

# **An Assessment of Student Opinion on Finals Week Policies at Morehead State University**

**Submitted by:**

**Morehead State University Student Government Association (SGA),**

**SGA Student Life Committee,**

**Brian Gay, Clint Banks, and Neil Arnett**



## **1. Introduction**

Reading Day, as defined by MSU, is a day designated for students to better prepare for final exams. On this day, there are no classes held or tests given. This day, for several years, has been on the Wednesday of finals week.

Student opinion regarding Reading Day at Morehead State University was difficult to gauge due to several factors. Diverse opinions within the student leadership, and the lack of research were among these factors. The potential negative feedback the Student Government Association could receive by students concerned about changing of the finals week schedule including reading day was also a factor. We felt that it was necessary to further investigate the issue.

The Student Government Association determined that a method was needed to gauge student opinion on the scheduling of finals week as it involves reading day and dead week. A survey was written and conducted to assess student opinion and assist the SGA in determining future actions. The results of this document indicate that this further investigation was most definitely warranted.

## **2. Methodology**

A survey (Appendix A) was developed and administered to gather the appropriate data from the population sample. The questionnaires addressed student feelings on the effectiveness of reading day, usefulness of dead week, amount of time studying on reading day, time spent studying on reading day, as well as Grade Point Average (GPA).

The survey was administered to students randomly in the Adron Doran University Center (ADUC) on Wednesday, September 27 and Thursday, September 28 during peak lunch periods. A total of 486 students were sampled. The population used in our study includes all persons who are students at Morehead State University. There are currently 9,062 students that are included in this population.

The statistical tests used to analyze the data include a one sample Z-test.

Research Questions:

1. **H<sub>0</sub>:** A student feels indifferent that reading day helps them prepare for exams.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** A student does not feel indifferent that reading day helps them prepare for exams.
2. **H<sub>0</sub>:** A student feels indifferent that having a dead week would be helpful in preparing for an exam.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** A student does not feel indifferent that having a dead week would be helpful in preparing for an exam.
3. **H<sub>0</sub>:** A student feels Wednesday is the best day for reading day.  
**H<sub>1</sub>:** A student does not feel Wednesday is the best day for reading day.

**4. Ho:** A student spends 0-3 hours studying on reading day.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** A student does not spend 0-3 hours studying on reading day.

We assumed that our samples were independent, and that our population had equal variances and was normally distributed.

### **3. Results**

This section is divided into four subsections that deal with questions as they appear in the survey.

**3.1 – Reading Day and Preparedness for Exams**

**3.2 – Helpfulness of Dead Week in preparedness for Exams**

**3.3 – Best Day for Reading Day**

**3.4 – Time Spent Studying on Reading Day**

#### **3.1 Reading Day and Preparedness for Exams**

In this subsection of our report we look to explore the following: Does reading day help students prepare for final exams? The research question to be addressed was as follows, since three represented indifference:

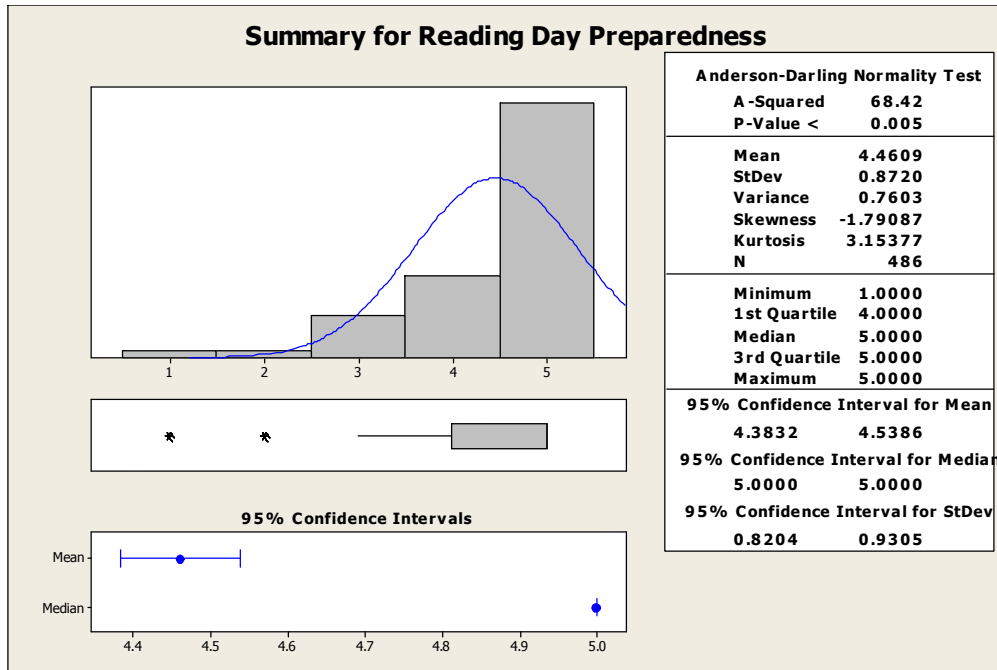
**1. Ho:**  $\mu = 3$

**H<sub>1</sub>:**  $\mu \neq 3$

**T.S. :**  $Z = 39.3$

**D.R:** For a significance level of  $\alpha=.05$ , reject the null hypothesis if the computed test statistic value  $z = 39.3 \neq z_{\alpha} = -1.64$ .

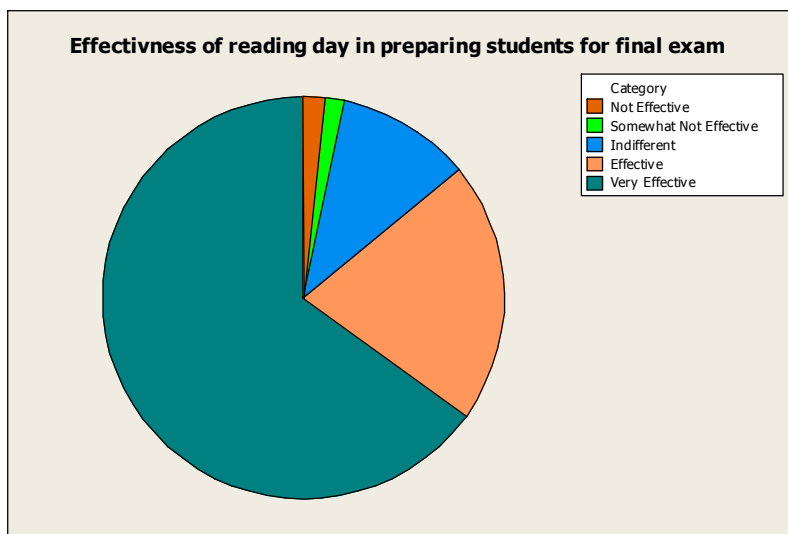
**Conclusion:** Since  $z = 39.3 > z_{\alpha} = -1.645$ , reject Ho. There is sufficient sample evidence to support our claim that students at MSU are not indifferent to this questions. Since  $z = 39.3 > z_{\alpha} = -1.645$ , you can conclude MSU students feel it is effective.



*Chart 1: Reading Day Preparedness*

**AT LEAST 86% PERCENT OF STUDENTS THINK THAT READING DAY IS AT LEAST SOMWHAT EFFECTIVE AT HELPING THEM PREPARE FOR EXAMS.**

Effectiveness	Count	
Not Effective	8	2%
Somewhat Not Effective	8	2%
Indifferent	52	10%
Effective	102	21%
Very Effective	<u>316</u>	65%
	486	



### 3.2 Helpfulness of Dead Week in Preparedness for Exams

In this subsection of our report we look to explore the following: Do students feel a dead week in which there are no exams would help them prepare for final exams? The research question to be addressed was as follows, since three represented indifference:

**2. Ho:**  $\mu = 3$

**H<sub>1</sub>:**  $\mu \neq 3$

**T.S. :**  $Z = 21.14$

**D.R:** For a significance level of  $\alpha=.05$ , reject the null hypothesis if the computed test statistic value  $z = 21.14 \neq z_{\alpha} = -1.64$ .

**Conclusion:** Since  $z = 21.4 > z_{\alpha} = -1.645$ , reject Ho. There is sufficient sample evidence to support our claim that students at MSU are not indifferent to this questions. Since  $z = 39.3 > z_{\alpha} = -1.645$ , you can conclude MSU students feel it is would be useful.

