

RESPONSE ANALYSIS OF RUBRICATE SOFTWARE FOR GDE SCHOOLS 2009

INTRODUCTION

Rubricate is a software package that assists educators in their role as assessors. **Rubricate** makes it easy and quick for teachers to create assessment tools, such as rubrics, that are correlated with the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) and current assessment policy and appropriate to their Learning Areas and Grades.

Rubricate Senior X licences have been procured in October 2009 for 435 GDE schools and training provided to prepare chosen GDE staff in the E-Learning and Curriculum Directorates as well as teachers from the identified schools, in order that they may train other teachers at these schools to make maximum use of the software. **Rubricate** is designed to make educators feel capable, confident and positive in their role as assessors.

Individual School-User Licence packages were delivered for the 435 schools. 15 **Rubricate Senior X** Special-User Licence Upgrades were delivered for the 15 GDE District Office staff.

Training was conducted around the province as follows:

19 October 2009

- 1-Day Refresher Course at the Sci-Bono Science Centre in Newtown, Johannesburg for 37 GDE Senior Phase facilitators

20 October 2009

- 1-Day Refresher Course at the Sci-Bono Science Centre in Newtown, Johannesburg for 38 GDE Senior Phase facilitators

22 & 23 October 2009

- 2-Day Training Course at the Medunsa Campus, Tshwane for 30 Tshwane North and West District officials and teachers from identified schools
- 2-Day Training Course at Ekurhuleni East Rand Campus in Springs for 30 Gauteng East, Ekurhuleni North and South District officials and teachers from identified schools

26 & 27 October 2009

- 2-Day Training Course at the Mamelodi Campus of University of Pretoria for 30 Tshwane South and Gauteng North District officials and teachers from identified schools
- 2-Day Training Course at Randfontein High School for 30 Gauteng West and Johannesburg West District officials and teachers from identified schools
- 2-Day Training Course at Suiderlig Secondary School in VanDerBijl Park for 30 Sedibeng East and West District officials and teachers from identified schools

28 & 29 October 2009

- 2-Day Training Course at the Sci-Bono Science Centre in Newtown, Johannesburg for 60 Johannesburg North, East, South and Central District officials and teachers from identified schools

Questionnaires were completed by workshop participants before and after orientation to **Rubricate**.

Part 1

Questionnaires designed to establish participants' evaluation of their knowledge and experience of outcomes-based assessment principles and tools were completed before any discussion to assess baseline knowledge. (This questionnaire is reproduced on page 3.) The same questionnaires were completed after **Rubricate** orientation and training to assess whether there had been any change in responses.

Part 2

Different questionnaires evaluating participants' response to the **Rubricate** software and the **Rubricate** training were completed after each of the one-day and two-day training sessions and these completed questionnaires have been analysed to determine response to **Rubricate**. (This questionnaire is reproduced on pages 4 and 5.)

ASSESSMENT RESPONSE

(Pre-training & Post-training)

Date: _____

Name (optional): _____

Institution: _____

Position & Responsibility: _____

Please indicate your response the following statements:

	Yes	Undecided	No	Comments
1. I am familiar with the principles of outcomes-based assessment				
2. I am familiar with the different outcomes-based assessment tools				
3. I have used a rubric before				
4. I understand the difference between holistic and analytical rubrics				
5. I have used a performance list tool before				
6. I understand the difference between a performance list and a rubric				
7. I have used a checklist before				
8. I understand the difference between a checklist and a performance list				
9. I have used Rubricate before				
10. I understand what Rubricate enables me to do				

RUBRICATE JUNIOR RESPONSE

(Immediate Post-training)

Date: _____

Name (optional): _____

Institution: _____

Position & Responsibility: _____

A. Rubricate Software Response

Please indicate your response the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Comments
1. Rubricate is in agreement with the NCS					
2. Rubricate is in agreement with current Assessment Policy					
3. Rubricate covers the assessment needs in each Learning Area					
4. Rubricate covers the assessment needs in each Grade					
5. Rubricate provides help in using the software programme					
6. Rubricate provides help in interpreting the curriculum documents					
7. Rubricate provides help in using different assessment tools					
8. Rubricate is a user-friendly computer programme					
9. Rubricate requires basic computer skills					
10. Rubricate is recommended for South African teachers					

Any further comments about the **Rubricate** programme?

B. Rubricate Training Response

Please indicate your response the following statements:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Comments
1. I have a greater understanding of what the Rubricate programme can do					
2. I can find assessment criteria in the Rubricate database for a rubric					
3. I can make a rubric using Rubricate					
4. I can change my rubric into a performance list tool					
5. I can save and print my Rubric					
6. I can export and print my rubric using MS Word					
7. I can edit my rubric to customise it for my specific use					
8. I can write a new entry and add it to the Rubricate database					
9. I can use the Rubricate search facilities					
10. I can use the Rubricate Curriculum Support facilities					
11. I can access my Learning Outcomes in Rubricate					
12. I can use Rubricate Record					
13. Rubricate training was at the correct level					
14. Rubricate training was at the correct pace					
15. Rubricate training was of correct duration					

Any further comments about the **Rubricate** training workshop?

RESULTS

PART 1 – ASSESSMENT RESPONSE

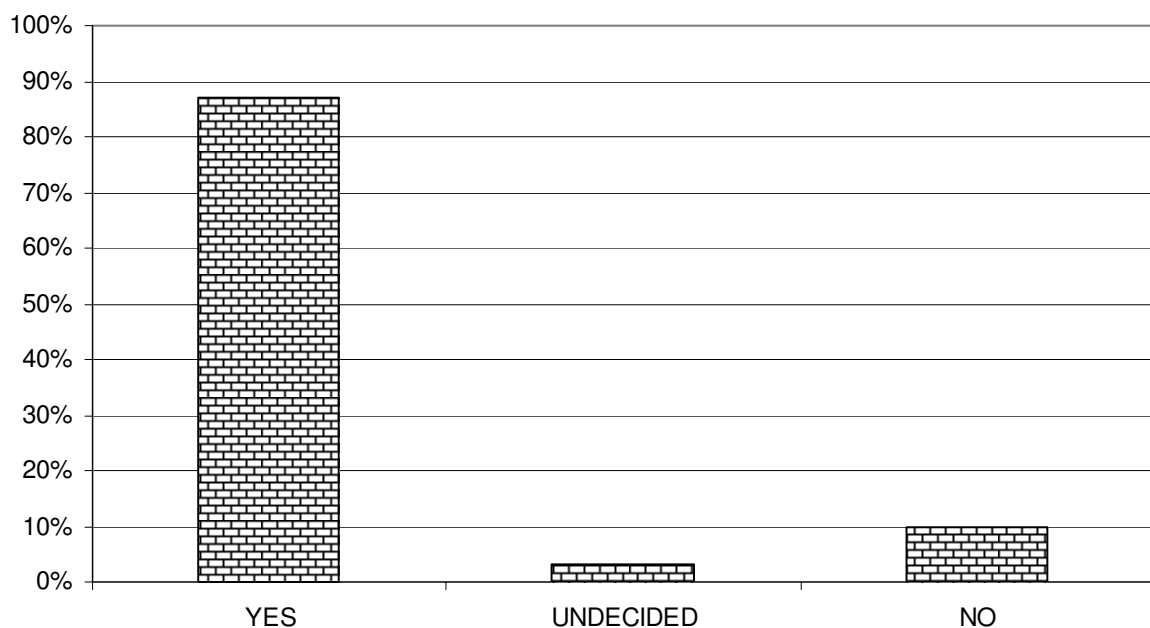
a) The first statement considered was:

“I have used Rubricate before”

As one of the purposes of this analysis was to establish what was known about outcomes-based assessment without any exposure to **Rubricate**, any responses indicating that **Rubricate** had been used before, resulted in those complete questionnaire responses being removed from the survey. This ensures that all baseline responses have not been influenced by the **Rubricate** software or training.

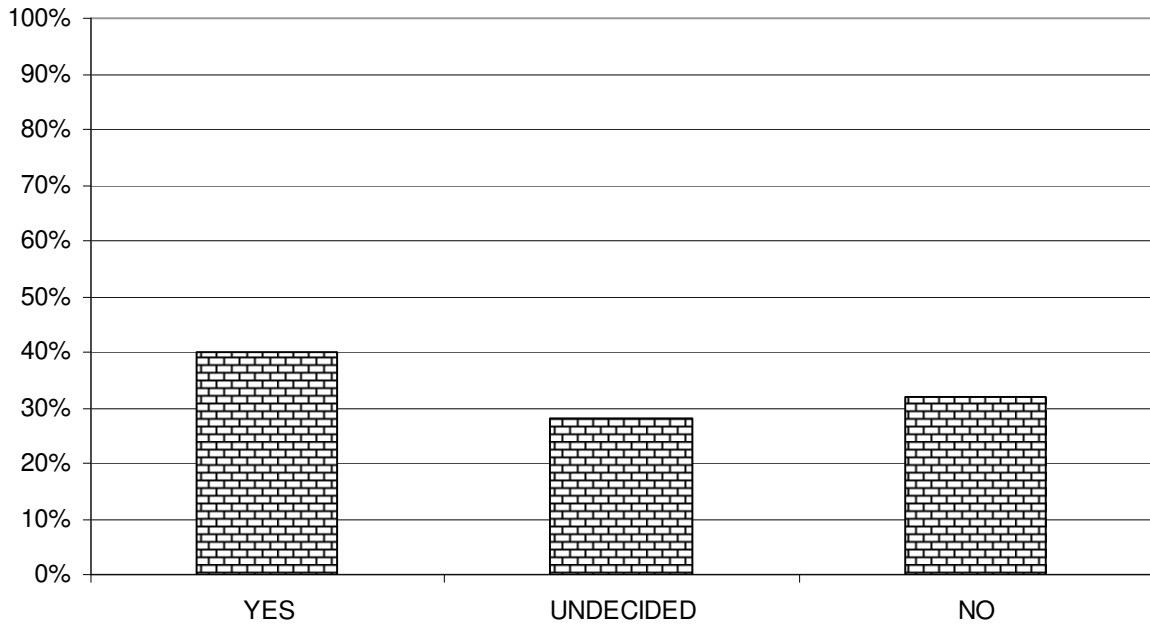
b) To establish existing experience of outcomes-based assessment tools, the following statements were considered next:

“I have used a rubric before”



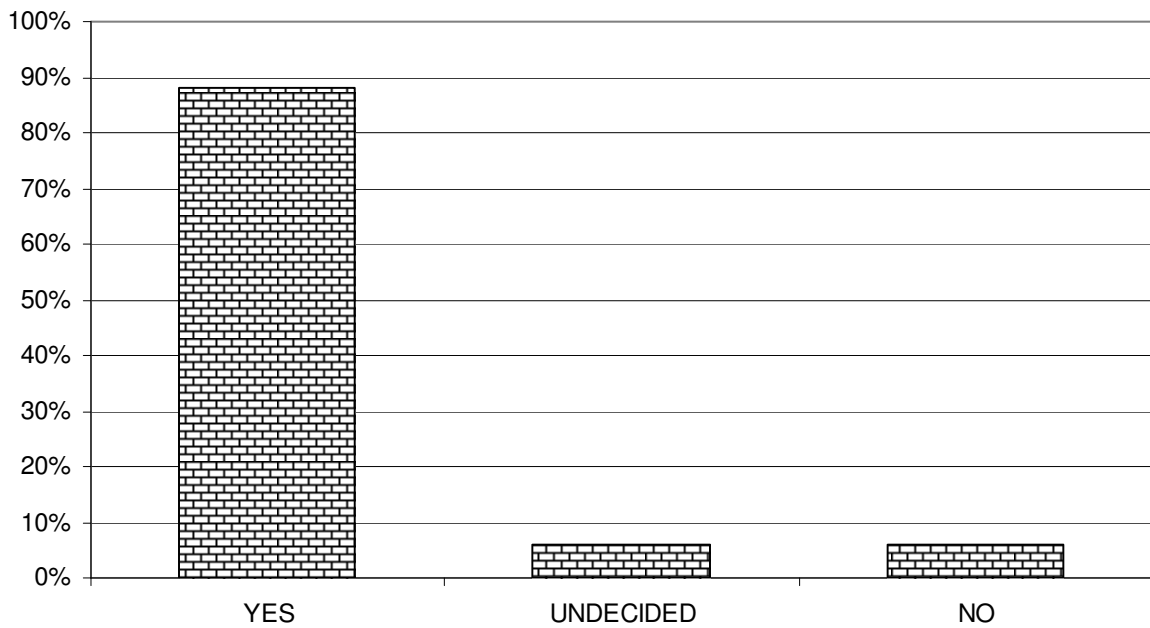
As can be seen, 87% of participants had actually used a rubric before.

