

# **STUDENT DISENGAGEMENT: WHY THEY SAY THEY DON'T COME & WHY THEY SAY THEY DON'T READ**

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LEARNFEST

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## 2 THE PROBLEM: STUDENTS ARE DISENGAGED

- Not enough students come to class or do readings
- Attendance: 75% - 25%\*
- Reading: 60% - 10%\*
- Even when the course is “good”
  - “Would you recommend?”
  - E.g., Yes=93%, Maybe=7%, No=0%
  - “Overall... good learning exp.”
  - E.g., Top boxes 100%

\* Denotes  
“anecdotal”  
claim



### 3 THE START OF A SOLUTION: ASK THEM WHY

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- Questions in formal student evaluations of courses
- **Attendance Qn:** Please answer honestly (this is anonymous): About how many classes did you miss? What is the main reason for you missing the classes you did?
- (Qns not adjacent in survey)
- **Reading Qn:** Please answer honestly (this is anonymous): About how many classes did you complete? What deterred you from reading more?

## 4 PROBLEMS WITH THE SOLUTION?

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- Low response rates
  - PHILO106-18A = 76%
  - PHILO150-17B = 67%
  - ~90% of active students in Wk12
  - They will lie to you
  - Maybe a bit, but they report laziness and mental health issues
  - They will lie to themselves
  - Yes, but we can factor that in by thinking this is best case scenario
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## 5 METHODS

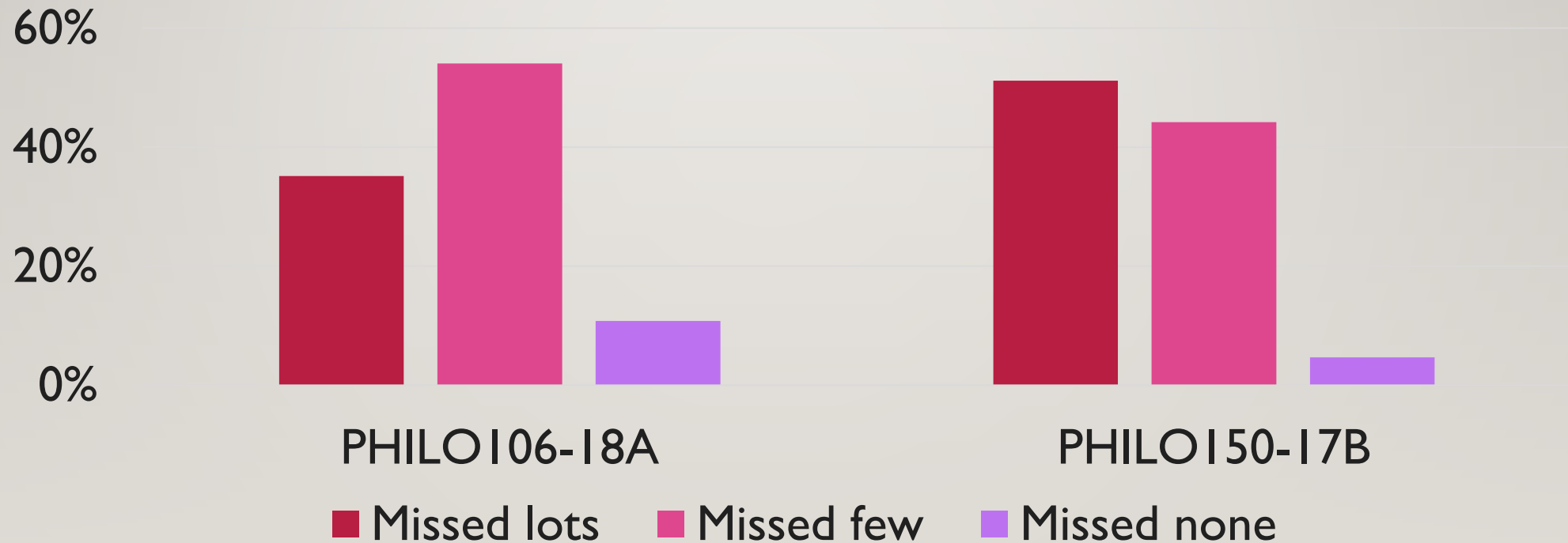
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- Questions in formal student evaluations of courses
- I stressed the importance of honesty and detail
- PHILO106-18A = 76% (78/102)
- PHILO150-17B = 67% (88/131)
- Initial qualitative coding and subsequent grouping by me
- Eliminated responses with no justification 9-10% : most of these were students that attended all classes (75%) or read all readings (71%)

