



Stephen Catterall, Academic Skills Tutor,  
School of Computing & Engineering

Christopher Ireland, Academic Skills Tutor,  
Business School

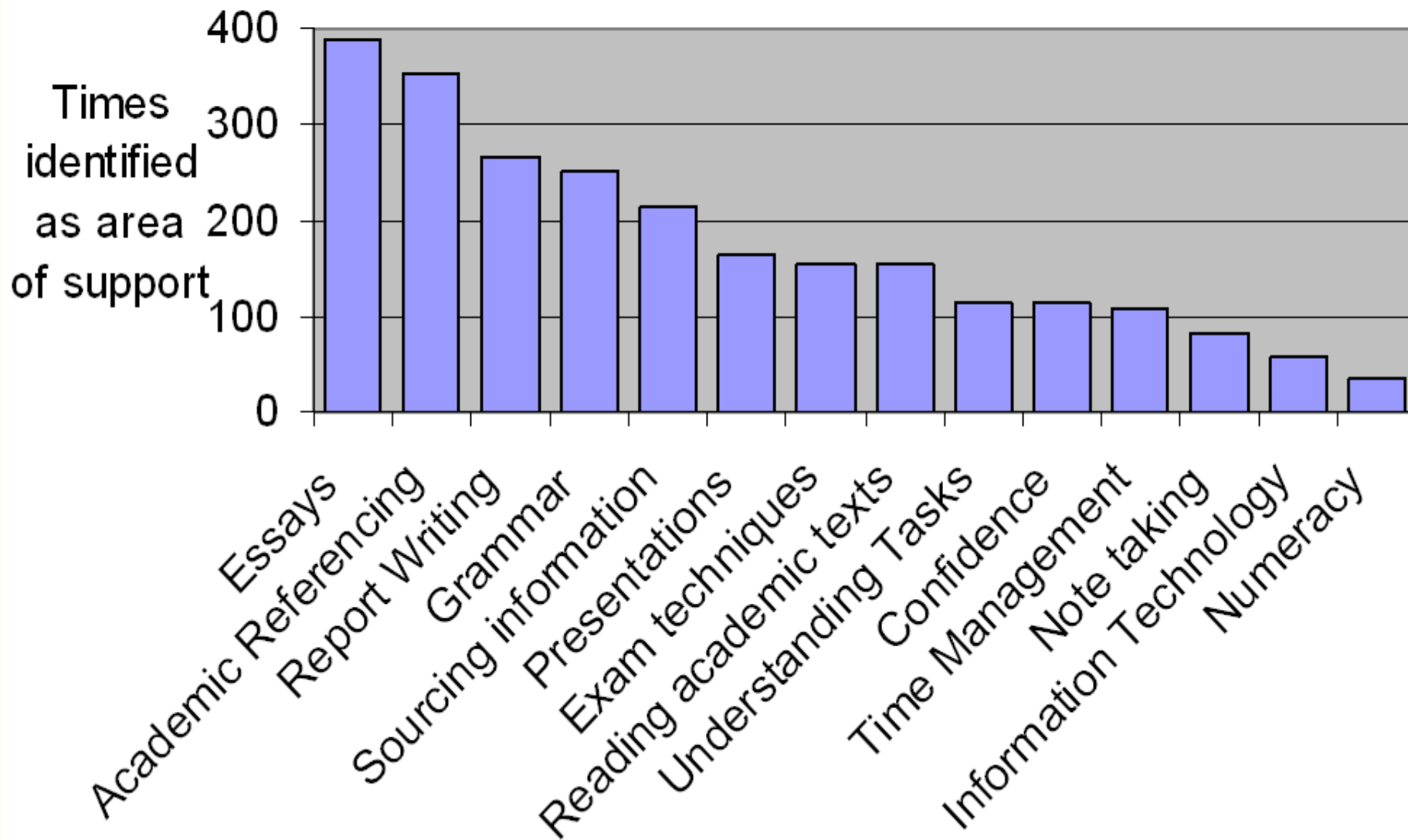


Writing Support for Overseas  
Students: quick fix or responsive  
solution?

