

Speech asks students to dig deep

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Thursday, 31 January 2013 14:14 -



Competitors contemplate why they put it on the line each week

At one competition, Madison Costello got the hiccups while presenting a speech.

During another, junior Carlin Daharsh was disqualified from a round because the judge said she had too many quote words in her persuasive speech.

Competing with speeches that include everything from extemporaneous speaking about current events to a wacky duet about “The Magic School Bus” can be likened to riding a roller coaster each week.

Students are always at the whim of what an individual judge likes and dislikes.

The high of receiving a gold medal for a performance one week may plummet the next when the scores of three different judges, during three rounds, aren’t high enough for a competitor to even stand on stage for recognition.

That’s when speech competitors must dig deep into themselves.

For Costello, such character-building experiences remind her that she doesn’t compete for glory but to express herself.

Costello, who’s a senior, is one of the speech club officers who came up with a theme for

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competitors this year which is “Why Are You Here?”

“Kids do speech for different reasons,” she said. “After a bad round, it’s a good question to ask.”

Kayla Trevino, a junior, has experienced the ups and downs of speech competition for 2 years.

One of the things she’s learned is how to embarrass herself and enjoy it.

Trevino tells of entering a round at a competition with several good-looking guys in the audience.

“I had to act like an old, demented man,” she said. “To do it, I had to blank them out.”

Through speech, several students said they’ve learned how to let go of anxiety.

“Because you never know how a judge will think,” said junior Abbie Mazour.

Another piece of learning for some students is a heightened desire to improve.

Students are required to practice their performances in front of coaches each week during the speech season.

They also practice while taking showers, during lunch break, while riding the bus to and from competitions and other times that may include in their sleep, several students said.

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“We also coach each other all the time,” said fellow junior Ashley Wilkerson.

Drake Brand and Brett Mann, who are also juniors, think about new ideas for their “The Magic School Bus” duet all of the time.

“We then practice it and see if it works,” Brand said.

Non-speech students and the community will have a chance to see local students compete at the Gothenburg Invite Saturday at the high school.

Senior Rebecca Miller described the event “as the coolest meet of the entire year.”

“There are going to be surprises for everyone throughout the day and during the awards ceremony,” Miller said.

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