



2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey

Report of Findings

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Executive Summary

About the Survey

The 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey was conducted with former Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) students who enrolled in upper-level ABE or ESL courses between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. In the first three months of 2009, 2,163 former students from 19 B.C. public post-secondary institutions participated in survey telephone interviews or completed the survey on-line. The following are highlights from the survey findings.

Findings: Former ABE Students

Of the 3,480 former ABE students who were eligible to participate in the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey, 1,533 completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 44 percent. The median age of eligible students was 23, and 64 percent were female. Eight out of ten former ABE students surveyed had their high school diploma at the time they enrolled, and 43 percent had taken previous post-secondary education.

Ninety-five percent of respondents said preparing for further studies was *very* or *some-what* important to them when they started their ABE courses, and 71 percent said this was their most important reason for enrolling. The majority (81 percent) of former ABE students said their courses were *very helpful* or *helpful* in achieving their most important goal.

Overall, 95 percent of former students said they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the courses they took. Most students rated aspects of their courses favourably, with 88 percent saying the quality of teaching was *very good* or *good*. ABE courses helped students develop a number of skills: 77 percent found their courses helpful in developing math skills, and 70 percent found their courses helped them learn on their own.

ABE courses helped students to achieve positive education and labour market outcomes. By the time the survey was conducted, 68 percent of former students had enrolled in further education, and of these, 92 percent said their ABE courses helped prepare them for their subsequent studies. At the time the survey was conducted, 62 percent of former ABE students were employed, and the majority of those who were employed found the knowledge and skills they gained in their ABE courses useful in performing their jobs.

The Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) helps many students with the costs of ABE courses: 17 percent of students surveyed applied for ABESAP funding, and 80 percent of those who applied received funding. The majority of students (57

percent) said that they relied on employment income as a main source of financial support while studying.

Findings: Former ESL Students

Of the 1,347 former ESL students who were eligible to participate in the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey, 630 completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 47 percent. The median age of eligible students was 33, and 70 percent were female. Almost all (98 percent) of the former ESL students came from a country other than Canada, and of these, 81 percent were permanent residents or landed immigrants, and 15 percent were Canadian citizens. Three-quarters of those who came from another country had some previous post-secondary education, and 65 percent had a post-secondary credential.

When asked for their most important reason for enrolling, most former ESL students said *to prepare for further studies* (41 percent) or *to use English better in daily life* (36 percent). The majority (85 percent) of former ESL students said their courses were *very helpful* or *helpful* in achieving their most important goal.

Overall, 94 percent of former students said they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the courses they took. Most students rated aspects of their courses favourably, with 84 percent saying the quality of teaching was *very good* or *good*. ESL courses helped students develop a number of skills: 83 percent found their courses helpful in developing English writing skills, and 76 percent found their courses helped them feel self-confident.

ESL courses helped students to achieve positive education and labour market outcomes. By the time the survey was conducted, 61 percent of former students had enrolled in further education, and of these, 93 percent said their ESL courses helped prepare them for their subsequent studies. At the time the survey was conducted, 50 percent of former ESL students were employed, and among those whose jobs required English, 75 percent said their ESL courses helped them use English at work.

The Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) helps many students with the costs of ESL courses: 40 percent of students surveyed applied for ABESAP funding, and 84 percent of those who applied received funding. Many students cited support from family and friends (45 percent) or employment while studying (32 percent) as a main source of financial support.

Introduction

After years of strong economic growth, British Columbia is now experiencing a challenging economic environment. In spite of current reduction in the demand for labour, B.C. is facing long-term shortages of skilled workers. To meet the predicted demand, the province's post-secondary institutions and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development (ALMD) are committed to creating opportunities and providing the necessary tools and training for all residents and newcomers who want access to further education. For many students, the pursuit of post-secondary education begins with improving literacy, upgrading credentials, or acquiring basic academic skills. For newcomers, the challenges often include learning English as well.

One of the key drivers of success for newcomer immigrants is the ability to use English effectively, and one of the objectives of ALMD is to ensure newcomers are able to communicate in English and attain jobs related to their skills, training, and education. More than one third of all job openings in the next ten years will need to be filled by immigrants, and immigration will continue to account for a significant share of B.C.'s population growth over the next two decades.

Developmental Program Delivery in the Public Post-Secondary System

Developmental programs are for adults who are not ready to enter an academic or career program at a public post-secondary college or institute. Developmental programs delivered in the B.C. public post-secondary education system include:

- Adult basic education;
- Adult literacy;
- Adult special education; and
- English as a second language.

The 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey included former students from Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language programs.

Adult Basic Education (ABE) is a generic term and institutions choose to call it by many different names: college/university preparation, career preparation courses, developmental programs, access and career programs, etc. Adult Basic Education provides upgrading courses that will enable students to qualify for academic or career programs of their choice. ABE courses lead to a high school diploma (BC Adult Graduation Diploma) and to prerequisites for post-secondary programs.

English as a Second Language (ESL) is also a generic term, and may also be referred to as: English as an Additional Language (EAL), English Language Training (ELT), English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), English Language Learning (ELL), etc. English as a Second Language (ESL) programs provide language instruction and information about

Canadian culture to people who need higher levels of English to help them graduate from high school, find jobs, or take vocational, career/technical, and academic programs.

Previous Developmental Education Survey Projects

In past years, groups of developmental education students have been surveyed separately. The most recent ABE and ESL student outcomes surveys were:

2007 English as a Second Language Student Outcomes Survey

This survey included students who enrolled in ESL courses at a B.C. public post-secondary institution between September 1, 2005 and August 31, 2006. In total, 4,050 past ESL students were identified in the survey cohort, and 1,821 completed the survey.

2005 Adult Basic Education Survey

This survey included students enrolled in at least one ABE course at any level (fundamental, intermediate, or advanced) at a B.C. public post-secondary institution between July 1, 2003 and June 30, 2004. In total, 17,253 former students were identified as eligible for the survey. To limit costs, only 4,989 were targeted by a sampling strategy, of which 4,249 completed the survey.

2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey

The purpose of the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey was to ask former upper-level ABE and ESL students to evaluate their educational experiences and to report on their transitions to the labour market and further education. This information is used by post-secondary institutions and government to:

- support post-secondary curriculum planning, policy development, and accountability;
- provide information for program and service evaluations and educational planning; and
- guide educational choices for future students.

To be included in this survey, former students must have been enrolled in at least three courses in their respective program area (ABE or ESL), between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2008. Furthermore, students must have been enrolled in at least one upper-level course in their respective program area between July 1, 2007, and June 30, 2008, and must not have enrolled in any further courses in their program area since July 1, 2008. Refer to Appendix: Survey Methodology, for additional information on the survey cohort selection criteria.

During the period most of these former students were still attending classes, B.C.'s post-secondary education system underwent some significant changes. Five new universities were created, affecting the following four institutions included in this report:

Previous Name	Current Name
Capilano College	Capilano University
Kwantlen University College	Kwantlen Polytechnic University
Malaspina University-College	Vancouver Island University
University College of the Fraser Valley	University of the Fraser Valley

The above changes occurred in September 2008, after students surveyed had already left their programs, but before the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey was actually conducted. This report refers to institutions by their current names.

In total, 4,827 students (3,480 ABE and 1,347 ESL) were included in the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey. Of these, 2,163 (1,533 ABE and 630 ESL) completed the survey, resulting in an overall response rate of 45 percent.

About this Report

This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey. Results are presented separately for the two survey cohorts—ABE and ESL. Although this report does not include an analysis of the results by institution, tabular reports were produced and distributed to the participating institutions in June 2009.

The results included in the report were analyzed across several demographic and other factors (e.g., age, region). The differences noted in the report are those that were statistically significant—a statistically significant result is one that cannot reasonably be explained by chance alone. (Please see Appendix: Survey Methodology, for more details on the report analysis.)

The first part of the report focuses on former ABE students; the second part focuses on former ESL students. Each part of the report begins with a description of the students themselves and their demographic characteristics. This is followed by a discussion of the students' reasons or goals for enrolling and students' evaluation of their education. The next sections focus on outcomes—what students did after they left their studies, namely further education and employment. In the final section of each part of the report, student finances are discussed.

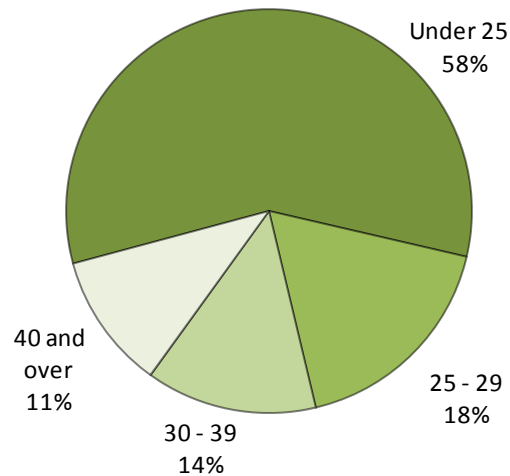
Findings: Former ABE Students

Description of ABE Cohort and Respondents

In total, 3,480 former Adult Basic Education (ABE) students from 19 different institutions were eligible to participate in the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey. Of these, 1,533 completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 44 percent. The number of eligible students and respondents by institution can be found in Appendix: Survey Methodology.

Former ABE students were relatively young. At the time of the survey, the median age of those eligible for the survey was 23, and three-quarters of the eligible former students were under age 30. ABE students are predominantly female: almost two-thirds (64 percent) of those eligible for the survey were women. The age and gender characteristics of survey respondents were virtually identical to those of all students eligible for the survey.

At the time of the survey, three-quarters of eligible students were under age 30

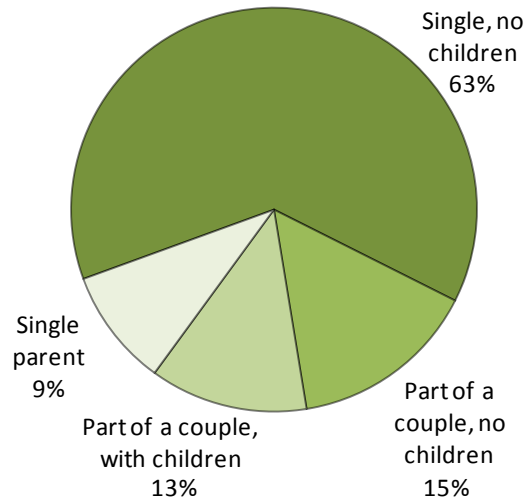


Survey respondents were asked to provide additional demographic information. Of those who gave Canada as their country of origin, 14 percent identified themselves as Aboriginal, and of these, 78 percent identified themselves as First Nations, 22 percent as Métis, and 1 percent as Inuit.¹ For comparison, in the 2006 Census, 4.8 percent of British Columbians identified themselves as Aboriginal, and of these, 66 percent self-identified as First Nations, 30 percent as Métis, and 0.4 percent as Inuit.

The majority of former students surveyed said that they were single with no children during the time they were studying, although approximately one-fifth of ABE respondents indicated that they had children at the time they took their courses.

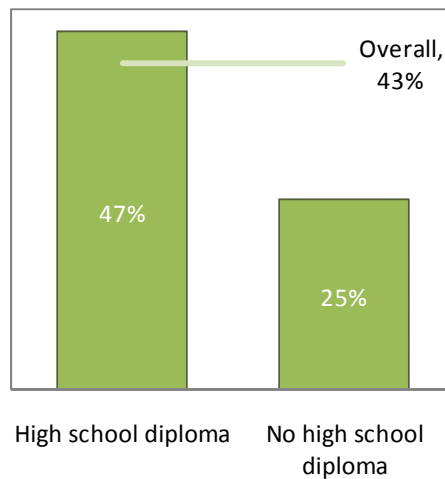
¹ Respondents were allowed to identify with more than one Aboriginal group.

At the time they were studying, the majority of ABE students were single, with no children



Eighty percent of students said they had already earned their high school diploma (or equivalent) before enrolling in their first ABE course at their institution, and 43 percent said they had taken some previous post-secondary education. Students who had obtained their high school diploma were almost twice as likely, however, to have studied at a post-secondary institution before enrolling in their ABE courses.

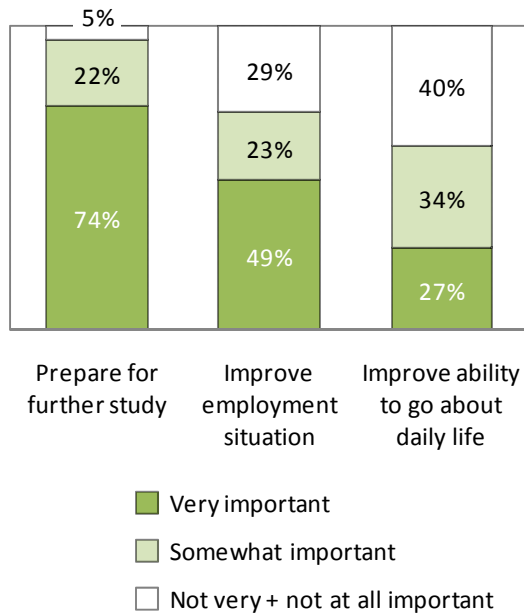
ABE students with a high school diploma were more likely to have previous post-secondary education



Reasons for Enrolling

Students enrol in ABE courses at B.C.'s post-secondary institutions for a variety of reasons. When asked to rate the importance of preparing for further studies or training, 95 percent said this goal was either *very* or *somewhat* important. Seven out of ten students said improving their employment situation was *very* or *somewhat* important, and six out of ten students said improving their ability to go about daily life was *very* or *somewhat* important.

