

TEACHER – COUNSELOR – CRITIC (TOB/TIA INFO)

We as judges are extremely close to the groups we adjudicate, especially at a local level. We share in their growth and we take on the responsibility of giving them input for improvement. Sometimes we talk directly to the performers and try to help them understand what is being asked of them. Unlike athletic referees or umpires, unlike other international championships judges, we are not isolated from the competitors we grade. This fact urges us to take a long hard look at why we are judges.

In most cases we have come from this activity; it has given something tremendously important to us. Most of us have been performers or instructors. Some of us have felt the stinging indifference of a judge who didn't seem to care, and we have vowed never to be like that. Others have felt the nurturing of some special person who went just a little beyond his/her duty and helped us to grow.

TEACHER: Beginning groups with young inexperienced instructors require us to be Teachers. At this level we will find many times when our evaluation will be clinics in basic technique. This must be done with patience, setting a logical progression of development for them to follow. We must offer encouragement when they are confused (which could be most of the time) and enthusiasm when they show some level of success. Remember that these beginners are where many of us were long ago. Deal with them in basic terms. Without encouragement and enthusiasm for their minor successes, growth could be impaired. The nurturing process at this level is of vital importance.

COUNSELOR: At the second level, we deal with groups that have been around for a few years, felt some success and believe that they are ready to move to a higher classification. Here we find ourselves dealing with the adolescent of our activity - convinced of their expertise and often reluctant to accept the fact that they have anything to learn. At this point we find ourselves in the role of Counselor. This role requires the most patience, the strongest concern and the greatest amount of effort.

CRITIC: Finally, the student really does grow up and we see moments of brilliance emerge from his/her creations and one day they have it all together, and in terms of creation, has surpassed the teacher, outgrown the counselor and looks to us to be the art Critic (for surely, this is a work of art). At this point, we must challenge and encourage them to set even higher goals and standards. We must be professional, concerned and supportive.

Superior performers always give 100%. Superior judges also give 100%. As judges, our disciplines and attitudes must be an extension of those the performers follow. We expect them to be professional – so must we be professional. We expect them to respect us - so must we respect them. Demand no less of yourself than is demanded of each performer. A great teacher continually learns from his/her students; a great judge continually learns from the instructors and performers. Communication is a two-way street.

Good groups and good judges grow together by helping one another, by keeping communication lines open and by setting mutual goals and standards for the activity. Judge with your head, with your heart and in a positive, nurturing and challenging manner as you contribute to the growth and development of this unique activity and its very special performers!