Digital Transformation at Canadian Higher Education Institutions:

Findings from the
2024 Pan-Canadian Report

Contact North | Contact Nord

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Presenter:

Dr. Nicole Johnson

Executive Director, CDLRA

Canadian Digital Learning Research Association
Association canadienne de recherche sur la formation en ligne

About the CDLRA

Non-profit organization

Annual pan-Canadian surveys since 2017

Research focuses on digital learning practices and trends in post-secondary education

2024 Sponsors and Partners

2024 Pan-Canadian Digital Learning Surveys

Spring Survey open from April 2– May 31, 2024

- **Canada:** 441 individuals representing 132 unique institutions

Fall Survey open from September 11 – October 13, 2024

- **Canada:** 196 individuals representing 86 unique institutions

Survey Topics

Spring Survey	Fall Survey
Digital learning trends	Technologies used in teaching and learning
Faculty competencies, attitudes, and preferences	Accessibility and student support
Student attitudes and preferences	Professional development and digital learning
Digital learning challenges	Open educational resources (OER) and open practices
Feelings about the future	

Big Ideas

Technology Use is Expanding – Hybrid, online learning, and digital tools are becoming more embedded in post-secondary education.

GenAI is the Future – Experts agree that Generative AI will be a standard part of education within a few years.

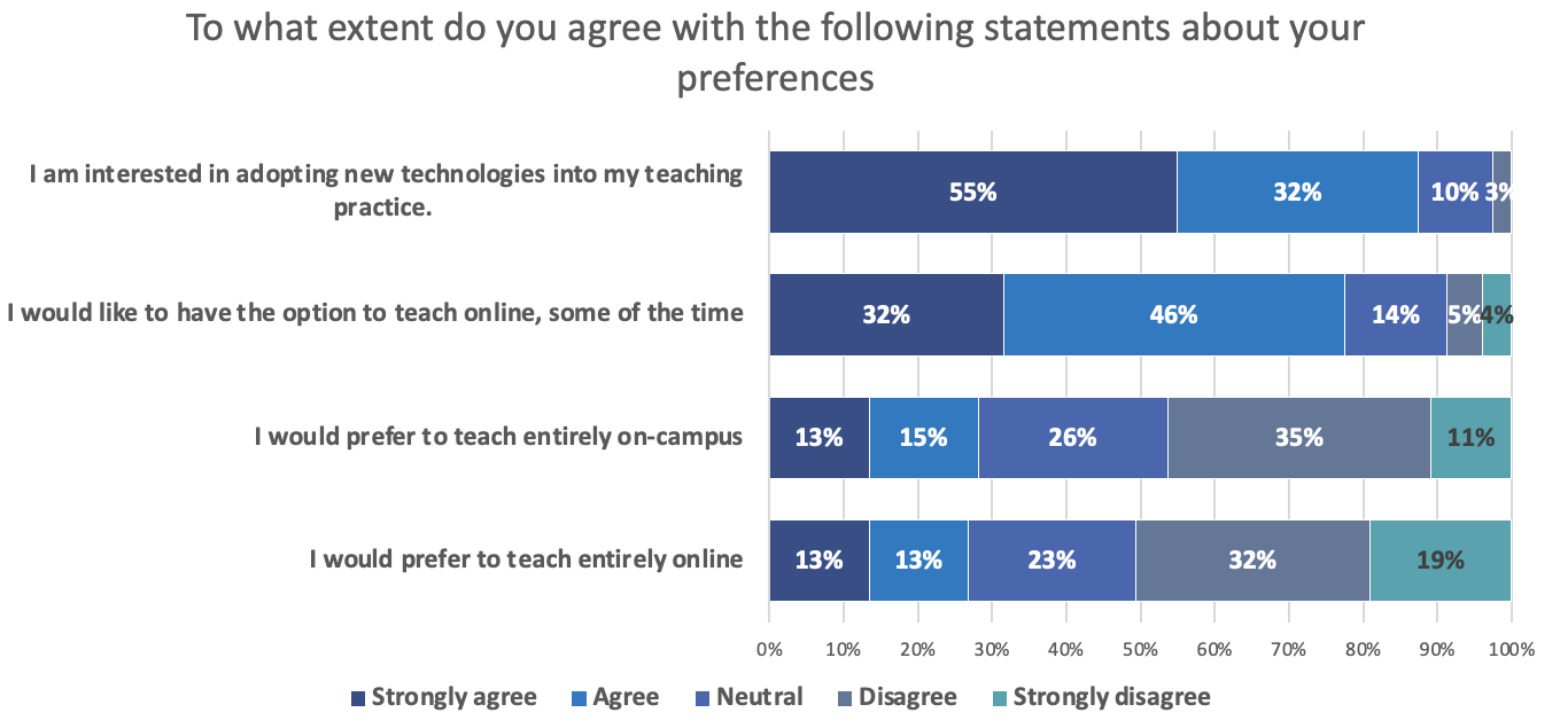
Student Priorities Differ by Modality – Flexibility drives online learning choices, while in-person learning is preferred for interaction.

Faculty Face Growing Pressures – Academic integrity, burnout, and increasing tech demands highlight the need for better support.

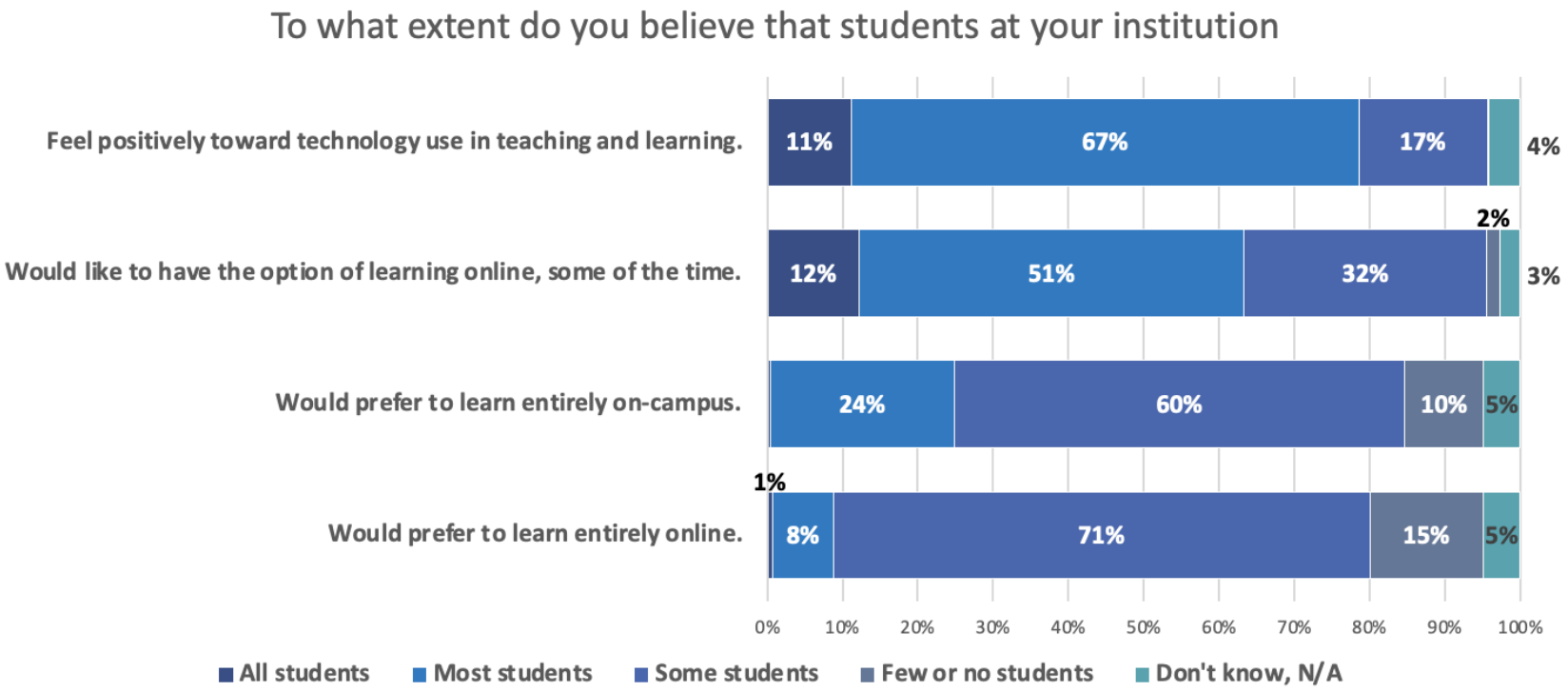
Technology Use: Modality Growth

Respondents Expecting Growth to Some Extent (Modality)	2023	2024
More courses and/or programs offered in a hybrid format	80%	73%
More courses and/or programs offered in a fully online format	69%	62%
More courses and/or programs offered in a fully in-person format	58%	52%
More courses and/or programs offered in a multi-access format	53%	51%

Technology Use: Faculty Preferences



Technology Use: Student Preferences (Perceptions)



Technology Use: Student Preferences (Academica Findings)

Academica Spotlight on Students

Experiences with Modalities: Most students had experienced at least one fully in-person class (69%); many had experienced at least one fully online class (40%) and/or at least one hybrid class (36%).

Preferences: When discussing their preferences, over half (58%) of students preferred a learning format where their courses are mostly or entirely in-person/on-campus; however, a sizable proportion (21%) preferred an entirely or mostly online education.

Technology Use: Most/Least Commonly Used

The type of technology most commonly used by respondents who taught over the last 12 months were online platforms (e.g., LMS) to facilitate interaction between faculty and students (90%).

The least commonly used were Extended Reality (XR) technologies (e.g., augmented reality, virtual reality) (3%).

Artificial Intelligence

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) has been at the forefront of discussions about academic integrity and teaching and learning practices for more than two years.

The tensions underlying the conversations about GenAI are not new.

Artificial Intelligence

In 2023, 19% of respondents who had taught over the past 12 months reported using GenAI to support teaching activities and 12% reported their use in student learning activities.

In 2024, these numbers rose significantly.

- 49% of respondents who had taught over the past 12 months reported using GenAI to support teaching activities
- 41% reported their use in student learning activities

Artificial Intelligence: Agreement with Statements About AI

Statements About AI	2023	2024
Within a few years, AI use will become a normal part of education	92%	85%
The widespread availability of AI will make teaching more challenging	72%	73%
The widespread availability of AI will make teaching more efficient	59%	46%
The widespread availability of AI will make teaching more engaging	49%	35%
The widespread availability of AI will make teaching more effective	48%	34%
Students will use AI to cheat	76%	83%
Students will use AI as a study tool	86%	80%

Student Priorities Differ by Modality

Important reminder:

Student needs do not always align with their preferences.

Student Priorities Differ by Modality

Perceived drivers: preference for online learning:

- inability to access affordable housing on or near campus (75%)
- to accommodate a disability (72%)
- inability to access affordable or reliable transportation to campus (67%)
- cost savings (61%)

Student Priorities Differ by Modality

Perceived drivers: preference for in-person learning:

- students feel they learn best in an in-person context (79%)
- students perceive that the quality of instruction is better when in person (72%)
- uncomfortable or unfamiliar with using technologies (60%)
- inability to access technologies (59%)

Faculty Face Growing Pressures

- The pandemic brought about a steep learning curve related to technology use in teaching and learning.
- Academic integrity has been a long-standing concern in the discourse surrounding online, distance, and technology-supported learning.
- Faculty respondents felt confident in their own ability to teach in different modes, but overall confidence in faculty ability to teach with technology is lower.

Growing Pressures: Teaching and Learning Challenges

Most Pressing Challenge: Teaching and Learning	2023	2024
Academic integrity	15%	20%
Faculty fatigue and burnout	16%	17%
Effective instructional practices for teaching with technology	12%	9%
Readiness for post-secondary studies among first-year students	11%	9%
Effective assessment practices for online learning contexts	10%	9%
Accommodating diverse learning needs among students	10%	7%

Growing Pressures: Operational Challenges

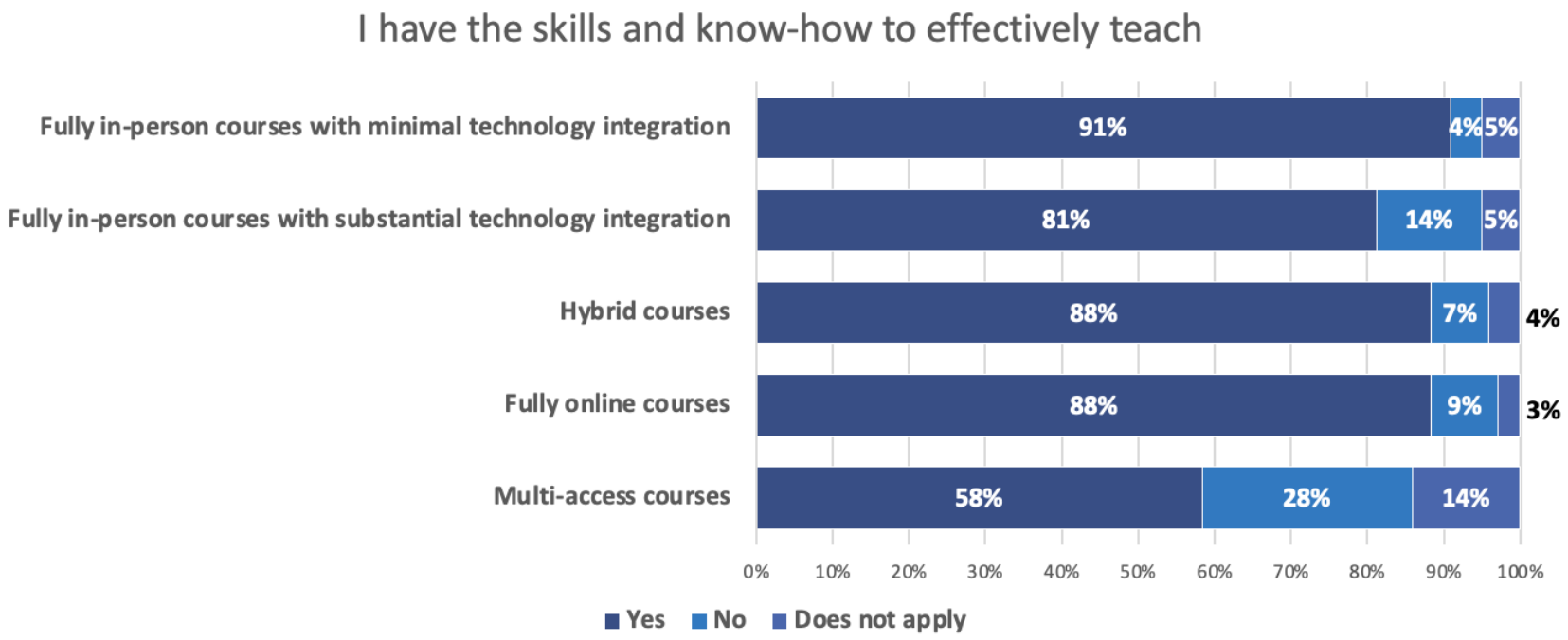
Most Pressing Challenge: Operations	2023	2024
Impact on faculty workload	18%	26%
Technology infrastructure	20%	22%
Financial stability of the institution	11%	14%
Student enrolments	11%	12%
Quality assurance	20%	8%
Addressing inequities	9%	7%
Cybersecurity	*see note	6%
Student demand for online and hybrid offerings	5%	3%
Privacy	*see note	2%

In 2023, cybersecurity and privacy were grouped together as a single challenge with 6% of respondents selecting it as the most pressing challenge.

Faculty Competencies: Perceptions of Others

All or Most Faculty Have the Skills and Know-How to Teach:	2023	2024
In-person courses with minimal technology integration	92%	88%
In-person courses with substantial technology integration	52%	45%
Hybrid courses	42%	39%
Online courses	33%	23%
Multi-access courses	12%	11%

Faculty Competencies: Self Perceptions



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Thank you

We thank our sponsors, partners, and the respondents that participated in this study.

The CDLRA welcomes your insights and feedback:

nicole.johnson@cdlra-acrfl.ca

www.cdlra-acrfl.ca/publications

Participate in Future Studies

Scan the QR code and sign up to receive invitations to participate in CDLRA studies.

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