Former students had multiple reasons for enrolling in ABE courses

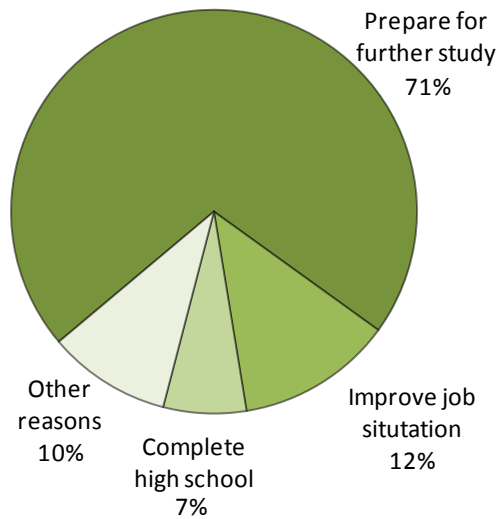


Exactly half of the students said that all three goals (preparing for further study, improving employment situation, and improving ability to go about daily life) were *very* or *somewhat* important to them.²

After rating the importance of each goal described above (preparing for further study, improving employment situation, improving ability to go about daily life), students were asked to provide the single most important goal or reason for enrolling in ABE courses. The most common reason was preparing for further study: 71 percent of ABE respondents said this was their main reason for enrolling in their courses. Although 49 percent of ABE students felt improving their employment situation was *very important*, only 12 percent gave this as their most important reason for enrolling.

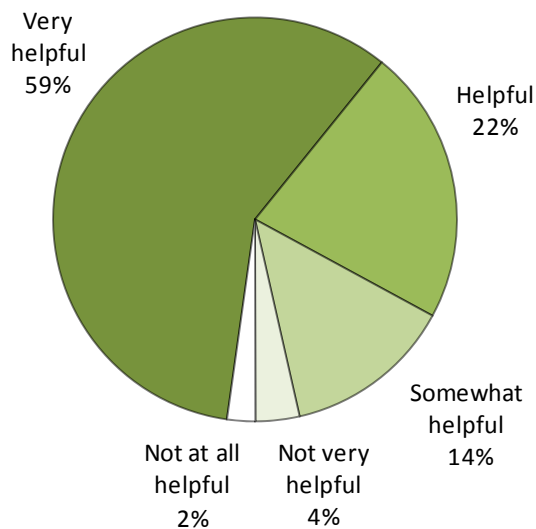
² Percentage is of those who gave a valid response to all three questions.

For the majority of students, preparing for future studies was the most important reason for enrolling



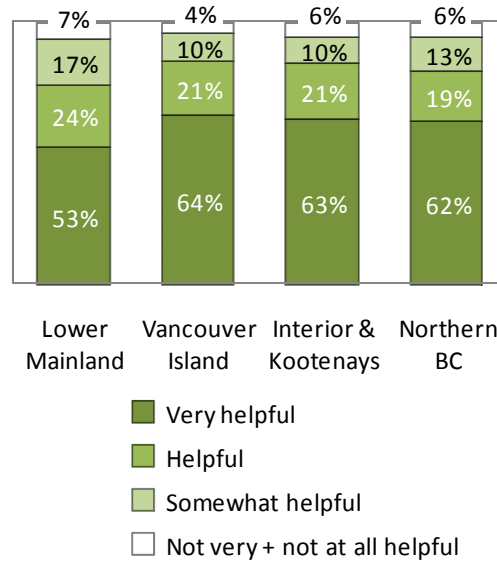
When asked how helpful their ABE courses were in achieving their most important goal, 59 percent of respondents said *very helpful*—81 percent of respondents said their courses were *very helpful* or *helpful*.

Most students found their ABE courses helpful in achieving their most important goal



Older students were more likely to give positive ratings when asked about the helpfulness of their courses in achieving their most important goal. Ratings also varied somewhat by region (based on the location of the institution), with more positive ratings outside of the Lower Mainland. Interestingly, helpfulness ratings did not vary significantly, regardless of whether students said their main goal for enrolling was to prepare for further study, improve their job situation, or complete high school.

Ratings of helpfulness of courses in achieving most important goal varied by region



Geography appears to be the single most important factor determining where students choose to take their ABE courses. When asked why they chose their institution,³ just over a third of respondents said it was because they didn't have to move, and 32 percent said it was because the institution was located where they wanted to go to school. The reputation of the institution was the next most common reason, given by 22 percent of students surveyed. As shown in the table below, a variety of other factors also influenced students' decisions about where to attend, although each of these other factors accounted for a relatively small proportion of students.

Geographic location/proximity was the reason many students chose their institution

Why did you choose to attend [institution]?	
I didn't have to move	36%
It was located where I wanted to go to school	32%
Reputation of institution	22%
Less expensive	12%
Convenient schedule	9%
It was the only place I could get these courses	8%
Transferability of courses	7%
I was accepted into this institution	6%
I didn't have to wait too long to start	4%
Small class sizes	2%
Other	16%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed; percentages may add to more than 100%.

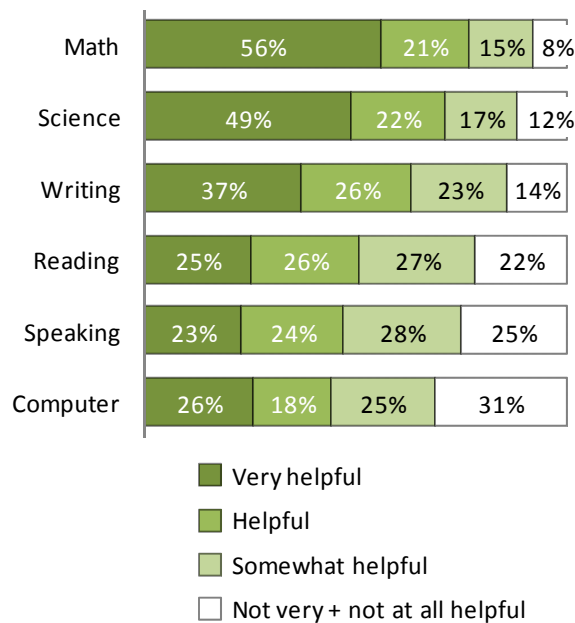
³ Respondents were allowed to provide up to three responses.

Evaluation of Education

Evaluation of courses

Former students were asked to rate the helpfulness of their courses in developing their writing, reading, speaking, math, computer, and science skills, and had the option of saying *not applicable* to skills not relevant to the courses they took.⁴ Excluding those who said *not applicable*, respondents gave the highest ratings to math and science skills, followed by writing skills. Reading, speaking, and computer skills received fewer positive ratings, although the majority still found these courses at least *somewhat helpful* in developing these skills.

Former ABE students said their courses were helpful in developing academic skills

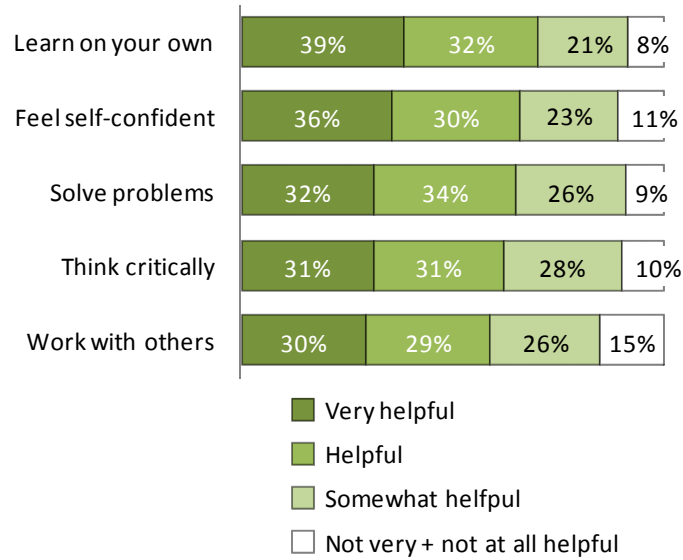


Former students found their courses helpful in several other areas as well. About 7 out of 10 said the courses were *very helpful* or *helpful* in learning on their own, which is not surprising, given the self-directed nature of many ABE programs. Approximately two-thirds rated their courses as *helpful* or *very helpful* in feeling self-confident and solving problems, and about 6 out of 10 gave such ratings to critical thinking and working effectively with others.⁵

⁴ The percentage of students saying *not applicable* ranged from a low of 13 percent (math skills), to a high of 43 percent (computer skills).

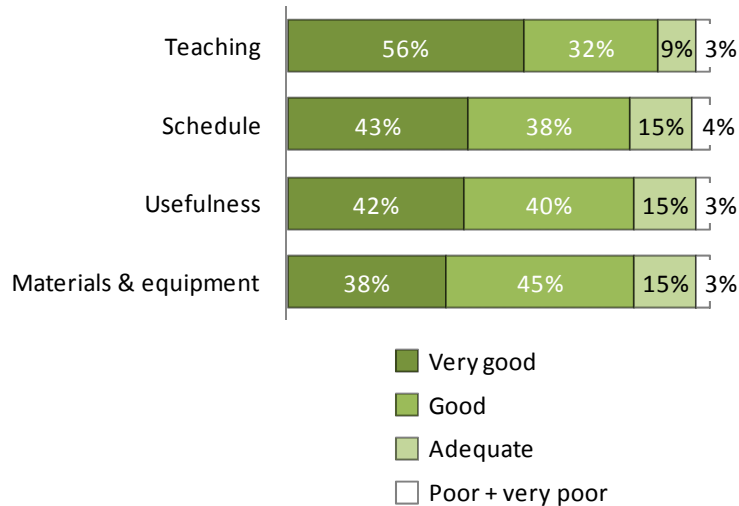
⁵ Excludes *not applicable* responses, which ranged from 4 percent (learn on own) to 14 percent (work effectively with others).

ABE courses helped students develop many different skills



Students were also asked to rate the quality of various aspects of their courses: the teaching, course scheduling, course materials and equipment, and usefulness of what they learned. More than half (56 percent) rated the quality of teaching as *very good*, and all four items were rated as *very good* or *good* by more than 80 percent of respondents.

Former students rated their ABE courses favourably

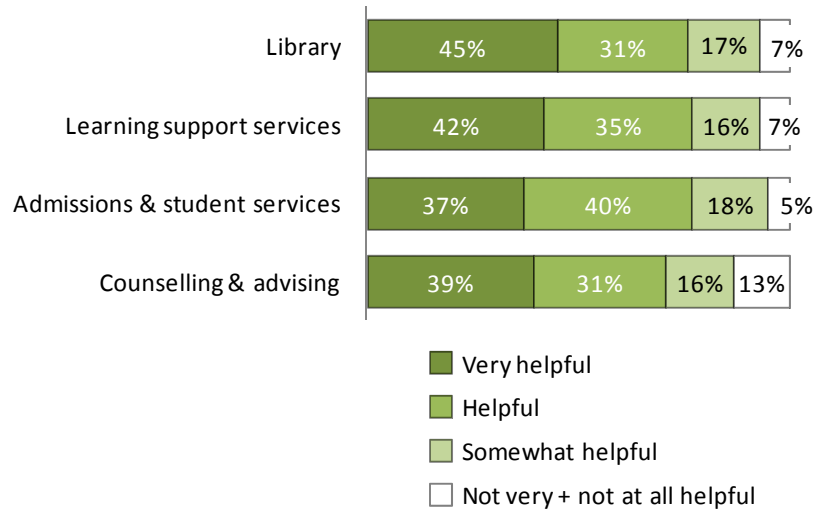


Evaluation of services

Students were asked to rate the helpfulness of various resources provided by institutions and had the option of saying *not applicable* if the resource did not apply to them or was not available at their institution.

The majority of students provided ratings for the library, learning support services, admissions and student services, and counselling and advising services.⁶ Each of these resources was rated as *very helpful* or *helpful* by the majority of students. Former students gave particularly high ratings to the library (76 percent *very helpful* or *helpful*), learning support services (77 percent), and admissions and student services (77 percent).

