

Michael Vosburg  
www.michaelvosburg.com  
michael@michaelvosburg.com

---

## Professional Profile

---

I studied, practiced, and taught photojournalism for 35 years, all to better understand how to use photographs to communicate. This desire led me to a rewarding career, useful theory, and fruitful opportunities in research and pedagogy.

---

## Theory

---

I developed the DANCE theory of the Big Five dimensions of photographs. This theory uses empirical evidence to explicate the top five variables in image reception. It is the first visual communication theory to satisfy all seven theory criteria set forth by Chaffee and Berger (1987). It explains praxis and makes testable predictions that promise renewed progress in visual effects research. The theory offers pedagogical advantages of clarity of direction for students and the objective evaluation of criteria by instructors.

DANCE theory partially derives from Prism theory, which explains the mechanics of image reception. Prism theory is informed by evolutionary psychology, semiotics, physiology, and phenomenology. It is relevant to all visual media.

---

## Research

---

I have been the sole investigator on several studies. Most recently, I conducted a pair of 4 x 4 within-subjects experiments. These manipulated image conditions of no image, no face, negative affect, and positive affect presented in four mobile news topic conditions. One study produced heat maps of the most salient aspects of mobile news presentations. Faces were the most salient component of all mobile news presentations. The second study found Emotion had four to 20 times larger effects than many communication studies.

A previous study explored numerous relationships between experience with mobile communication devices and the users' strategies to cope with notification fatigue with a 46-item survey. Canonical correlation produced 123 significant relationships, and the cessation of phantom vibrations could be predicted with 86 percent accuracy.

I conducted a meta-thematic analysis of the most-cited papers to better understand the literature on visual media effects experiments. I coded these for medium, theory, populations studied, research variables, production context, and publishing journals. I weighted the results by the

studies' cited count to gauge their influence on the field. I found that the most-cited literature on visual media effects either makes tangential references to theory or cites no explicit theory.

A qualitative study sought to understand how first-year college students decided how to seek and evaluate new information. Four focus groups and five interviews of 37 first-year students yielded 1,975 transcribed responses. Three rounds of coding found that the students used four heuristics in evaluating information to gratify two needs and three wants simultaneously.

To test a possible explanation for null effects in an exemplification study, I conducted a 3 x 3 experiment that manipulated face affect valence and face size to find that image valence significantly affected viewing time, level of interest, and level of importance of photographs. Results further suggest that viewing time is inversely related to photograph readability.

I collaborated with principal investigator Dr. David Westerman to design a 2 x 2 experiment and create video messages to test the relationships between naming an actor and whether the actor is a human or robot to perceptions of the actor's human qualities.

---

### Peer-reviewed Publications

---

**Vosburg, M.** (in press) *Getting satisfaction: Simultaneous gratifications of college student needs*. Accepted by *College Student Journal*.

**Vosburg, M.** (2024) *Watching the watchers: A Meta-thematic analysis of media effects studies of visual communication*. *Review of Communication Research*, 12, 83-101. <https://doi.org/10.52152/RCR.V12.5>

Westerman, D., **Vosburg, M.**, Liu, X. & Spence, P. R. (2024) *What's in a name and/or a frame?: Ontological framing and naming of social actors and social responses*. *Human-Machine Communication*, 8, 185-203. <https://doi.org/10.30658/hmc.8.9>

---

### Manuscripts Under Review

---

**Vosburg, M.** *Smartphone notifications in popular discourse and the literature*. Submitted to *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines*.

**Vosburg, M.** *Smartphone notifications: How experience influences coping strategies*. Submitted to *International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction*.

