

National Survey of Student Engagement

Highlights of the 2020 Survey Results



Renaming in process

In August 2021, the university announced that it would begin a renaming process to address the legacy of Egerton Ryerson and build a more inclusive future.

Let's write the next chapter together.

ryerson.ca/next-chapter

About the Survey

- Since 2005, Ryerson has participated in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) – a survey that examines the extent to which students are engaged in activities associated with active learning and engagement. The survey is currently administered every three years.
- 65 Canadian institutions participated in the 2020 survey, including 19 Ontario universities. The survey was conducted in early 2020, before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the move to virtual instruction.
- First-year and fourth-year students who are in full-time programs were asked about issues related to academic challenge, learning with peers, experiences with faculty, and the campus environment. In 2020:
 - **8,160** first-year students were contacted, with **2,655** total respondents, representing a response rate of 33% and sampling error of +/-1.6%; and
 - **10,616** fourth-year students were contacted, with **3,130** total respondents, representing a response rate of 29% and a sampling error of +/-1.5%.
- The results from the survey will be posted online at:
<https://www.ryerson.ca/university-planning/surveys-reports/>



Respondent Profile

Ryerson
University

About the Survey

- Broadly, the survey data collected was representative of what we know about Ryerson students from enrolment in full-time programs:

Response	First Year Respondents	First Year Population	Fourth Year Respondents	Fourth Year Population
Gender				
Male	45%	45%	45%	46%
Female	54%	54%	52%	53%
Other Gender Identity/ Not Reported	<2%	<2%	<3%	<1%
Course Load: Full-Time/Part-Time				
Full-Time	92%	89%	68%	62%
Part-Time	8%	11%	32%	38%
Faculty				
Arts	398 (15%)	1,570 (16%)	378 (12%)	1,292 (11%)
The Creative School	450 (17%)	1,679 (17%)	384 (12%)	1,519 (13%)
Community Services	333 (13%)	1,167 (12%)	601 (19%)	2,056 (18%)
Engineering and Architectural Science	449 (17%)	1,304 (13%)	582 (19%)	2,115 (19%)
Science	313 (12%)	1,066 (11%)	305 (10%)	959 (8%)
Ted Rogers School of Management	712 (27%)	2,919 (30%)	880 (28%)	3,463 (30%)
Total Respondents	2,655	9,705	3,130	11,404

Demographics



Grades: Most surveyed students had a self-reported grade average of B or above.

First year:

A- or Above: 33%

B- or Above: 49%

C or Above: 12%

C- or Lower: 5%

Fourth year:

A- or Above: 32%

B- or Above: 55%

C or Above: 12%

C- or Lower: 1%



Racial and Ethnic Diversity: Ryerson remains a highly diverse learning environment.

Indigenous: 1%

Caucasian/White: 35%

Chinese: 13%

South Asian (East Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, e.g.): 22%

Black: 7%

Filipino: 7%

Latin American: 4%

Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, Vietnamese, e.g.): 5%

Arab (Saudi, Egyptian, e.g.): 5%

West Asian (Afghan, Iranian, e.g.): 4%

Japanese: <1%

Korean: 1%

Other: 9%

Note: Percentages sum to more than 100 because students could select multiple responses. Approximately 13% of students indicated more than one ethnicity/race.



Disability: 11% of first-year respondents and 15% of fourth-year respondents reported being diagnosed with a disability.

Demographics Continued



Travel to Campus: 83% of respondents used public transportation to commute to campus, while 12% walk or cycle. The remainder use a car to get to campus, either alone or with others. Travel times range as follows:

20 minutes or less: 14%

21 to 40 minutes: 16%

41-60 minutes: 30%

61-80 minutes: 29%

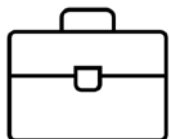
Over 80 Minutes: 12%



Family Educational Background: 44% of respondents were from families in which no parent has completed a bachelor's degree or higher degree at university.

High School or Less: 22%
**Some or Completed College
or CEGEP:** 16%

Incomplete University: 5%
Bachelor's Degree: 33%
Graduate Degree: 23%



Employment: 63% of students work for pay in a typical week. Among those who are employed, 77% work off-campus only, 16% work on-campus only, and 8% work both on- and off-campus.



Engagement Indicators

Engagement Indicators

The NSSE questionnaire includes more than 100 items. This information is summarized with the use of ten engagement indicators covering four major themes. The indicators can be thought of as subtypes or aspects of student engagement. They include:

Academic Challenge	Higher Order Learning Reflective and Integrative Learning Learning Strategies Quantitative Reasoning
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning Discussions with Diverse Others
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction Effective Teaching Practices
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions Supportive Environment

Students were asked to indicate the extent to which their experience at Ryerson involved each item in the survey. Depending on the question, options were either “very little / some / quite a bit / very much” or “never / sometimes / often / very often”.

A summary of findings is presented on the following pages. Charts outlining detailed results by question are provided as an Appendix.

Academic Challenge Indicators

- According to NSSE, challenging intellectual and creative work is central to student learning, and universities should challenge and support students to engage in various forms of deep learning. Four indicators are used to summarize the level of academic challenge.
- **Higher-order learning:** Students indicate how much they have had to move beyond memorization, and towards applying, analyzing, evaluation, and forming new ideas and information in their studies. Ryerson scored similarly to other Ontario institutions in these indicators.
- **Reflective and integrative learning:** Students indicate how much they have had to evaluate their own ways of thinking, connecting learning to broader issues, or consolidate information from a variety of sources. Ryerson scored similarly to other Ontario institutions in these indicators.
- **Learning strategies:** Students report on the practices they undertake to help them understand and retain course material. One example of such a practice is reviewing notes after class. Ryerson is on par with the Ontario average on this practice.
- **Quantitative reasoning:** Students report on the degree to which they were challenged to use numerical analysis. An example can include reaching conclusions based on self-generated numerical information, or examining a real world problem or issue. Ryerson is similar to the Ontario average in these indicators.

Learning with Peers and Experiences with Faculty

- One of the premises on which NSSE is based is that “collaborating with others in solving problems or mastering difficult material prepares students for the messy, unscripted problems they will encounter during and after college.” NSSE tracks two broad indicator groups that capture interactions with other students:
 - **Collaborative learning:** Collaborative learning happens when students’ academic work involves others. The most common form of collaborative learning reported was working with other students on course projects or assignments. Ryerson students worked together more frequently than was the case at other Ontario universities.
 - **Discussions with diverse others:** Ryerson students are more likely to interact with a student of a different ethnicity or different religion than was the case for the Ontario universities’ average, but were similar in terms of interactions with students from different economic backgrounds or political beliefs.
- Students conduct much of their learning with faculty, who help them think about and solve problems. NSSE tracks student-faculty interaction, and effective teaching practices.
 - **Student-faculty interaction:** Students report on the frequency with which they engage directly with faculty. Ryerson is slightly below the Ontario average in this indicator.
 - **Effective teaching practices:** Students report on the quality of faculty feedback, and specific aspects of teaching, including use of examples and illustrations, and clear explanations of course goals. Ryerson students reported slightly lower scores in this area than did students at other Ontario universities.

