Debate and Self-Authorship: A Narrative Case Study of Competitive Intercollegiate Debate and the Development of the (Cross) Examined Life

by

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ABSTRACT

Since Socrates, educators have implored learners to self-examine their lives and try to find their own way. Students are encouraged to cultivate autonomous and independent minds unmoored from the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in many of our communal beliefs and practices. As higher education professionals respond to market demands and expand the number of courses and programs providing vocational training and treat students as "consumers," there is concern that colleges and universities are negatively impacting educators' capacity to assist students in developing into reflective and self-examined students. Some argue that the zeal to produce job-ready graduates comes at the cost of nurturing ethically engaged citizens.

This narrative case study investigated whether students' participating in competitive intercollegiate debate can serve as a countervailing force by creating a space for constant reflection and questioning. More specifically, it explored intercollegiate debate's capacity to promote self-authored students. Exploring the interpersonal relationships and coaching strategies within a debate program at a large, public, comprehensive university in the southeastern United States, the study collected and

analyzed stories about debaters' preparation for and participation in NDT/CEDA debate tournaments. Interviews with debaters, graduate coaching assistants, and the debate program's director revealed a community of friends and caretakers working to support and challenge students to see themselves as knowledge generators.

The findings from this qualitative study exposed a set of complex relationships between the coaches and the students and between teammates that constitute learning partnerships. Additionally, the results identified that the squad dynamics that produce a culture of intellectual engagement that are the provocative moments students need to develop into self-authored citizens. The program simultaneously creates a community of care and a culture of questioning that encourages self-reflection and the cultivation of debaters' internal voices. Finally, the program's emphasis on self-reflection and questioning produces the critical components needed for a learning environment to encourage students to embrace a politically engaged life.

INDEX WORDS: Debate, NDT, CEDA, cross-examination, self-examination, questioning, self-authorship, Learning Partnership Model, and provocative moments

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DEDICATION

Wisdom begins in wonder.
-Socrates

To the debate coaches who encourage debaters to question after their learners believe they have found the right answer. To the coaches who push students to evaluate and earnestly explore alternatives even when their debaters insist that the optimal path has already been discovered. To the educators who ask their debaters to dream, wonder, and create new worlds even when that journey is emotionally and ideologically uncomfortable. To the debate coaches who understand that learning is truly a partnership that requires simultaneously challenging and supporting their students.

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It is not living that matters, but living rightly.
-Socrates

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Cohort4 – You will forever be the best part of this experience.

Socrates – Sorry they forced you to drink the hemlock. Tough break for the wisest person alive.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Socrates (469-399 BCE) was the first teacher to advocate for what we might now think of as student self-authorship. He consistently spoke about the importance of "knowing yourself" (Moore, 2015, p. x) and engaging in inward examination. Scholars and teachers remember Socrates for incessantly pushing students to self-examine as a means of producing intellectually and civically engaged Athenian citizens. In his Think-Academy, Socrates subjected his pupils to deeply personal interrogations that relentlessly challenged their decision-making prowess. Miller (2011) described Socrates' as having a "fearless habit of cross-examining powerful men in public" and directly connected that communication strategy to his "growing circle of followers" (p. 25). The Socratic method systematically cross-examined in order to cultivate autonomous and independent minds unmoored from the taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in many of our communal beliefs and practices. Socrates saw himself as a midwife for intellectual inquiry; "help[ing] students to 'give birth' to the correct insight, because a real understanding must spring from within" (Chen, 2011, p. 207). This intimate, student-focused relationship premised on the pursuit of self-knowledge resembles the Learning Partnership Model (LPM) advocated by King and Baxter Magolda (2004). Socrates' "commit[ment] to awakening each and every person to self-scrutiny" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 26) is an analog for contemporary scholars of self-authorship who urge educators to support activities that reduce student's reliance on external formulas and aid them in

finding their own way (Baxter Magolda, 2001). Baxter Magolda (1998b), the foremost preeminent advocate for and researcher of self-authorship, identified self-authorship as "the ability to collect, interpret, and analyze information and reflect on one's own beliefs to form judgments" (p. 143).

For Socrates, the "unexamined life is not worth living for a human being" (Plato, Apology 38e). An examined life encourages one's decisions and actions to be guided by an internal compass that allows them to author their lives independent of community customs, norms and traditions. His Socratic method encouraged students to remain skeptical of perspectives until justified through reason. No position was inherently authoritative; appeals based on political positions, social status, heredity, tradition and even the gods' dictates were scrutinized (Nussbaum, 1997). At the heart of Socrates' pedagogical engagement was an insistence that "class, fame and prestige count for nothing, and argument count for all" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 51). It was best for our beliefs and decisions to be guided by reason and justification because other factors rarely produced ethical, logical, or democratically coherent results. For Socrates, unreflexive and uncritical thinking directly threatened the Athenian democracy. Schlosser (2017) found that Socratic teachings promised to produce empowered citizens drawn "into collective practices of dialogue and reflection that in turn help them to become thinking, acting beings capable of more fully realizing the promises of democratic life" (p. 5).

Contemporary self-authorship scholars agree that the production of reflective and engaged learners is a worthwhile pursuit. Additionally, they forward that pedagogical methods that encourage students to reflect on, question, and reframe their worldviews and decision-making processes can play a significant role in birthing a student's intellectual

autonomy. Baxter Magolda and King (2008) professed that student self-authorship only develops in environments where "students encounter challenges that bring their assumptions into question, have opportunities to reflect on their assumptions, and are supported in reframing their assumptions into more complex frames of reference" (Baxter Magolda & King, 2008, para. 5). Echoing one of the world's greatest philosophers, self-authorship scholars look to develop citizens who adhere to an internal intellectual and moral compass that allows them to develop creative democratic solutions to our most intransigent social problems. This is a model of citizenship that challenges "politics as usual" by "assert[ing] one's thoughts publicly and contesting the extant democracy through questioning and dialogue" (Schlosser, 2017, p. 5). Throughout the history of higher education in the US, various forms of debate provided students opportunities to publicly contest and question ideas hoping that they would prepare students to contribute to our nation's democratic evolution. This study explored whether competitive intercollegiate debate practiced by National Debate Tournament (NDT) and Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA), with its emphasis on direct refutation and cross-examination, can effectively challenge students to live intellectually autonomous, self-examined, and democratically engaged lives.

Statement of the Problem

Parents, students, and policymakers increasingly ask "whether college is worth it" (Roth, 2015, p. 146). The primary metric for evaluating the worth of a post-secondary education is its financial return on investment - ROI. Tuition payers want to know that their investment will pay dividends in the form of higher salaries and faster promotions. Bok (2008) reported that "[s]ince 1970, the percentage of freshmen who rate 'being very

well off financially' as an 'essential' or 'very important' goal has risen from 36.2 to 73.6 percent, while the percentage who attach similar importance to 'acquiring a meaningful philosophy of life' has fallen from 79 to 39.6 percent" (p. 26). A corresponding increase in the number and type of vocational courses offered has occurred as colleges compete for students (Bok, 2008). The result is a spike in the number of undergraduates graduating with occupational degrees (Bok, 2008). Arum and Roksa (2011) painted a picture of the higher education landscape where students are "defined as 'consumers' and 'clients'" and schools are no longer expected to tend to students' moral and civic development but, instead, work "to meet client needs through delivery of elaborate and ever expanding services" (p. 15).

The drive to train students to be job ready upon graduation may come at the expense of preparing them to be informed and reflective citizens pursuing a meaningful life (Arum & Roksa, 2011; Bok, 2008; Nussbaum, 1997). During various periods of U.S. higher education history, some faculty and administrators privileged the whims of the market over the creation of a purpose driven undergraduate education. Ignoring the campus voices calling on the institution to focus on helping students live a meaningful life, these educators withdrew from exploring ethical questions and developed curriculums that concentrated on equipping students with marketable skills. Bok (2008) contended that we are in a similar epoch where many U.S. colleges and universities are failing "to make any deliberate, collective effort to prepare their students to be active, knowledgeable citizens in a democracy" (p. 41).

Nie and Hillygus' (2001) research on the role the academic curriculum plays in fostering civic-minded and politically active citizens provided an additional reason for

concern. In their study of 3,100 graduates and the types of courses they took while in school, they found that "an increase in the number of business courses is correlated with a statistically significant decrease in political participation, voting turnout, hours of community service, and perceived importance of influence the political structure" (p. 45). They found a similar negative correlation for graduates with degrees in the sciences and engineering. Though they were not as apolitical as business majors, students receiving engineering and science-based vocational training also prioritized wealth attainment over political engagement. Nie and Hillygus' study suggested that treating students as "consumers" involved in the purchase of services needed to maximize their vocational preparation may come at the expense of preparing them to be ethically engaged citizens.

While colleges and universities have always been partly a business providing the important service of preparing students for careers, they previously embraced the responsibility to cultivate students' civic and moral development in a more vigorous manner. Unfortunately, the balance between developing students as citizens and responding to them as consumers in a competitive market has decisively shifted is recent decades (Arum & Roksa, 2011). In the process, we risk hindering our ability to encourage "students to learn to think independently and skeptically and to learn how to make and defend their point of view" (Cole, 2016, para. 9). This shift makes it increasing difficult for institutions of higher education to develop a politically engaged and effective citizenry. Education is the primary way we reproduce a committed and competent citizenry that sustains a thriving public life. We must remain mindful of Dewey's (1916) declaration that "democracy has to be born anew every generation, and education is its midwife" (p. 410).

Nussbaum (2010) exclaimed that higher education's ability to produce engaged and democratic citizens has reached a crisis point. Expanded emphasis on technical skills jeopardizes its capacity to graduate students willing and capable of developing a democratically engaged political life. Citizen apathy hollows out the political middle leaving local and national politics negotiated and governed by extremists. An apolitical social center causes "politics to become more polarized, more partisan, less amenable to compromise, and less civil" (Bok, 2008, p. 174). This is a collective tragedy. Effective democratic institutions are constantly rejuvenated with fresh ideas that test the boundaries of possibility and acceptability. Unfortunately, ideas that find the sweet spot of being simultaneously innovative and pragmatic are usually generated by people willing to question established orthodoxy and resist being dogmatically committed to a particular perspective. Political and social innovation depends on those among us who are open-minded, ideologically flexible, and willing to compromise. More importantly, it requires a willingness to participate in the process. Higher education's overemphasis on technical and applied skills jeopardizes its ability to provide this vital democratic service by graduating students who are "useful machines, rather than complete citizens who can think for themselves, criticize tradition, and understand the significance of another person's sufferings and achievements" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2).

The production of a citizenry equipped to actively participate in the political process and effectively advocate for themselves and others requires students with the cognitive maturity to self-examine. The most prominent expectations for higher education in the twenty-first century includes outcomes that are essential for students to become effective citizens – critical thinking, complex decision making, and appreciation

of different perspectives (Meszaros, 2007a). Achieving the goal of effective citizenship forces educators to go beyond subject matter mastery and "requires engaging young adults in the transformation from authority dependence to self-authorship" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2004, p. 11). Hodge, Baxter Magolda, and Haynes (2009) concluded that effective twenty-first century citizens require teachers to cultivate students capable of communicating and collaborating in increasingly diversified communities. For them, that "necessitate the capacity to manage external realities using the compass afforded by our internally generated beliefs, identities, and social relations" (para. 2). In other words, effective citizenship necessitates self-authorship.

Unfortunately, our most prominent educational tools inadequately prepare students to be self-authored citizens. Baxter Magolda and King (2004) reported that a substantial body of research indicates that self-authorship is "uncommon" in college and that "traditional age students rely heavily on external authorities and sources for their beliefs and values" (p. xxiii). Baxter Magolda's ongoing research continues to produce results that cast doubt on current attempts to assist students needing to develop their own internal compass (Baxter Magolda, 2009a; Taylor & Baxter Magolda, 2015). Despite agreement that self-authorship is a "central *aim* of education," the preponderance of evidence indicates "that it is not a central *outcome*" (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 254, ilalics in the original). A longitudinal study of college students indicated that 80% of seniors graduated relying on authorities for knowledge (Baxter Magolda, 1999). While the college campus should be the "prime context for students in which to introduce provocative experiences, portray accurately the complexity of adult life, and guide students through the developmental transformations that lead toward inner wisdom"

(Baxter Magolda, 2007, p. 73), much of the established curriculum discourages student experimentation and innovation needed for students to author their own lives (Strayhorn, 2014). This failure should be of the utmost concern for higher education administrators because students who graduate without an internal foundation for making their own way in the world remain reliant on external formulas for decision-making and identity formation throughout their adult lives (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004).

Purpose of the Study

This silent citizenship crisis requires renewed support for instructional methods that challenge students to constantly and continuously reflect, question, and reframe; methods that help them become self-authored. Development of a more engaged citizenry necessitates an investment in instructional tools that encourage students to experiment with ideas and explore innovative and untraditional solutions to social ills. Baxter Magolda (1999) poignantly observed that conflictual, yet mutually empowering, learning spaces do that by providing students skills to "assess the world they inhabit, determine whether they want to make changes, and rebuild as they see fit" (p. 218). Kronman (2007) agrees. His experiences as a professor and, subsequently, an administrator convinced him that learning communities that husband questioning and conflict are incubators for intellectual growth. Kronman concluded that learning occurs when students embrace the notion that their perspectives can and should be "changed by their encounters with the ideas of their classmates. And for that to be possible, they must view themselves as participants in a shared inquiry, facing the same eternal questions that every human being confronts and struggling together to meet them" (pg. 152). Adopting a Learning Partnership Model (LPM) is one way to assist students through the process of

shared inquiry. Abes (2012) identified the LPM as a constructivist educational model that partners with the learner to cultivate their meaning-making capacity. This study investigated whether a competitive intercollegiate debate program produced learning partnerships that create opportunities for the shared inquiry that Baxter Magolda and Kronman forwarded we need to assist students in their development. More specifically, it explored intercollegiate debate's capacity to promote self-authored students. The research analyzed intercollegiate debate through the prism of Learning Partnership Model and asked the following questions:

- Is the relationship between the debate coach and the debater a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?
- Is the peer-peer relationship between debaters a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?; and
- Do student experiences while preparing for and participating in intercollegiate debate create provocative moments that disrupt the students use of external formulas to guide their decision-making?

Description of the Area of Focus

The broadest interpretation of debate is the consideration of multiple viewpoints to arrive at a judgment (Freeley & Steinberg, 2012). This study was interested in a specific model of debate. It focused on a competitive academic activity involving two or more people with the core objective of orally communicating and testing ideas. Akerman and Neale (2011) described academic debate as a "formal discussion where two opposing sides follow a set of pre-agreed upon rules to engage in an oral exchange of different points of view on an issue" (2011, p. 9). The goal is to create a marketplace of ideas where students compete for the approval of an impartial third-party – one or more judges.

Debate, as an instructional method for argumentation, has been part of the college experience since the establishment of Harvard College during the colonial period

(Bartanen & Littlefield, 2015). Rudolph's (1977) investigation of the history of undergraduate education in the United States identified the literary society as the central extracurricular activity during this period with the debaters and orators serving as the "heroes of the extracurriculum" (p. 95). Throughout the history of higher education, students continuously sought opportunities for vigorous debate training and enhanced competition. Beginning in the 1920's, intercollegiate tournament debating became the primary way undergraduates experienced debate. Instead of attending literary society meetings or competing in one debate on a Friday night against a rival school, third parties began hosting debate tournaments and permitting numerous schools to bring several students to their multi-day event. That remains the dominant model of intercollegiate debate and the focus of this study.

This study focused on the experiences of students competing at tournaments sanctioned by the Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA) and the National Debate Tournament (NDT). Debaters at these tournaments compete on a two-person team while debating one resolution, or topic, for an entire academic year. Tournament participation requires students to research and debate both sides of the resolution. The more competitively successful teams excel at both advocating for the resolution as the affirmative team and opposing suggested changes as the negative team. Many debate practitioners consider the requirement that students debate both sides of the topic, or switch between defending the affirmative and negative sides of the topic throughout the tournament, to be one of the primary benefits tournament debating has over other pedagogical models. They argue that it is uniquely suited to encourage perspective taking

or the ability step into the shoes of another person and consider the world from an alternative perspective (Zorwick, 2016).

During CEDA and NDT sanctioned tournaments, each two-person team is provided the opportunity to compete in up to thirteen debate rounds over the course of the weekend. The host school determines the format, schedule, and number of debate rounds the tournament offers to its contestants. Tournament competitions usually extend over three days with each individual round lasting two and a half to three hours to complete the debate, adjudicate, and provide a judge debriefing. Each team is guaranteed the same number of debates on both sides of the resolution during the preliminary portion of the tournament. The preliminary debates are usually judged by one debate coach from a school not participating in debate they are judging. Performances in the preliminary rounds determine who is invited to participate in the tournament's elimination debates on the final day of competition. The last day of the event is reserved for the best teams to participate in a single elimination, knockout tournament until the tournament champion is decided. The side for each elimination round is determined via a coin toss or switching sides if the teams debated in a preliminary round. The elimination rounds are usually judged by a panel of three or five judges. A more detailed discussion of the history of debate and its pedagogical benefits is provided in Chapter Two.

Theoretical Framework

While several researchers have explored debate participation's ability to improve oral communication and critical thinking, this was the first study to investigate its capacity to encourage students to find their own way or become self-authored. This study was informed by Baxter Magolda's (1999) scholarship on self-authorship. At the heart of

her work is a model of student development that views them as reliant on external formulas to understand social and cultural phenomena and make decisions. It is only when they become unsatisfied with the capacity of those formulas to explain their experiences that they begin to develop and trust their own internal voices.

King and Baxter Magolda (2004) argued that educators can play a pivotal role in this developmental process by establishing relationships with students that are premised on the Learning Partnership Model (LPM). LPM suggests that learning is a cooperative venture between the educator and the learner. It is an educational model that honors the student's perspective and embraces them as co-constructor of knowledge. A genuine respect for students' capacity to author their lives is a prerequisite if educators are truly interested in aiding them as they shift from a dependence on external formulas to developing their own internal compass.

As practitioners partner with students, they should remain mindful that most of their pupils will not toss off the yoke of external formulas without being first challenged to confront their deficiencies. Students need to be brought to the crossroads and forced to deal with the inadequacies of the external formulas used to interpret events and determine how to respond. For Baxtor Magolda (2001), the crossroad is that juncture in a student's journey when "[e]xternal formulas did not produce the expected results" and "[t]he realization that external sources of beliefs and definition were insufficient for happiness brought acute awareness that internal sources of belief and definition were necessary" (p. 93). This study on the role intercollegiate debate plays in facilitating the development of self-authored students is particularly indebted to the scholarship on Learning Partnership

Models (LPM) and the crossroads. A more detailed description of both is presented in Chapter Two.

Methods

The study examined narratives, stories, from 12 intercollegiate debaters, 5 graduate coaching assistants, and a director of debate from one large comprehensive university in the southeastern region of the US to consider whether there is a relationship between competitive intercollegiate debate and the development self-authorship. Their stories about competitive success and failure, their partnerships, and squad culture will provide debate professionals and higher education administrators a better understand how debaters make meaning of their experiences at tournaments and while preparing for competition. Additionally, the study's findings should enhance our understanding of how competitive intercollegiate debate informs students' beliefs, values, and actions. The study used thematic narrative analysis that focused exclusively on "what" students said rather than also analyzing "how" they speak, "to whom" they engage or "for what purposes" motivate their participation (Riessman, 2008, p.54). The emphasis on "what" students are saying was fitting for a study of debaters who dedicate a tremendous amount of time learning how to orally communicate.

Organization of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter One chronicled the impending citizenship crisis, the need for curricular and extracurricular activities that prepare students to become self-authored to reverse the trend, and the utility of teaching models grounded in cross-examination and refutation to encourage the production of self-knowledge. The chapter also describes intercollegiate debate, the area of focus for the

study, and the research questions that guided the investigation. Finally, it briefly introduces the theoretical framework, self-authorship, and the study's method, thematic narrative analysis. Chapter Two reviews the literature on debate and self-authorship and discusses points of intersection. Chapter Three offers a detailed description of the research participants, explains case study narrative analysis, the study's methods, and the procedures used to conduct the study. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. Chapter Five discusses the study's findings and how they can guide debate professionals, student affairs administrators, and classroom curriculum design in producing more self-authored citizens capable of developing more just and democratic alternatives to the Hobbesian forms of engagement that currently dominate U.S. politics.

As the cultural tailwinds push us deeper into an era of immense political polarization and unrest, some will be skeptical about the use of an agonistic pedagogical model like competitive debate to serve a productive role in resolving our citizenship crisis. While this concern should not be dismissed out of hand, Socrates' Think-Academy provides some empirical support for the use of direct refutation and cross-examination to encourage the pursuit of self-knowledge and the development of engaged citizenship. Socrates incessantly questioned students to motivate them to reason and become authors of their own lives. The habitual acts of refutation and cross examination revealed a bevy of possibilities around them and produced critically engaged democratic citizens. Socrates' teachings and the findings of this study indicated that competitive intercollegiate debate holds tremendous promise at a time when we desperately need a more engaged citizenry willing and cable of deliberating the numerous social ills that threaten to fracture communities.

Nussbaum (1997) urged U.S. colleges and universities to become genuinely Socratic by cultivating independently minded students and communities of learners who are inquiry-driven, reflexive, and deliberative. The alternative are communities "in which people talk at one another but never have a genuine dialogue. In such an atmosphere, bad arguments pass for good arguments, and prejudice can all too easily masquerade as reason. To unmask prejudice and to secure justice, we need argument, an essential tool of civic freedom" (Nussbaum, 1997, pg. 19). This study found that intercollegiate debate can serve as a refuge for genuine dialogue. Is debate a curricular and extracurricular effort that can "produc[e] citizens who can take charge of their own reasoning, who can see that the different and foreign are not threats to be resisted, but are invitations to explore and understand, expanding their own minds and their capacity for citizenship" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 300)? This study answers in the affirmative.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

One should not be shocked to learn that Socrates was a skilled debater. His mastery of refutation and cross-examination as teaching tools provided the skills he needed to excel at oral combat. Even though Socrates saw himself as a "genuine philosopher" unwilling to use verbal trickery, he "was not averse to mixing in the rough and tumble of debate" (Billig, 1987, p. 68). When he debated, Socrates engaged with the conviction of a professional rhetorician and masterful arguer (Billig, 1987). He was an exemplar of the well-reasoned and articulate debater that collegiate debating societies around the world strive to produce to this very day. Even with this outstanding resume, it was Protagoras, another Greek philosopher, who became widely known as the father of academic debate.

Protagoras flourished as an itinerant teacher of persuasive speaking and debate (Smith, 1918). While vilified by other philosophers for abandoning the dialectic in favor of speeches for and against particular questions, Protagoras is regarded as the "father of debate" for incessantly demanding that the majority of social and political questions had at least two sides and were best resolved through disputations (Brooks, 1966; McCroskey, 2005; Smith, 2012). He proclaimed that structured debates benefited the entire community by facilitating systemic challenges to established beliefs, norms, and values. Whether one ultimately affirmed or rejected the belief, norm, or value, Protagoras contended that the act of debating made the community more intellectually prosperous. For the father of debate, there was no more "'prudent' way to conduct business and

philosophy" (Smith, 2012, p. 43). One can easily see the influence of his teachings throughout the Ancient Greek academies and medieval universities with their focus on oral argumentation. Protagoras' influence can also be seen in the evolution of higher education institutions in the United States that are "descendants of the universities that arose in Paris, Bologna, and elsewhere in medieval Europe" (Branham, 1991, p. 13). Branham (1991) concluded that it is "scarcely an exaggeration to say that debate was a central feature of the medieval university curriculum" (p. 13).

Like Protagoras, contemporary debate scholars argue that access to opportunities to engage in structured debate can play a central role in strengthening social bonds and can serve as a decision-making model for resolving social and political disputes. Few have investigated or evaluated debate's capacity to stimulate students' personal development. This study is particularly interested in intercollegiate competitive debate's ability to assist students in developing their own internal compass and become less reliant on external actors and established social cues to make decisions. It seeks to answer the question: Does competitive debate encourage student self-authorship?

The rest of this chapter reviews the literature on academic debate and self-authorship in three sections. Section I explores the history of college debate and the current research on the benefits and costs of student participation. It provides a more detailed investigation of the history of debate in the U.S. higher education than that presented in the introduction. A discussion of colonial era disputations and the history of literary societies is followed by an exploration of intercollegiate debate tournaments, the primary vehicle colleges and universities have used to provide debate training since the 1920s. This section concludes with a review of the literature on the various ways students

benefit from and are harmed by participating in academic debate. Section II reviews the literature on self-authorship. It focuses on the research pertaining to Learning Partnership Model and the role of provocative moments in stimulating self-authorship. LPM and provocative moments are the two concepts embedded in self-authorship literature that provide the best framework for understanding and evaluating competitive intercollegiate debate's ability to create the conditions needed for students to develop an internal compass. Finally, Section III explores the intersections of the literature on collegiate debate and the pursuit of self-knowledge. When one considers the cognitive benefits of debate participation that, at first glance, seems to align with the benefits of self-authorship, farther exploration of a link between the two becomes a worthwhile intellectual pursuit.

Collegiate Debate – A History

The word "debate" derives from the Old French word debat-re, meaning "to fight" and the Latin word batluere, meaning "to beat." While many scholars trace academic debate to Protagoras of Abdera (481-411 BCE), the first to train Athenian pupils in the art of argumentative fighting, human desire to verbally joust and beat those we disagree with probably became a part of our interactions soon after we developed the capacity to speak and reason (Broda-Bahm, Kempf, & Driscoll, 2004). Records of Egyptian princes debating agricultural policy (2080 B.C.) and philosophical debates during the Chinese Chou Dynasty (1122-255 B.C.) indicate that people were debating long before it became a pedagogical tool in ancient Greece (Freeley & Steinberg, 2012). However, Protagoras, should be acknowledged for his unique role in developing academic debate. A scholarly exploration of collegiate debate should start with his

contributions as a teacher and scholar and their influence on curriculum development in U.S. colonial colleges.

Disputations

The success of Protagoras's call to arms for teachers to use debate as their primary means for training students is seen in the use of disputations by U.S. colonial colleges. Harvard College founders, educated at Oxford and Cambridge, structured its curriculum based on the offerings of those institutions. That included highly structured debates about the classics and theology (Kronman, 2007). Rudy and Brubacher's (1997) study of the U.S. colonial education indicated that the use of syllogistic disputations performed in Latin were universal in colonial colleges. Disputations were public debates refereed and judged by the schoolmasters and mentors. Geiger's (2015) study of the history of higher education in the United States discussed the original Harvard courses and noted:

> [I]nspite of the static conception of knowledge, the pedagogy demanded what today would be called active learning. Students studied their texts, kept notebooks to organize this knowledge, and copied key concepts or phrases for future use in declamations or disputations. These latter two exercises occupied significant parts of the week for all classes, and performance in these exercises largely determined a student's standing. Finally, the graduation protocols provided both accountability and a capstone experience as the commencers publicly 'demonstrated their proficiency in the tongues and the arts' with declamations and disputations that addressed previously publicized '*theses* and *quaestiones*.' (p. 3, italics in the original)

From the beginning, U.S. educators envisioned students actively participating in the educational process by refuting, cross-examining, and disputing. Purvis (1999) suggested

that the purpose of the disputations "was to rebut accusations that one's thesis was illogical or unfounded and to explore flaws in opposing arguments with oratorical flourishes, clever puns or apt axioms from classical savants" (p. 246). At Harvard, disputations were the "heart" of the educational process (Hollifield, 2004, p. 12). In addition to being required to prepare for and engage in weekly disputations, students were required to demonstrate their learning through monthly disputations with the magistrates and ministers. Hollifield (2004) concluded that Harvard "continued an ancient rhetorical tradition that conceived of thought and expression as agonistic, a mental combat designed to overcome opposition. Harvard did not teach its students to excel in objective descriptions or creative inquiry; it taught them to take a stand, defend it, and attack the views of others" (p. 12). This expectation that students take a stand, defend it, and attack the views of others is a common trait for contemporary collegiate debate. While today's intercollegiate debate model, the focus of this study, and literary societies and contract debates that were its forerunner are structurally distinct from colonial era disputations, all are children of Protagoras' emphatic defense of adversarial competitive argumentation as a core building block for student development.

Literary Societies

Contemporary competitive debate practices are quite different from what students experienced during Pathagoras' teaching sessions and the capstones at Harvard. Current practices find much of their inspiration in the late eighteenth-century student literary societies "that often provided a wide variety of services to their members – a place to polish verbal skills, a library that supplemented an often sparse collegiate one, and an outlet for camaraderie" (Piehler, 1988, p. 210). While grounded in a similar high regard

for argumentation, literary societies were a significant break from the disputations used in the colonial era. They were one of the few outlets for student creativity on a highly regulated college campus. Much like many other components of higher education, the literary society concept was imported from medieval universities. The unique contribution that the U.S. literary societies made was the "fusion of argumentation with competition" (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013, p. 1).

Literary societies were spaces for students to freely explore socially and intellectually, away from the watchful eyes of college administrators. They provided a much-needed respite from an academic environment that was almost completely controlled by the educator. Bartanen and Littlefield (2013) described the role literary societies played as providing a "social and intellectual outlet for students" that allowed them to "compete vigorously (rhetorically, athletically, and prankishly) in much the same way that contemporary fraternities interact" (p. 30). Lomas' (1953) research on the lighter side of literary societies offered a similar conclusion. He found these debating societies to be places of much horseplay and frivolity that students used to distract themselves from the steady diet of Latin, religion, and philosophy that dominated the official college curriculum. Debating club participants were primarily interested in a more casual, informal style of debate that emphasized oration and entertainment instead of research and critical thinking (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2015; Keith, 2010). Lomas (1953) concluded:

> Certainly, the societies filled a significant gap in the semi-scholastic education of the college students of the antebellum period. But a continuous diet of serious fare was too much for high-spirited young men, then and now. It is not surprising that

> they sought to temper their usual discussion of the character of Queen Elizabeth, the relative merit of pulpit and bar, or the justice of the fugitive slave act, with frivolous propositions. (p. 48)

Literary societies produced a model of competitive debate that was as much social as it was academic. This model of dueling public speeches that emphasized oratorical flare and drama dominated U.S. competitive debates during higher education's early years.

While it is clear that these student organizations served multiple functions for their participants, "debate was central," and "it took several forms: forensics disputations (carefully prepared), extempore debates (probably less prepared), or questioning (discussion of current issues)" (Geiger, 2015, p. 86). Literary societies allowed for debate to move out of the classroom and into a setting where students, not college administrators, had control. Thelin's (2011) exploration of the history of higher education contended that the colonial area literary societies constituted one of the original extracurricular activities on U.S. college campuses. They existed long before the organized athletic events and music groups that currently monopolize college student life. From their inception, literary societies were created to serve as disruptive forces that fundamentally challenged the staid and orthodox courses students were required to take. Debating fraternities were birthed by "a politically savvy generation of students" who were "restless and critical of the collegiate order and curriculum" (Thelin, 2011, p. 22). They wanted more influence over the curriculum. They wanted a more prominent role in authoring their educational experience. Participation in literary societies became an outlet for those desires.

Founded at William and Mary in 1776, Phi Beta Kappa was the first student group to incorporate in its fraternal charter an expectation for the membership to consistently debate. The original laws governing Phi Beta Kappa established the two-person team debate model that remains prevalent today. It was an early version of the student oriented collaborative learning that many practitioners regard as essential to getting students to own their educational experience. The original Phi Beta Kappa charter instructed: "four members are selected to perform at every session, two of whom in matters of argumentation, and the others in opposition" (McBryde, 1915, p. 221). The student governed debates on the William & Mary campus ultimately became a model for structured deliberation at Yale and Harvard (Thelin, 2011). This model of debate training via literary societies dominated the college landscape for over a century. Eventually, pressure from two different groups made the literary society model an anachronism and forced the next evolution in collegiate debate. One group of students wanted more intensive debating opportunities and the other desired increased fellowship in a less academically rigorous environment. The social functions were handed over to Greek lettered fraternities that focused on male bonding, philanthropy, and entertainment without the distractions of structured debates. Torbenson (2012) found that the demise of literary societies was "closely associated with the rise of fraternities and sororities, which engendered a higher degree of loyalty" (p. 37). A more competitive and research-intensive form of debate developed for those wanting more rigorous training in argumentation and communication. That training came in the form of inter-squad tours where a squad of debaters from one school traveled to another school to debate a mutually agreed upon topic in front of a public audience.

