

# Why students do and do not attend their courses and what instructors can do about it.\*

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Students chose\*\* to attend class more frequently when it influenced their grade, they wanted to ask a question, and they had friends in class.



\*\* Students identified the reason as affecting their choice to attend class and the reason was significantly predictive of actual (self-reported) attendance behavior (see Figure 1).

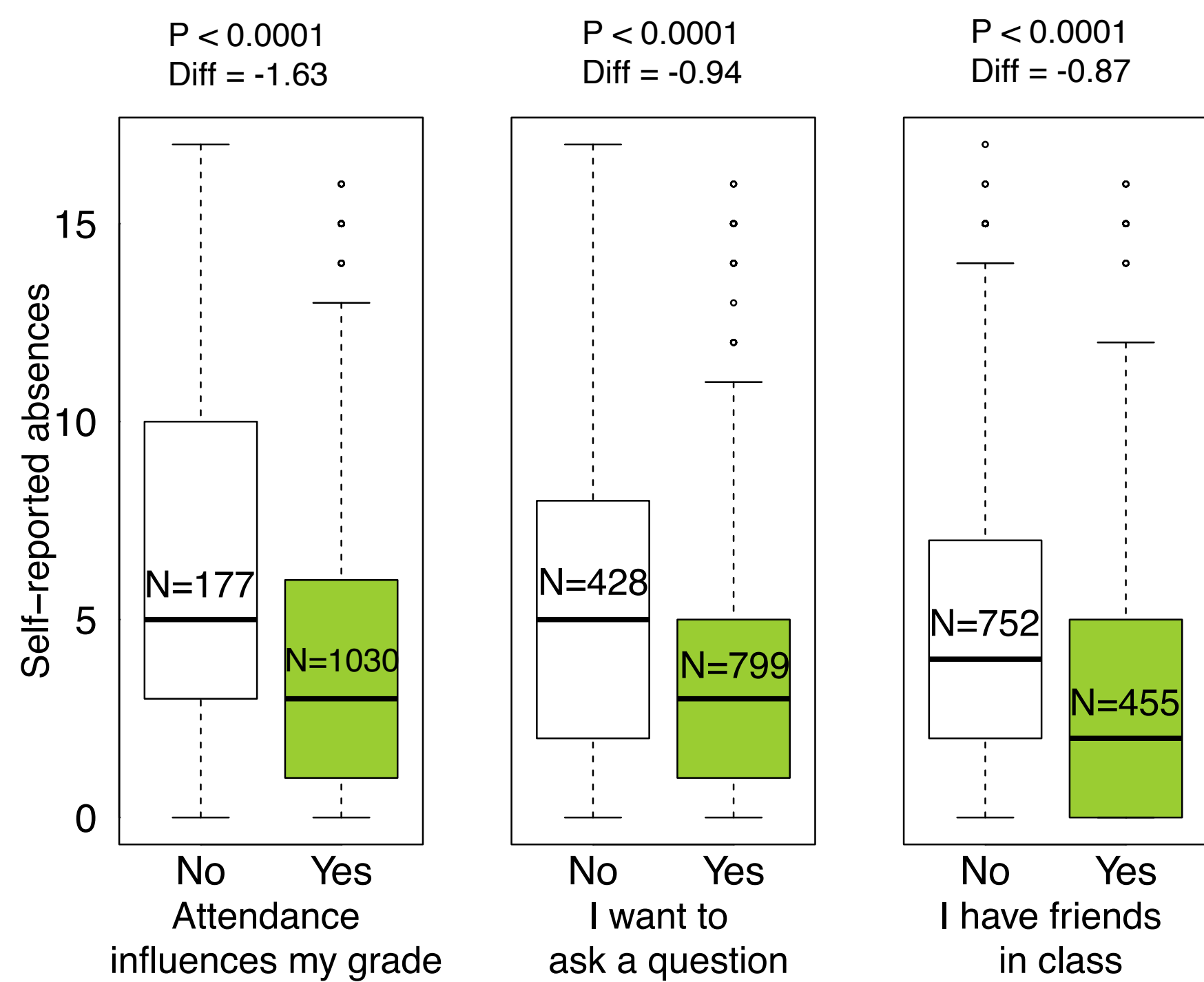


Figure 1. Three of the twenty-two reasons for attendance were behaviorally predictive. Students that said, “attendance influences my grade” was a reason they chose to attend class reported attending 1.63 more classes than students that said it was not a reason. Students that said, “I wanted to ask a question,” reported attending 0.94 more classes. Students that said, “I have friends in class,” reported attending 0.87 more classes.