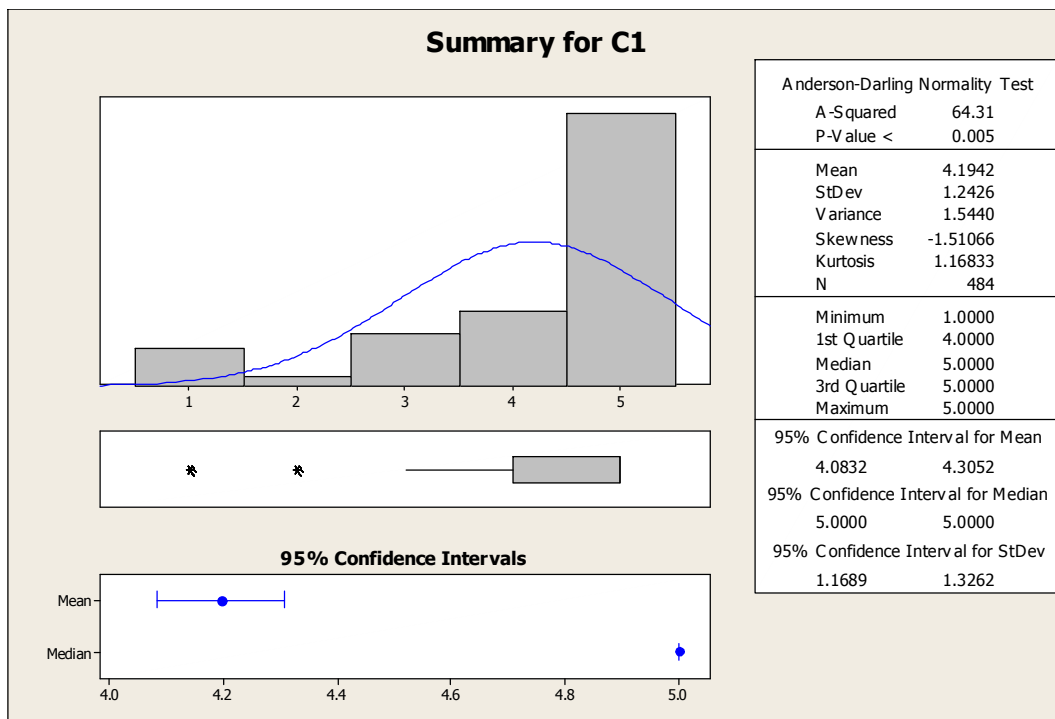
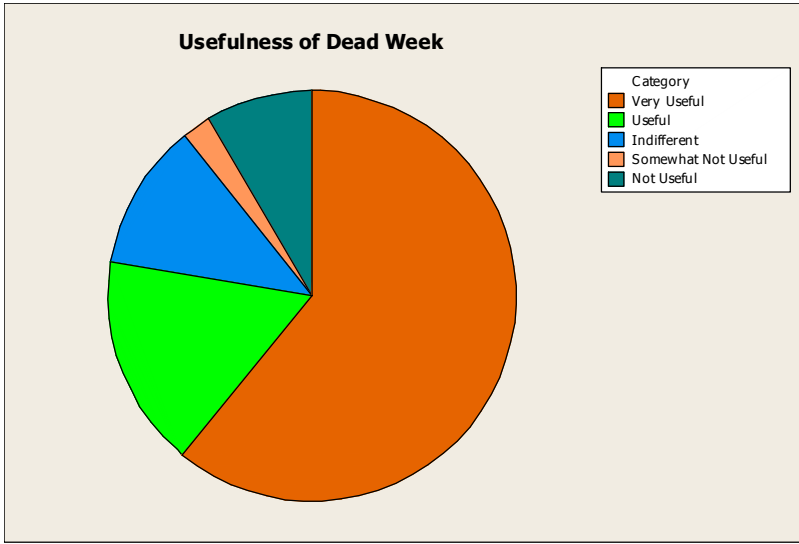


Chart 2: Dead Week Usefulness

**AT LEAST 77% OF STUDENTS FEEL THAT A DEAD WEEK AS DEFINED IN THE SURVEY WOULD BE HELPFUL IN PREPARING FOR EXAMS**

<u>Usefulness</u>	<u>count</u>	
Very Useful	295	61%
Useful	81	17%
Indifferent	56	12%
Somewhat Not Useful	11	2%
Not Useful	41	8%
	484	



**3.3 Best Day for Reading Day**

We sought to determine when students thought they would get the most benefit from a reading day. In analyzing the data I used the following method: days were ranked 1-6, six being the least desirable. The value of a day is based on the sum of the number it received on every survey that was filled out correctly for this question. Though this is semi-qualitative it yielded results.

