

# Scaling Authentic Learning: Evaluating a Large-Cohort Poster Showcase in Undergraduate Computing



COMP10120 First Year Team Project

**Dr Stewart Blakeway**  
Lecturer in Computer Science

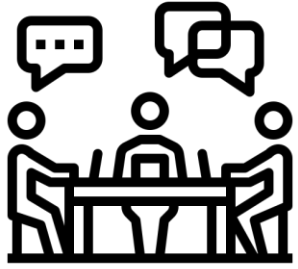
**Professor Uli Sattler**  
Lecturer in Computer Science

# Authentic Learning

difficult to  
provide at  
scale



Less Of



More Of

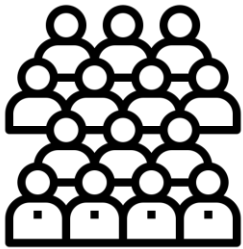


To Create



And Communicate with  
authentic audiences

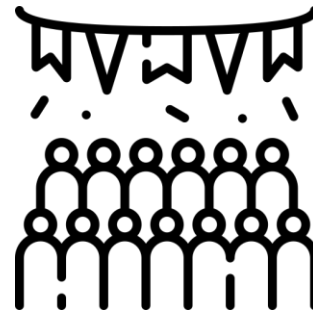
# Context



25/26 364  
24/25 370



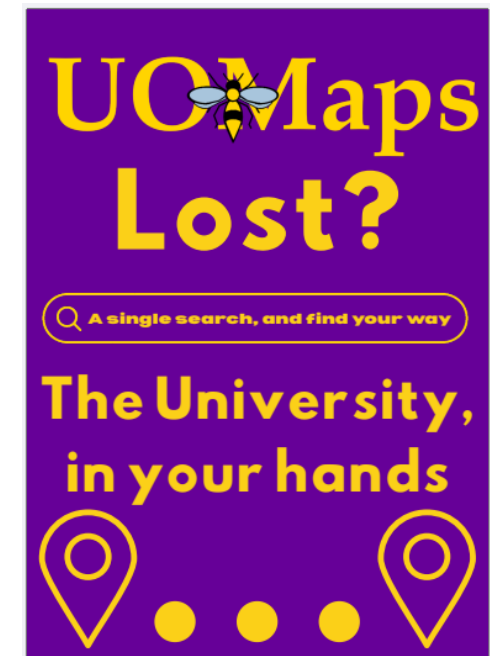
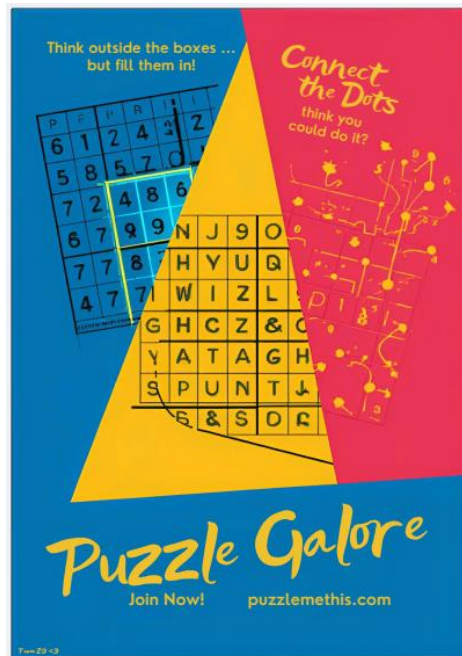
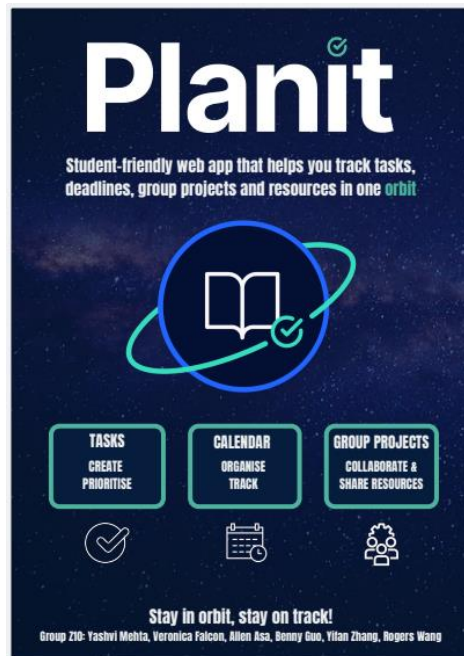
5 or 6  
48 Teams



Poster Event

# Design of the Showcase

poster production



# Planit

Student-friendly web app that helps you track tasks, deadlines, group projects and resources in one orbit



