

HOW TO REACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE MARKETING STUDENTS...A COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY FORUM

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Abstract

The Marketing Educators Association's focus is delivering a better marketing education to students across the globe. Often, our focus is the university student who has generally met certain levels of preparation in order to participate in marketing classes. For example, universities have entrance requirements and business programs have prerequisite classes by which students earn their admittance. In most two-year college settings, entrance requirements and course prerequisites are much more open allowing for increased student participation. At a community college, students, generally, can enroll in marketing classes without having met any sort of prerequisite. This phenomenon can certainly present a host of challenges to the instructor who is now attempting to teach an academic course to a wide range of academically different students. The purpose of this workshop is to bring together the faculty from the two-year colleges to discuss how to better meet the needs of this special population of marketing students. This workshop will allow the presenters to share some "best practices" for reaching and teaching community college marketing students as well as lead a discussion of workshop participants.

Supporting Statistics

Consider the challenge at Rio Hondo College in Whittier, CA. Assessment testing performed during the three academic years spanning from 2008 to 2011 yielded very interesting results. Assessment testing subjects included English, math, reading, and English as a Second Language. During this period, 42.75% of incoming students tested into basic skills English while 57.25% of students tested into Transfer level English. Incoming math skills were comparatively very low with 94.27% testing into basic skills courses while only 5.73% qualified to take transfer level courses. Reading assessments were also very low with 62.86% of students testing into basic skills reading courses while only 37.14% of students tested into transfer level courses (Sass, 2013).

Both reading and quantitative analysis skills provide the cornerstone of marketing study. Having a significant portion of any class lacking in reading abilities makes a deep study of the material

difficult. Having written assignments completed to an acceptable level also is an issue with skill-challenged students. The diversity of math abilities also creates challenges with respect to such concepts as elasticity, break-even point analysis, or contribution pricing methods.

Red River College in Winnipeg, MB, Canada offers Marketing mainly through the Business Administration (two-year) and Business Administration – Integrated (three-year) programs. Regular admission to the two-year program requires graduating from a Grade 12 high school; the three-year program requires a Grade 10. Both programs also offer an entrance for “mature” students, those who are 19 years or older and have been out of high school for more than one year. The Business Administration program offers an option for direct entrance into the University of Manitoba’s School of Management; the entrance requirements from the U of M are often challenging and, as a result, many students enter Red River College after having spent one or more years at a 4-year institution. This can create a very wide range of student capabilities and experiences.

Discussion Topics

There are several tools that have proven successful in reaching community college students and assisting their level of engagement and comprehension in marketing classes. Experiential exercises, case studies, social media projects, and simulations have proven to help under-prepared students comprehend the real-world application of elementary and intermediate marketing theory. Additionally, Rio Hondo College has had great success with employing a part-time business counselor with grant funding. This counselor has been able to assist students in making smart educational and career choices as well as find the necessary paths to complete the business programs that students start. The real question is “where do we go from here”? What tools are being used at other community colleges to increase student success? Which text book is most appropriate for under-prepared learners? How is technology leveraged to increase student comprehension?

References Available Upon Request