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Session: Technology for Globalization and Education

Alfons H. Teipen,

“Use of technology in an inter-institutional collaborative  
course  
in Islamic Studies, 2004-2006”

READY OR NOT  
Global Challenges, College Learning, and  
America's Promise  
January 21-24, 2009  
Seattle, Washington

# Rationale(s) for the Collaboration

- Limited faculty expertise in specific areas of a survey course
  - Collaboration can make various areas of expertise of collaborating faculty available to students
- Relative lack of diversity of students (religious / ethnic / socio-economic / regional)
  - Collaboration can increase student diversity – “collaborative learning can be enhanced when the learning partners bring different perspectives to the problem” (Wheeler, Valacich, Alavi & Vogel, 1995)

# Institutions involved

- Juniata College, Huntingdon PA:
  - Dr. Belle Tuten, History Department (2004-2006)
- Hobart and William Smith College, Geneva NY:
  - Dr. Bahar Davary, Dept of Religious Studies (2004)  
[Dr. Davary moved to the University of San Diego in 2005]
- Furman University, Greenville SC:
  - Dr. Alfons Teipen, Department of Religion (2004-2006)

# Content Aspects of the Collaboration

- Each collaborating instructor worked from their own syllabus; relative autonomy of each course preserved
- Identification of overlapping content as basis for “Touchpoints” (common readings, videos as basis for discussion), as well as a few “shared” lectures (delivered through video)
- Collaborative “research” projects on sacred scriptures (Qur’an and Hadith)

# Technical Aspects of Collaboration

- online threaded discussion boards  
(Blackboard / Sharepoint / Moodle)
- Audio files of individual lectures
- Occasional use of video-conferencing links  
between courses
- International video-conference between  
Furman and Ochanomizu University, Tokyo,  
Japan.

# Some Challenges:

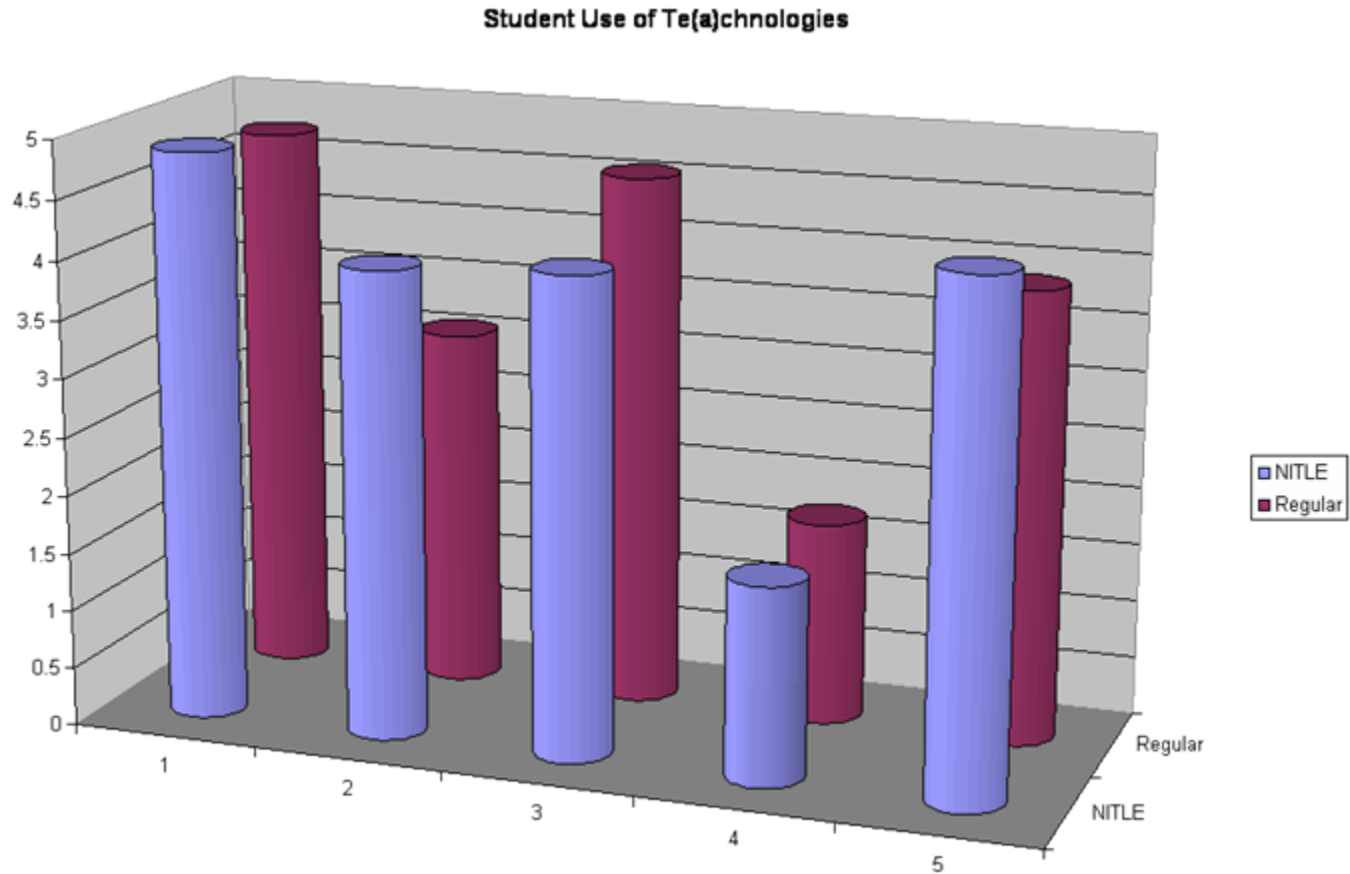
- Differences in academic calendars, class meeting times
- Initial Planning is time intensive
- Changes in technology (three iterations, three different CMS)
- Small group collaborations b/w colleges led to frustration among students (coordination with students from other institutions is difficult)
- International collaboration: time differences / language /

