

Introduction

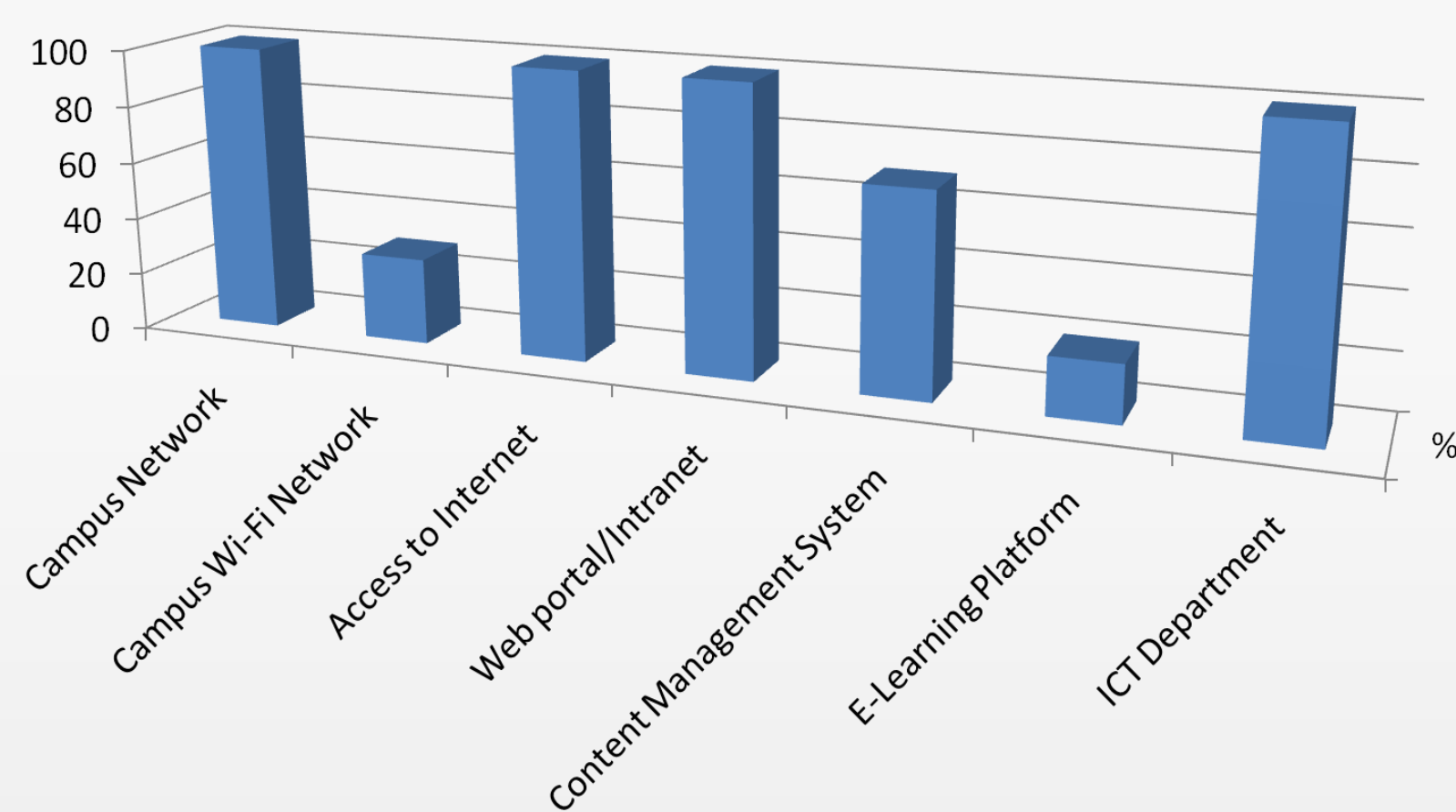
The *European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy* refers in its document *European Benchmark Statement* (ER-WCPT, 2003) that the Physiotherapist should have ICT competences, so that he/she is able to search for the required evidence to validate their interventions, as well as to process the data and records collected during the clinical practice. Therefore those skills should be developed during their basic training, and so should teachers be able to introduce the ICT in the teaching process, keeping in mind the institutional framework of this process. The main objective of this work was to characterize how ICT fits into Physiotherapy teaching and learning in Portugal, aiming specifically to determine the available technological support, and which were the ICT integration projects in teaching and learning of the Physiotherapy Course, as well as the usage, in an teaching context, of ICT by both teachers and students.

Methodology

We carried a descriptive study, a survey of transversal and exploratory nature, using 4 questionnaires based on bibliographic review, submitted to a validation before a experts panel and a pre-test. The studied population comprised all the Portuguese institutions that offered the Physiotherapy Course, in the year of 2003/2004. All the Physiotherapy and Computing Department Coordinators were inquired to characterize the institutions, as well as all the teachers who taught in the Physiotherapy Course (more than 30 hours per semester) and students from the 1st and 2nd years of the Physiotherapy Course. The data collection took place between June and September 2004 and descriptive statistics were used (frequency, mean, standard deviation). After the data retrieval the number of respondents was the following: Department of Physiotherapy - 14 (87.7%); ICT Department - 10 (62.2%); Physiotherapy teachers Course (more than de 30 hours per semester) - 119 (36.5%); students from the 1st and 2nd years of the Physiotherapy Course - 982 (69.2%).

