



IAHLA Learner Experience Survey 2024-2025 Report

Submitted to:

Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA)

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Executive Summary

The 2024-2025 IAHLA Learner Experience Survey builds on IAHLA's long-standing commitment to understanding learner experiences at member institutes. Building on nearly two decades of data collection since 2005, the new survey instrument focuses the IAHLA Data Collection Project on learner experience across multiple dimensions. As such, it provides a new lens into the education experiences of learners pursuing adult and post-secondary education at IAHLA member institutes, providing insights to improve services, inform future advocacy and engagement priorities.

This new survey instrument was developed through a literature review of learner experience research, analysis of existing post-secondary learner surveys, and consultation with the IAHLA Board of Directors to ensure it captured the priorities and contexts of IAHLA member institutes.

The survey was completed by 126 learners from 19 IAHLA member institutes and was designed to assess learner satisfaction, identify learner priorities, and guide service improvements across multiple aspects of the educational experience.

The learner body surveyed was diverse in age and background. Most identified as First Nations with status (89%) and as women (70%). A large proportion (61%) of learners were over the age of 30.

When asked why they enrolled in a program at an IAHLA member institute, learners most often cited the goal of earning a certificate, diploma, or degree. Many also aimed to pursue further education, develop job-related skills, or reconnect with culture and language. Nearly a third were focused on revitalizing First Nations language skills — an aspiration also reflected in learners' open-ended comments about reclaiming identity, culture, and community connections through education.

Learners chose their institutes for a variety of reasons, but studying close to home, feeling supported, and having access to the right programs were the most influential reasons. Cultural relevance, affordability, and recommendations from friends or family were also important. Many appreciated being in familiar environments where they could feel respected, included, and understood.

Feedback about educational quality was overwhelmingly positive. Most learners rated the quality of instruction, relationships with instructors, and overall learning environment very highly. Programs were seen as especially effective in building self-confidence, communication, and readiness for further education. Most respondents felt that the experience had broadened

their academic and personal skills, but fewer learners indicated their programs were helpful for employment preparation.

Student services were generally well received, especially cultural programming, food services, and academic advising. Learners indicated that financial support, time management training, and career guidance were among the types of supports that they would find most helpful for completing their educational goals.

Despite the high levels of satisfaction, learners also shared areas where improvement is needed. Many described challenges related to communication, such as unclear schedules, slow grade reporting, or delayed funding notifications. Others called for stronger academic supports, including tutoring, more structured curricula, and greater scaffolding for learners with limited prior schooling or who were new to language learning. The need for improved mental health and wellness services, better access to transportation and childcare, and more consistent instructor presence were also frequently raised.

Many learners continue to face barriers to attendance and accessing funding. Health challenges, caregiving responsibilities, and financial hardship were among the most cited reasons for missing classes or struggling to access support. While some institutes responded with flexible scheduling and supportive staff, others were less able to accommodate learners' complex life circumstances.

Still, most respondents expressed high satisfaction with their programs and institutes. Ninety-five percent said they would choose the same program again, and ninety-three percent said they would recommend their institute to others. Many emphasized the value of culturally grounded education, the presence of Elders and fluent speakers, and the importance of land-based and language learning.

In sum, survey results point to the strength of IAHLA member institutes in offering culturally affirming, community-rooted education. At the same time, the results point to the need for continued attention to communication, support services, academic scaffolding, and program planning tailored to the needs of First Nations learners and help them achieve their educational and community goals.

Introduction

Background and Context

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) has a long-standing commitment to understanding and improving the educational experiences of learners at member institutes. Since 2005, IAHLA has conducted annual data collection through institute and learner surveys, providing insights into learner needs, satisfaction, and outcomes across First Nations-controlled adult and post-secondary institutes in British Columbia.

Building on this foundation, IAHLA has reconceptualized its data collection approach to focus specifically on the learners' experience. This shift recognizes that understanding a broader scope of learner experiences is essential for continuous improvements to educational environments that support First Nations learners' success and well-being.

Why Learner Experiences Matter

Learner satisfaction is linked to engagement, academic achievement, and retention, which are important metrics for higher education institutions. For First Nations-controlled institutes, understanding learner experience is particularly vital as these institutions serve learners who bring diverse educational backgrounds, life circumstances, and cultural aspirations to their studies.

Learner experience encompasses multiple dimensions of learners' interactions within educational environments. This includes academic aspects such as instruction quality, faculty relationships, and skill development, as well as social and personal dimensions including peer interactions, cultural programming, support services, and overall well-being. Understanding how learners experience these various facets of their education enables institutes to identify strengths, address challenges, and allocate resources effectively to support learner success.

Survey Development

The IAHLA Data Collection Working Group engaged *Directions* Evidence and Policy Research Group to develop and implement a comprehensive learner experience survey for the 2024-25 academic year. The survey development process included:

- **Literature Review:** A review of existing research on learner experience and satisfaction surveys, focusing on methodological considerations such as question design, response scales, and scope of data collection in similar educational contexts.
- **Survey Scan:** Analysis of existing post-secondary learner experience and outcome surveys that are publicly available, including provincial (BC Student Outcomes Surveys,

previous IAHLA learner surveys), national Canadian Campus Wellbeing Survey, Canadian University Survey Consortium, National Survey of Student Engagement, Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey), and institutional surveys (NVIT, UBC, BCIT).

- **IAHLA Input:** Feedback from the IAHLA Board of Directors Data Collection working group to refine a draft survey, ensuring it captured the specific priorities and contexts relevant to IAHLA member institutes.
- **Best Practice Integration:** Incorporation of survey design principles including clear, straightforward questions; appropriate use of both closed and open-ended questions; mobile optimization; and attention to survey length to prevent respondent fatigue.

The 2024-25 survey represents a new survey instrument, designed specifically to capture contemporary learner experiences at IAHLA member institutes. While building on IAHLA's extensive history of data collection, this survey establishes a new foundation for understanding and tracking learner experience moving forward.

Survey Purpose and Objectives

The 2024-25 IAHLA Learner Experience Survey (Appendix A) was designed to help IAHLA member institutes:

- **Understand learner success and satisfaction** at IAHLA member institutes across multiple dimensions of the educational experience
- **Better fit programs and services** to learner needs and interests by identifying what matters most to learners
- **Identify where additional programs, services, or funding** may be needed to support learner success and well-being

The survey covers key areas including academic goals and engagement, educational quality and skill development, learner services and supports, well-being, satisfaction, and the challenges learners face in accessing and completing their education. This information can help inform IAHLA member institute decisions about program improvements, resource allocation, and strategic priorities.

Survey Implementation

IAHLA distributed the 2024-25 survey to 43 eligible IAHLA member institutes and was available online from March 17 to May 15, 2025.

To encourage participation, learners who completed the survey were entered into a draw for \$100 cash prizes. Institutes with a minimum of five learner respondents were also entered into a draw for a \$250 cash incentive.

To maintain individual and institutional confidentiality, this report presents the aggregated results across all participating institutes, providing insights into the collective experience of learners pursuing studies at IAHLA member institutes.

Results

This report presents the aggregated results across all participating institutes. Survey reliability depends on sample size — larger samples minimize the impact of outliers and random variation, producing findings that better represent the target population. With more responses, we can be more confident that results accurately reflect the broader group's views and experiences. Due to low response rates at individual institutions, findings are presented in an aggregated format across all participating institutes, and the results should be considered with caution.

Percentages in this report are calculated from the raw counts in each category and then rounded to the nearest whole number for readability. Because each figure is rounded independently, the rounded percentages shown in a table or chart may not add up to exactly 100 percent; any discrepancy of one or two points is a normal consequence of this rounding and does not reflect an error in the underlying data or calculations.

This report is based on responses from 126 participants, of whom 114 completed all questions and 12 provided partial responses (Table 1). Nine responses were excluded because the respondents answered three or fewer questions.

Table 1. Completion status (N=126)

| Status | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Complete | 114 | 90% |
| Partial | 12 | 10% |
| Total | 126 | 100% |

Respondent Overview

Participants came from 19 different IAHLA member institutes. The number of responses from each institute ranged from 1 to 19, with 55% of the responses submitted by learners from five institutes. The average number of learner responses from each institute was 7, and the median number of responses was 5.

