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**A DETERMINATION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
SEVEN KNOWN FACTORS AND A STUDENT'S  
SUCCESS IN DEBATE**

By


**Kenneth J. Erickson**

A thesis submitted  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree Master of Science at South Dakota  
State College of Agriculture  
and Mechanic Arts

June, 1956

A DETERMINATION OF RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN SEVEN KNOWN FACTORS  
AND A STUDENT'S SUCCESS  
IN DEBATE

This thesis is approved as a creditable, independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and acceptable as meeting the thesis requirements for this degree; but without implying that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

 Thesis Advisor


 Head of the Major Department

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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The writer also wishes to express his sincere thanks to Superintendent Lester D. Horrigan of Brookings City Schools, and to the teachers of Brookings High School who provided information in response to the questionnaires.

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## SECTION I

### Introduction

High school principals consider the state championship debaters to be ~~outstanding in every respect~~: in scholarship, leadership, personality, activities, and professional success after high school. These debaters have distinctive personalities and ~~demonstrate leadership both in and outside of the classroom~~. The principals evaluated these students as scholastic leaders, with many of them receiving university scholarships upon graduation from high school. The superior intelligence of the group was acknowledged. It is apparent that school administrators consider the championship debaters to have been ~~the distinguished citizens in their schools~~.<sup>1</sup>

Personal contact with debaters and debate coaches throughout the state of South Dakota gives support to the claim that proficient debaters are also distinguished school citizens. There are also distinguished school citizens who are not proficient debaters. Research in this area of study using control groups indicate that distinctive personality, high intelligence, and scholastic leadership are not the unique characteristics of debaters.<sup>2</sup>

Many debate coaches believe that there are certain factors that a student has that are directly related to success in debate. Harold P. Sampson, veteran debate coach at Watertown High School, says that

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<sup>1</sup> Donald E. Hargis, "A Note on Championship Debaters," The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XLIV (February, 1948), p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> Hugh W. Gillis, "A Study of Some Characteristics of Superior Speech Majors," Speech Monographs, XIV (Research Annual 1947), p. 165.

grades in mathematics and English indicate success in debate.<sup>3</sup> Donald J. McCarty, Superintendent and debate coach at the high school in Colman, South Dakota, believes mental ability and mathematics grades are the best indicators of probable success in debate.<sup>4</sup> Others like Alton P. Schenk, debate coach at the high school in Iankton, South Dakota, believe the student's personality and class rank to be of importance to superior debating.<sup>5</sup>

In South Dakota, debating is becoming highly competitive among both class "A" and class "B" schools. Debate coaches, in an effort to develop better teams, try to predict which students will respond to coaching and become superior debaters. This research attempts to determine the relationship between known factors and a student's success in debate.

#### Review of Literature

Only a limited amount of printed material has been compiled by persons interested in characteristics of debaters. In fact, very few studies have been made by persons writing theses for master's or doctor's degrees on the relationship of known factors and a student's success in debate. There is no research dealing with speech on file at South Dakota State College that has been written by a student of that institution.

Richard N. Thompson, in an essay presented to the Faculty of the

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<sup>3</sup> Statement by Harold P. Sampson, personal interview.

<sup>4</sup> Statement by Donald J. McCarty, personal interview.

<sup>5</sup> Statement by Alton P. Schenk, personal interview.



Graduate School of San Diego Army and Navy Academy, tried to show the relationship between intelligence and success in debate. For his study he used subjects who were members of the National Forensic League. This organization is a standard national honor society established in over seventy-five per cent of our states and evaluates debating by a series of points and degrees. Thompson states that:

While these results of this study are not as extensive as I might wish, in conjunction with my former work, they prove fairly positively that:

1. Successful debaters can seldom be picked from the lower half of the class, or with an average I.Q. much below 117.
2. Generally speaking, the higher the I.Q. the better brand of debating.
3. In general, the better the success of a debating team, the higher their intelligence.

It would seem from this study that in most cases a debate coach might well limit his initially picked squads to those having an I.Q. of 117 or better if he is working for victories for his school.<sup>6</sup>

Donald E. Hargis, instructor in Public Speaking at the University of California at Los Angeles, in a study of the Michigan High School Forensic Association, compares scholastic standing, leadership, participation in extra-curricular activities, with debate proficiency. Hargis states that:

"Practically all of the returned questionnaires contained comments on the individual debaters. These comments indicate that high school principals considered the championship debaters to be outstanding in every respect: in scholarship, leadership, personality, activities, and professional success after high school."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Richard W. Thompson, "The Intelligence of High School Debaters", The Quarterly Journal of Speech, IVII (June, 1931), p. 403.

