

# Does blogging improve writing skills?

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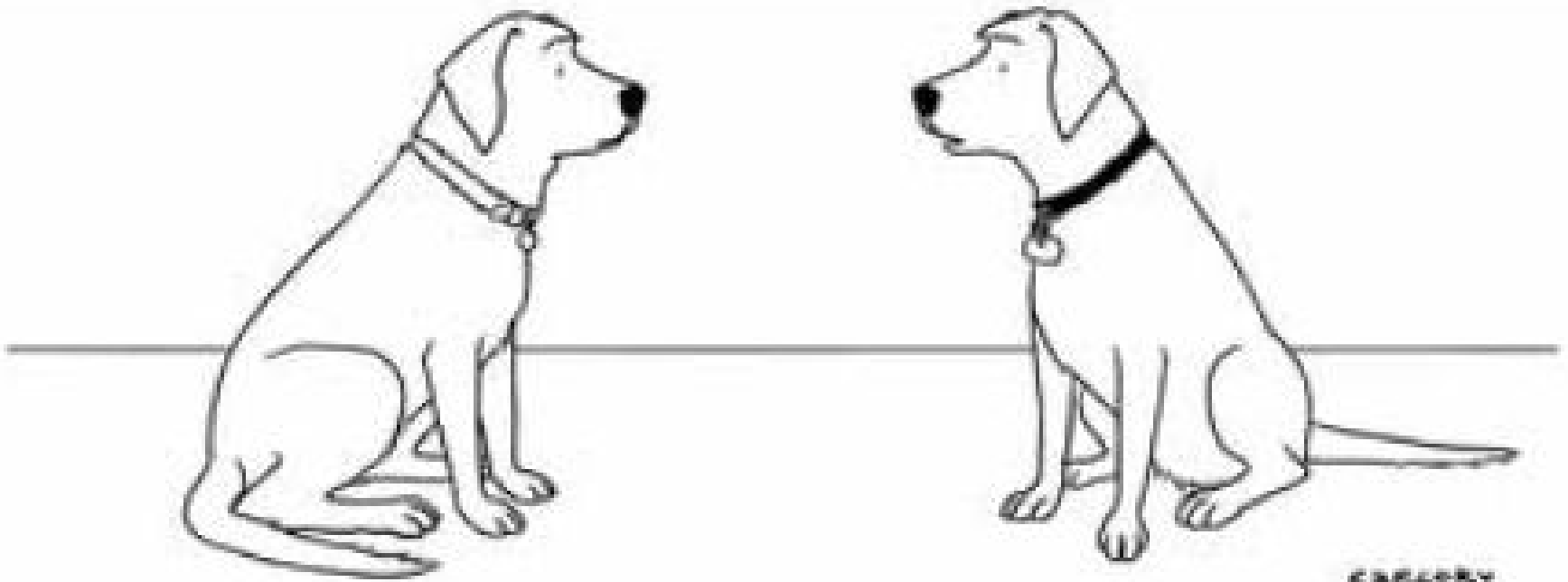
@scidocmartin @PopSciGuyOz



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MELBOURNE**



**DEAKIN**  
UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA



“I had my own blog for a while, but I decided to go back to just pointless, incessant barking”

# Why blogging?

Give students a voice and space to explore their science interests

Share writing with wide audience: feedback

Encourage student interaction

Learn useful tools: images, copyright etc

Improve student writing skills?

# 1. Does blogging improve writing?

Three student cohorts:

- Second year science (and ed.) students (Deakin)
- Second year science students (UoM)
- Masters of Science students (UoM)