# 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

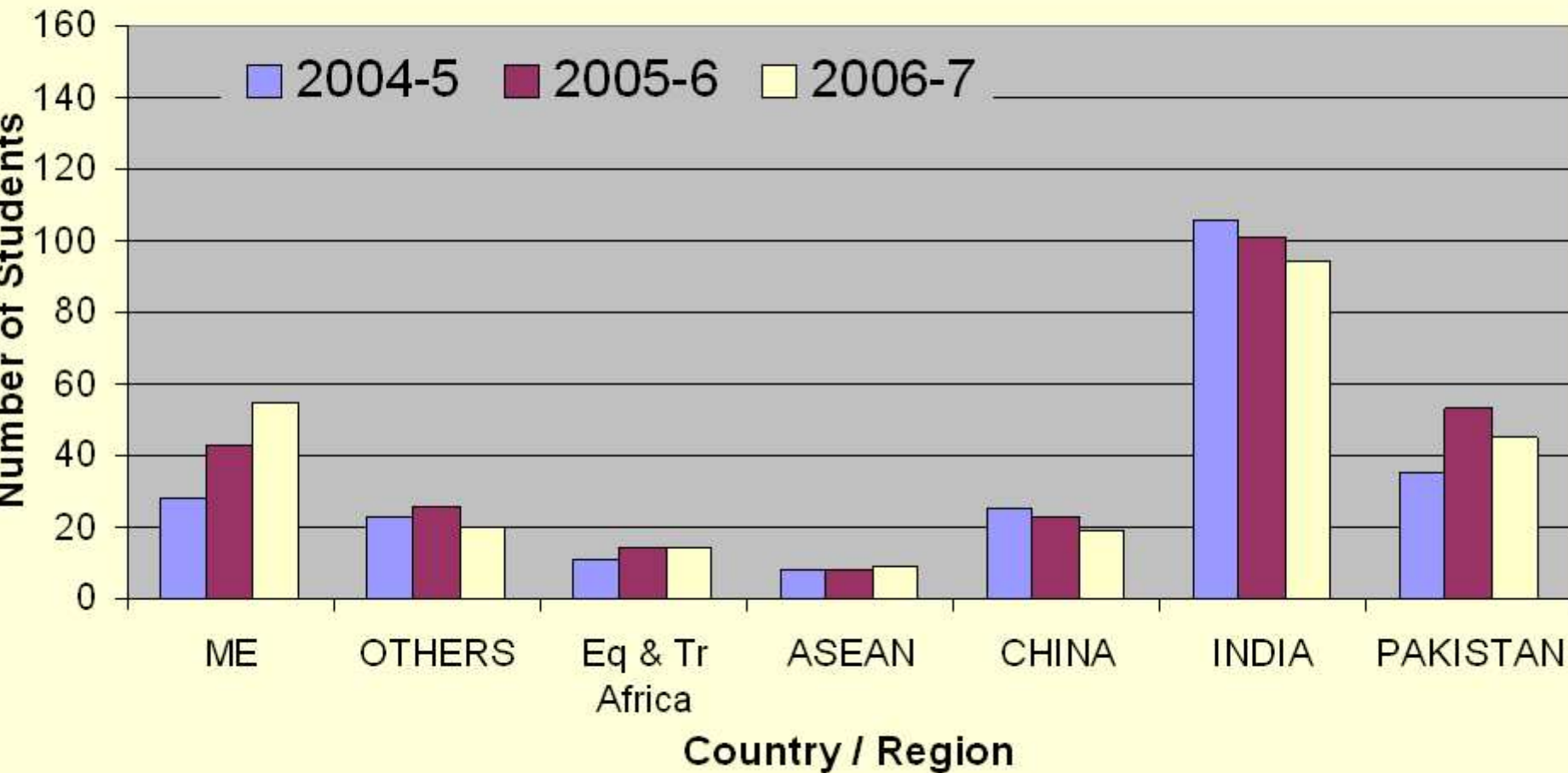
# Help sought from Academic Skills Tutors