Of 126 learners who completed the survey, 105 provided gender information (Table 2). The majority identified as women (70%), followed by men (25%), with smaller proportions identifying as Two-Spirit (4%) or other identities (2%).

Table 2. Respondents by gender (N=105)

| Gender | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Woman | 73 | 70% |
| Man | 26 | 25% |
| Two-Spirit | 4 | 4% |
| Other | 2 | 2% |
| Total | 105 | 100% |

Age data was provided by 112 respondents (Table 3). The largest age group was 21–30 years (27%), followed closely by those aged 31–40 (25%). Respondents under 20 made up 9% of the sample, while those aged 41 and older comprised 39%.

Table 3. Respondents by age (N=112)

| Age | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Under 20 | 10 | 9% |
| 21–30 | 30 | 27% |
| 31–40 | 28 | 25% |
| 41–50 | 18 | 16% |
| 51–60 | 13 | 12% |
| Over 60 | 13 | 12% |
| Total | 112 | 100% |

Eighteen percent of survey respondents (20 out of 112) self-reported having been a child or youth in care (CYIC) with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) (Table 4).

Table 4. Are you a former child or youth in care with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)? (N=112)

| Former CYIC | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| No | 92 | 82% |
| Yes | 20 | 18% |
| Total | 112 | 100% |

Most respondents identified as First Nations with status (89%) (Table 5). Smaller proportions identified as Métis (3%), First Nations without status (2%), or other identities (4%), while 2% were unsure of their identity.

Table 5. Identity of respondents (N=113)

| Identity | Count | Percent |
|----------------------------|------------|-------------|
| First Nations (status) | 101 | 89% |
| Métis | 3 | 3% |
| First Nations (non-status) | 2 | 2% |
| Don't know | 2 | 2% |
| Other | 5 | 4% |
| Total | 113 | 100% |

When asked about household dependents, nearly one-quarter (23%) reported no dependents (Table 6). Others supported between one to more than four individuals, with the most common response being three dependents (19%).

Table 6. How many individuals in your household rely on you for support? (N=111)

| Individuals | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 | 20 | 18% |
| 2 | 19 | 17% |
| 3 | 21 | 19% |
| 4 | 9 | 8% |
| More than 4 | 17 | 15% |
| None | 25 | 23% |
| Total | 111 | 100% |

Most respondents (90%, N=112) attended their institute without relocating from their home communities, while 7% did relocate, and 3% were unsure (Table 7).

Table 7. Did you relocate from your home community to attend this institute? (N=112)

| Relocation | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| No | 101 | 90% |
| Yes | 8 | 7% |
| Don't know | 3 | 3% |
| Total | 112 | 100% |

Goals for Attending the Institute

Participants selected up to three goals for attending their institute (N=126) (Table 8). The most common goal was earning a certificate, diploma, or degree (57%), followed by pursuing further education or training (48%) and gaining employment or specific career skills (42%).

Other frequently chosen goals included improving First Nations language skills (31%), contributing to their community (28%), and connecting with culture and heritage (23%). Nine respondents (7%) specified other goals not listed in the survey.

Table 8. What are your goals for attending this institute? (select up to three) (N=126)

| Goals | Count | Percent |
|--|-------|---------|
| To earn a certificate, diploma, or degree | 72 | 57% |
| To pursue further education or training | 61 | 48% |
| To gain skills for employment or a specific career | 53 | 42% |
| To improve my skills in a First Nations language | 39 | 31% |
| To contribute to my community | 35 | 28% |
| To connect with my culture and heritage | 29 | 23% |
| Other | 9 | 7% |

In open-ended responses from eight participants, several emphasized their desire to reclaim or strengthen connections to their language and culture. They described goals of achieving language fluency, relearning their language, and learning about their people through language study. Others listed goals such as personal growth and community contribution, participation in a life skills program, upgrading high school courses, and pursuing training to become an education assistant.

A few respondents shared deeper reflections on identity and systemic barriers. One individual noted feeling pressure to prove their worth through formal credentials, despite already carrying significant cultural and teaching experience. Multiple respondents indicated that they would have selected all the listed goals if that had been an option, reflecting the broad and interconnected motivations driving their educational journey.

Reasons for Choosing Institute

Participants were asked why they chose to attend their current institute instead of another educational institution (N=126) (Table 9). The most common reason was being able to study in their own community, selected by 75 respondents (60%). This was closely followed by feeling supported at the institute (73 respondents, 58%) and availability of needed programs and courses (58 respondents, 46%). Other key factors included culturally relevant learning environments (43 respondents, 34%), program fees being paid for by the institute (46 respondents, 37%), and affordability compared to other options (39 respondents, 31%). Additionally, 29 respondents (23%) noted that they receive a living allowance, and 27 (21%) indicated that friends or family had attended the institute. Eleven respondents (9%) selected “other” and provided different reasons for their choice.

**Table 9. Why did you choose to attend this institute instead of another educational institution?
(Select all that apply) (N=126)**

| Reason | Count | Percent |
|---|-------|---------|
| I can study in my community | 75 | 60% |
| I feel supported here | 73 | 58% |
| It offers the programs and courses I need | 58 | 46% |
| My program fees are covered by this institute | 46 | 37% |
| The environment is culturally relevant | 43 | 34% |
| It's more affordable than going somewhere else | 39 | 31% |
| I receive a living allowance to attend this institute | 29 | 23% |
| My friends and/or family attended here | 27 | 21% |
| Other | 11 | 9% |

Eleven respondents provided written comments about their motivations for choosing their institute. These open-ended responses revealed personal, cultural, and practical factors that influenced their decisions.

Supportive instructors and passionate teaching staff were highlighted as key elements that enhanced the learning environment. Several participants emphasized cultural connection, citing the geographic location in their territory, language learning opportunities, and deep respect for the institute's history and mission.

Practical considerations included free tuition for Elders, online course flexibility, and the ability to balance education with full-time employment. Some described personal growth goals such as preparing mentally for college, working with young children, or overcoming previous resistance to post-secondary education.

Others expressed motivations rooted in personal transformation, including desires to move forward in life, meet financial needs, and pursue meaningful learning connected to identity and community.

These responses highlight the diverse reasons learners choose IAHLA member institutes, often driven by cultural relevance, personal readiness, and flexible supports.

Prior Educational Attainment

When asked whether they had taken any post-secondary education before enrolling at their current institute (N=126), 57 respondents (45%) reported having previous post-secondary experience (Table 10). Fifty-five respondents (44%) had not pursued post-secondary education before, while 14 respondents (11%) were unsure.

Table 10. Did you take any post-secondary education before enrolling at this institute? (N=126)

| Prior Post-Secondary Education | Count | Percent |
|--------------------------------|------------|-------------|
| Yes | 57 | 45% |
| No | 55 | 44% |
| Don't know | 14 | 11% |
| Total | 126 | 100% |

Participants were asked what certificates, diplomas, or degrees they had completed prior to enrolling at their current institute, with the option to select all that applied. This question was posed to all who indicated that they were engaged in post-secondary education before enrolling at their current institute.

Among the 57 respondents who reported having taken previous post-secondary education programs or courses, over half (29 respondents, 51%) had completed a certificate, diploma, or associate degree below the Bachelor level (non-trades) (Table 11). A further 18 respondents (32%) had completed a trades program citation, certificate, or diploma. Smaller numbers reported holding a Bachelor's degree (6 respondents, 11%), a certificate or diploma above the Bachelor level (3 respondents, 5%), or a graduate degree such as a Master's or Doctorate (3 respondents, 5%). Additionally, 6 respondents (11%) had not completed any credential, and 2 respondents (4%) were unsure.

Table 11. What certificates, diplomas, or degrees did you complete before enrolling at this institute? (Select all that apply) (N=57)

| Credential | Count | Percent |
|--|-------|---------|
| Certificate, diploma, or associate degree (other than trades) below Bachelor level | 29 | 51% |
| Trades program citation, certificate, or diploma | 18 | 32% |
| Bachelor's degree | 6 | 11% |
| Certificate or diploma above Bachelor level | 3 | 5% |
| Graduate degree(s) (includes Master's, Doctorate, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry) | 3 | 5% |
| Did not complete any | 6 | 11% |
| Don't know | 2 | 4% |

Among the 57 respondents who had previously attended a post-secondary program (Table 12), 19 (33%) had attended 1-3 years ago, while 14 (25%) were enrolled in such programs more than 10 years ago. Fewer had participated in a post-secondary program 4-6 years ago (9 respondents, 16%), within the past year (8 respondents, 14%), or 7–10 years ago (7 respondents, 12%). This distribution shows a mix of both recent and more distant post-secondary experiences among participants.

