



**FORDHAM UNIVERSITY**

**THE JESUIT UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

# **Results of the 2005-2008 Alumni Survey**

**Graduate School of Education  
and  
Eduventures**



# Drivers Behind the Alumni Survey

- Understand outcomes of GSE students and programs
- Fulfill commitment to serving our students by understanding their experience
- Contribute to NCATE reaccreditation process
- Enable improvements at the GSE

## Guiding Questions:

1. Are alumni finding jobs and remaining in the fields in which they are trained?
2. How satisfied are alumni with their overall experiences?
3. How well do alumni believe their programs prepared them to enter their professional fields?



# About the Process

- Eduventures co-developed and executed the survey
  - 10-15 minutes to complete
  - Survey completed online or via an abbreviated paper version
  - Branching questions for C&T graduates online
- From June to September 2008, 1,321 alumni were contacted
  - Graduates from 2005-2008 were invited
  - 1<sup>st</sup> – E-mail invitation (but achieved a very low response rate via their @fordham.edu address)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> - Postcard invitation mailed
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> – Postcard invitation mailed (5% of postcards returned total)
  - 4<sup>th</sup> - 1 letter and paper survey mailed
- 33.1% response rate achieved (after accounting for invalid addresses)

While the response rate is on par with many schools of education, the outreach process highlights a need to keep alumni's current e-mail addresses on file and up to date.

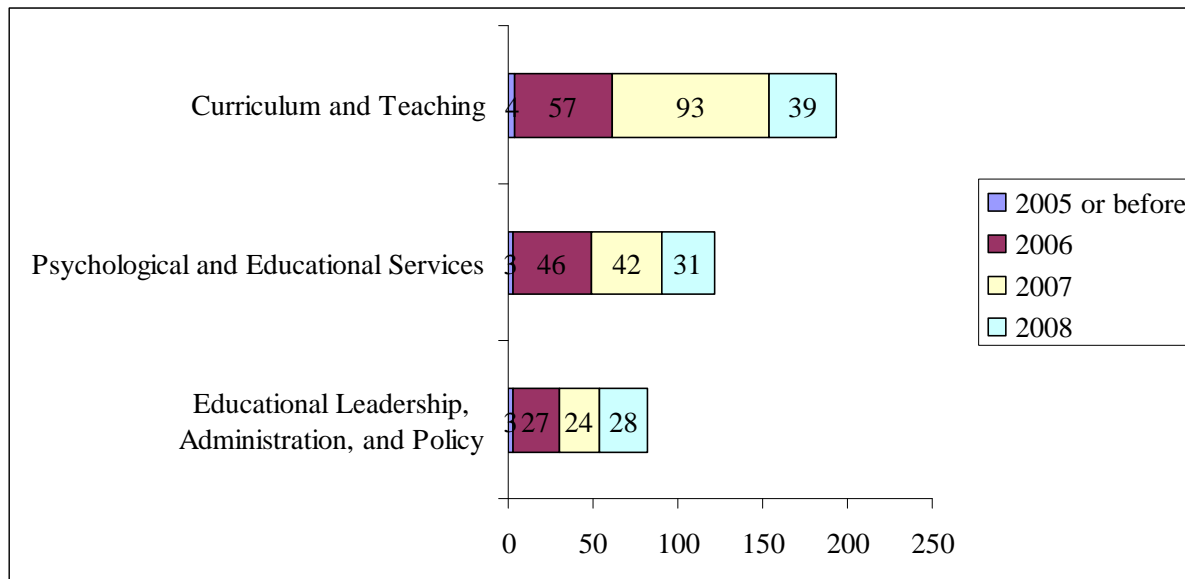


# Respondent Demographics

The average respondent is...

