



Institutional and Systemic Barriers in Indigenous Teacher Education

2025 | D'ANTIMO, S., AYSON, G., & DEGHANSAI, N.



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A member of the Listuguj Mi'gmaq First Nation Band in Gaspé Quebec, Jonathan's talent was recognized early in childhood and further nurtured by attending the Dawson College *Fine Art Program*. He also attended the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design where he majored in printmaking and painting.

His art has been on display throughout Canada and is on permanent display at the Gallery of Fine Art in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His cultural heritage and strong focus on his art draw together a sense of colour and style distinctive in method and view.

Emphasizing aboriginal stereotypes and native art in modern culture, his art attempts to examine where native art fits into society in addition to where a native artist fits into the art world. His larger-than-life depictions of Indigenous Peoples speak to his passion for both art and his native heritage.



ABOUT INDSPIRE

Indspire is an Indigenous national registered charity that invests in the education of Indigenous People for the long-term benefit of students, their families and communities, and Canada. With the support of its funding partners, Indspire disburses financial awards, delivers programming, and provides resources with the goal of improving educational outcomes for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students. Indspire provides resources to students, educators, communities, and other stakeholders who are committed to improving success in education for Indigenous youth. Since 2019, Indspire has awarded over \$120 million through over 33,800 bursaries and scholarships to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis youth, making it the largest funder of Indigenous post-secondary education outside of the Canadian federal government.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to begin by acknowledging and thanking our *Building Brighter Futures* (BBF) program recipients who shared their experiences with us and provided valuable insight into the experiences of Indigenous students across Canada. We also wish to acknowledge Indspire's staff, funding partners, and other stakeholders, whose support has enabled us to provide thousands of bursaries, scholarships, and awards each year to students pursuing post-secondary education and training. At Indspire, it is important for us to provide space for Indigenous communities to feel seen, represented, and celebrated. The success experienced by Indigenous students, and the ways they use their education to demonstrate reciprocity in giving back to their communities, are truly inspiring and tell the story of how brighter futures can be built when we work in partnership.

Chi-Miigwetch for all of the hope and encouragement that you all bring.

RESEARCH SPONSORS



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PREFACE

Situating the Research

This research addresses the underrepresentation of Indigenous educators in Canada's K-12 education system, focusing on understanding the barriers Indigenous students face in teacher education programs. Despite the growing recognition of the need for Indigenous educators (Battiste, 2002; Berger et al., 2006; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011), challenges such as cultural disconnection, financial constraints, and lack of support persist. By exploring these barriers, this study emphasizes the role Indigenous educators have in fostering cultural understanding and creating inclusive and equitable educational structures and systems. The outcomes of this study are twofold: 1) contribute to the body of research on improving recruitment and retention of Indigenous teachers, and 2) inform policies and practices that support Indigenous students in pursuing teaching careers.

Reflexive Statement

Aanii, my name is Shawna D'Antimo. I am Anishinaabe and a member of Wikwemikong First Nation and the urban Indigenous community in Toronto (Treaty 13).

As an Indigenous researcher with Indspire and the lead researcher on this project, it is important that I share some influences that have formed the way I relate to the research that is grounded to benefit Indigenous communities.

My knowledge is derived from my experiences, family, culture, and community. I am a previous recipient of Indspire's BBF program, and I am a member of the Indigenous student community we aim to support at Indspire. I feel the intergenerational effects of colonization and harmful policies implemented through the *Indian Act* and residential school system, which have directly impacted my family and my life. I am passionate about learning new ways that we can work together to address the needs of Indigenous People.

Research is a tool for community empowerment and an opportunity to create meaningful change. It is our responsibility to support each other, as Indigenous People, and make things better for future generations.

Summary of Findings

The Indigenous Teacher Education (ITE) initiative aims to inform systemic changes that increase employment opportunities for Indigenous educators. Through the support of the Rideau Hall Foundation, in collaboration with research teams across Turtle Island, Indspire embarked on the journey to investigate barriers to accessing, progressing, and graduating through teacher education programs and transitioning into employment. As one of the research teams, Indspire's Research and Impact Unit facilitated a two-phased mixed-methods research study capturing the experiences of Indspire's BBF recipients (a program that supports Indigenous students' academic aspirations through bursaries and scholarships). In phase one, 242 recipients who are or were enrolled in an education program responded to a survey. These participants reported barriers to their program progress: Curriculum and Cultural Disconnection (66%), Financial Support Barriers (58%), Systemic Racism and Discrimination (38%), Institutional Policy Issues (34%), and Geographical Barriers (29%). Strikingly, only 10% did not report any barriers to their learning during their program. In phase two, 34 of the participants engaged in focus groups to discuss these barriers and suggest recommendations for supporting Indigenous students in education programs.

A thematic analysis was conducted, resulting in eight themes (each with four subthemes) used to develop a dual-framework *Strengthening Indigenous Teacher Education* (SITE). The overarching purpose of the framework was to structure our understanding of the interaction between a myriad of factors that impact the opportunity and experience for prospective Indigenous educators. The first framework, *Transforming Systems*, centres around reducing barriers in education systems and includes the themes: *Strengthen Indigenous Representation*, *Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in the Curriculum*, *Create Respectful and Inclusive Environments*, and *Establish Culturally Informed Policies*. The second framework, *Encouraging Growth*, focuses on improving supports for Indigenous educators and includes the themes: *Provide Accessible Pathways to Education*, *Expand Indigenous Spaces and Services*, *Enhance Financial Support and Funding*, and *Increase Availability of Student Resources*. This report offers practical recommendations for institutions to embed in their efforts to support Indigenous student success in teacher education programs, ultimately increasing the representation of Indigenous educators in Canada's K-12 school system.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Indigenous educators are essential in passing on knowledge, fostering cultural understanding, and meeting the unique needs of Indigenous students. They provide culturally relevant teachings, inspire self-empowerment, and help address systemic inequities in education (Battiste, 2002). Their role also contributes to reconciliation by bridging gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and promoting mutual understanding and respect (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015). However, Indigenous educators remain underrepresented in Canada's K-12 education system, and many Indigenous post-secondary students face significant barriers in pursuing teacher education. These barriers include limited access to resources and cultural support as well as financial instability, often rooted in systemic and institutional challenges (Kitchen et al., 2010). Indigenous students aspiring to become teachers encounter challenges such as a lack of culturally responsive curricula and financial constraints, contributing to higher rates of early attrition (Landertinger et al., 2020). There is strong evidence in research that shows that Indigenous teachers are critical to improving educational outcomes for Indigenous students by fostering cultural relevance, representation, and authenticity (Battiste, 2013).

Purpose

The purpose of the ITE initiative is to increase the representation of Indigenous educators by identifying strategies to enhance Indigenous post-secondary students' success in teacher education programs. As part of this initiative, Indspire's Research and Impact Unit conducted a two-phased, mixed-methods study to understand the barriers and required supports for Indigenous students in Canada in teacher education programs. This study aimed to provide insights to the current landscape of the recruitment and retention of Indigenous students in teacher education programs and provide actionable outcomes that promote and enhance opportunities for future Indigenous educators.

METHOD

Research Question

The overarching research question was twofold: 1) what institutional and systemic barriers impact Indigenous students pursuing a teaching career, and 2) what mechanisms and systems are required to support the education of Indigenous students and facilitate the recruitment and transition of Indigenous educators into Canada's K-12 education system?

Methodology

The research used a culturally informed method to better understand the experiences of Indigenous students in teacher education programs in Canada, centring their voices and perspectives. The approach was aligned to the *Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession* (OCAP) principles, ensuring that the research was driven by Indigenous researchers, grounded in the experiences of Indigenous Peoples and for the benefit of Indigenous communities. Findings were shared with the participants to ensure their voices were accurately represented. The facilitation of focus groups allowed participants to drive the conversation, be central to openly discussing barriers to program completion, and share recommendations for success.

Research Design

The first phase of the two-phased process included a survey to capture insights from a broader cohort of Indigenous students ($n=242$) currently or previously enrolled in education programs. The second phase consisted of focus groups with a sub-set of those who completed the survey ($n=34$) to further unpack their experiences and identify areas of support that can improve the landscape for Indigenous students. This approach emphasized conversation and storytelling to ensure culturally relevant methods were centred in the research process.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through Indspire's BBF database which provides funding to Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education to help alleviate financial barriers. An interest survey was sent to all 2020–2024 student cohorts who received funding from BBF and who were in education or education and teaching programs. Two hundred and forty-two individuals expressed interest in participating and received an intake survey, which informed them of the project details and collected information on students' experiences, including the barriers they faced in their education program (e.g., curriculum and cultural disconnection, financial support barriers, inadequate student support, and systemic racial discrimination).

