

The background of the cover is a high-angle, architectural rendering of a modern building's interior. It features a series of curved, light-colored wooden or stone walls and floors that create a sense of depth and movement. A prominent, thick red diagonal stripe runs from the top left towards the bottom left, partially obscuring the architectural details. The overall lighting is warm and soft, highlighting the textures of the materials.

Innovative Work Integrated Learning Student Survey Results 2023-2025

A background image showing three people in a meeting. A man in a light blue shirt is on the left, looking towards the right. Two women are on the right, looking at a laptop. One woman is wearing a red top and the other a yellow top. They are in a bright room with large windows.

Innovative Work Integrated Learning (I-WIL)

Student Survey Results

INTRODUCTION

In 2023, the TalentED YYC pilot project began collaborating with local post-secondary institutions, non-profit organizations, and businesses to provide meaningful innovative work integrated learning (I-WIL) opportunities. Funded by the Business and Higher Education Roundtable (BHER), TalentED YYC worked with Blueprint ADE to survey students' experiences as they honed essential skills through I-WIL.

Innovative work integrated learning opportunities include:

- **Industry projects** (59% of data)
 - TalentED YYC administered student surveys for 45 courses with industry projects, across 4 post-secondary institutions in Calgary.
 - Example: SAIT's Capstone Project course in the School for Advanced Digital Technology.
- **Design competitions** (33%)
 - TalentED YYC administered student surveys for 7 design competitions.
 - Example: [AB2050 Student Case Competition](#)
- **Boot Camps** (5%)
 - TalentED YYC co-hosted and administered student surveys at 6 boot camps. Example: [Net Zero Boot Camp](#)
- **Simulated WIL** (3%)
 - TalentED YYC co-hosted and administered student surveys at 1 simulated WIL opportunity.
 - Example: [Newtonian Shift](#)

From July 2023 – February 2025, student responses were captured through two surveys:

- Pre-survey (n=1110) responses covered students' academic and demographic backgrounds.
- Post-survey (n=776) responses covered students' personal and professional skills development and growth through participation in I-WIL opportunities.
- Students representing all 7 post-secondary institutions in Calgary were surveyed: Alberta University of the Arts, Ambrose University, Bow Valley College, Mount Royal University, SAIT, St. Mary's University, University of Calgary.

HIGHLIGHTS

34%

**International
Students**

55%

**Visible Minority
Students**

90%

**Very and Somewhat
Satisfied with their
WIL experience**

SKILLS IMPROVED DUE TO I-WIL

77%

**Communication
Skills**

80%

**Problem
Solving**

80%

**Critical
Thinking**

1) Students in I-WIL opportunities are experiencing WIL for the first time.

81% of respondents indicated that their I-WIL experience was their first WIL experience.

2) Students in I-WIL opportunities are gaining extra experience regardless of completing traditional WIL opportunities or not later in their education.

45% of respondents indicated they were in their second or earlier year of study and they were 24 years of age or younger (76%).

By comparison, a 2023 national study indicated that 46% of students participating in traditional WIL are aged 19 to 25.¹ Students participating in I-WIL exceeded this benchmark, indicating that they are, on average, able to engage in non-traditional forms of WIL both at an earlier age and point of their program. This elongates their runway of skill development during their post-secondary education.

3) Students complete I-WIL opportunities gaining critical skill development, an optimistic outlook on their future career path and steps to achieve it.

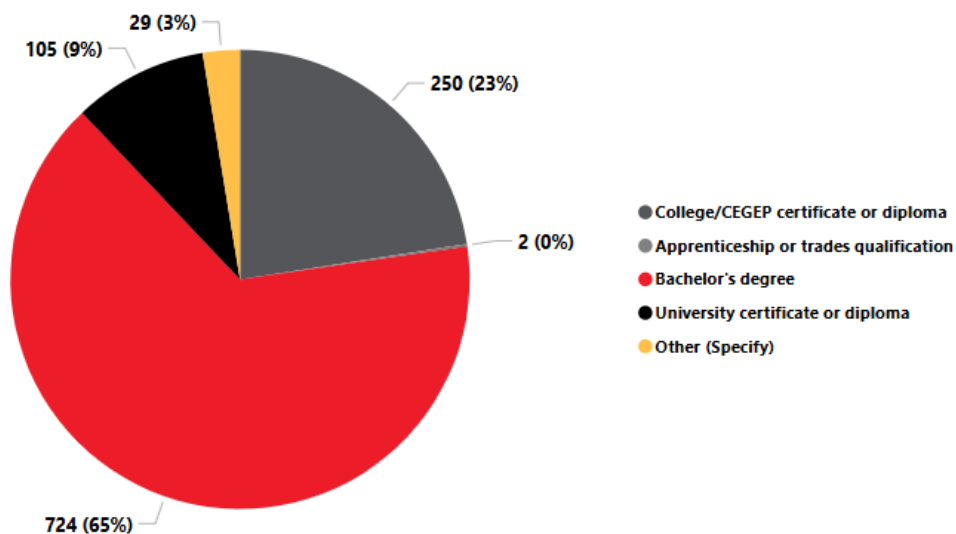
Students indicated there was a lot of or some improvement in their social and emotional skills such as adaptability (77%), achievement orientation (75%), and having a positive outlook (75%).

Students perceived that they had the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to work towards their career goals (86%), were optimistic that they would succeed (88%), and attributed their growth to their I-WIL opportunity preparing them for the world of work (84%).

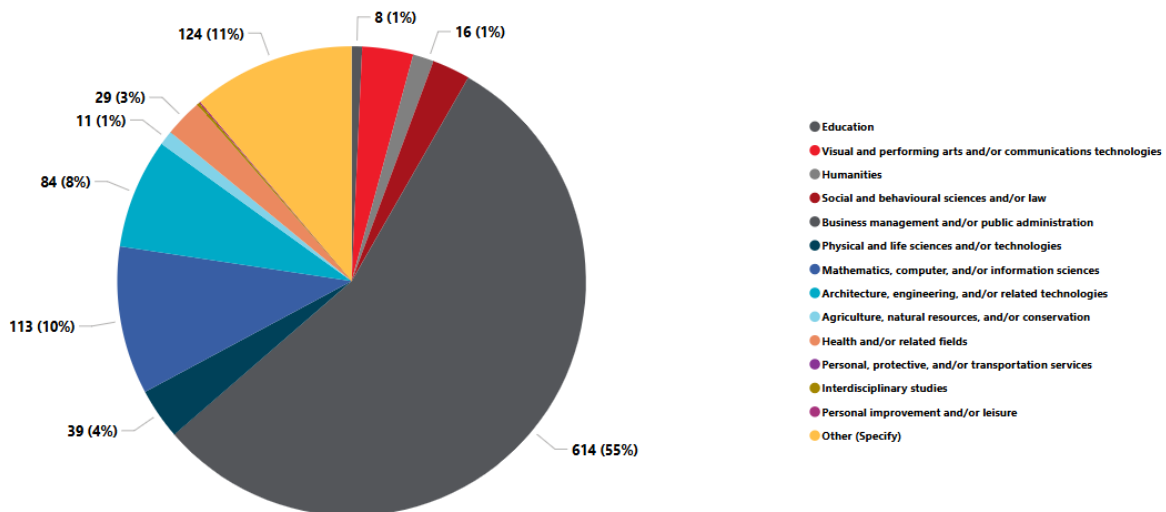
¹ Iacampo, Joe, "Work-Integrated Learning in Canada: Results from Wave 3 of the Longitudinal and International Study of Adults," 2023. Access at: <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/corporate/reports/research/report-wil-canada.pdf>