All assessed on blogging

3 – 4 posts, any science-related topic

Publicly-available websites

# 1. Does blogging improve writing?

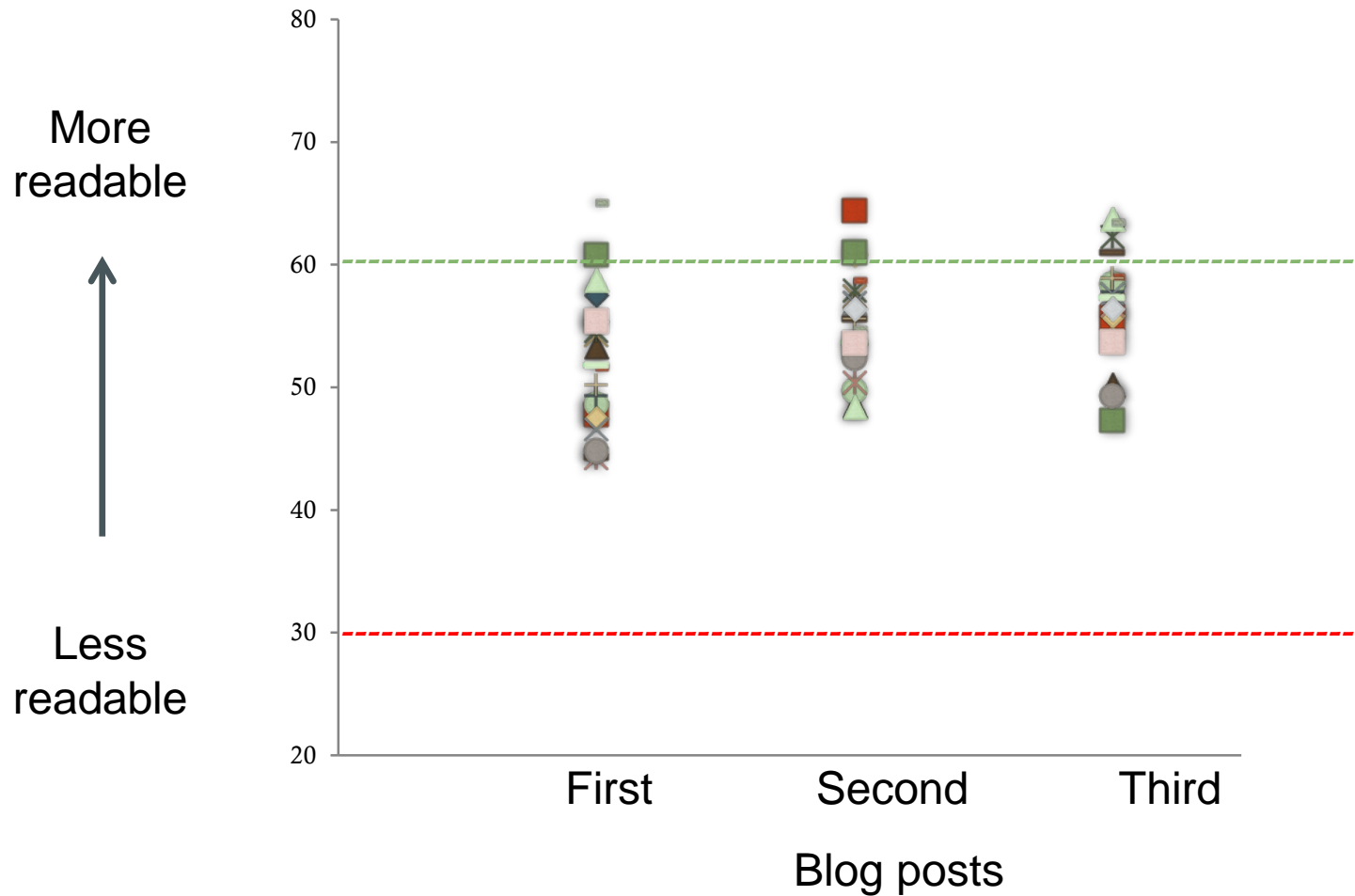
Readability statistics:

- 40 different measures
- Flesch Kincaid Reading Ease score
- 90 – 100: easily understood by 11-year old student
- 60 – 70: easily understood by 13 – 15-year old student
- 0 – 30: best understood by University graduates

