

The First Year Student Experience as a supplementary tool for disciplinary knowledge

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What does Literature say??

- The first year of studies is of key importance in determining students' chances of completing their studies in higher education. (Briggs et al. 2012)
- Many new students struggle with the transition from secondary school to university and have difficulties adapting to academic norms and expectations and also managing disciplinary knowledge; (Bruinsma and Jansen 2009).



- Individual student characteristics such as age, gender, motivation, personality, secondary school performance and study skills play a role, as do issues related to the programme of study, such as curriculum design, educational environment, induction activities and social integration (Briggs et al. 2012; Trautwein and Bosse 2017)



FYSE In the context of DUT

- The FYSE seminars are allocated a one hour slot per week in the academic time-table
- Designed as a comprehensive response to the articulation gap between learners' school attainment and the intellectual demands of higher education programmes.
- It is support mechanism not only for underprepared students but also to enhance the students' capabilities.
- Components: Academic, Psycho-Social and Technological Support



Lessons Learned in 2018 and prior

Through a Staff-Student focus group, the following concerns emerged;

- Low student attendance and participation in the programme
- Students perceived the programme as more work added in their already full academic activities (time-tables) with no relevance to their specific disciplines
- Stand-alone programme that provides support, loosely connected to disciplines
- The FYSE is non-credit bearing



In response to student-staff concerns

- Moving from a generic approach to a more contextualized model
- By Involving lecturers, first year level coordinators and senior students as Tutor-Mentor-Advisors(TMAs) from the same department in designing the FYSE seminars for each department, intertwined with the specific departmental knowledge structure.
- Understanding the disciplinary conversion and knowledge: conceptual, practical and procedural



Tracking Participation

- Increase in the departmental participation from seven in 2018 departments to 35 departments(2019) across all six faculties
- At least 70% attendance in the FYSE weekly seminars
- Students attend at least 3/4 seminars on average in a month



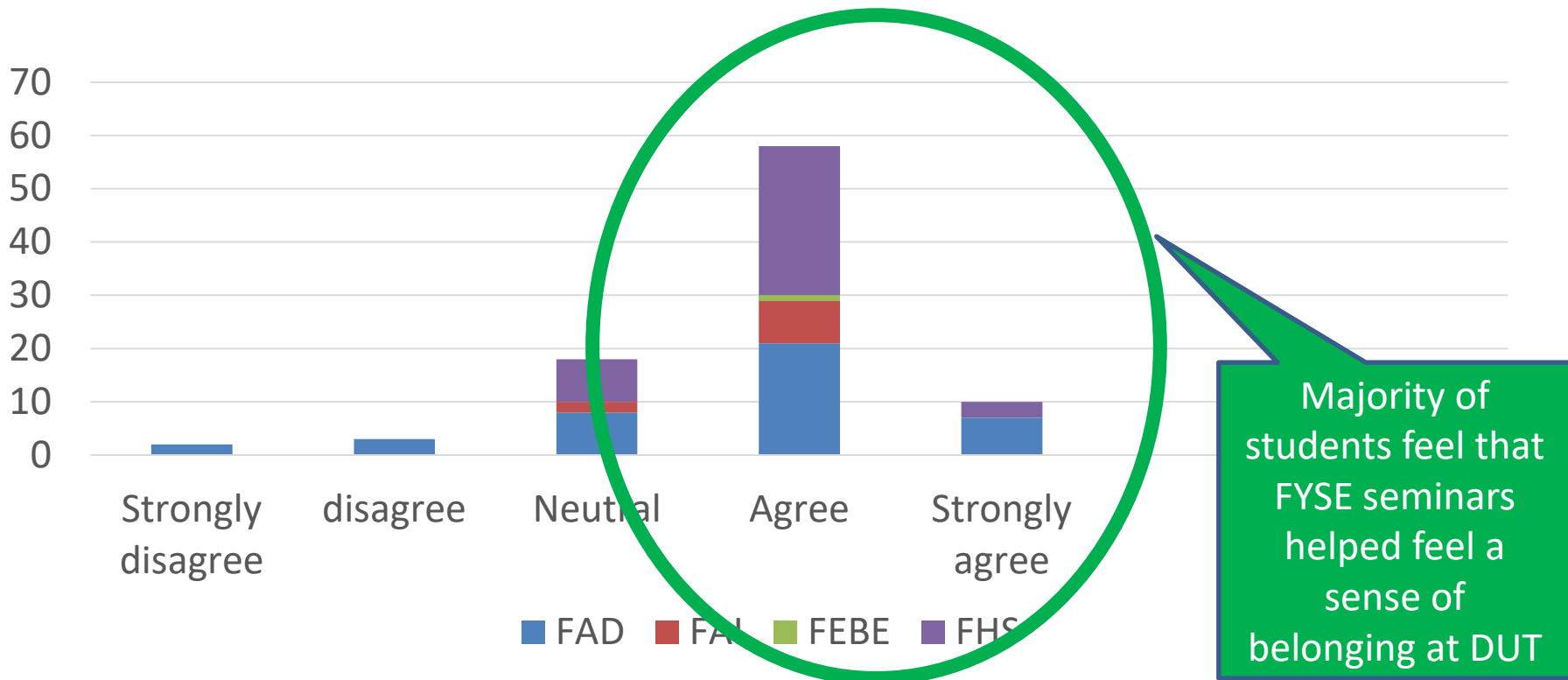
FYSE Student Survey- What is Data Saying

