



SENIOR CYCLE SUBJECT REDEVELOPMENT REPORT



NPC

SUPPORTING PARENTS
SUPPORTING CHILDREN

NPC Vision

The National Parents Council want to see an Ireland where every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential

NPC Mission

The National Parents Council exists to ensure that all parents are supported and empowered to become effective partners in their children’s education. NPC will work to increase the capacity and capability of the education sector, to achieve true partnership and deliver better outcomes for all children and young people.

Values

NPC knows that when parents and schools work together, children do better. Therefore, NPC believes that in order to achieve this parents must feel:

Engaged: Parents must be actively engaged in the education of their children.

Supported: Parents’ involvement in children’s education must be supported by the attitudes, beliefs and practices of all members of the school and broader education community.

Partners: Parents must be viewed as partners in facilitating children’s learning and be supported in this role by the school and broader education community.

Valued: Parents should be viewed as full partners in the decisions that affect their children and their family.

Welcomed: Parents should be welcome in the school, and their support and assistance sought as a valuable resource to support children’s education in the school.

Connected: All communication and dialogue with parents must be regular, open, two-way and meaningful.

National Parents Council

Key Activities

SERVICE DELIVERY

NPC's services are developed to empower parents so that they can support their children in all aspects of education.

HELPLINE

The NPC helpline is a national confidential service for parents. The helpline staff listen and give information and support to parents to help them make the best possible decisions for and with their children.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The NPC Training and Development programme is a national programme of training, development and support for parents. The purpose is to empower parents to play an active part in their child's education at every level.

WEBSITE

The NPC's website www.npc.ie aims to provide parents with information regarding education at early years, primary and post primary levels.

ADVOCACY

NPC engages in awareness-raising activities and campaigning and lobbying at a national level on the objectives of its Strategic Plan.

REPRESENTING PARENTS

NPC represents the voice of parents through representation on external bodies and other mediums. NPC consults with parents and brings parents' views to bear on education policy.

BUILDING PARTICIPATION

NPC builds participation strategies and activities to ensure parents and children are an integral part of the work of NPC.



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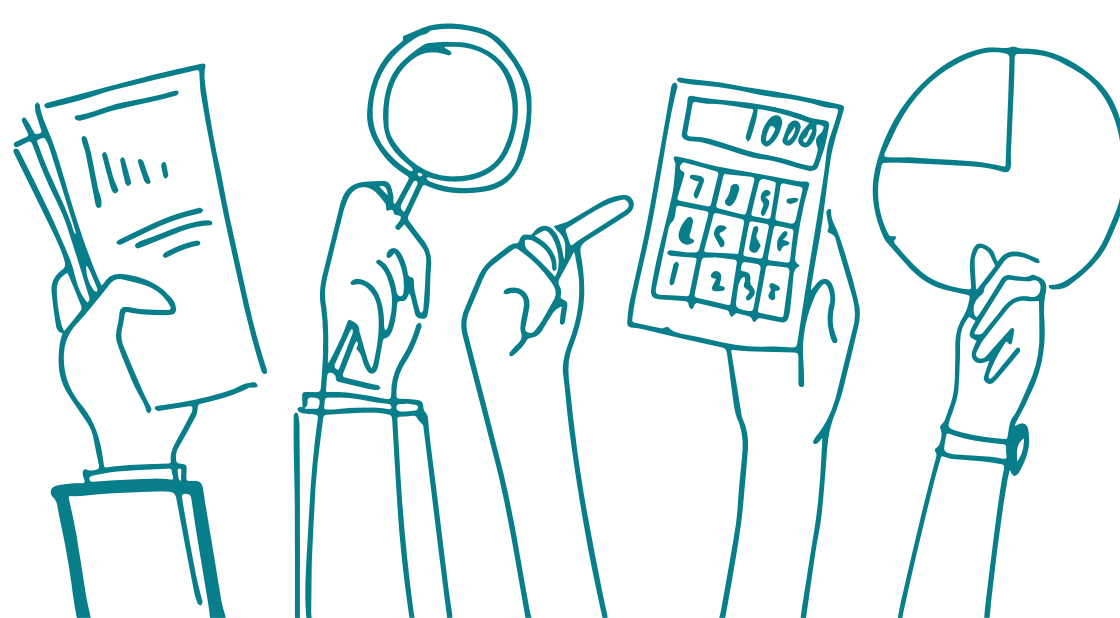
Introduction

The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is currently redeveloping the Senior Cycle curriculum in Ireland. As part of this initiative, the NCCA is introducing changes to various subjects in phases, referred to as "tranches." Tranche 3 subjects, which will be introduced to all schools in 2027, include: Agricultural Science, Computer Science, Design and Communications Graphics, History, Home Economics, Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry, and Music.

The goal of this redevelopment is to update and enhance the curriculum to better reflect students' interests while also fostering the development of a broader range of skills and talents.

The National Parents Council (NPC) has gathered and analysed feedback from parents regarding their opinions on the introduction of these subjects. This report will explore key areas of focus, such as parental awareness of changes to subject content and assessment methods, understanding of newly introduced competencies, and the impact of these developments on students' learning, critical thinking, and overall educational growth.

The findings presented in this report are based on surveys conducted by the NPC between January 2024 and February 2025. The surveys were sent to all parents on the NPC mailing list who had consented to receiving such invitations. The surveys were open from January 27, 2025, to February 20, 2025. During this time, a total of 403 responses were collected. The opinions of the 403 parents who completed the surveys will be shared in this report.



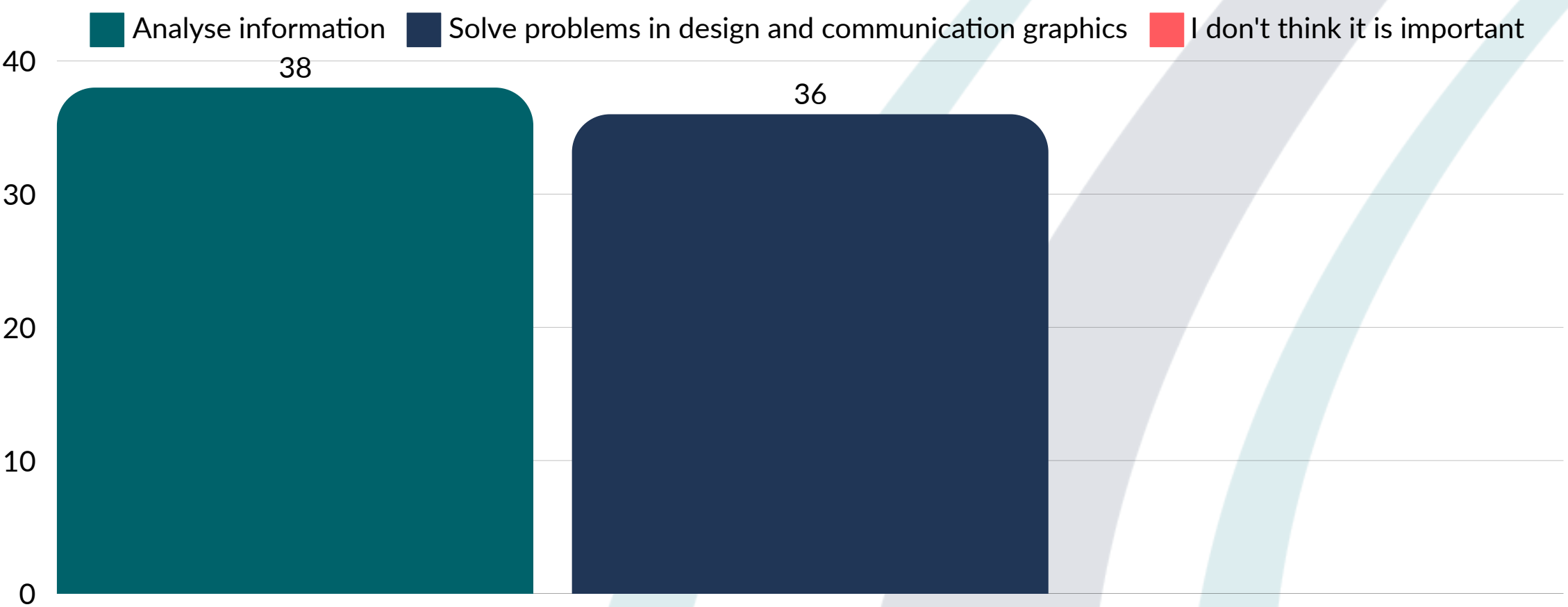
Surveys

There were eight separate surveys, each focused on one of the eight Tranche 3 subjects. Each survey was divided into two sections: the first focused on abilities and skills, while the second addressed assessment criteria.

The survey consisted of both multiple-choice questions and open-ended responses, enabling parents to select options and provide additional input. A summary of these responses will be included in this report.

Leaving Certificate Design and Communication Graphics Survey Findings

When considering the importance of the different competencies parents were given the opportunity to choose more than one option. When asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, slightly more than half of parents (51%) stated that analysing information is important, and slightly less than half of parents (49%) emphasised the importance of solving problems in design and communication graphics. No respondents indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 1).

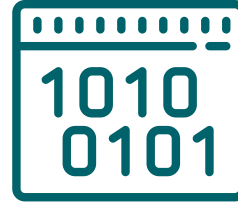


(Figure 1)

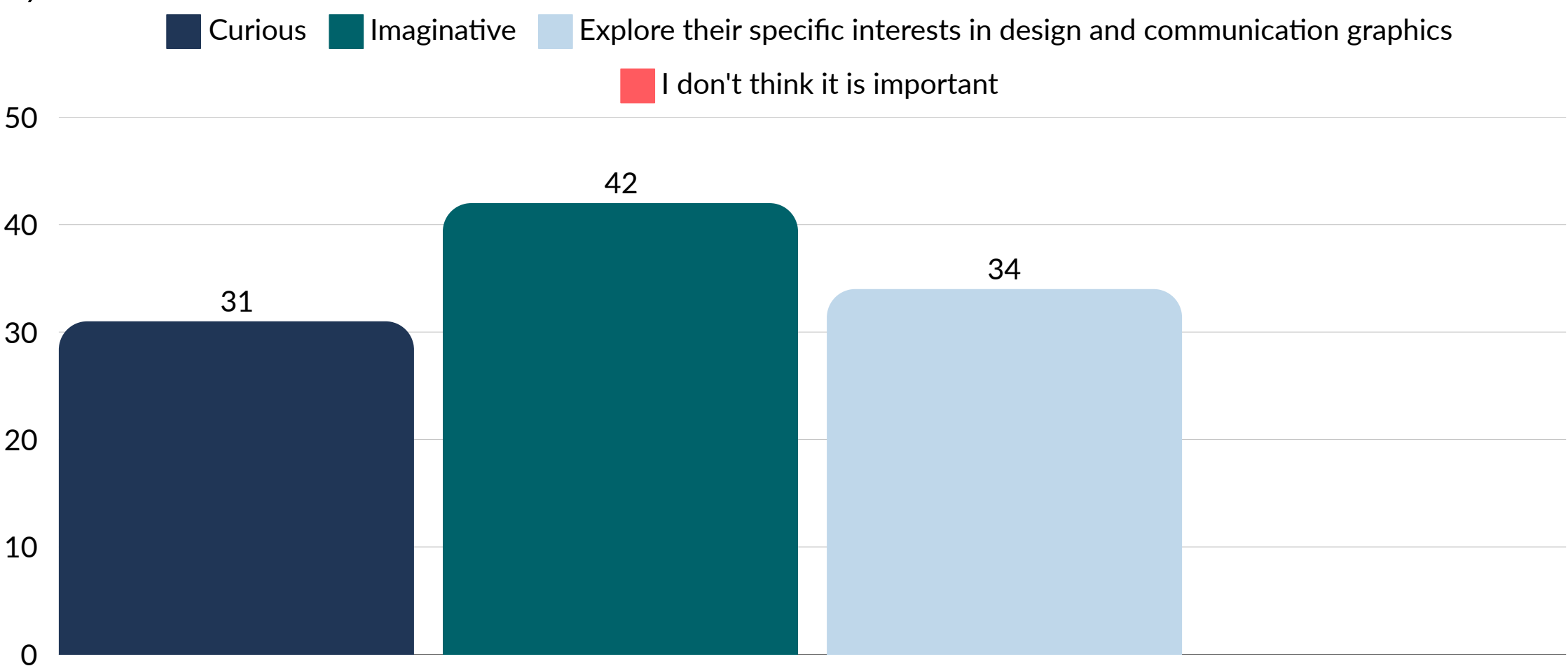
First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems

What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

Parents shared different views on the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving for children. Many believe these skills help students think creatively and avoid misinformation, especially in today's world of social media. Some said learning to solve problems step by step is useful for real-life situations. Others thought that schools should support children with different learning styles, like those with dyslexia, and those who may be strong in creativity and maths but struggle with written problems. While most agreed on the value of these skills, one parent felt that design and communication graphics would soon be replaced by AI. Overall, parents saw problem-solving as an important skill to help children become independent.



When asked about the importance of creativity in their child’s learning, over a third of parents (39%) highlighted the importance of being imaginative, whilst slightly less than a third of parents (32%) emphasised the value of exploring specific interests in design and communication graphics. More than a quarter (29%) stated that creativity helps their child become curious, while no parents indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 2).

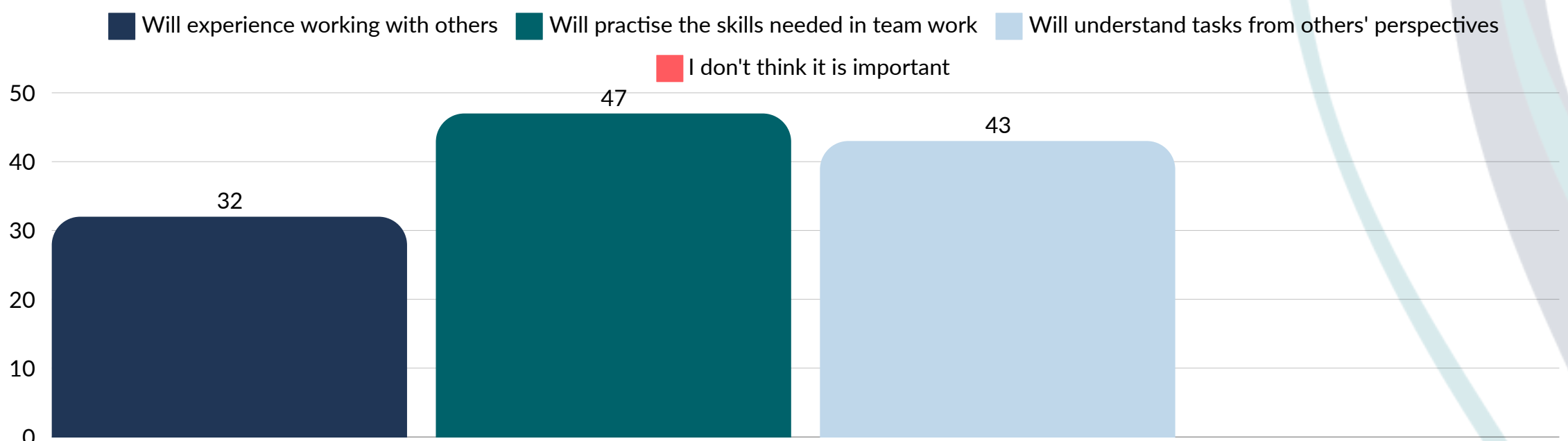


(Figure 2)
Second competency: Being Creative

What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be

Parents shared different opinions on the role of creativity in their child's learning. Many felt that children need more opportunities to explore ideas, develop themselves, and create things that express their thoughts and feelings. Some said creativity is a way to communicate and deal with stress without even realising it. Others believed that a student should have the freedom to find their own talents by thinking in new and creative ways. Many agreed that creativity helps children understand themselves and solve problems in unique ways. However, one parent questioned whether graphics is a useful subject in future education. Overall, most parents saw creativity as an important part of learning and personal growth.

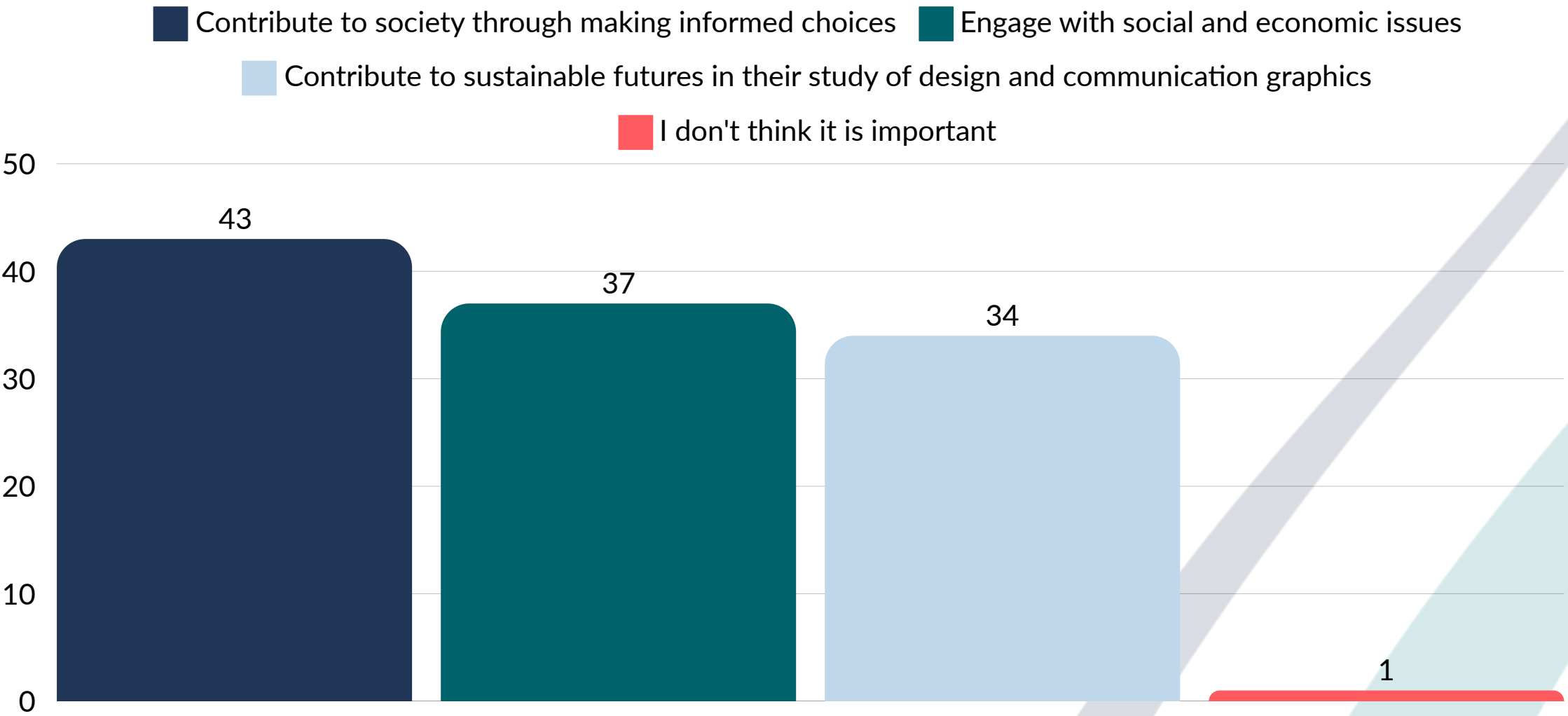
Regarding the importance of working with others, over a third (39%) indicated that their child will practice essential teamwork skills. Similarly, over a third of parents (35%) stated that their child will gain an understanding of tasks from others' perspectives, while a smaller number (26%) believed their child will gain experience working with others. Notably, none of the parents surveyed (0%) considered working with others to be unimportant (see Figure 3).



(Figure 3)
Third competency: Working with Others
What I find important about working with others is that my child

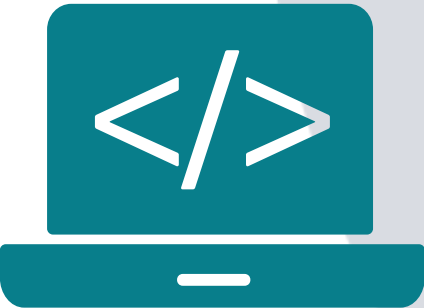
Parents expressed opinions about the benefits and challenges of group work. Some noted that teamwork can be difficult, especially when certain children contribute less while others take control, making supervision important. They highlighted the need for students to accept different working styles and understand that they will not always get along with their peers. Many saw collaboration as a way for children to develop social and leadership skills, experience different learning approaches, and learn to consider others' viewpoints. However, some parents pointed out that group work can be tough for children who lack confidence to share their ideas, making social skills an essential part of learning.

Regarding the importance of participating in society, over a third of parents (37%) stated that their child will learn to contribute by making informed choices, whilst slightly less than a third (32%) emphasised the importance of engaging with social and economic issues, similarly, less than a third (30%) highlighted the value of contributing to sustainable futures through the study of design and communication graphics. A small minority of parents (1%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 4).

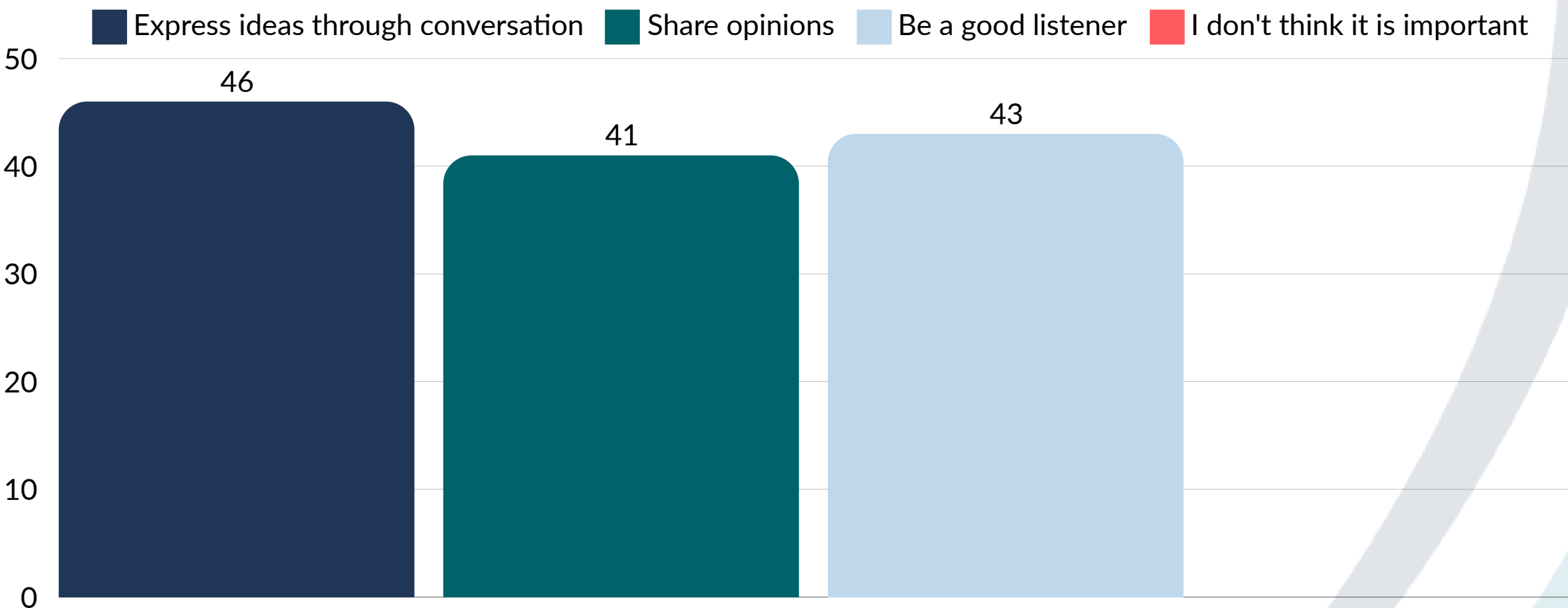


(Figure 4)
Fourth competency: Participating in Society
What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to

Parents shared their views on how teens connect with society and their education. Some felt that teens are often overlooked and not given the same opportunity to speak up, even though they can be more informed and opinionated than adults. They emphasised that being involved in society helps teens grow, feel like they belong, and build confidence. Many parents also stressed that learning about citizenship and sustainable development is important for the future. However, some felt that subjects like graphics are not suitable for senior cycle students. A small number of parents mentioned that teens are engaging less with others and suggested that these topics could be explored more in college, not during the senior cycle. Finally, some parents said that social media makes teens more judgmental, and working with different groups could help open their minds.



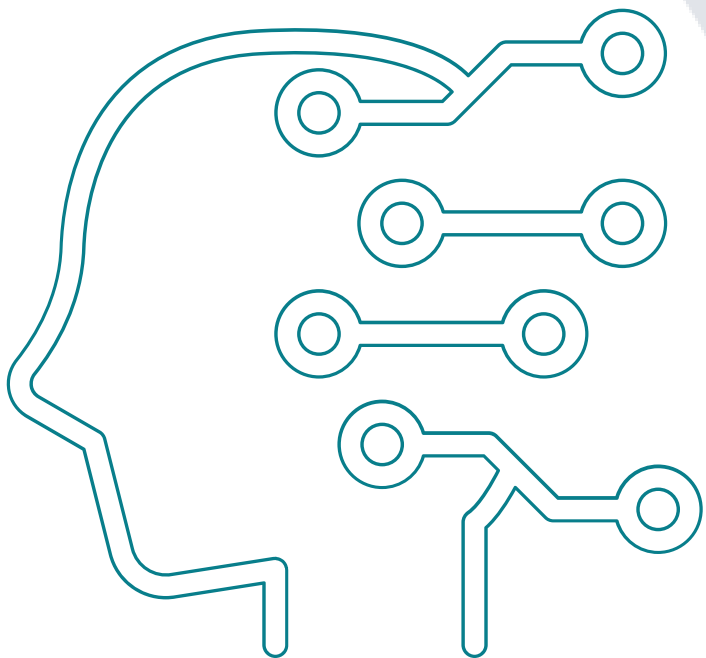
In response to the importance of communication, more than a third of parents (35%) believe their child will learn to express ideas through conversation. Additionally, a third (33%) highlighted the value of being a good listener, while a similar number (32%) emphasised the importance of sharing opinions. Notably, none of the parents surveyed (0%) indicated that they do not consider communication important (see Figure 5).

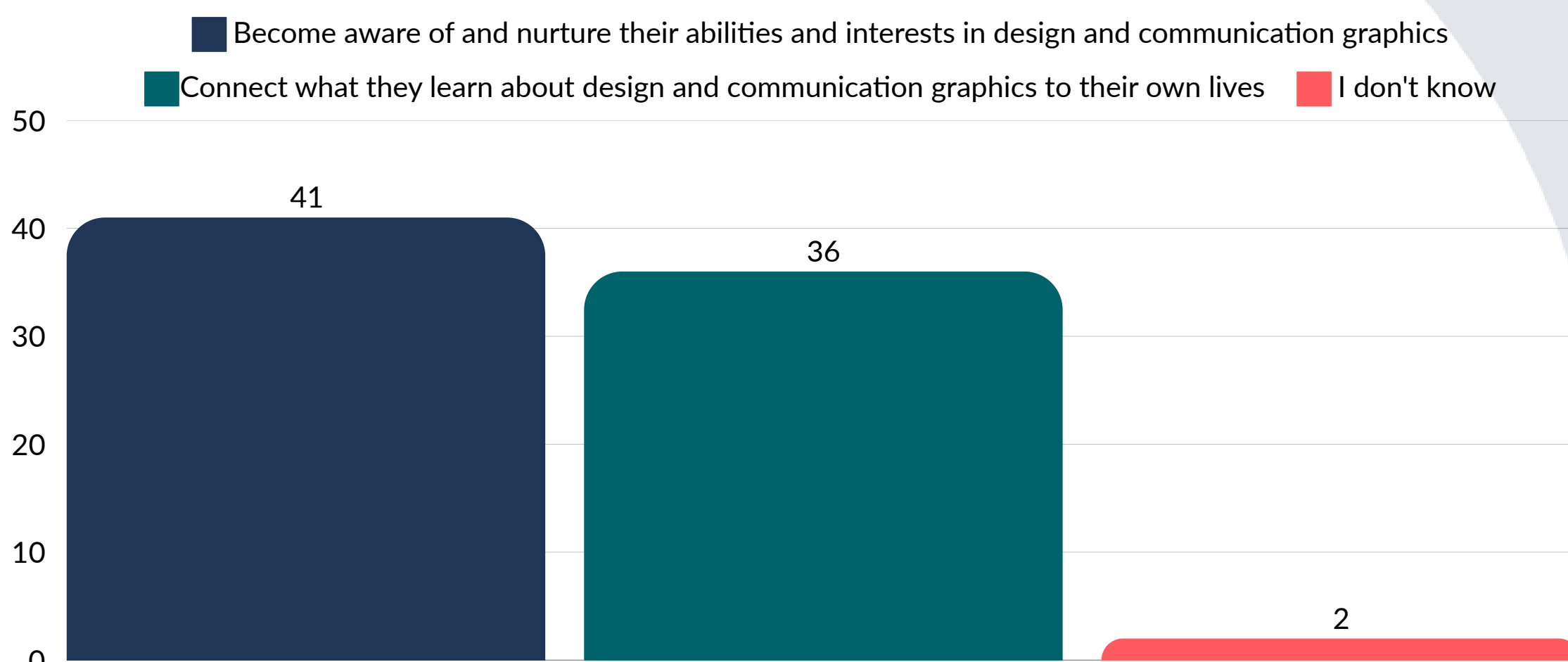


(Figure 5)
Fifth competency: Communicating
What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to

Parents shared their thoughts on skills that are important for teens to learn. Many believed that learning to listen is key for better communication. They also pointed out that in group settings, some teens who are more talkative can take over, while quieter teens may have great ideas if they are given a chance. Parents emphasised the importance of respecting other people’s opinions and making sure that discussions happen in a safe and respectful environment. Communication should be more than just talking; teens need to learn how to express themselves in different ways. Some parents also mentioned that teens should find healthy ways to take care of their mental wellbeing. They noted that while some teens are natural leaders, others might struggle to take part in group work. Finally, many parents said that teens often worry about sharing their opinions because they fear not fitting in, so it is important to give them a safe space to express themselves.

In terms of cultivating well-being, over half of parents (52%) believe their child will learn to become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in design and communication graphics. Slightly less than half (46%) emphasised the connection between what their child learns in design and communication graphics and their personal lives. Only a few parents (2%) indicated that they did not know (see Figure 6).





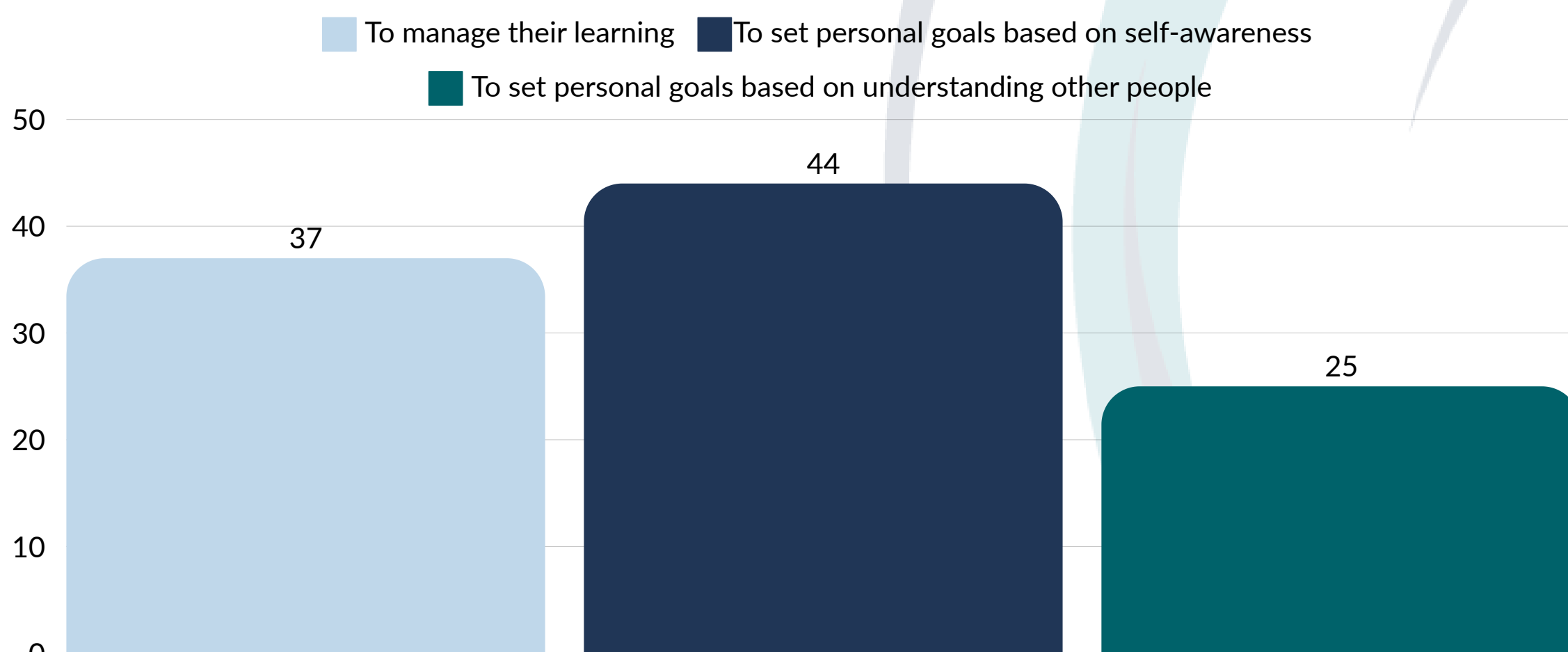
(Figure 6)

Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing

What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

Parents shared their thoughts on the importance of wellbeing in both personal development and education. One parent, with a background in holistic practice and design, emphasised that understanding our own wellbeing is key to better communication, especially in design. Others expressed concerns about reducing wellbeing to just a checklist, hoping it is treated in a more meaningful and holistic way within society. Some parents also mentioned the importance of helping children organise their time and work to maintain a healthy balance between learning, productivity, and overall wellbeing. A few suggested guiding teens towards careers they are passionate about, while others highlighted that a strong sense of wellbeing is essential for success in any area of life.

When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, a significant amount of parents (42%) emphasised the importance of setting personal goals based on self-awareness. More than a third (35%) believe their child will learn to manage their learning, while a smaller number of parents (23%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 7).

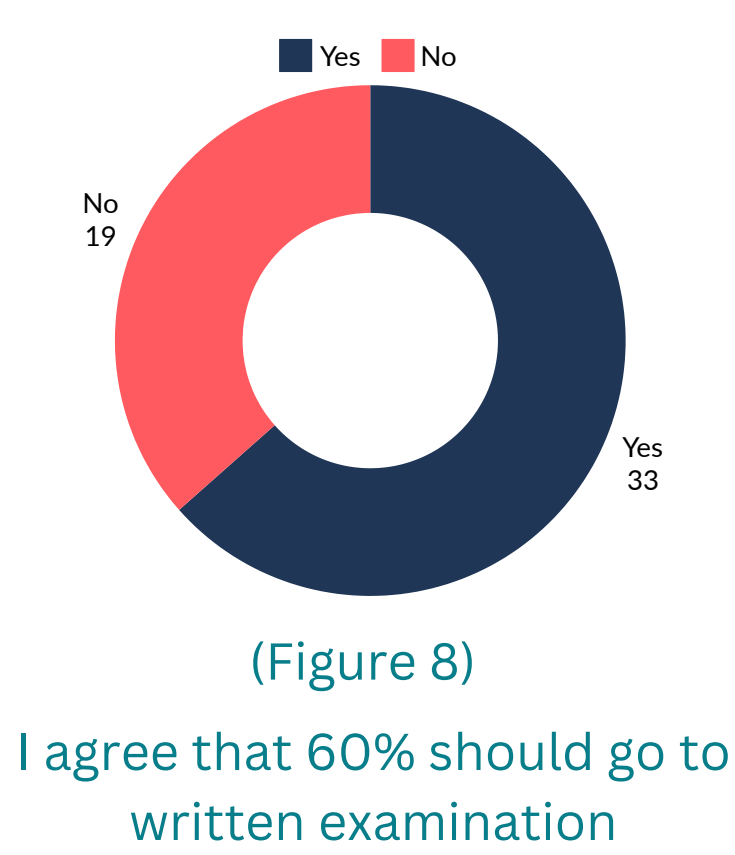


(Figure 7)

Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self

What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn

Parents emphasised the importance of certain skills for personal growth and learning. They highlighted that these skills help people take control of their own learning and stay motivated to keep learning throughout their lives. Some parents also mentioned that managing learning should be a balance between doing things on your own and working with others, as learning is both a personal and group effort.

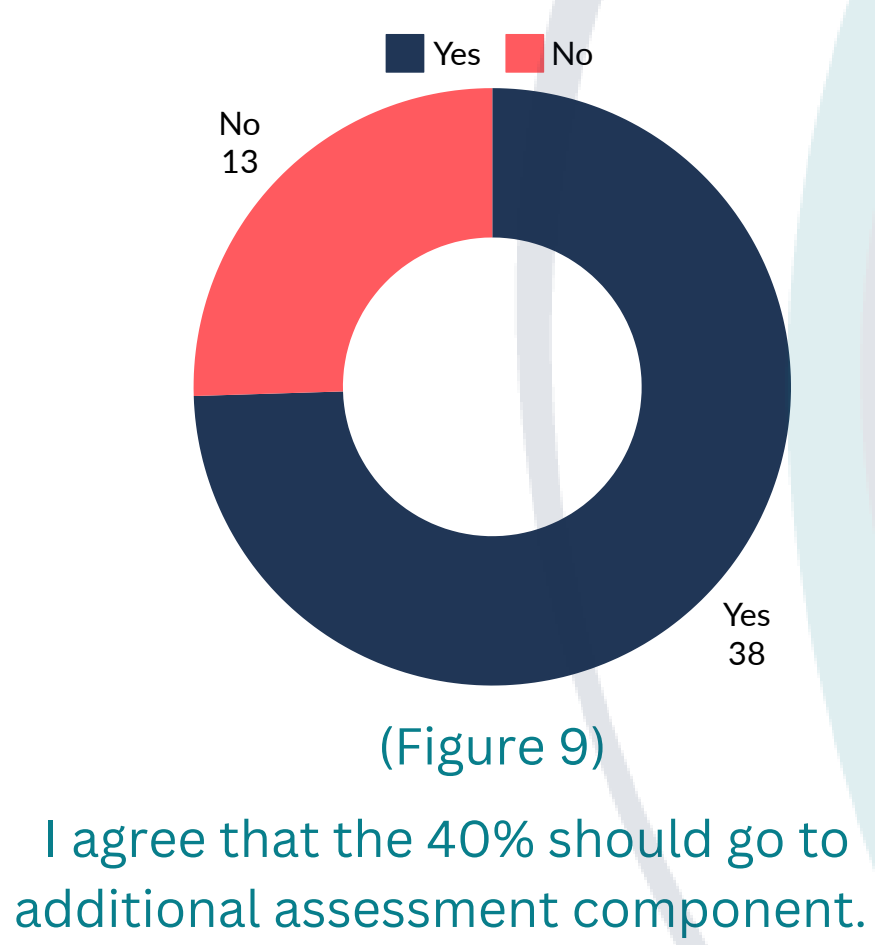


As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, the majority of parents (63%) agreed, while the reminder (37%) disagreed (see Figure 8).

Parents who disagreed with having 60% of the grade based on a written exam shared their thoughts on alternative assessment methods. Some suggested a mix of skills like podcasts or PowerPoint presentations, as these are more relevant in today’s world. Others pointed out that some students are better at hands-on or practical work than writing exams. There was also a concern that the written exam might not be fair for neurodivergent students, who may struggle with written tasks but excel in other areas. Many parents felt that continuous assessment throughout the year would be a better way to evaluate students, with a few proposing a 50/50 split between written and practical assessments.

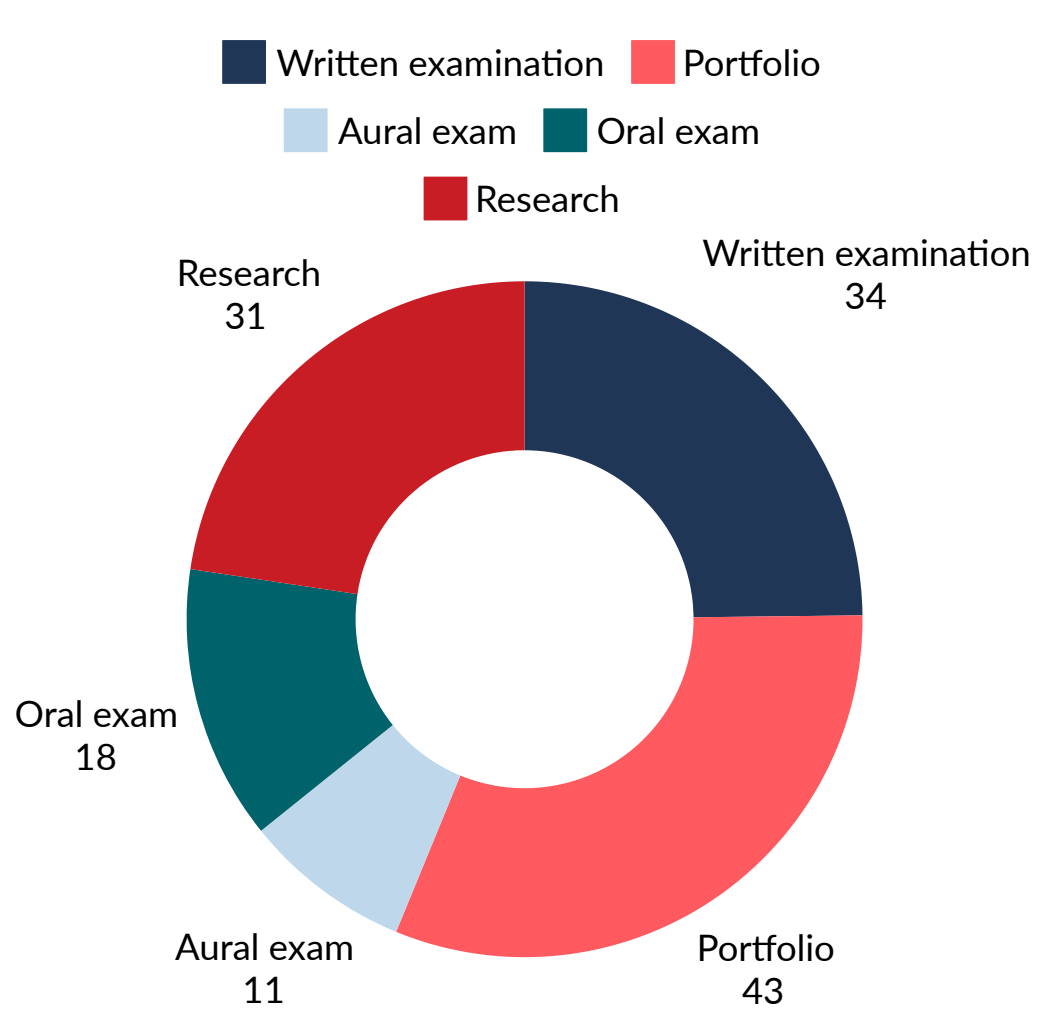
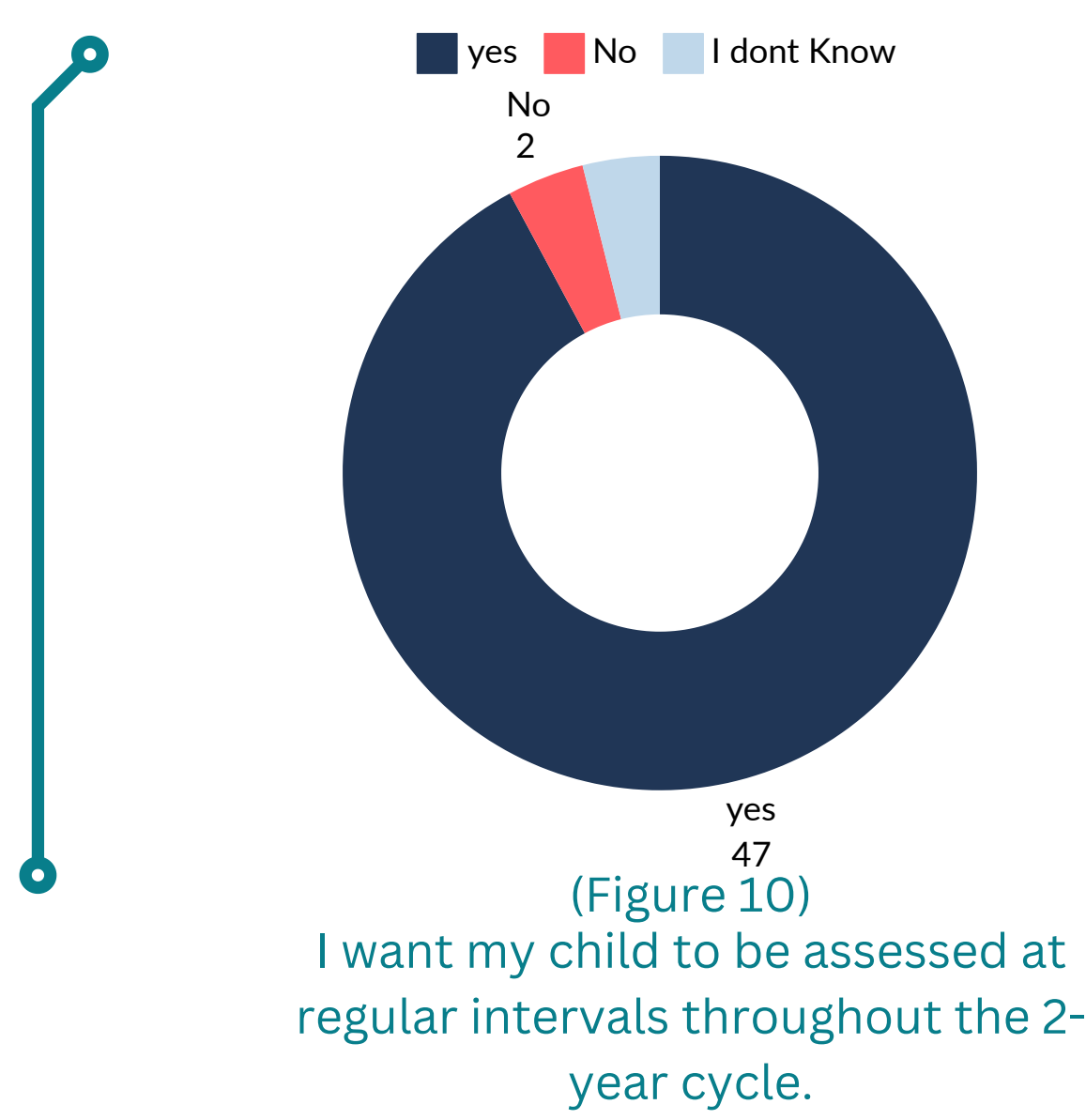
Some believed that subjects involving creativity should rely less on written exams and more on other forms of assessment. A few parents suggested reducing the weight of the written exam even further, with one proposing that the practical part should make up 100% of the grade. They felt that assessments should consider different learning styles and abilities, like those with dyslexia, who may find written tasks challenging but excel in other areas such as creativity or maths.