TASKS  
CREATE  
PRIORITISE

CALENDAR  
ORGANISE  
TRACK

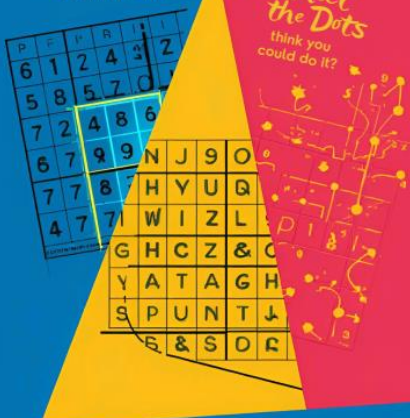
GROUP PROJECTS  
COLLABORATE &  
SHARE RESOURCES

Stay in orbit, stay on track!

Group Z10: Yashvi Mehta, Veronica Falcon, Allen Asa, Benny Guo, Yifan Zhang, Rogers Wang

Think outside the boxes ... but fill them in!

Connect the Dots think you could do it?



## Puzzle Galore

Join Now! puzzlemethis.com

### WhatsCooking

Filters Restaurants Cafes Bars Gluten Free



## WhatsCooking

- Review restaurants
- Find new places to eat
- Make new friends

### UoM Connect

The Exclusive Study Network for the University of Manchester



SIGN UP NOW

Connect • Collaborate • Study Smarter

# UoM Maps Lost?

A single search, and find your way

## The University, in your hands




week 09 of  
semester 1



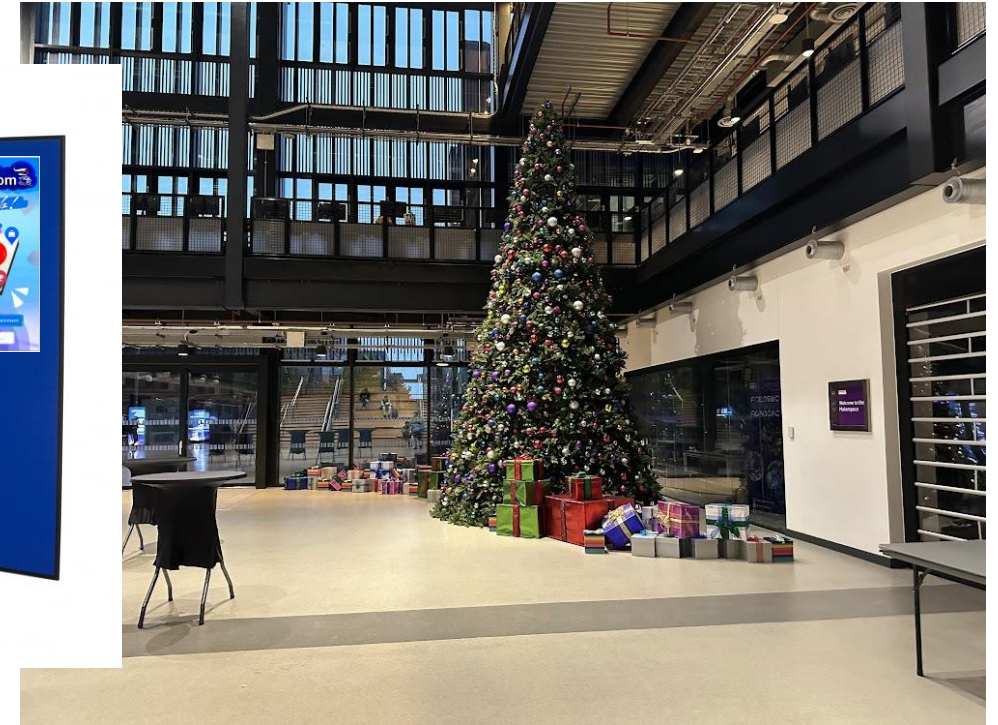
week 10 of  
semester 1



week 11 of  
semester 1

# Design of the Showcase

venue



# Design of the Showcase

## student interactions & audience involvement

- explain their project repeatedly
- answer questions
- discuss design decisions
- compare approaches with other teams
- observe other projects
- receive immediate feedback