Pre-Survey Results

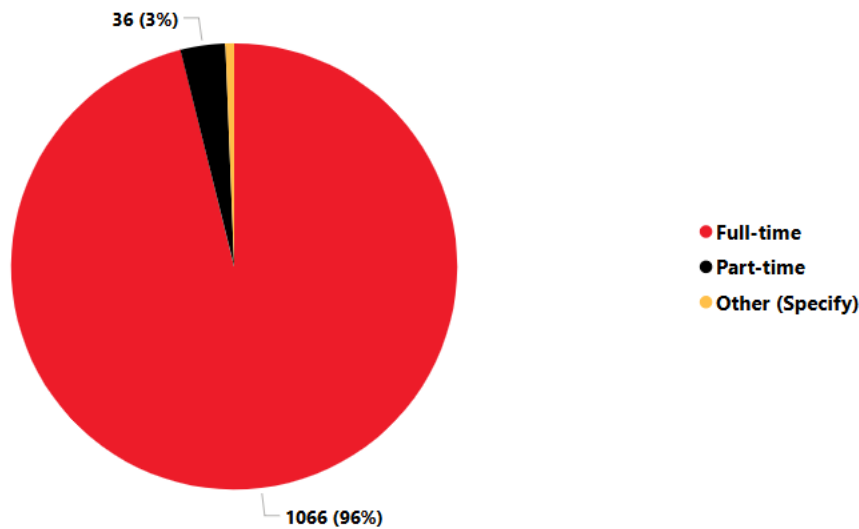
What type of degree or credential are you presently working towards?



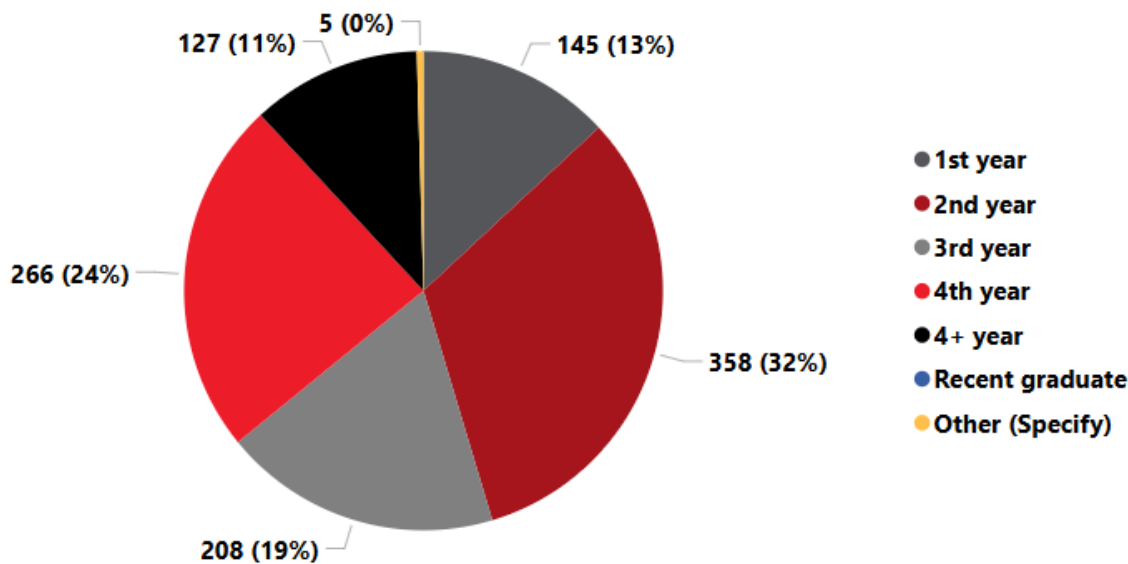
What discipline are you studying in school?



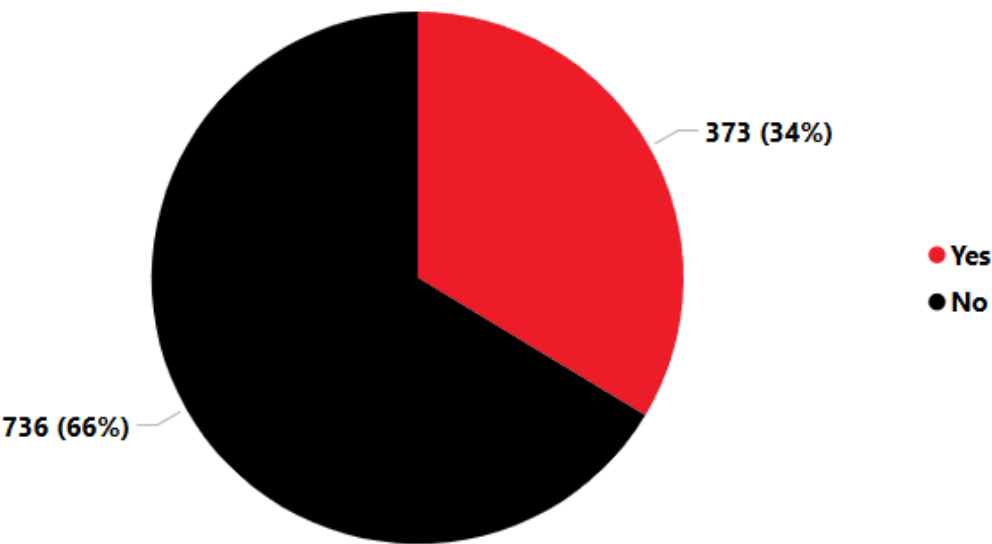
Which of the following best describes your enrollment status?



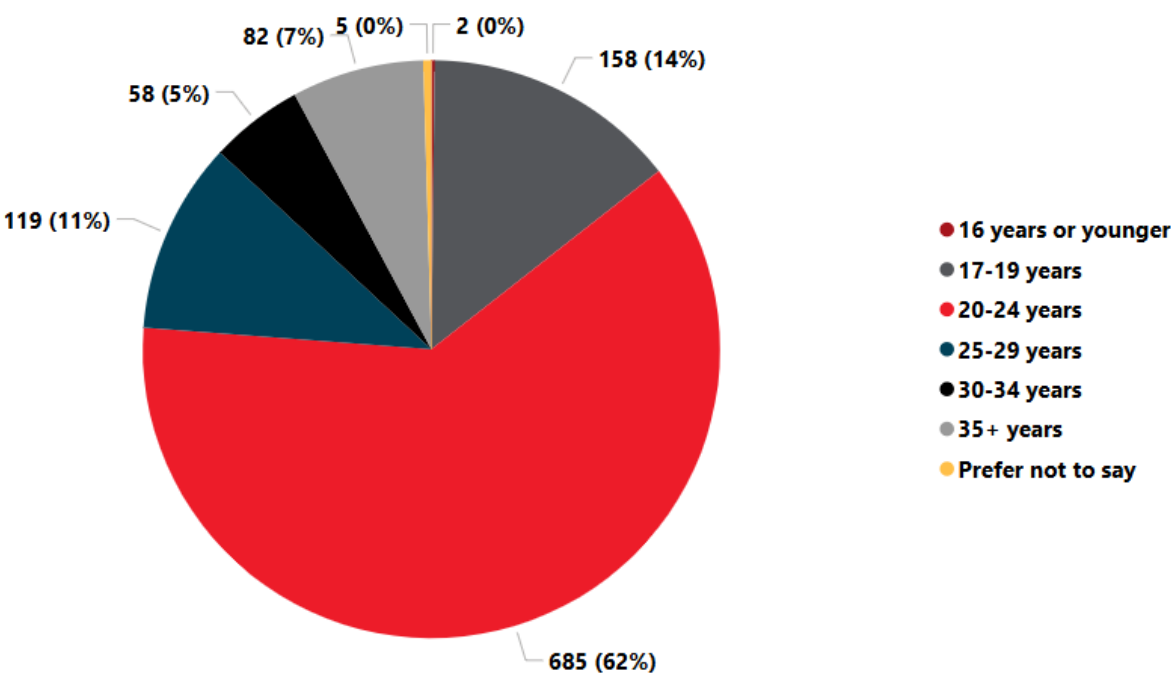
Which year of study are you currently in?



