



Learning Communities, Social Connections and Student Success

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Question

- Work has been done on the advantages and limitations of learning communities (e.g., Heath, 2005; Jones, Laufgraben, & Morris, 2006; Price, 2005)
- One of the supposed advantages of learning communities is social (at TAMU-CC)
- We sought to assess social connectedness in the learning communities and its relation to academic performance



Samples

- *General Psychology* learning community at TAMU-CC
 - N = ~210 students (no control)
- *Introductory Poli Sci* at Frostburg State University
 - N = ~30 students (includes control)



Learning Communities at TAMU-CC

Political Science Large Lecture Class
150

First Year Seminar
25

First Year Seminar
25

English Composition
25

English Composition
25

First Year Seminar
25

First Year Seminar
25

English Composition
25

English Composition
25

First Year Seminar
25

First Year Seminar
25



Questions

- Students were assessed four times during the academic semester (Spring 2006).
- Before each exam.
- $N=83$ students completed all four assessments (out of 208)



Assessment Items

- ***Approximately how many students do you know by name in this class (PSYC 2301)?***
- ***Have you studied with other students in this class (PSYC 2301)?*** (This includes studying for PSYC 2301, ENGL 1302, or UCCP 1102) [YES or NO]
 - If YES, how many?
- ***Have you socialized outside of class with other students from this class (PSYC 2301)?*** [YES or NO]
 - If YES, how often?
- Standard demographic items (e.g., age, sex, racial/ethnic background, etc.)
- 4 exam scores plus total # points in Large lecture class (Gen Psych)



TAMU-CC

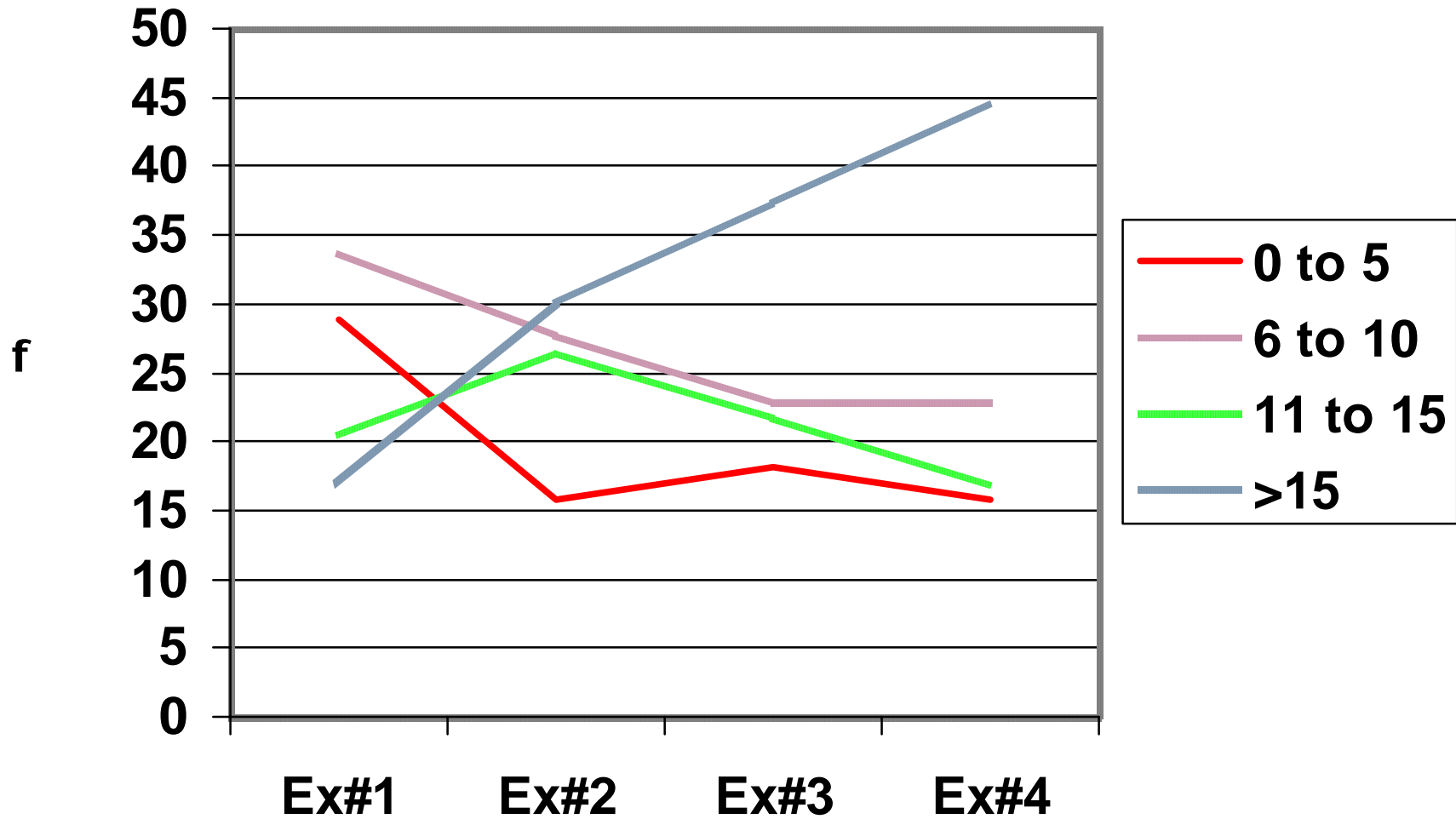
Sample Characteristics

- $N=83$ (completed all four surveys)
- 28 Males (33.7%), 55 Females (66.3%)
- 45% Hispanic, 45% Anglo
- Age: $M=18.8$ years ($SD=1.7$)
- 100% Freshmen
- 65% live on-campus, 35% off-campus

