

Do Law Students Want Multiple Graded and Ungraded Assignments?

Results from an Empirical Research Project

Question: In light of recent calls for more assessment in legal education, how do students feel about multiple graded and ungraded assignments in their law school courses?

Methodology: Survey administered to students at the beginning and end of their first year of law school.

At the beginning of the year, students were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements:

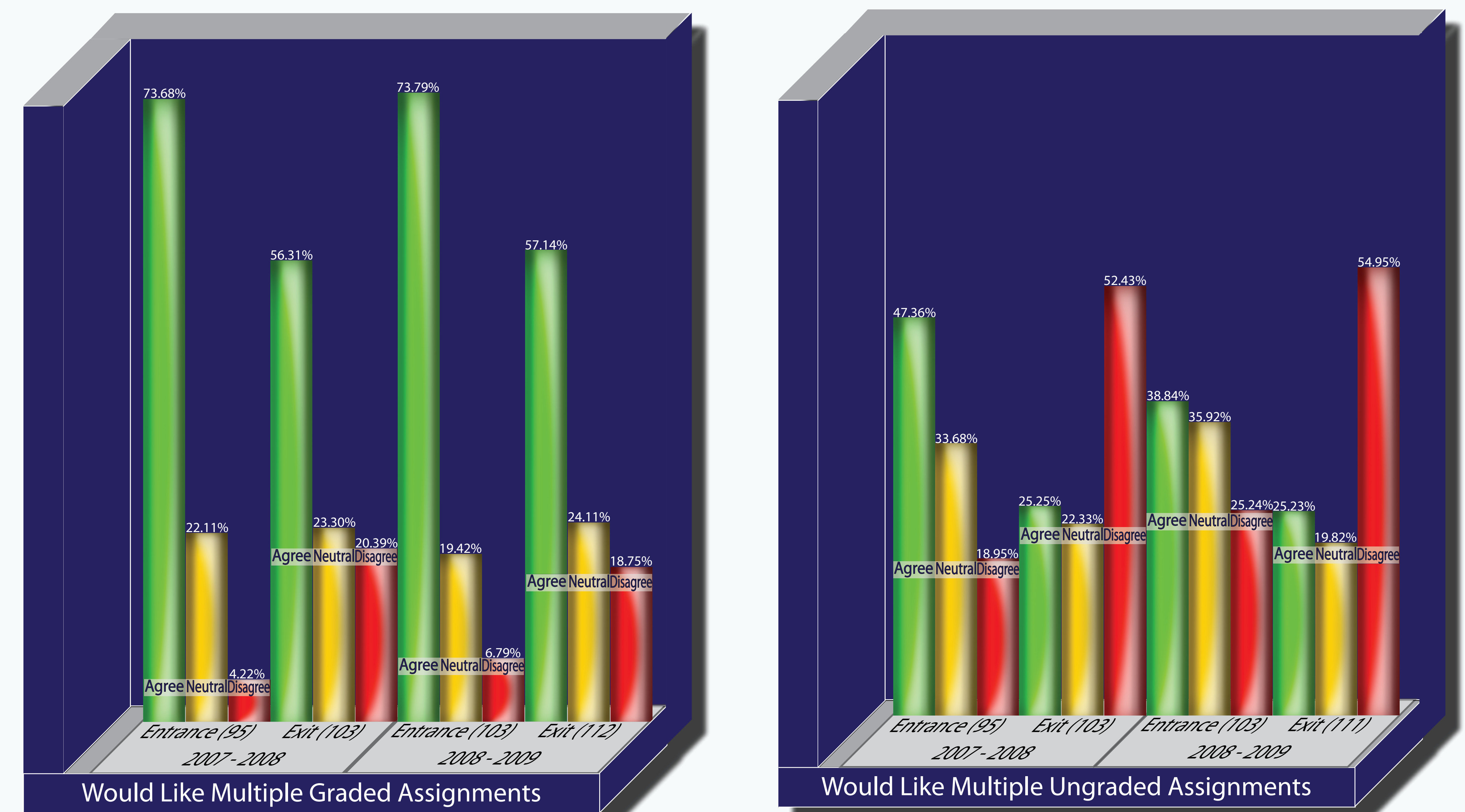
- I would like to be assigned multiple graded assignments throughout a first-year law school course.
- I would like to be assigned multiple un-graded assignments throughout a first-year law school course.

At the end of the year, students were asked to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements:

- I would like to be assigned multiple graded assignments throughout a law school course.
- I would like to be assigned multiple un-graded assignments throughout a law school course.

Students were asked to circle a response on a 5-point scale, with:

5 = Strongly Agree | 3 = Neither Agree Nor Disagree | 1 = Strongly Disagree



The graphs above show the percentage of students at each survey administration who answered 4/5 (Agree), 3 (Neutral), or 1/2 (Disagree).

Findings:

At both the beginning of the year and the end of the year, a majority of first-year law students indicate that they want multiple graded assignments.

Although a majority of first-year law students indicate that they want multiple graded assignments at both the beginning and end of the year, the percentage of students who indicate that they want multiple graded assignments is lower at the end of the year.

At the end of the first year of law school, a majority of students indicate disagreement with wanting multiple ungraded assignments.

Questions Raised by Findings:

Should at least some law school courses use multiple graded assignments?

Do students' workload concerns underlie their apparent resistance to multiple ungraded assignments?

How can assessment be integrated into the law school curriculum without overburdening law students (and law professors)?