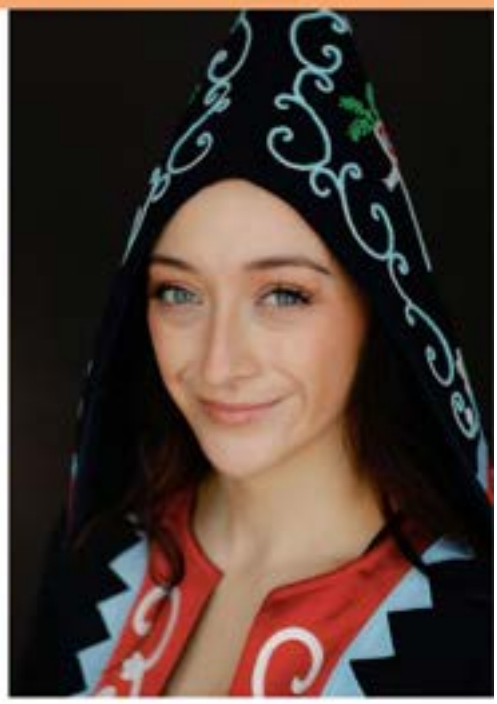
Charting a Course Kinu (Together)

Identifying Facilitators and Barriers to Participation of Indigenous Students in Post-Secondary Tourism Education Programs in Atlantic Canada



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KINU Tourism Project

Dynamic Horizons Innovative Relations

Mount Saint Vincent University

Charting a Course Kinu (Together)

Identifying Facilitators and Barriers to Participation of Indigenous Students in Post-Secondary Tourism Education Programs in Atlantic Canada

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Executive Summary

This report, titled *"Charting a Course Kinu (Together): Identifying Facilitators and Barriers to Participation of Indigenous Students in Post-Secondary Tourism Education Programs in Atlantic Canada,"* presents findings from a comprehensive research study exploring the opportunities and challenges Indigenous students face in accessing and engaging with tourism education. Guided by the Mi'kmaw concept of *Etuaptmumk* (Two-Eyed Seeing), the research uniquely blends Indigenous and Western knowledge systems, symbolized by the metaphor of constructing a Mi'kmaw birch bark canoe. This framework emphasizes interconnectedness, relationality, and the integration of multiple knowledge systems in addressing barriers to Indigenous participation in tourism education.

Background and Purpose

Indigenous tourism is an expanding sector in Atlantic Canada, driven by increasing global demand for authentic cultural experiences. Despite this growth, systemic barriers such as limited access to education, historical trauma, and underrepresentation in tourism-related professions hinder Indigenous participation. This study, part of the *Kinu Tourism Project* (KTP) at Mount Saint Vincent University, investigates these barriers and identifies strategies to promote equitable access to tourism education and careers, ensuring that Indigenous perspectives and values are central to both education and the industry.

Recommendations

The recommendations that resulted from this research range from those that are specific to Indigenous tourism education to those that impact the industry as a whole. On the education specific side, there is integrating Indigenous Knowledge in tourism programs and raising awareness of tourism education and career opportunities. The recommendations that have industry-wide impacts include, investment in tourism infrastructure development and protecting of authenticity in Indigenous tourism experiences. Both education and the tourism industry are equally impacted by the final recommendation, which is strengthening partnerships between Indigenous communities, educational institutions and the tourism industry.

Conclusion

This report highlights the critical role of culturally responsive education, infrastructure investment, and community collaboration in advancing Indigenous participation in tourism. The research underscores the transformative potential of tourism as a tool for cultural preservation, economic empowerment, and reconciliation. By adopting the Etuaptmumk (Two-Eyed Seeing) approach and using the Canoe Model, this study

provides a roadmap for addressing systemic barriers and fostering equitable, sustainable growth in Indigenous tourism education and industry.

The findings and recommendations serve as a call to action for stakeholders, emphasizing the importance of centering Indigenous perspectives to create meaningful and lasting change in Atlantic Canada's tourism sector.

The above executive summary was generated using ChatGPT (OpenAI, [2025]) and is based on the subsequent report which contains original, not AI generated content.

Kwitna’q: Travel by Canoe

The structure of this report follows the process of building a traditional Mi'kmaw birch bark canoe. Each stage of the research process represents a crucial step in the canoe's construction. This method combines academic research with traditional knowledge and skills to produce a result that is lasting, respectful, and sustainable (for more information, see Appendix 7). In many Indigenous cultures, the canoe is more than just a physical vessel; it is a profound symbol that represents balance, journey, and the interconnection of all elements (Davidson, 1991, as cited in Great Bear Rainforest).

The decision to apply the symbolic canoe as an organizing structure within a Western academic report supports the concept of *Etuaptmumk* (Two-Eyed Seeing), the theoretical framework applied in this research. Etuaptmumk, as it applies to research, is a concept developed by Mi’kmaw Elders Murdena and Albert Marshall. It emphasizes "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledge and ways of knowing" (Bartlett, Marshall, A. & Marshall, M., 2012, p. 5). In standard scholarly discourse, presenting Western research using the introduction-methods-results structure is commonly regarded as the conventional or correct approach. This approach is practical, but it is important to keep in mind that there are alternative ways of understanding and sharing knowledge that center Indigenous perspectives as well (Simonds & Christopher, 2013; Parent, 2014). That is why this report includes the canoe structure alongside the Western translation of widely recognizable sections such as Introduction and Methods.

The canoe has multiple layers of significance. Analogous to how every section of this report adds to the overall narrative, every component of the canoe serves an essential role in the excursion. Just as the study's careful integration of many voices and perspectives calls for careful construction and balancing, so too does the canoe. This structure additionally demonstrates a principle of relationality, which emphasizes that knowledge is interconnected and interdependent rather than isolated or compartmentalized, much like the components of a canoe, which must collaborate to ensure secure travel.

By respecting and embracing Indigenous knowledge systems alongside Western academic practices, we hope to represent a broader commitment to decolonizing research methodologies. Through this, we recognize that different modes of knowing can coexist and enhance one another, producing more insightful and consequential research findings. *Etuaptmunk* (Two-Eyed Seeing) embodies this philosophy. It directs the research in a way that is inclusive, equitable, and considerate of the many

viewpoints it engages. We welcome readers to embark on this journey with us, not as passive consumers of knowledge but as engaged contributors to a process that respects the profound, relational knowledge of Indigenous traditions as well as the analytical application of Western processes. We wish to also acknowledge and respect the fact that Indigenous knowledge is sometimes not transcribed or captured in written form, but instead through oral practices and traditions. We cite the knowledge keepers from whom we have learned the construction of the traditional birch bark canoe in Appendix 7.

Gathering Materials from the Land (Introduction)

Like how gathering materials is the first step in building a canoe (birch bark, cedar, spruce roots, spruce gum), this section gives background information and research purposes. It gathers all the "materials" needed to guide the research.

Indigenous tourism has evolved substantially over the last few years, both in Atlantic Canada and Canada as a whole (Heuvel & Many Chief, 2020) There is a growing demand for tourists to have immersive cultural experiences. However, there are barriers for Indigenous tourism professionals who are trying to build their businesses and services within Western dominate regulations, requirements, standards, and processes (personal communications, 2020, Catherine Martin and Robert Bernard). Cultural experiences include storytelling, traditional entertainment, handmade goods, guided tours, and Indigenous cuisine (Pyke, Pyke & Watuwa, 2019; Maher, MacPherson, Doucette, Tulk & Menge, 2020; George, Lucas & Kelsey, 2021; C & B, 2022). These elements draw on the sharing of culture, history, and ties to the land.

In 2023 BDO Canada LLP released a major report with the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat (APCFNC) that complemented the current Atlantic Indigenous Tourism research and aimed to support increased Indigenous participation in the industry (APCFNC & BDO, 2023). Indigenous communities have been the driving force behind this paradigm shift, seeking to ensure that tourism respects their cultures, customs, and sovereignty while also assisting in their economic sustainability (Redvers, Aubrey, Celidwen, & Hill, 2023). In broad terms, Indigenous tourism refers to tourism that shares the culture, systems, and knowledge of Indigenous peoples and is owned, run, or substantially influenced by them (APCFNC & BDO, 2023). It implies tourists interacting with Indigenous peoples in an authentic, respectful, and constructive way that benefits the communities. Another key finding from this report, was the need for post-secondary tourism education to foster Indigenous ways of knowing, show case Indigenous Tourism products, operations, businesses and services, and include more content about Indigenous history, culture, and tradition.

In 2015, as part of the national strategy from Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), the growth of Indigenous tourism in Atlantic Region began in the Mi’kma’ki

districts in what is known today as Nova Scotia. The formation of Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN - which means I want you to understand) started in 2014/2015 as the first Mi'kmaw Tourism Association in Atlantic Canada. The next Indigenous Tourism Association to form was the Indigenous Tourism Association of New Brunswick (ITANB). In 2018, the Indigenous Tourism Association of Prince Edward Island (ITAPEI) was launched and not long after in 2020, Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous Tourism Association (NLITA) followed. Around that time, in 2020, as part of the Mi'kmaw Cultural Tourism strategy, the Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMKNO) implemented the Mi'kmaw Authenticity project. Many Mi'kmaw and Wolastoqey community members and organizations have helped to inform this work. With the creation of the Kinu project in 2021, this work extended into post-secondary institutions and Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, resulting in the building of relationships and creation of a Mi'kma'ki-wide Advisory Committee.

Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) recognizes the essential significance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives into its academics considering recent disclosures regarding Canada's history and the pressing necessity to re-establish and celebrate Indigenous traditions. Since March 2022, the Kinu Tourism Project has been part of MSVU and its commitment to reconciliation. The discovery of over 10,000 unmarked graves and the investigation of Canada's residential schools has shone an irrefutable spotlight, escalating the importance of Canada's true history to be learned, and to re-establish, celebrate, and sustain Indigenous traditions, culture, and language.

Travelers seek to engage authentically with the people, places, and stories of a destination. Demand for Indigenous tourism experiences has seen a dramatic increase due to a shift in global and domestic interests (APC & BDO, 2023), while Canada simultaneously faces a labour and skills shortage in all tourism industry sectors (Tourism HR Canada, n.d). By encouraging Indigenous tourism entrepreneurs and expanding Indigenous students' access to post-secondary education, the Kinu Tourism Project (KTP) is addressing the growing demand for Indigenous tourism experiences as well as the labour and skills shortage in the tourism sector. The Kinu Tourism Project implements an *Etuaptmumk* (Two-Eyed Seeing) approach under the direction of Indigenous partners to preserve Indigenous language and culture, strengthen the capacity of Indigenous communities, grow the Indigenous tourism sector, and raise public understanding of Canada's past.

Offering Tobacco (Theoretical Framework)

Offering tobacco is a sacred tradition among Indigenous Peoples to honor and respect the land. We acknowledge this practice in this research by thanking the land for materials and knowledge, and the authors and knowledge keepers for their invaluable perspectives.

Etuaptmumk served not only as a guide but also as the theoretical framework for the research. We were also heavily influenced by the work of Shawn Wilson (2008) who explained that researchers and authors need to place themselves and their work firmly in a relational context. The authors and editors cannot be separated from this work, nor should they be. Good Indigenous research begins by describing and building on these relationships. Thus, this report begins with an introduction of the research team.

Authors Julietta, Chloe, and Keegan made up the Research Team of Dynamic Horizons Innovative Relations (DHIR), the consulting firm hired to conduct the research for the Kinu Tourism Project (KTP) at MSVU. Editors Bradley Paul, Kelsie Johnston, and Jennifer Guy made up the Kinu Research Team at MSVU. Chloe is a proud Mi'kmaw individual from Wasoqopa'q First Nation, living in Kjipuktuk (Halifax), Nova Scotia. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminology and Sociology with a minor in Indigenous Studies from Saint Mary's University and is currently pursuing her Juris Doctor at Schulich School of Law. Julietta Sorensen Kass is of Red River Métis and mixed European heritage, with a Master of Resource and Environmental Management from Dalhousie University. Julietta now lives in Calgary, Alberta. Bradley Paul is the Kinu Tourism Project Coordinator and is proud to be from Paqtnkek Mi'kmaw Nation. He is passionate about education, based on an instilled value of "education eliminates ignorance" and advocates for growth in terms of culture, reconciliation, and healing. Kelsie Johnston is a settler from Mi'kma'ki who holds an MBA from Cape Breton University. As the Kinu Tourism Project Manager, Kelsie believes in the power of culturally grounded education and Indigenous tourism as catalysts for community economic development. Jennifer Guy is a non-Indigenous Tourism Faculty member at MSVU who grew up in Kjipuktuk (Halifax), Nova Scotia in the district of Sipekne'katik of Mi'kma'ki. Jennifer is the co-lead of the Kinu Tourism Project. Her research interests lie in culturally responsive pedagogy, tourism education, student engagement, workplace learning, and food-centered learning.

Morse (2015) and Wright et al. (2019) described how rigor can be brought to *Etuaptmumk* research by having at least one researcher focus with an Indigenous lens and another with a Western lens. In this project, the Indigenous focus was carried out by Chloe, Keegan, and Bradley Paul the Western focus by Kelsie and Jennifer, with Julietta contributing to both. The separation of Western and Indigenous was intentionally blurred, with each of us viewing the research as a form of ceremony (Wilson, 2008). Adhering to the four Rs respect, relevance, reciprocity, and responsibility, this work aims to deepen understanding of Indigenous perspectives and highlight their importance in the tourism industry and in tourism education (Kirkness & Barnhardt, 1991).

Research involving Indigenous Peoples has often taken an extractive approach, treating Indigenous Peoples more like passive informants than like active partners in creating new knowledge (Hayward et al., 2021). This approach, even when well-intended, reduces Indigenous perspectives to that of passive sources of information and ignores their autonomy and importance. Drawing on *Etuaptmumk* (Bartlet, Marshall, & Marshall, 2012) and research as ceremony (Wilson, 2008), allows for a methodology that aims to "decolonize the areas of collaboration and knowledge production between Indigenous and Western modes of research and to rewrite and thereby "re-right" the boundaries between these ways of knowing (Smith, 1999; Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017, p.4).

Preparing Spruce Roots (Methodology)

Preparing spruce roots is comparable to preparing research methods. The methods section gets ready the instruments needed to "sew" the research together, just like the roots need to be cleaned, boiled, and split.

Cleaning the Roots (Ethics)

The research method was created through regular communication between members of Dynamic Horizons Innovative Relations (DHIR) and the Kinu Tourism Project Research Team (KTPRT). The research intent and interview questions had already been developed by the KTPRT when the DHIR team joined the process, which was informed by the Kinu Mi'kma'ki Advisory Committee. We worked with the KTPRT to contribute to the research ethics applications approved by both the MSVU Research Ethics Board and the Mi'kmaw Ethics Watch. Five out of six members of the combined teams completed their certification in the Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) of First Nations data by First Nations.

The research ethics approach also followed that of Bull (2010) who proposed, "ethics is not a stage of research completed at the start of a project by filling out a generic form and receiving approval from an institution" (p. 17). When Bird-Naytowhow et al., (2017) reflected on their work they described how "the Indigenous lens" was less concerned with specific aspects of the research process and more so focused on the intentions behind each action within those processes. Drafting a research protocol was a significant step in clarifying intentions as research authors. The research protocol drew on current Indigenous research paradigms and methodologies to engage with research participants in ways that honor reciprocity, ceremony, spirituality, and Indigenous Epistemologies. These steps provided a space to reflect on the contributions, assumptions, and obligations as contributors to the knowledge-generation process (Wilson, 2001; Hart, 2010; Bird-Naytowhow et al., 2017).

Boiling the Roots (Methods)

The KTP developed a vast network of people involved with or interested in Indigenous tourism in Mi'kma'ki. Through snowball recruitment with community leadership, Indigenous tourism businesses and organizations, and educators across Atlantic Canada, the KPT collected the names and contact information of approximately 50 individuals who were identified as having valuable insights to contribute to the study. We then reached out to these individuals by phone and email to arrange interviews until we had completed 18 interviews. In keeping with Indigenous methodologies, individuals were viewed not as participants or informants, but as co-researchers engaging in a reciprocal process and relationship (Anastas, 2004; Brant-Castellano, 2004; Chilisa, 2012; Quinn, 2022). Co-researchers took part on a voluntary basis and their time was compensated.

Prior to each interview, Chloe and Julietta provided co-researchers with copies of the research protocol, co-researcher information sheet and the consent form by email. The KTP Information Sheet also included the interview questions. Whenever possible, both Chloe and Julietta were present for the interview. Interviews were conducted in person in a location of the individual's choosing and recorded using the desktop program *Audacity*. When an in-person interview was not possible, we arranged for video chats using Microsoft Teams and recorded the interview using Teams' software. Audio-recordings provided rich qualitative data that not only preserved the exact wording of co-researchers, but provided other contextual information like pauses, sighs, and changes in tone (Giske & Artinian, 2007).

Before recording, we asked co-researchers what personal identifying information (if any) they wanted attached to their responses (community names, place of work, personal name etc.) and what they did not want included. It was reiterated that co-researchers could withdraw their participation in the study at any time without receiving any negative impact. We also asked what name or identifier we should use when referring to them in the report. Following Indigenous research practices, we did not assume that every co-researcher wanted to be anonymous. Simonds and Christopher (2013) explain this beautifully:

"[Members of the Community Advisory Board (CAB)] expressed that analyzing by breaking apart felt disrespectful to the women who shared their stories, and that the story's impact hinges upon the experiences and relationships the storyteller has to those receiving the story. For example, when a respected Elder shares her experiences, it is impactful to her audience largely because of who is speaking. In keeping with Western scientific methods, the interview transcripts were coded anonymously, not mentioning the names of the women who shared stories. CAB members explained that

when the Elder is not named, the person receiving the story loses their connection with the Elder, thus losing an essential part of the impact of the story (p. 2187)".

We used a semi-structured interview approach where the questions were written ahead of time, but conversation was allowed to flow naturally and included elements such as clarifying questions, personal anecdotes, and references to the research thus far. A conversational approach was intended to prioritize trust and relational knowledge formation. This followed the work of Cooper and Burnett (2006) who argued that during an interview, both the interviewer and the person being interviewed work together to create the story or information that is recorded. We embraced relationality instead of presenting ourselves as unbiased external researchers. As Lavallee (2009) asserted, Indigenous research does not labour under the assumption that it is either unbiased or objective, since the researchers themselves are necessarily connected to everyone else in the study (McGaw & Vance, 2023). We understood research to be inherently tied to relationships (Hart, 2010), and to be fundamental to Indigenous research practices (Wilson, 2001).

To improve the quality of the audio recordings, the files were processed using the desktop program *Audacity*. The desktop version of Transana, a qualitative analysis software, was used to automatically create transcripts. Transcripts were manually edited to remove any errors and information the co-researcher did not wish to include. To build and maintain trust and transparency, all co-researchers received a password protected copy of the cleaned transcripts and were invited to clarify, adjust, or withdraw any content related to their contribution. In Western research, this approach is known as "member checking" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Charmaz, 2000; Quinn, 2022).

During the early stages of data analysis (after all the interviews had been completed) we gave a presentation to the KTPRT and the Kinu Mi'kma'ki Advisory Committee sharing some high-level initial findings. The analytical model was described, and feedback was invited. The same presentation was recorded and shared with all the co-researchers, who also had the opportunity to provide feedback.

Splitting the Roots (Analytical Model)

Quinn (2022) described grounded theory as a "bridge between Indigenous and Western methodologies" (p. 4). Simonds and Christopher (2013) asserted that grounded theory is well suited to *Etuaptmumk* research because it does not force qualitative data into an existing theory or model**.** Likewise, the constructivist grounded theory as described by Charmaz (2000), recognizes researcher participants (who we called co-researchers} as playing a role in co-constructing the theory derived from research data. We applied a

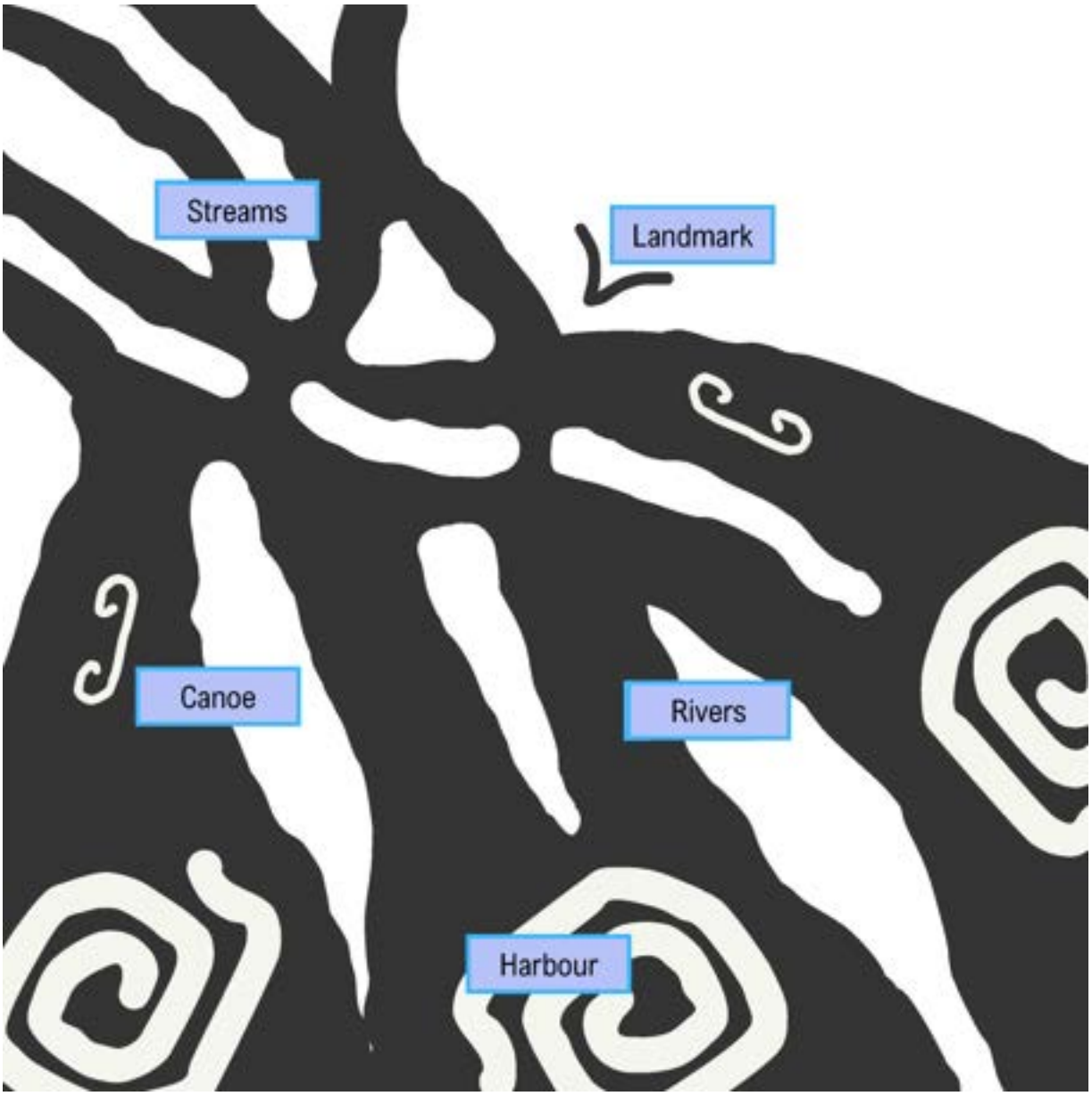
modification of grounded theory that sought to further include Indigenous research methodologies. This Indigenous-informed grounded theory was the answer to Kovach's (2009) call for researchers to push beyond Indigenous-Settler binaries and "construct new, mutual forms of dialogue, research, theory, and action" (p. 12).

