HOW TO TRANSLATE GREAT RESEARCH INTO GREAT TEACHING

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1. INTRODUCTION

At any business school worth its salt, one of the most important goals is to foster an environment of successful academic research. This is especially true at research-intensive business schools where a core of solid, productive researchers leads to recognition and ranking among the top business schools. The Financial Times' Business School Rankings and Bloomberg Business Week's Best B-Schools Ranking are among the most well-known. A select number of business schools, about one percent in total, are triple accredited (with accreditations from AACSB, AMBA, and EQUIS). This scholarly recognition attracts not only undergraduate and postgraduate students who want to achieve their full potential by acquiring the necessary capabilities and skills to manage and accelerate their career in business, but also PhD students eager to establish careers in a strong research environment.

Business schools have long had their research quality assessed. For example, in the UK, the impact assessment evaluation of higher education institutions' research is the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which is the successor to the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). These impact assessment evaluations provide benchmarking information according to which UK business schools (and other higher education institutions) are ranked (see, for example, *The Guardian* and *Times Higher Education*). Highly ranked business schools (i.e., schools that are conducting world-leading research in terms of originality, significance, and rigor) use this information unashamedly when seeking to attract the best talent, be it researchers or students.

With the RAEs/REFs putting much emphasis on higher education institutions' research, there has been an increasing realization that it also is important to evaluate institutions' teaching. The UK government introduced a Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) in 2017. Although participation in the exercise is voluntary, most UK colleges and universities have chosen to participate. An institution with gold status delivers consistently outstanding teaching, learning, and outcomes for its students. At research-intensive business schools, the aim of the research strategy therefore should be to conduct demonstrably impactful research that influences society; can be deployed usefully in developing education; and can be communicated to and used by practitioners. Fulfilling this aim starts with publishing research with a high impact.

Business school leaders would like to attract and keep the top research talent in order to stay competitive, attract high-potential students, and recruit the most promising young faculty. To accomplish these objectives, a successful research environment for its business academic researchers needs to be established so that these researchers can produce a sustainable research stream. In a recent editorial (Lindgreen, Di Benedetto, Brodie, and Naudé, 2019), we examined important antecedents including business school research strategy, leadership, and governance, and from these we developed a set of conditions that are related to long-term success of research programs in academic business institution. As detailed illustrations, we elaborated the experiences of two active research institutions—the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) Group and the Contemporary Marketing Practices (CMP) Group — and discussed how each of these groups has implemented the conditions for success. We concluded our editorial with general observations on the environmental conditions most conducive to sustainable business school research, and presented implications regarding the role of the journal editor as a gatekeeper.

Building on our past editorial, we now examine how business schools contribute to education by translating their great research into great teaching for graduate business-to-business marketing classes (including MBA programs with such classes). To achieve this goal, the remaining parts of the editorial are organized as follows. First, we present some of the most recent findings on teaching excellence, which pertains to business instructors, as well as to academics in general.

Next, we explore the specific opportunities and responsibilities facing the business-to-business marketing academic. We then discuss the process by which business-to-business marketing academics can transform our research in meaningful ways and deliver value to our practitioner audience in the classroom.

2. WHAT DOES GREAT TEACHING MEAN?

While it may be impossible to pin down the details, one can argue that great teachers facilitate the co-creation of learning with their students and thereby provide value. To understand this concept, one can apply the principles of service dominant (S-D) logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004), with the instructor playing the role of the "supplier" and the student as the "customer." According to S-D logic premises, the student is a co-creator of value, and the instructor does not deliver value, but can offer value propositions (for a detailed discussion of this topic, see Chalcraft and Lynch, 2011). The S-D viewpoint stresses the nature of the exchange between supplier and customer — or, in this case, instructor-student and even student-student interaction. The student is not a passive receiver of value from the instructor, since the instructor does not deliver value unidirectionally. Rather, the instructor's value proposition potentially can be converted to value, which is co-created by both instructor and student (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Vargo and Lusch, 2008). Suppliers know this and willingly invite customers to participate in the development of the value proposition (Vargo and Lusch, 2008). To ensure a long-term relationship between supplier and customer, each must offer satisfactory value to the other, sometimes referred to as reciprocal value propositions (Ballantyne and Varey, 2006). Working jointly, the supplier and customer can integrate their resources to co-create value, which can then be used by the customer to generate value in specific applications, or "value-in-use" (Vargo and Lusch, 2004).