**Vosburg, M.** *Visual message design in exemplification research*. Submitted to *Communication Methods and Measures*.

---

### Academic Conferences

---

- Vosburg, M.** (2025, March 13-15). *Images that DANCE: The Big Five dimensions of photographs*. Paper accepted to the 50th Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Vosburg, M.** (2025, March 13-15). *Making photographs DANCE: A rubric for impactful images*. Great Ideas for Teaching poster accepted to the 50th Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Vosburg, M.** (2025, March 13-15). *What is the future of photography in a world with AI?* Organizer and moderator for the panel during the 50th Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Chapel Hill, NC.
- Vosburg, M.** (2024, November 21-24). *Photographic exemplification: How mobile news readers regard affect displays*. Paper presented at the 110th annual conference of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Vosburg, M.** (2024, August 8-11). *High-tech, low-cost live visual demonstration*. Innovation in Teaching presented at the 107th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Philadelphia, PA.
- Vosburg, M.** (2024, August 8-11). *The salience of faces in mobile news*. Paper presented at the 107th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Philadelphia, PA.
- Vosburg, M.** (2024, August 8-11). *Visual message design in exemplification research*. Paper presented at the 107th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Philadelphia, PA.
- Vosburg, M.** (2024, March 7-9). *The salience of faces in mobile news*. Paper presented at the 49th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Lexington, KY.
- Vosburg, M.** (2024, May 16-17). *Watching the watchers: A Meta-thematic analysis of media effects studies of visual communication*. Paper presented at the Benedict College Inaugural International Multidisciplinary Conference, Columbia, SC.
- Vosburg, M.** (2023, Aug. 7-10). *Prism theory of visual communication*. Paper presented at the 106th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, DC.
- Vosburg, M.** (2023, Aug. 7-10). *Smartphone notifications: How experience influences coping strategies*. Paper presented at the 106th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, DC.
- Vosburg, M.** (2020, Nov. 19-22). *Smartphone notifications at the crossroads of popular discourse and the literature*. Paper presented at the 106th annual conference of the National Communication Association, Indianapolis, IN.
- Vosburg, M.** (2020, Nov. 19-22). *Salience of face size and affect at the crossroads of exemplification theory and praxis*. Poster presented at the 106th annual conference of the National Communication Association, Indianapolis, IN.
- Westerman, D., **Vosburg, M.**, Liu, X., Edwards, A., Edwards, C., & Spence, P. R. (2022, November). *What's in a name and/or a frame?: Ontological framing and naming of a social actor and social responses*. Paper presented at the 108th National Communication Association Conference, New Orleans, LA.

## Manuscripts in Progress

---

Vosburg, M. *Smaller and faster: The role of mobile devices in publishing news photographs.*

## Teaching Experience

---

2023-2025 Benedict College, Columbia, SC

- **Photojournalism** (two semesters): Students covered common assignment types, produced a photo essay, and learned standards in image processing, metadata, and professionalism.
- **Freelance Marketing with a Camera** (two semesters): Students spun up a sole proprietorship.
- **Professional Photography for Legacy Media** (four semesters): Students learned professional camera controls and their appropriate use.
- **Digital Imaging** (four semesters): Students claimed a genre, refined it over the semester, and learned how to crop, tone, and caption their images to professional standards.
- **Photography for Web and Social Media** (four sections): Students learned to use their smartphone cameras to produce compositionally sophisticated photographs.

2022 North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND

- **Introduction to Media Writing**: Beginning reporting students received an introduction to journalism and produced a personality profile with three interviews by the end of the semester.

1996-1999 Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO

- **Staff Photojournalism lab** (four semesters) taught as Interim Director of Photography: I supervised photojournalism students in staff photography for a general circulation daily newspaper. I also coached reporting students to find subjects with visual potential.
- **Staff Photojournalism lecture** (two semesters): I taught professional ethics, values, and standards to work as general-assignment photographers for a daily newspaper.
- **Graphics Desk Management**: I taught students to work as liaisons between daily newspaper editors and staff photographers.
- **Staff Photojournalism lab** (two semesters), teaching assistant: I coached students to produce and publish quality photographs for a daily newspaper.

## Curriculum Development

---

2024 Benedict College, Columbia, SC

- **Freelance Marketing with a Camera**: I used my industry connections and personal experience in managing an independent counseling practice to teach students to build and manage a sole proprietorship.

2023

- **Photojournalism**: I leveraged my newspaper experience to design a course with assignments representing daily photojournalists' most common assignments.

