

Student Perspectives on Communication

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Teaching Project Management to Second Year Engineering Students

Some challenges

- Some students did not see the relevance of management,
- Very large class – 320 students.
- Multidisciplinary class – Mechanical, Aerospace and Civil Engineers.
- Traditional lecture format not very engaging.

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Opportunities:

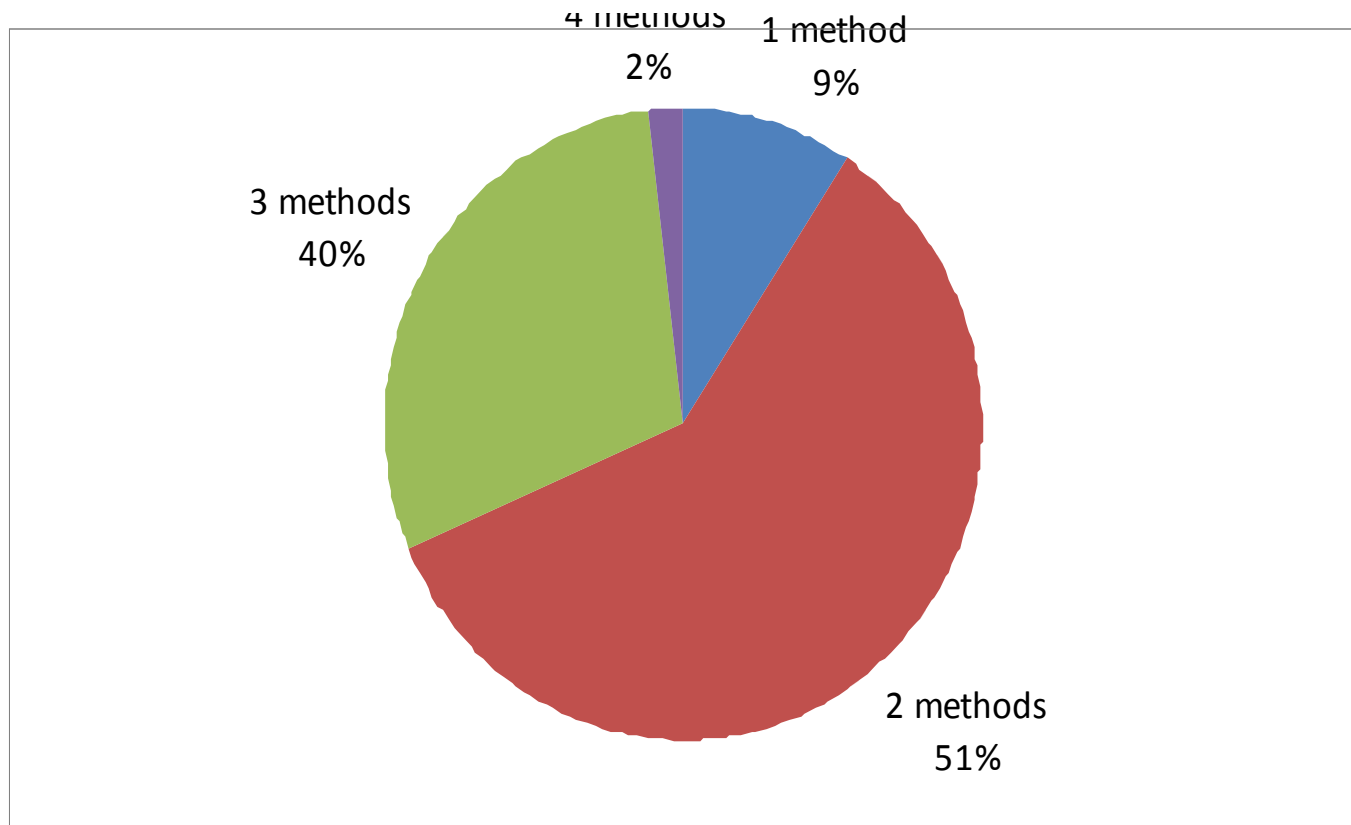
- Groupwork based on business simulation. Students learn by doing.
- Encourage reflective practice.
- Improve presentation and report-writing skills.
- Improve leadership, communication and teamworking skills
- For University and Industrial staff to work together on course delivery.

