The Impact of Written Ballot Criteria on the Frequency and Type of Ballot Comments in Collegiate Limited Preparation Speaking Events

C. Thomas Preston, Jr. *

Scholars and competitors of forensics activities become frustrated when faced with what they perceive as inadequate constructive written feedback on ballots. Hanson (1987b) noted in a survey that the type of judge who offers "concrete, helpful, and truthful comments in a sufficient amount that you can learn from them" tended not only to earn more respect from students, but tended to motivate students to make constructive changes (p. 16). Nonetheless, apparently not all judges exhibit consistently the behaviors noted above. Lewis and Larsen (1981) emphasize the need for consistency among judges for individual events. They state: "Contemporary individual event speech contests are designed to be educational. All too often, however, the contest experience leaves the participant more confused than educated due to inconsistent judging criticism" (p. 9). Hanson (1987a) has gone so far as to say, "Perhaps it is presumptuous for critic-judges to assume that their ballots are contributing to the educational growth of the contestant" (p. 3). Olson and Wells (1988) have noted that students frequently receive contradictory comments with similar scores, as well as similar comments with contradictory scores. Hence, while able to offer advice on how to teach students to adapt to certain critics, coaches may become frustrated when offering constructive advice to students on how to adapt to differing judging techniques.

The need for better and/or more consistent judging in individual events competitions has been the focus of much recent attention among forensic scholars (Aden, 1990; Allen and Dennis, 1989; Carrier and Rodier, 1987; Hanson, 1987a, 1987b, and 1989; Jensen, 1988 and 1989; Jones, 1989; Littlefield, 1987; Olson and Wells, 1988; Pratt, 1987; Preston, 1983; and Sellnow, 1987). Jones (1989) stresses the importance of ballot-feedback, noting that, by writing a ballot, a critic "is not merely the judge of that panel, but has in actuality become the teacher of each student in that room" (p. 49). This paper seeks to contribute toward an understanding of what constitutes the remarks read so closely by participants after the tournaments.

The question arises, then, as to how tournament directors seek to promote effective critic feedback. Tournaments ranging from

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American Legion high school speaking contests to some major collegiate speech tournaments use ballots with criteria printed before the space provided for judge remarks to encourage this consistency. To ensure effectiveness and consistency in ballot-writing at tournaments, a panel discussion at the 1988 Developmental Conference on Individual Events at Denver recommended that criteria be used on ballots, but debated at length what the nature of those criteria should be. Allen and Dennis (1989) went so far as to suggest that a hierarchical criteria be developed for the evaluation of informative, persuasion, and communication analysis (p. 53).

As the practice of using criteria on ballots becomes increasingly debated and widespread, it becomes useful to gain critical insight into how closely critics/judges follow these criteria. Seeking an in-depth analysis of one category of events, the present study poses the central research question, "What impact does printing criteria of judge's ballots have on the frequency and types of comments judges write on ballots for limited preparation events?" To answer this question, the present study first offers a survey of past ballot analysis studies in individual events. Second, it explains the method of the study. Third, it offers and presents the results from the analysis of ballots. Fourth, it discusses to what extent providing criteria on limited preparation event ballots proves beneficial to the educational goals of the events studied.

Literature

As indicated by the interest at the First Developmental Conference, the eighties marked the decade where forensic scholars began to explore the judging criteria emerging from written comments of ballots. At the 1981 Speech Communication Association Annual Convention, Cox, Manchester, and Frank (1981) analyzed dimensions in criticism of interpretation events. Preston (1983) extended this line of research to limited preparation events by conducting a content analysis of 152 ballots from the Nebraska Cornhusker Tournament of February 25 and 26, 1983. In that study, Preston compared comments critics wrote on ballots for the two events, concluding that impromptu was being judged as mini-extemp because ballot comments were so similar in the two events. Content-analysis of ballots since then has focused more on a broad range of events. Pratt (1987) conducted a study involving a sample of ballots, finding that judges were writing an average of 6.52 comments per ballot, while Carrier and Rodier (1987) discovered a higher average of approximately 11. Olsen and Wells (1988) discovered from their sample of 211 ballots at national tournaments that judges were making only 3.36 comments per ballot. Olson and Wells, as well as Jensen (1989), have noted that perhaps ballot design
and the addition of criteria might lead to better judging. While contributing in other areas, these studies nonetheless offer at best a partial explanation of why judges comment in what ways, specifically in limited preparation events ballots. Pratt’s sample, for example, involved only 50 ballots from limited preparation events, whereas out of the 211 ballots in the Olson and Wells study, only 33 were extemporaneous or impromptu ballots. While its entire sample did consist of limited preparation events ballots, Preston’s (1983) study did not yet address how to encourage judges to treat impromptu and extemporaneous speaking differently. The remainder of the studies have either focused on original prepared events or on interpretation events. Even among these studies, only Jensen addresses whether judging behavior can be altered by criteria being written on the ballots.

