



FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Results of the 2008 Survey of Employers

**Fordham University Graduate School of
Education and Eduventures**



Part I – Background

Part II – GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools

Part III – Overall Perceptions of the GSE

Part IV – Strengths and Opportunities

Part V – Analysis and Recommendations



Drivers Behind the Survey

- Understand employers' perceptions of graduate competencies
- Fulfill commitment to serving our students by understanding strengths of and opportunities to improve GSE programming
- Contribute to NCATE application

Guiding Questions

1. How effective are recently-hired teachers and professional staff who graduated from the GSE relative to other recently-hired staff?
2. What are administrators' overall impressions of the GSE?
3. How can the GSE better prepare teachers and professional staff for the field?



About the Process

- **Eduventures co-developed and executed the survey**
 - 10-15 minutes to complete
 - Survey completed online
- **From November to December 2008, 2,350 principals were contacted**
 - Eduventures obtained a database from the New York Department of Education with the names and mailing addresses of 7,500 schools and their principals across the state
 - In conjunction with the GSE, Eduventures filtered the list to include only those schools in Rockland, Putnam, Westchester, Nassau, and Suffolk Counties, as well as the five boroughs
 - The GSE provided Eduventures with e-mail addresses for 258 principals; in addition to these schools, Eduventures developed a randomized list of 2,092 schools from the filtered list described above
 - Postcard invitations were sent to all 2,350 principals, 258 of whom also received e-mail invitations
 - Two reminder e-mails were sent



Response Rates

- **53 people clicked on the survey, 41 of whom completed it**
 - This represents a 2.3% response rate and 1.7% completion rate
 - *Among those who received both a postcard and e-mail invitation a 12.0% response rate and 9.7% completion rate.*
- **Response and completion rates for this survey are slightly lower than those identified by other schools that have engaged in employer surveys**
 - *Fordham should continue to build a database and maintain communication with area employers, as its personal contacts yielded the greatest response rate*

Respondents self-selected to participate, and thus may be more inclined to offer extreme responses, either positive or negative.



Respondents' Backgrounds

- **The majority of respondents are principals who work in urban, public schools**
 - Eight-in-ten respondents (82.9%) self-identify as principals; superintendents (7.3%) and assistant principals (7.3%) represent the majority of other respondents
 - Eight-in-ten respondents (82.9%) also indicate that they work in public schools; other school settings include private schools, a charter school, a magnet school, parochial schools, and a hospital school
 - Two-thirds of respondents (68.3%) work in urban settings; one-quarter (24.4%) work in suburban settings, and 7.3% work in rural settings
- **Respondents report varying degrees of socioeconomic diversity in their schools; two-thirds of respondents work in schools where half or more of their students qualify for free or reduced lunch**

In addition to findings from this survey, Eduventures referenced findings from a 2008 survey of 415 GSE alumni, also administered by Eduventures.



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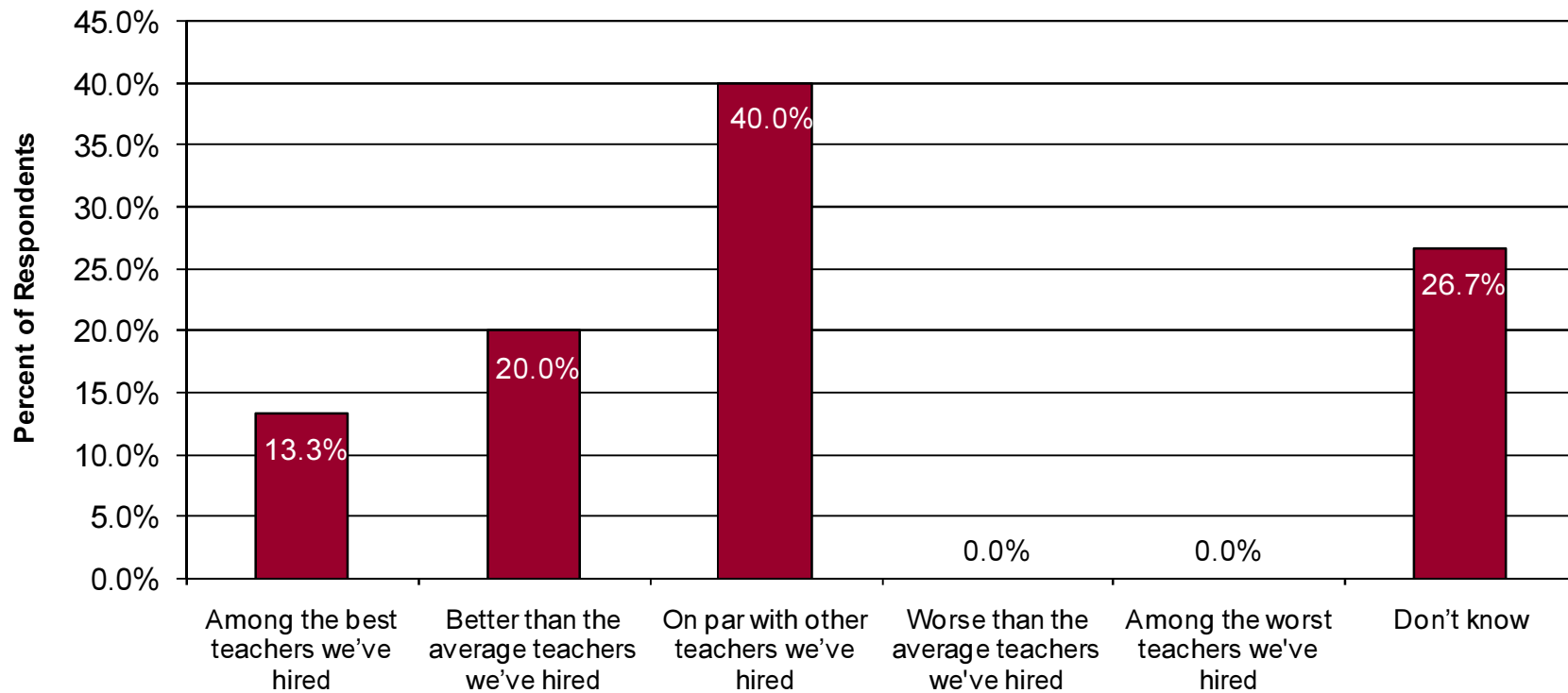
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GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



