

*Enhancing  
Teaching &  
Learning  
through*

*ASSESSMENT* | <sup>2</sup>3

*A UGC & PolyU Funded Project*

# Why is Assessment so important?

## Teacher Perspective

The survey has identified nine reasons (see later)

## Student Perspective

Probably the main reason that dictates:

- What they study
- How they study

# Assessment takes two forms\*

## Formative

Results are used for feedback during learning so that students and teachers know how teaching and learning is proceeding and how it can be improved

## Summative

Results are used to grade or mark students at the end of a subject and later for award level / classification

\* Concepts adopted from: Biggs, J B (2003) Teaching for Quality Learning at University, Buckingham: SRHE & Open University Press

# Background of the Project

Stage 1 – Examining current practice through questionnaire, focus group interviews of HoDs, staff & students

Stage 2 – Implementation of 9 sub-projects from APSS, BRE, ENGL, HTM, LGSI, MM, OR, & NS(HKU)

Stage 3 – Evaluation & dissemination through workshops, seminars & a conference

# Questionnaire Survey

- This reports the initial findings of Stage 1 (Examining current practice)
- To be further supplemented by qualitative data from focus group interviews conducted with HoD's, staff, and students

# Questionnaire Survey (Continued)

## Design:

- Part A – Background Information ( 2 Questions)
- Part B – Current Assessment Practices ( 8 Questions)
- Part C – Views of Teaching Staff (10 Questions)
- Part D – Other Comments ( 3 Questions)

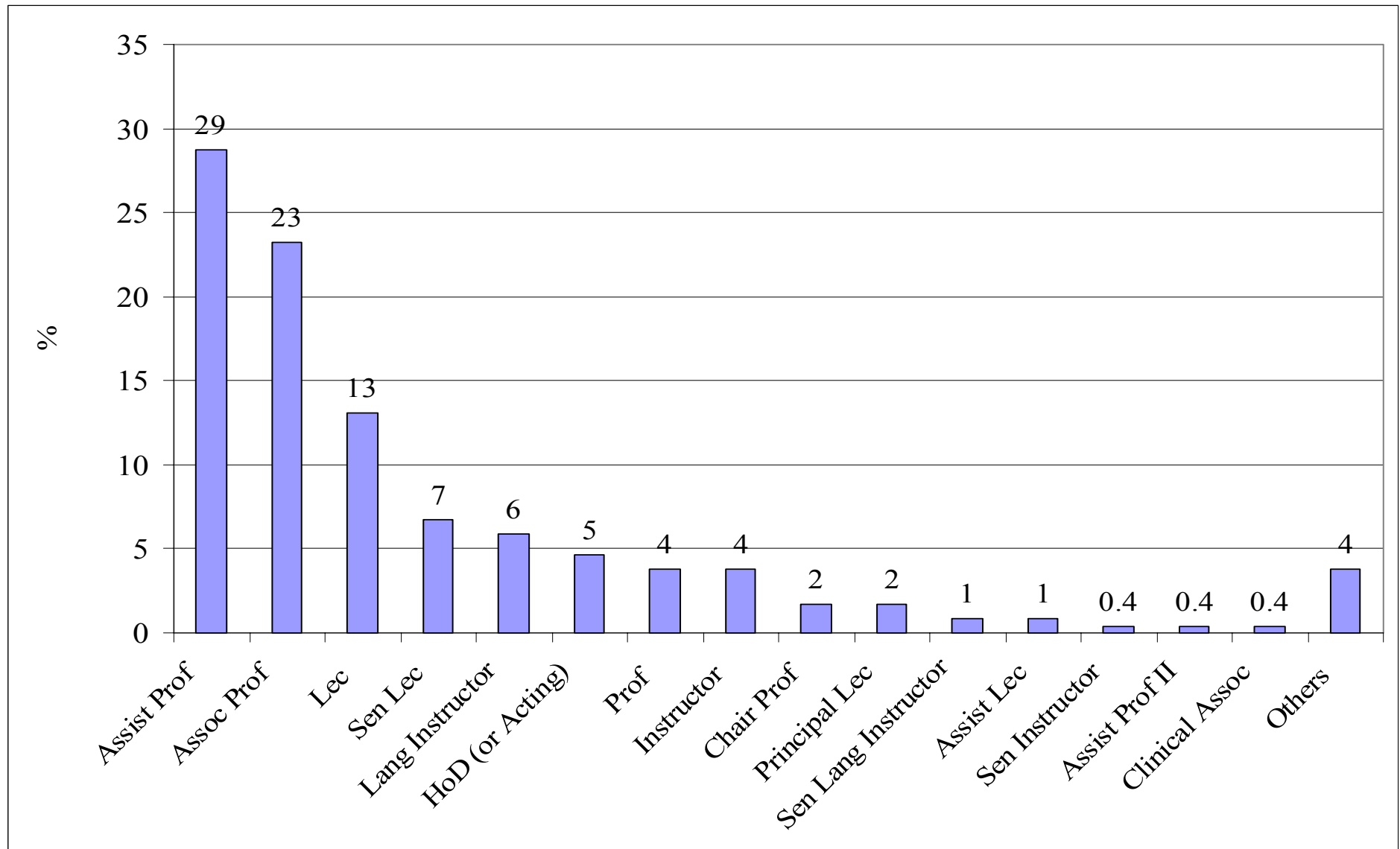
Overall Response Rate: 238 / 1,005 (24%)



# *Part A*

## *Background Information*

## Profile of Respondents (Q1)

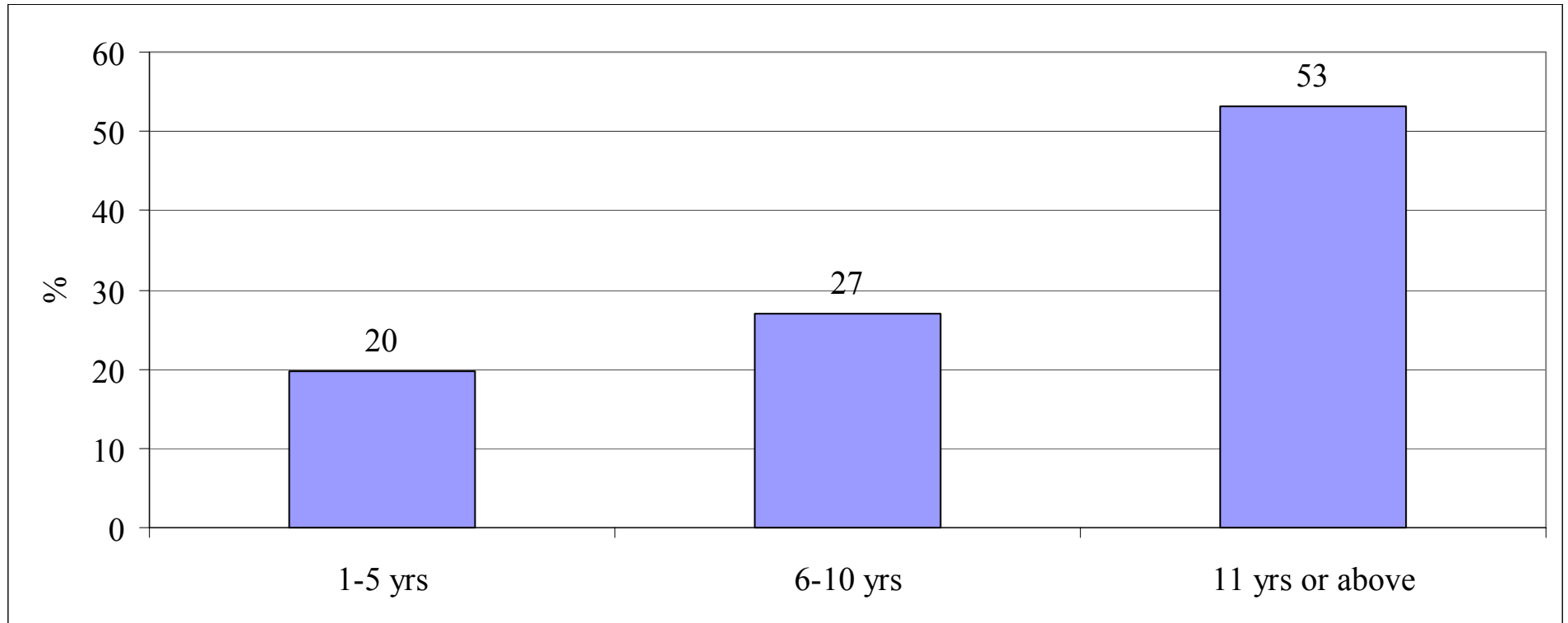


## Profile of Respondents (Q1)

### "Others" column

- Section Head & SAO (equivalent to Assistant Professor)
- Visiting Lecturer [2]
- Engineer
- Technical Officer
- PhD Student
- Research Student [3]