The standard method for analyzing interview data within the grounded theory approach is to identify meaningful sections of data (quotes) and convert these into keywords (codes) that will represent them (Foley & Timonen, 2015). Researchers then identify categories that emerge from the codes and form these into themes. The overall process provides a clean, hierarchical model for creating knowledge from data (Transana, 2024). This process appeases a Western-informed understanding of knowledge-making. However, when incorporating an Indigenous worldview, the interviews can be seen not only as the collection of data but also as the sharing of stories. Thus, we needed a model that better reflected the *Etuaptmumk* theoretical framework and reflected both knowledge systems.

Simonds & Christopher (2013) presented a conceptual model based on grounded theory but developed around the cultural symbol of the 5-poled Crow tipi. Parent (2014) used a similar approach where the research was organized according to the Northwest Coast bentwood box. Similar hybrid approaches, where grounded theory was combined with Indigenous ways of knowing, were successfully applied by authors such as Lavallée (2009), Simonds & Christopher (2013), Murrup-Stewart et al. (2021), and McGaw & Vance (2023). Following these examples, we too used a modified approach to grounded theory that was informed by the cultural context of the people we were working with. The model was built around the symbol of a canoe traversing a system of waterways. Recognizing the strengths of both Western and Indigenous ways of knowing, the hybrid grounded theory model (the Canoe Model, Figure 1) supported direct responses to the research questions, while also shedding light on the broader landscape of Indigenous people's experience in tourism.

In adopting *Etuaptmumk* as the theoretical framework, we saw ourselves less as collectors of data and more as receivers of stories. We thought of these stories as mapping out a complex system of understanding, much like a system of waterways (Figure 1). The canoe represented the story shared by a co-researcher; a sample taken at a particular point in time that shed light on the wider landscape. The ideas that arose from these stories could be organized into categories (streams), sub-themes (rivers), and themes (harbours) – a landscape of understanding. Keywords or phrases that appeared across multiple interviews could be represented as landmarks alongside the waterways. With this approach we hoped to emphasize the interconnection and relationship of the ideas being expressed and reduce the emphasis on hierarchy.

Canoe Model



Along with identifying themes and categories, we needed to provide answers to the interview questions. These answers were also nested within the canoe model when we represented them as a particular route along the waterways (Figure 2). When co-researchers responded to the questions, they provided insight on the “route” itself but through their stories also gave information about the wider landscape.

Figure 2. *Etuaptmumk* (Two-Eyed Seeing) Representation of how answers to the interview questions informed the Canoe Model

Learning about Birch Bark (Qualitative Analysis)

Learning to study features and qualities of birch bark from a knowledge keeper is like applying an analytical process based on the teachings of past scholars. The goal is to discern the information in front of you that is not immediately clear.

Qualitative analysis is a research method used to explore experiences, perceptions, and complex phenomena in various fields. It aims to represent rich, detailed, and nuanced data, which quantitative methods may overlook (Anastas, 2004). At its core, qualitative analysis is about understanding how people interpret their social world without trying to force those experiences into preconceived hypotheses. Instead, researchers focus on

the information that emerges from the analytical process, such as patterns, themes, and relationships. Kovach (2009) also argues that qualitative research can be aligned with Indigenous methodologies by embedding Indigenous epistemologies, which focus on holistic and relational knowledge systems.

Much like Indigenous methodologies, qualitative analysis focuses an stories or narratives. The process is often open-ended and iterative, which Foley and Timonen (2015) argue is essential to capturing the complexity of human behavior and social interactions. Another significant aspect of qualitative analysis is reflexivity—being aware of how the researchers' presence and interpretation influences data collection (Anastas, 2004). This again parallels the approach taken in Indigenous methodologies where the researcher is viewed as being inherently involved in the research process. Grounded theory is one way of conducting qualitative research that generates theories based on data collected from participants and focuses on their perspectives and perceptions (Charmaz, 2006).

Removing the bark (Coding vs. Categorization)

Birch bark must be carefully taken from the tree to be used. The tree can have its bark removed while it is still standing, or it can be chopped down. Some pieces will be used in the canoe creation, but not all will fit. We organize and work with the gathered bark just as we organize and work with the interviews we collected.

As previously noted, grounded theory has been successfully applied to Indigenous research in multiple cases, but usually in a modified form. One of the criticisms of using standard grounded theory in Indigenous research has been its deconstructive and hierarchical nature, where wholistic stories are cut and divided to be rebuilt and formed into new meaning. Wilson (2008) explains:

“Analysis from a Western perspective breaks everything down to look at it. So you are breaking it down into its smallest pieces and then looking at those small pieces. And if we are saying that an Indigenous methodology includes all of these relationships, if you are breaking things down into their smallest pieces, you are destroying all the relationships around it” (pg. 119).

While all analysis requires interpretation of what was said, coding can be seen as an added layer of interpretation wherein the original words of the speaker are further distanced from the conclusion. Coding is an integral part of the analytical process within grounded theory. To appease both the requirements of grounded theory process and the knowledge shared by Wilson, we first attempted to apply “in vivo” coding. This type of coding creates codes from a verbatim snippet of a statement. For example, if a person shared “I was totally overwhelmed”, and in vivo code could be “overwhelmed”. However, this approach still reduced a sentiment to a protracted representation of itself, while also creating so many unique codes that the benefit of coding was lost.

After several consultations with Dr. David Woods (personal communication, 2024), creator of the analytical software Transana, we chose to apply the “categorization” approach. Woods described this as an analogous alternative to traditional coding, explaining, “one of the implications of [Categorization] is that data items can be considered in relation to one another. First, these data items are grouped together in a collection that describes what they have in common” (personal communication, 2024). In the categorization approach the researcher finds a meaningful segment of speech (quote) and places it into a category (collection) without condensing it into a representative code. Instead of breaking down quotes into codes and then organizing those codes into categories, we looked at the meaning of each quote and organized it directly into a category. The categories naturally split and converged or changed throughout the analysis. The categorization approach did not entirely exclude the use of codes, as these were still helpful for finding what we called “Landmarks”- recurring points of reference that multiple people used to navigate their stories and experiences.

The difference between categorization and coding was subtle, but meaningful to this research study which aimed to preserve the voices of coresearchers as well as the context in which the words were shared. The most important difference came down to the units of information we would be working with as the analysts. When coding, we work with the keywords and codes created through our interpretations. When categorizing, we work directly with quotes and thus quite literally maintain the speakers’ voice in the analysis. By preserving these voices, we preserved more of the relational aspect of the research process, followed *Etuaptmumk*, and honoured the concept of research as ceremony.

Unlike the typical process of coding to saturation of theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2006; Quinn, 2022), we extended the coding and categorization of interviews beyond initial saturation and continued inviting feedback after the interviews were complete. We did this out of respect for the co-researchers who contributed their time and perspectives. Their contributions were valuable, even if they overlapped with previously identified categories and themes. We believed the analytical process should reflect this value and, therefore, did not remove or skip what might be considered redundant information according to the common application of grounded theory. This was in keeping with the Indigenous methodologies described by Wilson and Restoule (2010), where the relationships between researchers and participants form the foundation for research and are expected to continue beyond the data collection phase.

Preserving and storing birch bark (Applying the Canoe Model)

This part reflects how the information collected through the processes of coding and categorization were woven into the Canoe Model. This relates to the way we handle birch bark with care and caution, understanding that it was given to us as a gift. We preserve and store the bark with the same reverence that is used to preserve and present the voices of the co-researchers.

Through the processes of coding and categorization, several nested categories were created from the interview data. These were then visually represented using the online program Canva into a Mind Map (Figure 3).

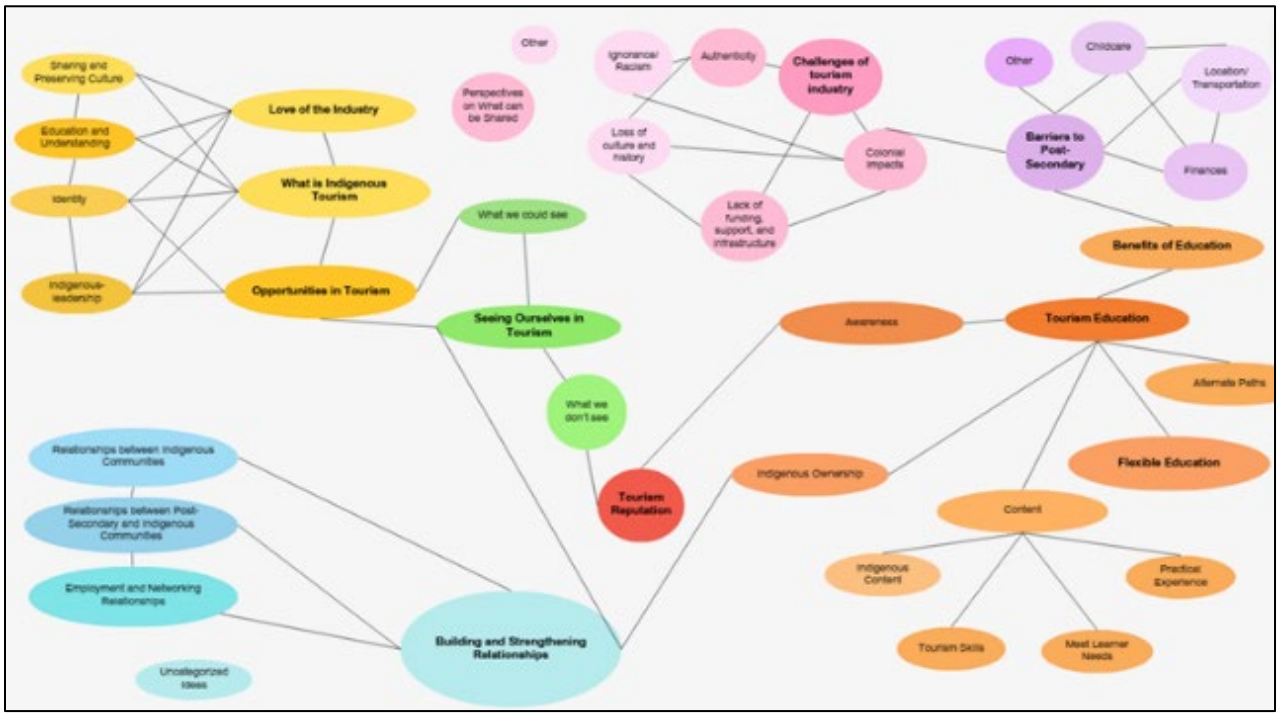


Figure 3. Mind Map

We then reorganized the mind map into a series of rivers (categories), streams (sub-themes), and harbours (themes), that better represented the relationships between each of the aspects (Figure 4). Lastly, we converted the information in Figure 4 into a series of representative symbols, shown in Figure 5. The analysis focused on the relationships between the streams, rivers, and harbours, and what this told us about the co-researchers' experience of Indigenous tourism in Mi'kma'ki.

Taken together, these three images represent the application of the *Etuaptmumk* (Two-Eyed Seeing) framework, where knowledge and information are presented from multiple lenses. The process of creating these visual representations was itself an act of analysis. Moving between the three visualizations (Figures 3, 4, & 5) was an iterative process where categories and subcategories may be reorganized or renamed during the process so long as they were still supported by the quotes that defined them. Parent (2014) explains how Indigenous research methodologies favour such visual representations not only for sharing and communicating knowledge but for understanding it as well.

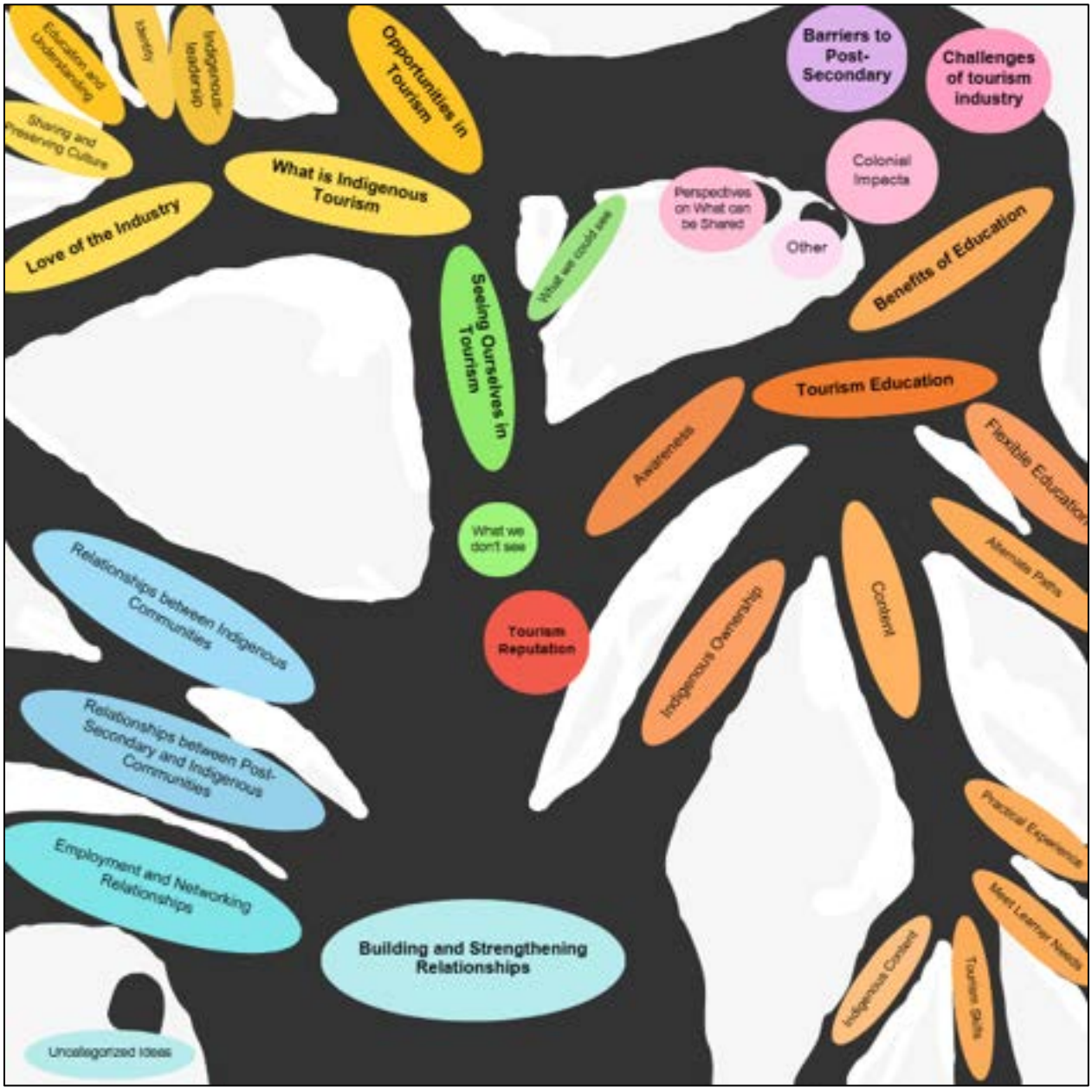


Figure 4. Transitional Canoe Model

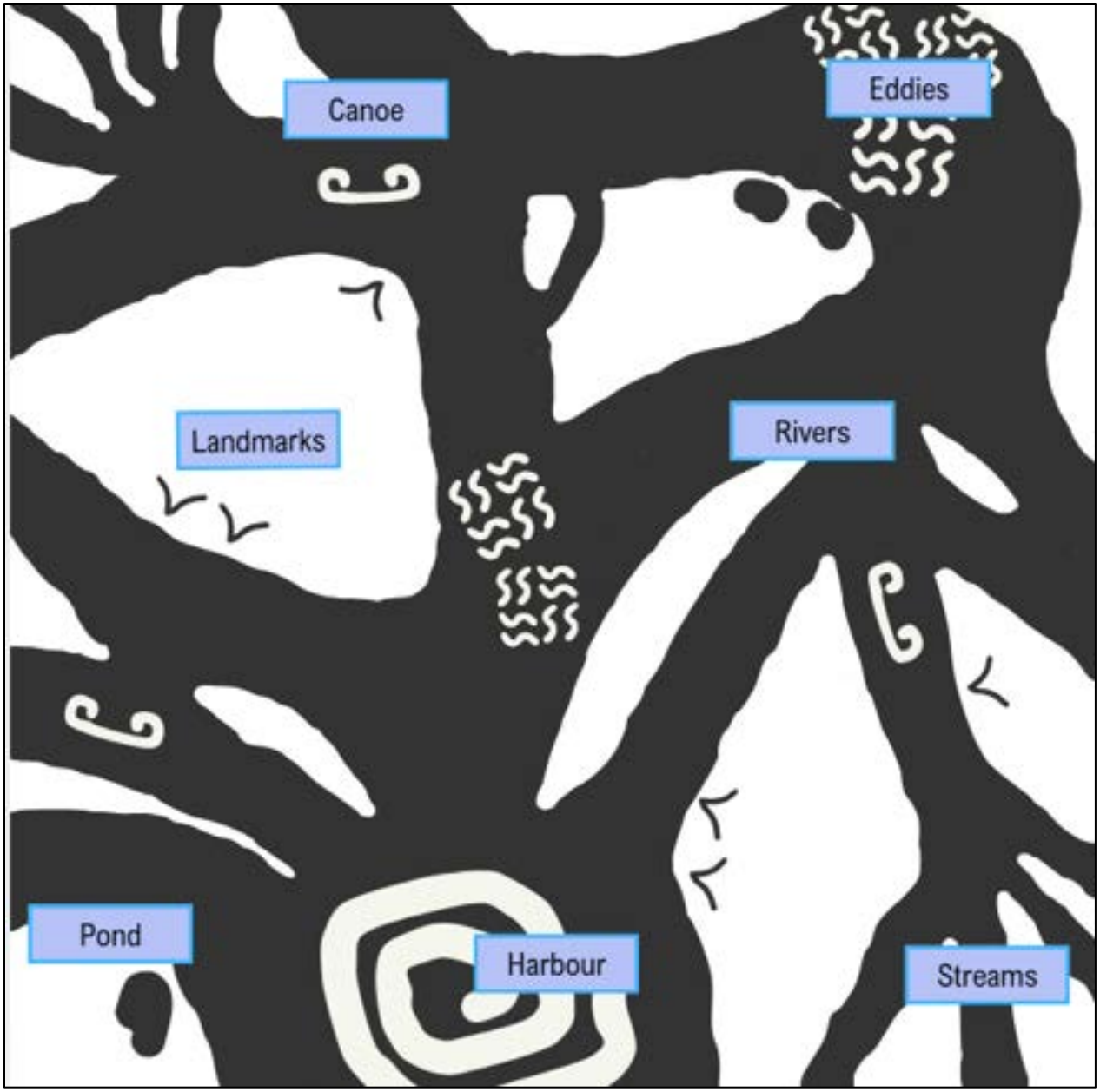


Figure 5. Symbolic Canoe Model

Preparing birch bark for use (Answering the questions)

Birch bark preparation involves meticulous harvesting and inspection. In answering the interview questions, we carefully reviewed and interpreted the data to provide the best fitting answers. Both procedures demand accuracy and flexibility to make sure the material is appropriate for the purpose for which it is intended.

As previously mentioned, we viewed the interview questions as being nested within the overall Canoe Model. Thus, the answers to individual questions were informed by the entire interview and not dissected from the whole. As Simonds and Christopher (2013)

learned in their work with the Apsáalooke Nation (Crow Tribe), “breaking apart stories changes the relationship between the storyteller and the receiver of the story and loses the relationship of the pieces of the story to each other”.

Codes were also invaluable for identifying whether statements were related to specific interview questions, and which ones. For example, a co-researcher might elaborate on their answer to one question and, in doing so, provide their answer to another question that would come later in the interview. They may also refer back to a previously answered question. Applying the question code to the statement made it clear which questions were being answered by it, regardless of when in the interview the answer was given.

Measuring and Cutting Birch Bark (Quantitative Analysis)

The birch bark must be measured and cut to the proper sizes for the canoe after preparation. This process ensures that every component fits precisely and complies with the design guidelines. It is comparable to data analysis in research where information is organized into concrete and measurable units.

While the study was predominantly based on qualitative analysis, Glaser & Strauss (1967) argued for a mixed methods approach where quantitative data can provide additional understanding to the phenomenon being studied and contributes to the overall credibility of the research. The question of when and when not to include quantitative data was thus one of function- when would quantitative data improve the understanding of the emergent themes and when might it detract from it? Using the features of the analysis software Transana, we were able to call up the frequency of specific words or ideas (i.e., Landmarks) and determine the number of people who provided a positive or a negative response to a question (i.e., Yes or No). This was extremely useful when discreet responses were provided. This was an uncommon occurrence however, as even questions that *could* have been answered with a yes or no often weren’t.

Another challenge we faced was with what might be called the fallacy of frequency, where higher frequency of a term or concept suggests a higher significance in the overall study. However, we noticed how a topic of interest or low-level concern could be widely known and thus appear in several interviews while still not appearing to be of particularly high importance to the co-researchers. Alternatively, a single co-researcher could raise a topic several times and feel it is of utmost importance, but that same idea may surface in one or two other interviews. Relying on frequency would be misleading in both cases. Frequency was further skewed by the fact that the interviews were guided by a pre-determined set of questions which could have led co-researchers to touch on topics that they may not have raised on their own.

