



IACLE
International Association
of Contact Lens Educators

The
TLC Initiative
TEACH. LEARN. CONNECT.

Survey on IACLE Activities

2020-2021

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Introduction

IACLE last conducted a comprehensive membership survey in 2018. Since that time there have been significant changes to modes of delivery of education as teaching moved online, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic that took effect from the start of 2020.

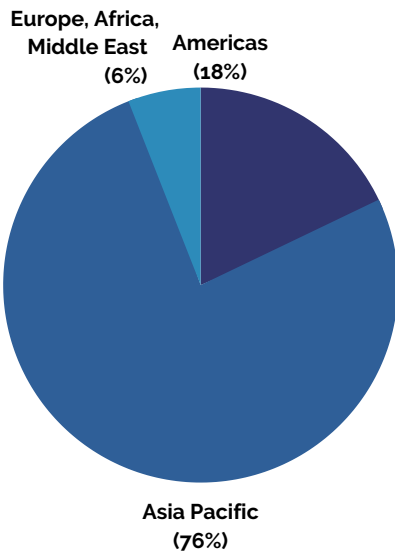
IACLE introduced ICLC2020 (April 2020), launched its teaching online platform IACLETOP (May 2020), added The Teach. Learn. Connect. Initiative (June 2020) to supplement its educational activities, and migrated resources and programs from its website to IACLETOP. Online events have included two conferences and regular national, regional and international webinars. Frequency of communication with members has increased, as has IACLE's social media presence.

This survey aims to determine IACLE members' use of / attitudes to IACLETOP resources and programs, to online events and communications. The results are compared with two other recent surveys: the 2018 IACLE Membership Survey and 2020 Impact of COVID-19 on Global Contact Lens Education Survey (in panels).

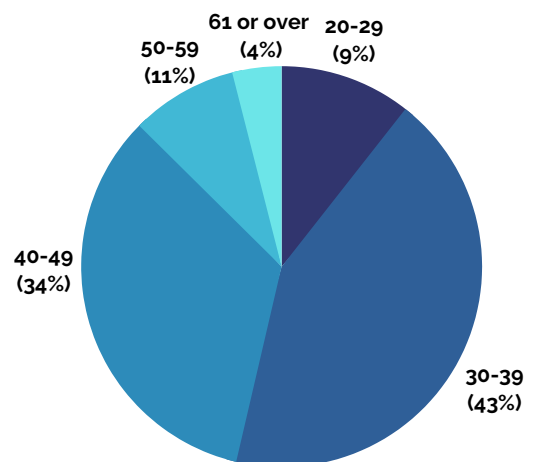
The survey and sample

The online survey was conducted via Survey Monkey and sent out by email in May 2021 to 809 IACLE members (Educator and Associate, as of May 2021). The survey was conducted in English and in Spanish, with translations provided in Chinese and Korean. Attitudinal questions were all rated on a 1-10 scale (eg 1=not at all satisfied, 10= extremely satisfied). By the deadline of mid-June, 151 responses were received from at least 25 countries, representing a response rate of 19%. Demographic data of respondents were as follows:

Respondents by region



Respondents by age



The principal area of activity was teaching (50%) followed by clinical practice (28%). A majority of respondents worked in a university / college (60%), with 23% in practice / office settings and 11% working for a contact lens manufacturer.

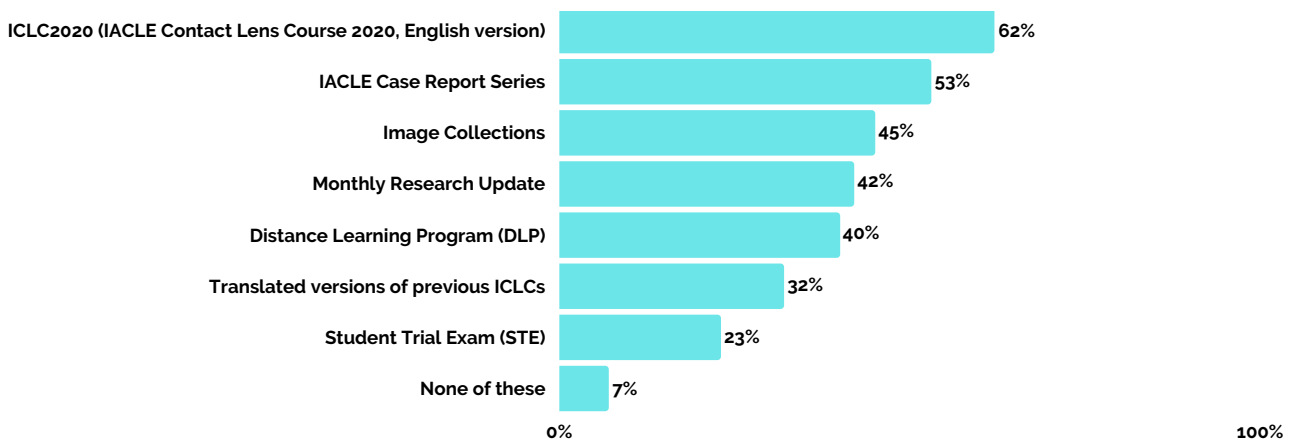
At 19%, the response rate was lower than the two previous surveys (36% in 2018 and 39% in 2020). Responses were biased towards Asia Pacific (76%) since membership data for May 2021 show 62% of members were from AP. Respondents also had a younger profile (15% aged 50 or over vs 24% in the 2018 membership survey). Area and location of activity were similar to previous surveys.

