

DAWG Power: The Synergy of Writing in Packs

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At root, intercollegiate debate is a collective activity. While there are moments of solitary labor, interactions mostly involve teamwork. Group brainstorming sessions, practice debates, argument construction, and contest rounds each involve significant elements of intellectual coordination, of both competitive and collaborative varieties.

Conversely, while there are moments of collective teamwork in professional scholarship, most of the activity involved in preparation and publishing of scholarly manuscripts is done in isolation: "[S]uccess in the academy depends largely on having one's work recognized as an individual accomplishment" (Ede & Lunsford, 2001, 357). The result is something of a mismatch, as the debate skill set fails to align smoothly with modes of labor expected from professional academics seeking to fashion publishing careers.

Might arrangements that promote co-authorship help harmonize modes of knowledge production in the two realms, transferring the intellectual synergy from the forensics setting to the academic publishing enterprise? Preliminary answers to this question emerge from our work with the Schenley Park Debate Authors Working Group (DAWG), a research consortium established at the University of Pittsburgh dedicated to co-production of debate-relevant scholarship.

¹ This essay grew out of collaborative research by the Schenley Park Debate Authors Working Group (DAWG), a consortium of public argument scholars at University of Pittsburgh striving to generate rigorous scholarship addressing the role of argumentation and debate in society. First author Gordon Mitchell led work on this DAWG essay, second author Carly Woods provided extensive editorial guidance, and all of the co-authors contributed substantially in areas of conceptual design, research, and writing. Gordon Mitchell is associate professor of communication and director of the William Pitt Debating Union at the University of Pittsburgh. Each of the other co-authors is a graduate student and current or former assistant coach of the William Pitt Debating Union in the Department of Communication at the University of Pittsburgh. Special thanks go to the pair of moose who permitted the lead author to descend from the mountain in time to deliver this paper (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PQi9roS6vD8>).

Since the last Alta conference, Schenley Park DAWG work products have been accepted for publication in *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* (English et al., 2007) *The Quarterly Journal of Speech* (Mitchell, 2006) and *Contemporary Argumentation and Debate* (Woods et al., 2007) as well as selected for inclusion in the proceedings of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation (Rief, 2007). Using these projects as a testing ground, the Schenley Park DAWG has developed and refined guidelines that stipulate qualifying criteria for co-authorship and determine the order in which authors are to be listed in collaborative articles. In the following pages, we frame discussion of these activities within the wider context of professional development challenges isolated in the Sedalia Conference (McBath, 1975), the National Developmental Conference on Forensics (Parson, 1984), and the 1993 Quail Roost Caucus (Dauber, et al., 1993).

Our aim here is to reflect on the process of academic knowledge production as it relates to the sociology of intercollegiate debate, using the DAWG example as a reference point to explore the potential and pitfalls of argumentation co-authorship. This analysis comes on the heels of a recent study documenting an uptick of multiple authored publications in the field of communication (Kramer, Hess & Reid, 2007), calls for more teamwork in rhetorical scholarship (Aune, 2007), and commentary suggesting that the time is ripe for contemplation of new modes of knowledge production in the academy (Jensen, 2007).

Debate as a Scholarly Endeavor

Academic scholarship contributes to the long-term vitality of intercollegiate debate, by securing institutional support for the activity, bolstering the intellectual freedom of participants, and engendering mutually informing conversations between debate scholars and interlocutors beyond the debate community.

In return, debate scholars have played prominent roles in steering the nascent field of speech communication. For example, Douglas Ehninger and Wayne Brockriede were intimately involved in early efforts to carve out a space for argumentation theory by using analyses of forensics as a point of departure for scholarship that connects trends in the

debate activity with more general treatments of debate as a mode of democratic decision-making (see e.g. Brockriede, 1972; Ehninger, 1970; Ehninger and Brockriede, 1960, 1972).

An earlier attempt to analyze debate from a scholarly standpoint prefigures recent concerns about contemporary trends in intercollegiate forensics. Frank Hardy Lane (1915) argues that the production of evidence and speeches by coaches has the potential to undermine the pedagogical goals of the debate activity while cultivating an unhealthy fetish for pure competition. Given today's increasingly difficult task of producing scholarship while coaching a successful team, Lane's commentary seems both apt and prophetic.