Western frameworks prioritize frequency and other quantitative data as a way of increasing the vigour or reliability of a largely qualitative study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For the reasons noted above, we adopted a modified approach that focused on the prominence (overall importance) of topics as they were conveyed by the co-researchers. This meant that while frequency *informed* the prominence of an idea, so did the intuition of the researchers. Tone, body language, and whether the topic arose organically or was prompted all contributed to the understanding of prominence. This then helped to differentiate between rivers (sub-themes) and streams (categories) in the Canoe Model (Figures 4 and 5).

Assembling and Securing the Canoe Structure (Co-researcher Confirmation)

The main structure of the canoe is put together by building the frame, adding the gunwales, and securing the bark using the spruce roots. This follows a traditional process ensuring that all parts fit together collaboratively. Like co-researcher confirmation, this step entails enhancing and verifying the research to ensure the results are reliable.

When a complete draft of the report was written, it was shared with the KTPRT and all co-researchers for their responses and feedback. Co-researchers were given two weeks to provide responses, and reminded that they were welcome to email, video call, or phone. The report was then shared with the Kinu Mi'kma'ki Advisory Committee. These steps followed the authors' understanding of *Etuaptmumk*, where decolonizing research is both "a process and an orientation to research that must be consciously attended to throughout the entire partnership" (Simonds & Christopher, 2013).

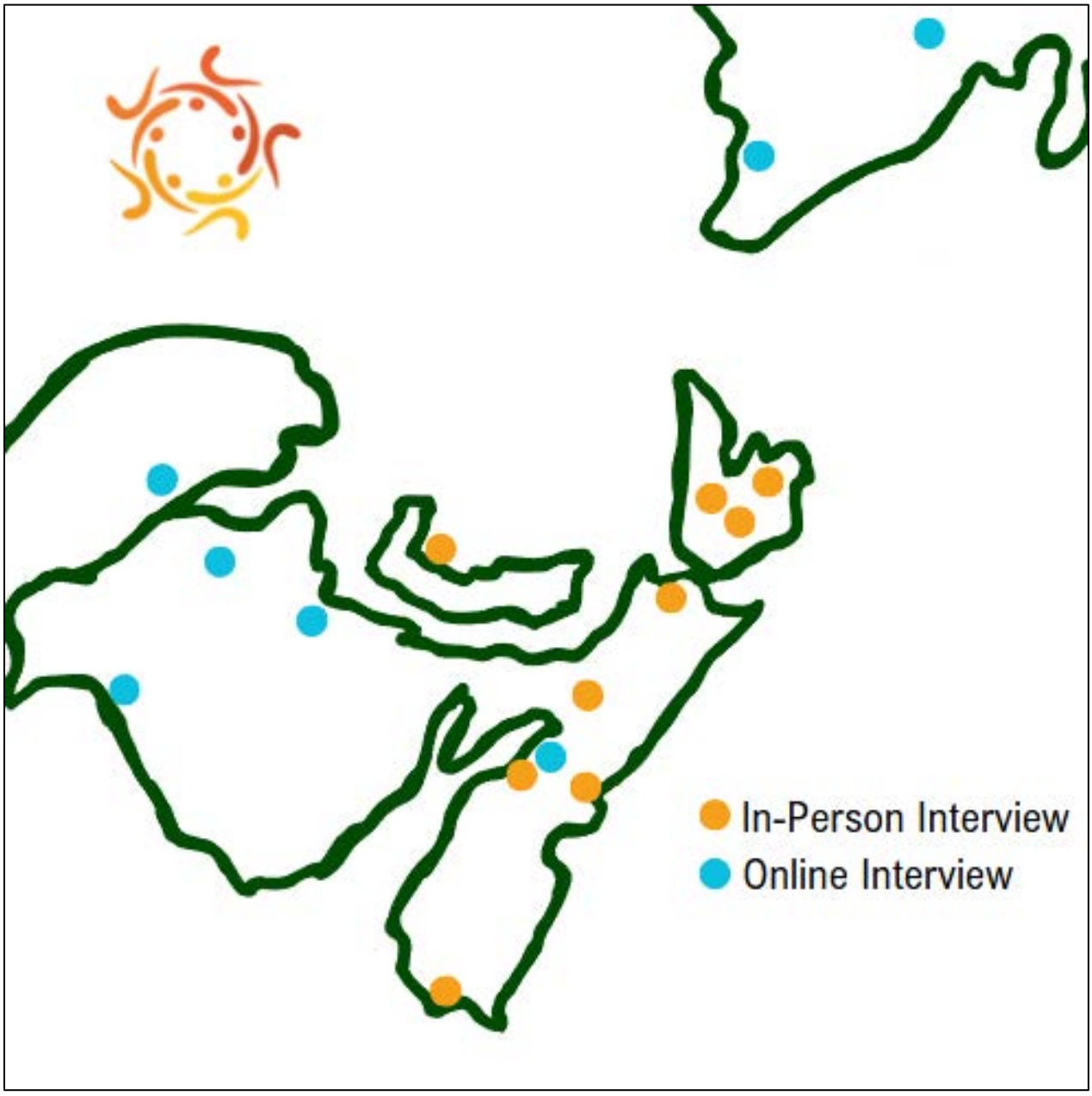
Adding the Gunwales (Findings)

A research study's findings may be thought of as the gunwales of a canoe, which define the shape and prepare it for use.

We completed 18 semi-structured interviews, where we asked a consistent set of questions but also made space for natural conversation and personal sharing. Eleven of these took place in person, as we travelled from community to community, and seven were completed online (Figure 6). The interviews were completed between April 18 and May 10, 2024, ranging from 25 minutes to 80 minutes, with the majority completed in under an hour. Participants, referred to as co-researchers, were drawn from 16 different communities across all five provinces within Mi'kma'ki—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and the Island of Newfoundland. The co-researcher pool included a mix of genders, all of whom were over the age of 18. Sixteen of the 18 co-researchers self-identified as Indigenous, one as non-Indigenous, and one did not disclose. Information specific to each co-researcher is displayed in Table 1, including Co-Researcher ID (the name they chose to be identified by), the community they come from or are currently living in, and any other contextual information they chose to

provide. Co-researchers were given the opportunity to provide as much or as little information as they wished.

The record of categories and quotes exported from Transana and then further developed into the Mind Map and Canoe Model is found in Appendix 1.



Co-Researcher ID	Ethnicity	Community	Profession
Urban Indigenous 1	Indigenous, Māori	Indian Brook First Nation, Sipekne'katik First Nations	Indigenous Tourism
Indigenous Tourism 1	Not Disclosed	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Kespukwitk District	Indigenous	Kespukwitk District	Leadership
Indigenous Tourism 2	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Indigenous Tourism 3	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Josie	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Indigenous Tourism 4	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Indigenous Tourism 5	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Faye Linkletter	Indigenous	Eskasoni First Nation	Indigenous Tourism
Shane Bernard	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism, Student
Millbrook 1	Indigenous	Millbrook First Nation	Other
Michael	Indigenous	Glooscap First Nation	Economic Development
Tim Dedam	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Trinity Maloney	Indigenous	Indian Brook First Nation	Indigenous Tourism, Student
Dean Simon	Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Anna-Marie	Non-Indigenous	Not Disclosed	Indigenous Tourism
Patricia Dunnett	Indigenous, Mi'kmaq	Metepenagiag First Nation	Indigenous Tourism
Dave Perley	Indigenous, Walostoq	Tobique First Nation	Leadership and Education

Table 1. Co-researcher identifiers and contextual information

Interview Questions

In answering each interview question, we limited our interpretations of responses and focused more on providing illustrative quotes from the co-researchers themselves. The quotes listed are not an exhaustive list of what was collected (see all quotes in Appendix 5), but a sample highlighting prominent or recurring ideas. These included both ideas that were brought forward organically and those prompted by the questions themselves.

#1 WHAT DOES "INDIGENOUS TOURISM" MEAN TO YOU? HOW DOES IT DIFFER FROM NON-INDIGENOUS TOURISM?

Responses to this question were organized into four emergent categories: 1) Education and Understanding, 2) Identity, 3) Indigenous-Leadership, 4) Sharing and Preserving Culture

<u>Education and Understanding</u>

Co-researchers shared that a defining characteristic of Indigenous tourism was how it teaches people the true history of Canada and about the Mi'kmaw people.

"It's not just to non-natives and natives, like because we're all learning from each other I find" - Josie
"It's a great way to teach [non-Indigenous people] and then when they leave, they have that whole concept of who we are now and how we live" - Faye Linkletter
"[Indigenous tourism should] bring people together into understanding each other instead of continuing with the hate growing up" - Indigenous Tourism 4
"Tourism bridged that, created a bridge where we could reach out to people all over the world to share our story" - Patricia Dunnett

<u>Identity</u>

Indigenous tourism was reported to provide Indigenous people with a sense of pride and confidence in their culture and identity.

"Indigenous tourism to me, it means we get to tell our stories from our point of view" - Indigenous Tourism 5
"Pride. Pride in culture. Wanting to, wanting to get the proper story out" - Dean Simon

“The basis of tourism is people visiting your land, visiting you, your history, your land, whatever your landscape is, whatever attraction. So, when you visit a place like this, you need to learn whose it really is” - Urban Indigenous 1
“I like to think that we’ve been tourism providers since the arrival of the Europeans, you know” - Tim Dedam
“[Indigenous tourism] created a desire in people to reclaim their culture and to take pride in it” - Patricia Dunnett

Indigenous Leadership

Indigenous tourism was defined not just as excursions focusing on Indigenous Peoples and history but also as any tourism venture that was led by Indigenous people.

“Casinos always seem to be one... a winery... a golf course... that is still Indigenous tourism” - Michael
“I would like to see with Indigenous tourism people who are of that culture being able to express their, showcase their own culture to these tourists that are coming” - Trinity Maloney
“If anybody is doing tourism, it should be Indigenous people” - Dean Simon
It’s also about taking control of the conversation and having our story told from our perspective...They’re able to have their own businesses and take control of their own lives” - Patricia Dunnett
“Indigenous tourism means...travel destinations or activities that are owned and run by Indigenous communities. This means that Indigenous people themselves are in charge of providing the experience, sharing their own culture, and benefiting from the tourism.” - Indigenous Tourism 3
“I recently learned it as something that is Indigenous led, Indigenous made, Indigenous owned, Indigenous influenced...It means that it's going to be sometimes completely Indigenous focused and other times just a component of a cultural aspect that's integrated” - Indigenous Tourism 1

Sharing and Preserving Culture

Many co-researchers shared that Indigenous tourism was more than just business, it was a way to reclaim culture.

“Economic development for a cultural thing, not just a business. Sometimes in Indigenous cultures, tourism goes beyond just dollars and cents” - Michael
" [The story of Glooscap] is such an interesting story and it's such a big part of our culture and our history. And right now, who's telling that story? There's nobody presenting that story. It's our story to tell. - Indigenous Tourism 5
“Bringing our people back, bringing our ancestors back and bringing our... stories back home where they need to be” - Kespuwitk District

Non-Indigenous Tourism

Indigenous tourism was often described as being notably absent from mainstream tourism in Mi’kma’ki. When describing non-Indigenous tourism near his community, Dave Perley shared “[T]hey erased our story, they've erased our culture. They erased... our history and so on.” Indigenous tourism was not described in how it differed from mainstream tourism; rather mainstream tourism was described in how it differed from Indigenous tourism. This positioned Indigenous tourism as the norm or at least as a distinct entity rather than as a subset or branch of mainstream tourism. Discussions around non-Indigenous tourism focused almost exclusively on the industry itself and rarely mentioned those working in it. Co-researchers predominantly shared negative perceptions of, or experiences with non-Indigenous tourism, but these sentiments were almost never applied to the individuals working in non-Indigenous tourism.

“That one picture says a thousand words. That says, ‘families were taken away, culture was taken away, language was taken away’. Everything in that one picture” - Shane Bernard
“Twistory’ is when you have only one set of facts and they ignore the other set of facts” - Dave Perley
“Non-Indigenous tourism is really like welcoming somebody into somebody else’s home” - Dean Simon

“Non-Indigenous tourism doesn't have Indigenous ownership or management. The main difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous tourism isn't so much about the specific experience being offered, but rather who's behind it.” - Indigenous Tourism 3

#2. WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE INDIGENOUS TOURISM INDUSTRY? WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE INDIGENOUS TOURISM INDUSTRY IN ATLANTIC CANADA?

Many co-researchers described the Indigenous tourism industry in Atlantic Canada in terms of disconnect. Many individual offerings and efforts were noted but it was seen as not being enough to draw a tourist to come to the area and have an entire *Indigenous experience*. In the researchers’ experience, traveling from community to community corroborated the descriptions of communities not frequently having accommodations, food, and enough experiences or attractions to host visitors. Co-researchers shared that if communities were to collaborate, they could collectively provide an experience allowing tourists to stay in the area. Membertou was frequently mentioned as a community making great strides and providing a solid anchor point that other communities could build off.

In many cases co-researchers used this question as an opportunity to further explain their answers to #1, “What is Indigenous tourism?”. The three most prominent ideas that arose from this question (beyond the ideas already discussed in #1) were the challenges of the Indigenous tourism industry (a. Authenticity and B. Colonial impacts), and the (C.) current state of the industry.

<u>Authenticity</u>

Co-researchers frequently reported seeing authenticity as a challenge faced by those in the tourism industry. This directly related to one of the identified barriers to education, where co-researchers shared that non-Indigenous people were passing themselves off as Indigenous and gaining access to schooling supports meant for them (see Question #10).

“A lot of [Indigenous tourism] is being done by people who have no idea what it is” - Millbrook 1
“We started working on branding for authentic Mi'kmaw tourism 20 years ago. And I don't think we still have that” - Kespukwitk District

“Challenges with authenticity. With the way some organizations are claiming Indigenous status” - Dean Simon
“There's only a limited amount of, you know, maybe authentic Mi'kmaw people. You know, the Shannon Monks and people like that are working on here in Nova Scotia, make it authentic.....but also that people need to realize that in Indigenous tourism, we often get pigeonholed almost into certain industries as well. Like we're making baskets, we're making drums, we're doing certain things, but there's so much more that we're doing that people don't realize...we shouldn't pigeonhole us to that.” - Michael
“There's so much tourism that it's just, it's almost like dollar store tourism... There's no meaning to it.” - Tim Dedam
“You have non-Indigenous people going out, representing themselves as being Indigenous. You know, selling these things at these fairs. - Kespuwitk District

Colonial Impacts

The other most commonly raised challenge was colonial impacts. This arose in response to co-researchers’ perception of the tourism industry, and included facing ignorance and racism, feeling erased from history, and a lack of resources or support.

“They had to rise above the ashes because a lot of systematic racism going on in the town that they're trying to operate in” - Shane Bernard
“Just so many people don't know. I mean, our history here, but also history in general. Like people come here think we still live in teepees” - Millbrook 1
“It makes me emotional because it makes me mad still today that there's so much that people don't understand and there's so many misconceptions and even that I still deal with today with people in my own circles because people simply don't have enough education.” - Anna-Marie
“A non-Indigenous tourist coming here...they expect to see...teepees, as they call them...they think they expect to see, you know, long hair braids and fur cloths - Kespukwitk District”
“[T]hey erased our story, they've erased our culture. They erased our- our history and so on.” - Dave Perley

“I think the biggest deficit that we have is the fact that we don't have those infrastructures in our community and we don't have those, those [sic] pillars built up that we're able to take advantage of, bringing tourists into the community and giving them something, a reason, to be here for 24 hours or 48 hours” - Tim Dedam

While these challenges were raised numerous times, by far the most prominent idea coming from Question #2 was that the state of Indigenous tourism in Atlantic Canada is not yet mature. It was often described as being behind that of Western Canada. This was consistent regardless of what province the co-researcher lived in, whether they had worked in the industry directly or indirectly, and whether they were Indigenous or non-Indigenous. It should be noted though that the majority of co-researchers lived in Nova Scotia, and so this perception may not be universally held around Mi’kma’ki.

“It’s growing” was an extremely common sentiment. Most felt Indigenous tourism was gaining momentum but was far from the potential industry it could be. As Faye Linkletter shared:

“[T]here's a lot more support with it in the Indigenous communities. In Atlantic Canada it's picking up slowly. We're trying to work with all the Indigenous communities to make sure that they're able to have something, a product to sell. So, I find Atlantic Canada is kind of behind. We're slowly picking up but it's still far behind from Canada.”

Tim Dedam described efforts to create:

“... sort of a web that we don't have right now.” He shared “I know we're trying to build it, and I know it exists in small fragments and pieces in people's minds. A lot of people believe that [Indigenous tourism is] bigger than it is, but I believe it's in its infancy stages.”

“And I think here in Atlantic Canada, we have a long way to go when it comes to Indigenous tourism because we do not have the extensive offerings that people in larger settings have.” - Indigenous Tourism 2
“So, I think that Indigenous tourism is doing really well and has a lot of potential to grow in Atlantic Canada...but I feel like we need to expand our offerings” - Indigenous Tourism 3

“It's growing... It's heading in the right direction. It's still very new, right? For me, I've been involved in it for a long time, 30-some years. But most of it is just starting. I could feel it building up around me.” - Indigenous Tourism 5

Many co-researchers referred to the Indigenous tourism efforts in Western Canada (specifically Quebec, Alberta, and British Columbia) as examples of communities thriving through tourism and becoming destinations. Michael said,

“... when you think of Indigenous tourism, I find a lot of times it's very West Coast focused...They got a lot of everything...I think it's almost untapped in a way here... think it's definitely undervalued and underutilized, definitely here, certainly here in Nova Scotia.”

Despite the sense of Indigenous tourism being underdeveloped, multiple co-researchers referenced how ITAC and NSITEN are actively working to move the industry forward. Co-researchers were also aware of other organizations such as the Newfoundland Indigenous Tourism Association (NLITA), Indigenous Tourism Association of New Brunswick (ITANB), and Indigenous Tourism Association of Prince Edward Island (ITAPEI).

#3. WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF WORKING IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?

Discussions often touched on the narrow view people may have when they think of tourism jobs, when in reality “tourism is anything you do when you step outside your home” (Chloe Pictou, 2024), or “tourism is defined technically as any business that would cease to exist without tourists” (Anna-Marie).

In this question, co-researchers shared their passion for the industry and their reasons for either having gotten involved or wanting to:

“I just didn't know how much of a like pride you take in your work when it's being shown and learning.” - Josie
"It's so diverse there's so many opportunities all over the world or just in Nova Scotia in general” - Trinity Maloney
“I'll just say in terms of working in tourism industry in general, it is probably the best job, career option that I've ever encountered myself.” - Indigenous Tourism 1

“I enjoy telling our stories. I enjoy talking about our history. I enjoy, you know, singing for people and teaching the story of our music and our legends.” - Indigenous Tourism 5
“I started out as a heritage interpreter and a heritage interpreter's job is to create change. And that's exactly what Indigenous tourism does for a lot of Indigenous operators. It creates change.” - Patricia Dunnett

Indigenous Tourism 4 described a meaningful experience with a couple touring from Sweden who gave her some Swedish money, saying “keep it for your keepsake”. They described how it felt like “an old-school... trade between friends”.

While the tone was optimistic overall, that is not to say that co-researchers did not also face challenges:

“I actually, I love it, but I hate it. And I'll tell you why. I love it because I love what I do, and nothing is ever the same. And you know, the idea of meeting so many people and doing so many different things is wonderful because I work in tourism at a higher level, right? So, it's not necessarily just providing experiences, but it's like working to negotiate funding and to do, like, so it's different. So, I really like, I like it, but then I also hate it because then I become the token and absolutely refuse to let anybody do that to me, right?” - Anna-Marie
“My perceptions have changed. My original perception was just full of energy and excitement” - Tim Dedam
"It's fun because every day there's like something new. So, whether it's like meeting people from different parts of the world, exploring new places... professional development...or organizing unique experiences, there's always something interesting happening...However, it's important to acknowledge that working in tourism, especially during the summer months, it's like incredibly demanding. It requires a lot of hard work and dedication. But the rewards in the off season are a hundred percent worth it.” - Indigenous Tourism 3
“Sometimes it's really, really good. And sometimes it's like COVID years and it's really, really not good.” - Indigenous Tourism 5

As described in question #2, co-researchers described Indigenous tourism as not yet being fully fledged. It was interesting to note then that when describing their experience in the industry, many co-researchers would circle back to this idea of the industry still being very disconnected and immature. What appeared to be feelings of fatigue or frustration were expressed through sighs, changes in tone, and body language such as shrugging or dropping shoulders.

#4. RESEARCH INDICATES A LACK OF POST-SECONDARY TRAINED INDIGENOUS EMPLOYEES IN TOURISM. WHY DO YOU THINK THAT IS? CAN YOU SHARE ONE OR TWO EXAMPLES?

Two primary areas of importance appeared relating directly to Indigenous participation in tourism education: awareness and validity. Co-researchers shared that not enough Indigenous people were aware that tourism education existed, especially not any that focused on Indigenous culture.

“I think in my experience, it's rooted in the fact that there's very little awareness around tourism education in general, like across the board” - Indigenous Tourism 1
“It's not considered an option. When I compare that to back home (outside of Canada) where we have tourism schools” - Urban Indigenous 1
“I wouldn't even know that there would be a post-secondary path to tourism” - Millbrook 1
“We don't think of that as something we can go study” - Trinity Maloney
“There also was no Indigenous tourism post-secondary programs until now, until this one. I mean, there's always you know hospitality courses and things like that that people would take, but they're working at the front desk at campgrounds or at hotels or something like that, but now there's a program.” - Indigenous Tourism 5

Likewise, co-researchers felt that not enough Indigenous people were aware that tourism is a valid and practical career option.

“I think because a lot of communities lack tourism facilities or tourism jobs or anything tourism around us because we're such isolated communities, I think we don't think of that as a job opportunity” - Trinity Maloney

“I feel it's part of that disparity too that we don't feel that tourism is a valid opportunity in many of our communities. So why train in something where there's no opportunity?” - Tim Dedam
“Because people don't realize that it's more than just a seasonal thing, right?” - Indigenous Tourism 2
“It's not promoted as much as to become a police officer a lawyer or whatever. It doesn't seem as important” - Faye Linkletter
“I think because Indigenous tourism, people don't yet see it as legitimate, viable.” - Indigenous Tourism 5
“I was just going to say about the pay scale too because I just had somebody in my office today who loves working tourism industry but they can make yeah 20 bucks at the liquor store an hour but talking about their culture they're making 16 bucks an hour, what more do you want me to say about that?” - Anna-Marie

Another consideration was raised by Indigenous Tourism 3, who shared,

“[o]ne reason there aren't many Indigenous people with formal training in tourism is because of the history of residential schools and day schools, which caused a lot of intergenerational trauma, which made it hard for Indigenous communities to access education and jobs.”

