eCampus Ontario

The Legacy of the Virtual Learning Strategy

The Virtual Learning Strategy (VLS) was an investment made by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities to drive growth and advancement of virtual learning across postsecondary institutions in Ontario.

The VLS was built on three key principles:

Collaborative

The VLS prioritized collaboration for sector transformation that impacts all institutions.

Learner-driven

The VLS drove virtual learning excellence for all learners in Ontario, now and into the future.

Digital by design

The VLS supported the development of online content that is digital by design.

eCampusOntario celebrates the role of the VLS in supporting innovation. eCampusOntario will continue to communicate the impacts of the VLS across Ontario following its funding from 2021-2024.

The VLS Pillars

Being the future

Providing sector supports to drive a continued co-existence with hybrid learning: Ensuring learners have high-quality education: anytime, from anywhere. This requires quality and innovation, better data, and digital access to enable lifelong learning and fuel Ontario's global competitiveness.

Being a lifelong learner

Enabling lerners to meet the needs of the rapidly evolving labour market at any stage of their careers by proving digital supports and infrastructure for new short duration training.
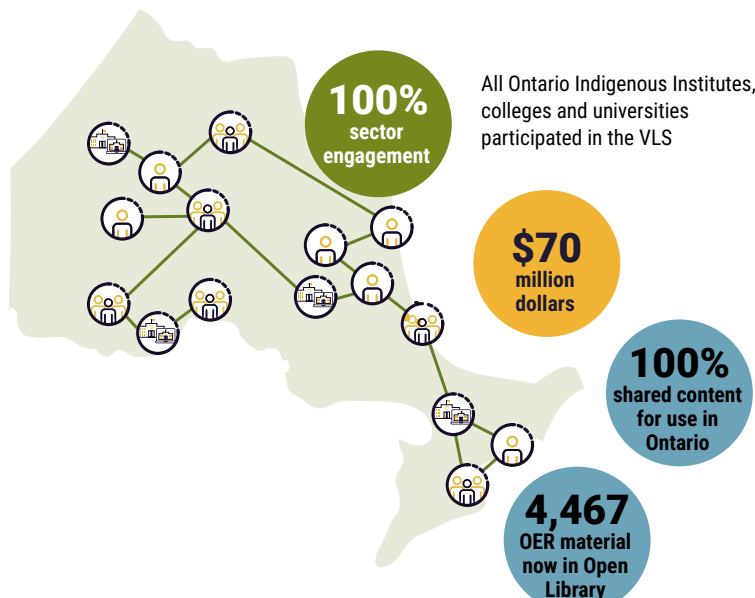
Being a global leader

Strengthening Ontario's leadership domestically and globally, by expanding access for Ontario's institutions to the global marketplace for virtual learning. With this, we aim to position Ontario as a global leader for virtual innovation in teaching and learning, including Ontario educational technoloigy companies.

VLS at a Glance

"There are a lot of artificial walls between universities and colleges in Ontario especially. And what I think the VLS did in these types of collaborations is pushing us together. We sought to bring some of that down and to demystify right, demystify the costs of doing that [virtual learning]."

— Senior Leadership, VLS Project Lead

100% sector engagement

All Ontario Indigenous Institutes, colleges and universities participated in the VLS

$70 million dollars

100% shared content for use in Ontario

4,467 OER material now in Open Library

"I'm really proud of what we have done and I think eCampus should be proud of initiating this... because at the end of the day the aim is that it will improve Canadian workforce towards a more innovative workforce, right? That's the goal."

