

# Affordable Learning Georgia Textbook Transformation Grants

## Final Report

**Date:** December 18, 2015

**Grant Number:** 107

**Institution Name(s):** Columbus State University

**Team Members (Name, Title, Department, Institutions if different, and email address for each):**

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**Project Lead:** Dr. Robin Snipes

**Course Name(s) and Course Numbers:**

| Names                          | Course Numbers       | Number of Students | Instructors  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| BUSA 4185 Strategic Management | BUSA 4185 CRN #80178 | 31                 | Robin Snipes |
| BUSA 4185 Strategic Management | BUSA 4185 CRN #80191 | 31                 | Robin Snipes |
| <b>Total</b>                   |                      | <b>62</b>          |              |

**Semester Project Began:** Spring, 2015

**Semester of Implementation:** Fall, 2015

**Average Number of Students Per Course Section:** 31

**Number of Course Sections Affected by Implementation:** 2

**Total Number of Students Affected by Implementation:** 62

## 1. List of Resources Used in the Textbook Transformation

| Title  | Author                               | Creative Commons   | URL   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Strategic Management: Evaluation and Execution (Course Primary Textbook) | David Ketchen<br>Jeremy Short        | <i>Strategic Management: Evaluation and Execution</i> is offered through <a href="http://2012books.lardbucket.org">2012books.lardbucket.org</a> and is licensed for open access under <a href="#">Creative Commons</a> | <a href="http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/strategic-management-evaluation-and-execution/index.html">http://2012books.lardbucket.org/books/strategic-management-evaluation-and-execution/index.html</a>                 |
| Guy Kawasaki: "Know Thyself and Niche Thyself"                           | Guy Kawasaki                         | Youtube Video  | <a href="https://youtu.be/PHhfDkLrOpA">https://youtu.be/PHhfDkLrOpA</a>   |
| "Southwest Pride"  | Southwest Airlines Promotional Video | Youtube Video  | <a href="https://youtu.be/Z79p7Ue78Dc">https://youtu.be/Z79p7Ue78Dc</a>   |
| "How to Analyze a Company's Financial Position"                          | Ben McClure                          | Investopedia Publicly Shared Article   | <a href="http://www.investopedia.com/articles/fundamental/04/063004.asp">http://www.investopedia.com/articles/fundamental/04/063004.asp</a>   |
| "Introduction to Fundamental Analysis"                                   | Investopedia                         | Shared   | <a href="http://www.investopedia.com/university/fundamentalanalysis/">http://www.investopedia.com/university/fundamentalanalysis/</a>   |
| "Formulation of Functional Strategy"                                     | ICAI Knowledge Gateway               | Creative common  | <a href="http://www.icaiknowledgegateway.org/littledms/folder1/chapter-5-formulation-of-functional-strategy.pdf">http://www.icaiknowledgegateway.org/littledms/folder1/chapter-5-formulation-of-functional-strategy.pdf</a> |
| "Long Rise and Fall of Volkswagan"                                       | Bloomberg Business Video             | Youtube Video  | <a href="https://youtu.be/SX_XKD_fhRk">https://youtu.be/SX_XKD_fhRk</a>   |
| "The Volkswagan Scandal Explained"                                       | Wall Street Journal Video            | Youtube Video  | <a href="https://youtu.be/VJjqIQ_pvRE">https://youtu.be/VJjqIQ_pvRE</a>   |

