Bay View Analytics®

ONLINE LEARNING™ CONSORTIUM

Faculty thoughts on OER and digital materials in higher education

Trends in Digital Learning and OER, an OLC webinar

Julia Seaman and Jeff Seaman, Bay View Analytics · 27 October 2026

Presentation details

1

Research background

2

Survey results

3

Panel discussion and Q&A

Research background

Who we are and what the faculty survey covers

Introduction to Bay View Analytics

Bay View Analytics offers a comprehensive suite of consulting services in survey design and statistical research. Our services build on nearly two decades of research and survey design, sampling, and statistical analysis expertise.



Julia Seaman, Ph.D.

Director of Research



Jeff Seaman, Ph.D.

Director

Over a decade of research on OER

2009

First data collected, within our online learning surveys

2014-15

First faculty question on OER awareness: 27% aware

2019-20

COVID-19: teaching moves online; no survey in 2020-21

2022-23

OER awareness peaks at 64%

2025-26

Our 15th faculty report: 3,635 faculty

Aim to understand the role of digital materials & OER

Goals of surveys

- To understand the role of OER in higher education
- To quantify perceptions and adoption of digital course materials

Respondents

- Faculty and students
- Nationally representative for geography and type of institution

Supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; grant administered by the Online Learning Consortium

Research questions



What are the current adoption and awareness of digital course materials, including OER?



How do faculty view digital and print materials, and do their choices match?



How have responses changed over time?

