

A Time of Digital Transformation: Digital Learning Trends in Ontario Post- Secondary Education

2023 Ontario Report

Report Author:

Dr. Nicole Johnson

Data collection and analysis:



Canadian Digital Learning Research Association

Association canadienne de recherche sur la formation en ligne



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We offer our gratitude to Alison Seaweed, from the Kwakiutl First Nation, who provided feedback on our 2023 surveys from an Indigenous perspective to help support the CDLRA in our efforts to begin decolonizing our work. The CDLRA acknowledges that, as a remote team, we live and work in many different locations on lands taken from Indigenous peoples. As a team, we seek to better understand the ongoing impacts of colonial systems and structures, particularly within the Canadian post-secondary education sector.

We thank the many people who have met with our team to discuss possible survey topics, to give feedback on our findings, and to share insights from the field. These perspectives have been critical in shaping our research initiatives.

We also thank the CDLRA team members and contractors who perform the tasks that support our day-to-day operations and our ability to conduct our research studies.

Most importantly, we thank our survey respondents.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Digital transformation is a broad term that captures the changes that are taking place as technology permeates our day-to-day lives, and it is certainly a fitting term to describe our current educational landscape. Throughout 2023, demand for technology integration in teaching and learning remained strong in Ontario post-secondary education. Additionally, the rise of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) created new opportunities for supporting students, but exacerbated tensions related to academic integrity.

The findings presented in this report come from the *2023 Pan-Canadian Digital Learning Surveys*, conducted by the CDLRA in Spring and Fall and referred to in this report as the Spring Survey and Fall Survey. This report shares the findings that are specific to the province of Ontario and includes perspectives from administrators, teaching and learning leaders, and other institutional staff (e.g., librarians, instructional designers).

One of the key overarching findings from all the Ontario-specific data this year is that more change to the post-secondary landscape is expected, despite all the change that has already occurred since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other key Ontario-specific findings include:

- The vast majority of respondents expect there to be greater technology use in post-secondary education, regardless of modality, along with growth in hybrid and alternative credential offerings. Respondents also expect there to be growth online and multi-access (e.g., hyflex) course offerings, but to a lesser extent.
- The perception that faculty have the skills and know-how to teach effectively in various modalities decreases as the technological complexity of the modality rises.
- Respondents have observed that most students are interested in adopting new technologies and prefer to have the option to learn online.
- Academic integrity is the most pressing teaching and learning challenge in Ontario.
- Technology infrastructure and the impact of digital learning on faculty workload are the most pressing operational challenges.
- Most professional development for faculty is voluntary. Faculty who teach in online or hybrid modalities are not required to undertake more training than those teaching in an in-person context.
- Open educational resource (OER) awareness is high in Ontario; however, most institutions do not have a formal policy.
- All respondents expect that higher education will be different from the present state in five years' time with roughly one-third of participants anticipating a very different future. Most respondents feel ready to some extent for future change and are also mostly optimistic about the future.



INTRODUCTION TO THE 2023 CDLRA REPORTS

Prior to the pandemic, the CDLRA conducted longitudinal research to track digital learning trends. Although the pandemic proved to be a formidable disruptor, rendering many of our previous questions obsolete, it provided an opportunity to gather just-in-time data for several years and to rethink our approach to collecting longitudinal data when the time was right again. In 2023, the CDLRA decided that the post-secondary landscape was stable enough to resume longitudinal research, and we launched the *Pan-Canadian Digital Learning Survey Series* project to replace our previous National Annual Survey. In collaboration with our sponsors, partners, and interest groups, we designed survey questions that will hold relevance for several years to come.

The 2023 Ontario Report provides a regional snapshot gleaned from the survey data.

Survey Topics

The widespread interest in digital learning means that we now have a greater breadth of topics in our surveys. In order to facilitate a robust investigation while minimizing the survey burden, the CDLRA now conducts two surveys each year (delivered in Spring and Fall) instead of our previous once-per-year approach. Each survey focuses on a different set of topics, as listed in the table below.

Table 1
CDLRA Survey Topics

Spring Survey	Fall Survey
Trends in online and hybrid learning	Technologies used in teaching and learning
Faculty attitudes and preferences	Equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and digital learning
Student attitudes and preferences	Professional development and digital learning
Digital learning challenges	Open educational resources and open practices
Speculative futures	



Survey Respondents

In 2022, we moved away from our previous approach of gathering a single institutional response and began surveying multiple individuals at each institution, representing a variety of roles. Our new approach proved to be a great success in 2022, and we continue this same approach in 2023.

The findings presented in this report represent the perspectives of administrators (e.g., senior administrators, deans and directors), teaching and learning leaders, and other staff members such as instructional designers and educational developers.

**Our hope is to gather faculty responses as we expand the survey reach in the years to come. If any faculty reading this report are interested in participating in future surveys, we invite you to sign up to join our survey roster using the QR code on the final page of this report.*

Defining Key Terms Related to Course Modality

Based on the CDLRA's previous work on developing a common framework for categorizing courses by modality, we acknowledge the importance of clarifying exactly what we mean when we use certain terms.

When discussing course modalities, we use the following definitions:

ONLINE LEARNING means that the entirety of a course is delivered online and that there are no on-campus requirements for students. Online learning experiences may be synchronous, asynchronous, or a mix of the two.

IN-PERSON LEARNING means that students are required to attend all classes in an in-person setting. Technology may be used to varying extents in an in-person course.

HYBRID LEARNING (also referred to as blended learning) means that there is some mix of in-person and online instruction within a course. There are many different variations of hybrid learning.

MULTI-ACCESS LEARNING means that instruction is available in different modes for a given course and students can move between modalities at their own discretion. Hyflex learning is an example of multi-access learning.



These definitions are based on past research conducted by the CDLRA, WCET, and Bay View Analytics. For more information on categorizing courses by modality, please refer to the following resources:

Johnson, N. (2023). What to do when the modality of a learning experience is unclear: Guidelines for creating multidimensional learning experiences. *WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)*. <https://wcet.wiche.edu/resources/what-to-do-when-the-modality-of-a-learning-experience-is-unclear-guidelines-for-creating-multidimensional-learning-experiences/>

Johnson, N., Seaman, J., & Poulin, R. (2022). Defining different modes of learning: Resolving confusion and contention through consensus. *Online Learning*, 26(3), 91-110. <https://olj.onlinelearningconsortium.org/index.php/olj/article/view/3565/1193>

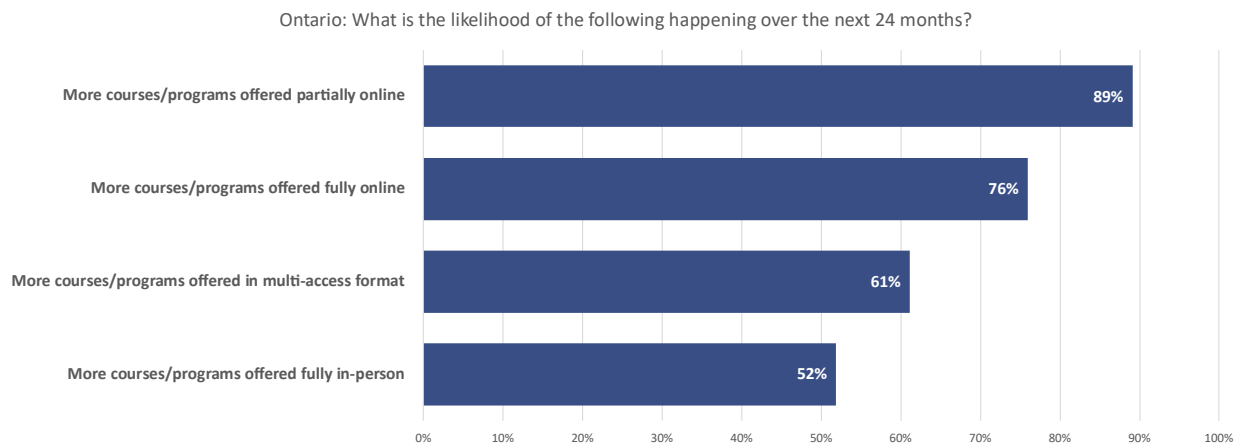
Johnson, N. (2021). Evolving definitions in digital learning: A national framework for categorizing commonly used terms. *Canadian Digital Learning Research Association*. <http://www.cdlra-acrfl.ca/2021-cdlra-definitions-report/>





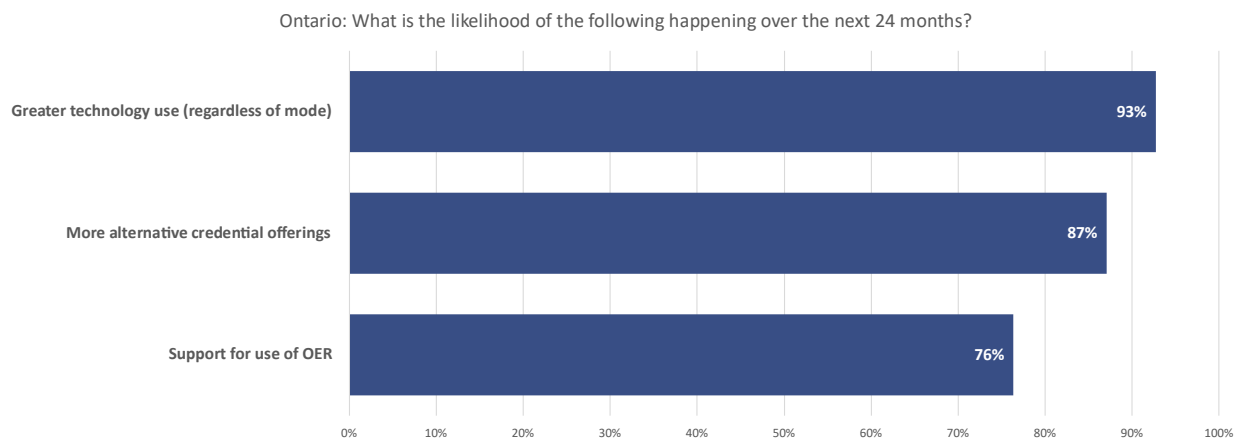
DIGITAL LEARNING TRENDS

Trends related to course modality and technology adoption are strong indicators of digital transformation. To assess whether technology-heavy course modalities (e.g., online, hybrid, and multi-access learning) are expected to increase, the Spring Survey asked respondents to rate the likelihood of growth in different modalities over the next two years compared to the present state. The findings show that the vast majority of Ontario respondents (89%) expect that more partially online (hybrid) courses will be offered within the next 24 months. Roughly three-quarters of respondents (76%) expect to see more online courses, and 61% of respondents expect to see more multi-access (e.g., hyflex) courses. The anticipated growth in all these areas was higher among Ontario respondents, compared to their counterparts across the rest of the country.





The Spring Survey also asked respondents about technology adoption, specifically greater technology use in teaching and learning, alternative credential offerings (e.g., microcredentials, badges, stacked credits), and Open Educational Resources (OER) (which are often digitally published). Nearly all Ontario respondents anticipate greater technology use in teaching and learning (93%), regardless of delivery mode, and most anticipate more alternative credential offerings (87%) and greater support for the use of OER (76%).

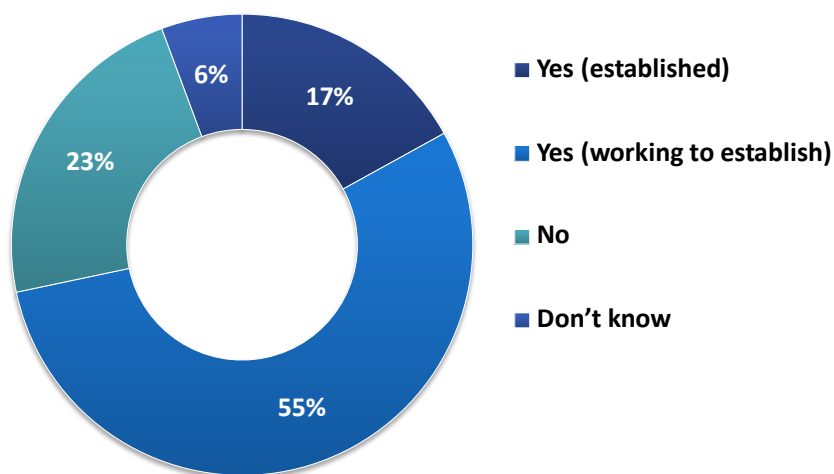




The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) use in post-secondary education is another signifier of digital transformation. The launch of ChatGPT in late 2022, resulted in many conversations about GenAI use by students and faculty. Student use of AI led to subsequent tensions between its potential benefits for enhancing the learning experience and concerns about academic integrity (e.g., students using GenAI to complete their assignments instead of doing the work themselves).

The Spring Survey asked respondents about policy development for AI at their institution. When interpreting the chart below, it is important to understand that survey answers from respondents at the same institution conflicted at times and the findings reflect individual perceptions about whether there is a policy for AI at their institution, not whether a policy actually exists. Overall, in Ontario, most respondents reported that their institution had established or was working to establish regulations, guidelines, or policies on AI.

Ontario: Regulations, guidelines, or policies on AI



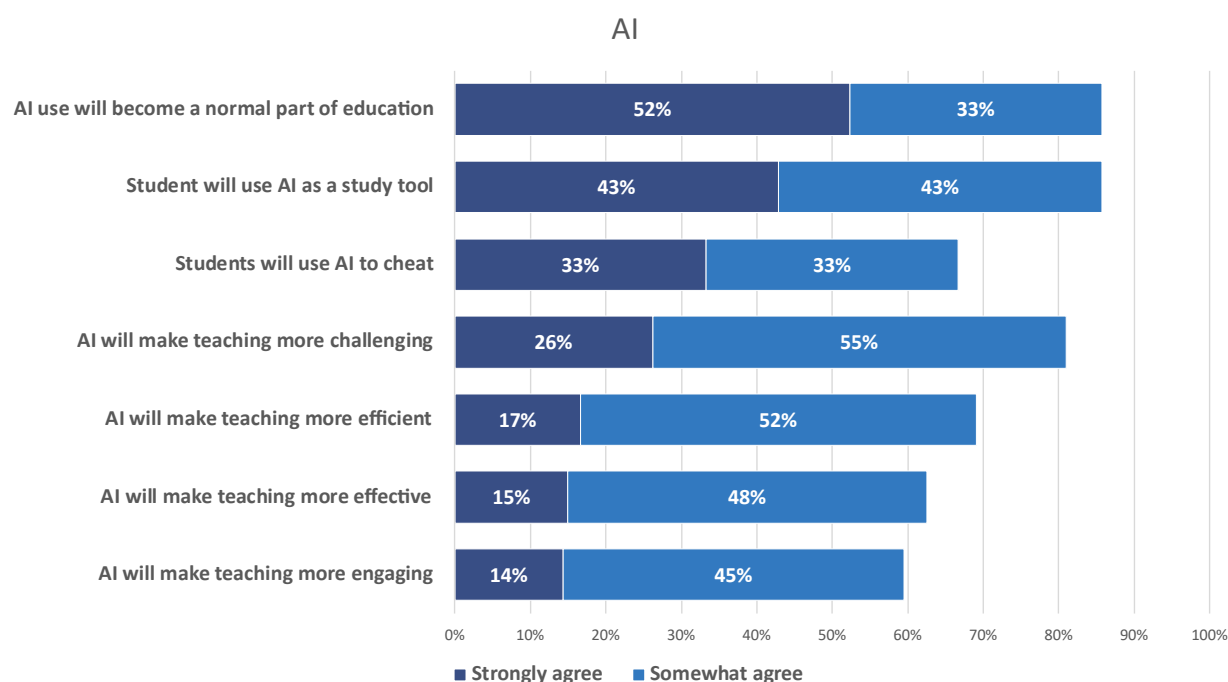
More AI-specific findings from the Spring Survey can be found in the CDLRA Special Topics Report on AI, available here:

Veletsianos, G. (2023). Generative artificial intelligence in Canadian post-secondary education: AI policies, possibilities, realities, and futures. *Canadian Digital Learning Research Association*. <https://www.d2l.com/resources/assets/cdlra-2023-ai-report/>



The Fall Survey posed several questions to participants who agreed to answer a few additional questions about AI at the end of the survey: 75% of Ontario respondents agreed and responded to this set of questions. The questions included the opportunity to agree or disagree with a series of statements related to AI use and an open-ended question about potential positive changes and negative impacts of AI at post-secondary institutions.

When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements about AI, many Ontario respondents (85%) agreed (either “strongly” or “somewhat”) that AI use will become a normal part of education. Most respondents (86%) also agreed that students will use AI as a study tool. Aligned with concerns about the impact of AI on academic integrity, 66% of respondents agreed with the statement that students will use AI to cheat and 81% agreed that AI will make teaching more challenging. The majority of respondents, albeit a lesser majority, agreed with statements that AI will make teaching more efficient (69%), more effective (63%), and more engaging (59%). More research is needed to better understand how AI is being used in practice to enrich educational experiences along with the student outcomes and faculty benefits associated with AI use in their courses.





The Fall Survey also asked respondents who agreed to answer questions about AI what positive changes or negative impacts they foresee with the use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, DALL-E, BARD) at their institution. Some of the answers from Ontario respondents are provided below:

“Generative AI tools in their current form give students a way of starting their research, helping to ensure they've thought of all the factors they need in a problem/issue/assignment and showing them alternative solutions. I see software development struggling as it is easy for generative AI to write code and difficult for instructors to know how to incorporate it or assess against it's use. For the teams that help build engagement into courses, AI in general, can help. H5P is releasing a tool soon that will quickly add engaging formative assessments within a lecture video. We may be able to use it to build assessment questions easier (although I may use a closed generative AI tool that we train ourselves instead of relying on the ChatGPT version).”

“Negative: Moral panic and further weaponization of "rigour." Positive: Deepening critical information literacy.”

“Much more education is needed. Currently, there only seems to be a dichotomized look either we are in a frenzy about student cheating or about being behind in how we use it. A much more pragmatic approach is needed and investigation into the implications for ethical use, data collection, commodification of data, and the impact on students from under-represented groups.”

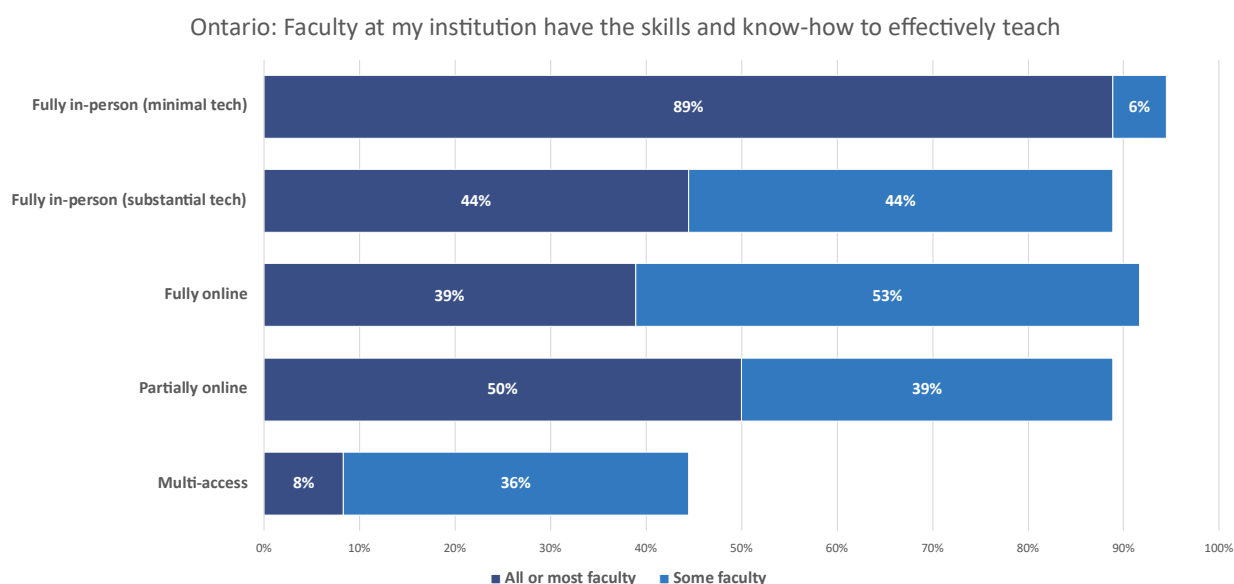
“The positive impact is the reflection and consideration that faculty need to engage in re: their current assessment practices. Faculty are having to re-assess how they assess student learning - and move towards more authentic assessments and focus on higher-order thinking. Some faculty members are concerned about the labour that is required to change and grade their assessments; this process could also be supported with Generative AI, and increased peer-to-peer assessment.”

“I think AI is the same as any digital tool, it will depend on how the instructor chooses to view it and incorporate it into the teaching.”



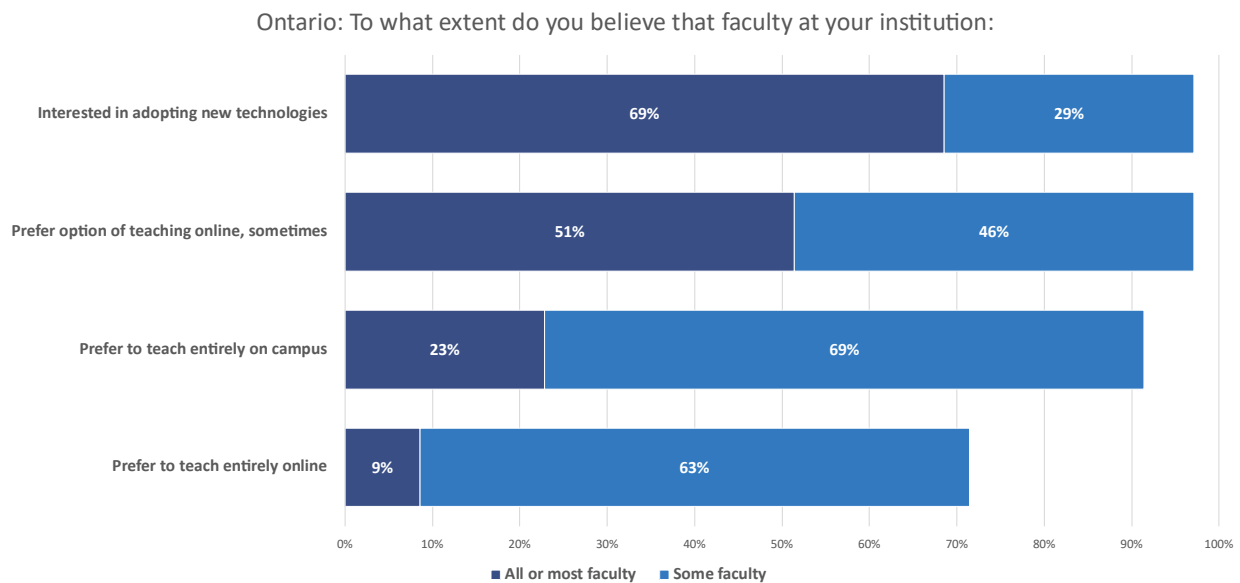
TEACHING COMPETENCIES AND PREFERENCES

The Spring Survey asked respondents to rate whether faculty at their institution have the skills and know-how to teach in different modalities. For the modality with the least technology use, fully in-person learning with minimal technology use, nearly all respondents (92%) reported that all or most faculty had the skills and know-how to teach in this modality. Conversely, for the most technologically complex modality (multi-access learning), very few respondents (12%) stated that faculty had the skills and know-how to effectively teach. Essentially the more technologically complex a modality is, the less confidence respondents have that faculty have the competencies to teach in that format.





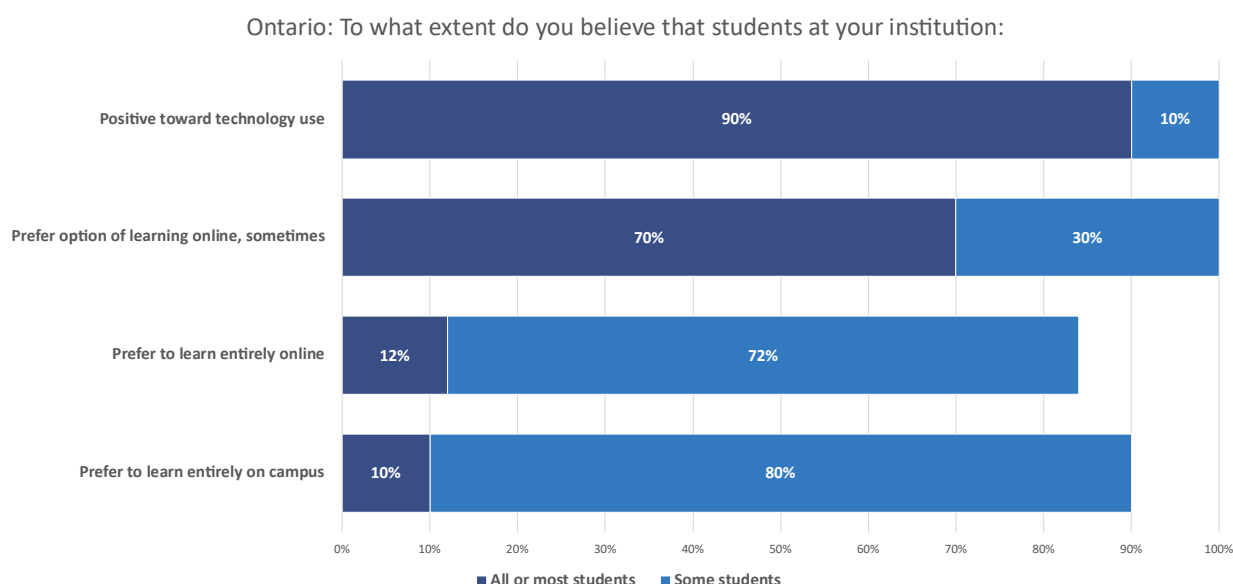
The Spring Survey also asked about respondent perceptions of faculty interests and preferences. Half of the respondents reported that all or most faculty at their institution were interested in adopting new technologies and a substantial minority (41%) reported that all or most faculty prefer the option of teaching online some of the time. About a third of respondents (34%) reported that all or more faculty at their institution prefer to teach entirely on campus and only 4% reported that all or most faculty prefer to teach entirely online.





STUDENT ATTITUDES AND PREFERENCES

Along with perceptions of faculty preferences, the Spring Survey asked respondents about their observations about student preferences at their institution. A large majority of respondents (86%) reported that all or most students at their institution feel positively toward technology use in teaching and learning. Additionally, 72% reported that all or most students prefer the option of learning online some of the time. Roughly a quarter of respondents (23%) indicated that all or most students prefer to learn entirely on campus and 11% said that all or most students prefer to learn entirely online.



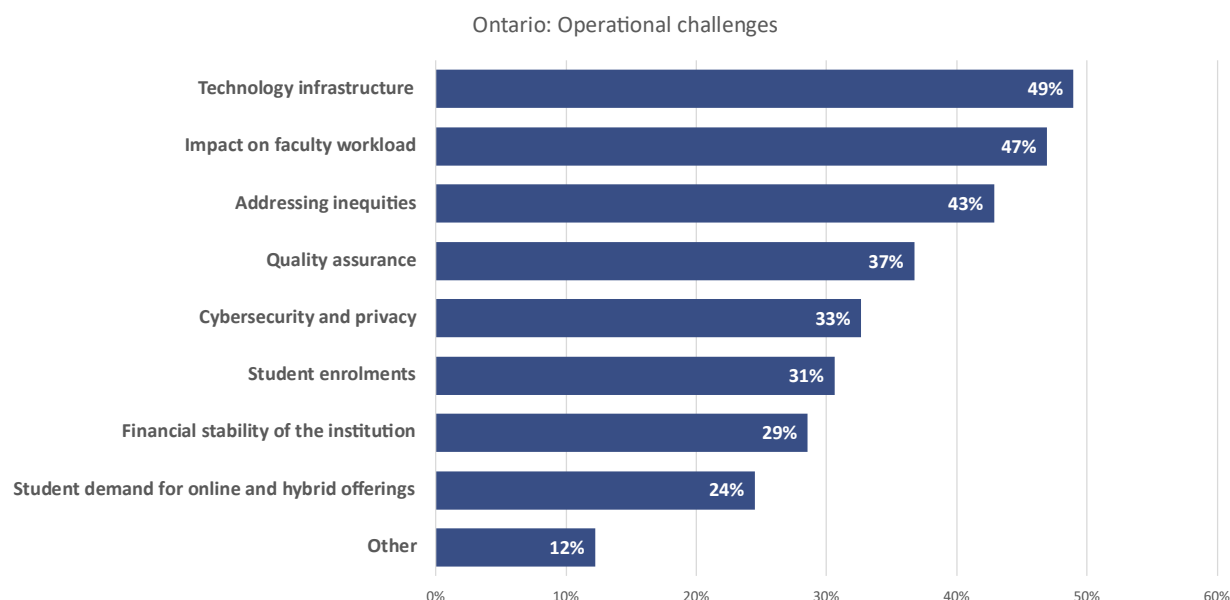
The findings related to student preferences, especially the positive feelings toward technology use in post-secondary education observed among students and the perception that many students would like to have the flexibility to learn online sometimes (e.g., hybrid courses, a mix of online and in-person courses) are further indicators of digital transformation. In other words, it appears that many students desire, or at least feel positively toward, a technology integrated post-secondary experience. It is also important to recognize that the majority of respondents reported that, even if it wasn't a sentiment shared by all or most students, some students at their institution preferred to learn entirely on campus or entirely online.



DIGITAL LEARNING CHALLENGES

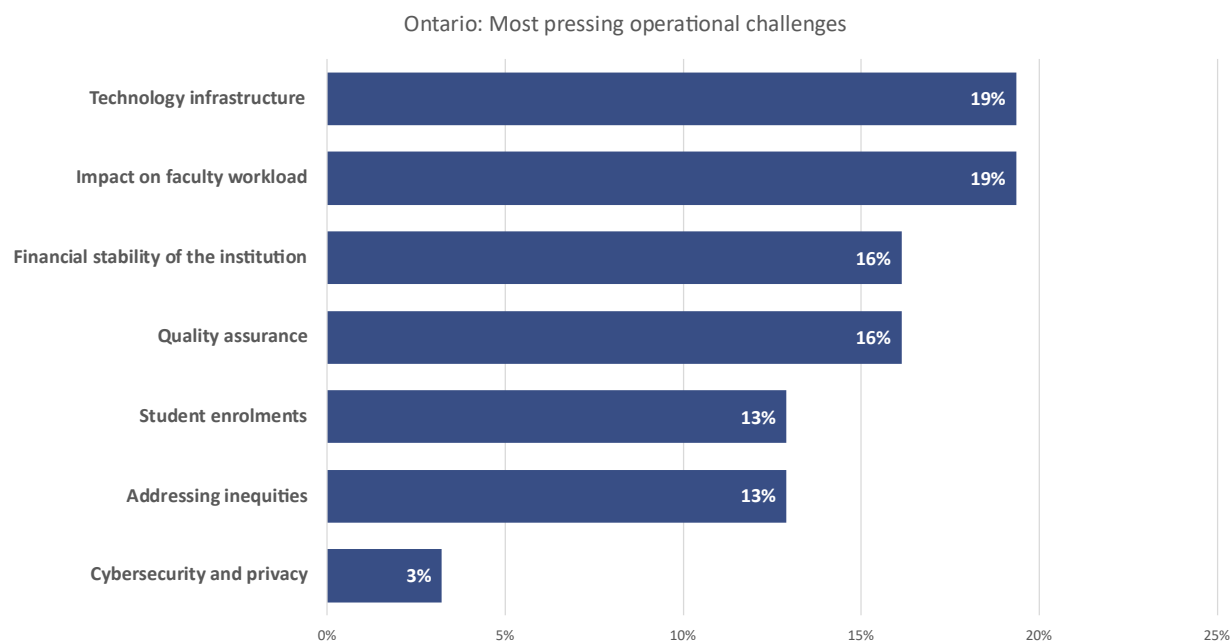
The Spring Survey provided respondents with two lists of challenges related to digital learning (operational and teaching and learning challenges). The survey then asked respondents to select any challenges that they felt were pressing at their institution.

Regarding operational challenges related to digital learning, when respondents were given the option to select all challenges that applied at their institution, the most commonly identified challenges were technology infrastructure (49%), impact on faculty workload (47%), and addressing inequities (43%).





Respondents identified technology infrastructure (19%) and impact on faculty workload (19%) as the most pressing operational challenges related to digital learning at Ontario institutions; however, it is important to note that no single operational challenge stood out significantly from the others.





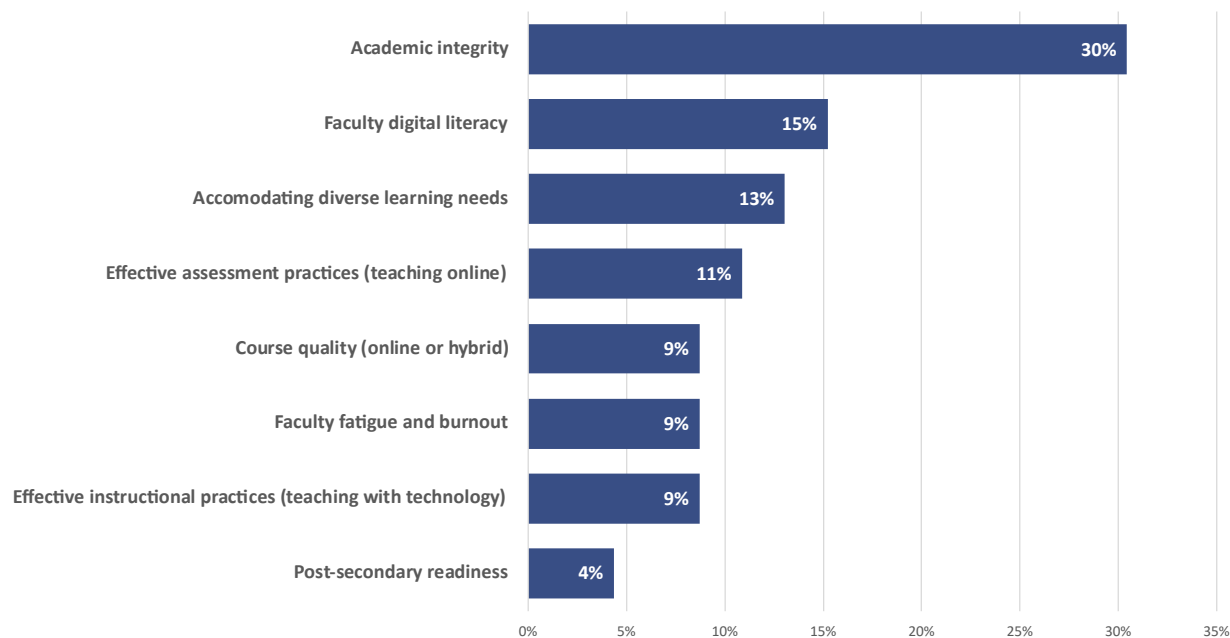
For teaching and learning challenges, the majority of respondents identified academic integrity (82%), effective assessment practices (74%), accommodating diverse needs (68%), and faculty fatigue and burnout (66%) as pressing challenges.



The survey then asked respondents to choose what they deemed to be the most pressing teaching and learning challenge from their previous selections. Academic integrity topped the list as the most pressing teaching and learning challenge at Ontario institutions.



Ontario: Most pressing teaching and learning challenges



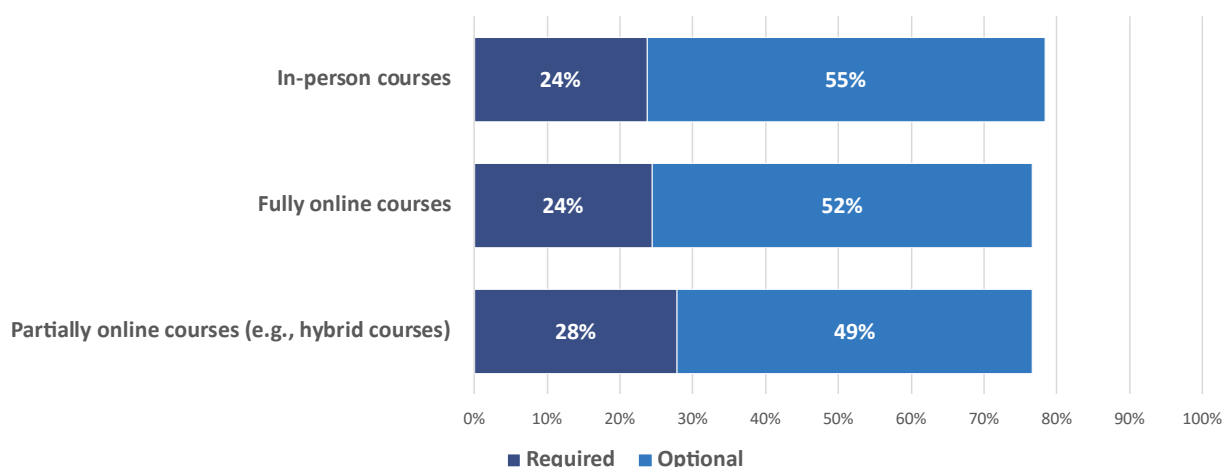


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND DIGITAL LEARNING

With the anticipated growth in online and hybrid learning, and the impact of AI on assessment practices, professional development is a critical topic. The Fall Survey asked respondents about the nature of professional development for faculty at their institution.

Just over three-quarters of respondents reported that their institution offers some sort of professional development for new faculty. The findings show these professional development opportunities for new faculty are mostly voluntary; however, roughly one-quarter of respondents noted that professional development for new faculty is required, regardless of teaching modality.

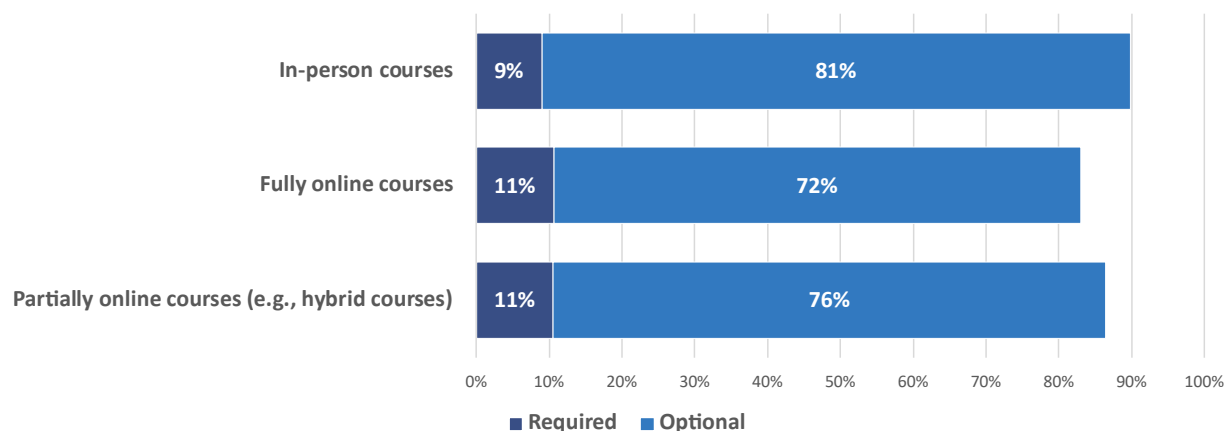
Ontario: Professional development offered for new faculty prior to teaching in the following modalities



The majority of respondents also reported that ongoing professional development is available at their institution for all faculty, with slightly more professional development offered for in-person courses compared to online and hybrid courses. Ongoing professional development is rarely required and tends to be mostly voluntary.



Ontario: Is ongoing professional development offered for all faculty for the following modalities?

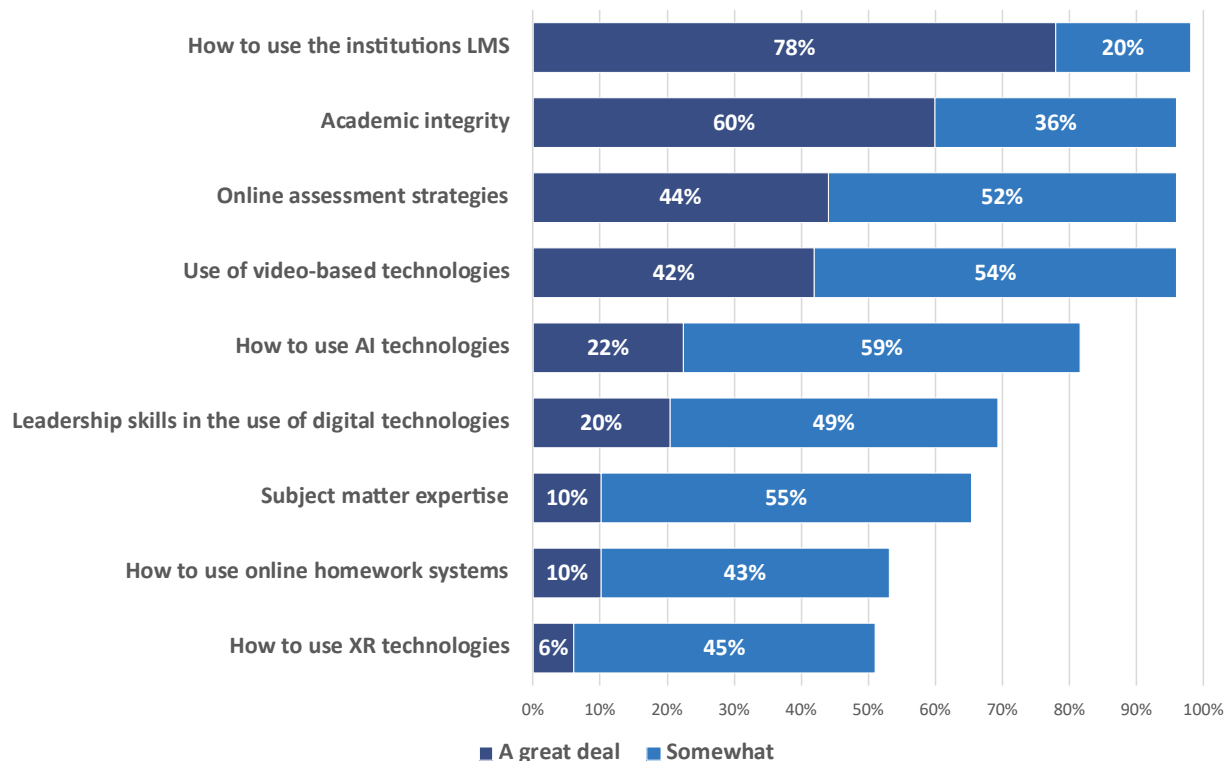


The Fall Survey also asked respondents about the extent to which professional development for faculty focused on two sets of topics.

The first set of topics focused on technology use. In Ontario, many respondents reported that a great deal of professional development is offered on how to use the institution's LMS (78%) and academic integrity (60%). A substantial minority of respondents also noted that there is a great deal of professional development for online assessment strategies (44%) and the use of video-based technologies (42%).



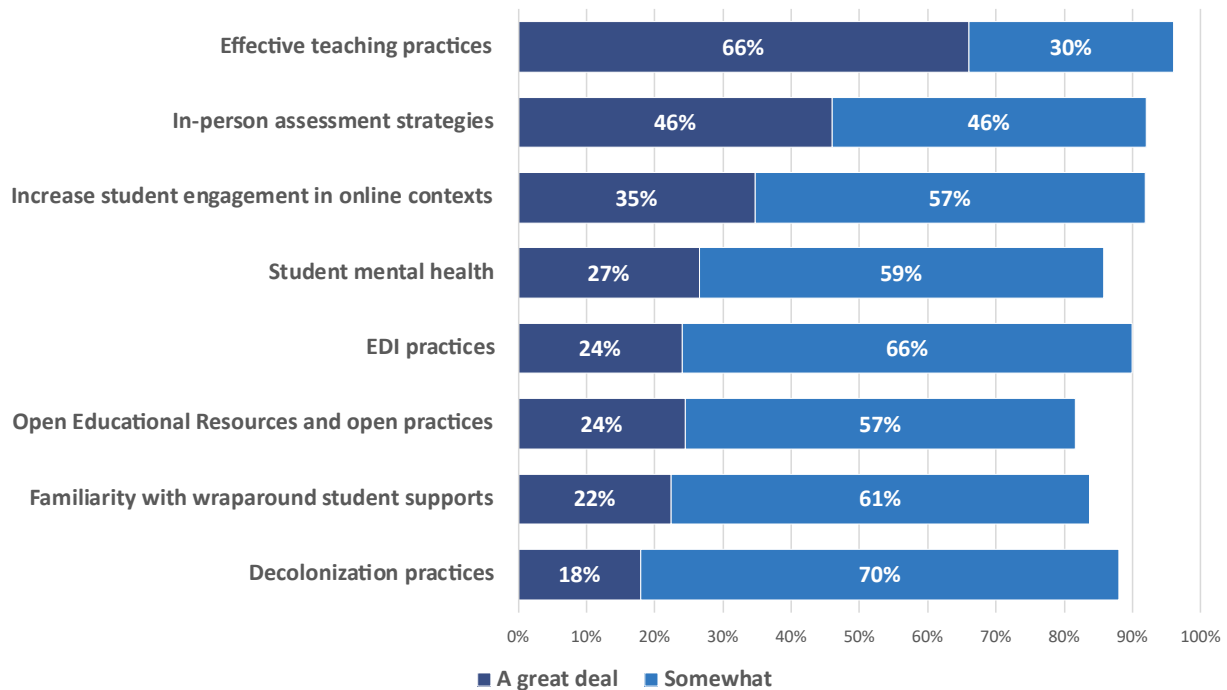
Ontario: Professional development for faculty topics



The second set of professional development topics focused on teaching practices and strategies. Two-thirds of respondents (66%) reported that effective teaching strategies received a great deal of attention as a professional development topic. Over one-third of respondents also reported that there is a great deal of professional development for in person assessment strategies (46%) and strategies for increasing student engagement in online contexts (35%).



Ontario: Professional development for faculty topics



More in-depth research is needed to explore the relationship between faculty skills and know-how for teaching with technology and existing professional development requirements and options.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (EDI) AND DIGITAL LEARNING

EDI is a commonly used term; however, it carries a range of meanings. To understand better what our survey respondents mean when they think of EDI, the Fall Survey asked respondents to provide their personal definitions of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Our intent in asking this question was to investigate whether there is a common understanding of EDI at Canadian post-secondary institutions to provide context when using this term in our reports.

The responses across Canada and within Ontario were varied. The following are some of the definitions provided by Ontario respondents:

“Access, engagement and belonging for all.”

“Equality, diversity, and inclusion in higher learning encompass the principles of providing equal opportunities and fair treatment for all students and members of the academic community, regardless of their background or characteristics; valuing and celebrating a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and identities; and actively creating an environment that fosters a sense of belonging, respect, and accessibility for everyone.”

“To me, EDI means supporting and embracing all students for their unique experiences and needs.”

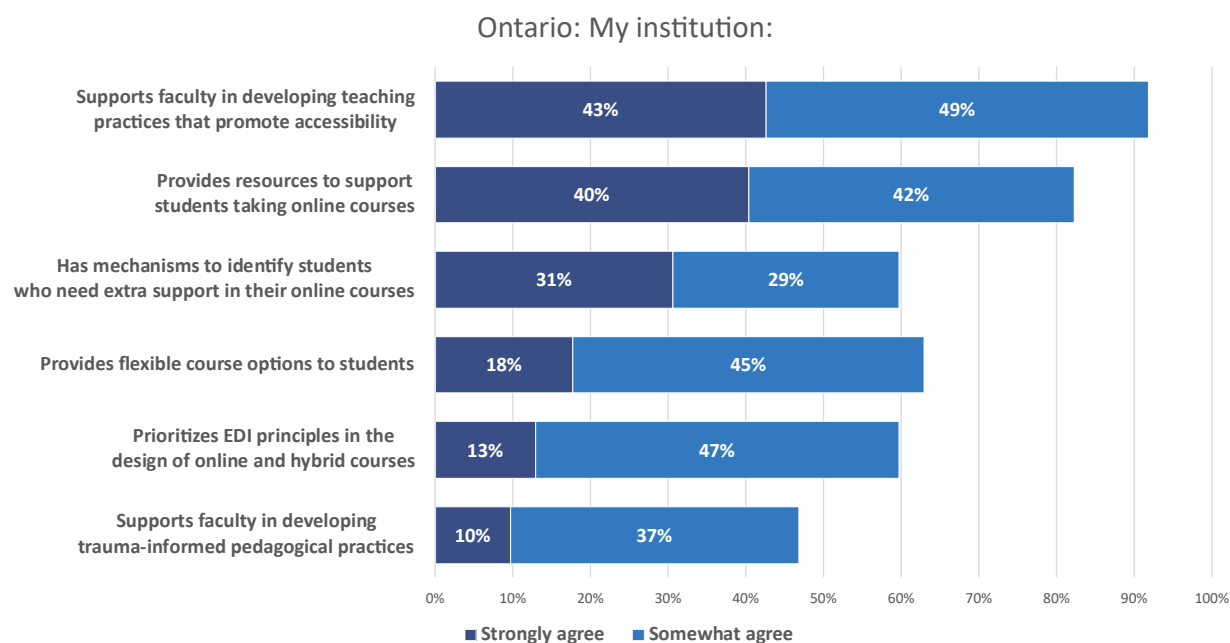
“A concept where persons are recognized as individuals deserving of just and equal treatment. EDI requires continual reflection and effort to facilitate.”

“Reducing barriers so that learners are able to participate in their preferred learning environment. This also includes creating safe learning environments where learners are able to share ideas, ask questions and feel free of judgement or punishments for a differing opinion.”

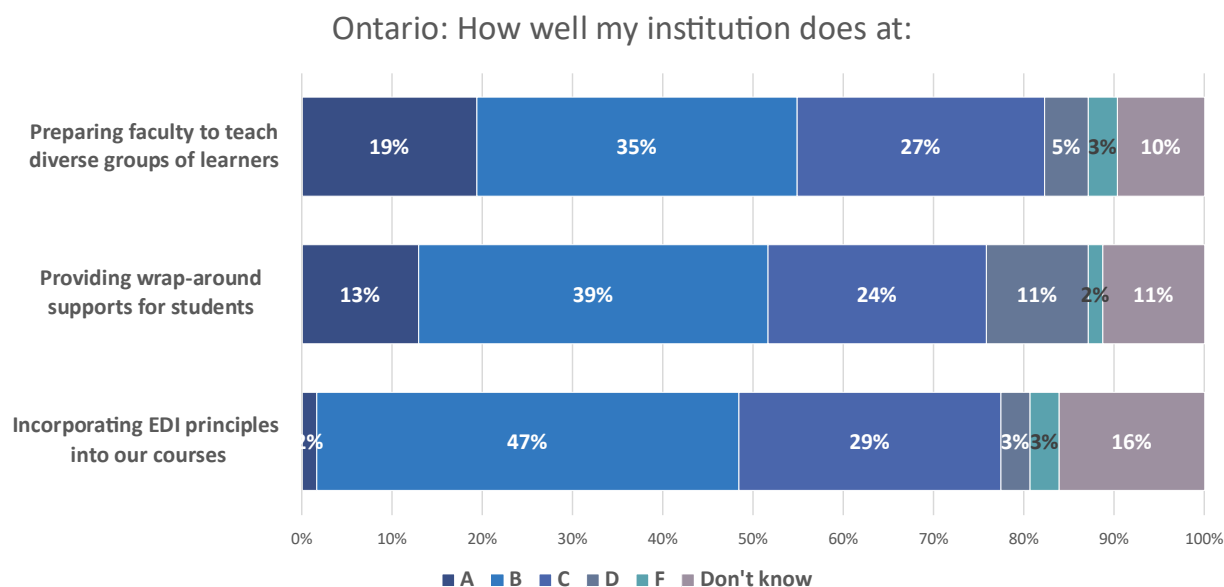
Recognizing that there is a range of meanings attached to the term EDI is important for interpreting the responses to any other questions that ask about EDI. For example, the Fall Survey asked respondents to rate their agreement or disagreement with statements about prioritizing EDI design principles and to provide their institution with a letter grade for how well it incorporates EDI principles into course design. The subsequent responses to these questions (seen in the following charts) are highly nuanced as they depend on each individual respondent's personal definition for EDI.



Along with the questions mentioned above, the Fall Survey asked respondents to state whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about practices at their institution that exist under the umbrella of EDI. The majority of respondents agreed to some extent with most of the statements. Respondents reported widespread agreement with the statements that their institution supports faculty in developing teaching practices that promote accessibility (92%) and provides resources to support students taking online courses (82%).



When asked to give their institution a letter grade for preparing faculty to teach diverse groups of learners, providing wrap-around supports for students, and incorporating EDI principles into courses, most respondents gave a “B” or “C” grade.



If respondents provided a letter grade other than an “A”, they were then prompted to answer an open-ended question asking them what their institution needs to do to improve its letter grade. The following answers from Ontario respondents provide insight as to how EDI practices can be improved:

“Fuller integration of UDL and inclusive design principles; wider adoption of hybrid and HyFlex learning modalities; decolonization of policies, procedures, learning environments, teaching strategies; better take-up of anti-racism, decolonization, Indigenous learning PD programs by all employee groups; strategies to support multilingual learners and multilingualism and raciolinguistics as concepts in learning design; better “virtual campus” supports--so many things...”

“We need to stop talking about diversity and start doing diversity.”

“We are still in the early stages of creating supports for students and faculty. There needs to be more unified direction that is supported by the administration.”

“Better coordination and collaboration between departments.”

“Demonstrate a commitment from senior and executive leadership to diverse students.”



Collectively, the findings related to EDI and digital learning indicate that although some supports are being implemented, considerable work is still needed to improve equity, diversity, and inclusion in the post-secondary educator sector.





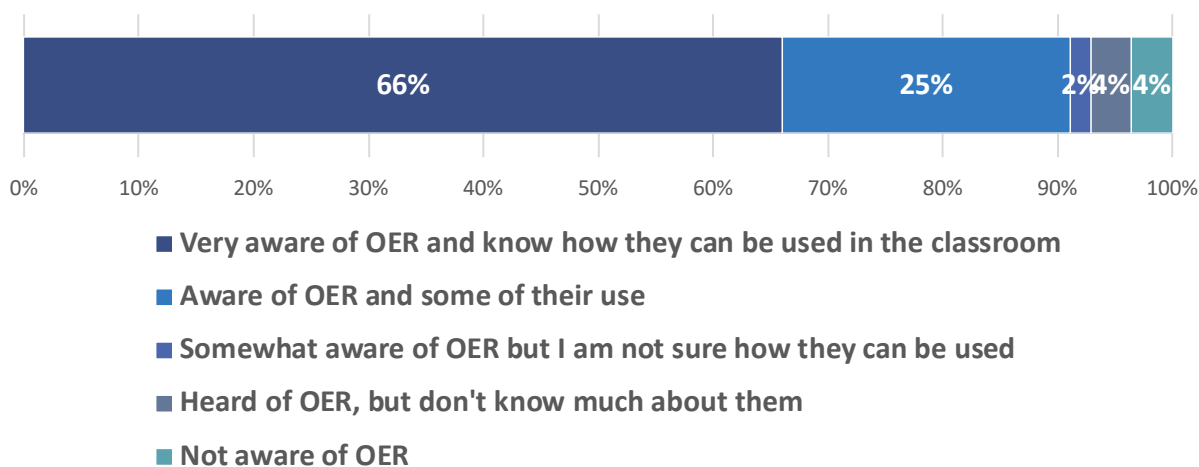
OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

The CDLRA uses the [Creative Commons definition](#) for open educational resources (OER), which defines them as “teaching, learning, and research materials that reside in the public domain or have been released under an [open license](#) that permits their free use and re-purposing by others.”

Being that OER are frequently produced, shared, and customized using digital technologies and platforms, they play a critical role in digital learning as well as accessibility (open resources are available at no cost to students and faculty).

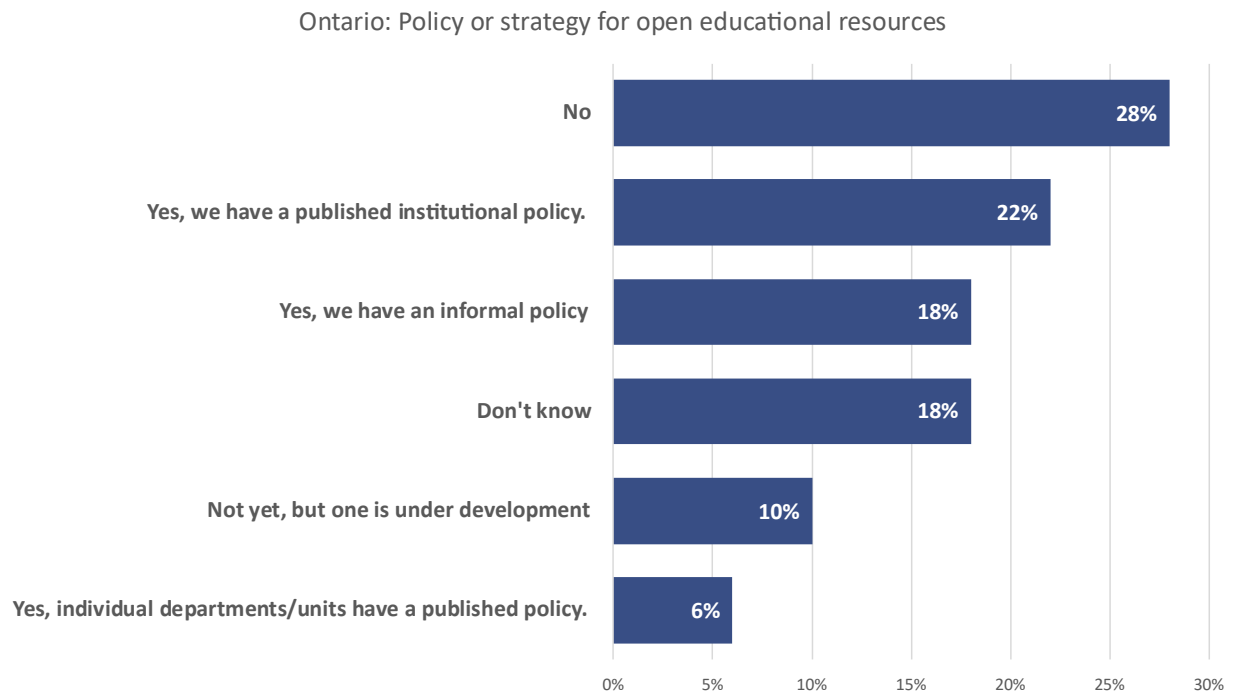
The Fall Survey asked respondents about their awareness of OER. In Ontario, there is a very strong level of awareness of OER and their uses. Very few respondents (less than 5%) had no awareness of OER.

Ontario: How aware are you of Open Educational Resources (OER)?





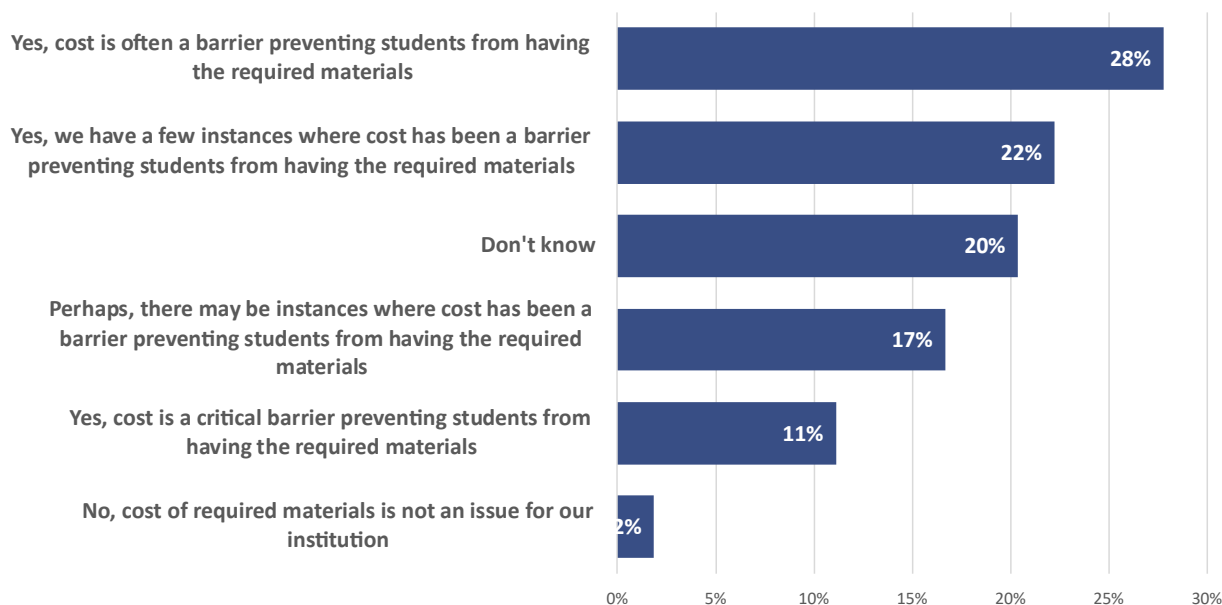
The Fall Survey also asked respondents whether their institution had a policy or strategy for open educational resources. Half of Ontario respondents reported that their institution had some sort of policy, either a published policy (22%), an informal policy (18%), or a policy that was under development (10%). Just over one-quarter of respondents (28%) stated that there was no policy or strategy for OER at their institution.





Reducing the cost of student materials to make post-secondary education more equitable is an important driver of OER initiatives. In Ontario, the majority of respondents noted that cost was a barrier for some students to some extent at their institution.

Ontario: Is the cost to the student of required course materials an issue for your institution?



The CDLRA hopes to gather faculty responses from Ontario through our 2024 research efforts. This will enable our organization to provide Ontario-specific faculty insights into what drives or deters the adoption of OER and the different types of OER being used across the province.

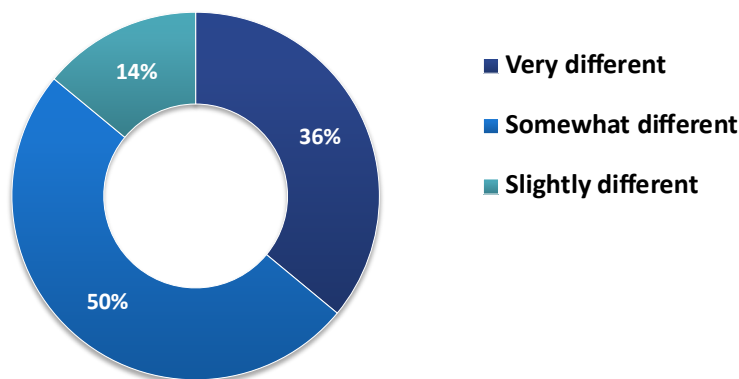


READINESS FOR FUTURE CHANGE

The past few years have been a time of intense change for the post-secondary education sector. The widespread shift to online course delivery during the stage of the COVID-19 pandemic where health restrictions were in effect, resulted in many students and faculty becoming experienced and comfortable with online learning contexts and digital technologies. The launch of ChatGPT and the rise of AI use at post-secondary institutions has also brought about significant change. The Spring Survey asked a series of questions to gauge whether respondents anticipate further change, whether they feel ready for any expected change, and how they feel about the future of post-secondary education.

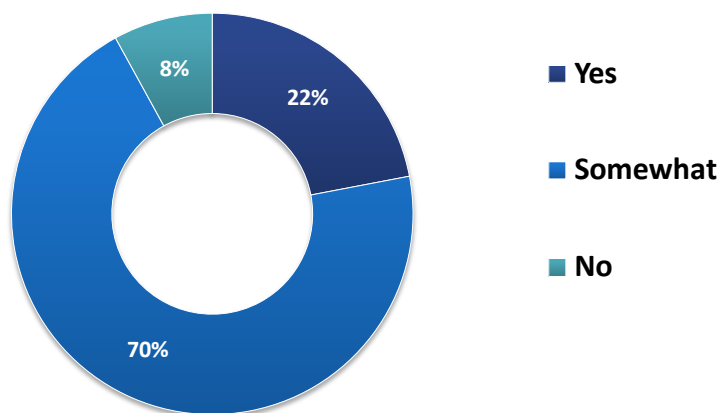
When asked how different they thought post-secondary education would be in five years' time compared to the present state, all Ontario respondents noted that they expect some different: 36% expect a very different future, 50% expect a somewhat different future, and 14% expect a slightly different future.

Ontario: Post-secondary education in 5 years' time



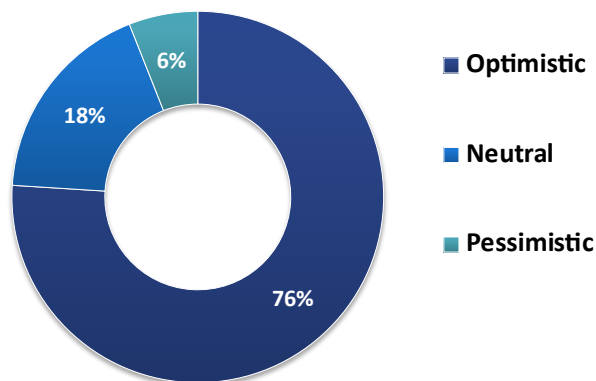
When asked whether they were ready for the anticipated change, the majority of respondents (70%) said that they were somewhat ready. An additional 22% of respondents reported being very ready and only 8% said that they were not ready.

Ontario: Readiness for change in the future



With all respondents expecting a different future and most respondents feeling ready for it to some extent, it is important to assess how those in the post-secondary sector feel about potential impending changes. In Ontario, most respondents (76%) said they feel optimistic about the future of post-secondary education. The minority of respondents who did not report optimism tended to report feelings of neutrality (18%) and very few (8%) reported feelings of pessimism.

Optimism/Pessimism about the future of higher education



Overall, despite many changes that respondents have experienced since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the expectation for ongoing change, there is an overall sense of optimism about the future of post-secondary education in Ontario.



DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings from this year galvanize the sentiment shared by many that post-secondary education will not return to its pre-pandemic state. More importantly, further change is expected as digital offerings and the use of digital technologies in teaching and learning continue to grow. How then do we navigate additional impending changes to an education landscape that seems very different from the relatively steady state that persisted for decades before now?

The pandemic shone a light on the inequities within the system and showed us that embracing digital transformation is an important tool for making post-secondary education more equitable, diverse, and inclusive. The flexibility afforded by many online and hybrid offerings opens the doors to prospective learners who would not otherwise be able to access post-secondary learning. At the same time, a very important finding from the 2023 data is that the majority of respondents told us that they perceive students to prefer having the option to learn online some of the time, not all of the time. The findings also clearly tell us that for some students an in-person-only learning experience is preferred, while for others an online-only learning experience is preferred. In other words, to ensure a diverse student body and equity in learning there must be a range of options available to students (if not at the level of the institution, then certainly choices must be available within the provincial sector).

Navigating further potential change also requires the post-secondary sector to address the gap between the need for quality teaching in digital contexts and the preparedness of faculty to teach in technology-rich modalities. While acknowledging that putting forth professional development requirements is a complex issue and may be limited by collective agreements, finding some way to train all faculty members (adjunct included) to teach in a variety of modalities must be prioritized.

Lastly, the rise of AI and the related concerns about academic integrity highlights the need to revisit the types of assessment strategies used in post-secondary education. Are there other ways that student outcomes can be measured, if the potential use of AI to cheat poses a concern? There is certainly room for multiple research endeavours to explore new instructional and assessment strategies to mitigate academic integrity concerns and the impact of these strategies on student outcomes.



Concluding Thought:

The post-secondary landscape continues to change and bring about new challenges. Yet, it is clear that with the challenges come powerful opportunities to better serve students across the province and across the country. Overall, Ontario institutions appear well-positioned to adapt to whatever the future may bring and with a spirit of optimism.





METHODOLOGY

Information for this report comes from the 2023 Spring and Fall Pan-Canadian Digital Learning Surveys. The Spring Survey was open from May 1 to June 30, 2023, and the Fall Survey was open from September 11 to October 13, 2023.

The universe of interest for the 2023 surveys consists of all publicly funded post-secondary institutions in Canada. Almost all universities in Canada are funded provincially.

Institutions that are not included in the roster include Canadian private for-profit universities, most of which are very small and fully private career colleges and institutes.

Our 2023 list of publicly-funded institutions included:

- 82 universities (including Francophone colleges of Anglophone universities)
- 80 colleges outside Québec
- 51 CEGEPs
- 21 private subsidized colleges in Québec

Participants

438 individuals responded to the Spring Survey, of which 394 provided responses in English and 44 in French. Participants indicated that they were located at 126 unique institutions across Canada. They came from all provinces and territories except for Nunavut. Specifically, participants were in Alberta (18), British Columbia (68), Manitoba (9), New Brunswick (105), Newfoundland and Labrador (2), Northwest Territories (1), Nova Scotia (99), Ontario (66), Prince Edward Island (20), Quebec (38), Saskatchewan (10), and Yukon (2). In Ontario, 64 respondents represented 33 eCampusOntario member institutions.

For the Fall Survey, 438 individuals responded, of which 360 provided responses in English and 78 in French. All provinces and one territory were represented in the Fall data. There were no participants from the Northwest Territories or Nunavut. Specifically, participants were in Alberta (11), British Columbia (55), Manitoba (8), New Brunswick (56), Newfoundland and Labrador (4), Nova Scotia (170), Ontario (72), Prince Edward Island (10), Quebec (45), Saskatchewan (6), and Yukon (1). In Ontario, 68 respondents represented 34 eCampusOntario member institutions.



A total of 39 eCampusOntario member institutions are represented in the combined data from the 2023 Pan-Canadian Digital Learning Surveys.

Respondent roles included administrators, teaching and learning leaders, faculty, and other staff (such as instructional designers, educational developers, and librarians). Due to a low number of faculty responses in all provinces outside the Maritime region, faculty responses are excluded from the Ontario Report. The 2023 Ontario Report includes the findings from 55 administrators and staff for the Spring Survey and 66 administrators and staff for the Fall Survey.

Survey Outreach

The CDLRA research team designed the questionnaires based on prior CDLRA surveys from 2017 to 2022. Potential respondents on the roster received an email invitation to participate in the survey. Each survey invitation included a link to the online survey form. The outreach email and questionnaire content were identical in both the English and French versions. The link to the survey was also shared on the CDLRA's social media channels and included in CDLRA sponsor and partners email newsletters and social media posts.

The Spring Survey included a total of 20 questions, 14 of which were displayed to all respondents. Of the remaining six questions, three were displayed to respondents who indicated they had taught over the past 12 months, and three were displayed to respondents who indicated they had not taught over the past 12 months. The survey also included three optional open-ended questions, where respondents were invited to provide an in-depth response.

The Fall Survey included a total of 12 questions, seven of which were displayed to all respondents. Of the remaining five questions, two were displayed to any respondents who indicated they had taught over the past 12 months, and three were displayed to respondents who selected administrator or teaching and learning leader as their role. The survey also included one optional open-ended question, where all respondents were invited to provide an in-depth response. At the end of the Fall Survey, respondents were asked if they were willing to answer a few more questions on AI use at their institution. If they said "yes," they were then provided with one additional multiple-choice question and two optional open-ended questions.

In both surveys, several questions had a potential follow-up (either multiple choice or open-ended), which was only displayed if the respondent made specific choices to the primary question.



CONTACT

Dr. Nicole Johnson, Executive Director, Canadian Digital Learning Research Association

Email: nicole.johnson@cdlra-acrfl.ca

Web: www.cdlra-acrfl.ca

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