



Training, recruitment, and retention of speech coaches in the Montana high school forensics program  
by Laura Nesbitt Lowe

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in  
Curriculum & Instruction  
Montana State University  
© Copyright by Laura Nesbitt Lowe (2003)

**Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the current status of coach training, recruitment, and retention in the extra-curricular forensics program sanctioned by the state high school association in Montana. Describing the current status of these coach issues answered three areas of questions: whether administrators can find qualified individuals, what training current coaches have, and what patterns are associated with longevity in the program. Findings are reported from two surveys, a document analysis, and a canvass of college level opportunities for speech teacher training and forensic competition. In addition, one portion of the literature review resulted in an extended search for national coaching and participation numbers, a search in which the lack of answers exemplifies the fragmentation noted in literature reviewed for this study.

Significant results include the high percentage of surveyed administrators who indicated that there are fewer applicants for speech positions than for other MHSAs program coach position openings. Over half of the surveyed speech coaches felt they had not received any training at all, and less than one in six felt they had received any training since being hired to coach. Document analysis showed a relationship between program consistency at individual schools and the ratio of speech coach pay to basketball coach pay. At post-secondary institutions in Montana, college level opportunities for speech teacher preparation are declining and only one of the post-secondary institutions offering this curriculum training also offers students who might be future teachers and coaches the opportunity for forensic competition.

TRAINING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION OF SPEECH COACHES  
IN THE MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL FORENSICS PROGRAM

by

Laura Nesbitt Lowe

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Education

in

Curriculum & Instruction

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY – BOZEMAN  
Bozeman, Montana

November 2003

© COPYRIGHT

by

Laura Nesbitt Lowe

2003

All Rights Reserved

N378  
L9514

APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

Laura Nesbitt Lowe

This thesis has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

Dr. Ann de Onis Ann de Onis 11/26/03  
(Signature) Date

Approved for the Department of Education

Dr. Robert Carson [Signature] 12-1-03  
(Signature) Date

Approved for the College of Graduate Studies

Dr. Bruce McLeod Bruce A. McLeod 12-8-03  
(Signature) Date

## STATEMENT OF PERMISSION TO USE

In presenting this thesis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at Montana State University, I agree that the Library shall make it available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

If I have indicated my intention to copyright this thesis by including a copyright notice page, copying is allowable only for scholarly purposes, consistent with "fair use" as prescribed in the U.S. Copyright Law. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this thesis in whole or in parts may be granted only by the copyright holder.

Signature



---

Date



---

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Problem .....	2
Purpose .....	5
Research Question .....	5
Introduction to the Study .....	6
Definitions .....	8
Assumptions .....	10
Summary .....	11
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	13
Introduction .....	13
Organization of the Literature Review .....	14
High School Athletic Coaching Literature: Individual Coach Patterns .....	16
Overview: Untrained High School Coaches .....	16
Becoming a Coach: Preparation and Socialization .....	24
Being a Coach: Role Conflicting for Teacher-Coaches .....	21
Leaving the Role of Coach: Intent to Leave and Burnout .....	25
College Forensic Coaching Literature: Program Patterns .....	29
Linkage Between Forensics and Speech Curriculum .....	29
Linkage Between High School and College Programs .....	32
Fragmentation in Forensics .....	35
High School Forensic Coaching Literature .....	38
Past Studies of Forensic Coach Training and Preparation .....	38
Current High School Forensic Coach Preparation .....	41
Recommendations for High School Forensic Coach Training .....	44
Evaluation of the Literature .....	48
Summary .....	50
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	54
Introduction .....	54
Research Design .....	56
Procedure .....	57
Participants, Evidence Sources, and Data Collection Methods .....	58
Limitations .....	61

Units of Analysis: School Size and Geographic Divisions .....	62
Timeframe .....	63
Summary .....	64
4. RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	66
Introduction .....	66
Results .....	66
Surveys .....	67
Survey of Current High School Principals .....	67
Administrator Demographics .....	67
Administrator Views on the Frequency of Hiring .....	68
Administrator Views on the Difficulty of Recruitment .....	69
Administrator Views on the Training of Applicants .....	69
Administrator Views on the Number of Applicants .....	70
Administrator Familiarity with Program Hiring .....	71
Administrator Willingness to Comment .....	71
Program Status Insights .....	72
Summary of MASSP Survey Results .....	73
Survey of Current MHSA Speech Coaches Attending MFEA .....	74
Coach Demographics .....	74
Length of Coaching Experience .....	75
Coach Views of Their Own Recruitment .....	76
Coach Views of Their Own Training and Preparation .....	77
Coach Employment .....	79
Coach Estimations of Their Own Future Longevity .....	80
Coaches' Other Coaching Experience .....	81
Coach Willingness to Comment .....	81
Coach Representation Insights .....	83
Competition Experience as Training .....	85
Summary of MFEA Coach Survey .....	88
Documents .....	89
MFEA and MHSA Archives .....	89
District Contracts .....	91
Demographics of Districts .....	93
Analysis of Contract Stipend Data .....	95
Summary of MFEA and MHSA Archives and District Contract Analysis .....	100
Montana College Forensic Activity and Secondary Teacher Endorsement Programs .....	100
Competitive College Forensic Activity .....	102
Teacher Training for Secondary Speech Endorsement .....	104

