

Issue Debates:



Notecards in Extemporaneous Speaking

Aff: Joseph Kennedy

Neg: Jonathon Carter

Joseph Kennedy



Joseph Kennedy earned his B.S. in Mathematics from George Mason University, where he also competed on the forensics team, earning a place in limited preparation event final rounds six times at the AFA-NIET. After teaching high school mathematics for sixteen years, and earning his National Board for Professional Teaching Standards certification, he became the Instructional Designer and Assistant Speech Coach at Concordia College. He has coached forensics at both the high school and college levels for eighteen years.

Jonathon Carter



Jonathan is a doctoral candidate and Asst. Director of Forensics at the Univ. of Nebraska-Lincoln. He has coached forensics for 11 years, including positions at Illinois State Univ. and Western Kentucky Univ. His research interests include networked rhetoric, critical theory, and Kenneth Burke. As part of his interest in how networked technologies foster new political subjectivities, he has taught courses including Rhetoric, Media, & Civic Life; Persuasive Public Communication; and Communication and Social Issues.

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Issue Debates: Notecards in Extemporaneous Speaking

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RESOLVED: *The event description for extemporaneous speaking should require the use of limited notes.*

The Affirmative: Joseph Kennedy, Concordia College, Moorhead MN

The Negative: Jonathan Carter, University of Nebraska – Lincoln

First Affirmative Constructive: Joe Kennedy

In 1994, a master's candidate at North Dakota State University finished his thesis, which focused upon the AFA-NIET Extemporaneous final round from the previous year. Essentially, this author alleged that more than half of the evidence used in that final round was inappropriately used, and probably violated the AFA-NIET code of ethics (Markstrom, 1994). As someone who knew the competitors in that round, I am absolutely confident that no one was attempting to fabricate evidence, and I'm reasonably confident that no one was deliberately trying to misrepresent evidence. However, I'm also completely confident that every competitor felt pressure to be "off notecard," which means they had to memorize seven to twelve sources and dates. In thirty minutes, this is less realistic than most understand, and that lack of realism causes me to firmly support the resolution:

The event description for extemporaneous speaking should require the use of limited notes.

The sad reality of the current state of extemporaneous speaking is that competitors are forced to choose between one behavior which is more likely to provide competitive success, and another behavior, which is more likely to provide ethical behaviors. To understand why requiring notecards removes this forced binary choice, let us briefly examine the nature of information processing, explore competitive norms in extemporaneous speaking, and remind ourselves of the ethical and pedagogical foundations of forensics competition.

Contention 1: Human beings can only remember a finite number of information "chunks" in working memory.

The formative psychological theory known as Miller's Law holds that human beings can only retain approximately seven "chunks" of information in working memory. A chunk of information is contextual, so while seven digits of a phone number might be seven different chunks of data, so too can seven date-source pairs. Thus, many competitors can memorize five



to nine sources in order, and five to nine pieces of cited information in order, and recite them with no error. Memorizing more than this is all but impossible for most human beings, however. Thus, competitors who cite more than nine sources either spend their preparation time utilizing time-consuming memorization techniques rather than developing argumentation, or they are likely to inaccurately present information during their speech.

To reward competitors for not referencing a notecard during their speech means that memorization in a short amount of time becomes a de facto primary judging criterion. Forget logical argumentation, forget effective delivery techniques, we are saying, “let’s judge students on whether or not they can memorize complex pieces of information along with dates and sources.” If we want to have a contest in memorization, why not follow the lead of the Virginia High School League and make Spelling a speech event? Of course, even that organization realized that memorization is not a skill that should be rewarded in the same vein as constructing effective orations or advocating through oral interpretation; it removed the event in 2003.

Contention 2: Extemporaneous speaking norms dictate that competitors are both “off notecard” and use at least ten sources.