- **Digital Imaging:** I designed the course to begin with a technical foundation and then refine their photography in a claimed genre over 10 weeks.

2022 North Dakota State University, Fargo, ND

- **Introduction to Media Writing:** I introduced reporting students to all aspects of journalism while scaffolding assignments from inverted pyramid through a well-rounded feature story.

1996 Missouri School of Journalism, Columbia, MO

- **Staff Photojournalism:** I developed the course to cover all aspects of conventional daily photojournalism and introduced elite concepts such as performance psychology.

---

### Invited Talks

---

2025 Brookland-Cayce High School, February 7, Cayce, SC.

- **How to photograph high school basketball.**

2023 The North Dakota Newspaper Association, May 11-13, Devils Lake, ND

- **Photo safari: On the hunt for photographs.** This lecture and workshop guided journalists from small papers to make more impactful photographs.

---

### Professional Experience

---

2002-2023 Photo Editor, The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead, Fargo, ND

- Planned, assigned, and executed news coverage.
- Supervised staff photography and video production.
- Established industry-leading use of mobile devices to be more responsive to readership.
- Designed and implemented an all-digital photo workflow and company-wide archiving.
- Published tens of thousands of my own images, viewed hundreds of millions of times.

1999-2002 Photo Editor, The San Angelo Standard-Times, San Angelo, TX

- Improved newsroom communication, planning, and product.
- Managed the city desk, supervised reporters, and edited staff writing part-time in addition to photo editor duties for a season.

1998-1999 Interim Director of Photography, The Missourian, Columbia, MO

- Assigned, edited, and critiqued photography for students working at The Missourian.
- Designed and implemented a relational database to better coordinate newsroom efforts.
- Coached reporting students to find more engaging subjects for news coverage.

1997-1998 Showcase Editor, The Missourian, Columbia, MO

- Managed several reporting teams to assign, supervise, and edit stories, photographs, and design for a weekly feature section.

- 1990-1995 Photographer, The Norfolk Daily News, Norfolk, NE
- Created a digital prepress process for improved and expanded color reproduction.

### **Professional Memberships**

---

2021-2025	Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
2020-2025	National Press Photographers Association
2020-2025	National Communication Association
2019	Central States Communication Association

### **Service**

---

2024-2025	Benedict College AI Taskforce and Teaching and Learning Subcommittee
2024-2025	Benedict College Committee on Communication and Marketing
2024-2025	Benedict College Committee on Research and Grants
2025	The 50th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Chappel Hill, NC, reviewer
2025	The Review of Communication Research, reviewer
2025	Visual Communication Division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, newsletter editor
2024	Associated Press, consultant regarding image manipulation by iPhones and the appropriate use of algorithms in news-gathering processes
2024	Benedict College committee to hire two Mass Communication professors
2024	Visual Communication Division of the 49th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Lexington, KY, reviewer
2024	Visual Communication Division of the 110th annual conference of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, LA, reviewer
2024	Visual Communication Division of the 107th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Philadelphia, PA, reviewer
2024	Visual Communication Quarterly, reviewer
2012-2023	Many statewide newspaper photojournalism contests, judge
2014-2023	North Dakota Newspaper Association, Contest Committee chair
2023	Visual Communication Division of the 72nd meeting of the International Communication Association, Paris, France, reviewer
2023	Visual Communication Division of the 106th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, DC, reviewer
2023	Communication Theory & Methodology division of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Social Media Director
2023	Media Advisory Committee of the Supreme Court of North Dakota, member

2022 Communication Theory & Methodology, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Webmaster  
 2022 Fargo Public Library, Flood of 1997 exhibit, curator  
 2018 Minnesota State University Moorhead, Bearing Witness exhibit, curator  
 2004-2013 North Dakota Newspaper Association, Contest Committee, member