Discussion of Findings .....	108
Recruitment: Can Administrators Find Qualified Individuals? .....	109
Training: How Have Current Coaches Been Prepared? .....	109
Retention: What Are Patterns Associated with Longevity? .....	110
Retention: Are There Patterns in How Coaches Anticipate an End to Their Coaching? .....	111
Summary .....	111
5. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION .....	113
Introduction .....	113
Overview .....	113
Summary of Key Findings .....	115
Recruitment .....	115
Training .....	115
Retention .....	115
Context .....	115
Recommendations to the Field .....	117
Recruitment Numbers .....	117
Recruitment: Hiring Qualifications .....	117
Recruitment: Preparation for Hiring Does Not Equal Training .....	118
Training: Coach Perceptions .....	119
Retention: Importance of Feedback and Training .....	120
Training Caution .....	121
Recommendations for Future Research .....	122
Suggestions for Implementation .....	124
Conclusion .....	126
REFERENCES .....	128
APPENDICES .....	141
Appendix A: Athletic and Forensic Counseling: A Framework .....	142
Appendix B: The Search for National Background on Forensics and Coach Training .....	147
Appendix C: Administrator Survey for MASSP, 2001 .....	168
Appendix D: Speech Coach Survey for MFEA, 2001 .....	170

Appendix E: Follow-Up Speech Coach Survey for MFEA, 2002 ..... 172  
Appendix F: College Forensic Director Survey Sent in 2001 ..... 174

## LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. School Size and Geographic Classifications Represented in MFEA Speech Coach Survey .....	75
2. Length of Coaching Experience Among Respondents to MFEA Speech Coach Survey .....	76
3. Coach Self-Assessment Distributed by Primary Coding of When Training Occurred .....	78
4. Pay Ratios Distributed by Class Size and Consistency Tiers .....	95
5. Pay Ratios Distributed by Division and Class Size .....	97
6. Pay Ratio Means Distributed by Consistency Tiers and Class Size .....	98
7. Tier Distribution by Division and Divisional Means within Tiers .....	99
8. Pay Ratio Distributions within Consistency Tiers .....	101
9. Teacher Training Coursework for Speech Endorsement Available in Montana Colleges as of July, 2002 .....	105
10. Characteristics of Responding Post-Secondary Institutions with Forensic .....	156
11. Regional Distribution of Responding Post-Secondary Institutions with Forensic Programs .....	157
12. Directors Identifying Forensic Team Members with Plans to Teach .....	158
13. Speech Degree Program Availability by Size of Four-Year Colleges .....	159
14. Competitors Planning to Teach by Size of Two-Year Colleges .....	159
15. Distribution of College Director Assessments of Change by Specific Program Interactions wit High School Programs .....	160
16. College Assessments of Relationship Change Distributed by Level of Program Interactions Programs .....	161

17. Mean Longevity of Responding College Directors by Employment Status Categories .....	163
18. Average Longevity of Forensics Directors by Employment Status at Four-Year Colleges and Universities .....	164

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. Order of Literature Review .....	15
2. Visualization of Literature Themes .....	53

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the current status of coach training, recruitment, and retention in the extra-curricular forensics program sanctioned by the state high school association in Montana. Describing the current status of these coach issues answered three areas of questions: whether administrators can find qualified individuals, what training current coaches have, and what patterns are associated with longevity in the program. Findings are reported from two surveys, a document analysis, and a canvass of college level opportunities for speech teacher training and forensic competition. In addition, one portion of the literature review resulted in an extended search for national coaching and participation numbers, a search in which the lack of answers exemplifies the fragmentation noted in literature reviewed for this study.

Significant results include the high percentage of surveyed administrators who indicated that there are fewer applicants for speech positions than for other MHSA program coach position openings. Over half of the surveyed speech coaches felt they had not received any training at all, and less than one in six felt they had received any training since being hired to coach. Document analysis showed a relationship between program consistency at individual schools and the ratio of speech coach pay to basketball coach pay. At post-secondary institutions in Montana, college level opportunities for speech teacher preparation are declining and only one of the post-secondary institutions offering this curriculum training also offers students who might be future teachers and coaches the opportunity for forensic competition.

## CHAPTER 1

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Burnout is hardly inevitable, whatever the profession. It is the attitude toward what one is doing—its value, its recognition, its rewards—or the lack of same that shapes whether we burn or burnout. However, it is good to remember the observation of University of Haifa (Israel) psychologist Ayala Pines, ‘In order to burn out, you first have to be on fire’ (Parson, 1997, p. 418).

#### Introduction

Competitive forensics offers high school students a co-curricular boon to academic competence, lifelong self-confidence, and future job skills. Speech contests in Montana have brought students together from across the state since 1904, and now include debate and drama competition as well as a variety of speech events. Interscholastic forensics has grown from its humble start as an event held only once annually to a full season of simultaneous tournaments dotting the state each weekend from October through the end of January. Long before dawn, Saturday after Saturday, hundreds of teenagers shiver with chill and nerves, climbing into busses for travel to day-long tournaments. Physical discomfort is secondary to getting there and doing well. Tournaments are long days, filled with emotion and disappointment. Originally dubbed a “friendly contest” by host University of Montana (Seelinger, 1987, p.1), high school forensics still hums with the exhilaration of teenagers meeting strangers and making

friends. The crucible of face-to-face competition hones skills more than equaled by the self-confidence that first falters and then comes back again to improve. Yet forensics can happen only if an adult will coach the team.

While the students' experiences in forensics are the beginning and end of the story, the focus of this study is on the adult who enters, maintains, and leaves the position of speech coach. Details differ in each coach's experience, yet stages of the cycle are common to all who coach. Somehow, they become coaches; in some way, they juggle the demands of being coaches; and finally, at some point, they each come to the end of coaching. While every coach either thrives or endures through this process as an individual, the cumulative effects of multiple solo coaching cycles reverberate and influence other aspects of the larger system. This one small extracurricular program in the high schools of a geographically huge but thinly populated state offers a chance to examine the functional organization of a subsystem within an educational network of systems.

### Problem

High school forensics in Montana faces unique challenges in its union of co-curricular content and extracurricular experience. Popular with students as well as with parents, and requested as an extracurricular option in many districts, the program faces logistical difficulties at the school, division, and state levels. Some of the recurring frustrations are unchangeable due to the geography of Montana and the character of forensic activity itself, while others are subject to reform and improvement.