<sup>7</sup> Donald E. Hargis, "A Note on Championship Debaters", The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XXXIV (February, 1948), p. 58.

Hugh W. Gillis, in a dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of State College, San Jose, California, undertook to determine whether there are characteristics which accompany success in the field of speech training. Gillis states that:

"It has long been assumed by teachers of speech, but without adequate investigation or proof, that outstanding performance work in speech is usually accompanied by certain factors of personal or mental make-up not necessarily found in students doing average or inferior work in speech. Moreover, the field of speech is woefully lacking in any means of forecasting possible success objectively through the use of concentrated but inclusive examinations of a standardized type."<sup>8</sup>

Glyde W. Dow, in an essay presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Massachusetts State College at Amherst, attempted directly to determine the relationship of intelligence to ability in public speaking.

Dow states that:

"There seems to be very little, if any relationship between ability in public speaking and intelligence. The abilities required to do well in public speaking are, apparently, quite different from those required to obtain high scores on scholastic aptitude or intelligence tests. Ability in public speaking seems to have a much more significant relation to personality than to intelligence."<sup>9</sup>

Elwood Murray, in an attempt to find some relationship between better speakers and personality found that:

"The best speakers are extraordinarily high in self-sufficiency and dominance. The poor speakers are just the opposite."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Hugh W. Gillis, "A Study of Some Characteristics of Superior Majors", Speech Monographs, XIV (Research Annual, 1947), p. 165.

<sup>9</sup> Glyde W. Dow, "Intelligence and Ability in Public Performance", The Quarterly Journal of Speech, XIVII (February, 1941), p. 111.

<sup>10</sup> Elwood Murray, "A Study of Factors Contributing to the Maldevelopment of the Speech Personality", Speech Monographs, III (1936), p. 95.

History of Debate at Brookings High School

Some form of speech work, as far as this writer is able to determine, has always been a part of the curriculum at Brookings High School. Brookings High School became a four year secondary school in 1907.<sup>11</sup> Speech work was introduced at that time in the literary societies. Each of the four classes had its own literary society and oratory was the important speech event. Competition in oratory was among classes. Orations were prepared and delivered before the people of Brookings.<sup>12</sup> In 1911 the literary society as a definite organization was placed in Brookings High School. They were now formed on a school basis rather than a class basis and organized debating put in its first appearance. Three societies were formed and each competed for the talent in the school. The purpose of the societies is described in the school annual of 1918,

On October 11th, 1911, some members of the faculty were inspired by the idea; that as long as students seemed to try to amuse each other during school hours, why not give them a half-holiday every two or three weeks in which to give a formal entertainment to their classmates.<sup>13</sup>

In 1919 the first inter-school debate was held with Watertown. Three inter-school debates were held that year. Most debating was still among the literary societies of the school.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Phenom, (Annual of the class of 1909, Brookings High School.)

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> The Bomb, (Annual of the class of 1918, Brookings High School)

<sup>14</sup> Statement by Herbert Cheever, personal interview.

Debating at this time was accomplished by the use of three speakers on the affirmative and three on the negative. Each speaker gave a twelve minute constructive and five minute rebuttal speech.

As far as this writer knows, the exact year two-man team debating started in Brookings High School is not available. Neither is the exact date available when the literary societies were replaced by what is now known as extra class activities. It is believed these two changes took place in 1926 and by 1928, with the publication of the first Bobcat, interschool debating was in full swing. Debaters participated in eight inter-school tournaments that year.<sup>15</sup>

Debate has remained an extra class activity to the present with the exception of the year 1945. It was in this year that a debate coach could not be hired as a faculty member.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The Bobcat, (Annual of the Class of 1928, Brookings High School).

<sup>16</sup> Statement by Lester D. Harrigan, personal interview.

## SECTION II

### Purpose

The purpose of this study is to determine if there is a relationship between known factors about a student and that student's success in debate.

### Procedure

In order to make this study, the researcher selected the period 1942 through 1955 and listed all persons who had participated in interscholastic debating at least once during his four years of high school.

A scale was then set up to rate each debater as being superior, excellent, average, fair, or poor. This scale was sent out as an opinionnaire to seven instructors and administrators who were familiar with the debating achievements of these students.

Since a personality rating was also desired, the students studied were rated not only in debating proficiency, but were also given a rating on a personality scale.

In answering the opinionnaire, each respondent was asked by checking to assign both a debating rating and a personality rating to each student included in the study. The values were designated:

#### Debate

1. Superior
2. Excellent
3. Average
4. Fair
5. Poor

#### Personality

1. Superior
2. Excellent
3. Average
4. Fair
5. Poor

A total of forty-seven students had participated in at least one inter-scholastic debate contest. All of the forty-seven were used in this study.

