

MARKETING CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT

As marketing educators, an attempt is made to provide our students with the appropriate knowledge of their chosen discipline based major and the development of the related supporting skills. While much of the focus of our grading and measurement is concerned with a student's use of marketing knowledge and its processes, theories, and practices, we often incorporate the measurement of relevant supporting skills such as communication (both written and oral), teamwork, and technology/research. Inherent within these expectations is that a student should be innovative in their thinking and solutions. Yet, from the authors' classroom experiences and observations, and the popular business press, our marketing and business students may be severely lacking in this important skill area.

The purpose of this paper is to: (1) address the importance of developing creative thinking skills, and (2) suggest future research that will help us to assess whether we do enough to encourage, recognize, develop, and reward creative thinking skills in our marketing students.

Common support skills addressed in the marketing literature include: communication (oral and written), interpersonal/teamwork, problem-solving, leadership, multicultural, creative, and job-search (Green and

Seymour 1991; Porter and McKibbin 1988; Floyd and Gordon 1998; Pica and Detrick 1997). A preliminary review of the marketing pedagogical literature indicates that the development of creative thinking skills has received less attention and research than many of the other support skills.

This paper addresses two important issues concerning the development of creative thinking skills. One, what is creativity or creative thinking? And two, can creativity be taught or nurtured? This paper was written to help identify the above important issues and propose research to address these issues. Important questions from a student's perspective include: How do they define creativity? How important is creative thinking to their future career? Do they realize the important role of research in providing focus or support for a creative solution? Do they consider themselves more creative than other business majors or less creative than students in the more creative disciplines such as art, music, theatre, etc.? Are creative thinking and innovative ideas encouraged, recognized, and rewarded in their course work by their fellow team members or by their professors?

The authors conclude that research that attempts to find answers to the above questions concerning creativity and creative thinking will lead to improved skill development in this important area.