# Limited assessment of collaboration

- Brief survey of two identical courses (Islam survey) in the fall of 2004- comparing perceptions of students involved in collaboration to those of students in other course (non-collaborative)
  - Blue: collaborative course
  - Purple: regular course

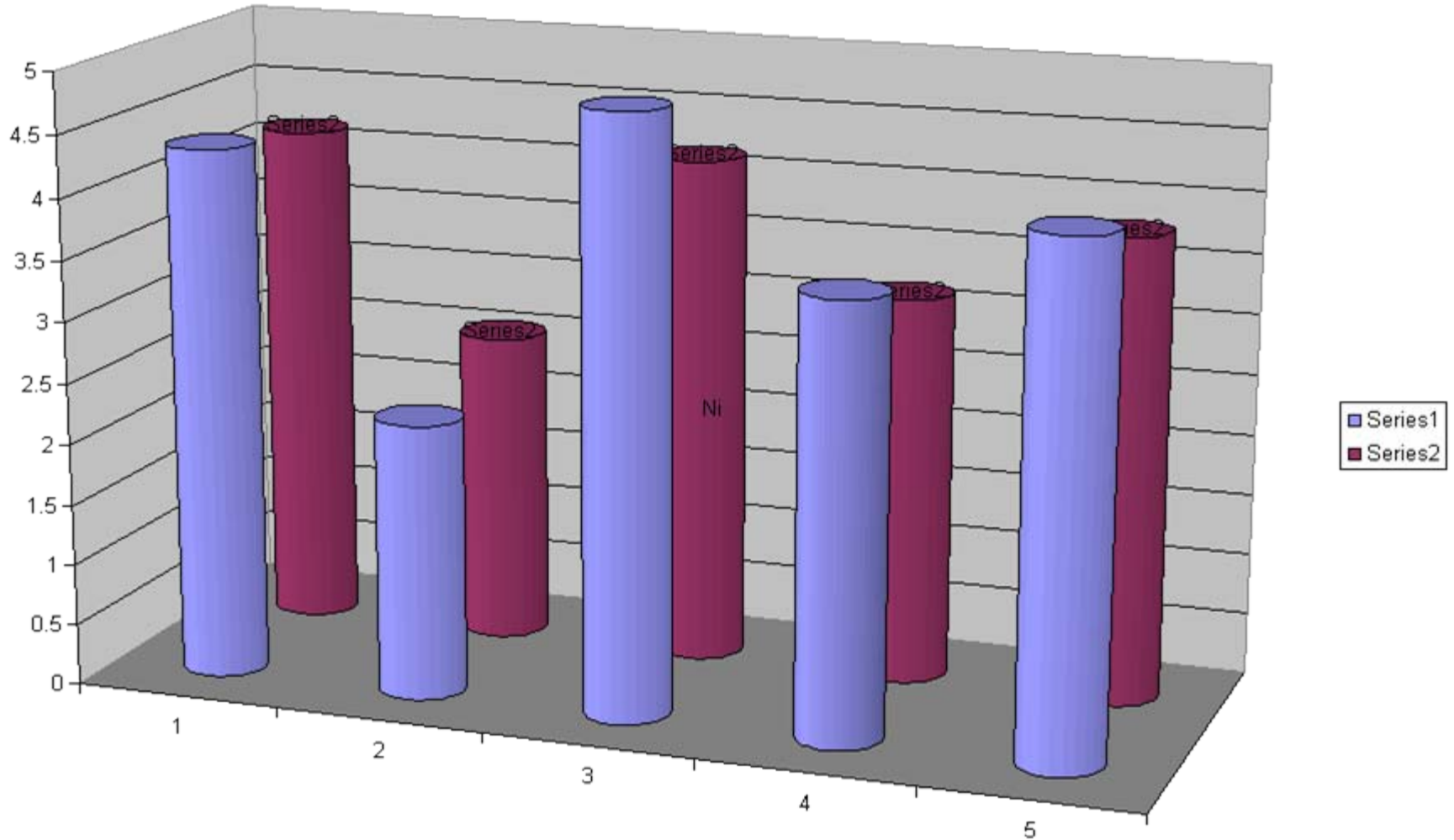
# Student Use of Technology

\*some difference in frequency of use of technologies (web-readings, audio files, discussion boards, etc)