Study of Communication methods used by students within groups and with staff

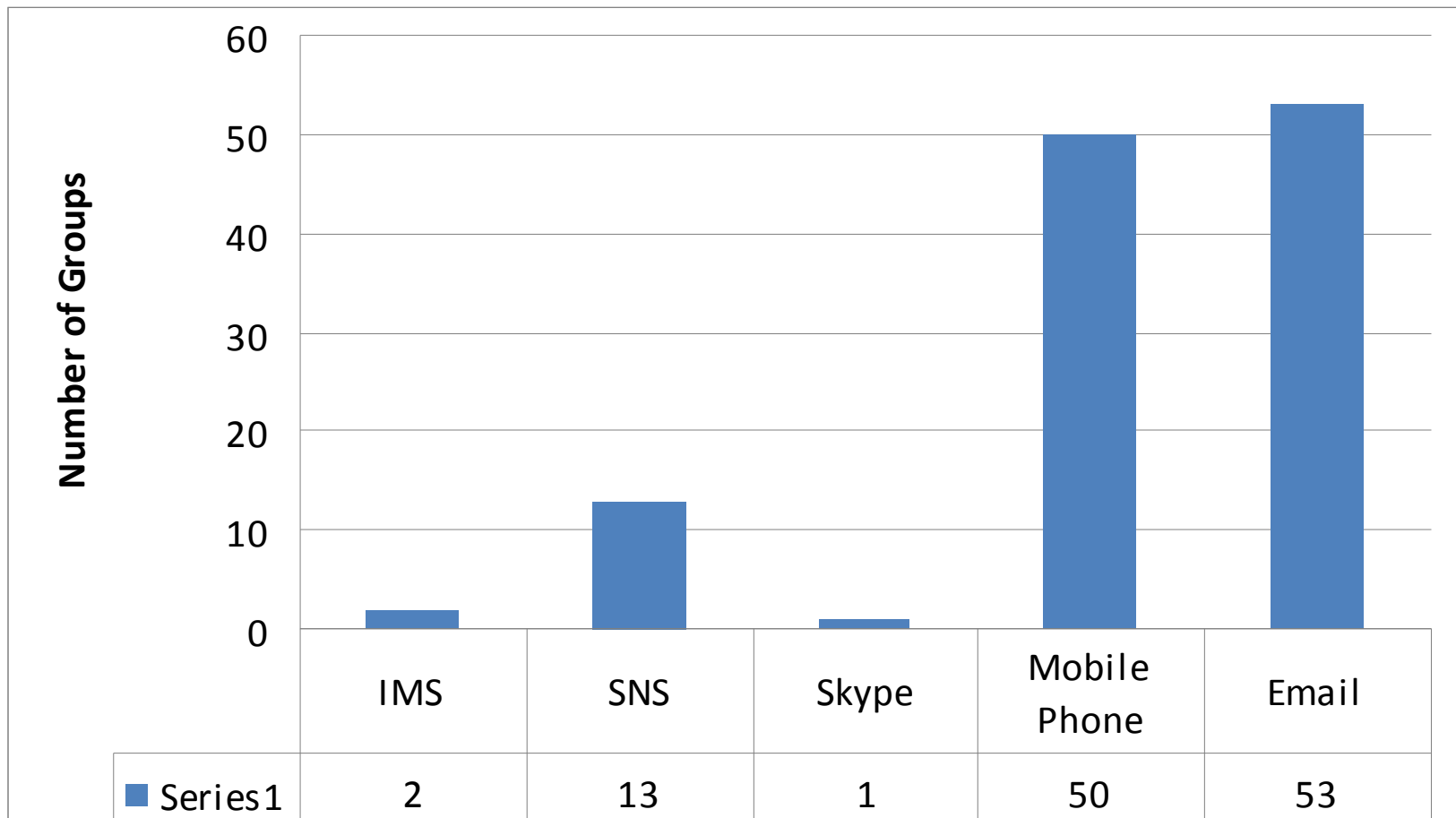
Why?

- To encourage reflection and recognise the importance of these skills,
- To identify how to improve the course delivery.
- To identify why difficulties identified in certain groups and try to prevent these in future.

