

2011 DEVELOPMENTAL STUDENT OUTCOMES SURVEY



Report of Findings



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Acknowledgements

The Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey is one of four annual surveys that make up the BC Student Outcomes project. The DEVSO Survey targets former students who took Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language programs. The Diploma, Associate Degree, and Certificate Student Outcomes (DACSO) Survey collects information from former students from diploma, associate degree, and certificate programs; the Apprenticeship Student Outcomes (APPSO) Survey targets former apprenticeship students who have completed the final level of their technical training; and the Baccalaureate Graduates Survey (BGS) is for baccalaureate graduates from all public degree-granting institutions.

The BC Student Outcomes surveys are conducted with funding from the Province of British Columbia and the participating British Columbia post-secondary institutions. Additional funding for the DEVSO Survey is provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and for the APPSO Survey by the Industry Training Authority (ITA).

The British Columbia Student Outcomes Research Forum (Forum) oversees all aspects of the project, from data collection to the reporting of survey results. The Forum represents a longstanding partnership among the Ministry of Advanced Education, participating post-secondary institutions, and system-wide organizations, such as the Senior Academic Administrators' Forum, the Council of Senior Student Affairs Leaders, the BC Registrars' Association, and the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer.

BC Stats acts as steward of the APPSO, BGS, DACSO, and DEVSO data and is responsible for providing operational support, day-to-day management, advice, and reports, as directed by the Forum.

Highlights

Former ABE students

In 2011, 3,885 former Adult Basic Education (ABE) students were eligible to participate in the Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey. There were 1,697 respondents to the survey, making the ABE response rate 44 percent. The following are highlights from the survey, which was conducted January to April of 2011.

Description of former students

- 57% of respondents were female
- 24 was the median age
- 19% of respondents were parents during their studies
- 81% were born in Canada
- 15% of Canadian-born respondents self-identified as Aboriginal
- 78% of respondents had a high school diploma or equivalent before their ABE studies

Reasons for enrolling

- 81% enrolled to prepare for further study
- 8% enrolled to complete high school
- 7% enrolled to improve their employment situation
- 96% said their ABE courses helped them achieve their most important goal

Evaluation of education

- 83% of respondents said their courses helped them develop math skills
- 80% said their courses helped them develop science skills
- 77% said they were helped to develop the ability to learn on their own
- 86% gave a *very good* or *good* rating to the quality of teaching
- 85% rated the usefulness of what they learned as *very good* or *good*
- 96% said they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their ABE courses

Student finances

- 52% of respondents said employment was a main source of funding for their studies
- 23% of respondents applied for funding from the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP)

- 86% of those who applied, received ABESAP funding
- 16% of respondents had to interrupt their studies for financial reasons

Further education

- 58% of respondents were enrolled in a program or taking courses other than ABE, at the time of the survey
- 71% of respondents were studying or had taken further studies since their ABE courses
- 52% of those who continued their studies enrolled in certificate or diploma programs
- 42% percent of those in further studies were pursuing a degree
- 94% of those who took further studies said they were *very well* or *somewhat prepared* by their ABE courses
- 71% of respondents said it was *very likely* they would enrol in more courses at a B.C. public post-secondary institution

Employment outcomes

- 70% of respondents were in the labour force at the time of the survey
- 57% of respondents were employed
- 54% of those who were employed were working full-time
- \$13 was the median hourly wage
- 17% of employed respondents had more than one job
- 57% of employed respondents said the knowledge and skills they gained in their ABE courses helped them perform their jobs

Former ESL students

In 2011, 1,676 former English as a Second Language (ESL) students were eligible to participate in the Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey. There were 812 respondents to the survey, making the ESL response rate 48 percent. The following are highlights from the survey, which was conducted from January to April 2011.

