



Do Experiences in the Classroom Translate to Improved Job Interview Skills?

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First year students in a biology course used Big Interview to videotape responses to a mock internship interview. A pre-interview was completed in the first two weeks of the course and a post-interview was completed after the twelfth week. The same 10 questions were used. They represented common interview questions:

Behavioral Questions:

- Give an example of when you were able to learn a new skill in a short period of time.
- Tell me about a time when you went above and beyond expectations.
- Tell me about a time you overcame a difficult obstacle.
- Give an example of a way you improved team efficiency.
- Tell me about a time you had a conflict on a team.
- Tell me about a time you failed.

Tell me about yourself Questions:

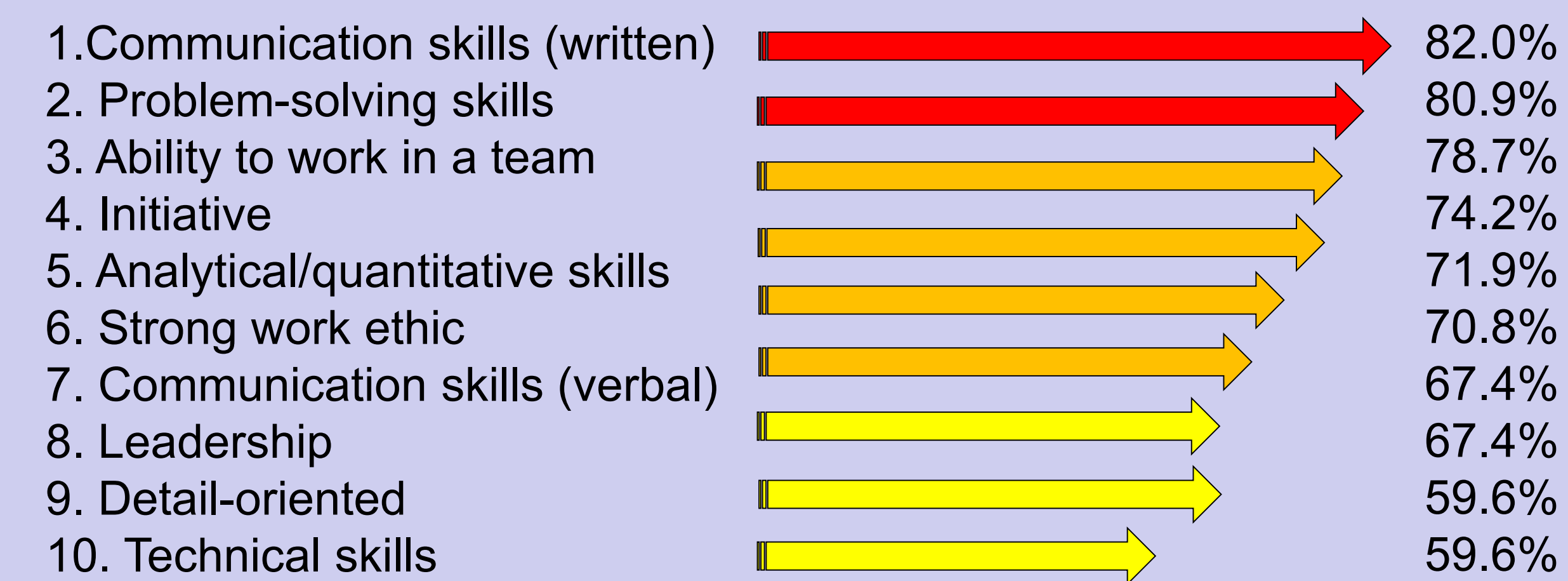
- How did you choose your school or major?
- What are you most passionate about?

Job accomplishments Questions:

- Which of your courses or projects helped you prepare for this internship?
- What makes you qualified for this position?

