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Writing support for overseas students: quick fix or responsive solution?

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School of Computing & Engineering

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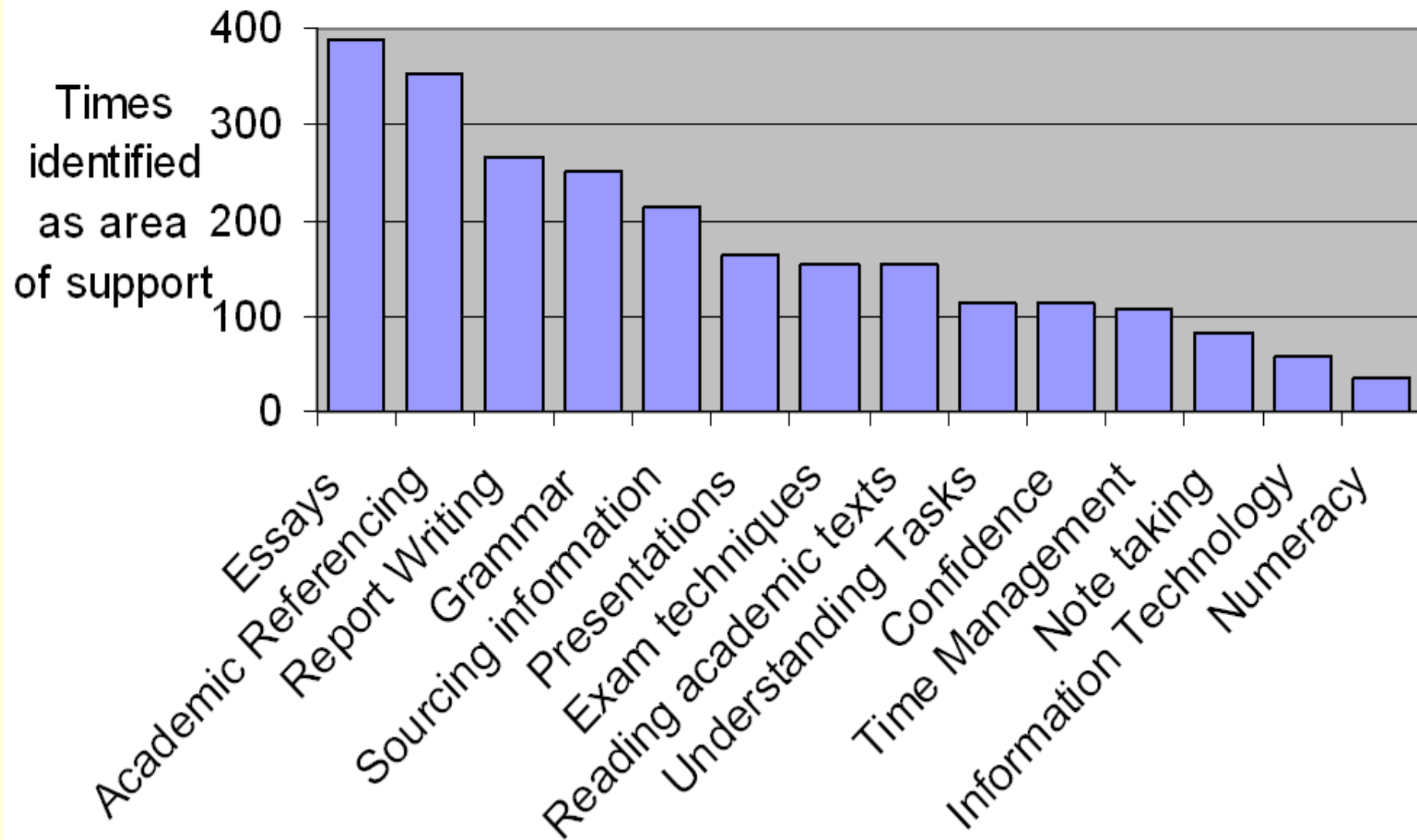


Writing Support for Overseas
Students: quick fix or responsive
solution?

Academic Skills Project

- Established in 2002
- Funded by the United Kingdom's Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC) as a Teaching Quality Enhancement Fund (TQEF) project
- Established academic skills development across the University to underpin retention of students
- Provide assistance for students in non-subject aspects of study