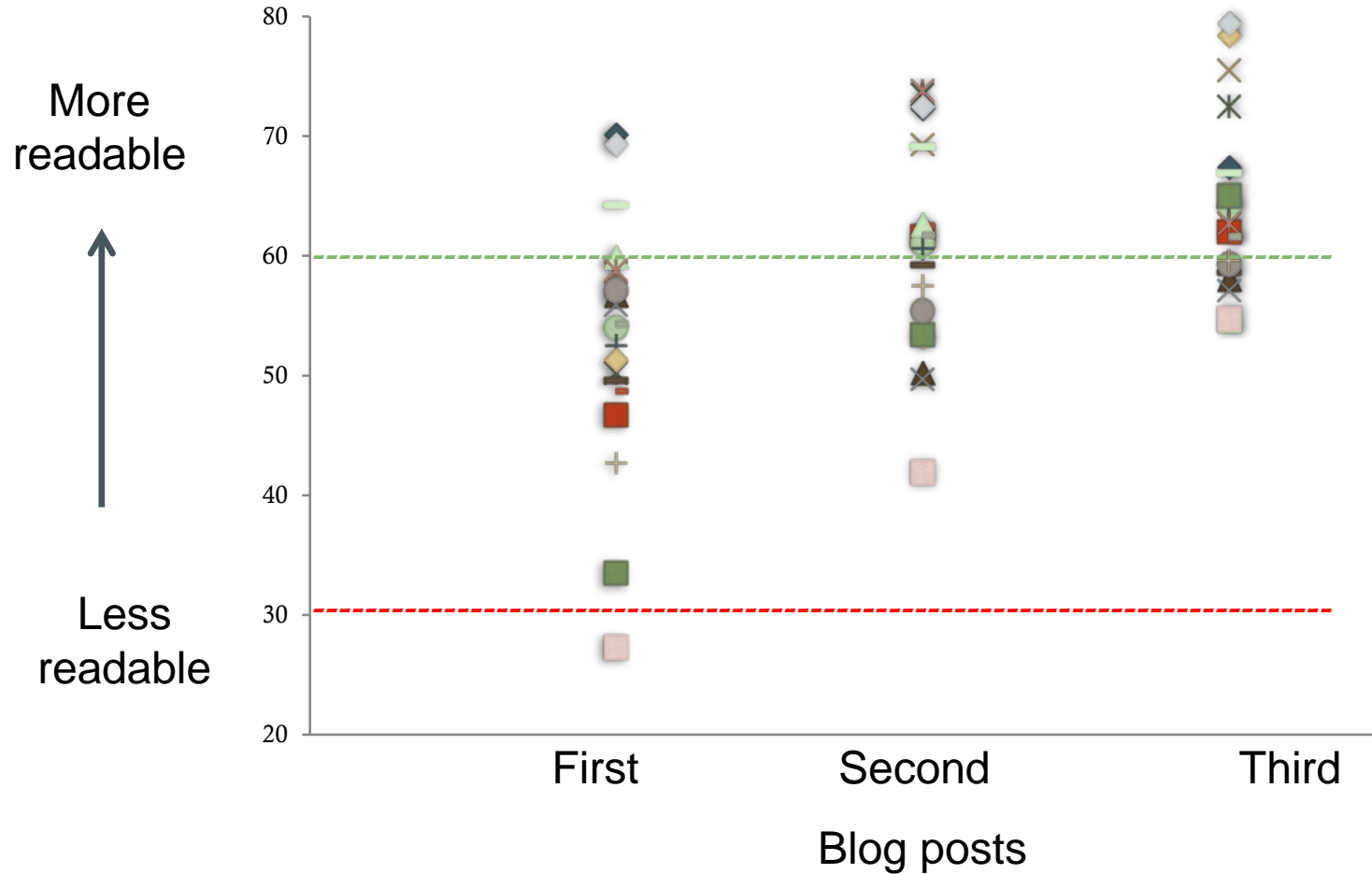
De-Jargoniser (Use of common/ rare words)

(<http://scienceandpublic.com/>)

