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Students' Perceived Usefulness and Relevance of Communication Skills in the Basic Course: Comparing University and Community College Students ................................................................. 1

Stephen K. Hunt, Daradirek Ekachai, Darin L. Garard, and Joseph H. Rust

Communication skills training is extremely important in terms of students' career choices. However, few studies have been conducted regarding differences between community colleges and four-year universities in terms of students' perceived usefulness and relevance of the study of communication in relation to career choice. The present study extends extant research by examining students' perceptions of this issue. The participants in Study 1 were 155 community college and 291 four-year university students and the participants in Study 2 were 205 community college students. The results demonstrate that students at both institutions perceive that the skills learned in basic communication courses are useful and relevant in relation to their future career. There were differences among students enrolled in interpersonal and public speaking courses, with those in interpersonal courses perceiving greater relevance of communication skills in terms of their future career.

Contrasting the Relationships between Teacher Immediacy, Teacher Credibility, and Student Motivation in Self-Contained and Mass Lecture Courses ................................................................. 23

Stephen A. Cox and Timothy S. Todd

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Basic communication courses are increasingly taught in mass-lecture formats. Research on teacher verbal immediacy, teacher nonverbal immediacy, teacher credibility, and student motivation has failed to contrast the relationships between these four variables in different basic course formats. Respondents enrolled in self-contained (n = 326) and mass-lecture (n = 865) formats of basic communication courses completed surveys measuring these four classroom variables. Results showed that all variables were positively and significantly correlated in both formats. However, four of the six correlation coefficients between teacher verbal immediacy, nonverbal immediacy, teacher credibility, and student motivation were statistically higher in the self-contained format. Verbal immediacy, teacher credibility, and student motivation scores were statistically higher in self-contained formats. These results show that past research has produced some potentially misleading conclusions about these variables. Discussion of the results, suggestions for mass-lecture instructors, and research directions are proposed.

Antiracist Pedagogy in the Basic Course: Teaching Cultural Communication as if Whiteness Matters ............................................... 46

Kristen P. Treinen and John T. Warren

As we have found in our experience as communication educators and scholars, there is a need for educators to understand the implications and impact of whiteness in the classroom. What we argue is typically missing in the basic course is an antiracist pedagogy. An antiracist pedagogy asks educators to understand the power and privilege inherent in whiteness, and asks educators to examine how whiteness affects their classrooms, students, teaching strategies, and attitudes toward students of color. In this essay, we offer four modifications to the basic course which are consistent with an antiracist pedagogy. The first modification involves re-examining the way cultural communication is approached in the basic communication course through a move from the
margins to the center. The second modification explores the danger of turning cultural communication into a study of the exotic cultural other. The third modification explores the ways the rhetoric of individualism reinforces inequality. Finally, we critique the notion that colorblindness is the appropriate way to handle issues of race in our classrooms. We conclude the essay by suggesting ways in which whiteness work is applicable and important in the basic course.

Rethinking Our Approach to the Basic Course: Making Ethics the Foundation of Introduction to Public Speaking .......................................................... 76
Jon A. Hess

The basic public speaking course is often taught from a standpoint of effectiveness. That approach can be problematic due to the dangers of technique. The use of ethics as a foundation for public speaking can overcome this drawback and has other advantages. Included in these advantages are its fidelity to the subject matter, promoting more responsible use of power, improved fit with the liberal arts mission of higher education, and better meeting student needs. Issues in implementing an ethics-based course are discussed, such as identifying ethical issues and engaging in dialogue. The model is illustrated through a description of one introductory public speaking course that was recently restructured to meet this philosophy.

What's Basic About the Basic Course?
Enriching the Ethosystem as a Corrective for Consumerism ............................................................. 116
Roy Schwartzman

A marketplace mentality featuring the student as consumer reaches deeply into educational practice today. This essay examines the roots and implications of framing public speaking education in economic terms. The amorality of the marketplace could be supplemented by closer attention to how
values infuse the communication process. A value-laden communication environment, or ethosystem, may contribute to greater student awareness of their obligations to others and yield a fuller description of communication education.

Teaching Social Construction of Reality in the Basic Course: Opening Minds and Integrating Contexts ........................................... 151
Marcia D. Dixson

After a brief review of social construction theory (SCT), this paper explores the introduction of SCT into the hybrid basic communication course. SCT offers a theoretical perspective that can open minds and integrate the contexts of our basic course. Specifically, this article offers a) an introduction to the theory; b) application of SCT to the areas of interpersonal communication, small group communication and public communication; and c) a description of a syllabus using team based learning to integrate the concepts and contexts of the hybrid basic communication course (all of the SCT projects referred to can be found in the Appendix).

Communication and Professional Civility as a Basic Service Course: Dialogic Praxis Between Department and Situated in an Academic Home ................................................ 174
Ronald C. Arnett and Janie M. Harden Fritz

Communication departments frequently offer basic service courses to other campus departments or schools. A communication course sensitive to the mission of the university or college of which it is a part, as well as to its own mission, allows programs that include such a course in their curriculum to distinguish themselves from competing programs. Additionally, such a mission-sensitive course further defines departmental and university identity, assisting in institutionalizing a mission. Offering such a course provides an opportunity for dialogic praxis to occur between departments

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situated within the context of a local institution. Dialogic praxis involves knowledge of one's own position, listening to the position of the Other, and recognition of the social and historical situation in which both parties are situated, and application, and collaborative application. Duquesne University's Communication Department designed a course entitled Communication and Professional Civility for the Physician Assistant Department through a process of dialogic praxis. This course addresses issues of working on a task with others from a variety of professional perspectives with different standpoints within a local organizational home centered around a clear mission. This course provides a public discourse approach to basic communication issues within a complex modern organization.

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