

Redirecting Laptop Users' Attention: Lessons from the Field

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Today's Presentation:

- 1. IRB-Study Description**
- 2. Findings**
- 3. Practical Strategies**



Study Type

**Observational Study
(Incomplete Disclosure for Consent)**

Duration/Location

**Entire Fall Semester 2010/Saint Louis University
School of Law**

Population Size

95 Total Participants

Observation Setting

**2- 1L Classes (Contracts &
Criminal Law; different teachers)**

1-2L Class (Taxation)

**2-3L Classes (Conflicts of Laws &
Secured Transactions; different teachers)**

6- Certified Research Assistants

**Assigned no more than 12 of same
participants to observe in various places in classroom**

Special Timer-Software

**Manually started and stopped to
Log Actual Off-Task Laptop Behavior**

IRB-STUDY:

**Laptop Usage
and Final Course
Grade**



Primary Research Questions

1. What is the actual extent of laptop misuse in class?
 - a) Time off-task?
 - b) Instances off-task?
 - c) Num. Laptop users off-task?
2. Does off-task behavior correlate to final course grade ? To LSAT scores?

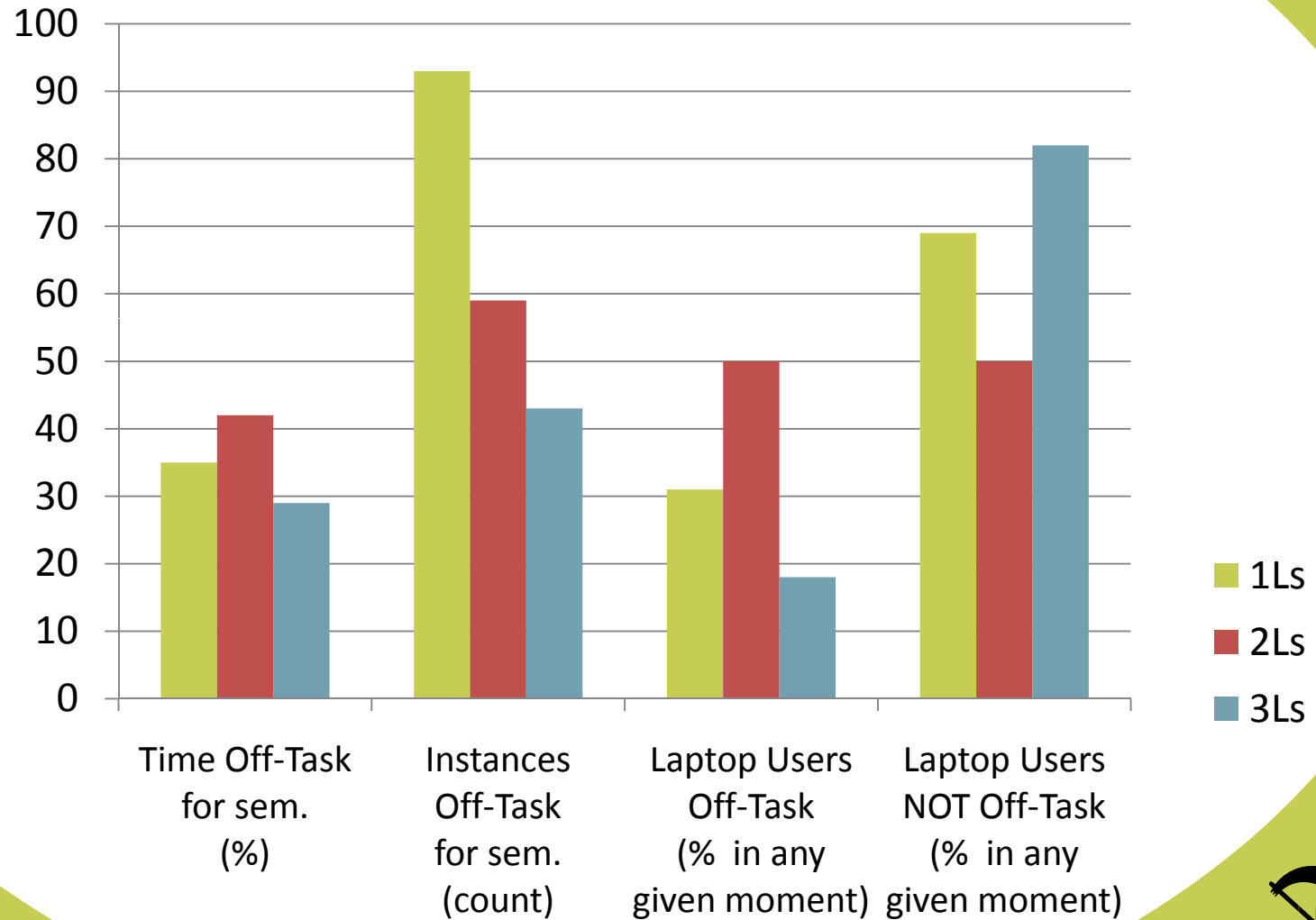
Secondary Research Questions

3. What classroom conditions promote off-task behavior?
4. What classroom conditions **redirect** laptop users' attention away from off-task behavior?