## 2. Narrative

**Describe the key outcomes, whether positive, negative, or interesting, of your project.**

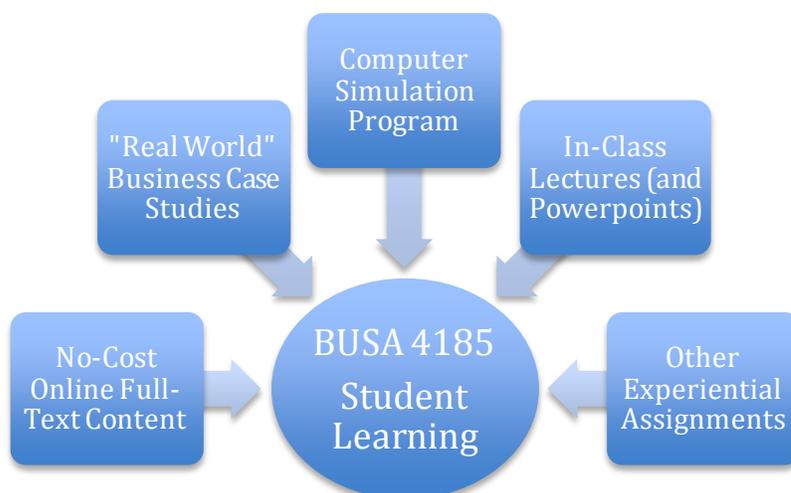
**Include:**

### A. Summary of your transformation experience, including challenges and accomplishments

- **Overview**

All Columbus State University ("CSU") undergraduate business students are required to take the BUSA 4185 "Strategic Management" capstone course in their last

semester before graduation. This capstone course experience is required at most business schools across the USG system and across the country. The course integrates the major fields of business and focuses on applying the knowledge students have gained in their junior/senior level business courses. At CSU, normally about 170 to 200 students take this course every year, but the impact on the University System of Georgia as a whole could be much larger since thousands of business students across the state take this course every year. From the experiences of the CSU instructors teaching the course (and from student feedback), it is apparent that students learn more from "real world" material, case studies, computer simulations, and other experiential exercises done in class and as homework assignments. Therefore, professors who teach this course focus more on the application of the knowledge that students have gained in their prior coursework. In addition to the textbook, there is also an online Business Strategy simulation project. The cost of access to this online simulation is \$45. Course student learning outcomes are achieved in the following ways:



The instructors of this undergraduate course believed that much of the course content could be developed in an open access format, savings students the cost of a new textbook (currently \$180). Eliminating the cost of the textbook would mean that students' total cost for course materials would be limited to the \$45 required for access to the online simulation program.

Therefore, the three main goals of this project/grant proposal were as follows:

- (1) Identify and develop useful online textbook content for Strategic Management (BUSA 4185) that is readily available to students;

(2) Improve student learning by increasing students' willingness to read course material through the inclusion of more student-oriented, relevant, and affordable course content in BUSA 4185; and

(3) Share the course content with other USG business schools to decrease student costs and improve student retention and learning throughout the USG system.

The following information provided will describe how the transformation experience was successful in achieving these project goals.

- **Transformation experience**

Overall, the transformation experience was good. We were able to accomplish our goal of realizing an estimated cost savings for book expenses of about \$11,160 for the 62 students enrolled in two sections in the Fall semester of 2015 (\$180 textbook cost per student).

In the Spring and Summers semesters of 2015, the textbook transformation team met several times to share relevant course-related open access material. A course "sandbox" was created in the D2L ("CougarView") learning management system that enabled the team to post and share material throughout the semester.

In the Fall semester of 2015, two course sections of BUSA 4185 participated in the implementation of the textbook transformation process. The course sections were taught by the project lead, Dr. Robin Snipes, in a traditional, face-to-face learning environment. The initial course was set up in the institution's learning management system first, and then, after use and testing of the material, it was transferred to the institution's LibGuide website so that it could be shared with other institutions (see <http://columbusstate.libguides.com>).

The phases of the textbook transformation are shown below in the table. The data collection phase will be discussed later in the report.

| Task   | Responsibility  | Date Completed |
|--|---|----------------|
| Identification of no-cost online textbook chapters, journal articles, case studies, and other material useful and relevant to undergraduate business students. | Drs. Snipes, Heriot, Marsh, Ms. Thornton, and CSU librarian | August 1, 2015 |

|  |  |                   |
|--|--|-------------------|
| Design and development of new online course (course structure, online activities, assessments, etc.) | Drs, Snipes, Heriot, Marsh, Ms. Thornton | July 31, 2015     |
| Completion of revised syllabus with new online content and assignments                               | Drs. Snipes, Heriot, and Marsh           | August 7, 2015    |
| Implementation of new course in Fall 2015 sections   | Dr. Snipes                               | December 1, 2015  |
| Review of possible copyright issues and online course content usability/sustainability               | CSU Libraries (Mr. Flynn)                | December 15, 2015 |
| Data collection and student success measures analyzed  | Drs. Snipes, Heriot, and Marsh           | December 15, 2015 |

