A Forum: Six Approaches to the Introductory Communication Course

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During the 1990 Speech Communication Association Convention in Chicago, the Basic Course Committee sponsored a program to discuss five popular approaches to the introductory communication course. These included the public speaking course, the hybrid or blend course, the interpersonal communication course, the introductory communication theory course and the business and professional speaking course. During the exchanges between the presenters and the 80 audience members, it was noted the group communication course was conspicuously absent but was added for this volume.

The panel marked the 20th anniversary of a similar panel which was part of the International Communication Association convention in May 1970. In his opening remarks for that ICA panel, Lawrence Rosenfield stated, “Papers on the basic course are an ancient custom in the speech profession, but there is reason to suspect that a professional discussion on this topic is more urgent now than it may have been a decade ago. We are all aware of the ferment characterizing contemporary American higher education; and we are further aware that, whether due to our own past sins or to the vagaries of the academic community, the speech discipline seems today to be peculiarly vulnerable to have its viscera probed, and it will either emerge from under the knife in a much healthier condition or it may not emerge at all.” This introduction is also a fitting opening for these descriptions — 20 years later.
A Forum

C. David Hurt, who also participated on the ICA panel stated: “It [the panel or the courses presented] does not pretend to be exhaustive, nor for that matter can the course described here even be called typical. They do, however, suggest some ways in which basic courses are changing.”


The presenters for this forum are:

Hybrid or Blend Course: Judy C. Pearson and Richard West,
Ohio University
Small Group Communication: Jack Brilhart, University of Nebraska - Omaha
Interpersonal Communication: Joseph DeVito, Hunter College
Communication Theory: William Donaghy, University of Wyoming
Public Speaking: Rudolph Verderber, University of Cincinnati
Business and Professional Speaking: Lawrence W. Hugenberg, Alfred W. Owens, II and David J. Robinson, Youngstown State University.