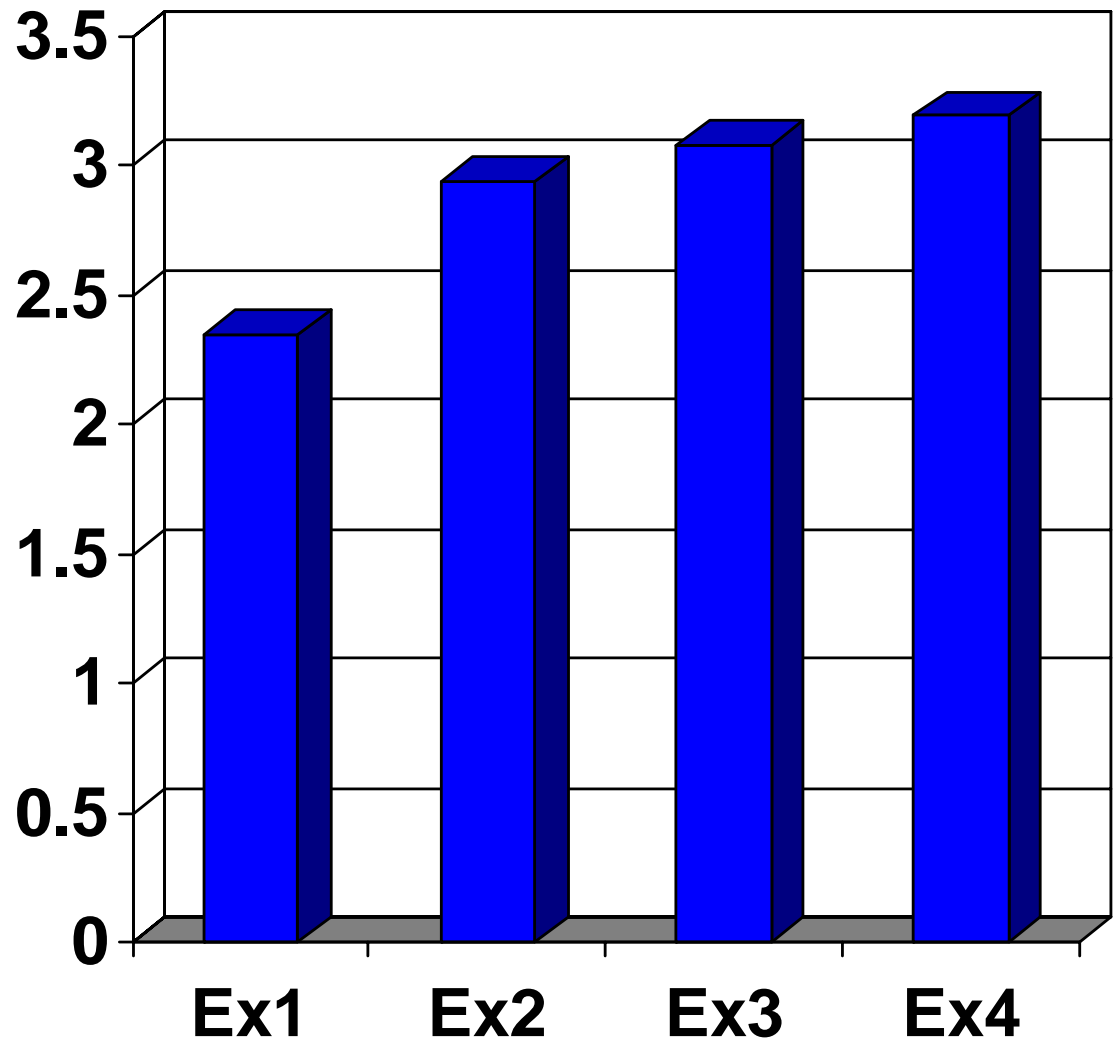


RESULTS

Texas A & M Univ-Corpus Christi

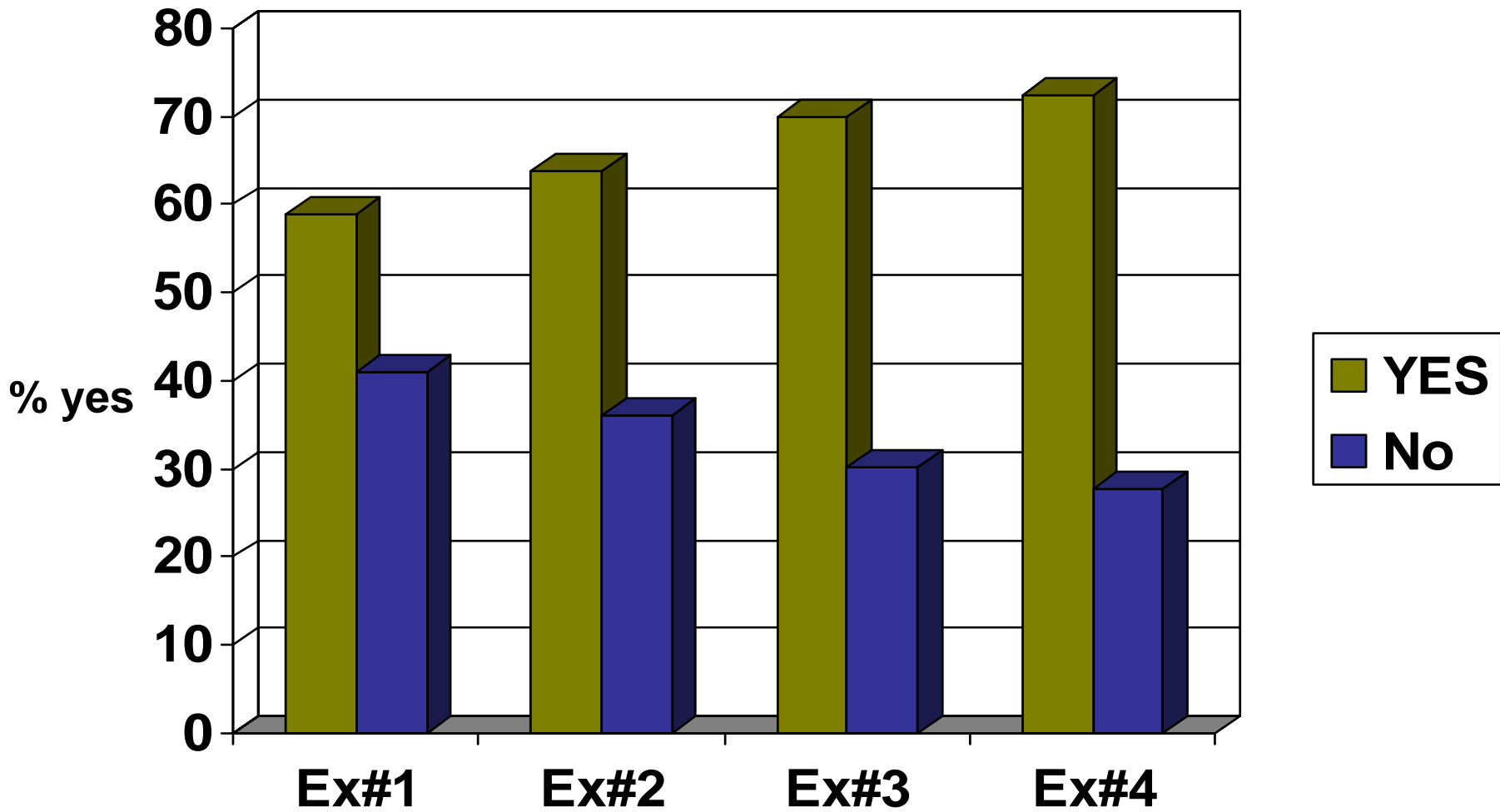


How many students do you know by name?