METHOD

Participants

Of the 242 participants who filled out the survey, 34 were selected to participate in the focus groups. Non-probability sampling was used to ensure representation across various cohorts including gender, Indigenous identity, first-generation students, and education/employment status (please refer to Appendix A, [p. 38](#), for a detailed demographic distribution of the participants). The focus group participants included students who completed a teacher education program (59%), were currently enrolled in a program (32%), switched programs (15%), or left an education program early (3%). Of those who graduated, 38% were currently employed as educators. The focus group research involved First Nations (62%), Métis (29%), and Inuit (9%) participants to reflect the diversity of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. Broad representation was critical to understanding individual differences and experiences within teacher education programs.

Data Collection

Two hundred forty-two participants responded to the expression of interest that was emailed by the research team. The email contained a SurveyMonkey link providing online access to an ethics form, project outline, initial intake form, and initial survey questions (Phase 1). The lead researcher then contacted those selected to participate in the focus groups (Phase 2). There were five focus groups, and each consisted of five to nine participants (34 participants total). The online group sessions which were remotely facilitated via Microsoft Teams lasted approximately 90 minutes. With consent of participants, audio from sessions was recorded.

Data Analysis

Focus group sessions were transcribed using Otter AI, then thematic analysis of the transcripts identified emerging themes and subthemes. First, focus group notes and transcripts were reviewed to gain deeper familiarity with the data. This was followed by coding that combined deductive and inductive methods. Codes were synthesized into themes and subthemes, which were iteratively refined and organized into two overarching frameworks, forming the dual-framework *SITE* (see Figure 1, [p. 11](#)).

In alignment with OCAP principles and ensuring Indigenous voices remained central to this research, measures were taken to include every participant's voice throughout the report. Therefore, at least one quote is highlighted from each participant throughout the text.

Ethical Considerations

This project adhered to ethical guidelines to ensure the protection and respect of all participants. Informed consent was obtained through a consent form provided at the beginning of the intake survey, outlining the study's purpose, participation requirements, and how data would be used. Participation was entirely voluntary, with participants able to withdraw at any point without consequences.

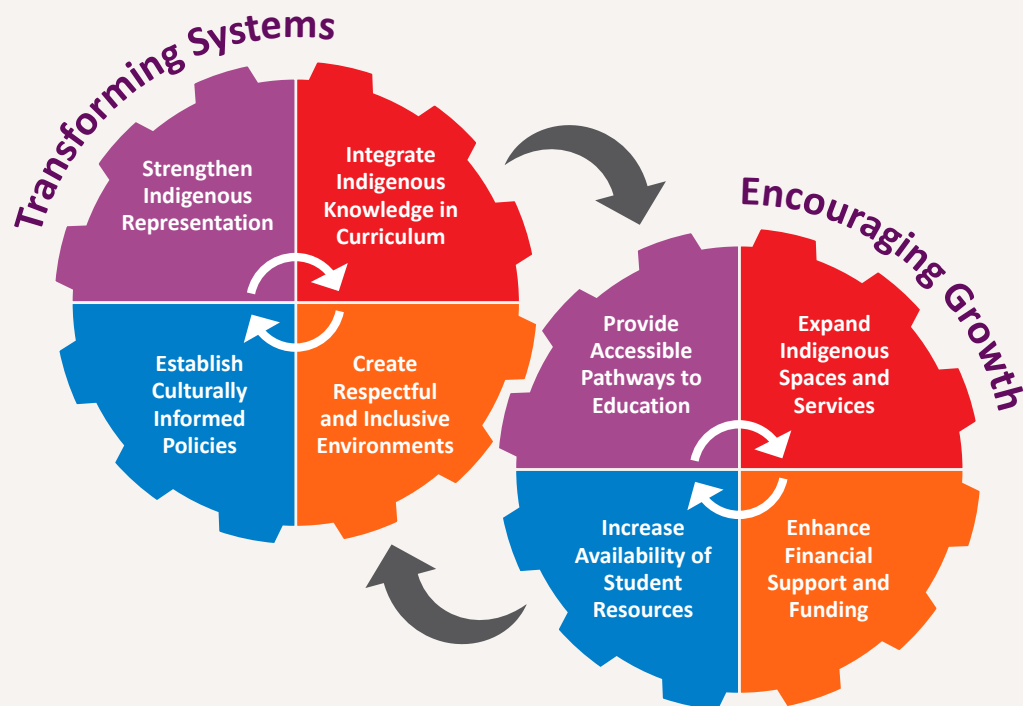
The study posed minimal risks and aimed to provide strategies that would benefit and improve supports for Indigenous students in teacher education programs. To facilitate a safe space for sharing, participants were reminded to respect the privacy of others in the focus groups. To maintain confidentiality, participant names were replaced with pseudonyms and identifying details were removed from quotes.

RESULTS

Overview

The first section of the results provides an overview of the barriers identified through the intake survey, along with a discussion of the findings' relation to the existing literature. The second section uncovers key findings from a thematic analysis of the focus group discussions. Themes (and their corresponding subthemes) were sorted into one of the two frameworks to develop the dual-framework *SITE* (Figure 1). Using the themes and subthemes, this report discusses how this framework can be mobilized into the existing system to address barriers and challenges for Indigenous students in education programs. Within *SITE*, the *Transforming Systems* framework centres around reducing barriers in education systems and the four themes within this are *Strengthen Indigenous Representation*, *Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in Curriculum*, *Create Respectful and Inclusive Environments*, and *Establish Culturally Informed Policies*. The *Encouraging Growth* framework focuses on improving supports for Indigenous educators and its four themes are *Provide Accessible Pathways to Education*, *Expand Indigenous Spaces and Services*, *Enhance Financial Support and Funding*, and *Increase Availability of Student Resources*. It is important to note that, in *SITE*, many themes interconnect. This dual-framework recognizes the important balance between identifying key areas that need transformation while resourcing other areas for growth.

Figure 1: Representation of the Themes Within the Dual-framework
Strengthening Indigenous Teacher Education (SITE)

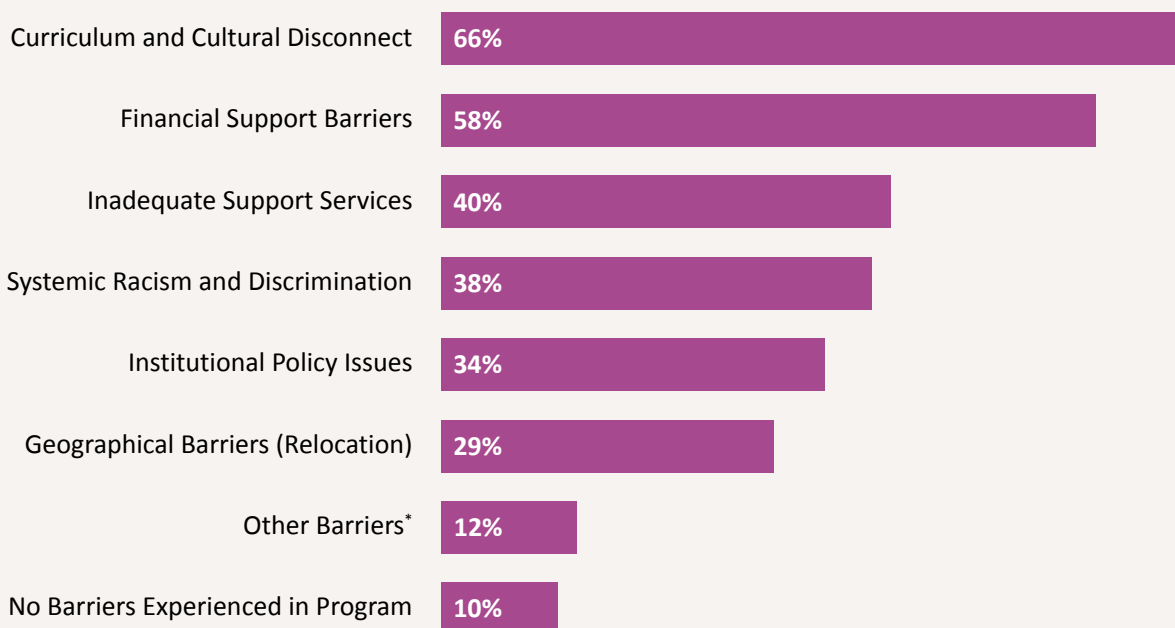


RESULTS

1. Identifying Barriers

Findings from the intake survey (Figure 2) revealed that the most prevalent barriers participants encountered were Curriculum and Cultural Disconnection (66%) and Financial Support Challenges (58%). These were followed by Inadequate Support Services (40%), Systemic Racism and Discrimination (38%), Institutional Policy Issues (34%), and Geographical Obstacles (29%). Additionally, 12% of respondents mentioned other barriers, including the lack of Indigenous representation and understanding. A smaller group (10%) reported experiencing no barriers in their program. Each barrier is discussed below with considerations to relevant literature insights.

