

Provincial Highlights



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

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PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

This report provides highlights from the Fall 2000 Continuing Education Provincial Survey in Ontario, and compares these results with the Fall 1998 and 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 2000, a comprehensive survey was administered to Continuing Education students in twenty-two community colleges in Ontario. This survey was also administered in the Fall of 1998 and 1996 to twenty-three colleges. The colleges together have over 185,000 student registrations each fall, and this co-operative survey provides a solid body of information about these students. 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 the development of 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.

It is encouraging to note the fact that over the three survey periods, almost all of the Facilities & Services questions have had increases in the 'Excellent' category, in the range of 1% to 4%. At the same time, 'Excellent' + 'Good' ratings in the Teaching & Learning questions have remained high. The trend towards students having increased access to computer technology both at home and at work that was seen between the 1996 and 1998 surveys is even more apparent in 2000. There has been a concomitant increase in the proportion of students who use and would prefer to use E-mail/Internet registration, and an increasing proportion of students would like to take a course using this technology.

Excellence in Education

One indication that colleges are continuing, successfully, to strive for excellence in education is the fact that 'Excellent' ratings have increased gradually but steadily between 1996 and 2000 in the four survey questions about Overall quality: 'Excellent' ratings of the Overall quality of Instructors has increased by 2% since 1996, and Overall quality of Courses, Facilities & Services and Helpfulness of Staff all increased by 3% since 1996.

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Growing Reputation of Ontario Colleges

For the last three surveys, the largest proportion of students (almost 40%) indicated that the most important reason for choosing to register in their particular College was due the location of the College campus. It is interesting to note, however, that a growing proportion of students has indicated that 'Reputation of this College' is the most important reason for choosing to register; an increase of 3% has been seen between 1996 (8%) and 2000 (11%). At the same time, 'This course/program is only offered here' has decreased by 3%, going from 19% in 1996 to 16% in 2000.

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 the same as the 1998 results and within 1% of the 1996 results. 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.

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 1998 and 6% since 1996, from 16% to 22%. However, the proportion varies widely from one college to another, from a low of 1% at one college up to a high of 51% at another.

Female students continue to outnumber male students by a significant amount in Continuing Education courses across the province (64% to 36%). The proportion ranges from a low of 52% female students in one college to a high of 76% females at another. The age of the student body varies from one college to another. Across the province, 63% of the Continuing Education students are between the ages of 25 and 44 inclusive, with 29% of these in the 35-44 age bracket. However, students in the 35-44 age bracket varies from 26% at one college, to 36% 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, 34% are in this age bracket.

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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 18% of students are working towards completion of a single course, but this ranges from a low of 10% at one college to a high of 48% at another; and while 39% of students are working towards a certificate, the range is from 14% to 47%.

Employed and Educated

The study shows that an increasing number of Continuing Education students are employed full-time, up 3% since 1998 and up 8% since 1996, from 63% to 71%. Another 15% are employed part-time. The proportion of Continuing Education students who have already completed some level of post-secondary education is up 2% from 1998 and up 4% from 1996, from 59% to 63%; and 28% of these hold university degrees. As in 1998 and 1996, 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 (67%) 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.

Increased Technology

The availability and use of computer technology has continued to increase since the last survey. In 1998, 84% of students who had access to a computer. This went up to 89% and in 2000 – an increase of 5% from the last survey period. In addition, 3% more students in 2000 than in 1998 have a CD-ROM and modem, 14% more students have an E-mail account and 16% more students have Internet access. This is also impacting the way students register. In 2000, 5% of students across the province indicated that they registered by E-mail/Internet, up 5% since 1996. However, 21% of students across the province indicated that this is how they would prefer to register in the future. This is an 11% increase since 1998 and a 16% increase since 1996. When asked which method(s) of taking a similar course would be of interest to them in the future, 27% selected 'Internet/WEB with E-mail support' up from 21% in 1998.

College Facilities/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.

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Student satisfaction ratings for questions regarding Telephone services all increased between 1996 and 1998 and again between 1998 and 2000, with increases ranging from 3% to 8% 'Excellent' plus 'Good'. The Telephone ratings range from 62% to 72% 'Excellent' plus 'Good'. Student satisfaction ratings also rose for the Registration questions by up to 5% since 1996. These ratings ranged from 68% to 84% 'Excellent' plus 'Good'. All of the Facilities and Services ratings have remained the same or increased slightly since 1998, with the exceptions of 'Cafeteria hours', 'Helpfulness of cafeteria staff' and 'Ease of parking'; these ratings went down by 1% 'Excellent' plus 'Good' since 1998. 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. It should be noted that an increasing number of students are being required to pick up the Continuing Education Catalogue at a College campus as opposed to the catalogue being delivered to their home without their request. In 2000, 32% of students picked up the CE catalogue at a College campus. This is up 2% from 1998 and 5% from 1996. Twenty-six percent of students had the catalogue delivered to their home without their request in 2000. This is down 4% since 1998 and 7% since 1996.

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 raise their awareness of 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 & Technology", "Facilities & Services", "Teaching & 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 being done every semester.

INTRODUCTION

The Heads of Continuing Education in the province of Ontario agreed to this on-going research project 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, the physical environment and services.
- 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.

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 and Fall 2000 surveys. The survey administration period was from September 25th to November 17th in the Fall of 2000. In total, 80,905 surveys were collected which reflects a return rate of approximately 43%. The study was conducted on behalf of the colleges by Compustat Consultants who had conducted the previous projects.

Survey Summary Statistics (Fall 2000) **Continuing Education**

College	Fall Registrations as of Nov.15/00	Survey Period Registration	Surveys returned	% of students surveyed in available period	% of Fall registrants surveyed
Algonquin College	16,049	11,644	4,107	35%	26%
Cambrian College	1,691		560		33%
Canadore College	1,523	391	318	81%	21%
Centennial College	14,077	11,890	6,055	51%	43%
Conestoga College	11,829	9,824	6,657	68%	56%
Durham College	6,105	3,723	2,832	76%	46%
Fanshawe College	12,000	5,643	3,880	69%	32%
George Brown College	17,284	17,284	6,135	35%	35%
Georgian College	9,392	4,710	2,246	48%	24%
Humber College	17,881		8,380		47%
La Cité collégiale	1,725	1,563	892	57%	52%
Lambton College	1,340	1,010	664	66%	50%
Loyalist College	4,550	2,102	1,606	76%	35%
Mohawk College	11,970		7,196		60%
Niagara College	6,441	6,130	2,885	47%	45%
Northern College	647		236		36%
Sault College	1,528	672	504	75%	33%
Seneca College	22,752	18,600	11,088	60%	49%
Sheridan College	13,624	11,352	7,869	69%	58%
Sir Sandford Fleming College	2,960	1,871	1,524	81%	51%
St. Clair College	7,500	4,990	3,791	76%	51%
St. Lawrence College	3,590	3,176	1,480	47%	41%
The Province	186,458	116,575	80,905	*55%	43%

* estimated return rate based on 18 colleges who tracked the necessary statistics