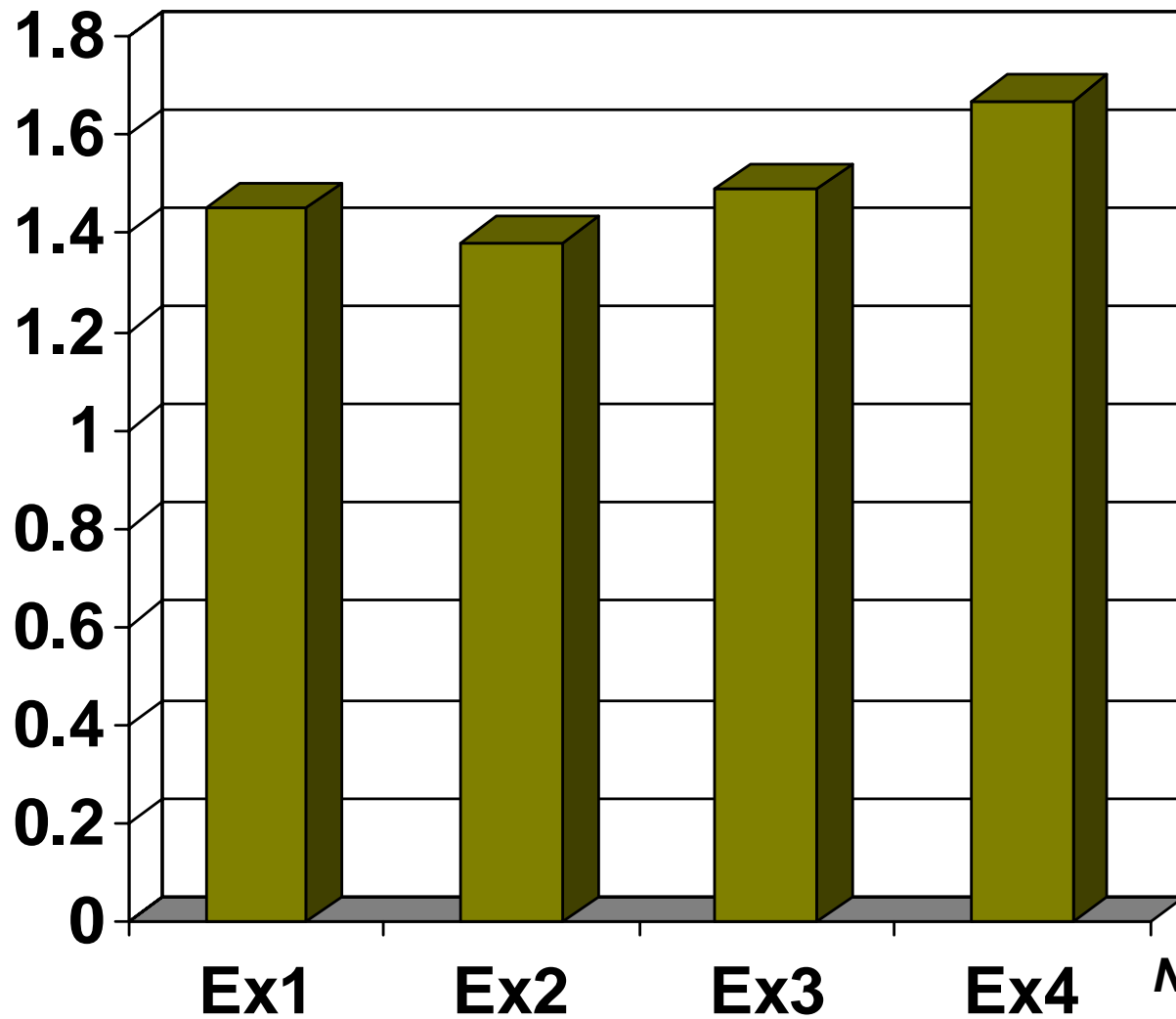


Students by Name

Note: 0-5 Students =1
6-10 =2
11-15 =3
16-20 =4
21-25 =5
>25 =6

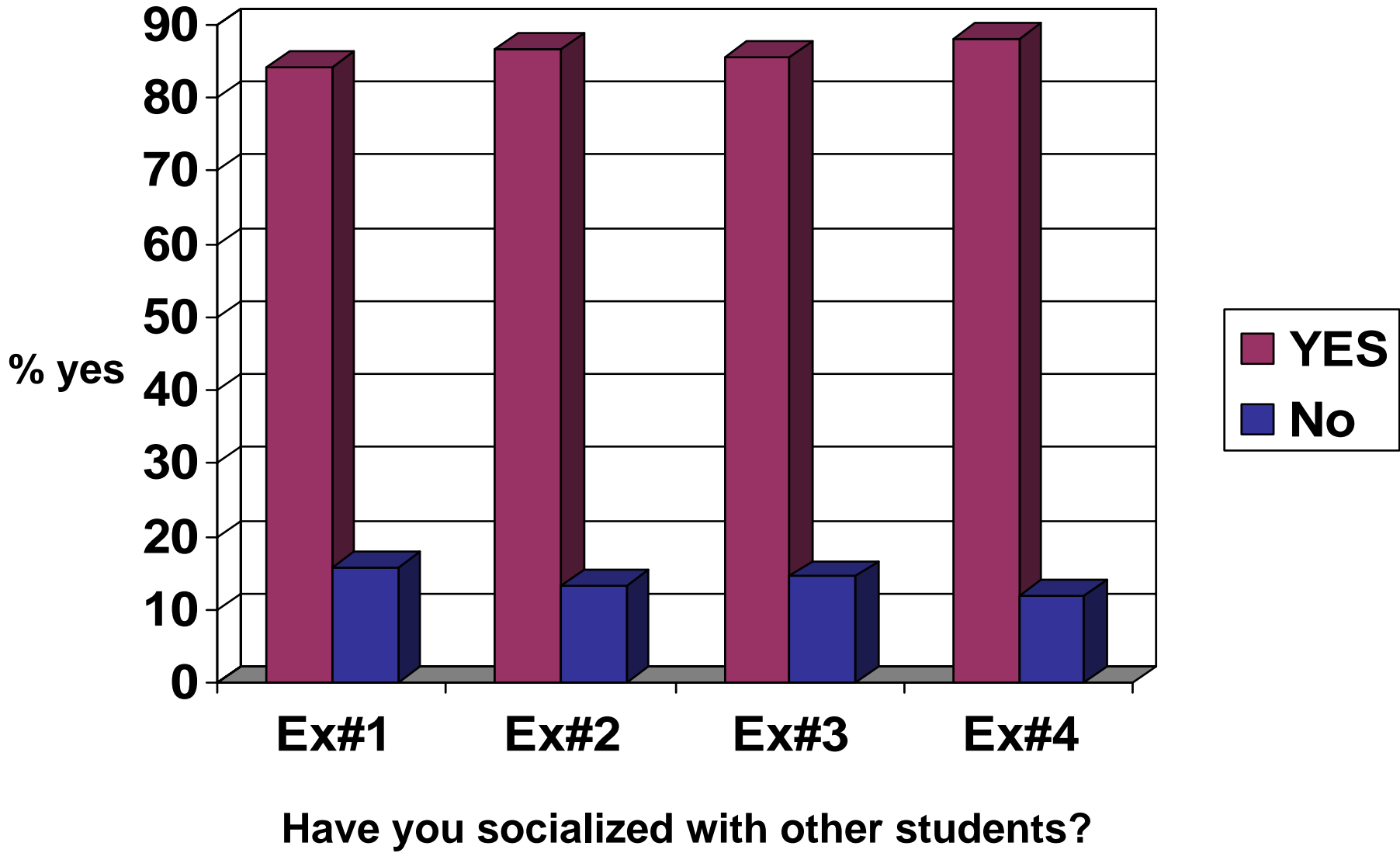