Similarly, a few co-researchers noted that many Indigenous families or communities do not (or have not until recently) value post-secondary education, perhaps because of the residential school system.

#5. DO YOU THINK INDIGENOUS PEOPLE SHOULD PURSUE A CAREER IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY? WHY?

Reasons for why speakers felt Indigenous people should pursue a career in Indigenous tourism varied widely, and included:

- the benefits of reconnecting with culture
- it is a valid career you could be successful in
- gaining a sense of pride, reclaiming identity
- the fun and excitement that comes from working in tourism

- tourism as a continuation of the tradition of welcoming people to the land
- tourism as a way to reduce the ignorance and misunderstanding

“You're put in an environment where you're learning your culture and your history, and you're learning yourself, right?” - Urban Indigenous 1
“It helps them as well in terms of their own identity and and [sic] then seeing the pride in their identity when when [sic] the tourist comes up to them, they see the pride in their identity” – Faye Linkletter
“I said, "did you know that just serving tea in your home and telling stories is tourism?"
“It's definitely needed. Like, I know there's so many ignorant people in the world and even just here still” - Millbrook 1
“I think it's important for our, now we're pursuing self-determination, we're pursuing self-governance within our communities, within our Nations” - Dave Perley
“I think they should because it's important because a lot of the times we're losing our culture, we're losing our language, you know we're losing who we are so we need to bring that back and become stronger of a Nation” - Faye Linkletter
“Pride in culture, wanting to, wanting to get the proper story out. Because it's Indigenous land, again, I go back to the, if anybody should be having a career or making a dollar out of it, it should be Indigenous people” - Dean Simon
“We're at where the industry is so thin. You need like a lot of entrepreneurial people to kind of get it going and then start those businesses. And then the ones that maybe don't want to take on the risk and stuff of starting your own business, probably follow suit. Because I think, again, when you look at anything, people will go into certain fields because, "oh, there's a demand for nurses. I know I'll find a job. I'll go into nursing" or whatever that industry might be because there's demand. I think we need to create that demand of Indigenous tourism” - Michael
“One of the ... biggest things that I've seen in our youth when they do work here is... a lot of people assume that our kids, because they're growing up on the reserve, know everything about their culture. And you know what? They don't” - Patricia Dunnett
“The tourism industry was throwing revenue into that community. Next thing you know, they start building hotels, building bowling alleys, and they start growing left and right.

So now it's turning into Sydney's new uptown. So, this is a great example why Indigenous people should pursue a career in the tourism industry because places like Membertou began welcoming the world to its community and generating... revenue" - Shane Bernard
"When you see somebody who had no confidence and said, "you know what, I don't know enough about my culture, and I'll never be able to speak about it with confidence...who's now leading an award-winning tour, who is providing for herself and her family....sharing her culture and her truth in her words...this is what the tourism industry has to offer" - Anna-Marie

While the response was neutral to positive for all co-researchers (none responded with "no"), Two co-researchers both stated that Indigenous people should only pursue tourism "for the right reasons". One co-researcher clarified that Indigenous people should not pursue tourism education simply for the sake of getting a degree and becoming another person pushed through the university system. Likewise, Indigenous Tourism 4 replied "yes" but, on the condition "they really are into tourism... If they really are into meeting people and expanding, willing to meet new artists, stuff like that". They warned, "it's not just like working at a shop."

In at least two cases it appeared that the co-researcher was responding to why Indigenous people should pursue *education* in tourism rather than a career. For example, Josie shared "I think it would be really good to learn the tourism, what's needed out there, learning -you know- what the need is".

#6. WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF POST-SECONDARY TOURISM EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Despite the pool of co-researchers having been gathered by the KTPRT, nine of the 18 speakers shared having little to no knowledge of tourism education programs. For example, Indigenous Tourism 3 shared "Up until I heard of the Kinu tourism and hospitality management project, I haven't heard of an Indigenous-based tourism program being offered before." Likewise, Indigenous Tourism 5 shared "I hadn't heard of any. Not here...I know they're out there. I know there's some of the universities in British Columbia have specialized in Indigenous tourism and everything." Urban Indigenous 1 asked "Is there an existing curriculum anywhere else besides [Kinu]?". This was surprising considering the bias that would naturally have been introduced in having all co-researchers be in some way connected to an institution that offers tourism education.

We can reasonably predict that awareness of tourism education programs among the general Indigenous population in Mi'kma'ki is even lower.

The co-researchers stressed that trying to incorporate Indigenous perspectives into tourism education needs to be done authentically, meaning it is taught and directed by Indigenous people. Three co-researchers referred to hospitality courses or programs at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), the University of New Brunswick (UNBC), and the Native Education College. Three more referred to guiding and adventure leadership training not associated with an academic institution, including the Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism.

Co-researchers often shared, either from personal experience or belief, that tourism programs are largely devoid of Indigenous context. Shane Bernard described his surprise when starting a tourism course and finding that the narrative was entirely centered on the Euro-Canadian perspective: "When you open the Introduction to Tourism book, you don't see that. You don't see the Indigenous people welcoming all the settlers". Not only was this perspective lacking, but so was history. As Trinity Maloney shared about her tourism education experience, "the most education that [my classmates] got about Indigenous people in Nova Scotia was from me". UNB was a notable exception, as Dave Perley shared about the courses he teaches on Wolastoqey language, perspective, and culture.

Others raised concerns about the practical skills and transferability of course content to the realities of working. For example, Anna-Marie said,

"I've known people that have come out of... post-secondary tourism education programs, that had the idea that they were now going to get a management job in the tourism sector because they had a certificate. And that didn't work out that way".

Indigenous Tourism 1 shared "right now they're not really training people for the industry effectively. They're training for people to go to like food and beverage or hotel services, to maybe do some business things." In addition to the considerable lack of awareness around tourism education, there also appears to be a perception that these programs lack Indigenous content or relevance and may not provide the skills needed to be successful in the industry.

#7. DO YOU THINK THERE IS ANYTHING PREVENTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE FROM ACCESSING TOURISM EDUCATION? PLEASE EXPLAIN

Twelve co-researchers felt there were barriers to Indigenous participation in tourism education, many noting that the barriers were not specific to tourism but were consistent with educational barriers in general. These barriers included:

- Generation gaps or education gaps within families and communities
- Lack of family support while going to school or needing to be that support for others
- Lack of funding or resources i.e., “I think we should be making it so that money isn't so much of a barrier. We should be highlighting funding opportunities, whether it be through scholarships, bursaries, or through people's band offices. We should make sure that people know that even if money is an issue, there's ways around it.” - Indigenous Tourism 3
- Families or communities not valuing post-secondary education or committing lateral violence against those who do wish to pursue it (i.e., “crabs in the bucket” - Indigenous Tourism 4)
- Challenges of leaving community, including finding housing or getting transportation
- The need for childcare

Three co-researchers initially stated they did not think there were any barriers but later went on to describe barriers that matched those already listed above. Two co-researchers felt there weren’t any barriers. One of these co-researchers clarified that at least in comparison to the barriers that used to exist, he did not feel there was much in the way of those in his community who wished to pursue it now.

Four co-researchers felt that the most prominent barrier was likely that Indigenous people aren’t aware that tourism programs exist or what they can do with a degree in tourism. There were other barriers that were each only mentioned once. These included the timing of tourism programs conflicting with tourism season, judgement or racism facing those with learning disabilities, and the feeling of being unable to return to school as a mature student.

#8. DO YOU THINK POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IS HELPFUL FOR INDIVIDUALS WORKING (OR WANTING TO WORK) IN THE INDIGENOUS TOURISM INDUSTRY?

Thirteen co-researchers said that post-secondary education was helpful for individuals working or wanting to work in the Indigenous tourism industry.

I think post-secondary education is helpful to anybody – Dean Simon
There's women on my reserve that I've seen start at like a very low position and maybe 15 years later they have that management position...I'm an advocate of post-secondary, especially within community, I think everyone should go post-secondary. Just so you don't have to sit there and fight and fight just to get a management position that you could have already had if you went to post-secondary and worked a couple of years." - Trinity Maloney
"Yes, because there's so many things that if you can learn it in university, you don't have to go out here and put your money on a table and learn it the hard way, like I have" - Indigenous Tourism 5
"I think so, because I think there's a capacity building element to what we need to do in Indigenous tourism. And in order to do that, we need our own community members to kind of get trained in that aspect" - Michael
"I feel like having that education piece is important because it'll give me the confidence...and I feel like going to school and having a piece of paper to back me up and say, "I do know this". - Indigenous Tourism 5
"Post -secondary education provide people with skills, knowledge and opportunities for professional growth. It can complement lived experiences and can enhance career paths by offering the industry resources networks, like everybody that you meet in those spaces" - Indigenous Tourism 3

Throughout the interviews, co-researchers frequently added clarifications about what makes post-secondary useful, or what could make them useful. While 72% of co-researchers gave positive responses, most came with conditions. These conditions focused specifically on program flexibility, practical experience, and Indigenous content. Three co-researchers provided "yes...but" in their answers.

"Post-secondary versus traditional learning is two separate things, but they both can equally work together and be beneficial" - Urban Indigenous 1
"[Yes], as long as, as I mentioned before, as long as the courses are are [sic] culturally grounded" - Dave Perley

“It would be helpful just as any post-secondary degree would be. But I think that, you know, experience and having a strong team and support is helpful as well” - Kespukwitk District

Two co-researchers were unable to say that university would be helpful. They shared:

“Yeah, I think it's going to be good for some individuals and not for others to be quite honest.... currently it's not set up for Indigenous community members so I would have to say ‘no’ to that” - Anna-Marie
“What do we teach in them? I haven't taken the program...I don't know if I can say that, because I don't know what we're teaching them” - Indigenous Tourism 2

The three remaining co-researchers provided neutral answers that did not commit to a particular opinion.

Alternatives to university were also frequently suggested. While these responses did not usually come as a direct response to Question 8, they offered valuable insight on how university programs are viewed.

“[University] is not the only way” - Urban Indigenous 1
“I'm more about structure training than I am going to a university, to be very honest, because we hit the knees, and then we go from there” - Indigenous Tourism 2
“I really think that a lot of people should do post-secondary, and it doesn't need to be university” - Trinity Maloney
“There's some pretty cool programs out there that are not linked to post-secondary like Outdoor Council of Canada that go and like Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism (GMIST) and stuff like that” - Indigenous Tourism 1
“[F]or people that are not suited maybe for the classroom to get a Bachelor of Science... you can take a youth adventure leadership program” and “It's nice to see JEDI offering stuff, that amazing program that they're doing with the accelerated entrepreneur” - Patricia Dunnett
“Emerti.ca... I have my professional certification as a tour guide as a tourism trainer as a heritage interpreter through this program and it’s currently the only one that I know

that you can take online that will give you professional certification in many tourism industries” - Anna-Marie
“[I]t's not only university... there's Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) too” - Faye Linkletter
“[N]ot everybody is going to university” - Kespukwitk District

#9. DO YOU THINK POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IS HELPFUL FOR COMMUNITIES WORKING IN THE INDIGENOUS TOURISM INDUSTRY?

Co-researchers were more positive responding to community benefits than about individuals’ benefits, and did not give the same caveats and hesitations as were seen in question #8:

“I think, yeah, the certificate part is, because some people just can't, like, if it was something in the community” - Josie
“Now you're talking about customer service, you're talking about administration, business, finance, that kind of thing. So that can be beneficial to the communities who send their people to education for the benefit of communities who actually look into the industry as well” - Urban Indigenous 1
“I think there are components to it, definitely. I think we need to train people with a roster of skills, and then look at how do we use those in practical senses” - Indigenous Tourism 2
“I think it will benefit the community to have educated people around and have people that you can hire on the split second because they have the education, and you don't really have to train them. I find a lot of times in community; they're hiring people that they have to train to do that job” - Trinity Maloney
“I think the immediate answer is yes, because again, it introduces the thought of, you know, thinking critically, problem solving, higher awareness, which if you have that within your community, even just within one individual that can spread broader to make better decisions” - Indigenous Tourism 1

“You get different habits, you learn different skills, and you bring those back to your people. And if they don't have education, you can share with them and educate them” - Millbrook 1
“Post -secondary education can be beneficial for Indigenous communities because with the proper education, they can gain access to best practices, industry trends, practical knowledge that can be applied to the development and the management of these places...can help communities build partnerships and network within a tourism industry...connecting with other people involved in tourism, communities can access resources, funding opportunities, and other support systems.” - Indigenous Tourism 3

#10. HOW WOULD INCREASING INDIGENOUS ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION INFLUENCE THE TOURISM INDUSTRY?

Responses were widely varied and did not present any discernable patterns other than being predominantly positive:

"It would empower indigenous individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to authentically represent their cultures, take on leadership roles, and to create sustainable tourism initiatives. This increased education would also promote diversity and inclusion within the industry.” - Indigenous Tourism 3
“[The tourism industry] could partner, you know, with universities. And I think that that would help them develop, you know, programs where they could help students once they...come back, and help communities” - Kespukwitk District
“Oh, my goodness, it would bring so much more of a skill set to to [sic] people...bringing those skills back to our community...and I see such a difference from these young people coming out of university, and then young people who don't go to university...there’s a huge gap in their skill set and in in [sic] their confidence” - Patricia Dunnett
“They have better understanding of systems change, and how all that works, and just different processes and stuff. And then probably a better idea, too, of how to work as a team, and how to bring people together and stuff. There's a lot of skills that I imagine they would be able to bring back.” - Millbrook 1
“I think it would, again I'm going on capacity, in trying to build within the communities and having that educational background. It's also even helpful when you're going to funders or something like that.... And that leads again, more economic development

opportunities, which leads to more, you know, all sorts of revenues for the community, more opportunities. So, it can kinda snowball" - Michael
"I think it would make it a little more professional and hopefully it'll drive up the price or the value of those because we're historically, we undersell ourselves" - Indigenous Tourism 5
"It will also help us in terms of, of making the [business/employment] case... and say "look, we have qualified individuals... that have been trained... that know the principles of tourism and so on, and we'd like for you to recruit them" - Dave Perley

Only one co-researcher described there being a potential negative impact on the community. Shane Bernard shared concerns that increasing access to post-secondary education for Indigenous people may unintentionally increase occurrences of identity fraud,

"[y]ou know, they're non-Indigenous, but they're playing the race card and they're saying that they are. Pretendian. They get funding, they go to school, all right? That's an empty seat for an Indigenous person".

Few responses focused entirely on the concept of access itself. Those that did were as follows:

"We can't make it so that getting into university programs is so f@#*!ing hard that no one's going to make it... [and] it's so expensive – Indigenous Tourism 2
"I think maybe some places need to open more access so people can actually get to these places or offer them online. Because I think a lot of people struggle with getting to and from places...A lot of people have kids up here so I think being able to give a little more to help them out would always be amazing for people to get more into the tourism industry. Or even doing a little crash course on reserve or something. Show them a little bit about different courses that they can take and different things like that. Or even offered like the six weeks courses that people have. I think like just being more flexible within post-secondary schooling when it comes to Indigenous people" - Trinity Maloney
"I think it would be more people interested in the tourism industry... if they had more access. Even if it was in community or online or something" - Josie

#11. WHY DO YOU THINK INDIGENOUS STUDENTS WOULD PURSUE POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION IN TOURISM?

Co-researchers appeared to answer two separate questions when responding to #11, the first being why students would pursue *education* in tourism, and the other being why students would pursue *careers* in tourism.

Tourism Education

“I would assume that this Indigenous tourism program that I was going to take would give me some of that historical information that I was not able to learn on my own. Or would give me, you know, access to [Elders]” - Indigenous Tourism 2
[Knowing] I can still work, and I can still go to school” - Faye Linkletter
“[When students] saw that that was a professional career option... they wanted to gain the skills and knowledge to be able to move into that” - Indigenous Tourism 1
“A lot of them want to learn like more of our history. And like the meanings behind the crafts and the meanings behind like everything.” - Josie
“The most important thing, I think, in any training that we do on the reserve and the kids that start that and go through it and complete it, they're looking for an opportunity at the end. They don't want to just train for no reason” - Tim Dedam
“I want that to be able to have that in my in my background, just be able to really show people I know what I'm talking about and to further my education on hospitality” - Faye Linkletter
“Some people are just trying to break those stereotypes and say, ‘hey, I want to be involved in tourism. I want to work at a hotel. I want to use my degree to be, you know, work in the tourism sector’ " - Shane Bernard

Tourism Career

“They want to do this because they're concerned as well in terms of you know, that the Wabanaki story isn't being highlighted....and they're they're [sic] also interested in the, in the [sic] history of our people, and they're interested in the culture of our ancestors and so on” - Dave Perley

“Pride in culture, wanting to, wanting to get the proper story out. Because it's Indigenous land, again, I go back to the, if anybody should be having a career or making a dollar out of it, it should be Indigenous people. Ownership, we'll call it” - Dean Simon
"It’s an industry that's very close to them because, well, hopefully if they're doing Indigenous tourism, you know, they will be working in an industry that's related to who they are” - Urban Indigenous 1
“I think though a lot of people, what I see tourism as, it's a way to not put somebody in a box, where somebody can really kind of grow and explore and just kind of bloom into the person that they are destined to become” - Patricia Dunnett
“There's a lot of jobs and a lot of opportunity for people to get into there and teach about their land, you're just being yourself every day of your life you're getting confidence” - Faye Linkletter

Millbrook 1 shared that whatever the reason a person may want to pursue tourism, it must outweigh the cost of doing it, “It would really have to like be a benefit. Just like it would have to be worth the risk of leaving community, leaving home”.

#12. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENCOURAGE MORE INDIGENOUS STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN TOURISM EDUCATION PROGRAMS?

Co-researchers shared that there needed to be more awareness, both that tourism programs exist and that there are viable careers to be had. This was made clear in responses such as:

“If they don't know they're part of the tourism industry they can't be part of it.” - Anna-Marie
“I think like just being more flexible within post-secondary schooling when it comes to Indigenous people would be a huge way to actually get Indigenous people within ... the tourism industry.” - Trinity Maloney
“We should have people.... coming to the communities. I would like to see...more recruitment, more like student recruitment fairs” - Kespukwitk District
“I don't know if the message is out there, how fun it is to work in tourism” - Dean Simon

“Well, first you need to have a good program...There has to be something there. And I don't know if there's much there... It's also about the quality promotion. Promotion in the communities where they are. Yeah, so there needs to be more promotion for them. Advertising that, ‘hey, this is an option. A Career pathway” - Urban Indigenous 1
[We were] creating our own promotional material and visiting schools, and that went over really well. And we visited for like grade five and up because that's when they start to like identify what they want to do in life” - Indigenous Tourism 1
“Having like engagement sessions to the community so that they can give out that information and if they can do like, let's say they come to the high school, that would be really good” - Faye Linkletter
“You could bring it to the communities, bring it to the communities. Because people don't know unless they know... They need to come to our community, do presentations, do an evening in our community” - Indigenous Tourism 5
“We have to make sure that the people who are in positions to promote this program see that there's a future for the kids or for the students” - Tim Dedam
“We really need to work hard, and we got to start making sure that our children know the opportunity that is there... there is great opportunity in tourism and there's great opportunity in, you know, your history and your language and your stories and where you come from” - Kespukwitk District

Many of the quotes on awareness also demonstrated the importance of building trust and relationships with communities. Indigenous Tourism 2 clearly stated that awareness does not mean just printing out new posters,

“I'm only giggling because they're like, “let's create a poster!’ Are you f@$*&ing kidding me? No!”

Some examples of statements linking awareness and relationships were:

“If you come and you really do that hands on and show them or like bring someone in, and you have them tell them about the experience they had, I think that would be all very beneficial to have people's eyes open a little bit more to the Indigenous tourism side. It's like ‘you belong here, these are all the things you can do’ “- Trinity Maloney

“Like Brad*... talking to people about it and being like ‘okay, like what can we do to help you to get to where you want to be?’ and stuff like that. Like more encouraging people and less judgmental people and for those people to understand where the barriers are with Indigenous people”. - Indigenous Tourism 4

*Brad is a member of the KTPRT who leads outreach and engagement with communities.

Another topic was that of job-search support:

“[Students] need pathways to go to once they have the training and skills from there. Otherwise, why do it if you're not going to be able to get a job out of it, right?” - Tourism 1
“I mean it would be nice if they got summer jobs- high school students I mean. We have summer jobs here in our community grade 11 and 12 but it would be nice to start them off in grade nine and take them and put them into different fields...get a 10-week program for students or eight weeks program yeah and they do two weeks in tourism” - Faye Linkletter
“[Students] can get in and there's funding programs to pay for the education themselves...but then at the end of it, you have a diploma or rather a degree and then you gotta find a job. There needs to be supports there” - Michael

Other recommendations included sharing Indigenous success stories and providing program flexibility through hybrid or online classes or by hosting training in community.

#13. HOW CAN POST-SECONDARY TOURISM EDUCATION PROGRAMS BETTER SUPPORT CURRENT AND ASPIRING INDIGENOUS TOURISM PROFESSIONALS?

Recommendations were divided into three primary ideas: 1) Flexible Education 2) Employment and Networking Relationships, and 3) Relationships between Post-Secondary and Indigenous Communities.

<u>Degree Flexibility</u>

Offering diverse and flexible options for education was the most common recommendation, such as offering condensed courses or professional development training:

“It would be really nice if there was like tourism related content available out to people that they could still engage, even if they are a trained professional, and have already done the full course or whatever” - Indigenous Tourism 1
“Professional development I think would be the way to go with, for those ones who are already in the system” - Dave Perley
“Offering training, even certain trainings like, just like a whole week of tourism hospitality certificate saying that you got your basic or something supporting them” - Faye Linkletter
“There's definitely opportunity for people on the front lines to pick up skills as well. It doesn't have to be a three- or four-year program” - Dean Simon
“They could have short-term programs” - Indigenous Tourism 5

Co-researchers stressed that professional development need not be separate from Kinu’s educational offerings, as Dean Simon shared,

“[e]veryone of those little professional development courses could be credit towards something bigger, you know, your certificate or your diploma or possibly even a degree in the long run. That sort of flexibility would be amazing, you know, like if you only want to do five of these courses, we'll give you a certificate. If you want to do 10 or 15 of them, then you'll get a diploma. But you could actually do 30 of them and walk away with a degree”.

