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LUMINOUS INSIGHTS

Commentary

Radically Hopeful: Climate-Conscious Pedagogy for Marketing Educators

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ABSTRACT

This commentary addresses the urgent need for marketing educators to integrate climate change education (CCE) into their curricula through transformative pedagogical approaches. Marketing's traditional growth-oriented focus perpetuates overconsumption and environmental degradation, positioning the discipline as both complicit in and potentially instrumental to addressing the climate crisis. The paper introduces "climate-conscious pedagogy"—an educational framework that transcends deficit-based climate discourse through ethics of care and pedagogies of hope. The proposed three-fold framework encompasses: (1) fostering awareness by making climate connections visible in marketing contexts, (2) centering students by addressing climate-related emotions through supportive pedagogies of care, and (3) building resilience by empowering students through hope-centered action and agency development. Pedagogies of care emphasize relationality and challenge dominant capitalist logics, while pedagogies of hope focus on future visioning, solution-oriented thinking, and community building. The commentary provides practical guidance for marketing educators, including course-specific integration strategies and learning outcomes for climate-conscious pedagogy. By positioning marketing educators as systems change agents, this work offers a pathway for transforming marketing education to prepare practitioners who can address environmental externalities while fostering human and planetary flourishing.

KEYWORDS

Climate Change Education, Climate-Conscious Pedagogy, Marketing Education, Sustainable Consumer Psychology, Sustainable Marketing Strategy.

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> "I know not what the future holds, but I know who holds the future."
>
> — Anonymous

It is you, me, and all of us currently living who hold the future in our hands. If you are a marketing educator, you are more powerful than you may consider yourself. Imagine a world where businesses exist for social and economic purposes and provide a net-positive contribution to human well-being, employ-


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ing carbon-positive, restorative, and regenerative practices. How can we achieve a flourishing future if not by harnessing the power of young people, just setting out to "make a difference" or "change the world" – our students?

This idea may sound naïve, especially in a country where, currently, the top 10% of households hold 67% of total wealth, while the bottom 50% hold only 2.4% (Federal Reserve, 2025); where 50% of household spending comes from those top 10% (Ensign, 2025); and where 40% of total emissions are associated with income flows to these highest earning 10% of households (based on 2019 U.S. data; Starr et al., 2023). While each of these trends is worrisome for numerous reasons, they all result from a human-made system and, therefore, are accessible to modification. Human constructions can be changed (Tadajewski, 2023). Another critical insight, often attributed to Noam Chomsky, holds that "optimism is a strategy for making a better future. Because unless you believe that the future can be better, you are unlikely to step up and take responsibility for making it so." As marketing educators, we should be radical and hopeful; we should take the bull by its horns and confront marketing's role in exacerbating climate change and in helping humanity adapt to new environmental circumstances. Not only must we be change agents, but we must be systems change agents. We should take deliberate educational action, informed by the growing research on climate change education (CCE), "a complex endeavour that should help learners develop a mix of knowledge, skills, dispositions, and values that prepare them to take socially transformative actions" (Leite, 2024, p. 2378). Transformative CCE does not work using a bolt-on approach, where the topic is treated as supplemental to already crowded curricula; we need to make fundamental changes to content and instructional methods (Leite, 2024).

In this commentary, I introduce CCE as transdisciplinary and essential for the marketing discipline and marketing education. I then introduce climate-conscious pedagogy, specifically, ethics of care and pedagogies of hope as dimensions of practical CCE. Along the way, I offer thoughts and resources that I hope might motivate and support colleagues in incorporating CCE into their practice with urgency, competency, and confidence.

1. A Primer for Climate Change Education

A straightforward narrative about climate change can be built around the following five facts: Climate change is happening, it is we who are causing it, it is happening right here, right now, and there are ways to fix it. Data can be presented to underscore that these are, indeed, facts, not beliefs, not opinions (e.g., IPCC, 2023). There may be dissent among students (or colleagues) who think facts are negotiable, for example, because they are affected by selective exposure bias or are resistant to belief change (Hess & Maki, 2019). If instructors find themselves "preaching to different choirs" (Hine et al., 2016), depending on their personal and professional values and perspectives on the mission of universities, they may engage with opposing views in different ways; however, sticking with scientific consensus should be paramount.