Examine the final round of any large, competitive tournament, such as the *Norton Invitational*, *Hell Froze Over*, or a national organization’s championship tournament, and you’ll find that very few competitors use a notecard, and most have at least ten sources in their extemporaneous speech. I was lucky enough to compete in an era where seven sources was considered an acceptable amount of evidence, but the students I coach now routinely receive comments that they need more sources when they already reference six to eight. Others also present anecdotal evidence that more sources are needed to impress judges (Wehler, 2009) and analyses of ballots indicate that judges attribute high value to the number of sources (Cronn-Mills & Croucher, 2001), but I believe each of us actively involved in forensics already has a sense that judges believe more sources are better than fewer.

I also find myself in conflict with my students regarding the use of a notecard; I prefer they use a notecard but they argue that all the best competitors don’t. Arguments such as this highlight the importance of norms in competition. Perhaps not every judge writes a comment indicating a student should not use a notecard, but most students perceive that they are at a competitive disadvantage if they do. As more competitors push themselves to be “off card,” more judges begin to attribute negative value to using a notecard. The same holds true for the number of sources referenced; as more students become convinced they should cite ten to a dozen sources, more judges expect such numbers.

Contention 3: The pedagogical and ethical foundations of competitive forensics require us to provide mechanisms that our students can use to win ethically.

It is not enough to agree that our practices should be grounded in ethical behavior. Every coach worthy of being called a coach holds that evidence should be cited, and cited properly.



Every educator involved in this activity believes that sources should be properly represented; evidence should not be taken out of context, for example. National titles have been revoked when it was determined that the champion had used material that belonged to someone else, the community has demonstrated backlash against competitors who were believed to be engaged in “canning” their speeches, and papers have been published demonstrating how evidence was used incorrectly. We don’t suffer academic dishonestly lightly.

We are, however, placing our students into situations where their ability to win rounds depends upon their conformance to norms which violate the bounds of human cognition. By not requiring every student to use notes, we tacitly perpetuate the perception that a student without notes is better than a student with notes. Students, who are competitively motivated, thus learn the lesson that potentially violating ethics is acceptable to the community.

Therefore, it is an ethical imperative that we require students to use limited notes when presenting their extemporaneous speeches. To do otherwise is to pretend either that competitive norms don’t matter, or that our students are superhuman in the way they think.

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Points of Information

Neg: What do you mean by "use"?

Notes must be referenced during the speech, in a manner similar to scripts being referenced during oral interpretation events.

Neg: How would we enforce a lack of use?

In whatever manner a lack of a script in an interp event would be enforced. (In the spirit of Parli debate, I would defer this to the appropriate national governing body. If you mean, “What is the ideal enforcement,” then a student who refuses to use limited notes would receive a rank of 5 in that round).



First Negative Constructive: Jon Carter

Above all, forensics is about developing students. Consequently, pedagogical concerns carry profound ethical implications. Having worked with students who both use and decline notes it is apparent that the *status quo* does not present the ethical conundrums that the affirmative claims. We must reject the resolution because the possibility of mistaken citation does not outweigh the ethical costs of limiting students' critical judgement and teaching incomplete rhetorical skills. My argument proceeds in three parts. First, I refute the claims that the current system is unrealistic and inequitable. Next, I articulate the ethical costs of mandatory notes. Finally, my counter-proposal addresses concerns of accuracy without incurring the disadvantages of the resolution.

Refutation of Affirmative Assertions

Initially, the affirmative relies on the assumption that students must sacrifice delivery or memory because of "Miller's law." However, Miller's (1956) research does not support this claim. First, Miller advocates "seven plus or minus two," suggesting 8-10 sources would not strain human memory. More importantly, the study examined the ability to recall random digits immediately after hearing them. Miller has gone to great lengths to clarify that while 7-ish numbers may be the limit of instant recall, the number does not apply if there is time to process (Miller, n.d.). Individuals can train memory to handle complexity. Children have memorized up to 2970 binary numbers in 30 minutes and the record for memorizing fictitious dates and events is 132 in five minutes (World Memory Sports Council, 2015) – suggesting 10 sources in 30 minutes is not a complex feat. Extempers, on or off notes, already memorize well over seven clumps by memorizing transitions, jokes, name pronunciations, tags, context, statistics, impacts, arguments, etc. Moreover, most high school competition prohibits notes, yet students memorize 7-10 sources. High schoolers compete competently and ethically without notes, we should believe college students can do the same.

