

# Promoting Mental Health Among Medical Students:

## The Role of Mental Health First Aid Training in U.S. Medical Education

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### Introduction

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) empowers participants to recognize and provide first aid to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.<sup>1</sup>
- Despite prevalence of mental health illness among patients and medical professionals,<sup>2,3</sup> little evidence exists on the value of MHFA training for medical students.
- **Purpose:** This research aims to document the value of MHFA training for medical students in the United States.

### Methods

- From 2018-2020, Youth MHFA courses were hosted for 63 self-selected medical students at Rush University
- In 2019, Stritch School of Medicine offered Adult MHFA courses for 159 first-year medical students.
- All participants completed post-training surveys to provide course feedback via 5-point Likert scale rankings and free-text responses.
- Medical students Sreedivya, Laura, and Parastoo, who serve as IAFP Public Health Externs, compiled the data, completed all analyses and literature review
- Means and standard deviations of rankings were calculated, with means compared using a t-test. Percentage of 5 out of 5 rankings, compared to 4 or lower out of 5, were also compared.

### Discussion

- This analysis suggests MHFA is a valuable resource for educating participants on how to recognize and provide first aid to individuals experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Our data depicts overall positive course feedback from student participants, regardless of whether the course was mandatory or optional, and provides insight into the value of MHFA training for medical students in the United States.
- Further research should focus on how to maximize confidence in applying skills gained through integrated mental health training.

### Results

- Overall, 95% of students indicated the MHFA training was “helpful and informative”
- Comparison of participants’ rankings of the course, confidence in recognizing signs and confidence offering first aid between adults vs youth MHFA were not statistically different (Table 1).
- There was a higher frequency of rankings of 4 or lower by participants regarding their confidence in applying skills, as opposed to the rankings of the course itself. (Figures 1-3)

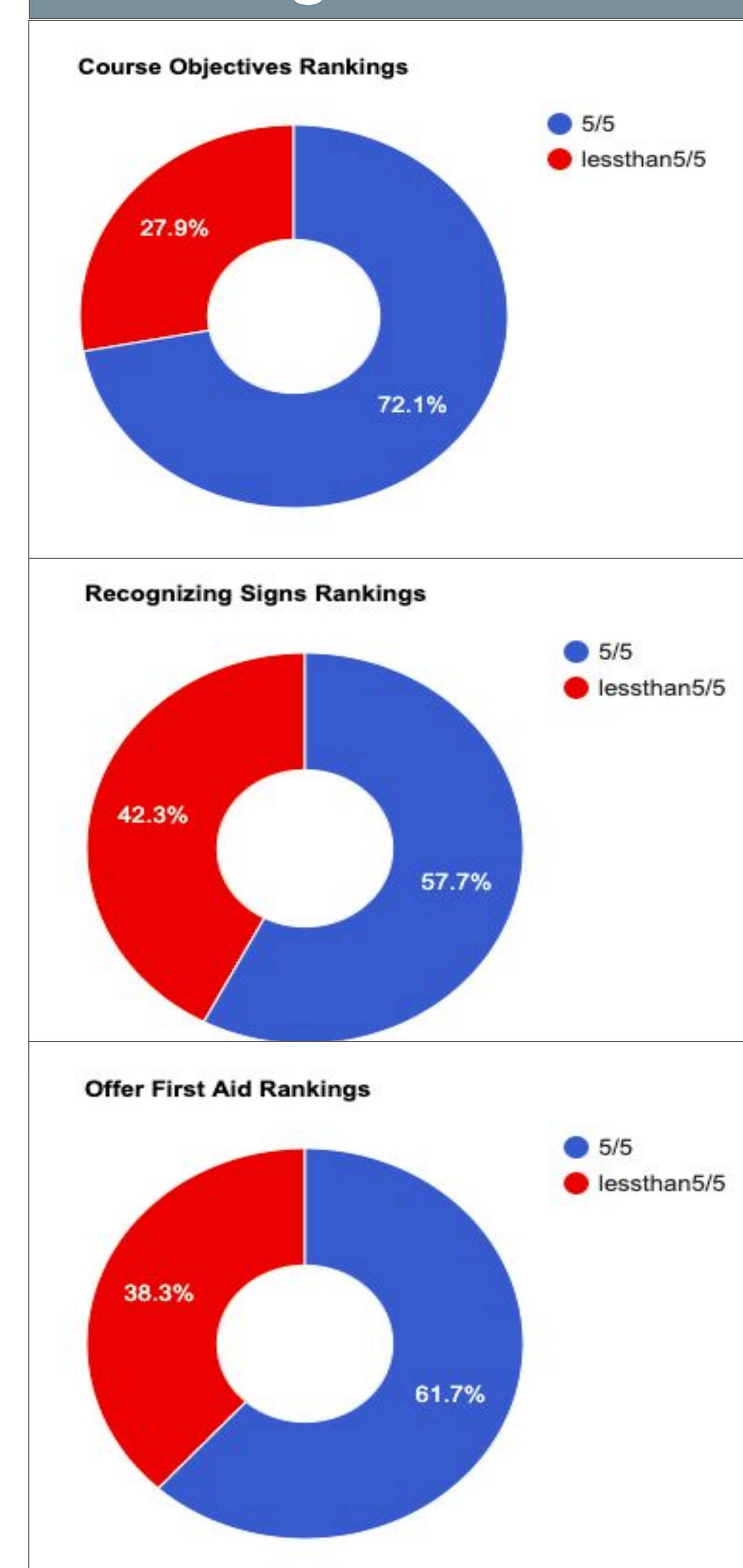
Table 1: Post-Training Student Evaluations\*<sup>1</sup>