Here are some facts and background information helpful in discussing climate change: the term refers to changes in the distributional properties (e.g., mean, variance) of climate characteristics like temperature and precipitation that persist across decades (Field et al., 2014). Because precipitation is related to temperature, scientists often focus on changes in global temperature as a focal indicator of climate change. Carbon dioxide (CO_2) levels have an outsized impact on global temperatures by preventing heat from escaping the Earth's atmosphere, which is called "the greenhouse effect." Because of this, atmospheric is often used as a proxy for average global temperatures. As evidenced by and other indicators, climate change has characterized all of Earth's history (Fletcher et al., 2008). It is a product of myriad processes, including features of the Earth's orbit, tectonic activity, and asteroid impacts (Cronin, 2009).

And now the spoiler alert: there is a scientific consensus for the significant role of human activity in climate change since at least 1970 (Rosenzweig et al., 2008). However, the relevance of an answer to how much humans have contributed to current climate change pales against finding an answer to what humans can do to reduce carbon emissions; we can-

not manage volcanoes and complex climate systems, but we can reduce carbon emissions. We can still fix (some of) this mess we are in. However, the fear of the solution may be greater than the fear of the problem (Campbell & Kay, 2014), especially for supporters of free markets and capitalism, as we (aka, consumers in high-income, high-consumption countries, especially the top 10%) must significantly reduce consumption-related emissions, and we (aka, voters in democracies) must use our rights as citizens to limit their (aka, the top-10 percents', industry's, and government's) production and consumption-related emissions (content warning: the last sentence includes subjectivity).

Human activities intensify climate disasters through global warming (IPCC, 2023). The Paris Agreement (United Nations, 2025) commits countries to limiting global temperature rise to well below 2°C (3.6°F) above pre-industrial levels (1850-1900), with efforts to cap it at 1.5°C (2.7°F), as impacts would be significantly lower at this threshold. However, while pointing to the need for additional research, some doubt that the 1.5°C threshold is low enough, noting that even current climate forcing (+1.2°C; +2.2°F), if sustained, is likely to generate several meters of sea-level rise over the coming centuries. Currently, around 230 million people live within one meter of sea level. Rising water level is primarily due to a combination of meltwater from ice sheets and glaciers and the thermal expansion of seawater as it warms; it poses an existential threat to low-lying countries and communities (Stokes et al., 2025). Tuvalu just became the world's first nation to prepare for the planned migration of the entire population based on the Australia-Tuvalu Falepili Union Treaty (Barnett et al., 2025). Earth has just experienced its ten warmest years on record, with no signs of reprieve, indicating escalating negative impacts on economies, ecosystems, and daily life (World Meteorological Organization, 2025).

Not all humans are equally complicit in the climate crisis (Leite, 2024), nor are all companies or governments. However, all young people living today and their offspring will experience the consequences of climate change, in the form of more frequent and more intense storms, droughts, heatwaves, fires, sea level rise and floods, likely leading to food insecurity, displacement and forced migration, among other dystopian scenarios such as mass extinctions, desertification, and loss of biodiversity (IPCC, 2023). Climate change is the dominant challenge of our time, a "super-wicked problem" (Leite, 2024), presenting an existential threat to life on Earth. As a sidenote, this is not about "saving the planet" – this is about saving us (Hayhoe, 2022). We must deal with this now. It is not five minutes, but seconds to twelve when humanity faces apocalyptic scenarios.