"I have used a performance list tool before"



40% of the participants had used a performance list before. This is significantly higher than the 28% last year. The number of undecided responses (28%) still seems to indicate that participants were unfamiliar with the term rather than the tool.

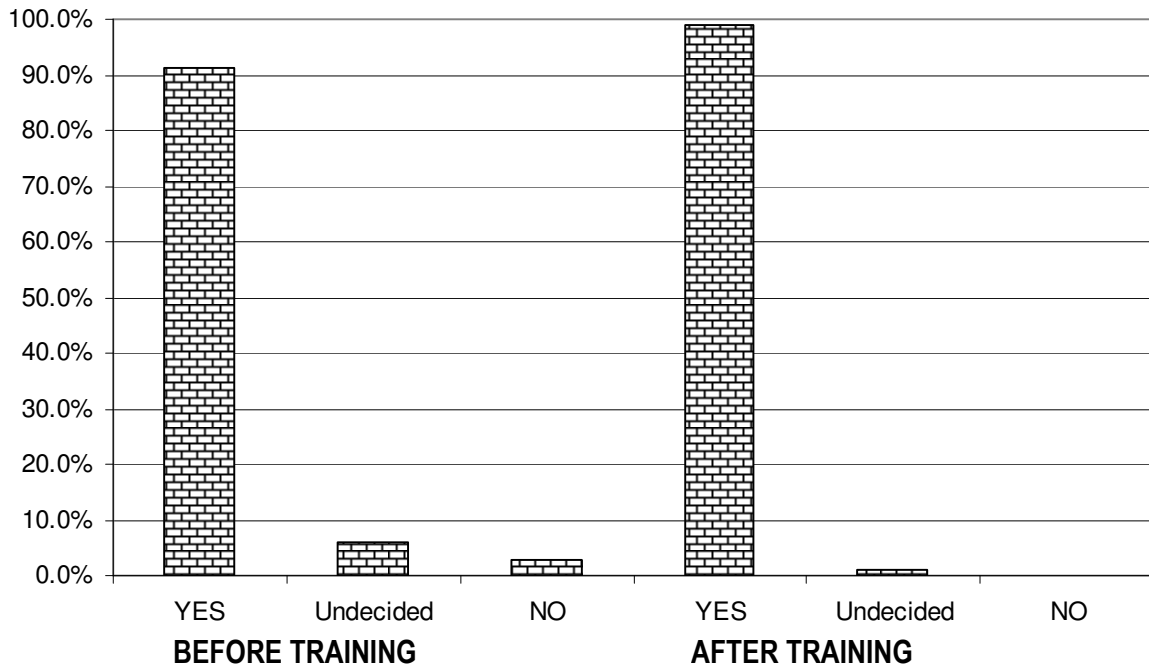
"I have used a checklist before"



This was still the most familiar assessment tool with 88% of participants having used it before.

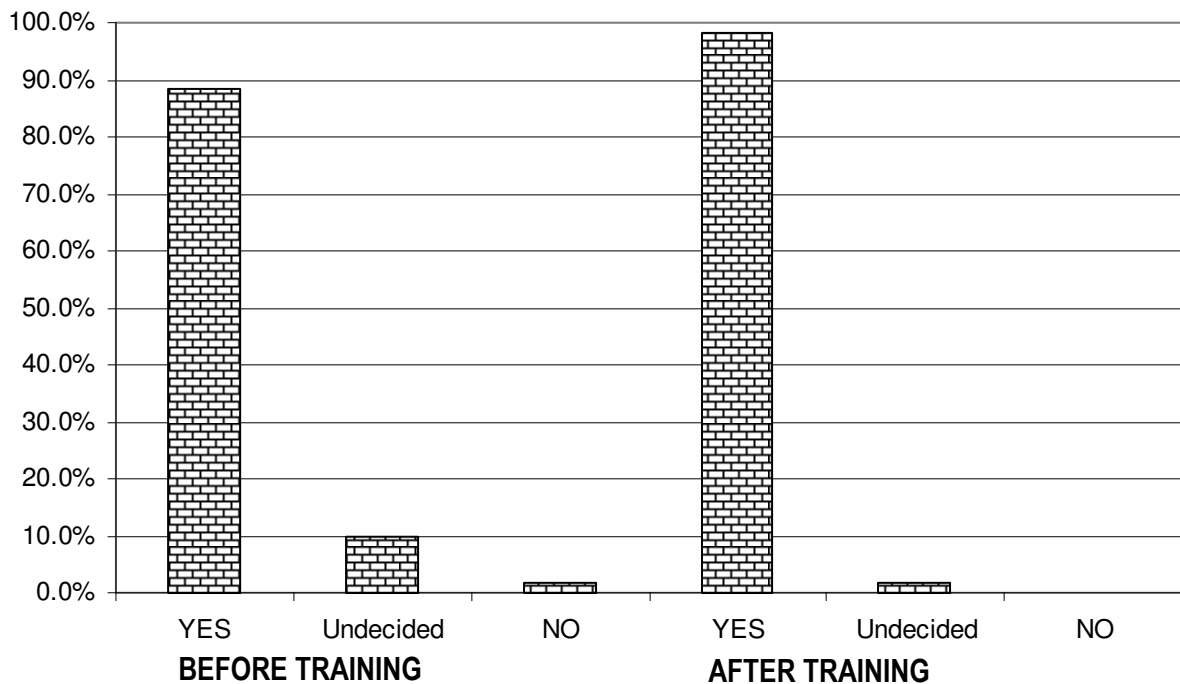
c) To compare responses before and after **Rubricate** orientation and training, the following statement responses were compared:

“I am familiar with the principles of outcomes-based assessment”



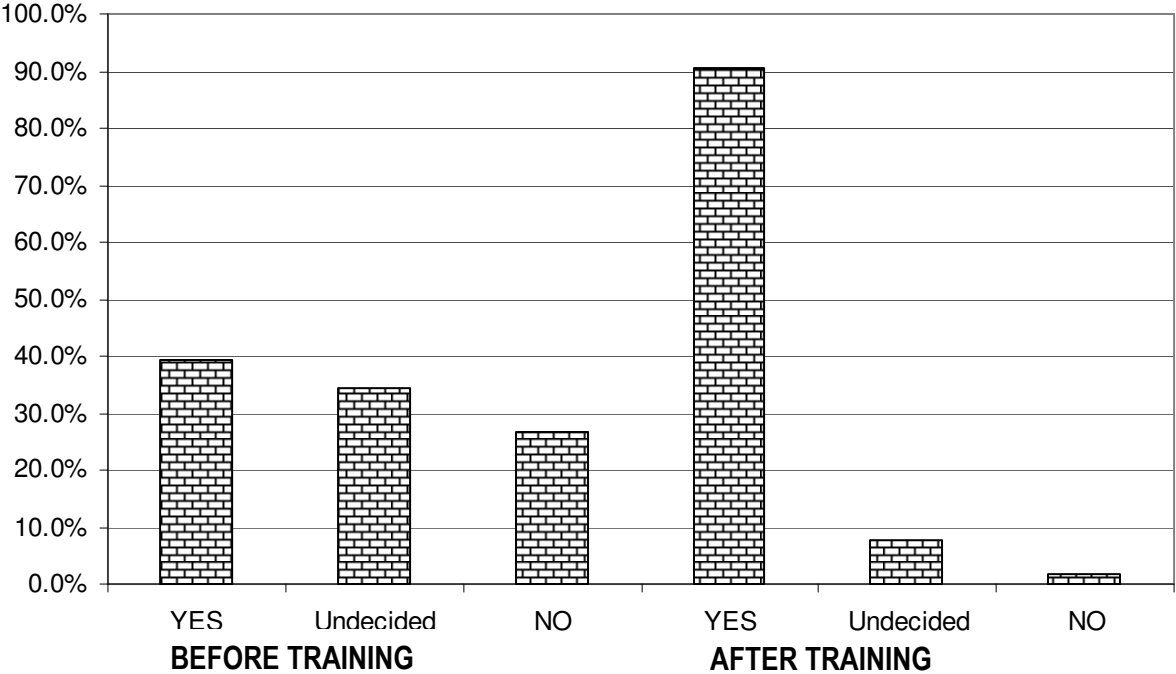
The increase in a YES response (91.3% to 98.8%) from pre-training to immediate post-training is significant and the 2.9% NO response has been eliminated after the training.

“I am familiar with the different outcomes-based assessment tools”



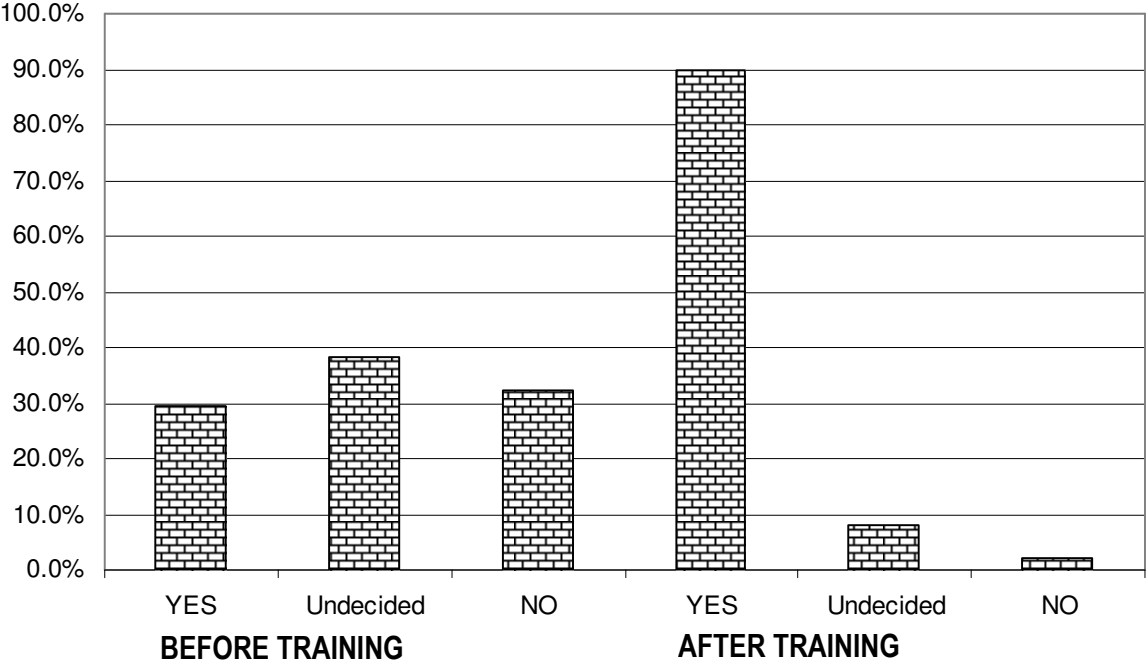
Again, the YES response has increased from 88.4% to 98.2% and the 1.9% NO response has been completely eliminated after the training.