The limited preparation events offer additional problems for comparing non-criteria ballots to criteria-ballots. First, the brevity of the speeches offers the critic less material to critique than a ten-minute prepared event. Hence, it is not surprising that Olson and Wells (1988) found only 2.36 comments per limited preparation ballot, or one comment fewer per ballot, than in ballots for other events. Second, the differing rules for the events suggest that impromptu should be judged differently from extemporaneous if each event is to meet any unique educational objectives. However, no study has established thus far whether ballot-criteria and/or ballot design can address these event-specific problems.

Other questions that must be explored in order to address whether ballot criteria lead to better written ballot criticism include the following: What types of comments do judges make to speakers on each type of ballot, for each event? How many comments of each type per ballot do they make? What percentages in each category of comment do they make? Do the proportions of comments in categories follow similar patterns on the two types of ballots? Alternatively, do they follow the instructions of the criteria in a way that differentiates them from the comments made on blank ballots? Will judges make fewer comments if there is less space on the front to write?

In proffering the above queries, the present study does not "praise the number of comments found on ballots even though a comment may
Rather, it contributes to the field of forensics scholarship by post-analytically examining the number of ballot/comments reflecting various areas of emphasis. Providing this information should offer forensics participants an empirical picture representing the nature of comments students receive in these events. For purposes of focus, certain questions are assumed to reside beyond the scope of this study. For example, questions concerning the "quality" of a particular comment are left to the philosophers, and questions concerning "positive and negative" feedback to students are left to future study. Regardless of the stand one takes on what constitutes a good comment, knowing empirically what types of comments occur now provides a necessary starting point on the road to improved ballot feedback. This article's findings represent such a starting point.

Method

To answer the above questions, 3,069 comments from 447 ballots were analyzed. The sample of ballots was taken from extemporaneous and impromptu contests at three tournaments during the 1988-89 forensics season: The Gateway Individual Events Tournament at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, the Mel Moorhouse Invitational at Wichita State University, and the Missouri Mule Tournament held at Central Missouri State University. At each tournament, one preliminary round was administered using ballots without criteria (see Appendix I), while another was administered using ballots with criteria (see Appendices II and III). To discourage bias, judges were not encouraged to pay special attention to the ballots any more than they would have been at any other tournament. The sample thus contained 79 extemporaneous ballots without criteria and 83 extemporaneous ballots with criteria; it also included 145 impromptu ballots without criteria, and 140 with criteria provided. Thus, the total sample included 224 ballots with...

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1 In a paper presented at the Second National Developmental Conference on Individual Events at Denver, Colorado, Aden (1990) offers an excellent rationale for new standards governing each individual event. However, his paper's allegation that Preston (1983) and Jensen (1988) promote quantity over quality in ballot feedback ignores the scope of the two studies. As in the present study, both studies do recognize the need for critics to tell students both why a certain action was right or wrong and how the student could either continue a desirable behavior or discontinue an undesirable behavior. But for the discussion of such qualitative factors to gain any practical value, it becomes necessary to gain some idea of what types of comments students actually receive in what frequency now, within the limitations of the sample. As the Preston and Jensen studies seek explicitly to give some unprecedented measure of what types of comments actually occur, qualitative discussion of individual ballot-comments fall outside the realm of these studies, except to explain the nature of the categories. Of course, this is not to deny the value of future studies discussing qualitatively the direction individual comments should take, or that some comments are of more value than others to certain participants.
out criteria, and 223 with criteria. A small difference in the sample size was due to a few no-show ballots, whose records were eliminated from the samples for averaging purposes. Thus, the statistical analyses comparing means among samples were conducted using formulas for differing sample sizes.