The majority of former ABE students rated institutional resources positively

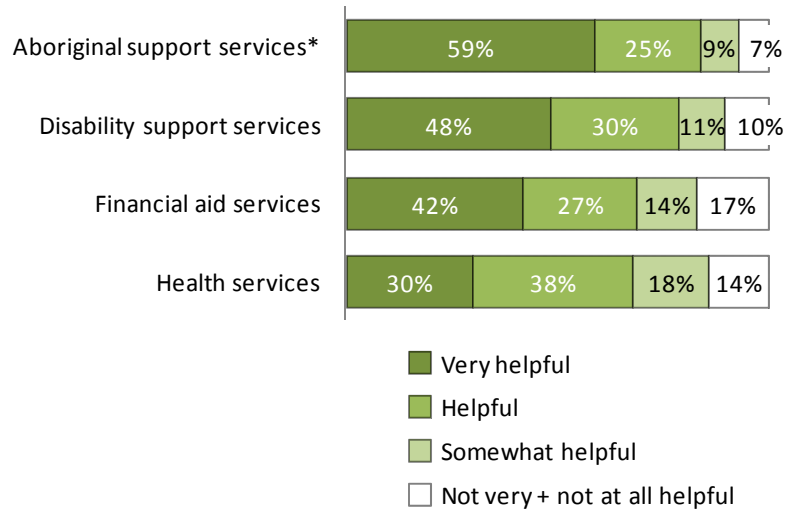


Resources such as financial aid services, health services, disability support services, and Aboriginal support services are generally used by a smaller subset of the population.⁷ Again, each of these services was rated positively by the majority of respondents. Of those who self-identified as Aboriginal, 84 percent rated Aboriginal support services as *very helpful* or *helpful*. Disability support services also received particularly high ratings, with 79 percent of respondents giving positive ratings.

⁶ *Not applicable* responses ranged from 10 percent (admissions and student services) to 29 percent (counselling and advising services).

⁷ *Not applicable* responses ranged from 61 percent (financial aid services) to 89 percent (disability support services).

Health, financial aid, and support services were rated positively by most former students

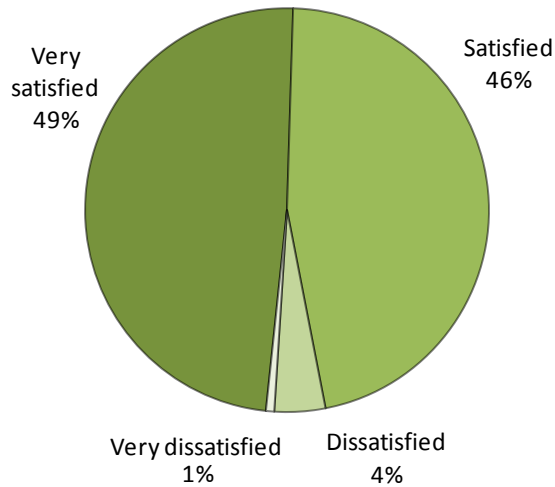


*Data are shown for Aboriginal students only.

Satisfaction with education

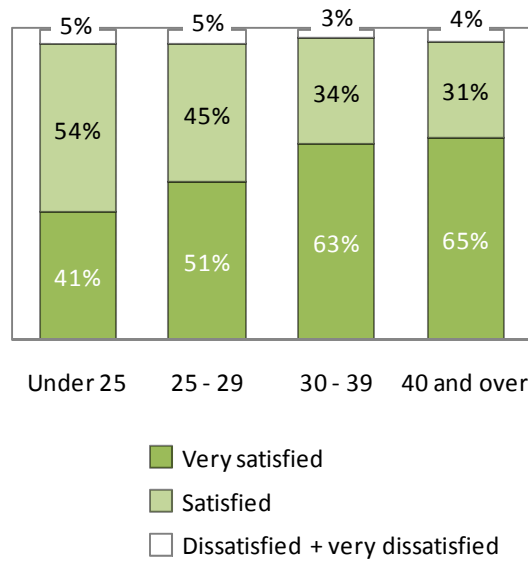
When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the courses they took, almost half (49 percent) of all students said they were *very satisfied* with their courses—95 percent were *satisfied* or *very satisfied*.

Almost all former ABE students said they were very satisfied or satisfied with their courses

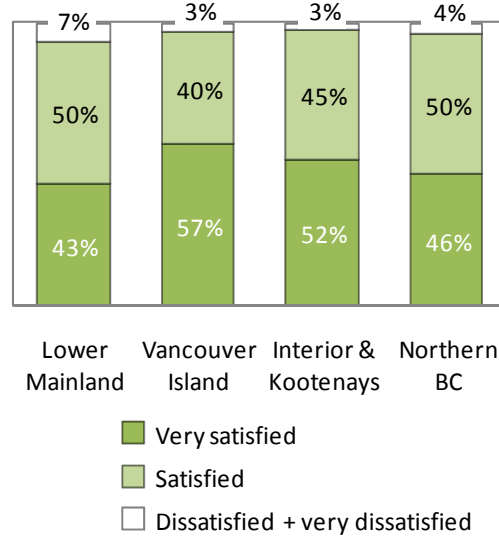


Overall satisfaction varied with both age and region. The older the students, the higher the proportion who said they were *very satisfied* with their courses. Regionally, overall satisfaction was higher outside of the Lower Mainland.

Overall satisfaction ratings varied across age groups...



...and also across regions



After rating their overall satisfaction with ABE courses, respondents were asked if they had any other comments, good or bad, about their experience with the courses they took. Almost half (47 percent) of respondents provided a comment. Of those who provided a comment, approximately two-thirds (65 percent) said something positive about their ABE experience.

I got the confidence to attend post-secondary school because of the courses offered. The program was exceptional as well as the teaching style. This institute is a great learning atmosphere.

I liked the small class sizes and one-on-one instruction after class with the instructor.

Although many of these comments were very general, a large number (35 percent of those who gave a comment) provided a positive comment about the quality of their instructors or tutors.

The teachers were excellent, easy to talk to and approach. They were inspirational.

...I enjoyed math for the first time in my life and thank [institution] for hiring the best teacher!

On the other hand, quality of instruction was also one of the most common complaints (mentioned in 12 percent of comments).

The teaching standards need to be improved.

Teacher was obviously intelligent, just not very good as a teacher (in my opinion at least).

Other common topics included: suggestions to improve course content, organization, or materials (mentioned in 13 percent of comments), and suggestions to improve course scheduling (mentioned in 5 percent of comments).

The courses should develop critical thinking and public speaking skills to a greater degree.

The school should offer more paced classes, not just self-paced ones. I didn't enjoy the learning style of the self-paced classes.

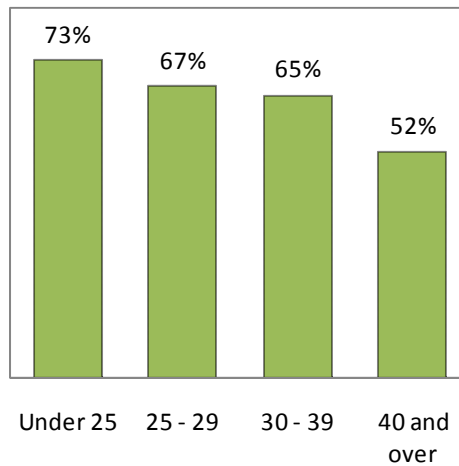
It is great that the courses are available, but they should also be available in the evening for those who work during the day.

Further Education

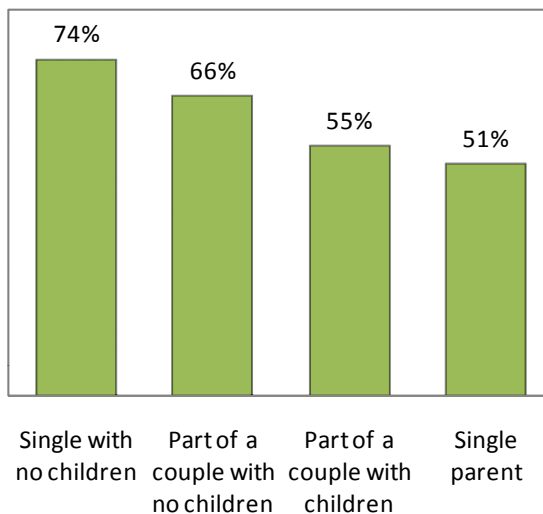
After completing their ABE courses, many students went on to take further studies or additional ABE courses. Seven percent took additional ABE courses, and more than two-thirds (68 percent) went on to take further studies other than ABE. From this point on, the discussion of further studies refers to studies other than ABE.

The proportion of students who went on to further studies varied with both family status and age. Younger students (under age 25) were the most likely to pursue further education: 73 percent had enrolled in further studies by the time the survey was conducted. Students without partners and/or children were also more likely than other groups to pursue further education.

Younger ABE students were more likely to pursue further education



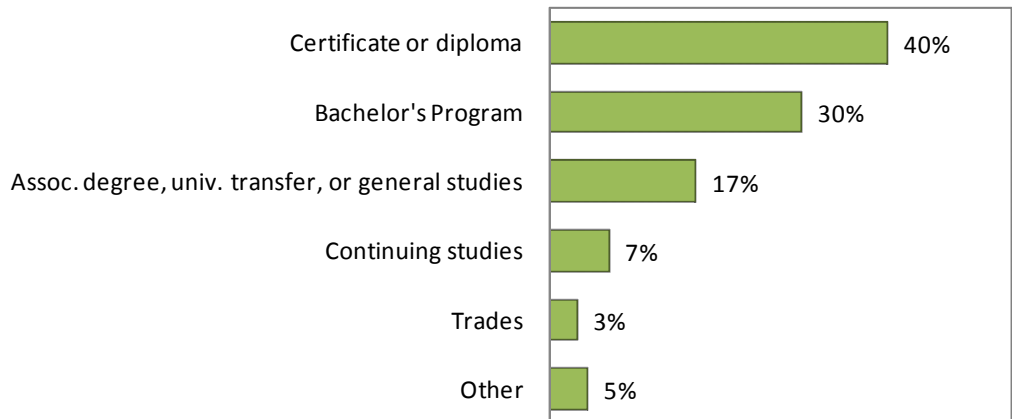
Single students without children were the most likely to pursue further education



Respondents who took further studies were asked to describe the type of course or program they enrolled in.⁸ Of those who enrolled in further studies, 40 percent enrolled in certificate or diploma programs, and 30 percent enrolled in bachelor's degree programs.

⁸ Multiple responses were allowed, although the vast majority (98 percent) who provided a valid response chose only one type of course or program.

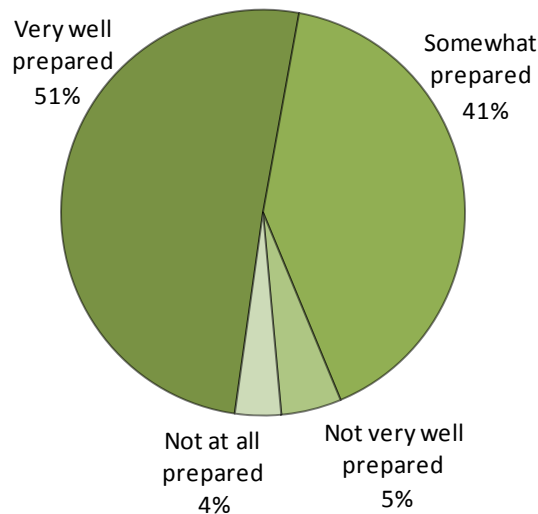
Students who enrolled in further studies took a variety of different programs



Note: Multiple responses were allowed; percentages may add to more than 100%.

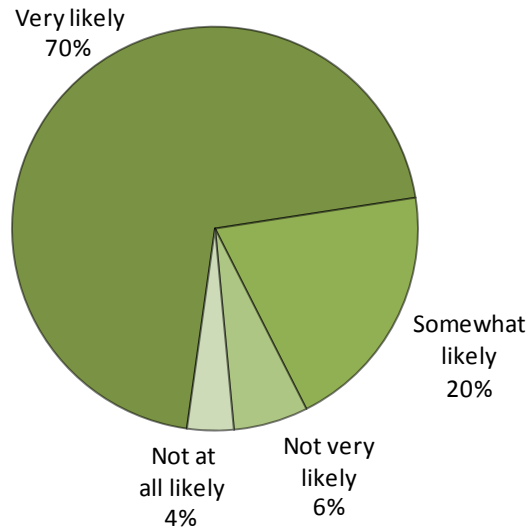
Most of those who went on to take further studies felt their ABE courses helped them to prepare for their subsequent courses. Overall, 92 percent said they were *very well* or *somewhat* prepared for their further studies.