Use of / attitudes to IACLE resources and programs

ICLC2020, previous versions of ICLC and translations have all been accessed via IACLETOP since January 2021. Prior to this date the course was available via the IACLE website and, since September 2020, also via IACLETOP.

The ICLC2020 English version was the most used resource over the previous two years (62%) and the most used on IACLETOP in the past year (58%). Corresponding usage for translated versions of the ICLC were 32% and 27% respectively. IACLE Case Reports, Image Collections and Research Update were the next most used resources.

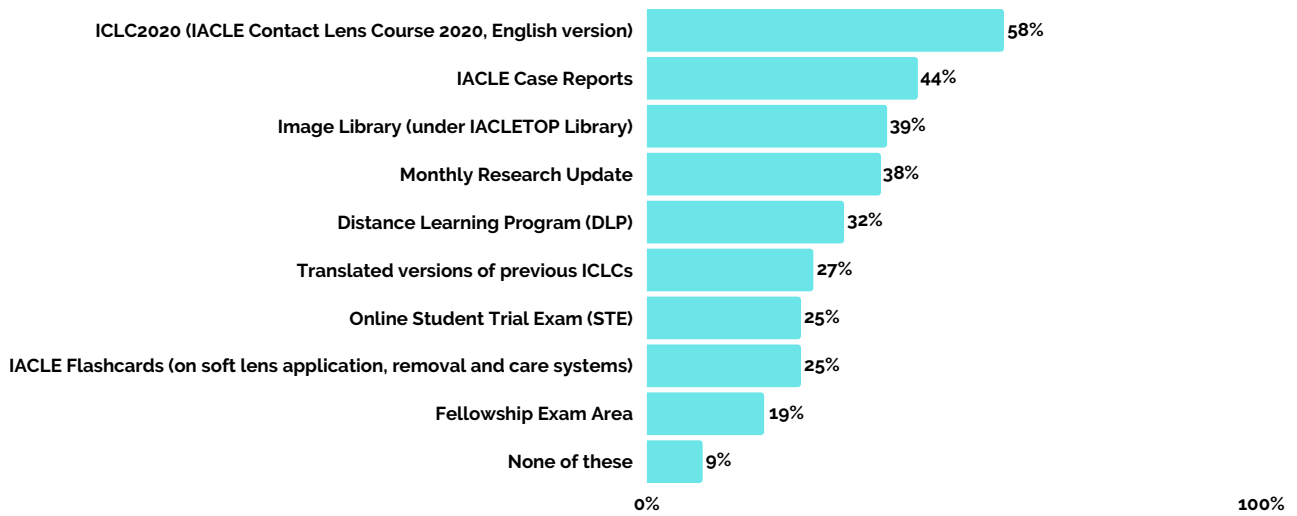
Which of these IACLE resources and programs have you used over the past two years?



Uptake of IACLETOP's additional educational resources such as IACLE Flashcards was lower in the past year (25%), although some resources such as the Fellowship Area and Distance Learning Program had only recently been added.

The Student Trial Exam and Online STE showed a similar level of uptake overall over the previous two years and via IACLETOP in the past year (23% vs 25%). Data for mid-June 2021 show that 1,385 students in 31 institutions had participated in the Online STE since its launch in July 2020. This compares with a total of 1,585 students in 42 institutions sitting the paper format STE from January – December 2019. Fees were introduced for the STE in March 2021. The effects of charging were not investigated in the survey and will be subject to review to inform policy from 2022.

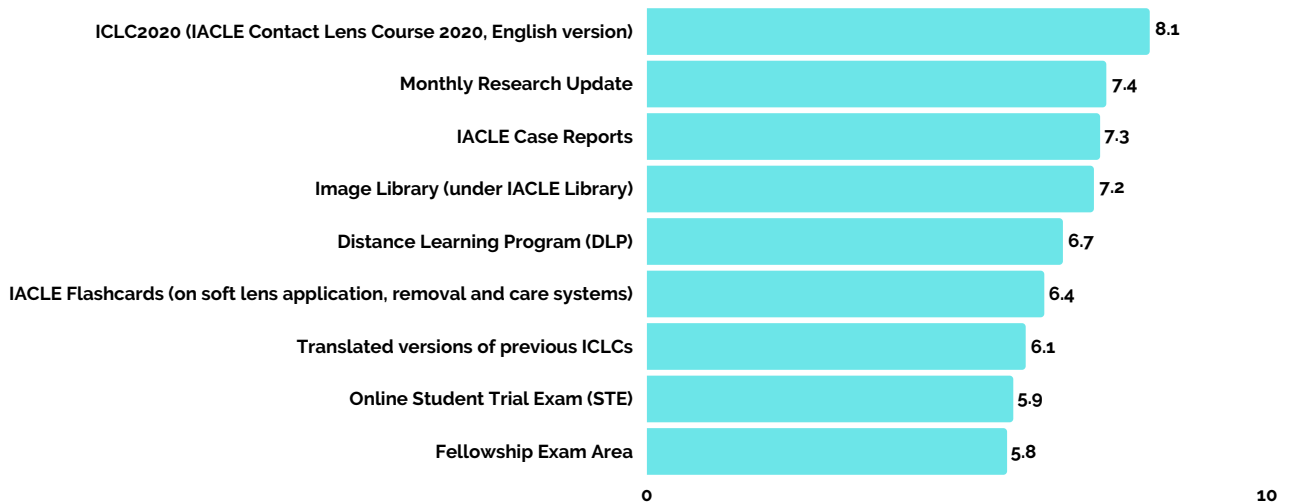
Which of these IACLE resources and programs have you used on IACLETOP over the past year?



