

TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Xi Zhang

Final-year PhD Candidate in Marketing

Birmingham Business School

University of Birmingham

Associate Fellow of Advance HE (AFHEA)

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Introduction

This teaching portfolio provides an overview of my teaching philosophy, teaching experience, and ongoing development as an educator in higher education. It brings together evidence from my work as a Postgraduate Teaching Assistant, seminar teacher, guest lecturer, and tutor at the University of Birmingham, and reflects my broader commitment to inclusive, research-informed, and student-centred teaching.

The portfolio begins by outlining my approach to teaching and learning, which is grounded in constructivist pedagogy, and explains how this perspective has shaped my classroom practice. It then discusses the four core principles that guide my teaching: inclusive teaching, real-world learning, critical thinking, and innovative teaching. The following sections provide an overview of my teaching experience across undergraduate and postgraduate modules, my approach to student support and supervision, and my contribution to curriculum enhancement and teaching innovation.

The portfolio also reflects on my development as a teacher through formal training, professional recognition, peer observation, and pedagogic workshops, and concludes with examples of how feedback has informed my reflective practice and continuous improvement. Overall, this portfolio aims to show not only what I have taught, but how I have developed my teaching practice and contributed to meaningful student learning in contemporary higher education contexts.

1. Approach to Teaching and Learning

My approach to teaching and learning is grounded in constructivist pedagogy. My understanding of this perspective has developed through a combination of professional training, reflective practice, and direct classroom experience, particularly during my work towards Associate Fellowship of Advance HE (AFHEA). Through this process, I have come to see teaching not simply as the delivery of content, but as the creation of learning environments in which students actively construct knowledge through discussion, reflection, collaboration, and application. This understanding has shaped the way I think about effective teaching and continues to guide my own practice. Four principles are central to my teaching: inclusive teaching, innovative teaching, real-world learning, and critical thinking. In what

follows, I draw on examples from my own teaching to show how I put these principles into practice.

1.1 Constructivist pedagogy and my teaching practice

I design my teaching around the idea that students learn most effectively when they actively engage with knowledge, rather than passively receive it. This is closely aligned with constructivist pedagogy, which views learning as a process of meaning-making shaped by learners' prior knowledge and experience (Caffarella and Merriam, 1999). In my own teaching, this means that seminars are not simply spaces where concepts are explained, but spaces where students are encouraged to discuss, apply, question, and reflect on ideas. For example, I regularly use applied discussion questions, case-based tasks, and follow-up prompts to help students move from recognising a concept to using it to interpret a marketing problem. This will be discussed more in Section 1.2.

I also adapt my teaching to different learner groups, which is supported by constructivist perspectives on individual difference and development. Cognitive constructivism highlights that students construct understanding at different paces and through different forms of engagement, so teachers need to recognise learners' existing knowledge and tailor support accordingly (Piaget, 1973, Kalina and Powell, 2009). This became particularly clear when I taught *Marketing Communication* module to both postgraduate and second-year undergraduate students. Although the two cohorts were working within a similar knowledge base and learning framework, they responded very differently in the classroom. Master's students were generally more confident in discussing ideas and drawing on prior knowledge, whereas undergraduate students were often less certain about how to begin analysing a question. This experience showed me that student-centred teaching requires more than active learning activities alone; it requires carefully adapting teaching to students' different levels of confidence, prior knowledge, and academic development.

I use questioning not only to check understanding, but also to stimulate deeper thinking, and this too is grounded in constructivist teaching. Constructivist approaches emphasise inquiry-based learning, in which students develop understanding by engaging with questions, evidence, and interpretation, rather than simply reproducing information (Kalina and Powell, 2009, Woolfolk and Shaughnessy, 2004). In practice, I found this especially effective with

master's students. In *Marketing Communication* seminars, for instance, students could usually generate an initial answer quickly, but they often stopped once they felt they had completed the task. To move them beyond this 'task completion' mindset, I began using more probing questions, such as 'why a campaign might be effective', 'whether there were alternative interpretations', or 'what assumptions sat behind their answer'. This helped extend discussion, encouraged deeper analysis, and supported more critical engagement with the topic.

At the same time, my teaching experience showed me that questioning alone is not always enough to generate meaningful participation. I place strong emphasis on discussion, collaboration, and guided interaction, which reflects social constructivist understandings of learning (See more in Section 1.2). Social constructivism stresses that knowledge develops through interaction with others, and Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development highlights the importance of support from teachers and peers in helping learners progress beyond what they could achieve independently (Vygotsky, 1978, Amineh and Asl, 2015). This was particularly important in my undergraduate teaching. When I initially used the same open questioning style that had worked well with postgraduates, undergraduate students often responded with silence or uncertainty. In response, I adapted my teaching by clarifying the purpose of the task before discussion, explicitly linking the discussion question to models they had already learned, and taking a more active role during group work. Rather than remaining at the front of the room, I moved between groups, checked understanding, and guided students back to relevant concepts when they felt stuck. This made discussion more focused and helped students participate with greater confidence.

My teaching and training experience also reinforced the importance of reflection in practice. Rather than treating teaching techniques as fixed, I have learned to evaluate them in relation to how students actually respond in the classroom. Across different seminars, I have regularly reflected on which activities encouraged participation, where students became uncertain, and what kinds of support helped them engage more confidently. This ongoing reflection has encouraged me to refine my teaching in a more deliberate way, adjusting the level of challenge, guidance, and structure according to students' needs. In this sense, constructivist pedagogy has not only shaped how I teach, but also how I review and improve my teaching over time.

