

Provincial Highlights



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

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides highlights from the Fall 2005 Continuing Education Provincial Survey in Ontario, and compares these results with previous survey results. It includes results to those survey questions pertaining to student satisfaction with their courses, their instructors, and their college facilities and services. It provides insight into what types of people are taking college-level continuing education courses in the province of Ontario. For example, the educational background and goals, employment status, gender, age, and first language of continuing education students will be presented.

In the Fall of 2005, a comprehensive survey was administered to continuing education students in 24 community colleges in Ontario. This survey was also administered in the fall of 2002, 2000, 1998, and 1996. The colleges together have over 150,000 part-time 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 provincial average, and, where appropriate, other colleges. Large, medium, small, and metro colleges were grouped together and results were analyzed. In addition, the colleges with the highest ratings were identified to enable others to benefit from best practices.

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 1996, fall 1998 and fall 2000 surveys. In 2002, the survey was revised with the most significant change being the scale used to rate teaching, courses, registration, facilities and services. This new scale, comprised of 'very satisfied', 'satisfied', 'dissatisfied', and 'very dissatisfied', could not be directly compared with the scale from previous surveys, which included 'excellent', 'good', 'fair', and 'not satisfactory'.

The survey administration period was from September 26th to November 18th in the fall of 2005. In total, 69,990 surveys were collected, which reflects a return rate of approximately 45%. The

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study was conducted on behalf of the colleges by Compustat Consultants Inc. who had conducted the previous projects.

The following chart shows the statistics summary for the Fall of 2005.

Survey Statistics 2005					
College	Fall registrations as of Nov.25/05	Survey period registration	Surveys returned	% of students surveyed in available period	% of Fall registrants surveyed
Algonquin College	12,577	10,020	5,396	54%	43%
Collège Boréal	707	716	505	71%	71%
Cambrian College	1,450	853	471	55%	32%
Canadore College	489	489	170	35%	35%
Centennial College	9,055	7,616	4,249	56%	47%
Conestoga College	11,133	5,808	3,806	66%	34%
Confederation College	1,397	1,397	346	25%	25%
Durham College	5,736	2,453	2,355	96%	41%
Fanshawe College	7,623	6,313	2,795	44%	37%
Fleming College	2,680	1,446	1,145	79%	43%
George Brown College	12,400	12,400	7,018	57%	57%
Georgian College	6,132	3,017	2,016	67%	33%
Humber College	16,829	10,933	6,864	63%	41%
La Cité collégiale	758	758	461	61%	61%
Lambton College	932	932	276	30%	30%
Loyalist College	4,006	1,497	1,038	69%	69%
Mohawk College	14,635	9,065	5,419	60%	37%
Niagara College	3,942	3,930	2,032	52%	52%
Northern College	285	285	250	88%	88%
Sault College	570	570	455	80%	80%
Seneca College	17,477	15,868	11,327	71%	65%
Sheridan College	11,559	11,559	7,391	64%	64%
St. Clair College	6,506	3,949	2,961	75%	46%
St. Lawrence College	5,835	5,835	1,244	21%	21%
The Province	154,713	117,709	69,990	59%	45%

Survey results from students indicating that they were registered in a full-time program (7,610 students) have been excluded from this report, due to the fact that they are characteristically different from part-time continuing education students. In addition to this, surveys from 3,327 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, as these students were considered to be like customers making a second purchase. Therefore, the student-course combination was the independent observation in this report unless otherwise noted, and should be kept in mind when interpreting results.

PROVINCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Excellence in Education

One indication that colleges are continuing, successfully, to strive for excellence in education is the fact that 'excellent' ratings increased gradually but steadily between 1996 and 2000 in the four survey questions about overall quality. In 2002, with the survey scale change, it was still observed that provincially, continuing education students were satisfied overall, with combined 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' ratings for overall 'quality of instructors', 'quality of courses', 'facilities and services', and 'helpfulness of staff' between 94% to 95%. In 2005, these satisfaction ratings have remained positive at 95% to 96%. Although the 'very satisfied' ratings were somewhat higher (by 2% to 3%) at 24% to 38%, there is still room for improvement in terms of moving students toward the highest level of satisfaction.

Positive Reputation of Ontario Colleges

In 2002, with the introduction of 'previous positive experience at this college' as an option for students to select as their main reason for attending their college, the proportion of students selecting 'location of the college campus' declined by 15%, while 'previous positive experience at this college' was selected by about one-quarter of the respondents. In addition, there appears to be a slight decline in the proportion of students identifying reputation of the college or course/program as their most important reason for choosing to register at that college (a combined total of 21% in 2000 as compared to 15% in 2002 and 2005). More than one-third of students were motivated to register at their college because of the reputation of the college, whether experienced by themselves or others. Less than one-quarter of students were motivated by college location.

High Course Satisfaction

Students gave very high combined 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' ratings to all aspects of their courses and instructors (91% or higher). 'Very satisfied' ratings alone can provide a better indication as to the strengths and areas for improvement with respect to teaching and learning. 'Very satisfied' ratings ranged from 53% ('feedback from your instructor about your progress') to 73% ('instructor's knowledge of the subject'). About two-thirds of the students indicated that the course materials were 'very useful', although course textbooks appear to be less useful. The majority of students indicated that specific positive instructor characteristics were generally exhibited by their instructors; however, in terms of the 'variety of teaching methods and materials' used, a smaller proportion of students felt that this was exhibited by their instructor.

These results emphasize the quality and value provided to students by colleges through continuing education courses. While these results are very positive, the colleges recognize the need and opportunities 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

The 2005 survey results indicate that there continues to be tremendous diversity among the colleges in terms of the continuing education student profile. Across the province, the proportion of students whose first language is other than English or French has increased by

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2% since 2002 and by 10% since 1996. This increase is most evident at metro colleges, where it has increased by 12% since 1996. Forty-one percent of students at metro colleges have a first language other than English or French compared to 26% provincially.

Female students continue to outnumber male students by a significant amount in continuing education courses across the province (65% to 35%). The proportion ranges from a low of 55% female students in one college to a high of 81% females at another.

The age of the student body varies from one college to another. Across the province, 59% of continuing education students are between the ages of 25 and 44 inclusive; 27% are in the 35-44 year old group. However, the proportion of students in the 35-44 year old group varies from 16% at one college, to 30% at other colleges. The proportion of older students (over 65 years of age) also varies from college to college, from 0% to 21%.

There also 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 16% of students are working towards completion of a single course, but this ranges from a low of 8% at two colleges to a high of 50% at another. Similarly, while 41% of students provincially are working towards a certificate, the proportion ranges from 15% to 48%.

Changing Demographics

The proportion of students who have completed a university degree continues to climb steadily. In 2005, 34% of continuing education students had completed a university degree prior to taking their course, which represents a 9% increase over the 1996 result. This change was accompanied by a decline in the proportion of students who had completed secondary school, or equivalent from 26% to 19%.

There appears to have been a peak in the proportion of students employed full-time (71%) in 2000. 2005 results indicate 68% full-time employment and 6% unemployment.

With a tougher and ever-changing job market, employees are required to have increased education and skills. Two-thirds of students (66%) are taking continuing education courses for career-related reasons. However, there has been a shift in the composition of this group since 2000, with a somewhat smaller proportion looking to improve themselves in their current career and a somewhat larger proportion looking for an entry-level job.

Increased Technology

The availability and use of computer technology has continued to increase since the last survey. In 2005, 95% of students had access to a computer, which represents an increase of 11% over 1998. In addition, use of the internet is steadily rising, with 24% higher usage than in 1998. This increased use of technology appears to impact several areas related to continuing education.

