

Two Years Into The Journey: AACSB Assessment Of Learning In A “Principles Of Marketing” Course

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ABSTRACT

Using a “Principles of Marketing” course, the authors demonstrate how compliance with AACSB standards and assessment of learning has been undertaken at Robert Morris University over a two-year period. Learning goals and objectives are tied to a specific assessment instrument to provide an illustration of how broad conceptual ideas are translated into classroom-level implementation. Numerous issues related to this two-year process are discussed.

Keywords: Assessment of Learning; AACSB Standards

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business International (AACSB) introduced new standards designed to support assurance of learning (AoL) in higher education. A critical component of the new standards requires that accredited institutions – or those seeking accreditation – use direct measures of student learning. Previously, indirect measures such as alumni surveys or exit interviews were deemed satisfactory.

As is the nature with any significant change, the move to meet the new standards has been accompanied by a certain level of confusion, surprise, and questioning. This has been reflected in two main streams of academic work concerning the new AACSB AoL standards: (1) Philosophical discussion of the pros/cons of the new standards and how they help or hinder schools of business (e.g., Julian & Ofori-Dakwa, 2006; Kilpatrick, Dean & Kilpatrick 2008) and (2) Explanatory articles detailing the intent of the standards, the “model” of AoL and measuring schools’ implementation progress (e.g., Zhu & McFarland, 2005; Marshall, 2007). The latter has been useful in clarifying AoL – particularly to those members of academe that have not been directly involved in their institutions’ AACSB efforts – and illustrating the structure necessary to move forward in implementing AoL. The former has raised interesting considerations and has laid the groundwork for continuing debate about AoL and how it impacts universities, departments, professors, students, and outside constituents.

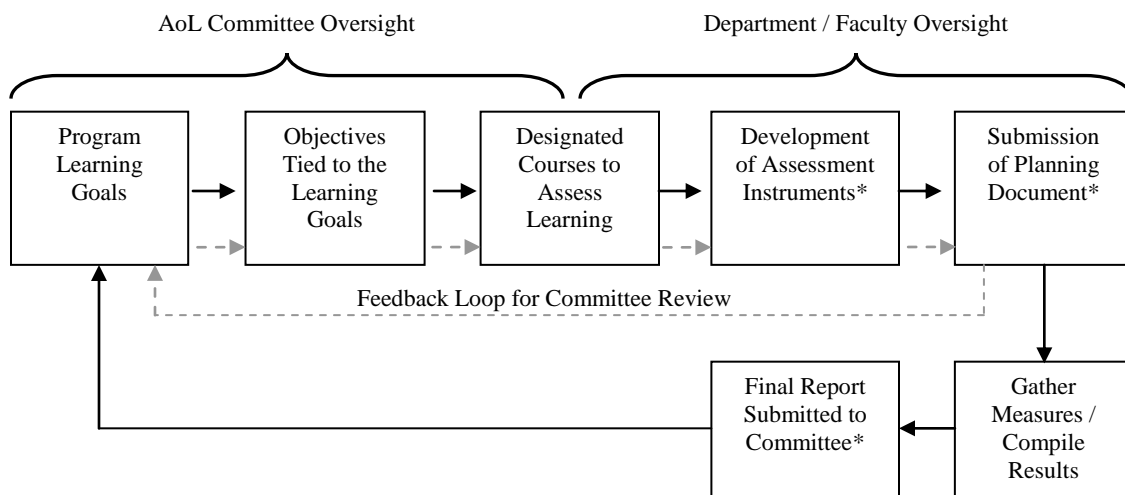
What has been largely absent, however, is investigation of what happens when conceptualization is put into action in the classroom. This is not surprising, given that AACSB allowed a three-year window (2004-2007) for institutions to grapple with AoL and put programs in place. But with the expiration of this grace period, institutions are now faced with demonstrating real progress and outcome measures. Given that AoL programs have to be “just good enough” and there is no need to reinvent the wheel at each institution (Pokharel, 2007), it is time to build upon the limited work (e.g., Aurand & Wakefield, 2006) that describes actual implementation efforts. This article endeavors to detail one institution’s efforts in developing a meaningful AoL program tied to a “Principles of Marketing” course. We look at the false starts, frustrations and improving outcomes of our efforts over a two-year period. In so doing, we consider some of the concerns raised in the existing literature and offer suggestions for others involved in the AoL process.

BACKGROUND

In 2003 Robert Morris University (RMU), a private university, entered into AACSB candidacy. As RMU’s candidacy progressed, the School of Business began working on AoL. A structure, similar to the conceptual framework of Zhu and McFarland (2005), emerged. Initially spearheaded by the Dean, AoL considerations were eventually delegated to a faculty committee. The faculty committee has representatives from all programs (i.e., Accounting, Economics, Finance, Hospitality Management, Human Resource Management, Management, Marketing, and Sport Management) within the School of Business. The AoL committee member from each program would be the link between the committee and the department faculty. They initially developed the goals and objectives in the Fall of 2003 at a school-wide meeting of all the School of Business faculty. Exhibit 1 provides the goals and objectives. The committee then examined the complete School of Business catalogue offerings to determine which courses would be most suitable for assessment purposes. The committee involved the department’s faculty and the department heads in the selection process. Exhibit 2 displays the list of courses chosen for AoL measurement. As indicated in Exhibit 2, two marketing courses were selected: (1) MARK 3100 – Principles of Marketing; and (2) MARK 4265 – Technology Topics and Issues. MARK 3100 is a required RMU business core class taken by every student seeking RMU’s undergraduate B.S. degree in Business Administration. MARK 4265 is an elective marketing class at RMU.

