

## 6.034 end of term statistics

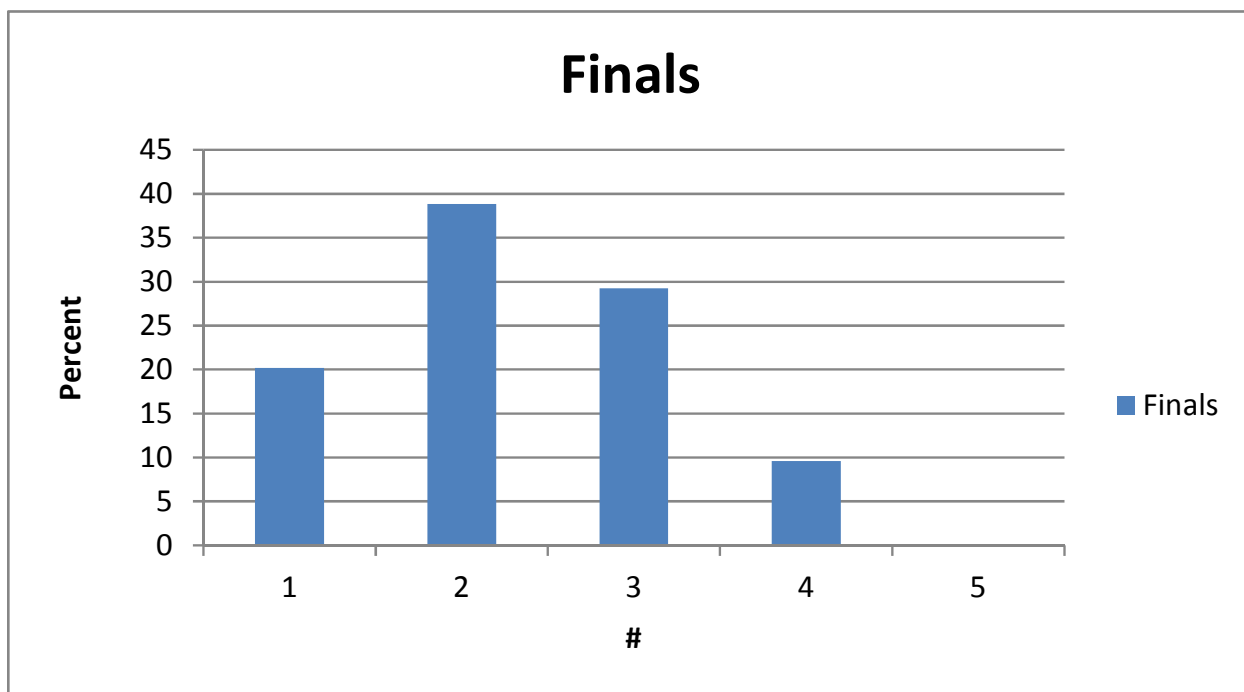
Patrick Winston

19 December 2014

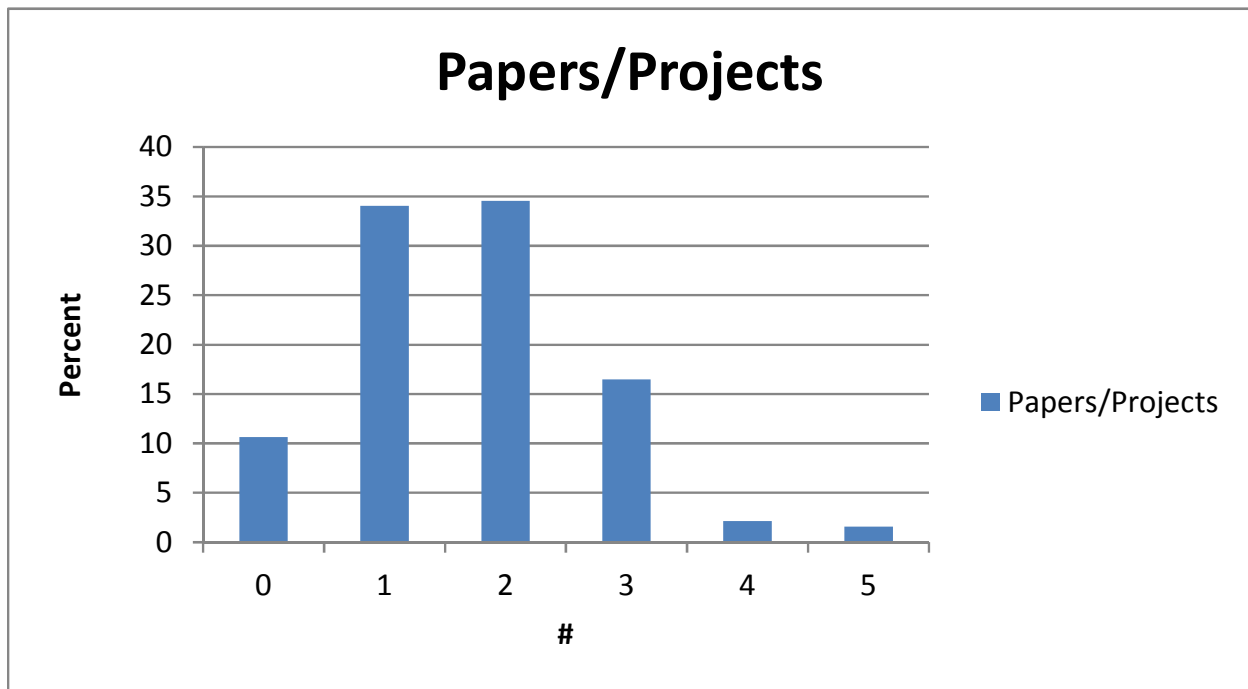
Many MIT subjects require substantial end-of-term effort, frequently on projects, presumably because projects force concentration and give students a sense of mastery. In recognition of this tendency, we deliberately front-load 6.034; the pace is more rapid in the first few weeks of the semester and less rapid after Thanksgiving. Also, our grading policy is such that a student can only improve his/her grade by taking our final.