Aside from the personality rating of each student, six other known factors of each debater were determined from the permanent record cards of the students who had attended Brookings High School and the Kuder Preference Record - Vocational. The six factors were:

1. Persuasive Interest.
2. Class percentile rank.
3. English grade.
4. Mathematics grade.
5. Number of extra class activities in which the student participated.
6. Intelligence Quotient.

Persuasive interests of each student were taken from the Kuder Preference Record - Vocational. It is one of the ten areas of interest listed by this form. Class percentile rank, English score, mathematics score, activity participation, and I.Q. were taken from the permanent records. Debate proficiency and personality ratings were secured from the opinionnaire.

### SECTION III

#### Study Results

In tabulating the survey dealing with debate proficiency of the forty-seven students who had participated in at least one inter-scholastic debate, the number of students ranked superior, excellent, average, fair, and poor were as follows:

Superior	9
Excellent	21
Average	15
Fair	2
Poor	0

The teachers and administrators who ranked these debaters seemed to be generally in agreement as to the debating proficiency of the students. In the majority of cases there were few who rated the debaters more than one value from the student's average rating.

None of the students were rated poor and only two were considered fair. This result was expected because only students who had participated in inter-scholastic competition were used in this study. Approximately sixty-four per cent of the group were rated superior or excellent in debate and about thirty per cent were rated as average.

In Table I, which shows the proficiency ratings of debaters as scored by seven administrators and teachers, the students are identified by a number and the teachers who ranked the debaters used a capital letter to prevent their identity from being known to anyone but the writer.

In tabulating the survey dealing with the personality of the forty-seven debaters who had participated in at least one inter-scholastic

TABLE I

Proficiency Ratings of Debaters by Seven  
Administrators and Teachers

Student	Teachers							Total	Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
1	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35	5.
2	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	20	2.85
3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35	5.
4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35	5.
5	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	21	3.
6	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	23	3.28
7	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35	5.
8	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	29	4.14
9	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	23	3.28
10	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	22	3.14
11	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	28	4.
12	3	4	5	4	3	5	4	28	4.
13	3	3	4	3	3	5	3	24	3.41
14	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	32	4.57
15	3	4	5	4	4	4	2	26	3.71
16	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	26	3.71
17	3	3	4	2	3	3	3	21	3.
18	3	5	5	5	5	4	5	32	4.57



**TABLE I (Continued)**  
**Proficiency Ratings of Debaters by Seven**  
**Administrators and Teachers**

Student	Teachers							Total	Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
19	3	4	5	2	4	4	4	26	3.71
20	4	5	5	4	4	4	4	30	4.28
21	3	4	3	1	3	4	3	21	3.
22	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	31	4.43
23	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	29	4.11
24	4	3	5	4	4	4	3	27	3.85
25	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	23	3.28
26	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	31	4.43
27	3	4	3	3	3	4	2	22	3.11
28	4	4	5	5	4	5	4	31	4.43
29	4	4	5	4	4	4	4	29	4.11
30	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	29	4.11
31	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	20	2.85
32	3	2	3	1	2	3	2	16	2.28
33	4	4	5	4	5	4	4	30	4.28
34	3	5	5	3	5	4	4	29	4.11
35	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	29	4.11
36	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	32	4.57

TABLE I (Continued)

**Proficiency Ratings of Debaters by Seven  
Administrators and Teachers**

Student	Teachers							Total	Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
37	4	4	5	4	3	4	3	27	3.85
38	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	33	4.71
39	3	4	3	4	5	4	4	27	3.85
40	3	2	3	1	3	2	3	17	2.43
41	3	5	5	4	4	4	4	29	4.14
42	3	4	4	2	3	3	2	21	3.
43	4	5	5	5	4	4	3	30	4.28
44	4	3	3	2	3	3	3	21	3.
45	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	34	4.88
46	3	4	4	3	3	4	3	24	3.43
47	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	23	3.28

**Key:**

4.6 - 5.0	Superior
3.6 - 4.5	Excellent
2.6 - 3.5	Average
1.6 - 2.5	Fair
0.0 - 1.5	Poor

debate contest, the number of students ranked superior, excellent, average, fair, and poor were as follows:

Superior	9
Excellent	28
Average	8
Fair	2
Poor	0

The teachers and administrators who rated the debater's personality seemed to be in general agreement. In the majority of instances there were few who rated the personalities of these students over one value from their average rating.

None of the debaters had their personalities rated as poor. Two student's personalities were rated as fair and it was the same two students who rated fair in debate. Five students who ranked superior in debate were also rated as having superior personalities. In the majority of instances, those debaters who rate average in debate were ranked excellent in personality. Excellent rated debaters were generally rated excellent in personality. Most of the debater's personalities were rated as excellent. There were more debaters given superior personality ratings than average personality ratings.