Description of former students

- 68% of respondents were female
- 34 was the median age
- 48% of respondents were parents during their studies
- 98% were born outside Canada
- 56% of those from outside Canada had a degree (bachelor's or higher) from their country of origin

Reasons for enrolling

- 47% of respondents enrolled to prepare for further study
- 35% enrolled to use English better in daily life
- 16% enrolled to improve their employment situation
- 96% said their ESL courses helped them achieve their most important goal

Evaluation of education

- 87% of respondents said their courses helped them develop writing skills
- 80% said their courses helped them develop reading skills
- 80% said they were helped to feel self-confident
- 89% rated the usefulness of what they learned as *very good* or *good*
- 88% gave a *very good* or *good* rating to the quality of teaching
- 95% said they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their ESL courses

Student finances

- 38% of respondents relied on family or friends for financial support during their studies
- 49% of respondents applied for funding from the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP)
- 91% of those who applied, received ABESAP funding
- 23% of respondents had to interrupt their studies for financial reasons

Further education

- 44% of respondents were enrolled in a program or taking courses other than ESL, at the time of the survey
- 63% of respondents were studying or had taken further studies since their ESL studies
- 65% of those who continued their studies enrolled in certificate or diploma programs
- 21% of those who continued their studies were pursuing a degree
- 93% of those who took further studies said they were *very well* or *somewhat prepared* by their ESL courses
- 55% of respondents said it was very likely they would enrol in more courses at a B.C. public post-secondary institution

Employment outcomes

- 71% of respondents were in the labour force at the time of the survey
- 52% of respondents were employed
- 62% of those who were employed were working full-time
- \$13 was the median hourly wage
- 12% of employed respondents had more than one job
- 97% of employed respondents used English at work
- 80% of those who spoke English at work said their ESL training helped them use the language

Introduction

Developmental Program Delivery in the Public Post-Secondary System

Developmental programs are for adults who require additional skills to enter an academic or career program at a public post-secondary institution. Some developmental courses are available to students in other programs, if they have specific learning needs and would benefit from these studies, or if they require completion to meet prerequisites. Developmental courses, therefore, serve both preparatory and remedial functions.

Developmental programs delivered in the B.C. public post-secondary education system include Adult Basic Education, Adult Special Education, and English as a Second Language. The 2011 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey targeted former students from Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language programs.

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

English as a Second Language (ESL) is a generic term, and the training is also referred to as English as an Additional Language (EAL), English Language Training (ELT), English as a Second or Other Language (ESOL), or English Language Learning (ELL). ESL programs provide language instruction and information about Canadian culture, society, and the workplace to people who need higher levels of English to help them find jobs or enter vocational, career/technical, and academic programs.

2011 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey

The purpose of the 2011 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey was to ask former ABE and ESL students, who studied at the intermediate level or higher, to evaluate their educational experiences and to report on their transitions to the labour market and further education. This information is used by post-secondary institutions and the Province to:

- support post-secondary curriculum planning, policy development, and accountability;

- provide information for program and service evaluations and educational planning; and
- guide educational choices for future students.

To be eligible for the survey, former ABE students must have been enrolled as domestic students between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010 and have completed at least one course at the Intermediate level or higher. They must have completed at least three ABE courses (at any level) between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2010) and must not have enrolled in any ABE courses since July 1, 2010. A total of 3,885 former ABE students were included in the survey cohort.

Former ESL students must have been enrolled in at least two ESL courses between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2010. In addition, they must have been enrolled in at least one intermediate or higher level ESL course between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010 and must not have enrolled in any further ESL courses since July 1, 2010. In total, 1,676 former ESL students were eligible to participate in the survey.

(Refer to [Appendix: Survey Methodology](#), for additional information on the survey cohort selection criteria.)

About this Report

This report presents a summary of the findings from the 2011 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey. This report does not include an analysis of the results by institution; tabular reports were produced and distributed to the 18 participating institutions in May 2011.

The results included in the report were analysed by demographic characteristics and other factors. The differences noted in the report are those that were statistically significant—a statistically significant result is one that cannot reasonably be explained by chance alone. (Please see [Appendix: Survey Methodology](#), for more details on the report analysis.)

The first part of the report focuses on former ABE students; the second part focuses on former ESL students. Each part of the report begins with a description of the respondents' demographic characteristics. This is followed by a presentation of the respondents' reasons or goals for enrolling, their evaluation of their education, and a discussion around how they financed their studies. The final sections focus on outcomes—what former students did after they left their studies, namely further education and employment.