The adoption of the new course materials and assignments by Dr. Snipes occurred in varying degrees. Drs. Snipes, Heriot, and Marsh made the new materials available in the D2L course "sandbox" so that all team members could review the new material as soon as it was selection for inclusion. Dr. Snipes then incorporated the material and other assignments from the D2L sandbox into the BUSA 4185 course learning management site (called "CougarView" at Columbus State) in the Fall of 2015.

Throughout the transformation experience, the instruction was supported by Ms. Amy Thornton, Director of the school's Center of Online Learning. She provided the technical assistance to ensure the technology infrastructure was available for D2L. Her assistance provides a much-needed layer of support that makes the use of new technology less challenging by CSU faculty and students.

At the end of the semester, the students in the two face-to-face classes were surveyed.

- **Challenges**

There were three major challenges related to the transformation experience. The first challenge that was identified by the instructional team members focused on convincing students to use the online materials (versus printed material). Some students complained that they would rather have a printed version of the book, but the ink and paper cost made printing the book more costly than expected. A solution to this issue was to offer a hardcopy of the textbook at the school's printshop for a small fee (\$20). About 20% of the students took advantage of this

option. Another challenge was that some students had already borrowed or purchased used copies of the course textbook used in previous semesters from friends and classmates, but this is not expected to be an issue in the future since future students will be aware of this textbook change. Lastly, a third challenge was the amount of time required to develop the material and then set up the information sharing website (in CSU's LibGuides) for sharing with other USG institutions.

- **Accomplishments (Outcomes)**

The three goals of the project as presented on Page 3 of this report were accomplished. The success of the transformation experience provides a good baseline for future use of free, open-access materials for other courses in the Turner College of Business.

Goal 1: Identify and develop useful online textbook content for Strategic Management (BUSA 4185) that is readily available to students.

This first goal was accomplished. The textbook transformation team was able to find a useful open-access textbook for this course. The textbook did lack some content that the team felt was integral to the course learning objectives, but the team was able to find other appropriate material to "fill in the missing gaps."

Goal 2: Improve student learning by increasing students' willingness to read course material through the inclusion of more student-oriented, relevant, and affordable course content in BUSA 4185.

All three faculty members shared material through a D2L "sandbox" course set up in February of 2015. The course material was developed by the team in the Spring and Summer semesters of 2015, so it was available to students at the beginning of the Fall, 2015 semester (the implementation semester). Getting a strong start to the semester is essential for student success. Thus, the availability of the materials for students on the first day of class was critically important for this project. The new course material saved most students as much as \$180 on course material. Based on student test scores and other feedback from students, Goal #2 was met.

An estimated 62 students enrolled in the course did not have to purchase a new textbook. The potential combined savings for this one cohort was an estimated \$11,160, and that number is expected to increase significantly for the Spring, 2016 cohort. The retention/completion rate was approximately 97% for the 62 students who participated in the transformation experience. Of the 62 students, only two

students did not complete the course: one student withdrew at the beginning of the semester, and one dropped out for personal reasons.

According to a Textbook Satisfaction Survey given to students at the end of the course, about 75% of students enrolled in the course found the open access textbook to be helpful in the course learning process. About 77% of the students enrolled in the course found the open access textbook easy to understand, and about 96% found the open access textbook about the same or better than other textbooks they have used during their college tenure. Additionally, when asked whether other courses should provide free, open-access textbooks, about 77% responded definitely, and another 27% responded that it might be useful for some courses but maybe not all of them.

Goal #3: Share the course content with other USG business schools to decrease student costs and improve student retention and learning throughout the USG system.

This goal has been accomplished. After the course was tested during the Fall, 2015 implementation phase of this project, it was transferred to CSU's LibGuides website for sharing throughout the University System of Georgia (see <http://columbusstate.libguides.com/>). This information sharing website is available and accessible to all system institutions. The URL for this course is <http://columbusstate.libguides.com/businessstrategy>.