INTRODUCTION

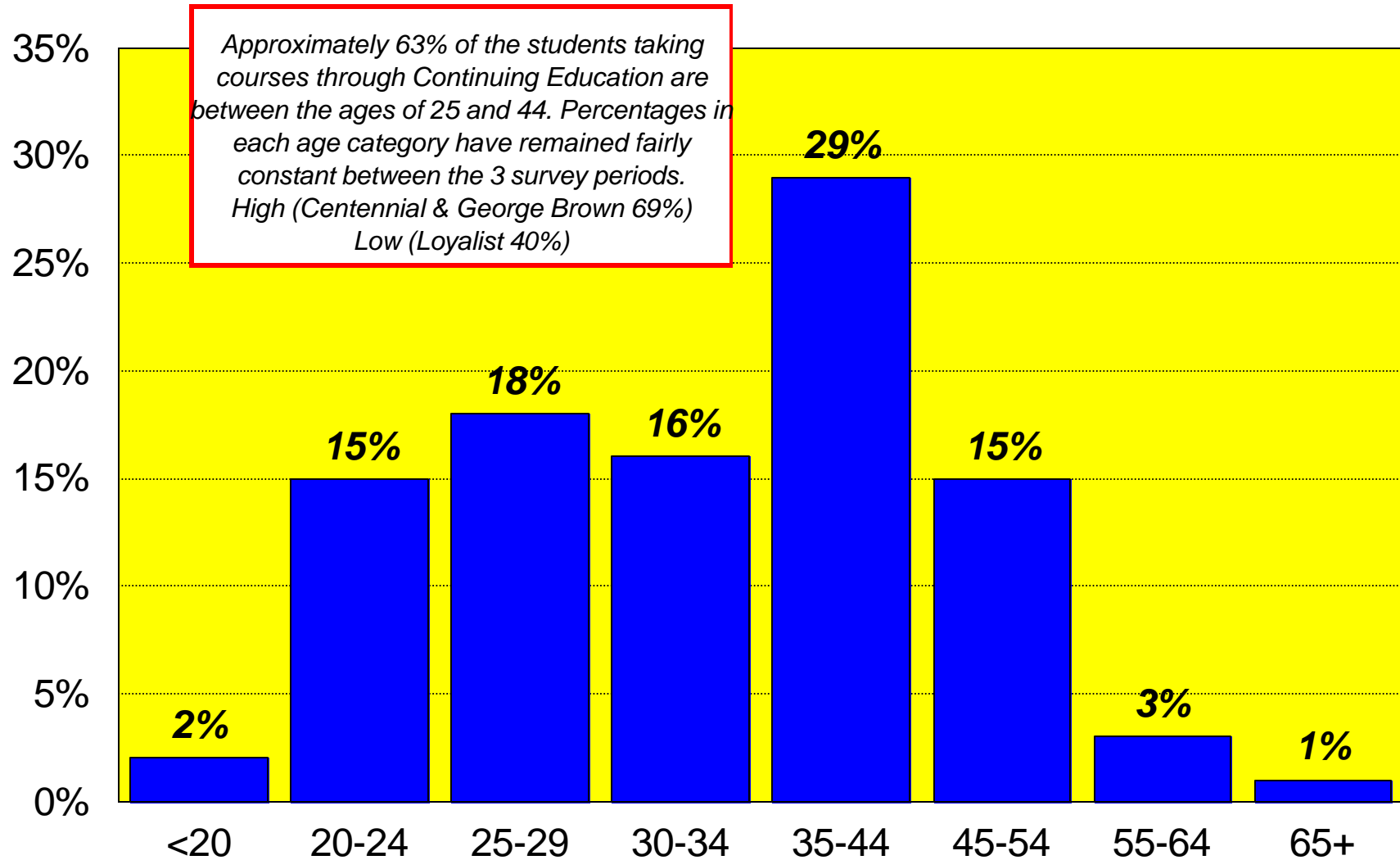
Survey results from students indicating that they were registered in a full-time program (9,355 students) have been excluded from this report, due to the fact that they are characteristically different. These students have been studied separately as they make up a significant proportion (12%) of Continuing Education activity. In addition to this, surveys from 2,301 students who either did not answer the question regarding their full-time status or answered with a double response, have been excluded.

Surveys from students who filled out multiple surveys were included in the report. 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.

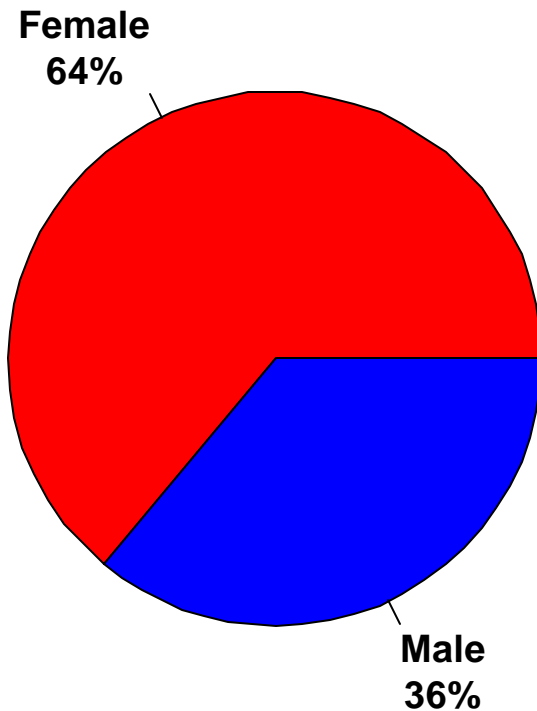
For further information regarding this survey please contact one of the following:

Algonquin College – Raymonde Hanson, Vice President, Academic
Cambrian College – Chris Bartlett, Dean, Creative Arts & Open Learning
Canadore College – Nancy Moulton, Chair, Continuing Education & Corporate Training
Centennial College – Debby Kaplan, Chair, Centre for Part-time Studies
Conestoga College – J. David Stewart, Director, Continuing Education
Durham College – Donna Crawford, Director, Continuous Learning
Fanshawe College – Jan Novotny, Dean School of Continuing Education
George Brown College – Colin Simpson, Dean
Georgian College – Marie Knapp, Director, Research and Evaluation
Humber College – Janis Miller, College Director, Corporate & Continuing Education
La Cité collégiale – Jean Leroux, Vice-president, IDM
Lambton College – Dave Gotts, Director, Corporate Training – Access Programs
Loyalist College – Dan Holland, School of Business & Continuing Education
Mohawk College – Carolyn Gray, Chair, Business & Community Studies
Niagara College – Patricia Labonte, Director of Continuing Education & Learning Resource
Northern College – Debbie Petrus, Manager, Continuing Education
Sault College – Patricia Gibbons, Director, Centre for Continuing Education & Contract Training
Seneca College – Susan Savoie, Director
Sheridan College – Gary Britton, Director, School of Continuing and Part-time Studies
Sir Sandford Fleming College – Rosemary Newmaster, Manager, Fleming Training Services
St. Clair College – James Wilson, Chair, Continuing Education
St. Lawrence College – David White – Manager, College Research & Planning
Joan Homer – Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario, Executive Director
Edward T. Hodge – Compustat Consultants, President