Nine out of ten former ABE students felt prepared for their further studies



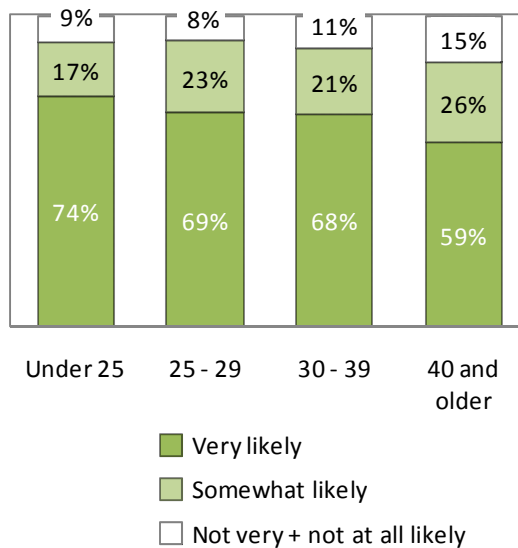
All respondents (including those who already said they had taken further studies) were asked to rate the likelihood that they would enrol in any more courses at a B.C. college, institute, or university in the future. Overall, 70 percent said it was *very likely*, and a further 20 percent said it was *somewhat likely*.

The majority of former ABE students said it was very likely that they would enrol at a B.C. public post-secondary institution again



The proportion of students who said they were *very likely* or *somewhat likely* to enrol in any more courses at a B.C. public post-secondary institution was consistent across males and females, but varied with age. The younger the students, the higher the proportion who said it was very likely that they would enrol again.

Younger students were more likely to enrol in further studies at a B.C. public post-secondary institution again

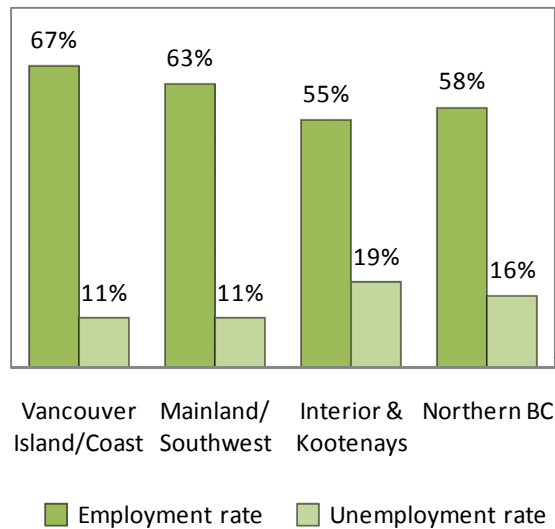


Employment Outcomes

At the time of the survey, 72 percent of former ABE students were participating in the labour market (either working or looking for work). The overall employment rate among former ABE students was 62 percent, and the unemployment rate was 13 percent.

Labour market outcomes varied somewhat, based upon the region where students were living at the time of the survey.⁹ Although labour force participation rates were not statistically different across regions, employment and unemployment rates were less favourable in the Northern BC and Interior and Kootenay regions.

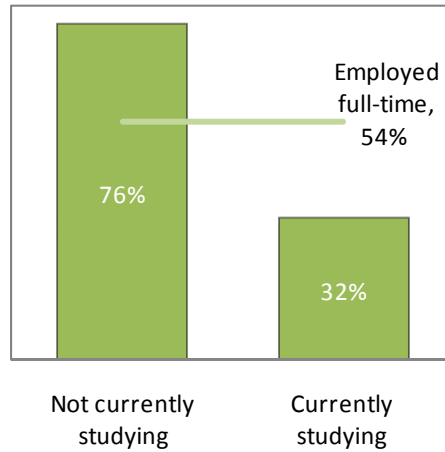
The employment outcomes of former students varied across regions



Employed students who were not enrolled in further studies at the time of the survey were significantly more likely to be working full-time than those who were currently studying: 76 percent of employed respondents who were not enrolled in further studies were employed full-time, compared to just 32 percent of those who were taking further studies. Overall, 54 percent of employed respondents were working full-time, and this figure did not vary by region.

⁹ Students were assigned to one of B.C.'s eight development regions based on their postal code. The Thompson/Okanagan and Kootenay development regions have been combined and so have the four northern development regions. For a map of B.C.'s development regions, please visit: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/maps/drmap.asp>

Students who were enrolled in further studies were less likely to be working full-time at the time of the survey



Note: Percentages are based on employed respondents.

Of those who were employed at the time of the survey, most (83 percent) held just one job, although 14 percent held two jobs, and 3 percent held three or more jobs. Of those who were not employed, two-thirds (65 percent) said that they had worked at a job or business at some point since leaving their ABE courses.

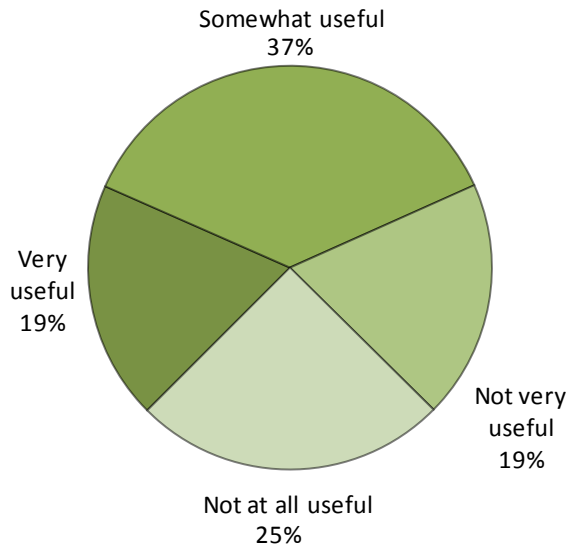
Overall, the median hourly wage of employed respondents was \$13. However, the median hourly wage varied based on whether or not students were enrolled in further studies at the time of the survey: among those who were currently studying, the median hourly wage was \$12 per hour, but among those who were not currently enrolled in further studies, the median wage was \$14 per hour.

The median wage was higher among students who were not taking further studies at the time of the survey



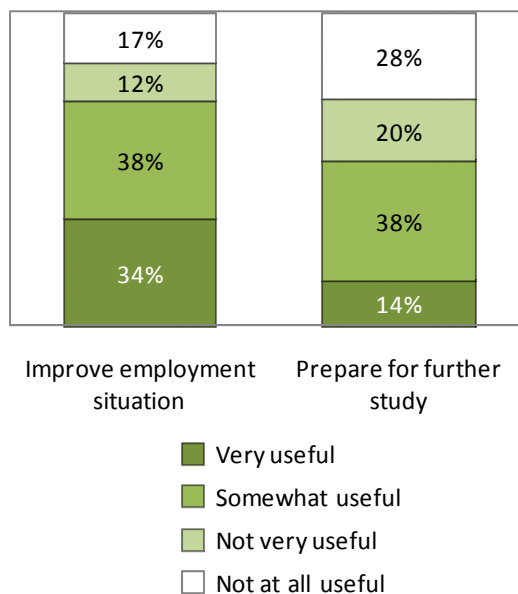
Former ABE students who were employed at the time of the survey were asked to rate the usefulness of the knowledge and skills gained in their ABE courses in performing their jobs. Nineteen percent said the knowledge and skills gained were *very useful* in performing their jobs, and a further 37 percent said they were *somewhat useful*.

Employed students found the knowledge and skills gained in their ABE courses were useful in performing their jobs



Whether or not employed students found the knowledge and skills gained in their ABE courses useful in performing their jobs may be related to their main goal or reason for enrolling. Compared to students whose main goal was to prepare for further studies, students whose main goal was to improve their employment situation were far more likely to say that the knowledge and skills they gained were useful in performing their job. Of those whose main goal was to improve their employment situation, the majority (72 percent) found their courses *very* or *somewhat* useful.

Employed students who enrolled to improve their job situation found the knowledge and skills they gained useful in performing their jobs



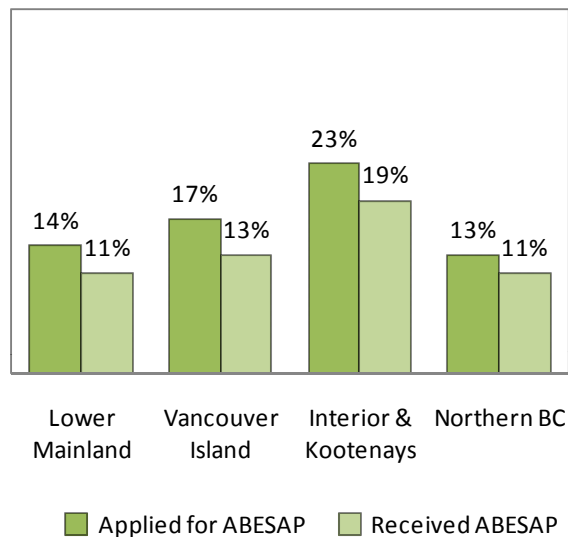
Sources of Funding

Students taking Adult Basic Education courses at B.C. public post-secondary institutions may be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP), offered through StudentAid BC. The ABESAP program provides funding in the form of a non-repayable grant to students enrolled in development programs who can demonstrate financial need. Students can receive funding for tuition fees, books and supplies, and in some cases, transportation and child care expenses.

Overall, 17 percent of former ABE students indicated that they applied for ABESAP funding, and of those who applied, 80 percent received funding.¹⁰ Altogether, this means that 13 percent of former ABE students received ABESAP funding.

Because ABESAP funding is based upon financial need, there were differences in the proportions of students who applied for ABESAP funding by region and family status. Financial need appears to be highest among students who studied in the Interior and Kootenay region, where 23 percent of students applied for ABESAP funding. However, the proportion of ABESAP applicants who successfully received funding was not statistically different across regions.

The proportion of students who applied for ABESAP funding varied by region

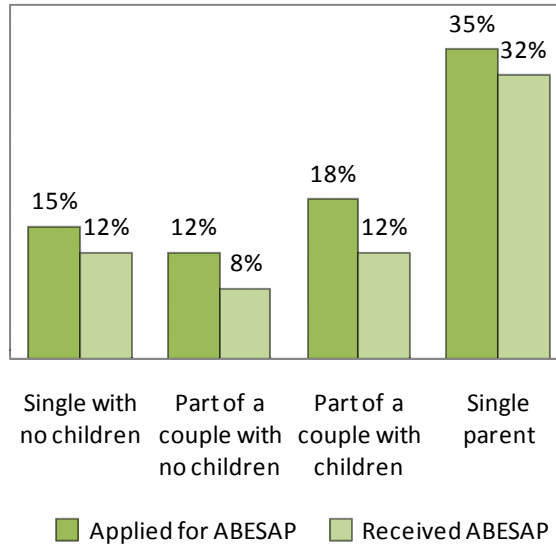


By family status, students who had children were more likely to apply for ABESAP funding, particularly if they were single parents. Of those who applied for ABESAP funding, students who were single (with or without children) were more likely to actually receive funding compared to students who were part of a couple: 84 percent of single students

¹⁰ Percentages are derived based on responses to questions 22 (How did you support yourself financially while studying?), 23 (Did you apply for ABESAP funding?), and 24 (Did you receive ABESAP funding?).

who applied for ABESAP funding actually received funding, compared to just 68 percent of students who were part of a couple.

More than one-third of single parents applied for ABESAP funding



In addition to ABESAP funding, students relied on various other sources of funding to support themselves while studying. When asked to provide their main source (or sources) of financial support, the most common response was employment while studying, given by 57 percent of former students. Family and friends (34 percent) and personal savings (17 percent) were also important sources of financial support for many students.

More than half of all students relied on employment income as a primary source of financial support

Main source(s) of financial support	
Work while studying	57%
Family or friends support	34%
Personal savings	17%
Government Student Loan	8%
Other government funding	7%
ABESAP	5%
Band/other First Nations funding	5%
Scholarship or bursary	4%
Personal bank loan/credit card	3%
Other	2%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed; percentages may add to more than 100%.

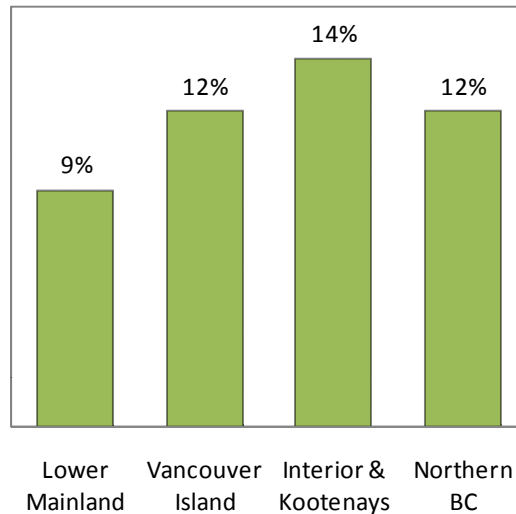
There was considerable variation in sources of financial support by family status. For example, employment while studying was given as a main source of funding by 64 percent

of students who did not have children, but was a main source of funding for only 36 percent of those who did have children. Single parents were more likely than other students to say ABESAP was one of their main sources of funding (14 percent), and less likely than other students to say support from family and friends (15 percent) was a main source.