Survey details

2026

fielded in May and June, for the 2025-26 academic year

3,635

faculty from over 1,200 institutions

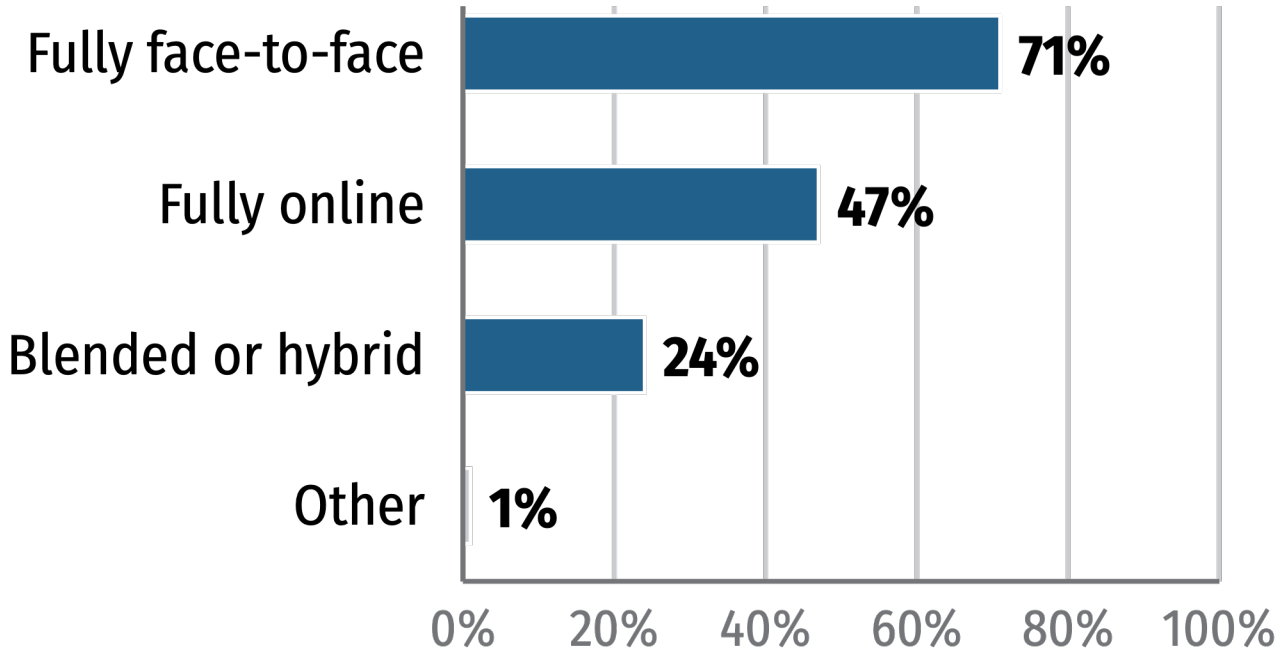
50

states, plus DC, Guam and the Virgin Islands

Survey results

What faculty use, and what they think of it

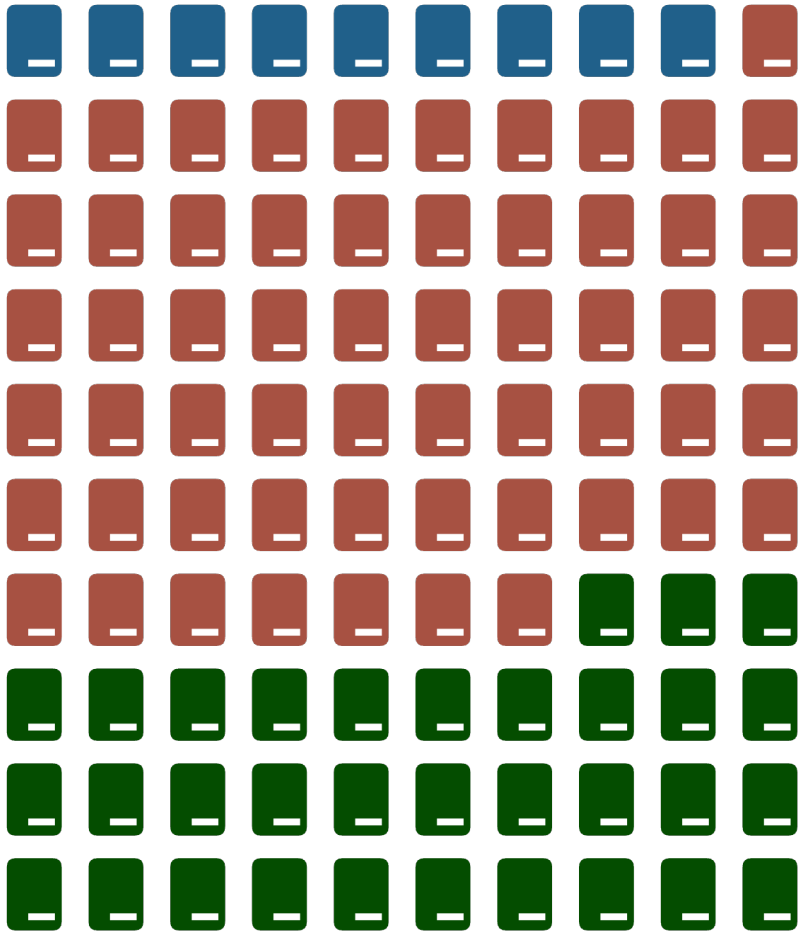
Teaching modes have settled since the pandemic



KEY FINDING

71% taught fully face-to-face, similar to the last three years. Two in three teach in one mode.

Nine in ten required textbooks come in a digital format



9% Print-only

58% Both formats

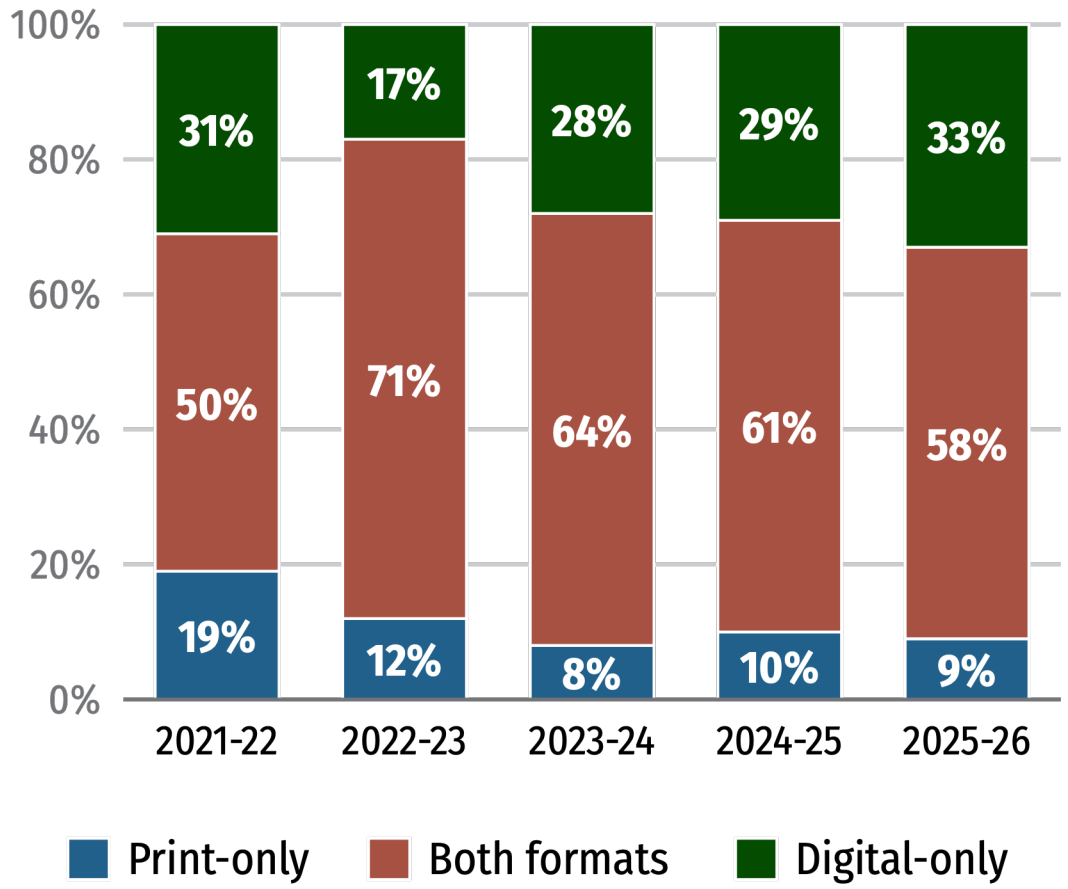
33% Digital-only

67% in print: print-only or both

91% digital: both or digital-only

Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; faculty with a required textbook, n = 2,664

