

# Evaluation of BCIT's Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs Project

## Final Evaluation Report

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FSC is a forward-thinking centre for research and collaboration dedicated to preparing Canadians for employment success. We believe Canadians should feel confident about the skills they have to succeed in a changing workforce. As a pan-Canadian community, we are collaborating to rigorously identify, test, measure, and share innovative approaches to assessing and developing the skills Canadians need to thrive in the days and years ahead. The Future Skills Centre was founded by a consortium whose members are Toronto Metropolitan University, Blueprint ADE, and The Conference Board of Canada

The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the Future Skills Centre or the Government of Canada.



# Table of Contents

<b>1.0 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Theory of Change .....	2
1.3 Contextualization – International Students and Newcomers in Canada .....	1
1.4 Evaluation Objectives, Scope and Questions .....	2
<b>2.0 Methodology.....</b>	<b>4</b>
2.1 Data Collection Methods and Stakeholder Sample .....	4
2.2 Analysis of the Data .....	5
2.3 Strengths and Limitations.....	6
<b>3.0 Findings.....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 Relevance – International Students and Young Newcomers Needs.....	7
3.2 Reach – The Extent to Which the Program Has Been Delivering Services to the Intended Populations .....	10
3.3 Design & Delivery – The Extent to Which the Project Has Been Implemented as Intended .....	14
3.4 Effectiveness – To What Extent Is the Project Efficient? .....	20
3.5 Learning Reflections.....	24
<b>4.0 Conclusions .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>5.0 Recommendations .....</b>	<b>27</b>
5.1 Recommendation for BCIT’s Consideration.....	27
5.2 Recommendations for FSC’s Consideration .....	27
<b>Appendix A – Evaluation Matrix .....</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix B: Targeted Interview Guides .....</b>	<b>34</b>

# 1.0 Introduction

Goss Gilroy Inc (GGI) is proud to present this report for the evaluation of the British Columbia Institute of Technology's (BCIT) Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shock-Proofing Through Language Confidence project ("the project") funded by the Future Skills Centre (FSC). This report starts by presenting some background information about the project, explaining the broader context in which it took place, and identifying the purpose, scope, and objectives of this evaluation. It then briefly summarizes the methods used. Finally, the results of the evaluation are presented according to key evaluation questions and indicators. A brief summary concludes this evaluation report.

## 1.1 Background

The British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) is a public polytechnic institute in Burnaby, British Columbia. BCIT was founded in 1964 and currently has five campuses throughout the Metro Vancouver region. It offers more than 300 programs ranging from diplomas and certificates to Bachelor's and Master's degrees in a variety of different subject areas including "applied and natural sciences, business and media, computing and IT, engineering, health sciences and trades". Currently, there are around 50,000 students enrolled at BCIT.

### *Project Description*

The project aims to support and improve young newcomers to Canada and international students' English language skills to help them succeed in their course work, as well as to prepare them better for a successful transition from their diploma programs into the workforce. To do so, students' English language skills are being assessed through an online post-admission assessment tool. If the assessment tool identifies low English language skills, students receive information and access to language classes and other supports to help them build their language confidence during their diploma programs at BCIT. In addition to the language classes, a number of these students also have the opportunity to participate in an experiential learning opportunity to improve their practical job application skills. This is possible through a partnership with two industry partners, i.e., Vancity and Clarius Mobile Health. All students, irrespective of their assessment scores, also have access to an English Language Success Hub as well as the English Lounge. While the former is an online platform where all students and faculty can self-access online language learning materials, the latter is a weekly peer conversation group that provides students with the opportunity to practice their language skills in an informal setting. For a full overview of the different services that are available see Appendix A.

### *Project Objectives*

The project aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Develop and deliver innovative, confidence-building content and language integrated curricula in various modalities (e.g., face-to-face, online, blended);
- Develop and evaluate post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments to measure language competency and progress in various full-time diploma programs;
- Work with industry partners to offer English as an Additional Language (EAL) students authentic job seeking and interview training programs; and,
- Establish a specific framework for a Centre for language learning at BCIT to act as a hub for post-admission language assessment, development, and support.

## 1.2 Theory of Change

A theory of change explains how an intervention is expected to produce its results.<sup>1</sup>

### The Problem

Young newcomers and international students who participate in polytechnic-level diploma programs often face additional challenges as compared to their English-speaking counterparts as a result of their lower English language proficiency. High course loads in these programs leaving limited amount of time for addressing specific language needs further exacerbate this situation resulting in poorer academic outcomes for young newcomers and international students. Moreover, racialized individuals face discrimination entering and remaining in the work force and this risk is even higher for those who are developing their English language skills. This project was developed to address some of these challenges faced by young newcomers and international students.

### Target Groups

This project primarily targets young newcomers and international students attending diploma programs at BCIT to connect them with the English language support services that they need as well as to provide them with job-readiness skills.

### Mechanisms of Change

This project posits that providing young newcomers and international students with English language support services can not improve their academic performance but also better prepare them for their transition into the workforce,

In planning this evaluation, a logic model was developed to outline the project's activities and the results expected from them.

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<sup>1</sup> Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Theory-Based Approaches to Evaluation: Concepts and Practices*, <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/audit-evaluation/evaluation-government-canada/theory-based-approaches-evaluation-concepts-practices.html#toc4>

The logic model (see page 4) shows the **activities** that the project planned and undertook: the development and evaluation of post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments, the development and delivery of innovative confidence-building content and language integrated curricula in various modalities, the establishment of industry partnerships as well as the establishment of a Language Learning Success Centre at BCIT.

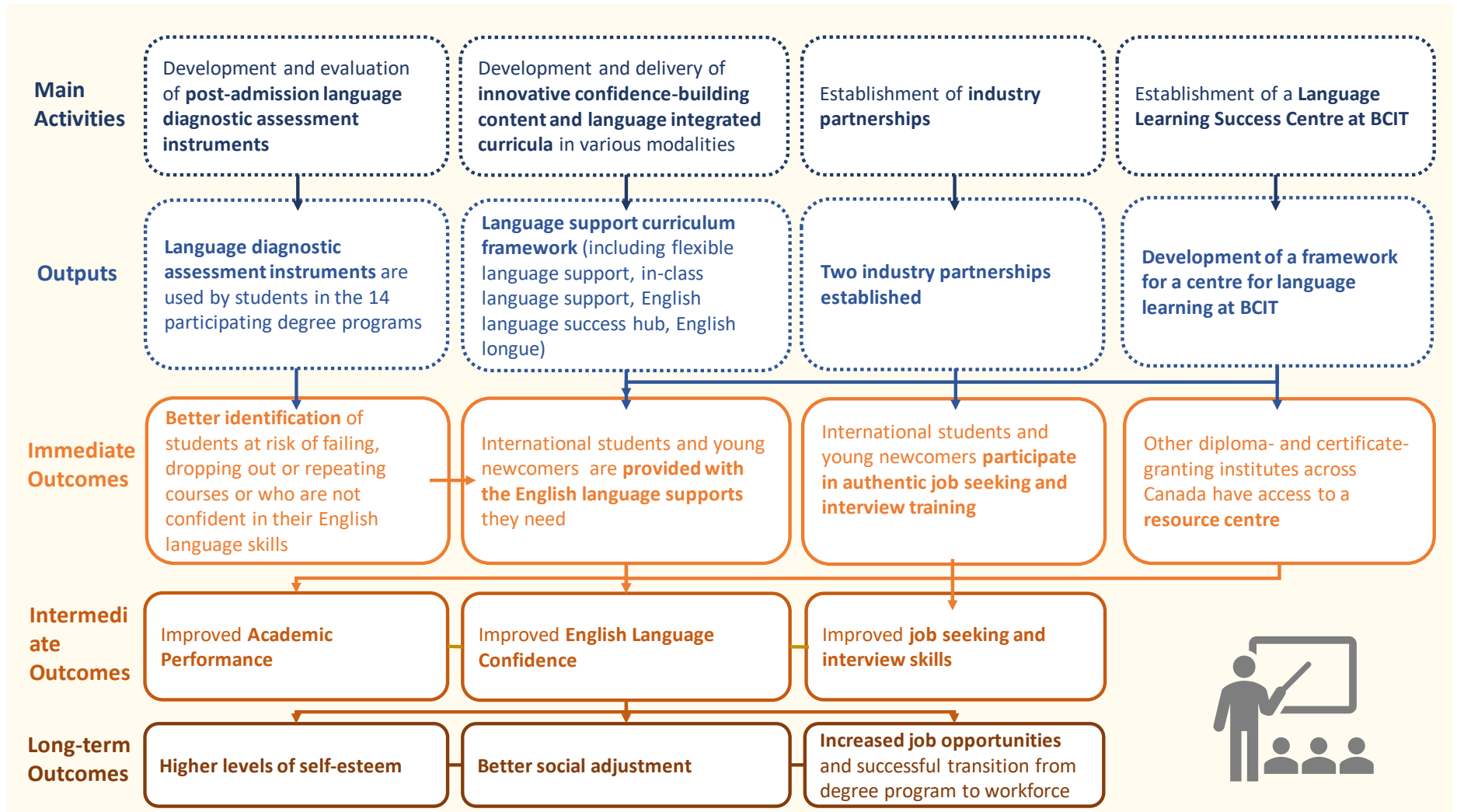
The **outputs** are the direct result of those activities: Language diagnostic assessment instruments are currently used by students in the 14 participating degree programs; a language support curriculum framework, including flexible language support, in-class language support, English language success hub and English langue) has been developed and shared with faculty and is used by instructors; two industry partnerships with Vancity and Clarius Mobile Health have been established; and a framework for a centre for language learning at BCIT has been developed.