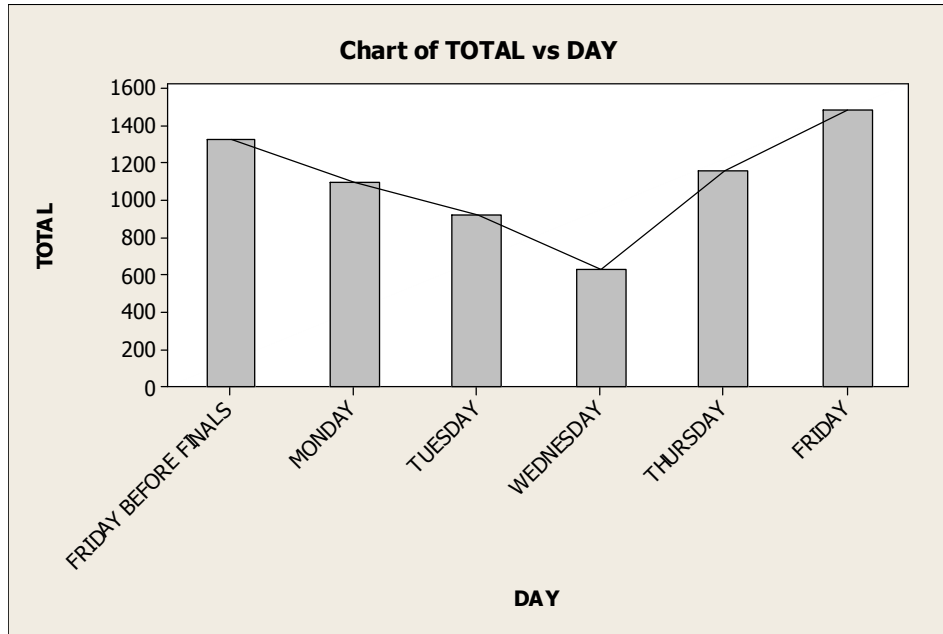


Chart 3: Reading day Preference

Wednesday is the best suited day during finals week for a reading day. Wednesday is followed by Tuesday, Monday, Thursday, the Friday before finals and the Friday during finals week.

According to the survey, students assigned a ranking values of best suited '1', through '6', worst suited, respectively. This method is helpful to identify which day is preferred. It is not the best gauge of depicting the spectrum of how strongly students desire each day.

The next series of graphs will display the frequency of values 1-6 for each day.