*This continual interaction is what develops confidence*

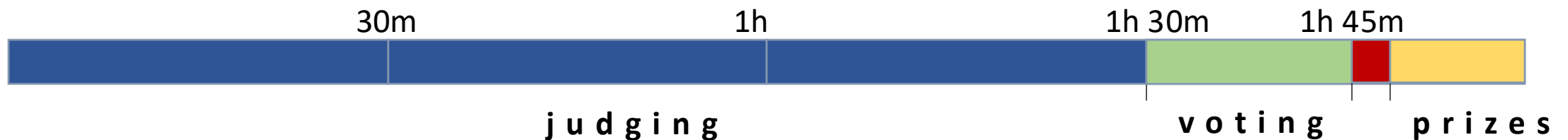
# Design of the Showcase

j u d g i n g / v o t i n g / p r i z e s a n d c e r t i f i c a t e s

The Application  
with the **Best Idea  
or Concept**

The most Carefully  
Thought Through  
**Application and  
Plan**

The most **Visually  
Appealing** and  
Imaginative Poster



The Application with the  
Best Idea or Concept

**Weathify - Music Tuned to Your  
Moment**

Jeevan Francis (CMwIE), Samuel  
Coulson (CM), Mohammed Malji  
(CM), Berke Tunc (CMwIE), Krish  
Patel (CM), Daniel Arthur (CMwIE)

The most Visually  
Appealing and  
Imaginative Poster

**Imposter**

Sama Sweed (CS), Alisa  
Krasnopolska (CS), Artem  
Miezientsev (CSwIE), Razin  
Annis (CS), Shiven Singh  
(CSwIE).

The most Carefully  
Thought Through  
Application and Plan

**Spot Version 3.0**

Kamronbek Khusainov (CS),  
Zhaosen He (CS), Jing Jin (CS),  
Shreeyash Dash (CSwIE), Louis

