The MA program on Language Education and Technology: a global endeavour

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MA programs

Provide education and training in specialized areas

Personnel from within a department or a school or a university

THE PROBLEM

- Not more than one or two individuals working in the same area of study
- A commodity not too many institutions have

THE RESULT

MAs in general areas of study (i.e. applied linguistics) which look like another BA (e.g. department of English of the Aristotle University)

The program

- bring together several scholars from around the world to contribute to this endeavour
- making use of current technology
- an alternative mode of delivery, such as online instruction,
- alternatively-scheduled classes

Two basic strands in language education and technology:

- a) the academic, for those pursuing an academic career, and
- b) the practical, for those working as language teachers

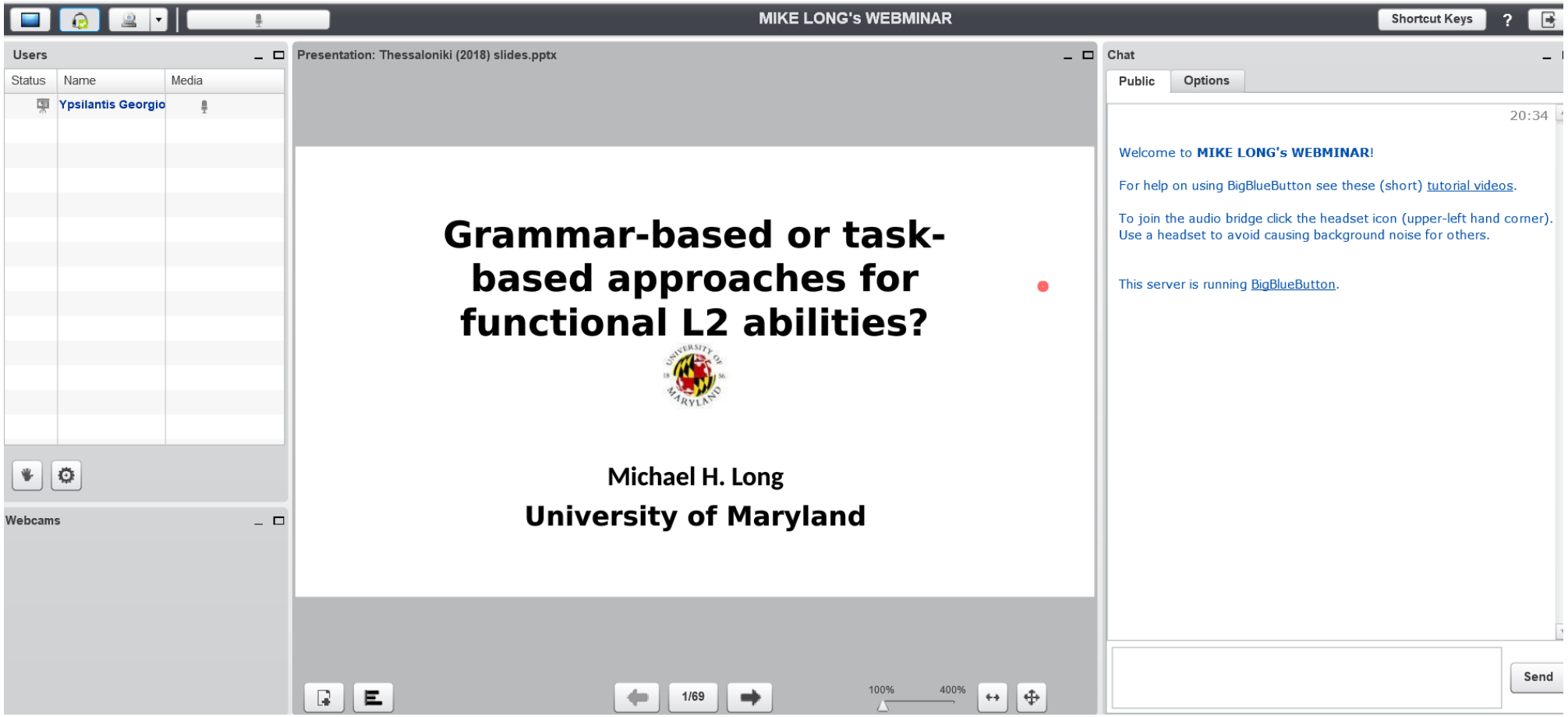
The modules

- experimental research methods and statistics,
- theories of second language acquisition,
- mobile assisted language learning,
- the internet and language education,
- internet technologies,
- language teaching theories and CALL,
- learner autonomy,
- instructive vs incidental learning
- massive on-line language courses

