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FORUM RESEARCH INC.

Contact North | Contact Nord supporting Indigenous online students' educational goals and beyond

Toronto, October 24th, 2019 – A mixed-method study was conducted on behalf of Contact North | Contact Nord; an organization helping underserved Ontarians in small, rural, remote, Indigenous and Francophone communities access training and education without having to leave their community. A province-wide learner experience survey was conducted with 102 Indigenous online students who used Contact North | Contact Nord's services, and two online chat groups (focus groups) were held, with 6 Indigenous online students per group. The objective was to understand the experiences of Indigenous online students who used Contact North | Contact Nord's services to pursue their education and training over the past year.

9-in-10 students indicated using Contact North | Contact Nord's services to complete their online programs and courses helped them achieve their goal

Nearly 7-in-10 (67%) students across all educational institutions; university, college, Indigenous institute, and secondary school shared the same goal—to obtain a diploma, certificate, or degree. Almost 9-in-10 (TOP2: 88%) of all students reported the online program(s) or course(s) they took contributed to achieving their goals.

Those most likely to agree the course(s) they took contributed to achieving their goals were those enrolled in university (TOP2: 95%), followed by those enrolled in secondary school (TOP2: 91%), college (87%), and an Indigenous institute (TOP2: 78%).

Students indicated Contact North | Contact Nord supported them beyond their educational goal of getting a diploma, certificate, or degree. Students expressed other goals such as:

- To help create a better life for their family
- To be a good role model for their children
- To feel a sense of pride in having completed their diploma/certificate/degree
- To gain learning/education that will allow them to help their community

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- To gain enough credits to allow them to pursue post-secondary education
- To help them make a career change and/or better compete for the limited jobs available in their community

The vast majority of students felt they were successful in achieving their goals. Students noted achievements such as securing a job, their confidence in their knowledge and abilities, and their capacity to pursue education while also caring for a family.

8-in-10 (TOP2: 81%) of all students said Contact North | Contact Nord provided support that enabled them in achieving their goals.

Those most likely to agree that Contact North | Contact Nord supported them in achieving their goals are students enrolled in secondary school (TOP2: 91%), followed by those enrolled in college (TOP2: 86%), university (TOP2: 80%), and an Indigenous institute (TOP2: 64%).

Contact North | Contact Nord services used by students

Top services used by the respondents:

- 88% received support from staff in an online learning centre
- 84% received help registering in courses
- 77% used Internet access at an online learning centre
- 76% used exam invigilation services
- 76% used the web conferencing platform at an online learning centre or from home
- 75% used computers at an online learning centre

“Time issues” was the biggest challenge students faced

Students expressed the services provided by Contact North | Contact Nord helped them overcome many of their challenges. Nearly a third of respondents indicated “time issues” such as working (32%), family responsibilities (31%) and course availability in community (29%) as challenges they face when pursuing their education and training.

Those enrolled in secondary school indicated the top 3 challenges they faced were time issues (36%), family responsibilities (18%), and lack of motivation (18%).

Those enrolled in an Indigenous institute indicated the top 3 challenges they faced were family responsibilities (43%), a learning disability (36%), and time issues (21%).

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Those enrolled in college indicated the top 3 challenges they faced were family responsibilities (33%), time issues (25%), and the college campus being too far away (21%).

Those enrolled in university indicated the top 3 challenges they faced were time issues (55%), financial issues (30%), and family responsibilities (25%).

Across all educational institutes, “time issues” is the biggest challenge faced by students, followed by family responsibilities.

Online learning made education more accessible to students

7-in-10 (72%) students completed their education because it was available online.

Those most likely to agree are those enrolled in college (TOP2: 81%), followed by those enrolled in secondary school (TOP2: 73%), an Indigenous institute (TOP2: 64%), and those attending university (TOP2: 60%).

Contact North | Contact Nord is positively impacting lives

Students expressed that Contact North | Contact Nord had a very positive impact on their lives. As a result of their education, they were able to secure jobs; one student notes that now they now have “a career” and not just a job.

Many students feel they are better able to support their family and have a positive impact in their community due to the education they were able to access. Several note pursuing an education would not have been possible without Contact North | Contact Nord. Many would not have been able to attend classes during the workday due to their jobs and/or they could not afford to commute to school due to either the cost and/or the commute time.

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Quantitative Methodology

Forum Research Inc. conducted an online survey on behalf of Contact North | Contact Nord. 496 invitations were sent to clients who used Contact North | Contact Nord's services during the period of September 1, 2017 to August 31, 2018. Respondents were invited via e-mail to complete the online survey to participate. 102 responses were received between May 30, 2019 and July 3, 2019. At the end of the survey, respondents could opt-in to be considered for participation in the online chat sessions (focus groups).

Qualitative Methodology

Forum Research Inc. conducted two online chat sessions (focus groups) on behalf of Contact North | Contact Nord. Contact North | Contact Nord clients across Ontario were recruited; seven students were recruited for each group to ensure that 5-6 would show (the final count being 6 participants in each group). Both groups were held on July 18, 2019. Each group lasted 90 minutes.

Top2/Btm2 (or 3 or 4 where applicable) refers to the combined results of the most answered positive and negative responses:

%	Total	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	Male	Female
Sample	631	112	91	133	119	176	303	315
NET: TOP3	66	57	60	68	78	86	67	64
NET: BTM3	34	43	39	32	21	14	32	36
Very satisfied	9	9	6	6	13	20	11	8
Satisfied	28	17	29	35	32	45	25	31
Somewhat satisfied	28	31	26	28	32	20	31	25
Somewhat dissatisfied	12	11	16	14	11	8	13	12
Dissatisfied	11	15	15	9	5	3	9	13
Very dissatisfied	11	18	9	8	5	3	9	12
Don't know	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0

Top 3 here collects very satisfied, satisfied, and somewhat satisfied into one category, and Btm 3 collects very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, and somewhat dissatisfied. TABLE IS AN EXAMPLE ONLY.

Due to rounding, some numbers may not add up to 100

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