Accessibility to ICT

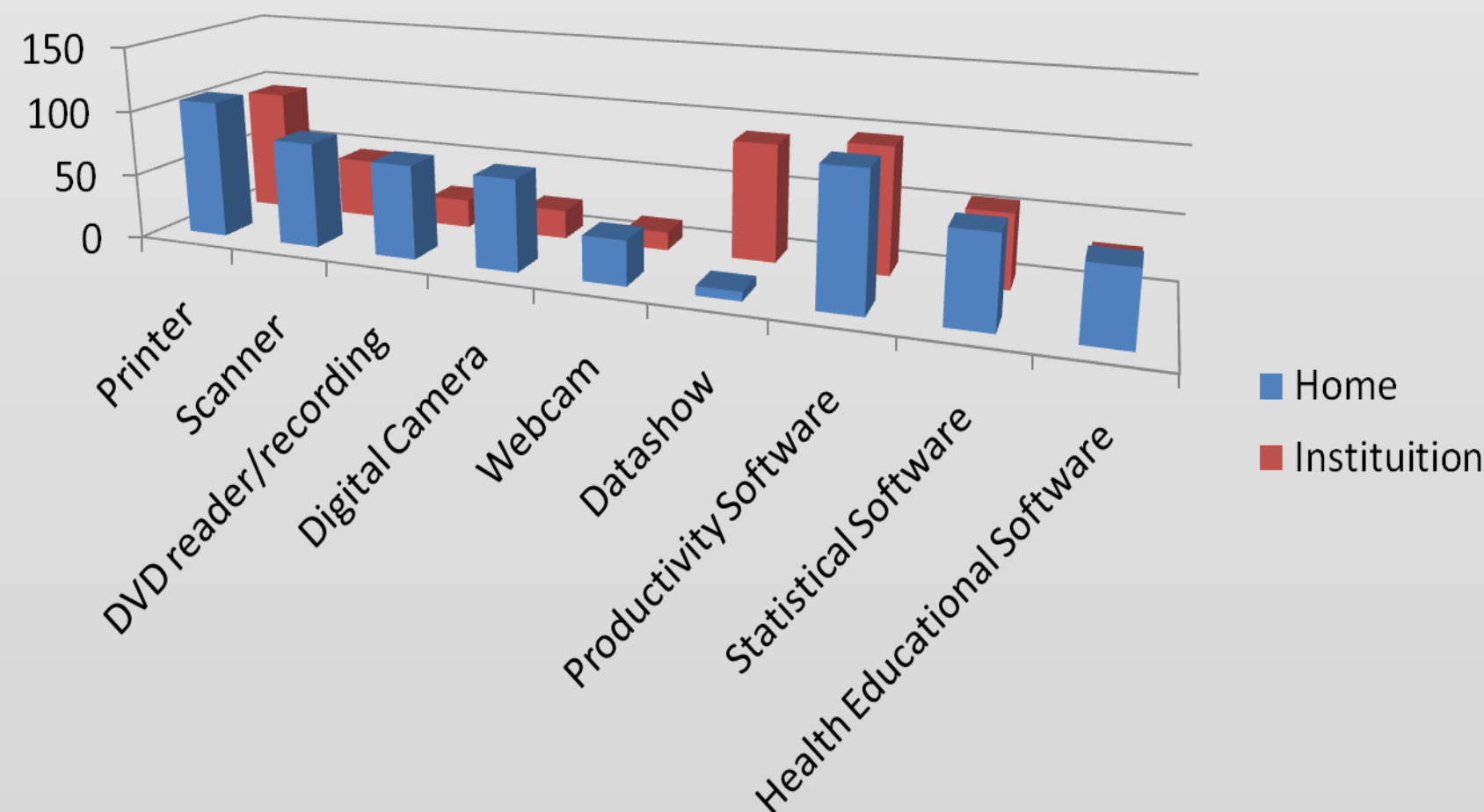
Institutions



Teacher's

98% have computer at home

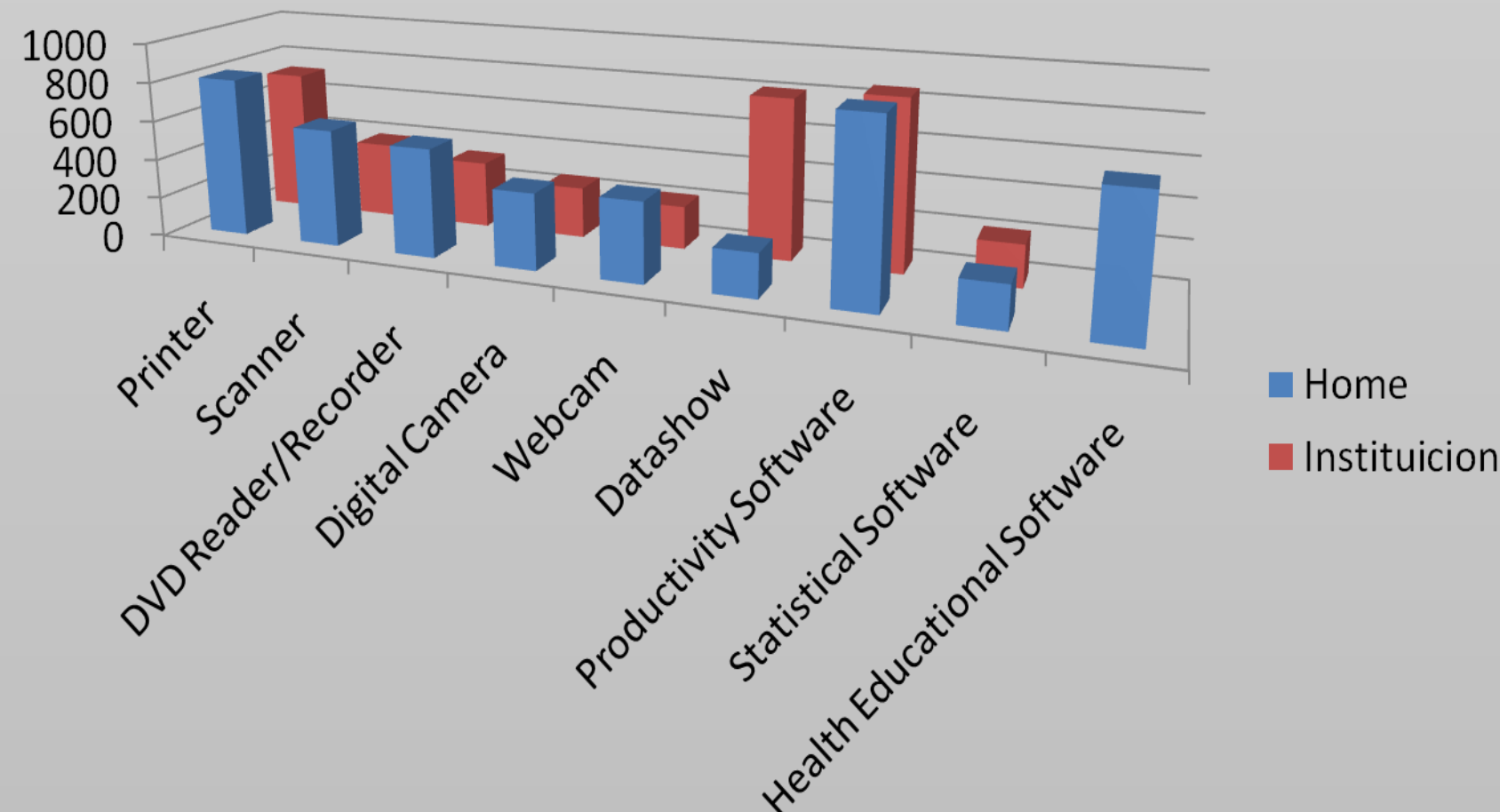
86.2% have Internet access (50% High Speed Connection)



