



Tutors' perceptions of blended and online higher education: the case of Hellenic Open University

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Introduction

- Hellenic Open University, the unique distance learning university in Greece
- New programs with exclusively digital educational content, digital interactive educational activities and online Tutor-Student Sessions (TSS) (Kalantzi, Sideris, Spyropoulou & Androulakis, 2016)
- Tutors' perceptions of educational material, educational activities, TSS and general difficulties
- We compare our results with students' opinion (Spyropoulou, Kalantzi, Sideris & Androulakis, 2017a ; Sideris, Spyropoulou, Kalantzi & Androulakis, 2017 ; Spyropoulou, Kalantzi, Sideris & Androulakis, 2017b)

Background (1/2)

- A limited number of face-to-face TSS support educational procedure → blended and online learning (Antonelou, Verykios, Kalantzi, Panagiotakopoulos & Stavropoulos, 2015)
- During TSS: tutors familiarize students with the process of distance learning, provide them advice, support and general academic guidance, is a way to interact with each other and be part of a team
- Online TSS → blended online learning (Fadde & Vu, 2014)



Background (2/2)

- Reduction of travel expenses and the corresponding time spent on transportation
- Get familiar with the web conferencing tool
- Tutors have to decide which instructional methods are enhanced by synchronous interaction and aim the purpose of TSS (may need pedagogical training and technical support)

Method

- Educational Content, Methodology and Technology Lab (e-Comet Lab) supports and coordinates the courses' development procedures that need close collaboration between the involved teams and frequent assessment of the quality and successful operation of each program
- Questionnaire with open-ended questions
- Thematic analysis
- Grounded theory



Sample

90 tutors

66,03 % female

54% between 40-49 years old

42% between 5-15 hours/week

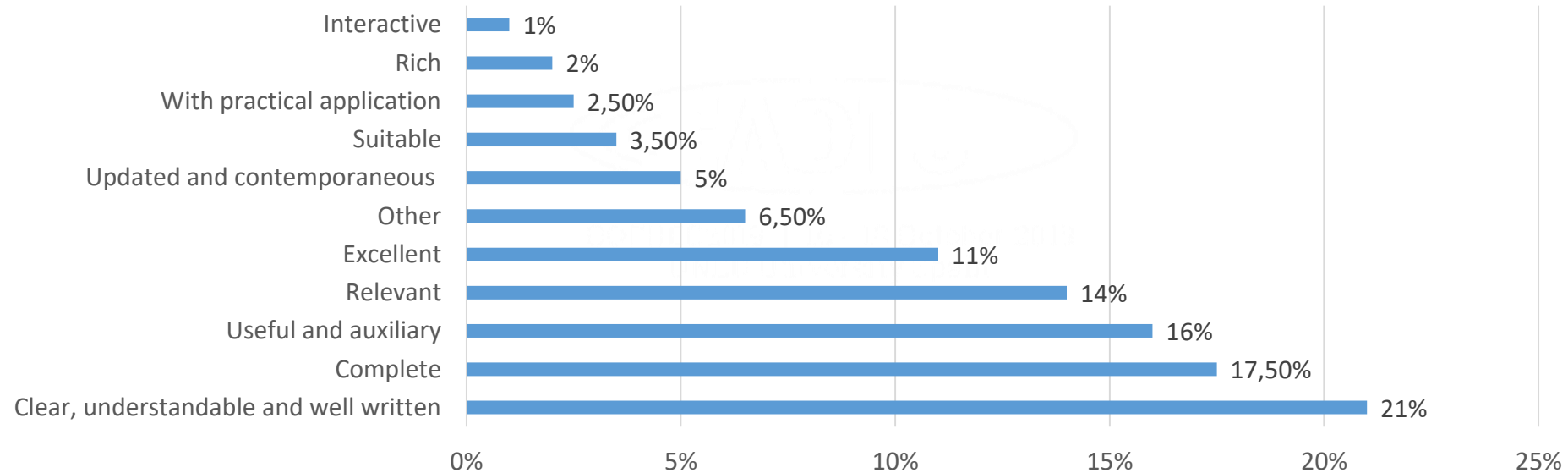
34,4% between 15-25 hours/week

All experienced in Open and Distance Learning



Educational material (1/3)