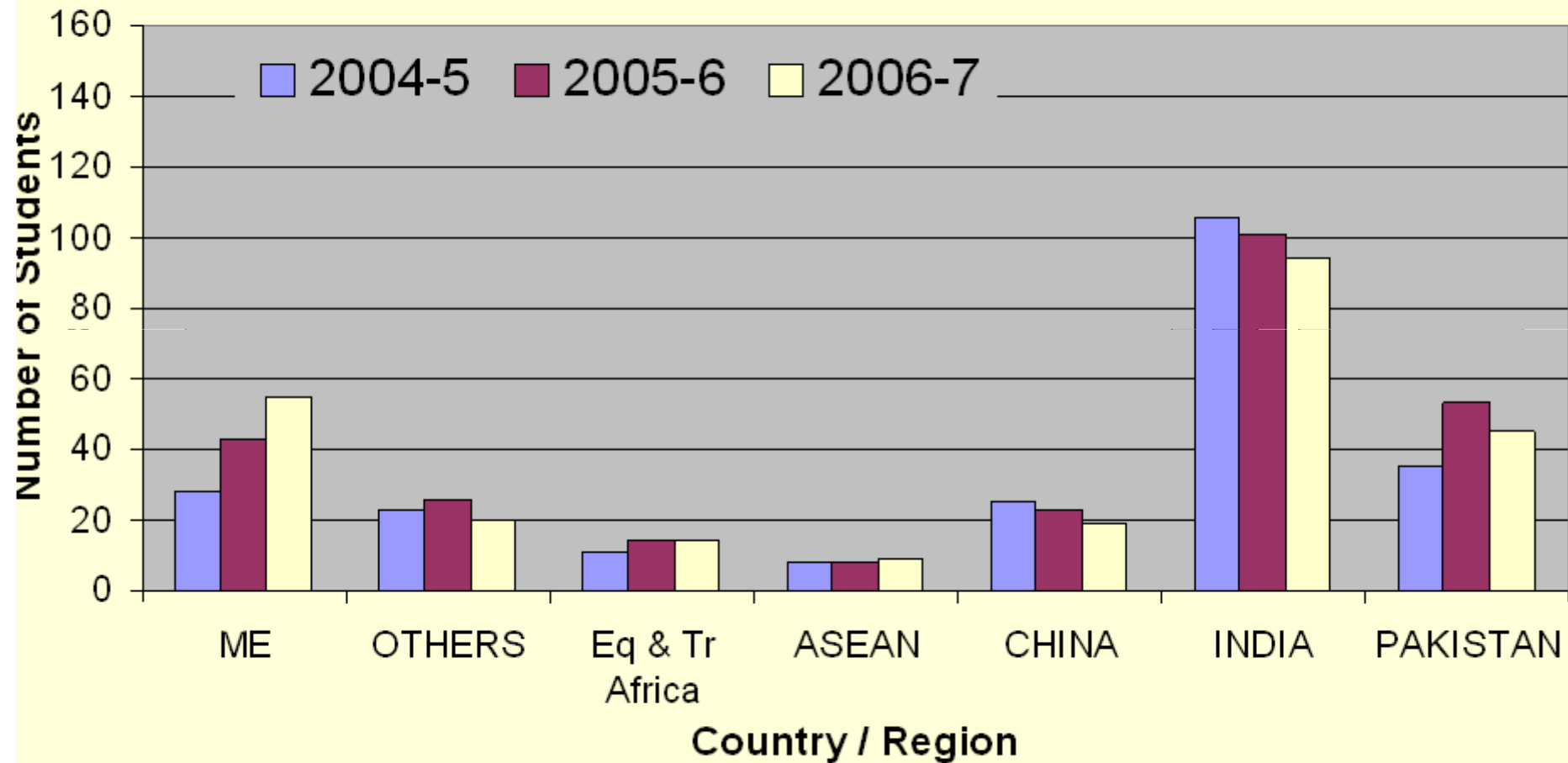
Help sought from Academic Skills Tutors



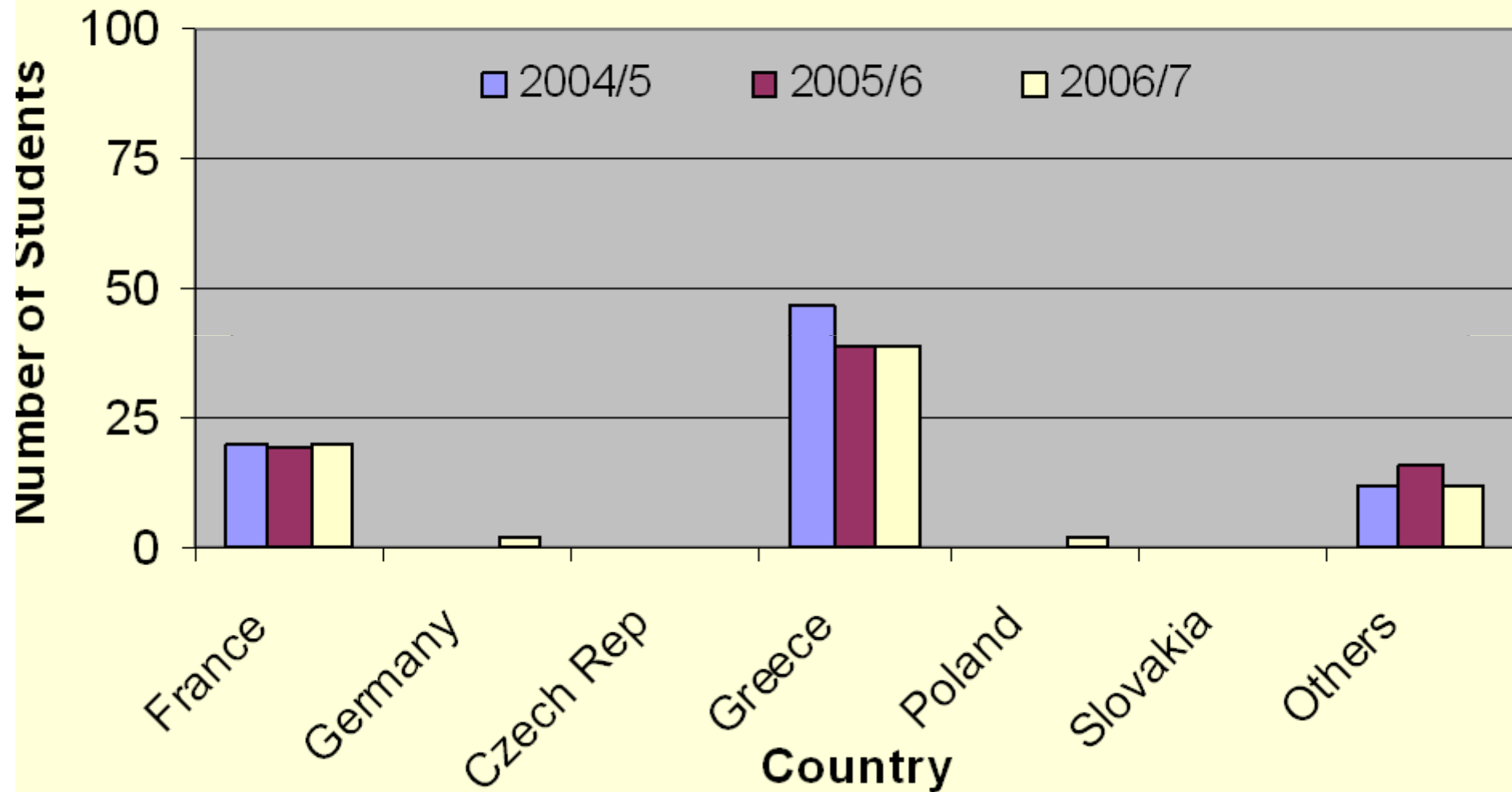
Students & Writing Tasks

- Students
 - Access; foundation; undergraduate and postgraduate students
 - UK students and students from overseas including the European Union