- **Transformative Impacts on Individual Instruction**

Dr. Snipes found some positive transformation impacts on her instruction during the implementation phase (Fall of 2015). Dr. Snipes indicated that she felt the transformation process improved teaching and students' interest in the subject. All three faculty members on the team (Snipes, Heriot, Marsh) indicated that the process increased their knowledge of the availability of Open Education Resources (OER) to enhance coursework. Moreover, Dr. Snipes added that the transformation process also helped her to locate, develop, and understand the value of new "real world" content that could improve student interest and learning.

Another positive impact noted by Dr. Snipes was that she did not have to wait until a week or two into the semester to start textbook activities. With the open-access textbook available to students on the first day of the semester, she was able to start instruction immediately since enrolled students could immediately download the textbook and other course materials.

- **Transformative impacts on your students and their performance**

The impact of this textbook transformation was mainly on the cost savings to students, although student academic performance may have also improved slightly through this project.

Student test scores from the current semester (Fall, 2015) were compared to the Fall, 2014 cohort that used the traditional printed textbook. There are two main exams given in the course that cover material in the textbook. On the first exam, the Fall, 2015 (textbook transformation) cohort performed at a slightly higher level on average than the 2014 cohort (mean = 80 versus 75). On the second exam, the textbook transformation cohort performed about the same as the Fall, 2014 cohort (mean = 80 versus 81). Additionally, a comparison of the student retention and completion rates for the two cohorts -- 2015 versus 2014 -- showed that the 2015 rate remained very high with about a 97% successful completion rate (note that business students have to make a grade of "C" or better to pass this course). Therefore, it can be concluded that student performance was slightly better in the Fall, 2015 textbook transformation cohort.

A second impact noted by Dr. Snipes was that having the Open Stax textbook allowed everyone to be on equal footing when it came to starting the class. For example, sometimes the financial aid reimbursement is not available at the beginning of the semester for some students. The textbook transformation gives all students access to the textbook from the first day of class.

**B. Describe lessons learned, including any things you would do differently next time.**

There were lessons learned from the perspective of the project lead. One of the lessons learned was the amount of time instructors will need to spend on this type of course transformation project. Team members need to meet several times prior to the beginning of the implementation semester. Additionally, the time spent on the course development, assessment, report writing, and course sharing consumed more time than expected.

Other, more important, lessons were learned about student learning during this process. Based on student responses to the Textbook Satisfaction Survey (see Appendix), for traditional, face-to-face lecture courses, many students seem to prefer to use Powerpoints over textbooks for studying purposes. About 78% of students responded that they found the Powerpoints posted by the course instructor to be more useful than the course textbook in supporting learning outside of class. However, it is

highly likely that this finding will be different for online courses in which students have to rely more on the textbook to learn course material. Additionally, courses that use the "flipped" classroom technique -- where the typical lecture and homework elements are reversed and in-class time is devoted to exercises, projects, and/or discussion -- might find that textbooks are more important to student learning.

From the Textbook Satisfaction Survey, it was discovered that about 48% of students in the course indicated that they read very little or none of the textbook at all during the semester. Note that this is not because students found the textbook to be difficult to read, since 87% indicated that the textbook was "easy to understand." In order to motivate more students to read the textbook, in future classes the team will assign more problems/questions and assignments directly from the textbook and work towards incorporating more of a "flipped" classroom style. It is clear that instructors need to provide different learning materials/tools to accommodate the different learning styles and preferences of this generation of students.

### 3. Quotes

- **Provide three quotes from students evaluating their experience with the no-cost learning materials.**

Student #1: "The online material is helpful. It gives us the ability to have access to the text from the first day of class and it is free!"

Student #2: "Free textbooks allow access and learning without a budget for a \$200 textbook. This textbook was very easy to understand and I enjoyed reading the material."

Student #3: "As a disabled veteran with a herniated lumbar disk, I really appreciated not having to carry the weight of one more textbook in my backpack."