Table 12. How long ago did you attend a post-secondary program? (N=57)

| Years | Count | Percent |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Within the past year | 8 | 14% |
| 1-3 years ago | 19 | 33% |
| 4-6 years ago | 9 | 16% |
| 7-10 years ago | 7 | 12% |
| More than 10 years ago | 14 | 25% |
| Total | 57 | 100% |

Out of 124 respondents who responded to a question about upgrading, access, bridging, or preparatory courses (Table 13), the majority (84 participants or 68%) reported that they had not taken any such courses prior to or during their studies at the current institute. Among those who did, 27 respondents (22%) had taken Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses, while 13 respondents (10%) participated in a pre-employment program.

Table 13. Did you ever take upgrading, access, bridging, or other preparatory courses during or prior to your studies at this institute?

| Prior Preparation | Count | Percent |
|--|------------|-------------|
| No, did not take any | 84 | 68% |
| Took Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses | 27 | 22% |
| Took Pre-Employment program | 13 | 10% |
| Total | 124 | 100% |

43 out of 125 respondents (34%) reported participating in paid or unpaid work experience as part of their program (Table 14). The remaining 82 respondents (66%) indicated that their program did not include a work experience component.

Table 14. Did you participate in any paid or unpaid work experience as part of your program?

| Work Experience | Count | Percent |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| No | 82 | 66% |
| Yes | 43 | 34% |
| Total | 125 | 100% |

Plans for the Next Academic Year (Starting September 2025)

When asked about their plans for the next academic year, 71 respondents (56%) indicated they plan to continue studying, while 49 (39%) planned to work at a paid job or business (Table 15). Twenty-four respondents (19%) reported that they do not yet know their plans, and 10 (8%) selected “other”.

Table 15. What are your plans for the next academic year (starting September 2025)? (Check all that apply)

| Plans for next academic year | Count | Percent |
|--------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Continue studying | 71 | 56% |
| Work at a paid job or business | 49 | 39% |
| Don't know | 24 | 19% |
| Other | 10 | 8% |

Among the 70 respondents who plan to continue studying, most (47, 67%) indicated they intend to remain at their current institute (Table 16). Fewer planned to attend a non-Indigenous-controlled post-secondary institution (9 respondents, 13%) or another IAHLA member institute (2 respondents, 3%). Ten respondents (14%) were unsure of their plans, and two (3%) selected “other”.

Table 16. Where do you plan to study in the next academic year? (N=70)

| Location of study in the next academic year | Count | Percent |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| This institute | 47 | 67% |
| A post-secondary institute that is not Indigenous-controlled | 9 | 13% |
| Another IAHLA member institute | 2 | 3% |
| Don't know | 10 | 14% |
| Other | 2 | 3% |
| Total | 70 | 100% |

In open-text responses, participants shared a range of plans reflecting continued educational, professional, and personal development goals.

Several participants plan to continue their studies, including enrolling in the second year of their program or retaking a course with renewed commitment. Some mentioned balancing school with employment, either continuing part-time or full-time work alongside studies.

Others expressed uncertainty about next steps, noting they were still exploring options such as virtual learning formats or determining eligibility for further study.

One respondent shared plans to transfer to another institution, while another focused on upgrading courses to meet future goals. The desire to learn their language remained a strong motivator, even among those initially reluctant to return to school.

These responses reflect commitment, flexibility, and persistence as learners navigate education alongside work, personal responsibilities, and cultural aspirations.

Program and Institute Experience

Respondents were asked to rate various aspects of their program and overall experience at their institute (Table 17). Overall, the feedback was highly positive:

- Quality of program instruction was viewed favorably (“good” or “very good”) by 109 of 126 respondents (87%).
- Practical experience during in-school training received positive ratings from 102 of 118 respondents (86%), excluding those who marked "not applicable".
- Relationships with instructors were highly rated by 108 of 125 respondents (86%), with 82 selecting very good.
- Accessible institute information was rated positively by 106 of 125 respondents (85%).
- Communication with learners was rated positively by 101 respondents (81%).
- Feeling respected and valued received the strongest results, with 114 of 126 respondents (90%) giving favorable ratings.
- Inclusion in class discussions or group projects was positively rated by 111 respondents (89%).
- Interaction with peers was rated favorably by 103 respondents (82%).
- Engagement in non-academic events and activities was rated positively by 89 of 116 respondents (77%), excluding those who selected "not applicable".

These results suggest that most learners had strong academic and social experiences, particularly in areas of instructor relationships, inclusion, and respect within the learning environment.

Table 17. Please rate the following aspects of your program and experience at this institute.

| Aspect | Very good | Good | Adequate | Poor | Very poor | Not applicable | N |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-----------|----------------|-----|
| Feeling respected and valued | 86 | 28 | 7 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 126 |
| Feeling included in class discussions or group projects | 85 | 26 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 125 |
| Relationship with instructors | 82 | 26 | 12 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 125 |
| Communication with learners | 69 | 32 | 17 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 125 |
| Quality of program instruction | 67 | 42 | 11 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 126 |
| Amount of practical experience during the in-school portion of the training | 65 | 37 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 126 |
| Interaction with peers | 65 | 38 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 126 |
| Accessible institute information | 58 | 48 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 125 |
| Engagement in non-academic events and activities at the institute | 54 | 35 | 15 | 5 | 0 | 9 | 125 |
| | | | | | | | |

| Aspect | Very good | Good | Adequate | Poor | Very poor | Not applicable | N |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-----------|----------------|------|
| Feeling respected and valued | 68% | 22% | 6% | 0% | 2% | 1% | 100% |
| Feeling included in class discussions or group projects | 67% | 21% | 6% | 2% | 0% | 2% | 99% |
| Relationship with instructors | 65% | 21% | 10% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 99% |
| Communication with learners | 55% | 25% | 13% | 0% | 1% | 2% | 99% |
| Quality of program instruction | 53% | 33% | 9% | 2% | 1% | 1% | 100% |
| Amount of practical experience during the in-school portion of the training | 52% | 29% | 9% | 0% | 1% | 6% | 100% |
| Interaction with peers | 52% | 30% | 13% | 1% | 2% | 2% | 100% |
| Accessible institute information | 46% | 38% | 10% | 1% | 0% | 2% | 99% |
| Engagement in non-academic events and activities at the institute | 43% | 28% | 12% | 4% | 0% | 7% | 99% |

Skill Development Outcomes

Participants were also asked to rate how helpful their program was in developing a range of academic, personal, and career-related skills (Table 18). Overall, most respondents found the program to be helpful or very helpful:

- The most positively rated (“Helpful” or “Very helpful”) skills were learning on your own (91%), reading and comprehending material (90%), self-confidence and self-esteem (89%), preparing for further education (88%), working effectively with others (88%), effective communication (87%), and analyzing and thinking critically (85%).
- A smaller but still substantial group found the program helpful for becoming more active in the community (81%), clear and concise writing (78%), and preparing for employment (75%).
- Out of 39 respondents who attended the institute to improve their First Nations language skills, 33 (or 85%) found the program to be helpful or very helpful.

These results suggest that the programs were broadly effective in supporting academic and personal growth, with particularly strong outcomes in communication, confidence, and preparation for further education.