Faculty	Age Group				Total
	17-19	20-22	23-25	+ 26	
Faculty of Arts and Design	10	19	9	3	41
Faculty of Accounting and Informatics	5	5			10
Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment	1				1
Faculty of Health Sciences	26	9	2	1	38
Did not Say	1				1
Grand Total	43	33	11	4	91

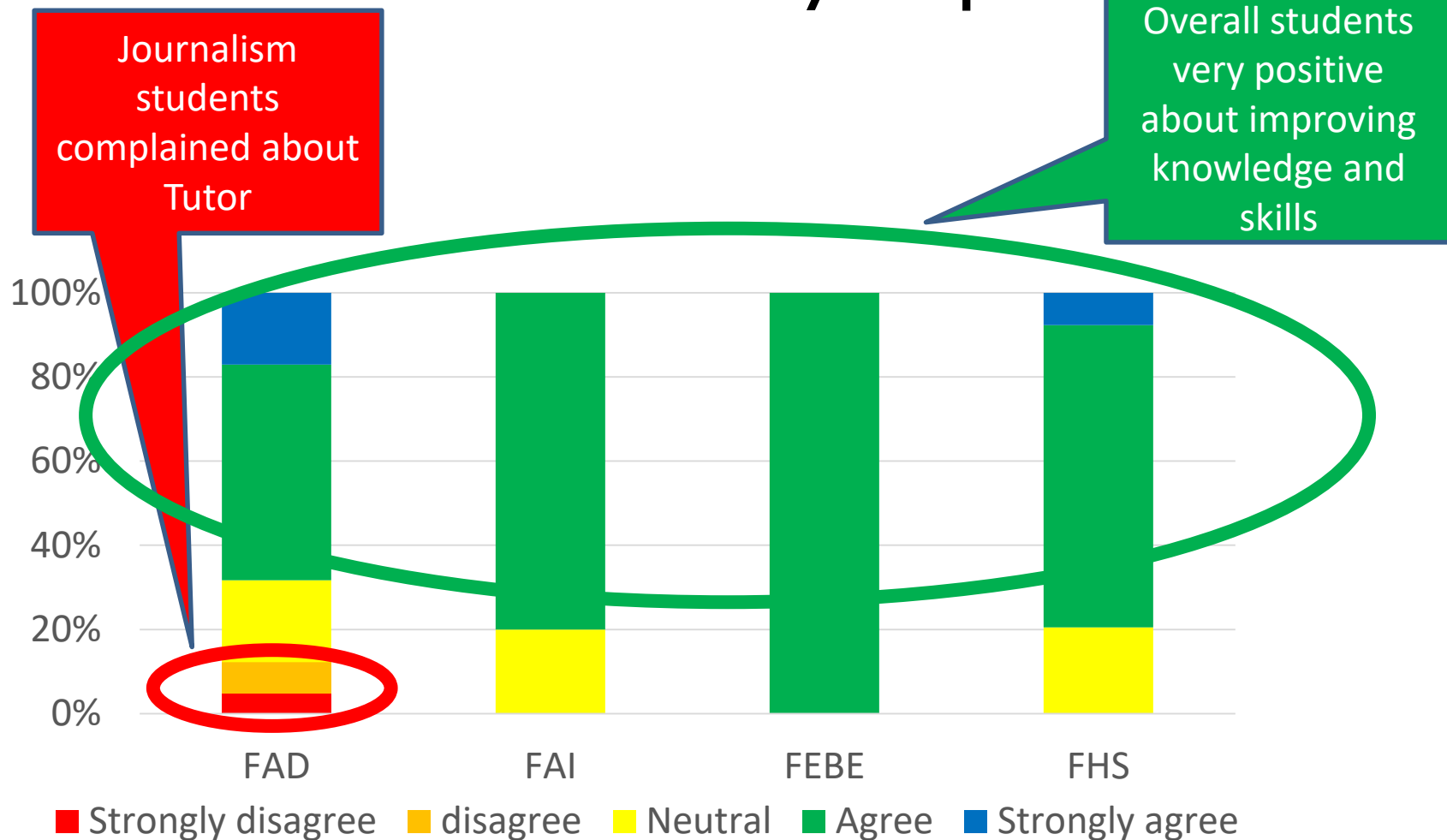
It is not students straight out of matric that are using the FYSE. 47% (43/91) are 17-19 years old, but 53% (48/91) are +20 years old.