A majority of respondents consider Fordham graduates to be on par, if not better than average among teachers they have hired

Compared to teachers you have hired from other colleges and universities in the past 5 years, how would you rate the overall quality of teachers you have hired from the GSE over the past 5 years? (n=15)



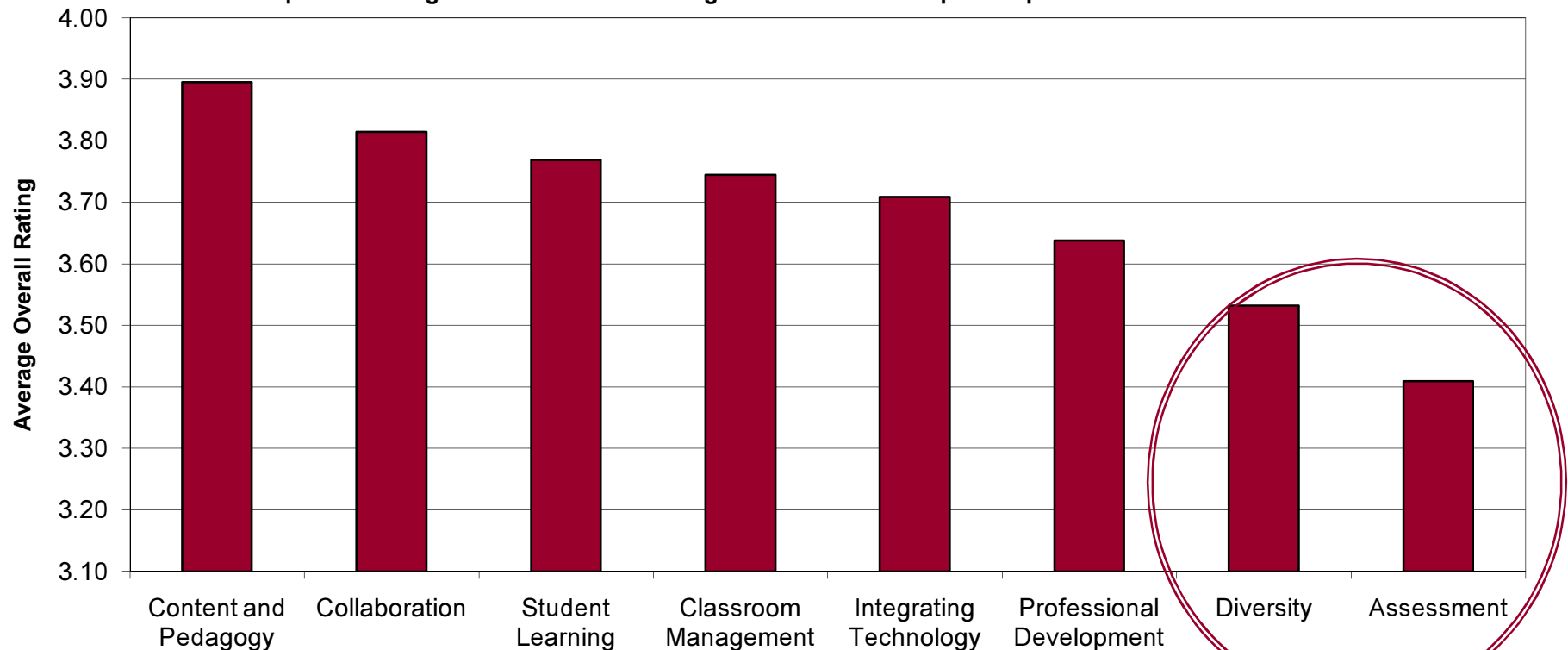
Overall, 73.3% of respondents view GSE graduates to be equivalent or better than the average teachers they have hired.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



Overall, Fordham graduates are consistently rated above average across core areas of teaching

Respondents were asked to rate teachers from the GSE relative to other teachers they hired over a 5-year period. Ratings below reflect the average score across multiple competencies in each core area.*



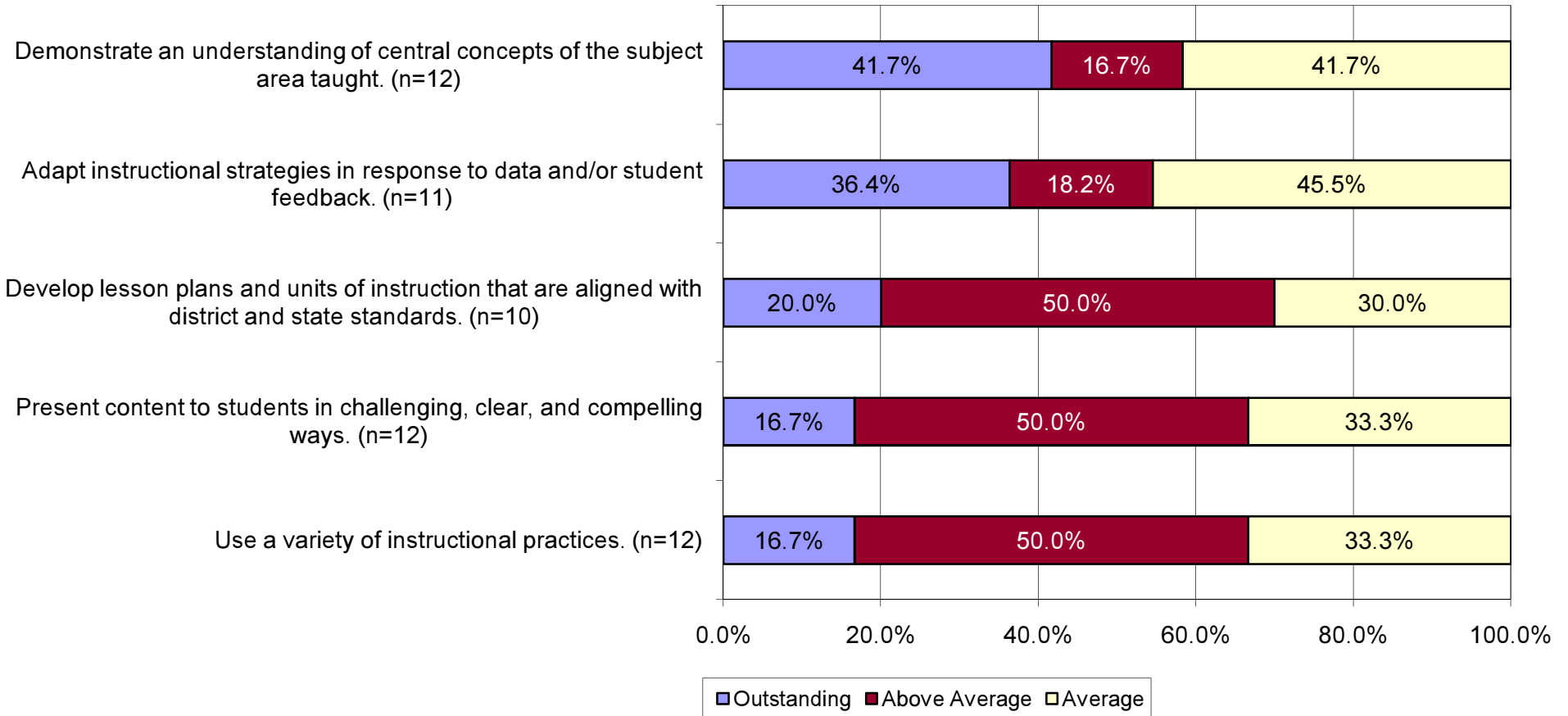
Working with diverse learners and engaging in effective assessment practices may be areas where further support or inquiry is needed.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