Students

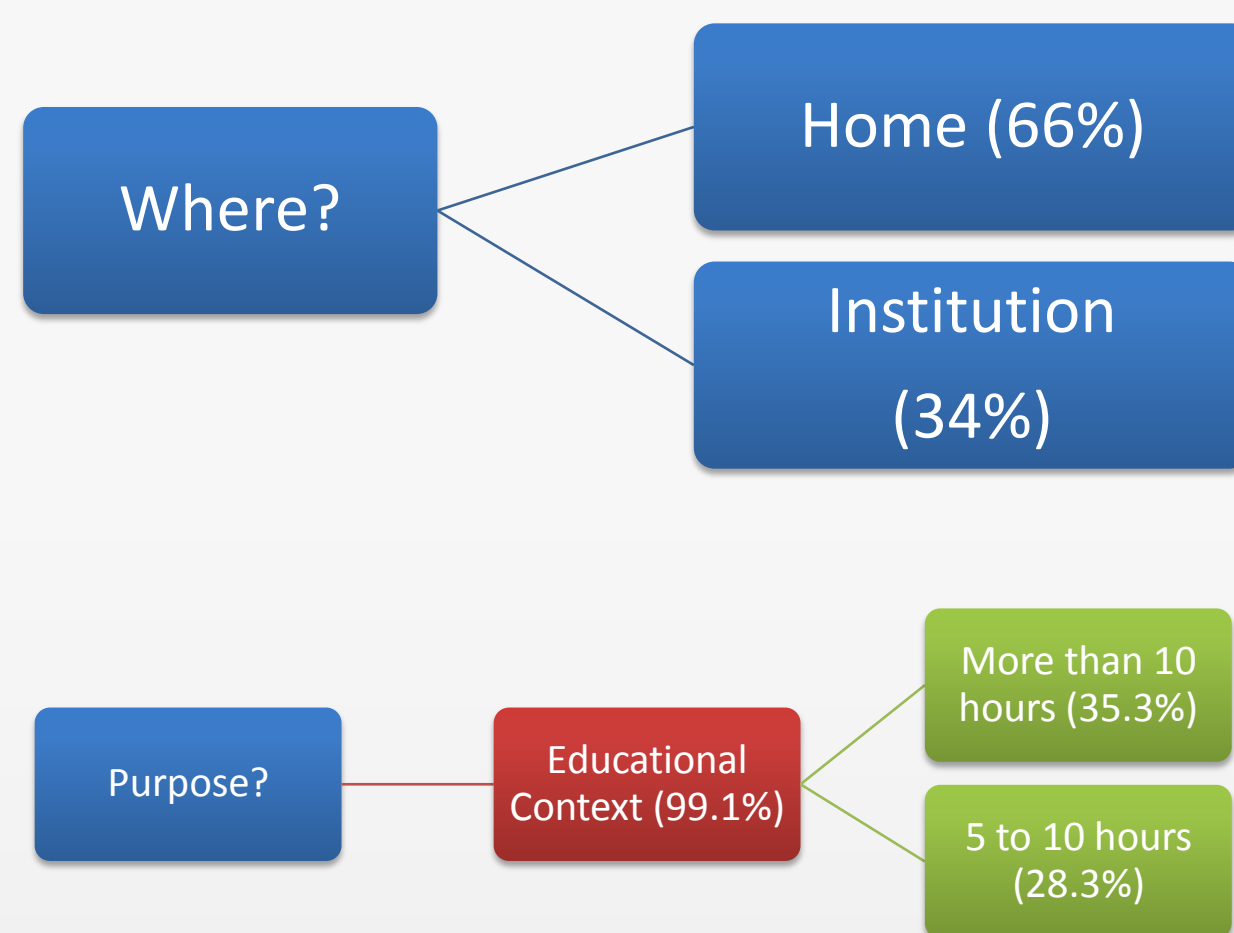
93.5% have computer at home

63.9% have Internet access (58% High Speed Connection)