“I understand the difference between a checklist and a performance list”



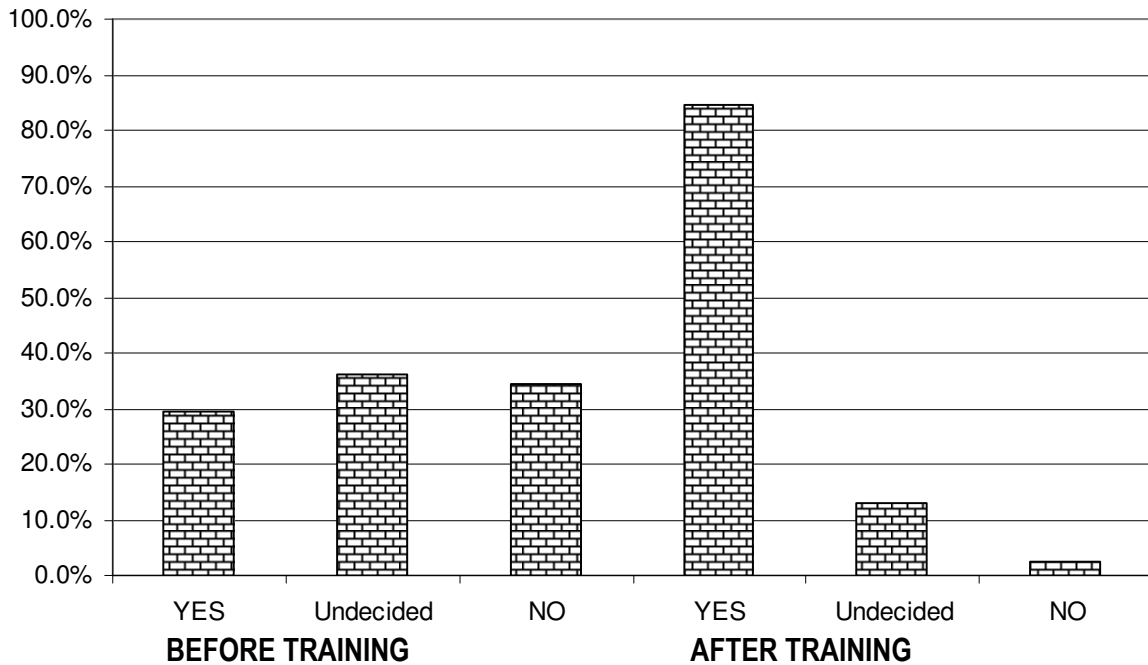
There is a significant increase in the number of YES responses after training (39.2% to 90.5%) and a significant decrease in the number of NO responses (26.5% to 1.8%). Even the number of UNDECIDED responses has dropped significantly from 34.3 to only 7.7%.

“I understand the difference between a performance list and a rubric”



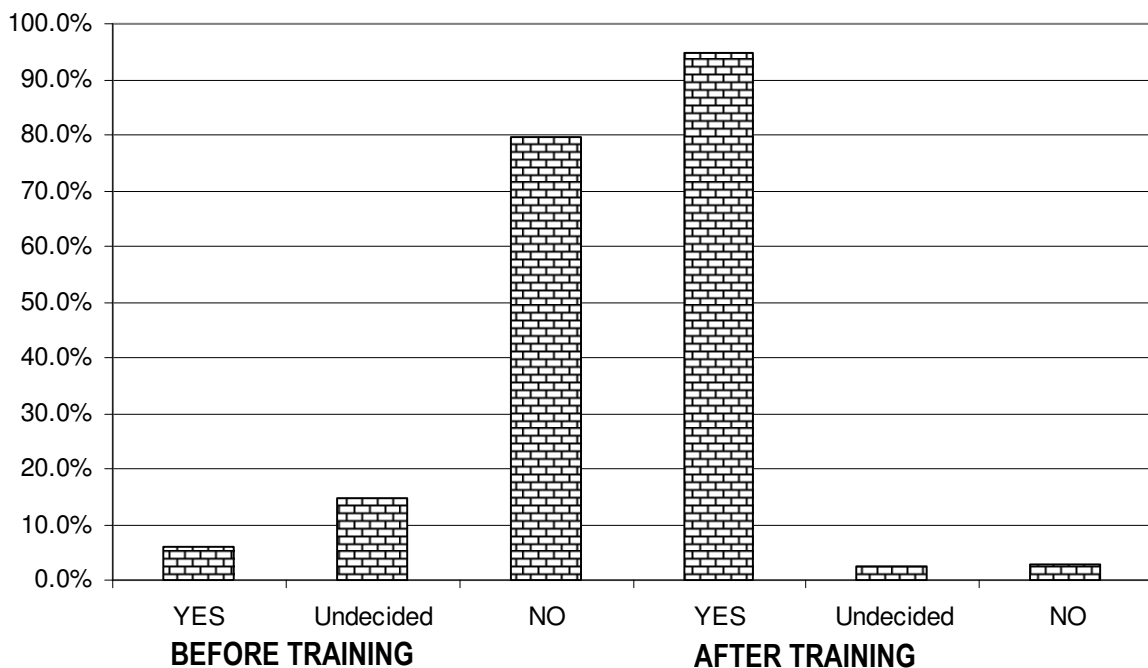
Again there is a huge increase in YES responses (from 29.4% to 90.0%) with corresponding decreases in NO responses (from 32.4% to 2.0%) and UNDECIDED responses (38.2% to 8.0%).

“I understand the difference between holistic and analytic rubrics”



This graph shows a similar trend with an increase in YES responses (from 29.4% to 84.7%) and decreases in NO responses (from 34.3% to 2.4%) and UNDECIDED responses (from 36.3% to 12.9%).

“I understand what Rubricate enables me to do”



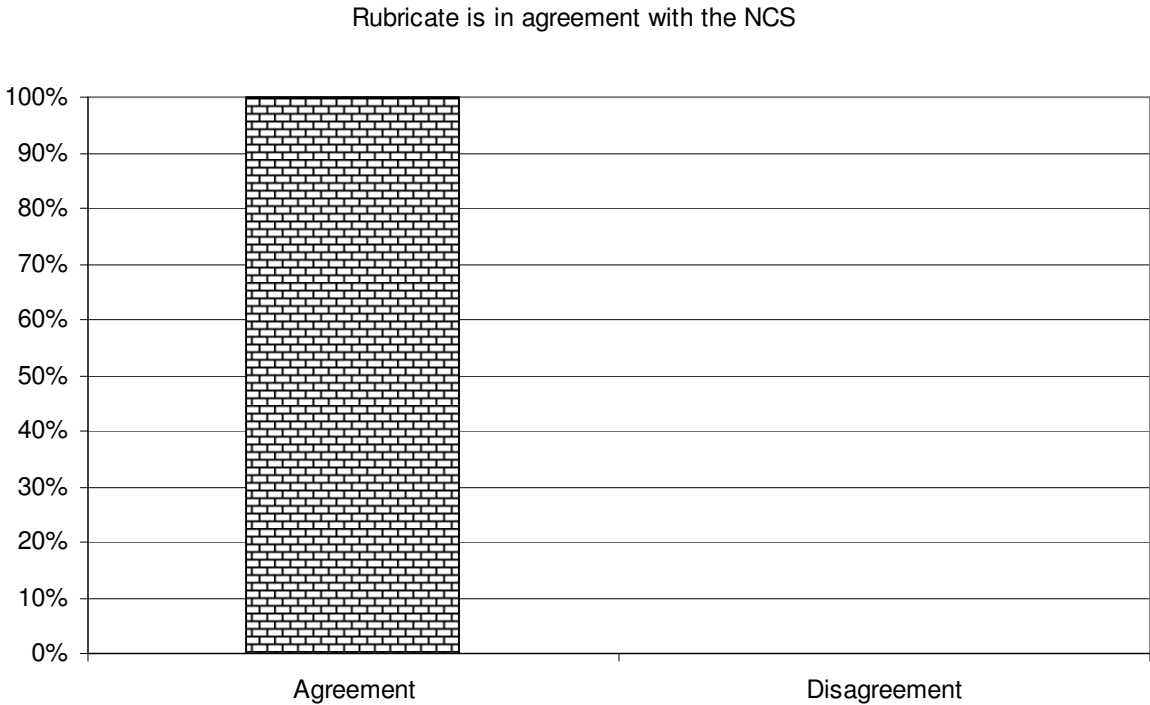
As expected, there is a very large increase in YES responses after training (from 5.8% to 94.7%). However the 5.8% YES response before training is inflated by the participants in the 1-Day Refresher Courses who were included in these results as they had answered NO to the statement “I have used **Rubricate** before”. But because they were with their colleagues who had worked with **Rubricate** before, they had more knowledge of the programme before training began. If these YES responses are ignored the pre-training YES response drops to 0%.

PART 2 – RUBRICATE RESPONSE

Participants were asked to choose the following responses to the statements: Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree; or Strongly Disagree. The responses were overwhelmingly positive so that the difference between Agreement and Disagreement was so large that it was decided to combine Strongly Agree and Agree to just show Agreement and to combine Strongly Disagree and Disagree to just show Disagreement. Within Agreement, Strongly Agree was chosen more often than Agree in all cases and Disagree was chosen more often than Strongly Disagree in all cases.

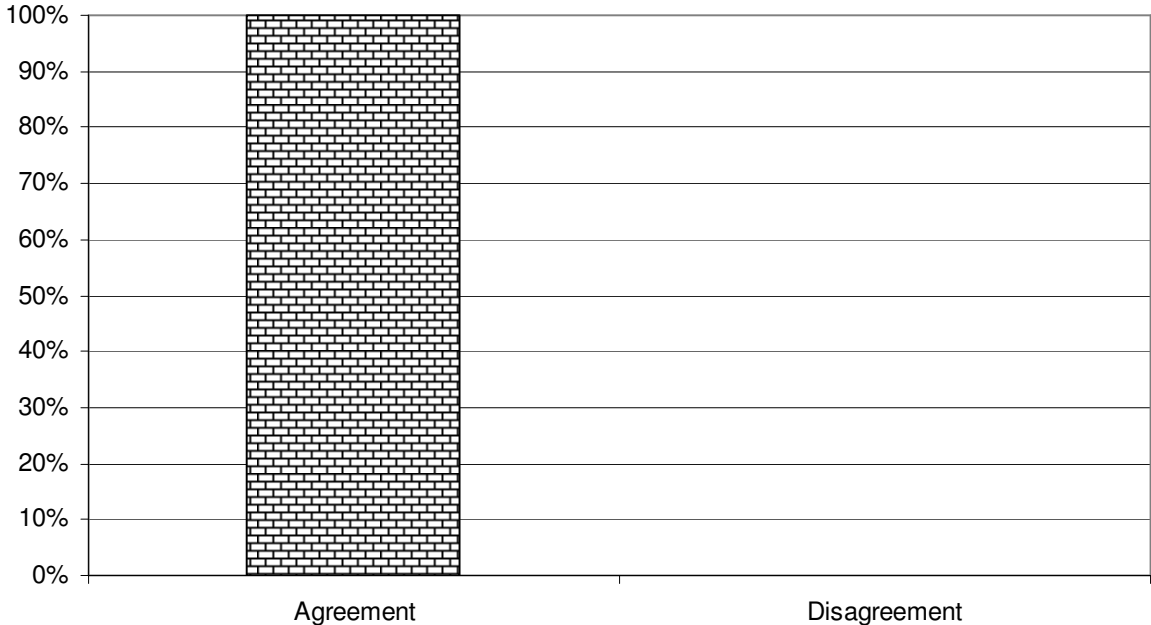
a) **RUBRICATE SOFTWARE RESPONSE**

Each statement is indicated separately with the percentage agreement and disagreement as follows:



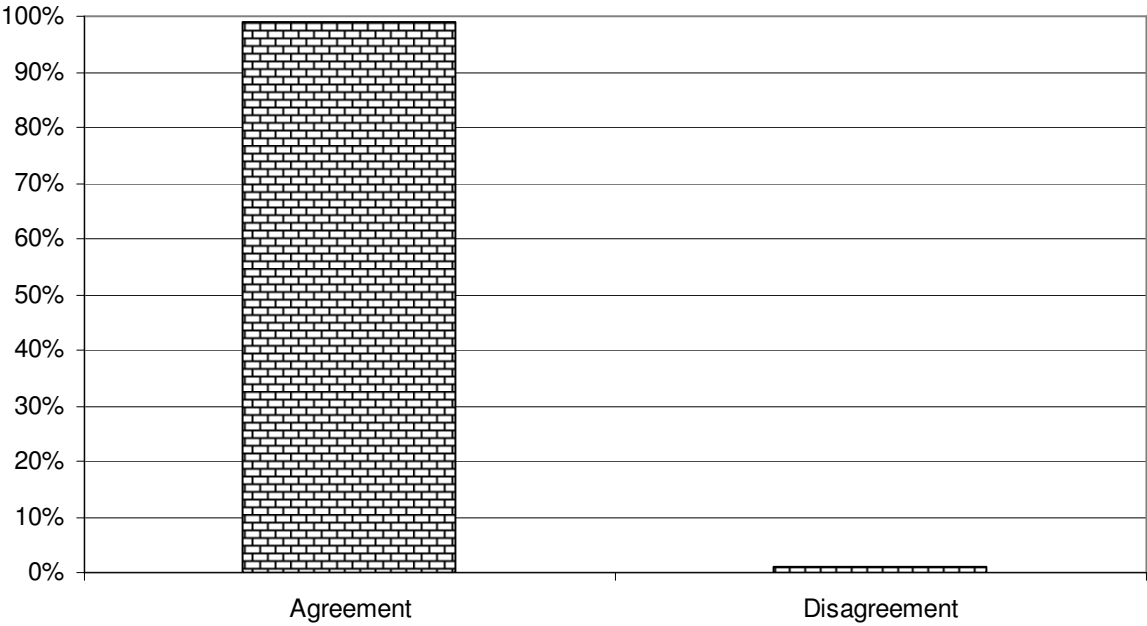
All participants agreed with the statement that **Rubricate** is in agreement with the National Curriculum Statements.

Rubricate is in agreement with current Assessment Policy



There was 100% agreement with this statement concerning **Rubricate** and current Assessment Policy.

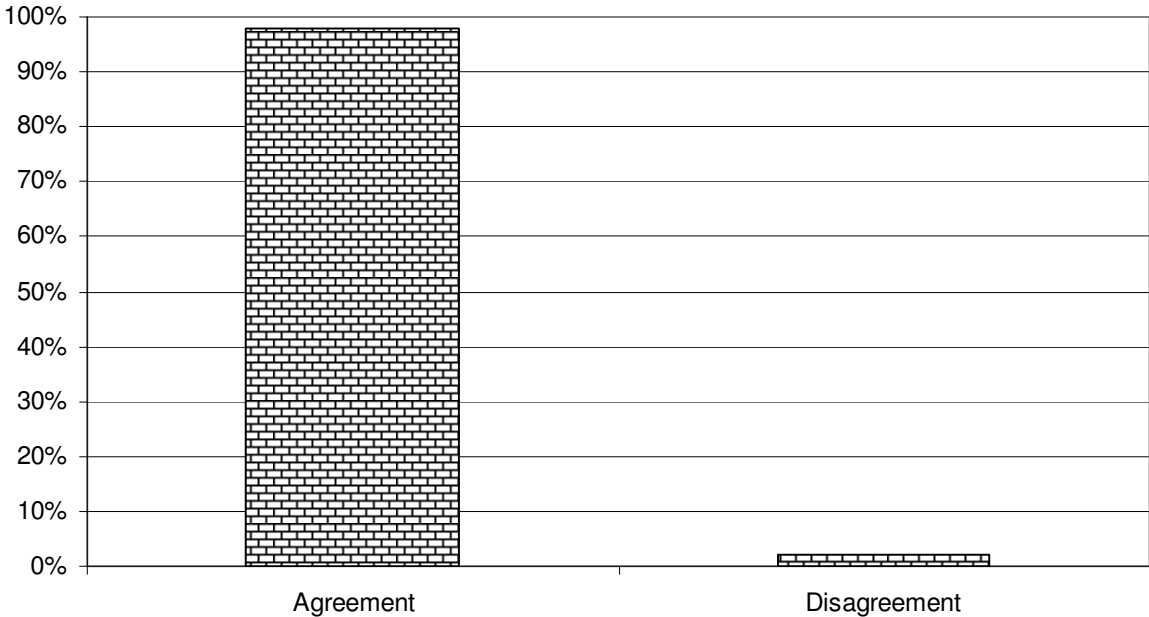
Rubricate covers the assessment needs in each Learning Area



There was 99% agreement with this statement, however it seems from the written comments that the disagreeing participants were referring to the **Rubricate Senior** package purchased by GDE rather than to the **Rubricate**

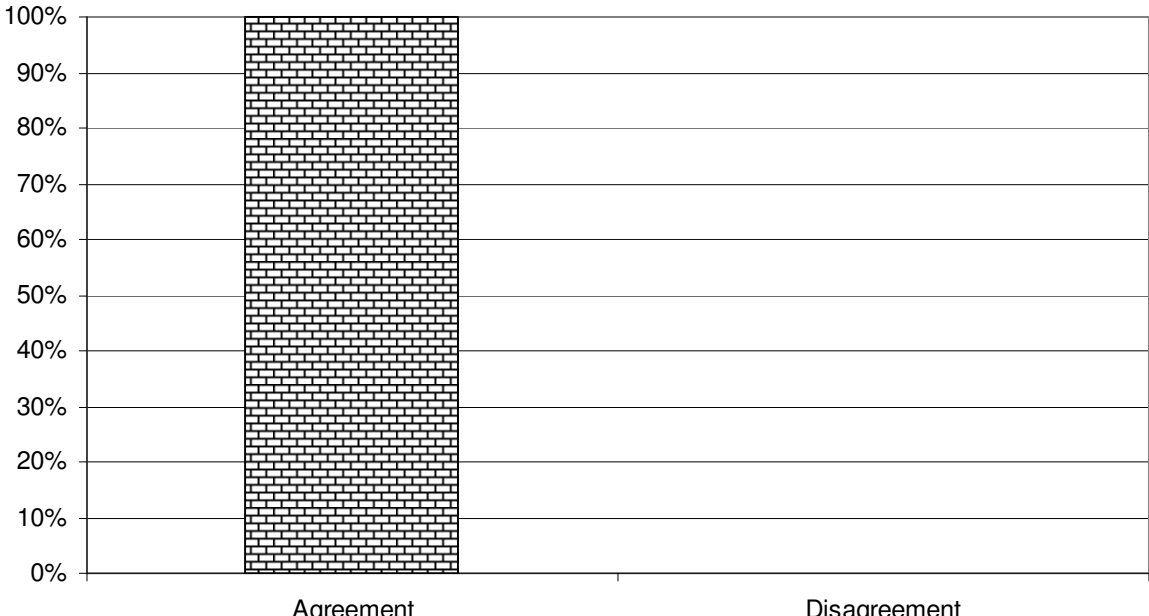
options available. Many participants requested that the FET Subjects to be included in the **Rubricate Senior** GDE package.

Rubricate covers the assessment needs in each Grade



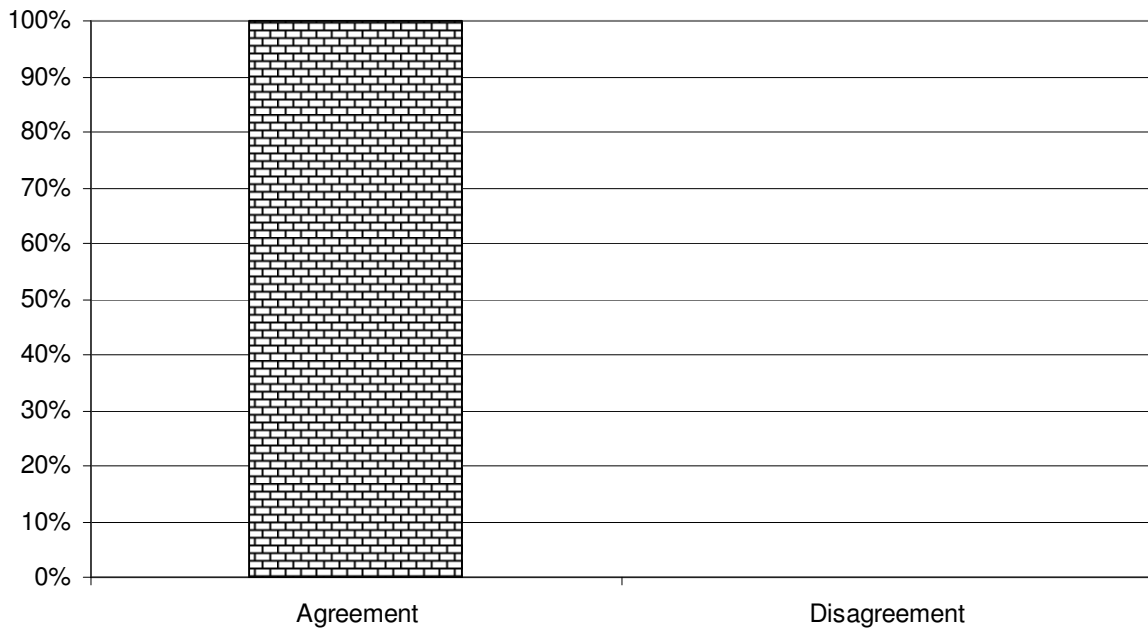
There was 98% agreement with this statement, however it seems again from the written comments that the disagreeing participants were referring to the **Rubricate Senior** package purchased by GDE (which excluded Grades 10 - 12) rather than to the **Rubricate** options available.