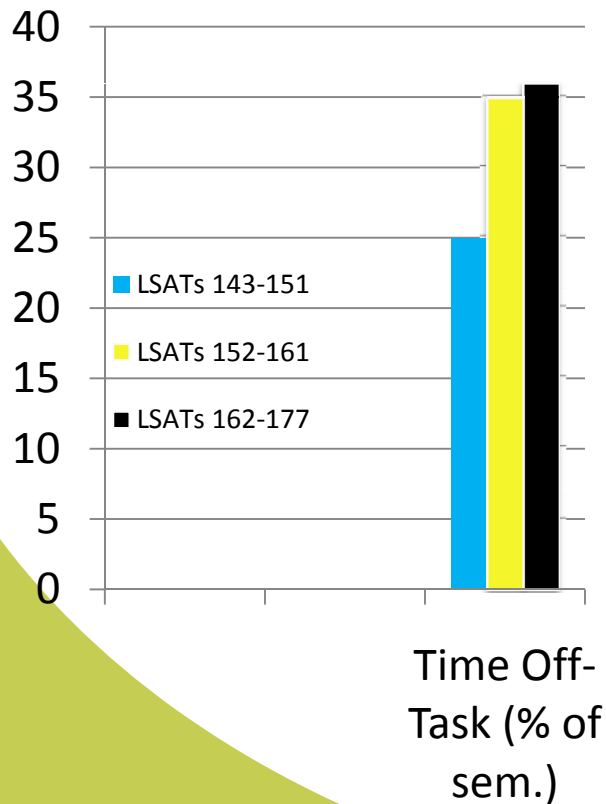
1. What is the actual extent of laptop misuse in class?

(Chart 1)