## Years of Teaching in Higher Education (Q2)

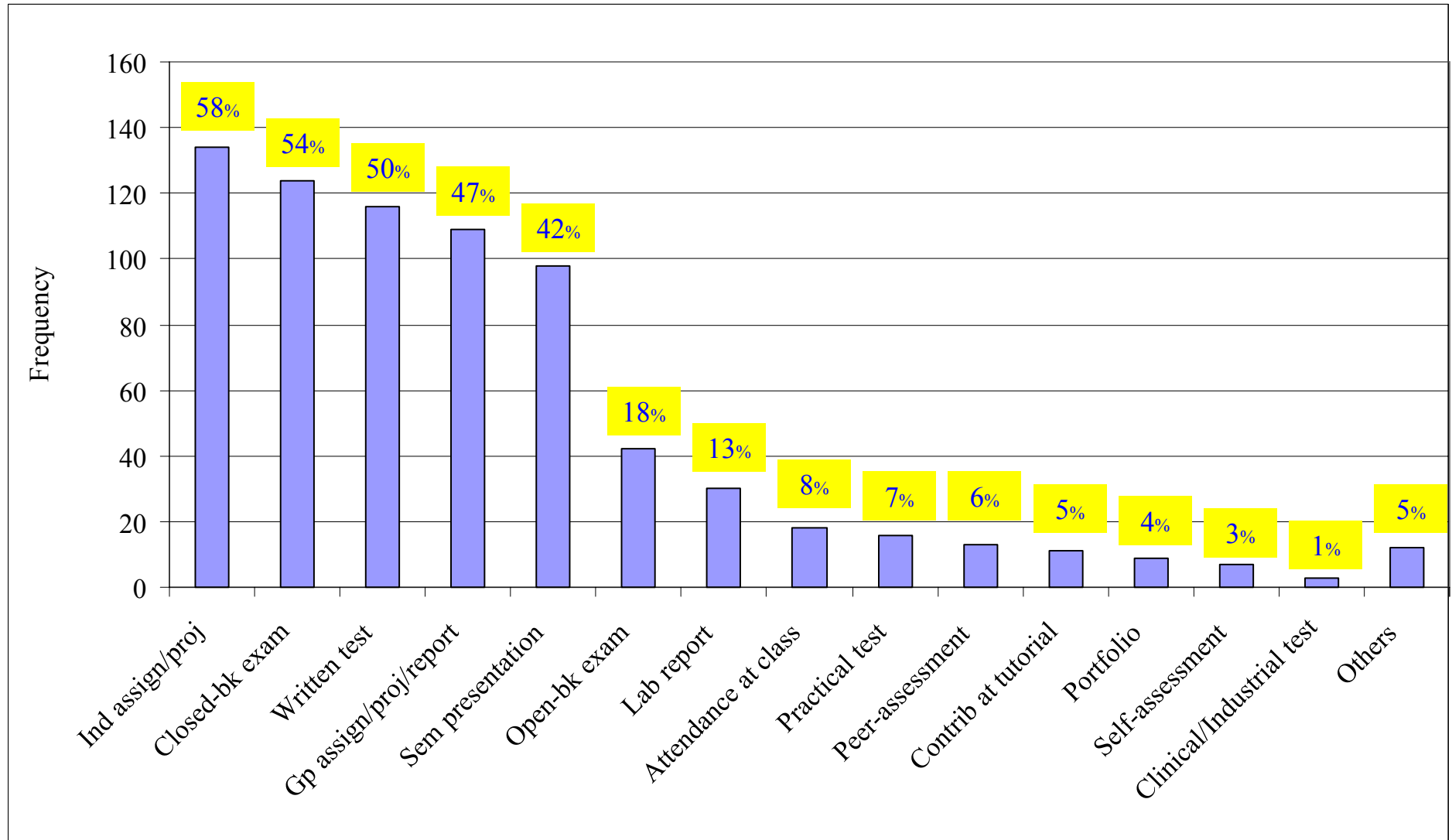




## *Part B*

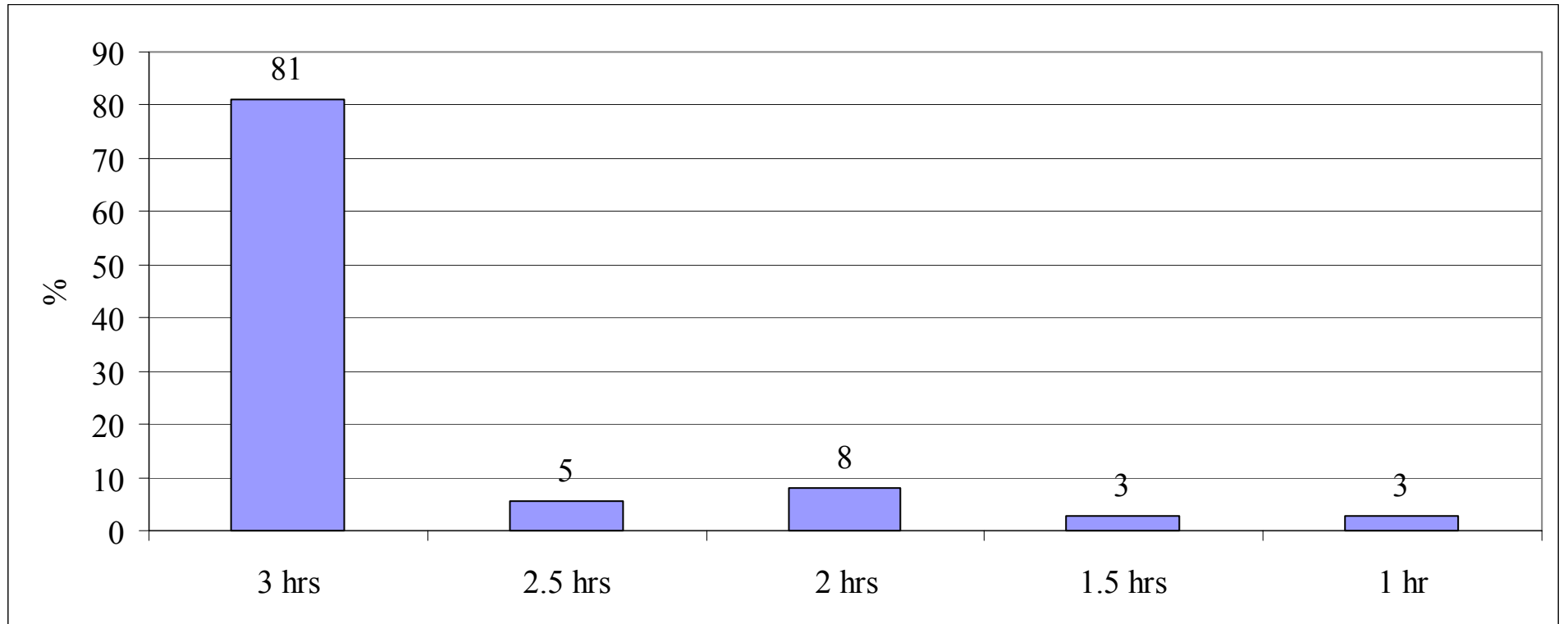
# *Current Assessment Practices*

## Most Commonly used Assessment Methods (Q3)

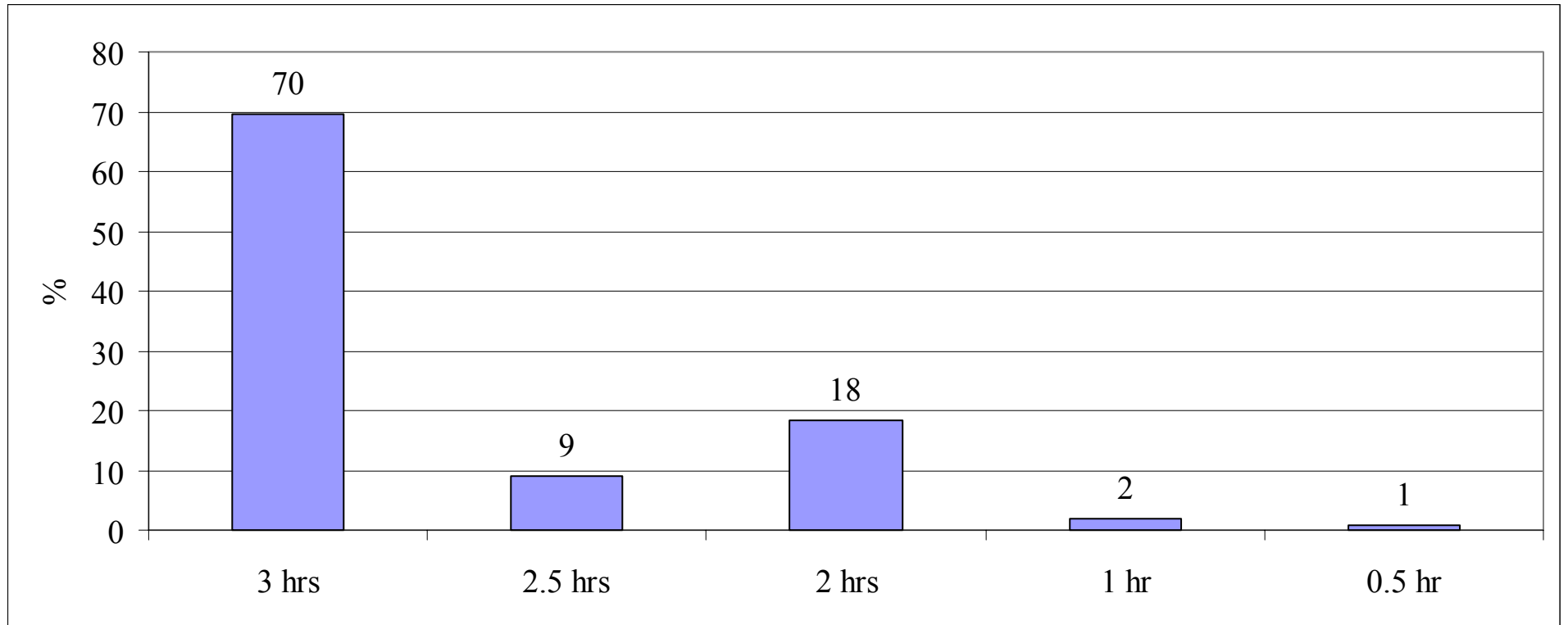


Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

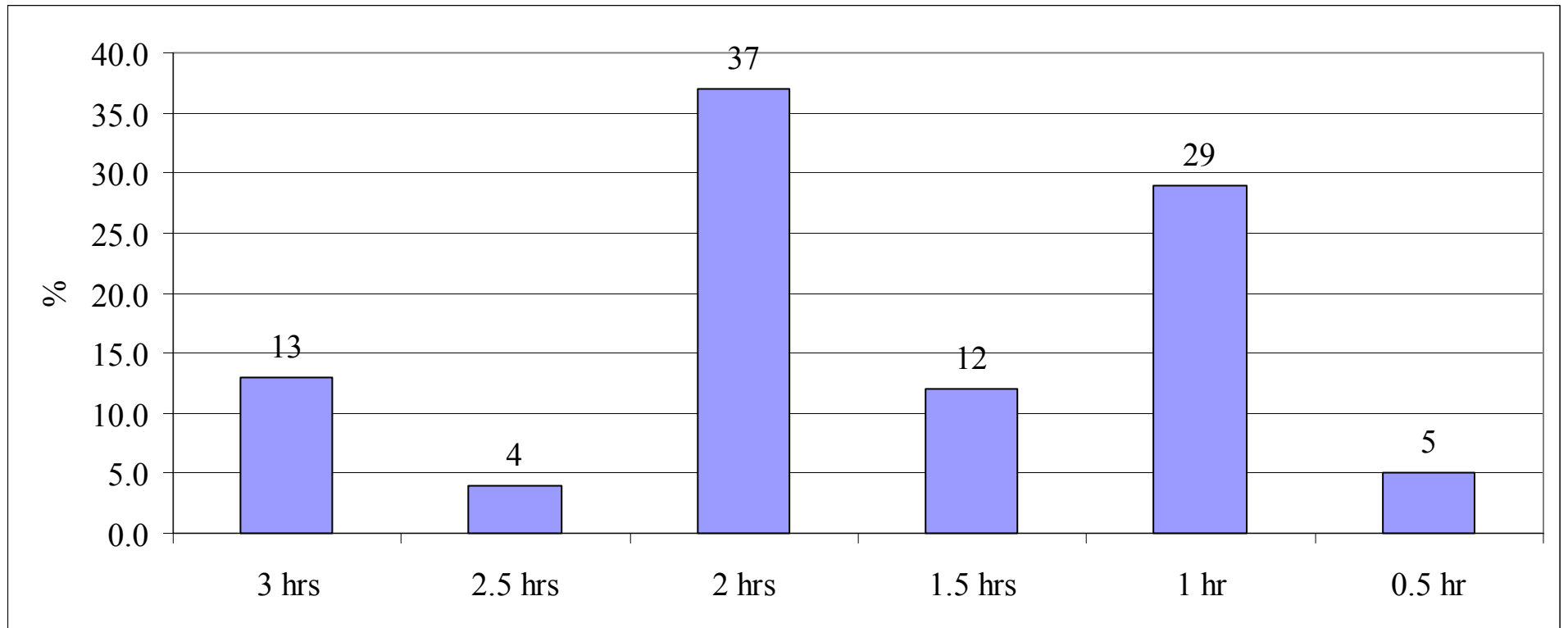
## Duration of Open-book Exams (Q3.1)



### Duration of Closed-book Exams (Q3.2)



### Duration of Written Tests (Q3.3)

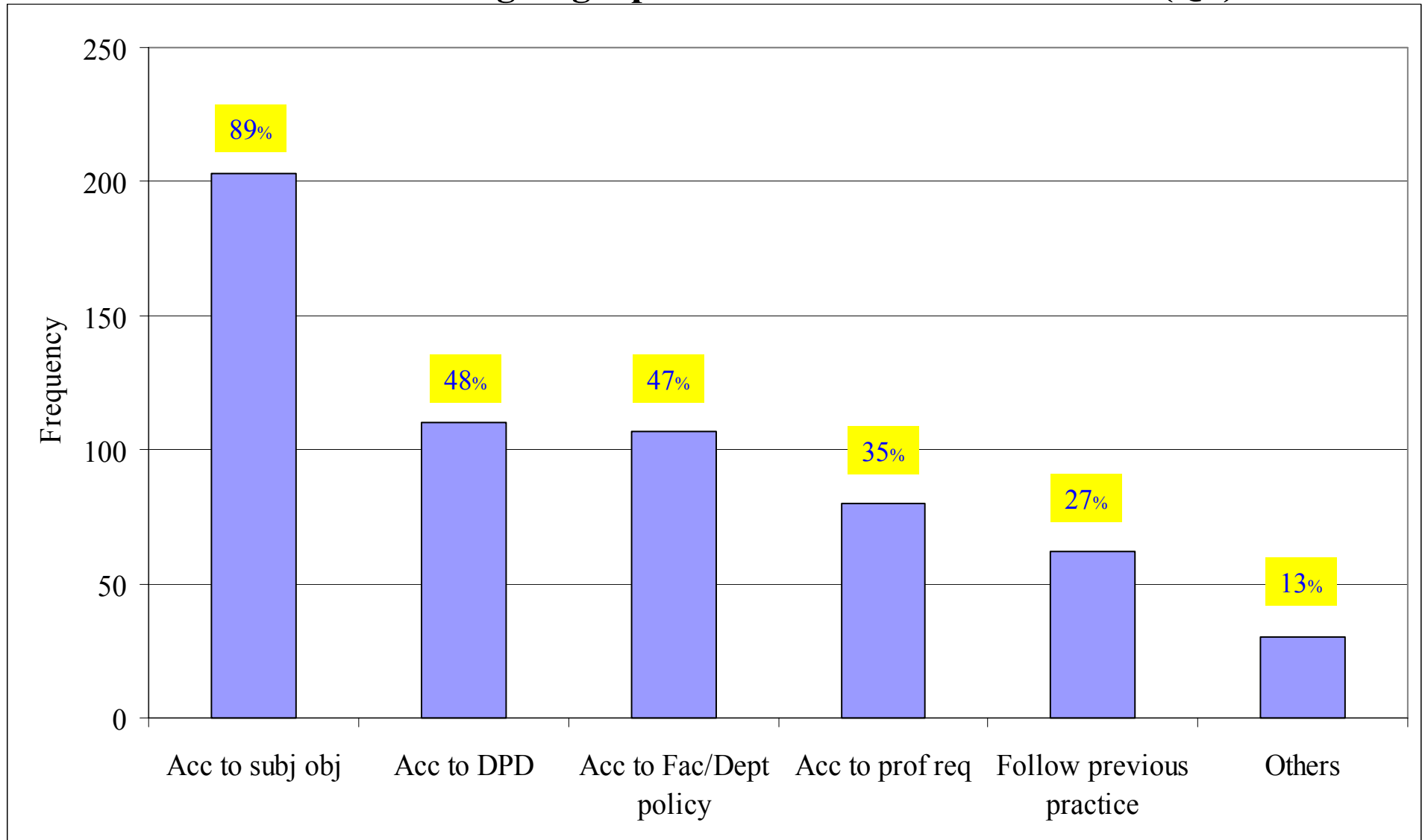


# Most Commonly used Assessment Methods (Q3)

## "Others" Column

- Case studies
- Essays
- Interviews, role plays, letter writing, essays
- On-line discussion and forums
- Oral presentations
- Participation in class
- Peer teaching in laboratories; in-class quizzes on pre-readings; PBL case studies
- Reflective writing
- Short quizzes of 15 mins
- Use of PISER

