

1. Partner: Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada (April-July 2012)

Research Needs/Questions:

A prospective intern is required to develop a proposal to address at least TWO questions listed below:

- Q1: Which key industry sectors in Canada are driving/will drive the demand for international highly skilled workers now or in the near future?
- Q2: What are the policy options for Canada that will facilitate meeting the demand specified in Q1?
- Q3: What are the existing international and regional policy- or regulatory-frameworks to address the industry-led demand (similar to Q1) for highly skilled workers?

2. Partner: Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation, Immigrant Integration and Multiculturalism Branch, Victoria Office (possible partnership with the Ministry of Social Development)

Description of Research Needs/Questions:

Examination of the external dynamics that influence the language learning outcomes of adult immigrants and refugees: What social and economic factors impact successful language learning? Which factors have the greatest impact?

Background:

In BC immigrants and refugees have access to free publicly-funded ESL instruction delivered by community-based and private agencies and public post-secondary institutions. These programs may also provide childminding support and some subsidies to cover the cost of transportation and books.

Many newcomers measure their success by their English language learning outcomes, and their ability to find meaningful and lucrative work. Previous education and literacy in other languages impact a learner's outcomes, but there are also numerous external factors in the new environment that may influence learning and success; e.g. the situation in the home; the support of family and friends; proximity to services; the need for an income. Economic pressures may be one of the most significant factors, given they may limit a newcomer's ability access ESL classes full-time in order to accelerate learning. This means some individuals are unable to gain English skills quickly enough to avoid a long cycle of working at jobs below their education and skill levels, and to provide an adequate income to support their families. Other individuals may find full-time study impossible due to the needs of the children or elders in the home. In a reduced economy, some immigrants may be unable to find any work and become dependent on social assistance benefits, which also limits their access to ESL training.

An intern would be expected to design a research project that examines the social and economic factors affecting ESL learner outcomes, particularly labour market attachment. Research may involve (initial suggestions only):

- 1) An environmental scan of other jurisdictions, looking at the social and economic factors that influence the outcomes of ESL learners, particularly those destined for the job market (to include supports available for full-time study); including gathering available data (both quantitative and qualitative) on outcomes and labour market success.
- 2) Compiling available information and data about social and economic factors affecting learners in publicly-funded ESL programs in BC (outcomes surveys; BC Stats reports; ELSA surveys), and labour market outcomes, as available.
- 3) A literature review.