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A Comparison of Formulaic Language in Student, Researcher, and Practitioner Reports in Civil Engineering

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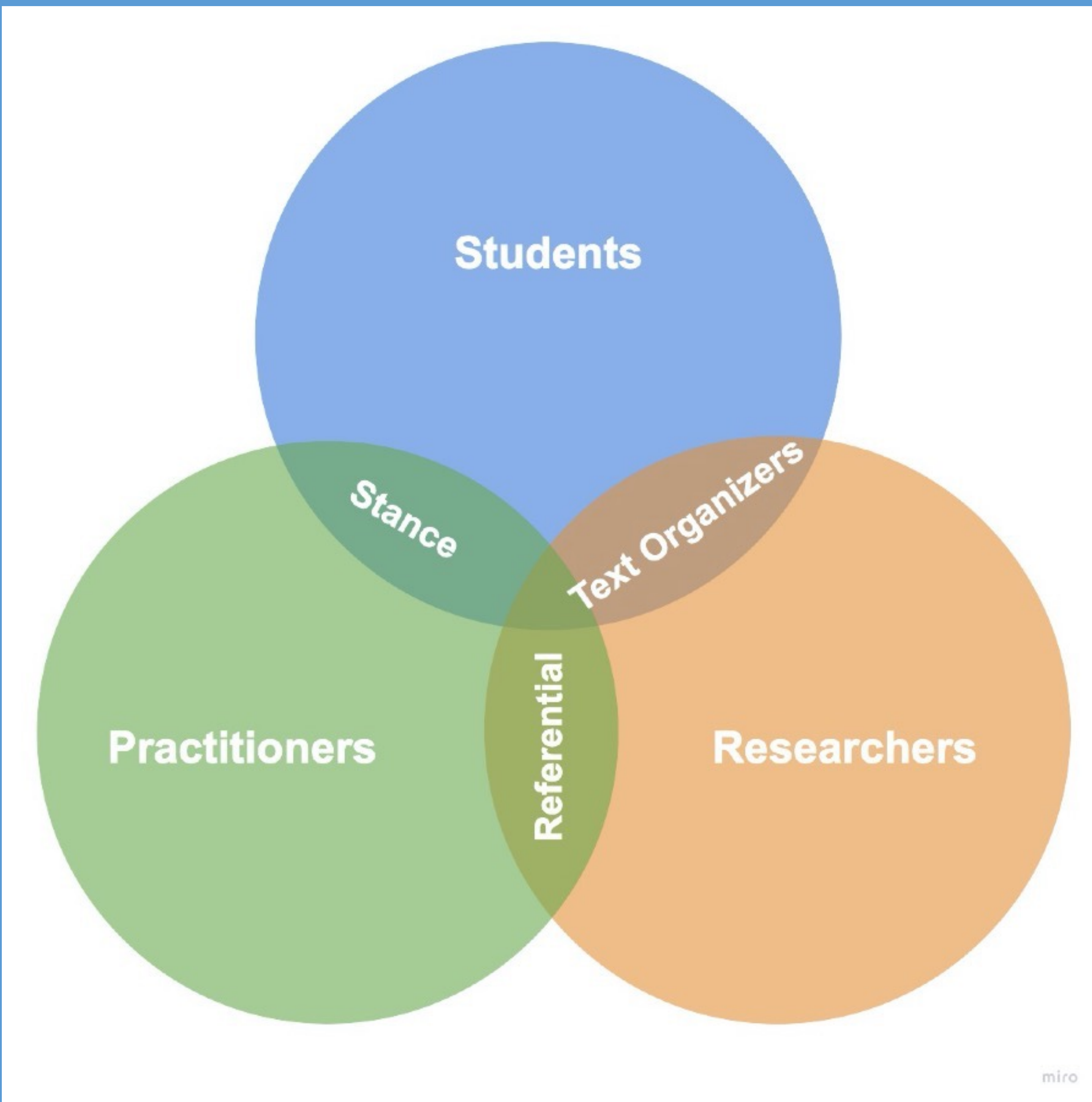
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Q: Are Civil Engineering Students learning to write like Industry Practitioners or are they writing like Academic Researchers?

