

# Closing the Divide: Progress and Challenges in Adult Skills Development among Indigenous Peoples

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# Importance of Higher Literacy and Numeracy Skills

- ❖ **Provide better employment and earnings potential**
- ❖ **Foundational for on-the-job performance**
- ❖ **Facilitate the application of skills**
- ❖ **Enhance productivity**

### Table 1: PIAAC Results for Non-Indigenous and Indigenous Populations and for Indigenous Sub-Groups

Population Categories	Literacy	Numeracy	Problem Solving (in a Technology- Rich Setting)	Percentage of University Educated People within each Sub-Population in the PIAAC Sample (percent)
Non-Indigenous	280	272	286	22
Indigenous	260	244	274	10
First Nations	253	235	270	9
Metis	272	259	280	13
Inuit	218	199	248	4



**Figure 1A: PIAAC Results of the Literacy Gaps between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous by Levels of Education**

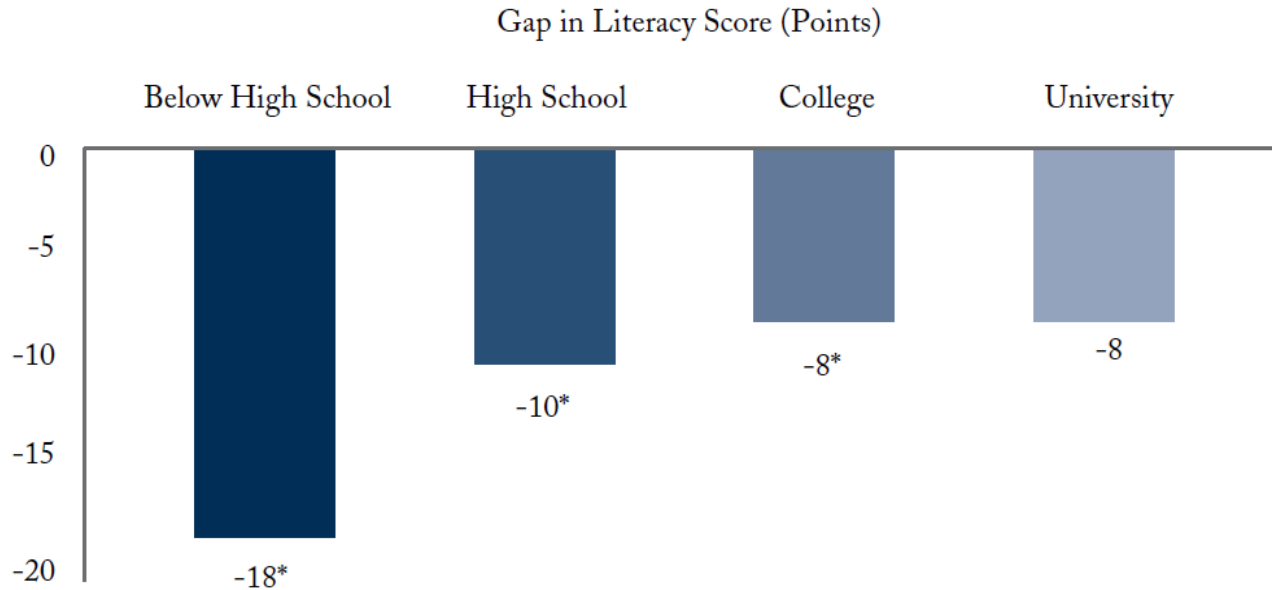


Figure 1B: Literacy Gaps between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous by Indigenous Group and Education Level