# Evaluation Themes

## Learning

Improved understanding  
Communication  
Confidence

**Did students learn?**

## Authenticity

Professional experience  
Useful feedback  
Audience interaction

**Was the experience authentic?**

## Scale

# people spoken to  
Overall value  
Student suggestions

**Does this work at scale?**

# Evaluation

What students told us about presenting their team project posters



**29** rated the  
Likert items



**15** suggested  
Improvements

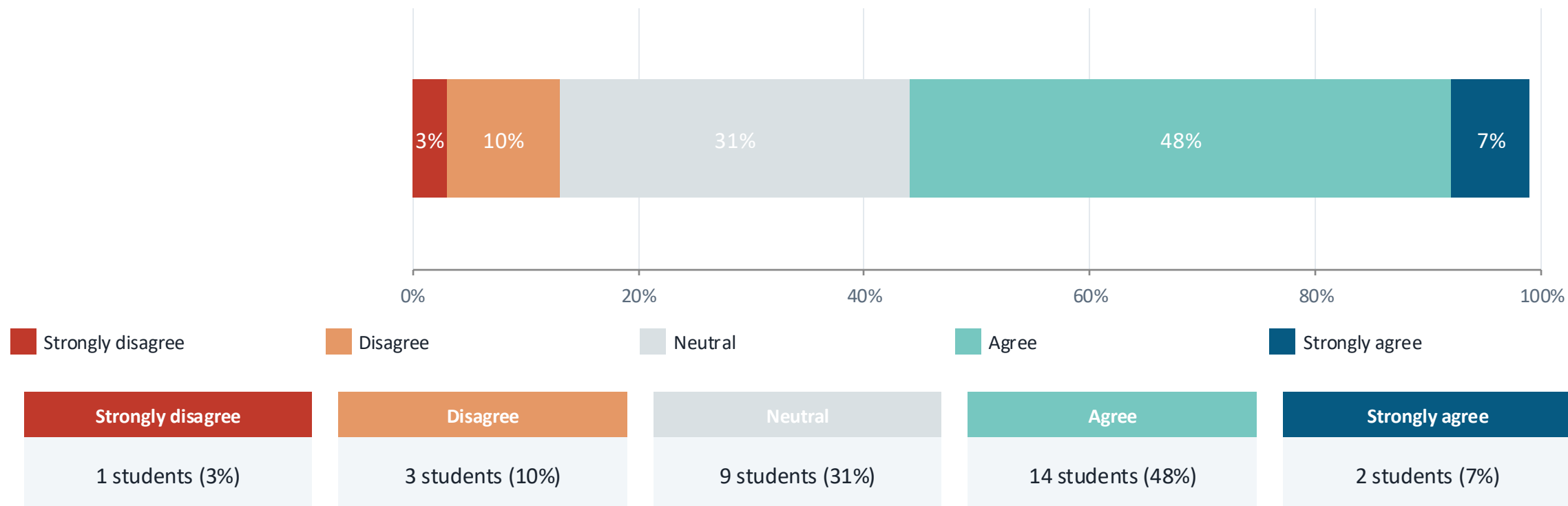


**13** named the  
most  
valuable lesson



**12** reflected  
on  
confidence

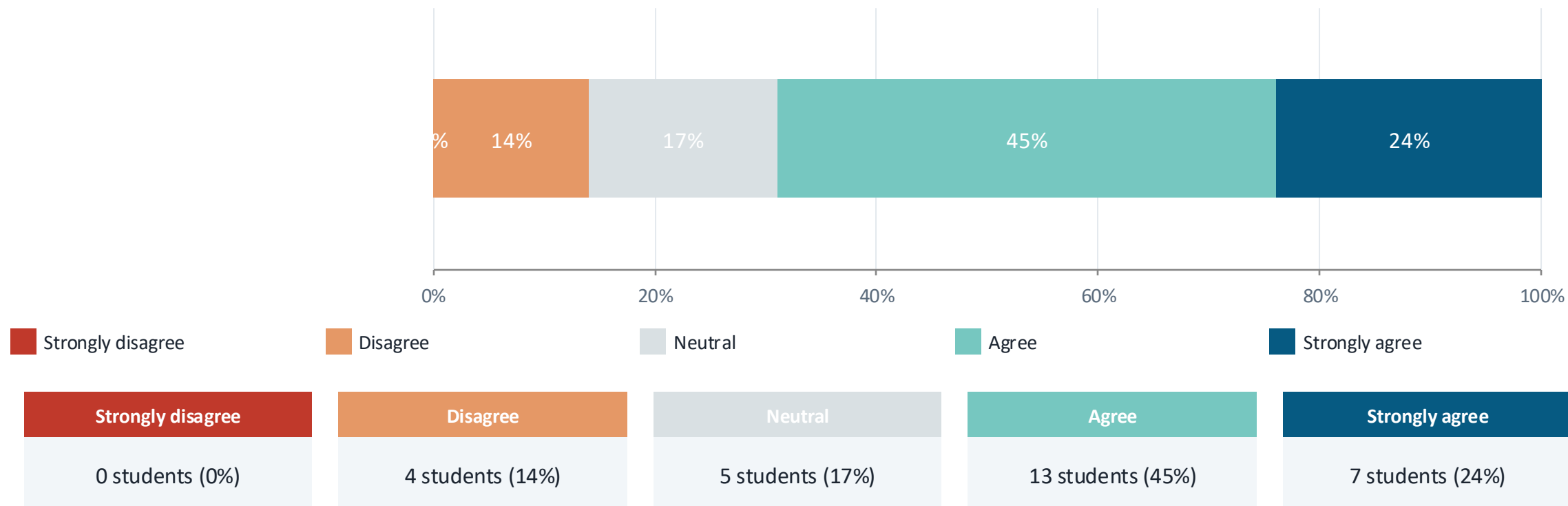
## Q1 Preparing the poster improved my understanding of our project.