Employment and Networking Relationships

“I even think that Kinu should actually look into making.... the program a co-op program. Just because it's so diverse and there is different Indigenous tourism places that you can get jobs... maybe expanding on opportunities, maybe bringing in more people that are looking to hire people....maybe you can like seek out people who are willing to hire tourism students while they're in school to do a tourism job”” - Trinity Maloney
“More one on one opportunities, mentoring, and exchange programs to get in there” - Millbrook 1
“Helping [students] connect with people in... the Indigenous tourism industry. Co-op programs, things like that. So, they can kind of get some experience” - Michael

“Try and bring [experienced tourism professionals] into the programs. First of all, tell their stories” - Dean Simon
"If you're training somebody to work in Indigenous tourism, there should also be hands -on experiences. Taking people to those destinations that are really high rated so that they know what you're trying to do. What to expect instead of getting a degree and then going into the community and not knowing how to navigate.” - Indigenous Tourism 3

Relationships between Post-Secondary and Indigenous Communities

“Creating communities and trying to network with, you know, the industry side of the community, as well as like the, the future entrepreneur or student or whatever you want to label them to kind of keep working together in that community” - Indigenous Tourism 1
“Even coming here and checking on us and letting us know, like you know, ‘we're here for you if you need any information, you can contact us’. We need the support to be able to lean on them... Having like engagement sessions to the community so that they can give out that information and if they can do like, let's say they come to the high school, that would be really good”” - Faye Linkletter
“Work together, and work through the bullsh*t” - Indigenous Tourism 4
“You got a lot of collaboration because like I said, [universities are] the pathway.” - Urban Indigenous 1

Co-researchers also shared that those going into the industry needed opportunities to gain practical experience during their education, and that this education needed to include Indigenous leadership (i.e., educators, contributors). Lastly, Indigenous Tourism 4, shared simply that “understanding and patience” are needed.

#14. WHAT WOULD A SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MSVU, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

Again, the recurring ideas shared by co-researchers centered around relationships between post-secondary institutions and Indigenous communities:

“We have to have relationship building. I don't think we're there yet “- Dave Perley
“There's probably more Indigenous people at NSCC than there is a university because of the fact that I find universities to be so big that they can't keep connections” - Trinity Maloney
“To have a real exchange you do need to meet in person” - Indigenous Tourism 1
“You have to have a a [sic] government that's truly committed to establishing those relationships and you have to have of course the the Wabanaki people uh invited to sit on the committees.... And of course, and and having, having in Mount Saint Vincent to be part of that partnership as well” - Dave Perley
“You know where people are they're actually coming out and coming into our community and I think taking that fear away” - Josie
“I think it's very important that you have collaboration with the associations that exist in the tourism industry throughout the land... If you're a university that's providing education to get people in the tourism industry those collaborations and partnerships [with Provincial and Federal tourism organizations] to me, would be vital” - Anna-Marie

Urban Indigenous 1 shared that part of those good community relationships is ensuring that the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge is being done in an authentic way,

“[m]ake sure it's done in a good way, and then make sure that it's authentic too, that it's correct. That'll also keep the good relationship between the community, the education, and the industry as well...
…So if Mount Saint Vincent is going to get funding or get a fee for providing a tourism package, especially with this Indigenous tourism knowledge, it needs to be owned. The knowledge itself needs to be owned by the People, and the teaching of it should be done by the People.”

In terms of authenticity, it was suggested that adding Indigenous content to courses might not be enough. Dave Perley explained “we have to find ways... to work with... universities and and [sic] ask them to change their their [sic] way of doing things from...the Western way”. It was also proposed that universities could “look over the authenticity that's being offered in tourism...set up some standards... within the school”. This sentiment was shared by Shane Bernard who wished to see universities apply greater screening to ensure that Indigenous students, faculty, and staff are in fact Indigenous.

It was noted multiple times that the Kinu Tourism Project team should continue to do what they are doing – going to communities, asking for guidance, building relationships, and following up. For example, Patricia Dunnett shared,

“[t]he fact that we have a university (MSVU) that's working with First Nations to take this on and really take...the Two-Eyed Seeing approach... is, to me, it's very respectful because it's bringing the Indigenous people in to get their feedback and their insights on this. And it's being taken seriously. And for me, in an ideal world, where I see these three different components coming together, it's almost like it's just a recipe for success.”

Members of the Kinu Team were specifically referenced as examples of what universities should be doing, saying,

“I feel like [Jennifer Guy]'s such an advocate on Indigenous students within the tourism industry... just by talking to Jennifer, like she just gives me so much knowledge and different experiences and opportunities.... I've grown so much just from university. And it's because they've given me spaces where I feel like I can truly be myself and I don't have to change who I am.” - Trinity Maloney

Several co-researchers discussed the need for greater connectivity between nations that are interested in Indigenous tourism so that the collective can work together to build a “trail” or network of Indigenous offerings. It was suggested that the university could help be a part of this network.

“What we’re trying to do is...bring all the communities, five bands, together so that when people come to Cape Breton, they can actually go on to five bands... I want to go to every Indigenous community in Atlantic Canada you know what I mean?” - Faye Linkletter

“We're working in silos right now. Every nation feels like they're in competition with each other -well I shouldn't say that every nation- but there's a few nations that feel that they're in competition with each other and don't see it as being in partnership with each other. And until that mindset changes it's going to be difficult to form these crucial, what I feel are imperative, alliances that are going to be needed to move tourism in Atlantic Canada forward.” - Anna-Marie
“I don't see very much, you know, Indigenous tourism in Mi'kma'ki, that's, that's like an organization, you know, and a lot of them too, I think we got to get away and I want to see our people get away from the division of communities.” - Kespukwitk District

#15. DO YOU THINK STUDENTS (INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS) NEED TO LEARN ABOUT INDIGENOUS HISTORIES, CULTURE, HERITAGE, AND WAYS OF LIFE TO PREPARE THEM FOR WORKING IN THE TOURISM UNDSTRY? WHAT DO THEY NEED TO LEARN ABOUT?

Co-researchers commonly felt that all students engaging in tourism in Mi’kma’ki needed to know the history of the people and the land. This education was not only intended to benefit cross-cultural understanding, but also to give back the history and teachings that were kept from Indigenous people themselves. One idea that often surfaced was that most tourism offerings in Mi’kma’ki begin their timeline with the coming of settlers, and that this has become the norm, which continues to reinforce colonial perspectives. While “culture” was the most common response to what needed to be taught, emphasis was less on the ‘what’ and more on ‘who’ needed to teach it– Indigenous people.

“I wish there was a course that everyone had to take just to just give them an overview of what Indigenous people were.” - Trinity Maloney
Because our story... is important to our people, but it should be a story that's important to Canada. And we can't let them forget that. Like the whole Truth and Reconciliation. We're still working on the truth, you know that.” - Indigenous Tourism 5
“I teach the course here at UNB “Aspects of Mi'kmaq and Wolastiquyik Societies” ...my focus is on helping helping [sic] them to understand the history of the Wabanakis from our perspective...not from the colonial perspective” - Dave Perley
“[Tourism students] need to learn all about it...If you're put in a role where you have the responsibility of educating people, like you're the first point of contact...You should be able to answer all their questions.” - Millbrook 1

“We have to do a better job of educating our own people around our own history, our own culture, our own successes, our own struggles, all of those things.” - Indigenous Tourism 2
“Anybody who's going to be talking about the history of Canada has to start with the first people and go from there... Treaties are the founding point of everything and and if every Canadian read the treaties there would be a whole different concept of of what is going on here” - Anna-Marie
“I better learn the history so I'm able to, you know, when they come up to me like somebody from Switzerland ask questions and then you know, you're sharing culture back and forth” - Indigenous Tourism 4

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Some co-researchers found the questions repetitive and that they were unable to produce a “new” answer for each. This did appear to create some anxiety or even frustration for the co-researchers. This was usually eased after we verbally explained that the overlap was intentional to try and explore different aspects of related ideas, and that they were welcome to pass over a question if they felt they had said all there was to say.

The 18 completed interviews appear to have been adequate in providing thorough context and insight into the research questions. We heard significant overlap in stories and sentiments which indicated to us that we had likely reached a point of saturation. We did not feel additional interviews were needed to complete the study. However, we recognized that had there been budget for more interviews, it would have been beneficial to meet again with all co-researchers to discuss the analysis face-to-face and to receive immediate feedback. The budget allowed for the draft report and a request for feedback to be emailed to all co-researchers and the KTPRT.

Canoe Model

Beyond providing answers to the questions directly asked, this research aimed to understand the overall landscape of Indigenous participation in tourism education programs. As previously discussed, the process of coding and categorization resulted in the creation of a Mind Map (Figure 3) containing the identified categories, sub-themes, and overarching theme.

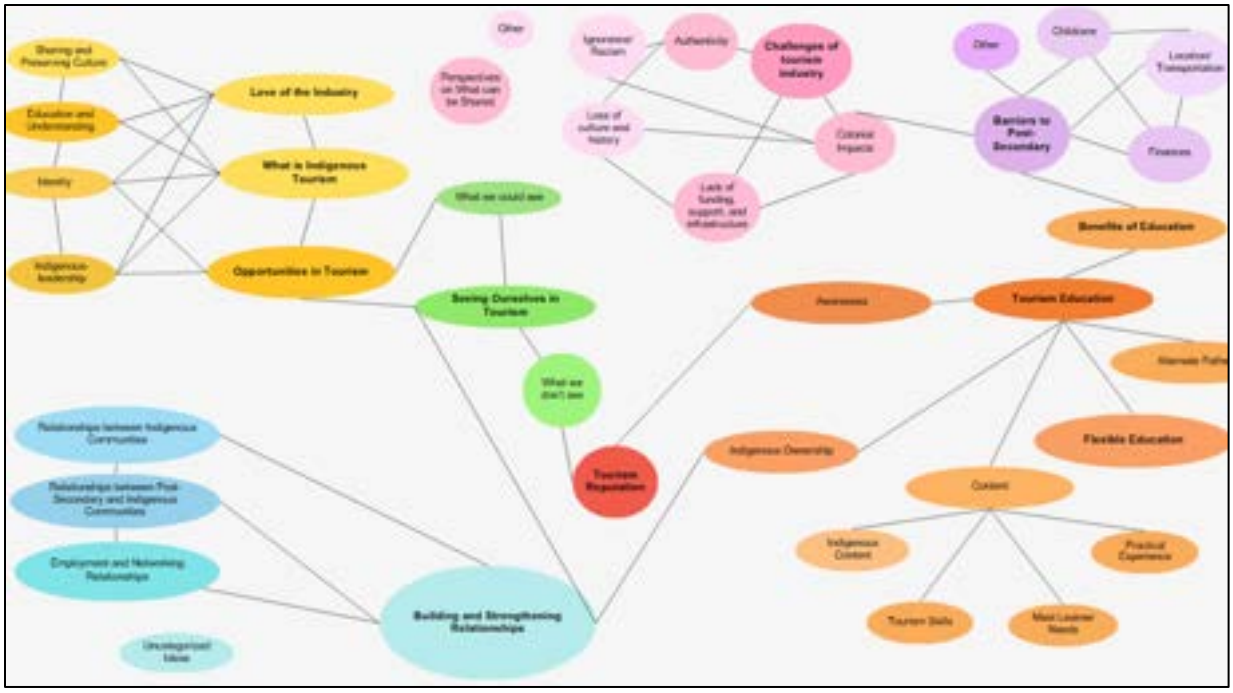


Figure 3. Mind Map

As we translated the Mind Map into the Transitional Canoe Model (Figure 4) it became clear that some ideas flowed into or contributed directly to others, some were related than originally configured, and some more or less dependent on others. The categories became represented as streams (eg. Identity) leading into or flowing out of sub-theme rivers (eg. Love of the Industry). We used circles to denote concepts related to barriers (eg. Colonial impacts). Ovals were used for concepts describing or contributing to Indigenous participation in tourism education.

The Symbolic Canoe Model (Figure 5) then shows the symbolic representation of the information presented in Figures 3 and 4. The canoe represented individual interviews-samples of information shared at a particular point in time that helped us to understand the wider landscape. Landmarks were specific terms or phrases that emerged independently across multiple co-researchers that seemed to be points of reference. The ponds showed categories that were collected and loosely related to the others, but did not appear to have direct relationships to the overall model. The eddies were the barriers to flow, things preventing Indigenous people from participating in tourism education. And lastly, the harbour showed the overarching emergent theme. That theme being "Building and Strengthening Relationships"

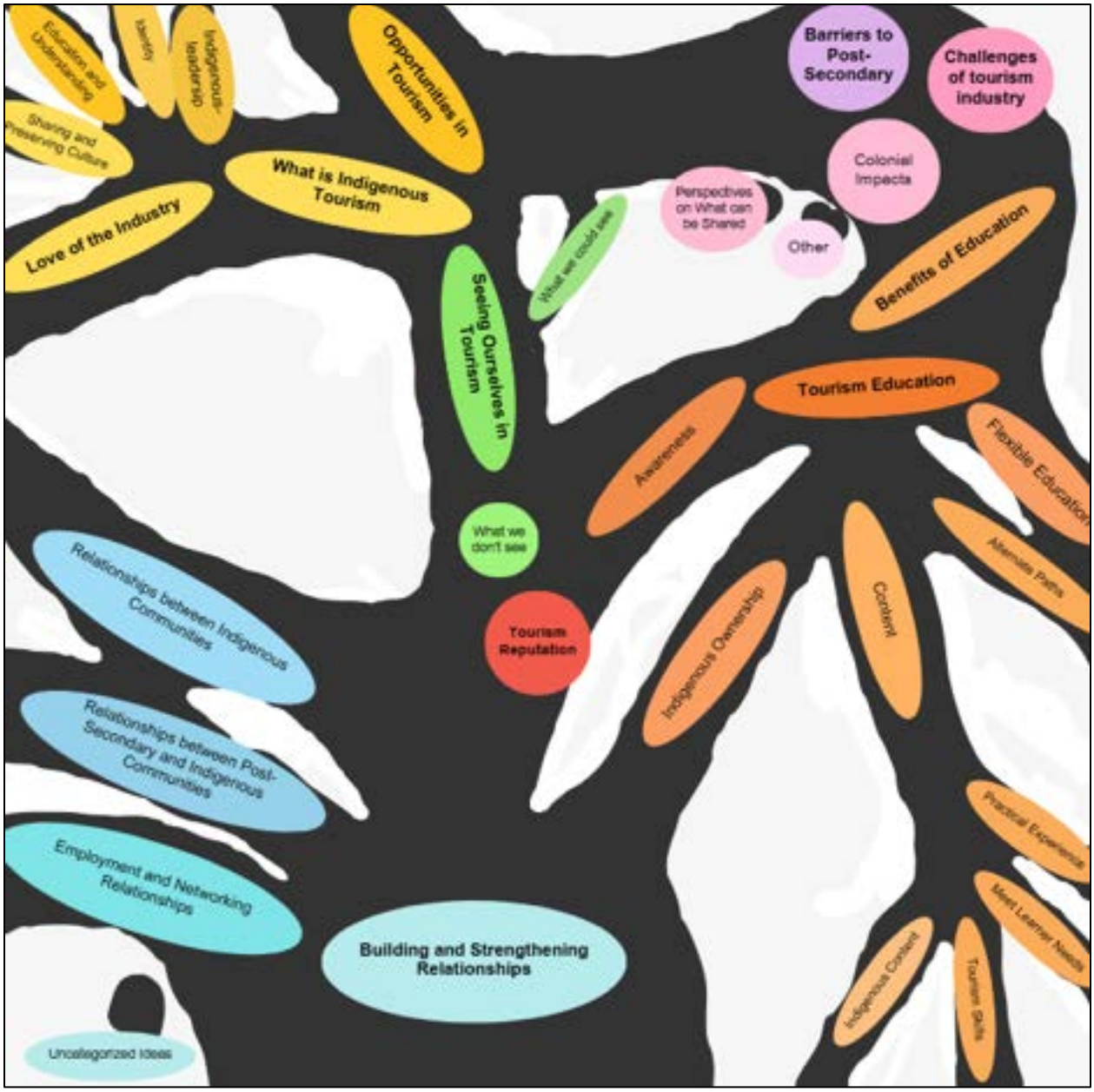


Figure 4. Transitional Canoe Model

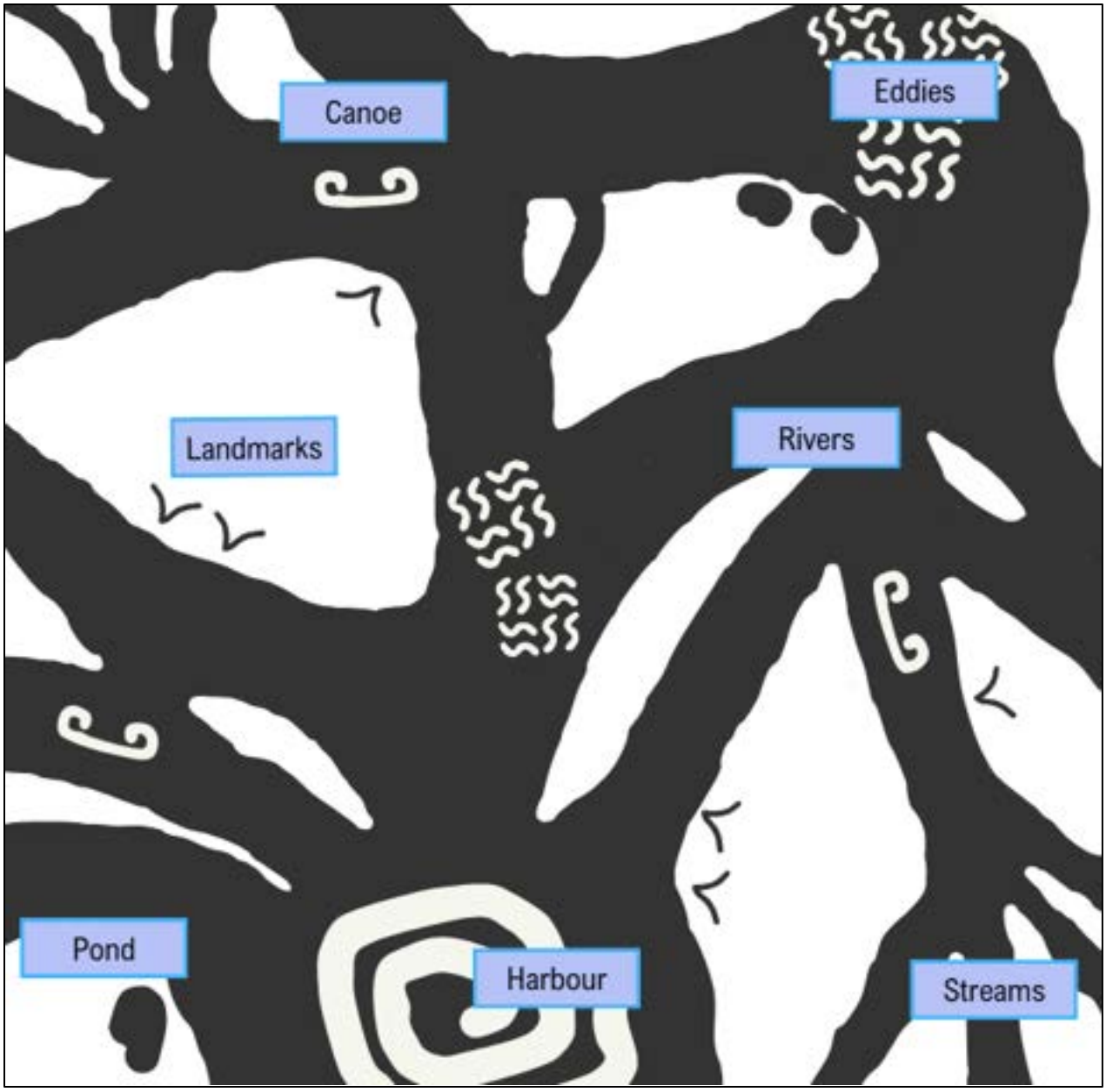


Figure 5. Symbolic Canoe Model

For the ease of the reader, we explore the categories, sub-themes, and theme according to the colour groupings found in the Mind Map and Transitional Canoe Model. This exploration will focus on ideas not already discussed in answering the interview questions. The colour used for each concept was not significant, instead similar colours were used to represent loose groups of relation. Full-size images of these visualizations can be found in Appendices 6c and 6d.

