

# MULTIMEDIA IMPORTANCE IN THE MARKETING CLASSROOM

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## Abstract

This paper looks into different multimedia strategies and how these strategies can enhance student learning. The goal is to not only prove the benefits of multimedia uses in the marketing classroom, but to also help give the educators ideas to incorporate into their classrooms. It helps to explain the advantages of using these different types of strategies in the classroom and what type of benefits you can expect to see from using these innovative techniques. It explores different ideas, how to gauge success as well as how to introduce these strategies into the classroom. Finally this paper highlights ways to incorporate these new strategies into the classroom using both traditional and new technologies.

## Why Multimedia?

Why should marketing educators utilize multimedia in the classroom? The answer is pretty straight forward, and it has to do with the changing times. It is important for classroom educators to work on mirroring societies influence. "Facebook has more than 800 million active users and more than 50% of the active users log on to Facebook in any given day (Facebook, 2011)." The social media craze combined with smart phone abilities and virtual communities really has the students living in a different world than twenty years ago. So why should educators still be using the same, old strategies?

"By incorporating multimedia in their instruction, teachers can capture the attention, engage learners, explain difficult concepts, inspire creativity and have fun (Schroeder, 2010)." With tons of new technology emerging every year educators need to fight even harder to keep the attention of their students and most importantly make sure they understand key concepts. Multimedia approaches to learning can help reach all learners. This can be incorporated into hands on activities, visual hand outs, and also audio and animation helping to reach all learning styles.

Looking at the benefits from a strictly marketing perspective, another major benefit of using multimedia in the classroom is to be able to explore the more creative side of marketing. "Marketing students are high self-monitors and are easygoing, creative, enthusiastic, persistent, venturesome, imaginative, and edgy (Noel et al., 2003)." Utilizing multimedia outlets not only allows these students

to explore their creative sides, it also gives hands on experiences. This can help the students form a more realistic idea of what happens in the marketing world.

### Adding Multimedia to Educational Outlets Already In Use

There are easy ways for educators to add multimedia into their instructional techniques that they already use. For example, the power point presentation. In a typical classroom these types of presentations are often greeted by sighs and groans from the class. They tend to be dry and require more talking from the teacher and less interaction from the students. Adding multimedia to existing power points are a great way to use modern technologies while helping to illustrate difficult concepts. One type of multimedia use in a power point would be a video link. Instead of explaining a marketing concept, why not show them a video of what you are talking about? This not only adds excitement to the classroom, but it helps to incorporate real world examples for the students to remember. “The human mind learns and remembers by connecting new information to old. If a person does not have existing knowledge to connect new information to, then learning is extremely difficult. (Sweeny and Cromley, 2002)”

One of the struggles in marketing in particular is that many students don't realize that they are bringing marketing experience to the table simply by consumer shopping experiences. Tying these experiences with video clips showing popular marketing techniques will help to make those connections. This will help them to form a connection between popular cases or experiences they have personally had to the classroom information that they are currently learning.

Another traditional technique that can be update to reflect multimedia would be case studies. Often times case studies are found via textbook or handed out as a paper print out. By providing web link rights to the case study students are able to experience more interaction. For example, utilizing a web link provides room for answering questions inside the case studies at different parts of the study. This will not only solidify the lesson, but it will also check for comprehension. A case study provided on the Internet instead of in a textbook is dynamic. Instead of being a once and done article it can change and grow as more information is discovered about the case study. There can also be links to other resources, magazine and newspaper articles for example, about the case study right in the case study. “The multimedia case study is designed to be used in a broad range of educational situations. Portions of the case can be used to enhance classroom lectures and discussion (Stanard, 2010).”

### New Techniques Using Multimedia

Creating a sense of unity in a large classroom can be done simply by utilizing social media. This can include creating a Facebook page for your class. Students can post questions to other students, interact via the chat feature and find an easy way to get in contact with the educator. A “Class Facebook”, can not only be used to help students get in contact with each other, but it can also help teachers to reach out to students with current events. “The rationale behind the use of social networks as a tool for professional learning includes the idea that the Internet is this generation's defining technology for literacy (Coiro & Dobler, 2007), and teachers will utilize popular media such as Facebook.”

The status feature can be used to post about current events in marketing, marketing internships, and other information that the students may be curious about. Encouraging the students to post on the page can help the students feel more involved and promotes learning outside the walls of the classroom. Furthermore, it can spark conversations and connections during group projects which are often found in marketing curriculum.

Another potential use of multimedia in the classroom could be for providing real world validation to classroom objectives via virtual guest speakers. It is not always easy to be able to have guest speakers take the time out of their busy day to come to school and present a topic or answer questions from the class. During the regular business day that could amount to hours of lost productivity. It is possible to provide that experience to the classroom by utilizing video conferencing software to allow a potential guest speaker to “meet” with your classroom from the comforts of their own office. For example, if the classroom has a Mac then you already have a webcam and video conferencing software available. Then there is Skype and AOL Instant Messenger as free alternatives. “By bringing outsiders into your classroom, even if your guests arrive virtually, you give your unit a real-life relevance that it doesn’t have if it only relates to the four walls of your classroom.(Needleman, 2007)”

Multimedia can also be used in the classroom to show what is being done outside of the classroom. It is not easy to bring a billboard or a storefront display into the classroom short of using photographs. By showing photographs or even videos of these billboards you may lose the “Wow!” factor of current and future marketing trends. The usage of augmented reality in the classroom can give the students the same “Wow!” factor feeling they may get from seeing the billboard of storefront on their own. This virtualization technology allows them to not just look at a picture of what is there but to orbit around the subject, zoom in and out, and see key parts as if they were right there. Augmented reality has been used primarily for product modeling so far but has great potential for expanded uses. While still a fairly new technology, augmented reality has already been exercised as an option for advertising a range of products. This has been helped along with the growth of smart

phone adaptation, which is where it has been targeted. “According to figures from ABI Research, the market for augmented reality in the US alone is expected to hit \$350m (£218m) in 2014, up from about \$6m (£3.8m) in 2008. ( Varley, 2011)” By introducing this new type of non-traditional marketing to the classroom you will be preparing the students for what they will be seeing as the new standard for years to come.

