Background information

This talk was presented at the EALTA workshop on Sign Language Assessment in Rome, 2017.

Contact information:

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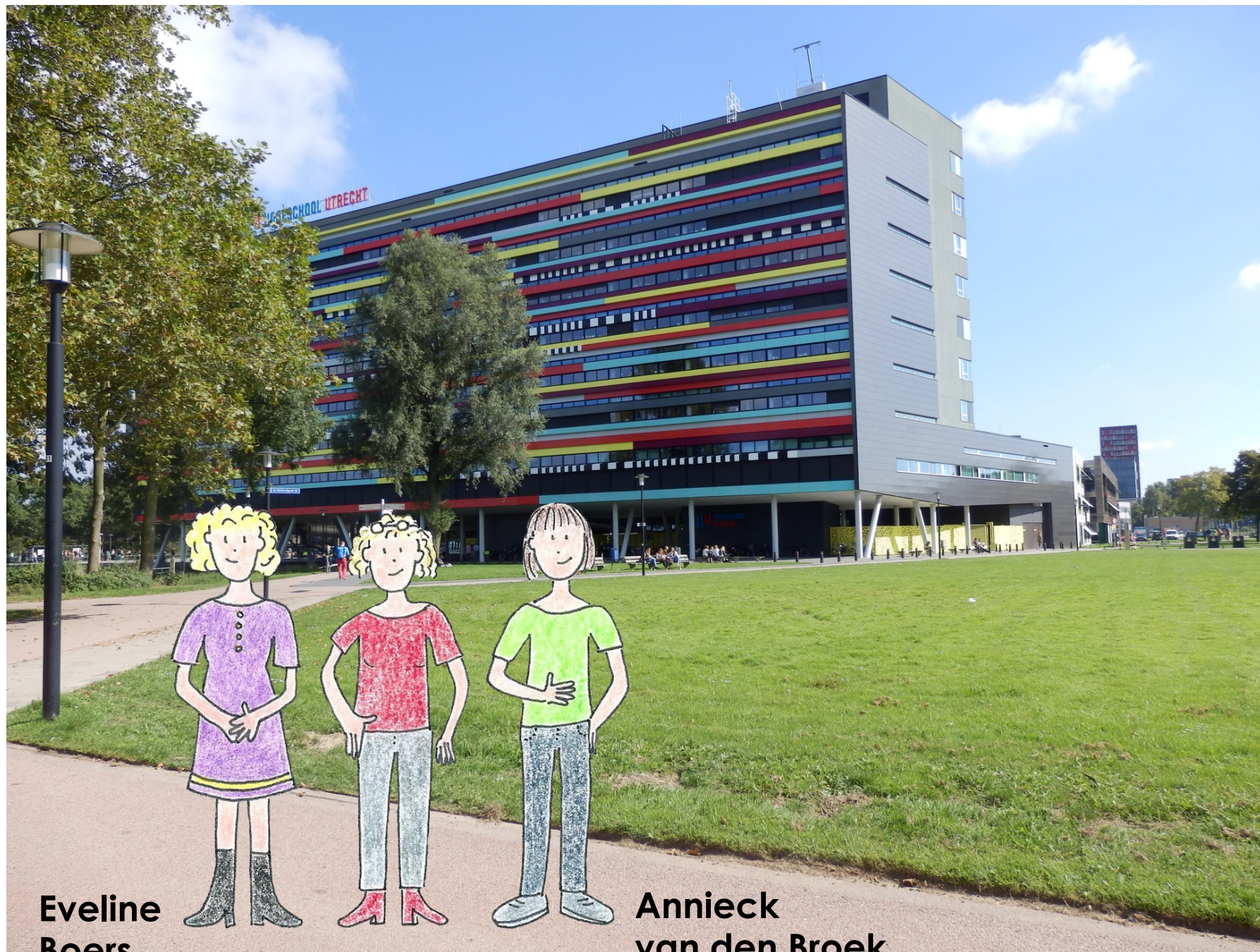Beppie van den Bogaerde (beppievdb@hotmail.nl)

The NGT Functional Assessment

assessing sign language levels by means of an interview

Eveline Boers-Visker MEd
Annieck van den Broek MEd
Prof. dr. Beppie van den Bogaerde

Eveline
Boers

Beppie
van den Bogaerde

Annieck
van den Broek

400 students

Bachelor Interpreter NGT (4 years)

Bachelor Teacher NGT (4 years)