Financial constraints can cause students to interrupt their studies or to end them sooner than they otherwise had planned. When asked if they ever had to stop their studies at their institution for financial reasons, 14 percent of respondents said yes. Among single parents, this figure was 23 percent.

The costs of relocating to attend school represent an additional financial strain to some students. Overall, 11 percent of former ABE students said that they moved from their home community to attend their institution. Given the large number of institutions concentrated in the Lower Mainland region, it is not surprising that fewer students studying in this region had relocated to attend, compared with students studying in other regions.

Students studying in the Lower Mainland region were less likely to have relocated to attend



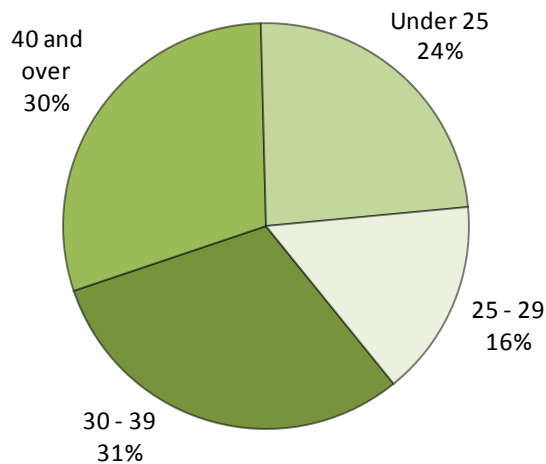
Findings: Former ESL Students

Description of ESL Cohort and Respondents

In total, 1,347 former English as a Second Language (ESL) students from 15 different institutions were eligible to participate in the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey. Of these, 630 completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 47 percent. The number of eligible students and respondents by institution can be found in Appendix: Survey Methodology.

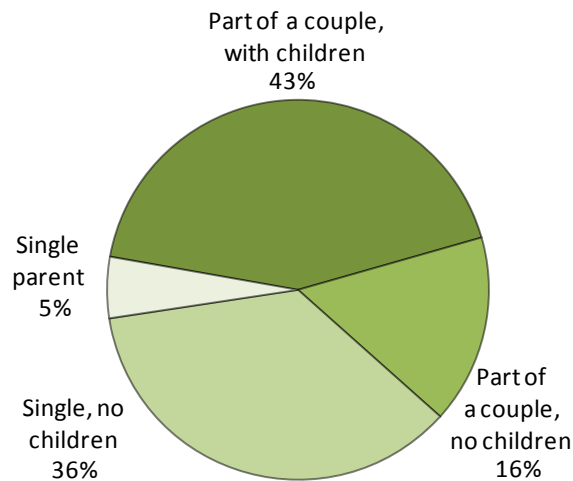
The population of ESL students studying in B.C.'s public post-secondary institutions is diverse. At the time of the survey, the median age of those eligible for the survey was 33, but the age distribution of students was quite wide, with many students under age 25 and many over age 40. ESL students are predominantly female: 70 percent of those eligible for the survey were women. The age and gender characteristics of survey respondents were virtually identical to those of all students eligible for the survey.

More than half of all ESL students were in their 30's or 40's



Survey respondents were asked to provide additional demographic information. ESL respondents came from a variety of family types, not surprisingly, given their diverse age structure. While almost half of all survey respondents had children, a large number (36 percent) were single with no children.

Almost half of all ESL respondents had children at the time they were studying



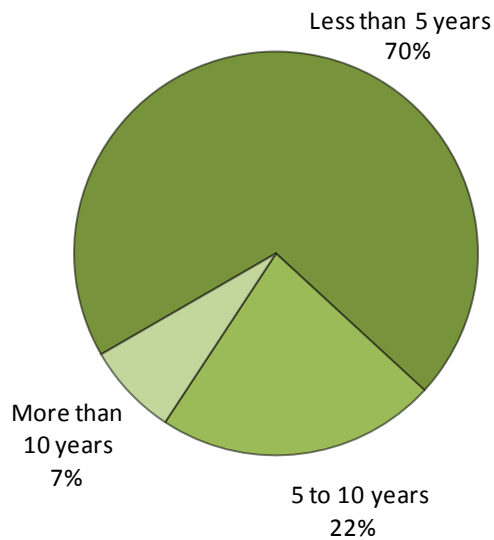
Asked to provide their country of origin, 98 percent of former ESL students indicated they were from a country other than Canada. These students represented over 70 different countries, although 43 percent were from China.¹¹ Most students who had immigrated to Canada had done so relatively recently—just over two-thirds had been in Canada for less than five years at the time of the survey.

Almost all former ESL students originated from another country...

Country of Origin	
China ¹¹	43%
Iran	11%
India	6%
Taiwan	4%
Colombia	3%
Korea, Republic Of	3%
Russian Federation	3%
Canada	2%
Philippines	2%
Japan	2%
Other	21%

¹¹ Includes Hong Kong.

... and the majority of those who came from another country moved to Canada less than five years ago



At the time they took their ESL courses, the majority (81 percent) of those who originated from a country other than Canada said they were permanent residents or landed immigrants. Another 15 percent of those respondents reported that they were Canadian citizens.

The majority of ESL respondents who originated outside of Canada were permanent residents or landed immigrants at the time they took their ESL courses

Immigration Status	n	%
Permanent resident /landed immigrant	492	80.7%
Canadian citizen	94	15.4%
Permanent resident /refugee	8	1.3%
International student/student visa	5	0.8%
Refugee claimant	3	0.5%
Other	8	1.3%

At the time they took their training, most ESL students had already taken other post-secondary education, and many held a post-secondary credential. Students who gave a country of origin other than Canada were asked about their highest level of formal education before coming to Canada. Three-quarters (75 percent) had taken some form of previous post-secondary education. Altogether, 65 percent had a post-secondary credential, and more than half (52 percent) held a bachelor's degree or higher.

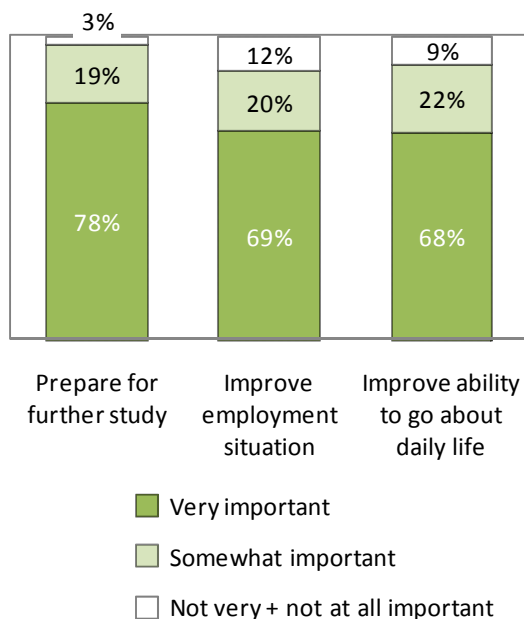
Three quarters of ESL students who came from another country had taken post-secondary studies before coming to Canada

Highest Level of Education before coming to Canada	
Did not complete high school	6%
High school diploma	19%
Some post-secondary (no credential)	10%
Post-secondary certificate, diploma, or trades qualification	13%
Bachelor's degree	38%
Certificate or diploma above bachelor's level	2%
Masters, doctorate, law, or medicine degree	12%

Reasons for Enrolling

Most ESL students had multiple reasons for enrolling in English language training. Almost all (97 percent) said preparing for further studies was *very* or *somewhat* important to them, 91 percent said improving their ability to go about daily life was *very* or *somewhat* important, and 88 percent said improving their employment situation was *very* or *somewhat* important. Of those who provided a valid response to each of the three questions, 81 percent said all three goals were *very* or *somewhat* important to them.

ESL students had multiple reasons for taking English language training

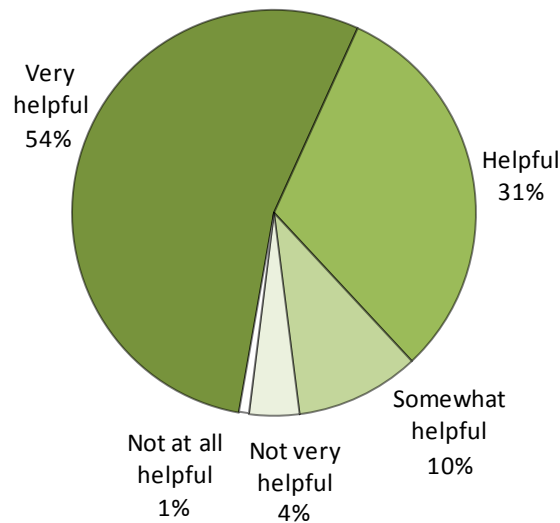


After rating the importance of each goal described above (preparing for further studying, improving employment situation, improving ability to go about daily life), former students were asked to provide the single most important goal or reason they had for enrolling in their courses. The most common response (41 percent) was to prepare for

further study, followed closely by using English better in daily life (36 percent). Approximately one-fifth (19 percent) said their most important goal was to improve their employment situation, and a handful (4 percent) gave other goals, such as to complete high school or upgrade their skills.

More than half of all former students said that their ESL courses were *very helpful* in achieving their most important goal or reason for enrolling. Together, 85 percent found their ESL courses *very helpful* or *helpful* in achieving their most important goal.

Most students found their ESL courses helpful in achieving their most important goal



Interestingly, helpfulness ratings did not vary significantly, regardless of whether students said their main goal for enrolling was to prepare for further study, use English better in daily life, or improve their job situation.

ESL training is provided at a number of institutions, both public and private, throughout British Columbia, and students have several choices of location to pursue their studies. When asked why they chose to attend their particular institution, the majority (63 percent) of students said they chose their institution on the basis of its reputation.¹² Geographic location or proximity was the next most common response, with 18 percent of respondents saying that they chose their institution because it was located where they wanted to go to school, and 17 percent saying it was because they didn't have to move.

¹² Respondents were allowed to provide up to 3 responses.

The majority of ESL students chose their institution on the basis of its reputation

Why did you choose to attend [institution]?	
Reputation of institution	63%
It was located where I wanted to go to school	18%
I didn't have to move	17%
Transferability of courses	8%
Convenient schedule	7%
Less expensive	7%
It was the only place I could get these courses	6%
I was accepted into this institution	5%
I didn't have to wait too long to start	4%
Other	12%

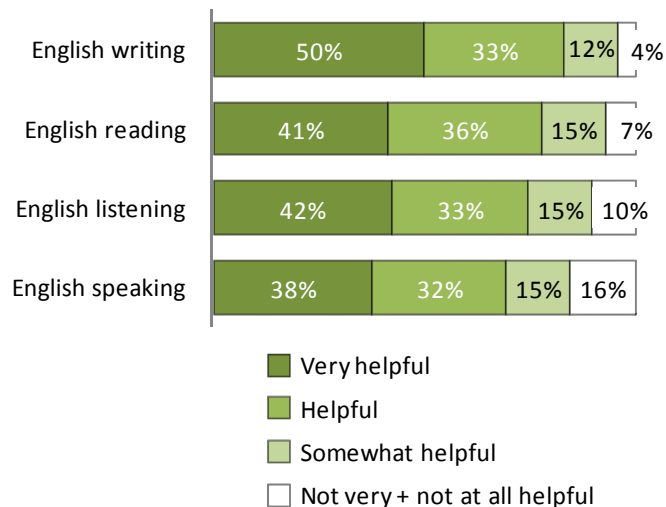
Note: Multiple responses were allowed; percentages may add to more than 100%.

Evaluation of Education

Evaluation of courses

ESL courses aim to help students with all aspects of the English language: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. When asked about the helpfulness of their courses in each of these areas, the majority of students gave positive ratings. In general, however, students found their ESL courses the most helpful in developing English writing and reading skills.¹³

ESL courses helped students develop many English skills

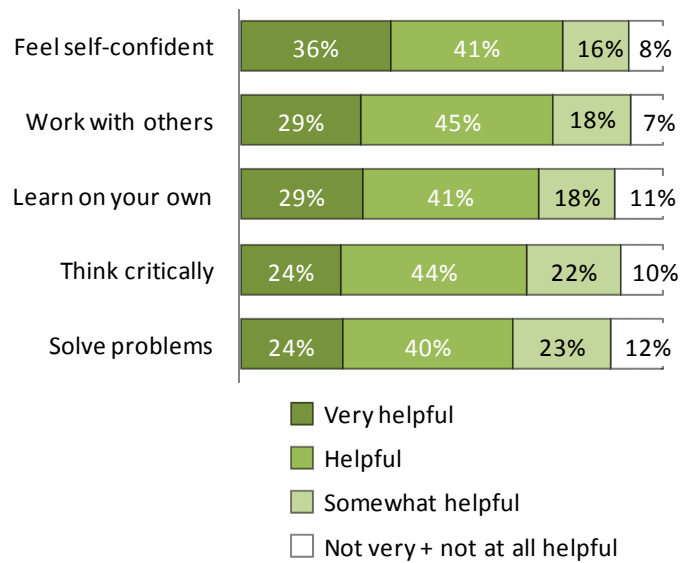


¹³ Between 1 and 2 percent of respondents rated each English skill as *not applicable*.