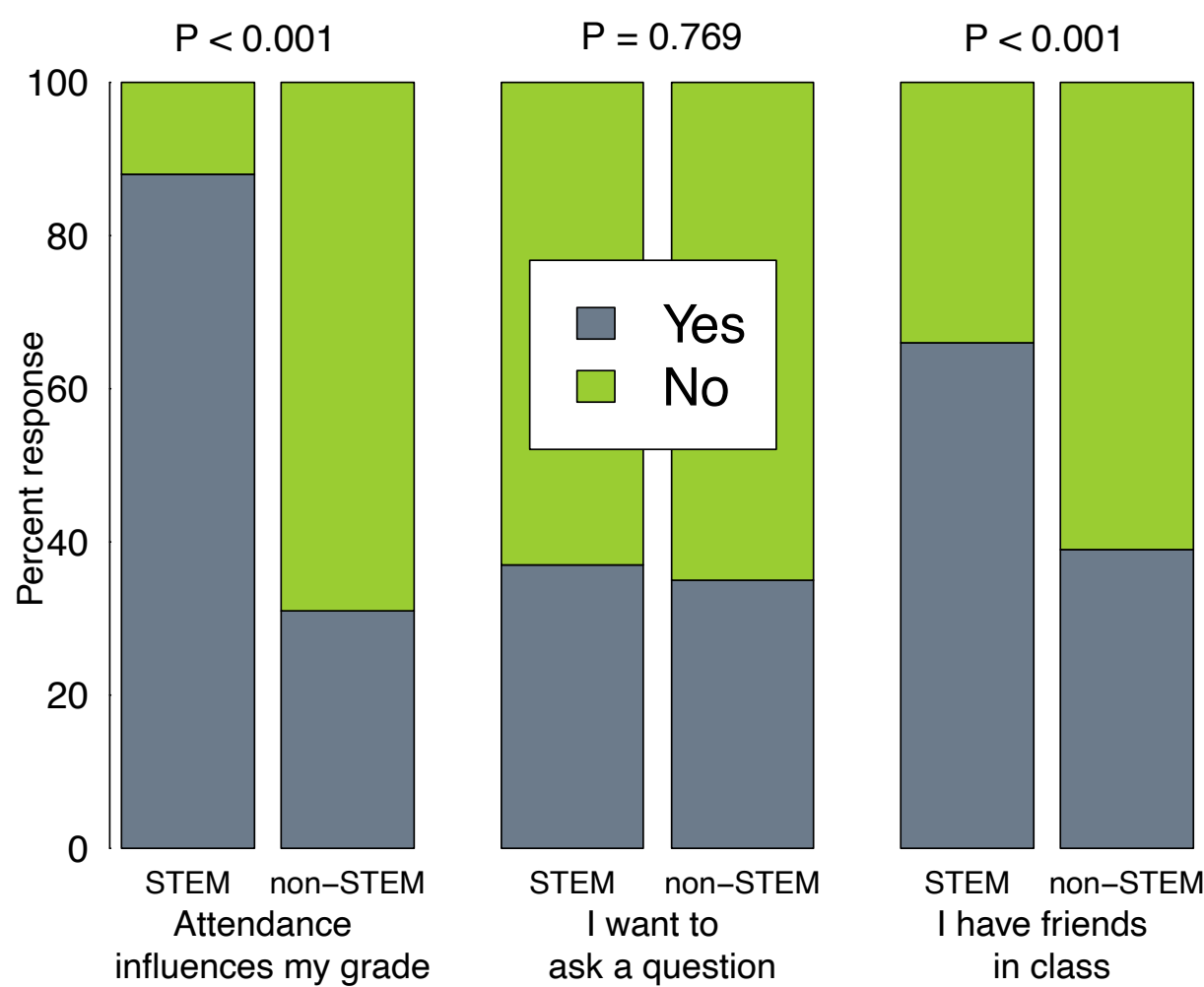


Figure 3. Disciplinary context. Students in non-STEM courses cited “attendance influences my grade” and “I have friends in class” as reasons that did influence their choice to attend less frequently than STEM students. \*We think this is being driven by other factors.