Figure 2: Barriers Experienced in Teacher Education Programs (n=242)



* Other barriers mentioned include the lack of Indigenous representation and understanding.

1.1 Curriculum and Cultural Disconnection

Indigenous students often face barriers due to a lack of authentic representation of their knowledge, histories, and perspectives in educational curricula, which can lead to feelings of exclusion and cultural disconnect (Berger et al., 2006). While the integration of Indigenous content into the curriculum is increasing, many approaches remain superficial, perpetuating tokenism rather than fostering meaningful engagement (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018). Additionally, a lack of traditional learning methods (land-based or experiential methods) in post-secondary education further exacerbates feelings of cultural disconnect. Non-Indigenous educators often lack the training to confidently incorporate Indigenous content, further compounding the negative impacts on Indigenous students (Williams & Morris, 2022).

RESULTS

1.2 Financial Support Barriers

Indigenous students face significant financial responsibilities, including extended family obligations, and the necessity to relocate from their rural home communities to urban areas for educational and vocational opportunities (Bingham et al., 2014; Bonnycastle & Prentice, 2011; Erwin & Muzzin, 2015). These commitments often exacerbate challenges navigating school-related expenses such as funding for tuition, living expenses, and essential resources such as textbooks and technology. Complex funding processes often delay or prevent access to support, and many students, particularly first-generation learners, are unaware of available financial aid options like bursaries or scholarships (Timmons, 2013). Moreover, disparities in funding from the government and the rising cost of education further increase these challenges.

1.3 Inadequate Support Services

Support services often fail to meet the academic, cultural, and personal needs of Indigenous students. The lack of dedicated spaces for cultural connection and access to Indigenous mentors and Elders are often reported as barriers, while mental health and education counsellors' knowledge of Indigenous ways has been reported to further impact the quality of support services (Gallop & Bastien, 2016; Oloo, 2007; Timmons, 2013). Resources such as flexible childcare, transportation assistance, and culturally relevant mental health services are critical to the well-being and success of Indigenous students (Herkimer, 2021). Additionally, limited visibility of Indigenous culture and poor communication from school administrations about existing services leave many Indigenous students unaware of critical support options, contributing to feelings of isolation and negatively impacting academic success (Oloo, 2007; Timmons, 2013).

1.4 Systemic Racism and Discrimination

Indigenous students often face systemic racism and discrimination within educational institutions, including overt incidents of racism and subtle biases embedded in policies and practices (Bonnycastle & Prentice, 2011; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Parent, 2017). These barriers manifest in areas such as hiring processes, curriculum design, and inadequate reporting mechanisms for addressing discrimination. The absence of accountability in responding to these incidents deepens feelings of marginalization (Herkimer, 2021). Insufficient cultural safety and anti-racism training for staff and faculty also perpetuates ignorance and hesitancy toward integrating Indigenous perspectives (Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

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1.5 Institutional Policy Issues

Indigenous students face significant challenges due to institutional policies that fail to accommodate their unique cultural, academic, and personal needs. These policies often lack flexibility in areas such as attendance, assessment, and scheduling, which are crucial for students balancing cultural responsibilities and family obligations (Berger et al., 2006). The exclusion of Indigenous voices in policy-making processes intensifies the disconnect between institutional practices and the lived realities of Indigenous students (Erwin & Muzzin, 2015; Gaudry & Lorenz, 2018).

1.6 Geographical Barriers

Indigenous students face significant geographical barriers, particularly when relocating from rural or remote communities to urban areas to access educational opportunities. Moving to a new community is challenging for many and can create financial strain and stress from travel and accommodation costs, feelings of isolation, and difficulties in adjusting to urban environments (Bingham et al., 2014; Oloo, 2007; Rodon et al., 2016; Timmons, 2013). Additionally, cultural disconnection, feeling homesick, and lack of support systems in a new place, can affect a student's mental well-being and academic success (Erwin et al., 2015; Herzinger, 2021).

1.7 Other Barriers

Indigenous students reported that there was a lack of cultural understanding within educational environments and they often felt pressured to know everything about Indigenous People because they are Indigenous. Within the teacher education programs, it was also identified that there was a lack of knowledge on the distinctness of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives. Personal challenges, lack of representation in education leadership roles, and family obligations were also seen by participants as barriers to education.

1.8 No Barriers Experienced in the Program

Strong institutional supports, inclusive policies, and access to culturally relevant resources in schools played a crucial role for Indigenous students who reported minimal or no barriers in their experiences in education programs. Support networks, such as Indigenous student groups or mentors, helped students navigate academic challenges while maintaining cultural connections. Fostering an environment where Indigenous students can thrive, is a valuable approach for institutions that offer tailored programs, financial assistance, and culturally competent staff.

2. Strengthening Indigenous Teacher Education: A Dual-framework

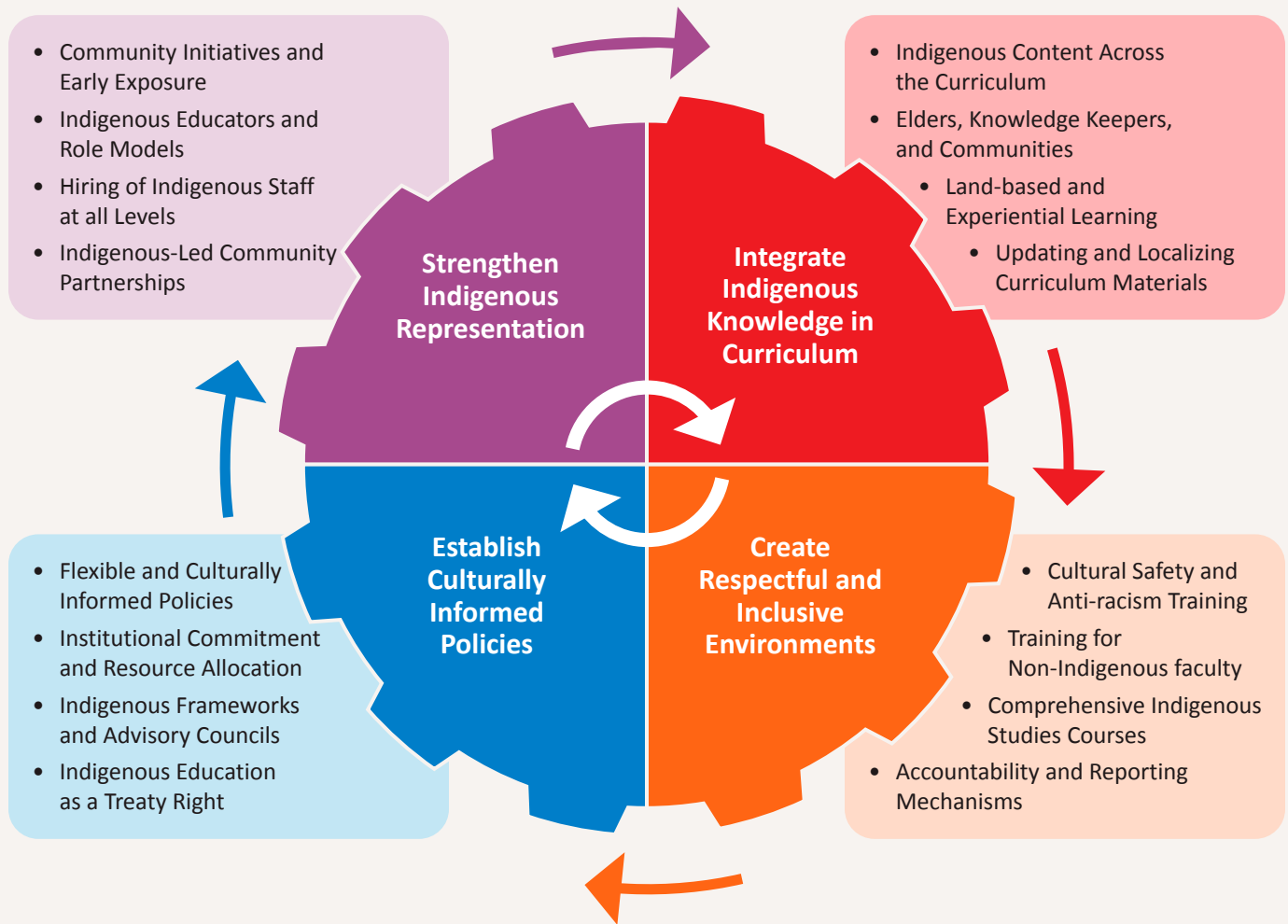
Discussions from the focus groups were thematically analyzed and findings were organized into two frameworks: *Transforming Systems* and *Encouraging Growth*, which comprise the dual-framework *SITE*. The *Transforming Systems* framework identifies the need to improve inclusivity and reduce barriers for Indigenous students. Findings were grouped into four key themes: *Strengthening Indigenous Representation*, *Integrating Indigenous Knowledge into the Curriculum*, *Creating Respectful and Inclusive Environments*, and *Establishing Culturally Informed Policies*. The *Encouraging Growth* framework focuses on supporting Indigenous educators and improving resources for Indigenous students. The key themes include: *Providing Accessible Education Pathways*, *Expanding Indigenous Spaces and Services*, *Enhancing Financial Support*, and *Increasing Student Resources*. Within each theme of the dual-framework, participants shared ideas on how change can improve current systems and offered practical suggestions on how to strengthen existing practices. The frameworks and corresponding themes are listed in Appendix B ([p. 40](#)) and summarized below.