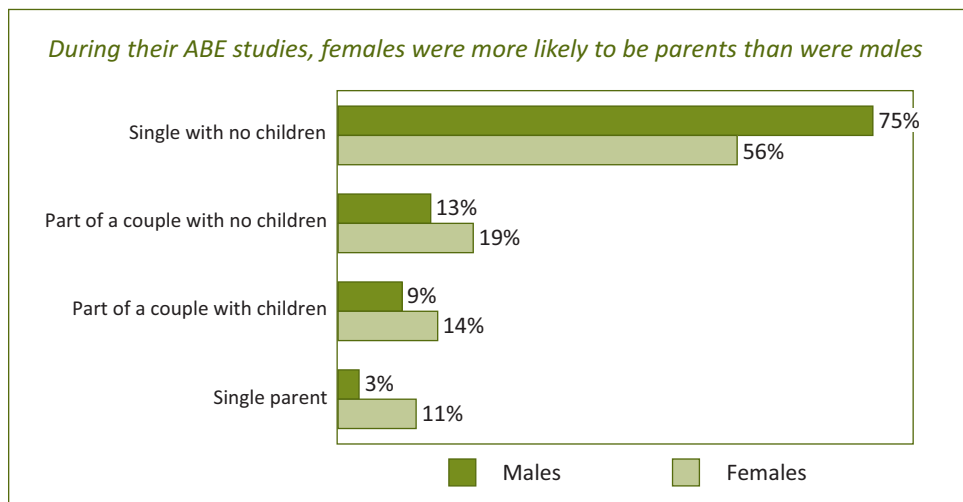
Findings: Former ABE Students

In 2011, 1,697 former Adult Basic Education (ABE) students responded to the Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey, for a response rate of 44 percent. (The number of eligible students and respondents by institution can be found in the [Appendix](#).)

Description of former ABE students

The DEVSO survey included a number of questions intended to collect information to help those who are responsible for developing programs and planning services for developmental students. Data on gender and age come from administrative records.

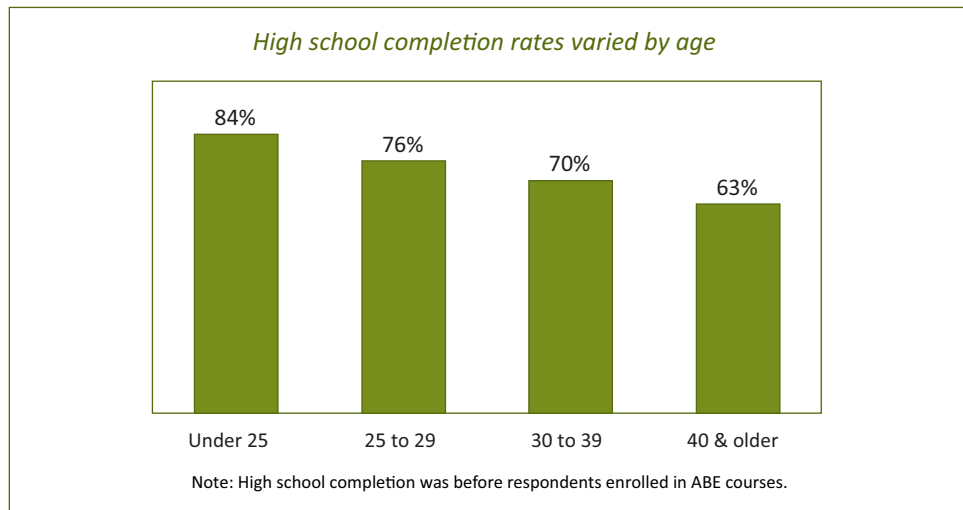
The former ABE students who responded to the survey were relatively young; at the time of the survey their median age was 24. Over half (57 percent) were female, and during their studies, almost one-fifth (19 percent) were parents. Females were much more likely to be parents than were males—25 percent of female respondents indicated they had children at the time of their ABE studies, compared with 12 percent of males.



The country of origin for most ABE respondents (81 percent) was Canada. Of those who were not born in Canada, almost two-thirds (64 percent) were Canadian citizens by the time they took their ABE courses. The other third (35 percent) were made up of permanent residents.

Canadian-born respondents were asked if they identified themselves as Aboriginal—15 percent said yes. In contrast, the proportion of respondents to the Diploma, Associate Degree, and Certificate Student Outcomes Survey¹ who self-identified as Aboriginal was considerably smaller, at 5 percent. The majority of the Aboriginal former ABE students were First Nations (78 percent), although over one-fifth were Métis (22 percent).

Before enrolling in their ABE or upgrading courses, over three-quarters (78 percent) of the respondents said they had a high school diploma or equivalent. Younger respondents were much more likely to say they had completed high school.