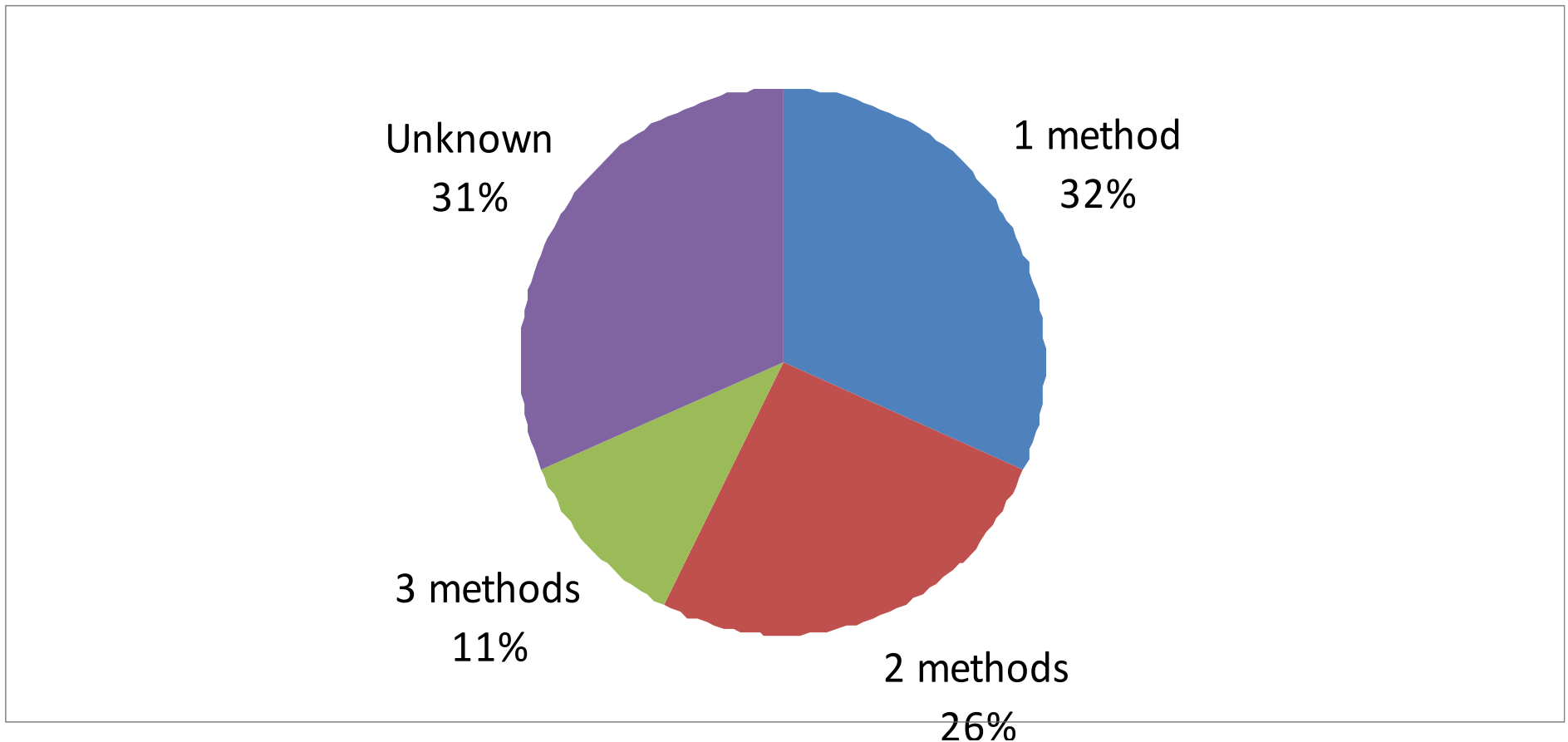
How many methods did groups use to communicate with each other?