Inter-squad Tours

While most of the groundbreaking work on argumentation and debate took place in Europe and Asia, the development of inter-squad tours was the unique contribution U.S. educators made to academic debate. The use of intercollegiate debate to teach argumentation is widely recognized as a late nineteen-century American invention (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013; Cowperthwaite & Baird, 1953). Cowperthwaite and Baird (1953) observed that "intercollegiate debating is primarily an American institution" and was quite different from the models of debate in other countries that more closely resembled the disputations at Harvard and the literary societies of Oxford (p. 259). Intercollegiate debating began in the early 1890s and exploded in popularity during the first two decades of the twentieth century (Keith, 2007). Inter-squad tour debates were governed by a "contract" arrangement for a single debate (Cowperthwaite & Baird, 1953; Freeley & Steinberg, 2012; Keith, 2007; Sloane, 2001). When one college challenged another and the challenge was accepted, the two schools negotiated the terms of the contest and, subsequently, participated in a single debate. Contracted inter-squad debate contests were considered special events and garnered the interest of a tremendous amount of people on and off the campus.

Inter-squad tour debates took place in front of an audience of distinguished guests and were judged by community members of high regard. Host schools held banquets honoring their guests (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013). The 1881 intercollegiate contract debate between Phi Alpha Society of Illinois College and the Adelphi Society of Know College was the first formal inter-squad competition (Brooks, 1966; Ehninger & Brockriede, 2009). Another noteworthy early intercollegiate debate that generated a

tremendous amount of buzz throughout higher education was the 1892 competition between Harvard and Yale. Some scholars even consider it to be the first "official" inter-school debate (Hollihan, 1999; Keith, 2007). Ehninger and Brockriede (2009) claimed that the "growth and expansion of intercollegiate debating was meteoric" during the period with sixteen colleges fielding active debate programs by 1895 (p. 303). Collegiate debating had entered a new phase with its popularity rivaling the most popular athletic competitions (Ehninger & Brockriede, 2009; Keith, 2007). Keith (2007) captured the immense popularity of inter-squad tours and campus-wide excitement they produced when he wrote:

> Intercollegiate debating was originally much more like the sports of today than we would like to think. …Debates could be wildly popular with student audiences; they sometimes involved pep rallies and large audiences. In fact, admission might be charged; teams addressed the perennial problem of finding enough money to pay for traveling by sponsoring fundraisers in the form of lectures, plays, and concerts. (p. 64)

Inter-squad tours were later facilitated by the creation of small debating leagues. Leagues formed throughout the country to facilitate regular competitions among rival schools. The debate league competitions were "the forerunner of football and basketball as an instigator of interscholastic rivalry" (Brooks, 1966, p. 23). The formation of intercollegiate debating leagues drove the adoration and support of debate to even greater heights. Rival schools joined the same debating leagues and debated each other twice a year to attract and preserve the attention of future debaters and donors. At the peak of the inter-squad tours era, rivalry debates were highly anticipated social events that generated

large audiences. They were lively public contests that attracted the attention of students, campus administrators, and community leaders. In their prime, inter-squad tours were a source of a tremendous amount of school spirit:

> Crowds in attendance were large. Bands played at debating rallies and at the railroad stations to "see the team off." Special trains ran in order to take the large number of fans that followed the team to its out-of-town debates. Indeed, in their heyday, the debate leagues were complete with pep assemblies, bands, rallies, and fans. (Brooks, 1966, p. 24)

Additionally, intercollegiate debate events were important to college administrators because they represented one of the few ways colleges could measure and compare institutional quality and student preparation (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013). At the time, quality assessment was nonexistent and colleges struggled to differentiate themselves. Success in intercollegiate debate was one way to do so. It became a means for institutions to boast about and advertise the caliber of students it produced. Meticulous league records were kept to prove one's dominance in the intellectual sport of debate because inter-squad tour debates were one of the few comparative measures available to administrators (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013). With the roaring crowds and immense popularity, these tours became a victim of their own success. An overwhelming number of students now wanted to debate and the model could not accommodate the demand. The open intercollegiate debate tournament became the alternative.

Tournaments

Contracting inter-squad rivalry debates remained the norm until the late 1920's when there was "veritable explosion in the popularity of intercollegiate debate" (Greene & Hicks, 2005, p. 102). Colleges and universities could not meet the demand for debating opportunities with inter-squad tours. The rising cost of hosting and traveling to one-on-one rivalry debates and the inability to support the increasing number of students wanting to debate competitively forced a series of changes that eventually led to the more efficient open tournament-style model that featured multiple schools participating in three to five debate rounds per day (Greene & Hicks, 2005; Keith, 2007). This transition to tournaments substantially altered the style and content of intercollegiate debates. They became "more accessible and more conversational, less oratorical and performative; it was more focused on research (a learned skill) than eloquence (increasingly perceived as a talent)" (Keith, 2007, p. 15). The 1923 contest at Southwestern College in Winfield, Kansas was the first of these new open tournament competitions (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013; Ehninger & Brockriede, 2009; Sloane, 2001). The open debate tournament quickly became the preferred debate model and remains a fixture in U.S. higher education with many of its current participants having their first tournament experience in middle or high school.

The open tournament evolved into the dominant format used to train students because of several noteworthy advantages. Bartanen and Littlefield (2013) identified three advantages the tournament format had over its predecessors — disputations, literary societies and intersquad tour debates. First, it increased the number of students who could participate. While a single contracted debate could allow for at most four students from

each of the two schools to participate, the tournament could accommodate exponentially more. Additionally, all students would debate four to six times over the course of a weekend instead of just once on a Friday evening. Tournaments allowed schools to serve far more students and serve each student much more intensively. Second, greater student participation legitimized the role of the professional debate coach. With many more students traveling to tournaments, there was a demand for full-time coaches to prepare arguments and efficiently arrange competition travel. Third, the tournament format produced professional dialogue about competitive debate in scholarly journals. It encouraged scholarly discussions about the rules, norms, and theories governing competitive debate. Debate coaches evolved from team managers into scholars who used rhetoric journals to share best practices and explore cutting-edge methods for engaging students and crafting arguments. This was indeed an intellectually exciting time for intercollegiate debate. With many more students participating, debate was increasingly seen as a legitimate area of academic inquiry.

The forensic leaders of the 1920's "formed the basis for promoting the tournament model and its apex, the West Point NDT" (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013, p. 72). By the 1940's, enough schools were fielding competitive debate programs and traveling to open tournaments that a nation-wide debating circuit had formed and generated support for an end-of-the-season championship tournament called the National Debate Tournament (NDT) (Cirlin, 2007). Cirlin (2007) declared that the NDT was originally founded to only host a national championship tournament but quickly morphed into a sponsoring organization that decided the year-long topic and set the norm for other tournaments. The NDT began as a small invitational tournament attended by 29 colleges

and universities (Cirlin, 2007; Louden, 2013; Ziegelmueler, 1996). The number of teams invited quickly grew to 36 and remained that size throughout the years the tournament was hosted at West Point. Ziegelmueler's (1996) account of the history of the NDT depicted an invitation to the tournament as a highly sought after accolade. He wrote:

> The West Point Tournament was, from the beginning, a prestiguous event, and invitations to it soon came to be widely sought. The rapid popularity of the tournament was due, in part, to its elitest nature and the national competition which it offered and, in part, to the stature of the sponsoring institution and its colorful and gracious style of hosting. (Ziegelmueler, 1996, p. 143).

While West Point controlled the procedures for administering the NDT, regional committees were eventually established to determine the list of invitees. The committees began holding qualifying tournaments to determine the teams they wanted to invite to the NDT. After the 1966 NDT, West Point ended its commitment to hosting the tournament in order to reallocate resources to the Vietnam war (Louden, 2013; Ziegelmueler, 1996). The first post-West Point NDT was held at the University of Chicago and that started the ritual of annually rotating the tournament to different institutions in the United States. If you were a college or university professor or administrator from the late 1960's and throughout the 1970s and wanted your students to participant in collegiate debate, NDT-style debating was considered the "only game in town" (Ziegelmueler, 1996, p. 146).

An alternative to the NDT soon emerged in the form of Jack Howe's Southwest Cross-Examination Debate Association (SCEDA). Howe "bemoan[ed] the state of debate as a high-speed recitation of evidence that was, in his view, inaccessible to many college students" (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013, p. 74). In a piece lauding the value of eloquence

and engaging presentations, Howe (1982) excoriated that the apeal of intercollegiate debate was waning because “we have ignored the ‘obligations’ of the debaters to offer their arguments in as palatable a fashion as possible and to make effort to hold the attention of the judge” (p. 1). He insisted on the need for a debate organization that placed an “emphasis on an audience-centered approach to debate” (Howe, 1981, p. 1). An increasing number of debate coaches agreed. They were concerned that the style of debate that dominated the NDT emphasized the wrong skills. The speeches were too fast and lacked oratorical persuasiveness. Additionally, students were presenting too much evidence that was decontextualized from its source. Howe argued that this emphasis on evidence made preparation for competition too time-consuming and constituted a barrier to entry for those most in need of debate — students who had never done it. The criticisms of NDT-style debating struck a chord. The spread of these concerns transformed SCEDA from a regional organization with support primarily in Southern California into national movement. SCEDA became the Cross-Examination Debate Association (CEDA), a debate organization with the explicit goal “to create a style of debate in which speakers would not be rewarded for spewing, and in which debate evidence did not have the prominance that it had in NDT debate” (Fine, 2001, p. 253). Howe eventually garnered enough nationwide support for his alternative model of intercollegiate debate to be a legitimate rival to the NDT. Unlike the NDT’s use of an annual policy oriented topic, CEDA decided to debate a different topic each semester and focuseed its topics on debating competing values instead of policy solutions. In 1986, CEDA began hosting an open national chamiponship tournament that contrasted with the

NDT's highly restrictive tournament (Bartanen & Littlefield, 2013). Fine (2001) reported that by the end of the 1980s CEDA was four times larger than the NDT.

Over time, the distinctions between the two formats faded. CEDA value debates began to resemble the policy debates at NDT sanctioned tournment in both form and style. CEDA debaters began to speak faster and the discussion of values became a brief pitstop on the way to advocating a policy solution. CEDA reformers were unable to hold off the allure of speaking rapidly and utiliizing large quanities of evidence to overwhelm opponents as strategies for maximizing competitive success. They may have also underestimated the attractiveness of the NDT as the premiere symbol of national competitive debate success. For many students and coaches, the NDT's elitism remained quite appealing. The attraction is demonstrated by the NDT's ability to consistently overshadow and displace other national championship tournaments (Louden, 2013). The division between the NDT and CEDA became so minor that the two organizations functionally merged in 1996 (Bartanen & Frank, 1999; Fine, 2001; Louden, 2013). Currently, students competing at CEDA/NDT debate tournaments debate one policy topic for the entire year. Each tournament provides several opportunities to debate as the afirmative, adovocating a policy change suggested by resolution, and the negative, opposing the resolutional change. Each organization continues to host a national championship tournament. While participation has decline in recent years, CEDA's national championship tournament remains an open affair and has fielded over 200 two-person teams. On the other hand, the NDT preserves its restrictive qualification requirement and smaller tournament size. However, the popularity of the the NDT has encouraged the organization to expand the participant pool to 78 teams. To this day, the

desire of earning one of the coveted spots at the National Debate Tournament informs argument development and travel patterns throughout the debate season for many squads.

The CEDA/NDT tournament format is currently how a substantial number of college students experience intercollegiate debate. While smaller NDT/CEDA sanctioned tournaments host at least a half a dozen schools with a few teams competing from each school, there are several debate tournaments that are "large gatherings at which students from numerous schools compete in isolated settings away from the public" (Broda-Bahm, Kempf, & Driscoll, 2004, p. 19). Tournaments hosted by Georgia State University, Wake Forest University, Harvard University, University of Southern California, University of Texas and Northwestern University attract 120-150 teams from around the country. During the 2016-17 debate season,1347 students entered in at least one NDT/CEDA sanctioned tournament across three different divisions — open, junior varsity and novice (National Speech and Debate Association, 2016).

While the history of collegiate debate depicts a dynamic and pedagogically rich activity, it is primarily written from the perspective of higher education institutions. We actually know very little about the debating experience from the perspective of the student. Researchers rarely explore the interpersonal relationships of the students who participated in Harvard's disputations or those debaters working in tandem to win the Sigurd S. Larmon Trophy, a rotating trophy awarded to the winner of the National Debate Tournament. Fine's (2001) investigation of high school debate culture is the exception. However, intercollegiate debate has not been the subject of a similar study of its caliber. This disregard of the interpersonal aspects of intercollegiate debate creates a glaring hole in the scholarship on one of the United States' more significant contributions to

education. Debate programs provide an opportunity to interrogate the ways students develop communion, what Baxter Magolda (2000) identifies as "the ability to connect with others and to function in a collaborative way" (p. 141). Debate programs do much more than travel students to tournaments. They are social networks imbued with communion-oriented expectations. They encourage students to develop deeply interpersonal collaborative bonds. Debaters are routinely asked to sacrifice their individual success for others and embrace the dependencies that come with being on a team. Unfortunately, these interpersonal relationships are currently underexplored by those researching collegiate debate. I am skeptical of the ability of administrators, debate coaches, and researchers to fully ascertain the benefits of competitive debate without investigating the shared teaching and learning communities that develop between students and with their coaches. Student interactions in debate squad rooms matter. Van and airport discussions before and after tournaments are potentially important sites for student development. A students' relationship with their coaches have the potential to inform their maturation as debaters and people. A study of intercollegiate debate should explore the interpersonal dynamics of the debate experience because those interactions may play a significant role in students' maturation.

Collegiate Debate – The Benefits

The history of collegiate debate in the United States presents a relay of educators and students constantly seeking more active learning models to test and improve students' oral communication and critical thinking skills. Colonial college administrators used disputations to sharpen the minds of students in ways that rote memorization of Latin and religious verses could not. Literary society and inter-squad tours movements

were outgrowths of student consternation with the curricular offerings that lacked opportunities for creative expression. They thrived because they provided students the opportunity to develop as rhetoricians and researchers. Historically, collegiate debate prospers at a particular institution when its benefits are perceived to be lacking from the college or university's official academic curriculum. Freeley and Steinberg (2012) presented academic debate as a unique educational endeavor that promotes the intellectual clash of opposing ideas. For them, the benefits of tournament participation include providing students the "ability to communicate complex ideas clearly with words" and "the ability to process the arguments of others quickly and to reformulate or adapt or defend previous positions" (p. 38).

Bartanen and Littlefield's (2013) study of the history of forensics in the United States came to a similar conclusion. They argued that the legacy of intercollegiate debate "lies in both the personal benefits participation has provided to millions of students, one by one, and the role the activity played in helping to shape the educational philosophy and practices of high schools and colleges during the century" (p. x). With a better understanding of intercollegiate debate's history in hand, the chapter proceeds with a review of the literature on the "personal benefits" of participating in academic debate. It starts with the literature on debate's capacity to enhance students' oral communication skills.

Oral Communication

When one considers that public speaking is the primary way students participate in collegiate debates, it is not surprising that improved oral communication is routinely touted as one of the activity's primary benefits (Budesheim & Lundquist, 1999; Carroll,

2014; Darby, 2007). While debates can take place via any communication channel, orality is definitively the preferred vehicle. As more of our communication becomes mass-mediated and twitterfied, a greater premium will be placed on opportunities for and people skilled to orally advocate and deliberate (Carroll, 2014). The preservation of opportunities for students to debate may very well be the much-needed storehouse for the increasingly at-risk art of public speaking.

Debate coaches and debaters regularly identify collegiate debate as one of the better learning experiences for training students to orally communicate their ideas with eloquence, passion, and a critical edge. Oral communication is an essential skill that college students should acquire if they are to become productive workers, act as engaged citizens, and fully participate in the development of their communities. In a peer-reviewed study of 63 undergraduate leaders participating in programs that used experiential learning approaches and their capacity to develop communication skills, Shokri et al. (2014) concluded:

> The importance of communication skills among undergraduates is undeniable by both academics and employers. Discovering ways to assist undergraduates in developing and improving communication skills—be they interviewing, listening, writing, or presentation skills—is a good investment for colleges and universities, whether through course work or designing programs or co-curricular projects. (p. 594)

Employers are increasingly looking to hire college graduates with strong oral communication skills. Top executives rank it the second most valuable soft skill only behind integrity (Stephenson, Mayes, Combs, & Webber, 2015). Unfortunately, according to a survey of hiring managers, U.S. higher education is doing a poor job of

equipping undergraduates with the vital skill. A late 2013 survey of 1000 hiring managers concluded that 56% of undergraduates are not prepared to communicate with an authority figure or their clients and 57% are not prepared to publicly speak or make a persuasive argument in defense of a contested idea (Chegg and Harris Interactive, 2013). Those results are consistent with research done for the Association of American Colleges and Universities that indicated that 80% of the employers surveyed want higher education institutions to increase their emphasis on training undergraduates to orally communicate (Hart Research Associates, 2013).

The concern that colleges and universities are generally doing a poor job equipping students with the communication skills needed to excel is a claim that is almost universally accepted in and outside of academia (Bellon, 2000). There is a clear need for more innovative approaches to teaching public address, and Bellon (2000) argued that intercollegiate debate is up to the task. He explained:

> Where many undergraduates may have, at best, a single classroom experience involving public speaking, debaters spend many hours assembling and practicing hundreds of public speeches on topics of national importance. The questioning skills developed in cross-examination makes debaters more capable of eliciting important information from their peers, thereby sharpening their analytical skills. (p. 165)

This defense of debate's capacity to sufficiently improve students' communication skills is in line with Colbert and Biggers' (1985) proclamation that debate is one of the better teaching methods for improving public speaking and interpersonal communication skills. Williams, McGee, and Worth's (2001) study of intercollegiate debate participants using student questionnaires provided some evidence for Bellon and Colbert and Biggers'

enthusiastic conjectures supporting collegiate debate. 286 completed student questionnaires from intercollegiate debate participants representing 70 institutions revealed that students regularly and consistently insisted that intercollegiate debate helps improve oral communication skills. Students participating in the activity perceived debate as improving their ability to confidently and coherently communicate their ideas with 171 respondents identifying speaking/communication skills as a primary benefit of tournament debating. Littlefield's (2001) study of high school debaters drew a similar conclusion. Like their college counterparts, Improving Communication/Speaking Skills was frequently identified as one of the top benefits of tournament debating.

Student surveys evaluating in-class debates produced similar results. Combs and Bourne (1994) conducted a five-year study of debates in a senior-level marketing course. The results of a questionnaire completed by 544 students assessing their oral communication skills and the overall effectiveness of debate revealed that 88.3% of students rated debate as Good or Excellent in overall effectiveness in training students to communicate and critically think and 77.5% reported they learned more through debating than their lecture-oriented classes. In a different study, Zare and Othman (2015) found that students in the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) program at University Putra Malaysia who participated in in-class debates identified debate as the source for their improved public speaking and argumentation skills. All 16 of the participants concluded that "debates helped the students lose the fear of talking in front of their classmates and boost their confidence to talk" (p. 166). As a result, they were able to "express their opinions freely, talk without anxiety, and practice their speaking and oral communication skills" (p. 166).

Studies on the use of formal structured debates to train healthcare professionals also found improvements in oral communication competencies. Hall (2011) used structured classroom debates as a teaching strategy to enhance critical thinking and communication skills of 81 healthcare students. The participants comprised three groups. There were two teams of four or five students who debated and one group of two to four students who served as the event "debriefers." The debriefers determined the debate topic and provided an oral critique of the presentations that included detailing the debaters' arguments, identifying important information that was not covered in the debates, and highlighting errors in the debaters' reasoning. The debriefing occurred two to four days after the debate. Students reported that the most beneficial aspects of debating included learning new ways to communicate with their colleagues, learning to remain poised during questions, and helping to clarify what they were attempting to communicate. Garrett, Schoener, and Hood's (1996) study delivered similar results. They found that formal debates addressed a pressing concern for professional nurses by developing their oral communication skills and cultivating poise when dealing with controversial issues. Finally, a recent study of seven graduates of a doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) program who participated Oxford-style debates on global health care topics "found engagement in the debate to have a synergistic effect on their learning" (Elliott, Farnum, & Beauchesne, 2016, p. 233), resulting in enhanced professional communication skills and sharpened critical appraisal skills.

While debate's ability to improve oral communication skills seems intuitive, it is difficult to ignore that the preponderance of the evidence supporting a relationship relies on student self-assessment reports. One concern with a reliance of student evaluation is

the potential for students to grasp for a convenient justification when they are asked to account for the substantial amount of time and effort they invest in preparing for debates. The observation of improved communication skills may be driven by a desire to justify their participation in a difficult and time-consuming activity instead of an accurate appraisal of intercollegiate debates' ability to improve their public speaking skills. Although I agree that the current studies of debate's ability to enhance oral communication are limited, teachers working with debaters will tell you that there is something that makes debaters different when it comes to orally presenting their ideas. Debaters are demonstratively better than their counterparts at preparing and delivering speeches. Some would argue that this differential is due to debate's ability to keep students actively engaged in the learning process and motivated to practice the art of public speaking.

Now that we know debate improves how we communicate, one may wonder if it positively impacts what we communicate by altering the way we think. Public speaking instructors and coaches will tell you that it is difficult to communicate clearly if you thinking fails to be logical, reasoned, and focused. Many asserted that good communication and critical thinking are inextricably related. The next benefit this chapter explores speaks to the activity's potential to improve our cognition by coaxing its participants to be more critical thinkers.

Critical Thinking

The higher order learning processes that debate potentially develops are routinely referred to as critical thinking skills (Kennedy, 2007; Roy & Macchiette, 2005; Vo & Morris, 2006). Unlike lower order thinking that emphasizes rote and passive learning,

critical thinking demands that students analyze numerous sources of material, synthesize them into coherent collections, and vigorously evaluate the information before deciding what to do with it. While lower order thinking focuses on *what* students should think, critical thinking focuses on *how* they should think. Proulx (2004) defined critical thinking as "a process that consists of carefully determining whether to accept, reject, or suspend judgment about what someone says" (p. 27). Fostering habits and processes for critical discernment are increasingly touted as one of the primary goals for higher education as employers continue to highlight the need for colleges and university to graduate students with a more developed set of high order learning skills (Arum, Roksa, & Cook, 2016). More importantly, critical thinking is the "intellectual engine of a functional democracy: the set of mental practices that lends breadth, depth, clarity, and consistency to public discourse. It's what makes thinking in public truly public and shareable" (Scheuer, 2015, para. 22). In other words, our most intransigent and impactful social problems require a citizenry equipped to deliberate with a keen sense of judgment of when compromise is needed. Nurturing communities of debating learners could be quite helpful in that regard.

In *Using Debate in the Classroom* (2016), the editors forwarded that debate has the power to transform our schools into "engaged learning centers" (p. 3) that can empower students to "cultivate their voice, intellect, and capacity to see things from a variety of perspectives" (p. 4). These engaged learning communities serve as a refuge for critical listening and inquiry; 21st century skills that are increasingly in demand as more of us find ourselves ensconced in social media's ideological cocoons and bereft of opportunities to publicly engage about and across our differences (Lee & Nair, 2016). Wade (2016) presented debate as a learning tool with a significant capacity to serve as a

countervailing force to our increased social and political separation. While assessing debate's capacity to promote critical thinking, he argued:

> the ideal critical thinker should value reason and should strive to be well-informed regarding the matters under consideration. He or she should be open-minded and demonstrate a willingness to suspend personal beliefs so that reasons and evidence for opposing and different views can be evaluated without bias. Doing so requires the critical thinker to be capable of thinking from the perspective of another person and understand how his or her background, social position, and life history has impacted his or her worldview. (p. 97)

There are three ways debate is connected with critical thinking. Wade alluded to debate's ability to facilitate peer interactions that encourage students to garner a deeper understanding of the materials they are studying. Second, debate provides a means for students to advance up Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of cognition (Jagger, 2013). It consistently presents students with opportunities to practice higher order thinking skills pertaining to information analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The final connection to critical thinking is debate's ability to foster metacognition, an awareness of one's own cognitive strengths and weaknesses. The requirement that debaters think about the multiple sides of an issue encourages them to step outside of their preferred worldview and become aware of the limitations of their own thinking. Numerous studies (Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden, 1999; Berkowitz, 2006; Charrois & Appleton, 2013; Gervey, Drout, & Wang, 2009; Wade, 2016) have identified debate as an excellent conduit for critical thinking. It encourages students to engage in four forms of thinking that are definitively critical: "(a) thinking that is clear, precise, accurate, relevant, logical

and consistent; (b) thinking that reflects a controlled sense of skepticism or disbelief of any assertion, claim, or conclusion until sufficient evidence and reasoning is provided to conclusively support it; (c) thinking that takes stock of existing information and identifies holes and weaknesses, thereby certifying what we know and don't know; and (d) thinking that is free from bias, prejudice and one-sidedness of thought" (Garside, 1996, p. 215).

Research on the use of formal in-class debates consistently shows that debate promotes critical thinking. For example, Healey's (2012) reflection on the use of debate in geography courses concluded that formal classroom debates have the potential to engage students in critical thinking before, during, and after the debates. While preparing for the debates, students appraise, analyze, and evaluate materials from multiple perspectives. They critically think during the debates when they listen to others and quickly assess and present counterarguments. Critical thinking occurs after the debate when students formulate questions to solicit feedback on their performances. Camp and Schnader's (2010) exploration of the use of debate to enhance critical thinking in accounting classes found a significant increase in awareness and confidence with respect to information gathering and higher order synthesis of that information after evaluating 55 sets of before and after student surveys. Paired t-tests determined the results were statistically significant. Additionally, faculty feedback revealed that "[n]ot only were students more willing to ask questions and challenge concepts discussed in class but they also began conversing both inside and outside of class with the professor about issues related to debate topics" (Camp & Schnader, 2010, p. 668). Finally, a study evaluating the use of open debate techniques in a rehabilitation counseling course replicated the findings that students are more willing to consider alternate points of view after

participating in formal academic debates (Gervey, Drout, & Wang, 2009). The above findings are part of a trend in multiple academic disciplines including nursing, geography, pharmacy and business (Charrois & Appleton, 2013; Elliott et al., 2016; Sziarto, McCarthy, & Padilla, 2014; Vo & Morris, 2006). Educators are increasingly using debate to inculcate critical thinking into the curriculum.

Research on intercollegiate competitive debate corroborates the conclusions drawn from studies on in-class debates. Studies on competitive debate provided strong empirical and conclusive evidence of a positive relationship between debate and critical thinking. McGee (2002) professed that the best reason to support competitive tournament debating "lies in the fact that debate does not aim for persuasion so much as it aims for the creation of a dynamic form of knowledge: critical thinking. The forensics educator seeks to promote in students a capacity to evaluate evidence and arguments critically" (p. 172). Additionally, an exhaustive program evaluation of intercollegiate debate's capacity to develop critical thinking found that the empirical research supporting the connection between the two is deep and extensive (Parcher, 2008). In 1985, Colbert and Biggers advocated for additional institutional support of intercollegiate debate tournaments based on their findings that "50 years of research correlates debate training with critical thinking skills" (p. 212). A more recent meta-analysis consisting of 19 individual longitudinal and cross-sectional studies of the relationship between competitive debate and critical thinking found that debate participation consistently improved critical thinking (Allen, Berkowitz, Hunt, & Louden, 1999). The results indicated that public evaluation of arguments and counterarguments can substantially improve students' critical thinking and critical listening skills. In a follow-up piece defending the results of

the meta-analysis, Berkowitz (2006) concluded that "[t]raining in forensics, debate, public speaking, and argumentation courses has clear and demonstrable effects on critical thinking development" (p. 57).

The research supporting debate as a promoter of critical thinking is robust and quite compelling. Researchers should continue exploring the reasons for such a strong correlation. Just like not all learning is active, not all debate-like activities are capable of producing critical thinkers. Educators need to think about their roles, dosage, and expectations before and after debates, as well as, the unique attributes each student brings to the conversation. One explanation for debate's ability to successfully cultivate critical thinking is that debate produces an active communal process. Akerman and Neale (2011) suggested that the gains in learning could be due to the interactive nature of the debate activities. This observation supports Golding's (2011) finding that the most effective way to prepare students to become critical thinkers is by immersing them in a "community of critical thinking" (p. 358) and making it an essential part of their everyday educational experience. Students learn to critically engage "by enculturation and immersion in such a community or … by initiation into this practice" (Golding, 2011, p. 359). Debating cannot be a solo sport. The benefits of participation are acquired by being an engaging community member willing to share your ideas and listen to others.

The final benefit is related to but, ultimately, different from critical thinking. Halpern (2014) definition of critical thinking helps to distinguish it from disruptive thinking. Halpern defined critical thinking as "the use of those cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. It is used to describe thinking that is purposeful, reasoned, and goal directed—the kind of thinking involved in

solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions, when the thinker is using skills that are thoughtful and effective for the particular context and type of thinking task" (p. 9). Even when one is critically engaged, we must still decide which outcomes should be desired and how to choose between competing desirable outcomes. Those decisions are embedded in value systems that can be informed by disruptive thinking. As we critically sift through the relevant information to make a decision, the choices we make are heavily informed by whether we filter the information through imposed cultural values or our own internal voices. Producing critical thinkers remains an important and necessary educational goal. However, it may be an incomplete one. If all we do is produce students who know they should accumulate a variety of information from a multitude of sources, they may still lack the skill to process that information in a way that facilitates intrapersonal and interpersonal development.

Disruptive Thinking

Collegiate debate trains students to engage in disruptive thinking by encouraging them to accept that their adhered to cultural and social norms are partial and subjective understandings themselves, others, and their environment (Green & Klug, 1990). Disrupting fidelity to a particular worldview heightens our curiosity about alternative perspectives and makes us more willing to disrupt other thought patterns and our material existence. The concept of benign disruption has a long history and operates from the premise that intellectual growth requires students to break away from their current ways of processing and interpreting the world (Goldsmid & Wilson, 1980; Roberts, 2002a). Benign disruption is a teaching tool used to encourage students to "experience cognitive dissonance – the intellectual conflict that occurs when one's problem-solving processes

are not adequate to resolve a new dilemma" (Roberts, 2002a, p. 7). Benign disruptors push students to pose questions before adopting solutions. They help students determine the appropriate set of questions and encourage them to defer to evidence-based solutions that were critiqued and challenged. Wagenaar (1982) presented several suggestions for employing benign disruption that included:

> professors confront students with the latter's initial convictions, that professors present students with challenges in the form of discrepant data or conclusions, and that professors assist students in reformulating initial convictions consistent with the evidence presented. In short, the instructor becomes a troublemaker and works with the student instead of doing something to the student. The teaching task becomes arranging a set of problems and possible strategies for the student — the student is helped to learn how to learn rather than just given bits of knowledge. (p. 137)

Wagenaar's suggestions harken to many of the goals that educators pursue when they incorporate debate into the curriculum. At its best, debate is a venue for students to confront their own presuppositions, analyze and challenge differing and inconsistent data, and reform their worldviews based on the best evidence available.

Collegiate debate encourages disruptive thinking by challenging preconceptions and taken-for-granted assumptions that guide many student decisions. Roberts (2002b) argued that a successful strategy of benign disruption "prods students to take a fresh look at a world that they thought they understood. It goads them to step outside of their current world-view, to look at the unfamiliar, and to examine their assumptions with new perspectives" (p. 14). Debate does that. It motivates students to take a new look at the world by encouraging them to encounter views that are diametrically opposed to their

own. In doing so, it induces self-reflection and, occasionally, encourages people to alter their views (Healey, 2012). Debate produces a self-reflexive process where students analyze, critique, and challenge their own reasoning. It is an internally disruptive force that can unsettle students and encourage them to explore different ideas and ways of being (Akerman & Neale, 2011; Healey, 2012; Omelicheva & Avdeyeva, 2008).

The insistence that participants engage in perspective-taking in order to successfully compete challenges students to de disruptive thinkers. At every tournament, students are required to switch between being the affirmative and being the negative. That requirement promotes perspective taking — the ability to step into the shoes of another person and consider the world from their perspective (Zorwick, 2016). Successful debaters must comprehend the presentation of their opponent's ideas and be able to earnestly and fatefully describe worlds that are not their own. Intercollegiate debate trains students to persuasively defend competing claims by encouraging an understanding of truth that is contingent and contextualized. Every idea is always worthy of deeper interrogation. Zorwick (2016), a social psychologist and former intercollegiate debater, concluded that debate is a powerful medium for expanding the perspectives students are willing to consider and the stories they are willing to listen to:

> [P]erspective taking can be meaningfully developed through the skills and activities required in structured debate. … Perspective taking will help students strengthen the skills required for considering multiple sides of an issue, which can lead to a nuanced understanding of issues, other people, and the world as whole. In developing future citizens and leaders, teachers have the unique opportunity to encourage students to develop perspective taking skills. … [T]hey need to know that debate is a powerful

> ally in the struggle to help students consider the world outside their own experiences. (p. 115)

Students' development of more nuanced understanding of differing interpretations of the same event or phenomena allows for fruitful engagement across cultural and political differences. Various authors (Alén, Domínguez, & de Carlos, 2015; Healey, 2012; Kennedy, 2007) concluded that competitive debate encourages students to transcend their biases and prejudices by requiring them to defend a range of perspectives and adopt an unbiased evaluation process that interrogates their own assumptions while they analyze the arguments of others.

