Student self-regulation and the use of assessment rubrics

Minmin Du, Alvise Favotto and William Finlay

Accounting & Finance,
Adam Smith Business School

University of Glasgow

Background

- Need for improving feedback quality (NSS 2018)
  - Assessment & Feedback (Q8-Q11: Accounting & Finance: 70.6% vs ASBS: 62.6%)

- Assessment rubrics can be effective tools for communicating expectations associated to assessment and for guiding students' self-evaluation (Dawson, 2017)

- Research concentrates on methods for designing/ administering assessment rubrics yet less attention to their 'reception' (Andrade & Du, 2005)

- Engagement and satisfaction with assessment and feedback may be mediated by self-regulation mechanisms (Nicol & McFarlane-Dick 2006)

Research questions

- How do students make use of assessment rubrics?

- How [if at all] does self-regulation affect students' attitudes towards assessment rubrics?

  - Content interpretation

  - Use for self-assessment

Assessment rubric

Structure

1	Clear executive summary
2	Effectiveness of Introduction
3	Coherence and logical progression
4	Logical conclusions

Content

5	Identification of relevant issues
6	Explanation of issues
7	Relevance to the task
8	Application of relevant ethical theory

Literature

9	Identification & use of relevant literature
10	Quality and breadth of reading
11	Correct citations

Presentation

12	Style & quality of written communication
13	Good report structure
14	Originality

Word count

15	Is essay within 3,000 words +/- 10%?

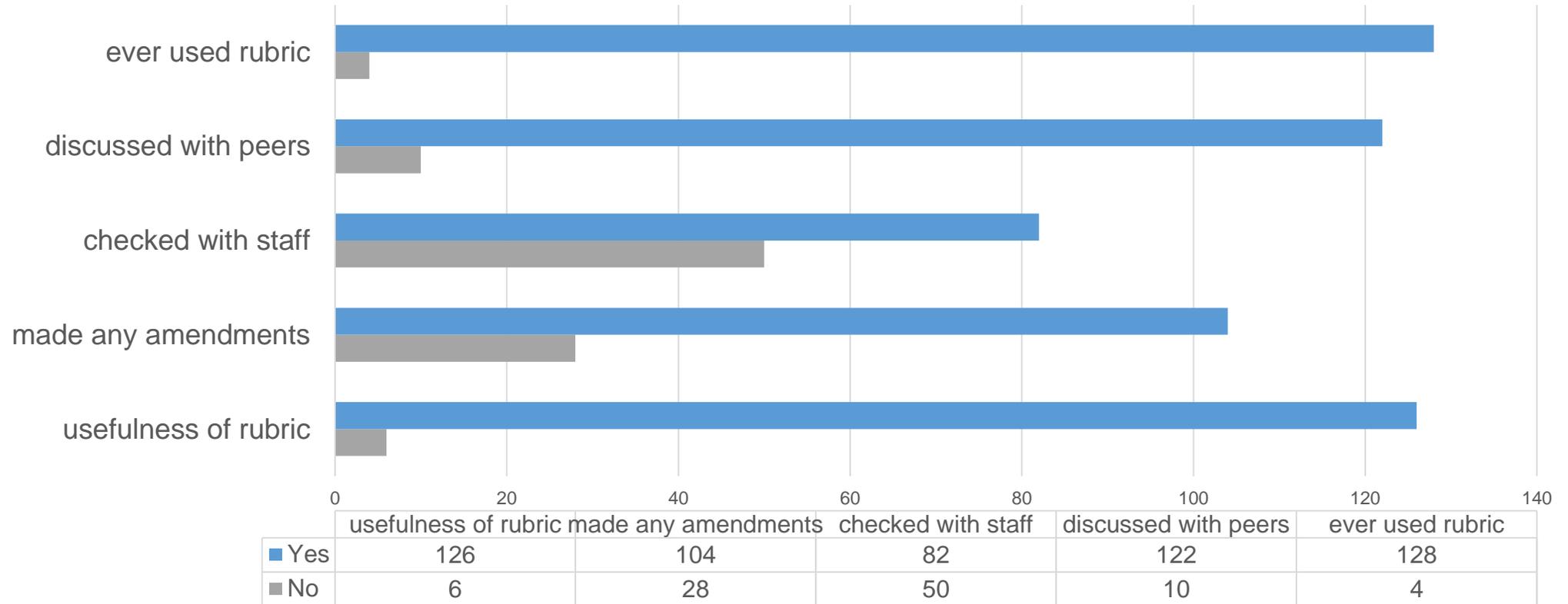**Log**

16	Included meeting log?

Procedure and Participants

- 'Accounting and Business Ethics'
  - In-course assessment: 40% weighting

- Class of 214

- Participants n = 135

- Two-stage survey
  - Stage 1: Self-regulation
  - Stage 2: Engagement with assessment rubric
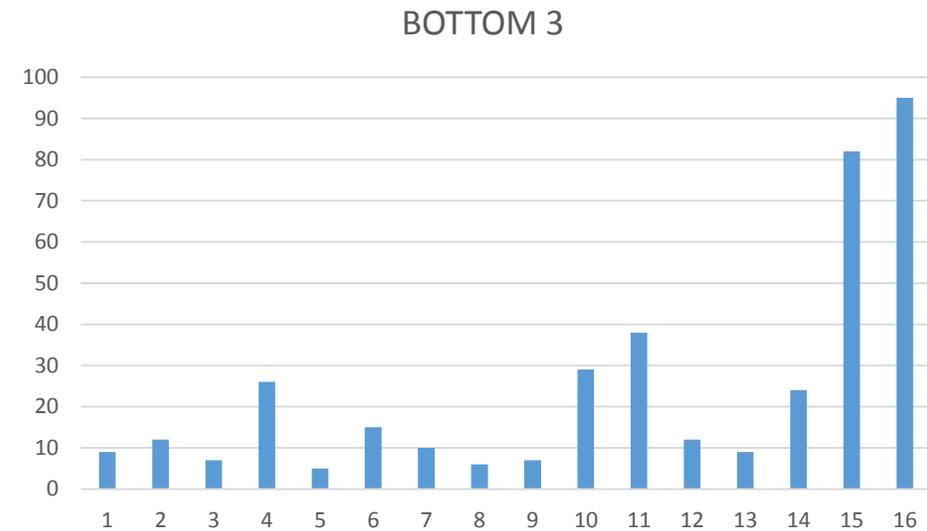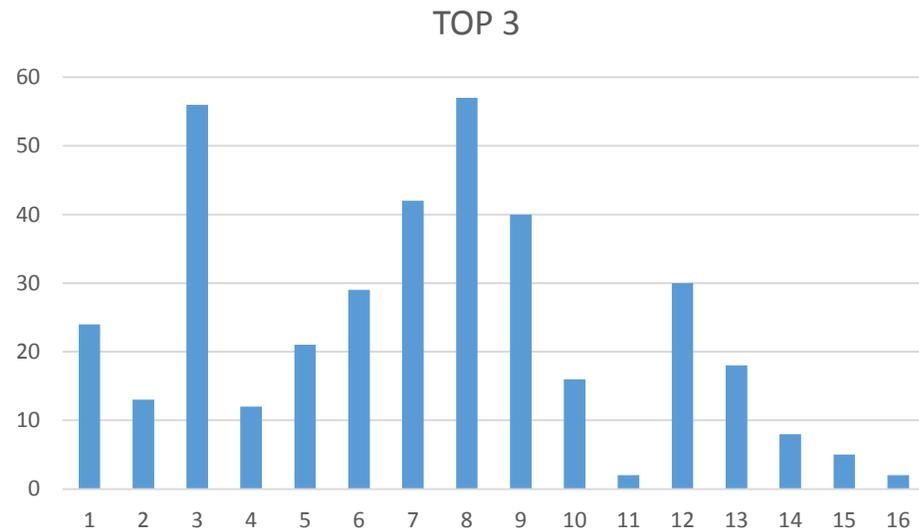
Engagement with our rubric

	usefulness of rubric	made any amendments	checked with staff	discussed with peers	ever used rubric
Yes	126	104	82	122	128
No	6	28	50	10	4

Rubric interpretation

TOP 3

BOTTOM 3

Top 3	Bottom 3
Application of theory	Meeting log
Coherence of sections/logical progression	Word limit
Identification of relevant issues	Correct referencing

