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4LTR Press Increases Student Engagement at St. Petersburg College

St. Petersburg, FL

THE STUDY

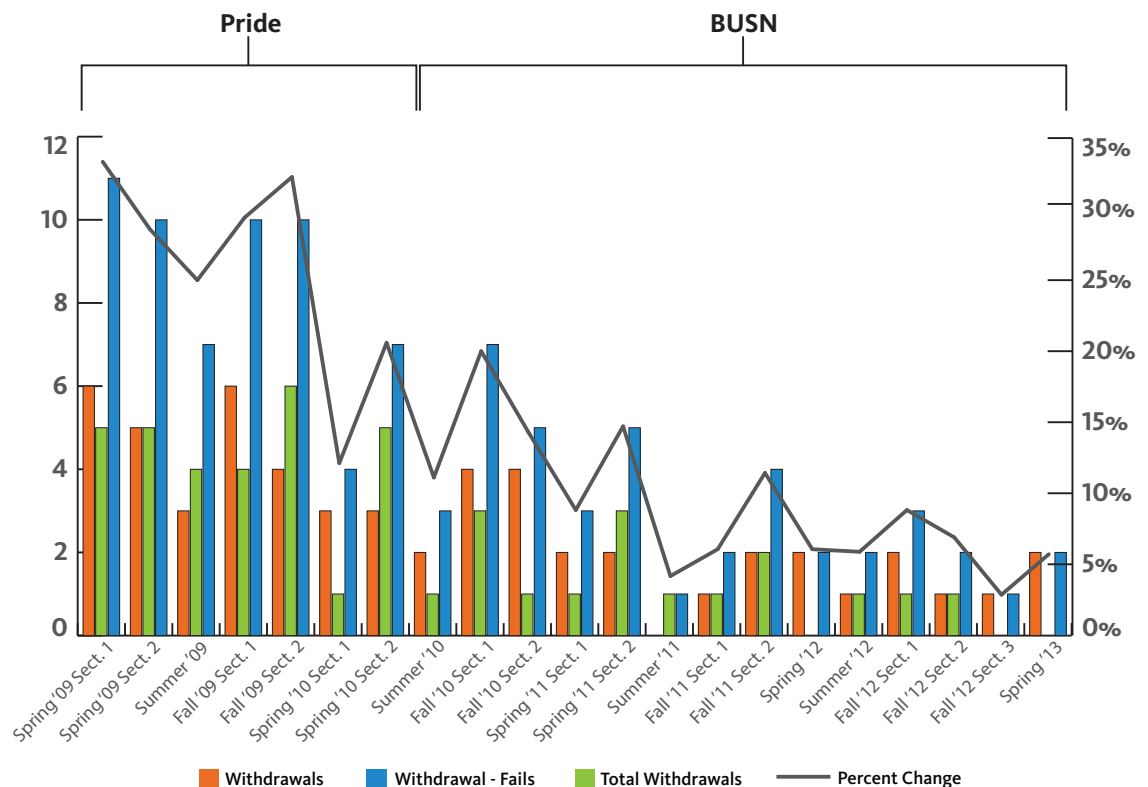
St. Petersburg College professor Dr. John Kurnik had taught introduction to business for years and yet still remained vigilant, “always looking to find ‘the better mouse trap’” for his courses, a “new publication that will make the classroom and learning experience better for students and improve my effectiveness and efficiency.” Summer 2010, Dr. Kurnik switched from a traditional business textbook to BUSN, the introduction to business title from 4LTR Press designed by a student-tested, faculty-approved development process to maximize student engagement and access across learning styles.

Four years later, Dr. Kurnik cites improvement in student retention numbers and higher quality of assigned discussions as proof that changing to a 4LTR Press product was “a smart move.” He attributed some of these improvements in content comprehension to the currency of BUSN, saying “BUSN represents up-to-date material” with familiar current events which create “an easier learning process for students to relate to and comprehend.” Dr. Kurnik also felt the practical, demonstrative approach of BUSN permitted students a “natural” understanding of important terminology within the context of present-day business operations.

“[4LTR Press materials] allow me more freedom to manage my students’ learning experiences more efficiently and effectively. In turn, this has given me more opportunity to be a content expert for my students rather than a technical help desk.”

Dr. John Kurnik

Table 1: Student Withdrawals by Text Adoption, Spring 2009-2013



Finding his better mouse trap has provided Dr. Kurnik with increased freedom in his teaching. He said that 4LTR Press textbooks and digital resources allowed “more freedom to manage my students’ learning experience more... effectively,” and that in turn he has “more opportunity to be a content expert for students rather than a technical help desk.”

THE FINDINGS

After adopting BUSN, the number of students who dropped Dr. Kurnik’s class declined significantly and continue to fall. Last year, 2 students out of 70 dropped his class, a drop rate below 5%. Prior to adopting BUSN, withdrawal and drop rates for Dr. Kurnik’s classes (when corrected for students never attending class during the first drop-add week) were between 22% and 29% of the class (see table 1). He finds now that students tend to take him for several classes because they like the consistency of how material is presented. “Familiarity of the course environment, including the text, gives students confidence in navigating assignments and the complete learning experience.”

Other positive results included anecdotal evidence of improvements to student retention completion rates and more stability in grade distribution after adopting BUSN and other 4LTR Press titles. Dr. Kurnik has also noted an increase in spirited debates and clear analysis of cases using appropriate terminology, which he considers a positive indicator of comprehension, adding “Mastery of terms in any dialog is also the standard of acceptable performance in my class. Students’ grades in these areas have improved over previous semesters based on communication assignment rigor and their working knowledge of concepts.”

While BUSN offered topical relevancy and currency to improve the learning process for his students, Dr. Kurnik maintained high standards when considering his course options: “Text quality, price, add-ons, and company reputation for supporting faculty and students were primary [concerns].” What Dr. Kurnik found in BUSN proved persuasive. “I saw that the content of the text was substantive, dynamic and robust. The online CourseMate material, video cases and support analytics were materials I had used previously with success,” he explained.

CourseMate, the digital resources included with BUSN, also convinced Dr. Kurnik that his students would experience similar benefit. “My feeling is that the BUSN publication and digitally prepared package is exactly what the students need. It allows for learning flexibility at many levels and accommodates faculty student complicated schedules.”

Kurnik answered with an emphatic “Yes!” when asked if he would recommend BUSN or other 4LTR Press products to colleagues. He says that he time manages more effectively and spends more quality time on content and individual instruction while minimizing time spent on technical issues.

“Anecdotal reviews of the grade distributions, student retention, and completion rates after adopting BUSN have shown a higher level of course completion and a more stable grade distribution.”

Dr. John Kurnik



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Source Code: 14M-BU0089
ISBN: 978-1-133-36747-5

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