



HOW CAN ONLINE, INDIGENIZED TEACHER EDUCATION CONTRIBUTE TO MITIGATING SYSTEMIC BARRIERS FOR POSTSECONDARY ACCESS?

Though certified Indigenous teachers are in high demand in Alberta, many potential students are not able to move to an urban center to pursue their teaching degree. This barrier to postsecondary access means that talented Indigenous educators are not receiving education that would support their teaching practices, and are frequently stuck in lower-paid educational assistant roles to satisfy their passion of working with children.

In 2021, ATEP developed an entirely online Bachelor of Education (Elementary) route for students to

be able to obtain their teaching credential without having to physically move from their home community. The connection to their home community is essential as students' support networks, connection to culture and Elders, and often their ancestral lands support their fulsome success as Indigenous educators. ATEP's online program has become unprecedentedly popular because of these benefits, and we will graduate the first cohorts of online learners in 2025. The widespread success of this initiative has attracted national attention, and we seek to understand what facets of the

programming are driving this success so other institutions could implement similar initiatives.

We use ATEP's guiding values (right) as a conceptual framework to begin this inquiry, though the research will ultimately be responsive to components of an educational experience foregrounded by the participants. ATEP's values were gifted to the program through ceremony in alignment with traditional knowledge transfer methods.

ATEP'S VALUES



TQS AND TRC

ANSWERING THE CALLS

Broadening access for Indigenous educators fundamentally shifts the experience for K-12 youth in any classroom, answering the Calls to Action by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Alberta's Teacher Quality Standard (TQS) also includes provisions in every competency for uplifting FNIM knowledges, and TQS 5 attends specifically to "applying foundational FNIM knowledge". Indigenous educators are most strongly positioned to uphold all of these imperatives, and by ensuring quality education in accessible formats, ATEP is making substantial strides to realize these provincial and national goals.

METHODOLOGY

COMMUNITY-CENTERED ENGAGEMENTS

To explore the successes and areas for opportunity in this project, we will conduct focus groups with online ATEP students at various stages of their program, including those studying in a part-time format. The focus groups will be conducted in circle and guided by Elder Calvin Cardinal, threading ATEP's prioritization of ethical relationality and community-centered practice into the research design. In alignment with a decolonial research approach, the results of these engagements will be collaboratively analyzed by our research team; in alignment with a decolonial research approach. The results will be used to inform a report for national dissemination by the Rideau Hall Foundation, presentation at education conferences, and sharebacks to community partners.

SUPPORT

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POWERED BY