**55%** agreed or strongly agreed  
(16 of 29 students)

**13%** disagreed or strongly disagreed  
(4 of 29 students)

## Q2 Presenting the poster helped me communicate ideas more clearly.

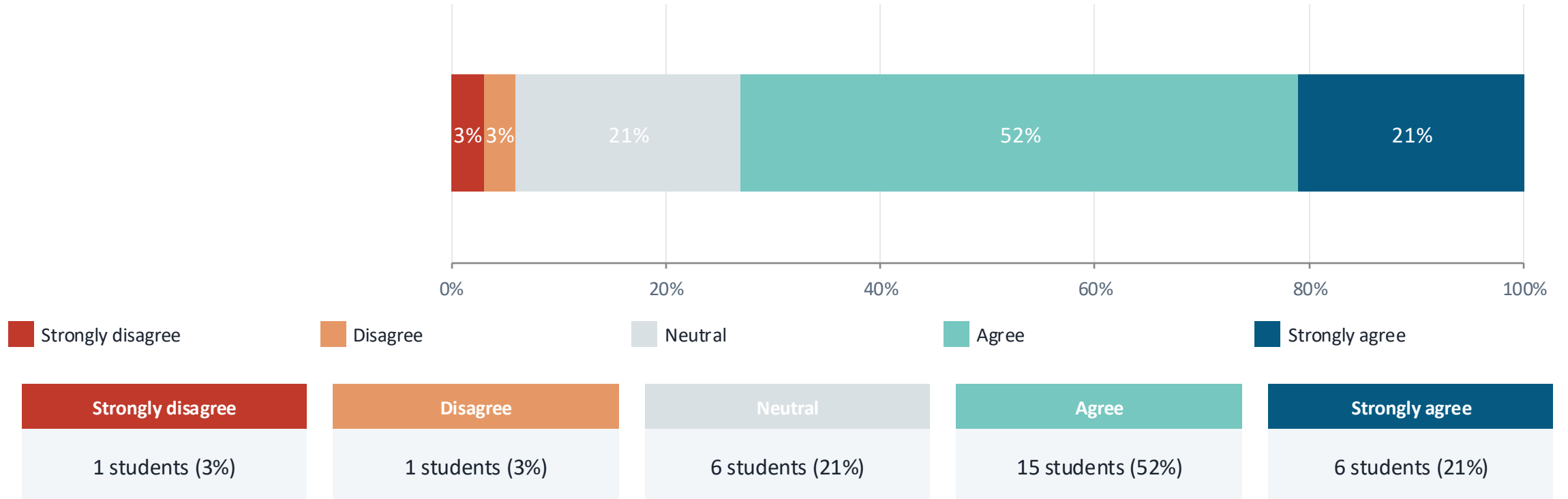


**69%** agreed or strongly agreed  
(20 of 29 students)

**14%** disagreed or strongly disagreed  
(4 of 29 students)

Q3

## Explaining our poster to others increased my confidence in talking about my work.

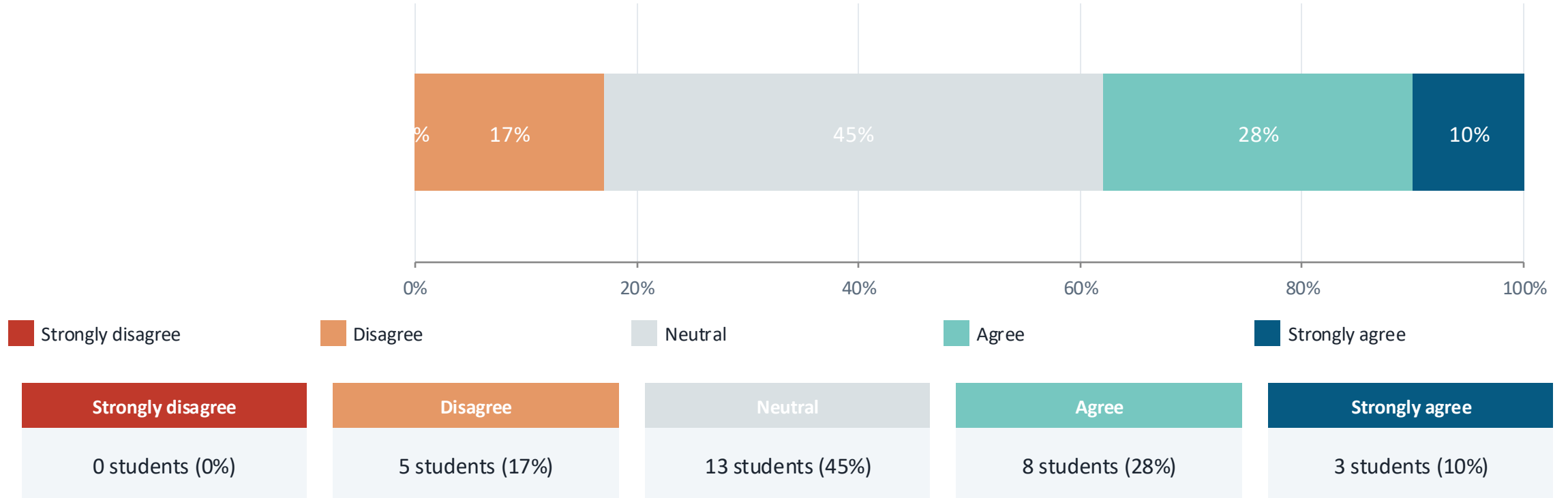