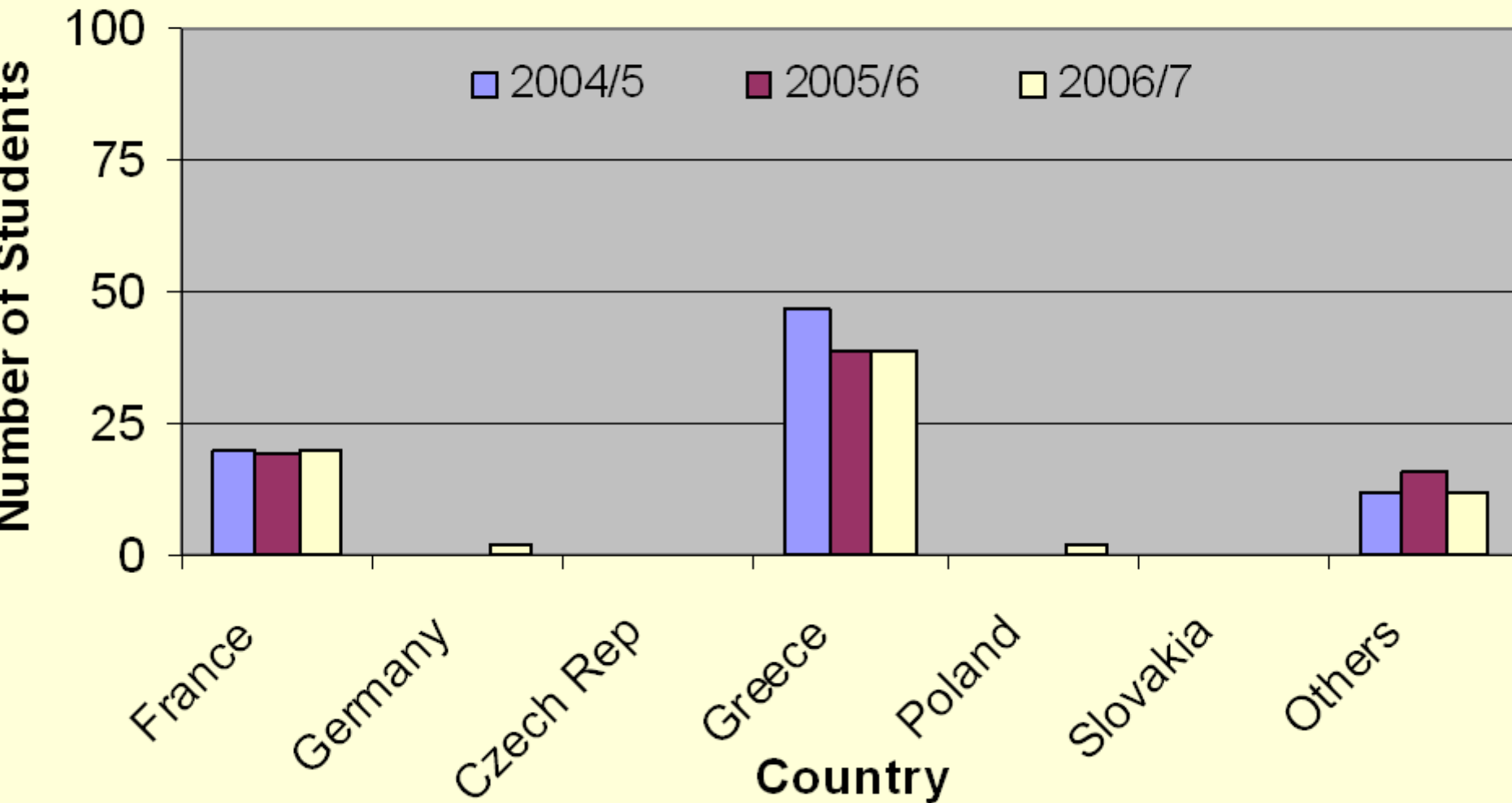
# Students & Writing Tasks

- 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