Age Of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2000



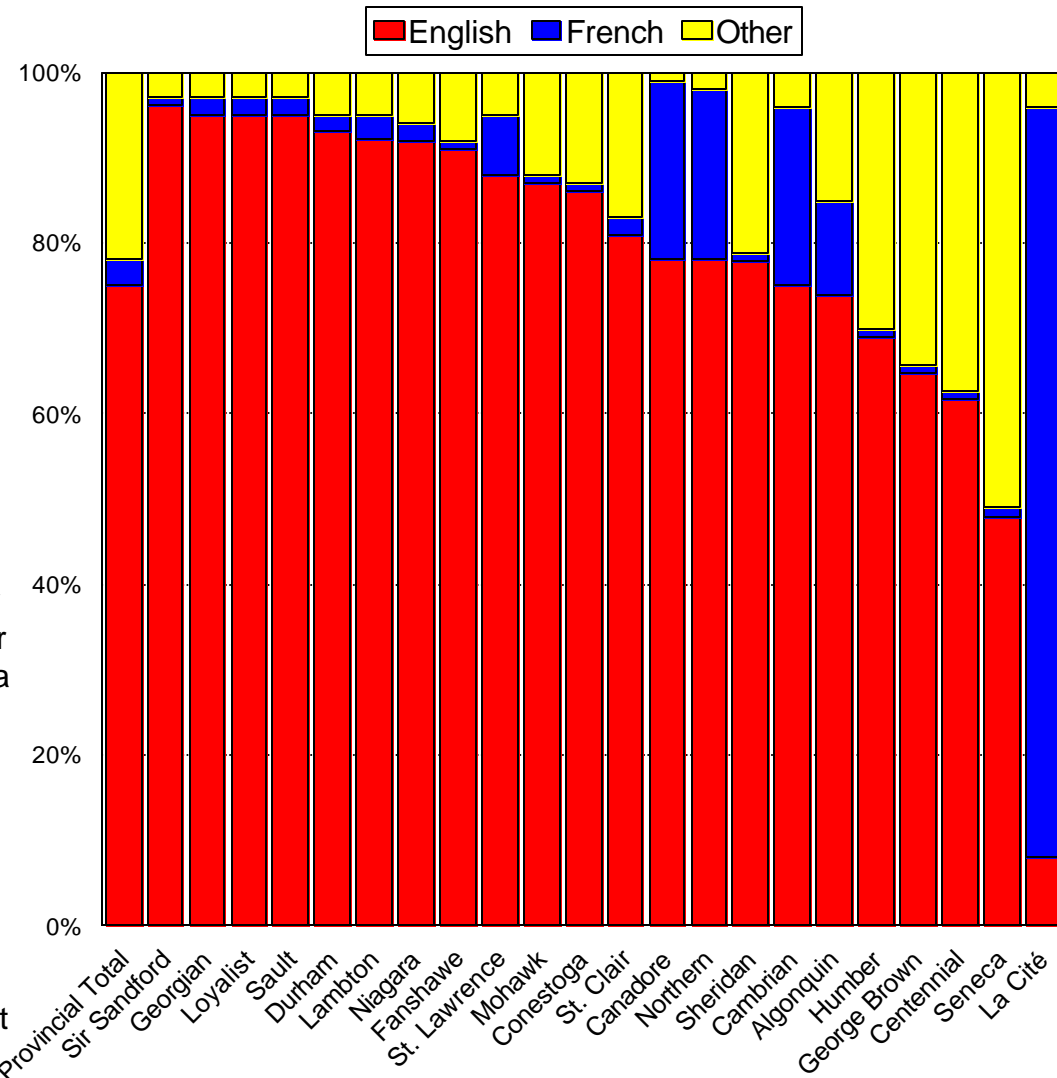
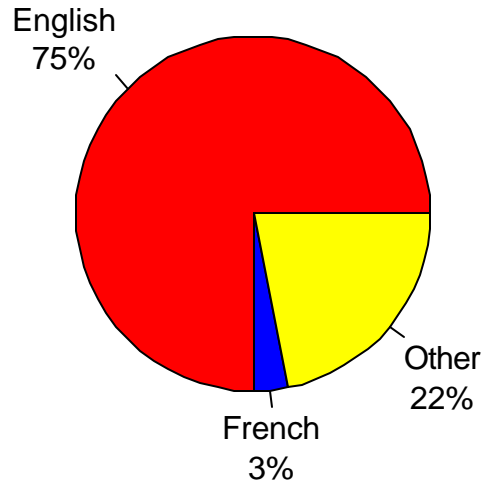
Gender of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2000



- ⇒ *Almost two-thirds of students taking Continuing Education courses are female. This has remained constant since 1996*
- ⇒ *Eighty percent of the males reported being employed full-time compared to 66% of females.*
- ⇒ *There is a larger proportion of females employed part-time (9% more) and homemakers (6% more).*

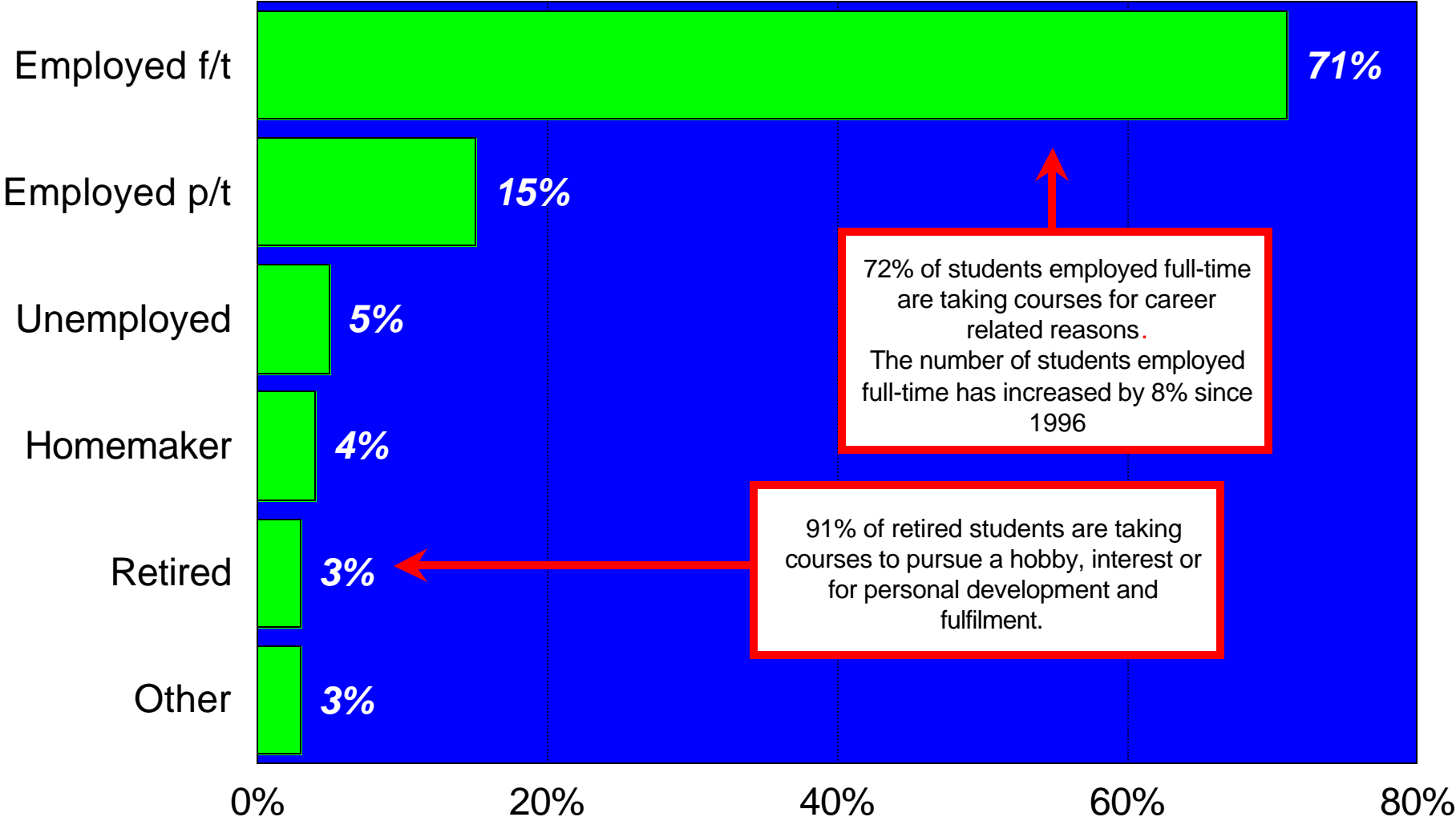
First Language of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2000