Second, while the affirmative documents the *perception* that notes limit competitiveness, empirics do not support this perception. Over the past fifteen years I have judged, watched, and coached students in a variety of national out rounds. Yes, a majority of students were off notes, however, many students excelled in these rounds using notes. Techniques included held notecards, a source list on a table, or keywords jotted on their question slip. More than one national champion has used notes. Simply, being on notes does not prevent success.

While judges may punitively judge students for using notes, judges also penalize students who did not. In my experience these penalties are often more severe as judges assert these students are acting unethically. Consequently, I have had students vary note use based on judge and even



tournament. There will always be different standards in judging, students will adapt. Over the long run, the best students will continue to do well regardless of their use of notes.

Disadvantages of Mandatory Notes

Winifred Horner notes, “there is no complete rhetoric without consideration of all five of its canons” (1993, p. xi). However, prohibiting notes marginalizes the canon of memory, promoting an incomplete understanding of communication. While contemporary rhetoric has ignored the canon of memory as “simple memorization,” Reynolds (1993) asserts that memory is a trainable skill that not only improves delivery, but the quality of argument, critical thinking, and cultural connections. When individuals memorize, short or long term, they make judgements about what is useful. Memorizing sources also helps students retain information and arguments tied to the source because the process enhances the neural pathways containing the information. If this activity is about conveying knowledge, developing critical thinking, promoting the communicative arts, and/or encouraging civic discourse, discouraging the development of memory creates ethical concerns far greater than the potential harm of saying the October tenth when you meant the sixth.

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Second, *forcing* students to make performative choices limits the development of critical decision-making. Some students deliver better speeches using notes, others flourish without them. Students should have the option to make choices that let them maximize their potential. Currently, the *status quo* forces students to evaluate every round critically. Will this judge demand a notecard, reward delivery, etc.? While they may choose to use notes, or not, currently a student can decide if that is the best decision. The level of situational awareness, adaptability, and critical judgement this decision demands fosters educational opportunities impossible under the resolution.

Further, mandatory notes may directly disadvantage students with conditions that alter the capacity to read or write. Will blind students be required to bring notes they cannot read? If not, at what standard of vision do notes become required? What if a student has difficulty quickly typing or writing notes? The rules should not require students to spend their time meeting a rule, when it may not help develop their performance.

Avoiding Misattribution – Counterplan

After evaluation, the only potential cost of the *status quo* is the possibility of misinformation. The affirmative grants that this is likely incidental. If a student wanted to fabricate information intentionally, a notecard provides no assurance. My counterproposal addresses these concerns and offers a litany of pedagogical advantages. I propose that students should be required to make a cited material available to judges and the audience by request after the performance.



This proposal's advantages include:

- It does not abandon the canon of memory.
- Students get to make critical decisions regarding their performances. If they believe judges will check their memory, they have to make the critical judgement to work on memorization or use a card.
- With citations available, incidental misattribution has no detriment.
- It allows audiences to gain more depth of information by having easy access to cited sources
- Increased depth and interaction promotes civic deliberation.
- Potential crosschecking discourages deliberate falsification.

Conclusion

In sum, the *status quo* does not demand students be “superhuman” nor create competitive inequities. However, the ethical costs of limiting student judgment and truncating the canons outweigh any benefits of requiring notes, particularly because there are more pedagogically sound ways to ensure that information is not only accurate, but also used by students to improve their world and themselves.

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Points of Information

None were asked



Second Affirmative Constructive: Joe Kennedy

Let us begin by acknowledging the points of agreement between both sides of this debate: forensics should be a pedagogical experience, competitors should act ethically and be held accountable for acting ethically, the potential to fabricate sources exists in the status quo, and memory is one of the canons of rhetoric. After agreeing upon these claims, however, there are some key questions which must be answered, in order to come to a resolution regarding the proposed mandate that extempore speakers use limited notes while competing. The first of these questions regards the norms of competition, namely, is the current system unrealistic? The second question deals with the role of Memory as part of the canon's pentad: does requiring notecards truly abandon the canon of Memory? The final question seeks to determine, is there a better way to help students compete ethically?