Blended Learning (BL)

- BL combines **different teaching methods**, and **information technology** under a **new pedagogical environment**
- facilitates “a convergence between face-to-face and technology-mediated learning environments” (Naaj, Nachouki and Ankit, 2012)
- combines the potential of technologies with traditional teaching techniques

The working environment: Big Blue Button



The personnel

- **Ana Gimeno-Sanz** (current president of WordCALL who also acted as co-coordinator of the program),
- **Mirjam Hauck** (current president of EuroCALL),
- **Glen Stockwell** (Associate Dean of the faculty of law at Waseda University, Japan),
- **Elena Barcena** (Professor at UNED, Spain)
- **Thomas Vougiouklis** (Professor Emeritus of the Democritus University of Thrace),
- **Agneliki Psaltou-Joycey** (Professor Emeritus of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece),
- **George Ypsilandis** (associate professor and program coordinator),
- **Panos Arvanitis** and **Panos Panagiotidis** (associate professors) from the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- Additional seminars, by well-known scholars who were invited to teach on campus or through webinars, were offered:
- **Mike Long** (USA),
- **David Little**, (Ireland),
- **Phil Hubbard** (USA),
- **Cornelia Illie** (Sweden). The working language of the course was English.

This study

- evaluates a postgraduate course on technology in language education, by recording the participant's views
- through a questionnaire aiming to register
- any possible impact on their professional and academic life,
- locate its strengths and weaknesses and
- find whether initial personal targets were achieved.

Benefits

- of value to both MA course organisers and
- MA students alike,
- with a set of criteria to use for course selection.

Method

Design and Procedure

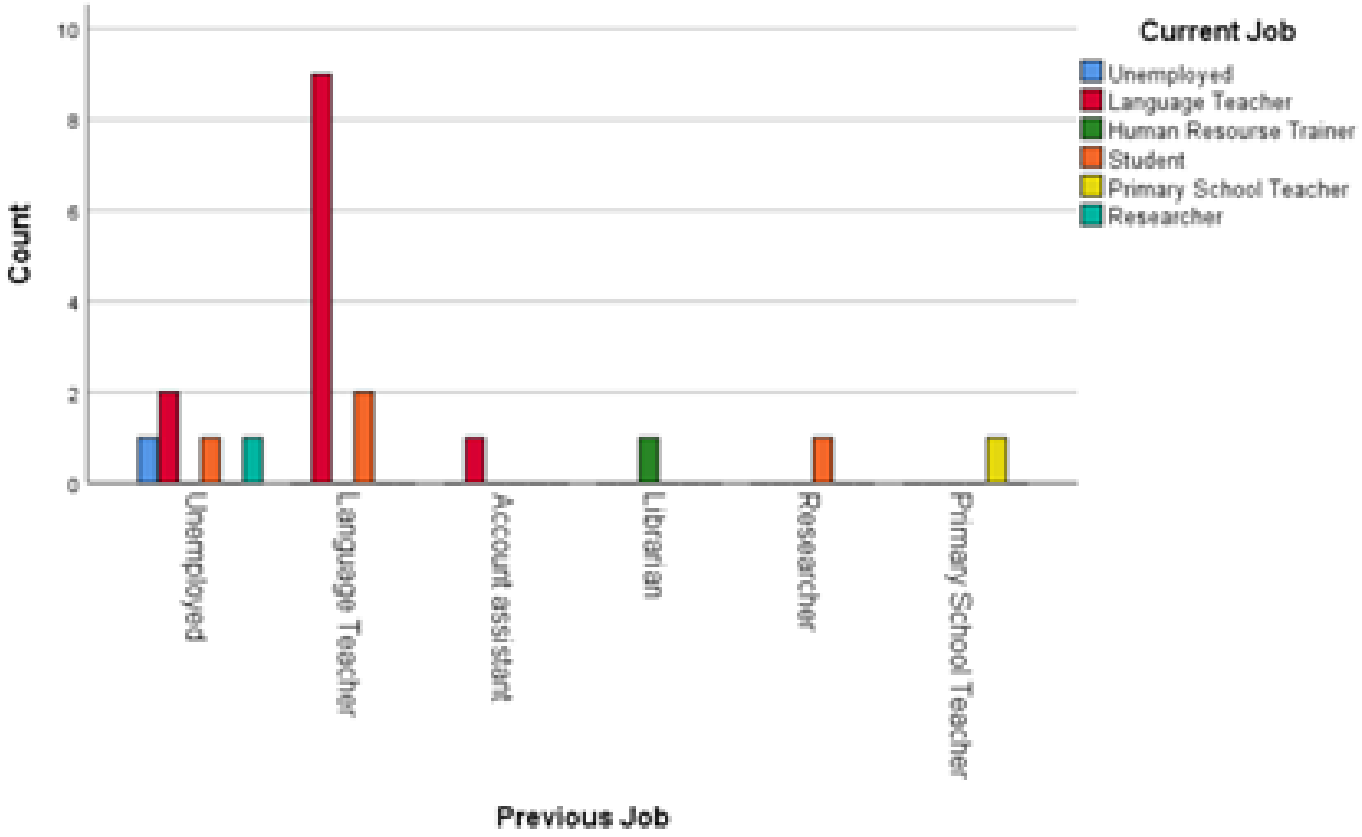
- Participants were approached by email and were asked to fill in a questionnaire relevant to the purpose of the study, with a student acting as a mediator to ensure anonymity.