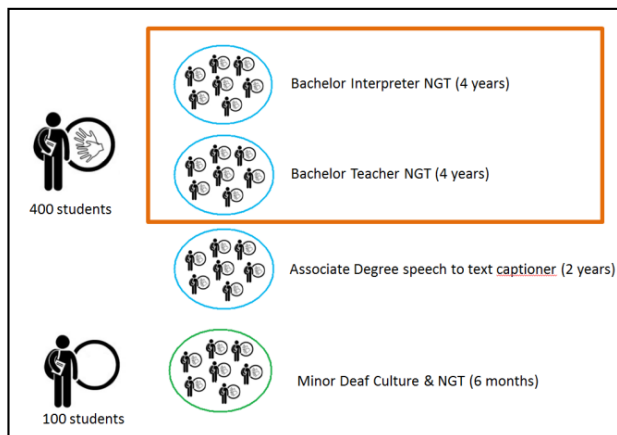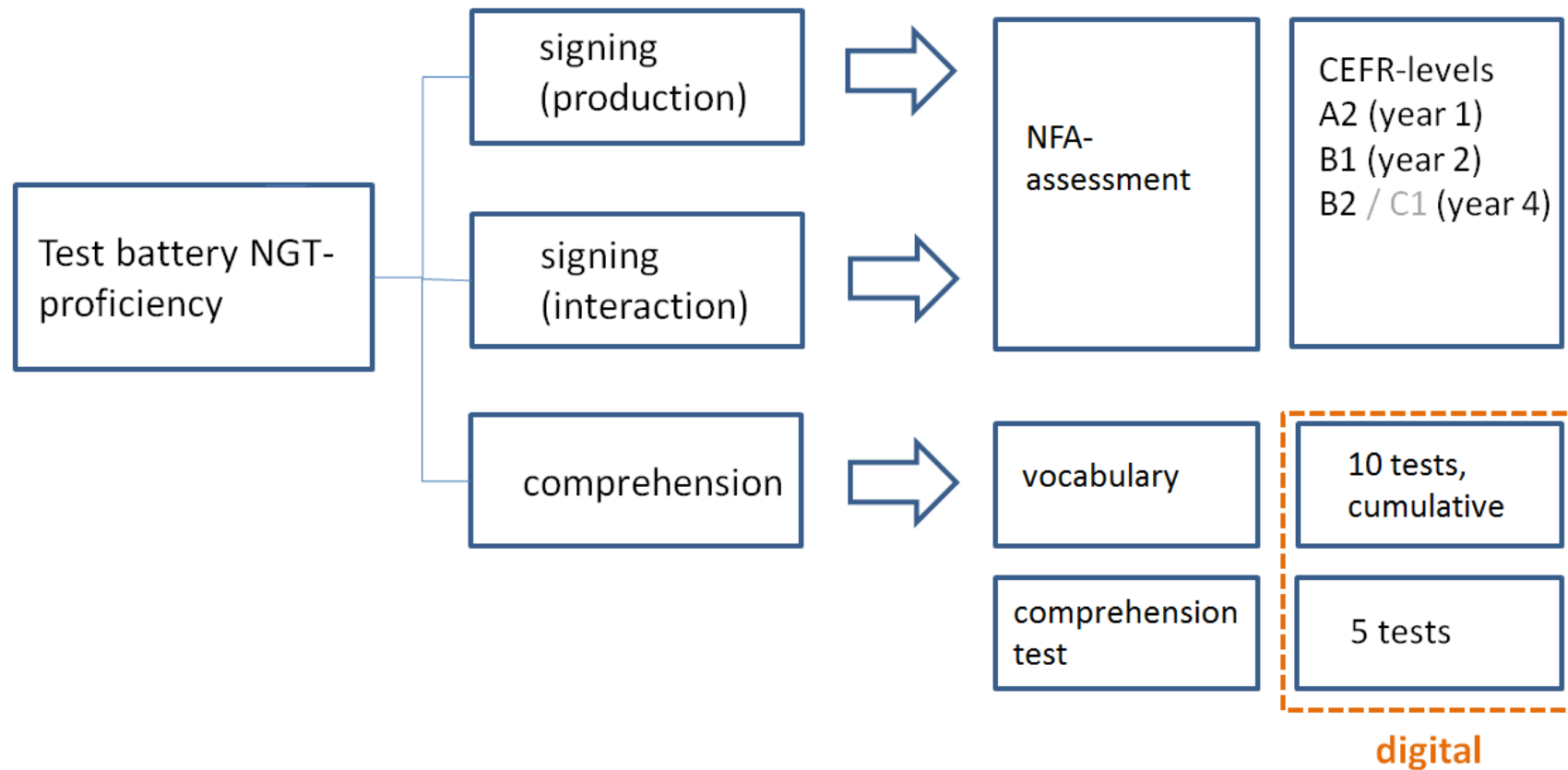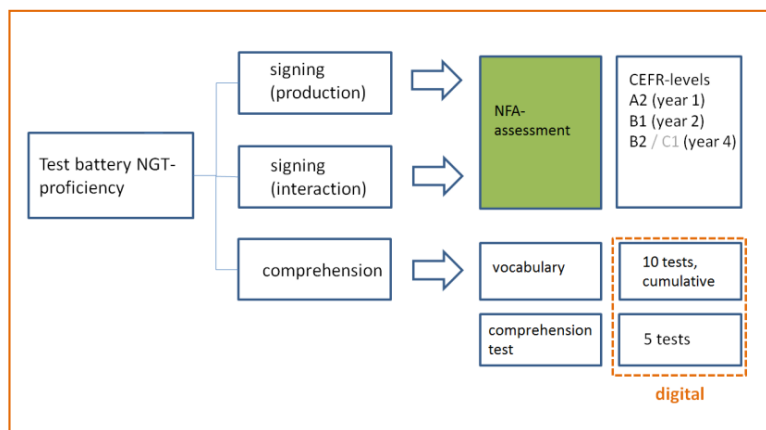Associate Degree speech to text captioning (2 years)