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The affirmative continues to maintain that the current system places unrealistic expectations upon competitors. Competitors are expected to use Invention to determine the best analysis of the prompt, Arrange their arguments in the most effective manner, determine (with appropriate Style) effective transitions, and introduction, and a conclusion, commit to Memory all of the preceding elements along with a list of source citations and material, and then practice good Delivery. Other than Delivery, all of this must be accomplished within 30 minutes. Each of these tasks takes time, and time spent committing sources to memory takes away from time spent constructing analysis, which can lead to "canned arguments," or organization, which can lead to static structures which don't truly adapt to the prompt, or style, which leads to uninteresting speeches. These harms are not insubstantial; although none of them creates ethical problems in the speech itself, by the same argument the Negative makes regarding the "truncation of Memory," we could argue that encouraging any of these behaviors is unethical for us as educators.

The Negative would have us believe that, since high school students who aren't permitted to use notes routinely cite seven to ten sources ethically, then so can college students. This statement requires us to assume that such students are indeed getting their source citations correct, and we've unfortunately seen through Markstrom's (1994) research that this assumption must be challenged. Either students are choosing to miscite information, or they simply lack the ability to memorize the sources correctly.

The Negative also cites examples of humans who can memorize information quickly. The brain can indeed be trained to memorize but that requires considerable effort, which takes away from the critical thinking in which we wish students to engage. In the absence of recent studies regarding the number of sources, or use / non-use of a notecard at the highest levels of competition, perception becomes the critical factor regarding norms; as extempers perceive that



judges penalize notecard users, or those who use too few sources (as Wehler (2009) argues), then their behaviors adapt to this perceived reality. Certainly there are regions of the country where the “no notecard norm” holds sway, regardless of whether or not it should. Again, my colleague will argue that this argument relies upon an observation that notecards are discouraged at the highest levels of competition, which is a true observation. Although some individuals are talented enough to engage in counter-normative practices and do well, that does not change the reality of the norm for the vast majority of competitors, which discourages notes (Shafer 2005).

The Negative also believes that requiring notecards means abandoning Memory. This, however, is not true, and the lessened emphasis on memory is both made up for in other forensics events and creates the opportunity for competitors to engage in more inventive analysis, organization, and style, which at worst creates a neutral benefit, and at best, allows extemporaneous speakers to excel at adapting all aspects of their presentation to the given prompt, which is what this particular event is supposed to teach.

Requiring notecards does not mean that there is a discouragement of the development of memory; it merely places memory into the proper context of part of the speech rather than a primary focus. Students must remember the arguments they made, the rhetorical devices they chose to employ, the in-depth analysis they created from the references they consulted, any clever word play they came up with, and so forth. Memory is not merely about memorizing specific words and phrases, but is also about being able to recall analogies or historical facts to support an argument, and about being able to relate experiences and ideas to the current situation, and thus is related to Kairos. Requiring notecards thus does NOT truncate memory from the experience of extemporaneous speaking, but shifts the focus on memory from the memorization of discrete facts, probably useful only in a particular situation, and toward the recall of broader themes, theories, and situations into which a particular prompt falls.

The question then becomes, “should we as coaches be using a rule change as a counter-normative device?” McCann (2002) establishes that competitive norms definitely prevent competitors from “being all they can be,” so something must be done to counter norms. While he does not argue for a rule change, he does argue that coaches use the mechanism of the prompt to allow competitors a chance to challenge the norms of the event. In other words, it is certainly appropriate for coaches to take steps to counter norms. While the Negative claims that requiring notecards restricts students’ performative choices, we routinely force students to make performative choices by requiring the use of script in oral interpretation events, because we believe that the nature of oral interpretation requires such a paradigm. If we believe that some form of notes is necessary for students to ethically cite sources, then it is certainly appropriate to restrict performative choices.