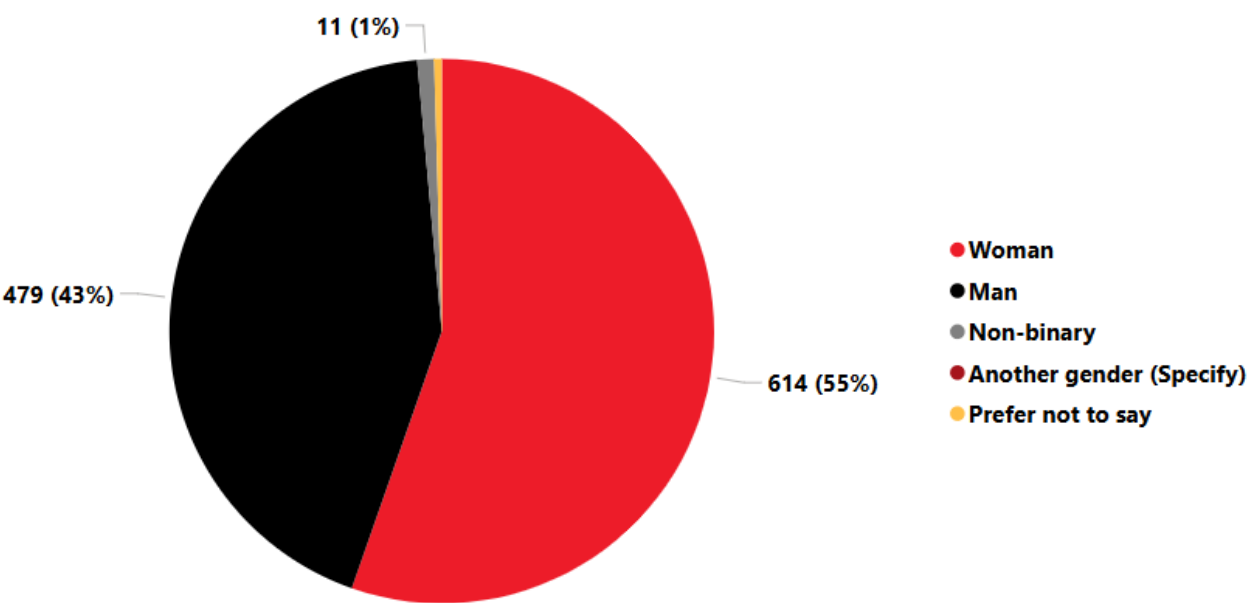
Are you an international student?



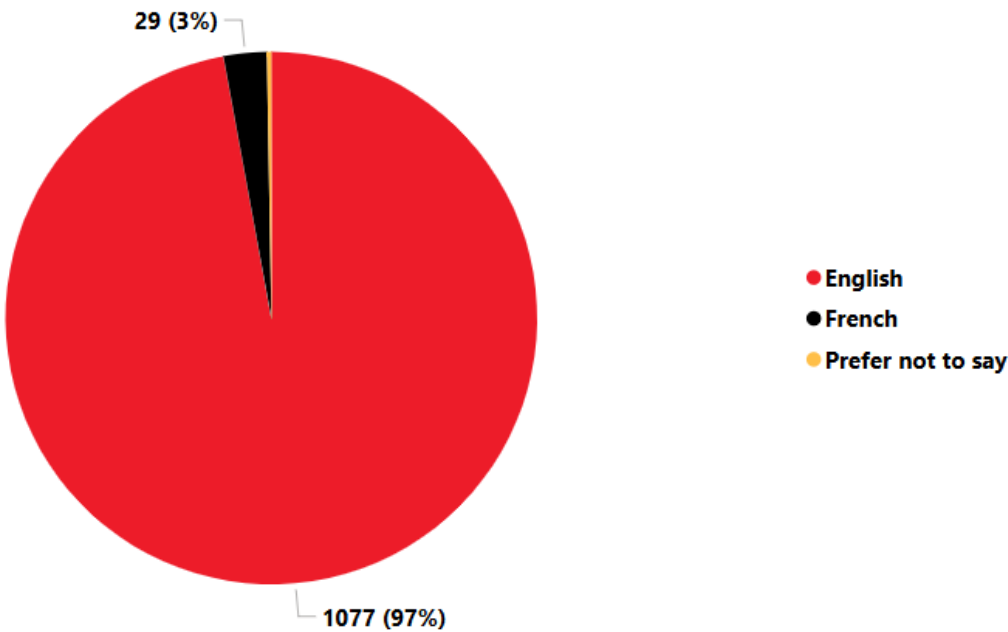
How old are you?



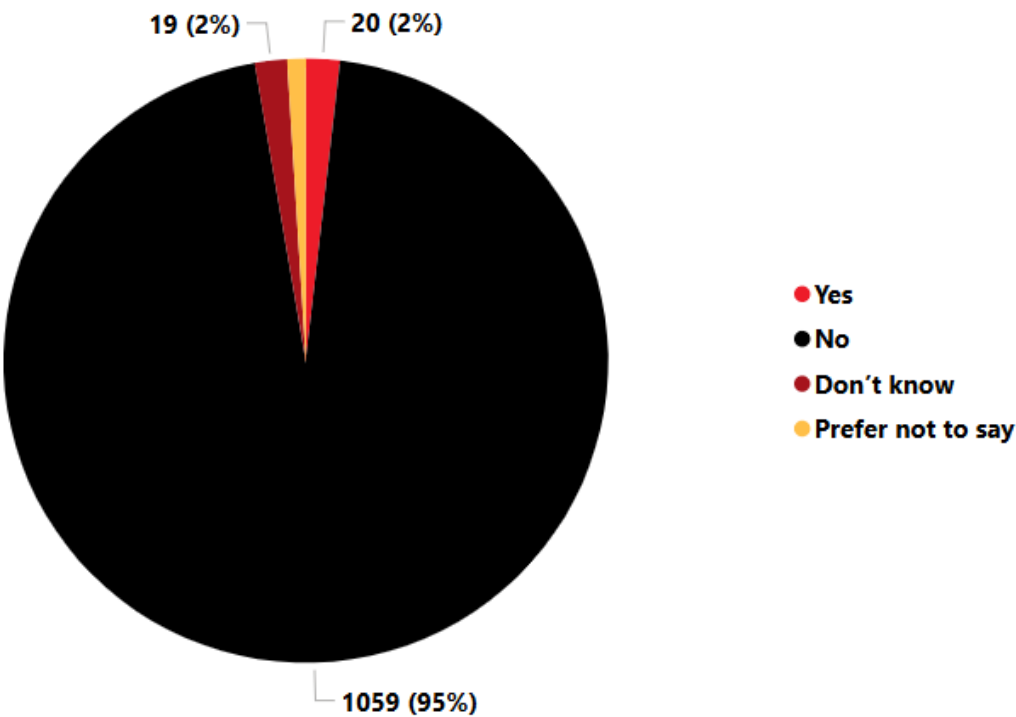
What is your gender?