The coaching situation in forensics reflects larger trends in American education, in extracurricular coaching generally, and in the national state of forensics. The national teacher shortage has been widely reported in both popular and professional publications. Within this general picture, other changing dynamics are at work, such as the alterations in the proportion of women entering the teaching field as compared to other professions (Fine, 2001) and a decreasing number of teachers willing to coach, let alone willing to be career-long coaches (Frost, 1995; Martens, 2000; Munksgaard, 1997; Odenkirk, 1986). Montana administrators have noted both publicly and privately that teachers hired to coach frequently resign from their extracurricular assignments after gaining tenure (Tanglen, 2001). Montana principals and superintendents are increasingly faced with the imperative of finding an individual qualified for a coaching position and then sorting out the academic teaching assignments later (METNET, personal communication, June 19, 2001). Concern about the quality of sports coaching is motivating an athletic coach certification movement both nationally and internationally (Sawyer, 1992; Stewart & Sweet, 1992; Whitby, 1993), and Montana has joined the ranks of the states in which high school coaches must now pass certification process. Most states, however, including Montana, have no minimum requirements for forensic coach training.

Coach training is a particularly critical factor in the success of Montana forensics due to the organizational structure of the state's program. In contrast to other interscholastic high school competitive programs, many functional aspects of forensic activity at the state level depend on the voluntary membership of the statewide coaches' organization, Montana Forensics Educators Association (MFEA), to initiate decisions

about scheduling and rule changes. Although the MHSA forensics and drama committee has veto power over recommendations from the MFEA coaches' organization and can choose to not bring recommendations from the MFEA annual coaches' meeting to the MHSA board for approval, the MHSA forensics and drama committee is limited to simply overturning the MFEA coaches' vote and does not have the power to initiate management decisions. At the division level, the speech coaches at many high schools organize aspects of scheduling and program decision-making that are equivalent to decisions handled by athletic directors or administrators in other competitive MHSA programs. Athletic programs under the MHSA rely to a great degree on event rules developed by the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), but the only aspect of national federation coordination directly adopted by the Montana forensics program has been the annual policy debate topic (Haugen, 2000). Rule changes in 17 separate events are decided on the Montana state level in a process initiated by MFEA. The forensics and drama committee of the Montana High School Association (MHSA) has veto power on recommendations from the coaches' organization and can refuse to bring items approved by the MFEA before the MHSA's governing body, the Board of Control. Due to this largely coach-driven activity structure, in which administrators have what amounts to a veto power, the quality of coach preparation is a particularly vulnerable fulcrum for overall program stability. Varying levels of individual training and perspective combine for a cumulative impact on the health and functional success of a state's program.

### Purpose

The purpose of this descriptive study is to present as complete a picture as can be discovered about the status of high school speech coach training, recruitment, and retention in the state of Montana. Examining available evidence of coaching preparation and longevity may add to the identification of factors contributing to coaching success and stable high school forensics programs. Ultimately, the researcher hopes that this study might contribute to the accumulated understanding needed for successful management of secondary school organizations through insights into the current situation in one extracurricular activity.

### Research Question

What is the current status of speech coach training, recruitment and retention in the MHSА forensics program? The primary objective of this study is to explore the quantity, quality and timing of coach training and other influences on coach recruitment and retention. This research question represents several associated concerns. Can administrators who seek coaches to direct forensic programs in their high schools find qualified individuals? How have current coaches been prepared for the coaching assignments they fill today? Where, when, and in what ways are coaches being trained, and what patterns are associated with coach longevity in Montana high schools today?

### Introduction to the Study

From the perspective of high school administrators, successful personnel management of extracurricular coaching staff is an important public arena in which program stability and strength builds parent and community support for schools. While forensics may have a uniquely different public constituency than athletics, it is an important one in many communities and potentially important in many others. With the nation undergoing a crisis of confidence in education, and the K-12 system in Montana facing serious funding difficulties, all school programs must be managed as productively as possible. This study should help illuminate the current employment and training status of coaches in competitive forensics, a less visible program under the management of high school administrators.

Forensics is a collection of systems (Bartanen, 1994). In Montana high schools, every forensics program operates as a smaller system encompassed within the system of a larger school organization. As such, forensics is subject to the common culture and community priorities of the overall school setting, sharing funding and staff resources with other extracurricular and co-curricular systems. In addition to these shared and intersecting dynamics between high school coaching in forensics and athletics, college forensics is a second and separate system, centered outside of the secondary school, which overlaps and influences high school forensics. While athletic coaching literature addresses basic themes applicable as a framework for the individual coach (Coakley, 1978; Lyle, 1999; Martens, 1990), forensic literature makes only limited forays into

addressing individual coaching questions, focusing more on program-level ramifications of the coaching issues central to this study (Frana, 1989; Lee & Lee, 1990; Leeper, 1997). Although many aspects of forensics and athletics are dissimilar, this study is based on areas in which all high school coaching shares important dynamics.

Interscholastic high school speech programs combine academics and practical experience within a competitive framework. Contradictions inherent to this combination are relevant to the current study. Despite its laboratory exercise of teachable, curriculum-oriented skills, the management of competitive forensics in a majority of Montana high schools today lies outside of the school day schedule and outside of a class framework. Thus the coach's time commitment and the team's out-of-class focus are similar to athletics. Yet the competitive format, level of time involvement, and semantics that make much about a speech program parallel to extracurricular athletics do not change the fact that these two activities are perceived as very different in the mindsets of many coaches and administrators.

When organizing for any extracurricular program needs, administrators must be able to distinguish perception, however common, from the actual realities faced by staff members, especially when those realities impact program stability. All high school coaches, whether athletic or forensic, must not only teach event-specific skills to prepare individual students for competition, but must also manage administrative duties in order to lead their teams as organizations. These administrative duties include program advocacy, fundraising, scheduling, planning, budgeting, disciplining, and inspiring young people as a group (Bartanen, 1994; Martens, 1990; Newcombe & Robinson, 1975;

Stewart, 2001). This study is intended to contribute to administrators' understanding of the training and retention status of coaches in one high school program out of the many that vie for administrative attention and concern.