100 students

Minor Deaf Culture & NGT (6 months)

400 students	Bachelor Interpreter NGT (4 years)
	Bachelor Teacher NGT (4 years)
	Associate Degree speech to text captioner (2 years)
100 students	Minor Deaf Culture & NGT (6 months)

	year 1				year 2				year 3		year 4	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Action embedded language contact	I	J	Action embedded language contact
CEFR-level	A1	A2	A2		B1					B2	B2	
hours in-class instruction	68	34	68	34	34	34	68	34		68	68	
study load (hours)	280	140	280	140	140	140	280	140		280	280	

Test battery NGT-proficiency

- signing (production) → NFA-assessment → CEFR-levels
A2 (year 1)
B1 (year 2)
B2 / C1 (year 4)
- signing (interaction) → NFA-assessment
- comprehension → vocabulary → 10 tests, cumulative
comprehension test → 5 tests

digital

Test battery NGT-proficiency
- signing (production) → NFA-assessment
- signing (interaction) → NFA-assessment
- comprehension → vocabulary, comprehension test

NFA-assessment:
CEFR-levels
A2 (year 1)
B1 (year 2)
B2 / C1 (year 4)

vocabulary → 10 tests, cumulative
comprehension test → 5 tests

digital

Rochester Institute of Technology
R·I·T
National Technical Institute for the Deaf

NGT Functional Assessment (NFA)
Rating Scale

CEFR Rating[†]	CEFR Descriptor (Fluency)[†]	NFA Rating	NFA Descriptor
C2	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Superior	**Can have a fully shared conversation, with in-depth elaboration for both social and work topics.** Very broad sign language vocabulary, native-like or near native-like production and fluency, excellent use of sign language grammatical features, and excellent comprehension for normal signing rate.
C1	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Advanced	**Can have a generally shared conversation with good, spontaneous elaboration for both social and work topics.** Broad sign language vocabulary knowledge and clear, accurate production of signs and fingerspelling at a normal/near-normal rate; occasional misproductions do not detract from conversational flow. Good use of many sign language grammatical features and comprehension good for normal signing rate.
B2†	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he/she searches for patterns and expressions. There are few noticeably long pauses.	Inter-mediate	**Can discuss with some confidence routine social and work topics within a conversational format with some elaboration; generally 3-to-5 sentences.** Good knowledge and control of everyday/basic sign language vocabulary with some sign vocabulary errors. Fairly clear signing at a moderate signing rate with some sign misproductions. Fair use of some sign language grammatical features and fairly good comprehension for a moderate-to-normal signing rate; a few repetitions and rephrasing of questions may be needed.

RESEARCHERS

 Eveline Boers-Visker ➤

 drs. Miranda Deijn ➤

 Lieke Kielstra ➤

adaption SLPI => NFA | training (dec 11) | familiarization intern training | training (sept 12) | familiarization intern training | implementing NFA

① n = 18 (4th year students)
② n = 13 (teachers Deaf school)
③ n = 23 (parents of deaf children)

④ n=14 (pilot study
   1st and 3trd year students)
⑤ n= 9 (teachers Deaf school)

❻ ❼   interraterreliability-sessions

Rater sheet

Name   *Jan Blokker*   Rater: *EB*
Date   *06-06-2014*

Function: *A2*

Form: *A2*

Vocabulary:
example, example, example, example
example, example, example, example

Fluency:
example, example, example, example

Production of signing:
example, example, example, example
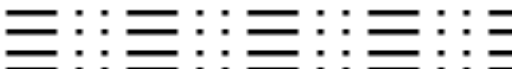
Grammar:
example, example, example, example
example, example, example, example