Evaluation of Campus Environment

- **Quality of interactions:** Students were asked to rate their interactions with others on campus on a scale of 1 (low) to 7 (high). Overall, students maintained strong connections with faculty, staff, and each other in first and fourth year. Ryerson was largely comparable with other universities in this regard.

Average Scores (1-7 Scale)

	First Year	Fourth-Year
Students	5.3	5.4
Academic Advisors	4.8	4.6
Faculty	4.8	4.8
Student Services Staff	4.7	4.6
Other Administrative Offices	4.7	4.5

- **Supportive environment:** Students report the degree to which they felt supported in their studies, inclusive of the emphasis the institution places on academic support and social opportunities. Ryerson scored either similarly or slightly below comparator universities on these indicators. First-year students generally gave higher ratings than fourth-year students on these indicators.

Engagement Indicator Summary

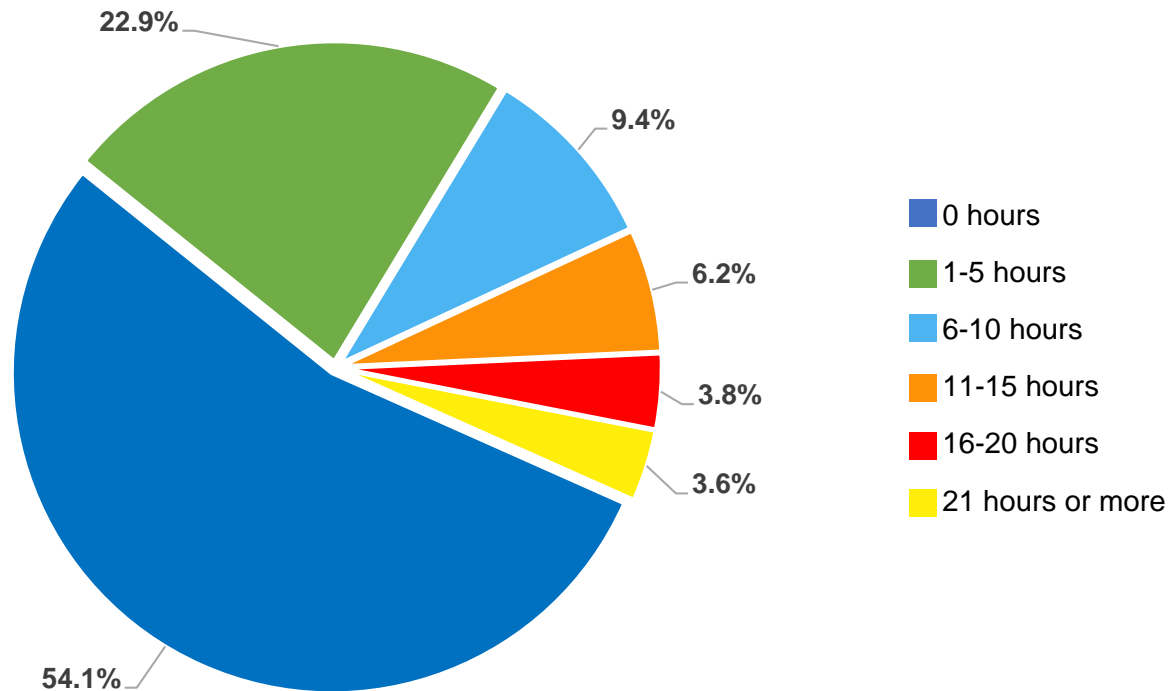
- Results for these engagement indicators are shown below for Ryerson, Ontario universities, and U.S. peer universities*.
- On indicators related to learning with peers, Ryerson results are higher than those for Ontario and US comparators. Ryerson matches or is behind in other categories.
- Fourth-year students report significantly more student-faculty interaction than do first-year students. In general, results for fourth-year students are somewhat higher than for first-year students on indicators related to academic challenge and learning with peers, and somewhat lower on campus environment indicators. These trends are generally consistent with other Ontario universities.

Engagement Indicator	1st Year			4th Year		
	Ryerson	Ontario	U.S. Peers	Ryerson	Ontario	U.S. Peers
Academic Challenge						
Higher Order Learning	35.9	37.0	37.6	36.6	37.6	40.6
Reflective and Integrative Learning	33.9	34.1	34.9	35.8	36.2	38.0
Learning Strategies	34.7	35.8	37.0	33.3	34.3	39.3
Quantitative Reasoning	24.5	26.3	28.7	26.7	27.8	30.7
Learning with Peers						
Collaborative Learning	34.5	33.9	32.5	34.6	33.4	32.4
Discussions with Diverse Others	39.9	39.6	37.9	42.1	39.8	40.9
Experiences with Faculty						
Student-Faculty Interaction	12.6	14.8	19.1	17.1	18.2	21.2
Effective Teaching Practices	32.0	34.3	37.8	32.5	34.9	39.6
Campus Environment						
Quality of Interactions	38.5	39.5	41.0	37.9	38.8	42.1
Supportive Environment	30.1	30.5	35.3	26.5	25.5	32.1

*Note: Includes participating public U.S. institutions that are urban, commuter universities with more than 20,000 students, and in either the Doctoral Universities or Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Universities Carnegie categories

Co-Curricular Activity

- Though not formally included in the campus environment indicators, a related feature of the university experience is the time students spend in co-curricular activities.



- Nearly half of the survey participants participated in co-curricular activities. This participation rate was down slightly from 2017, and was less than the Ontario and US peer average. However, Ryerson has made significant improvements in this category since 2014.

Skills Development and High Impact Practices

High Impact Learning Practice	Participation Rate			
	First Year		Fourth Year	
	Ryerson	Ontario	Ryerson	Ontario
Participate in an internship, co-op, field experience, student teaching, or clinical placement			48%	47%
Participate in a learning community or some other formal program where groups of students take two or more classes together	5%	8%	15%	17%
Participate in a study abroad program			8%	10%
Work with a faculty member on a research project	2%	3%	13%	24%
Complete a culminating senior experience (capstone course, senior project or thesis, comprehensive exam, portfolio, etc.)			40%	34%
Community-Based Project or service learning	42%	45%	53%	48%

*Please note that NSSE only considers 3 of the high-impact practices applicable to first year.

