

The Virtual Learning Landscape Ahead

Co-creating an innovation-driven postsecondary education system in Ontario through a systemic & futures-oriented approach.

Over the course of 2021 and 2022, we explored maturing trends in the education sector that are influencing change in the virtual learning landscape.

We synthesized our findings in a collection of five foresight reports: Hybrid Futures, Tomorrow's Learners, Lifelong Learning, Shaping the Future Workforce, and Leading Virtual Learning Innovation. This map synthesizes a year of foresight research intended to support institutions in navigating transformation by addressing immediate and short-term challenges, while articulating long-term visions for systems level evolution.

THE VISION: CO-CREATING BETTER FUTURES FOR ALL THROUGH EDUCATION

The [Virtual Learning Strategy \(VLS\)](#) is supporting ongoing and future virtual learning needs at all Ontario Indigenous Institutes, colleges, and universities, and is built on three key pillars:



The 2021-2022 foresight reports collection support the VLS pillars by enabling awareness of drivers of change to continue realizing the potential of education in guiding personal purpose-finding, driving social and environmental justice, and supporting global development goals.

THE VIRTUAL LEARNING LANDSCAPE

Ubiquitous, flexible, & human-centered education

The virtual learning landscape is an environment which leverages the best of in-person and virtual learning to enable new standards of educational accessibility for local and global impact. As the education sector continues to evolve, we anticipate increasing innovation for multi-access futures established on human-centered and universal design for learning principles.

Supporting Ontario's human-centered virtual learning landscape calls for collaboration as well as intentional initiatives across and within institutions to support flexible and unbundled learning pathways.



Drivers of Change:

INNOVATIONS, INITIATIVES, & STRATEGIES

Throughout the year, we engaged in a research-driven, systematic exploration of possible futures by identifying trends or patterns of change that may have significant lasting impacts in the postsecondary education sector.

This section provides a high-level overview of the futures-focused questions we explored and the key trends and insights that emerged from the research.

1 INTENTIONAL INITIATIVES

? *What type of supports would future learners need to succeed?*

Intersectional perspective: An intersectional approach explores how identity shapes a learner's educational, cultural, economic, social, and lived experiences.

Learner agency: Intentional initiatives emphasize learner agency and engage learners as co-creators and partners in initiatives across all levels of the education experience.

Inclusive campus: Successful transformation to an inclusive hybrid campus is facilitated by affirming a sense of belonging, community, and identity among community members.

Read our report on [Tomorrow's Learners](#)