**73%** agreed or strongly agreed  
(21 of 29 students)

**6%** disagreed or strongly disagreed  
(2 of 29 students)

Q4

## Working on the poster helped our team collaborate more effectively.

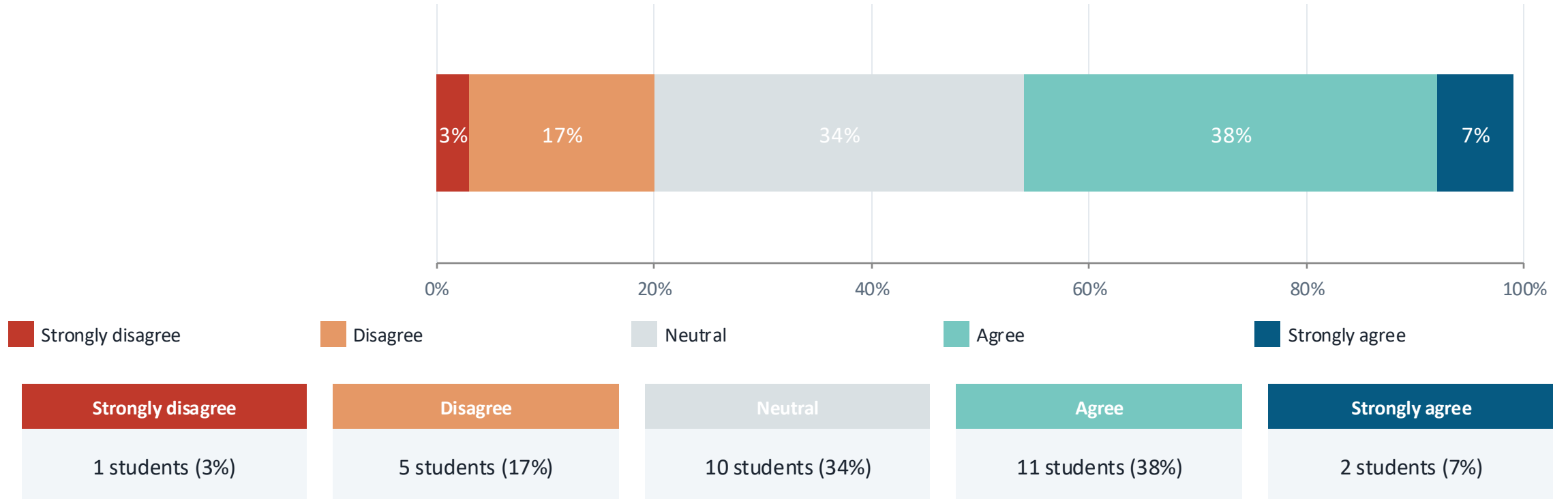


**38%** agreed or strongly agreed  
(11 of 29 students)

**17%** disagreed or strongly disagreed  
(5 of 29 students)

Q5

The poster event felt like a professional or “real-world” way of presenting work.