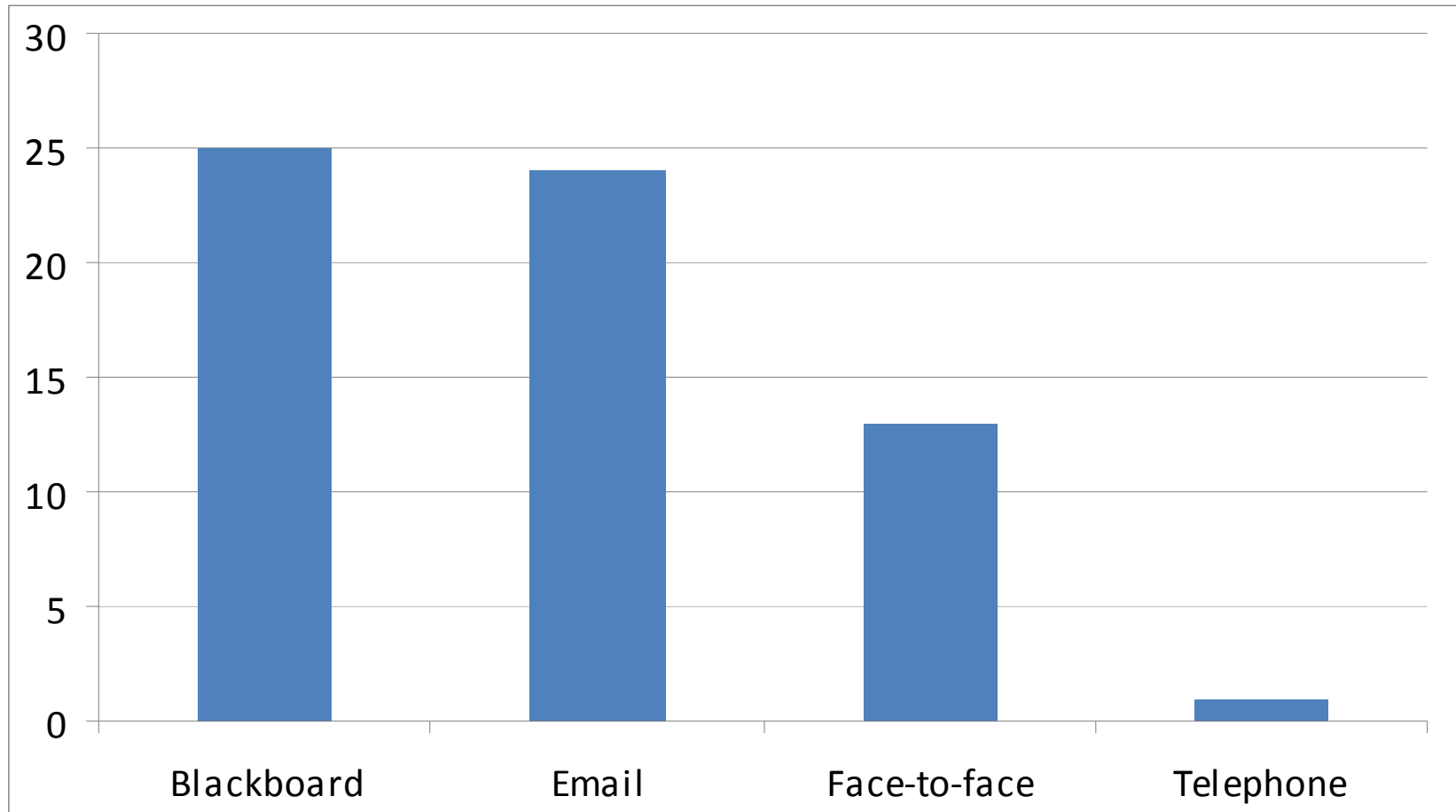
Which methods were used to communicate within group?



How many methods did groups use to communicate with teaching staff?



Which methods were used to communicate with staff?



Key findings – Students Perceptions

- Importance of communication skills in managing teams.
- The staff is seen as a team – University and Business Simulation Provider.
- Quick response to queries is valued.
- Different communication channels are used for different purposes.
- Accessibility of staff is important and there is a demand for more

Key findings – Teaching Staff

- Challenges of running an integrated team of teaching staff.
- Need for a quick response to prevent group issues escalating.
- Can use elearning environments to complement class teaching.
- Challenges of providing quick response to queries and balancing staff workload.
- Identifying which communication mechanism is more effective for what purpose is important.