The **immediate outcomes** are the changes that are expected to come from these activities and outputs in a short period, and largely attributable to the project. The expected immediate outcomes include that students who are at risk of failing, dropping out or repeating courses or those who are not confident in their English language skills are better identified so that they are provided with the English language supports that they need; that young newcomers and international students can participate in authentic job seeking and interview training and that other diploma- and certificate-granting institutes across Canada have access to a resource centre.

The **intermediate outcomes** are the changes expected in the medium-term to which the project is expected to contribute to, at least in part. Young newcomers and international students at BCIT are expected to improve their academic performance, English Language Confidence and their job seeking and interview skills.

The **long-term outcomes** are the changes that may result at a later time in the future. As a concept, medium and long-term outcomes are less directly attributable to an intervention (i.e., the project) along, since other intervening factors play a role over time. For example, the project may contribute to the long-term outcome of young newcomers and international students having “increased job opportunities”, but of course, there are many other external factors that influence achievement of this outcome over time, such as willingness of employers to recruit young newcomers and international students, the economy, personal life events etc. As a small intervention, this project can only be expected to contribute towards these long-term changes.

Figure 1: Logic Model for the Shock-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project



## 1.3 Contextualization – International Students and Newcomers in Canada

Over the past few years, Canada has increasingly participated in the race for “the best and brightest” by implementing immigration policies and programs that facilitate the arrival and settlement of highly skilled individuals. International students form an important part of this strategy because they are seen as “easily integrated immigrants” and potential future citizens by the Canadian Government (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012; Scott et al. 2015). On the one hand, they are predominantly young and highly skilled and, having earned their credentials in Canada, they do not have to go through a process of foreign credential recognition but rather, are employment ready. On the other hand, having already lived in Canada for a certain amount of time, they are not only already familiar with how Canadian society works but might have also gained some insights into how the Canadian labour market is organized and operates (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2012; Scott et al. 2015).

As a result of these policy developments not only has the number of international students at Canadian universities increased significantly over the past few years but so has the number of international students at colleges throughout the country (Crossman et al. 2021, 2022; Wayland and Hyman, 2018). For example, the overall number of international students in Canada has increased from less than 200,000 in 2000 to 638,300 in 2019 (Crossman et al. 2022). During the same period, the number of international students in colleges increased from 27% in 2000 to 41% in 2019 (Crossman et al. 2022). While the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a decrease of the international student population in 2020, numbers have started to rise again in 2021 (Crossman et al. 2022).

Despite the policy assumption that international students are supposedly easily integrated immigrants, there is evidence which shows that international students often struggle to transition into the Canadian labour market after completing their studies and that their earnings are lower than those of Canadian born students (Chen and Skuterud 2018). Moreover, it was found that it takes a long time (10-11 years) for former international students to benefit from their Canadian credentials economically (Crossman and Hou 2022). Some factors identified in research impacting these trends are limited opportunities to accessing meaningful employment opportunities or co-ops during their studies, lack of or limited possession of soft skills needed in the Canadian work environment, language skills (e.g., accents), employers being hesitant to hire international students, discrimination, lack of or limited opportunities to form networks and connections, complexities of immigration procedures, limited access to support services (Shinziana 2013, Dauwer 2018).

Similarly, research on skilled newcomers to Canada (i.e., those arriving as permanent residents) has demonstrated difficulties with integrating into the Canadian labour market. Typical barriers that skilled newcomers face when trying to enter the Canadian labour market include “perceived language barrier, lack of access to professional networks, discrimination



and discounting of professional experience and credentials” (TRIEC 2022, p. 3). As a result of this, skilled newcomers are often either not able to find employment at all, or are underemployed (i.e., work in jobs that do not match their skills and experiences). For example, compared to their Canadian-born counterparts university educated recent immigrants are almost 20% less likely to be employed (Future Skills Council 2020). To address this experience of de-skilling, many skilled newcomers turn to college programs (including bridging programs) to re-skill or upskill their credentials and to receive a Canadian certification that is more highly valued among employers than international credentials (TRIEC 2022).

Additionally, research has demonstrated that while skilled newcomers arriving in Canada have access to English as a second language (ESL) classes as part of their settlement process, these classes are often perceived as not preparing newcomers appropriately for entering the labour market and remaining in a job (Frey 2021). Reasons for this are related to ESL classes offered to newcomers not taking into consideration their prior learning, transferable skills or individual needs and goals (Frey 2021).

Based on these observations, there seems to be a need to provide international students and skilled newcomers with better supports, services and opportunities to ensure their successful transition into employment. Universities and colleges can play an important role in this undertaking as they are often the main point of contact for international students regarding information and accessing support, and present important places of contact for newcomers aiming to re-skill or upskill their credentials. Therefore, evaluating projects such as the one offered by BCIT is important to better understand their impact and their potential for scalability.

## 1.4 Evaluation Objectives, Scope and Questions

### Objectives

The evaluation of the project is being conducted in order to evaluate its relevance, reach effectiveness, and impact as well as to understand sustainability options.

### Scope

The scope of the evaluation includes the period from the launch of the project until the present (i.e., ending March 31, 2023). This will help capture and evaluate the different steps and processes involved in the project, as well as to capture outcomes for students who have successfully participated in the program.

## Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions relate to issues of relevance, reach, design/delivery, and effectiveness. An overview of the evaluation questions and indicators is presented in the evaluation matrix in Appendix A.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Data Collection Methods and Stakeholder Sample

GGI implemented the evaluation in three phases: design, data collection, and analysis and reporting. The methods included:

- Document and data review,
- Key informant interviews

These methodologies are further described below.

#### Document and Data Review

The document and data review contributed to evidence for most evaluation questions related to relevance, reach, design and delivery, as well as some questions related to effectiveness. Specifically, it provided background information on the origin and initial design of the project. The review of implementation documents was key to understanding how the project was intended to operate, and how it was actually implemented. Moreover, the review of the administrative data contributed to evaluating the reach of the program. In addition to key documents including BCIT's proposal, quarterly reports, workplan, as well as internal design documents, the following documents were reviewed:

- 2021 Student Outcome Data Report;
- Outlining the Background of English Language Support Services;
- ESTP-O Fact Sheet 2022;
- Map of Services and Data Collection;
- Survey for Program Evaluation December 2022;
- Manuscript: Developing and Validating a Post-Admission Screening-Diagnostic Assessment Procedure to Offer Language Support in Diploma Programs;
- Language Support Curriculum Framework; and
- Short Report: Utilization of Language Support and Flexible Language Support Services: Fall 2021 & Fall 2022.

#### Key Informant Interviews (n=10 interviewees)

In addition to the document and data review, GGI also conducted semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs) with different stakeholders involved in the project. These KIIs allowed to capture perceptions, opinions, experiences, examples, and factual information with respect to

most evaluation issues and questions. They also allowed to provide more context about the project. In total, GGI conducted nine interviews with a total of ten different stakeholders as presented below.

**Table 1: Key Informant Interview Information**

Stakeholder	Number of Interviews	Number of Interviewees
<b>BCIT project coordinator</b>	1	1
<b>BCIT language class instructors</b>	2	2
<b>BCIT senior management</b>	2	3 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Industry partners</b>	2	2
<b>Program alumni</b>	2	2

For each stakeholder group, GGI developed tailored interview guides (see appendix B). Potential interviewees were first contacted by the BCIT Project Coordinator and upon their agreement to participate in an interview, the GGI team sent follow-up messages to determine the interview appointments. Interview questions were shared with the interviewees prior to the interview. All interviews were conducted virtually using either MS Teams or Zoom between January 19<sup>th</sup> and February 1st, 2023 and lasted on average between 30 minutes and one hour. The results of the analysis are presented in the findings section of this evaluation report.

## 2.2 Analysis of the Data

GGI analyzed all data from the two different lines of evidence. The analysis consisted of a vertical and a horizontal analysis of the findings. In the first step (the vertical analysis), GGI focused on the two individual lines of evidence individually, that is, a) the document and data review; and b) the KIIs with different stakeholder groups. For each of these lines of evidence, key findings were identified. While the analysis of the interviews paid attention to differences in responses based on identity characteristics, no such difference were identified. In the second step (the horizontal analysis), GGI then compared the findings of the two lines of evidence and made linkages between them. This allowed GGI to identify essential insights for evaluating the project in its entirety.