An additional benefit of perspective-taking is that it generates a healthy sense of doubt in one's own views by encouraging students to acknowledge the legitimacy of alternate perspectives. Doubt leads students to become less dogmatic and offer more reserved and nuanced opinions. Roth (2015) identified the importance of doubt in creating learning environments that are hospitable to question asking and experimentation:

> Doubt is the antidote to conformity because doubt about the way things are (or are said to be) encourages inquiry. … certainty is the enemy of inquiry – not its promise. We should expect that inquiry will lead to more questions, more experiments, more learning. With learning there is always risk, and educators harness the energy of that risk for creative purposes. …Doubt becomes creative when it is linked to the spirit of investigation, a desire to learn that itself sparks more inquiry and experimentation. Pg.169

Requiring students to comprehend and defend multiple sides of the topic is one of the better pedagogical tools for producing inquiry inducing doubt that generates experimentation and creativity. The cultivation of doubt is a generative process that nourishes curiosity and openness to new ideas. It is difficult for students to remain wedded to untested assumptions when they are consistently researching and advocating on behalf of diametrically opposed perspectives. Switching sides forces them to entertain, passionately defend and legitimize values, philosophies, and policies they would summarily dismiss in other settings. The argumentative playground of debate, where students freely play with countervailing polices and values, facilitates intellectual openness and ideological flexibility that comes at the expense of an unwavering commitment to untested beliefs. While exploring doubt as a means for improving communal interactions, Gladwell (2013) presented an additional set of benefits:

> doubt was creative because it allowed for alternative ways to see the world, and seeing alternatives could steer people out of intractable circles and self-feeding despondency. Doubt, in fact, could motivate: freedom from ideological constraints opened up political strategies, and accepting the limits of what one could know liberated agents from their dependence on the belief that one had to know everything before acting, that conviction was a precondition for action. (para. 17)

In other words, a healthy dose of doubt is the enemy of dogma and the midwife of invention. It frees students from intellectual and ideological straight-jackets that impede their personal growth and development. One of the more impactful benefits of intercollegiate debate is its ability to sow the seeds of doubt that leaves our ethical and political foundations unsettled.

Additionally, debate stimulates disruptive thinking by challenging our tendency to make decisions based on confirmation bias where we interpret new information as a confirmation that our established beliefs are impartial and correct. Unless educators create incentives for students to explore all sides of an issue, they will research and process information in ways that confirm and reinforce their biases (Budesheim & Lundquist, 1999). To counter the tendency towards bias assimilation, students should defend all sides of an issue to broaden their perspective and obtain a more objective analysis. Budesheim & Lundquist's (1999) used a "*consider-the-opposite-strategy*" approach that forced 72 students participating in the debates to defend the side of the argument they disagreed with (p. 106, italics in the original). Requiring students to switch sides forced learners to grapple with their own uninformed opinions, challenged their own preconceptions, and thwarted bias assimilation that impedes the student's development. Green and Klug (1990) reported similar results from the use of debate in an introductory sociology course. They found that when students present views that are contrary to their own, debate has the capacity to spur a change in those views or the pursuit of better arguments to defend their initial convictions. Formal debates that encourage students to defend perspectives that are inconsistent with one's initial opinion "drive students' personal development, contributing to … a personal 'paradigm shift'" (Osborne, 2005, p. 42).

An additional source of disruption is produced via the creation of learning environments where students understand that policy and ethical choices are not clear-cut and the right answer is usually highly contextual and contingent (Scannapieco, 1997; Yang & Rusli, 2012). This understanding of world events as complex phenomena

requiring nuisance evaluation shatters the assumption that decisions can be made by following an established cookie cutter formula. Students learn to be skeptical of simplistic explanations of complex situations and universal solutions to particular problems. When students realize that all decisions are made with incomplete and partial information, they come to see the value of more open investigations and less dogmatic conversations. Negotiation and compromise become more likely. Ackerman and Neale (2011) concluded that students:

> learn that the ability to argue for one position in a debate does not mean that they cannot embrace a different position in other contexts. …debate is beneficial for teaching respect for different opinions, for being able to take on multiple perspectives, and for highlighting the dangers of absolutism, in addition to providing training in the analysis of public policy. (p. 21)

The research preparation before the act of debating plays a critical role in helping students challenge their own simplistic reading and superficial understanding of the issues being discussed. The preparatory process "exposes students to divergent—but substantiated — points of view and encourages open-mindedness, tolerance of diversity, and common understanding" (Garrett et al., 1996, p. 6). This is another reminder that scholars may miss some of the more powerful benefits of debates if they solely focus on what occurs during the debates. Student preparation before tournaments also informs their development.

Gimenez (1989) argued that we best achieve benign disruption when teachers encourage students to "develop their own viewpoint as long as it is well argued" (p. 187) by using teaching tools that "generate debates" (p. 187). Forcing students to debate will

not always be comfortable for the teacher or the student. How could it be? The goal is disruption and disruptions are rarely pleasurable and are routinely uncomfortable. However, Newman (1996) encouraged teachers to accept the necessity of a little discomfort if we want students to rethink their worldviews:

> [I]t is true that "a gain in knowledge is a loss of innocence." Trying to induce students to see themselves in what they're studying or to face "inconvenient facts" may lead them to question strongly held assumptions about how their lives and the world around them work. This process can be uncomfortable and can provoke frustration among students. Some dearly held assumptions about common sense, or what they thought was common sense, may become head-scratchingly confusing. (p. 85)

The literature on collegiate debate indicates that it can promote disruptive thinking. While the evidence is intuitively compelling, the vast majority of the debate-related research on benign disruptions, perspective-taking, and doubt presents them as tertiary issues that were not systemically explored as a part of the study. The focus of the studies was usually assessing improvements in communication skills or critical thinking and the author merely conjectured that debate produces some ancillary benefits related to benign disruption and/or perspective-taking. More focused qualitative and quantitative studies are needed that investigate debate's relationship with introspection and perspective-taking. Instead of depicting these as inevitable knock-on benefits to training students to be critical thinkers, researchers should independently explore the activity's potential to promote self-reflection, introspection, and doubt.

Collegiate debate has left a lasting impression on higher education. It served as a fulcrum for student empowerment during the colonial era and, more recently, the

development of twenty-first-century skills. With roots that extend back to 481 BCE, one would correctly expect a deep research base exploring the relationship between debate to a multitude of issues. Research on the benefits of debate offers a strong compelling argument for its continued support in US colleges and universities. Numerous studies concluded that it is a powerful vehicle for improving how we orally communicate with each other. Additionally, it provides them the skills to critically and disruptively interrogate their social environment and make research-driven decision.

Collegiate Debate – The Concerns

While the benefits of collegiate debate — improved oral communication, critical thinking and disruptive thinking — have generated and sustained its support across a wide range of higher education institutions, the activity has detractors. However, even Tumposky (2004), one of the activity's staunchest critics, conceded that there is "widespread acceptance of debate as a vehicle for teaching and learning at the levels of both secondary and higher education" (p. 52). She is not blind to the fact that debate is a "virtually unchallenged" activity and is valued enough among institutions of higher education that "several well-known universities (for example, Stanford, Emory, Vermont, and Michigan) bolster its image by holding summer institutes where young scholars hone their debating skills" (p. 52). It is easy for debate advocates to review the literature and interpret this overwhelming support as reason to summarily dismiss those who have found cause for concern. Some might take the widespread support as justification to mistakenly present intercollegiate debate as a panacea for all that ails higher education. In the proper context, competitive debate is a wonderful activity supported by some of the best higher education professionals in the United States. The litany of studies discussed

earlier in this chapter supports that conclusion. The criticism leveraged against debate are thoughtful, well-reasoned, and very much worthy of public deliberation. Debate's advocates should acknowledge and tend to the concerns that intercollegiate debate trivializes complex issues, is premised on an adversarial model that produces negative externalities, and encourages a communication style that is insular and elitist. Debate is held in such universal high regard that doing so can only serve to improve the activity.

Issue Trivialization

Some are concerned that the process of debating may encourage students to oversimplify and misrepresent the nature of complex issues (Tumposky, 2004). This epistemological concern is driven by the fact that the most prevalent models of debate artificially divide issues so that there are only two sides in the dispute. In CEDA/NDT competitions and most classroom debates, a team of students defend either the affirmative or negative side of a topic for all of that sides constructive speeches and rebuttals (Kennedy, 2007). Presenting the discussion as a simple two-sided problem reinforces the Western bias toward dualistic thinking and ignores that every issue can and should be engaged from a multitude of perspectives. Tumposky (2004) feared that most debate formats trivialize complex issues by turning them into sloganeering soundbites. Overly simplistic debates may merely reinforce preexisting opinions rather than promote an objective analysis of all sides (Tumposky, 2004). Lardner, Marshall and McClure (1990) had a similar concern. They argued that pro-con debates reduce our understanding of complex social and political issues and "the end result wouldn't necessarily be humanizing or liberalizing" (p. 686). Similarly, after creating and evaluating two first-year composition courses to find a new approach for teaching argument, Lynch, George,

and Cooper (1997) feared that when teachers' overemphasize agonistic pro-con argumentation "the complexity of the issues is often lost, and with it (we might add) the basis for introducing important, higher level concepts such as ideology, multiple subjectivity, and contingent foundations" (p. 84). Finally, Sziarto, McCarthy and Padilla's (2014) stakeholder debates among 36 students in world geography courses lends some credence to the above analysis. They found some risk with the use of the debate model because "[m]any students on both sides – despite understanding course material in other assignments – repeated mainstream rhetoric" and "students' tendencies toward dualistic thinking and prior misconceptions undermined the potential for critical thinking in the debate" (p. 560). However, they also found some benefit in the debates ability to encourage students to think about the world in complex ways beyond just being territorial areas.

This criticism should be of great concern for those who present debate as an effective pedagogical tool for teaching critical thinking. Teachers should probably abandon the instructional method if its structure creates a slippery slope to soundbites and sloganeering that reinforce students partial and bias perspectives. However, the jury is still out with a substantial amount of the above assessment. Kennedy (2007) provided several suggestions to mitigate the effects of dualism including using role-playing debates and assigning students to the task of taking a third position similar to the "debriefers" used in the Hall study. Zhao, Pandian, and Singh (2016) suggested that instructors assign students to defend a stance contrary to their current views or require them to defend an opposing position in a written assignment to the one they defended in the oral assignment. They saw this as a solution to the drawbacks of dualism because

"students are encouraged to research and consider both sides of an issue" (p. 17). Their suggestion reminds us why many continue to forward competitive debate's requirement that students switch sides as one of its more transformative attributes. It encourages students to research the numerous arguments that can be used to support and oppose the proposition.

Adversarial Model

The concerns about the adversarial nature of debate are related to Tumposky's dualism criticism. However, they are not as easily addressed by tinkering with the format. Debate forces its participants to view issues through a competitive frame that is inimical to some learners who thrive in more cooperative settings. The zero-sum nature of the activity may undermine the development of sharing communities that support the intellectual development of all members.

It is undeniable that debate fosters a confrontational learning environment that privileges students who are comfortable with an adversarial form of discourse. The act of debating has the potential to produce overwhelming competitive pressures that can override norms pertaining to respect and decorum. Rowland (1995) saw these competitive pressures metastasize into consistent incivility towards fellow competitors and judges. Steinfatt (1990) reported that tournament debating rewarded verbal aggression and "a good deal of hostility was sometimes generalized, sometimes aimed specifically at an opponent, and sometimes generalized at the judge" (p. 67). While there are many other anecdotal testimonies about the relationship between competitive debate and verbal aggression, there are few studies that actually establish a causal relationship. Colbert's (1991) investigation of the effects debate participation has on

argumentativeness and verbal aggression offered more hopeful conclusions. Results from his survey of 278 high schools at a forensics tournament "dispute[d] anecdotal claims that participation in tournament debating is counterproductive, that is, that it negatively impacts ARG [argumentativeness] and VA [verbal aggression]" (p. 213).

Even if we are unable to establish a relationship between the competitive nature of debate and verbal aggression, there are other reasons to be concerned. Tumposky (2004) declared that the emphasis debate coaches and students place on competitive success inevitably comes at the expense of challenging "students to identify and resolve real-life problems rich in ambiguity and complexity" (p. 54). Tannen's (1998) criticism of the argument culture that has developed in the US supports Tumposky's conclusion. Tannen found that during debates little gets resolved, worked out, or achieved because participants focused on listening for weaknesses in their opponent's logic and locating opportunities to distort opposing arguments instead of consensus building and compromise. From Tannen's perspective (2013), debating makes it more difficulty to address our most pressing issues by "creating an atmosphere of animosity" (p. 179). Tannen concluded that debate makes "individuals more likely to turn on each other, so that everyone feels more vulnerable and more isolated. And that is why the argument culture is destructive to the common good" (p. 179). Additionally, Westbrook's (2002) study of archived minutes and records from one of South Carolina College's antebellum literary and debating societies, the Clariosophic Society, casted doubt on the ability of pro-con debates to positively impact students' development. She declared that "claims that pro–con debate encourages students to resist dominant values and reexamine their positions on important issues don't seem to hold for members of

South Carolina College's literary and debating societies" (p. 352). Westbrook concluded that the radial and subversive potential of the debating society was limited by its social homogeneity, all its members were privileged white males expecting to become social elites, and with the lack of "a teacher to guide the exercises, suggest readings, play "devil's advocate," or evaluate students' performances, members may very well have lacked the motivation or support for arguing reasonably from a contrarian position"(p. 352).

Most concerning is that adversarial and hostile classrooms disproportionately impacts women and people from historically marginalized communities. Their voices are already suspect in these settings and the competitive pressures of debate reduces the incentives for creating spaces where they are more likely to be honored. Tumposky's (2004) work revealed that very few women would be comfortable with a pedagogical model that features adversarial argument and they would be unlikely to participate. She concluded that "debate as a teaching technique is rather unsuited to schools in an increasingly multilingual, multicultural, and economically diverse society" (p. 55).

Tumposky and Tannen's concerns about debate deserve due consideration. Teachers should be aware of how their instructional tools privilege some and, potentially, hinder others. However, that should always be the case, regardless of the classroom activity or assessment tool that an instructor is using. Lectures, tests, and essays impact students differently depending on their learning styles and experience with the instrument. The question is: Are there strategies teachers can implement to reduce the impact demographics have on academic results? Does the presence of teachers/debate coaches guiding and debriefing the conversation help to alleviate some of their concerns?

Can teachers effectively use the competitive frame to achieve collaborative educational goals across our cultural differences? The preponderance of the studies critiquing adversarial pedagogical models seem to ignore the role teachers play in determining the rules of engagement and thwarting the worst-case scenarios.

Speech Delivery

The final concern about collegiate debate is specific to intercollegiate competitive debate. It is one of the concerns that galvanized Jack Howe's founding of the Cross-Examination Debate Association. While the 1996 NDT/CEDA merger officially ended CEDA's insurgency against the rapid presentation of evidence, an undercurrent of criticism about the rate at which students deliver speeches and a perceived overreliance on evidence remains. Colbert (1991) studied the 1986-1991 CEDA final rounds and the 1980-1988 NDT final rounds and identified that the deliveries in both greatly exceeded the optimal normal speaking rates by over 110 words per minute for the CEDA finalists and over 155 words per minute for the NDT finalists. There is fear that this mode of engagement is poorly training students to engage people outside of their niche competitive event. The competitor's desire to speak quickly is driven by the same competitive pressures that Rowland and Steinfatt argued were producing incivility in debate rounds. Intercollegiate debate is a time intensive game that requires a substantial amount of preparation and financial resources to excel. The drive to win continues to undermine the desire of some to privilege eloquence in the evaluation of student performance. Colbert (1991) concluded that "[c]ompetitive aspects, proof burdens, time constraints, and other competing argument skills requirements may make debating the wrong form for the development of speaking eloquence" (p. 92). This conclusion to

Colbert's research on the rates of delivery in the final rounds of CEDA and the NDT attempts to provide some balance to the conversation. Are we expecting NDT/CEDA debate to do too many things? Is debate the right medium for teaching public speaking eloquence? What skills should debate coaches prioritize as they train their students and judge others? What will we loss by shifting what is prioritized?

Those who continue to attack NDT/CEDA for not teaching students to be eloquent rhetors ignore the litany of studies cited earlier in this chapter that found competitive debate to be one of the better pedagogical tools for teaching many other skills that are need to be an effective communicator. Jack Howe and his successors have a strong desire for judges and coaches to privilege eloquence over all of the other benefits debate can provide. In their zeal to teach students to be powerful orators, these critics of the NDT/CEDA debate model seem willing to sacrifice the development of students to be critical and disruptive thinkers who can quickly process information. It is important that we acknowledge their suggestions are not risk free. They have tradeoffs and costs.

While Colbert's nuanced appraisal is a welcomed addition to the conversation about the NDT/CEDA fast-talkers, one should not ignore that the decision to forgo training debaters to be eloquent presenters has negative implications that go beyond the development of individual students. Bartanen and Frank (1999) contended that the choice to ignore delivery as a criteria for evaluating debates "may explain the activity's political alienation from the speech profession and the National Communication Association" (p. 42). With many competitive debate programs residing in communication studies departments, the choice to ignore eloquence as an articulated and pursued outcome of debating is fraught with great risk. Where is competitive debates academic home if it is

not communication studies? How do we convince administrators to support an activity that they can't listen to or understand? Finally, this hyper-specialized and technical model of debate creates a high entry barrier for novices and new programs.

Appraisal of the concerns and benefits about collegiate debate reveals an imperfect teaching tool that possesses the potential to both positively and negatively impact student development. The context in which it is used, the role teachers play in organizing and facilitating the activity, and the profile of the student are important factors that will inevitably inform the outcome. Even as we acknowledge the seriousness of the concerns put forth in the chapter, debate's strong pedagogical history and the litany of research supporting its use should not be ignored. Instead, we should make contextualized, contingent, evidence based decisions as we harness intercollegiate debate's power to positively transform students' lives.

Scholars have previously drawn connections between argumentation and numerous other issues ranging from public speaking and critical thinking to violence reduction and civic engagement (Hogan, Kurr, Johnson, & Bergmaier, 2016; Leek, 2016). One educational topic that has received less attention from debate scholars is student self-authorship — "the internal capacity to define one's beliefs, identity, and social relations" (Baxter Magolda, 2008b, p. 269). The next section offers a review of literature on self-authorship. A deeper understanding of the concept is needed to answer the fundamental question of this study: Does intercollegiate debate facilitate student development of their own internal compass?

Self-Authorship

A primary role of educators is to assist students along their journey towards self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001). In her seminal work exploring the path that students take as they form the internal capacity to define themselves, Baxter Magolda (2001) identified four phases of development: following formulas, crossroads, becoming the author of one's life, and internal foundations. In the initial phase, following external formulas, one's life choices are heavily reliant on the beliefs, expectations, and dictates of others. The crossroads, the second phase, is that moment of cognitive dissonance when one's current way of knowing is inadequate for explaining their experiences. A sense of dissatisfaction prods individuals to question the formulas laid out for them by others. People reach the third stage, becoming the author of their life, when they begin to actively work to develop their own perspective and self-define their lives. They begin to create their own formulas instead of relying on others. The last stage, internal foundations, identifies the time when people have locked in their internal compass and consistently uses it to guide their actions, behavior, and knowledge generation. It is important to keep in mind that people can ebb and flow in and out of each of stage depending on intrapersonal and interpersonal developments. Additionally, people become self-authored at different stages of life. Baxter Magolda and King (2004) contended that one of the more important factors affecting a student's journey is the availability of an effective learning partner who can assist them in negotiating the cultural expectations that they "assume a position of responsibility in public and private life," "manage complexity and engage multiple perspectives," "gather and judge relevant evidence from others to

make decisions without being consumed by pleasing everyone," and "act in ways that benefit themselves and others equitably and contribute to the common good" (p. xviii). The most difficult part of the process is actually developing educational programs and learning partnerships that can successfully assist students in meeting those worthwhile expectations.

With a basic understanding of the developmental phrases of self-authorship in hand, the rest of this section will unfold in the following manner. First, it will more thoroughly explore self-authorships foundational research produced by Marcia Baxter Magolda. While Baxter Magolda was not the first scholar to explore human development from this perspective, she is undeniably one of its more prolific researchers and her work is grounded in higher education. The section then shifts to a discussion of how students make meaning of their experiences and how that informs their development. Emphasis will be placed on Robert Kegan's work. A better understanding of that process is essential if educators want to understand when and how learners become self-authored. The section concludes with a review of the literature on the Learning Partnership Model and provocative moments. A focus is placed on LPM and the dissonance produced by provocative moments because those are the elements of self-authorship most likely to be present in students' intercollegiate debate experiences.

The Foundation – Marcia Baxter Magolda

An exploration of the literature on self-authorship should start with the work of Marcia Baxter Magolda. Informed by the research of Robert Kegan (Kegan, 1982, 1994), she is a prolific scholar advocating for research and pedagogical strategies that facilitate student self-authorship. Her work, above and beyond all others, has informed the

evolution of the curricular and extracurricular practices promoting self-authorship and Learning Partnership Model (LPM). It is difficult to imagine a coherent discussion on self-authorship that is not informed by and anchored to her substantial body of work.

Baxter Magolda focuses on self-authorship because she considers it a necessary learning goal if colleges and universities are to produce engaged citizens who can manage their own affairs and contribute to the collective's discussion of how the country should be governed (Baxter Magolda, 2008a). For her, self-authorship is necessary to produce engaged citizenship. Putting students on the path towards establishing an internal foundation is a prerequisite for democracies to thrive. They function at their optimal level only when their citizens have developed to independently reason and advocate for political change. Higher education practitioners play a vital role in this process. They are expected to cultivate engaged learners who are "anticonformists aiming to discover more about who they are and what kind of work they might find most meaningful — not simply to accept what has been handed to them, even by the most reputable scholars" (Roth, 2015, p. 60). It is easier to develop an anticonformist engaged citizenry in a learning community that cherishes autonomy, dissent, and questioning over enculturation and rote memorization. Additionally, Baxter Magolda (1998a) argued that higher education is expected to produce lifelong learners who "make informed decisions for themselves and their fellow citizens, appreciate diverse perspectives, manage conflict appropriately, and act responsibly in their communities" (p. 41). These expectations can only be met if educators embrace self-authorship as a core student development goal. The pursuit of self-authorship requires a constant recalibration of our belief systems and incorporation of new information in our decision calculus. It is an ongoing, incomplete

process of self-improvement and community development. The integration of self-authorship into educational activities encourages students to "construct healthy relationships with others, relationships based on mutuality rather than self-sacrifice and relationships that affirm diversity" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. xvi).

Baxter Magolda's scholarship on self-authorship is anchored by her longitudinal study of college students' intellectual development that began in 1986 with 101 first-year students at Miami University. The study was originally designed to explore gender differences with fifty-one women and fifty men participating. However, it quickly evolved into a study of how people make meaning and formulate relationships as they traverse through life. Students were encouraged to participate in annual interviews where they were invited "to talk freely about their role as learners, the role of instructors and peers in learning, their perception of evaluation of their work, the nature of knowledge, and educational decision making" (Baxter Magolda, 1998a, p. 42). She found that students exhibited three ways of knowing during college. First, absolute knowing, the assumption that knowledge is certain and possessed by authorities, was a hallmark of students in their first two years. Second, transitional knowing assumes that knowledge is only partially certain. However, our confidence in it can be improved with a learning process. Independent knowing was the final way of knowing she documented in the study. While rare, these students assumed that everyone operated by a bias and partial perspective and knowledge was uncertain. Baxter Magolda (2001) chronicled the experiences of 39 people who remained within the study through their twenties. Their stories revealed the complex relationship between education and self-authorship. They provided an informative roadmap for students on a journey away from following external

formulas and headed towards becoming authors of their own lives.

For Baxter Magolda (1998a), self-authorship is much more than a skill. It is a way of making meaning of one's experiences. People process and understand actions and ideas differently depending on the phase of development they are in. Self-authorship is part of a process of individuals coming to understand themselves as independent constructors of knowledge. While knowledge is socially created, people no longer allow external actors or community norms to be the primary determiners in how they construct and interpret the meaning of events. Baxter Magolda (1998a) argued:

> [S]elf-authorship requires a sense of identity through which individuals perceive themselves as capable of knowledge construction. It also requires interdependence with other people to gain access to other perspectives without being consumed by them. (p. 41)

Her understanding that the self is constructed in a social context, leads Baxter Magolda to conclude that her study participants cultivated, reflected on, and trusted their internal voices "when others engaged them in learning partnerships" and "[t]heir partners validated their capacity to use their internal voices, situated learning in their experience, and invited them to construct meaning of their experiences" (Baxter Magolda, 2008b, p. 283). In fact, self-authorship is most likely achieved in a setting that promotes three interrelated elements: trusting the internal voice, building an internal foundation, and securing internal commitments (Baxter Magolda, 2008b).

At its core, self-authorship scholars ask us to think about how we make meaning of our experiences. Becoming self-authored is inherently a meaning making process. Baxter Magolda is interested in the creation of educational models that facilitate student

adoption of a meaning making process that is independent of external formula and guided by their own internal compass. Her scholarship is heavily influenced by the work of Robert Kegan, a developmental psychologist who explores how humans make sense, or make meaning, of personal problems. It is difficult to understand how individuals make meaning out of their experiences and use those to construct the self without first going back to Robert Kegan's foundational work on meaning making and the self.

Meaning Making

Inspired by the work of Jean Piaget (1948), Kegan's *The Evolving Self* (1982) explored the human condition from the perspective of meaning-making, the process of organizing and making sense of our experiences. He argued that "the activity of being a person is the activity of meaning making" (Kegan, 1982, p. 11). For humans, the most fundamental thing we do with our experiences is organize them in order to improve our understanding of ourselves and the world we exist in. In fact, one of the commonalities in all human cultures is the desire to organize and understand. For Kegan, "human being is the composing of meaning" (Kegan, 1982, p. 11). We cannot avoid the process of meaning making. It is part and parcel of being human. It is what makes us human.

Meaning is as much about mattering to others as it is about constructing the self. It is inherently a social practice. While Kegan's work is an analysis of the human condition from the perspective of the self, he is clear that construction of meaning cannot be divorced from our social experiences and relationships we cultivate in our communities. Our ability to acquire the recognition of others is a "powerful determinant of future thriving" and "the single greatest factor of influence to what that life becomes" (Kegan, 1982, p. 19). Our work to sustain the self and assure our personal survival cannot

be separated from the larger community building and sustaining projects that are simultaneously occurring around us. That is why self-authorship is as much about the interpersonal as the intrapersonal. Educators attempting to construct spaces that promote self-authorship must keep in mind the social environment and networks that students are inhabiting. Those space, as much as their individual relationships with students, will directly impact their intervention strategies. Kegan (1982) concluded that "[i]ntact, sustaining communities have always found ways to recognize that persons grow and change, that this fate can be costly, and that if it is not to cost the community the very loss of its member, then the community must itself be capable of 're-cognition'" (p. 261). Additionally, communities keep the personal costs of development low by prioritizing a "*culture of self-authorship*" (Kegan, 1982, p. 259, italics in the original) that allows for individual "exercises of psychological self-definition" (Kegan, 1982, p. 259). If Kegan is correct, flourishing campus communities can only be built on a foundation of self-authorship. The pursuit of self-authorship can be seen as a community development initiative that allows students to commune together without having to sacrifice their identities.

Kegan's second book, *In Over Our Heads* (1994), clarified and extended the ideas presented in the first book. Continuing the discussion about how humans organize and make sense of their experiences, Kegan presented a picture of how we orient ourselves toward the world that has an inner logic rooted in a subject-object relationship. The object refers to elements of knowing and organizing "that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate or otherwise operate upon" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). These elements are distinct from the self

and can be manipulated or rejected. The subject refers to elements that "we are identified with, tied to, fused with, or embedded in" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32) These elements are absolute and inherent parts of our identity and can't be rejected. Baxter Magolda (2009b) poignantly explained the importance of the subject-object relationship for educators interested in researching human development:

> Because the underlying subject–object relationship undergirds thinking, feeling, and social relating, it intertwines cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of development. How we come to know, how we see ourselves, and how we see ourselves in relation to others are all hinged on the same underlying subject–object relationship. (p. 624)

While the elements that get coded as subject or object will change over time, these principles will continuously "guide how we construct our thinking, feeling, and social relating" (Baxter Magolda, 2009c, p. 624). When we take on other's expectations as subjects we construct our identities and lives to conform to the desires of external actors and their expectations. At that juncture, we are developing a socialized mind that is externally defined. On the contrary, when we engage other's expectations as objects, "we are able to stand apart from them and construct our internal voice" and develop a "self-authoring mind" that is internally defined (Baxter Magolda, 2009c, p. 624). For Kegan, self-authorship is an internal identity "that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideas, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states" (Kegan, 1994, p. 185). When Kegan described the transition from a socializing mind to a self-authoring mind, he described a shift "from uncritically accepting values, beliefs, interpersonal loyalties and intrapersonal states from external

authorities to forming those elements internally" (Baxter Magolda, 2008b, p. 270).

In the final chapters of *In Over Our Heads* (1994), Kegan suggested that the shift towards a self-authoring mind sets the stage for communities to successfully address the "inevitable conflicts and challenges" (p. 343) that the diversity movement imposes on teachers, managers, leaders, and policymakers. Progress starts by accepting that our own ways of understanding are ideological and deserving of critique and reflection. We need to reflect on our inherent biases and incompleteness as much as the perspectives we oppose. Second, we must recognize that the opposed way of being and understanding the world is worthy of respect regardless of how strange we perceive the perspective (Kegan, 1994). Kegan (1994) argued:

> We cannot conclude that others are just "visiting" and will soon return "home." They *are* home. If this classroom/office/government/country is their home, too, then we are going to have to find ways to learn the curriculum/get our work done/solve civic problems/live together that leave each culture's distinctiveness, integrity, wholeness and dignity still standing. (p. 344, italics in the original)

Kegan's work encourages us to harness the intellectual and ideological discomfort that comes with being a member of a community of learners and use it to make our decision-making processes more generative and creative. Student development requires all participants to "focus on ways to let the conflictual relationship transform the parties rather than on the parties resolving the conflict" (Kegan, 1994, p. 320). Kegan is asking us to use the conflict and its ensuing discomfort as an opportunity for intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection. We need to ask ourselves: How do I use this conflict as an opportunity to reflect on the legitimacy and appropriateness of my own values and

perspectives? It is a form of conflict resolution that transforms our suspicion of others into an interrogation of our own highly partial and incomplete perspectives. It is a dispute resolution process that places a premium on a model of self-reflection that earnestly searches for a piece of ourselves in who and what we oppose. Kegan's work on self-authorship and the importance of reflection informed the research of many subsequent scholars including Marcia B. Baxter Magolda.

One of Kegan's more valuable contributions to the study of human development is his understanding of conflict as a productive force for facilitating personal and social change. Not only does the discomfort of conflict present the opportunity for intrapersonal and interpersonal reflection, some researchers (Pizzolato, 2005; Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007) have argued that conflict derived dissonance is needed to get people to the crossroads – that phase of development when external formulas no longer offer a coherent explanation for our existence. They argued that students will continue to depend on external formulas until they witness their inability to resolve some issue producing consternation. In fact, too much physical and ideological comfort are inimical to the pursuit of self-authorship.

Provocative Moments

While there is near consensus on the benefits of self-authorship, more work needs to be done on how educators can properly structure intervention efforts to get students to the crossroads where they experience provocative moments. Baxter Magolda (2001) identified the crossroads as that juncture in a student's journey when "[e]xternal formulas did not produce the expected results" and "[t]he realization that external sources of beliefs and definition were insufficient for happiness brought acute awareness that internal sources of belief and definition were necessary"(p. 93). For the participants in

Baxter Magolda's study, a conflict was the “turning point that called for letting go of external control and beginning to replace it with one's internal voice” (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 94). As educators create intervention strategies, it is imperative that they keep in mind that the crossroads is a place of conflict, angst, and discontent and not one of safety, satisfaction, and comfort. However, it is important to be mindful that not all discontent is a suitable catalyst for self-authorship. The challenge needs to be particularized and appropriate for the person moving along the path. Pizzolato (2003) reviewed the literature on the crossroads and found that one of two experiences were best for producing self-authored students:

a. participants had to make a decision for which there was no formula for success, or
b. they realized they were sufficiently unhappy in their present situations to start making changes, but they had to figure out what sorts of changes could be made and how to make them on their own. (p. 798)

According to this data, institutions of higher education will only positively contribute to college students’ development of self-authorship when they provide “sufficiently provocative experiences — experiences that disrupted students’ equilibrium such that they felt compelled to consider and begin to construct new conceptions of self” (Pizzolato, 2003, p. 798). Students need to be appropriately challenged with moments of “jarring disequilibrium” (Pizzolato, 2005, p. 625) to successfully move them in the direction of self-authorship. Pizzolato’s (2003) study of 35 high-risk students revealed evidence of self-authorship before they entered college. She concluded that access to privilege negatively affected one's attainment of self-authorship. On the other hand, the lack of privilege forced students to self-author in order to create their own pathways for success. High privileged students were protected from having to figure out the college

process and denied opportunities that would force them to author their own way. It seems that adversity may be needed to galvanize self-authorship. We should not interpret these findings as justification to remove all support from students. A balance must be struck between adequately supporting students so that a crisis is not total debilitating and preserving their opportunities for autonomous development. The best programs will sufficiently challenge students by leaving them worried just enough about their prospects for success to stimulate their development but not so much that the fear failure results in paralysis.