Content and pedagogical knowledge – particularly subject matter competency – is considered to be an area of strength

Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of Content and Pedagogy?



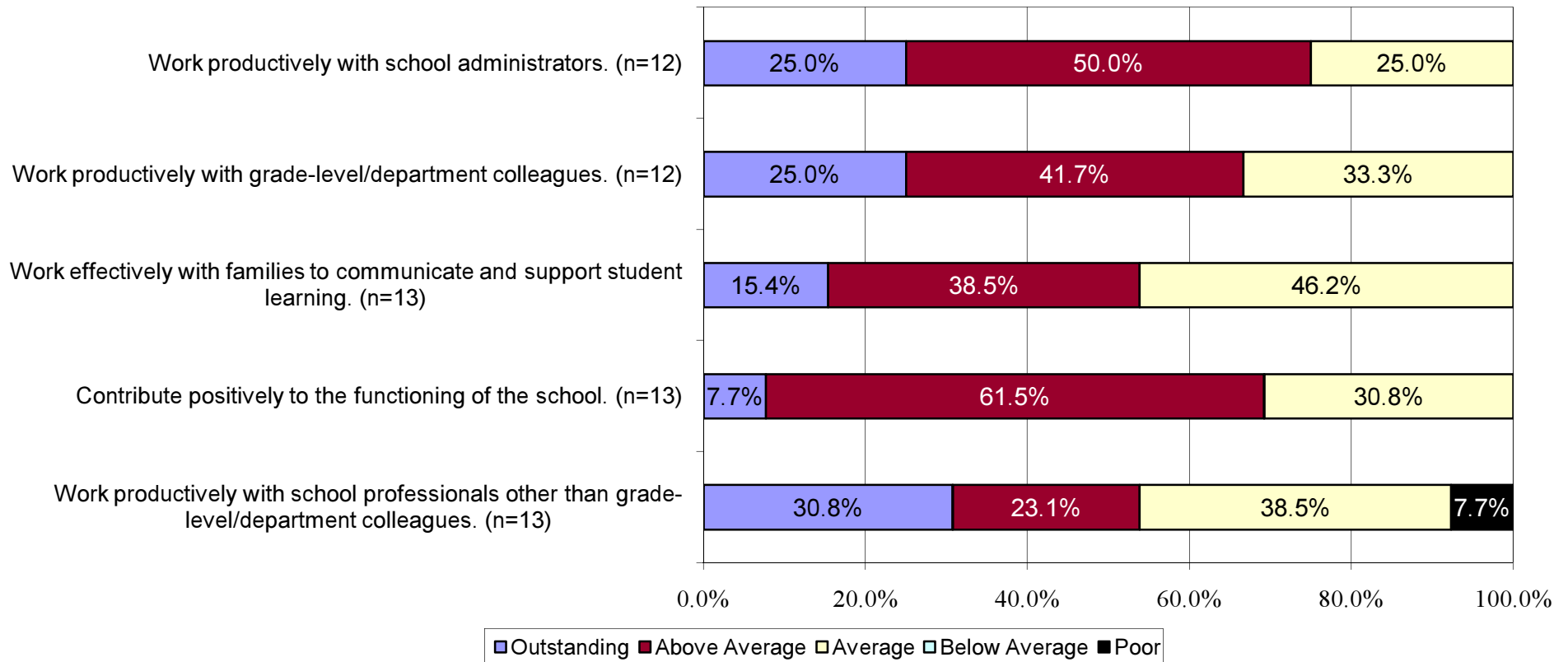
Similarly, nearly nine-in-ten alumni (87%) report feeling prepared or very well prepared to understand and apply relevant theories to their work.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



GSE graduates demonstrate an ability to work productively with administrators, colleagues, and families

Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of Collaboration?



