

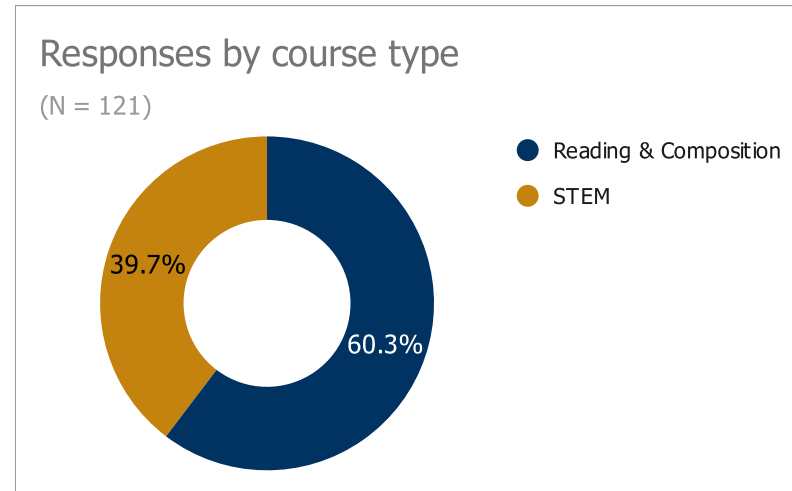
## Learning Loss During COVID

Survey of Common Good Curriculum Instructors

January 2022

In the wake of pandemic disruptions to instruction, there is a widespread impression of a loss of learning impacting both continuing and new students. A survey was conducted in late November 2021 to collect quantitative data on this issue.

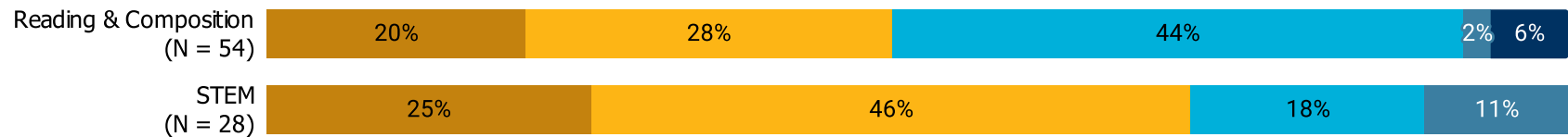
Instructors of Common Good Curriculum (CGC) courses were invited to participate in the survey. CGC courses include Reading and Composition, and select STEM gateway and critical courses offered in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, Math, Physics, and Statistics. The response rate was 34% (n = 121) out of 353 possible responses.



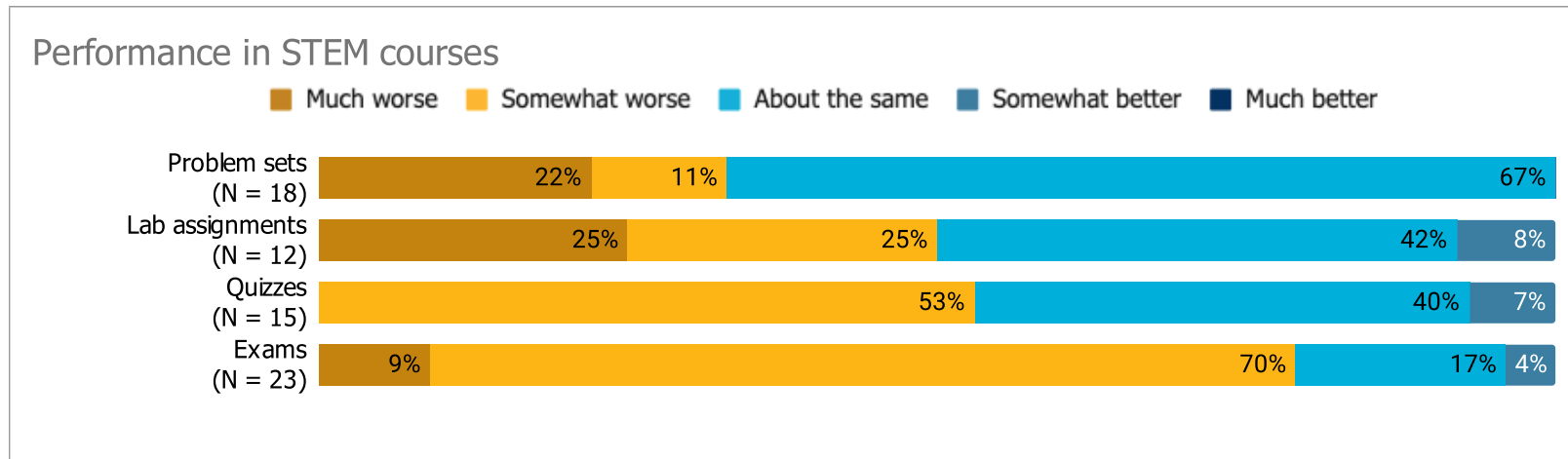
Overall, 56% (n = 46) instructors reported that their students were somewhat less prepared or much less prepared in Fall 2021 compared to pre-pandemic years. Instructors of STEM courses reported they had less prepared students at higher rates than did instructors of R&C courses.