The parallel to the business-to-business marketing education scenario is clear. As service providers, instructors who provide the greatest value to students provide the requisite resources to students, who bring with them their own skills, capabilities, and initiative, such that together instructors and students can co-create value. This value can then be exploited to co-create value-in-use, which allows students to achieve their potential (Chalcraft and Lynch, 2011). Once their resources have been developed, students will then be able to enact the value-in-use through time and in different applications into the future. To achieve this co-creation of learning, the traditional unidirectional, instructor-to-student learning process will not be enough. Great teaching ideally facilitates learning processes in three different directions to encourage co-creation of learning: instructor-to-student, student-to-instructor, and student-to-student (as actors all participate in the creation of value and all benefit from reciprocal value propositions).

Several actions can be undertaken to facilitate these three learning processes. First and perhaps most traditionally, instructors guide students, drawing on their academic and practical knowledge. This, of course, can be done well, or not well; and a later section will discuss the translation process from great research and practical experience into great teaching. Students can also interact with the instructor, applying and developing new ideas based on their own practical experience, under the guidance of the instructor, translating the lesson learned in the specific context to a resource that provides value-in-use in the future. A later section will explore how instructors can effectively use cases and other classroom tools to accomplish this translation process. Finally, students can interact with each other, sharing and developing their new ideas drawn from experience. While synergy and reciprocal value creation can be produced from all of these processes, it is this last one that might be the most fruitful if managed well. As will be discussed later, a typical graduate business-to-business marketing class will include students of all different backgrounds and levels of experience. This, of course, can be viewed as a challenge by the instructor, but is really an opportunity for students with differing backgrounds to apply their knowledge in possibly unexpected ways.

Great teaching also recognizes the power of the available technology, and uses it to advantage. Both instructor and student have access to a wealth of knowledge about business-to-business practices and management, as well as strategy applications of all types. The challenge is to develop processes so that these resources can be used sensibly and efficiently to create value. Most business schools have moved to a platform such as Canvas, Brightspace, or the like, which offer diverse ways for instructors and students to interact: discussion boards, video lectures, access to media, in-class polling, breakout groups, online quizzes, and so on. Needless to say, many business schools are offering online versions of their classes, as well as conventional on-site classes, and these platforms are critical to the effective functioning of online programs. All of these tools can be used profitably to improve the classroom experience, and indeed to facilitate all three directions of learning processes discussed above.

Whether teaching online or on-site, the instructor can benefit from the flipped classroom format (Green, 2015; Jarvis et al., 2014). Using this format, the traditional 'lecture in class/assignments outside of class' structure is flipped; video lectures and discussion boards are assigned as class work, to stimulate student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction. Class time then is used for intensive discussions, case analyses, group work, and so on. That is, the flipped classroom can be used effectively to facilitate learning processes in all three directions, and encourage the co-creation of value, which is central to S-D logic, as applied in the classroom (Jarvis et al., 2014). The instructors then can further personalize the course to bring their own perspective or even personality into the course. This can be done in many ways, limited only by the imagination of the instructors: constantly scanning for and posting current articles illustrative of course material and encouraging students to do the same (for example, by adding to discussion boards), adding weekly announcements including thought-provoking websites, humorous but relevant videos or YouTube clips, and so on. There are many relevant articles in publications such as *Business Horizons*, *California Management Review*, *Harvard Business Review* and *Sloan Management Journal* that can be added to the weekly readings, or online reports about recent company successes or failures. Adding these, and periodically updating them, provides a wealth of information to the students that shows the relevance of course material in real situations and helps to further the co-creation of value.