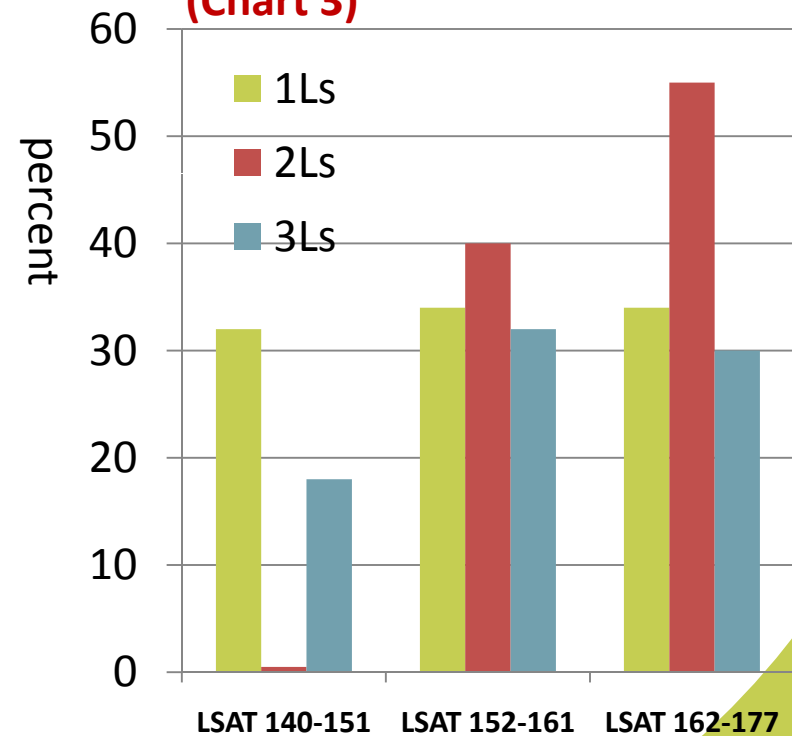


Actual Extent Off-Task Behavior Based on LSAT

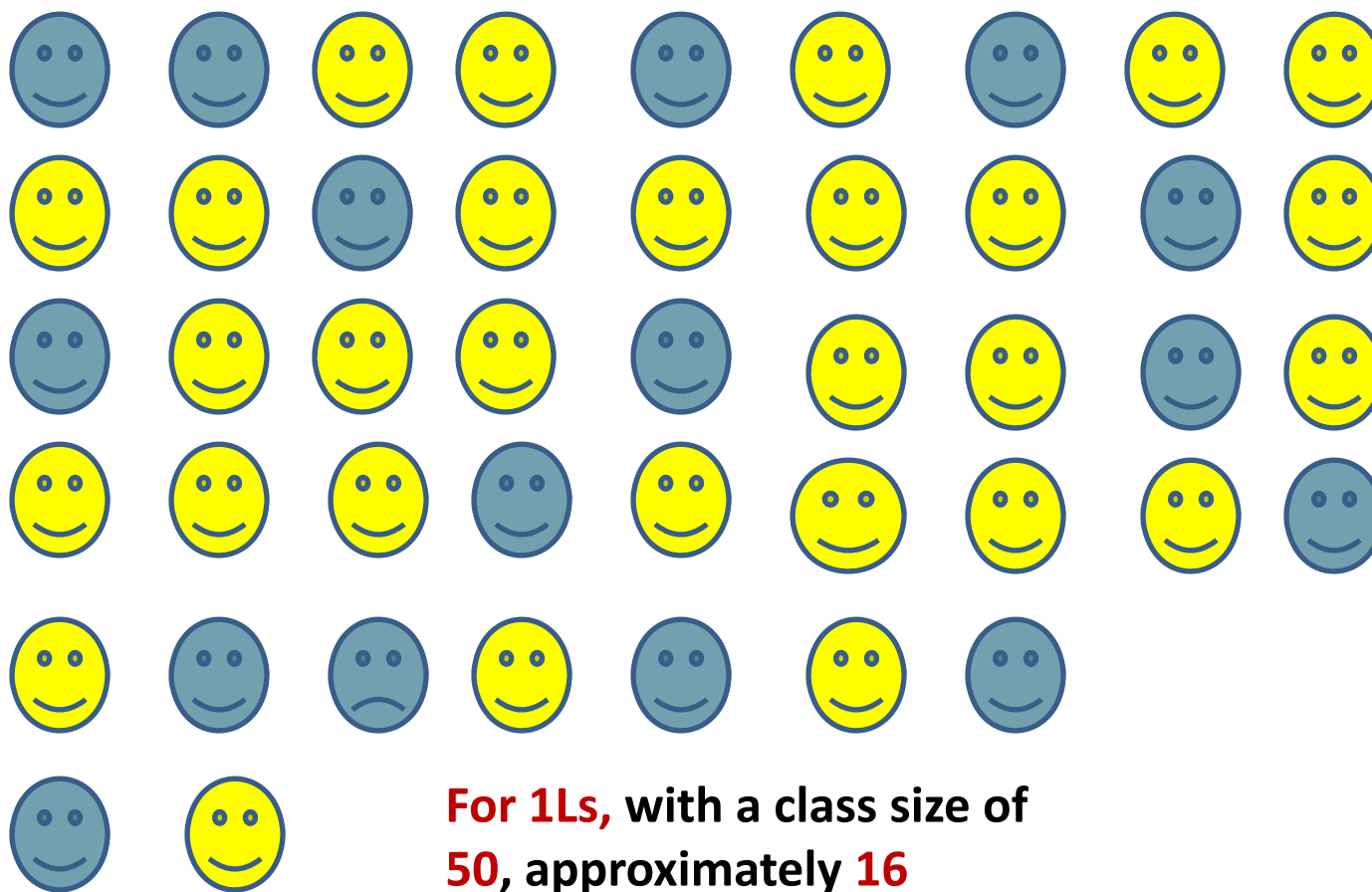
All laptop users % of Time Off-Task by LSAT (chart 2)



Laptop Users % Time Off-Task by Student Year & LSAT (Chart 3)

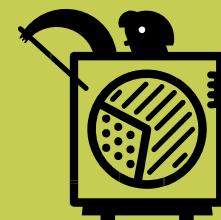


Actual Extent of 1Ls off-task at a given time?

