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Future Skills Centre

Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology's Professional Practice Certificate: Propel One's Career Forward with Essential Workplace Skills

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FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and Signal49 Research.

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Executive Summary

The James Bay Region in Quebec has historically lacked post-secondary institutions, leaving Indigenous communities in the area with limited access to higher education. As a result, employers in the Region struggle to find skilled employees, while employees often lack essential workplace competencies, such as digital and numeracy skills, business communication, and organizational and customer service skills.

To address this critical gap, Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology, an Indigenous post-secondary not-for-profit college, was launched in Chisasibi, the largest Cree community in the Region. One of the College's first tasks was to bring local employers together to develop a training program to upskill and reskill employees in the community.

The Future Skills Centre funded the Professional Practice Certificate: Propel One's Career Forward with Essential Workplace Skills project. The College designed the project in cooperation with local employers to learn how to structure and implement training programs that will help upskill and reskill employees for opportunities relevant to the community. The College then collaborated with six local employers to recruit 62 employees to participate in the Certificate Program.

R. A. Malatest & Associates Ltd. (Malatest) conducted an independent rapid evaluation to assess the extent to which project objectives were met and, where possible, to assess the impact of project activities on intended short-term outcomes. This evaluation analyzed data collected through surveys of participating employees and through interviews with employers. In addition, the evaluation team gathered perspectives of participating employers and employees pursuing the professional practice certificate in person through focus groups in Chisasibi.

Employers and employees found the training relevant, effective, and efficient. Employees improved digital literacy, numeracy, communication and teamwork skills and became more confident in their ability to do their work and continue to learn. This project demonstrated the effectiveness of an employer- and Indigenous-led training program in a remote Northern community.

Key Insights

- Almost all employees reported improving their digital literacy (100%), basic accounting (94%), writing (100%) and communication skills (94%) through the courses they took.
- Employers highly valued the training provided by the College for its relevance and efficiency in meeting their employees' training needs.
- Providing culturally appropriate training in the local community was effective and was appreciated by both employers and employees.

Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology's Professional Practice Certificate: Propel One's Career Forward with Essential Workplace Skills is funded by the Government of Canada's [Future Skills Program](#). The [Future Skills Centre \(FSC\)](#) is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to driving innovation in skills development so that everyone in Canada can be prepared for the future of work. We are funded by the Government of Canada's [Future Skills Program](#).

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Issue: Accessing education and training in Northern communities

Colleges are a key access point to higher education for Indigenous people in Canada. Half of Indigenous people starting post-secondary education begin with college, higher than the 37% for non-Indigenous students.¹

Indigenous communities in the North have little access to colleges, let alone other forms of higher education. The James Bay Region of Quebec has historically lacked post-secondary institutions due to prioritization of development in the south and geographic isolation. Even today, the closest CEGEP² and university are only accessible by plane or by a fifteen-hour drive. As a result, employers struggle to recruit skilled employees, while existing employees often lack essential workplace competencies such as digital literacy and numeracy, as well as business communication, organizational and customer service skills.

Further, having access to colleges that offer flexible, adaptable, and culturally responsible outreach and partnerships can be important success factors for Indigenous learners.³ Thus, Indigenous-led and employer-led training initiatives hosted through local colleges have the potential to build capacity in remote, Northern and Indigenous communities while developing local economies. By addressing the challenges and applying the success factors, training and skills-development programs can meet the needs of local employers and communities.

1.2 Project description: A professional practice certificate program

One community that has experienced this lack of access to post-secondary education is Chisasibi, the largest Cree community in the James Bay Region of Quebec, with a population of 5,200. To address the critical skills gap between employer needs for skilled workers and employee needs for skills development, Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology, an Indigenous post-secondary not-for-profit college, was established in Chisasibi, in 2025.

The College was formed by the Cree Nation of Chisasibi, beginning with a series of roundtable community discussions in 2018. Chief Daisy House formed a committee to conduct feasibility studies in 2020 and 2022, and the College was officially launched in June 2025.⁴ The College is a Cree-governed and community-led non-profit organization created to provide local, relevant education and training that fits community needs and priorities. To meet the needs of local employers, the College has requested permission from the Province of Quebec to offer programs leading to a Diploma in College Studies and an Attestation in College Studies.⁵

¹ Statistics Canada (2024) “Highlights on Indigenous new entrants to postsecondary education” www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024017-eng.htm. Cited in Colleges & Institutes Canada (2024) “By the Numbers: Indigenous Post-Secondary Education in Canada” www.collegesinstitutes.ca/by-the-numbers-indigenous-post-secondary-education-in-canada/.

² A glossary of terms and acronyms is provided in the appendix.

³ Colleges & Institutes Canada (2024) “By the Numbers: Indigenous Post-Secondary Education in Canada” www.collegesinstitutes.ca/by-the-numbers-indigenous-post-secondary-education-in-canada/.

⁴ Patrick Quinn “The Time is Now—Chisasibi celebrates historic launch of Eeyou Istchee College” (2025) The Nation, nationnews.ca/community/the-time-is-now-chisasibi-celebrates-historic-launch-of-eeyou-istchee-college/.

⁵ Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology (2025) “About Us” eeyouistcheecollege.ca/about-us/.

For the FSC-funded program, the College's project team worked with community employers to identify common employer needs for upskilling and reskilling and to design a program to meet those shared needs in the local community. Through this process, the College aggregated and coordinated employer demand for training. The College customized a program to bring together employees from local organizations to take a selection of courses, rather than each employer having to provide training separately. The project also contributed toward collecting data on the role of Northern and Indigenous anchor institutions, such as colleges, in providing and supporting skills development for Northern and Indigenous communities.

Six employers enrolled employees in the program. The participating employers included a diverse range of organizations, such as the local Indigenous government, a retail store, a telecommunications organization, a hotel, a research institute and a business development group.

Delivered in-person in Chisasibi from May to October, the program offered nine courses that could be counted toward the Professional Practice Certificate.⁶ The courses offered were:

- Effective Writing for Business,
- Digital Literacy,
- Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable,
- Accounting Literacy,
- Managing Client Relations,
- Time Management and Productivity,
- Project Management Fundamentals,
- Mastering Public Communication and Effective Presentations, and
- Enhancing Interpersonal Skills and Teamwork.

Each of the seven courses for the Professional Practice Certificate consisted of three or five full-day sessions, with a total instruction time of about 200 hours. Courses were scheduled spread out over ten days to two weeks to better accommodate employer and employee needs.

As part of the College's strategy to make higher education more accessible for Indigenous people in the Region, the program integrated wraparound services for those enrolled in the program. Wraparound supports are services that help learners to overcome systemic barriers and improve outcomes for equity-deserving groups. The wraparound supports offered included access to an Elder, a life or career coach, and a tutor to provide holistic assistance to participating employees and their families.

1.3 Intended outcomes

The short-term objectives of the program were:

- Having 70 participants complete the Certificate in Professional Practice,
- Increasing participant workplace readiness, developing essential and soft skills and increasing confidence,

⁶ While the proposed form and structure of the project were preserved in implementation, some details of course offerings were modified to better meet the needs of the community. In the spirit of reconciliation, the College aimed for a flexible, responsive approach to the project and the community it serves. The program originally planned to include seven courses but the College changed the structure and content of some courses based on intake assessments and employer feedback to better fit the capacities of participating employees and needs of employers.

- Strengthening connections between the College and community employers, and
- Recommending Indigenous-led approaches to inform future programs serving employers and Indigenous communities.

Success in achieving these outcomes was intended to support the medium-term outcome of improved job performance and employee retention over the next year and to contribute to the longer-term outcomes of the development of a:

- Skilled, confident and resilient local workforce,
- Stronger and more sustainable local economy, and
- Reduced reliance on external labour.

For a complete logic model, see Figure 15 in the Appendix.

2. Evaluation Methods

2.1 Evaluation design

Malatest conducted an evaluation of the College's activities in delivering the Professional Practice Certificate program to assess the extent to which objectives were met and short-term outcomes were achieved. Malatest worked with the College to develop questionnaires to gather feedback from employees participating in the program and interview guides to gather feedback from participating employers. Malatest developed discussion guides for focus groups with employees and employers and conducted these focus groups in person in Chisasibi.

A brief summary of data collection approaches is detailed in Figure 1. Additional details, including data collection tools, are included in the Appendix. Data were collected between May and October 2025.

Figure 1: Summary of data collection

FSC's strategic questions*	Evaluation questions	Data collection	Purpose
10. What employer-led intermediation models are the most effective in aggregating and coordinating employer demand for upskilling and reskilling support?	How effectively did the College collaborate with community employers in designing and delivering the certificate programs?	- Pre-program interviews with employers (8 interviews with representatives from 4 employers; response rate: 67%) - Mid-program interviews with employers (7 interviews with representatives from 6 employers; response rate: 100%) - Employer roundtable (8 representatives from all 6 employers; response rate: 100%)	- To evaluate employer satisfaction with the program design and implementation - To identify challenges and success strategies
22. In emerging and evolving sectors across the North, what new forms of skills development can equip Indigenous community members to take advantage of community and local economic opportunities that align with their visions of livelihood? What role can Northern and Indigenous anchor institutions play in providing new forms of systems infrastructure to support skills development for Northern and Indigenous communities?	- To what extent did the courses equip participants with essential workplace skills and competencies required by their employers? - To what extent did the wraparound supports provided support participants' personal and professional growth? - To what extent was the project supportive of the goals of equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation?	- Five focus groups with program participants (30 participants; response rate: 47%) - Employer roundtable (8 participants; response rate 100%) - Program data - Employee surveys at three intervals - Pre-assessment (64 participants, response rate: 100%) - Mid-program (54 participants; response rate: 85%) - Post-program (33 participants; response rate 47%)	- To evaluate employee challenges, satisfaction, gains in skills and confidence, and personal and professional growth - To evaluate employer perspectives on skills gained by employees - To identify success factors associated with the program - To evaluate relevance and cultural appropriateness of training for Indigenous employers and employees

* FSC identified 27 strategic questions to gather evidence and insights on key problems and opportunities in upskilling, reskilling, job-transition, and innovative approaches to skills development in projects funded in 2025. This project contributes to answering questions 10 and 22.