My teaching experience has also encouraged me to reflect on how students use AI tools in the class. In my seminars, I observed that when students encountered difficulties, some would turn directly to GenAI rather than revisit the slides and connect the question to knowledge they had already learned. Reflecting on this through a constructivist lens led me to interpret it not simply as over-reliance on technology, but as a sign that some students lacked confidence in analysing problems independently and critically. In response, I placed greater emphasis on guiding students in the critical use of AI. For instance, I designed activities that required them to engage critically with generative AI as part of the task and facilitated discussion on the strengths and limitations of AI-generated responses in relation to the module learning objectives. In this way, constructivist thinking helped me address an emerging classroom challenge by turning it into a structured learning opportunity. More discussion about my approach to critical thinking will be shown more in Section 1.2.

Overall, constructivist pedagogy has provided me with a clear framework for thinking about participation, challenge, guidance, and learner differences. More importantly, it has helped me refine my teaching in response to real teaching experience. In this sense, constructivism has not simply shaped how I understand learning in theory; it has directly informed how I question, guide, scaffold, and respond in practice. Building on this, the following sections discuss the four teaching principles that underpin my approach: inclusive teaching, innovative teaching, real-world learning, and critical thinking, and explain how they support student engagement, confidence, and independent learning.

1.2 Four principles shape my teaching practice

Building on my constructivist approach to teaching and learning, four principles consistently shape my practice: inclusive teaching, real-world learning, critical thinking, and innovative teaching. In the following sections, I use examples from my previous teaching to show how I have interpreted, applied, and developed these principles in practice.

Inclusive teaching

Inclusive teaching is a core part of my practice. I aim to create a learning environment in which students feel welcomed, respected, and able to contribute with confidence. In diverse higher education settings, meaningful learning depends not only on the quality of the

material, but also on whether students feel that their backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives are recognised as relevant to the classroom. For this reason, I try to design teaching that is accessible, culturally responsive, and supportive of different ways of participating.

In practice, this means paying close attention to the composition of the classroom when selecting examples and framing discussion. For example, in one of my seminar groups, a large proportion of students were international students from China and India. To make theoretical concepts more accessible and relatable, I incorporated comparative examples from the UK, Chinese, and Indian markets. When discussing segmentation, targeting, positioning, and adaptation in marketing communication, I used examples such as how brands like KFC adapt their products, messaging, and promotional strategies across different economic and cultural contexts. This helped students connect abstract frameworks with familiar consumer environments and encouraged more active participation in discussion, as students felt able to contribute knowledge from their own contexts. I found that students often engaged more confidently when they could see a clear connection between the material and their own lived experience.

My approach to inclusion also involves making expectations explicit and structuring participation carefully. In seminars, I often break down discussion tasks into smaller steps, clarify the purpose of the activity, and provide prompts to support students who may be less confident speaking immediately in front of the whole class. In tutorials and office hours, I have also provided one-to-one academic and pastoral support to students from diverse educational backgrounds, helping them navigate assessment expectations, academic writing conventions, and study strategies in the UK higher education context. Taken together, these practices reflect my belief that inclusive teaching is not only about representation, but about creating the conditions in which all students can engage meaningfully and develop confidence as learners.

Real-world learning

I place strong emphasis on real-world learning because I believe marketing education should help students connect theory to practical and contemporary challenges. Students engage more deeply when they can see how marketing concepts operate in dynamic commercial settings,

and when they are given opportunities to apply knowledge in ways that mirror professional practice. Real-world learning is therefore central to how I help students move from conceptual understanding to applied judgement.

One of the most valuable examples of this was my contribution to a live-client, project-based MSc assessment in the *Marketing Communication* module, delivered in partnership with University of Birmingham alumni start-ups. While the assessment was led at module level, I played an active role in supporting its delivery through seminars, workshops, and feedback processes. In particular, I facilitated scaffolded workshop activities that helped students translate theoretical frameworks into client-focused analysis, supported staged feedback cycles as their ideas developed, and guided preparation for industry-facing presentations. Through this process, I helped students strengthen their analysis, communication, teamwork and visualisation presentation ability.

This experience reinforced for me the importance of integrating theory and practice in marketing education. Students develop a deeper understanding of marketing concepts when they are able to apply them to real business situations, rather than engaging with them only at an abstract level. Real-world case-based learning is particularly valuable because it allows students to connect academic frameworks with practical challenges, organisational needs, and contemporary market contexts. It also helps cultivate transferable skills that are essential beyond the classroom, including teamwork, communication, problem solving, adaptability, and critical judgment. However, I also found that this kind of learning is most effective when it is underpinned by a clear and carefully staged structure. Students benefit most when tasks are scaffolded progressively, expectations are explicit, and activities are sequenced in a way that supports them in moving step by step from theoretical understanding to applied analysis and professional presentation.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking always goes throughout my teaching. My aim is not only to help students understand concepts, but also to question assumptions, compare perspectives, evaluate evidence, and develop reasoned arguments of their own. In marketing education, this is particularly important because students are often exposed to persuasive claims, fast-moving technologies, and complex business environments that require judgment rather than simple

recall. For this reason, I deliberately use teaching strategies that prompt students to interrogate ideas, reflect on the quality of evidence, and become more aware of their own analytical processes.