	Combined	Youth MHFA	Adult MHFA
Course objectives met	4.61	4.68	4.58
Confidence recognizing signs	4.50	4.52	4.50
Confidence offering mental health first aid	4.55	4.68	4.50

\* Means calculated from participants rankings on 5-point Likert scale.

<sup>1</sup> No relationships were statistically significant

### Figures 1-3



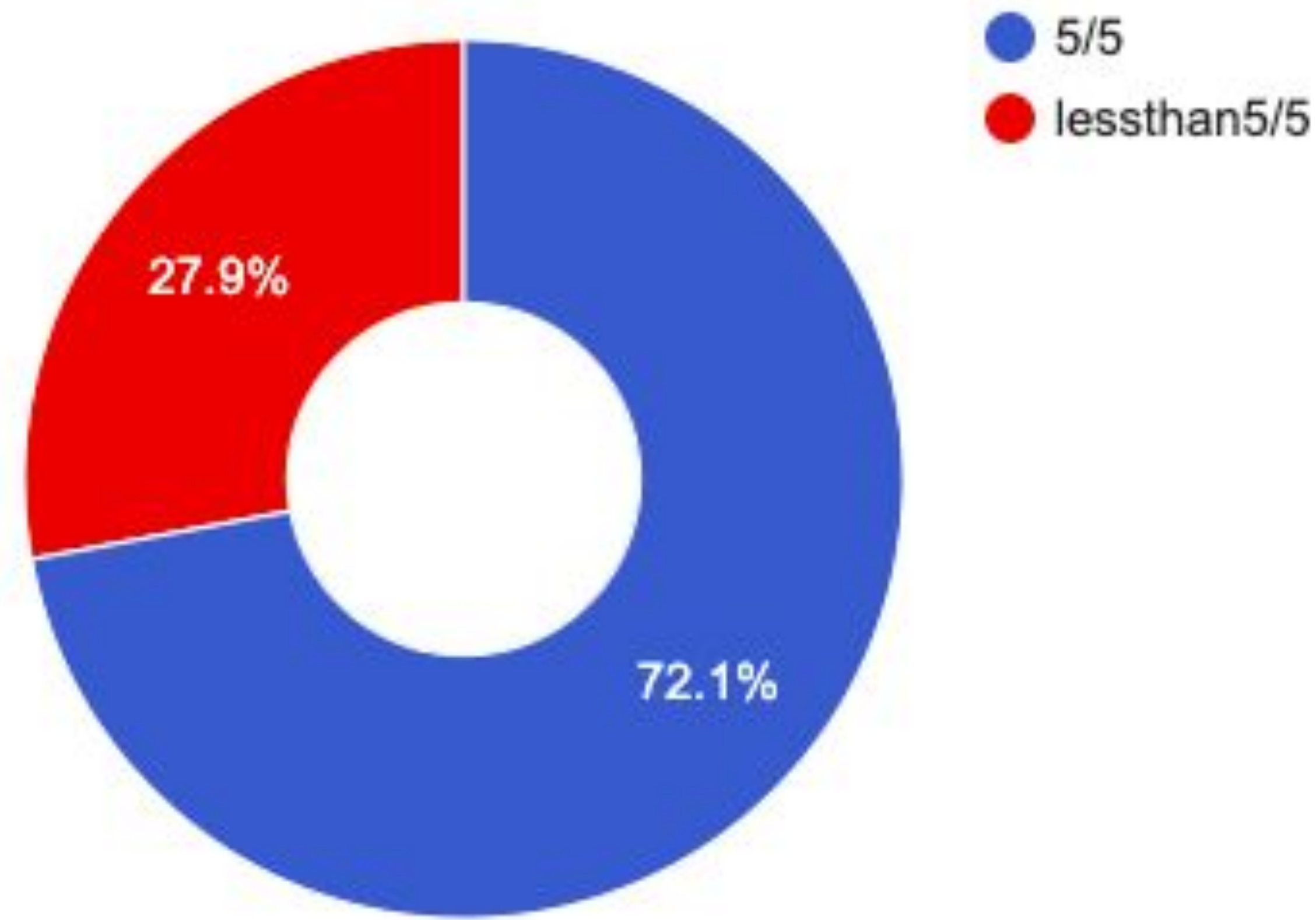
### Acknowledgements

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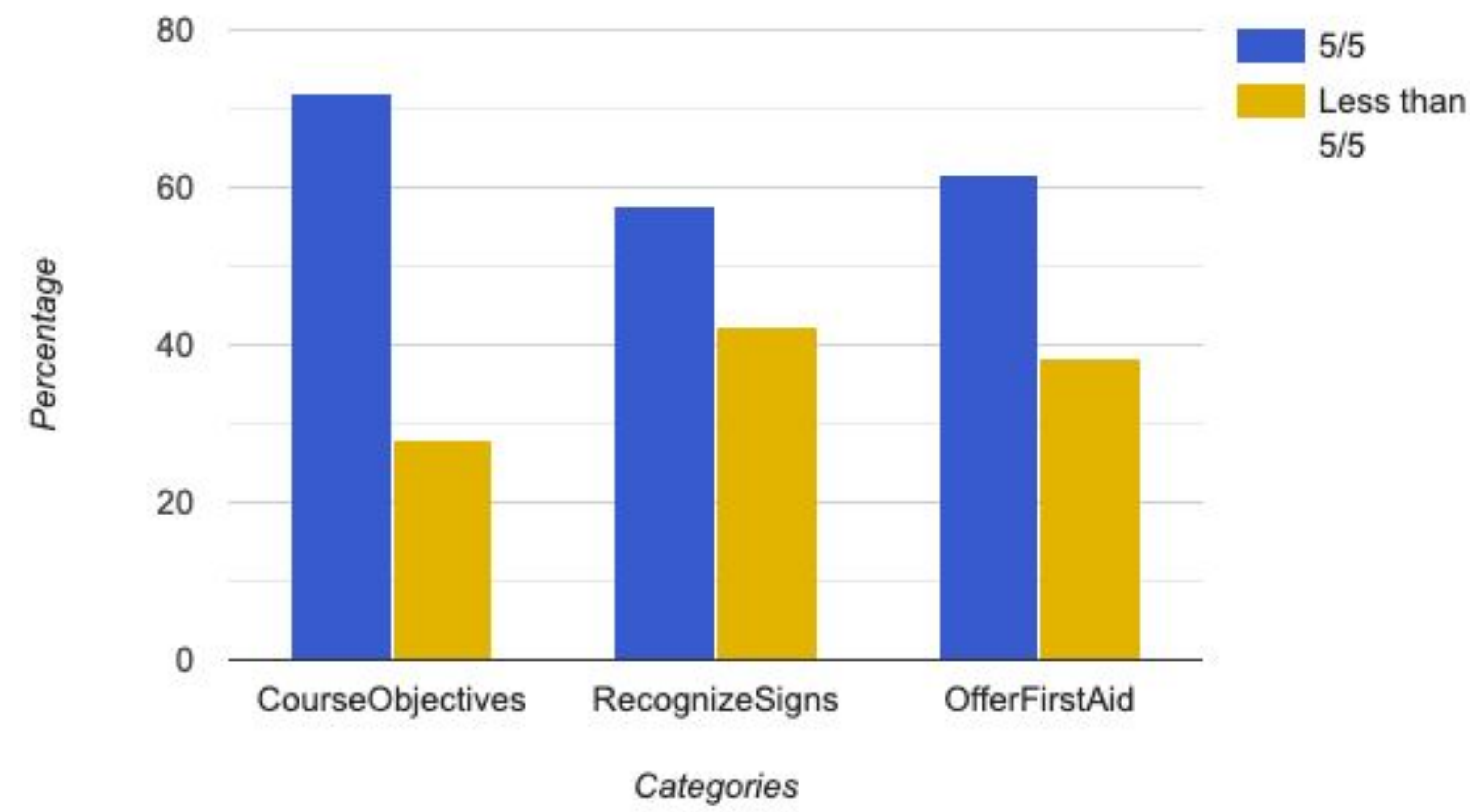
### References