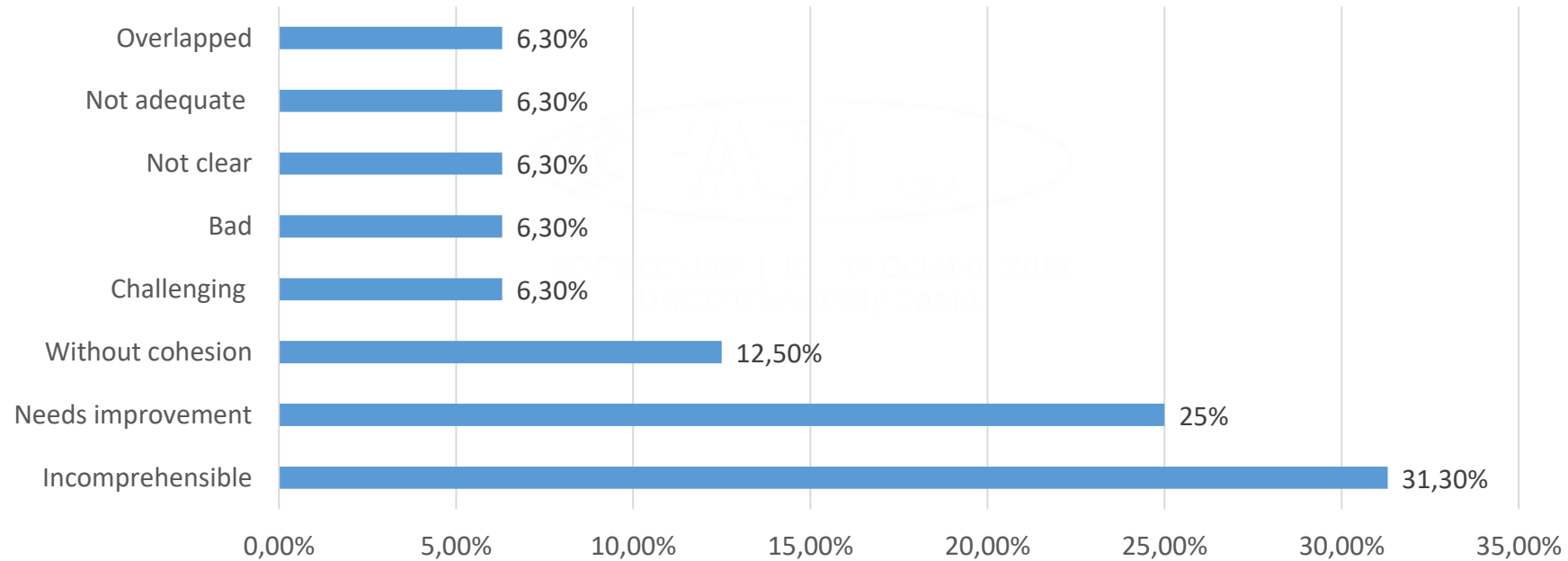
Positive Comments





Educational material (2/3)

