Preparing Teacher Candidates to Effectively Engage CTSOs in Marketing Education

BY URS HALTINNER AND DEBBIE STANISLAWSKI

The contemporary marketing educator can be likened to the Volkswagen Beetle and the Austin Mini Cooper of the bygone 1950s and 60s. While their success was based on form and function befitting the times of “utilitarian functionality,” they survived because of role and purpose. Times, tastes, and technologies change, and products emerge that represent morphing of the old and new; hence the Beetle and the Mini Cooper remain relevant products within the 21st century automotive marketplace. Just as these automotive icons embrace the past to create their future success, so must teacher educators who are training future marketing education teachers. As teacher educators we have an opportunity to guide and shape these future practitioners. Reviewing the educational and career histories of teacher candidates prior to their entry into our programs highlights their wide range of experiences, practices, assumptions, and beliefs about marketing and teaching marketing to high school students. As professionals, we embrace the dawning of possibilities being presented to the marketing education community. Concurrently, we are reminded that part of change is passing on rituals, beliefs, and traditions, some of which ought to endure over time. Career and technical student organizations (CTSOs) are part of the marketing education culture that is a critical pedagogy that deserves further investigation. While marketing education is at the base of the discussion, this article focus on preparing marketing teacher candidates to learn about the CTSO’s role and purpose.

Marketing Education – The Discipline

Marketing education has emerged as a modern, distinct, and relevant program in the contemporary comprehensive high school. Marketing is taught in almost 28% of U.S. public high schools (Stone, Kowske, & Alfeld, 2004). While the program has a broadened focus that embraces marketing knowledge and practices, it has retained much of its historic DNA, including designing and delivering instruction through methods and strategies that embrace learning beyond parameters typically present in traditional forms of schooling (Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone, 2003).

Marketing education, as a discipline, has endured change to remain relevant over time. Historically, marketing teacher-coordinators made no excuses about the discipline, its purpose, and obligation towards preparation of youth for their roles in the marketing professions. Its pedagogy includes a coherent sequence of marketing and advanced marketing courses focused primarily on the junior and senior years (Crawford & Meyer, 1972). While all students were perceived beneficiaries of learning about marketing during their junior-level beginning marketing course, select students became the focus of the senior-level marketing cooperative occupational education experience. Marketing students also quickly realized that learning about marketing was more than a class; it often involved a school store (school-based enterprise) and a VSO (Vocational Student Organization). The Vocational Student Organization, currently known as Career and Technical Student Organization (CTSO), became part of the experience. In a recent study entitled Looking Inside the Black Box: The Value Added by Career and Technical Student Organizations to Students’ High School Experience supported by the National Research Center for Career and Technical Education (Alfeld, Stone, et al., 2007), it was reported that students engaged in CTSO competitive events tend to demonstrate a significantly higher level of academic engagement and high career self-efficacy than students who do not have these experiences. It was
also reported that participating in CTSO competitive events supports a positive effect "on grades, college aspirations and employability skills" (p. 27).

Meeting Teacher Candidates Needs

As marketing education continues to add value to the comprehensive high school, it must pay attention to what works. This includes understanding the program and its pedagogy. Teacher educators have an opportunity to design programs and curricula that support best practices for future marketing teachers. It is relatively easy to prepare marketing teacher candidates for their traditional curriculum responsibility. Standards and resources supporting the standards are readily available that support the "what to teach." Methods and strategies are more complex. Information on how to teach and how to learn about the role of the advisor for CTSOs is even more elusive.

Facilitating learning about the purpose and role of CTSOs in marketing education at first blush appears to be a series of lessons facilitated through focused discussion of DECA, the international association for high school and college students studying marketing and related areas. While that is an option, the complex nature of understanding the CTSO’s connection to the overall program cannot be overlooked. For those teacher candidates entering teacher education without knowledge or experience of a CTSO, it provides only a basic snapshot, unlikely to lead them to understand the CTSO’s deep curricular possibilities.