- Female (82.6%)
- White (65.8%)
- In her late 30s ( $\underline{M}$ =37.5)
- Part-time enrollee (54.3%)
- 2007 graduate (39.5%)
- Master's degree recipient (76.7%)

Respondents By Year of Program Completion and Department Area (N=397)





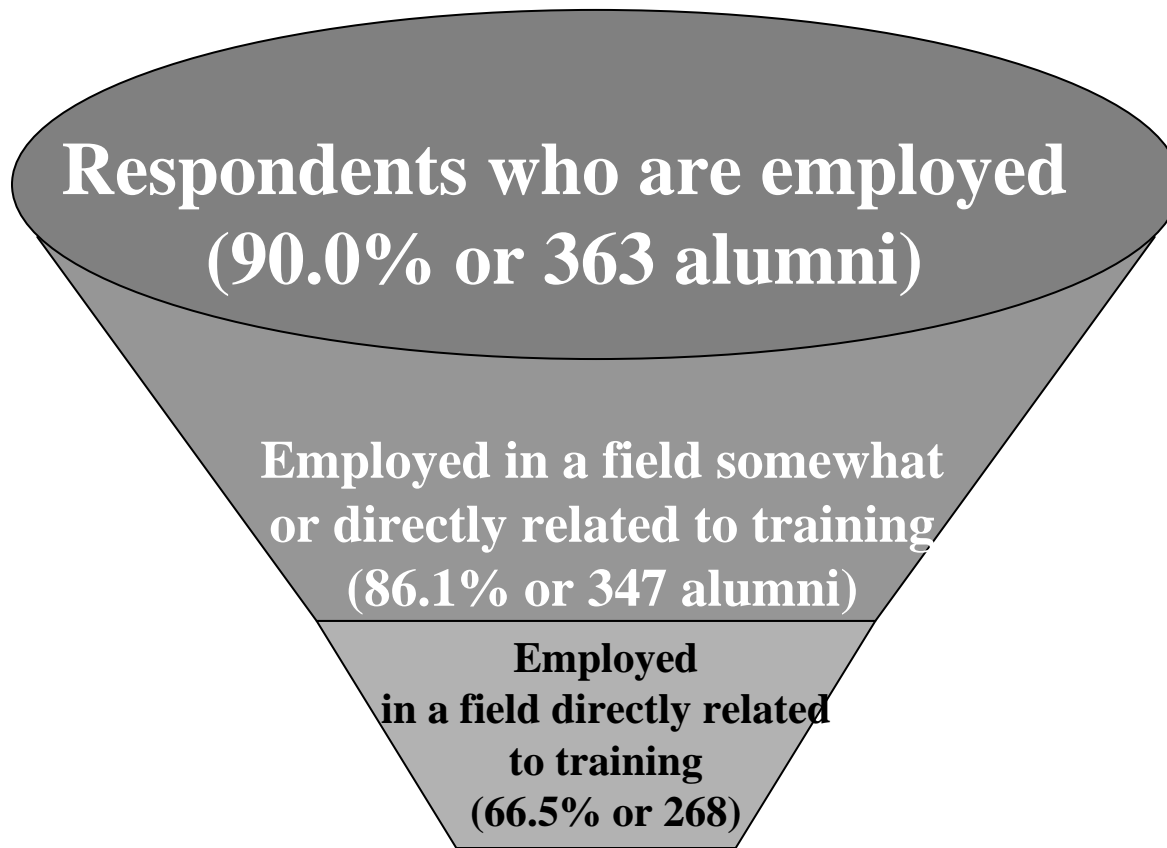
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# Most alumni are employed in a related field

**Percent of Respondents Who Are Employed and in a Field Directly Related to Their Training (N=403)**





# The largest group of alumni is employed as teachers

## Responses to “What best describes your current position?” (N=372)

	Count	%
<b>Teacher in PK-12</b>	142	38.2%
<b>School or district administrator</b>	39	10.5%
<b>Counselor</b>	31	8.3%
<b>School psychologist</b>	31	8.3%
<b>Other (please specify)</b>	30	8.1%
<b>Not answered</b>	25	6.7%
<b>Special education teacher in PK-12</b>	18	4.8%
<b>Teacher leader in PK-12</b>	15	4.0%
<b>University or college faculty/professor</b>	12	3.2%
<b>Human resources specialist</b>	8	2.2%
<b>Non-education related occupation</b>	8	2.2%
<b>University or college administrator</b>	5	1.3%
<b>Reading specialist</b>	4	1.1%
<b>Researcher</b>	4	1.1%
<b>Curriculum developer</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Education technology specialist</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Policymaker</b>	0	0.0%
<b>Full-time student</b>	0	0.0%



