Educating for Peace: From Pieces to Peace

Maria Lai-Ling Lam, AJ-Great Limited, Kwai Chung, Hong Kong

ABSTRACT

The author presents a peace-centered process of teaching marketing that she has implemented during 2001-2016 academic years with her undergraduate and graduate business students in various marketing courses, corporate social responsibility course, and summer seminars in the United States, Hong Kong, and China. The peace-centered process is neglected in the conventional norms of marketing education even though marketing is considered to create values to stakeholders through the exchange processes and creates a peaceful world through business activities. The peace-centered approach is related to the development of a unified world view about human life in a culture of peace and culture of healing, and the development of virtues in a marketing career. She discusses (1) the critique of marketing education, (2) the concept of a peace-centered process of teaching marketing, (3) the role of marketing educators, and (4) the seven pedagogical strategies for this approach.

KEYWORDS

Authentic Self, Culture of Healing, Culture of Peace, Marketing Education, Peace Education, Pedagogical Strategies, Unity-Based World View, Virtues

INTRODUCTION

Peace is essential for the vibrancy of human beings and the fullness of happiness in our moral ecology which respects life and supports human development and community (Danesh, 2006; Kotler, 2007; Lam, 2015; Novak, 1996, Murphy, 1999; William and Murphy, 1990; Thompson, 2002). Peace exists in our just relationships with ourselves, others and nature. Harris and Synott (2002, p. 4), two distinguished peace educators, state that peace education as “teaching encounters” that should draw out for people the (1) desire for peace, (2) non-violent alternatives for managing conflict; (3) and the skills for critical analysis of the structural arrangements that produce and legitimate injustice and inequality. Business education is advocated to include peace education when business schools want to embrace their role as peace builders (Graham and Requejo, 2017; Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018; United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2018). It is exceptional to find any business school that will write the desire for peace and the skills of conflict resolution as the outcomes of marketing education. Will marketing educators be requested to enhance students’ desire for peace when they teach students to learn how to use consumer analytics, artificial intelligence or big data for being more competitive?

Many business educators hope students to have more consciousness of themselves and others in their choices, in particular when there are pervasive on-line business education and increasing violence in social media technologies in the United States (Carr, 2008; Dolby, 2013; Konrath, O’Brian and Hsing, 2011; Natale and Libertella, 2016; Waddock and Lozano, 2013). From the author’s twenty-
one year of experience with her business students in the United States, Hong Kong and China, she finds that most students tend to accept the business reality as a battle field rather than a system for human flourishing. She assesses more students are distracted and self-centered in the classrooms. She examines the common approach of teaching marketing is at best a piecemeal approach. Such an approach denies the inherent characteristic of wholeness of students and their calling. Students are trained to fulfill marketing functions¹ for the sake of organization objectives without being taught to treat people as sacred beings, and being critical to injustice in the global market structure. She believes that it is a priority to guide her students through a broad range of classroom activities to understand and experience how marketing relates to our human well-beings, to discover who they are, to awaken their conscience, to aid them to use their conscience as their witness of the laws written on their heart, to assist them in developing awareness of certain virtues, to rouse their empathy toward others, and to encourage them to commit to the highest Good with their free will and wise choices.

In this article, the author presents a peace-centered process of teaching marketing that she has implemented during 2002-2016 academic years with her undergraduate and graduate business students in various marketing courses in the United States, Hong Kong and China. Her years of personal and professional study and reflective teaching have led her to develop this process. Peace is defined as “the harmony of all energies of life, their balance, and the recognition of all the opposites and conflicts” (Haring, 1986, p. 8). It is a process and will be shaped by a person’s perspective about reality, human nature, and meanings of life (Lupovici, 2013). It needs spiritual disciplines and needs the practices of empathy. She has years of research about human rights in higher education (Lam, Lam, and Lam, 2006) and has advocated empathy as another paradigm in the study of corporate social responsibility and sustainability (Cook and Lam, 2013; Lam and Wong, 2018; Lam, 2000, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2013d, 2013e, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018). This process affirms personhood through the practices of mindfulness and meditation (Eshelman, Lam, and Cook, 2012). This process needs educators and students to practice critical reflection skills and develop virtues together in a loving community. It is the author’s contention that the process will equip her students to “take responsibility for fairly and honestly communicating a product’s attributes and benefits while balancing the demand for exciting creativity and emotional enthusiasm within the nature of truthful relationships” between organizations and customers (Thompson, 2002), and to learn to be open to self-deceptive practices in their lives.

In the following segments of this article, she discusses (1) the critiques of marketing education, (2) the concept of a peace-centered process of teaching marketing, (3) the role of marketing educators, and (4) the seven pedagogical strategies for this approach.

**THE CRITIQUES OF MARKETING EDUCATION**

Marketing education is defined as “a program designed to prepare secondary and postsecondary students to conduct the critical business functions associated with directing the flow of products and services from the producer to the consumer” (Association for Center and Technical Education, 2018). Traditional approaches to teaching marketing have overemphasized the rational decision-making process and objectified the knowledge presented in the textbooks without criticizing how the assumptions of human beings may violate the self-esteem and the social fabrics of humanity. The future marketing education is called to develop students’ analytical skills that support evidence-based decision making and increases the competitiveness of graduates in the digitized global market economy (Finch, Nadeau, and O’Rilley, 2012).

The existing pervasive world view in marketing education is mainly a conflict-based perspective. War metaphors are frequently used to describe different marketing strategies and “The Art of War” written by the ancient Chinese strategist Sun Tzu is often quoted in the strategy classes. It is not surprising when students describe the business world as a dangerous, conflicted, and violent world by using the slogans, “dog eats dog or survival of the fittest.” Students are more familiar with the
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