In addition to facilitating student-instructor and student-student interaction, the online class platform permits online group project work. Especially in an online class where students are recruited from miles away or even from different countries, the virtual meeting room facilitated by the online platform may be the only realistic way to meet. Students therefore have to get used to using technology as a substitute for travel when doing their group projects, which is a skill they will put to good use when they are working for multinational corporations that want to reduce their CO_2 footprint or are under price pressure to cut back on international travel and therefore turn to virtual meetings.

The above discussion, of course, assumes an ideal context for instruction. It should also be noted that at times, some adjustments will need to be made, as conditions may not permit easy transmission of information in all directions. A very large class (100 or more students) poses major challenges. Whether on-site or online, it is unrealistic to expect a free-flowing class discussion, which includes all students. Even if class discussions go well, there will be dozens of students who did not participate and/or may feel left out. There are a few adjustments that may overcome some of the challenges: hiring several course assistants, or organizing small discussion breakout groups to encourage student-student communication. The assistants will need to be well-trained and dependable, though, as otherwise the classroom experience will be compromised. Also, for anyone who has taught globally, or has had a class with a high percentage of international students, the challenges of effective student-to-instructor or student-to-student information flow are well known. In China and some other East Asian cultures, students are often very reluctant to participate in class, in spite of good English skills in many cases. When teaching in Japan, one of the authors used mandatory short presentations by individuals or student pairs, just to ensure that everyone does speak at least a couple of times during the semester! (This works especially well if there is support staff who can help students with accurate translations in good business English for their PowerPoint slides.) Even teaching a mixed group of European students reveals national differences regarding willingness to participate enthusiastically in class discussions.

3. WHAT DOES GREAT TEACHING IN BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS MARKETING MEAN?

The previous section explored teaching in general from the perspective of value creation; here we examine the issues and challenges when applying these concepts specifically to the effective teaching business-to-business marketing.

An obvious starting point is to know the students: their level and their level of experience and preparedness. Usually, basic marketing is a prerequisite for business-to-business marketing, and students at graduate level will have taken at least one marketing principles course. Therefore, the instructor can focus the business-to-business marketing course on how it adds to existing knowledge. A relevant question may be: how do basic marketing principles, such as research, customer behavior, segmentation, or integrated marketing communications, apply in business-to-business marketing? A classroom group assignment might be to take a business-to-business market, segment it, select a target and a positioning strategy, and make marketing mix recommendations for the targeted customer groups. The instructor may also ask whether the basic principles do indeed apply, or whether we need new principles adapted to the business-to-business context?

Depending on student level, there is the possibility of prior relevant work experience, and the amounts of work experience can vary greatly. In a traditional MSc program, students typically come directly from their undergraduate program. In an executive MBA program, in contrast, students often have 10 or more years of managerial experience, and some may be senior marketing executives at business-to-business companies. Others may come with a medical or engineering background and will have little or any interaction with marketing people on the job. The disparity therefore poses a real challenge for the instructor, but also presents an opportunity for student-student interaction. By focusing classroom time on cases, relevant online media reports, or hands-on projects, and requiring group project work and discussion board participation outside of class for project work, students can be put into interactive situations. Ideally, the ones with the strongest marketing backgrounds can take a lead role and mentor those for whom the material is quite new. Real-world examples that the instructor or the students themselves find are an ideal basis for teaching and should be stressed in discussion board posts.

The instructor can insist on hands-on projects based on real issues faced by real companies, and, in a graduate class, can require that students work on current projects (sometimes within their own companies). This may not always work out, and the instructor may need to provide a plan-B project, such as to report on a major company of their own choosing and search online for relevant background material. But, on project presentation day, it is always enjoyable for senior managers from the companies to come and listen to the presentations, ask questions, and give feedback.