# Most teachers hold initial certifications or licensure

- Most hold certification or licensure to practice in the area for which they were prepared at Fordham (74.8%).
  - Most hold initial certification or licensure (67.7%)
  - Certification is most frequently in childhood education (28.6%), counseling (14.9%), administration (14.9%), school psychology (13.0%), and special education (13.0%).
- The highest percent of teachers are teaching in childhood education (27.5%), English or language arts (20.9%), and history or social studies (15.4%).





# Alumni's employment status in summary...

- Most alumni are employed in NY (73.6%) or NJ (9.2%)
- Nearly half (47%) of alumni are PK-12 teachers
- Most teachers are working in urban (57.0%) settings and in general education classrooms (79.1%)
- 1 in 20 are employed in an unrelated field
- Most unemployed are actively looking for a new job (7.7% of all alumni)



# Since graduating, alumni most frequently attributed obtaining a job to their Fordham experience

**When asked “As a result of my experience at Fordham, I have accomplished the following,” alumni reported (N=210)**

- Obtaining a position that required a degree, license, or endorsement (44.3%)
- Obtaining a professional license or certificate (38.6%).
- Taking a leadership position within their organization (28.1%)
- Gaining access to a new professional network (26.7%).



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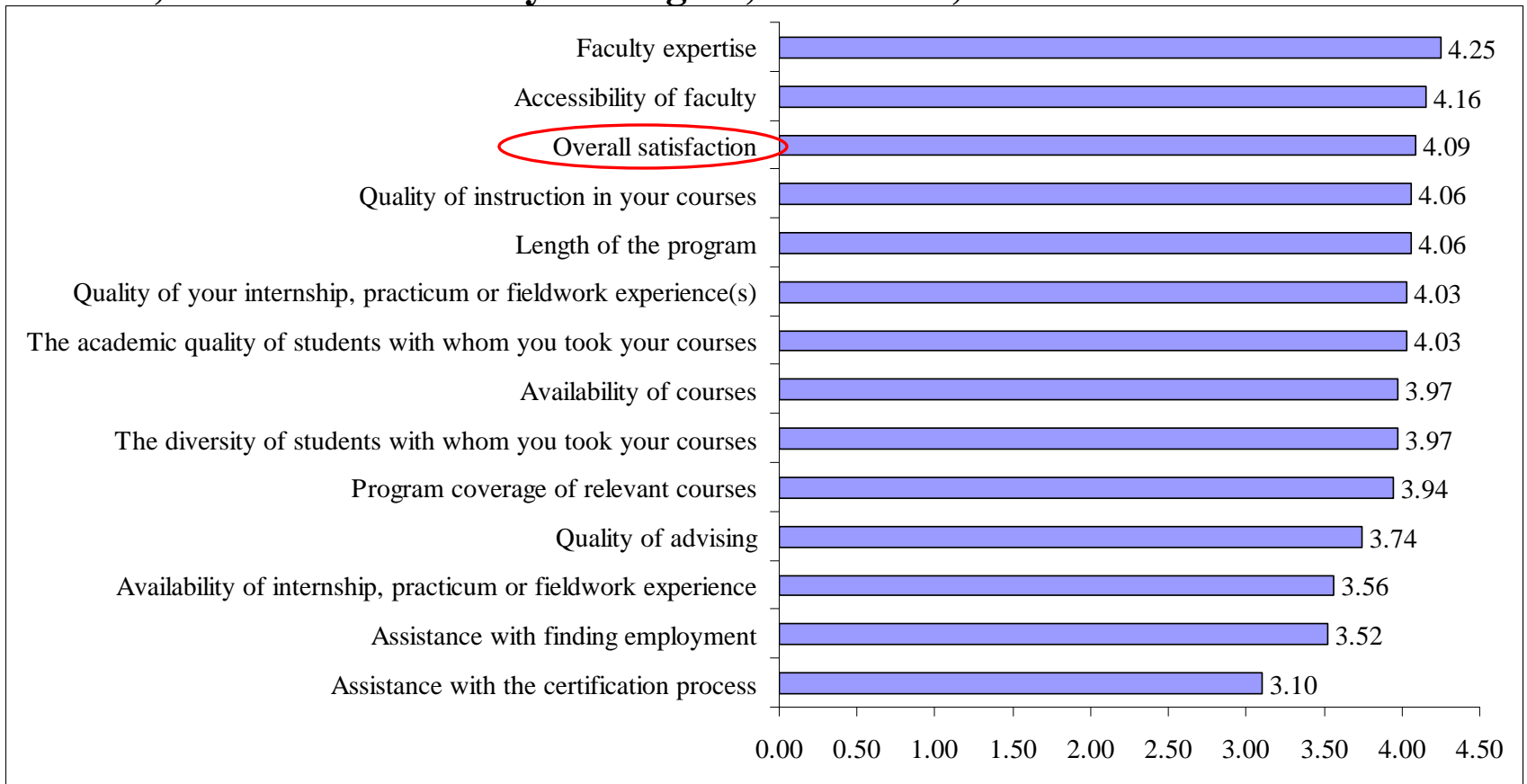
# Overall, alumni are satisfied with their Fordham experience