Once the individual classes were identified each department was responsible for assigning personnel to examine the course and develop initial assessment instruments. AoL measurement in these classes began in the Fall 2006 semester. Early in this semester each instructor assigned to a designated AoL course was required to submit a planning document. This document was submitted to the School of Business AoL committee for review. Feedback from the committee was then provided over the course of the semester to individual professors. If necessary, changes were made to the initial planning documents. Assessment instruments were then used - as specified for each course – and data collected. The data was then assembled for an end-of-the-semester report. This report is the summary document detailing whether or not learning goals were achieved or not. The report is then reviewed by the School of Business AoL committee. If acceptable, this concludes the process for the semester. If not, the committee sends the report back, asking for changes and/or additional information. Thus, by January 2007, our AoL formal structure closely resembled the framework shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1



*Indicates points at which subsequent modifications might be made based on AoL Committee feedback.

THE MARK 3100 PROCESS

Figure 1 shows the general process each RMU AoL-designated course uses in an effort to comply with AACSB standards. We now turn our attention to the specific experience of MARK 3100-Principles of Marketing.

As with most universities, MARK 3100 is offered through multiple sections each semester. Generally speaking, one or two professors continually teach at least one section semester after semester while other professors rotate in and out. Consequently, MARK 3100 AoL assessment measurement responsibilities were assigned to one professor (i.e., the second author) who routinely taught the course. In accordance with AACSB standards a departmental MARK 3100 syllabus was developed. (Note: The departmental syllabus is designed to designate the course content and suggested grading components but individual faculty have considerable latitude in developing their specific course syllabus.) One suggested content element in the departmental syllabus is an end-of-term team marketing plan project. Such a project had historically been used in MARK 3100.

During the planning stages of Summer 2006 it was decided that the marketing plan would be used as the AoL MARK 3100 assessment tool and a complementary assessment rubric would be developed. The overall MARK 3100 AoL plan was presented to the marketing faculty at a meeting three days prior to the start of the Fall 2006 semester. An explanation was given as to what goals and related objectives were to be assessed in MARK 3100 and that the marketing plan assignment would be used for the actual assessment.

Five different faculty were assigned Fall 2006 sections of MARK 3100 – all of which were taught at our main campus. Three of the five were also slated to teach MARK 3100 in Spring 2007; one of the five had developed the AoL MARK 3100 plan. Each faculty member had approximately one month to submit their AoL MARK 3100 planning document for Fall 2006.

In mid-October 2006 the MARK 3100 faculty received committee feedback on their planning documents. At this time they were informed that the marketing plan could not be used for assessment purposes because it was a team assignment and assessment must be done on an individual basis. It was suggested to the MARK 3100 faculty that some form of pretest/posttest or embedded questions would be more appropriate. As a result, it was decided that one faculty member (who would not be teaching MARK 3100 in Spring 2007) would develop a questionnaire and circulate it for review.

The questionnaire (Exhibit 3) was presented for initial review at a MARK 3100 faculty only meeting in early November. Slight content changes were made to the questionnaire shown in Exhibit 3 but the general format was unchanged. It was designed to be used on a pretest/posttest basis but due to the lateness of the semester it was agreed that it would only be administered once during the final two weeks of class. The intent of the questionnaire was explained to the students (i.e., AACSB requirement) but they received no credit for completing it.

Each MARK 3100 faculty member had until February 1, 2007 to complete the post-assessment report. Reports were submitted to the Department Chair and subsequently to the AoL Committee. Simultaneously, the plan for Spring 2007 was also due February 1, 2007. Four faculty were covering the Spring 2007 MARK 3100 sections at our main campus. This meant three had limited experience with the process whereas the fourth had no experience.

Later in February 2007 the faculty teaching MARK 3100 during the Spring 2006 semester were assembled and informed that the committee was not satisfied with the new assessment tool. According to the committee representative, the tool measured perceptions and not actual learning. We were asked to devise a new measurement instrument. One of the course instructors had developed an instrument for MARK 4265 that had been approved by the AoL Committee. He volunteered to develop a similar instrument for MARK 3100. As a group we agreed the instrument should focus again on marketing plans. The result is the twenty (20) multiple choice question format instrument shown in Exhibit 4.

This new instrument was composed primarily of questions pertaining to marketing plans but with a sampling of other topics that we felt measured our objectives. The questions were taken from the course textbook's

test data bank. In an effort to document learning, it was also agreed that this instrument would be used as a pretest/posttest. However, due to the fact that it was not available until March 2007 – i.e., mid-semester – it was decided that the pretest aspect would have no validity for the Spring 2007 reports.

The instrument was administered during the final two weeks of the semester. Scantron forms were provided to students. Depending on the instructor, students either provided their names or were requested to remain anonymous. No additional credit was given for completing the instrument. The results were compiled and reports were submitted by June 1, 2007.