In my teaching, this often involves structured tasks that guide students from initial understanding towards more evaluative forms of thinking. For example, in the *Introduction to Marketing and Communication* module, I designed a template-based activity to help students critically assess GenAI outputs. Rather than treating AI-generated content as automatically useful, students were asked to evaluate its relevance, strengths, weaknesses, and the extent to which it aligned with the requirements of the task. This activity helped students recognise that some aspects of analysis, interpretation, and contextual judgement still depended on their own thinking in ways that AI could not easily replicate. In this sense, the exercise was not only about digital literacy, but also about helping students recognise the value of their own reasoning.

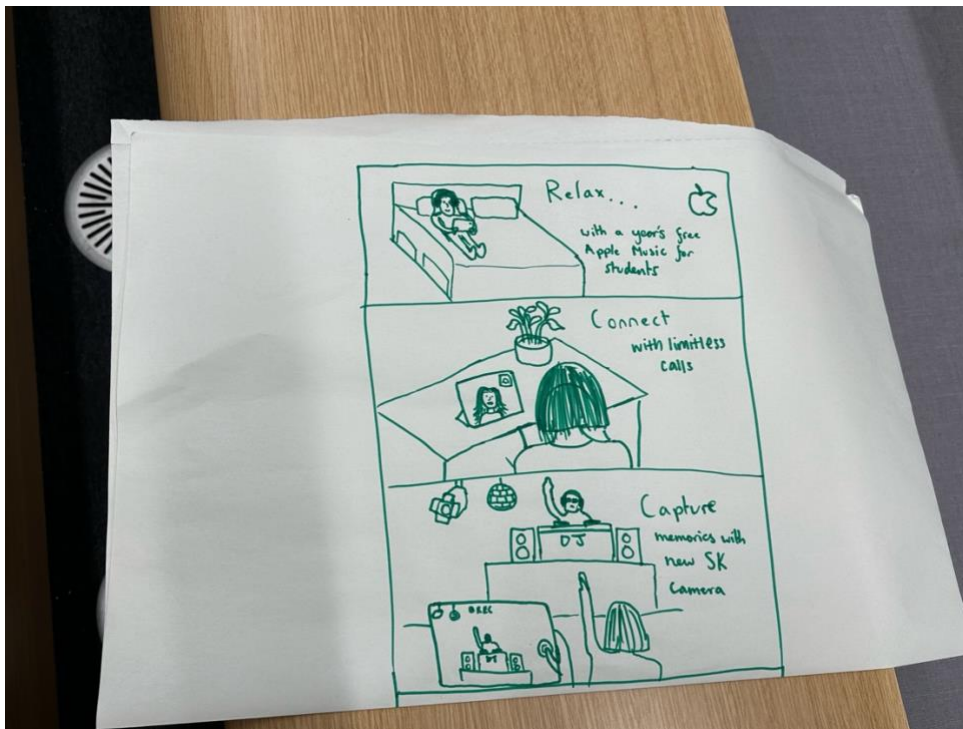
I also use peer discussion and peer review to stimulate critical engagement. When students compare different responses, evaluate the work of others, and justify their own feedback, they often become more aware of assumptions they might otherwise overlook. In my experience, these activities are particularly useful in helping students move from simply ‘finding an answer’ to understanding why one response may be stronger, more nuanced, or better evidenced than another. By structuring critical thinking in this way, I seek to help students develop confidence not only in what they know, but in how they evaluate and use knowledge. This is particularly important in marketing education, where students are preparing to work in environments shaped by constant change in technology, consumer behaviour, and market practice. Developing critical judgement helps students engage more thoughtfully with this complexity, enhances their employability, and supports their longer-term development as reflective and adaptable professionals.

Innovative teaching

Innovation is another important principle in my teaching practice. I value teaching approaches that encourage creativity, participation, and experimentation, particularly when they help students engage with complex ideas in more active and memorable ways. For me, innovative teaching does not mean novelty for its own sake; rather, it means selecting

methods that open up different ways of thinking, expressing, and applying knowledge.

One example of this is my use of arts-based teaching methods, which I encountered through a workshop during my professional development. The workshop prompted me to think about how creative and visual approaches could be used to support student engagement and make learning more participatory. I then applied this technique in my own practice. In *Marketing Strategy* seminars, I guided students to use drawing and a visual group presentation to represent their understanding of strategic concepts. Rather than relying solely on verbal explanation, students were asked to visualise a strategic issue, present their interpretation as a group, and then engage in peer evaluation of each other's work. This approach encouraged students to think more creatively about how strategic ideas could be organised and communicated, while also making their reasoning more visible for discussion and critique. In my experience, it was particularly effective in increasing participation among students who were less confident speaking in more conventional discussion formats, while also supporting peer learning and critical reflection.



Picture 1. Example of Arts-Based Learning Activity in a Marketing Communication Seminar

Another example comes from the *Marketing and New Technology* module, where I supported the development of an assessment approach that differed substantially from previous teaching

materials and formats. In this task, students used AI prompting and vibe coding to develop their own business idea, app, or product, and then considered how to build an accompanying marketing plan. My role involved contributing to the design and classroom implementation of this more practice-based and technology-enabled assessment approach, as well as supporting students in navigating the task requirements. What made this especially valuable was that students were not simply discussing innovation at a theoretical level, they were experiencing a simulated contemporary business environment in which they had to make decisions, test ideas, and think strategically about market positioning, value creation, and communication. This kind of innovation in teaching reflects my broader interest in ensuring that marketing education remains responsive to current technologies and evolving professional contexts.