Digital-only textbooks are at their highest level yet

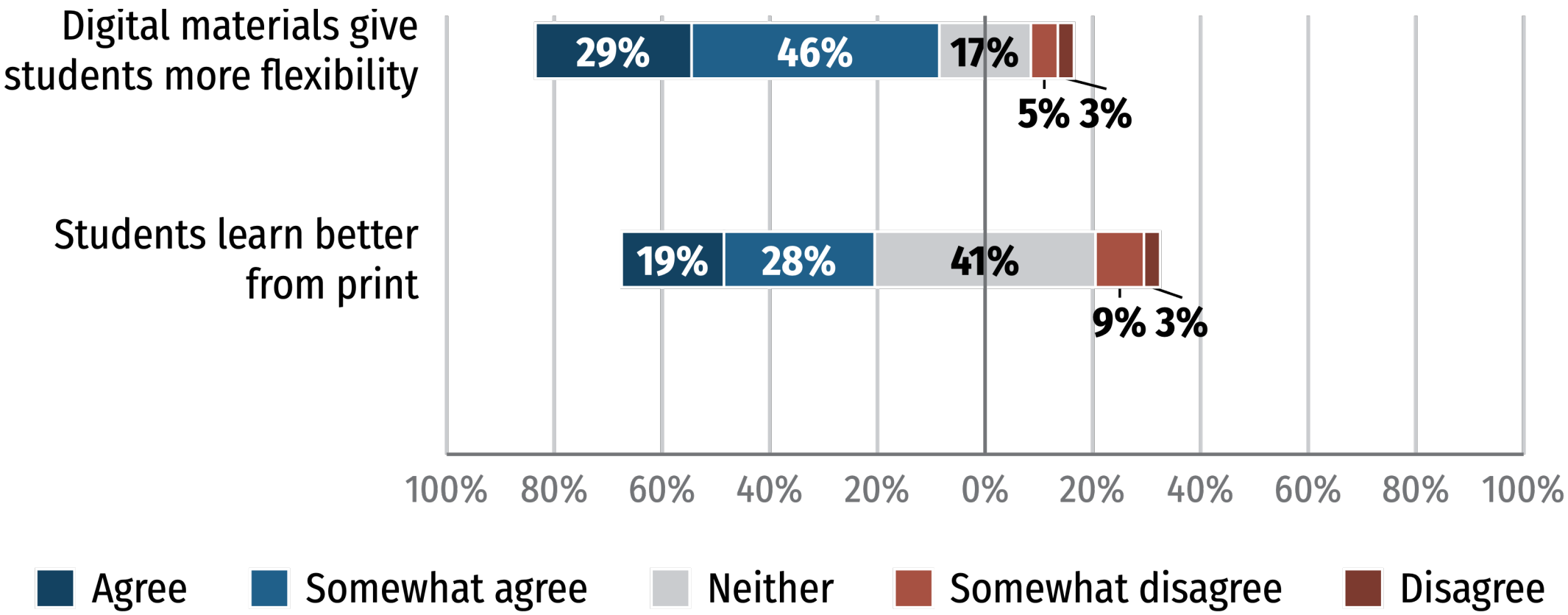


KEY FINDING

Digital-only rose 4% to 33%. Both formats keeps slipping; print-only stays at 10% or less.