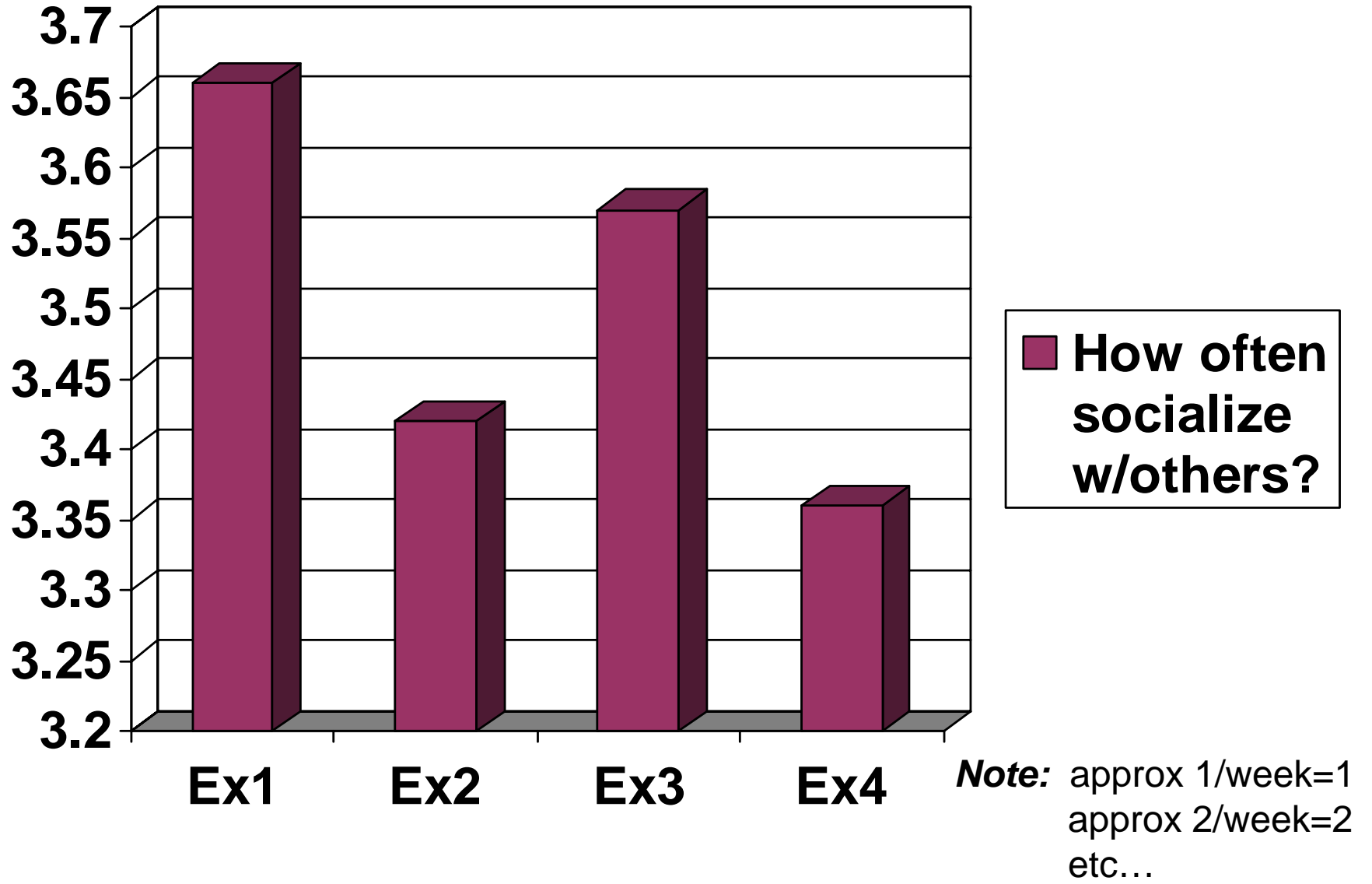
Have you studied with other students?

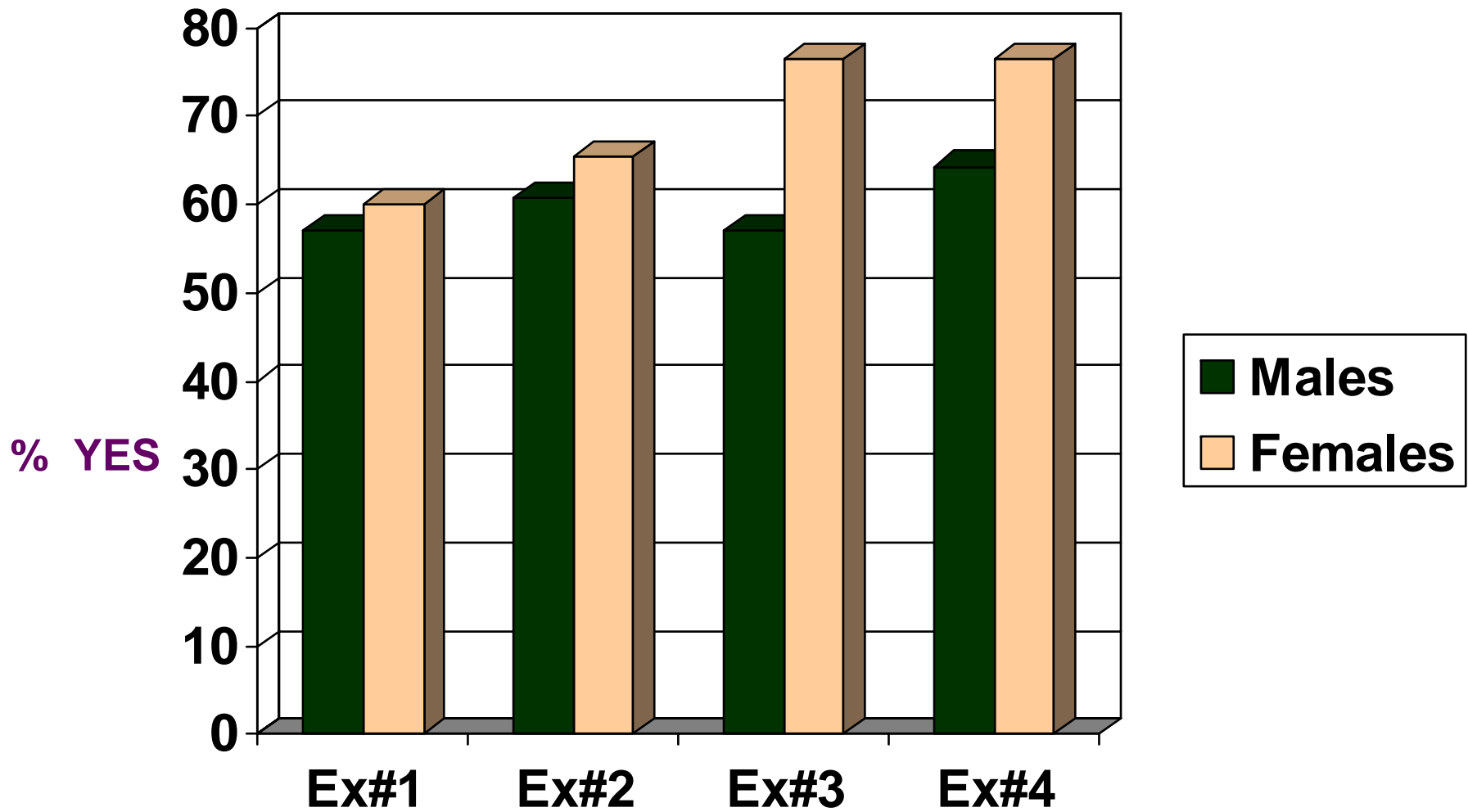


■ How often study w/others?