## Reasons for Designing a particular Assessment Method (Q4)



Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

## Reasons for Designing a particular Assessment Method (Q4) "Others" column

1. Student oriented
2. Class oriented
3. Teachers' judgment and experience [7]

# Reasons for Designing a particular Assessment Method (Q4) "Others" column (Continued)

1. Student Oriented:
  - According to students' ability and performance
  - To try to address different learning styles
  - Improve teaching quality
  - To support student learning development
  - Encourage responsibility and team work; some info seeking
  - Enhance critical thinking and co-operative learning
  - The need to promote problem based learning
  - To optimize the students' learning results

# Reasons for Designing a particular Assessment Method (Q4) "Others" column (Continued)

1. Student Oriented:
  - Monitor the progress and hence give appropriate assistance to students
  - To make sure that students understand the subject
  - To identify understanding
  - To avoid plagiarism and copying
  - Ensure no free-riding in group assignments
  - According to students' workload

## Reasons for Designing a particular Assessment Method (Q4) "Others" column (Continued)

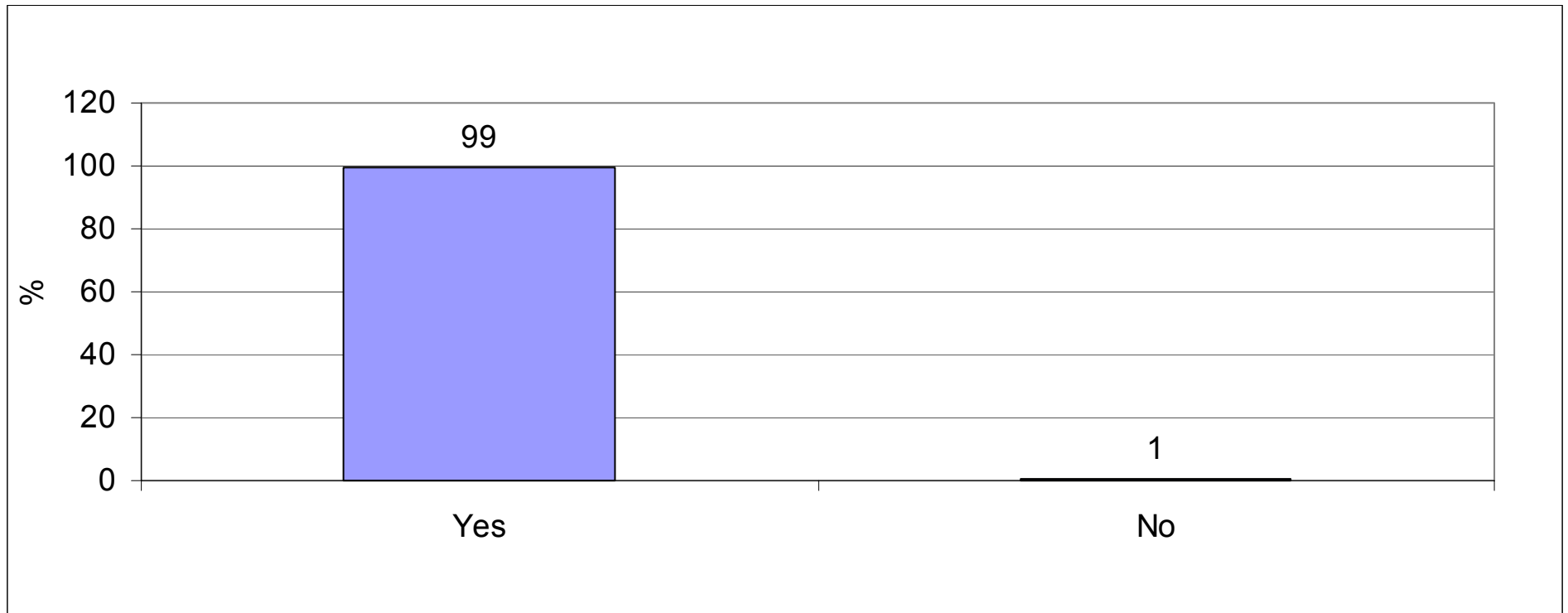
### 2. Class oriented:

- In achieving the best students' benefit (learning objectives)
- Learning outcome
- To overcome theory/practice gap,
- To meet aims of program, to try something new that fits the aims
- Emphasize continuous study
- According to the program level

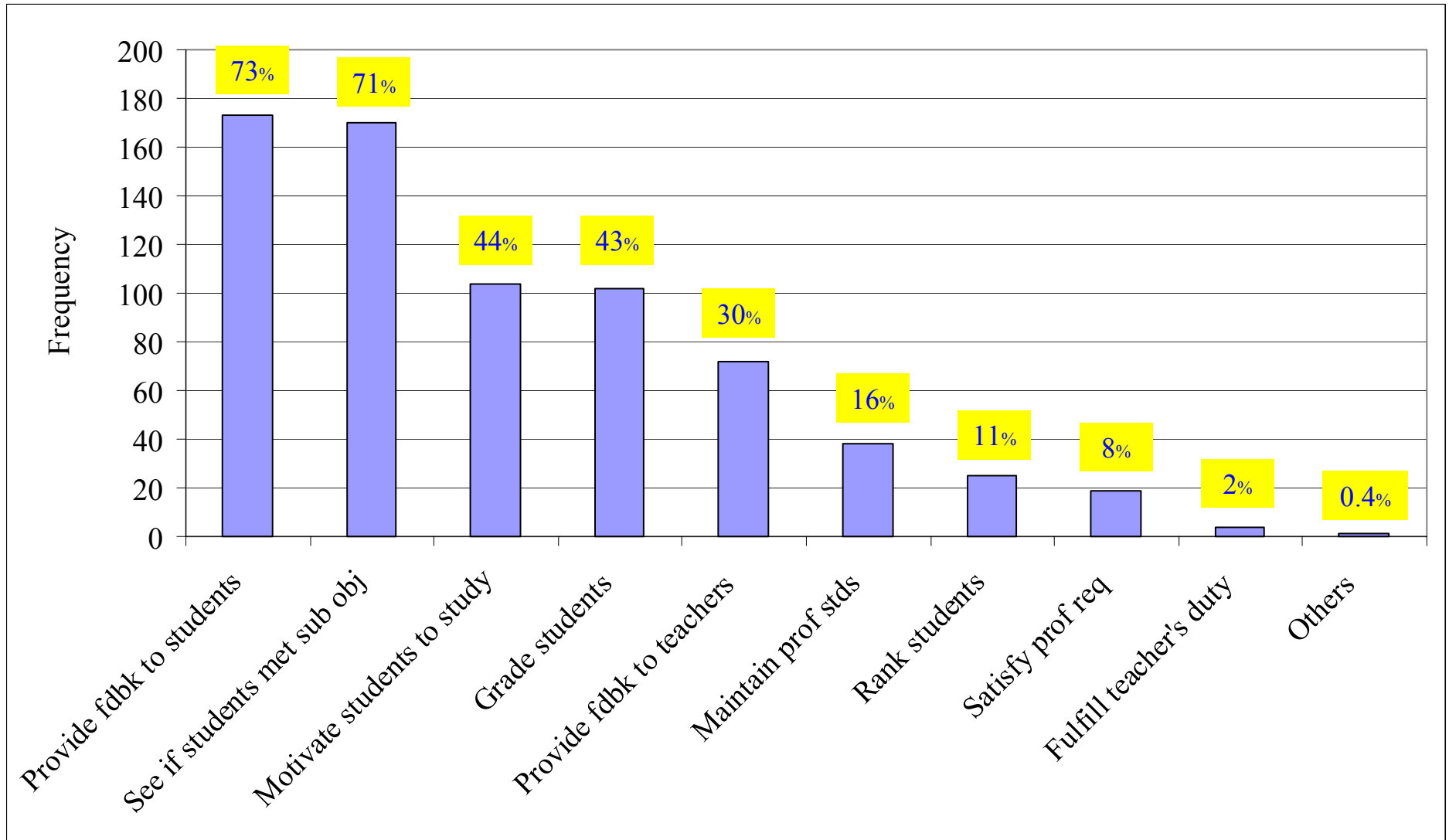
## Reasons for Designing a particular Assessment Method (Q4) "Others" column (Continued)

2. Class oriented:
- Class size
  - On-line teaching (interactive)
  - The best method for my subject
  - The subject I teach does not lend itself to tests
  - Professional requirements
  - To give relevance to the subject matter