In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, most parents (75%) expressed agreement, and the reminder (25%) disagreed (see Figure 9).



Parents who disagreed with allocating 40% to the additional assessment component shared their views on a fairer approach. Many felt assessment should reflect modern methods used in higher education, such as podcasts and presentations, and suggested a more balanced distribution of marks. Some believed continuous assessment should carry more weight, while others proposed equal percentages for both components. A few highlighted the need to support students with different strengths, allowing those who excel in design but struggle with writing to demonstrate their understanding in other ways. Some parents suggested increasing the additional assessment component to 50% or even 60%, while a few argued that practical work should make up the entire grade, with no need for a written exam.

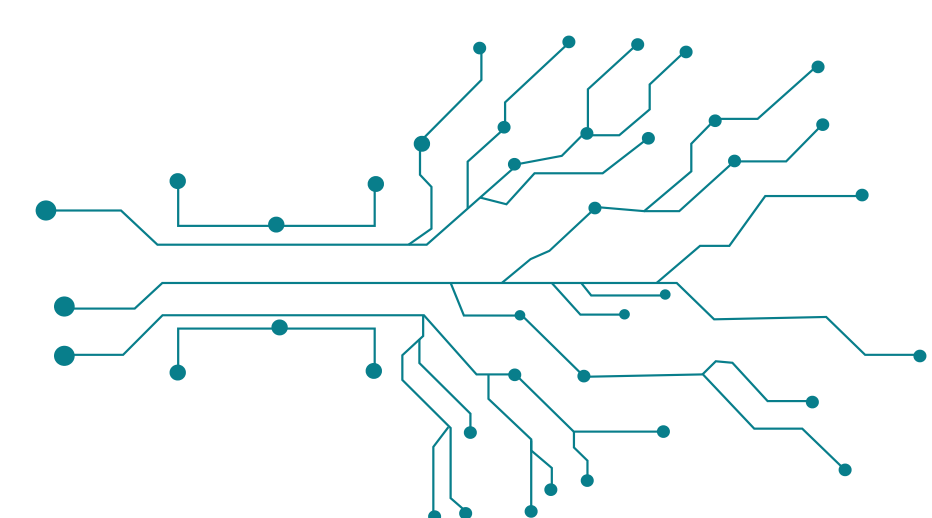
On the question of assessments, the majority of parents (92%) wanted their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. A small number of parents (4%) disagreed, and a further (4%) were unsure (see Figure 10).



On the question of assessments in design and communication graphics, almost a third of parents (31%) preferred portfolio assessments, whilst a quarter (25%) favoured written exams. Research was also a popular choice (23%), with fewer parents selecting oral exams (13%) or aural exams (8%) (see Figure 11).

(Figure 11)

As part of their study of design and communication graphics, I want my child to be engaged in

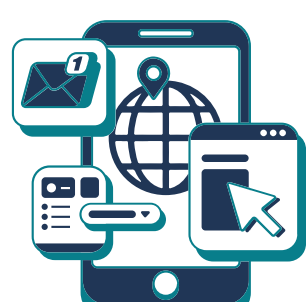


Parents had different views on the purpose of Leaving Certificate Design and Communication Graphics. Many felt it should develop students' ability to think critically, solve problems, and apply creativity in real-world situations. Some saw it as a pathway to careers in fields like engineering, marketing, and animation, while others believed it should spark curiosity and a deeper appreciation for design. The importance of effective communication was also highlighted, with parents stressing the need for students to learn how to present ideas clearly across different formats. Some suggested it should focus on both written exams and project-based work, while a few questioned its long-term relevance. Overall, parents valued the subject for its practical applications and its role in preparing students for a range of future opportunities.

When asked what they would like to keep about the current Leaving Certificate Design and Communication Graphics, many parents said they did not know enough about the subject to comment. However, those who shared their thoughts mentioned a few important things they valued. Some wanted to keep the project element and the written exam, while others liked the practical side of the subject. They felt that physical drawing, using different tools, and learning problem-solving skills were important. A few parents also said that students feel a sense of achievement when they create something, either on their own or in a group. While many were unsure about the programme, those familiar with it liked its hands-on approach.

Parents were also asked what should be removed from the current Leaving Certificate Design and Communication Graphics, many parents said they were not familiar enough with the subject to comment. However, among those who shared their views, some felt there should be less focus on written exams and rote learning. Others questioned whether the current exam format was the best way to assess students' knowledge and skills. One parent mentioned the need to improve the connection between the subject and real-world careers. While many did not have enough information to give specific suggestions, those who responded generally wanted a more practical and skills-based approach.

Finally, when parents were asked what they would like to improve about the current Leaving Certificate Design and Communication Graphics, parents shared a range of suggestions. Some wanted the subject to help students develop skills for managing their time and planning their future. Others called for more specialised teachers so that more students could take the course. A few parents felt there should be a greater focus on continuous assessment rather than relying heavily on end-of-year exams. Some suggested expanding the use of computer applications or introducing industry professionals to give classes. One parent highlighted the need to make assessments more inclusive for students with learning differences, such as dyslexia, by balancing written and practical elements equally. While some had no specific suggestions, those who responded generally wanted the subject to be more accessible, practical, and relevant to students' future careers.

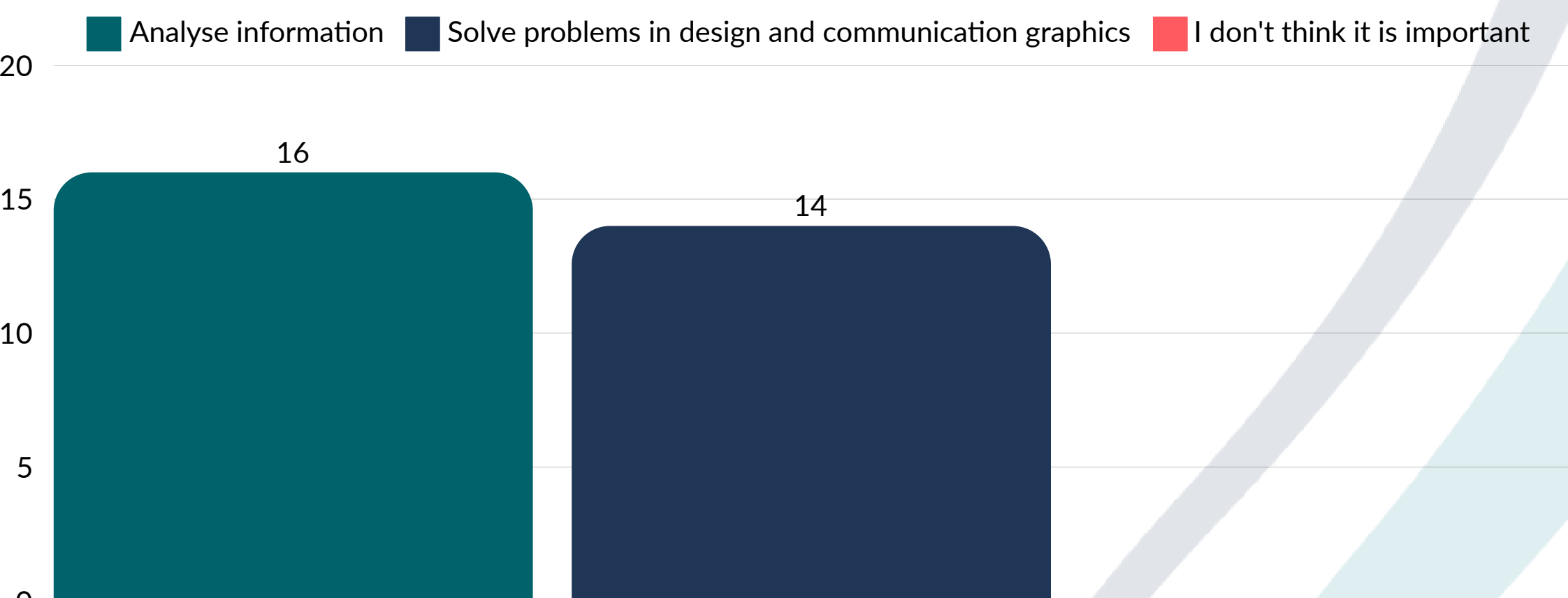


Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science Survey Findings



When considering the importance of the different competencies parents were given the opportunity to choose more than one option.

When asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, over half of the parents (53%) emphasised analysing information as important. Slightly less than half (47%) identified solving problems in agricultural science. No respondents indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 12).

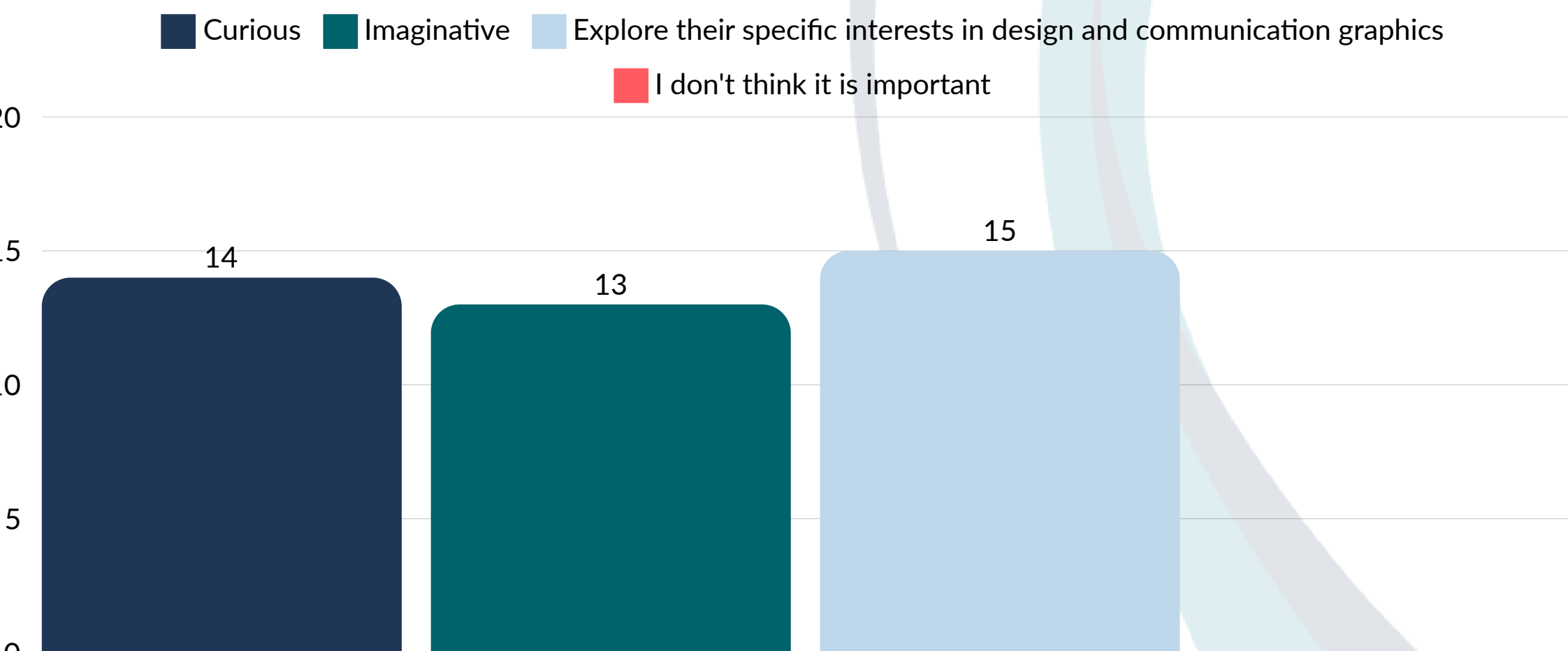


(Figure 12)

First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems

What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

When asked about the importance of creativity for their child’s learning, more than a third (36%) stated that their child will learn to explore their specific interests in agricultural science. A third (33%) highlighted curiosity, while a smaller number (31%) emphasised being imaginative. No respondents indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 13).



(Figure 13)

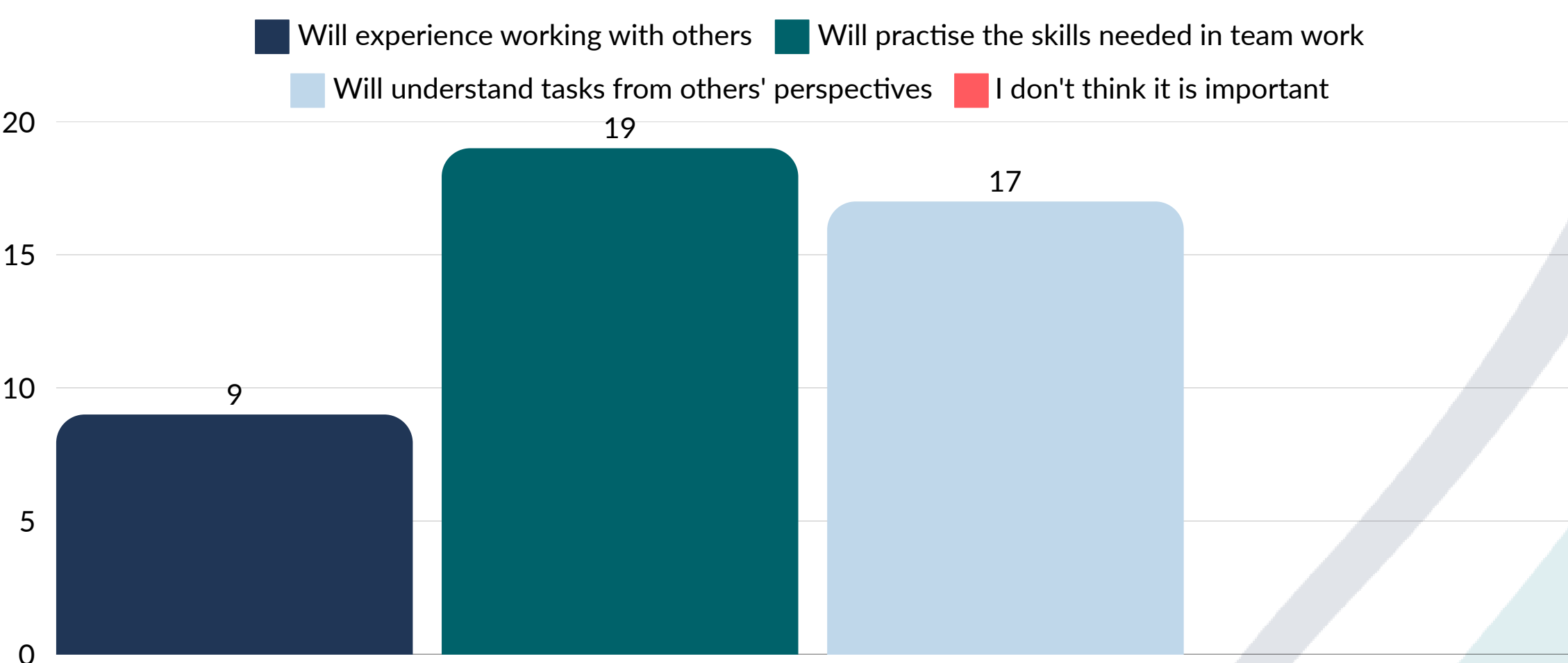
Second competency: Being Creative

What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be



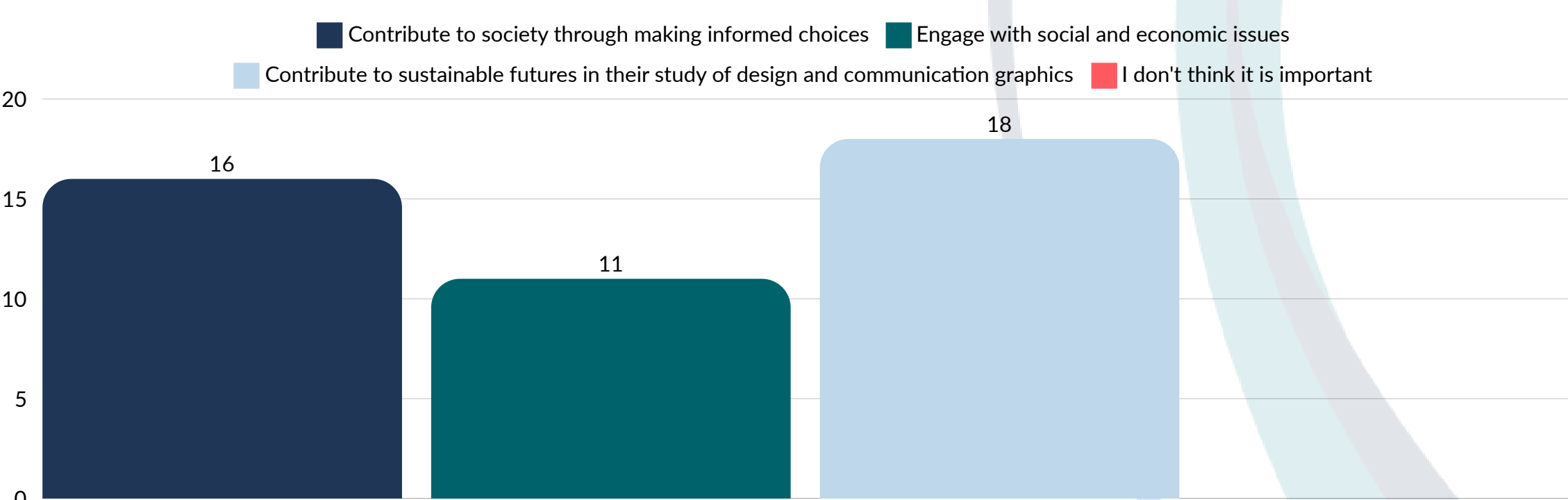
Regarding the importance of working with others, less than half (42%) of parents reported that their child will practice the skills needed in teamwork. Over a third (38%) stated that understanding tasks from others' perspectives is important, while a small number of parents (20%) indicated that their child will gain experience in collaboration. No respondents said they do not think it is important (see Figure 14).

Additionally, one parent expressed a different viewpoint, highlighting the significance of the "Working with Others" competency, as it helps develop leadership and collaboration skills.



(Figure 14)
Third competency: Working with Others
What I find important about working with others is that my child

When asked about the importance of participating in society, less than half (40%) of parents stated that their child will contribute to sustainable futures through their study of agricultural science. Over a third (36%) highlighted the importance of contributing by making informed choices, and nearly a quarter (24%) emphasised engaging with social and economic issues. None (0%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 15).

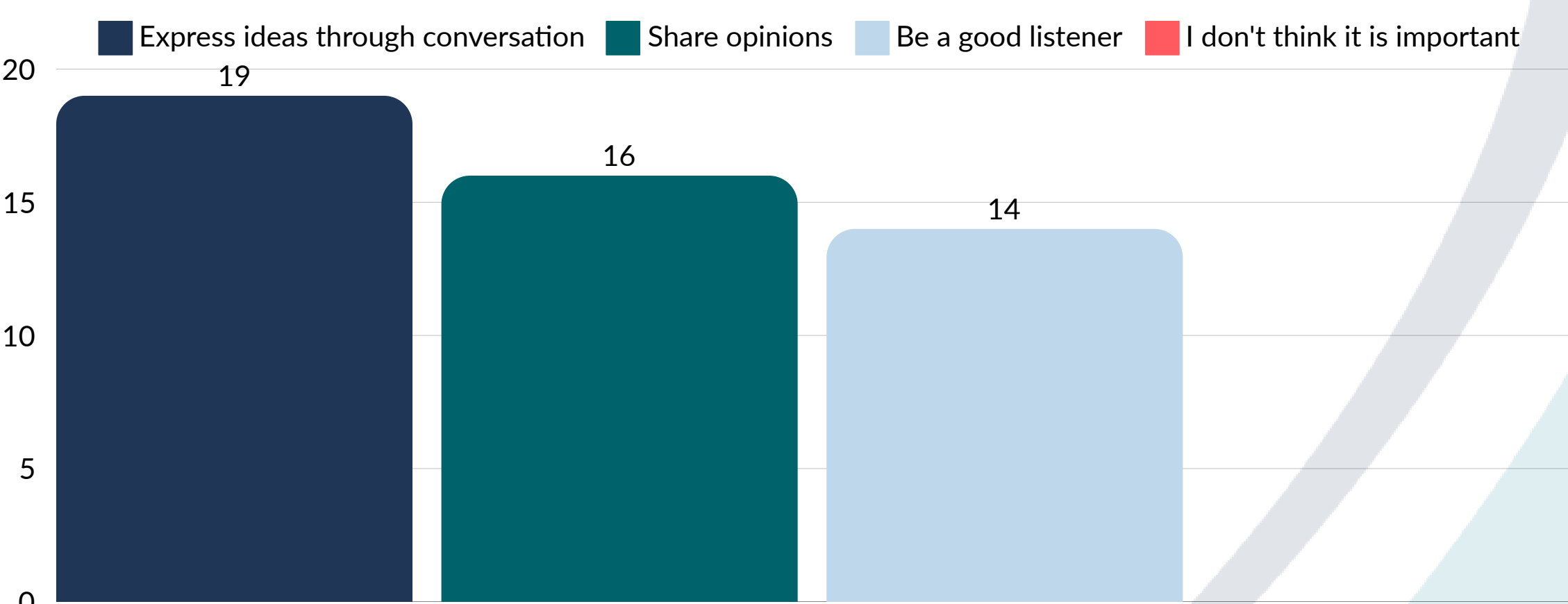


(Figure 15)
Fourth competency: Participating in Society
What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to



In response to the importance of communicating, over a third of parents (39%) believe their child will learn to express ideas through conversation. A third of parents (33%) emphasised the importance of sharing opinions, whilst a smaller number of parents (28%) highlighted being a good listener. None (0%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 16).

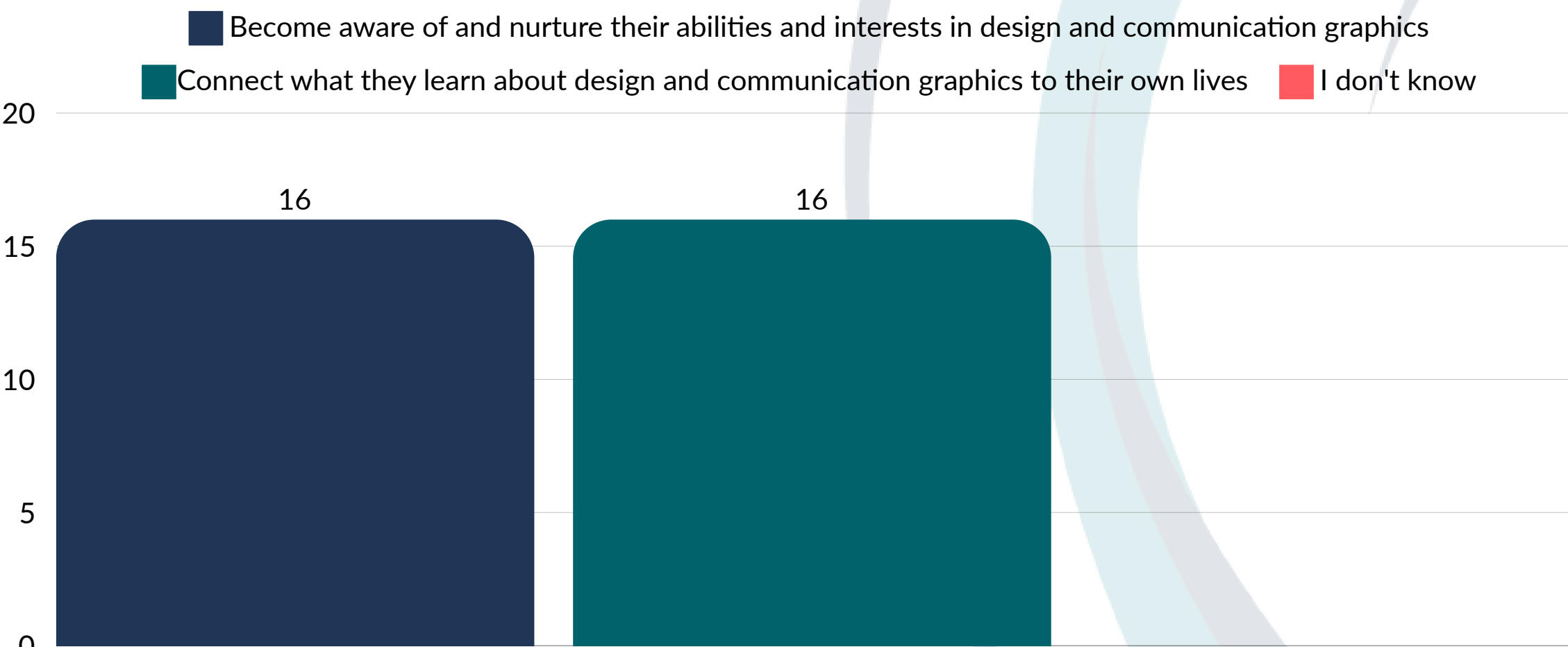
Additionally, one parent highlighted the significance of the "Communicating" competency, as it helps learning how to effectively hone conversation skills and get important messages across.



(Figure 16)

Fifth competency: Communicating
What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to

In terms of cultivating wellbeing, half (50%) of parents believe their child will learn to become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in agricultural science. An equal proportion (50%) emphasised the connection between what they learn about agricultural science and their personal lives. None (0%) indicated that they did not know (see Figure 17).

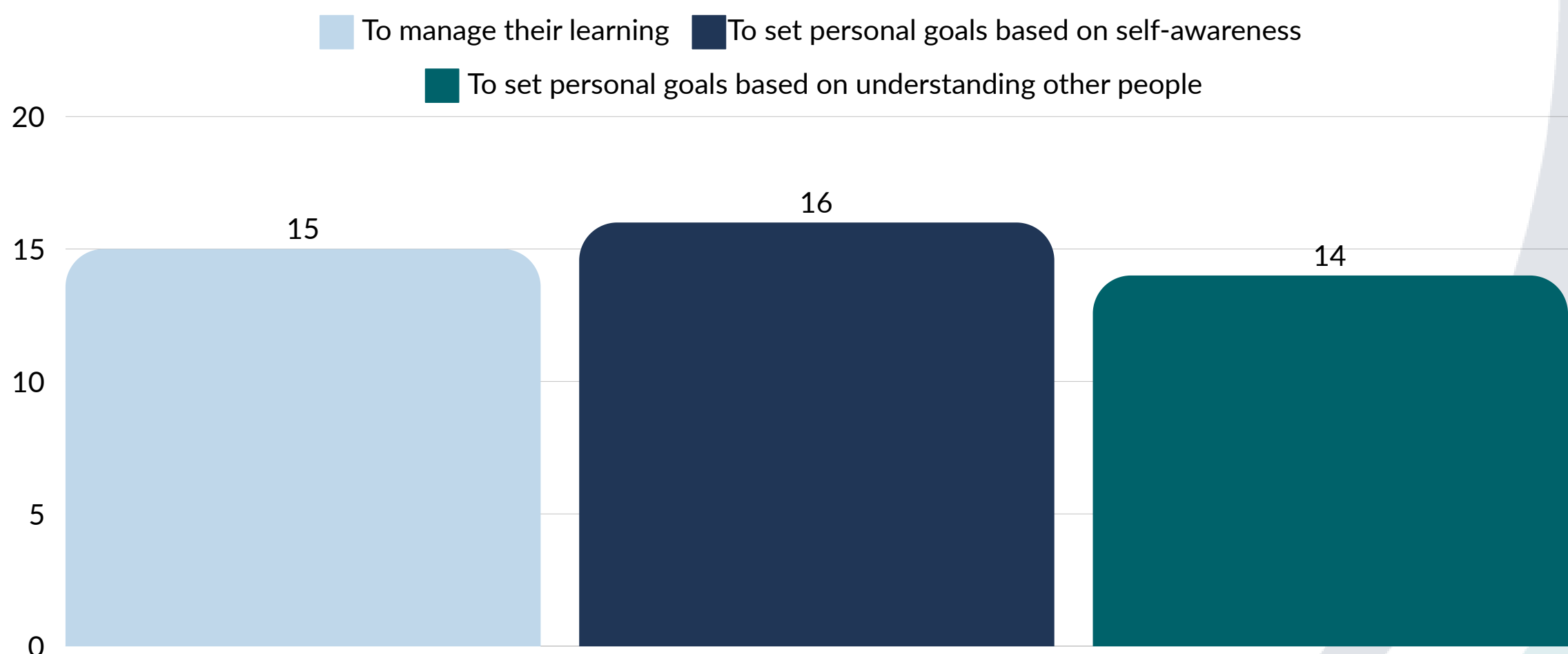


(Figure 17)

Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing
What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

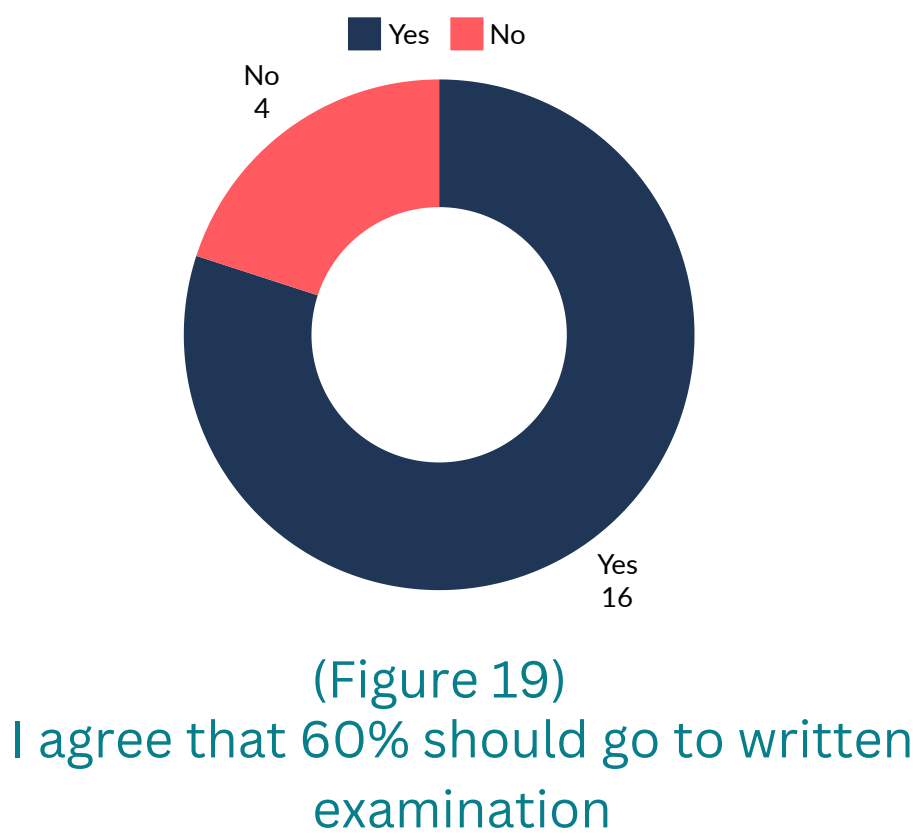


When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, over a third (36%) of parents believe their child will learn to set personal goals based on self-awareness. A third (33%) emphasised the importance of managing their learning, while a smaller proportion (31%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 18).



(Figure 18)

Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self
What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn



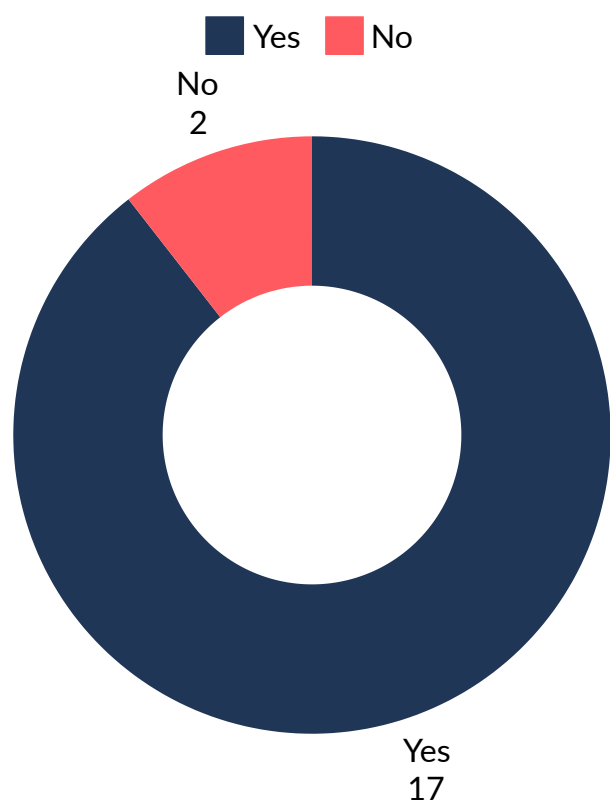
(Figure 19)

As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, most parents (80%) agreed, while a smaller number (20%) disagreed (see Figure 19).

When parents were asked if they had other views, they shared the following thoughts. One parent believes that agricultural science should be graded with a mix of practical and written work. Since it is based on real-life experience as well as learning, one parent thinks 60% of the grade should come from hands-on activities. Another parent feels that practice is the best way to learn, and the exam should make up 40% of the grade, as this helps reduce stress for students.

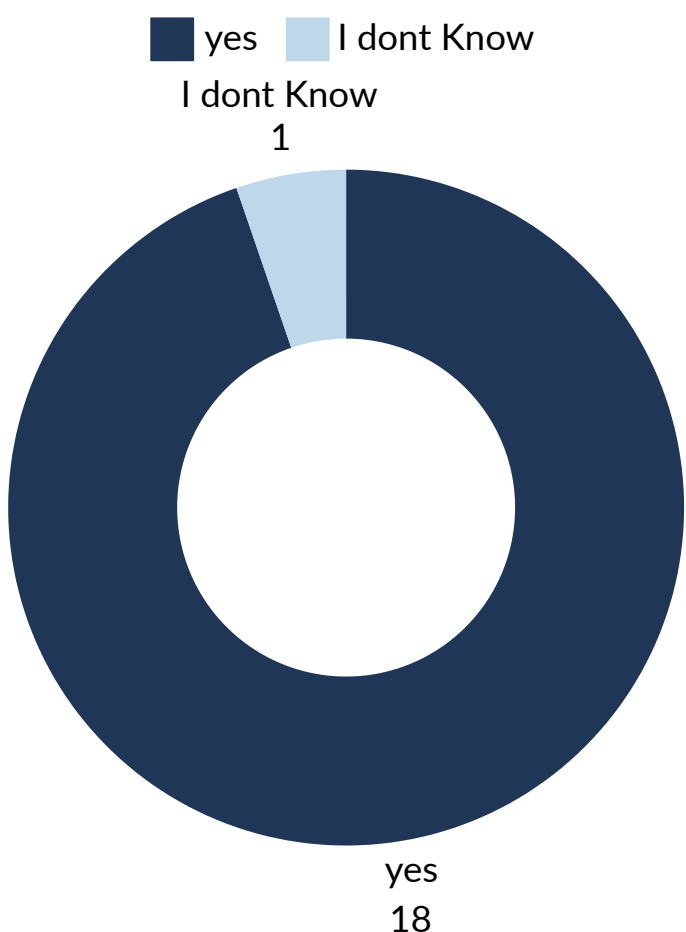


In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, most parents (89%) expressed agreement, with a smaller number (11%) disagreeing (see Figure 20).



(Figure 20)

I agree that the 40% should go to additional assessment component.



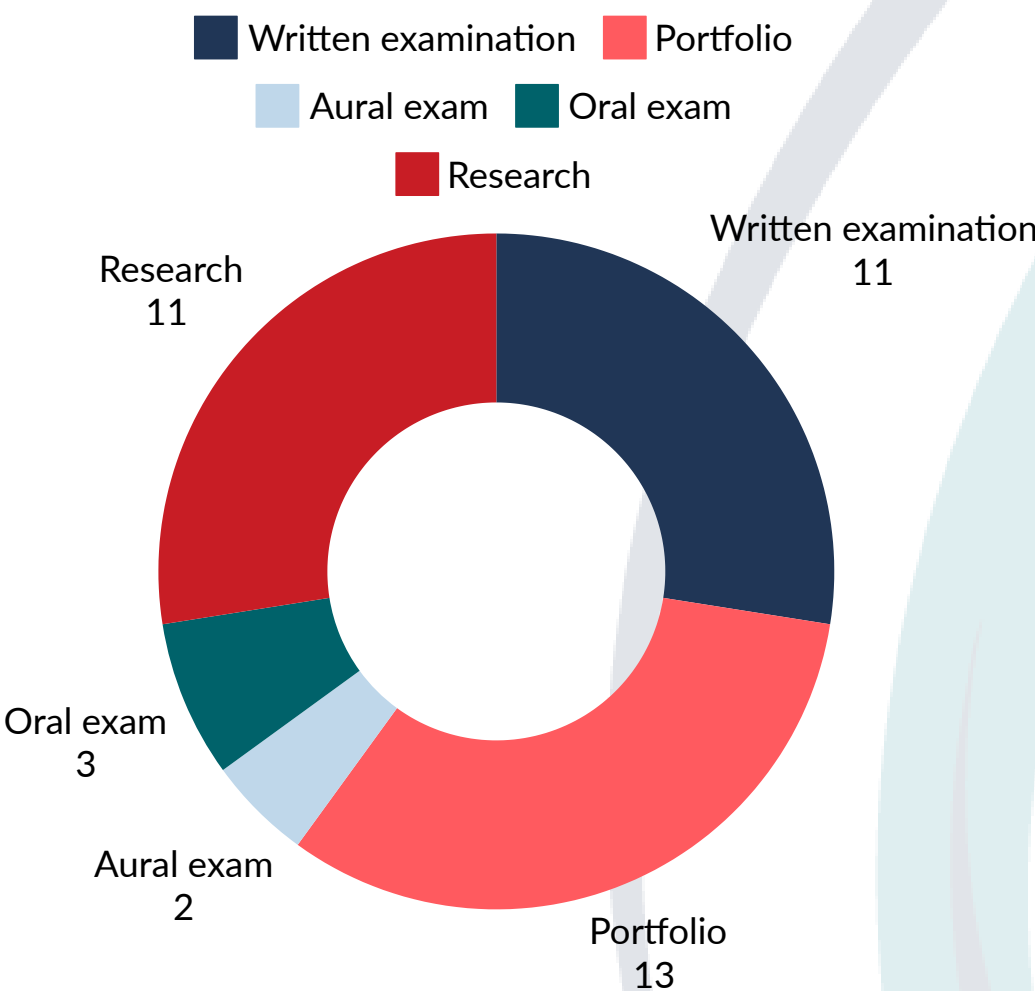
(Figure 21)

I want my child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle.



On the question of assessments, most parents (95%) wanted their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. No parents disagreed, while few parents (5%) were unsure (see Figure 21).

On the question of assessments in Agricultural Science, a significant minority of parents (33%) preferred portfolio assessments, while a smaller minority (28%) favoured written exams. Research was also a popular choice (28%), with fewer parents selecting oral exams (8%) or aural exams (3%) (see Figure 22).



(Figure 22)

As part of their study of agricultural science, I want my child to be engaged in



When parents were asked about the purpose of Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science, they provided multifaceted responses. They appreciated having another subject that is not 100% exam-based. They believe it should prepare students to advance to further education in the agricultural sector and equip them for various streams such as technology, machinery, and farming. Additionally, parents felt it should provide good insights into agriculture and farming, demonstrate a solid understanding of the subject through exams that cover learning in agricultural sciences and food science, and prepare students for agri-related careers in the future.

When parents were asked about the aspects of the current Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science they would like to keep, they emphasised the value of the project work and the course's comprehensive content. The inclusion of projects was especially appreciated.

Regarding potential changes to the current Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science, some parents were unsure about the entire curriculum. Others felt that there are too many mathematical questions, while a few believed the course was fine as it is.

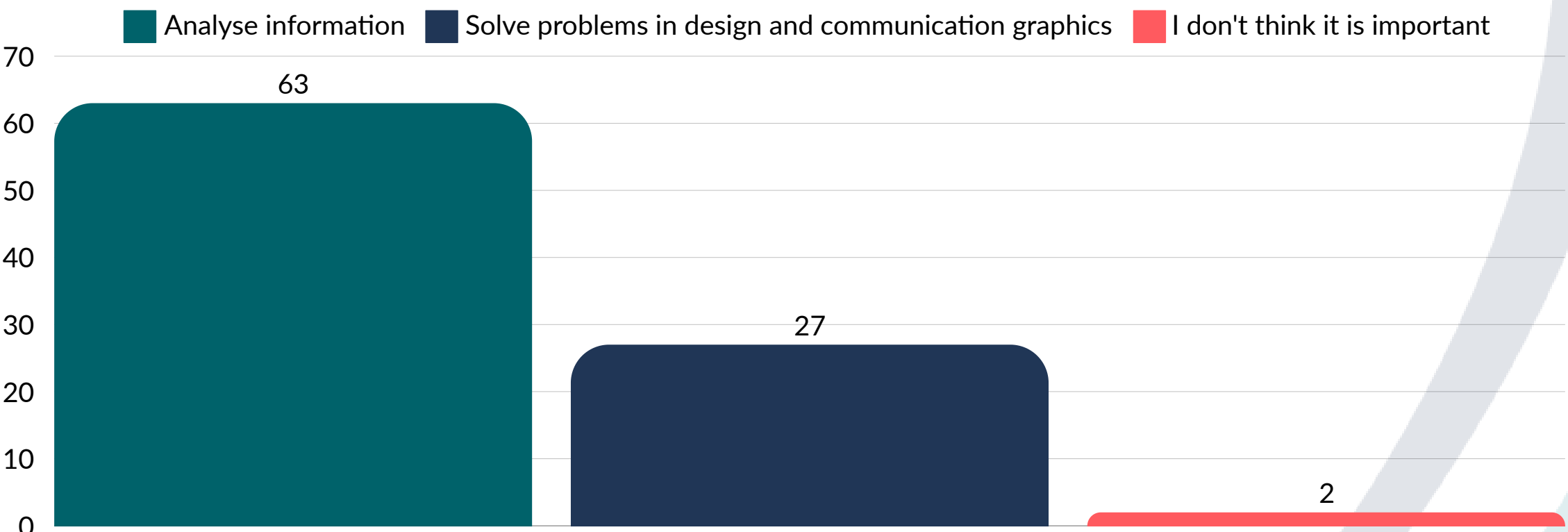
Suggestions for improving the current Leaving Certificate Agricultural Science include enhancing the IIS project and incorporating more trips to agricultural venues for hands-on learning experiences.



Leaving Certificate History Survey Findings



When parents were asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, most parents (68%) stated that analysing information is important. This was followed by less than a third (29%) who highlighted solving problems in history. Few parents (3%) indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 23).



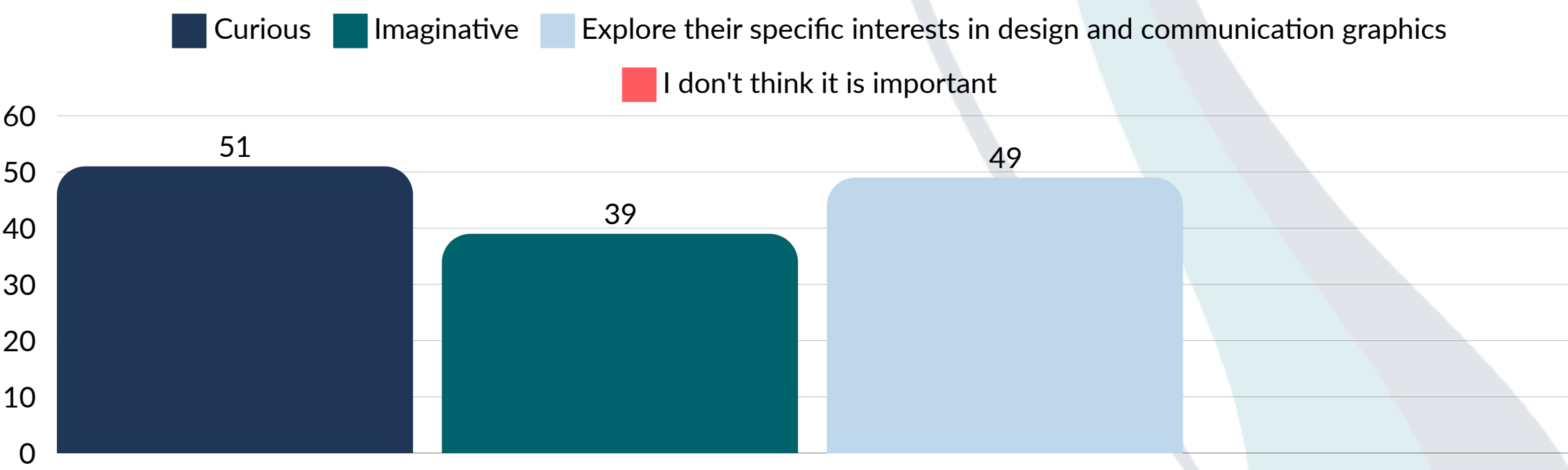
(Figure 23)

First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems

What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

Parents shared several thoughts on the importance of history in education. They believe history is crucial for developing critical thinking and understanding the world. Learning to assess sources is an important skill history teaches. Many parents see history as a valuable subject for understanding world events and learning from the past. Some raised concerns about focusing too much on solving problems with hindsight, questioning if that is the best approach. They also suggested teaching the connections between events, rather than just memorising facts, and making history more relatable by exploring situations that affected children in different times. Lastly, some wondered if enough time would be given for students to truly develop critical thinking skills.