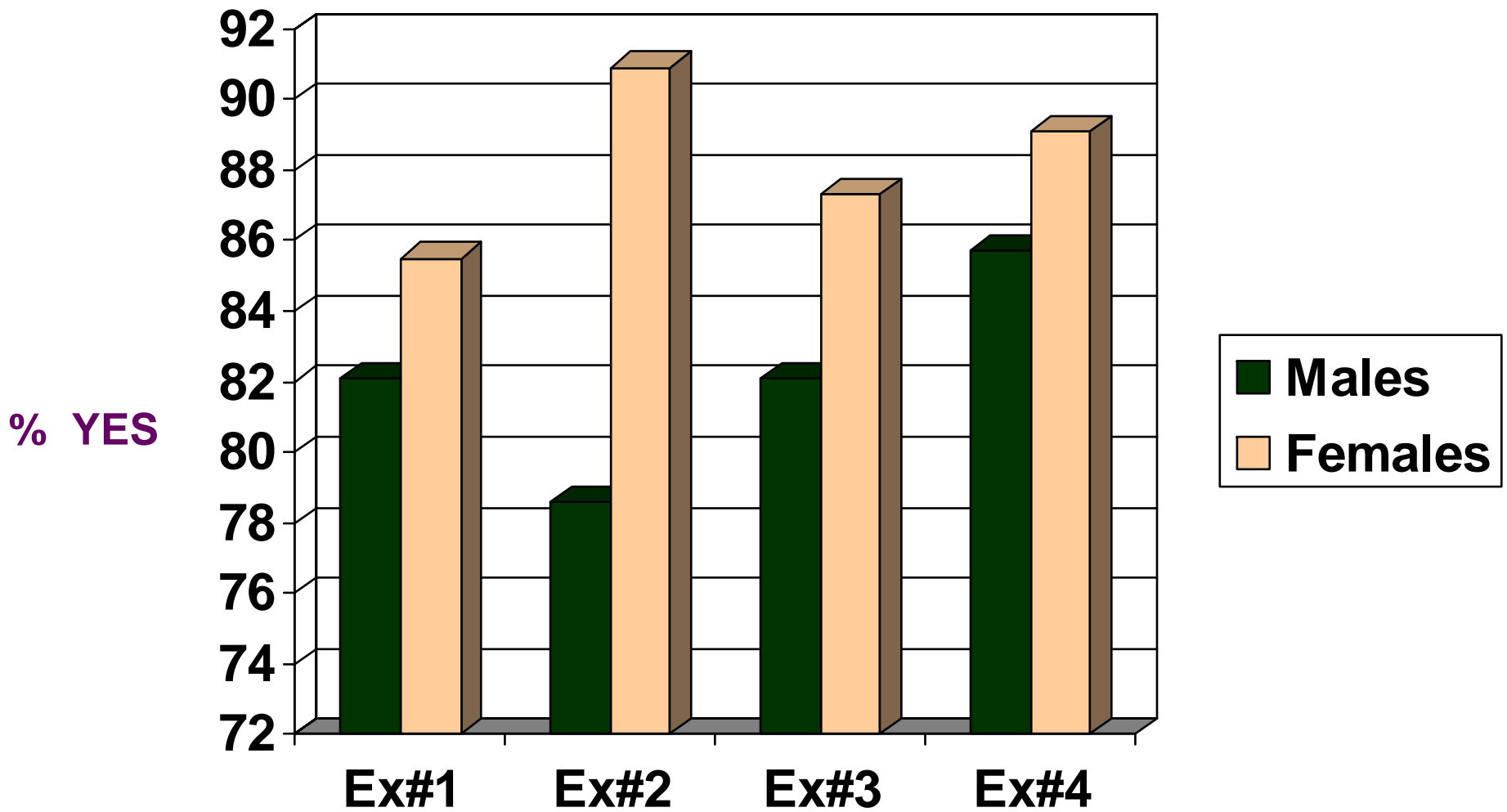
Note: approx 1/week=1
approx 2/week=2
etc...







Have you studied with someone else?

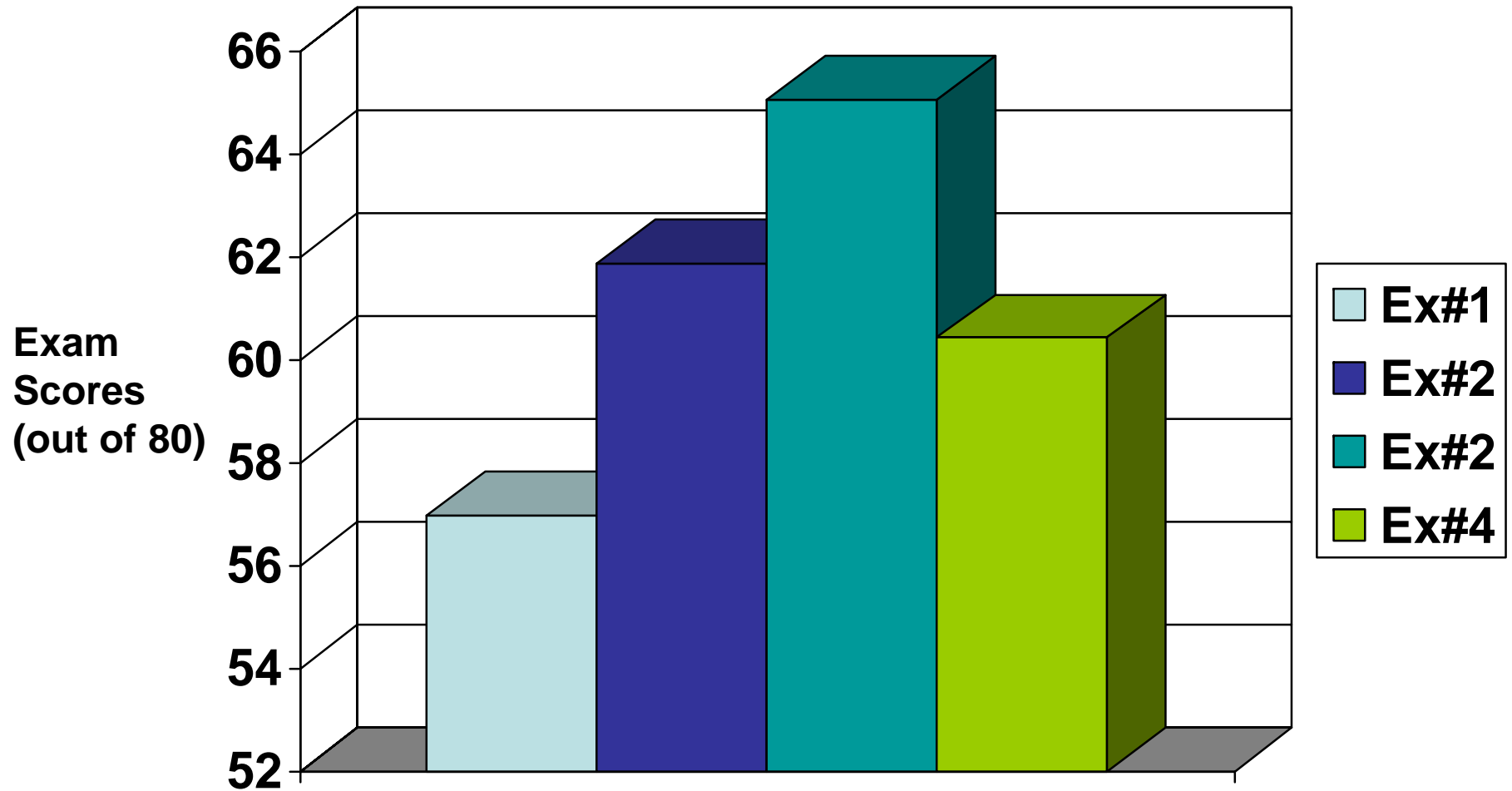


Have you socialized with someone else?