Perhaps this is why G. Thomas Goodnight called for the rapprochement of argumentation scholarship and debate practice at the second Alta conference (Goodnight, 1981). While some have taken up the call and written about the interpenetration of argument theory and practice in contest rounds (see e.g. Kauffman, 1991; Mitchell, 1998; Munksgaard and Pfister, 2005; Panetta, 1990; Rowland and Fritch, 1989), the tradition of debate scholars actively producing manuscripts in the communication field seems to have melted into the background as the pursuit of competitive success has become ever more labor intensive. Heightened sportification of the debate activity, general decline of interest in scholarly knowledge production on the part of debate coaches, and erosion of tenure-stream faculty lines for directors of debate are just a few markers of this trend.

Debate sportification presents most debate coaches with a Hobson's choice – produce academic scholarship or coach a successful team. Travel schedules, research assignments, and three to four day tournaments combine to exercise a temporal tyranny over those young debate coaches who struggle to find time for academic pursuits beyond the competitive tournament grid. One result is that some of the most talented scholars are cornered out of the competitive debate activity because it does not allow them the time or incentive to work on other interests such as publishing and teaching (Parson, 1990, 70). Intercollegiate debate, once the powerful engine that launched an entire field of academic scholarship, is evolving into a cultish sport whose academic relevance is increasingly open to question.

While the sheer intensity of labor involved in contemporary intercollegiate debate accounts for some of the difficulties facing young participants seeking to launch academic research careers, there are also structural factors complicating the debate-to-scholar metamorphosis. Intercollegiate debate is driven by collective knowledge production shaped by both competitive and collaborative forces. While competitive pressures provide motivation for debaters to do research in order to defeat opposing teams, *esprit de corps* spurs team members to work harder on common projects designed to leverage contest round preparation.

The nature of competition in academia, of course, is much different. While debaters derive research agendas from a single, focused resolution, academics face a virtually limitless research horizon. Debaters receive prompt, face-to-face feedback from experts responding to their work, while peer review timelines are notoriously long in academic publishing. And most basically, in an academic world where assessment criteria are often vague or even non-existent, scholars find few counterparts to the tournament trophies and speaker point awards that motivate intercollegiate debaters. Debaters become accustomed to a variety of resources at their disposal: coaches, fellow debaters, case lists, backfiles, blogs, and email listserves with hundreds of subscribers. As scholars, they may find only a small handful of mentors or colleagues who are well-versed in their areas of research, so the sheer volume of research cues drops dramatically.

Co-authorship: Sedalia's Blind Spot?

The Sedalia Conference provided a powerful vision for forensic educators. Noting a growing disconnect between academic departments and forensic programs, Sedalia laid out a series of goals that could help to bridge this divide. Unfortunately, while the adopted resolutions were helpful in imagining a new future for forensics, they were less useful in marking precise routes charting courses to such imagined futures.

One of the dilemmas facing those who are sympathetic but not yet sold on Sedalia is that with most forensic educators time-strapped to begin with, the idea of doing additional research and publishing seems unrealistic. Indeed, many coaches choose not to publish. Others publish, but do so on an "internalist" model, that is, reporting on trends

and issues in the debate community, without linking their work to wider conversations in the academy. Still others establish separate personas, developing research with only tangential connections to their debate identities. The Schenley Park DAWG strives to link analysis of trends/practices/problems in the debate community to larger issues facing the academy and world. This approach has potential to save coaches' time by allowing them to write about issues in their area of expertise, while also generating valuable intellectual production that is respected by colleagues in and out of the debate community.

Traveling to tournaments every weekend, judging debates, and assisting with research – all of these responsibilities might make pursuit of an active research agenda appear daunting. Therefore, to supplement Sedalia's vision of the forensic educator as active, respected intellectual, we call for a new model of publication that utilizes another skill acquired in debate, knowledge co-production. Most debaters quickly learn that debate is a squad-centered activity, and they therefore learn to work well with others. However, when debaters go on to do graduate work, and then to eventually take academic appointments, they quickly learn that the scholarly situation in the academy is radically more atomized. The Quail Roost draft document, for instance, while emphatic in its position that directors should be judged comprehensively in tenure and promotion decisions, does not consider the possibility of intellectual production being a collaborative project (at most, it references the need for forensic directors to have research assistants to help them in their presumably solitary publication activities).