When asked about the importance of creativity for their child’s learning, over a third (37%) stated that their child will learn to be curious, a slightly smaller number (35%) highlighted the importance of exploring their specific interests in history. More than a quarter (28%) emphasised the value of being imaginative, while none (0%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 24).



(Figure 24)

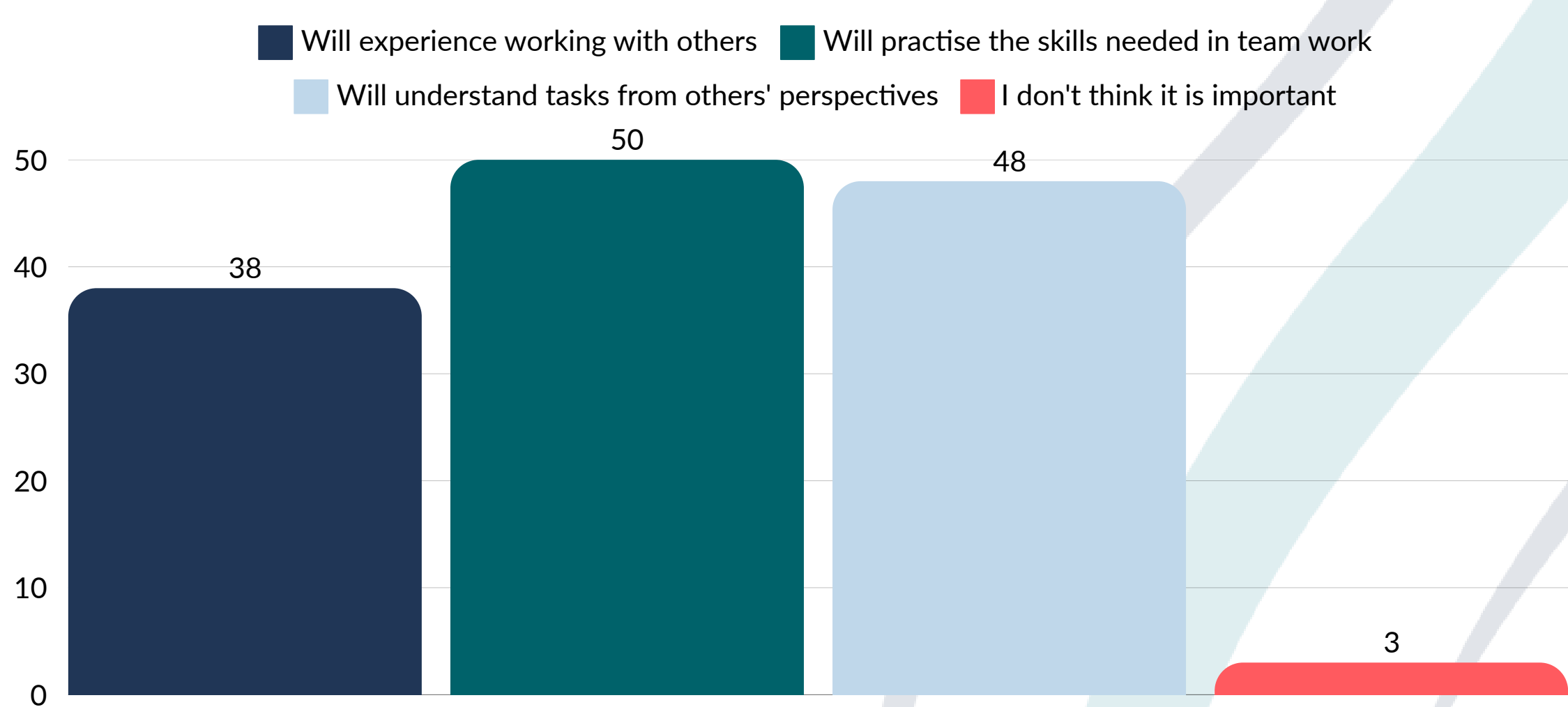
Second competency: Being Creative

What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be



Parents also offered additional comments on creativity in history. Some felt that creativity should be about interpreting the past and synthesising information to form new ideas. However, there were concerns about whether being creative in history means altering facts or evidence, which could lead to misinformation or propaganda. Many agreed that knowing history helps develop a broad understanding of human experiences. Some parents suggested creative learning methods, like projects, acting out historical events, or watching relevant movies. Still, they wondered how space could be made in the curriculum for such activities, as they felt it should not be treated as an add-on.

Regarding the importance of working with others, over a third (36%) of parents reported that their child will practice essential teamwork skills. A similar number (35%) stated that understanding tasks from others' perspectives is important, whilst over a quarter (27%) highlighted the value of gaining experience in collaboration. A small number parents (2%) said they do not think it is important (see Figure 25).

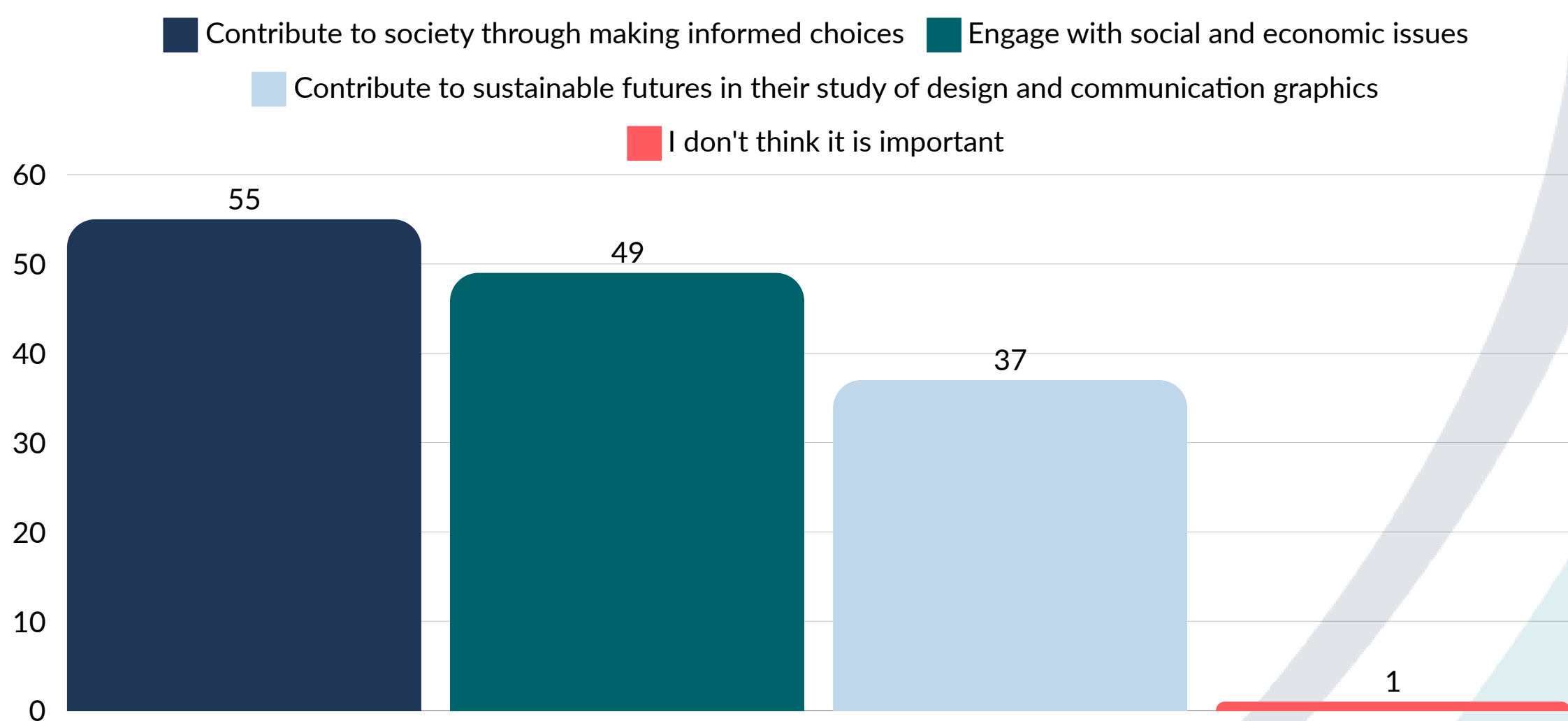


(Figure 25)
Third competency: Working with Others
What I find important about working with others is that my child

Parents had mixed views on group work in history. While they acknowledged the value of collaboration, they felt it is not always necessary for studying history. Concerns were raised about some students doing little work while others take on more, leading to stress and frustration. Parents emphasised the need for a skilled facilitator to ensure fair contributions from everyone. They also mentioned that group work could be a good way to learn from different perspectives, but only if managed well. There were questions about how grading works in group projects and how to make sure everyone contributes equally, since students might be hesitant to speak up if someone is not pulling their weight.



All parents, when asked about the importance of participating in society, over a third (38%) stated that their child will learn to contribute to society through making informed choices. Slightly less (35%) emphasised the importance of engaging with social and economic issues, and over a quarter (26%) highlighted that contributing to sustainable futures in the study of history is important. Only a few parents (1%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 26).



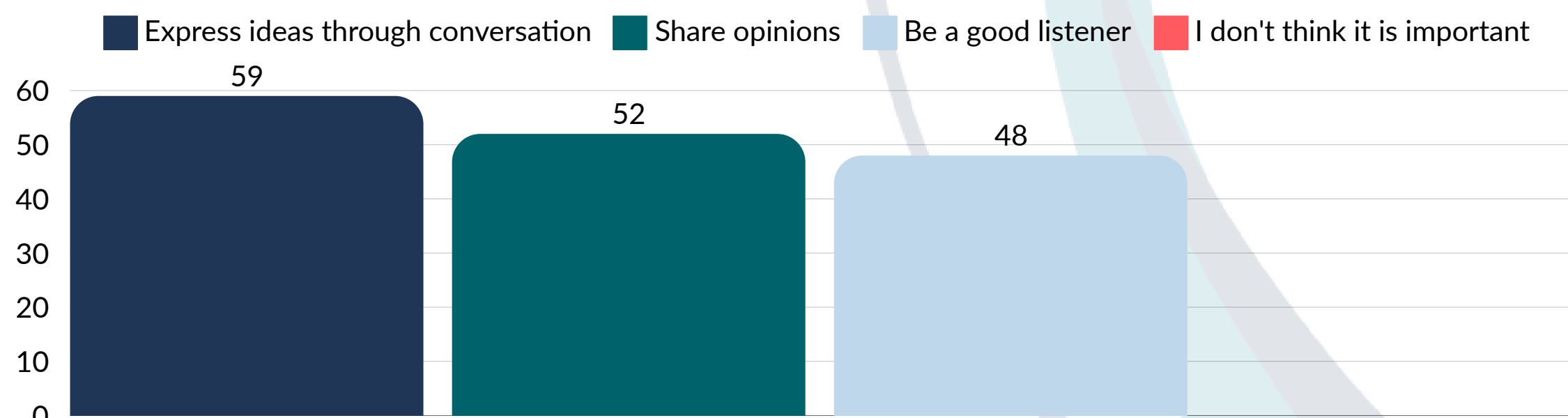
(Figure 26)

Fourth competency: Participating in Society

What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to

Parents had varied opinions on the role of participating in society within history. Many felt that the focus should be on helping students understand their cultural roots, their role in society, and how history can guide future decisions. They questioned how these goals would be put into practice, especially considering the current shortage of teachers. Additionally, there were concerns about whether these concepts would be taught in school or through external activities, and how they would be effectively managed.

In response to the importance of communicating, over a third (37%) of parents believe their child will learn to express ideas through conversation. A third (33%) emphasised the importance of sharing opinions, while slightly less (30%) highlighted being a good listener. None (0%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 27).



(Figure 27)

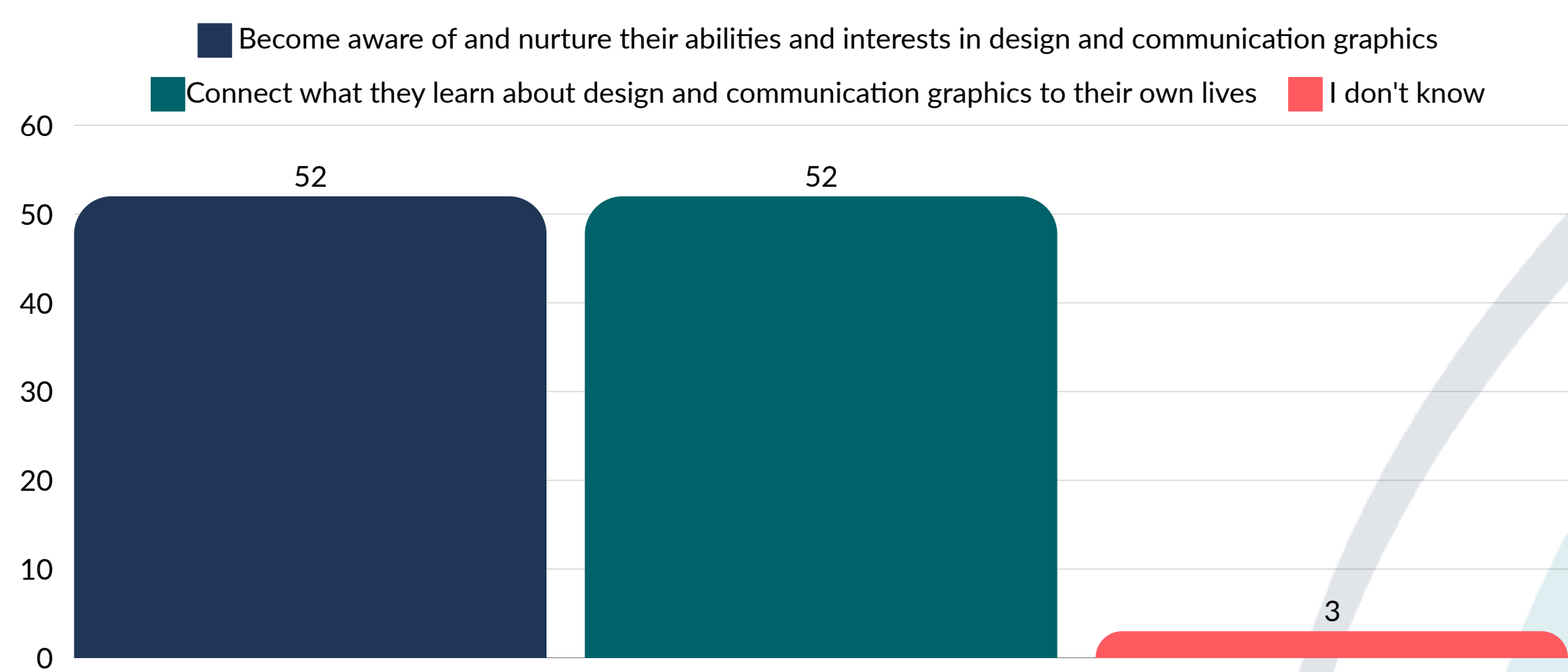
Fifth competency: Communicating

What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to



Parents shared various views on communication in history. Some felt that while communication is an important life skill, it is not the main focus of studying history and should be part of overall education. They emphasised the need to know historical facts to form informed opinions and recognise fake news. Parents also stressed the importance of being a good listener and respecting different opinions, as even history books can present different views. They noted that the main goal should be engaging with the curriculum, not just rewarding good speakers. Finally, they raised concerns about how to balance teaching communication skills with other learning priorities.

In terms of cultivating well-being, almost half (49%) of parents believe their child will learn to become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in history. An equal proportion (49%) emphasised the connection between what they learn about history and their personal lives. Only few parents (2%) indicated they did not know (see Figure 28).

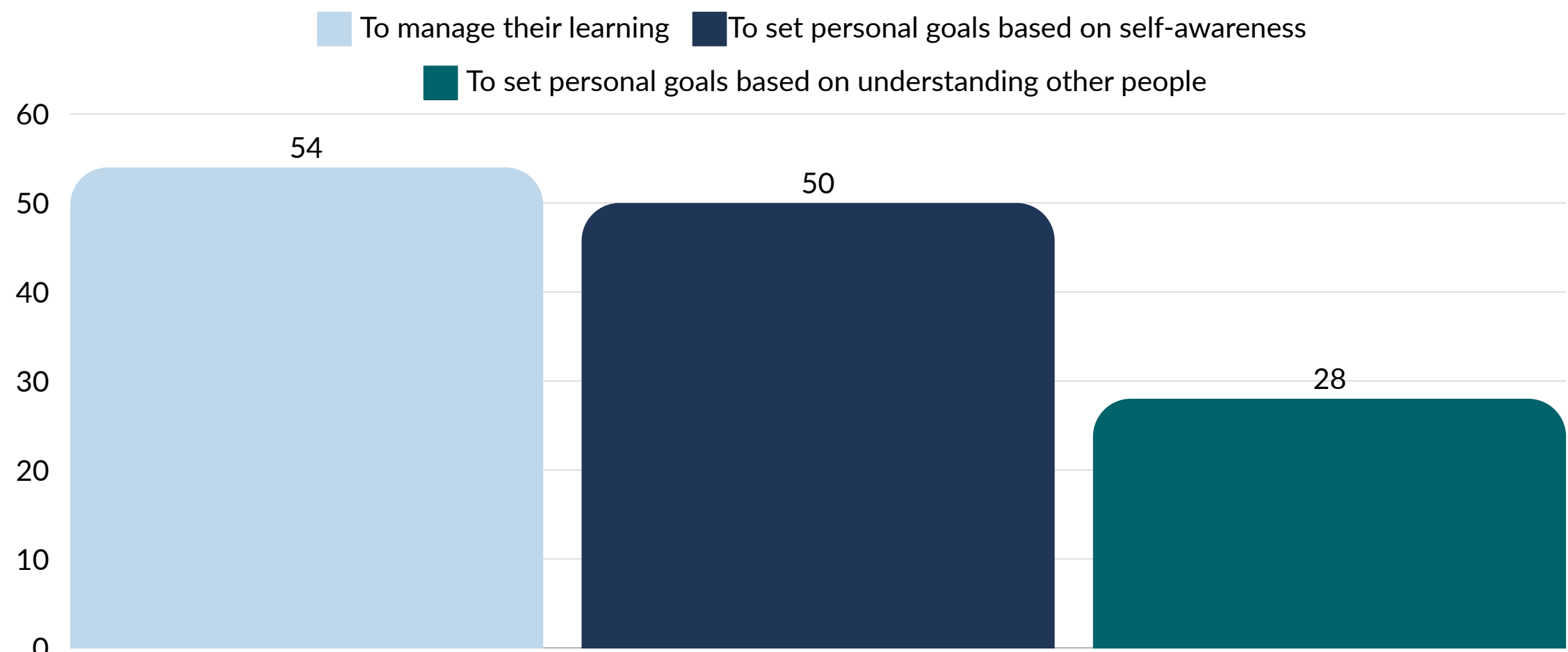


(Figure 28)
Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing
What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

Parents had different opinions about including the Cultivating Wellbeing competency in history. Some felt it should not be part of the history curriculum since it is already covered in other subjects like SPHE, and they thought it did not add much value to history. They believed some of these competencies were not relevant and seemed exaggerated. On the other hand, some parents felt it is important for students to understand how the past connects to the present, as it helps them understand current issues. They suggested that showing students how history relates to their lives could be useful, as it helps them see that the past and present are connected. A few parents also expressed concern about making sure this competency is not used to promote specific ideologies, such as trans ideology.



When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, a significant number (41%) of parents believe their child will learn to manage their learning. A smaller number (38%) emphasised setting personal goals based on self-awareness, while less than a quarter (21%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 29).

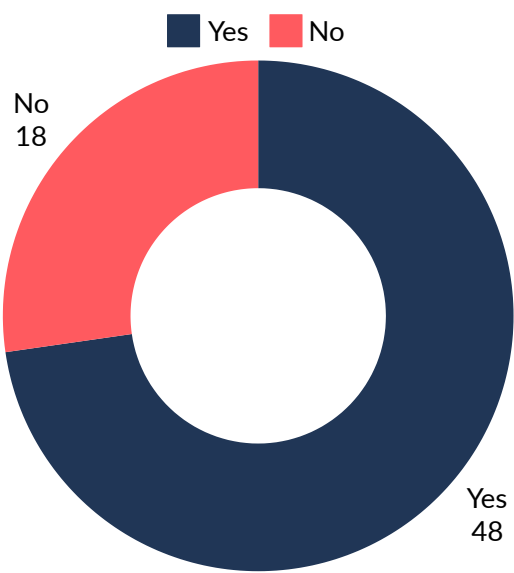


(Figure 29)

Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self

What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn

Parents felt that managing learning and self-competency should be part of the overall learning environment and not specifically included in the history curriculum. They emphasised that students need to learn how to organise their lives, manage their responsibilities, and plan for the future. Some also suggested that students should develop the ability to manage how they learn and use knowledge in a way that works best for them as young adults.



(Figure 30)

I agree that 60% should go to written examination

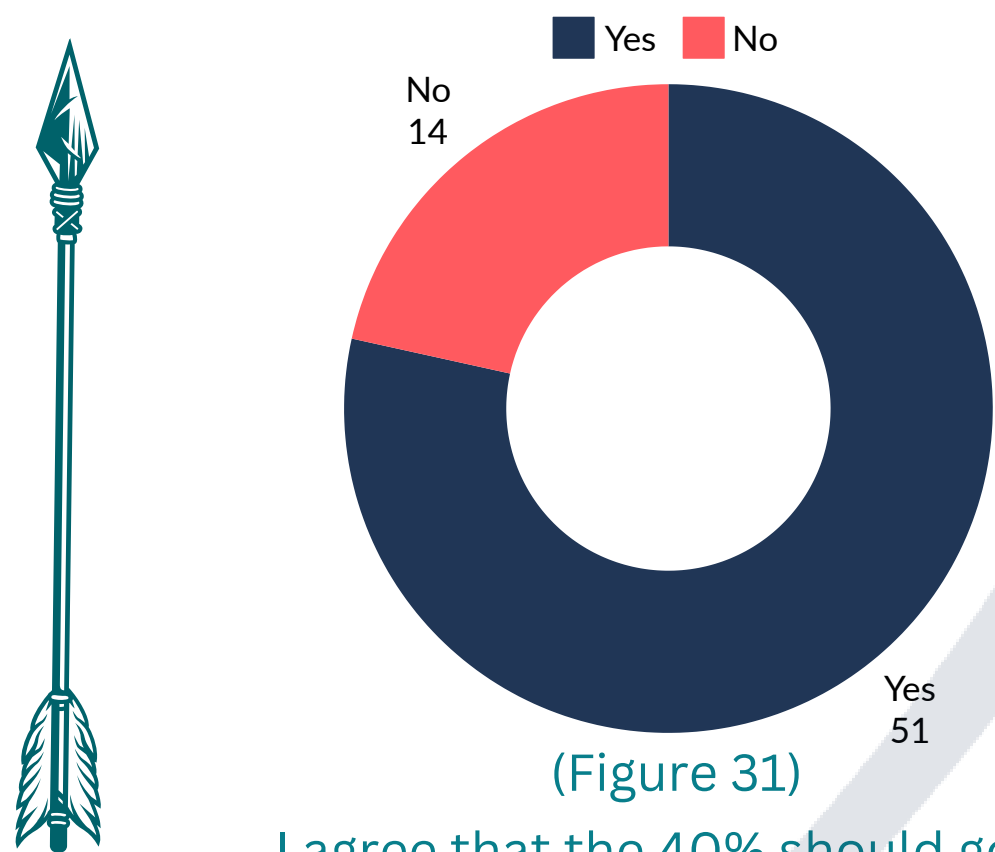
As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, the majority (73%) agreed, while a significant minority (27%) disagreed (see Figure 30).

Parents who disagreed with the 60% written exam weight had a variety of suggestions. Some felt that a higher percentage, like 80%, should be allocated to exams. Others preferred project work, with a few suggesting a choice between exams and projects as an option. There were concerns that the current system creates unnecessary pressure, especially since not all students perform well in exams despite excelling in other areas.



A few parents thought 60% is too high given the broad range of topics covered and suggested that allowing students to choose their topics earlier would make this more reasonable. Others proposed a 50:50 split between exams and projects to better reflect students' efforts. Some parents questioned how the Department of Education plans to ensure fairness for all students, particularly regarding access to resources or support. They also mentioned that the current system seems to favour students with strong memorisation skills, rather than those who work consistently but may not perform well under pressure.

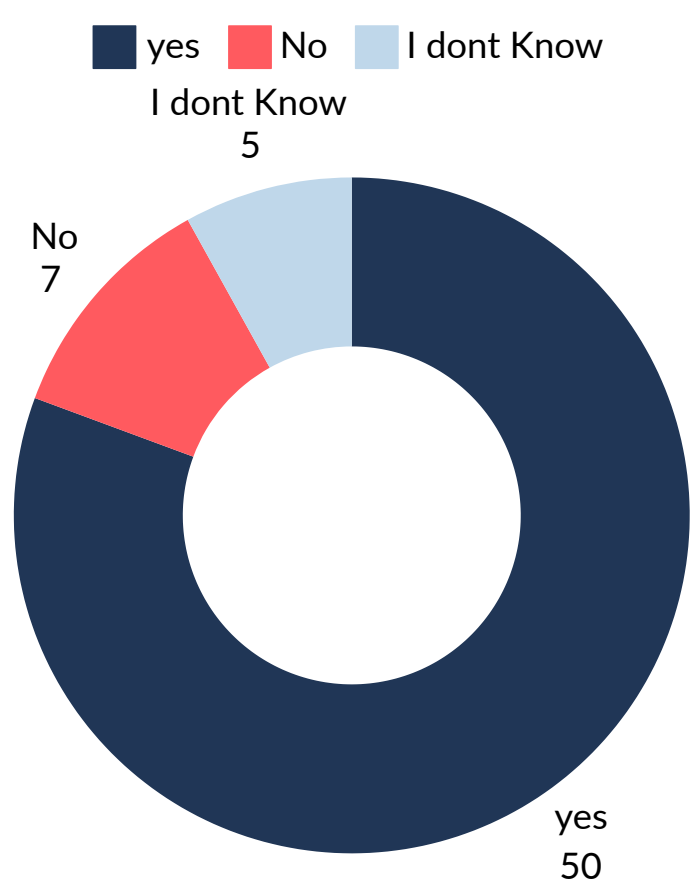
In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, the majority (78%) expressed agreement, with a smaller number (22%) disagreeing (see Figure 31).



(Figure 31)
I agree that the 40% should go to additional assessment component.

Parents who disagreed with the 40% weight for the additional assessment component had various opinions. Some thought it should be capped at 20%, while others suggested 25%. There were concerns that too much focus on CBAs could disadvantage students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, as work done outside school might not be equally accessible to all. A few parents felt that assessments should be focused entirely on exams. Some also mentioned that global history is too broad to be covered in a short exam, even with the added assessments.

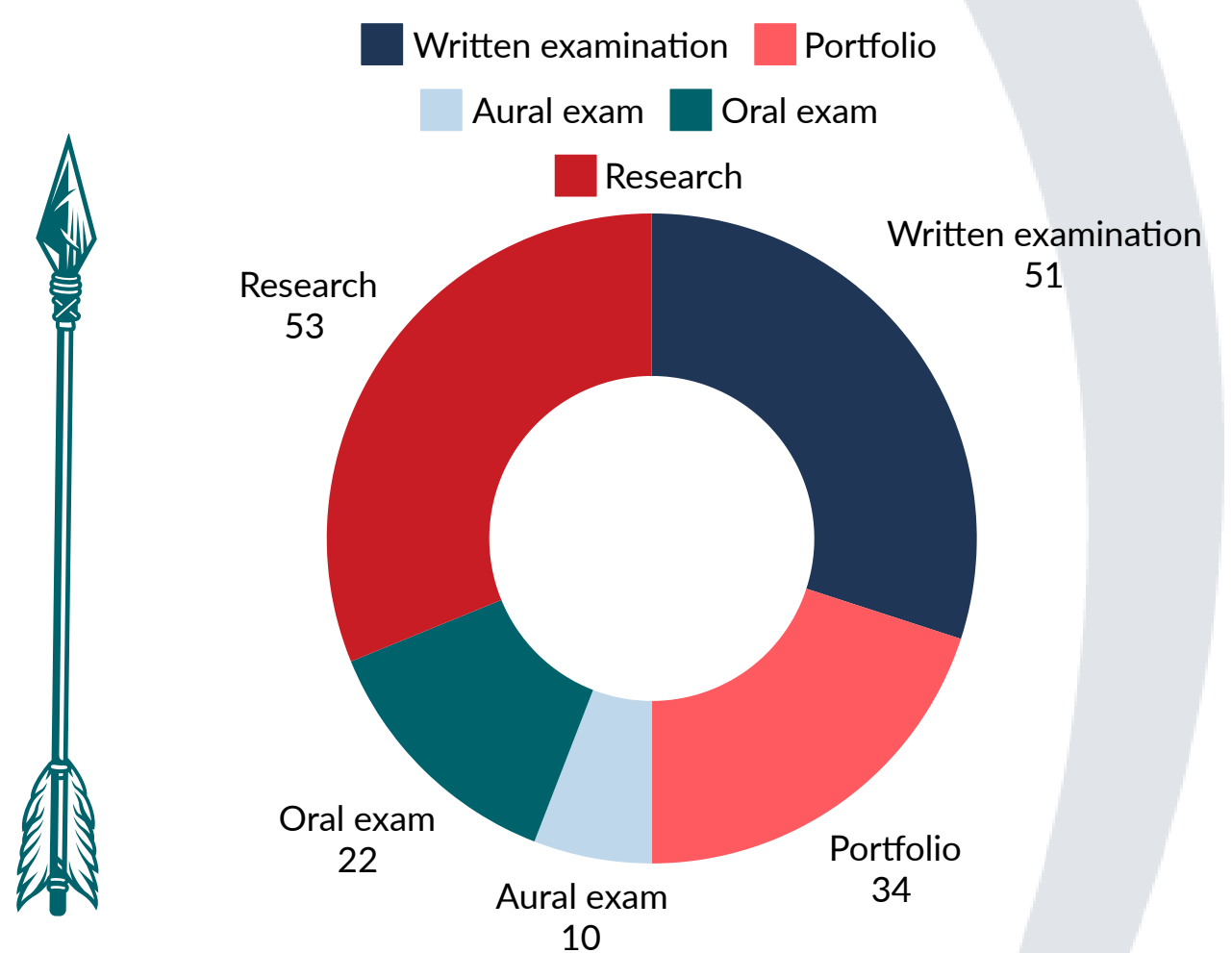
Others proposed a 50/50 split between exams and additional assessments, while some suggested increasing the exam portion to 60% to help reduce stress. Several parents felt more clarity is needed about what the additional assessments would involve.



(Figure 32)
I want my child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle.

On the question of assessments, most parents (81%) wanted their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. A few parents (11%) disagreed, while another (8%) were unsure (see Figure 32).

On the question of assessments in history, a significant minority of parents (31%) preferred written exams, while a smaller minority (30%) favoured research. Portfolio assessments were also a popular choice (20%), with fewer parents selecting oral exams (13%) or aural exams (6%) (see Figure 33).



(Figure 33)

As part of their study of history, I want my child to be engaged in

Parents were asked what they think the purpose of Leaving Certificate History should be. The following points analyse the key purposes of studying history as identified by parents:

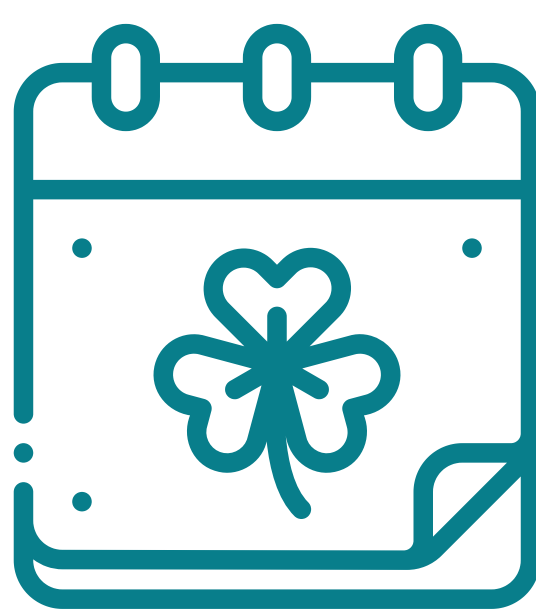
- **Understanding the Past to Understand the Present:** Parents believe that studying history helps students understand today's world by learning about past events and how they have shaped society, politics, and the economy.
- **Developing Critical Thinking and Research Skills:** Many parents pointed out that history helps students develop important skills like analysing information, researching, and forming strong arguments based on evidence.
- **Learning from Past Mistakes:** A common idea was that history teaches us to learn from past mistakes to avoid repeating them. It encourages students to think about the decisions made in history and how they could have been better.
- **Understanding Society and Humanity:** Parents highlighted that history helps students understand the role of societies and cultures in shaping the world. It helps them see how people and events from the past connect to who we are today.
- **Exploring Personal Interests:** Some parents suggested that students should be able to explore topics that interest them personally, which helps them enjoy learning and develop a lifelong interest in history.
- **Learning to Evaluate Information:** Studying history helps students learn how to critically assess information, like recognising propaganda or analysing different viewpoints, which is important in today's world of information overload.
- **Understanding Important Historical Events:** Parents emphasised that understanding key historical events is important because they help us understand current events and how societies and cultures interact.



- **Building Knowledge of Irish and European History:** Many parents believe that students should have a solid understanding of both Irish and European history, particularly important events like the World Wars. However, some felt that there is too much focus on early history, suggesting a more balanced approach.
- **Inspiring a Love for Learning:** Parents want history to spark an interest in the subject that lasts beyond school, helping students carry what they have learnt into their future careers and lives.
- **Using Projects to Stimulate Interest:** Parents also suggested that project-based learning could encourage students to explore history in a deeper way, especially through research on topics that matter to them, like local history.

When parents were asked what they appreciate about the current Leaving Certificate History and what they would like to keep, several key aspects emerged. The following points analyse the parents views:

- **Fair and Impartial Assessment:** Parents value the fairness of the written exam, which is corrected anonymously, ensuring an unbiased assessment based on individual performance.
- **Research Study Report:** Many parents highlighted the importance of the research project, with some stating it is one of the best aspects of the course. The research study report allows students to develop independent research and analytical skills.
- **Wide Variety of Topics:** Parents appreciate the broad range of topics covered, including both Irish and European history, as well as significant global events. This variety ensures a well-rounded understanding of history.
- **Use of Sources and Document-Based Questions:** The use of primary and secondary sources in the exam encourages students to engage with historical evidence and develop critical thinking skills.
- **Focus on Key Historical Events:** The curriculum includes important historical moments, particularly in Irish history and past wars, which parents see as crucial for students' understanding of the present.
- **Balanced Exam Structure:** The combination of a written exam and the research project, with 40% of the final mark coming from coursework, is seen as a positive aspect, reducing pressure on a single exam.
- **Clear and Well-Structured Learning Materials:** Some parents mentioned that the textbooks are well-designed, with key points highlighted to help students navigate the content more effectively.
- **Encouragement of Student Interest:** The course provides opportunities for students who have a passion for history to explore topics in depth and form their own opinions on historical events.



When parents were asked what should be changed or removed from the Leaving Certificate History course, several concerns stood out. Many felt that the subject relies too much on memorisation, with students spending a lot of time learning off long essays instead of focusing on developing their own opinions and critical thinking skills. They believed that history should be about understanding events, analysing different perspectives, and forming arguments rather than simply recalling facts and dates.

Another issue raised was the length and difficulty of the final exam. Some parents felt that it places too much pressure on students, as it carries a lot of weight in determining their overall grade. Many suggested reducing the number of essays required to make it more manageable. In addition, there were concerns that the syllabus is too broad, making it difficult for students to cover everything in time. Parents felt that narrowing the focus would allow for deeper learning and better understanding of key topics.

Some parents also pointed out that too much time is spent on very early history, which may not always feel relevant to students. They believed that modern history should receive more attention, as it helps students connect the past with the world they live in today. Others mentioned that the course requires too many long essays filled with dates and details, which can feel overwhelming. They suggested making the written work more manageable and balanced with other forms of assessment.

While parents appreciated the variety of topics available, some felt that there were too many choices, making it harder for students to concentrate on key areas. Overall, there was a strong desire for less focus on memorisation and long essays, more time for modern history, and a fairer balance between coursework and exams.

Parents had many ideas on how to make Leaving Certificate History better. A lot of them felt that history should be more interesting and practical, instead of just memorising facts and writing long essays. They wanted students to learn how to think for themselves, understand different opinions, and make strong arguments based on evidence. Some parents suggested that students should have more freedom to study topics that interest them, rather than just following a set course.

Many parents thought that history lessons should include more films, documentaries, trips, and hands-on activities to help students connect with the past. They believed that history should feel more real and relatable, using creative ways to teach, like group discussions, debates, quizzes, and projects. Some also wanted more focus on Irish history, especially events in Northern Ireland, and said that the course should cover more modern events beyond 1993.



There were also concerns about the final exam. Some parents felt it was too difficult, with too many long essays to write in a short time. They suggested making the exam shorter, using more questions based on documents, and including case studies where students could show their understanding in a different way. Others thought history should have a mix of coursework and exams so students would not have to rely only on one big test at the end.

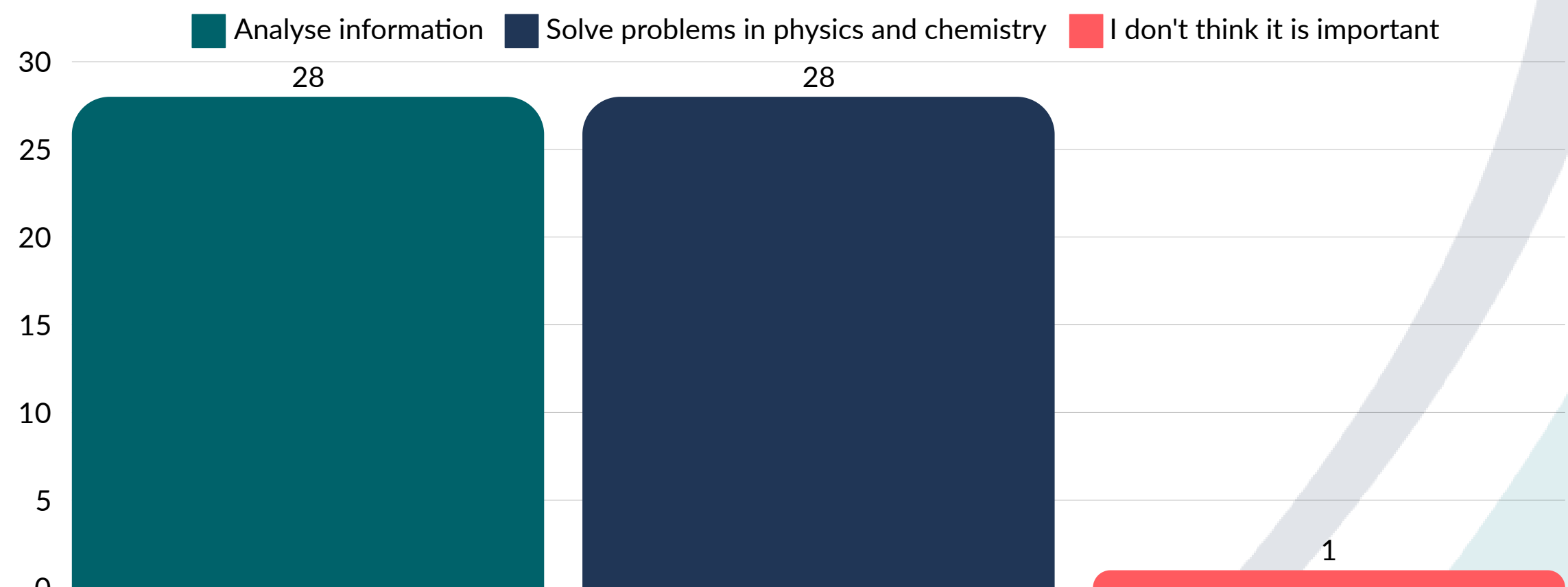
Another idea was to link history with other subjects like geography and politics, showing how everything connects. Some parents even suggested adding an oral exam, where students could talk about what they have learnt instead of just writing about it. Overall, parents want history to be more engaging, more connected to real life, and focused on developing important skills instead of just memorising facts.



Leaving Certificate Physics and Chemistry Survey Findings



When parents were asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, slightly less than half (49%) stated that analysing information is important and an equal proportion (49%) highlighted solving problems in physics and chemistry. A few parents (2%) indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 34).



(Figure 34)

First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems

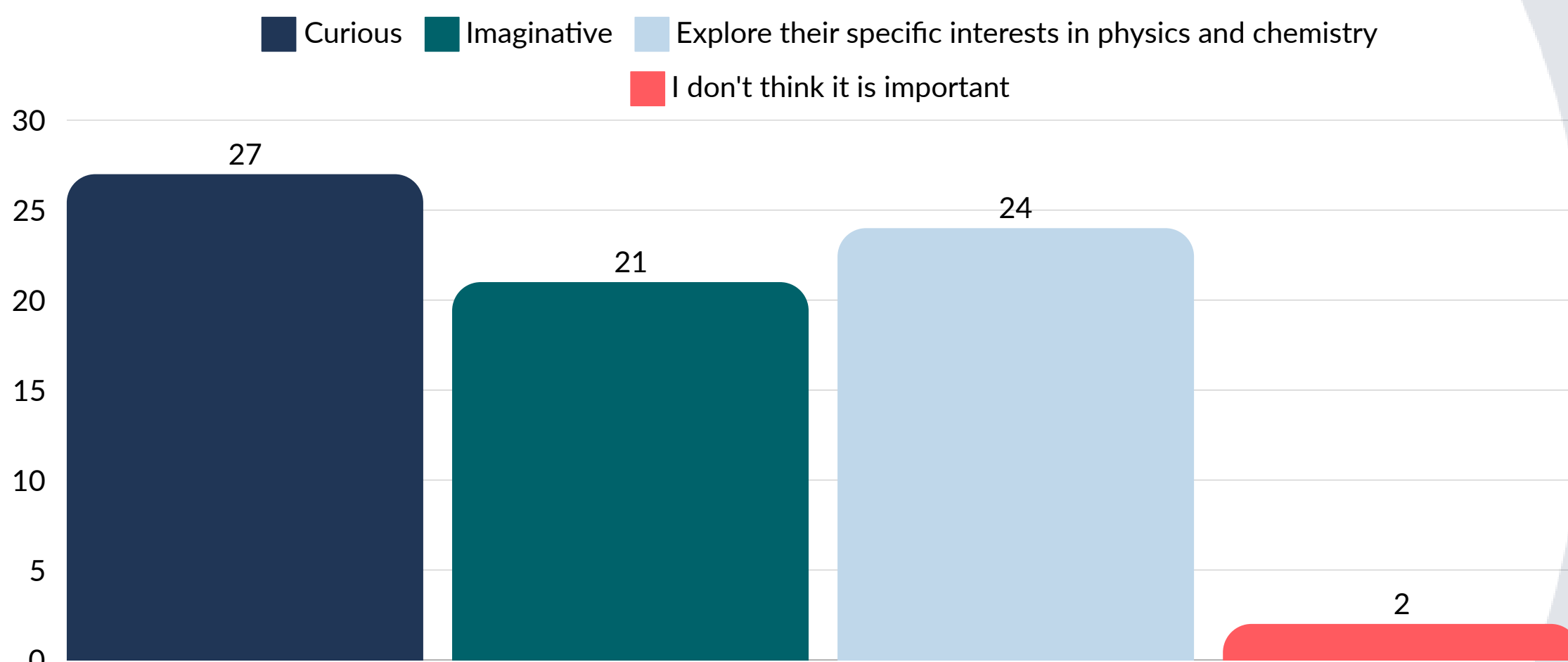
What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

Parents believe that critical thinking and problem-solving are essential skills that go beyond just solving mathematical problems. They feel that students should learn how to think independently, analyse situations, and apply their knowledge to real-world challenges. Some parents emphasised the importance of practical problem-solving skills, which can be used in everyday life and future careers.

There is also a strong belief that students should learn how to fact-check information and identify reliable sources, especially in today's world where misinformation is common. Many parents see these skills as crucial, particularly for STEM-related careers, where problem-solving and critical thinking are key. Some also mentioned that innovation should be encouraged, as it is a valuable way for students to apply their critical thinking skills in a practical and creative way.

When asked about the importance of creativity for their child’s learning, over a third (36%)of parents stated that their child will learn to be curious, slightly less than a third (32%) highlighted the importance of exploring specific interests in physics and chemistry. A little over a quarter (28%) emphasised the value of being imaginative, whilst a few parents (4%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 35).





