

"In Plain Site": Towards standardising the web-based component of Spanish courses across multiple sites

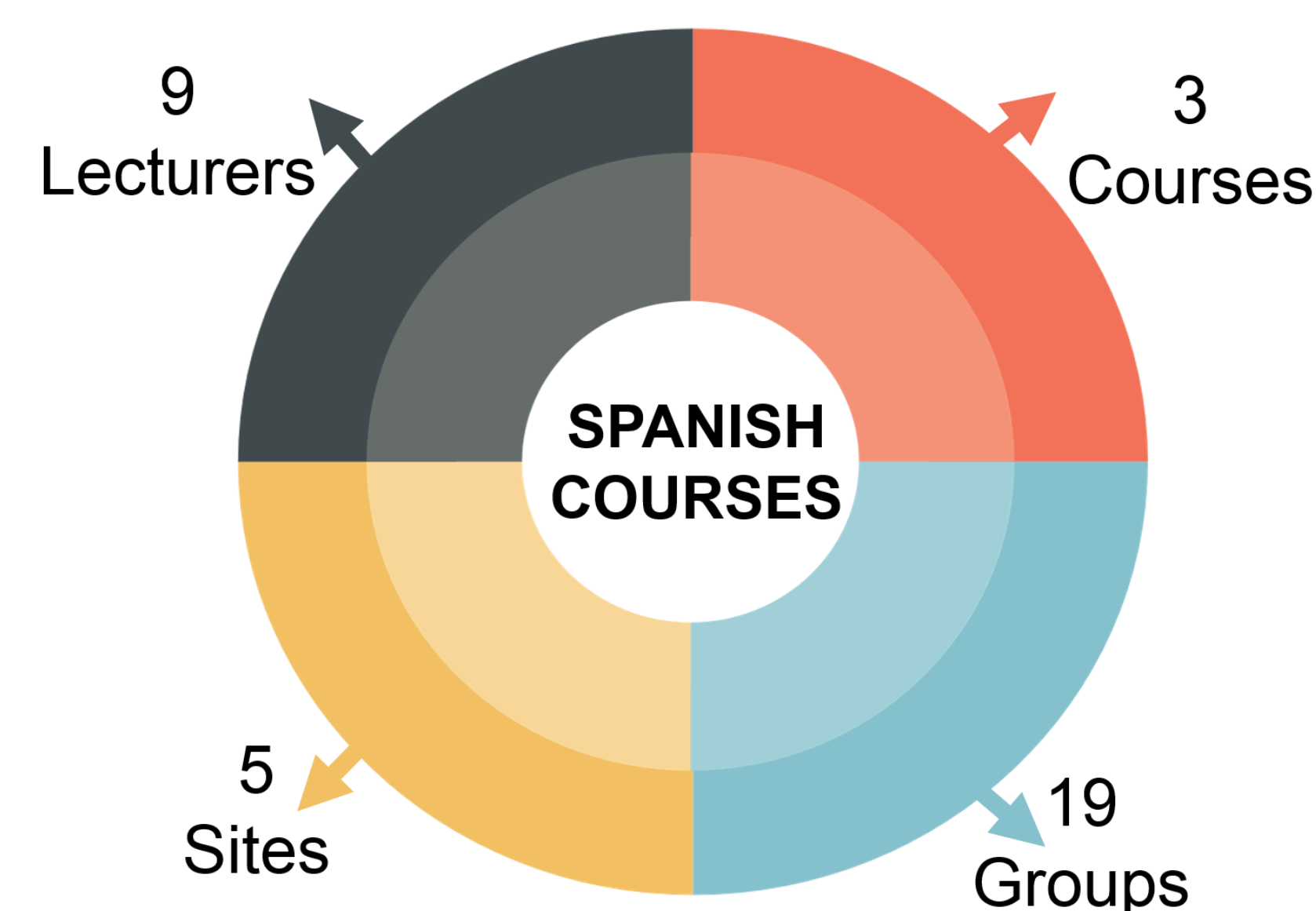
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March 10, 2016