What does this mean for how we teach? Picture a university where climate change is discussed only in environmental and atmospheric science, or geography classes, while business students graduate without understanding their role in the climate crisis. That disconnect is precisely what we can no longer afford. Every discipline must now weave climate education into its curriculum. The race to Net Zero demands this comprehensive approach (Fankhauser et al., 2022). We need a "mainstreaming" of climate and sustainability education across all fields (Molthan-Hill et al., 2019). Business schools and marketing programs are no exception to this urgent transformation; in fact, they could drive it.

2. What Marketing Has to Do with Climate Change

Marketing's role has a dark and a bright side. Let's start with the dark side: a recent World Scientists' Warning to Humanity identifies marketing, next to (fossil-fueled) economic growth and pronatalism, as driving existential threats for humanity (Merz et al., 2023). Current planetary warming is caused by excessive greenhouse gases (GHGs), emitted primarily through human activities (IPCC, 2023); human production and consumption activities are carried out in service of consumer demand for increasing levels of comfort, cleanliness, and convenience (Shove, 2003).

As Brown (2006, p. 220) points out, "marketing boils down to 'selling stuff'". The demand created to sell more stuff for increasing profits (often achieved through planned obsolescence; Guiltinan, 2009) results in environmental overshoot, that is "the human consumption of natural resources at rates faster than they

can be replenished, and entropic waste production in excess of the Earth's assimilative and processing capacity" (Merz et al., 2023, p. 3). Marketing is implicated because growth is its core disciplinary value, as regularly reflected in the Marketing Science Institute's research priorities (e.g., Marketing Science Institute, 2022). As the equitable degrowth movement points out, with current technologies[1], growth cannot be resourced in a way that ensures ongoing human or planetary flourishing (Kallis et al., 2018). To remain within ecological boundaries, fossil fuel and material consumption need to be reduced between 40% and 90% (Merz et al., 2023).

While our planet slowly comes to a boil, marketing's "uncomfortable truth" has been recognized by colleagues. Sheth and Parvatiyar (2021), for example, point out that

> "Marketing, through its market-driven consumption-oriented practices, may have knowingly or unknowingly promoted these unsustainable production-consumption practices. Therefore, it needs to change its orientation from merely being responsive to consumer and market needs into a more responsible approach that drives markets for sustainable products and services and builds sustainable societies" (p. 150).

That brings us to the bright side. Marketing's creative and problem-solving strengths make it uniquely suited to tackle complex societal and environmental challenges (Martin & Burpee, 2022). The central challenge of our time is balancing social progress and equity with corporate owners' profits while natural resources dwindle and carbon emissions rise. How do we solve this trillion-dollar puzzle? Knowles (2023) outlines three key roles for marketing in increasing sustainability: First, demand activation (authentically engaging consumers, employees, and society to drive responsible behavior); second, policy advocacy (pushing for stronger regulations that ensure both corporate success and societal progress); third, innovation support (identifying and promoting solutions with high social value, regardless of their profitability). The American Marketing Association (American Marketing Association, n.d.) defines "green marketing" as the promotion of "environmentally safe" products and marketing activities that are "sensitive or responsive to ecological concerns". Both Knowles (2023) and the American Marketing Association (n.d.) represent the growing "green" or "sustainable" marketing movement, spearheaded by initiatives such as Better Marketing for a Better World (Better Marketing for a Better World, n.d.; Chandy et al., 2021).

Exploring these avenues for "greening" the marketing toolbox can show students how to create meaningful change through marketing careers; however, these approaches do not address the inherent need for systemic transformation of consumer culture and its dominant drivers. And they rarely address how the consumer responsibilization inherent in statements about how consumer demand drives production ("customers pay companies to produce the things they want to buy"; Knowles, 2023, p. 291 neglects the issue of how demand has been stimulated and to what ultimate purpose (see above: corporate owner's profits), and how this relates to social inequity and negative externalities. The sobering reality is that achieving net-zero emissions requires fundamental shifts in economic, political, and societal systems—changes that go far beyond marketing alone and touch on the ultimate purpose of companies and the economy as a whole. That means that, if we want to use the powerful persuasive tools marketing has successfully employed for commercial and social purposes for averting the climate catastrophe, some fundamental logics and priorities need to be reconsidered.