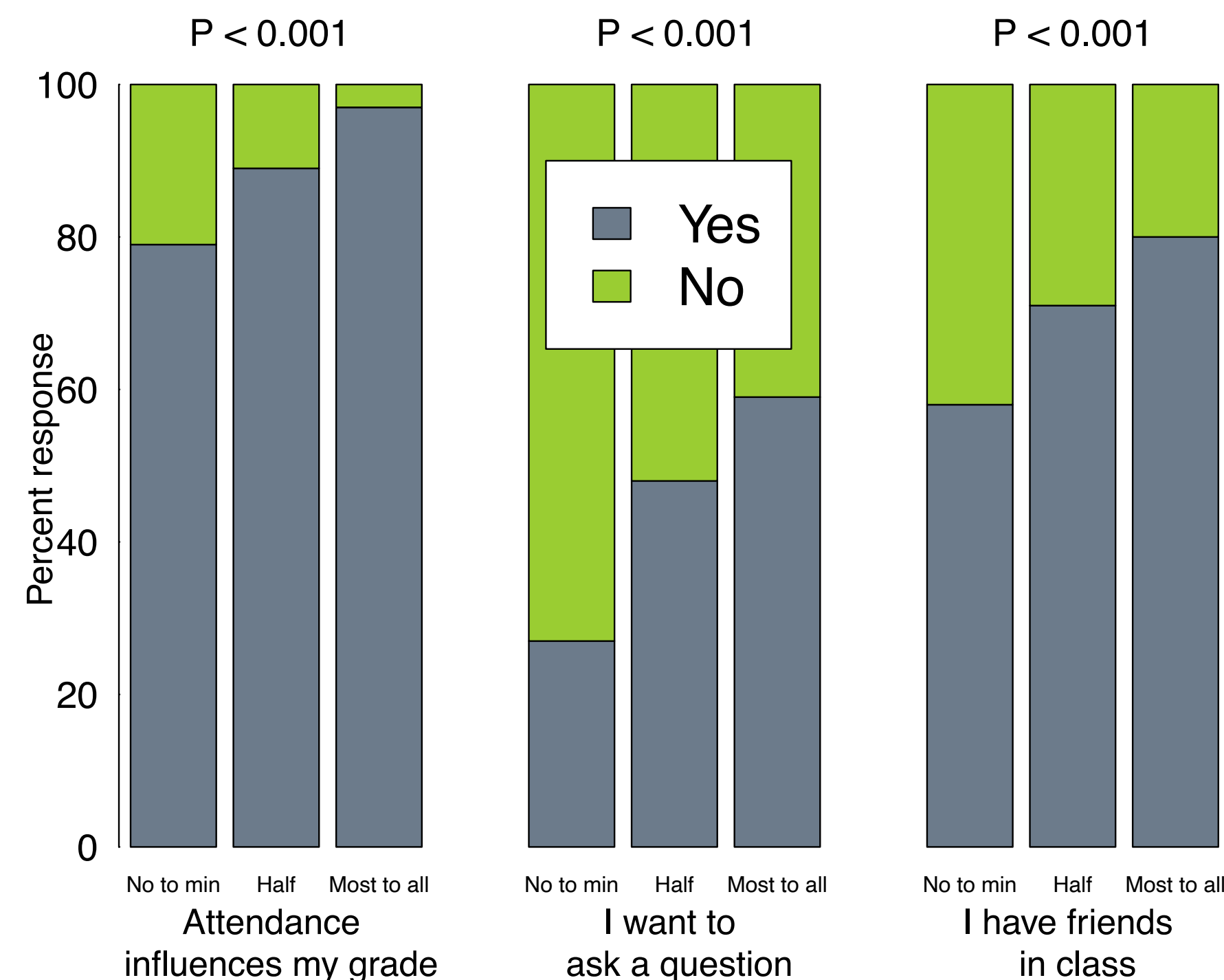


Figure 2. Course context. Students in courses they described as using most to all course time for student interaction cited all three behaviorally predictive reasons more frequently than students that described the course as using no to minimum course time for student interaction.