- The majority (80.9%) of respondents rated their **satisfaction with their overall experience** *satisfied* or *very satisfied*, on a scale from 1 to 5.
- If they were to make the decision again, the majority (76.6%) would be *likely* or *very likely* to enroll in their **same program**.
- Alumni agreed that their **expectations were** *met* (56.8%) or *exceeded* (17.8%).
- Most alumni (85%) said they are *satisfied* or *very satisfied* with their **current profession**.



# Alumni rated high levels of satisfaction with faculty

**Alumni Responses to “How satisfied are you with the following aspects of your educational experiences, related to work on your degree, certificate, or endorsement coursework?”**



On a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 represents *Not at all satisfied* and 5 represents *Very satisfied*. The N ranges from 322 to 414.



# 1 in 6 respondents requested improvements to advising

**Alumni Responses to “From the following list, please select the most important area, if any, you think the Fordham Graduate School of Education should improve.” (N=213)**

- Advising quality (15.5%)
- Cost (11.3%)
- Career services (9.9%)
- Other, please specify (9.4%)
- Faculty quality (7.5%)
- Programs or courses offered (7.5%)



# Alumni's recommendations in their own words

*Alumni were asked an open-ended question about areas Fordham could improve in. Approximately one in eight respondents made suggestions to each of the following categories.*

## **Faculty**

- *“Our professors really need to be urged to get out in the field so they can relay experience to us, not just book knowledge and research.”*
- *“Professors could have been more understanding and have experience relevant to NYC teachers-not just researchers”*

## **Content**

- *“I believe if we had a stronger emphasis on technology and school leadership, I would have more knowledge in this area.*
- *“More aid and support when working with severe needs special education populations, with specific focus on the 13 NYS Special Ed Designations and ways of working with each population.”*

## **Advising**

- *“I felt the advising process was lacking. I was very unhappy with how my advisor was not available, and passed questions over to his staff. Explanations about the program process were not completely accurate, and very often confusing.”*

## **Career Counseling**

- *“I expected to receive more assistance when the program was complete and I was trying to find a job. Fordham disappointed [me] in this area because I did not feel I had any assistance.”*



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# Professionally speaking, alumni overall feel they are *prepared* or *very well prepared*