Comprehension:
example, example, example, example

Rating scale

Descriptors:

C

B2

B1

A2

A1

supervisor

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

rater sheet   rating scale

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

rater sheet   rating scale

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

level
determined

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

discussion

agreement:
level determined

disagreement:
third rater

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

C
B2
B1
A2
A1

more than
one level:
third rater

interview   rating process   determine level
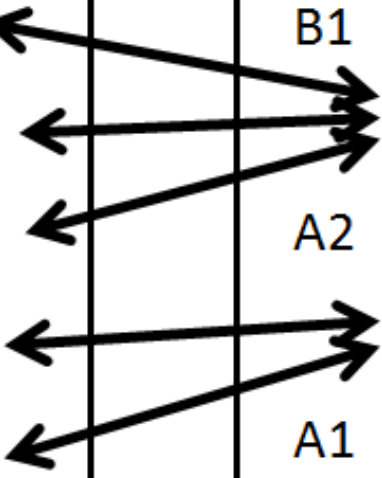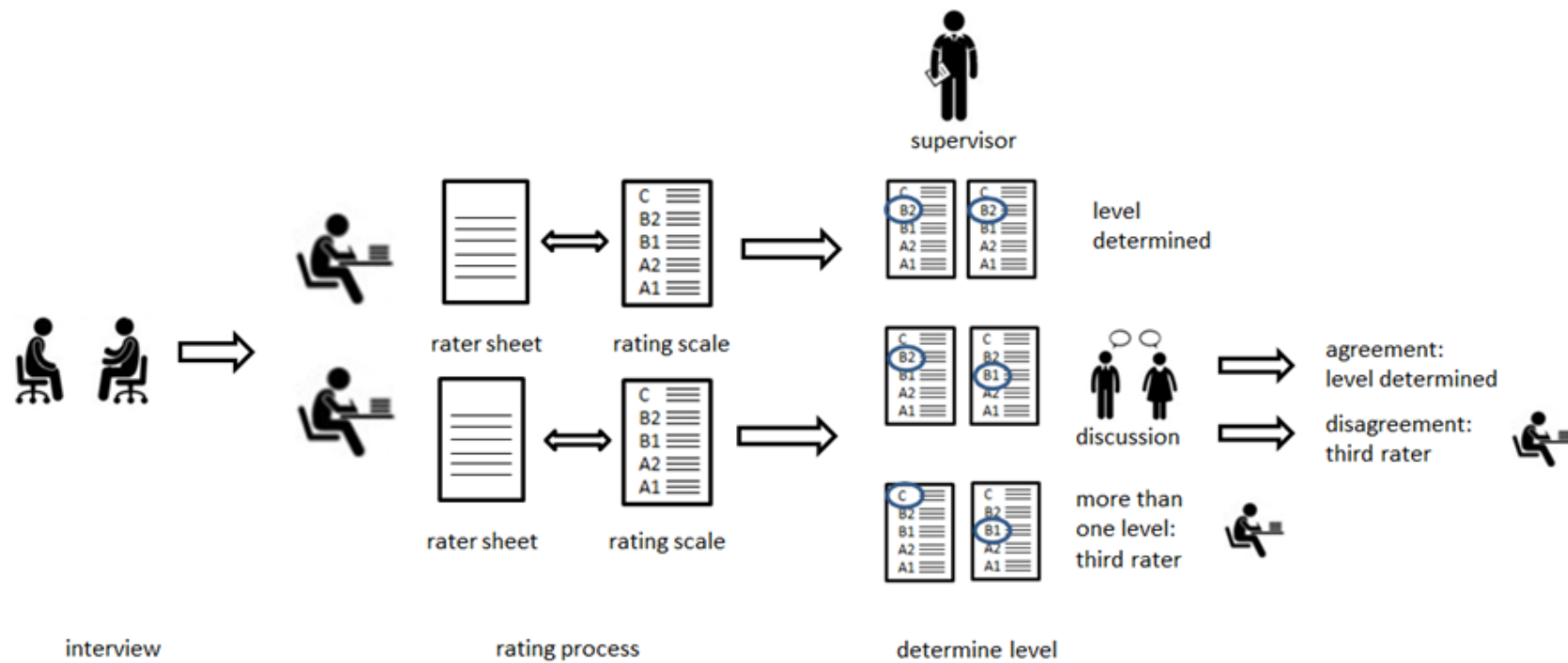
Strengths
- Conversation
- No influence of written language
- Student is pushed to highest level
- Two (or more) raters
- Raters and interviewers must be certificated
- Introvert persons in disadvantage
- Positive (what *can* the student sign)