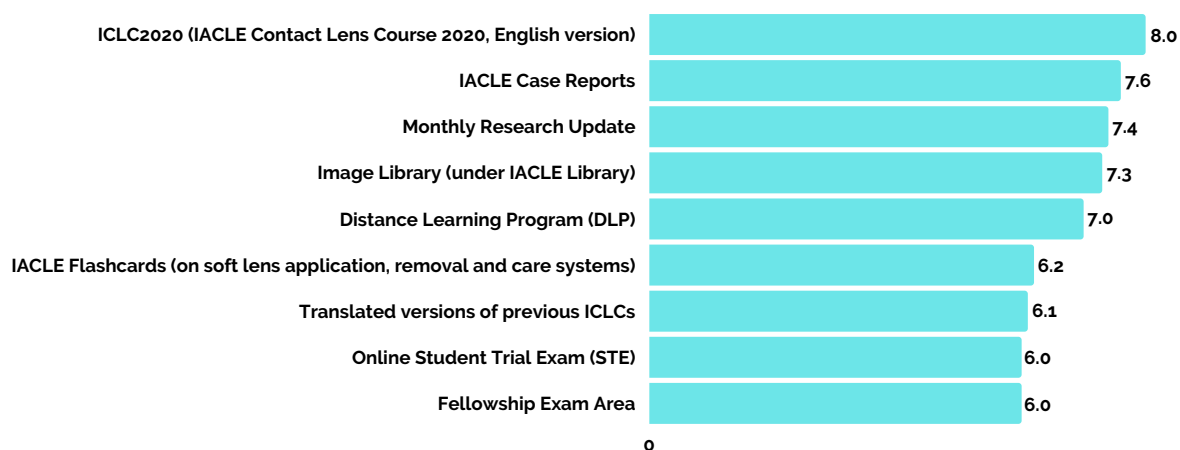
There is potential for wider engagement in resources and programs on IACLETOP and for greater use of the latest ICLC. A similar proportion had used the latest version over the past 2 years as in 2018 (62% vs 67%), and 27% were still using translated versions of previous ICLCs on IACLETOP in the past year. More had used Case Reports in the past 2 years than in 2018 (53% vs 48%). In our 2020 survey, 77% of respondents were using the ICLC for online education during the COVID pandemic.

Average ratings for satisfaction and importance to a member's job were analysed, as well as ratings in three boxes: low (1-3), mid (4-7) and high (8-10), to provide further detail. The ICLC2020 English version had the highest average ratings for satisfaction and importance. The Fellowship Exam Area was rated lowest as the Fellowship Exam was conducted 6-8 months later. ICLC2020 in English also had the highest top-box rating for satisfaction (8-10), at 79% of responses.

How satisfied are you with each of the following IACLE resources and programs you have used on IACLETOP?



How important to you in your job are these IACLE resources and programs on IACLETOP?



10

In the 2018 membership survey, average ratings for satisfaction with and importance of the latest version of ICLC (ICLC2015) were similar to the present survey (both 8.3 in 2018). Image Galleries were more highly rated for satisfaction in 2018 at 8.1. In general, there was greater satisfaction with resources other than ICLC in 2018 – when all scored 7.9 or higher – than with their equivalents in 2021. Satisfaction with equivalent programs (DLP, STE and Fellowship) was 7.6 or higher in 2018.

