

PRINCIPLES OF MARKETING CLASS: DESIGNING A PROGRAM THAT IS EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT FROM EXAMS TO FINAL PRESENTATIONS

Frank R Veltri, University of Oregon
Catherine T. Atwong, California State University, Fullerton
Gregory S. Black, Metropolitan State University of Denver
Michelle M. Nelson, Linfield College
Sohyoun Shin, Eastern Washington University

Multiple-choice (MC) exams are very popular among professors teaching in large classes, especially at the principles of marketing level. The purpose of this study is to determine the most efficient ways to evaluate student learning in large classes, from group assignments to Multiple-choice exams. Teaching at an institution that uses the quarter system instead of semesters, presents an even greater challenge for instructors. In any cases, many instructors, large classes present a logistical problem in student evaluation.

For the purpose of this study, I have used the Zipp (2007) cooperative learning method, adapting it to suite and embrace cooperative learning styles for large principles of marketing courses. Over the many years I have been teaching this course, students work in groups in the classroom on various presentations, projects and quizzes, I recently extended group work to tests. The first stage of the course, I divided students into four or five-person, heterogeneous learning groups. I stratified groups by gender and foreign exchange students (most groups had at least one female or male, and one foreign student). The group is considered their lifeline during the quarter. The group creation should be comprised of individuals with differing academic strengths (finance major, accounting major, etc.). Students were to stay in close proximity to their groups members during the semester, to complete a variety of individual and group exercises assignments (Johnson & Johnson, 1991).

Three exams were given during the quarter (each covered four chapters), including the final exam. All exams were administered in a two-step cooperative test during a regular 110-minute class period (Zipp, 2007). Each test contained 25 to 30 multiple-choice questions (with four answer choices for each question) that students first answered individually, recording their answers both on the test question sheets and again on Scantron sheets. Students had to record their answer for each question three times (question one would be filled out on the Scantron as question one, two, and three). The student could divide their answer up if they were unsure of the correct answer. After everyone handed in their individual answer sheets, students answered the same questions in their groups, turning in one answer sheet per group (Zipp, 2007). I gave students approximately 60 minutes for the individual exam (many of the students took all 60 minutes), with most of the rest of class time (typically 50 minutes) for the group test. Students' grades were a combination of their performance on the individual and group exams: students received the grade on their individual exam (out of 90 points), plus their group score (based on 60 points) (Zipp, 2007). The average individual score on exam one was 71.0%, due to the applied content of the questions. The average group scores were much higher (86%) than on the individual exams. With almost 280 students across 3 sections I avoided having to curve the exams.

The final exam can be either an in class test following the same procedures or a take home exam. The take home exam consist of sections and students have to total 100 points, each questions contained different values. This exam, I told students, would consist entirely of short answer questions and investigation questions (covering areas of lecture) (Zipp, 2007).

Having students present papers is challenge for many instructors. The first question is how much class time do you give for student presentations? In the quarter system, final project

presentations are presented during week ten of the quarter. With over 90 students per class, the presentations are administered at night. Students sign-up up for nightly presentations with two groups per hour. This method can also be used for semester teaching.

Discussion

This discussion will look at the differences between individual performance and group performance. In addition we will discuss the students working in groups for various projects that include: group assignments, exercises, exams, final projects, and quizzes. Learning certainly takes place in the two-step cooperative exam. During the team part of the exam they are talking about marketing and defending or conceding their answer among their group members. Occasionally a team score will be lower than one member in the group's individual score, this may reflect the consensus of the group. Being part of a correctly answering group compared to being part of an incorrectly answering group in a cooperative group exam increases short term retention of material, through the debates and reexamination process of the questions. Furthermore, Millis and Cottell (1998) Zipp (2007) explained that the reason for using the two-stage cooperative group exam and group assignments was academic. The first stage is to have students work together, debate and discuss their answers on group activities. The second stage measures how students perform on their own and how they performed as a group member. Group averages are typically higher than individual ones resulting in the transfer learning (Webb, 1993). Finding the right balance between learning and testing has create problems throughout the history of teaching.

References

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