The Province

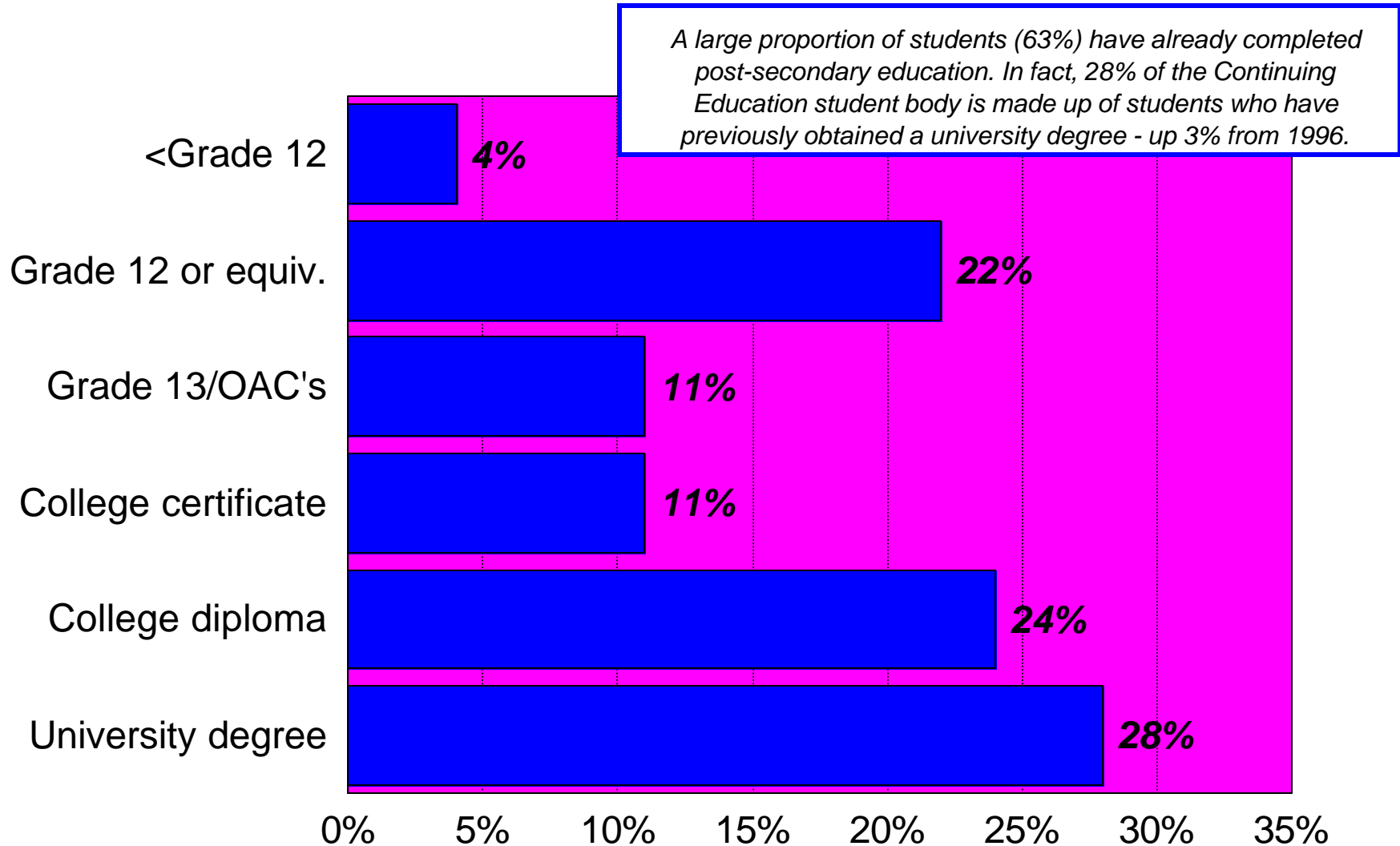


- ⇒ One of the most significant indications of diversity is the proportion of students with a language other than English as their mother tongue. Of course, La Cité collégiale has a large majority of students with French as their first language. Fifty-one percent of Seneca College students have a first language other than English or French compared to only 1% of Canadore College students.
- ⇒ The proportion of students with English as their first language has decreased by 6% since 1996 while the proportion of students with an 'Other' first language increased by 6%

