

LEARNING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR THROUGH EXPERIENTIAL VIDEO PROJECTS

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As first noted by Kolb (1981, 1984), experiential learning or “learning by doing” enhances the learning experience considerably by immersing students into real-life situations outside of the classroom. In this stimulating external context, students have the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge and acquire practical skills through work, play, and other activities that marketing educators would be hard pressed to duplicate within the limited confines of a traditional classroom.

Numerous studies exploring and applying experiential learning in the marketing education context have emerged since the 1980s (Bobbitt et. al 2000, Daly 2001, Gremler Et. al 2000, Keller and Otjen 2007, Neale et. al 2011, Payne et al. 2011, Petkus 2000, Rinaldo et. al 2011). However, with few exceptions, the application of experiential video projects that immerse students into a real world context armed only with a video camera (or smart phone), a field journal, and newly learned marketing or consumer behavior concepts has not been fully explored in the marketing education literature to date. This lack of attention is surprising when, as noted by Belk and Kozinets (2005), videographic methods of marketing and consumer research are full of promise. Furthermore, due to the drastic decline in the cost and ease of use with regard to video recording equipment and video-enabled smart phone technology, video applications have become increasingly relevant and realistic. As a result, companies large and small have eagerly adopted this creative approach toward understanding their respective customers and marketing environments. Marketing and consumer culture scholars have also begun to adopt and integrate videographic and visual ethnographic approaches into their academic research (Belk and Kozinets 2005, Caldwell et al. 2010, Cherrier and Ponner 2010, Rabikowska 2011, Webster et al. 2010). And so, it would seem, that while marketing educators have long recognized the value of experiential learning approaches, they have been comparatively slow in capitalizing upon the potential benefits of experiential, video-based projects specifically.

The purpose of this session is to discuss the use of experiential, student video projects to teach consumer behavior, creativity, and qualitative research methods. We will present the design and mechanics of ongoing experiential video projects embedded within a consumer behavior course, as well as their integration with both a visual ethnographic study of consumer

culture and library resources specifically designed for the course. After viewing examples of selected student video projects, all derived from fieldwork at farmers' markets within the community, we will discuss the challenges of design, implementation, and project assessment.