

Academic Writing in the Engineering Studies

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Background

- Problem: Engineering students' problems in writing academic texts
- Solution: Disciplinary 'crash courses' in academic writing
- Evaluation: A survey

Objective of the Study

- **Academic writing in the professional studies: How to better prepare students for academic writing**
 - Students' perception of course design and supervision in academic writing
 - Improving course design accordingly
 - Contributions to the general discourse on academic writing at university level

Course Description

- Integrated in Introductory Course for Engineering 5 sp
- Lectures over three weeks (4 lessons of total 44)
- Library staff lectured on sources and referencing style (2 lessons)
- Supervision 2 lessons a week during semester
- The use of the library's writing shed 'skrivestua' for supervision
- Discipline- and task-related instruction

Method

- Survey
 - Some items borrowed from Monash University (Dawson et al, 2018)
- Autumn 2018
- Distributed online

- Maximum response rate 41%
- Minimum response rate 26%

Overview of Reported Data

- **Data findings are grouped into three categories**
 1. Students' perception of lectures
 2. Supervision and feedback
 3. Students' perceived challenges

Students' Perception of Lectures

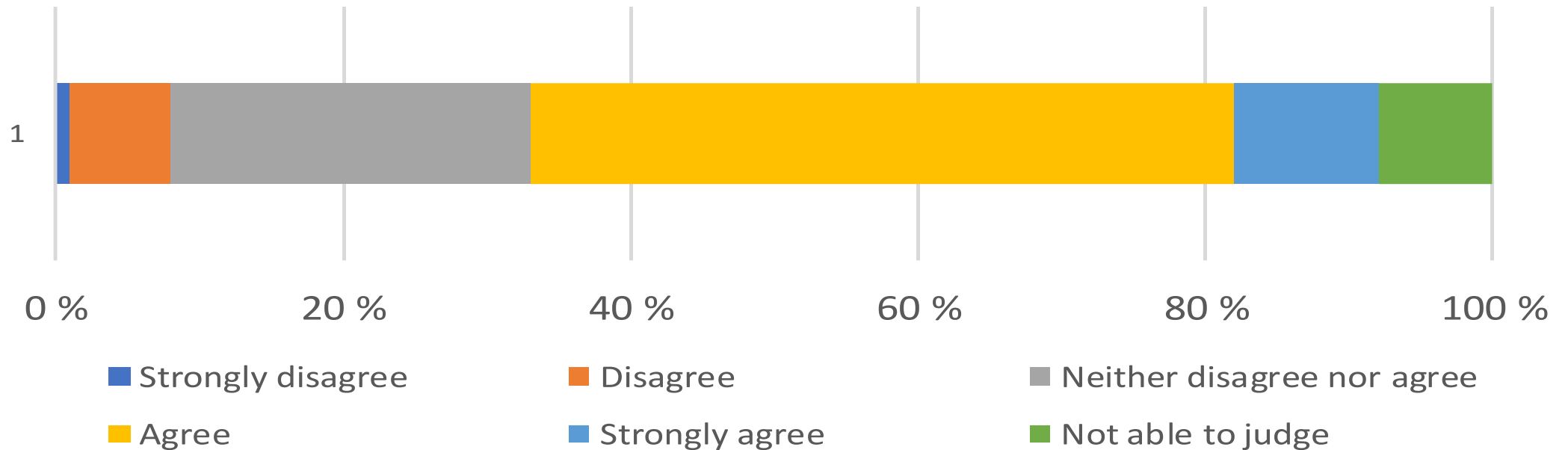
- 78% find lectures in academic writing useful
- 88% are satisfied with lectures in academic writing