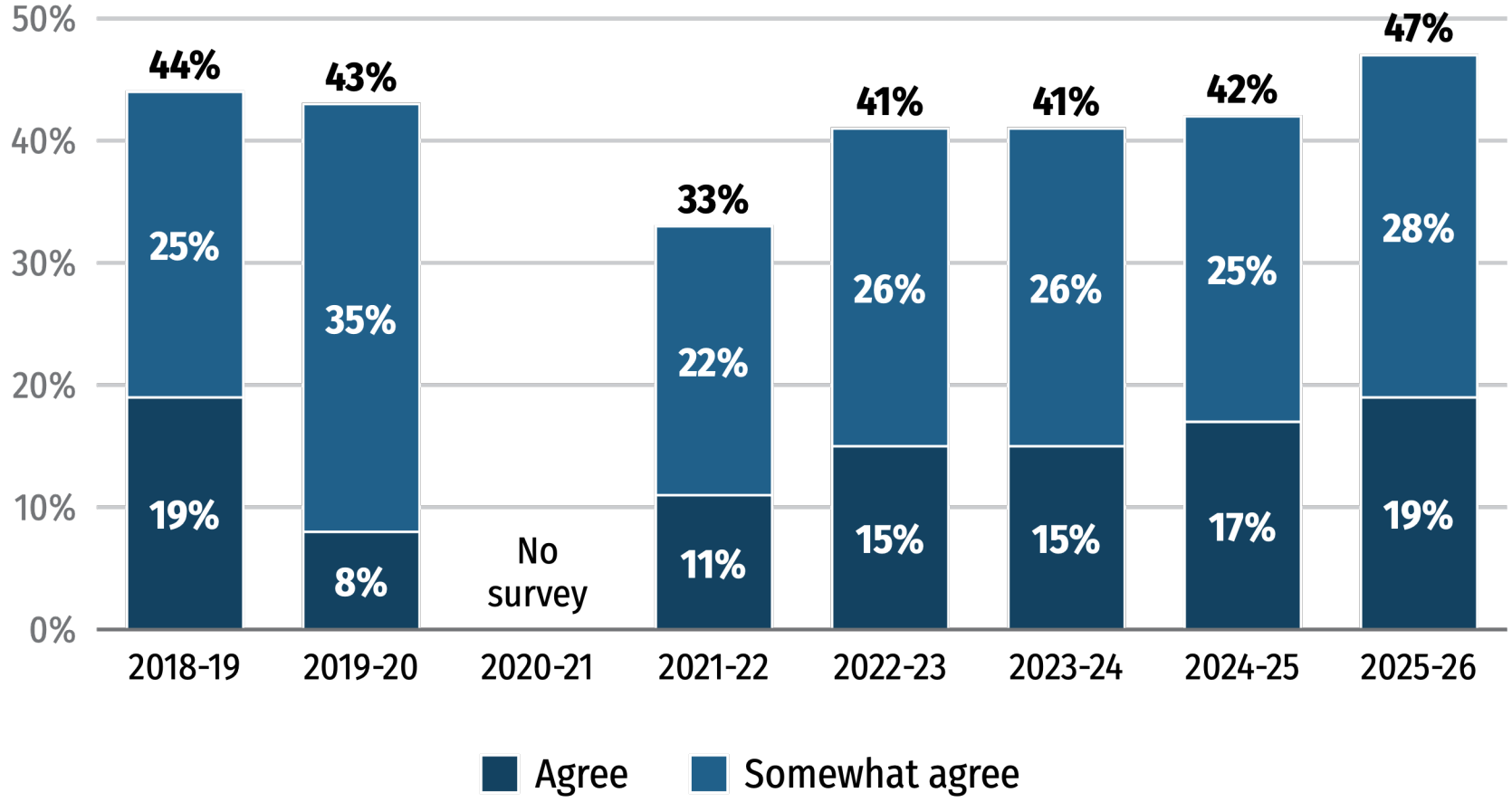
Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; n = 2,664

Faculty see benefits in both print and digital



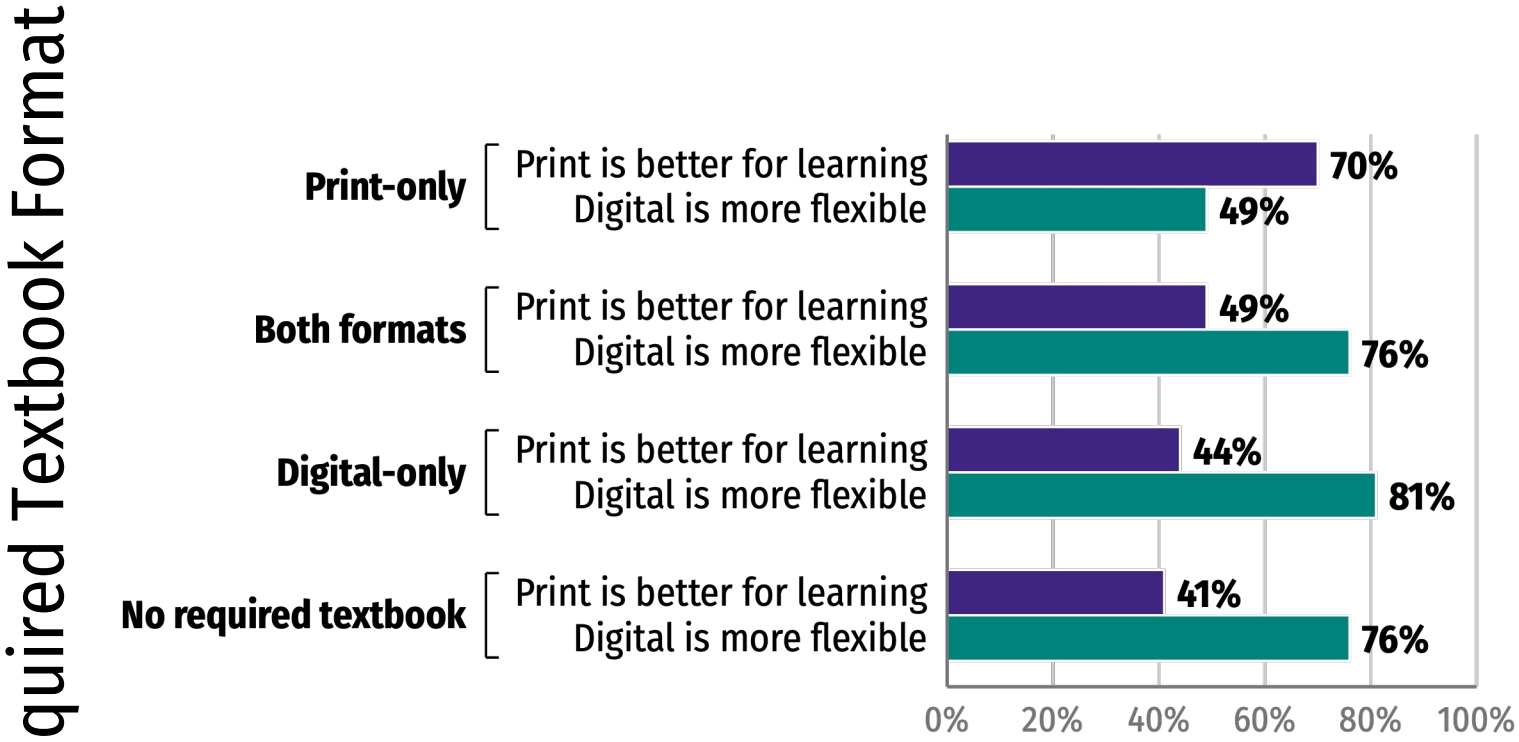
Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; n = 3,348