2.2 Equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation

Equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation were integral to this project. The project aimed to advance reconciliation by:

- Prioritizing the use of Indigenous instructors and staff whenever possible,
- Engaging local employers (most of whom were Indigenous) in shaping the curriculum and program structure,
- Ensuring that all staff receive training in the principles of reconciliation, and
- Arranging for an in-residence Elder as an ongoing service to students, families and staff.

One out of the ten instructors for the program was Cree, reflecting the current gap in post-secondary qualifications among Indigenous educators. The College indicated that they are implementing a “train the trainer” initiative to support Cree community members in developing instructional skills to teach at the College in the future.

Although the College had limited Cree instructors, most other staff at the College are Cree; three quarters of the College staff involved with the program were Indigenous. The College indicated that these staff members held key administrative and technical roles, contributing significantly to the daily operations and overall student learning environment.

All College staff received training on the principles of reconciliation through a full-day session in Montreal, which focused on Cree and Indigenous history, culture and reconciliation practices. This training was delivered by an Indigenous subject matter expert to ensure the learning was grounded in authentic, community-informed perspectives.

The evaluation was also designed to support reconciliation. Malatest’s approach to the evaluation aimed to follow the College’s lead in respecting the relations developed between the College and participants to employ a respectful, flexible and responsive approach to data collection. Malatest endeavoured to balance evidence-based learning with relationship building. Evaluation tools for the project were framed in terms of helping identify best practices for the College to serve the needs of the community. Efforts were made to use culturally sensitive methods of evidence gathering that aligned with the needs and priorities of the community. For example, feedback from participating employees was gathered by meeting with them in Chisasibi, while providing food and refreshments. At this meeting, participating employees were encouraged to speak in Cree in small groups to answer evaluation questions before sharing their experiences with the evaluator in English.

The evaluation collected data on perspectives of program participants on how well the training and wraparound supports met their needs as Indigenous people and as members of other equity-deserving populations. The evaluation also invited feedback from community employers and participating employees on the effectiveness of the program in serving the needs of employers in the Indigenous community. Ownership of all data collected for the evaluation remains with the College, in accordance with the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access and possession of data as defined by the First Nations Information Governance Centre.

2.3 Limitations and other considerations

Understandably, the College was protective of their relationship with the Indigenous community, which had taken years to develop. As such, the College was careful in how the evaluation approached stakeholders to collect data. Initially, the College placed some restrictions on which participants were contacted and which questions were asked. For instance, some demographic data were not collected at

intake due to concerns around trust in research. As a result, the evaluation was less able to operate as an independent assessment of program activities and outcomes than ideal. However, the careful way of building trust in the evaluation among the community helped ensure high participation rates in the employee surveys and focus groups, as well as employer interviews and the employer roundtable discussion. Further, as the evaluator team developed their relationships with the community, the evaluation was able to operate with greater independence. For instance, more detailed demographic data were collected in the post-program survey.

Focus groups with human resources representatives were planned for gathering mid-program employer feedback but due to scheduling challenges separate interviews with each employer were conducted instead. In all but one case, human resources representatives were the same individuals interviewed as in the first set of employer interviews. Consequently, human resources perspectives could not be distinguished from employer perspectives more generally.

Participation in the evaluation was voluntary, which can encourage those with stronger views (either positive or negative) to be more likely to participate. Given that the College was founded by the community to meet its needs, participants generally held positive views of the College, including this program. This potential bias was addressed both by the College and the evaluator by emphasizing the value of frank feedback, particularly that feedback was being sought to improve the program and to identify challenges and success factors to inform similar projects. Further, response rates were high for surveys (between 51 and 100%), interviews (between 67 and 100%), and in person discussions (100% of participating employers, 47% of participating employees), providing samples that represent the views of most participants, not just those with the most positive views.

3. Evidence and Insights

The College completed all their planned activities and most of their objectives. The Professional Practice Certificate Program was successful in training Indigenous employees in the remote Northern town of Chisasibi. The training was not only beneficial to the learners, but also to their employers.

Figure 2: Achievement of project objectives

Objective	Extent Achieved
1. 70 participants complete the Professional Practice Certificate	Significant progress (64 participants), and on track to achieve within the next six months
2. Participants increase workplace readiness, developing essential soft skills and increasing confidence	Achieved
3. Connections between the College and community employers are strengthened	Achieved
4. Make recommendations about Indigenous-led approaches to inform future programs serving Northern employers and Indigenous communities	Achieved

3.1 Activities conducted

Before the evaluation period, the College met with local employers in Chisasibi to discuss their training needs and to develop a portfolio of courses for upskilling their employees. The College hired instructors to come to Chisasibi and met with employers to recruit employees to participate in the Certificate Program. With the help of instructors, the College conducted pre-assessments of some skills at the beginning of courses to sort employees into beginner and intermediate cohorts.

The College successfully recruited 75 applicants, and 64 employees enrolled, slightly below their target of 70.⁷ In total, 42 employees completed the Professional Practice Certificate during the evaluation period, and as of the time of writing, an additional 27 were still in the process of completing it. This level of upskilling has the potential to make a significant difference in a town the size of Chisasibi.

Employers were content with the number of their employees enrolled in the program. In the roundtable and mid-program interviews some employers noted that they faced internal limitations on how many employees could be gone from work at once to take the training and said that they hoped it would be offered again in the future for additional employees.

In the roundtable, some employers reported that some of their older employees (35+) were less likely to have completed the training. Employers indicated that this might have been because their previous schooling had been in French and they may have been less comfortable with some subjects in English.⁸

⁷ Some of those who applied were unable to attend the courses due to schedule conflicts, and some did not receive email from the College because some personal Internet service providers identified messages as “junk” mail (as discussed in Section 4.1, under Accessibility).

⁸ The post-program survey of employees did not find that older employees were less satisfied with the program, but those who did not specify their age were the least satisfied with the program, with about a fifth (21%) of those who did not specify their age (n=14) indicating they were very dissatisfied. Those who dropped out of the program would not have been included in the post-program survey.

Employers paid employees to take courses toward the Professional Practice Certificate. Attendance was required for employees to be paid for their time in class, and the College required an 80% attendance to count the courses as completed. Some employers opted to take the courses themselves.

3.2 Engagement and population served

Employees who participated in the program were mostly First Nations, female and over 35 years of age. They worked in a wide variety of occupations and sectors.

Most participating employees were Indigenous

Given the location of the program, and that most residents of Chisasibi are Cree, it was assumed that most employees were Indigenous. Due to cultural sensitivity about conducting research, initial demographic information collected from employees by the College on intake did not include questions about ethnicity or cultural identity. All participating employees surveyed at the end of the program (n=33) were from equity-deserving groups. Post-program feedback (n=33) indicated that most (85%) were First Nations, or First Nations and Inuit (6%).⁹ Only 6% did not identify as Indigenous. Those who did not identify as Indigenous were members of other visible minorities, or identified as women, or persons with disabilities.¹⁰

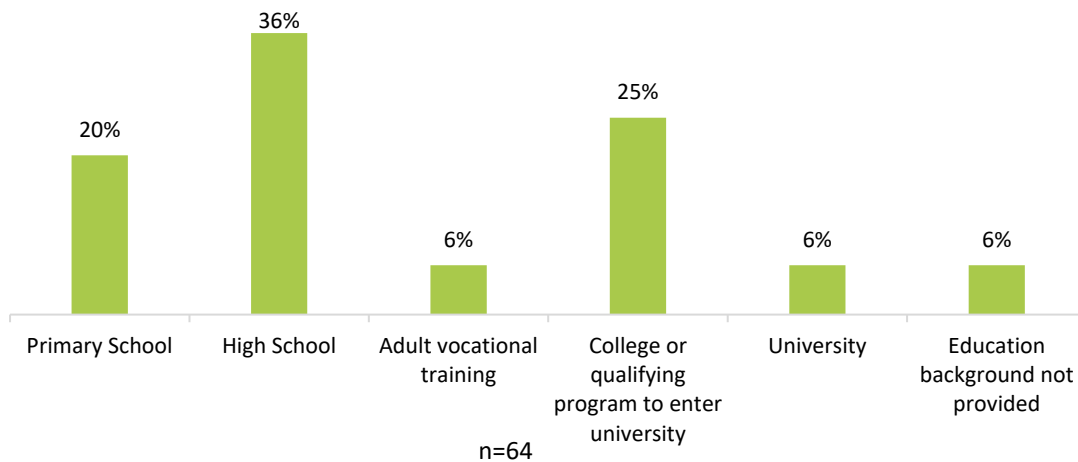
Most participating employees had not previously attended college, and some had not attended high school

The prior education levels of employees were quite variable (see Figure 3). Perhaps due to the lack of local access to post-secondary education, most had not previously attended a post-secondary institution. More than a third (36%) had completed high school as their highest level of education, and a fifth (20%) completed only primary school. A few (6%) had completed a university degree, and a quarter (25%) had completed college or a qualifying program to enter university. Some employees had completed vocational or other college training as adults (11%), and some did not provide information on their educational background (6%).