Table 18. How helpful was the program at this institute in developing the following skills?

| Skill | Very helpful | Helpful | Not very helpful | Not at all helpful | Don't know | Not applicable | N |
|---|--------------|---------|------------------|--------------------|------------|----------------|------|
| Conversing in your First Nations language | 51 | 36 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 13 | 124 |
| Clear and concise writing | 52 | 45 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 15 | 124 |
| Preparing for employment | 57 | 36 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 22 | 124 |
| Effective communication | 65 | 44 | 7 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 125 |
| Reading and comprehending material appropriate to your field of study | 61 | 51 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 125 |
| Analyzing and thinking critically | 59 | 48 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 125 |
| Improving your self-confidence and self-esteem | 65 | 46 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 125 |
| Becoming more active in your community | 50 | 51 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 12 | 125 |
| Working effectively with others | 62 | 47 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 12 | 125 |
| Learning on your own | 61 | 52 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 125 |
| Preparing for further education | 72 | 38 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 10 | 125 |
| | | | | | | | |
| Conversing in your First Nations language | 41% | 29% | 11% | 5% | 3% | 10% | 100% |
| Clear and concise writing | 42% | 36% | 5% | 2% | 2% | 12% | 100% |
| Effective communication | 52% | 35% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 4% | 100% |
| Reading and comprehending material appropriate to your field of study | 49% | 41% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 5% | 100% |
| Analyzing and thinking critically | 47% | 38% | 2% | 1% | 2% | 10% | 100% |
| Improving your self-confidence and self-esteem | 52% | 37% | 4% | 2% | 2% | 4% | 100% |
| Becoming more active in your community | 40% | 41% | 6% | 2% | 2% | 10% | 100% |
| Preparing for employment | 46% | 29% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 18% | 100% |
| Working effectively with others | 50% | 38% | 2% | 1% | 0% | 10% | 100% |
| Learning on your own | 49% | 42% | 5% | 1% | 0% | 4% | 100% |
| Preparing for further education | 58% | 30% | 2% | 2% | 0% | 8% | 100% |

Learner Well-Being

When asked to rate their physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being as learners at the institute, 58 respondents (46%) described their well-being as excellent, and 49 (39%) rated it as good (Table 19). A smaller number rated their well-being as fair (15 respondents, 12%) or very poor (3 respondents, 2%). These results suggest that most learners experienced positive overall well-being during their time at their institute.

Table 19. How would you rate your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being as a learner at this institute?

| Well-being | Count | Percent |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Excellent | 58 | 46% |
| Good | 49 | 39% |
| Fair | 15 | 12% |
| Poor | 0 | 0% |
| Very poor | 3 | 2% |
| Total | 125 | 100% |

Satisfaction with Learner Supports

Survey respondents rated their satisfaction with various institute supports (Table 20). Overall satisfaction levels were high, particularly for culturally grounded and basic needs supports.

The highest-rated supports were cultural activities and workshops (72% satisfied or very satisfied), advising (69%), technical support (67%), career planning services (66%), food services (65%), and strategies for success (65%). High satisfaction was also reported for access to Elders (60%).

Supports such as community engagement, holistic wellness, and services for learners with disabilities received moderate satisfaction levels (58%-60%). However, many respondents selected "not applicable" or "don't know" for these services, suggesting variable awareness or availability. Tutoring, financial support, and transportation assistance were positively rated by most users, though higher proportions of respondents were neutral or unaware of these services. Daycare or childcare had the lowest awareness and usage, with 41% selecting "not applicable" and only 30% expressing satisfaction.

These results suggest that while many support services are well-received, increased visibility and access—particularly for tutoring, disability supports, and childcare—could further enhance learner experiences.

Table 20. How would you rate the following supports at this institute?

| Support | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | Not applicable / not aware | Don't know | N |
|--|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------|------|
| Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities) | 54 | 34 | 13 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 122 |
| Food supports and services | 53 | 27 | 16 | 1 | 1 | 21 | 4 | 123 |
| Elders to support learners | 49 | 24 | 22 | 7 | 2 | 13 | 6 | 123 |
| Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management) | 46 | 34 | 19 | 5 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 123 |
| Supports for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities) | 40 | 31 | 22 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 7 | 123 |
| Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses) | 40 | 40 | 14 | 0 | 1 | 24 | 3 | 122 |
| Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access) | 40 | 41 | 17 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 6 | 122 |
| Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs) | 39 | 33 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 18 | 8 | 122 |
| Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements) | 37 | 48 | 15 | 2 | 1 | 15 | 4 | 122 |
| Transportation or transit to and from the institute | 34 | 29 | 14 | 4 | 3 | 31 | 8 | 123 |
| Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance) | 33 | 33 | 25 | 1 | 2 | 20 | 9 | 123 |
| Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members) | 32 | 47 | 17 | 3 | 2 | 14 | 7 | 122 |
| Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a learner service centre) | 32 | 41 | 12 | 3 | 1 | 26 | 8 | 123 |
| Daycare or childcare | 21 | 16 | 17 | 2 | 1 | 50 | 16 | 123 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities) | 44% | 28% | 11% | 2% | 2% | 7% | 6% | 100% |
| Food supports and services | 43% | 22% | 13% | 1% | 1% | 17% | 3% | 100% |
| Elders to support learners | 40% | 20% | 18% | 6% | 2% | 11% | 5% | 100% |
| Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management) | 37% | 28% | 15% | 4% | 2% | 11% | 2% | 100% |
| Supports for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities) | 33% | 25% | 18% | 1% | 2% | 16% | 6% | 100% |
| Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses) | 33% | 33% | 11% | 0% | 1% | 20% | 2% | 100% |
| Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access) | 33% | 34% | 14% | 3% | 2% | 10% | 5% | 100% |

| Support | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | Not applicable / not aware | Don't know | N |
|--|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------|------|
| Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs) | 32% | 27% | 14% | 3% | 2% | 15% | 7% | 100% |
| Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements) | 30% | 39% | 12% | 2% | 1% | 12% | 3% | 100% |
| Transportation or transit to and from the institute | 28% | 24% | 11% | 3% | 2% | 25% | 7% | 100% |
| Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance) | 27% | 27% | 20% | 1% | 2% | 16% | 7% | 100% |
| Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members) | 26% | 39% | 14% | 2% | 2% | 11% | 6% | 100% |
| Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a learner service centre) | 26% | 33% | 10% | 2% | 1% | 21% | 7% | 100% |
| Daycare or childcare | 17% | 13% | 14% | 2% | 1% | 41% | 13% | 100% |

Learners' Priorities for Supports

When asked which supports would be most helpful in completing their education goals (selecting up to three), respondents most frequently identified financial support (42 respondents, 37%) as a top priority (Table 21). This was followed by strategies for success, such as programs focused on studying and time management (33 respondents, 29%), and career planning services (32 respondents, 28%).

Other frequently identified supports included cultural activities and workshops and food supports (each selected by 27 respondents, 24%), as well as tutoring (20 respondents, 18%) and supports for students with disabilities or diverse abilities (19 respondents, 17%).

Less frequently selected, but still valued, were advising (16%), Elder support (21%), holistic wellness programs (12%), and transportation assistance (13%). Fewer respondents identified community engagement, technical support, childcare, or other supports as critical to meeting their goals.

These findings suggest that respondents placed the greatest value on tangible academic and financial supports, while also recognizing the importance of culturally relevant services and basic needs like food and transportation.

Table 21. What supports would be most helpful to you in completing your education goal(s)? (Select up to three) (N=113)

| Support | Count | Percent |
|--|-------|---------|
| Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance) | 42 | 37% |
| Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management) | 33 | 29% |
| Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses) | 32 | 28% |
| Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities) | 27 | 24% |
| Food supports and services | 27 | 24% |
| Elders to support students | 24 | 21% |
| Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a student service centre) | 20 | 18% |
| Supports for students with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities) | 19 | 17% |
| Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements) | 18 | 16% |

| Support | Count | Percent |
|--|-------|---------|
| Transportation or transit to and from the institute | 15 | 13% |
| Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs) | 13 | 12% |
| Daycare or childcare | 12 | 11% |
| Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members) | 11 | 10% |
| Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access) | 8 | 7% |
| Other | 6 | 5% |

In open-ended responses, participants shared thoughtful suggestions and concerns about supports that would help them succeed.

Several emphasized the need for better planning and communication, noting that poor preparation in program delivery has caused unnecessary stress. There was a call for consistent, sustained support, particularly for learners who show initiative, with one respondent expressing frustration over repeated funding disruptions.

One learner new to language learning desired improved teaching and group learning supports, acknowledging the challenge of their first attempt at language acquisition. Specific program suggestions included adding a Licensed Practical Nursing program, incorporating quizzes to encourage study habits, and shifting curriculum to extend oral language learning across both first and second years rather than prioritizing writing too early.

These comments reflect desires for clearer program structures, increased academic and financial stability, and pedagogical approaches that better align with learners' readiness and cultural goals.

Improving Services

One hundred and thirteen participants shared a variety of ideas for improving services at their institutes. While many expressed satisfaction, others provided constructive feedback across the following themes.