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<sup>2</sup> 1 group interview was attended by 2 senior managers, and 1 interview was conducted with an additional senior manager.

## 2.3 Strengths and Limitations

Overall, this evaluation presents a strong methodology. The use of multiple lines of evidence enhances confidence in the findings. In addition, by consulting with several stakeholder groups involved in the program (i.e., project coordinator, BCIT instructors, BCIT senior management, industry partners and alumni), the evaluation provides a “voice” to these stakeholders as well as an opportunity to obtain objective information and perspective on topics directly from them.

However, considering that this was a small-scale evaluation, only a relatively small number of KIIs were conducted. In addition, no quantitative data was collected other than a review of data from the program documents. This places certain limitations on representativeness of the evaluation findings. Some of these limitations were augmented by including survey data that has been collected by the project. Moreover, since the goal of this evaluation was not to establish the numeric value of the project but rather to identify what has been working well as well as whether there is potential for scalability, GGI is confident that the evaluation findings adequately respond to each of the evaluation questions under consideration.

## 3.0 Findings

### 3.1 Relevance – International Students and Young Newcomers Needs

#### Evaluation Question 1 - To What Extent Do the Format and Activities Offered by the Project Meet the Interests, Needs and Learning Goals of International Students and Young Newcomers?

##### **Key Findings:**

The main need of international students and young newcomers is to ensure that their language skills are sufficient to succeed in their course work at BCIT as well as their transition to the labour market, for which experience with job application and interviews are crucial. While students often have the content knowledge to succeed, limited language abilities can impact their success rates during their studies especially considering the high course load and short timeframes of diploma programs. The current format and activities of English Language Support Services offered at BCIT addresses the needs of students as it provides flexible, formal and informal, possibilities for them to improve their English language skills as well as to attain real job application and interview skills.

#### **Identification of the Interests, Needs and Learning Goals of International Students and Young Newcomers**

Findings from all lines of evidence demonstrate that the main need the project is meant to address is difficulties with English language skills that many international students and young newcomers are facing during their studies at BCIT.

Program documentation demonstrates that the English and Communications Learning Centre at BCIT closed in 1996 and resulted in reduced support for language learning needs. Data from 2001 and 2005 showed that 22% of BCIT students may be linguistically unprepared for post secondary studies in English. Starting in 2009, BCIT's Communication Department began offering language support classes to respond to greater failure rates in Communications classes. These failure rates were perceived to be due to an increased student population who do not have English as their first language. Failure rates in Communication classes reduced by 25% following the implementation of the language support classes. Further, analysis in 2022 showed that students

who received the language support earned 6% higher grades than their counterparts who did not participate in the support classes.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of addressing language difficulties faced by students was also underlined by the BCIT leadership team<sup>4</sup> and BCIT instructors. The BCIT leadership team established that the project responded to inequities which negatively impacted newcomers and international students given the short duration of diploma programs that might cause some students to struggle due to lower language skills despite having “strong content knowledge”. In addition to that, they also identified that students have historically met English language requirements for admission to the program, but were not at a sufficient level to be successful in the program. BCIT programs are very intensive and there was attrition in the first term in “language heavy courses”. The approach of the project was to provide post-admission support on communication. Similarly, BCIT instructors identified that many students at BCIT need support with writing, speaking, [and] communicating in English. However, they added and underlined that such additional language support was needed not only for international students, but for any other student for whom English is not their first language.

According to industry partners, the project was meant to address the language element, so that international students are better equipped to enter the workforce. The mock interviews with industry partners help prepare students to enter the workforce. This aligns well with students’ perceptions given that their main goal for participating in the program was to learn about the job application, and specifically, the interview process. One student highlighted that this was particularly important due to the cultural differences between their country of origin and Canada.

### **Evidence that the Format and Activities of the Project Support these Interests, Needs and Learning Goals**

The project provides a variety of different English Language Support Services to students at BCIT. These support services include: Flexible Language Support, In-Class Language Support, Industry Partnership, English Language Success Hub, English Lounge.<sup>5</sup>

**Flexible Language Support** offers students the possibility to book and attend 15 to 25 -minute tutoring sessions with a designated English as an Additional Language instructor when needed to work on their English skills.

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<sup>3</sup> BCIT. Nathan Devos. Outlining the Background of English Language Support Services. November 2022. Background of English Language Support Services in COMM V01.pdf

<sup>4</sup> Note: To protect the identity of stakeholders interviewed, we grouped together the findings of BCIT senior management and the BCIT project coordinator and are referring to the findings from this group as BCIT leadership team throughout this report.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bcit.ca/computing-academic-studies/communication/bcit-language-success-team/>

**In-Class Language Support** are additional weekly English classes offered to students in specific programs at BCIT (i.e., programs with embedded Language Support classes) that focus on their “assignments and related language needs”<sup>6</sup>.

The **Industry Partnership** allows second-term students at BCIT the ability to obtain job application and interview skills practice. Students first participate in “six hours of application and interview preparation with a mentor” and then have the possibility to participate in a mock interview with “a real hiring manager” from one of the two participating industry partners – Vancity and Clarius Mobile Health<sup>7</sup>. In total, there are 15 spots available to participate in the Industry Partnership each year.

The **English Language Success Hub** is an online portal accessible to all students and faculty at BCIT. It offers “free, online, asynchronous lessons, activities and quizzes to help students with their English language”<sup>8</sup>. The materials can be used depending on students’ needs and interests as well as at their own pace. Currently, eight courses on the following topics are covered in the hub: sentence structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, common grammar errors, verbs, check your reading skills, reading, and punctuation, capitalization, and numbers in writing.

Finally, the **English Lounge** offers students the possibility to participate on an informal conversation group once per week throughout the semester. It is free and accessible to all students.

Overall, the English Language Support Services currently offered at BCIT seem to be addressing the needs of international students and young newcomers for the most part as they enable students to access both formal (e.g., In-Class Language Support) and informal (e.g., English Lounge) options to improve their English language skills, ensure that support is provided in a flexible way that allows students to access it despite a high course load (e.g., English Language Success Hub or Flexible Language Support), enables students to gain experience with the job application and interview process and, for the most part, is open to all students who need help with their English language skills.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.bcit.ca/computing-academic-studies/communication/bcit-language-success-team/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.bcit.ca/computing-academic-studies/communication/bcit-language-success-team/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.bcit.ca/computing-academic-studies/communication/bcit-language-success-team/>



## 3.2 Reach – The Extent to Which the Program Has Been Delivering Services to the Intended Populations

### Evaluation Question 2 - In What Ways and to What Extent Is the Project Reaching Intended Target Populations?

#### **Key Findings:**

The main strategy for reaching the intended target population were the use of an early term language assessment tool that is sent out to all students at BCIT that are enrolled in programs that have Language Support classes embedded, as well as information shared by course instructors at BCIT. Regarding the number of participants, the project has been on track for reaching its intended number of participants for its In-Class Language Support program and for the English Language Success Hub. Numbers of participants in the industry partnership were slightly lower than expected in year one (i.e., 5-6 instead of about 10), while in year 2, a total of nine students participated throughout the year. Finally, the English Lounge seems to have had good attendance in year 1 and was slightly more successful in year 2, although participation fluctuated throughout the year.

#### **Strategies to Reach Target Population**

The evaluation findings demonstrate that the main strategy to reach its target population for the project is through the early term language assessment that is sent out to students prior to starting their classes. Specifically, program documents underline that all students enrolled in programs that have Language Support classes are asked to complete an ESTP-O language assessment, which includes a vocabulary and grammar component. A writing assessment is further administered either through ESTP-O or by Communication Instructors. As these assessments occur early in the term, students are able to have support throughout their studies to facilitate greater success in their Communications classes. Any student that scores poorly on the assessment receives an email from their instructor, referring them to Language Support classes. In Fall 2021, 262 recommendations were made; in Fall 2022, there were 250 recommendations.<sup>9</sup>

The importance of the early term language assessment to reach the target population was also underlined by the BCIT leadership team and instructors. The BCIT leadership team reported that early term assessments are conducted to reach out to students in 14 programs that have embedded language support classes. They also noted that students are encouraged by instructors to participate in the program.

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<sup>9</sup> BCIT. Utilization of Language Support and Flexible Language Support Services: Fall 2021 & Fall 2022. January 6, 2023. Short Report LS Dada Fall 2021-2022 V07.pdf

Regarding the industry partnership, both students who were interviewed mentioned that they learned about the project through information that was distributed as part of their communication classes at BCIT. One student highlighted that this communication class was voluntary and particularly offered to international students. Industry partners stated that they followed their organization’s HR process to schedule interviews. BCIT provided participant contact information to partners, the partner reached out to the participant to ask to schedule an interview. Industry partners indicated that the process to contact BCIT students was efficient with no difficulties.