### Definitions

Montana High School Association or MHSA: The governing authority for all sanctioned extracurricular activity in accredited Montana high schools. Montana High School Association coordinates and issues notification of policies, scheduling, rule changes, and other statewide aspects of the forensic program as well as of all other sanctioned competitive programs, including sports and music competition. (Haugen, 2000; Montana High School Association, 2001).

Montana Forensic Educators Association or MFEA: The voluntary professional organization of forensic coaches. The MFEA membership meets once a year to calendar and discuss rule changes. This group follows constitutional procedures and bylaws, making recommendations to the MHSA Forensic and Drama Committee, which then decides whether to take the recommendations to the MHSA Governing Board (Montana Forensic Educators Association website [www.mtforensics.org](http://www.mtforensics.org), 2002; Haugen, 2000).

“Forensics,” “Speech,” “Speech and Drama,” “Forensics and Drama,” and “Speech, Drama, and Debate”: Terms used in Montana to refer to the activity at the center of this study. Although some participants and coaches have their own variant distinctions, these terms are often used interchangeably, and for simplicity's sake, the term “speech team” will be used in this study.

“Coach” and “Director”: Two terms used interchangeably in this study. “Director” was used more often in the past and is used more often today in the context of college forensics. In the 1970’s, one commentator stressed “the deleterious effect” of the term *coach* rather than *director of forensics*, because of its analogy with athletics (McBath, 1975, p. 159), but in the day-to-day reality of Montana high schools, coach is the term commonly used and understood to mean the individual leading the speech team.

The National Federation of State High School Associations, or NFHS: The national administrative organization for high school athletics and fine arts programs, which operates out of central offices in Indianapolis, Indiana, to serve more than 50 member state high school associations. The NFHS publishes playing rules for 16 sports and provides many other services to benefit the 17,346 member high schools in the U.S. (National Federation of High Schools, 2001a).

National Federation Interscholastic Speech and Debate Association, or NFISDA: One of several specialized activity and athletics committees operating under NFHS. A forensic specialist acts as NFHS’s liaison to the NFISDA advisory committee, helping to coordinate speech, drama, and debate programs at the state and national level. To speech and debate coaches who choose to become members, NFISDA provides several services including the opportunity for awards, the Forensic Educator publication, and insurance. Reasonably priced videotapes and other materials for coaches are available through the organization (National Federation Interscholastic Speech and Debate Association, 2002).

National Forensic League, or NFL: A national honorary organization for high school forensics competitors formed in 1925 in Ripon, Wisconsin, to honor students for

their accomplishments in interscholastic debate, oratory, and public speaking. The annual National Speech Tournament, or “nationals,” has been continuously hosted since 1931, other than during World War II, and the organization claims many prominent and influential Americans as members (National Forensic League, 2002).

Montana Association of Secondary School Principals, or MASSP: A professional organization to assist middle school, junior high school and high school principals, affiliated with the School Administrators of Montana and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. A state convention in April and other regular state and regional meetings provide inservice, materials and support to help educate students and create effective schools (Montana Association of Secondary School Principals, 2003).

#### Assumptions and Delimitations

The researcher's focus on the coaching cycle is based on a comparison between two categories of high school coaching, athletic and forensic. Despite forensics traditionally having been a co-curricular activity, the purposes of this study are better served by using the extra-curricular athletic coaching model as a framework than by using that of the co-curricular music director. Though there are many co-curricular competitive programs in Montana high schools, only music and forensics are supervised and sanctioned by MHSA. Significant differences between speech coaches and music directors are evident in the number of individuals certified in the specific curriculum area, the ratio of competition to performance in the allocation of student time, and the degree to which preparation for competition occurs within the school day. These three factors,

along with historic and current trends linking the development of athletics and forensics, are detailed in Appendix A.

Focusing on the coaching cycle in Montana high schools necessitated that several related topics not be covered. Among the significant issues in forensics which have been avoided in this study are changes in the academic discipline of communications studies evident at the college level, and philosophical differences represented by the distinction between “coach” and “director” noted in the definitions section. Other issues that have been avoided include funding, public attitudes toward forensics, frustrations between AA and ABC coaches, and the schism between debate, drama, and speech interests, though each of these issues influences the health of the statewide program.

### Summary

Training, recruitment, and retention are aspects of an individual coach’s experience that influence program stability. This exploratory study focuses on describing the current status of coach training issues that limit the ability of high school administrators to maintain competitive forensics in Montana high schools. While national trends in high school staffing impact all coach management in Montana, recruitment, training, and retention are critical to the stability of speech programs at individual schools as well as to the continuity of the statewide program as a whole. Key to understanding the current status of these coaching issues in the forensics program is assessing whether administrators can find qualified individuals to coach speech, determining what preparation currently functioning coaches have had, and finding

patterns related to coach longevity and program stability. Because forensics is a system amidst larger systems, finding answers to these questions requires a preliminary look at the larger context of the activity. The literature review will therefore undertake the discovery of a theoretical framework for understanding coaching issues in high school forensics.

## CHAPTER 2

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

All competitive high school programs currently face shortages of coaches in the employment pool and increasing numbers of untrained coaches. High school administrators are dealing with the ramifications of this dynamic in both athletics and forensics. The process through which an individual becomes a coach and overcomes role-related problems is central to retention and recruitment issues in high school programs.

Themes key to this study were summarized by the statement of John Lyle, a British athletic coaching expert, in his assertion that coaches

become more expert through experience, interaction with others, and a mix of formal and informal education and training opportunities. Without a greater knowledge of successful coaching practice, role priorities and the personal attributes necessary, those responsible for coach education . . . and the coaches themselves will be less likely to be responsible for expert coaching practice (1999, p. 4).