Specifically, when compared to 2002, the use of web site registration was higher by 16% in 2005 and is preferred by 13% more students as their registration method in the future. The inclusion of a web site option in 2002 as a source of information about continuing education

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courses resulted in a decrease in the proportion of students choosing the CE catalogue/calendar. In 2002, one-quarter of the students selected web site as a most valuable source of information and in 2005 this proportion increased to one-third, with the proportion selecting the CE catalogue/calendar declining to just over one-half. It should be noted that a decreasing proportion of students are receiving the catalogue/calendar at their home, with or without their request (36%, lower by 10% since 2000), while an increasing proportion are receiving it on the web site (20%, higher by 7% since 2002).

A similar pattern occurred with respect to teaching methods, when students could choose more than one method. Although traditional classroom is still the most popular choice, selected by about three-quarters of students, one-quarter of students selected 'internet/web with e-mail support'. Thus, technology continues to present significant opportunities in the future for education.

College Facilities/Services and Support

With respect to facilities/services and support, the survey 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 for questions regarding telephone and information services ranged from 82% to 90% 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied', with 'very satisfied' ratings from 26% to 32%. Registration ratings were slightly higher, ranging from 84% to 93% 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied', with 'very satisfied' ratings from 27% to 45%. These ratings were within 2% of 2002 results.

The combined 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' ratings for facilities and services ranged from 80% to 93% with two exceptions: 'cost of parking' (64%) and 'price of books' (47%). The corresponding importance ratings were 92% and 93%, respectively, resulting in gaps of 28% and 46%.

Provincially, those facilities and services which were considered most important were cleanliness of 'washrooms', 'classrooms' and 'building', as well as 'classroom temperature and air circulation'. All aspects related to the cafeteria (hours, food, and helpfulness of staff) had the lowest importance ratings. The facilities and services rated with highest satisfaction were 'cleanliness of classrooms', 'cleanliness of building', 'helpfulness of library staff', and 'special needs services'. Note that cleanliness of 'classrooms' and 'buildings' were rated with the highest importance and satisfaction.

Barriers & Safety

Again, the greatest barrier to success by a wide margin was seen to be finances (22%). 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.

Most students feel safe in college buildings (98%) and on college grounds (92%). Females, however, feel less safe than males with 10% of females saying they do not feel safe on college

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grounds in comparison to 3% of males. Note that 59% of students were not aware of the escort program at their college.

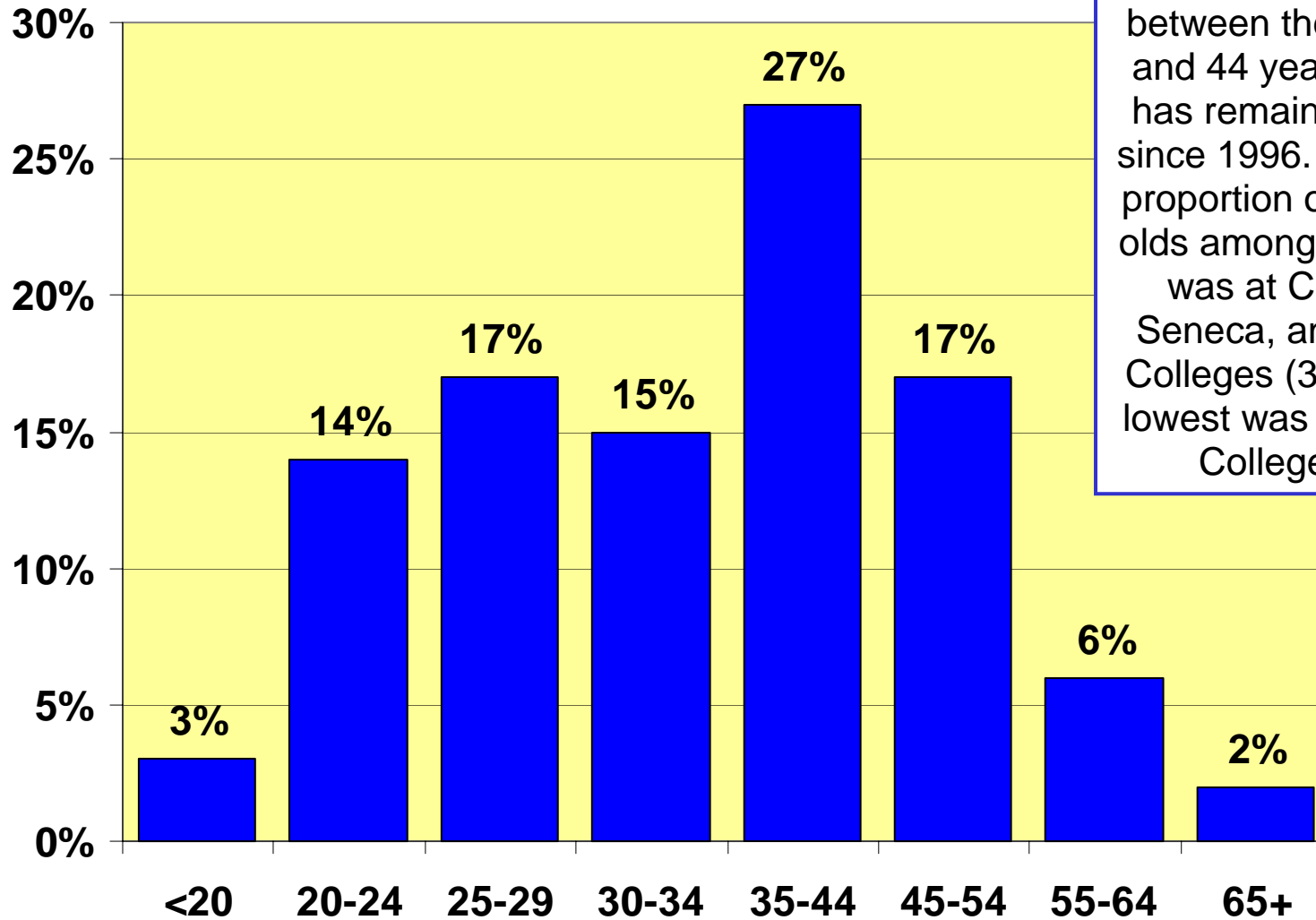
In Summary

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, indicating 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", and "Safety". 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 to three years to determine ongoing satisfaction levels and monitor trends. In some colleges, student evaluations of courses and instructors are being done every semester.