### Intended Number of Participants

The intended numbers of participants for each of the different Language Support Services, as well as the actual number of participants for year 1 (i.e., April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022), quarter 1 (i.e., April 1 to June 30, 2022), quarter 2 (i.e., July 1 to September 30, 2022), quarter 3 (i.e., October 1 to December 31, 2022) and quarter 4 (i.e., January 1 – March 31, 2023) of year 2 (where available) are displayed in the table below. Numbers are based on the information provided in BCIT’s work plan and evidence generation form as well as BCIT’s quarterly and annual reports that were submitted to FSC<sup>10</sup>.

Type of Language Support Service	Intended Number of Participants	Actual Number of Participants
In-Class Language Support	About 130 students attend multiple in-person classes in Term 1 and 2 each project year	306 (Year 2021-22) <sup>11</sup> 28 (Q1 2022-23) 255 (Q3 2022-23) 125 (Q4 2022-23)
Industry Partnership	About 10 students	6 (Year 2021-22) 5 (Q1 2022-23) 4 (Q4 2022-23)

<sup>10</sup> Note: Intended number of participants is not available for the Flexible Language Support component as this component was only added during the second year of the project.

<sup>11</sup> Discrepancies between the number of students recommended to in-class language support and those who actually attend these classes can be explained by the fact that in-class language support is not only open to those students who have received a recommendation through the ESTP-O language assessment, but also to those who have not received a recommendation. For example, some students may be referred to the classes by their course instructors throughout the semester, and others might hear about these classes from other students and decided to attend them.

English Language Success Hub	About 100 students complete online modules in Terms 1 & 2 each project year	133 (Year 2021-22) 94 (Q1 2022-23) 103 (Q2 2022-23) 52 (Q3 2022-23)
English Lounge	About 10 participants attend weekly sessions throughout the term	35 (Year 2021-22) 1 (Q1 2022-23) 38 (Q2 2022-23) 8 (Q3 2022-23) 15 (Q4 2022-23)

### Number of International Students Participating in the Different Program Activities

The actual numbers of international students participating in each of the different Language Support Services is not available. However, between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 a total of 123 international students participated in all project activities and between April 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022 a total of 54 international students participated.<sup>12</sup>

### Number of Young Newcomers Participating in the Different Program Activities

The actual numbers of young newcomers participating in each of the different Language Support Services is not available. However, between April 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022 a total of 97 young newcomers participated in all project activities and between April 1, 2022 and December, 2022, 59 young newcomers participated.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> BCIT. Quarterly Report. April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022. BCIT (Young)\_Q1 Report 2022.pdf  
BCIT. Annual Progress Report. April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. BCIT (Young)\_Annual 2021-2022 Report.pdf

<sup>13</sup> BCIT. Quarterly Report. April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022. BCIT (Young)\_Q1 Report 2022.pdf  
BCIT. Annual Progress Report. April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. BCIT (Young)\_Annual 2021-2022 Report.pdf, Quarterly Activity and Financial Report Q3 (October 1 – December 31, 2022).

## Evaluation Question 3 - What Are the Barriers/Constraints for Current International Students and/or Young Newcomers to Participate in the Project?

### **Key Findings:**

One of the main barriers for participating in the project that was identified by the BCIT leadership team and instructors was related to time, i.e., the high course workload that students face in diploma programs at BCIT might inhibit their participation. Other barriers were related to the stigma that might be associated with needing extra language support or not prioritizing English skills. Interestingly enough, students did not mention any barriers to participating in the project.

### **Views on Accessibility of the Project**

The BCIT leadership team reported that the strongest barrier to participation in the program is time constraints, given the heavy course load and the need for some students to have jobs. Further, it was noted that some students may not want to attend due to social barriers around being considered an EAL student.

Several members of the BCIT leadership team as well as instructors felt that the additional workload of the program is a barrier to students, as the program is not worth extra credits. In addition, they indicated that international students might think that when they pass an English language requirement test, everything is fine.

Industry partners are not aware of any major barriers to students who want to participate and students may choose to participate or not. Participation of referred students was high; however, given the student workload, holding the mock interviews may add to a heavy workload.

Neither of the two students identified any barriers for participating in the project. Both thought that it was an "easy and straight forward" process.

## 3.3 Design & Delivery – The Extent to Which the Project Has Been Implemented as Intended

### Evaluation Question 4 - To What Extent Were English Language Skill Services Provided as Intended?

#### Key Findings:

For the most part, English language skill services were provided as intended. Specifically, evidence from the evaluation demonstrates that the project a) developed and delivered innovative confidence-building content and language integrated curricula in various modalities (e.g., online, in-person, hybrid etc.); b) developed and evaluated post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments to measure language competency and progress in various full-time diploma programs; and c) collaborated with industry partners to offer EAL students authentic job seeking and interview training. Finally, there is evidence that a specific framework for a centre for language learning at BCIT that is meant to act as a hub for post-admission language assessment development and support has been developed. However, this framework has not been implemented yet.

#### Evidence that the Project Developed and Delivered Innovative Confidence-Building Content and Language Integrated Curricula in Various Modalities

Training is available in various modalities, including: hybrid/blended virtual and in-person, online, classroom/in-person, and mock interviews with industry partners.<sup>14</sup> This is also reflected by the observations of the stakeholders interviewed. The BCIT leadership team reported online and in-class materials have been provided, a language support curriculum framework has been developed and instructors are teaching the content. Specifically, the Language Support Curriculum Framework outlines the structure for Language Support classes. The document can be used by administrators for program planning and instructors can use the framework for lesson planning.<sup>15</sup> The BCIT leadership team also indicated that the curricula is “very flexible and supportive” with additions of various modalities. Moreover, BCIT instructors specified that the language support classes are face-to-face, while the online hub provides tools for help as needed. Flexible Language Support is offered both online and in-person. Finally, students said they participated in various modalities, including weekly online sessions, in-person interview training, the mock interview

<sup>14</sup> BCIT. Quarterly Report. April 1, 2022 to June 30, 2022. BCIT (Young)\_Q1 Report 2022.pdf

<sup>15</sup> BCIT. Language Support Curriculum Framework. January 27, 2022. LS Curriculum Framework January 2022.pdf

process and used the online Hub "to try to improve myself and my communication skills and develop the language skills".

### **Evidence that the Project Developed Post-Admission Language Diagnostic Assessment Instruments to Measure Language Competency and Progress in Various Full-Time Diploma Programs**

Findings from all lines of evidence demonstrate that the project developed post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments to measure language competency and progress in various full-time diploma programs. In fact, post-admission language diagnostic assessments are used to identify students who might require extra support with their English language skills. For example, English language assessments were used in August - September 2022 to identify first-term BCIT students who may struggle with their English language skills. Students who are enrolled in one of the 14 programs that have embedded language support classes, could take a screening test and diagnostic writing task, or a screening test only. Most (86%) of the 1,335 students who were enrolled in 14 programs participated in the assessments. Results found that 22% of students were recommended for language support based on the results of the assessment.<sup>16</sup> The project coordinator, BCIT instructors and senior management all mentioned the importance of this assessment tool to identify students in need.

### **Evidence that the Project Evaluated the Post-Admission Language Diagnostic Assessment Instruments to Measure Language Competency and Progress in Various Full-Time Diploma Programs**

The early term assessment is completed to offer and inform students about services. It was found that the instrument is considered to be successful and supported by research to create a "fair and valid assessment". The BCIT leadership team was aware of the development of the language assessment instruments and that they are evaluated with the ability to update as needed. BCIT instructors described the tool as "very useful" and a "very good predictor" of students needs.

### **Evidence that the Project Collaborated with Industry Partners to Offer EAL Students Authentic Job Seeking and Interview Training**

Program documents demonstrate that to date two industry partnerships have been established to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a mock interview. The current industry partners are Vancity and Clarius Mobile Health.

### **Evidence that the Project Established a Specific Framework for a Centre for Language Learning at BCIT to Act as a Hub for Post-Admission Language Assessment Development and Support**

It was found that a framework for a centre for language learning has been developed with support from the institute, an advisory group and a program developer. The aim of the framework is to

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<sup>16</sup> BCIT. ESTP-O Fact Sheet. 2022. Fact Sheet- ESTP-O 2022 V05.pdf

allow for the establishment of “a more centralized unit within BCIT to reach more students [...] by having a centre” that structures language supports across BCIT as an institution. It also includes an educational model that was specifically developed for this purpose. However, while the framework was pitched to senior management, it has not yet been implemented. BCIT senior managers indicated that they were aware that a framework was developed that outlines a clear path.

## Evaluation Question 5 – Were Modifications Made to the Design or Delivery of the Project?

### Key Findings:

Evidence from the evaluation indicates that some modifications were made to the design and delivery of the project. These modifications include changes to online modules of the English Language Support Hub and the post-admission screening-diagnostic assessment as well as the shifting of In-Class Language Support hours and the introduction of Flexible Language Supports.