2.1 Transforming Systems

The first framework within *SITE* is *Transforming Systems* (Figure 3, [p. 16](#)). Within the conversations, the need to transform education systems to improve inclusivity and reduce barriers for Indigenous students was consistently raised. The findings were synthesized and organized into the following four themes:

- 2.1.1 Strengthen Indigenous Representation** ([p. 16](#))
- 2.1.2 Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in Curriculum** ([p. 18](#))
- 2.1.3 Create Respectful and Inclusive Environments** ([p. 20](#))
- 2.1.4 Establish Culturally Informed Policies** ([p. 22](#))

The themes (and corresponding subthemes) are discussed in further depth in the following sections.

Figure 3: Transforming Systems Framework—Overarching Themes and Subthemes

2.1.1 Strengthen Indigenous Representation

2.1.1.1 Community Initiatives and Early Exposure

Collaboration with Indigenous communities and early exposure to education career pathways were identified by participants as inspirational for young Indigenous students. Strengthening partnerships between post-secondary institutions, high schools, and local Indigenous communities can create smoother transitions. Specific education programs and initiatives can guide students, provide support, and encourage them to pursue careers in education. An example of this is the Indspire program, [*Build from Within*](#) which aims to inform students of opportunities early in their educational pathways (e.g., high school) and encourage them to pursue teaching careers (Winnipeg School Division, 2024).

RESULTS

“Something I would change is to basically let people know of the gap that exists in the education system, that there is a need for Indigenous educators because, now that I’m a grades 2/3 teacher in the education system, I see that huge gap. I wish I knew [this] when I was in the teaching program, so I could recruit more of my Indigenous friends into the education system.”

– Pauline (Group 3)

2.1.1.2 Indigenous Educators and Role Models

Participants shared that there is a need for more Indigenous educators and role models in educational settings that Indigenous students can identify with to increase visibility. This includes advocating for increased representation among teachers and encouraging Indigenous educators to visit high schools and speak about their career journeys. Positive role models and Indigenous educator “success stories” are seen as powerful tools to inspire students from a young age.

“Something that could help is more Indigenous spaces as well as Indigenous professors. I know that’s already been brought up. Yeah, so I’ve had maybe two Indigenous professors, even within the Indigenous Studies program right now, so it just, it would be nice to have that connection with the professor who’s teaching that type of content.”

– Naomi (Group 1)

2.1.1.3 Hiring of Indigenous Staff at all Levels

The importance of hiring Indigenous faculty, staff, and administrators at all levels, especially in leadership and decision-making roles, was emphasized by participants. Capturing Indigenous voices in policy-making processes can ensure institutional practices are inclusive and reflective of Indigenous perspectives, fostering a more welcoming environment for Indigenous students.

“I think we’ve kind of mentioned that there have been a few times about just having people, Indigenous People, in roles that are there for Indigenous People.”

– Karl (Group 4)

RESULTS

2.1.1.4 Indigenous-led Community Partnerships

Development of culturally responsive curricula, policies, and support services informed by Indigenous communities was highlighted by participants. A strong sentiment was made for Indigenous education, language revitalization, and land-based learning initiatives to be developed through collaboration with Indigenous advisory councils, Elders, and community leaders. The importance of aligning institutional goals with Indigenous priorities and strengthening partnerships with Indigenous communities is also echoed in the literature (Yip & Chakma, 2024).

“I was also really traumatized during my last semester there. And so, it took a lot for me to, like, go into that education program at [my university]. And the only reason I did was because it was a partnered program with an Indigenous institution.”

– Robyn (Group 1)

“Something that really inspired me to be a teacher was seeing in school the misrepresentation and the stereotypes I would hear. And I just wanted to break down those barriers and just show like the world that Indigenous People are still here, and their conception of it is wrong because of what has been taught in school so far.”

– Sam (Group 2)

2.1.2 Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in Curriculum

2.1.2.1 Indigenous Content Across the Curriculum

Participants emphasized the need to integrate Indigenous perspectives across all courses and not just within Indigenous studies. This includes weaving Indigenous Knowledge, teachings, and assessment methods into all subject areas. Additionally, training and support for non-Indigenous faculty is necessary to incorporate Indigenous content to ensure meaningful curriculum transformations.

“There’s like, almost zero Inuktitut resources online, and that’s a challenge, because we already do so much as teachers, and it’s kind of hard making our own Inuit ones, because it takes so much time. And I think it’d be better if there were way more Inuktitut resources online.”

– Dawn (Group 1)

“I feel like my institution could have walked that walk and actually Indigenized their curriculum and Indigenized their institution and prioritized hiring Indigenous instructors to teach Indigenous courses and use Indigenous pedagogy—instead of just telling us to do it.”

– Lisa (Group 4)

RESULTS

2.1.2.2 Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Communities

Participants highlighted the importance of including Indigenous teachers, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers in sharing specific cultures, histories, and knowledge of territories when developing and delivering curriculum. Active collaboration with local Indigenous communities and advisors ensures that curriculum is authentic and relevant.

“I would just like to have more of those Knowledge Keepers around to give us those more specific teachings that we could then incorporate in our classroom.”

– Nicolas (Group 2)

2.1.2.3 Land-based and Experiential Learning

Participants highlighted the value of connecting students with Indigenous ways of knowing through land-based and experiential learning. These hands-on opportunities allow interaction among students while learning about Indigenous worldviews and practices that are culturally relevant. These experiences meet the needs of students while empowering them to stay connected to their culture. Arguably, these methods of learning also introduce alternative ways of knowledge absorption and retention within academic settings. These practices maintain academic rigour while acknowledging, respecting, and embedding Indigenous values and ways of learning.

“I think that you know, having that kind of hands-on experience, and outside of the school is very helpful, like experiential and land-based.”

– Dustin (Group 3)

“We did get to go harvest sweetgrass, and we did get to do a lot of hands-on learning. So, I really did appreciate that about [my university]. I liked that we got to do one weekend a month.”

– Renee (Group 3)

2.1.2.4 Updating and Localizing Curriculum Materials

Building relationships and collaborating with local Indigenous communities and territories was seen as essential for participants. These interwoven relationships can allow for curriculum to incorporate localized knowledge and traditions. Tailoring curriculum to reflect contemporary Indigenous cultures in the local community context contributes to more authentic, meaningful, and engaging learning materials.

RESULTS

“It’d be nice to have more place-based ones, because Ontario’s so big, like, there’s so many nations, communities, so spread out. So, it’d be nice to have some local resources and local curriculum or just like local ways of knowing that you can incorporate, in collaboration with community and stuff into what you teach kids.”

– Marlene (Group 1)

“I feel like it’s so simple to even just throw in one assignment about, like, how can you decolonize this curriculum? I think it could make a really big difference on educators that might not come from Indigenous backgrounds and, like already have the mindset like, to get them kind of turning their gears on. Like, how can we better the school system in that sense?”

– Kendra (Group 5)

2.1.3 Create Respectful and Inclusive Environments

2.1.3.1 Cultural Safety and Anti-racism Training

Improvement of inclusivity on campus through mandatory cultural safety and anti-racism training for all faculty, staff/administrators, and students was suggested by most of the participants. To create respectful and supportive learning environments for Indigenous students, school policies must address systemic discrimination and biases in the institution.