Rubricate provides help in using the software programme



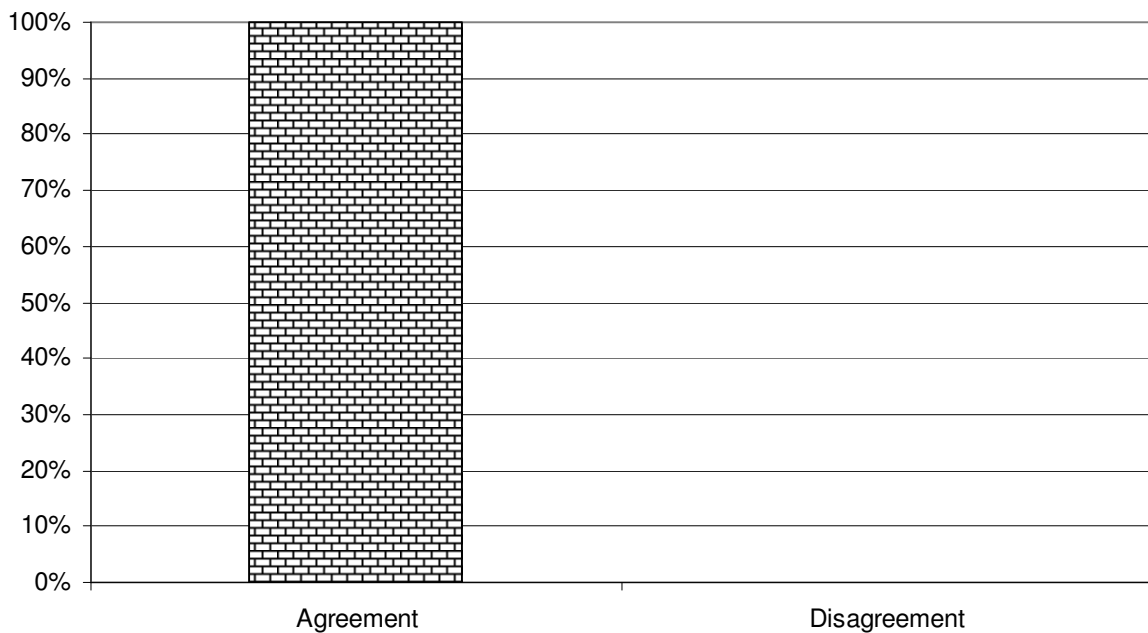
There was 100% agreement with this statement.

Rubricate provides help in interpreting the curriculum documents



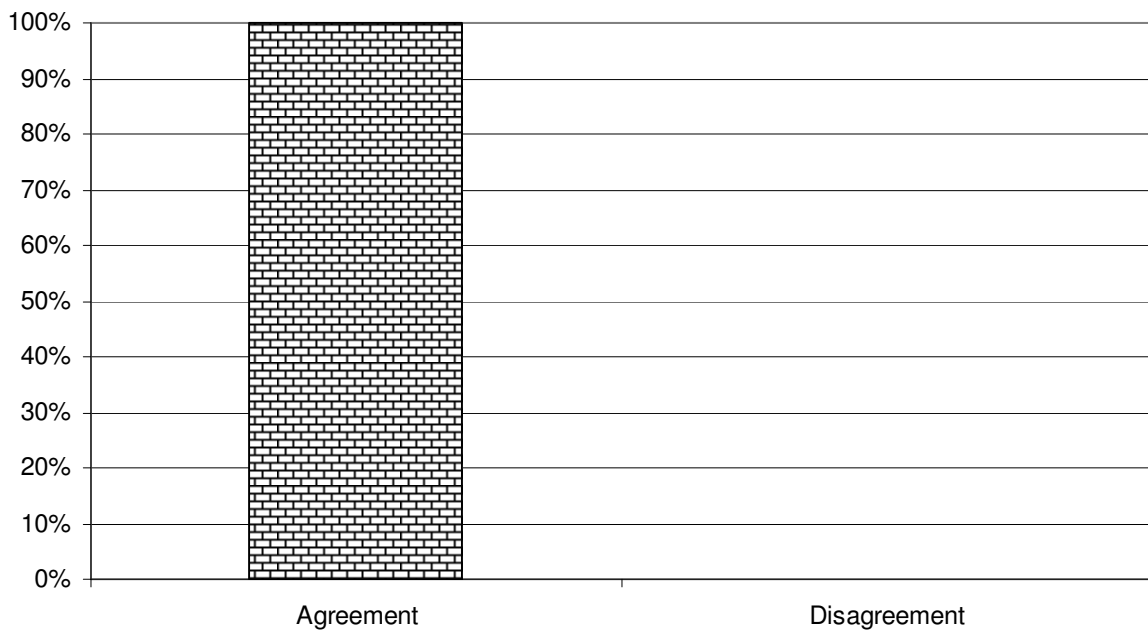
There was 100% agreement with this statement.

Rubricate provides help in using different assessment tools



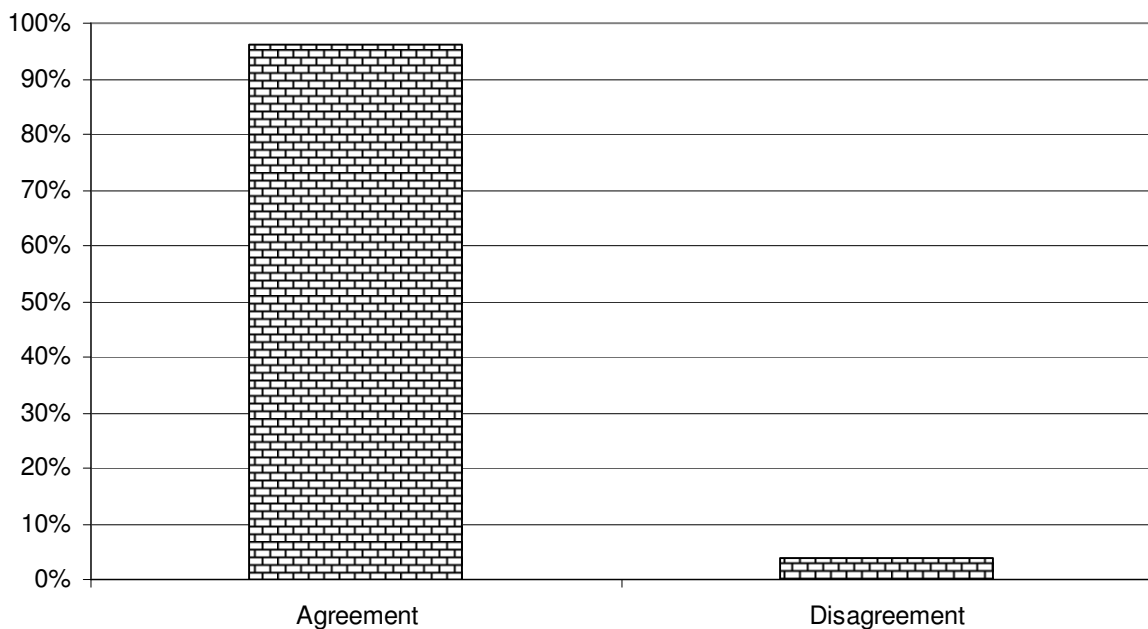
There was 100% agreement with this statement too.

Rubricate is a user-friendly computer programme



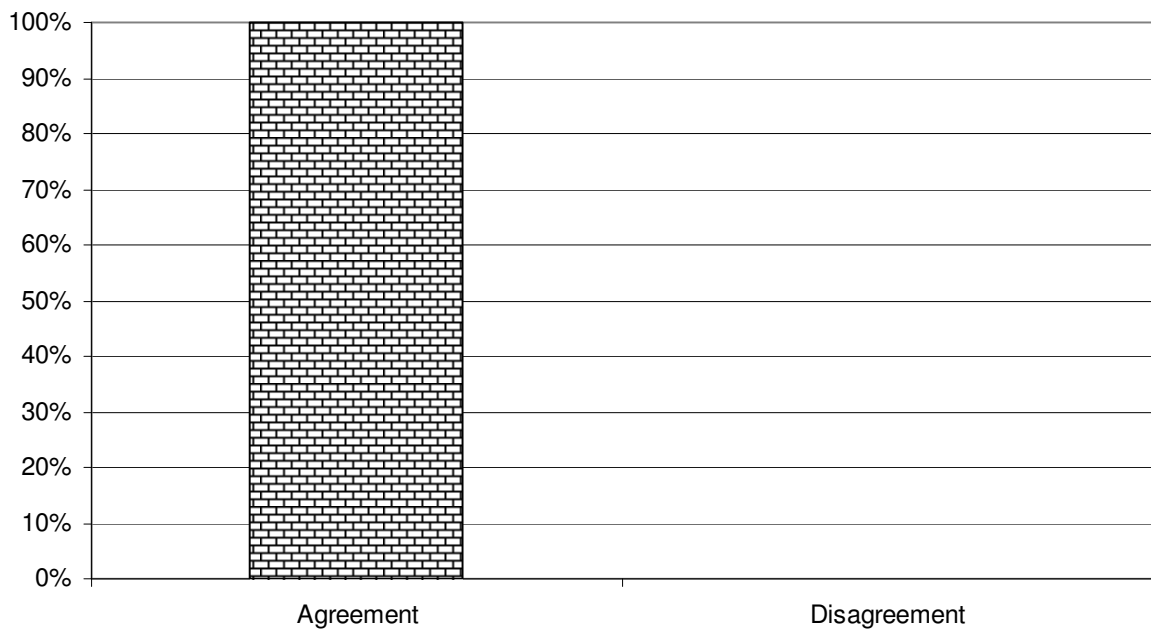
There was 100% agreement with this statement which is interesting as this statement in the 2008 questionnaire had 93% agreement and in the 2007 questionnaire had 100% agreement.

Rubricate requires basic computer skills



This statement had 96% agreement which is interesting when comparing with the statement before it. Some comments were made that **Rubricate** required a higher level of skill than what would be called "basic" but another comment disagreed and said **Rubricate** "didn't even require basic computer skills"! There was a wide range of computers skills demonstrated by the workshop participants.

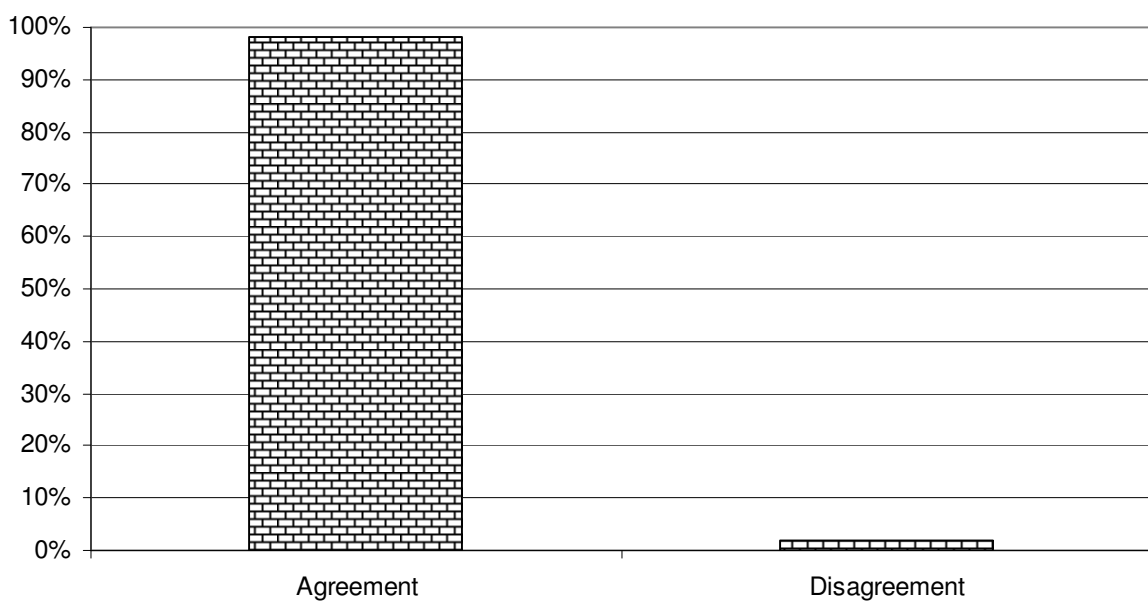
Rubricate is recommended for South African teachers



There was 100% agreement on recommending **Rubricate** for South African teachers.

