Abstract: Development and Validation of the "Positives Scale" (Postsecondary Information Technology Initiative Scale) Final Report Presented to the Canadian Council on Learning

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Data on how well information and communication technology (ICT) needs of 1354 Canadian college and university students with disabilities are met on and off campus were collected using the newly developed Positives Scale (Postsecondary Information Technology Initiative Scale). The measure contains 26 items which use a 6-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) to indicate level of agreement with each of the positively worded items. It has three factor analysis derived subscales (ICTs at School Meet Student's Needs, ICTs at Home Meet Student's Needs, e-Learning ICTs Meet Student's Needs) and a total score. Reliability and validity are excellent for both English and French versions. Versions that could be completed online, on paper (printable PDF), and within a Microsoft Word document were found to be equivalent.

The measure has a variety of attractive features. Only 26 items, it is easy for learners with all types of disabilities to complete, and the simple scoring requires only a straightforward calculation of means. The measure also has the advantage of flexibility due to its face validity. Thus, the scale (a) permits item-by-item analysis to identify individual areas of perceived strength and weakness, (b) can assess modifiable aspects of ICT availability, usability, and accessibility on campus as well as (c) monitor and evaluate the effects of efforts to improve these. The scale may be used to evaluate how well an institution's ICTs meet students' needs, provide empirical data to influence ICT policy, and pinpoint areas of strength as well as areas for improvement, all from the perspective of students with diverse disabilities.

Findings on Positives Scale subscales indicate that, overall, students' ICT related needs are better met at school than at home and that their e-learning related ICT needs are met quite well. Nevertheless, the results also show substantial differences in how the ICT related needs of students with various disabilities are met in different contexts.