“Racism is definitely something I still deal with on a daily basis, even in my job. But I think that, you know, starting to make those kinds of changes, because I think education is key to kind of lessening, I guess that racism, because people don’t know until they realize it, right?”

– Kelsey (Group 5)

2.1.3.2 Training for Non-Indigenous Faculty

The need to train and support non-Indigenous teachers so they can appropriately incorporate Indigenous content and pedagogies into the curriculum and instructional practice, was recognized by many participants. Offering training and professional development programs to non-Indigenous staff can help address hesitancy, increase confidence and knowledge, and ensure that Indigenous content is meaningfully integrated into daily practices.

RESULTS

“ I think it’s really important that if my university is going to kind of preach that they are including Indigenous perspectives and the importance of it, they should maybe do at least some sort of class on how to incorporate this kind of thing into our teaching. ”

– Christina (Group 2)

2.1.3.3 Comprehensive Indigenous Studies Courses

The requirement for all students to complete courses on Indigenous perspectives, cultures, and histories/treaties was suggested to deepen awareness and understanding among the student body. Developing courses in collaboration with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous communities was highlighted to achieve this outcome. Additionally, increasing the representation of Indigenous faculty to teach these courses can bring authenticity and provide a space where Indigenous students observe themselves being represented.

“ My university did a very good job—every single student in the university had to take an Indigenous-based course, and it was a requirement for any bachelor’s degree or graduate degree, and I think that would be great to implement across more universities, just to give that exposure and that knowledge to those students. ”

– Hunter (Group 3)

2.1.3.4 Accountability and Reporting Mechanisms

Participants recommended creation of policies and procedures for transparent reporting of incidents of discrimination and harassment to address systemic racism. These systems should have clear accountability measures to ensure appropriate responses to incidents, fostering a safe environment for Indigenous students. Institutions should track and report the progress of Indigenous inclusion and reconciliation efforts, ensuring tangible actions and outcomes.

“ With my new school division, there’s a huge policy around harassment, discrimination, and racism, and it’s all connected to the Charter of Rights and Freedom. So just knowing what your rights are, having information sessions with people, and providing that background with what services they can access if they’re experiencing this, that’s really important. ”

– Joanne (Group 2)

RESULTS

2.1.4 Establish Culturally Informed Policies

2.1.4.1 Flexible and Culturally Informed Policies

Creation of policies that accommodate the unique needs of Indigenous students, such as family and cultural responsibilities, was expressed among the participants. Flexibility in attendance, assessment, and scheduling is essential to supporting Indigenous student success. Policies could be implemented to support Indigenous student engagement through non-traditional educational activities, including community-based research, land-based learning, ceremony, and knowledge sharing.

“Use assessment methods that are honouring Indigenous ways of knowing and learning. So, rather than solely writing standardized tests, or answering 100-question multiple-choice tests, or writing research reports, to allow for, like, narrative assessments and art and, like, more hands-on assessments or forms of evaluation. That would respect an Indigenous student’s diverse learning style.”

– Kaitlyn (Group 3)

2.1.4.2 Institutional Commitment and Resource Allocation

Participants emphasized the importance of institutional commitment and allocating sustainable funding and resources to implement their recommendations. Specifically, participants identified the need for institutions to develop strategic plans with clear goals, timelines, and accountability measures for Indigenization efforts that align with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. For sustainable impact, a genuine commitment by institutions is necessary to foster inclusive environments. This involves providing dedicated funding to support Indigenous-specific programs and initiatives.

“We need to allocate funding for training, because most policies, the way that the systems are set up, are designed to impede our success. So, you need to hire people who are able to analyze the ways that existing policies are causing ongoing barriers for us.”

– Lena (Group 4)

RESULTS

2.1.4.3 Indigenous Frameworks and Advisory Councils

The establishment of comprehensive Indigenous education frameworks and Indigenous advisory councils was suggested by participants. These would provide guidance, oversight, and accountability to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into various initiatives. These frameworks, developed collaboratively with Indigenous communities, can help ensure institutions follow consistent, respectful, and meaningful practices. Provincial frameworks, such as Manitoba's [Mamàhtawisiwin](#), are good examples of support that ensure sustained commitment to Indigenous inclusion (Province of Manitoba, 2023).

“I guess if there was Indigenous representation in the student associations, like a particular one Indigenous student representing within the association, I think that would be so great.”

– Denise (Group 5)

2.1.4.4 Indigenous Education as a Treaty Right

The recommendation to recognize post-secondary education as a treaty right and eliminate tuition and application fees for Indigenous students was advocated by participants. Ensuring this policy is consistently applied across all institutions has the potential to make education more accessible and alleviate financial challenges faced by Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education.

“One thing that I think could be changed is, according to the treaties, we are actually supposed to be entitled to education, so, I feel like First Nations shouldn't have to pay to go to university. [...] I think that that would be a benefit to a lot of Indigenous folks, because I feel like that's a huge barrier for a lot of people.”

– Kelsey (Group 5)

2.2 Encouraging Growth

The second framework, *Encouraging Growth* (Figure 4), centres around encouraging Indigenous educators and the need to provide and improve Indigenous student supports. The findings were synthesized and organized into the following four themes:

2.2.1 Provide Accessible Pathways to Education

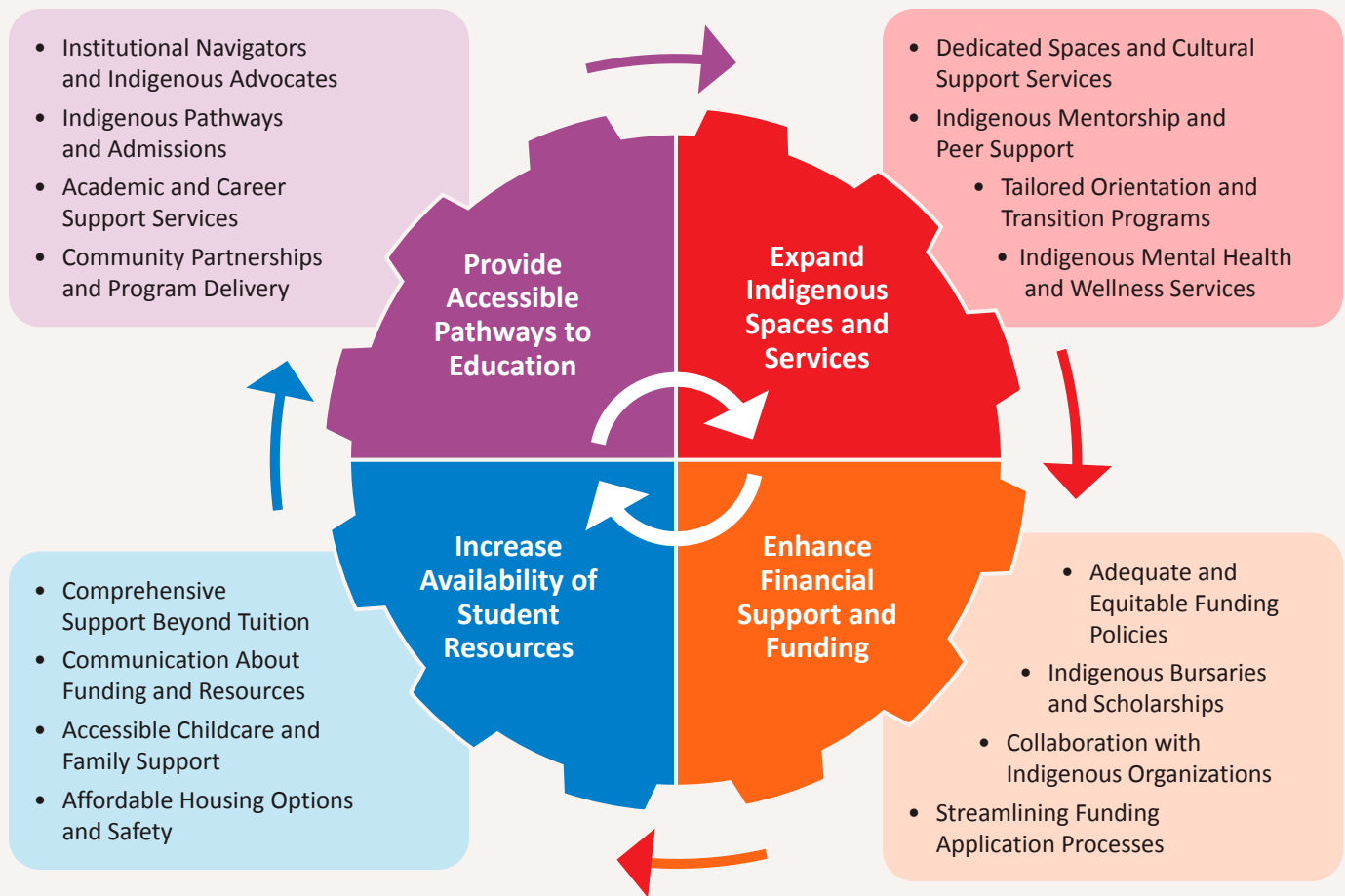
2.2.2 Expand Indigenous Spaces and Services

2.2.3 Enhance Financial Support and Funding

2.2.4 Increase Availability of Student Resources

The themes (and corresponding subthemes) are further discussed in depth.