During Summer 2007 one MARK 3100 course was taught and the assessment was field tested with twenty-one (21) students. Based on this field test we elected to use the same instrument for the Fall 2007 semester. The pretest was administered during the first week of Fall 2007 classes, followed by a posttest during the final two weeks of the semester. At this point our measurement focus was on the incremental change between pretest and posttest. Students would be deemed to have learned if the following criteria were met: (1) Each question would be examined to determine if the aggregated responses showed a positive percentage increase in correct answers from pretest to posttest; (2) All questions measuring a given learning goal would be examined and at least 50% of that goal's questions would have to show a positive percentage increase. For example, if three questions were measuring a goal, there might be two questions showing a positive increase and one showing no change or a negative change. In such a situation, the learning goal was considered met because the majority of the questions showed a positive increase.

We again had a mix of repeat and new instructors covering the multiple sections of Fall 2007 MARK 3100. In an effort to assist the new instructors, they were provided with copies of the planning documents completed by the repeat faculty. This created a high level of commonality across the various instructors.

Observations in our first year noted that administration of the instrument at the end of the semester – with no perceived impact upon the student – yielded a number of uncompleted scantrons or scantrons that were marked for the same letter for each question. In an effort to avoid this situation at the end of the Fall 2007 semester, students were either given extra credit for correct answers or the questions were embedded in the final exam. The data allowed us to compare pretest and posttest results and determine if learning objectives were achieved or not. These results were noted in our final reports submitted February 1, 2008.

Having received no additional feedback from the AoL Committee no changes were made in our MARK 3100 AoL approach for Spring 2008. This was desirable as it facilitated collection of one academic year's worth of data using the same instrument before making additional changes. For this semester we used all repeat professors with the exception of one adjunct teaching at our downtown campus. The planning documents were similar to those used in Fall 2007, reducing preparation time. The pretest was again administered the first week of class and the posttest during the final two weeks of the semester.

In March 2008 the MARK 3100 faculty were again called to a meeting with a representative of the AoL Committee. During this meeting we were informed that our Fall 2007 final report document needed to tie each of the instrument's questions to specific objectives and not an overall goal. We then proceeded to make the changes which necessitated alterations in the way we measured whether we attained the necessary learning level or not. Similar changes were made to the Spring 2008 planning documents (Exhibit 5).

One week from the end of the Spring 2008 semester we were again summoned to a meeting and informed that as a result of our changes to the planning document, the AoL Committee felt our measurement of successful / not successful was no longer valid. We were asked to develop new measures and revise our Fall 2007 reports. Interestingly enough, with the revised measures we no longer looked at the changes from pretest to posttest but focused exclusively on the posttest results (i.e., did a class answer a threshold percentage correctly or not?) – thereby rendering the pretest useless from an AoL standpoint. As a result of these changes, our “success” rate in achieving learning goals diminished. We no longer looked at the change from pretest to posttest but only at the posttest performance. Therefore, while a given question might have seen 28% correct answers on the pretest and 54% correct answers on the posttest, the incremental increase of 26% no longer counted – only the 54%. If the “success”

threshold was 70% correct answers then students were considered to not have learned. These changes were incorporated into the Spring 2008 reports (Exhibit 6) as well.

DISCUSSION

(1) *Faculty Time Commitment:* As detailed above, AoL assessment in MARK 3100 entails some time commitment from the faculty in terms of assessment tool preparation, generation of planning and final reporting documents, actual administration of the measurement instrument, and related meetings. In total, the three authors conservatively estimate their AoL work for this one class required fifteen (15) to twenty (20) hours for the entire semester.

Does this approach the Pringle and Michel (2007) finding that “over half (54%) of the respondents indicated that they were either very overloaded or somewhat overloaded.”? Direct comparisons are difficult to make due to the fact that Pringle *et al.* asked respondents to assess their feelings concerning assessment of both the overall degree program and individual majors whereas our situation focuses on a single class. Nonetheless, what we do find is an obvious disparity between marketing faculty assigned to AoL-designated courses and those that have no such courses. Ironically, it appears that in order to advance the worthiness of AoL in a course, it is preferable to keep a core set of faculty in the course over time – thus exacerbating the time commitment differential between those who have AoL-designated courses and those that do not. Without such a core set of faculty, it appears to us that continuous improvement would be difficult. But two years into this process this time differential has recently emerged as an issue, with the repetitive MARK 3100 faculty inquiring as to how they will eventually be compensated for their efforts – particularly since MARK 3100 classes at RMU are usually the largest marketing classes.

(2) *Faculty “Buy-in”:* Pringle and Michel (2007) asked how much assessment would occur if there were no assessment requirements? Their results indicate assessment efforts would be scaled back dramatically in the absence of outside entities pushing their standards. Based solely on our observations we see nothing to contradict their findings. Certainly faculty are not clamoring to take over AoL-designated courses! Achieving AACSB accreditation is considered extremely important to RMU administrators and the Marketing Department but it is doubtful all faculty are equally engaged in the process.