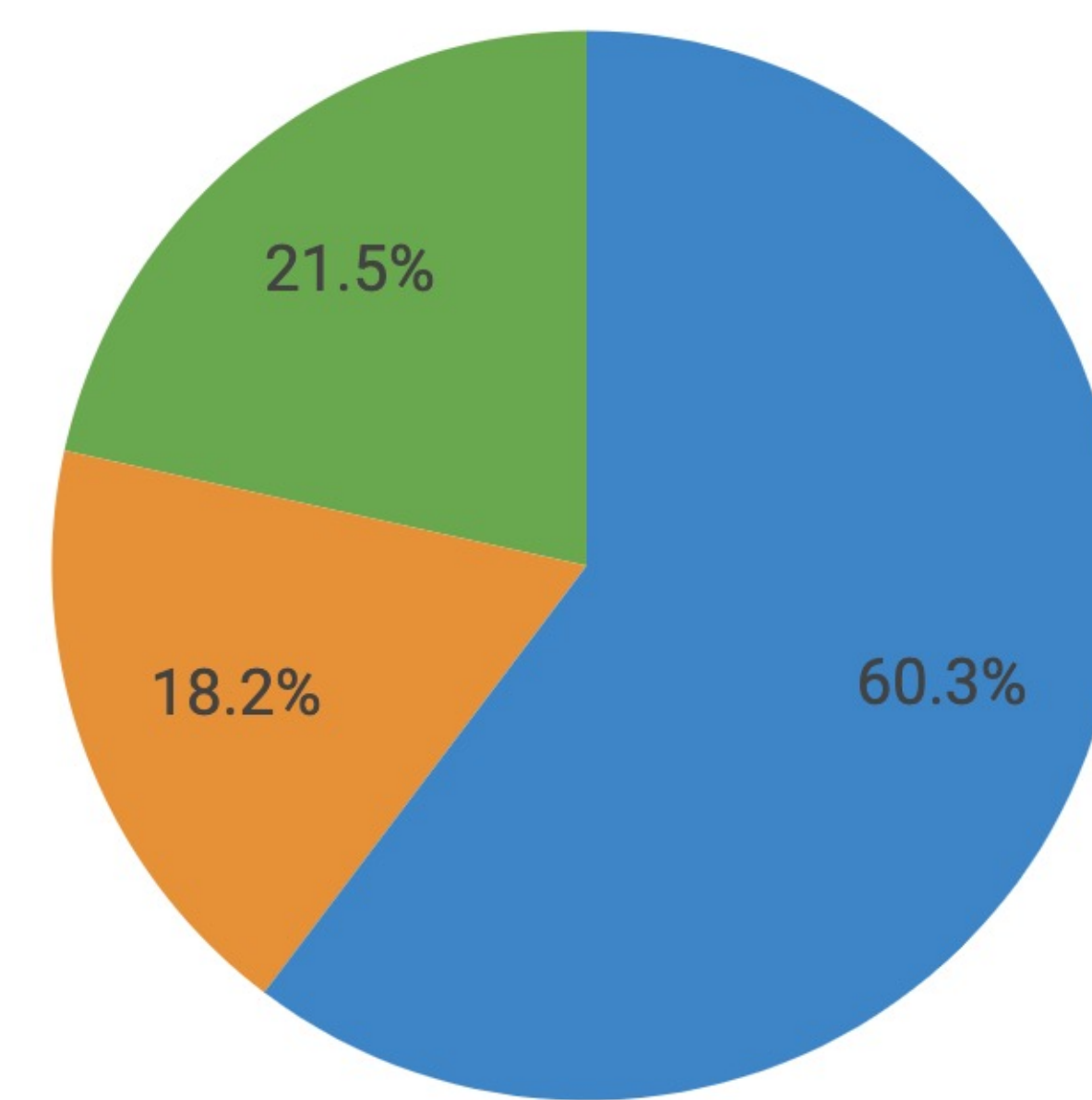


A: Students still need help learning to write for client-facing contexts.