Rubric and self-assessment
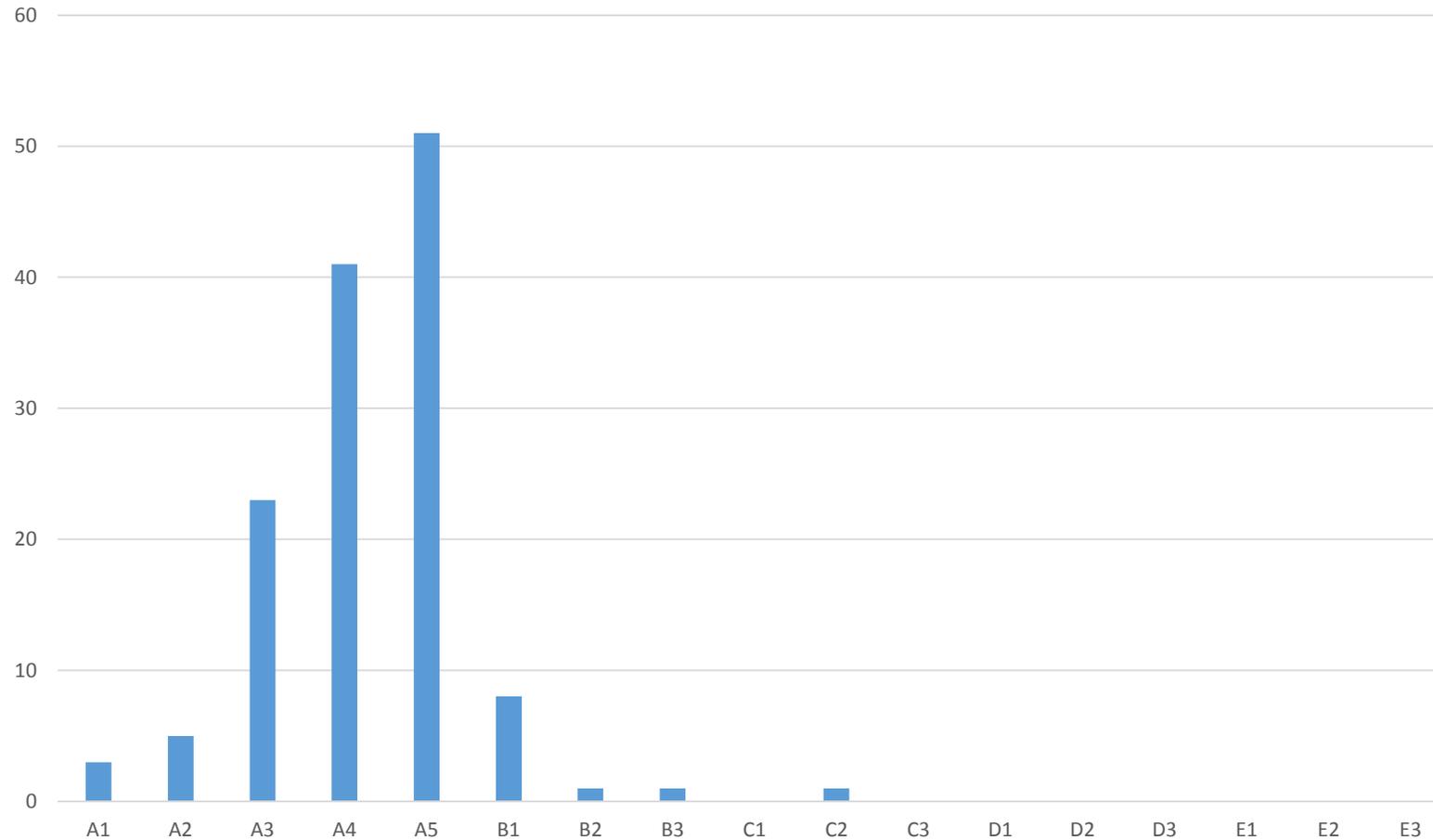
Structure
Content
Literature
Presentation
Word count
Meeting log

You would grade your coursework as:

Theoretical framework

- Regulatory Focus theory (Higgins 1997; 1998):

Promotion focus (PROM)**:**
  - Emphasises on growth and advancement needs
  - Goals are viewed as ideals, there is a strategic concern with obtaining gains and avoiding non-gains

Prevention focus (PREV)**:**
  - Emphasises safety, security needs.
  - Goals are viewed as 'oughts' and there is a strategic concern with obtaining non-losses and avoiding losses.