In the past four decades, the understanding of marketing has transitioned from a relatively limited focus on exchange in buyer-seller dyads to explicit recognition of marketing's responsibility towards wider social stakeholders. According to Dangelico and Vocalelli's (2017) three-stage model, marketing has moved on from the end-of-pipe stage; however, it remains stuck at the "environmental" stage, i.e., improving technologies without challenging the overall system of consumption and

[1] A note on the role of technology in saving the planet: Global energy consumption must be rapidly reduced to avoid catastrophic climate change, requiring strong policy support; technology alone cannot "save us" (Moriarty & Honnery, 2023).

wealth distribution. Producing less harmful artefacts more efficiently does not address the wicked, systemic problems of growth, overconsumption, and ecological overshoot (Wright & Nyberg, 2017; York et al., 2003). In short, green marketing perpetuates unsustainable practices and is, hence, part of the problem (Peattie, 2010) as it still prioritizes selling stuff (Brown, 2006). Overproduction and overconsumption of more stuff, "green" or otherwise, exacerbate the climate crisis (Millward-Hopkins & Fisch-Romito, 2025).

It has been said that ignoring the climate crisis and continuing business-as-usual is like accelerating a car about to drop off a cliff. Can we use marketing as a means to prevent the impending downfall? Merz et al. (2023) affirm this: marketing, while "complicit in the creation and exacerbation of the behavioural crisis, may just be our best chance at avoiding ecological catastrophe" (p. 12). As marketers, we can either perpetuate behavioral manipulation and deepen our crisis, abandon responsibility to chance, or embrace humanity's rare gift for conscious evolution—steering our behaviors toward harmony with nature's fundamental laws (Merz et al., 2023). It is the destination that matters. Knowles (2023) suggests that social progress and material prosperity are different, but possibly overlapping, destinations. If that were the case, we urgently need to reorient marketing toward social progress and a better future for us all. These suggestions align with the broader role of academics as critic and conscience of society (Virgo, 2017) and with our moral responsibility as educators to provide young people with the critical capacities necessary to deal with a warming world (Heath et al., 2023).

3. Climate-conscious Marketing Education

Education is a social tipping point for addressing climate change (Otto et al., 2020). Education can be instrumental in reinforcing thought patterns that perpetuate our unsustainable trajectory or in redirecting thinking and action towards more sustainable systems and lifestyles (Leite, 2024). CCE is a key mechanism for raising awareness and inspiring action, and, if implemented appropriately and at scale, could reduce carbon emissions as effectively as technical solutions like electric transportation or rooftop solar (for details, see Leite, 2024). The value of educating people about climate change lies not only in preparing them to act individually but also in addressing climate change collectively (Gunckel, 2023). Thus, education is the most expedient tool available to effect cultural adaptation to climate change. Universities hold the key to climate preparedness—training future leaders to navigate complex environmental challenges while empowering citizens to integrate climate solutions into their daily lives, careers, and civic engagement (Molthan-Hill et al., 2019). Marketing educators, specifically, have a significant impact on the marketing worldviews and actions of future business leaders.

However, secondary and higher education are associated with higher resource use, as those enjoying the benefits of higher education typically have a larger carbon impact (O'Neill et al., 2018). Moreover, education is generally, and paradoxically, "situated within and contributes to the capitalist forces that are responsible for ecological destruction, climate change, poverty, and social injustices" (Gunckel, In Press). Transformative climate change education "must engage with the past and present repercussions of colonialism and capitalism, in order to disrupt unsustainable mindsets and transform the underlying logics that exploit humans and the Earth" (Leite, 2024, p. 2376).

