

Basic Communication Course Annual

Volume 13


Article 4

2001

Editor's Page

Deanna D. Sellnow
North Dakota State University

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Recommended Citation

Sellnow, Deanna D. (2001) "Editor's Page," *Basic Communication Course Annual*: Vol. 13 , Article 4.
Available at: <http://ecommons.udayton.edu/bcca/vol13/iss1/4>

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Editor's Page

I'd like to take this opportunity to make a few comments after finishing my first year as editor of the *Basic Communication Course Annual*. I'll begin by making some personal comments to the commission and to the contributors and, then, by providing a preface to the essays in this 13th edition of the *Annual*.

First, I'd like to thank members of the NCA Basic Course Commission for entrusting me to this assignment. I hope I haven't let you down. Second, I'd like to formally thank each member of the Editorial Board for the time and energy spent reading and thoughtfully critiquing the essays. I truly believe that any journal is only as good as its reviewers. Your conscientious work has made this issue of the *Annual*, in my opinion, an outstanding one. Finally, I'd like to thank the authors for their careful attention to the reviewer suggestions when revising their manuscripts. You are to be applauded. Doing so has made your essays more helpful to the field.

I've decided to arrange this issue of the *Annual* thematically. Hence, the first two essays focus on student perceptions of the basic course. Stephen Hunt and his co-authors extend what we know by comparing university and community college student perceptions of usefulness and relevance of communication skills taught in the basic course. Stephen Cox and Timothy Plax extend

existing research by comparing student perceptions in self-contained versus mass-lecture courses.

The next four articles pose suggestions for modifying our approach to the basic course. Kris Treinen and John Warren challenge us to teach the course as if whiteness matters. That is, we should move our approach to cultural communication from the margins to the center and take care to avoid presenting cultural communication as a study of the exotic cultural 'other,' or as an individual rather than systematic construct, or as a non-issue. Jon Hess asks us to consider modifying the basic course with ethics, not only embedded throughout, but as the foundation. Roy Schwartzman challenges us to deconstruct the economic consumerism metaphor of the basic course and then replace it with one that acknowledges it as a value-laden communication environment, or ethosystem. Finally, Marcia Dixson explores the idea of integrating social construction theory into the basic course as a means by which to connect contexts of interpersonal, small group, and public communication.

The final article, by Ronald Arnett and Janie Harden Fritz, is unique in that it describes and evaluates a basic service communication course that was designed strategically to be sensitive to the mission of the university, its own mission, and the mission of its constituents. That course is entitled "Communication and Professional Civility."

Combined, these articles remind us of the complex nature of what we call the "basic" course. Moreover, they challenge us to expand our thinking by questioning why we approach the course as we do. Finally, they entice us to probe deeper through additional research about the basic communication course. Enjoy!