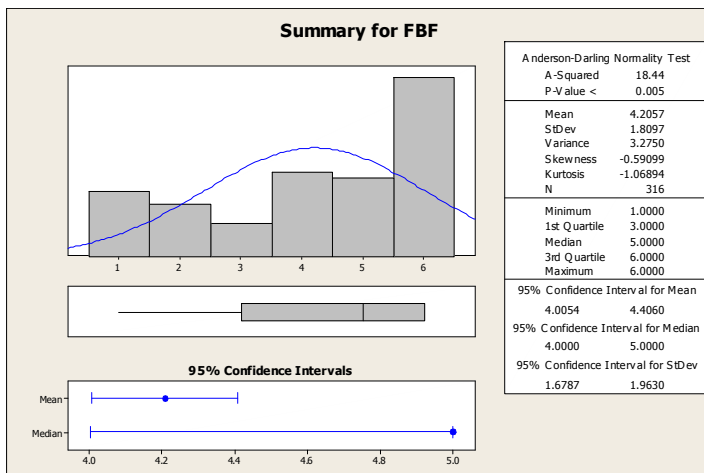


Chart 4: Friday Before Finals

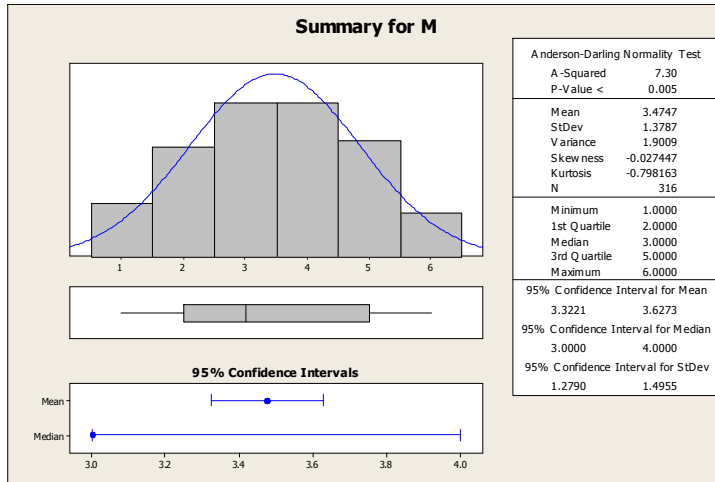


Chart 5: Monday

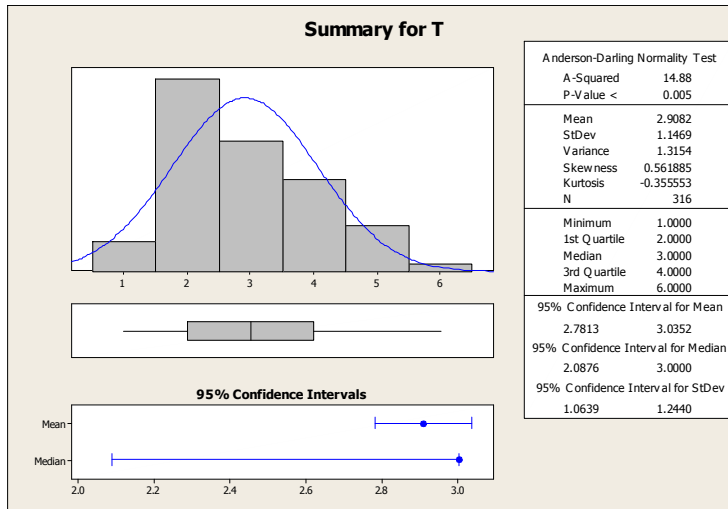


Chart 6: Tuesday

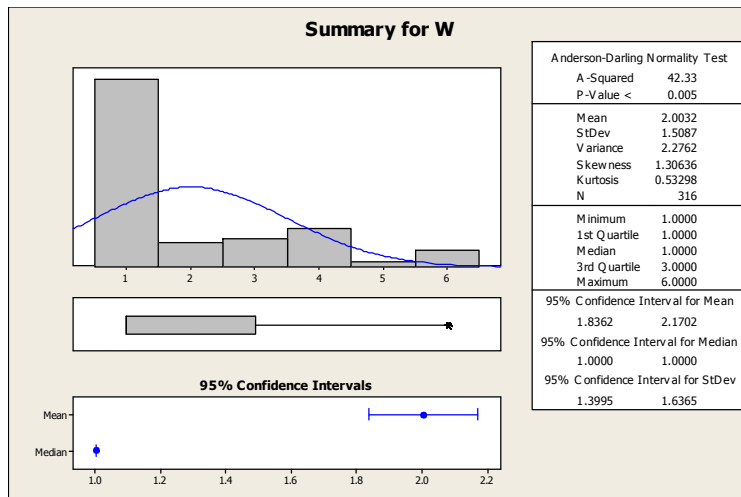


Chart 7: Wednesday

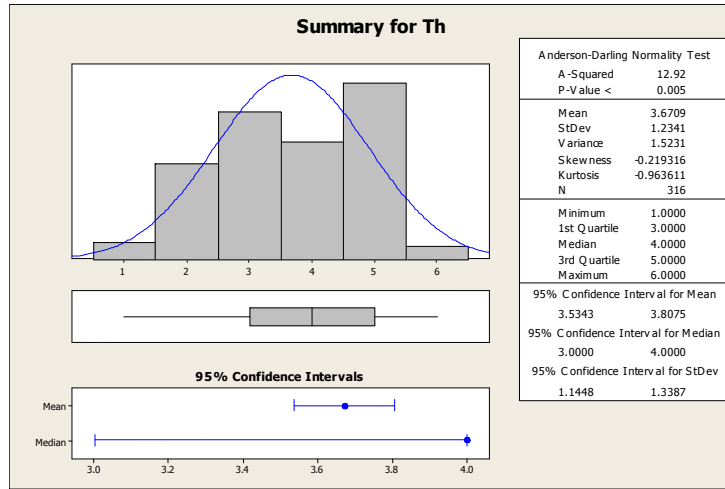


Chart 8: Thursday

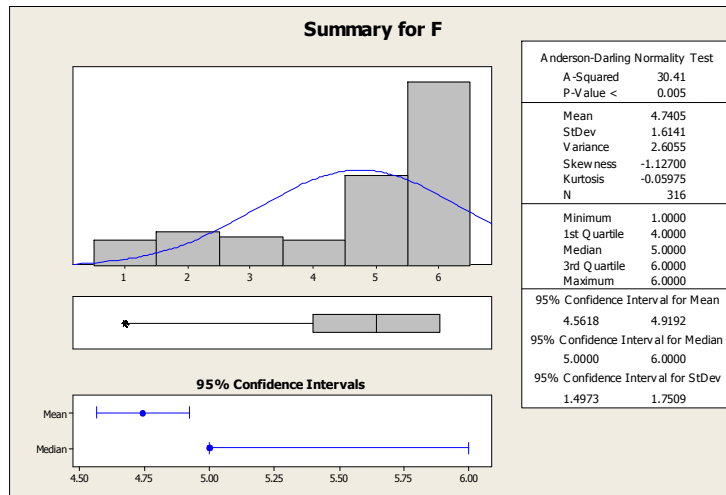


Chart 9: Friday

**3.4 Time Spent Studying on Reading Day**

We sought to determine how much time the average student spends actually studying on reading day. To do that we used the following research question, whereas 1 represent 0-3 hours of studying:

**2. Ho:**  $\mu = 1$

**H<sub>1</sub>:**  $\mu \neq 1$

**T.S. :**  $Z = 29.21$

**D.R:** For a significance level of  $\alpha=.05$ , reject the null hypothesis if the computed test statistic value  $z = 29.21 \neq z_{\alpha} = -1.64$ .

**Conclusion:** Since  $z = 29.21 > z_{\alpha} = -1.645$ , reject Ho. There is sufficient sample evidence to support our claim that students at MSU don't spend 0-3 hours studying on reading day. . Since  $z = 29.21 > z_{\alpha} = -1.645$ , you can conclude MSU students spend on average more than 0-3 hours studying on reading day.