(3) *Faculty Evaluation Issues:* The final report that must be prepared for MARK 3100 AoL requires the preparer to note whether or not student learning has occurred. As Martell (2007) notes, not meeting expectations is not disastrous in and of itself as long as it guides future curricula improvement. But despite this “spirit” of AoL, Pringle and Michel (2007) found a “fear” factor among faculty – fear in the sense that AoL reports would be used in their evaluations. Kilpatrick *et al.* (2008) raised the concern that such reports would drive a movement to “teaching to the test,” with a resulting standardization across sections of the same course and subsequent mismatch of individual professors’ teaching styles to course formats.

To date, neither of these concerns has been apparent at RMU. In our annual reviews, AoL outcomes have never been mentioned nor used in our evaluations. Nor is there any evidence of “teaching to the test.” In fact, as a faculty group we steadfastly avoid looking at the instrument unless we are reevaluating its use as a proper assessment tool. Although we are guided by the departmental syllabus we do not meet as a group prior to a semester to compare syllabi, proposed assignments and grading methods. Each faculty member remains free to teach the course in his or her preferred format.

But we are also early in this process. As documented above, our first year efforts were fraught with problems and changing instruments. We anticipate that we will make further improvements but eventually reach a near “steady state” where we are satisfied with our assessment tool and accompanying assessment rubric. Might it be tempting at that point for administrators to use AoL results in evaluations or for faculty to “teach to the test”? That remains to be seen. However, at least in terms of faculty evaluation an AACSB White Paper (2007) is quite clear that “outcomes assessment processes must be separated from the faculty performance evaluation system.”

(4) *Student Involvement:* Perhaps the most ironic aspect of our AoL experience has been the student reaction. After all, a major consideration in AoL is to demonstrate to outside constituencies that our students have

demonstrated significant learning in critical skill areas – not just in course content. But our experience is that at the end of the semester, unless you provide some incentive linked to their grade, many students simply will not complete the assessment or will do so halfheartedly – racing through it in minutes. And so, while AoL is designed to measure something quite different from that reflected in a grade, unless it is tied to the grading our experience indicates one is unlikely to get useful results. Explaining that it is “good for the university and good for you in the long-run” does not do it for today’s student. Therefore, it is quite possible that one can do everything right to the point of administering the assessment tool – and have unsatisfactory and misleading results due to student indifference. For this reason, embedded questions in an exam or some other graded assignment are more likely to demonstrate an assessment’s efficacy rather than a stand-alone assessment. It is important to note that the AACSB standards do not preclude using graded assignments to conduct assessment.

(5) *Grades versus AoL:* If one can use graded assignments to conduct assessment then why is the student’s course grade not good enough for AoL purposes? Again, the AACSB White Paper (2007) explains the distinction: “Course grades, by intentional design, measure student learning associated with content and activities specific to a course. In most instances, this falls short of providing evidence of student learning designed around broad knowledge and skill areas.” Stated somewhat differently, the assessment processes are measuring different things. AoL assessment is tied to the learning goals and objectives whereas a grade measures knowledge of course content. In addition, AoL is decidedly individual whereas a student’s course grade is often a mix of individual and group assignments.

But is it possible grades are a reliable indicator of student learning? To investigate this question we gathered posttest scores for students in one instructor’s Spring 2008 MARK 3100 courses and compared them to their final grades. Using the percentage score for the final grade as the independent variable and the percentage score on the assessment tool as the dependent variable, one hundred twelve (112) students’ scores were analyzed using simple regression. The R^2 showed only 13.7% of the relationship could be explained in this manner. For this limited sample it is clear that AoL and grades are not the same and do not influence one another.

(6) *Philosophical Concerns:* Kilpatrick *et al.* (2008) express concern that AACSB standards will ultimately be addressed in ways that do not support best practices in education. For example, they indicate that standards will quite possibly lead to standardization and routinization, negatively impacting students – and faculty – whose learning and teaching styles do not match the standardized practice.

Julian and Ofori-Dankwa (2006) question whether or not accreditation practices will hinder business schools in the evolving competitive arena. Specifically drawing upon the areas of environmental turbulence, competitiveness, and potentially discontinuous change, they contend that in today’s environment (e.g., online education, for profit schools, etc.) accreditation standards limit a business school’s ability to respond effectively to new challenges.

For our part, we have yet to witness the problems envisioned by Kilpatrick *et al.* (2008). It is important to remember that AoL assesses goals and objectives to determine if broad-based learning has occurred. It does not assess content or that which is typically assessed by grading. Thus, while our AoL assessment instrument and rubric are standardized across all sections of MARK 3100, we each continue to arrange content in the order we prefer and to use assignments that we think are best suited to the material and student level.

The Julian and Ofori-Dankwa position is broader than our micro class level focus of this paper. However, it still has potential impact on the individual class. We have experienced this in terms of a down-sizing in programs and satellite locations in order to comply with AACSB practices. Our responsive capabilities have been curtailed during the accreditation process.

(7) *Validity Issues:* Perhaps our greatest concern at this point in the process is whether or not we are actually capturing student learning. It is difficult to ignore in the AACSB information that there is not a citation that supports the general AoL approach. Nor do recently published academic articles concerning AACSB and its AoL approach offer any such reassurances. While this is obviously not a reason to decry AoL as meaningless, it does give pause to those of us actually interfacing between the conceptual standards and the students. Given that we can

change our measurement instruments and standard of “success” rather rapidly, we are left to wonder if all of our efforts are meaningful? Does a twenty (20) multiple choice question posttest assess learning? Or should we be doing something else? We do not know the answer and, in reality, without backgrounds in educational testing and assessment, we are unlikely to find the answer on our own.