The instructor must always keep in mind what students will expect of a business-to-business marketing course. Business-to-business marketing is usually taken by marketing majors, some of whom have significant experience. They will not want to hear about segmentation or the 4Ps yet again, unless the instructor can show successfully how the familiar concepts apply in a business-to-business setting. The students will find the content much more relevant if the instructor uses a business-to-business context with which they are familiar: a focus on the buyer-seller interaction, customer relationships and external network partners. Recent cases of good or not-so-good practice can be very effective here. In addition, students are unlikely to be interested in elegant academic theories, so the instructor needs to think carefully about translation of current research for relevance; we will take up this discussion below. Most importantly, students will want take-aways that they can apply right away—first and foremost to their class projects, perhaps, but especially out in the workplace.

One useful technique to achieve relevant take-aways is to make term papers as applied as possible. The term paper could be based around a business-to-business marketing principle, as in: "Using the business-to-business segmentation concept as described in class, discuss how you might effectively segment the market served by your company," or, for executives, "Consider the organizational buying models discussed in your text and describe the buying process within your buying center, outlining how you resolved conflicts in a recent purchase situation." To make the assignment even more realistic, one can use a "boss test" grading structure: the instructor, playing the role of work supervisor, provides grades on a three-point scale:

- This is brilliant. I did not realize how much value you could add to our company. I am promoting you immediately. I am really glad you are doing this program. The program is clearly adding value to you and to our company (high pass/distinction).
- This is OK, but all you have done is to describe what we already know/do. I need to know what we need to do differently and why (low pass).
- You have not fully appreciated just what we do and why. I fear we are wasting our time and money sending you on this program (fail).

Taken together, the last two sections illustrate that there is no one clear answer to the question of what makes a great teacher. Rather, it is better to accept the principle of equifinality in teaching: there are many different routes to becoming a great teacher. Much of this will depend on the audience and their level of academic knowledge and practical experience. However, it will also depend on the individual instructors: to recognize their own strengths and to develop a style that works, rather than trying to copy anyone else.

The next section addresses the issue of translating the best research into great teaching: the challenge of making relevant the work that we do as academic researchers.

4. TRANSLATING GREAT RESEARCH INTO GREAT TEACHING

At the outset, we recognize that great research must be presented in ways that adds value to students. According to the S-D logic, we as instructors can only make value propositions, not create value ourselves. As is the case for any service provider, we need to understand customer needs such that we can develop the best value proposition for our customers (i.e., students) so that we can co-create value. The exoteric theories in and of themselves are not of interest to students.

Instructors need to be able to pick the ones that potentially add the most value, and find a way to demonstrate their relevance to students so they will see the value in use.

A gifted teacher knows how to bridge the gap between academic research and practice. If our research is motivated by real, practical, managerial problems, the translation process is facilitated, since the academic contributions are at the same time relevant solutions for decision makers. Luckily for us, much of our work in business-to-business marketing is like this. We study practically relevant problems, and our findings can substantially improve managerial decision making. As business-to-business marketing researchers, we are also fortunate in that our target journals (*Industrial Marketing Management* and other top marketing journals) require statements of managerial implications. These publications ensure that the published articles have some managerial relevance.

Having said this, one must still note that the value-adding process is by no means easy in all cases. Much of the great academic marketing articles, published in the highest-ranked marketing journals (*Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, *Journal of Service Research*, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *Marketing Science*) and also in *Industrial Marketing Management* (the top business-to-business marketing management journal) require substantial analytical skills on the part of the reader. It is safe to assume that the majority of MSc / MBA students do not have these skills. The answer is not necessarily to cut out all of the math. To simply present the results without justifying how the conclusions were reached trivializes the issue, probably oversimplifies the results, and ultimately frustrates the students. This translation process therefore is hard work.