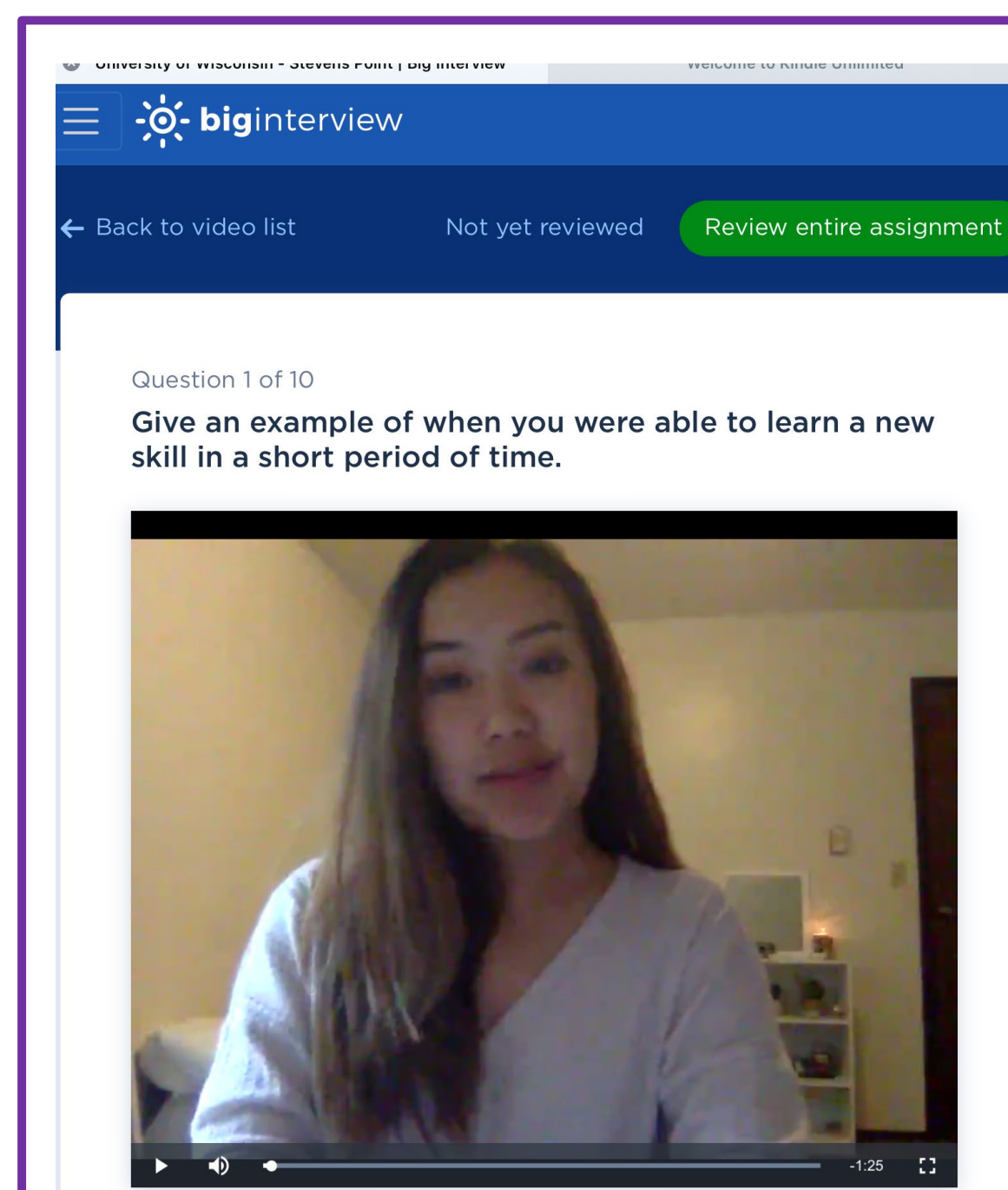


Between the two interviews the students conducted a semester-long Course-based Undergraduate Research Experience (CURE) investigating squirrel behavior and submitted data to a national dataset. Teams of students then had to collaborate on a research paper and give an oral presentation of the study.