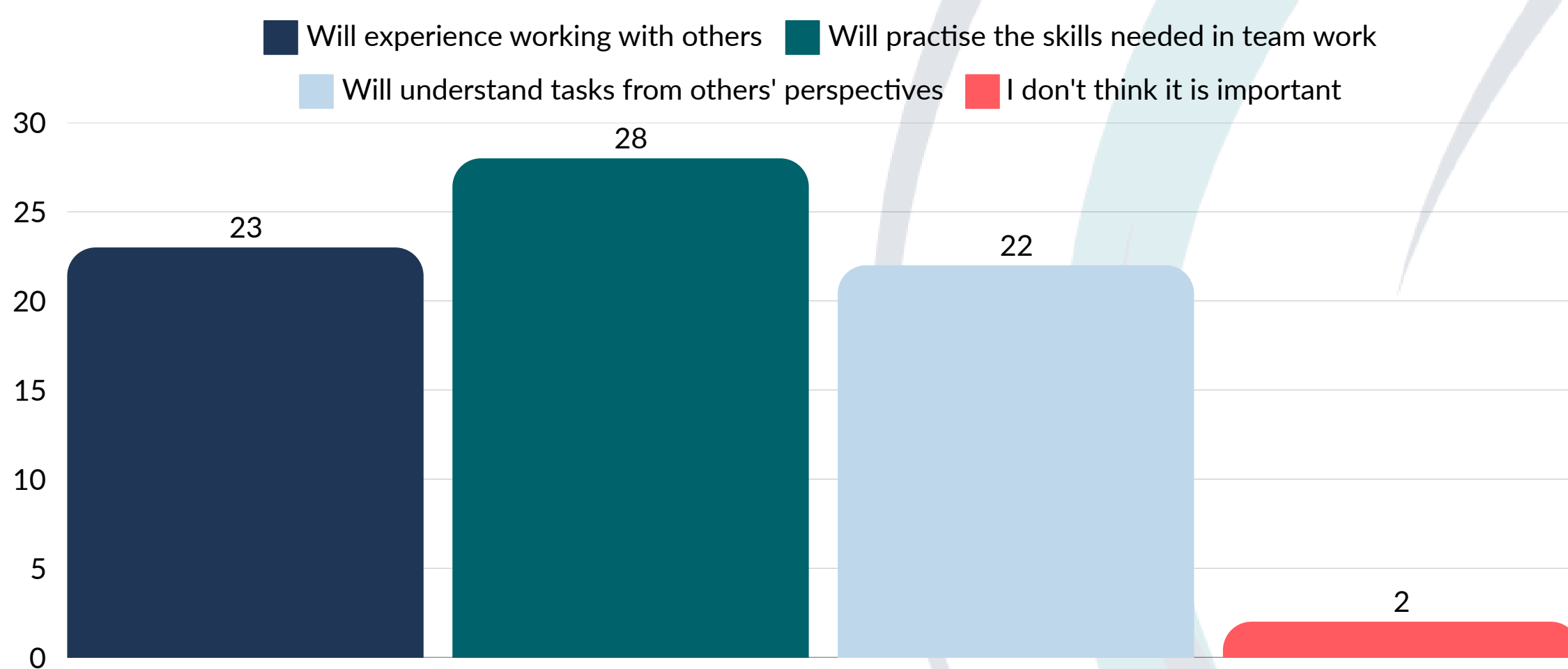
(Figure 35)

Second competency: Being Creative

What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be

Parents believe that creativity should be actively developed and rewarded in exams by encouraging students to share their own ideas and think independently. They see creativity as an essential skill, especially for STEM-related careers, where coming up with new ideas and innovative solutions is crucial.

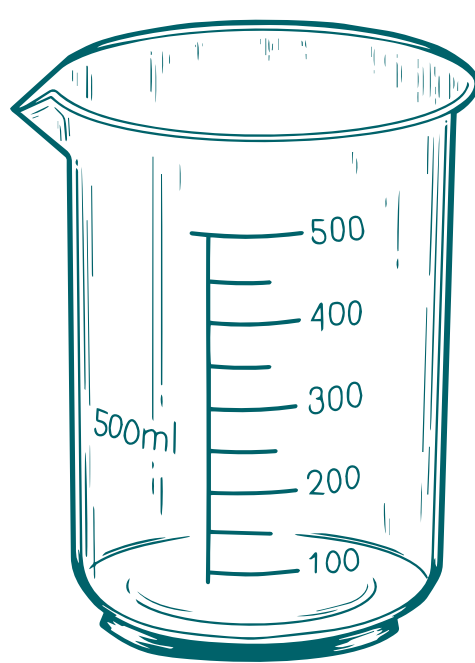
Regarding the importance of working with others, over a third (37%) of parents reported that their child will practice essential teamwork skills. A little less than a third (31%) indicated that their child will gain experience in collaboration, and a smaller number (29%) stated that understanding tasks from others' perspectives is important, a few parents (3%) said they do not think it is important (see Figure 36).



(Figure 36)

Third competency: Working with Others

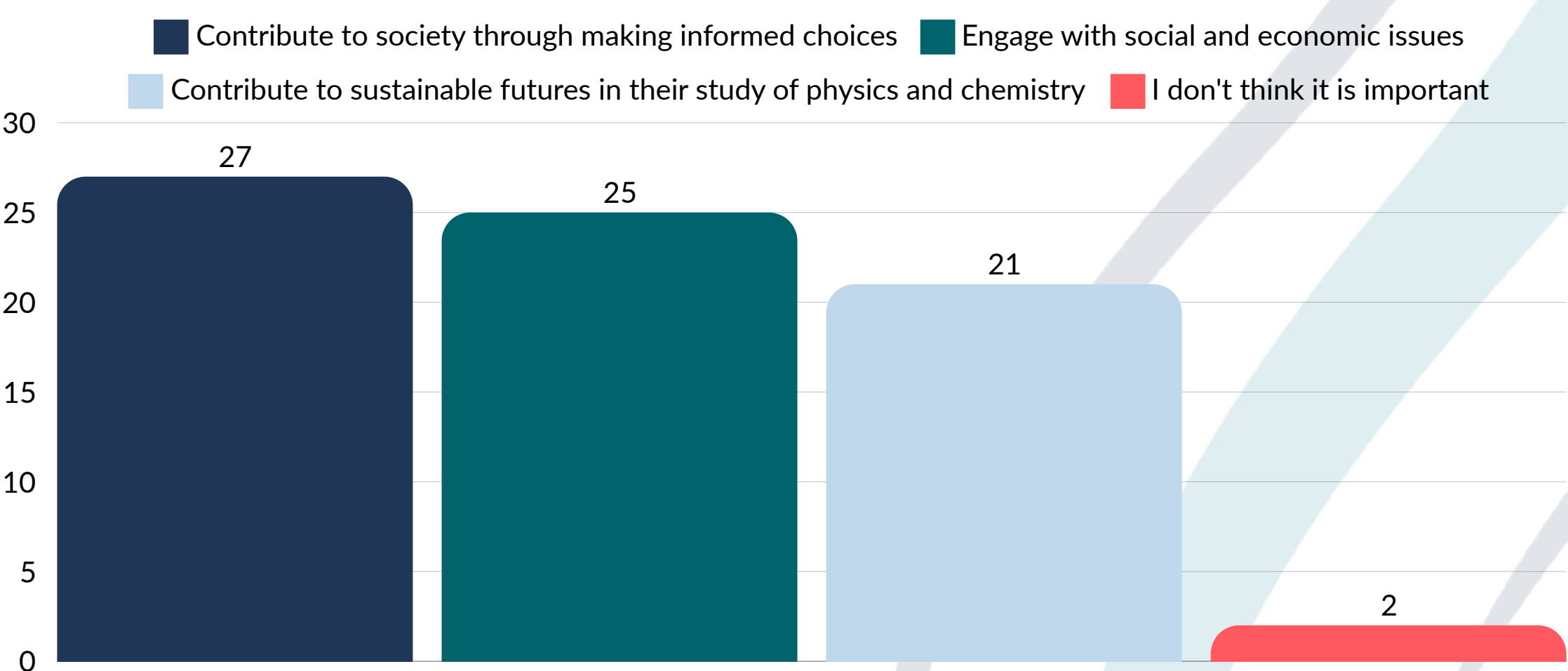
What I find important about working with others is that my child



Parents have different opinions about working with others in the Leaving Certificate. While they agree that teamwork is an important skill, some feel that groupwork should not be graded for such an important exam because it can be unfair, as students often contribute in different ways.

However, many parents see working with others as an essential skill for any career, since most jobs require people to collaborate to get things done. They also believe that teamwork helps students improve their social skills, learn to see things from other people’s perspectives, and work together to solve problems.

All parents were asked about the importance of participating in society, over a third (36%) stated that their child will learn to contribute to society through making informed choices. A third (33%) emphasised the importance of engaging with social and economic issues, and a smaller number (28%) highlighted that contributing to sustainable futures in the study of physics and chemistry is important. Only few parents (3%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 37).

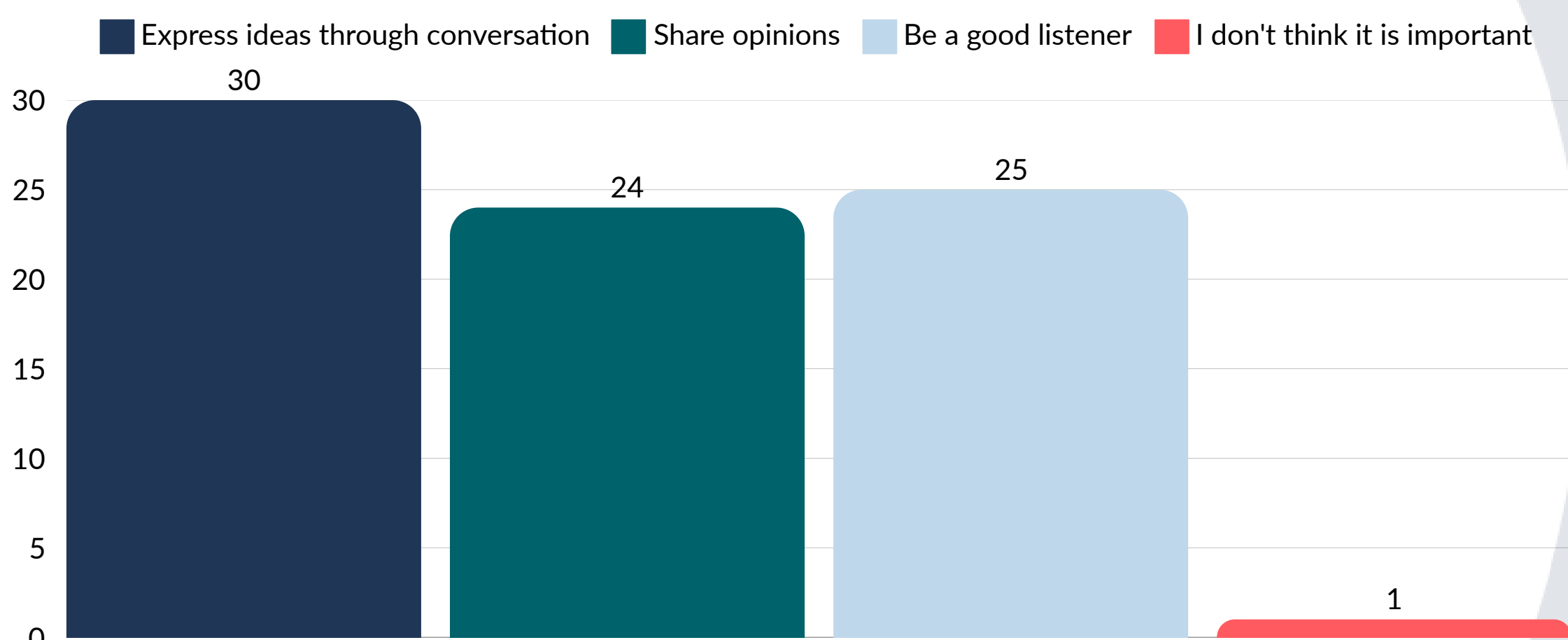


(Figure 37)
Fourth competency: Participating in Society
What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to

Few parents feel that it is important for their child to learn how to actively participate in society. Many believe that students should develop the ability to form their own opinions and contribute to society in meaningful ways. They also see value in students understanding how different subjects, like physics and chemistry, have had a significant impact on society and will continue to shape the world in the future.

In response to the importance of communicating, over a third (38%) of parents believe their child will learn to express ideas through conversation. Slightly less than a third (31%) highlighted being a good listener, while a smaller number (30%) emphasised the importance of sharing opinions. Only one parent (1%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 38).





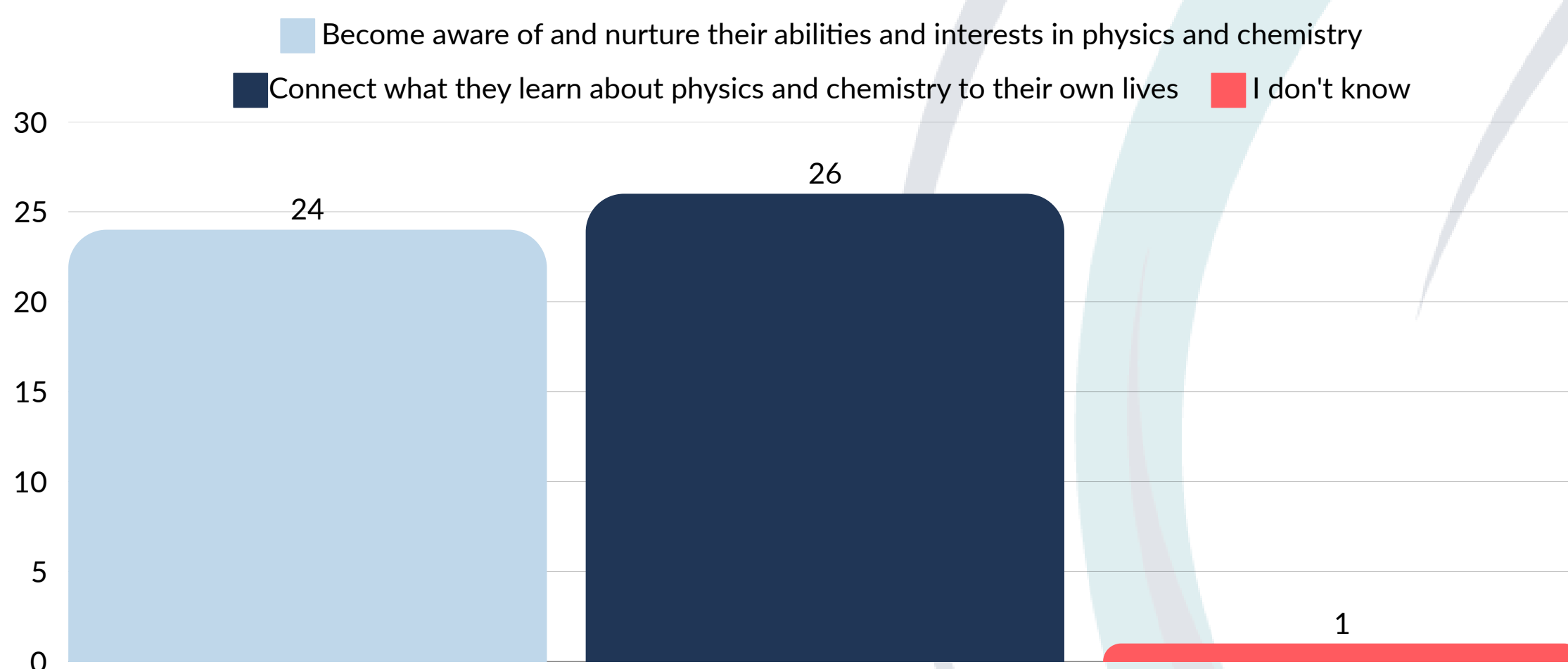
(Figure 38)

Fifth competency: Communicating

What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to

Parents believe that communication is an essential skill for their child to develop. Many feel that encouraging more oral involvement in class and possibly adding an oral or presentation component to exams would help improve these skills. They also recognise that communication is changing, especially for younger generations, due to the influence of phones and social media.

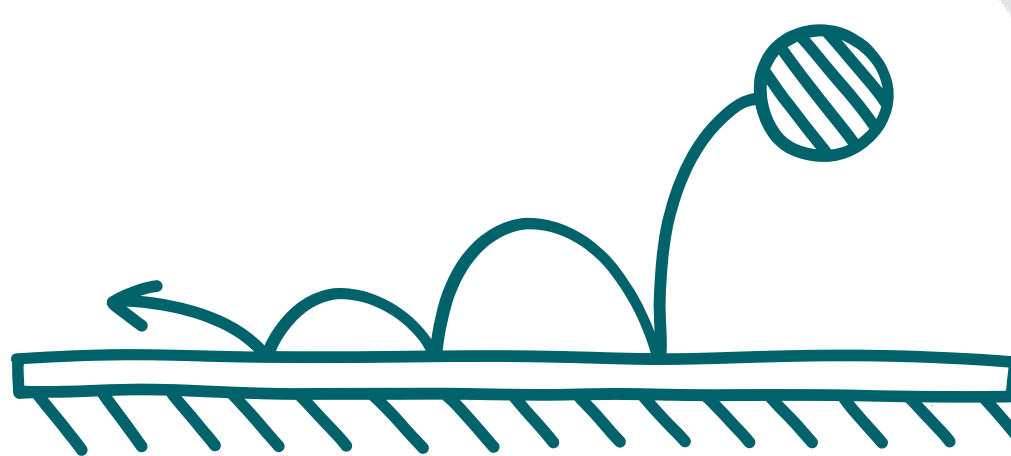
In terms of cultivating well-being, over half (51%) emphasised the connection between what their child learns about physics and chemistry and their personal lives. Slightly less than half (47%) believe their child will learn to become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in physics and chemistry. Only one parent (2%) indicated that they did not know (see Figure 39).



(Figure 39)

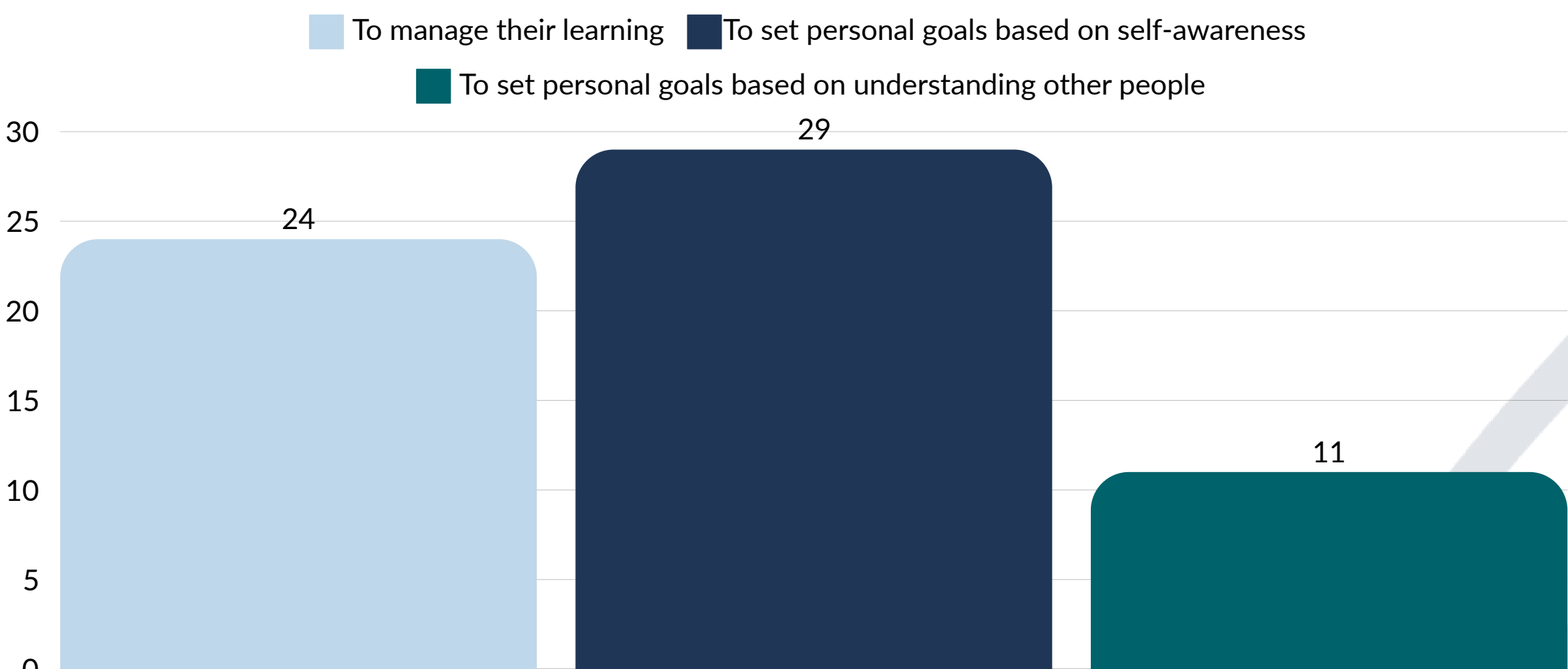
Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing

What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

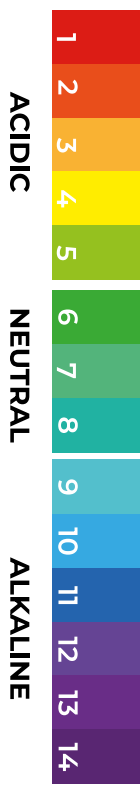
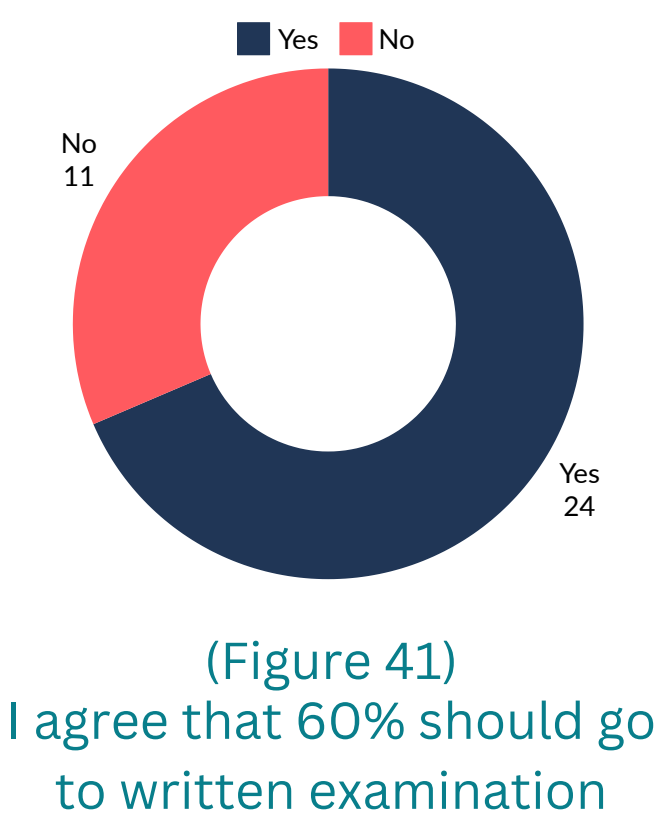


Parents believe that subjects like physics and chemistry play a key role in everyday life and contribute to the development of society and the economy. They see STEM fields as crucial for driving progress in these areas. However, parents also emphasise that this development should focus on benefiting people’s health and well-being in a sustainable and fair way. They want their children to understand how scientific knowledge can improve lives while ensuring that progress is made responsibly and for the good of everyone.

When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, almost half (45%) of parents believe their child will learn to set personal goals based on self-awareness. Over a third (38%) emphasised the importance of managing their learning, while a smaller number (17%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 40).

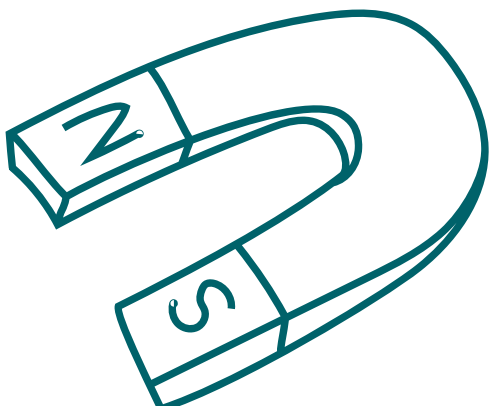


(Figure 40)
Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self
What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn



As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, the majority (69%) agreed, while a smaller minority (31%) disagreed (see Figure 41).

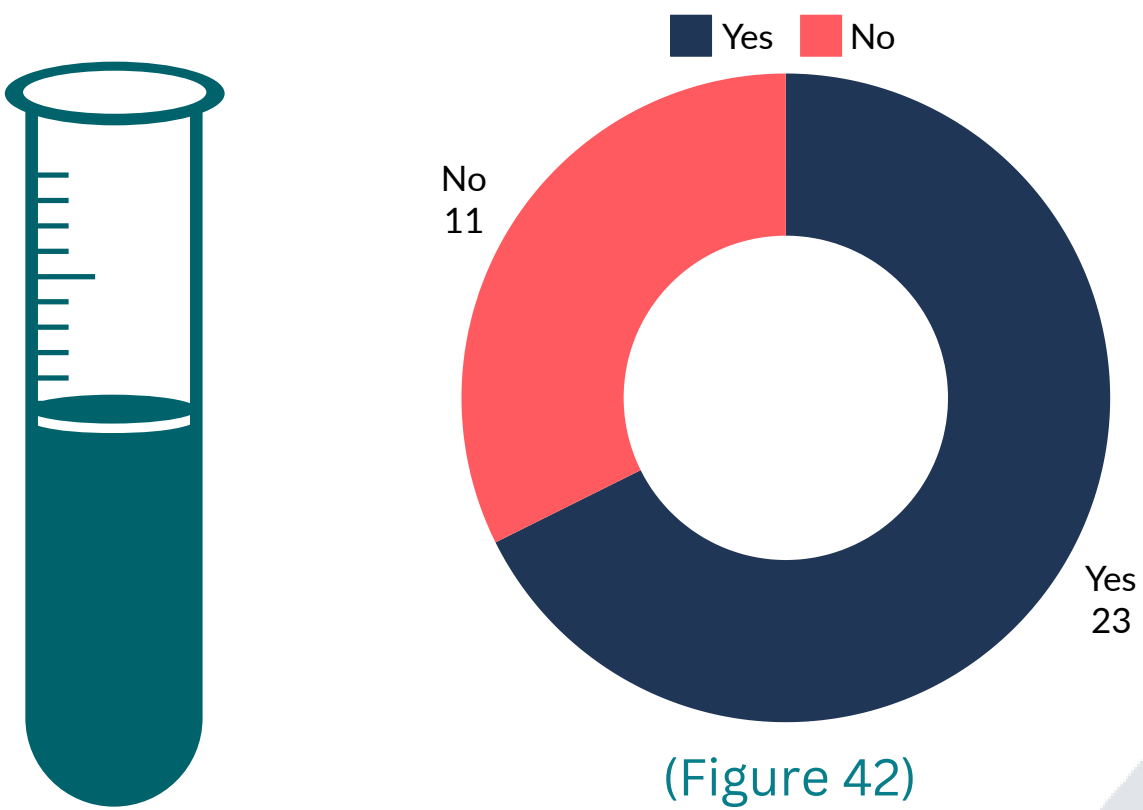
Parents who disagreed with the statement that "60% of the Leaving Certificate Physics and Chemistry grade should come from the written exam" shared several concerns. Some thought that the written exam should count for more, with suggestions like 70% or even 75%, because it is the fairest way to judge a student’s individual work without outside help.



A big concern was the fairness of project work. Some parents felt that projects can be influenced too much by teachers, parents, or even professionals, which makes the grading unfair. They also pointed out that students already have to study for exams and are under a lot of stress, and adding projects on top of that makes things even harder.

Some parents prefer the traditional 100% exam approach because it is clear, fair, and ensures that students are only graded on their own work. They also worried that students with learning challenges might struggle more with long-term projects, so they think exams would be a better way to assess everyone fairly.

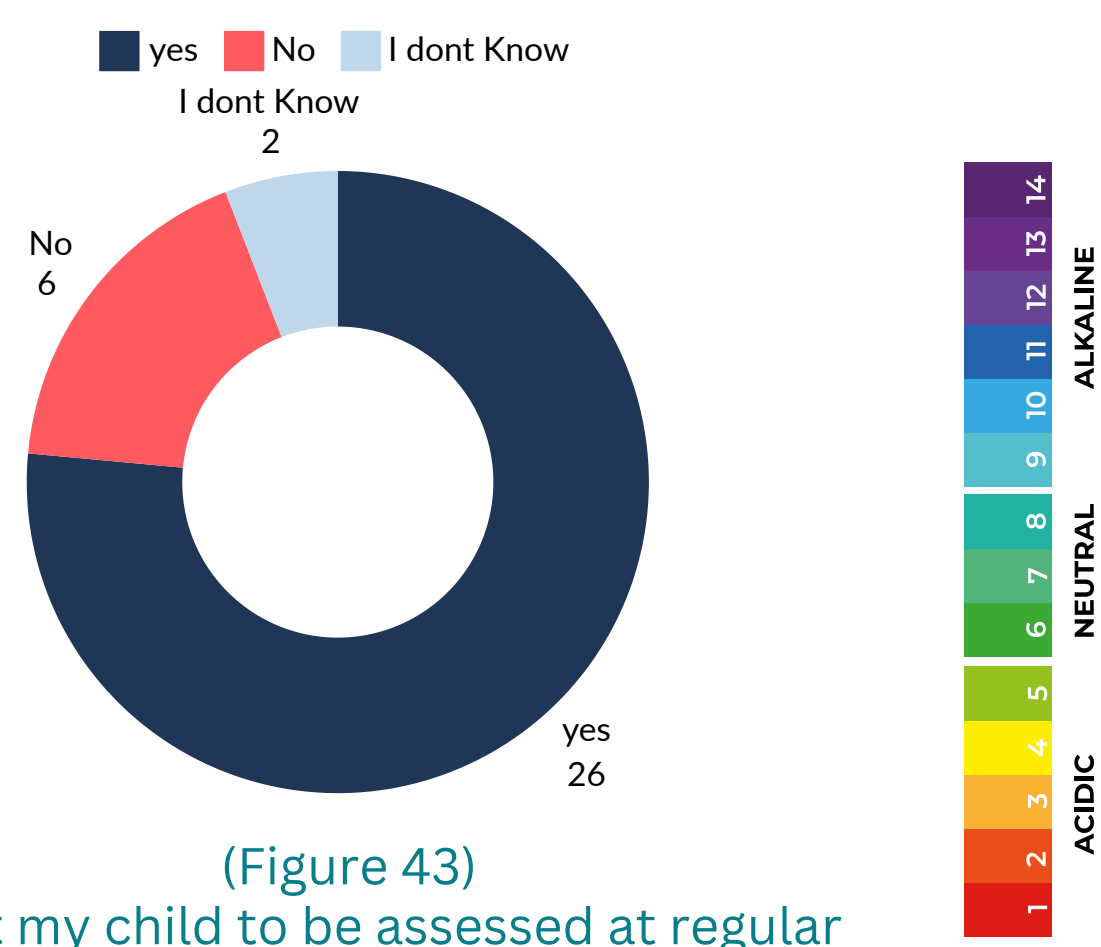
In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, the majority (68%) expressed agreement, with a smaller minority (32%) disagreeing (see Figure 42).



(Figure 42)
I agree that the 40% should go to additional assessment component.

Parents who disagreed with the idea that 40% of the grade should come from additional assessments, like projects, had several concerns. They worried that projects could be done with AI, copied from others, or even completed by parents, making them unreliable. Some parents felt that project work adds too much pressure on students throughout the year. They suggested that projects could be done in the fifth year for practice but should not count toward the final grade for the Leaving Certificate.

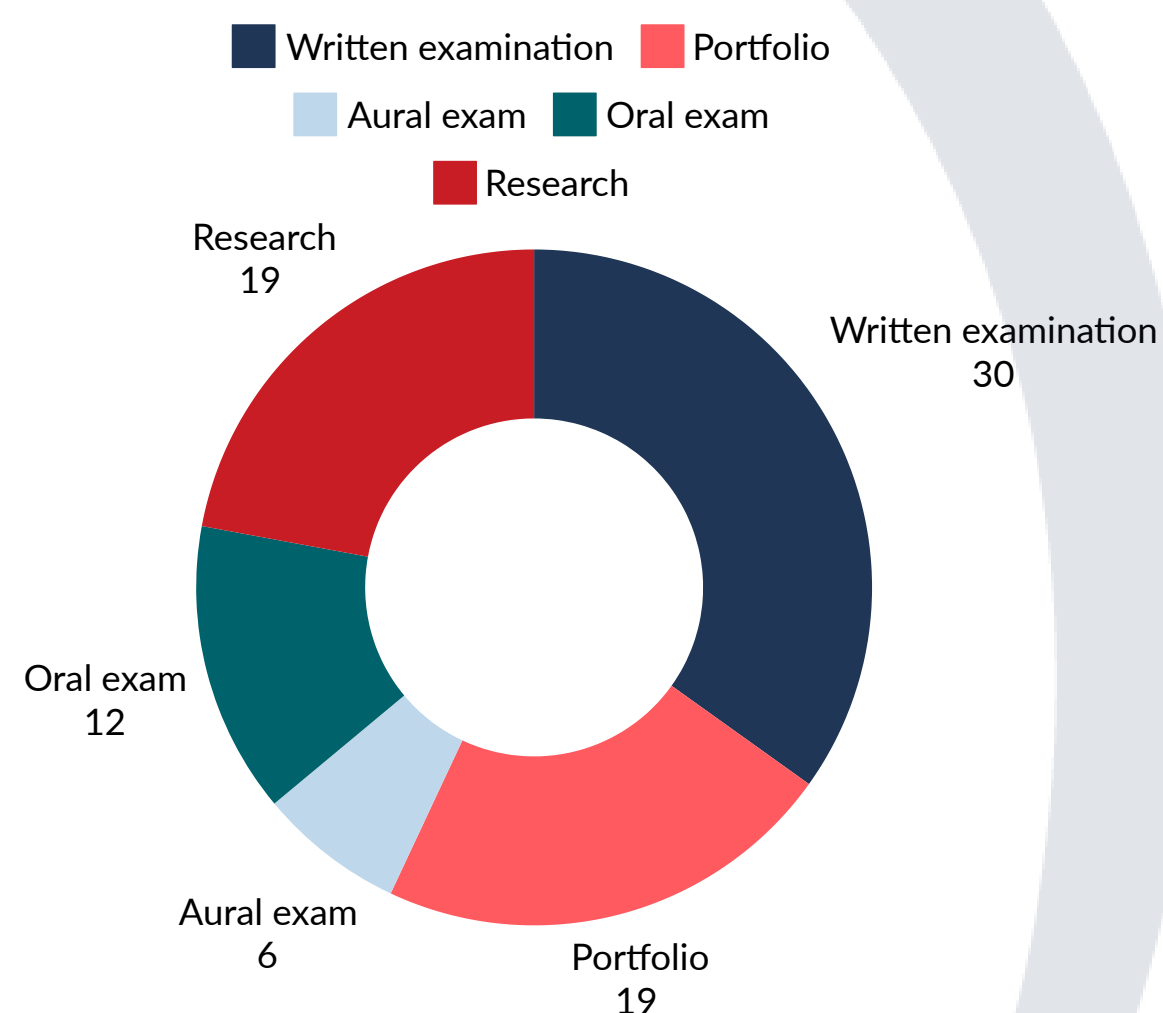
Others thought 40% was too high and suggested it should be lowered to 30% or 25%. Some parents also felt that continuous assessment could be difficult for students with learning challenges, as long-term projects may be hard for them to manage. few preferred a traditional 100% exam, believing it would be fairer and more transparent.



(Figure 43)
I want my child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle.

On the question of assessments, the majority of parents (76%) wanted their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. A small number of parents (18%) disagreed, while few (6%) were unsure (see Figure 43).

On the question of assessments in history, a significant minority of parents (35%) preferred written exams, while a smaller minority (22%) favored each of both research and portfolio assessments. Fewer parents selected oral exams (14%), and the lowest proportion (7%) preferred aural exams (see Figure 41) (see Figure 44).



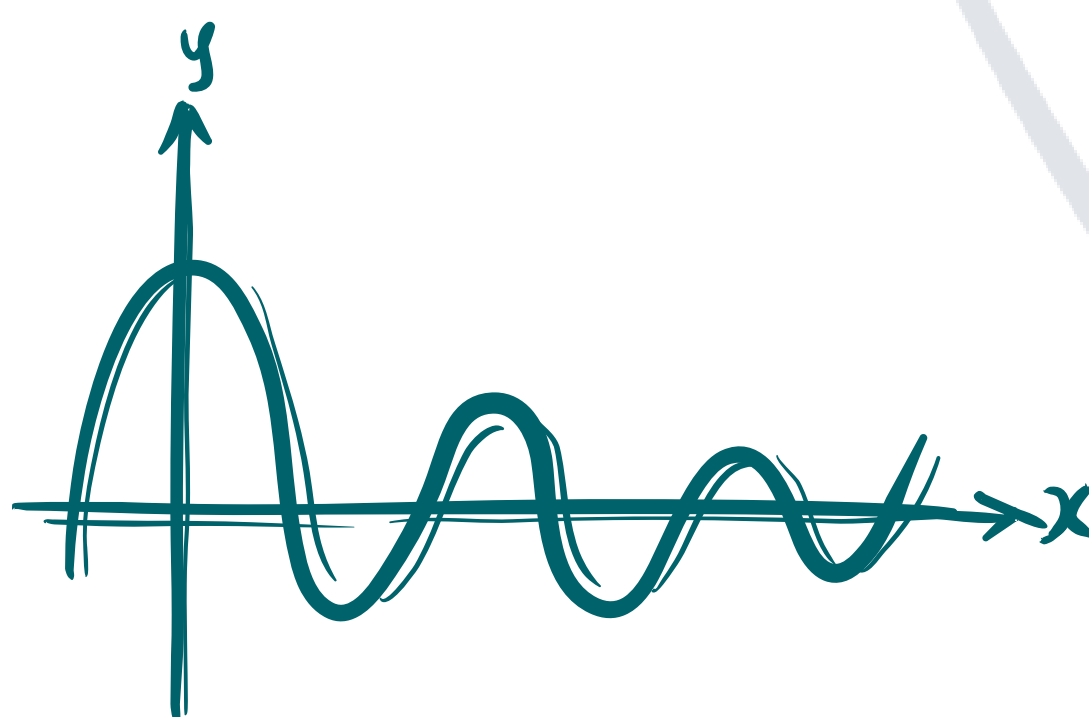
(Figure 44)

As part of their study of physics and chemistry, I want my child to be engaged in

Parents were asked what they think the purpose of Leaving Certificate Physics and Chemistry should be. Parents believe that the purpose should be to establish a solid foundation in these subjects, which can be used for further study or careers, particularly in STEM fields. These subjects are seen as a way to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills that can be applied in real-world situations. Many parents feel that Physics and Chemistry help students understand themselves and the world around them, encouraging them to explore different ways of thinking and potential future careers.

Few parents also believe that these subjects should encourage creativity and curiosity, and they view them as a gateway to third-level education. Some see them as essential for developing a scientific mindset, teaching students how to approach research and new ideas independently. The subjects should help students understand scientific methods and foster an interest in science that can lead to future inventions and advancements.

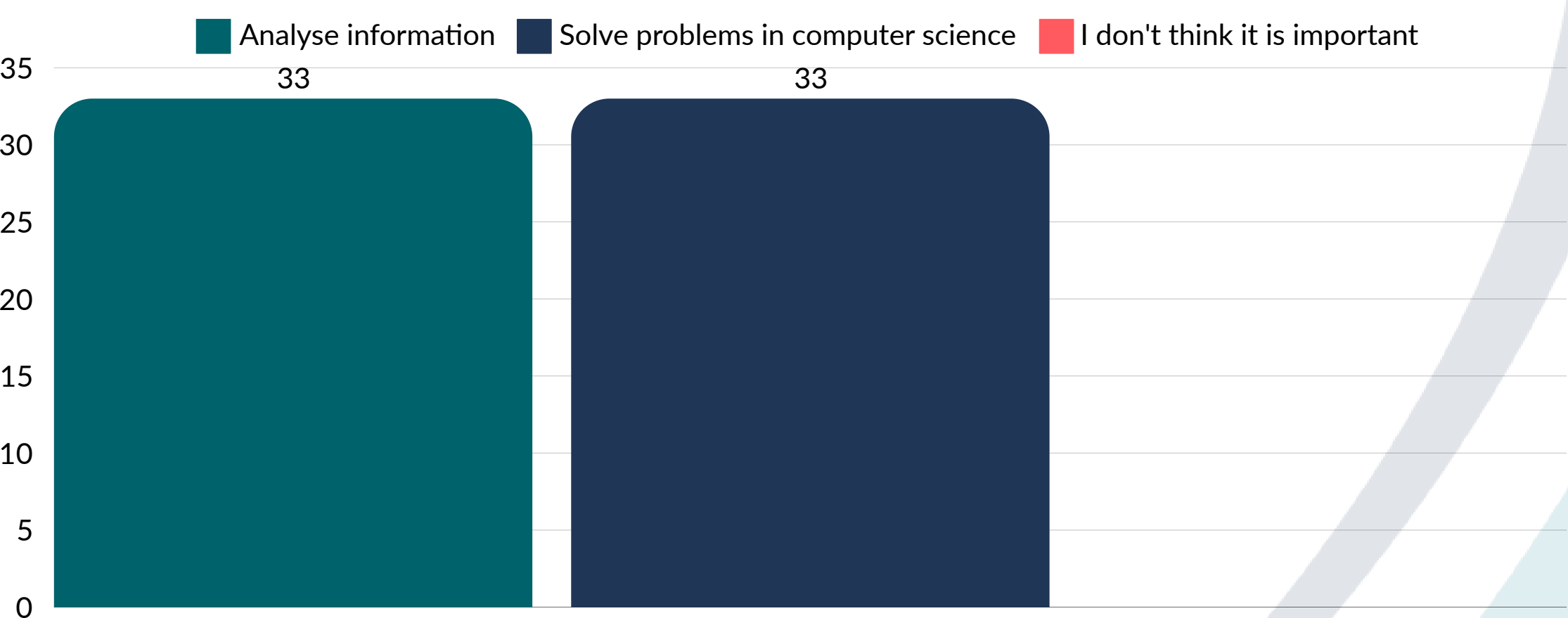
Moreover, for parents, the goal is to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to become engaged and informed members of society, whether or not they choose to pursue further education. These subjects are also viewed as important for preparing students for life after school, helping them make informed decisions and be better prepared for the challenges of the future.



Leaving Certificate Computer Science Survey Findings



When parents were asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, equal number of parents (50%) stated that analysing information and solving problems in computer science are important. None (0%) indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 45).



(Figure 45)

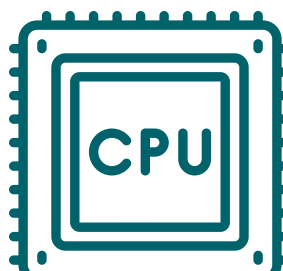
First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems

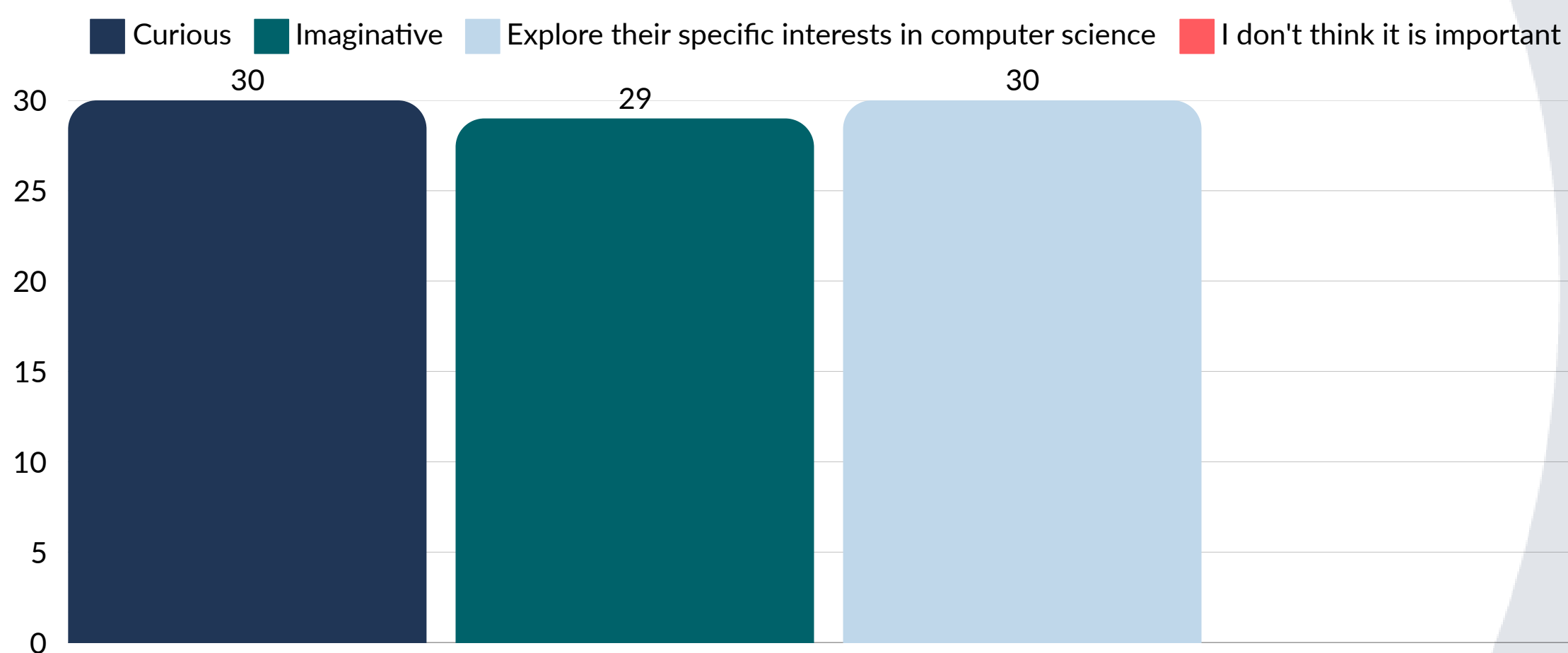
What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

When considering the importance of the different competencies parents were given the opportunity to choose more than one option. In regard to the parents' comments about their thoughts on the first competency, Critical Thinking and Solving Problems, they emphasised its importance in today's world. Many parents believe that developing critical thinking skills is essential for navigating everyday life and future careers. They see problem-solving as a key ability that helps students approach challenges in a structured way, breaking problems down into smaller parts and finding effective solutions.