More faculty than ever say print is better for learning



Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; n = 3,348

Faculty preferences and behavior do align, but there are still many who show conflicting choices



KEY FINDING

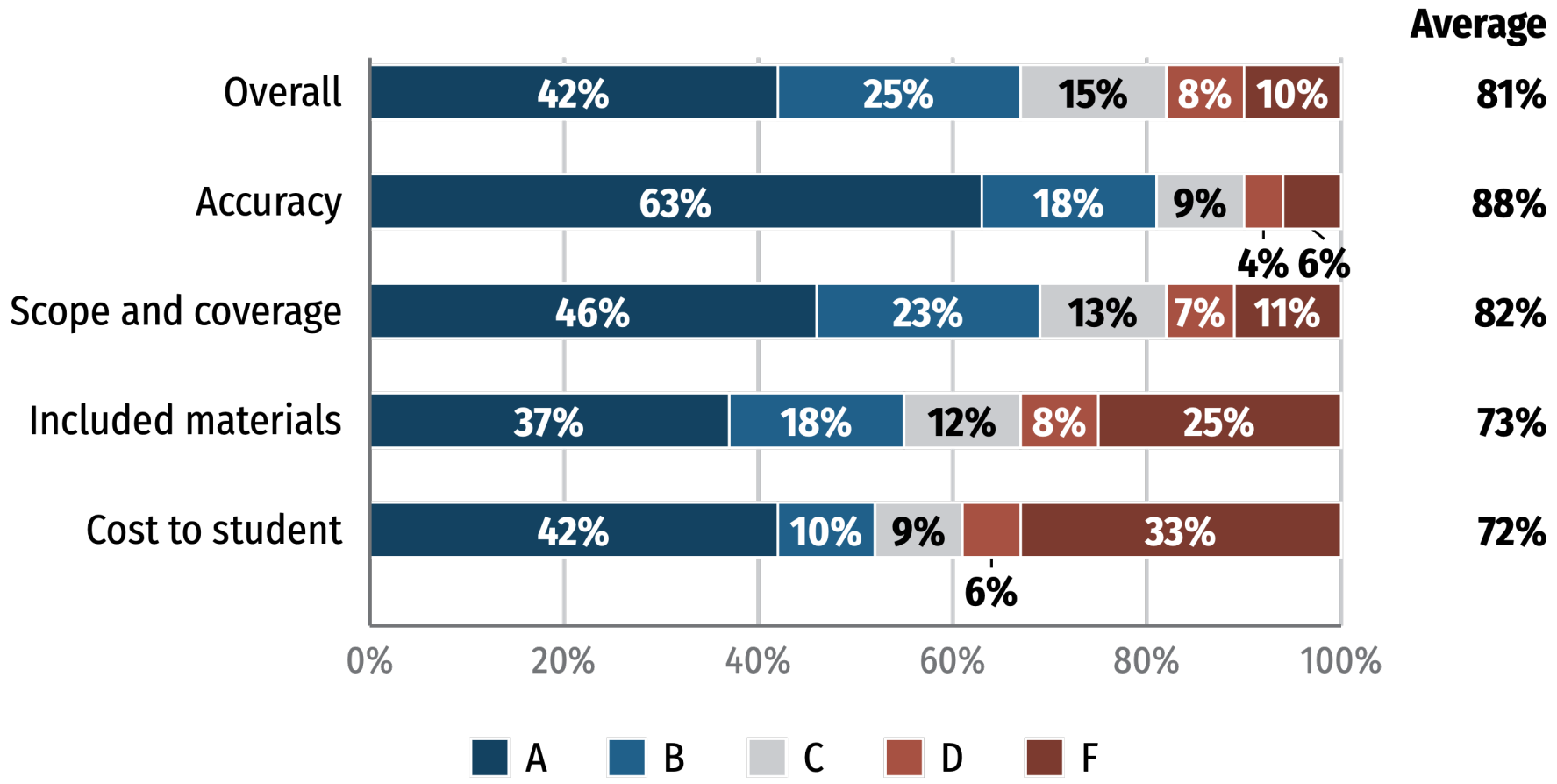
Faculty who offer only print are the most sure print is better, while digital users are more pro-digital

Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; n = 3,346

Curricula satisfaction

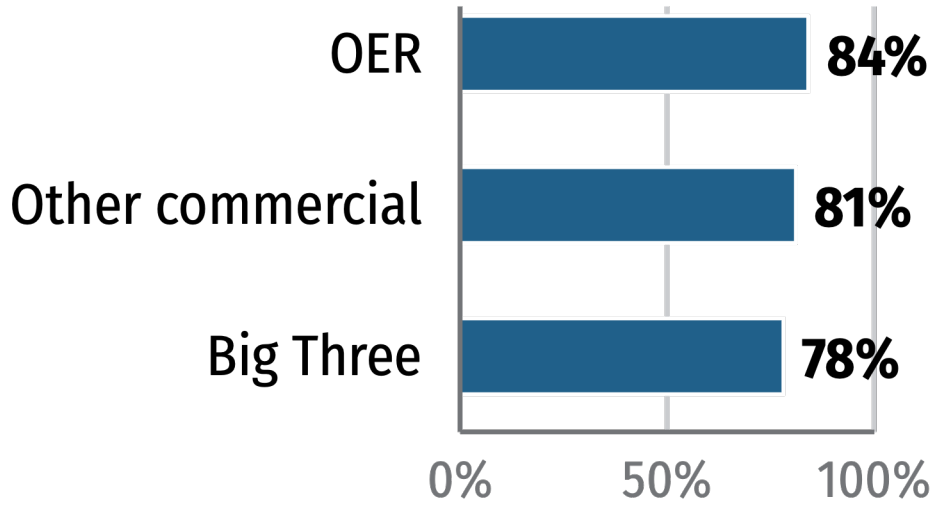
Faculty give their course materials a passing grade: 81%

Cost to students is the weakest grade

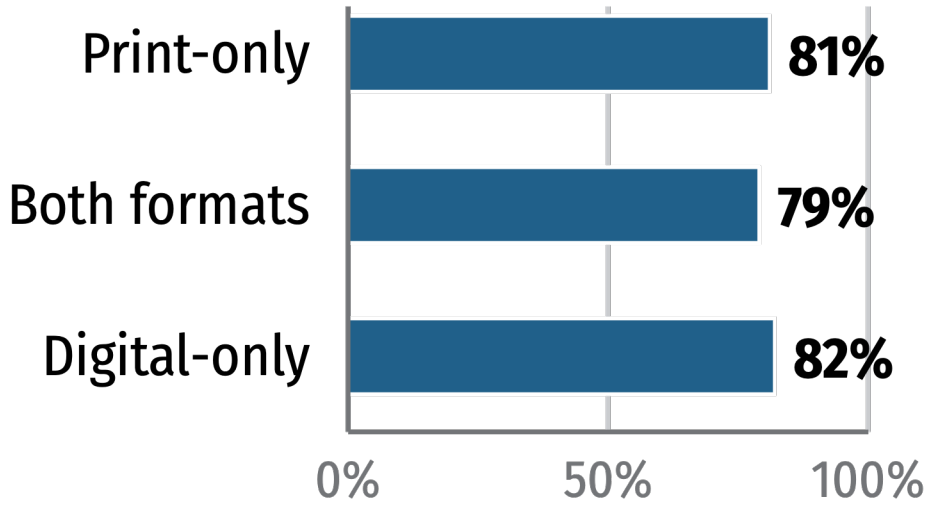


OER earns the highest rating; format makes little difference

Average rating by publisher group



Average rating by format



Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; n = 2,544 by publisher, 2,559 by format

Faculty voices on cost and curricula

"The paper book cost was over $300. The online cost was about $60. Many of my students really seem to benefit from paper copies, but this text is simply **impossible to recommend at $300**."

Full-time, natural sciences

"There just aren't a lot of texts for the course. I tried open source, but there wasn't anything at all available… So I ended up using the same old text, and it's basically **old enough to drive** at this point."

Part-time, social sciences

"Most of the students used e-texts and **will not have access** to the material or information in a year, yet it costs almost as much as a real textbook."

Full-time, engineering

"I don't really want some students using paid access and some not… Instead I try to figure out ways to 'fake it' – ways to offer something similar **at no cost** to the students."