Concluding reflection

Taken together, these four principles reflect my broader approach to teaching as grounded, research-informed, and responsive to contemporary practice. Whether I am designing inclusive examples, supporting students through live-client learning, fostering critical engagement with AI, or using creative teaching methods to deepen understanding, I aim to create learning experiences that are both intellectually rigorous and practically meaningful. Across my teaching, I have consistently sought to connect theory with real-world contexts, research-informed insight, and emerging developments in business and digital marketing. Just as importantly, I continue to reflect on and refine my teaching in response to student needs, classroom experience, and changes in the wider educational and professional environment.

2. Teaching experience and supervision

Teaching experience

My teaching experience is in undergraduate and postgraduate marketing education across a range of modules at the University of Birmingham. As shown in Table 1, I have contributed to teaching on **seven** modules, including *Marketing Communication*, *Marketing Strategy*, *Marketing and New Technology*, *Services and Retail Strategy*, and *Introduction to Marketing and Communication*. Across these modules, I have worked with cohorts ranging from small seminar groups of 25 students to large classes of over 200, which has enabled me to develop

confidence in teaching across different levels, formats, and student needs.

A significant strength of my teaching experience is its breadth across both BSc and MSc contexts. Teaching across these levels has shown me that effective teaching requires more than subject expertise, it also requires sensitivity to students' differing levels of prior knowledge, confidence, and analytical development. In undergraduate settings, I have often used more structured and scaffolded teaching approaches to help students apply academic models to concrete business contexts. In postgraduate teaching, I have placed greater emphasis on extending critical discussion, encouraging students to question assumptions, compare interpretations, and engage more deeply with contemporary marketing issues. Working across both levels has strengthened my ability to adapt teaching strategies in ways that are responsive to learner needs while still encouraging deeper engagement and independent thinking.

My teaching has also varied in the level of responsibility involved. In some modules, I worked as a PGTA supporting large-cohort seminar delivery and guiding students through discussion, applied analysis, and assessment-related tasks. In others, I took on more independent teaching responsibility as the sole seminar teacher. For example, in BSc *Marketing Communication* and MSc *Marketing Strategy*, I independently designed and led seminar sessions for groups of 25 students across the semester. These experiences developed my confidence not only in classroom delivery, but also in structuring seminar activities, facilitating collaborative learning, and creating opportunities for peer evaluation and active participation.

I have also contributed to teaching innovation and assessment design in ways that support students' engagement with contemporary marketing practice. In BSc *Marketing and New Technology*, I contributed to the implementation of a newly redesigned assessment that required student groups to develop a product or application, conduct market analysis, and build a marketing plan. As part of this process, I guided students in using GenAI for vibe coding to visualise product concepts and support deeper analysis of their marketing plans. Similarly, in BSc *Marketing Communication*, I independently developed and delivered a seminar component on the critical use of AI, guiding students to evaluate AI-generated content and reflect on its appropriate use in academic and marketing contexts. These experiences reflect my interest in ensuring that teaching remains responsive to changing

technologies and contemporary business practice.

Another important aspect of my teaching experience has been research-informed teaching. In both undergraduate and postgraduate *Marketing Communication* modules, I delivered guest lectures drawing on my doctoral research. These lectures explored the role of AI and virtual influencers in contemporary consumer communication and invited students to think critically about how marketing communication is evolving in current business environments. Bringing my research into the classroom has helped strengthen students' critical thinking and engagement by connecting teaching to current debates. It has also reinforced for me the importance of the relationship between research and teaching, highlighting the value of using current academic research to keep classroom learning relevant, forward-looking, and intellectually stimulating.

Overall, my teaching experience has allowed me to develop as a flexible, research-informed, and reflective educator. Across diverse cohorts and teaching contexts, I have supported students not only in understanding marketing concepts, but also in applying them critically, collaboratively, and creatively. This experience has provided a strong foundation for further development in higher education teaching and curriculum contribution.

Year(s)	Course Level	Course Name	Number of Students	My Roles
2026	BSc	<i>Marketing and New Technology</i>	285	Supported seminar delivery for a large-cohort BSc module (285 students) and contributed to a newly redesigned assessment format. Guided student groups through end-to-end project development, including concept creation, market and competitor analysis, and marketing planning. Guided students in using generative AI for vibe coding to visualise product concepts and support

				deeper analysis of their marketing plans.
2026	BSc	<i>Services and Retail Strategy</i>	260	Supported seminar delivery for a large-cohort (260 students) by using structured and scaffolded teaching approaches to guide students through both group and individual assessments. I helped students analyse customer journey in their chosen organisations by breaking down the analytical process step by step, supporting them in applying module frameworks to real business cases, and encouraging visual presentation of ideas to strengthen understanding and communication.
2025	BSc	<i>Introduction to Marketing and Communication</i>	672	Marked assessments for a large-cohort, ensuring fair and consistent marking in line with UK higher education standards and module criteria. Provided constructive, criteria-based feedback that helped students understand their performance, reflect on their strengths and areas for development, and apply this learning to future assessments.
2025	BSc	<i>Marketing Communication</i>	117 (25/seminar)	Served as guest lecture drawing on my doctoral research to explore how AI is used in contemporary consumer communication, encouraging students to think critically about the effectiveness and implications of new digital

