

TEACHING LARGE LECTURE CLASSES: AN EXPLORATION INTO A HYBRID ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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On-Line Friday Assignments: Objective and Goals

This study is focused on exploring the effectiveness and success of utilizing on-line content within a large introductory marketing class for non-business majors at Cornell University. During the 13 week semester, 7 lectures will be replaced with an on-line exercise. Instead of attending class a quiz is administered through blackboard covering 1 to 2 chapters. The purpose is to offer students 1) an alternative to attending class (on 7 Fridays during the semester), 2) “forced” incremental studying in preparation for their midterm and final exam and 3) the opportunity for another grade in the class (this counts for 15% of their course grade).

Description of On-Line Assignments

Each on-line assignment consists of 16-20 varied types of questions including true/false, multiple choice, fill in the blank and matching. Quizzes may cover 1 – 2 chapters in the textbook as well as material covered in lecture. Quiz questions were derived from either the test bank from the class textbook (MKTG8, Cengage Learning, 4LTR Press) or were original questions developed from class lectures and readings. Quizzes are available for students to complete for 7-8 days. The quizzes are launched on a Monday and for the first two quizzes were due on the next Sunday by the end of the day. This was problematic because often students took the quiz late on Sunday evening and if they had problems I was not available to assist them (I was sleeping!). To remedy this for the remainder of the quizzes the due day/time was extended to the next day (Monday) at 6:00 pm. There have been no problems since that adjustment was made.

For all quizzes the questions appear in random order. Furthermore, for the last two quizzes questions appear “all at once”. Initially they were set to appear “one-at-a-time” however this created problems for the students who wanted to go back and check a question or who wanted to try to take all “like” questions at the same time. Further, it appeared to cause blackboard to freeze when students tried to “go back” in search of previous questions.

The quizzes are set up for “forced completion.” A specific amount of time is assigned for each quiz. Once that time is used up the quiz is automatically submitted. Initially the first quiz was set for 30 minutes however students felt that was not enough time. Following the first quiz the time was increased to 40 minutes.

For the first two quizzes students were allowed to take the quiz once. An option exists to allow for multiple attempts. For each of the first two quizzes there were about 10-12 students who encountered “technical” problems and their quiz was submitted before they were done. This may have been student and/or technical error. During the second quiz there was a blackboard malfunction and many students had their work submitted before they completed the quiz. As a result of these problems for the third and subsequent quizzes students were allowed to have 2 attempts to take the quiz with the highest grade earned becoming their grade for that quiz. After this adjustment there were no “problems” with premature submissions for the third and fourth quiz. It is accepted that students will corroborate with each other while taking the quiz.

Preliminary Survey Results

Two surveys will be administered during the semester. The first was administered after they completed three on-line assignments and their midterm and the second will be administered at the conclusion of the semester. Of the 398 students in the course, 376 completed the October

Table 1: Specifics and Results of Each Quiz

Quiz Dates	Amount of time allocated	Avg. time taken/student	Type of questions	# of attempts/Quiz	Questions appear all at once	Average grade	Median grade
9/6/14	30	27	Multiple choice	1	No	72	75
9/19/14	40	27	Case study with multiple choice and T/F questions	1	No	78	80
9/26/14	40	13	T/F	2	Yes	96	100
10/24/14	40	NA	T/F, Matching, Fill in the blank	2	Yes	99	100

survey which was administered through blackboard and contained 12 questions. The profile of students as reported in the survey is as follows:

Year of Students	Self-Reported Grade-to-date	Reason For Taking The Class	Location Where the Quiz Was Taken
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 48% sophomore 30% junior 21% senior 1% other <p>(freshman are not permitted in the course)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 31% 90-100% 49% 80-90% 16% 70-80% 4% below 70% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 68% required for the University-Wide Business Minor 4% for their major 24% interested in marketing Other 4% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 83% using Wi-Fi in their dorm/apartment/on campus 3% plugged directly into the internet at dorm/apartment 112% on a library computer 2% other

Summary of Survey Results

- 77% of students “strongly agreed or agreed” that the information on the quiz related to the information in the reading and lectures
- 49% “strongly agreed or agreed” that the wording of the quizzes was sufficient to properly answer the questions, 24% either “disagreed or strongly disagreed”

- 62% “strongly agreed or agreed” that the on-line quizzes helped them prepare for the midterm, 26% were “neutral” while 11% either “disagreed or strongly disagreed”
- 60% either “strongly agreed or agreed” that the quizzes tested and expanded their understanding of marketing while 27% were neutral
- 78% either “strongly agreed or agreed” that Blackboard was easy to use then accessing the quiz
- 69% either “strongly agreed or agreed” that they preferred the on-line Fridays in lieu of class, 14% were neutral and 15% either “strongly disagreed or disagreed”

Thoughts to Date

Initially students were not adequately prepared for the quizzes. Many students took the quizzes with “unreliable” internet connections which caused premature submission. Blackboard had a malfunction during one of the test times which caused prematurely submitted quizzes. When setting up the quiz on blackboard the rules which govern when the student can see the finished quiz and correct answers are not clear to the user and caused minor hiccups.

Preliminary results are positive but do point to some potential modifications such as 1) improving wording on the quizzes, 2) aligning the quizzes closer with the types of questions on the exams, and 3) focusing the questions on the “biggest” marketing concepts so that students feel their mastery of marketing content is further strengthened by participating in the quizzes.