⁹ More specifically, most participating employees (85%) identified as either First Nations, or more specifically Cree or Eeeyou. Six percent specified that they were First Nations and Inuit or Cree and Inuit. Three percent identified themselves as Métis and Inuit. Some who identified themselves as Cree or Eeeyou did not identify with the external labels of Indigenous or First Nations.

¹⁰ Sample sizes were too small for detailed comparative analysis of differences between ethnic groups or disability status.

Figure 3: Highest level of education completed by employees prior to the program



More women than men accessed the training

Intake data (n=63) indicated that almost two thirds (61%) of employees beginning the program were women.¹¹ This is perhaps not surprising given that women in the community tend to be more likely to access higher education. Participating women were more likely to have had previous access to post-secondary education than participating men. Even so, some women had little advanced education. Almost half (46%) of female employees had completed some form of post-secondary program, with 23% finishing high school, and 26% with primary school. Most (56% of) male employees had completed high school as their highest level of education, with 24% completing post-secondary and 12% completing primary school.¹²

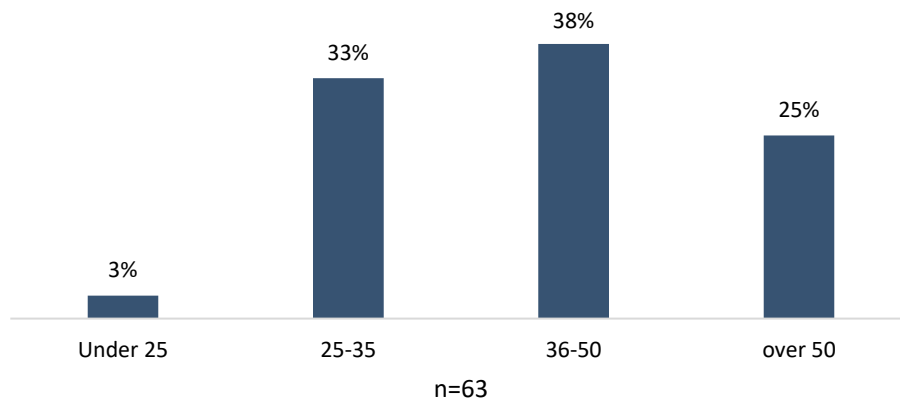
Most participating employees were over thirty-five

The ages of participating employees ranged from 23 to 62. Few participating employees were young adults, the group usually associated with pursuing post-secondary; only 3% were under 25. Rather, more than a third (38%) were between the ages of 36 and 50, a third (33%) were between 25 and 35, a quarter (25%) were over 50 (see Figure 4).

¹¹ In post-project feedback, 15% of respondents (n=33) preferred not to identify their gender.

¹² 8% of men and 5% of women did not provide their educational background.

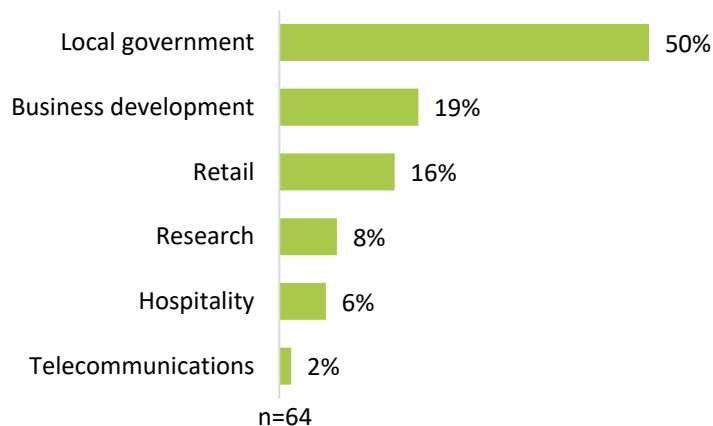
Figure 4: Age of participating employees



Employers represented diverse sectors

Participating employees came from employers in a number of sectors. Half (50%) of participating employees were employed in local government, almost one fifth (19%) in business development, and 16% in retail (see Figure 5). The remainder were employed in research (8%), hospitality, (6%), and telecommunications (2%).

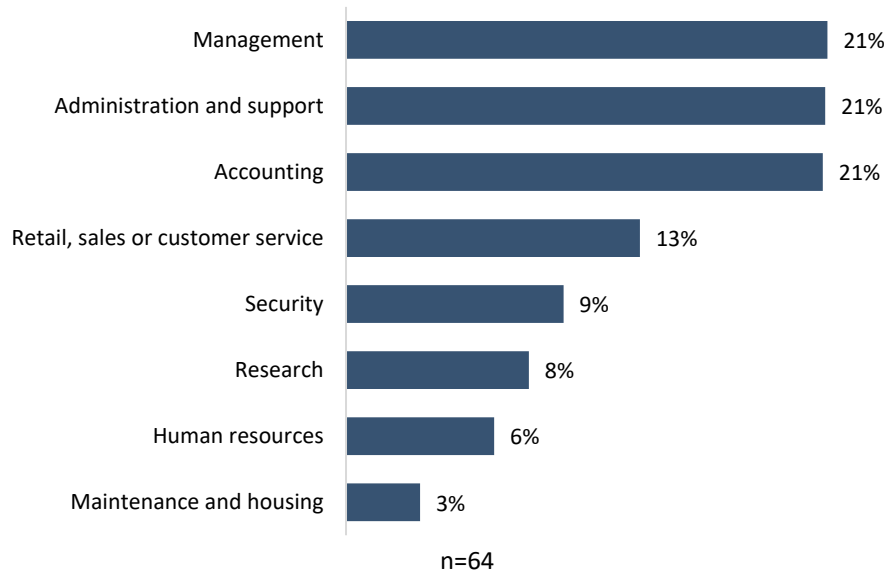
Figure 5: Employers of participants



Employees served diverse roles but required overlapping skills

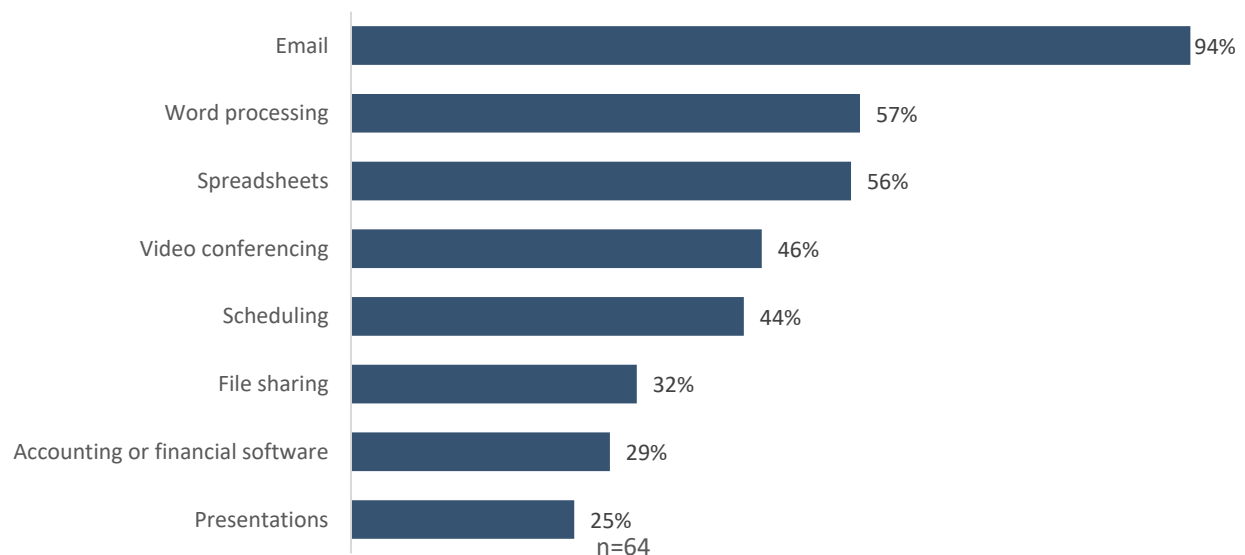
The roles of participating employees were diverse. Almost two thirds of participating employees were evenly split between working in accounting (21%), administration (21%) and management (21%) (see Figure 6). A bit more than one in ten (13%) worked in sales, or customer service. Less than one in ten worked in security (9%), human resources (6%), housing or maintenance (3%) or research (6%).