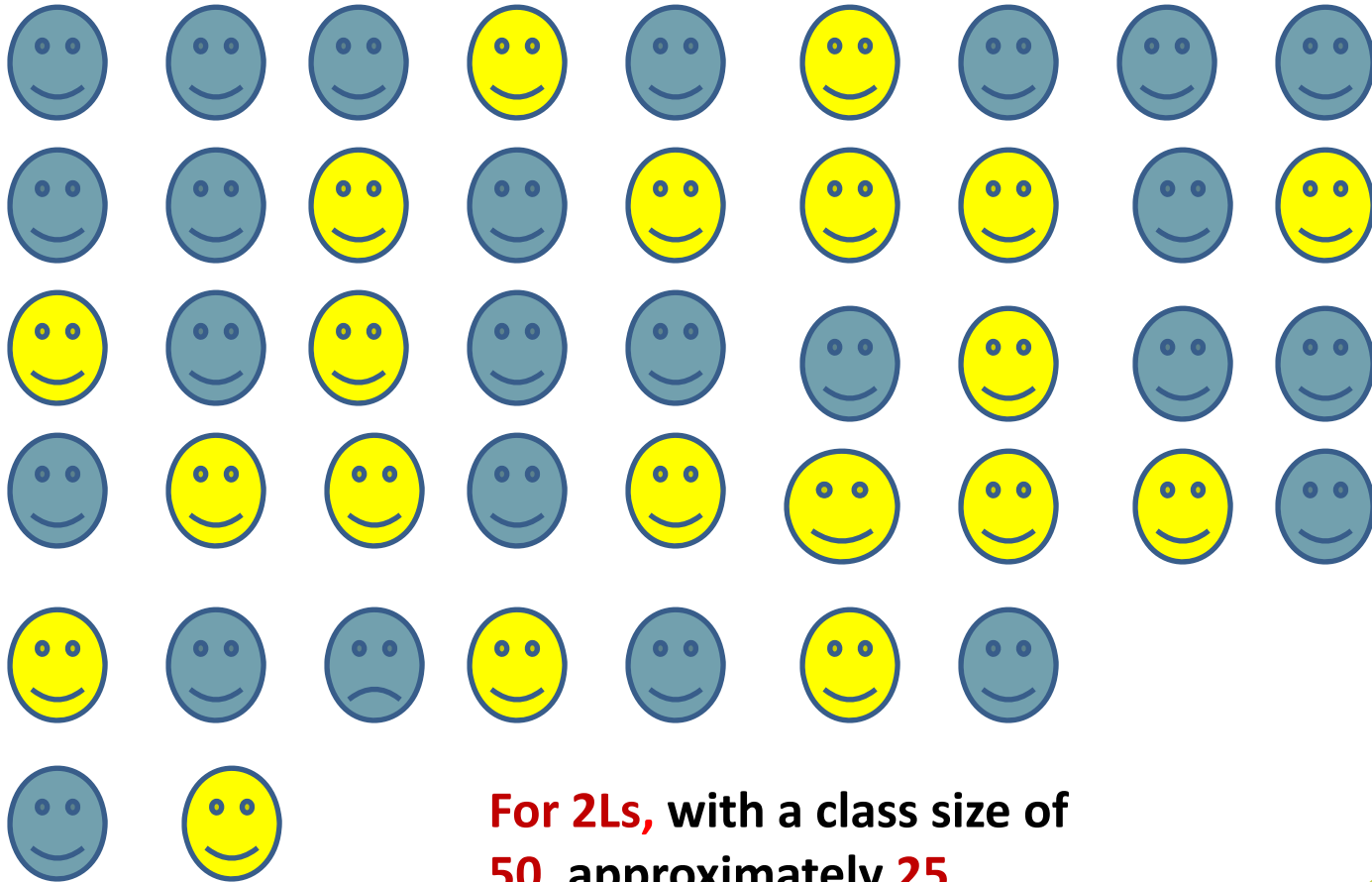


For 1Ls, with a class size of 50, approximately 16 students are off-task in a given instant.

Or, said positively, approximately 69% of the class is not misusing their laptops at a given instant.



Actual Extent of 2Ls off-task at a given time?