## Communicating Assessment Methods to Students at Commencement of Semester (Q5)

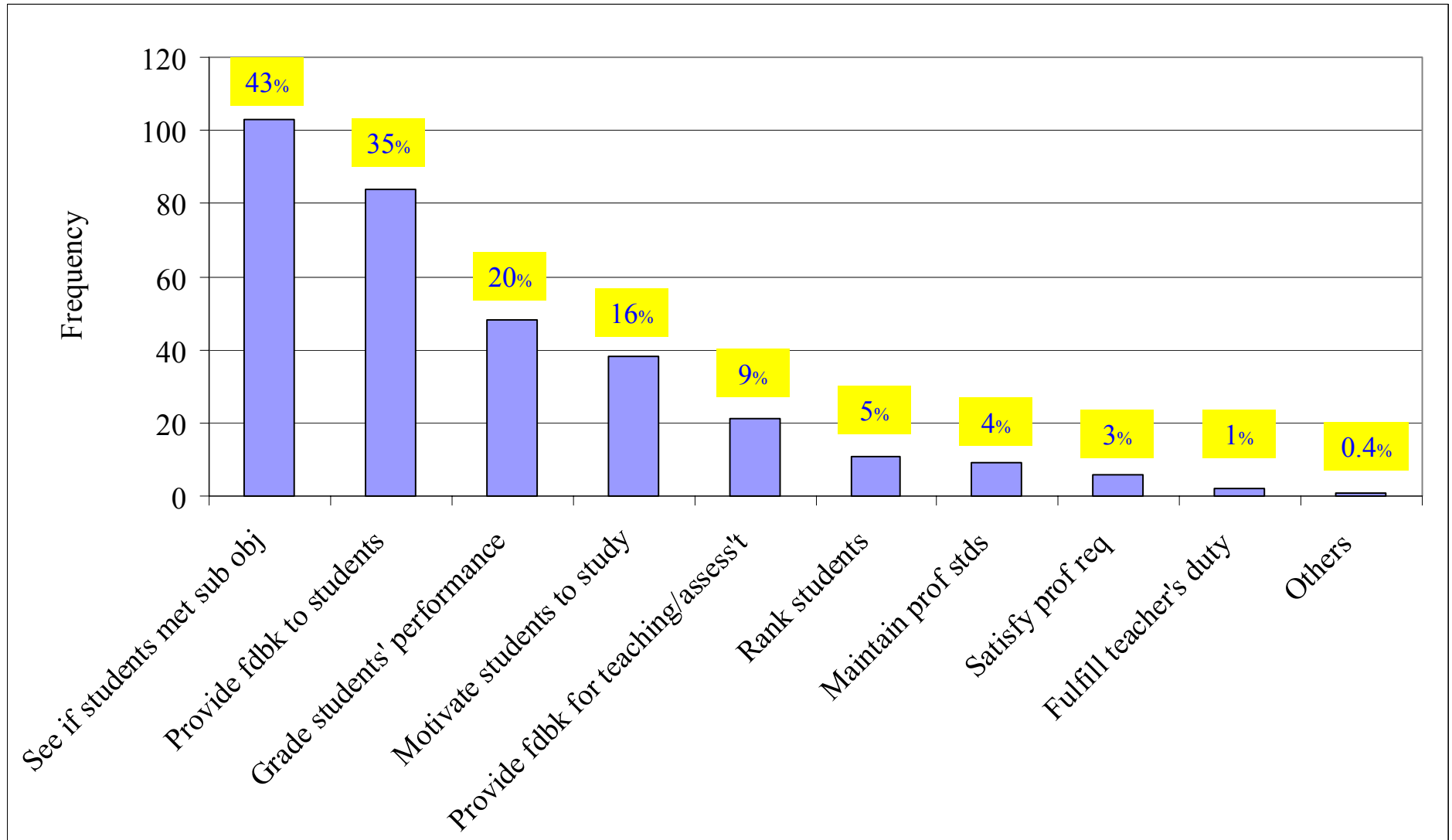


## Reasons for Assessing Students (Q6)



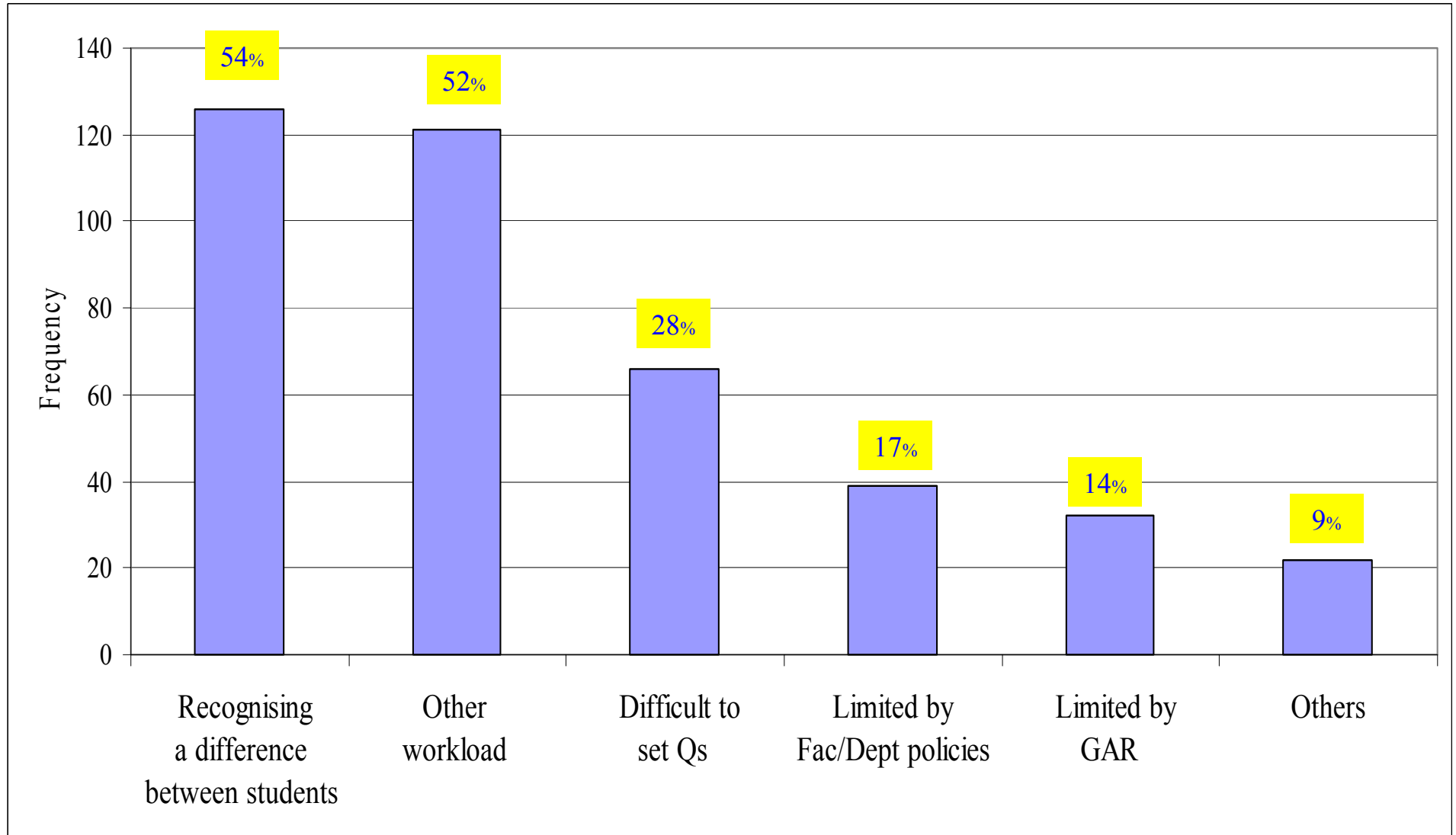
Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

## Reasons for Assessing Students - 1st Priority (Q6.1)



Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

## Problems in Designing Assessment (Q7)



Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

## Problems in Designing Assessment (Q7)

### "Others" column

1. Workload
2. Organizational inertia
3. Plagiarism
4. Communication
5. Miscellaneous
6. No problems [4]

# Problems in Designing Assessment (Q7)

## "Others" column (Continued)

### 1. Workload:

- Assessment of large groups, e.g. over 60 students
- Teaching load

### 2. Organizational inertia:

- Culture of PolyU
- Disagreement in the use of novel methods which are unfamiliar to other staff

# Problems in Designing Assessment (Q7)

## "Others" column (Continued)

### 3. Plagiarism:

- Students' tendency to copy if assignments are done out of class
- Difficulties in ensuring that students display their own work and to avoid plagiarism

### 4. Communication:

- Communication skills of students
- Language deficiency

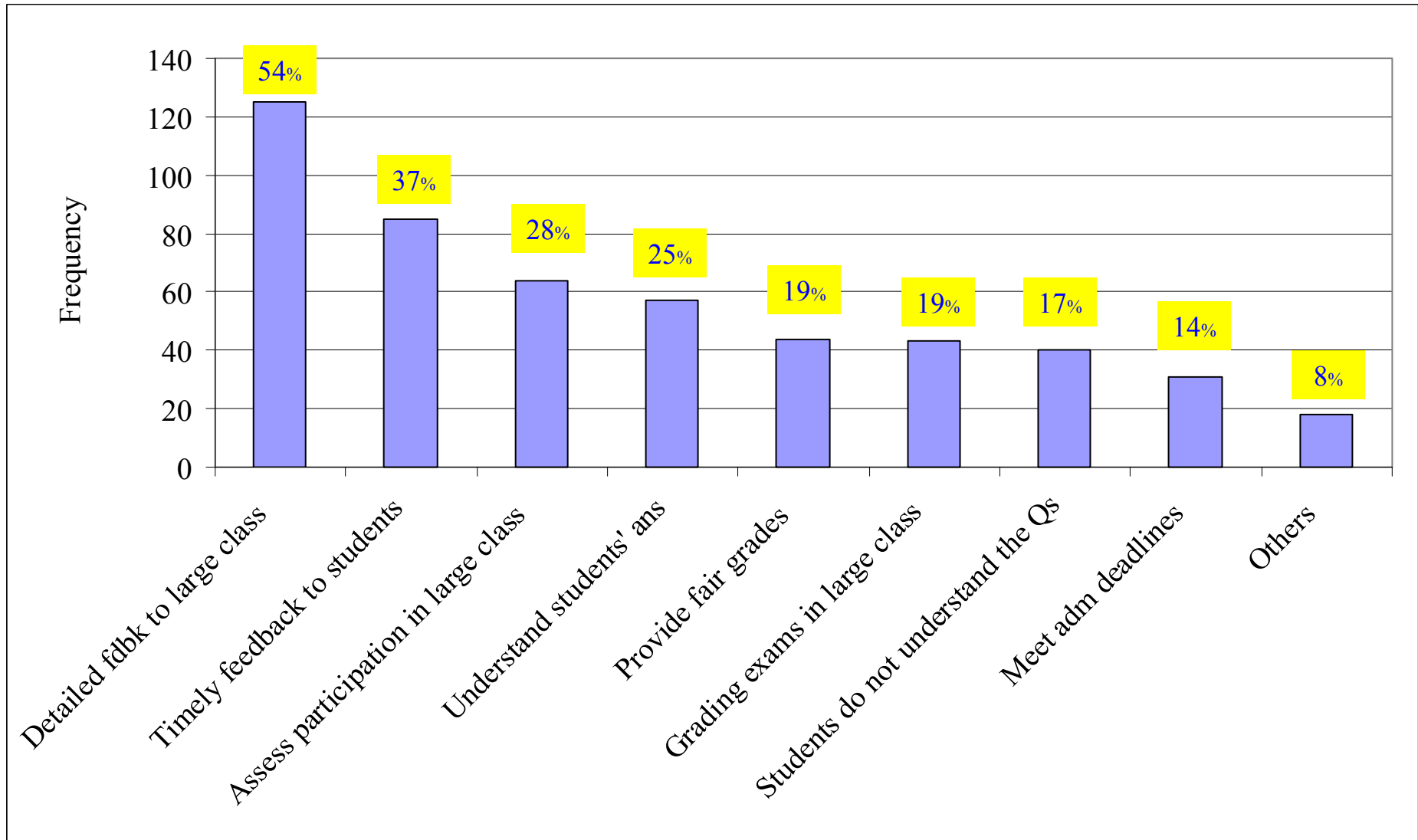
## Problems in Designing Assessment (Q7)

### "Others" column (Continued)

#### 5. Miscellaneous:

- Difficulties in assessing understanding and learning
- Making assessment meaningful & useful
- Marrying pedagogic & practical considerations with good assessment practice
- Part-time students' work commitment
- Students hate assessment and let the teachers know it
- Trying to blend students' interest with need to cover subject material

## Problems in Implementing Assessment (Q9)



Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

## Problems in Implementing Assessment (Q9)

### "Others" column

1. Poor system
2. Students' problems
3. Motivating students
4. Group projects
5. To obtain a fair assessment of students
6. No problems [4]

# Problems in Implementing Assessment (Q9)

## "Others" column (Continued)

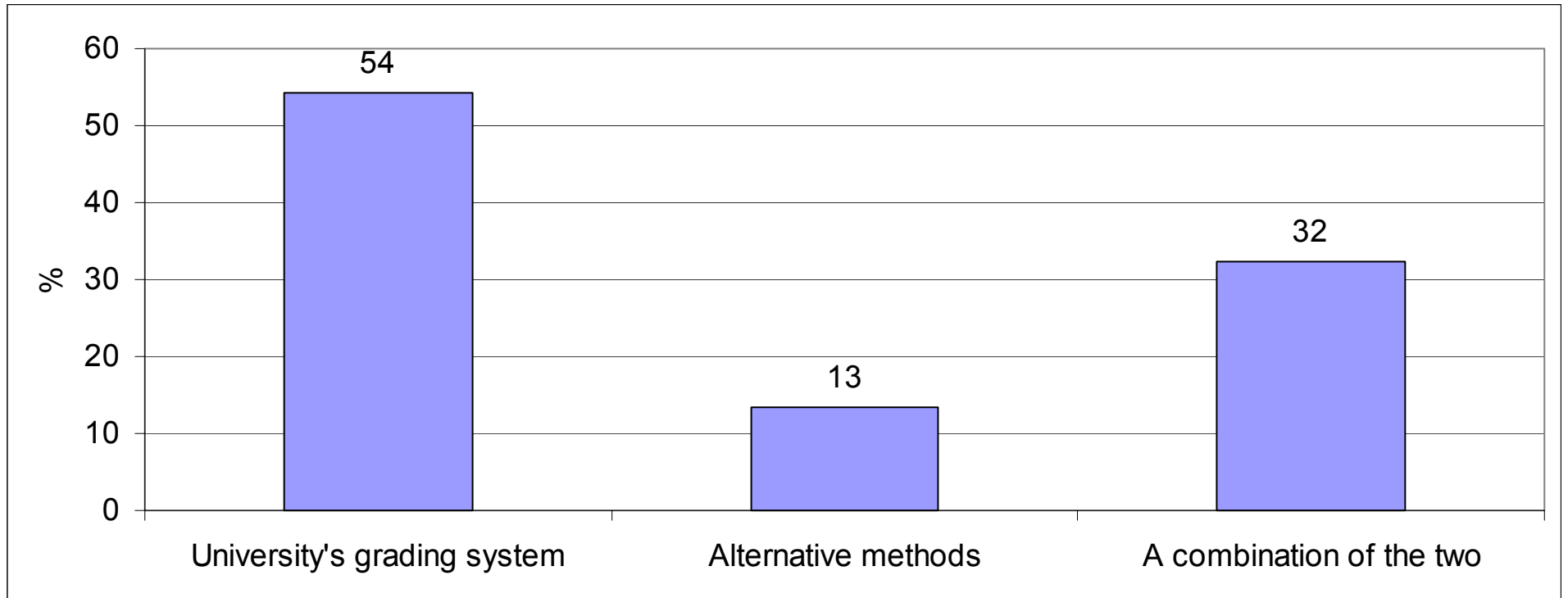
1. Poor system:
  - University's grading system
  - Rigid timetabling, no flexibility in the system
  