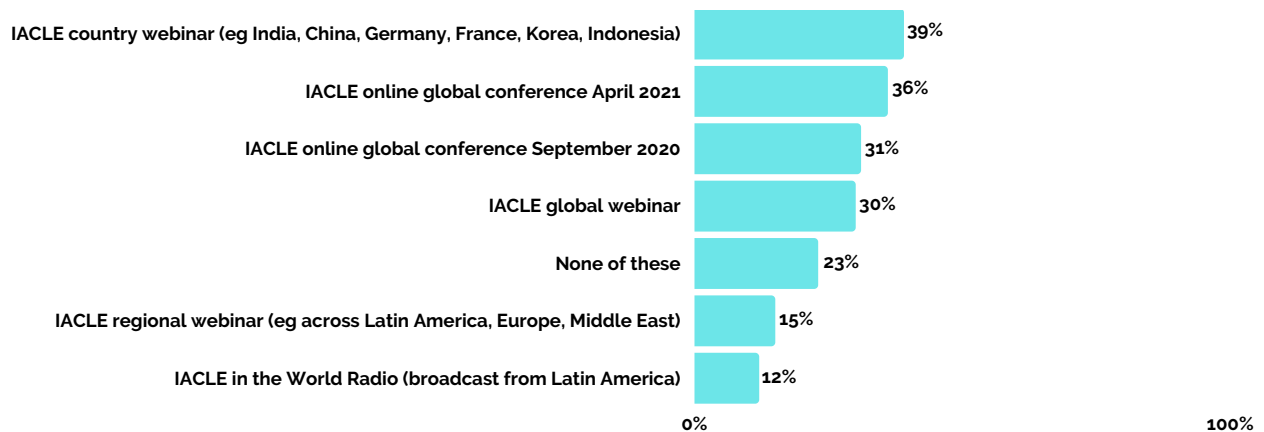
Future resources and programs

Video fitting demonstrations were top of respondents' wish lists for future resources. Narrated lectures and more clinical images were among many other suggestions. Easier access for students and ways to integrate IACLETOP with institutions' own platforms were also mentioned, along with more support on how to use IACLETOP.

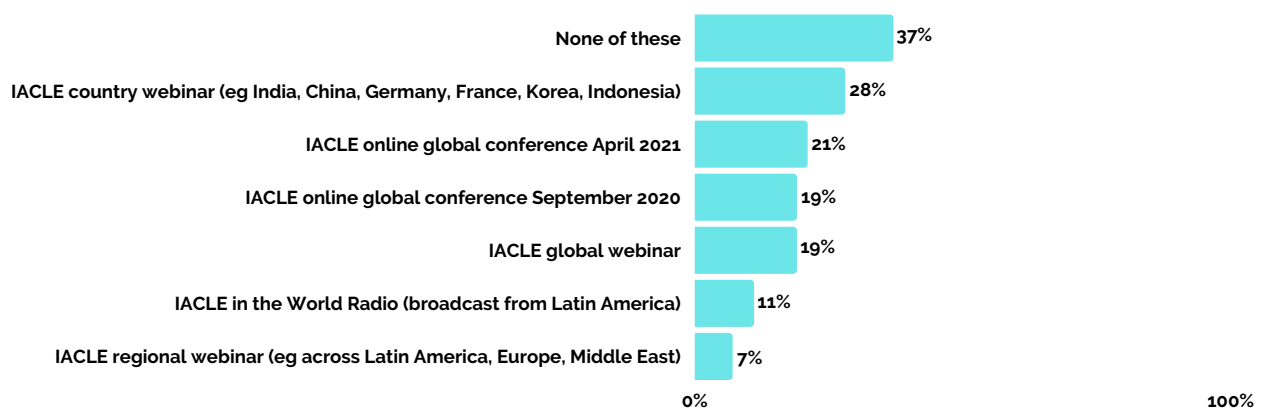
Use of / attitudes to IACLE online events

Engagement with live online events over the past year was greatest with country-based webinars. Regional webinars were less likely to have been attended and 23% of respondents had not participated in any IACLE events live online. Still more, 37%, had not watched any recordings of events on IACLETOP.

Which of these IACLE events have you participated in live online over the past year?



Which of these IACLE events have you watched recordings of on IACLETOP over the past year?



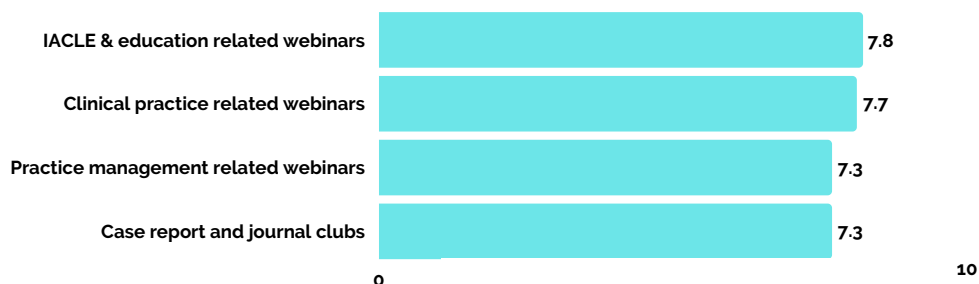
In mid-June 2021, data show that members and students had tuned in a total of 13,000 times to global, regional and country webinars during the first year of the TLC Initiative.

IACLE's Global Virtual Conference in April 2021 had the highest average rating for satisfaction and regional events were rated the lowest. IACLE and education-related events achieve the highest ratings (74% in the top box of 8-10 scores) and were also rated highest for importance to members' jobs. Case report and journal clubs are a more recent addition and are more prevalent in some countries (eg India) than others.

How satisfied are you with the following IACLE online events that you have attended?



How important to you in your job are the following types of IACLE webinars?



The 2018 membership survey only covered in-person events and found 69% of respondents had attended either Educator Meetings or Train-the-Trainer Programs in the previous 2-3 years, while 30% had attended a World Congress. Some 29% had not attended any IACLE events in 2018, compared to 23% in the present survey who had not attended any events online.