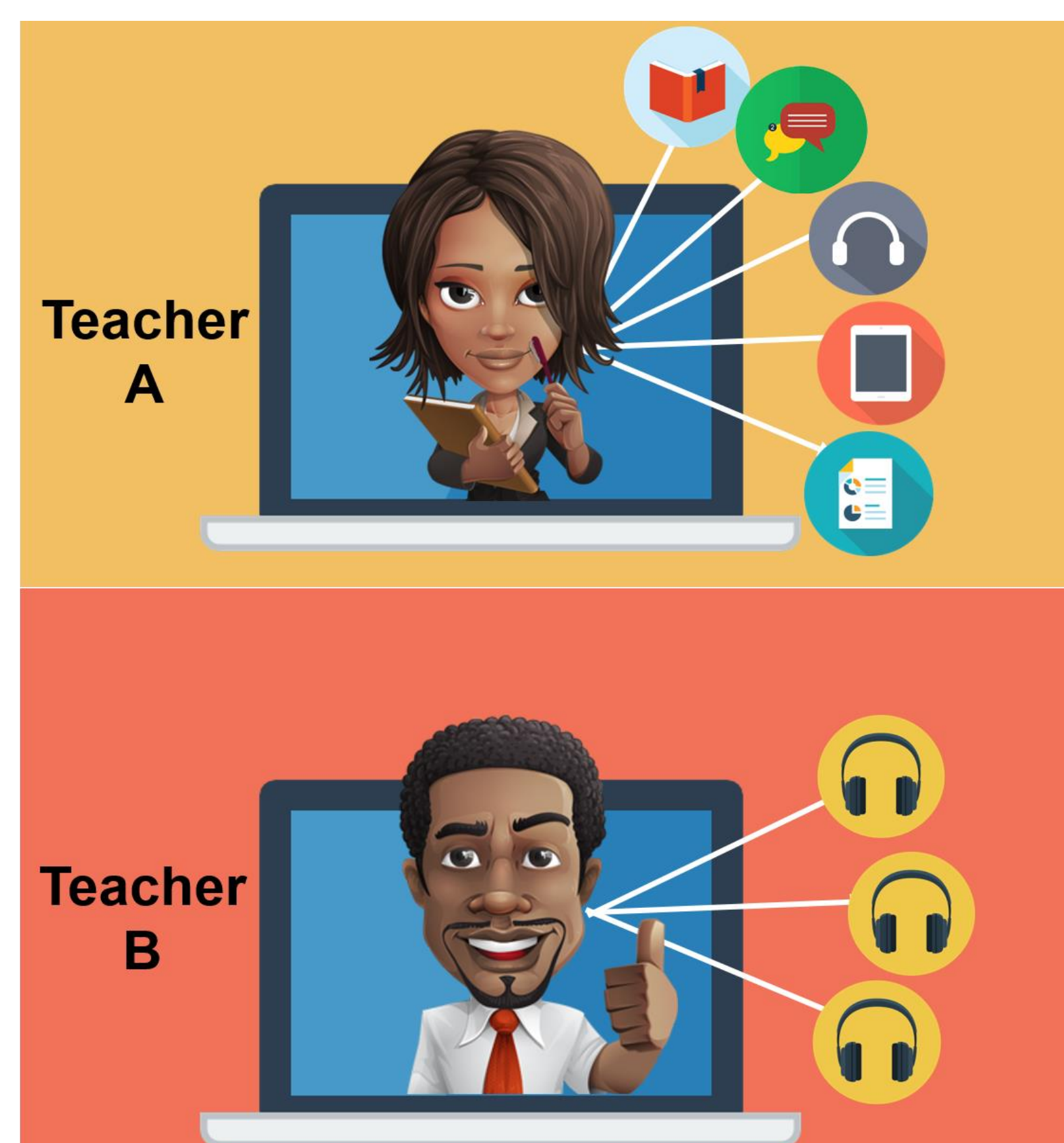
The Context

The Spanish courses of the Foreign Languages Division generally carry a web-based assessment of 10%. The 2015/16 Spanish courses (Basic Spanish, Spanish Language 1 and Spanish Language 2) span multiple teachers, multiple classes and multiple sites.



The Issue

There is no clearly established definition and details of what constitute the term web-based component. This ambiguity has resulted in dissimilarities among lecturers in the type and number of assessments, the activity focus and activity pace.



The Solution

The most logical solution to such a challenge would be locating the web-based content in "plain site" where all students across the various sites are engaged in the same or in equivalent web-based activities.

