Editor's Page

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Historically, the basic oral communication course has been labeled “the bread and butter” of our discipline. This designation has been used to describe the economic and pedagogical importance of the basic course to the departments in which it is housed. Economically the basic course produces considerable revenue for institutions of higher education. Pedagogically, the basic course is often the gateway course to our discipline that students must complete to meet a graduation requirement; the course plays an important role in general education programs across the country. While the basic course is still often termed “the bread and butter” course, changes are afoot, as many who work in the basic course can testify. We are faced with new expectations, new budgetary constraints, new pedagogies, new foci, and new technologies that call for a rethinking of the basic course. Ongoing research focused on the basic course is fundamental to this rethinking. The Annual provides an important outlet for this research that encourages us to think carefully and critically about our work as basic course directors, teachers, and researchers.

This volume of the Annual offers food for thought to help us as we rethink the basic course. The various researchers who have contributed to this edition provide us with a rigorous and vigorous examination of impor-
tant issues including assessment, learning communities, peer workshops, grading consistency, and student evaluation. While some of these topics are well represented in basic course literature, the authors in this volume offer us fresh perspectives on these issues. I am sure you will find their work not only impressive research, but also valuable to your own thought and practice.

Although the editor of the *Annual* typically oversees three volumes, this will be the final volume of the *Annual* I edit. I want to thank all of you who have contributed to the two volumes for which I have been responsible. Additionally, I am deeply grateful to the reviewers whose diligent and excellent work truly makes a difference to basic course research and the *Annual*.

As you review this valuable research, I encourage you to share the news of the *Annual* with your students, colleagues, departments, and libraries. Many remain unaware of the good work readily available in this and past editions. As more new readers join our ranks, the *Annual* will continue to grow in quality and in readership, thereby ensuring an ongoing, unique contribution to our discipline.

David W. Worley