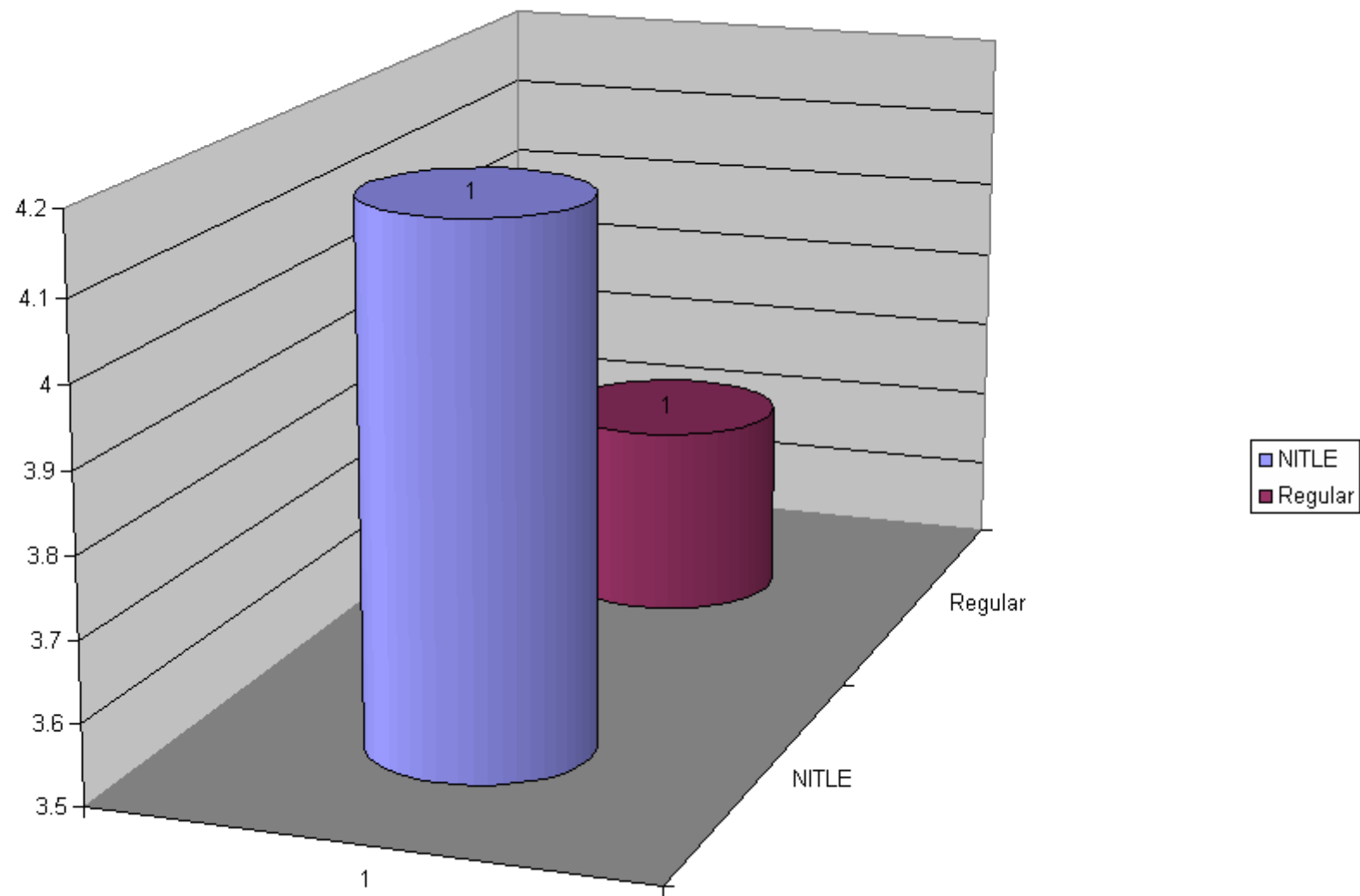


# Some difference in enthusiasm for technologies