### **Honors**

---

2024 One of nine faculty selected for the Alpha Cohort of the Benedict College Faculty Fellows Forward (B2F3) Leadership Development and Mentoring Initiative  
 2024 Top Papers, Visual Communication Division, National Communication Association  
 2023 First place, Top Student Paper Competition, Communication Technology Division, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication  
 2021 One of 30 international doctoral candidates selected for the Doctoral Honors Seminar, National Communication Association

### **Funding Received**

---

**Internal**

2024 Benedict College, Academic Affairs, funds to present at the 107th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Philadelphia, PA, \$1,998  
 2024 Benedict College, Academic Affairs, funds to present at the 110th annual conference of the National Communication Association, New Orleans, LA. \$1,426  
 2024 Benedict College, Academic Affairs, funds to present at the 49th annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Southeast Colloquium, Lexington, KY, \$881  
 2023 Benedict College, Career Development Services, travel funds, and use of college van to take six students to the Atlanta Photojournalism Seminar, Nov. 3-4, \$885  
 2022 North Dakota State University, Graduate School, travel funds to present at the 108th National Communication Association Conference, New Orleans, \$800

### **Related Skills**

---

Media consulting, newsroom management, system and workflow design, news planning, assignment editing, news editing, all aspects of photojournalism.

## Professional Awards

---

2023	First Place, Use of Photography as a Whole, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2022	First Place, News Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2022	First Place, Outdoor Recreation Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2022	Third Place, Feature Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2022	Third Place, Picture Story, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2022	Third Place, News Photo, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2022	Honorable Mention, Spot News Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2022	Honorable Mention, Sports Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2018	Second Place, News Photo, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2017	First Place, Press Photographer's Portfolio, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2017	Second Place, Spot News Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2017	Third Place, Photo Story, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2017	Honorable Mention, Picture Story, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2016	Photo of the Year, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2016	First Place, Spot News Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2016	First Place, Outdoor Recreation Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2016	First Place, Agricultural Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2016	Second Place, Sports Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2016	Third Place, Pictorial Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2015	First Place, News Photo, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2015	Second Place, Feature Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2015	Second Place, Portrait Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2015	Third Place, Pictorial Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2013	Second Place, Outdoor Recreation Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2013	Third Place, Sports Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2013	Third Place, Use of Photography as a Whole, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2012	Honorable Mention, News Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2012	Honorable Mention, Portrait Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2011	Second Place, Sports Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2011	Second Place, Use of Photography as a Whole, Minnesota Newspaper Association
2011	Third Place, Agricultural Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2011	Third Place, Feature Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2011	Third Place, News Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2011	Honorable Mention, Outdoor Recreation Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2011	Honorable Mention, Sports Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2011	Honorable Mention, Portrait Photo, North Dakota Newspaper Association
2008	Second Place, Best Use of Photography as a Whole, Minnesota Newspaper Association



## Education

---

- 2023 Ph.D. communication, North Dakota State University  
major concentration in media and society, minor concentration in social psychology  
dissertation: *Photographic exemplification*  
committee chair: Dr. David Westerman [david.westerman@ndsu.edu](mailto:david.westerman@ndsu.edu)  
committee members: Drs. Benjamin Balas, Shuning Lu, and Carrie Anne Platt
- 1998 M.A. journalism, Missouri School of Journalism  
master's project in the maestro method of newsroom management  
committee: David Reese (chair), Julie Elman, and George Kennedy
- 1990 B.S. mass communication, North Dakota State University  
major in news writing, cognate in photography, special interest area in psychology

## Other Academic Training

---

- 2023 College Teaching Certificate, North Dakota State University
- 2022 Summer Institute in Computational Social Science, North Dakota State University

## Coursework

---

- Ph.D. Communication, North Dakota State University
- COMM 899 Doctoral Dissertation
- COMM 793 Media Lab Work
- COMM 792 Graduate Teaching Experience
- COMM 791 Temporary/Trial Topics: How to Teach Online
- PSYC 761 Applied Research Methods: Multivariate Statistics
- COMM 750 Advanced Issues in Communication: Collaborative Technology and Organizations
- COMM 750 Advanced Issues in Communication: Communicating with Technology
- COMM 750 Advanced Issues in Communication: Debating the Impact of Technology
- COMM 750 Advanced Issues in Communication: Media Effects
- COMM 735 Theories of Media, Technology, and Society
- STAT 726 Applied Regression, Analysis of Variance
- STAT 725 Applied Statistics
- COMM 711 Communication Theory
- COMM 707 Quantitative Research: Communication
- COMM 704 Qualitative Research
- COMM 702 Introduction to College Teaching
- COMM 701 Advanced Research Methods: Communication
- PSYC 686 Neuropsychology