Eighteen learners emphasized the need for clearer communication, planning, and advance notice for class schedules, deadlines, and funding information. Common concerns included last-minute class announcements, delayed grade reporting, lack of transparency in sponsorship and admissions processes, and difficulty planning life around school due to institutional delays.

Twenty respondents identified the need for additional financial support, especially:

- Living allowances, particularly for low-income learners and those balancing full-time work and school
- Food and gas vouchers or honoraria for attendance
- Support with childcare and transportation

Fifteen learners raised concerns about instructor quality and staffing, especially commented on:

- Instructor availability, with requests for more full-time instructors and Elders in classrooms
- Teacher preparedness and reliability
- Requests for new programs like Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN)
- Need for multiple advisors to improve responsiveness

Twelve learners highlighted a desire for stronger mental health and emotional supports, including:

- Access to counseling and wellness programs
- Support for learners with disabilities and learning challenges
- More empathetic responses to youth mental health and community trauma.

Fourteen learners requested more learning materials and academic supports such as more learning resources, including quizzes, handouts, language audio recordings, and videos, additional tutoring services, more emphasis on oral language learning before written instruction, and provision of breaks and wellness-oriented classroom structures.

Six learners provided recommendations regarding facilities and technology. Suggestions included:

- Larger or better-equipped classroom spaces
- Improved access to tech support, especially for online platforms like Moodle
- Continuation of Zoom-based courses for those studying remotely

Twenty-four respondents expressed satisfaction with current services, offering praise for:

- Supportive and kind staff
- Cultural relevance of the programs
- The personal and community impact of their learning
- Statements like “Everything is running smoothly,” “They’re doing great,” and “I’m satisfied with everything” were common.

Satisfaction with Education Received

When asked to rate their satisfaction with the education received from their program, most respondents expressed high levels of satisfaction (Table 22). Seventy-eight respondents (66%) reported being very satisfied, while 34 (29%) were satisfied. Only a small number reported being dissatisfied (3%) or very dissatisfied (1%), and three respondents (3%) indicated they did not know. These results suggest that overall satisfaction with the educational experience at the institute is very strong.

Table 22. How satisfied are you with the education you received from your program at this institute?

| Satisfaction | Count | Percent |
|-------------------|------------|-------------|
| Very Satisfied | 78 | 66% |
| Satisfied | 34 | 29% |
| Dissatisfied | 3 | 3% |
| Very Dissatisfied | 1 | 1% |
| Don't know | 3 | 3% |
| Total | 119 | 100% |

One hundred learners provided written comments describing their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with education.

Thirty-five learners highlighted the dedication, patience, and helpfulness of instructors and support staff as a key reason for their satisfaction. They felt instructors explained materials clearly, were available and approachable, and encouraged learners through challenges

- “The instructors are excellent and full of knowledge.”
- “Even when I went through a hard time, they helped me get back on track.”

Twenty-two learners appreciated programs grounded in their First Nations language, culture, and land-based learning, indicating that cultural relevance helped foster identity and healing and that learning in community-based cohorts created a sense of belonging:

- “Being on the land, eating with Elders, and hearing my daughter speak our language in her dreams was deeply healing.”
- “I love that our program is all verbal in the first year—it feels right.”

Fifteen learners valued flexible, accessible learning formats such as online and part-time courses, programs close to home, and support for mature or working learners

- “I can work full time and still attend class—this makes a huge difference.”
- “I live in Merritt, and Zoom made it possible to take the class.”

Also, 17 learners noted that supports such as food, transportation, and living allowance, academic check-ins and tutoring contributed greatly to their ability to stay in school.

- “Meals and transit made it possible to focus on school.”
- “Tutoring once a week helped me get back on track.”

Seven learners noted challenges, such as inconsistent scheduling and late or poor communication, lack of structured curriculum and basic scaffolding for language learners, instructor or TA absences, and disorganization.

- “We didn’t learn the basics before being asked to read complex materials.”
- “Schedules were provided last minute—it was hard to plan life around school.”

Ten learners expressed desire for more academic support and resources such as more tutoring and Elder involvement and language audio recordings and beginner materials

- “We need worksheets, songs, and simple tools—many of us are like babies in the language.”
- “More support with English and higher-level math would help.”

A small number of learners (5) expressed clear dissatisfaction, citing lack of instructor presence, frequent classroom changes, and poor communication or lack of structure.

- “We were moved around daily, no consistent instructor.”
- “They just didn’t help.”

Overall, most respondents expressed high satisfaction, often highlighting the cultural grounding, supportive staff, and holistic environment of their learning experience. Criticisms included administrative disorganization, communication gaps, and the need for more scaffolding in language and academic content.

When asked whether they would choose the same program again based on their experiences, an overwhelming majority (110 out of 116 respondents (95%)) said “yes” (Table 23). Only 6 respondents (5%) indicated they would not select the same program again. These results reflect a high overall level of satisfaction and confidence in the value of the educational programs offered.

Table 23. Given your experiences in your program, would you select the same program again? (N=116)

| Select same program | Count | Percent |
|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| Yes | 110 | 95% |
| No | 6 | 5% |
| Total | 116 | 100% |

When asked how likely they are to recommend their institute to others, 84 out of 117 respondents (72%) said they are very likely to do so, and 24 (21%) said they are likely (Table 24). Only six respondents (5%) were neutral, and just three respondents (3%) were unlikely, very unlikely, or uncertain about recommending the program to others. These results indicate a strong level of endorsement and satisfaction among most learners.

Table 24. How likely are you to recommend this institute to others? (N=117)

| Likelihood | Count | Percent |
|---------------|------------|-------------|
| Very likely | 84 | 72% |
| Likely | 24 | 21% |
| Neutral | 6 | 5% |
| Unlikely | 1 | 1% |
| Very unlikely | 1 | 1% |
| Don't know | 1 | 1% |
| Total | 117 | 100% |

Ninety respondents elaborated on why they would or would not recommend their institute by providing written comments, many of which echoed themes from previous questions. Thirty learners expressed strong support for their institute, citing a welcoming and supportive learning environment as a key reason they would recommend it to others. They frequently described instructors, Elders, and support staff as kind, patient, and attentive, emphasizing that they felt respected and encouraged throughout their studies.

Several learners appreciated the inclusive atmosphere, with one noting that they “Felt included, not singled out... very open and inviting.” These supportive relationships made a lasting impression and were often cited as a reason they encouraged friends and family to enroll.

Cultural relevance and the opportunity to engage in language revitalization and land-based learning were also frequently cited, with approximately 20 learners highlighting these features. Respondents valued the presence of fluent speakers, Elders, and culturally grounded curricula that allowed them to deepen their connections to language, culture, and identity. Some described the experience as healing and transformational. One learner shared that both they and their daughter began speaking their language in dreams, while another noted that learning with community members created strong intergenerational bonds.

About ten respondents pointed to the flexibility and accessibility of the programs as a major benefit. Online learning options were praised for enabling participation by those with full-time jobs, family commitments, or who lived in remote communities. Being able to learn close to home was seen as a key factor in supporting educational success and reducing stress.

Practical support was also recognized as important, with approximately 12 respondents mentioning meals, transit, tutoring, and living allowances as factors that helped them stay committed to their studies. These supports reduced financial and logistical barriers, allowing learners to focus more fully on their learning. In several cases, learners emphasized that these forms of assistance were essential to their continued participation.

At the same time, around 10 respondents from different institutes expressed critical feedback or reservations about recommending the program. The most common concern was a lack of consistent communication and organization, with some citing delayed schedules, unclear expectations, and instructor absences. Others raised issues with curriculum pacing, particularly in language programs where some felt that written instruction was introduced too soon, without enough foundational oral practice. A few learners also mentioned limited program options or challenges accessing culturally relevant support from outside the core community.

Despite these critiques, most of respondents who had concerns indicated that they valued the program overall and believed in its potential. Learners frequently expressed a hope that the program would continue to grow, improve, and expand so that more people could benefit from it. Overall, the responses suggest that most learners would recommend their institute to others, especially for its cultural strength, community-based approach, and meaningful support systems.