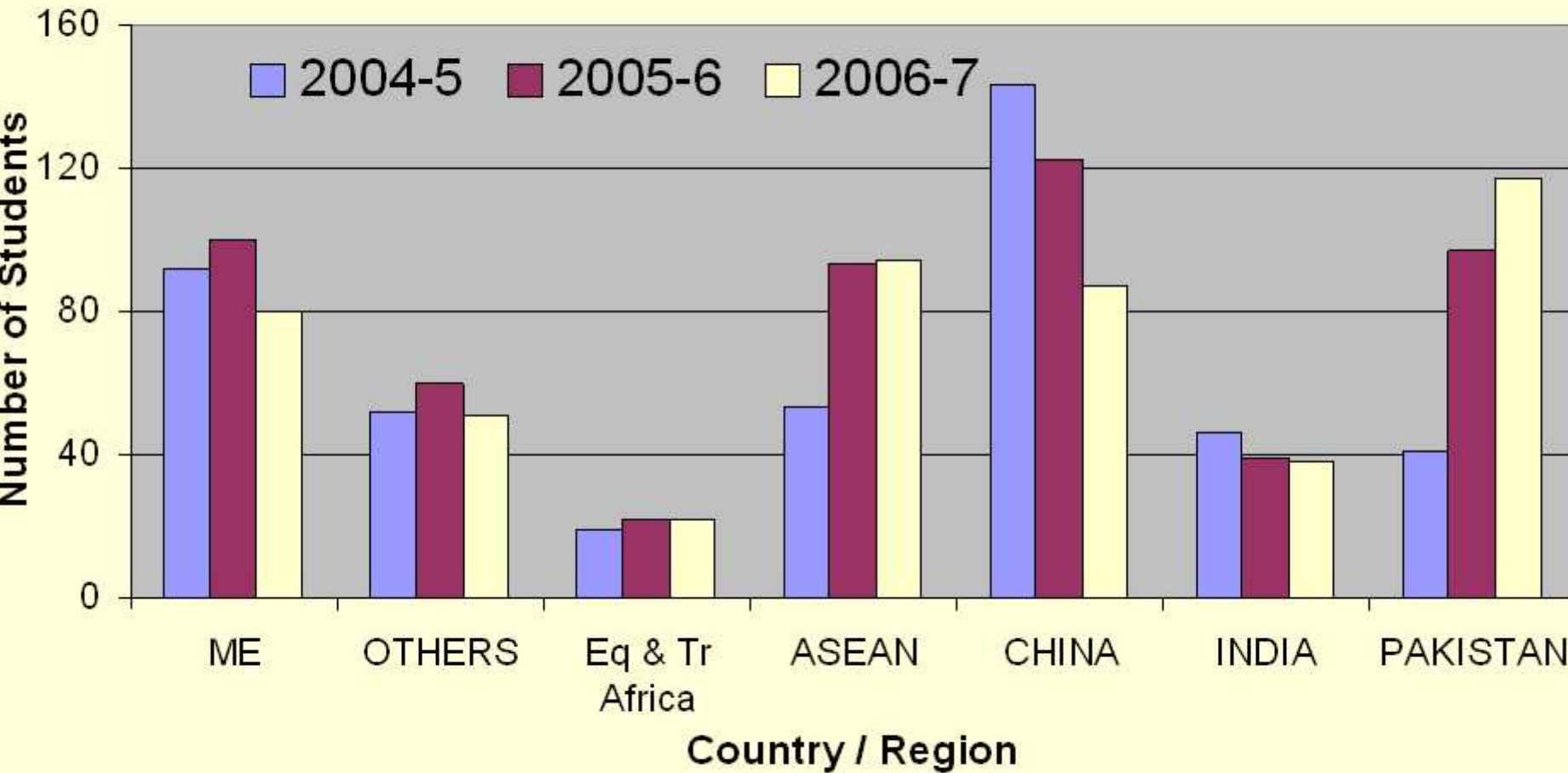
# School of Computing & Engineering: Overseas Students (excluding EU)



