

Comparing Employability between Native English Speakers and English Language Learners in a Co-operative Program at a Large Canadian University

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June 18th, 2008

July 18, 2008



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Background

- U of T & Co-op demographics
- Topic of interest during graduate studies
- Small sample size previously but still interesting findings worth further exploration
- Generated proposal for CAFCE research award

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Benefits of applying for & receiving CAFCE Research Award

- Encourages you to move forward with your ideas
- Encourages production and sharing of meaningful co-op related research
- Promotes co-op contribution at the institutional level
- Great for merit recognition!

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Background Research

- International students are actively recruited by post-secondary institutions but services offered by these institutions are not meeting the needs of international students whose first language is not English (Kilbride & D’Arcangelo, 2002).
- Common discussions among practitioners about ESL student challenges
- Job Search Self Efficacy/Confidence (Kanfer, Wanberg & Kantrowitz, 2001)
- Applicant’s demonstrated level of extroversion is the single largest predictor of whether or not the applicant received a job offer (Caldwell & Burger, 1998; Sagen et al, 1999).

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Question?

Are English Language Learners (ELL) equally successful in securing employment as their English as a First Language (EFL) counterparts?

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Research Definitions

EFL: English as a first language

ELL: English Language Learner

ELL TOEFL: English Language Learner required to write the TOEFL at time of entry to university (studied less than 4 years in English)

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Research Questions:

Based on English language classification, is there a significant difference in:

- Number of applications submitted?
- Number of interviews received?
- Ability to convert applications to interviews?
- Dates of match/offer?
- Number of times that they met with co-op staff for assistance?
- Confidence levels?

Research Set-up

- Look at larger picture (over 3 terms, higher participant #s)
- Look at exploring external validity
- Aim to seek out a comparable program
- To forge a professional, focused partnership

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SFU Counterparts

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Research Methods

- Captured names of all students scheduled for a work term prior to the beginning of the job search process
- Once the search process was finished, made two requests of each student:
 - To complete a survey on their perceptions of the job search process
 - Permission to pull actual job search data
- Total of 213 useable surveys (N=213)
 - Summer: 79
 - Fall: 60
 - Winter: 74

Demographics

English Language Classifications

EFL: 28%

ELL: 57.5%

ELL (TOEFL): 11.7%

Population Groups (top 3)

Chinese: 52%

South Asian: 21%

White: 10%

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Demographics

Gender

Males: 43%

Females: 54.2%

Work Term

1: 52.8%

2: 23.8%

3: 22.4%

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Results

Is there a significant difference in number of applications submitted?

Yes, between EFL & ELL TOEFL groups:

with actual application numbers
(18.78 vs. 29.32 applications: $F=4.247$)

and

perceptions of required application numbers
(11-20 vs. 21-30 applications: $F=5.752$)

$P<.05$

Results

Is there a significant difference in number of interviews received?

Yes, $F=7.117$

Between EFL & ELL TOEFL
(4.25 vs 6.92)

and

Between ELL & ELL TOEFL
(4.80 vs 6.92)

$P < .05$

Results

Is there a significant difference in ability to convert applications to interviews?

No.

EFLs apply to less, they also receive less interviews.

ELLs apply to more, they also receive more interviews.

Conversion percentages:

EFL: 23%

ELL: 21%

ELL TOEFL: 24%

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Results

Is there a significant difference between dates of match?

No.

Average number of days in cycle prior to securing an offer:

EFL: 26

ELL: 28

ELL TOEFL: 32

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Results

Is there a significant difference in the number of times that the students met with co-op staff?

Cover Letter/Resume appointments? Yes (F=4.259)

Between EFL: 1.97 and ELL TOEFL: 3.20

and

ELL: 1.94 and ELL TOEFL: 3.20

Mock Interview appointments? Yes (F=10.676)

Between EFL: .50 and ELL TOEFL: 1.88

and

ELL: .77 and ELL TOEFL: 1.88

P<.05

Results

Is there a significant difference in confidence levels?

Yes.

Between all groups in their written ($F=13.881$) and verbal ability ($F=13.182$)

Most confident: EFL

Moderately confident: ELL

Least confident: ELL TOEFL

$P < .05$

Ideas for Future Research

- Difference in quality of jobs received?
- Success on work term?
- Look at programmatic influence through JSSE testing at entry to co-op
- Further exploration of cultural influences
- Further exploration of external validity