				<p>marketing communication practices.</p> <p>Served as the sole seminar teacher, independently designing and leading two-hour seminars for groups of 25 students across the semester. Used case discussion, collaborative tasks, and peer evaluation to guide students in applying marketing communication concepts, developing analytical confidence, and critical thinking. In addition, I independently developed and delivered a seminar component on the critical use of AI, helping students evaluate AI-generated content and reflect on its value and limitations in academic and marketing contexts.</p>
2025	BSc	<i>Marketing Strategy</i>	107	Delivered seminar support for a BSc Marketing Strategy module (107 students), facilitating group discussion, case analysis, and students' application of core marketing strategy frameworks to practical business scenarios.
2024	MSc	<i>Marketing Strategy</i>	100+ (25/seminar)	Served as the sole seminar teacher for an MSc Marketing Strategy module, independently leading 2 hours seminars of 25 students. While the module leader provided the case study materials, I designed and delivered the seminar structure and activities, including arts-based tasks that asked students to

				visualise strategic ideas and engage in peer review. This supported active participation, critical reflection, and deeper engagement with marketing strategy frameworks.
2024	MSc	<i>Marketing Communication</i>	179	<p>Delivered a guest lecture drawing on my doctoral research to explore new developments in marketing communication and how communication practices are evolving in the contemporary business environment, using this to stimulate student engagement and critical thinking with emerging industry change.</p> <p>Supported seminar delivery for a large-cohort (179 students), facilitating group discussion and case-based analysis with a strong emphasis on critical thinking and deeper engagement with contemporary communication issues.</p>

Table 1. Summary of Teaching Experience and Contribution

Supervision and Student Support

Alongside classroom teaching, student support has been an important part of my academic practice. Through tutorials, office hours, and follow-up conversations, I have provided one-to-one academic and pastoral support to students across different modules and levels of study. These interactions have given me a broader understanding of student learning beyond the seminar room and have reinforced my view that effective teaching also involves creating conditions in which students feel supported, capable, and able to progress with confidence.

A central part of this support has involved helping students navigate assessment expectations and develop academic skills. In practice, this has included guiding students on assignment structure, presentation development, the application of academic models, and strategies for approaching case analysis and written work. Rather than simply answering immediate questions, I aim to support students in understanding how to approach tasks more independently, so that they can transfer this learning to future assessments. This developmental approach is particularly important in marketing education, where students are often required to move between theory, application, and critical evaluation.

My experience has also shown me that students often need different kinds of support depending on their background, confidence, and stage of study. This has been especially relevant when working with diverse and international cohorts. In one-to-one settings, I have often supported students in adjusting to UK higher education expectations, including understanding marking criteria, developing academic writing, and building confidence in contributing their own ideas. These conversations have reminded me that student support is not separate from teaching, but an extension of it: students are often better able to engage in the classroom when they feel clearer about expectations and more confident in their own academic ability.

While I have not yet held a formal dissertation supervision role, I have offered informal dissertation-related guidance through tutorials and one-to-one student support. This has included helping students think through potential dissertation topics, refine research questions, approach the literature, structure a literature review, and consider aspects of research design such as data collection and the overall research framework. In these discussions, I have aimed to support students in moving from initial ideas to a clearer and more feasible research direction. This experience has given me useful insight into the kinds of academic guidance students need in independent research and has strengthened my interest in contributing to dissertation supervision more formally in future.

Pastoral awareness has also been an important part of my student support. While maintaining appropriate academic boundaries, I have tried to create an approachable and supportive environment in which students feel comfortable raising concerns about workload, confidence, or adjustment to university study. In these situations, I see my role as listening carefully, offering practical guidance where appropriate, and signposting students to relevant university

support services when needed. This has been particularly important in supporting students who may be facing uncertainty, low confidence, or challenges adapting to new academic expectations.

Overall, supervision and student support form an integral part of my teaching practice. These experiences have strengthened my commitment to student-centred teaching and have deepened my understanding of how academic guidance, pastoral awareness, and learning development work together in higher education.

3. Curriculum Enhancement and Educational Leadership

My contribution to teaching extends beyond classroom delivery to the enhancement of learning design, assessment practice, and teaching innovation. While I am still at an early stage of my academic career, I have actively contributed to making marketing education more current, applied, and engaging for students. One important area of contribution has been the development of more practice-oriented and contemporary learning experiences. In particular, I have supported teaching and assessment activities that move beyond conventional formats and require students to apply marketing knowledge to realistic business problems. This includes guiding students through structured tasks related to market analysis, competitor analysis, product development, and marketing planning, as well as helping them engage with new digital tools such as GenAI in ways that are both practical and critical. Through this work, I have contributed to forms of learning that are more closely aligned with current professional practice while still grounded in clear academic structure.

A second area of contribution has been teaching innovation. Across my teaching, I have experimented with approaches that broaden participation and create alternative ways for students to express and develop their understanding. This has included the use of arts-based and visual teaching methods, scaffolded tasks, peer evaluation, and structured activities for the critical use of GenAI. What connects these approaches is a shared aim: to make learning more active, inclusive, and intellectually engaging. Rather than treating innovation as novelty for its own sake, I see it as a way of improving how students encounter knowledge, develop confidence, and engage with increasingly complex marketing environments.

I have also contributed to curriculum quality through research-informed teaching. By

bringing current research and emerging developments in AI, virtual influencers, and contemporary consumer communication into the classroom, I have sought to ensure that teaching remains relevant to changes in both scholarship and business practice. This has reinforced my belief that strong teaching should be informed by current research, not only to keep content up to date, but also to strengthen students' critical thinking and engagement with the subject.