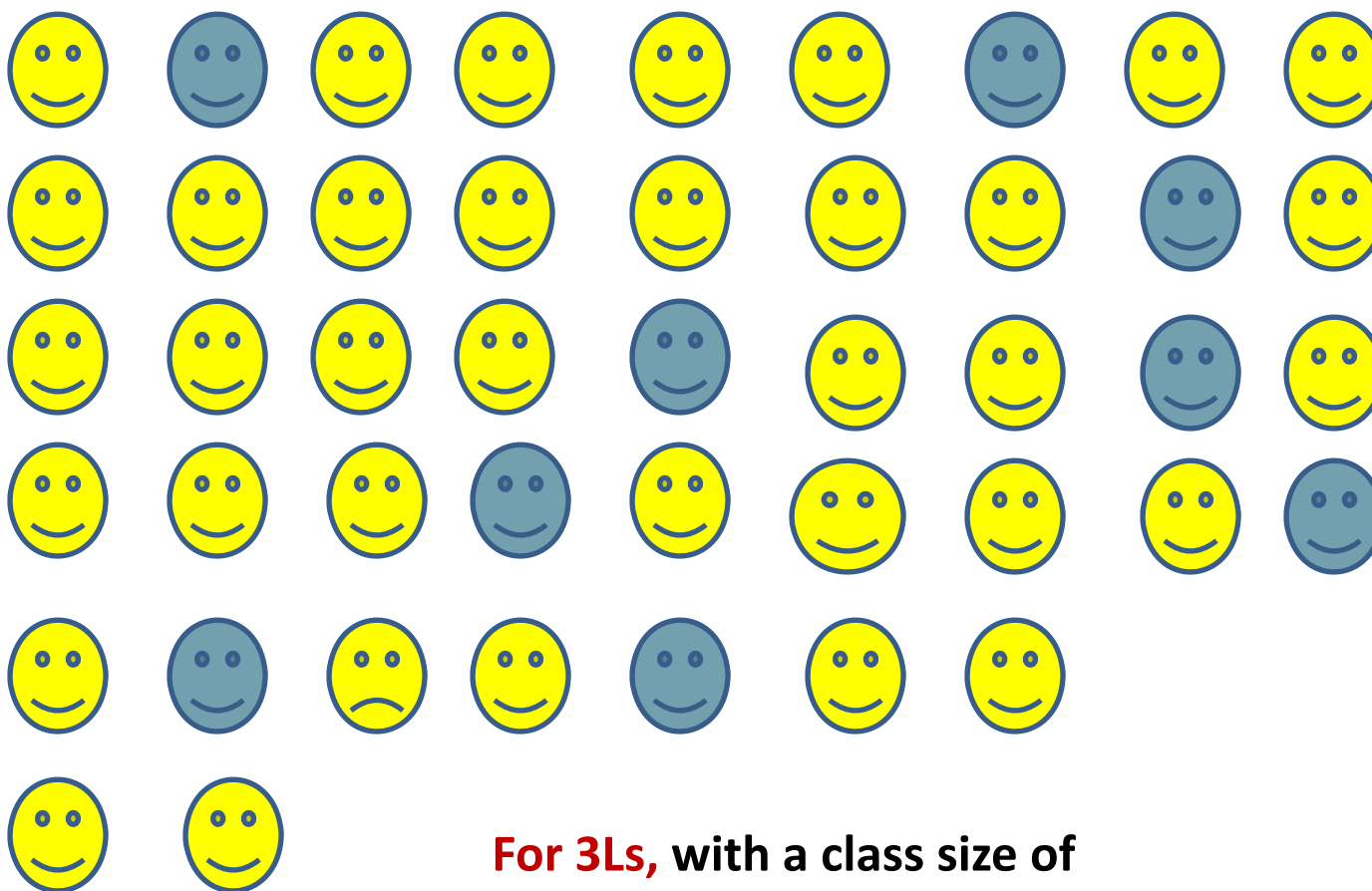
Or, said another way, approximately **50%** of the class is not misusing their laptops at a given instant.

For 2Ls, with a class size of **50**, approximately **25** students are off-task in a given instant.

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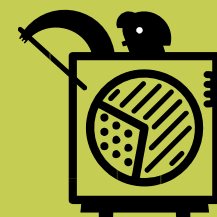


Actual Extent of 3Ls off-task at a given time?



Or, said in a positive way, approximately **82%** of the class is not misusing their laptops at a given instant.

For 3Ls, with a class size of **50**, approximately **9** students are off-task in a given instant.



2. Is there a correlation between Off-Task Behavior and Final Course Grade?

NO Significant Relationship between Percent of Off-Task Behavior and Final Course Grade (either positively or negatively)