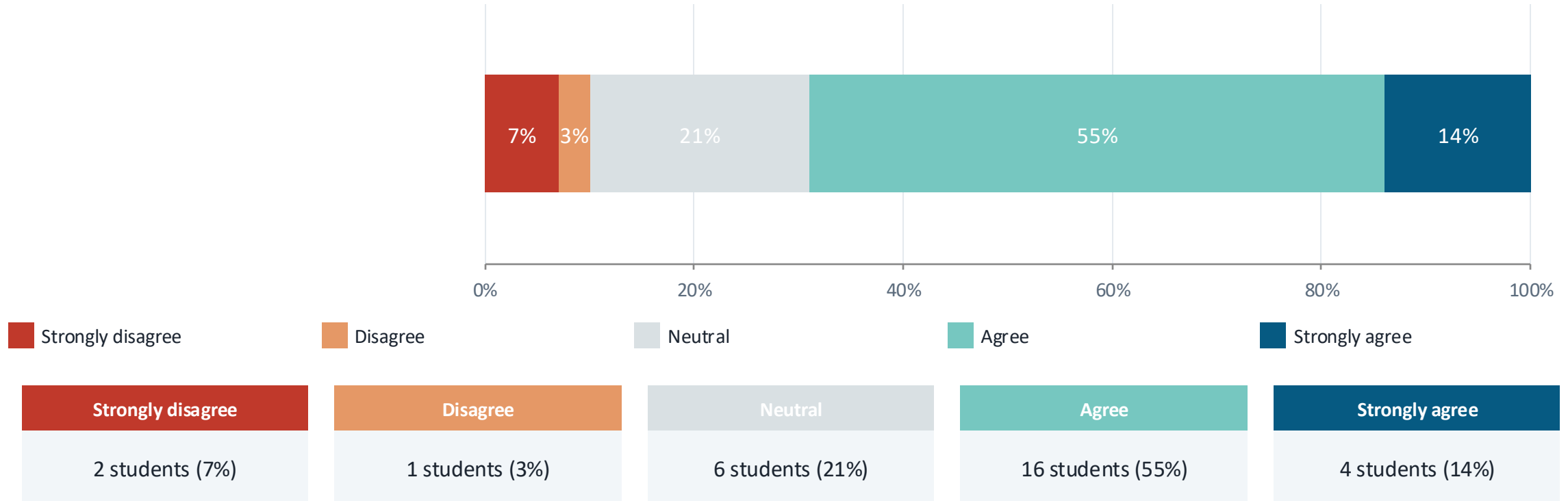


**45%** agreed or strongly agreed  
(13 of 29 students)

**20%** disagreed or strongly disagreed  
(6 of 29 students)

Q6

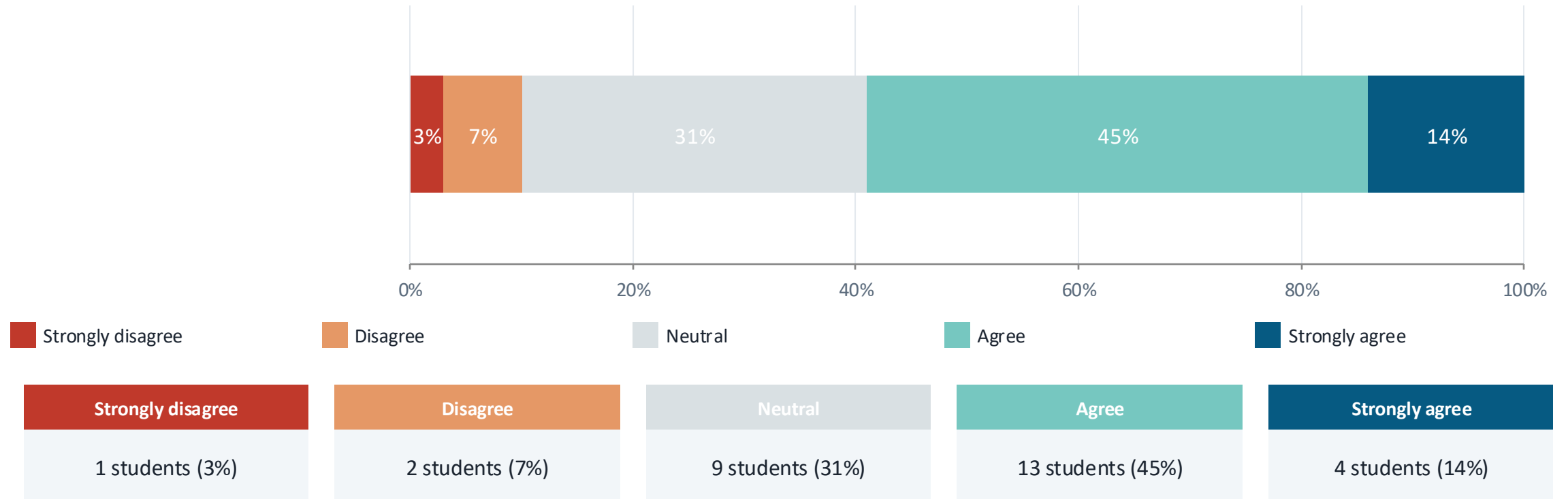
The feedback or questions I received during the poster session were useful.



**69%** agreed or strongly agreed  
(20 of 29 students)

**10%** disagreed or strongly disagreed  
(3 of 29 students)

Q7 Overall, the poster event was a valuable part of the COMP10120 project.



**59%** agreed or strongly agreed  
(17 of 29 students)

**10%** disagreed or strongly disagreed  
(3 of 29 students)

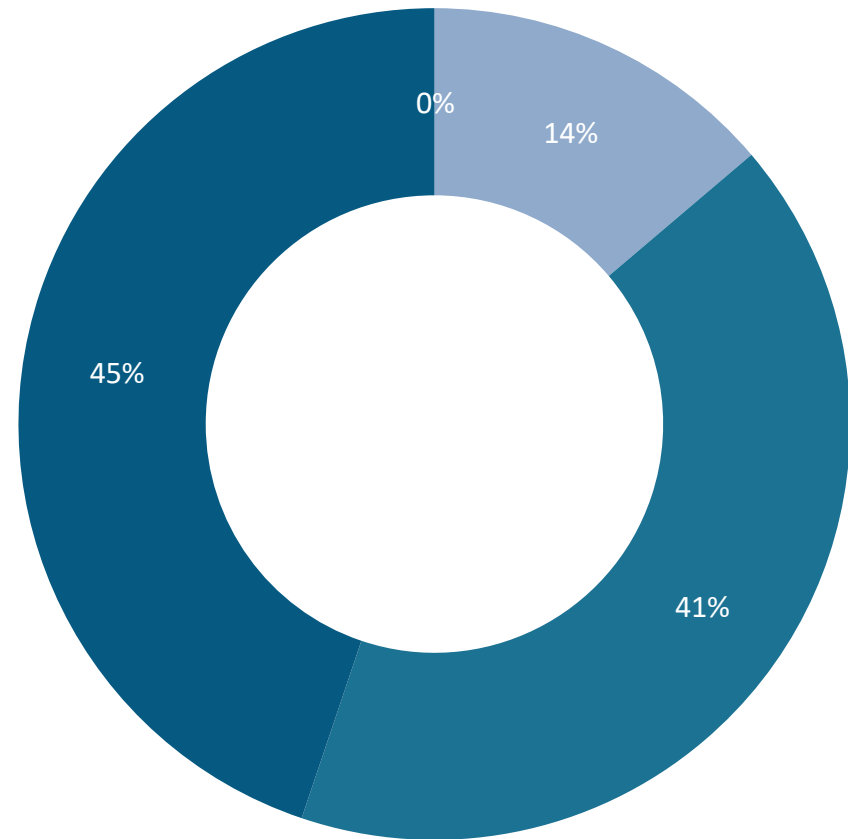
# Who did students talk to?