used

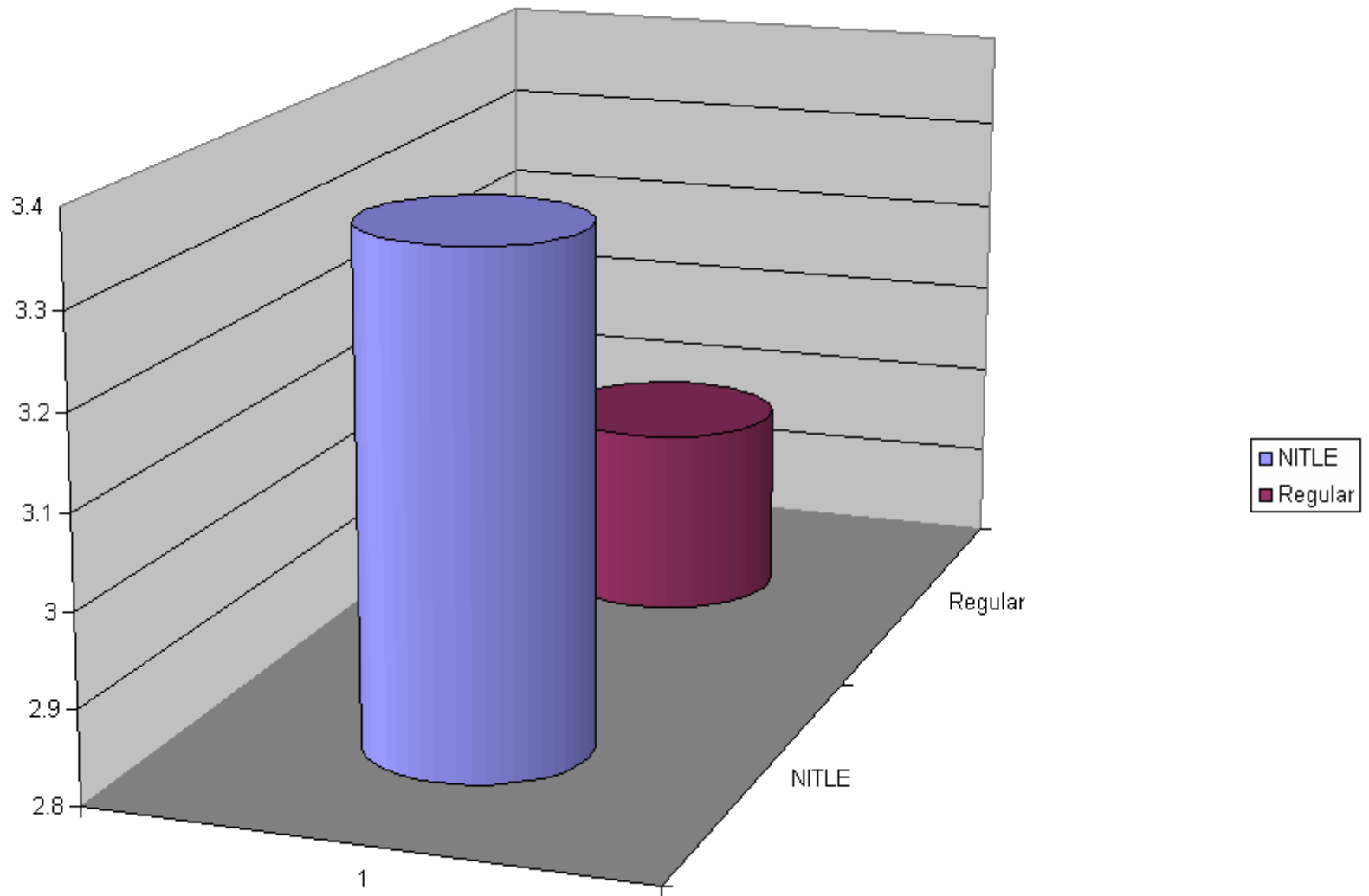
Overall Enthusiasm on Instruction Technology