A few parents highlighted the growing role of computers in society and stressed that learning computer science would be a valuable skill for their children. They believe that problem-solving is the foundation of computer science, and mastering it will help students think logically and tackle complex issues in many areas of life. Overall, parents see this competency as a crucial tool for helping students develop independence, adaptability, and the ability to think critically in an increasingly digital world.

When asked about the importance of creativity for their child's learning, over a third (34%) of parents stated that their child will learn to be curious. A similar number (34%) emphasised the value of exploring their specific interests in computer science, while a slightly smaller number (33%) highlighted the importance of being imaginative. None indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 46).





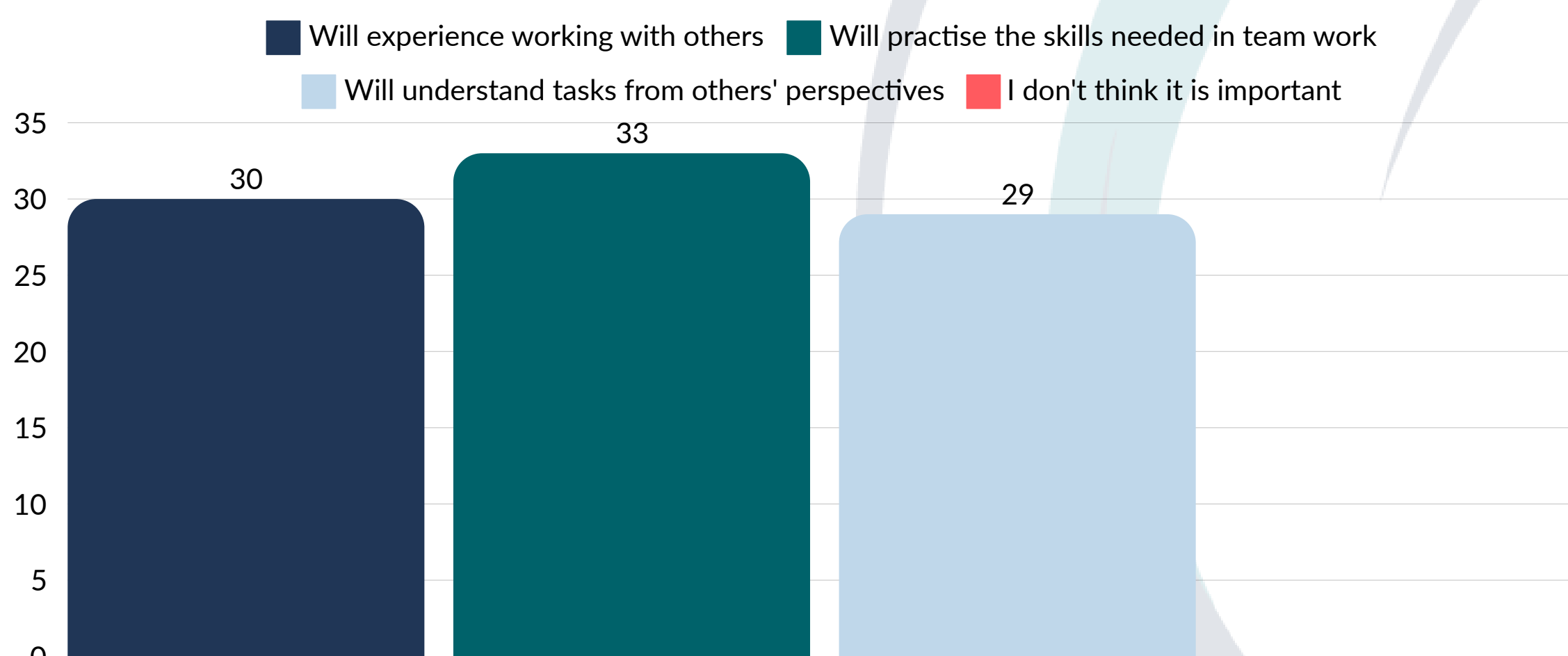
(Figure 46)

Second competency: Being Creative

What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be

Parents had different opinions about the second competency, being creative. Some felt it is important for students to think outside the box because creativity helps with problem-solving and new ideas. Others said that in computer science, creativity might not come right away. They believe students need to first learn the basics before they can start being creative. Without a strong foundation, it might be too difficult to expect creativity early on.

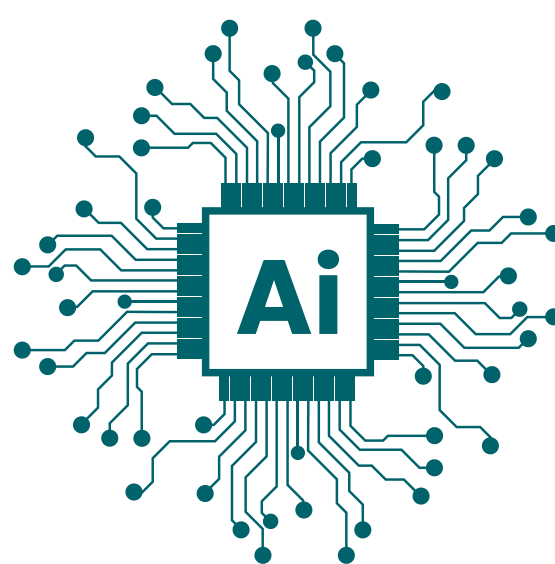
Regarding the importance of working with others, over a third (36%) of parents reported that their child will practice essential teamwork skills, and a third (33%) indicated that their child will gain experience in collaboration, a slightly smaller number (32%) stated that understanding tasks from others' perspectives is important. None indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 47).



(Figure 47)

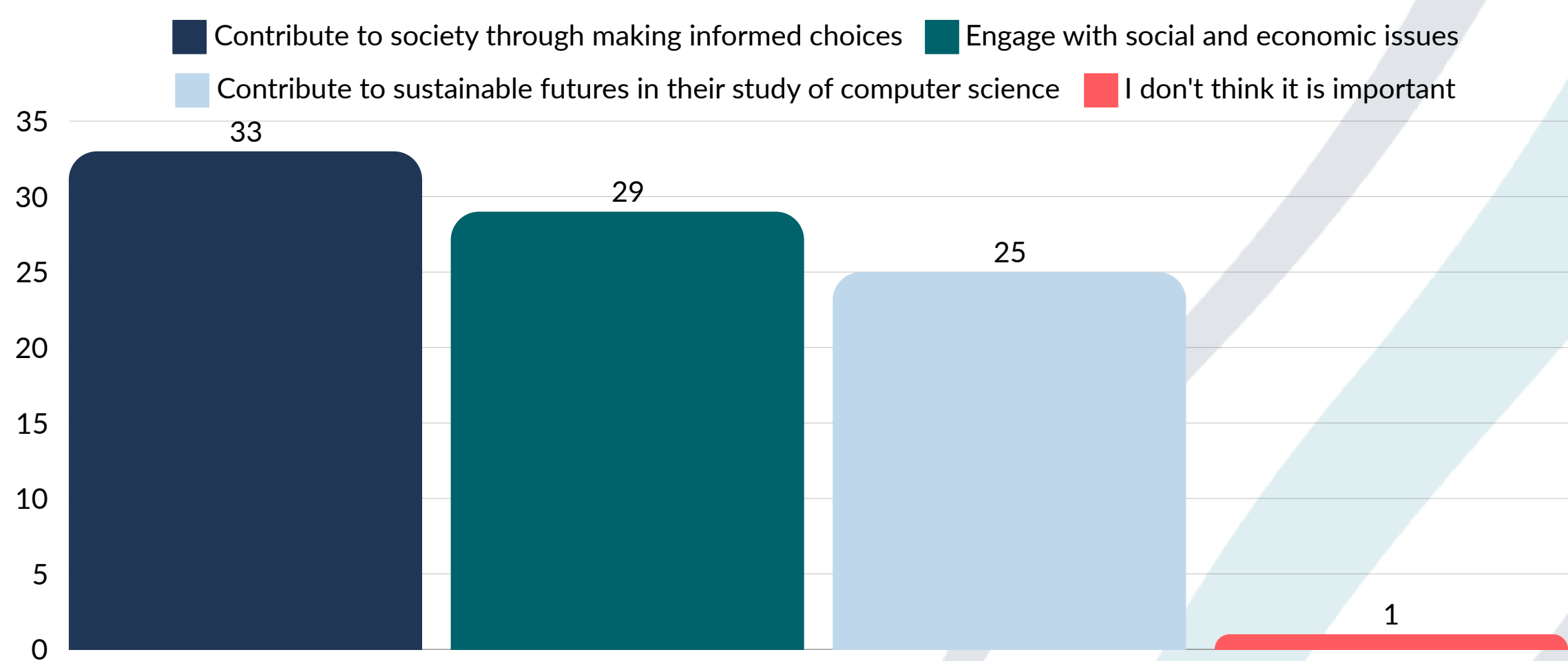
Third competency: Working with Others

What I find important about working with others is that my child



Parents shared different thoughts on the third competency, Working with Others. They highlighted the importance of good communication, listening skills, and team bonding to achieve common goals. Many parents pointed out that team work is especially important in software development, where group projects and collaboration play a big role. Some also felt that while learning the theory of teamwork is useful, getting real practical experience working with others is even more important.

All parents were asked about the importance of participating in society, over a third (38%) stated that their child will learn to contribute to society through making informed choices, a third (33%) emphasised the importance of engaging with social and economic issues, and a little over a quarter (28%) highlighted that contributing to sustainable futures in the study of computer science is important. Only one parent (1%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 48).



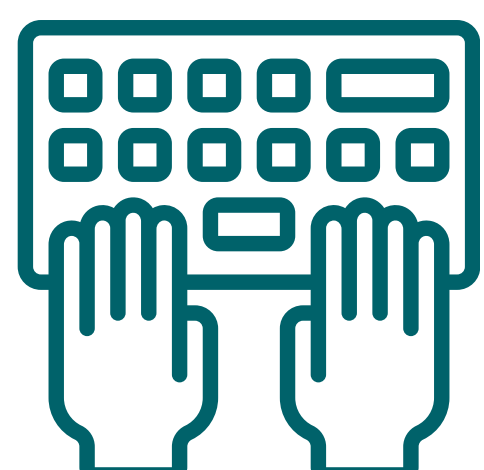
(Figure 48)

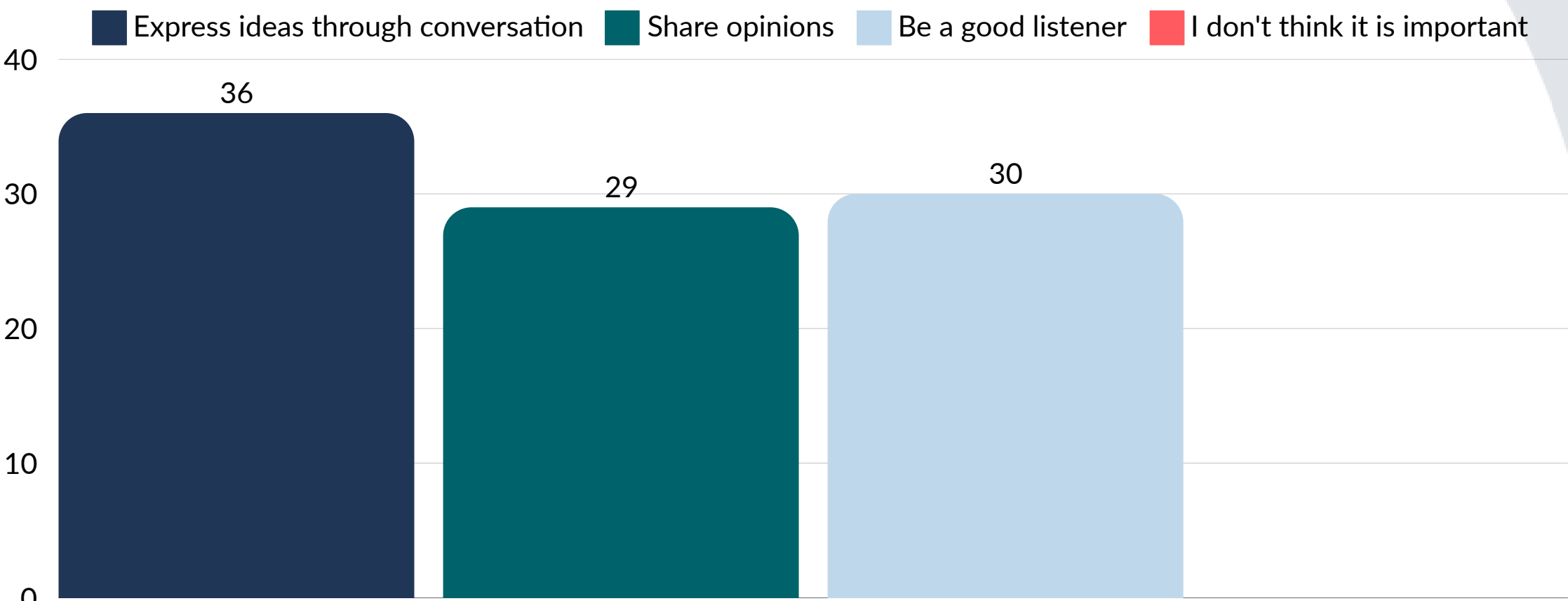
Fourth competency: Participating in Society

What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to

Parents shared their thoughts on participating in society. Some said that using computers to gain knowledge is important, while others mentioned that understanding how communities are built is a valuable skill. They also highlighted that information technology and automation play a big role in making society better and helping it progress.

In response to the importance of communicating, over a third (38%) of parents believe their child will learn to express ideas through conversation, a smaller number (32%) highlighted being a good listener, with a similar amount (31%) emphasised the importance of sharing opinions. None indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 49).

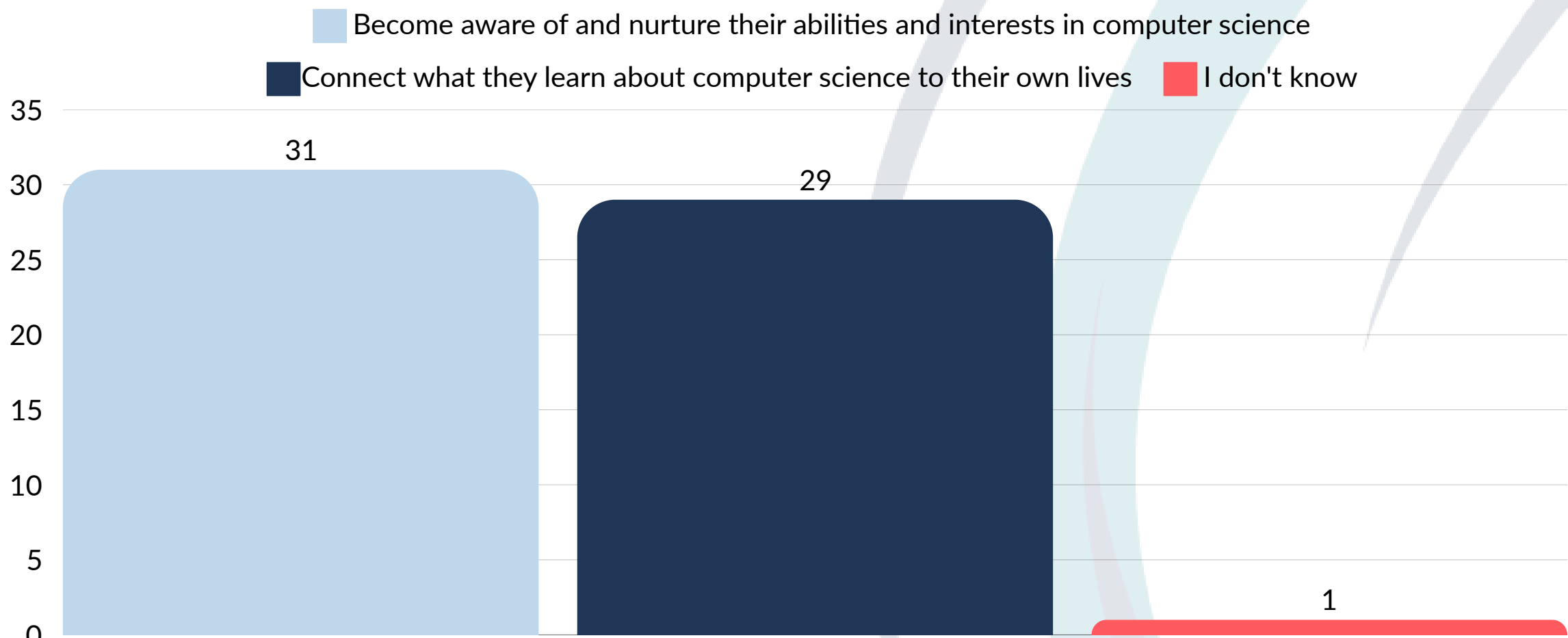




(Figure 49)
Fifth competency: Communicating
What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to

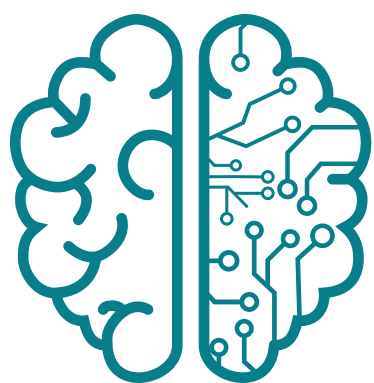
Parents believe that communication is very important. They said computer science can help people with disabilities find new ways to communicate. They also think students should learn different ways to communicate, especially for those who find speaking or making eye contact difficult. Parents want children to feel confident asking questions when they do not understand something. They also think it is important for students to learn how to explain their ideas clearly, as this is a useful skill for the future.

In terms of cultivating well-being, the majority (51%) of parents believe their child will learn to become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in computer science. A little less than half (48%) emphasised the connection between what they learn about computer science and their personal lives. Only one parent (2%) indicated they did not know (see Figure 50).

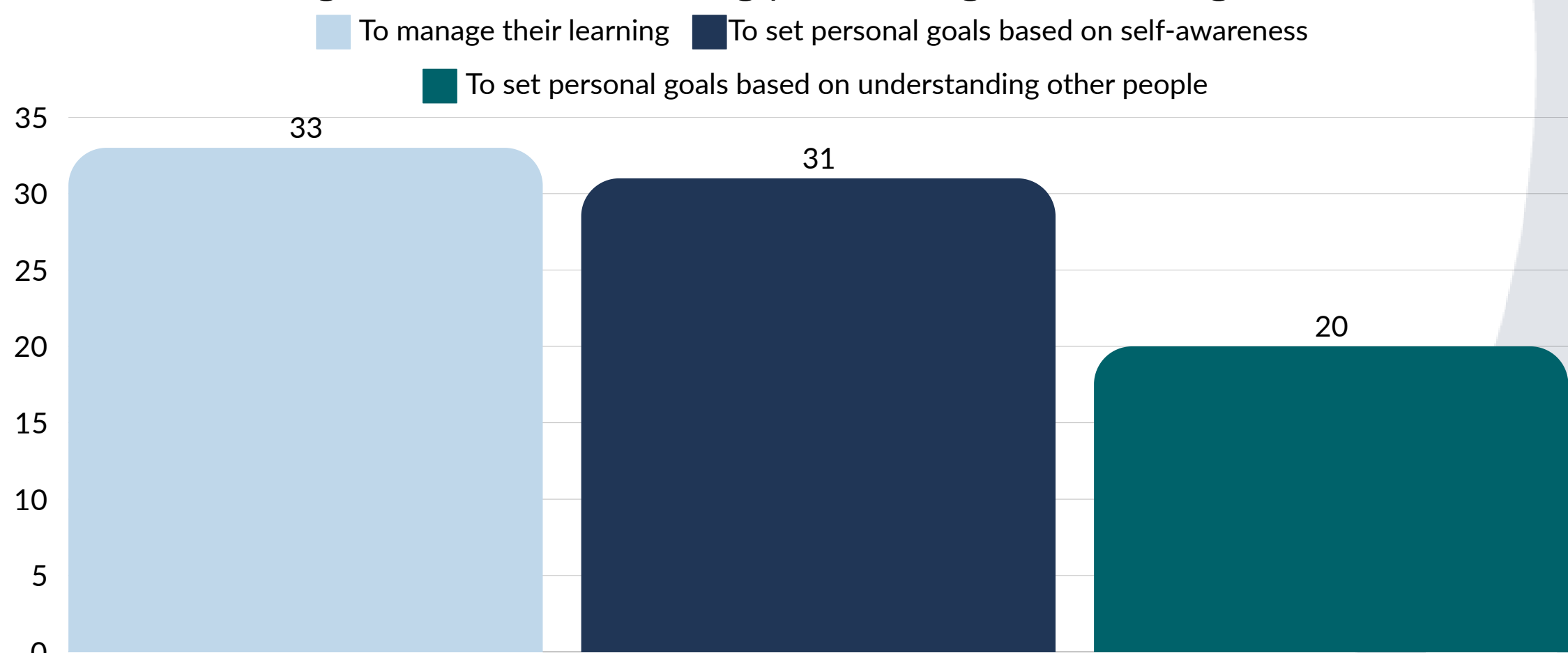


(Figure 50)
Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing
What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

Parents have different views on how computer science relates to well-being. Some believe students should learn about topics like social media and explicit online content and how to handle these subjects in a healthy way. Others think that studying computer science, like any other subject, supports well-being by allowing students to explore their interests and build valuable skills.

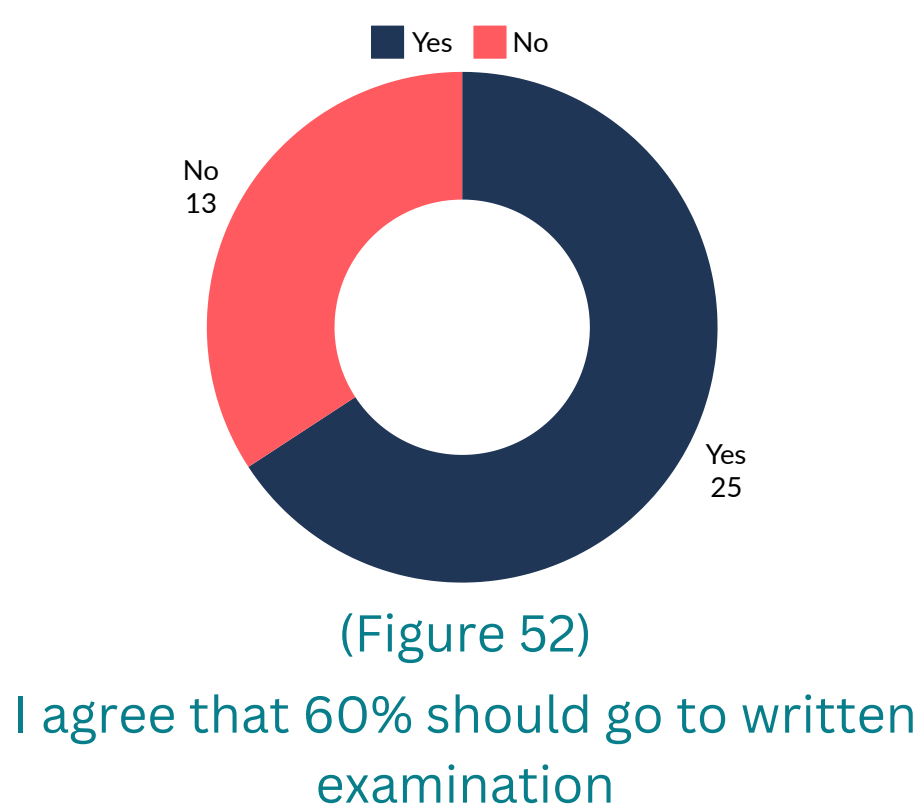


When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, over a third (39%) of parents believe their child will learn to manage their learning. A slightly smaller number (37%) emphasised setting personal goals based on self-awareness, while a quarter (24%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 51).



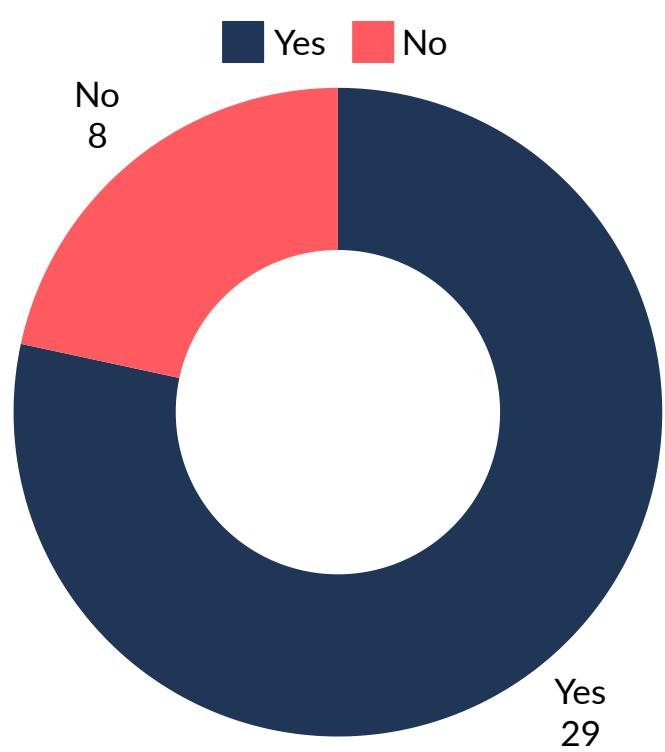
(Figure 51)
Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self
What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn

Parents had mixed views on managing learning and self. One parent believes it is important for students to learn how to exceed expectations. Another parent feels that managing learning and self is similar to what’s needed in any other subject.



As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, the majority (66%) agreed, while a smaller minority (34%) disagreed (see Figure 52).

Parents who disagreed with the idea that 60% of the Leaving Certificate Computer Science grade should come from the written exam shared various concerns. Some believe practical work should be given more importance, as computer science is a hands-on subject. They feel that project work and continuous assessment throughout the year would better reflect students' understanding. A few parents suggested a 50/50 split between written exams and practical work, like team projects or coding assignments. They believe that practical assessments are more useful for measuring students' true skills.



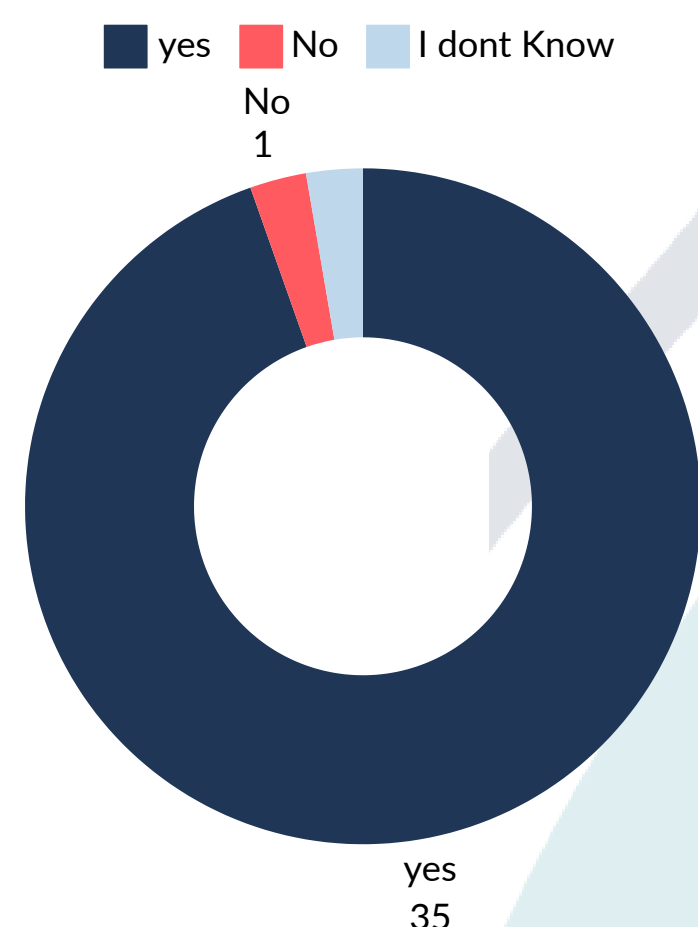
(Figure 53)

I agree that the 40% should go to additional assessment component.

In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, most parents (78%) expressed agreement, with a smaller number of parents (22%) disagreeing (see Figure 53).

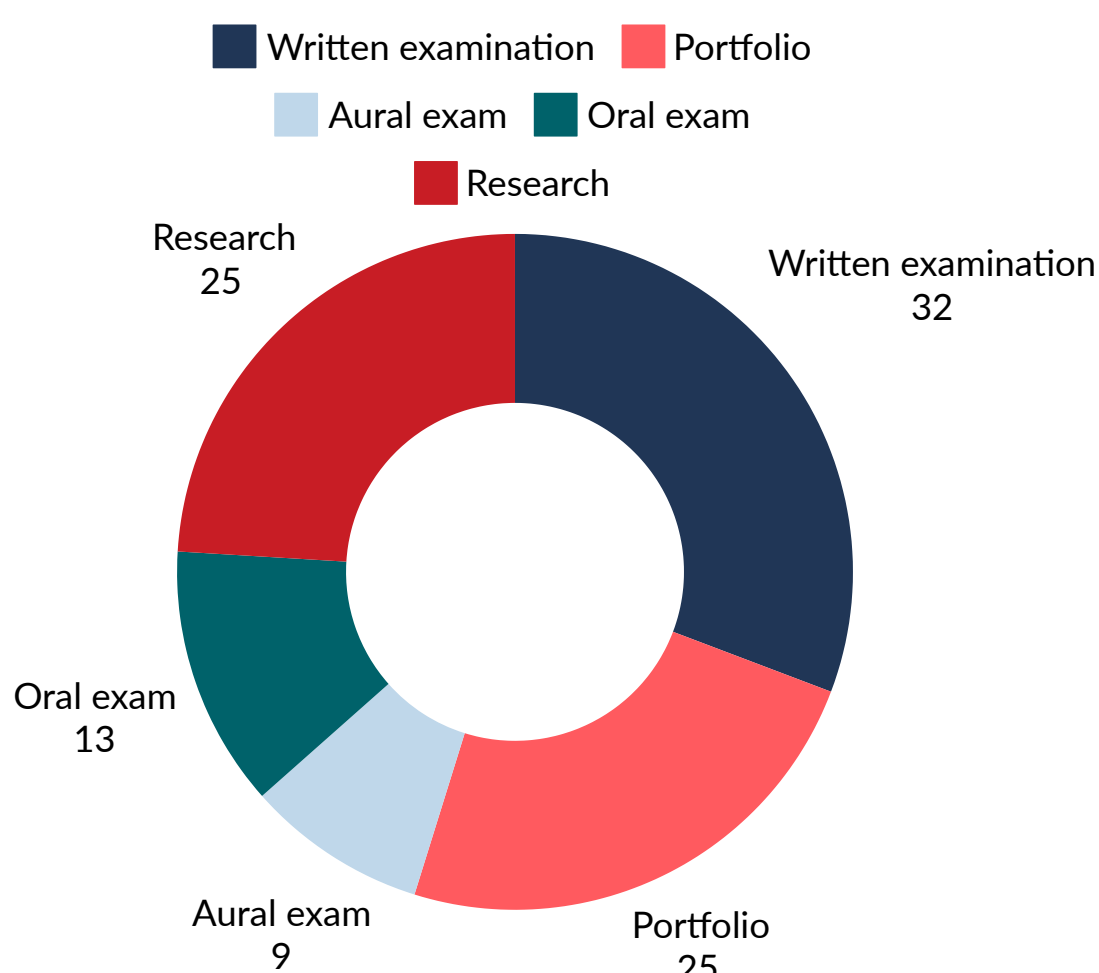
Parents who disagreed with the idea that 40% of the grade should come from additional assessments, like projects, had several concerns. Some felt that a higher percentage should go to these assessments, with suggestions for a 50/50 split between written exams and practical work. They believe that project assignments, teamwork, and coding projects should carry equal weight as written exams. Others also pointed out that the final decision depends on the nature of the additional assessments.

On the question of assessments, almost all parents (95%) wanted their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. Few parents (2.5%) disagreed, while another (2.5%) were unsure (see Figure 54).



(Figure 54)

I want my child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle.



(Figure 55)

As part of their study of computer science, I want my child to be engaged in

On the question of assessments in computer science, a significant minority of parents (31%) preferred written exams. A smaller minority (24%) favoured both research and portfolio assessments. Fewer parents selected oral exams (13%), while the lowest proportion (9%) preferred aural exams (see Figure 55).

Parents had a variety of thoughts on the purpose of Leaving Certificate Computer Science. Many agreed that the subject should lay a strong foundation for students to pursue computer science-related degrees and careers. They highlighted the importance of teaching programming and showing how computer science impacts both personal and work life.

A number of parents also emphasised the need to prepare students for a digital world, focusing on essential skills like problem-solving, coding, and app development. They stressed that the curriculum should help students stay updated with new technology and feel comfortable using it in real-world scenarios.

Several parents saw the subject as a way to improve analytical thinking and equip students with technical awareness. They also believed that computer science should help students explore future career opportunities and offer basic coding and networking skills that would be useful in many jobs. Ultimately, they felt it was essential for students to gain a foundational understanding of the subject, allowing them to make informed decisions about future studies and careers.

When asked about what is good about the current Leaving Certificate Computer Science course, some parents were unsure or unfamiliar with the subject, as their children had not yet engaged with the course or it was not offered at their schools. A few parents expressed hope that their second child would have the opportunity to study it. One parent mentioned that they believed the course should have less pressure, particularly regarding the exam and project work. Another parent noted that while the current curriculum provides a solid foundation, it should be updated to keep up with technological advancements.

When asked what should be taken out of the current Leaving Certificate Computer Science course, many parents were unsure or unfamiliar with the curriculum. However, some suggested that there should be less focus on written exams and more emphasis on ongoing assessments throughout the year. One parent recommended updating the curriculum to include topics like artificial intelligence and its integration into daily life.

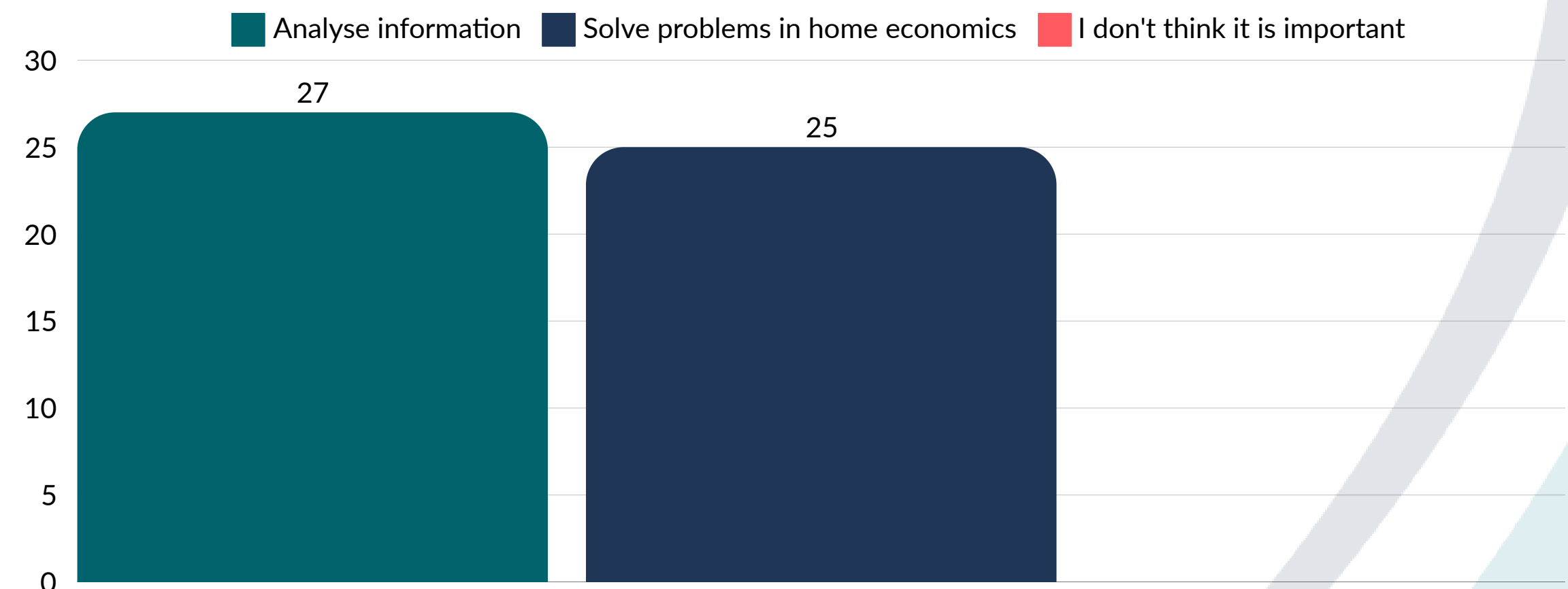
When parents were asked what they would like to improve about the current Leaving Certificate Computer Science course, a variety of suggestions were made. Some parents expressed the need to incorporate more modern programming languages and ensure the curriculum stays up to date with current trends, with regular revisions. Others suggested that more time should be dedicated to insights from industry professionals, helping students gain a clearer view of career opportunities. A few parents felt the subject should be made more inclusive and promoted to students, as technology is increasingly important in everyday life. There were also calls to focus on coding, data analysis, and analytics, as well as emphasising ethics and governance related to data and AI.

Leaving Certificate Home Economics

Survey Findings



When parents were asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, the majority (52%) stated that analysing information is important. Less than half (48%) highlighted solving problems in home economics, while none indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 56).



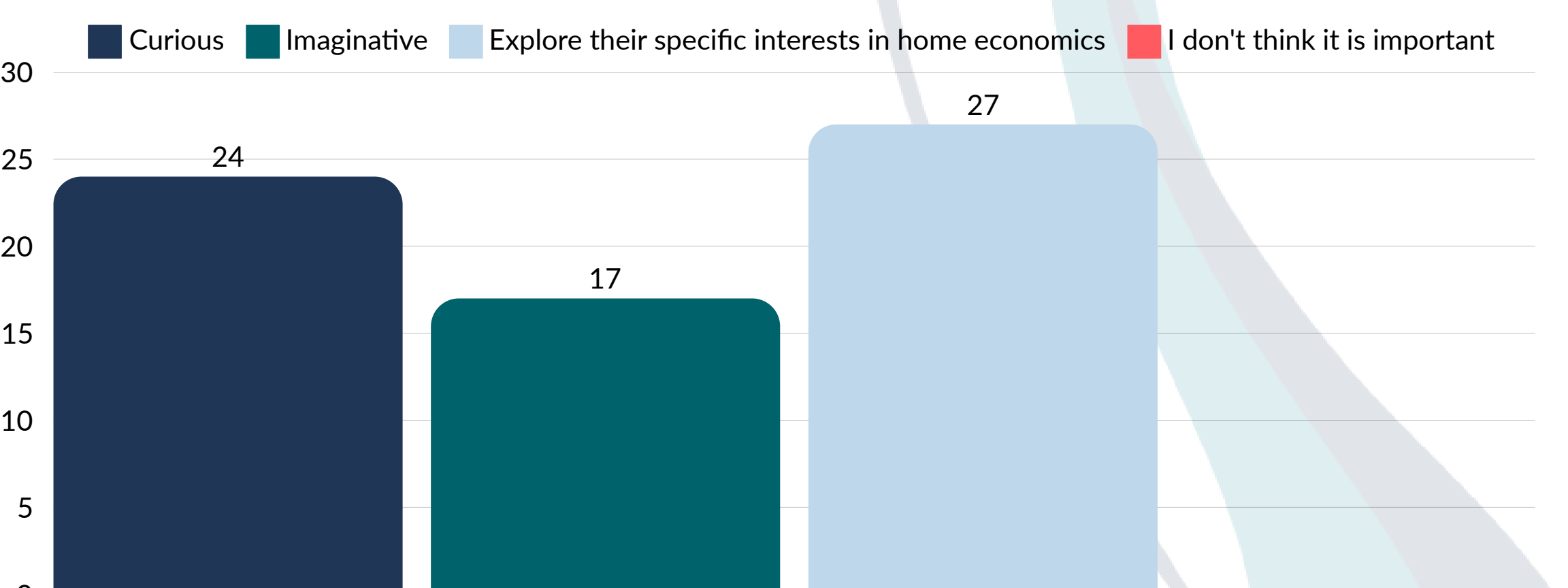
(Figure 56)

First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems

What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

When parents were asked about the first competency, critical thinking and solving problems, some expressed a desire to see a greater focus on emotional intelligence in addition to the traditional critical thinking skills. One parent suggested that the course could maintain its current approach to analysing information, while another proposed a name change for Home Economics to something like "Consumer & Life Sciences" to reflect a more modern and relevant approach to the subject.

When asked about the importance of creativity for their child’s learning, a significant less than half (40%) of parents emphasised the value of exploring specific interests in home economics. A little over a third (35%) stated that their child will learn to be curious, while a quarter (25%) highlighted the importance of being imaginative. None indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 57).

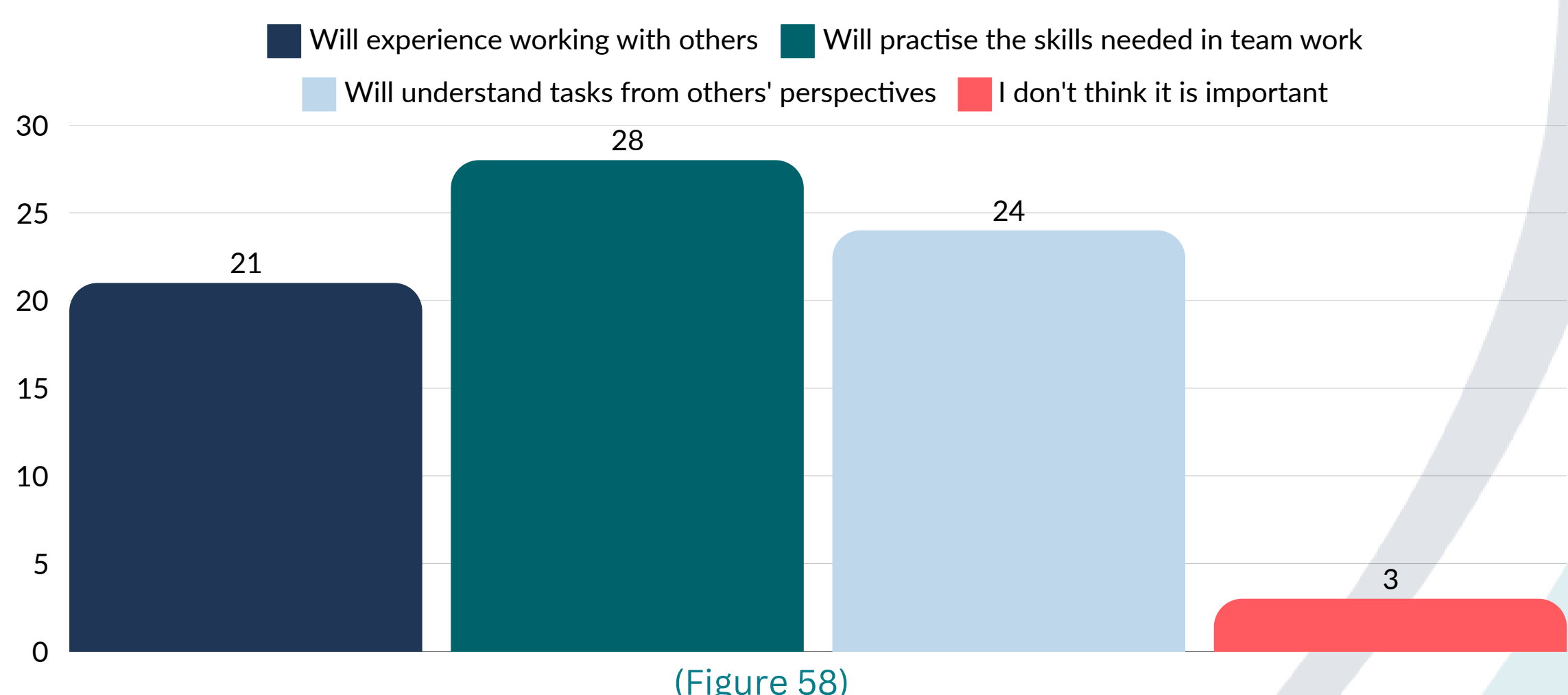


(Figure 57)

Second competency: Being Creative

What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be

Regarding the importance of working with others, over a third (37%) of parents reported that their child will practice essential teamwork skills. Slightly less than a third (32%) stated that understanding tasks from others' perspectives is important, whilst a little more than a quarter (28%) indicated that their child will gain experience in collaboration. A small number (4%) said they do not think it is important (see Figure 58).

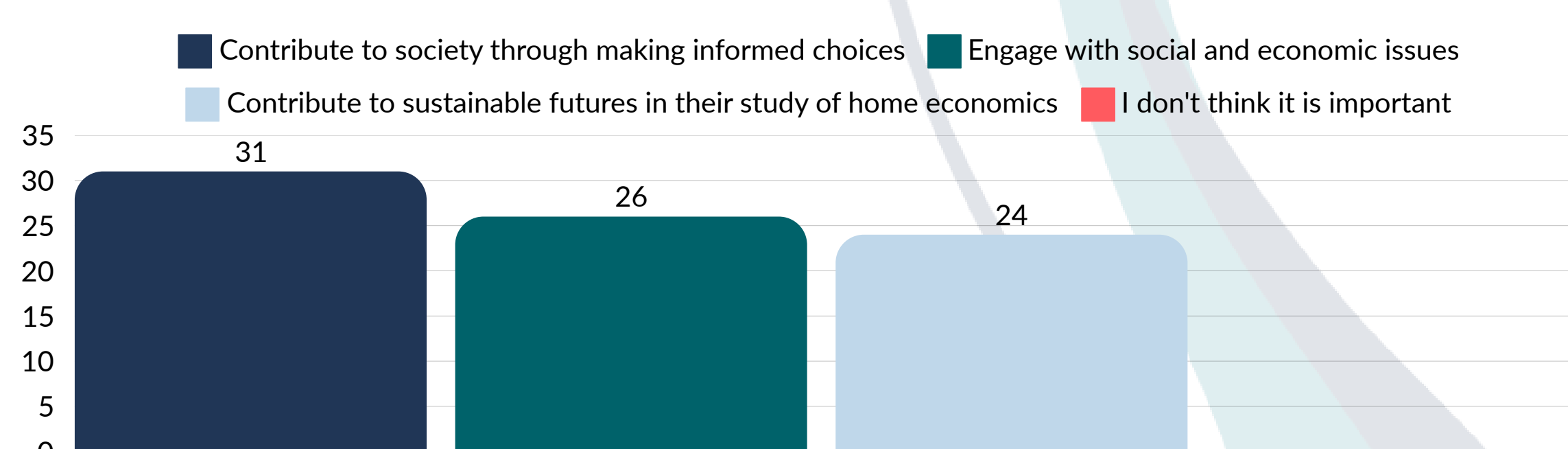


(Figure 58)
Third competency: Working with Others
What I find important about working with others is that my child

When parents were asked about the third competency, Working with Others, one parent expressed concern that their child, who is on the spectrum, might struggle with group work and presentations. They emphasised the importance of allowing the child to contribute individually to projects without being asked to present in front of the class, as they found this especially difficult. Another parent felt that the name Home Economics was outdated, as it does not fully reflect the broader skills taught in the subject, suggesting that it should be renamed to something more inclusive.