Weaknesses
- Artificial situation
- Preparation
- Quality interview influences results
- Does not cover all areas of language acquisition

Other disadvantages:
- Intensive training interviewers and raters
- Time-consuming (but: we conduct less tests overall)

College-year

	A		B		C		D	summer	E
	nov		feb		apr		jun		aug

	year 1				year 2				year 3		year 4	
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Time-independent, for formal reasons linked to courses C, H and J

4th year teacher-students [n=16]

4th year interpreter-students [n=37]
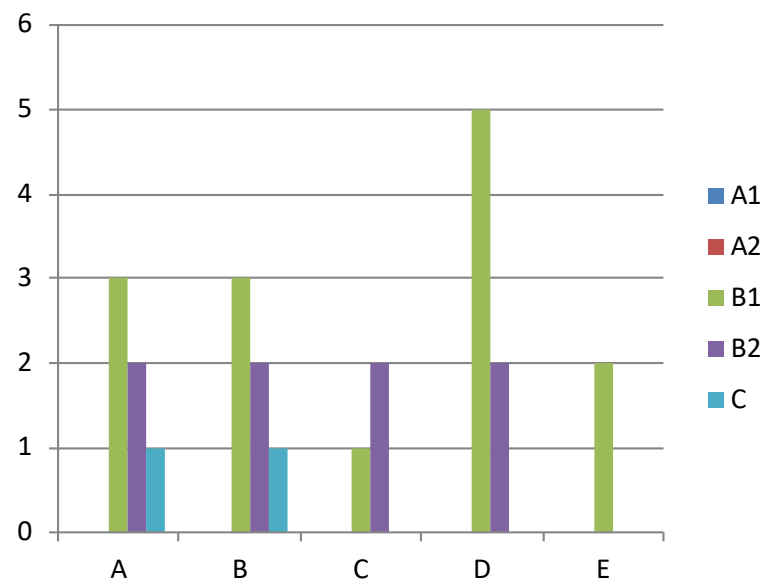
8 students awarded B2 (50%)
C-levels: deaf students
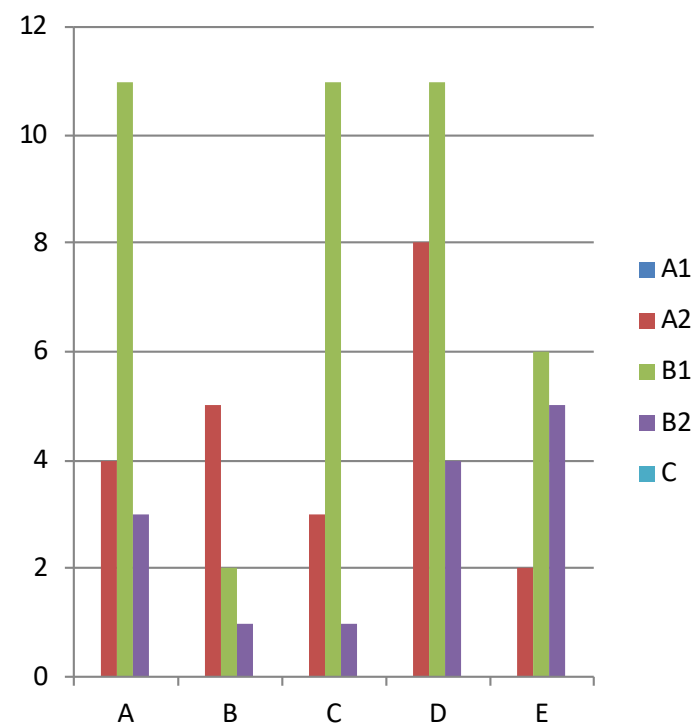
14 students awarded B2 (38%)
no C-levels

1st year teacher-students, 1st NFA
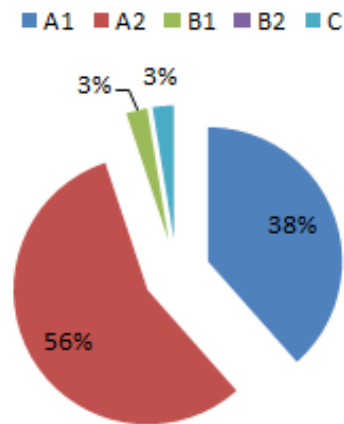
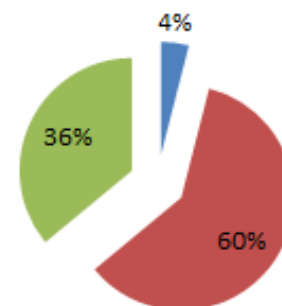■A1 ■A2 ■B1 ■B2 ■C