In order to encourage students to become self-authored, they need to believe that the external formulas they rely on will produce unsatisfactory results. That motivates the learner to turn inward and develop an internal capacity for independent decision making that can assist them in identifying solutions to their unresolved problems. When students are thrust into a new social context where their old script no longer has explanatory value, the social forces in their new context prompt new ways of thinking about the world. Thus, the key contributor to self-authorship is dissonance. Dissonance is "a situation where individuals encounter situations where peoples' currently held assumptions and ways of knowing do not work for them, and they have to reconsider what counts as knowledge, how knowledge is constructed, and/or their role in knowledge construction" (Pizzolato & Olson, 2016b, p. 575) Pizzolato and Olson (2016a) declared that "[r]egardless of the form dissonance takes, the message is: students need to experience dissonance to move toward self-authorship" (p. 414).

While it is important to remain mindful that trust is an essential component of student development, an academic environment that is intellectually and emotionally

comfortable is bereft of the conditions necessary to motivate students to challenge what they know and who they are. Students will only enter the crossroads phase of development when they are uncomfortable with their current ways of understanding the world and, subsequently, need to seek new ways of knowing to cope with the situation. Jehangir, Williams, and Jeske's (2012) longitudinal study of 24 historically marginalized students in a TRiO Student Services program spoke to the critical role disequilibrium plays in student development:

> Experiencing disequilibrium was a starting point for the students to further their development. It was this experience of encountering something new that the students had to understand and incorporate into their own knowledge system that helped them to move from one phase to another in their development of self-authorship. (p. 280)

Additionally, Torres and Hernandez (2007) studied 29 self-identified Latino/a students and found that the students who experienced disequilibrium developed a decision-making process that accounted for their self-defined values and needs. Much like the students in Baxter Magolda's (2001) longitudinal study, the results indicated that Latino/a students shifted from relying on external sources to being increasingly dependent on their internal value system when they realized the plans created by authorities were insufficient. Additionally, students' attempt to make sense of their ethnic identities in light of discriminatory experiences served as provocative moments and were sources for their dissonance and reflection. Even marginalizing experiences can produce the disequilibrium needed for self-authorship.

Some may argue that a portion of the student body is so vulnerable that they need to follow rigid external formulas in order to meet requirements for college graduation.

They would conclude that a focus on self-authorship is inappropriate for these students. The 44 participants in Pizzolato and Olson's (2016a) CalWORKs study may be identified as such people. They are single parents who experienced family crisis, domestic violence, job loss, child custody battles, and terminal illnesses while trying to complete college. The assumption was that these students need external formulas to keep them on track as they negotiate various crises. Pizzolato and Olson's (2016a) results demonstrated that even among this student population, participants moved from following their supportive external formulas and entered into the crossroads. While many did not completely abandon their external formulas, they did actively repurpose those formulas to better fit the requirements of their lives. The findings suggested that self-authorship is possible in college even among the most vulnerable students.

Finally, the research on provocative moments speaks to opportunities for students to find a place for mutuality and compromise in their disagreements. Educators should look for opportunities to help "students learn to validate one another as knowers" and "contribute to positive processing of multiple meanings" (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 248). Provocative moments between disagreeing students is an opportunity for mutual validation that can pave the way for far more durable and sustainable solutions. On the other hand, "ineffective response to conflict can undermine both learning and growth of the mind" (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 248). Baxter Magolda (1999) discussed the delicate balance that must be struck when attempting to empower multiple conflicting voices:

> [C]alling forth multiple voices into the dialogue usually results in conflicting perspectives about which students and educators have strong feelings. This dissonance can be a teachable moment, an opportunity to explore what students really

> think and feel in an open and trusting environment. Using the dissonance produced by diverse perspectives effectively enhances learning. The challenge here is that many educators and students tend to avoid conflict in favor of harmony. Ineffective use of dissonance can push students' thoughts and feelings underground where they remain inaccessible to the teaching-learning interaction. (p. 248)

Educators need to husband dissonance instead of working to eliminate tensions and discomfort by erecting protective barriers between the participants. Viewed in the proper light, disputes can serve as "a catalyst for heightened engagement and deeper learning when the teacher and students work together to create a safe place for meaningful engagement with ideas" (Jehangir, 2012, p. 2). Embedded within these conflicts are opportunities for "negotiated disequilibrium" (Jehangir, 2012, p. 2) and "provocative situations that create the discomfort that is an essential catalyst to shifting one's understanding of self and others" (Jehangir, 2012, p. 3).

Self-authorship cannot be developed in an ideological cocoon where students are protected from new and challenging ideas. Educators should avoid creating a climate of conflict avoidance that could retard students' developmental progress. Torres and Hernandez (2007) conclude that students who responded to crisis with conflict avoidance "stagnated in their development" (p. 569). There seems to be a huge downside risk if we dismiss the value of conflict in challenging students in our zeal to support them. Like Day and Lane (2014), other educators should reexamine how they frame student support and "permit students to experience moderate discomfort in situations which we judged that they had the resources to manage or had the capacity to learn to manage" (p. 11).

It is easy to interpret the research on dissonance and provocative moments as a call to relentlessly challenge students until they are broken of their bad habits of following external formulas. This ignores the need for the development process to be closely aligned with and informed by the unique needs of the student and requires educators to delicately balance how much and when they chose to challenge and support students. The student drives the process and learning partners – teachers, mentors, or coaches – are there support and not control the journey. While learning partnerships play a vital role in encouraging self-authorship, they are only effective when the educator is following the lead of the student and making the journey to self-authorship a student-centered endeavor.

Learning Partnership Model (LPM)

Through her longitudinal interviews, Baxter Magolda developed a framework for analyzing the developmental growth of students through the lens of the Learning Partnership Model. Early in its development, Baxter Magolda presented the LPM as a simple heuristic containing three principles: (a) validate students as knowers, (b) situate learning in students' experiences, and (c) define learning as mutually constructing meaning (Baxter Magolda, 2001; J. Pizzolato, 2008; J. Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007). After following the participants through college, graduate school, and their careers for more than 20 years, Baxter Magolda's model became more complex when she isolated six key characteristics of a learning environment that facilitates self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2009b). The LPM consists of six elements that together works to promote self-authorship while encouraging an active role for the learner in establishing and sustaining the partnership. Baxter Magolda (2009b) concluded that learning partners support students'

self-authorship by balancing respect and support for their current meaning-making while challenging them to adopt more ways of knowing. Support occurs through three principles:

- respecting their thoughts and feelings, thus affirming the value of their voices;
- helping them view their experiences as opportunities for learning and growth; and
- collaborating with them to analyze their own problems, engaging in mutual learning with them. (Baxter Magolda, 2009b, para. 9)

In addition, learning partners challenge students by:

- drawing participants' attention to the complexity of their work and life decisions, and discouraging simplistic solutions;
- encouraging participants to develop their personal authority by listening to their own voices in determining how to live their lives; and
- encouraging participants to share authority and expertise, and work interdependently with others to solve mutual problems. (Baxter Magolda, 2009b, para. 9)

When partners interact with students in this manner, they are able to assist the learner in finding their voice and make life decisions independent of the social norms that guide so many of our choices. The learner is encouraged to forego simplistic explanations of their problems and instead embrace the complexity of their existence as an opportunity for growth and development. Fluid and evolving partnerships create the condition for learners to reflect on the taken-for-granted assumptions that inform their lives and offer opportunities for them to take responsibility for cultivating their own beliefs, relationships, and identities (Baxter Magolda, 2004). Learning partnerships facilitate self-authorship by placing students in situations where external formulas for success are no longer readily available. When students encounter old assumptions and replace them with an internally derived meaning, they are making their own way and becoming self-

authored. Coughlin (2015) contended that learning partners “can enable developmental shifts by creating and reinforcing feedback loops that sustain and grow development over time” (p. 23). They do so by prodding students to habitually ask questions, entertain multiple perspectives, and see the complexity of their communities and relationships. The most powerful partner interventions facilitate the development of a self-authored mind that critically engages different worldviews, people, and ideas.

A core assumption of LPM is that learning is a cooperative venture between the educator and the learner. The LPM introduces learners to a model of education that expects them to honor their own perspectives and embrace the responsibilities that come with being a knowledge constructor. Learning partnerships move students closer to developing self-authorship by encouraging them to challenge “authority dependence via *three core assumptions* about learning: knowledge is complex and socially constructed, one’s identity plays a central role in crafting knowledge claims, and knowledge is mutually constructed via the sharing of expertise and authority” (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004, p. xix, italics in the original). For self-authorship scholars, LPM is grounded in a deep respect for students' capacity to guide the educational process and serve as knowledge creators. The model encourages educators to construct their curriculum and programs with attention to and respect for who students are, their lived experience, and what the learning experience is designed to provide them. King and Baxter Magolda (2004) argued that respect for the student's contribution is a “first order value of the pedagogy of the Learning Partnership Model” (p. 330). When a student’s capacity to contribute to the curriculum development process is respected, they move quickly along the epistemological development trajectory and are “able to engage in the complex

meaning-making strategies that give rise to success in the classroom" (Pizzolato, Hicklen, Brown, & Chaudhari, 2009, p. 478).

The LPM demands students to actively participate in creating learning environments that fit their particular needs. The LPM emphasizes the developmental benefits of the co-curricular components of education that occur outside of the classroom. Engaging students in nontraditional spaces like debate teams, chess club, and student government are excellent opportunities to establish learning partnerships (N. Moore et al., 2011). Cocurricular partnerships support self-authorship by combining the classroom's curricula emphasis on knowledge with students' experience in other places on the campus.

As the LPM is relatively new area of study, there is little empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness in self-authorship (Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007). However, the research is promising. Olsen, Bekken, McConnell, & Walter's (2011) studied an experimental general education curriculum centered on earth sustainability at Virginia Tech. The study found that LPM's strength is in its capacity to create learning environments that adequately support and challenge students as they intellectually mature. The goal of education is no longer to produce a specific type of knowledge or skill "but, rather, a deep-seated set of conceptions or beliefs about knowledge, knowers, and knowing that will support deeper engagement in learning, greater intellectual flexibility, and more complex thinking generally" (Olsen et al., 2011, p. 140). Their line of reasoning is in lockstep with Baxter Magolda's (2014) claim that progressively increasing the repertoire of skills is "insufficient to help collegians face the adaptive challenges of the 21st century" (Baxter Magolda, 2014, p. 25). Students need to learn to

interrogate what constitutes knowledge and what is considered sufficient evidence for altering one's opinion. Bekken and Marie's (2007) earlier findings of the same earth sustainability project came to similar conclusions. They surmised that educators should provide students the ability to contextualize information and interpret perspectives based on the multiple pieces evidence that are available. To truly take advantage of the best that the LPM has to offer, educators need to abandon their dependence on the recitation of ideas formulated by authoritative figures and scrap their overemphasis on acquiring decontextualized technical skills. The challenge is clear: we need teaching tools and learning goals that simultaneously provide learners technical skills and move them towards self-authorship (Bekken & Marie, 2007).

Pizzolato and Olson's (2016b) one-year exploratory study investigated the development of self-authorship among 44 CalWORKs female students also speaks to the value of the LPM. Their focus on the CalWORKs program at Lakeview Community College filled a significant gap in the literature because prior research overwhelmingly focused on traditional-aged, 4-year residential students. They found that the time spent in college facilitated the participants' epistemological development through the construction of long-term supportive relationships and the establishment of markers of success that allowed students to feel autonomous. Supportive relationships with counselors encouraged students to develop new ideas about school and work. While dependence on external definition is often disempowering, the CalWORKs study demonstrated that counselors and student affairs professionals can use the LPM to "facilitate large developmental gains just by showing … students that they can be active knowers and that they have value" (Pizzolato & Olson, 2016b, p. 591).

Iverson and James' (2013) qualitative case study of 22 undergraduate students' involved with change-oriented service-learning in a social studies methods course found that involving students in dialogue about important social issues and asking them to develop strategies to resolve those issues pushes students to see themselves as authorities and rethink the terms and ideas they previously used to engage the issue. While the results speak to the value of service learning, they highlight its deficiencies and the need for partners to create experiences in college that will allow for a fuller developmental transformation. Iverson and James declared that the most effective learning partnerships respect and cultivate students capacity for developing and designing academic or cocurricular projects. Program development conducted at the exclusion of student input is unlikely to be a source of student self-authorship. For Iverson and James, coauthoring should be a focal point of student affairs practitioners because they have the knowledge and are uniquely positioned to "develop students' capacity to coauthor and co-construct curricular and cocurricular initiatives" (p. 102).

Coauthoring allows students to play a determining role in shaping the curriculum and learning objectives instead of remaining passive receptacle of knowledge. Simply exposing students to divergent viewpoints and multiple sources of knowledge, without providing them the opportunity for true engagement of the ideas, is insufficient to produce self-authored students (Laughlin & Creamer, 2007). Students need to have a meaningful role in constructing experiences if they are to be transformative. A study of three leadership programs at Bryn Mawr College confirmed the value of coauthoring (Cohen et al., 2013). Cohen et al. (2013) suggested that student affairs practitioners should design liminal spaces that are neither academic nor social but are spaces where

students are empowered participants and educational practitioners work to validate the learners' capacity to be a true educational partner. They argued that educators should embrace "students as partners or colleagues" and imbue their learning spaces with a "radical collegiality" that invites students to be their "dialogue partners, co-conceptualizers and co-constructors of educational experiences and institutional revision" (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 11).

While various intervention strategies have been used to promote the LPM, advising seems to have a distinct advantage with its ability to consistently and continuously engage students over multiple years. Pizzolato's (2006, 2008) work focused on the use of LPM in that context. She advocated for an advising-as-teaching model that inspires students to work towards realistic goals while connecting their academic experiences to their life ambitions. This model of advising produces a set of complex cognitive skills:

> (1) seeing oneself as able to construct knowledge and have ideas without having to receive this information from others, and
>
> (2) understanding that there are multiple ways to view any given situation or idea. (Pizzolato, 2008, p. 20)

While traditional advising approaches focus on test-taking, time management, and study skills, Pizzolato (2008) studied two advising programs featuring the LPM at Michigan State University. She found a more effective effort that teaches skills "by having students examine their own situation, identify strategies to overcome difficulties, and learn to apply them in new situations" (p. 23). This puts advisors in a position where they can help students make sense of the complex processes they are embedded in and come to

understand their own unique experiences as a source of knowledge. In her exploratory study of 132 students investigating self-authorship through the academic advising relationship, Pizzolato (2006) noted that advisors can use the LPM to equip students with the "cognitive tools needs to cope with moments of dissonance" (p. 33).

Educators should strive to create learning partnerships that support a high degree of intellectual interaction and collaboration between teachers and their students. Jehangir, Williams and Jeske (2012) argued that the common denominator of this type of learning community is the opportunity for students to consistently experience disequilibrium in "ways that push them to reexamine or construct new self-concepts and ways of viewing the world" (p. 271). Properly constructed, the LPM makes dissonance a productive learning force by creating spaces where students know that they are valued learners and where they trust the other participants enough to probe, challenge and ask difficult questions. The question we are left with is: Can intercollegiate debate serve a learning partnership that provides students the provocative moments they need to become self-authored? The concluding section offers a preliminary appraisal of the relationship between debate and self-authorship based on review of the literature pertaining to collegiate debate and self-authorship presented earlier in this chapter.

From Competitive Debate to Self-Authored Citizens

Multiple documents on desirable student outcomes for the 21st century agree that higher education should focus on improving students' problem-solving skills, enhancing their critical thinking, and preparing them to live in multicultural communities (Baxter Magolda, 2002; Meszaros, 2007b; J. Pizzolato & Ozaki, 2007). With these core objectives in mind, Pizzolato and Ozaki (2007) concluded that "[s]elf-authorship seems

an ideal goal to work toward because it should allow students to achieve these goals not as separate skills, but by developing an understanding of how cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions are interrelated" (p. 197). When one understands self-authorship as the developmental capacity to determine one's own life journey without the excessive influence of external expectations, ideas, and norms and considers collegiate debate's capacity to promote critical and disruptive thinking, an exploration of a positive relationship between the two seems a worthwhile project.

The crucial role for educators as students figure out how to author their own lives is to be "good company" with learners in co-curricular settings where students are likely to see their sense of self as central (Baxter Magolda, 2002, p. 2). For educators to be good company, they need to shift away from the traditional control-oriented forms of instruction that treat students as passive receptacles of information and knowledge. As an alternative, Baxter Magolda (2002) suggested that teachers adopt a pedagogical framework premised on mutuality and focuses on creating an environment for students active engagement:

> The framework calls for a mutual partnership between educator and learner characterized by mutual respect and active exchange of perspectives. The educator role in this partnership focuses on introducing the complexity of learning or work, inviting learners to bring their sense of self to learning or work, teaching learners how to work through complexity, affording learners autonomy, and respecting learners as adults. The learner role in this partnership involves active engagement in learning or work, taking initiative and responsibility for one's learning or actions, reflecting on one's sense of self, and participating in the

> mutual construction of meaning. A mutual respect between educator and learner would enable meaningful exchanges that keep learning connected to learners' progress on the journey toward self-authorship. (p. 8)

Does collegiate debate create mutual partnerships between coaches and their debaters? Can its structures facilitate learner engagement and autonomy? Prior research (Doody & Condon, 2012; Freeley & Steinberg, 2012) indicated that formal debates may produce the actively engaged students that Baxter Magolda alludes to. Debate encourages students to attempt to master the content well enough that it will hold up against vigorous interrogation. Before and during their debates, students contemplate the numerous ways their positions can be undermined and devise strategies to rebut their opposition. The activity requires intense scrutiny of the material used to support their arguments because students know their findings will be publicly analyzed and critiqued. This direct clash of ideas adds intensity and excitement to the learning process that enhances students' interest in and enjoyment of preparing for and participating in the debates. Kennedy (2007) spoke to the power of formal debates as an instructional practice that heightens students' engagement with the fine grain details of issues they are discussing:

> [S]tudents benefit when professors use instructional strategies that promote active engagement. In-class debates provide an opportunity for students to be actively engaged, particularly if the instructor uses a debate model that involves more than just two to four students. However, even if only four students are orally participating in the debate, the novelty of a less familiar instructional strategy can increase the students' level of interest and attention. (p. 188)

Several other studies came to similar conclusions. They found that students viewed academic debates as engaging and innovative activities that made them true partners in the learning process (Kennedy, 2009; Roy & Macchiette, 2005; Yang & Rusli, 2012). Debate treats students as knowledgeable and capable teachers of others. They are not only participants but they serve as the primary leaders of the learning process. Instructors fade to the background after they have established the rules for the game. At that point, students take center stage. Debate is a much-needed corrective to traditional instructional control-oriented methods that feature rote memorization and uninterrupted lectures. While both are appropriate instructional tools, it is difficult for control-oriented approaches to serve as vehicles for creating engaged students who see themselves as the authors of their educational journey. Debate seems to thrive where lecturing and memorization falls short.

Debates' ability to produce engaged students is one sign that there may be a positive relationship between it and self-authorship. While teachers set the parameters for the discussion, learners are theoretically set up to be fully vested with the power to determine the specifics of the conversation, how the material is presented and what the audience should prioritize when evaluating the debate. Ownership of the process should encourage them to become caretakers of the knowledge generation. Debate is an instructional technique uniquely suited to generate "enthusiastic involvement of students in the learning process" (Huryn, 1986, p. 268). Is that enthusiasm strong enough to produce mutual learning partnerships that keeps debaters actively engaged, taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning, and reflecting on their own sense of self? That question drove this study.

Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature of collegiate debate and self-authorship. The final section identified points of intersection for the two bodies of literature. Baxter Magolda's (1999) longitudinal study of college students concluded that 80% of seniors graduated still relying on authorities for knowledge. They left their colleges and universities remaining dependent on external formulas to make decisions. Her findings are consistent with a study using interviews from the Wabash National Study of Liberal Arts Education that found that less than 10% of the sample population demonstrated an internally derived understanding of their values (King, Baxter Magolda, Barber, Brown, & Lindsay, 2009). Additionally, the most prominent studies on college student development conclude that the maturation of their cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal meaning-making capacities unfolds "slowly and in small increments" (Barber, King, & Magolda, 2013, p. 867). With so few undergraduates becoming self-authored learners by the time they graduate, education practitioners need to turn their attention to discovering programs that encourage collegians to start and complete the journey of authoring their own lives. Is intercollegiate debate one of those programs?

As higher education administrators search for new ways to assist students on their journey to become self-authored adults, they may want to take cue from Protagoras, the father of academic debate, who always kept his students stirred up and on tilt as he taught them in the ways of the sophist (Whelan, 1989). Teaching students to skillfully question and be skeptical of all sides of a proposition will not only make them great debaters, it could transform them into the high engaged self-authored citizens we need to revitalize our democracy. Chapter Three describes the epistemological framework, research method

and data that was used to determine whether intercollegiate debate is comprised of mutual learning partnerships that can facilitate self-authorship.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The previous two chapters outlined the need for higher education administrators to be more attentive to their roles in cultivating engaged citizens equipped to revitalize our democratic institutions. How can they be more like Socrates, actively probing, questioning, and midwifing students to self-knowledge? Those chapters encouraged education practitioners to consider self-authorship and competitive intercollegiate debate as a potential partnership capable of "strengthening the spirit of democratic citizenship," one of the more important functions of an institution of higher education (Kronman, 2007, p. 38). This chapter presents the methodology and method used in this study of NDT/CEDA intercollegiate debate including descriptions of the epistemological stance, research design, source of data, and data analysis. Additionally, the chapter explores trustworthiness, the potential for author bias and the limitations of the study. First, it revisits the purpose of the study; the trend in higher education to develop students as consumers instead of citizens.

Purpose and Significance

Higher education's ability to produce citizens capable of rejuvenating our democracy is increasingly strained by concerns that the cost of many degrees may no longer be worth the deferred benefits they provide. Students, parents, and, even, some educators are questioning the value of a college education and asking if it continues to be worth the price (Huffman, 2016). To justify the lofty expense of a college education,

some are beginning to view it as exclusively a vocational training program providing an immediate and substantial financial return on one's investment. Administrators are responding to market dynamics and aggressively competing for student/customers. College admission offices have functionally become well-armed marketing departments that "pursue students much as businesses pursue customers" (Edmundson, 2014, p. x). As U.S. colleges and universities further vocationalize their degree offerings to meet customer demands, we create academic environments where students "become fixated on their perception of the end product, a student seated in an office chair, and forget that education is a process, and one that students ought to continue on their own post-graduation" (Kreuter, 2014, para. 8). Kreuter (2014) warned that continued privileging of short term employment over the long term goal of cultivating engaged citizens will result in the "human equivalent of strip-mining" (para. 9). He feared that we are sacrificing the development of higher order thinking and wholesale mortgaging our democratic future in exchange for fleeting economic gains.

While higher education has always been partly a business providing skills for immediate employment, efforts have recently shifted away from civic and moral development and towards emphasizing education as a steppingstone to employment. The emphasis on personal financial attainment breeds citizen apathy that culminates in a disregard for political awareness and engagement. Galston's (2001) research on education and political engagement provided several reasons for concern:

> The more knowledge citizens have of civic affairs, the less likely they are to experience a generalized mistrust of, or alienation from, public life. Ignorance is the father of fear, and knowledge is the mother of trust. One possible explanation

> for this relationship is the phenomenon of attribution error. More knowledgeable citizens tend to judge the behavior of public officials as they judge their own—in the context of circumstances and incentives, with due regard for innocent oversights and errors as well as sheer chance. By contrast, less knowledgeable citizens are more likely to view public officials' blunders as signs of bad character. …Moreover, low-information citizens encountering vigorous political debate with its inevitable charges and countercharges are more likely to conclude that there are no white knights and adopt a "plague on both your houses" stance. For those who understand politics, debate can be as clear as a tennis match; for those who do not, it more closely resembles a food fight. (p. 224)

Continued production of low-information consumers who do not see themselves as citizens is a clear and present threat to stable democratic governance. The choice to opt-out, ultimately, leaves politics in the hands of highly invested interest groups and fuels the political polarization that currently plagues the U.S. political system (McCarthy, Poole, & Rosenthal, 2016). Hollowing out the political middle makes political compromise less likely and intransigent ideological battles more destabilizing. The lack of a strong and engaged voting block that understands and appreciates the nuances of political debate makes it difficult to generate creative solutions to vexing social issues. Those solutions are birthed in a social and political environment that privileges debate and compromise; not one that foments dogma and polarization.

This situation requires higher education administrators to think long-term and support teaching methods that encourage reflection, open questioning, and experimentation with ideas. While numerous scholars have written about debate's

potential to produce better oral communicator, critical thinkers, and empathetic students, this study was the first to investigate its capacity to promote reflective self-authored citizens. Its primary purpose was to explore competitive intercollegiate debate's capacity to develop learning partnerships that develop self-authored citizens. It investigated and analyzed competitive debate's potential to produce self-authored students by providing supportive learning partnerships and its capacity to create provocative moments that motivate students to develop their own internal compass. The study was informed by three research questions:

- Is the relationship between the debate coach and the debater a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?
- Is the peer-peer relationship between debaters a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?; and
- Do student experiences while preparing for and participating in intercollegiate debate create provocative moments that disrupt the students use of external formulas to guide their decision-making?

Constructivist Methodology

Emphasizing the importance of students' meaning making regarding their experiences participating in the activity, constructivism guides this qualitative study of student experiences in competitive intercollegiate debate (Charmaz, 2011). While there are various approaches, scholars agree that "constructivism is a learning or meaning-making theory" that "suggests that individuals create their own new understandings, based upon the interaction of what they already know and believe, and the phenomena or ideas with which they come into contact" (Richardson, 1997, p. 3). In a similar vein, this study explores the impact competitive intercollegiate debate experiences have on students' ability to create new values, beliefs, and understandings. Savery and Duffy (1996) identified three propositions that constitute the philosophical underpinnings of the

constructivist paradigm. First, individual experiences within an environment inform and shape their contextual understanding. In other words, how we learn is just as important as what we learn. Second, puzzlement is the primary motivator for learning. Exploration of those moments of intellectual unease is critical to understanding a student's learning process. Finally, knowledge evolves through social negotiation that can test and validate competing perspectives. Group discussions allow us to test our own understanding and examine others (Savery & Duffy, 1996). The constructivist framework is the optimal choice for guiding a study of the relationship between collegiate debate and self-authorship because we negotiate meaning "through cooperative social activity, discourse, and debate in communities of practice" (Twomey Fosnot, 2005, p. i).

Additionally, constructivism is the appropriate epistemological framework for the study exploring self-authorship. The paradigm's focus on meaning-making is "consistent with basic tenets of an integrated view of development toward self-authorship" (Baxter Magolda & King, 2007, p. 496). Following Kegan's (1982) prioritization of the self as the unit of analysis for meaning making, constructivists emphasize each individual's meaning making capacity. Each person's meaning-making process is an active and highly contextualized endeavor that is informed by "their current assumptions about themselves and the world, conflicting assumptions they encounter, and the context in which the experience occurs" (Baxter Magolda, 2004, p. 32). Baxter Magolda's (1999) framework for self-authorship incorporated two major concepts that inform our understanding of students' debate participation: "(1) students construct knowledge by organizing and making meaning of their experiences [and] (2) this construction takes place in the context of their evolving assumptions about knowledge itself and the students role in creating it"

(p. 6). For Baxter Magolda, the goal of education is to equip students with "the ability to reflect upon one's beliefs, organize one's thoughts and feelings in the context of, but separate from, the thoughts and feelings of others, and literally make up one's own mind" (p. 6). With that in mind, education is the primary meaning-making process and, thus, should be analyzed through a constructivist framework.

With a better understanding of constructivism, the study's methodological guide, in hand, this chapter shifts to the two components comprising the study's research method. A presentation how the case study approach enhances our understanding of intercollegiate debate follows a discussion of narrative analysis.

Narrative Case Study Method

Narrative Analysis

While constructivism has given rise to a diverse array of research approaches to explore human experiences, this study uses narrative analysis, an inquiry into people's stories about their own experiences (Riessman, 1993). Narrative studies improve our understanding of people, phenomena, and events because humans are inherently storytellers and their stories play a central role in how and what we communicate to others (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998) concluded that "[o]ne of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world is through verbal accounts and stories presented by individual narrators about their lives and their experienced reality. In other words, narratives provide us with access to people's identity and personality" (p. 7). Its ability to provide a window to the development of a debater's identity and personality makes it an appropriate method for exploring the relationship between a student's debate experiences and self-authorship. For many

debaters, their participation in intercollegiate debate shapes and informs every other aspect of the college experience. Debate is their raison d'etre. Their narratives will help researchers and program administrators better understand how that choice has subsequently informed their development.

In her book on narratives as a research method, Clandinin (2013) argued that "[n]arrative inquiry begins and ends with a respect for ordinary lived experiences" and those narratives we are studying "begin and end in the storied lives of the people involved" (p. 18). Her analysis leaves one wondering what is a narrative beyond just being a story? In contemporary usage, the word narrative includes anything that goes beyond a few pithy decontextualized words. Reduced to a metaphor for any personal depiction of an event, narrative loses its power as an analytical research concept that can improve our understanding of how we experience the world. While there is a range of definitions, at their core, they all assume that a "fundamental criterion of narrative is surely contingency. Whatever the content, stories demand the consequential linking of events or ideas. Narrative shaping entails imposing a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected" (Riessman, 2008, p. 5). A more exacting interpretation of a narrative is a story that brings order to what could otherwise be interpreted as a random set of events or experiences. The researcher plays an important role in assisting the narrator in ordering the world. Etherington and Bridges (2011) concluded that the researcher is most useful when they encourage the storyteller to explore the cultural context of their experience, the roles of others, and their own choices and actions.

The narrative analysis in this study, guided by this more nuanced understanding of narratives, focused on the participant's own voice to extract meaning from a particular topic (Yin, 2016). It was particularly interested in the debaters' personal narratives; their extended speech acts about their individual experiences (Holstein & Gubrium, 2012). Specifically, the investigation used a thematic narrative analysis where the stories told during their interviews were at the center the analysis. This kind of approach places a premium on 'what' the narrator says, the content of the story (O'Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015). A thematic analysis focuses on the point of the story and its thematic meaning. In other words, "the focus is on the act the narrative reports and the moral of the story" (Riessman, 2008, p. 62). Hunter, Emerald and Martin (2013) advocated for the use of thematic narrative analysis because "it can be used to generate a rich description of a large data set and summarise its key aspects, as well as similarities and differences across the data set" (p. 117).

Narratives have moved from the margins of academia to be the place where the "cool kids" are doing their research (Clandinin, 2013, p. 215). The increased popularity of narrative analysis stems from "a growing awareness that a person is essentially a storytelling animal who naturally constructs stories out of life" (Sparkes & Smith, 2007, p. 295). More researchers now interpret their human subjects as actively constructed beings who live rich and highly contextualized storied lives. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) agree. They concluded that "stories are how we make sense of our experiences, how we communicate with others, and through which we understand the world around us" (p. 33). Unlike most qualitative researchers who ignore narrative structure and extract disconnected pieces of information from interviewees, a narrative researcher is "keen to

collect narrative accounts from the study participants and will facilitate this in the interview by encouraging extended accounts and by encouraging the participant to reflect upon the temporal sequence of events" (Yardley & Murray, 2003, p. 95). Additionally, Squire, Andrews, and Tamboukou (2013) attributed the increased use of narratives to how they allow researchers to "see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with other and to understand more about individual and social change" (p. 2). The ability to explore contradictory layers of meaning is particularly useful for a study investigating what some perceive as a potentially counterintuitive relationship between doubt and positive student development. Finally, Saldana (2009) argued that narrative analysis is suitable when the researcher is interested in documenting how people form their identities. With an emphasis on revealing how competitive debate serves as a pathway for student's journey toward self-authorship, narrative analysis was the best research approach for this study.

Case Study

This study extracted narratives from a single case. Use of case study, a focused and intensive investigation of a single unit, allowed for an in-depth study of debate that improves our understanding of the issue in context (Brandell & Varkas, 2001; Gilgun, 1994). Case studies are a commonly used research method in studies of educational programs because they allow the investigator to "understand complex social phenomena" and "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events" (Yin, 2009, p. 4). The crosscutting and intersecting relationships students develop with coaches, partners and other squad members make for a complex milieu that is not easily understood even by those ensconced in it. Additionally, the exploratory nature of the

study's research questions and their focus on "how" debate contributes to students' development made the use of a case study an appropriate research method (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) declared the classification of research questions as the "first and most important" determiner of the research method one should use (p. 10).