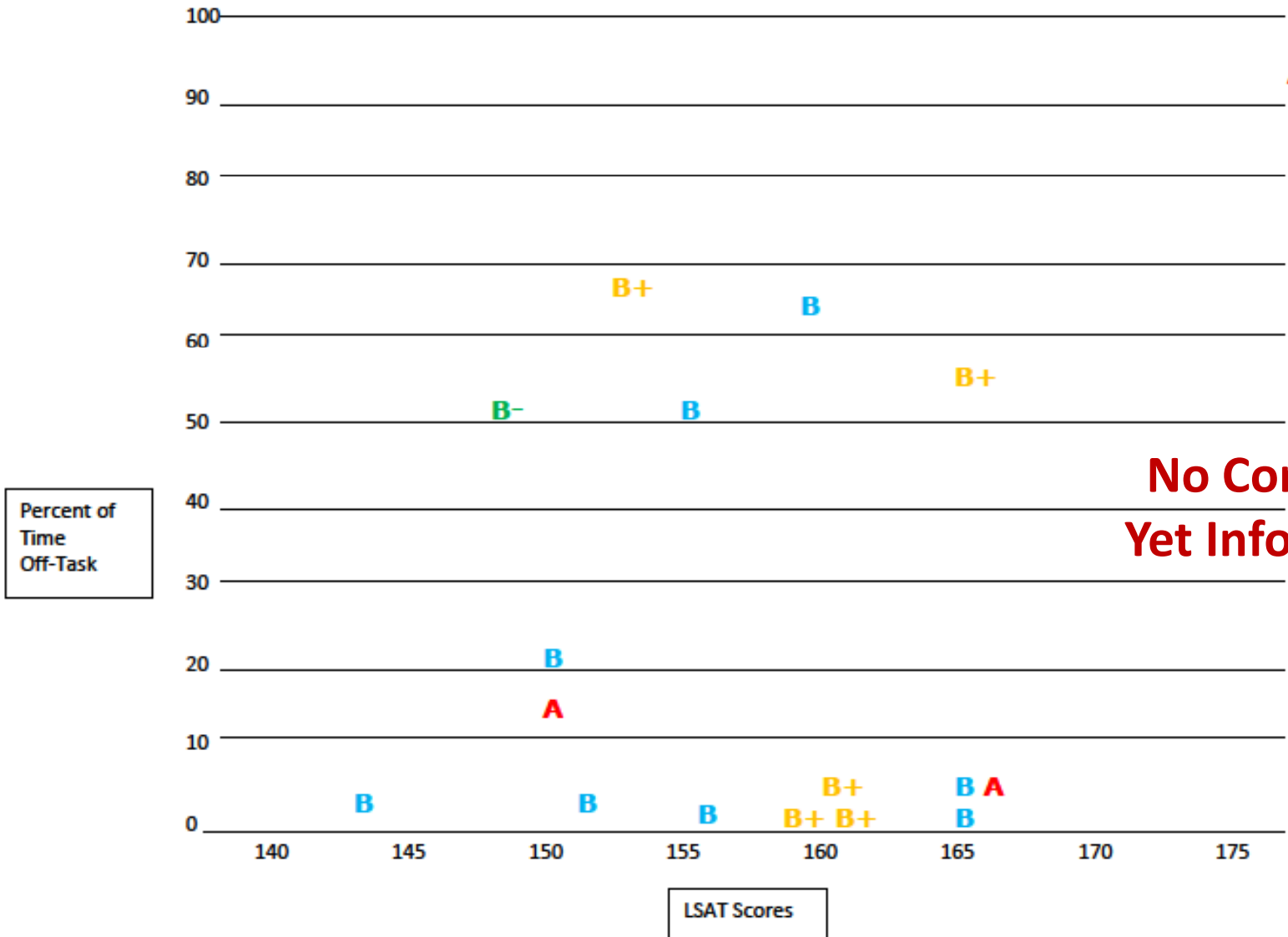
Correlations (Chart 4)

		PctOT	GradeNum
Percent Off-Task Increases	Pearson Correlation	1	-.137
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.188
	N	95	94
GradeNum	Pearson Correlation	-.137	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.188	
	N	94	94

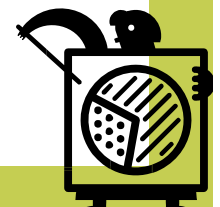


(Chart 5-Correlation)

3Ls (Final Grade, LSAT & Percent of Time Off-Task)