Student self-regulation

- Chronic Regulatory focus
  - Stable as part of personal character
  - Students filled in Regulatory Focus Questionnaire – compares promotion pride versus prevention pride

- Strategic inclination
  - Students indicated their strategy applied in the assessment

	Promotion focus	Prevention focus	*Missing*	Total
Chronic Regulatory Focus	61	69	4	
				134
Strategic Inclination	71	16	47	

Use of rubric

	Promotion focus	**Prevention focus**
Discuss assessment rubric with peers	98%	88%

t = 2.375, p = 0.020

Promotion focused students

	Yes	No
ever used rubric	59	2
discussed with peers	60	1
checked with staff	37	24
made any amendments	46	15
usefulness of rubric	60	1

Prevention focused students

	Yes	No
ever used rubric	66	2
discussed with peers	60	8
checked with staff	43	25
made any amendments	56	12
usefulness of rubric	64	4
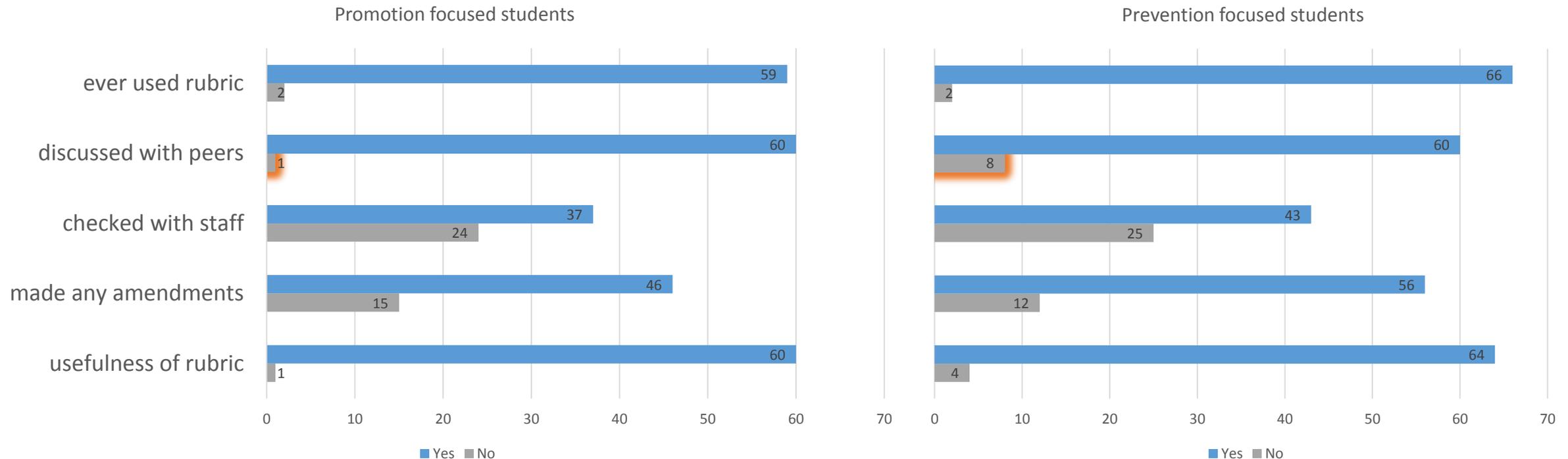
Use of rubric

	Promotion strategy applied	Prevention strategy applied
Discussed/checked with teacher	65%	38%