Keeping in mind that students want answers, the instructor can use the available tools to demonstrate the relevance of academic research to practical decision problems. Many business-to-business marketing classes are designed around the use of large Harvard-style cases, which allow for in-depth discussion of complicated situations without a single clear answer. The instructor can stimulate deep group discussion, encouraging the use of conceptual models brought into class and/or application of textbook principles. One way this can be done is by using the set of questions that accompany most cases in the corresponding teaching note: break the class into groups (this works on-site, as well as with online virtual groups) and allow each group some class time to address one of the questions and then present their findings to the class. After a healthy discussion and student-generated recommendations to the company, the instructor can reveal what the company actually did (the epilogue is frequently included in the teaching note). The class can conclude with a discussion of whether the students agree with the company's actions and what the long-term consequences of the actions taken were.

Especially when teaching postgraduate students or mid-career executives, there is always the question of relevance of cases. One might use, for example, a case about LEGO to illustrate the changing role of innovation of a company in transformation, or discuss Fitbit to develop strategies for sustaining a significant competitive advantage in a maturing market. It is important to remind students that the cases are chosen to illustrate specific concepts, and that the settings (in this case, the toy industry and the wearable technology industry) are just the context. This is an effective strategy to avoid the occasional question of relevance, such as "why am I studying a toy company? I work in pharmaceutical management." To go a step further, the instructor can ask students to submit a report of at least one or two take-aways from the case that is directly relevant to their own company or can be implemented immediately.

The contemporary marketing practices (CMP)-based case study approach can be used effectively to ensure the relevance of academic research. A characteristic of CMP is the emphasis on active discussion with executive students, through research-led teaching and teaching-informed research. CMP researchers are typically experienced teachers of executive programs. CMP research efforts are designed to be integrated with teaching activities, to achieve a continuous cycle that connects research and learning. The CMP-based approach is characterized by using case studies drawing on the students' work environments and action research, as well as ongoing feedback both to and from the classroom. This leads to what Little, Brookes, and Palmer (2008) refer to as a "zone of mutuality" between research and teaching. They state (p. 126):

> "While purpose and form of cases for research or teaching are very distinct, this does not necessarily imply these two endeavors are mutually exclusive. Rather, they can be seen as complementary activities and may even draw from the same source material. Both require a purposive and systematic approach. Both require the application of creativity in arriving at conclusions and in developing new knowledge or testing and exercising current knowledge about management practice or management theory. Whilst academic capability is required in both forms of case development, they differ fundamentally in their purpose and approach to theory: either a methodology to build or test theory in a rigorous manner, or a pedagogical technique that illustrates theory by adopting a narrative approach intrinsic to which is student engagement and participation. In addition, different quality criteria apply: case research is required to be rigorous and valid, whilst a teaching case must deliver against the teaching objectives. Internal consistency, face validity, acceptability and comprehensibility for students are of primary importance."

Central to the idea of living case studies is the notion of 'theories-in-use', a term used by Cornelissen (2002), which draws from Schön's (1983) notion of reflective practitioners and the work on the interface of theory and practice by Argyris and Schön (1974) and Zaltman, LeMasters, and Heffring (1982). The living case study technique recognizes that practitioners and practical knowledge can play an important role in the theorizing process and the way managers use theory. The practices and experiences of previous actions of executive students can lead to expertise that offers important insight for theory development. Nevertheless, the process by which practitioners absorb understandings means that theory development may have subtle differences and that therefore indirect and formal processes are required to theorize with practitioners (Nenonen et al., 2017). While the living case study approach was developed when teaching part-time executive students, the approach has been adapted to other types of student settings; graduate students may have work experience and hence can reflect on theories-in-use.