The Questions

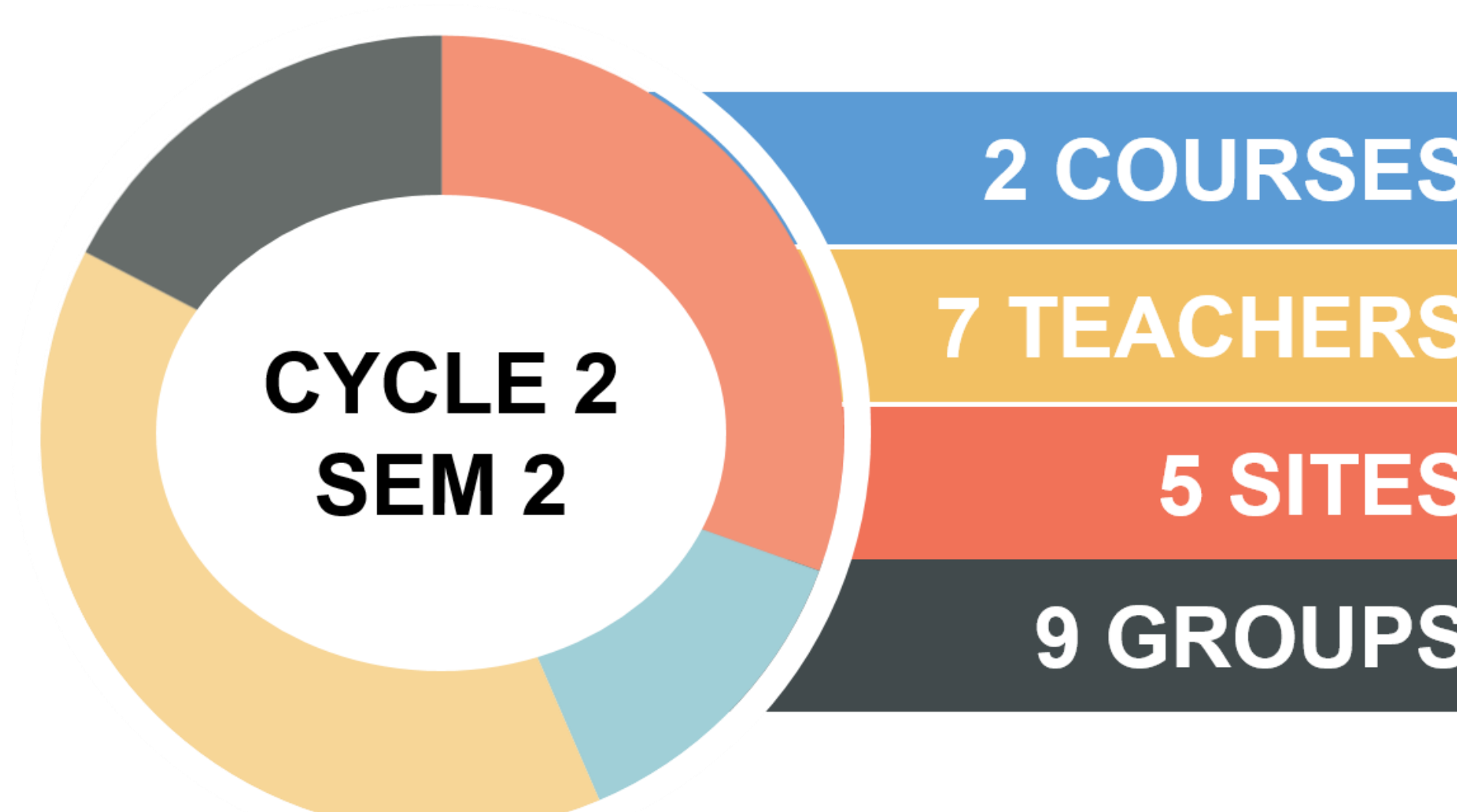
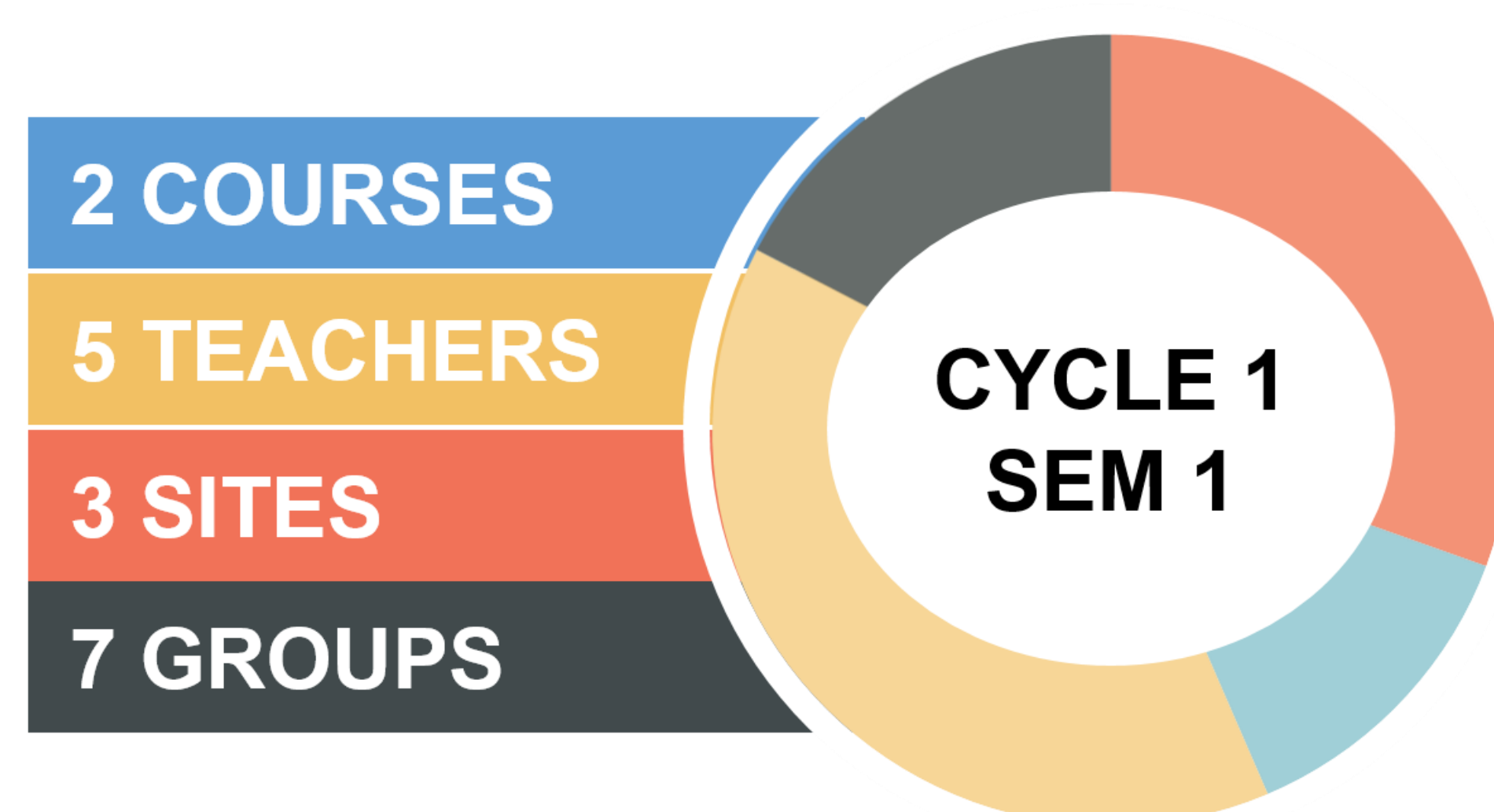
1. How do the different lecturers carry out the web-based component of the Spanish courses?
2. How can a web-based standardization framework be developed to ensure consistency of the web-based component across sites?