### 4. Quantitative and Qualitative Measures

The success of the transformation experience was measured by both quantitative and qualitative measures for the project. The quantitative measures for this project involved textbook cost savings, retention in course, and the overall academic success of students completing the course. Based on an analysis of the data, it is apparent that the textbook transformation was a success in at least three ways: (1) it saved students money on textbook costs; (2) it provided a learning tool for students to begin using on the first day of class; and (3) it was a satisfactory replacement for the expensive, printed textbook

students normally use in other business courses (as indicated by the Textbook Satisfaction Survey).

The cost savings for the project is estimated at \$11,160 for the Fall, 2015 semester. This figure was calculated by adding all the students in the two sections of the course (total = 62) at the beginning of the class, multiplied by the cost of the new edition of the Business Strategy textbook used in prior semesters (\$180). It should be noted that the Spring, 2016 semester savings will be higher since a significantly larger number of students take the capstone course in the Spring semester.

In regards to the academic rates, the drop rate was less than 3% (n=2), and the course retention and completion rates were 97%. The overall academic success of the transformation experience resulted in slightly higher test scores than in previous semesters. Student test scores from the current semester (Fall, 2015) were compared to the Fall, 2014 cohort that used the traditional printed textbook. There are two main exams given in the course that cover material in the textbook. On the first exam, the Fall, 2015 cohort performed at a slightly higher level on average than the Fall, 2014 cohort (mean = 80 versus 75). On the second exam, the Fall, 2015 cohort performed about the same as the Fall, 2014 cohort (mean = 80 versus 81). Additionally, a comparison of the student retention and completion rates for the two cohorts -- 2015 versus 2014 -- showed that the 2015 rate remained very high with about a 97% successful completion rate (note that a successful completion for business students is a grade of "C" or better in this course). Therefore, it can be concluded that student performance was slightly better in the Fall, 2015 textbook transformation cohort.

Qualitative data obtained from a survey given was also obtained for the project. There were 55 surveys completed by the students in Dr. Snipes' textbook transformation classes. In sum, the positive impact of the OER materials was shown from the student results. Responses to Question 9 on the survey indicated that at least 96% of the respondents thought the textbook was at least the same or better as other textbooks used in the past. Responses to Question 10 on the survey indicated that 100% of students think other courses should also have open-access textbooks available.

## **5. Sustainability Plan**

The Turner College of Business offer the BUSA 4185 Strategic Management course every semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer). The selected course is a required class that is taken by all business students in their last semester prior to graduation. Now that the open-access textbook for this course has been selected, the team will continue to add resources and update the other materials used for instruction.

The team will be available to assist other faculty teaching different sections of this course. Further, this team of faculty will encourage the Department to enlist other

faculty members to participate in future textbook transformation grants. Results from this grant provide compelling evidence for the rationale to continue and expand open access materials for the Turner College of Business and other business colleges in the University System of Georgia.

## **6. Future Plans**

The project has made the team aware that the traditional model of student learning is changing. The plan is for the team to present the findings to faculty in the Turner College of Business during the College's January faculty meetings with the goal of convincing other business faculty to apply for transformation grants. Now that the open-access textbook for this course has been selected, the team will continue to add resources and update the other materials used for instruction. Lastly, given the new data from the Textbook Satisfaction Survey on student use of textbooks versus other course material, the team will look for ways to motivate business students to read the textbook. In future classes, the team will assign more problems/questions and assignments directly from the textbook and work towards incorporating more of a "flipped" classroom style. Lastly, the team will look for publication outlets for these findings. It is highly likely that other business faculty across the country may be interested in the data presented in this report.

## **7. Description of Photograph**

A group photo of the BUSA 4185 Textbook Transformation team is below. Shown in the picture is (from left to right):

- Ms. Amy Thornton, Director of CSU's Center of Online Learning
- Dr. Laurence Marsh, Assistant Professor of Management in CSU's Turner College of Business
- Dr. Kirk Heriot, Evelyn and Ray Crowley Endowed Chair of Entrepreneurship in CSU's Turner College of Business
- Mr. Mark Flynn, CSU's Dean of Libraries
- Dr. Robin Snipes, Project Lead, Professor of Management in CSU's Turner College of Business



APPENDIX A

**BUSA 4185**  
**Textbook Satisfaction Survey**  
**Fall, 2015**  
*(With Student Response Percentages)*

Note that this survey is anonymous and confidential. We would like to have your feedback regarding the free, online open-access textbook that you used for the course. Compare your experiences in this course to other courses that required a traditional printed textbook. Then answer the following questions honestly and objectively.