- Writing tasks
 - Routine coursework assignments
 - Final year undergraduate projects
 - Dissertations for masters degree students

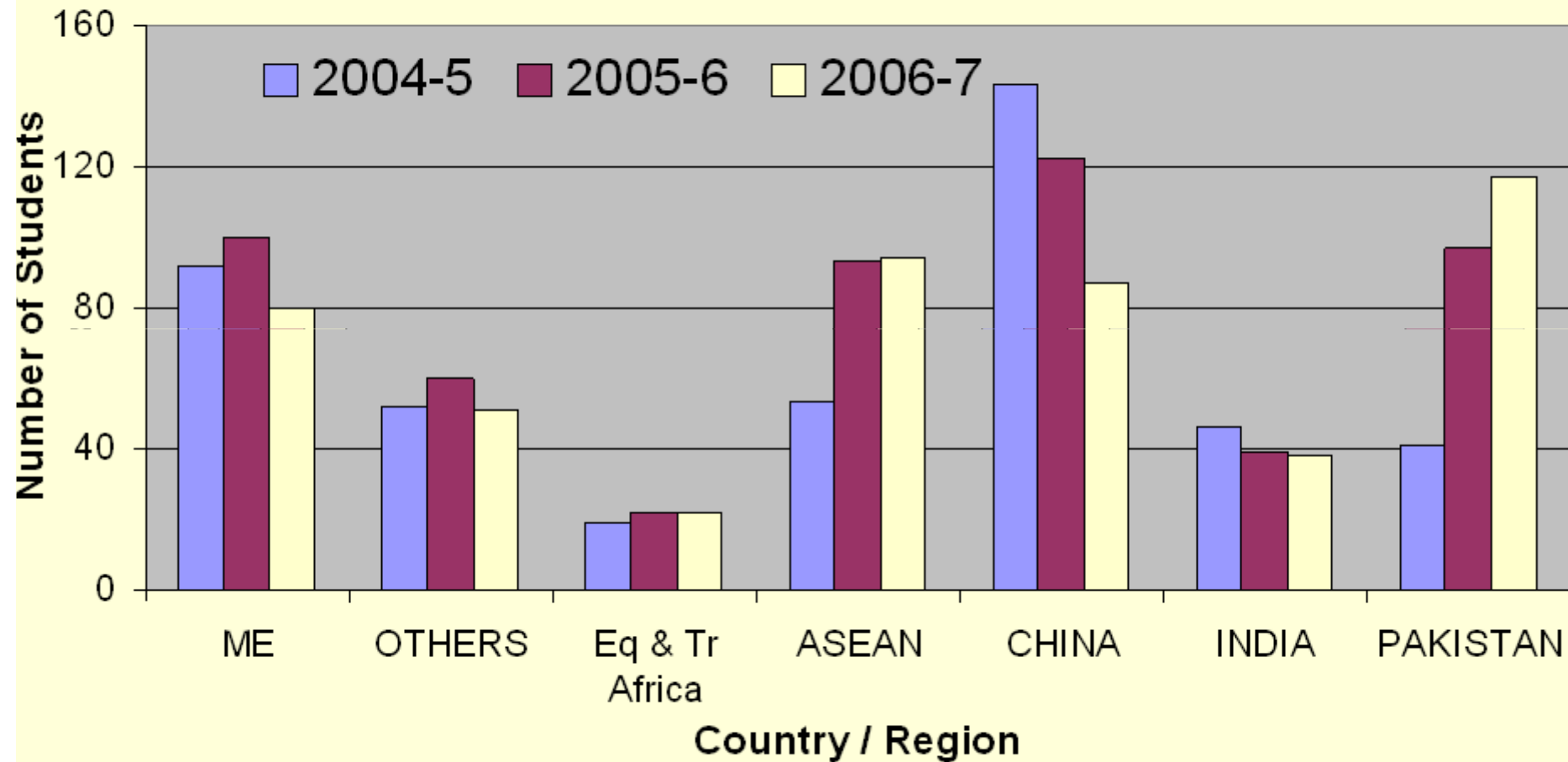
School of Computing & Engineering: Overseas Students (excluding EU)



