

JOURNAL WRITING AS ASSESSMENT IN MARKETING EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Journal writing has been shown to be an effective learning tool for students, through reflection and integration of theory and experience. In addition to using journals to increase learning, we propose that journals can be used as an assessment tool, giving the instructor insights regarding the level of understanding of course concepts. The purpose of this project is to develop a process for analyzing student journal writing to assess understanding of marketing concepts.

The methodology utilizes a pre and post journal assignment for students in a Principles of Marketing course. The objectives of the assignment are to (a) understand students' perspectives of and assumptions about marketing as they enter the Principles of Marketing course, and (b) gain insight into which marketing concepts students retain and understand at the end of the course.

The word choices within the pre and post journals were compared using content analysis. As the researchers intuitively knew, many students brought an advertising and sales-bias into the Principles of Marketing classroom. Beyond that obvious finding,

this research uncovered the real difficulties in supplanting a sales and promotion bias with a broader, customer-centric point of view. Though the results of the content analysis are the secondary focus, the findings reiterate the value of the methodology. The findings provide the instructor with concrete feedback regarding the knowledge and assumptions that students bring into the class as well as the content areas that students retain.

This exploratory research creates a framework for marketing instructors to use as a starting point for their own content analysis of student work. The journal pre and post assignment could be used in a variety of marketing courses and range from broad application (What is marketing?) to narrow (How can marketers drive environmentally responsible activities?). The analysis could be used for an individual instructor's understanding of student learning, leading to an awareness of areas where course content, assignments, and teaching need to be improved in order to meet course objectives. In addition, the analysis could be used course or program-wide as an assurance of learning tool.