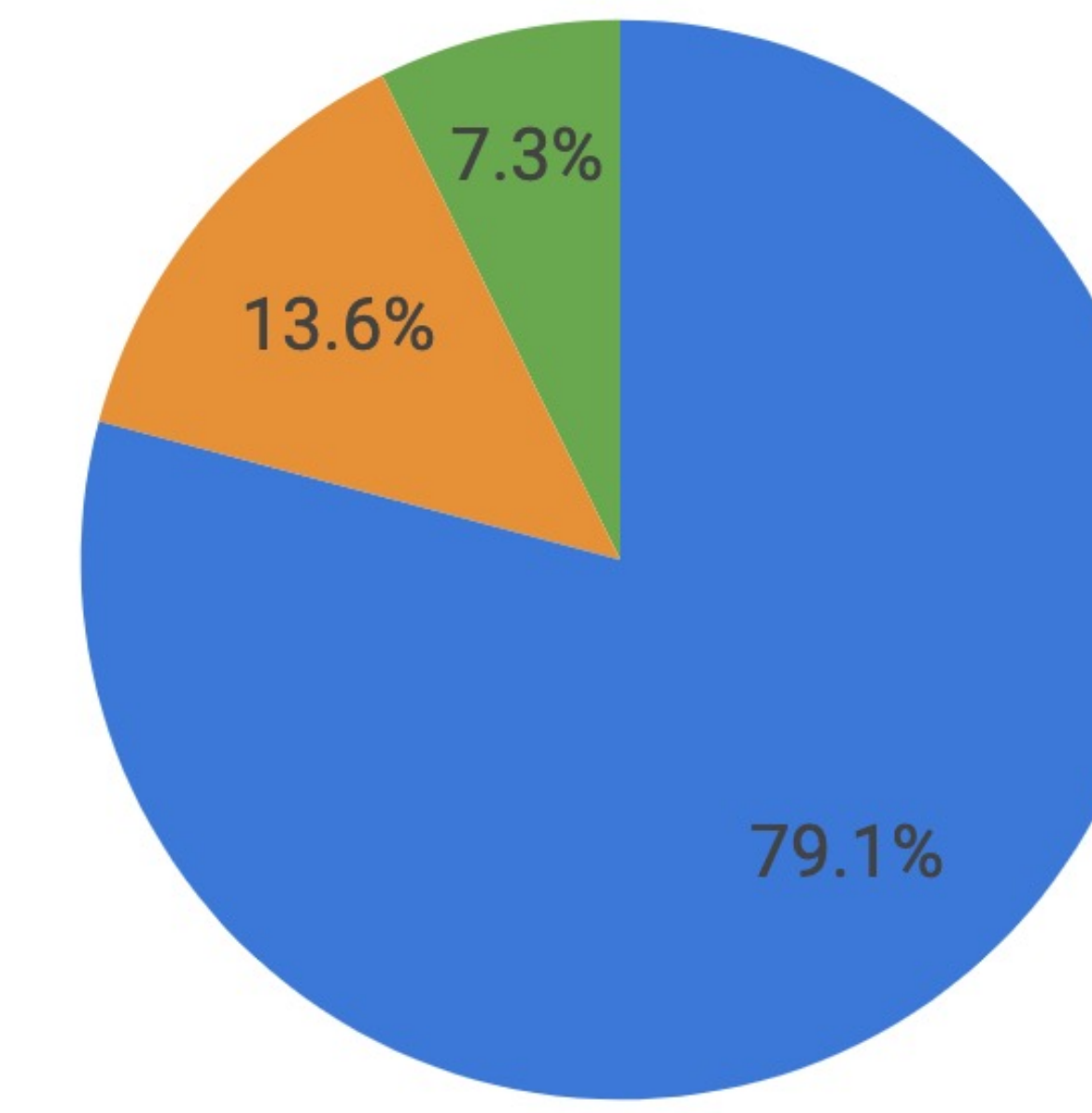
Methodology:

1. Using computer analysis, find the most common 4-word *n-grams* used by students, practitioners, and researchers.
2. Categorize according to their function in the text.
3. Compare *n-grams* by function and author type