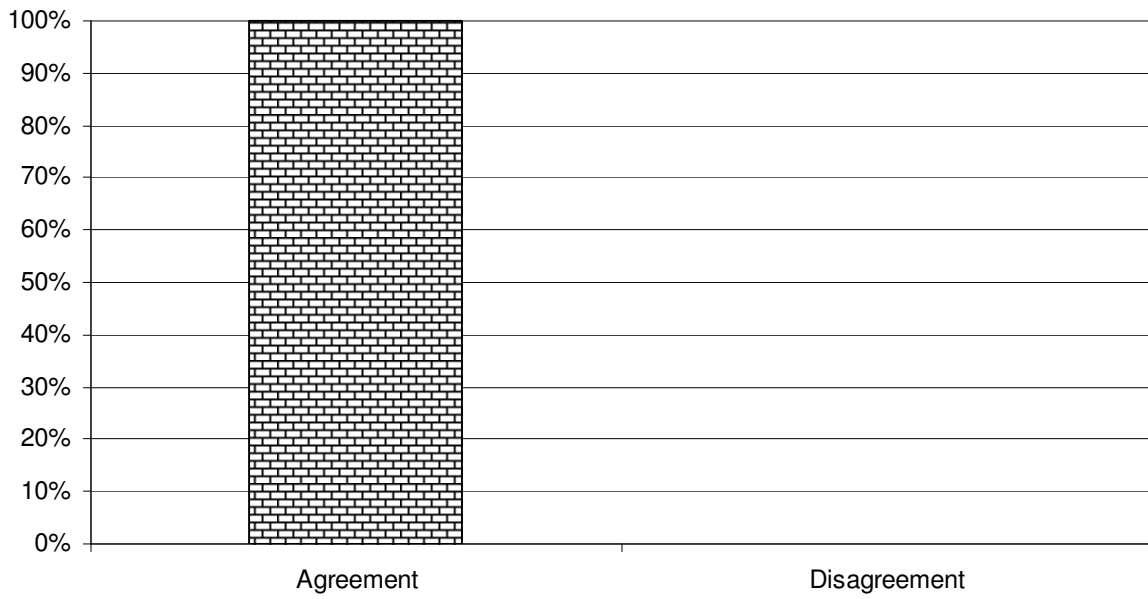
b) RUBRICATE TRAINING RESPONSE

I have a greater understanding of what the Rubricate programme can do



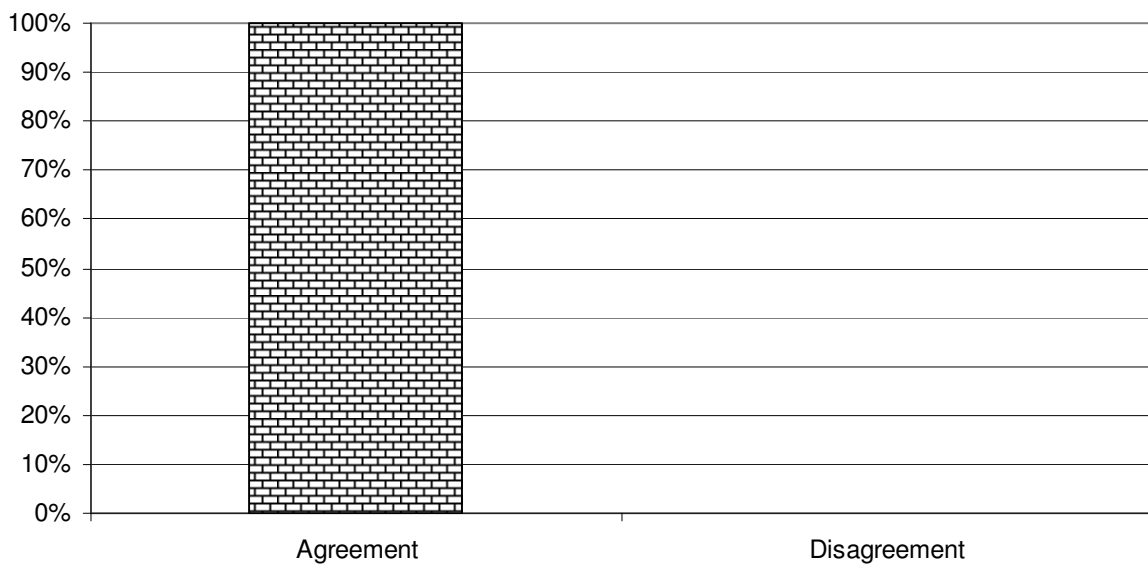
There was 98% agreement with this statement.

I can find assessment criteria in the Rubricate database for a rubric



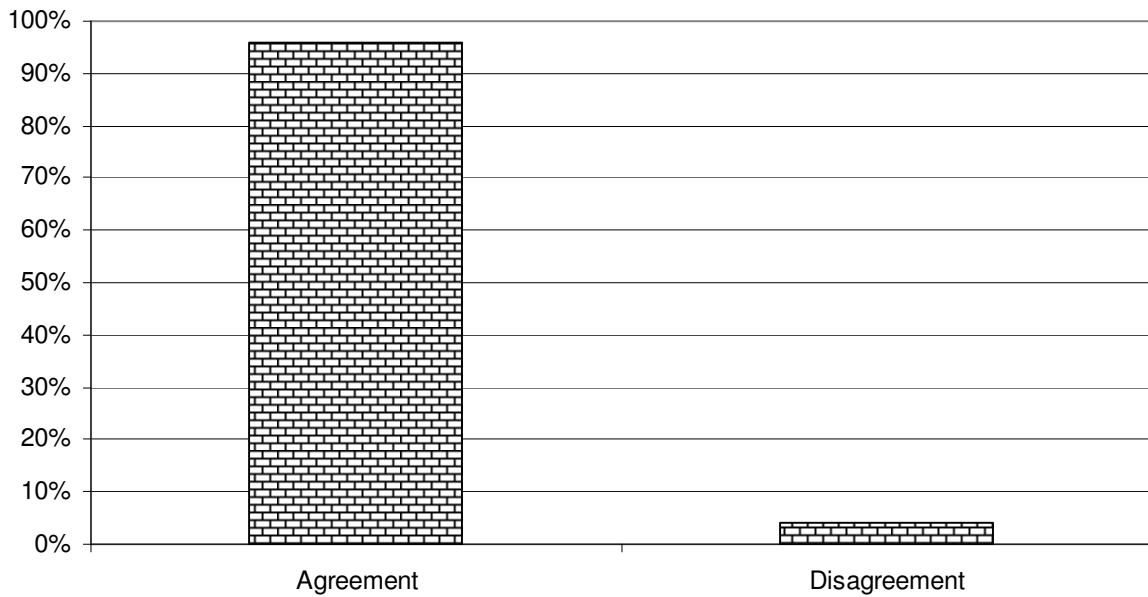
There was 100% agreement with this statement.

I can make a rubric using Rubricate



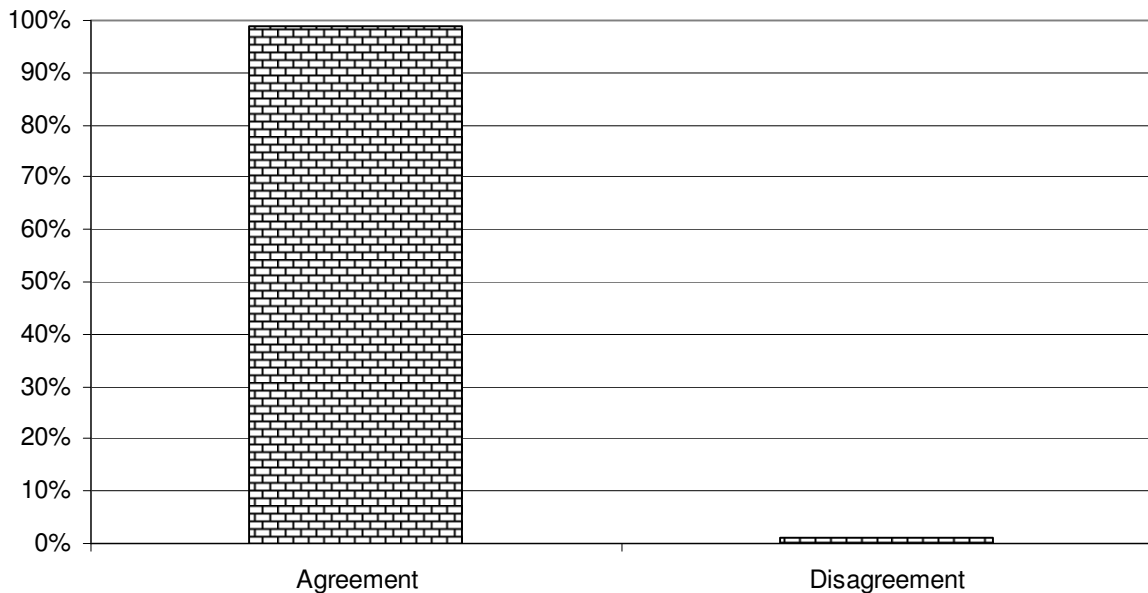
There was 100% agreement with this very important and basic task in **Rubricate**.

I can change my rubric into a performance list tool



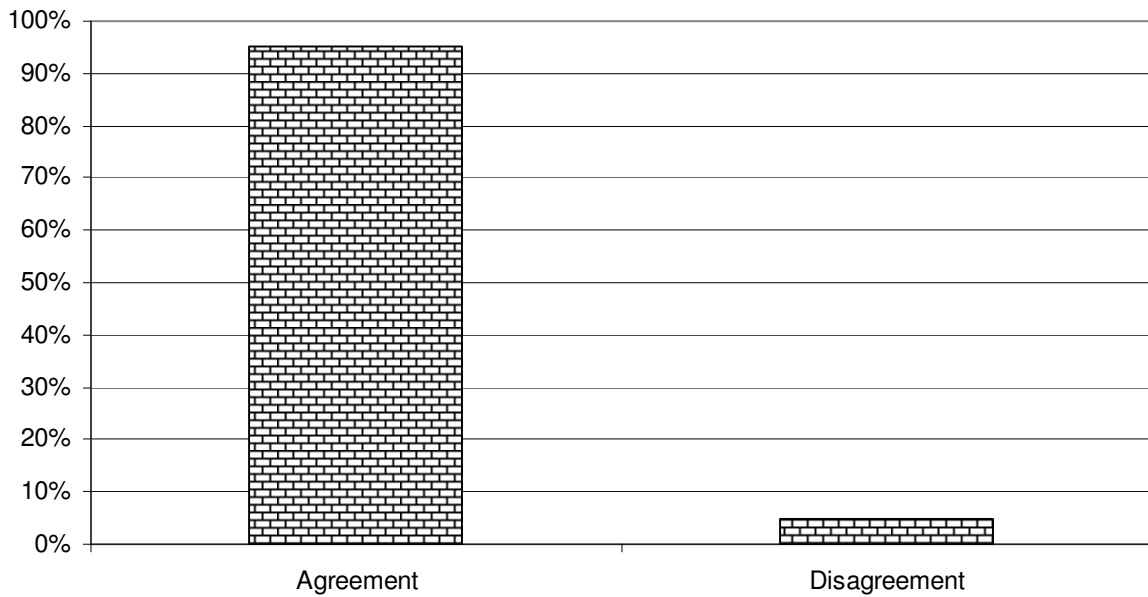
There was 96% agreement with this statement.