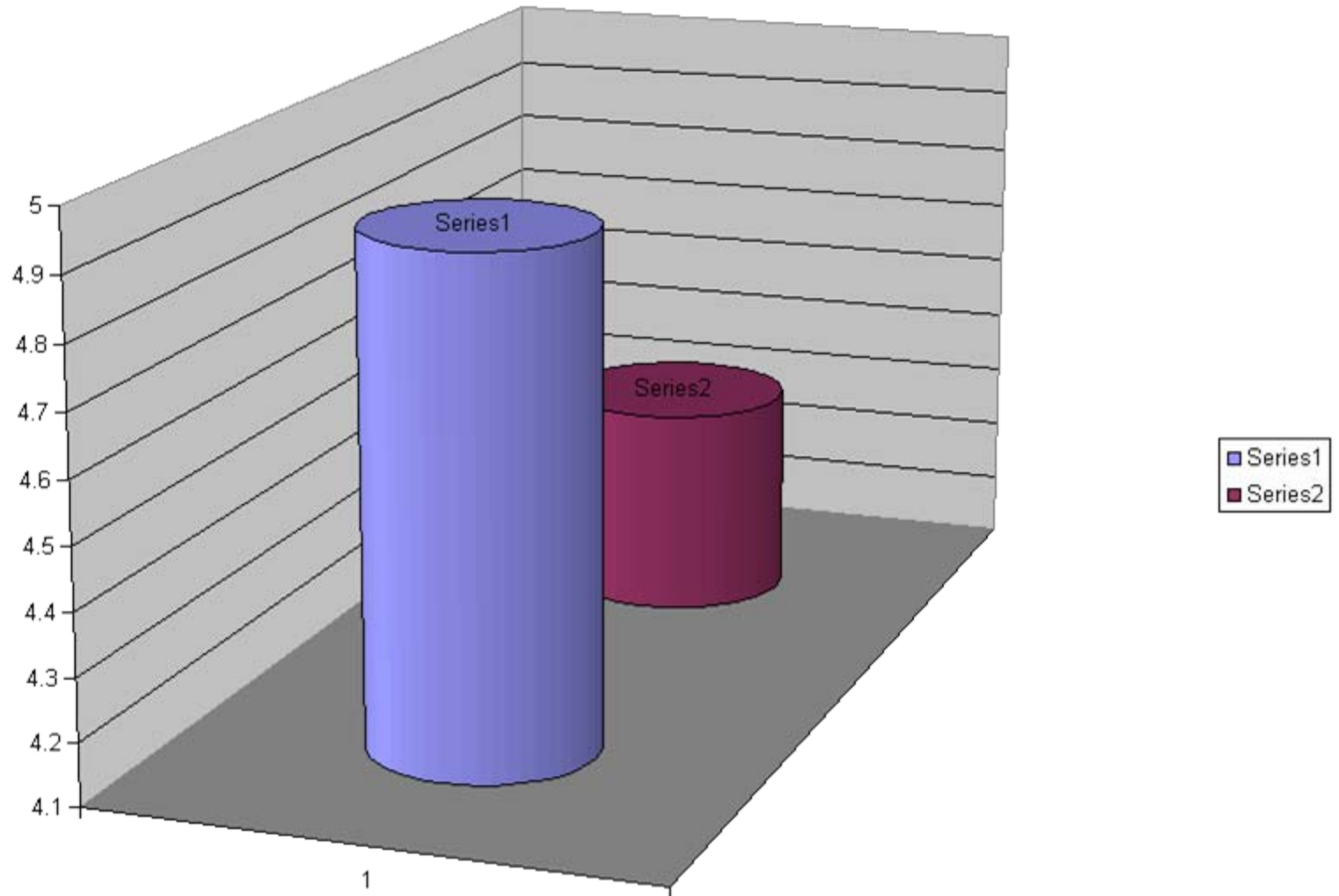
### Exposes me to viewpoints different from my own