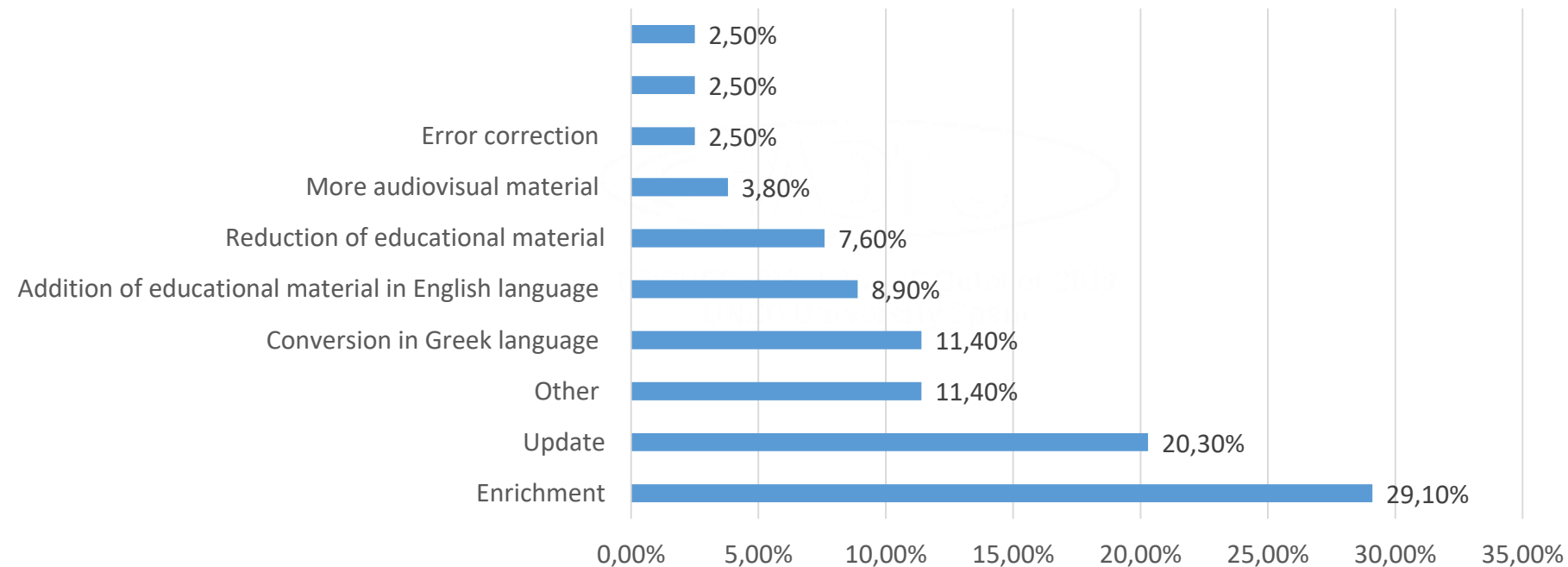
Negative Comments





Educational material (3/3)

