



**Beyond Lectures:**  
**Insights from Business Discipline-**  
*(Reflections, Transformations, and the Human*  
*Side of Teaching)*

Chief Editor  
Dr. Azila Jaini

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## FROM FUNDAMENTALS OF MARKETING TO DIGITAL STRATEGY: REFLECTIVE LESSONS FOR IMPACTFUL TEACHING IN A DIGITAL AGE

*Muhamad Khodri Kholib Jati, Suzana Hassan, Oswald Timothy Edward*

### **Teaching as an Integrated and Human Centred Practice**

Teaching in higher education is not simply an act of delivering content. It is an intellectual, relational, and developmental endeavour through which students are guided towards disciplinary understanding, professional readiness, and a stronger sense of self as future practitioners. In marketing education, this responsibility has become even more significant as digital transformation continues to reshape markets, communication, consumer behaviour, and business decision making. Marketing educators are therefore expected not only to teach established concepts, but also to ensure that these concepts remain meaningful within rapidly changing social and technological contexts (Grewal et al., 2025; Walter, 2024).

In reflecting on our experience teaching MKT243 and DGM551, we have come to regard these courses not as separate instructional spaces, but as connected points along a pedagogical continuum. MKT243 provides the conceptual and analytical foundations on which DGM551 builds more advanced, strategic, and digitally oriented forms of thinking. This progression reflects a wider need in marketing education. Students must first understand the logic of marketing before they can engage meaningfully with the pace, complexity, and data rich nature of digital strategy. The classroom thus becomes a space in which foundational theory is translated into applied understanding, and where reflective pedagogy supports sustained student engagement, intellectual growth, and professional formation (Li et al., 2023; Walter, 2024).

### **From Foundational Knowledge to Applied Thinking: Lessons from MKT243**

Our earlier experience teaching MKT243 placed strong emphasis on clarity, structure, and conceptual mastery. Core topics such as needs and wants, segmentation, targeting, positioning, consumer behaviour, and the marketing mix remain essential because they provide students with the vocabulary, frameworks, and mental models needed to understand how markets function. These principles continue to form the intellectual architecture of marketing education. At the same time, experience has repeatedly shown that conceptual familiarity does not necessarily develop into strategic understanding. Students may be able to define terms accurately yet still struggle to think like marketers. Many initially reduce marketing to advertising, selling, or social media promotion, without recognising its broader role in value creation, customer understanding, and strategic decision making. This gap between conceptual recall and applied reasoning highlights a central pedagogical challenge, namely, helping students move beyond memorisation towards authentic interpretive and analytical competence. This challenge has reinforced the importance of contextualised teaching. In MKT243, theory becomes more meaningful when it is connected to familiar brands, services, consumer experiences, and local business contexts. Segmentation is more readily understood when students can identify actual customer groups. Positioning becomes clearer when linked to real brand promises.

Discussions of product or service strategy gain greater relevance when grounded in the markets students encounter in everyday life. Such contextualisation enables students to see marketing not as a collection of isolated definitions, but as a practical and strategic discipline embedded in real commercial settings. Authentic learning activities are equally important. Tasks such as brand analyses, mini case evaluations, market observations, and group-based problem solving deepen conceptual learning because they require students to interpret, apply, and justify marketing decisions. These activities also strengthen broader capabilities associated with employability, including communication, teamwork, analytical reasoning, and

problem solving, all of which continue to be highly valued in contemporary workplaces (Li et al., 2023; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). In this sense, MKT243 functions not only as an introductory academic course, but also as an early platform for professional thinking.