Priorities for Improvement

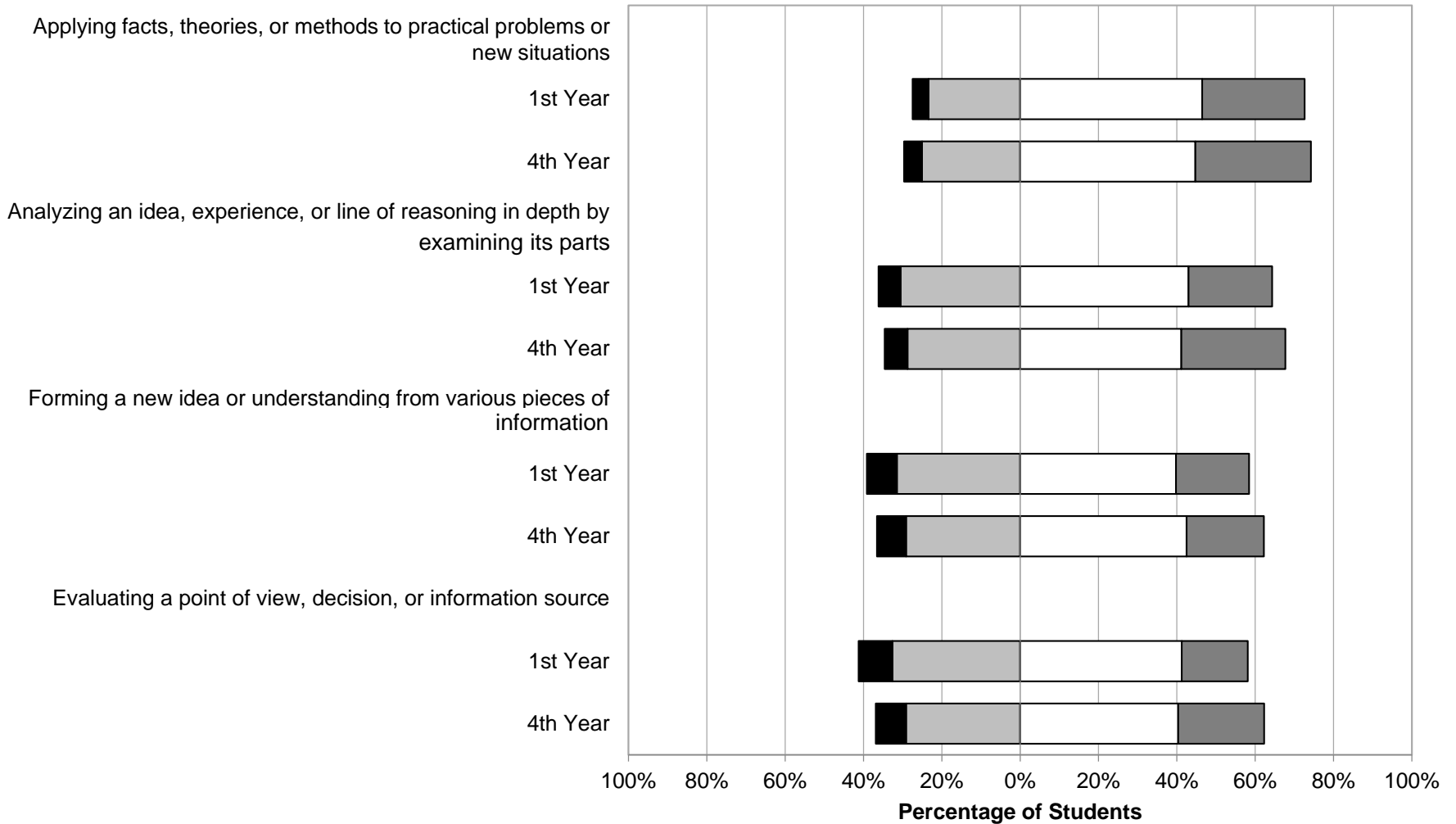
- **Inside the classroom**
 - Quality of course instruction
 - Variety of course offerings within their majors (particularly among first-year students)
 - Better fit between course content and evaluation
 - Improving classrooms
- **Outside the classroom:**
 - Improving the quality and availability of study space
 - Providing a better social environment
 - Improving the quality of personal support services
- **Other Comments referred to:**
 - Costs of transportation
 - Scheduling of classes
 - Limited opportunities for involvement in campus life
 - More mental health support
 - Employment counselling
 - Safety on campus

Questions and/or comments on these survey results can be submitted to the University Planning Office via email at upo@ryerson.ca.