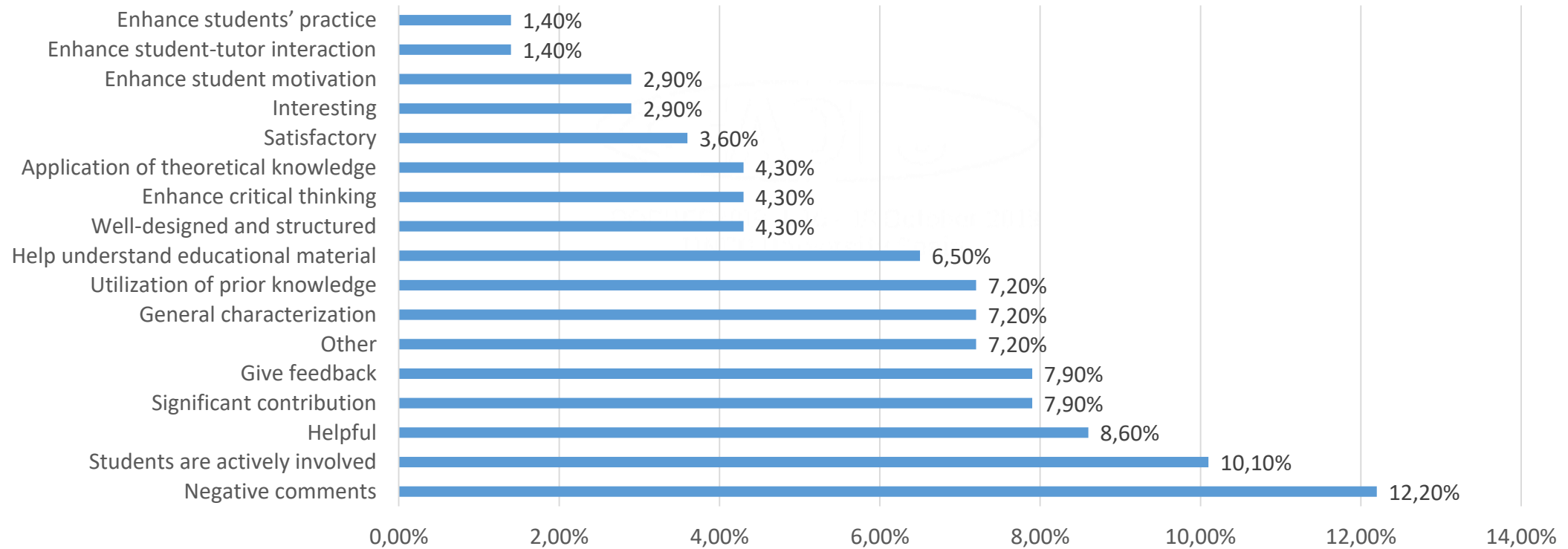
Suggested improvements





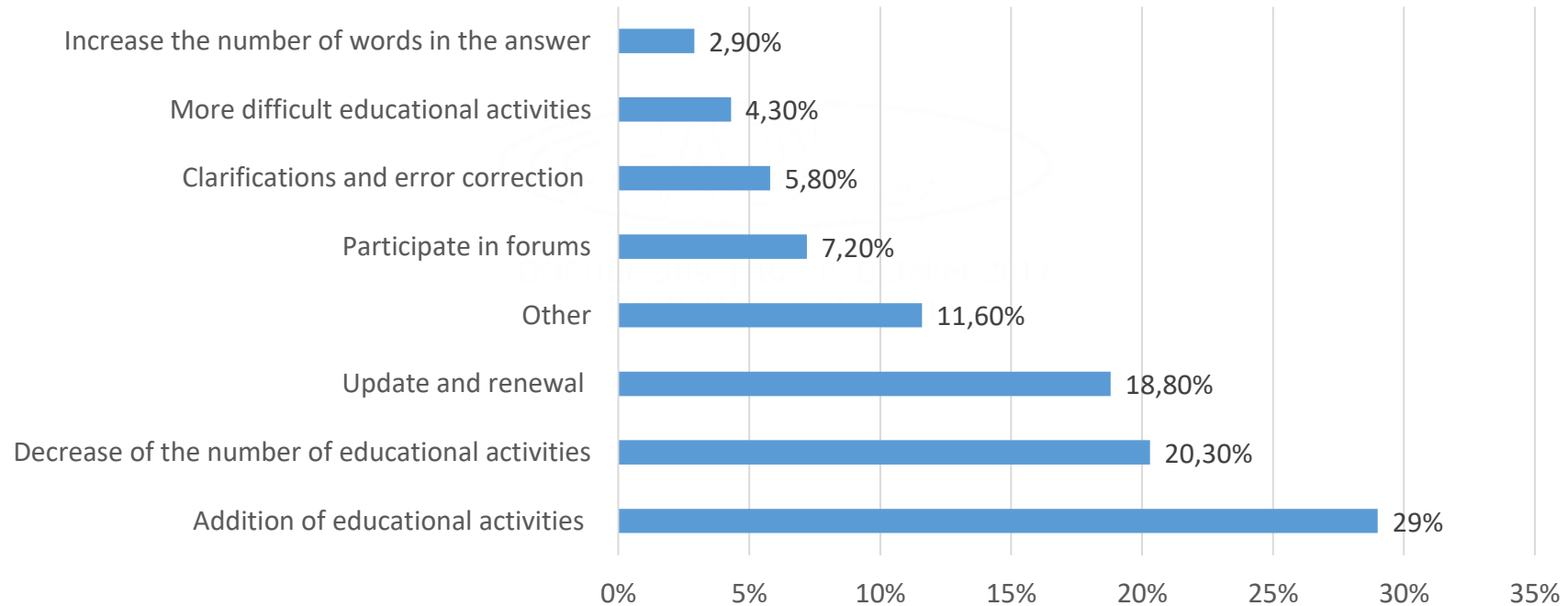
Educational activities (1/2)

Contribution



Educational activities (2/2)