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

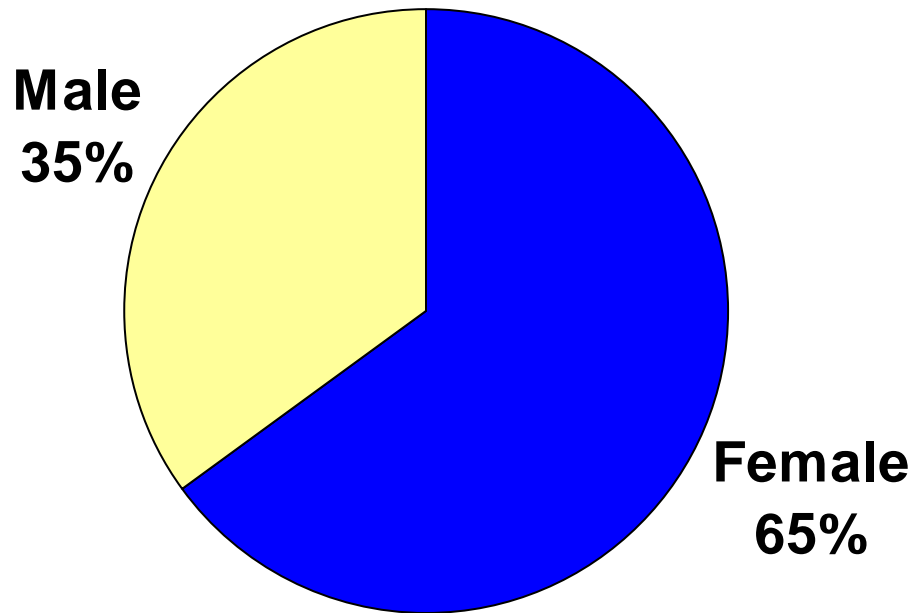
Algonquin College – Linda Rees, Dean, School of Part time Studies
Cambrian College – Linda Renaud, Chair, Continuing Education
Canadore College – Karyn Brearley, Executive Director, Enterprise & Partnership
Centennial College – Chris Dudley, Acting Dean, School of Continuing Ed. & Corp. Training
Collège Boréal – Michelle Violette, Manager, Continuing Education
Conestoga College – Dan Piedra, Director of Continuing Education
Confederation College – Vince Stilla, Director, Centre for Continuing Education
Durham College – Jeanette Barrett, Dean, Schools of Career & Dev't & C.E.
Fanshawe College – Ann Everatt, Director of Continuing Education
Fleming College – Rosemary Goodacre, Manager, Part Time Studies
George Brown College – Kathleen Abbott, Associate Dean, Centre for Continuous Learning
Georgian College – Steve Lichty, Dean, Community & Business Development
Humber College – Janis Miller, Dean, Corporate & Continuing Education
La Cité collégiale, Martine Cardinal, Director, Continuing Education
Lambton College – Cindy Buchanan, Continuing Education, Director
Loyalist College – Trudie Lake, Continuing Education, Manager
Mohawk College – Don Burroughs, Executive Dean, Continuing Education
Niagara College – Kim Walker, Dean, Continuing Education
Northern College – Debbie Petrus, Manager, Continuing Education
Sault College – Rick Wing, Dean, Sch. of Continuing Ed., Contract Training & Hosp.
Seneca College – Susan Savoie, Associate Dean, Continuing Ed. & Training
Sheridan College – Sylvia Teichtmeister, Dean, Continuing Education
St. Clair College – Ron Seguin, Director of Continuing Education and Corporate Training
St. Lawrence College – David McFadden, Director, Community Advancement – Skills Training Division
Association of Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology of Ontario – David Lindsay, President and CEO
Compustat Consultants Inc. – Ted Hodge, President

Age of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2005



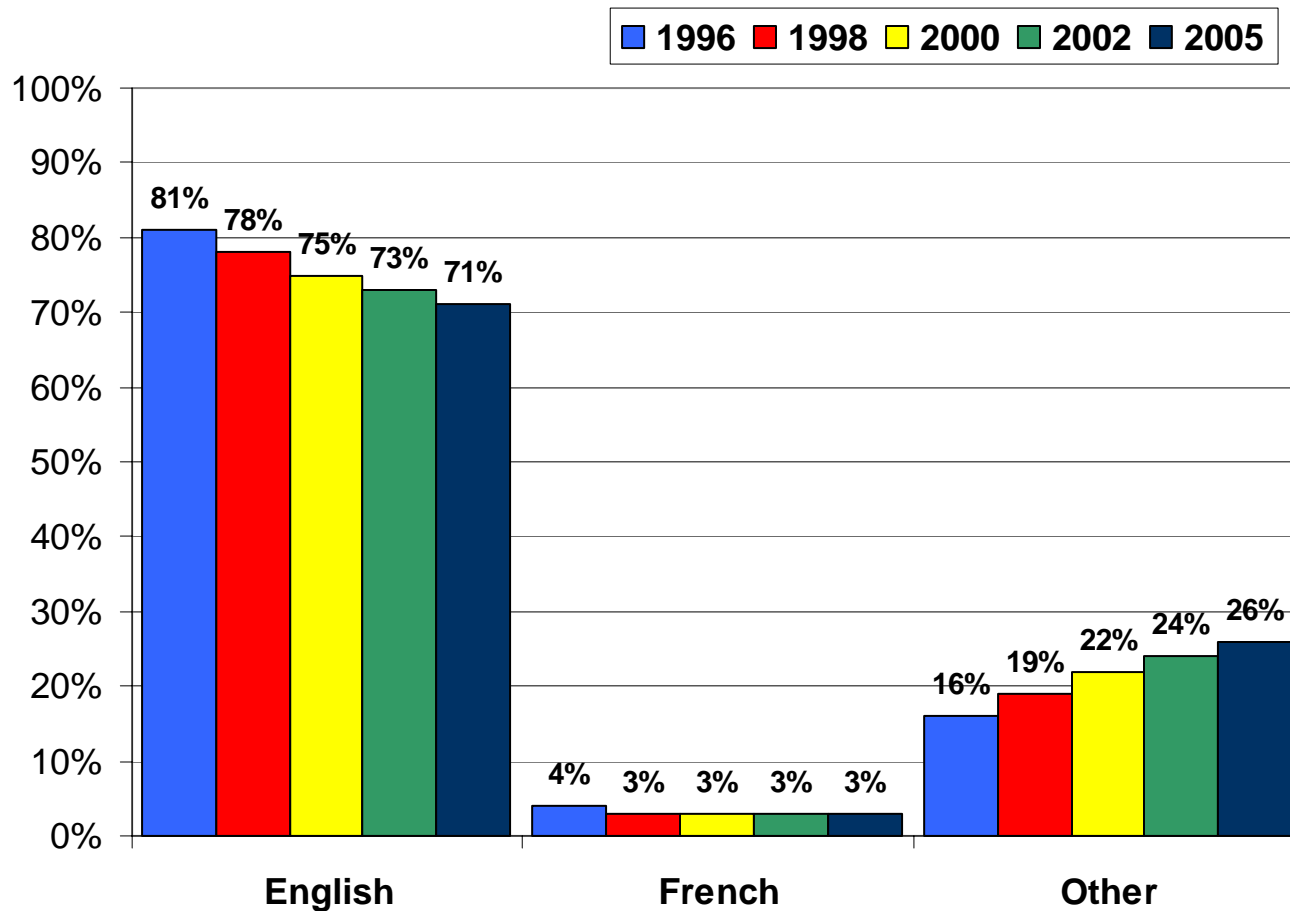
The highest proportion of CE students falls between the ages of 35 and 44 years old. This has remained constant since 1996. The highest proportion of 35-44 year olds among the colleges was at Conestoga, Seneca, and Sheridan Colleges (30%) and the lowest was at Cambrian College (16%).