### Evidence that the Design and/or Delivery of the Program Changed Over Time

Several changes to the initial design and/or delivery of the project were made over time. Specifically, the 2021-2022 annual report states that the objective of designing seven online language supports has been modified. Efforts to develop the seventh module may not be undertaken, but rather BCIT may chose to refine the grammar module as a knowledge-based skill using a classroom assessment tool (CAT). Further the objective pertaining to delivering a post-admission screening-diagnostic assessment has been modified based on evidence that BCIT's vocabulary test is unidimensional but a cloze test is multidimensional, which is not deemed appropriate. A new grammar module was to be piloted in September 2022.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, program documents demonstrate that in Fall 2022 the Flexible Language Support component was added to the available Language Supports at BCIT. This was also acknowledged by the BCIT leadership team, as well as by BCIT instructors. Specifically, it was found that the delivery of the project was modified after an evaluation to reallocate instructional hours which resulted in the establishment of Flexible Language Supports. BCIT instructors were aware of the addition of flexible language support, along with changes in language support hours, based on analysis, to redistribute to areas of greater need.

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<sup>17</sup> BCIT. Annual Progress Report. April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. BCIT (Young)\_Annual 2021-2022 Report.pdf

## Evaluation Question 6 – How was Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considered in the Project’s Design and Delivery

### Key Findings:

The project primarily targets international students and young newcomers as well as those with low English skills. By aiming to provide these students with supports and raising their English skills, it ultimately contributes to more equity regarding their chances of success during their studies as well as when transitioning to the workforce.

### Evidence of/Views on the Inclusion of EDI in the Project

According to the project workplan, the primary target population is newcomers to Canada who arrived in the last five years. Other EDI populations include racialized groups, international students, immigrants, people with essential skills gaps, and youth.<sup>18</sup> Participants in the program were varied, including 54% women, 44% male, and 2% non-binary. The majority have been in Canada for less than five years (59%), while 22% have been in Canada for over five years, and 20% were Canadian citizens by birth.<sup>19</sup>

According to a member of the BCIT leadership team, the project is “inherently about equity” as it aims “to level that playing field [i.e., the impact of different language skills on a student’s success]”. Moreover, the same member of the BCIT leadership team underlined that the project is sensitive to the diversity of students and aims to establish “a community where students feel welcomed regardless of their language and cultural background”. BCIT instructors noted that the program is open to everyone and supports the student population with additional needs. Additionally, one instructor highlighted that by raising “the level of non-native speakers” the project ultimately makes contributions to EDI.

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<sup>18</sup> Future Skills Centre. Work Plan and Evidence Generation Form. Undated. Work Plan and Evidence Generation Form - BCIT\_Young Newcomers.pdf

<sup>19</sup> BCIT. Utilization of Language Support and Flexible Language Support Services: Fall 2021 & Fall 2022. January 6, 2023. Short Report LS Data Fall 2021-2022 V07.pdf



## Evaluation Question 7 – What Are the Key Factors Supporting or Hindering the Delivery of the Project?

### **Key Findings:**

The key factors supporting the delivery of the project were related to the good coordination and management of the project through the project coordinator, including clear communication of results and outcomes; as well as the clear structure of the project. Industry partners particularly highlighted that being able to provide feedback to students on their performance in the mock interviews was essential to preparing them for future job interviews. The main challenges the project faced were related to spreading the word about the project throughout BCIT as a wider institution, as well as securing funding to continue the project after the current funding period. Suggestions for improving the project included: securing more long-term funding, making the project accessible to students in programs that are not currently part of it, conducting a more extensive needs assessment, increasing number of hours for language support programs, ensuring that language support instructors have content knowledge of the program they are teaching in, conducting in-person mock interviews, and providing students with more opportunities to network with future employers.

### **Evidence of/Views on What Is Working Well**

It was found that the Language Support Team is very productive and receives positive feedback. Moreover, it was identified that the program has contributed to a change in perspective, from seeing international students as the problem, to acknowledging that lack of English language proficiency is the problem that can affect international and domestic students equally. Moreover, the project seems to have succeeded in “normalize[ing] the attendance to language support” rather than seeing it as a stigma.

BCIT senior managers point to the excellent work done by the project coordinator to drive the project and collect evidence on outcomes, in addition to good feedback from students and industry. BCIT instructors stated that the program is working well as it provides students with the supports needed. Moreover, they underlined that based on their own experience but also the evidence that the project collects, students participating in it demonstrate improvements in their English language skills. Moreover, they also emphasized that the project team is very collaborative and clearly communicates on aspects such as results of the project, any new tools or resources available, etc.

Industry partners mentioned that communication with BCIT and with students is working well. Another benefit is the ability to provide feedback to students on areas they can improve for future

interviews. Students reported that the program structure was “clear and logical”. Further, one student indicated that it was a “great opportunity” to meet new people.

### **Evidence of/Views on Challenges of the Project**

Members of the BCIT leadership team noted several challenges: First, because BCIT is a large institute, communicating the program can be a challenge as it is just one of many projects competing for attention and funding. Second, sustainability of the project is another challenge because the funding received by FSC is limited to two years. Currently no concrete option has been identified for how the project can continue after the FSC funding ends. Third, it was found that the project is not available to students who are not full time or in the communications classes. In addition to that, one BCIT instructor noted a challenge that students can be impatient and want to become proficient in English quickly.

Both industry partners were initially concerned about additional workload as a result of participation in the project. Once the participation was initiated, however, partners found that there has been a modest level of interviews, or they have added other staff members to conduct interviews to share the experience.

### **Suggestions from Project Staff, Facilitators, BCIT Senior Management, Industry Partners and Alumni**

The BCIT leadership team reported that they would like to find funding to continue the program. BCIT senior managers would also like to see additional trades students have access to the program and continue to communicate the long-term vision of the program outside of BCIT. It was also mentioned that a more extensive needs assessment would be useful but that it is difficult to do that within the parameters of a short-term project such as this one.

BCIT instructors suggested improvements such as increased hours if warranted, or ensuring that “language support instructors have experience in teaching in the program’s [technical] courses”.

Although some mock interviews were conducted online, industry partners feel that there is a benefit to in-person, on-site interviews in the future.

One student said they would like to have had more networking opportunities with industry partners.

## 3.4 Effectiveness – To What Extent Is the Project Efficient?

### Evaluation Question 8 – To What Extent Did/Does the Project Meet Its Intended Outcomes?

#### Key Findings

The evaluation evidence clearly indicates that the project boosts international students and young newcomers' confidence in their English Language skills and contributes to their increased success in their course work. While the industry partnership, as well as the opportunity to participate in a mock interview, is seen as an important step to help students transition into the workforce, currently it is too early to evaluate whether this experience actually has a positive impact on students' transition or not.

#### Evidence of International Students and Young Newcomers Being More Confident in their English Language Skills

Findings from all lines of evidence demonstrate that the project has had a positive impact on international students and young newcomers confidence in their English language skills. Particularly, a survey of participants administered by BCIT revealed that 80% of students agreed they felt more confident in English after attending Language Support classes and 84% agreed that Language Support helped them improve their English.<sup>20</sup> The BCIT leadership team highlighted these survey results as evidence for students feeling more confident in English. Moreover, it was indicated that students gain confidence through increased opportunities to speak in English or practice presentations (e.g., through participating in in-class supports, the English Lounge or the Flexible Language Support), and be in front of a real hiring manager through mock interviews. BCIT instructors observed that students gained confidence through feedback in class, getting higher grades, and being able to work with instructors individually to practice public speaking. Finally, both students reported that the project helped improve their language confidence, with one articulating that the project "boosted self-confidence and skills [learned] are not only applicable to interviews and jobs but also helped feeling more confident during assignments and presentations at BCIT."

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<sup>20</sup> BCIT. Utilization of Language Support and Flexible Language Support Services: Fall 2021 & Fall 2022. January 6, 2023. Short Report LS Dada Fall 2021-2022 V07.pdf

## Evidence that the Project Has Increased the Success of International Students and Young Newcomers in Their Course Work

All lines of evidence demonstrate that students who participate in the project are more successful on their course work at BCIT. According to a survey of participants, 90% felt that Language Support had a positive impact on their academic performance in Communication classes. Likewise, 70% felt that the support had a positive impact on their academic achievement in other classes.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, evidence generated as part of the project demonstrates that students who were recommended and attended Language Support (LS) scored approximately 5.8 percentage points higher in their communication classes than students who were recommended but did not attend LS.<sup>22</sup> This factor was also reiterated by the BCIT leadership team to underline that students in the program improved their academic performance. BCIT instructors stated that students who attend language classes consistently, better understood course instruction and feedback on assignments, and, therefore, it is expected they will increase their grades. Finally, one student reported that the program helped them with BCIT course work, while another student participated in the program only after completing their communication classes and subsequent classes that were more technical.