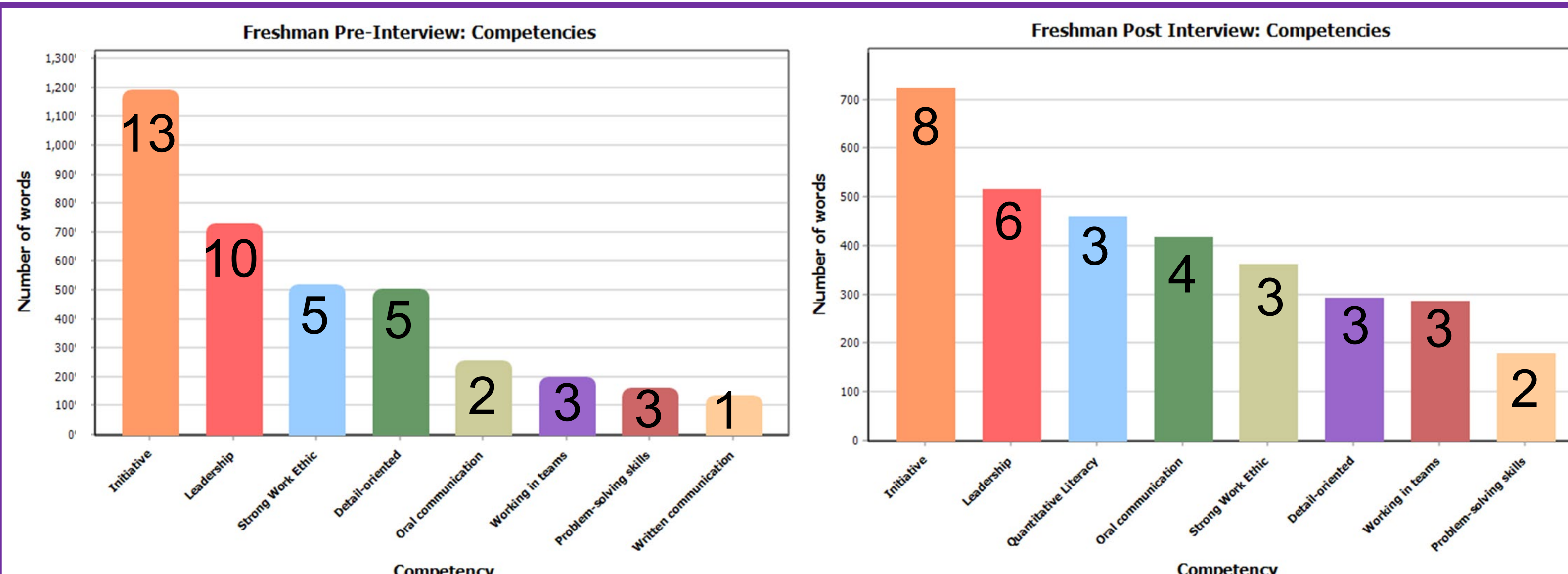


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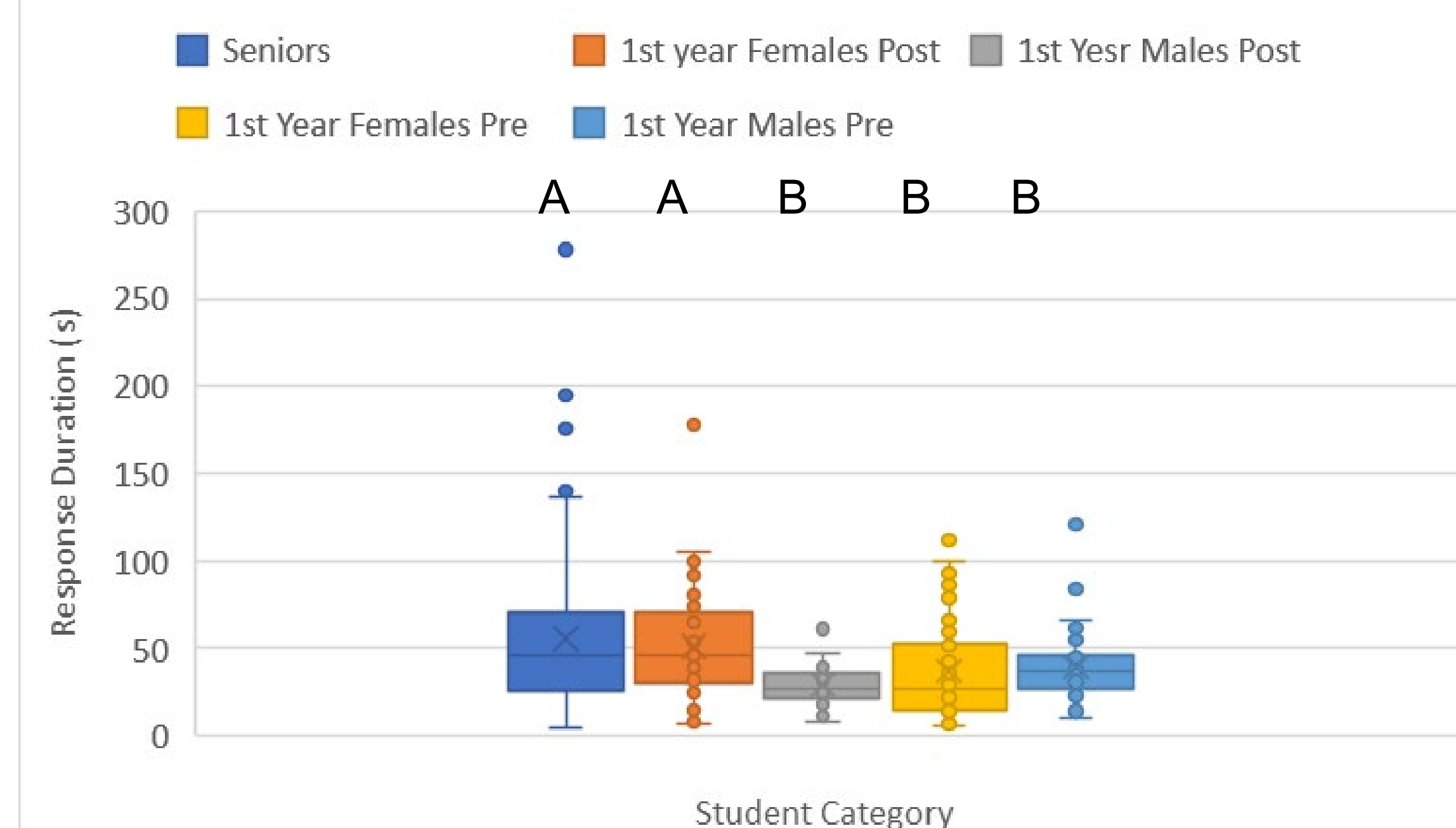
Employers were asked which skills – beyond strong GPA – they most want to see on a student's resume. I include the most current NACE top 10 skills list on all of my course syllabi. While the list does not change much from year to year, Leadership dropped from number one in 2017 to number eight in 2019, and Written Communication increased from number three to number one in 2019. No first-year students provided an example of written communication skills in an interview response.