A fundamental reality of this study is the shortage of literature on high school forensic coaching. The majority of journals in the field of speech, such as Communication Education, Communication Quarterly, Communication Studies, Southern Communication Journal, and the Quarterly Journal of Speech, are oriented towards communications in other contexts, such as media, interpersonal communication, and conflict resolution. The

limited material available on forensics coaching deals primarily with the college director, as in the American Forensics Association's Argumentation and Advocacy, the Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta, and the National Forensic Journal. Studies with data are generally older or focused on college programs. High school forensic publications such as the NFL's Rostrum and NFISDA's Forensic Educator focus on how to coach specific events or anecdotal stories, and these categories were excluded from this review.

In contrast to most forensic coaching literature, which focus on the needs of the program and not on the needs of the coach, important aspects of the research questions relating to the individual coach were found primarily in athletic literature. Inclusion of this material was essential, since consideration of coach training solely from the perspective of program needs ignores the personal dynamics of individuals faced with occupational expectations, and overlooks much established coaching literature on role conflict and retention. Two categories of themes are considered in the preliminary review to this study: first, those shared by all high school coaches, both athletic and forensic, and second, those shared by forensic coaches at both college and high school levels.

#### Organization of the Literature Review

The following diagram shows the intersection between the four coaching dimensions reviewed for this study: college, high school, athletic, and forensic. Due to the small volume of literature about coaching high school forensics, athletic high school coaching literature is explored first to establish patterns for coaching. Then, since so little of the literature on coaching forensics concerns the high school level, literature on

coaching college forensics is explored for forensic system characteristics. Finally, the literature on high school forensic coaching is analyzed. Thus, the body of the literature review that follows explores the areas of Figure 1 in the order indicated by the numbers.

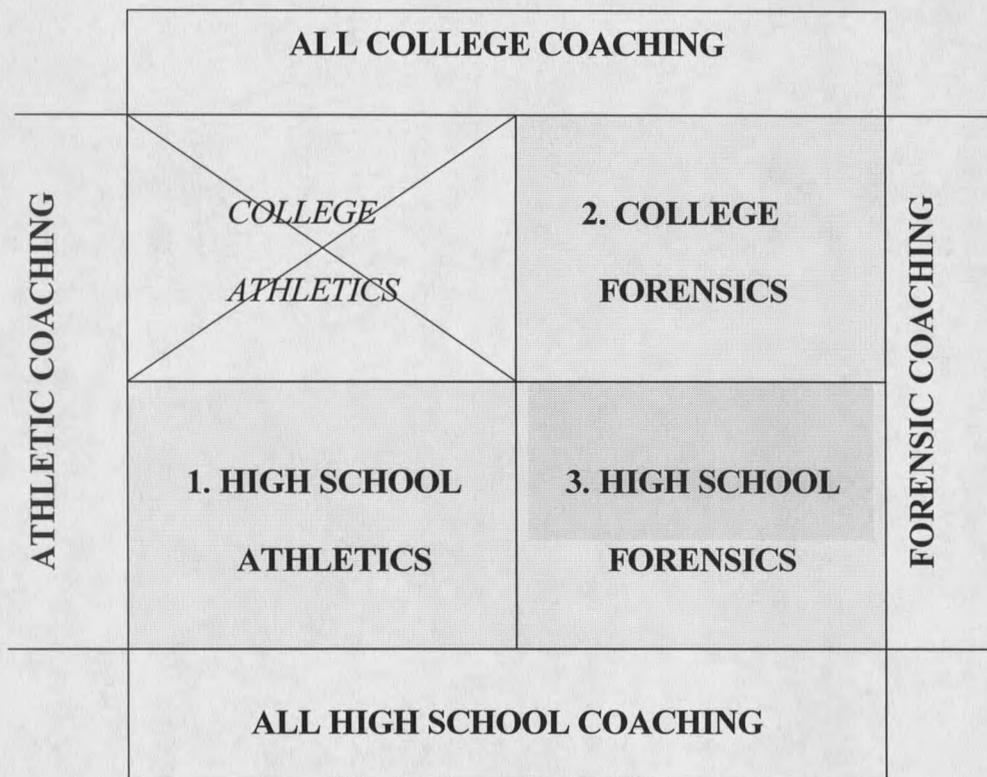


Figure 1. Order of Literature Review. Coaching literature of related activities is reviewed in the sequence indicated by numbers above.

## High School Athletic Coaching Literature: Individual Coach Patterns

### Overview: Untrained High School Coaches

High school administrators staffing extracurricular programs today face the reality of untrained coaches, a result of increased demand colliding with changes in the teacher-coach employment pool. Nationally, the numbers of high school students participating in extracurricular competitive athletics of every kind are at an all-time high. According to figures from the National Federation of High Schools (National Federation of High Schools, 2002), over 6.7 million students participated in extracurricular high school athletics during the 2001-2002 school year, breaking the previous records set during each of the previous four years (National Federation of High Schools, 1999, 2002). This level of student participation raises the number of coaching positions to be filled, estimated at over one million (T. E. Flannery, personal communication, November 2, 1999). The numbers of athletic events have multiplied in the last 25 years along with the associated coaching positions, with the result that many schools now offer 25 to 30 different sports programs, including several levels of varsity and sub-varsity competitive teams. This explosion in the demand for athletic coaches was foreseen over two decades ago, but the shortage is more serious than it was predicted to be (Frost, 1995; Munksgaard, 1997; Odenkirk, 1986).

Simultaneous shifts in coach demographics have accentuated the hiring crisis. In the past, most athletic coaches were physical education teachers, but by 1986, changes in college preparation were noted as a primary reason for the declining number of physical

education majors seeking teaching-coaching positions (Odenkirk, 1986). By the mid-1980's, the majority of high school athletic coaches were not physical education teachers anymore (Sage, 1989).