Appendix

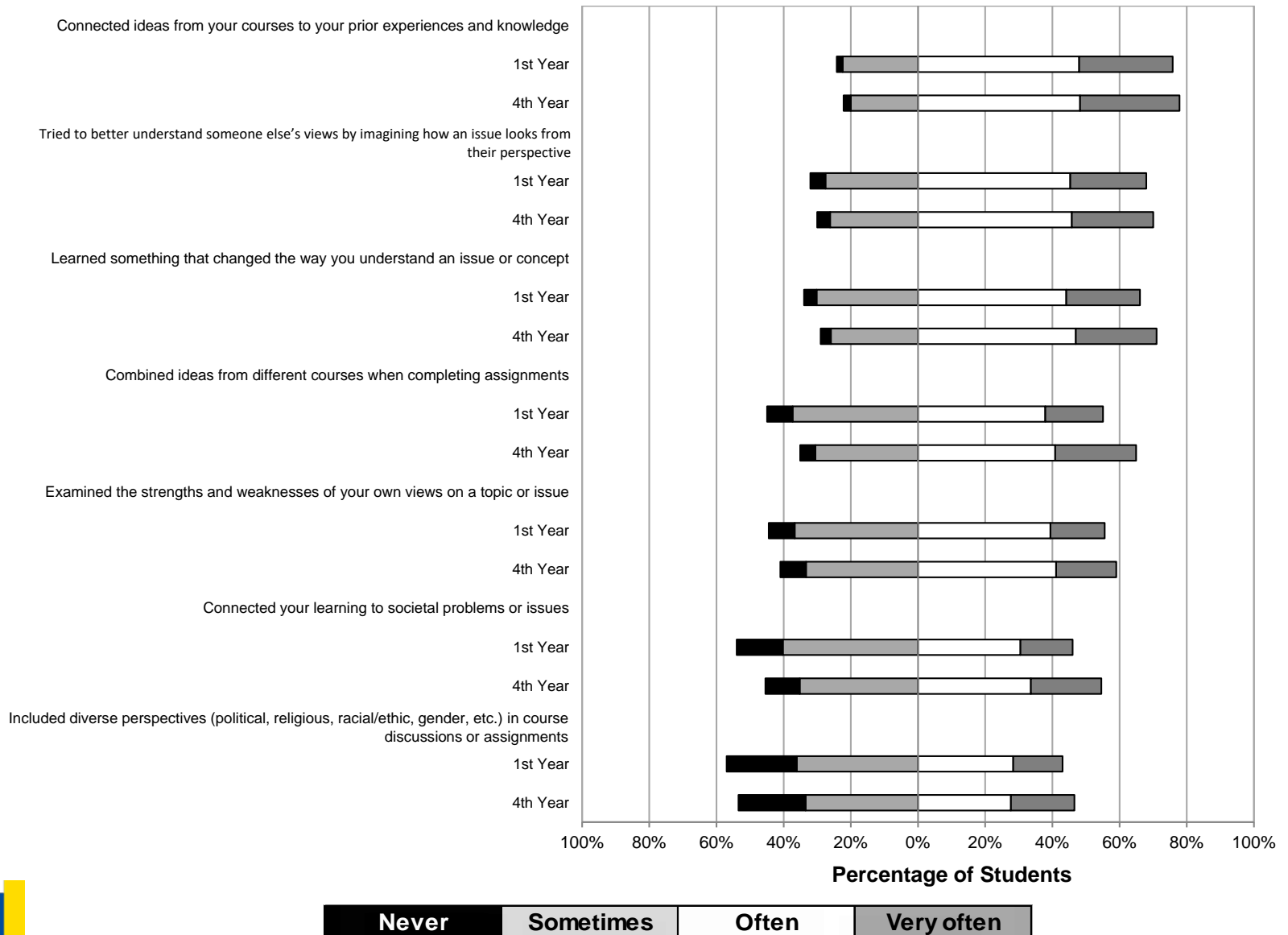
Detailed results

Academic Challenge – Higher Order Learning

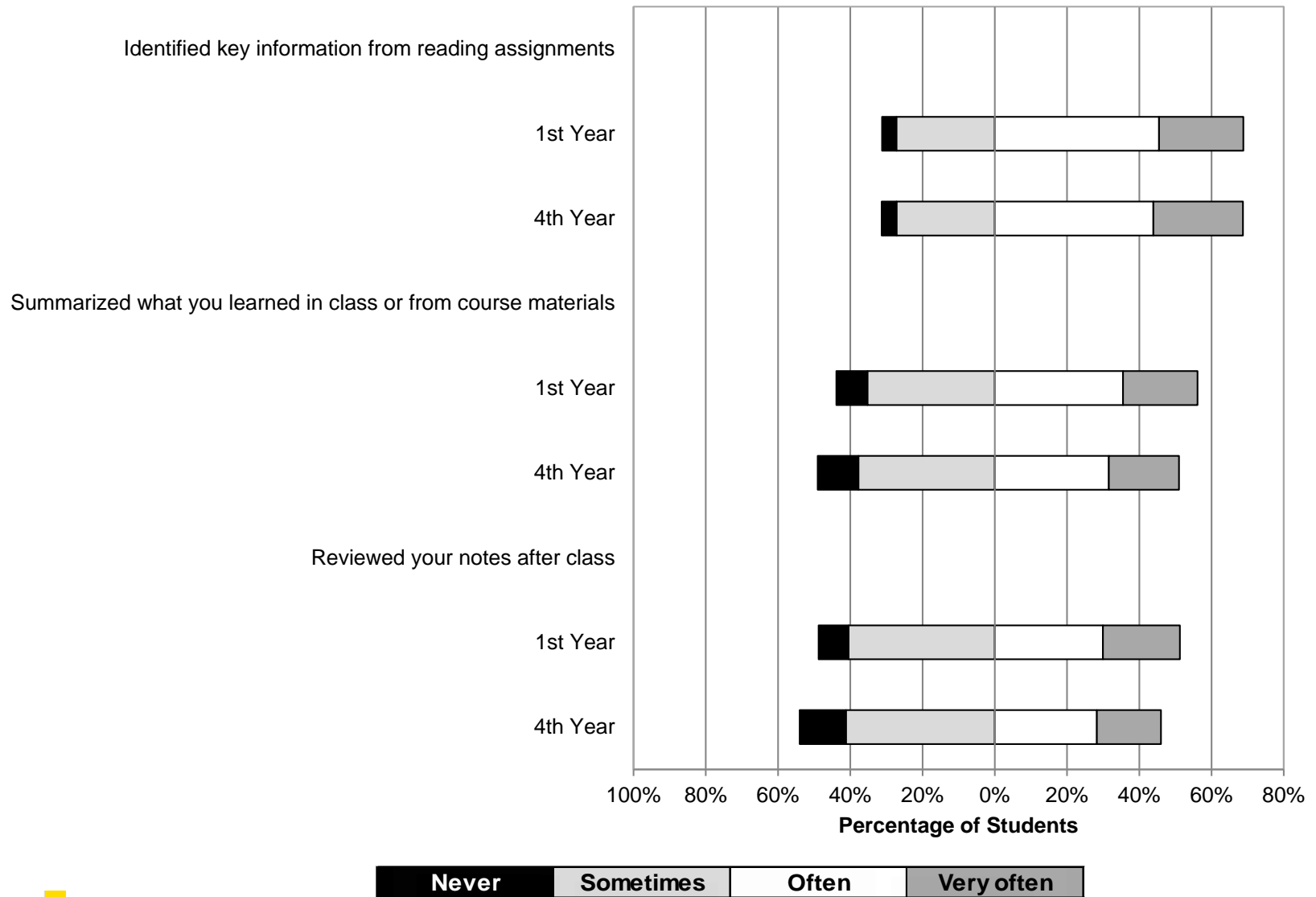


Very little Some Quite a bit Very much

Academic Challenge - Reflective & Integrative Learning



Academic Challenge – Learning Strategies



Academic Challenge – Quantitative Reasoning

Reached conclusions based on your own analysis of numerical information (numbers, graphs, statistics, etc.)

1st Year

4th Year

Evaluated what others have concluded from numerical information

1st Year

4th Year

Used numerical information to examine a real-world problem or Issue (unemployment, climate change, public health, etc.)