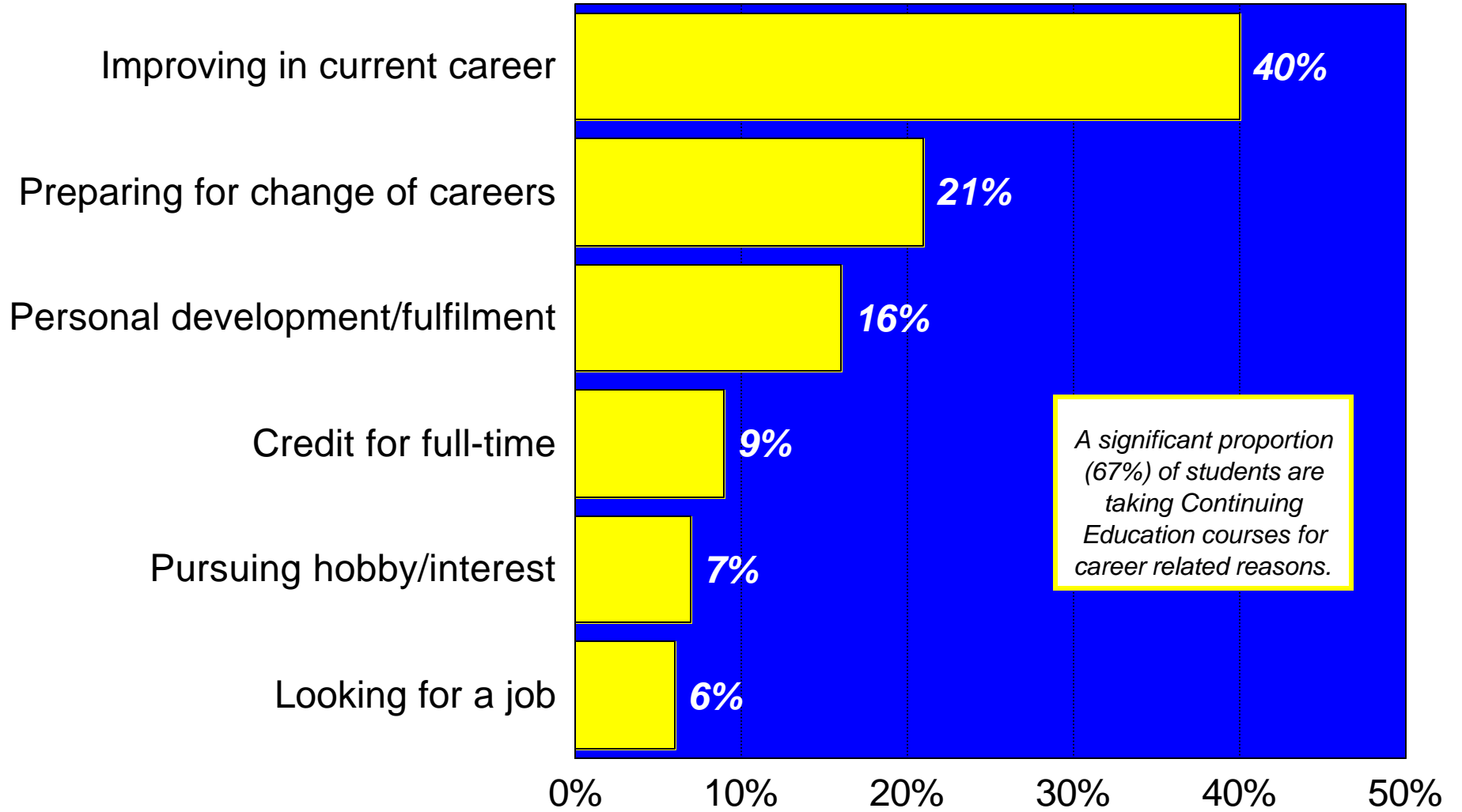
Employment Status of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2000



Highest Level of Education of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2000