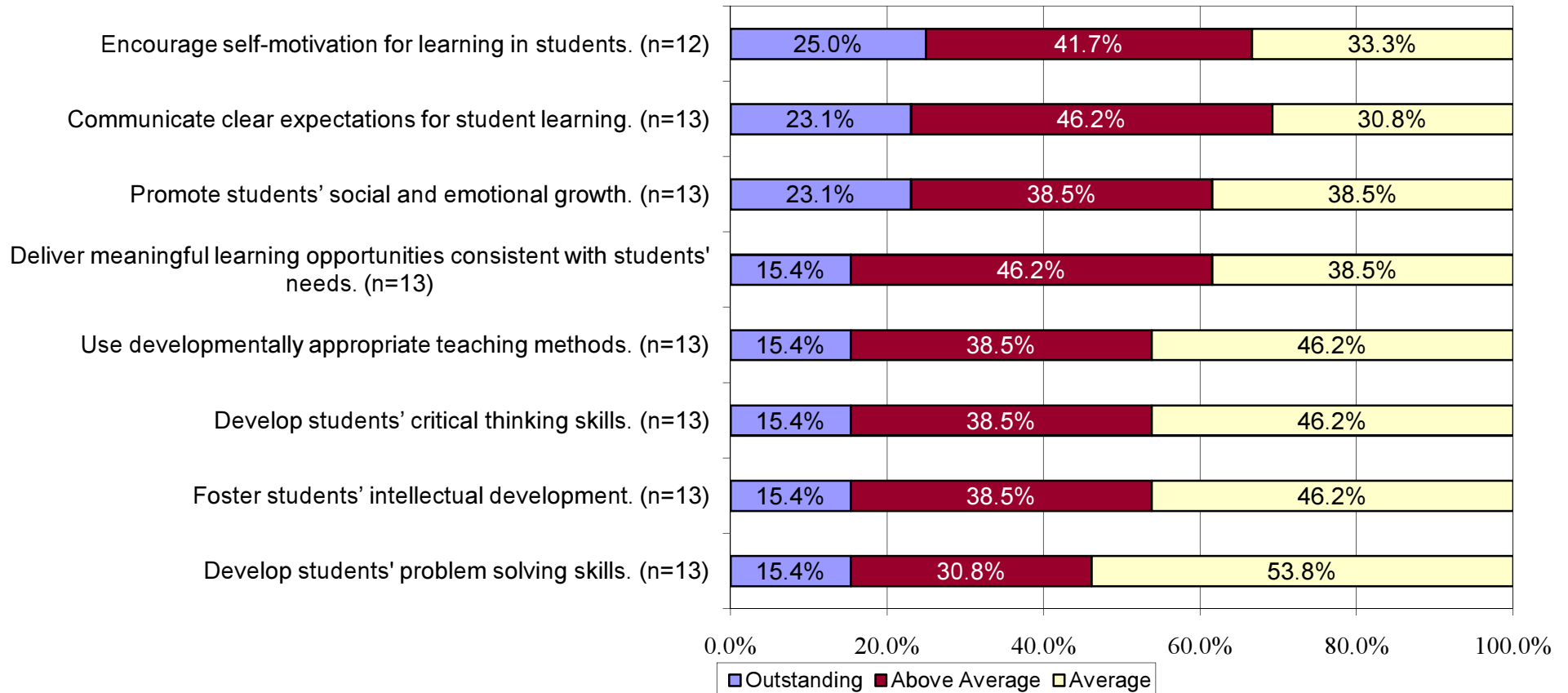
Unlike employers, alumni perceptions of their preparation to collaborate with others – particularly working with administrators – was a relative weakness.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



GSE graduates' ability to communicate clear expectations for learning and encouragement of self-motivation are strengths

Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of *Student Learning*?



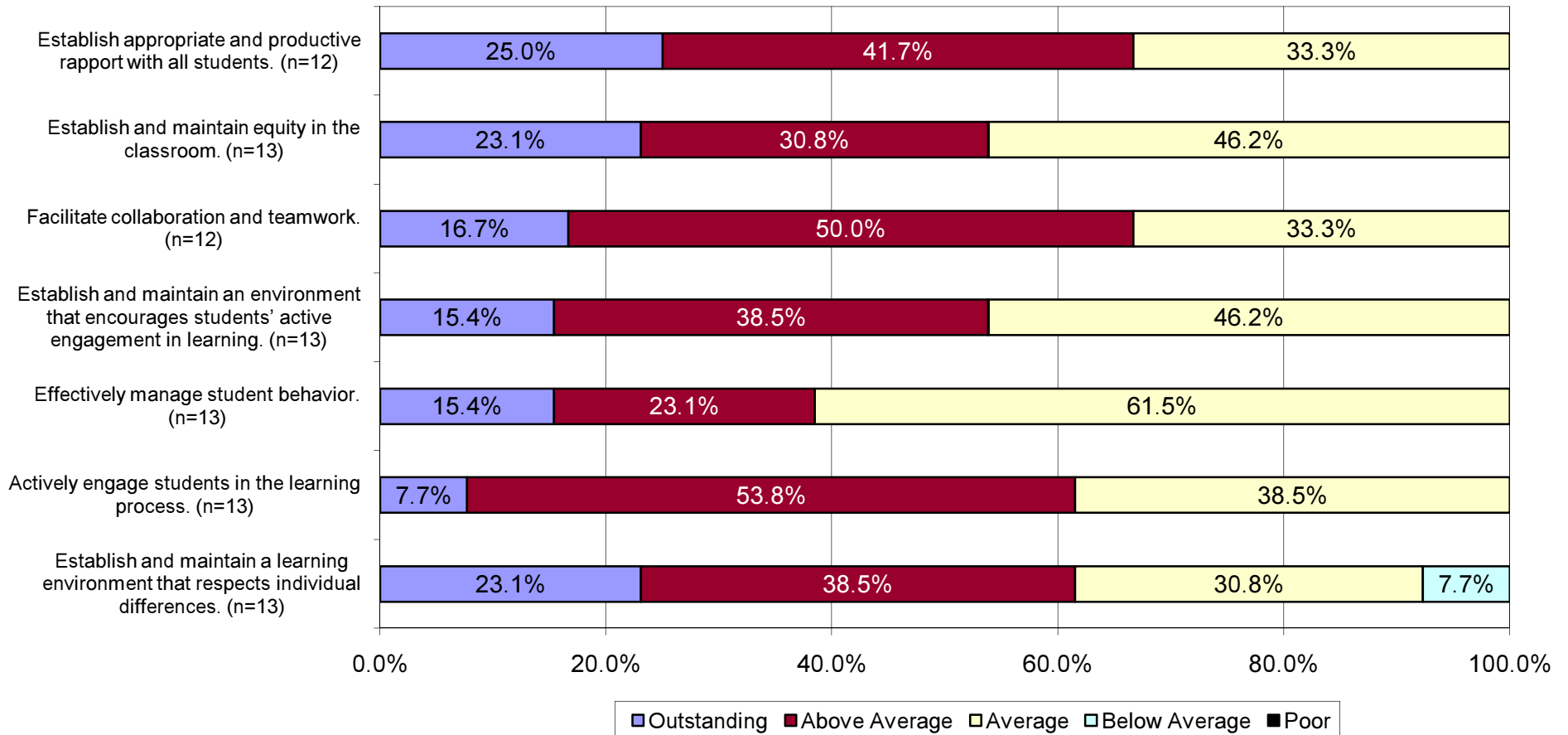
Both employers and alumni consider the GSE's preparation to support student learning to be a strength.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