As previously pointed out, traditional marketing curriculum helps propagate a growth logic that supports overconsumption and, in turn, environmental degradation, climate change, and resource depletion (Helm et al., 2023; Peterson, 2022; Soule & Sekhon, 2022). However, bringing the highly complex and interdisciplinary topic of climate change into the marketing classroom is daunting; it means engaging with a challenging and potentially traumatizing subject, without the benefit of established best practices, at least within our field, on how to address polarizing, controversial, and provocative issues, or for appropriately teaching about climate change. Understandably, there is some reluctance among marketing educators to engage in CCE (Helm et al., 2023). This reluctance is also due to concerns about rising eco- and climate anxiety among students (and educators), serious considerations when promoting the integration of climate change-related content in marketing curricula (Leite, 2024).

These concerns are not merely academic. Human well-being is deeply entwined with that of the planet. Climate change can give rise to psychoterratic conditions; mental health and well-being impacts arising from a degrading biophysical environment, or disconnection from nature (Albrecht, 2011). Psychoterratic conditions include climate change-anxiety (debilitating worry about climate change), solastalgia (the lived experience of negative environmental change), and ecological grief (mourning the experienced or anticipated loss of natural environments or species) (Albrecht, 2020).

While the effect of these conditions on student well-being is causing growing concern (Albrecht, 2011; Clayton, 2020), such emotional responses are not necessarily negative. They can also motivate adaptation and community resilience (Gunckel, In Press; Hayes & Poland, 2018; Venugopal & Chakrabarti, 2022). However, care is required as we need to recognize and validate students' climate-related emotions. Students who become overwhelmed with messages of doom and gloom may respond with disaster fatigue; pessimism can result in despair, disengagement, and loss of agency, while naïve optimism may undermine credibility (Edwards et al., 2023). Marketing educators need to support students in coping with climate-related emotions and channeling anxieties in positive ways; they need to engage in informed, hopeful practice, building the social capital necessary for effective adaptation, and preparing students to drive societal changes necessary for a sustainable future (de Brito et al., 2024). While emerging work addresses marketing faculty responses to climate change (e.g., Helm et al., 2023; Kemper et al., 2022), these often adopt a transmission-focused perspective of education (what content is imparted to students) instead of a focus on transformation, encompassing concern for the whole person (how are students engaged to increase climate change resilience). Or, as Molthan-Hill et al. (2019) note, learning to know and learning to do both are essential for transformative learning. If successful, not only does our students' knowledge repository change; instead, their action repertoire increases, and they reflect on their values and identity (Biesta & Miedema, 2002).

4. Climate-conscious Pedagogy

With the term climate-conscious pedagogy, I describe teaching that transcends negative discourses, building on ethics of care and pedagogies of hope, and offering transformative and actionable approaches to engagement with climate change. Numerous authors provide actionable guidance on how to communicate or teach about climate change (see e.g., Armstrong et al., 2018; Beach et al., 2017; Burandt and Barth, 2010; Climate Psychology Alliance of North America, 2025; Siperstein et al., 2017). While these texts are not authored by or directed at marketing educators, transfer to our context is manageable and inspiring. Leite (2024) provides excellent guidance for getting started with CCE, and Helm et al. (2023) present teaching tools for marketing educators interested in integrating climate change, similar to the extensive online Supplement to this commentary. Indeed, content integration is not the main challenge for most marketing educators; integrating psychologically sustaining pedagogies may be more unaccustomed to many, as is overcoming one's own and others' preconceptions of what teaching marketing in higher ed entails, and what it does not. Personal and professional identity crises or denial can result from recognition that the solution to climate change implies a fundamental rethinking of what marketing is and does (see the "solution aversion model" proposed by Campbell & Kay, 2014). However, especially the younger generations of students, expect that our teaching recognizes humanity's grand challenges and prepares students for future changes. Delivering anything less would be a violation of trust.