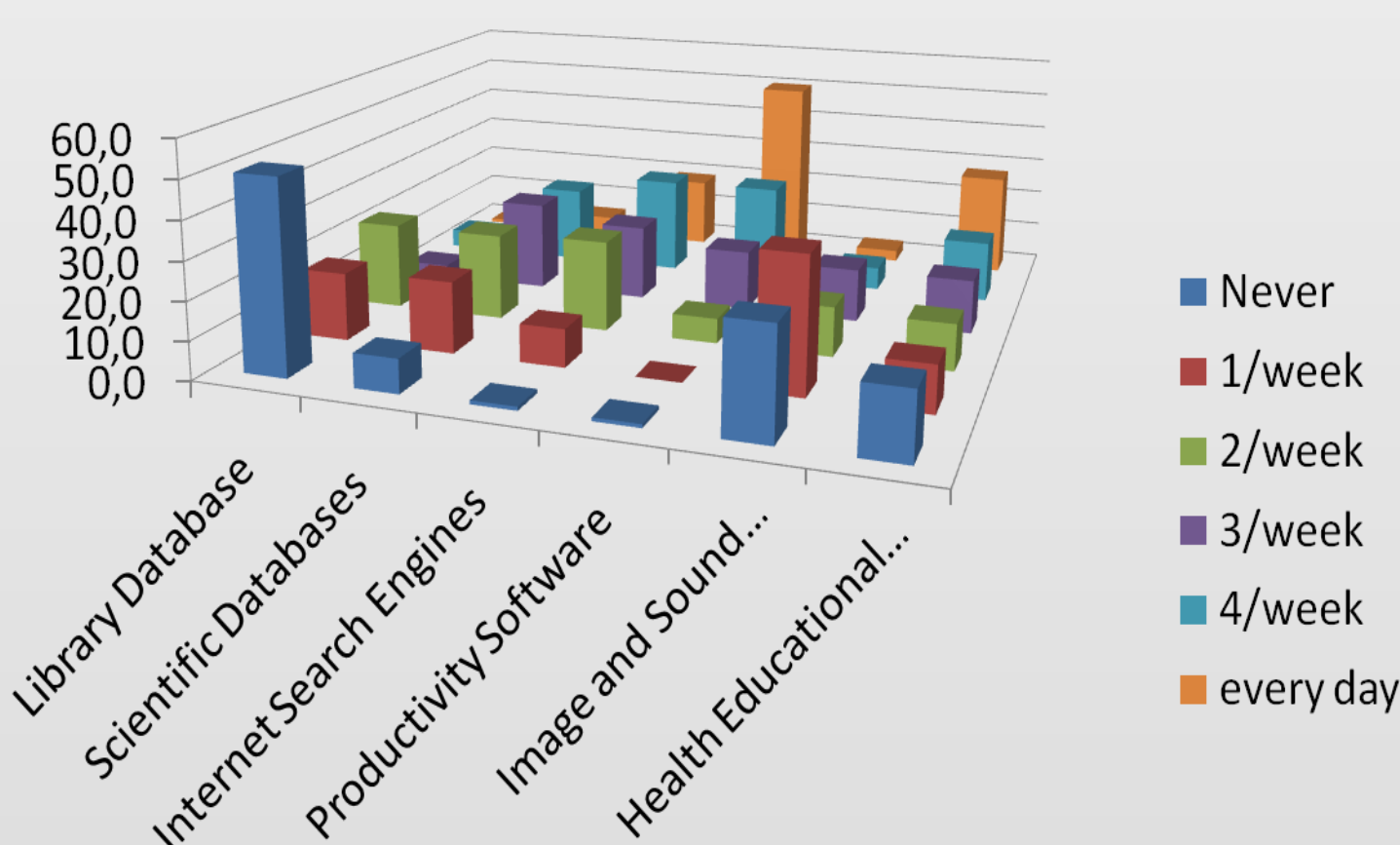


ICT Usage

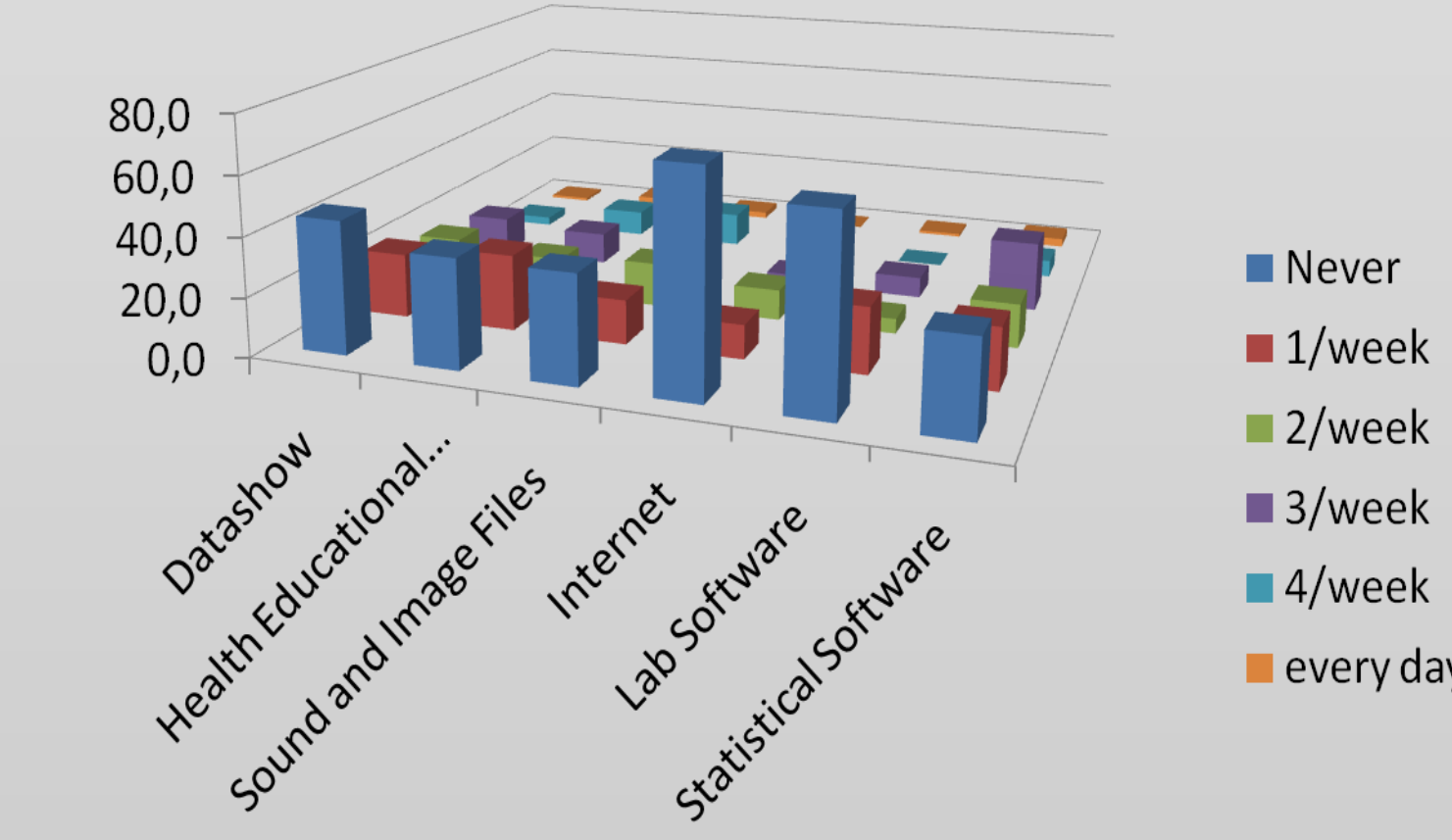
Teacher's



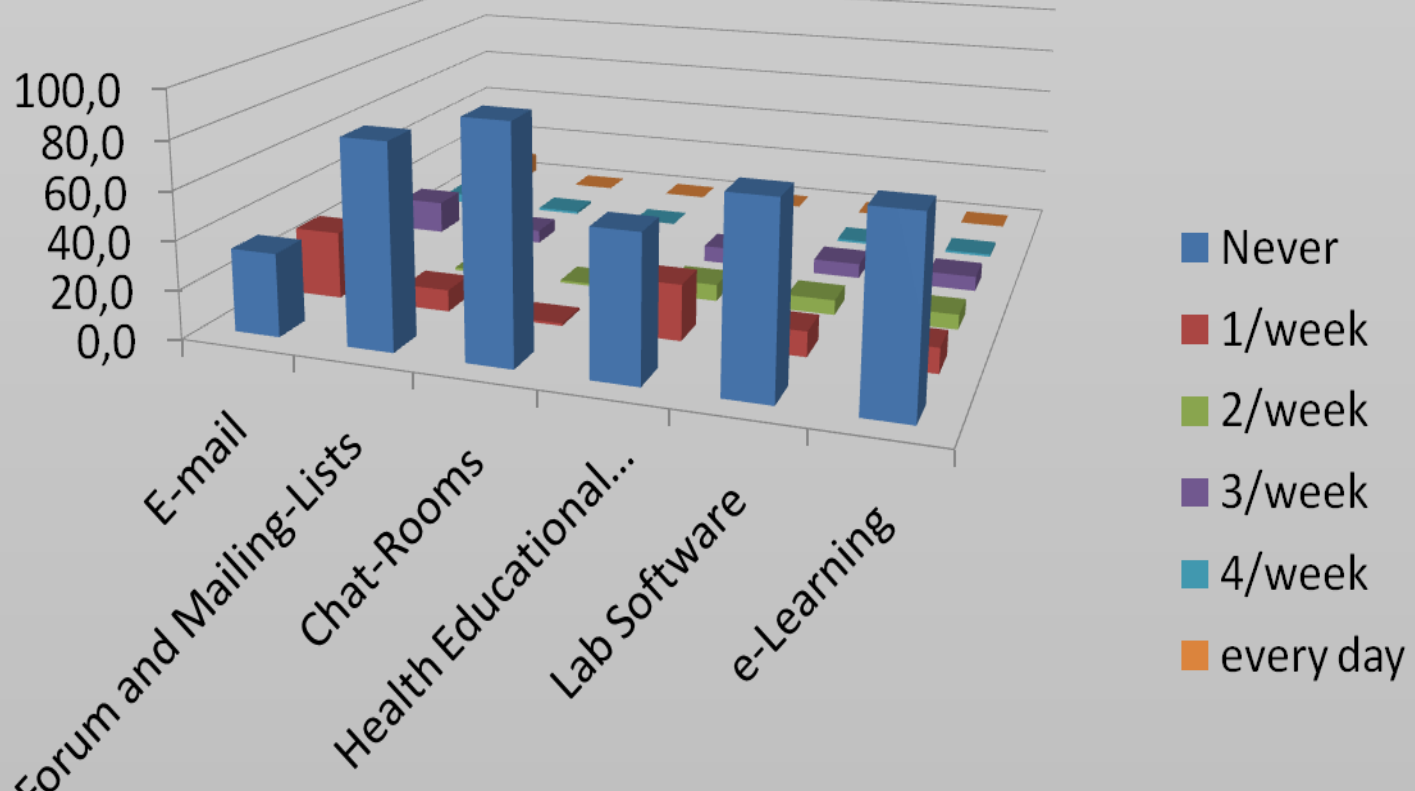
Creating content and preparing lectures



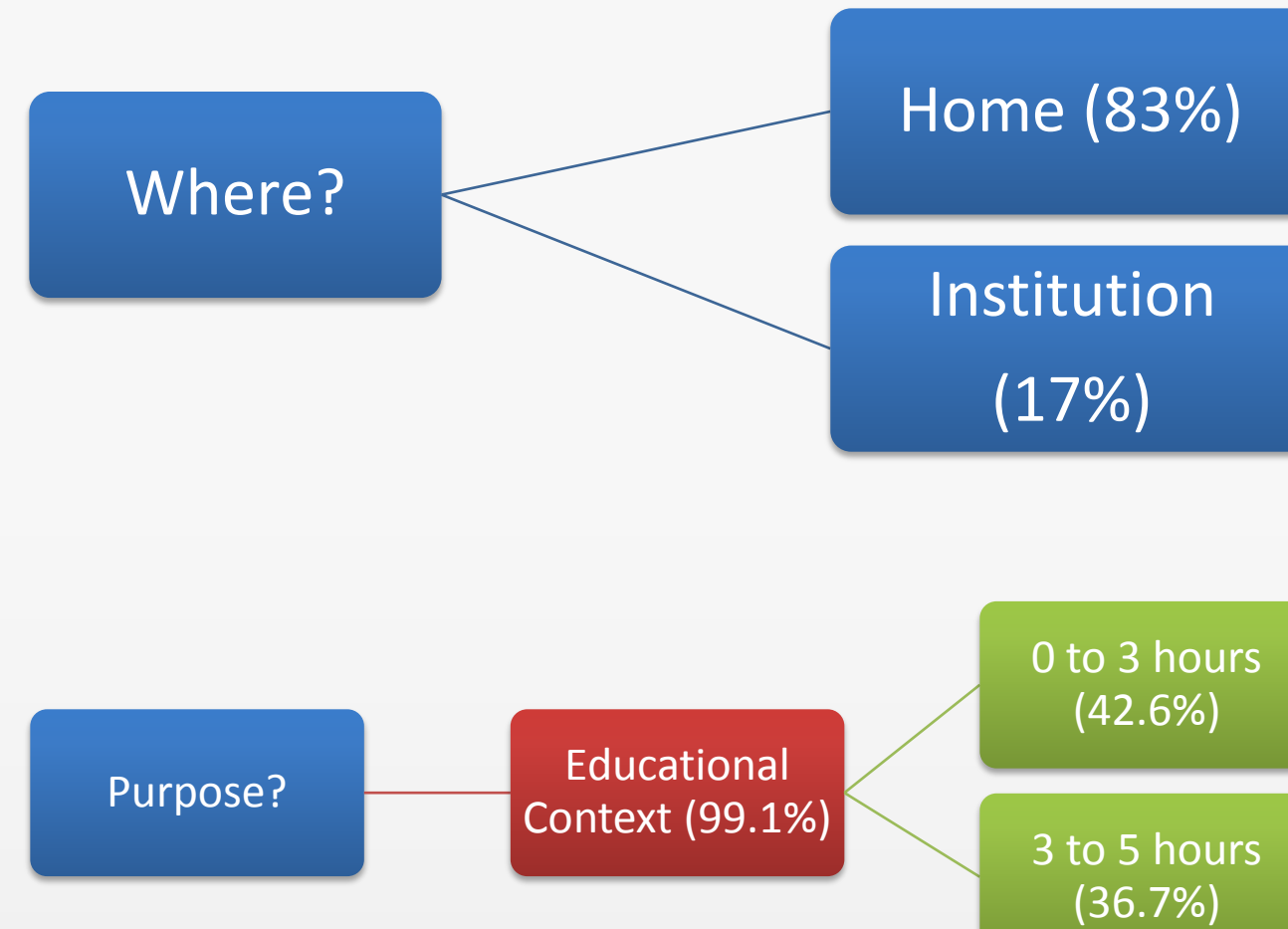
In the classroom



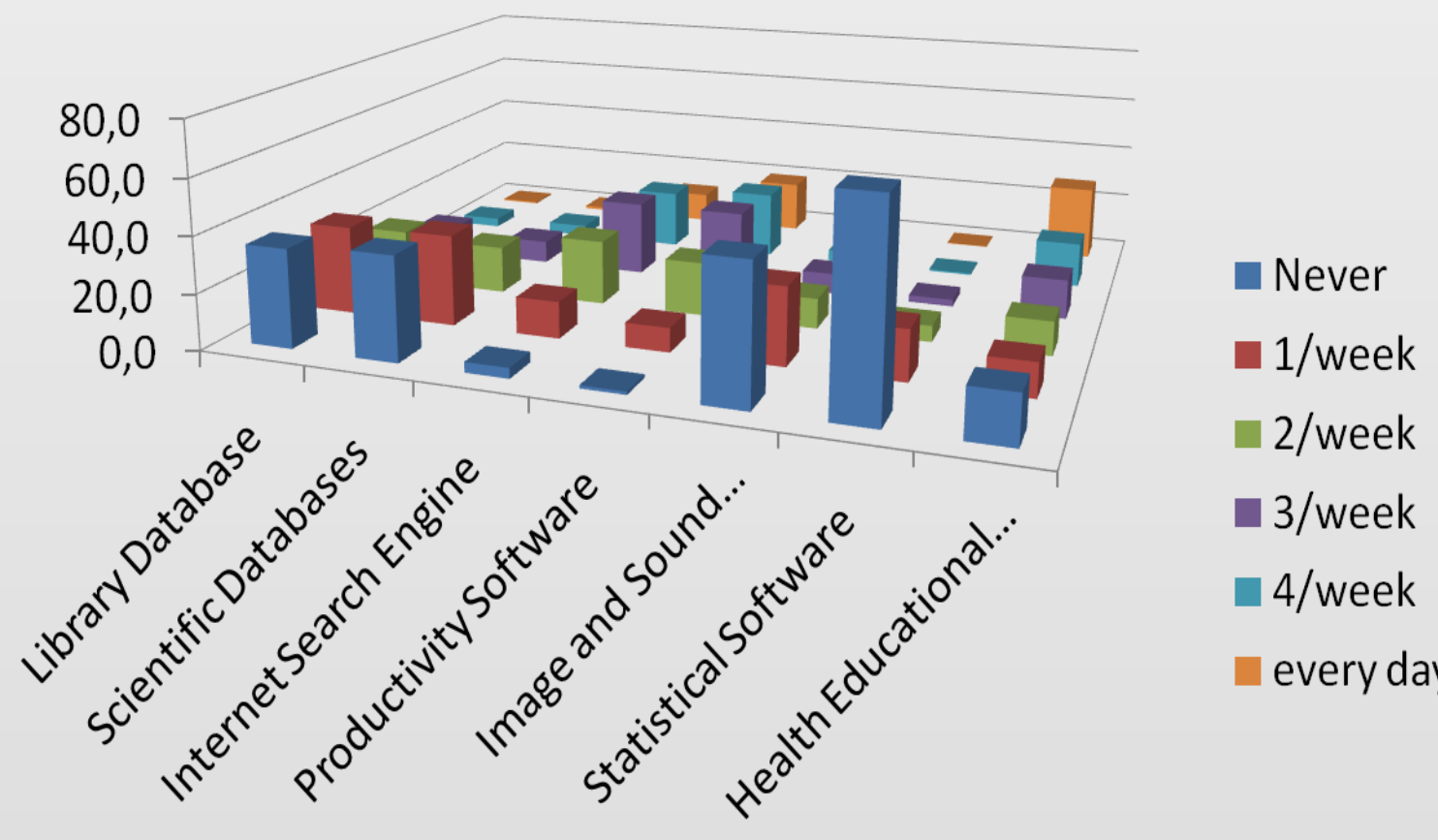
Directly with students



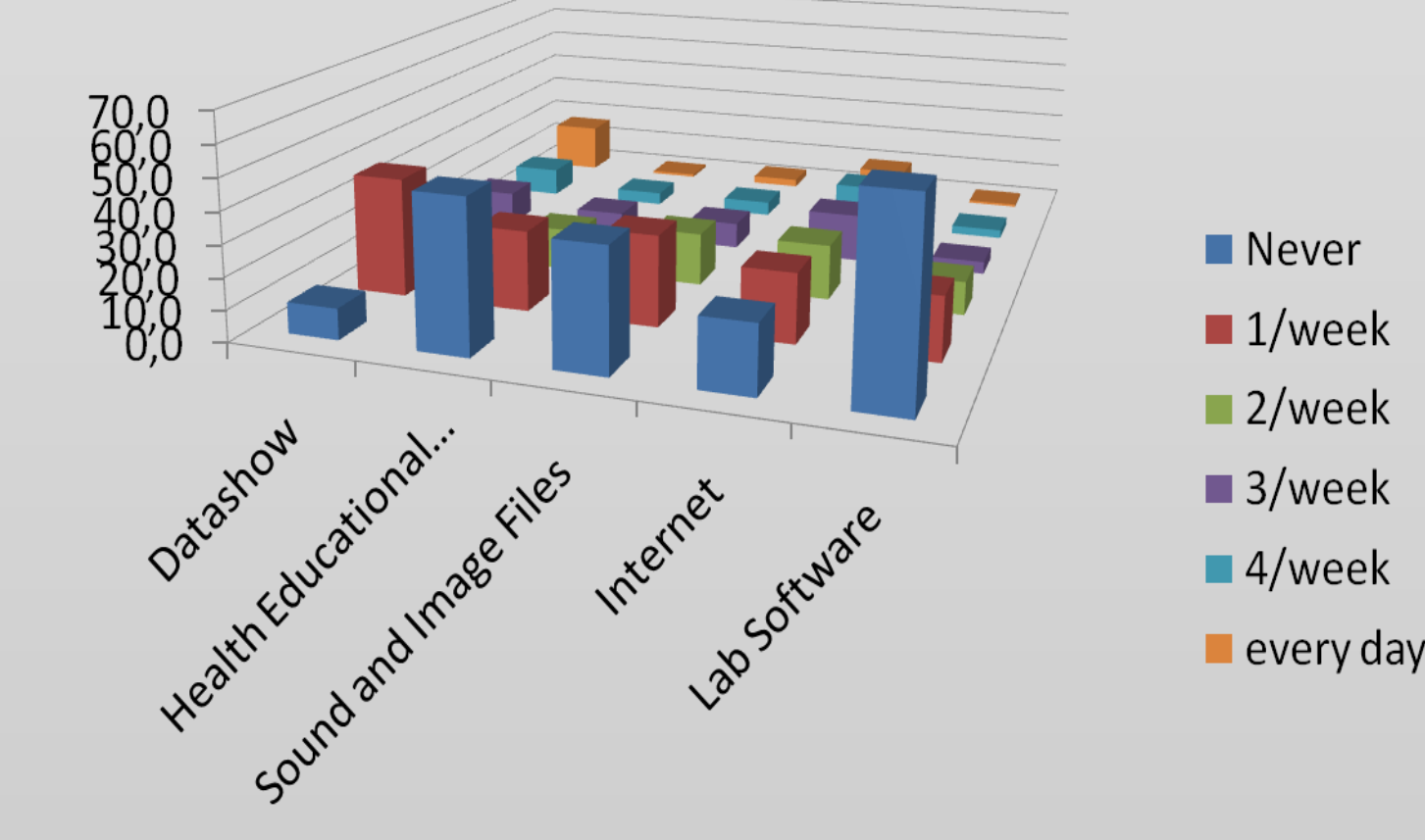
Students



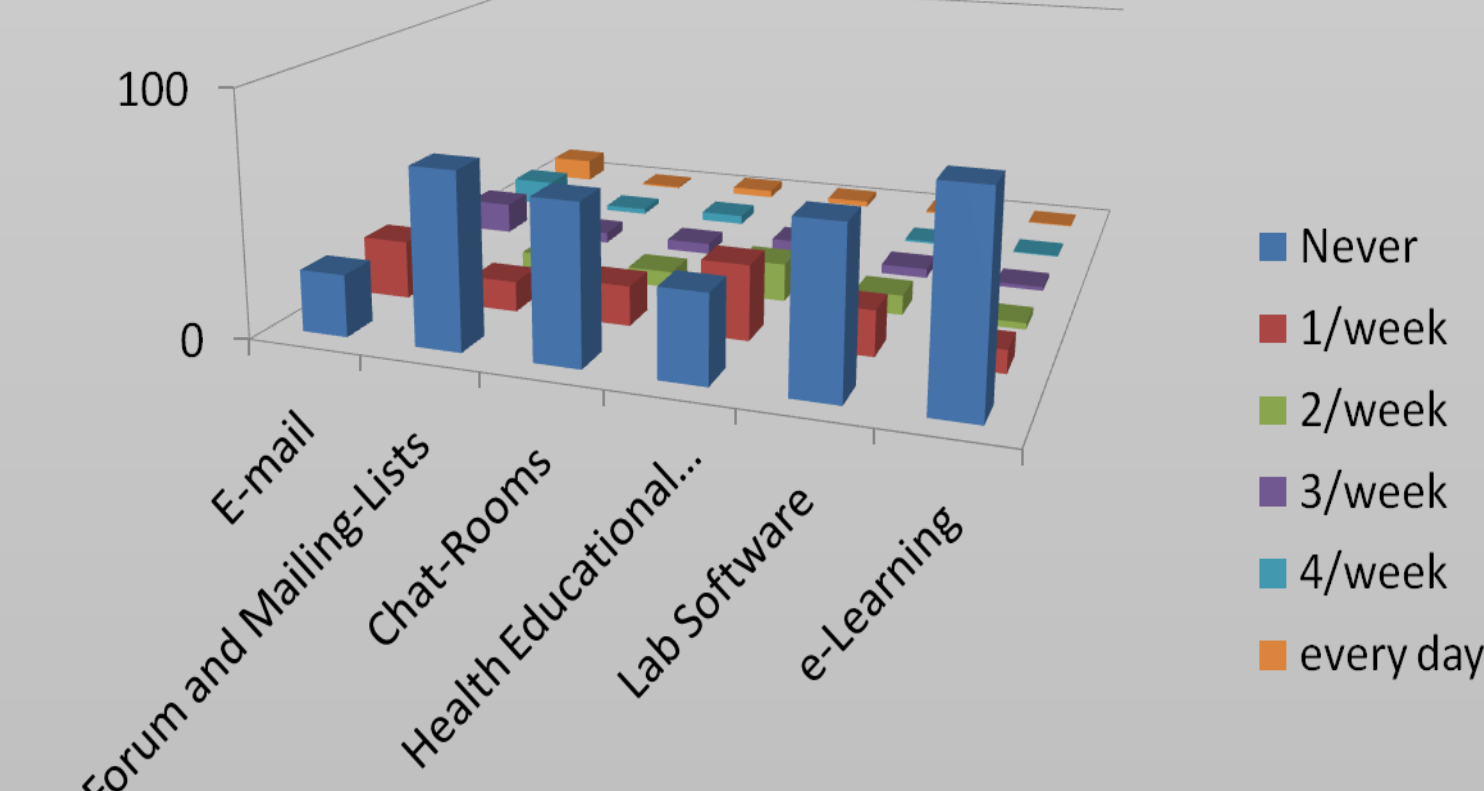
Educational work and tasks