The Approach

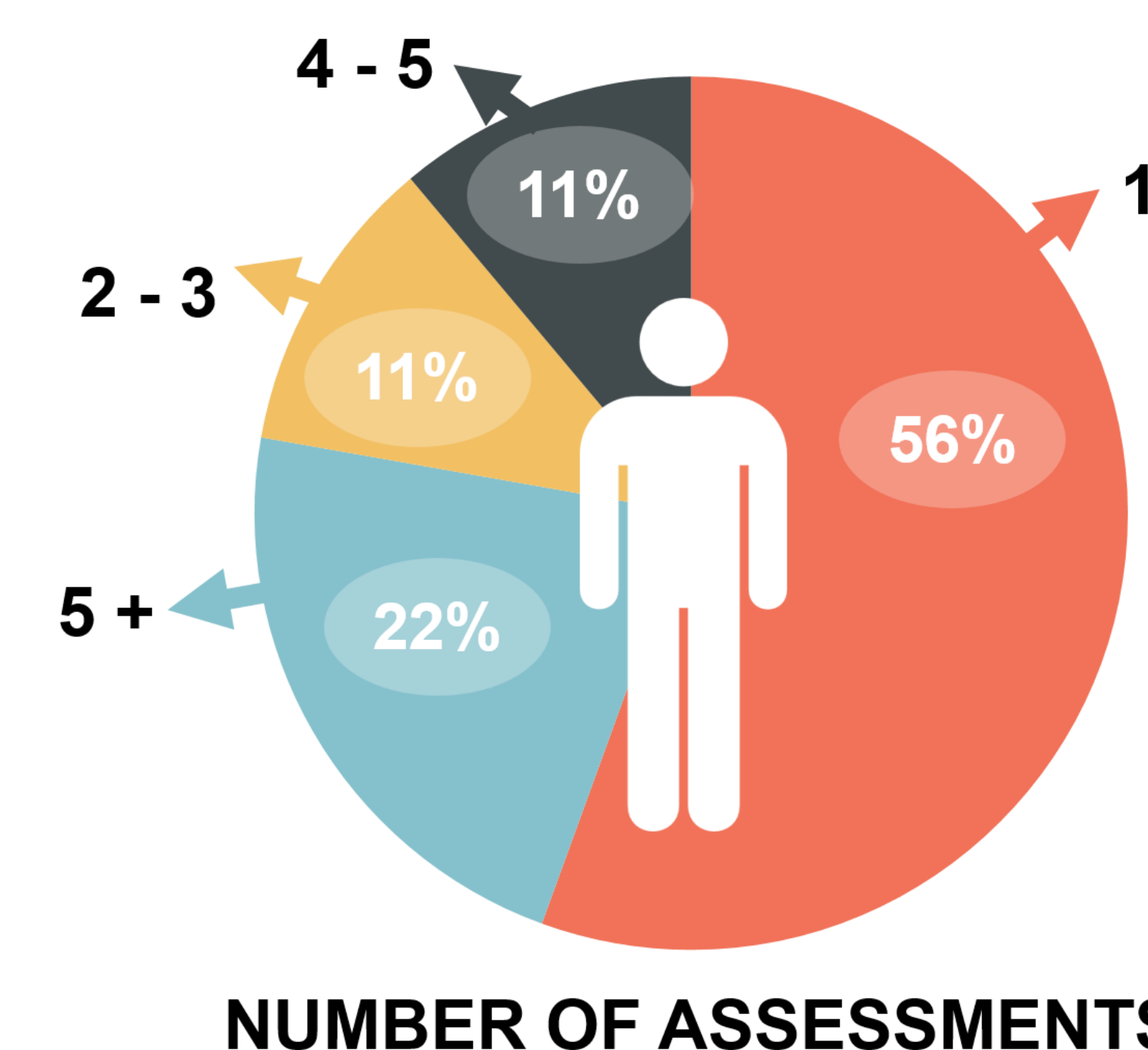
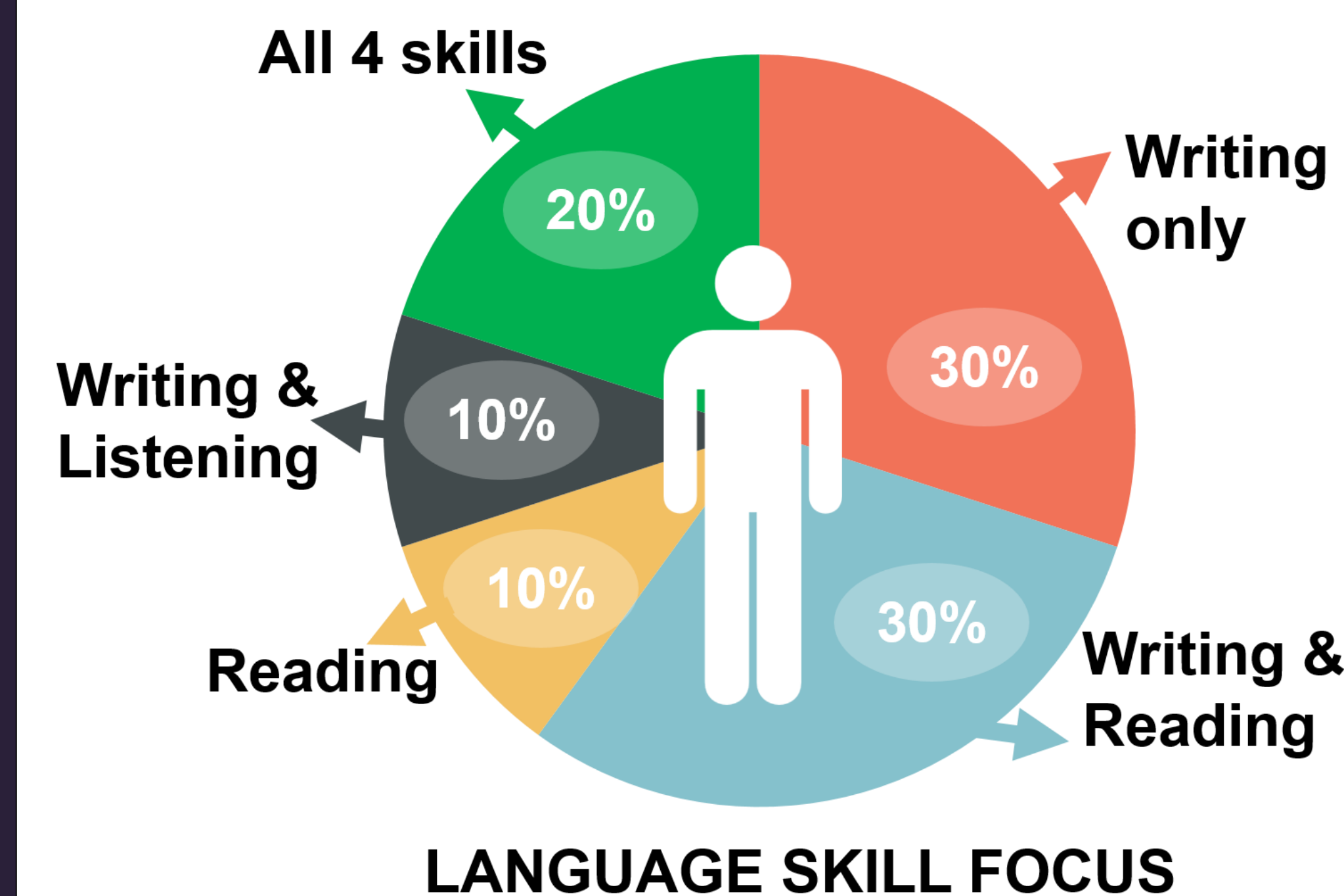