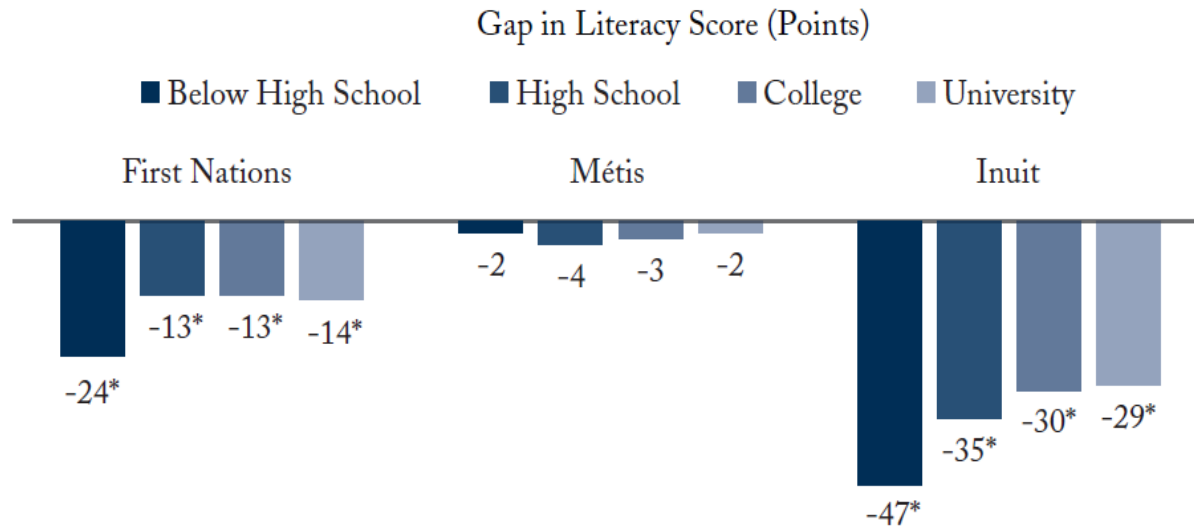
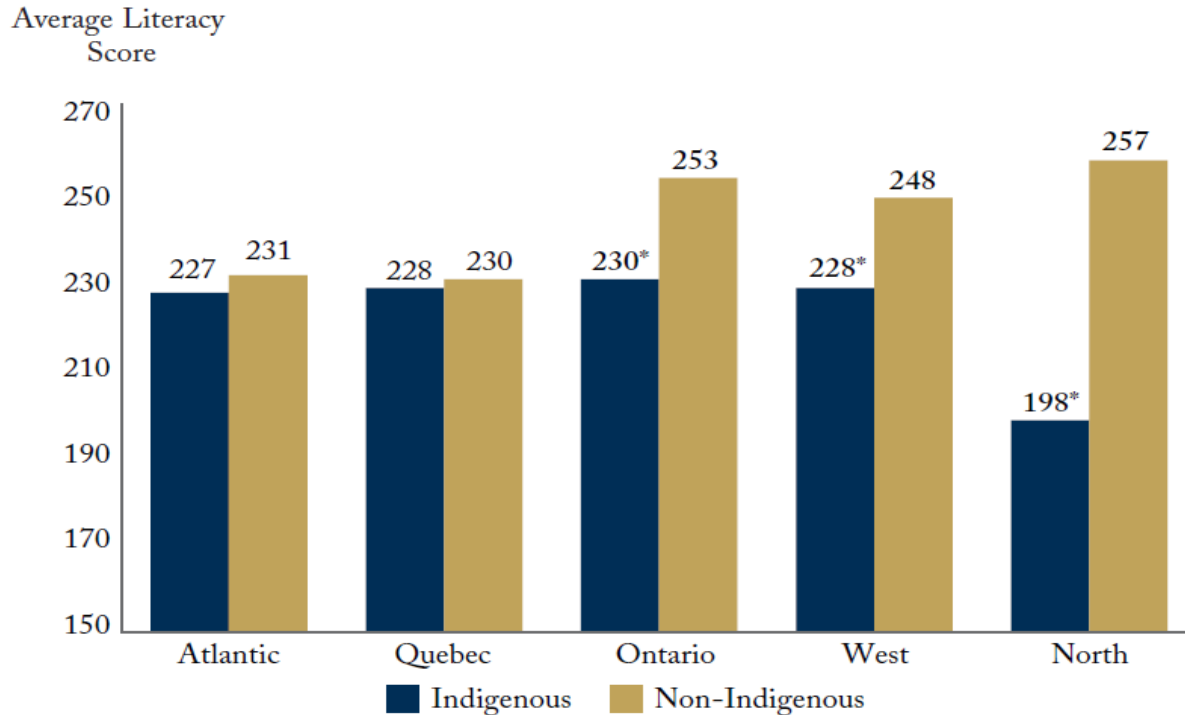


Figure 2: PIAAC Results for Below-High-School Educated Population Sub-Groups by Region of Residence



## Table 2: Age-Group Literacy Skills Gap Regression Results, Literacy Scores

Population Groups	Age Groups				
	<24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55+
First Nations	-16***	-12**	-9**	-14***	-12***
Métis	-7	-3	3	-2	-2
Inuit	-38***	-32**	-14	-28***	-30*

Note: The dependent variable is the literacy scores in the PIAAC; control variables include education levels, language, parental education, gender, and location; regression coefficients are relative to non-Indigenous and non-immigrant people; \*\*\* significant with 99 percent confidence; \*\* significant with 95 percent confidence; \* significant at 90 percent confidence.

