



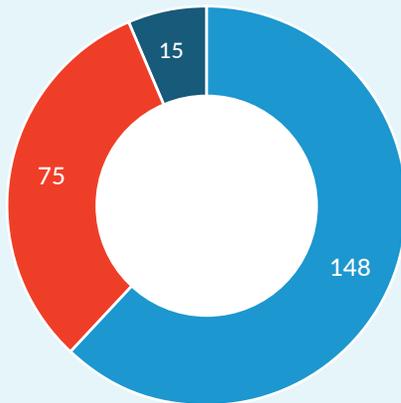
Online Delivery in Adult Education During COVID-19

Synopsis:

The COVID-19 pandemic created a challenging context for delivery of programming for adult learners in Ontario school boards. Reflecting on the pivot to online delivery provides an opportunity to investigate challenges encountered in adult learning, skills developed and recommendations for moving forward.

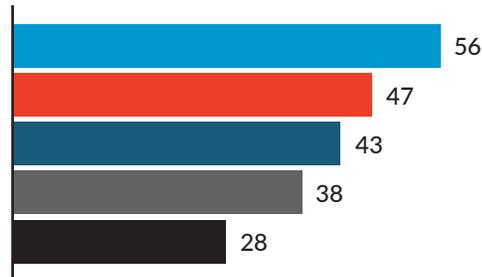
In 2021, Dr. Lorraine Godden and Dr. Sandy Youmans surveyed participants from 18 district school boards.

Who was surveyed:



■ Adult learners
■ Teachers, instructors, and guidance counsellors
■ Administrators

Learners identified the benefits of online learning:



I like:

■ The flexibility to meet other responsibilities
■ Not having to travel to school
■ Learning online
■ Working from home
■ Learning new technology

Learners identified challenges they faced in remote learning:

- tech challenges
- lack of support from teachers
- lack of flexibility with deadlines
- difficulty asking questions online
- difficulty with motivation or staying on task
- difficulty at home

Teachers identified challenges they faced in remote teaching:

- Concerns about low enrollment and job security
- Challenges balancing their own childrens' learning and their teaching load during lock-down
- A lack of regular communication from board administrators that was specific to A&CE
- Concern that adult learners were not doing the work themselves, especially for online exams
- Sadness at not being able to regularly see their adult learners in the face-to-face setting

Teacher identified supports put in place for adult learners:

- Lending of technology and Wi-Fi hotspots
- Availability for frequent “check-ins” with learners
- Mailing learning materials to learners who had no Internet access
- Providing a nominated person to reach out to for guidance support
- Increasing the number of Student Success team meetings
- Differentiated instruction and high-impact pedagogical practices
- Board-wide sharing of information about mental health and well-being services

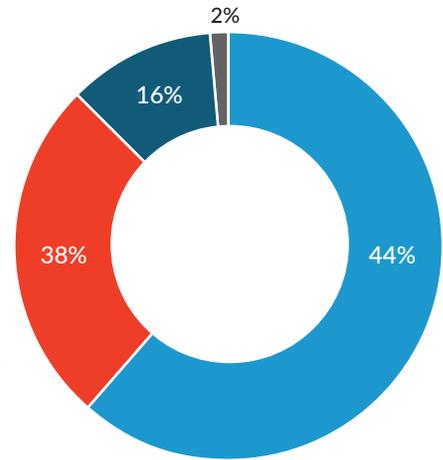
Moving forward

Both learners and teachers identified several similar skills that they developed through online learning.

- Time management
- Technology
- Work-life balance
- Communication
- Problem solving

Learners identified the mode of learning they would prefer post-COVID:

- Learners who prefer a mix of online and face-to-face learning (hybrid)
- Learners who prefer only face-to-face learning (in-person)
- Learners who prefer all learning to be online.
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Recommended supports for adult learners:

- Referrals to online community services
- Lending of technology
- Designated IT support for adult learners
- Greater flexibility with deadlines
- Virtual drop-in centres for academic support
- Additional training to navigate online systems
- A reduction of tasks and examinations
- Additional effort to connect regularly with teachers through email and social media

Recommended supports for teachers and programming:

- Development of best practices to ensure academic integrity of online work and exams
- Sufficient technology devices and hotspots to loan to learners
- Professional development for online instruction
- Time for regular sharing and collaboration with colleagues
- Strategy to mitigate cancellation of co-op placements
- Online delivery of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)
- Mental health and well-being support

For the full report, go to <https://cesba.com/resources/online-adult-education-during-covid-19/>