I can save and print my rubric



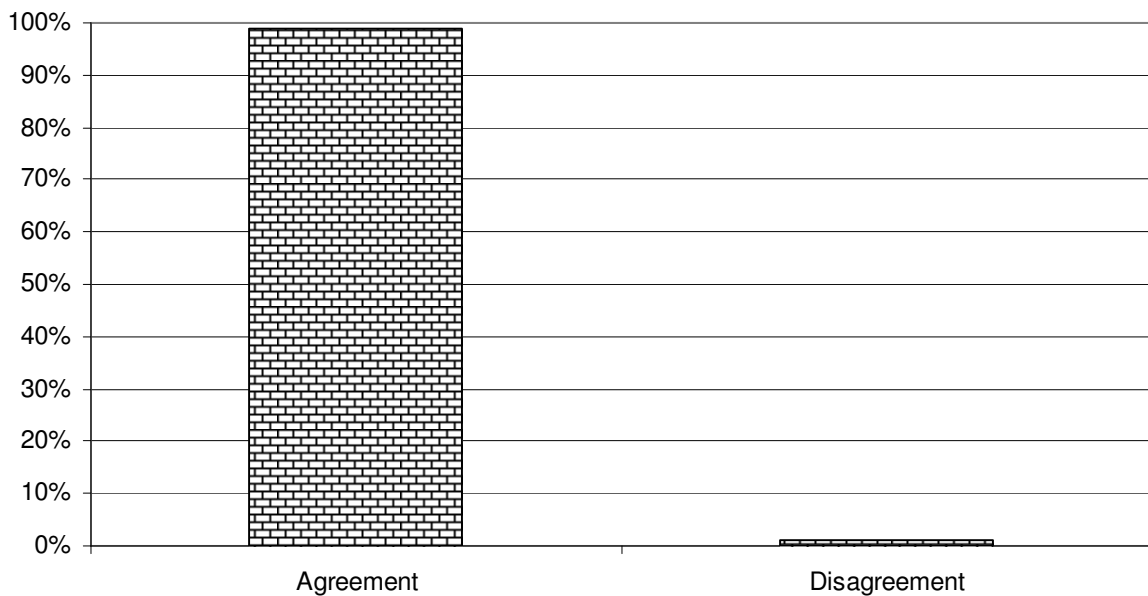
There was 99% agreement with another very important and basic task in **Rubricate**. The Sci-Bono Science Centre venue had no printing facilities and many participants complained about this fact and the venue in general.

I can export and print my rubric using MS Word



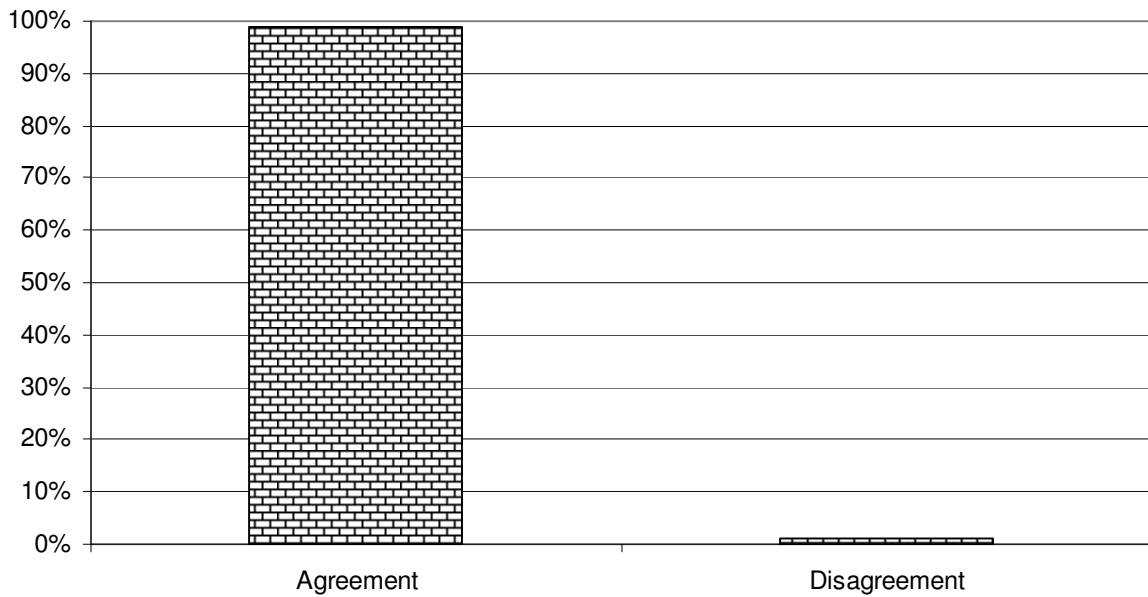
There was 95% agreement with this statement. Again, the Sci-Bono Science Centre venue had a problem with the Microsoft Office Licence Agreements on the computers and many participants complained that they were unable to use Microsoft Word and Excel.

I can edit my rubric to customise it for my specific use



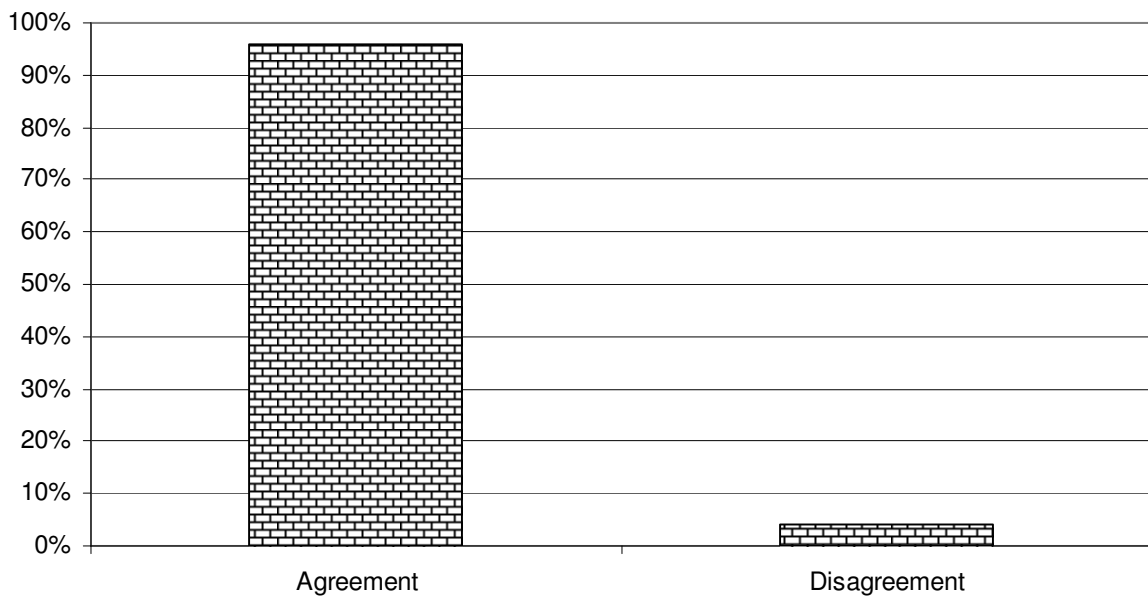
It was encouraging to see a 99% agreement with this statement which refers to an advanced **Rubricate** task.

I can write a new entry and add it to the Rubricate database



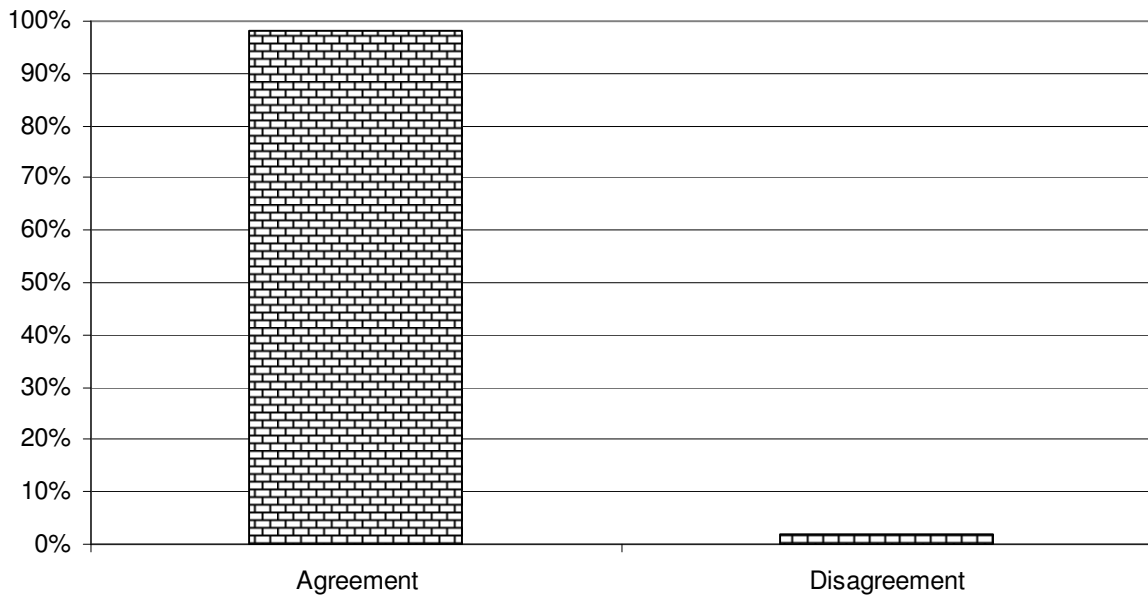
This is the most advanced task in **Rubricate** to perform and so the 99% agreement with this statement is extremely encouraging. This is a significant 10% percent increase on the agreement responses in 2008.

I can use the Rubricate search facilities



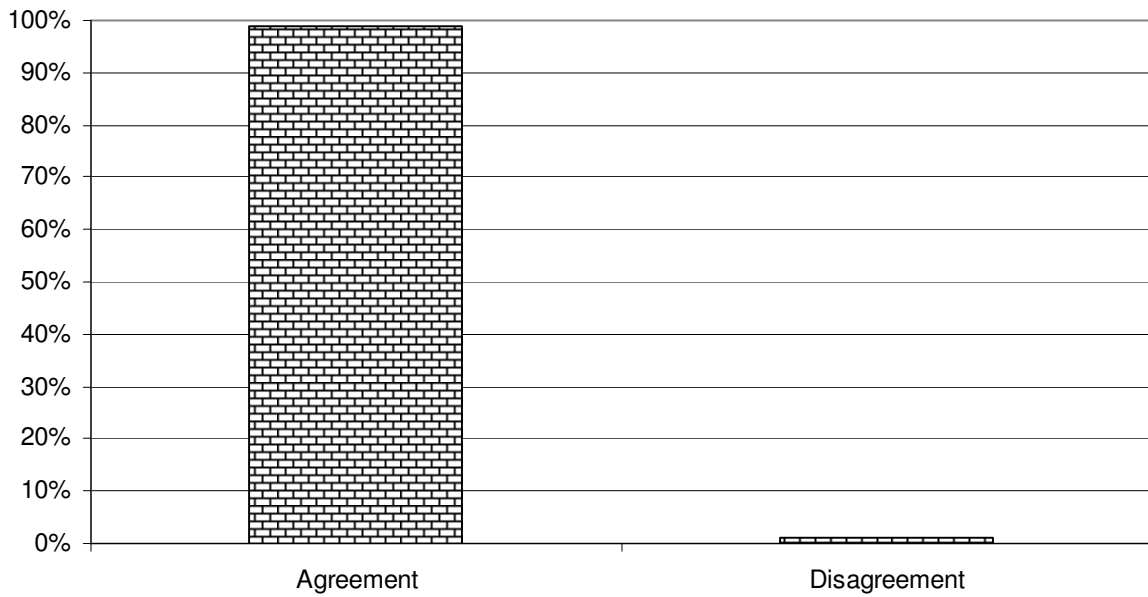
With an 11% increase in agreement from 2008 to 96%, these responses are now more in line with the responses to the other questions.