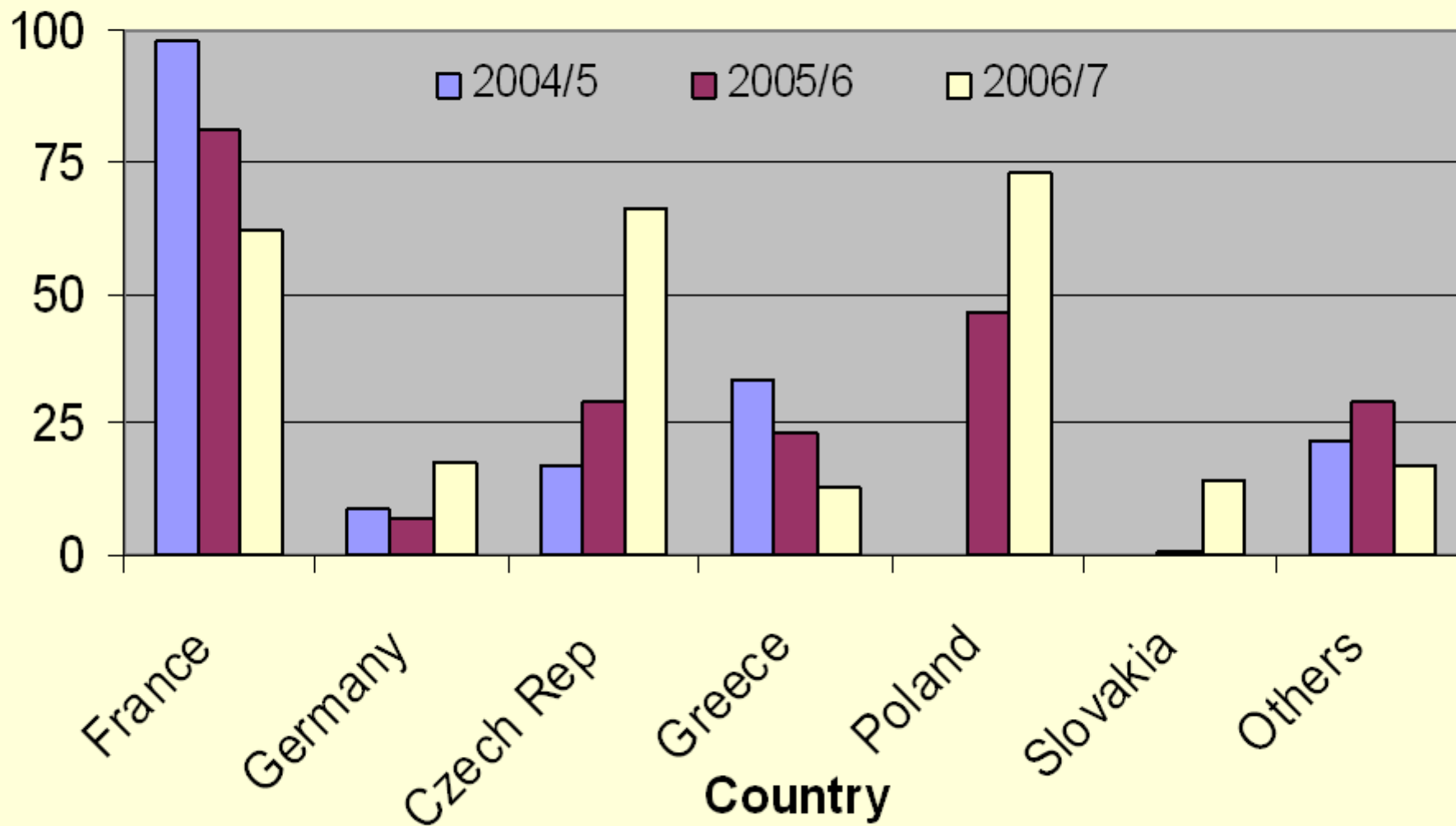
# School of Computing & Engineering: EU Students