Upon reading the ballots, the number of comments was counted. A comment is defined as any sentence, phrase, paragraph, or single word that provides some critique of the speaker's performance or advice for improvement. Structurally, the term "comment" as used in this study parallels closely Bormann's concept "fantasy theme"—the smallest unit of analysis (Bormann, 1972). Consistent with the earlier studies by Pratt (1987) and Olson and Wells (1988), the main criterion for counting what a judge writes as a "comment" is that it contains such a single thought for analysis, whether the thought be a word, phrase, sentence, or paragraph. For example, "It's best to use notecards rather than legal pads" and "good!" were both counted as single comments because they both relayed a single message. On some occasions, a sentence containing two clauses would reveal different messages. For example, the sentence, "You've talked a good deal about the debates, but you did not provide the information sufficient to back your claims," would be counted as two comments. While it praised the depth of the speaker's analysis of a presidential debate in the first clause, it critiqued the speaker to be more thorough in the information presented in the second. However, sentences such as, "Because of your humor, I was at ease," would be classified as a single comment.

All comments on all ballots were then broken down into content categories. An inductive method was used to generate these categories, with new categories created each time a comment appeared that did not appear in a previously encountered classification. All categories, including miscellaneous, were used for statistical analysis. While the names for the categories of comments were similar to those found in the Preston (1983) study, the categories were, nonetheless, post-analytically derived. The reflection of the 1983 results in terms of category generation, of course, confirms the importance of those categories. The categories were defined as follows:

1. Delivery—any comment addressing any issue related to either physical presentation of materials, as opposed to the materials themselves. Examples: "Good, smooth delivery." "The rate was very good." "Very nice conversational style." "Good that you were not dependent on notes."

2. Specific Analysis—any comment addressing explicitly the quality of the way a speaker handled specific content in the speech. Examples: "You shouldn't make it so obvious that you preferred Bush
in this year's election." "(you need to) detail more reasons for price increases." "Your position contradicts all published opinion about the first presidential debate."

3. Organization—any comment related to the structure of the student's speech: Examples: "Your speech was difficult to follow." "Sign posting needs to be clearer." "Work on your transition." "Good job of telling me where you are going with this." "Stick to your original outline."

4. Analysis (general)—any comment assessing the student's analysis but not referring to specific content in the speech. Examples: "Your overall analysis was good." "You miss the general thesis of this topic."

5. Introduction—any comment that focuses on the introduction of the speech. Examples: "Your intro was outstanding." "Good preview of your main points." "Nice attention-getter."

6. Supporting material—any comment questioning or applauding the student's sources and/or examples. Examples: "You made a lot of assertions that needed to be backed by evidence." "You need more evidentiary support for your position." "You use too many personal examples."

7. Conclusion—any comment related to the student's conclusion of a speech or closure. Examples: "Nice referring back to your introductory remarks in the conclusion" and "A summary at the end would be helpful."

8. Generally positive—any comment that offers encouragement to the student's overall performance as opposed to a specific aspect of performance. Usually the last comment on a good ballot, although it could be used to encourage anyone. Examples: "You are a marvelous speaker." "Good show!" "Stick with it."

9. Time allocation—any comment that refers to the way a student uses his or her time either before or while speaking. Examples: "You need to use more of your prep time." "You need to spend more time with the second point."

10. Miscellaneous—any comment not fitting into any of the above categories, or comments falling into more than one category simultaneously.

After the ballots were read and comments counted, all of the data were broken down further by event and ballot type for comparative purposes. First, for each event, a frequency count was made of each category, with number of comments, number of comments per ballot, and percentage of comments made on a certain category of comment noted.