Now, do social connections affect student performance?



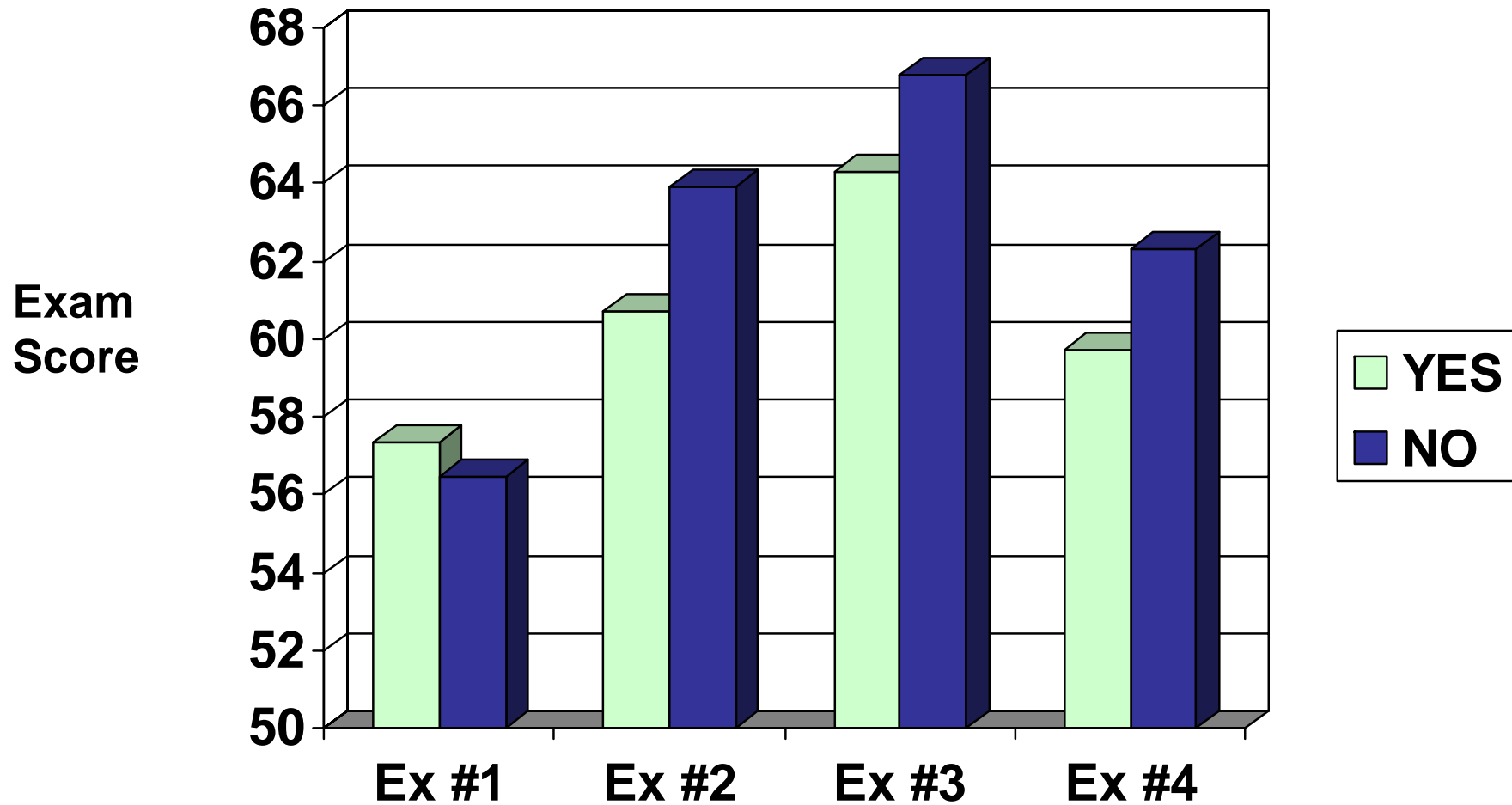
Avg Exam Scores (Gen Psych)



Correlations

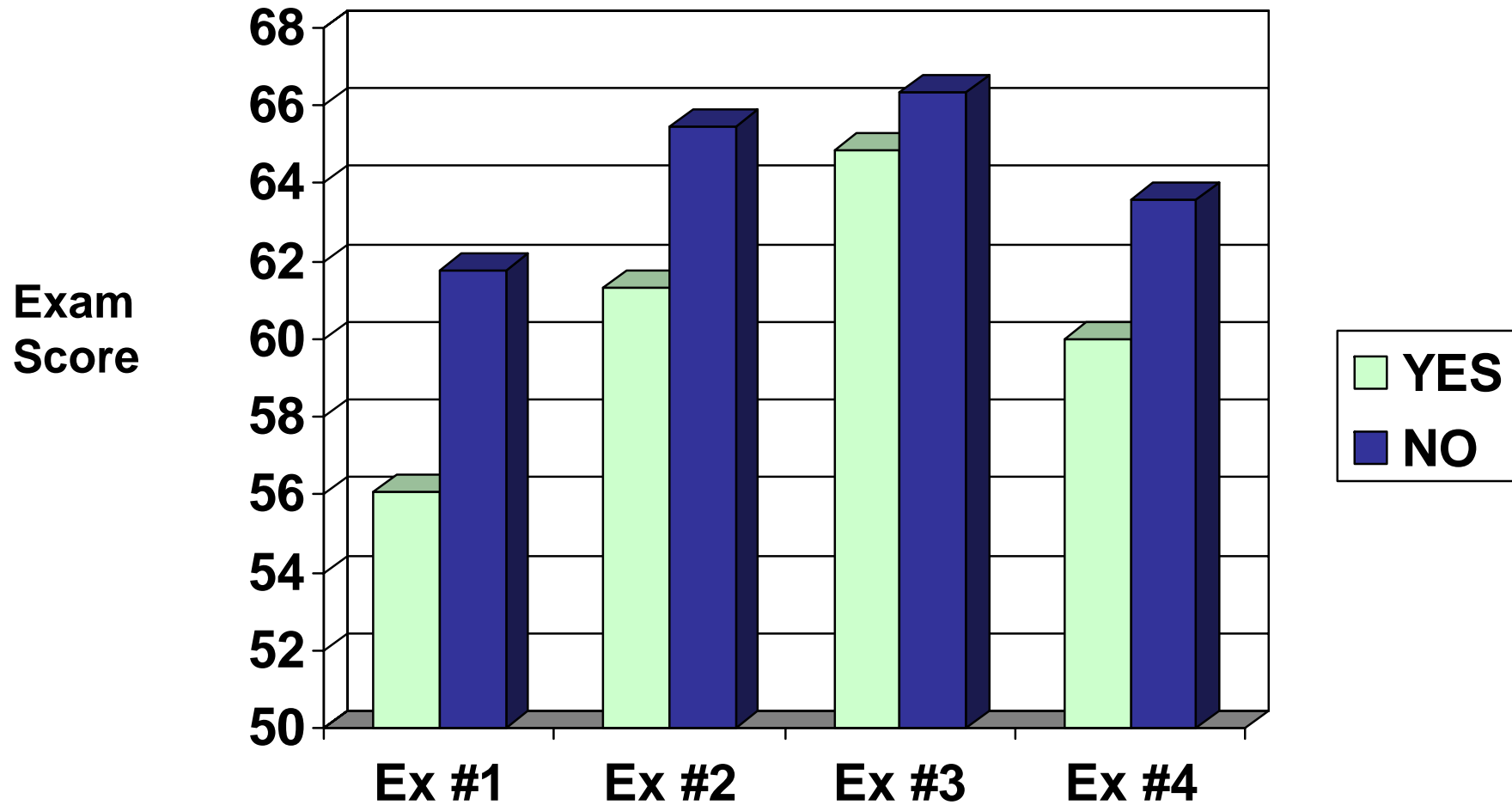
	How many students by name?	How many Ex#2?	How many Ex#3?	How many Ex#4?
Ex #1	<i>-.04</i>			
Ex #2		<i>-.13</i>		
Ex #3			<i>.09</i>	
Ex #4				<i>.04</i>