YELLOW

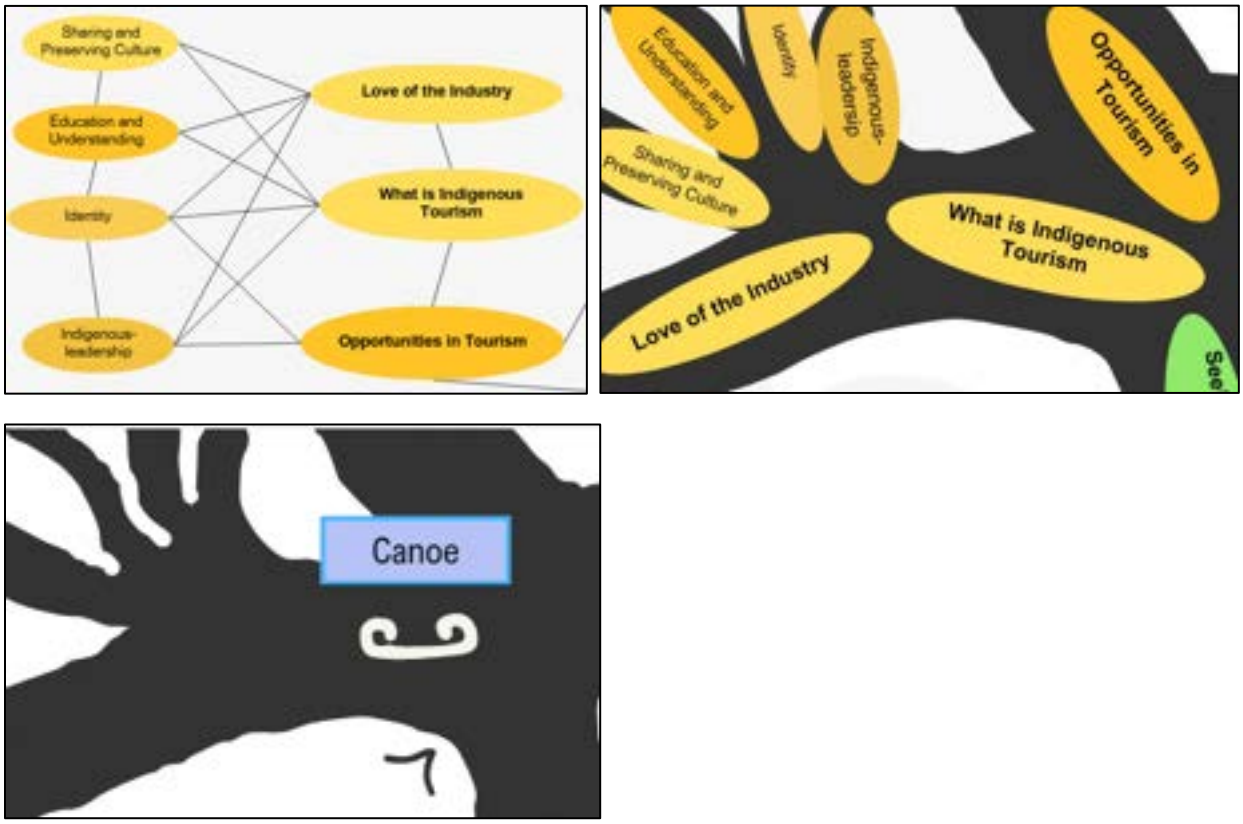


Figure 8. Representations of the yellow category grouping from Figures 3, 4, & 5

Indigenous Tourism

As shown in Figure 8, the four streams (categories) of 1) Identity, 2) Education and Understanding, 3) Sharing and Preserving Culture, and 4) Indigenous-Leadership contribute to the river (sub-theme) “What is Indigenous Tourism”. One recurring idea that surfaced in this research was that Mi’kmaw people have been welcoming non-Indigenous people to their land since Europeans first arrived. In this way, Indigenous tourism was presented, not as a new industry that spun off from euro-centric tourism traditions, but as a continuation of the tradition of welcoming people to Mi’kma’ki. This was shared by one co-researcher who stated:

“I like to think that we've been tourism providers since the arrival of the Europeans, you know, and I'm sure you've heard that before. And it's said in a joking way a lot of times, but in all honesty, we receive people to understand us, to understand the land, to understand, you know, what our direction is in life, as opposed to simply taking somebody on a boat ride or taking them on a tour”.

Again, looking at the streams contributing to “What is Indigenous Tourism”, the concepts of identity, understanding, preservation, and leadership are at the forefront. This suggests that Indigenous tourism is viewed as a process for agency. One quote illustrates this beautifully, saying “They’ve always ignored our presence here in New Brunswick.... Indigenous tourism will change that” (Dave Perley). Within the streams of both identity and sharing and preserving culture came the importance of Indigenous tourism helping their own people relearn and reconnect with themselves. This closely mirrored the 2010 work by Lynch et al. which found that cultural tourism provided the opportunity to educate not just tourists but Mi’kmaw people themselves.

Co-researchers prioritized the preservation and protection of Mi'kmaw culture, educating others, and removing ignorance and misconceptions about Mi’kmaw people. While there was discussion about what could and could not be shared and how to protect the integrity of Mi’kmaw culture while engaging in tourism, Indigenous tourism was framed largely as an act of taking back culture rather than selling or giving it away.

The same streams that flowed into the river of “What is Indigenous tourism” were paralleled as the reasons co-researchers gave for their love of the industry (Figure 8). Many described the self-actualizing and fulfilling nature of the industry and the roles they played in it. These streams also contributed to the reasons given for why co-researchers felt that other Indigenous people should take advantage of opportunities in the industry. As one co-researcher shared, demand for Indigenous tourism is rising, and by the very definition of Indigenous tourism, that means demand for Indigenous employees/entrepreneurs is rising. Despite this enthusiasm, another emergent sub-theme was the idea that Indigenous people did not see themselves in tourism. This will be described in detail in the GREEN section.

Non-Indigenous Tourism

Atlantic Canada is well established as a tourism hub, particularly for those with an interest in history and heritage (MacDonald, Reid & Summerby-Murray, 2015). The region's focus on preserving and promoting its historical sites continues to be a significant draw for both domestic and international tourists. However, until recently, the history told by tourism outfits has largely lacked any mention of Indigenous peoples. This may help explain why co-researchers gave definitions for non-Indigenous tourism that were often emotionally charged. One particularly vivid response described non

Indigenous tourism using the famous painting, "The Scream", by Kent Monkman. Kent Monkman is a Cree artist known for his provocative works that often reframe historical narratives. "The Scream" specifically depicts the traumatic moments of Indigenous

children being taken from their families by nuns and RCMP officers. Referring to the painting, the co-researcher shared,

“[t]hat answers your question right there. How does [Indigenous tourism] differ from non-Indigenous tourism? That one picture says a thousand words. That says ‘families were taken away. Culture was taken away. Language was taken away’. Everything in that one picture”.

Similarly, another co-researcher shared that when non-Indigenous operators begin their tours, they open with the post-colonial story, erasing those who were there before. “For me, the story that they present is something like what I call ‘twistory’... when you have only one set of facts and they ignore the other sets of facts”. Another shared that “[n]on-Indigenous tourism is really like welcoming somebody into somebody else’s home”.

Most co-researchers did not specifically define non-Indigenous tourism in their interviews. Those who did highlighted the absence, omission, or erasure of Indigenous people’s existence in the stories or experiences. While it was recognized by one co-researcher that non-Indigenous tourism can focus on other cultures, the overall perception was that non-Indigenous tourism tended not to teach about culture and when it did, it erased the existence of Indigenous cultures. We should note that the focus was squarely placed on the state of non-Indigenous tourism, and not as an attack on the individuals working in it. It was felt that the result of non-Indigenous tourism in Mi’kma’ki has been continued ignorance and erasure. In short, a continuation of colonialism. This idea resurfaces in the PINK and PURPLE section (Figure 9).

Eddies were not originally a part of the planned Canoe Model (Figure 1) but resulted from the analytical process. While mind mapping the sub-theme “Challenges of Tourism Industry” and its many categories, a non-linear relationship appeared in which all the categories appeared to have one thing in common, they were a result of colonial impacts (Figure 9). Many authors have come to similar conclusions and written on the enduring impacts facing Indigenous people in education and employment (MacDonald & Hudson, 2012; Battiste 2013; Gray 2020). Seeing how the relationships between these categories and sub-themes circled back on one another, a river did not seem an appropriate representation for these ideas. As a result, the eddy symbol was created (Figure 9).

PINK and PURPLE

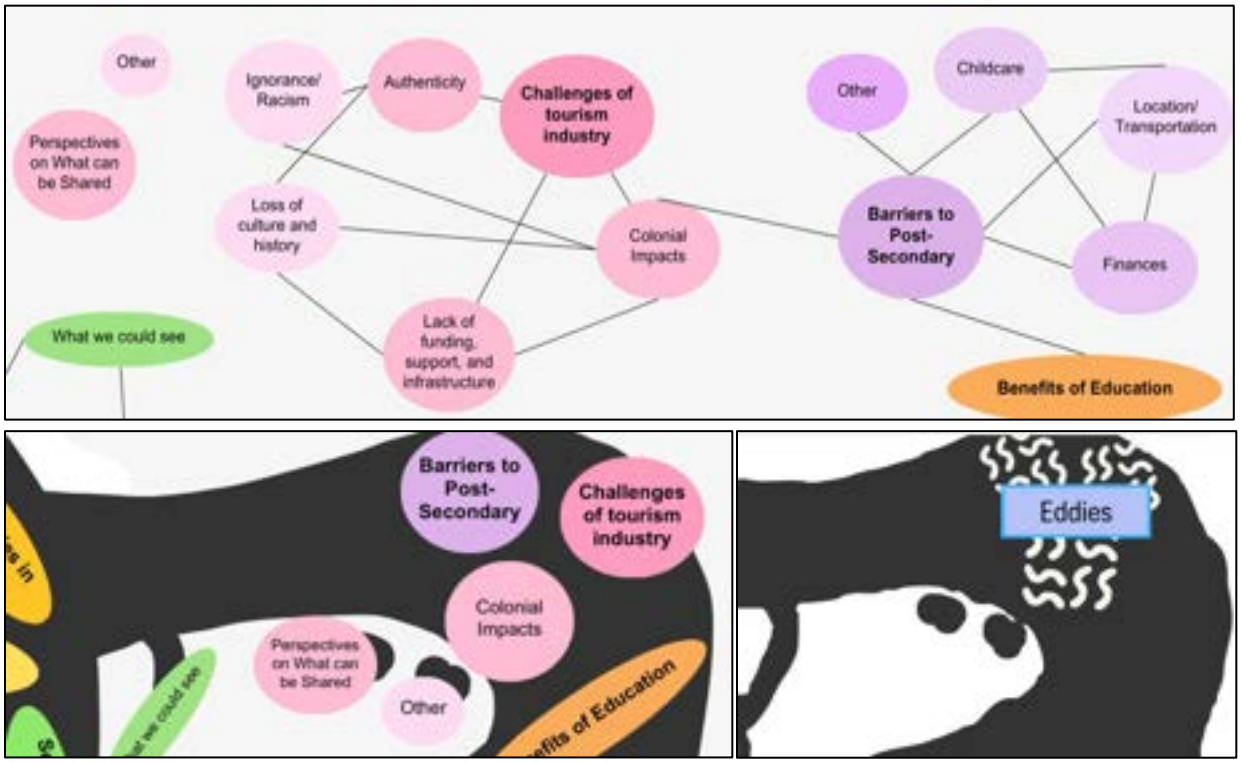


Figure 9. Representations of the pink and purple category groupings from Figures 3, 4, & 5

The process repeated itself when we began organizing the purple grouping, “Barriers to Post-Secondary" and the related subcategories. Not only were the pink and purple groups closely related, but there were again clear links back to colonial impacts. For example, co-researchers shared that a barrier to engaging in post-secondary is the challenge of getting to an institution. This is a direct result of the reservation system, where Indigenous communities were intentionally pushed onto, and kept, in areas with limited infrastructure and access.

Another barrier mentioned was finances, which again relates back to living in communities with limited opportunities for employment as well as systemic barriers to gaining employment. Direct references to colonialism by co-researchers were limited, and so this grouping was not initially considered prominent. Based on the relationships that emerged from the overall model, however, we chose to have it be represented its own eddie. It made sense then to position these eddies between the “Opportunities in Tourism” and the education needed to make use of those opportunities. Thus, eddies were not just represented as deeply linked groupings, but as barriers to overall flow.

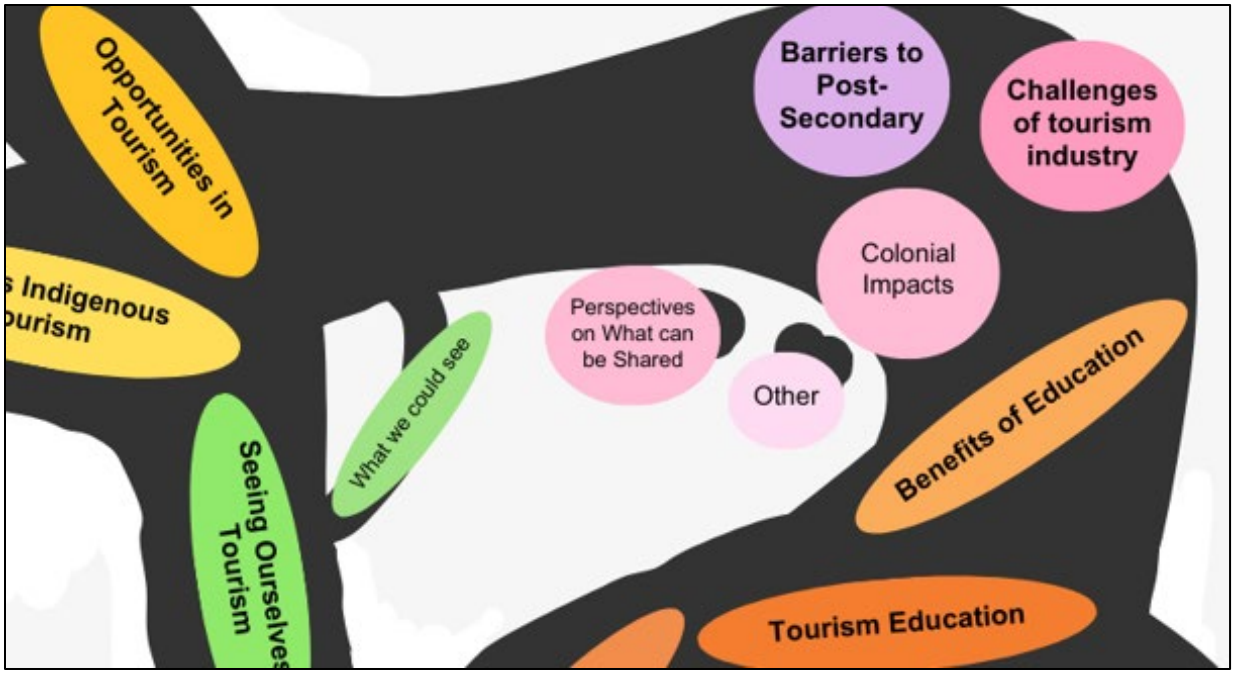


Figure 10. Positioning of eddies (barriers) between “Opportunities in Tourism” and “Tourism Education”

ORANGE

Figure 11. Representations of the orange category grouping from Figures 3, 4, & 5

Exploration of the orange grouping began with the subthemes of the “Benefits of Education” and “Tourism Education”. A fascinating change took place when asking co-researchers about the individual benefits of tourism education compared to the

community benefits (questions #8 and #9). When referring to individual benefits (question #8), co-researchers often hesitated or provided a response with several follow-up clarifications. When asked about community benefits, however, co-researchers appeared much more comfortable and gave answers without further caveats and clarifications. This was not always reflected in the quotes themselves but was abundantly clear when listening to the interview recordings. Co-researchers rarely described the specifics of how a community would benefit from having more individuals with tourism training, just that it would.

Kespukwitk District noted that while communities could absolutely benefit from individuals receiving tourism education, that benefit depended entirely on whether those individuals returned to the communities,

"I think most definitely. I think that it is, yes. And I think that the teachings that are gathered from post-secondary for the students to go into tourism industry, that those students, if they choose to come back here... and that's the thing. Because once they graduate, where are they going to go?"

Anna-Marie made the clarification that once a person has the education, it benefits the community, but the challenge lies in the barriers that person faces in getting it. She shared,

“I don't think post-secondary education in tourism (unless it's Indigenous-led) is, is helpful, per say. But if there's individuals who have gone through the programs and have that and can bring it back to the community, yes. But I think it's difficult... it's not many people that can get through the, the education system the way it's set up right now”.

How we understood this, as well as the insights of others, was that while a community may benefit from having community members with post-secondary education, there is no guarantee that the education will be beneficial to the individual themselves or that it will be worth the challenges of obtaining it. Another way of saying this is that while the benefit of post-secondary education can be shared with the community, the cost is carried almost entirely by the individual.

When asked about the impact that increased access to tourism education would have on the industry (question #10), most co-researchers did not directly discuss access at all, despite it being the intended focus of the question. It was unclear why this happened. It is possible it was a simple issue of phrasing, and that the wording of the question was confusing. This was proposed by Indigenous Tourism 2, who responded,

“What do you mean?... Like more access via funding availability, programs and services available, that kind of stuff? I don't get it. What does access mean?”.

They further clarified by saying “when you think about access... depending on who you're talking to, that's going to be a completely different thing”. Similarly, Tim Dedam initially gave a positive response of “I think it's going to be a big influence more so to the creation of opportunity on reserve, it's going to bring that greater awareness” but then went on to consider the labour pool, aspects of the individuals themselves, their career goals, and others before concluding “... I'm not... I'm not really sure. I guess that's a, that's a loaded question, right?”.

Many co-researchers responded not to the access specifically but to more Indigenous people having tourism education or more Indigenous people working in tourism. We cannot say whether this reflected the co-research thinking that increased access would automatically lead to more Indigenous people completing tourism education or working in the tourism industry, or if they misinterpreted the meaning of the question itself. The wide range of responses (and lack of clear patterns in them) led us to suspect that the question was not consistently understood.

As illustrated in Figure 11, four emergent sub-themes arose from the discussion of Tourism Education: 1) Degree Flexibility, 2) Content, 3) Indigenous Ownership, and 4) Awareness. Specifics relating to each of these were previously provided in the discussion around interview questions are well represented by the quotes shared. Degree flexibility came forward as the most prominent of these ideas. It was stressed multiple times that university was not the only option for tourism training and may not be the most desirable option. Many co-researchers shared that when they thought of university, they thought of the standard four-year model which was not necessarily desirable or even possible for many Indigenous people. They also felt that the typical university structure was not well suited to the realities of Mi’kmaw people, especially those living on reserve.

As previously described, when question #13 asked co-researchers what education programs could do to better support current and aspiring Indigenous tourism professionals, two of the three recurring ideas were focused specifically on relationship building. This tied in directly with discussions of awareness. Co-researchers frequently shared how there was little awareness within Indigenous communities of the career opportunities in the tourism industry, the educational options for tourism, or the Indigenous aspects of programs like that at MSVU. Co-researchers shared that these ideas could be effectively shared and promoted through relationship building between post-secondary institutions and communities, as well as between communities. This

observation contributed to the representation of eddies between the sub-theme of “Awareness” and “Building and Strengthening Relationships”, as shown in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Position of eddies (barriers) between the sub-themes of Awareness and Building and Strengthening Relationships

RED and GREEN

Figure 13. Representations of the red and green category grouping from Figures 3, 4, & 5

Awareness of tourism education programs (or rather a lack of) along with an apparent reputation of tourism not being a viable career path were clear barriers to participation in the tourism industry. Co-researchers presented a reality where Indigenous people are not aware of the opportunities for them in tourism and do not see examples of Indigenous people being successful in it (Figure 13). This was compounded by the perceptions co-researchers previously shared of mainstream tourism not only omitting Indigenous history but outright erasing it. This research suggests that the reputation of tourism overall within Indigenous communities may not be particularly positive. While this was not the view held by the co-researchers, it shed light on the perceptions of Indigenous people who are less familiar with the tourism industry.

Several co-researchers shared how they frequently found themselves having to convince community members that the work or skills they already had (storytelling, traditional dancing, crafting, knowledge of medicinal plants) were tourism opportunities. They did not see themselves in tourism. As one co-researcher said, “To us, it’s just normal”. Raising awareness that these existing skillsets could be profitable is a crucial step for bringing more Indigenous people into the tourism industry. This idea was captured by the sub-theme “What We Could See”. Some positive examples where co-researchers shared seeing themselves in tourism included recent developments by the West Coast People’s as well as Wendake Tourism run by the Huron-Wendat Nation of Quebec. These were raised to demonstrate what Mi’kma’ki tourism could be, rather than something that already exists.

Co-researchers suggested greater promotion of entrepreneurs who had already found success. They shared that while there are Indigenous tour operators in Mi’kma’ki, notably Goat Island, there was little awareness around individual champions and success stories. Indigenous people were not seeing people like them represented enough in tourism for it to seem like a career option. Indigenous Tourism 1 wanted to see a promotional campaign of Indigenous success in the tourism industry that focuses on highlighting existing role models. They suggested that superhero playing cards could be created to show who the people are, what they do, and where they are from. This idea was driven by the hope that other Indigenous people might see themselves reflected as well.

BLUE

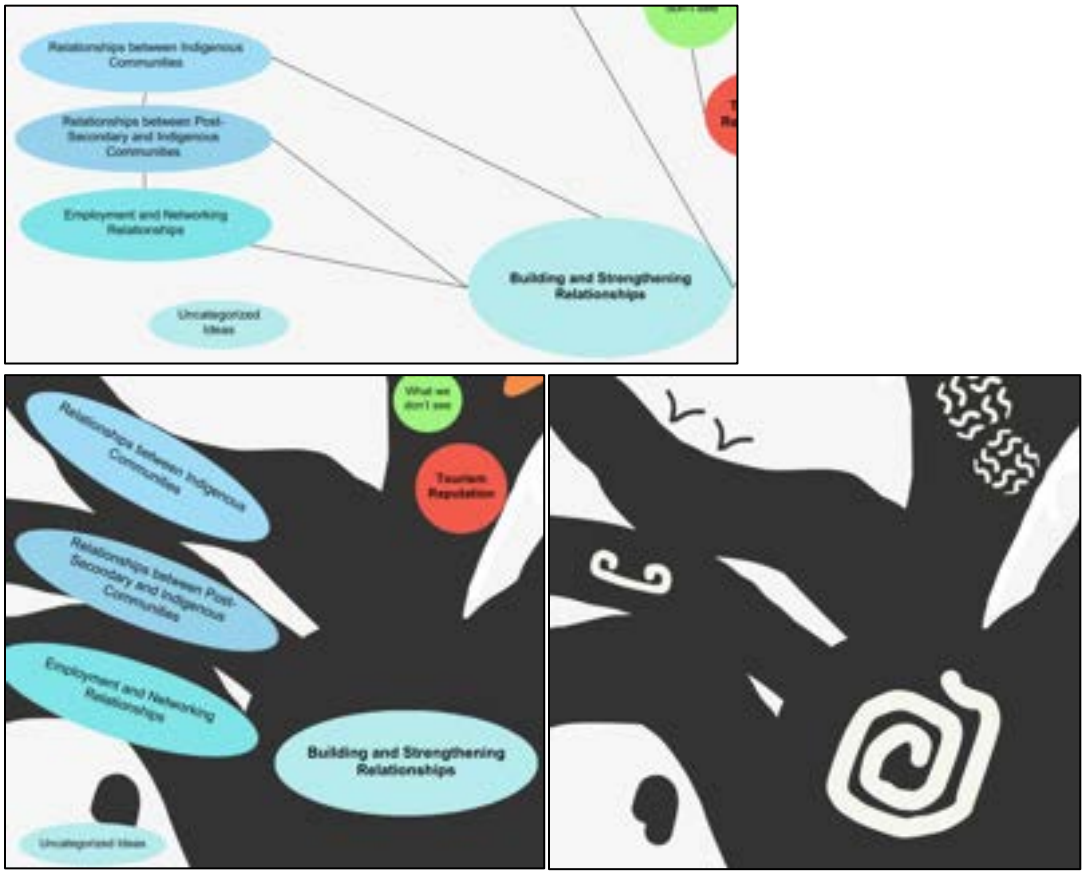


Figure 14. Representations of the red and green category grouping from Figures 3, 4, & 5

Relationship Building

The overarching theme that arose from the research analysis, the one represented as a harbour into which all other rivers flowed, was “Building and Strengthening Relationships” (Figure 13). Relationship building is a common theme throughout research with Indigenous communities and was expected to surface in some form due to one of the interview questions explicitly asking about relationships (question #14).