Thus, the goals of climate-conscious teaching are three-fold: First, foster awareness by making visible the connections between course content and climate change. Second, center students by showing sensitivity to students' emotions, concerns, and questions about climate change. This refers back to climate change anxiety and how it can either motivate or paralyze individuals. Third, build resilience by empowering students to respond to climate change in ways that increase their sense of agency toward sustainable action and change. Pedagogies of care and hope can further support this

Table 1: Three-Fold Pedagogical Framework

Framework Component	Description	Key Activities
Foster Awareness	Make climate connections visible in marketing contexts	• Analyze the carbon footprints of favorite brands • Examine marketing's role in overconsumption • Study climate marketing case studies
Center Students	Address climate emotions through pedagogies of care	• Anonymous climate emotion surveys • Safe space creation with ground rules • Climate buddy partnerships • Emotional processing activities
Build Resilience	Empower through hope-centered action	• Individual agency projects (manifestos) • Collective agency projects (campus campaigns) • Proxy agency exploration (industry letters) • Future visioning exercises

three-part framework (see Table 1). Detailed application examples are available in the supplement to this commentary, which includes three modular examples for integrating climate consciousness into marketing pedagogy, along with additional information.

Pedagogies of care. "Radical care" is a concept discussed in engineering and science education literature to overcome educational limitations in increasing public climate literacy and action. A central problem with the predominant technocratic framing and discourse of science and engineering education is that it lacks a moral or ethical basis for responding to climate change (Gunckel, 2023; Sanchez, 2023). It conceals the complex nature of environmental and sustainability issues by disguising the fact that these issues have political, psychological, and sociological dimensions that are not solvable through technological approaches (Gunckel, 2023). As an educational approach, pedagogies of care focus on nurturing students' sense of care for others, including other species and the land, air, and water, inspiring more ethical, more just, and more culturally responsive approaches to education (Sanchez, 2023). If, as Sharma (2020) points out, the predominant technocratic focus of science and engineering education makes it complicit in fueling the economic forces that drive climate change, it stands to reason that marketing (and business) education is similarly, if not more, complicit. Marketing instructional literature typically does not explicitly promote a worldview where the well-being of humans, ecosystems, and the planet is a primary goal.

Pedagogies of care prioritize relationality by emphasizing empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness in decision-making. This approach recognizes our obligations not only to other humans but also to more-than-human entities—plants, animals, water, air, and land. Care-centered pedagogy focuses on rebuilding relationships, restoring communities, and cultivating environmental stewardship. It promotes acting in others' interests while interrupting violence and oppression, including environmental harm. By repairing damage and advancing justice, this approach directly challenges patriarchal rationality, colonialist attitudes, and capitalist logics (Leite, 2024). This perspective stands in stark contrast to marketing's role in fueling climate change; starting points for its consideration in marketing education are summarized in Table 2.

Pedagogies of hope. "Hope is what enables us to keep going in the face of adversity. It is what we desire to happen, but we must be prepared to work hard to make it so" (Jane Goodall, quoted in Goodall & Abrams, 2021). As outlined in the theory of imagined futures

Table 2: Pedagogies of Care Integration in Marketing Education

Focus	Educational Application
Relationality	Community partnerships, more-than-human perspectives
Challenge Dominant Logics	Question growth metrics, explore alternative success measures, discuss the meaning and drivers of overconsumption
Stewardship	Reframe marketers as culture stewards, integrate UN SDGs

(Beckert, 2013), our imaginations of the future matter; fictional expectations have the potential to drive modern economies and societies. Imaginative narratives are fundamental in grounding our values and institutions, impacting decisions and actions, and slowing down or accelerating cultural change (van der Leeuw, 2020). Educators can serve as facilitators in this process of constructing speculative futures, which disrupt the dominant doomsday narratives of climate change by unlocking the potential of creativity and imagination (Gunckel, In Press). We can foster agency instead of leaving our students to deal with lingering despair, often resulting in denial and disengagement (Edwards et al., 2023). Here, a special challenge for marketing educators is replacing the gratifications of capitalism and consumerism with an alternative vision to motivate people to make change. Change "requires a vision of hope for a different future. Hope is not just wishful thinking that the world will change; instead, hope is a praxis…, an action orientation toward social change and structural transformation" (Gunckel, In Press).