## 6 ATTENDANCE DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

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Proportion of students that did not attend class



## 7 CODING ATTENDANCE QN DATA (FACE VALIDITY)

Time of lectures

Time of lectures

Health

Health

Mental health

Depression

Anxiety

Personal issues

Disengaged

Lazy

Only class, so stay home

Not needed to pass

Busy life

Other commitments

Clashes with work

Clashes with courses

Assignments

Family

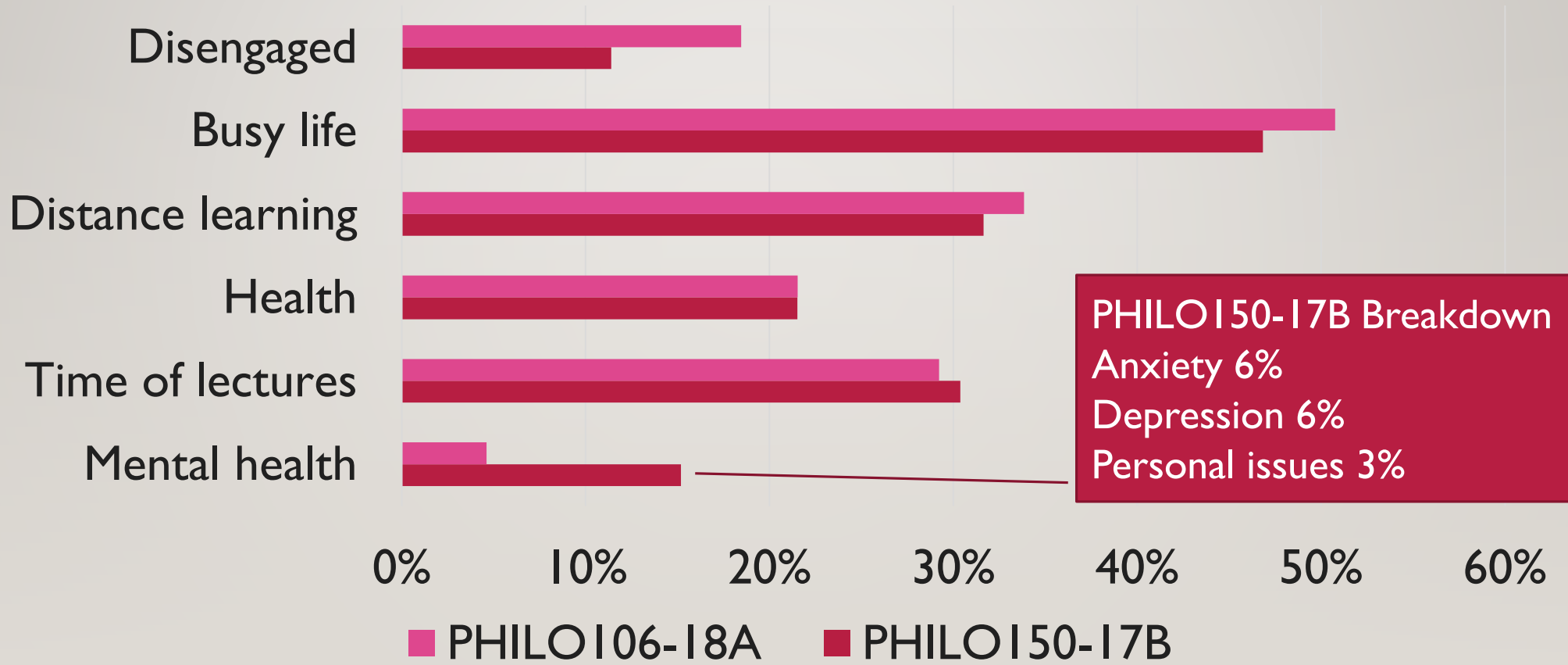
Distance learning

Live far away

Use Panopto

## 8 ATTENDANCE RESULTS BY CLASS

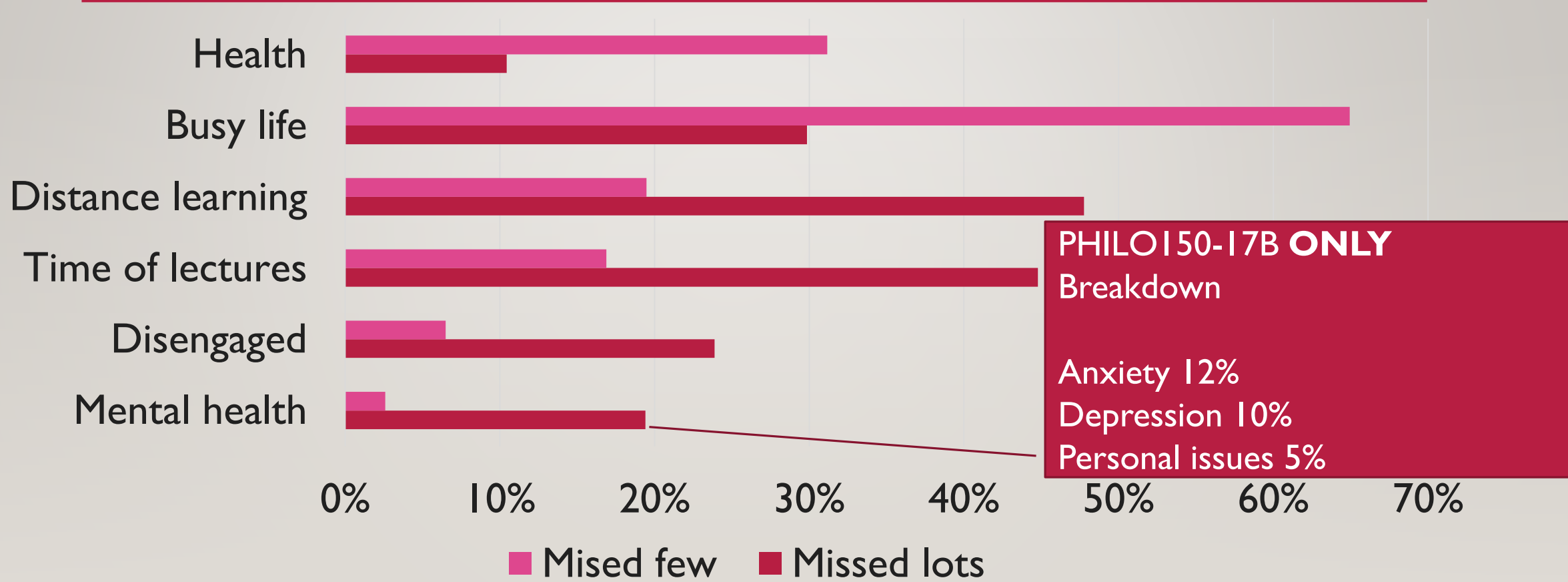
% of respondents from class reporting issue