If we believe, as the Affirmative firmly does, that competitive norms privilege those who do not use notes, and we accept that a lack of notes is more likely to lead to accidental



misattribution then the presence of notes, we must conclude that requiring limited notes is beneficial for our students. The Negative responds with a counter-proposal, which by itself does not solve the problem of accidental misattribution, and which can be implemented in conjunction with the Affirmative's stance, and thus does not provide direct clash with the resolution. We could, after all, require students to use notes while speaking and then leave the notecard in the rooms for audience member perusal.

Ultimately, we as forensics educators must choose which aspects of communication we emphasize in each event. In every event, we should choose to stress ethical communication. In the event of extemporaneous speaking, we should be emphasizing those elements which best fit the role of the event, which does not include the rote memorization of facts or entire speech segments. Requiring all students to use notes provides them with a tool to engage in ethical, well-constructed communication without forcing them to choose to use such a tool at the expense of competitiveness.

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Wehler, E. (2009). The terrible secret of extemporaneous speaking. *Speaker and Gavel*, 46, 55 – 59.

Points of Information

Neg: May I have a copy of the unpublished Master's Thesis to review?

It is available in print form from NDSU's library. I do not have a copy of it. I read excerpts from it two decades ago, as I was one of the people referenced in it, and references to it can be found in the following scholarly articles, which jogged my memory of it. (<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED447556.pdf> Shafer's article in http://www.mnsu.edu/cmst/dsr-tka/vol%2042_2005.pdf)



Second Negative Constructive: Jon Carter

Plato (1997) was famously wary of the written word. He feared that locking ideas in text would sacrifice the development of rhetorical skills – particularly memory. While the affirmative asserts that notes would not lead to Plato’s fears, they themselves argue, “the lessened emphasis on memory ... creates the opportunity for competitors to engage in more inventive analysis, organization, and style.” Privileging some canons above others – particularly invention/analysis – is a profoundly unethical move, diminishing our students’ capacities to develop as advocates, scholars of rhetoric, and humans. Before my defense of memory against mandatory notes, I first refute the central arguments of the second affirmative constructive.

Extemp is not Broken and the Affirmative Cannot Fix it

Towards the end of second constructive, the affirmative collapses their advocacy to two harms – competitive inequity and misattribution. The first is unproven and notes cannot solve the second.

Initially, the affirmative maintains that current system is unrealistic and breeds competitive inequity. It is unrefuted that for the last 15 years, students have consistently done well using notes. Without actual inequity, the question turns to perception. I agree the perception of competitive advantage exists, but that onto itself does not warrant changing rules. Instead, we must evaluate the non-competitive costs of not requiring notes.

Here, the affirmative provides one harm, predicated on two premises. (1) Memory forces tradeoffs and (2) this leads to misattribution. Recalling my argument that a trained memory could handle ten data points in a matter of seconds, the tradeoff is minimal at best. Now the affirmative contends that these are highly trained minds, but any student could develop these skills outside prep time. Attribution errors do not happen because of tradeoffs, but because there is no disincentive to limit errors. If we demand more of our students, they will live up to our expectations – overcoming these tradeoffs.

Further, notes cannot solve misattribution. Two examples highlight this. First, studies such as Cronn-Mills and Schnoor’s (2003) demonstrate that misattribution is ubiquitous in the prepared events. If these students misattribute despite functionally limitless prep-time, limited time is not the issue. This means there is no reason to believe that notes will notably decrease misattribution.

Second, I turn to this debate as an example. The affirmative relies heavily on Markstrom’s thesis to prove misattribution. This document is not available online and could not arrive via interlibrary loan within the debate’s timeframe. Therefore, I requested a copy from the



affirmative. During this exchange, the affirmative revealed they had not directly referenced it. Instead, they recalled the information from “[reading] excerpts from it two decades ago” and from Schafer (2005) and Wheler (2009). Because the source was not directly referenced, its uses in both affirmative constructives are misattributions. The affirmative should have cited the Markstrom as presented in Schafer as one his cited authors did (Wehler, 2009).