Changes in college preparation are not the only cause for disparity between supply and demand in coaching. According to national reports, as well as athletic directors, superintendents, and principals in Montana and Wyoming, it is much more difficult today to find beginning teachers who are interested in coaching than it was one or two decades ago (Frost, 1995; Gillis, 1994; Lowe, 1999; Munksgaard, 1997; Tanglen, 2001; Wishnietsky & Felder, 1989). Karen Partlow, national director of the American Coaching Effectiveness Program in 1994, commented in a National Federation interview that a contemporary study showed "coaching is not a career that is encouraged by parents or teachers. The only people encouraging students to enter the coaching field are coaches themselves" (Gillis, 1994, p. 5). Fewer individuals start their careers today with the idea in mind of being a coach.

In addition to having a smaller initial pool of teacher-coach candidates to draw from, the coaching longevity of tenured teacher-coaches is declining. Even with higher pay, coaches tend to move out of coaching much earlier in their careers now than in the past, largely by their own choice (Gillis, 1994). An increasing percentage of teacher-coaches retire from coaching but keep teaching, leaving administrators in unenviable hiring situations (Odenkirk, 1986). National Federation of High Schools Coaching Program director Flannery said in a 1999 phone interview with the researcher that coaching patterns have changed since the graduates of the 1960's and 1970's started

coaching, when it was generally true that "once you were a coach, you were always a coach" (T. E. Flannery, personal communication, November 2, 1999). He estimated seven years to be the national average for the tenure of an athletic coach, based on statistics from those state associations which require all coaches to be members and which keep track of coach longevity (T. E. Flannery, personal communication, November 2, 1999). Another coaching expert has estimated the annual turnover rate among coaches in the last decade to be as high as 40% (Stewart, 2001).

Pressures from outside the school contribute to the coaching exodus.

Increasingly, athletic officials are targeted by parents and competitors acting out a "hyper-competitive" (Frost, 1995, p. 25), "win at all costs" mentality (Lord, 2000, p. 52).

Violence contributes to coach turnover (Marshall, 2000) as does the scapegoat phenomenon, in which the players get credit for winning and the coach is at fault for losing (Lackey, 1977, 1986; Templin & Washburn, 1981; Wishnietsky & Felder, 1989).

Increasing dependence on parental financial support for extracurricular costs in a time of tight school budgets erodes a coach's ability to emphasize sportsmanship over winning (Frost, 1995).

The shortage of teacher-coaches forces the hiring of many "walk-on" coaches who work outside of education for their primary employment and do not understand the basics of supervision, teaching methods, or legal issues. Some areas of the country have increased the use of non-faculty coaches by more than 400%, despite administrator efforts to keep coaching linked to certified teaching positions (Nasstrom et al., 1984). Frost (1995) notes that the 1986 National Federation handbook indicated one-third to one-half

of the faculty at any particular high school in the country was involved in coaching a sport. In comparison, today's percentage of coaches who are teachers has dropped significantly (Frost, 1995).

For many of those who are coaching today, the primary preparation for coaching is simply having played that sport at some point in the past. In response to this trend, coach mentoring programs, formal certification procedures, and a growing emphasis on quality coaching are diffusing internationally as well as from state to state within the United States (Dietze, 1997; Martens, 1990; Sawyer, 1992; Stewart, 2001; Whitby, 1993). One survey of coach certification programs (Whitby, 1993) commented on the importance of linking coach training to the physical education curriculum by noting that "credibility of certification lies in the endorsement of the program by state athletic directors, coaches and high school athletic or activity associations and by state departments of education" (p. 43).

#### Becoming a Coach: Preparation and Socialization

The intersection of these two trends, a significantly increased need for coaches on one hand and a reduced number of teachers available and willing to coach on the other, is complicating other long-standing occupational problems documented in coaching literature (Chu, 1981, 1984; Coakley, 1978; Locke & Massengale, 1978; Sage, 1989). Collectively, these issues serve as a framework for insight into Montana high school forensic coaching, beginning with the question of how a person begins to become a coach.

In one study of the processes through which individuals become high school coaches, Sage (1989) found that over 50% of the athletic coaches he studied had already decided to coach before starting college, and most of the others made that decision during college. His interview subjects were 50 male coaches, many of whom were not physical education teachers. Their choices to become coaches were justified "by personal characteristics and experiences, a desire to remain involved with sport, and an ambition to work with young people and serve society" (Sage, 1989, p. 89).

Even for those athletic coaches who majored in the traditional coaching curriculum area of physical education, academic coursework preparing them to coach has been minimal (Sage, 1989). One study by Chu (1984) showed that over 80% of the courses for physical education majors were devoted to teaching competencies and not coaching. Additionally, out of 2,172 graduate physical education courses, only 146 had an indication of coaching preparation anywhere in their descriptions or formal titles. Chu (1981) noted in another study that the "preparation myth" functions to minimize meaningful coach preparation in college for physical education majors (p. 44). Sage (1989) concluded:

Aside from acquiring some knowledge about instructional processes in teaching-oriented courses which may have relevance to coaching, aspiring coaches have limited opportunity to acquire the skills, values, and ideology basic to the practice of coaching, so the process of becoming a coach takes place outside of formal academic institutions (p. 86).

Thus, individual athletic coaches are often hired without any formal advance training, and they must negotiate the process of becoming a coach on their own.

For athletic coaches, a significant source of professional socialization into the role of coach is the experience they have had as student participants observing their own coaches. Coakley (1978) noted that the experience of having been an athletic participant, "combined with the anticipation of entering the ranks of coaching, are the channels through which the traditionally accepted methods of coaching become integrated into the behavior of aspiring young coaches" (p. 241). Coakley (1978) called this process of role learning "anticipatory socialization" (p. 241).

#### Being a Coach: Role Conflicts for Teacher-Coaches

Role is defined as the dimensions of behavior, attitudes and beliefs associated with a given position (Biddle, 1979, 1986). Assumptions made by others about an individual's role act to shape the specific expectations of that person and the individual's own identification with that role (Sage, 1989; Turner, 1978). Role conflict results from multiple obligations, each with different sets of expectations (Massengale, 1981, p. 23).