Fortunately, the winds of change in academia are blowing in a favorable direction on this front. The next section explores how a softening of the sole-author norm in the academy creates opportunities for new forms of debate scholarship to emerge.

The Synergy of Pack Writing

Within academic fields such as medicine, economics, and the sciences, co-authorship is common practice (Aonuma, 2001, 7). In response to concerns regarding abuses such as authorship inflation and downplaying the contributions of junior scholars and graduate students, there have been considerable efforts to address co-authorship as part of ethical research conduct (Drenth, 1998; Kwok, 2005). Professional associations, institutions, and

research journals have developed sophisticated guidelines and practices to determine issues such as who may qualify as a co-author, how co-authors should be listed in a given article, and what forms of academic recognition are due to each scholar participating in a collaborative project (see e.g. American Psychological Association, 2001; Biagioli et al., 1999).

Inspired in part by these examples, but noting that there is little discussion of collaborative research protocol within the communication field in general and the intercollegiate debate community in particular, the Schenley Park DAWG formed a committee to craft its own co-authorship guidelines. The committee's task was to fashion a set of expectations specific to the aims of the working group: production of a particular form of argumentation scholarship that either makes intercollegiate debating a point of departure for analysis of issues beyond the debate community, or alternately deploys an "outside-in" approach that uses analysis of intercollegiate debate as a destination point for analysis that starts with treatment of topics relevant to wider society.

These guidelines (see Appendix 1) provide a framework for intellectual collaboration that enables satisfying and rewarding production of high-caliber academic work. They lay out the stages of knowledge production for each project, calling for the substantial involvement of all contributing authors in the key creative dimensions of conceptual invention, research and writing/revising (cf. Jones, 2000, 13; Flanagan, et al, 2002).

Finally, the guidelines seek to preemptively address potential controversies regarding who qualifies as an author and the order in which they should be acknowledged in published material. Wolseley (1980) defines a co-author as "the writer of approximately half a book's text, sharing equally on space, earnings, and expenses, and participating fully in decision-making" (20). However, real-world collaboration cannot always be so clearly divided (Day & Eodice, 2001, 137; see also Fox & Faver, 1984). The Schenley Park DAWG guidelines attend to this issue by clearly enumerating the responsibilities of the lead author, senior author, and other co-authors. Since a key challenge involves convincing institutional audiences of the value of collaborative work products, the guidelines are also accompanied by a worksheet (see Appendix II) designed

to make transparent each co-author's contributions to any given project. Such transparency has potential to reduce the phenomenon of "honorary authorship," or "ghostwriting," a problem in the medical field where the proportion of authors whose published contributions do not meet authorship criteria is significant, even reaching 21.5% on one journal (Bates, et al., 2004, 87-88; Laine & Mulrow, 2005). Information disclosed in the DAWG author worksheet can also serve as a valuable resource in administrative assessment settings. For example, the worksheet received a favorable hearing during the lead author's 2007 annual faculty review at the University of Pittsburgh, where a co-authored DAWG article (Woods, et al., 2007) was evaluated by a department chair seeking to calibrate judgments regarding annual research output of a single faculty member.

The DAWG's recent experiments in collaborative knowledge production shed light on particular challenges involved in the co-authorship of scholarship related to debate and argumentation. Co-authorship seems particularly well-suited for members of the debate community because it engages a familiar process of internal deliberation and argumentation. Mirroring the creation and refinement of argument briefs for competitive debate, the collaborative brainstorming, revision, and decision-making that goes into co-authored scholarship involves reworking arguments for eventual presentation to wider publics. Co-authors provide unique perspectives, which add depth to the arguments and can energize their peers towards new ideas in the back-and-forth exchange that characterizes the project at its various stages of completion.

Conclusion

This essay has focused on the Schenley Park DAWG, a small working group striving to convert the collaborative energy of intercollegiate debate into production of rigorous academic scholarship. Should conditions for extrapolation of this approach obtain, synergistic DAWG power could provide an impetus to roll back sportification of the intercollegiate policy debate activity. For example, grant monies could be awarded competitively to young debate scholars wishing to buy out portions of their judging commitments at intercollegiate debate tournaments, freeing the scholars to work

collaboratively on publishing projects at the tournament site. Rigorous and theoretically grounded systems for academic knowledge co-production could enable current and former forensics coaches to increase scholarly productivity, thereby strengthening the pillars of institutional support that enable intercollegiate debate to thrive over the long-term. Instantiating norms and habits of co-authorship may also make conditions more favorable for argumentation scholars to pursue the sort of interdisciplinary research that is common in fields such as medicine and public health, where collaborative knowledge production is acknowledged as an essential response to the challenge of analyzing multifaceted phenomena.