Barriers to class attendance and accessing funding

The most-reported barrier to attending classes was health-related challenges, identified by 45 (out of 117) respondents (38%) (Table 25). Job responsibilities and family or childcare obligations were each cited by 32 respondents (27%), followed by financial difficulties (21 respondents, 18%) and transportation challenges (16 respondents, 14%). Other barriers included housing issues (12 respondents, 10%), cultural responsibilities (11 respondents, 9%), and feeling socially isolated or unwelcome (10 respondents, 9%). A smaller number (7 respondents, 6%) faced challenges due to insufficient technology or internet access, and 8 respondents (7%) selected “Other.”

It is notable that 34 respondents (29%) reported that they had not experienced any challenges that prevented them from attending classes, suggesting that while barriers exist for many, a substantial portion of learners have been able to maintain regular attendance.

Table 25. Have any of the following situations prevented you from attending classes at this institute? (Select all that apply) (N=117)

| Challenge | Count | Percent |
|---|-------|---------|
| Health-related challenges (physical or mental health) | 45 | 38% |

| Challenge | Count | Percent |
|---|-------|---------|
| Job responsibilities | 32 | 27% |
| Family or childcare responsibilities | 32 | 27% |
| Financial difficulties | 21 | 18% |
| Transportation challenges | 16 | 14% |
| Housing challenges | 12 | 10% |
| Cultural responsibilities | 11 | 9% |
| Feeling socially isolated or unwelcome | 10 | 9% |
| Insufficient technology or internet access | 7 | 6% |
| I have not faced any challenges that have prevented me from attending classes | 34 | 29% |
| Other | 8 | 7% |

The most frequently reported barriers to accessing funding were personal and family responsibilities such as childcare or eldercare (35 respondents out of 114, 31%) and insufficient funding for living expenses like rent, food, and transportation (33 respondents, 29%) (Table 26). Conflicting work schedules with class times were also noted by 21 respondents (18%), while lack of awareness or information about funding sources affected 18 respondents (16%). A smaller number identified geographic or transportation challenges (11 respondents, 10%), and five respondents (4%) selected “Other.”

It is important to note that 49 respondents (43%) reported that they did not experience any barriers in accessing funding, indicating that while many learners face challenges, a significant portion are able to access the financial support they need.

Table 26. What are the main barriers you have experienced in accessing funding to complete your education at this institute? (Select up to three) (N=114)

| Barrier | Count | Percent |
|--|-------|---------|
| No barriers experienced | 49 | 43% |
| Personal and family responsibilities (for example, childcare, eldercare) | 35 | 31% |
| Insufficient funding for living expenses (for example, rent, food, transportation) | 33 | 29% |
| Conflicting work schedules with class times | 21 | 18% |
| Lack of awareness or information about available funding sources | 18 | 16% |
| Geographic or transportation challenges | 11 | 10% |
| Other | 5 | 4% |

Supports provided by the institute

Many learners shared that their institute made meaningful accommodations for non-academic responsibilities, particularly through flexible scheduling and opportunities to complete missed coursework. Several respondents noted that they were able to attend evening or part-time classes or make up assignments and tests on their own time. This flexibility allowed them to

continue participating in their program while balancing jobs, caregiving, or other obligations. One respondent shared, “They allow make-up time to complete the course load and homework assignments,” while another said, “Some classes are on Zoom, which helps when I have to travel for work.”

Equally important was the role of supportive and understanding staff. Many learners expressed appreciation for instructors and advisors who listened, responded empathetically, and worked with them to find solutions. Open communication was encouraged, and learners felt empowered to explain personal or family-related challenges without fear of judgment. As one learner noted, “The staff and instructors are understanding,” and another added, “I communicate with the advisor, so they understand why I’m experiencing challenges.”

Some learners also benefited from financial and logistical supports, such as gas vouchers, bus passes, or monthly gift cards for attendance. These resources were especially appreciated by learners with low income, those commuting from rural areas, or those balancing full-time work. A learner shared, “We receive Walmart gift cards for attendance—it helps a bunch so I can get what we need for the month.” Others mentioned receiving fuel reimbursement or assistance with transportation during difficult periods.

Technology access and online learning options were another important support mechanism. Institutes that provided online classes, recorded lessons, or laptops helped learners continue their studies even when home responsibilities or health issues prevented them from attending in person. One learner commented, “They gave me a laptop so I could work from home while caring for my son,” while another emphasized that having recordings of classes helped them catch up when emergencies arose.

Some students also reported that institutes showed respect for cultural and family obligations, such as funerals or allowing time for community responsibilities. A few learners expressed appreciation that Elders or family members were included in programming, which helped them stay connected to both their education and their community values. “They support my elderly mother by including her in the AGM,” one respondent shared.

However, seven learners indicated that more support is needed. Four reported that their institute did not provide help or did not recognize the complexity of their responsibilities. Others described challenges when previously online programs were abruptly shifted to in-person formats, adding financial and emotional strain. One learner explained, “The sudden change from online to mandatory in-person put me into debt. I’m grateful, but the stress was overwhelming.”

Overall, many learners felt that their institutes made genuine efforts to accommodate non-academic responsibilities through flexibility, empathy, and basic support. However, the feedback also highlights the need for greater consistency, communication, and adaptability, especially when unexpected changes arise or when learners are managing complex life circumstances.

Additional Feedback

At the end of the survey, learners were asked for additional feedback about their institute and program. Some of these comments reinforced or repeated earlier feedback included in other open-ended questions.

Of approximately 65 learners who provided further open-ended responses about their educational experience, fifteen expressed strong appreciation for the instructors, Elders, and staff who supported their learning. Comments praised the passion, knowledge, and commitment of educators, noting that they were “great and inspiring,” “phenomenal,” and “the best.” Several learners specifically mentioned feeling lucky to have instructors who made the class enjoyable and meaningful. These expressions of gratitude highlight the central role that respectful and culturally grounded relationships play in creating positive learning environments.

Eighteen learners expressed overall satisfaction with their programs, describing experiences as “great,” “enriching,” or “very exciting.” Many had no complaints and would recommend the program to others. One noted, “It is a rare opportunity - no such thing exists in our community,” highlighting the importance of culturally responsive education in First Nations communities.

Ten learners emphasized the significance of language and cultural revitalization. One shared: “This is what grounded me to language and land and all living things.” Others suggested improvements like prioritizing oral learning over writing in earlier program stages to better support fluency and mirror traditional learning styles.

Eight learners highlighted accessibility and flexibility as key program strengths, particularly valuing online learning options for those balancing caregiving responsibilities or living in remote areas. One participant noted, “I appreciate that these classes are being offered online and funded - it makes them accessible for me and my family.”

Six learners offered suggestions for improvement. These included calls for better communication, more diverse instruction, and improved administrative processes. One noted that having the same instructor for multiple years was both beneficial and limiting, while another expressed frustration with slow certification timelines that impacted their ability to

teach. Feedback like this signals a strong investment in the program and a desire to see it grow and evolve.

Eight learners shared structural or operational suggestions, such as expanding the hours of the campus gift shop to offer learner employment, or the need for facility upgrades (e.g., “TWMLC needs a new building”). These ideas reflect how closely learners connect their learning experience with the broader institutional context and community involvement.

A few respondents shared critical or mixed feedback. These included frustrations with specific administrative decisions, program design, or challenges with external support services such as post-secondary funders. For example, one learner described a “stress-filled and frustrating” experience due to communication issues related to financial support.

Further Improvements

Based on approximately 70 open-ended responses regarding potential improvements, several key themes emerged.

Twelve participants emphasized the importance of increasing academic supports, including tutoring, teaching assistants, and improved instructor preparation. Some suggested having more instructors available or full-time tutors for specific subjects like Math 11/12. Others recommended a clearer feedback system, more organized syllabi, and improved communication between teachers and learners. One learner explained that support outside of class, particularly for learners living away from the community, would help ease academic stress while maintaining cultural connection.

A second major theme (10 learners) focused on the structure and delivery of the program. While many learners appreciated online learning, some expressed concern about rushed content or inconsistent teaching staff. A few commented that hands-on learning, more class space, or dedicated time with Elders would enrich the learning experience. Several pointed out that consistency across instructors and better time management could improve learning outcomes.

Cultural integration and land-based learning were also highlighted. Learners suggested that programs incorporate more on-the-land learning and deeper connections with seasonal teachings. This included aligning content with traditional knowledge and using natural growth cycles as learning opportunities. Others advocated for engaging more Elders or building stronger cultural components into the curriculum.