More specifically, this study used a narrative case study approach to collect and analyze rich narrative accounts of debaters' and coaches' experiences related to preparing for and participating in competitive events and the students' relationships with their partners and coaches. The majority of debate teams are comprised of coaches and undergraduate students. Some debate programs employ graduate assistants to serve as assistant coaches. This study chronicled narratives from the director of debate, graduate assistant coaches, and undergraduate debaters from one particular debate team to explore the relationship between debate and self-authorship. Brandell and Vakas (2001) supported the use of a narrative case study approach to investigate debate when they drew an explicit connection between the case study and narratives:

> In its simplest form, the case study is a story told for the purpose of understanding and learning. It captures essential meanings and qualities that might not be conveyed as forcefully or as effectively through other research media. Fundamentally, the narrative case study provides entrée to information that might otherwise be inaccessible. It makes possible the capture of phenomena that might not be understood as readily through other means of study. (2001, p. 293)

Research on intercollegiate competitive debate is rarely done from an intrapersonal and interpersonal developmental perspective. While debaters demonstrated a willingness to frankly discuss the activities impact on their cognitive development, previous scholars

have not considered the activity's developmental prowess from the vantage point of this study. The findings from this narrative case study provide administrators and coaches a better understanding of a previously under researched developmental process.

Since the late 1990s, there has been a resurgence of case studies employing narrative inquiry (Wells, 2011). The expanded use of narrative case studies is related to the potential of narratives to "allow investigators to connect subjective experiences to social context because they inevitably contain the embedded assumptions and patterns of reasoning that characterizes the narrator's society" (Wells, 2011, p. 18). Undoubtedly, intercollegiate competitive debate counts as one of those varied and subjective experiences that is worthy of a more focused investigation.

Participant Data

Sample Selection

Students choose to participant in intercollegiate debate for numerous reasons. Some are interested in using it to improve their communication skills. Others see it as a training ground for law school. Many are seeking a competitive outlet. Regardless of the reason, this study is interested in intercollegiate competitive debates impact on students' intrapersonal and interpersonal development. That development occurs within the social context of a debate squad that includes a coaching staff and mutually dependent partnerships with at least one other debater. The study's research questions cannot be sufficiently addressed without mining those relationships for the existence of learning partnerships. The importance of squad dynamics makes the focus on one case an appropriate research method. With that in mind, the sample of debaters and coaches

participating in the study will consist of members from one CEDA/NDT intercollegiate competitive debate program.

Following the recommendation of Wells (2011), this narrative case study purposefully selected sources of information from the debate squad that are "expected to yield in-depth information" needed achieve the study's aim (p. 19). Purposive sampling allows researchers to select sources that "yield the most relevant and plentiful data – in essence, *information rich*" (Yin, 2016, p. 93, italics in the original). A rich descriptive dataset is most likely to come from the coaches and debaters actively traveling with the squad and demonstrating some commitment to the squad's competitive success. Undergraduate debaters and graduate assistant coaches who consider competitive debate success to be an important component of their educational experience should provide the most relevant and plentiful data.

While debate teams are found at colleges and universities of various types and sizes, this study focuses on a program at a large, public comprehensive university. It is the type of higher education institution that should attract students with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and needs. Additionally, study of this particular debate program allowed for the exploration of a set of deep and complex relationships between the debaters and coaches and between teammates that are not present on most squads that have fewer debaters and/or lack graduate student support.

Description of the Participants

The study's sample consisted of a director of debate, graduate assistant coaches, and debaters involved with the program during the 2016-2017 school year. Sampling inevitably raised the question: How many participants are needed to achieve the study's

purpose? Wells (2011) concluded that a minimum of five participants is sufficient for a "case studies employing narrative methods" (p. 20). However, given the size of this university's debate program and the complexity of the relationships, the participants for the study included:

- Director of Debate;
- Five Graduate Assistant Coaches; and
- Twelve active debaters identified by the Director of Debate.

After discussing the research project with the director and gaining their commitment to serve as the in initial point of contact for potential participant, they were given the following criteria to use in configuring the pool of participants:

- Participants consider themselves members of the debate team;
- Participants attended intercollegiate competitive debate tournaments as either a competitor or judge; and
- Their participation in the research is strictly voluntary.

Fourteen undergraduate students and five graduate assistant coaches accepted the director's recommendation to participate in the research project. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts prevented two of the undergraduates from participating in the research.

The participants represented a variety of academic majors (Biology, Communication Studies, Economics, International Affairs, Journalism, Philosophy, and Political Science). Four of the five Graduate Assistant Coaches were male. Half of the undergraduate debaters were female. While several participants voluntarily disclosed their race (White and Asian), nationality ("American" and Indian) and/or religious affiliation (Christian and Muslim), that information is excluded from the description of the participants in order to protect their identity. Disclosure of that information allows

other members within the program to accurately assign attribution to a particular speaker even if the information would be insufficient for those outside of the program to do so. Additionally, the participants are referenced by pseudonyms for this and any subsequent study-related documents to farther preserve the confidentiality of the study and its participants. The eighteen participants are:

Name	**Role**	**Years with the squad**
Earnest Block	Debater	4
Richard Boor	Director	5
Will David	Grad Asst. Coach	1
Patrick Harper	Debater	2
Phillip Jennings	Grad Asst. Coach	2
Tom Jones	Debater	2
Maud Kelly	Debater	1
Nicole Martin	Debater	3
Warren McDaniel	Grad Asst. Coach	2
Adam Ryan	Grad Asst. Coach	4
Ashley Seuss	Debater	3
Elizabeth Shively	Grad Asst. Coach	1
Edward Smith	Debater	2
Mimo Song	Debater	1
Dana Stephenson	Debater	1
Suzanne Taylor	Debater	1
Steve Turner	Debater	4
Terry Wilkins	Debater	2

I made some editorial choices pertaining to the presentation of the participants and their stories. I use “they” as a singular pronoun for all of the participants for two reasons. First, there were occasions when the use of a gendered pronoun could reveal the identity of the participants. Second, a traditionally masculine or feminine pseudonym did not always align with the participant’s sex or gender identification. That left me in quandary of whether to use the gendered pronoun based the actual person or the traditional gendering of the pseudonym. The use of the singular “they” resolves this dilemma. Finally, with permission from each of the participants, grammar was corrected

if doing so did not change the intent and meaning of what they shared. Verbalized pauses were omitted to enhance the readability of the findings. Again, absolute deference was given to preserving the original meaning and intent of their statements.

Data Collection

Interviewing was the best data collection method for the study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) forwarded that in the field of education, "[i]nterviewing is probably the most common form of data collection" and "[i]n some studies it is the *only* source of data" (p. 106, italics in the original). Not only did interviewing make the data collection consistent with the majority of qualitative studies in education, it was the best tool for obtaining rich stories about the student's relationships within the debate program. Additionally, the decision to use narrative analysis made interviews a necessary data collection tool.

Individual interviews with the debaters and graduate assistant coaches were conducted in person in the debate program's squad room. The sixty-minute semi-structured interviews acquired the students and coaches' narratives about their participation in intercollegiate debate. I was particularly interested in the debaters' relationship with coaches and teammates, the potential for those relationships to serve as learning partnerships, and debate's role of their lives as college students. The interview questions encouraged the participants to tell descriptive stories describing why they debate, how it informs their personal development, and their successes and failures as debaters and coaches. Finally, the interviews probed for provocative moments that informed the student's development and explored how they responded to those challenges. During our time together, we also explored the role, if any, coaches and

partners played in their negotiation of those moments. The free-flowing conversation set the stage for the students to tell rich and engaging stories about their debate experiences.

The interviews with the director and the graduate coaching assistants explored the coaches' personal relationships with students, support structures, training methods, and the potential of their relationships with students to be learning partnerships. The exchange was guided by my desire to assess whether the program's debate coaching constituted a Learning Partnership Model capable of producing self-authored students.

The interviews were recorded using VoiceRecorder App on an iPhone. The recordings were moved to and remain stored in Dropbox. Go Transcript, a professional transcription service, was subsequently used to convert the audio recording of each interview into a written text for coding. Before each interview, the research participants created an interview pseudonym to protect their identity. Additionally, the participants were given permission to review the findings to ease their concerns about participating in the project.

Data Analysis

The data for this study consisted of professionally transcribed interviews with participants on an intercollegiate debate team. Following Merriam and Tisdale (2016) advice, I conducted the qualitative data analysis along with data collection to prevent the data from becoming "unfocused, repetitious and overwhelming in the sheer volume of material that needs to be processed. Data that have been analyzed while being collected are both parsimonious and illuminating" (p. 197). Consistent implementation of three practices ensured maximum utility of the data collected. First, I documented my initial impression of the narratives during the interview in a journal dedicated solely to that

function. Second, I produced an analytic memo following each interview to document and reflect on the participants, emergent categories, and noticeable themes. The memo offered an opportunity for me to engage in a solo conversation about the data (Saldana, 2009). Finally, each interview was immediately transcribed and coded, prioritizing transcription and analysis of completed interviews over performing additional interviews.

Like the majority of qualitative research, this study took the raw data generated through the interviews and used it to produce abstract categories that improved my understanding of how students experience and make meaning of their academic spaces. Additionally, I used a complementary approach of constantly comparing segments of the dataset to identify patterns, similarities, and differences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Analyzing the data via induction and the constant comparative method allowed me to ascertain a deeper understanding of the interview participants' narratives.

After each interview transcription, I managed, organized, and coded the data using the modified version of the comments function in Microsoft Word. By placing a one-word or short phrase description or in vivo code in a comment box to the right in the document, I coded the salient, noteworthy, and/or provocative data. While descriptive codes helped summarize the relevant issues, the in vivo codes placed in quotation marks indicated language taken directly from the interviews. Initially, I used an open coding process to code any and everything that could potentially be useful. I did not want to ignore any data during this initial phase of the coding process because future interviews could reveal the relevance of some of the information that I might miss if I used a more discriminating coding method. While the coding process remained open, it was vital for

this project that I remained attentive to the existence of potential themes that could guide the analysis of future interviews.

The study's focus on narratives created unique expectations for data analysis. The analysis needed to move beyond just the exploration of the psychological and incorporate an investigation of the sociological context that informed the stories. I wanted to explore the student's interpersonal debate relationships and how those inform their development. Saldana (2009) argued that "[e]nvironments such as close relationships, local culture, jobs, and organizations influence and affect the individual's telling of personal tales" (p. 111). Debate squad rooms constitute one of those environments. An exploration of student-coach relationships in the context of the Learning Partnership Model can facilitate an improved understanding of these debating communities. Additionally, narrative coding created its own unique set of expectations. It required the production of many unique subcoding schemes that include the type of narrative, genre, purpose, setting, plot, characters, elements, and spoken features (Saldana, 2009).

Validity and Reliability

The preservation of validity and reliability is of the utmost importance. Strategies for promoting validity and reliability were built into the study to ensure its trustworthiness. First, use of personal narratives facilitated development of rich, thick descriptions of the participants' experiences that allowed the reader to more fully contextualize the findings. Riessman (2008) urged the researcher "to document their sources, and bring the reader along with them as they uncover a trail of evidence, and critically evaluate each piece in relation to others" (p. 188). Chapter Four was written with these expectations in mind. Second, the inclusion of data from a diverse array of

students to confirm the emerging findings served as a "powerful strategy for increasing the credibility or internal validity" of the research (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 245). While all the participants are active coaches or debaters, their histories, cultural backgrounds, academic experiences are diverse enough to secure the study's internal validity. Third, the use of respondent validation substantially reduced the possibility of misinterpreting the participants' stories by soliciting their feedback on the research's preliminary findings. This type of check is an invaluable tool for identifying and rooting out my own biases. The consistent and diligent implementation of these three strategies successfully maintained the study's validity and reliability. While generalizability is not the study's goal, the pursuit of rich, thick descriptions and maximum variation in the sample increases the likelihood that some readers will extrapolate the findings to other conditions and situations that are similar to but not directly related to the competitive intercollegiate debate program that is the focus of this study.

Researcher Bias and Assumptions

Since my junior year in high school, I have actively participated in competitive debate. While my role has transitioned from competitor, coach, and program director to now serving as a senior-level university administrator with intercollegiate debate as one of many programs in my portfolio, I continue to see a tremendous value in providing students competitive debating opportunities as a means of assisting their intrapersonal and interpersonal development. Shortly after transitioning from an intercollegiate competitor to a coach, I wrote a short piece espousing the virtues of competitive debate:

> Debate offers a pedagogical tool that simultaneously opens the mind to alternatives and empowers students to take control of their lives. Half of the time,

> students are disseminating information and forming arguments about complex philosophical and political issues. In the other half, they answer the arguments of others. Self-reflexivity is an inherent part of the activity. …Contemporary educational techniques teach one side of the issue and universalize it as the only "truth." Debate forces students to evaluate both sides, and determine their independent contextualized truth. (Lee, 1998, p. 95)

While I deeply appreciate the love and ardent support of debate by the younger me, I bring to this study a far more reserved and circumspect voice. These days, I am more interested in the questions then the answers. I am more inclined to challenge than to advocate. As Socrates' teachings remind us, a well delivered question can be far more illuminating than a quick pithy retort. I come to this project with a firm commitment to Socratic questioning and the wisdom to listen to those who challenge and refute the project's findings. My experiences as an administrator with a diversifying portfolio encourages me to appreciate competitive debates enormous potential without the need to ignore its limitations. It is not a pedagogical Swiss Army knife and should be judiciously used in academic spaces where it can meet a specifically defined purpose. This study explored whether self-authorship should be considered one of those purposes.

I bring to the study a commitment to evidence-based decision making and vigorous support for an open marketplace of ideas. Neither are possible if conflicting and confounding ideas are summarily dismissed because they do not conform to perceived notions of reality. Both are compromised in academic settings that privilege expedience over unencumbered exploration. No debate coach committed to their craft privileges

unsupported desired outcomes over fidelity to reasoned deliberation and well-supported scholarship. The process is always more important than the outcome.

Riessman (2008) reminded us that "[i]n the final analysis, good narrative research persuades readers" (p. 191). It is my responsibility, as the researcher, to present the data in a way that convinces the audience that it was genuinely acquired and that the analytic interpretations are reasonable and plausible. To strengthen the study's persuasive appeal, I followed Riessman's suggestions. I worked to ensure that the theoretical claims were supported by evidence from the students' accounts, incorporated countervailing narratives, and presented alternative interpretations. Riessman concluded this "strategy forces investigators to document their claims for readers who weren't present to witness the storytelling event, or alongside the investigator trying to make sense of it" (p. 191).

Summary

This chapter presented the study's methodology, constructivism, and the method, narrative case study analysis. It also discussed various issues pertaining to sample selection and data collection. As I considered using this space to preview Chapter Four and explore my role in retelling the stories of the students interviewed for this study, I was reminded that Socrates never wrote anything. He had concerns about the corrupting power of written language on Athens, an oral society that privileged face-to-face dialogues to test and defend ideas (Powers, 2011). We are aware of Socrates' life and teachings because others wrote his stories.

Socrates' teachings would have long been lost to time without the literary and philosophical works of Aristotle, Aristophanes, Plato, and Xenophon crafting stories about him. Like Plato for Socrates, I am the caretaker of the stories that the members of

the debate squad who generously shared their time and tales with me. Stories about Socrates and the debaters participating in this study provide windows for viewing their lives and offers the reader additional ways of explaining the world and all of our actions within it. Stories can be powerful tools for humanizing, understanding, and connecting with others. I hope that Chapter Four's retelling of these debaters' stories provides higher education practitioners the opportunity to connect with them and a better understand the role intercollegiate debate plays in their identity development.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

Socrates spent a substantial amount of time in Athens, Greece engrossed in conversations. His eccentric dialogues fueled by intense inquiry and cross-examinations made him the focal point of many comic poets including Aristophanes (Stone, 1989). In *Clouds* (1983), Aristophanes depicted Socrates as an obscene headmaster of a school he unflatteringly called the "thinkery" – an institution of incessant banter "with little to no interest in ethical questions" (Vander Waerdt, 1994, p. 65). While Socrates vehemently denied being a sophist, a teacher of deceptive rhetoric, and there is little support for Aristophanes' disparaging accusations about the Think Academy, the play's satirization of Socrates' question-and-answer method of inquiry ultimately constituted additional evidence of his desire to engage Athens' nonelites and instill in all citizens a desire to have their life choices guided by reason (Schlosser, 2017). Moreover, the creation of a learning environment akin to a modern-day "think tank," "house of thought," or "reflectory" (Andic, 2001, p. 167) no longer carries the negative connotations that Aristophanes attempted to ascribe to Socrates' pedagogical efforts. In fact, few contemporary educators, trainers, or debate coaches would take umbrage to their work being described as a "think tank" or a "house of thought."

One could argue that the interaction among students and coaches I observed and the stories I heard while performing this case study has roots in Socrates' Athenian "thinkery." The students were keen conversationalist giving much credit for their oratorical skills to debate. Additionally, as the narratives presented below reveal, the

participants are quite vested in exploring the nuances of policy implementation and our ethical obligations. Located on the bottom floor of a historic building built in the early 19th century, this debate program is provided a grand space for the team's spirited squad meetings, combative practices rounds, and as Ashley Seuss proclaimed in our interview, a place that is "a home away from home for the debaters." When one enters the squad room, they are struck by the massive "U" shaped table in the center of the room that is arranged to consistently encourage the personal and political conversations that seem to be a hallmark of the program. This is a space where the debaters will always have supportive friendships and intellectually challenging conversations. Is it a place where a student can author their own life while building a community with others?

Baxter Magolda (2000) observed that one of the primary challenges for educators working to create learning environments that enhance students' capacity to thrive in our increasingly diverse, complex and interdependent communities is "that agency and communion have been viewed as mutually exclusive rather than as dimensions of interpersonal development that can be integrated. Life in contemporary America requires the kind of interpersonal maturity characterized by a blend of agency and communion" (p. 144). At times, we present students with the false choice of either securing their "self-protection, self-assertion and self-expansion" or striving to develop "connection to and fusion with others to achieve acceptance in relationships" (Baxter Magolda, 2000, p. 141). The findings presented here are from a debate program that attempts to balance its members' pursuit of agency and communion by creating a safe space for the exploration of conflicting ideas, encouraging members to accept their personal and political differences (sometimes begrudgingly), and creating a communal expectation for

collaboration. The program is a "thinkery" attempting to encourage students to develop a sense of self and an internal compass while appreciating the importance of communion with others.

This chapter tells the stories of the members of an intercollegiate debate team in the southern region of the United States and uses their stories to reveal an interplay between intercollegiate competitive debate and its participants' journey towards self-authorship as they relate to the following research questions:

- Is the relationship between the debate coach and the debater a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?;
- Is the peer-peer relationship between debaters a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?; and
- Do student experiences while preparing for and participating in intercollegiate debate create provocative moments that disrupt the students use of external formulas to guide their decision-making?

Several themes emerged from the rereading and coding of the debaters and coaches' accounts of their debate experiences. The narrative case study approach exposed complex and dynamic interactions between team members, coaches, and the act of debating that a few described as a "love-hate relationship" that they preserved because it was simultaneously a space for personal support and intellectual rigor. The rest of the chapter presents the thematic findings of my analysis of students' relationships and experiences at this modern-day "Thinkery" and concludes with a summary of the findings and how they relate to the overall purpose of the study: Assessing whether intercollegiate competitive debate positively contributes to the participants' becoming self-authored citizens.

The findings reveal an interplay between the pursuit of communion and agency as the students hone their skills as verbal pugilists. To preserve a high degree of fidelity to the participant's understanding of their relationship to intercollegiate competitive debate,

generate rich and compelling descriptions of those relationships, and enhance the readers' confidence in the findings, the rest of the chapter will feature several large quotations from the interview transcripts.

Commune of Caretakers and Friends

For many debaters, debating is their primary, and at times, only extracurricular activity. The team's squad room is a gathering place for preparing for competition, recuperating from and studying for class, and, to the dismay of many coaches, a place for eating and sleeping. In a supportive and thriving programming, one finds students in the squad room engaging one another and their coaches at all hours of the day and night. Coaches and students routinely lunch together. Observers of a squad room's communal dynamics would notice debaters and coaches flowing in and out of conservations and informal debates about an assortment of issues related to the debate topic, current political events, and television programs. It is fascinating watching a group of people seamless transition a conversation from a substantive analysis of healthcare reform to an exploration of latest pop culture sensation dominating social media. In such an intimate and stimulating environment, it is difficult for debate coaches to separate their role as argument instructor from the needs and desires of their debaters for them to serve as personal advisors and role models. The result is that debate coaches tend to take on the role of caretaker in a myriad of ways.

Coaches as Caretakers

The graduate student coaches not only accept that their role includes serving as a role model and personal advisor for their students, but they consider it a priority. Elizabeth Shively proclaimed that "every graduate student coach is a debate coach for

maybe 30% of their time, and then they're a life coach for the other 70%, and that's not written into the job, but everybody knows it." This notion of the role of debate coach as that of a "life coach" speaks to support structures that coaches create for the debaters. Shively's discussion of "life coach" alludes to the supportive role of coaches as they establish communion, an interpersonal connection, with the debaters. Immediately after talking about this unwritten aspect of the job, Shively stated:

> If they are having trouble in school, then you help them fix it. Or they're having a problem with a relationship then you talk to them about it because the kids don't really have people to talk to. They're not going to talk to Boor, not just because he's grumpy, but they're not going to talk to him because there's too big of an age difference and so the graduate student coach has to assume the responsibility to chat with them about things that are important to them but aren't necessarily about debate. You act like it's about debate and you invite them to have lunch. You talk about debate, but really you let the kid talk about whatever they want to talk about. Things come up that are not about debate and eventually, you have enough of a rapport with the kid where a comfortable space for dialogue exist that they are willing to talk to you about any problem that they have. It doesn't even have to be problems but advice for school, how to advance their career, how do I deal with a conference, what is a conference, I'm I supposed to make a resume, I've never done that before, or just happy things. Don't know what to get my significant other for the upcoming holiday, can you help? Can you drive me somewhere?

For Shively, there is a "responsibility" for the graduate coaches to establish an intimate and close relationship with the debater that demonstrates the program is vested in the students' emotional well-being. Successful coaching includes "respecting [the debaters] thoughts and feelings, thus affirming the value of their voices" (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 251). A significant portion of this supportive work takes place outside of the squad room. Shively and other coaches created mobile offices in the local coffee shops and eateries for these more personal conversations. This role of the "life coach" requires the debate coach to simultaneously tend to the debaters emotional and social needs while working to maximize their competitive success. Some would argue that coaches cannot assist a student in reaching their full potential as a debater if they are unaware of or ignore the most salient issues in a student's life. These supportive lunchtime conversations serve as opportunities to be "good company" for the students (Baxter Magolda, 2002, 2009a; Meszaros, 2007b).

Similar to Shively's belief that the debate coach is duty bound to be the debater's "life coach," Will David, another graduate coaching assistant, understands their role to also require going beyond teaching the debaters to be masterful arguers. David is looking to be something akin to slightly wiser, yet culturally connected, friend. Like Shively, it seems that David performs this part of the job at the lunch counter or the dinner table.

> I think my role is partially as a friend to the debaters. I'm here a lot more often than I think the other coaches are, so I get dinner with the kids a lot and I hang out with them. In one sense it's because I'm younger than the other coaches, like, Shively and Jennings are a little bit detached, and I was a recent national circuit competitive debaters, so the kids feel like they can talk to me about their strategy

> concerns. I'm friends with them. On the other hand, it's a weird self-appointed role.

Both Shively and David spoke of their attempts to develop interpersonal connections with the debaters as unwritten collateral assignments. For David, it is a "self-appointed" role. For Shively, the role of teaching life skills is "not written into the job." Regardless, their efforts are greatly appreciated by the students. Patrick Harper's discussion of what they "love" about this debate team indicates that David's efforts have been larger successful. Harper spoke of a comfortable, supportive environment that is conducive to producing a collaborative partnership between the coach and the debater. Harper gushed:

> David has been great on this team in my interactions with them. I feel I can interact with them in a lot of ways than I can't interact with certain coaches like Boor. Boor is 35, and my interactions are like, "What's the strategy? Here's my assignment." That's why I love being around here a lot just because David's always here. I love talking to him, and I'll do work with him. I just feel productive. That's been something that I've loved a lot. It's just his presence on this team. I think they have made it really comfortable. It has made me want to be here a lot more. Like I love being at the squad room. Just in general, it's a great workspace and what not. I really like being around when David's here to just talk or play a game with him. They always want to go to new places to eat and stuff like that. Or discuss every strategy whatever policy or stuff like that.

Harper was not the only debater to speak to the importance of the graduate assistant coaches in creating a hospitable learning environment. Nicole Martin spoke of the graduate assistants as "also friends on some level." Mimo Song talked about the coaches

being motivational cheerleaders who always tell the teams, “You got this. You two are smart enough to figure out.” Terry Wilkins appreciated their ability to be both adults who “can be in charge of us at tournaments and tell us what to do” when it comes to taking care of the travel logistics and companions who “can sit with us at lunch and just bitch about life and the latest wild stuff that Director Boor did or whatever it may be.” Even though some of the graduate coaches may think they are not contractually obligated to support the debaters’ intrapersonal and interpersonal development, the students are tremendously appreciative that they have taken on the role. The graduate assistants understand that supporting the debaters requires more than helping them become nationally competitive debaters. It requires respecting their immediate emotional needs and working with, not for, the student to find solutions.

Phillip Jennings, a different graduate assistant coach, also spoke of the importance of the coach being a part of the student’s support network. Jennings depicted the coach as regularly engaged in a delicate dance of challenging students to be competitively successful while providing them a “home” outside of class. Thinking back to their reasons for debating, Jennings surmised:

> For me, debate was a place where I found a home outside of my classes, stuff like that and it helped give me the life skills to go through college. The debate coach provides an environment like it's just setting the stage, creating a space where students feel comfortable to come, be more engaged in argument, learn some critical thinking skills, stuff like that, and then above and beyond being open to letting people come, it's creating a culture that demands, not demand success, but encourages success. Sometimes that involves cutting a lot of cards and working

> with folks and hearing practice speeches, other times it's listening to students with health concerns and dealing with that. Debate becomes a point of contact for students in the university. That's a little bit more direct, so at times it's a support group and other times it's a competitive team.

Jennings' juxtaposition between "cutting lots of cards" and tending to a student's "health concerns" further illustrates the balance that this program's coaches attempt to strike between preparing the debaters for competitive success and helping them succeed at life. "Cutting lots of cards" refers to the process of acquiring evidence that debaters use to support their arguments during competition. It is one of the more direct ways that a coach contributes to the competitive success of the program and is held out by many students and some coaches to be the primary metric for evaluating one's coaching prowess. It is quite meaningful that Jennings considers the acts of dealing students' health issues and creating a home for debater on a large university campus to be on par with helping them maximize their competitive success.

Like many of the other debaters, Ashley Seuss, a rising junior, considered the graduate assistant coaches to be the heart and soul of the debate program because of their willingness to tailor their support for the debaters to meet each student's individual needs. In addition to working to improve the debate performance of all students regardless of their capacity to competitively excel, the graduate assistants serve as on-call tutors, counselors, motivational coaches, and lunch dates. Most importantly, they are connectors cementing a long-term relationship between the debater and the university. The coaches allow the debaters to determine the terms of the engagement. Sometimes the conversations are about arguments they want to forward at the next tournaments.

However, they seem to just as often be about the student's other academic pursuits and developing strategies to become a functional adult. Effusive in their praise and appreciation, Seuss argued:

> Our assistant coaches are one of the greatest assets at the university. Anytime you go into the debate building, there's at least one assistant coach there that's wanting to help you. Willing to talk about life and whatever struggle you're going through, whatever. No matter how much you hate biology class, Roberts will help you because they have a Master's in science education. He can teach you science quickly, or you have this Econ thing that you can talk about with McDaniel because they have an Economics Degree. You can talk about all of those things. That's just great. I think having those resources. All of them have been successful academically because the university has a great Communications Department. I think that's one of the greatest assets we have. Then at tournaments. No matter what team you are — if you're the 5th team or 6th team you have a coach with every single round to help you and really encourage you. It doesn't matter if there's no way you're going to break, the coaches care about you. No matter how much you put into debate, even if you don't ever want to go to the in NTD, you have coaches that care about you, care but your success, care about what you do in every single round. I think that's absolutely incredible. We talk about a lot of other schools. That if you don't want to go to the NDT they won't care and you're not going to be one of those top priorities. You will get coaching depending on how good you are. It's great that we will have coaches before every round and helping you, and really care about your success, care about your development and

> growth at tournaments. Outside of tournaments, they are willing to listen to your speeches. I know that if I email Jennings, they are as willing to listen to my practice speech as they are Wilkins'. I think that says a lot about them. They obviously, are willing to listen to everyone's speech whether you're the last speaker of the tournament or whether you were the Top 10 speaker at national tournament, they don't care. They are willing to be there for everyone.

The graduate assistants are invaluable members of the debate program working to affirm and respect the developmental needs of each debater. Performance at the National Debate Tournament (NDT) remains a dominant marker of success for many intercollegiate debate programs. From Seuss' perspective, the coaches are unwilling to sacrifice the needs of the least competitive students to maximize the program's success at the NDT. Decisions that consistently honor the needs of each individual student allow the graduate coaches to serve as central connecting points for the debaters. Jennings' conceptualization of the coach as "a point of contact for students in the university" powerfully and succinctly expresses how many of the students talked about the debate program and their coaches. Some students are easily overwhelmed by the byzantine structures of a large university and it is important that they find a trusted advisor who can help them "get an understanding of how to navigate the institution, take advantage of opportunities, [and] sustain themselves during periods of stress" (Dumbrigue, Moxley, & Najor-Durack, 2001, p. 101). The graduate assistants in this debate program serve as this "important and concrete connection between the student and the university, and can help to personalize the educational institution" (Dumbrigue et al., 2001, p. 102).

Coaching this debate team is not always easy. The program has its fair share of interpersonal skirmishes that requires finding ways to support all the students while making progress on core organizational objectives. The students alluded to several disputes on the squad that they feared would have severely damaged the team if coaches were not available to guide them through the negotiation process. One situation discussed by a couple of debaters involved a social media exchange after Donald Trump's elections. The coaches played a pivotal role in simultaneously challenging the debater to engage in perspective-taking and supporting those they deemed most in need of comforting. For most higher education professionals working directly with students after the election, it was a herculean task persuading them to look beyond their political differences and work to preserve inclusive communities that listen to and engage alternative perspectives. This debate program was no exception.

Dana Stephenson, a political conservative and Trump supporter, was bombarded by a barrage of social media attacks on GroupMe shortly after the election. The firm and decisive response by the coaches in support of Dana and the core values of the program quickly resolved the issue. While displaying some hesitancy to speak to the issue because they genuinely feel like the issue is "over with," Stephenson described the situation:

> We had a squad meeting that night, and I came in and Jennings, one of the coaches, saw me crying. Jennings and I are super close, and so he was like, "You okay?" I'm like, "I didn't really want to talk about it," even if it was Jennings. And I was just like, "No, I'm fine." And he told Boor because, apparently, Jennings was in the room when people were, altogether, doing these messages. And Boor ripped everyone a new butthole and was just like, "You're not going to

> treat people like that. You're not going to treat members of the team like that." I haven't had anything of that nature brought up again. I'm not like, "Oh, I hate those two people that did that." With all the people, I think emotions are high. It was a very scary time for everyone but it was just kind of, I guess, troubling that I was the object of their anger. I think the majority, everyone is, whether they like to portray it or not, I think they're caring. I think the big thing, honestly, is Hayes is a great coach, and he cares about how each of us feels. So, when he knew I was bothered by that, he handled it. The day — it was the day or the day after, he handled it. And he would email me and follow up, and ask if I was doing okay. It's the little things like that that make you want to continue even when you feel like things aren't going very smoothly. At the end of the day, Boor always reminds us that we're all in the same team. And when one person benefits, we all benefit.

This episode reveals the difficulty of simultaneously tending to the needs of all students when there is a dispute that divides the squad. We observed a coach attempting to respect a student's thoughts and feeling by affirming their unique perspective that is politically outside the communal norm. Additionally, the director saw the treatment of Dana Stephenson as a threat to the open heterodoxy the coaches are attempting to establish. However, the response potentially comes at the expense of a learning opportunity for all of the participants in the form of a negotiated solution with or without the assistance of the coaches. This was a time when the director's desire to immediately eliminate a threat to a core communal norm was in conflict with their ability to be in partnership with the students. This seemed to be an aberration driven by extenuating circumstances. Phillip

Jennings presented Boor as a leader who encouraged the coaching staff to consider the use of a decision-making partnership with the debaters the default mode of engagement:

> Boor is a really big on knowing what are the goals for the team and the individuals? We have students whose goals are, "I want to do the regional tournament to have fun." Okay, that's awesome because you are still getting a lot of debate. We have students who want to do public debates. We have students who are more competitive. It is all about now that you've told us your goals how can we help you get there.