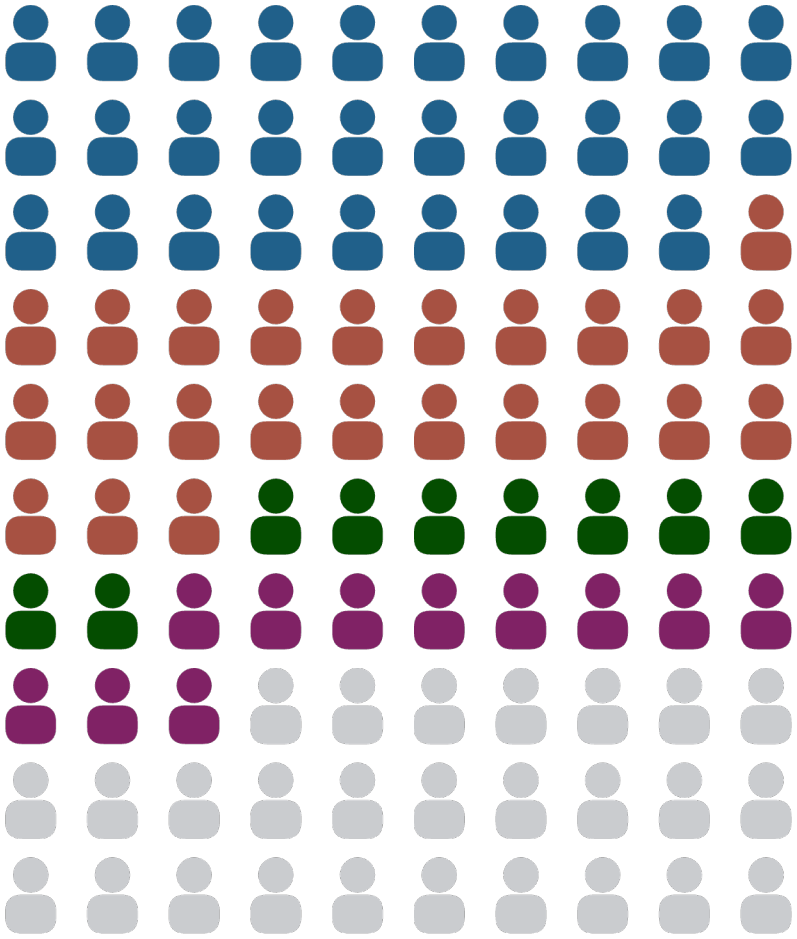
Part-time, linguistics and language



OER awareness and use

Awareness is near its peak and use is at its highest

Six in ten faculty are aware of OER



29% Very aware, know how to use them in my courses

24% Aware of OER and some of their uses

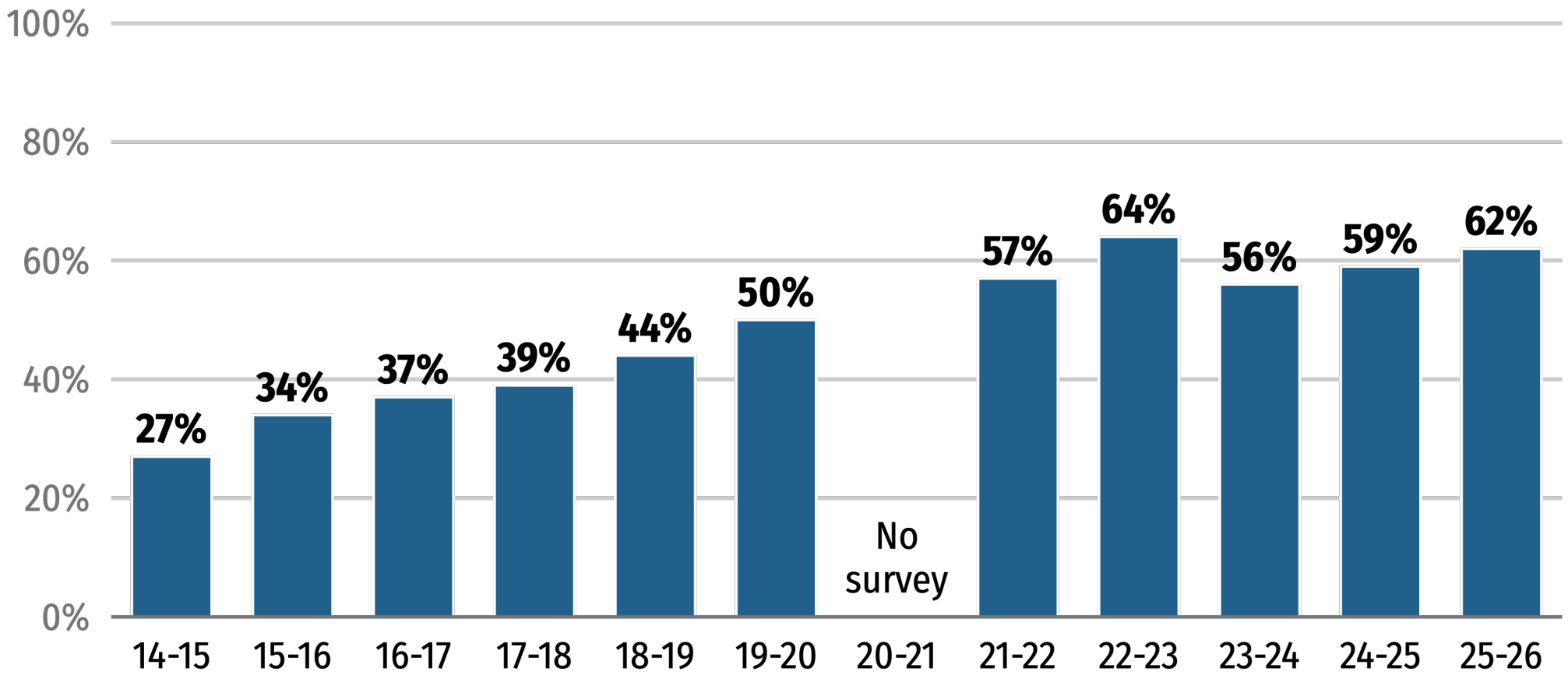
9% Somewhat aware, not sure how they can be used