Gender of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2005



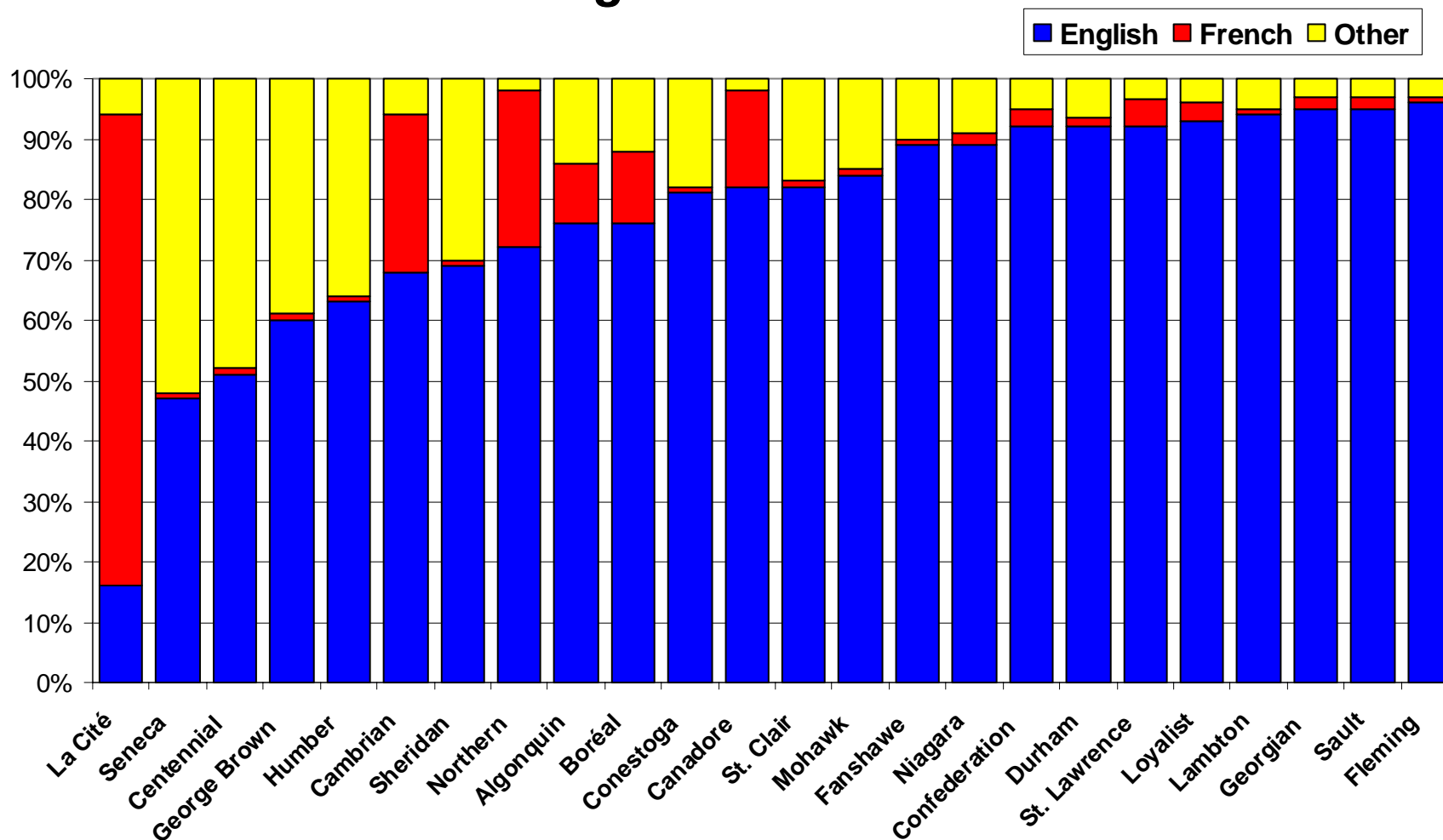
The proportion of males and females taking continuing education courses across the province has remained relatively stable since 1996. A 12% larger proportion of male students are employed full-time, whereas a 9% larger proportion of female students are employed part-time. Five percent of female students are homemakers.

First Language of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2005



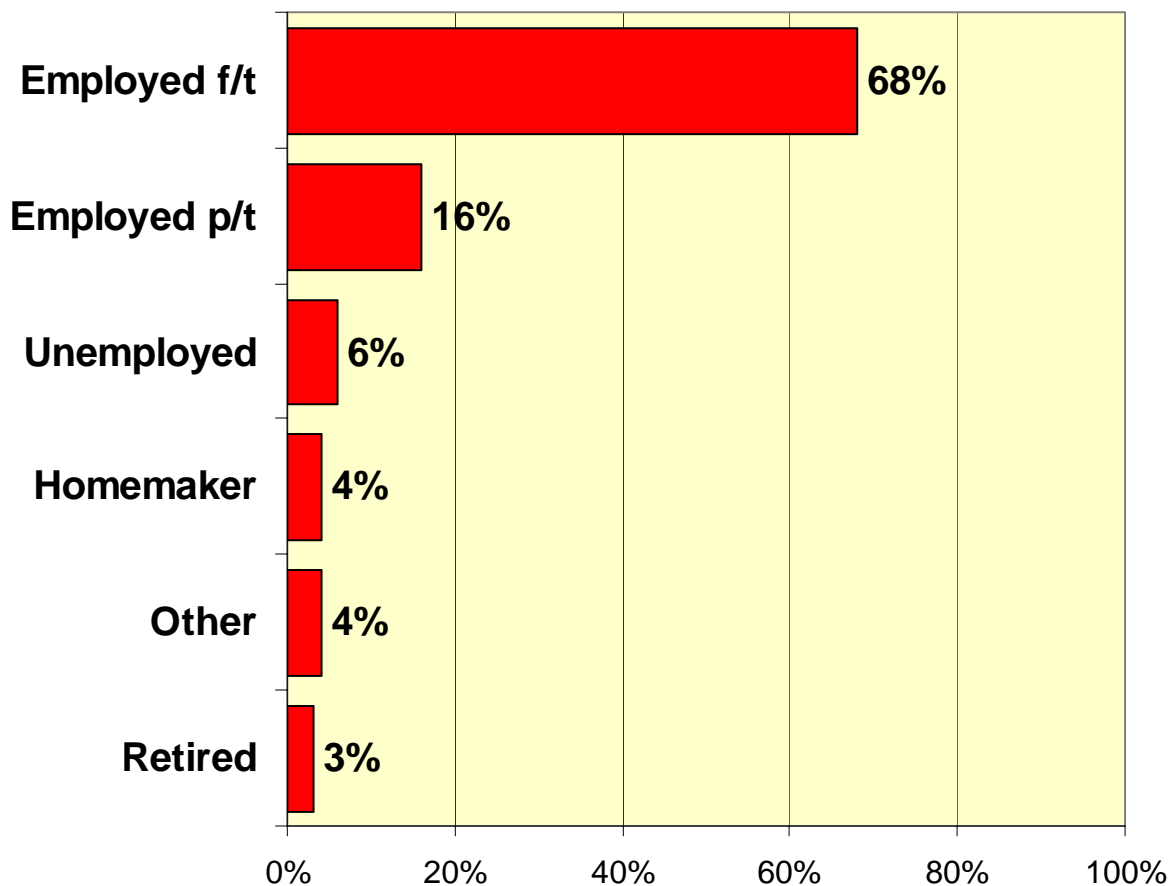
Provincially since 1996, there appears to be a smaller proportion of students who speak English as their first language and a growing proportion who speak a language other than English or French. The proportion of those speaking French has remained stable.

First Language of Continuing Education Students Colleges - Fall 2005



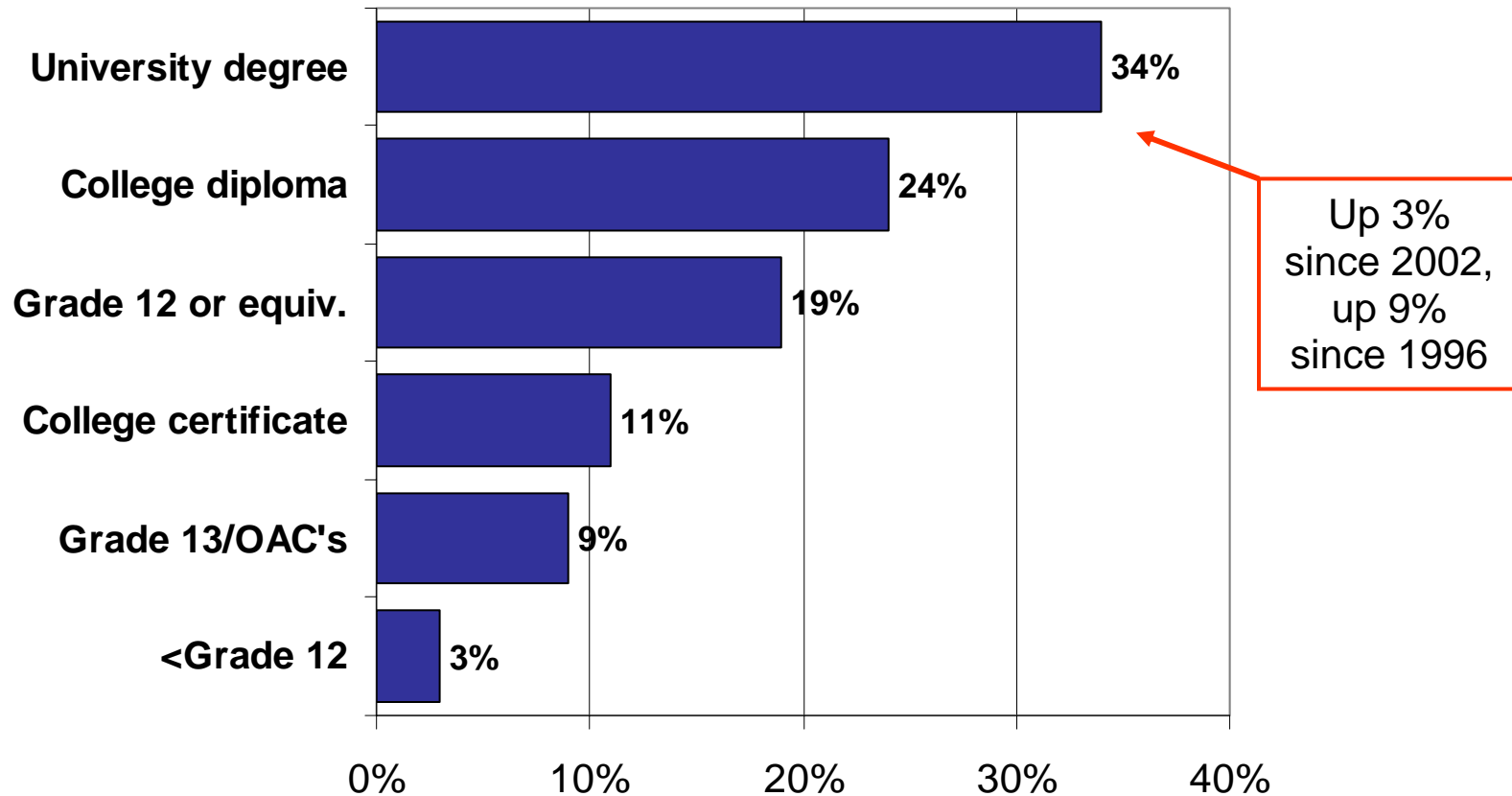
La Cité collégiale has the highest proportion of French speaking students (78%). Seneca College (52%) and Centennial College (48%) have the highest proportions of students speaking a language other than English or French.