The coaches' commanding response to the squabble after President Trump's election seems atypical because it privileged organizational needs over the individual goals of some of the students. More often than not, the needs of individual debaters guide the work of this debate squad and the coaches are "engaging in mutual learning with the [students]" (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 251). Student expectations are the building blocks for interactions with the coaches. The director and the graduate assistants work to weave highly personalized support for each student throughout their coaching. However, there are events that challenge their capacity to continuously do so.

One role of the coach, demonstrated after Trump's elections, is to remind the collective of its need to balance the pursuit of agency with the preservation of community. In a competitive space like a debate, having someone continuously speaking to the importance of the team and sacrifice is of paramount importance. Mimo Song, a first-year debater, predicted that without an engaged coaching staff working to keep individual, social, and competitive desires in balance with communal needs, the debate program "would probably have some of the conflicts that happen between people on the

team go as far as ruining a friendship between some people and one person actually not being in debate anymore." In a different organization, Dana Stephenson may no longer want to be active member after such a public and high-profile altercation. That is not the case in regards to this team. The coaches desire to ensure that conflict remain nestled within a strong support network may be the reason why.

Stephenson concluded our interview with a powerful ringing endorsement for the coaches and the support systems they create for the debaters. Stephenson's ability to grow and learn from the dispute was far more likely because of the support and care the coaches provided during and after the post-election confrontation. They explained:

> I am personally indebted to debate, and I'm indebted to this team. I think that overall, we've had our scuffles, but I think overall, they have made me — it does feel like you're wanted here from the coaches. I'm not stupid, I know I'm not as valued or as good debate wise as Harper and Jones, but Boor, Jennings, Shively and everyone else never made me feel like I'm less than another. I think that that's so important. I'm indebted to debate, and if I didn't continue with debate, then I would just be like, "Why am I here? I could be getting this at Tennessee." Not my major but this is a part of the package and even if I don't end up being the very best on the team, the top-ranking, I think that this is important. I think it looks good for law school. I think I'm going to meet a lot of important and a bunch of people along the way. I don't see a con to it. It's time-consuming but other than that; I don't see a con to it. I think this is a great — I think the debate team is a great thing. I think it's comprised of great people, both grad students, coaches, and debaters, and overall, I'm very pleased with it.

One can conclude that the model of coaching that dominates this program is consistently successful at performing the difficult task of both supporting and challenging the debaters. They remain aware of the students' emotional needs while pushing them to find their competitive limits. The coaches are not perfect. There were concerns that some of the coaches occasionally pushed too hard. A couple of students feared that coaches might be unavailable for them because their potential for competitive success was not as great as others. Many debate teams attempt to balance an access mission, providing the opportunity to debate to numerous students regardless of their potential, with a desire to sufficiently support students who are capable of being nationally successful. That balancing act can impact student travel opportunities, inform which students coaches assist, and trigger disputes over resource allocations. While two students alluded to the drive for national competitive success potentially limiting their travel options, these same students were effusive in their appreciation of the support they are currently receiving from the graduate assistants. What we do know is that several students are acutely aware of the tensions between the programs access mission and the pursuit of competitive excellence. On balance, the narratives above depict a debate squad where the trainings are cooperative ventures between the coaches and the debaters that allow students to determine the pace and purpose of the engagement. On their tandem bike, the debaters are the drivers in the front seat and the coaches and are in the backseat occasionally dispensing food and motivational speeches.

Finding Friends

Since the 1950's, education researchers have emphasized the importance of supportive peers for student success (McCabe, 2016). In fact, college and university peer groups are identified as the "single most potent source of growth and development during the undergraduate years" (Astin, 1993, p. 398). McCabe's (2016) study of a diverse group of 67 undergraduates at a Midwestern public university also spoke to the benefits students' accrue to their academic and social development when they establish friendships. McCabe found that close companionships can keep students in school during stressful periods, sustain their commitment to academic excellence when their interest wanes, and allow them to feel like a whole person as they transition to adulthood. With a substantial number of students throughout the United States failing to complete their college degrees each year (Fishman, Ludgate, & Tutak, 2017), a better understanding of where and how students make friends on campuses is a worthwhile pursuit. Higher education administrators should keep in mind that friends are uniquely positioned to assist struggling students because they "often share similar concerns" and "rely on each other for support in facing life's challenges" (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 272).

One of the more consistent themes revealed in the data was that students' participation in intercollegiate competitive debate served as an avenue for them to make friends and the debate team's squad room was a place for them to meet and sustain those friendships. The bonds students established on the team were identified as critical support networks because the large institution they attend could quickly overwhelm and alienate if students lack a place they can go and just be. Ashley Seuss spoke of the debate team as

a community of "good friends." The squad room is a place where the debaters are always welcomed and is truly a home for many of them. Seuss explained:

> I enjoy the people. We joke about the adrenaline, and that's part of it, and it's partly now like a community for me, as well. A lot of my good friends come from the debate team. It's a place that since freshman year, I've felt welcomed. It's fun at this school because we all legally have a key to the building. You literally, feel like there's a place on campus that you're always welcome. Having that place, I think is incredible. Many people really don't feel like they found their place, but we can say we literally, found our place and we have a key to it and we can go, literally, any time we want. Most of us, I think, have been here past midnight, writing papers and studying for tests. Then preparing for tournaments and doing practice rounds until 11 O'clock at night. I think that's something that at this school, we're definitely blessed to have this incredible space.

While Seuss appreciates the "incredible" physical space that the debaters have universal access to, we should not overlook the importance of the sense of belonging they feel being a part this particular community. Unlike some of the students at this university, the debaters "literally" have a "welcoming" space on the campus. A tremendous amount of value is derived from just being with the other debaters and being able to support their teammates' development as debaters and academic scholars. Later in the interview, Seuss spoke of the important role the debate squad plays in creating this sense of belonging:

> I think it's partially evidence production and having answers to everything, but also, you `always have a team to debate. You always have the practice round availability of someone to bounce arguments off of you. You are cutting a new

DA [disadvantage], and you have someone to ask "what would you say to this?" You go to your favorite 2A [2nd affirmative speaker], and you say, "Okay, I am going to read this against you. What would be your top five answers?" They're like, "Look, okay. This is what I would say," and that helps you with that and you're able to improve yourself as well, as just a friend component. At the beginning of the semester, I had this struggle with statistics, and I complained to everyone and just like the ability to like get that out and just feel better and then go back to the work. I know it's really helpful just to have the people there and the friends I've made and also the help I get with debate. You can bounce DA answers, you can talk about new AFFs, you can practice rounds, there's always someone around to help you. A lot of debate teammates need help with econ and math classes. I like to think that the reason that the debate team has done better in econ and math classes is because I have helped so many debaters. I am the resident math nerd of the debate team. Having those discussions and being able to be a really good teammate is important. It really gives you a sense of belonging on campus, especially in a school of 30,000 people. This school is huge and so many people don't find a place. I think really, having a group and say you are part of something and something that acknowledges that you are part of them. If you go, if you're like, "Yes, I'm a part of debate," but if someone is else is like, "Yes, I'm a part of debate" people will ask "Do you know her?", and I'll be like, "Yes, of course. I know we are teammate, we've traveled across the United States together. Of course, I know her." I'm like, "Do you know whoever?" Do you know Wilkins? I'm like, "Yes. Is it surprising that I know my teammates?"

For Seuss, there is a significant amount of pride that comes from being a part of the team. More noteworthy is that Seuss' primary contribution to the program is with their capacity to serve as economics and math tutor. This is a community of practice that in sewn together by a common interest in competitive argument. Yet Seuss and others find meaning and purpose in their ability to assist colleagues with problems unrelated to debate. Their knowledge and expertise is community property and freely shared to improve the lives and academic performances of colleagues in and out of debate. These friendships constitute resources, not unlike the support provided by the graduate students. The squad room is a place where the debaters are willing to "share [their] authority and expertise and work interdependently with others" to resolve problems (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 251). Mimo Song credited Seuss for helping to create the welcoming community that Seuss referenced. Like many of the debaters, Song uses their relationships on the team as a source of support and guidance beyond improving as a debater. Whether it is event planning or tutoring, Song declared that other debaters were readily available to share their experiences and knowledge:

> My debate partner is Seuss. I think Seuss, even outside of debate, they were one of the first people who I became close with here at school and she helped me navigate my way around campus. Even at 1:30 in the morning, I can ask her some random question like, "What time are we supposed to be in the squad room to leave for the tournament?" Seuss is very involved on the campus. A lot of things just go on here at campus, and I was like, "Hey, I saw that you were leading this event in this talk team. What is it going to be about so I can decide if it is worth my time or not?" Also, Seuss was just in the class last semester that I was

> struggling in. Seuss was like, “Here, I can help you. You want to meet up at like this time? We get coffee.” I was like, “Yes, it sounds great. Thanks.”

Nicole Martin described the debate team in a manner similar to Seuss and Song. For Martin, the program is a core support structure and the squad room is safe and friendly place on a massive college campus where one can easily get lost. The debate team is the place they can always find a friend to listen to their troubles and offer a heartfelt congratulation to acknowledge debate and non-debate accomplishments. It is a community of caring students who continuously demonstrate that they are vested in the success of the others. Martin explained:

> I think that it has given me a more foundational group that I can really ground myself in when I get lost on this big campus, and I'm not really sure where to turn to. I know that there's always someone that would be listening in the squad room. I know that there is someone that'll let me cry on their shoulder or give me a high five after I do really well on a test. But it's more you come to college and you find your core group of friends but here it's more familiar than anything. I think that college debate has taught me to balance. Prior to college, there's like an innate balance of school and family and friends, and here it's one and the same.

Martin continued:

> All my friends are debaters. I say that. Not anymore. It is not nearly that bad. A lot of friends are debaters. I think that's just because we share. We all go through the same thought process for everything. We can talk about things that not that many other people are interested in, but they just don't know enough about to carry on the same level of conversation. That's fine, I don't not like my other

> friends because of that but I think it definitely makes talking to debate people easier. Because they just get it, like where you're coming from. They get what it's like to wrestle with that idea, like is there any answer, is there truth, is there such a thing as something being black or white? Whereas most people wouldn't even wrestle with that question to begin with.

Martin spoke to aspects of these debate friendships that was only hinted at by others. Students are attracted to wrestling with big elusive ideas. They love to question and don't need or desire an immediate answer. Debate is shrouded with ambiguity, uncertainty, and an incessant desire to challenge. These students appreciate the complexity of life decisions and seem to shun the pursuit of simple solutions. The debate program is full of students who are rarities elsewhere on the campus; learners who tend to love the questions more than the answers.

Several other students discussed the friendships they developed with other members of the team. Edward Smith identified the squad room as their "unconditional home" where they can establish "close connections" with other students. Tom Jones, who attended a relatively small high school, appreciates that the debate team is a place they "can always go to and one of my friends will be here." Like many others, Jones concluded that it is "an important thing to have in a college setting where you're off on your own in a lot of ways." However, no one spoke with more reverence for intercollegiate debate's capacity to create durable and long-lasting interpersonal relationships than Patrick Harper. Responding to my final question of: "Is there anything you would like to add?" Harper shared a love for supportive friendships they developed through debate that includes their teammates, coaches, and opponents:

One of the most important things about the debate for me is the relationships I formed in a debate. I can't tell you how excited I am to see people like Kristin and Viveth. I love so many people in the community, and I love just seeing people and hugging them at tournaments. When they do well congratulating them and sending them Facebook messages. I love that aspect to the community that is everyone always cares about people and really kind and really supportive. It feels like a very positive environment. I like that we have a great debate against a team that's good friend. For example, there's a team we beat them five times this year, but they are very good and very close to our level so they very close debates. Every debate we had was just an incredible time against them. I message them every time they went and broke tournaments, and I'm like, "Fantastic job, you're all are incredible. I always enjoy debating you all." In fact, we sorta ended their careers in round seven NDT. I cried during the RFD [Reason For Decision]. It was bad, but that's how it is. You get really invested in other people. You make friends that you really care about and that to me means so much. I'm sure that there are other activities where you make friends. But I have been going to camp with some of this people since I was a junior or sophomore in high school. I'm going to be with a lot of this people throughout college. For example, Kristin and Viveth, I look up to them as debaters on the local circuit and while Kristin has debate for the longest time. Being able to debate people who you have always looked up to it's just such a good feeling. Stuff like that that I just love and that means a lot to me. That to me is the most important part of debate. I love the research. I love it. I love the research. I love the topics. I love debates and just

> coming up with cool strategies in beating other teams and winning. It feels wonderful and losing feels terrible. It's just like, “Be cool like the rush that you have in doing debate.” At the end of the day, the thing that matters the most for me is those interpersonal relationships that I feel I would never have formed had there not at a community like debate.

Earlier in the interview, Harper provided a more targeted expression of appreciation, focusing on their partnership with Jones. There is tremendous gratitude for the relationship Harper has developed with their debate partner that has evolved into an almost irreplaceable friendship. It is easy to glean from Harper’s testimony just how important their partnership/friendship with Jones is to preserve their sense of belonging:

> I really like my relationship with Jones. I don't know. Jones is just such a constant in my life that sometimes I don't think about how important he is in my life. It's like I'm just always talking to Jones whether or not that would be about my friendships, my relationships. Anytime I need advice for a lot of stuff, I'm always talking to Jones and they are always here. I get lunch with him five times out of seven out of the week or I’m always on living with him next year. I'm just always around them whether I'm just making jokes or doing debate work and stuff, he means a lot to me. Because we've been partners this year, we've started talking a lot more as people, and that's created a friendship that growing and which means we're around each other more and more. It started off with this like, “I'm around you all the time because we're debate partners.” That became, “I'm around you all the time because we're really good friends and we happen to be debate partners.” It's just grown from that. Jones means a lot to me. They really do.

For the debaters, the debate team is an important place for their interpersonal development. It is a place where they are listened to and their thoughts and feelings are affirmed by their peers. It is a place of refuge from the discomfort of being one among many on the campus of a large university. More importantly, it is a set of stabilizing supportive friendships during a time when there tends to be a tremendous unease and fragility in an individual's life – transitioning to college and adulthood. We should not underestimate the import role these friendships play as emotional anchors at this juncture in debater's lives. Baxter Magolda (2009a) noted that the critical role of a partner, friend or otherwise, is to provide support during those moments the learner is most vulnerable. She surmised that a learning partner "provides good company by providing the necessary support to help the person facing the challenge. Moving toward self-authorship requires support for cultivating one's internal voice, particularly until the fragile internal voice becomes strong enough to hold its own against external pressure" (p. 250). These debating friends are doing that for each another.

While I was unable to definitively identify *why* the debate team is a source for close friends and a more robust sense of belonging, these students have found their intercollegiate competitive debate team to be more welcoming, engaging, and friendlier than other departments and student organizations on the campus. It has indeed become the home away from home for many of them and a wellspring for the support they need to emotionally, socially, and, at times, academically excel.

Establishing Peer Partnerships

In addition to being a gathering spot for friends, the debate program provides students the opportunity to compete as partners on a two-person team. They act as one

preparing for tournaments and working together to convince judges during debate rounds that the team's collective arguments are superior to those of their opponents and worthy of the win. Debate partners win and loss each debate round together. That provides an incentive to form a collaborative relationship that challenges each partner to practice and improve. To successfully compete, debaters need to enter into peer learning partnerships that are "voluntary, reciprocal helping relationships between individuals of comparable status, who share a common or closely related learning/development objective" (Eisen, 2000, p. 5). Eisen (2000) noted that peer learning partnerships, like a two-person debate team, are different from friendships because a peer learning partnership:

> Involves *coaching* each other to master specific content knowledge or skills and/or *consulting* with each other to solicit contrasting perspectives and/or generate new solutions to problems. A defining element is the *nonhierarchical exchange of help,* focused on "formative," rather than "evaluative," outcomes. In other words, learning is or *bidirectional,* and liberated from fears associated with evaluation by an authority figure, such as a boss or a teacher. (Eisen, 2000, p. 6, italics in the original)

The best peer partners understand that they need to actively support their teammates during the emotionally trying parts of the debate season while also serve as a player coach providing constant feedback if the team is to be competitively successful.

Harper's description of interactions with Jones while preparing for and during debate rounds is a peer learning partnership where each debater functions as a coach for the other and provides feedback and new ideas. Harper appreciates the support and friendship Jones provides. However, the willingness to vigorous cross-examine and

intellectually push each other is what allows the partnership to thrive and for them to develop into a nationally competitive debate team. Harper proclaimed:

> I have a lot of fun with Jones. We laugh about stuff. Sometimes it's nice to be there with somebody else when you're debating Rutgers MM, and then they're just coming for your life and making fun of you. It's nice to have someone else there who is also there experiencing this and who understands what you're going through and is going through the same thing. Then based on that you two can talk and strategize, and figure out the best solution to it. I think the most invaluable part of Jones in our partnership has been ideas and idea testing. Something I am like, "Okay, Jones, let's do this. This is a great idea. This is fantastic. This AFF is ridiculous. We should do this counterplan." They are like, "No, what about this?" I'm just never thought of that. Good point. I'm like, "We'll got this." We go off of each other on that. That's how a lot of our neg strategies get developed. Or Tom is like, "You know the AFF?" And Jones will start cross-examining me about certain parts of it. They are like "What about this? How are we going to deal with this?" We always sit down and just like, "Alright this critique argument. What is the 1AC preempt? What is the 2AR? How do we synthesize this so it's a coherent story?" I feel that the process of doing that makes it easier because it's like you have someone who is equally invested in you succeeding. Because your success is their success as a team and you're both working as hard you possibly can to win around. The result to that is two minds with a different perspective, different backgrounds, different views on debate coming together to really make the best. Having a combination of ideas, thoughts, et cetera. It's like having a coach with

> you on the front line. Yes, accept also their coach. You're all constantly critiquing each other, you're constantly working with each other.

Harper and Jones have built collaborative structures into their relationship that increases the likelihood of effective partnering. Once again, we see students willing to work interdependently and share their expertise. Their use of peer observations followed by feedback, research, engaged dialogue, joint problem solving, and collective brainstorming constitutes "*regular collaborative activities* [that] foster the development of *trust* between/ among partners, thereby enhancing the quality of the help they exchange. (Eisen, 2000, p. 6, italics in the original). As discussed earlier, trust is a hallmark of Jones and Harper's debate partnership.

Jones also identified a strong partnership as one where the partners are willing to think through arguments together and challenge each other to be better. While there is some risk of those exchanges becoming heated, Jones considered the willingness to participate in testy conversations to be a demonstrated path to competitive success:

> An important part of partnerships is being someone on the same page with one another and I think that we only really see this when partnerships blow up. The importance of a good partnership and a good partnership dynamic, I think, only comes out when you see a partnership that is the complete opposite of that. The other thing is, good partnerships and good partnership dynamics help you have those conversations when you begin thinking about argument, constructing argument in great ways. One of the most ridiculous example I can give is, I would say last year, a little bit before the NDT, I was at a party with two teammates and just randomly they start arguing about whether we should have democracy in the

> Middle East. It got very heated. And we're like, “What, what you all doing?” but in some ways, that dynamic is what makes them good. They argue with each other. They talk out differences and think about things from that perspective.

Wilkins also talked about how these intra-partnership discussions were a source of the team’s competitive success. The willingness to give and receive constructive feedback from a peer has pedagogical and competitive benefits. Wilkins forwarded:

> A lot of that discussion happens in the squad room. You never really like, “Hey so what do you think of this argument?” We'll talk about it just like, not from a strategy perspective, but honest. Just like our honest opinions of it, or what do we think about, what this team did last tournament or any number of things that are about debate. I spent a lot more time thinking about them. I think some of those discussions are really productive and helping me just understand and view debate arguments.

For Song and Seuss, the path for improvement also includes consistently engaging and challenging each other as peer learning partners. They believe that requires spending more time together in the squad room preparing for the debate tournaments. Being there together seems to be their way of creating some collective accountability for the team’s performance. Song discussed their commitment to each other as they start to prepare for the upcoming debate season and how it is different from their commitment to each other as friends:

> I'm paired with a junior. We have a solid friendship and stuff like that. I guess we both still have a lot of things going on but we still like debate enough to invest the time. We both are on the same page about what we want at a debate. We still want

> to be partners with each other. We know what aspects we like about a debate. We both like the research part. Just how we can improve on coming in here to the squad room and giving more practice speeches during the season. Being there at the same time and doing some debate prep, the same time together.

The peer partnerships seem to generate a desire for a more formalized commitment even among established friends. Smith spoke to a desire to be more accountable to their partner's work effort and their competitive success. For Smith, who partners with a friend and roommate, there is a pressure to perform for the sake of respecting the contributions that others are making to the collective. That translates into a desire for greater output, improved interpersonal relationships, and sustained investment in the team's success. Smith declared:

> You're responsible for another person. You have to put the same amount of effort as they do. If you mess up, do less work, make a bad argument, or give bad speech or whatever, you aren't just letting yourself down, you're accountable to another person as well. It is very unique in that it's just one person. I'm not sure the fact that it's one person versus a group has any particular bearing, but I think it's a very interesting relationship that you're forced to have with one other person. I think that's invaluable when you apply that some real world working experience where you got to continually get tasks done, and having not only the ability to work with someone but also the pressure knowing that everyone's been there when they're giving a bad speech and they feel like they've let their partner down. Being able to (1) make sure you use that pressure in a productive way to not let them down, but (2) if you do let them down, you learn how to deal with it. Before,

> if I let someone down, I was a nervous wreck, I was like "Oh my God this person probably hates me" all that stuff, but now that I know how to deal with it I think it's really good for interpersonal relationships with them. When you're in a working within a working environment, "Hey man I'm sorry, I'm accountable."

Not all the peer partners were close friends like Jones/Harper, Seuss/Song, and Smith/Wilkins. Even with those relationships, there was some desire to work to make the partnership competitively successful by participating in regular collaborative activities. This materialized to varying degrees. Some admitted not having much follow through in this regard. On the other hand, most students were willing to provide their partners with a formative assessment on how they could improve. I am not sure that they were always as eager to receive advice as they were to give it.

Eisen (2000) concluded that the peer learning partnership model that develops within some intercollegiate competitive debate partners "promises to foster a sense of belonging and esprit de corps" (Eisen, 2000, p. 17). Creating communities built on peer feedback solidifies students' commitment to the community while making individual team success a point of pride for the entire squad. In a competitive environment, it can sometimes be difficult to preserve cultural norms encouraging collaboration, humility, and listening. Disagreements will flare-up. Exclusive cliques will form that are unwelcoming of some team members. Disparities in work effort among partners are inevitable. However, the debate team seems better equipped than most student organizations to handle these challenges because the coaches and debaters understand the value of balancing agency and communion and work to be "good company" to one

another by providing an inviting space that encourages students to become supportive friends and debate partners who are willing to challenge each other to be better.

From Agonism to Agency

Intercollegiate debate is inherently agonistic; mandating rhetorical conflict and oppositional reasoning as its primary mode of inquiry. Students are given a proposition and expected to formulate points for contestation for all sides of the dispute. Each debater spends a tremendous amount of time working with their partners and coaches to determine the most compelling set of arguments on the topic. The primary goal is to identify the central issues of concern and construct a well-reasoned argumentative strategy that will persuade and gain the assent of the people adjudicating their debates. At their best, the debate rounds are laboratories for idea exploration removed from pressures to conform to the prevailing social norms or epistemic practices. Some defenders of competitive intercollegiate debate and other agonistic modes of public inquiry insist that the rhetorical method's rejection of cultural and political conformity "may be the best way to prevent tyranny and totalitarianism, to ensure that injustices are discussed" (Roberts-Miller, 2007, p. 121). Graff (1989) noted the radical democratic potential of debate while writing a historical analysis of colonial era literary societies. He forwarded that, unlike the classroom, literary society debaters were encouraged to engage the controversies of the day in a manner that transcended local politics and communal expectations and "made possible the experimental trying out of ideas so necessary for intellectual self-definition" (Graff, 1989, p. 46).

Many modern intercollegiate debate practitioners use argument experimentation to reframe students' understanding of and relationship with vexing social issues. The

pursuit of a pedagogical space that permits learners to redefine themselves allows students to develop agency, the "ability to separate from others and function as an autonomous individual" (Baxter Magolda, 2000, p. 141). Traditionally, core objectives of higher education included challenging students to shun the recommendations of uninformed external actors and think critically and creatively for themselves (Baxter Magolda, 2000). Some debate programs make the development of an agentic student, a self-questioning and self-reflexive learner, the crux of their mission with agonistic inquiry their primary means of developing autonomous learners. My discussion with the coaches and students who are the focus of this study reveal a debate program driven by a desire to cultivate a cadre of questioning and reflexive debaters.

Culture of Questioning

The director of the program and the graduate assistants utilize teaching methods that emphasize questioning and challenging students to make incremental improvements to their arguments. While the students are the ultimate arbiters of how, when, and what they debate, those choices are made in a community that expects a public defense of decisions and a well-researched and well-reasoned end product. While explaining the purpose and role of the debate coach, Warren McDaniel, a graduate assistant coach, referenced the renowned literary critic Kenneth Burke's pentad, five rhetorical elements used to explore the motive for one's behavior. McDaniel acknowledges and appreciates the important roles of Shively and Jennings supporting the debaters. However, as a coach, McDaniel prioritizes challenging the debaters to engage the best version of the argument they are debating. The goal is to complexify their decision-making processes. McDaniel stated:

> I think they are much like Burke's pentad where there are five or six competing roles. They're all always present to some degree, but how you choose to look at the prism determines their ratios. I think that the purpose of a coach on a debate team is to make the debaters and the debaters' arguments the best version of themselves as possible. Sometimes, I try to preference that through interpersonal relationships and argument development. Sometimes that means making sure that kids have hot meals every day. I know that Jennings especially thinks that that's one of the major roles of a debate coach because they are a very caring person. I think, Shively, for them, the role of a debate coach is to help your debaters be the best, most comfortable people they can be. They take that role very seriously, and people disrespect that element of the job because it's not cutting cards. But oh my god, it's so important. My pentad is a little more skewed from both of theirs. It's really more, for me, "If we disagree with something, are we disagreeing with the best version of their argument as we can?" I think the most important element of argument interaction is that our criticisms of other people are always more accurate than our defenses of ourselves. Because there's less, I think, epistemic blinding, which means that their criticism of us is very accurate. It's probably much more accurate than we think it is. Part of making the best possible arguments means generating a way of viewing the world that gives your opponents as much credence as possible. That's my inner route to building better people.

Even while emphasizing the importance of teaching argument construction, McDaniel is compelled to speak to the coach's obligation to tend to the debater's basic needs.

McDaniel depicts a culture of questioning that attempts to draw the debaters "attention to the complexity of their work and life decisions" by asking them to concomitantly be more skeptical of their argument and less dismissive of their opponents (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 251). It is a form of argumentative humility that encourages debaters to be less dogmatic about their established worldview.

Adam Ryan, one of the more experienced graduate assistants, presents the role of the debate coach as one that allows students to determine the direction and destination of the journey while the coach challenges them to become the best version of themselves while on that journey. At the heart of Ryan's coaching philosophy is a push for debaters to develop their voices and an independent decision-making rubric. Ryan argued:

> The purpose of a debate coach was in a sense to help the debaters reach the goals that the debaters set for themselves but also to push the debaters to set higher goals. That's how I view it. Help them do what they want to do and then push them to do more than they think they can do. For the ones that are motivated, they make it easy because they request more frequent interaction. They ask smart questions. They're interested in their own development. Being there to just talk to them and be in that working mindset. I learned a lot of this from my coach which is that there's value in just being in the squad room more often than not. Being around people that are talking about and thinking about debate. Being around your coaches. You never know then one of them is going to be set off and go on a rant about something that may seem irrelevant to everyone else but will come back and help you later down the road. Proximity means a lot. You have one-on-one meetings with the debaters that ask them directly: "Why do you debate? Why

> are you here? What do you want to do here?" The ones that can answer that question specifically or without much hesitation are usually the ones that are easier to work with. It's the folks, when you can ask them, "Why do you debate?" or "Why are you here?" and they don't have an answer, it's harder to get them to set goals because I think that, for a lot of folks, most people don't reflect on why they do things. Maybe most 18-year-olds aren't really the most reflective on why they're a part of an activity. They just do it because they enjoy it. They don't have to question it but it is being available, being there.

Ryan's coaching philosophy is grounded in a culture of questioning that encourages the debaters "to develop their personal authority by listening to their own voices" (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 251). Their coaching style informs how they engage students and the type of relations they want debaters to develop with each other. Ryan questions to goad students into taking ownership of their own cognitive development and academic success. Debaters have to decide why they are debating and what success looks like for them. The coach cannot know what they are motivating the student to do until the student articulates their goals. Once the student establishes their goals, the coaches' role is to help them develop an action plan. This is one of several ways these coaches use cross-examination to aid in students' development.

The support for independent, autonomous thinking debater is encapsulated in a culture of questioning that challenges the learner to pursue the best mode of inquiry; not the most convenient. Tom Jones, a sophomore debater, talked about this relentless culture of questioning that is infused throughout coaches' interactions with the debaters:

> Sometimes it's a coach doing it for learning experience moments, and they will ask questions, and you'll struggle with the questions, and they'll provide you with, if not answers, kind of a direction for how to answer it. Then sometimes it's Boor, and you feel shut down but then like three days later he's like, “Alright, maybe we'll revisit this.”

The type of interactions that Jones is referencing, a surgical probing and dissection of arguments, is usually focused on the initial research done by students as they explore new ideas to present during debate tournaments. It is done to discourage willful blindness to the downside risks of the student’s idea and give them a list of counterarguments that others may make during the competition. After each session, students are encouraged to refine their arguments based on the discussion and to “revisit” the coach in a few days. Jones and other students are clear that this form of engagement can be emotionally taxing and can occasionally cause them to “shutdown.” However, the intensity and intellectual rigor of the engagement is highly attractive for many of the debaters. It is one aspect of debating that a student can simultaneously love and hate.

Later in our conversation, Jones referenced the squad room cross-examinations as central to the coaches’ effort to challenge the debaters to always think about how their opponents may respond and work towards modifying and improving their arguments before their opponents have the opportunity to present their counterarguments. Jones continued:

> It always challenges you to think about new issues that you're not familiar with. I think in a lot of ways it's like every time that I sit in that room and have conversations with the other debaters or with the coaches, I'm being challenged.

> Any time that I have a strategy idea, it'll be questioned from multiple angles, and being able to defend what you want to do and why you want to do it is a big aspect of the activity. I think it happens to the 2A the most, they will pitch an advantage idea, and you'll be like advantage counterplan. They'll be like, "Ugh." That process has happened a bunch of times. The biggest conversation that I remember was my freshman year before the year, Patrick started to delve into the missile defense, THAAD, part of the Korea part of the topic and Boor was just adamant "no." There was just like a really big sort of cross-X sequences that happened in the squad room and the same thing happened before this year with "Is our 1AC Global Warming Bad advantage good enough?" Just these like cross-X back and forth that is kind of stressful, but they tell you what you've got to get better at.

Jones' discussion of the intense cross-examinations over a high altitude anti-missile defense system and the destructive impact of global warming describes a coaching method that could be interpreted as the modern-day version of the colonial era disputations. Students research and determine solutions to problems and coaches and other teammates publicly interrogate every possible weakness in the proposal. In the two examples provided, the coach was "adamant" that the student's argument of choice could be substantially improved. However, the students were aware that the coach was willing to support them moving forward with presenting the proposal at a tournament if the student desired to do so. The exchange reveals an iterative process that involves debaters constructing arguments followed by coaches attempting to deconstruct the same argument. While the process can be stressful, Jones concedes that there are few better

ways to improve as a debater. It has the added benefit of making debaters more receptive to feedback and resilient when they receive negative feedback.

A couple of students alluded to intense squad room discussions leaving them mentally drained. Harper spoke of a time when a coach cross-examined them in the front the entire team for "what felt like one and a half hours." While one can easily imagine a student withering under a barrage of questions and being "shut down" when their answers are insufficient, the adverse effects of this rigorous intellectual exchange seem to be blunted by the interpersonal support and care that remains an organizational priority. The culture of questioning is nestled in a community of care that leaves most students assured that their effort is appreciated and incremental progress will be acknowledged. Shortly after talking about the culture of questioning, Jones voiced their appreciation for both the team's support structures and director's commitment students emotional and competitive development:

> Just from a personal perspective, I don't know if I would be doing debate in college if I didn't have a debate coach who believed in me. At least for me, the interpersonal relationship that I have with Boor is very important for me in the activity. I guess the best example that I could give of this would be, back when I was a senior in high school, Boor and I had a couple of conversations. I was going through a not great period of my debate career at that point. I didn't do well at the Barkley Forum for High Schools Tournament, and I remember Boor sent me an email that was like, "It's okay. College is a blank slate. There are a lot of regional debaters that had come from small schools, that have had a lot of success. You can do that if you work hard." I

> think that is the ethos of this program that is if you work hard, you'll get opportunities. That is very important to me.