2 LIFELONG LEARNING

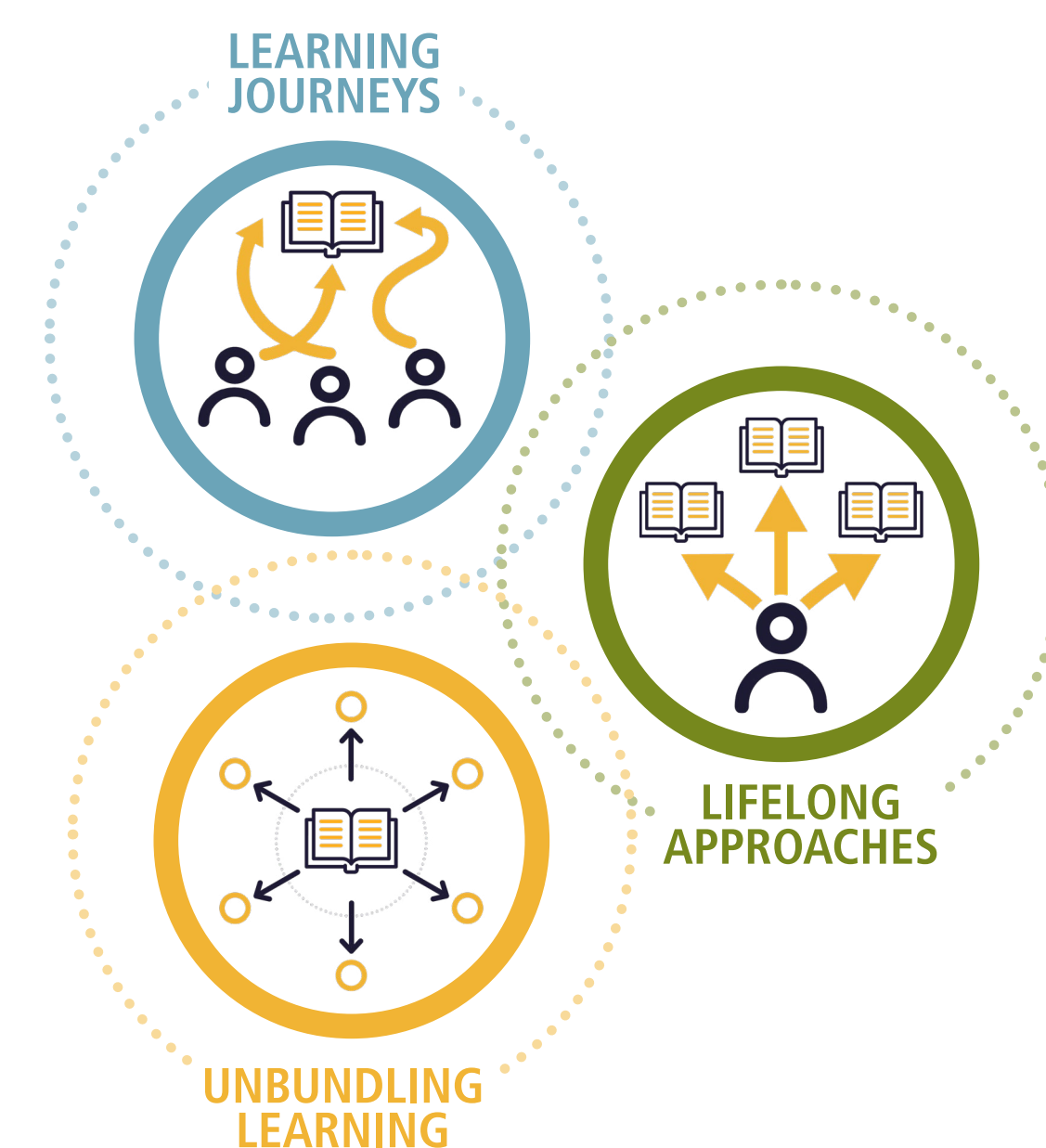
? *When does learning happen?*

Learning journeys: A dynamic process that aims to create personalized, adaptable, and intergenerational hybrid learning environments

Lifelong approaches: Models of learning that seamlessly support lifelong learning.

Unbundling learning: Pathways to education that are flexible, cost-efficient, and meet the needs of lifelong learners.

Read our report on [Lifelong Learning](#)



3 DIGITAL-BY-DESIGN

? *What approaches would best meet future learning needs?*

Teaching & learning: High-quality hybrid teaching and learn integrates learner-centred approaches with intentional use of Ed Tech.

Emerging EdTech: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Extended Reality (XR) are examples of key EdTech that are projected to grow in postsecondary education.

Wraparound supports: Hybrid wraparound learner supports are designed to enrich holistic learner growth, success, and wellness, virtually and in-person.

Read our report on [Hybrid Futures](#)



4 WORKFORCE & MARKET NEEDS

? *What external influences are driving change in postsecondary education needs?*

Market & values shift: Change drivers that influence the labour market, skills gap, reskilling and upskilling, and finding purpose.

Human-tech synergy: Recognizing and understanding innately human skills and complementing human skills with technology.

Work-readiness: Postsecondary initiatives and programs to facilitate work-integrated lifelong learning, career agility, and satisfaction.

Read our report on [Shaping the Future Workforce](#)



