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
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
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!
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).
Question?

Are English Language Learners (ELL) equally successful in securing employment as their English as a First Language (EFL) counterparts?
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 then 4 years in English)
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
SFU Counterparts

Tony Botelho,
Shauna Tonsaker
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%
Demographics

Gender
Males: 43%
Females: 54.2%

Work Term
1: 52.8%
2: 23.8%
3: 22.4%
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%
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
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