Similarly, the concept of active hope as described by Macy and Johnstone (2012) is a practice, "something we do rather than have" (p. 3), involving three main steps: First, taking a clear view of reality; second, identifying what we hope for in terms of the directions in which we would like things to move or the values we would like to see expressed; and third, taking action to move ourselves or our situation in that direction (Macy & Johnstone, 2012). Connecting deeply with our difficult emotions, with one another, and with our planet, is integral to this journey. It prepares us for taking necessary actions to address the climate crisis while maintaining our wellness in a way that averts burnout and apathy (Hayes, 2020). A related concept is "constructive hope", which is "based in an acknowledgement of the negative, a positive view of preferable futures, the possibility of societal change, and […] concrete pathways toward this preferable future" (Ojala, 2016, pp. 42-43). A common interpretation of hope in these pedagogical approaches is that hope follows, not precedes, action. Or, in the words of Greta Thunberg, "the one thing we need more than hope is action. Once we start to act, hope is everywhere" (Thunberg, 2019).

Applying pedagogies of hope in the classroom requires 1. imagining a different and desired future; 2. focusing on problem-solving (rather than despair); 3. stressing embeddedness in community (it is not just individuals fighting for change); 4. building trust that others are working towards the same goals as we; and 5. moving towards actions (actions that raise awareness and actions that express dissent or disruption of the status quo). Trust plays a crucial role in constructive hope by fostering confidence in both personal agency and collective action toward shared futures. Rather than blind faith, this trust acknowledges the complexity of social change while believing others share similar goals. Teachers can help students develop this trust by showcasing individuals and organizations creating a meaningful impact (Ojala, 2012). Building agency is foundational in climate-conscious pedagogies, and we can identify and discuss different agency framings as presented by Bandura (2006) to inform our teaching approaches. We can focus on the agency of the individual (ourselves; e.g., avoiding travel, increasing the share of plant-based foods in our diet), the collective (groups; e.g., participating in a climate change march, a tree planting event, or a consumer buycott), and/or

Table 3: Pedagogies of Hope Applications in Marketing Education

Steps	Application Examples
Future Visioning	"Marketing in 2040" scenarios
Solution Focus	Map solutions for every problem discussed
Community Building	Guest speakers, peer networks, alumni connections
Action Planning	Immediate, medium-term, long-term commitments

Table 4: Key Learning Outcomes for Climate-conscious Pedagogy in Marketing

Learning Outcome	Description
Climate Literacy	Understand marketing's environmental and social impact mechanisms
Emotional Resilience	Process climate anxiety while maintaining agency
Action Orientation	Create concrete plans for sustainable marketing practice
Community Building	Establish peer and professional networks for ongoing support
Professional Integration	Develop climate-conscious career frameworks

proxies (someone else acts on our behalf; e.g., students call or write to legislators). Some ideas for starting points are summarized in Table 3.

Additional Implications for Marketing Educators. Tried and tested CCE approaches can inform marketing educators who need content knowledge to incorporate climate change into their curricula, as well as content-specific instructional strategies to build confidence in teaching about climate change (Gunckel, 2023; Helm et al., 2023). Educators could structure their engagement along specific learning outcomes; examples are summarized in Table 4.

CCE is inherently transdisciplinary. We can incorporate climate-conscious teaching in any academic discipline and within different areas addressed by a discipline. We can include CCE in any and all of the courses we teach. Some ideas for topics to address in marketing courses are listed in Table 5.

Table 6 presents an overview of essential resources and support to consider for effectively teaching and learning about climate change. While numerous resources for climate change-relevant information can be accessed, their quality needs careful assessment. Some emotional support infrastructure may already exist at instructors' organizations, or educators could initiate its development.