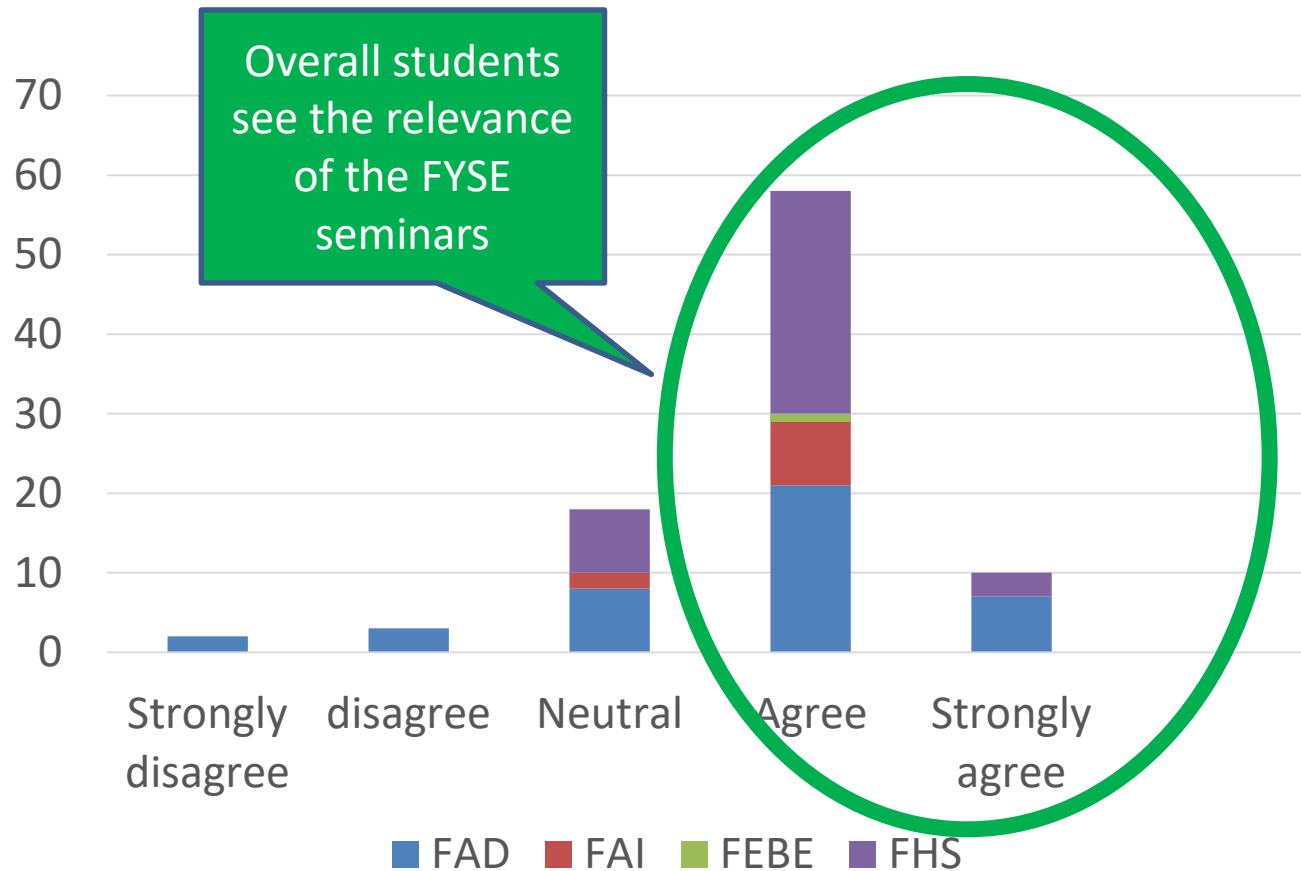
To what extent has the FYSE seminars helped you feel a sense of belonging to DUT?