Then, for each event, two statistical analyses were performed on the data to determine to what extent the critics made similar comments
to contestants from non-criteria-ballots to criteria ballots. First, for each event, the category totals for the two samples were correlated using Pearson's $r$ to determine the overall strength of the similarity in comment type from one type of ballot to the other. Then the results were correlated between events. Second, $t$-tests were conducted to compare average numbers of comments per category per ballot in each event. For each comment category, the mean number of comments per ballot for non-criteria-ballots were compared to the mean number of comments per ballot for criteria-ballots using the $t$-test for statistical significance. The $t$-test measure enables us to ascertain whether judges place more emphasis on a particular judging criterion which was either included or omitted from the criteria written on the ballot. For each category, then, our null hypothesis would be that $t = 0$, or that there was no significant difference in the average number of comments in a category between the criteria and non-criteria ballots. A .05 level of significance was established as sufficient to disprove the null hypothesis. Thus, when $t > 1.960$ or $t < -1.960$, a change is noted below between the criteria and noncriteria ballots for an event.

**Results**

Analysis of the ballots yielded the following breakdown of the 3,069 comments:

**Table 1**

**Extemporaneous Speaking**

**Ballot Type**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Comment</th>
<th>Without Criteria</th>
<th></th>
<th>With Criteria</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#</td>
<td>#/bal.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific Analysis</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Analysis</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>.90</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Positive</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time Allocation</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>9.03</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Pearson's correlation between the two types of extemporaneous ballots derived from the results noted in Table 1 yielded .947, and a similar correlation between the two types of impromptu ballots derived from the results noted in Table 2 yielded .917. When the frequency distributions were correlated between events, Pearson's r was .899 between extemporaneous and impromptu ballots without criteria. This finding confirmed the 1983 finding that without criteria on ballots, judges make little if any differentiation between the two events in terms of their ballot comments. However, writing different criteria on the ballots to distinguish the two events did not induce comment differentiation between the two events; in fact, Pearson's r actually rose to .952 when the criteria ballots for each event were compared. Hence, despite an overt attempt to make the criteria for extemporaneous speaking different from those for impromptu speaking, the comments followed patterns more similar for each event when the criteria were added.

The t-tests comparing the mean numbers of comments per category per ballot between the ballot types yielded six significant results. In extemporaneous speaking, significant declines on criteria ballots were noted in the mean number of comments made in four categories; generally positive, where the mean number of comments per ballot fell from .54 to .24, and t = 2.432 with 160 degrees of freedom; specific analysis, where the mean number of comments fell from 1.85 to
1.14 and $t = 2.318$ with 160 degrees of freedom; delivery, where the mean number of comments per ballot fell from 2.48 to 1.66 and $t = 2.782$ with 160 degrees of freedom; and time allocation, where the mean number of comments per ballot fell from .38 to .18 and $t = 1.988$ with 160 degrees of freedom. In impromptu speaking, two significant results were noted. Mean comments per ballot pertaining to introduction declined markedly from .92 to .48 when criteria were introduced, with $t = 4.491$ with 283 degrees of freedom. The only significant increase in means noted in the study was in impromptu supporting material, where $t = -2.054$ with 283 degrees of freedom. There, the mean number of comments per ballot rose from .54 per ballot on the non-criteria ballots to .74 per ballot on the ballots with criteria.

Along with the differences in a few of the categories, significant declines were noted in the overall average numbers of comments for each event. In extemporaneous, the decline in comments from 9.03 per ballot to 6.86 was also noted in a $t$-score of 4.275 with 160 degrees of freedom. In impromptu, where the decline was less dramatic, going from a mean of 6.65 without criteria to 5.88 with criteria, the difference was nonetheless significant. Here, $t = 2.690$ with 283 degrees of freedom.

**Discussion**

Two major sets of implications arise from the above results—the first macroscopic, and the second microscopic. In terms of the overall patterns, three observations might be made. First, the results indicated that the proportions of comments in categories follow similar patterns on the two types of ballots, and they do so for each event. Second, impromptu speaking continues to be judged as extemporaneous speaking if the analysis of critic comments provides any indication. In fact, the correlation between the two events increased on criteria-ballots, although criteria were introduced that clearly instructed the critic to stress supporting material more in extemporaneous speaking. Third, for each event, the overall total number of comments to students declined significantly, although the ballots clearly instructed the critic also use the space on the back of the ballots.

