

What Works in Marketing Education

In all the many years that scholars have written about marketing education, we have accumulated a substantial literature on the topic. In the *Journal of Marketing Education (JME)* alone, approximately 900 articles have been published since the journal's first edition in 1979. JME articles have explored a wide variety of topics including research on job market issues (e.g., the match between student preparation and market needs), faculty issues (e.g., performance evaluation including student evaluations of teaching, evaluation of research, and journal rankings), student satisfaction issues (e.g., student preferences for various teacher characteristics or pedagogical methods), issues related to various theories of student learning, and creative ideas for new ways to teach topics, courses, and programs. However, only a few published articles address student learning issues directly (e.g., the effect of various methods on student learning).

Recently, business education scholars have become increasingly aware that while much has been written about student learning in a broad sense, there is a substantial difference between student's self-reported or perceived learning which is the predominant dependent variable in research on student performance, and actual learning as measured by assessments of actual student performance on some task (Bacon, 2016; Köhler, Landis, & Cortina, 2017). Importantly, the correlation between perceived learning gains and actual learning is close to zero (Sitzmann, Ely, Brown, & Bauer, 2010). Student perceptions of their own learning appear to capture some affective dimension of their experience but not the cognitive gains that are central to higher education. Similarly, a meta-analysis of studies of student evaluations of teaching in business found that there is no correlation between SETs and actual learning (Clayson, 2009).

Concerning educational assessment, the AACSB has strongly encouraged member schools to use measures of actual learning (i.e., direct measures) instead of indirect measures (usually perceived learning) to improve programs. However, as Bacon and Stewart (2017) point out, many business programs are too small to have sufficient sample sizes to ever be able to detect meaningful changes in their learning outcomes using assessment studies. Instead of relying on assessment, Bacon and Stewart assert that the key to improving business education is to focus on the published literature. The standards for validity in the published literature generally exceed the standards applied in assessment studies conducted by business schools (Pokharel, 2007). Bacon and Stewart call for systematic reviews of the business education literature, identifying studies that use direct measures and summarizing the findings so that educators can easily access valid studies of what actually works in business education. A similar initiative that focuses on K through 12 education has been funded and implemented; the results are available at the What Works Clearinghouse at <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/>.

The present research takes the first steps in the challenge of identifying what works in business education by focusing specifically on marketing education and reviewing the research published in the three primary marketing education journals – JME, *Marketing Education Review (MER)*, and *Journal for the Advancement of Marketing Education (JAME)*. Working with multiple research assistants, we have examined all of the articles published to date in these journals and flagged those studies that identify an intervention's effect on student learning using a direct measure of student learning (Walvoord, 2004). While the examination task is substantial, it has

not been as time consuming as one might assume primarily because an estimated less than 5% of all articles published in these journals use a direct measure of student learning as a dependent variable. Of these studies, not all will qualify for inclusion in subsequent analyses using procedures inspired by the What Works Clearinghouse (What Works Clearinghouse, 2014). For example, studies would be excluded from further analysis if: 1) the sample size is too small and so statistical power is too weak to support the null results; 2) multiple interventions occurred simultaneously to respondents in the same treatment condition and thus confounded each other, 3) no comparison group was used and thus the true effectiveness can't be evaluated, or 4) different test forms were used across conditions and the tests were not appropriately equated.

At the MEA conference in April, we will present a synthesis of our understanding of what works in marketing education. After completing an examination of approximately 80% of all the articles published and studying in-depth most of the articles that we expect to include in our review, we foresee the following points to be supported:

- Active learning can be effective, but it may not be efficient. Active learning interventions often consume more student time and/or class time than do other methods.
- Case learning is under researched, and no strong evidence presently exists that supports the effectiveness of case teaching.
- Student team skills can be improved following a number of interventions.
- Each of these points and likely additional points will be reviewed in-depth in our presentation if this proposal is accepted.

References

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