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Basic Course History

"The Basic Course in Speech Communication: An Historical Perspective" ............................ 1
Pamela L. Gray

The purpose of this paper is to trace some of the changes that have taken place in the basic course in speech communication through the use of representative literature concerning the basic course. In addition, a direction for the future, indicated by the literature, will be suggested. This paper should serve as both an historical perspective of this course and a summary of the changes that may have occurred as this course has responded to philosophical/intellectual and/or pragmatic pressures.

"What We Know about the Basic Course: What Has the Research Told Us?" .................... 28
William J. Seiler and Drew McGukin

Research in the basic speech communication course is vital to our understanding of what we know about it, how it is administered and taught. The paper examines theoretical as well as empirical literature relevant to the basic course. Our examination suggests that the literature is deplete of a consistent base of knowledge on which to design the basic course. The paper concludes by discussing a proposal for systematic research to help provide a foundation for teaching and administering the basic course.
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“A Comparison between PSI-Based and and Self-Contained Formats of Instruction in the Introductory Speech Communication Course” .. 43
Pamela L. Gray, Nancy L. Buerkel-Rothfuss and Richard W. Thomas

This study assesses differences between two instructional methods in a basic speech communication course: a modified Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) and a self contained format. Communication skills, communication apprehension, self-esteem, and academic achievement in, perceptions about, and satisfaction with the course are compared. Using t-tests to compare means and mean exchange scores, the PSI-based format was found to be more effective than the self-contained format. Comparing these data with an earlier study designed to compare the PSI-based format with more traditional lecture-recitation format, the self-contained approach appears to be a better alternative than the lecture-recitation for teaching the course, but the PSI-based model was still clearly superior to both alternatives.

“Using Plays and Novels as Case Studies in the Basic Course” ........................................... 70
Roger D. Smitter

“Using Plays and Novels as Case Studies in the Basic Course” presents a rationale for the use of case studies and the case study method in the undergraduate speech communication classroom. Examples are provided for using plays and novels. The advantages and disadvantages of using plays and novels as cases are presented.

“A Unit on Relationship Termination in the Basic Course” ........................................... 82
Lynn A. Phelps

Basic interpersonal communication courses stress relationship development but seldom address the concept of
relationship termination. If addressed, termination is often viewed from a negative perspective. Yet in today’s mobile society, the concept that a person will continue to develop new relationships throughout their life without terminating any of their previous relationships is ludicrous at best. The purpose of this article is to suggest units on relationship termination which are appropriate for the basic communication course.

"Teaching Ethics in the Basic Survey Speech Communication Course" .......................... 95
William A. Haskins

The teaching of ethics in speech communication courses is not new to most communication curriculums. Emphasis upon teaching ethics in speech communication courses, however, appears to be growing. Attention on the teaching of ethics appears to be growing as well as in many basic speech communication classes. This paper, then, provides general suggestions on teaching ethics in a basic speech communication course.

"The Necessity of Separating Idealized Accountability from Realized Accountability: A Case Study" ........ 106
Karen J. Greenberg

This essay presents the hidden distinction between the idealized accountability and the realized accountability of the basic communication course. It illuminates this difference as this difference is evidenced in the ethical dimension of the rhetoric of basic communication course instructors’ manuals. Contrary to popular myth, the basic communication course does not aim to reinforce the importance of the creation and maintenance of students’ or instructors’ identities, but aims to reinforce the importance of the creation and maintenance of educational systems. That is, this course mystifies one type of social hierarchy rather than elucidating many.
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"Implications of Student and Instructor Involvement in the Basic Course" .................. 134
Sam Wallace and Don B. Morlan

The purpose of the study is to test the notion that students in the basic course who possess high levels of communication competence will perform better in and subsequently will be more satisfied with the course than their counterparts with low levels of competence. Results show no support for the initial hypothesis. Further analysis, however, showed that the level of instructor competence has a significant effect on student evaluation of instructors.

"The Interaction of Teacher and Student Social Styles and Learning Styles on Learning Outcomes of the Basic Communication Course" ................ 150
Michael Smilowitz and Lynn A. Phelps

There has been considerable research that indicates the importance of the type and quality of teachers' communication. Too little of this research has considered the possibility of interrelationships between teacher's social and preferred learning styles with the social and preferred learning styles of students. This study examines students in basic communication courses for the effects of actual correspondence in styles as well as students' accuracy in describing the styles of their teachers. The results indicate that accurate perceptions of teachers' social styles influence course grades and actual correspondence influences student evaluations of the course.
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"Training or Teaching: A Professional Development Program for Graduate Teaching Assistants" ............ 169
Douglas M. Trank

Basic course directors are urged to consider the range of roles available to them in working with graduate teaching assistants. The key element in establishing an effective professional development program is the development of an appropriate atmosphere where the graduate instructors know they are viewed as valuable members of the faculty. Such a program must remain flexible enough to meet the needs of the graduate instructors and the department it serves. Treating graduate instructors as colleagues and involving them in the process, giving them power and freedom, and valuing the teaching they do benefits the students, the graduate instructors, the faculty, and the university.

"Teaching Basic Courses:
Problems and Solutions" ......................... 184
Richard L. Weaver II and Howard W. Cotrell

Basic speech courses enroll many students. Basic course instructors are often under great pressure to succeed and to be effective. Because of the numbers of students and the pressures, they experience many problems. Five are discussed in this article: rigor versus leniency, independence versus dependence, theory versus skills, being close versus being distant, and objective evaluation versus subjective evaluation. Solutions to these problems are likely to affect both student and instructor motivation. Solutions are also likely to affect how students perceive instructors. That's why, with respect to basic course instructors, you have to have solutions for the problems.

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