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## Responding To Challenges: Special Issue On Teaching Innovations In Marketing

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### Abstract

Introduction to a special "Teaching Innovations" issue of *Marketing Education Review*, 2022. Teaching Innovations in this issue of *Marketing Education Review* presents thirteen articles with exciting and novel ideas, assignments, and activities, which we hope will inspire fellow marketing educators to innovate in their classrooms. Marketing educators continue to face and respond to challenges in the global marketplace. The current COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing climate crisis and the various international conflicts continue to bring uncertainties and changes to various consumer behaviors and marketing processes throughout the value chain. These changes, sometimes sudden and sometimes for the long term, force marketers to adapt quickly in terms of how to best engage in cause-related marketing, address shifting marketplace needs, and develop novel ways to deliver value by being open to opportunities that present themselves along the way. In response to new and shifting marketplace practices, marketing educators have to adapt, design, and rely on new teaching methods, technologies, and innovations to engage with our students.

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## RESPONDING TO CHALLENGES: SPECIAL ISSUE ON TEACHING INNOVATIONS IN MARKETING

Responding to Challenges: Teaching Innovations in this issue of Marketing Education Review presents thirteen articles with exciting and novel ideas, assignments, and activities, which we hope will inspire fellow marketing educators to innovate in their classrooms. Marketing educators continue to face and respond to challenges in the global marketplace. The current COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing climate crisis and the various international conflicts continue to bring uncertainties and changes to various consumer behaviors and marketing processes throughout the value chain. These changes, sometimes sudden and sometimes for the long term, force marketers to adapt quickly in terms of how to best engage in cause-related marketing, address shifting marketplace needs, and develop novel ways to deliver value by being open to opportunities that present themselves along the way. In response to new and shifting marketplace practices, marketing educators have to adapt, design, and rely on new teaching methods, technologies, and innovations to engage with our students.

The first article by Jen Riley and Kate Nicewicz, "Connecting with Gen Z: Using Interactive Improv Games to Teach Soft Skills" introduces improvisation-based techniques as a class activity. Three interactive games are described as a means of reinforcing existing marketing concepts as well as improving student soft skills. We continue with the theme of Gen Z with Theresa Wajda, Shahriar Gias, and Anindya Chatterjee's article "Giving Generation 'Z' Marketing Students a 'Voice.'" In this paper, the authors use the Voice Thread© platform to create heightened student engagement with the course materials, peers, and the instructor. Similarly, Steven Bauer, Sarah Fischbach, Alice Labban, Emilie Fleck, and Anna Mauldin Speth present a comparison of two types of virtual reality content in "Virtual Reality or Reality: Content is Always Key to Enjoyment, Understandability, and Comprehension." This article highlights the importance of content when creating educational materials, which impact enjoyment, understanding, and comprehension. In "The Effectiveness of Using Online Video and Blog Content in Marketing Case Studies for College Students' Learning - A Three-Year Comparison," Robert Yeh and Laurence Zoekler compare the use of case study

assignments presented in the traditional written manner to being presented in video clips, blogs, and vlogs. The authors provide results supporting the incorporation of modern online content in curriculum design. Switching gears to focus on older adults, Summer Zwanziger Elsinger and Melinda Heinz article "A Cross-Disciplinary Project on Marketing to Older Adults," the authors use Fink's Taxonomy of Significant Learning as the structure for a group marketing plan project on a product targeted to older consumers. The project ideas are presented to a panelist of older adults prior to the finalization of the project. The presentation aids in refining soft skills and improves the overall project by incorporating the panel feedback.

The next three articles in this issue share a common theme, namely experiential learning. In the first of these articles, Shannon Cummins brings a valuable learning experience to students by introducing students to objection response techniques using live over the phone role-plays with professionals. The article "Objection Practice using a Live Appointment-Setting Phone Call with Professionals," outlines how these role-play activities increase actual and perceived learning. In the second of these articles, Sarah Alhouti presents a learning activity, which focuses on a client-based learning program. In her article, "Teaching Social Media as an Interdisciplinary Experiential Program" students learn from internal and external stakeholders, offering benefits to the students, the university, and the client. Finally, Tomasz Miaskiewicz, article titled "The Website Traffic Project: Facilitating Engagement and Learning in an Introductory Digital Marketing Class," presents the development of a website and the use of a variety of digital marketing tactics (e.g., search engine optimization) and tools (e.g., Google Analytics) to drive traffic.

The next article we present is by Rebecca Dings, Hulda Black, and Steven Dahlquist, who address two student concerns in their preparation for going on the job market. In their article "Let's Get Personal: Using SWOT and FAB as the Foundation to Develop Students' Personal Brands" they present an innovative pedagogy, which not only helps students to better position themselves in the job market via their personal brand but also aids in learning and applying

two key marketing methods (SWOT-Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Strengths and FAB-Features, Advantages, and Benefits).

In “Integrating Transformative Consumer Research into the Marketing Curriculum: A Design Thinking Pedagogical Approach,” Jennifer Zarzosa, demonstrates how marketing strategies can be designed to address macro-level marketing issues by targeting consumers on a micro-level. Through a team-based intervention project, students are trained to identify systemic interaction and intersection in the market while utilizing the design-thinking steps of “empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test.” Next, Suri Weisfeld-Spolter and Cindy Rippé use the element of surprise in their article “I will Take a Large Veggie Pizza and a Lesson about the Consumer Buying Process.” In their innovation, students learn about the consumer buying process by going through the five steps starting with need recognition “are they hungry?” to post-evaluation “are they satisfied with the product ordered and consumed?”

All articles in this issue offer ideas on how the innovations can be adapted to other marketing classes than the ones they were originally designed for. This offers further opportunities for marketing educators to respond to their own individual challenges they are faced with in their unique classrooms.

We finalize this issue with two tried and true favorites. First, the winner of the 2021 Society for Marketing Advances (SMA) Wessex Press Innovations in Teaching Award by Alicia Cooper with her article titled, “Using the Discussion Board During Your Online Synchronous Class to Engage Students.” This award-winning idea utilizes online discussion boards in synchronous online classes to increase engagement of students while decreasing the temptation of distractions. Then finalizing this special issue, are the ever-popular highlights from

the 2021 SMA Teaching Moments titled, “Going the Extra Mile: Teaching Innovations during COVID Times,” compiled by Prachi Gala, Parker Woodroof, and Charles Drehmer. Highlights of eleven Teaching Moments represented by twelve different marketing educators’ teaching practices are included which stimulates our pedagogical thinking.

We are honored to have been able to serve in the role of special issue guest editors for MER. We would like to express our gratitude to the past editor of MER Dr. Barbara Wooldridge and current MER editor Dr. Seung Hwan (Mark) Lee for their support and assistance during our guest editorship. In addition, we would like to thank the MER support staff and production team. Lastly, we would like to thank all the contributors and reviewers for this issue. The final issue would not be what it is without all the time and commitment of these individuals. If by reading these articles, you find yourself inspired by an innovative idea that you would like to share, the 2023 Innovation Editors are Michael Levin, Otterbein University and Alicia D. Cooper, Alabama A&M University. We wish Michael and Alicia great success with their upcoming issue. Please enjoy the innovations in this issue!


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