CONCLUSION

AoL is sometimes described as “a journey, not a destination.” From our experience thus far, the journey features numerous setbacks and frustrations; but the further one travels, the more the road improves, although we doubt it will ever be smooth. Through a combination of university-sponsored AoL workshops and committee feedback, we feel that after two years we finally understand what we are trying to do in terms of MARK 3100 AoL.

It is hoped that the description of our journey can help others in three ways: (1) By providing concrete examples of what does and does not work in AoL implementation we hope others can learn from our efforts; (2) to illustrate that it is not an easy process and that it is normal to experience setbacks and frustration; and (3) by promoting discussion of AoL-related issues and adding to those we have presented in this paper.

AUTHOR BIOS

Steven R. Clinton received his Ph.D. degree (Major: Marketing; Minor: Logistics) from Michigan State University in 1998. His research interests include international supply chain organization, customer service in logistics, logistics strategy, and selection processes involving international logistics service intermediaries. He has published in *Journal of Business Logistics*, *Transportation Journal*, *International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management*, *Journal of Production and Inventory Management*, and *International Marketing Review* as well as numerous conference proceedings.

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EXHIBIT 1

Learning Goals And Objectives

1. Apply qualitative and quantitative analytical skills in business decision making
 - (a) Use analytical methods to make decisions
 - (b) Utilize decision support systems technology to analyze data for managerial decision making
 - (c) Gather and utilize primary and secondary data to support decisions
2. Communicate effectively and professionally
 - (a) Use standard written and spoken American English, including accuracy in spelling, grammar and punctuation, when communicating with various audiences
 - (b) Demonstrate a knowledge of and ability to create, analyze and evaluate communications appropriate to one's professional discipline
 - (c) Employ technology to prepare professional reports and presentations
3. Utilize information technology for business solutions
 - (a) Use and apply software for decision support systems
 - (b) Use technology to gather and analyze data
4. Understand the fundamentals of financial reporting and analyze and use financial information when making business decisions
 - (a) Comprehend accounting terminology, concepts and methods
 - (b) Analyze how business transactions impact the financial statements
 - (c) Analyze and interpret financial reports
 - (d) Explain the cost of capital and its components
5. Employ leadership and interpersonal skills to effectively manage
 - (a) Demonstrate an understanding of the historical context, practices, and theories related to management
 - (b) Apply communication principles that underlie group problem solving and decision making, and principles of leadership to motivate groups
 - (c) Analyze how organizations build strong customer relationships using current theory about customer value and relationship marketing
 - (d) Analyze various styles of management and leadership and solve common management problems
6. Comprehend, evaluate, and apply ethical and legal responsibilities in business
 - (a) Demonstrate an understanding of legal terminology and develop an awareness of legal rights and responsibilities
 - (b) Apply legal principles to solve business, employment, and consumer problems
 - (c) Understand, evaluate, and apply ethical principles and social responsibility in business interactions
7. Comprehend and analyze the impact of dynamic global market and social forces on the exchange of goods and services
 - (a) Identify key micro and macroeconomic terms
 - (b) Identify international institutions and agreements that influence business
 - (c) Recognize the interaction between social, economic and political forces in the global market and domestic economies
 - (d) Predict the outcomes of events in competitive and noncompetitive markets
 - (e) Recognize the importance of having a consumer focus

8. Integrate skills across disciplines to design, implement and evaluate business strategies
 - (a) Apply the strategic management process to analyze and solve business problems
 - (b) Create and manage business strategies using an interdisciplinary approach
 - (c) Analyze the competitive position of a business and evaluate how it relates to strategic planning
9. Understand and value multicultural, diversity and social issues relevant to a global business environment
 - (a) Identify the cultural differences and how they affect the management process
 - (b) Appreciate diversity in building productive relationships among co-workers, team members, customers, and other stakeholders
 - (c) Use cross-cultural awareness in business interactions

EXHIBIT 2

<u>Area</u>	<u>Course</u>
Economics	Principles of Macroeconomics
Economics	Principles of Microeconomics
Math	Finite Math/Calculus
Statistics	Statistics
Computer Information Systems	Introduction to Decision Support Systems
Accounting	Intro to Financial Accounting
Accounting	Managerial Accounting
Accounting	Accounting Information Systems
Legal Environment	Legal Environment of Business
Marketing	Principles of Marketing (MARK 3100)
Marketing	Technology Topics and Issues (MARK 4265)
Finance	Principles of Finance
Management	Management Theory and Practice
Management	International Business
Management	Strategic Management (RMU Business Capstone Course)

(In addition to the courses listed above, a number of courses designated as “Communications Skills Intensive” were identified as courses that might be used for assessment of learning.)

EXHIBIT 3

How knowledgeable are you of the following marketing terms?