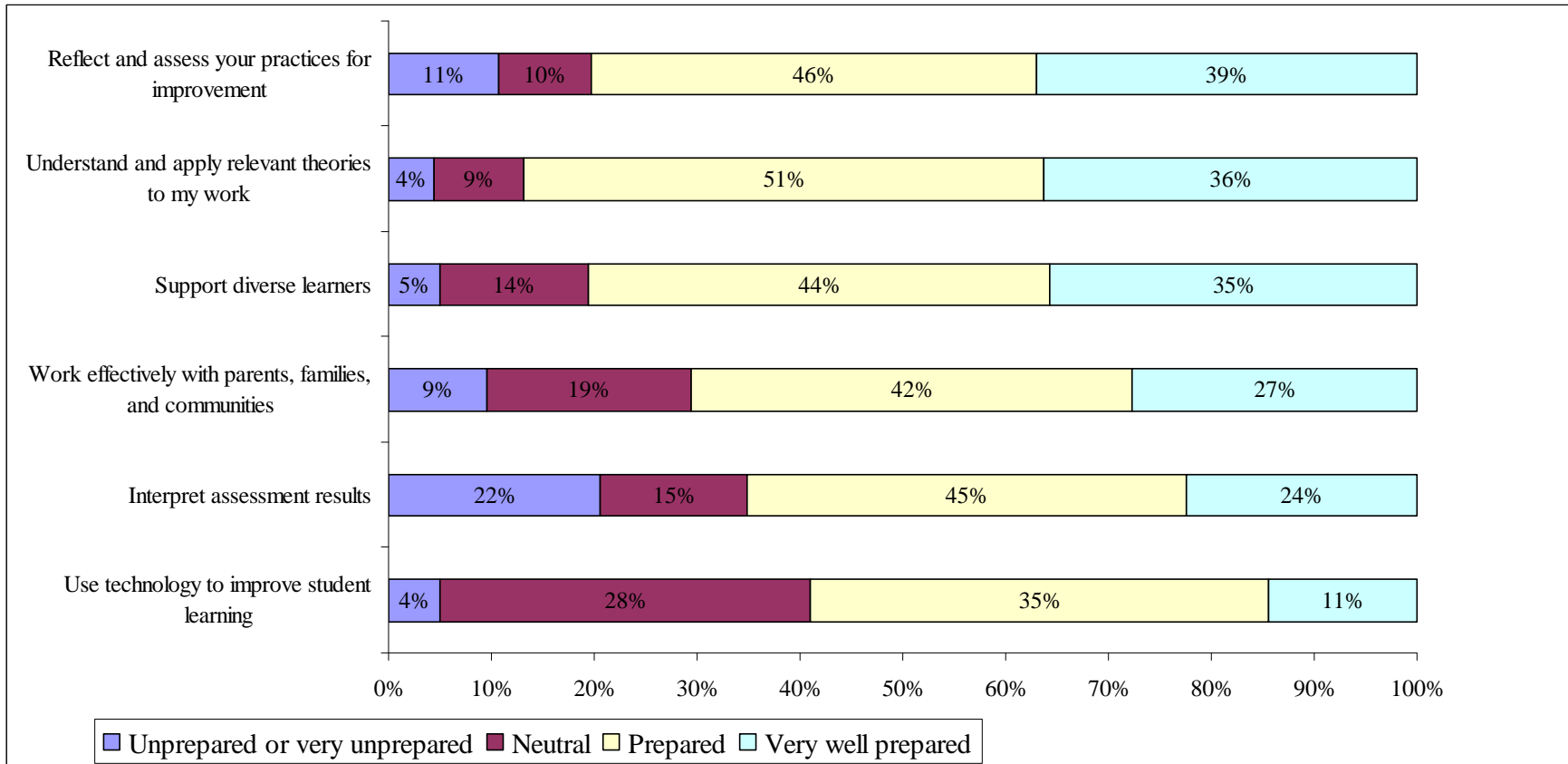
**Responses to “Overall, how well did Fordham's Graduate School of Education prepare you to be an effective professional in the area for which you were trained?”  
(N=406)**

