

The Students Got There First: A New Essay Series on Work and Higher Ed

Mr. DuCoin releases a three-part essay series on psychological safety, professional permission, and the language of business from end-of-semester reflections.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Edward DuCoin, adjunct professor of business at Montclair State University and co-founder of Orpical Technology Solutions, today released a three-essay series drawn directly from his students' end-of-semester reflections.

This semester, DuCoin taught Marketing and Branding for Business at Montclair State, a commitment he has kept alongside running Orpical. At the close of the spring 2026 semester, he assigned a final reflection in which students describe what they learned, what surprised them, and what they plan to do differently.

Three themes surfaced often enough that DuCoin decided they belonged outside the classroom.

"There are always surprises," DuCoin said. "This year, three general themes of the same reflections came across so often that I knew they were articles, not classroom just notes."



Edward DuCoin

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Because of this class, I am no longer waiting for permission to be a professional”

*Montclair State University
Student*

The three essays, which quote students directly and with their consent:

1 - "[A Safe Space for Students to Feel Scared](#)." Sparked by a student who wrote, "You created a safe space for me to feel scared without judgment," the essay argues that the dominant conversation about psychological safety has split into a comfort camp and a candor camp, and that neither describes how people actually grow. Drawing on Amy

Edmondson's original research and his own classroom experience, DuCoin contends real growth

requires discomfort paired with the credible assurance that being wrong will not bring humiliation. Without discomfort, nothing is at stake; without trust, no one speaks.

2 - "[Waiting for Permission](#)." Built around a student's line, "Because of this class, I am no longer waiting for permission to be a professional," the essay argues that years of prerequisites, GPA thresholds, and eligibility checkpoints have trained students to perform readiness until a gate opens. DuCoin traces how that posture survives graduation: in resumes written as personal stories rather than solutions to an employer's problem, and in the habit of staying quiet until they feel ready, unaware that speaking is how readiness is built.

3 - "[The Business Students Without the Words](#)." DuCoin opens with a thought experiment: a brilliant professor lecturing in Dutch to students who don't speak the language. No one learns, not because they aren't capable, but because language is the precondition. With AI now handling content delivery, teaching vocabulary, presence, and professional communication is the work universities have left to do.

Stefan Schulz, co-founder of Orpical and DuCoin's partner, said the reflections track what the firm sees in hiring: "Agency, curiosity, and ownership are exactly the dispositions we hire for. AI isn't a replacement for these students; it's a colleague. Their job is to learn to manage it."

The series appeared simultaneously across three digital publications, each reaching a distinct slice of DuCoin's audience.

NY Weekly is a New York-based digital publication covering business, culture, lifestyle, and education for a metropolitan readership.

San Francisco Post is a Bay Area digital outlet focused on business, technology, and the ideas

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CEO Weekly is a national business publication read by founders, executives, and senior leaders for commentary on leadership and management.

"All three essays were inspired by the end-of-semester reflections my students wrote at Montclair State," said DuCoin. "What the students kept telling me was that the most valuable thing they took from the course was not the curriculum. It was permission to be wrong out loud, permission to stop waiting for someone to authorize them, and the vocabulary of the rooms they were about to walk into. In an era when AI has made content delivery a commodity, the classroom must now teach these things to a greater degree. That is what the three essays, taken together, are trying to name."

About Edward DuCoin

Edward DuCoin is co-founder of Orpical Technology Solutions, a firm providing software development, marketing, and operational services to growth-stage companies. Orpical has twice been named to the Philadelphia Business Journal's Top 50 Fastest-Growing Companies list. A Wharton graduate, DuCoin previously built Impact Marketing into a NASDAQ-listed company that earned Inc. 500 recognition three years running. He has served as an adjunct professor of business at Montclair State University since 2024, where his Marketing and Branding for Business course and its end-of-semester reflection assignment form the basis for this series.

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