In terms of the specific categories, the average numbers of comments per ballot declined significantly in generally positive, specific analysis, delivery, and time allocation categories when criteria were introduced on extemporaneous ballots. Although the declines were perhaps expected in that "time allocation" and "generally positive" were deliberately omitted from the criteria ballots, the significant declines in specific analysis and delivery occurred despite their being stressed in the criteria or extemporaneous speaking. The category
results were equally perplexing in impromptu speaking. The number of comments on "introduction" did decline substantially with the term if not the concept being omitted from the criteria impromptu ballot. Nonetheless, the average number of comments per ballot in "supporting material" increased significantly for this event, despite each ballot stressing that it was "extemp," not "impromptu," that called for more supporting material. "Creativity" never really appeared as a category, as one might expect if that category on the criteria impromptu ballot affected judge-comment behavior. Finally, it is essential to note that in six of ten categories of extemporaneous comments and that in eight of ten categories of impromptu comments, there was no significant difference between the comments made on criteria and non-criteria ballots.

Both the general and specific patterns of judge-comments indicate that in this study, the use of criteria on ballots neither changed significantly the nature of the material judges wrote on ballots nor brought about a differentiation between comments made on extemporaneous and impromptu ballots. Rather, the proportions of comments in categories followed similar patterns on the two types of ballots in each event. The few differences noted by the significant t-scores seemed to result from factors other than the criteria, since the changes did not in each case occur in the direction expected from what was stressed on the ballot-criteria. From these results, criteria as used in the present study would appear to be of limited use either for encouraging more effective judge feedback or for encouraging ballot feedback that differentiates between the objectives of the two events.

Olson and Wells' (1988) study found that judges were making fewer comments per ballot than those in other studies. Their finding should come as no surprise since the Olson and Wells sample contained large numbers of ballots from the Interstate Oratory contest and American Forensic Association's National Individual Events Tournament. Both of these tournaments used miniature "card-type" ballots with very limited writing space. The present study's finding that judges made fewer comments per ballot on the criteria ballots would appear to confirm the implied earlier finding that when given less space to write, critics will provide less feedback to the students, even when urged to write on the back of the ballots.

**Implications for Research and Practice**

Bormann (1980) has defined special theories as "style specific formulations which relate to the communication practices of communities clearly bounded by patterns of general usage" (p. 4). For an example of such a theory, he notes that "a typical textbook on public speaking provides an artistic special theory of communication that is concerned
with a group of communication episodes characteristic of set occasions in contemporary North American culture" (p. 4). Clearly, theories about the judging of extemporaneous and impromptu speaking fit into the category of special theory as defined by Bormann—in fact, they are even more "special" in the context of the competitive forensics tournament.

Most critics at tournaments, who are experts in these texts, should be quite familiar with the "style specific artistic formulations." Even inexperienced judges should be familiar with the rules of public speaking. Critics, therefore, usually write ballots according to accepted criteria without the criteria being provided for the critics. Thus, the results of the present study indicating that the specialized critics of limited preparation events ignore what they perceive to be needless criteria, are not so surprising. These results would appear to call into question the conclusions reached at the 1988 Denver Conference calling for criteria-laden ballots as a solution to insufficient critic feedback.

The present study's findings should be interpreted with several limitations in mind. First, they left unanswered the possibility that in future study, the criteria ballots might appear in an 81/2" X14" size in order to eliminate writing space as an intervening variable. Second, the scope of the study excluded the possibilities that judge training in the criteria might promote a difference in feedback. Third, since each tournament avoided students speaking twice in front of the same judge in an event, the study is limited in that different judges were used in each round. Fourth, each tournament offered debate. Thus, perhaps the judge pools at all three tournaments had perhaps more persons with debate background than do tournaments offering only individual events. While the precise impact of these limitations on the results remains uncertain, future ballot analyses should look for ways whereby they maybe avoided without compromising the authenticity of examining real critic behaviors at real tournaments.

