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Editor's Page

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Editor's Page

Now 16 years old, the *Basic Communication Course Annual* continues to hold a unique and instrumental status among peer communication journals. Notably, the *Annual* is the only national communication journal devoted to research and scholarship pertaining to the basic communication course. What started as an infant in 1988 has grown into a bright young-adult with an admirable sense of self.

The success of the *Annual* is entirely attributable to the community of scholars who have supported the journal over the years. All of us should be thankful for the leadership provided by the previous editors: Deanna Sellnow, Craig Newburger, and especially Larry Hugenberg. One hallmark of the *Annual* has always been the professionalism and generosity of the editorial board, and that tradition certainly continues with the most recent iteration. Most importantly, the continued vitality of this journal is indebted to the long list of scholars who have used the *Annual* as the outlet for their scholarly efforts.

Articles in this volume of the *Annual* illustrate the interplay between stories describing the day-to-day routines of our lives and the larger, grander stories of our discipline and profession. For instance, each author has a small, yet captivating story to share with the readership. Two articles, one by Turman and Barton and the other by Reynolds, Hunt, Simonds and Cutbirth, de-

scribe the speech evaluation process in epic, even perhaps tragic terms. As they explain through crisp statistical analyses, the monotonous nature of performance evaluation and feedback in the basic course can result in less than desirable feedback for students. Brann-Barrett and Rolls, as well as Jones, Hunt, Simonds, Comadena and Baldwin take an optimistic view in their articles describing the use of speech laboratories. As they explain, both students and peer mentors derive important benefits from participation in such labs. A narrative of optimism is also provided in Trinen's article on Whiteness studies as well as Harter, Kirby, Hatfield, and Kuhlman's article on service learning and Privera's article on gender sensitivity. Specifically, both Trinen and Privera advocate ways that the basic course can bring voice to marginalized groups whereas Harter and colleagues discuss how service learning empowers both students and teachers. Finally, as noted in Dr. Sprague's thoughtful analysis, each of the four essays in the special forum on philosophies of teaching celebrates the unique nexus of personal and public created in the basic communication course classroom.

Though each article in this volume of the *Annual* shares a smaller, yet important story, a larger narrative concerning the basic communication course is also embraced. Each essay, sometimes explicitly and sometimes not, presents an idealistic vision of what our basic course does. Based on my reading, the scholars contributing to this volume seek classrooms where students are empowered and encouraged, where important societal issues are openly discussed, where relationships flourish, and where the primacy of learning is not forgotten. Though many essays in this volume point to areas of

practical concern in the basic communication course, each essay also holds romantic optimism for what our basic course can accomplish.

I share in this optimism and encourage the reader to blend these authors' stories with their own narratives of the basic course. The essays are thought provoking, informative, and engaging. After reading each essay, you may embrace some of the smaller stories while rejecting others; yet, I believe that each of us can find common ground in the larger narrative that permeates these pages.

*Scott Titsworth,
Editor*