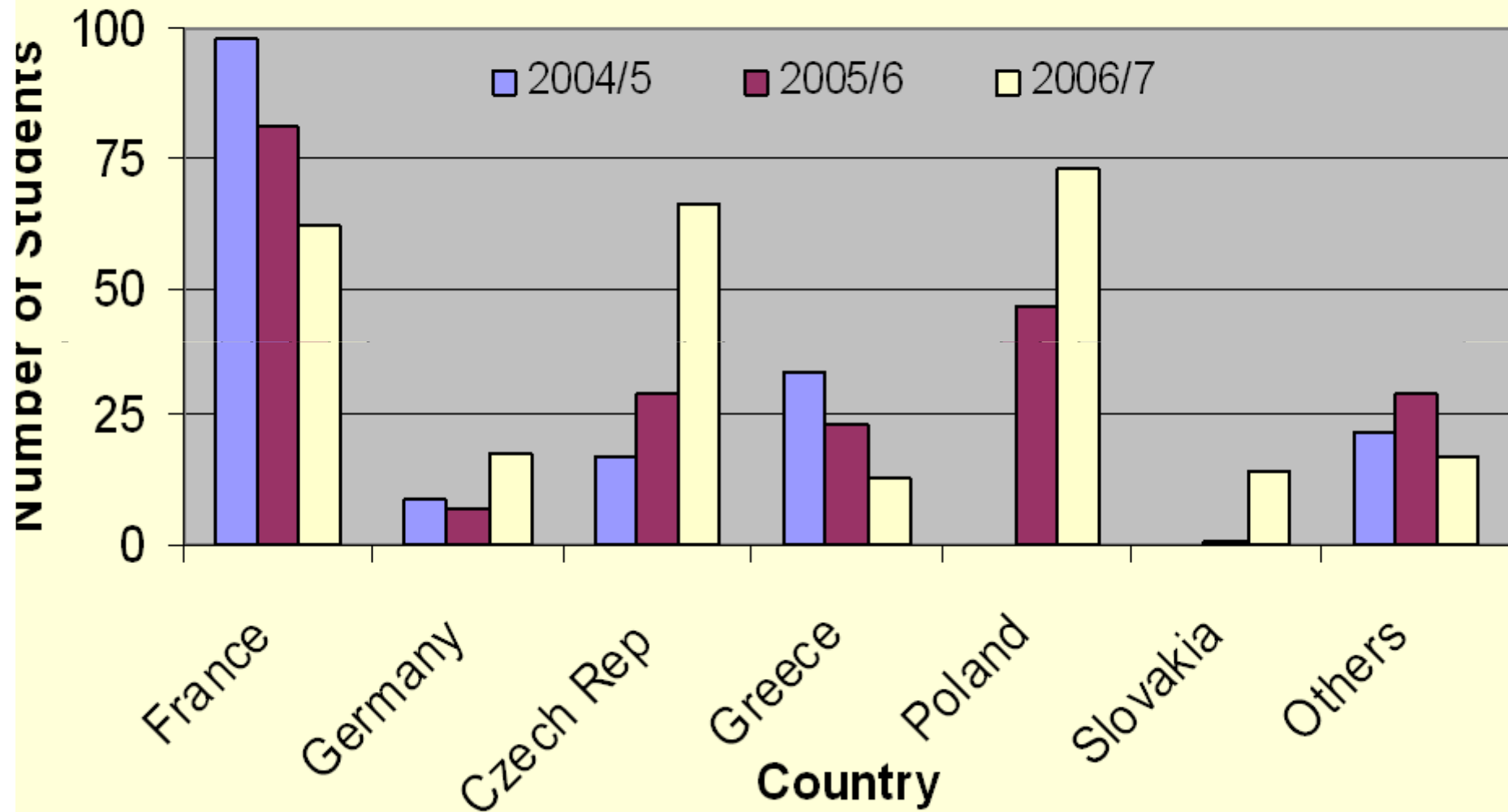
School of Computing & Engineering: EU Students



Business School: Overseas Students (excluding EU)



Business School: EU Students



Pedagogical Challenges

- Writing: level & length
- Experience only of traditional assessment
- Students need to acquire new skills quickly
- Particular issue for final year direct entry undergraduates

Political & Institutional Challenges

- European Union students deemed to be UK students for funding purposes
- The University's International Office unable to help
- No University-wide strategy for providing English language instruction or support for overseas students
- Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) 20 April 2007 melanie.newman@thes.co.uk

The course

Voluntary participation

Invitations to attend made on the basis of
Individual Learning Profiles

Classes formed according to student
availability

Attendance & Take Up

<u>Year</u>	<u>Cohort</u>	<u>Attendances</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Weeks</u>	<u>Take up</u>
2004/5	48	260	26	10	54%
2005/6	89	576	38	15	43%
2006/7	130	1029	73	14	57%