Jones is not alone. Nicole Martin, a junior on the team, also spoke of the program's interpersonal support systems being a primary reason for attending the school and continuing to debate. Nicole's discussion of the role the director played in their college choice and continues to play as they negotiate difficult life decisions harkens to "life coach" role that Shively articulated and the "home" and "support group" missions mentioned by Jennings earlier. Martin stated:

> The largest part of the reason I came to this university was the first year I went to a debate camp, Boor was my lab leader. He just got me. They were always the one that kept in touch, and he was like, "I know you're in a small town. Keep on, keeping on." A lot of the people I went to high school with, I don't want to say settled, but it's like expected you go to a college near my hometown. It's fine, but it's like that's what you're expected. We weren't encouraged to apply to schools that were considered reaches or even schools that we all wanted to go to and no one really encouraged us to think we could go there because the local college is fine. All of our teachers got educated there, why shouldn't we? Boor was always an email away, and every time I came to the campus, he's like, "Let's go get food and chat. Just catch me up on life." Before I even consider coming to school here, he was just like, "Let me know any way that I can help you. Anyway, if you ever just want to come and hang out. The squad room's open." Then once I got to school, I was terrified. Because it's so different and he was like, "Let's go get coffee. We'll figure it out." He's just always an ear whenever the two, I don't want

> to say versions of myself but versions of myself, my hometown self and my myself myself collided, and I didn't know what to do with that. Boor was always the one that would help me remedy it. Make sense of, I feel this thing and I also feel this other thing that are dichotomous in a sense.

For Jones and Martin, the program's director was instrumental in helping them acquire more nuanced understandings of some negative debate experience. Helping them reframe failure was dispositive in their decisions to continue debating in college. There is a tremendous amount of failure when one debates competitively. Most students lose as much as win. Quite a few lose much more than they win. The web of support networks that coaches weave throughout the program has a goal of "helping [students] view their experiences as opportunities for learning and growth" (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 251).

From the coaches' perspective, their jobs are a multi-prong effort to emotionally, socially, and competitively supports each student. Each spoke to a strong desire to allow the students to operate with a sense of argumentative autonomy and control of their learning experience. The coaches seemed repulsed by the notion of telling the students what to argue. However, they are deeply committed to working with the students to produce the best version of the argument the debater wanted to forward. For the coaches, the student's right to decide which arguments they will present is concomitant with a responsibility to publicly defend that choice.

Laboratory of Idea Exploration

This debate team is an idea factory. Thinking of it an idea testing laboratory may be a more appropriate metaphor. Coaches and students seem to be impartial to what issues get discussed and, even, the outcome most of the time. They are more interested in

running every idea through a rigorous battery of tests to evaluate the soundness and validity of the proposition than vigorously advocating for any one particular idea. While issues related to the national debate topic dominate many of the squad room's conversations, the lab frequently tests ideas gleaned from current events. Should the United States preemptively strike North Korea? Should body cameras be required for police officers? Is Kanye West a god? For Maud Kelly, a first-year debater, "debate is all about researching politically charged topics, so you're really just thrown into that political controversy straight off the bat. With these people, you have to think about how your views interact with what you're researching and how your views interact with other people who are researching the same thing." There is expectation to be "thrown into" a political controversy every time one enters the squad room. Additionally, the ideas presented and their interrogation is expected to be grounded in research and evidence.

Whether it is the debate topic or not, the rhythms of the discussion are the same. Someone opens the lab of idea exploration by defending a side of a controversy. A series of questions and alternative perspectives soon follow. The community knows that no idea is sacrosanct. The participants are aware that every entry into a dispute is a potential target for criticism and deconstruction. While collective interest will determine how long any one idea gets tested, this debate team's testing laboratory seems to be open as long as two members are present.

For Harper, one of the squad's more engaged debaters, the debate team nudges students to challenge untested beliefs and unquestioned assumptions. Harper views the squad room as a place where all ideas and perspectives are contested and students cannot resign themselves to interacting with like-minded peers who will exclusively validate and

confirm our point of view. The following quotes capture the sentiment held by the majority of debaters and coaches in the program. Harper enthused:

> In the classroom, you don't have the level of discussion that you do. The whole thing about debate is that all your positions are contestable and you should be able to defend it rigorously. In debate, everyone is constantly talking about these things, and you're constantly involved in these discussions. I don't think there's another form like that where that happens. When you're in a debate, you surround yourself with a lot of people who have challenged or are constantly challenging their values because of what debate is. In normal life, I would have otherwise just surrounded myself with a lot of people who believe the same thing I do. I would never have thought twice about certain things. I'd be like, "This is right because this is what my parents believed. And I'm going to surround myself with a bunch of other people who believe the exact same thing as me." But in debate you can't do that, you surround yourself with a bunch of people who are contrarians to what you believe or aren't because you — but because you've rigorously had to defend and talked about why you believe certain things with people otherwise usually wouldn't seek out and talk to.

Additionally, Harper considered the demand that students research and understand all sides of an issue as pedagogically transformative:

> I think the research on load debate is super important like the volume of research that you have to do, the speed which you have to do it, the amount you have to process. I don't think it happens anywhere else. I mean yes, you can take a class on climate change, but I don't think you'll learn nearly as much when you have to

> not only research climate change. It means different being like a lecture at and being told like, “Here are some facts. And here is some stuff.” There's going to be a test don’t matter just so versus like, “This is a certain team’s articulation of something. This is what I believe personally.” I do a lot of research from both sides you have to always have to look at both sides because there's affirmative and negative. That causes you to have to question which side I personally think is true. Because you have to do so much research on so many different issues you constantly having to challenge yourself on certain questions. I mean even if not explicitly and really consciously thinking about it. I mean just like I know how I feel about a lot of those certain controversies on the mission to stop it. I certainly think climate change is real anything. Jennings is ridiculous for thinking otherwise. I think that for a certain reason and it's because I've had to pour with all these reports and all this other stuff. I also have to read the terrible negative evidence. I find all the evidence and really evaluate what do I believe. I don't think in a classroom setting you're like, “Here's a one-day PowerPoint on something about climate change that some researchers think. I have to be here to take this information for a paper or a test.” I don't think the testing the argumentative component is there. I think that only exists in debate.

Many of the other participants spoke of debate’s power of arguing to prod, challenge, and unsettle our cognitive and social orientations. For Phillip Jennings, one of debate’s strengths resides in the “competitive incentive that forces you to learn how to build an argument on its own terms.” To be successful, the participants must learn to confront ideas that they would usually opt-out of discussing. There are no “self-selected”

argument-free enclaves where certain beliefs or values are protected from challenge. Jennings argued that this regime of incessant idea testing force debaters to explain and develop a "coherent internal rationale" for their perspectives because the environment is one where all ideas are always vulnerable to vigorous interrogation.

Harper and Jennings are concerned that too many college and university students develop in ideological and argumentation cocoons that insulates their prevailing orthodoxy from criticism and undermines the cultivation of viewpoint diversity. Several students presented their participation in competitive debate as a remedy; impeding their ability to accept uninterrogated beliefs or policy recommendations. Nicole Martin forwarded that arguing on all sides of multiple issues encourages them to explore "every possible angle" before making a final decision because you come to learn that things are not "black or white." For Martin, the world is complex and navigating it requires nuance and accounting for all the perspectives:

> There are different perspectives and if you look at one thing from every possible angle, we all see it differently. I don't know if there's a true angle to look at something. Maybe there's core ideals but I think that the world as we know it and how problems play out are not nearly as "black or white" as some think they are. Obviously, you want to be good and kind and accepting, but when you're placed in a situation, it's not "yes or no," it's you're looking at it from an angle. It's a little bit of in between. I think that debate forces you to take a singular issue that might be "black or white" and look at it from all the angles and really sit on each of those positions for an extended period of time where you can't even remember what your initial opinion of the thing was. On any given day it's different, even if

> it's just a little bit. Debate makes you genuinely a more thoughtful person. I think about literally everything for extended periods of time before I come to any sort of conclusion as how I feel about it. Debate taught me that there's maybe not "right or wrong." There's maybe not even just two ways to view one thing. There's a third and a seventh.

Martin's decision-making formula rejects the use of simplistic binaries. Debating has instilled a desire to explore and understand the complex nature of deliberated issues. Martin wants to test "every possible angle" for an "extended period of time" before they "come to some sort of conclusion." Additionally, Martin's skepticism about the existence of one universal "true angle" was shared by a few of their teammates. Debating has made Patrick Harper "skeptical" of the "idea of a totalizing truth" because everything is "challengeable." Ashley Seuss declared that "so many things are debatable" and "the truth is very difficult to really nail down." Maud Kelly rejected the notion that "there's a big, capital 'T' truth." Many of the debaters realize that sound decision-making requires the negotiation of multiple complex issues and there is rarely a simple solution. They have adopted a contingent and contextualized notion of truth that encourages them to question the unspoken and taken-for-granted value systems that guide many of our choices. Debating has the capacity to challenge and shatter the traditional frames we use to process and understand social phenomena. It has transformed these debaters into rebellious learners willing to question and challenge the moral and philosophical precepts that once guided their lives.

Steve Turner also became more skeptical of the information they consumed. For Turner, debating provided a better understanding of the complexities and nuances

embedded in each decision. They noted that debating “helped me process information in a way where I'm always trying to think of the alternative way or view on a subject” and compelled them to “think of the way that all these issues interact with each other.” Additionally, debate provided them the skills to look beyond the headlines and examine the complex interactions that are inevitably at play. Turner declared:

> The way of viewing arguments through that lens and try to compare them has helped me understand more complex parts of, specifically my work interest or what I'm interested in and other things as well. The debate helps me understand the nuance a lot more or understand complex things. Some people that don't debate and they don't know a ton about that subject ask me a question. There's a lot of times where I feel like there's a lot of answers. There's not just one single thing. They are assuming there is. There’s more to it. So maybe the bottom line of is it helped me understand there's more than just a headline or one incident that happened or one issue.

One of the themes connecting many of my interviews with the coaches and the debaters was a yearning to understand the complex structures and processes that undergird the events and phenomena that students are researching and debating. They seem dubious of the “headlines” and attempts to provide simplistic answers to complicated issues. They know the world is too complex to be analyzed and vigorously tested via Tweet length communiques and are interested in investigating and analyzing the myriad of forces informing its trajectory. For many debaters, pithy and shallow explanations of the world are on face rejected and marked for further testing.

Tom Jones also spoke to the benefits of testing the "multiple angles" of an issue before making a decision. Using the same language as Nicole Martin to describe how they process information, Jones presented their decision-making process as a constantly recalibrating cost-benefit analysis "where you're weighing every different angle on the pros and cons of those angles and what is most persuasive, what is the best way to interact with what someone else has said." Jones concluded that this is a never-ending process because debate teaches its participants that everything deserves to be challenged, evaluated and weighed against other alternatives:

> I think that there is always this kind of switch side testing process that debaters undergo. They encounter issues outside the debate and people draw different conclusions from that testing process, but I think that the idea, the notion that everything is challengeable and everything is debatable is something that a lot of debaters carry outside of just the competition room itself.

Much like Jones, Terry Wilkins spoke of a decision-making process outside of debate that is influenced by the debates about "how should the Affirmative be weighed or how should you evaluate Kritik argument." Continuously debating how one prioritizes the allocation of limited time and treasure has left Wilkins "skeptical of anything that claims to be the truth" and needing to personally test an idea before assenting to it. Wilkins explained:

> It's all about testing because I can basically find evidence contrary to any claim even though some evidence is less believable or from less qualified sources than others. The fact that you can find evidence or criticisms of any claim out there makes me really skeptical of absolute truth claims. When I first started debate, I

> would find some arguments and I was like, “Ah, this is just true and awesome.” I remember the first time I read realist IR [International Relations] literature and people and Robert Kagan was big back when I was like a freshman, reading his stuff. John Mearsheimer and all of these realist IR people's, I go ahh, “This is the truth.” I definitely believed in hegemonic stability and that hegemony was good. I really strongly believe that. I basically was a neocon until I read more of the other side of the literature and then I read security K authors and then I was doubting the entire systems. If the structure of debate isn't what it was, I would have just found that first claim and stuck with it but the structure debate means that you have to directly deal with the opposite claim and argue it to win debate rounds and when you're arguing it, you can't ignore that, “Hey, this has some good points.” Now, I think realism is really silly, part of that is untrue, studying international affairs in college but I think debate is what gave me the ability to view any of my beliefs in a critical frame and say, what was bad about this?

It is “the structure of debate,” the creation of a laboratory of vigorous idea exploration, that imparts on debaters a desire to test, weigh, evaluate all sides of an issue, and directly deal with the opposite claims if you want to be competitively successful. Wilkins and Jennings agree. The competitive elements of the activity overwhelm the student’s inclination to protect their ideas and worldviews from challenge. The more successful debaters are comfortable exposing their ideas to criticism and making one’s support for a proposition contingent and situational. That requires a level of intellectual vulnerability many students would be uncomfortable with and a level of cultural humility they have not developed. Wilkins seems to believe that debate’s agonistic mode of inquiry lays the

groundwork for debaters to develop both. They quickly overcome concerns about constantly being told you are wrong. Shortly after professing “I think that agonism is good,” Wilkins claimed:

> As a result of agonism in debate, you're told you're wrong again and again there's an incentive if you can test every claim and every internal link and, every argument basically that the other side makes when it is strategic for you to contest and dealing with people disagreeing with you is an important skill, to be calm, realize that it's not an attack on you and understanding what they're saying and defending your argument is a valuable skill.

While Adam Ryan willingly acknowledges the adversarial nature of the activity can be taxing, they also see the act of debating as an “invitation” to grow together. Seconding Wilkins proclamation that debating provides students the skills to depersonalize arguments and make disagreements generative, Ryan believes that debating equips its participants with the humility to be open to critique and willing to adopt new perspectives when your current viewpoint has been summarily defeated. Referencing their earlier years as a political conservative, Ryan credited the debate’s culture of questioning with creating a series of debates that encouraged them to rethink their political approach:

> You can't say anything around debate people without the risk of an argument. But it is also the invitation because it's one of the best ways to pass the time either on long van rides or a long time sitting around working on stuff. It forces you to have a rigorous set of justifications or to have humility towards the things that you might not have been yet placed on the field of play for debate yet. Things that you haven't had extended arguments about and debates with other folks about what

> you just take as accepted and true that hasn't been tested. Because in high school, I had what felt like strong political affiliations to conservative beliefs or Republican values or those political affiliations but it was only because of the social sense of fitting in because why would you adopt another view when there's sort of a mob mentality or that everyone believes that and thinks that everyone seems to get along fine doing so and everyone's happy doing that. But once you get exposed to other viewpoints that people are willing to debate and argue with you on, you see things that are dangerous for yourself or for others or that have ethical problems. Most of the time I didn't take those arguments or those probing questions or even personal attacks as vicious but just as an inevitable part of debate. I think these things and I want to defend them. If I went out and worked harder, I could defend them. We have this argument and you beat me. But maybe if I just go research more and think about what you just said I can come back and win the next time. If that still doesn't happen, I keep going back, researching, thinking. Eventually, you put in enough time testing ideas and they still are not persuading anyone else then it's time to rethink your approach.

Ryan describes an iterative relay between debate, researching, and rethinking that led to changes in their political perspective. That repetitive sequence can, also, be observed in the way the coaches train students for competition. It is alluded to by several students and coaches as they spoke to the desire to acquire and synthesize information on all sides of an issue before making a final decision. Indeed, the transformative elements of competitive intercollegiate debate probably reside in the act of consistently debating – allowing one’s ideas to be challenged, opening up to alternative perspectives, seeking a

deep understanding of all sides, and delaying one's commitment to a particular course of action – and not the outcome of any one particular debate. These students are constantly pushing, prodding and testing each other during lunch, in their squad room, and on the vans traveling back and forth from debate tournaments. The laboratory of idea exploration seems to always be open. The normalization the act of questioning seems to infect students decision-making processes in and out of competitive debate. Edward Smith thinks of debating as an antidote to the social media "echo chamber" and "dangerous hive mind" because "even if you don't acquiesce to alternative ideas, the fact that you're forced to consider them, just think about things from a different perspective, that just makes you better equipped to deal with the different ways that different people interact with an issue or engage or experience an issue."

Finding Their Own Way

Participating in a competitive debate round is an exhilarating intellectual wonderland for many students. The amount of control they have over what ideas are deliberated and validated is unlike any other academic experience. The student-teacher power dynamics are flipped with students setting the curriculum and the teacher playing the role of the dutiful and engaged listener. Most impactful on the learner is that debate squad rooms are where some students, for the first time, will hear a vigorous and cogent defense of propositions identified as heresy in their homes and local communities. For the first time, many students are asked to reconsider some of their deeply embedded and unchallenged beliefs about identity, religion, economic structures, and geopolitics. Earlier in this chapter, I shared Terry Wilkins story about how the structures of debate changed their understanding of the way the global political system functions. I also shared Adam

Ryan's discussion of the circumstances that led them to shed their parent's conservative political ideals. Those stories are not unique. Several other coaches and debaters shared stories about squad room conversations, debate rounds, and interpersonal relationships with others in their debate community that motivated them to shudder the social and cultural paradigms instilled in them by friends and family members and, instead, try to find their own way of believing and existing.

For most, our parents suggest our first values. Most will uncritically adopt their worldview and belief systems because we are unaware of the myriad of options available to us and we, probably, trust them because they have already demonstrated an interest in and capacity to keep us alive. Our parents remain a primary cultural translator during our formative years. We tend to defer to their judgment when we entertain competing cultural frames. However, all too often, our parents' perspectives dovetail well with others in our community and that gives those ideas a patina of absolute truth and universality. Their beliefs and values become cultural heirlooms that heavily inform our perspective on politics, religion, social location, and identity. It was not until debate placed Patrick Harper in a position where their father's conservative beliefs were unable to address the social concerns they were witnessing that Harper begin to challenge political conservativism, rethink their own beliefs and, even, find comfort in exploring and expressing their own sexual identity. Harper declared:

> Debate changed me in a lot of ways. It changed my views. I think the biggest change is political — how I view the world and who I am as a person. Back in the beginning, I remember at the Emory National Debate Institute, going into my sophomore year, I was still a low-key conservative because my parents were, at

least my dad was. I was terrible on social issues. I had no empathy. That wasn't like my personal views. It's was just what my parents have told me or my dad kind of instilled in me. I remember, one of my roommates was really liberal in his social views and he got a bunch of other people into my room and they just started challenging me on all that stuff. They were like, "Hey, why do you think this?" To be honest, I couldn't defend most of it. I couldn't. I really couldn't defend most of it. It was really that moment when I started to change a lot of how I felt about certain things politically and become a lot more socially aware and left leaning and become more comfortable with myself as a gay person. It's because of the debate community that I was able to be more comfortable with that. I've met people who identify as transgender, who identified with the LGBT community who are not white. People would talk to me about why it makes a difference in a lot of different aspects that I am male. I've been forced to confront a lot of privileges. I've been forced to confront a lot of social beliefs and political beliefs especially. I think that's the strongest thing, and to really ask myself what do I believe as a person? Because before it wasn't what I believe, it's was what my parents believed. Debate is really like where I got political maturity to the point where I've researched topics. I asked what do I really believe on this? How do I feel with this given the research I've done in the debate? It's changed my view on a lot of different things. It has changed my view on things like climate change and police brutality. I think I've really been challenged and changed. That's to me is one of the most important parts about debate for me and shaping who I am. It made me confront a lot of things that I didn't want to confront

without it. It made me really reexamine why I believe certain things and ask why I hold certain values? Then ask myself what do I really think about this?

Harper's notion of political maturity is a form of engagement that demands we explore and articulate the rationale guiding our convictions before they are embraced and identify a justification for an action before it is taken. This sense of maturity combines the development of an agentic self, a self-questioning and self-defining politicized actor, with the pursuit of communion, a greater understanding of others and an attempt to preserve a connection with them. Once again, at the heart of this moment of self-discovery is the willingness of the student to doubt the veracity of unquestioned beliefs and the humility to see value in perspectives that are not our own.

Others had issues that debating provoked them to rethink and, occasionally, act in ways that challenged the established norms of their families and/or communities. While the issues varied, the inspiration for the change remained consistent. Each student confronted a situation where their understanding of the world withered under the pressure of self-reflective questioning. There were members of a supportive debate community that challenged them to question their core beliefs, test all idea, weigh the alternatives and have the courage to alter their perspectives when the evidence deemed it appropriate. That is what each did. Contrary to the beliefs of some friends, debate changed how Dana Stephenson thought about sexual orientation and made them "realize that no matter where a person comes from or who they are, what they believe, that doesn't make them any less of a person or a friend." Debate changed Mimo Song's "mind primarily about interacting with people in the LGBTQ community" and increased their willingness to talk about sexual identity with people who express their sexuality in ways that are outside the norm.

Phillip Jennings was raised by “parents who grew up in very rural areas and that comes with its own prejudices.” Jennings self-identified as “very close-minded” and “very homophobic” before debating introduced them to “a whole different set of ideologies out there that I just previously dismissed.” Maud Kelly only “started to really care about the environment” after debating the need for ocean conservation and address the possibility for runaway global warming. Climate change and ocean acidification became issues of such import that Kelly decided to pursue an environmental law minor. Finally, to the dismay of their liberal parents, Elizabeth Shively became a Republican after debating international terrorism forced them “to treat both sides credibly.” Debating encouraged each of these people to “develop their own personal authority by listening to their own voices in determining how to live their lives” (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 251).

This culture of constant questioning and idea exploration is not without risk. Adam Ryan spoke of some sadness for many debaters who “you know that their brains are just going at full speed all the time and it's hard to shut them off.” Ryan concluded that being around a group of debaters “all day, every day, for too many days, is exhausting.” Mimo Song agrees. Constantly questioning is mentally exhausting and occasionally leaves them “scatterbrain.” All of the questions and the myriad combinations that can be put together to address a problem can be overwhelming for Song. While few others were as explicit as Ryan and Song, others mentioned a love/hate relationship with the activity. I believe part of the hate derives from their inability to stop the questioning and just be.

Will David posed a different but related concern about how their many years of debating impacts their belief system. David fears that because they are always in debate

mode ready to defend any and all sides of a proposition and always mentally “playing the conversation out four steps ahead” to ensure victory, they are becoming “just a contrarian” who has no idea what they “actually believe about these issues." David fears they are becoming the Sophist that Aristophanes accused Socrates of being. Finally, Dana Stephenson worries about how they will ultimately reconcile the constant push to question with a desire to maintain their religious faith. While Stephenson values the diversity of perspectives debating introduces, they are “aware that a lot of debaters are atheist or aren't really closely tied to religion.” Stephenson is “really really scared” that the culture of questioning “would pull me away” from god. These observations should remind us of the emotional discomfort that accompanies the unsettling students’ ideological core by creating dissonance in their lives.

Summary

At one point, Adam Ryan conceded that “there is a part of being around people who are smart and questioning and loquacious and argumentative that others just can't understand.” While I agree with Ryan’s assessment that there are things about this eristic community of fast-talkers that are difficult to explain and others may near quite understand, I hope this chapter gave the reader a glimpse of the lives of college students on this one particular intercollege competitive debate team. For many of these students, their debate team is a home where they practice being agents of change in communion with other debaters and their coaches. It is a place on the campus where they know they will always be welcomed and supported.

Using Socrates as the frame for comparison for what occurs in the classroom and the squad room, Patrick Harper summarized many of the case study’s findings.

> Some classrooms have a Socratic element and that's where some classes might come close is to debate. I don't think there's ever class where you debate enough to change what you think about a lot of things. I'm always thinking what is the argument to answer this? How would I answer that certain argument? With debate, you have to interact with a lot of these people who are challenging and making you defend why you believe what you believe. That's completely different in my opinion than just being told something by a professor.

Like Socrates' Think Academy, this debate program is a "Thinkery" that "questions, cajoles, challenges, encourages, and chastises his interlocutors in an attempt to educate them" (Mintz, 2014, p. 736). While being nestled in a culture of care, the debaters are encouraged to think, embrace alternate perspectives, and publicly defend their ideas. The coaches have woven a pedagogical method throughout the program that is truly "Socratic."

This chapter contained the findings of a narrative case study of a large university's debate team located in the Southern part of the United States. While the debate team is a network of complex relationships with the debaters routinely serving as learning partners and the coaches as friends, the study reveals an organization that excels at creating the proper structures of support that the students need to take on the challenges of competitive intercollegiate debate. Additionally, the students supplement the supportive efforts of the coaches by establishing close friending and deliberative peer partnership. Finally, debate's emphasis on viewpoint diversity, testing all arguments, and weighing the multiple options creates an environment where students are willing to deviate from the established norms and find their own way.

Woven throughout the program is a deference to questioning and cross-examination. The students on this debate team are constantly challenged to find a better argument. It is left to them to determine what that is. However, “good company” from a coach or teammate is always available as students embark on their journey of argumentative and self-improvement.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study explored competitive intercollegiate debate's impact on students' journeys toward self-authorship. Using narratives from debaters and their coaches, it examined the relationships developed while participating on a university's debate program to determine whether those interactions constituted learning partnerships or provided the provocative moments necessary to alter students' decision-making processes to be less reliant on external formulas and more likely to cultivate and listen to their own internal voices. This chapter provides summaries of the problem that motivated the investigation and the purpose of the study. That is followed by a discussion of the conclusions in the context of the research questions and implications of the study's findings for debate professionals, student affairs administrators, and curriculum designers. An acknowledgement of the study's limitations and offering of recommendations for future research are then presented. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary.

Statement of the Problem

Some practitioners are increasingly concerned about U.S. higher education's capacity to produce engaged citizens. For Nussbaum (2010), questioning, self-scrutiny, and reflection, critical educational components needed to develop informed and engaged citizens invested in the revitalizing democratic institutions, are "rapidly losing their place in the curricula" because administrators "prefer to pursue short-term profit by the

cultivation of the useful and highly applied skills suited to profit-making" (p. 2). She is on one side of a hotly contested debate between those who forward that the role of the university should include preparing students for citizenship and those who perceive its role in much narrower terms: equipping students with job-ready skills that immediately maximize their market value upon graduation (Kleinman & Osley-Thomas, 2016). Joining Nussbaum, several other higher education professionals suggest a more vigorously exploration of how framing students as "consumers" impacts educational outcomes and student development before administrators continue to graft corporate business models onto U.S. academic institutions (Burke, 2014; Martinez-Saenz & Schoonover, 2014; Perry, 2014; Porfilio & Yu, 2006). A study of 608 students from 35 English universities by Bunce, Baird, and Jones (2016) casted doubt on higher education's ability to simultaneously equip students to serve as caretakers of our democratic traditions while treating them as consumers. Their research on the influence consumer orientation has on academic performance concluded that "a lower learner identity was associated with a higher consumer orientation, and in turn with lower academic performance" (p. 14). High consumer orientation was associated with shallow intellectual engagement and an inability of students to approach learning materials in critical and meaningful manner. More importantly, the results demonstrated that strong consumer orientation "competes with" (p. 14) and crowds out students' involvement in extracurricular activities, volunteering, and a desire for social and political participation that was not linked to course credit. Higher education's ability to aid students in tending to their social and political responsibilities as citizens hangs in the balance as its staff and faculty determine whether to treat students as citizens or customers.

Instead of cavalierly graduating increasing numbers of apolitical consumers, higher education administrators should expand their institution's capacity to engage in what Socrates identified as "the midwifery of the mind" (Shorris, 2000, p. 28). Shorris (2000) argued that a life of the mind and a political life follows a similar course and uses a similar method: "politics is always dialogue; it cannot ever be done alone. Like dialogue, politics does not happen within a person, but in the free spaces between persons, the political spaces" (p. 29). Cultivating questioning and reflective students sets the stage for a more engaged and politicized citizenry. Questioning students instilled with a sense of doubt have a better chance of developing into citizens equipped to establish informed and deliberated solutions to historical, social, and political conflicts. Preparing students to reflect, deliberate, and compromise is a necessary part of the process. Schlosser (2017) concluded that programs enriched with Socratic questioning and self-reflective thinking "begin the dialogue within oneself, preparing those involved for engaged political life and the dialogue of politics. This process spawns public, dialogical spaces and inculcates citizens with the autonomy and reflective capacities necessary for democratic citizenship" (p. 164).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore competitive intercollegiate debate's capacity to serve as an intellectual midwife for college and university students on their journey to find their own way. Can it nurture questioning, reflective and self-authored students willing to serve as democratically engaged citizens? More specifically, the study investigated whether intercollegiate debate programs can cultivate the learning partnerships students need to develop their own internal compass divorced from the

external formulas that overly determines the decision-making of many of their peers. Using a narrative case study that included interviews with 12 debaters, 5 graduate coaching assistants, and 1 director of the debate, the study analyzed the interpersonal relationships on one debate squad to assess the program's capacity to promote self-authorship. Viewing these relationships through the prism of Learning Partnership Model (LPM), the research was guided by the following questions:

- Is the relationship between the debate coach and the debater a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?
- Is the peer-peer relationship between debaters a learning partnership that enables the development of self-authorship?; and
- Do student experiences while preparing for and participating in intercollegiate debate create provocative moments that disrupt the students use of external formulas to guide their decision-making?

This study's research approach ensured that the actual words and first-hand accounts of the debaters, the graduate assistant coaches, and the director of debate were clearly expressed in the study's findings. The narrative case study approach provided an opportunity to investigate the rich, complex and interdependent relationships students develop when they become members of intercollegiate debate teams. The investigation took place at a large, public, and comprehensive university located in the southeastern part of the United States.

With a focus on the research questions that guided the study, this chapter moves to a discussion of the conclusions gleaned from the findings presented in the previous chapter. Does intercollegiate debate provide a model for coaches to establish learning partnerships that are in "good company" with their debaters? Are the debaters "good company" for each other? Does debate provide the dissonance and provocative moments

for students assists students on their journey toward self-authorship? As the ensuing discussion reveals, this study answers all of these questions in the affirmative.

Conclusions - Learning Partnership Model (LPM)

Baxter Magolda encouraged educators to conceptualize the LPM as being in "good company" with the learner. In an interview with Crosby, Baxter Magolda (2006) succinctly defined the LPM as the creation of mutual relationships that "support students' voices by respecting their thoughts and feelings, helping them see their experiences as opportunities for growth, and collaborating with them to analyze their own problems" (p. 6). In addition, these learning partnerships "challenge students by focusing on the complexity of work and life decisions, encouraging personal authority, and emphasizing interdependence in solving mutual problems" (Crosby & Baxter Magolda, 2006, p. 6).

Previously describing the model as being like riding a tandem bicycle with the student controlling the direction of the self-authorship process from the front seat and the educator in the backseat providing pedaling power when needed, Baxter Magolda (2009) suggested that new partners "can offer good company by joining the support network on the back seat of the bicycle. Being good company requires challenge and support" (p. 250). Meszaros (2007a) depicted the role of the teacher or mentor as the backseat rider carrying a saddlebag of various modes of challenge and support that were dispensed at the appropriate time to aid the learner on their journey. At their best, good company "enable[s] learners to see the complexity of knowledge, recognise that they needed to bring their own internal voices to knowledge construction, and see the importance of interdependent collaboration with others to make wise decisions and create new knowledge" (Baxter Magolda, 2010, p. 3). For Pizzolato (2004), good company should

act as "coaches" assisting students in "learn[ing] how to manage the intense and diverse external pressures of their new environment in ways consistent with their internally defined beliefs and goals" (p. 437).

Aided by the participants' stories about their relationships, the squad room, and their competitive and personal goals, the study assessed whether the interactions between the debate coaches and students and between the debaters constituted the form of "coaching" that Pizzolato would describe as a LPM. Baxter Magolda's longitudinal research produced a six component framework that effectively balances challenge and support and facilitates teachers, mentors and coaches being good company for the learner (Baxter Magolda, 2009a). Baxter Magolda (2009a) argued that good learning partners will strengthen the internal voice of the student by providing three supportive functions:

- Affirming their voice by respecting their thoughts and feeling;
- Helping them view their experiences as opportunities for learning and growth; and
- Collaborating with them to analyze their own problems.

Additionally, good learning partners should challenge students by:

- Encouraging them to acknowledge the complexity of decisions and discouraging simplistic solutions;
- Emboldening them to cultivate and listen to their own voices as they make life choices; and
- Motivating them to share their expertise and work interdependently to address problems.

The six elements of Baxter Magolda's LPM provide a framework for evaluating whether the relationships between the debate coaches and the debaters, as well as the peer-to-peer relationships between the debaters, constitute partnerships that enable the development of self-authorship. The following discussion of the findings in the context of each separate

component leads me to conclude that this debate program encourages the coaches and the students to be good partners for each other.