## Evidence that the Project Helps Preparing International Students and Young Newcomers for a Successful Transition from Their Degree Programs into the Workforce

One component of Language Support services is the Industry Partnership. BCIT has partnered with local businesses, notably, Vancity and Clarius Mobile Health. This partnership offers international student and newcomer participants with Canadian job application and interview skills practice. There are 15 openings each December for second-term BCIT students. Students engage in six hours of employment application and interview preparation under the guidance of a mentor. The mentorship helps students to consider their values, skills and abilities and position these attributes to align with the company's values. The component concludes with an online or on-site interview with an experienced industry hiring manager for a practice interview. Feedback from the interview can be applied to future real-world employment interviews.<sup>23</sup> While the BCIT leadership team underlined the importance of the industry partnership in providing students with authentic job interview experience, they indicated that there is currently no evidence that it has a positive impact on students' successful transition to the workforce, partly because it is too early to determine such an impact. Thus, the general perception among the BCIT leadership team was that the mock interview component may help with this goal but further evidence is needed to determine the exact impact. Overall, it was conveyed that BCIT supports the vision of workplace

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<sup>21</sup> BCIT. Utilization of Language Support and Flexible Language Support Services: Fall 2021 & Fall 2022. January 6, 2023. Short Report LS Data Fall 2021-2022 V07.pdf

<sup>22</sup> Language Success Team. Student Outcome Data Report. 2021. 2021 Student Outcome Data Analysis Report v01.doc

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.bcit.ca/computing-academic-studies/communication/bcit-language-success-team/industry-partnership/>

readiness for graduates, combining technical training with “soft skills” for workplace readiness. BCIT instructors pointed to the partnership with industry to prepare for mock interviews as a support for this outcome; although more work could be done to develop “soft skills” needed to transition to the workforce. Industry partners note that the connection BCIT students have with industry is a “step to transition students to the workforce.” According to students, they “learned about important differences” of applying for jobs in Canada versus their country of origin but no evidence was provided that it actually helped them to transition into the workforce.

## Evaluation Question 9 – Have There Been Unintended Impacts (Positive or Negative) of the Project? If so, What Were They?

### Key Findings:

Several unexpected but positive outcomes of the project were identified. These included:

- The introduction of flexible language support which has potential for scalability;
- Considerations around changing admission criteria to diploma programs (i.e., lowering English requirements but providing post-admission language supports);
- Providing language instructors with up-to-date research and best practices;
- Allowing industry partners, the ability to identify potential future job candidates; and
- Triggering momentum for students networking with potential employers.

### Evidence of/Views on Unintended Outcomes (Positive or Negative) Are Identified

The project resulted in several positive unexpected outcomes at outlined below.

According to one member of the BCIT leadership team, the establishment of flexible language support has been a positive unexpected impact, and has potential for scalability and reach. Other members of the leadership team pointed to the unintended outcome of using the program to consider accepting students with lower English learning experience, as it demonstrates that students can be supported post-admission. Another outcome associated with extending presentations about the program to all BCIT staff has resulted in increased awareness that the program is not only for international students.

BCIT instructors noted that the program has allowed instructors the opportunity to stay up-to-date on research and best practices, and noted that a few students have achieved “self discovery” that learning English is also about how to communicate.

Both industry partners concluded that through conducting mock interviews, they may find potential candidates for future positions. One partner reported that they used the project as a way to involve other staff in acquiring interviewing skills for professional development.

One student indicated that the process for participating in the mock interview helped them learn that "even when you think you are prepared for an interview, the interview might not go super well. [It's] Important to practice lots". Another student said that the process helped to trigger momentum in networking with potential employers.

## Evaluation Question 10 – To What Extent Do Partnerships Between BCIT and Industry Partners Assist International Students and Young Newcomers with Obtaining Authentic Job Seeking and Interview Training?

### **Key Findings:**

Despite the lower-than-expected overall uptake among students, the industry partnerships have been successful at providing participating students with obtaining authentic job seeking and interview training. Participating students appreciated the opportunity to get this real experience and felt that the feedback they received from employers was particularly helpful. The partnership was valued both by BCIT senior managers as well as staff from the two industry partners and there were hopes to extend the partnership to other industry partners in the future.

### **Evidence/Perception of Key Stakeholders as to the Effectiveness of Partnerships**

The BCIT leadership team established that both industry partners have a good relationship with BCIT and that the partnership seems to be working well. Specifically, it was stated that the partnership helped to “demystify the hiring process” and allows for experiential learning. It was also stated that ideally, the number of partnerships should be increased so as to not place a burden on the two current partners exclusively. Finally, one member of the BCIT leadership team noted that the uptake among student participants was lower than expected. This was attributed to interview experience likely not being an immediate need of students as well as their relatively heavy course load.

Both industry partners emphasized that the partnership with BCIT helps students gain “real world interview experience” and hope that the partnerships continue to support additional students.

Students said the partnership provided them with the opportunity to conduct a job interview with a real employer and to learn about the expectations that employers have, along with “helpful feedback”.

## 3.5 Learning Reflections

One of the most important learning reflections at the end of the project, was the importance of having a “post-project implementation plan” in place to ensure that projects, such as this, which receive short-term funding, can be sustained after the funding ends.<sup>24</sup> This was not only highlighted in the official reporting of this project, but also came up during the KIIs conducted as part of this evaluation. Particularly, it was suggested that projects should discuss options for sustaining short-term funded projects and any related long-term plans with managers or leaders to scope out what may be possible in the future.<sup>25</sup> In these discussions, questions around the future plans for the project, resources needed to continue the project, as well as the level of investment and sponsorship required from upper management should be discussed.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Annual report 2022-23.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

## 4.0 Conclusions

### Relevance

The evidence collected through this evaluation demonstrated that the main need of international students and young newcomers is to ensure that their English language skills are sufficient to succeed in their course work at BCIT, as well as their transition to the labour market. For this, it is not only important to receive support with their English language skills in an academic context but also to learn how to use English when applying and interviewing for jobs and to gain real-life experience. Moreover, due to the heavy workload associated with diploma programs, it was identified that language supports need to be provided in a flexible way that allows students to incorporate them into their busy schedule. The evaluation found that the current format and activities of English Language Support Services offered at BCIT address the above identified needs of students as they provide flexible, formal and informal possibilities for them to improve their English language skills in an academic environment that accommodates their busy course schedule, while also providing the opportunity to attain real job application and interview skills.

### Reach

The main strategies for reaching the intended target population are the use of an early term language assessment tool as well as information shared by course instructors at BCIT. These strategies are particularly successful in reaching students for the In-Class Language Support program as well as the English Language Success Hub, and recently have also shown success in informing and encouraging students participate in the English Lounge. Participation in the industry partnership component has been lower than expected in year one, however, the evaluation was not able to identify whether this was the result of a lack of outreach and information, disinterest, or time constraints among students, or a combination of all. However, it seems likely that time constraints, due to a heavy course load, have some impact on the lower-than-expected number of participants in the industry partnership, as the heavy workload that students face in diploma programs was identified as one of the major barriers for participating in the project. Other barriers included the stigma that might be associated with needing extra language support, or not prioritizing English skills.

### Design and Delivery

Evidence from the evaluation demonstrates that, for the most part, English language services were provided as intended. Of note, while a specific framework for a centre for language learning at BCIT was developed and pitched to senior management, it did not receive the approval from senior management due to a lack of available funds. Moreover, it was found that slight modifications were made to the original design and delivery of the project. Specifically, these modifications include changes to online modules of the English Language Support Hub and the



post-admission screening-diagnostic assessment, as well as the shifting of In-Class Language Support hours and the introduction of Flexible Language Supports. The evidence also demonstrates that the design of the project considered EDI to some extent by trying to address the inequities that arise through lower English language skills. Finally, the evaluation found that the good coordination and management of the project through the project coordinator, including clear communication of results and outcomes, as well as the clear structure of the project supported its delivery. Challenges faced throughout the project were predominantly related to spreading the word about the project throughout BCIT as a wider institution, as well as securing funding to continue the project in the future.

## Effectiveness

The evaluation found that the project is successful in achieving increased confidence in international students' and young newcomers' English language skills and improving their course outcomes. While the industry partnership is seen as an important step to helping students transition into the workforce, to date, it is too early to evaluate whether it is actually successful in achieving this or not. In addition to these positive and intended outcomes, the evaluation identified several unexpected but likewise positive outcomes of the project, including, for example, the introduction of flexible language support, considerations around lowering English language skill requirements for admission, as there is proof that post-admission support is successful, as well as the potential for industry partners to identify potential employees. Finally, despite the lower-than-expected uptake associated with participating in the industry partnership among students, all partners involved felt that the partnership was effective in providing students with obtaining authentic job seeking and interview training and saw a lot of future potential in it.