Emphasis on relationship building with Indigenous people for educational efforts, in Atlantic Canada and beyond, is echoed by authors such as Battiste (2013) and McGregor & Clarke (2019). In this research, the theme was directly fed by three prominent sub-themes: 1) Relationships between Indigenous Communities, 2) Relationships between Post-Secondary and Indigenous Communities, and 3) Employment and Networking Relationships.

Discussions on the relationships between post-secondary institutions and Indigenous communities largely arose in response to question #14 (What would a successful relationship between MSVU, Indigenous communities, and the tourism industry look like

to you?) and was already discussed in the section exploring answers to the interview questions. Employment and Networking Relationships were highlighted when co-researchers responded to question #13 (How can post-secondary Tourism education programs better support current and aspiring Indigenous tourism professionals?) and co-researchers described a role that post-secondary institutions could potentially play. Indigenous Tourism 1 shared how they have seen a shift where universities are beginning to recognize the “industry side” of communities and are networking with future entrepreneurs and students. Trinity Maloney explained “Tourism is all about networking...it's such a small industry that like everybody knows everybody so when you're getting your hands in there, I think post-secondary education really gets your foot in the door”.

“Relationships between Indigenous Communities” was a category that arose outside of any interview question and was therefore less anticipated. Co-researchers shared a desire for greater connectivity between communities where there is an interest in Indigenous tourism, and for greater communication between communities about the opportunities that lie in the industry. Co-researchers were excited about the potential benefits from the growing global interest and momentum in the Indigenous tourism industry. These benefits included cultural revitalization, economic development, and self-determination. Faye Linkletter spoke about the incredible potential there is in Indigenous tourism across the region, “We want Indigenous tourism to be the first thing tourists want to do in Atlantic Canada.... I don't want to be a pit stop. I want to be a destination."

Despite this optimism, many co-researchers felt their communities or organizations have been working alone, although they acknowledged the meaningful work of organizations like NSITEN and other provincial Indigenous tourism organizations in Mi’kma’ki. It was put forward that institutions like MSVU could play a role in connecting communities with one another. Co-researchers spoke about how a Mi’kma’ki tourism trail could be created to draw in and support far greater tourists if multiple communities were to contribute to it. This would require greater awareness of the opportunities in tourism, more people trained to participate in those opportunities, and coordination between communities to develop complementing experiences and amenities. Greater connectivity would also allow communities seeking tour providers or support staff to reach jobseekers from across Mi’kma’ki. Through the diverse representation of the Kinu Mi’kma’ki Advisory Committee and the network of potential co-researchers, it appears Kinu has already begun to facilitate tourism-based connectivity across Mi’kma’ki, but co-researchers communicated that much more is needed. It is also the authors’ hope that this report contributes to a growing sense of connectivity.

Authenticity

Within the overarching theme of relationship building was also the subtext of authenticity. This included authentic attempts to build relationships with Indigenous communities, authentic commitment to Indigenizing education, sharing and preserving authentic Mi'kmaw culture and history, and so on. Co-researchers described seeing "dollar store" representations of their culture, or of non-Indigenous people representing themselves as Indigenous. Building relationships with Indigenous communities, Elders, teachers, and community members was frequently put forward to ensure authenticity. In this way, authentic did not mean the total exclusion of non-Indigenous people, but the meaningful inclusion of Indigenous people. A non-Indigenous entity (such as a university) for example, could contribute to the authenticity of Indigenous tourism by hiring Mi'kmaw teachers and education experts.

Authentic representation of culture is part of a much larger ongoing discussion in Mi'kma'ki around Intellectual Property rights that extends well beyond this research. For example, the concern of Mi'kmaw community members in seeing Mi'kmaw cultural elements incorporated into non-Indigenous works and being sold has given rise to the development of an authenticity logo for Mi'kmaw cultural tourism (Pottie, 2021; WIPO, 2023). Likewise, a Mi'kmaw rights group, Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn released a public Mi'kmaw Authenticity Guide (see Mikmaqrights.com). As Shannon Monk explained, "[r]edefining what it means to be "authentically" Mi'kmaw is a key part of reclaiming our culture" (WIPO, 2023).

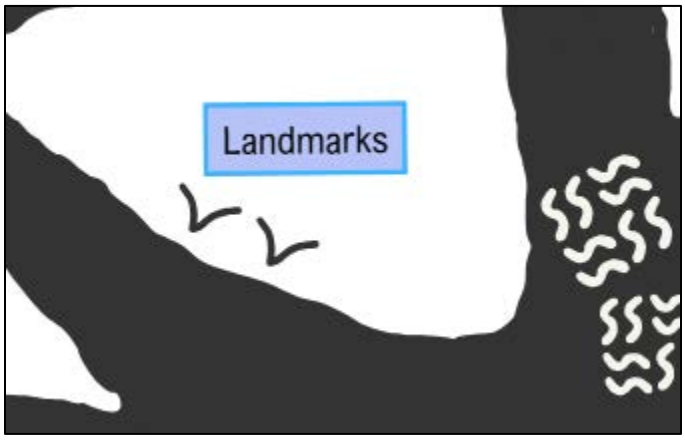
On the other side of the discussion of what is authentic, is the discussion of what is not. This research identified concerns around what were called "pretendians", non-Indigenous people claiming Indigenous identity (Gollom & Paris, 2023). This too is part of a much larger discussion around identity fraud, not just in Mi'kma'ki but across Canada. For example, in 2022 Maclean's magazine issued an exposé exploring the stories of outed "pretendians" in post-secondary institutions across Canada. Similarly, Jean Teillet, a Métis lawyer and scholar, issued a report on Indigenous identity fraud through the university of Saskatchewan (Teillet, 2022). It is clear why an industry built on the creation of authentic cultural experiences would concern itself with the protection of that authenticity. This research suggests that relationship building directly with communities is the best way to honour that authenticity.

Securing the Bark (Landmarks)

With the securing of the bark to the canoe frame the boat begins to look complete and can be easily recognized as a canoe. Likewise, several "landmarks" appeared in this research that seemed to be widely recognized points of reference.

While analyzing the interviews, we noticed that occasionally a particular organization or term would surface independently across multiple interviews. We saw these as helpful

reference points that co-researchers were using to navigate discussions around Indigenous tourism. In keeping with the Canoe Model, we called these “landmarks” (Figure 15). Their placement was aesthetic only and did not signify a particular relationship, only that they were a part of the overall landscape as described by co-researchers. Table 2 describes these landmarks and their frequency.



LANDMARK	FREQUENCY	DESCRIPTION
Wendake	3	An example of a successful Indigenous tourism endeavor. Wendake is in Quebec
Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)	4	An organization working to progress the Indigenous tourism industry in Canada
Nova Scotia Community College	3	An alternative option to university for those interested in tourism. Tourism program also noted as lacking Indigenous content
Membertou First Nation	4	An example of a community successfully engaging in Indigenous tourism and economic development
Nova Scotia Indigenous Tourism Enterprise Network (NSITEN)	3	An organization working to progress the Indigenous tourism industry in Nova Scotia
Reconciliation	3	An unprompted topic. Some co-researchers discussed the potential role Indigenous tourism can play in reconciliation.

Table 2. Descriptions and frequencies of Landmarks identified throughout the interviews

The unprompted mention of Reconciliation again suggested that colonial impacts were playing a role in the progression of Indigenous tourism. Reconciliation also led us back to the overarching theme of the importance of relationship building. Speaking on Reconciliation, Chief Dr. Robert Joseph shared,

“Let us find a way to belong to this time and place together. Our future, and the well-being of all our children, rests with the kind of relationships we build today.” (Reconciliation Canada, n.d).

Adding the Ribs (Study Limitations)

Ribs provide structural support to areas needing additional reinforcement. The study limitations are like the areas of the canoe that need additional reinforcement. We hope to see further ribs (research) add to what we’ve started.

While this research reached saturation with 18 interviews and was enriched by the insights from the Kinu Mi’kma’ki Advisory Committee, there are notable limitations to consider. The sample size, while adequate for the scope of this study, leaves room for further exploration. Given the emerging understandings from this project, more questions have arisen that we were unable to pursue within the current scope. Furthermore, although we made efforts to include participants from all five provinces within Mi'kma'ki, most respondents were from Nova Scotia which could have skewed the findings towards regional experiences in that province. Lastly, due to ethical considerations, we only included participants aged 18 and older, which meant that the perspectives of younger individuals (i.e., high school students) were not captured.

Adding the Thwarts (Recommendations)

Thwarts enhance the canoes functionality and stability just as the authors recommendations are aimed at improving the success and viability of the Kinu Tourism Project. This step refines both the canoe and the project.

If we refer to the title originally given to this research project, we see a clear question: What are the facilitators and barriers to Indigenous students participating in post-secondary tourism education programs in Atlantic Canada? Figures 4 and 5 are the answers to this question. Rivers, streams, and harbours contribute to the flow of the canoe’s journey and represent facilitators. Eddies interfere with the passage of the canoe and represent barriers. Knowing this, we offer the following recommendations for charting the path forward, together:

<u>Strengthen Relationships with Indigenous Communities</u>

The greatest facilitator to Indigenous participation in tourism as put forward by the co-researchers was direct relationship building with communities. Co-researchers repeatedly spoke to the effectiveness of, and the need for more, in-person visits to communities to raise awareness of opportunities for Indigenous people. MSVU should continue engaging with community leaders, Elders, youth, entrepreneurs, and educators. Co-researchers stressed the role that can be played by post-secondary institutions in building connections between potential employers and job seekers, and between Indigenous communities themselves. The KTP has already demonstrated a strong position for helping to establish a Mi’kma’ki trail for tourism and greater

connectivity between communities and individuals interested in pursuing tourism opportunities.

Promote Tourism as a Viable Career Path

Specific to tourism, the greatest barrier appeared to be one of awareness. Not only did co-researchers report little awareness of post-secondary tourism programs (both in what they include and that they exist), but there is a lack of awareness of the Indigenous tourism industry itself. The awareness that it does exist was reported as a perception that the industry does not offer a viable career. There is a need to increase awareness about tourism as a valid and diverse career choice for Indigenous students. Highlighting the variety of opportunities within the tourism sector and emphasizing the potential for meaningful work that supports cultural preservation, economic sustainability, and community development are also needed.

We recommend that MSVU continue promoting the Kinu Tourism Project within Indigenous communities. Additional recommendations include clearly communicating the project's objectives, content, and the unique opportunities it offers, such as the incorporation of Indigenous language, perspectives, and leadership.

Integrate Indigenous Content and Perspectives

Colonial impacts appear to be playing an ongoing role in presenting barriers to Indigenous individuals and communities. However, it appears that co-researchers see Reconciliation as taking place within tourism as well. Authentically engaging with community members to rebuild relationships and reclaim culture can actively work against systemic issues caused by colonialism. MSVU can prevent the continued erasure of Indigenous history and perspectives by teaching Canada's true history and ensuring that Indigenous leaders are meaningfully involved in curriculum building and implementation. By ensuring that the MSVU tourism program reflects Indigenous ways of knowing and includes teachings on cultural, historical, and spiritual elements of tourism, MSVU can nurture an environment of deeper understanding of the significance of tourism in Indigenous contexts.

Leverage Networks for Connectivity

MSVU should utilize existing networks to build stronger connections between Indigenous communities, students, and the tourism industry. For example, the university could facilitate opportunities for prospective employees to connect with employers, helping to bridge the gap between education and employment, and supporting the growth of Indigenous tourism enterprises.

Celebrate Indigenous Excellence

This research shows that even those who already involved with the Indigenous tourism industry, do not see themselves reflected in tourism. MSVU can reflect and amplify the success and excellence of Indigenous students and professionals within the tourism industry. By creating platforms to showcase achievements and success stories, the university can reinforce a sense of belonging and pride in Indigenous identity and contributions.

Offer Flexible Learning Options

This research shows how Indigenous participation in tourism and tourism education faces many of the same barriers that exist for participation in all post-secondary education. These are largely linked to ongoing colonial impacts, and include transportation and relocation challenges, access to childcare, and financial difficulties. The university can limit transportation and relocation barriers by offering courses online, in-community, and/or in modules (i.e., offering 2-week intensive courses). Hybrid models were also suggested, where class participation includes a mix of in-person and online options. If a robust childcare program already exists at MSVU, it may help to advertise this and other resources to potential students. If such programs and resources are not fully implemented or are at capacity, now may be the time to invest in expanding childcare services as a strategy for improving Indigenous engagement at MSVU.

Sealing the Canoe (References)

Sealing a canoe to make it seaworthy is the final step that incorporates and acknowledges all that was given to make the craft. Here we reflect on the academics and knowledge keepers who we learned from, "sealing" the work so that it is complete, credible, and ready for publication.

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APPENDIX 1 - Final Quotes and Categories

Final Quotes and Categories

PINK : Challenges of the Tourism Industry

- Authenticity
    - People challenging the Indigenous identity of the tour provider
    - Challenges with authenticity
    - Challenges of labeling within Indigenous tourism
    - Still an authenticity problem where people access loans by pretending to be Indigenous
    - Those are Mi'kmaq foods that are being presented as Nova Scotian
    - Set up standards for authenticity
    - Indigenous tourism with no Indigenous staff

- But that was all done by a non-Indigenous person
- Hire someone from the actual Indigenous community
- Indigenous tourism, a lot of it is being done by people who have no idea what it is
- There are a limited amount of authentic Mi'kmaq people
- Dollar store tourism... no meaning to it
- We need time to be able to give the...level of authenticity and the level that we want to give
- We are still working on an actual brand for all Mi'kmaq people so that we have an authentic Mi'kmaq
- And then you have non-Indigenous people going out, representing themselves as being Indigenous

- <u>Colonial Impacts</u>
  - *Ignorance, loss (history, culture), racism*
    - You have to be mentally tough, dealing with the situations
    - [Mi'kmaq history and presence] is not a joke
    - Example of racist perspectives "free ride"
    - They started giving their opinion to me... some nice, some bad, some lovable, some hateful
    - There wasn't a lot of awareness...it was only what they taught in books or the stereotypes
    - A lot of systemic racism going on in the town that they're trying to operate [tourism] in
    - They're just like ignorant
    - Anytime I am asked to give a land acknowledgement I let them know that they should be the ones to do it
    - From the perception of a non-Indigenous tourism they expect to see wigwams and long hair braids

        - There's so much that people don't understand and there's so many misconceptions
        - A lot of younger people just don't know about their culture
        - That one picture says a thousand words.... of all the things that were taken away from us
        - All you're telling me is stuff about post-colonial...disregarding thousands of years of knowledge
        - They erased our story, they erased our culture. They erased our history
        - For me the story that they present is something like what I call "Twistory"

- <u>Lack of funding, support, and infrastructure</u>
    - One community might have a great experience on offer but we have no place for tourists to stay overnight
    - We don't have infrastructure, large populations, ways for people to get to experiences
    - We need support. Our people need funding. We need support
    - I reach out to all of them at Eskasoni asking how did you do this... hopefully me and NSITEN can do something together
    - What we perceive as tourism because it doesn't work or we don't have the elements
    - In other industries if you want to hire an Indigenous apprentice you know you'll get funding
    - We need government support, funding support to get us off the ground
    - Lack of support... funding support or just support in general hasn't been there
    - Not receiving start-up support for Indigenous tourism initiatives
    - I know that provincial leadership is not too keen on establishing those relationships with us
    - Communities can't afford to bring on summer students or internships...their capacity is small
    - Biggest deficit is we don't have that infrastructure in our community

- Limitations on reserve
    - Our communities are located in spots that aren't traditional tourism areas
    - Limitations exist within the boundaries that are known as the reserve, Limited land, limited resources
    - We'd have to work outside the reserve and we'd have to work in one of the tourism industry offices
    - I don't know if I would want to put tourists in my home on the reserve, they might have a horrible experience
- Perspectives on what can be shared
    - Deciding what is acceptable for sharing through tourism and what should be kept only in community
    - Fine line between tourism and culture... because its actually medicine
    - Some people think you should never make a dollar off of culture
- Other
    - Sometimes it's like Covid years and its really really not good
    - Working outside of general business hours
    - [Tourism is highly] dependent on economic factors

PURPLE: **Barriers to Post-Secondary**

- Childcare
    - A lot of people have kids up here
    - Childcare and funding too on some
    - Childcare
    - Some people have children, they can't just go to school and then go home
    - When facing violence or family instability, providing care and surviving takes priority over school
- Finances
    - They had to spend another $2000

- There need to be incentives like scholarships and internships
- Lack of support, resources and money
- Funding is blocking them, a lot of people get trapped at the funding
- Costs associated with going to school when living on minimum wage
- We should make money less of a barrier. Highlight funding opportunities

- Location/Transportation
  - The reality is I had to leave my entire life behind
  - There's a comfort level of being in your community
  - People struggle because they have no cars
  - [Offer training] in the communities, because transportation is a big issue
  - We struggle a lot with being in remote areas
  - Would it be worth the risk of leaving community, leaving home?
  - Communities are not typically near universities...often very little transportation...risk of leaving
  - Travel is [a barrier] in... I think some parts
  - Our kids are not as successful in universities when they are leaving their family, their community
  - Depending on how remote a community is, might be a barrier for some
  - It's scary for someone who has never left.... some don't have support at home or they are the support
  - Transportation and housing (because you lose your housing when you leave)
  - Do these people have a ride? Accessibility? Travel back and forth, finding housing, apartments
  - Having to leave the reserve and lose access to housing in order to go to school
- Location/Transportation
  - University programs have to be developed and implemented for 5 years without changes (so they are slow to change)

- Post-secondary as a colonial structure
- Lack of value placed on post-secondary education (by Indigenous families)
- University is very different from the traditional way of learning
- Pretendians Taking Up Space - McLean's 2023 Big Lies on Campus: Identity Fraudsters passing themselves off as Indigenous
- Having a learning disability is a challenge for lots of people
- Stereotypes around being lazy combined with actual learning disabilities or mental health needs
- [Universities] are giving seats to non-Indigenous people and not checking status or asking for verification
- “Same stuff” that's preventing them from accessing education in general
- Lateral violence, crabs in the bucket
- Having a criminal record, struggling to finish Grade 12
- Mental health and trauma
- Racism and the child welfare system
- Families or communities that don't support getting further education

BLUE: BUILDING AND STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS

Relationships between Indigenous Communities

- I want to see our people get away from the division... inclusive of all communities
- We're trying to build a Unamak'i Trail...bring all 5 bands together
- You can get somebody on an Indigenous tourism trail... but right now we're working in silos
- It creates sort of a web that we don't have right now
- Building partnerships within tourism outside of your community to grow tourism overall
- Building with every Indigenous community in Atlantic Canada. Make Indigenous tourism a priority
- Always seems to be like committees or something put together

- I wish we had more community engagement and support where we can send tourists to after ours

Relationships between Post-Secondary and Indigenous Communities

- Just like how NSCC is. NSCC is very connected within our communities
- Keep that relationship between community and the school
- Visit communities and the community members
- You need to do it in person
- We have to have relationship building
- To have meaningful partnership you have to have government, the Wabanaki people, and Mount St Vincent
- Peace and friendship is for all of us, all Canadians
- [Communicating] a spotlight on the Indigenous tourism of the year or something
- Coming into community, taking away the fear, giving them that sense of pride
- Here we have a university (MSVU) that's working with First Nations, using two-eyed seeing approach
- I actually want to say MSVU is doing the right thing... building relationships and stuff
- I think [people generally] are working to create meaningful partnerships with Indigenous folks
- {schools] could come here, let us know they are there if we need info we can reach out. Give support
- Have engagement sessions in community to give out information and come to the high school
- We need more people like Brad. Talking to people, encouraging people, not judging
- {we all need to] work together, and work through the bullshit
- Make sure [education] is authentic and correct for good relationships with community, education and industry
- A lot of collaboration because [universities] are the pathway [to the Indigenous tourism industry]

- Collaboration, relationship building, visiting communities, growing awareness
- More connection between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations provincial and federally
- We're hoping that through the Kinu project those types of conversations can be had
- {Provincial and federal tourism organizations] could use the help of uni's to collaborate and partner

Employment and Networking Relationships

- Kinu making a co-op program
- Why do it if you're not going to be able to get a job?
- Bringing in more people that are looking to hire
- Tourism is all about networking
- Creating communities and trying to network
- Connecting program graduates with employers in their area
- more one on one opportunities, mentoring and exchange programs
- Internships, being able to connect instantly
- Helping students connect with people in the Indigenous tourism industry
- [Students] are looking for an opportunity at the end. .. not training for no reason
- I always reach out to other First Nations and see if they can get a job placed here
- Connect high school students with jobs in various tourism applications in lots of communities (eg. 10 week placement)
- [Students] can get funding for the education but that's the end of it and then you gotta' find a job
- Connect with HRM for a marketplace where Indigenous artists can sell their work
- Bring [experienced tourism professionals] them into the Kinu programs, tell their stories

YELLOW: WHAT IS INDIGENOUS TOURISM

Love of the Industry

- It's so diverse, there's so many opportunities

- I love the tourism industry
- It's an exciting industry
- Probably the best job, career option that I've ever encountered myself
- Its very satisfying
- I like telling our stories. I enjoy talking about our history
- The industry is really fun
- It's very fun and enjoyable
- It’s fun and there are some good career and growth opportunities
- It was something that I could vibe with, relate to
- That's her thing, she loves it
- My original perception was full of energy and excitement
- I'm encouraged that tourism can thrive but discouraged that nobody else sees my visions
- It's good...I didn't know how much pride you take in your work when its being shown
- It's a passion...it gets in your blood It's fun because everyday there's something new
- This is an amazing industry and for so many reasons
- I love it because I love what I do, and nothing is ever the same
- I love it but I hate it
- I have visions and I have goals. I've got job offerings to other place but I'm like “nope!”
- Because it's fun! You get to be yourself
- Learning about hotels and stuff, you meet so many people. It's neat going into tourism
- I could work on a cruise ship. There are so many opportunities, avenues and branches. Its cool
- Getting experiences that connect you with people. "An old school trade between friends kind of thing"
- Every day there is something new