The evolution of CMP research has lessons for all academics wishing to make their own personal research meaningful to practitioners. At this point, however, action research-based articles are relatively poorly represented in the academic journals, so there is much room for growth and improvement. As discussed by Nenonen et al. (2017) and Brodie et al. (2017), abductive reasoning plays a central role in the collaborative processes when theorizing with practitioners. This is because most accounts of theorizing with practitioners use—explicitly or implicitly—abduction as the main mode of inference. For example Nenenon et al. (2017) explore the use of abductive reasoning when theorizing with practitioners. They articulate a theorizing process that integrates general theoretic perspectives and contextual research to develop midrange theory. The process is based on the principles of pragmatism and abductive reasoning, which have their origins in the 1950s when the management sciences were being established. This provides philosophical foundations of the living case study research.

Another important consideration when using living case studies is to develop a research design, which leads to knowledge that is meaningful to practitioners. As outlined by Little, Motion, and

Brodie (2006), attention needs to be given to understanding the differences between academics and practitioners. These differences, summarized in Table 1, are profound and must be understood and addressed to alleviate problems in communication between the two groups. As shown in the table, academics and practitioners differ greatly in terms of their overall career goals (publication versus personal and organizational performance), how to achieve these goals (conceptual breakthrough versus proprietary solutions), kind of knowledge sought (why versus how), even the kind of language used in communication (scientific versus business-oriented). The differences between the two groups are noticeable in a classroom of senior-management graduate students with years of experience in writing business reports, but who are new to academic writing. One of the authors of this article teaches in a DBA program whose students average fifteen years of management or entrepreneurial experience. An anecdote from this program reveals much about the gap between the two groups. One student commented at the end of a semester that he thought his DBA class was going to be easy: he only had to write two papers that semester, and he was used to writing a paper every week at work! He admitted that he had no idea how much more difficult it would be to write a scholarly paper (such as a progress report on his academic research), as compared to writing a weekly report for his boss. As shown in table 1, practitioners are in “action mode,” seeking solutions to their organization’s problems and used to writing business reports; it is a major change in direction to adopt an academic’s “reflection mode” and to write research papers in academic style.

Table 1. Differences between academics and practitioners

Issue	Academics	Practitioners
Goal	Publication	Personal performance, organizational performance
Means of achieving goals	Conceptual breakthrough	Proprietary problem solutions
Most valuable resources	Data, idea, insights	Time, energy
Time horizon	Medium to long term	Short to medium term
Key sources of frustration	Data not delivered or available	Time-consuming tasks
Knowledge sought	Why?	How?
Language	Academic/scientific	Organizational/business
Confidentiality	Not an issue	An important issue
Most common mode	Reflection	Action

Source: Adapted from Little, Motion, and Brodie (2006, Table 2).

Also important is an understanding of the way practitioners use theory. Of particular importance is the research by Cornelissen and Lock (2005) and Åge (2014) who examined how and why practitioners use conceptual devices in business-to-business research. The research shows that practitioners, through translating research into their specific context, can find a new spectrum of research usage in their organization, but can also contribute to research in an interactive and creative way. A distinction is made between three ways in which practitioners use theory. The first is instrumental use, implying that practitioners use research to directly solve a problem. Much of the discussion in marketing regarding the use of research is based on this perspective on direct and instrumental use (e.g., Deshpande and Zaltman, 1982). In contrast to instrumental use, there is conceptual use where concepts and theories are used to influence practitioners' thinking, but are not applied directly. Here "ideas, problem definitions, and interpretive schemes [are viewed] as a set of intellectual tools available to the practitioner in understanding and anticipating real-world phenomena" (Cornelissen, 2000, p. 319). Conceptual devices also offer practitioners considerable scope and flexibility and play a key role in learning from work experience. Finally, Åge (2014) discuses symbolic use. This is where the use of concept and scientific research is deliberately taken out of context and used by practitioners, and is used for its symbolic value to legitimate the actions of the practitioner. Brownlie and Saren (1997, p. 150) elaborated upon this more "partisan" method of science, arguing that "Marketing managers are typically very adept at using this conceptual vocabulary to provide interviewers with persuasive accounts of their activities as marketing managers. In that sense they are authors too."