1st Year

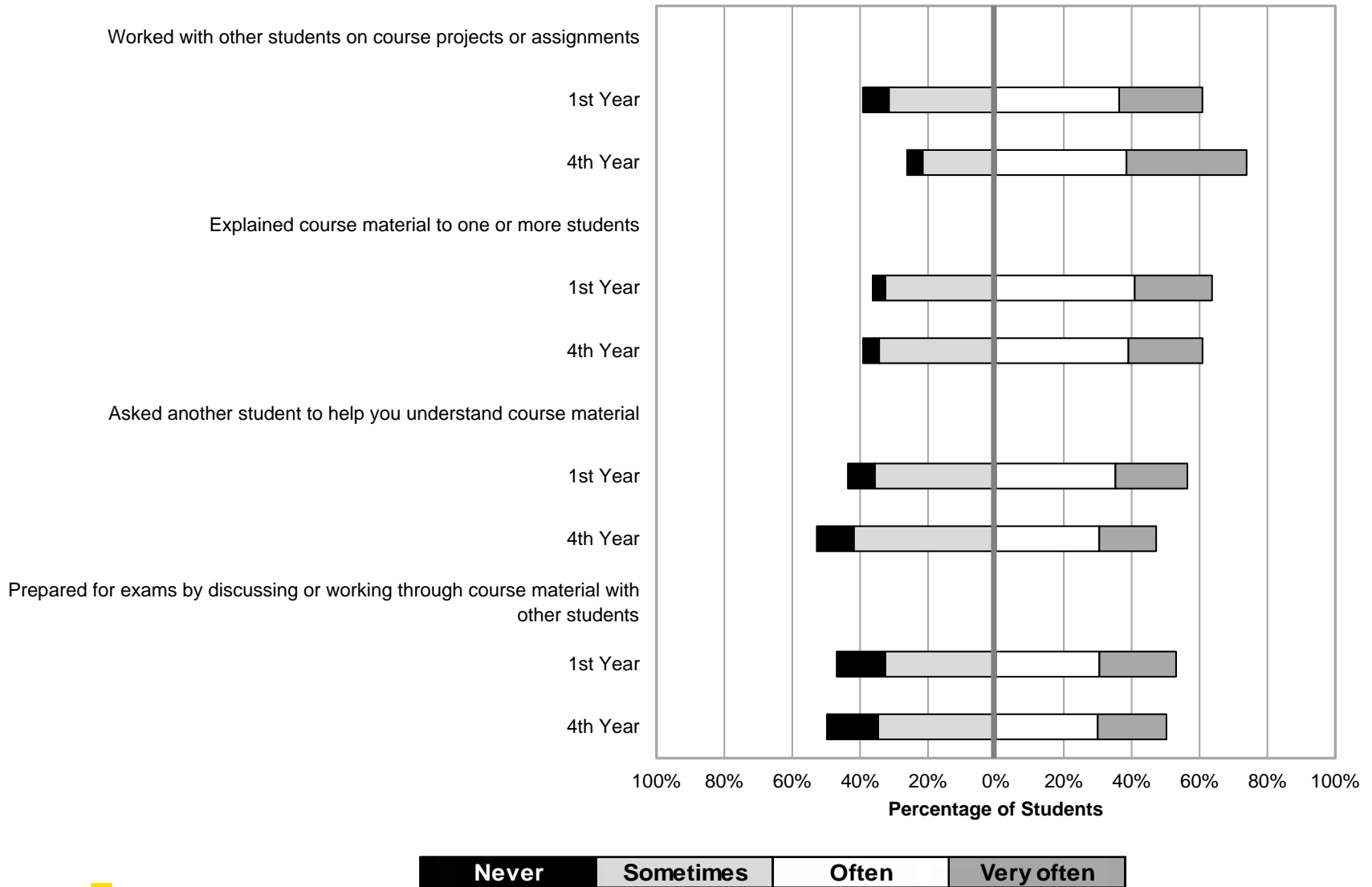
4th Year

100% 80% 60% 40% 20% 0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

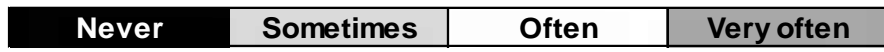
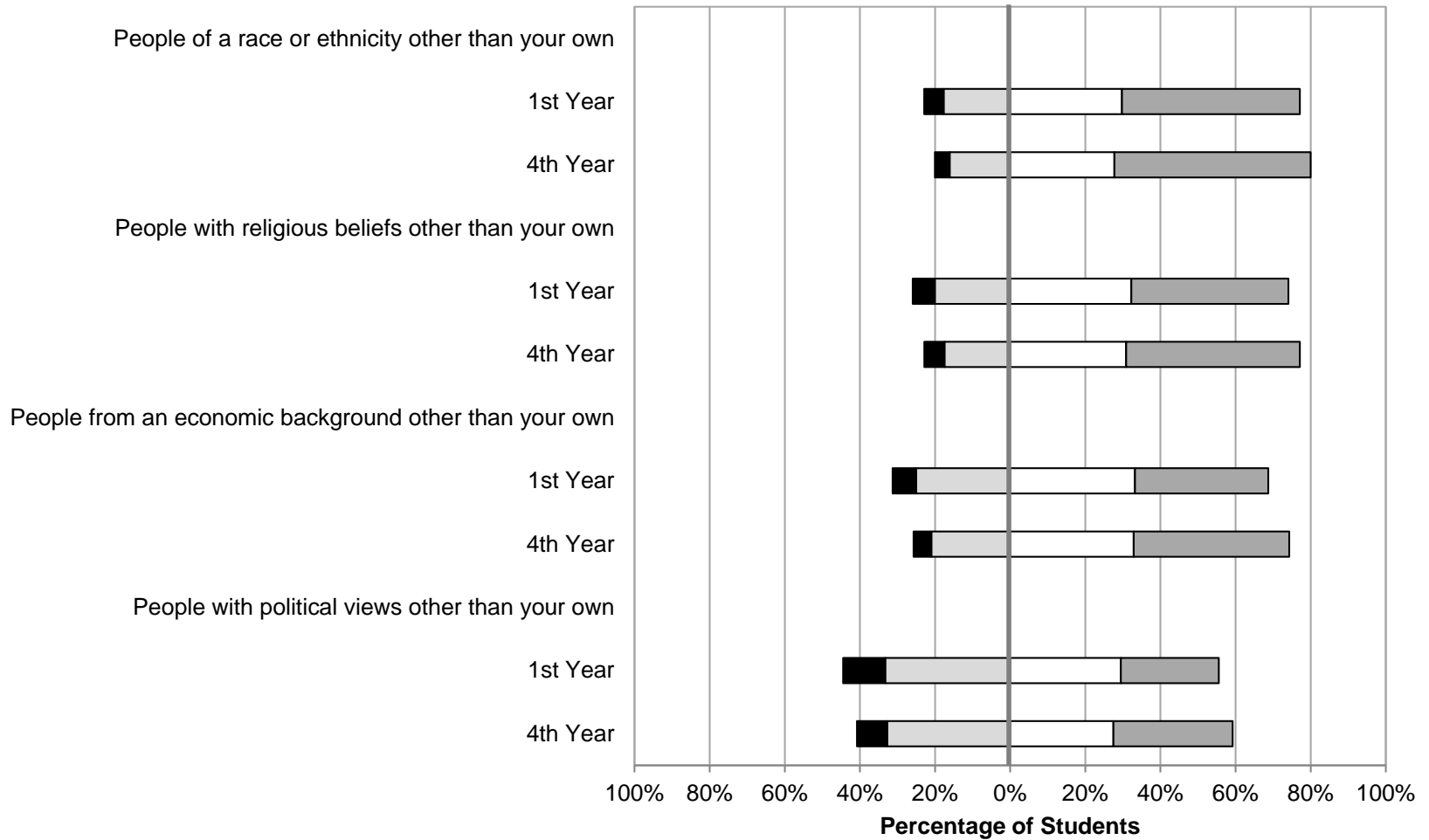
Percentage of Students



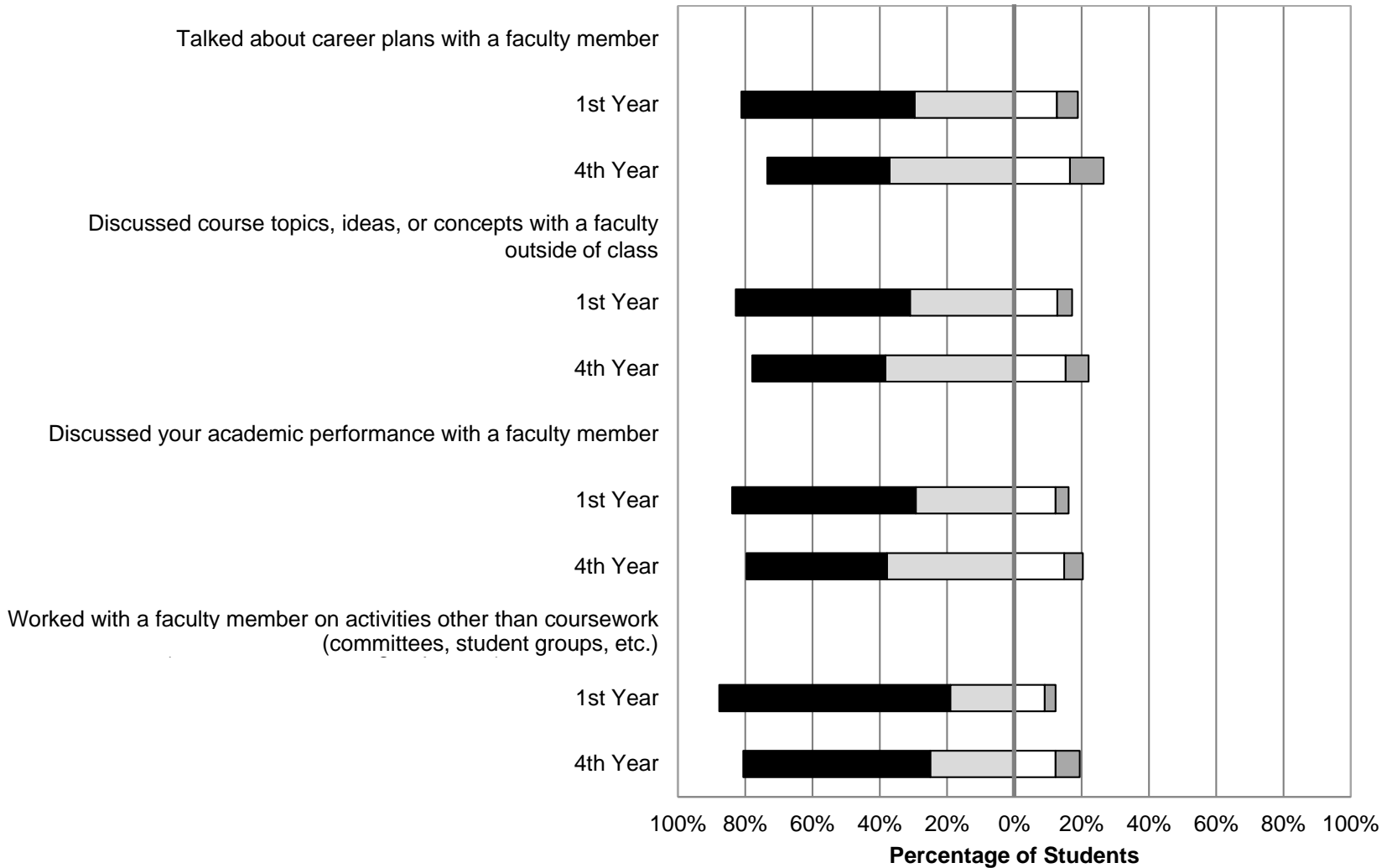
Learning with Peers – Collaborative Learning