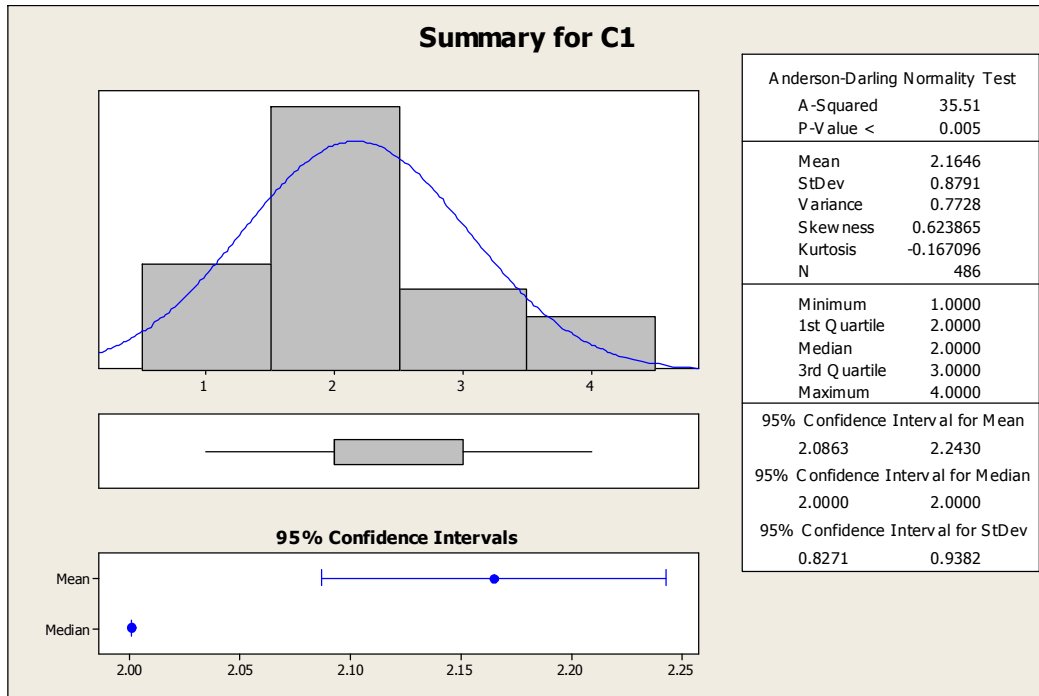


Chart 10: Study Times

On the graph 1= 0-3 hours, 2 = 4-6 hours, 3 = 7-10 hours, 4= 10+hours. The majority of students spend 4-6 hours studying for their exams on reading day.

**A majority of students spend between 4 and 6 hours studying for finals on reading day.**

<u>Hours</u>	<u>Respondants</u>
0-3	102
4-6	254
7-10	78
10+	52

#### **4. Recommendations**

The Morehead State University Student Government Association strives to uphold its commitment to the students: “...to commit itself to addressing student concerns, improving the overall quality of student life and work to make the college experience the best it can be.”

As the SGA continues to uphold this commitment, we are prepared to make the following recommendations of behalf of the students of Morehead State University, in accordance with our analysis of the above assessment of student opinion on Finals Week Policies at MSU:

##### **4.1 Continuance of “reading day” policies:**

It is the recommendation that Morehead State University continue to offer a scheduled day during finals week in which no “regular day time” classes or final examinations in such classes are to be scheduled. Upon review of student opinion it is apparent that students feel having such a day will afford the opportunity to achieve the highest levels of preparation for their final examinations. Thus ensuring students have the opportunity to reach their highest potential in completing their course of study.

##### **4.2 Establishment of a “dead week” policy:**

It is the recommendation that Morehead State University establish a policy that requires all faculty members schedule and maintain course studies so that the week prior to the final examination week not include any comprehensive assessment of student performance. The week would be utilized as regular instructional time.

Upon review of student opinion, students clearly feel that a week prior to final exams week, in which they can narrow their focus to the successful preparation for final examinations; would be very useful. This type of policy would prevent unfortunate circumstances in which students are assessed on their comprehensive knowledge of course material the week prior to final examinations and then reassessed during the final examination period.

##### **4.3 Wednesday, during final exams week, as “reading day”:**

It is the recommendation that Morehead State University utilize the Wednesday during final examination week as a “reading day”. Upon review of student opinion, it is clear that students feel Wednesday is the most effective day on-which to have a “reading day”.

From the assessment of vocal opinion on “reading day” policies many students feel they would be more successfully prepared by using this arrangement to balance their preparation over the course of the final examination period.

**Appendix A**

Morehead State University Student Government Association  
 Student Life Committee 2006-2007

*Final Exam Week “Reading Day”*

**1. How effective do you feel having a “Reading Day” during final exam weeks is at helping you prepare for your exam?**

Not Effective		Indifferent		Very Effective
1	2	3	4	5

**2. Do you feel that having a “dead week” (no exams the week before finals) would be useful in helping you prepare for exams?**

Not Useful		Indifferent		Very Useful
1	2	3	4	5

**3. Rank the day during finals week which is best suited for “reading day”?  
 (Best Suited =1 through 6= Worst Suited)**

Friday (before finals)	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

**4. How much time would you estimate you spend studying on a “reading day”?**

0-3 hrs	4-6 hrs	7-10 hrs	10 +
---------	---------	----------	------

**5. Please indicate the range of your G.P.A.**

4.0-3.51	3.5-3.01	3.0-2.51	2.50-2.0	Below 2.0
----------	----------	----------	----------	-----------

***Thank You!!!***