	Count	%
<b>Very well prepared</b>	132	32.5%
<b>Prepared</b>	205	50.5%
<b>Neutral</b>	40	9.9%
<b>Unprepared</b>	20	4.9%
<b>Very unprepared</b>	8	2.0%
<b>Not applicable</b>	1	.2%



# Overall, alumni report highest levels of preparation in applying theories and lowest levels of preparation in assessment and technology

**Percentage of Respondents Who Reported Ratings of Preparation in Following Skill Areas**



N=425. In the above graphic, respondents rated on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 represents *Very Unprepared*, 2 represents *Unprepared*, 3 represents *Neutral*, 4 represents *Prepared*, and 5 represents *Very Well Prepared*.



# C&T graduates believed they were most prepared in pedagogy and less in classroom management, technology, special populations, and collaboration

Alumni Ratings of Teacher Competency Areas (N=56)

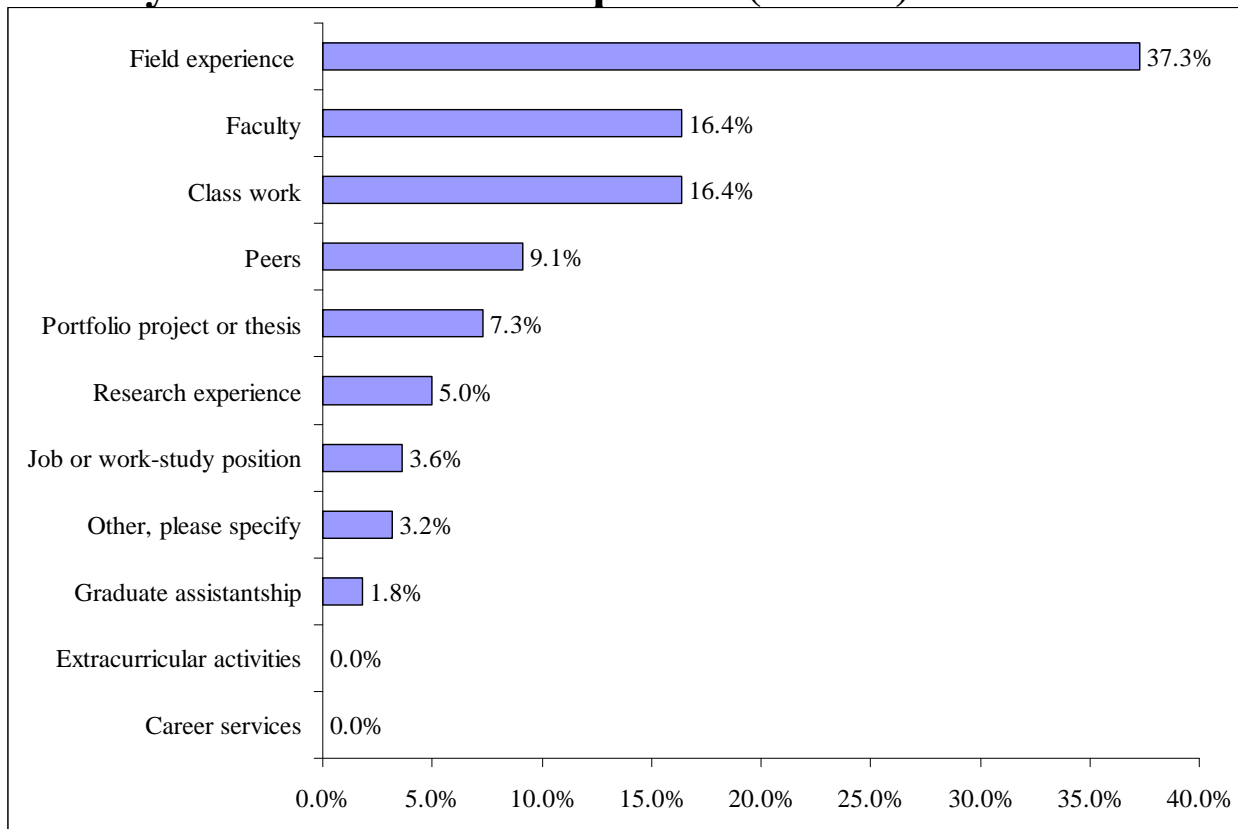
Highest Rated Outcomes	Mean	Lowest Rated Outcomes	Mean
Link instruction to students' prior experiences and knowledge	4.36	Adapt my content expertise to unique contexts and challenges of all learners	4.09
Create a learning community that respects individual differences	4.36	Communicate clear expectations for student learning	4.05
Review and reflect on my teaching practices	4.34	Utilize research for effective and/or appropriate practices	4.05
Develop lesson plans appropriate for curriculum goals	4.28	Understand the variety of students in schools and to teach according to their needs	3.96
Use a variety of informal and formal strategies to assess student learning	4.27	Collaborate with counselors and teachers to support students' learning and well-being	3.95
Create lesson plans aligned with state and district standards	4.25	Work effectively with parents to support student learning	3.88
Use multiple teaching strategies to present information in a variety of ways	4.22	Maintain records of student performance and growth	3.84
Understand the central concepts of the subject area I teach	4.21	Teach students with disabilities	3.82
Promote students' social and emotional growth	4.18	Teach English Language Learners	3.81
Foster student collaboration	4.16	Integrate technologies into my lessons	3.63
Use developmentally appropriate teaching methods	4.16	Effectively manage student behavior	3.63
Develop students' critical thinking and problem solving skills	4.11	Work with school administrators	3.54
Help students interpret ideas from a variety of perspectives	4.11		