Additionally, I have also contributed to assessment design, marking, and moderation processes within UK higher education quality frameworks. This has strengthened my understanding of fair and transparent assessment practice, while also reinforcing the importance of student engagement and module feedback in the ongoing enhancement of teaching and learning.

Although I have not yet held a formal curriculum leadership role, these experiences have shaped my understanding of educational contribution as something enacted through initiative, collaboration, and continuous improvement. They have shown me the value of contributing ideas, supporting innovation in teaching and assessment, and helping create learning experiences that are academically rigorous, professionally relevant, and responsive to change. As I develop further in higher education, I would like to continue building on this foundation through deeper involvement in curriculum development, assessment design, and pedagogic innovation.

4. Development as a Teacher

My development as a teacher has been shaped by a combination of formal training, reflective practice, peer feedback, and a continuing interest in pedagogic innovation. As an early-career educator, I have taken professional development seriously, not only to strengthen my classroom confidence, but also to develop a more thoughtful and evidence-informed approach to teaching in higher education.

A key part of this development has been my participation in the *Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* programme at the University of Birmingham. See more details in Table 2. These sessions helped me build a stronger foundation in higher education

pedagogy and encouraged me to think more systematically about how teaching strategies, assessment design, inclusion, and student participation are connected in practice. In particular, the training helped me move beyond seeing teaching as content delivery and towards understanding it as the design of learning experiences that are structured, inclusive, and responsive to student needs.

My professional development was further consolidated through the **Associate Fellowship of Advance HE (AFHEA)**, which I was awarded in June 2025. Working towards AFHEA gave me an important opportunity to reflect critically on my teaching practice in relation to the UK Professional Standards Framework and to articulate more clearly my approach to teaching and learning in higher education. This process helped me identify the pedagogic principles that now underpin my practice, particularly constructivist teaching, inclusion, and the importance of supporting students' critical engagement. It also strengthened my understanding of teaching as an evolving practice that benefits from reflection, dialogue, and continual development.

Alongside formal training, peer observation has played an important role in my growth as a teacher. I have engaged in peer observation as part of my teaching development each semester. These observations have been valuable not only because they provided feedback on my teaching, but also because they encouraged me to reflect more carefully on how students were responding to my teaching choices in practice. As shown in Appendix 2, an example of feedback from a module leader, together with my own reflective commentary, helped me think more deliberately about seminar structure, questioning techniques, student participation, and the balance between guidance and challenge in the classroom. I have found peer observation especially useful in turning everyday teaching experience into more conscious and purposeful professional learning.

I have also sought out opportunities to engage with new teaching ideas and approaches beyond core training requirements. For example, I participated in the *Visual Storytelling for Responsible Business Education workshop*, which introduced creative and visual approaches to teaching and prompted me to think about how alternative methods can support participation, engagement, and deeper understanding. This interest in pedagogic development has informed my willingness to experiment with approaches such as arts-based teaching, visual group tasks, peer review, and critical engagement with generative AI in the classroom.

For me, continuing development as a teacher means not only improving existing practice, but also remaining open to new methods that can enrich student learning.

Overall, my development as a teacher has been characterised by a strong commitment to reflection, professional learning, and continuous improvement. Formal training has provided me with an essential pedagogic foundation, while peer observation and workshop participation have helped me refine and extend my practice in more context-specific ways. Together, these experiences have strengthened my confidence as an educator and reinforced my commitment to creating learning environments that are inclusive, intellectually engaging, and responsive to contemporary higher education contexts. Details of my continuing professional development are provided in Appendix 1.

Year	Programme / Activity	Provider	Focus / Content
2026	Visual Storytelling for Responsible Business Education workshop	Birmingham Business School	Creative and visual approaches to teaching and learning in business education
Each semester	Peer Observation of Teaching	Birmingham Business School	Observation and reflection on teaching practice, including feedback from mentor and my own reflective commentary
2025	Associate Fellowship of Advance HE (AFHEA) training	Advance HE / University of Birmingham	Reflective engagement with teaching practice in relation to the UK Professional Standards Framework
2025-2026	HEFi MicroCPD activities	HEFi	Ongoing short professional development sessions on higher education teaching and learning
2024	Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education	University of Birmingham	Core areas of HE teaching, including: ILT001 Introduction to Learning and Teaching in Higher Education; ILT002 Small Group Teaching (Labs); ILT003 Small Group Teaching (Seminars); ILT004 Principles of Assessment and

			Feedback; ILT005 Teaching with Digital Tools; ILT006 Inclusive Teaching; ILT007 Large Group Teaching (Lectures); ILT008 Teaching Academic Writing; ILT009 Teaching International Students
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Table 2. Teaching-Related Professional Development

5. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Feedback plays an important role in how I continue to develop my teaching. I value both formal and informal feedback from module leaders and students (see more in Table 3), and I use it to reflect on the effectiveness of my teaching, refine seminar design, and improve the way I support student learning. Across modules, feedback has helped me strengthen classroom structure, student engagement, and the balance between guidance and independent thinking.