Have you studied w/other students?



*All differences nonsignificant

Have you socialized w/other students?



*All differences nonsignificant

Note: Unequal *ns* (#1, Y-70, N-13)



Frostburg State University

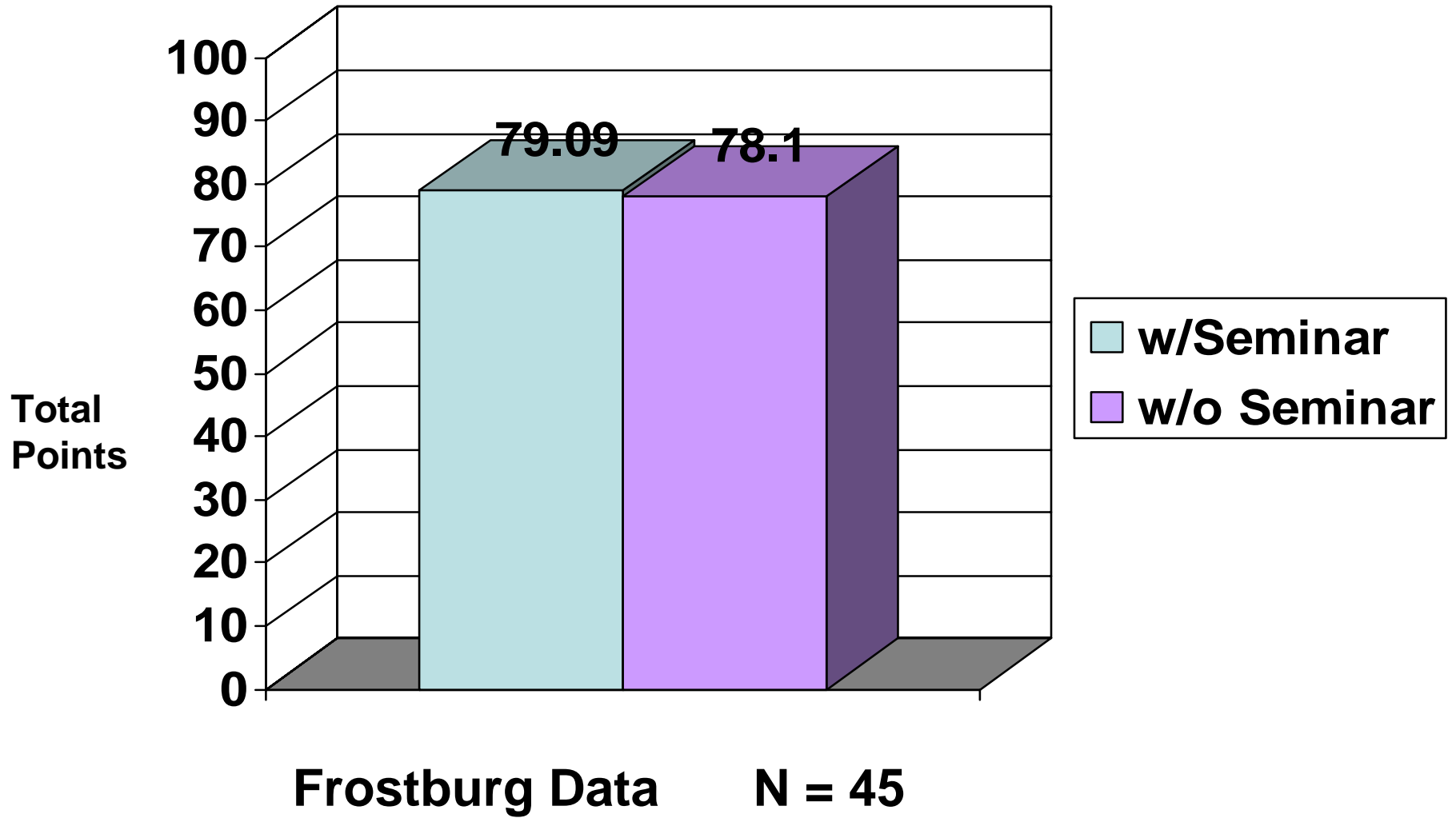
Sample Characteristics

- $N=60$
- 30 Males, 30 Females
- 75% Anglo, 17% African-American
- Age: $M=19.3$ years ($SD=2.0$)
- 55% Freshmen, 20% Sophomores, 13% Juniors, 10% Seniors
- 60% live on-campus, 40% off-campus