Improvements and topics for future online events

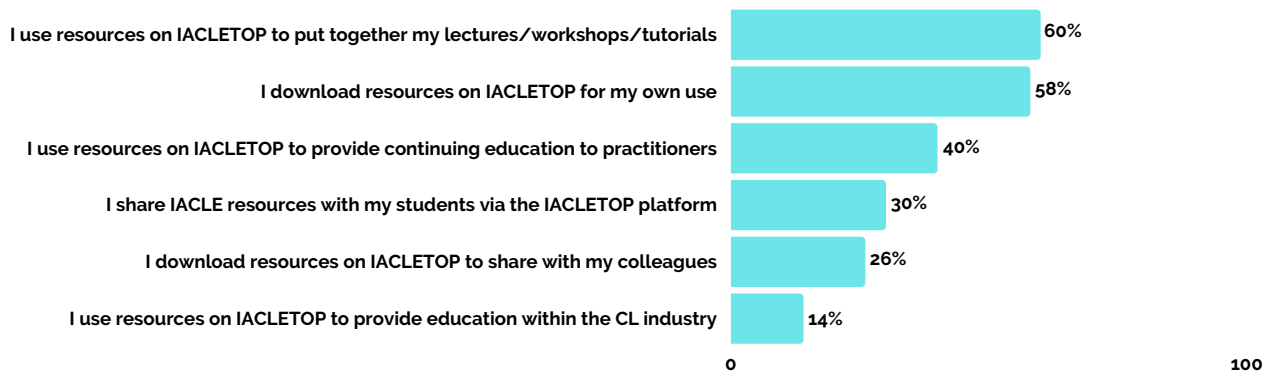
Comments on online events were generally positive. Among improvements suggested were greater interaction, easier access, shorter presentations (30 mins) and more consideration of timing, language and accessibility (eg China) issues.

Specialty contact lens fitting was the standout topic that respondents would like to see covered in future, especially orthokeratology, myopia control and scleral lenses. There was also strong support for case reports to illustrate these and other topics.

Use of / attitudes to IACLETOP

Questions about overall use of IACLETOP suggest there is still work to do to ensure that the platform is used to its full capacity, especially in sharing resources with students. By mid-June 2021, data show that a total of 303 students from eight institutions had access to the new dedicated Student Area within IACLETOP.

Which of these statements reflect your use of IACLETOP overall?

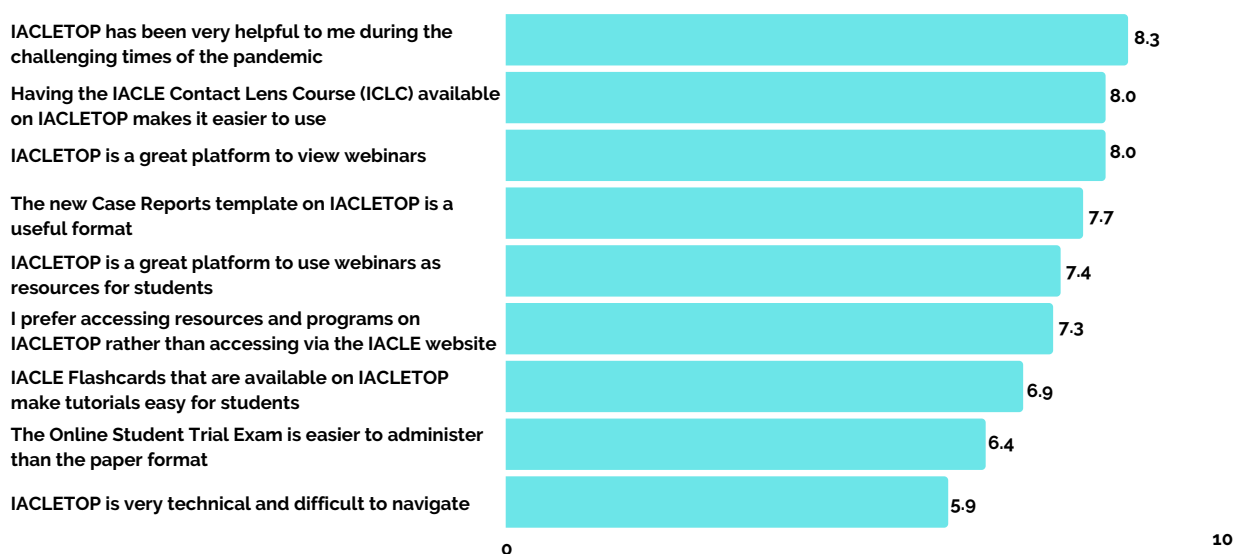


Compared to the 2018 membership survey findings, respondents were less likely to use resources on IACLETOP to prepare lectures than they had previously used IACLE resources for this purpose (60% vs 73%) and, in particular, were less likely to share resources with students (30% vs 60%). On the positive side, fewer were downloading resources to share with colleagues (26% vs 41%).