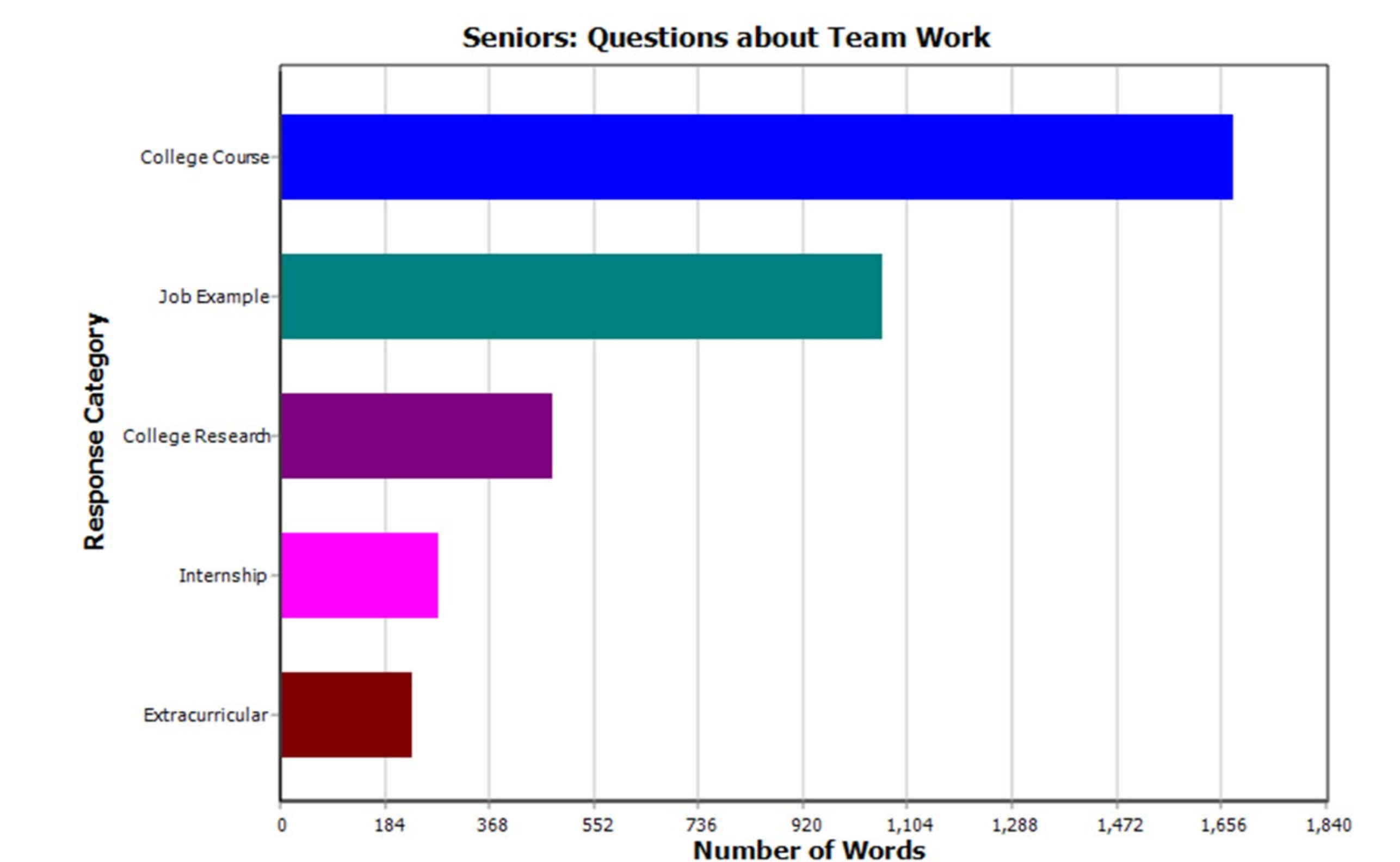
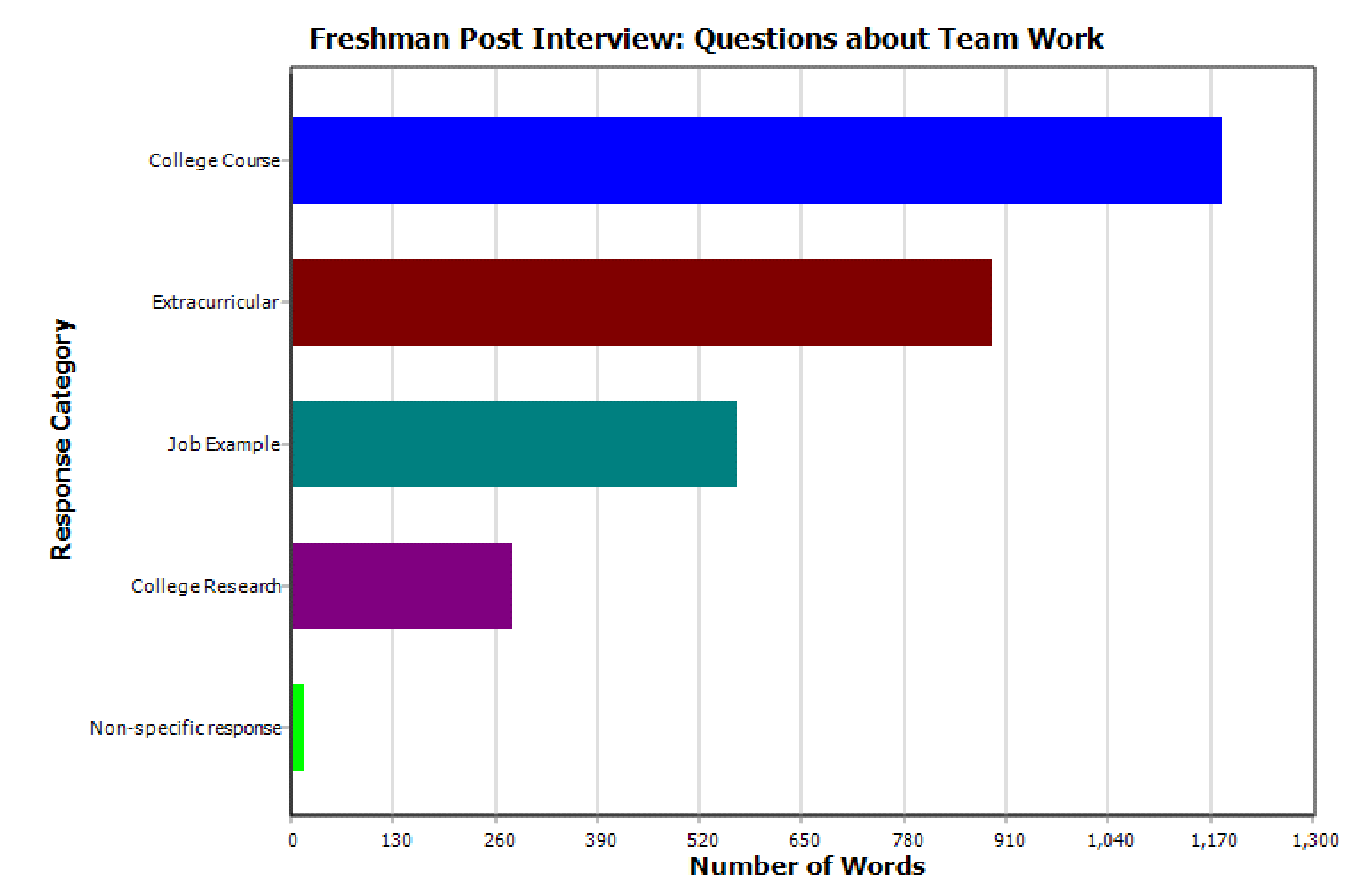
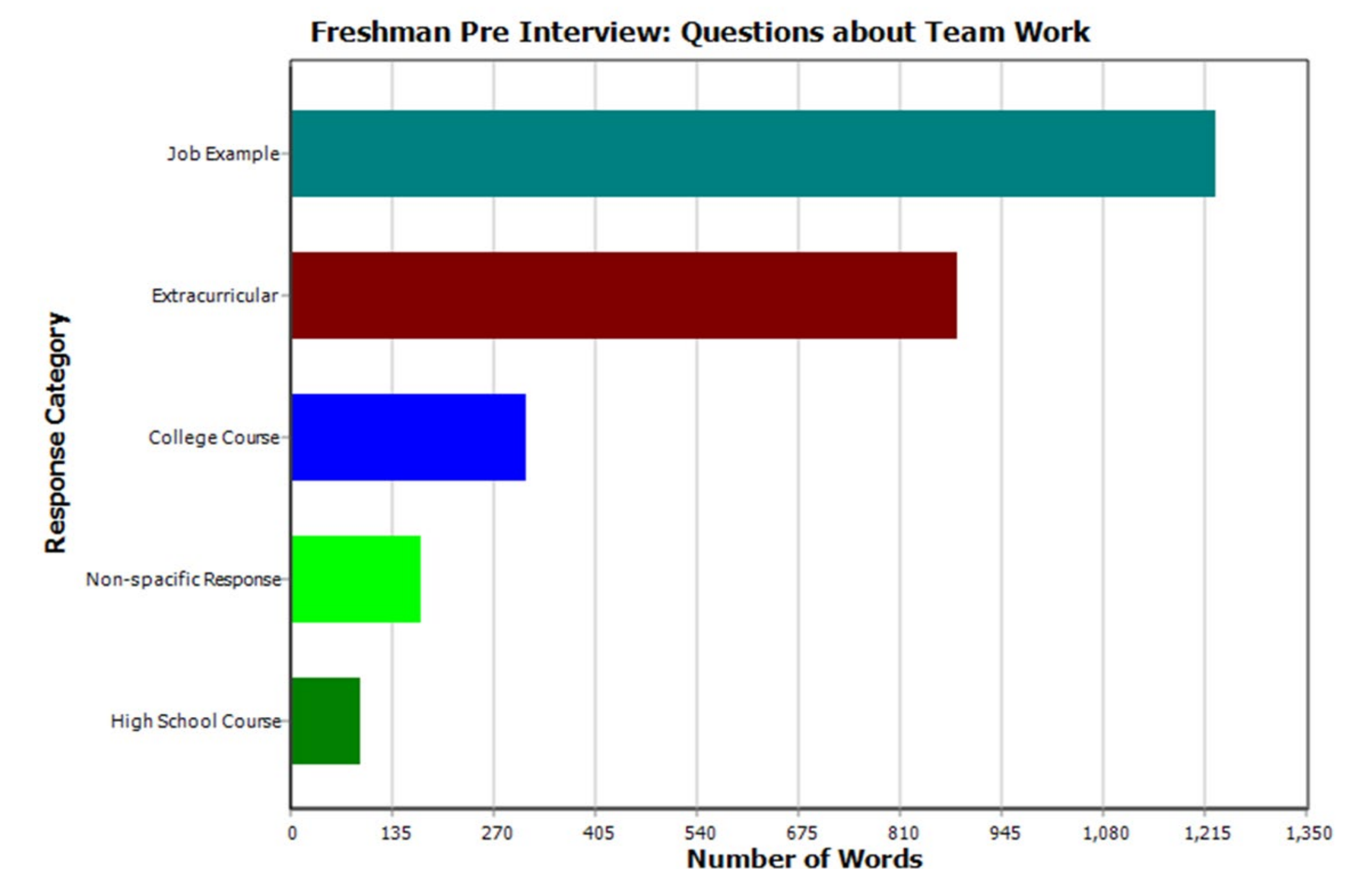
Students learned how to use Big Interview, a resource offered through our Academic and Career Advising Center. Ten questions were selected from a standard Internship Interview template. Most of the questions are behavior questions, which allow interviewees to tell stories drawing from past experiences. It is these questions I focused on to determine if the content of these stories changed over the course of the semester in first-year students. I looked both at competencies and type of example.



Initiative and Leadership were the two competencies that were highlighted most in first year student responses. After the CURE activity some students included examples of quantitative literacy and oral communication in their interview responses. The numbers within each bar represent the number of interview responses that included a specific competency.



For first year students, response time significantly increased on the post internship interview for female students but not for male students. Post interview females were similar to seniors in response times. Different letters represent treatments that were significantly different from each other based on paired t-tests.



First year students quickly incorporated examples from college courses and college research into their interview responses. There were still many examples from extramural activities, particularly relating to questions about working on teams. Extramural examples declined dramatically in the senior responses. All students can be better coached by instructors on how to translate their coursework into job competencies.