2. Students' problems:
  - Some students don't study enough
  - Poor student performance
  - Students fail to recognize alternative assessment methods; methods of assessment directed at understanding of topic versus rote learning

## Problems in Implementing Assessment (Q9)

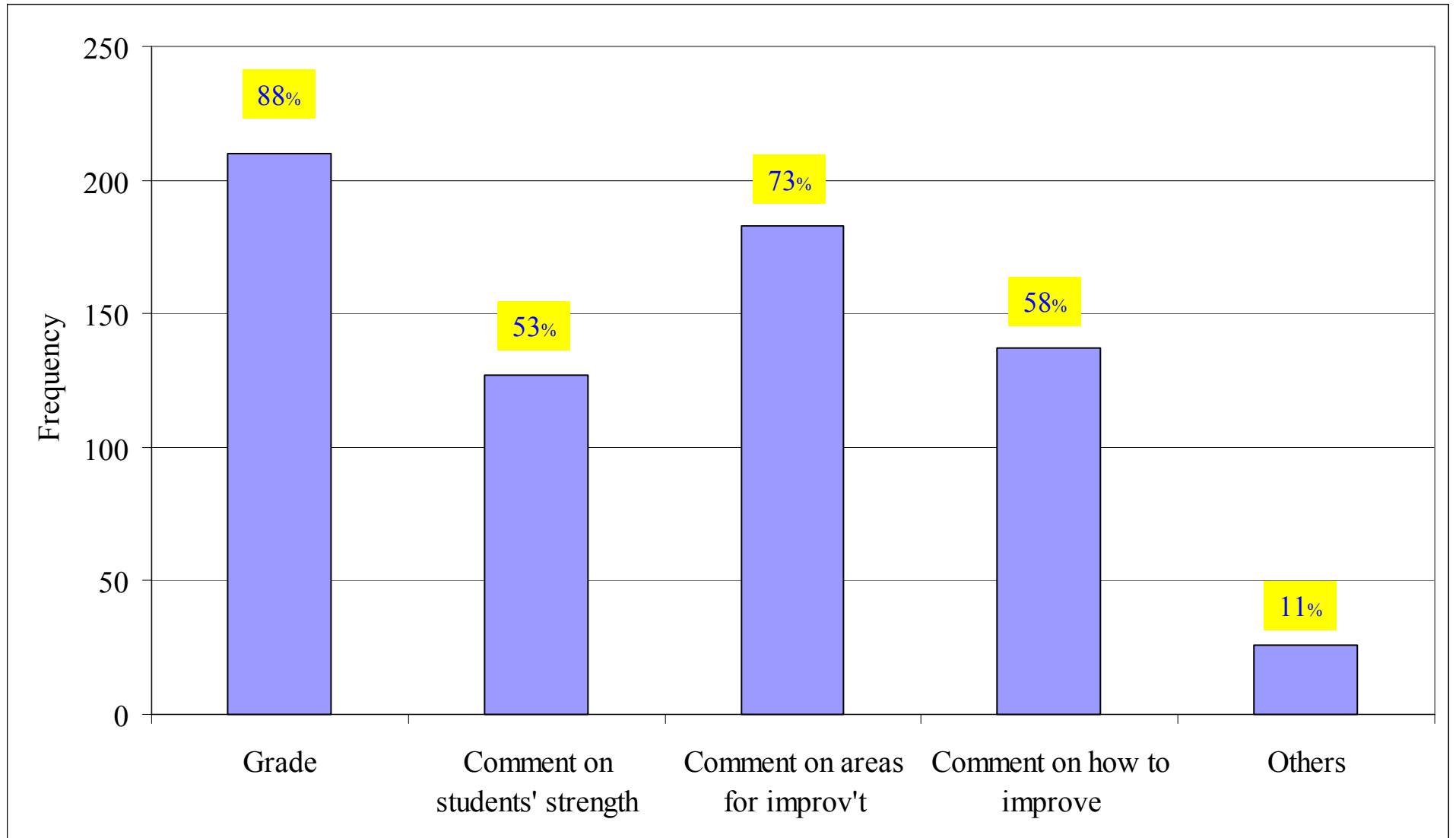
### "Others" column (Continued)

3. Motivating students:
  - Difficult to motivate students to ask the right questions
  - Difficulty in motivating students through assessment
  
4. Group projects:
  - Difficulty in grading group work, and giving fair grade / comments to take-home assignments
  - Difficulty in identifying individual contribution in group work
  - Difficulty in separating those who actually did the work from those who did not
  - Unable to know whether it is the student's original work. May copy from schoolmates

## Grading System used for Assessment (Q8)



## Content of Feedback to Students (Q10)



Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

## Content of Feedback to Students (Q10)

### "Others" column

1. Details of comments
2. Discuss with students in person [3]

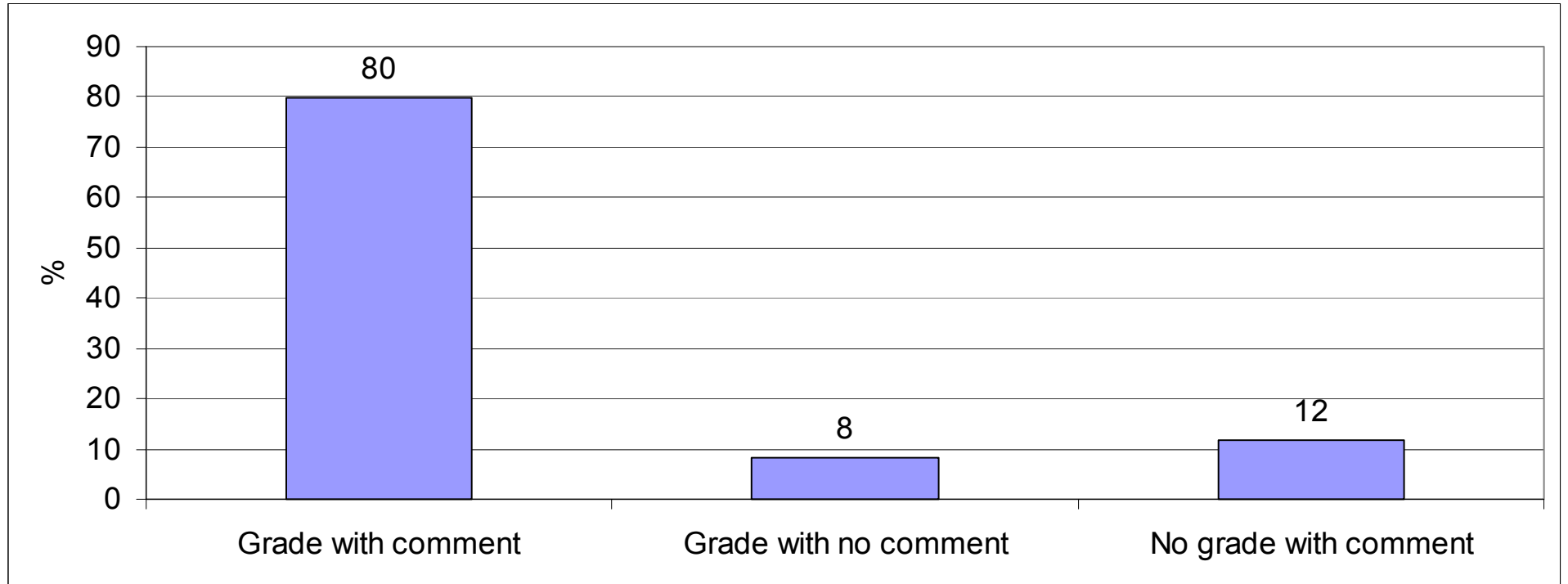
# Content of Feedback to Students (Q10)

## "Others" column (Continued)

1. Details of comments:
  - Mistakes [7]
  - Encouragement words [2]
  - Model answers [3]
  - Marks and grades [2]
  - Source of further information
  - Review and follow up with students

Frequency of comments appear more than once are shown in [ ]