Åge's research suggests that, "[c]ontrary to what extant literature suggests, … research that is abstract in nature has inherently greater possibilities for managerial relevance compared to other research, due to its potential for flexible and dynamic interpretations. The present study also suggests that researchers are not simply the producers of research for managers to passively consume or reject. Instead, B2B research can benefit from encountering the messiness and chaos of the managers' worlds" (Åge, 2014, p. 440). This stream of research suggests that conceptual and symbolic, as well as instrumental use of research, can all be used by the business-to-business marketing academic to translate business research into effective teaching, though it is probably fair to say that we still rely greatly on instrumental use. Case studies derived from research can be adapted into teaching cases as a way to incorporate learning from work experience into the classroom. Especially in a class of senior executives with varying backgrounds, "messy" (to use Åge's term) teaching cases will take students out of their comfort zones and encourage student-to-student learning, stimulate communication, and add more value to the classroom experience.

In conclusion, the CMP experience shows that case studies developed for teaching purposes and case studies developed for research purposes are not mutually exclusive. The needs of both students and researchers can be met contemporaneously if the research and learning projects are designed and implemented effectively. The value to students is created through the provision of an engaging "living" learning experience, enabling engagement in and application of theory, thereby creating enhanced understanding and greater perceived value. Using the living case study method, managers' tacit knowledge and experience can be accessed and used inductively. As committed teachers, we always should look for alternative ways to create and construct knowledge. The CMP approach has provided this group of instructors with a means of creating "requisite variety" (Weick, 2007), that is, has provided a rich basis of knowledge on which to construct theoretical frameworks that acknowledge the complexity and multidimensional nature of CMP. The living case approach provides a rich "zone of mutuality", whereby the needs of both learners and researchers can be met.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Business-to-business marketing academics can learn much from current trends in higher education to increase the value proposition to their students. As educators, we are service providers; the literature on service-dominant logic has been applied to the academic context, yielding insights on how we can encourage the co-creation of value. Since many of us teach in environments with their own peculiarities (MBA/MSc students, mid-career or senior professional students, occasionally large class sizes, online classes, and international classes, among others), we often must make adjustments or workarounds to adapt the ideal academic service encounter to fit the setting.

Furthermore, as business-to-business marketing academics, we potentially have an advantage in the classroom. Like many of our colleagues in the business school, our own academic research is very much driven by real-world problems faced by decision makers. Our research is inherently practical; many times, our next research project is stimulated by a discussion with senior managers about the challenges they are currently facing. Ideally, we should be able to take our academic research, make some positioning adjustments to it, and deliver a presentation to a group of senior executives who will find value in it.

Despite these advantages, it is still not necessarily smooth sailing ahead, and we need to understand the nature of the gap between academics and practitioners so that we can recognize the slipping points and overcome them. Our goals do not match those of the practitioner community. In our publish-or-perish world, publications are the currency; this is quite foreign to most practitioners. We write in an academic style designed to please reviewers and editors, and to demonstrate our theoretical contribution to the extant literature; these are issues, which are not of concern to a practitioner writing a report for senior management or for stakeholders. Even our definitions of what a “report” is can differ wildly. Furthermore, no matter how relevant the findings may be to practitioners, we must demonstrate analytical rigor and may use statistical jargon that will bog down any decision manager looking for a quick and practical answer. For all of these reasons, we need to be aware of the translation process between our research and potential classroom application. While not prescribing it as a one-size-fits-all strategy, we note the success that the CMP has had with their “living” learning experience, in which practitioners’ knowledge and experience are used inductively. Using such a case study method, students can apply and engage in theory, increasing their understanding and the co-creation of value. This technique helps us to incorporate more conceptual and symbolic use of our research, as well as to complement instrumental use of research, which is more prevalent in business schools.

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