



Introducing the Education Review of Business Communication - ERBC

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Editors' Introduction

Dear Readers:

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *Education Review of Business Communication* (ERBC). After more than a year of talking with authors and reading manuscripts, we are pleased to deliver this first issue to you.

ERBC was started with one simple premise: to provide diverse and quality pedagogical resources to faculty teaching business, management, and corporate communication. As you look through the journal you may realize that pursuing this mission produces a slightly different type of academic publication than what some may expect. First, we have included two case studies that are ready for classroom use. The lead case, written by Kathryn Huang and Megan Vanaelstyn, discusses the corporate communication and ethical decisions faced by Wyeth Pharmaceuticals when its claims for hormone replacement therapy products were challenged by a scientific study. Modeled after the Harvard case teaching approach, this case study provides a wonderful entry point for discussing many issues such as the ethos granted by the general public to scientific data, the ethics of marketing pharmaceutical products for several uses, and crisis response. Additionally, we should mention that this case won the Grand Prize in the 2003 Arthur W. Page Society case writing competition.

Our second case was written by Kristen Bell DeTienne and explores stakeholder relations at HP. This one-part case asks students to think strategically about communication between the CEO, Carly Fiorina, and the HP board of

directors. Many fascinating issues emerge, such as the constraints that family and organizational history can place on CEO-led initiatives. Merger and acquisition, the changing business environment, and persuasive strategy also play an important role in this case.

While the two case studies provide one type of resource for the discussion-based classroom, Ong Siow Heng's stand-alone exercise on metaphors demonstrates a different yet equally important teaching tool: the short exercise. Drawing from classical literature discussing metaphor, such as Aristotle and I.A. Richards, Professor Ong gives us a nice exercise for leading discussion about metaphor in business messages. The exercise also illustrates an important point about ERBC's mission: we are eager to publish manuscripts that revisit the most important works in rhetorical and communication history (e.g., Plato, Toulmin, Burke, and Booth to name a few) as we are manuscripts or cases exploring contemporary business and communication issues.

ERBC also seeks to be a journal with a strong international flavor. This first issue includes submissions from the United States, Spain, and Singapore. Subsequent issues will include more manuscripts from European authors, and we currently are reviewing manuscripts from places such as South Africa, New Zealand, Singapore, India, and Spain to name just a few. It is our firm belief that business, management, and corporate communication instructors will only benefit from an international range of teaching resources. As anyone who has taught or lived internationally can tell us, a stark contrast exists between the demand for international teaching resources and the actual supply. We intend to address that difference and bring you international teaching resources of the highest quality.

Another objective we have defined, and in many ways the central or defining goal of ERBC, is theory. We aim to publish manuscripts that clearly draw upon some theoretical foundation and then make a pedagogical turn. We would like to see a range of theories find their way into the business, management, and corporate communication classroom through case studies, exercises, classroom-ready primers, original pedagogical research projects, and even oral lectures and keynote speeches. We are happy to consider the widest range of manuscript formats, both traditional and nontraditional, that promote the application of theory. The same applies to the source of a theory. Rhetoric, human communication, corporate communication, composition, social psychology, conflict studies, and more are equally welcome.

An excellent example of bringing theory to the classroom is Susheela Varghese's article titled "Transforming Language into Business Influence." Professor Varghese draws upon a case study that is well known to business communication professors, Teknosport written by Priscilla Rogers (an ERBC board member), to create an exciting tool for teaching persuasion. The manuscript first quizzes students on strategic choices they must make before writing a memo, and then walks the reader through an application of theory illustrating how theory

applies to written discourse and how theory translates into actual words. When combined with case method instruction, Professor Varghese's manuscript will certainly make for an excellent learning opportunity in the business communication classroom.

A second example is Brian Leggett's manuscript on speeches and leadership. Professor Leggett does a superb job of dusting off a classic speech model, Monroe's Motivated Sequence, and bringing it to life with recent examples of business oratory. The manuscript ends with an exercise making this article a wonderful resource to bring into any speech course whether it is undergraduate, graduate, or even executive education.

Equally interesting is Professor Geraldine Hynes' work with annual reports. The manuscript traces the seventy-year history of annual reports and helps us understand how these important corporate messages have come to serve a more complex function than just presenting results. Additionally, the authors discuss important topics such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act which "forever changed the financial reporting landscape." Hynes goes on to discuss the role that annual reports can play in the business and management communication classroom, making this a particularly timely and important article for students and professor's alike.

The book review is also a good example of pursuing intellectually and professionally important topics. ERBC's book review editor, Judith Clifton of Universidad de Oviedo, Campus del Cristo (Spain), has brought us a review of two books discussing the rhetoric of economics. The first can probably be called an emerging classic in rhetorical studies. It is *The Rhetoric of Economics* by Deirdre N. McCloskey. The second book is titled *Selling the Free Market: The Rhetoric of Economic Correctness* by James Arnt Aune, a critical studies scholar in speech communication. You may wonder why a business or management communication scholar would be interested in the rhetoric of economics. We firmly believe these books are important because they apply theories of communication to economics and offer insightful critiques. Additionally, both books identify potential areas of collaboration with colleagues at your university or perhaps a new course you might consider proposing. Future book reviews will also be in the essay style and explore a range of publications such as textbooks of intercultural communication and recent corporate communication publications.

Finally, we must add that ERBC would enjoy hearing from you. Letters to the editors, opinion pieces, and essays are most welcome. The journal is intended to be an intellectual space for you. Whether you teach business communication to first year undergraduates, corporate communication to MBA students, or communication management to executives and professionals, we would like to provide the pedagogical resources and discussions that you find useful.

In short, we aim to provide you with a journal that complements existing academic journals in our field, provides international teaching resources and perspectives, and most importantly brings theory into the classroom. Our aim is

to help professors be more effective and assist students with learning the communication theories and skills they will need after graduation.

We look forward to hearing your feedback to this inaugural issue. Please send manuscripts or comments to the publishing editor, pneilson@senatehall.com. Additionally, if you would like to propose a special issue of ERBC and serve as a special issue editor, you may submit a three to five page proposal to this same address.

Thank you for reading the ERBC.

Cordially,

Michael Netzley
Melinda Knight
James O'Rourke