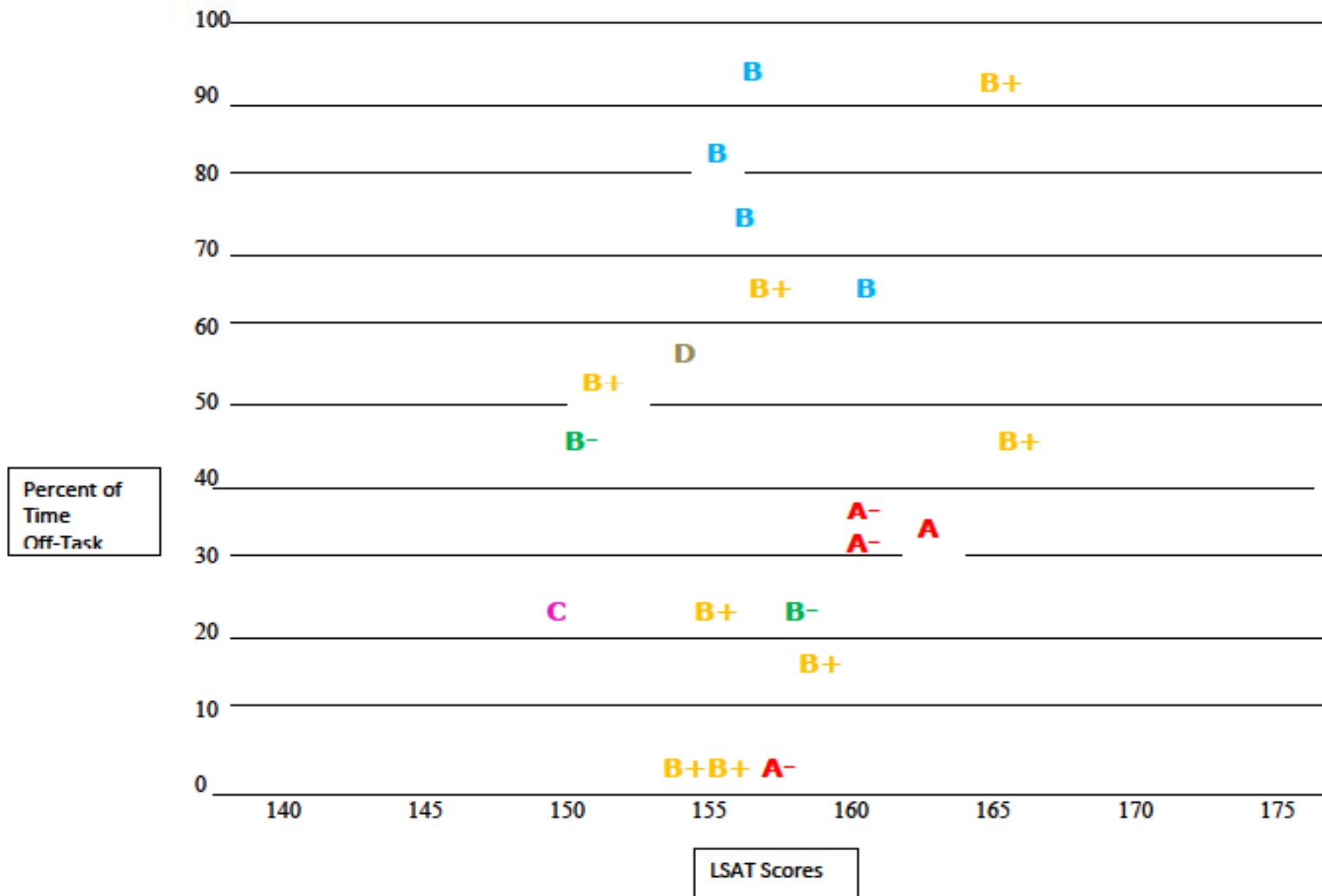


No Correlation,
Yet Informative...



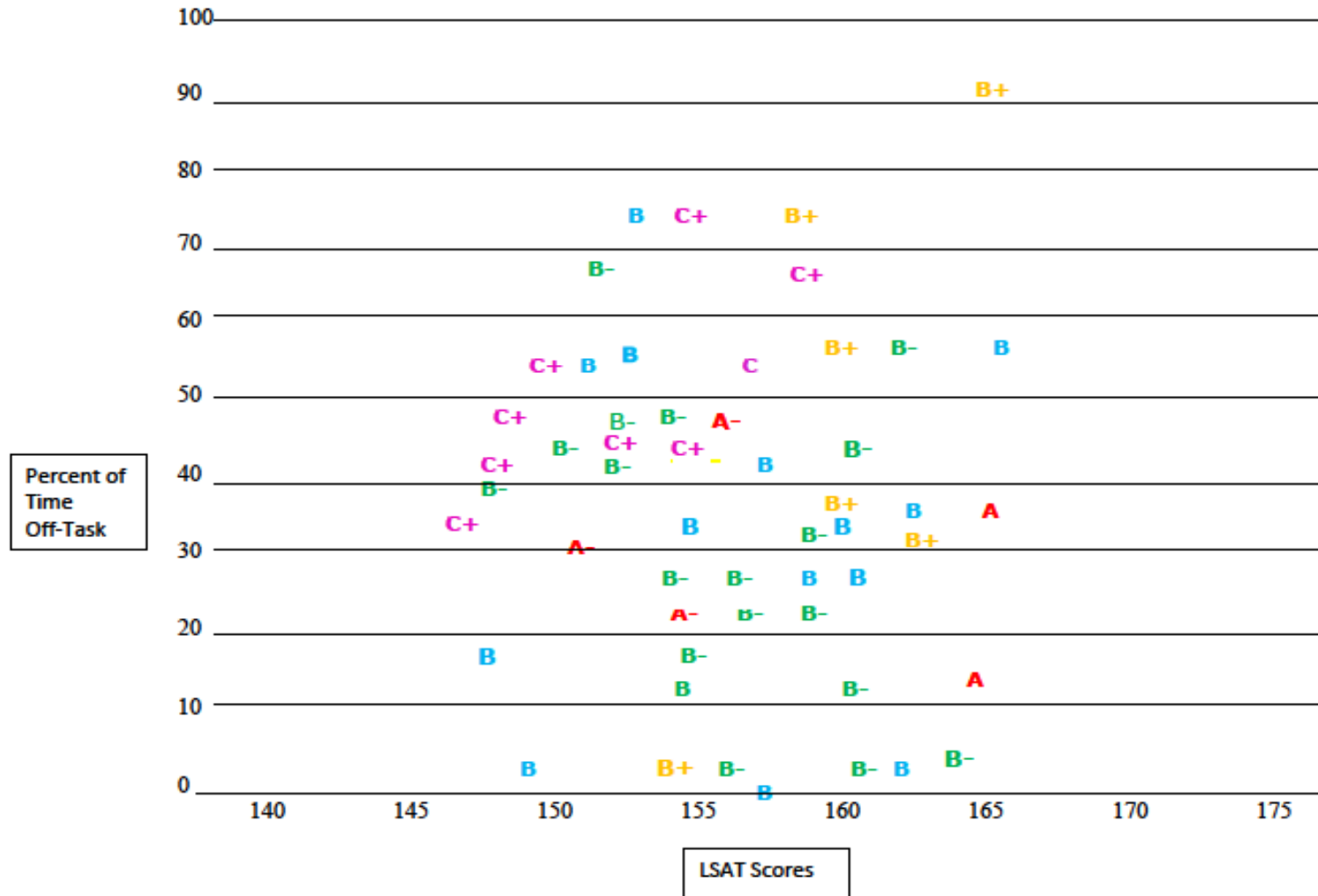
(Chart 6- Correlation)

