

TITLE The Impact of Peer Mentoring on Marketing Content Mastery

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OBJECTIVE The purpose of this research was to examine the effect and efficacy of peer mentoring on content mastery in an undergraduate junior-level Principles of Marketing course, and how mentors' overall leadership peerdevelopment affects student learning.

METHODOLOGY

High-achieving marketing students were recruited to work directly with student teams during learn-by-doing sessions. Faculty- and self-nominated students submitted an application and résumé to the faculty coach, who was also a course instructor. All sections of the course were scheduled for ten weeks and met twice a week for two hours each day. One control section (without mentors) and four treatment sections (with mentors) were scheduled both quarters. The control section comprised 40 students in Quarter 1 and 64 students in Quarter 2. Treatment sections averaged 63 students per section and were taught by full-time faculty members, with 15–30 years of experience teaching Principles of Marketing. The instructor for Quarter 2's control class also taught a Quarter 2 treatment class. Data were collected from students on content mastery (N = 548; 91% response rate) and student perceptions of the learning experience (N = 533; 88% response rate). Data were also collected from the eight peer mentors on leadership practices (through the Student version of the Leadership Practices Inventory) and their own perceptions of the experience.

KEY FINDINGS

On the basis of a median split of Quarter 1 LPI difference scores, there was a significant effect for mentor leadership development on student content mastery for multiple choice ($p < .05$) but not for essay examinations. Hierarchical models were estimated for both dependent variables and the effect of leadership practices overall was significant for multiple choice but not for essay mastery. For multiple choice, Enable and Encourage were related to higher student performance, and none of the leadership practices contributed to student performance for essay content mastery.

The author's conclude: "Overall results demonstrate that peer mentoring has a positive effect on content mastery and student perceptions of the learning experience and that mentor leadership development makes a significant contribution to student learning" (p. 129). They explain further: "Student learning benefited most when

working with peer mentors who felt they improved as leaders. This shows the effect of mentor leadership development on student content mastery. When matching the five self-assessed leadership practices of the peer mentors to student performance, two practices—enable and encourage—contributed significantly to student learning; however, the other three practices, model, inspire, and challenge, did not offer a unique contribution to student learning. This finding suggests that when facilitating collaborations among peers in a learning environment, mentors should seek most to involve and to recognize the contributions of others, rather than seek to set an example, to inspire a common purpose, or to challenge the status quo” (p. 130).