M.A. Journalism, University of Missouri - Columbia

Journ 446 Media Ethics  
 Journ 408 Research Methods in Journalism  
 Journ 404 History of Mass Media  
 Journ 377 Newspaper Graphics Desk Management  
 Journ 344 Picture Story & Photographic Essay  
 Journ 343 Electronic Photojournalism  
 Journ 342 Staff Photojournalism  
 Educ T310 Electronic Portfolio Generation  
 Educ T310 Digital Video Production  
 Econ 1 Principles of Macroeconomics

B.S. Mass Communication, North Dakota State University  
 cognate in photography, special interest area in psychology

MCOM 497 Individual Study (studio photography)  
 PSYC 497 Individual Study (research assistant on a scopolamine study)  
 PSYC 497 Individual Study (research assistant on a scopolamine study)  
 MCOM 496 Still Photo Documentary  
 MC 480 Problems in Mass Communication  
 MC 430 Communication Photography III  
 MC 430 Communication Photography III  
 ART 497 Individual Study  
 ART 496 Still Photography III  
 MCOM 462 Communication Law  
 ART 405 Characteristics of Light  
 MCOM 404 Feature Writing  
 ART 403 Photography  
 ART 403 Photography  
 ART 402 Subjective Contour-Form  
 MC 330 Communication Photography II  
 ART 304 Anatomy & Gesture  
 PSYC 304 Psychology of Adjustment  
 ART 300 Color Theory  
 MCOM 342 Designing for Print  
 MCOM 341 Photography III  
 ART 302 Shape of Light  
 SOC 302 Social Inquiry III  
 ART 301 Realization of Form  
 SPCM 301 Social Inquiry II  
 MCOM 300 Social Inquiry I  
 MUS 290 Choral Participation  
 MUS 290 Choral Participation  
 PSYC 251 Psychology of Business & Industry  
 MCOM 251 Advertising and Society  
 MCOM 242 Photography II  
 PSYC 239 Psychology Asp/Drug Use/Abuse  
 PSYC 234 Social Interaction

PSYC 233	Developmental Psychology
MCOM 241	Photography I
MCOM 231	Introduction to TV Production
PSYC 222	Experimental Psychology
SPAN 211	Intermediate Spanish
MCOM 210	Introduction to Broadcasting
PSYC 200	Introduction to Behavior Modification
ENGL 209	Survey of English Literature
MCOM 203	Editing
AS 202	Development of Air Power II
AS 201	Development of Air Power I
MCOM 202	Advanced Reporting
MCOM 201	Reporting-News Writing
SOC 201	Social Problems
EDUC 123	Study Skills
MATH 121	College Algebra
MATH 120	Intermediate Algebra
CHEM 114	Foundations of Chemistry Lab
SPCM 108	Fundamentals of Public Speaking
CHEM 105	Foundations of Chemistry
MCOM 105	Intro to Mass Media
CHEM 104	Foundations of Chemistry
AS 103	The Air Force Today III
BIOL 103	Man in the Ecosystem
ENGL 103	Freshman English
HIST 103	United States History
HPER 103	Spring Activities
PSYC 103	Introduction to Psychology
AS 102	The Air Force Today II
ENGL 102	Freshman English
HIST 102	United States History
HPER 102	Winter Activities
ME 102	Engineering Graphics
SOC 102	Introduction to Sociology
ANTH 101	Introduction to Anthropology
AS 101	The Air Force Today I
EEE 101	Fundamentals of EEE
ENGL 101	Freshman English
HPER 101	Fall Activities