

## THE SILENT AUCTION AS AN IN-CLASS MARKETING APPLICATION

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The five characteristics that influence new product rate of adoption are routinely covered in the Principles of Marketing course. More specifically the characteristics associated with relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, divisibility, and communicability may not capture interest or engagement among students, particularly those who take the course as a graduation requirement. Thus a silent auction adaptation was developed to address the lack of participation and understanding. Assessment ( $n = 279$ ) of the activity demonstrated that the silent auction activity (*Bidding for Buyers*) increased class participation, concept understanding, and motivation to learn compared to a tradition lecture covering the same material.

Students made clear connections between new product characteristics and consumer rate of adoption. The in-class experience provided a non-threatening environment where everyone could benefit from the explanations students made with each other in teams and then in the debriefing session with the class as a whole. Having seven teams competing provided an incentive for students to try their best and to really understand the concepts such that they could make ready application. Social loafing, which is a common challenge in group work was also minimized in that the group exercise only lasted for one class period and prizes were provided as an incentive.

Reflecting in the debriefing session how the game could be modified to make the setting more realistic for other adopter categories such as innovators or laggards also solidified how new or modified product characteristics vary depending on the target segment. Overall the relaxed, yet competitive atmosphere provided a fun classroom environment to enthuse and engage students in the learning process.