

ABSTRACT

Ricardo E. Cunningham, Jr.

THE EFFECTS OF STUDENT RESPONSE SYSTEMS ON FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS MAJORING IN BUSINESS

Traditionally, first-generation college students (students whose parents didn't attend college) are at a distinct disadvantage in regards to academic performance and outcomes at post-secondary institutions; and according to the literature, the most commonly declared major of first-generation students is business. Student response systems (SRS) are an in-class student polling technology that is designed to create an engaging and inviting learning environment that maximizes active learning. The research on SRS has cited numerous benefits to students including student satisfaction, engagement, exam performance, and class interaction. This study will assess the effectiveness of SRS in terms of improving exam scores (which have a positive correlation to graduation rates) of first-generation students majoring in business. Ideally, SRS will lead to higher exam scores which will benefit the personal/career goals of these students and improve the retention rates of post-secondary institutions.

The purpose of this study is threefold. This study seeks to determine (1) if student response systems (SRS) have a significant positive effect on exam scores of all students that are exposed to the system; (2) if SRS causes a significant improvement in the exam scores for first-generation college students majoring in business exposed to SRS compared to first-generation college students majoring in business not exposed to SRS; and (3) if first-generation college students majoring in business who are exposed to SRS report positive feelings towards the use of the technology in the classroom.