- \_\_\_\_\_ During my college career, for most courses I normally:
- (38%)** a. Purchase a printed course textbook (new or used)
  - (44%)** b. Rent a printed course textbook (online or from the College bookstore)
  - (7%)** c. Rent an online course e-book
  - (11%)** d. None of the above -- I usually just borrow a textbook from one of my classmates to use for studying purposes
- \_\_\_\_\_ If/when you didn't purchase or rent a textbook for a course, what was the reason?
- (36%)** a. The instructor told me it wasn't necessary to do well in the course
  - (0%)** b. A student told me it wasn't necessary to do well in the course
  - (15%)** c. The textbook was too expensive
  - (29%)** d. All of the above
  - (20%)** e. I have always purchased a textbook for every course!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assume that cost is NOT a factor. Which of the following course materials would you prefer to use?
- (84%)** a. Printed and bound textbooks
  - (13%)** b. Online course e-books
  - (4%)** c. Video and/or audio books (for example, Podcasts)
  - (0%)** d. None of the above -- I don't think I need them to do well in my coursework
- \_\_\_\_\_ How useful to your learning the course material was the free online textbook that was provided for this course?
- (35%)** a. Very helpful
  - (38%)** b. Somewhat helpful
  - (7%)** c. Not very helpful
  - (20%)** d. Not helpful at all -- I never used it
- \_\_\_\_\_ If a free textbook were not provided for this course, how likely is it that you would have purchased or rented a textbook this semester?
- (27%)** a. I would have definitely purchased or rented a textbook for this course
  - (35%)** b. There is a good chance that I would have purchased or rented a textbook
  - (25%)** c. There is a good chance that I wouldn't have purchased or rented a textbook
  - (13%)** d. I definitely wouldn't have purchased or rented a textbook for this course

\_\_\_\_\_ From the types of study aids listed below that were available to you during this semester, which did you find to be most useful to support your learning outside of class?

- (13%)** a. Free online course e-book
- (78%)** b. Powerpoints
- (2%)** c. YouTube videos (suggested by instructor)
- (7%)** d. Strategy Simulation Game (bsg-online)

\_\_\_\_\_ How much of the free online textbook did you actually read during this semester?

- (11%)** a. I read all of the chapters that we covered in class.
- (18%)** b. I read most of the chapters that we covered in class.
- (24%)** c. I read some of the chapters that we covered in class.
- (24%)** d. I read very little of the textbook.
- (24%)** e. I didn't read the textbook at all.

\_\_\_\_\_ How easy was the textbook to understand?

- (56%)** a. The textbook was very easy to understand and provided good examples of concepts.
- (31%)** b. The textbook was somewhat easy to understand.
- (11%)** c. The textbook was somewhat difficult to understand and the concepts were not clearly explained.
- (2%)** d. The textbook was challenging and difficult to understand and I did not find it useful to the learning process.

\_\_\_\_\_ How did the free online textbook used in this course compare to other business textbooks that you have used in other courses?

- (18%)** a. The textbook was much better than other textbooks that I have used.
- (27%)** b. The textbook was somewhat better than other textbooks that I have used.
- (51%)** c. The textbook was about the same as other textbooks that I have used.
- (4%)** d. The textbook was somewhat worse than other textbooks that I have used.
- (0%)** e. The textbook was much worse than other textbooks that I have used.

\_\_\_\_\_ Do you think more courses should provide free online textbooks?

- (73%)** a. Yes -- all of them!
- (27%)** b. It might be useful for some courses but not all of them
- (0%)** c. No -- I would rather buy or rent a traditional printed textbook

Please provide your comments about the value of free, open-access textbooks for students -- how is it helpful (if at all)?

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