

# MARKETING'S MASTER TEACHERS REVISITED: A REPLICATION

*Craig A. Kelley, California State University – Sacramento*

*Denise T. Smart, Southwest Texas State University*

*Jeffrey S. Conant, Texas A&M University*

## ABSTRACT

Like most industries in the world, higher education in the United States has had to adapt to an increasing pace of change. The drivers of change include the technological revolution, shrinking budgets, diverse backgrounds among college students and greater accountability demanded by consumers (e.g., employers, state legislators) of a college education. Marketing education has not been immune to these forces of change. For a decade several marketing educators (e.g., Ferrell 1995; 1990; Hair 1995; 1990; Kelley, Conant, and Smart 1998; Mason 1995; 1990; Smart, Conant, and Kelley 1998) have predicted the course and pace of change. Yet surprisingly few studies have attempted to determine over a period of time what a cross-section of marketing educators view as essential elements to effective teaching (or quality). Based on a 1988 (Conant, Smart, and Kelley 1988) study of marketing's master teachers, a replication was undertaken in an effort to determine what, if anything, has changed in the characteristics of effective teaching in the past decade.

Conant, Smart, and Kelley (1988) identified specific elements of "master" teaching by asking respondents to explain what they did in terms of general differentiating characteristics, lecturing; syllabus construction; student involvement and class discussion; examinations, assignments and grading; and student rapport. Using the methodology developed by Conant, Smart, and Kelley (1988), marketing department heads in 310 U.S. colleges and universities were contacted by letter in 1998 and asked to select two of their most effective teachers to complete a two-page questionnaire.

The initial mailing resulted in 78 completed surveys representing 61 different schools. A follow-up request including one extra questionnaire was sent to department heads of the 248 schools initially selected but not represented in the first responses. Twenty-nine additional responses were received from the follow-up. The total of 107 responses represented 90 different schools. Based on the number of schools responding the response rate was 29 percent. A nonresponse bias check was done by comparing responding and nonresponding schools along the dimensions of geographical distribution and faculty size. In each case, no significant differences were found to exist between the two groups.

The first question was designed to stimulate respondents to evaluate their overall teaching style and approach. The response categories in 1998 were similar to those elicited in 1988. There has been a noticeable shift, however, away from applied projects and knowledge of the topic toward more emphasis on caring/empathy.

The next question asked respondents to indicate what techniques, approaches, and/or methods they employ to enhance student learning and overall course effectiveness in terms of lecturing. An interactive style of lecturing was expressed in 34 percent of the comments compared to 20 percent of the comments ten years ago. Examples and enthusiasm/entertainment were also represented to a greater degree in the responses. What was emphasized less in the current study was a teamwork philosophy with students and preparation and structure.

The third question asked respondents to indicate what techniques, approaches, and/or methods they employ to enhance student learning and overall course effectiveness in terms of syllabus construction. Nine percent fewer comments indicated the syllabus was a contract between the professor and the student. Yet six percent more comments indicated the syllabus was comprehensive and detailed. Perhaps the perception of a legalistic society has caused educators to back off calling a syllabus a contract but made them more cognizant of the need to cover as many situations as possible by being very specific in the syllabus.

The next question asked respondents to indicate what techniques, approaches, and/or methods they employ to enhance student learning and overall course effectiveness relative to student involvement and class discussion. The current study found that student presentations and personalization were not mentioned as frequently as in the past. However, current events were mentioned to a greater extent compared to 10 years ago.

The respondents then answered a question that asked what techniques, approaches, and/or methods they employ to enhance student learning and overall course effectiveness in examinations, assignments and grading. Fast and constructive feedback was not mentioned as often compared to 10 years ago.

The last question asked the respondents to indicate what techniques, approaches, and/or methods they employ to enhance student learning and overall course effectiveness. What stood out was an increase in the number of comments that indicated a friendly demeanor

and positive attitude were important to develop student rapport. Availability dropped perhaps because of increasingly demanding and harried lives of faculty and students.

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For further information contact:  
Craig A. Kelley  
Department of Management  
California State University – Sacramento  
6000 J Street  
Sacramento, CA 95819-6088  
Phone: (916) 278-7199  
E-Mail: Kelleyca@csus.edu

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