In 2014, we conducted a survey on the front page of our final examination to determine whether our front-loading policy in 6.034 makes sense. We asked our students to indicate the number of subjects taken with a final and the number of subjects with a term project or paper requiring substantial effort at or near the end of the semester.

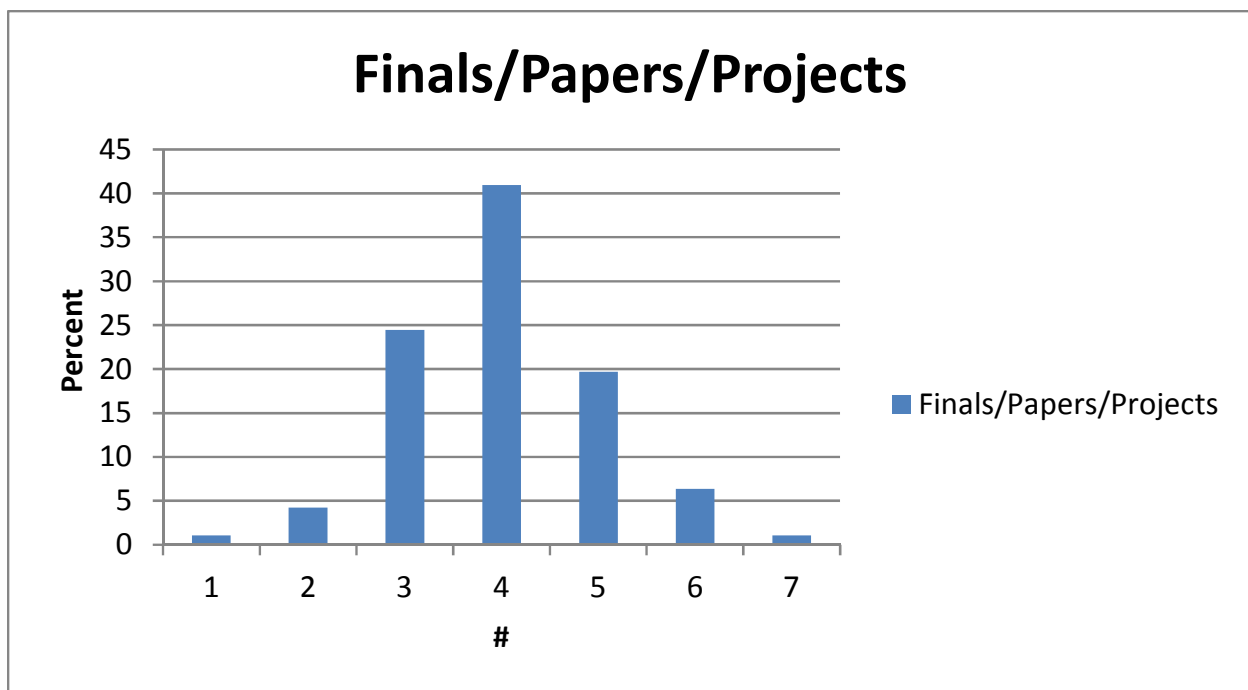
Of our 320 students, we collected information from 189—many were happy with their grades before taking the final and elected not to take it. A few did not participate in the survey. Some wrote unsolicited notes on their final pleading with us to retain our front-loading policy.



Only 20% of the students who participated in our survey had one final, the one on which we asked our questions.



Half our students have 2 or 3 term projects or papers that require substantial effort at or near the end of the term.



Almost all our students have substantial end-of-term pressures.