

Friday, November 14, 1980 SCA Convention, New York
Basic Course Workshop reports, the Southern Region

by

Ralph Hillman

This paper will consist of two parts: the first, a brief overview of the workshop activity in the south and second some personal reactions to this first year of Basic Course Workshop activity.

This has been a year of organization for the Southern Speech Communication Association Basic Course Ad Hoc committee. Interested people throughout the South have been contacted and invited to participate with our Committee. Many individuals and institutions have committed themselves to various forms of involvement. These names and addresses were shared through various mailings; to identify those people who would be interested in serving as a Director of a Workshop on the Basic Course. Basically, a Workshop Director will

- 1) identify a working committee to survey the area (within 2 or 3 hundred miles) to determine interests and perceived needs of those who would be interested in participating;
- 2) assign sessions; 3) actually, hold the workshop; and finally, 4) prepare a detailed workshop evaluation to help all of us prepare for the next one.

The Basic Course Committee will coordinate so that the workshops are spread out both in time and in geography; disseminate outlines of previous workshops, names of previous

workshop directors and participants (where available) as well as workshop evaluation data; assist in establishing major criteria for the on going unity of all the workshops; and keep lines of communication open among all interested Basic Course people especially SSCA and SCA personnel.

The Basic Course Committee is currently operating under these assumptions: 1) a full day (Friday) and a half (Saturday) will probably best serve the majority concerned. This pattern preference does not rule out other possible days or arrangements. The day and half seems to best encourage the kind of interaction to maximize the learning possible from the workshop. 2) Locally prepared and conducted workshops appear to best serve the needs of specific areas. The Basic Course Committee will be very involved in the planning for every workshop in an attempt to help the Director keep quality at a high level. 3) Each workshop must strive to meet the needs of all applicable educational institutions in the area. Universities seek assistance with the Basic Course as do secondary schools.

This spring, Austin Peay was the sponsor of the first Basic Course Workshop to be held since this Ad Hoc Committee was appointed by Carl Kell a year ago. Reese Elliott and Jim Holm walked us through much of the following agenda. The group was small but those in attendance all felt the workshop was a valuable learning experience.

Basic Course Workshop: Morning Session

May 25, 1980

"Course Content, Methods, Media"

10:30 A.M.

Joe Morgan University Center

1. Trends in Basic Course Designs
2. Constraints on Course Designs
3. Course Purposes/goals
4. Course content
 - a. types of courses currently offered
 - b. theory or performance orientation
 - c. basic content areas
5. Methods of Teaching
 - a. typical assignments
 - (1) first day
 - (2) written assignments
 - (3) oral assignments
 - (4) tests, quizzes
 - b. assignments for research purposes
6. Media in the basic course
 - a. use as audio/visual aids
 - b. use in recording and evaluating performances

Afternoon Session

"Speech Evaluation and Competency"

1:00 P.M.

1. Methods of Evaluation
 - a. written
 - b. oral
 - c. peer evaluation

- d. self evaluation
 - e. recorded critique
 - f. videotaped/recorded critique
2. Criteria for evaluation
- a. value emphasis
 - b. criteria
 - (1) organization
 - (2) style
 - (3) delivery
 - (4) etc.
3. Competency standards
- a. state requirements
 - b. personal standards
 - (1) performance
 - (2) theory

An interesting question came out of the workshop: How many of us as instructors use the grades given for initial speeches in the Basic Course as an attempt to stroke the student and encourage him/her? By so doing we later find it difficult to hold to our standard? The discussion concerning this honesty-on-the-standard was a most interesting one. What are your thoughts?

My personal reactions to this year of work as Director of the Basic Course Committee in the South will cover these points. . . . First, far too many teachers who are now

responsible for Basic Course Sections really are not very responsive to learning more or sharing what they know about the Basic Course. Although I gathered most of my data from the Southern Region, there does seem to be considerable support for the notion that the problem is nationwide. Inherent in this notion is my growing belief that these instructors aren't very clear about what they want their students to learn or how they should go about learning it. What this all boils down to is that a very small number of Basic Course instructors must ultimately take the responsibility for organizing the area, setting standards and disseminating information.

Secondly, the quality of students which we see in our classrooms has continued to drop. As Basic Course instructors we can no longer assume that the large majority of our students can write a simple sentence, or for that matter say an appropriate sentence. Five years ago, one or two students per class could not deal with the above, now that number has grown. Instructors find themselves being more redundant, spending more time on basics, expecting less from students and having their standards for a good competent speaker seriously challenged.

Thirdly, state funding agencies for Universities have already begun to develop formulas which have a component for reflecting quality of instruction. We are ultimately going to be forced to show that our students can do what we say

we have been trying to teach them. Thus, we are between a rock and a hard spot. On the one hand we want and need students so that we can get funding by having large numbers of students. On the other hand we must show that our students can perform better than students in comparable schools so that we can get the quality funding. The bottom line indicates that we must greatly improve our instruction so that we may remain employed.

Fourthly, the work of evaluating a workshop must begin before the workshop begins. When evaluating the actual workshop make sure that the evaluative instrument is administered before the participants leave the workshop. You'll save time and frustration by securing the data early.

Finally, individuals are not necessarily jumping at the opportunity to Direct a Basic Course Workshop. The next workshop in the South will be held at the University of Alabama/Huntsville, in February or March. Dr. Carol Roach will be the workshop Director.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

THE JOURNAL OF THE TENNESSEE SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION is published twice yearly in the Winter and Spring. Subscriptions and requests for advertising rates should be addressed to David Walker, Box 111, MTSU, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. Regular subscription price for non-members is \$4.00 yearly, or \$2.00 per issue. The TSCA JOURNAL is printed by the MTSU Print Shop, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN 37132. Special fourth class postage is paid at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN.

The purpose of the publication is to expand professional interest and activity in all areas of the field of speech communication in Tennessee. Articles from all areas of speech study will be welcomed, with special consideration given to articles treating pedagogical concepts, techniques, and experiments.

All papers should be sent to the editor. Authors should submit two copies of their manuscripts, each under a separate title page also to include the author's name and address. Manuscripts without the identifying title pages will be forwarded by the editor to a panel of reader-referees who will represent the varied interests within the discipline.

All papers should be double-spaced, typed in standard type with a dark ribbon, and on standard typing paper. Margins should be standard and uniform. Notes need to be typed single-spaced on separate sheets following the last page of the manuscript proper. The first footnote should be unnumbered and should contain essential information about the author. This footnote will be eliminated by the editor from the manuscripts sent to the panel of readers. Any professional style guide, consistently used, is acceptable. Accuracy, originality, and proper citing of source materials are the responsibilities of the contributors.

Institutions and individuals wishing to be patrons of the Journal may do so with a contribution of \$25.00 yearly.