1st year interpreter-students, 1st NFA

■A1 ■A2 ■B1 ■B2 ■C
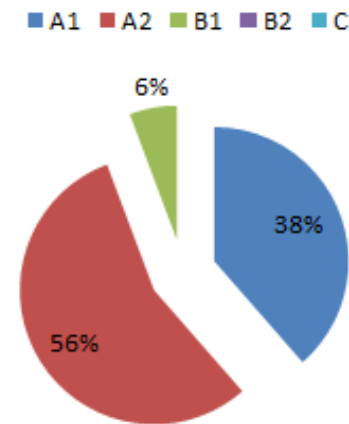
1st year teacher-students, 1st NFA
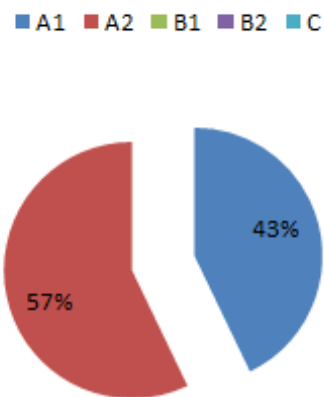
■A1 ■A2 ■B1 ■B2 ■C

2nd year teacher-students, 1st NFA
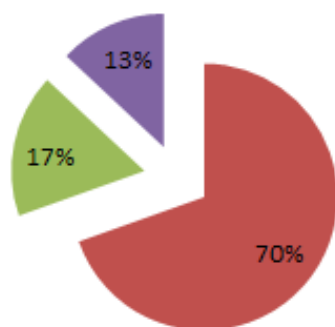
A1   A2   B1   B2   C