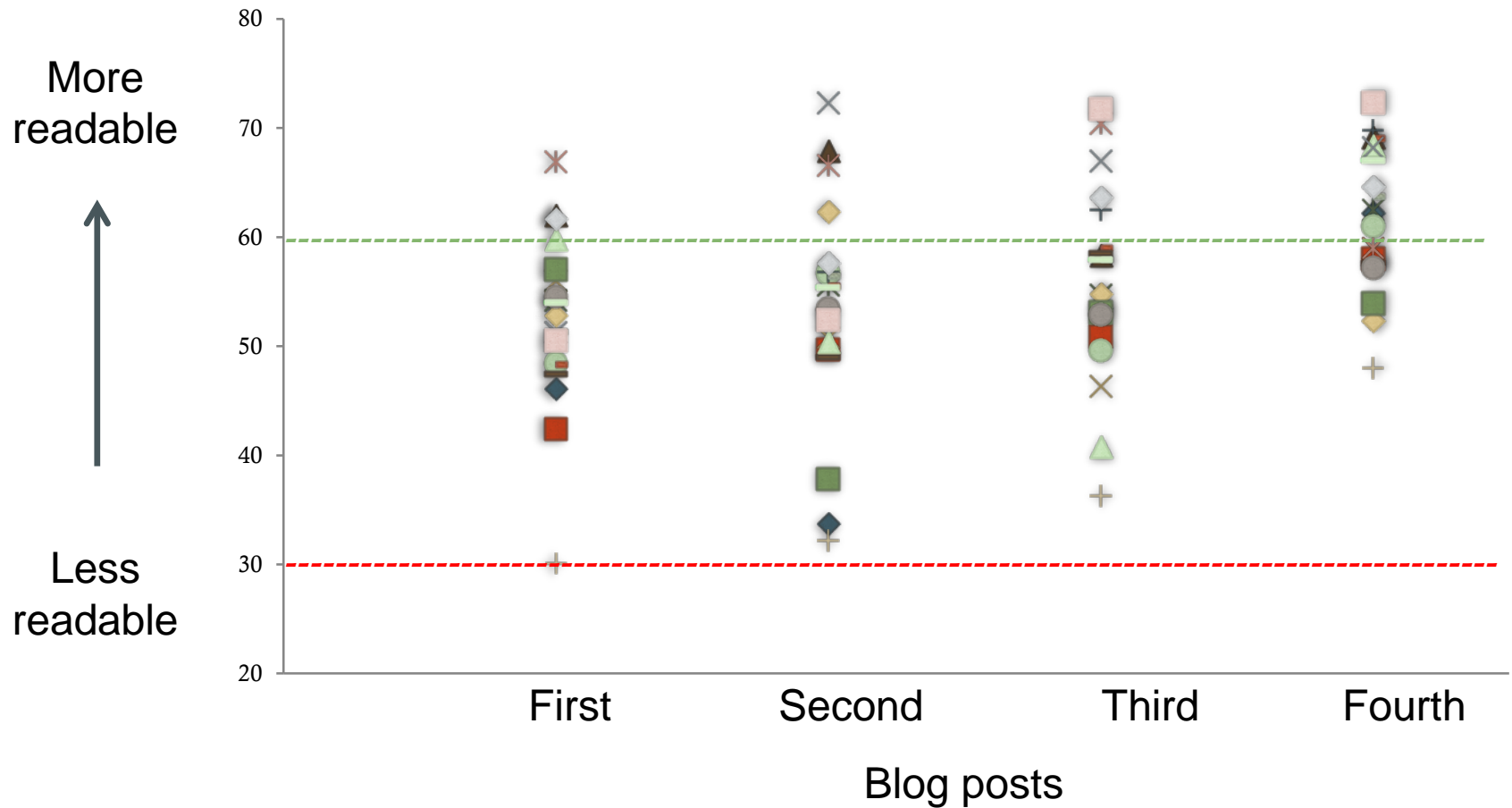
# Readability scores: Deakin UG



# Readability scores: UoM UG



# Readability scores: MSc



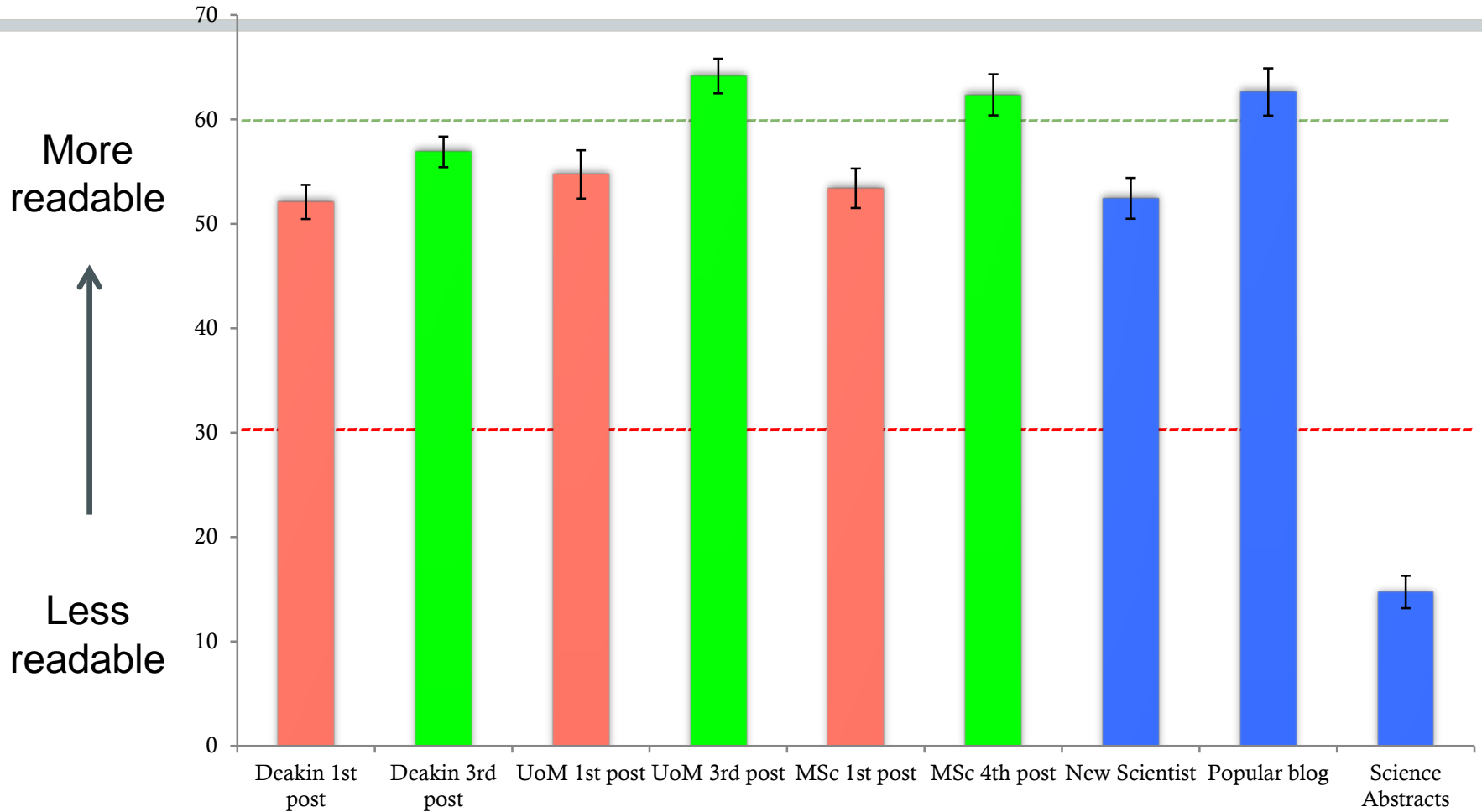


## 2. Is more science training a help or hindrance to blogging?

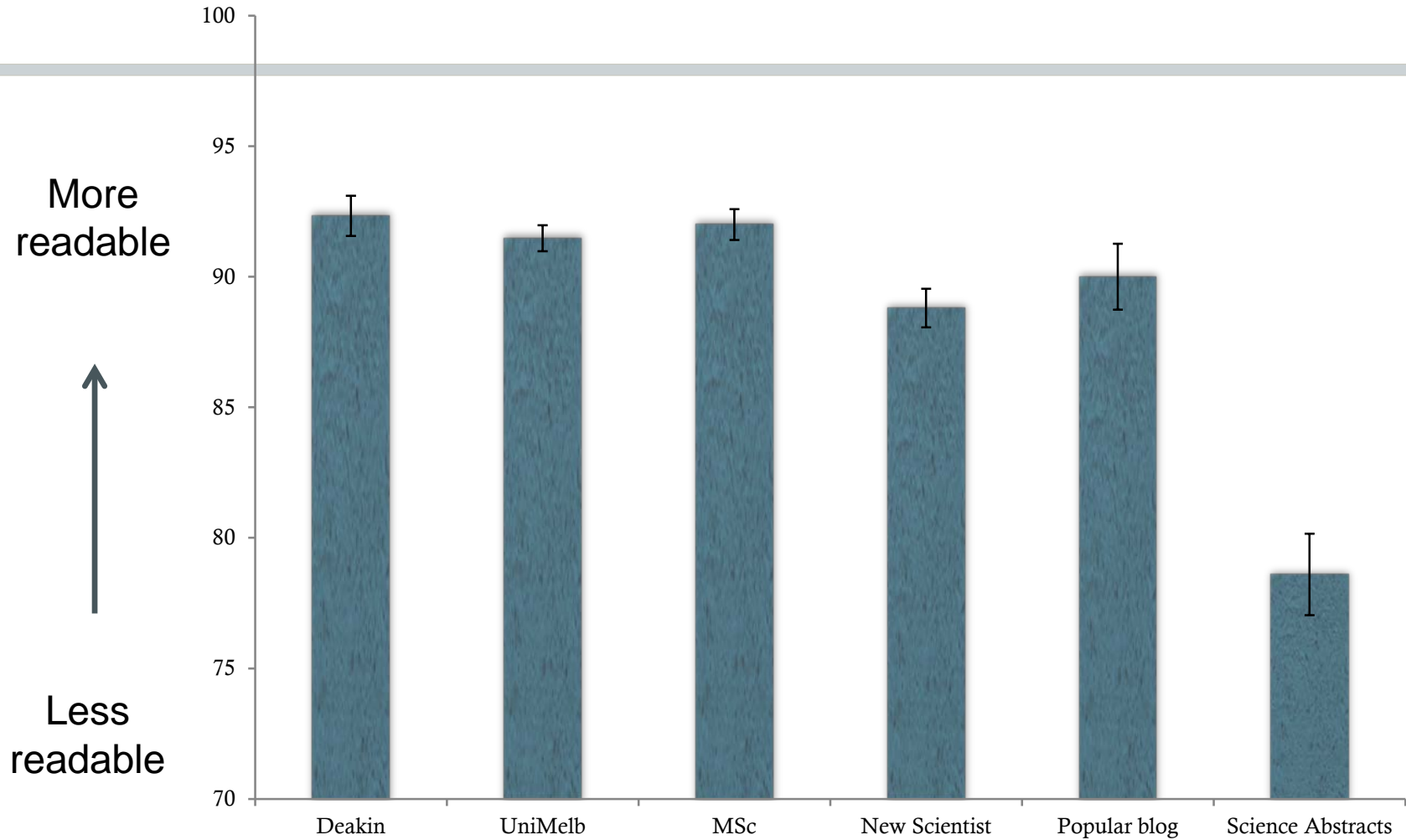
Explore relationship: years of science training & ability to write popular science

Mean scores for students' first & last posts compared with writing from other sources

# Readability



# 'De-jargonizer' score



# Conclusions

Blogging is a useful task to improve writing skills

Spreading writing across semester may be helpful

All students successfully adopted popular writing style

No clear relationship between years of science training and ability to write popular science

(Blogging a popular assessment task)