5 LEADING INNOVATION

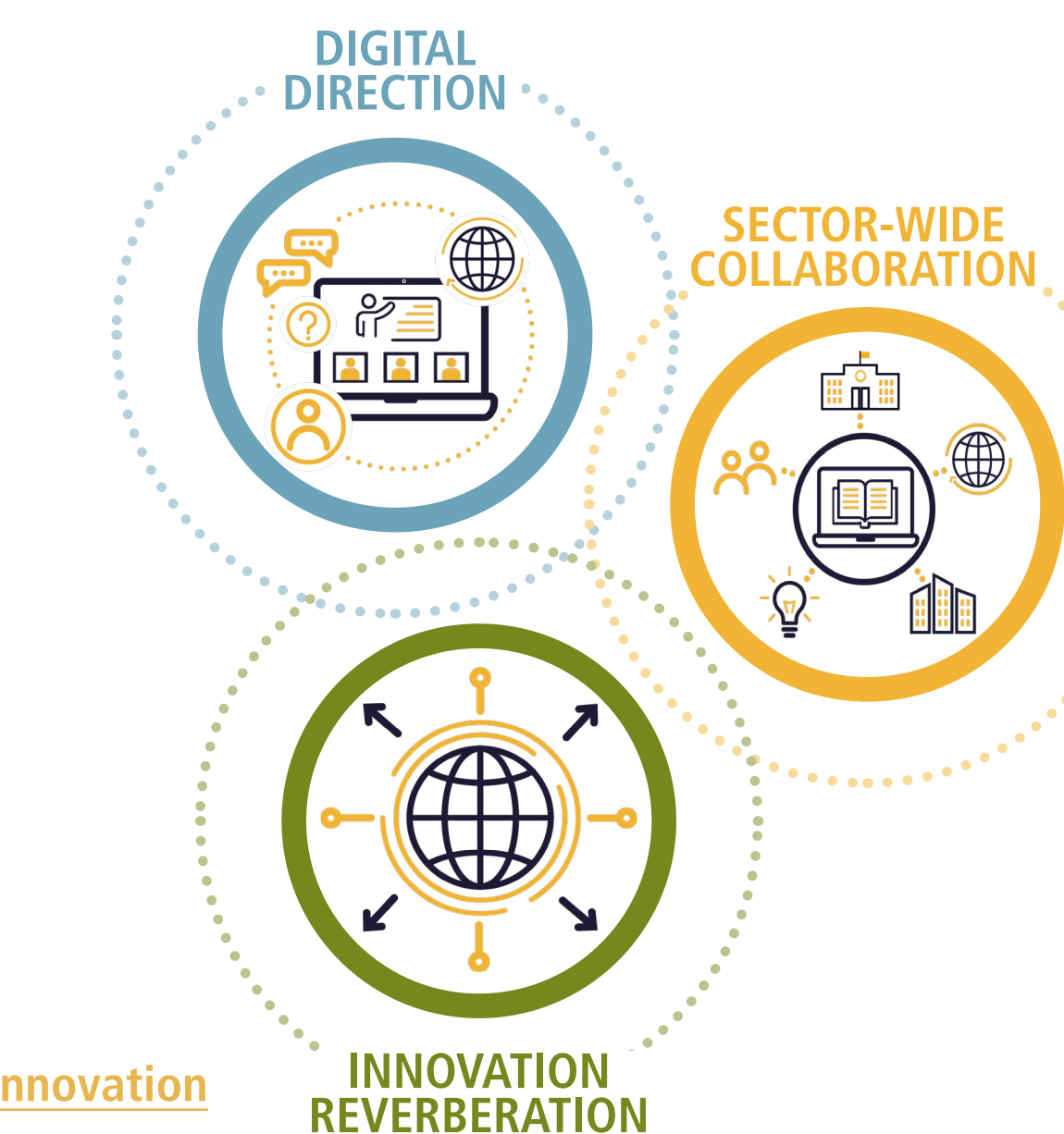
? *How might we co-create better futures through education?*

Digital direction: Major trends shaping Ontario's virtual learning efforts and their potential impacts.

Sector-wide collaboration: Amplifying Ontario's sector-wide collaborative innovation impacts to enhance digital-by-design teaching and learning across the province.

Innovation reverberation: Extending Ontario's impact globally to contribute towards sustainable futures through virtual education.

Read our report on [Leading Virtual Learning Innovation](#)



LOOKING AHEAD

The COVID-19 pandemic and the shift to emergency remote teaching amplified challenges across the Ontario postsecondary system. This shift forced the sector to assess its capacities for ubiquitous continuity of teaching and learning, and to pursue new opportunities to build tools and strategies for the digital-by-design future.

As we look ahead to the futures of Ontario's virtual learning landscape, it is essential that we maintain a state of constant openness to change, agility and innovation.

CALLS TO ACTION

Explore & Engage

We recommend readers to use this report as a map for further exploration. Readers can click on the links provided to refer to each of the five foresight reports and learn more about topics of interest.

Spark Conversation

We invite you to use these reports to spark conversations across your institution. Remember, these reports are simply the beginning. Please use the additional links and reading resources provided to help guide and support your futures-focused journey.

QUESTIONS TO FACILITATE FUTURES-THINKING

- * *What do you resonate with?*
- * *What motivates you?*
- * *What challenges your assumptions?*
- * *What do you disagree with?*
- * *What does this evoke in you?*
- * *What further questions does this spark?*
- * *What do we need to explore next?*
- * *What is your role in co-creating the futures of postsecondary education in Ontario?*

Connect with eCampusOntario

Continue the conversation with eCampusOntario as we build the second collection of Foresight Reports in 2022 and 2023. The Research and Foresight team invites readers to celebrate and create space for future-focused conversations.

Email us to keep the conversation going!
For additional guidance, questions, or to share your work, please contact: research@ecampusontario.ca.