Some learners emphasized the need for logistical and institutional improvements, such as better planning, updated technology, improved communication, and increased awareness of the program. Suggestions included improving band communication about the courses offered, expanding availability of private transportation and food services, and using social media to help bridge learners from one academic year to the next.

On the other hand, 18 learners explicitly stated that no improvements were needed. These learners felt the program met their needs and had no additional feedback beyond appreciation. Comments included “It was awesome,” “Nothing to improve,” and “Everything is good.” This indicates a generally high level of satisfaction among many participants.

Finally, a few responses offered individual reflections or mixed feedback. These included calls for more financial support due to inflation, stricter enforcement of classroom etiquette, or more support transitioning into the workforce. A few mentioned that the program was overwhelming at times or that more consistency with instructors would be helpful.

Conclusions

Overall, the 2024–2025 Learner Experience Survey provides insight into the strengths, challenges, and priorities of learners attending IAHLA member institutes. Responses from 126 learners across 19 member institutes indicate a high overall level of satisfaction with program instruction, culturally grounded learning environments, supportive staff, and flexible delivery models. Most respondents reported feeling respected, included, and confident in their educational journeys, key indicators of a positive and culturally safe learning experience.

Learners emphasized goals that reflect both personal and collective aspirations, such as obtaining credentials, contributing to their communities, revitalizing language and culture, and preparing for further education and employment. Their decision to attend IAHLA member institutes was often shaped by a combination of proximity, affordability, cultural relevance, and trusted relationships with instructors, Elders, and staff.

Learners identified a broad range of institutional supports that enhanced their well-being and academic success. Food services, cultural programming, financial supports, and advising were highly valued. However, the findings also identify areas for improvement. Learners called for greater consistency in communication and scheduling, stronger academic scaffolding, particularly in language instruction, more structured learning materials, increased mental health support, and expanded access to childcare and transportation.

While most respondents reported positive educational outcomes and skill development, barriers such as health-related challenges, caregiving responsibilities, and financial insecurity continue to affect attendance and funding access. Many learners appreciated the accommodation and understanding provided by staff, but others emphasized the need for more consistent and proactive institutional responses to complex life circumstances.

The feedback from learners affirms the important role IAHLA member institutes play in fostering community-rooted, culturally affirming, and responsive education. High satisfaction levels, strong learner recommendations, and meaningful learner reflections point to the value and impact of these programs. Attention to communication, cultural integration, learner support services, and institutional planning will be essential to further strengthen learner success and ensure that IAHLA member institutes continue to meet the many different needs of First Nations learners across British Columbia.

Appendix A: Learner Experience Survey

Introduction

Welcome! This survey is for learners enrolled in Indigenous-controlled adult and post-secondary educational institutes that are part of the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA). Your feedback is important. Both IAHLA and your institute want to learn more about your experiences as a learner.

What is IAHLA? The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA) is an independent non-profit society that supports and represents Indigenous-controlled adult and post-secondary institutes and adult education centres in British Columbia.

Is my school an IAHLA member institute? If your school is listed [here](#), you are eligible to complete this survey.

Prize Draw. Upon completing the survey, you will be entered into a **draw for one of fifteen \$100 prizes**.

How long will it take? The survey will take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete.

Why is this survey being conducted? The survey will help your institute / school / learning centre to:

- Understand learner success and satisfaction.
- Better tailor programs and services to meet learner needs and interests.
- Identify additional programs, services, or funding that may be needed.

The results will also help IAHLA understand the collective needs of our member institutes and their learners.

Your responses will be kept anonymous, and your participation is completely voluntary. Please do not provide any identifying information.

Questions? To learn more about the survey, please see our FAQ page.

FAQs

What is the purpose of this survey?

The Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association (IAHLA), with support from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), is gathering information about learner experiences and available supports through the IAHLA Learner Experience Survey.

Is my institute an IAHLA member?

A list of IAHLA Member Institutes:

- Ahousaht Education Authority
- Blueberry River First Nation Adult Centre
- Chemainus Native College
- Coastal Training Centre
- Cowichan Tribes - Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum
- En'owkin Centre
- Gitksan Wet'suwet'en Education Society
- Gitwangak Education Society
- Heiltsuk College
- Ittatsoo Learning Centre
- Ka:'yu:'k't'h'/Che:k'tles7et'h' First Nations
- K'ak'otlats'i School
- Kitamaat Valley Education Society
- Kwadacha Dune Tiyy
- Kyah Wiget Education Society
- Lip'alhayc Learning Centre (Nuxalk College)
- Muskoti Learning Centre - Saulteau First Nations
- Native Education College
- Neskonlith Education Department
- Nexw7áystwaý Training and Trades Centre
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- Ntamtqen Snmamayatn Adult Education
- NTC Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council (NETP)
- Pacheedaht First Nation
- Penelakut Island Learning Centre
- Penticton Indian Band Adult Education
- Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Centre
- Seabird College
- Shíshálh Nation
- Snuneymuxw First Nation / House of Learning
- St'át'imc Education Institute
- Stein Valley Nlakapamux School
- Stó:lō Nation
- St'uxwtews Education Centre
- Ted Williams Memorial Learning Centre
- Tl'azt'en Adult Learning Centre
- Ts'zil Learning Centre
- T̓silhqot'in National Government
- Tsay Keh Dene Learning Centre
- Wabsuwilaks'm Gitselasu Adult School
- Wahmeesh Learning Center
- Wilp Wilxo'oskwhl Nisga'a Institute
- W̱SÁNEĆ College

Who can respond to the survey?

All learners currently enrolled in an IAHLA member institute are invited to participate.

What kinds of questions will be asked?

The survey asks about your experiences and available supports at your IAHLA member institute. It also includes demographic questions to help the institute understand the characteristics of the learners responding.

Do I have to answer every question?

The only required question is the name of your IAHLA member institute. You can skip any other questions by leaving them blank and moving to the next question.

How is the data reported?

Data will be reported in aggregate form with IAHLA and your institute, ensuring no individuals are identified. Demographic information is only reported at the IAHLA sector level, not at the institute level.

Can I answer on my tablet or smartphone?

Yes, the survey is compatible with tablets and smartphones.

Do I have to complete the survey all at once?

No, you can select “Save and continue later” at the top right of each survey page. You’ll enter your email to receive a link to continue later. The email will come from Survey: IAHLA Learner Experience Survey (noreply@alchemer.com). If it’s not in your inbox, check your junk folder. We don’t store your email or keep a copy of the sent email.

How are my responses kept anonymous if you collect my contact information for a prize draw or to continue the survey later?

Your survey responses are stored separately from any contact information provided for the prize draw, and we do not retain the email used to continue the survey later. We will not link your responses to your contact information. All information is confidential and anonymous. We do not collect IP addresses or geolocation data.

How was the survey developed?

The survey was developed based on direction from the IAHLA Board. Some questions are drawn from the BC Student Outcomes Surveys to collect comparable data on IAHLA learner experiences.

More questions or technical difficulties?

The survey is being conducted by Directions Evidence and Policy Research Group on behalf of IAHLA. For questions or technical difficulties, contact _____ at Directions. All communication will be kept confidential.

Collection notice

Directions is conducting this survey using Alchemer software, which provides the necessary security and privacy measures to protect your information. The survey does not collect personal information as defined under B.C. PIPA. Please avoid entering any details that could identify yourself or others in your responses. Some questions request demographic information to help understand the characteristics of respondents; these questions are optional and will not be used to identify individual learners.

The information collected will help IAHLA member institutes better understand learner experiences. Survey responses will remain anonymous, and no administrative decisions about individuals will be made based on this survey.

After completing the survey, you may enter a prize draw. If you choose to participate, you will need to provide your name, email, and mailing address so FNEC can send the prize to winners. This contact information is stored separately from survey responses, and it cannot be linked to your survey answers.

