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Assessment of Self-Reported Studying Habits in a High-Risk Business Calculus Course

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Assessment of Self-Reported Studying Habits in a High-Risk Business Calculus Course

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Abstract

The University of Rhode Island offers a number of undergraduate courses that are considered high-risk, which is constituted by a high failure rate. BUS 111: Business Calculus has been identified as a high-risk course that focuses on basic concepts in calculus and is typically taken by freshman students. There are a multitude of potential factors that increase the likelihood of students struggling in BUS 111, such as prior math knowledge, class attendance, lack of resources, and ineffective studying strategies. However, the most salient factors for determining performance in BUS 111 have not been identified. Therefore, I sought to examine what studying techniques undergraduate students employed in BUS 111 and which techniques contributed to successful performance on examinations.

In order to gather data on studying habits, I constructed two surveys that were distributed to approximately 200 students enrolled in BUS 111 during the Fall 2010 semester. The surveys included information that assessed demographics, studying techniques and duration, use of social media and examination performance. In addition, I conducted interviews with faculty, and spoke with other universities to determine whether they offered high-risk undergraduate math courses. Following this, I examined the survey responses to attempt to determine what factors contributed to successful performance on examinations.

I was able to identify factors that contributed to successful performance on BUS 111 examinations. As a result of the findings, I have made some suggestions for studying habits and additional approaches to this class that may improve the likelihood of successful performance in BUS 111. This project has helped me develop skills to conduct a basic research study and communicate findings to an audience regarding a certain problem. Ultimately, these recommendations may help future undergraduate students perform successfully in BUS 111.