This misattribution was not malicious, nor do I doubt the accuracy of the affirmative’s recollection. However, if a professional coach, with multiple degrees and over a week of prep time can make such an error, misattribution will continue in extemp regardless of notes. Further, this misattribution did not limit the flow or depth of the debate. As long as the ideas are good, there is little cost to an accidental error.

This demonstrates that only the counterplan can solve any potential harm of misattribution. Asking the affirmative to provide sources revealed the mistaken attribution. If provided, it would have added to the educational experience by providing deeper context. Moreover, I am sure the affirmative will be more careful with citation in the future, creating an incentive for accuracy lacking in the affirmative proposal.

Rhetoric is Five Canons, Not Three

Considering there is no competitive imbalance and that the affirmative cannot solve misattribution, the only argument the affirmative retains is the tradeoff between memory and analysis. The affirmative’s logic – quoted in my intro – creates a double bind. Either the affirmative does not gain the advantage of increased analysis or notes create a tradeoff under which invention/organization/arrangement (argument) are privileged over memory/delivery (performance). Let us evaluate each half in turn.

Initially, the affirmative claims that memory is far more than discrete facts. I agree, however this means that potential tradeoff will happen regardless of the need to memorize sources. Moreover, the affirmative argues the memorization of sources has little worth. However, source memorization offers two unique advantages. First, my argument that memorizing sources improves information use is unrefuted. Notes are read then discarded, but memorized sources are linked not only with the larger speech, but global issues, and personal identity. Beardsworth (2013) argues that the copy-paste attitude enabled by simple memory technologies prevents the internalization that connects individuals to society in a way that facilitates political action. Second, quickly memorizing specific data is a useful skill required for jobs, good relationships, and social awareness. Nowhere else in forensics can students develop this skill, so we must keep extemp as its training ground.

Second, the affirmative’s valuation of argument over performance is dangerous. The affirmative only explicitly identifies the tradeoff between memory and argument. However, not only do they exclude delivery from the canons they defend, but it is undeniable that notes distract



from delivery. Regardless of the other events, the affirmative's proposal would enhance the attitude that argument should be privileged above delivery/memory. Further, the canons can and should not be separated in any event. Performance helps make arguments and makes arguments onto itself (e.g. establishing ethos). The affirmative mindset would transform extemp from an exercise in rhetoric, the foundation of forensics (Rosenthal, 1985), to an exercise in argument independent of performance. Such privileging of reason promotes a rationalist worldview that silences those who communicate outside Eurocentric definitions of argumentation – notably women and minorities (Fraser, 1989). We should do our best to promote the all canons in order to ensure that all types of students and communication styles can exist within the event.

Unrefuted Concerns

Beyond memory, the disadvantages to the affirmative proposal go largely conceded. The affirmative's only response to the denial of choice is that other events – primarily interp – also do this. First, that does not intrinsically make it a good idea. Second, the book has deep roots in disciplinary identity and performance theory – the affirmative has failed to provide similar proof that prioritizing notes justifies limiting critical decision-making. The status quo and the counterplan develop students who do not just give accurate speeches, but who critically evaluate and adapt to every round.

Second, mandatory notes disadvantage physically and neurologically atypical students. Near infinite preparation in other events allows for developing performance, however time restriction in extemp increases the burden on these students while providing no clear advantage.

Conclusion

Aristotle famously defined rhetoric as “the available means of persuasion” (Aristotle, 1991, I.ii.1). Yet the affirmative redefines that to “some means of persuasion available some people.” They advocate this change while demonstrating neither clear harms nor the propensity to solve those issues. Only the negative offers a vision of rhetorical education that is compressive, inclusive and ethical.