2Ls (Final Grade, LSAT & Percent of Time Off-Task)



(Chart 7 - correlation)

1Ls (Final Grade, LSAT & Percent of Time Off-Task)



3. What Classroom Conditions Promote Off-Task Behavior?

Duration: Student laptop users tend to go off-task when **X** occurs for 4 minutes or more...

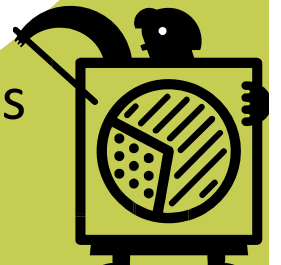
Pedagogical Method: When professor is engaged in socratic method with one student, there is an increase in off-task behavior by other students.

Classmate Participation: When classmates question or comment with professor, there is an increase in off-task behavior by other students.

Linguistic Mannerisms: When professor is monotone, or, overly uses one linguistic intonation style, students tend to increase off-task behavior.

Class Duration: Approximately 40 minutes into class, off-task behavior increases.

Pedagogical Method 2: When professor calls on students in expected order.



4. What conditions *redirect* laptop users' attention away from off-task behavior?

Lecture Content: Students redirect attention away from off-task behavior when professor provides Big-Point-Summaries, Rule Formations, Definitions, and Conclusions.

“Ultimately, courts look at X...”; “The upshot is...”

Pedagogical Method 1: Students decrease off-task behavior when directed to an item in a book, chalkboard, digital presentation, in-class task. “Look at page X...”; “On the chalkboard you see...”; “On the screen, notice X...”, “Write a brief X...”



Conditions that redirect (cont'd.)

Linguistic Signals & Mannerisms:

Students redirect attention away from off-task behavior when professor prefaces content with signal phrases like:

“This would be a good exam question...”

“ I want to flag for you...” , “The critical idea here is...”

Or, by using linguistic mannerisms like intonation, especially rising intonation found in questions:

“And, how would you know X ?”; “Because.....?”



Pedagogical Method 2: Students redirect attention when professor asks a problem-solving question to the class (less so than targeting one student).

“How might we determine X...?”

“If we alter X, what might Y?”



Conditions that redirect (Cont'd.)

Pedagogical Method 3:

Students redirect attention away from off-task behavior when professor manages “the duration of any X” so it doesn’t exceed 4-5 minutes. For example, the professor

- 1) may present info (5 min or less)
- switch 2) ask a question to the class (5 min or less)
- switch 3) direct students to book (5 min or less)
- switch 4) ask an individual a question and have student respond (5 min or less).

switch, etc.

Kinesthetic: Students redirect attention when professor moves toward off-task individuals (but surprisingly only for a short time)



Summary

Take Home Point One: Yes- SOME students are off-task but-- it is not who we think, and it is not as pervasive as we think.

Take Home Point Two: Off-task behavior doesn't significantly correlate to lower final course grade.

Take Home Point Three:

Short of outright banning laptops in classrooms or attempting to integrate technology into the classroom, the third option is for professors to simply redirect laptop users by Employing the various methods above.