Figure 6: Employee roles



Almost all employees' roles required them to know how to use email (94%) and more than half required using word processing (57%) and spreadsheets (56%), as shown in **Error! Reference source not found..**

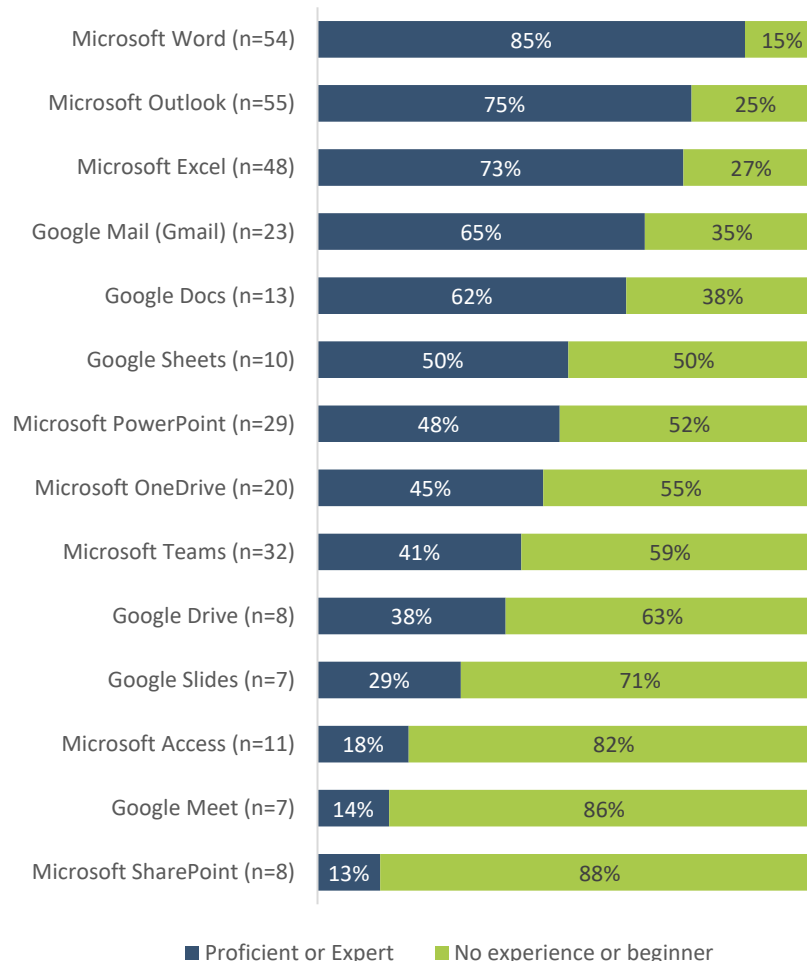
Figure 7: Types of software required



However, before participating in the program some employees did not think they were quite as proficient as they should be with some of the software required by their jobs. Most employees' jobs required them to use Microsoft Outlook, but a quarter (25%) of those whose role required it did not think they knew enough about how to use it to do their job. Fewer roles required the use of Gmail, but more than a third (35%) of those whose role required it were not proficient with the software. Similarly, 38% of employees whose job required using a specific word processing software did not know how to use it. About half of employees whose job required using spreadsheets did not know how to use the required software to do their job. A bit less than half (46%) of roles required the use of

videoconferencing, but of those, most were not proficient with the required software. Fewer roles required presentation software (25%), but of those, most did not know how to use the required software (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Figure 8: Employee pre-program self-assessment of software proficiency



3.3 Collaboration between the College and employers

Responds to FSC question 10: What employer-led intermediation models are the most effective in aggregating and coordinating employer demand for upskilling and reskilling support?

Participating employers were satisfied with the development and design of the Professional Practice Certificate Program. Employers reported that collaborating with the College enabled the development of a suite of training courses that met their collective needs for upskilling and reskilling. Employers found the program provided effective training that was relevant and efficient in meeting their needs.

Before working with the College to develop the Professional Practice Certificate Program, local employers in Chisasibi had limited options for local training, according to views expressed in pre-program interviews conducted by the College. Small employers were mostly limited to providing on the job training due to the lack of training budgets and human resources staff.

Some larger employers had the capacity to assess their training needs and to provide in-house training. Some were able to support professional development through external training (paying for courses toward certificates or providing leave to pursue training). Some had been able to coordinate with other organizations to provide training, either formally co-organizing training or informally inviting other employers to send employees to fill spaces in training they organized.

However, previous training attempts faced multiple challenges:

- Lack of local access to training,
- Lack of employee interest in online training,
- Planning for accommodations for trainers coming into the community,
- Low employee attendance, even when mandatory or self-requested,
- Difficulties in scheduling training around employee work schedules, and
- Delays in obtaining approval for training requests from parent companies outside the community.

Intermediation process

In mid-program interviews between the director general of the College and participating employers, employers reflected on what helped develop good relations between the College and the employers. Employers indicated that regular communication leading up to the program set the foundation for the success of the program. Some employers also mentioned that the orientation presentations the College made to them helped employers and employees decide whether they wanted to participate in the program.

Both in interviews with the director general and in the evaluator conducted roundtable, participating employers were enthusiastic in their appreciation for the program. In mid-program interviews, all responding employers indicated that the program was meeting their expectations, with one reporting that it was exceeding their expectations. All responding employers said they would recommend the program to other employers in the area. In the roundtable discussion, responding employers said the program went well and they were looking forward to more programs like it in the future.

“My staff have learned a lot. I have learned a lot. There are so many good skills that are coming out from the program and I am really glad that the College actually put those programs in place. They actually considered what is needed for the employers and their students.... I am really happy that that was done instead of just giving general courses, that all the courses that are here actually help us.” (Employer interview)

Relevance

In mid-program interviews and the roundtable, employers reported that the training was relevant to their needs. Employers indicated that employees were learning new skills that were relevant to employers’ needs, and that employees were able to apply the skills taught in the program right away in their jobs. In interviews, employers said the training was beneficial for those who had not completed high school and that “the program is helping us build capacity.” They noted that there was a lot of excitement about the program in that both employees and managers wanted to take the training as soon as possible.

Some employers took the courses with their employees and found the training useful both for themselves and their employees. In the roundtable, employers said that having managers and

employees attending together worked well, and that the courses served as a refresher for employers and managers, while building skills and confidence in employees. In some cases, managers could not take the time to attend classes when their employees were because someone had to be working.

Efficiency

Mid-program interviews and the roundtable indicated that the program met the training needs of employers efficiently. In interviews, some employers remarked that the program complemented what employers need in the workplace. At the roundtable, employers noted that having local training was efficient because there was no need to pay for people to travel south.

The program helped overcome employer problems with:

- Local access to training;
- Employee interest, attendance and engagement;
- Planning for accommodation for outside trainers (because the College made the arrangements); and
- Timeliness of training (because the training was free to employers, it did not require funding approval by parent companies).

3.4 Effectiveness of training program

Responds to FSC question 22: In emerging and evolving sectors across the North, what new forms of skills development can equip Indigenous community members to take advantage of regional and local economic opportunities that align with their visions of livelihood? What role can Northern and Indigenous anchor institutions play in providing new forms of systems infrastructure to support skills development for Northern and Indigenous communities?

Developing a training program in collaboration between local employers and the newly formed Indigenous College effectively met the needs of employers in the remote Northern and Indigenous town of Chisasibi. The program provided local training that significantly improved participating employees' digital literacy, writing, basic accounting, presentation and teamwork skills. The program also increased employee confidence in their skillsets. At the end of the program, employers and employees were highly satisfied with the skills gained by employees through the program. In the roundtable, employers reported that employees who had not finished high school were now motivated to get their diplomas. Employers related that employees displayed a sense of pride in what they had learned. Employers indicated that the program provided the confidence and optimism to boost community development and capacity building. Most employees were very satisfied with the program overall and found the format of the training effective.

In the pre-program interviews, employers indicated that they expected the training program to increase employees':

- Digital literacy, writing and accounting skills;
- Professionalism and work ethic; and
- Networking opportunities to connect with employees in other organizations.

Further, through the training, employers expected employees to gain confidence on the job and to be able to implement what they learn.

Employees made significant improvements in digital literacy, writing skills and professionalism

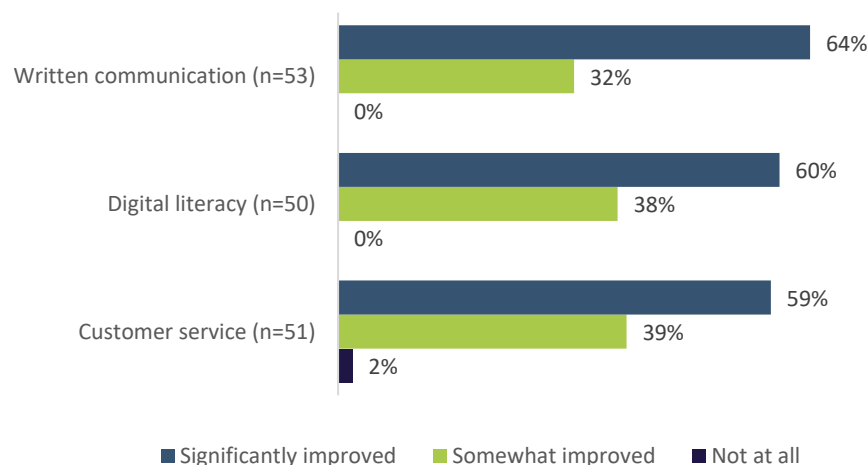
Both employers and employees indicated that writing skills had greatly improved. In the roundtable, employers noted improvements in employees' writing for correspondence and report writing. Most (64% of) employees surveyed said their written communication skills had significantly improved, and none said it their writing had not improved at all (see Figure 9).