	A	B	C
	Very Knowledgeable	Knowledgeable	No Knowledge
Overall field of market	()	()	()
E-marketing	()	()	()
The marketing mix	()	()	()
SWOT analysis	()	()	()
Branding	()	()	()
Psychographics	()	()	()
Target Marketing	()	()	()
Buzz marketing	()	()	()
Viral marketing	()	()	()
Green marketing	()	()	()
Product Life Cycle	()	()	()
Marketing Segmentation	()	()	()
Marketing Environment	()	()	()
Marketing Channel of Distribution	()	()	()
Promotion Mix	()	()	()

EXHIBIT 4

Principles Of Marketing

Mark 3100

1. Identifying and analyzing a target market and developing a marketing mix to satisfy individuals in that market are essential elements of which of the following parts of strategic planning?
 - A) Establishing marketing objectives
 - B) Coordinating marketing activities
 - C) Organizing marketing functions
 - D) Developing a marketing strategy
 - E) Planning marketing activities
2. The strategic planning process begins with
 - A) development of an organizational mission statement.
 - B) development of marketing strategy.
 - C) analysis of the marketing environment.
 - D) analysis of target markets.
 - E) development of a marketing plan.
3. A market opportunity results from
 - A) the right combination of circumstances and timing that permit an organization to take action to reach a particular target market.
 - B) monitoring the firm's capabilities.
 - C) an increase in market share and profits.
 - D) an assessment of environmental forces.
 - E) technological determinism.
4. When an organization attempts to control its marketing activities, it may find it difficult to
 - A) determine their effect on sales volume.
 - B) use the information it collects.
 - C) obtain the necessary information.
 - D) get the accounting department to cooperate.
 - E) develop a marketing plan.
5. The time lag between the performance of marketing activities and their results
 - A) limits the marketing manager's ability to measure the effectiveness of marketing activities.
 - B) facilitates the ability to measure performance.
 - C) increases the chance of accurate measurement.
 - D) limits the amount of money to be spent on measurement.
 - E) increases the likelihood of having a successful marketing mix.
6. Which of the following statements *best* describes total quality management?
 - A) A process aimed at improving product quality, increasing competition based on quality, and quality improvement among employees
 - B) The coordination of efforts directed at improving customer satisfaction, increasing employee participation, forming and strengthening supplier partnerships, and facilitating continuous quality improvements
 - C) A method of increasing overall financial benefits, emphasizing faster development of innovations, and improving customer satisfaction
 - D) A process directed at controlling marketing activities at a higher level of involvement among the firms' employees
 - E) An approach used to emphasize the need for quality among a firm's hierarchy of employees, beginning with top-level executives

7. Firms that truly adopt the marketing concept develop a distinct organizational culture based on a shared set of beliefs that makes _____ the pivotal point of the firm's decisions about strategy and operations.
 - A) beating competitors
 - B) increasing market share
 - C) customers' needs
 - D) marketing implementation
 - E) marketing control
8. The marketing control process consists of
 - A) establishing goals, market scanning, and market share analysis.
 - B) establishing performance standards, evaluating performance, and reducing the differences between desired and actual performance.
 - C) establishing goals and measuring performance.
 - D) planning, implementing, and measuring marketing activities.
 - E) setting objectives, implementing strategies, and reducing the differences between desired and actual performance.
9. A marketing plan
 - A) is characteristic of production-oriented firms and other mass producers.
 - B) provides a framework for implementing and controlling marketing activities.
 - C) always increases the marketing manager's operating costs.
 - D) produces plans that are short term in orientation.
 - E) restricts the marketing manager's future options.
10. Which of the following is a purpose of the marketing plan?
 - A) Communicate internally with employees
 - B) Assign tasks and responsibilities for implementation
 - C) Specify the allocation of resources
 - D) Monitor the performance of a marketing strategy
 - E) All of the above.
11. A marketing plan usually begins with a(n)
 - A) executive summary.
 - B) introduction to the company's marketing objectives.
 - C) summary of current performance as compared with past performance.
 - D) situation analysis.
 - E) opportunity and threat analysis.
12. A competitive advantage that cannot be readily copied by the competition is referred to as a(n) _____ advantage.
 - A) controllable
 - B) sustainable
 - C) noncopyable
 - D) effective
 - E) implementable
13. Marketing research is *best* defined as
 - A) a framework for the day-to-day management and structuring of information gathered by marketers.
 - B) a continuous gathering of data for an organization to make marketing decisions.
 - C) the systematic design, collection, interpretation, and reporting of information to help marketers solve specific marketing problems or take advantage of market opportunities.
 - D) the collecting of data from secondary sources and internal documents.
 - E) an intuitive process for making decisions based on personal knowledge and experience.
14. When selecting specific target markets, a firm should
 - A) revert to an undifferentiated approach if the market is deemed heterogeneous.
 - B) choose the segments most in line with the firm's objectives and long-term growth.
 - C) choose all segments that are determined to be profitable for the organization.
 - D) choose the minimum number of segments necessary to achieve company sales potential.
 - E) pick the segments with the best sales forecasts for the upcoming period of time.