Cooperative research and co-authorship may not be a panacea for all of the problems isolated at Sedalia and Quail Roost, but it may provide a key corrective. Debate coaches and students are measured against other individuals in the field including graduate students and tenure stream faculty who are not involved in intercollegiate academic debate and are therefore able to spend much more time on their scholarly endeavors. A robust defense of cooperative scholarship might help to right the ship and give debate scholars room to breathe. Even more, it might regain a place for debate scholarship in the wider disciplinary framework of communication. Debate scholars working cooperatively to produce outstanding scholarship might also help to rejuvenate debate, not only as a site of scholarly production but also a critical point of access for future scholars in multiple fields.

Appendix I

SCHENLEY PARK DEBATE AUTHORS WORKING GROUP GUIDELINES FOR CO-AUTHORSHIP OF WORK PRODUCTS

Revised from a draft document generated by the DAWG co-authorship committee (John Rief & Carly Woods), polished and approved by acclamation at the December 1, 2006 DAWG meeting.
Revisions approved April 22, 2007 (e-mail ballot).

The Schenley Park Debate Authors Working Group (DAWG) sees authorship as a significant aspect of academic research, one that deserves careful and rigorous treatment, given its ethical and professional implications.¹ We believe that it is important that participants in the DAWG have a clear, common understanding of the standards for authorship at the outset of each project.

Given the history of outstanding co-authorship throughout the field of rhetoric, argumentation theory, and debate scholarship, it is surprising that there is still a paucity of guidelines for conducting collaborative research in this area.² As intellectual collaboration is the lifeblood of intercollegiate academic debate, it is appropriate that sound and workable guidelines be developed for translating collective intellectual labor into professional argumentation scholarship.

I. Co-Authorship Guidelines for the Debate Author's Working Group³

It is our belief that the practice of co-authorship should involve the substantial involvement of all contributing authors. Substantial involvement is defined by the following criteria, which must be met by each individual who will be listed as an author in the final work. Under each major heading, there are several modes of involvement that contributors may select.

¹ As representatives of the University of Pittsburgh, we assume that all research activities conducted by the DAWG will comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Guidelines for Ethical Research, available at <http://www.pitt.edu/~provost/ethresearch.html>.

² The following examples should suffice to indicate the quality of co-authorship that has been advanced: Ronald Walter Greene and Darrin Hicks, "Lost Convictions: Debating Both Sides and the Ethical Self-Fashioning of Liberal Citizens," *Cultural Studies*, 19.1 (2005): 100-126; Kathryn M. Olson and G. Thomas Goodnight, "Entanglements of Consumption, Cruelty, Privacy, and Fashion: The Social Controversy Over Fur," *The Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 80.3 (August, 1994): 249-276; Chaim Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric: A Treatise on Argumentation*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1969); Celeste M. Condit, Benjamin R. Bates, Ryan Galloway, Sonja Brown Givens, Caroline K. Haynie, John W. Jordan, Gordon Stables, and Hollis Marshall West, "Recipes or Blueprints for Our Genes? How Contexts Selectively Activate the Multiple Meanings of Metaphors," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (August 2002): 303-26; Gordon R. Mitchell, Damien Pfister, Georgeta Bradatan, Dejan Colev, Tsvetelina Manolova, Gligor Mitkovski, Ivanichka Nestorova, Milena Ristic and Gentiana Sheshi, "Navigating Dangerous Deliberative Waters: Shallow Argument Pools, Group Polarization and Public Debate Pedagogy in Southeast Europe," *Controversia: An International Journal of Debate and Democratic Renewal* 4 (2006): 69-84.