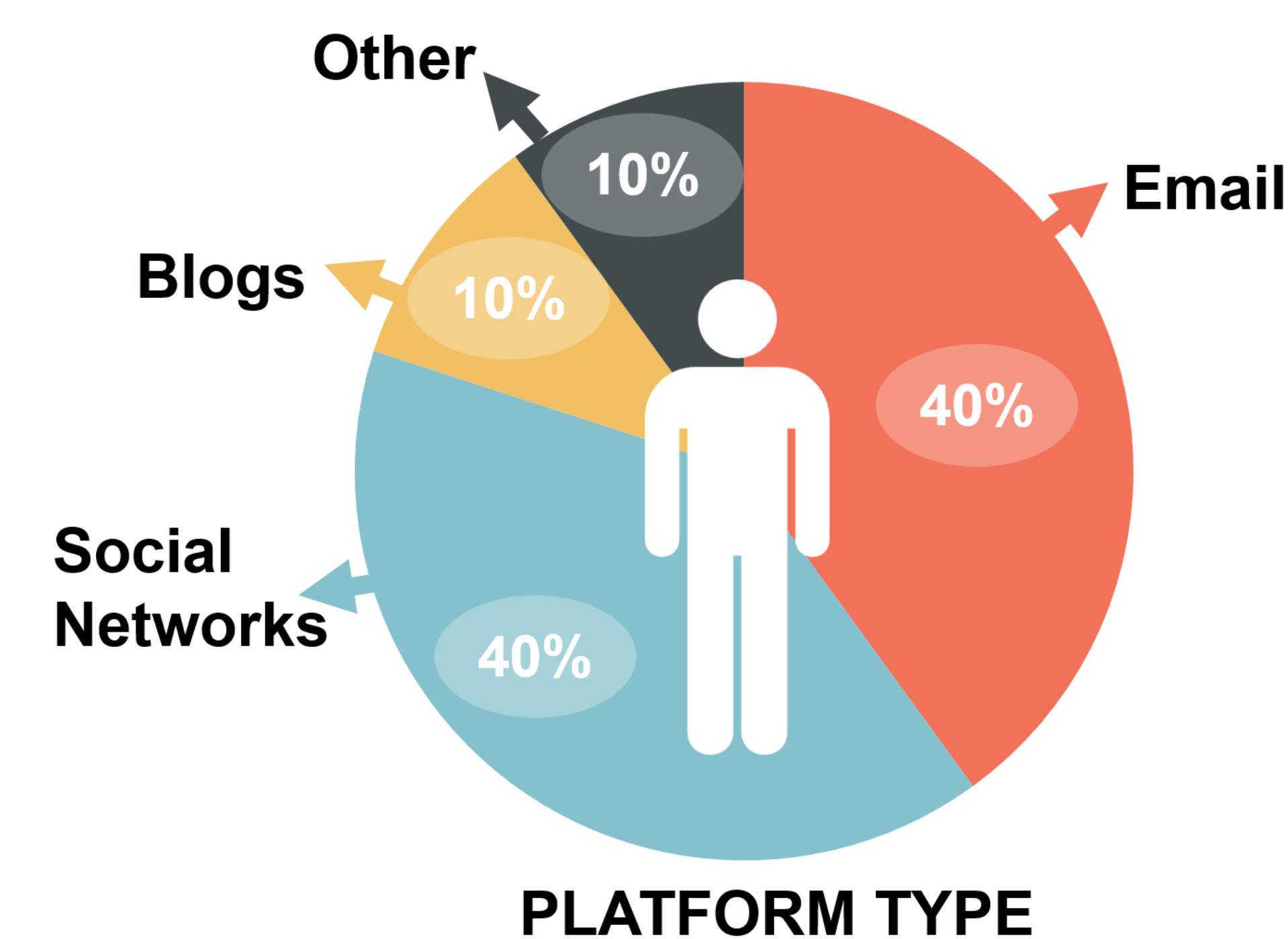
This research is a work in progress and utilises a Participatory Action Research (PAR) design.