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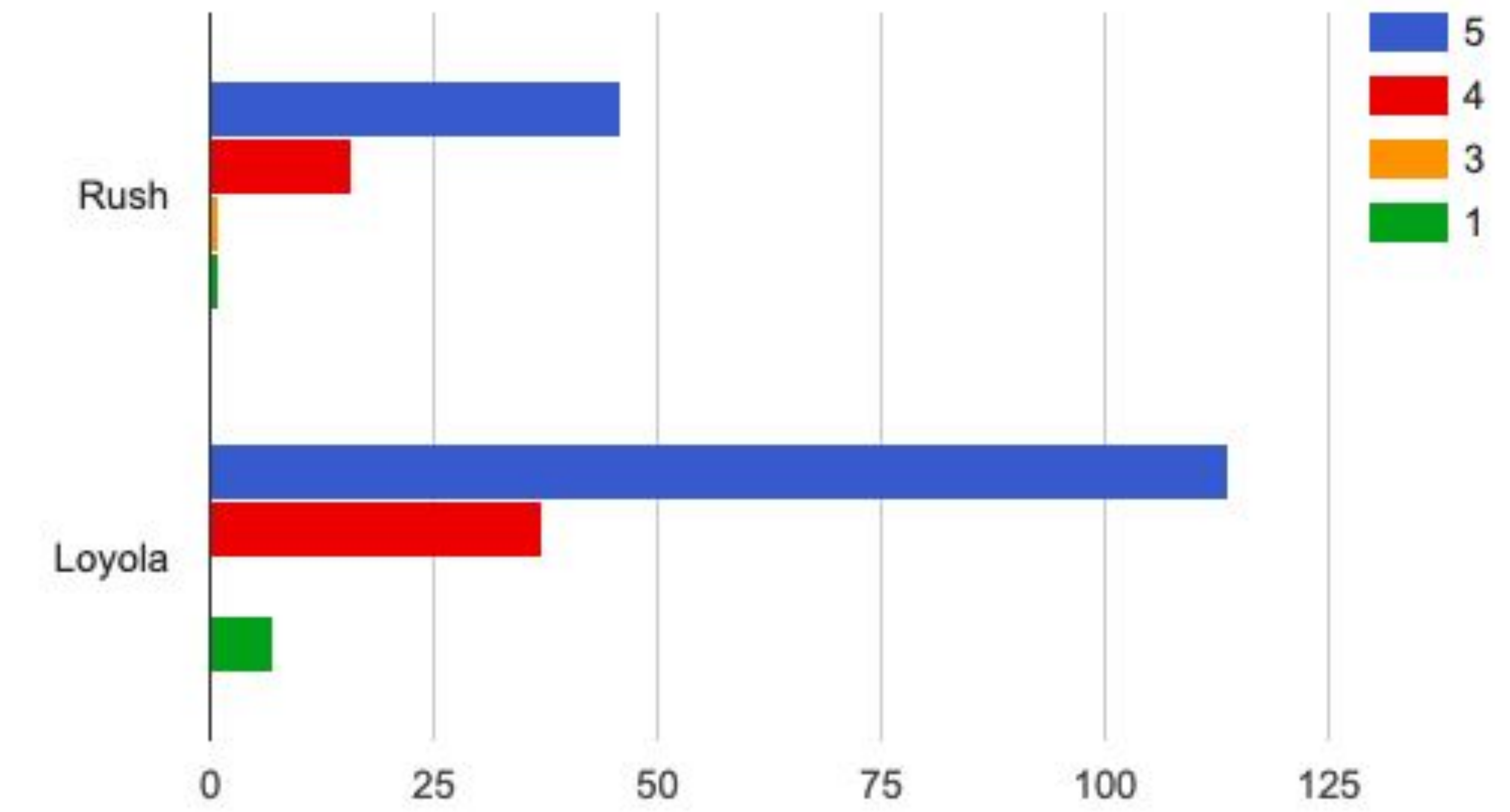
Course Objectives Rankings