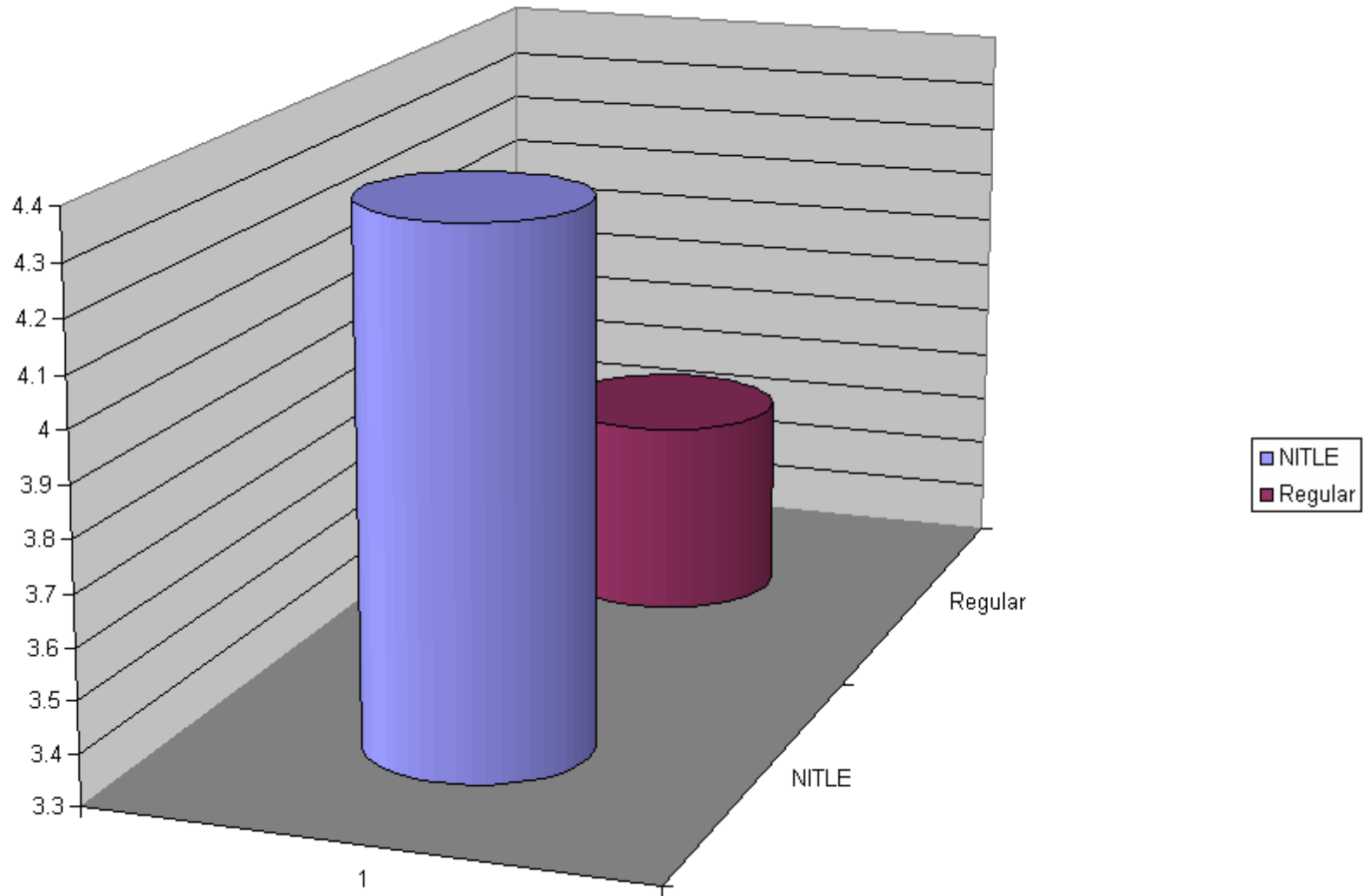
### Makes me rethink my own positions on certain questions



### More interested in subject matter since the beginning



### I frequently discuss topics & questions arising course family/friends



# Additional Benefits

- Becoming familiar with new, sometimes useful technologies
- Getting to know colleagues with similar challenges
- Intensive exchange with colleagues on both subject matter and pedagogy
- Learning new methodologies, tricks of the trade, approaches to instruction

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