RESULTS

Figure 4: Encouraging Growth Framework—Overarching Themes and Subthemes

2.2.1 Provide Accessible Pathways to Education

2.2.1.1 Institutional Navigators and Indigenous Advocates

The need for institutional navigators and Indigenous advocates to help students access resources was suggested by participants. This would help guide Indigenous students through their institutions' systems and alleviate the need to educate non-Indigenous faculty and staff about Indigenous-specific needs and challenges, thus allowing students to allocate more energy to their learning.

RESULTS

“All others [non-Indigenous People], they’ve all had head starts on university—they’ve all been doing this for hundreds of years, we’re basically new to this.”

– Jared (Group 5)

2.2.1.2 Indigenous Pathways and Admissions

Changes to institutional policies, such as alternative admissions and reserved seats, were suggested by participants to better support Indigenous students. Institutions could develop more flexible pathways for Indigenous students that take into consideration their lived experience and provide alternative qualifications in the admissions process. This can ease access into higher education, thus increasing Indigenous student representation in education programs.

“What I observed is that they [post-secondary institutions] need to have some sort of alternative admissions process, because the current admission system is not reflective of our lived experiences and struggles and things like that with education.”

– Courtney (Group 3)

2.2.1.3 Academic and Career Support Services

Participants shared the need for the availability of academic support, such as tutoring, writing assistance, and after-hours services that are tailored to the unique professional needs of Indigenous students. Career-focused services (e.g, resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, and application support) can provide guidance on navigating post-graduation pathways to ensure a successful transition into the workforce.

“[If] I could change one thing about my institution to better support Indigenous students, I would say, have availability after hours. Working full-time and then doing studies when everything’s all shut down—it’s hard to reach out when I’m in struggling, when I need help.”

– Derek (Group 4)

“Coming out of the bachelor education program, I really didn’t know where to start with applying for jobs or really even where to look. We received a short, I think it was about a 30-minute presentation from some people on how, in B.C., you apply through it’s called Make a Future.”

– Jasmin (Group 3)

RESULTS

2.2.1.4 Community Partnerships and Program Delivery

Strengthening partnerships with local Indigenous communities to offer and design community-based programs, land-based practicums, and field placements was often mentioned by participants. These partnerships could provide students with experiential learning grounded in Indigenous practices and promote sustained engagement with cultural values. Flexibility in program delivery was also discussed, especially where practicums could take place in the students' home communities to accommodate family or cultural responsibilities.

“My master’s was also blended online, allowing me to stay in community, and so it’s taken a lot of my time travelling back and forth and being able to navigate children in the programs.”

– Cheryl (Group 1)

2.2.2 Expand Indigenous Spaces and Services

2.2.2.1 Dedicated Spaces and Cultural Support Services

Establishing dedicated Indigenous gathering spaces, student centres, and support services on campus was seen as essential for participants. While services may exist, they are often not reflective of the needs of Indigenous learners. Improving support services for Indigenous students to connect with their culture through the access of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous mentors/staff was viewed as important for participants. Indigenous communal spaces can foster a sense of belonging and community while providing opportunities to connect with peers and access mental health support.

“I used the Indigenous Student Centre a lot for my undergrad, just again, it was on the outskirts of campus, and unless you were directly trying to go there, you wouldn’t have randomly walked past it.”

– Emily (Group 1)

2.2.2.2 Indigenous Mentorship and Peer Support

Facilitating mentorships and peer support networks that connect Indigenous students with Indigenous alumni or educators was a recurring recommendation by participants. Creating Indigenous student organizations, peer groups, and community-based mentorship opportunities were mentioned as ways to build communities for Indigenous students to support one another throughout their studies. These support networks could play a role in helping students navigate the post-secondary environment and provide them with guidance toward a career as an Indigenous educator.

“I think this was mentioned earlier, but like a mentoring program would be helpful, just to have someone help give you tips and guide you along the way, and someone to talk to. Sometimes you just need to discuss the struggles of being a student in these institutions, and having someone that you can talk to and get support from would be helpful.”

– Lynda (Group 5)

2.2.2.3 Tailored Orientation and Transition Programs

The creation of comprehensive orientation programs for Indigenous students, particularly those who have relocated from rural communities, was identified as an important need by participants. Indigenous students could benefit from having more practical information (e.g., public transportation, healthcare, and community resources) and resources available on campus. Another suggestion was to make connections through early mentorship from Indigenous alumni or upper-year students to help ease the transition to post-secondary.

“I know anytime anyone moves, especially to a big city, it can be hard to find those new supports that we mentioned are so important. So maybe just being able to connect people with the resources that are in that new city. Like mental health supports, putting that all in one place—kind of like, here’s where you can go if you need these things, and providing that to Indigenous students.”

– Nathan (Group 5)

2.2.2.4 Indigenous Mental Health and Wellness Services

Participants identified access to culturally relevant mental health services with Indigenous counsellors as another key support mechanism. It is vital to employ Indigenous mental health professionals who can provide trauma-informed and culturally safe support to address the unique challenges Indigenous students face, including coping with the cultural shift and systemic issues. This could take the form of providing access to Elders, traditional healers, and counselling services that are tailored to Indigenous students.

“I just wanted to say I agree with Kelsey, like the mental health support yeah, I could get it, but it wasn’t culturally compatible. And you know once you access it, you just don’t feel that connection—then you kind of shy away from getting that help.”

– Leah (Group 5)

RESULTS

2.2.3 Enhance Financial Support and Funding

2.2.3.1 Adequate and Equitable Funding Policies

The need to increase overall funding to reflect rising costs in tuition, housing, food, and other living expenses was emphasized by participants. Addressing disparities in government funding among First Nation Bands to ensure Indigenous students can receive equitable financial supports, was recommended. This includes securing adequate and consistent funding for education and having flexible funding policies to accommodate students balancing work and/or family responsibilities.

“A lot of the students that I know are reliant on this band funding, or reliant on the kind of living expense that it’s there, but still it’s not enough, because for a lot of my classmates are Manitoban, Saskatchewan, where the living allowance is not enough for the university that’s out here.”

– Taylor (Group 2)

2.2.3.2 Indigenous Bursaries and Scholarships

Participants suggested offering funding to increase representation through bursaries and scholarships targeted for Indigenous students, including funding for emergency or unexpected expenses. Extending financial aid to cover graduate studies and/or part-time was also recommended, as many existing resources focus primarily on undergraduate full-time education. Other areas identified included providing financial assistance and tailored supports for students who are parents or have to take care of their families. Additionally, male Indigenous educators are vastly underrepresented in the classroom.

“What I observed is a lot of people are parents, and so when we have to care for family, and things like that, it becomes difficult for us to achieve [an] 80-plus average. But I think that doesn’t mean that we don’t have lots to contribute in terms of education, because I think that barrier is preventing quite a few Indigenous educators from becoming qualified teachers.”

– Courtney (Group 3)

2.2.3.3 Collaboration with Indigenous Organizations

Collaboration between institutions and community bands/organizations which provide funding to Indigenous students' education was another recommendation discussed by the participants. Improved coordination between post-secondary institutions and funding bodies could address issues like delayed approvals which often leave students without financial support during critical deadlines. Delays in the distribution of bursaries, scholarships, and band funding are commonplace. These funding sources require annual renewals, creating additional uncertainties for students who are managing multiple life roles. Providing additional support during these waiting periods and long-term financial support would help alleviate significant financial stresses.

“So it wasn't till the last year that I had, that my band did pay for my funding, which I'm very thankful for. But I think just that the whole process of the application time and the waiting is what needs to be improved.”

– Evelyn (Group 3)

2.2.3.4 Streamlining Funding Application Processes

Application and funding processes for financial aid were frequently described as complex and burdensome by participants. Simplifying and centralizing these processes, such as creating a single access point or hub for numerous bursaries and scholarships, could help reduce barriers for Indigenous students. Streamlining these processes is essential to improve accessibility and prevent delays in receiving support.