Lessons & Tutorials

Up to 16 lessons

8 entirely concerned with aspects of writing

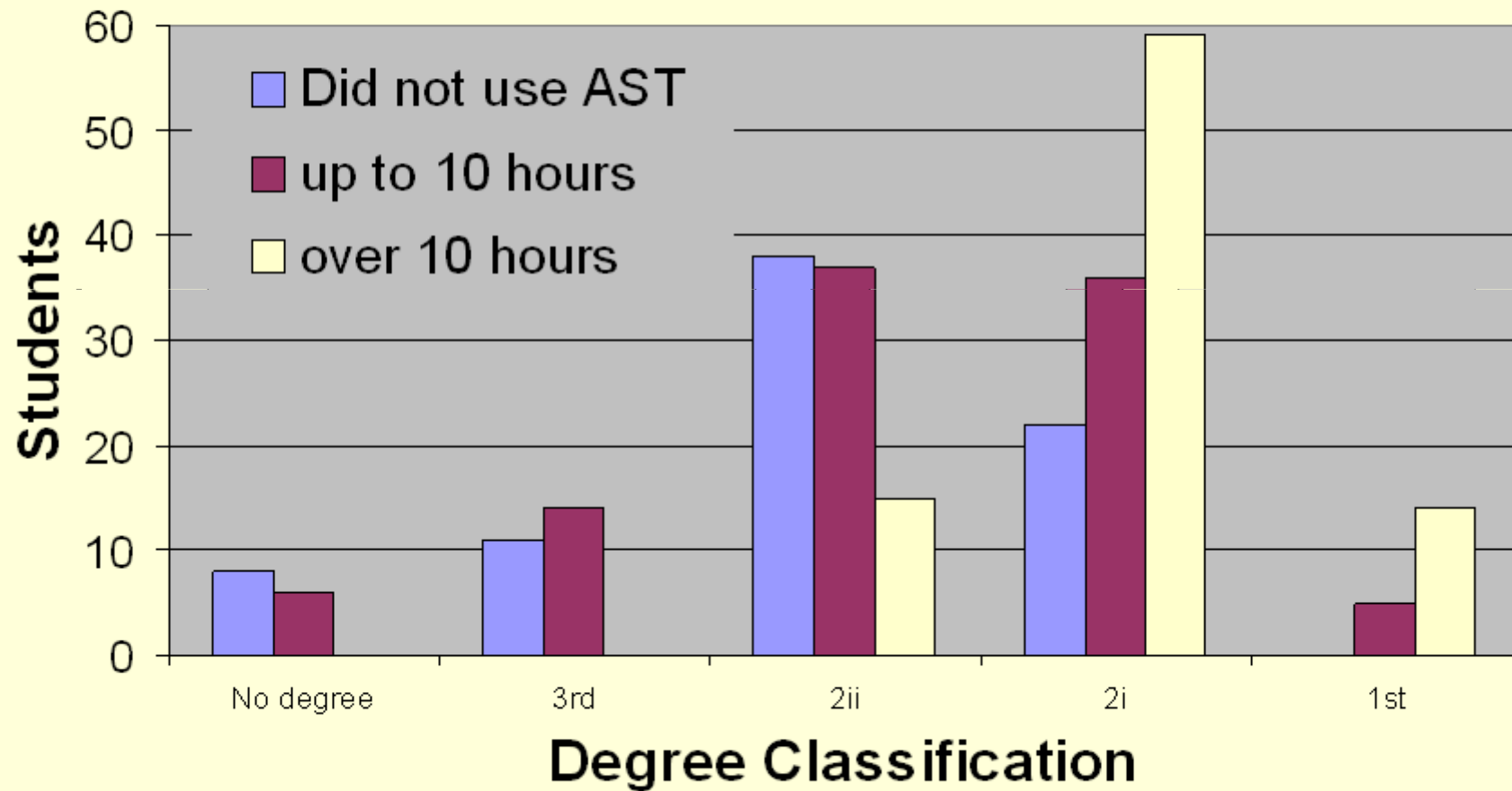
7 containing aspects of writing

1 entirely on presentations

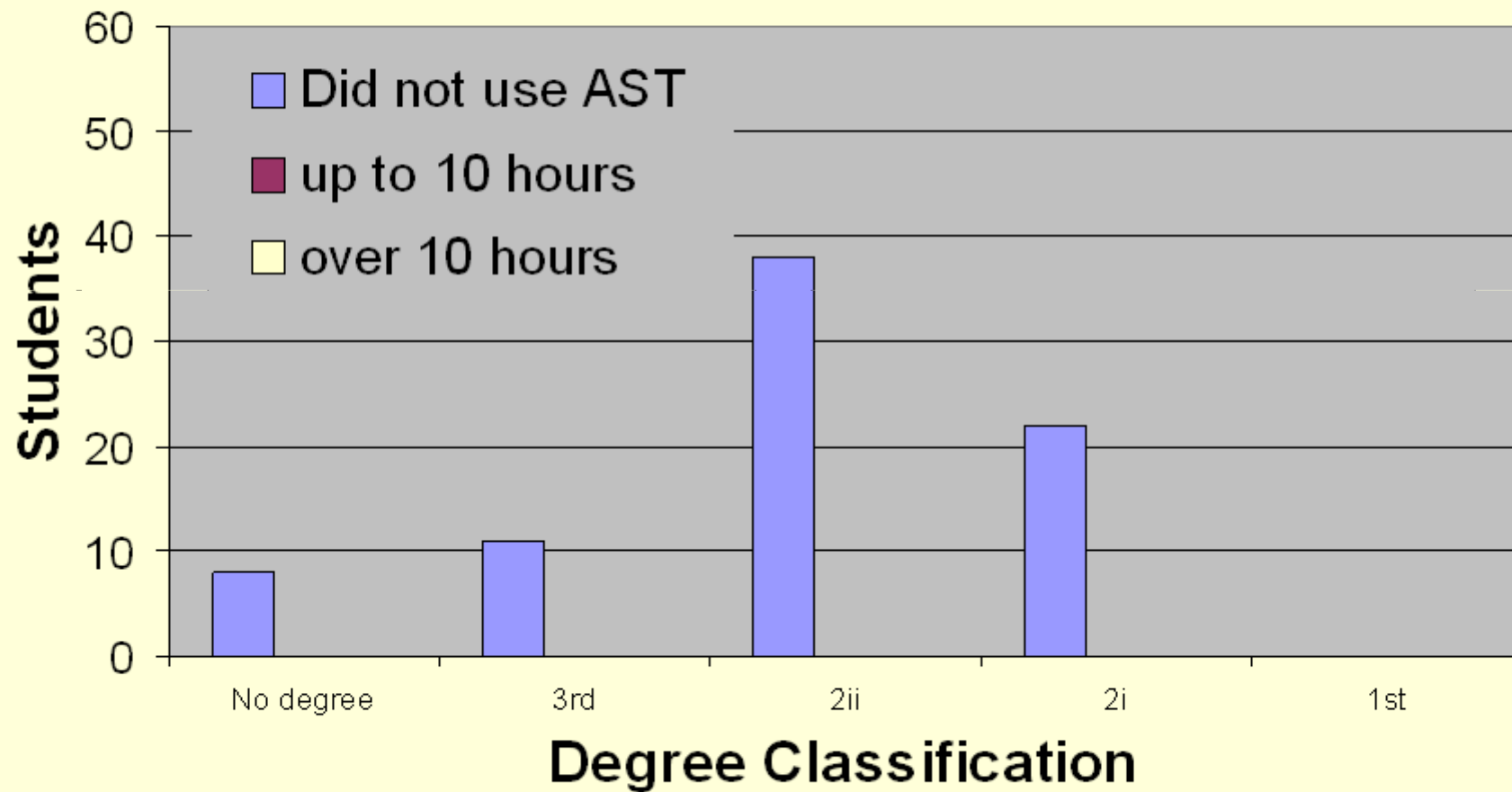
As many individual tutorials as requested