Supervision and Feedback: Satisfaction

- 97% are satisfied with supervision and feedback

Supervision and Feedback

The feedback helped achieve learning outcomes for the course

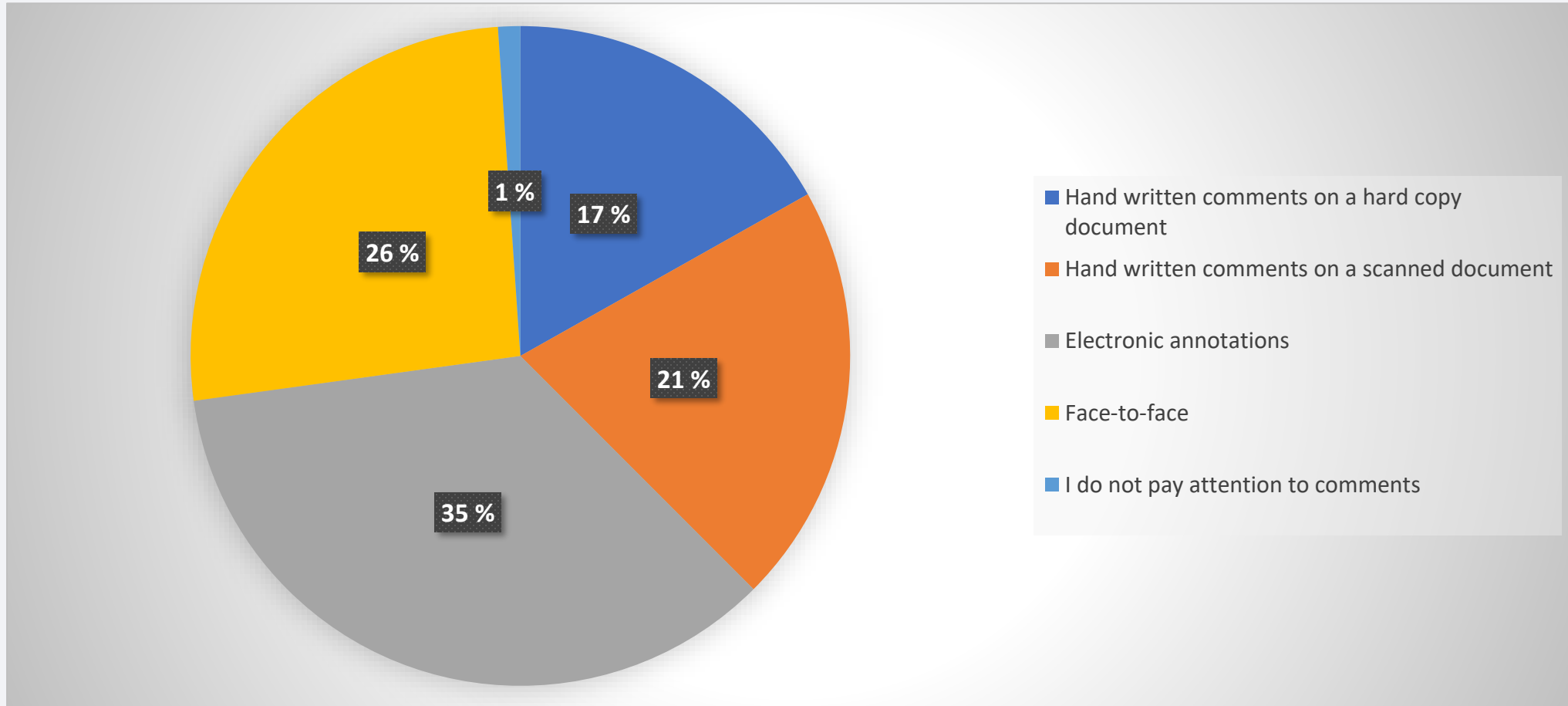


Supervision and Feedback:

Who provided you with comments on your assignment?

n	Before submission	After submission
Lecturer/disciplinary supervisor	58	23
Library supervisor	17	2
Peers	59	12
Friends	26	5

How do students prefer to receive feedback on assignments?



Introduction

Samsung has made major improvements in the last 10 years with their smartphones. When Samsung released its 2011 Note series, they wanted to put a new type of phone on the map, the "Phablet", it was bigger than previous phones and should act as a hybrid between a handheld computer and a mobile phone. With this product they tried to outmanoeuvre the rest of the market, what has been done for that to be accomplished?

There are many different materials used in their mobile-phones, why is that? Maybe it's because they have to take measurements so they don't have an impact on the environment, so that they can preserve it instead. What does a company like Samsung have to do to get the attention of millions of people to buy their products? Let us look further into all of this.

History of Samsung smartphones

Remember
four steps
the intro :

And the background?

