

EFFECT OF ACTIVE LEARNING ON LEARNING MOTIVATION AND OUTCOMES AMONG MARKETING STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES

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ABSTRACT

Using an active learning approach to motivate students to learn has been advocated by many educators. It has been an ongoing discussion on whether marketing educators should customize their teaching activities based on the learning styles found in their classes recently. While heavily customizing specific activity is considered a "high investment strategy," it is worthwhile to explore the effectiveness of active learning/passive learning curriculum design and how it may vary among students possessing different learning styles. The purposes of this study are to investigate:

1. How does active learning affect students' motivation to learn, learning outcomes, satisfaction with the class and perceptions of the instructor?
2. How do students with different learning styles react to passive learning approach and active learning approach respectively?

An active learning approach has been advocated by many educators and linked to positive outcomes in general (Kozar & Macketti, 2008), but it is not known if this is true of all students. Research has identified different learning styles among college students (Martinez, 2001; Kolb, 2000). Do students with different learning styles perceive and receive active learning similarly? This study is designed to address these issues and provide a current view on the effectiveness of active learning and how it may vary among students possessing different learning styles.

A current measurement model of learning styles has been developed by Martinez (1999, 2001). Building on previous research, this instrument gives a more comprehensive view by including psychological influences in measuring learning styles (called learning orientations), in addition to the traditional cognitive design. The research found three factors

that affect student learning styles: emotional/intentional aspects, strategic planning and committed learning effort, and learning autonomy. It also categorized learning styles into four groups: Transforming Learner, Performing Learner, Conforming Learner and Resistant Learner.

In this study, we chose to extend the findings of the Martinez's (1999) Learning Orientation Model. Students were given a respondent ID to take an online survey. In the first part of the survey they were asked to think of and describe a tightly-structured marketing class that they had previously taken that had "straight forward, task-oriented learning goals which emphasized lectures, quizzes and/or exams assessing competence on the course content." Subjects were then asked to answer the dependent measures about this class. In the last part of the survey, students were asked to do the same task about a loosely-structured marketing class that they had taken that had "challenging, discovery-oriented learning goals which emphasized discussion, research projects and/or cases assessing competence on the course content." In between, subjects were given the lengthy learning orientations scale to fill out.

This study has several implications for marketing course design. First, many of us today design project and case-oriented courses not knowing if students really appreciate them. Their responses suggest that they do. Another implication of this study is that autonomy of students matters in what they take away from a marketing class. Lastly, it is important to note that student ratings of the instructor were not affected by the design of the class.

References Available on Request