In addition to basic English writing, reading, listening, and speaking skills, ESL courses also helped students develop skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, working effectively with others, learning on their own, and feeling self-confident. Respondents were asked to rate how well their courses helped them perform each of these skills, and had the option of saying *not applicable* if the skill was not relevant to the courses they took.¹⁴

Most students gave positive ratings to the helpfulness of their ESL courses in each skill area. The skills that received the highest overall ratings were: feel self-confident (76 percent found courses *very helpful* or *helpful*) and work with others (74 percent).

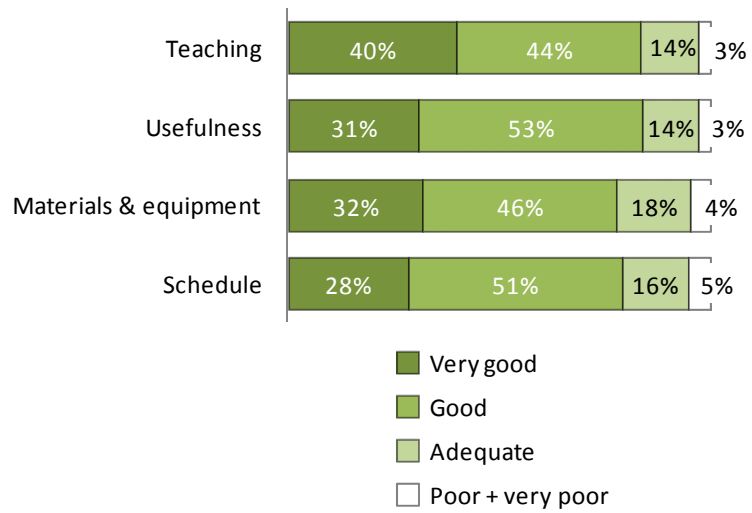
ESL courses helped students develop a number of important skills



Students were asked to rate the quality of various aspects of their courses: the teaching, course scheduling, course materials and equipment, and usefulness of what they learned. Teaching and usefulness of what students learned were both rated as *very good* or *good* by 84 percent of respondents. Materials and equipment and course scheduling were also rated favourably by the majority of students, with more than three-quarters rating each as *very good* or *good*.

¹⁴ Not *applicable* responses ranged from 2 percent (feel self-confident) to 8 percent (solve problems).

Students rated several aspects of their courses favourably



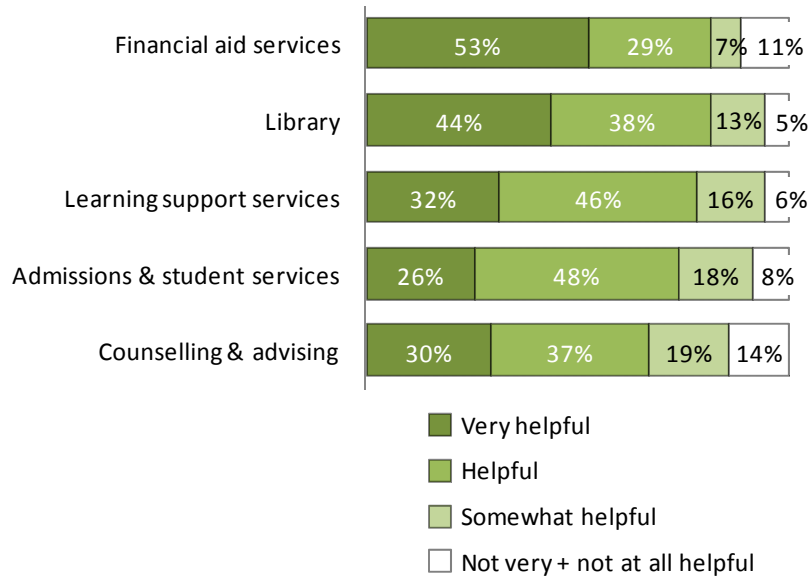
Evaluation of services

Students were asked to rate the helpfulness of various resources provided by institutions and had the option of saying *not applicable* if the resource did not apply to them or was not available at their institution.

The majority of students provided ratings for the library, learning support services, admissions and student services, and counselling and advising services.¹⁵ Each of these resources was rated as *very helpful* or *helpful* by the majority of students. Former students gave particularly high ratings to the library (82 percent *very helpful* or *helpful*), financial aid services (82 percent), and learning support services (78 percent).

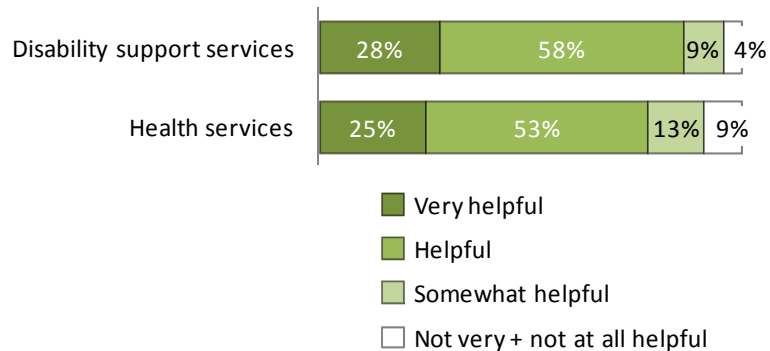
¹⁵ *Not applicable* responses ranged from 9 percent (library) to 37 percent (financial aid services).

The majority of former ESL students rated institutional resources positively



While relatively large proportions of students did not use health or disability support services (68 and 84 percent said *not applicable*, respectively), these services were rated favourably by those who did use them, with 78 percent saying health services were *very helpful* or *helpful*, and 86 percent giving such ratings to disability support services.

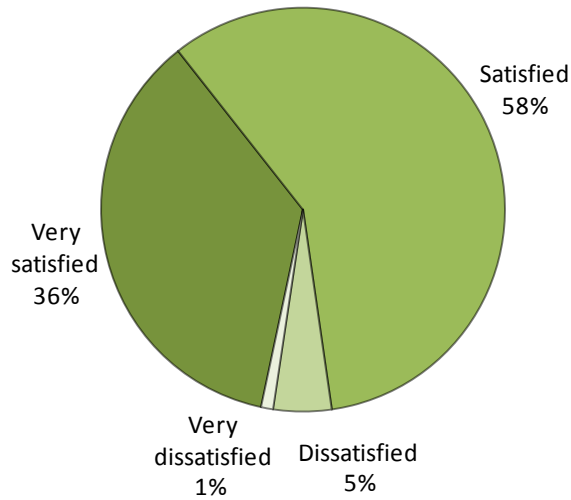
Health and disability support services were rated positively by the large majority of students



Satisfaction with education

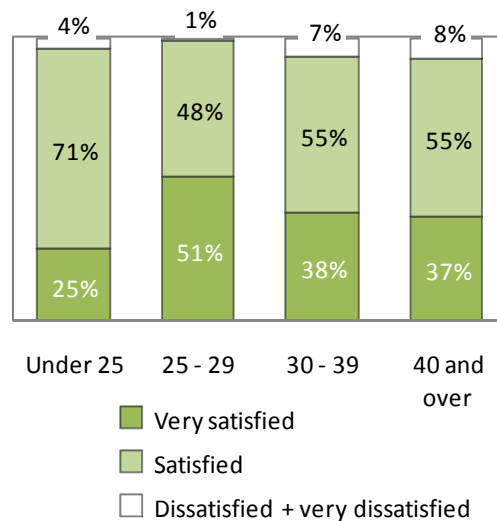
When asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the ESL courses they took, 94 percent were *very satisfied* or *satisfied*, with more than a third of respondents saying they were *very satisfied*.

More than nine out of ten students were very satisfied or satisfied with their ESL courses overall

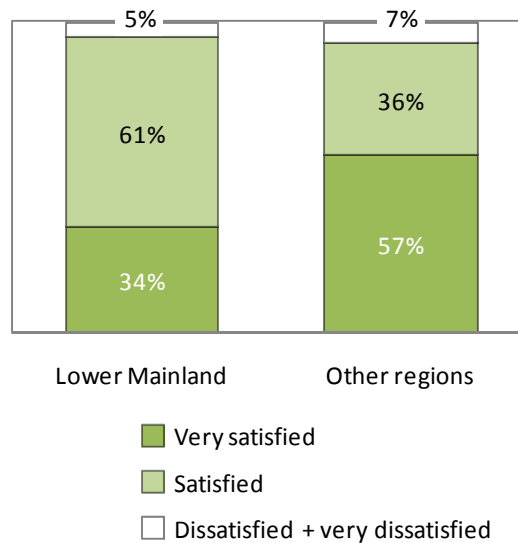


Overall satisfaction was higher among students aged 25 to 29 (age at the time of survey) than among those under 25, but overall satisfaction dropped off again in the groups who were 30 or older.

Overall satisfaction with ESL courses varied with age



Overall satisfaction also varied by region (based on the location of the institution), with students studying outside the Lower Mainland region more likely to say that they were *very satisfied*.

Overall satisfaction with ESL courses varied by region

After rating their overall satisfaction with ESL courses, respondents were asked if they had any other comments, good or bad, about their experience with the courses they took. The majority (60 percent) of respondents provided a comment. Of those who provided a comment, exactly half mentioned something positive about their ESL experience.

I find it very helpful to have these courses available for when you first come to Canada and it's hard to survive but these courses give you a lot of confidence.

The courses helped improve my reading and listening skills and helped me to better understand what others are saying in daily life.

Although many of these comments were very general, a large number (19 percent of those who gave a comment) provided a positive comment about the quality of their instructors or tutors.

The teachers were very good, hard-working, and supportive.

I found the teachers very helpful.

On the other hand, approximately the same number (18 percent of those who gave a comment) had a complaint about the quality of instruction. Many former ESL students had both positive and negative experiences with instructors.

[Institution] has two kinds of teachers: very good ones and very bad ones. I have had both kinds.

Other common topics included: suggestions to improve course content, organization, or materials (mentioned in 21 percent of comments), and suggestions to improve course scheduling (mentioned in 8 percent of comments).

The class was meant to teach English but too much time was spent on Canadian culture, etc.

There should be more in-class speaking and listening practice.

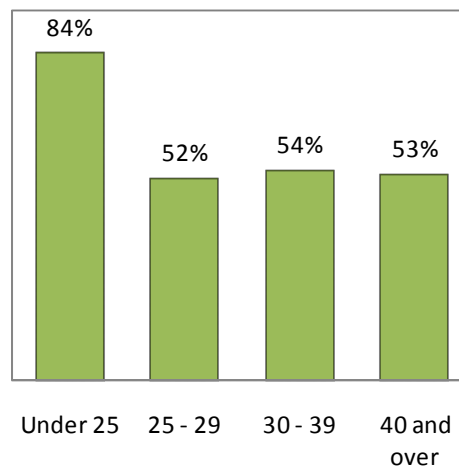
The schedule should be adapted for people who are working.

Further Education

Preparing for further study was an important goal for 97 percent of ESL respondents. By the time the survey was conducted, 61 percent had taken further studies other than ESL and 11 percent had taken further ESL courses. From this point on, the discussion of further studies refers to studies other than ESL.

The proportion of students who went on to take further studies varied with age. Younger students were the most likely to pursue further studies: 84 percent of those under age 25 had enrolled in further education by the time the survey was conducted.

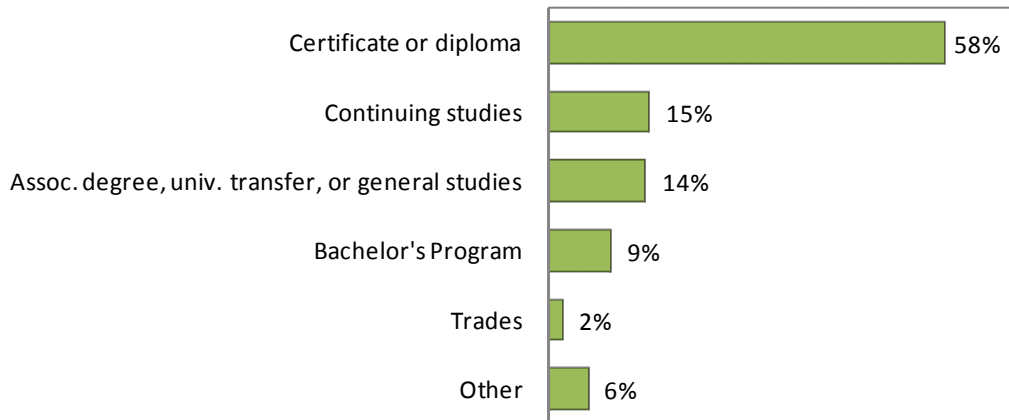
Younger students were more likely to pursue further studies



Respondents who went on to take further studies were asked to identify the type of course or program they were enrolled in.¹⁶ More than half (58 percent) of all students who went on to further studies had enrolled in a certificate or diploma program. Approximately one in seven (15 percent) were enrolled in continuing studies, and almost the same number (14 percent) were taking an associate degree, university transfer, or general studies program. Only 9 percent were enrolled in a Bachelor's degree program.