Education and Understanding

- Non-Indigenous tourism...they don't really educate people
- What if nobody who's getting off those planes really know what that means?
- I think about Indigenous tourism and it's education
- I would like every single New Brunswick citizen to know something about Wolastoqiyik
- Cultural exchange
- Opportunity to engage in a positive way and share in a positive way
- Opportunity to share...personal sharing
- Giving cultural understanding and insight to people who don't share your culture
- Mutually beneficial
- They're concerned that the Wabanaki story isn't being highlighted
- I'd sing the honour song to them...and explain it's like our national anthem
- [Non-Indigenous tourism] weren't focused on teaching and educating people
- It's definitely needed, I know there's so many ignorant people in the world and just here still
- It's not just to non-natives and natives, because we're all learning from each other
- Tourism created a bridge where we could reach out to people all over the world to share our story
- They want to learn. So what we need to do as communities is find ways to share the knowledge
- We need to make sure that we know the history and it's a correct history. Its not a made up story
- It was extremely important to me that I talked about the First people who were here then the French
- Create education and awareness and be able to answer questions
- [Indigenous tourism] is hands on learning experience and stories. How I felt as opposed to what I did

- Being taught by Mi'kmaq people... experience our culture
- It's a great way to teach them and when they leave they understand who we are
- Opportunity for you to teach about your land
- You want non-Indigenous people to feel comfortable about learning our culture
- {Indigenous tourism is] bringing people together into understanding instead of hate. Less racism

Identity

- Find that confidence to share their own story
- We were the original hosts
- It's welcoming people into your territory
- To welcome somebody, we need to go back to the question of whose land it is
- Pride in culture... getting the proper story out
- We get to tell our stories from our point of view
- Our people are starting to learn a little more about how to present their stories
- Nobody else should tell the story of Glooscap
- Sharing who you are in a good way
- It's their right as the hosts of the land
- You're put in an environment where you're learning your culture and your history
- Working in an industry that's related to who they are
- It's appropriate that we are the people who are welcoming
- [Indigenous tourism] will instill a sense of pride for them too
- The basis of tourism is people visiting your land
- Indigenous tourism sharing our story
- Within our communities we have to be aware of that story, the Wabanaki story, Mi'kmaq story, Wolastoq
- They've always ignored our presence... Indigenous tourism will change that

- Its important now that we're pursuing self-determination, self-governance within our communities
- [Cultural education] helps in terms of their own identity and seeing the pride
- We're the people that were welcoming these guys first
- My perception is still like stereotypical stuff like dream catchers
- We often get pigeonholed...we can expand outside of that traditional network
- I like to think that we've been tourism providers since the arrival of the Europeans
- What [Indigenous tourism] means to be now is being proud and showing who we are
- It's more pride, the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous [tourism] It created a desire in people to reclaim their culture and to take pride in it
- Tourism is a way to not put somebody in a box, where somebody can really bloom into the person they
- People look at the [Metepenagiag Heritage Park] and say 'we're so proud of this'
- All of a sudden they become so proud of who they are
- Indigenous cultures bringing their culture and their identify forth
- Transformative nature of tourism industry in giving confidence to learn about and speak about culture
- You're being yourself and getting confidence
- We get to be out there more. We're not oppressed anymore
- We need more stuff like Goat Island but also highlighting what we're doing and who we are today

Indigenous-led

- It can't be all non-Indigenous people doing it
- People who are of that culture being able to express... their culture to these tourists
- Indigenous people doing Indigenous tourism
- Indigenous people really need to be at the forefront
- Indigenous led, Indigenous made

- Indigenous owned business
- Just because they are an Indigenous business does not mean they have to offer an "Indigenous experience"
- Non-Indigenous tourism is like welcoming somebody into somebody else's home
- If anybody is doing tourism, it should be Indigenous people
- Indigenous people should be leading tourism, not only working in it
- There's a need for [Indigenous people in Canada] to participate and have some share in the industry
- Having our own people taking the lead in telling our story
- I think about like Goat Island Eski and stuff
- Casinos, winery, golf course, that is still Indigenous tourism. It's still bringing benefits
- It's also taking control of the conversation and having our story told from our perspective
- [Indigenous tourism allows people to] take control of their own lives rather than being dependent
- I started as a heritage interpreter whose job is to create change, and that's what Indigenous tourism is
- I think with tourism it's Indigenous-led and if you can find Indigenous consultants that should be a priority
- Indigenous led, created, owned and operated
- Owned and run by Indigenous communities

Sharing and Preserving Culture

- Being able to showcase the culture of Indigenous people
- Indigenous people...showcase their own culture to... tourists
- Mi'kmaq sustainable cultural tourism
- Cultural connection that links to the original peoples of the land
- The cultural showcase

- Your culture, your people, your history
- Appreciating what we have as a culture and passing on to the next generation
- I think it would motivate them to know that they have a role to play in sharing story
- Taking away identity and culture, what do you got? An average Canadian doing tourism
- I find it's a good way to preserve culture
- Sometimes in Indigenous cultures, tourism goes beyond just dollars and cents
- A lot of [our people] want to learn, more of our history, and meanings behind crafts
- Indigenous tourism means an opportunity to share our culture in a very respectful way
- People assume that because kids grow up on reserve they know everything about their culture
- [Indigenous tourism involves] bringin' our ancestor back and bringing our stories back home
- Non-Indigenous tourism is not culture specific
- It's a reconnection opportunity and preservation of life and culture opportunity
- It's important because we are losing culture and language and who we are, need to bring it back
- An avenue for us to be able to highlight and celebrate Mi'kmaq or Indigenous Culture
- The story of Glooscap is such a big part of our culture. There nobody presenting that story

Opportunities in Tourism

- {Tourism} is a career option
- There's needs to be advertising in communities that this is a career option
- You don't have to work at McDonalds (there's something better for you!)
- Indigenous tourism... it's a whole thing
- It's a career path, its another opportunity
- Indigenous tourism is also about jobs

- It's a pretty vibrant community today
- Membertou is a great example why Indigenous people should pursue a career in the tourism industry
- [Indigenous people] can work in their own communities and not feel like they have to leave the rez
- Trying to break those stereotypes...I want to use my degree to work in the tourism sector
- We got to make sure our children know the opportunity that is there
- Some people do see [tourism] as an opportunity
- Lot of places making it mandatory to have Indigenous person in tourism... lot of job opportunities
- There's a lot of jobs and a lot of opportunity for people
- You can build careers off it
- There's so many opportunities around the world or just in Nova Scotia
- It's probably the best career option I've ever encountered myself
- Some good career opportunities, good growth opportunities too

GREEN : Seeing Ourselves in Tourism

- <u>How to Help Us See Ourselves in Tourism</u>
    - Showing people that us Indigenous people can be involved in tourism
    - You just have to find the people and market to the niche
    - If we made a culture that Indigenous people will thrive in tourism
    - Universities need to tell us 'You belong here"
    - Send out job applications to communities
    - When are we gonna' be invited to big conferences and events in tourism?
    - Communities should be embracing tourism more than they do
    - Marketing community members being successful in tourism
    - We need more visits to the communities (like Kinu is doing)

- It's nice to see with ITAC awards this year, nominations from NB and PEI
- I think once we see more graduates in architecture and museums it will inspire more of our youth
- You need role models, and champions who have been successful
- People like Jenna White are the champions that can be in community and serve as inspiration
- Bring out Indigenous tourism consultants to stand in front of communities and share what they've done

- <u>We Don't See Ourselves in Tourism</u>
  - Why would someone want to come to the res?
  - {Indigenous] people don't see themselves in tourism
  - It's hard for them to suddenly say "I could have a career in this"
  - To us it's so normal... (we have nothing special to showcase)
  - I'm still trying to figure out where we sit within the tourism industry No representation...where there has actually been Indigenous people doing Indigenous tourism
  - There's not really a blue print right now they're saying "this is Indigenous tourism."
  - When it comes to tourism, they focus only on Anglophones and Francophones
  - Most of the [tourism] initiatives here don't involve Wabanaki people
  - I didn't see nothing about First Nation tour guides
  - Is that something people want to do? (fear of having nothing to offer)
  - There's a lack of models for people to look up to.... isn't a whole lot of examples for young people
  - I dont think we as Indigenous people connect with those ideas
  - Battle of Restigouche...But doesn't depict Indigenous involvement
  - We don't have enough example that people are going "hey, I should do something like that"

- Community members don't realize people would pay to have an experience and just watch you do your thing
- We weren't really out there or being represented in the tourism community
- Some community members have no idea that what he (and others like him) does is special
- If they don't know they're part of the tourism industry they can't be part of it
- The industry lacks Indigenous representation

ORANGE: Education

<u>Benefits of Education</u>

- I think everyone should go post-secondary
- I've grown so much just from university
- Introduces thinking critically, problem solving, higher awareness
- Somebody with post-secondary is probably better equipped to see a vision
- [Post-secondary is helpful because its lets you learn so you don't have to learn it the hard way
- Can be efficient and helpful too if it's done in a good way
- Going to open up conversations
- I think it's helpful
- You get different habits, you learn different skills
- Education helps our communities get stronger, but there isn't as much push to go into tourism
- I value training before kids get out into the workforce
- If they don't have the opportunity to at least go to school, that limits them
- [Tourism education] would be helpful just as any post-secondary degree would be

- Yeah, it's good to have a background to bring a broader view and to get more opportunities
- Education will give me confidence

Tourism Education

Awareness

- We don't think of that as something we can go study
- There is not enough marketing
- They don't advertise that they're holding a space for Indigenous people
- There's very little awareness around tourism education in general
- When there IS awareness, there is interest. For example....
- I don't know a lot about [tourism programs]
- I don't know if the message is out there.... how fun it is
- I hadn't heard of any [tourism programs], not here
- We need to bring awareness to communities
- Is there an existing curriculum anywhere else besides this? (not knowing about ed programs)
- Not a lot of promotion to the communities
- [Going to school for tourism is] not considered an option, when I compare that to back home
- I don't know if there's anything to the tourism programs and if they are useful]
- [Tourism education] needs more promotion in the communities where Indigenous people are
- I wasn't aware that there was post-secondary institutions doing a program for tourism
- I'm not sure how many students would be aware of this
- Make them aware, give them the information, and bring in role models
- I wouldn't even know that there would be a post-secondary path to tourism
- Is there something she could go to school? (not knowing the options for tourism school)

- I have no idea what they are (tourism ed programs)
- I always thought [education you'd get for tourism] was just like management
- I don't know a whole lot about [post-secondary tourism ed programs]
- If somebody came in and said "I want to take tourism training" I would have said "does that exist?"
- Marketing and going out to high schools
- I don't know what's going on in the school system now [that my kids are done]
- I think the only thing preventing them is knowing about it
- I feel that we should have people coming to communities... more recruitment
- Until Kinu, I haven't heard of an Indigenous based tourism program being offered
- I'm laughing because they always think the answer is to create a poster. No!
- Why don't you have a circle with some of the students who are going to be going into post-secondary?
- What do we teach in them? (not knowing what is taught in tourism programs)
- We don't see it because it's not promoted much by the institutions... they need to do a promotion
- If [post secondaries] came to communities or places like Goat Island, show that its Indigenous
- [They need to be] creating promotional material and visiting highschools
- Haven't heard of an Indigenous-based tourism program
- There was no Indigenous tourism post-secondary programs until now
- I hadn't heard of any. I know they are out there
- Bring it to communities. Because people don't know unless they know

Content

- *Indigenous Content*
    - [Students] should know the principles of tourism but it has to come from an Indigenous perspective
    - [There were] no educational pieces that touched on Indigenous People
    - Most education these people got [about Mi'kmaq people] was from me
    - [Education should have] given them an overview of what Indigenous people were
    - I don’t see a single course [that's required about Indigenous people in these programs]
    - Get Mi'kmaq language courses going
    - There was no Indigenous tourism post-secondary programs until now
    - I'm always concerned with the education provided by colonial education
    - They were teaching the Western way in the Western pedagogy [when we need Indigenous ways of knowing]
    - The epistemology, the ontology, the pedagogy, they were all based on Wolastoqiyik (a positive example of a course in their community)
    - [Indigenous students] have to know the language, their traditions
    - [they need] courses that help to understand the history of the Wabanaki's from our perspective, not from colonial
    - [Indigenous students should be} learning ceremony and speaking with Elders
    - [Course should be] using our own terminology as a way of promoting our world views
    - Updated version of the education books would make it feel more inclusive
    - [All students} need to learn all about [Indigenous culture and history]
    - Culture is something we all need to learn as Indigenous people, but it will be hard when so much was destroyed
    - Go through history and understanding our culture, what our culture was, what our culture is today
    - Land-based learning...because we're losing that

- A lot of [our people] want to learn, more of our history, and meaning behind our crafts
- Example of how non-Indigenous people weren't successful working in community because they didn't understand the culture (parallel to how similar things could happen in tourism)
- We have to do a better job of educating our people on our own history, culture, success, & struggles
- When I think about reconciliation, do [Indigenous people] even understand why we want to achieve it?
- Anybody who's going to talk about the history of Canada has to start with First People
- Treaties are the founding point of everything
- The true history of Canada, the distinction of Indigenous peoples here, "Indigenous 101"
- There are other programs with hospitality and tourism but with no Indigenous focus
- Yes, because when tourists come and ask me the background and history, I gotta learn this
- Post-secondary versus traditional learning is two separate things but can be beneficial together
- Make sure that [education] is authentic, that it's correct
- Cultural sensitivity training for faculty members
- Our story should be a story that's important to Canada. Truth and Rec, we are still working on truth

- *Tourism Skills*
  - Learn the etiquette, how to talk to customers
  - They were able to give me the full two-eyed seeing approach
  - They have better understanding of systems change
  - Obviously the outdoor adventure training
  - Training as a lifeguard

- It's really helpful when they are able to take some type of culinary course
- I would love to see people do more training on grant writing and proposal writing
- [Education that produces] professional people that can run your business
- From an enterprising organizational sense... teachings that are relevant and required for the industry
- Customer service, administration, finance, that kind of thing
- Getting a grasp of starting your own business, business plans, financial plans, funders, bookkeeping
- Two biggest things are administrating business and being prepared for growth
- How to do marketing, advertising, social media
- How to do people skills... seeing different cultures
- How to be a people person, how to be approachable and how to communicate
- Empower individuals with knowledge, skills, culture, leadership

- *Practical Experience*
  - If you have a degree in tourism where does the practical side come in?
  - Co-ops and stuff. Get them out into the world
  - We need to train people with a roster of skills and how we use those in practical senses.
  - Without experience, they got a post-secondary tourism education but couldn't find a job
  - [Tourism ed is beneficial because employees] get the education and you don't really have to train them
  - *Meet Learner Needs*
    - Many students chose tourism because they didn't want to be reading and writing...In the industry you don't write reports every day
    - They need to adjust their programs to actually get Indigenous people into them
    - They're not really training people for the industry

- Tourism training should really be life learning
- Education needs to understand so they can know what to focus on
- More thought needs to be put into the courses
- Universities need to focus on the reality of First Nations life within the communities
- There's a capacity-building element to what we need to do in Indigenous tourism
- I think the programs need to be designed to meet the needs of the learner
- Just because like everything is changing in society, there's certain things that should be taught
- Programs need to meet the needs of the learner and be structured to meet learning styles

Degree Flexibility

- Six-week course
- Just being more flexible
- Tourism education timing does not match up with tourism season
- Professional development offerings
- Is a four-year degree required for that?
- Something shorter and more compacted might serve some people well
- I don't want my materials stretched out over time just so that there's a certain pace
- Having options
- For people on the front lines... it doesn't have to be a four-year program
- Professional development courses could be credit
- Short-term programs
- A little crash course on reserves
- Professional development courses could be credit towards something bigger

- Professional development could focus on cultural aspects and what they can do as they continue
- Maybe a community-based program might be an option
- Students think they have to take a full course load, but then you talk to people in Kinu and learn you can do whatever amount works best for you
- We were certified in 16 different competencies
- We cram a whole semester in two weeks
- I think it can be broken down into modules that gives each EDO the certification
- Certificate part is, because some people just can't do the whole thing
- It would be more people interested in the tourism industry, if they had more access, online or in community
- It was a certification program and there was at least 5 different components
- One year course. Wish they had more courses being delivered in community
- Offering programs and get certifications, because not everybody is going to university
- [employers] need flexible programs that can deal with [employees] working 6 months of a year
- Not unless it is as flexible. Currently it's not set up for Indigenous community members
- [Kinu] makes it easier for me so I can still work and I can still go to school
- I can take a 1yr certificate and it really gets all the education you need
- Some kids have bad anxiety and don't want to go to university so they could do it online or half/half
- Offer specific training, like a whole week of tourism hospitality certificate for something basic
- Brad was giving me all these options... [school] is so much more accessible than it used to be

<u>Alternate Paths</u>

- [Post-secondary] is not the only way
- I'm more about structured training that I am going to university

- Tourism Industry Association of New Brunswick - Ready to Work program (example)
- Doesn't need to be university
- Outdoor council of Canada and Gros Morne Institute of Sustainable Tourism (example)
- You can take a youth adventure leadership program [if you aren't suited to academia]
- Online professional certification in tourism
- It's not only university, there's NSCC too
- Not everybody is going to university
- JEDI's "Accelerated Entrepreneur" program (example)
- Business, doing business administration... other 2 year [program] at the college

<u>Indigenous Ownership</u>

- Seeking out Indigenous teachers
- Some teachers are hellbent on only working in community
- Great to gain knowledge from lots of different (Indigenous) people
- Give the sovereignty of that program to the First Nations community
- The knowledge itself needs to be owned by the People
- Ensure that if we can find them that the instructors will be Wabanaki instructors as well
- I would add the need to be educated by the Elders as well
- Hard part is also having the people who live it, teaching the programs
- It needs to be Indigenous people teaching Indigenous people
- For Indigenous tourism initiatives to be successful they need to be Indigenous led
- I don't think post-secondary ed is helpful unless its Indigenous led, then they help the community
- If non-Indigenous schools are teaching Indigenous history is needs to be an Indigenous person teaching it
- Need to build protocols into the program so that Indigenous knowledge is shared appropriately

- If we're going to be successful in delivering the Indigenous tourism initiative we need cultural teachers

RED : Tourism Reputation

- It's not fully recognized within the world as a professional career option
- We don't think of tourism as a job opportunity
- Tourism is not marketed out to the world as a career option
- {You're not recognizing the tourism opportunity]. You're just calling them a sports group
- We don't usually recognize that very important component (tourism)
- We can't even market the career of working in tourism
- Then we're a legitimate viable business that our own people will see
- People don't yet see it as legitimate, viable
- Indigenous tourism and cultural preservation was not considered valid or valuable by Federal gov
- Do people even make money?
- That's her thing, but how does she make a future?
- How would it stack up against someone who wants to do this, but they have their whole family breathing down your neck to do something else
- [Indigenous tourism] is definitely undervalued and underutilized, definitely here
- It might be different for someone going to study business, they know they can find a career
- I think we're doing well and stuff like that, so trying to find ways to do the marketing side
- Disparity that we don't feel that tourism is a valid opportunity in many of our communities
- [Tourism] hasn't been a real job. Its more like working at McDonalds
- We have to make sure that people promote this program
- A lot of people see tourism as a seasonal thing, it doesn't seem as secure

- Education helps our communities get stronger, but there isn't as much push to go into tourism
- Our youth aren't pushed to do that...there could be more push for our youth to go into tourism
- [Our youth] need to know there there's opportunities, curatorial, archaeology, things like that
- Once they graduate, where are they going to go?
- They don't even know why I would do this, “where am I going to go with it?”
- People don't realize that its more than just a seasonal thing
- There is a perception that tourism is not a career-sustaining opportunity or not something long-term
- Concerns around pay scale. You can make 20$ at the liquor store but 16$ talking about your culture
- Why don't [Indigenous people] get involved in tourism industry? They have no idea what it is
- It's not promoted like police and lawyers are, doesn't seem as important
- They don't see it as legitimate, viable

We’re Just Not There Yet

- We're still very at the bottom
- But until then...
- It's not yet really well known
- Underdeveloped
- There's not a lot of industry as yet
- It's still very new
- It still has a long way to go
- Out West there's all kinds of Indigenous tourism
- Once we're able to advertise better and once we're able to establish actual tourists

- In a perfect world we'd have lots of graduates promoting and taking over our industry
- There's a gap, a huge gap
- Because we're such isolated communities
- We're at the initial stages... it was always a sidebar to the main story
- The seed has been planted for Indigenous tourism, now we have to water that seed
- It's like a fetus in a womb
- I think you would just see different ways of life
- A lot of it being done by people who have no idea what it is
- [Indigenous tourism] is also an important economic development tool... which we haven't really tapped into
- [Indigenous tourism] is definitely undervalued and underutilized, definitely here
- When you think of Indigenous tourism it's very West Coast focused
- Trying to move into those space...trying to get more involved...trying to access that
- [The Indigenous tourism] industry really doesn't exist quite yet here in Nova Scotia
- There's not much of a market as an employee
- I think we need to create that demand of Indigenous tourism
- It's growing, we're part of NSITEN
- When I went to Winnipeg there was [Indigenous tourism] representation right up until NB but not NS
- My perception is that it is growing and the moment of Indigenous peoples is growing
- They say Atlantic provinces are a little behind compared to other provinces
- I can honestly say [Indigenous tourism] never even came to surface within the last 15 years
- It was not an industry down here, like we're trying to be now... there wasn't a lot of opportunity
- Everybody wants [Indigenous tourism]. And everybody wants more. But it takes time
- We have a lot of catching up to do...when you go out to BC

- We don't have the capacity, down here, right yet
- The Indigenous tourism industry in Canada is doing well, in Atlantic we are beginning our potential
- Atlantic Canada has a long way to go when it comes to Indigenous tourism...
- We have a long way to go when it comes to Indigenous tourism... don't have extensive offerings
- It's growing...Atlantic Canada is picking up slowly...we're a couple steps behind
- Our Nation bought a tourism company but we don't have any people in place to actually run it
- Without funding or without people supporting each other
- Indigenous people don't have the capacity to do all the things that are already started
- Once we're able to advertise better and establish actual tourists
- We need that help to build the tourism industry here
- The majority of tourism experiences are out West, they are the leaders

Uncategorized Ideas and Recommendations

- Having Indigenous-run information centers
- [Tourism training] should somehow be integrated as a standard training practice for EDO's
- Why don't you have a circle with post-secondary students who are going into post-secondary?
- Read “The Emith Revisited”
- First I want to bring a few youth from all other five communities here and bring them together... connect our youth
- Integrate geocaching into the experience
- Let it be mandatory that they spend a summer working at the Heritage park
- Towns/communities making strategic plans with graduates coming back
- Communities need to develop strategies and bring them back to students and youth

- Individuals have been putting their toe in the water, but as communities