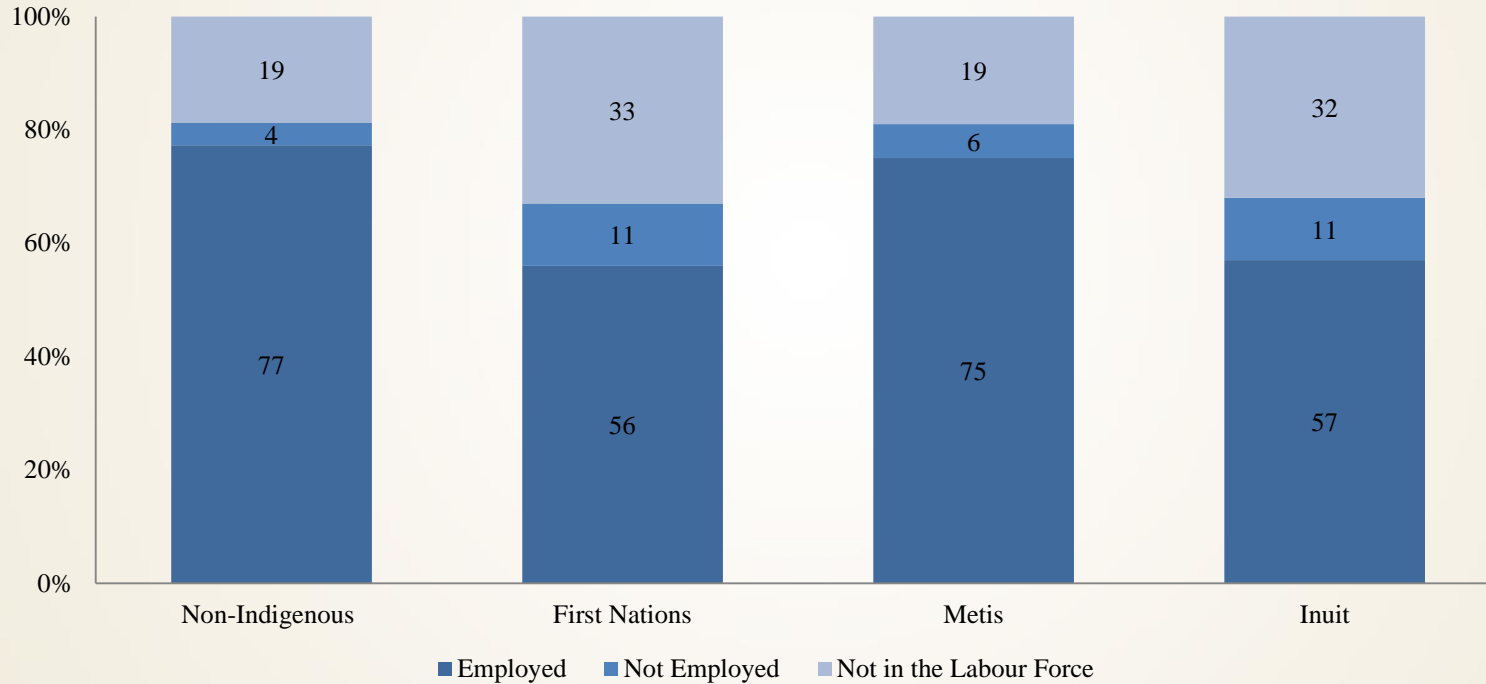


**Table 3a: Factors Influencing the Skills Gaps between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Adults, Broken Down by Indigenous Group (Percent of Total Gap)**