¹⁶ Multiple responses were allowed, although 96 percent of those who provided a valid response chose only one type of course or program.

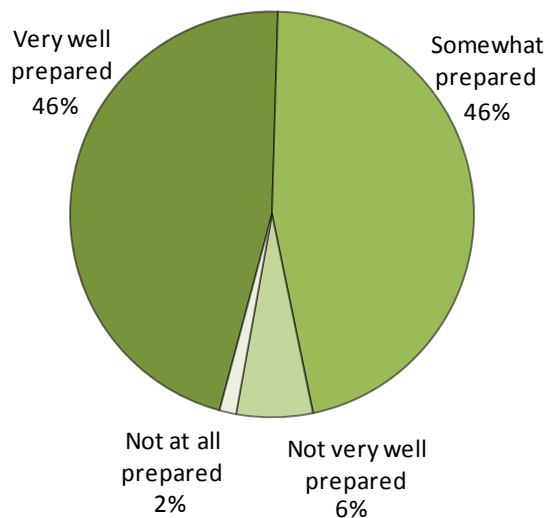
More than half of those who took further studies were enrolled in a certificate or diploma program



Note: Multiple responses were allowed; percentages may add to more than 100%.

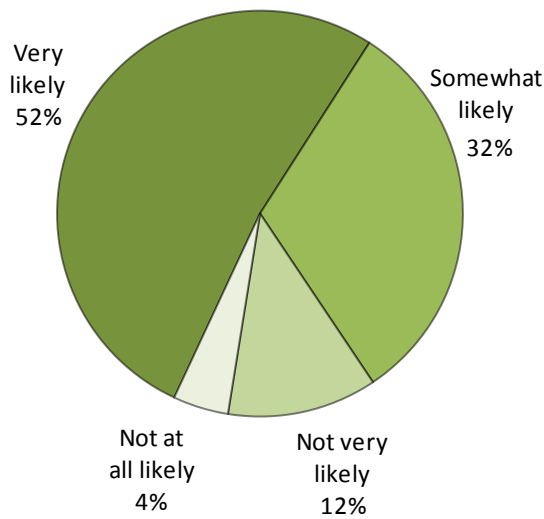
Given that pursuing further studies is an important goal to so many former ESL students, it is essential that ESL courses adequately prepare students for higher levels of study. Of the students who went on to further studies, 93 percent said they were *very well* or *somewhat* prepared for the courses they took after leaving their ESL training.

ESL courses helped students prepare for further studies



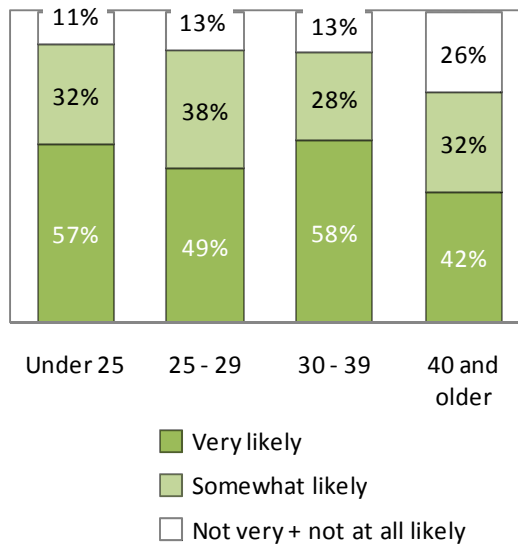
All respondents (including those who had already taken further studies) were asked to rate the likelihood that they would enrol in any more courses at a B.C. public post-secondary institution in the future. Just over half (52 percent), said it was *very likely* that they would enrol again, and a further 32 percent said it was *somewhat likely*.

Just over half of all students said it was very likely they would enrol in a B.C. college, institute, or university again



The proportion of students who said they were *very likely* or *somewhat likely* to enrol in any more courses at a B.C. public post-secondary institution was consistent across males and females, but varied with age. In general, younger students were more inclined to say that it was likely that they would enrol again.

In general, younger students were more likely to say they would enrol in a B.C. public post-secondary institution again



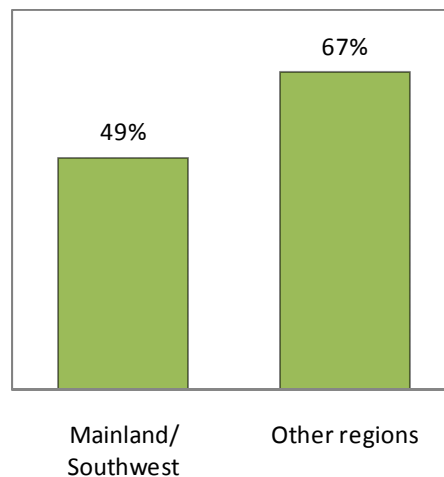
Although the percentage who said they were *very likely* to enrol again did not vary by region, outside of the Lower Mainland, only 21 percent said they were *somewhat likely* to enrol again, compared with 33 percent of those who studied in the Lower Mainland.

Employment Outcomes

Overall, two-thirds (67 percent) of former ESL students were in the labour force, that is, either working or looking for work. Exactly half of all former students were employed at the time of the survey, and about one-quarter (24 percent) of those in the labour force were unemployed.

Labour market outcomes varied somewhat, based upon the region where students were living at the time of the survey.¹⁷ Although all three indicators (labour force participation, employment, and unemployment) were less favourable in the Mainland/Southwest region, only the difference in employment rates was actually significant. Among former students living in this region, the overall employment rate was only 49 percent, compared with 67 percent for former students living in the rest of the province.

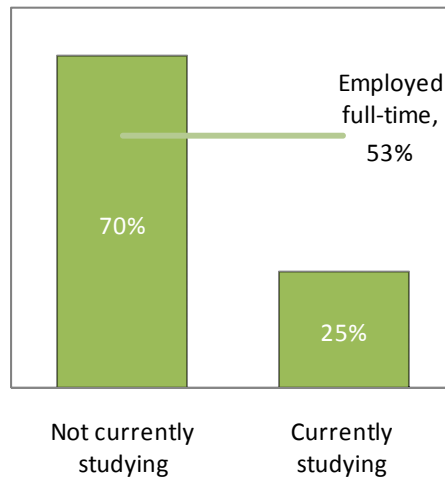
The proportion of respondents who were employed at the time of the survey varied by region



Employed students who were not enrolled in further studies at the time of the survey were significantly more likely to be working full-time than those who were currently studying: 70 percent of employed respondents who were not enrolled in further studies were employed full-time, compared to just 25 percent of those who were taking further studies. Overall, 53 percent of employed respondents were working full-time.

¹⁷ Students were assigned to one of B.C.'s eight development regions based on their postal code. For a map of B.C.'s development regions, please visit: <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/maps/drmap.asp>. The vast majority (90 percent) of ESL respondents were living in the Lower Mainland region.

Employed students who were enrolled in further studies were less likely to be working full-time

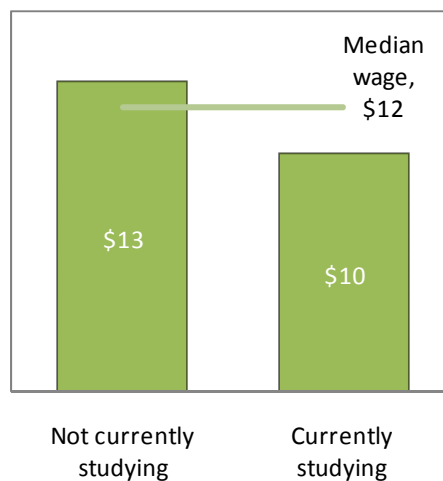


Note: Percentages are based on employed respondents.

Of those who were employed at the time of the survey, most (87 percent) held just one job, 10 percent held two jobs, and 3 percent held three or more jobs. Of those who were not employed, 39 percent said that they had worked at a job or business at some point since leaving their ESL courses.

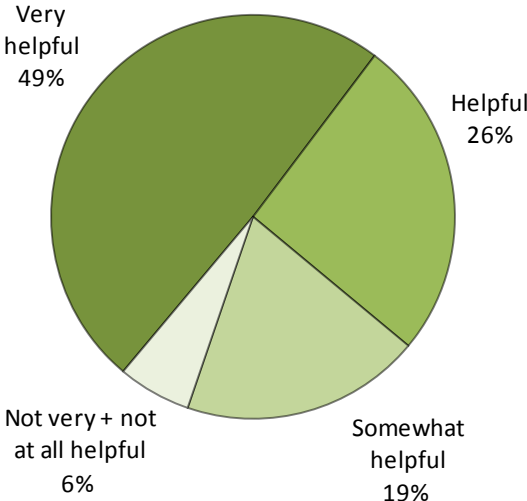
Overall, the median hourly wage of employed respondents was \$12. However, the median hourly wage varied based on whether or not students were enrolled in further studies at the time of the survey: among those who were enrolled in further studies, the median hourly wage was \$10 per hour, but among those who were not taking further studies, the median wage was \$13 per hour.

The median wage was higher among students who were not taking further studies at the time of the survey



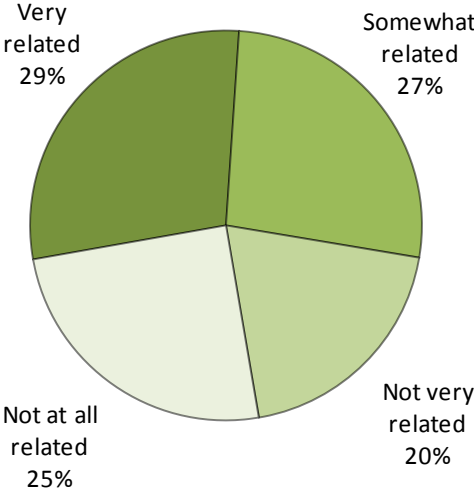
Almost all (97 percent) of those who were employed said that they used English at work, and approximately half of these students said that their ESL training was *very helpful* to them in using English at work.

Most employed respondents found their training helpful in using English at work



When asked whether their job was related to any previous education or employment they had before beginning their ESL studies, respondents were almost split down the middle: 55 percent said their job was related, and 45 percent said it was unrelated.

About half of former students said their job was related to their previous education or employment



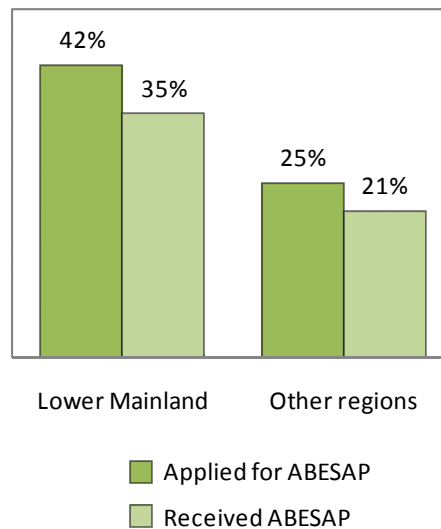
Sources of Funding

Students taking English as a Second Language courses at B.C. public post-secondary institutions may be eligible to receive financial assistance through the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP), offered through StudentAid BC. The ABESAP program provides funding in the form of a non-repayable grant to students enrolled in development programs who can demonstrate financial need. Students can receive funding for tuition fees, books and supplies, and in some cases, transportation and child care expenses.

Four out of ten former ESL students indicated that they applied for ABESAP funding, and of those who applied, 84 percent received funding.¹⁸ Altogether, this means that 33 percent of former ESL students received ABESAP funding.

Outside the Lower Mainland region, students were less likely to have applied for ABESAP funding: while 42 percent of those studying in the Lower Mainland applied for ABESAP funding, only 25 percent of those in other regions applied. However, the proportion of ABESAP applicants who successfully received funding was not statistically different across regions.

The proportion of students who applied for ABESAP funding varied by region



Although ABESAP represents an important source of funding for many students, the majority of ESL students do not receive ABESAP funding and must rely on other sources of financial support. When asked to provide their main or primary source(s) of funding, close to half (45 percent) of students said it was support from family or friends. The sec-

¹⁸ Percentages are derived based on responses to questions 22 (How did you support yourself financially while studying?), 23 (Did you apply for ABESAP funding?), and 24 (Did you receive ABESAP funding?).

ond most common source of financial support was employment income (32 percent of respondents), while ABESAP funding and personal savings were the main or primary sources of funding for approximately one-fifth of respondents.