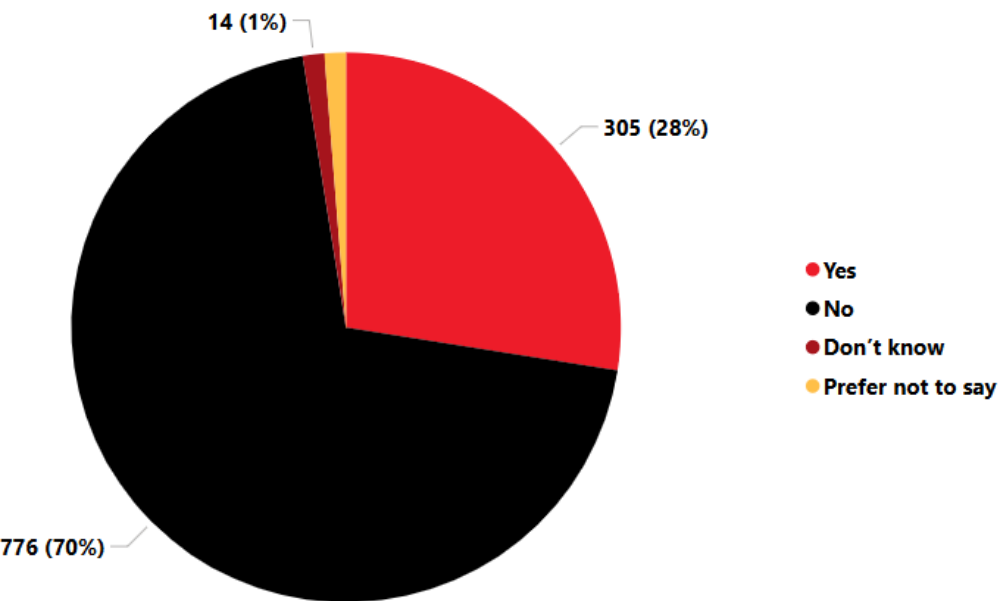
Which of the following languages do you speak most proficiently?



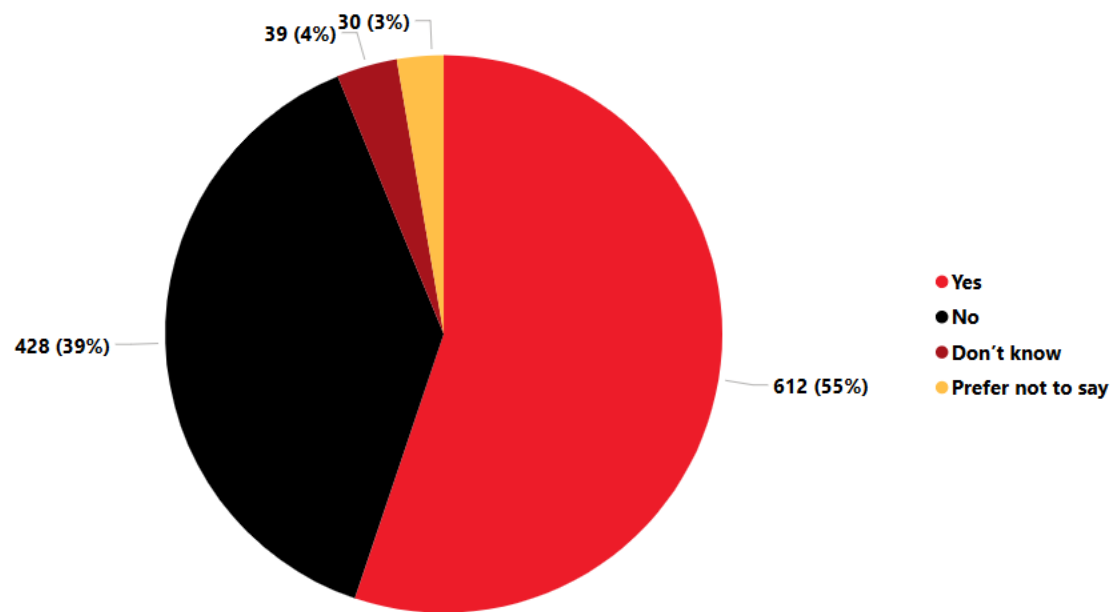
Do you identify as an Indigenous person?



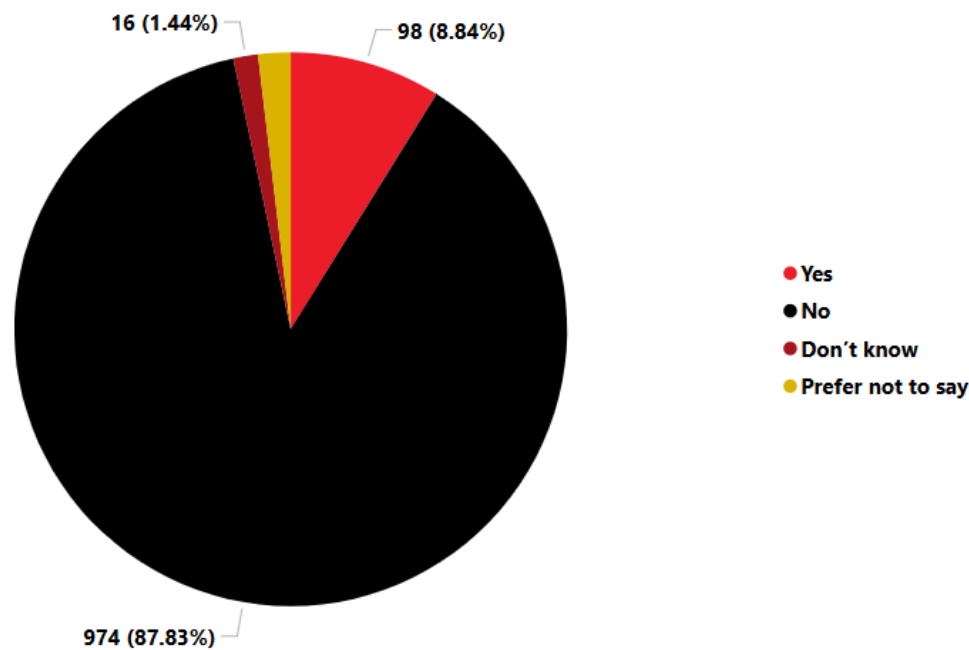
Are you a newcomer to Canada?



Do you identify as a visible minority?

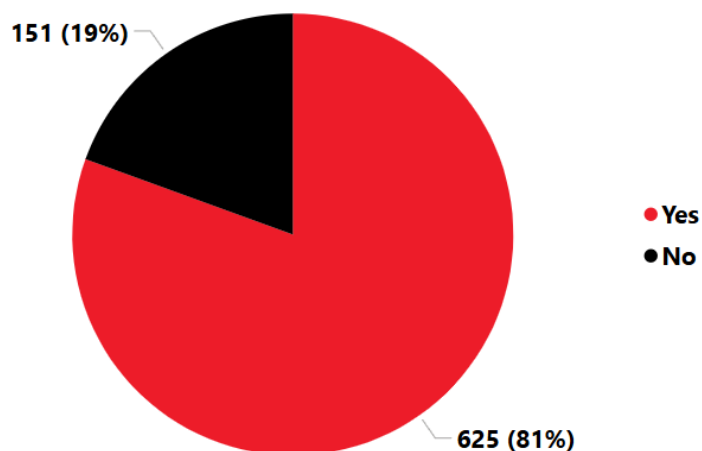


Are you a person with a disability?