Coaches who are also teachers have always been at risk for role conflict due to their dual positions. Coakley (1978) noted that for the athletic coach, "normative limits of role expectations are probably more restrictive than they are for many other positions" (p. 223) and complicate pressure and conflicts inherent to the position. For those coaches who also teach, studies have identified several specific role conflicts: school organizational expectations, coach-faculty strains, personal professional aspirations, and teacher-coach workload (Riggins, 1979). Another study identified that "incompatible expectations resulting from the combined workload of teaching and coaching are the most

commonly experienced cause of role conflict” for those who fill a combined position (Massengale, 1981, p. 23).

One of the most common adjustments to a dual role conflict is selecting one role as the major role (Locke & Massengale, 1978). Every individual identifies sources of positive reinforcement through support and approval. When there are two competing sets of demands on an individual, and those two opposing expectations are both role-related, the degree to which the individual has identified with one role or the other will affect which role will receive a greater portion of energy. Studies (Chu, 1984; Locke & Massengale, 1978) suggest that the teacher-coach role conflict can lead to considerable dysfunction in one or both of the two occupational roles, and ultimately the one with the least potential for negative reinforcement gets the least emphasis, or conversely, the role with the most potential for positive reinforcement gets the most emphasis. Locke and Massengale (1978) suggested that athletic coaches who were also physical education teachers tended to reduce the emphasis they place on their teaching role in order to reduce role stress. “A surprising number of teacher-coaches admit concern over the feeling that the quality of their teaching performance is impaired by the additional demands of coaching” (Locke & Massengale, 1978, p. 173). Others also found that teaching was given secondary priority as a behavior adaptation to reduce the level of teacher-coach role stress (Riggins, 1979), or simply as a matter of preference between roles for both pre-service and experienced teacher-coaches (Chu, 1984). One reviewer noted, “the responsibilities associated with coaching consume the time and energy of teachers such that teachers who appear to be burned out during their physical education classes may

have adjusted their priorities to conserve energy for coaching duties” (Caccese, 1982, pp. 22-23). Locke and Massengale (1978) referred to this kind of teacher-coach as one who simply “rolls out the ball” for physical education class but performs legendary coaching feats with a team (p. 165). A majority of 307 teacher-coaches studied more recently exhibited a similar dichotomy, with decreasing levels of commitment to their roles as teachers during the coaching season and a greater professional involvement related to coaching than to teaching (Morley, Aberdeen, & Milislagle, 2000).

Conflict between two roles is accelerated when there is ambiguity and lack of feedback about expectations, and these are common for teacher-coaches. Occupational studies, including Johnson and Stinson’s 1975 study cited in Riggins (1979) and Jackson and Schuler’s 1985 study and a subsequent meta-analysis (Tubre & Collins, 2000), have found significant negative correlations between job satisfaction and performance and key role variables, such as role conflict and feedback ambiguity. Increased work stress has also been found to directly relate with the degree of role conflict and role ambiguity (Daniels & Bailey, 1999; Fried et al., 1998). Coaching researchers, including Massengale (1981), have noted that the actual job descriptions for teacher-coach roles vary from expectations held by educational organizations for other teachers (Riggins, 1979). As Chu’s (1981) research into organizational expectations showed, “a discrepancy exists between official acknowledgment of the professional role (teaching) and actual work performed” (p. 40). Disparities in a reward system characterized by a “lack of clear role definition and the apparent confusion of school administrators” (Massengale, 1981, p. 23) further complicate role conflict.

Outside pressures on athletic coaches are real and not simply perceived. Athletic coaches can lose their jobs because of coaching inadequacies, and potential dismissal has traditionally had a key relationship to role stress. Older studies identify deficiency areas, including coaching methods and techniques, organizational and administrative ability, ethics, staff relations, winning, and public relations skills (Hafner, 1962). More recently, up to 92% of surveyed school administrators had experience with coaches being dismissed or quitting in studies by Lackey (1977, 1986) and Wishnietsky and Felder (1989). Kroll (1982) cites "inevitable" (p. 7) interpersonal conflicts with administrators, players, and parents as stress factors contributing four times as often to coaches quitting than any lack of technical expertise.

Athletic coaching literature sketches a clear picture of the coach-administrator relationship as being fundamental to successful coaching (Coakley, 1978). Evaluation is one of the most important tools to deal with teacher-coach role ambiguity and role conflict by "clearly defining basic beliefs and goals" (Hungerford, 1981, p. 20). Reinforcement of a common understanding about job expectations between coach and administrator is an essential reason for formal evaluation (Pflug, 1980). Participatory management procedures in high school activity programs use human relationships between employee and supervisor as the key to improved system functioning, by centering on individuals and not simply the roles (McLenighan, 1990). Massengale (1981) stated that even though the role conflict from incompatible expectations for the teacher-coach "is perceived more than actually experienced" (p. 23), differences in perceptions of role expectations can lead to miscommunications and misunderstandings

between coach and administrators (p. 23). Lackey's (1977, 1986) frequently referenced studies contrasted coach and administrator perceptions and indicated significant difference between them. Yet differences in the perspectives of these two roles are not universally unbridgeable. Newman and Miller's (1995) study of the viewpoints of high school coaches and administrators shows that agreement can be found between administrator and coach. Ultimately, the manner in which coaches are hired, evaluated, and supported by administrators makes a difference not only in the quality of coaching but also in the coach's longevity. Feedback about job expectations and performance are important factors in a coach's confidence and success in managing role conflict.

