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Editor's Page

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Over the past 20 years, the basic communication course has become a staple of many of general education programs. The ability to communicate effectively is viewed as a prerequisite to interpersonal relationships, success in the workplace, and meaningful participation as a citizen in our democracy. The role of the basic communication course in general education affords the discipline with substantial political capital on many campuses—administrators often look to the basic course as an ideal location for launching new initiatives and capturing important data regarding student learning outcomes. To the extent that basic course directors are able to deliver those initiatives effectively, they may earn additional access to university resources. Without question, this is an important course. For more than 20 years the *Basic Communication Course Annual* has been the preeminent outlet for scholarship exploring and debating the best practices for the basic course in communication and this volume continues that tradition.

The articles presented in this volume of the *Annual* cover a wide range of topics that advance our understanding of basic course scholarship, practice, and pedagogy. Initially, the lead article in this volume by Valenzano explores the role of the basic communication course in general education and encourages readers to consider how the course might be protected from the some of the changes washing across the landscape of higher education.

Thompson and Robinson's article examines classroom power through the implementation of critical reflection exer-

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cises aimed at promoting student agency and learning in the basic course classroom. Their research provides clear guidelines for basic course instructors in terms of implementing critical reflection practices in the communication classroom. Hodis and Hodis examine static (cross-sectional) and dynamic (longitudinal) relations among communication apprehension, communicative self-efficacy, and willingness to communicate in the public speaking context. Their findings advance our understanding of basic course instruction and open new avenues for theory development.

Davidson and Dwyer's research explores student use of an e-textbook in a large multi-section basic pubic speaking course. Their results may be surprising to some readers in that they indicate that participants preferred traditional textbooks to e-texts. Similarly, their results demonstrate that when it comes to e-textbook reading, participants preferred computers to smaller devices like iPads and cellular phones.

The next two manuscripts explore the development of students' public skills in the basic course. Farris and Houser assess the validity of two instruments (Informative Presentation Assessment Form and Persuasive Presentation Assessment Form) measuring student public speaking competency. This study also examines the development of students' public speaking skills after receiving training and the findings provide support that instruction positively influences competency. The next study by Gaffney and Frisby explores students' perceptions of changes in efficacy and affect toward a variety of communication skills (e.g., interpersonal, writing, visual, public speaking, group collaboration) over a sequence of two hybrid basic course classes. Their results have implications for assignment sequences and should stimulate some debate among basic course directors about the efficacy of requiring two basic courses in communication to maximize student learning outcomes.

The final two articles in this volume examine the use of International Teaching Assistants (ITAs) in the basic course

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and the importance of goal setting in basic course pedagogy. Initially, Miyazaki and Yamada discus how non-native English speaker identity, or non-nativeness is displayed, developed, and negotiated through interactions with both native and other non-native speakers. Finally, LeFebvre examines how goal setting strategies and self-generated feedback from video affects student grade improvement on subsequent speaking occasions.

In conclusion, this volume contains essays that address some of the most pressing issues facing those concerned with the basic course. Taken as a whole, this scholarship allows the reader to reflect on what the research tells us about what works in the basic course, what does not work, and what still needs to be investigated. The introductory communication course provides a context for fruitful investigations that assess how we can effectively develop, deliver, and assess our discipline's "bread and butter" course.

We extend our sincere thanks to all those who assisted in our efforts to bring this volume to print. Our editorial board deserves special acknowledgement for their tireless commitment to the Annual.

Sincerely,
Steve Hunt (Editor)
Joe Mazer (Associate Editor)

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