# 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

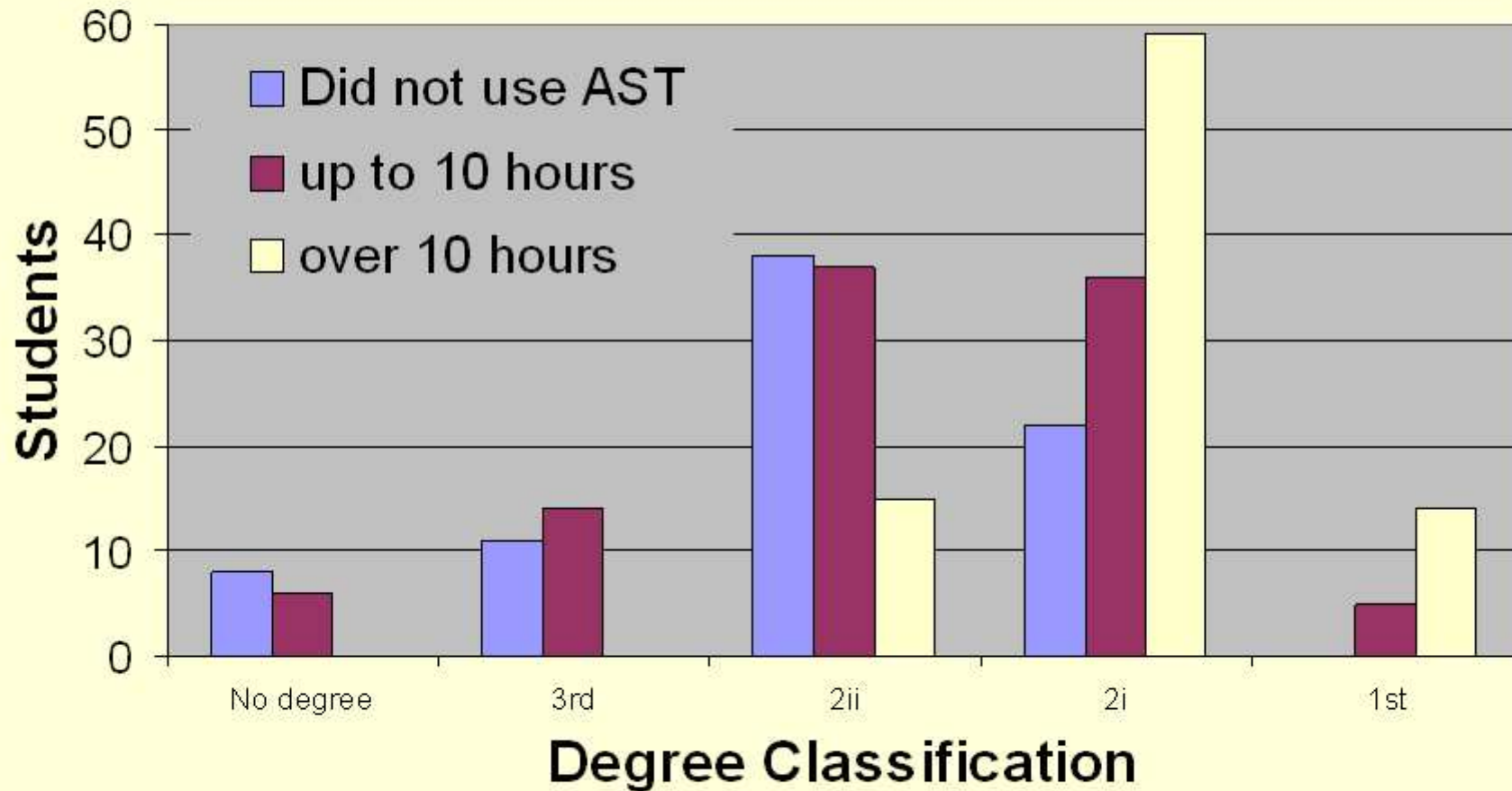
7 containing aspects of writing

1 entirely on presentations

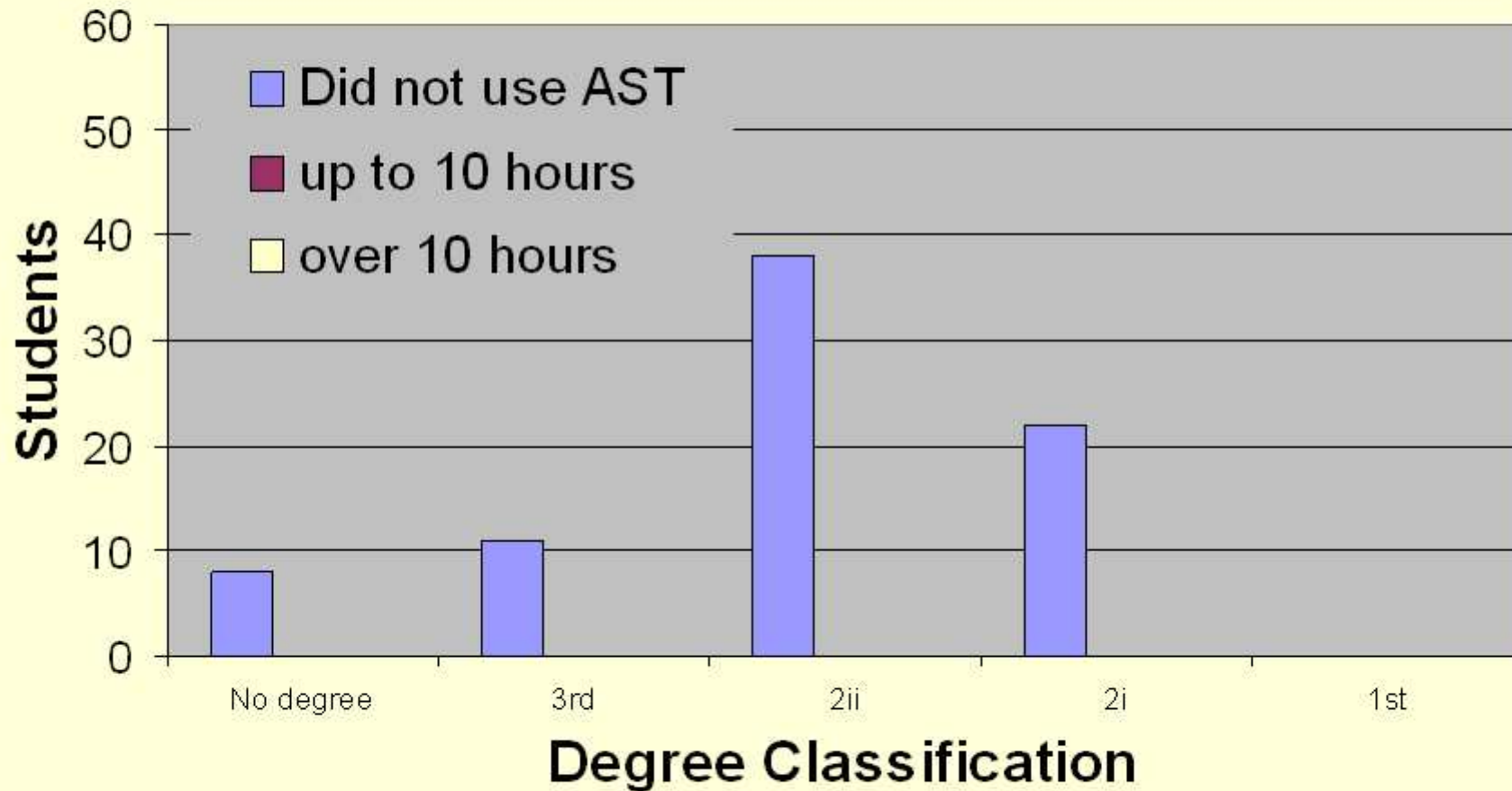
As many individual tutorials as requested

