

EXCELLENCE IN THE TEACHING OF MARKETING: EDUTAINMENT NOT ENTERTAINMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper develops the *Teacher as a Communicator* and *Teacher as Actor* roles and describes why and how marketing faculty can and use traditional acting tools including enthusiasm, voice control, animation, suspense, and surprise in order to capture and hold their students' attention and interest in marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Considerable discussion has taken place in our journals, conferences, offices, and hallways regarding the attributes or characteristics of those marketing professors that excel in their teaching effectiveness. Over the last 15 years the three most frequently cited authors in our literature, Conant, Kelley, and Smart have labeled these individuals as "Master Teachers." (2003, 1991, 1988). Other recent authors have been perhaps more modest and focus on what makes for a "good" teacher (Desai, Damewood, and Jones 2001). These and other authors have focused on defining excellence in marketing education via primary research. Others have used analysis of student evaluations of teaching (aka SETs) to provide insight into the characteristics of those professors who are viewed as better via the eyes of students.

Overall, the marketing education literature clearly suggests that a master teacher must possess a wide variety of abilities, attitudes, and skills. Unfortunately, the same literature has not provided very much guidance on how to develop these characteristics or improve upon those now possessed. Smart, Kelley, and Conant (2003) offer some guidance such as interacting with know master teachers, having them observe and comment on instruction, etc. However, more complete guidance can be offered by breaking down the roles of the teacher and the isolating on specific steps that can be taken to improve role performance.

THREE CRITICAL ROLES

Jordon reminds us of the three critical roles teachers must play in their efforts to educate. They are: (1) the *Teacher as a Scholar*, (2) the *Teacher as a Person*, and (3) the *Teacher as a Communicator* (Jordon 1982). Knowledge of the field of marketing and mastery of specific subsets is a minimal necessity for playing the role of *Teacher as Scholar*. While it may be argued that most students assume their professors to be knowledgeable, it is also reasonable and fairly well documented that many students are not in the best position to even assess such knowledge. Evidence of this fact was presented long ago in non-marketing education literature. One such study involved the classic "Dr. Fox Effect" experiment in which an individual acted as an expert (professor) for one class day and completely "wowed" students despite the fact that "Dr. Fox" conveyed little content, used double talk, irrelevant, and contradictory examples during his class lecture (Perry 1985). Clearly, Dr. Fox's students did not know they had been duped!

The *Teacher as Person* role is perhaps best thought of by considering the personal characteristics and actions that help build rapport with students. How well students like their teacher/professor can summarize performance within this role. Within this area are characteristics and descriptors such as caring or empathy, concern for students, a friendly demeanor (Kelley, Conant, and Smart 1991 and Smart, Kelley, and Conant 2003) and perhaps being fair and impartial in evaluating student performance (Desai, Damewood, and Jones 2001). This is the likeability and showing concern for the student that Marks (2000) found to positively impact SET scores. "Dr. Fox's" students liked him, so they felt that they had learned from him. But, we know that their perceptions did not match reality. They were no better off (knowledge wise) upon leaving the classroom that day than they were when they entered the room. If Dr. Fox had "known his stuff," then we could argue that effective teaching had occurred.

The *Teacher as Communicator* role requires that what students need to know, understand, do, etc. be properly transferred within the classroom. (This is not meant to suggest that learning does not take place outside the classroom.) Thus, what the professor knows must be communicated. Knowledge in itself is not enough. And, being liked is not enough. A number of scholars suggest teachers could become better at their role of *Teacher as Communicator* if they thought of and trained themselves as an actor. This suggests that an overall *Teacher as Actor* role subsides within the *Teacher as Communicator* role.

EDUTAINMENT

If marketing educators expect their students receive or absorb the material presented and discussed in class, then they must capture them by presenting material (our knowledge) in an interesting and captivating way (Tauber and Mester 1994). Simply put, we need to entertain our students. But, we must think of and use entertainment as a means to an end. After conducting numerous interviews and observations with award-winning teachers, Kelly and Kelly (1982) concluded that, among other elements, that the very best teachers compared their teaching to a theatrical performance. Evidence of effective teaching as effective acting appears to be worldwide. A dramatic style of teaching in many cultures has emerged as one of the highest correlates with teaching effectiveness (Sallinen-Kuparinen et al 1987). Holloway, Abbot-Chapman, and Hughes (1992) report that a common element among effective teachers is a high level of enthusiasm even to the point of being highly dramatic.

FOUR KEY ELEMENTS

While not considered to be all inclusive of the possibilities, four major elements of delivering marketing education in an atmosphere of edutainment appear to be: (1) enthusiasm, (2) animation through bodily movements, (3) animation through voice, and (4) the use of suspense and surprise. **Enthusiasm.** Teacher enthusiasm is fundamental to effective communications and is a pedagogical necessity. (Soenksen 1992). Effective teachers motivate their students with an enthusiastic style of teaching (Brophy and Good 1986). Enthusiasm has been identified as one of the five delivery characteristics associated with effective teaching. **Body Animation.** Effective actors and teachers use gestures to communicate with and "control" their audience's attention and thoughts. The best gestures are natural and not distracting. They

are purposeful. **Voice Animation.** As an actor uses their voice to effectively play a role, so does the effective teacher use it to facilitate student learning. There are three aspects or components of voice to be understood and used in the classroom. They are pitch (high versus low), volume (loudness), and speed (rate of talk). **Suspense and Surprise.** These are two other characteristics of teachers who deliver effective classroom instruction day in and day out. Again, if we think of those actors, movies, shows, etc. that gain and hold our attention we will find that the elements of suspense and surprise are present. Teaching without surprise or suspense suggests that all in life is completely predictable. This is hardly the case with today's marketing world!

APPLICATIONS

A large variety and number of examples of how professors can effectively use the above-mentioned four elements are presented in the full paper from which these proceedings were produced.

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