### Content of Feedback (Q10.1)

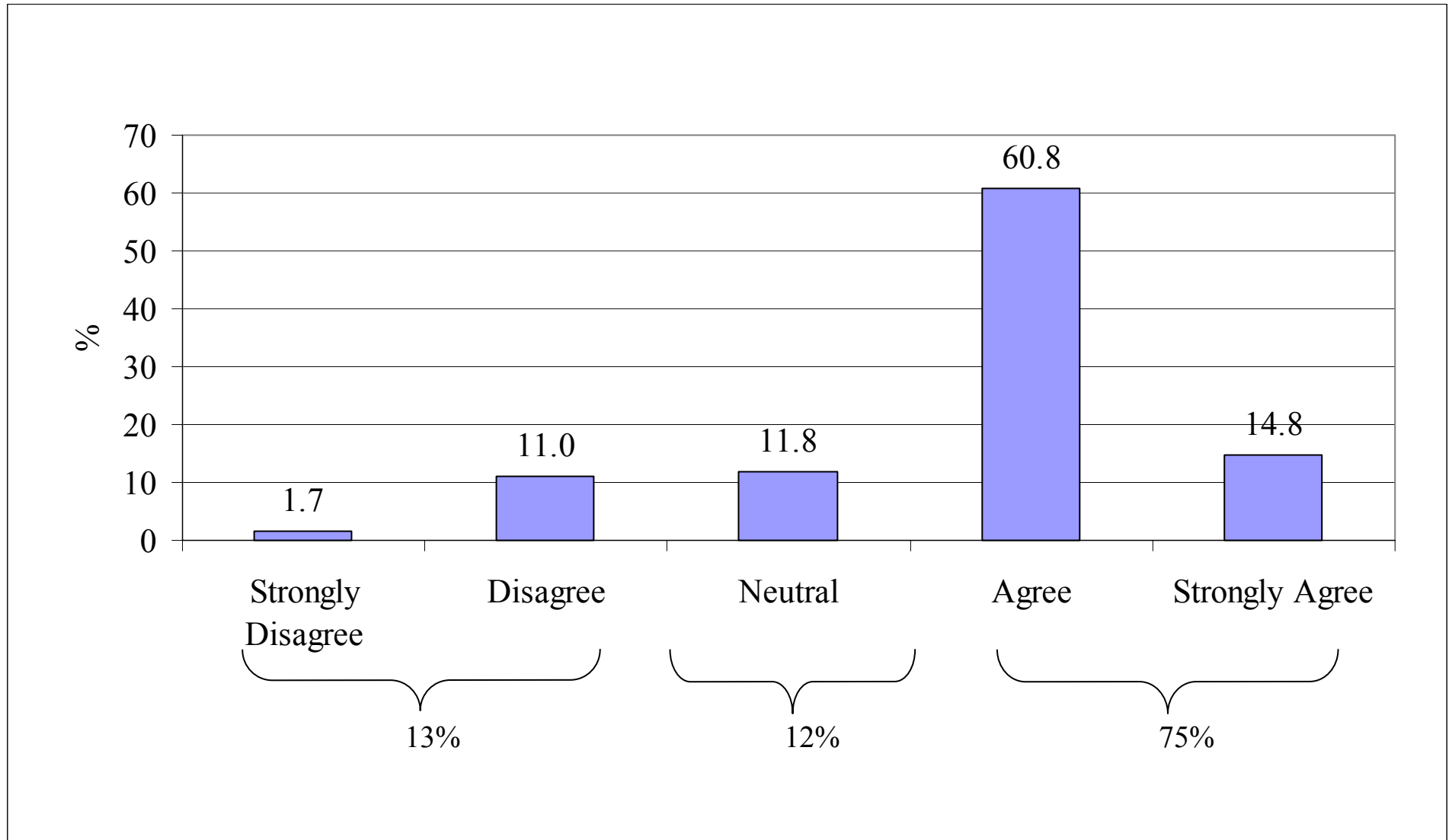




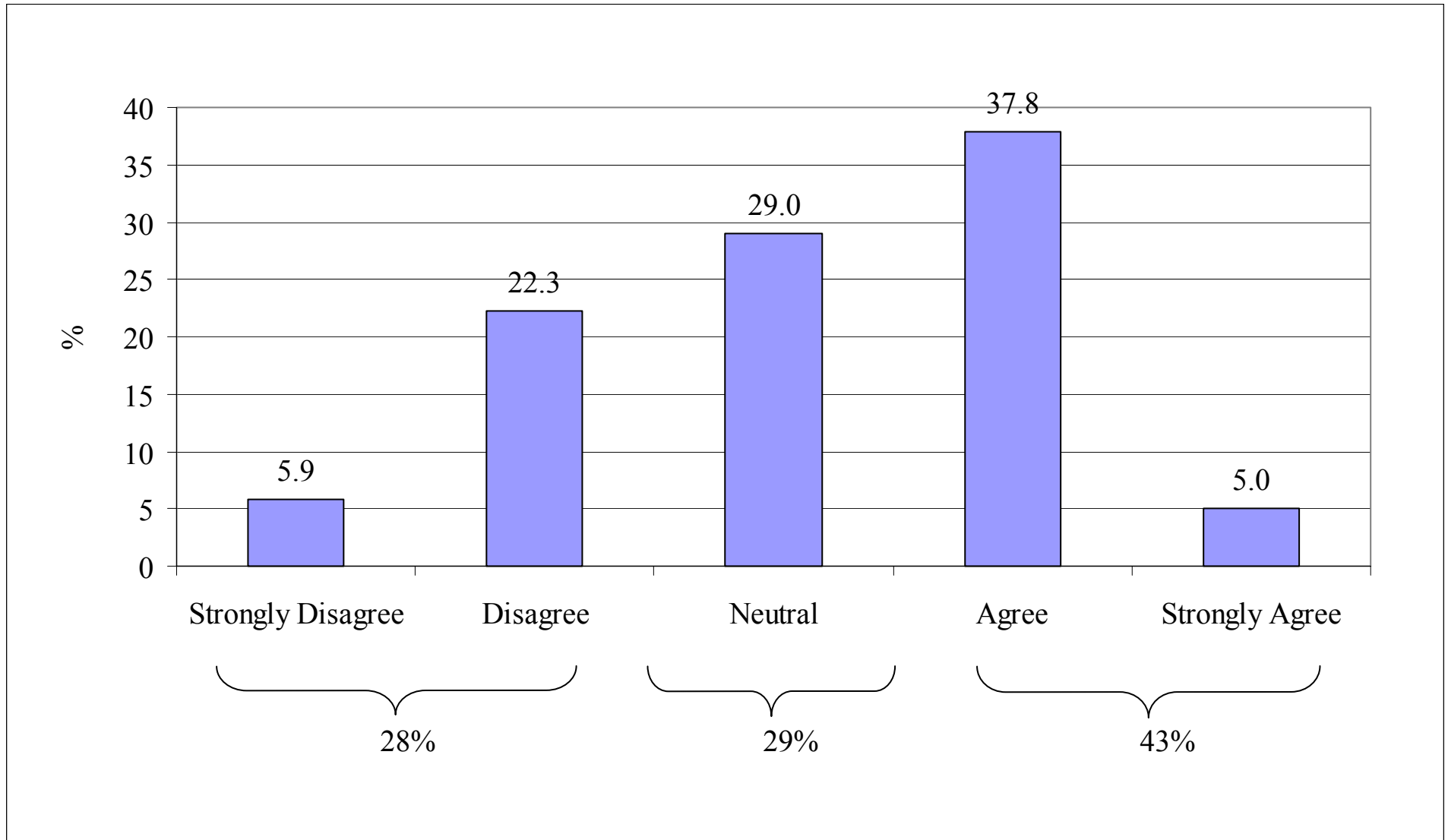
# *Part C*

## *Views of Teaching Staff*

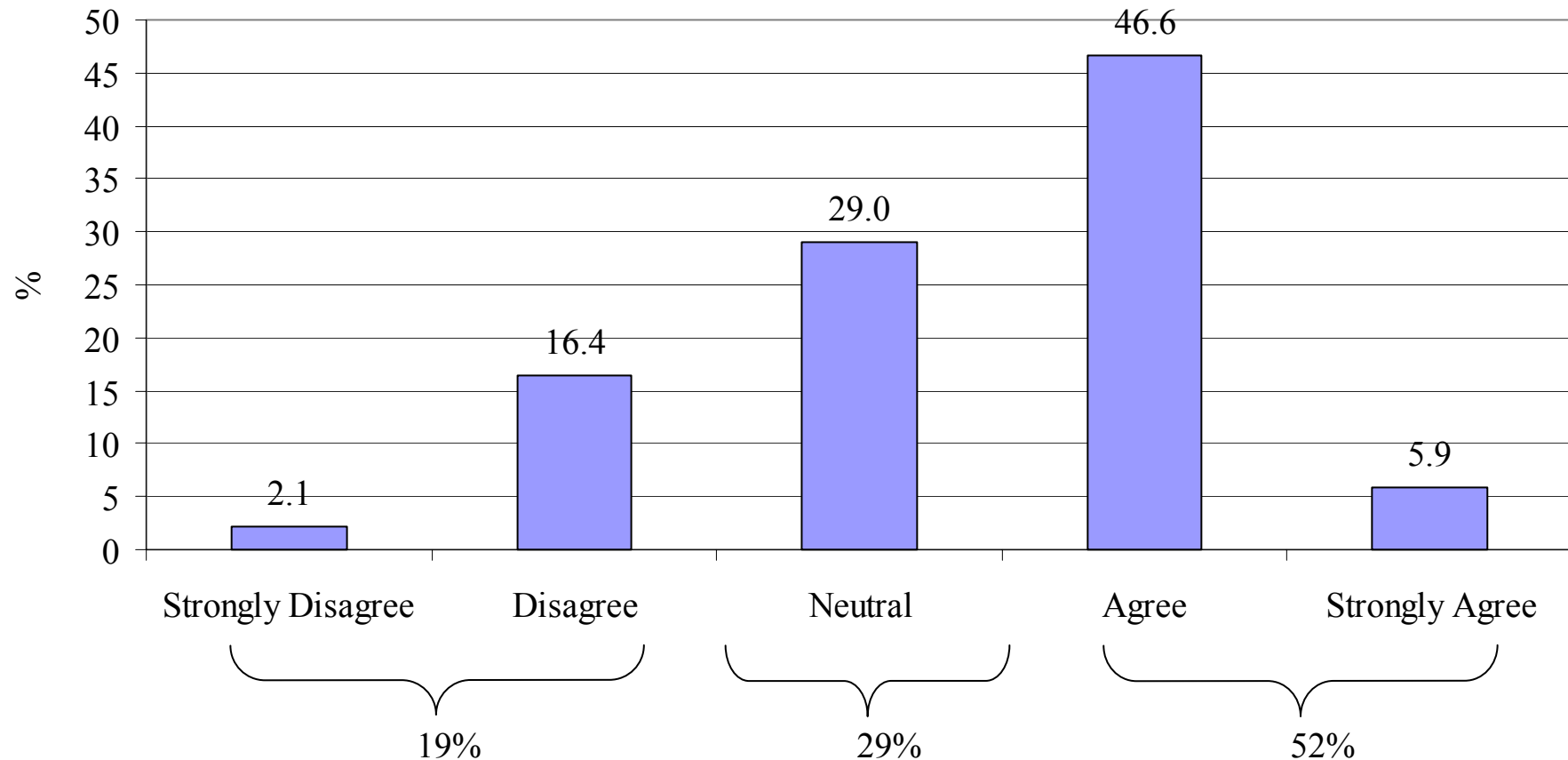
## You are Satisfied with the Method(s) You Use for Assessment (Q11)



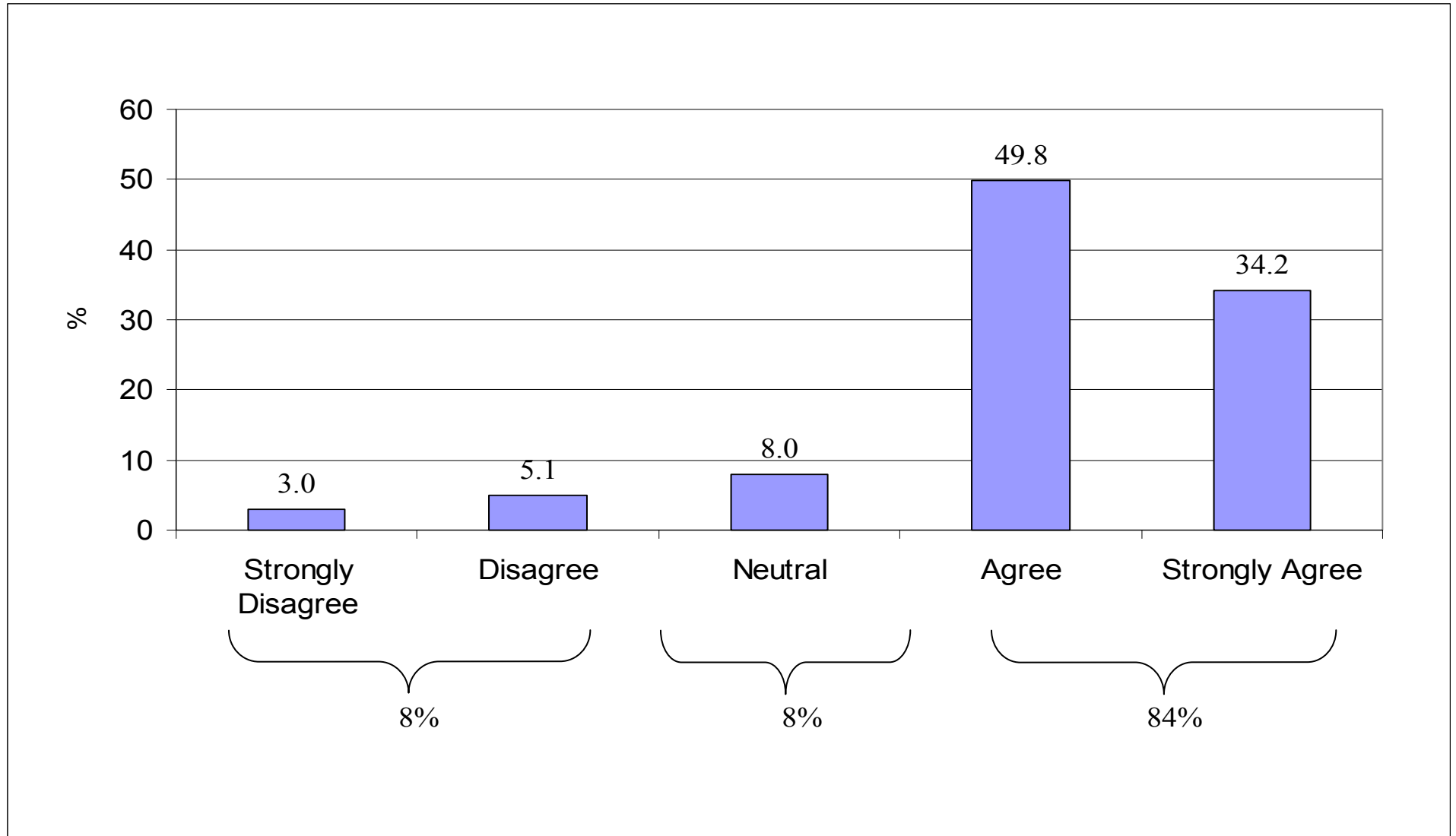
## You are Satisfied with the University's Current Grading System and its Guidelines (Q12)