### How Often Should Multimedia Be Used In The Classroom?

How often to use this strategy in the classroom, will depend on a couple of different things. First, how the student react to the multimedia strategies will be important. Another factor will be the availability of technology for the instructor. “The configuration and management of a multimedia activity will vary, based upon the number of available computers (and other hardware), the grouping strategy, and other factors (Kann, 2009).” This is also a case to bring to the administration. It is important to have enough multimedia resources for the classroom. With limited resources it will be hard to employ the latest technologies.

Just like any other teaching strategy it is important to make sure this method is right for the group of students that are in the class. If the students are having a positive reaction to this method of learning it should be increased. Some forms of multimedia such as Skype to get interviews with marketers from around the world, will be less replaceable than others such as interactive case studies. Often times you cannot get an international guest speaker into the classroom, however having interactive case studies can be replaced by traditional case studies if these are not working out well for that particular class.

Something else for educators to think about is not just presenting multimedia efforts from the instructor’s side. Multimedia projects can be assigned for students to do. This can range from creating an interactive website to creating their own advertisements. “First, multimedia scholarship invited students to prioritize and dramatize their main points by highlighting text, incorporating eye-catching images, or employing engaging video clips (Kann, 2009).” It is important for a marketing student to really feel the creative side of the marketing world. While they may not necessarily want to work on the actual creation of marketing or advertising pieces, it is important that they experience all areas of marketing.

In contrast to the creative side of marketing, using multimedia can help with marketing research projects. “While many studies of technology use in the classroom have reported mixed results, the largest gains seem to occur when technology tools are used to teach science and mathematics (Roschelle et al., 2000).” Knowing that technology tools are best in mathematical situations; marketing research, or logistical marketing forecasting would be a great time to introduce

multimedia into the classroom. Sometimes numbers-based lessons are a struggle for students, so having an alternate way for them to achieve the knowledge can help marketing majors in some of the more difficult courses.

### How Will Nontraditional Student React?

With the current economic times the classrooms are filled with students of all ages. The traditional age marketing student is often surrounded by students of all ages and walks of life that have decided to go back to college. It is important that students of all ages realize that technology is there to be helpful and give them real-world experiences and additional insights. When a teacher shows a you tube video or sets up a Skype conversation this should not be anything new to the students since the technological change is performed by the educator, not the student. When the student has to utilize multimedia themselves this could be where the apprehension takes place.

It is important that the non-traditional students get the support that they need if they are not familiar with the most modern technology. One great way for this is introducing multimedia projects in a group setting. "These projects are well-suited for team-learning and can incorporate multiple learning and communication styles, as well as demonstrate organizational skills (Reaching all students, 2010)." Since multimedia is about inclusion this can really help the students tackle the project together as well as making the team more "tech savvy".

### How To Gauge Success

As we have discussed here technology in the classroom is not a question of when, but how and how much. It is available, can be attained fairly cheaply, and can be highly effective. The main question now is "How effective is it?" How can we measure the success of technology integration into the classroom? The statement posed by Steven Anderson in his blog gives a good insight to where technology success measurement should be. He writes "Administrators should not measure technology use - they should assess student learning. (Anderson, 2009)"

In essence the success of technology can be measured indirectly by measuring the success of the students. If the students are successful or have become more successful from the addition of technology in the classroom is that directly attributable to the technology? What if the student's success rate wasn't tied to the usage or addition of technology? What if the technology just allowed them to work faster, or more efficient? In that case the student success would stay the same, but the student actually became more productive.

Could the success of technology be measured in other ways also? What about the amount of time the students were using the technology, or the engagement rate? What about the actual product

that the student was producing with the addition of new technology? Let us say, for example, that two students learned the same amount of information about cost analysis. They are given an assignment to present what they know to the rest of the class. The first student had access to a standard classroom, without a lot of technology integrated into it, and gave his presentation. It would logically outline the information he has to offer and would be concise. The second student, with a technologically advanced classroom, would give his presentation and include various multimedia pieces to reinforce what he is presenting about his knowledge. Both students know the same amount of information about the subject, but the second student has the advantage when presenting that information. When it comes time for those two students to enter the workforce the disparity of technology would become more apparent than in the short term student success measurement.

So is there an answer when it comes to measuring the success of technology integration in the classroom? Can you set metrics to measure change from a baseline to a post-implementation reading of student success? What would those metric contain? Does it even matter? When it comes to the use of multimedia in the marketing classroom, really in any classroom, it is the final product that counts. It is not the information you know, it is what you can do with it that truly matters.

#### Conclusion

In the growing marketing field the use of multimedia in the education process is needed to introduce the students to the diverse group of resources used in their field. This is why we have propositioned the use of so many types of multimedia resources within the classroom. In the marketing field the student will need to not only feel comfortable using all of these tools but will need to be effective with them. These are enablers, allowing anyone in the marketing field to do so much more than they could just twenty years ago. By encountering them on a regular basis the student should incorporate them into their cache of tools for their future careers. This will give them a definitive edge over anyone whose education did not include a systematic incorporation of these multimedia technologies.

References Available Upon Request.