t = 2.036, p = 0.045
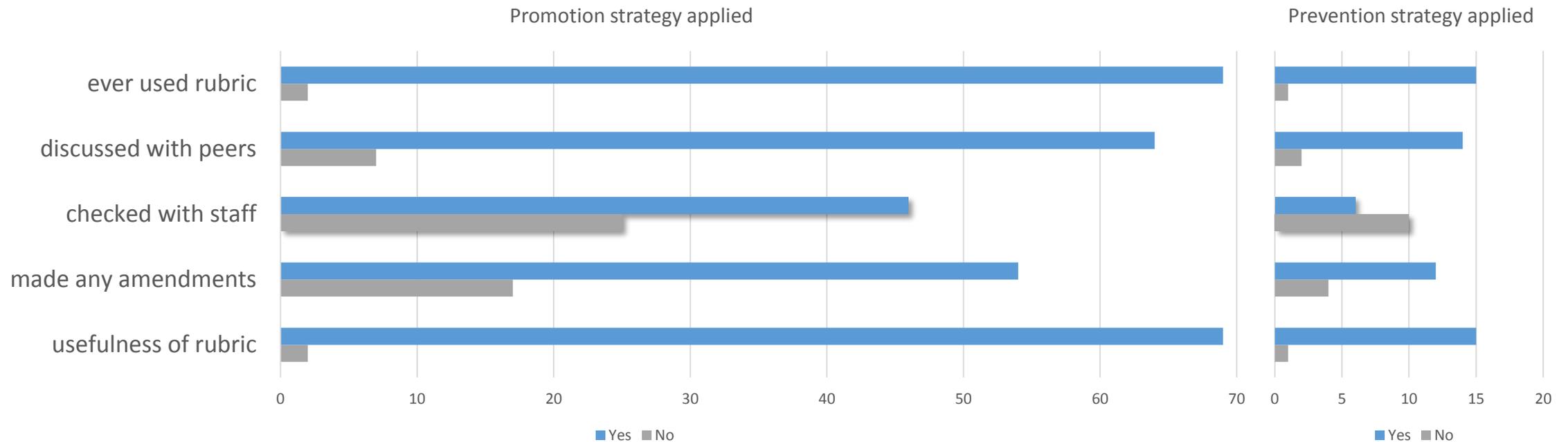
Use of rubric
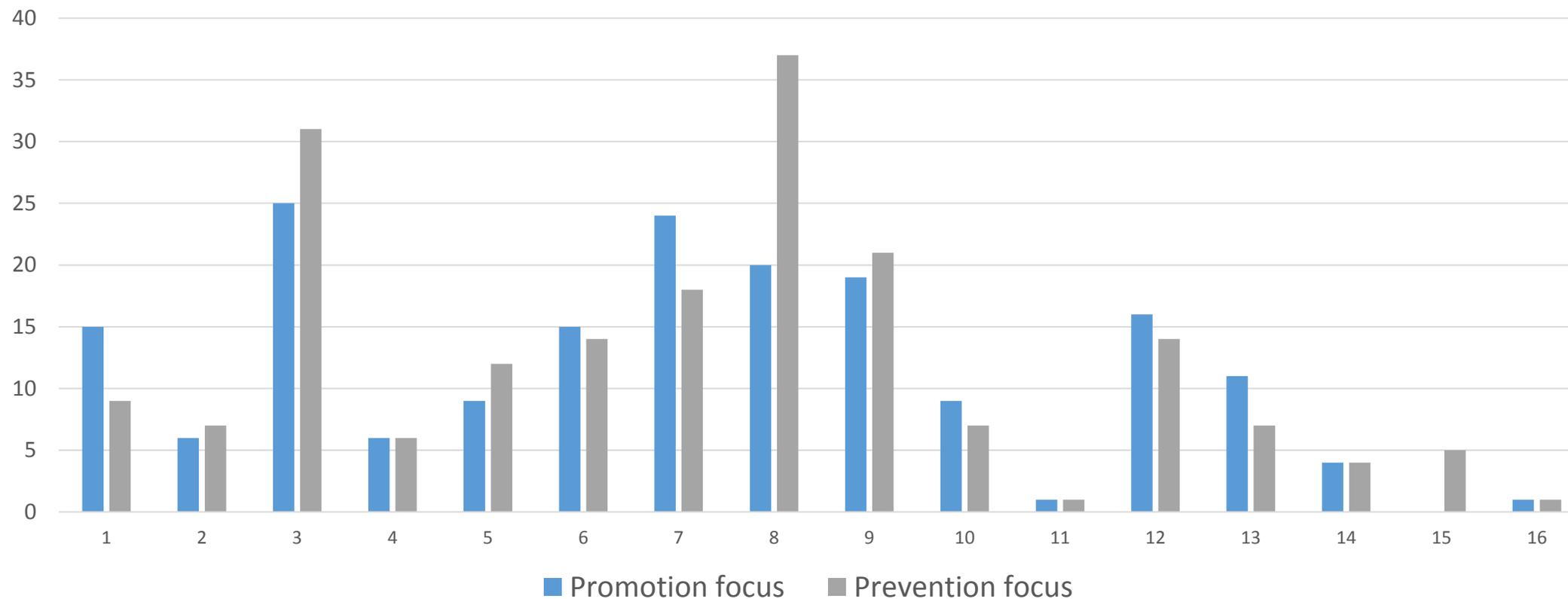
Top 3 items	Promotion focus		Prevention focus	
	Item No.		Item No.	
1st	3	Structure	8	Content
2nd	7	Content	3	Structure
3rd	8	Content	9	Literature