Source of feedback	Feedback received	My reflection / response	Change or development in practice
Module leader (peer observation)	Positive feedback highlighted my ability to integrate research into teaching in ways that supported student understanding, stimulated engagement, and encouraged critical thinking.	This prompted me to reflect more carefully on how student engagement can be supported not only through content, but also through the way I position myself in the classroom and structure interaction from the start of the session.	I became more intentional in how I introduced seminar sessions and how I framed questions. In particular, I began to break down larger questions into smaller stages, think more carefully about how students might respond, and clarify the purpose of each question so that discussion could develop more gradually and confidently.
Student feedback /	Students responded positively to the use of	Reflected on how to support students more	I introduced more explicit knowledge review at the

classroom response	examples that connected theory to familiar contexts and found this helpful for engagement and understanding. At the same time, some students needed more guidance on how to connect previously learned knowledge to case discussion.	effectively in making the transition from understanding concepts to applying them in analysis. I became more aware that some students needed stronger structure before they could participate confidently in discussion.	beginning of seminars, revisiting key concepts and frameworks before moving into case-based discussion. This helped students connect prior learning to the analytical task more clearly and engage more confidently in classroom discussion.
Students in AI-related seminar activities	Students engaged well when asked to evaluate AI-generated content rather than use it passively	Reflected on the value of turning an emerging classroom challenge into a structured learning opportunity	Developed seminar activities that encouraged critical use of generative AI and discussion of its strengths and limitations
Tutorials / one-to-one support	Students often needed reassurance around assessment expectations, structure, and academic writing	Recognised that confidence-building and clarity are central to effective student support	Became more explicit in explaining task expectations and more developmental in the feedback I provided

Table 3. Examples of Feedback, Reflection, and Development in Practice

6. Conclusion

My teaching is shaped by a commitment to creating learning environments that are inclusive, intellectually challenging, and closely connected to contemporary marketing practice. Grounded in constructivist pedagogy, my approach emphasises active learning, critical engagement, structured support, and the meaningful application of theory to real-world problems.

Across my teaching experience, I have worked with diverse undergraduate and postgraduate cohorts in a range of seminar, tutoring, and guest lecturing roles. These experiences have helped me develop as a flexible and reflective educator, able to adapt teaching to different

learner needs while maintaining a clear focus on student engagement, critical thinking, and applied understanding. They have also strengthened my commitment to research-informed teaching and to the thoughtful integration of new pedagogic and digital approaches into the classroom.

In the future, I aim to continue developing as an educator who contributes not only through effective teaching delivery, but also through curriculum development, assessment innovation, and student-centred academic support. Ultimately, my goal is to help students become confident, critical, and adaptable learners who are well prepared to navigate a rapidly changing academic and professional environment.

Appendix 1. Log of continuing professional development activities

Activity planned for future development	Timescale	Rationale / need addressed	UKPSF
Continue teaching practice	Sep 2025	I want to continue teaching as a PGTA. Through the past year, I learnt that teaching is the best way to verify theoretical learning and improve. Besides, student reaction during teaching can provide the most direct feedback on my teaching skills, promoting introspection and progress.	V4, K2, K3, A2
Observe experienced teachers teaching	On going	I realized that observing other teachers' teaching broadened and stimulated my reflection and development. I can learn excellent teaching methods from them. This process also helps to shape my teaching style.	K3, V5
Learn about other HEFi MicroCPD courses	On going	This semester, the GAI theme course of HEFi MicroCPD helped me understand the learners' views and inspired me to create courses related to this theme. I found that course study and practice work better together than separately. I will regard the course as an effective tool to guide my further improvement.	A5, K1, V3
Use of digital teaching tools	On going	In the future, I want to try more digital teaching tools. For example, Mentimeter, which can support students to express their opinions anonymously. These tools are expected to improve classroom participation.	K2, K4, V2

Appendix 2. Teaching Observation Report Form (To be completed by the Observer)

Lecturer / Tutor Name: Xi Zhang	Session Title: LI Marketing Communications
School / Department: Marketing	Module / Course: LI Marketing Communications
Observer Name: Julie Whiteman	Level / Year: 2
Date: 27.03.25	Session length: 30min in a 2 hours lecture

The Teaching Observation process seeks to align to the [Professional Standards Framework \(PSF\)](#) as a means of evidencing the professional development of the observee (as well as, where appropriate, the observer). Completion of the Teaching Observation serves to provide evidence towards demonstrating that the observee is working within the PSF and meets the requirements of Descriptor 1 for Associate Fellowship of the HEA. In the sections that follow reference is made to specific aspects of the **PSF** that the observer may wish to use when providing feedback.

Brief description of the session
<p><i>Briefly set out the aims of the session and how these fit within the rest of the module / course.</i></p> <p>The aims of the session: Identify distinguishing characteristics of different marketing methods; Demonstrate a critical understanding of diverse communication channels; Critically appraise marketing communication tools.</p> <p>I intended to introduce the latest concept of virtual influencer in this session. In terms of structure design, before introducing this knowledge, I explained the reason for introducing this concept, which will help students understand the importance of this content in the overall structure. After talking about the knowledge, I will guide students to think about the characteristics of virtual influencers, how they communicate with followers, and the advantages and disadvantages of virtual marketing. Doing so will help students critically understand how to use different marketing communication channels and techniques from the perspective of virtual influencers, which is highly relevant to the module's objectives and the rest content.</p>
Learning objectives and rationale
<p><i>What do you want to achieve with your students and why? Set out why you have chosen the teaching methods that you will employ – this might include reference to the student group (linked to PSF values V1-5), learning theory (linked to A5, V3, K1, K2, K3), feedback from and evaluation of any previous teaching experiences, including prior observations (linked to K5).</i></p>

The learning objective of this session is guiding students to critically look at influencer marketing and social media marketing.