Data are being collected from a total of three (3) courses (Basic Spanish [offered in both semesters], Spanish Language 1 and Spanish Language 2), nine (9) teachers [7 females and 2 males], sixteen classes with a total of 478 students across (5) five sites (Papine [main campus], Knox, Montego Bay, Brown's Town and Portmore).

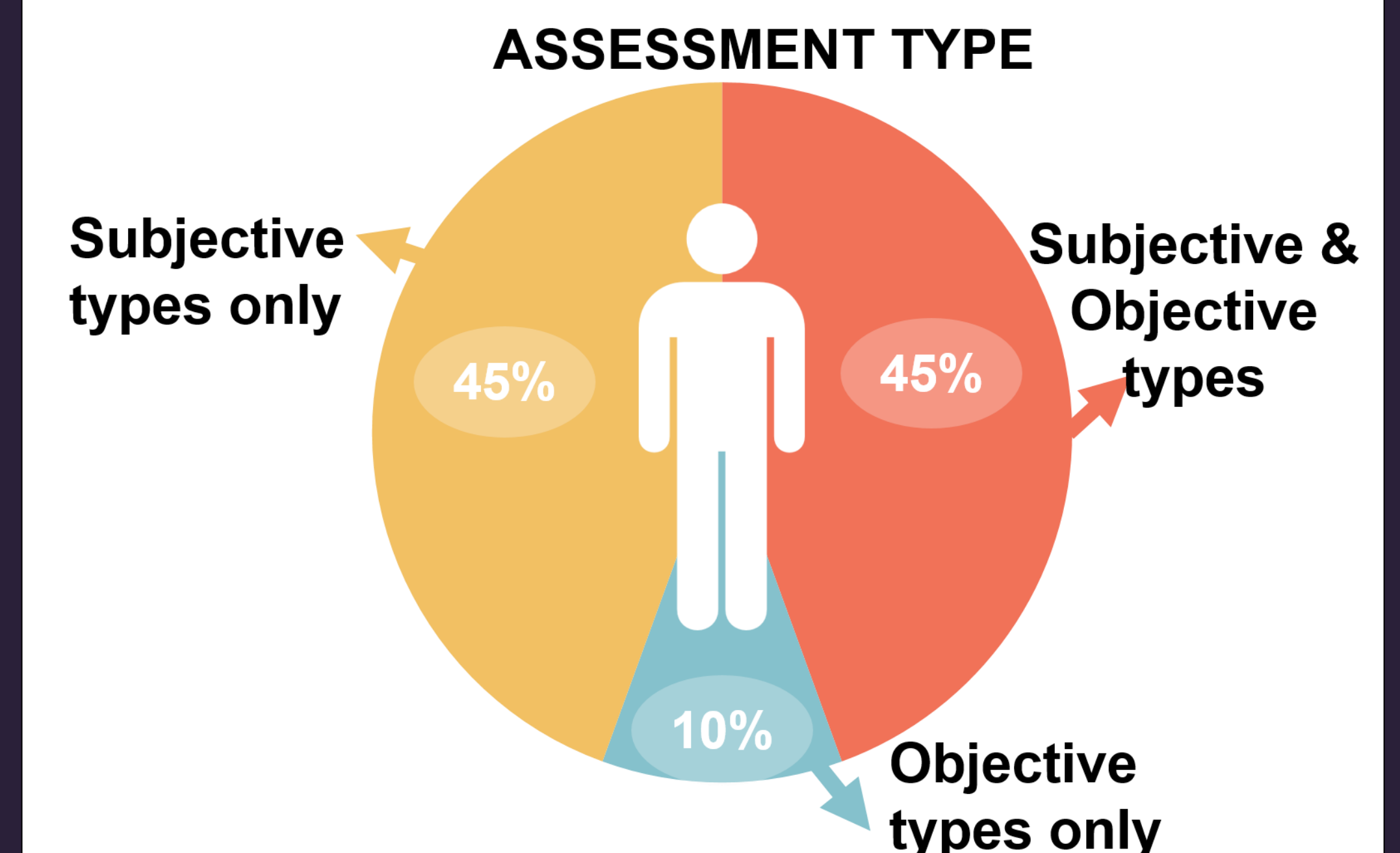
The research started with the administration of a teacher questionnaire survey which informed the direction, design and development of the common web-based component. The project has 2 main iterative cycles: Cycle 1 which took place in semester 1 of the 2015/16 and academic year and cycle 2 which is currently underway.



Preliminary Findings (Teacher Questionnaire)



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The Lessons being learned.....

The implementation and piloting of a common web-based component have revealed the following valuable lessons thus far:

- Some lecturers are not very familiar with the a wide variety of eLearning tools.
- With the piloting of the common web-based component, a few lecturers are early adopters. The majority of lecturers are late adopters and laggards (as originally proposed by Rogers 2010).
- There is a prevalence of "It's not my business" (INMB) resulting in work overload for some lecturers.

The Recommendations (thus far.....)

To ensure uniformity, consistency and a high quality in the web-based component of the Spanish courses, across the sites, the following will have to be implemented:

- **Main Campus Push:** The Papine campus must aggressively drive the direction of the web-based component.
- **eProfiles:** A comprehensive eCompetence profile for both lecturer and students.
- **On-site Training:** Pre-site orientation for both students and teachers.
- **Guides:** A detailed handbook for both teachers and students which includes rationale, orientation, components etc.
- **Collaborative Development:** Lecturer "buy-in" must be present and all members must be convinced that for the sake of transparency, consistency and quality, the task has to involve all parties.