In Table II, showing the personality ratings of debaters as scored by seven administrators and teachers, the students are codified by number and the teachers and administrators by letter so that their identity will remain unknown.

The Kuder Preference Record - Vocational, Form O, was used to determine the persuasive interest of the students. Persons with a high persuasive interest like to meet and deal with people and to promote

projects or things to sell. Kuder has found that most actors, politicians, radio announcers, ministers, salesmen, and store clerks have high persuasive interests.<sup>17</sup>

This research tends to agree with Murray's findings. "The best speakers are extraordinarily high in self-sufficiency and dominance; they tend to be extroverts, many of them markedly so. The poor speakers are just the opposite. They are very low in self-sufficiency, very markedly introverted, and they tend to be submissive."<sup>18</sup>

Only fifteen of the students in this study ranked below the 50th percentile in persuasive interest. Almost half the students ranked above the 70th percentile. Nine students ranked below the 25th percentile. Over twenty per cent of the debaters ranked above the 90th percentile.

The Intelligence Quotient of the forty-seven debaters was taken from the California Test of Mental Maturity. The debaters tended to score high on this test. Only one student scored below 100. About forty per cent scored over 120.

Table V shows the class percentile rank of each of the forty-seven students in this study. It is interesting to note that over thirty per cent of the debaters ranked at the 90th percentile of their respective class. Over sixty per cent of the students ranked in the upper quartile of their respective class. Only two debaters ranked below the 50th percentile of their class.

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<sup>17</sup> Kuder Preference Record - Vocational, (Form C, self-interpreting).

<sup>18</sup> Elwood Murray, "A Study of Factors Contributing to the Maldevelopment of the Speech Personality, Speech Monographs, III (1936), 95.

TABLE II

**Personality Ratings of Debaters by Seven  
Administrators and Teachers**

Student	Teachers							Total	Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
1	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	34	4.85
2	3	4	4	3	5	5	4	28	4.
3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	35	5.
4	4	5	4	4	4	5	5	31	4.43
5	4	4	4	3	4	5	4	28	4.
6	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	24	3.47
7	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	34	4.85
8	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	33	4.71
9	3	4	4	3	4	5	4	27	3.85
10	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	28	4.
11	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	28	4.
12	5	5	4	4	5	5	3	31	4.43
13	2	4	3	2	3	4	4	22	3.14
14	3	5	4	4	5	3	4	28	4.
15	3	3	2	3	4	4	3	22	3.14
16	4	4	5	4	5	3	4	29	4.24
17	5	3	4	2	4	4	3	25	3.57
18	3	5	4	3	4	4	3	26	3.71

TABLE II (Continued)

Personality Ratings of Debaters by Seven  
Administrators and Teachers

Student	Teachers							Total	Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
19	4	4	5	2	4	5	4	28	4.
20	3	5	4	4	5	5	4	30	4.28
21	3	5	3	2	4	3	4	24	3.41
22	2	4	2	3	3	1	3	18	2.57
23	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	25	3.57
24	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	31	4.43
25	4	4	5	5	5	5	4	32	4.57
26	4	4	4	5	4	4	4	29	4.14
27	3	5	4	3	3	4	4	26	3.71
28	3	5	3	4	4	4	4	27	3.85
29	4	4	4	4	5	4	4	29	4.14
30	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	30	4.28
31	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	24	3.41
32	2	2	2	1	2	2	3	14	2.
33	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	32	4.57
34	4	4	4	3	4	5	3	27	3.85
35	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	24	3.41

TABLE II (Continued)

Personality Ratings of Debaters by Seven  
Administrators and Teachers

Student	Teachers							Total	Average
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
36	4	5	5	3	5	4	4	30	4.28
37	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	27	3.85
38	4	5	5	5	5	5	4	33	4.71
39	4	4	5	4	4	5	4	30	4.28
40	2	2	3	1	4	3	2	17	2.43
41	4	4	4	4	5	5	3	29	4.14
42	2	3	2	2	4	3	3	19	2.71
43	5	5	5	5	5	5	4	34	4.85
44	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	26	3.71
45	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	34	4.85
46	2	3	3	3	5	5	4	25	3.57
47	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	26	3.71

## Key:

4.6 - 5.0	Superior
3.6 - 4.5	Excellent
2.6 - 3.5	Average
1.6 - 2.5	Fair
0.0 - 1.5	Poor

TABLE III

Persuasive Interest  
of Debaters

Student	Persuasive Inter- est Percentile	Student	Persuasive Inter- est Percentile
1	98	25	99
2	45	26	65
3	96	27	61
4	45	28	70
5	20	29	50
6	76	30	60
7	95	31	45
8	80	32	1
9	98	33	4
10	52	34	20
11	5	35	99
12	50	36	99
13	40	37	82
14	80	38	70
15	45	39	68
16	30	40	8