Average ratings for level of agreement with positive statements on IACLETOP were generally high (on a 1-10 scale where 1=strongly disagree and 10=strongly agree). Respondents had found the platform very helpful during the pandemic, with 75% of agreement in the top box (8-10). Attitudes to viewing webinars, to the new Case Reports and to ease of use of the ICLC on IACLETOP were also very positive by this measure.

Probing deeper into satisfaction with ease of use and navigation in general, average ratings were good but lower for ease of use with students.

Level of agreement on attitudes to IACLETOP

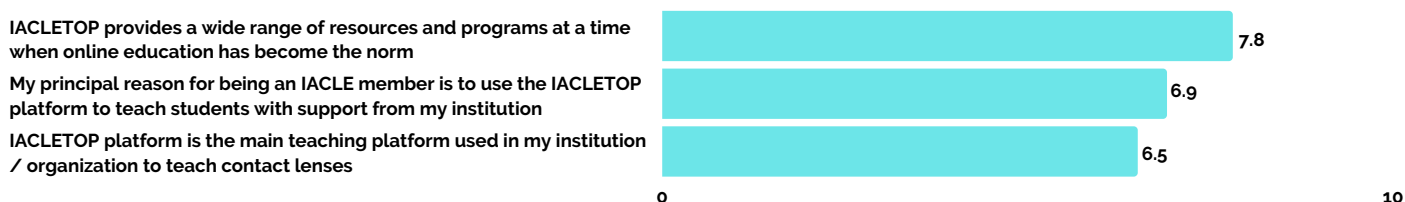


How satisfied are you with IACLETOP concerning the following features?

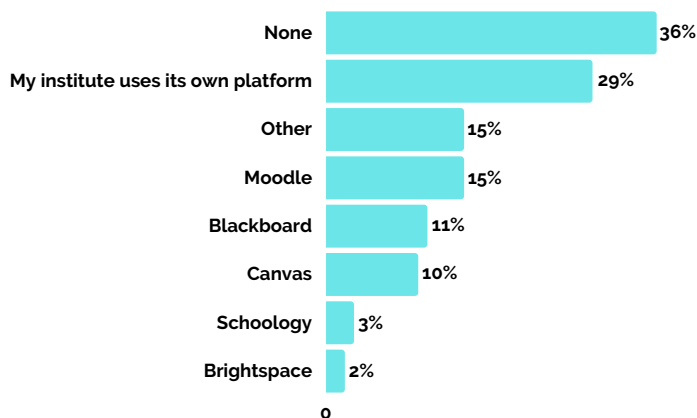


The overall value of IACLETOP to respondents' teaching was also acknowledged. Respondents appreciated the platform's wide range of resources and programs and recognised it as a membership benefit. For many, IACLETOP was the main teaching platform used, since 36% of respondents had no access to one through their institution.

Level of agreement about the value of IACLETOP in your teaching



Does your institution offer a teaching online platform / learning management system using any of the following ?



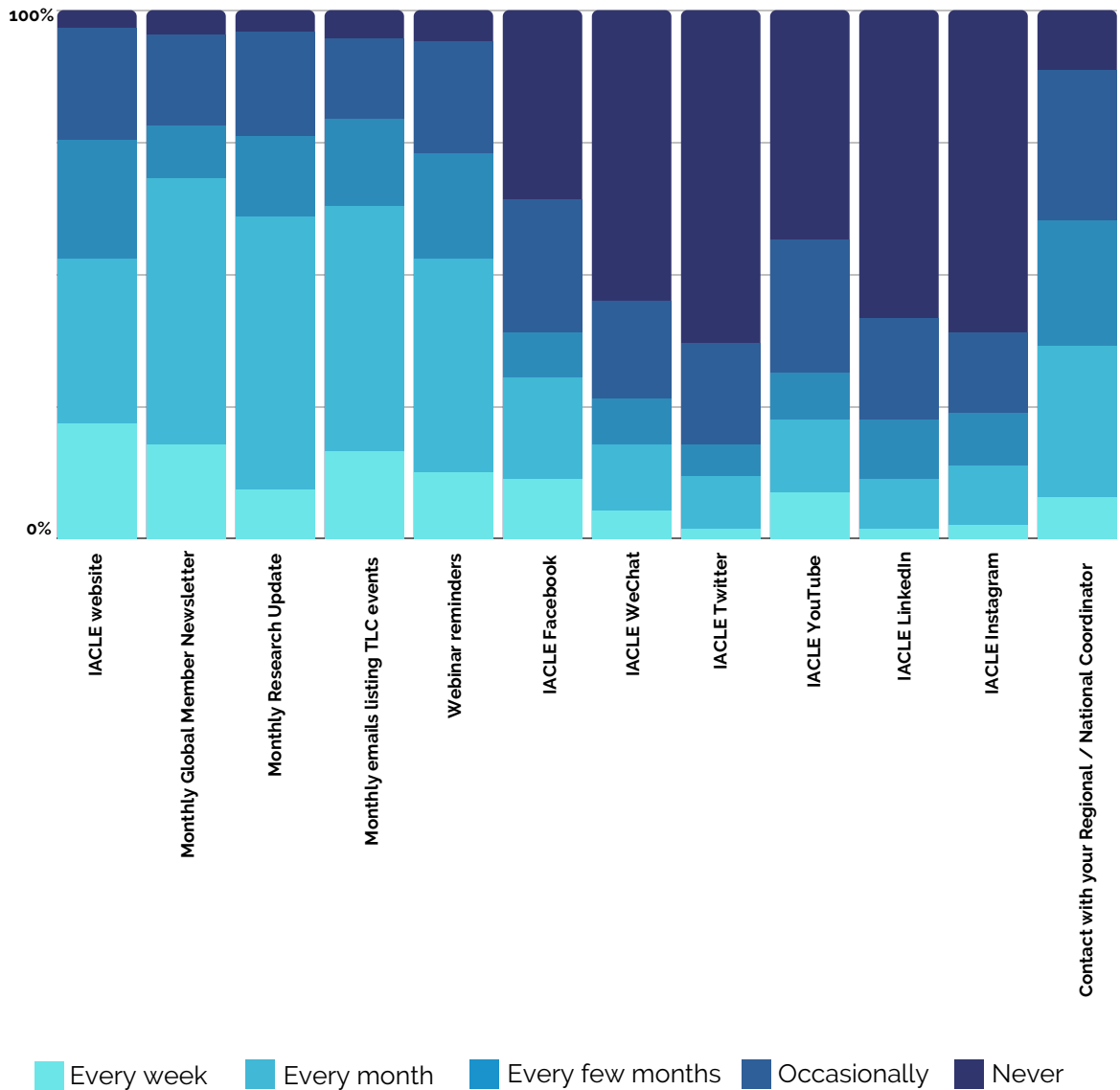
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Asked about resources for the future in our 2020 survey, 74% of respondents said they would be interested in using an IACLE online education platform delivering IACLE resources. IACLETOP was subsequently launched in May 2020 and by 31 May 2021, data show that 764 members had accessed the platform, or 94% of the membership. Total views on IACLETOP were 10,583 by this date.