## 5.0 Recommendations

### 5.1 Recommendation for BCIT's Consideration

- **Continuation and expansion of current English Language Support Services:** The evaluation identified that the current delivery of English Language Support Services including In-Class Language Support, the English Success Hub, the English Lounge and Flexible Language Support are successful at increasing students' course outcomes. Therefore, it is recommended that the program continue the delivery of current services and expand them to other diploma programs at BCIT that are currently not able to access them.
- **Conduct a thorough needs assessment:** Before expanding English Language Support Services, throughout BCIT, it is recommended that a thorough needs assessment is conducted to identify which other programs are most in need of accessing English Language Support Services. This needs assessment should also include a survey of students across BCIT to identify their most urgent needs with regard to English language skills, both in regard to their academic career, but also with respect to their transition into the labour force. Results from this needs assessment will allow the program the ability to modify and/or tailor current services to ensure that the needs of students are met.
- **Ensure language instructors have program content knowledge:** To optimize in-class language support, it is recommended that instructors teaching English language support classes, in programs with embedded language support, should not only have EAL credentials, but they are be familiar with the thematical content of the programs in which they teach.
- **Improving the Industry Partnership:** To improve the industry partnerships, the following changes are recommended:
  1. Increase the number of industry partners to ensure that students from different diploma programs have the possibility to participate and gain experience with an employer in their field.
  2. Provide students not only with the opportunity to participate in a mock interview but also extend their networking opportunities with future employers, e.g., organize a job fair where students can meet and get to know potential future employers.
  3. Provide the opportunity to participate in job interviews that are in-person, as well as potentially job-shadowing opportunities.

### 5.2 Recommendations for FSC's Consideration

- **BCIT's current English Language Support Services should be used as a best-practice model for scaling up similar services to other institutions:** The evaluation identified that the current delivery of English Language Support Services including In-Class Language Support, the English Success Hub, the English Lounge, and Flexible Language Support are

successful at increasing the course outcomes as well as English language confidence of international students and young newcomers by a significant degree. This is crucial for their transition into the job market as having good English language skills, as well as a good degree with high grades, are important factors that impact job hiring decisions. As such, BCIT's services have the potential to be used as a best-practice model for scaling up English language supports to other post-secondary institutions.

- **Provide funding to support future projects promoting industry partnerships:** The evaluation identified that industry partnerships between post-secondary institutions and companies have the potential to make important contributions in facilitating the transition of international students and young newcomers from their study programs into the workforce. Providing students with the possibility of participating in a mock interview with real recruitment officers was seen as a valuable experience among participating students. Industry partners also saw it as an opportunity to identify potential future employees. However, more research/evidence is required to determine the actual long-term outcomes of partnerships with industry partners. It is therefore recommended that FSC consider funding projects that promote industry partnerships, and measure their long-term outcomes in order to undertake a more fulsome evaluation of this practice.

## Appendix A – Evaluation Matrix

Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Data Source
<i>Relevance – International Students and Young Newcomers Needs</i>			
1. To what extent do the format and activities offered by the project meet the interests, needs and learning goals of international students and young newcomers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of the interests, needs and learning goals of international students and young newcomers</li> <li>• Evidence that the format and activities of the project support these interests, needs and learning goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document and data review</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documentation and data (e.g., on project design, participant surveys etc.)</li> <li>• Interviews with project coordinator, instructors, senior management at BCIT, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>
<i>Reach – The Extent to Which the Program Has Been Delivering Services to the Intended Populations</i>			
2. In what ways and to what extent is the project reaching intended target populations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies to reach target population</li> <li>• Intended number of participants</li> <li>• Number of international students participating in the different program activities</li> <li>• Number of young newcomers participating in the different program activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document and data review</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project data</li> <li>• Interviews with project coordinator, instructors, senior management, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>
3. What are the barriers/constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Views on accessibility of the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interviews with project</li> </ul>

Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Data Source
for current international students and/or young newcomers to participate in the project?			coordinator, instructors, senior management, industry partners and alumni

*Design & Delivery – The Extent to Which the Project Has Been Implemented as Intended*

<p>4. To what extent were English language skill services provided as intended?</p> <p>4.1 To what extent did the project develop and deliver innovative, confidence-building content and language integrated curricula in various modalities (e.g., face-to-face, online, blended)?</p> <p>4.2 To what extent did the project develop and evaluate post-admission language diagnostic assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence that the project developed and delivered innovative, confidence-building content and language integrated curricula in various modalities</li> <li>• Evidence that the project developed post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments to measure language competency and progress in various full-time diploma programs</li> <li>• Evidence that the project evaluated the post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments to measure language competency and progress in various full-time diploma programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document and data review</li> <li>• Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project documentation and data</li> <li>• Interviews with project coordinator, instructors, senior management at BCIT, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>
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Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Data Source
<p>instruments to measure language competency and progress in various full-time diploma programs?</p> <p>4.3 To what extent did the project establish a specific framework for a Centre for language learning at BCIT to act as a hub for post-admission language assessment, development, and support?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that the project collaborated with industry partners to offer EAL students authentic job seeking and interview training</li> <li>Evidence that the project established a specific framework for a Centre for language learning at BCIT to act as a hub for post-admission language assessment, development, and support</li> </ul>		
<p>5. Were modifications made to the design or delivery of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that the design and/or delivery of the program changed over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documentation (e.g., on project design)</li> <li>Interviews with project coordinator and instructors</li> </ul>
<p>6. How was equity, diversity and inclusion considered in the project's design and delivery?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of/views on the inclusion of EDI in the project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document review</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documentation</li> <li>Interviews with project</li> </ul>

Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Data Source
			coordinator and instructors
<p>7. What are the key factors supporting or hindering the delivery of the project?</p> <p>7.1 What improvements can BCIT make in its delivery of the project?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of/views on challenges of the project</li> <li>Evidence of/views on what is working well</li> <li>Suggestions from project staff, facilitators, BCIT senior management, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews with project coordinator, instructors, senior management at BCIT, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>
<i>Effectiveness – To what Extent Is the Project Efficient?</i>			
<p>8. To what extent did/does the project meet its intended outcomes?</p> <p>8.1 How effective has the project been in promoting international students and young newcomers' English language confidence?</p> <p>8.2 How effective has the project been in helping international students and young</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of international students and young newcomers being more confident in their English language skills</li> <li>Evidence that the project has increased the success of international students and young newcomers in their course work</li> <li>Evidence that the project helps preparing international students and young</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document/Data review</li> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project data (e.g., participant surveys)</li> <li>Interviews with project coordinator, instructors, senior management at BCIT, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>

Questions	Indicators	Data Collection Method	Data Source
<p>newcomers to succeed in their course work?</p> <p>8.3 How effective has the project been in preparing international students and young newcomers for a successful transition from their degree programs into the workforce?</p>	<p>newcomers for a successful transition from their degree programs into the workforce</p>		
<p>9. Have there been unintended impacts (positive or negative) of the project? If so, what were they?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of/views on unintended outcomes (positive or negative) are identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews with project coordinator, instructors, senior management at BCIT, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>
<p>10. To what extent do partnerships between BCIT and industry partners assist international students and young newcomers with obtaining authentic job seeking and interview training?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence/Perception of key stakeholders as to the effectiveness of partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interviews with project coordinator, instructors, senior management at BCIT, industry partners and alumni</li> </ul>



# Appendix B: Targeted Interview Guides

## External Evaluation of the BCIT Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project

### Interview Guide – Project Coordinator and Instructors

BCIT is conducting an evaluation of the Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project (“the project”). This evaluation focuses on the relevance, reach, effectiveness and impact of the project. Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) has been hired by BCIT to help evaluate the project. This interview is a part of the evaluation of the project.

You have been identified as someone who can provide important feedback for this effort. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and the information you provide will be kept confidential and managed as per the Privacy Act and other applicable privacy laws. Findings will be used only for the evaluation of the project. The evaluation report will only include aggregate responses and potentially selected quotes. No responses will be attributed to you as an individual. Please note that certain questions in this interview guide might not be applicable to you. If you are unable to answer a question, please let us know and we can skip to the next question.

If you have any questions about this evaluation or the interviews, please feel free to contact Nathan Devos, Project Lead at BCIT ([ndevos1@bcit.ca](mailto:ndevos1@bcit.ca)).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

#### Introduction

- 1) To start, please tell me briefly about your specific role at BCIT, as well as your involvement with the project.

#### Relevance

- 2) In your own words, what need was this project meant to respond to?

#### Reach

- 3) What strategies are you currently using to reach international students and/or young newcomers?
  - a) Have you experienced any difficulties/challenges in reaching and interacting with international students and/or young newcomers? If so, what would you suggest to address these difficulties?
- 4) Are you aware of any barriers or constraints that international students and/or young newcomers who want to participate in the program are facing?

#### Design and Delivery

- 5) Please comment on the different aspects of the project and the extent to which they have been implemented:

- a) Development and delivery of innovative, confidence-building content and language integrated curricula in various modalities (e.g., face-to-face, online, blended)
  - b) Development and evaluation of post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments to measure language competency and progress
  - c) Establishment of a specific framework for a Centre for language learning at BCIT to act as a hub for post-admission language assessment, development, and support.
- 6) Have you made any adaptations to the original program design? If yes, what prompted you to make this adaptation?
- 7) What role did equity, diversity and inclusion consideration play when developing and delivering the program?
- 8) Tell me about your overall experience with the project/program:
- a) What has been working well?
  - b) What challenges did you face?
  - c) Do you have any suggestions for how the project/program could be improved?