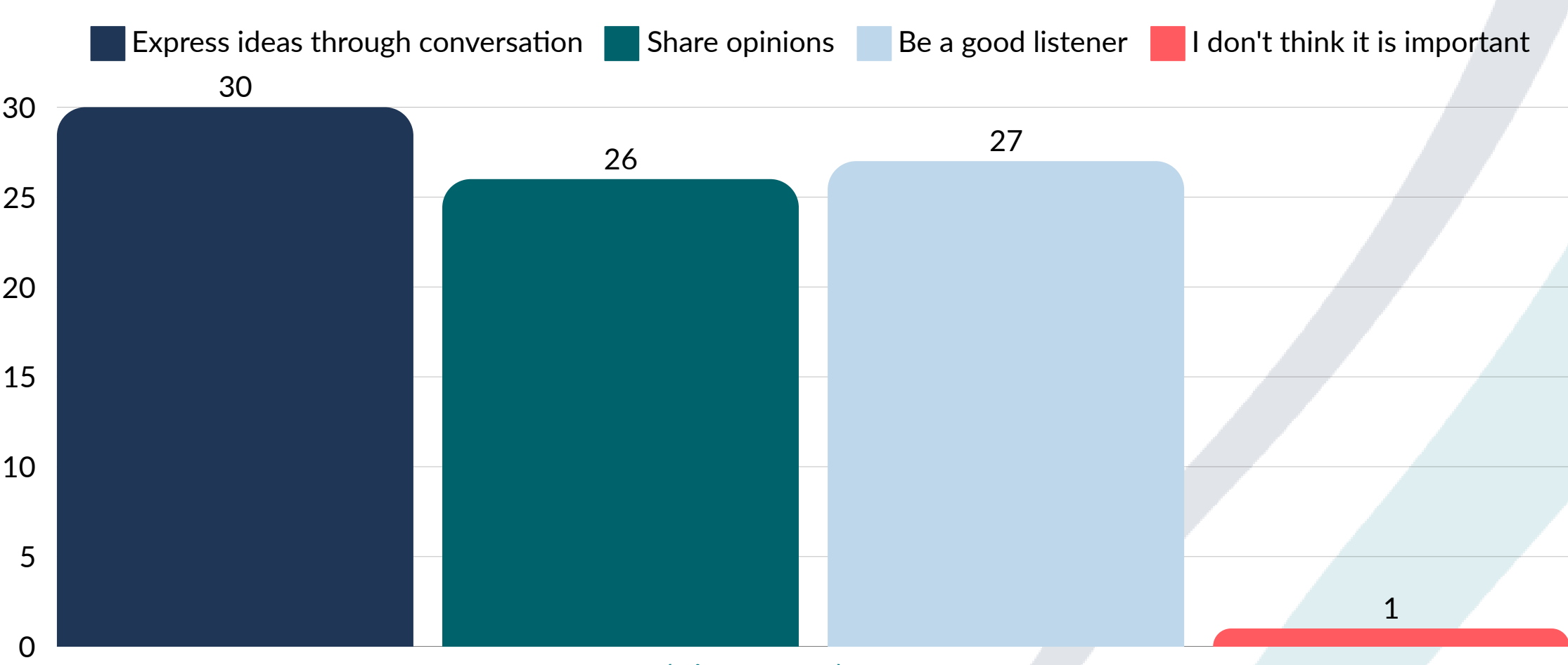
When asked about the importance of participating in society, more than a third (38%) of parents stated that their child will learn to contribute to society through making informed choices. Slightly less than a third (32%) emphasised the importance of engaging with social and economic issues, a smaller number (30%) highlighted that contributing to sustainable futures in the study of home economics is important. None indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 59).



(Figure 59)
Fourth competency: Participating in Society
What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to

When parents were asked about their opinions on the fourth competency, Participating in Society, one parent expressed the importance of being independent in life, particularly in making informed decisions about food, products, and cooking healthy meals. However, the same parent also noted that requiring cooking in an exam setting might be too stressful and should be avoided.

In response to the importance of communicating, over a third (36%) of parents believe their child will learn to express ideas through conversation. Slightly less than a third (32%) highlighted the importance of being a good listener, and a smaller number (31%) emphasised sharing opinions. Only one parent (1%) indicated that they do not think it is important(see Figure 60).

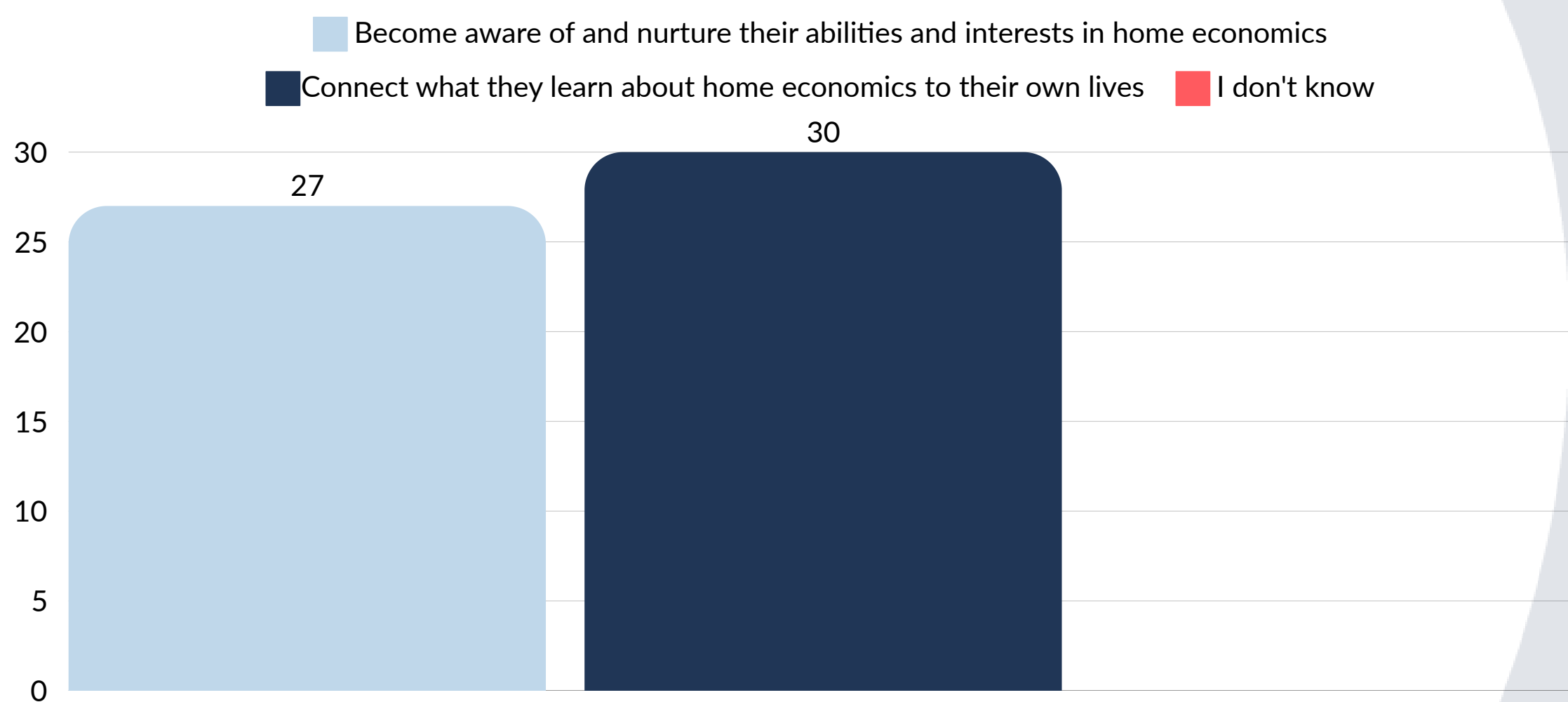


(Figure 60)
Fifth competency: Communicating
What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to

In regard to parents' opinions on the fifth competency, communicating, some mentioned that not enough time is given for class discussions. They also highlighted the importance of being aware of non-verbal communication and recognising that different people have different communication styles. Additionally, it was noted that group work is helpful in developing these communication skills.

In terms of cultivating well-being, over half (53%) of parents believe their child will connect what they learn about home economics to their personal lives. Slightly less than half (47%) stated that their child will become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in home economics. None indicated that they did not know (see Figure 61).





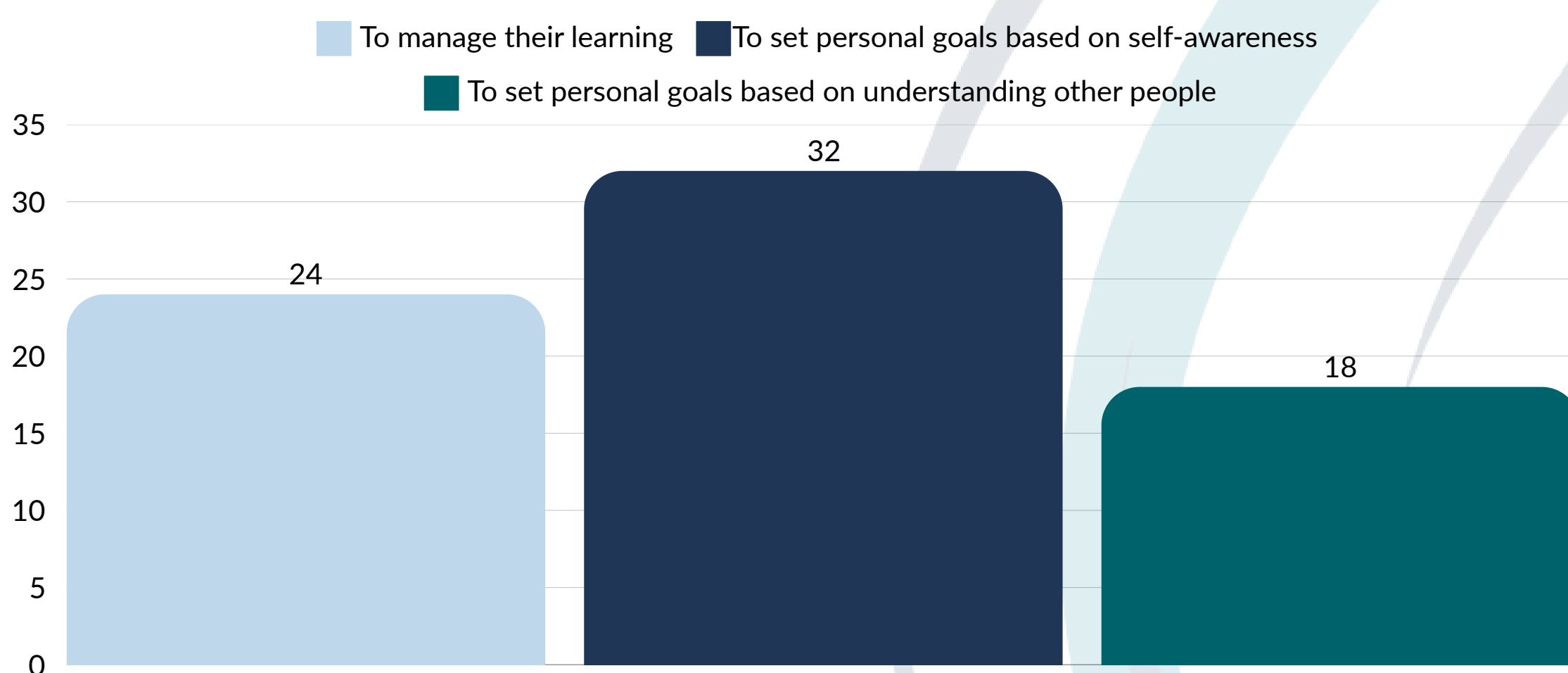
(Figure 61)

Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing

What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

Regarding the sixth competency, cultivating wellbeing, one parent mentioned "health issues," suggesting a focus on the importance of addressing health and wellbeing in the curriculum.

When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, a significant number (43%) of parents believe their child will learn to set personal goals based on self-awareness. Just under a third (32%) stated that their child will learn to manage their learning, less than a quarter (24%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 62).



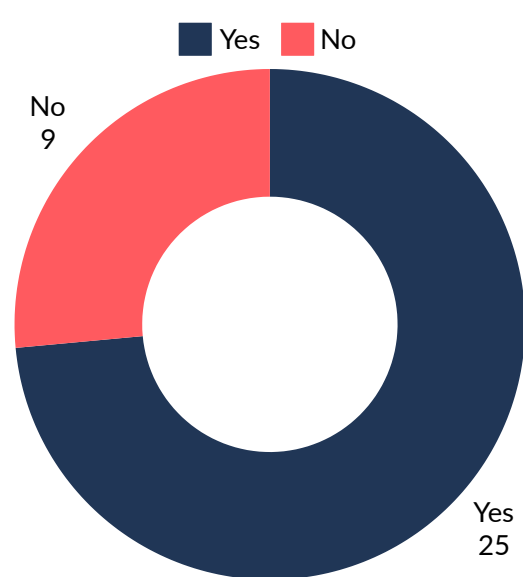
(Figure 62)

Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self

What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn

When parents were asked about their opinion on the seventh competency, managing learning and self, one parent expressed concern about the lack of space for continuous assessments in the current template, finding it discouraging. They also suggested introducing reflective learning journals. Another parent recommended a 40% project-based approach for tasks in 5th year, focusing on health issues, appliances, and food choices, but emphasised that there should be no cookery exam, as the junior certificate is already too stressful.



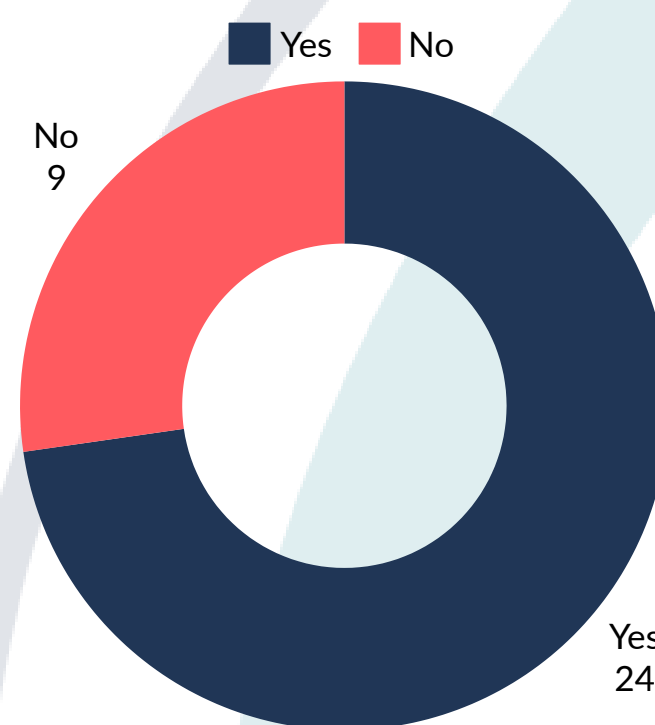


(Figure 63)
I agree that 60% should go to written examination

As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, most parents (74%) agreed, while a smaller number of parents (26%) disagreed (see Figure 63).

Parents who disagreed with the idea that 60% of the Leaving Certificate Home Economics grade should come from the written exam had several opinions. Some suggested a 50/50 split between the written exam and practical assessments. They argued that if a student has a bad day on the written exam but performs well in other areas, this would not reflect their abilities accurately. Others felt that the subject should focus more on assignments or continuous assessment rather than a written exam. Some emphasised that Home Economics is a practical subject, so more weight should be given to hands-on work, with one parent even proposing that 60% should come from practical submissions and 40% from the exam. Overall, many parents expressed that experience should play a bigger role than theory in grading.

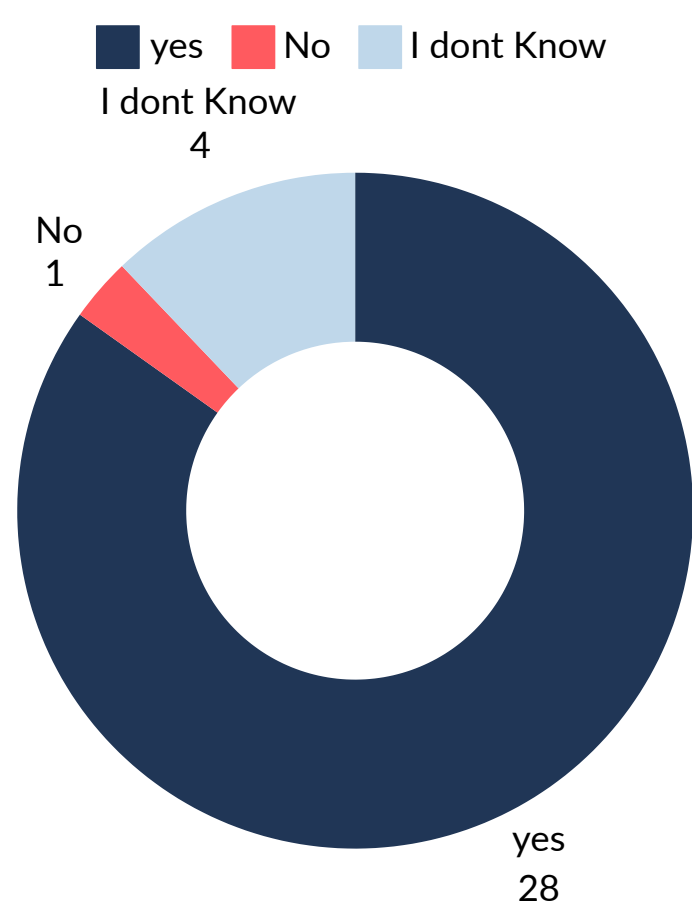
In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, most parents (73%) expressed agreement, with a smaller number of parents (27%) disagreeing (see Figure 64).



(Figure 64)
I agree that the 40% should go to additional assessment component.

Parents who disagreed with 40% of the grade coming from additional assessments had various concerns. Some suggested a 50/50 split between written exams and assessments. Others felt more emphasis should be placed on continuous assessment or practical work. Some believed that 40% was too high, as it could be affected by outside help or AI, and preferred the written exam to show a student's true understanding.



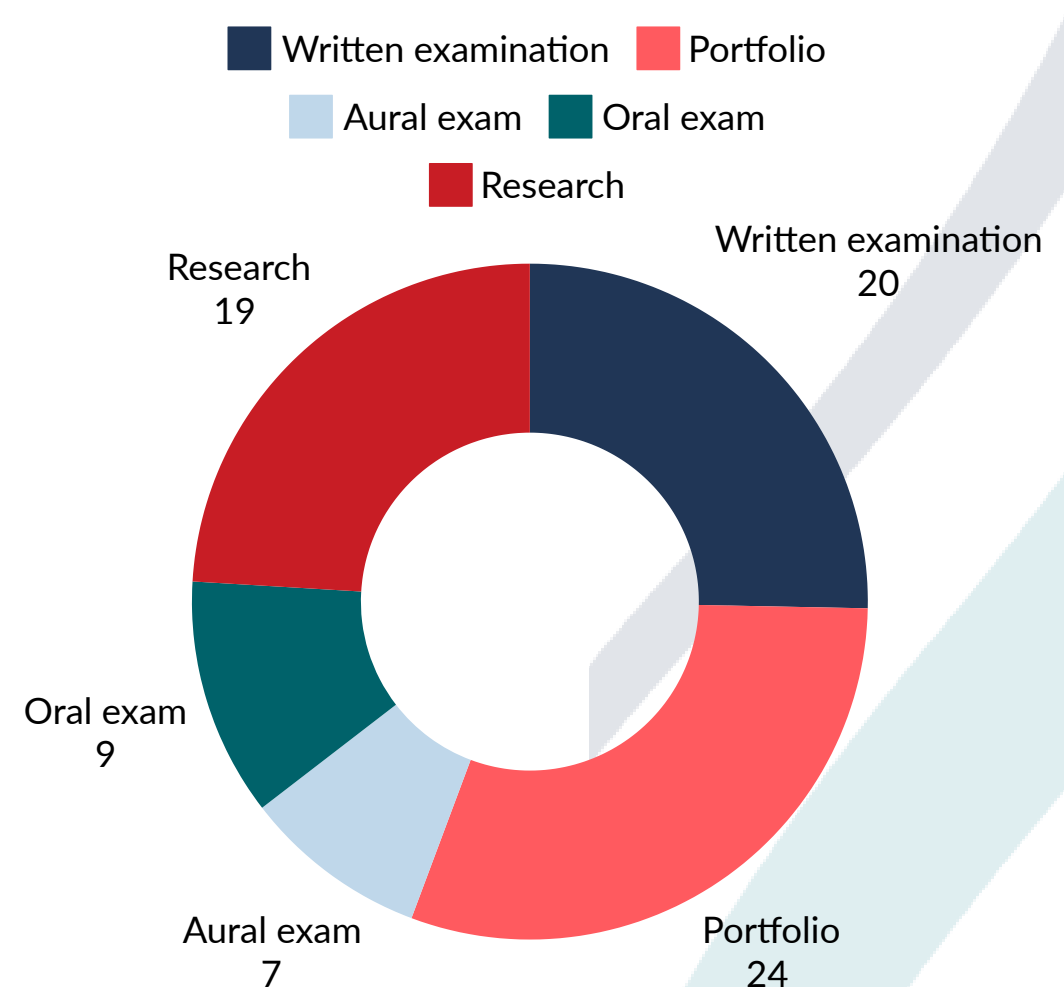


(Figure 65)

I want my child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle.

On the question of assessments, almost all parents (85%) wanted their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. A few parents (12%) were unsure, while a few parents (3%) disagreed (see Figure 65).

On the question of assessments in Home Economics, a significant minority (30%) of parents preferred portfolio assessments, while a slightly smaller minority (25%) favoured written exams. Research assessments were selected by a small number (24%) of parents, whereas few parents (11%) preferred oral exams. The lowest proportion (9%) opted for aural exams (see Figure 66).



(Figure 66)

As part of their study of Home Economics, I want my child to be engaged in

Parents shared a range of views on the purpose of Leaving Certificate Home Economics. Many believe it should provide essential life skills, including cooking, budgeting, cleaning, and managing a household, to help students become independent and confident. Several emphasised the importance of a balanced diet, healthy living, and financial management.

A few parents highlighted the subject's role in preparing students for life beyond school, teaching them how to navigate everyday challenges. Others stressed that it should promote personal development, social awareness, and practical skills relevant to both home and society. A few noted that Home Economics should be recognised as a science subject in universities, while still maintaining its real-world applications.

There were mixed opinions about the subject's name, with some suggesting it should be changed to better reflect its broad scope. One parent mentioned concerns about teachers' ability to cover the wide range of topics, from cooking to crafts. Overall, parents agreed that Home Economics should focus on real-world skills that students will use throughout their lives.



When parents were asked what they would like to keep in the current Leaving Certificate Home Economics, opinions varied. Many valued the practical elements, such as cooking, nutrition, budgeting, and consumer awareness. Some specifically mentioned the importance of learning about nutrients, health issues, appliances, and hygiene.

A few parents felt that the subject should remain broad, covering areas like food, business, interior design, and housing, while others believed it should be divided into specialised subjects such as cooking and textiles, with teachers trained in those specific areas.

Some parents were unsure about the current curriculum or had no direct experience with it, while a few expressed concerns that the subject does not fully prepare students for essential life skills like sewing, cleaning, and managing bills.

What should be removed from the current Leaving Certificate Home Economics course? Parents had different opinions on this. Some felt that in-depth food chemistry and excessive scientific theory should be left to science subjects. Others believed that topics like knitting, sewing, and textiles should be reduced or removed. A few parents suggested cutting back on consumer studies and banking, as these are already covered in business subjects.

Several parents felt that the course tries to cover too many topics, making it overwhelming for students. Others were concerned about the heavy focus on the written exam and suggested reducing its weight.

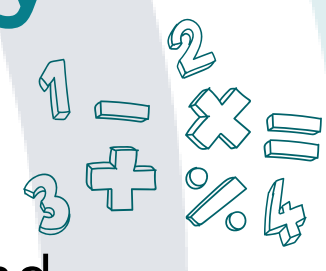
In regards to what parents would like to improve about the current Leaving Certificate Home Economics, several suggestions were made. Many expressed a desire for more practical work, including cookery, sewing, and budgeting, with less emphasis on written exams. Some parents felt the subject still carries a stigma as being "for girls" and believed this needed to change.

Concerns were raised about the assessment process, particularly the restrictive templates for coursework, which caused stress and anxiety. Parents called for better-designed assessment booklets and digital submissions with word counts. Several suggested that a higher proportion of marks should be allocated to coursework, as they felt the current project was too time-consuming for the marks awarded.

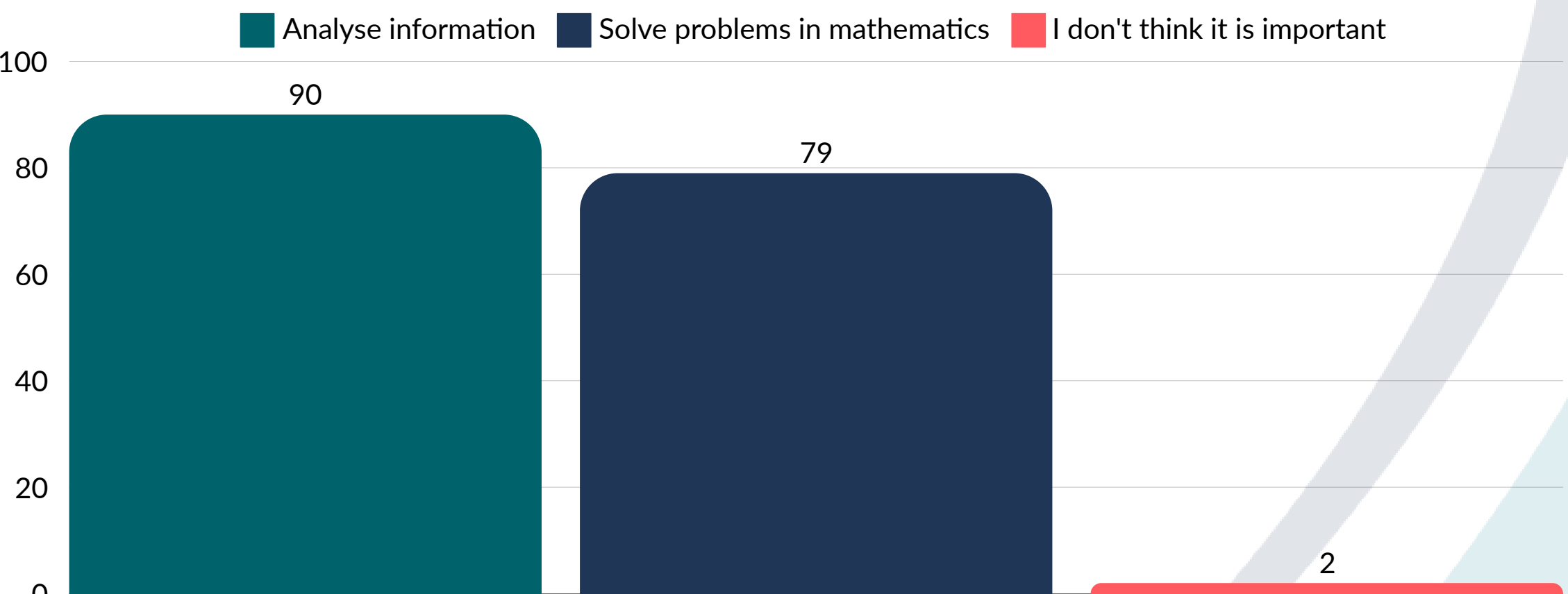
Some parents recommended more focus on real-life skills, such as interpreting false information in advertising, promoting healthy living, and managing finances. They also emphasised the need for additional support for students with disabilities. A few parents suggested reinstating the subject's scientific status and improving teacher training before making curriculum changes.



Leaving Certificate Mathematics Survey Findings



When parents were asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, over half of parents (53%) stated that analysing information is important. A slightly lower number (46%) highlighted solving problems in mathematics, while only a few parents (1%) indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 67).



(Figure 67)
First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems

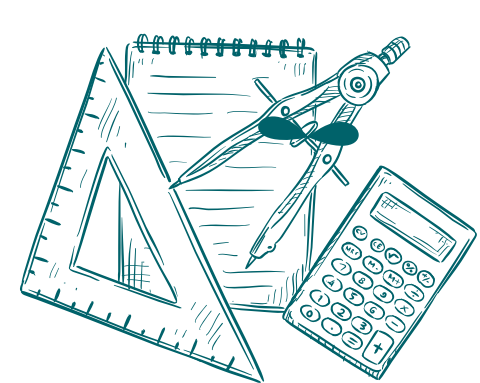
What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

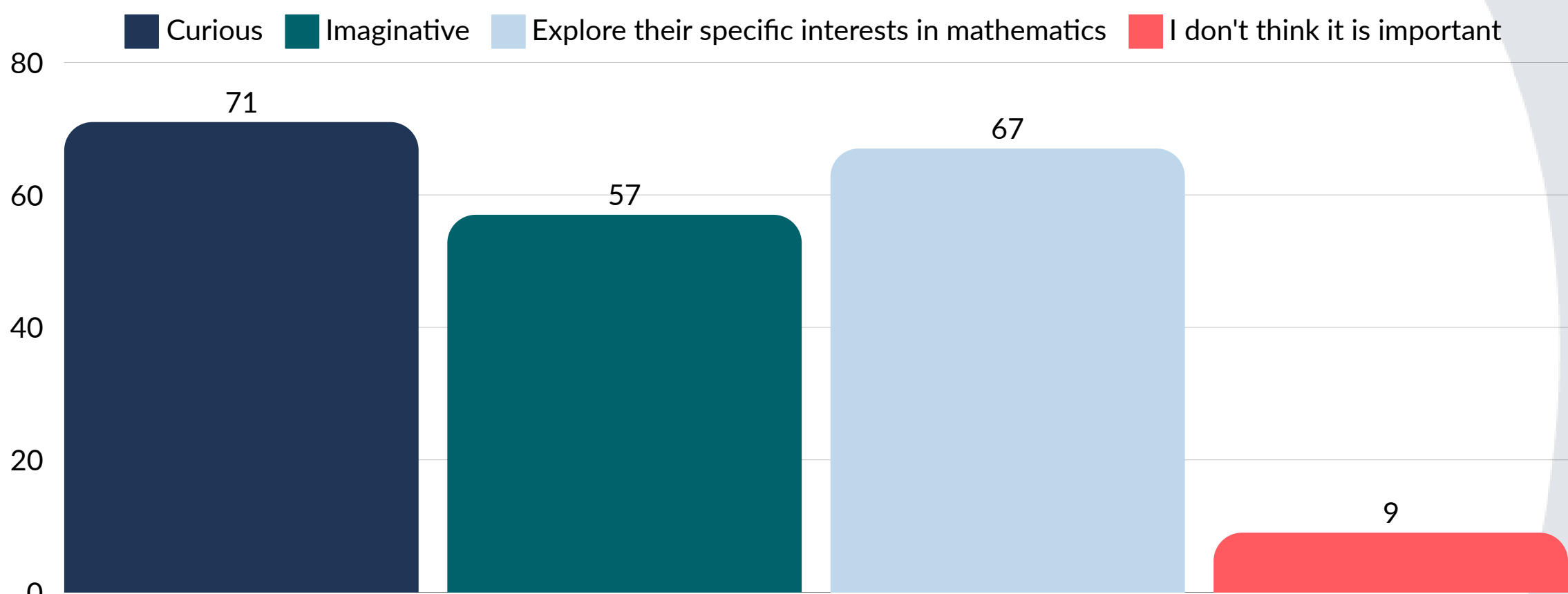
Parents shared different opinions on the first competency: Critical thinking and solving problems. Many agreed that students should learn to solve problems in everyday life, not just in maths, and use logical thinking to find solutions. Some mentioned that understanding the difference between cause and effect is important, as well as learning how to read and explain data.

A few parents felt that critical thinking and problem-solving are different skills and should be taught separately. Others suggested including more practical maths skills, like understanding bills and survey results. Some were concerned that wordy problems could be difficult for students with dyslexia.

Parents with a background in maths believed students need to master basic maths skills before they can become good problem solvers. Overall, many parents thought that focusing less on memorisation and more on thinking skills would help students in everyday life.

When parents were asked about the importance of creativity for their child’s learning, more than a third (35%) stated that their child will learn to be curious. A third (33%) highlighted the importance of exploring specific interests in mathematics, followed by a little more than a quarter (28%) who emphasised being imaginative. A few parents (4%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 68).





(Figure 68)

Second competency: Being Creative

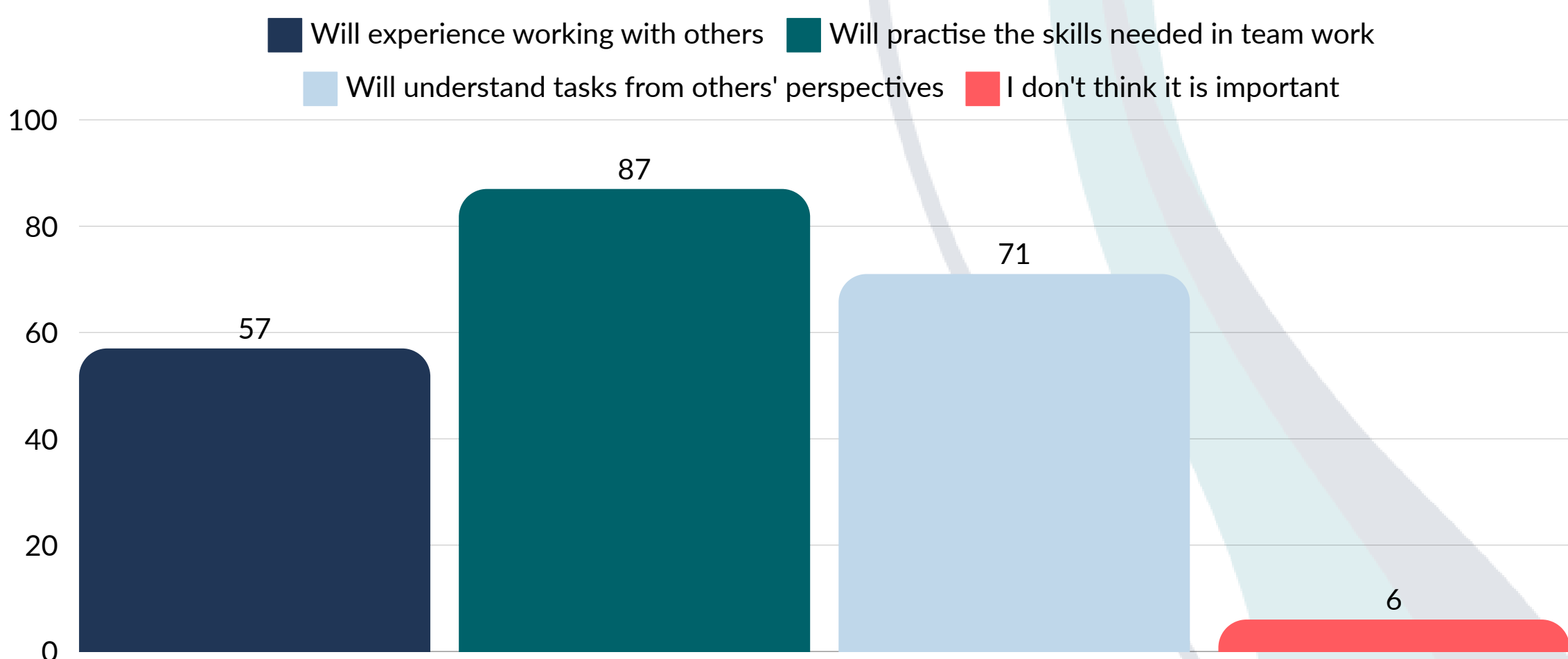
What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be

Parents had different opinions about the second competency: being creative. Many agreed that creativity is important for learning, but some felt it is hard to develop it with the current curriculum unless the content is simplified.

Some parents thought that maths helps turn imagination into reality, while others disagreed, saying that maths is not really creative, especially in exams. A few mentioned that creativity is more about a person's personality and is not easy to teach.

Some parents thought students might have a hard time finding their own interests and suggested that the department should provide clear, creative tasks rather than leaving it to teachers. Others said that teenagers can be shy about sharing their ideas with classmates and that some students might prefer to learn from textbooks instead of doing creative work.

Regarding the importance of working with others, over a third (39%) of parents reported that their child will practice essential teamwork skills. Almost a third (32%) stated that understanding tasks from others' perspectives is important, whilst a little more than a quarter (26%) indicated that their child will gain experience in collaboration. A few parents (3%) said they do not think it is important (see Figure 69).



(Figure 69)

Third competency: Working with Others

What I find important about working with others is that my child

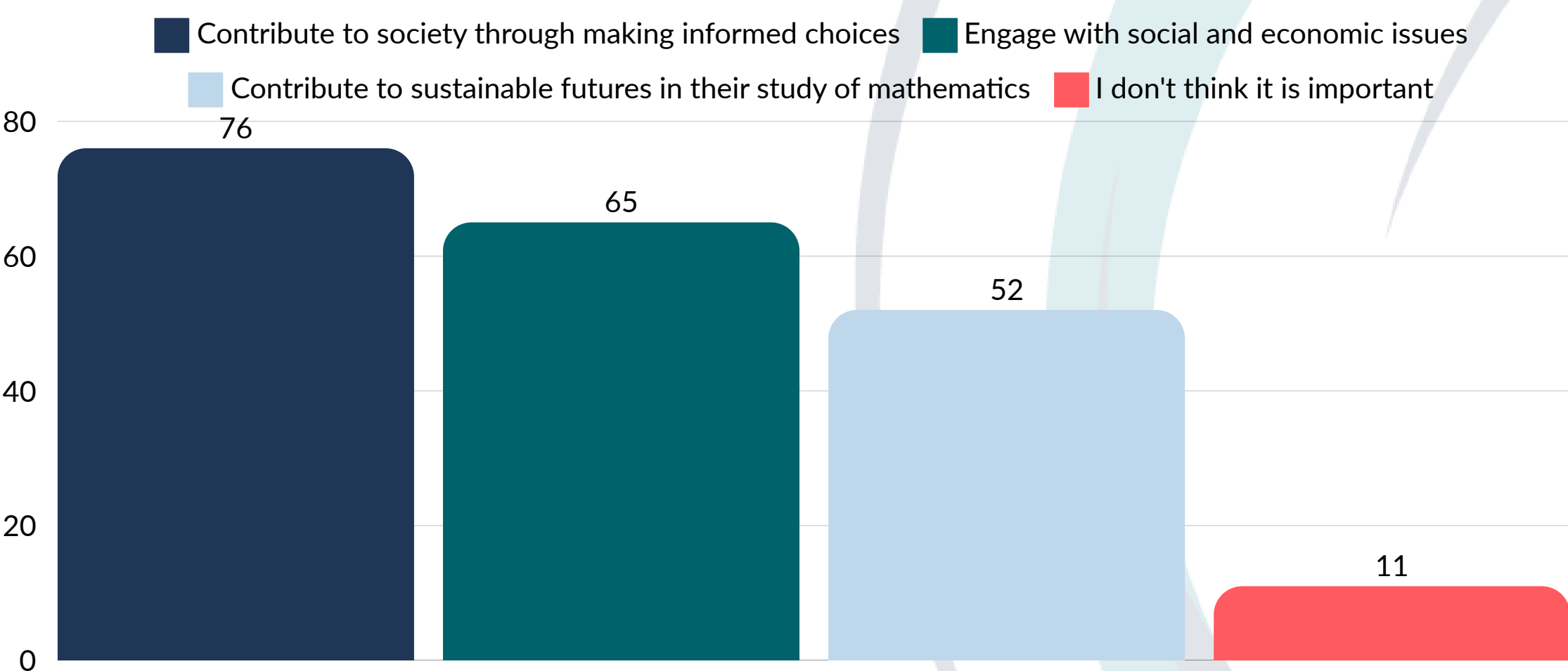
Parents had various opinions on the third competency: Working with Others. Some emphasised that teamwork helps students develop real-world skills and learn the importance of other people’s viewpoints. However, others felt that group work can be challenging, especially when some students end up doing most of the work. They suggested that group work should be monitored to ensure fairness.

A few parents mentioned that it is difficult to focus on teamwork when the curriculum is already full, and some felt that, in math, working with others might not be as necessary since students will be working alone on exams. There was also concern for autistic children, who might need extra support in group settings.

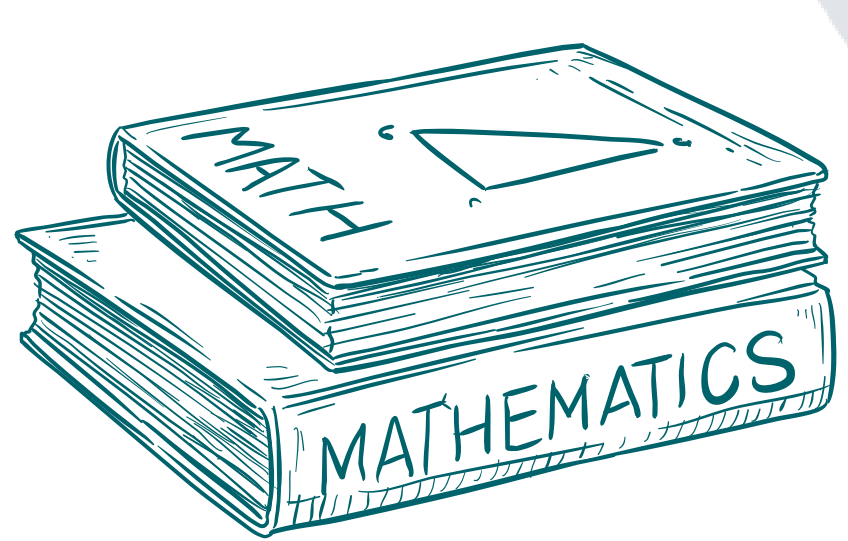
Some parents noted that group work might be intimidating for shy or less confident students, especially when it comes to presenting their ideas to peers. They also thought students should have a say in any changes to the curriculum.

On the positive side, many parents saw teamwork as a valuable life skill, especially in today’s world where online collaboration is so important.

When asked about the importance of participating in society, more than a third (37%) of parents stated that their child will learn to contribute to society through making informed choices. Almost a third (32%) emphasised the importance of engaging with social and economic issues, and a quarter (25%) highlighted that contributing to sustainable futures in the study of mathematics is important. A few parents (5%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 70).



(Figure 70)
Fourth competency: Participating in Society
What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to

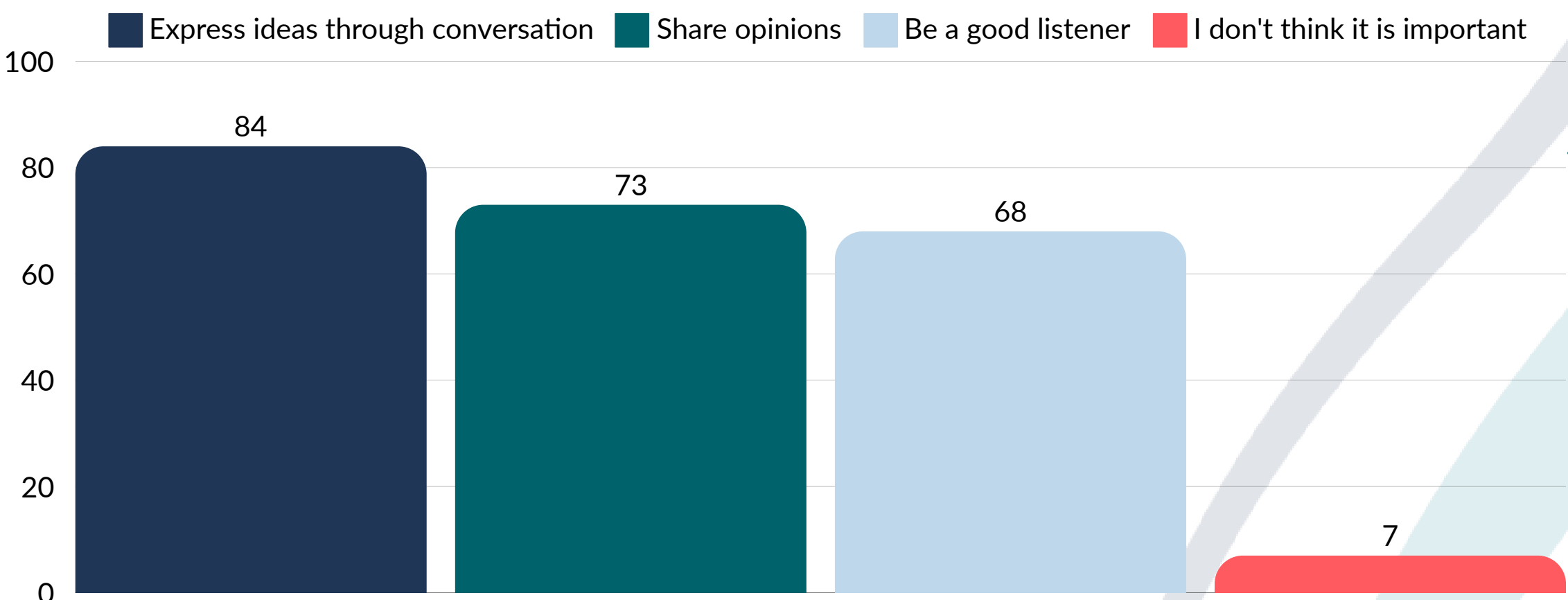


Many parents were unsure about how "Participating in Society" relates to maths. Some felt that focusing on societal issues and life skills did not fit into the maths curriculum.