Several quantitative and qualitative questions remain for future research: Is there a need to differentiate between impromptu and extemporaneous judging criteria? If so, how can this difference be achieved in the comments received by students? Why do critics choose to ignore criteria in writing? Are critics' notions of effective extemporaneous and impromptu speaking so ingrained that any criteria or training would be ineffectual in terms of affecting feedback? Do criteria on ballots help put the apprehension of the lay critic to rest, or would a separate handout or workshop work better? Do criteria make a difference when accompanied by judge training? Will different criteria forms than the ones used in the present study yield different results? Do criteria ballots where space is left between each criterion work differently.
than the ones in the present study? Finally, how do ranks received relate to positive and negative comments made to the speakers in these categories? While this study has shown what judges are teaching about, speech coaches still need to explore the relationship of positive and negative comments to behavior, and whether those comments are consistent with the ranks given.

Whether judges and speech coaches agree with competition philosophically, it has become an important part of the forensic endeavor. As long as they compete at tournaments, students will examine closely their ballots. Thus, the ballot may become the pedagogical tool for the speech coach. Ballot-criteria are often offered as means whereby ballots can guide judges to be more consistent teachers. The present study, however, has shown that in and of themselves, criteria on ballots bring about little if any difference in the types of comments critics make to students in the limited preparation events, and that printing criteria on ballots actually decreases the total average number of constructive comments per ballot critics offer students. Because of the continued need to promote criticism of students that is event-specific, instructive, and consistent, ballot analysis should continue in the areas of extemporaneous and impromptu contest speaking. Since comments are read by students more closely than criteria are read by critics, knowing what written feedback appears on ballots and being critical of the consequences will continue to be an important research prerogative for those interested in improving the learning experience enjoyed by competitors.

References

Aden, R. C. (1990). Imitation is the most sincere form of flattery, but it's not the most educational form of forensics. Paper presented at the Second National Developmental Conference on Individual Events, Denver, CO.


APPENDIX I-Noncriteria Sample Ballot, Used in Both Events

Individual Events Ballot

Event _____________________ Round ____ Section ___ Room

Student Name_______________________________ Code

Please write voluminous constructive comments to the speaker in the space below:

Rank (1-5, no ties)_______ Judge
Rating (100-70) ________ School
APPENDIX II-Extemporaneous Speaking Ballot Sample
with Criteria

Extemporaneous Speaking Ballot

Contestant ________________________________ Round

School Code Number __________________________ Section

Topic ___________________________________ Room __

Note to Judge: Please rank each contestant from 1 to 5, with no ties except for fifth place. Please rate each contestant from 70 to 100.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. Topic and goal—Was the topic selection appropriate? Did the speaker take a clear stand on the issue?
2. Organization—The student should provide a clear and meaningful structure, with logical development.
3. Support—The student should exhibit a strong knowledge of current events by strongly backing claims about the topic assigned with evidence. Sources should be cited.
4. Specific Analysis—The student should effectively and critically explain the facts relevant to the topic.
5. Delivery—The student should show ability to think on his or her feet, with delivery enhancing the student's ideas.

Supporting material and the ability to demonstrate critical awareness of current affairs are essential to this event. This event is distinguished from impromptu speaking, where general interest discussion is stressed.

Comments: (use back of ballot if needed)

Rank (1-5, no ties but 5) __ Judge __
Rating (100-70) _________ School
APPENDIX III-Impromptu Speaking Ballot Sample With Criteria

Impromptu Speaking Ballot

Contestant ______________________________ Round __________________

School Code Number _____________________ Section __________________

Topic __________________________________ Room ________________

Note to Judge: Please rank each contestant from 1 to 5, with no ties except for fifth place. Please rate each contestant from 70 to 100.

Criteria: Please judge the speaker on the following criteria:

1. Clarity in Thesis—The student should develop a clear goal for the speech, with a purpose clearly determined.
2. Organization—The student should develop a clear and meaningful structure, with logical development.
3. Creativity—The student should support the points he or she makes with creative examples.
4. Language—The speaker should demonstrate a command of language and style, showing an ability to think with language.
5. Delivery—The speaker should show ability to think on his or her feet, with delivery enhancing the student's ideas.

Creative ideas and a clear, enjoyable, and enlightening discussion of general interest ideas are essential to this event. Impromptu is not mini-extemp, since it does not require cited evidence or a special understanding of current events.

Comments: (use back of ballot if needed)

Rank (1-5, no ties but 5) __ Judge __

Rating (100-70) ________ School