Subjects and Apparatus and Materials

- 50 students were initially targeted; 6 of those had not completed the program at the time of the study and were excluded from the sample. A final sample of 44 subjects were approached and 20 of those responded to the appeal (**return rate at 45.4**%). A questionnaire with 13 open-ended questions was administered and the SPSS (v.25) statistical package was employed for data analysis.

Analysis

- **Frequencies related to MA impact on students' professional life**



1		P. J.	C. J.
2	Unemployed	5	1
3	Language Teacher	11	12
4	Account assistant	1	0
5	Librarian	1	1
6	Researcher	1	1
7	Primary School Teacher	1	1
8	Human Resource Trainer	0	1
9	Student	0	3
10	Total	20	20

Analysis

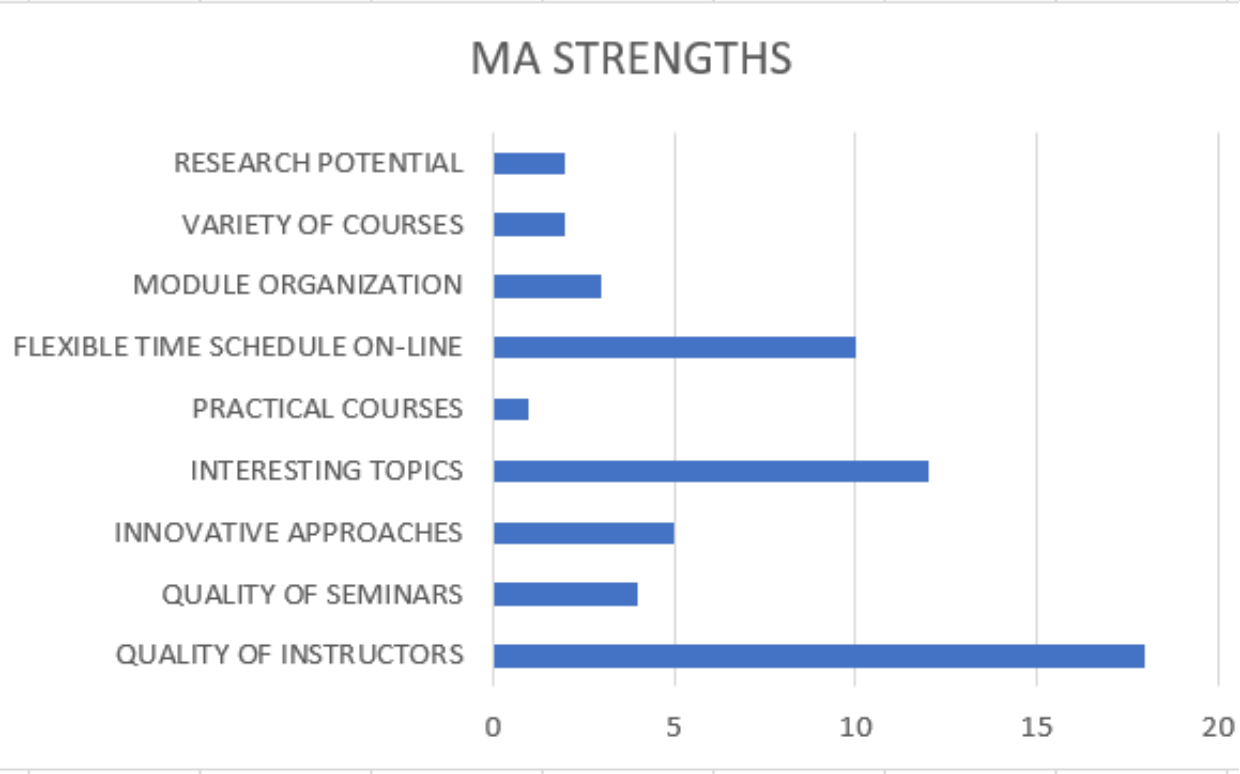
- **Impact of program to studen… cad… fe.**