15. The four major stages of a product life cycle include
 - A) prosperity, recession, depression, and recovery.
 - B) specialty, convenience, shopping, and unsought goods.
 - C) decline, stabilization, exposure, and growth.
 - D) introduction, growth, maturity, and decline.
 - E) awareness, interest, trial, and adoption.
16. A major advantage of using individual branding is that
 - A) the promotion of one of the company's brands will also promote the company's other brands.
 - B) this branding policy will prevent the overextension of a brand name to products that are completely unrelated to the original.
 - C) a poor quality product will not contaminate all of the company's other products with negative images.
 - D) a specific brand name for each product will help the company grow during times of economic recession.
 - E) the quality of one of the company's products will help increase the perceived quality image of the company's other related products.
17. Consumers look closely at service quality when comparing competing services because
 - A) they perceive all services to be essentially the same.
 - B) they typically have very few services from which to select.
 - C) all services are priced about the same.
 - D) quality is the only relevant service characteristic.
 - E) services are very difficult to evaluate.
18. When one company in a marketing channel has the ability to influence another member's goal achievement, the company has
 - A) channel control.
 - B) channel power.
 - C) marketing leadership.
 - D) a channel captain.
 - E) distributive influence.
19. Retailing is *best* characterized as
 - A) large organizations that carry wide and deep product mixes.
 - B) transactions in which the buyer intends to consume the product through personal, family, or household use.
 - C) arrangements whereby a supplier grants a dealer the right to sell its products.
 - D) transactions in which the purchaser intends to use the product for resale or for business operations.
 - E) exchanges that take place only in a store or service establishment.
20. Generally, promotion mixes for companies with extremely limited promotional budgets tend to concentrate on
 - A) advertising.
 - B) publicity.
 - C) sales promotions.
 - D) personal selling.
 - E) distributor incentives.

EXHIBIT 5

MARK3100 Principles of Marketing
Assessment Planning Document
Spring 2008

Faculty name: _____

Place an “X” to the left of the student learning objective(s) that you plan to assess in this course. Please note that you need not assess all objectives for this course.

BSBA Learning Goals and Objectives

- 1. Apply qualitative and quantitative analytical skills in business decision making.
- c. Gather and utilize primary and secondary data to support decisions.
- 5. Employ leadership and interpersonal skills to effectively manage.
- c. Analyze how organizations build strong customer relationships using current theory about customer value and relationship marketing.
- 6. Comprehend, evaluate, and apply ethical and legal responsibilities in business.
- c. Understand, evaluate, and apply ethical principles and social responsibility in business interactions.
- 7. Comprehend and analyze the impact of dynamic global market and social forces on the exchange of goods and services.
- e. Recognize the importance of having a consumer focus.
- 8. Integrate skills across disciplines to design, implement and evaluate business strategies.
- b. Create and manage business strategies using an interdisciplinary approach.
- c. Analyze the competitive position of a business and evaluate how it relates to strategic planning.

Place an “X” to the left of the type of course based assessment tool you plan to use in this course. Please complete a separate form for each assessment tool you plan to use.

- Essay questions with rubric
- Written assignment with rubric
- Test map
- Embedded questions
- Portfolio with rubric
- Pre/post tests
- Electronic discussion threads with rubric
- Others (please list) _____

Describe the linkage between the assessment tool and the objective(s) assessed.

Please see the grid on the following page. It details how each question relates to the “checked” learning goals and objectives above.

Linkage Between Assessment And Objectives					
Question #	BSBA Learning Goals and Objectives				
	1c	5c	7e	8b	8c
1			X	X	
2				X	X
3					X
4	X				
5					X
6		X			
7			X		
8				X	
9				X	
10				X	
11					X
12					X
13	X				
14				X	
15					X
16				X	
17			X		
18		X			
19		X			
20				X	

Benchmarks – Describe the acceptable level of student achievement. (See example provided).

This course is taught by multiple professors. Therefore, we feel that a statistical approach will more accurately capture whether or not the students are learning. This approach will compare the pre-test mean score against the post-test mean score. If the difference is statistically significant we will conclude that positive gains in student learning were achieved. If not, we will conclude that the students did not make the desired improvement over the course of the semester.

Describe the assessment process.

Multiple choice instrument used across all sections of MARK 3100 Principles of Marketing. Student responses are recorded on a scantron form, enabling us to capture the necessary statistical information.

EXHIBIT 6

COURSE ASSESSMENT REPORT: POST-TEST COURSE NUMBER COURSE NAME (MARK 3100-A/B) Faculty Member’s Name (_____) Semester Assessment Occurred (Spring 2008)

Summary of Objectives Met/Not Met

BSBA Learning Goals and Objectives

Objective	Met	Not Met
1. Apply qualitative and quantitative analytical skills in business decision making.		
c. Gather and utilize primary and secondary data to support decisions.	X	
5. Employ leadership and interpersonal skills to effectively manage.		
c. Analyze how organizations build strong customer relationships using current theory about customer value and relationship marketing.		X
7. Comprehend and analyze the impact of dynamic global market and social forces on the exchange of goods and services.		
e. Recognize the importance of having a consumer focus.		X
8. Integrate skills across disciplines to design, implement and evaluate business strategies.		
b. Create and manage business strategies using an interdisciplinary approach.	X	
c. Analyze the competitive position of a business and evaluate how it relates to strategic planning.	X	

List the course learning outcomes that support those set forth in the RMU Mission/Vision, Middle States or specialty accreditation standards, school/department outcomes assessment plans, or the RMU Core Curriculum (Specify the source of the learning outcomes listed).