“It's basically like your OSAP kind of pays for your tuition, and then you get a refund, or I get a refund once my band funding comes in. Which isn't until, for me, at least, like, late October, early October. And so, you're basically out of money for, like, a month or two.”

– Tanya (Group 4)

RESULTS

2.2.4 Increase Availability of Student Resources

2.2.4.1 Comprehensive Support Beyond Tuition

The need for financial aid that covers not only tuition but also textbooks, supplies, technology, and transportation was emphasized by participants. Ensuring access to necessary education resources such as laptops, reliable internet, and specialized software would positively impact student academic success. Offering transportation support to assist with commuting, whether through subsidies or coordinated services, is especially important for rural or remote students and those who have familial obligations.

“ I mentioned technology support and needing a new laptop. Indigenous students need good laptops like MacBook Airs or ThinkPads—not the cheapest and not the most basic. [...] As Indigenous students, it always feels like we are at a constant disadvantage, and we are trying to keep up with our non-Indigenous classmates and it becomes overwhelming. ”

– Alisha (Group 5)

2.2.4.2 Communication About Funding and Resources

Participants discussed that many Indigenous students, particularly first-generation students, are unaware of the available fundings and resources. This includes accessing funding opportunities such as bursaries, scholarships, and paid internships aimed to support Indigenous students. Improving communication and providing guidance on navigating the application process would ensure students are informed of their funding options and are equipped to navigate financial challenges. Providing updated, accessible information through multiple avenues, such as a centralized mailing list, on-campus promotion, and recruitment within Indigenous communities, can ensure students are aware of and can easily access the support they need.

“ There should be one place that students could go, where all financial resources, bursaries, scholarships, etc., could be there for them to see and that it’s very clear that you can apply for which ones are available to you. ”

– Carter (Group 5)

2.2.4.3 Accessible Childcare and Family Support

Given the high rates of young parents within Indigenous communities, participants suggested the need for more accessible and affordable childcare options. Information on these services and options is especially important for students who have family responsibilities and must relocate to an urban centre for their education. Additional family support and financial assistance such as childcare subsidies or on-campus childcare facilities can alleviate the financial burden on Indigenous students and their families.

“I think it’s just like the transition. I think there should be a lot more resources, especially with children, childcare, and family. I know there are some people who are supporting their own family.”

– Taylor (Group 2)

2.2.4.4 Affordable Housing Options and Safety

The need to ensure affordable and suitable housing options for Indigenous students was recommended by participants. This was particularly key for those relocating from their home communities. Providing Indigenous students with a list of housing and budgeting options would help them in their planning and would reduce anxiety associated with relocation. It is also imperative to implement safety measures, particularly for Indigenous women who face increased risks when relocating, as highlighted by the [MMIWG final report](#) (MMIWG, 2019).

“I think that there’s a certain vulnerability as well for our young Indigenous women, and I think that the missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls research and report speaks to that as well. And so, I think when we’re talking about relocation, there really needs to be support in terms of understanding hotspots, understanding safety, and having those safety plans.”

– Mya (Group 1)

DISCUSSION

Key Insights

Findings from the focus group discussions emphasize strengthening Indigenous representation through community initiatives and increased hiring of Indigenous educators and staff at all levels. Indigenous representation provides role models for Indigenous students and brings authentic perspectives to curriculum development and changes to institutional policies. Adopting land-based learning approaches and integrating Indigenous Knowledge into the curriculum and instructional practices are key steps to embedding culturally relevant pedagogies into mainstream education. Inclusion of Indigenous worldviews will also foster a deeper understanding among all students and school staff of Indigenous Peoples and reconciliation.

Another central suggestion was the need to create welcoming and inclusive learning environments that employ strategies such as cultural safety and anti-racism training for staff and students in post-secondary. Education and training could help address systemic biases and foster inclusivity among students and staff. In addition, establishing culturally informed policies through consultation with Indigenous communities can help dismantle barriers and create supportive frameworks. Measures of success in this progress should be established through an institutional commitment to reconciliation and adequate funding.

Also highlighted, was the value of providing accessible pathways to education through partnerships with Indigenous communities to ensure that student support initiatives are aligned with the priorities and lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples. Establishing dedicated Indigenous spaces facilitates student success through opportunities for cultural connection, mentorship, and peer support. Access to tailored services contributes to a sense of belonging for Indigenous students and will positively impact their well-being.

The final key points emphasized the need to enhance student support. This includes improving financial support and funding mechanisms for Indigenous students. Additionally, providing and promoting campus student-centred resources geared to meet the unique needs of Indigenous students will increase awareness and visibility and foster a sense of belonging. Supporting the well-being of Indigenous students will allow them to feel more comfortable and capable as they complete their studies.

Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into recommendations for increasing Indigenous representation in teacher education programs, some limitations should be acknowledged. First, the findings primarily reflect perspectives gathered from specific groups of Indigenous students, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences within all Indigenous communities across Canada. Second, the scope of the study is limited to Indigenous students in teacher education programs, which may overlook broader systemic barriers in other academic areas.

Additionally, implementing the proposed strategies, such as mandatory cultural safety training and curriculum integration, may face practical challenges including resistance to change, resource constraints, and low levels of institutional commitment. Lastly, the study does not provide detailed assessments of how these recommendations might be adapted to unique local or regional contexts, which could impact their overall effectiveness.

Future Directions

This research provides an opportunity to consider next steps and future directions based on the findings. Further research should examine the impact of implementing the recommended strategies for increasing Indigenous inclusion and representation in education programs. Implementing smaller-scale pilot programs before scaling up to broader contexts or frameworks is also recommended. For example, studies could assess the effectiveness of cultural safety training programs aimed at reducing systemic biases and improving campus environments. Moreover, research focusing on localized adaptations of these recommendations, particularly in collaboration with Indigenous communities, would provide valuable insights into tailoring specific strategies that will meet the regional and cultural contexts.

Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the career trajectories of Indigenous students who benefit from these initiatives could shed light on the broader societal impacts of increased Indigenous representation in education. Exploring the roles of policy changes, resource allocation, and institutional commitment in sustaining these efforts would further strengthen the evidence base for effective practices in teacher education.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a list of recommended actions developed from the shared experiences of Indigenous students in teacher education programs.



Create Inclusive Environments

Mandate cultural safety and anti-racism training for staff and students and create clear and accountable reporting systems.



Enhance Financial Support and Funding

Provide adequate and equitable financial support and simplify the funding processes for Indigenous students.



Establish Culturally Informed Policies

Adopt flexible and culturally informed policies, involve Indigenous perspectives in decision-making, and ensure sustained commitment to reconciliation goals.



Expand Indigenous Spaces and Services

Create dedicated Indigenous spaces, foster culturally inclusive environments, provide tailored resources, and offer mental health and wellness support services.



Increase Availability of Student Resources

Offer comprehensive financial support and improve communication about available resources to ensure Indigenous students can easily access the support they require.



Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in Curriculum

Embed Indigenous Knowledge across curricula and equip educators with the skills and support necessary to promote respectful and authentic inclusion.



Provide Accessible Pathways to Education

Hire education navigators and create supports that help Indigenous students navigate post-secondary programs, resources, and services that supports their needs.



Strengthen Indigenous Representation

Increase representation of Indigenous communities within academic settings and create inclusive environments that prioritize Indigenous perspectives and experiences.

CONCLUSION

The need for transformative changes in post-secondary institutions to support the success of Indigenous students in teacher education programs is emphasized throughout the study. Through strengthening Indigenous representation and addressing systemic barriers, institutions can create policies and, in turn, environments that are inclusive and reflective of Indigenous perspectives and cultures.

Indigenous educators play a central role in these efforts, bridging cultural gaps and inspiring future generations. Institutions that prioritize hiring Indigenous faculty and staff at all levels ensure Indigenous voices are represented authentically, which better supports students. Key strategies include the integration of Indigenous Knowledge in all curricula, mandating cultural safety and anti-racism training, and establishing culturally informed policies within institutions.

The findings promote the representation of Indigenous educators across Canada by supporting the post-secondary academic journey of Indigenous students. Strategies include providing accessible pathways to education and increasing support services and community-based initiatives that promote education career pathways and mentorship opportunities. Furthermore, dedicated and sustained financial support and resources are critical for the success of Indigenous students.

In summary, this project emphasizes the need for comprehensive approaches to create inclusive learning spaces for Indigenous students, focusing on systemic change, increased Indigenous representation, and growth initiatives. These recommendations provide actionable steps for institutions to support the success of Indigenous students in teacher education programs, while advancing broader goals of reconciliation.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

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PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

The following charts include demographic information from the 34 focus group participants.