Employers and employees agreed that digital literacy skills were among those most improved. Most (60% of) employees reported that their digital literacy significantly improved by the time of the mid-program survey, and none said it had not improved at all.

Employers reported substantive improvements in employees' general computer skills. In mid-program interviews and in the roundtable, employers were pleased that employees who had previously avoided using computers had stopped using handwritten notes and faxes and had started sending emails or had begun using the computerized timecard system to request holidays and leaves of absence. In the roundtable one employer recalled that an employee commented that they never knew computers were that easy and they were now planning to buy one.

According to employers and employees, customer service skills improved through the training. Most (59% of) employees reported significant improvements in their customer service skills. At the roundtable employers noted that employees became more comfortable speaking with clients and more skilled with customer service, for example with sending acknowledgement emails.

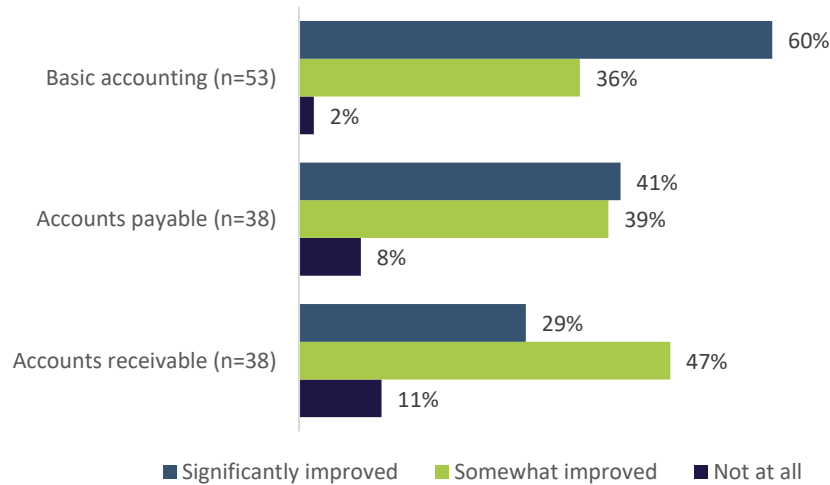
Figure 9: Employee self-assessment of digital literacy and writing and customer service skills development



Employees significantly improved basic accounting skills

Employers and employees noted sound progress with accounting and data analysis skills. In mid-program interviews and at the roundtable, employers observed that employees who had never used Excel before had begun to feel comfortable using it and were interested in learning more about data analysis (see Figure 10).

Figure 10: Employee self-assessment of accounting and skills development

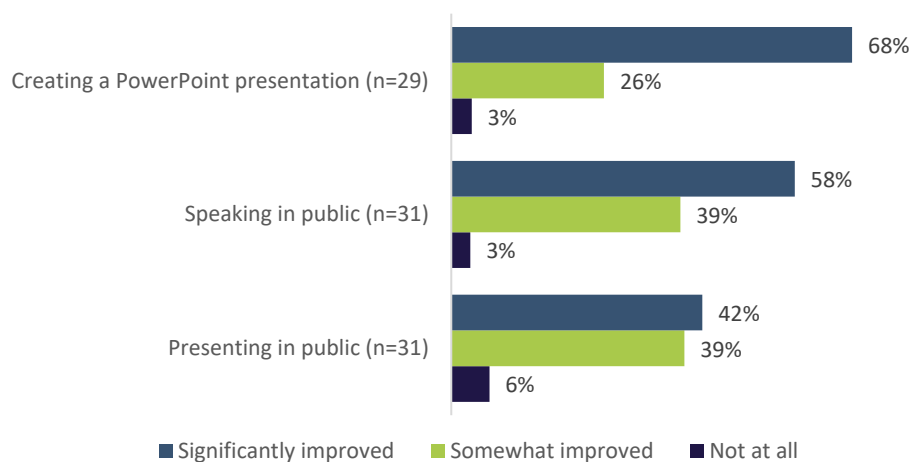


Employees improved presentation skills more than they thought they did

Employers' and employees' views on improvements to presentation skills diverged somewhat. Less than half of employees thought they significantly improved their ability to present in public, but employers noted significant improvement. Employers found that employees had made gains in their presentation skills in general and capacity with PowerPoint in particular. At the roundtable, one employer recounted a recent experience with one of their employees presenting at a conference, where another attendee was so impressed that they commented, "You should get this [person] to do a podcast!"

Employees said they gained skills in creating PowerPoints but fewer were as confident in their ability to present them. Only 42% of employees indicated significant improvement with presenting in public, and 6% said they had not improved at all. However, like employers, most (68%) employees reported significant improvement in their ability to create PowerPoint presentations and 58% said they had significantly improved their ability to speak in public (see Figure 11).

Figure 11: Employee self-assessment of presentation skills development

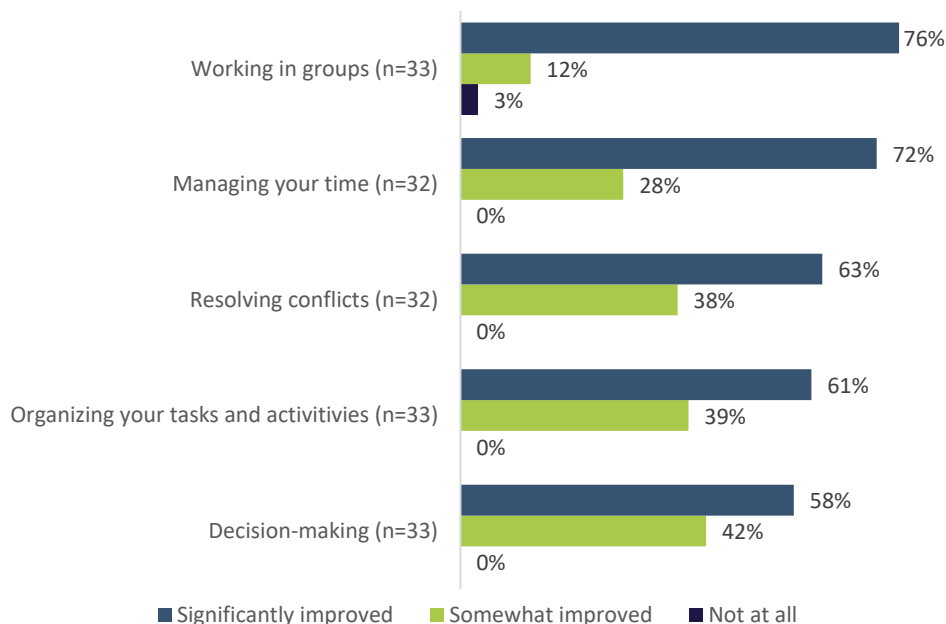


The program yielded unexpected gains in employees' capacity to work together

Both employers and employees indicated teamwork was one of the most improved skills through the program. More than three quarters (76%) of employees reported that their ability to work in groups increased significantly (see Figure 12).

In the roundtable, employers noted improved teamwork was evident in how participating employees supported one another, for instance in covering for each other when co-workers were in training.

Figure 12: Employee self-assessment of teamwork and organizational skills development



Skills development boosted employee confidence

Employers and employees agreed that significant gains in employee confidence resulted from participating in the program. Prior to participation in the Professional Practice Certificate program, participating employees lacked confidence in some skills. For example, pre-program information gathered by the College showed that:

- Only 17% of employees were confident or very confident in their business writing skills.
- Three quarters (75%) of employees had no prior business writing training, and most (83%) did not have a high level of confidence in their business writing skills.

By mid-program responding employees reported feeling more confident about their jobs and learning capabilities.

- Half (50%) strongly agreed, and 44% somewhat agreed they felt more confident to do their job.
- Most (74%) strongly agreed they were confident to learn more.

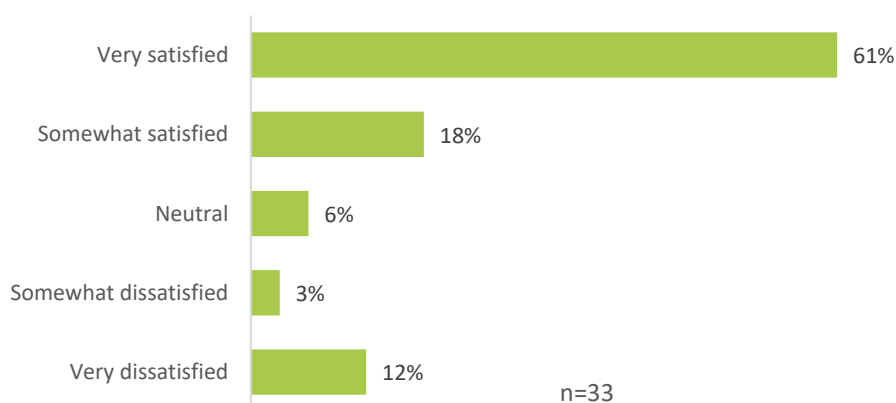
By the end of the program, employers observed significant gains in employee confidence. At the roundtable, employers reported that employees had become more confident using computers, writing emails and reports, working with graphs, interacting with clients and co-workers and making presentations.