#### Effectiveness

- 9) The project aims to achieve a number of outcomes related to the English language skills of international students and/or young newcomers. For each of the outcomes, please comment on how and the extent to which the project has made an impact:
- a) Promoting international students and young newcomers' English language confidence
  - b) Helping international students and young newcomers to succeed in their course work
  - c) Preparing international students and young newcomers for a successful transition from their degree programs into the workforce
- 10) Thinking about your answer to the last question, have there been any other unexpected impacts (positive or negative) that the project has resulted in? If so, what were they?
- 11) Can you explain how the partnership with Vancity and Clarius Mobile Health helps international students and young newcomers with obtaining authentic job seeking and interview training?
- a) What is working well with this partnership?
  - b) Have you faced any challenges with this partnership? If so, which ones?
  - c) How could the partnership be improved in the future?

#### Final Thoughts

- 12) This brings us to the end of the interview. Is there anything else you would like to share with us that will help to inform the external evaluation of the project?

Thank you for your participation!

# External Evaluation of the BCIT Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project

## Interview Guide – BCIT Senior Management

BCIT is conducting an evaluation of the Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project (“the project”). This evaluation focuses on the relevance, reach, effectiveness and impact of the project. Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) has been hired by BCIT to help evaluate the project. This interview is a part of the evaluation of the project.

You have been identified as someone who can provide important feedback for this effort. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and the information you provide will be kept confidential and managed as per the Privacy Act and other applicable privacy laws. Findings will be used only for the evaluation of the project. The evaluation report will only include aggregate responses and potentially selected quotes. No responses will be attributed to you as an individual.

If you have any questions about this evaluation or the interviews, please feel free to contact Nathan Devos, Project Lead at BCIT ([ndevos1@bcit.ca](mailto:ndevos1@bcit.ca)).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

### Introduction

- 1) To start, please tell me briefly about which organization/company you are affiliated with, your specific role, as well as your involvement with the project.

### Relevance

- 2) In your own words, what need was this project meant to respond to?

### Reach

- 3) How is the project currently reaching international students and young newcomers?
  - a) Are you aware of any difficulties that the project has had in reaching international students and young newcomers?
- 4) Are you aware of any barriers or constraints that international students and/or young newcomers who want to participate in the program are facing?

### Design and Delivery

- 5) Please comment on the different aspects of the project and the extent to which they have been implemented:
  - a) Development and delivery of innovative, confidence-building content and language integrated curricula in various modalities (e.g., face-to-face, online, blended)

- b) Development and evaluation of post-admission language diagnostic assessment instruments to measure language competency and progress
  - c) Establishment of a specific framework for a Centre for language learning at BCIT to act as a hub for post-admission language assessment, development, and support.
- 6) Tell me about your overall experience with the project/program:
- a) What has been working well?
  - b) Are you aware of any challenges? If so which ones?
  - c) Do you have any suggestions for how the project/program could be improved?
  - d) Would you like to see the project continue after the FSC funding is ending at the end of March 2023? If so, how could that be achieved?

Effectiveness

- 7) The project aims to achieve a number of outcomes related to the English language skills of international students and/or young newcomers. For each of the outcomes, please comment on the extent to which the project has made an impact:
- a) Promoting international students and young newcomers' English language confidence
  - b) Helping international students and young newcomers succeed in their course work
  - c) Preparing international students and young newcomers for a successful transition from their degree programs into the workforce
- 8) Thinking about your answer to the last question, have there been any other unexpected impacts (positive or negative) that the project has resulted in? If so, what were they?
- 9) Can you explain how the partnership with Vancity and Clarius Mobile Health helps international students and young newcomers with obtaining authentic job seeking and interview training?
- a) What is working well with this partnership?
  - b) Have you faced any challenges with this partnership? If so, which ones?
  - c) How could the partnership be improved in the future?

Final Thoughts

- 10) This brings us to the end of the interview. Is there anything else you would like to share with us that will help to inform the external evaluation of the project?

Thank you for your participation!

# External Evaluation of the BCIT Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project

## Interview Guide – Industry Partners

BCIT is conducting an evaluation of the Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project (“the project”). This evaluation focuses on the relevance, reach, effectiveness and impact of the project. Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) has been hired by BCIT to help evaluate the project. This interview is a part of the evaluation of the project.

You have been identified as someone who can provide important feedback for this effort. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and the information you provide will be kept confidential and managed as per the Privacy Act and other applicable privacy laws. Findings will be used only for the evaluation of the project. The evaluation report will only include aggregate responses and potentially selected quotes. No responses will be attributed to you as an individual.

If you have any questions about this evaluation or the interviews, please feel free to contact Nathan Devos, Project Lead at BCIT ([ndevos1@bcit.ca](mailto:ndevos1@bcit.ca)).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

### Introduction

- 1) To start, please tell me briefly about which organization/company you are affiliated with, your specific role, as well as your involvement with the project.

### Relevance

- 2) In your own words, what need was this project meant to respond to?

### Reach

- 3) How is the contact between you and the BCIT students established?
  - a) Have you experienced any difficulties/challenges in reaching and interacting with the students? If so, what would you suggest to address these difficulties?
- 4) Are you aware of any barriers or constraints that students who want to participate in the project with your organization might be facing?

### Design and Delivery

- 5) Tell us about how the collaboration between BCIT and your organization came about and what it involves?
  - a) What activities are you offering to the students?

- 6) Tell me about your overall experience with the project and working with the students, so far:
  - a) What has been working well?
  - b) What challenges did you face?
  - c) Do you have any suggestions for how the project could be improved?

Effectiveness

- 7) How is the collaboration between your organization and BCIT contributing to preparing international students and young newcomers for a successful transition from their degree programs into the workforce:
- 8) Thinking about your answer to the last question, have there been any other unexpected impacts (positive or negative) that the project has resulted in for your organization and/or the students involved? If so, what were they?
- 9) Can you explain how the partnership with BCIT helps international students and young newcomers with obtaining authentic job seeking and interview training?
  - a) What is working well with this partnership?
  - b) Have you faced any challenges with this partnership? If so, which ones?
  - c) How could the partnership be improved in the future?

Final Thoughts

- 10) This brings us to the end of the interview. Is there anything else you would like to share with us that will help to inform the external evaluation of the project?

Thank you for your participation!

## External Evaluation of the BCIT Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project

### Interview Guide – Alumni

BCIT is conducting an evaluation of the Young Newcomers and International Students in Diploma Programs: Shook-Proofing Through Language Confidence Project (“the project”). This evaluation focuses on the relevance, reach, effectiveness and impact of the project. Goss Gilroy Inc. (GGI) has been hired by BCIT to help evaluate the project. This interview is a part of the evaluation of the project.

You have been identified as someone who can provide important feedback for this effort. Thank you for taking the time to speak with us today. Your participation in this interview is voluntary and the information you provide will be kept confidential and managed as per the Privacy Act and other applicable privacy laws. Findings will be used only for the evaluation of the project. The evaluation report will only include aggregate responses and potentially selected quotes. No responses will be attributed to you as an individual.

As a thank you for your participation in the interview, you will receive a \$25 gift card.

If you have any questions about this evaluation or the interviews, please feel free to contact Nathan Devos, Project Lead at BCIT ([ndevos1@bcit.ca](mailto:ndevos1@bcit.ca)).

Thank you in advance for your participation.

#### Introduction

- 1) To start, please tell me briefly about your diploma program at BCIT as well as the status you held when completing your degree (e.g., international student or young newcomer)?

#### Project Relevance

- 2) Why did you decide to participate in the project? What were you hoping to achieve?

#### Project Reach

- 3) How did you learn about the project?
- 4) Have you experienced any barriers or constraints to participating in the project?

#### Project Design and Delivery

- 5) What aspects of the project did you participate in (e.g., in-person classes, job application skills, English Language Success Hub, the English Lounge)?
- 6) Tell me about your overall experience with the project:
  - a) What did you enjoy most and why?
  - b) Were there any aspects that you did not enjoy? If so, why?
  - c) Do you have any suggestions for how to improve the project?

Project Effectiveness

7) What impact has participating in the project had on you?

Probes

- a) Has it helped you to improve your English abilities and your confidence in your English language skills? If yes, how?
- b) Has it helped you to succeed in your course work at BCIT? Is yes, how?
- c) Has it helped you to prepare for transitioning into the workforce? If yes, how?

8) Thinking about your answer to the last question, have there been any other unexpected impacts (positive or negative) that participating in the project had for you? If so, what were they?

9) If applicable, how useful did you find the opportunity to participate in the mock interview sessions with Vancity and/or Clarius Mobile Health?

Probes

- a) What were you expecting from this session?
- b) What did you learn from this experience?
- c) Is there anything that could be improved?

Final Thoughts

10) This brings us to the end of the interview. Is there anything else you would like to share with us that will help to inform the external evaluation of the project?

*Thank you for your participation!*