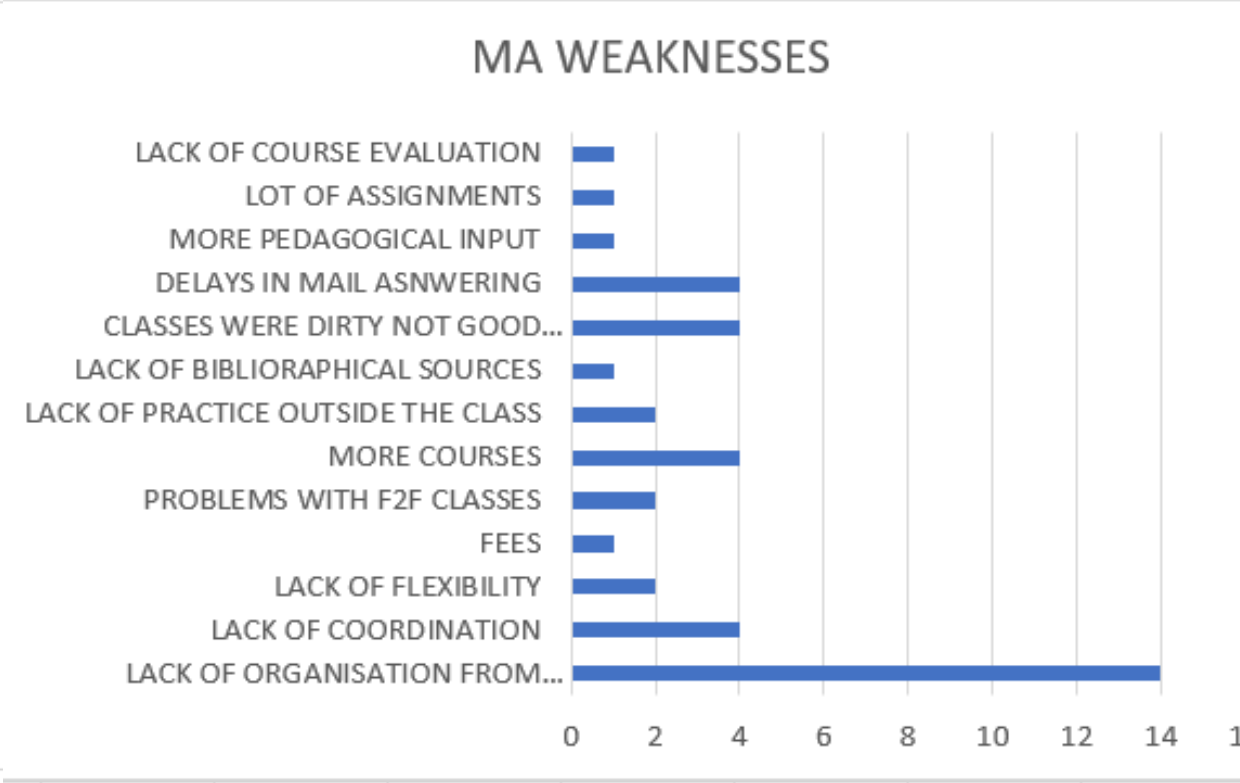
How… help … ent

					…mulative Percent
Valid	Incr… Awaren…			14,3	14,3
	Pa…			21,4	35,7
	Ph.D…			…0	85,7
	Self…			14,3	100,0
			70,0	100,0	
Missing	999,00	6	30,0		
Total		20	100,0		