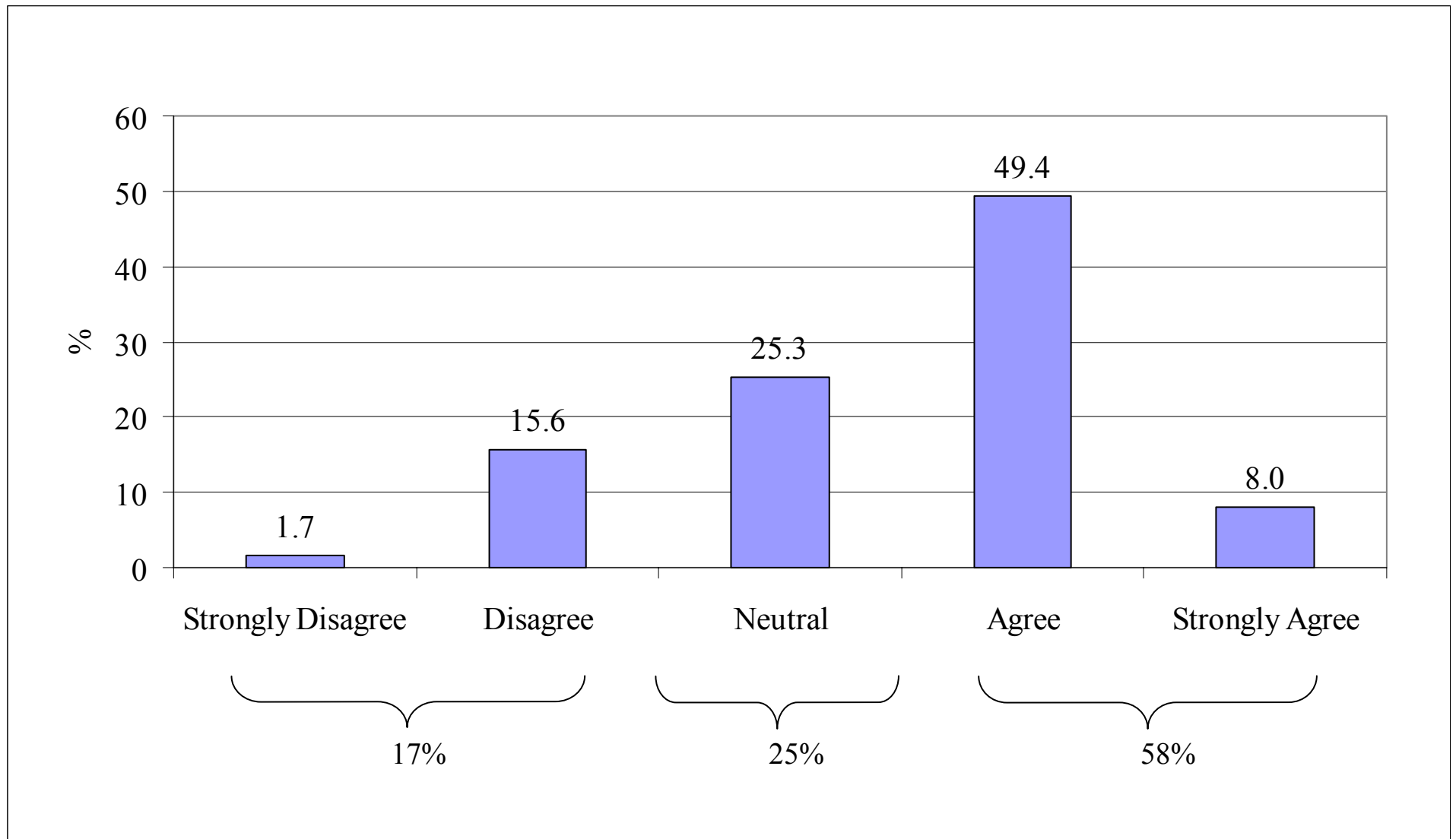
## You are Satisfied with the Current Mechanisms for Students to Express their Opinions on Current Assessment Practices (Q13)



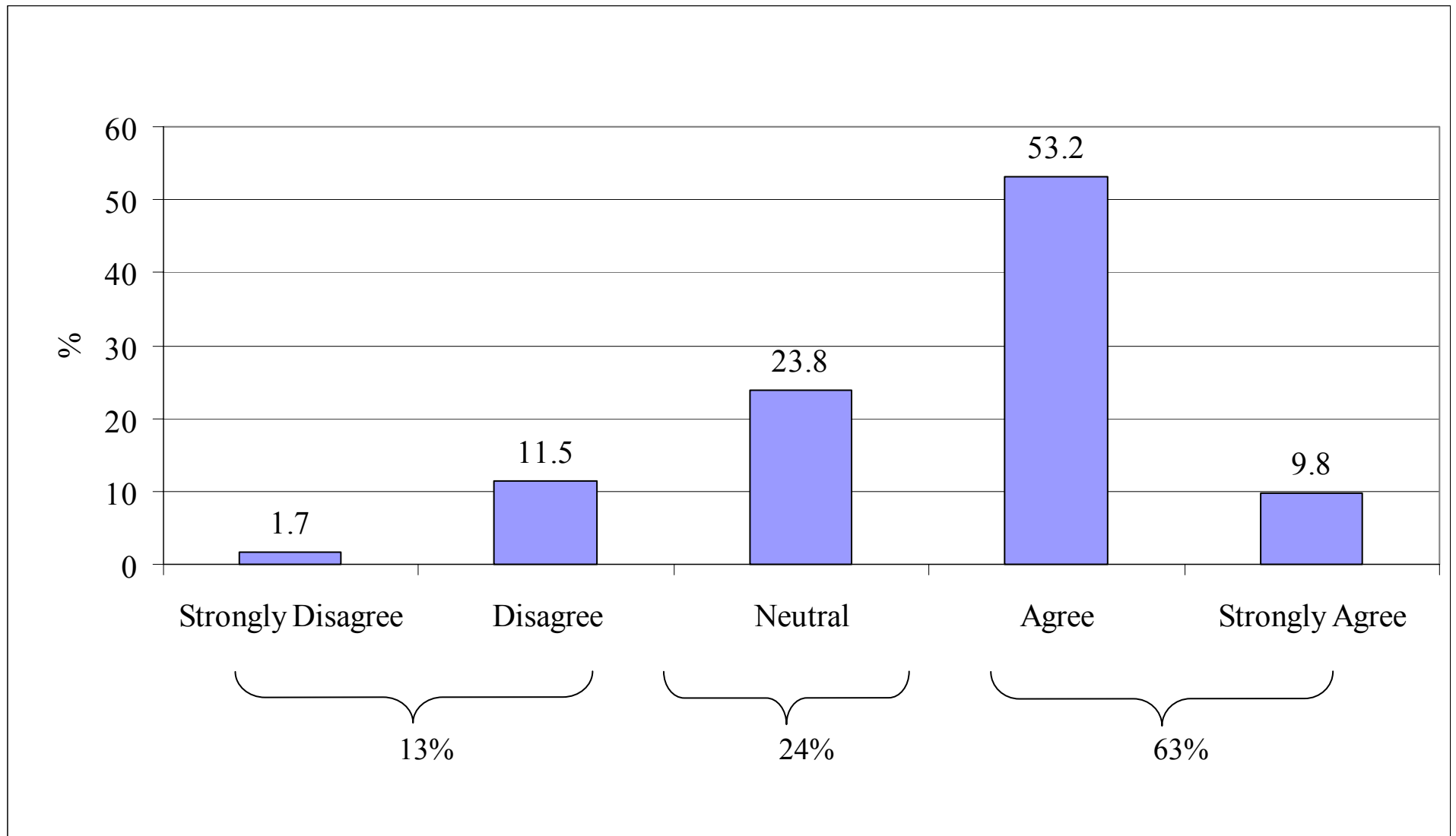
## The Subject Objectives are Considered when Developing the Assessment Tasks (Q14)



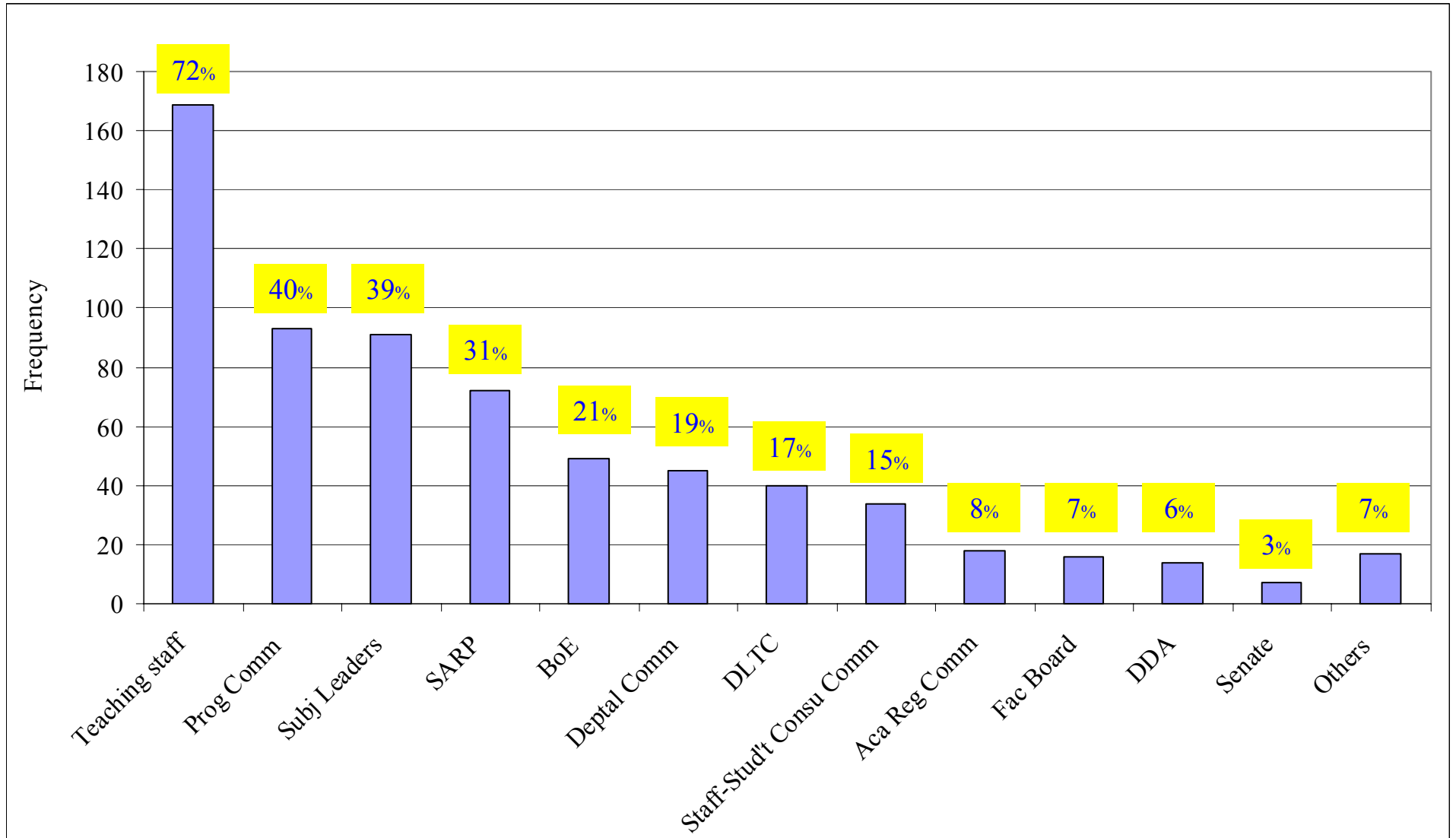
## Current Assessment Methods Motivate Students to Study (Q15)



