

Halbesleben, Jonathon R.B., Jennifer A.H. Becker, and Ronald M. Buckley.
"Considering the Labor Contributions of Students: An Alternative to the Student-as-Customer Metaphor." Journal of Education for Business 78 (2003): 255-257.
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In this article, the author talks about the common metaphor that students are customers of education. The author argues that metaphors can be very deceiving while others think the contradictory, and support the use of metaphors. The underlying concept behind this metaphor, students are customers of education, came around in 1990. It was the new push for total quality management within colleges and universities that sparked this metaphor. It was based on a basic marketing idea that the student, or customer, is paying for a service in the form of education. First of all, it is a common understanding that the customer is always right, yet this is not the case in the classroom. This can be seen in the grading structure. If the customer, or student, is always right, then every answer would be correct and this would take away from the educational value of an institution.

It is also debated that this metaphor can be deceptive due to the fact that often students do not pay full price for tuition and that the government often picks up the tab. Since students are not paying full price, it is argued that no commercial transaction takes place to warrant the student being considered a customer. This article goes on to say that a safer metaphor would be to consider the student a "customer labor contributor" (2). This would be a safer metaphor due to the fact that the student often times also serves as an "employee" of the institution by performing some of the duties of professors, such as teaching oneself certain ideas throughout a chapter or lesson.

Researchers have shown that metaphors are often used to teach and give a better understanding. However; there are times in which people do not have the same view on the topic and do not understand what is being said based on the given metaphor. This article gives a closer look into metaphors that deceive people and provides a common metaphor used within the education industry. This provides support that metaphors are not only used in lectures, but also by the marketers of education and the ways it can deceive.