

Special Issue Introduction

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We are pleased to introduce this special issue of the *Federation of Business Disciplines Journal (FBDJ)* for 2019.

The issue contains three papers. The papers use different methodologies and address different questions. However, each of them has implications for the basic business communication course. Lindsay Clark's paper proposes the addition of a new topic (visual persuasion) to the basic course. Danica Schieber's paper concerns transfer, the process by which students transfer what is learned in the basic course into the workplace. Christopher McKenna's paper provides data demonstrating the value of communication skills for success in the early stages of many careers. In other words, we move from the content of the business communication course, to the transfer of course content to the workplace, to the value of course content for career success.

Lindsay Clark's paper is titled "Recognizing Visual Persuasion: Meaning-Making Strategies in Magazine Food Advertisements." Professor Clark reports an analysis of a collection of food advertisements published in *Self* magazine. Her findings show that advertisers share several assumptions about the usefulness and power of visual images. As she notes, in the current and future environment, graduates may be called on to use (or to assess) visual images in a variety of business communications. She proposes, therefore, that business communication educators should consider including the analysis of print advertisements in their classes. Perhaps this paper will prove to be an inflection point in the content of basic courses in business communication.

Danica Schieber's paper is titled "Sam: The Story of an Entrepreneur." Professor Schieber presents the case study of one individual student who quickly and effectively transferred what he learned in a basic business communication course into a successful agribusiness start-up. Transfer of learning—particularly such an effective transfer—is a goal toward which educators frequently aim. The case study of Sam provides evidence that such transfer is possible and, furthermore,

suggests some of the factors (e.g., Sam’s entrepreneurial attitude) that can encourage it. This paper may stimulate professors of business communication (and perhaps other subjects) to think about how they might encourage their students to transfer classroom learning into the workplace.

Christopher McKenna’s paper is titled “Alumni Perspectives on Mission-Critical Communication Skills for New Job-market Entrants.” Professor McKenna reports a survey of the alumni of Stephen F. Austin State University (SFASU). The alumni were asked to evaluate the early-career importance of 50 different communication abilities. Their responses reveal that, while all sorts of communication are important, individual skills in oral, interpersonal communication are particularly important in the early years of a career. Furthermore, the data show that the communication abilities learned in a basic business communication course are useful for graduates from all SFASU graduates—not just those from the college of business. Thus the SFASU experience provides an example of how a college of business can provide a university with part of its core curriculum.

As usual with academic research, the papers leave some questions unanswered, providing opportunities for future research. However, all three papers provide a foundation from which future research might begin.

We are grateful to the Association for Business Communication, Southwest United States (ABCSW) for the opportunity to represent the ABCSW in this effort. We are grateful to Federation of Business Disciplines (Federation), the *FBDJ*, and to editor Mary Fischer for the opportunity to participate in the intellectual life of the Federation.

The ABCSW was one of the founding organizations of the Federation and from the beginning, members of the ABCSW have benefitted from association with the Federation. A number of ABCSW members maintain memberships in two or more of the Federation’s organizations. ABCSW meetings have been enriched by presentations from scholars whose primary affiliations are with other associations. And this special issue will—we hope—encourage further intellectual exchange between ABCSW and the other academic disciplines.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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