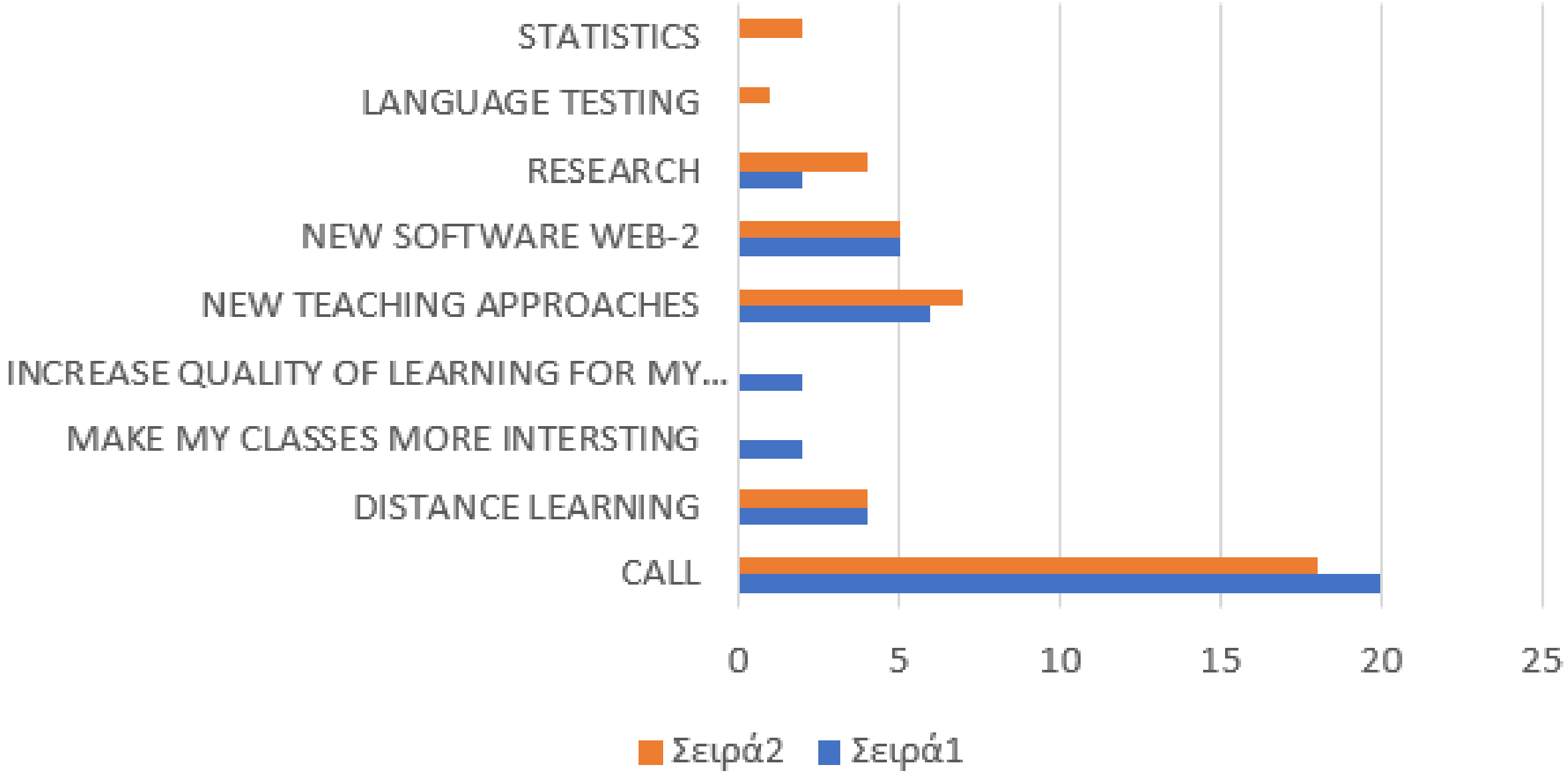
A total of 15 students presented their work in conferences out of Greece with a scholarship from the program

Strengths and weaknesses of the program.





INITIAL AND ACHIEVED TARGETS



Summary and Conclusions

- The program was declared to have a significant impact on participants' both professional and academic life
- offered job opportunities to those unemployed or led those interested to a further Ph.D. level study. Those already in the profession initially targeted to learn about CALL, net applications for language teaching or applications for the design and creation of their own material
- The claimed strengths of the program were: the instructors' academic quality, the topics taught and the flexibility of the time schedule, the innovative approach of program delivery and the quality of seminars. On the other hand, the administration by the department was stated to be poor.
- The stated targets were mostly achieved while other stated targets, such as making their classes more interesting or increasing the quality of their teaching/learning were not met

The other side of the road tactic

- The department of English of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki organized and offered an MA on a similar topic without having a single member of staff working in this area!

- The department of French of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki organized an MA on a similar topic with two members working in the same area!

- The department of Italian (which offered this MA program) now has a new MA related to Italian studies (literature) with 4 students registered in it!