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Negative Rebuttal: Jon Carter

Pontificating on the importance of memory for constructing better arguments and developing masterful rhetors, Cicero (1942) tells the story of Simonides of Ceos. Simonides, a famous poet, was renowned for using the *method of loci* to develop a strong memory. One day Scopas, a wealthy merchant, invited Simonides to a dinner party. During the dinner, a messenger called Simonides outside, at which point the roof collapsed. Because Simonides recalled where everyone was sitting, officials were able to identify bodies and arrange proper funerals. Cicero uses this story to illustrate memory's importance to orderly and informed arguments which enable the search for truth.

This narrative highlights key themes in this debate. Our students can learn memory, the accuracy of memory is in people not notes, and this skill is important in the development of well-rounded students. Developing memory is not some feat of *outstanding or exceptional* individuals, but rather an *ordinary average capacity* that all students can develop (Cicero, 1942, 2.74.299). Considering the educational, argumentative, and ethical advantages of encouraging this ordinary skill, we must encourage students' cultivation of this critical faculty. Moreover, forcing students to use notes is not does not prevent misattribution, but is potentially discriminatory. For these reasons, we must reject the affirmative's call for mandatory notes. In this final essay, I will focus on two themes, the failure of the affirmative to develop a substantial case for required notes and the significant harms of such a mandate.

A Deficit of Significance and Solvency

Initially, the affirmative has not established a significant harm to the *status quo*, nor shown the propensity of notes to solve either incidental or intentional misattribution. Competitively, there is no inequity due to note usage. Additionally, the prevalence of misattribution in memorized speeches, as well as the incidental citation error by the affirmative (an instructor and speech coach) proves that student notes use will not prevent misattribution. Moreover, as this debate testifies, incidental misattribution has no significant pedagogical cost.

Second, memorization need not come at the cost of analysis. Not only can this skill be learned to minimize prep time used, but both Cicero (1942) and Beardsworth (2013) remind us that memorization fosters learning, rhetorical skill, and socially nuanced arguments. Only the



negative counter-proposal offers any incentive to avoid misattribution while fostering increased engagement with source material. In the face of no significant harm, nor a propensity to solve stated problems, there is no reason to affirm the resolution.

Memory, Judgment, Equality

However, making notecards mandatory also incurs great costs. Memory is a central part of the rhetorical tradition, and is imperative to the development of quality orators, scholars, and citizens. As a community dedicated to these goals, we would be remiss if we adopted any proposal that actually or symbolically discouraged the use, development, and study of this canon.

Additionally, the *status quo* creates better conditions for developing students' critical judgment. It demands students make choices about how much time to dedicate to memorization, as well as how to adapt to different judges and their varied opinions on note use. Without mandatory notes, students must make critical judgments and weigh costs and benefits in a way unmatched by the affirmative proposal. As educators, it is our ethical responsibility to maximize the situations that require students to evaluate self and situation to make informed decisions.

Finally, as a community that prides itself on inclusion, we cannot ignore the exclusionary pressures created by mandating notes. In the *status quo*, students can prepare in whatever manner best suits their learning style. Beyond pedagogical benefits, this ensures extemp does not exclude students for whom the production or use of notes may be difficult, time consuming, or impossible. As such, mandating notes would be ethically disastrous. It punishes students simply because they are neurologically, psychologically, or physically atypical.

A Return to the Rhetorical Tradition

Cicero (1942) concludes his musings on Simonides by asserting, “nor yet is anybody so dull-witted that habitual practice in [memory] will not give him [sic] some assistance” (2.87.357). While aggressive in tone and archaic in language, he reminds us that memory is a tool that all have the capacity to develop. To demand our students use notes is either to sell them and their potential short or to accuse them of deliberate falsification. As educators, we must not allow our students to strive for less than their greatest potential. Only the negative provides the opportunity for our students to become the rhetors, scholars, and humans they have the capacity to be.

Beardsworth, R. (2013). Technology and politics: A response to Bernard Stiegler. In C. Howells, & G. Moore (Eds.), *Stiegler and Technics* (pp. 208-224). Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.

Cicero (1942). *De oratore*. 2 vols. Trans. E. W. Sutton and H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library.