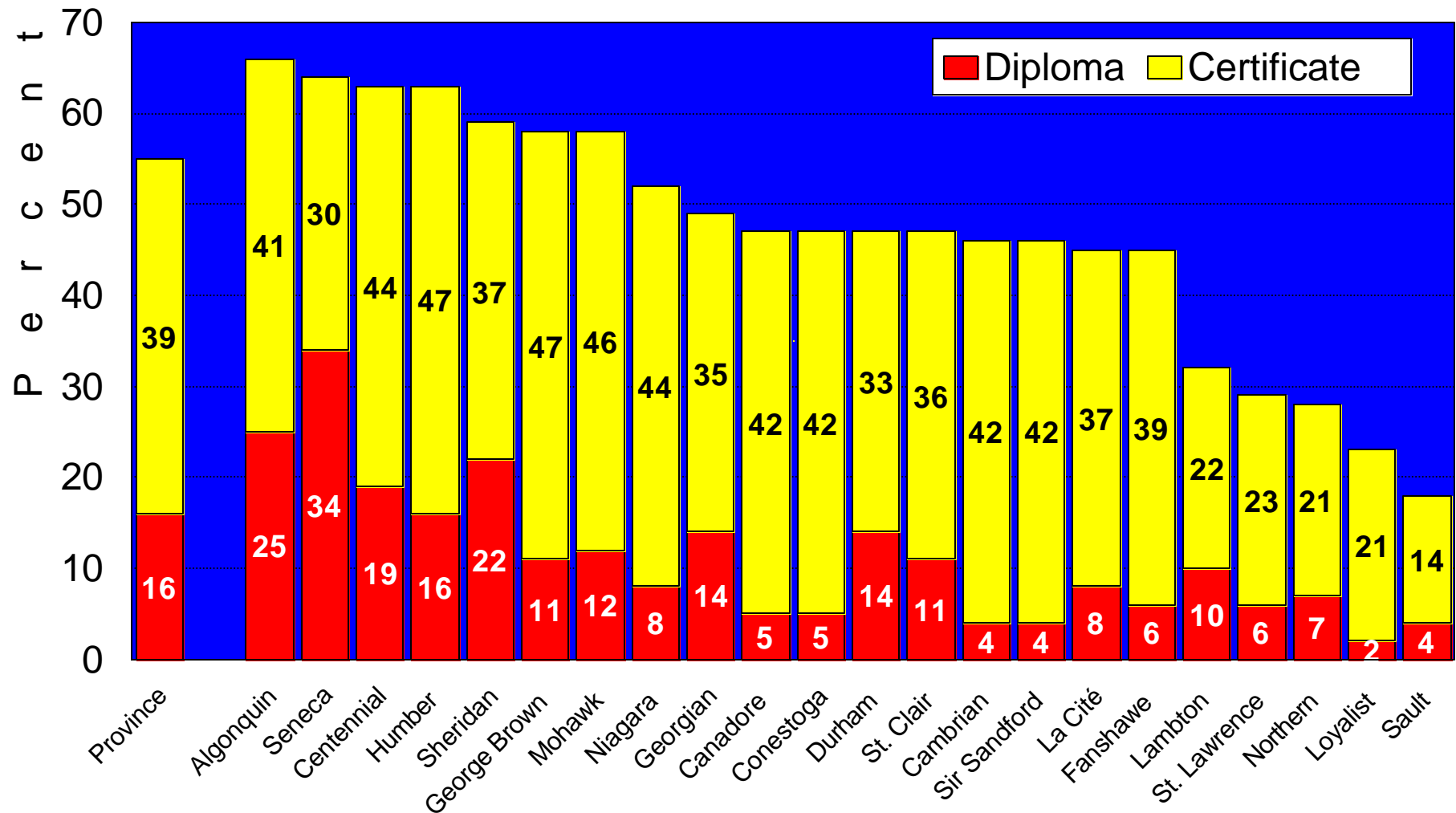


Main Reasons for Enrolling Province - Fall 2000

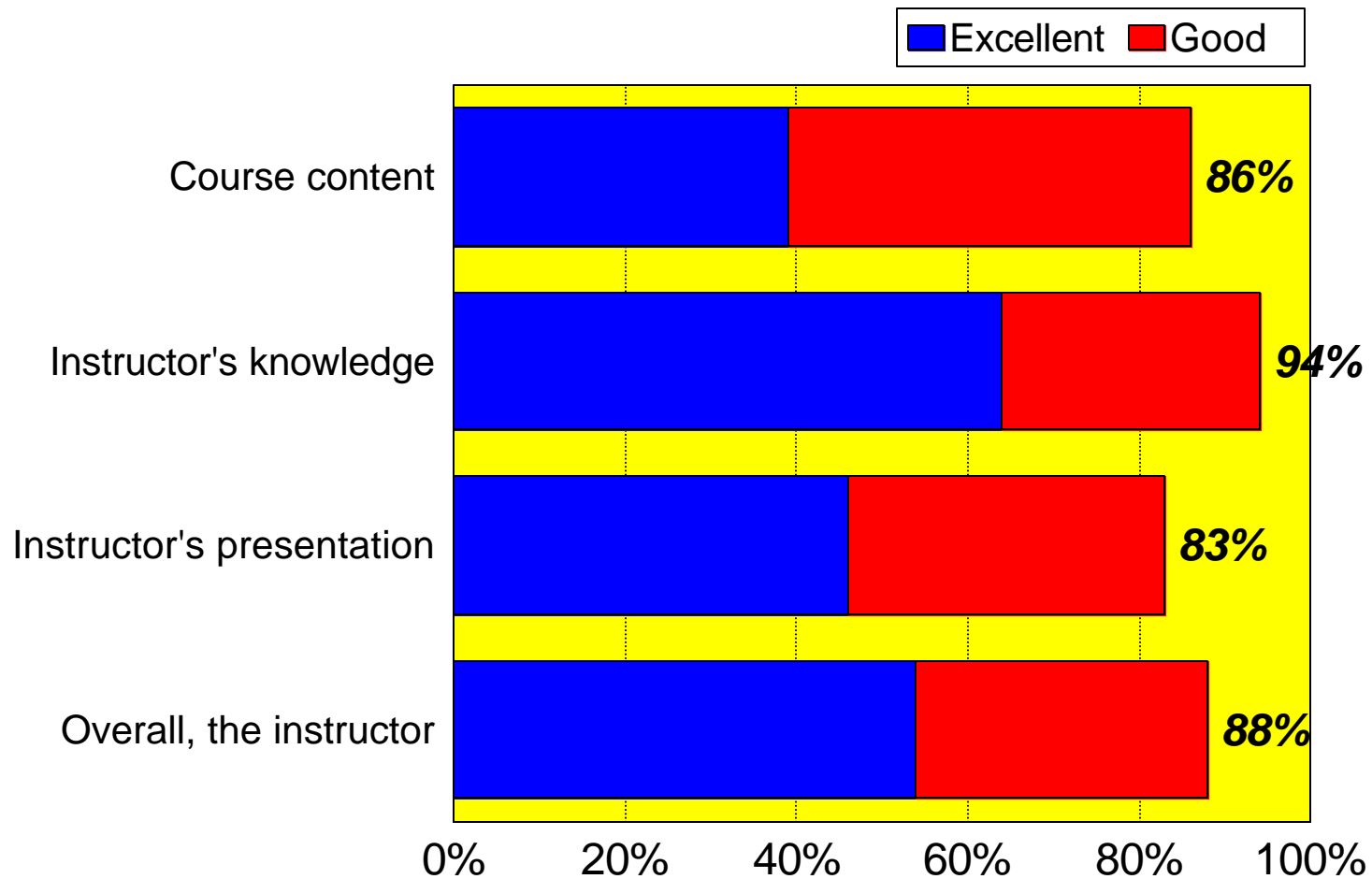


What Continuing Education Students are Working Towards Province - Fall 1998

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 2000



Other Indicators Of Satisfaction Province - Fall 2000

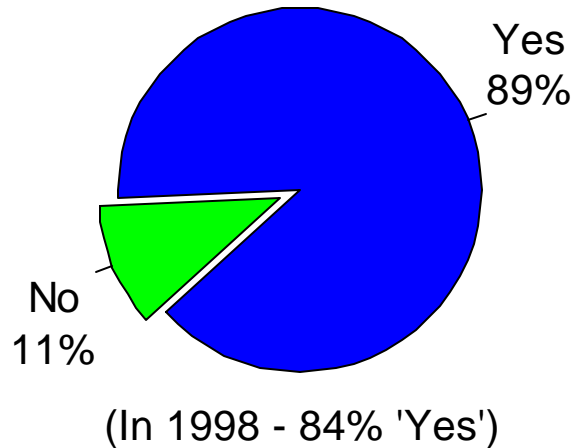
- ⇒ *82% of students would recommend their course to a friend with similar interests*
- ⇒ *29% of students said that the course was better than they expected*
- ⇒ *70% of students had taken courses at their present college in the past*
- ⇒ *34% of students had already taken 4 or more courses at their present college*

(the above 4 points have remained within 1% of 1998 and 1996 results)

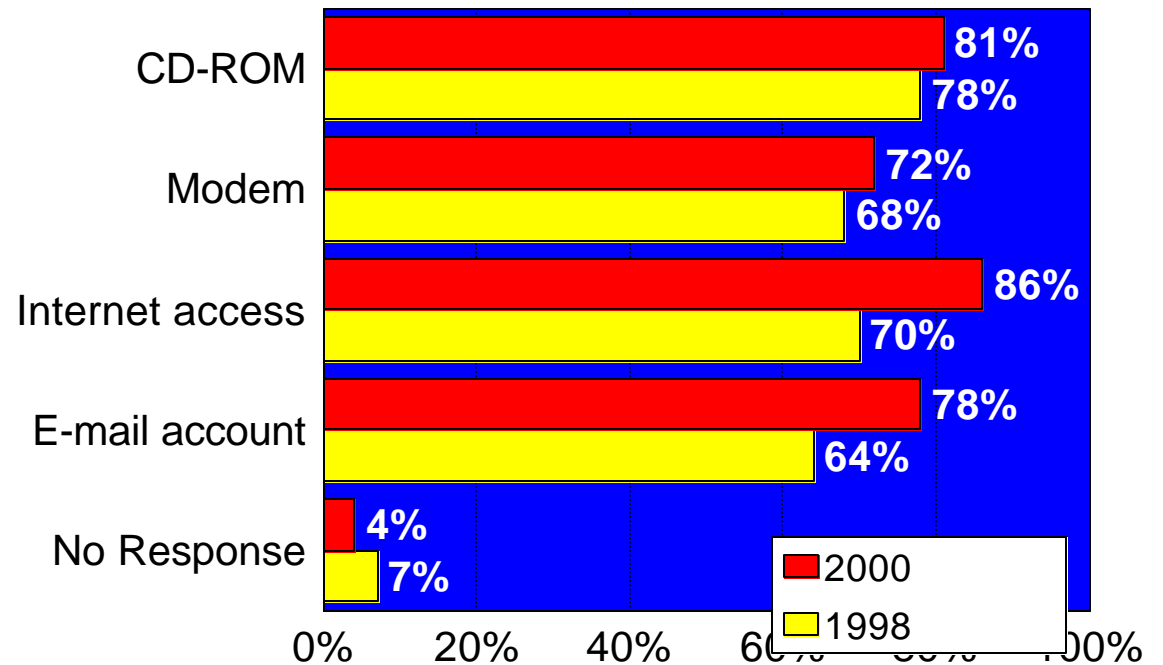
Learning and Technology Province - Fall 2000

Student access to computer technology at home has continued to increase since the last survey. Across the province, 89% of C.E. students said that they have access to a computer; 87% of those have access to a computer at home, and 48% have access at work. Students who have a computer also have access to an increasing number of peripherals. 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 16% since 1996, and 27% of students across the province are interested in taking their course via the Internet/WEB.