Use of / attitudes to IACLE communications

Since the last full membership survey in 2019, IACLE has redesigned its website and migrated resources and programs from the site to IACLETOP. The frequency of email communications increased to include weekly COVID-19 updates in the early days of the pandemic and, from June 2020, monthly Teach. Learn. Connect. (TLC) emails and webinar reminders. Instagram and LinkedIn were added to our social media platforms during 2020 under the TLC Initiative.

How often do you access the following IACLE communications?

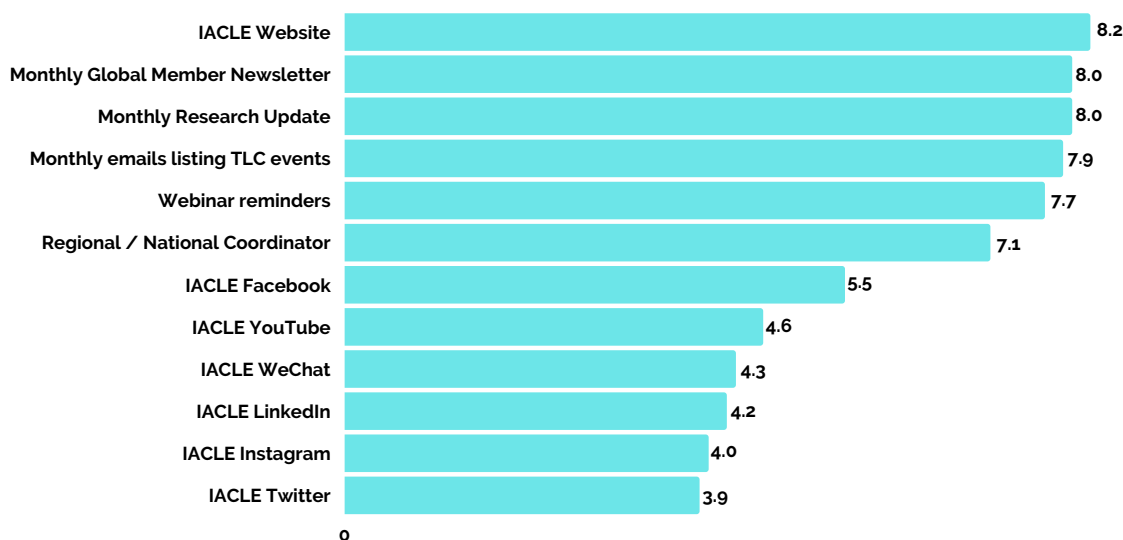


Global Member Newsletters, TLC emails and Monthly Research Updates were the most regularly accessed IACLE communications. Of social media channels, Facebook was the most used. Data show that social media activity has increased across all platforms, gaining over 4,400 followers across Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter by mid-June 2021, a year after the TLC Initiative was launched.

Some 34% of respondents were communicating with their regional / national coordinator at least every month.

