The Pedagogical Value of Branded Digital Training and Certification Programs

for Digital Marketing Courses

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Preparing students for careers in digital marketing requires marketing educators to design courses with relevant and timely content and learning activities that facilitate knowledge comprehension and skill acquisition. Several companies offering digital products and services have developed digital marketing computer-based training materials and certifications. These branded training programs are a potentially valuable resource for digital marketing educators if they aid in the accomplishment of course learning objectives. This research study evaluates the pedagogical implications of several branded training and certification programs for use in digital marketing courses.

The research method used is a content analysis and pedagogical assessment by multiple digital marketing professors (subject matter experts in both the content of digital marketing and instructional design of digital marketing educational materials). The programs assessed included those offered by the following companies and organizations: Hootsuite, Google, Bing, Digital Marketer, Hubspot, Coursera, IAB (Interactive Advertising Bureau), and Online Marketing Institute. The variables assessed include target courses (topic and delivery method), required time investment for professors to adopt successfully, advantages and disadvantages of using the program as a class requirement, the nature of the educational outcomes (transformational learning or technical skills), the relevance for AACSB learning objectives, and the classification of the learning objectives using Bloom's taxonomy.

The study provides the first known pedagogical assessment of digital marketing training programs provided by companies. Further, marketing educators will benefit by using the results to efficiently determine whether these programs will be of value in their digital course designs and if so the practical implications of doing so.