

The myth of having only the latest information.

By Shawn Augsburger

Most people who loathe Extemp will likely cite one common complaint, that you have to keep your box up to date by almost constantly cutting out articles. In this aspect Extemp is much like policy debate, but most of the similarities end there. Not having a quality extemp box is part of the reason that it often why many people are frustrated in finding cites for their speeches. The problem stems from several misconceptions about building a box. For starters many believe that if the article wasn't from the last year that it isn't useful. This seems to be an ideology that comes from policy debate because there is always the quip that "my card is newer than yours." While I do not advocate that you carry around news clippings from the first Bush administration there is some value in keeping at least some material from last years extemp box and perhaps even a few years earlier. There are many issues that are recurrent where many news stories cite earlier data. In other words your piece of evidence from last week often times is only more current in the sense that the newspaper story was written more recently. Some data such as international tests comparing the US to other countries are only done every several years. The data may be 2-3 years old, but it may be the latest information in fact. Unless the data is superceded by something else you will have no evidence in your box on international K-12 results if you throw away that "old" article.