A deeper understanding can be facilitated through applied projects that allow for authentic assessments. Authentic assessment allows teacher candidates to demonstrate ability on real-work problems or tasks (Frey & Schmitt, 2007). Three examples of applied projects for allowing future advisors to develop and demonstrate knowledge and skills are (1) mock competitive events, (2) competitive event analysis, and (3) program of work.

Mock Competitive Events

Understanding the purpose, organization, and implementation of competitive events is important for new advisors. This can be an overwhelming task, as advisors need to not only understand the competitive event process, but also the management perspective of taking students away from school, often for the first time. The opportunity to build confidence through mock competitive events can be a powerful experience for teacher candidates.

Implementing mock competitive events allows future advisors to experience role plays and written tests first hand. Several steps can be taken to make sure teacher candidates get the most out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>EMERGING</th>
<th>UNSATISFACTORY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Report - Quality of Information</td>
<td>Content suggestions are addressed with detailed support using terminology and examples from the competitive event read.</td>
<td>Content suggestions are addressed, but with minimal support using terminology and examples from the competitive event read.</td>
<td>Not all content suggestions are addressed. Little or no support for statements using terminology and examples from the competitive event read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Evaluation Forms</td>
<td>DECA Event Checklist and Evaluation Format complete and submitted. Extensive notes written on forms to show evidence and support evaluation.</td>
<td>DECA Event Checklist and Evaluation Form complete and submitted. Basic notes written on forms to show evidence and support evaluation.</td>
<td>DECA Event Checklist and Evaluation Form incomplete or not submitted. No notes written on forms to show evidence and support evaluation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Presentation</td>
<td>No grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs. Format guide followed. Minimum of 3 pages.</td>
<td>Minimal grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs. One format error. Length requirement not met.</td>
<td>Several grammatical, spelling, or punctuation errors. Information is unorganized and/or paragraphs are not well-constructed. Two or more format errors. Length requirement not met.</td>
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of this experience. Teacher candidates must first study the competitive events’ purpose, structure, and procedures. Next, they can study steps to prepare students for competitive events. They can then be asked to put the steps into action as they prepare for a mock competitive event experience.

A simple mock competitive event can be facilitated in approximately two 55-minute class periods. In order to do this in a short time frame, it is most efficient to select one event and have all teacher candidates participate in it. Teacher candidates should be given event competencies one class prior to the competitive event. Depending on the time allocation, teacher candidates may act as participants in only one role-play; for the alternate role-play, they act as judges. Through this process, teacher candidates see two role-plays, yet, they also get to see how the evaluation is applied to the competencies and performance by serving as the judge.

The activity allows a unit or lesson on competitive events to move beyond the process, as teacher candidates witness firsthand the affective elements. For example, by utilizing reflection questions after the role plays and written tests, teacher candidates are led to think about and discuss their experiences and feelings as both a participant and a judge. By examining these feelings, teacher candidates can then connect them to how their future students may feel and react. Ultimately, this allows teacher candidates to move beyond process to think deeper about the connection between competitive events and the curriculum, student preparation for competitive events, and their roles as advisors.

**Competitive Event Analysis**

A competitive event analysis project can facilitate teacher candidate understanding about the structural elements of written events and student achievement expectations of these occupationally focused events. In this assignment, teacher candidates are asked to read and analyze a sample DECA International Career Development Conference winning written event. The analysis includes both a formal written paper and an event evaluation using the event judge’s evaluations (See Table 1).

Several steps are involved in helping teacher candidates get the most out of this assignment. Initially, teacher candidates are reminded that reading the event description will provide necessary background information to place the event into context. Also, having the judges evaluations forms copied and available while they read the event will help them analyze the event in terms of achievement expectations. Lastly, teacher candidates should be instructed on constructive criticism requirements (event competitor feedback) for completing the judge’s evaluation forms.

In order to facilitate a quality competitive analysis paper, specific criteria for content are critical. Examples include:

- Introduction to the event with description of the event (purpose, objectives, and procedures)
- Description of the specific event read (chapter, team, project, outcomes, etc.)
- Overview of analysis of the event read (strengths and areas for improvement)
- Explanation of how the Marketing Education Curriculum influences the competitive event
- Explanation of what an advisor needs to do to ensure success for the event (personally and student success)
- General reflections and conclusion.