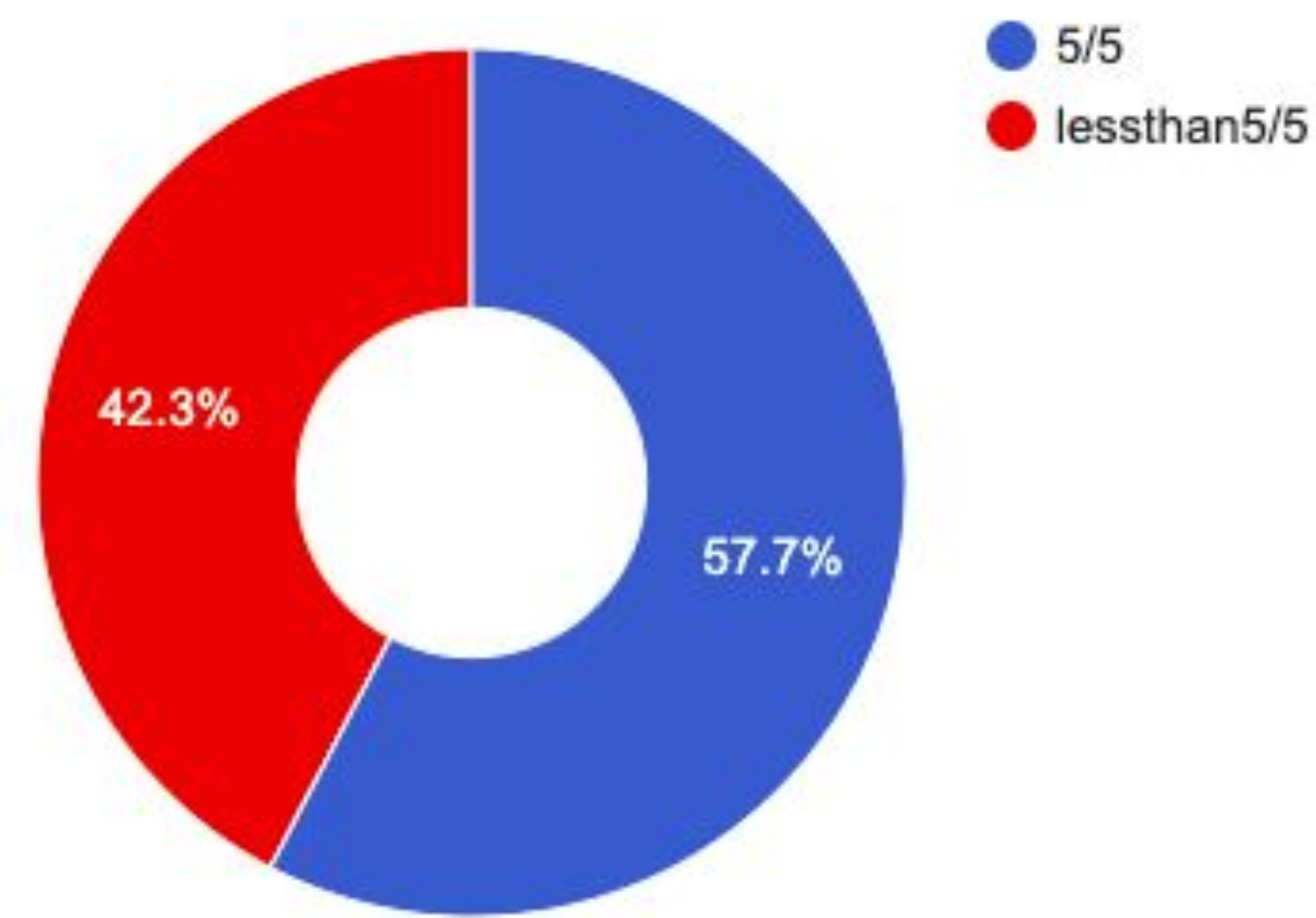
Evaluation Rankings



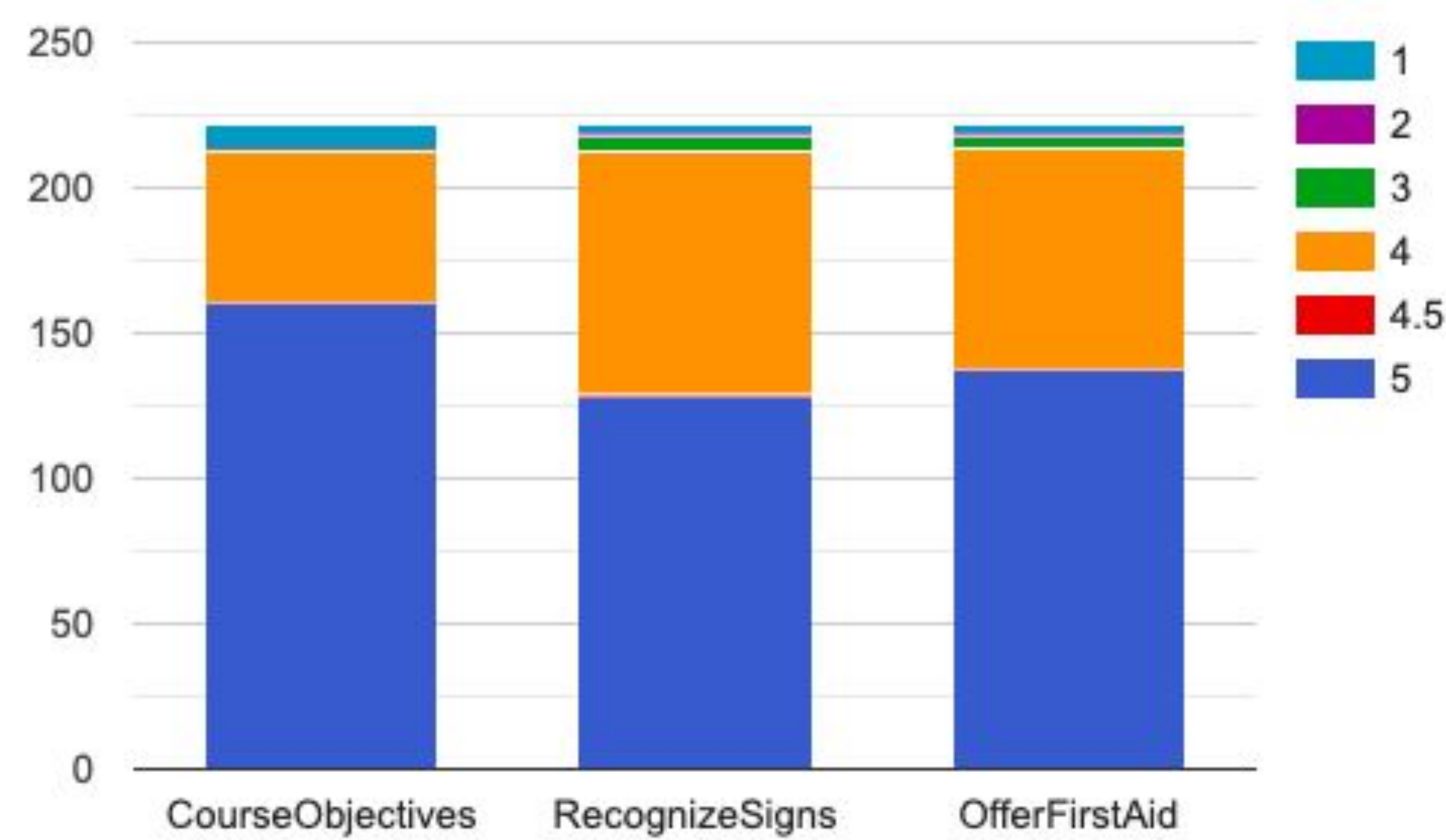