Figure A1: Teacher Education

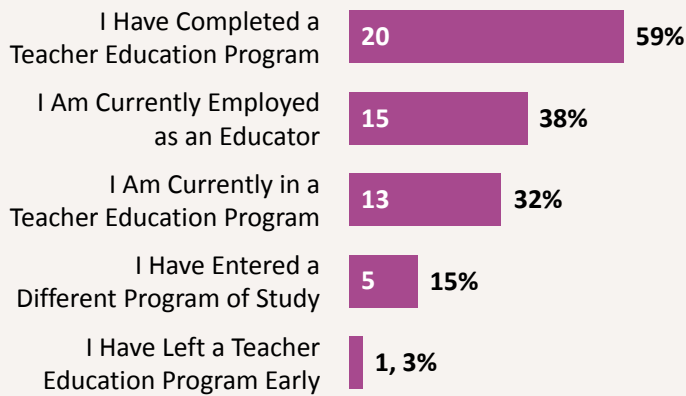


Figure A2: Level of Study

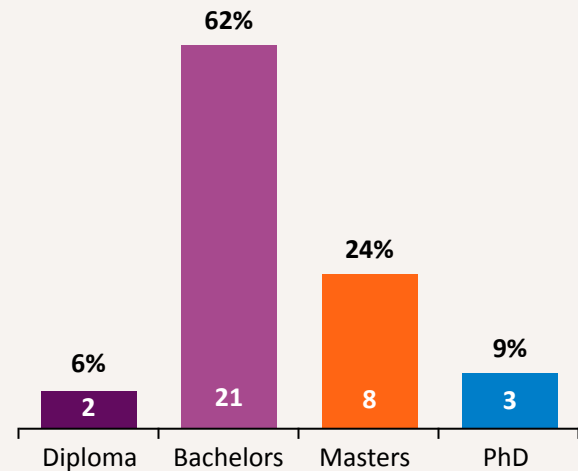


Figure A3: Indigenous Identity

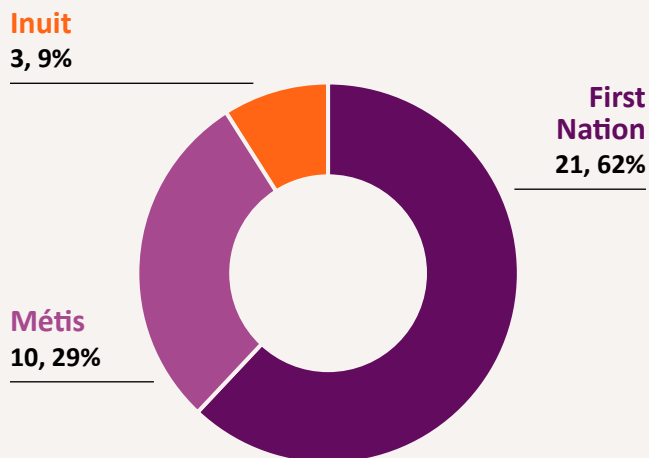
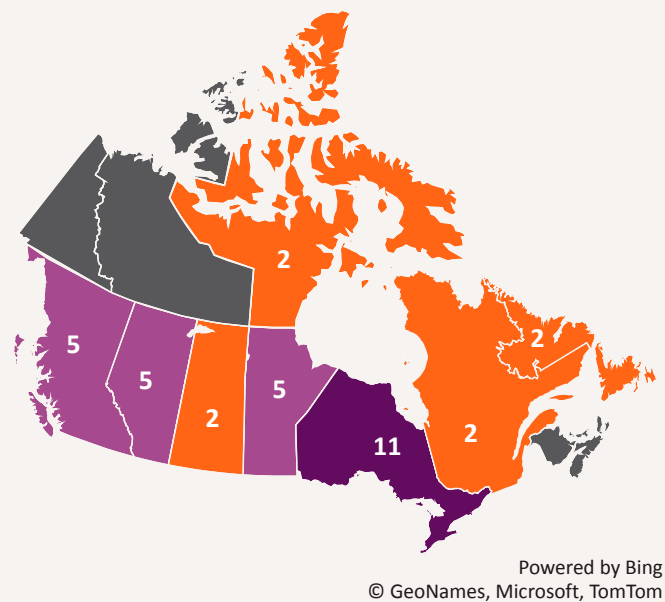


Figure A4: Indigenous Community



APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Figure A5: Age Group

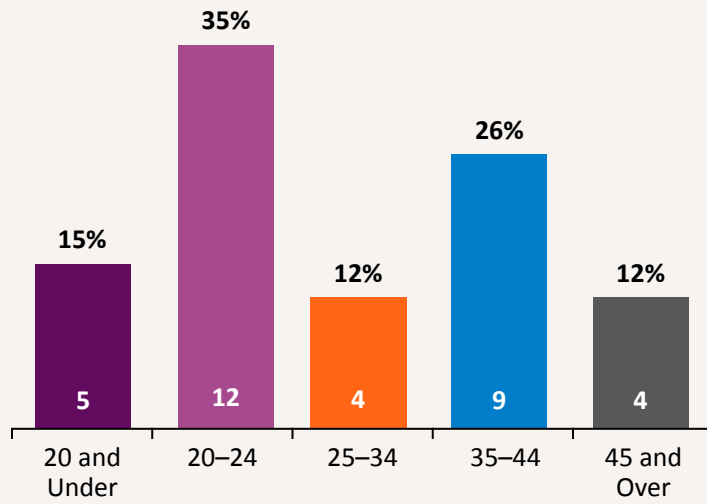


Figure A6: Gender Identity

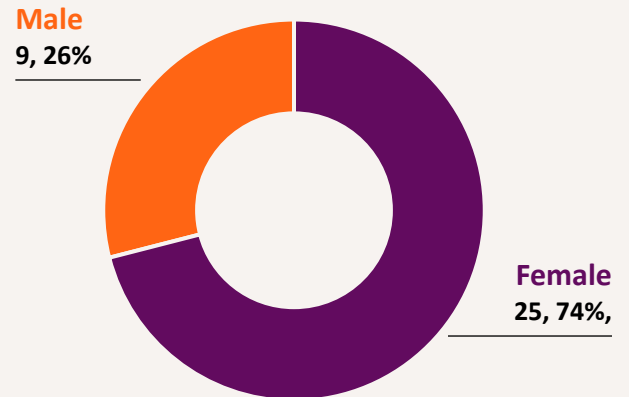


Table A1: Characteristics

	Yes		No	
First-Generation Student	15	44%	19	56%
Sponsored by Organization	15	44%	19	56%
Student with Disability*	11	32%	22	65%
Student with Dependents	10	29%	24	71%

Note: Percentages do not add to 100 due to some students preferring not to answer this question?

APPENDIX B: THEMES AND SUBTHEMES

APPENDIX B: THEMES AND SUBTHEMES

The following section includes the themes and subthemes developed.

Framework 1: Transforming Systems

Theme	Subthemes
Strengthen Indigenous Representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Initiatives and Early Exposure • Indigenous Educators and Role Models • Hiring of Indigenous Staff at All Levels • Indigenous-led Community Partnerships
Integrate Indigenous Knowledge in Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Content Across the Curriculum • Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Communities • Land-based and Experiential Learning • Updating and Localizing Curriculum Materials
Create Respectful and Inclusive Environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Safety and Anti-racism Training • Training for Non-Indigenous Faculty • Comprehensive Indigenous Studies Courses • Accountability and Reporting Mechanisms
Establish Culturally Informed Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible and Culturally Informed Policies • Institutional Commitment and Resource Allocation • Indigenous Frameworks and Advisory Councils • Indigenous Education as a Treaty Right

APPENDIX B: THEMES AND SUBTHEMES

Framework 2: Encouraging Growth

Theme	Subthemes
Provide Accessible Pathways to Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Navigators and Indigenous Advocates • Indigenous Pathways and Admissions • Academic and Career Support Services • Community Partnerships and Program Delivery
Expand Indigenous Spaces and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dedicated Spaces and Cultural Support Services • Indigenous Mentorship and Peer Support • Tailored Orientation and Transition Programs • Indigenous Mental Health and Wellness Services
Enhance Financial Support and Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate and Equitable Funding Policies • Indigenous Bursaries and Scholarships • Collaboration with Indigenous Organizations • Streamlining Funding Application Processes
Increase Availability of Student Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Support Beyond Tuition • Communication About Funding and Resources • Accessible Childcare and Family Support • Affordable Housing Options and Safety



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