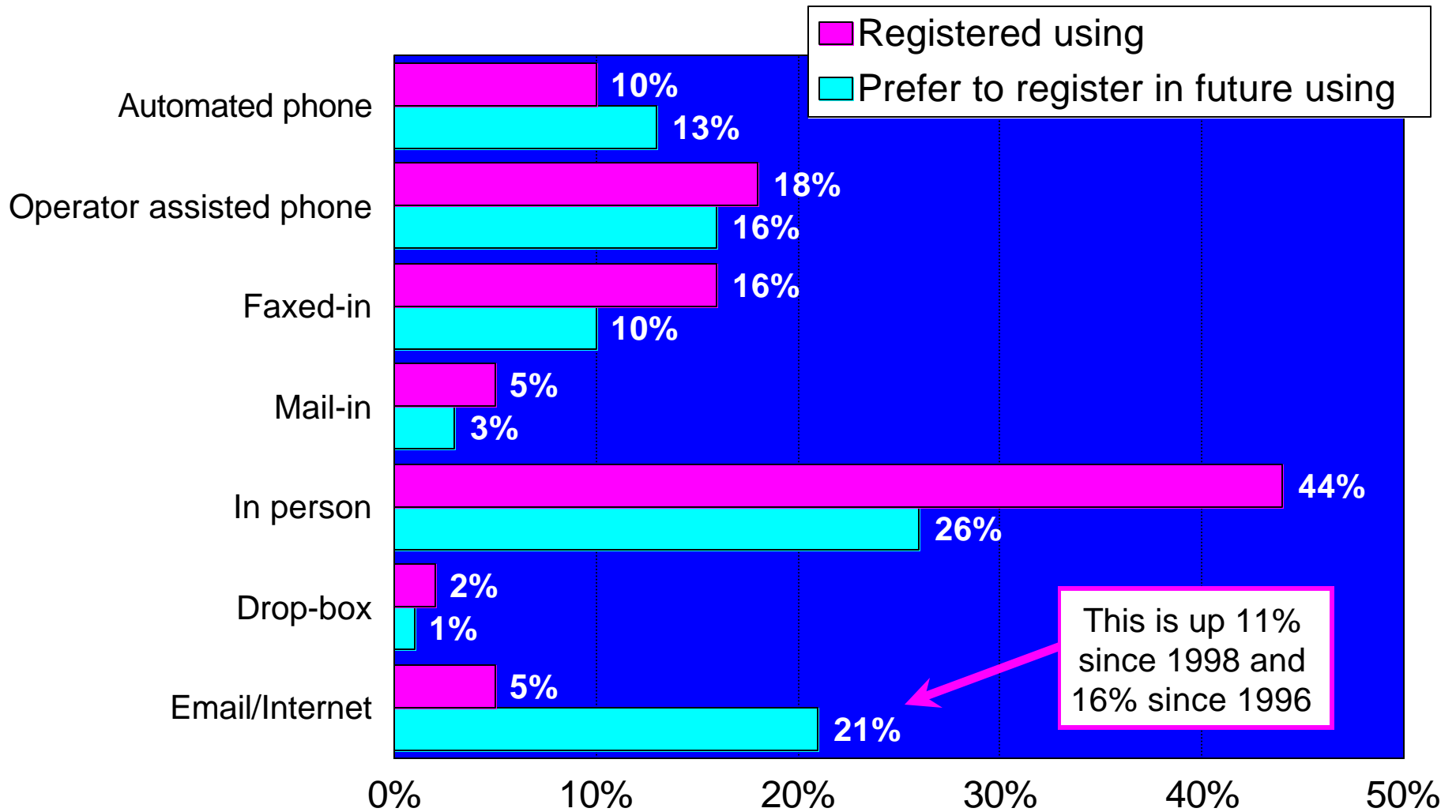
Do you have access to a computer?



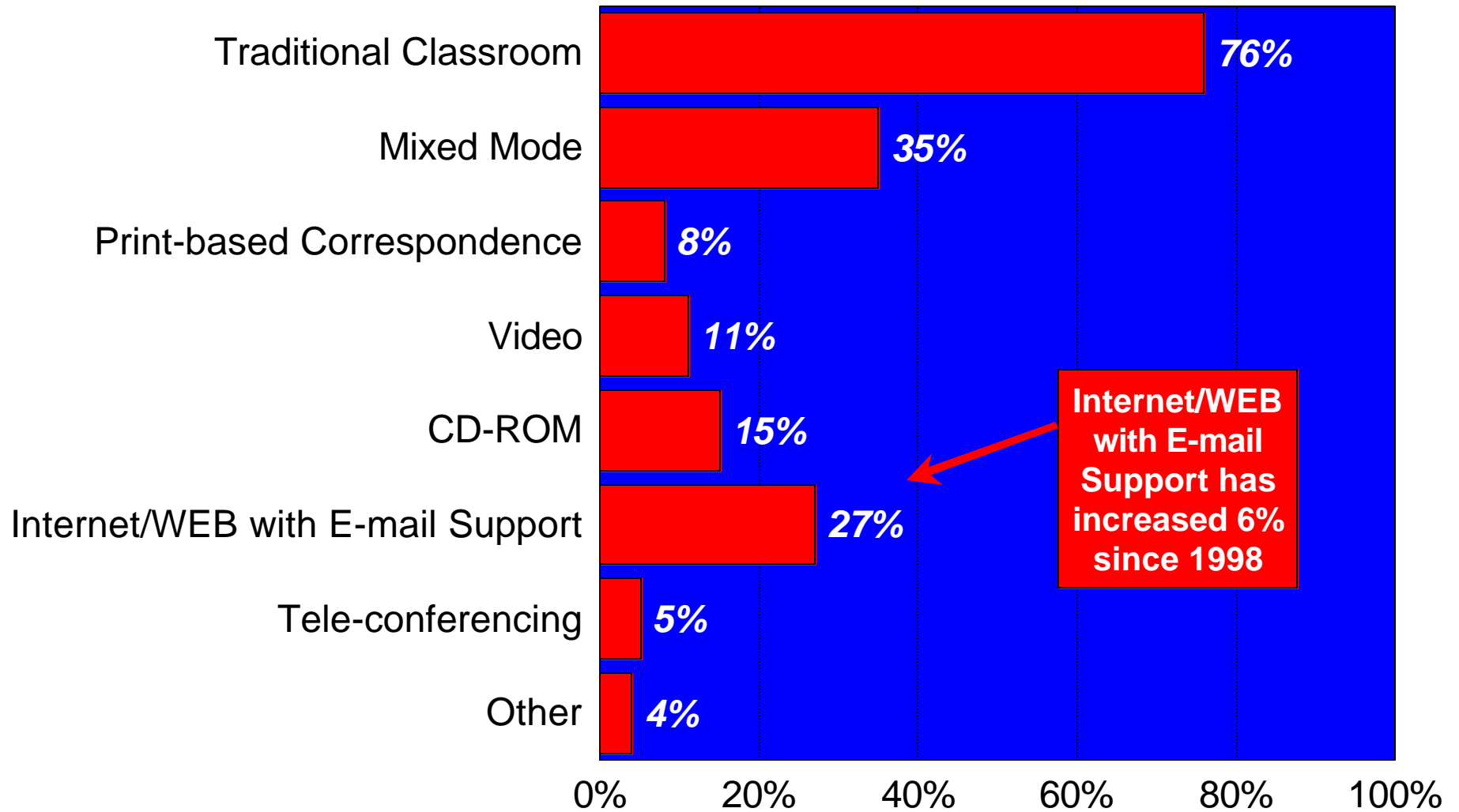
If 'Yes' which of the following do you have?