While studying, many ESL students relied on financial support from family or friends

Main source(s) of financial support	
Family or friends support	45%
Work while studying	32%
ABESAP	22%
Personal savings	21%
Other government funding	11%
Government Student Loan	8%
Scholarship or bursary	5%
Personal bank loan/credit card	2%
Other	3%

Note: Multiple responses were allowed; percentages may add to more than 100%.

Family status had an important impact on the main source(s) of funding that students relied on. Parents (single or part of a couple) were less likely to rely on support from family and friends (40 percent) than students who did not have children (50 percent). Parents were also less likely to rely on employment income while studying (24 percent, compared with 40 percent for non-parents). Instead, former students who had children were more likely to say personal savings (30 percent) or other government funding (14 percent) was a primary source of financial support for them. Among students without children, 13 percent cited personal savings as a main source of financial support, and only 8 percent cited other government funding.

Financial constraints can cause students to end their studies sooner than they otherwise had planned. When asked if they ever had to stop their studies at their institution for financial reasons, almost one-fifth (18 percent) of respondents said yes.

Conclusion

The purpose of the 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey was to ask former upper-level Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English as a Second Language (ESL) students to evaluate their educational experiences and to report on their transitions to the labour market and further education. This information is used by post-secondary institutions and government to support post-secondary curriculum planning, policy development, and accountability; provide information for program and service evaluations and educational planning; and guide educational choices for future students.

Although the ABE and ESL groups had very different characteristics and outcomes, they had similar goals for enrolling in their programs of study and they both gave positive ratings to many aspects of their courses. Most former ABE and ESL students said preparing for further education was an important goal to them; those who went on to further studies reported that their courses did a good job of preparing them. Likewise, the former students who were employed said that their studies provided them with useful skills. Almost all of the former students from both groups said they were satisfied with their courses.

Former ABE Students

Former ABE students were relatively young—the median age of students eligible for the survey was 23, and the large majority were under age 30. Almost two-thirds of former ABE students were female, and most respondents were single with no children at the time they were studying. At the time they enrolled, most respondents had already completed their high school diploma, and some had taken previous-post-secondary education.

When asked to rate the importance of various reasons for enrolling, almost all former ABE students said preparing for further studies was *very* or *somewhat* important to them. Improving their employment situations and their ability to go about daily life were also rated as important goals by most respondents. However, when asked to identify their main goal or reason for enrolling, the majority said it was to prepare for further studies. When asked to rate the helpfulness of their ABE courses in achieving their most important goal for enrolling, the large majority of students said their courses were *very helpful* or *helpful*.

Former students gave positive ratings to several aspects of their courses, skill development, and services offered by their institutions. Students gave particularly high ratings (*very good* or *good*) to the quality of teaching and usefulness of their courses. Large majorities of respondents indicated that their courses were *very helpful* or *helpful* in

developing a number of different skills, including: math, science, self-learning, and feeling self-confident. Almost all former ABE students said that overall, they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the courses they took.

ABE courses help students complete prerequisites for further education, and many ABE students go on to take further studies. By the time the survey was conducted, more than two-thirds of respondents had enrolled in further education. Most of those who went on to take further education enrolled in programs that led to a certificate, diploma, or bachelor's degree. ABE courses were very successful in preparing students for further studies: most of those who had taken further education said they felt prepared for their subsequent studies.

ABE courses also help students improve their employment outcomes. At the time of the survey, almost three-quarters of former ABE students were participating in the labour market (either working or looking for work), and the large majority of these students were employed. Of those who were employed, just over half were working full-time, and the median wage of those working was \$13 per hour. Among those whose main goal for enrolling was to improve their employment situation, most found the knowledge and skills they gained in their ABE courses useful in performing their jobs.

Former ESL Students

Former ESL students covered a wide age range—the median age of students eligible for the survey was 33. More than two-thirds of former ESL students were female, and almost half of all respondents had children at the time they were studying. Almost all former ESL students originated from a country other than Canada. The large majority of students who came from another country were permanent residents or landed immigrants at the time they were studying, but some were Canadian citizens. ESL students who came to Canada from another country were very likely to have taken previous post-secondary studies, and many already had a post-secondary credential.

When asked to rate the importance of various reasons for enrolling, almost all former ESL students said preparing for further studies was *very* or *somewhat* important to them. Improving their ability to go about daily life and improving their employment situation were also rated as important goals by most respondents. When asked to identify their main goal or reason for enrolling, most respondents said either to prepare for further studies or to use English in daily life. When asked to rate the helpfulness of their ESL courses in achieving their most important goal for enrolling, the large majority of students said their courses were *very helpful* or *helpful*.

Former students gave positive ratings to several aspects of their courses, skill development, and services offered by their institutions. Students gave particularly high ratings (*very good* or *good*) to the quality of teaching and usefulness of their courses. Large majorities of respondents indicated that their courses were *very helpful* or *helpful* in

developing a number of different skills, including: English writing skills, English reading skills, feeling self-confident, and working with others. Almost all former ESL students said that overall, they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with the courses they took.

Preparing for further education was an important goal to almost all former ESL students. By the time the survey was conducted, the majority of respondents had enrolled in further education. Many of those who went on to take further education enrolled in programs intended to lead to a post-secondary credential. ESL courses were very successful in preparing students for further studies: most of those who had taken further education said they felt prepared for their subsequent studies.

ESL courses also help students improve their employment outcomes. At the time of the survey, two-thirds of former ESL students were participating in the labour market (either working or looking for work), and half of all former students were employed. Of those who were employed, many were working full-time, and the median wage of those working was \$12 per hour. Among those whose job required English, most found their ESL courses helpful in using English at work.

Appendix: Survey Methodology

Cohort

The survey cohort included former students who had recently taken ABE or ESL training at a B.C. public post-secondary institution. Students were classified into one of the two cohorts, ABE or ESL.

ABE Cohort

To be included in the ABE survey cohort, students had to satisfy four selection criteria:

1. Enrolment period: Students must have completed at least one upper-level ABE course between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Upper-level ABE courses included ABE/College Prep courses at Intermediate level (roughly equivalent to grade 10) or higher.
2. Exposure to ABE: Students must have completed at least three ABE courses (at any level) in the past three years (between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2008).
3. Required period of absence: Students must not have enrolled in any ABE courses at the same institution since July 1, 2008.
4. Domestic student: Students must be enrolled as domestic students. Students identified as International students on the basis of their tuition fees were excluded.

ESL Cohort

To be included in the ESL survey cohort, students had to satisfy four selection criteria:

1. Enrolment period: Students must have completed at least one upper-level ESL course between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. Upper-level ESL courses included Intermediate level (articulates to Access level 6 or Canadian Language Benchmark level 5) courses or higher.
2. Exposure to ESL: Students must have completed at least three ESL courses (at any level) in the past three years (between July 1, 2005 and June 30, 2008).
3. Required period of absence: Students must not have enrolled in any ESL courses at the same institution since July 1, 2008.
4. Domestic student: Students must be enrolled as domestic students. Students identified as International students on the basis of their tuition fees were excluded.

Overlap between Cohorts

Approximately two percent of students included in the survey met the criteria for both ABE and ESL cohorts.¹⁹ These students were assigned to only **one** group, based on the majority of their courses completed during the exposure period (July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2008). If the number of ABE and ESL courses were equal, then the student was assigned to a group based on the most recent course.

Data Collection

The 2009 Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey was delivered by mixed-mode: telephone and web. Field testing of the survey instrument was conducted between January 11 and January 21, 2009, resulting in 151 completed surveys. The data collection contractor suggested some minor modifications to the questionnaire, to enhance the flow of the survey and to increase the clarity of certain questions.

The data collection contractor undertook a number of steps to contact former students, including:

- for records with multiple phone numbers, calling all numbers to determine the correct number;
- leaving a voice mail and toll-free number for the former students to call at their convenience;
- using a number of directories to trace former students whose contact information was missing or incorrect;
- asking for a forwarding number, where possible;
- using interviewers with multiple language skills to communicate with people at the given phone number in order to reach the former student; and
- sending email invitations, where possible (invitations included both a link to the web survey and a toll-free telephone number for students wishing to participate by telephone).

Full survey administration was conducted between February 4 and March 30, 2009. Additional survey administration for a small portion of the sample with corrected contact information was conducted between May 15 and May 22, 2009. In total, 2,163 surveys were completed, and of these, 1,945 were completed by telephone and 218 were completed by web.

Of the surveys conducted by telephone, the average survey administration time for ABE students was 16.3 minutes, and the average time for ESL students was 20.5 minutes.

¹⁹ Percentage based on original cohort extraction from ALMD's Central Data Warehouse (CDW).

The following table shows the final call dispositions of the survey cohort that was submitted for data collection.

Call Result	n	% of Cohort
Completion	2,163	44.8%
Incomplete Survey	29	0.6%
Respondent Refusal	317	6.6%
Hard Appointment	11	0.2%
Soft Appointment	105	2.2%
Respondent Wants to Do Online	49	1.0%
No Phone Number/Incomplete Number	72	1.5%
Not in Service/Wrong Number	1,061	22.0%
Fax/Modem Line	4	0.1%
Business (Not Employed There)	4	0.1%
Busy Signal	7	0.1%
No Answer	16	0.3%
Moved/Left Toll-Free Number	6	0.1%
Left Message/Call Again	510	10.6%
Problem Communicating with Respondent	9	0.2%
Language Case	42	0.9%
Deceased	2	0.0%
Serious Illness/Incapable	3	0.1%
Travel Within Canada/US	11	0.2%
Travel/Moved out of Canada/US	58	1.2%
In Prison/Shelter	2	0.0%
Non Qualifier (Still in Same Program)	88	1.8%
Non-Qualifier (Other)	258	5.3%
Total	4,827	100.0%

Response rates by institution, ABE

In total, 3,480 former ABE students were eligible to participate in the survey. Of these, 1,533 completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate among ABE students of 44 percent.

Institution	Eligible for survey	Number of respondents	Response rate
British Columbia Institute of Technology	99	55	56%
Camosun College	305	103	34%
Capilano University	345	139	40%
College of New Caledonia	154	70	45%
College of the Rockies	60	26	43%
Douglas College	110	53	48%
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	460	232	50%
Langara College	64	28	44%
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology	47	23	49%
North Island College	151	68	45%
Northern Lights College	42	15	36%
Northwest Community College	72	41	57%
Okanagan College	321	137	43%
Selkirk College	109	50	46%
Thompson Rivers University	266	102	38%
Thompson Rivers University-Open Learning	9	4	44%
University of the Fraser Valley	193	66	34%
Vancouver Community College	209	108	52%
Vancouver Island University	464	213	46%
Total	3,480	1,533	44%

Response rates by institution, ESL

In total, 1,347 former ESL students were eligible to participate in the survey. Of these, 630 completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate among ESL students of 47 percent.

Institution	Eligible for survey	Number of respondents	Response rate
British Columbia Institute of Technology	121	71	59%
Camosun College	41	17	41%
Capilano University	33	15	45%
College of New Caledonia	10	5	50%
College of the Rockies	2	0	0%
Douglas College	111	63	57%
Kwantlen Polytechnic University	179	80	45%
Langara College	62	37	60%
North Island College	10	4	40%
Okanagan College	51	26	51%
Selkirk College	9	7	78%
Thompson Rivers University	11	4	36%
University of the Fraser Valley	80	24	30%
Vancouver Community College	614	271	44%
Vancouver Island University	13	6	46%
Total	1,347	630	47%

Reporting

Analysis

BC Stats was responsible for cleaning and validating the data received from the data collection contractor. Based on these data (the responses to the survey questionnaire), the necessary variables were derived for analysis and reporting. Two separate summary reports—one for ABE results and one for ESL results—were produced and distributed to post-secondary institutions and the Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development in June 2009. The reports presented the results of most survey questions and of derived labour market indicators.

Limitations

The former students who were interviewed—44 percent of those eligible former ABE students and 47 percent of eligible former ESL students—were those from the cohort who could be located and who agreed to be surveyed. They may not be representative of all former students.

Although interviewers with multiple language skills were available to help respondents with understanding, the survey interviews were conducted in English. The quality of data obtained is reliant on the abilities of former ESL students to understand, interpret, and respond to survey questions in the English language.

Comparisons

All comparisons described in this report are based upon statistical significance testing. Whenever data is presented separately for demographic groups (e.g., age groups), results for at least one of the demographic subgroups (e.g., age 25–29) differ significantly from the results of at least one other subgroup.

Percentages

For consistency and ease of presentation, most percentages in the report text, tables, and charts have been rounded; as a result, totals may not always add to 100.

Unless otherwise noted, each percentage is based on the number of students who responded to the question—those who refused the question or said *don't know* were not included in the calculation.

Questionnaire

A copy of the 2009 Development Student Outcomes Survey questionnaire is available at: <http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DEVSO/DEVSOQuestionnaire.aspx>



BCStats

For more information on the Developmental Student Outcomes Survey,
see <http://outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DEVSO/DEVSOHome.aspx>