Employment Status of Continuing Education Students Province - Fall 2005



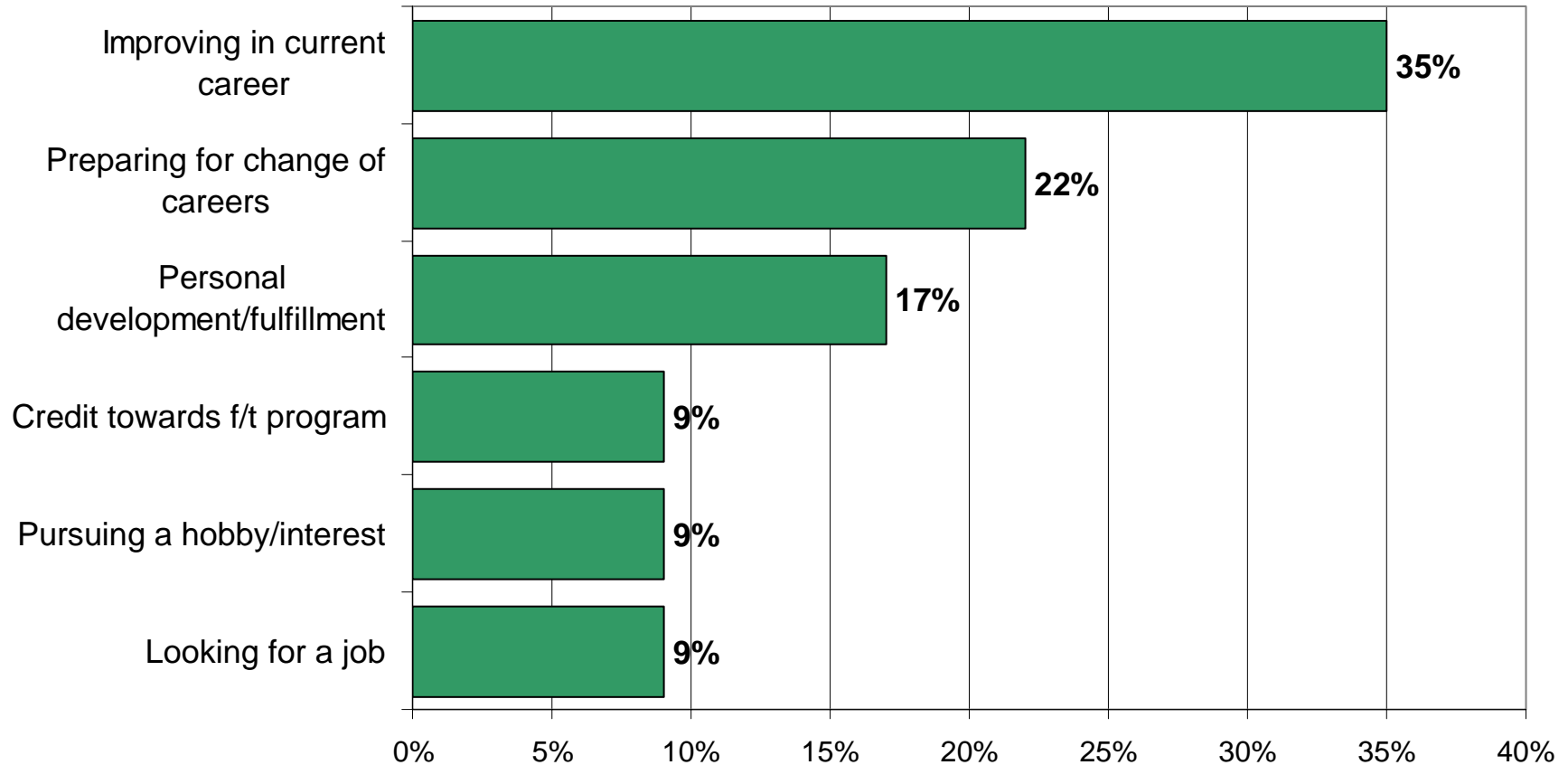
With respect to employment status, 42% of those who are employed full-time are taking their CE course to improve themselves in their current careers and 22% are preparing for a change of careers. Eighty-seven percent of retired students are taking their courses for personal development and fulfillment or to pursue a hobby or interest.

Highest Level of Education of Continuing Education Students - Province - Fall 2005



69% of CE students provincially have already completed some form of post-secondary education, which is 3% more than in 2002. Seventy-six percent of CE students completed their highest level of education in Canada and 24% in another country.

