

Excuse me, I thought you had a PhD

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I have a handicap. I teach marketing. I went through undergraduate and graduate programs surrounded by people who enjoyed thinking and scholarship and reading and talking about ideas. I entered a doctoral program because of a deep and intense curiosity, a love of learning, and a nearly pathological enjoyment of reading.

As an educator, I want to inspire students to learn, to convey my interests in reading and ideas,

need to attract bodies to our programs and classes so administrators tend to seek how to deliver the programs students want. Yet marketing is on campus

as an academic discipline.

Unfortunately, even faculty now think in terms of job skills. Academic job listings place an emphasis on quantitative skills desired by incoming faculty. Doctoral programs might focus on providing data analysis skills instead of seminars that might

ple. We can teach them how to read balance sheets. What is killing us is having to teach them to read and to compute and to communicate and to think."

Every time a marketing education article or seminar focuses more on job training and placement than thinking, we do the entire academic discipline a disservice. We pay homage to practitioners, who look down at us, instead of giving them a reason to look up. Every time faculty pander to businesspeople for credibility and acceptance, we only do ourselves harm. When we don't encourage our intellectual foundations, we won't get respect on campus.

To paraphrase the late Howard Gossage, I await the time when marketing education will be a respected activity for a scholar. I can expect students and their parents to have a limited view of education, since all scholars in this country have done such a poor job of presenting to the rest of the world the value of being educated. But I expect more from people with PhDs. As with any graduate program, a doctorate is a training degree, of sorts; training in being a scholar. Research is not a method, it is a philosophy and approach for understanding the world.

For our students, emphasis should be on marketing thought as an important perspective for understanding modern society that is on any campus as an academic discipline, not just because it is part of business practice. ■

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to teach my students so they can teach others. But since my scholarly passion is marketing, my students only want job training, what they think they need for a job. As I said, I am handicapped.

And to serve these students, the driving force behind programs often implies, "Heaven forbid that the students might be required to learn something that does not have a clear job-market utility." In class, checklists and generalizations supplant a perspective of marketing as a way to help understand the world. The history of marketing, the basic theories of the field, or a perspective on the world is almost a footnote in most textbooks.

Making matters worse, some teachers are now like many of their anti-intellectual students. It is unclear whether faculty simply are marketing the programs and serving students' needs and wants, or whether they've lost all sight of marketing as an academic discipline. But then such a distinction really is trivial and insignificant.

The fact remains that journals dedicated to "marketing education" do not discuss how to inspire students with the wonders of our discipline but how to train and prepare marketing students for their first jobs. As part of the marketing of education, the goal devolved to providing better training and job placement.

After listening to other senior faculty in an education seminar talk about job training, placement, business partnerships, and making top graduates who would best fit in entry-level jobs, a respected marketing scholar complained, "Excuse me, but most of us here have PhDs. That means a doctorate of philosophy. I don't hear much about philosophy here."

Later he speculated that the problem might have been that he was the only senior person on the panel who was not a dean or department head. Like it or not, we

help develop an understanding of how data should be collected in the first place. It seems that even some doctoral students now go to school not to learn, but to get certified, so it should not be a surprise that marketing graduates at every level of education exhibit the intellectual interests and abilities of a beagle.

Once they graduate with PhDs, too many faculty believe that only businesspeople have credibility for students. Regardless of their own credentials, too many of our colleagues look up to business practitioners for credibility and support. And although marketing is an academic discipline, business credentials often seem more important for faculty members, too.

Some people got into education not because of a love of scholarship but because they were not very successful as marketing professionals. Shifting from business practice to business education can be a satisfying change of career. Former practitioners often can be (and are) very respected scholars. Yet some others do not do any new thinking once they leave the business world. Talking only of training students, they demand that as educators who worked, they deserve a status they never possessed as practitioners. These men and women never learned to think and do not expect such behavior from students.

So some graduates who leave campus with a world view as expansive as a pet goldfish might be just like their teachers.

I loathe to call upon a practitioner to give what I say credibility, but in the current world of marketing thought, I must.

Last spring, at the National Education Summit in Palisades, N.Y., IBM chief executive Louis V. Gerstner Jr., said, "[Businesspeople should not want] to turn public schools into vocational schools. We can teach [graduates] how to be marketing peo-