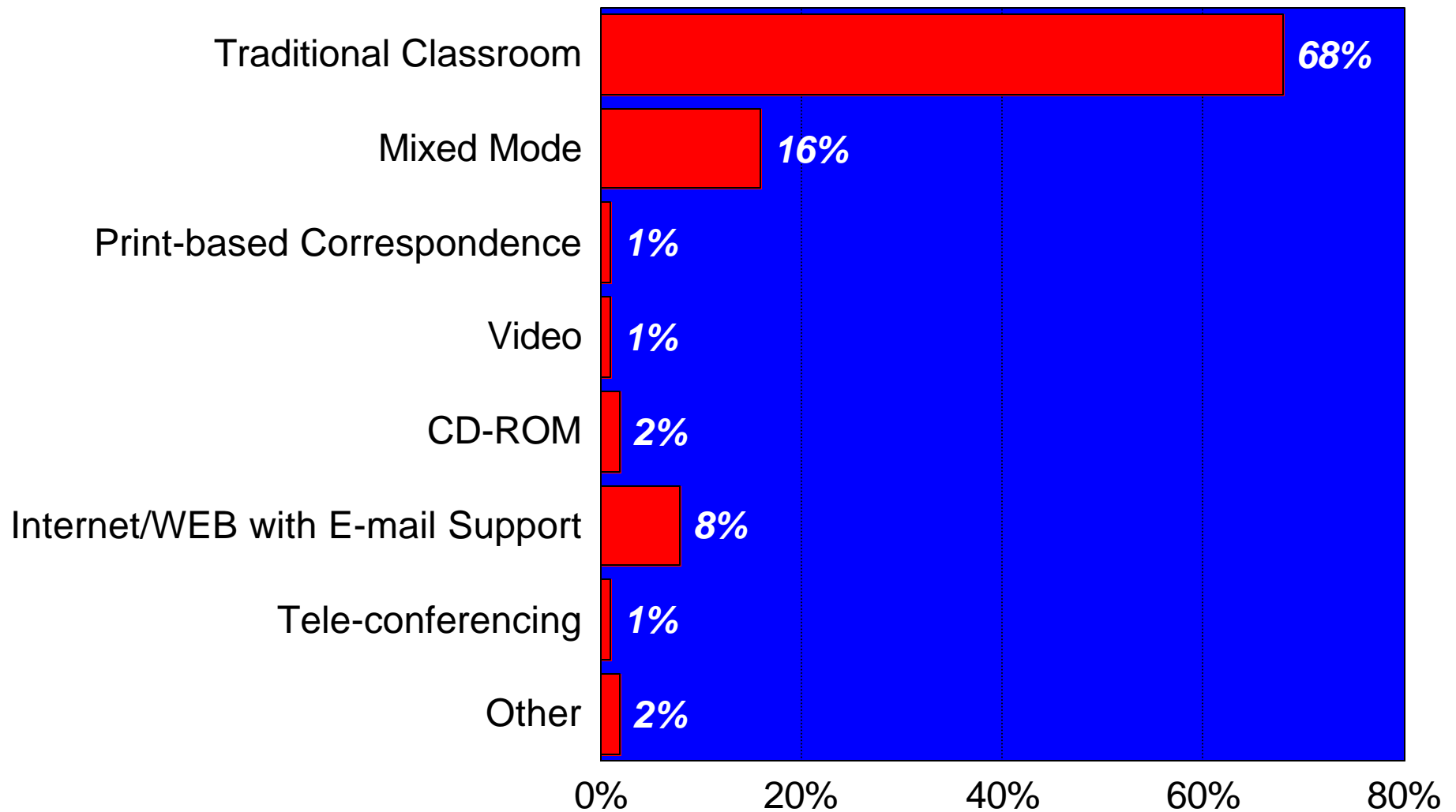
Registration Province - Fall 2000



Method(s) of Interest for Taking Course (Select all that apply) Province - Fall 2000



***Method of Interest for Taking Course (Select only one)
Province - Fall 2000***



Ratings which Changed by 3% or More
"Excellent" + "Good"
Province - Fall 2000

- ⇒ **4% up to 66%** - *Getting through to the college on the phone* (up 8% since 1996)
- ⇒ **3% up to 62%** - *Reaching a knowledgeable person by phone* (up 4% since 1996)
- ⇒ **3% up to 84%** - *Confirmation of registration* (up 5% since 1996)
- ⇒ **3% up to 62%** - *Classroom temperature and air circulation* (up 5% since 1996)
- ⇒ **3% up to 65%** - *Library hours* (up 5% since 1996)
- ⇒ **4% up to 61%** - *Access to college computers outside class time* (up 7% since 1996)
- ⇒ **4% up to 64%** - *Classroom or lab equipment* (up 4% since 1996)

Non-Rating Changes *Up 3% or more* **Province - Fall 2000**

- ⇒ **3% up to 9%** - *'Other' as a valuable source of information* (up 5% from 1996)
- ⇒ **4% up to 5%** - *Registered using E-mail/Internet* (up 5% from 1996)
- ⇒ **11% up to 21%** - *Prefer to use E-mail/Internet registration* (up 16% from 1996)
- ⇒ **5% up to 89%** - *Have access to a computer*
- ⇒ **3% up to 87%** - *Have a computer at home*
- ⇒ **4% up to 72%** - *Have a modem*
- ⇒ **16% up to 86%** - *Have internet access*
- ⇒ **14% up to 78%** - *Have an e-mail account*
- ⇒ **6% up to 27%** - *Internet/WEB with E-mail support as a method of taking a course of this type in the future*
- ⇒ **3% up to 71%** - *Employed full-time* (up 8% from 1996)
- ⇒ **3% up to 22%** - *Other first language (Not English or French)* (up 6% from 1996)

Non-Rating Changes *Down 3% or more* **Province - Fall 2000**

- ⇒ **4% down to 26%** - *CE catalogue delivered to home without request (down 7% from 1996)*
- ⇒ **3% down to 71%** - *Continuing Education Catalogue as a valuable source of information (down 3% from 1996)*
- ⇒ **3% down to 10%** - *Use of Automated phone registration (up 1% from 1996)*
- ⇒ **4% down to 13%** - *Prefer to use Automated phone (down 3% from 1996)*