#### Leaving the Role of Coaching: Intent to Leave and Burnout

An ongoing focus in occupational literature deals with the process of leaving a job and voluntary turnover. Theories such as the unfolding model proposed by Lee and Mitchell in 1994 describe the evolutionary stages of voluntarily deciding to quit a job, and form a theoretical basis for contemporary studies of the ways in which personal, external, and work-related variables contribute to the processes of turnover (Lee, Mitchell, Holtom, McDaniel, & Hill, 1999). While most occupational literature deals with full-time jobs, much coaching is not full-time employment, especially at the high school level and particularly for teacher-coaches. Thus, the concept of voluntary quitting as a process with stages has partial relevance to understanding how a coach develops the decision to quit coaching. Much of the research on leaving coaching has been prompted by the declining percentage of women coaches since Title IX legislation of the 1970's.

Personal, external and work-related variables identified by the turnover model (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986) have been studied with the goal of establishing predictors of progressive stages in an individual's developing of the intent to leave coaching (Sagas & Ashley, 2001).

Though the development of a coach's idea to leave coaching is being studied as a process based in reasoned action, such a departure can also involve the processes of burnout, called "an occupational hazard" (Austin, 1981, p. 35) for educators in general. Coach burnout has all of the components of teacher and administrator burnout as well as additional factors. The recognition of burnout began in occupational literature with Freudenberger (1974) and Maslach (1976, 1978). Extensive literature on educator burnout will not be reviewed here other than to note that it is a three-stage process moving from emotional exhaustion through the depersonalization of others to a negative evaluation of oneself (Caccese, 1982). Relationships between individuals in the system are critical to preventing burnout, as are clear expectations and reduced job ambiguity; this requires that administrators and teachers are "responsive to as well as responsible for each other" (O'Brien, 1981, p. 45). In order to prevent burnout, a teacher must be part of the solution, since "an administrator trying to solve a teacher's problems without the teacher's active participation may be worse than not trying to solve the problem at all" (Kohlmaier, 1981, p. 39).

A pattern of physical, emotional, and behavioral symptoms characterizes the process of burnout for a coach, and the reaction to coaching stress has been found to be more related to individual differences than to job demands (Pate, Rotella, &

McClenaghan, 1984; Vealey, Udry, Zimmerman, & Soliday, 1992). The greater need an individual coach has to be successful, the greater risk that coach has for experiencing burnout. Higher levels of motivation, dedication and enthusiasm create larger stressors, particularly for success-motivated "minor" sports coaches who get little attention or support from the community and media. Transitioning through the burnout process moves coaches through stages of blame: first, blame for team members; second, self-blame; and third, blame for the situation. In the third stage, coach-administrator alienation emerges when "failure is attributed to lack of support . . . an abundance of time is spent complaining about the administration. Jealousies for the support given to other sports is frequently expressed" (Pate, Rotella, & McClenaghan, 1984, p. 123).

Ultimately, an individual who has moved through these stages is overwhelmed.

"Coaching burnout is a result of a feeling by coaches that they no longer can meet all the demands of coaching" (Stewart, 2001, p. 2). Reducing ambiguity and job overload and defining realistic personal responsibilities all diminish role stress and the risk of burnout (Martens, 1990). Other suggestions to prevent burnout include raising a coach's own awareness of burnout symptoms (Malone & Rotella, 1981), and administrative reinforcement of achievement and community (Olcott, 1981).

Earls (1981) identified a category of educator he called the *distinctive teacher* as one who "consistently demonstrates sincere interest and enthusiasm in teaching, genuine concern for students, and self-study and continued striving to improve as a teacher" (p. 41). He described *distinctive* physical education teachers who have successfully resisted the negative impact of coaching on their teaching and identified changes in behavior that

deter burnout in this type of professional. Recently, mentoring programs to teach coaches how to coach are being developed in school districts so that more experienced coaches can strengthen new coaches (Dietze, 1997). Coaching education programs such as MHSA's online course stress that coaches must be aware of their own needs as well as the needs of their athletes and their programs (Stewart, 2001, p. 2).

Time pressure is a major aspect of high school coaching burnout. In a study by Sage (1989), the researcher noted that "while high school coaching is seen as an extracurricular assignment, it is uniquely different from other extracurricular assignments" (p. 82), in large part due to the 30 to 40 hours a week spent on coaching duties above and beyond the time involved in teaching and classroom preparation. While not all coaches experience burnout, coaches who quit coaching before they quit teaching must go through a process of evolving the intent to leave their coaching positions. The same factors influence individual coaches, whether those factors result in burnout or simply a decision to leave coaching.

While these themes in coach preparation, role-conflict, and burnout come from athletic coaching literature, they frame a general understanding of individual patterns inherent to coaching. The processes are three-fold: first, becoming a coach; second, dealing with conflicts inherent to the role; and third, evolving the reasoned intent or emotional burnout precipitating the end of an individual's tenure as coach.

## College Forensic Coaching Literature: Program Patterns

### Linkage Between Forensics and Speech Curriculum

The development of speech communications as a separate academic discipline in American universities during the early 20th century was only one stage in the long and checkered history of rhetoric, the educational basis of forensics defined by Webster's dictionary as "the art of expressive speech and discourse" (Gove, 1976, p. 1946). This history, dating to the earliest Greeks, leads many to consider forensics to be the oldest academic subject still taught (Swanson & Zeuschner, 1983) as well as one of the most consistently and characteristically fragmented of all disciplines. In ancient Greece, philosophical schisms over the relationship between rhetoric and truth foreshadowed a history of inclusion, exclusion, and redefinition in the educational curriculum. By mid-19th century, the study of rhetoric, central to American college education since colonial times, was supplanted as English departments replaced oral discourse with the study of literature in an increasingly specialized academic curriculum (Heinrichs, 1995). The pendulum swung back towards oral exercise again after extracurricular student-run debating clubs popularized highly competitive intercollegiate debate competitions. These contests were the origin of modern forensic activities as we know them today, and precipitated the birth of communication studies and the reintroduction of speech into academic coursework. In 1914, a professional speech communication organization broke away from the National Council of Teachers of English, evolving through several name changes into the Speech Communication Association. Beginning in 1920, "Department





































































































































































































































































