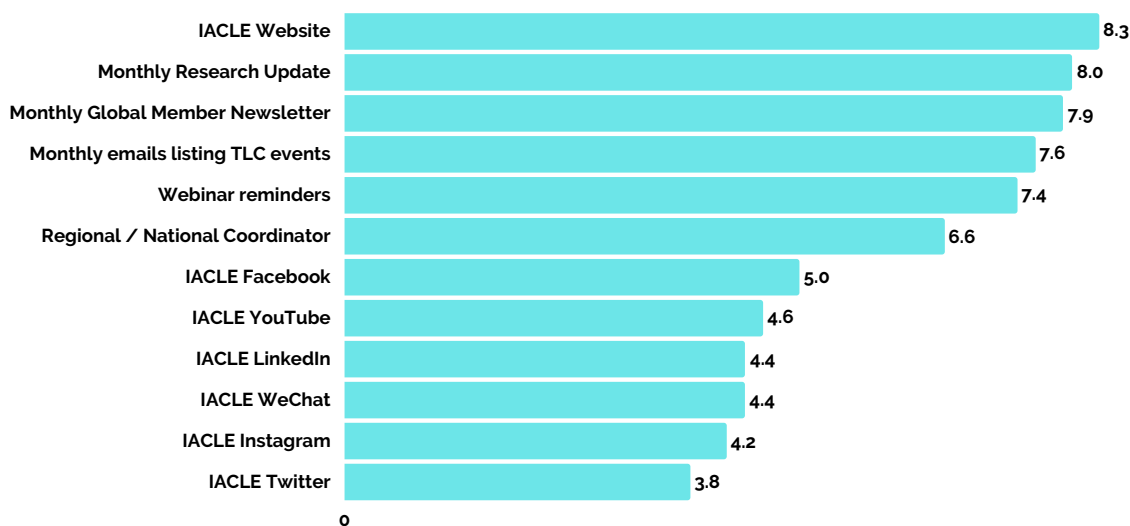
Satisfaction with the website and email communications was high and they were regarded as important to respondents' jobs. Research Update had 76% of satisfaction ratings in the top box (8-10). Contact with regional / national coordinators also performed well. Social media channels other than Facebook were rated lower but had been introduced more recently.

How satisfied are you with the following IACLE communications?



10

How important to you in your job are these IACLE communications?



10

Comparison with the 2018 membership survey shows increasing levels of access to the IACLE website (49% in 2018 vs 53% in 2021 accessed every month or week) and Global Member Newsletter (59% in 2018 vs 68% in 2021). Research Update shows more frequent access this year (61% vs 56% each month or week). Satisfaction levels with these communications were similar. In 2021, respondents were more likely to say that the frequency of communication was too often (17% vs 5%) and less likely to say that frequency was about right (75% vs 83%) than in 2018.

Overall comments

Final comments on IACLE's recent activities were almost all positive, including:

'During the pandemic IACLE has taken such a good initiative in reaching every member personally and encouraging them to participate actively in webinars. I really appreciate it.'

'Every month, I receive information from IACLE members, and the Regional Coordinator will hold an online seminar. These are very good. If time permits, I will take part in various activities organized by IACLE and browse various information from IACLE. This is a good opportunity and a rich learning platform for me.'

'IACLETOP is very good initiative taken by IACLE, very useful and user friendly, especially for Fellowship Exam preparation and image collections. But regarding STEs we have an issue. The paper format was good. Kindly check the student numbers before and after IACLETOP was introduced – I think numbers got reduced. For the Fellowship Exam it is an excellent platform rather than a paper format. Thanks to IACLE team for the excellent work.'

'Very happy and grateful for this great new tool – IACLETOP.'

'I find the topics discussed in the webinars excellent.'

'IACLE is doing an extremely commendable job in this pandemic, enabling educators to deliver their lectures smoothly. Thank you IACLE team.'

'Great engagement amid pandemic! Cheers!'

Conclusions

Conducted a year after the launch of IACLETOP and the Teach. Learn. Connect. Initiative, this survey provides IACLE with a wealth of information on the current use of and attitudes to its resources and programs, online events and communications.

Caution is needed in extrapolating the results to the full membership since the sample was biased towards the Asia Pacific region. Likewise, comparisons to previous surveys are not always helpful since bases differ and resources investigated are not always comparable.

IACLETOP has generally been well accepted and the migration of resources and programs from the website has been largely successful. Members recognize that the platform has been very helpful to them in the challenging times of the pandemic. Access to IACLETOP is seen more as a valued addition to membership benefits than as the primary reason for being a member.

The ICLC2020 remains the most used, satisfactory and important resource to members in their jobs. There is still potential for greater use of ICLC2020 through translations of this latest version. Some IACLETOP resources and programs other than ICLC – such as IACLE Case Reports, Research Update and Image Library – are more used and valued than others. Additional case reports and updated images could be helpful to maintain engagement.

Recently introduced resources might benefit from more promotion and explanation to help increase take-up. Some functionality may need to be improved – such as student access – but members are generally finding IACLETOP easy to use and navigate.

Among IACLE events, country-based webinars and educational topics are most popular. Around one in four respondents was yet to take part in a live online event and nearly four in 10 had not watched any recordings online.

Engagement with IACLE communications remains high. The importance of the website, emails and contact with regional / national coordinators should not be underestimated. Further increases to frequency of emails may not be welcome.

Finally, respondents' comments offer many useful suggestions for additional resources, programs and events that can help to inform future direction.



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