Employee satisfaction

Overall, most employees surveyed at the conclusion of the program were very satisfied with the training provided (61%) or somewhat satisfied (18%). Most employees praised the program. In the in-person discussion, employees noted that they liked the structure of the courses and particularly enjoyed opportunities for hands-on learning. All indicated that they would recommend the program to others in the community.

It should be noted that a few (12%, or four individuals) were very dissatisfied (see Figure 13 **Error! Reference source not found.**). All of those who indicated they were very dissatisfied also indicated that they wanted to be able to take different courses, including advanced Excel.

Figure 13: Employee satisfaction with the training, post-program



3.5 Effectiveness of wraparound supports and EDI&R approach

Responds to part two of FSC question 22: What role can Northern and Indigenous anchor institutions play in providing new forms of systems infrastructure to support skills development for Northern and Indigenous communities?

Before the Professional Practice Certificate program, post-secondary training was not available in the community. The culturally appropriate training provided by the local Indigenous college enabled learning and skills development for Indigenous employees. Although wraparound supports were underutilized by employees enrolled in the Professional Practice Certificate Program, they may have been less necessary because of the cultural appropriateness of the training and the training being located in the community, where participants had family and other community support available.

The courses and instruction were culturally appropriate

At mid-program, employees surveyed (n=54) reported feeling welcomed in the program and that instructors respected their culture.

- Almost all (89% of) employees indicated they strongly agreed they felt welcomed in the program.
- Most (74%) reported that instructors were respectful of employees' culture, and more than half (56%) strongly agreed that examples used by instructors reflected employees' culture.

In discussion at the end of the program, participating employees (n=30) reported that they felt comfortable in the courses they took. Most indicated that there was nothing that made them feel

uncomfortable or unwelcome. All employees who participated in the discussion agreed that they developed good relationships with their instructors. Employees indicated that the program was culturally appropriate because time was provided for students to attend cultural events such as a funeral and because the courses included material relevant to their culture.

However, a few suggested that some materials were not specific to the region. Some employees expressed a hope that instruction be provided in Cree in the future.

Relatively few participating employees accessed the wraparound supports provided

At mid-program most (66% of) employees surveyed had not accessed any wraparound supports. Employees were somewhat reluctant to say why.

- Some employees (30%) reported not needing the services, but some were not aware of them (15%) or did not know how to access them (11%).
- Those who accessed wraparound supports were satisfied with them. Most employees were very satisfied (37%) or somewhat satisfied (33%) with the supports accessed.

Asking about the effectiveness of the Elder, life or career coach and tutor individually was avoided due to the cultural inappropriateness of appearing to invite criticism of an Elder, and this topic was not broached in the in-person discussion with employees to respect employees' privacy.

4. Lessons Learned and Recommendations

4.1 Challenges

Most challenges to implementing the program related to learning to work together with the resources available. The diverse needs of employers led to some scheduling conflicts and necessitated balancing the needs of some to be reachable during class with those who preferred a classroom without distractions.

Scheduling

Employers and employees experienced challenges with the scheduling of the courses. During in-person discussions, both employers and employees said offering courses only during standard work hours limited access to the program. In mid-program interviews and the roundtable, most employers indicated that they had some difficulties coordinating their employees' work and course schedules. Scheduling challenges identified by employers included:

- Accommodating work requirements with courses offered in consecutive full-day sessions. The compressed format of the courses did not allow flexibility to manage employee absences.
- Offering courses in the summer conflicted with fieldwork research and travel plans. The timing of the courses caused some delays for employers with data gathering and reporting to funders.
- Attending classes interrupted workflows and increased workloads on those not participating.

As noted above, scheduling had previously been a problem for some employers even when conducting their own training independently. Of the problems previously experienced by employers with training, scheduling conflicts were the one not overcome by the program.

Cell phone use

Cell phone use in class was a point of contention. Some employers needed employees or managers taking the courses to be available by phone during class time, but other employees found this disruptive. The College implemented a cell phone policy, asking those attending class to put phones in silent mode and to leave the room if they needed to take a call. However, employees continued to be distracted by their classmates' phones as well as calls and texts from their own workplaces.

Classroom space

Both employers and employees were dissatisfied with the classroom space that hosted the courses. Meeting spaces are not readily available in the town, and the College does not yet have its own space. Most of the training was offered in one of the hotels in Chisasibi in a room where noise across the hall was distracting. In the focus groups, employees expressed a desire for a "real classroom" with desks. In the roundtable, employers agreed that providing a portable microphone system for instructors could be helpful.

The College plans to create classroom space in the Mitchuap Building, featured on the cover of this report.¹³

¹³ "Mitchuap" is Cree for "tipi."

Accessibility

Employees experienced challenges accessing the training related to the technology used and the form of instruction, among other factors.

In the focus groups and roundtable, both employers and employees indicated that not being able to make up missed classes or participate remotely when travelling presented a challenge for some employees. Some employees found it difficult to meet the 80% attendance requirement without accommodations for necessary absences.

Some employers noted that some of their employees initially had problems receiving emails from the College. Communications sent to personal email addresses rather than work email addresses were in some cases quarantined by spam filters. This problem was recognized by the College and addressed by calling people and sending text messages instead, but it may have impacted initial enrollment levels.

Some employers reported that some employees were too intimidated to participate in post-secondary education because they had not finished high school. One employer noted that older employees (aged 30 or higher) had a particularly hard time adjusting to the learning environment, and gained less confidence, perhaps because their previous education was conducted in French.

In terms of pedagogy, both employers and employees expressed a desire for training to be provided in Cree. Some employees also wanted more hands-on instruction or applied learning opportunities.

4.2 Success factors

Key components of the successful design and delivery of the program included taking the time to listen to the needs of the community, to build relationships with employers and employees and work adaptively with them to provide accessible training. The training was also affordable as the only cost to employers was to pay their employees for their training time.

Time taken time to build relationships

While the project was completed within six months, its success depended on a multiyear process of relationship building. The band council and employers worked together for five years to identify community needs and to design the program. Developing the College and building trusting relationships with employers required another three years before launching the program.

Scheduling flexibility

Employers appreciated that the College ran different classes of the same course on different days, which allowed employees to be split between classes so that someone was always available to work. Both employers and employees expressed a desire for even greater flexibility in the timing of future training, including options for evening and weekend classes, and half-day rather than full-day options.

Paid training

Employees and employers agreed that paying employees during class time helped make the program a success. One employer commented that paying employees to learn during work hours and bring the skills back to the workplace was “fantastic.” While there were some discrepancies noted with attendance taken by the College, which impacted pay for some employees, corrections were made and the College improved the process of recording attendance during the program.

Local, culturally appropriate training

Employers indicated that they appreciated having the College located in the community. In addition to the cost efficiency of local training for employers, providing the training in the community through culturally appropriate instruction may have obviated the need for some wraparound supports. However, wraparound supports that were not offered, such as childcare, travel arrangements, and accommodations for learning disabilities, could further improve skills development and the accessibility of the program.

4.3 Recommendations

Employer and employee experiences with the College's Professional Practice Certificate program can inform the development of additional programs with the College, and similar training programs for Indigenous people or other organizations in the North.

Recommendations for Indigenous or remote training programs:

Other training programs in Northern, remote, and Indigenous communities should consider emulating this program's success.

Customized, culturally informed and respectful training offered in the spirit of reconciliation through local colleges can upskill and reskill workers and can build capacity in the North. The success factors identified above in section 5.2, namely taking time to build relationships with employers and community partners, being flexible with scheduling to fit around work times, paying employees for time spent in training, and providing local, culturally appropriate training relevant to the specific cultural groups involved may be key strategies for successfully creating similar training programs or Indigenous colleges in other Northern, remote and Indigenous communities.

While training programs for Indigenous people may not need some wraparound supports when training is culturally appropriate and available locally in Indigenous communities, other wraparound supports could make training more accessible.

Most employees receiving training through the program did not feel the need to access wraparound supports. However, other accessibility supports and accommodations for those with learning disabilities and needing help with transportation or childcare are likely to continue to be desirable.

Recommendations for the College:

The College should continue working with local employers, and build relationships with additional employers, to expand their course offerings.

Employers already involved in the program could benefit from additional course offerings. For example, some employers and employees expressed interest in more advanced courses in data analysis. More than 75% of employees were interested in an advanced Excel class and more than half (58%) were interested in taking management courses. Almost half (49%) were interested in leadership courses and a third (33%) in taking French. In addition, there are other employers in the community that could benefit from engaging with the College. With a new, larger, hospital opening in a few years, the College could arrange training of local people with the hospital and for related employment opportunities in healthcare.

The College should work with employers in surrounding communities to scale up the program through satellite campuses.

Other communities and local employers in the James Bay Region could similarly benefit from the training offered through the program. The College has initiated discussions with two other communities in the Region, and both have passed Band Council resolutions expressing interest in bringing the program into their communities and adapting it to meet their employer and training needs.

The College might investigate the feasibility of providing access to professional software.

Some employees already had skills with free software products such as Zoom or Gmail that serve similar functions to Microsoft products that require subscription or purchase. Future participants might become familiar with proprietary products more easily if they are provided free access to these products. Sponsorship could be sought to fund software licensing for the College. Alternatively, increasing digital literacy might be facilitated by focusing on how to apply their familiarity with Google products to Microsoft products.