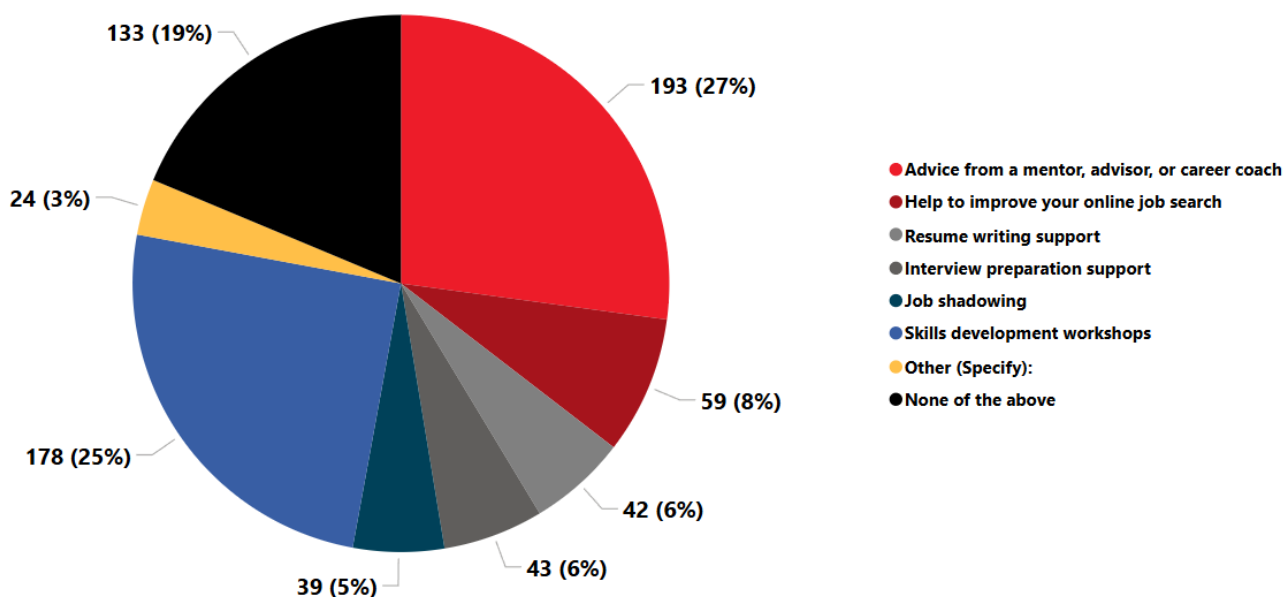


Post-Survey Results

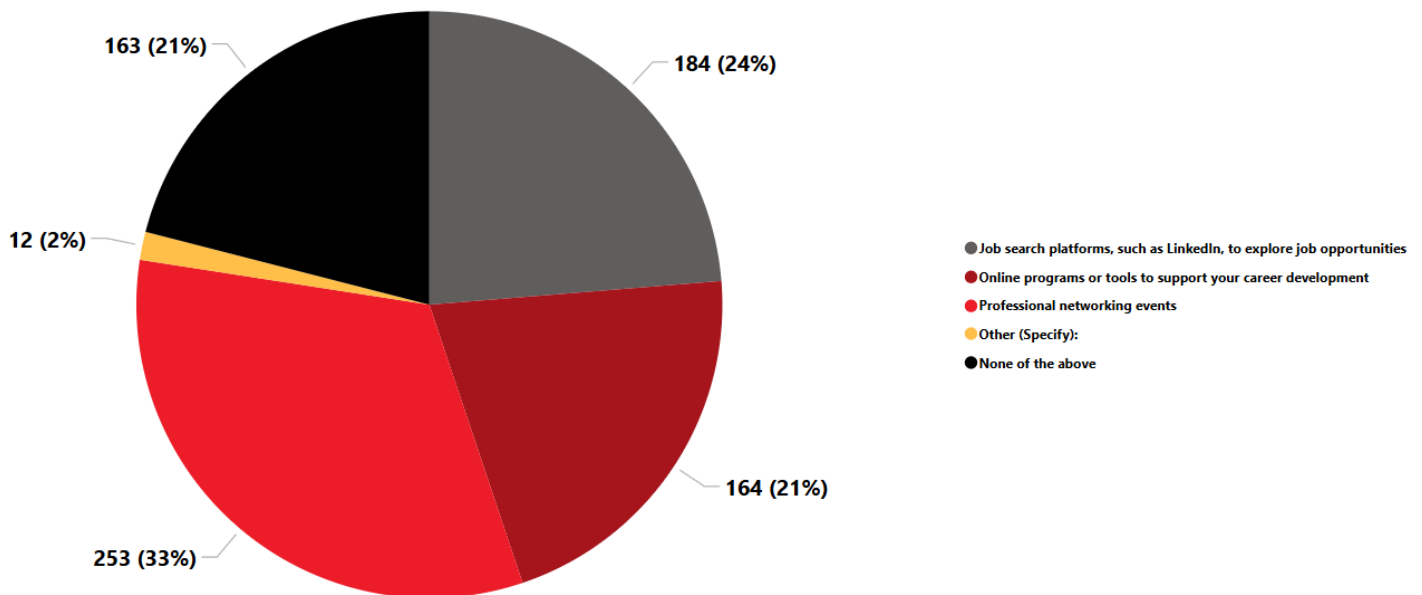
Was this the first WIL opportunity that you have completed?



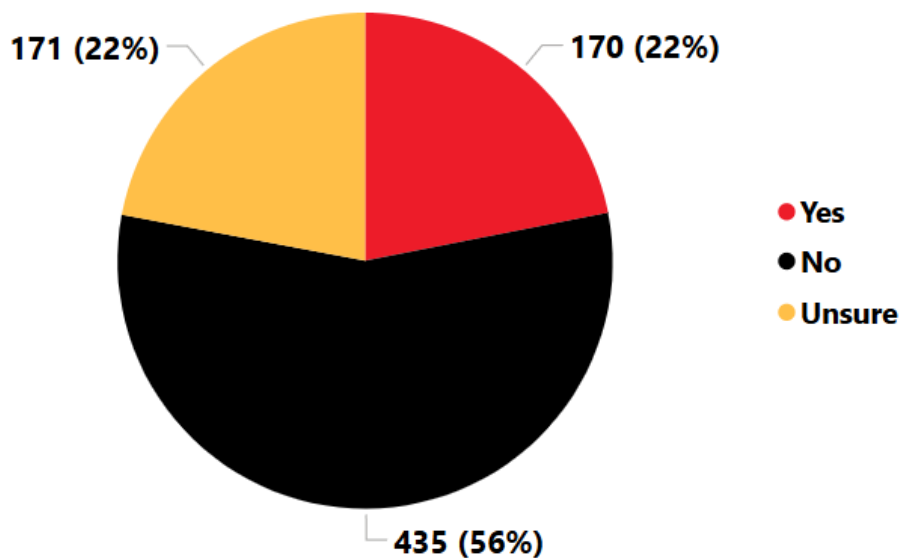
Which of the following career development supports did you access as part of the WIL opportunity? Select all that apply.