A few parents suggested more specific goals and challenges for students, rather than focusing on competitive programs. They also expressed concern that life skills should not be part of the maths curriculum, which should remain focused on academic content.

Overall, parents seemed to feel that "Participating in Society" may be more relevant later in education, such as at the third-level stage, rather than in the senior cycle.

In response to the importance of communicating, more than a third (36%) of parents believe their child will learn to express ideas through conversation. Less than a third (31%) emphasised the importance of sharing opinions, and a smaller number (29%) highlighted being a good listener. A few parents (3%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 71).

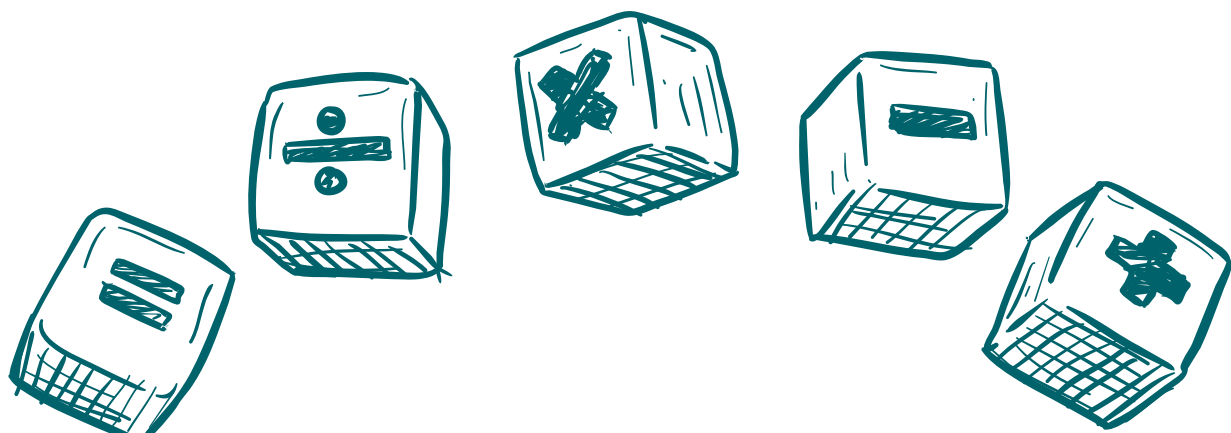


(Figure 71)
Fifth competency: Communicating
What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to

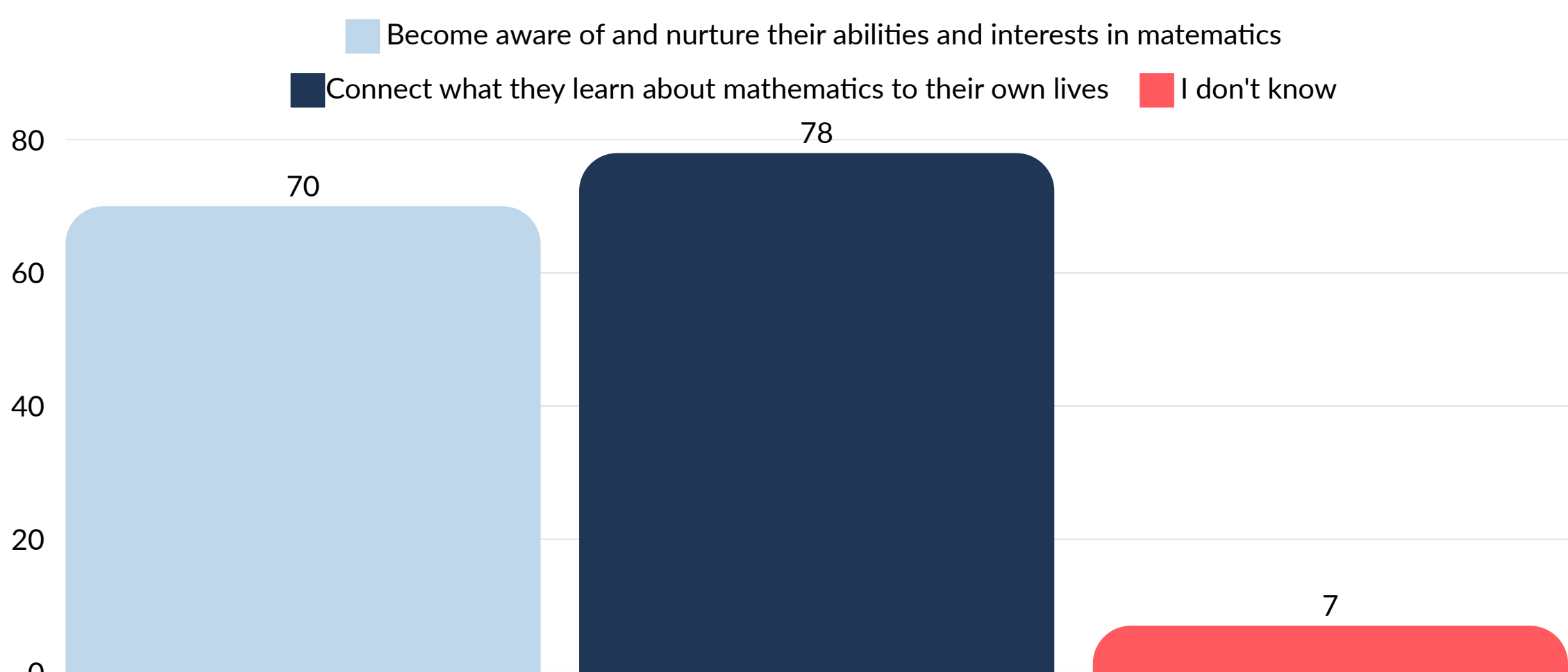
Parents had different opinions on the fifth competency, Communicating. Some said listening is just as important as speaking when it comes to communication. Others thought that explaining maths concepts is important but not always focused on.

A few parents suggested that students should be encouraged to use visual ways to communicate and learn how to tell the difference between facts and opinions. Some were also concerned that not all students might feel comfortable sharing their ideas, especially in front of others.

Overall, parents agreed that communication skills, both in person and online, are important for students, but opinions varied on how these skills fit into maths.



In terms of cultivating well-being, half (50%) of parents believe their child will learn to connect what they learn about mathematics to their own lives. Slightly less than half (45%) stated that their child will become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in mathematics. A small number of parents (5%) indicated that they did not know (see Figure 72).



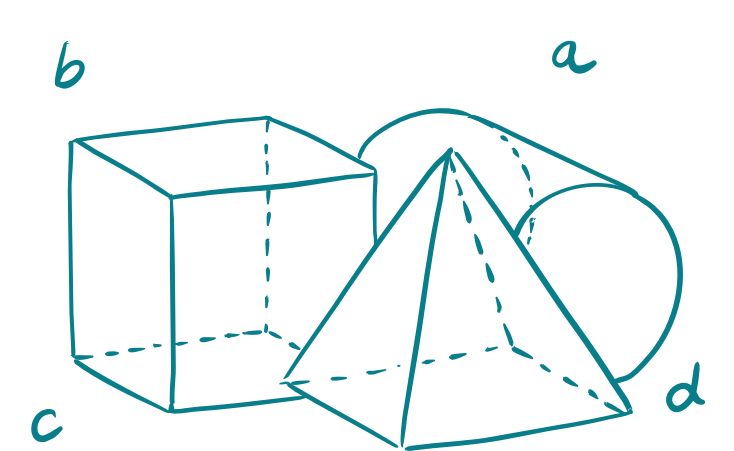
(Figure 72)
Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing
What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

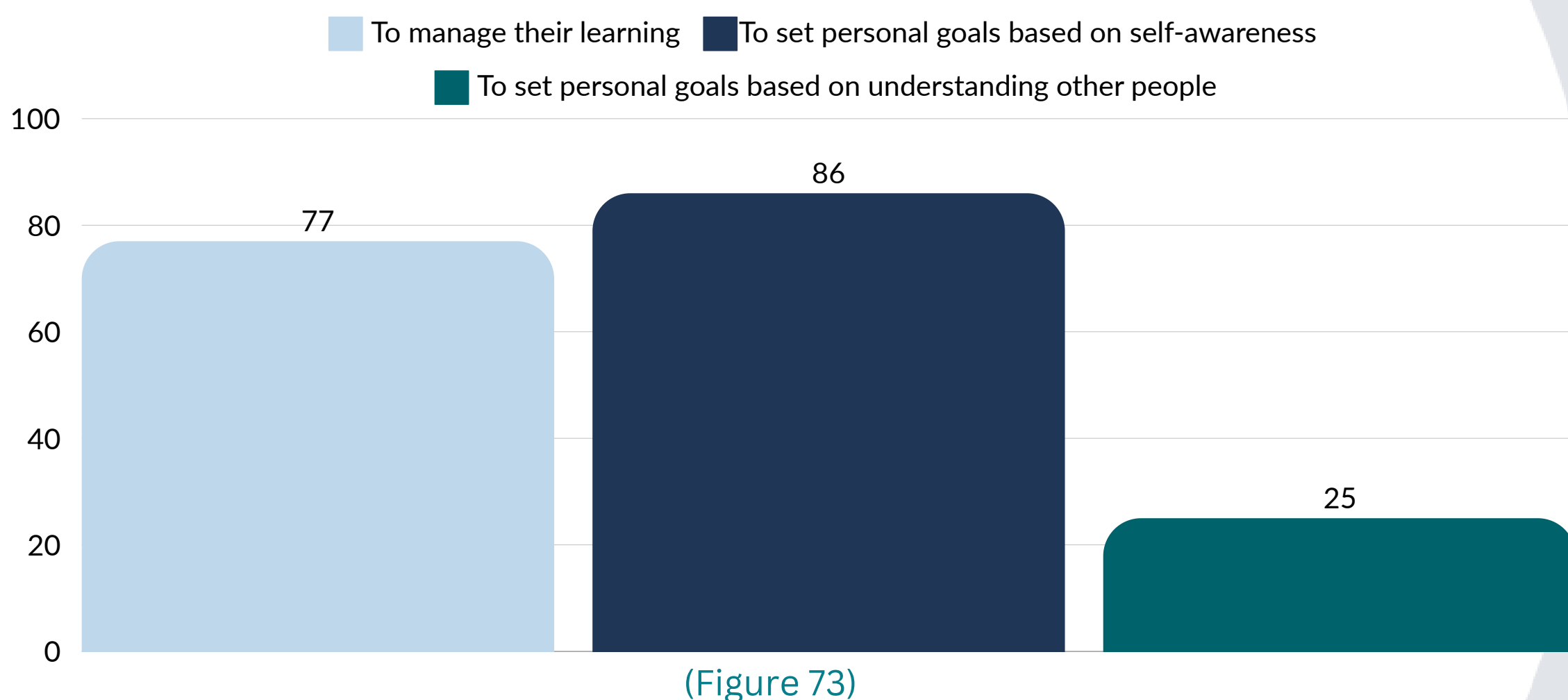
Parents had mixed views on the sixth competency, Cultivating Wellbeing. Many found the connection between well-being and maths weak or unclear, with some even questioning how these two concepts relate at all. A few parents felt that maths can often cause stress rather than promote well-being, and one parent pointed out that certain teaching methods or lack of explanations can make things worse, especially for students who struggle with the subject.

Some parents expressed concern about how well-being would be assessed, suggesting that assessments need to meet students at their level of ability and maturity to avoid causing frustration. A few mentioned that maths can be a difficult subject for some students, but with proper teaching methods and practice, it could be more manageable.

Parents also highlighted that in subjects like maths, it is important to consider the English language aspect, as students with dyslexia may struggle despite excelling in the subject itself. Additionally, some parents felt that maths should be connected to real-life situations like managing finances or applied fields such as astrophysics and computer science.

When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, slightly less than half (46%) of parents believe their child will learn to set personal goals based on self-awareness. A smaller number (41%) stated that their child will learn to manage their learning, with the minority of parents (13%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 73).



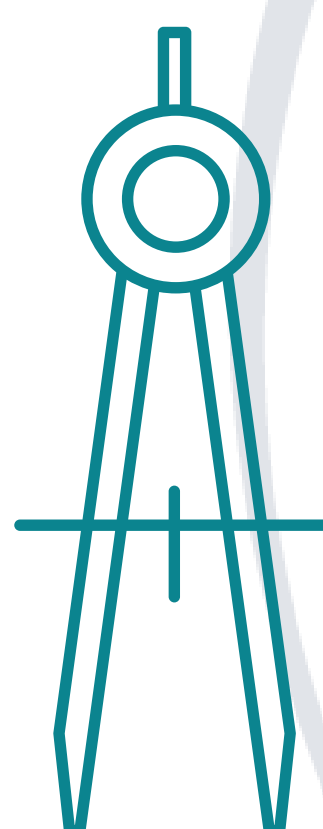
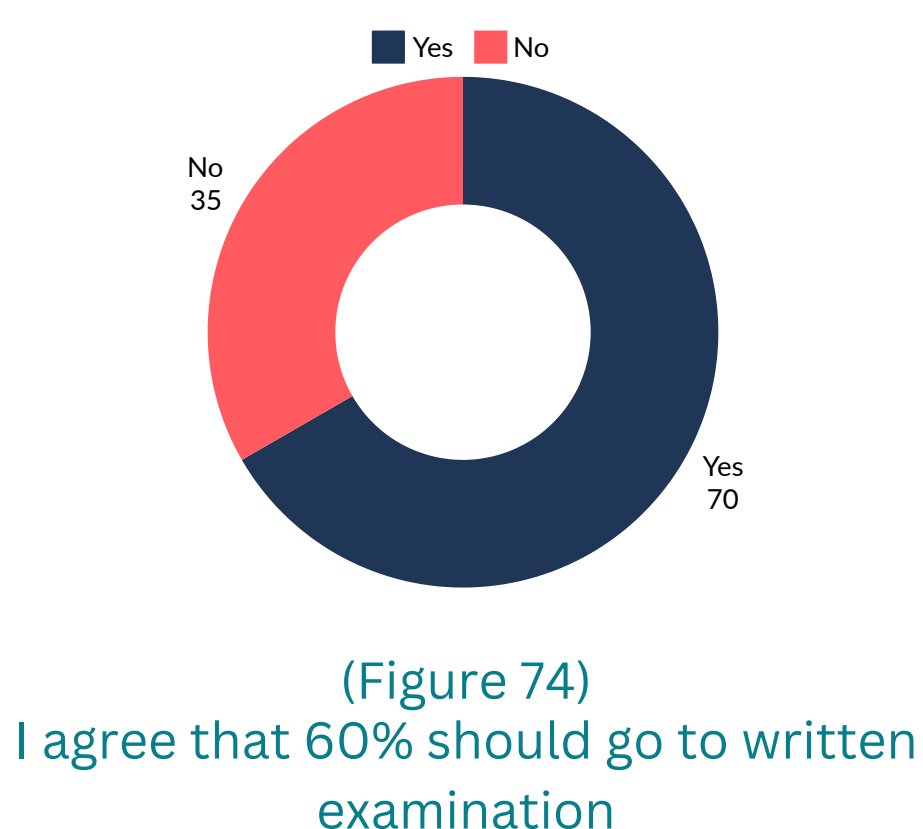


Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self
What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn

In regards to the seventh competency, Managing Learning and Self, many parents expressed concerns about the relevance of some aspects to maths. Some felt the focus should be more on competencies directly related to the subject, rather than broad skills like goal-setting or social awareness.

A few parents worried that self-management might lead to gaps in foundational knowledge, especially for students who struggle with maths. They emphasised the importance of the teacher's role in guiding students through the curriculum and helping them stretch their abilities.

Additionally, a few parents suggested that maths should remain focused on practice and understanding, and that clearer information about the actual curriculum would help them give more informed feedback.



As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, most parents (67%) agreed, while a smaller number of parents (33%) disagreed (see Figure 74).

Parents had varying opinions about how much weight the written exam should have in the Leaving Certificate Mathematics grade. Some felt that more should be allocated to the exam, particularly in an era of AI, and that maths is best examined through traditional exams. A few suggested that the written exam should be worth 80-90%, with some even recommending 100% exam-based assessment.

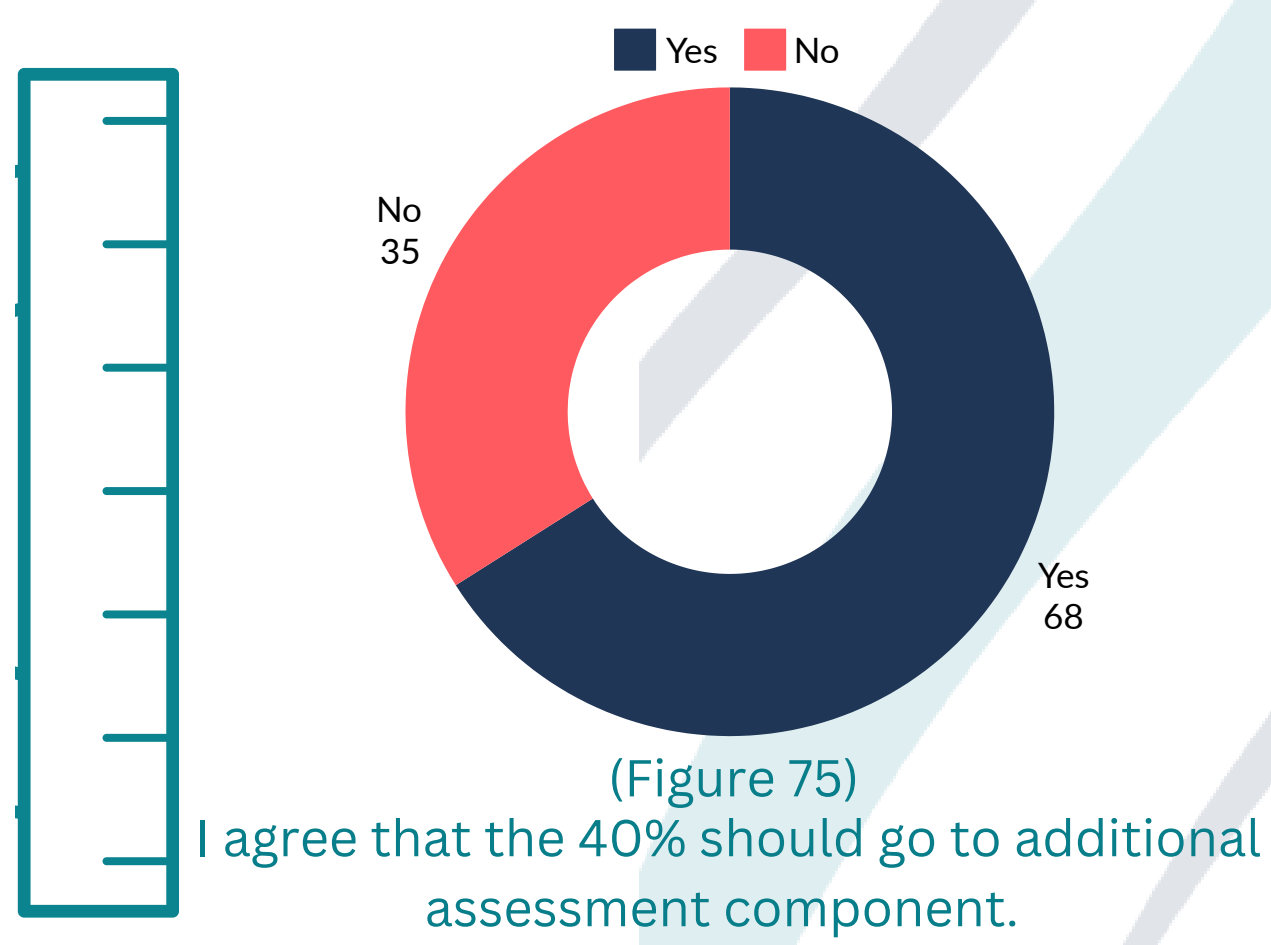
$$y = mx + b$$

Others believed a 50/50 split between exams and projects was fair, while a number of parents supported increasing the percentage for the written exam, with many suggesting it should be at least 75%. Some parents expressed concerns that continuous assessments, like projects, added stress for students, particularly those with learning challenges, and felt the written exam should make up a larger portion of the grade.

Several parents mentioned that some students perform better in exams than in project-based assessments, with one parent suggesting that students should be given the choice between an exam and a project. Others were wary about the potential for cheating in projects, especially with the rise of AI, and felt that exams would offer more transparency and fairness.

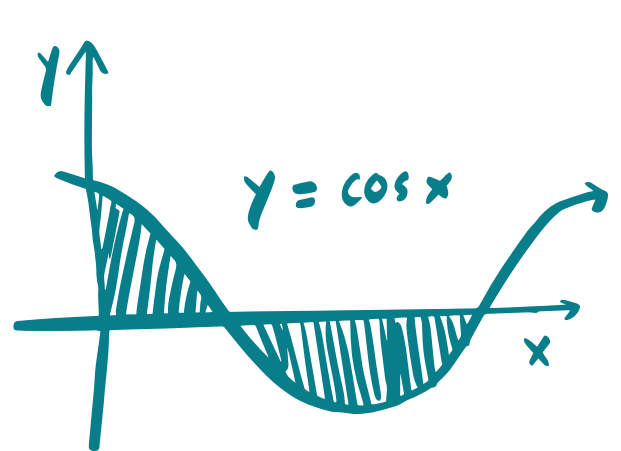
In summary, many parents expressed a preference for a greater focus on written exams, with some advocating for an 80-90% weight for the exam, while others supported a more balanced approach but still emphasised the importance of exams in assessing students' maths skills.

In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, most parents (66%) expressed agreement, with a smaller number of parents (34%) disagreeing (see Figure 75).



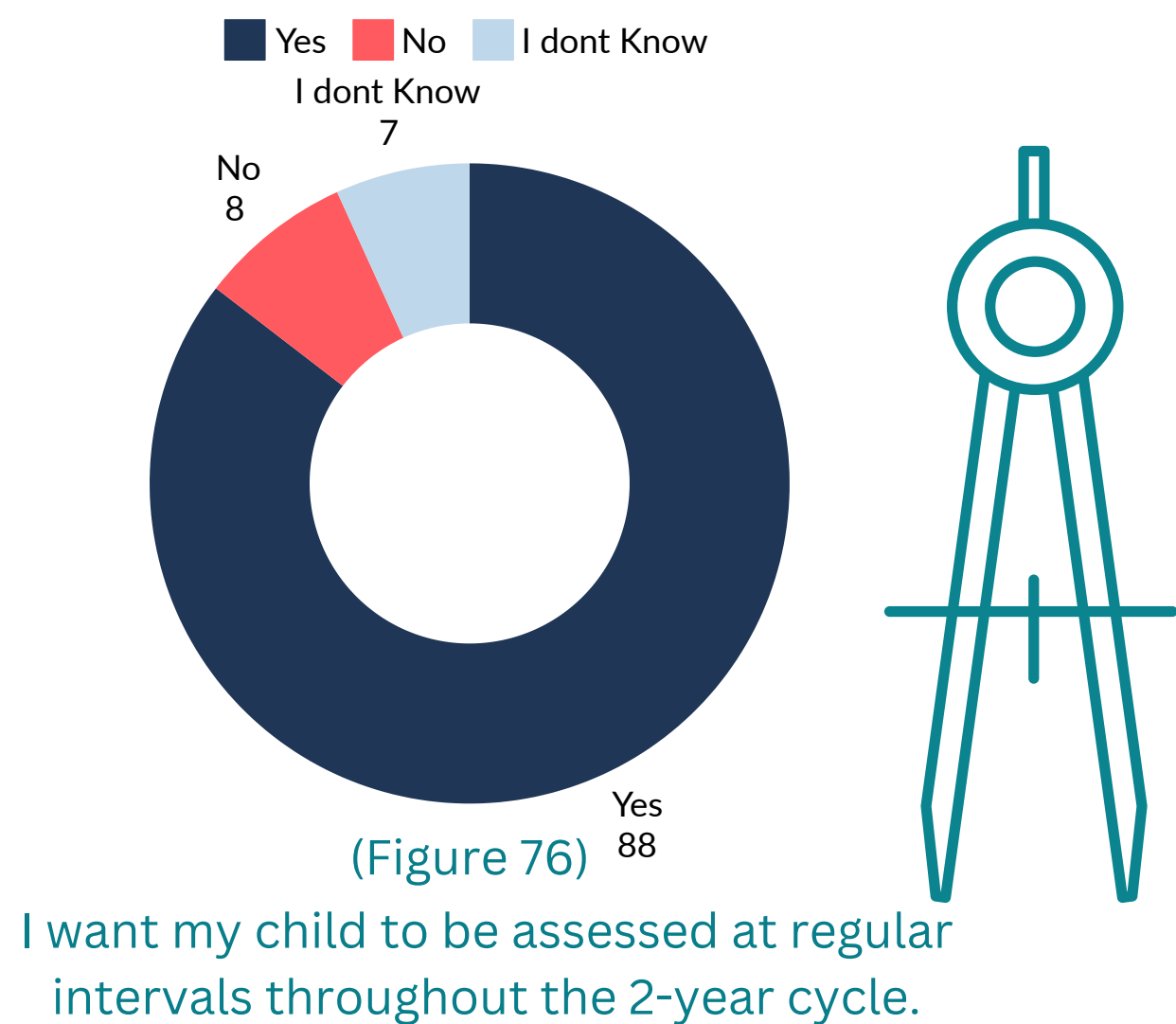
Parents who disagreed with 40% of the Leaving Certificate Mathematics grade coming from additional assessments had several concerns. Many felt that 40% was too much for maths, as the subject is better assessed through exams. Some argued that project work is not a good test of mathematical ability and should be limited to 20% or less of the final grade. A few parents suggested a more balanced approach, with a smaller percentage for projects—such as 25%—or multiple smaller assessments spread out over the two years of study.

Several parents highlighted that the current approach puts too much pressure on students, especially those with learning challenges, and felt it detracts from the core learning of mathematics. They pointed out that exams are better suited to testing maths skills and that assigning a higher percentage to projects could lead to unnecessary stress and take away from the development of mathematical understanding.



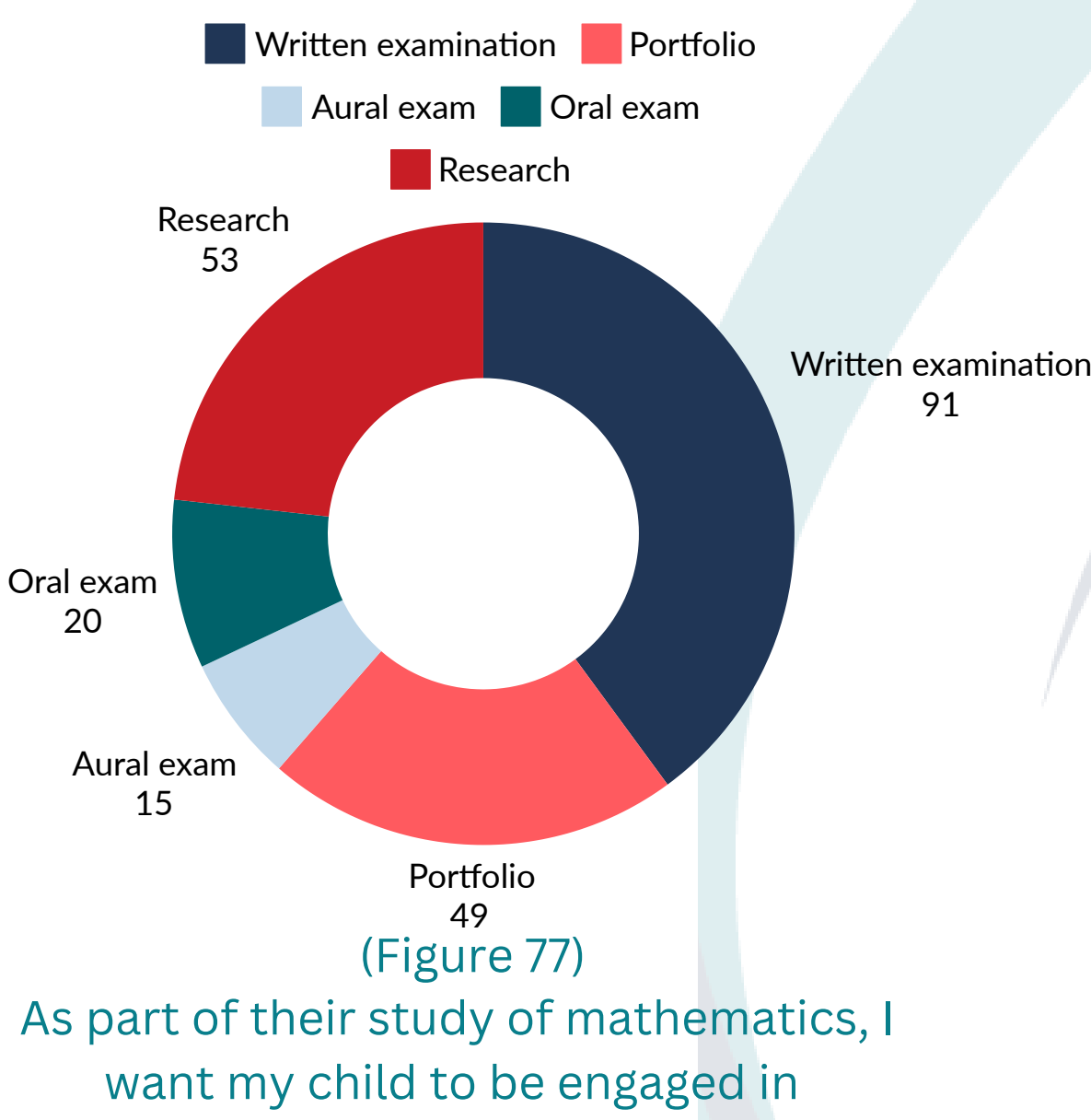
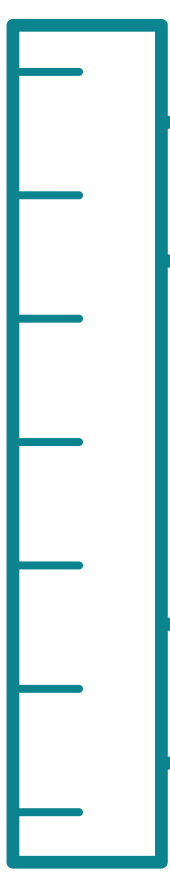
Some parents also raised concerns about fairness, suggesting that relying on AI for completing assignments creates an unfair system where students' work may not reflect their true abilities. Others felt that continuous assessment or a series of smaller assessments might be a better way to evaluate students but still recommended reducing the weight of projects in the overall grade.

In summary, many parents favoured a greater focus on traditional exams and felt that the percentage allocated to additional assessments should be significantly reduced, with some suggesting a maximum of 20-30%.

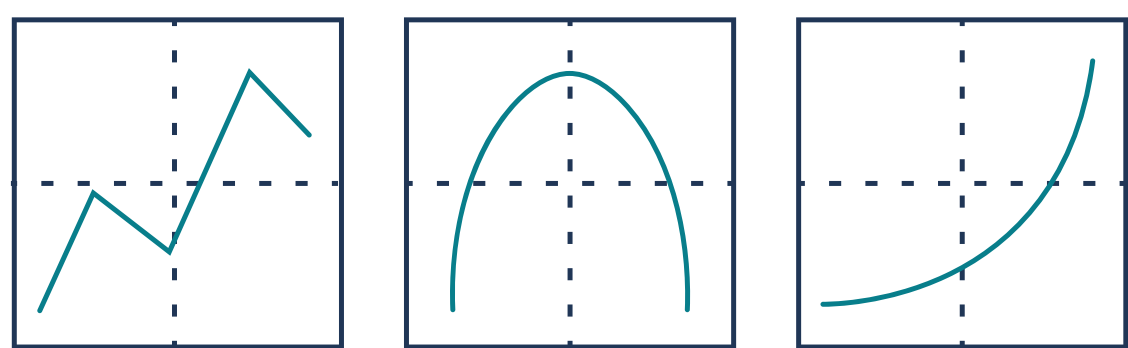


On the question of assessments, almost all parents (85%) wanted their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. A few parents (8%) disagreed, while a few other parents (7%) were unsure (see Figure 76).

On the question of assessments in Mathematics, a significant minority (40%) of parents preferred written exams. A smaller minority (23%) favoured research assessments, while less than half (21%) selected portfolio assessments. A few parents (9%) preferred oral exams, and the lowest proportion (7%) opted for aural exams (see Figure 77).



Parents shared various perspectives on the purpose of Leaving Certificate Mathematics. Many agreed that it should provide a strong foundation in maths, ensuring students develop essential problem-solving, logical reasoning, and critical thinking skills. Some emphasised its importance for future education and careers, particularly in STEM fields, while others highlighted its practical applications in everyday life, such as managing finances and interpreting statistics.



Several parents felt that maths should be relevant to real-world scenarios, helping students understand its role in society. Some suggested that the subject should be structured differently, with options for applied or commercial maths to better suit different career paths. A few parents questioned whether maths should remain a compulsory subject, proposing that students should have a choice, similar to other subjects.

Concerns were raised about assessment methods, with some parents advocating for a more balanced approach that tests both knowledge and practical application. Others felt that the current distinction between higher and ordinary levels was too broad and should be restructured.

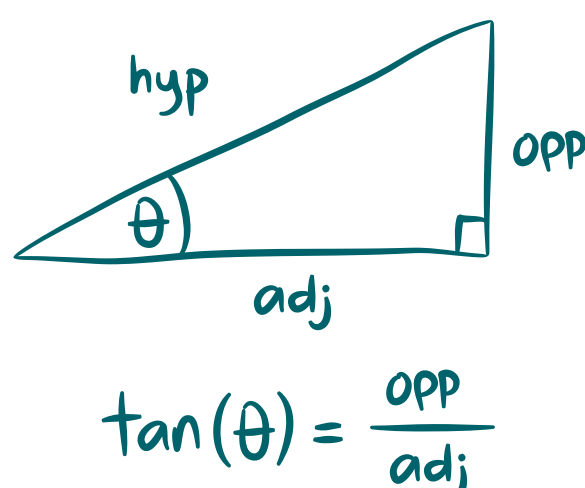
Overall, parents believed that Leaving Certificate Mathematics should equip students with the necessary skills for further education, careers, and everyday problem-solving while ensuring the curriculum remains practical and accessible.

Parents highlighted several aspects of the current Leaving Certificate Mathematics that they would like to keep. Many valued the written exam as a fair and objective way to assess students' abilities, with some emphasising the importance of keeping it at 100% of the grade. The structured curriculum, which builds on concepts progressively, was also seen as a strength, along with the broad range of topics covered, including algebra, trigonometry, statistics, and financial maths.

Some parents appreciate that students are awarded marks for their working process, not just final answers, as this encourages logical thinking. The additional points for higher-level maths were also viewed positively, as they reflect the effort required. Others noted that the syllabus is well-established, making it easier for teachers to prepare students effectively.

However, a few parents felt that maths is simply an exercise in thinking rather than a practical subject. Some were unsure or had no strong opinion, while others expressed concerns about potential changes diluting the course. Overall, parents valued the structure, fairness, and depth of learning in the current system.

Parents expressed a variety of views on what should be removed from the current Leaving Certificate Mathematics curriculum. While some strongly believed that every concept is essential for building a solid foundation in mathematics, others felt that certain topics, such as algebra, complex numbers, calculus, and theorems, are overly abstract and not useful in everyday life. Some suggested that the curriculum should focus more on practical applications rather than theoretical concepts that students may never use again.



Many parents raised concerns about the structure of examination questions, arguing that they can be unnecessarily complicated or designed to confuse students rather than assess their true understanding. They called for clearer and more straightforward questions, particularly to support students with additional learning needs.

There was also criticism of the extra points awarded to students who take Higher Level Mathematics, with some parents believing that this system gives an unfair advantage to mathematically inclined students while disadvantaging those who excel in other subjects. Some suggested that mathematics should be structured differently, possibly offering alternative courses that focus on different applications of mathematics rather than forcing all students to follow the same curriculum.

Another significant concern was the stress and pressure associated with the subject, particularly at the higher level. Some parents suggested reducing the overall workload or reassessing the balance between theory and practical applications. Others felt that the gap between different levels of mathematics is too large, which sometimes leads capable students to choose a lower level simply to reduce pressure.

Overall, parents were divided in their opinions, with some advocating for a more practical and less stressful approach, while others believed that the current curriculum, despite its challenges, provides necessary mathematical knowledge.

Parents proposed several improvements to the Leaving Certificate Mathematics curriculum, emphasising practical applications, assessment methods, workload management, and teaching approaches. Many suggested incorporating real-life financial literacy topics, such as loan interest rates, budgeting, and financial planning, to make mathematics more relevant. Some also recommended better alignment with career pathways and practical problem-solving applications.

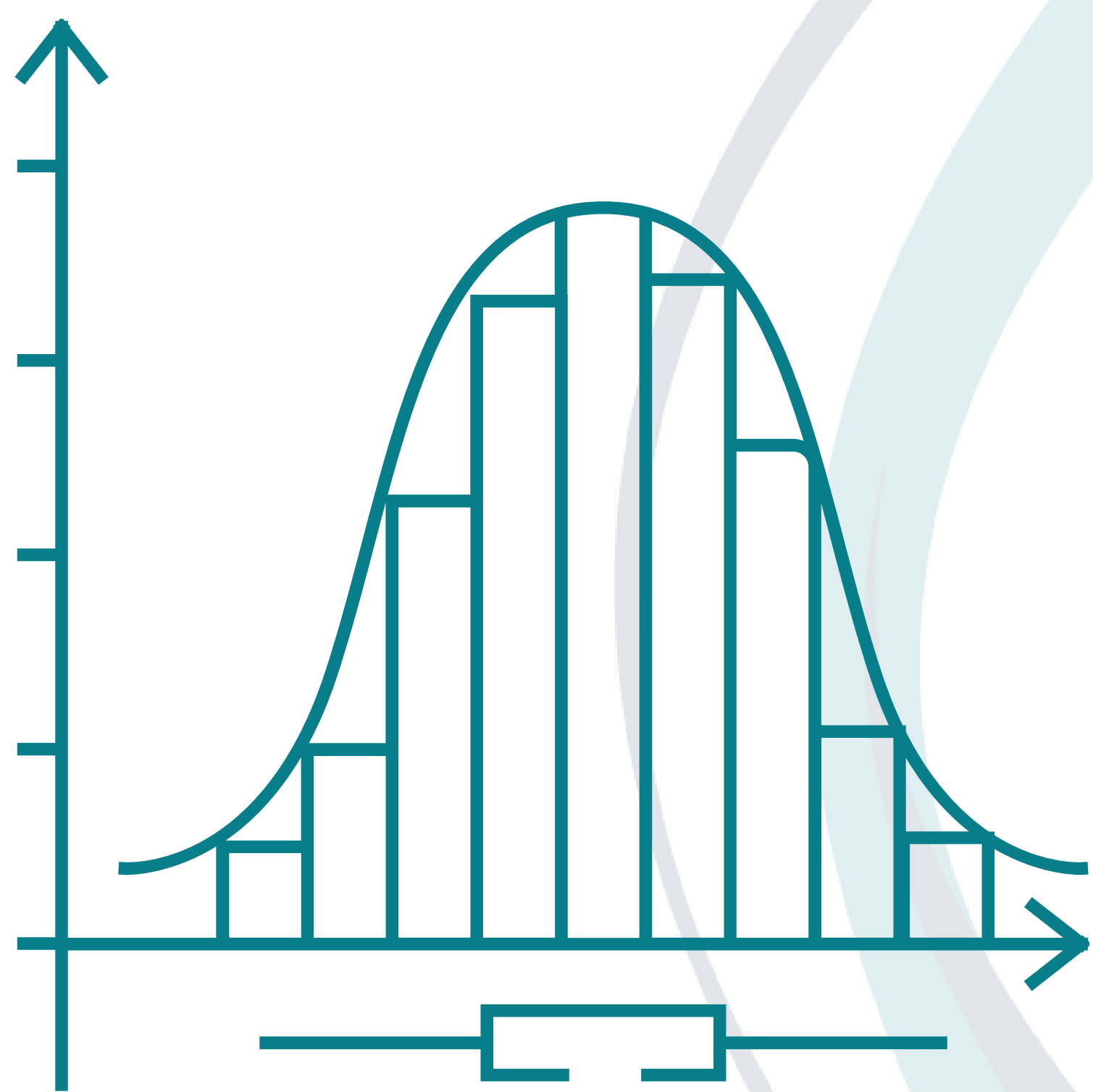
Concerns about assessment methods were frequently raised. While some parents supported continuous assessment, they preferred structured periodic evaluations over a single large project, arguing that spreading assessments across the two-year cycle would alleviate pressure. Others advocated for maintaining the final exam but ensuring a fairer balance between assessment components. The wording of exam questions was also criticised, with calls for greater clarity to assess mathematical understanding rather than test interpretation skills.



Several parents recommended refining the curriculum by reducing content volume or adjusting difficulty levels, particularly at the higher level, which was seen as excessively challenging. They also suggested increasing class time in the senior cycle to allow for deeper engagement with concepts. Some parents felt that students should focus on applying mathematical principles rather than memorising extensive lists of formulas and theorems, as real-world scenarios allow for reference materials.

Teaching quality was another key concern, with recommendations for enhanced teacher training to improve engagement and delivery. Proposals included making mathematics instruction more interactive, integrating historical context to illustrate the evolution of key concepts, and providing additional school support, such as in-house tutoring for senior cycle students.

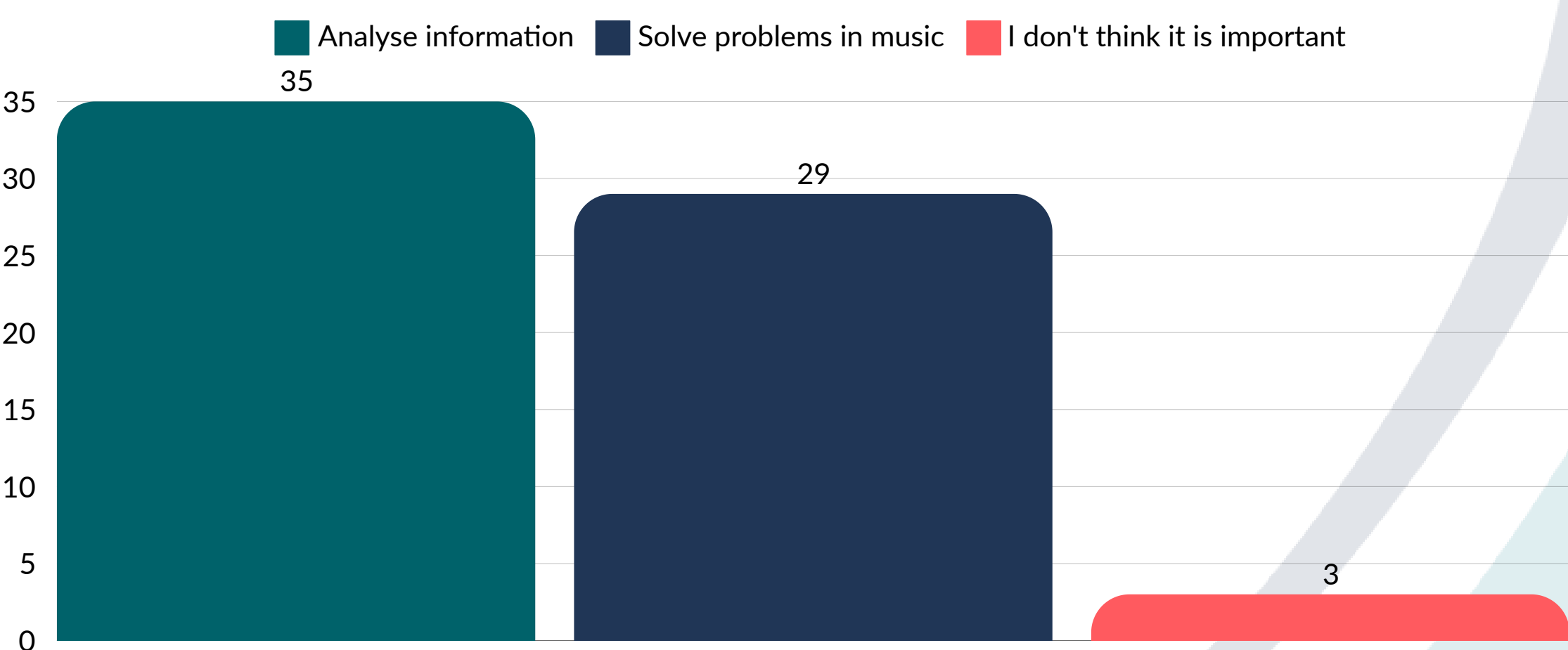
Overall, parents emphasised the need for a more practical, accessible, and well-balanced mathematics curriculum that fosters both critical thinking and real-world application while reducing unnecessary stress on students.



Leaving Certificate Music Survey Findings



When considering the importance of the different competencies, parents were given the opportunity to choose more than one option. When asked about the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving, the majority (52%) of parents stated that analysing information is important. A smaller number (43%) highlighted solving problems in music, while a few parents (4%) indicated that they do not consider it important (see Figure 78).