TABLE III (Continued)

Persuasive Interest  
of Debaters

Student	Persuasive Interest Percentile	Student	Persuasive Interest Percentile
17	55	41	85
18	92	42	90
19	75	43	15
20	99	44	80
21	10	45	75
22	86	46	40
23	95	47	50
24	30		

TABLE IV

Intelligence Quotient  
of Debaters

Student	Intelligence Quotient	Student	Intelligence Quotient
1	135	25	129
2	110	26	138
3	131	27	105
4	120	28	125
5	122	29	125
6	120	30	117
7	112	31	115
8	118	32	115
9	111	33	136
10	127	34	126
11	120	35	113
12	127	36	135
13	122	37	122
14	130	38	132
15	121	39	131
16	118	40	87

TABLE IV (Continued)

Intelligence Quotient  
of Debaters

Student	Intelligence Quotient	Student	Intelligence Quotient
17	125	41	118
18	110	42	128
19	129	43	115
20	138	44	129
21	127	45	127
22	136	46	109
23	119	47	119
24	110		

TABLE V

Class Percentile Rank  
of Debaters

Student	Percentile Class Rank	Student	Percentile Class Rank
1	95	25	95
2	66	26	84
3	98	27	55
4	90	28	96
5	46	29	76
6	72	30	85
7	87	31	58
8	87	32	38
9	97	33	94
10	81	34	92
11	98	35	70
12	98	36	97
13	99	37	72
14	93	38	77
15	73	39	95
16	64	40	53

TABLE V (Continued)

Class Percentile Rank  
of Debaters

Student	Percentile Class Rank	Student	Percentile Class Rank
17	52	41	89
18	58	42	66
19	71	43	93
20	75	44	72
21	89	45	93
22	82	46	86
23	67	47	55
24	85		

Table VI reveals the participation in extra class activities of the forty-seven students. Debaters as a whole participated in a great number of extra class activities. Those activities in which the students participated were football, track, basketball, Industrial Arts Club, Chorus, Publication Club, junior class play, senior class play, Band, O.A.A., tumbling, F. H. A., Declamation, Student Council, orchestra, L'Allegro, Bobcat Staff, Brobosa Staff, Clef Club, Kinetic Club, Forensic Club, Latin Club, F.B.L.A., Spanish Club, Library Association, Monogram Club, Senior Service Society, cheer leader, and debate.

The least number of activities participated in by any debater during his four years of high school was three. The largest number of activities participated in was fifteen. Four students had participated in fifteen activities during their four years of high school.

Table VII which gives the English and mathematics grade point average of the students, shows that debaters had very good grades in these subjects. Close to thirty per cent of the debaters had "A" averages in English. None of the students received grades in English below "C". Over fifty per cent of the students received "B" in English and over seventy-five per cent received "B" or better in English during their four years in high school. All of the students had taken four years of English.

The student's mathematics grades did not appear to be as high as their English grades. Close to thirty per cent received "A" averages

TABLE VI

**Extra Class Activity  
Participation of Debaters**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Number of Activities</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Number of Activities</b>
1	5	25	13
2	15	26	11
3	12	27	11
4	11	28	11
5	11	29	12
6	11	30	8
7	11	31	12
8	12	32	5
9	15	33	12
10	10	34	11
11	11	35	12
12	10	36	15
13	10	37	12
14	10	38	14
15	3	39	9
16	7	40	11

TABLE VI (Continued)

Extra Class Activity Participation  
of Debaters

Student	Number of Activities	Student	Number of Activities
17	8	41	9
18	12	42	12
19	9	43	12
20	13	44	10
21	8	45	14
22	8	46	12
23	9	47	8
24	15		



in mathematics which corresponds with the averages in English. Two students had "D" averages in mathematics compared to the no "D"s given to the students in English. Only slightly over twenty per cent of the students received "B" in mathematics compared to the fifty per cent that received "B" in English. About forty-three per cent had "C" averages in mathematics.

Table VII shows that nineteen per cent of the students included in this study were given a superior rating in debate.

Five of the debaters ranked superior were rated as having a superior personality. Four were rated as having excellent personalities. None of the students were rated as having average, fair, or poor personalities. The average personality rating given superior debaters was (4.55).

All the students ranked as superior in debate had high persuasive interests except one. Over fifty per cent of the superior debaters had persuasive interests at the 92nd percentile or above. The average persuasive interest was at the 83rd percentile.

The average I.Q. of the superior debaters was (125.76). Only two of the superior rated debaters had an I.Q. below 120. Five of the superior debaters had an I.Q. of 130 or above.