This sentence
is breath-taking

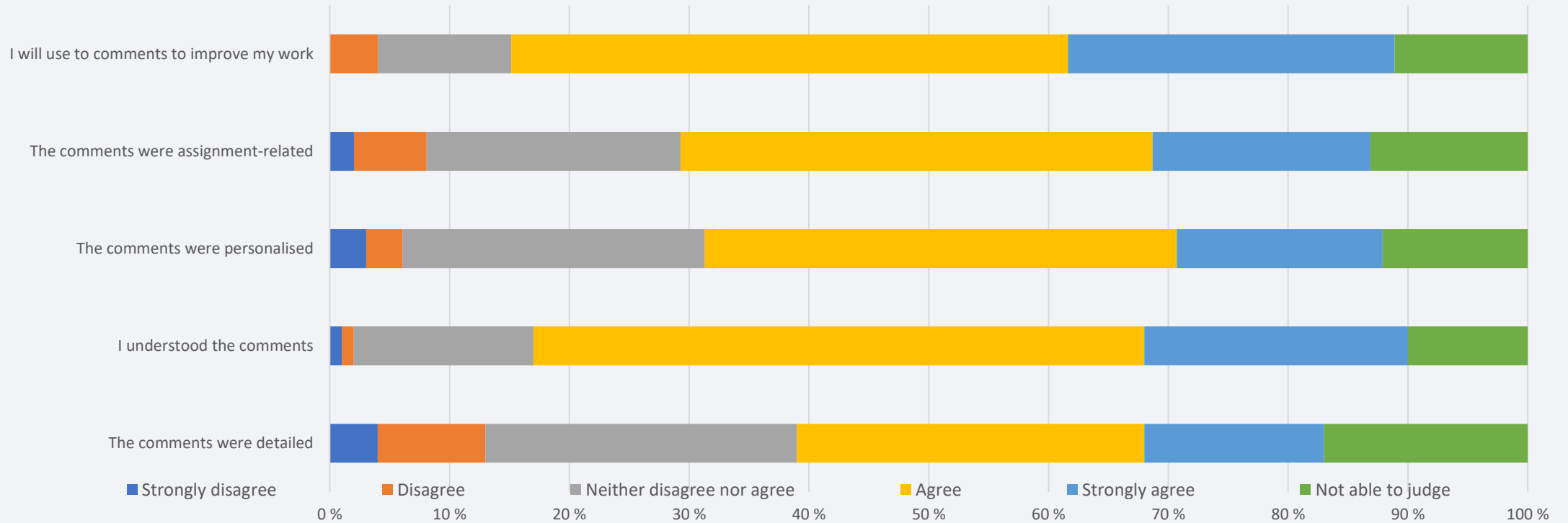
Where is your
RQ?

Scope?

You raise good questions
here but too many...

Comments on supervision and feedback

Feedback from supervisor/assessor



Summary: The Role of Feedback and Supervision

- Supervision and feedback help achieve learning outcomes
- Supervision motivates
- Electronic and face-to-face feedback preferred
- Detailed and personalised supervision preferred

What do students find difficult in academic writing?



What do students find difficult in academic writing?

	Not challenging	Somewhat challenging	Very challenging
Finding relevant sources	25%	58%	17%
Creating a thesis statement	13%	61%	26%
Text structure	42%	45%	13%
Writing in English	59%	32%	9%
Finding «my own voice»	48%	40%	12%
Correctly referencing sources	32%	48%	21%
Cooperating in groups	38%	44%	18%

Summary: Students' Challenges in Academic Writing

- Most challenging:
 - Finding and using sources correctly
 - Creating a research question.
- Least challenging:
 - Writing in English
 - Structuring text

Conclusion

- Students find lectures and feedback useful in order to achieve learning outcomes. Supervision and feedback more useful than lectures
- Students' biggest perceived challenge in academic writing is to create a thesis/research question and to relate to source texts
- Close cooperation between writing instructors and disciplinary instructors is valuable in the current course design. More emphasis on the exploratory text is needed.

Practical Implications

- Instruction and supervision in academic writing are considered useful and they are wanted, however not prioritised at universities in Norway (Folkvord & Thowsen in Matre & Hoel red. 2007)
- The course design needs to contain disciplinary elements while also providing an overall understanding of the essence of academic writing: the exploratory text based on the objective, the research question or statement
- A dynamic approach to instruction

Reading List and Contact Information

- Rienecker, L. & Stray-Jørgensen, P. (2018) *The Good Paper: A Handbook for Writing Papers in Higher Education* (2. ed.). Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur
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- Dawson, P., Henderson, M., Mahoney, P., Phillips, M., Ryan, T., Boud, D. and Molloy, E. (2018): What makes for effective feedback: staff and student perspectives, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2018.1467877.
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- Berge, K. L, Evensen, L.S, Vagle, W, Hertzberg, F. (2005). Ungdommers skrivekompetanse: Norsksensuren som kvalitetsvurdering (bind2, s 387 – 393).

- **Please contact me for questions and comments: gunvor.s.almlie@uia.no**