Though effective at establishing a productive and equitable classroom, GSE graduates are generally considered to be on par in their ability to manage student behavior

Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of *Classroom Management*?



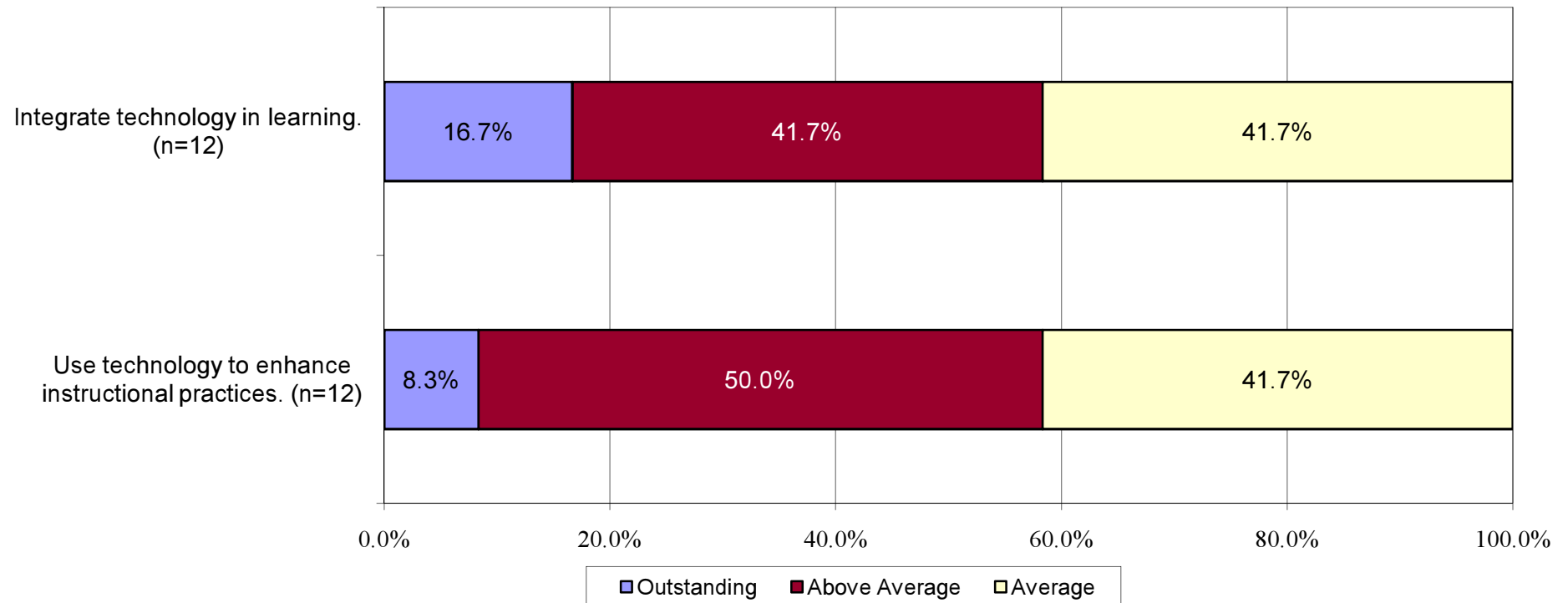
Both employers and alumni note that managing behavior is a challenge.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



GSE graduates demonstrate an ability to integrate technology into teaching and learning

Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of *Integrating Technology*?



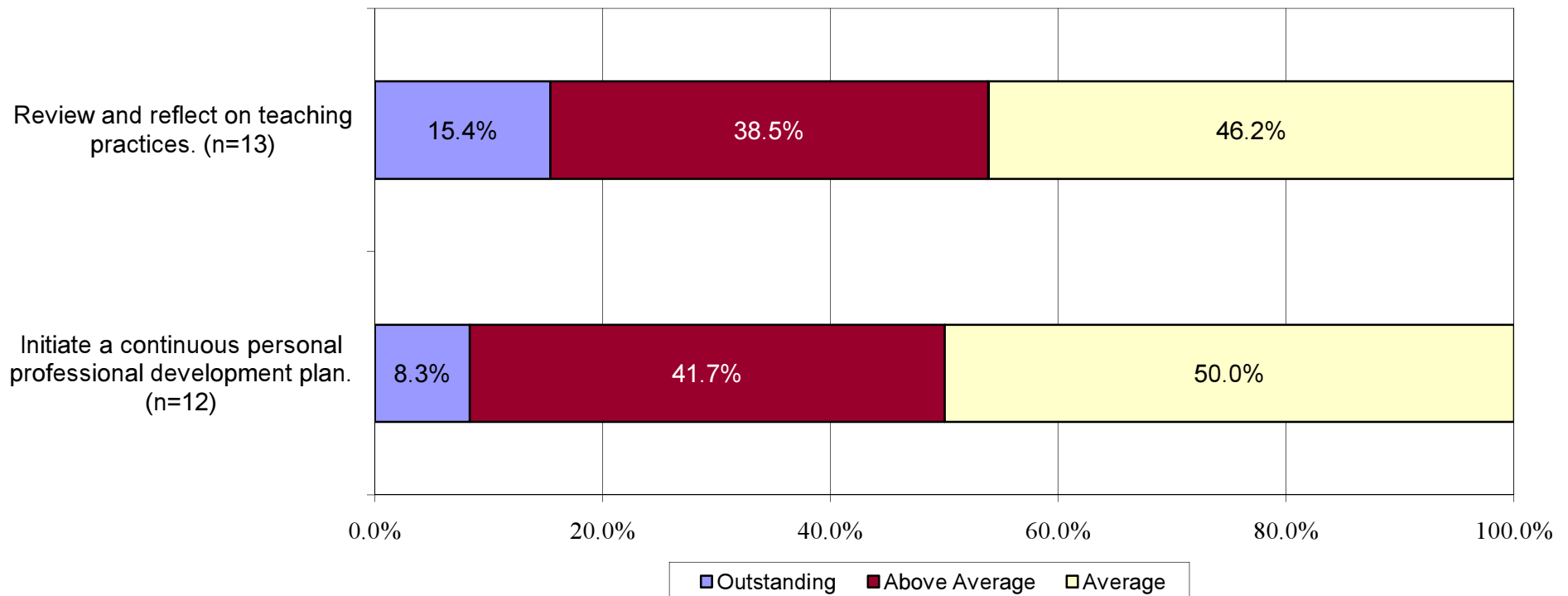
Fordham alumni consider the preparation they received to integrate technology to be a relative area of weakness. Fewer than half of alumni (44%) felt prepared to use technology to improve student learning.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