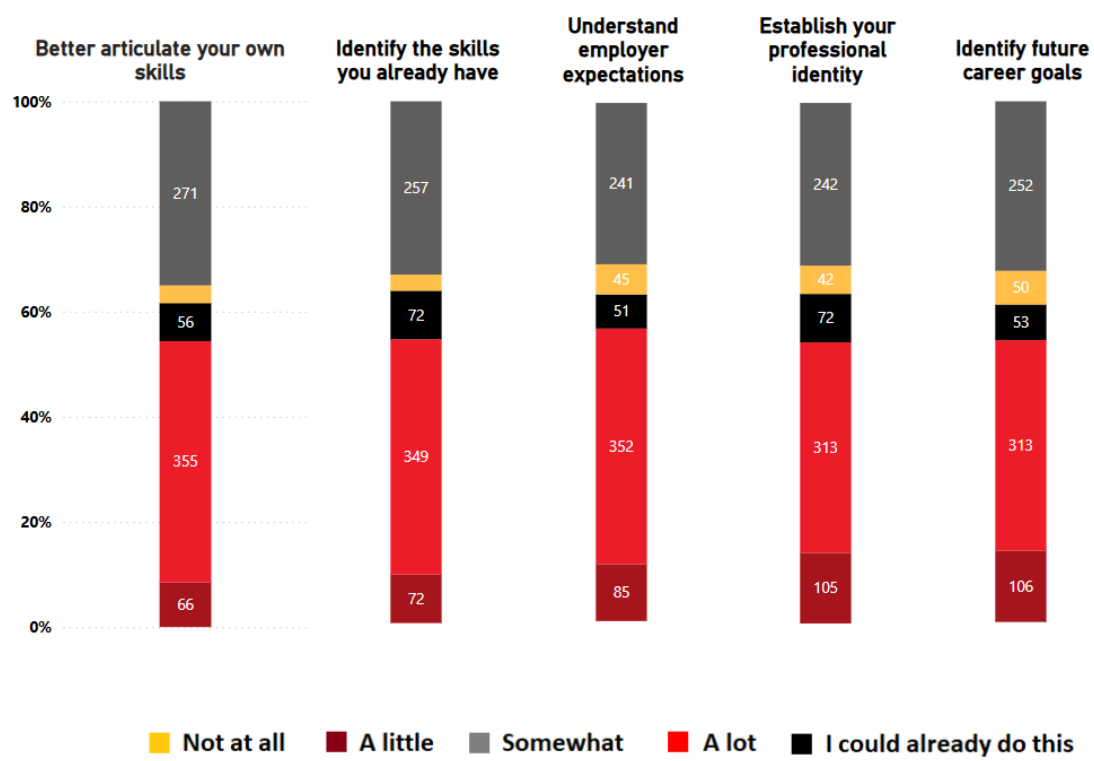
Which of the following platforms or activities did you access as a part of the WIL opportunity?



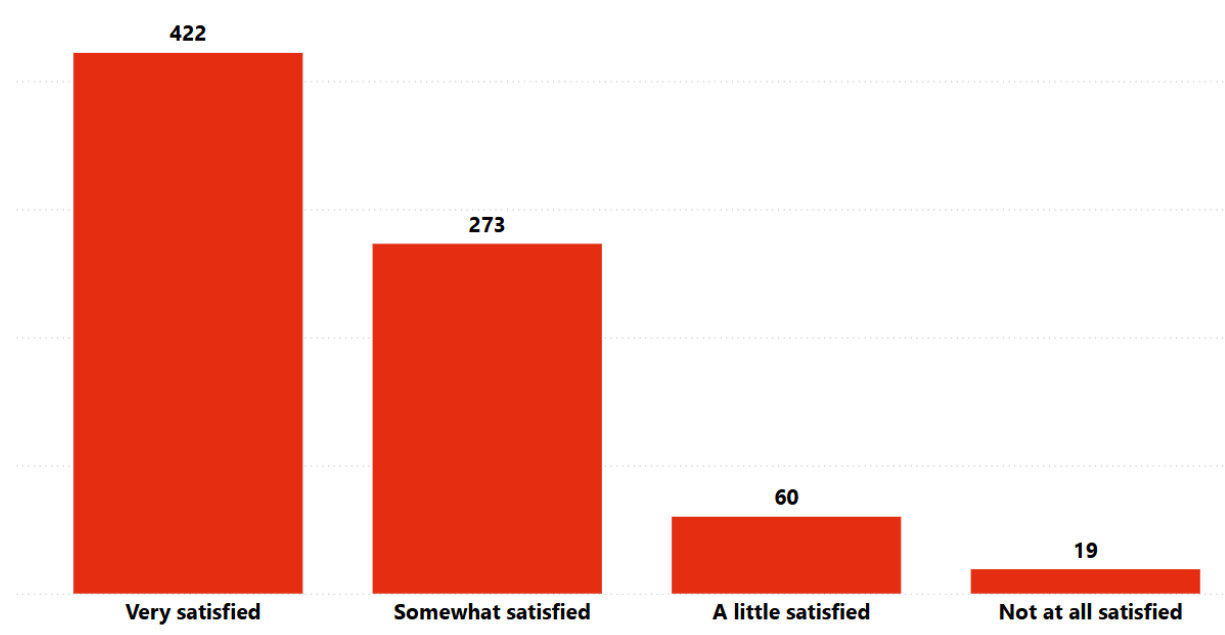
During your WIL opportunity, did you secure a new mentor?



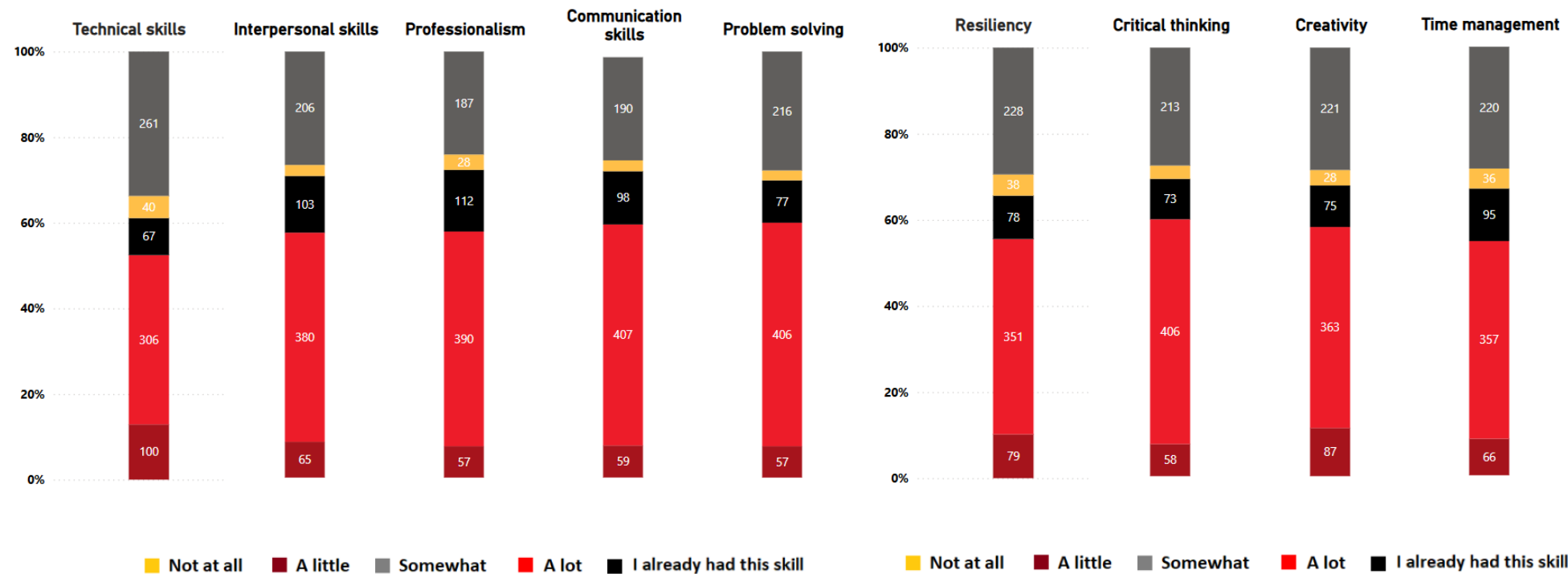
To what extent has the WIL opportunity helped you:



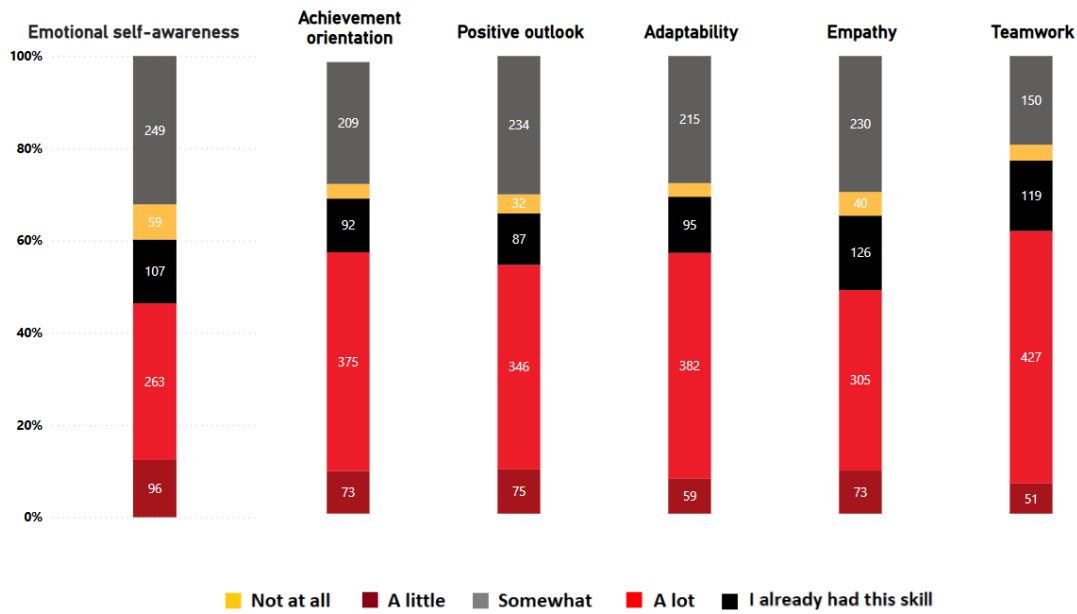
Overall, how satisfied are you with your WIL opportunity?



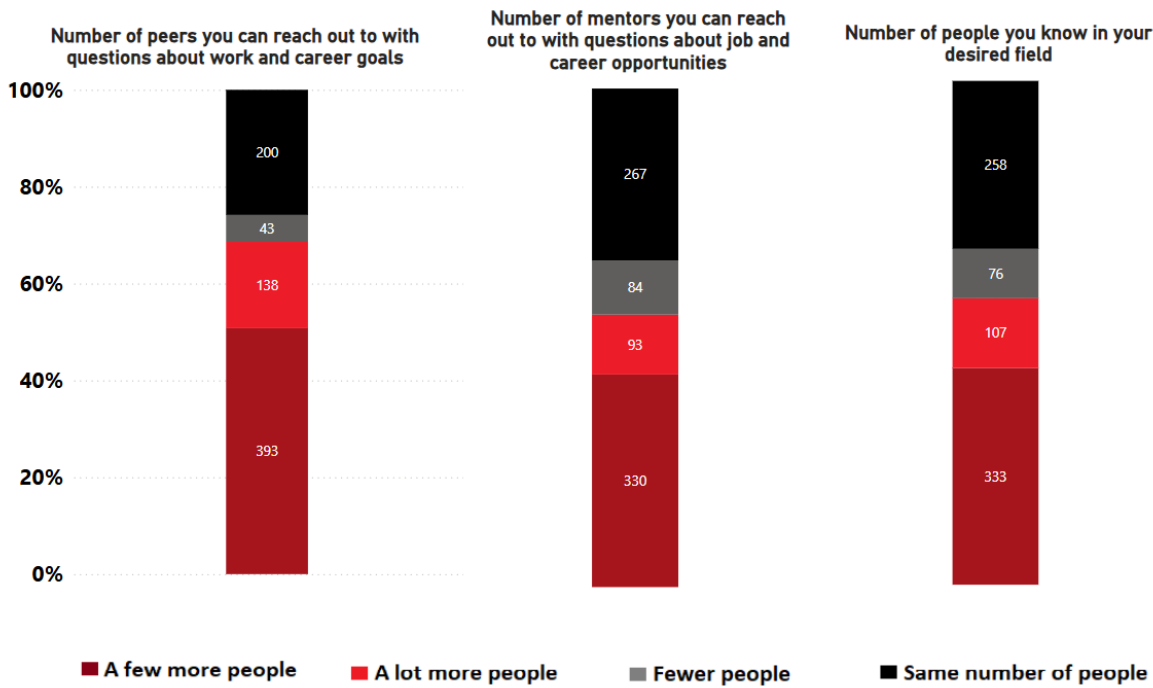
To what extent have you improved on the following skills as a result of completing the WIL opportunity?



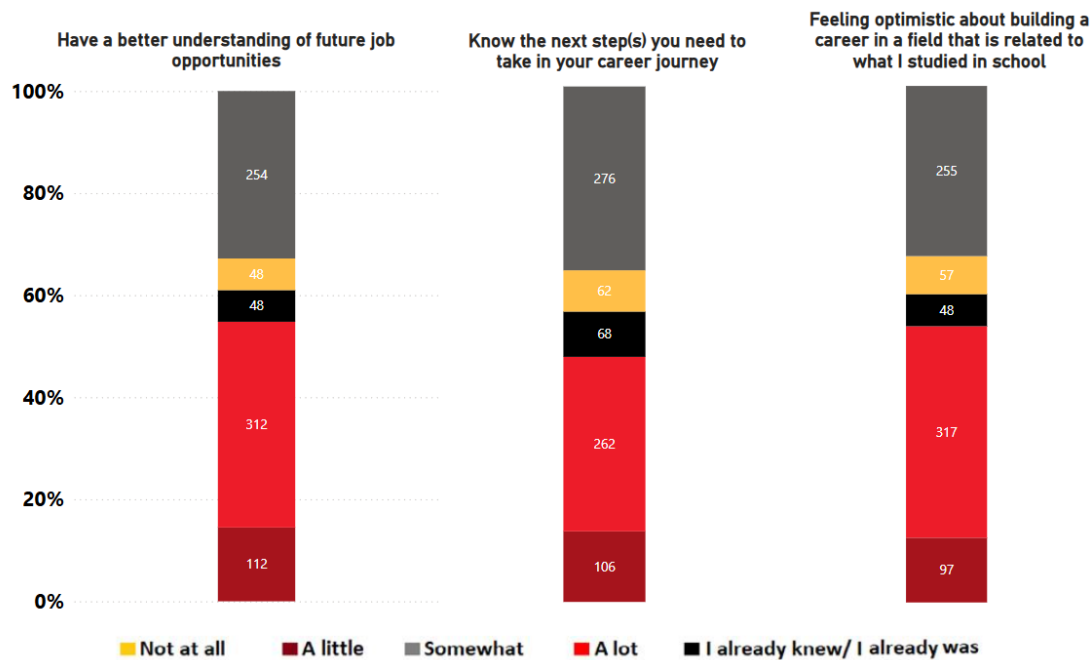
To what extent have you improved on the following social and emotional skills as a result of completing the WIL opportunity?