13%

17%

70%

2nd year interpreter-students, 1st NFA

A1   A2   B1   B2   C

4%

36%

60%

Wake up call!
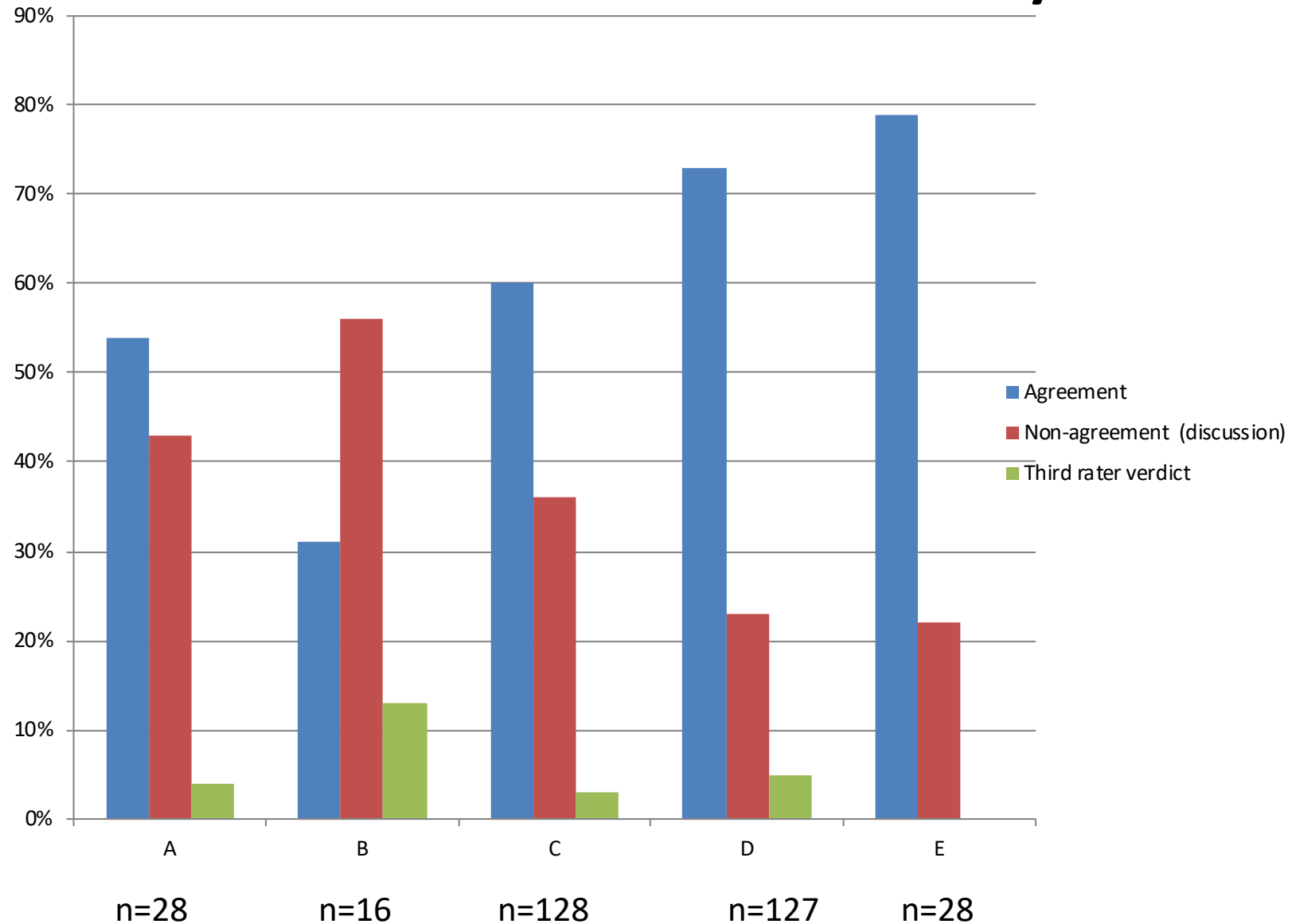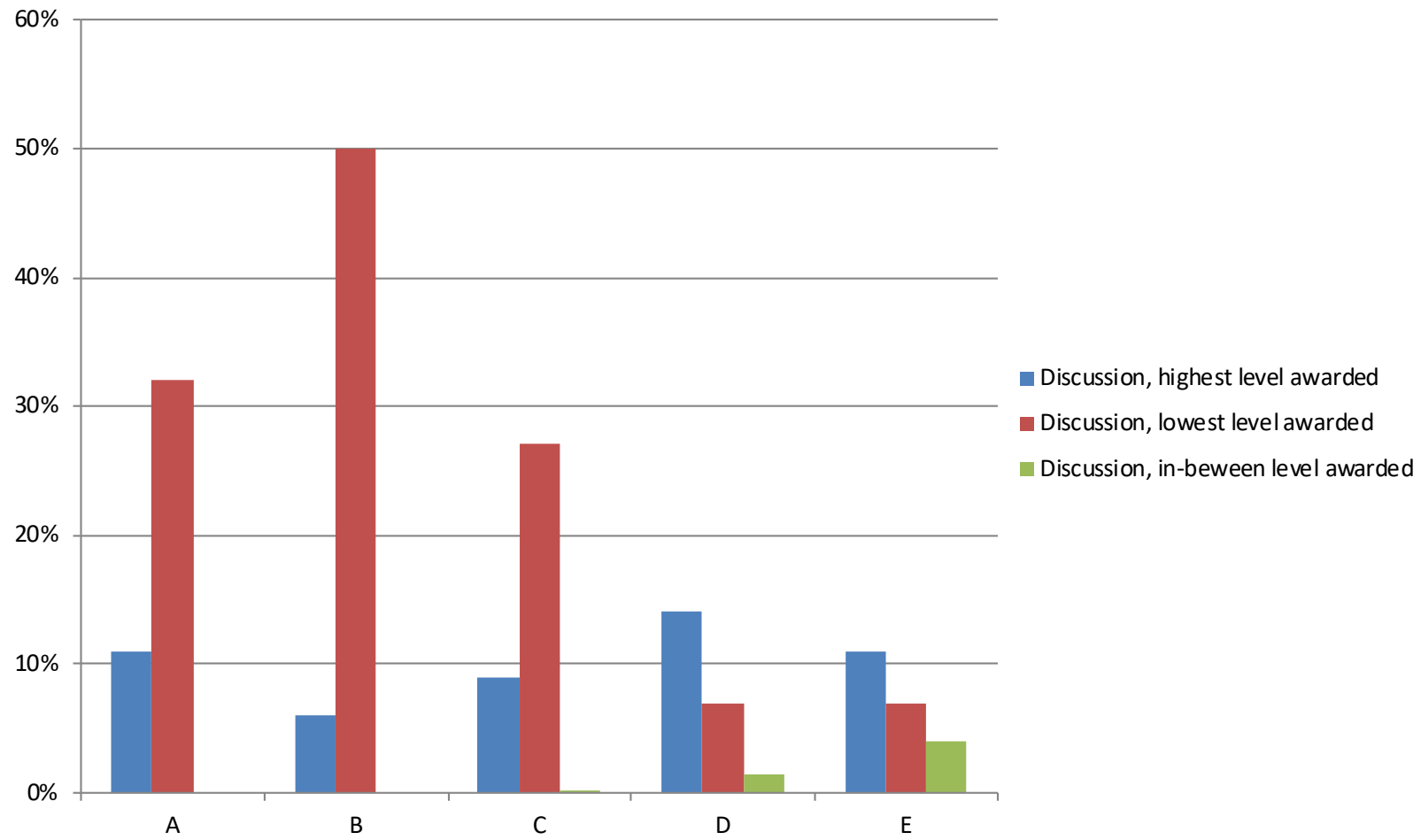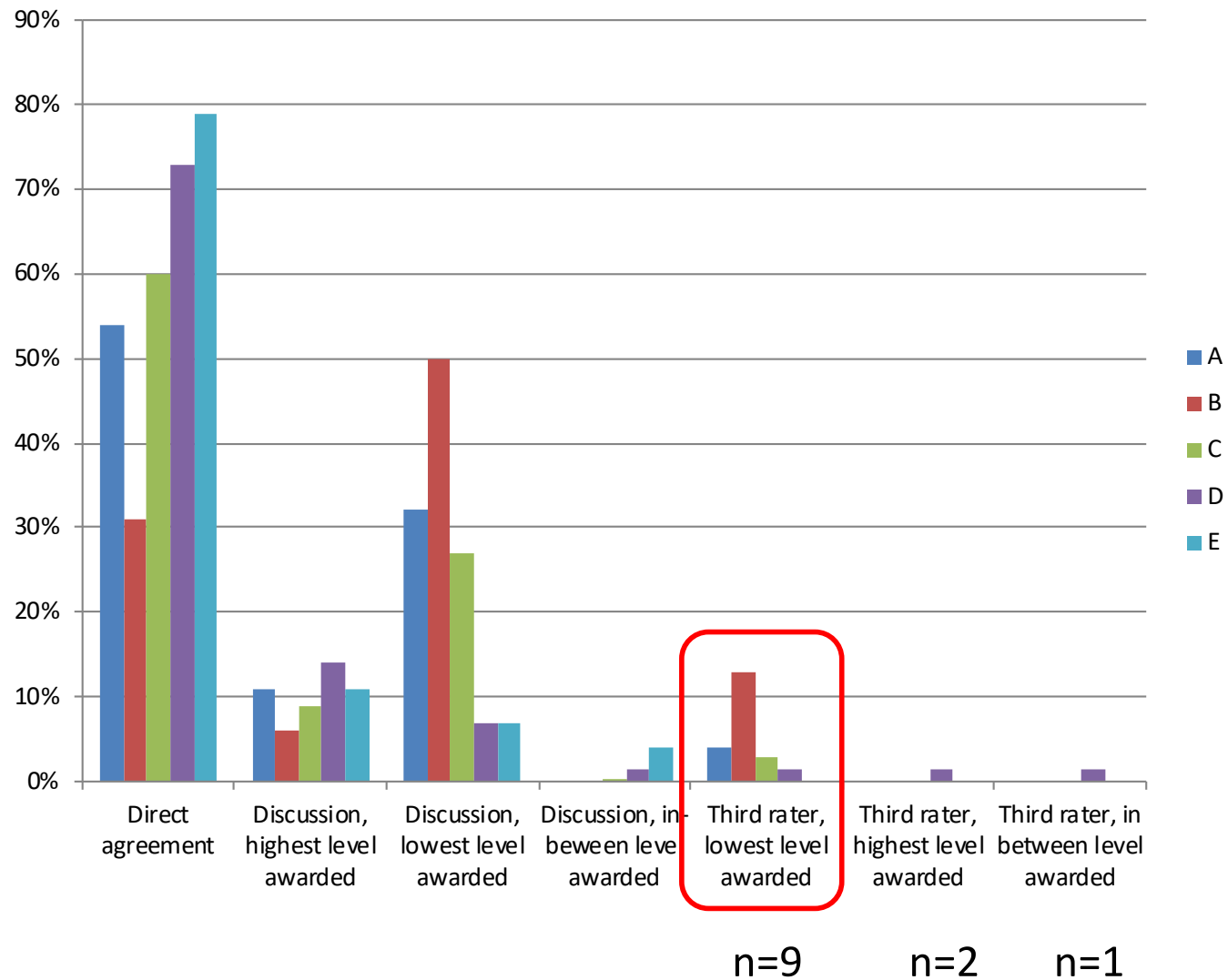
Work to do!

- Increase inter-rater reliability NFA (85-90%)
- Raise levels of students (cohort-study)
- Develop summative production tests in addition to test-battery
- increase feedback/formative testing
- encourage use of self- and peer-assessment through portfolio
- Manage workload

Acknowledgments

Karin Vinke – NFA-candidate

Marte Bol Raap – NFA-interviewer

Geoffry S. Poor - SLPI/NFA-trainer

Sources

Drawings by Eveline Boers

All illustrations were composed by Eveline Boers; icons: 123RF.com

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