Generally on dissertation issues

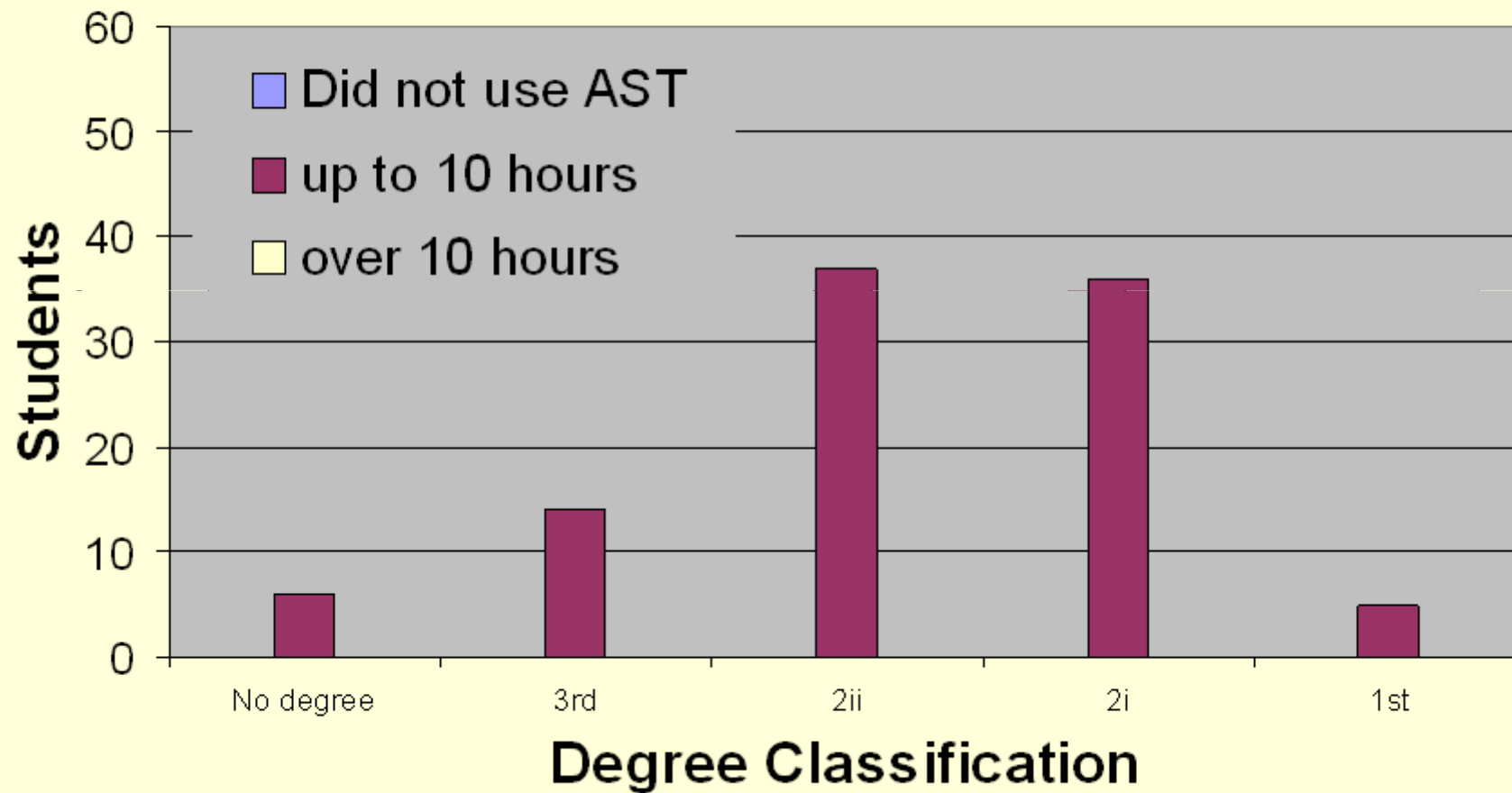
BA European Business



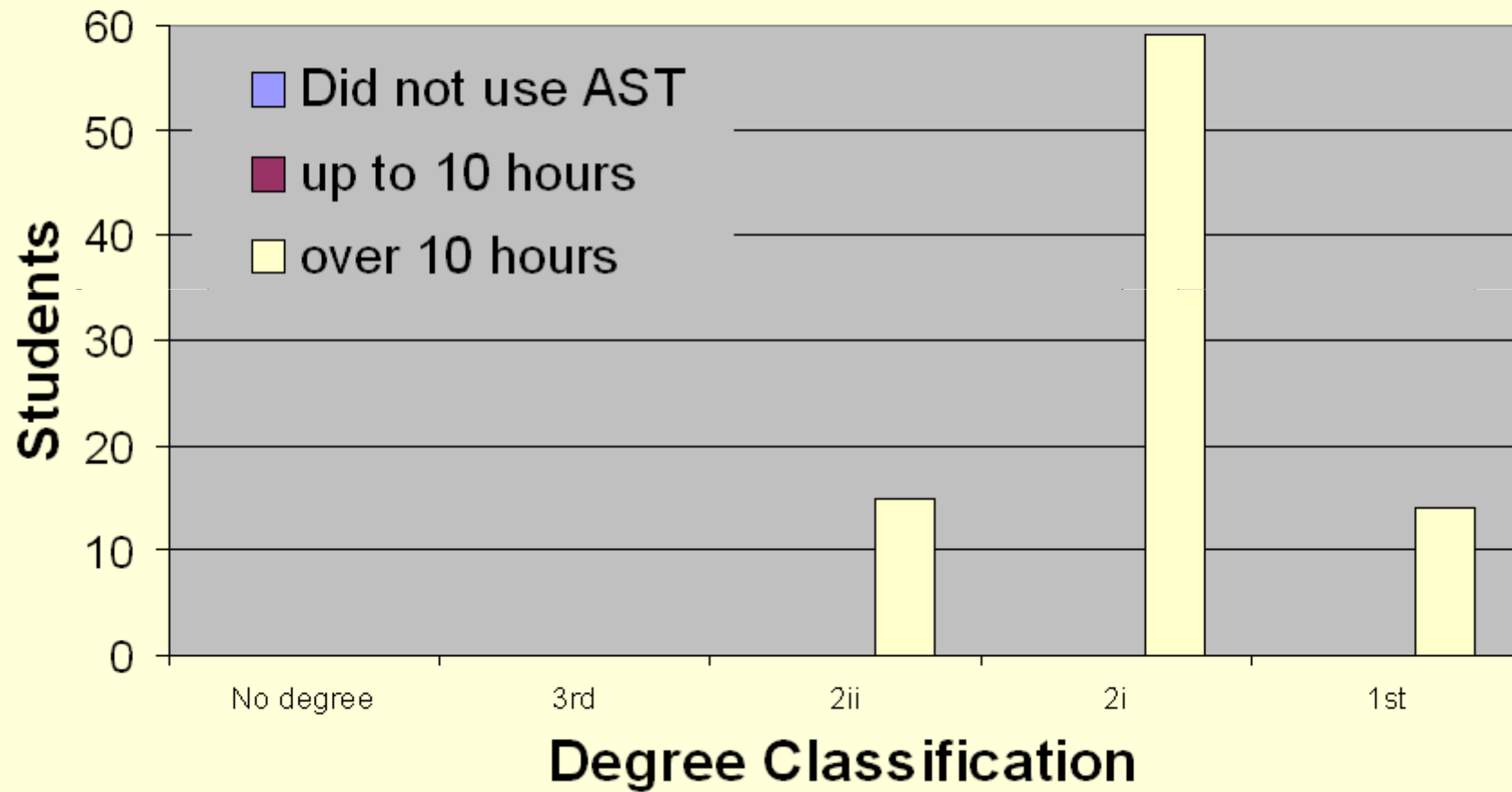
BA European Business



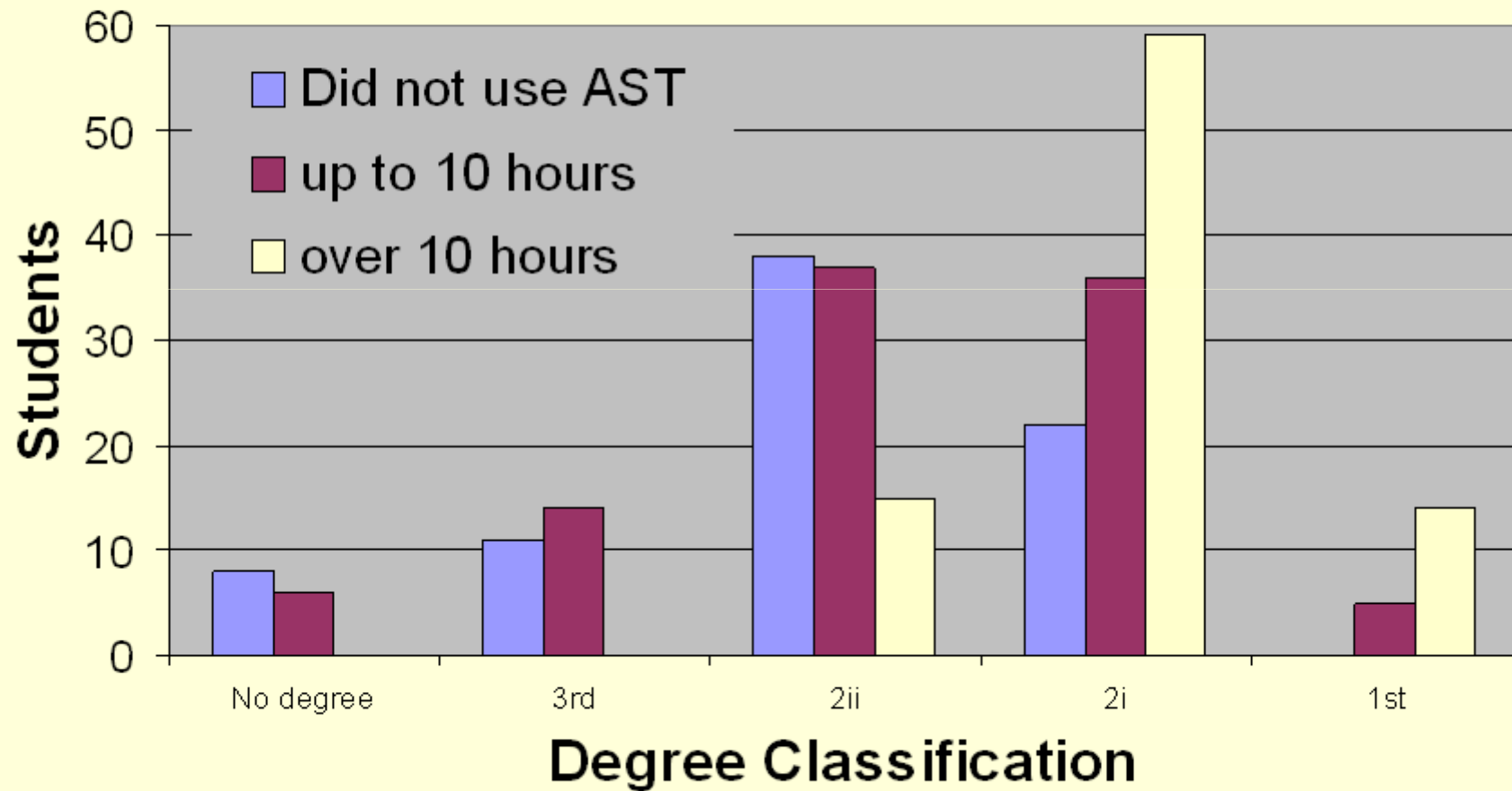
BA European Business



BA European Business



BA European Business



Sample Session

Using Journal Articles

By the end of the session students will

- know how to read an article efficiently;
- have made notes from two articles;
- have drafted some paragraphs of 'academic writing'.

Accuracy of References in Three Critical Care Nursing Journals

Marilyn H. Oermann, PhD, RN, FAAN

Linda D. Ziolkowski, MSN, RN, CPAN

Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing, Vol 17,
No 2 (April), 78 2002: pp 78-83.

Reference List Accuracy in Social Work Journals

Christina A. Spivey

Scott E. Wilks

University of Georgia

Research on Social Work Practice,
Vol. 14 No. 4, July 2004 281-286

See Appendix

Note Taking

	Oermann & Ziolkowski	Spivey & Wilks
Why are reference lists important?		