5. What's Next for Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology

Building on the success of the project, the College will focus on and on developing a scalable delivery model that can be replicated in other communities across the James Bay Region. As for next steps, the College plans to adapt and extend the Professional Practice Certificate program into the communities of Wemindji and Whapmagoostui.

Key next steps identified by the College include:

- Refining the curriculum to better support field-based and operational workers such as public works employees, security personnel and tradespeople
- Increasing emphasis on digital literacy, workplace technology, and applied writing skills
- Strengthening the teaching capacity of Cree residents to become instructors
- Improving existing pre-program diagnostics, evaluation frameworks and course evaluations.

Another major aim for the College will be to securing funding to support additional staff salaries. The College does not receive stable operating funding from provincial or federal governments, and most employers in the region do not have dedicated training budgets. As a result, Future Skills Centre funding was critical to launching the certificate program but may not be available in the years to come.

The College has been in discussion with the Cree Nation about using their job-creation program to contribute toward necessary additional staff with the College if the certificate program scales up to offer training in more communities. The Cree Nation Government made a concrete commitment to support 50% of Cree employee salaries, contingent on the College receiving a favorable decision from the Future Skills Centre to scale the project. This commitment represents a significant new financial contribution and would directly support the hiring of Cree operational staff required to sustain and expand programming in communities such as Wemindji, Whapmagoostui, and Chisasibi.

Appendix

Glossary of terms and acronyms

Anchor institutions – place-based mission-driven organizations that are unlikely to relocate, such as post-secondary schools, government agencies, and hospitals.

CEGEP – is an acronym for “collège d'enseignement général et professionnel” that has become a word and refers to Quebec educational institutions spanning what in other Canadian provinces are the last two years of high school and the first year of college.

Cree – one of the largest First Nations group in Canada, with diverse populations across the North. “Cree” also refers to the language spoken, which has several different dialects.

Eeyou – the term Cree people of northern Quebec use to refer to themselves, meaning “the people”

Eeyou Istchee – Cree for “our land,” referring to the traditional lands of the Eeyou, part of which Quebec recognizes as a territory equivalent to a regional county municipality.

FSC – is an acronym for Future Skills Centre. FSC is an independently operating initiative of Employment and Social Development Canada that funds workforce development projects and collects insights from these projects to inform decision-makers and employers.

Intermediation – the actions and strategies employed by an intermediary organization to facilitate collaboration and knowledge exchange between stakeholders

Additional details of the evaluation methodology

The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the College’s intermediation process to aggregate and coordinate training for local employers in Chisasibi, and the effectiveness of the training program in meeting employer needs and the training needs of Indigenous employees. Data collection methods incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Evaluation questions

Four key evaluation questions were developed to align with FSC’s strategic questions in consultation with the College:

1. How effectively did the College collaborate with community employers in designing and delivering the certificate programs?
2. To what extent did the courses equip participants with essential workplace skills and competencies required by their employers?
3. To what extent did the wraparound supports facilitate participants’ personal and professional growth?
4. To what extent was the project supportive of the goals of equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation?

These questions informed the development of the mid-program and post-program surveys of employees, the pre-program and mid-program interviews with employers, and the focus groups with employees and employers at the conclusion of the program.

Equity, diversity, inclusion and reconciliation

Developing good relations with Indigenous communities takes time and the project team at the College wanted to be sensitive to the historical context of exploitative research on Indigenous people. Words

such as “research,” “evaluation” and “collecting data” can be emotional triggers. Consequently, significant care to preserve good relations with the community was necessary in framing and conducting the evaluation. The College aimed to learn with Chisasibi how best to structure and implement training programs that will help upskill and reskill employees in cooperation with community employers and provide educational opportunities relevant to the community. Most data for the evaluation, including surveys and interviews, were collected by the College and ownership of all the data is retained by the College.

Lines of Evidence

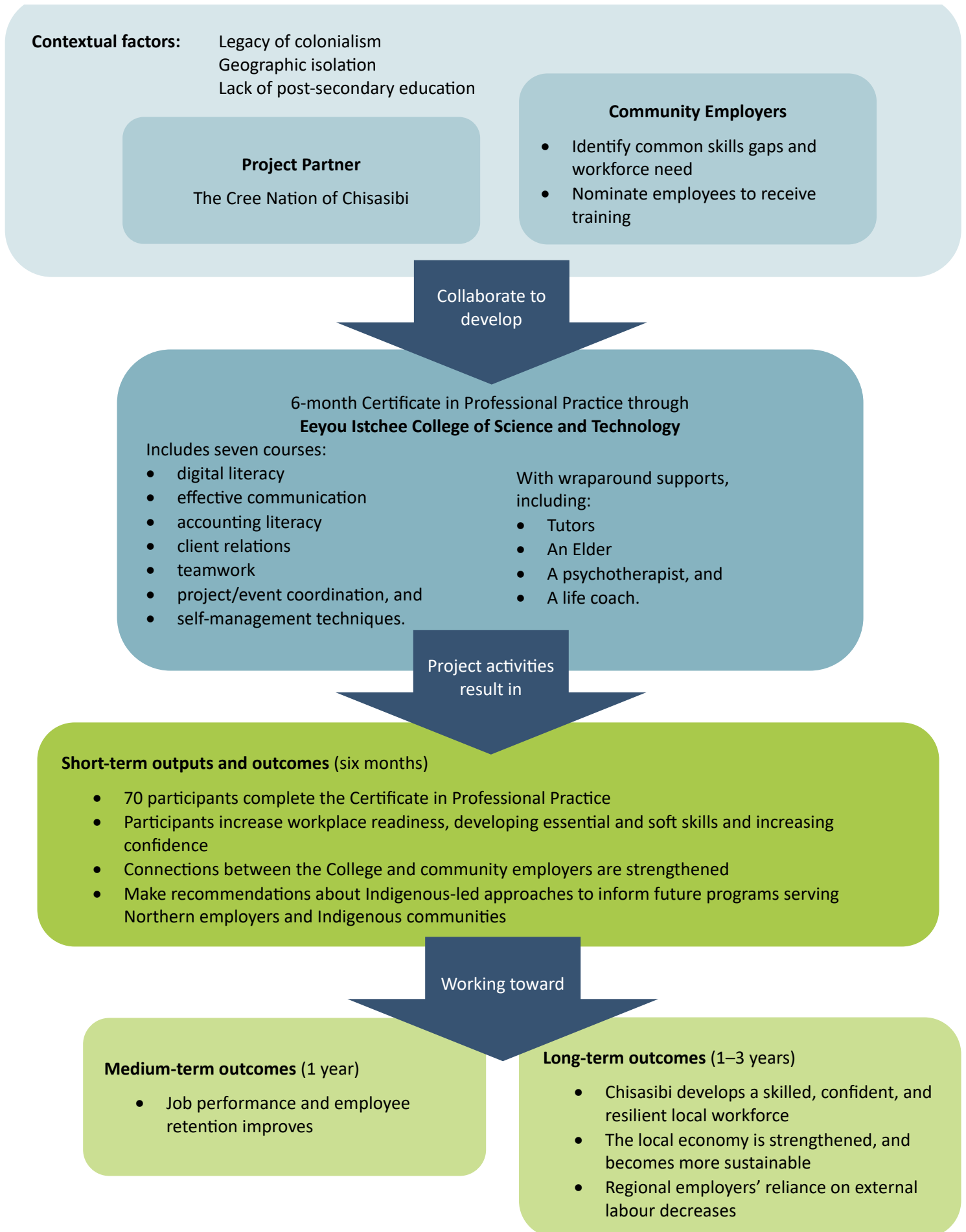
Data collection methods included surveys of participating employees, interviews with employers, focus groups with employees and employers, and administrative program data. The table below summarizes the data collected through each line of evidence.

Figure 14: Data collected per line of evidence

Evidence	Respondents	Information collected	Sampling
Pre-program surveys of employees	n=64	Demographic information on employees, pre-program assessment of skills.	The College collected some information from employees when they registered for the program before the evaluation began and conducted pre-assessments of employees’ skills at the beginning of the business writing and digital literacy courses. The College shared anonymized data from these surveys with Malatest.
Mid-program survey of employees	n=54	Employee engagement, challenges and progress; satisfaction with wraparound supports and confidence in skills gained	The College administered the survey in conjunction with course evaluations midway through the program.
Post-program survey of employees	n=33	Employee demographics, challenges and satisfaction with the training.	The College administered the survey in conjunction with final course evaluations.
Pre-program interviews with employers	n=8 interviews (with representatives from 4 employers)	Employer challenges with previous training.	The College recruited employers and conducted interviews in person in Chisasibi. The College shared interview transcripts with the evaluator for analysis.
Mid-program interviews with employers	n=7 interviews (representing all 6 employers)	Employer satisfaction with collaboration with the College to create the program and challenges and satisfaction with the delivery of the training.	The College recruited employers and conducted interviews in person in Chisasibi, or online over Teams. The College shared interview transcripts with the evaluator for analysis.
Focus group with employers	n=8 (representing all 6 employers)	Employer perspectives on skills gained by employees and overall satisfaction with the program.	The College invited employers to attend, and Malatest conducted the focus group in Chisasibi.

Focus group with employees	n=30	Employee perspectives on the training, including its cultural appropriateness.	The College invited employees to attend, and Malatest conducted the focus group in a workshop format due to the number of participants. Five groups of employees discussed the questions among themselves and provided collective feedback.
Project data	Not applicable	Numbers of employees enrolled in and completing the program (target=70)	The College provided enrollment, progress and completion numbers.