³ These guidelines were developed in large part through a revision of the guidelines established by the NHMRC / AVCC (National Health and Medical Research Council / Australian Vice Chancellors' Committee) Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice (1997). This statement can be found at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/funding/policy/researchprac.htm#6>. We also consulted guidelines developed in other areas of study including those produced by the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

DAWG co-authorship guidelines

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A. Inventional Process: We recognize the importance of the initial phase of creation that helps to set the stage for collaboration in the first place and the importance of linking up with individuals throughout the process of writing and research who can make additional substantial contributions critical to the project's completion. For this reason, we believe that co-authors should be involved in the initial conception of the project, mapping the goals and methods for completion of the project, or contributing substantial intellectual labor throughout evolution of the project as goals and the overall conception of the piece shift and change to meet new understandings and research findings.

B. Writing and Revising: We also recognize the importance of substantial written contributions to the collaborative work effort as these justify the use of the term "author" in the first place; however, we believe that "authorship" can be understood in a broader sense to include both the initial contribution of substantial writing or the contribution of substantial written revisions later on in the process. Both of these activities imply a deep investment in the construction of the work at hand. For this reason, a co-author may be understood as an individual who drafts substantial original material or makes written contributions by proposing substantial revisions throughout the process.

C. Research: Given the importance of research both in terms of the production of scholarly works and the development of arguments for the intercollegiate academic debate contest round, it is our belief that it should play an important role in the collaborative process of co-authorship. For this reason, substantial contributions in this area include setting the initial research agenda through a cooperative process of identifying where the working group should seek out relevant information and what kinds of information are most important to the completion of the project, working through primary and secondary source material in order to identify the most important elements to include in the final project, and finally synthesizing the research that has been completed so as to craft a final coherent product.

D. Final Approval: As with any collaborative work effort, it is important that all individuals involved, should they wish to be identified as authors, give their consent to the final project. This avoids confusion, controversy, and de-legitimation of the work effort after it has gone on to the publishing phase.

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II. Order of Authors⁴

To ensure that all participants have a common understanding of research responsibilities, and to avoid confusion, we believe that it is important to establish the order of authors, including a lead author and a senior author (if appropriate).

A. The lead author (listed first) will be responsible for:

- Contributing key written material;
- Corresponding with journal editors and conveying necessary information to other DAWG members involved in the project;
- Synthesizing material contributed by co-authors, e.g. by knitting together sections, generating thesis statements and implications or conclusions;
- Confirming that the content contributed to the project meets the ethical and quality standards of the group;
- Making final decisions about the order of authors and those included in the acknowledgments.

B. The senior author (listed last) will be responsible for:

- Mentoring the first author in the above tasks;
- Providing senior leadership and guidance to the entire group of co-authors throughout the process, from development of the concept to final submission of the manuscript.

C. We believe that those who have made significant contributions (as defined above) are entitled to be included as co-authors. Where there is a clear difference in the size of these contributions, this will be reflected in the order of these authors.

D. All others who fulfill the criteria for co-authorship with equal contributions will be included in alphabetical order of their last names.

E. If all authors feel that they have contributed equally, this can be indicated in a footnote or by directing readers to the DAWG Co-authorship Guidelines.

⁴ Suggestions on the order of authors are adapted from the British Sociological Association, "Authorship Guidelines for Academic Papers," 2001, available at http://www.britisoc.co.uk/Library/authorship_01.pdf.

Appendix II

SCHENLEY PARK DEBATE AUTHORS WORKING GROUP CO-AUTHORSHIP WORKSHEET

This worksheet breaks down a single scholar's contributions to the collaborative work product listed below.
Categories and concept derived from the
Schenley Park Debate Authors Working Group Guidelines for Co-Authorship of Work Products 2.0



Name of co-author:
Title of article:

To qualify as a co-author for a Schenley Park Debate Authors Working Group article, scholars must demonstrate "substantial involvement" in each of the following areas listed below: invention; research; writing and revising.

INVENTION

Check at least one box

- Involvement in initial project conception
- Assistance in mapping goals and methods for project
- Intellectual contribution to drive project evolution

Qualitative description of contribution in this area

-
-
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RESEARCH

Check at least one box

- Involvement in setting the research agenda
- Retrieval of primary or secondary source material
- Synthesis of research for presentation in article

Qualitative description of contribution in this area

-
-
-

WRITING AND REVISING

Check at least one box

- Contribution of substantial written text
- Contribution of suggested revisions
- Execution of substantial revisions

Qualitative description of contribution in this area

-
-
-

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