FYSE seminars are improving my knowledge and skills that will contribute to my discipline



The FYSE seminars are relevant to my education as a whole





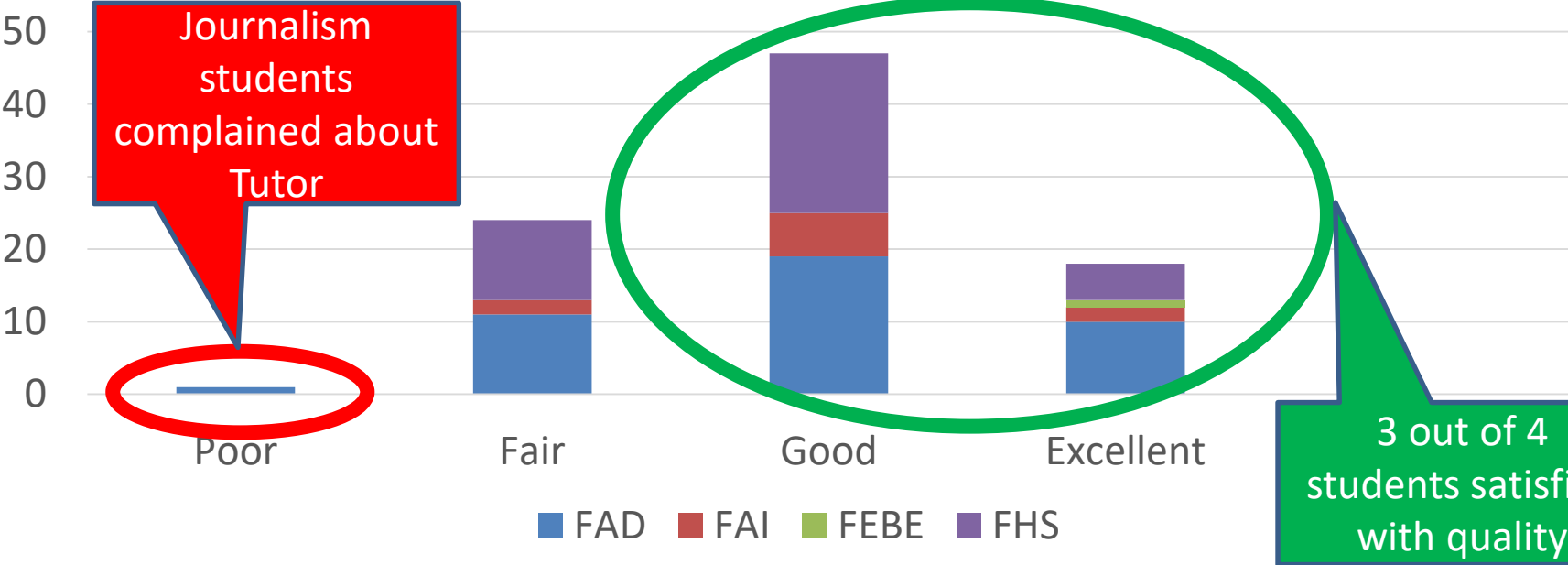
DUT Graduate Attributes

5 questions in the survey specifically focused on the DUT Graduate Attributes.

- Two out of 3 students responded positively about the DUT Graduate Attributes in the FYSE programme



Overall how would you rate the quality of the entire FYSE seminars?



Overall, 73% (66/91) rated the quality as Good and Excellent. This is 3 out of 4 students who satisfied with the quality. 24/91 students said it was fair (or 1 out of 4).



What has been the most beneficial part of the FYSE in helping you succeed academically?

- *The tutors helped me understand my school work better and how my modules link to each other.*
- *Effective time management and study skills*
- *Seeing senior students talk about their first year challenges and experiences*
- *It helps me when it comes to critical thinking and improve academically.*
- *To be more comfortable and confident in class.*
- *Having someone who has gone through the course and knows all of its challenges.*



What aspects of the FYSE seminars most need improvement?

- *Time allocated is too short(x72)*
- *Working using Technology and also show some videos.*
- *the time allocation is not enough and venues sometimes cannot accommodate all of us.*



What has motivated you to attend the FYSE seminars?

- *Being taught by such hard working and young mentors kept me motivated.*
- *I wanted to learn more about my programme and what it does in the real world.*
- *Me seeing improvement in my academics and the seminars have been really helpful.*
- *My safety, how to deal with stress and how to approach certain situations in Varsity.*
- *The seminars were fun and exciting and its an open discussion about social and educational issues.*

THANK YOU

