

TEACHING FACE TO FACE VS ONLINE: AN EMPIRICAL COMPARISON

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ABSTRACT

Marketing and Money (M&M), an undergraduate course, is part of the core requirements of undergraduate Marketing majors at the lead author’s university. Students typically take M&M, offered in face to face and web-delivered formats, after the required Principles of Marketing core course, but may take it concurrently to facilitate scheduling. However, they must take M&M before advanced classes such as the required Market Research and Marketing Management courses. Through a four year period, more than 1,000 students have completed the course in traditional face to face and online formats.

During the typical semester, in class and on the web, the author discusses about 50 one-page mini cases, drawn from a resource base of well over 200 problems. The author typically incorporates 5 to 10 specific questions at the end of each mini case, leading to the solution, “step-by-step.” These mini cases cover a wide variety of topics as indicated in the following table:

interpreting percentages correctly
weighted average
income statement and balance sheet
Channel markups
fixed, variable and sunk costs
contribution analysis
simple breakeven analysis
simple breakeven, with profit
incremental breakeven analysis
incremental breakeven, with profit
cannibalization of sales
marketing mix: product
marketing mix: price
marketing mix: promotion
marketing mix: distribution
net present value
decision making under uncertainty

All the mini cases are easily modified by, (1) changing the company name, or (2) changing key numbers, and/or (3) changing the problem itself by borrowing ideas from the pool, affording infinite permutations for future semesters.

Over a four-year period, supplementing COBA course evaluations, the authors have collected self-reported attitudinal data about the course, the usefulness of its content, how well it compares with other courses and its value. At the proposed MEA 2011 special session, the authors propose to present analysis of the data comparing the face to face and online formats, whether and how the perceptions of the two groups of students differ and how these impact overall attitudes about the course. The results of this study should provide additional insights on the effectiveness of online teaching relative to traditional course delivery format.