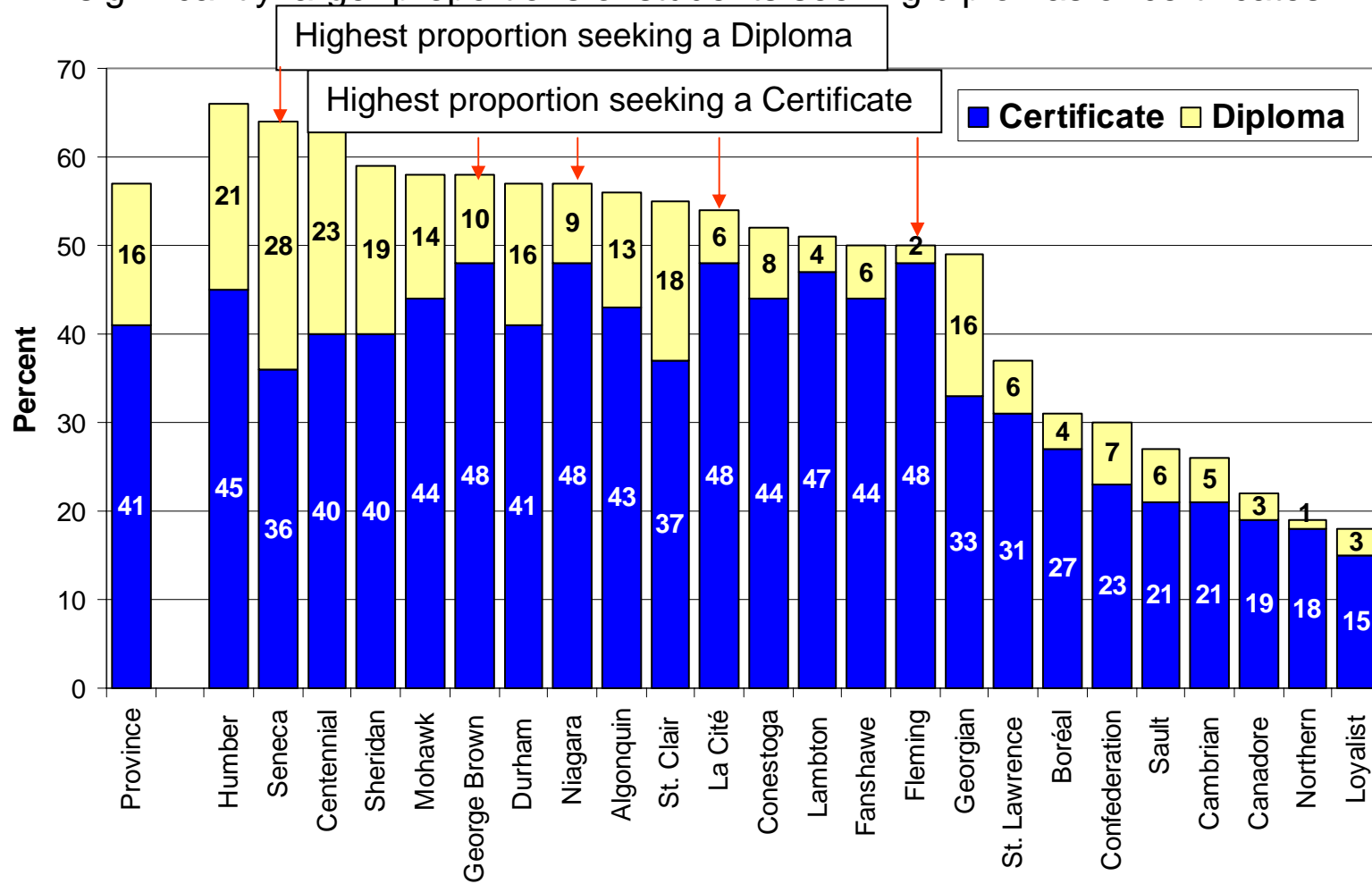
Main Reasons for Enrolling Province - Fall 2005



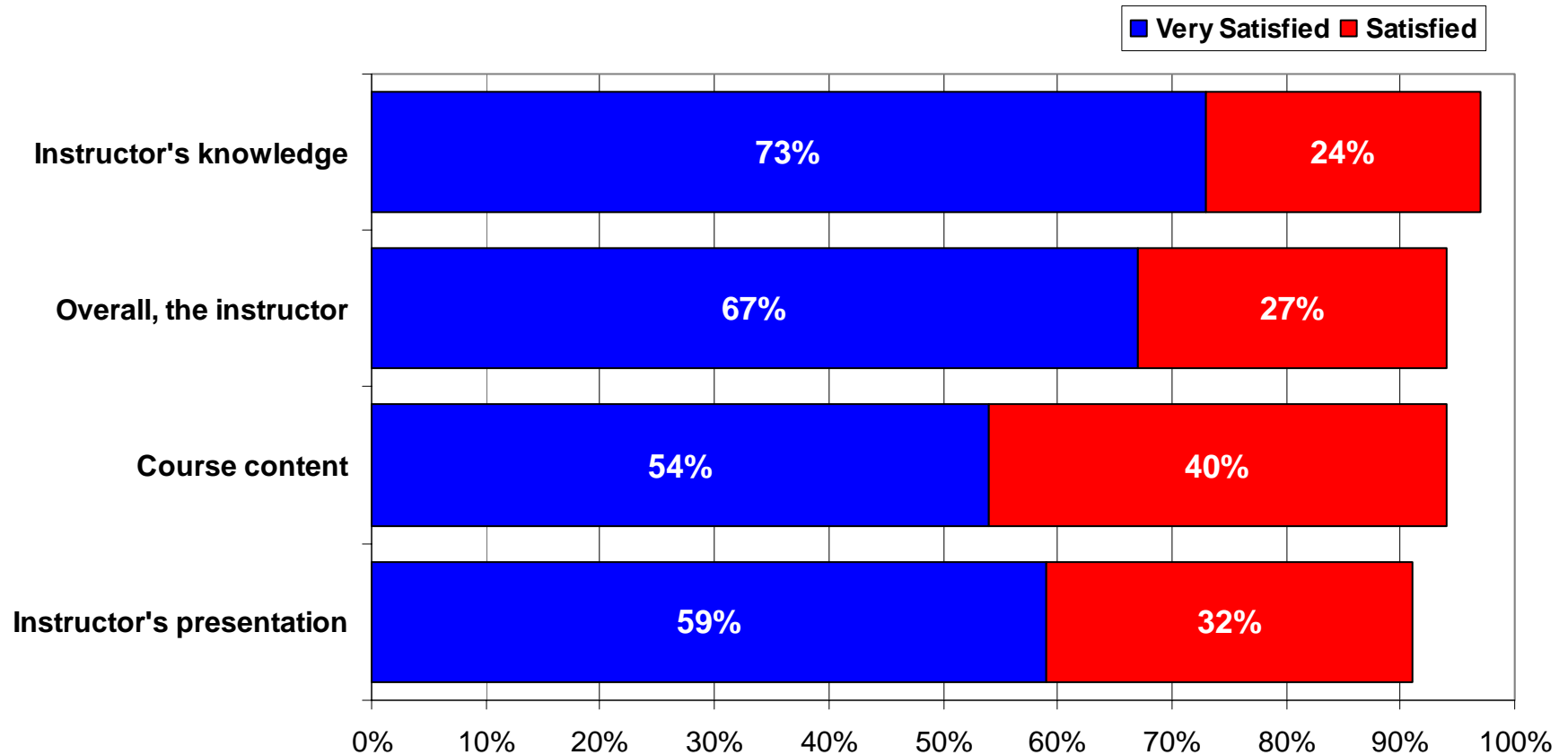
A total of 66% of CE students are taking their CE courses for career-related reasons. This is about the same as in 2002; however, in 2005 3% more students were looking for a job and 5% fewer students were improving for their current job.

What Continuing Education Students are Working Towards Province - Fall 2005

Similar to other results, 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 or certificates.