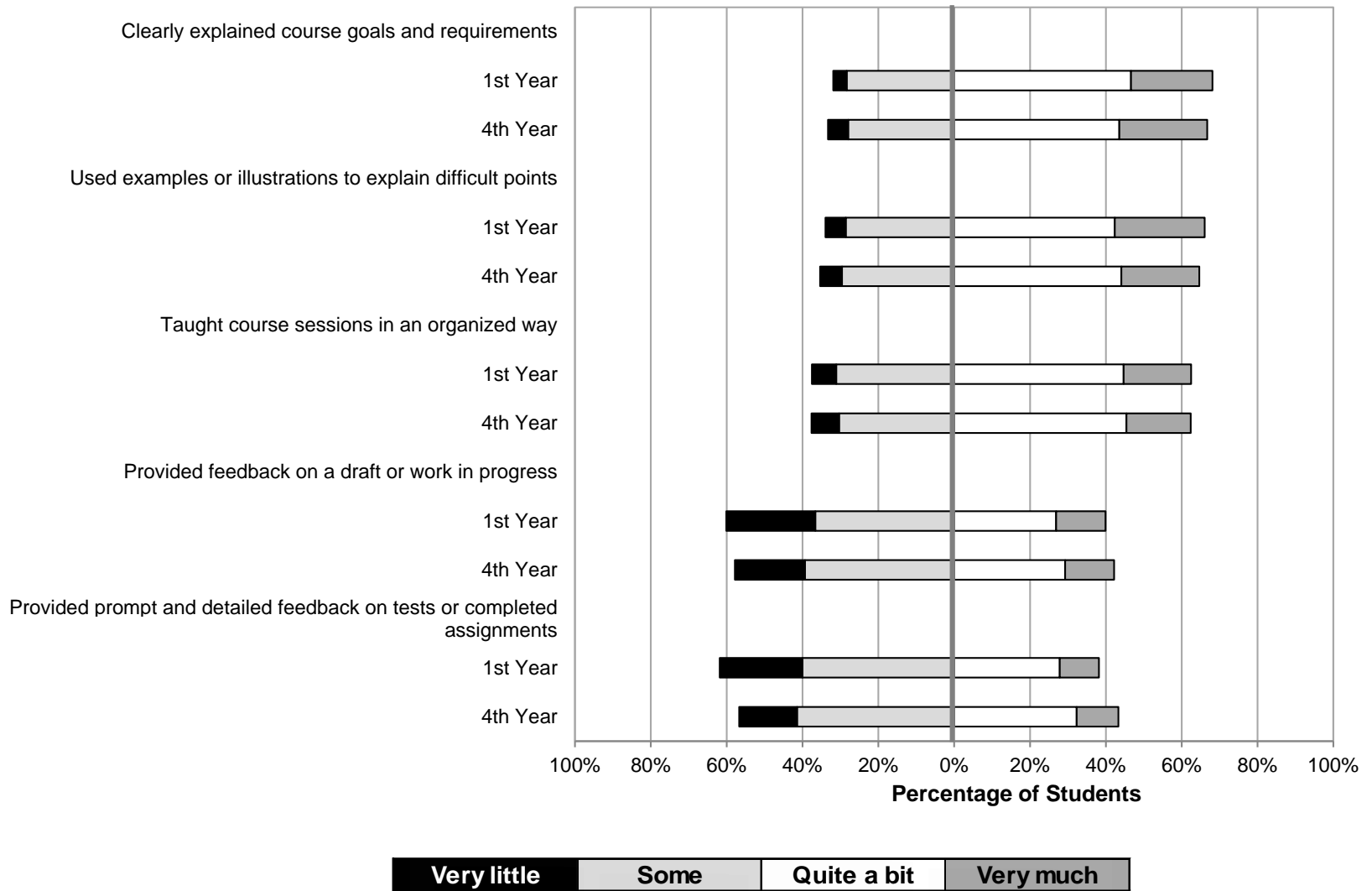
Learning with Peers – Discussions with Diverse Others