### Student preparedness compared to pre-pandemic years

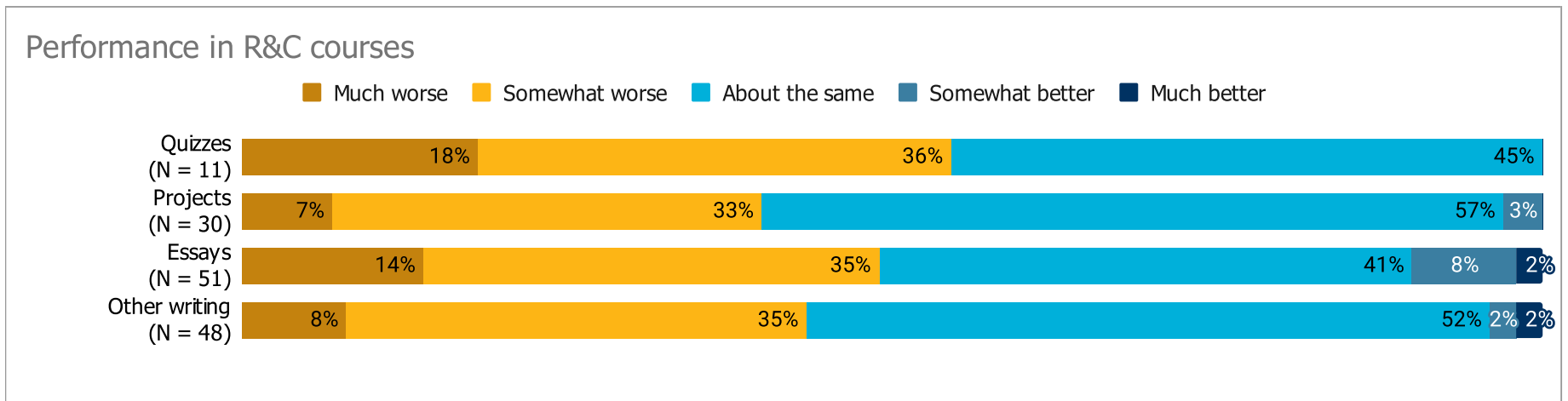
■ Much less prepared ■ Somewhat less prepared ■ About the same level of preparedness ■ Somewhat more prepared ■ Much more prepared



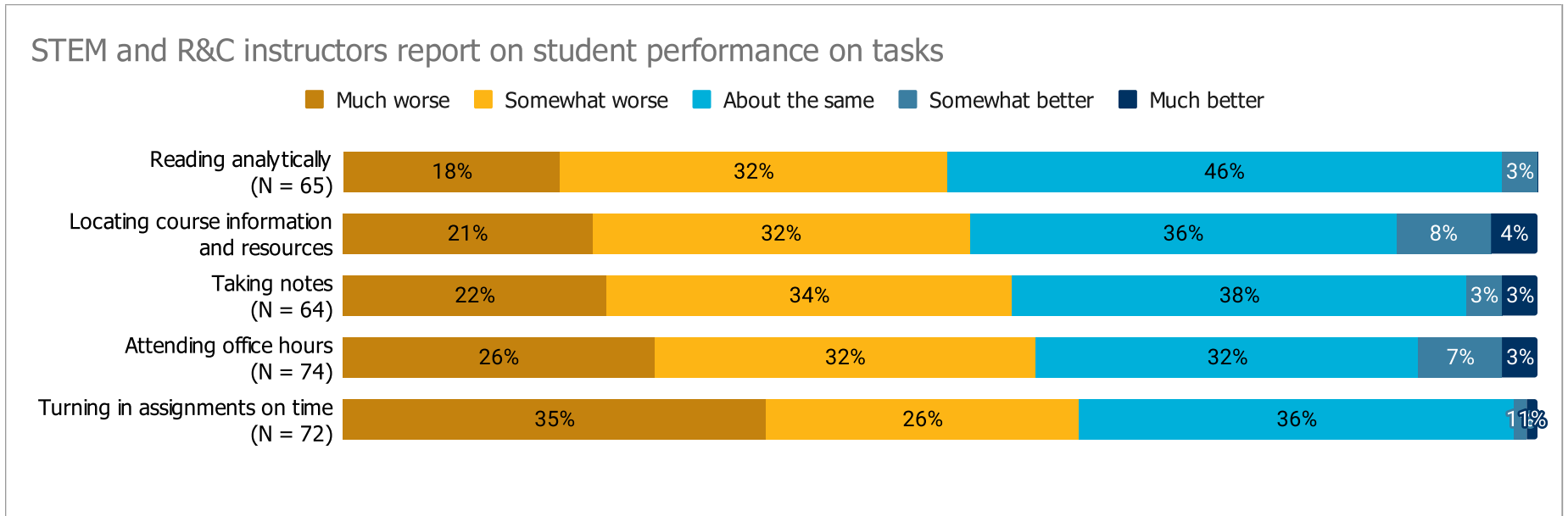
Seventy-nine percent (n = 18) of instructors in STEM courses reported much worse or somewhat worse performance on exams compared to in pre-pandemic terms. In addition, more than half of the STEM instructors reported increased variation in quiz and exam performance in Fall 2021. The findings for problem sets was different; two-thirds of instructors said performance on problem sets was about the same as in pre-pandemic terms.



For Reading & Composition courses, most instructors said performance was about the same as in pre-pandemic terms on projects (57%, n = 17) and other writing (52%, n = 25). Similar to in STEM courses, instructors in R&C courses reported worse performance on quizzes (55%, n = 6; STEM 53%, n = 8). R&C instructors reported that variation in performance was about the same as in pre-pandemic terms.

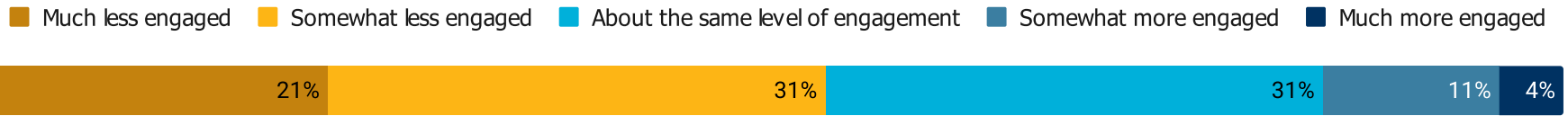


Instructors were asked how well students performed or demonstrated resourcefulness on the following tasks compared to students in the same course in a pre-pandemic term. While sizeable portions of instructors said student performance on these tasks was about the same, the majority of instructors reported that students in Fall 2021 had somewhat worse or much worse performance, particularly with turning in assignments on time, attending office hours, and taking notes.



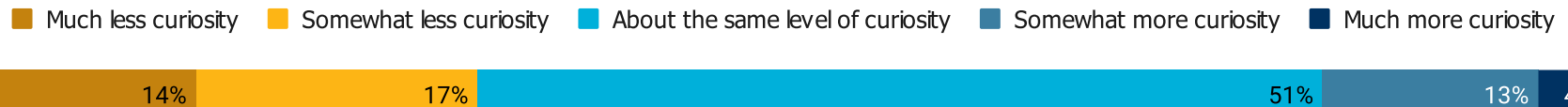
While more than half of instructors said their students were less engaged in discussions than pre-pandemic students, 16% (n = 11) reported higher levels of engagements in discussions.

### Student engagement in discussions (N = 70)



About half of instructors (51%, n = 36) said students had the same level of intellectual curiosity as pre-pandemic students. While 31% (n = 22) said students had less intellectual curiosity, 17% (n = 12) said students displayed more intellectual curiosity than pre-pandemic students.

### Student intellectual curiosity (N = 70)



Instructors were given the opportunity to share **strategies to address students' lower levels of knowledge and skills from prerequisite courses**. Below are the most commonly mentioned ideas from the 44 open-text responses.

- 25%** Review prerequisite skills at the beginning of the term
  - 7%** Review prerequisite skills throughout the term
- 16%** Instructors made themselves **more available** via extended office hours, Piazza, etc.
  - 9%** Peer or instructor **review of assignments** before they are due
    - 7%** Increase low-stakes assessments
  - 9%** Encourage students to **attend lecture** and discussion sections

Below are the most commonly mentioned ideas from 54 instructors who shared their **strategies to address the lower levels of performance** on assignments, exams, or other learning tasks.

- 22%** Instructors made themselves **more available** via extended office hours, Piazza, etc.
- 22%** **Modified assignments**  
(e.g., increase low-stakes assessments and quizzes, daily writing, assigning projects, decreasing the number of assignments)
- 15%** **Extended deadlines**

At the end of the survey, 47 instructors shared additional thoughts about instruction and student learning in Fall 2021. One-third of respondents (32%, n = 15) reported that **attendance in lectures, both in-person and synchronous virtual, was much lower than pre-pandemic**. The possible causes mentioned were: availability of asynchronous recordings, shift in students' understanding of academic expectations, and students' increased responsibilities due to the pandemic. One-fifth of respondents (21%, n = 10) said their **students had increased anxiety and were overwhelmed**, which affected their academic performance. Fifteen percent (n = 7) noticed that students showed **persistent issues with time management**. A further 11% (n = 5) suggested that students need to be **re-trained on how to be students** because of lowered expectations during the pandemic.