**Program of Work**

Teacher candidates can be asked to develop a Program of Work (POW) for a fictitious school’s CTSO that includes the goals, calendar of activities, and chapter funding activities. The POW highlights student organization activities for the year based on the goals and objectives of the student organization (See Table 2). Ultimately, the officer team and chapter members are responsible for developing and acting on the POW. Even though an advisor is not responsible for developing the POW, teacher candidates can develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of student organization goals and activities to meet the objectives by completing this project. In addition, future advisors develop critical thinking skills by developing a budget that allows the POW to be carried out. The National DECA website provides a resource called “Creating a Program of Work” (DECA, Inc.) that is a valuable reference for teacher candidates as they develop their POW. This resource provides an overview of the purpose of a POW, developing SMART Goals, and a sample POW format.

**Application to the Curriculum and Conclusion**

Applied projects can be integrated into teacher preparation in multiple ways. Within a marketing curriculum course, it is plausible to incorporate the competitive event series and link each with the state and national discipline standards. Teacher candidates can be engaged to see the outcome of such projects and ensuing core marketing curriculum required to build student success should they elect to participate in any of the competitive venues. Ultimately, it comes down to the teacher candidate deeply understanding the role and purpose of the events and how to engage students ethically (outside of the explicit curricula) to compete based on their intrinsic motivation. Given the wide range of projects, is it even possible to design a course to meet the critical competencies required to become an effective CTSO advisor.

While marketing teacher candidates cannot possibly be prepared for all of the incidentals, teacher education programs can facilitate experiences that provide candidates with a level of confidence across the roles that they will sometimes unknowingly accept in the process of becoming a CTSO advisor. The discussed applied projects
### Table 2. Program of Work Rubric

| CRITERIA                                                                 | PROFICIENT                                                                                                                               | EMERGING                                                                                                                                   | UNSATISFACTORY                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Goals and Activities:                                                   | Detailed goals using the SMART method that are well aligned with the state DECA objectives. Weekly activities that show creativity and go beyond the activities discussed in class. Specific dates for events sponsored by State and National DECA included. | Goals developed using the SMART method that are somewhat aligned with the state DECA objectives. Many activities that show creativity and some activities that were taken from class discussion. Room for more detail in activities or goals. | Goals have little or no alignment with state DECA objectives. Goals may not be detailed enough or in SMART format. Activities lack creativity, detail, or coverage of objectives. |
| Budget: Detailed with estimated dollar amounts and the number of delegates involved. | Detailed budget includes realistic estimated income and expenses. Realistic number of delegates estimated.                                | Budget includes estimated income and expenses, but some dollar amounts or delegates are missing. Budget amounts or delegate numbers are slightly unrealistic. | Budget has no detail in estimated income and expenses. Delegates are not consistently estimated. Budget amounts are unrealistic. |
| Overall Presentation:                                                   | Well organized and follows established guidelines/format. No spelling or grammatical errors.                                              | Organization could be better, but established format used. Several spelling or grammatical errors.                                       | Unorganized. The established guidelines/format are not followed. Numerous spelling or grammatical errors. |

are only a sampling of opportunities to prepare teacher candidates for their advisor role. For example, student organizations at the collegiate level and co-advisement responsibilities during student teaching can also be critical to developing competence and confidence. By integrating multiple methods into marketing education curriculum, teacher candidates can develop the necessary knowledge and skills for their advisor roles in a deliberate manner. Teacher preparation programs must address the skills and knowledge that advisors need to be successful.

**References**


Urs Haltinner is the program director for the Marketing and Business Education Program and an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, in Menomonie, Wisconsin, and can be contacted via e-mail at haltinneru@uwstout.edu.

Debbie Stanislavski is an assistant professor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout, in Menomonie, Wisconsin. Her e-mail address is stanislavski@uwstout.edu.