RESULTS

Frostburg State University



Correlations

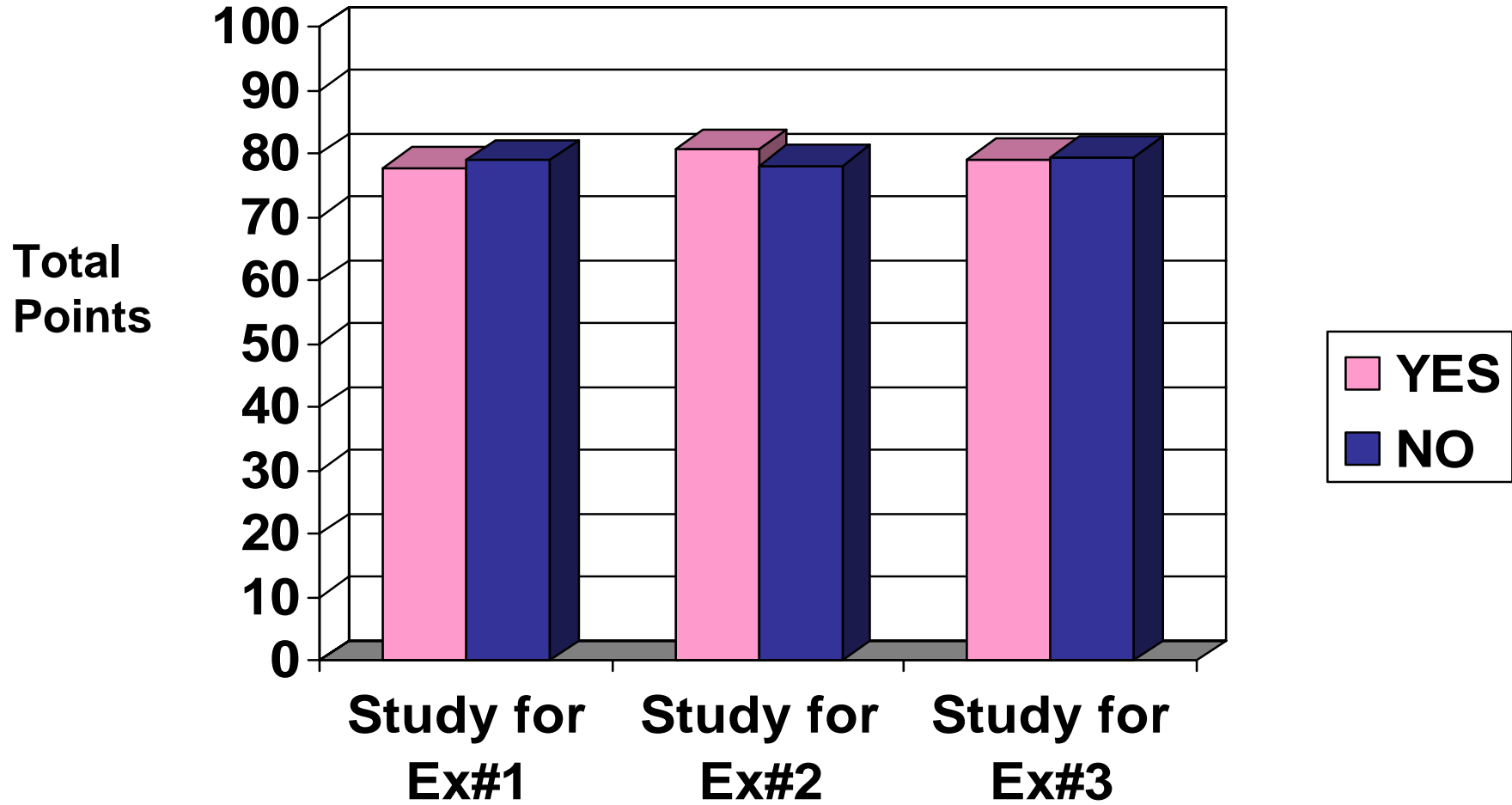
	Points
How many students do you know? (Ex #1)	.249
How many students do you know? (Ex #2)	.158
How many students do you know? (Ex #3)	-.001

Note: All r_s nonsignificant

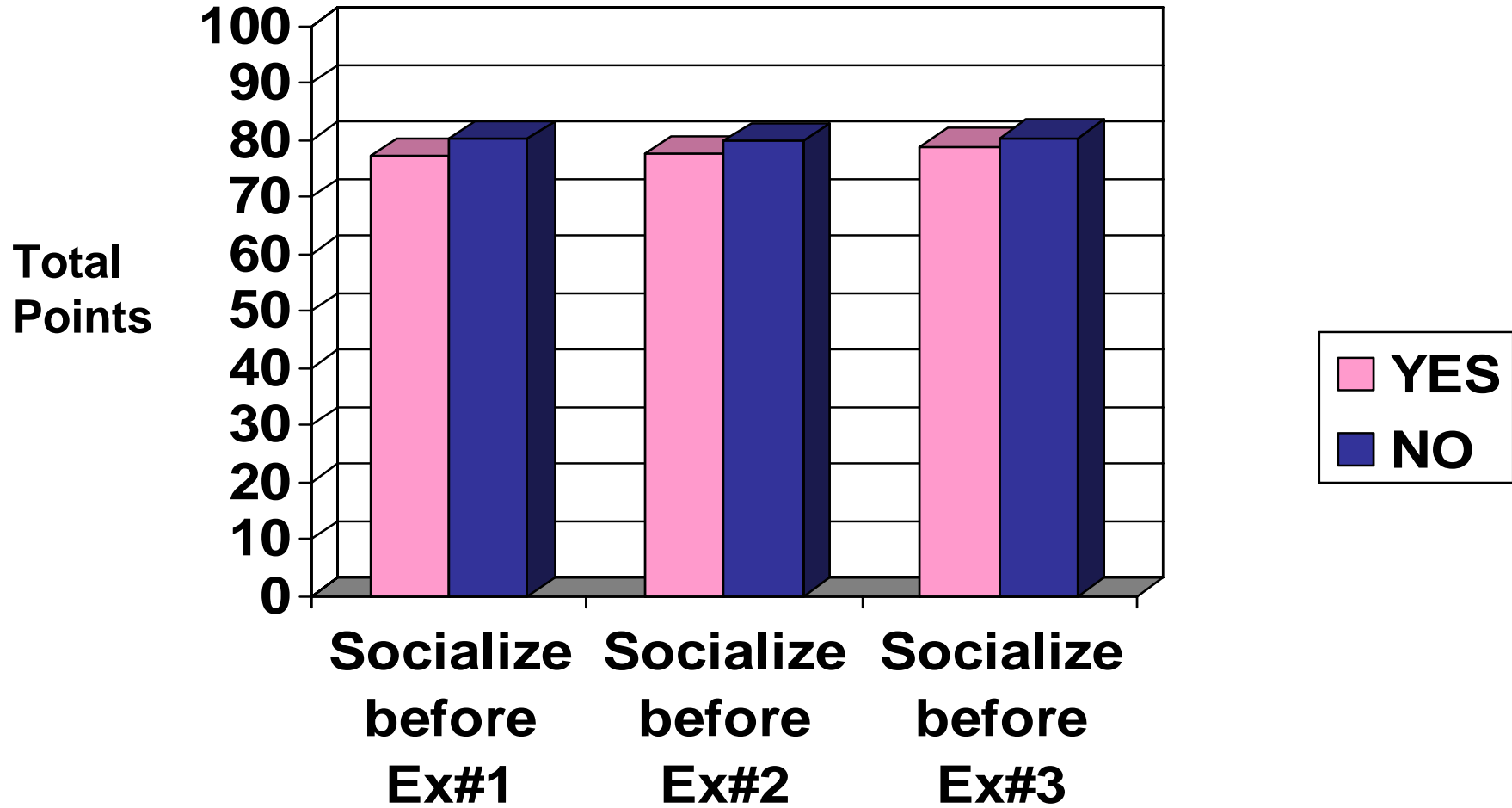
Frostburg Data

N = 53

Have you studied with other students?



Have you socialized with other students?



Future Directions

- Currently analyzing data from poli sci sections (both learning community and “stand alone”)
- Allows comparison of academic performance
- Other DVs? Are there other goals besides student academic performance? (e.g., retention, confidence, enjoyment?)