5. Conclusion

Once we step beyond traditional marketing education, new and sometimes uncomfortable questions emerge: How did I get here? How do I view my past teaching approaches? Who am I as an educator, citizen, and moral being? What will be my legacy? Such reflection can spark research and experimentation with innovative pedagogy—approaches that prepare future marketers to address environmental externalities while still generating positive returns according to the organization's mission. However, seeing students not only as future professionals but as complex individuals with a whole life still ahead of them and countless opportunities for impact, may also encourage us to expand our measures of success for climate-conscious pedagogy, such as:

- Increased climate awareness paired with decreased anxiety

Table 5: Course Type and CCE Integration Focus

Marketing Course	Examples for Topics
Intro to Marketing	Marketing's societal role and purpose, sustainable value creation, ethical foundations and paradoxes
Consumer Behavior	Climate emotions, sustainable consumption patterns, consumer responsibilization
Brand Management	Purpose-driven positioning, authenticity vs. greenwashing/purpose washing/SDG washing
Digital Marketing	Carbon footprint of online advertising, ecommerce, etc.; sustainable practices
Market Research	Consumer climate attitudes, behavior change measurement
International Marketing	Cultural climate differences, global supply chain impacts
Innovation Marketing	Clean technology adoption, circular business models, sustainable innovation diffusion
Marketing Communications	Crisis communication strategies, nonprofit climate messaging, ethical persuasion

Table 6: Essential Resources for Student Support and Instructor Preparation

Student Support	
Emotional	Campus counseling for climate anxiety, mindfulness techniques
Professional	Climate marketing organizations, mentorship programs, sustainability conferences
Learning	Climate podcasts, newsletter subscriptions
Instructor Preparation	
Self-Care	Manage personal climate emotions, build support networks
Stay Current	Follow climate marketing leaders, attend sustainability education conferences (remotely...)
Collaborate	Partner with campus sustainability offices, collaborate with climate scientists on campus, connect with community organizations

- Values-driven career planning and decision-making
- Active engagement in campus or community sustainability initiatives
- Continued climate action beyond course completion

Universities play a vital role in providing the human and social capital required to avoid the more dramatic consequences of climate change, such as widespread starvation, disease, and social unrest, and to facilitate climate change adaptation, resilience, and wellbeing. In support of this societal role, marketing educators can teach "better marketing for a better world" (Chandy et al., 2021), preferably, a Net Zero world.

Moreover, we can go beyond that and use marketing education to tackle the behavioral drivers of overshoot. Ecological overshoot is a symptom of a more profound, more subversive modern crisis of human behavior; marketing is an effective mechanism to shift social norms relating to consumption and waste, focusing on transforming socially constructed attitudes, values and behaviors that encourage unnecessary personal consumption, which have led the world into a state

of overshoot (Merz et al., 2023; Millward-Hopkins & Fisch-Romito, 2025). We can emphasize and practice agency to prevent moral distress that students (and ourselves) may experience due to a sense of powerlessness in the face of social, political, and economic structures that perpetuate environmental and societal harm and destruction (Gunckel, In Press).

As previously noted, knowing what to teach is essential, but knowing how to teach is equally important. Here, learning opportunities with knowledgeable facilitators, participation in discussions with instructional peers, and gaining experience in using best practices for teaching about climate change (Monroe et al., 2019) are pivotal. Transdisciplinary approaches such as active hope and radical care should be further explored for their potential to increase the effectiveness of climate-conscious teaching in marketing and for coping with climate anxiety.

In the face of the climate crisis, it is tempting to remain within the safe confines of familiar teaching methods, or to focus on accustomed approaches such as "selling (more) green stuff". However, doing so risks perpetuating harm to companies, investors, societies, and to our students and ourselves. Environmental change is accelerating; addressing it requires us and our students to be systems change agents. For marketing educators, the mission is clear: to guide marketing education and, ultimately, marketing practice, toward climate responsibility rather than climate harm. We have agency. We know the steps needed. We can act with both urgency and hope, helping shape a future in which marketing educators are not bystanders to the climate crisis, but catalysts for a flourishing, sustainable world.

Supplementary Materials

Supplementary Materials

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