### **Reflective Teaching as a Basis for Pedagogical Growth**

One of the most important lessons from our teaching journey is that effective instruction requires continuous reflection. Reflective teaching is not merely retrospective contemplation. Rather, it is a disciplined pedagogical practice through which educators examine what supports learning, what limits participation, and how teaching may be refined in response to students' needs and changing conditions. This form of reflection is especially important in higher education, where student diversity, technological change, and shifting expectations demand ongoing pedagogical responsiveness. Research likewise indicates that reflective teaching is positively associated with stronger work engagement, greater professional commitment, and improved teaching quality among university instructors (Li et al., 2023). In practical terms, reflective teaching has led me to move beyond a predominantly lecture based approach towards more participative and dialogic forms of learning. Presentations, guided discussions, brand critiques, mini cases, collaborative tasks, and peer interaction have become increasingly important components of our teaching practice.

These strategies encourage students to articulate ideas, test interpretations, question assumptions, and engage more actively with the content. Instead of positioning students as passive recipients of information, participative learning allows them to become active contributors to the construction of understanding. Reflection has also deepened our sensitivity to the human dimensions of learning. Students differ in confidence, preparedness, pace of learning, communication style, and prior exposure to the subject. Some require greater structure, whereas others benefit from exploratory discussion and independent inquiry. A reflective stance therefore calls for attentiveness not only to instructional technique, but also to classroom climate. Encouragement, empathy, timely feedback, and appropriate academic challenge all contribute to a learning environment in which students feel able to participate meaningfully without compromising standards. This relational and human centred aspect of teaching is especially important in contemporary learning environments shaped by digital mediation, post pandemic shifts, and new forms of student vulnerability and disengagement (Walter, 2024).

### **Extending the Pedagogical Continuum: From MKT243 to DGM551**

If MKT243 establishes the conceptual foundations of marketing, DGM551 extends that foundation into a more complex and strategically demanding terrain. The transition between these two courses is pedagogically significant because it marks a movement from understanding marketing principles in general terms to examining how those principles operate within fast moving, technology enabled, and data rich environments. Students often enter DGM551 with a degree of comfort in using digital platforms, yet familiarity with digital tools does not automatically lead to strategic competence. Being a user of digital media is not the same as being able to plan, justify, and evaluate digital marketing decisions. In DGM551, students are therefore challenged to move from digital consumption to strategic analysis. They must learn how to assess digital channels, formulate coherent campaign objectives, develop audience relevant messages, and evaluate performance in relation to broader business goals. This progression requires a more critical and disciplined understanding of digital marketing practice, one that is grounded in strategy rather than trend imitation or habitual posting (Grewal et al., 2025). Teaching DGM551 has reinforced the importance of preserving core marketing logic even as technology evolves. Digital pedagogy should not displace foundational principles. Rather, it should extend them. Students need to understand that digital tactics are not ends in themselves, but tools that should serve clearly defined objectives, consumer needs, and organisational priorities. A strategically meaningful digital education, therefore, is one that balances conceptual continuity with adaptive thinking and prepares students to

engage intelligently with emerging platforms, technologies, and market expectations (Grewal et al., 2025; Walter, 2024).

### **Artificial Intelligence, Pedagogy, and Professional Judgment**

One of the most significant developments in higher education today is the growing presence of artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching, learning, and professional practice. AI is no longer a peripheral issue. It is becoming a practical reality that both educators and students must learn to navigate with discernment. Recent scholarship has highlighted the increasing integration of AI in higher education while also identifying concerns related to faculty readiness, self-efficacy, ethical use, and professional development needs (Mah & Groß, 2024). At the same time, work on AI literacy underlines the importance of critical thinking, prompt awareness, and responsible evaluation of AI generated outputs in educational settings (Walter, 2024). Within marketing education, AI presents both opportunities and tensions. On the one hand, it can improve efficiency, support brainstorming, facilitate access to information, and enable more personalised forms of learning.

