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BEYOND LECTURES: INSIGHTS FROM BUSINESS DISCIPLINES (REFLECTIONS, TRANSFORMATIONS, AND THE HUMAN SIDE OF TEACHING)

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
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Beyond Lectures: Insights from Business Discipline-

(Reflections, Transformations, and the Human Side of Teaching)

Chief Editor
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MARKETING THE CLASSROOM: CO-CREATING VALUE, TRUST, AND ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Sharmin Baba, Azila Jaini, Nur Auni Afifah Abdul Karim

Introduction

I used to believe that teaching marketing meant mastering the theories and frameworks. The 4Ps, segmentation, targeting, positioning, consumer decision making models, buying behaviour concepts, all of these were my tools, and I used them with confidence. My teaching slides were structured. My case studies were relevant. My explanations were solid. The examples given were the latest. Students listened, took notes, and prepared for exams. On paper, everything looks fine. However, something felt incomplete yet good enough. Some students were engaged, others were silent, a few were curious, many were simply obedient. That quiet gap between delivery and impact forced me into one big question. If marketing is fundamentally about understanding human needs and creating value (Kotler & Keller, 2016), why was I focusing so heavily on content delivery rather than the human interaction itself? This matter kept playing in my mind and it slowly transformed my thinking on how I viewed my lovely classroom, which is not simply just a school place, but as a knowledge centre where value must be co-created.

Co-creation of value

In marketing theory, the evolution toward service-dominant logic reframed value as something not embedded in products but co created through interaction (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). These words unsettled me in the best possible way. In an educational context, students can be considered as customers or clients. If customers co-create value, then students are the ones who co-create learning. Education, like marketing, is relational. This realization aligned with constructivist learning theory, which argues that learners actively construct knowledge rather than simply absorb it (Bruner, 1961). Here, I began to realize that my role was not merely to just cover the syllabus but to create experiences where students could interpret, question, and reshape marketing concepts through their intellectual storage. Discussion became less about identifying the right segmentation strategy, but more to debating session. Case studies turned into platforms for opinion exchange, not rehearsals of textbook answers. Group projects moved from absolute outputs to critical solution processes. This revolution made me notice something subtle but effective. When students felt ownership over learning, their engagement and attention deepened. Discussions became less about identifying the “correct” segmentation strategy and more about debating trade-offs. Case studies turned into platforms for argument, not rehearsals of textbook answers. Group projects shifted from structured outputs to negotiated processes. Slowly, I noticed something subtle but powerful, when students felt ownership over learning, their engagement deepened. The classroom started to feel less like a lecture hall and more like a collaborative laboratory of ideas.

Trust

This paradigm shift forced me to rethink the concept of trust. In relationship marketing theory, trust is central to long term relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In the absence of trust, transactions remain insignificant. This applies similarly to education. Students will comply without trust, but they will not experience the real engagement. Research on student engagement consistently shows that meaningful interaction with instructors significantly affects motivation and persistence (Kuh, 2009). Early in my profession, I put professionalism with distance. Authority was functioned through strict interaction and formal boundaries. Over time, I started to realize and learn that being approachable does not jeopardize my credibility,

instead enhance it. Besides that, transparent grading rubrics, timely feedback, and honest conversation about academic stress contributed more to engagement than perfect slides ever could. Before student presentations. I acknowledge their nervousness openly, instead of condemning. When having a consultation and discussion, I invite disagreement rather than consensus. All these practices encourage cultural psychological safety, allowing students to be confident in expressing their views intellectually without feeling fear and humiliation. Again, trust is cumulative, not dramatic but grows consistency.

Engagement

Another element is engagement, which demands re-examine. In the specific context, engagement is often misunderstood as entertainment. A lively classroom is assumed to be an effective one. Some research distinguishes behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). During the lecture students may laugh, participate, and still fail to think deeply. As we know, marketing education cannot be escaped from being vulnerable to certain activities such as viral campaigns, flashy advertisements, gamified quizzes. I have also experimented with simulations, competitive branding games, and digital platforms to energize the room. These tools are undeniably powerful entry points, but they are not the main goals. The most meaningful learning moments often actually occur during reflective debriefs, when students unpack why their strategies failed or why ethical tensions emerged. When a student realizes that maximizing profit might conflict with social responsibility, the classroom becomes more than a strategic arena; it becomes a moral one. Teaching marketing indirectly invites ethical reflection. Scholars have warned that narrow management theories can unintentionally shape questionable business practices (Ghoshal, 2005). In my classes, I would rather make discussions for any interesting topics like influencer culture, sustainability claim, greenwashing practices and data privacy transform into symposium sessions about integrity. I no longer treat ethics as a separate lecture but instead, it would be integrated into every strategic conversation, because persuasion without responsibility is manipulation, and marketing without conscience is simply extraction.