*"During the poster event, approximately how many people did you speak to about your poster?"*

## 86%

of students spoke to three or more people about their poster — with nearly half speaking to more than five.

- None — 0 responses
- 1–2 people — 4 responses
- 3–5 people — 12 responses
- More than 5 — 13 responses



# Did presenting change their confidence?

Open responses (n = 12), themed

## Increased confidence



## No change — already confident



## Neutral



*Presenting the poster increased my confidence because explaining my work multiple times helped me become more comfortable with the key ideas.*

— Student 25

*I feel like I'm generally quite confident, so the poster presentation didn't do much in that sense.*

— Student 31

# The most valuable thing learned

"What was the most valuable thing you learned from preparing or presenting your poster?" — themed, n = 13



## Communicating clearly

4 mentions

*"The most valuable thing was learning how to simplify my topic and explain it clearly."*

— Student 25



## Reading & engaging an audience

2 mentions

*"How to answer questions from people with a variety of different levels of understanding."*

— Student 17



## Teamwork

3 mentions

*"Power of teamwork."*

— Student 38



## Design & presentation skills

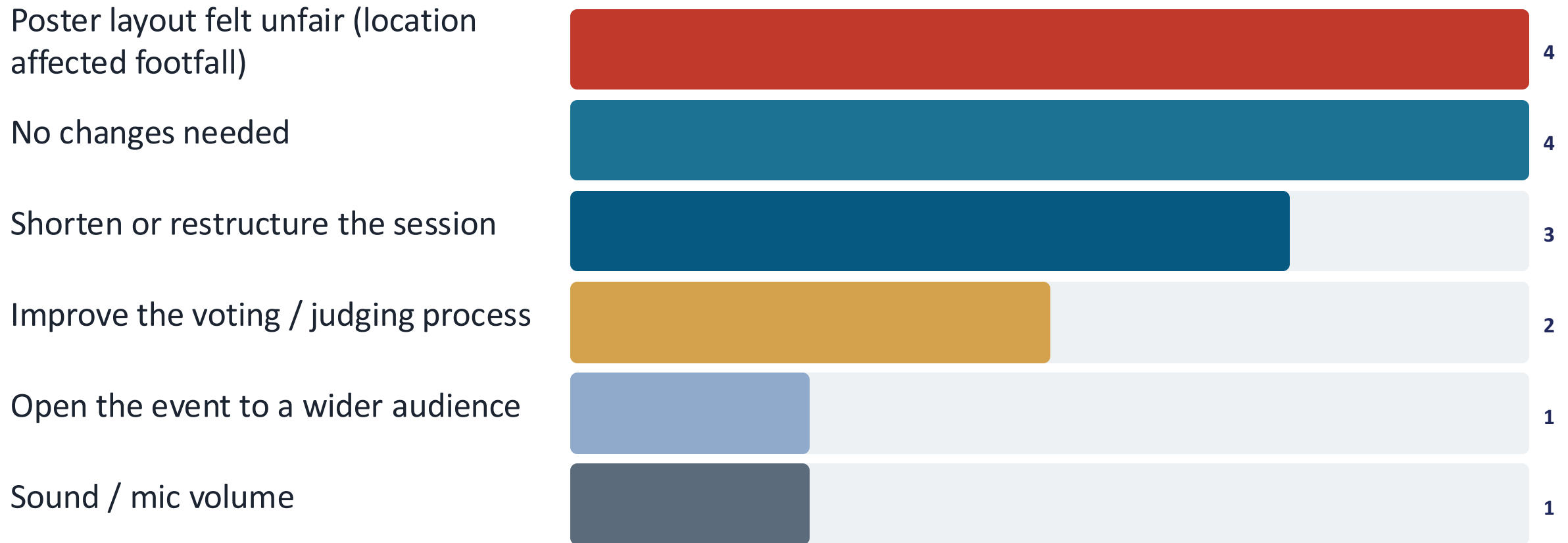
4 mentions

*"How designing posters works, using Affinity."*

— Student 35

# What would students change?

Open responses on improving the event for future cohorts — themed, n = 15



# Recommendations for future cohorts

Drawn directly from the student feedback above



## Let students decide their pitch

Allow student to select their own posterboard and hang their own poster.



## Fix the voting process

Publish judging categories earlier, extend voting time, and prevent self-voting.



## Advertise to a wider audience

Advertise the event beyond the cohort could bring richer, more varied feedback.



## Check the sound setup

Confirm mic volume and room acoustics work for the full space in advance.



## Keep what's working

The core format — prepare, present, get feedback — is rated valuable; protect it.

# Take-home messages

questions / discussions / feedback

1

Students value opportunities to communicate with real audiences

2

Small evidence-informed refinements can significantly improve large-cohort activities

3

Authentic professional experiences can be embedded at scale

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