



4 Strategies to Better Support Indigenous Learners



The percentage of Indigenous students in B.C. achieving grade 12 completion within 6 years has increased from 62% to 70%. While this improvement is encouraging, it is still far short of the provincial average of 84% for all B.C. resident students. More needs to be done.

How can you close that gap? Here are four proven strategies you can try in your classroom to better support Indigenous learners.

1. **Acknowledge, respect and integrate Indigenous cultures into your teaching**

The research is clear that Indigenous students are more engaged and successful at school if their experiences are culturally relevant and affirm their sense of identity. This is supported by the [First Peoples Principles of Learning](#), especially the principle that “learning requires exploration of one’s identity” as well as a strong grounding in culture.

Integrating Indigenous cultures, knowledges and content into lessons has been proven to enrich learning and produce positive results for Indigenous students. To that end, commit yourself to learning more about Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and doing, and local First Nations and working this into your teaching. A great place to start would be to explore the new [Continuing Our Learning Journey: Indigenous Education](#) professional development resource.

2. **Focus on literacy**

Research also shows that the development of strong literacy skills in the early grades is critical to student success and, ultimately, to graduation. Some ways you can ensure Indigenous learners become skilled



young readers are by offering differentiated instruction, making real life connections, using strategies and resources that are engaging, motivating and culturally affirming, and maintaining high expectations. Other effective techniques include read aloud with reference to print, play with sounds inside words, and explicit instruction in letter names, sounds and formation. Take a look at the lesson plans in the [In Our Own Words, K-Gr. 3 Authentic Resources](#) publication for some great ideas.

3. Create a culture of care

Teachers who create an environment where students feel welcomed, honoured, comfortable and safe help set up strong conditions for student success. One way you can create a culture of care in your classroom is to commit yourself to the belief that each of your students can improve and grow and learn at a high level. Practicing a [growth mindset](#), and asking the same of your students, will go a long way to ensuring their success in your classroom.

4. Involve Indigenous families in their children's learning

Teachers who have seen sustained improvements in results for Indigenous learners recognize the key role their families play in their lives and build strong relationships with them. With that in mind, connect with Indigenous student's families and their broader community. Learn what is important to them and their children. Invite them into your classrooms to share their knowledge and perspectives. Take your class out to meet them in their communities. This will enrich the learning environment for not just your Indigenous learners but for everyone.

Have any other strategies for improving outcomes for Indigenous students?
Drop us a line at educ.stakeholder.engagement@gov.bc.ca.