— Faculty Member, VLS Project Lead
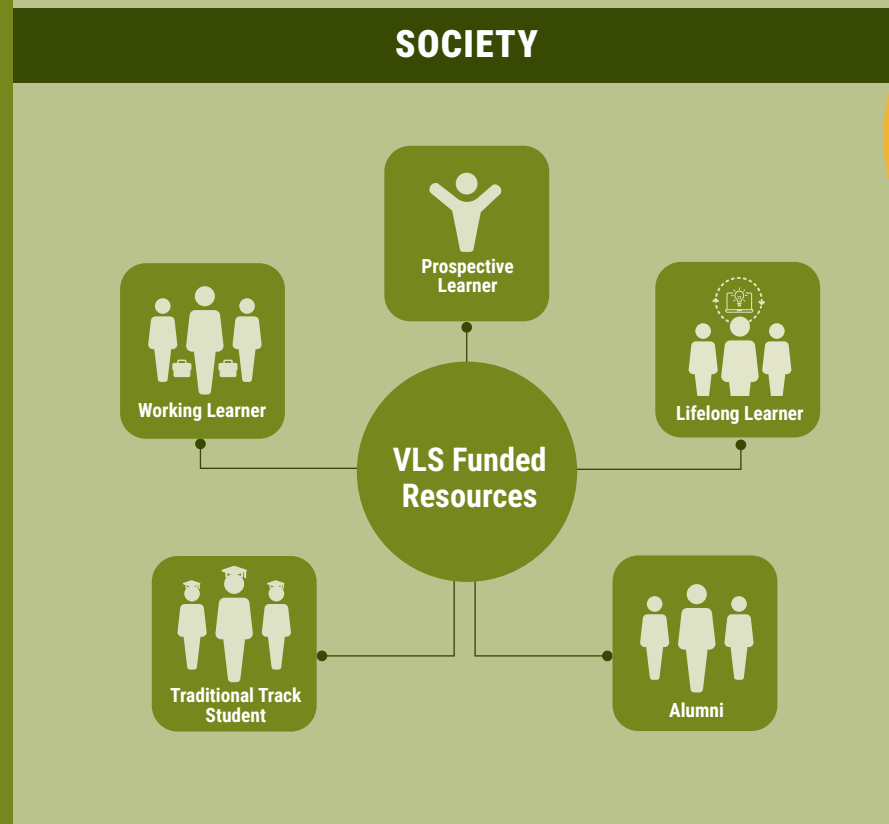
The Legacy of the Virtual Learning Strategy

Use the VLS pillars to examine the impacts of the VLS on the postsecondary sector in Ontario and understand how it has affected learners, instructors, and the culture of virtual teaching within institutions, the province, and abroad. In order to measure the impacts of the VLS, we used several methodologies. These included surveys with VLS program participants, one-on-one in-depth interviews with project leads, focus groups with program participants, and an examination of OER adoption reports provided by eCampusOntario's Open Library. The interviews and focus groups were transcribed and coded inductively with themes that emerged.

Being a Lifelong Learner

The VLS sought to meet the needs of the labour market for learners at any stage of their careers by providing digital supports and infrastructure. According to interviews with VLS project leads, people from all walks of life are using and benefiting from VLS resources as part of their lifelong learning journey.

SOCIETY

Prospective Learner

Working Learner

Lifelong Learner

VLS Funded Resources

Traditional Track Student

Alumni

The VLS built and strengthened relationships between staff and learners at postsecondary institutions and employers. This collaboration has fostered an excellence in virtual learning that extends benefits to Ontarians and Canadians across their learning journey.

POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

285+ reported adoptions of VLS-funded resources as of January 16, 2025.

COLLEGES

INDIGENOUS INSTITUTES

UNIVERSITIES

100% of Ontario's postsecondary institutions participated in the VLS

"Faculty members and students [were brought] together to do pedagogical innovation and co-design of courses. And that's something we've continued on with and we've continued on with it because we found it such a positive experience."
— Senior Leadership, Project Lead

Being a Global Leader

The VLS was designed to strengthen Ontario's leadership domestically and globally by expanding access to the global virtual learning marketplace and positioning Ontario as a global leader for virtual innovation in teaching and learning. According to discussions with project leads and reports of resource adoption in eCampusOntario's Open Library, resources produced by the VLS have been adopted and adapted in other provinces across Canada and countries around the world.

VLS

Being the Future

The VLS sought to drive a continued co-existence with hybrid learning that allowed learners to access high-quality education from anywhere at any time. To achieve this, the VLS conceptualized and/or invested in the growth of the training programs below to support educators' development in excellence in virtual teaching and learning and digital transformation.

81% of Empowered Educator participants indicate that they have integrated what they learned into their practice, specifically citing using apps and EdTech, as well as developing and adopting OER

100% of Leadership for Digital Transformation participants indicated they have integrated their learning into their practice, citing specifically their use of templates when developing EdTech policies at their institution

100% of Online Teaching Fundamentals participants indicated they have integrated their learning into their practice, citing specifically their greater use of online teaching activities such as with H5P

67% of Digital Fluency Accelerator users continue to use the program to support their learners and make sure they have the digital skills to succeed in their studies and careers.

100% of Ontario Exchange participants found their collaboration with an industry partner successful and continue to use their created outputs.

VLS project leads indicate that the funding for their programs has allowed for them the funds, space, and time to try new ideas and promote innovation in teaching and learning.