## Assessment Results are Used to Improve Teaching and Learning (Q16)



## Effects of Academic Bodies on Assessment (Q17)



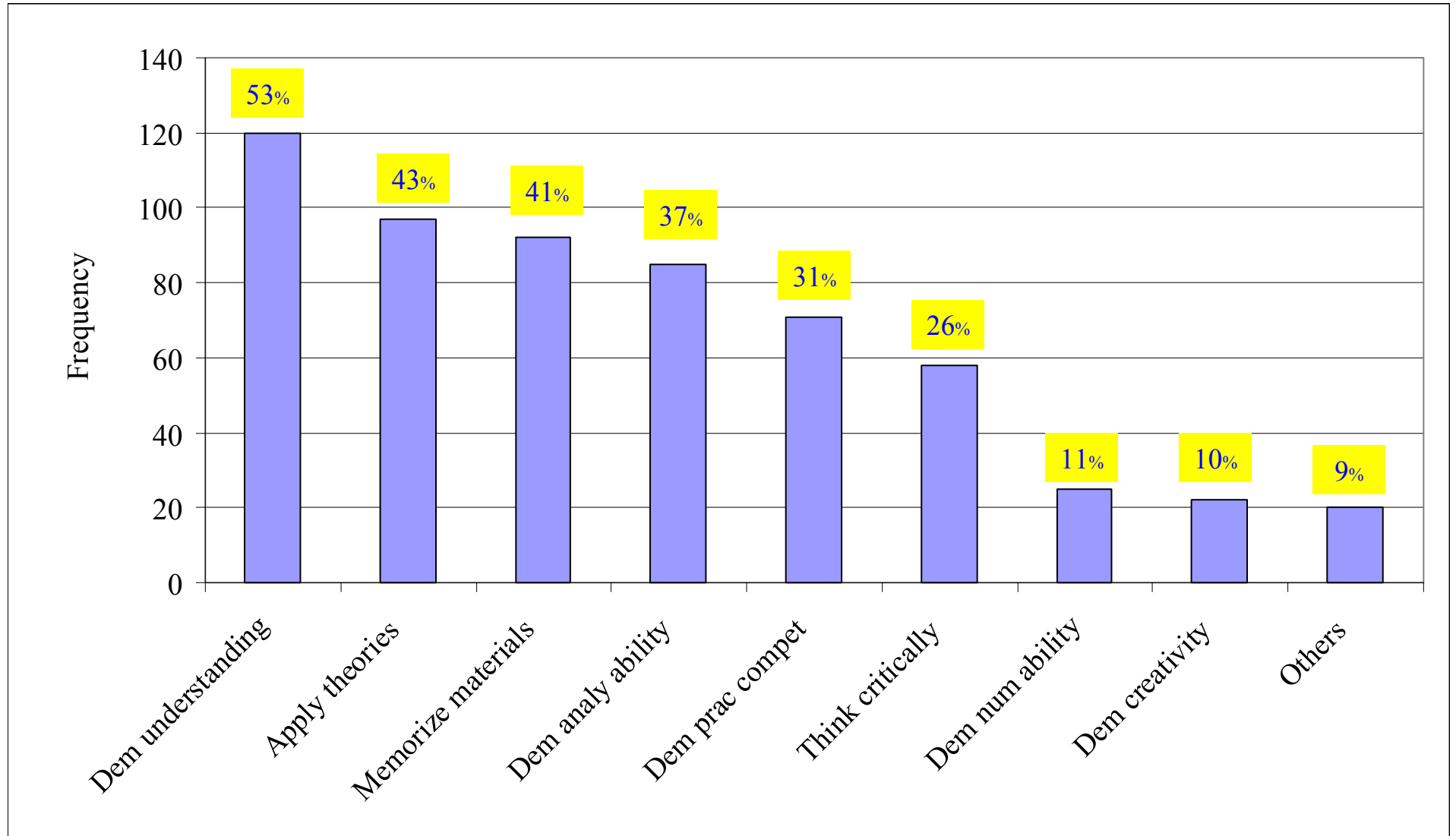
Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

# Effects of Academic Bodies on Assessment (Q17)

## "Others" column

1. Authorities/persons not listed:
  - HoD [4]
  - Academic Secretary
  - Host department for the subject
  - Staff on the teaching team
  - Reviewer of subject reports
  
2. Students' feedback [5]
  
3. Miscellaneous:
  - Historical: the way things were previously done
  - Moderation of examinations
  - Results of assessment from previous cohorts

## How Students' learning ability is encouraged under PolyU's Assessment (Q18)



Above items are multiple responses, and the % scores reflect the % that total respondents selected as their responses

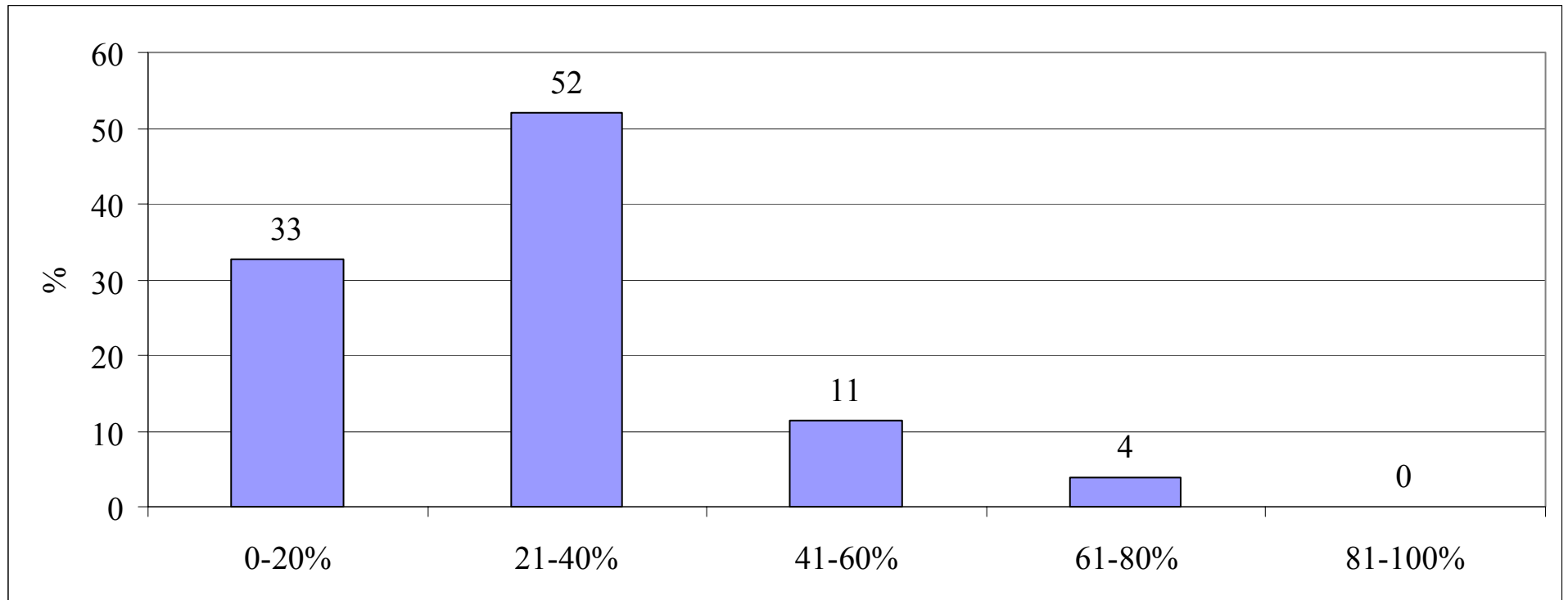
# How Students' learning ability is encouraged under PolyU's Assessment (Q18) "Others" column

1. Positive learning outcomes:
  - All 8 choices in Question 18 were ticked
  - Demonstrates problem-solving ability
  - Tends to encourage group assessments rather than individual assessments

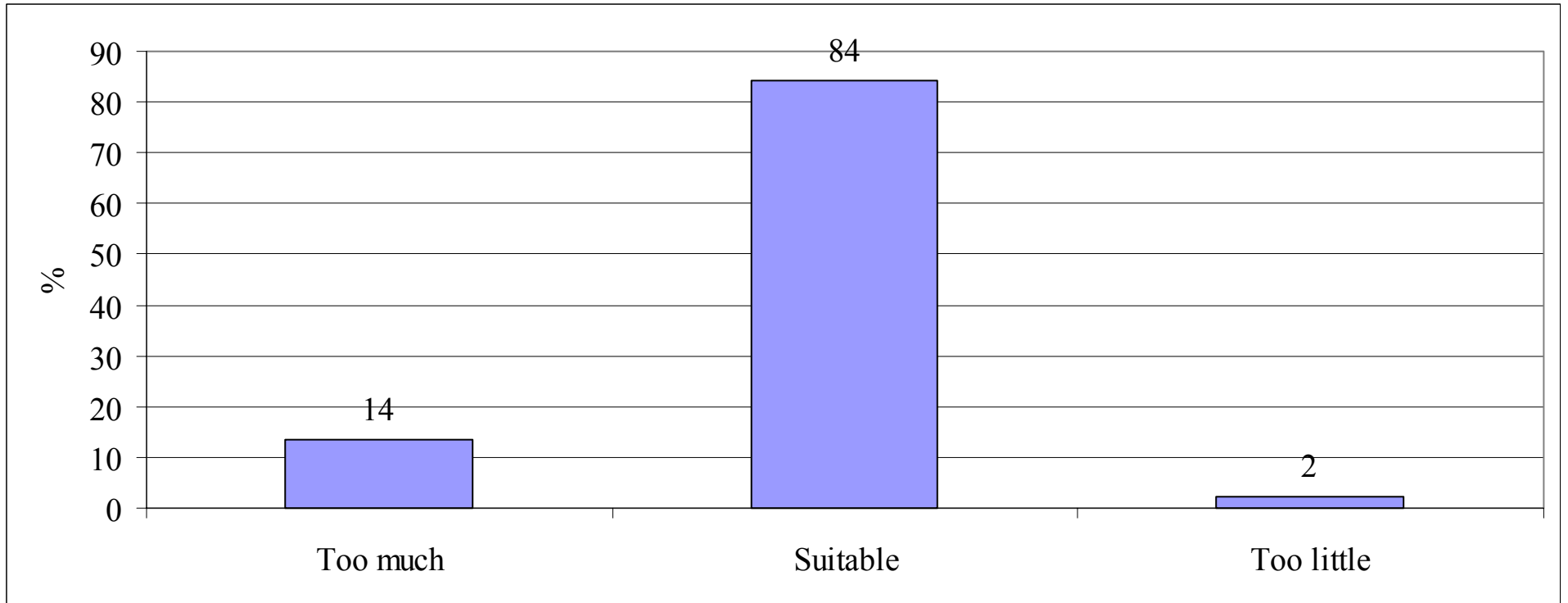
# How Students' learning ability is encouraged under PolyU's Assessment (Q18) "Others" column (Continued)

2. Negative learning outcomes:
- Students are too assessment driven [4]
  - Students become lazy and unmotivated [2]
  - Students know it's difficult to get fail grades
  - Students prefer memorization
  - Students rely on good classmates
  - Students learn how to play the game

## Percentage of Teachers' Workloads Spent on Assessment (Q19)



## Teachers' feelings towards Assessment Workload (Q20)





# *Part D*

## *Other Comments*

# Good Points (Q21) – Relating to:

- Fairness & effectiveness of the assessment system (19 responses)
- Helping students to learn (4 responses)
- Providing flexibility & encouraging teachers to develop good assessment practices (13 responses)

**Overall Responses: 45 (19%)**

# Areas for Improvement (Q22)

## – Relating to:

- Moving away from traditional practices such as closed-book examinations, using more continuous assessment & less memorization; enhancing effectiveness of assessment methods (36 responses)
- Changing the University's grading scale (10 responses)
- Improving the University's management of assessment (9 responses)
- Reduction in teachers' workload (2 responses)
- Reduction in class sizes (6 responses)
- Relaxing the University's guidelines on grade distribution (8 responses)

# Areas for Improvement (Q22)

## – Relating to (Continued):

- Adopting more flexibility under the CBS such as the GPA calculation (7 responses)
- Integrating assessment into teaching & learning (2 responses)
- Improving resources (1 response)
- Better scheduling of students' classes (2 responses)
- Reconsidering the role of the SFQ towards improving teaching & learning (2 responses)

# Areas for Improvement (Q22) – Relating to (Continued):

- Providing more standard assessment guidelines for teachers (3 responses)
- Helping students to develop a more appropriate learning attitude (4 responses)
- Establishing a better grading system (1 response)
- Reducing students' assessment workload (4 responses)
- Aligning the University policy with assessment (4 responses)

**Overall Responses: 73 (31%)**

# Other Comments (Q23) such as:

- To provide credit transfer between different universities
- To promote more class discussion
- An interest in learning what other subjects/departments do regarding assessment
- Knowledge of the teaching staff in designing various assessment practices to meet subject objectives has a great impact on assessment practices
- **This Project is very worthwhile!**

**Overall Responses: 29 (12%)**