On the other hand, it raises serious questions about originality, authenticity, overreliance, and the erosion of critical judgment. For this reason, AI should neither be treated as a threat to be rejected outright nor embraced uncritically as an educational shortcut. It should instead be approached as a professional tool that requires ethical reasoning, contextual judgment, and disciplined use (Mah & Groß, 2024; Walter, 2024). From a pedagogical perspective, this means that students must be guided to develop AI literacy as part of their broader professional competence. They should understand not only how AI tool's function, but also when their use is appropriate, how to interrogate their outputs, and what ethical responsibilities accompany their use in academic and professional settings. This requires assessment and learning activities that do not simply permit AI use, but instead require students to evaluate accuracy, relevance, bias, strategic alignment, and ethical implications critically. Such an approach preserves rigour while acknowledging the realities of an increasingly AI infused workplace.

### **Implications for Teaching Practice: Design, Judgment, And Employability**

A central implication of these reflections is that teaching marketing is ultimately about cultivating judgment, not merely delivering information. Students must be encouraged to ask substantive questions. Does this tactic support a meaningful objective? Is the message appropriate for the intended audience? Are the available data sufficient to justify the recommendation? Have ethical concerns been adequately considered? Questions of this nature move learning beyond surface level activity and towards professional reasoning. To foster such judgment, teaching design must include authentic and intellectually demanding tasks. Campaign critiques, strategic presentations, team projects, and problem-solving exercises allow students to rehearse the forms of thinking expected in professional practice.

Through these tasks, students learn to justify decisions, negotiate ideas with others, interpret evidence, and reflect on the implications of their recommendations. These experiences are pedagogically rich, but they also align with the employability agenda by developing communication, collaboration, adaptability, and critical thinking. Employers consistently value these qualities, even though concerns remain regarding graduates' readiness for the realities of contemporary work (Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023). The relationship between MKT243 and DGM551 is especially important in this regard. Together, these courses show that employability is not built through isolated skills training alone, but through a coherent educational journey in which theory, practice, reflection, and professional identity develop progressively. Foundational knowledge must therefore be taught in ways that anticipate later application, while advanced strategic teaching must remain connected to its conceptual roots.

### **The Human Dimension of Marketing Education**

An equally important lesson from reflective practice is that effective teaching must remain attentive to the human realities of learning. Marketing education is not concerned solely with

producing technically competent graduates. It is also concerned with nurturing confidence, resilience, ethical awareness, and a sense of professional possibility. Students enter the classroom with diverse strengths, anxieties, expectations, and experiences, and these differences shape how they participate, interpret feedback, and respond to challenges.

A human centred pedagogical approach does not imply reduced rigour. On the contrary, it involves creating conditions in which students can engage more fully with demanding learning. A classroom that balances challenge with encouragement, structure with dialogue, and accountability with empathy is better positioned to support sustained participation and intellectual growth. In technology enhanced environments, where students' academic identities may intersect with issues of visibility, self-presentation, and uncertainty, such a climate becomes even more important (Walter, 2024). Thoughtful attention to classroom relationships, feedback practices, and psychological safety can therefore make a meaningful difference to student engagement and self-efficacy.

### **Towards a Holistic and Future Ready Model of Marketing Education**

As a conclusion, reflecting across MKT243 and DGM551 has reinforced our conviction that impactful marketing education must be intellectually rigorous, professionally relevant, technologically responsive, and profoundly human. It must equip students with strong conceptual foundations while progressively developing their ability to interpret markets, understand consumers, think strategically, and engage responsibly with digital transformation. Just as importantly, it must cultivate the wider qualities required of future professionals, including communication, collaboration, ethical awareness, adaptability, and reflective judgment. In an era shaped by technological acceleration, AI integration, and changing professional expectations, the role of the educators are not diminished but deepened. Teaching must continue to bridge theory and practice, preserve the integrity of disciplinary thinking, and support students as they grow into capable and ethically aware practitioners. Across both foundational and advanced courses, the aim is not simply to help students perform well in assessments, but to prepare them to enter an increasingly complex professional environment with discernment, confidence, and purpose (Grewal et al., 2025; Mah & Groß, 2024; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023; Walter, 2024).

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