Flexibility

My experience during the COVID-19 pandemic deepened these reflections. Overnight, classrooms moved online. Cameras were off. Silence filled virtual rooms. Students faced anxiety, isolation, and uncertainty; research documented significant mental health impacts during this period (Son et al., 2020). In that situation, normal practices applied prior to the pandemic felt so disconnected from reality. Therefore I redesigned activities for digital platforms, combining with collaborative tools, and to some extent, having virtual sharing beyond office hours. Yet the most important shift was not solely about physical but philosophical. I began prioritizing empathy over performance measures. I have viewed flexibility as a form of leadership rather than leniency. Brief check-ins were introduced before complex topics. Deadlines turned into negotiations instead of threats. This is revealed as a more humanitarian approach, and not lowering the standard. Surprisingly, this period strengthened my conviction that teaching marketing is fundamentally about people, not frameworks. Theories remain essential, but their relevance depends on emotional connection.

5. Branding

At some point, I also began thinking about branding. Marketing scholar stated that having a strong branding also could foster consumer confidence in the product or services offered (Kotler & Keller, 2016). However, in corporate sense, I could relate branding more to educator identity. Students, consciously or not, develop perceptions and those perceptions would lead to their confidence and dependency toward the lecturers. At first, I tried to cultivate a brand of authority, precise, efficient, and somewhat distant as my identity. Over time, I realized that authenticity is far more sustainable than performance. In marketing, strong brands also align

promise with behavior This same logic can be applied to teaching. If I emphasize ethical marketing, then my assessment practices must be fair. If I promote collaboration, then my classroom must be a dialogue-driven environment. Even sharing my own struggles with rejected journal articles or failed marketing campaigns surprisingly helped build rapport with students. They saw that I'm not perfect; they saw my process. This did not undermine my credibility, it enhanced it. Originality is important because it demonstrates a sense of coherence between my values and action.

Embracing change

Living in an academic life is challenging yet interesting. Through dynamic environment, we might see the shifting of the policies, technologies evolvement, and massive change of student expectations and behaviour. Marketing strategy itself teaches environmental scanning and adaptive positioning. Strangely, I have found comfort in applying that mindset to my academic journey. Rather than against change, I embrace it. Rather than being afraid of new technologies like the use of artificial intelligence tools in marketing analysis, I incorporate them thoughtfully into my coursework. Rather than monitoring students for AI software use, I refocus my assignments on interpretation, creativity, and critical thinking skills that are difficult to automate. This is not a technology avoidance but rather a strategic alignment. Resilience, like brand equity, builds over time through consistency and thoughtful adjustment.

Lessons and reflections

Perhaps, the most humbling insight from this beautiful ride is that students consistently redefine my understanding of marketing itself. Their perspectives on sustainability, digital culture, and social impact challenge established case studies. They question traditional advertising logic and demand ethical transparency. In paying attention carefully, I have always reminded myself that teaching is a mutual rather than an individual benefit. Keep in mind, students are not passive consumers of knowledge, instead they are emerging professionals and future leaders with distinct views and diverse opinions. When they give critiques such as outdated campaigns or propose innovative digital strategies, the classroom turns into a living marketplace of ideas. In those moments, co-creation is not a metaphor but a reality.

Looking back to this journey, I no longer see my transformation as a leaving act from marketing principles but instead embrace the theories to more deeper understanding and real-life application. Marketing, at its intellectual core, is about understanding human behavior, building relationships, and creating value ethically. Teaching is similarly practiced with those same commitments. The classroom is not just a place for knowledge delivery and students are not just simply customers to be served. Education is beyond transaction. And yet, marketing concepts, understood in a relational sense rather than a business sense, provide valuable analogy for creating meaningful learning experiences. Value is co-created; trust is the foundation of commitment; engagement has content; influence has responsibility. This set of concepts has been more significant to my philosophy of teaching than any set of framework or slide decks ever has.

Lastly, the most significant transformation was intrinsic. I joined the education line as a lecturer in preparation to teach marketing strategies, but I soon realized that teaching itself is a strategic, ethical, and human endeavour. The human aspect of teaching does not undermine academic rigor, it enhances it. When students feel trusted, challenged, and respected, their intellectual curiosity expands. When students get into arguments, maturity evolves. When ethical reflection accompanies strategic analysis, professional identity develops alongside technical skill. When authenticity replaces performance, credibility grows organically. Teaching marketing has taught me that influence carries responsibility, that value emerges through collaboration, and that education like ethical marketing is ultimately about people.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my insights may contribute less than what others experienced but I do believe this could give significant values for us as educators in improving ourselves to be better. As a marketing lecturer, I want to highlight again that *"marketing the classroom is equally important as marketing the business".*

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