Relative to other competencies, GSE graduates' ability to reflect on their own practice and initiate PD is a weakness

Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of *Professional Development*?



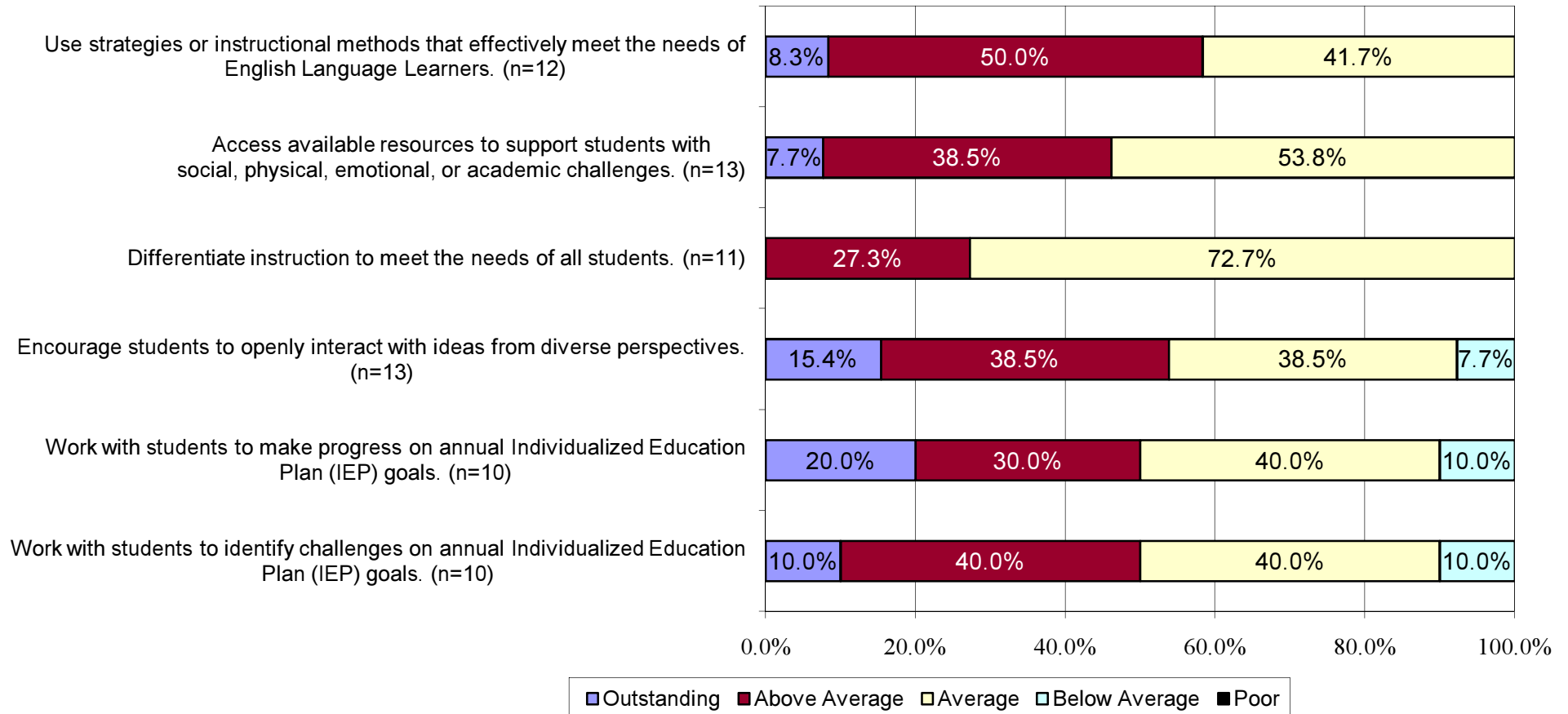
Unlike employers, alumni rate their preparation to support their professional development growth highly. The vast majority of alumni (85%) felt prepared or very well prepared to reflect and assess their practices in order to improve.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



Though highly rated across areas of diversity, additional training to differentiate instruction would likely be beneficial

Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of *Diversity*?



