REFLECTIVE TEACHING PORTFOLIO
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Background

My expertise deals with Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing in a global environment. In my first profession, I worked for some of the most prestigious beauty companies, such as Revlon, Coty, P&G and LVMH. In the Fall 2016, I was given the chance to share my passion for beauty with students at one of the best programs in America: the Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing program at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Since then, I have been teaching CM341 Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing, CM442 Global Brand Management, and CM423 New Product Development Workshop, as well as FM268 Team Development Workshop in the Fashion Business Management program.

Teaching philosophy

Passing on knowledge to the next generation is certainly the greatest gift that a teacher can give to a student. My role as a teacher is to be a guide and a model through student-centered activities, to educate them to be problem-solvers, and to train them for the corporate world, as well as to engage them in learning, questioning, critical thinking, and innovation processes inside and outside the classroom. As I sometimes remind them, I do not tell them what to think, but how to think and, as per Coty's motto, always think "faster, further, freer."

To draw upon this approach in my classes and create the most meaningful experience for my students, I turned to the Lewinian learning theory to rethink the process of teaching marketing concepts to the students. This model is based on concrete experiences that allow the development of a theory that is then tested in a new situation. Through this experiential learning cycle, I connect students with real life experiences that are familiar to them, and in which they can take an active role. Consequently, they are more involved in the learning process and their learning experience is significantly improved. When we include Stephen Brookfield's ideas about critical thinking, they reinforce the Lewinian model by provoking critical thinking in my students. In this process, students are not just seeing things from different viewpoints, they are also considering assumptions as well as crafting a conclusion.

In order to illustrate this redesigned framework, I use the following assignment. One of the key topics to which students are introduced is distribution channels in the beauty industry. At the end of the course, students should understand key trends in the marketplace, identify the characteristics of distribution channels, and recommend additional distribution channels. Eventually, I expect students to be able to create new customer experiences. I could have presented distribution channels as a lecture. Instead, a real experience, considered as a focal point, allows the students to analyze and validate abstract concepts while fostering their critical thinking using the four steps of critical thinking.

The first step of the concrete experience is about observation. Students go to the stores to observe and get their personal immediate experience, to surface their prior knowledge. They build their own opinion and empirical perspective on their own retail experience, but at this level they do not really articulate all elements together. The second step is about applying a framework. I provide structure and guidance with a list of specific criteria to observe and analyze. Students research and investigate the different distribution channels to check their assumptions. The third step is to share, reflect and make generalizations. Students gather in teams in a workshop session. They present their conclusions publicly in class. They become expert in their topic and they all learn from each other's research. They can relate these findings to their own personal experience. This also promotes active listening among students. Stimulating debates arise from these discussions. In the last step, students come up with new ideas based on these key learnings and conclusions. All the criteria and experiences that were previously discussed in class help them build new abstract concepts, with descriptions of the experience, as well as concretely with renderings of communication that they create.

Once students can think critically, I provide them with opportunities to get feedback from their peers with in-class team presentations. Through this active and cooperative approach, students are more engaged and excited to share their creative ideas, and to receive oral and written feedback in order to make their concepts stronger. To be innovative, we need perspectives from others to challenge and to cross-pollinate ideas. This is a very efficient tool to build a strong community of creative thinkers, all helping each other for their projects. Students assess the comments and suggestions from their peers to revise their concept accordingly and go further into innovation. Besides participating and engaging much more, students demonstrate creativity and teamwork.

Use of Technology

This journey is an ongoing learning adventure to understand who the students are, how they feel, and how they react, and to find creative techniques to engage them and challenge them.

Our students are digital natives. In 2018, Mintel's team of global beauty and personal care analysts developed an acronym to identify this new generation of consumers as the AVID generation, Approaching adulthood, Video driven, Influencer aware and Digital natives. Bringing more technology to the classroom is a way to connect with students and, teach them new skills while embracing their lifestyle and meeting them on their own terms.

Two years ago, I implemented a training session on how to make a video for all the juniors enrolled in the Cosmetics and Fragrance Marketing program. Students apply their learnings with several projects during the program, and really value this skill when they start their career.

I also use Google drive for my senior students as a shared platform to post their draft concepts of their capstone presentation, give critiques to the other teams and receive constructive feedback from their peers on their own project. This is a useful tool to conduct peer assessment with technology.

The Teaching with Technology workshop made me discover some very interesting features available on Blackboard, especially the embedded library resources we can incorporate into a course. The CM442 Global Brand Management course that I teach requires students to do intense research on foreign countries. Each week we approach a different aspect like the economic environment, the technological ecosystem or the cultural environment. I am currently working with the librarians to build a weekly guide for students to help them navigate the databases and the various sources of information.

Voicethread is also a feature that I would like to use that seems very appropriate for online courses, which is one of my objectives for this year. I have only taught face-to-face classes so far, but I will adapt a course to the online version next semester. I believe it is useful to my professional development as well as offering more flexibility to students. I am looking forward to taking the training program with FIT's Online Learning Office to gain exposure to even more tools available on Blackboard. Although I think I will miss the human interaction of face-to-face courses, I am eager to witness the participation and interaction of students, as I expect this interface may allow quiet students to express themselves more easily than in the physical classroom.

Social Media is a tool that can be powerful to put down the walls of the classroom. Two years ago, I created an Instagram account for CFM where students can share pictures and react to posts. It encourages interaction between students to strengthen our learning community, and it also connects them with industry to help them build their network.

I also discovered the mobile apps Zappar and Arilyn for augmented reality. These are innovative tools that could be very exciting for students to learn. I am not sure yet on how to incorporate these apps in projects and apply them to business cases. So as a first step, I will organize a training session for our juniors on different technologies (3D modeling and printing, augmented reality, virtual reality) and see how they react. It will increase the comfort level of both the students and myself for experimenting with new technologies and being more prepared to face technological challenges in the workplace.

Bringing more technology to the classroom is an effective opportunity to connect with students. However sometimes technology offers more distractions. Finding the right balance of technology in the learning environment can be a challenge, so I keep experimenting with new teaching methods to adjust to the students and provide them with the best learning experience possible.

Goals

I have enjoyed teaching tremendously. I learn from the students and I share my passion for the beauty industry with motivated students who create amazing projects and constantly experiment.

As I love gardening, especially fragranced plants like lavender and jasmine, I would use the metaphor of the gardener: I plant the seeds in the soil of the classroom, and I provide them with the nutrients and water that they need to develop, some requiring more care and resources than others to germinate. I watch them grow and bloom into

young professionals. And we harvest the benefits all together, all happy to achieve our goals.

I am permanently committed to improving myself, and I strongly encourage the students to do so to blossom and be successful. To enact this philosophy, there is no better place than FIT with its community of unconventional minds.