Course Objective Rankings



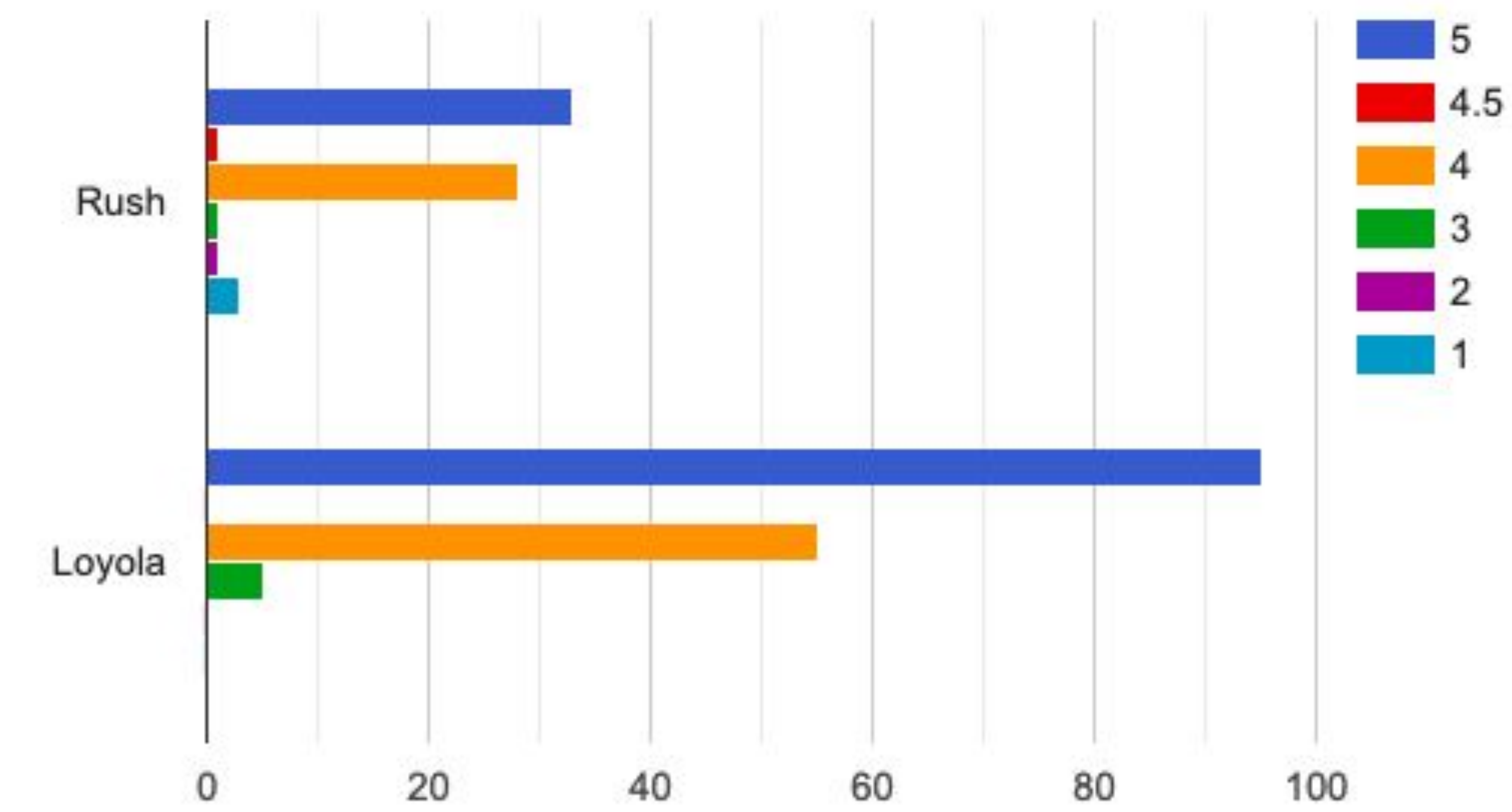