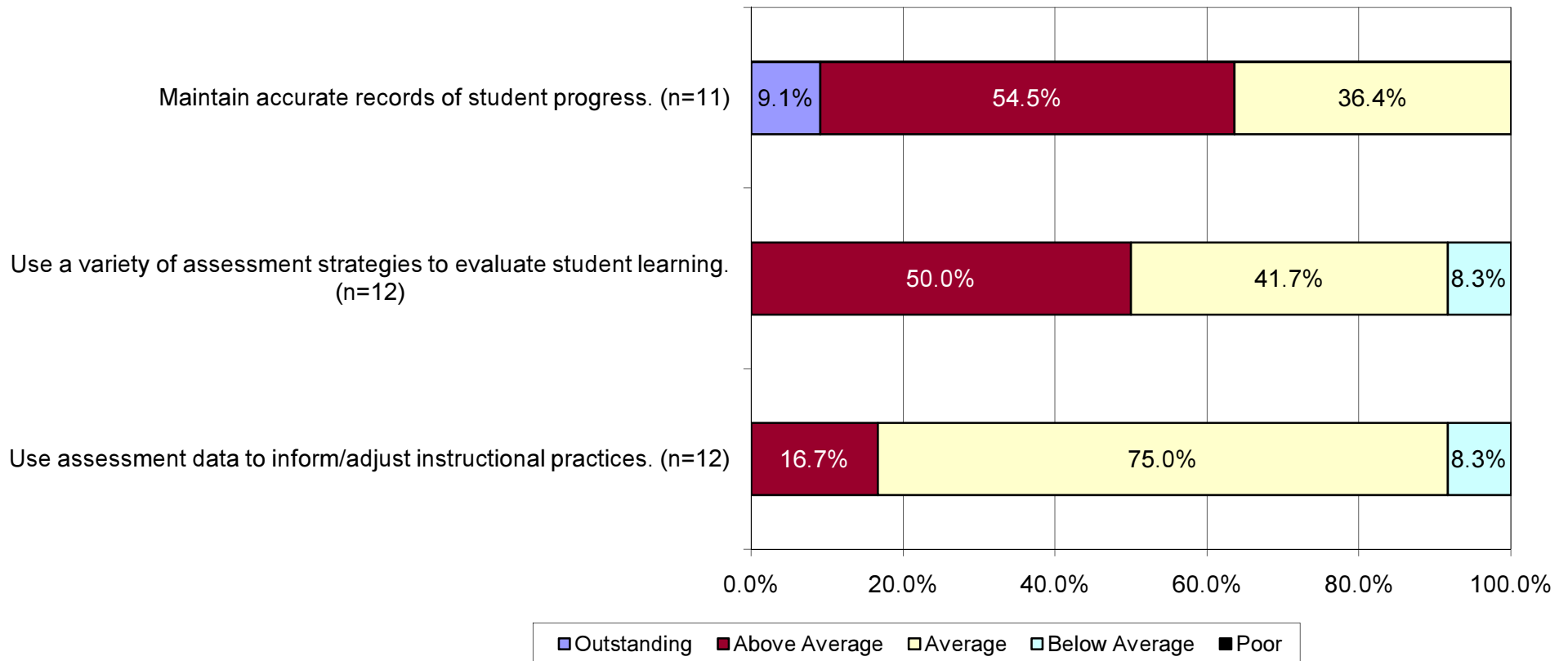
Fordham alumni note that their preparation to work with diverse learners was a relative weakness of their programs.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools



Graduates would likely benefit from support in understanding how to use assessment data to inform their teaching

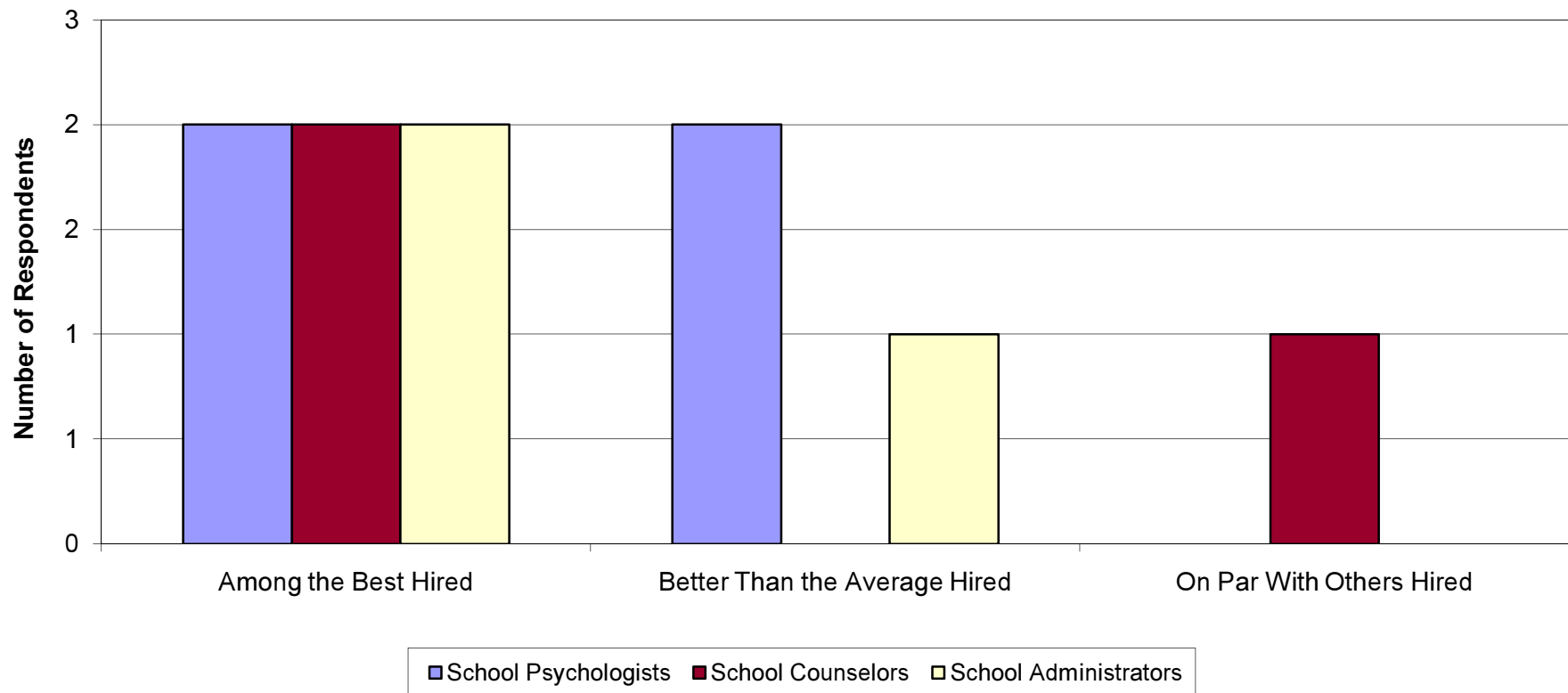
Compared to other teachers you have hired over the past 5 years, how would you rate the teachers you have hired from the GSE across the following areas of Assessment?



