

**EMPOWERING MARKETING STUDENTS IN THE EVALUATION PROCESS
OF THEIR ORAL PRESENTATIONS:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses a method for empowering students in the evaluation of oral presentations. We begin by discussing the theory and importance of empowerment, and how students can be given an enriched learning experience by being empowered to participate in the process of their course evaluation.

Next, we discuss the value of oral presentations as part of undergraduate and graduate marketing courses, and how important it is for students to be competent at this skill. Employers, students and educators all agree that mastering the art of oral communication is extremely important in today's workworld.

The evaluation of oral presentations can be difficult for those of us who have not been trained in the field of communication. Oral presentations represent complex knowledge and communication, requiring carefully designed assessment methods and instruments. We found only a few articles giving guidance for this difficult task, although we did find oral presentations as part of several different learning assignments.

We conducted a study that 1) involved students in the evaluation of their oral presentations, 2) determined students' perceived importance of evaluation criteria, and 3) compared the weightings assigned to the evaluation criteria by undergraduate students, graduate students, and faculty.

Marketing students (two undergraduate classes, two graduate classes) were given a list of twelve evaluation criteria and asked to assign the weights they would like the criteria to have for their class oral presentations. The mean weight of each criteria were used in the evaluation of the oral presentations at the end of the course.

Meanwhile, the faculty from the business schools of our two universities were given the same twelve criteria and asked to assign weights according to how they felt oral presentations should be evaluated.

We compared the mean weights of the twelve criteria from the three groups. Faculty felt that 'Clarity of Presentation' was the most important criteria, graduate students felt that 'Keeps Audience Interested' was most important, and undergraduate students felt two criteria were most important: 'Clarity of Presentation' and 'Use of Appropriate Data'.

We conducted an ANOVA to determine if the groups differed significantly in the weightings they assigned to the evaluation criteria that could lead to troublesome differences between students and faculty. Although there were some statistically significant differences, they were minimal, and, we feel, not problematic enough to prevent use of the students' self-weighting evaluation procedure. We feel that the benefits of empowering students in the evaluation of their oral presentations far outweighs any differences in opinion between faculty and student.