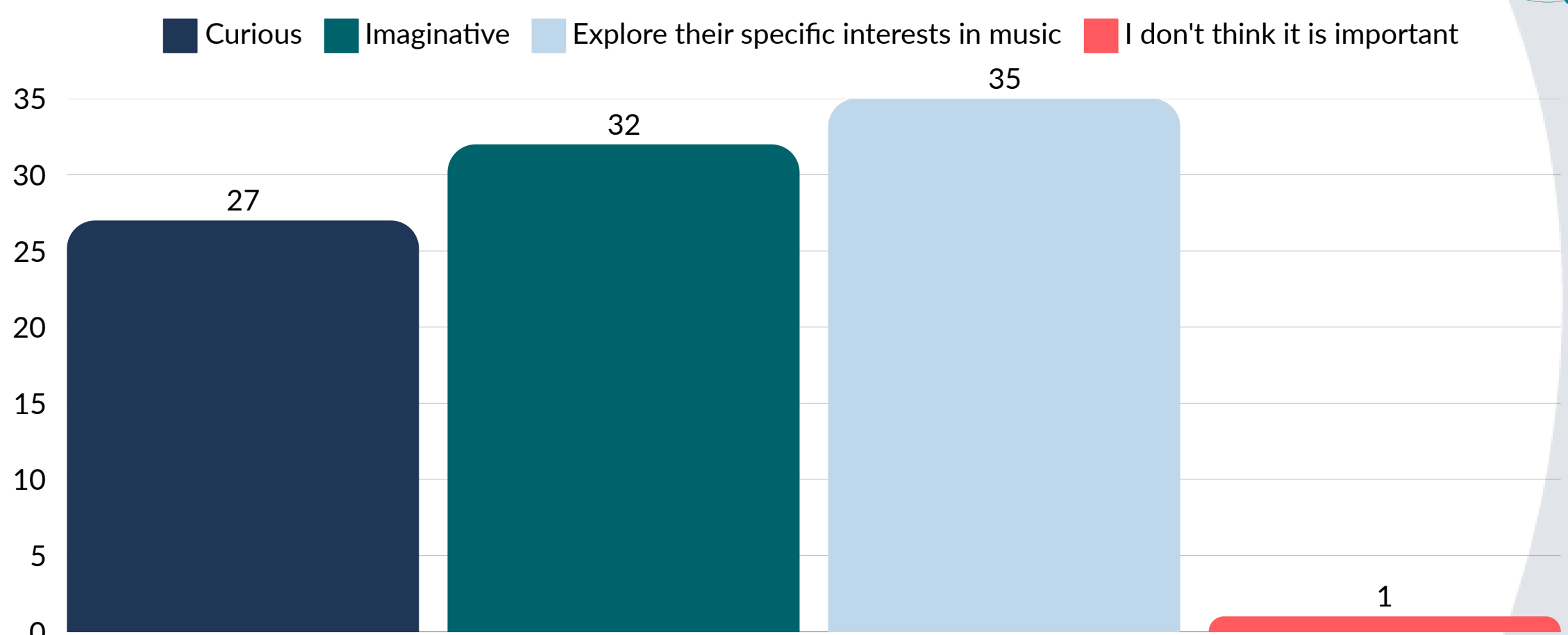


(Figure 78)
First competency: Critical Thinking and Solving Problems
What I find important about critical thinking and solving problems is that my child will learn to

Parents emphasised the importance of developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills in music. They felt it was important for students to understand the different eras of music, how songs are composed, and how different instruments work together. Parents also highlighted the value of being able to read and play music from sheet music, as this helps connect both the theory and practice of music.

Some parents praised specific parts of the course, like the Backing Chords question, for testing students’ problem-solving skills, suggesting that it should continue to carry significant weight in exams. They also saw composition and performance as great ways for students to think critically, as these activities require them to apply what they have learnt in creative ways. Additionally, parents pointed out that using the correct musical terms when explaining opinions is important for developing students’ ability to think clearly and communicate their ideas.

When asked about the importance of creativity for their child’s learning, over a third (37%) of parents stated that their child will explore specific interests in music. This was followed by a smaller number (34%) who highlighted the importance of being imaginative, while more than a quarter (28%) emphasised curiosity. Only one parent (1%) indicated that they do not think it is important(see Figure 79).



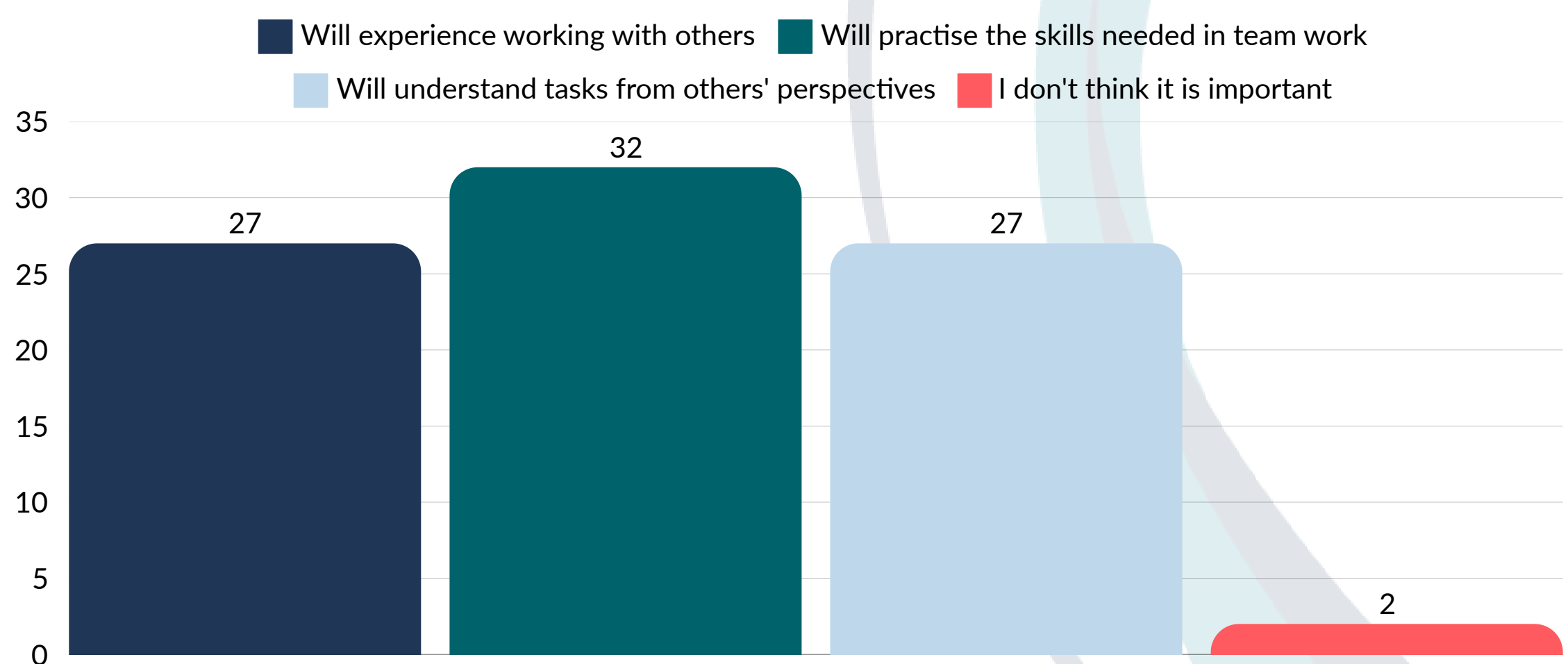
(Figure 79)

Second competency: Being Creative

What I find important about being creative is that my child will learn to be

Parents expressed that creativity plays an important role in their child's learning, especially in music. They suggested that while students should study a set range of pieces to understand different eras of music, there should also be room for personal exploration. Allowing students to work on a project or answer a question about music from an era they are interested in, based on certain guidelines, would encourage them to be more imaginative and develop a deeper connection to their personal musical tastes. Additionally, they emphasised the importance of allowing students to focus on their own interests during the senior cycle music practical exam, as this would foster their creativity and passion for the subject.

Regarding the importance of working with others, over a third (36%) of parents indicated that their child will practice essential teamwork skills. Slightly less than a third (31%) stated that their child will gain experience in collaboration, and a similar number (31%) emphasised the importance of understanding tasks from others' perspectives. Only a small number of parents (2%) said they do not think it is important (see Figure 80).



(Figure 80)

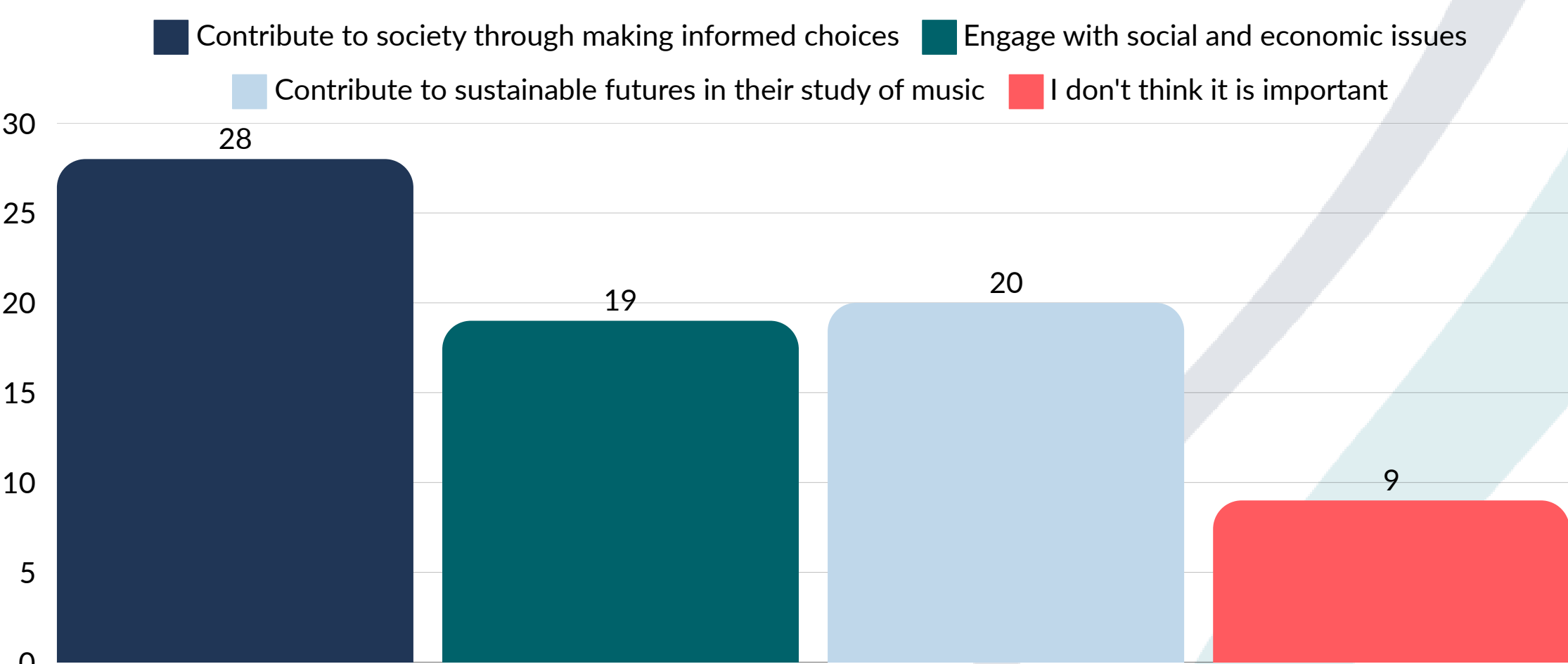
Third competency: Working with Others

What I find important about working with others is that my child



Parents emphasised how important it is for students to work with others, especially in music. They believe that learning to work as a team is an important skill for students in all subjects. Music helps students practice cooperation, listening, and teamwork. Parents also mentioned that playing in a group, like in an ensemble, is a great way for students to learn how to compromise and work together with others.

All parents were asked about the importance of participating in society, over a third (37%) stated that their child will learn to contribute to society through making informed choices. More than a quarter (26%) emphasised the importance of contributing to sustainable futures in the study of music, and a quarter (25%) highlighted the importance of engaging with social and economic issues. A small number of parents (12%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 81).



(Figure 81)

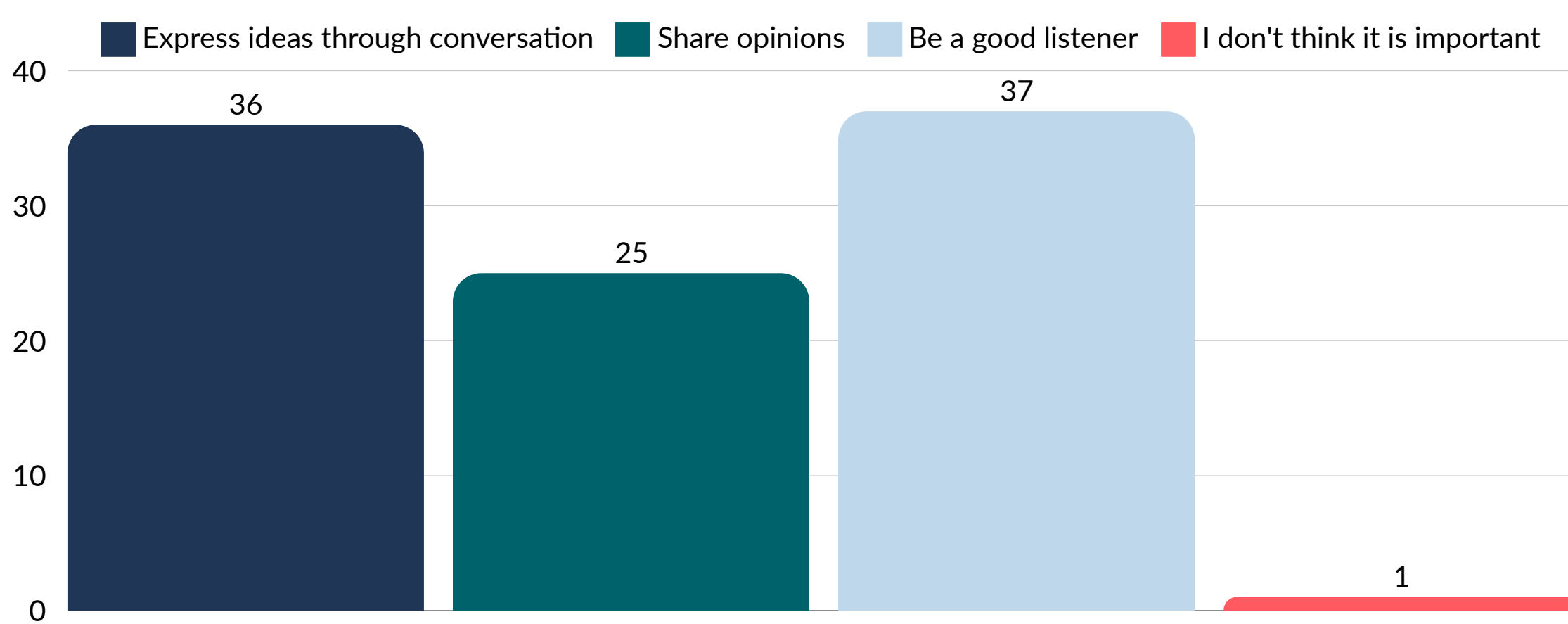
Fourth competency: Participating in Society

What I find important about participating in society is that my child will learn to

Parents had different opinions about the "Participating in Society" competency in the Leaving Cert Music course. Some thought it did not really fit with musicianship and felt these topics were already covered in other subjects. Others believed students should be encouraged to perform music or sing in public as part of engaging with society. However, some parents felt that in Senior Cycle, students should focus on their own musical skills to prepare for the big exam. A few also mentioned that music is important just for music's sake and should not have to focus on societal participation.

In response to the importance of communicating, over a third (37%) of parents believe their child will learn to be a good listener. A similar number (36%) emphasised the importance of expressing ideas through conversation, while a quarter (25%) highlighted sharing opinions. Only a few (1%) indicated that they do not think it is important (see Figure 82).





(Figure 82)

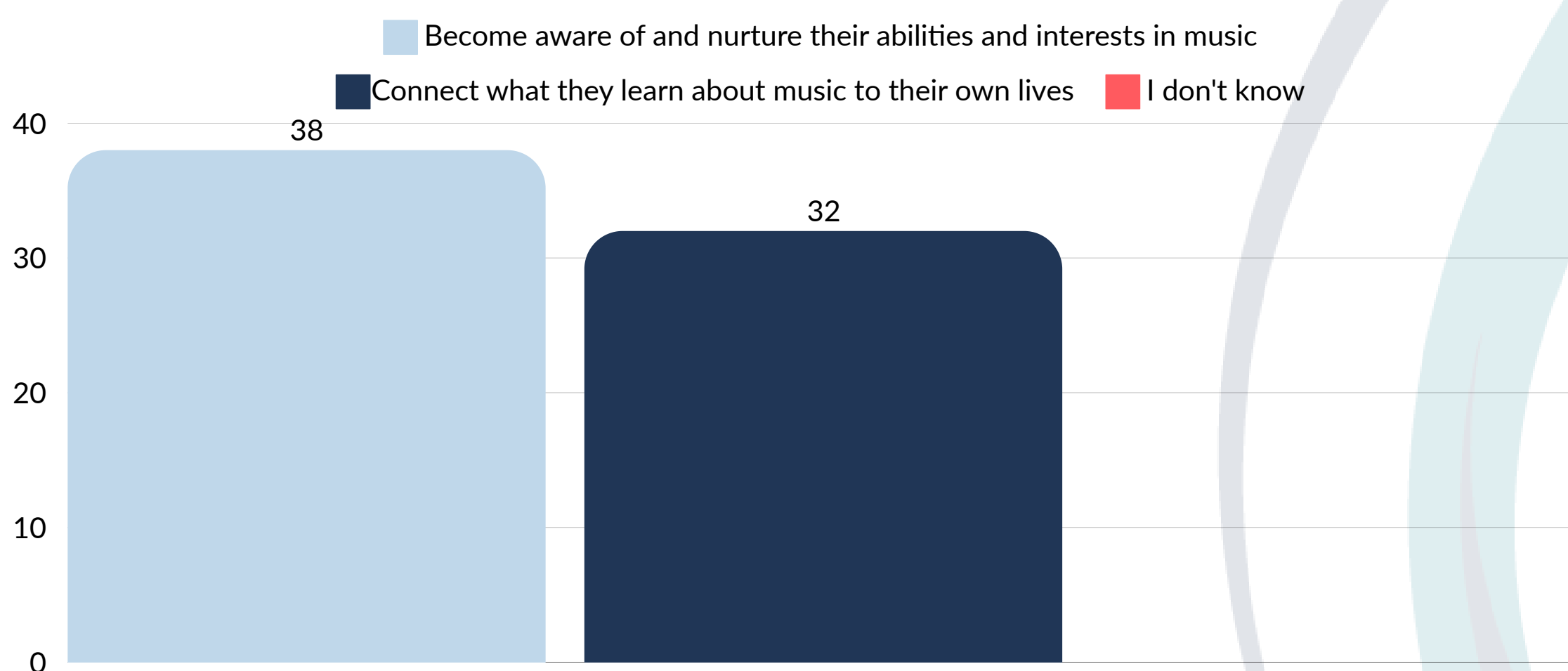
Fifth competency: Communicating

What I find important about communicating is that my child will learn to

Parents highlighted that learning how to listen to music, to the music itself, and to other musicians is a key skill for students. They also mentioned that expressing ideas through music is more relevant, as music is its own language. Overall, they emphasised that the ability to communicate through music is crucial for students.



In terms of cultivating well-being, over half of parents (54%) believe their child will learn to become aware of and nurture their abilities and interests in music. A little less than half (46%) emphasised the connection between what they learn about music and their personal lives. No parents indicated that they did not know (see Figure 83).



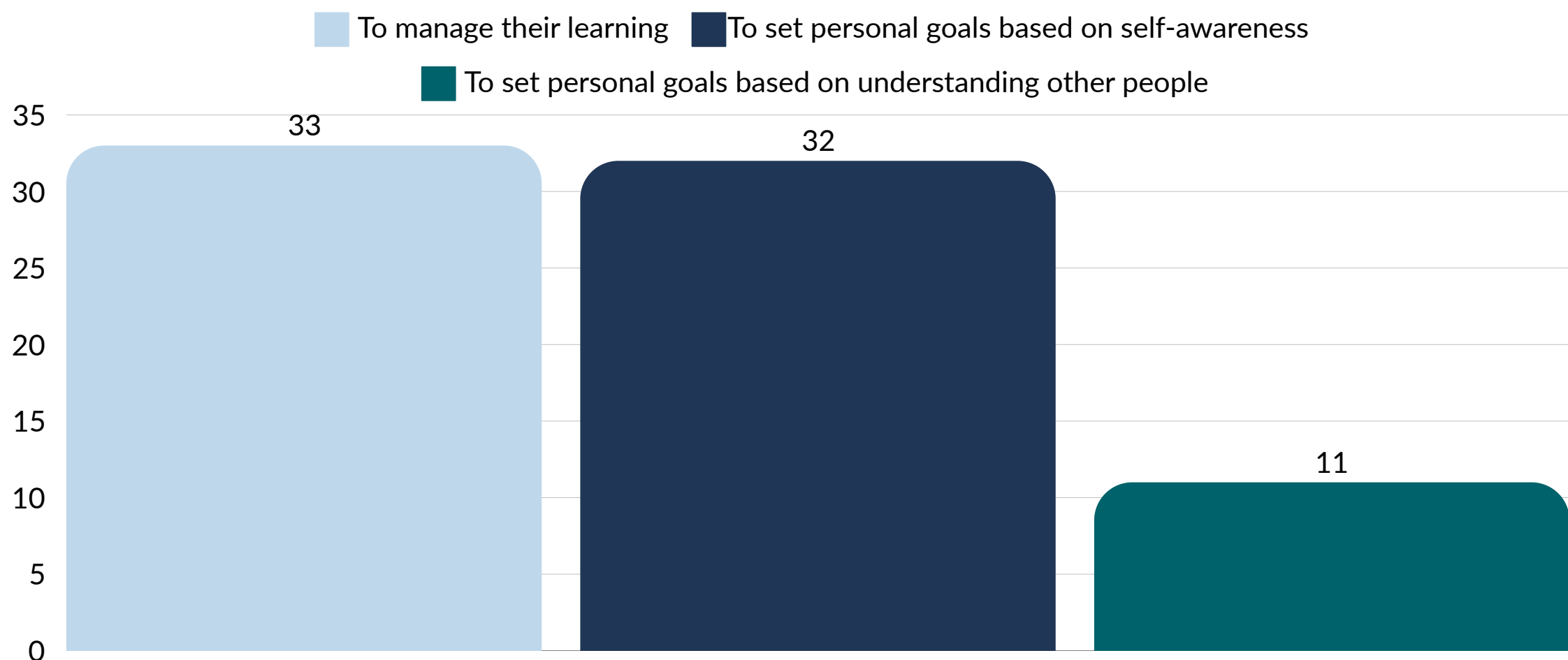
(Figure 83)

Sixth competency: Cultivating Wellbeing

What I find important about cultivating wellbeing is that my child will learn how to

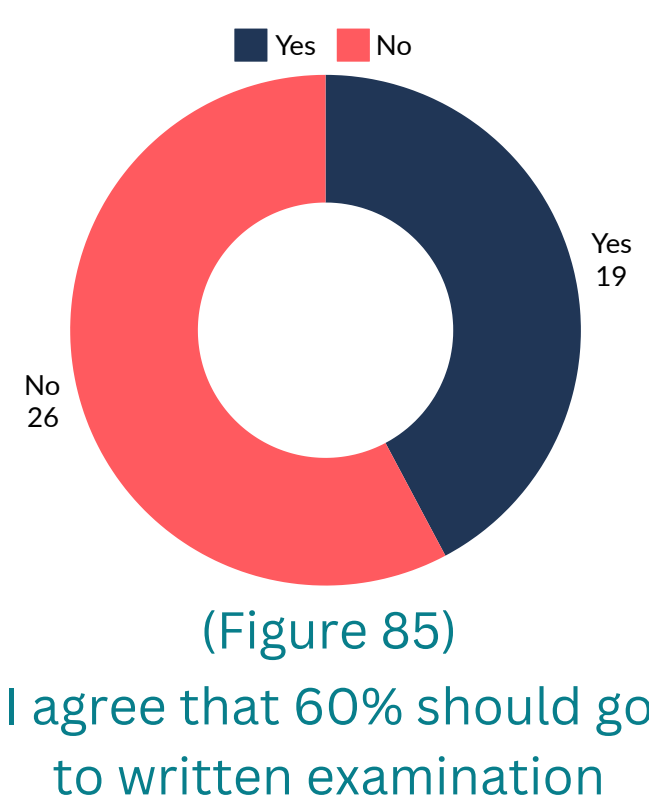
Parents believe that well-being and music are closely connected. They feel that music can be nurturing for both the soul and the mind. Parents advocate for incorporating enjoyment of music into exams. They suggest asking students what they enjoy about music and what might help foster a positive connection with the subject.

When it comes to managing learning and self-questioning, a significant number of parents (43%) believe their child will learn to manage their learning. A similar number (42%) emphasised setting personal goals based on self-awareness, while a smaller number (14%) highlighted the importance of understanding others when setting personal goals (see Figure 84).

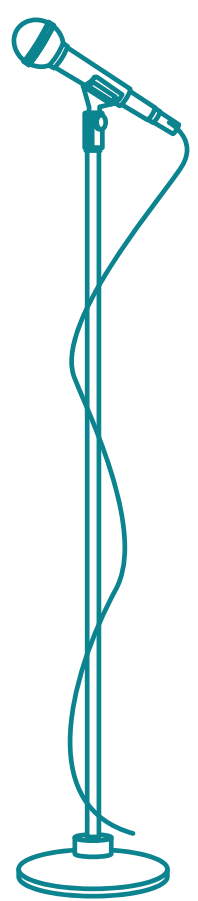


(Figure 84)
Seventh competency: Managing Learning and Self
What I find important about managing learning and self is that my child will learn

Parents believe the music curriculum should include a wider range of music, reflecting contributions from both genders, Africans, and other minority groups in classical music history. They also suggest adding a world music or ethnomusicology component, as many music graduates learn about non-European music traditions. While they think these aspects are important, some feel that they should not be assessed at the Leaving Cert level. Overall, they believe the current exam structure does not need to change.



(Figure 85)
I agree that 60% should go to written examination



As for the assessment section, regarding the allocation of 60% to the written examination, most parents (58%) disagreed, while less than half of parents (42%) agreed.

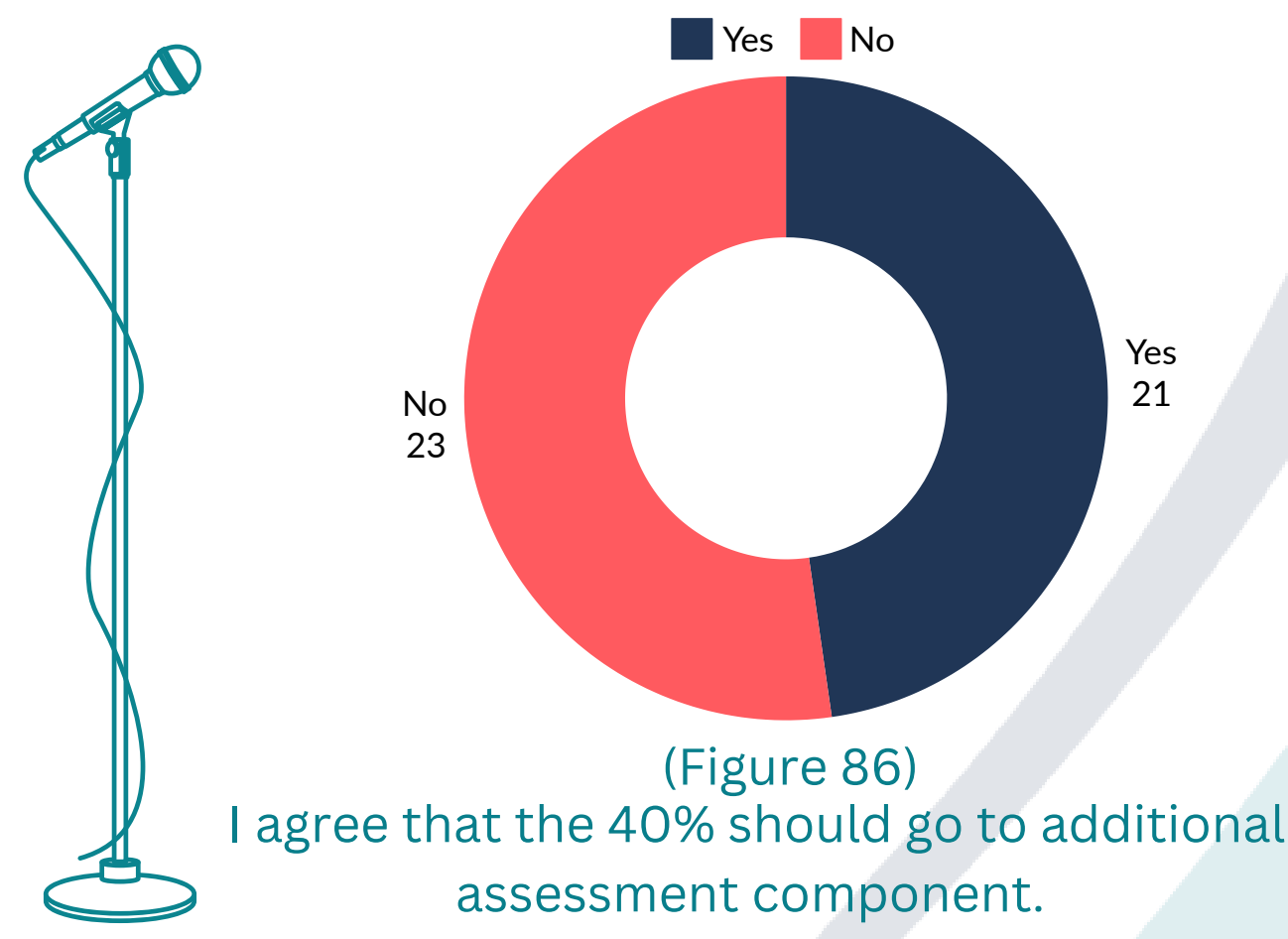
Parents had different opinions on how much the written exam should count in the Leaving Certificate music grade. Many believe that music should be assessed more practically, with a fair balance between written and practical work. They think music is a practical subject, so performance and creativity should be rewarded. Some parents think the practical part should carry more weight because it shows students' real skills and encourages creativity.



There are concerns that making the written exam more important could increase stress for students, especially since music requires a lot of practice outside of class. Parents also believe the written exam should not be more important than the practical side of music. They want students to be encouraged to express themselves and develop their own style. Many feel the current 50/50 balance is fair and shows students' abilities well.

Some parents also suggested that more focus should be placed on continuous assessment, where students' ongoing work and creativity are considered instead of just one final exam.

In response to the suggestion that 40% should go to an additional assessment component, most parents (52%) expressed disagreement, with a significant minority of parents (48%) agreeing (see Figure 86).

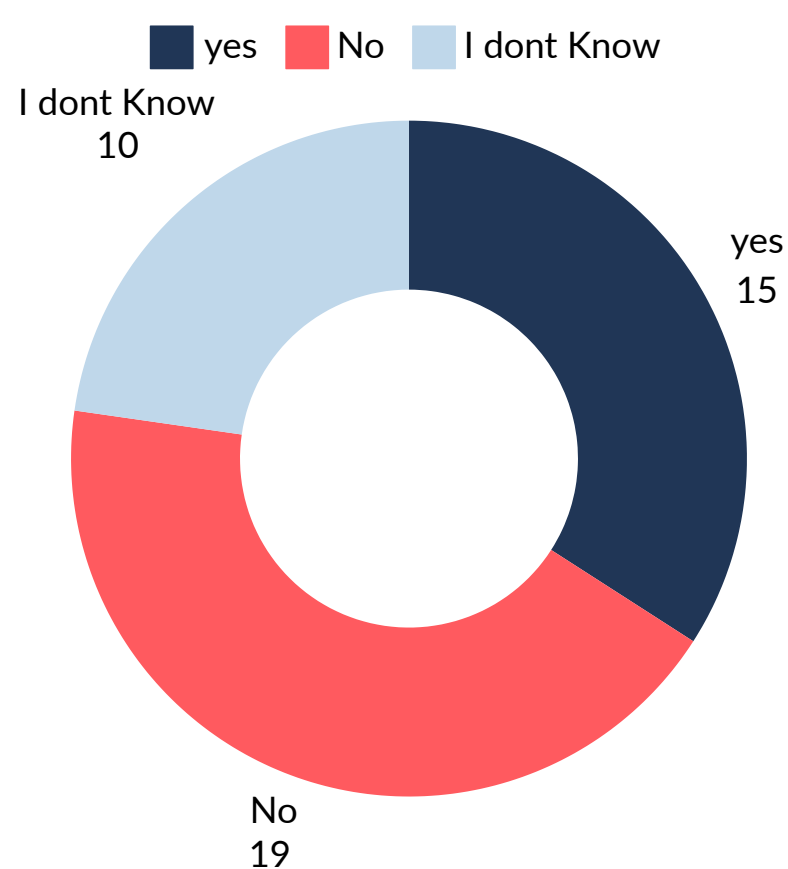


Parents who disagreed with 40% of the Leaving Certificate music grade being based on additional assessments raised several views. Many feel the current 50/50 split between practical performance and written work should be maintained because students choose music out of passion for creating music, and the practical aspect is crucial for assessing their skills. They argue that live music making should be properly assessed and rewarded in the exam.

Several parents expressed concerns about the stress the new changes could cause. They feel that adding more assessments would overwhelm students, especially with the pressure of classwork, revision, and multiple new components. Concerns were also raised about how quickly these changes are being implemented, referencing challenges with the Junior Cycle program.

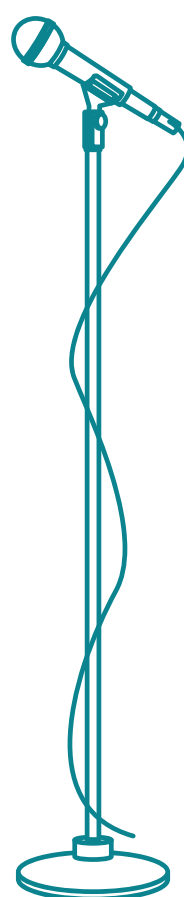
Overall, many parents believe the current structure of a 50% practical grade is fair and reflects students' abilities in music. Some suggested that more emphasis should be placed on practical skills and that continual assessment would be a better way to track students' progress over time. They also feel that practical components deserve more weight in the overall grade to better reward students' creativity and strengths.





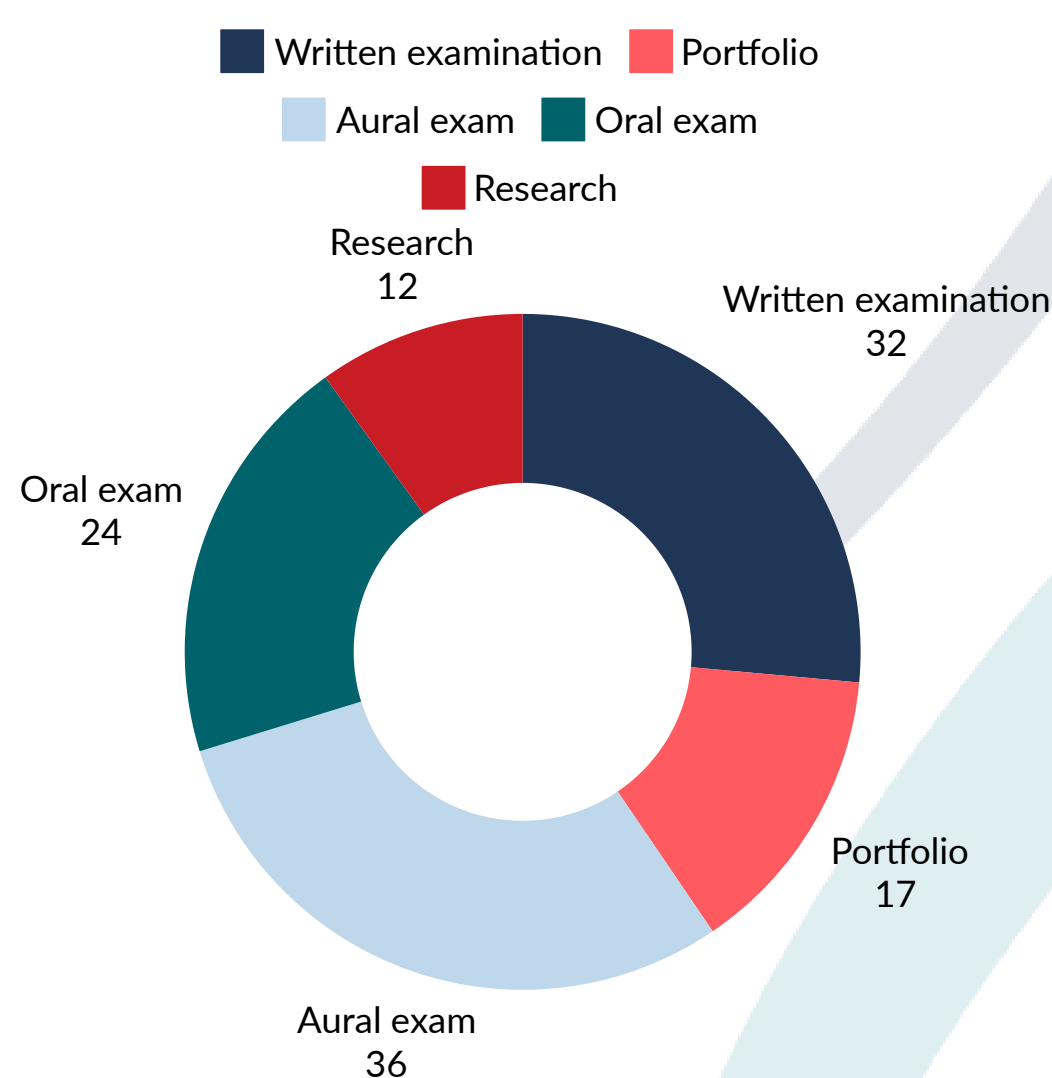
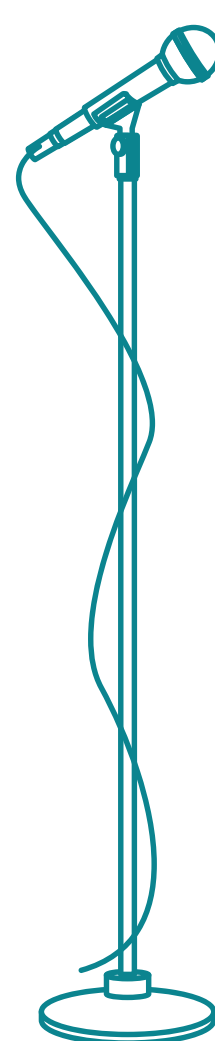
(Figure 87)

I want my child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle.



On the question of assessments, (43%) did not want their child to be assessed at regular intervals throughout the 2-year cycle. A little over a third (34%) agreed, while a smaller number of parents (23%) were unsure (see Figure 87).

On the question of assessments in music, almost a third (30%) of parents preferred aural exams. A little over a quarter (26%) favoured written exams, whilst a smaller number (20%) selected oral exams. A small number of parents (14%) preferred portfolio assessments, and the lowest proportion (10%) opted for research assessments (see Figure 88).



(Figure 88)

As part of their study of music, I want my child to be engaged in

Parents had varying views on the purpose of Leaving Certificate Music. Many believe it should help students enjoy music, develop a love for it, and understand all kinds of music. The goal should be for students to learn how to read and perform music and gain an appreciation for different pieces from various musicians. Parents also want students to be able to compose their own music, identify features in the music they enjoy, and improve their performance skills.

Some parents mentioned the importance of developing skills in music and fostering a lifelong appreciation. They emphasised that practical performance should be worth more, as students invest significant time outside of school to develop their skills. Others believe music education should help students build a foundation for continuing music studies in college or abroad.



Parents also see the purpose of Leaving Certificate Music as expanding students' musical knowledge, enhancing their skills, and encouraging creativity. They want to give students the chance to demonstrate their practical abilities and help them succeed in something they enjoy. Many believe that music should not just be about theory but about applying skills creatively and also recognise the role of music in cultures and societies.

Some parents think the course should expose students to a variety of music genres, helping them prepare for further studies or careers in music. They want the music program to focus on performance, listening skills, and students' overall musicianship. Parents also suggested that students' strengths, whether in composition or performance, should be nurtured, allowing them to develop their confidence and creativity.

Parents expressed many positive aspects of the current Leaving Certificate Music programme that they want to keep. A key highlight is the practical exam, with many parents emphasising its importance and the fact that 50% of the grade is dedicated to practical performance. The practical exam provides students with a chance to showcase their performance skills, and parents feel it encourages them to develop their abilities in a way that is both rewarding and enjoyable.

The variety of options within the practical exam is also appreciated, allowing students to choose between performance, composition, and listening. The study of composers and their techniques, along with the inclusion of music technology, is viewed as a strong aspect of the course. Additionally, parents feel that the set works provide a valuable opportunity for students to explore different genres and learn about music from various eras.

The composition and listening components of the course are seen as appropriate for students of this age group, offering a good balance between theory and practice. Many parents also appreciate the opportunity to work on aural skills, which are important for developing active listening and analytical abilities. Overall, parents expressed satisfaction with the versatility of the current course structure, the ability to focus on areas of personal interest, and the overall balance between practical and theoretical components.

Parents shared several opinions on aspects of the current Leaving Certificate Music programme that they believe should be changed or removed. Some feel that the number of set works should be reduced from four to three, allowing for a deeper understanding of each piece rather than just memorisation. There were also concerns about the composition paper, which many believe is not fit for purpose, particularly because it requires students to compose from learnt patterns without being able to hear the music they are creating.



The 20th-century art music section, especially when focusing on niche composers, is seen as too challenging and not relevant for all students. The rote learning involved in sections like the Irish music essay and some of the theory elements (such as melody writing and harmony questions) was also criticised. Many parents feel that these aspects require memorisation rather than fostering a genuine understanding of music.

Some parents suggested eliminating or changing the Irish music essay, as it is viewed as purely rote learning. There were also suggestions to reduce or update the set work to make them more manageable and relevant. A few parents felt the melody writing question is too difficult, even for high-achieving students, and that a more modern and accessible approach to composition could be beneficial.

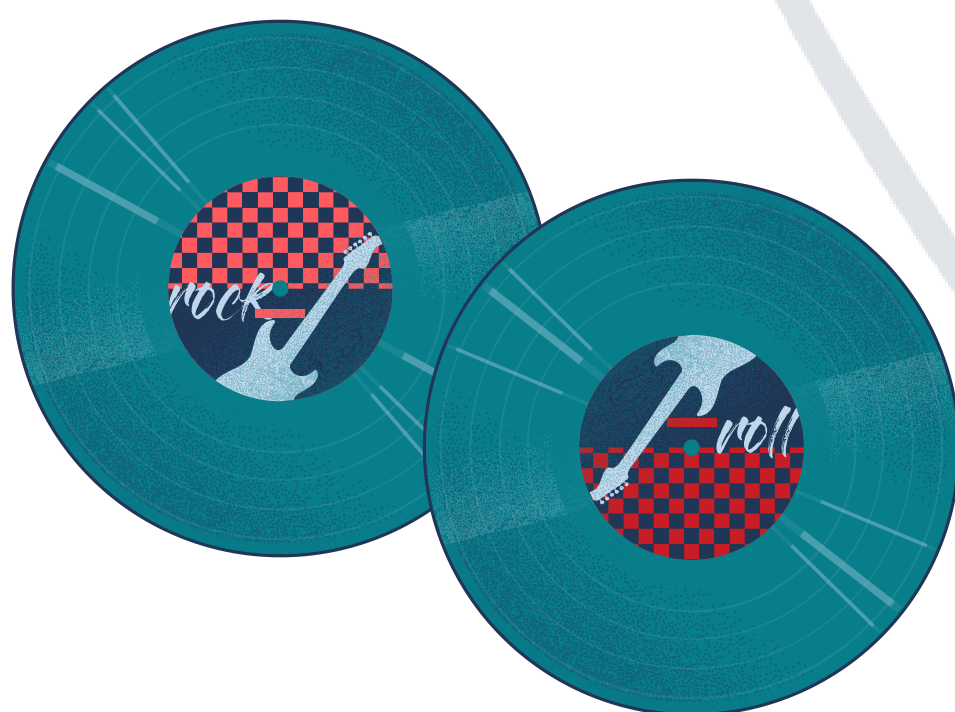
Lastly, some parents argued that excessive theory could be reduced in favour of more practical and engaging content, such as projects or more modern music pieces.

When parents were asked what could be improved about the current Leaving Certificate Music, they had several suggestions. Many felt that more focus should be put on practical musicmaking, such as performance, and that music technology should be used more in composing music. Some parents also wanted less work for students, like the changes made after COVID, and they believed the current balance of assessments was fair.

There was a strong desire to update the set works, with many parents asking for more enjoyable and accessible 20th-century pieces. They also suggested including more music by female composers and people from different ethnic backgrounds. Some parents felt that the melody writing question was too hard and wanted it to be marked more fairly.

Parents also wanted more flexibility in the practical exam, especially for group performances. They felt that the melody writing question could be improved and that creativity should be emphasised more in composition, rather than relying on formulas.

There were also suggestions to improve fairness between schools, with some parents wanting DEIS schools to have the same opportunities for individual performance lessons as private schools. Overall, parents wanted a curriculum that allowed for more creativity, flexibility, and diversity, and one that better reflects modern music.



Conclusion

This report provides valuable insights into parents' perspectives on the redevelopment of the Senior Cycle curriculum, highlighting both the positive aspects and areas for improvement. Parents expressed a range of views on subject content, assessment methods, and the overall impact of these changes on students' learning and future opportunities.

The findings emphasise the importance of a curriculum that is balanced, inclusive, and reflective of students' needs, ensuring they develop critical skills for higher education and the workforce. By addressing concerns through enhanced communication, collaboration, and transparency, policymakers and educators can foster a more supportive learning environment. A student-centred approach to curriculum development will ultimately lead to a more effective and engaging educational experience for all students.

