Basic Communication Course Annual

Volume 22

2010

Contents and Abstracts

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Contents and Abstracts

A Life of Scholarship and Service
To the Communication Discipline:
Celebrating Lawrence W. Hugenberg ....................... 1
Jeffrey T. Child

Assessing Preemptive Argumentation
in Students’ Persuasive Speech Outlines ................. 6
Kevin R. Meyer, Ryan R. Kurtz, Jamie L. Hines,
Cheri J. Simonds, Stephen K. Hunt

The purpose of the present study was to determine if
critical thinking skills, a key component of basic com-
munication course pedagogy, can be assessed through
students’ use of preemptive argumentation. Persuasive
speech outlines were coded to determine if preemptive
argumentation was present in students’ speeches and
to determine the quality of preemptive argumentation.
The results indicated that the majority of outlines con-
tained preemptive argumentation. However, of those
speeches containing preemptive argumentation, the
majority of outlines employed low-quality preemptive
argumentation. Finally, the findings revealed that the
quality of preemptive argumentation employed in the
persuasive speech outlines did not predict the students’
persuasive speech grades. Implications for instructor
training programs and pedagogy in the basic course
are discussed.
Competent Public Speaking: Assessing Skill Development in the Basic Course .......................... 39
   Judy C. Pearson, Jeffery T. Child,
   Liliana L. Herakova, Julie L. Semlak,
   Jessica Angelos

   Effective public speaking skills are essential for a successful life. The authors provide an overall assessment of the basic public speaking course by examining fifteen student attributes divided into three categories (course engagement characteristics, dispositions, and demographics) hypothesized to affect learning and public speaking skill development in the basic course. A four-step hierarchical multiple regression tested two research questions (N = 709). Course engagement characteristics improved students’ public-speaking grade averages, but dispositions did not. The effects of demographic characteristics, particularly biological sex, were not eliminated after controlling for course engagement and dispositional factors (twelve variables). Implications and limitations of the study are addressed.

The Influence of Instructor Status and Sex on Student Perceptions of Teacher Credibility and Confirmation across Time .............................. 87
   Roxanne Heimann, Paul Turman

   Universities continue to rely heavily on graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) to teach many of their entry level courses, with limited research emphasizing student perceptions of GTAs. With this in mind, the purpose of this investigation was to assess the combined influence of instructor status (GTA vs. Professor) and sex on student perceptions of teacher credibility and confirmation behaviors across time. Results from the
repeated measures analysis indicated interaction effects for instructor sex and time, whereby female instructors (regardless of their status) were perceived to have higher levels of character, trustworthiness, and perceived caring. Three-way interaction effects emerged for instructor confirmation dimensions of demonstrated interest and teaching style. For each of these dimensions, female GTAs and professors experienced marked increases after student initial perceptions, while male GTAs were perceived to decrease dramatically.

(Re)Constructing ELL and International Student Identities in the Oral Communication Course .......... 125
Richie Neil Hao

There have been numerous studies (e.g., Dick, 1990; Ferris, 1998; Jung & McCroskey, 2004; Yook, 1995; Yook & Seiler, 1990; Zimmerman, 1995) that discuss the obstacles that English Language Learners (ELL) and international students face in oral communication classrooms. Although these studies provide teaching strategies that can be employed to better serve ELL and international students, they also reinforce stereotypical student identities. By exploring and engaging in critical communication pedagogy (Fassett & Warren, 2007), I problematize some of the foundational studies that construct ELL and international student identities as “at-risk” in oral communication classrooms and offer possibilities by specifically advocating for hybrid oral communication classes where both native and non-native English speakers can interact and learn from each other.
Student Evaluations for the
Online Public Speaking Course .................................. 153

John J. Miller

Despite criticisms raised about online public speaking classes, the growth of these online courses cannot be denied. This essay attempts to develop student course evaluations aimed at reflecting the unique characteristics of online instruction to assist instructors with improving their online pedagogy. Just as instructors seek to improve classroom instruction, they should likewise seek to improve online instruction through the realization and acceptance that online instruction is not simply course development, but the ongoing interactions between the student and instructor in the context of two significant differences between a traditional classroom and online instruction: (1) student-centered-controlled learning and (2) instructor-student and student-instructor communication. Thirty areas of evaluation are suggested that reflect these two unique differences. The author encourages online instructors to develop more specific evaluations to receive the student feedback necessary to help improve online instruction.

Repetition and Possibilities: Foundational
Communication Course, Graduate
Teaching Assistants, etc. .................................................. 172

Chris McRae

This essay considers repetition as a site for change and possibility in the foundational communication course. Using performative writing, I consider repetition as simultaneously comfortable and dangerous. As repeated actions become commonplace they can easily go unnoticed, and unchallenged. However, repeated ac-
tions can also become recognizable as patterns that can be changed. Repetition is then, a useful and even necessary starting place for the recognition of possibilities and the enactment of change. As a graduate teaching assistant, I find repetition useful for my pedagogy, but I am wary of how power operates through repetition in discursive and material ways. I argue for a conceptualization of repetition that considers micro-practices and macro-structures as intertwined. I argue that a nuanced understanding of repetition provides a space for new and better ways of knowing as and becoming instructors of the foundational communication course, etc.

Author Biographies .......................................................... 201

Index of Titles Volumes 1-21 ........................................... 205

Index of Authors Volumes 1-21 ...................................... 224

Submission Guidelines for Volume 23 ......................... 228