# The field experience was the most valuable experience in alumni's preparation

- Approximately two-thirds of respondents reported engaging in some type of field experience.

**Ratings of *Most Valuable* Components in Professional Development, Sorted by Most Valuable Component (N=220)**





# During the field experience, mentors play an essential role

## Aspect of Field Experience Considered Most Valuable to Professional Development and Career Preparation (N=141)

Component	N	Percent
Mentors or coordinating supervisors	37	26.1%
Students with diverse learning styles	14	9.9%
Length of time in practicum/internship	12	8.5%
Peers or fellow colleagues in practicum/internship	11	7.7%
Type of school or organization	10	7.0%
Course or seminar accompanying practicum/internship	9	6.3%
Experience with PK-12 classroom curriculum	9	6.3%
Urban setting	8	5.6%
Other (please specify)	8	5.6%
None of the above	7	4.9%
Students from diverse ethnic backgrounds	5	3.5%
Students with special needs	5	3.5%
University faculty or instructors	4	2.8%
Suburban setting	2	1.4%
Not Answered	1	0.7%



# Alumni want to continue their relationship with Fordham online and through events

**Responses to “Which of the following types of alumni services would make you feel most connected with Fordham's Graduate School of Education? (Select all that apply)” (N=210)**

- Alumni emails (31%)
- Online alumni network (31%)
- Alumni networking events (29%)
- Alumni publications (25%)
- Education career fairs (23%)
- Mentoring current students (22%)



# Final Takeaways

- Most alumni are employed and in related fields
  - 1 in 13 were actively looking for employment
- Alumni are generally satisfied with their experience and believe their expectations were met
  - Alumni are highly satisfied with faculty and value field experience
  - Alumni are least satisfied with career assistance and advising
- Alumni generally believe they are prepared in most areas related to working with students



# Eduventures' Recommendations

- Fordham should reconsider re-evaluating:
  - Student advising
    - How can consistent experiences be offered? How can students' expectations be met or adjusted?
  - Career advising
    - What resources are available? How are they communicated? What additional resources are needed? How can unemployed alumni be assisted?
  - Curriculum
    - Based on alumni feedback, should curriculum be reviewed in any specific programs to ensure it is covering students' needs for professional practice?
  - Faculty consistency
    - How effectively is the evaluation process working, and for adjunct faculty? How can alumni concerns be addressed?
  - Keeping in touch via email
    - How can updated alumni e-mail addresses be consistently collected?