The average superior debater ranked at the 87th percentile of his class. Over fifty per cent ranked at the 90th percentile of their class. All but one of the superior debaters ranked in the top twenty-five per cent of their class.

TABLE VII

**English and Mathematics Grade  
Point Average of Debaters**

Student	English	Math.	Student	English	Math.
1	3	4	25	4	4
2	3	2	26	3	3
3	4	4	27	2	2
4	3	3	28	4	4
5	2	2	29	3	2
6	2	2	30	3	2
7	4	2	31	2	2
8	3	3	32	2	2
9	3	2	33	4	4
10	3	2	34	3	2
11	4	4	35	3	3
12	4	4	36	4	4
13	4	4	37	3	2
14	4	4	38	3	2
15	3	3	39	4	3
16	2	3	40	2	1

TABLE VII (Continued)

English and Mathematics Grade  
— Point Average of Debaters

Student	English	Math.	Student	English	Math.
17	2	1	41	3	4
18	2	2	42	3	2
19	3	3	43	4	4
20	3	2	44	3	2
21	3	3	45	3	3
22	3	3	46	4	4
23	3	2	47	2	2
24	3	3			

## Key:

4 -- "A"  
3 -- "B"  
2 -- "C"  
1 -- "D"

A grade of "B" was the average English grade received by the superior rated debaters. About fifty per cent of the superior debaters had an "A" grade average in English. Only one debater in this group received an average "C" grade and none received an average of "D" or "F".

A grade of "B" was also the average mark received in mathematics for the superior debater. Almost fifty per cent received a mark of "A" in mathematics. Three of the superior debaters received marks of "C". None received a grade below that mark.

The average number of activities participated in by superior debaters was (11.55). One student had participated in as few as five extra class activities. The largest number of activities participated in was fifteen.

Table II shows the related factors of the debaters ranked excellent. About forty-five per cent of the students in this study were ranked as excellent debaters.

Only three excellent debaters were rated as having superior personalities. Seventy per cent of this group were rated as having excellent personalities. Three were rated as average personalities and none were rated as fair or poor. The average personality rating for excellent debaters was (4) or excellent.

The average persuasive interest of the excellent rated debaters was (57.76). Only three debaters in this group had persuasive interests at the 90th percentile or above. Thirty-eight per cent of these students

had persuasive interests at the 75th percentile or above. Two of these students had persuasive interests below the 10th percentile.

The average I.Q. of the excellent rated debaters was (123.9). There were no students with an I.Q. below (110). Five persons had I.Q.'s above (130).

The average class percentile rank of the excellent ranked debater was (83.14). Thirty-three per cent of these students ranked at the 90th percentile or above in their class. Seventy per cent of the debaters of this group ranked above the 75th percentile of their respective class.

The average grade point earned in English by the excellent debaters was (3.24). Six of these debaters had "A" averages in English. Only one student had a "C" average in English and there were no grades below this for this group.

The average grade point average of the excellent debaters in mathematics was (3.). Twenty-eight per cent of this group had an "A" average grade in mathematics during four years of high school. Twenty-eight per cent of this group had a "C" average grade in mathematics.

The average number of activities participated in during high school for the excellent ranked debaters was (10.24). One student had participated in as few as three extra class activities during four years of high school. One student had participated in as many as fifteen activities during high school.

TABLE VIII

Related Factors of the Superior  
Ranked Debaters

Student	Personality	Persuasive ability	Percentile class rank	English score	Math. score	Activity Participa- tion	Intelligence Quotient
1	5	98	95	3	4	5	135
3	5	96	98	4	4	12	131
18	4	92	58	2	2	12	110
36	4	99	97	4	4	15	135
38	5	70	77	3	2	14	132
45	5	75	93	3	3	14	127
4	4	45	90	3	3	11	120
7	5	95	87	4	2	11	112
14	4	80	92	4	4	10	130
Averages	4.55	83.33	87.44	3.33	3.12	11.55	125.76

Table I shows the related factors of the average ranked debaters. About thirty-two per cent of the students in this study were rated as average in debate.

One of the average debaters was rated as superior in personality. Thirty-three per cent of the students were rated as having an average personality. The personality average for this group of debaters was (3.77).

Those debaters ranked as average had a persuasive interest average at the (50.63) percentile. Twenty per cent had a persuasive interest at the 90th percentile or above. One student had a persuasive interest at the 10th percentile.

The average I.Q. of the students ranked average in debate was (121.2). None of these debaters had I.Q.'s of 130 or above. Twenty per cent of the students in this group had an I.Q. of 110 or below.

The average class percentile rank of the students ranked average in debate was at the (75.93) percentile. Twenty per cent of the average debaters were ranked at the 90th percentile of their class or above. Only one student ranked below the 50th percentile of his class.

