration as opposed to dialogue is frequently considered the "dead spot" of a prose selection, Kleinau explains how the interpreter can successfully give characterization to the narrator and improve the interpretation of the selection. Both first and third person narrators are considered. Two students each read a selection as examples, and Kleinau critiques each and instructs from the demonstrations.


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The videotape does not provide basic instruction for the beginning interpreter. Such topics as use of voice and gesture, accepted oral interpretation technique, and style are not covered. The tape offers insightful advice to the student beyond the basic "how to." Students ready for more advanced analysis of the prose selection would benefit from this instruction. The performances by the students on the tape serve as models of both "do" and "don't" for the event of serious prose. Coaches may also benefit from the style and substance of Kleinau's critique.

Dramatic Interpretation

This instructional videotape package features Dr. Frank Tourangeau of the College of DuPage as commentator. The focus of the videotape is the literary genre of drama and its interpretation. Tourangeau instructs the beginning interpretation student in the basics of the event. He moves the student through steps of preparation to performance: choice of material, analysis of material, and actual interpretation performance techniques. Two sample performances by college students (one dramatic, one humorous) serve as examples of performance technique.

Tourangeau's comments are concise and instructive. He allows for variations in accepted performance styles, but he does not make the distinction between acting and interpretation. Beginning students would find this tape very helpful as would the coach new to the event.

Extemporaneous Speaking

This tape features an introduction to the contest event of extemporaneous speaking. Matthew Sobnosky of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln directs his comments primarily to the beginning student. The information and instruction is basic and useful. The overview of the event includes a description of the event and its rules. Also included is practical instruction of how a student prepares for competition in the event. Included is advice on such topics as what to read, how to file, tournament procedures for topic choice, preparation, speech structure, and composition. A sample speech is presented by a college student. In the dialogue-critique following the sample speech, Sobnosky reviews his instruction by questioning the student about her preparation for and composition of the speech.

The tape is a valuable instructional tool for students starting out in extemporaneous speaking. Advice is practical and clearly presented.
Oratory

The commentator on this instructional videotape package is Roger Aden of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Aden defines the event as "persuasive speaking." He develops three topic areas. Under the heading of types of persuasive speeches, Aden submits two: praise or blame and problem-solution. Claiming that most orations are the latter, he gives a brief overview of the development of such a speech and then submits Monroe's Motivated Sequence as an appropriate organizational pattern. Each step of the sequence is described and explained. Aden lists ways for a persuasive speaker to be more credible: showing concern, providing support in the form of evidence, and appearing confident. Aden suggests the student avoid "value oriented" topics like abortion and look for "up-to-date" topics which will deliver new information to the audience.

A sample oration is presented followed by a dialogue-critique with the student. The student is questioned about speech preparation and composition.

The tape offers a good overview of one type and style of persuasive speech. The approach is traditional and reflects the problem-solution approach to the event. Coaches in agreement with that particular style of oratory will find the tape useful. The videotape serves as a good introduction and guide for beginning orators.

The videotapes reviewed in this article are available for purchase from the National Federation of State High School Associations, P.O. Box 20626, Kansas City, Missouri 64195.