Use of course level outcomes assessments administered during the current semester

- a. Describe the assessment(s) used to measure the student learning outcomes set forth above. Specify whether the assessment(s) are direct or indirect measures of student learning. If applicable, also describe course modifications based on prior course level assessment results obtained through direct/indirect measures of student learning

A multiple choice exam was used as a direct assessment of the course-level objectives listed above. This multiple choice exam was modified prior to the Fall 2007 assessment. The modification was based on perceived flaws with the original instrument used in the previous semester’s assessment. No further modifications were made prior to the Spring 2008 semester.

Since more than one multiple choice question was used to assess each objective, the benchmark to be used to determine if the objective was met or not met is the following:

Benchmark: An objective will be considered to be met if on 50% or more of the multiple choice questions associated with that objective, 50% or more of the students answer that question correctly on the post-test with an average positive increase in score from the pre- to the post-test.

Describe the results of the assessments (What evidence do you have that learning occurred?)

Objective: 1. Apply qualitative and quantitative analytical skills in business decision making.			
c. Gather and utilize primary and secondary data to support decisions.			
Results			
Multiple Choice Questions used to assess this objective:	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Difference
4	30%	37%	+7%
13	51%	80%	+29%
Average difference			+18%
Students showed improvement from the pre- to the post-test on both questions. Question #13 met the benchmark of 50% or more of the students correctly answering the question; Question #4 did not. 50% of the questions met the benchmark; therefore, the objective was met.			
Conclusion: Objective 1c was met.			

Objective: 5. Employ leadership and interpersonal skills to effectively manage.			
c. Analyze how organizations build strong customer relationships using current theory about customer value and relationship marketing.			
Results			
Multiple Choice Questions used to assess this objective:	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Difference
6	47%	53%	+6%
18	19%	46%	+27%
19	29%	38%	+9%
Average difference			+15%
On all three questions associated with this objective, students showed improvement from the pre- to the post-test. However, the scores for two of the three questions on the post-test were lower than the benchmark of 50%; therefore, the objective was not met.			
Conclusion: Objective 5c was not met.			

Objective: 7. Comprehend and analyze the impact of dynamic global market and social forces on the exchange of goods and services.			
e. Recognize the importance of having a consumer focus.			
Results			
Multiple Choice Questions used to assess this objective:	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Difference
1	61%	70%	+9%
7	59%	46%	-15%
17	1%	41%	+40%
Average difference			+11.33%
Students showed improvement on two of the three questions associated with this objective (i.e., Questions 1 and 17). However, on Question 7 students exhibited a reversal from the pre-test. Of the three questions, scores exceeded 50% on only Question 1; therefore, the benchmark was not met.			
Conclusion: Objective 7e was not met.			

Objective: 8. Integrate skills across disciplines to design, implement and evaluate business strategies.			
b. Create and manage business strategies using an interdisciplinary approach.			
Results			
Multiple Choice Questions used to assess this objective:	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Difference
1	61%	70%	+9%
2	29%	28%	-1%
8	27%	26%	-1%
9	86%	99%	+13%
10	87%	93%	+6%
14	54%	76%	+22%
16	19%	51%	+32%
20	23%	18%	-5%
Average difference			+9.38%
There was a minor decrease in the percentage of students answering correctly from pretest to posttest on three of the eight questions. But overall, on five out of eight questions, 50% or more of the students answered the questions correctly. This meets the benchmark set.			
Conclusion: Objective 8b was met.			

Objective: 8. Integrate skills across disciplines to design, implement and evaluate business strategies.			
c. Analyze the competitive position of a business and evaluate how it relates to strategic planning.			
Results			
Multiple Choice Questions used to assess this objective:	Pre-test score	Post-test score	Difference
2	29%	28%	-1%
3	66%	79%	+13%
5	43%	68%	+25%
11	14%	63%	+49%
12	34%	63%	+29%
15	67%	95%	+28%
Average difference			+22.83%
On five out of six questions associated with this objective, students showed improvement from the pre- to the post-test. On a single question (#2), there was a slight decrease in the percentage of students answering correctly. On five out of six questions, 50% or more of the students answered the questions correctly. This meets the benchmark.			
Conclusion: Objective 8c was met.			

c. Did the results of the assessment indicate you met the objectives for student learning in the course?

No. Only three of the five objectives met the necessary “success” rate.

d. What changes/improvements did you make to the course during the current semester as a result of assessments conducted during the term?

Given the nature of a pretest/posttest it would not make sense to institute any changes during the semester. However, in light of the Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 results I will now be able to compare outcomes and carefully evaluate if changes are necessary for Fall 2008.

e. As a result of assessments conducted during this semester, will you make changes/improvements to the course for future semesters? If so, please describe the proposed changes/improvements. If concerns about the reliability of the assessment instrument or about how representative the sample of students assessed is of all students has lead you not to make changes please explain how you will continue the assessment process.

Due to the fact that several professors teach MARK 3100 every semester (and generally not the same professors from semester to semester), during the summer the MARK 3100 professors from the 2007/2008 academic year will likely meet to discuss outcomes and debate the worthiness of the assessment instrument in its current state. I will not make any changes until I have discussed the matter with other marketing faculty.

NOTES