## 9 ATTENDANCE RESULTS BY ATTENDANCE FREQUENCY

% of respondents from attendance group reporting issue



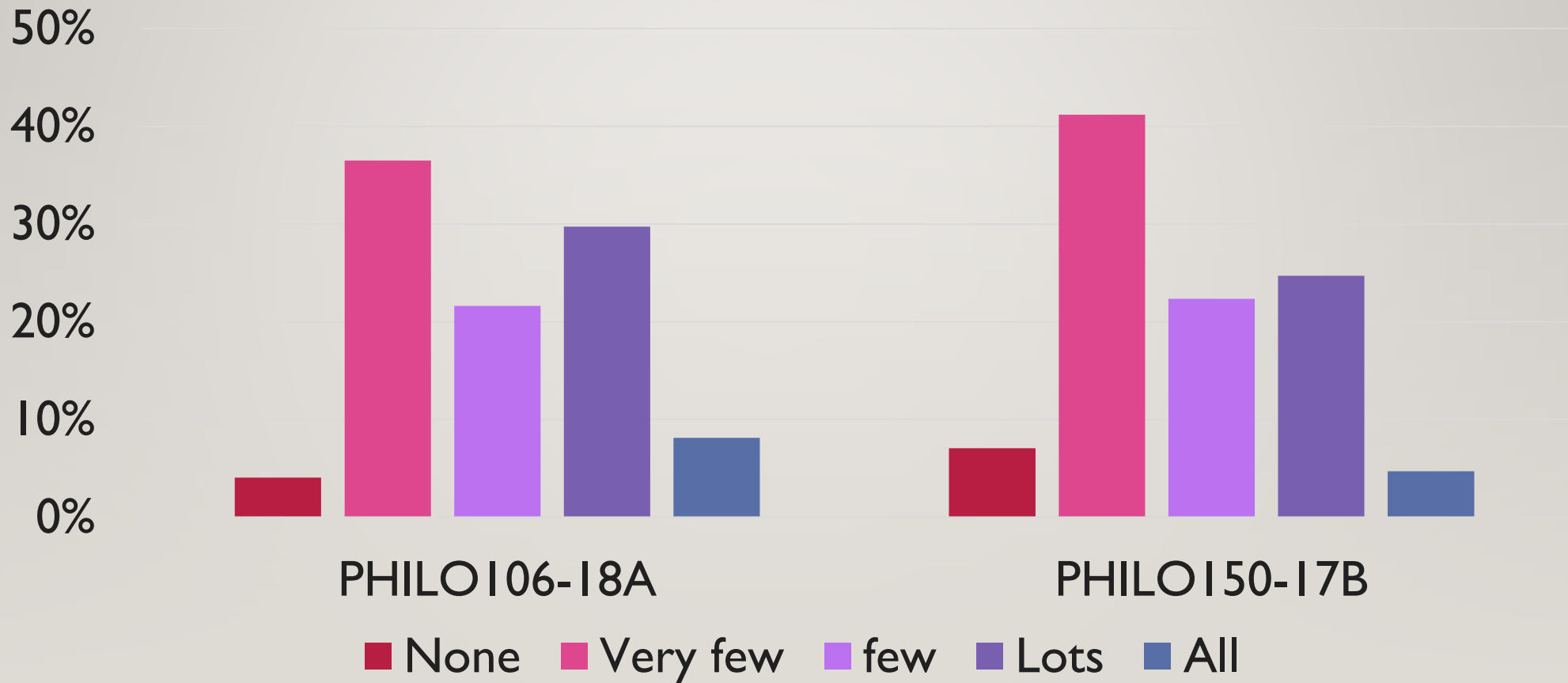
## 10 ATTENDANCE DISCUSSION

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- Busy life (work, other assignments, family, etc.) & health probs are normal and may not result in missing many classes (unless other issues present)
- Time of lectures may be important for less motivated students (9am and 4pm both bad, but vast majority of students say 9am Monday is worst!)
- Mental health seems much worse in B
- Do many disengaged A Sem students have mental health issues in B?