The grade point average in English of the average debater was (2.8). Three of the students in this group had averaged "A" in English and forty per cent had a "C" average in English during high school. The marks in English did not go below this for this group.

The grade point average in mathematics for the average debaters was (2.4). Sixty-six per cent of the average debaters received a mark

TABLE IX

Related Factors of the Excellent  
Ranked Debaters

Student	Personality	Persuasive ability	Percentile class rank	English score	Math. score	Activity Participation	Intelligence Quotient
16	4	30	64	2	3	7	118
30	4	60	85	3	2	8	117
41	4	85	89	3	4	9	118
26	4	65	84	3	3	11	138
39	4	68	95	4	3	9	131
29	4	50	76	3	2	12	125
8	5	80	87	3	3	12	118
20	4	99	75	3	2	13	138
33	5	4	94	4	4	12	136
34	4	20	92	3	2	11	126
36	3	99	70	3	3	12	113



**TABLE II (Continued)**

**Related Factors of the Excellent  
Ranked Debtors**

<b>Student</b>	<b>Personality</b>	<b>Persuasive ability</b>	<b>Percentile class rank</b>	<b>English score</b>	<b>Math. score</b>	<b>Activity Participation</b>	<b>Intelligence Quotient</b>
37	4	82	72	3	2	12	122
24	4	30	85	3	3	15	110
15	3	45	73	3	3	3	121
19	4	75	71	3	3	9	129
22	3	86	62	3	3	8	136
23	4	95	67	3	2	9	119
43	5	15	93	4	4	11	115
28	4	70	96	4	4	11	125
11	4	5	98	4	4	11	120
12	4	50	98	4	4	10	127
<b>Averages</b>	4	57.76	83.14	3.24	3	10.24	123.9

of "C" in mathematics. Twenty per cent had an "A" average in mathematics in this group.

The average number of extra class activities participated in by the average rated debater was eleven. Three students had participated in as few as eight and two had participated in as many as fifteen activities.

Table XI shows the related factors of the fair rated debaters. Only four per cent of the debaters were rated fair in this study.

The average personality rating of the fair debaters was (2.) or fair.

The average persuasive interest of the fair debaters was at the (4.5) percentiles. Neither of these students had a persuasive interest above the 10th percentile.

The average I.Q. of the fair debater was 101. One student's I.Q. was 87 and the other student's I.Q. was 115.

The average class percentile rank of the fair debater was (45.5). One student ranked in the 38th percentile and the other student ranked in the 53rd percentile.

The average English mark received by the fair debater was (2.) or "C". Both students received this grade point average during their four years of high school.

The average mathematics grade point received by the fair debater was (1.5). One student had an average mark of "C" while the

**TABLE I**  
**Related Factors of the Average**  
**Ranked Debaters**

Student	Personality	Persuasive ability	Percentile class rank	English score	Math. score	Activity Participation	Intelligence Quotient
44	4	80	72	3	2	10	129
47	4	50	55	2	2	8	119
31	3	45	58	2	2	12	115
25	5	99	95	4	4	13	129
42	3	90	66	3	2	12	128
2	4	45	66	3	2	15	110
5	4	20	46	2	2	11	122
10	4	52	81	3	2	10	127
6	3	76	72	2	2	11	120
9	4	98	97	3	2	15	111
46	4	40	86	4	4	12	109

TABLE X (Continued)

Related Factors of the Average  
Ranked Debaters

Student	Personality	Persuasive ability	Percentile class rank	English score	Math score	Activity participation	Intelligence Quotient
17	4	55	52	2	1	8	125
27	4	61	55	2	2	11	105
21	3	10	89	3	3	8	127
13	3	60	99	4	4	10	122
<b>Averages</b>	3.77	50.63	75.93	2.8	2.4	11.1	121.2

other had an average mark of "D" in mathematics for four years of high school.

The average participation in extra class activities by the fair ranked debater was eight during four years of high school. One student had participated in five while the other student had participated in eleven.

Table XII shows the proficiency of debaters related to known factors. It compares the superior, excellent, average, and fair ranked debaters with their seven known characteristics.

The superior debaters were ranked higher in personality than were the excellent, average, and fair debaters. Excellent debaters were ranked higher in personality than average debaters. Average debaters were ranked higher than fair debaters. Fair debaters were given a fair personality rating. The largest difference in personality ratings was between the excellent and fair debaters.

Much greater differences appeared among the debaters in the characteristic of persuasive interest. Superior debaters ranked highest in persuasive interest with a twenty-five percentile difference between them and the excellent debaters which were next highest ranked. There were seven percentile points difference between the excellent debaters and the average debaters, the excellent debaters ranking higher. The greatest difference in persuasive interest was between the average and fair debaters. The average debaters were forty-seven percentile points higher in persuasive interest than were the fair debaters.