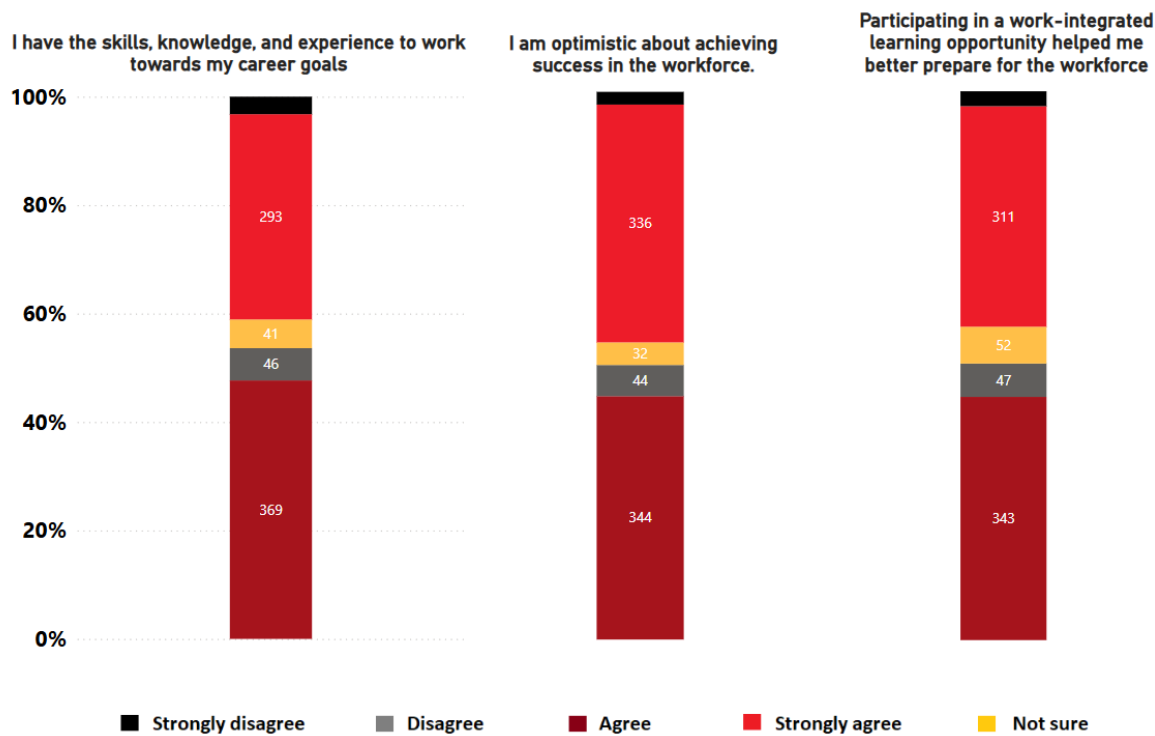
To what extent have your connections to the workforce changed as a result of completing the WIL opportunity?



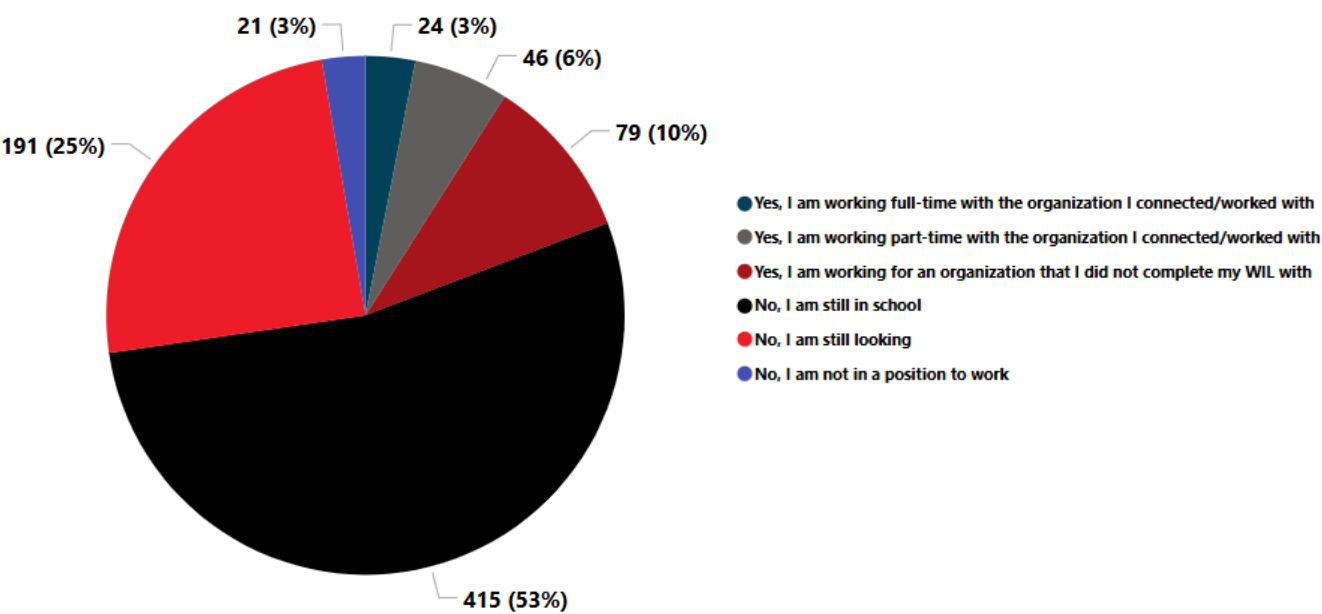
Looking forward, to what extent do you:



Since completing the WIL opportunity, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Have you secured employment since completing the WIL opportunity?





Conclusion

The data captured by TalentED YYC and Blueprint ADE demonstrate that I-WIL opportunities provide students with critical skills development and a positive outlook on their future career paths. In summary, the following applications of I-WIL have been identified:

1) I-WIL contributes to reducing the skills gap.

Research reveals that employers engaging in WIL may experience a skills mismatch between what they require and what their WIL students can offer.² Employers indicate that communication, self-direction, and project management were their top three desired skills.³ Further, research also indicates that skill gaps in the general workforce are projected to diminish the Canadian economic output by up to \$11 billion by 2040.⁴

I-WIL provides students with the opportunity to develop critical skills ahead of either traditional WIL opportunities or entering the general workforce. Through this development, students will have stronger skills and reduce the likelihood of a skills gap.

2) I-WIL eases the strain on small to medium-sized organizations exploring early talent options.

Employers have indicated that a barrier to participation in WIL can be the financial and resource commitments necessary to train and supervise a student, compared to a more experienced worker.⁵ SMEs are particularly vulnerable as they struggle

² Magnet, ICTC "The Impact of Workforce Integrated Learning on Student Success and the Canadian Economy: An Evaluation of Canada's Student Work Placement Program," 2023. Access at: https://magnetnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ICTC_SWPP_evaluation_2.0-ENG-sep18_23.pdf

³ ICTC "Assessing the Value of Canada's Student Work Placement Program for Students, Employers, and the Digital Economy," 2022. Access at: <https://ictc-ctic.ca/reports/assessing-the-value-of-canadas-student-work-placement-program-for-students-employers-and-the-digital-economy>

⁴ Conference Board of Canada, "The Future of Work: Addressing Skill Imbalances in Canada," 2024. Access at: https://www.conferenceboard.ca/product/the-future-of-work_2024/

⁵ Magnet, ICTC "The Impact of Workforce Integrated Learning on Student Success and the Canadian Economy: An Evaluation of Canada's Student Work Placement Program," 2023. Access at: https://magnetnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/ICTC_SWPP_evaluation_2.0-ENG-sep18_23.pdf

with lower productivity, lower technology adoption, and underinvestment in internal training.⁶

I-WIL opportunities allow employers to work with student talent for shorter periods of time than traditional WIL, to help address their capacity and/or business needs. In short, I-WIL allows for a more flexible approach to engaging SMEs in WIL.

⁶ Future Skills Centre, "Small and Medium-Sized Employers (SMEs): Skills Gaps and Future Skills," 2020. Access at: <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/small-and-medium-sized-employers-smes-skills-gaps-and-future-skills/>