Questions as to whether marketing is an art or a science generate lively debate amongst marketing academics in the field’s top-ranked journals. Many take the side of science, emphasising measurement, causal explanation and generalizations in the creation of knowledge that can be put to immediate operational and strategic use. Others, however, seek accounts based in rich descriptions, lived experience and emotional texture in order to create knowledge of how products, brands and advertising circulate in culture and social life.

In recent years, poetry and creative prose writing have been used to extend the epistemological and methodological boundaries of marketing research. At a more practical level, a glance at almost any advertising media will elicit a profusion of creative and intensely novel communication strategies that are essential to the maintenance of strong brands and the development of new market sectors.

Despite evidence of these creative, arts-based approaches in both the theory and practice of marketing however, marketing education as an arts subject remains underdeveloped compared to its scientific cousin. In order to challenge this status quo, it is proposed that marketing students should be given the opportunity to take part in creative writing workshops. In short, this project seeks to draw current developments in marketing research into marketing education at the University of Melbourne. Creative writing workshops are intended to provide an exciting and productive environment in which to develop essential communication skills that will enhance learning, assessment and transition to the job market.

More specifically, the creative writing laboratory will impact on the student learning experience, fostering a vibrant and exciting zone that can:

- Enhance communication skills through the fostering of creative and original use of written and spoken language.
- Reconsider the epistemological and paradigmatic foundations of marketing (often subjects that make students groan) in as stimulating manner as possible across disciplines and across a wider creative culture.
- Exercise novel approaches to research methods and approaches to building effective advertising and branding campaigns.
- Build confidence in idea generation and the ability to make surprising analyses driven by the richness of communicative possibilities.
- Build greater understanding of the use of metaphor and imagery, both verbally and visually.
In addition to these specific skills, it is expected that students will also develop generic skills in the areas of: critical thinking & creativity; the evaluation of data and other information; receptiveness to criticism; academic essay writing; collaborative learning; problem solving; team work; application of creativity to practice; accessing data and other information from a range of sources. These skills are expected to allow new and enhanced approaches to learning that will feed into subject assessments that require elements of creativity.

Beyond the potential to improve learning outcomes, intended to assist students into the work force. Creative skills are sought after by advertising, marketing and consulting firms where many students hope to gain employment. The opportunity to develop creative communication skills will help students to differentiate themselves from other applicants, whilst also differentiating our own faculty’s approach marketing education as more exciting, intellectually challenging and consummate with the marketplace than is presently the case for many other Universities in Australia and across the globe.