Alumni consider their preparation in assessment to be a relative weakness; one-in-five did not feel prepared to interpret assessment data.

GSE Graduates Relative to Graduates of Other Schools

Those responding employers who have hired GSE-trained school psychologists, counselors, or administrators over the past five years are largely satisfied with them





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Overall Perceptions of the GSE



The GSE enjoys a strong reputation among those who are both familiar and unfamiliar with the school

- **Six respondents spoke of the high quality of programs**
 - *“I have three friends who graduated from Fordham with degrees in administration. We have worked together for almost two decades and I trust their work ethics and opinions. They all heap high praise on how rigorous the curriculum is at F.U. I would eagerly interview a candidate with a degree from Fordham.”*
 - *“It seems to be comprehensive in its offerings of courses and the quality of work demanded from its students.”*
- **Three respondents spoke of the relevance of programs and responsiveness and quality of its faculty/staff**
 - *“It is an excellent institution that keeps up with the current trends in education and prepares their [sic] students well in teacher-education.”*
 - *“Very professional and hands-on with me. Always willing to speak and follow up with the graduates.”*
 - *“Drs. Marcus, Tetenbaum, and Cooper do exceptional work and are an asset to the GSE.”*

Overall Perceptions of the GSE



Though overall positive, three respondents with prior GSE experience also offered constructive feedback

- **Constructive feedback centered on program content, quality of teaching candidates, and the GSE’s responsiveness**
 - *“It has an excellent student teaching program. It could stand to have more focus on unit planning, however, and collaboration between student teachers – common planning is a major focus in the new small schools of NYCDOE.”*
 - *“Good Program. Needs to recruit stronger teaching candidates. Some student teachers have been excellent, some should have been screened from entering the program in the first place, as they did not have the necessary tools to be a strong teacher.”*
 - *“I attended the GSE and have been trying to complete my degree. Yet, I keep running into obstacles. I am an experienced principal in the DOE and was tapped for a superintendent position. Yet, I need to complete the comprehensive examination to get my Master [sic] degree. I already met the credit requirement. I was told that I had to re-apply for admission to be eligible to work in the comprehensive. I was told to do this after 6 six weeks of emails and phone calls!!! I am still in limbo regarding my degree and want to complete it ASAP to apply for my State SDA license. Without it, I can't apply for the Superintendent position.”*



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Strengths and Opportunities



GSE graduates' content and pedagogical preparation, classroom management, and communication skills are their most frequently identified strengths*

Core Strengths

Content Knowledge & Pedagogical Skills

- Three respondents noted GSE graduates' content and pedagogical knowledge are key strengths
 - “Excellent understanding of content.”
 - “Demonstrate evidence of good planning.”

Classroom Management

- Three respondents cited GSE graduates' skill with classroom management
 - “Our student teacher had an excellent rapport with the students. She knew many ways to motivate students. It was obvious she had learned a lot in her classes about how to establish a positive rapport with students.”

Collaboration & Communication

- Three respondents cited GSE graduates' ability and willingness to collaborate and communicate as a strength
 - “Have good communication skills, are very professional in nature, [and] work collaboratively.”
 - “Excellent collegial skills ... Relationships with the community”

Strengths and Opportunities



Respondents suggest additional training to support teaching candidates' ability to engage in assessment, work with diverse learners, and support student learning*

Additional Support

Assessment

- Three respondents suggest additional training in assessment strategies that drive instruction
 - “Few understand data and how it can be effectively employed to advance student achievement.”

Diverse Learners

- Two respondents suggest additional experience working with diverse learners
 - “Need extra knowledge in dealing with special ed students.”
 - “Special ed candidates often require additional training.”

Student Learning

- Two respondents also suggest additional experience to support student learning
 - “Rigor, training for the Regents exams, since most 9th and 10th grade classes focus on this.”
 - “Being prepared in general, for students who are not easily motivated.”



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Analysis and Recommendations



Employers consider Fordham graduates to be on par, if not above average relative to other new teachers they hire, and Fordham graduates are consistently rated above average across core areas of teaching

- **Employers perceive Fordham graduates' content and pedagogical knowledge, and their ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and families, to be their greatest strengths**
- **Employers largely have a positive overall impression of the Graduate School of Education – they spoke positively to the quality and relevance of its programs and the responsiveness and quality of faculty/staff**

Analysis and Recommendations



Despite Fordham's strengths, opportunities exist to address challenges noted by employers

Using data to drive instruction is an area in which many new teachers struggle.

- Employers note that Fordham graduates are not exceptionally strong in their ability to use assessment data to drive instruction. In addition, alumni consider their preparation in assessment to be a relative weakness.
 - *Therefore, teaching candidates would likely benefit from tangible examples, strategies, and/or experience in ways to maintain effective records of student progress and modify individual or group instruction based on that progress.*

Working with diverse learners is a challenge identified by both employers and alumni.

- Differentiating instruction and working with English Language Learners are particular areas in which employers and alumni indicate teaching candidates would benefit from additional preparation.
 - *Therefore, additional training or coursework to understand how to identify and implement strategies to work with English Language Learners and how to modify lesson plans to meet the needs of multiple learners is recommended. In addition, identifying strategies in how to work with colleagues to help identify and support students with physical, emotional, or academic challenges will likely help better prepare new teachers.*

Analysis and Recommendations

Despite Fordham's strengths, opportunities exist to address challenges noted by employers



Managing a classroom is particularly challenging for new teachers.

- Both employers and alumni offer positive feedback about the degree to which Fordham's programs prepare teaching candidates to manage most aspects of the classroom. However, both employers and alumni indicate that it is a challenge to manage student behavior.
 - *Therefore, opportunities to observe and discuss strategies used by experienced teachers, mentoring opportunities with new teachers or area principals, or additional practical experience may help ease the transition and provide new teachers with a number of new strategies to implement and refine.*