The Negative reveals a fundamental flaw in 2NC. By calling for us to not privilege one canon, they imply all canons must be treated equally, in each event. Obviously, this is not what the forensics community believes, or there would only be one competitive event. We cannot treat all canons as exactly equal. That's unrealistic. To call any prioritization of criteria "profoundly unethical" insults judges who have identified one element of a performance as the deciding criterion. Arguing that all canons are equal puts our students in a terrible predicament if they use a notecard in either the status quo or the counter-proposal. They would privilege accuracy over delivery.

The simple fact is norms privilege students without a notecard. We must conclude *requiring notecard use* is a good policy.

First, widespread norms privilege students without notecards. The Negative argues that Extemp is not broken because some students have done well using notecards. Affirmative's argument that the *no-notecard-norm* holds sway in many areas goes unrefuted. Clearly there is "actual inequity."

Negative, argues that privileging memory by rewarding students who don't use a notecard creates a minimal tradeoff. The tradeoff is only minimal if the competitor has the innate predisposition to benefit from memory training. Again, this means coaches choose to make memory a litmus test of good extemporaneous speaking and disadvantage students without this talent. By agreeing that a tradeoff exists, the Negative is privileging one part of the canon over another, something they describe as "profoundly unethical." If tradeoffs exist, someone is privileging one thing above another.

The Negative argues that using *simple memory techniques* prevents students from making broader connections. However, all the techniques used by excellent memorizers prevent making broader connections! From years of teaching mathematics, I argue that students who quickly memorize a myriad of discrete facts for a test quickly forget those facts and often do not understand the deeper meaning behind those facts.

The Negative urges us to promote all canons. Under the Affirmative plan, Memory is promoted, a point the Negative has not refuted (students remember their argument and how everything ties together). Furthermore, the Negative does not explain why using notes detracts more from delivery than spending prep-time memorizing rather than practicing delivery. A student who doesn't memorize a dozen sources has more time to analyze a question, arrange arguments, and include stylistic devices. Finally, the Affirmative's proposal allows a student to privilege Memory by memorizing everything and glancing at the notecard occasionally, as many Interpers do. The Affirmative's plan allows for greater agency by students.

Misattribution: The Negative claims notes won't solve the problem, and points out what they believe to be an Affirmative misattribution. I argue first, that there is no reason to believe that notes will **not** notably decrease misattribution. Furthermore, coaches can now focus on the



other causes of misattribution, such as ignorance of procedure; rather than coaching memory techniques.

Regarding the supposed misattribution on the Affirmative's side, I must disagree. Reading other articles prompted me to remember reading the original article, and I remembered more than just what was in Schafer or Wheler's article. Thus, citing "Markstrom as presented in xxxx" would have been worse than misattribution; it would have been factually incorrect. If notes are required but misattribution occurs, we know it wasn't because of Memory, but was some other misunderstanding. Thus we are in a better position to teach concepts of research and citation. In this case, both sides know the source attribution was not subject to the vagaries of Memory, and could discuss that issue.

Finally, the Negative says the Affirmative's proposal uniquely disadvantages some students. Affirmative grants that some students would find preparing a notecard difficult for biological reasons, but some students would also struggle under the counterplan. Thus, the Negative's argument is nonunique, and does not need unique refutation. In fact, under the Affirmative's plan, students who struggle to write notes only need to write notes for themselves; under the counterplan, the student must write notes someone else can read.

If students wish to develop their memory in a competitive way they should compete in the World Memory Championships. In forensics, we teach a roughly balanced set of rhetorical skills. As we have failed to alter competitive norms regarding speaking from notes in extemp, we must alter the rules so students have a more level playing field – one that does not force them to choose between competitive norms and proper citation. Requiring students to use notecards in extemporaneous speeches provides the level playing field.

In the end the ballot is cast by the readers of the Issue Debate. Whether you find yourself casting siding with the Affirmative or the Negative our goal is that your position is more informed as a result of reading this debate. Our thanks to both the Affirmative and the Negative for their contributions.