Recognizing Signs Rankings



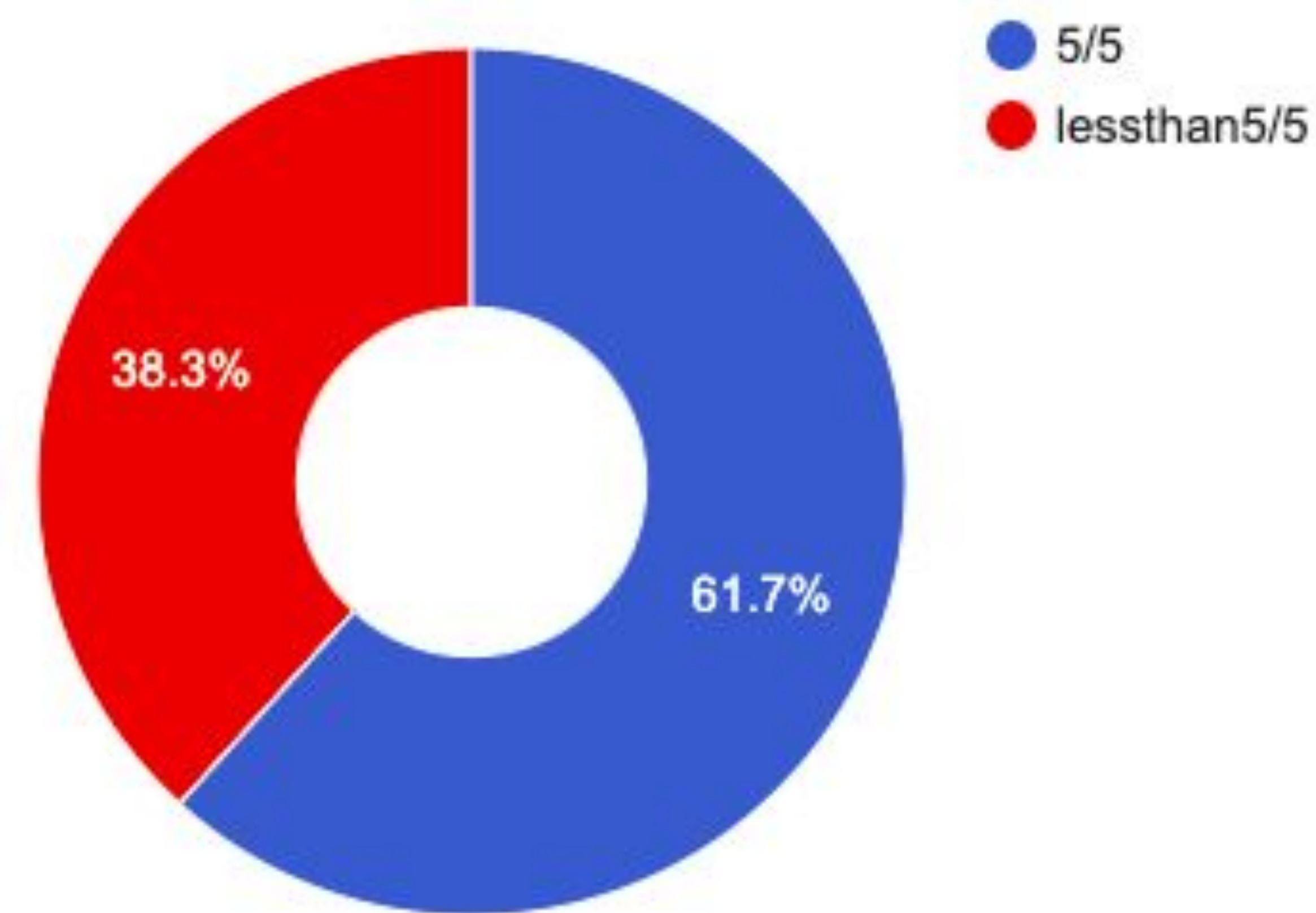
Evaluation Rankings



Comfort in Recognizing Signs Rankings



Offer First Aid Rankings



Comfort in Offering First Aid Rankings