Why are errors in reference lists so serious?		

Questions continued in Appendix

Short Writing Task

Reference lists and bibliographies are essential components of academic reports and must be produced immaculately.

What consequences may derive from errors in reference lists? **What steps can be taken to ensure they are accurate?**
What evidence is there in the literature that this is a problem in journals and student writing?

Summary

- Context: pedagogical, institutional and political challenges
- A quick fix to the problem or a responsive solution to a challenging set of circumstances
- We believe that we have provided a responsive solution for our students
- We also believe that this is has proved to be an effective solution

Questions

References

Newman, M. (2007) 'Private firms tighten grip', *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, 20 April [online]. Available at: <<http://www.thes.co.uk>> [Accessed on 26 June 2007].

Oermann, H. and Ziolkowski, L. (2002) 'Accuracy of References in Three Critical Care Nursing Journals', *Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing* Vol.17, No.2, pp.78-83 [online]. Available at: <<http://www.sciencedirect.com>> [Accessed on 7 June 2007].

Spivey, C. and Wilks, S. (2004) 'Reference List Accuracy in Social Work Journals', *Research on Social Work Practice* Vol.14, No.4, pp.281-286 [online]. Available at: <<http://rsw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/14/4/281>> [Accessed on 7 June 2007].

Language Requirement

Applicants to undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at the University are expected to demonstrate English Language ability at a level equivalent to IELTS 6.0 (TOEFL 550).

Concern - level test validity and reliability

Typical Language Issues

The level of language is generally good but first language influences output

Articles seem random

Subject-verb agreement

3rd person singular present

Collective nouns

Collocation & word order