Respecting the Learner's Thoughts and Feeling

Although not identified as an official duty, the coaches seem to spend a tremendous amount of time serving as "life coaches" for the debaters. Their work includes emotional support and personal counseling for the team members. The coaches understand that the primary expectation is to prepare the debaters for intercollegiate competitions. However, they either believe that the prospect for success are maximized by acknowledging and tending to the emotional needs of the debaters or they believe that a mentoring and counseling role is a valuable pursuit even if it doesn't translate into additional competitive success. Regardless, the graduate coaching assistants are invested in serving as mentors and academic counselors who understand the particular needs of each debater. For a couple them, discussions about arguments and tournament preparation are Trojan horses to get the debaters to open up and talk about their academic and personal challenges and disclose how the debate program can better assist them in resolve their non-debate problems.

Many of students and coaches referenced the informal advising sessions that routinely take place over lunch or dinner. Finding time for a quick bite to eat or drink is a ritual that serves to develop trusting relationships between the coaches and the debaters and provides an opportunity for the debaters to freely express themselves in a more private setting. Visser's (1992) research on the rituals of dining identified eating together as one of the primary ways humans express respect, friendship, and care. It is one of the more powerful mechanisms for building trust and establishing communion. Visser

declared that in many cultures, spanning time and geography, “people do not feel they can talk in a friendly way with each other unless they have first eaten together: it is an equivalent of being ‘properly introduced’” (p. 87). These debate coaches turn the coffeehouses and local eateries near the campus into their personal offices where they “properly introduce” themselves to the debaters in manner that allows the debaters to consider the coaches as resources who can help them effectively respond to time demands, work through conflicts with debate partners and others, and develop plans to achieve their life goals. The coaches have established the level of trust with the students needed to be effective advisors. More importantly, a solidified coach-debater bond produces a mutual construction of meaning around how to comport oneself as a debater that supports the development of an internal sense of self and helps the learner “move away from inauthentic interactions …and towards ones characterized by mutuality” (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 264).

One of the more dominant themes from the findings was the view of the debate squad room as a “home away home.” The study took place at a large land grant university where it can be difficult for students to find support networks that meet their individualized needs. Some students identified this as a primary concern when deciding whether to attend the university. It continues to be a salient issue even as their social needs evolve. The debate program’s squad room, the primary gathering place for the debaters and the coaches, is an anchor for many of the students. It keeps them from feeling emotionally adrift on a campus where students move from one class to another in waves. Students identified the squad room as one of few places on the campus they can enter and know they will find friendly faces and a welcoming community. While having

a key to the debate squad room helps to make the place feel like “home,” the attraction to the space is much more about the affirming relationships and the community of care that has developed between the students who consider many of their teammates to be friends and the coaches who support them. It is a community where peer support and validation along with sage coaching advice are readily available.

Viewing Experiences as Learning Opportunities

This debate program competes locally and nationally to provide debating opportunities to students at various experience levels. Students gravitate to debate for numerous reasons and differences in competitive interest and success, if not properly managed, can impact squad dynamics and students’ willingness to participate. The coaches must assist the debaters who are not motivated by competitive success to find some meaning and purpose in a hyper competitive activity if they want those students to continue debating. For many of the debaters who are not driven by the pursuit of competitive accomplishments, being a member of the debate program offers a low-stakes environment for intellectual inquiry with other inquisitive people willing to listen to and explore new ideas. I am reminded of Ashley Seuss’ appreciation of knowing that their access to coaching and communal status was not contingent on competitive success. This is in line with Dana Stephenson’s proclamation that “I'm not stupid, I know I'm not as good debate wise” as others on the squad but “I am indebted to debate” because it provides opportunities for growth and learning. Yuke Yang identified coach supported opportunities for learning as a primary reason they continue debating even when the time invested seems to far exceed their level of competitive success. For Yang, “it's about learning because college is a time to learn. I think that this is a really great way to know,

be more involved in politics and learn about the issues of the world." Several of the students debated because it is an engaging cocurricular activity that provides opportunities to improve as researchers, negotiate solutions to vexing social problems, and develop strategies for sifting through the overwhelming amount of information we a bombarded by on a daily basis. The director and the graduate assistant coaches also identified these as core objectives of the program.

Even among the more competitively successful debaters, there were times when the coaches needed to help them reframe why they continued to debate. Tom Jones and Nicole Martin shared similar stories about a time they considered quitting only to have a coach remind them of the numerous learning and social benefits derived from the rigorous intellectual engagement provided by competitive debate. For Jones and Martin, what was most persuasive was that the appeal was coming from a coach who previously demonstrated a personal interest in their development by serving as a mentor and advisor. During their most taxing moments as debaters, they were able to consider and appreciate emotional, social, and cognitive benefits of competitive intercollegiate debate because of the prior relationships they had developed with the coach.

Collaborating to Analyze Their Problems

The graduate assistant coaches constitute a commune of caretakers invested in helping the debaters think through and respond to their personal problems. The manner in which they do that is a familiar one. Whether they are engaging the students on the feasibility of constructing a missile defense system in Northeast Asia or determining the proper response to an aggrieved loved one, the Socratic method of questioning is the primary method for engaging and supporting students. While the tone and intimacy of the

conversation may change, the approach remains the same. There is a fidelity to the act of questioning that treats the debaters as knowledgeable collaborators. Students are rarely given the answer. However, the coaches seem to be readily available to provide additional information needed to reframe and improve the students decision-making process while ensuring they are emotionally supported.

The personal issues the coaches help the debaters negotiate are quite diverse. Elizabeth Shively spoke of working with the debaters to think through career options, resume development, and holiday gift giving for significant others. Phillip Jennings prioritizes providing students a "home" outside of classes where students feel comfortable enough talking about their health concerns and economic insecurities. Warren McDaniel referenced a time they aided a debater who was homeless. Remarkably, these discussions occurred with the intense pressure of preparing for tournaments looming in the background.

Various students mentioned the important role the graduate assistants play in aiding them as they prepare for adulthood. Most of the debaters are comfortable enough with at least one coach to use them as a sounding board for exploring personal problems. Many of the other debaters would agree with Ashley Seuss proclamation that the "assistant coaches are one of the greatest assets at the university" because there is always at least one working in the squad room "willing to talk about life and whatever struggle you're going through." This occurs without the expectation being codified in policy or an edict being handed down by the director. All the graduate assistants competed as undergraduates at different universities. They joined this debate program at different

stages of its develop. Yet we still find a strong desire to collaborate with debaters to analyze and address their personal problems.

Is this desire to create a collaborative learning venture with debaters unique to the coaches working for this particular program? While additional research on this question is warranted, prior observations lead me to believe that coaches' fondness for and devotion to their debaters and a collaborative pedagogical experience for the squad derives from their own experiences as competitive debaters. The vast majority of competitive debate coaches are former competitors who became coaches because the act of debating positively impacted their intellectual and social development, and they are driven to create for others the relationships they benefited from as debaters. One does not need to mandate or codify an expectation that a debate serve as a "life coach" when the motivators for being a debate coach are personal and internally derived.

Acknowledging Complexity

The findings depicted a strong yearning for students to understand the complex structures and processes that undergird the issues that they were researching and debating. The debate program produced a culture of questioning that encouraged students to pursue more nuanced understandings of economic, political, and social phenomena. Competitive debate provides a unique incentive for considering the perspectives of all sides by requiring students to consistently engage on both sides of a proposition. Winning can be a powerful motivator to consider alternate perspectives even if the only goal is to determine how to defeat it. The structure of debate, switching sides and debating multiple responses to the same problem, generates a desire to more thoroughly understand complex social systems and structures. Nicole Martin's discussion of why the majority of

their friends are debaters was one of several stories that spoke to the transformative power of debate in this regard. Martin enjoys the company of their inquisitive debate friends because they "like to wrestle with ideas," explore what constitutes the "truth," and they know that there are no easy solutions to complex problems because there is "no such thing as something being black or white." Not only do these debaters seek an understanding of proposed solutions that "go beyond the headlines," they are actively researching vexing problems to formulate alternative solutions. Baxter Magolda (2001) declared that educators could guide students toward self-authorship by giving them the "autonomy to work with complexity" in a manner where they "remain flexible," "work collaboratively with others," and "analyze data to generate conclusions" (p. 252). Debaters in this program work collaboratively with teammates to construct arguments and defend them at tournaments. The squad room conversations reveal a culture of questioning that encourages them to remain ideologically flexible and open to new ideas. Additionally, their emphasis on idea testing is aligned with Baxter Magolda's appeal for data analysis. This squad's expectation that students research and defend all sides of the proposition creates a complex learning environment that promotes self-authorship.

This debate program features a culture of questioning that trains students to shun simple solutions and embrace complexity. It is a laboratory of idea exploration where everything is always debatable. Participants know that every utterance is a site for contestation and an opportunity for a verbal joust. Questioning is habitual in this learning community. Some even seem to challenge the most banal suggestions as a matter of principle. While this relentless interrogation of ideas can become overwhelming, one could argue that the high dosage of questioning naturalizes a sense of doubt toward

simplistic solutions. For a couple of debaters, this learning environment birthed an incessant desire to investigate issues from "multiple angles." Others mentioned of a deep skepticism of unquestionable "truths." This debate program is effectively assisting its university to achieve the primary purpose for higher education's existence. It is teaching students to think. For Deresiewicz (2014), that "means developing the habit of skepticism and the capacity to put it in practice. It means learning not to take things for granted, so you can reach your own conclusions" (p. 79).

The power of this highly engaged debate program goes beyond the complexification of students' decision-making processes. It is a radical reorientation of education that can transform the political lives of its members. Schlosser (2017) argued that "by asking and investigating questions with others we may well see the illogic of our current arrangements; by taking up and transforming extant practices of political life we effectively change the status quo" (p. 169). While serving as a path towards self-authorship, this debate program equips its debaters to pursue an engaged political life.

Cultivate and Listen to Their Own Voices

Most students leave college relying heavily of external formulas to guide their beliefs, how they learn, how they self-define, and how they make decisions (Baxter Magolda, 2009a). This reliance on external authorities to make life choices is incompatible with the cultivation of and listening to one's own voice which is needed to complete the journey towards self-authorship. Cultivation of one's internal voice involves "developing parts of themselves they valued, establishing priorities, sifting out beliefs and values that no longer worked, and putting pieces of the puzzle of who they were together" (Baxter Magolda, 2009a, p. 7). The study's findings indicate that several of the

participants are actively questioning the external formulas that guide the lives of their peers and using debate as a venue to cultivate their own voices. Coaches and debaters shared stories about squad room conversations, debate rounds, and interpersonal relationships with others in their debate community that motivated them to challenge the social and cultural norms that guided their adolescent development. Patrick Harper, Philip Jennings, Dana Stephenson, Mimo Song, and Elizabeth Shively told stories about how debating encouraged them to shift their values in ways that no longer aligned with the beliefs of their parents. At the heart of these moments of self-discovery and self-definition is the willingness to doubt unchallenged beliefs and the humility to see value in perspectives that are not your own. Willing to challenge familial and cultural norms, these debaters freely explored their sexuality, challenged gender stereotypes, established different political priorities, and sifted out the beliefs of their parents that were incompatible with the internal voices they were cultivating. What is it about this debate program that makes it hospitable to the cultivation of one's internal voice? Baxter Magolda's (2009a) research points to its culture of questioning that nestled in supportive friendships and peer partnerships:

> The nature and support you offer to friends. …may make all the difference in helping them find their internal voices. …Questions that help them sort out how they are making sense of the situation, what evidence they have for that interpretation, what about it bothers them and what other possible ways there to view it helps people listen to their internal voices and identify beliefs, values, and feelings they are bringing to the situation. Engaging them in working through the

> benefits and drawbacks of various alternative responses helps cultivate their internal voices (p. 272).

The culture of questioning that pervades the program is a powerful force shaping how the debate team participants orients themselves in and out of their communities. It informs their friendships, structures their beliefs, and cultivates their voices. It does what Deresiewicz (2014) argued that a real education is supposed to do. It "sends [students] into the world bearing questions, not resumes" (p. 82).

Sharing Authority and Expertise

One of the more interesting aspects of the relationship these debate coaches developed with their debaters is what seems to be near absolute deference to the student's desires when deciding the argumentative strategies forwarded in debate rounds. Coaches want students to become subject matter authorities and budding experts on the issues they research and debate. I asked the director of debate, Richard Boor, about how the coaches reconcile disagreements with students over argument selection. From their perspective, a coach has two options. First, they can constructively engage the student and persuade them that the argument is unsound and should be abandoned. Persuasion is necessary because the debater is the ultimate decider. Second, they can work with the student to improve the legitimacy and soundness of the argument that the coach is concerned about. Both options attempt to share authority with the debater and respect them as a knowledge generator. Ultimately, the job of the coach is to work collaboratively with debaters to construct the best version of the argument that the student wants to forward. All of the coaches articulated a similar role for guiding students' argument selection. It is the debater's choice and the coach's role is to assist with improving the argument regardless

of the choice. It is easy to listen to the coaches discuss their coaching philosophies and forget that the power dynamics and cultural norms actually preserve a substantial amount of influence for them over the students' choices. However, they have cultivated a culture of cooperative learning that attempts to preserve a substantial amount of student control of the learning process while giving coaches the tools needed to improve the rigor of the research and the soundness the arguments selected by the debaters.

Throughout coaching sessions, students are cross-examined to expose the weaknesses of the arguments and provide direction for follow-up research. Debaters are encouraged to seek new and confounding information and challenge the counterarguments proposed by the coach. The coach's role is to poke, prod, and interrogate student generated strategies until the argument has evolved to a state that allows it to withstand vigorous public interrogation or is abandoned by the student. The debaters are the arbiters of when that state is achieved and whether they will abandon the argument. Of course, there are times when a coach disagrees with the debater's assessment of an argument's state of readiness. During those times, they find comfort in knowing that their job is to work with the student in developing the debater's capacity to make better decisions and not supplanting the learner's role in the decision-making process. While they hope their coaching sessions will translate into additional competitive success, the coaches' primary objective is to validate the debater as a scholar and knowledge producer. Validating the debater as a knowledge generator supports the notion that "knowledge [is] complex and socially constructed, invite[s] the participants to view the self as central to knowledge construction, and increase[s] their confidence in

their ability to participate in the mutual construction of knowledge" (Baxter Magolda, 2001, p. 191).

Finally, the debaters engage each other in mutual collaborative learning partnerships. Built on a foundation of supportive and welcoming friendships, they establish peer partnerships that are dependent on and invested in improving teammates' performance. Baxter Magolda (2009a) argued that friends and peers "can use the six components of learning partnerships to help others develop their internal voices and simultaneously strengthen your relationship" (p. 272). The requirement that each debater participates with a partner encourages the development of trusting relationships. To even achieve a modicum of competitive success, each debater must be willing to serve as a coach to their partner. Several students spoke of their partnerships as sources of motivation, camaraderie, and support. They seek each other's feedback and incorporates those ideas into speeches. The peer partners routinely engage in collective brainstorming and argument drafting sessions in their squad room, dorm rooms, and at the dinner table. Additionally, debaters use their partnerships to expand their social and academic networks and as sources of academic tutoring. The students demonstrated a strong belief in mutual learning and collaborative work that aids their intrapersonal development.

This program has a learning environment that produces interdependent engaged knowledge generators working to collaboratively construct meaning. The students are constantly laughing, eating, and debating together. Debaters use their squad room to develop peer learning partnerships where they "take an active role in managing their own learning, coordinating with adults who are also contributing to the direction of the activity, while they provide. …guidance and orientation" (Rogoff, Matusov, & White,

1996, p. 386). The director and the graduate assistant coaches encourage the debaters to design their own learning experiences while remaining collectively responsible for each other's development and competitive success. More often than not, the debaters on this squad are eager to work collaboratively with teammates to produce arguments and engage their opponents' arguments. While writing about a work place collaboration, Baxter Magolda (2001) concluded:

> This put participants in positions to express their own thinking and acquire feedback from their colleagues. As a result, learning to construct meaning with others helped participants' move toward defining themselves internally and join others from an internally defined sense of self. (p. 268)

The findings lead me to conclude that this competitive intercollegiate debate program has established the communal norms and structures needed to aid students on their journey toward self-authorship. It is a welcoming supportive community that constitutes a much needed and "home" on this large university campus that could leave many students feeling isolated if they did not have the debate team. The program provides a structured supportive space for the debaters that can elude their non-debating peers at large comprehensive institutions of higher education. Nestled within this community of care is a strong desire to challenge students to complexify their understanding of the world and cultivate their internal voices. This debate program operates as a Learning Partnership Model that leaves these fast-talking questioners more likely to graduate self-authored than others in their class.

Conclusions - Provocative Moments

Pizzolato (2005) found that students need to be appropriately challenged with moments of "jarring disequilibrium" (p. 625) to successfully move them in the direction of self-authorship. The key contributor is dissonance that occurs when the learner encounters a situation that forces them to reconsider currently held assumptions because they cannot sufficiently explain the events they are witnessing. As debaters in this study experienced moments of "jarring disequilibrim" that conflicted with their core values, they reconsidered previously unquestioned assumptions and developed more independent orientations. The dissonance created when they were cross-examined and expected to depend policies, practices, or customs that were previously unspoken naturalized assumptions was transformative. It was the trigger that compelled several students to cultivate and listen to their internal voices. This debate program is a learning environment that preclude the establishment of "self-selected" argument-free enclaves where certain beliefs or values are protected from challenge. Debating forces the students to engage ideas they might otherwise ignore. Additionally, the demand that they use the squad room as a laboratory for idea exploration encourages them to challenge the external formulas that previously guided their lives.

These provocative moments offer hope that debate can promote self-authorship. Higher education administrators should invest in safe spaces where students are encouraged to be intellectually vulnerable and willing to consistently face arguments that challenge their core assumptions and beliefs. This debate program is one of those spaces on this campus. Student affairs professionals looking for ways to serve as learning partners who are willing to challenge students to lean into the dissonance and traverse the

crossroads will find an effective model in the interactions between this program's coaches and their debaters.

Implications

This study's findings have important implications for higher education practitioners, including directors of debate, student affairs professionals, and curriculum designers. The findings are also useful for those exploring ways colleges and universities can develop students into more politicized citizens.

Debate Professionals

The findings from this case study directly implicates how students are trained to participate in competitive intercollegiate debate. First, coaches should consider a holistic integrated approach when thinking about students' experiences in the activity and consider every interaction with students an opportunity to help them find their own way. While tournament participation matters, this study reveals that it is not the most important aspect of their debate experience. It was surprising how little the students and coaches talked about being at tournaments and the thrill of actually competing. The data is dominated by stories about squad room interactions, informal academic and personal advising sessions, and the creation of learning environments that are conducive for developing supportive friendships. Coaches should keep in mind that greatest impact on students' journey towards self-authorship seems to occur before and after the tournament. Creating an inviting squad room that students consider their "homes away homes" and feel comfortable verbally jousting with their teammates is a critical component of that effort. Additionally, coaches should remain mindful of results from Astin's (1993) research on undergraduates. Astin found that students who developed a significant

nurturing and supportive relationship with at least one adult improved their resilience and retention. The findings indicate that debate coaches are position to be effective "life coaches" and advisors who can expand their debaters' opportunities for interpersonal and academic success.

Second, the Learning Partnership Model produced by intercollegiate debate coaches is a fragile relationship. Unfortunately, the model is easily undermined by coaching practices that privilege the pursuit of individual team or organizational success over students' pursuit of knowledge. Coaches should not lean too heavily on previous ideas they developed as they guide students' argument construction process and, instead, should allow students to freely explore and test their own ideas. Deference should be given to the goal of developing students as knowledge generators. Coaches must remain vigilant because distinguishing between providing coaching support and legitimizing an external formula can sometimes be difficult.

Additionally, the LPM is undermined when educators fail to challenge debaters to venture outside of their ideological comfort zones and view the issues they are debating from "multiple angles." Allowing students to continuously pursue the same line of argument without exploring alternative perspectives may enhance the support aspects of the LPM but it comes at the cost the challenge components of the model that are necessary for students to become self-authored. Switching sides on an issue and taking the perspective one disagrees with has tremendous value if the goal is to help develop questioning and reflective self-authored democratic citizens. Permitting students to exclusively explore one particular aspect of an issue risks trading one external formula for another. Coaches should remain mindful of the roles reflective questioning and

argumentative doubt plays in the development of self-authored debaters on this debate team. LPM requires educators to both challenge and support students. Additional support for students is not a substitute for challenging them to self-reflect and have a deeper and more complex engagement with the issues they are debating. Establishment of a LPM requires coaches and judges to coax the learner to explore issues outside of their intellectual and ideological comfort zones.

Finally, the findings provide a new line of defense for those advocating for increased opportunities for students to participate in CEDA/NDT intercollegiate debate. With self-authorship being is increasingly touted as a foundation of the twenty-first-century higher education (Baxter Magolda, 2007), the findings identify intercollegiate debate as a programmatic effort capable of assisting colleges and universities in achieving those student development goals. As campus and local communities continue to demographically evolve, engaged citizenship, cross-cultural partnerships, and effective leadership to resolve complex social and political problems require students who are willing to analyze the world using their internal compass; not anachronistic social and political assumptions constructed during a bygone era. We need to cultivate students willing to articulate a vision of more democratic and just world in their own voices. Neither is possible unless colleges and universities adopt educational practices that produce self-authored graduates. For Baxter Magolda (2007), that "makes it imperative for educators to shift from old, controlling designs to new partnership designs" (2007, p. 81).

Ironically, this study identifies an effective "new" partnership design in an educational strategy with roots in the first US colleges in the colonial era and educational

practices developed in antiquity. While it is not difficult to find vocal supporters of debate on most of our college and university campuses (Tumposky, 2004), many higher education administrators consider financial support for the activity to be a luxury that needs to take a back seat to making students job ready upon graduation. Debate professionals can and should marshal a defense of activity as one few pedagogical tools that can simultaneously prepare students for citizenship and employment. Are we effectively preparing students to compete in an increasingly globalized world if they are unable to develop and sustain cross-cultural partnerships? Are we effectively preparing students to lead if they are unwilling or unable to challenge antiquated assumptions about new members of our pluralistic communities that are antithetical to the lived experiences of many of the people they will interact with? Debate professionals can and should be reframe the activity as an essential teaching tool for producing engaged and effective citizens and leaders in the twenty-first-century.

Student Affairs Administrators

The findings are useful as student affairs professionals embrace the responsibility to create pathways for students to become democratic citizens. Market forces, legislative demands, and student economic anxiety will continue to encourage many colleges and universities to privilege curriculum offerings that emphasize job readiness. Student affairs professionals can serve as an effective countervailing force that brings the objectives of higher education back into balance. Campus life personnel should accept the challenge to rebalance the purposes of high education by emphasizing programs that encourage self-reflection, questioning and student driven knowledge generation. Student affairs can and should prioritize midwifing the mind; helping students become reflective,

self-examined and questioning citizens. They have the freedom and flexibility to quickly restructure the cocurricular experience to emphasize those core components of democratic citizenship. Much more of their work could incorporate cross-examining students on their academic and personal choices, creating opportunities for reflective deliberation, and an expectation that students pursue a meaningful and purpose driven life. Student affairs staff members should explore ways they can encourage students to become their own Socrates. That could start with the incorporation of agonistic pedagogical methods into their current programmatic offerings.

Second, the findings implicate the work of student affairs professions with established goals pertaining to intercultural maturity. Baxter Magolda's (1999) observation that the "intense struggle to deal with diversity effectively (or to deal with it at all, for that matter) is evident in all facets of higher education" applies as much today as it did over a decade ago (p. 266). More recently, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) suggested that the presence of racially-motived hate crimes on our campuses provide strong evidence that administrators need to find better ways of addressing multicultural issues. They forwarded that "producing interculturally competent citizens who can engage in informed, ethical decision-making when confronted with problems that involve a diversity of perspectives is becoming an urgent educational priority" (p. 571). This educational priority, the responsibility to equip students to be interculturally competent citizens, will increasingly fall to student affairs professionals as academic departments are forced to continue to respond to market forces and further vocationalize their curriculums.

Preparing students to engage about and across their differences becomes more important as globalization further shrinks the planet. Students need support and assistance in learning to negotiate mutually satisfactory compromises with people whose core beliefs differ from their own because they will increasingly inhabit a "city planet" where they "routinely rub shoulders with men and women from every country, culture, faith and ethnicity" (Garten Ash, 2016, p. 9). Social changes in our "city planets" will continue to challenge and unsettle the distribution of political power and economic resources. Left unmanaged, these clashing cultural differences could increase the frequency and lethality of personal and political conflicts.

Students need educational opportunities that prepare them with the tools to negotiate difference, collaboratively problem solve, and make our inevitable conflicts sources of generative creativity. The alternative risks cultural clashes that are increasingly disruptive and galvanize support for separatism. Educators should prepare students to proactively engage others who do not look like or think like them. With major shifts in the racial and cultural composition of schools, student affairs administrators should shift their attention to programs that can develop a culture of questioning and self-reflective thinking.

Creating a refuge for difficult dialogues where students argue, dissent, and express differences provides the provocative moments students need to become more democratically astute and effective citizens. Educators must remain mindful that the transformations featured in this study occurred while the students were active members of a community of care that supported the students' development in and outside of competitive debate. The provocative moments occurred when the students were

ensconced in communal support. While debate induced dissonance holds the potential to reinvigorate political spaces in ways that challenge separatist impulses that threaten to further marginalize people based on their social identity, it will not occur until the learner nestled in a community that validates their individual experiences and tends to their personal needs and concerns. Incorporating support structures like those used by the coaches and debaters featured in this study may ameliorate some of the concerns others forward about the use of agonistic pedagogical models. Access to supportive adult relationships is immensely valuable as students wrestle with the discomfort of breaking away from external formulas and trying to find their own voice.

Higher education professionals should consider competitive intercollegiate debate to be one avenue for promoting sustained vigorous interrogation that can challenge dominant modes of knowledge production. Colleges and universities can prepare students for living with diversity by taking some cues from the findings of this study and encouraging students to explore all sides of vexing issues. When students experience this type of learning environment, one can "see a lightbulb of mutual understanding being switched on" (Garten Ash, 2016, p. 232). More importantly, when students engage each other in a constructive conversation about controversial topics, "young people are equipped to think critically about prejudices," "understand where other people are 'coming from,'" and develop "imaginative sympathy" (Garten Ash, 2016, p. 232). Long-term sustainable solutions to our campus diversity problems can only come via managed open dialogue. With that comes the opportunity to produce a student body that has more intercultural maturity and is better equipped to resolve the underlying drivers of racial animus and political discord.

Curriculum Designers

The findings also have implications for classroom curriculum designers. Incorporating debate into the classroom projects can counter some the negative externalities derived from treating students as "consumers." Additionally, it holds the possibility of transforming the classroom into an active learning environments that encourages students to question, self-reflect and engage the world with a sense of inquisitive doubt. Professors should consider bringing back the colonial era disputations, an interrogation and defense of student ideas in front of their peers, as a means of evaluating students' engagement with and retention of the course material. Disputations can be incorporated into various disciplines to cultivate skills students need to develop into effective and engaged citizens. In fact, the findings lead me to believe that debate should be embedded into multiple courses to produce the culture of questioning that contributes to self-authorship.

Recommendations for Future Research

The vast majority of the research on competitive intercollegiate debate focuses on its ability to promote critical thinking and improve public speaking. Exploration of intercollegiate debate as mechanism for facilitating self-authorship breaks new ground and leaves much room for future research. The study should be replicated on a larger scale that allows researchers to compare several case studies to determine how institutional type, debate program organizational structure, and participant numbers impact the debaters journey toward self-authorship.

Second, future research could focus exclusively on programs without graduate assistant coaches. This study's findings lead me to believe that the program would be

radically different without the relatively large pool of graduate students assisting with the coaching, mentoring, and advising. They play a dominant role in informing the culture and learning environment. Future studies should focus on debate programs with a more limited graduate student participation because the majority of debate programs lack graduate student support.

Third, the study focuses on NDT/CEDA competitive debate. It is a research-intensive model of debate that is not as accessible as other formats. Some of the debaters identified its "intensity" as the reason they are attracted to the activity. I wonder if that intensity informs its ability to produce self-authored students. Studies of Lincoln-Douglass and British Parliamentary Debate could answer that question.

Fourth, future studies should explore how gender informs competitive debates ability to produce self-authored students. Tumposky's (2004) critique of the masculine norms of debate and research that forwarded that gender (Bock, 1999; Rockenbach, Riggers-Piehl, Garvey, Lo, & Mayhew, 2015) informs students meaning making and their journey towards self-authorship leads me to believe that women and men experience participation in intercollegiate debate in different ways. One can imagine that gender informs what each debater considers supports and, at times, who is capable of delivering it. Additionally, gender may impact coaches' ability to effective challenge their debaters.

Fifth, some the participants assumed that the structures of competitive debate that mandate rhetorical conflict was an impetus for change. Expanding the study to include participants in public speaking events that do not force an oppositional mode of engagement will test the role agonism actually plays in promoting self-authorship.

Finally, future research should quantitatively and qualitatively assess debaters' willingness to participate in local, state, or national politics. The findings of this study support the notion that debaters are more likely to developed into engaged citizens interested in politics and governance. However, research should explore the forms of political action they are likely to engage in. Are they more likely to engage in political organizing or directly engage politicians? Are they more likely to participate in the legislative process or run for off? This data would be useful as we look for long-term solutions to the entrenched partisanship in US politics.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to the study that merit discussion. The first involves the study's design. While the focus on debaters' stories about their experiences in competitive debate required a qualitative methodology, the choice prevents the findings from being generalizable to a broader population. I am sure some aspects of the findings will resonate with other debaters and coaches. Unfortunately, a wholesale application of the study to other debate programs risks overlooking the nuance relationships and norms that are specific to each of these programs.

Second, the exclusive use of a thematic narrative analysis limited the richness of the study's data. While waiting in the squad room to interview students, it was apparent that the study's data would substantially improve if I observed and documented the cross-examinations, the witty banter, and the lunch time coaching sessions that are a hallmark of the program. Observing the relationships in action, instead of just listening to stories about them, would enrich the data and farther contextualize the narratives.

Third, the study is limited by its failure to explore the impact gender has on the participants' journey toward self-authorship. While an exploration of it was beyond the scope of this research project, observation of squad room interactions between some of the males and females leads me to believe that this squad room is not and probably cannot be a gender neutral space. Additionally, debate's privileging of what are considered masculine modes of communication also supports the notion that gender is a salient issue that informs how and when debating contributes to a student becoming self-authored. Failure to incorporate gender as a unit of analysis limits this study and points to opportunities for future researchers.

Finally, the graduate assistant coaches play such a prominent role in the program it may make it difficult for others to find insight in the data and the findings. They are powerful influencers. I did not anticipate their profound importance to the develop of the team's cultural norm and the way the debaters perceive the program. There are few other programs with as many graduate students playing such prominent roles. They add a level of uniqueness that may inhabit other directors of debate and student affairs administrators from seeing the relevance of the findings and conclusions to debate program on their campuses.

Summary

Socrates was a fitting protagonist for this study's exploration of the role intercollegiate debate plays in developing self-authorship. He saw a role for argumentation and debate in his pursuit of a more self-examined and democratically engaged citizenry. At the heart of the Socratic method resides a strong commitment to two pedagogical practices, habitual refutation and cross examination, that continue to

thrive in U.S. higher education in the form of intercollegiate debate. A fierce advocate of habitual questioning, Socrates saw it as a way to produce the intellectually and civically engaged citizens Athens needed to preserve its democracy. This narrative case study of a competitive intercollegiate debate program assessed whether he was correct. This study provides some evidence that students ensconced in a culture of questioning are more likely to become engaged citizens.

Despite its limitations, the study is important because it confirms what several supporters of a citizenship oriented curriculum previously wrote about debate. In an essay on global citizenship, Nussbaum declared that the most critical component of a Socratic educational model is the "emphasis on analytical thinking, argumentation, and active participation in debate" (para. 9). She (2010) later identified debate as an instructional tool that can encourage students to "internalize and master what they have learned" while allowing them "to develop more fully their capacities for citizenship and respectful political interaction" (p. 56). For Zakaria (2015), another vigorous defender of the liberal arts, debate's greatest gift is its emphasis on "articulate communication" (p. 76) that encourages students to think through the subject matter before publicly presenting their findings and jointly analyzing their conclusions. At its best, debate creates a pedagogical space where students can express and negotiate disparate ideas. Zakaria (2015) concluded "the best thinking often happens when ideas, fields and disciplines collide, in a setting where cultures rub up against one another" (p. 80). The generative collision of ideas that he alludes to is the hallmark of competitive debate. In debate, Nussbaum and Zakaria find opportunities to open students' minds to new ways of thinking and their hearts to empathetic relationships that bridge our differences. This study provided some support

for their defense of debate as a pedagogical tool capable of producing an inclusive democratic citizenship.

The study found that coaches and peer partners serve as good learning partners for the debate team members; helping them progress on their journey toward self-authorship. The coaches and teammates are community caretakers supporting each debater's personal and argumentative development. Nestled within this community of care is a culture of questioning that encourages self-reflection and the cultivation of debaters' internal voices. Finally, the program's emphasis on self-reflection and questioning produces a learning environment that encourages students to embrace a politically engaged life.

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