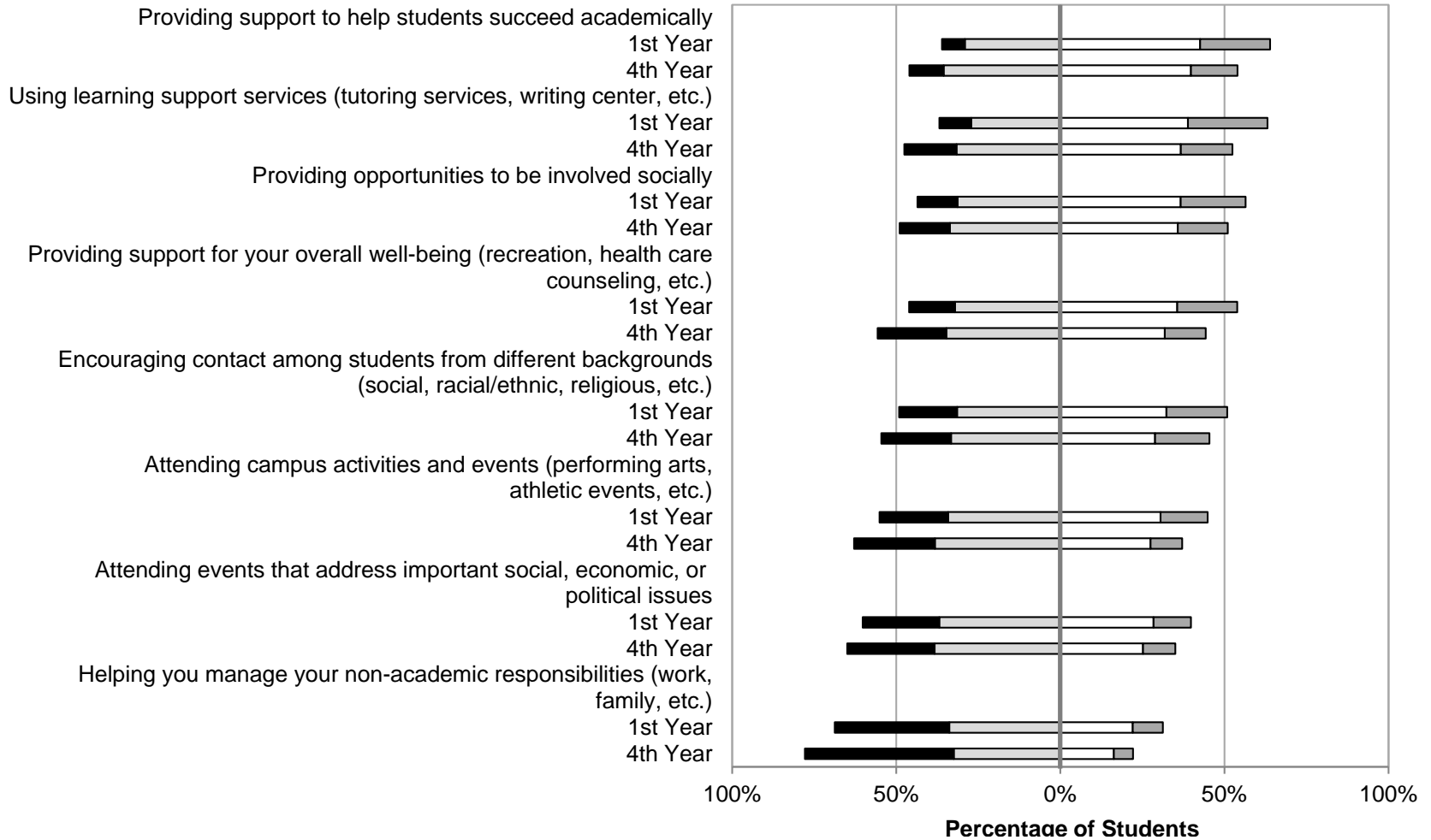
Faculty – Student-Faculty Interaction



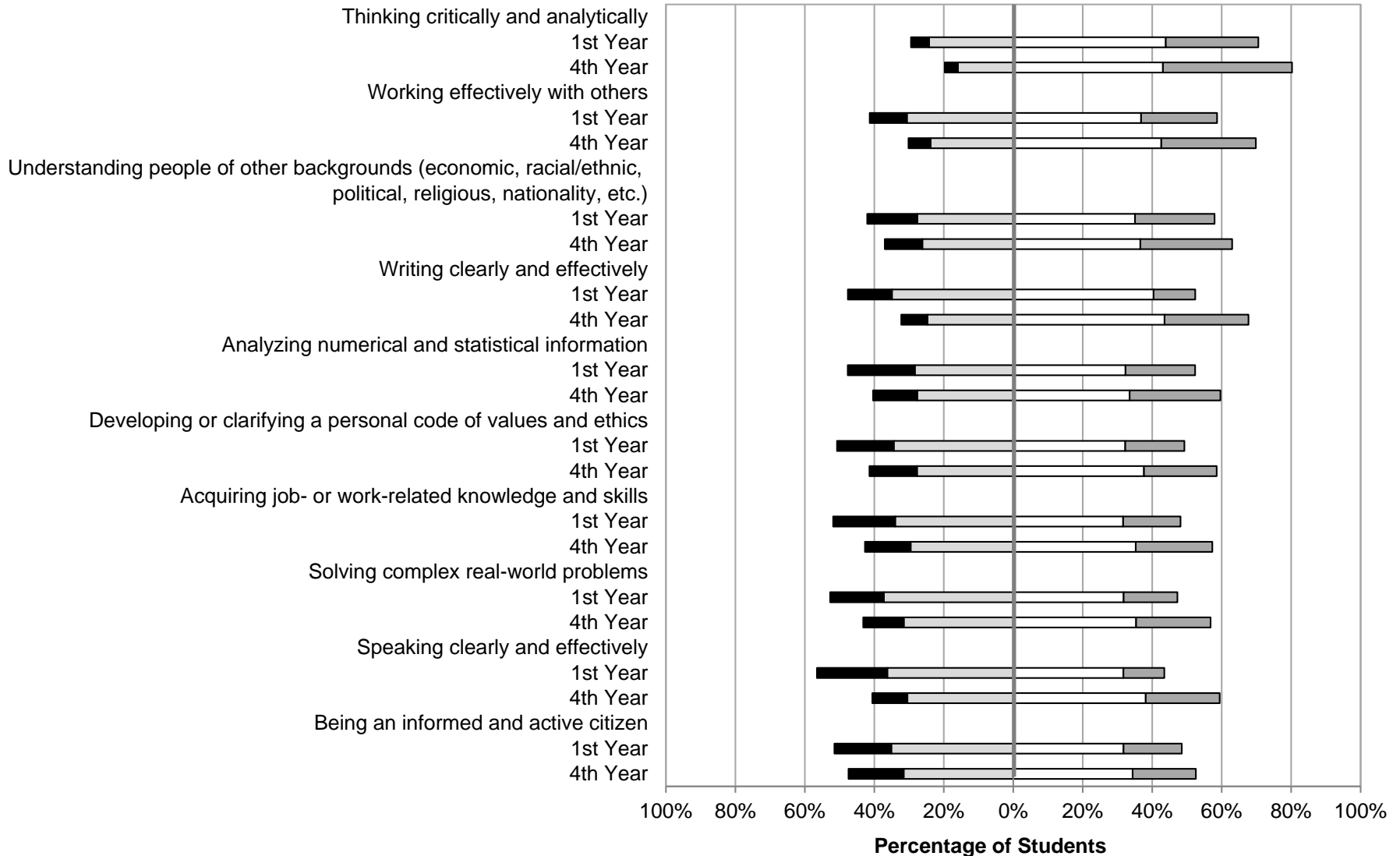
Faculty – Effective Teaching Practices



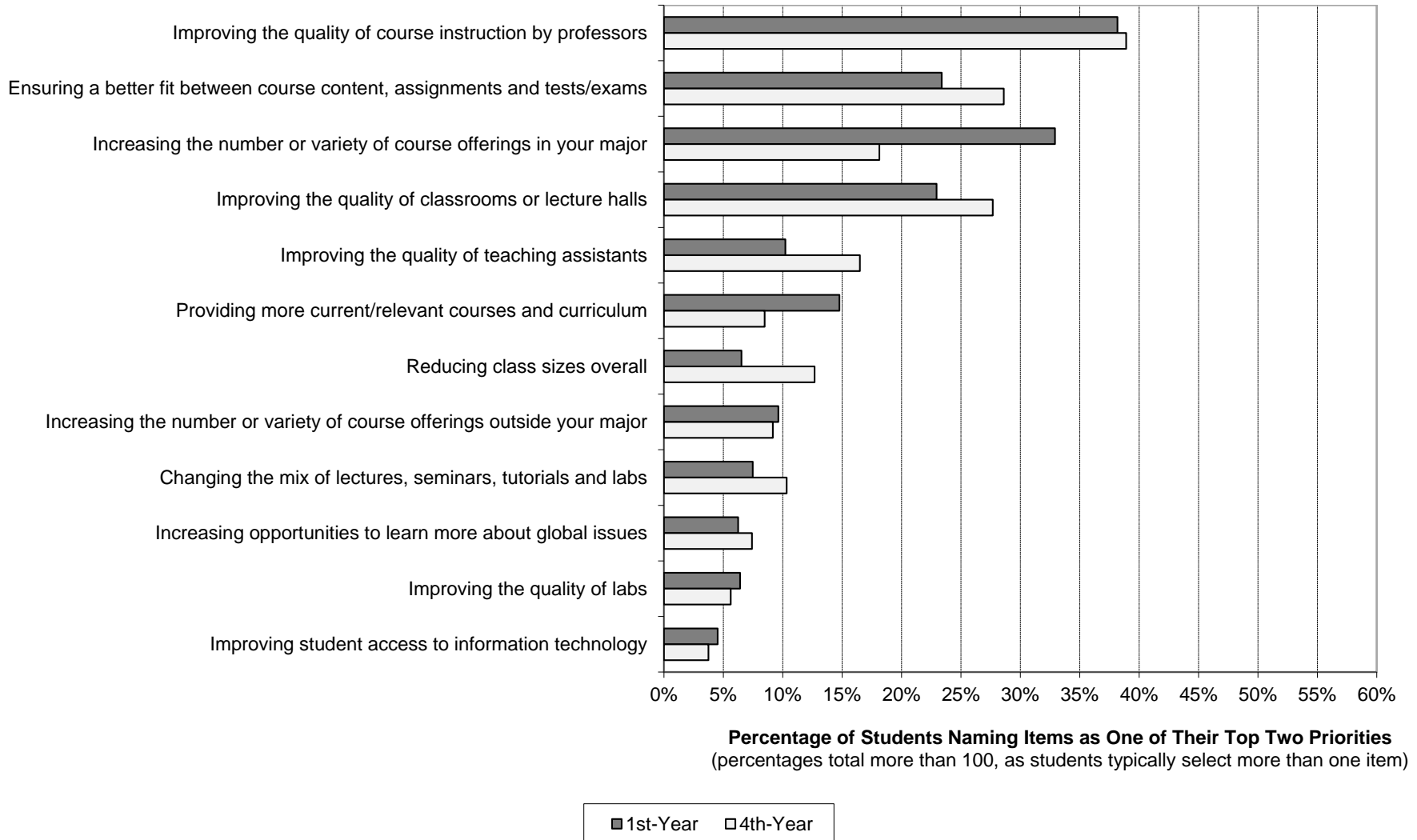
Supportive Environment: Emphasis on Various Activities



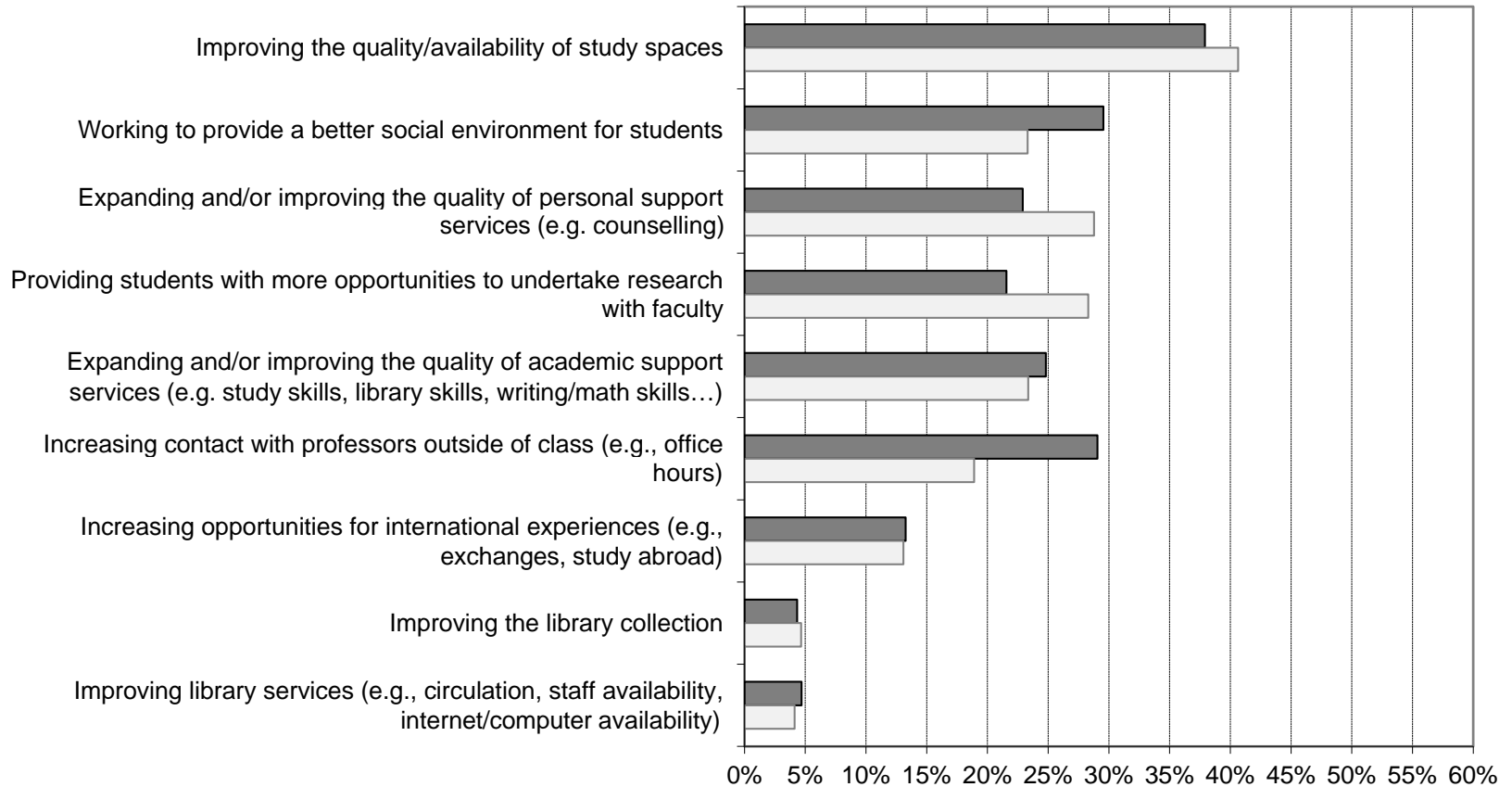
Skills Development: Contribution of University



Priorities for Improvement – In the Classroom



Priorities for Improvement – Outside The Classroom



Percentage of students naming item as one of their top two priorities (percentages total more than 100, as students typically select more than one item)