Course & Instructor Ratings Province - Fall 2005

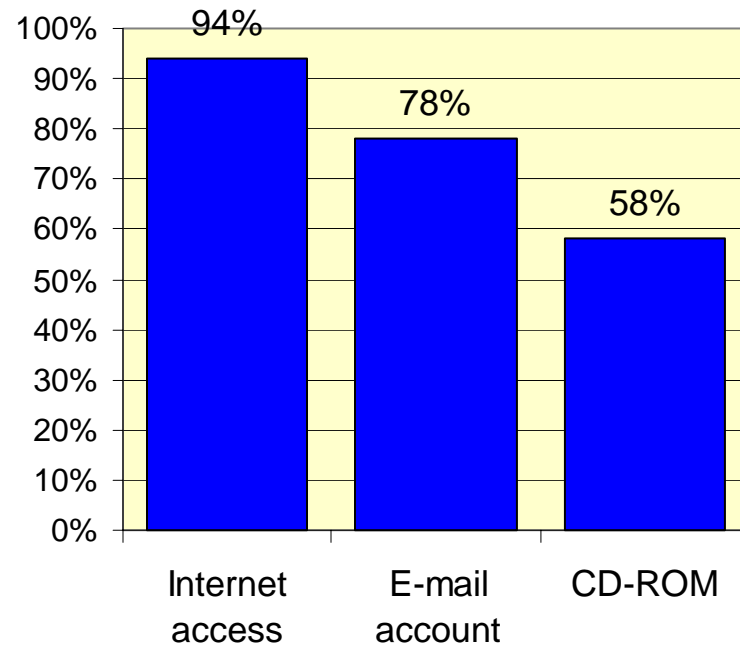
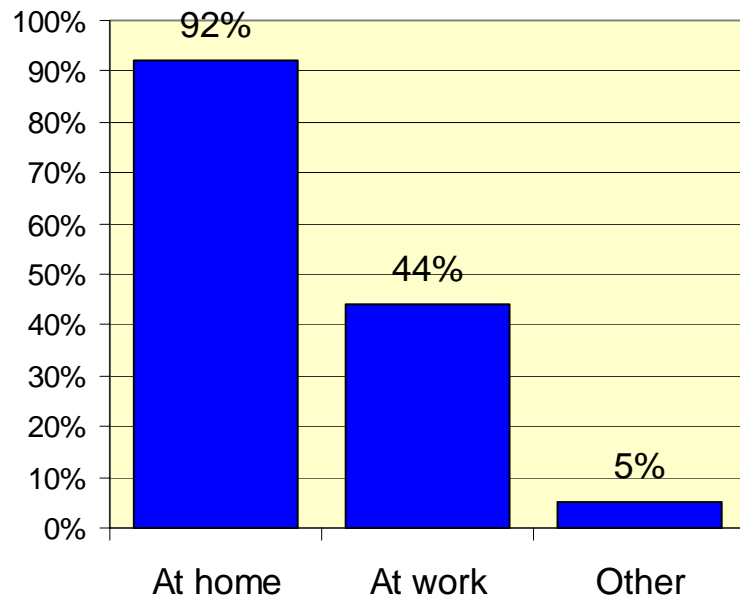


Other Indicators of Satisfaction Province - Fall 2005

- 83% of students would recommend their course to a friend with similar interests
- 32% of students said that the course was better than they expected
- 70% of students had taken CE courses at their present college in the past
- 35% of students had already taken 4 or more CE courses at their present college

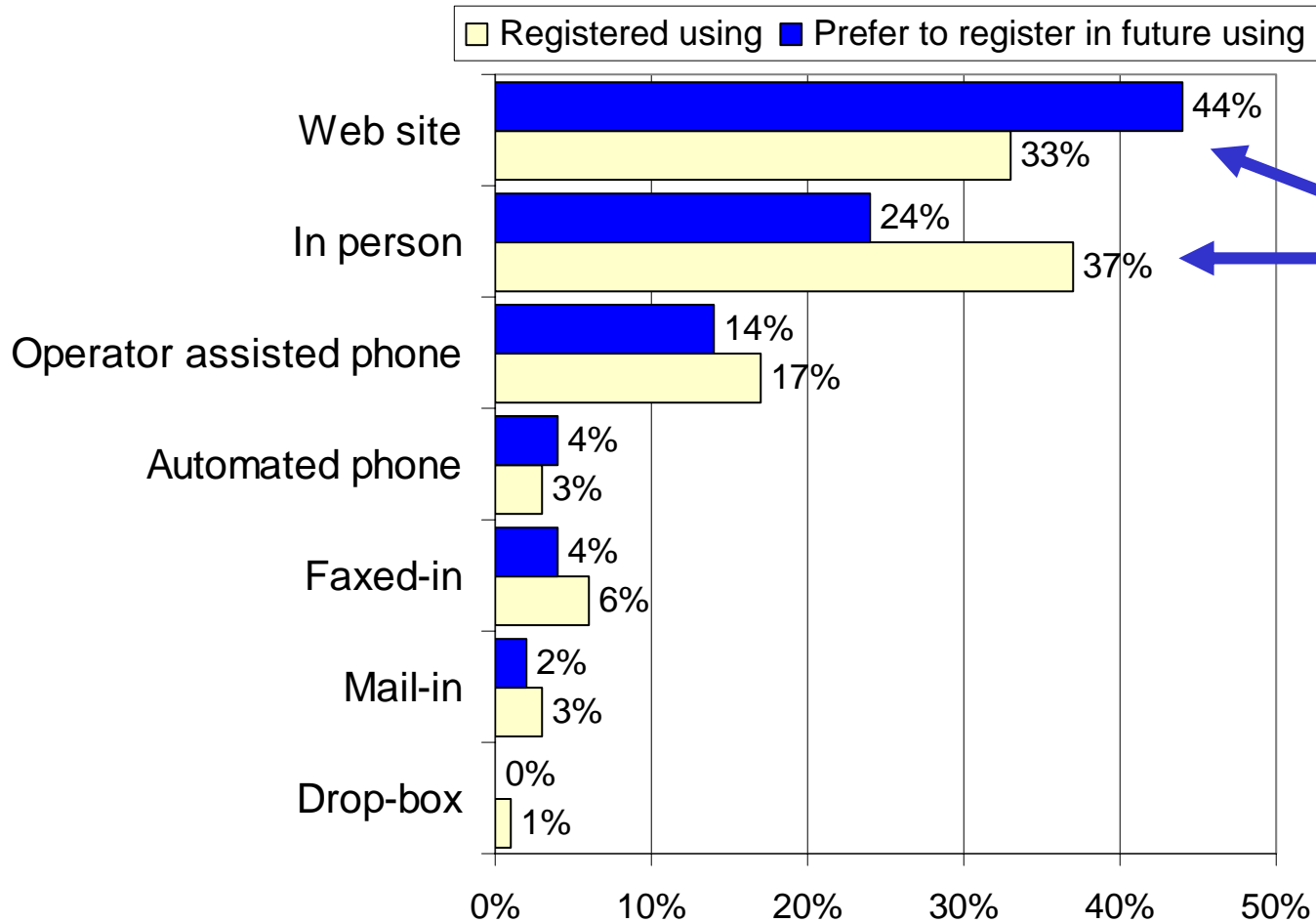
Learning & Technology Province - Fall 2005

95% of Continuing Education students across the province have computer access.
The following charts show where this access is and the tools that they use.