Use of rubric

Depending on RF, students respond differently to components of assessment rubric
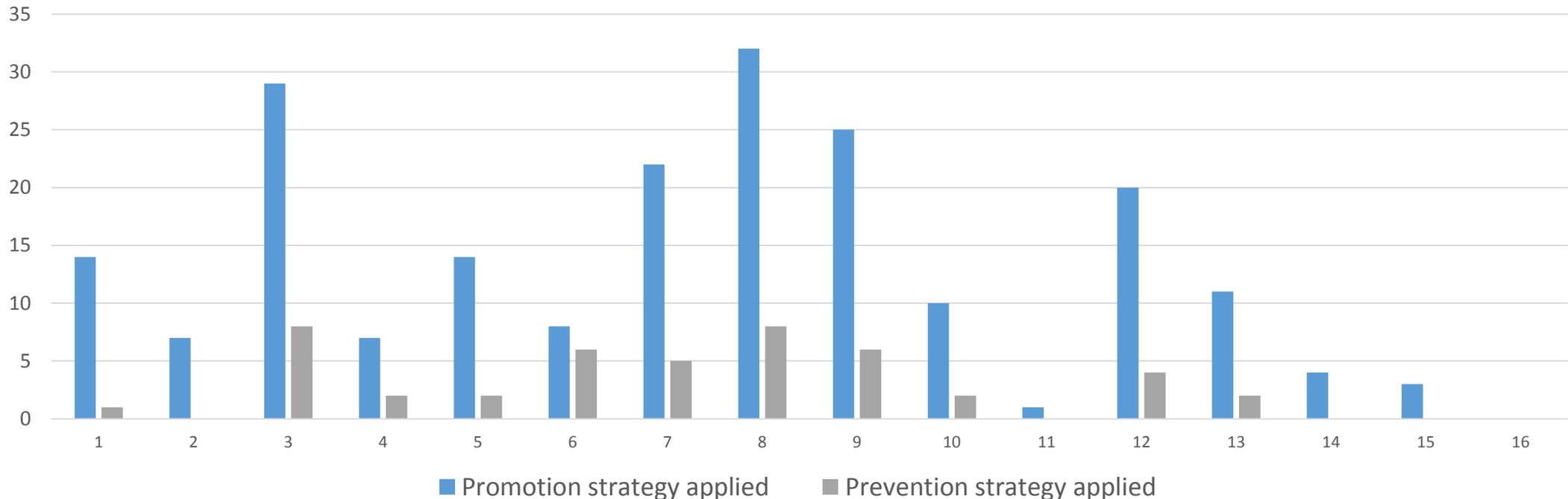
	Promotion strategy applied	Prevention strategy applied
Number of items excluded	1	5

Findings

- 94.8% of participants made use of rubrics for this assessment and 95.5% find it useful (response rate: 63.1%)

- PROM students take a more proactive approach to coursework than PREV students
  - They are more likely to discuss work-in-progress with staff and fellow students

- Depending on RF, students respond differently to components of assessment rubric

Discussion

- Assessment rubric is a useful tool and students have a positive attitude towards it

- Self-regulation mediates the use of assessment rubrics.

- PROM students use the rubric to map out the route towards the 'target' while PREV use it as a collection of 'checkpoints'

- PROM have a more 'holistic' approach to rubric while PREV concentrate deeply on fewer items (Liberman et al. 2001)

Takeaway

- Students engage significantly with the assessment rubric

- Students associate different levels of importance to items included in the rubric (because of their RF)

- Assessment rubrics generate 'mixed feelings':
  - Promotion oriented students engage with fellow students and lecturers
  - Prevention oriented students are less likely to communicate with academic staff

Thank you for listening!

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Minmin Du (minmin.du@glasgow.ac.uk)

Alvise Favotto (alvise.favotto@glasgow.ac.uk)

William Finlay (william.finlay@glasgow.ac.uk)

Accounting and Finance, Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow