

Provincial Highlights



Prepared for the
Heads of CE
Ontario Colleges of
Applied Arts & Technology

May 26, 1999

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Compustat Consultants Inc.

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**The Heads of Continuing Education would like to thank the Association of
Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario for their financial
support.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides highlights from the Fall 1998 Continuing Education Provincial Survey in Ontario, and compares these results with the Fall 1996 Survey results. It will answer questions pertaining to student satisfaction with their courses, their instructors, and their college facilities and services. It will provide insight into what types of people are taking college level Continuing Education courses in the province of Ontario: For example, their educational background and goals, their employment status, gender, age, and first language.

In the Fall of 1998, just as in the Fall of 1996, a comprehensive survey was administered to Continuing Education students in twenty-three community colleges in Ontario. The colleges together have over 450,000 student registrations each year, and the co-operative survey provides a solid body of information about these students. This is the second time a project of this nature and size has been undertaken by the Ontario Colleges. This collaborative effort has allowed each college to benefit from results at the provincial level right down to the course section level with feedback provided to individual instructors. The project has had numerous benefits including shared costs and shared results, comparative student profile data and important performance benchmarks against which to measure future results.

Participating colleges received summary results for each of their course sections, their college, the province and, where appropriate, other colleges. As well, large, medium and small colleges were grouped together and results were analyzed. The colleges with the highest ratings were identified to enable others to benefit from best practices.

The 1996 research model was developed from the Metro survey (Winter 1993) and later Central Region survey (Winter 1995), and was used again for the Fall 1998 survey. The survey was conducted over the period September 28th to October 14th in the Fall of 1998. In total, 86,938 surveys were collected which reflects a return rate of approximately 65%. The study was conducted on behalf of the colleges by Compustat Consultants who had conducted the previous projects.

High Course Satisfaction

Once again, it was found that students are very satisfied with their courses and their instructors. Overall, 86% rated course content with either a 'Good' or 'Excellent', 94% said the same of their instructor's knowledge of the subject, and 83% indicated the same with respect to their instructor's presentation of the course material. These ratings are consistent with the 1996 results (within 1%). These results again underscore the quality and value that is provided to students by colleges through Continuing Education courses. While these results are very positive, the colleges recognize the need for improvement, and are continuing to strive for excellence, and to develop strategies to raise student satisfaction even higher in the future.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Diversity from College to College

Once again, the survey indicated that there is tremendous diversity among the colleges in terms of the Continuing Education student profile. Across the province, the proportion of students whose first language is something other than English or French is up by 3% since 1996, from 16% to 19%. However, the proportion varies widely from one college to another, from a low of 2% at one college up to a high of 48% at another.

Female students continue to outnumber male students by a significant amount in Continuing Education courses across the province (63% to 37%). The proportion ranges from a low of 51% female students in one college to a high of 73% females at another. The age of the student body varies from one college to another. Across the province, 80% of the Continuing Education students are between the ages of 25 and 54, with 30% of these in the 35-44 age bracket. However, students in the 35-44 age bracket varies from 25% at one college, to 43% at another. The proportion of older students also varies significantly from college to college; in one college, only 1% are 55 years of age or older, while at another college, 27% are in this age bracket.

There continues to be diversity among the programs offered by colleges and the goals that students have in taking Continuing Education courses. For example, across the province 20% of students are working towards completion of a single course, but this ranges from a low of 6% at one college to a high of 59% at another; and while 37% of students are working towards a certificate, the range is from 6% to 48%.

Employed and Educated

The study shows that an increasing number of Continuing Education students are employed full-time, up 5% since 1996, from 63% to 68%. Another 16% are employed part-time. The proportion of Continuing Education students who have already completed some level of post-secondary education is up 2% from 1996, to 61% in 1998; and 27% of these hold university degrees. As in 1996, almost 70% of the students have previously taken Continuing Education courses at their college, and 34% have taken four or more. With a tougher and ever changing job market, employees are required to have increased education and skills. A significant proportion (77%) of students are taking Continuing Education courses for career related reasons, and those students whose main reason for enrolling was to prepare for a change of careers has increased by 2% since 1996, to 21% in 1998.

Increased Technology

The availability of computer technology at home has continued to increase since the last survey. In 1996, 67% of students indicated that they had access to a computer at home. In 1998, 70% of Continuing Education students across the province indicated that they have access to a computer at home, an increase of 3% since 1996. In addition, students who have access to a computer now have many of the latest computer peripherals as well; about two thirds of these students have a modem, Internet access, and an E-mail account, and almost 80% have a CD-ROM. This could possibly impact the way students register and take courses in the future. There has been a 5% increase in the proportion of students who would prefer to register using E-mail/Internet, from 5% in 1996 to 10% in 1998. When asked which method(s) of taking a similar course would be of interest to them in the future, 21% of students across the province selected 'Internet/WEB with E-mail support' and 16% selected 'CD-ROM'.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

College Services and Support

The study measured student satisfaction with the information available for course selection and the usefulness and accessibility of course catalogues. Questions about students' experience with registration, dealing with the college by phone and in person, and a wide variety of college services and facilities were also included. Student satisfaction ratings in 1998 remained consistent with (were within 4% of) the 1996 results. Again, the greatest barrier to success by a wide margin was seen to be finances (20%), and colleges need to continue to provide financial support for part-time students through student loans, scholarships and bursaries so that Continuing Education courses are accessible to all students.

In Summary

This on-going project has provided a wealth of information, allowing the Heads of Continuing Education to define who their students are and why they are taking Continuing Education courses. It has allowed colleges to monitor trends and keep an eye on changes within their student body. It also reflects each institution's strong and not-so-strong characteristics, pointing out where improvement is necessary and where special advantages can be highlighted. Individual colleges have engaged in specific further studies of interest to them; some have conducted a focused analysis on such subjects as "registration", "learning and technology", "services", "teaching and learning", "marketing", "full-time students taking C.E. courses" and "safety on campus". Although each college will use the survey results in the ways that best meet their individual needs, the overall outcome in all the colleges should be a greater sensitivity and more direct response to the needs and preferences of the part-time student population.

The colleges plan to survey at least every two years to determine ongoing satisfaction levels and monitor trends. In some colleges, student evaluations of courses and instructors are already being done every semester. All twenty-three colleges are committed to implementing improvements in their services to Continuing Education students.

INTRODUCTION

The Heads of Continuing Education in the province of Ontario agreed to this on-going research project in December of 1997 in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To acquire a comprehensive profile of their Continuing Education students.
- To establish benchmarks to assess performance and future trends in all aspects of a student's experience, including teaching and learning.
- To benefit from the efficiencies of shared cost and consistency of survey and process.
- To maximize the use of the data for each course, division, location and college in the system.
- To illustrate the benefits of cooperative research among the colleges.

This model was a further development of the Metro survey (Winter 1993) and later Central Region survey (Winter 1995), and the 1996 Provincial Continuing Education survey. The survey was conducted over the period September 28th to October 14th in the Fall of 1998. In total, 86,938 surveys were collected which reflects a return rate of approximately 65%. *See Table below.*

Survey Summary Statistics (Fall 1998)

Continuing Education

| College | Fall Registrations as of Nov.15/98 | Survey Period Registration | Surveys returned | % of students surveyed in available period | % of Fall registrants surveyed |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Algonquin College | 18,937 | 10,493 | 6,950 | 66% | 37% |
| Cambrian College | 1,611 | | 998 | | 62% |
| Canadore College | 1,467 | 1,317 | 496 | 38% | 34% |
| Centennial College | 10,297 | 10,297 | 7,033 | 68% | 68% |
| Conestoga College | 9,119 | | 5,860 | | 64% |
| Confederation College | 1,426 | | 675 | | 47% |
| Durham College | 6,378 | | 3,265 | | 51% |
| Fanshawe College | 12,154 | 8,153 | 5,437 | 67% | 45% |
| George Brown College | 11,831 | 8,829 | 5,041 | 57% | 43% |
| Georgian College | 7,221 | | 1,795 | | 25% |
| Humber College | 17,230 | | 7,149 | | 41% |
| La Cité collégiale | 1,852 | 1,085 | 725 | 67% | 39% |
| Lambton College | 1,412 | | 958 | | 68% |
| Loyalist College | 4,077 | | 2,181 | | 53% |
| Mohawk College | 14,401 | | 8,199 | | 57% |
| Niagara College | 6,593 | | 2,904 | | 44% |
| Northern College | 714 | 415 | 317 | 76% | 44% |
| Sault College | 1,575 | | 595 | | 38% |
| Seneca College | 24,411 | 16,258 | 11,086 | 68% | 45% |
| Sheridan College | 14,925 | 13,760 | 8,587 | 62% | 58% |
| Sir Sandford Fleming College | 2,382 | | 1,475 | | 62% |
| St. Clair College | 7,265 | | 3,174 | | 44% |
| St. Lawrence College | 6,055 | | 2,038 | | 34% |
| Provincial Totals | 183,333 | 70,607 | 86,938 | *65% | 47% |

* estimated return rate based on 9 colleges who tracked the necessary statistics

INTRODUCTION

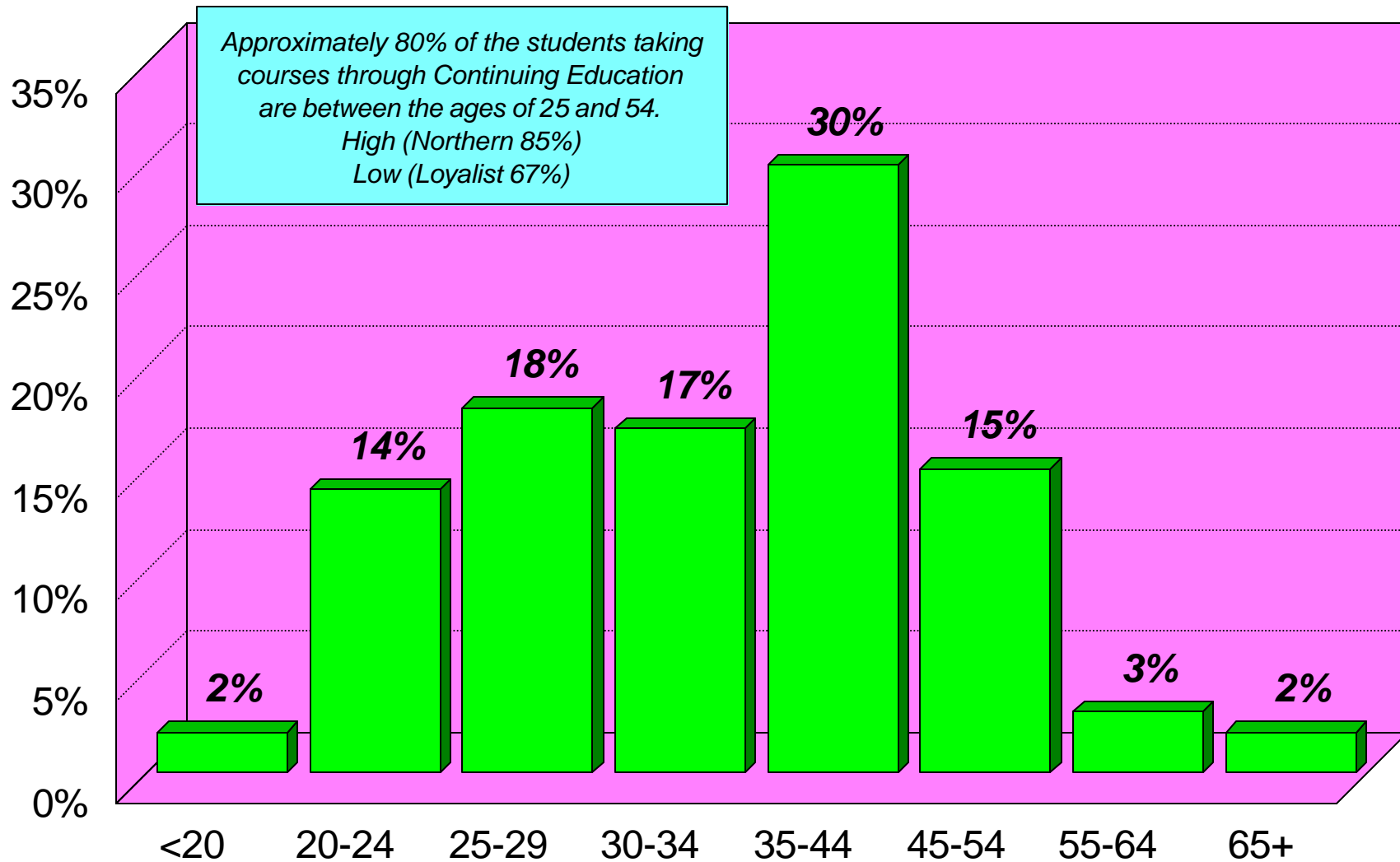
Survey results from students indicating that they were registered in a full-time program (9,611 students) have been excluded from this report, due to the fact that they are characteristically different. These students have been studied separately as they make up a significant proportion (11%) of Continuing Education activity. In addition to this, surveys from 2,748 students who did not answer the question regarding their full-time status have been excluded.

Surveys from students who filled out multiple surveys were included in the report (multiple surveys accounted for approximately 13%). This allowed students attending more than one course to cast a second vote or in other cases to give information specific to their course. These students were likened unto customers making a second purchase. Therefore the student-course combination was the independent observation in this report unless noted, and should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

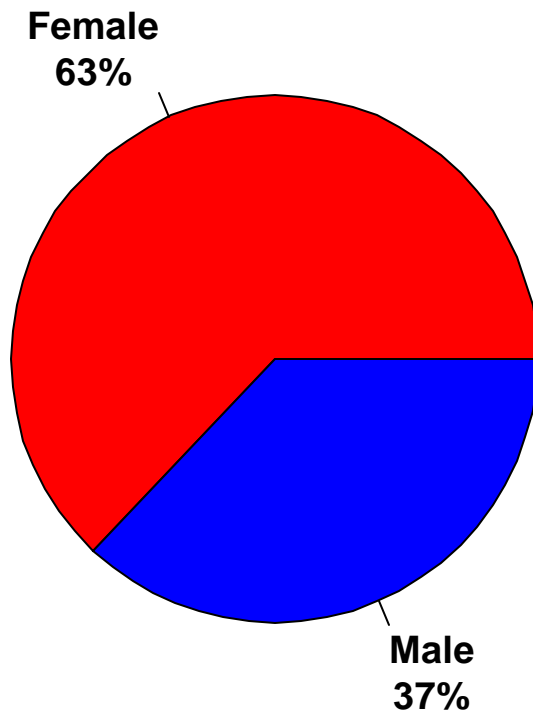
For further information regarding this survey please contact one of the following:

Algonquin College - Raymonde Hanson
Cambrian College - Chris Bartlett, Dean, Access & General Studies
Canadore College - Nancy Moulton, Manager, Continuing Education
Centennial College - Debby Kaplan, Chair Centre for Part-time Studies
Conestoga College - J. David Stewart, Director, Continuing Education
Confederation College - Vincent F. Stilla, Director, Community Education
Durham College - Donna Crawford, Director of Continuous Learning
Fanshawe College - Jan Novotny, Dean of Continuing Education
George Brown College - Susan Horne, Chairperson, Continuing Education & Marketing Division
Georgian College - Bob Kennedy, Director, Marketing and Communications
Humber College - Ken Harrison, Director, Corporate Distance & C. L.
La Cité collégiale - Francine Chartrand, Directeure
Lambton College - Derek Washington, Dean, Business & Industry Services, Continuing Education
Loyalist College - Dan Holland, Dean, Continuing Education
Mohawk College - Carolyn Gray, Chair, Applied & General Science, Continuing Education
Niagara College - Foster Zanutto, Director of Continuing Education
Northern College - Debbie Petrus, Manager, Continuing & Distance Education
Sault College - Jim Erb, Registrar
Seneca College - Susan Savoie
Sheridan College - Gary Britton, Director, School of Continuing and Part-time Studies
Sir Sandford Fleming College - Rosemary Newmaster, Team Leader, Part-time Studies
St. Clair College - Rick Dumouchelle, Chair Con. Ed. Technology & Trades
St. Lawrence College - Alice Welsh - Director, Continuing Education
Joan Homer - Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, Executive Director
Edward T. Hodge - Compustat Consultants Inc., Consultant

Age Of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 1998



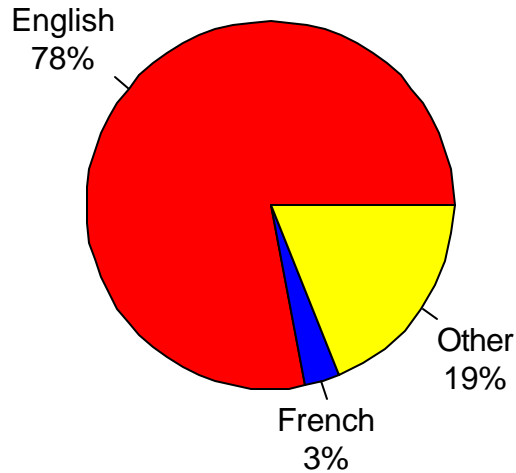
Gender of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 1998



- ⇒ *Almost two-thirds of students taking Continuing Education courses are female.*
- ⇒ *Seventy-eight percent of the males reported being employed full-time compared to 63% of females.*
- ⇒ *There is a larger proportion of females employed part-time (11% more) and homemakers (6% more).*

First Language of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 1998

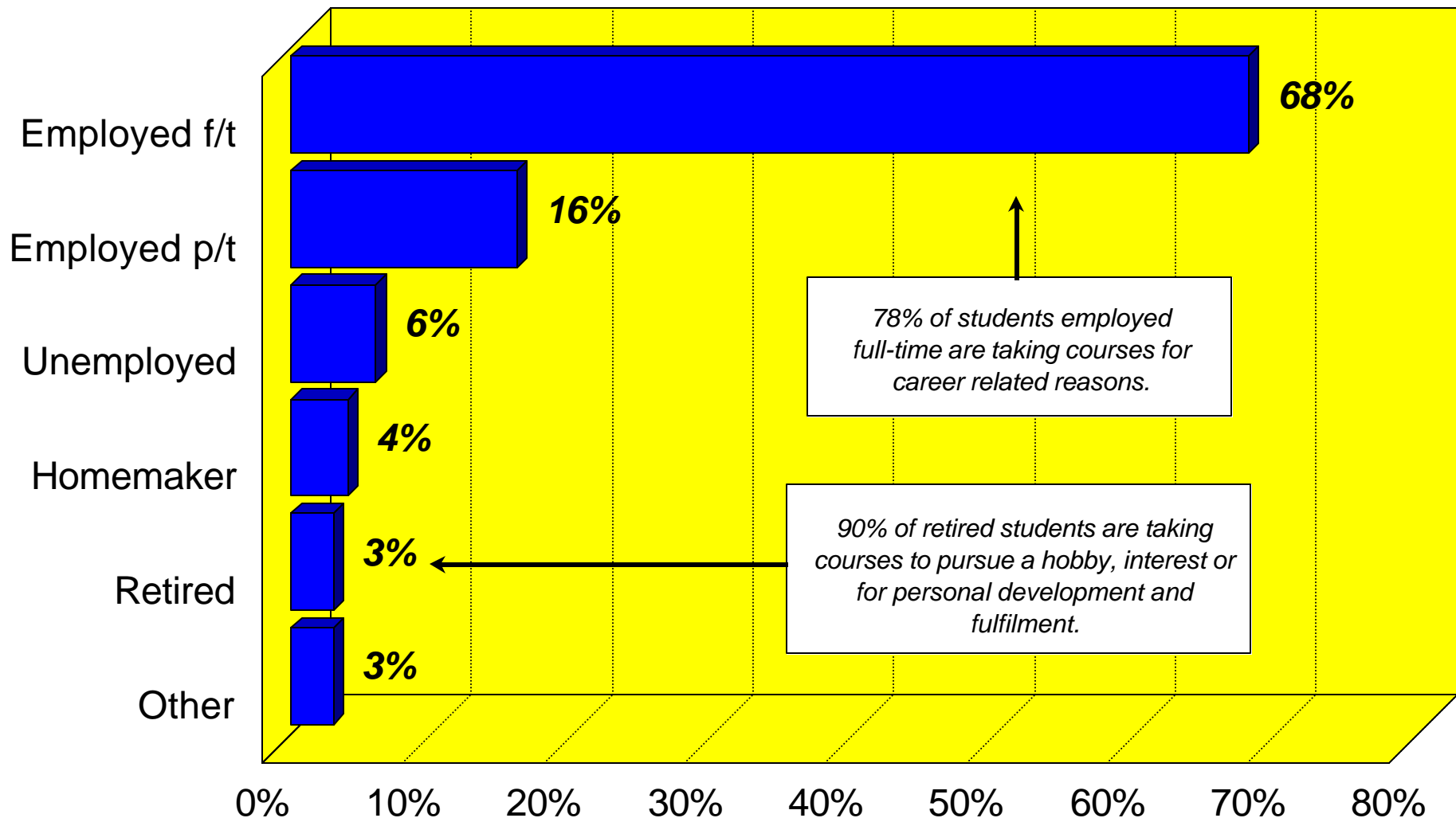
The Province



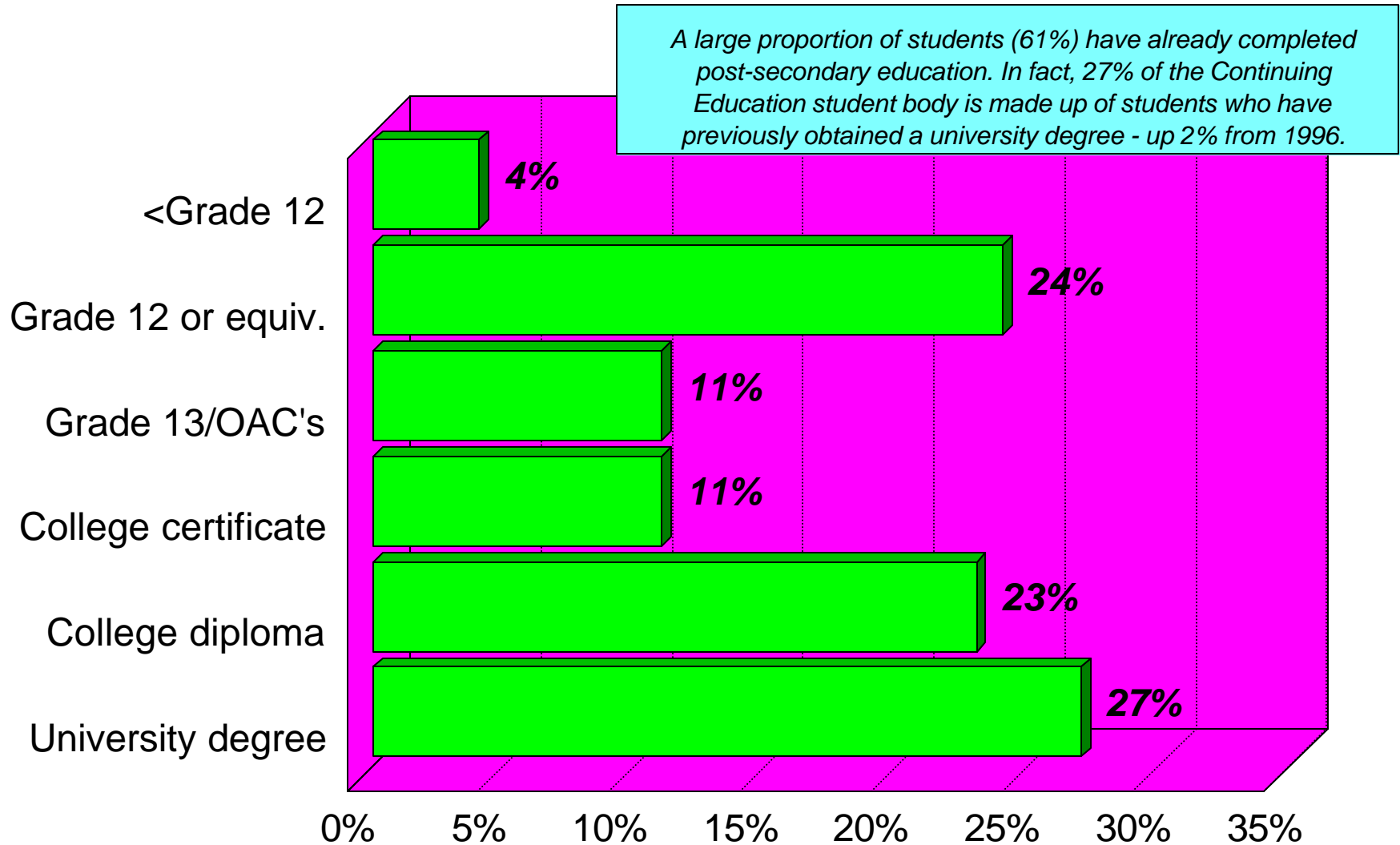
One of the most significant indications of diversity is the proportion of students with a language other than English as their mother tongue. Of course, La Cité collégiale has a large majority of students with French as their first language. Forty-eight percent of Seneca College students have a first language other than English or French compared to only 3% of Sir Sandford Fleming College students.



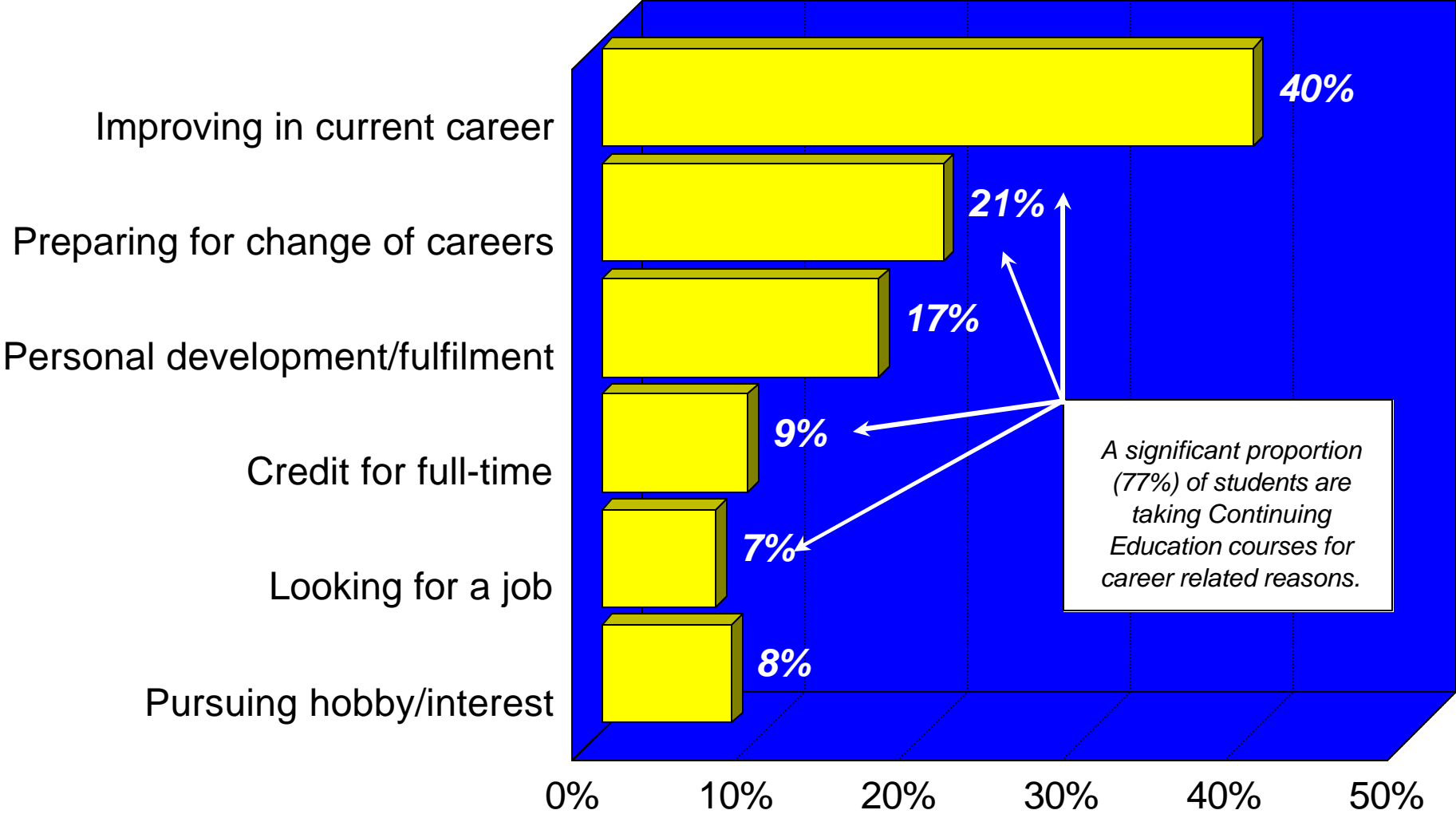
Employment Status of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 1998



Highest Level of Education of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 1998

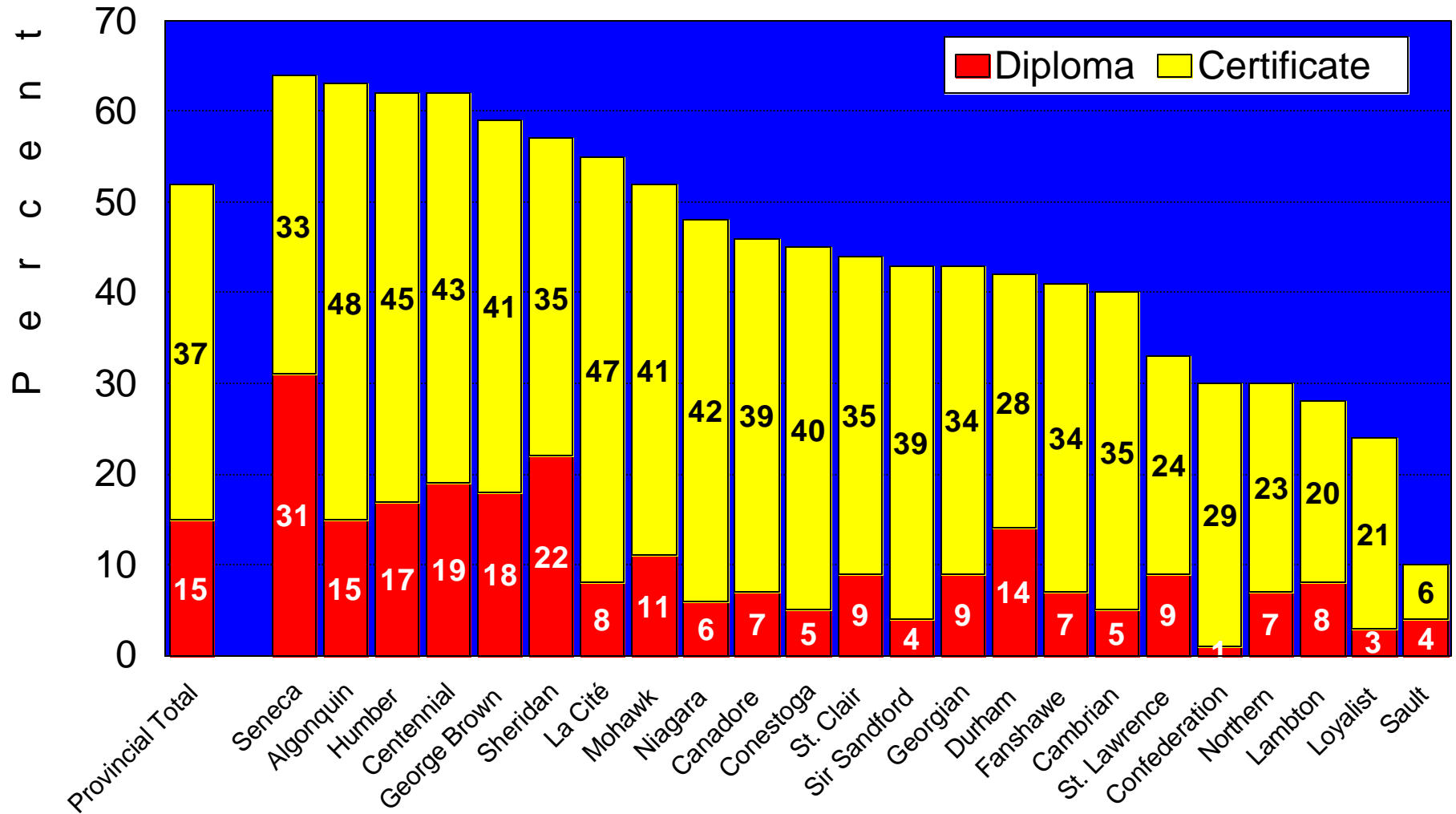


Main Reasons for Enrolling Province - Fall 1998



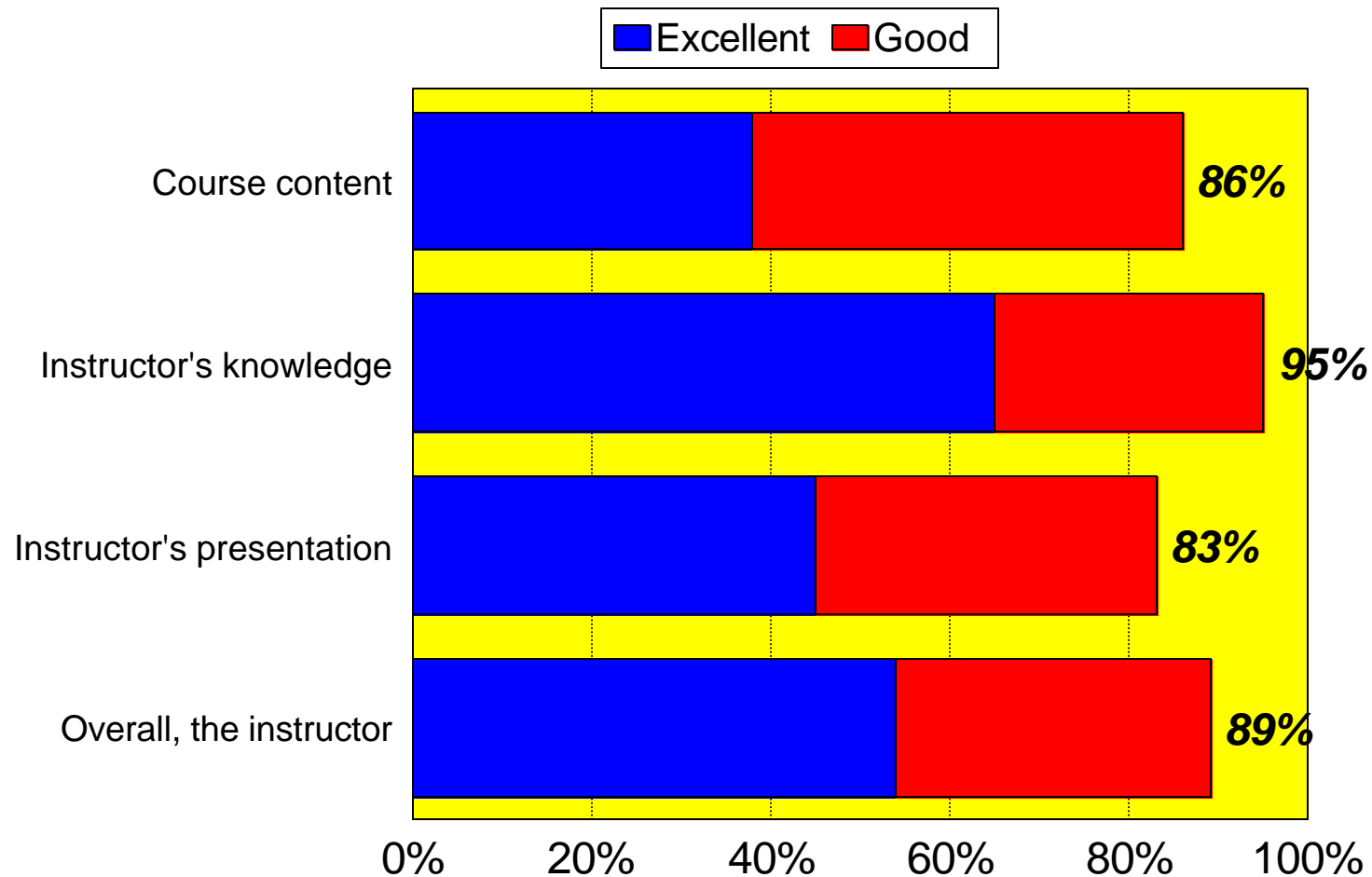
What Continuing Education Students are Working Towards Province - Fall 1998

Similar to other motivational and demographic results, we are led to the conclusion that there is considerable diversity from one college to the next in terms of student profile and the programs offered. In this chart it is noted that larger colleges have significantly larger proportions of students seeking diplomas and certificates.



Course and Instructor Ratings Province - Fall 1998

The vast majority of students are very satisfied with the courses and instructors in Continuing Education. The results are encouraging for every college in the Ontario system. However, colleges recognize the need to strive for 'Excellence', and consideration of these results should lead to further improvement.



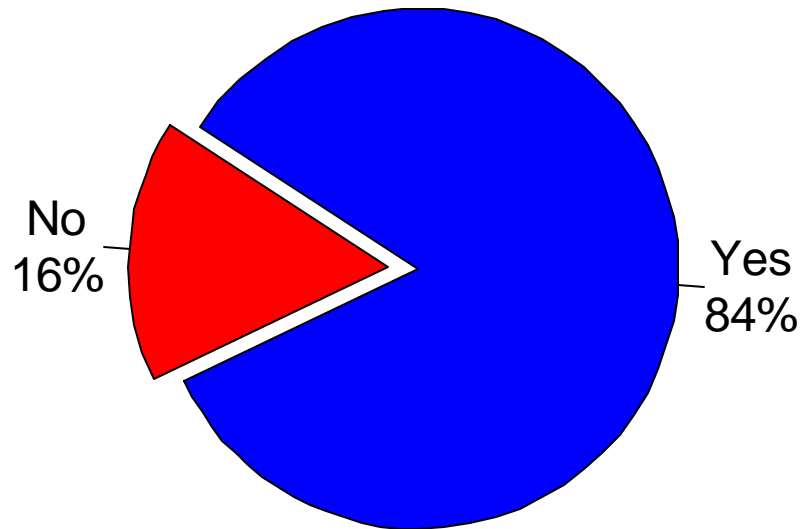
Other Indicators Of Satisfaction Province - Fall 1998

- ⇒ *83% of students would recommend their course to a friend with similar interests*
- ⇒ *29% of students said that the course was better than they expected*
- ⇒ *69% of students had taken courses at their present college in the past*
- ⇒ *34% of students had already taken 4 or more courses at their present college*

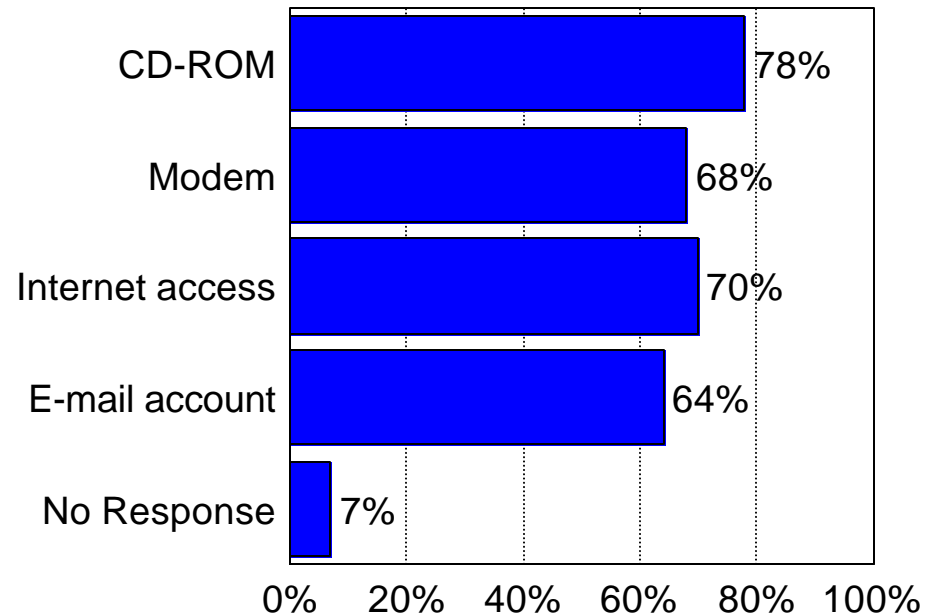
Learning and Technology Province - Fall 1998

Student access to computer technology at home has continued to increase since the last survey. Across the province, 84% of C.E. students said that they have access to a computer; 84% of those have access to a computer at home, and 48% have access at work. Over two thirds of these students also have many of the latest computer peripherals at their disposal. This trend might lead to new ways in which colleges can communicate information to students, accept registrations, and teach courses. Interest in registering using E-mail/Internet is up by 5% since 1996, and 21% of students across the province are interested in taking their course via the Internet/WEB, and 16% indicated interest in taking their course via CD-ROM.

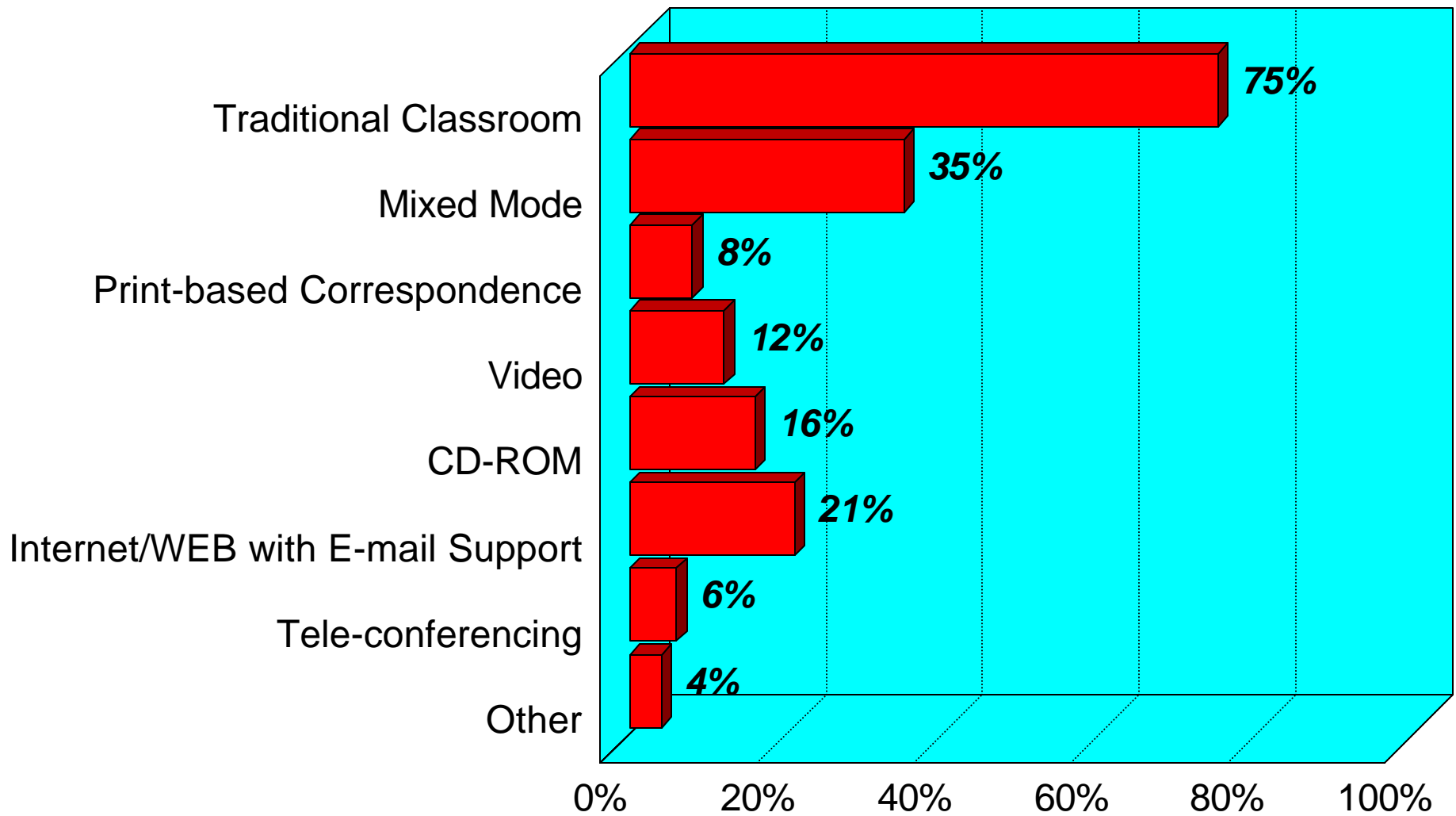
Do you have access to a computer?



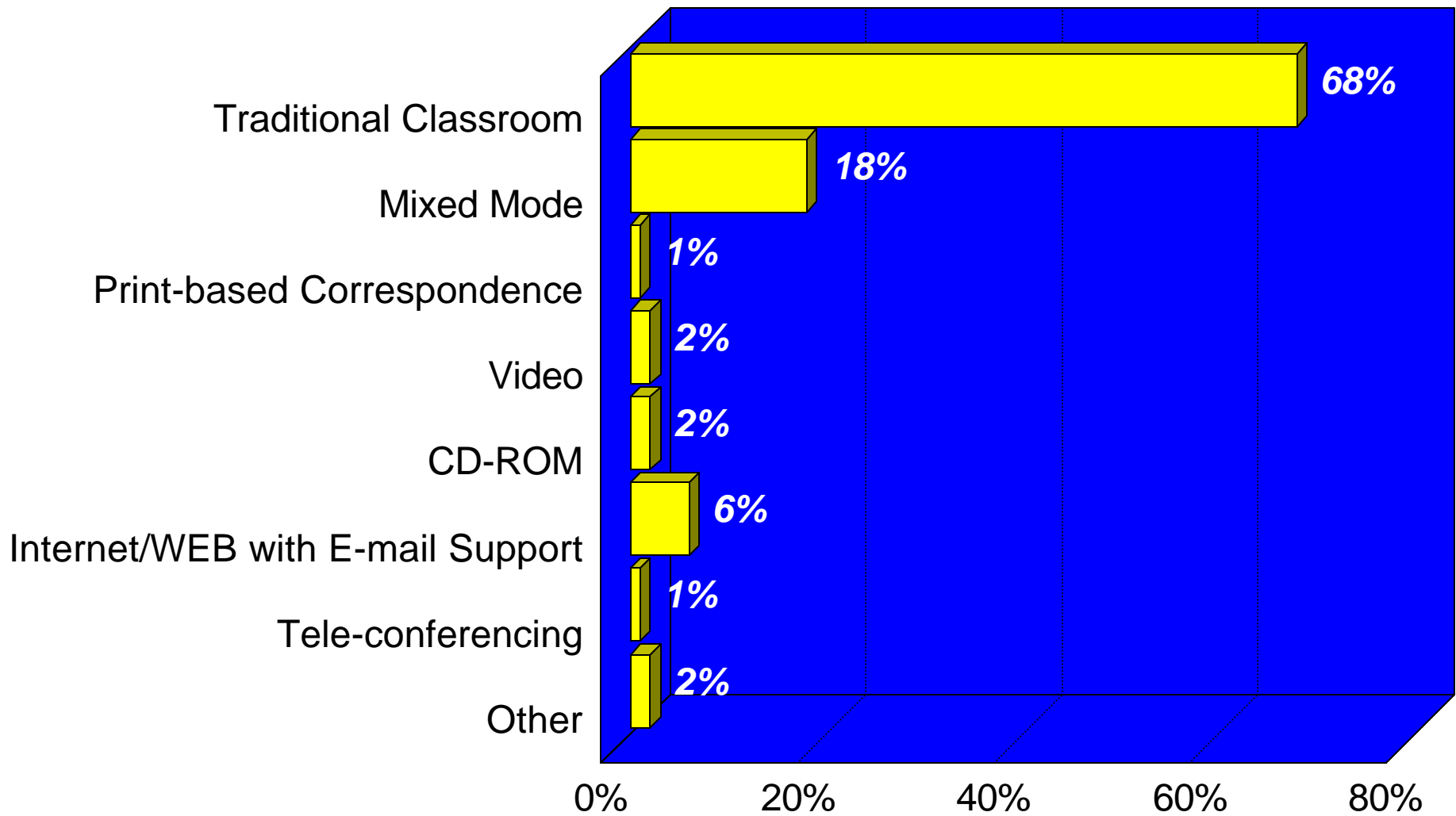
If 'Yes' which of the following do you have?



Method(s) of Interest for Taking Course (Select all that apply) Province - Fall 1998



Method of Interest for Taking Course (Select only one) Province - Fall 1998



Provincial Ratings which Changed by 3% or more Province - Fall 1998

- ⇒ *4% up to 62% ("Excellent" & "Good") - Getting through to the college on the telephone*
- ⇒ *3% up to 83% ("Excellent" & "Good") - Overall ease of registration*
- ⇒ *3% up to 49% ("Excellent" & "Good") - Cost of Parking*
- ⇒ *3% up to 57% ("Excellent" & "Good") - Access to college computers outside of class time*
- ⇒ *3% up to 91% ("Yes") - Course outline provided at the beginning of this course*
- ⇒ *3% up to 89% ("Yes") - Feeling safe on college grounds*

Provincial Non-Rating Changes of 3% or more Province - Fall 1998

- ⇒ *3% down to 30% - CE catalogue delivered to home without request*
- ⇒ *4% up to 13% - Use of Automated phone registration*
- ⇒ *5% up to 10% - Prefer to use E-mail/Internet registration*
- ⇒ *5% up to 68% - Students employed full-time*
- ⇒ *3% up to 19% - Other first language (Not English or French)*