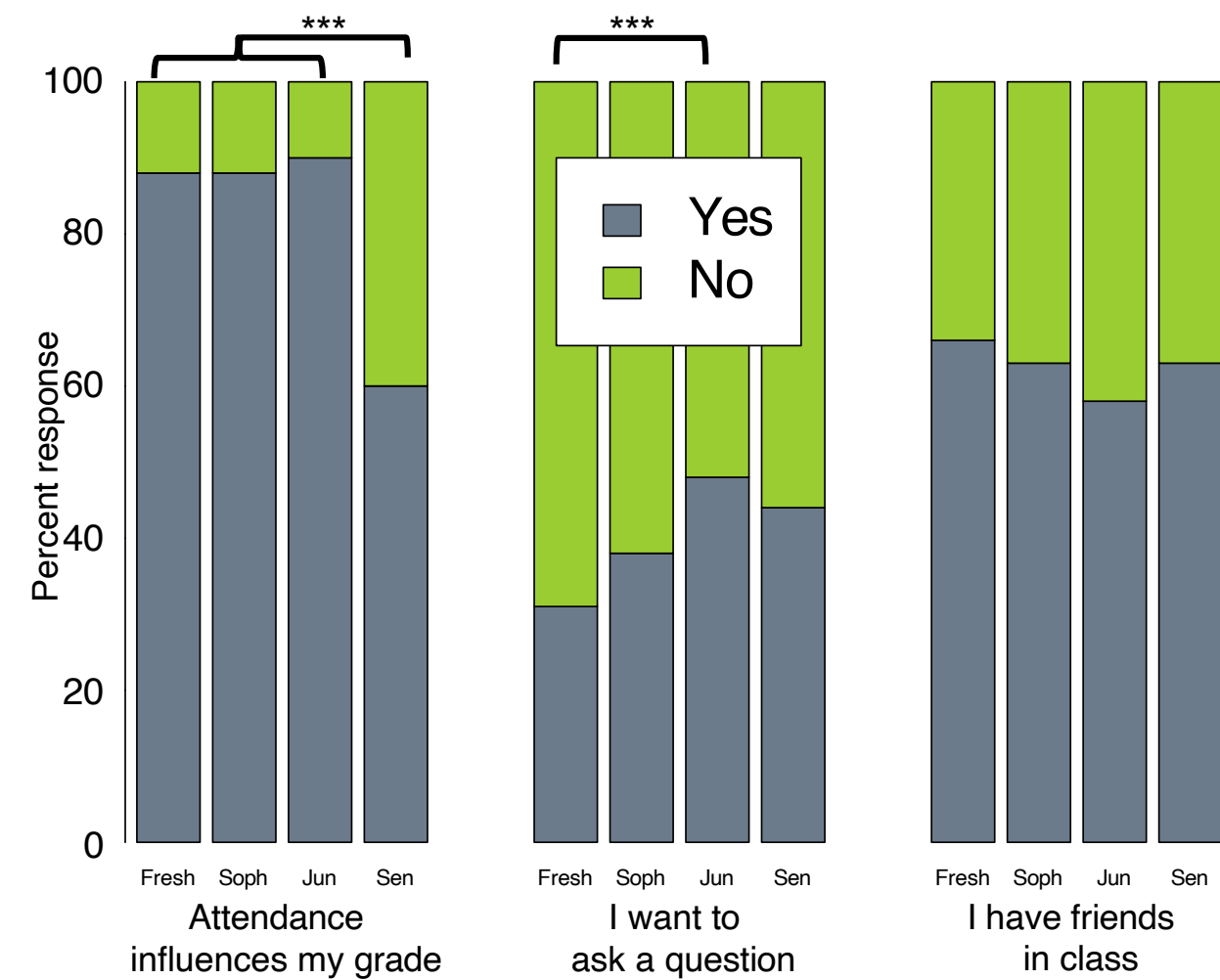
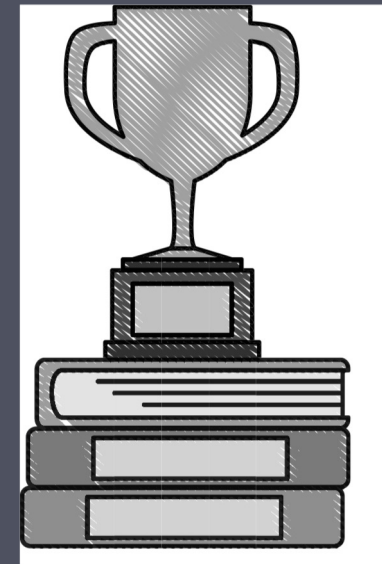


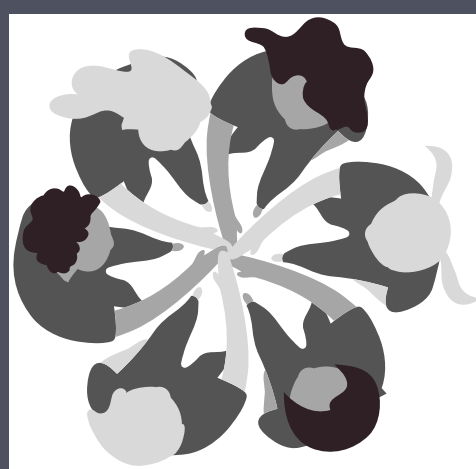
Figure 4. Student context. Seniors cited “attendance influences my grade” as a reason that did influence their choice to attend less frequently than all other class levels. Juniors cited “wanting to ask a question” as a reason that did influence their choice to attend more frequently than freshmen.

Many reasons students do not attend are out of our control as instructors. Here are a few things we can do to influence more attendance.



Award points for in-class group work (that requires a product or will be reported out on)

Structure interactions (i.e., assign roles, create ground rules, establish accountability)



Build community by including structured student-student interactions that allows for humanization