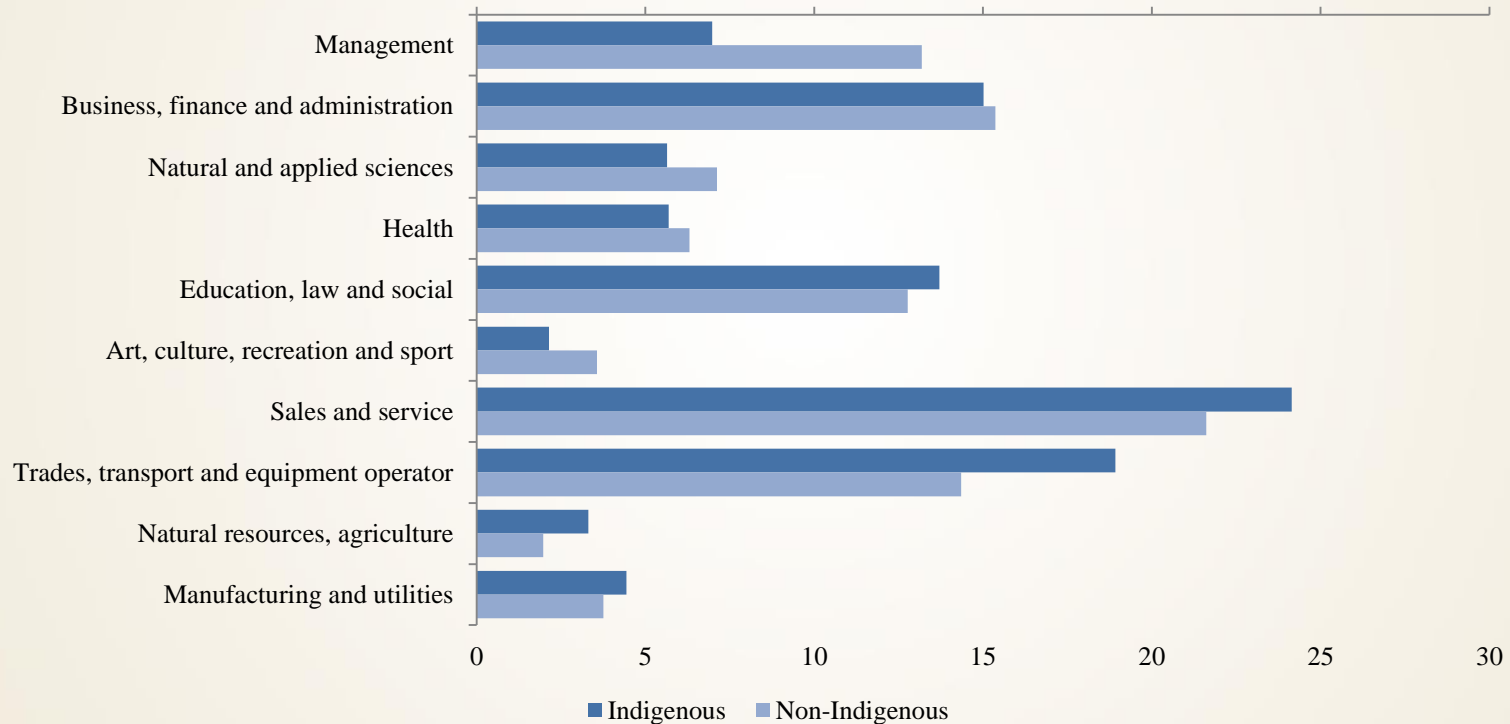
Variable	All	By Indigenous Group		
		First Nations	Metis	Inuit
Education	41	34	69	29
Home Environment (parental education and number of books in the home)	15	14	20	14
General Demographic Characteristics (age, gender and language)	-4	-3	-7	-1
Work Experience	2	2	2	1
Region	-2	-2	-13	3
<b>Total Explained Gap</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Unexplained Gap</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>54</b>



## Distribution of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Sub-Groups by Employment Status



## Distribution of Employed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous by Occupation (percent)



# Main Findings

- ❖ Skills gaps between off-reserve Indigenous people – First Nations, Métis and Inuit – and non-Indigenous Canadians are wide among those without a high-school education – a gap compounded by relatively high dropout rates among Indigenous youth.
- ❖ Skills gaps are largest in northern communities, the western provinces and in Ontario.
- ❖ Importantly, the gap in literacy scores between Indigenous and non-Indigenous population shrinks with more education, but both First Nations and Inuit experience large skills gap at any education level.
- ❖ differences in education levels and the characteristics of the home environment explain the largest share of this gap.
- ❖ But, the PIAAC data only allows us to evaluate foundational skills among adults and how well these skills translate into labour market success.

To ensure a prosperous future for Indigenous people

- ❖ The focus of policymakers should be on developing skills during primary and secondary education.
- ❖ How? Collecting more data that track the performance of Indigenous students to better understand the causes for differences in student outcomes
  - Provincial student assessments
  - International Student assessment (PISA)

Thank you!