# READING DESCRIPTIVE RESULTS

## Proportion of students that did the readings



## 12 CODING READING QN DATA (FACE VALIDITY)

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### Disengaged - self

Lazy

Prefer hard copy

Never do readings

Tech problems

Forget

Too much reading

### Disengaged - reading

Not interesting

Long

Complicated

### Not needed to pass

Not needed to  
pass

Use slides/other  
resources instead

Clearly explained  
in class

### Busy life

Other  
commitments

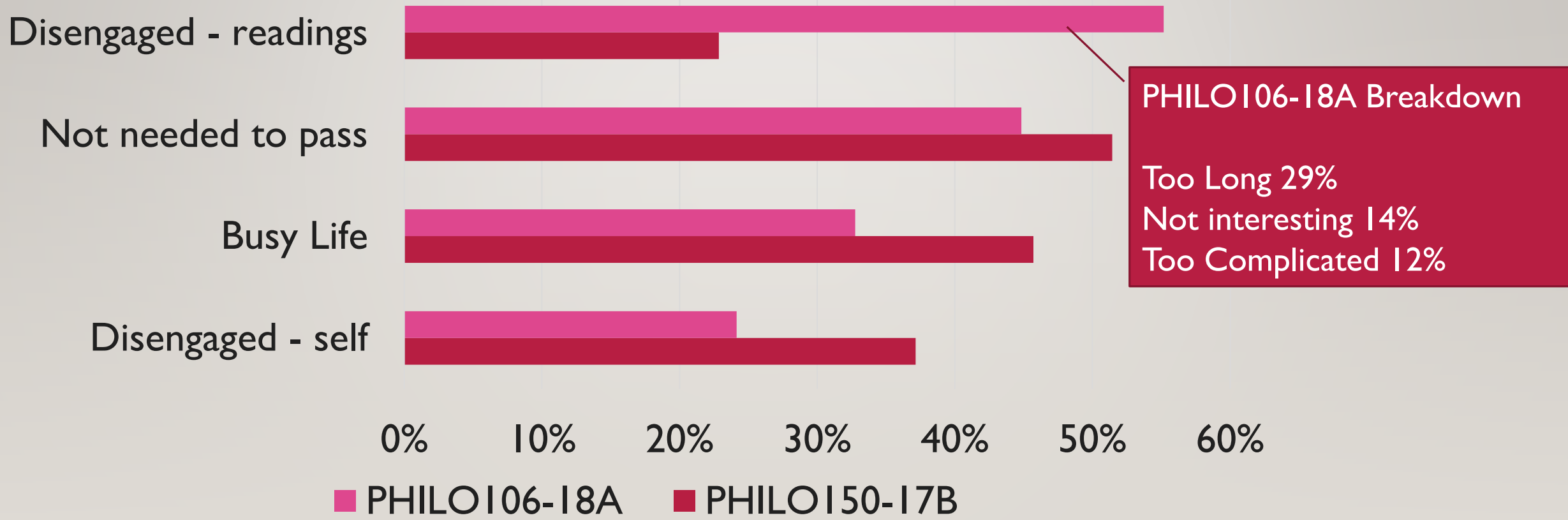
Clashes with  
work

Assignments



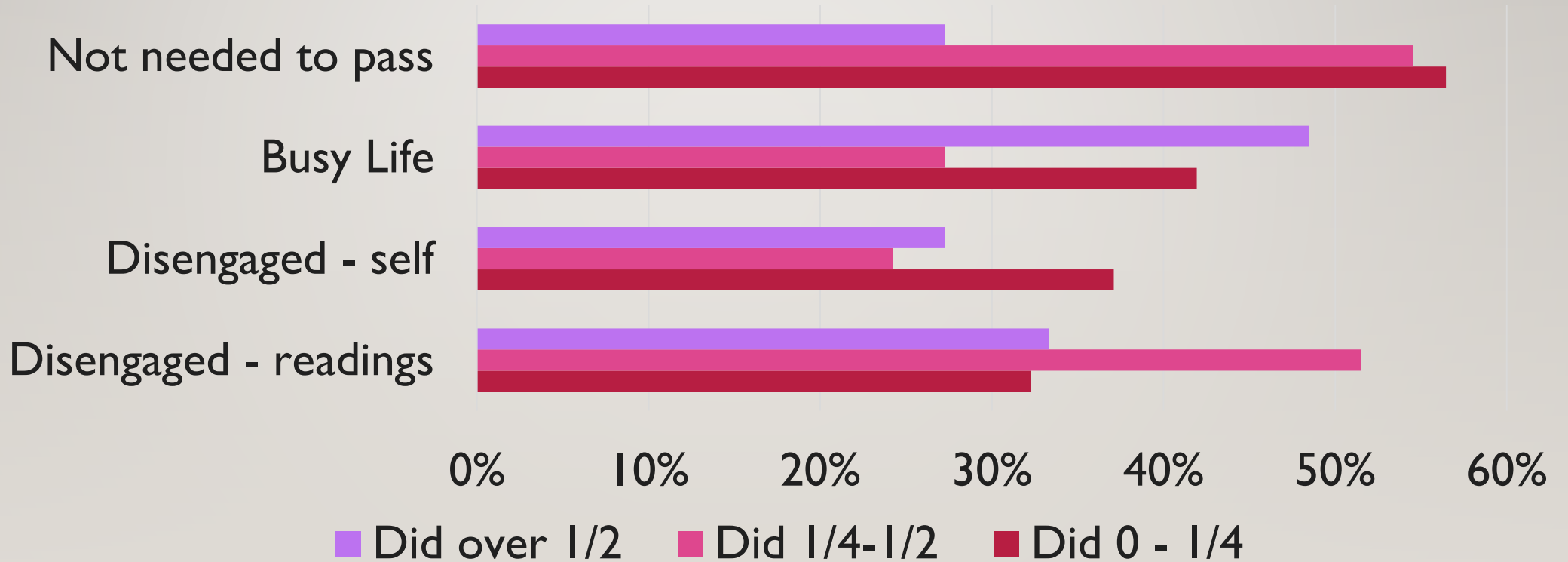
# 13 READING RESULTS BY CLASS

% of respondents from class reporting issue




# 14 READING RESULTS BY READING FREQUENCY

% of respondents from reading frequency group reporting issue




## 15 READING DISCUSSION

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- Readings are longer and more complex in PHILO106-18A
  - Students may get less engaged and get more “uni smarts” in B Sem
  - Nearly half of the students didn’t do readings because they weren’t TIGHTLY linked to assessments
  - Students that read more were held back by being busy
  - Students that read about 25-50% of the readings were held back by the readings themselves and not needing them to pass
  - Students that read hardly any readings were held back by everything!
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## 16 GENERAL DISCUSSION

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- PHILO150-17B students come and read less (is course or semester to blame?)
  - Reasons for not attending were similar except for mental health
  - Reasons for not doing readings were quite different, mainly tough readings for PHILO106-18A
  - Busy life and “good” reasons common for students that come and read more
  - Disengaged (Lazy), mental illness, etc. Worrying reasons common for students that come and read less
  - Are the non-attenders also the non-readers? (Can’t tell, but probable overlap)
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## 17 SOLUTIONS? – MASS CULTURAL CHANGE! DESIGN COURSES TO ENFORCE WORK!

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- Stress the importance of coming to class and doing the readings *directly to the worst students*
- Make reading and/or attendance be required to pass
  - Surprise in-class quizzes
  - Weekly online quizzes
  - Student response system quizzes during class
  - Give marks for participation in lectures
  - Graded cue cards
  - More essays

## 18 RADICAL / JOKE SOLUTIONS?

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- Make readings shorter (etc)
- Don't use Panopto
- Don't explain things so well in class
- Don't set readings
- Don't hold lectures (just show videos)
- Pay rent-a-crowd to make lectures seem popular/important
- Put lectures in small rooms so the scarcity makes them seem more valuable
- Make readings “unlockable advancements”