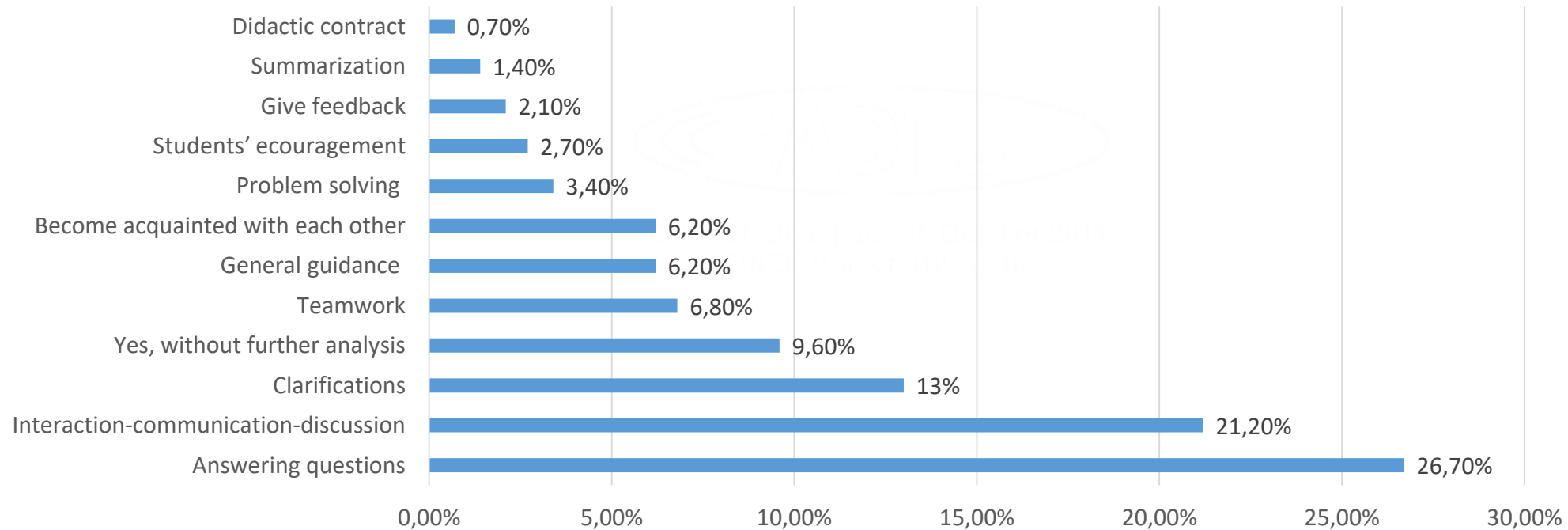
Suggested improvements





Tutor-Student Sessions (1/2)