I designed the latest trend in social media influencer marketing - virtual influencers (A1). This content helps students understand the latest business practices. I will use a lot of cases and conduct comparative analysis of the cases (A2), which makes the content attractive and easy to understand for undergraduates (K2). In addition, after conveying the new content, I will lead students to review and analyze the marketing models they have learned. This helps students understand the design of the course and build new knowledge based on prior knowledge, which is in line with the constructivist teaching concept (K1). In addition, I will stimulate students' thinking and class participation by asking questions in teaching, which will promote students' active learning (V2).

At the end of the course, students should have understood what virtual influencer marketing is, what are the features of this marketing tool, how virtual influencer marketing have been applied in past business cases; and what should be paid attention to when considering using virtual influencers for social media marketing.

Any particular aspects of the session on which you would like feedback?

The observation process is intended to be developmental. If there are any particular areas of practice on which you would like feedback please outline them here.

My teaching techniques for increasing class participation.

Anything else that you would like the Observer to be aware of?

No

Pre-Observation Statement (To be completed by the Participant before the Teaching Observation and submitted to the Observer)

Teaching Session Outline

Part 3: Report Form (To be completed by the Observer, and submitted as authentication of practice)

Observer comments

Planning and Organisation of the Session (PSF A1, A4, K1, K2, K5, V3)

Slides and content appropriate and spoke without notes demonstrating knowledge and comfort with topic.

Presentation (PSF A2, A4, K1, K2)

Xi led part of a bigger session on virtual influencers. Good intro. Could have taken a moment to introduce yourself.

Learning and Teaching Methods, including (where appropriate) use of technology (PSF A2, K1 V1, V2)

Very knowledgeable and confident in subject. Made it relevant and engaging.

You have a nice manner that engages students and participation.

Good to ask questions – and encouraging responses. This encourages students to talk more. I think perhaps some of your questions could have been more clearly phrased. It can help to write them out in advance to help you think about this.

Student participation and interaction (PSF A4, A3, A4, K1, K2, V1, V2)

Some good attention and responses to questions.

Post-session review and self-evaluation (PSF A5, K3, K5, V3, V4)

After teaching, Xi realized the shortcomings of using questions in teaching. She showed great self-evaluation.

General concluding comments

Xi gave an interesting and knowledgeable talk on virtual influencers, linking to the topic for the week and reflecting the LOs for the week. Content was a good fit and well delivered.

Xi has a natural ease that works well in teaching and makes her appear approachable. In discussion afterwards Xi expressed some concern that student's hadn't engaged as much as she would have liked. I replied that this is not unusual and that I could see they were listening and that most student won't ask questions or answer questions for fear of looking foolish in front of peers. We talked about question development and suggested Xi work on structuring questions in advance of the session in future, allowing her time to think about what words/phrases will encourage feedback.

Signed (Observer): Julie Whiteman

Signed (Observee): Xi Zhang

Date: 27.03.25

Part 4: Post-Observation Evaluation (To be completed by the Participant after the Teaching Observation)

What went well?
<p><i>What do you feel went well? Why did it go well? How could you extend this element of your teaching to other sessions / courses/ interactions with students?</i></p> <p>First, I was very familiar with the topic and knowledge because it came from my doctoral research. This was a necessary factor for the course to go well. Apart from that, I prepared well before the class and made the knowledge easier to accept by using examples that were close to the audience. In addition, I clearly explained the connection between this knowledge module and the overall course, which helped students understand and accept it.</p> <p>The above three points are also necessary for preparation for other conferences and courses. In addition to fully understanding the knowledge content, considering the characteristics of the audience and paying attention to the clarity of the course structure are very important to improve student participation and acceptance.</p>
What could have gone better?
<p><i>What do you think could have gone better? Why do you think it did not go as well as hoped / expected? Are there any professional development needs that you have identified that you need to engage with in order to improve next time around? What will you do differently next time?</i></p>

In order to improve student participation, I asked a lot of questions during the presentation. However, I realized that some questions were difficult to answer quickly in a short period of time. The main reason is that these questions require a certain amount of time to think about and students are timid about answering questions.

For that, I will consider the wording of questions in advance during future lectures. I will use more brief and clear expressions. If faced with questions that students need to think about and give answers, I will leave more time for students to think independently or discuss with each other before they provide their opinions.

What did you feel were the most important points in the post-observation discussion with the C

What action points are you going to take away? How will you ensure that you can meet these? If there are any elements that are apparently outside your control who might be able to influence these and how?

The most important point in the discussion with the Observer was the emphasis on self-evaluation. This reflective practice allows me to assess whether my previous teaching improvement goals have been met. It also provides a foundation for the Observer to offer targeted and constructive feedback, which supports more meaningful and continuous improvement in my teaching practice.

Moving forward, I plan to set clear teaching goals before each session. During the teaching process, I will consciously monitor my own performance and seek feedback from others. By reflecting on this feedback and adjusting my approach accordingly, I aim to foster ongoing improvement in my teaching effectiveness.

The enthusiasm and initiative of students are not something that lecturers can fully predict. However, I realize that communicating with students before class, using examples that are closer to students' lives, and providing one's own answers to complex questions to guide students' thinking, using more encouraging words are all good techniques.

Any other comments?

No

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