Questions

1. **In which IAHLA member institute are you currently enrolled?** *[dropdown menu of IAHLA member institutes]* *[required question]*

Academic Goals

2. **What are your goals for attending [IAHLA member institute name]?** (Select up to three)
- ☐ To gain skills for employment or a specific career
 - ☐ To pursue further education or training
 - ☐ To connect with my culture and heritage
 - ☐ To earn a certificate, diploma, or degree
 - ☐ To improve my skills in a First Nations language
 - ☐ To contribute to my community
 - ☐ Other - please specify: _____
3. **Why did you choose to attend [IAHLA member institute name] instead of another educational institution?** (Select all that apply)
- ☐ I can study in my community
 - ☐ It offers the programs and courses I need
 - ☐ The environment is culturally relevant
 - ☐ I feel supported here
 - ☐ My friends and/or family attended here
 - ☐ It's more affordable than going somewhere else
 - ☐ I receive a living allowance to attend [IAHLA member institute name].
 - ☐ My program fees are covered by [IAHLA member institute name]
 - ☐ Other - please specify: _____

Educational History

4. **Did you take any post-secondary education before enrolling at [IAHLA member institute name]?**
- Yes
 - No
 - Don't know
5. (if Yes to previous question) **What certificates, diplomas, or degrees did you complete before enrolling at [IAHLA member institute name]?** (select all that apply)
- Trades program citation, certificate, or diploma
 - Certificate, diploma, or associate degree (other than trades) below Bachelor level
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Certificate or diploma above Bachelor level

- Graduate degree(s) (includes Master's, Doctorate, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Optometry)
- Did not complete any
- Don't know

6. (If Yes to post-secondary education question) How long ago did you attend a post-secondary program?

- Within the past year
- 1–3 years ago
- 4–6 years ago
- 7–10 years ago
- More than 10 years ago

7. Did you ever take upgrading, access, bridging, or other preparatory courses during or prior to your studies at [IAHLA member institute name]?

- No, did not take any
- Took Adult Basic Education (ABE) courses
- Took Pre-Employment program

8. Did you participate in any paid or unpaid work experience as part of your program?

- Yes
- No

Future Plans

9. What are your plans for the next academic year (starting September 2025) (Check all that apply)

☐ Continue studying

☐ Work at a paid job or business

☐ Don't know

☐ Other - Please specify: _____ *

10. (if selected "Continue studying" in question above)

"IAHLA member institute" refers to an Indigenous-controlled post-secondary education or learning society, institute, college, school, or adult learning centre. Click [here](#) for a full list of IAHLA member institutes.

"Post-secondary institute" refers to all other public or private post-secondary education institutions (e.g., learning society, institute, institution, university, college, school, or adult learning centre) that are not Indigenous-controlled. This does not include high school. Examples of public or private institutions include Academy of Learning College, British Columbia Institute of Technology,

Coast Mountain College, College of New Caledonia, Columbia College, and University of British Columbia.

Where do you plan to study in the next academic year?

- () [IAHLA member institute name]
 () Another IAHLA member institute
 () A post-secondary institute that is not Indigenous-controlled
 () Don't know
 () Other - Please specify: _____ *

Education Evaluation and Engagement

11. Please rate the following aspects of your program and experience at [IAHLA member institute name].

| | Very good | Good | Adequate | Poor | Very poor | Not applicable | Don't know |
|---|-----------|------|----------|------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| Quality of program instruction | | | | | | | |
| Amount of practical experience during the in-school portion of the training | | | | | | | |
| Relationship with instructors | | | | | | | |
| Accessible institute information | | | | | | | |
| Communication with learners | | | | | | | |
| Feeling respected and valued | | | | | | | |
| Feeling included in class discussions or group projects | | | | | | | |
| Interaction with peers | | | | | | | |
| Engagement in non-academic events and activities at the institute | | | | | | | |

12. How helpful was the program at [IAHLA member institute name] in developing the following skills?

| | Very helpful | Helpful | Not very helpful | Not at all helpful | Not applicable | Don't know |
|---|--------------|---------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| Clear and concise writing | | | | | | |
| Effective communication | | | | | | |
| Reading and comprehending material appropriate to your field of study | | | | | | |
| Working effectively with others | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Analyzing and thinking critically | | | | | | |
| Learning on your own | | | | | | |
| Improving your self-confidence and self-esteem | | | | | | |
| Becoming more active in your community | | | | | | |
| Conversing in your First Nations language | | | | | | |
| Preparing for further education | | | | | | |
| Preparing for employment | | | | | | |

Well-being and Supports

13. How would you rate your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being as a learner at [IAHLA member institute name]?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor
- Very poor

14. How would you rate the following supports at [IAHLA member institute name]?

| Support | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | Not applicable / not aware of this support | Don't know |
|--|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------|-------------------|--|------------|
| Elders to support learners | | | | | | | |
| Cultural activities and workshops (for example, language classes, land-based learning activities) | | | | | | | |
| Community engagement (for example, opportunities to connect with local First Nations leaders or community members) | | | | | | | |
| Holistic health and wellness supports (for example, traditional healing practices, wellness programs) | | | | | | | |
| Supports for learners with disabilities or diverse abilities (for example, challenges with thinking, moving, hearing, seeing, emotions, or behavior; has difficulty learning; or has exceptional talents or abilities) | | | | | | | |
| Advising (for example, program planning, degree requirements) | | | | | | | |
| Tutoring (for example, within a program or through a learner service centre) | | | | | | | |

| Support | Very satisfied | Satisfied | Neutral | Dissatisfied | Very dissatisfied | Not applicable / not aware of this support | Don't know |
|--|----------------|-----------|---------|--------------|-------------------|--|------------|
| Career planning (for example, job search skills, opportunities to connect with businesses) | | | | | | | |
| Strategies for success (for example, program that addresses studying, time management) | | | | | | | |
| Financial support (scholarships, awards, or bursaries; not including living allowance) | | | | | | | |
| Technical support (for example, troubleshooting computers or Internet access) | | | | | | | |
| Daycare or childcare | | | | | | | |
| Food supports and services | | | | | | | |
| Transportation or transit to and from the institute | | | | | | | |
| Other: _____ | | | | | | | |

15. What supports would be most helpful to you in *completing* your education goal(s)? (select up to three)

[Present the same options as in the previous question, allow to pick up to three]

16. How could the services and supports provided by [IAHLA member institute name] be improved?

Overall Satisfaction

17. How satisfied are you with the education you received from your program at [IAHLA member institute name]?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied
- Don't know

Please explain the reasons for your level of satisfaction with [IAHLA member institute name]. We are interested in hearing more about what has and has not been working well for you.

18. Given your experiences in your program, would you select the same program again?

- Yes
- No

19. How likely are you to recommend [IAHLA member institute name] to others?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neutral
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Don't know

Please explain why you would or would not recommend [IAHLA member institute name] to others.

Challenges

20. Have any of the following situations prevented you from attending classes at [IAHLA member institute name]? (Select all that apply)

| | |
|--|--|
| Financial difficulties | |
| Job responsibilities | |
| Family or childcare responsibilities | |
| Housing challenges | |
| Cultural responsibilities | |
| Feeling socially isolated or unwelcome | |
| Insufficient technology or internet access | |
| Transportation challenges | |
| Health-related challenges (physical or mental health) | |
| Other (Please specify): _____* | |
| I have not faced any challenges that have prevented me from attending classes [exclusive option] | |

21. What are the main barriers you have experienced in accessing funding to complete your education at [IAHLA member institute name]? (Select up to three)

- Insufficient funding for living expenses (for example, rent, food, transportation)

- Conflicting work schedules with class times
- Personal and family responsibilities (for example, childcare, eldercare)
- Lack of awareness or information about available funding sources
- Geographic or transportation challenges
- No barriers experienced (*exclusive option*)
- Other (Please specify): _____

22. If you have non-academic responsibilities that impact your experience, how does [IAHLA member institute name] accommodate these responsibilities?

Additional Comments and Suggestions

23. Do you have any further comments to add about your educational experience or your program?

24. How could the education or training in your program be improved?

Demographics and Personal Profile

The following optional questions aim to gather information about the characteristics of learners who have participated in this survey. The results will be aggregated across the IAHLA sector and will not be reported at the individual school level.

25. What gender do you identify with (woman, man, Two-Spirit, non-binary, etc.)?

26. What is your age?

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ 21–30
- ☐ 31–40
- ☐ 41–50
- ☐ 51–60
- ☐ Over 60

27. Are you a former child or youth in care with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

28. Do you identify yourself as:

- ☐ First Nations (status)
- ☐ First Nations (non-status)
- ☐ Métis
- ☐ Inuit
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Other (Please specify): _____

29. How many individuals in your household rely on you for support?

- ☐ None
- ☐ 1
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ More than 4

30. Did you relocate from your home community to attend [IAHLA member institute]?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

Thank you for completing the survey!