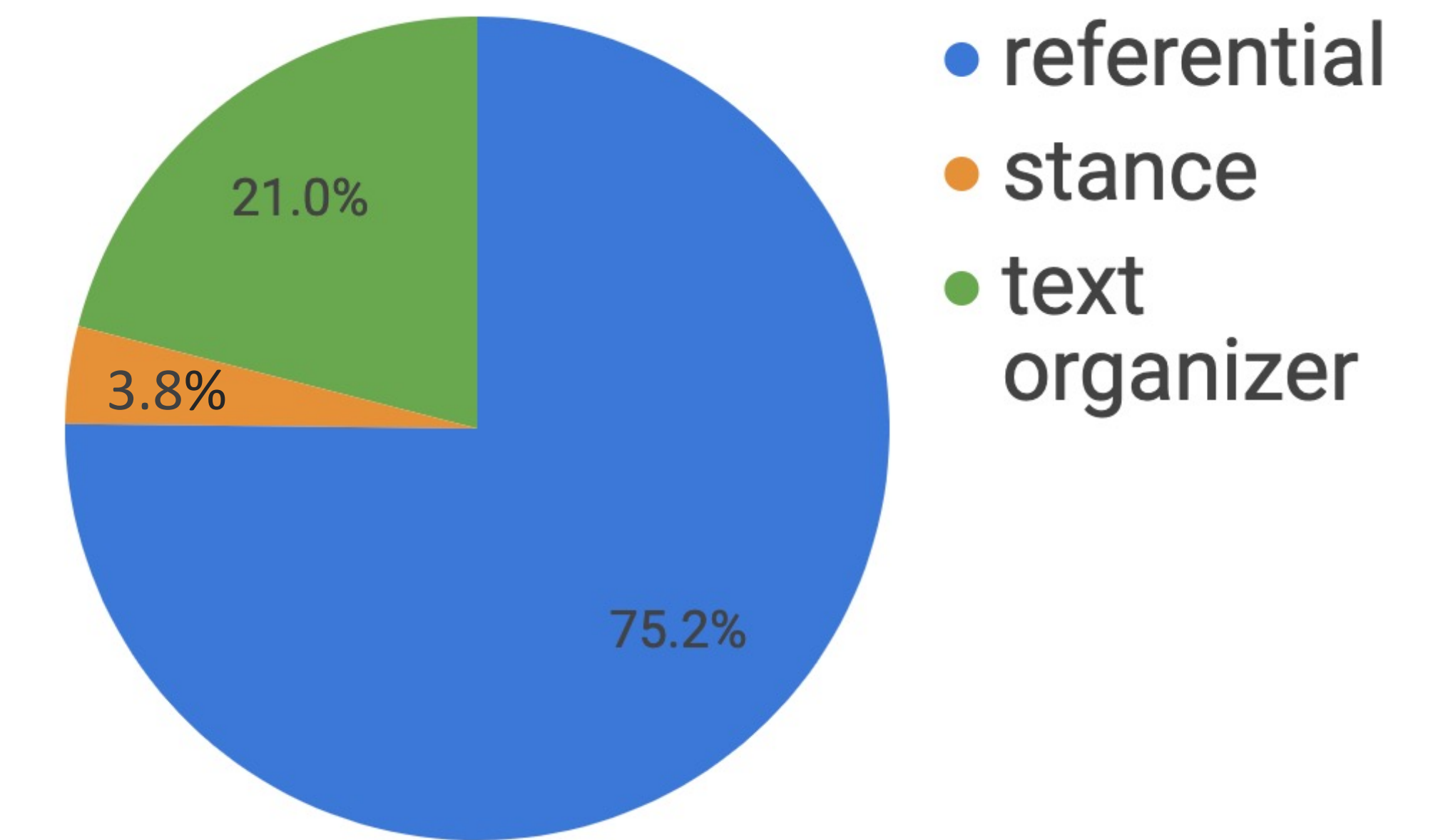
Students



Practitioners



Researchers



N-grams are formulaic sequences of words that become the building blocks of writing.

“... to a depth of...”

“... it should be noted...”

“... are summarized in table...”

N-gram Categories used:

Referential: Makes direct reference to item or context in the text for identification or attribution

Stance: Expresses attitudes or assessments of certainty

Text Organizer: Reflects relationship between prior and coming discourse



Find out more about the Civil Engineering Writing Project