11% Heard of OER, but don't know much

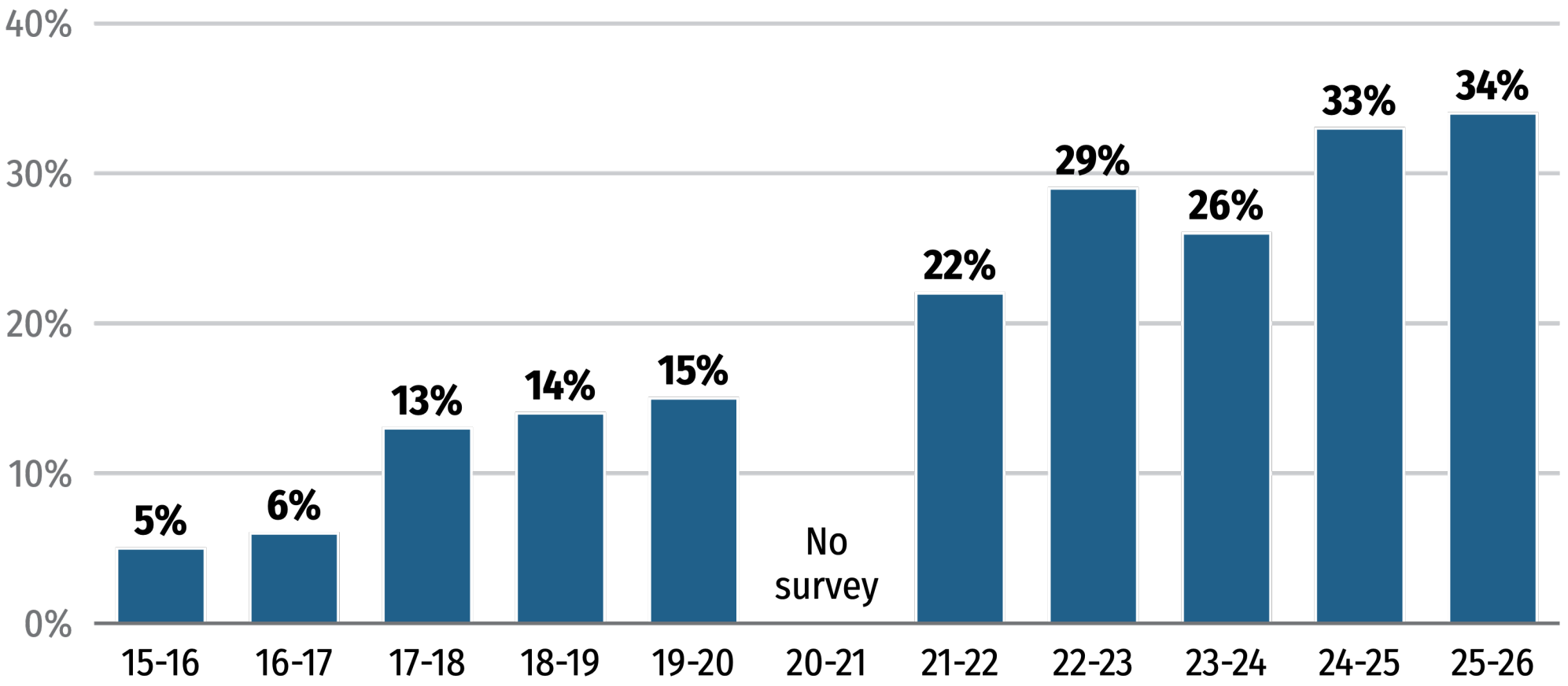
27% Not aware of OER

Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; n = 3,324

OER awareness is back near its 2022-23 peak



One in three faculty require OER, the most ever



Bay View Analytics, 2025-26 national survey of higher education faculty; n = 2,356

Faculty voices on OER

"I spend **triple the time** on my classes when I use OER… but I teach at a school where most students are low income so I use OER anyway."

Full-time, computer science

"My co-workers and admin look at me like I'm evil for asking students to purchase a $100 book. **OER is supported.**"

Full-time, philosophy

"I think OER is **incredibly positive for everyone**… I've jumped in wholeheartedly and I am now an editor for three OER books."

Full-time, linguistics and language

Where things stand in 2026

Settled. Teaching modes and most opinions on course materials have changed little in three years.

Inching toward digital. Digital-only textbooks keep growing, even as more faculty say print is better for learning.

OER gaining ground. Awareness is near its peak, required use is at its highest, and faculty rate OER above commercial publishers.

Panel discussion and Q&A



Bay View Analytics ®

Thank you

Bay View Analytics
All reports at bayviewanalytics.com/oer