Generally on dissertation issues

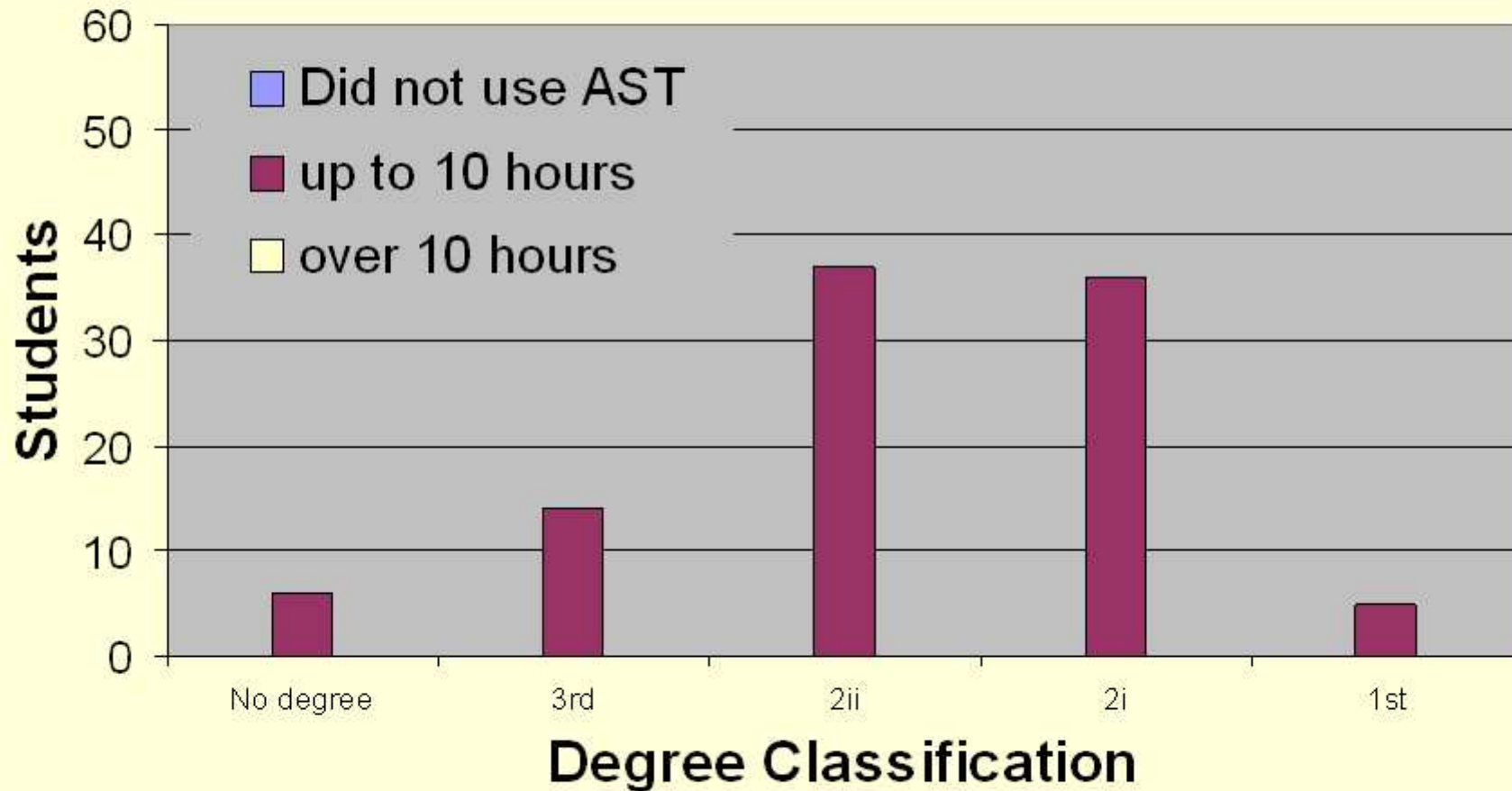
# BA European Business



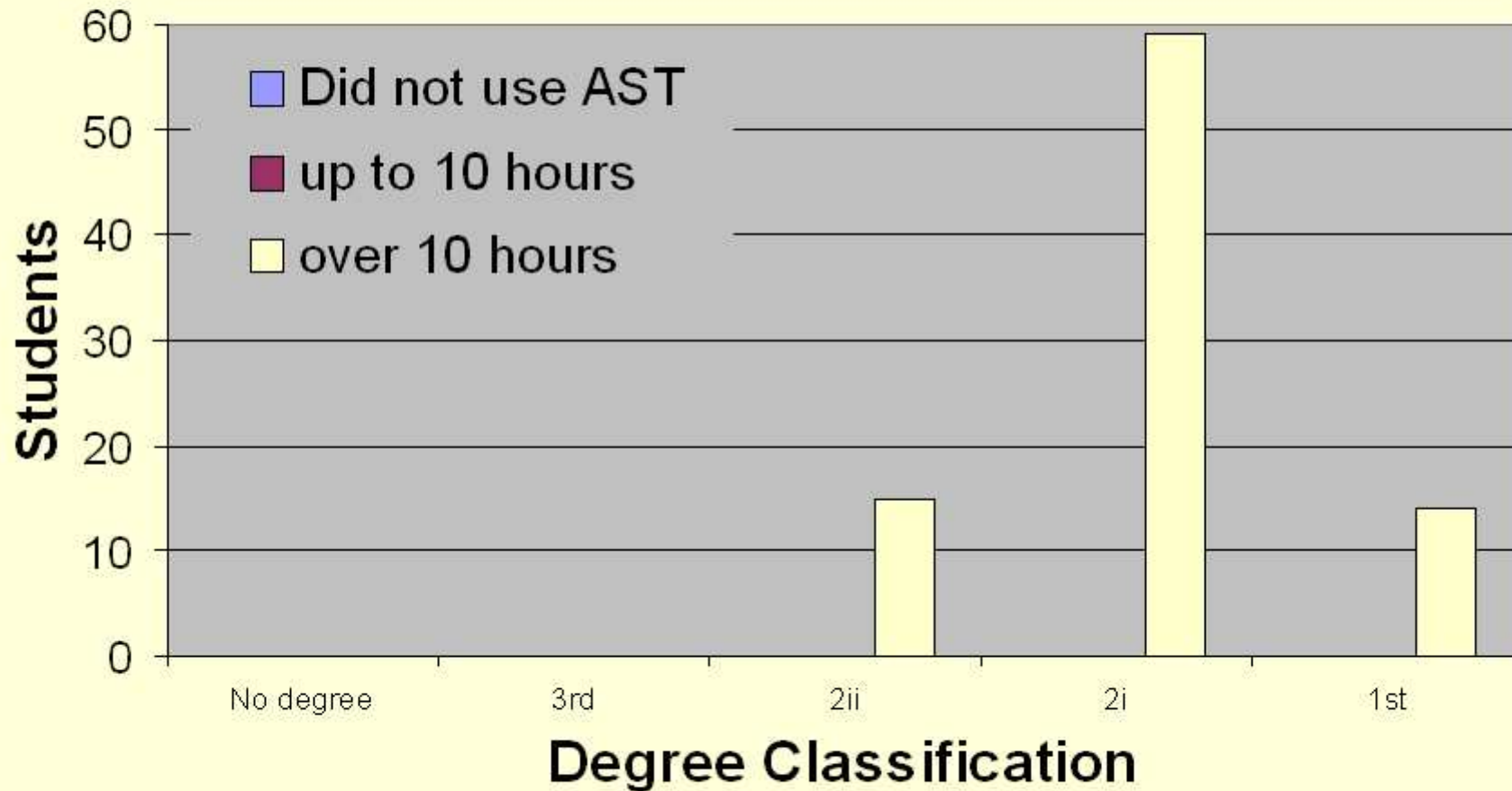
# BA European Business



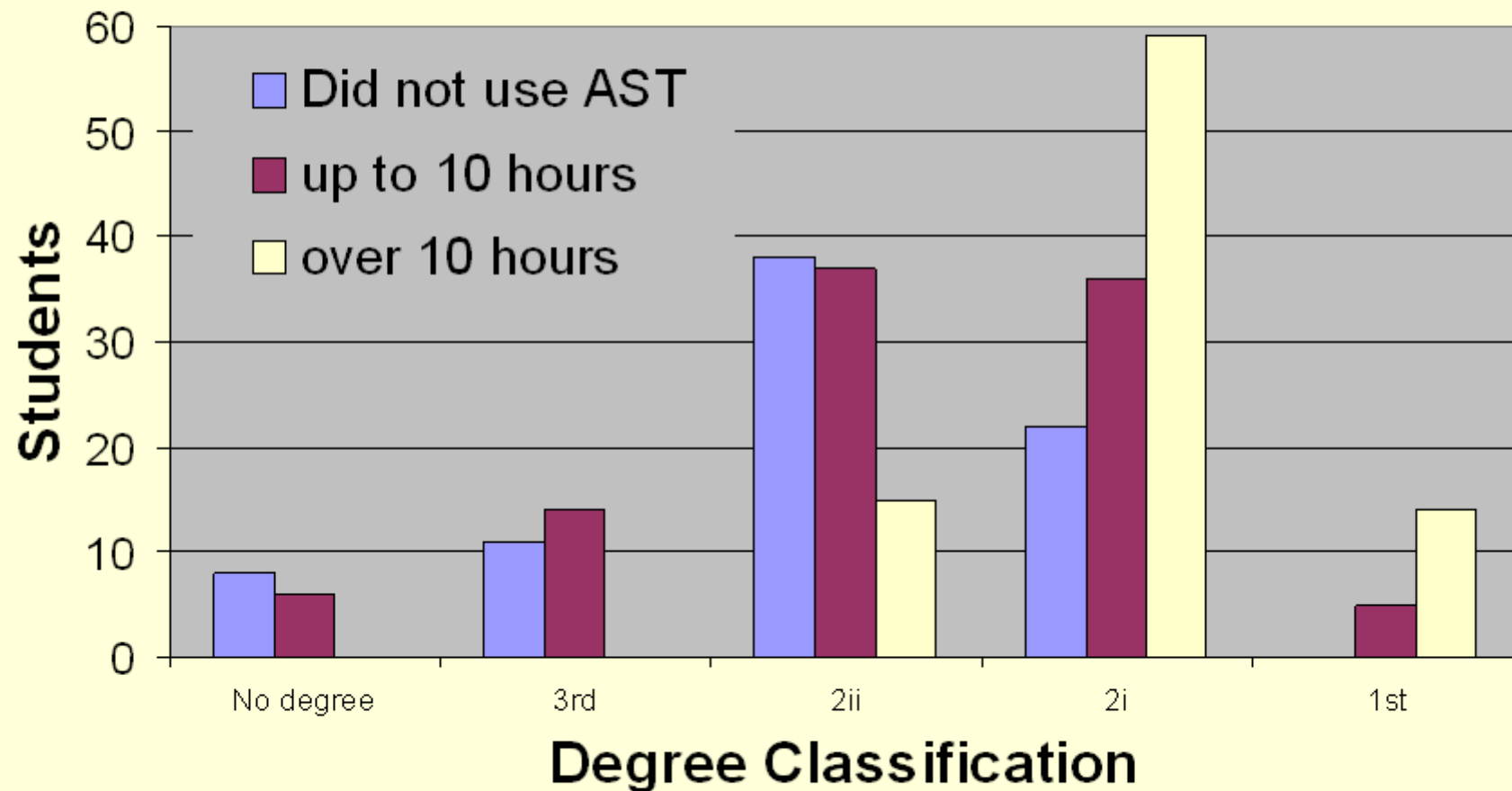
# BA European Business



# 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

	<b>Oermann &amp; Ziolkowski</b>	<b>Spivey &amp; Wilks</b>
<b>Why are reference lists important?</b>		
<b>Why are errors in reference lists so serious?</b>		

**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

3<sup>rd</sup> person singular present

Collective nouns

Collocation & word order