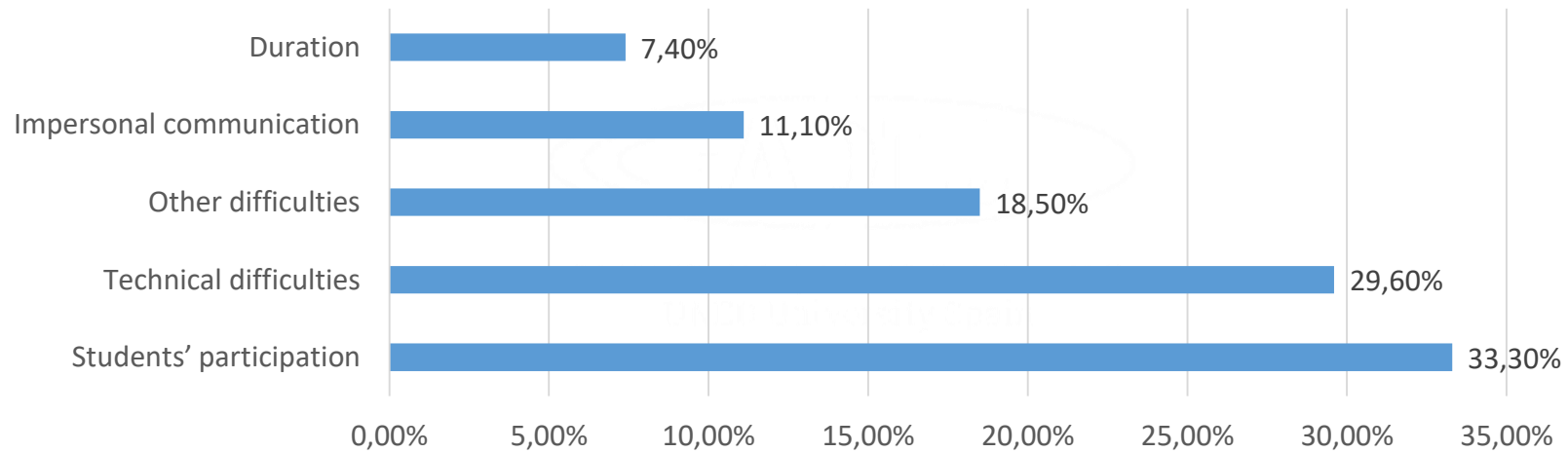
Contribution of TSS





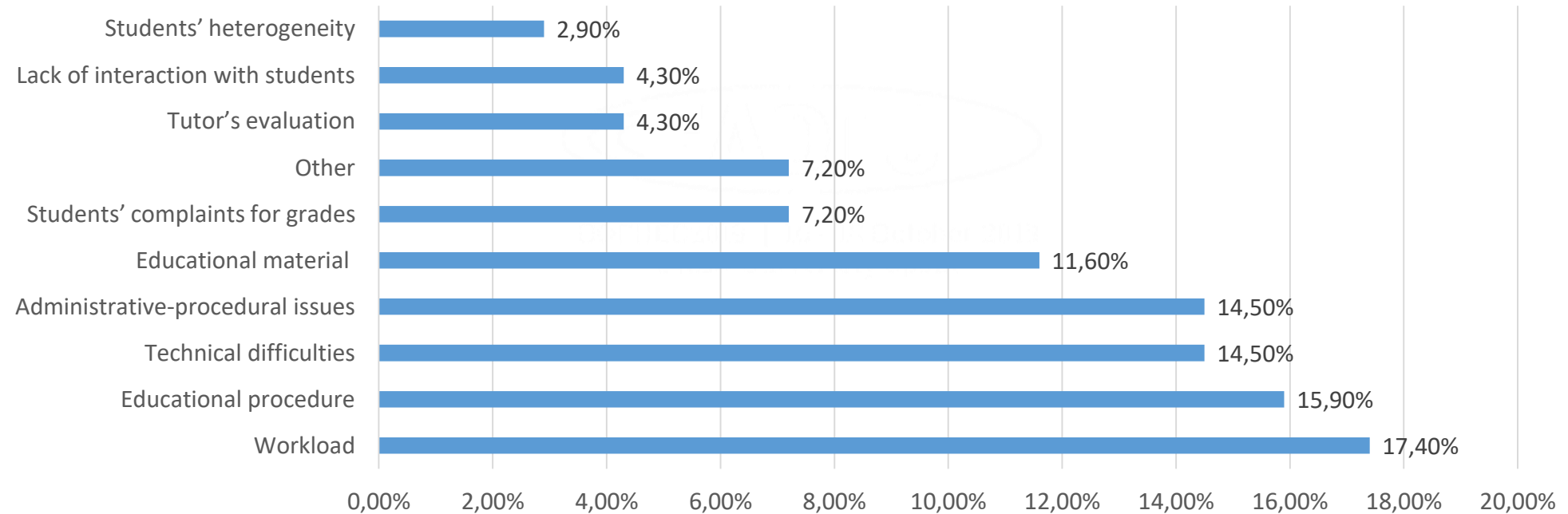
Tutor-Student Sessions (2/2)

Difficulties



General difficulties

General difficulties





Conclusions (1/4)

- The majority report educational material's positive impact on learning procedure (clear, understandable and useful along with its completeness and relevance to course's subject matter) but a small number find it incomprehensible for students
- The majority do not propose improvements except a small number who suggest that it should be updated and enriched with additional bibliography

Conclusions (2/4)

- The majority of the comments mention educational activities' positive contribution in educational procedure (help students be actively involved in educational procedure, understand educational material in depth and connect theory with practice, enhance students' abilities like critical thinking and motivation)
- Suggest adding specific types of educational activities and reduction of their number

Conclusions (3/4)

- During TSS tutors answer students' questions while clarifying and explaining difficult or important parts of educational material
- It is a way for students to interact and communicate with other students and tutor
- Students' low participation is a common issue for tutors along with technical difficulties
- Tutors find their occupation demanding since they had to spend many hours in order to fulfill their duties

Conclusions (4/4)

- Both tutors and students mention the good quality of educational material but some of them comment parts of it as incomprehensible and claim that needs updating
- Recognize educational activities' positive contribution on the educational procedure but they propose reduction of their number
- Emphasize on the interaction and communication that is built between students and tutors and students with each other during TSS however they cite technical problems

References

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Thank you

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