Figure 15: Logic model



Data collection tools

Employer interview guide—Training and Development Questions

Introduction

This document outlines a set of questions designed to explore the practices and challenges associated with training and development within an organization. These inquiries are aimed at understanding how training programs are structured, managed, and perceived in terms of effectiveness and impact.

Training Background

1. Do you have a person who is responsible for training and development in your organization? If yes, can you describe the role of this person?
2. Do you have a training and development budget?
3. How does your organization decide that training is necessary?

For example, do you arrange training

- When new technology is introduced?
 - If employees receive bad performance reviews?
 - If employees request training? Does the organization support employees who want to pursue formal education (Certification, DEC, BA, etc.)?
4. Have you worked with other employers to have joint training sessions before? If so, how did that work out?
 5. How do you encourage continuous learning and development outside of formal training sessions?

Implementing Training

6. What is working well with training in your organization?

Probes:

- What sorts of training have worked best, and why?
 - Have you arranged for culturally relevant or training otherwise tailored to the community?
7. What is/are the main challenge(s) you face with training?
 - Can you give an example of training that hasn't worked out as planned? What have you learned from it?

Training Outcomes

8. In the past how did you know if the training you offered was successful? (ROI)
9. What are your expectations for employee performance following the training for the Certificate for Professional Practice?
10. How will you know if the Certificate for Professional Practice training has been successful?

Interview questions for HR or employer representatives from community employers

1. How has the College professional practice program been going, so far?
2. What helped you and the College develop good relations?
3. What is going well with the program?
4. What skills developments are you seeing with your employees that are a direct result from the College program?
5. Is the program meeting your expectations? How so?
6. What challenges have you experienced with the program?
7. How do you think the program could be improved?
8. Would you recommend working with the College to other employers in the area?

Mid-Project Feedback Form

1. Which of the following courses have you completed?

- ☐ Effective writing for business
- ☐ Digital Literacy
- ☐ Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable
- ☐ Accounting Literacy
- ☐ Managing Client Relations

2. To what extent have you improved the following skills through the program so far?

	Not at all	Somewhat improved	Significantly improved	Do not know or prefer not to answer	Not applicable
Written communication					
Spoken communication					
Digital literacy					
Accounts payable					
Accounts receivable					
Basic accounting knowledge					
Customer service					

3. Please rate your level of agreement with the following statements:

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	Do not know or prefer not to answer
Since starting this program, I feel more confident to do my job well.						
Since starting this program, I feel more confident to learn more.						
I felt welcome in the program.						
Examples used by instructors reflected my culture.						
The instructor was respectful of my culture						

4. Which of the following supports provided by the College have you accessed?

- ☐ Tutor
- ☐ Elder
- ☐ Psychotherapist
- ☐ Life/career coach
- ☐ None of the above

5. If you did not access any of them, why not? (If you did access supports, please go on to question 6.)

- ☐ I did not know about them
- ☐ I did not know how to access them
- ☐ I did not feel comfortable accessing them
- ☐ I did not need them
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

6. How satisfied were you with the supports offered?

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied

7. Which of the following supports might you have used if they were provided by the College?

- ☐ A more flexible schedule to complete the program over a longer period of time.
- ☐ Social activities to connect with others accessing training through the College
- ☐ Additional help for people with learning disabilities or other challenges
- ☐ Childcare
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ A mentor
- ☐ Other:

8. What other feedback would you like to share with the College? (This can be about challenges you've experienced, suggestions for improvement, or what you think is going well with the program.)

Post-Project Feedback Form

1. Which of the following courses have you completed? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Time Management and productivity
- ☐ Project Management Fundamentals
- ☐ Mastering Public Communication and Effective Presentations
- ☐ Enhancing interpersonal skills and teamwork
- ☐ Unsure

2. To what extent have you improved the following skills through the program so far?

	Not at all	Somewhat improved	Significantly improved	Do not know or prefer not to answer	Not applicable
Managing your time					
Organizing your tasks and activities					
Resolving conflicts					
Speaking in public					
Decision-making					
Creating a PowerPoint presentation					
Presenting in public					
Working in groups					

3. Overall, how satisfied are you with the training provided by Eeyou Istchee?

- ☐ Very dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Very satisfied
- ☐ Do not know or prefer not to answer

4. What courses or training are you interested in pursuing with Eeyou Istchee?

- ☐ Not interested in further training
- ☐ French language courses
- ☐ Management courses
- ☐ Leadership courses
- ☐ Basic Excel
- ☐ Intermediate Excel
- ☐ Advance Excel
- ☐ Other(s):

5. Was there anything missing from the training or that could be improved to better meet your needs?

☐ Yes. Please describe:

☐ No, nothing missing or to be improved

☐ Do not know or prefer not to answer

Our funder, Future Skills Centre, would like us to gather some information about who is benefitting from the training offered by Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology. This will help identify whether certain groups are being supported more than others through the projects they fund. These last few questions will also help the College understand what aspects of the program were more or less helpful to different participants. Your answers will be kept anonymous.

6. In our society, people are often described by their race or racial background. For example, some people are considered "White" or "Black" or "East/Southeast Asian", etc.

Which race category/categories best describe(s) you?

Select all that apply.

- ☐ Black (African, Afro-Caribbean, African-Canadian descent)
- ☐ East Asian (Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent)
- ☐ Southeast Asian (Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent)
- ☐ Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuit descent)
- ☐ Latino (Latin American, Hispanic descent)
- ☐ Middle Eastern (Arab, Persian, West Asian descent, e.g. Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish, etc.)
- ☐ South Asian (South Asian descent, e.g. East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean, etc.)
- ☐ White (European descent)
- ☐ Another race category please specify: _____

☐ Prefer not to answer

7. Do you identify as Indigenous—that is, First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit?

Please select all that apply.

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes, First Nations
- ☐ Yes, Métis
- ☐ Yes, Inuit
- ☐ Another Indigenous identity—please specify: _____

8. In what year were you born?

- ☐ _____
- ☐ 99: Prefer not to answer

9. What best describes your gender? Please select only one.

- ☐ Man
- ☐ Woman
- ☐ Gender non-binary (including gender fluid, genderqueer, androgynous)
- ☐ Two-spirit
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ I would like to self-describe: _____
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

10. Disability is understood as any physical, mental, developmental, cognitive, learning, communication, sight, hearing, or functional limitation that, in interaction with a barrier, could hinder a person's full and equal participation in society.

Do you identify as a person with a disability?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Discussion questions for participants

Thanks for having me here and speaking with me about the Professional Practice Certificate training provided by the College and your experiences with it.

My name is Barb, and I'm here from Malatest, an independent company that is assisting the College in understanding how best to support employers in creating training programs that work for Chisasibi and Eeyou Istchee. What is learned through our conversation will be used by the College to improve the College's programs and other similar projects and make recommendations to the granting agency.

More about this study:

Eeyou Istchee College of Science and Technology's project is funded by the Future Skills Centre. The Future Skills Centre has contracted R.A. Malatest & Associates, an external and independent research firm, to conduct an evaluation in collaboration with the College. No individuals will be identified in any report resulting from this study. Only anonymized information will be included in reports for this evaluation. Your responses will be protected *as per* [Canada's Privacy Act](#). Management of the information collected through this study will be compliant with the Government of Canada's [Policy on Service and Digital](#).

Are there any questions before we begin?

1. Overall, how did the College Professional Practice program go for you?
2. Did you develop good relations with your instructors?
 - a. What helped develop good relations with instructors?
 - b. What prevented developing good relations with instructors?

3. What helped you learn the most in doing the courses?
4. What got in the way of your learning?
5. What was your favourite part of the courses you took?
6. How do you think the program could be improved?
7. Did you feel comfortable and welcome in the courses you took?
8. Was there anything about the courses that made you feel uncomfortable or unwelcomed?
9. Would you say that the program was culturally appropriate?
 - a. What made the program culturally appropriate or not culturally appropriate?
10. Would you recommend the program to other people in your community?
11. Time permitting: Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences with the program?

Employer Roundtable

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With your permission, I'd like to record our conversation so I can take accurate notes later to use in writing about what is working well and what maybe needs some improvement with the training to write a report the funder. The report is to help the funder understand how projects such as the College's training are benefitting employees and employers. The recordings will not be shared with the College or the funder and will be destroyed after the project is completed.

Are there any questions before we begin?

Are you okay with me recording?

1. Overall, how did the Certificate in Professional Practice program go for you and your organization?
2. How well did the training provided meet the needs of your organization?
 - a. Did the training topics fit your needs?
 - b. Was the scheduling of the training convenient for your organization?
 - c. Were you able to send as many employees as you needed to take the training?
 - d. Were they able to complete the training you wanted them to take?
3. Did your employees improve the skills you wanted them to through the training?
 - a. Of these skills, which skills improved the most?
 - b. Of these skills, which skills improved the least?
 - c. Did your employees develop any skills that were unexpected?
4. What went well with the training?
5. Where there any unexpected consequences to having your employees take the training?
6. How do you think the program could be improved?
7. Would you recommend the training provided by the College to other employers, such as yourself?
8. Time permitting: Is there anything else you would like to share about your experience with the program?