TABLE XI

Related Factors of the Pair  
Ranked Debaters

Student	Personality	Persuasive ability	Percentile class rank	English score	Math. score	Activity participa- tion	Intelligence Quotient
32	2	1	38	2	2	5	115
40	2	8	53	2	1	11	87
Averages	2	4.5	45.5	2	1.5	8	101

TABLE III

Proficiency of Debaters Related  
to Known Factors

Debaters	Personality	Persuasive ability	Percentile class rank	English score	Math. score	Activity participa- tion	Intelligence Quotient
Superior	4.55	83.33	87.44	3.33	3.12	11.55	125.76
Excellent	4.	57.76	83.14	3.24	3.	10.24	123.9
Average	3.77	50.63	75.93	2.8	2.4	11.11	121.2
Fair	2	4.5	45.5	2.	1.5	8.	101.

Superior debaters ranked higher in percentile class rank than the other three groups. There were just four percentile points difference in class rank between the superior debaters and the excellent debaters. Excellent debaters ranked seven percentile points higher than the average debaters. Average debaters ranked thirty-one percentile points higher than the fair debaters.

There was slight difference in grade point average in English between the superior and the excellent debaters. The superior debaters made the higher mark. There was about one grade point difference between the excellent debaters and the average debaters, the excellent debaters scored higher. There was also about one grade point difference between the average debaters and the fair debaters. The average debaters scored higher.

There was little difference between superior and excellent debaters in their grade point average in mathematics. Superior debaters scored higher than the excellent debaters. There was one grade point difference in mathematics between the excellent debaters and the average debaters. The excellent debaters made the higher mark. There was also about one grade point difference between the average and fair debaters, with the average debaters making the higher mark.

In participation in extra class activities, the superior debaters generally participated in more activities than the other three classifications. Superior and average debaters were ranked closer in the average number of extra class activities participated in than superior and excellent debaters. Superior debaters tended to participate in about



one more activity than excellent debaters. Excellent debaters participated in two more activities than fair debaters.

Superior debaters had a slightly higher I.Q. than excellent debaters. Just two I.Q. points separated these two groups. Excellent debaters scored four points higher in I.Q. than the average debaters. The greater difference in mental ability was between the average debaters and the fair debaters. There was a twenty I.Q. point difference between these two groups.

## SECTION IV

### Summary

This study was made to secure information which might be helpful to debate coaches. Debate is becoming highly competitive among the schools of South Dakota and neighboring states. Much time and effort is spent by coaches to develop a winning team in debate. When new students come out for this activity, it is always a question in the coach's mind as to how proficient the students will become in debate and how much time to spend with a particular student.

This study has revealed what most coaches thought to be true. Superior debaters have a high intelligence quotient, they participate in many school extra class activities, their grades in mathematics and English are well above average, they rank close to the top of their class, and they have outstanding personalities.

This study has also shown that there are differences in the proficiency of debaters and that these differences are present in other factors related to the student.

### Conclusions

1. In general, the better personality a student has, the more proficient that student will be in debate.
2. In general, the greater the persuasive interest, as shown by the Kuder Preference Record, the better the student will be in debate.

3. In general, the persuasive interest percentile rank, as shown by the Kuder Preference Record, is the best single characteristic on which to predict the debate proficiency of a student.

4. In general, the higher the class percentile rank of a student, the better debater that student will be.

5. In general, the higher the English grades of a student, the better debater that student will become.

6. In general, the higher the mathematics grade of a student, the better debater that student will become.

7. In general, the higher the I.Q. of a student, the better debater that student will become.

8. In general, debaters tend to participate in many extra class activities.

9. There appears to be little relationship, in general, in the number of extra class activities participated in and debate proficiency.

10. In general, the poorer the personality of a student, the less proficient that person will be in debate.

11. In general, the lower the percentile rank of a student, as shown on the Kuder Preference Record, the less proficient that student will be in debate.

12. In general, the lower the class rank of a student, the less proficient that student will be in debate.

13. In general, the lower the mark made by a student in English, the less proficient that student will be in debate.

14. In general, the lower the mark made by a student in mathematics, the less proficient that student will be in debate.
15. In general, the lower the I.Q. of a student, the less proficient that student will be in debate.
16. Persuasive interest seems to have a more important relation to debate proficiency than any of the other factors studied.
17. Class rank seems to have a greater relationship to debate proficiency than the intelligence quotient.
18. The intelligence quotient seems to have a greater relationship to debate proficiency than personality rating, English marks, and mathematics marks.

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