In the classroom

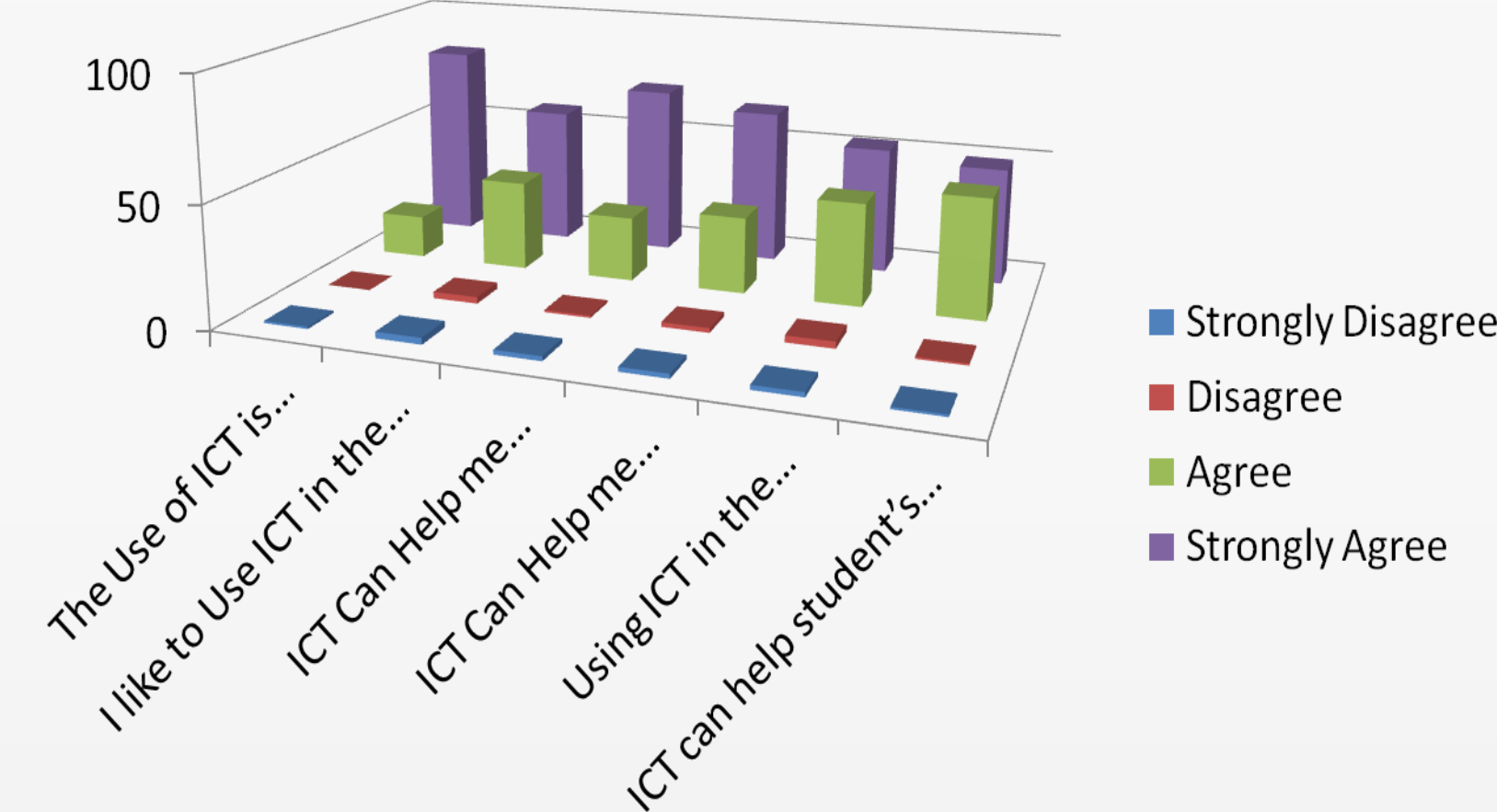


Directly with Teachers and Pears

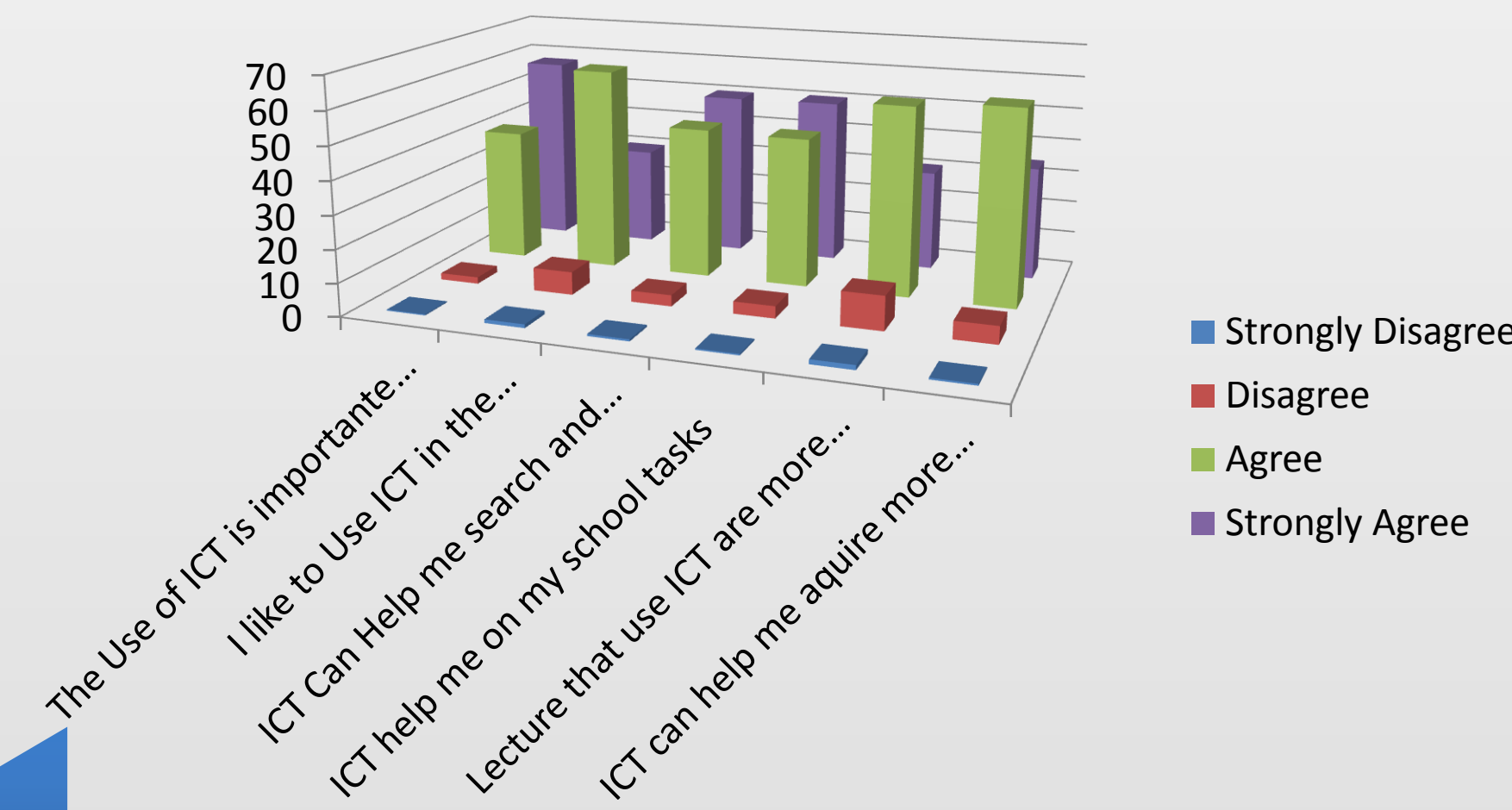


Attitudes and Beliefs

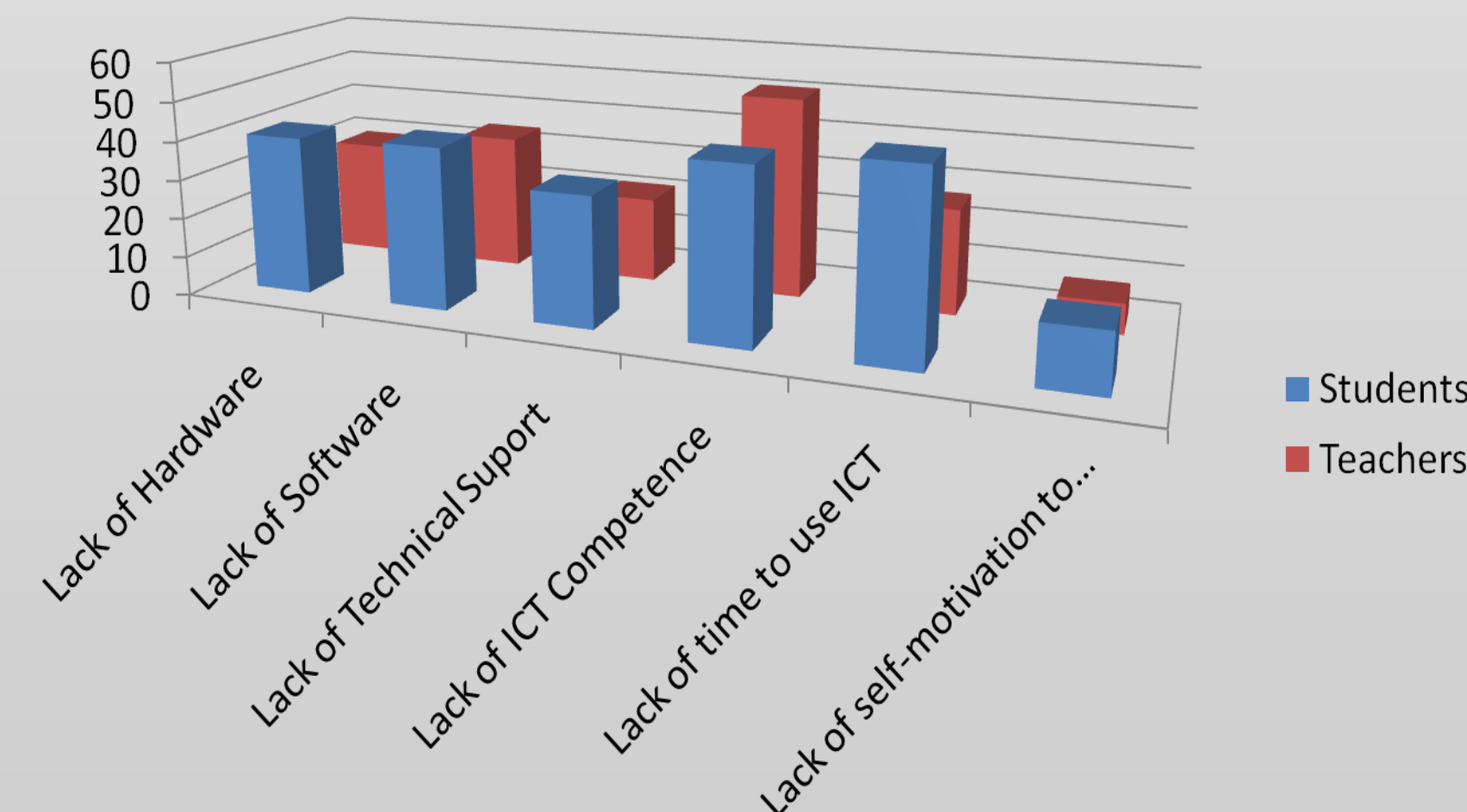
Teacher's attitudes and beliefs about ICT



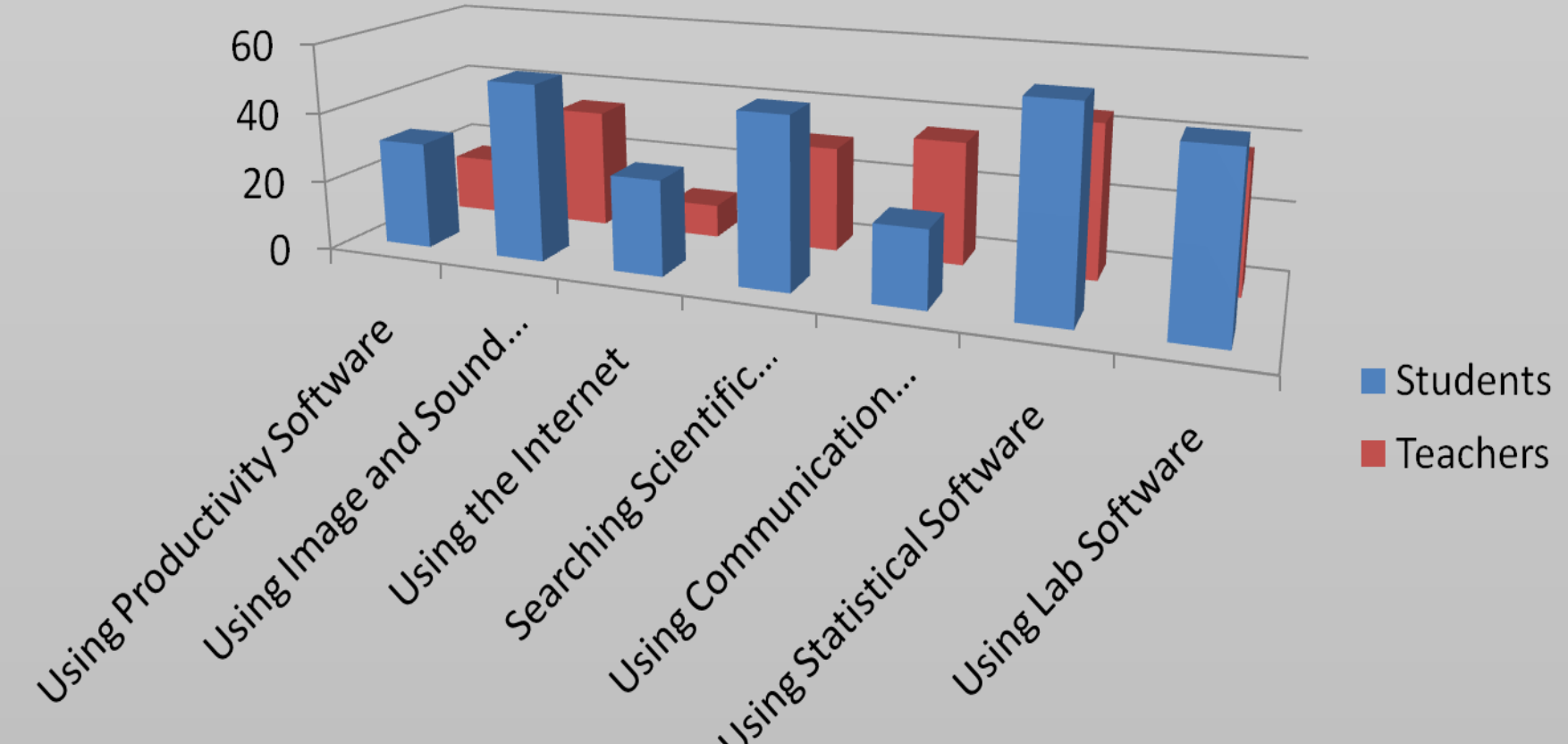
Students attitudes and beliefs about ICT



Perceived barriers for the implementation of ICT (Students and Teachers)



Perceived training needs



Conclusion

The results of this study seem to point towards a recent and progressive ICT integration in the Physiotherapy education, because most institutions have ICT contents in their core curricula, all are connected to the Internet, and there is an IT specialized support Department. We also conclude with this study that ICT are scarcely used in the classroom and that both students and teachers lack specific training in this area. These results contrast with the generic competences that should be acquired in a Physiotherapy Course as referred in the *ER-WCPT* (2003). Therefore it is essential that teachers and students realize the importance of ICT in their educational process, and by that motivating themselves for the pursuit of competences in this field. It is also necessary that the institutions set forward strategies that consider the ongoing training of teachers and students, that organize specific areas that make the path easy for the usage of ICT, that establish partnerships that will ease information exchange about ICT integration experiences and the development of educational software especially in Physiotherapy.

Reference:
ER-WCPT (2003) European Benchmark Statement. European Region of the World Confederation for Physical Therapy.

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