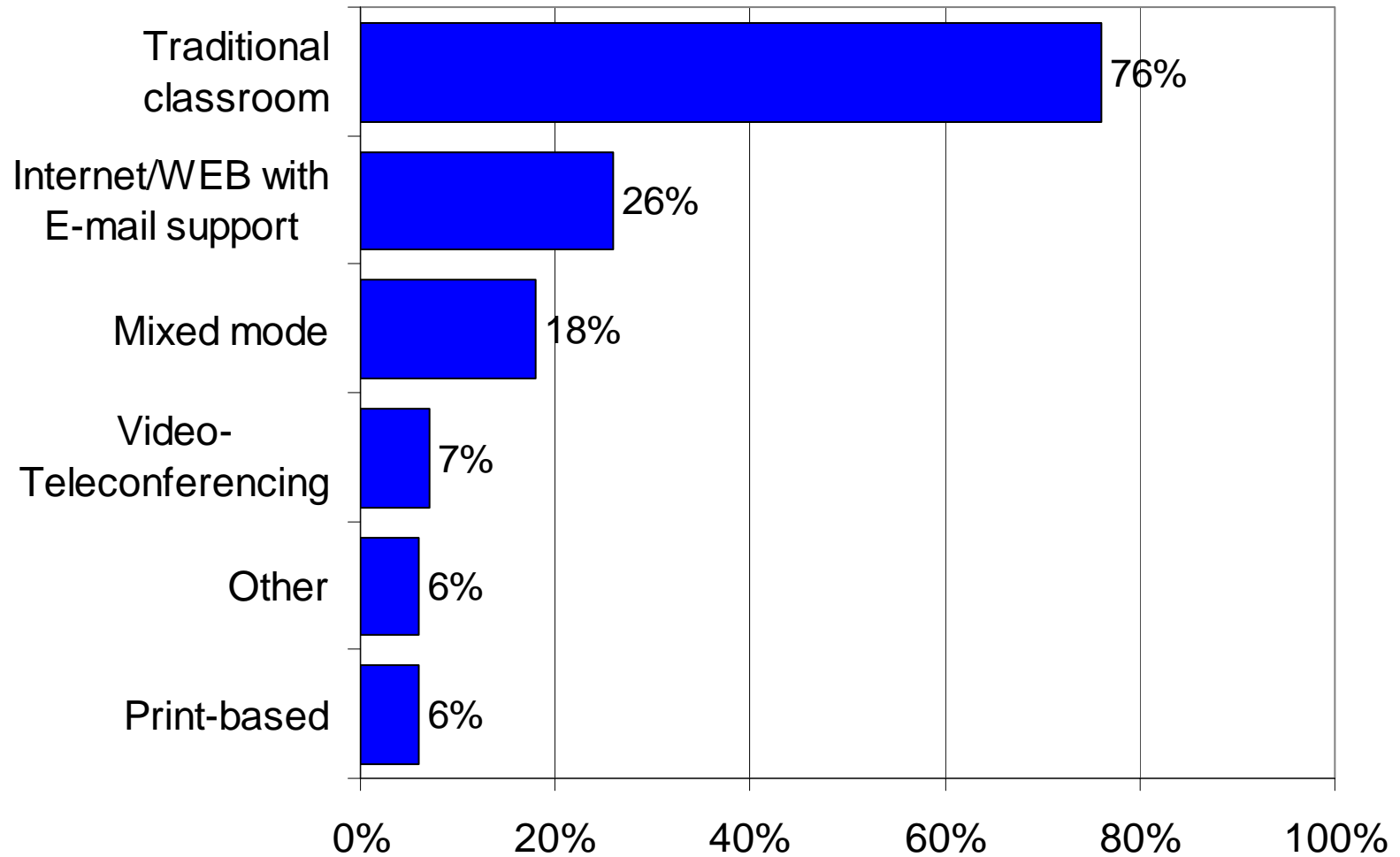
The proportion of those having computer access is up 6% since 2000.

Registration Province - Fall 2005

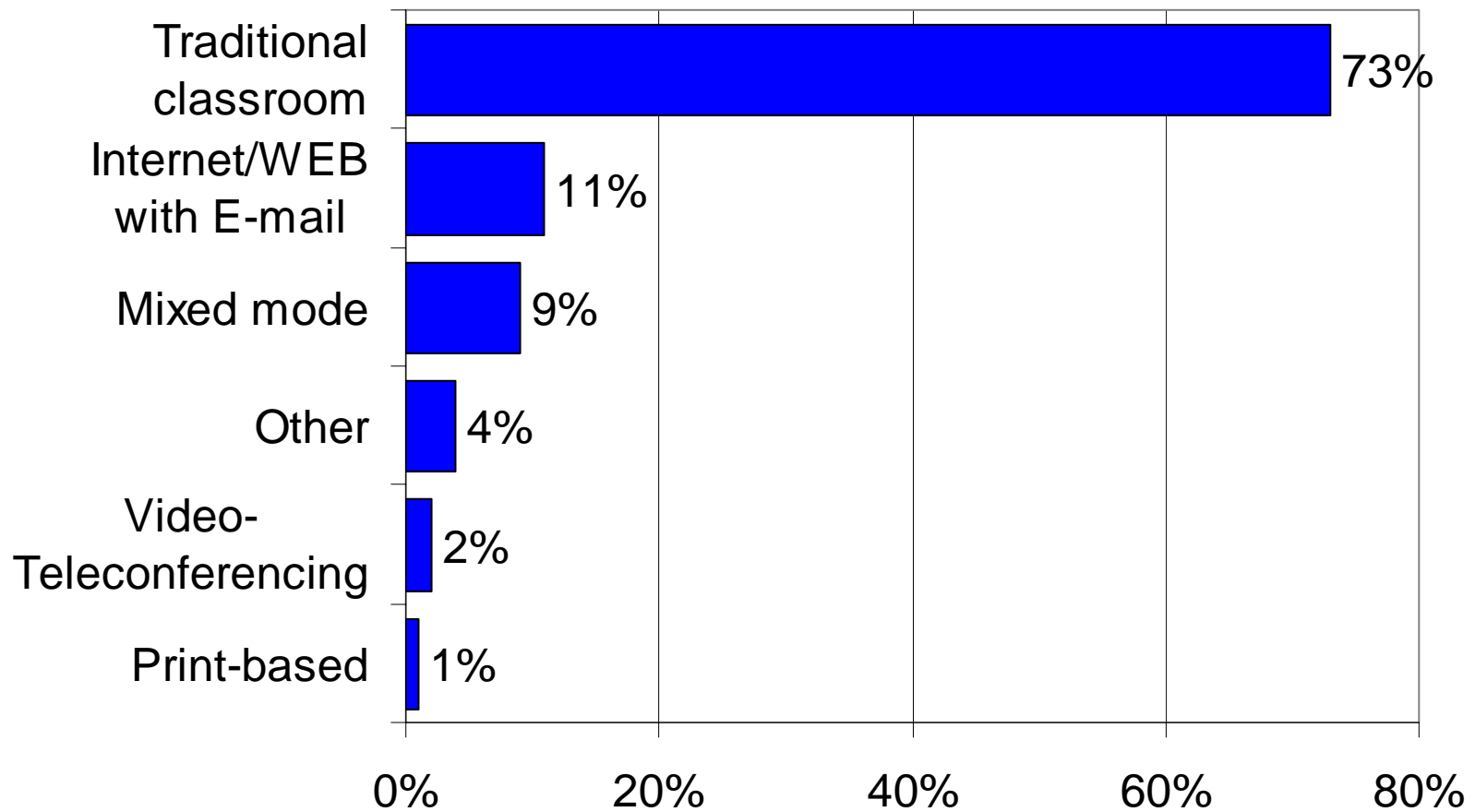


Although the most common registration method across the province is in person, the preferred method for the future is web site (44%). Web site registration has more than doubled since 2000.

Method(s) of Interest for Taking Course (Select all that apply) Province - Fall 2005



**Method of Interest for Taking Course (Select one)
Province - Fall 2005**



2005 Provincial Rating Results: Changes of 3% or More

(‘Very Satisfied’, ‘Very Important’, ‘Very Useful’, or ‘Always’)

- ↑ up 3% to 59% - instructor’s presentation of course material
- ↑ up 4% to 63% - fairness of evaluation
- ↑ up 4% to 53% - feedback from your instructor about your progress
- ↑ up 3% to 54% - course content
- ↑ up 3% to 69% - usefulness of handout material
- ↑ up 3% to 37% - instructor uses a variety of teaching methods and materials
- ↑ up 3% to 59% - importance of cleanliness of the classroom
- ↑ up 3% to 38% - quality of instructors at the college
- ↑ up 3% to 34% - quality of courses at the college

2005 Provincial Non-Rating Results: UP 3% or More

- ↑ up 7% to 20% - received the CE catalogue by Web site
- ↑ up 9% to 34% - found the Web site to be the most valuable source of information about CE courses
- ↑ up 16% to 33% - registered by Web site
- ↑ up 13% to 44% - prefer to register by Web site
- ↑ up 3% to 92% - have access to a computer at home
- ↑ up 3% to 94% - use internet access
- ↑ up 3% to 34% - have completed a university degree
- ↑ up 5% to 91% - taking one course in the current semester

2005 Provincial Non-Rating Results: Down 3% or More

- ↓ down 3% to 28% - received CE catalogue by picking it up at a college campus
- ↓ down 8% to 53% - found the CE catalogue to be the most valuable source of information about CE courses
- ↓ down 5% to 3% - registered by automated phone
- ↓ down 4% to 6% - registered by fax
- ↓ down 5% to 37% - registered in person
- ↓ down 5% to 4% - prefer to register by automated phone
- ↓ down 3% to 4% - prefer to register by fax
- ↓ down 7% to 58% - used CD-ROM