I can use the Rubricate Curriculum Support facilities



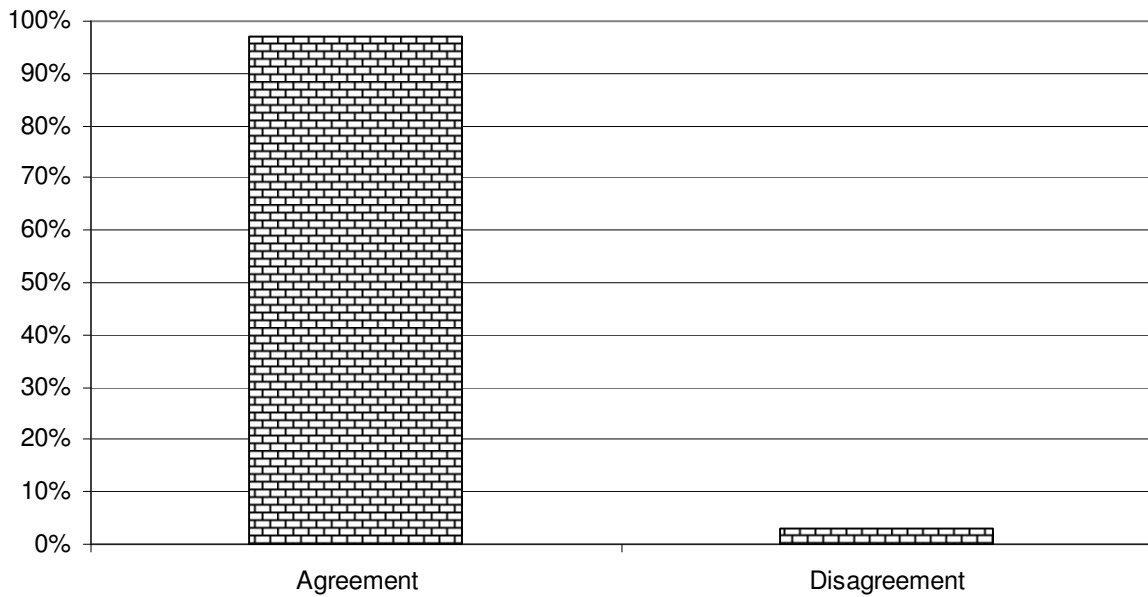
There was 98% agreement with this statement.

I can access my Learning Outcomes in Rubricate



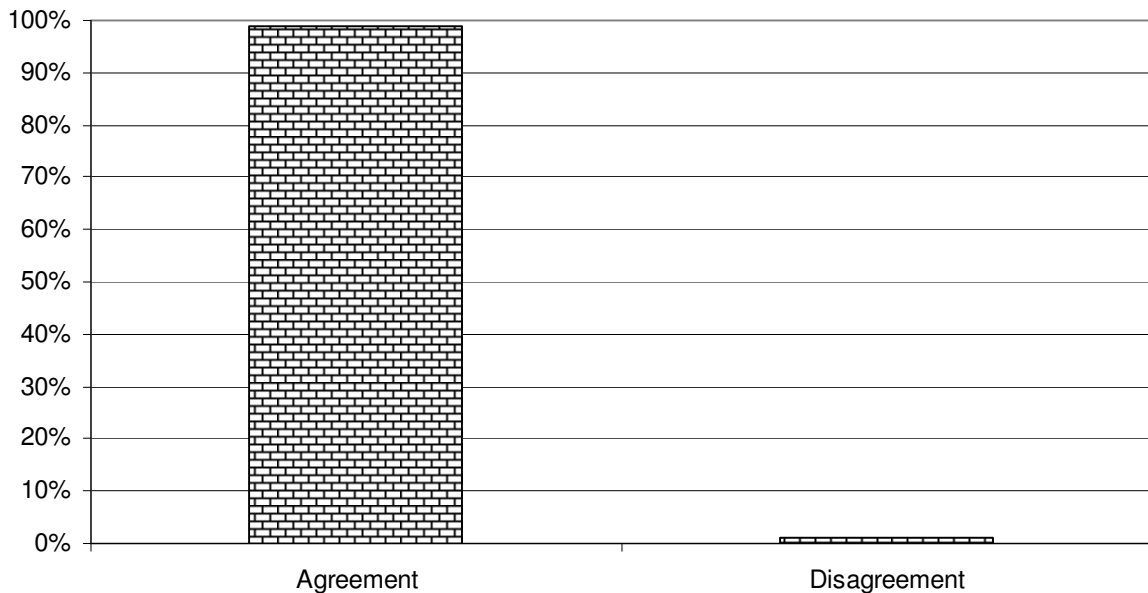
There was 99% agreement with this statement.

I can use Rubricate Record



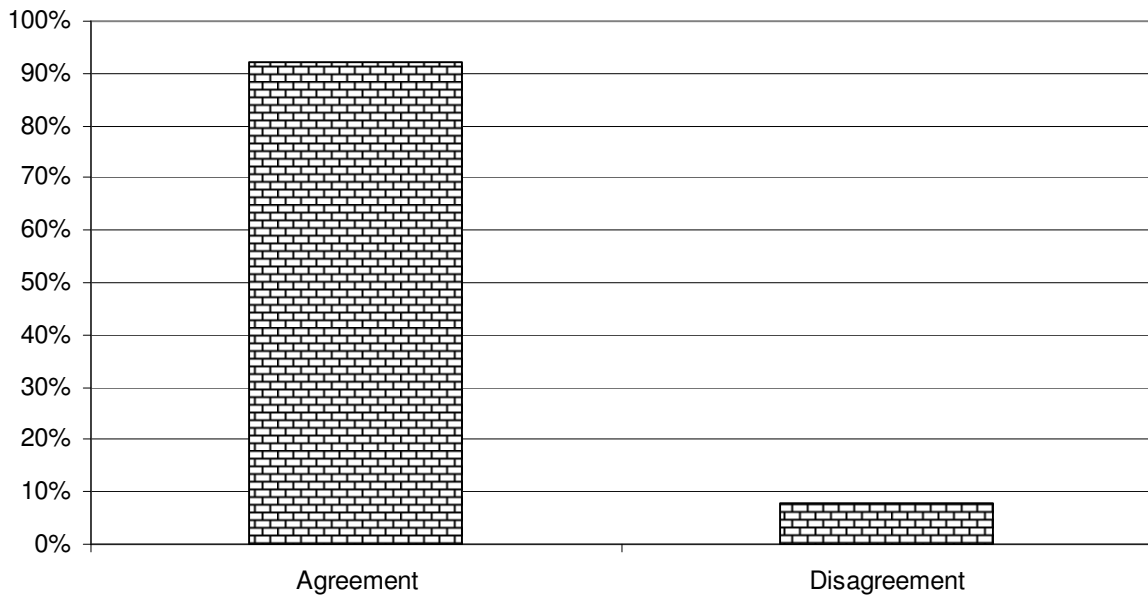
This year there was 97% agreement with this statement which is higher than the agreements in 2008 and in 2007. This is again most likely due to the further improvements made in **Rubricate Record** to make it more user-friendly.

Rubricate training was at the correct level



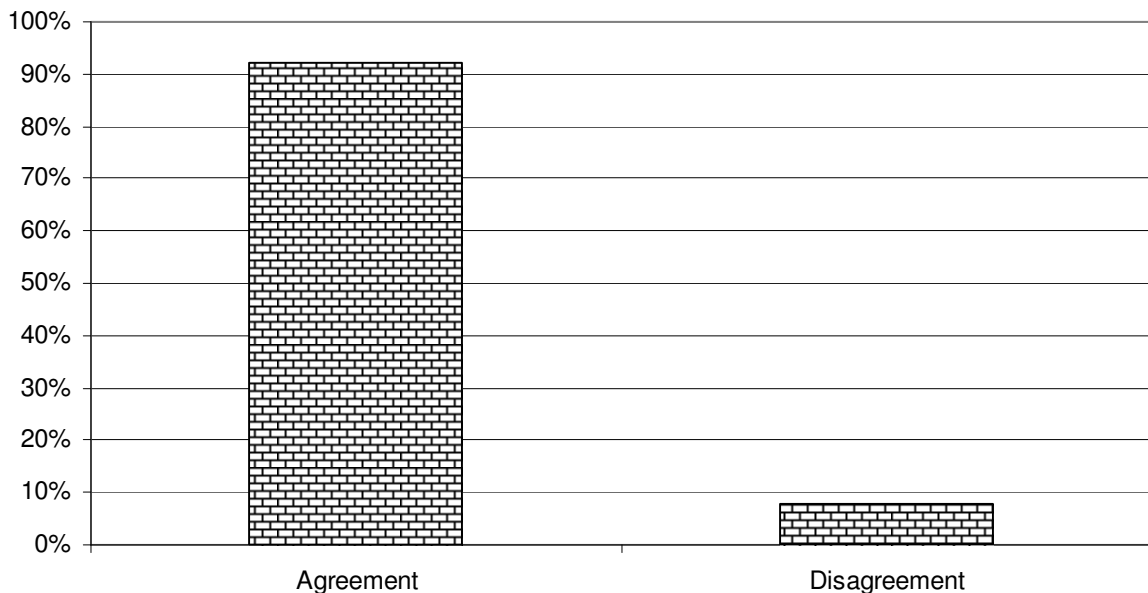
It was encouraging for the trainers to see that there was 99% agreement that **Rubricate** training was at the correct level especially as participants displayed a wide range of computer skills.

Rubricate training was at the correct pace



Agreement on this was 92% but amongst the disagreements, there were comments saying that training was too slow as well as comments saying that training was too fast. This seems to reinforce the idea that the participants had very varied computer experience.

Rubricate training was of correct duration



Again, while agreement on this was 92% (20% up from 2008), opposing views were displayed in the comments. Some felt that one day would have been sufficient while others felt three or even five days would be preferable. One participant said that 5 hours was sufficient for a complete **Rubricate** Training Course!

CONCLUSIONS

Additional comments were extremely positive. Many were requesting more **Rubricate** components (mainly the FET Subjects) and more schools having access to **Rubricate**. Some of the **Rubricate** software comments made by questionnaire respondents were:

“This is the tool the educators have longed for, for a long time. **Rubricate** will ease the work load of creating your own rubrics.”

“**Rubricate** is the answer to teachers’ prayers...”

“Excellent programme that can help make assessment easy and interesting. Educators will enjoy setting projects and assignments now with this programme.”

“It has the potential to save teachers a lot of time. It will also make assessment more meaningful, transparent and reliable.”

“... eye-opener programme which is giving us enthusiasm to do our work with pride...”

Many comments reinforced the user-friendliness of the programme and recommended it for teachers. Some reservations were expressed about teachers’ computer skills and their access to computers.

As far as training was concerned, some felt more training was required in order to train others to use **Rubricate**. Some of the **Rubricate** training comments made by questionnaire respondents were:

“The training was so empowering now I look forward to empowering other educators at school.”

“I truly enjoyed the workshop and the expertise I’ve learned I’ll cascade to other teachers to make their lives worth while.”

Respondents complained about the lack of space in the training venue, the fact that some had to share computers, that they had no access to Microsoft Office and the lack of printing facilities. However, almost all complaints about venue referred to the Sci-bono Science Centre.

For the third year in a row, there has been an overwhelmingly positive response to the **Rubricate** software by Gauteng Department of Education staff. The results of this study have improved even more on the highly convincing results of the studies done over the last two years for GDE. **Rubricate** is building capacity and confidence in the educators of the province.