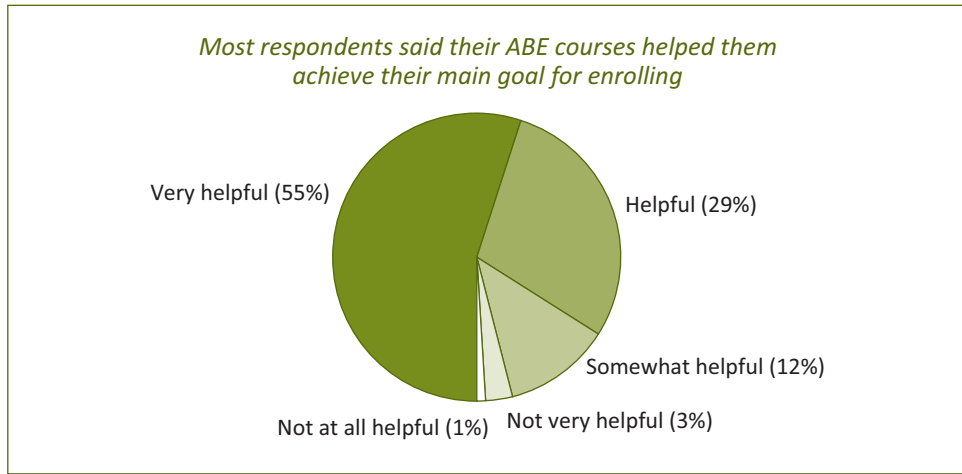
Reasons for enrolling

Survey respondents were asked to think back to when they first started their ABE courses and to state their most important goal or reason for enrolling. A large majority (81 percent) said they had enrolled to prepare for further education. Much smaller proportions said they had taken ABE courses to complete high school (8 percent) or to improve their employment situation (7 percent). A handful (5 percent) gave more personal reasons: to use English better in daily life, to improve knowledge and skills, or to pursue an interest.

Whatever their reason for enrolling, almost all (96 percent) of ABE respondents said their courses had helped them achieve their most important goal. (They said their courses had been *very helpful*, *helpful*, or *somewhat helpful*.) The respondents whose

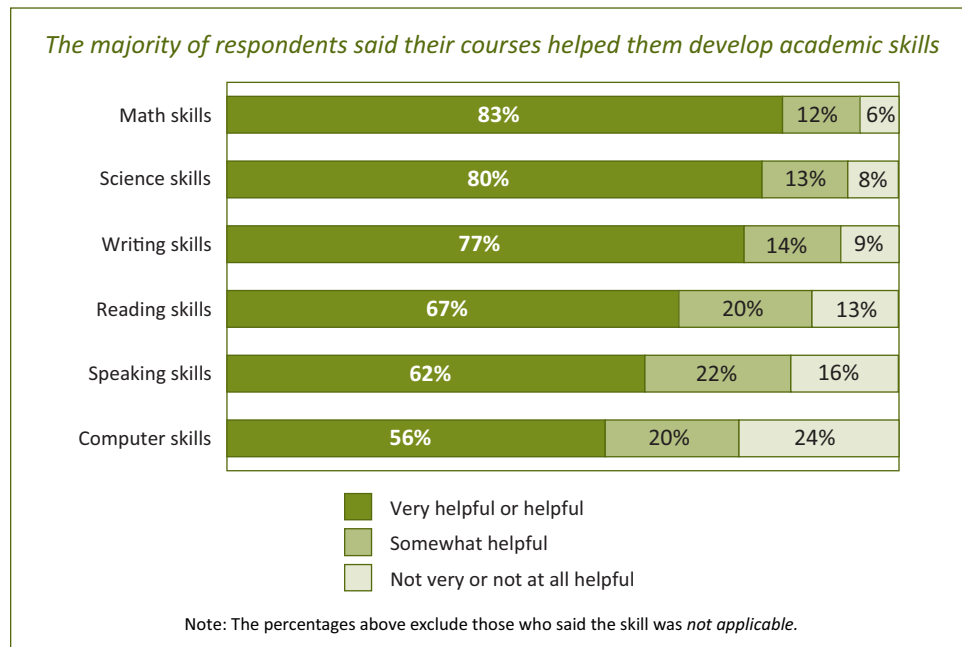
¹ For information on the Diploma, Associate Degree, and Certificate Student Outcomes (DACSO) Survey, please see outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DACSO/DACSO_Info.aspx.

goal had been to prepare for further education were as likely as those who had enrolled for other reasons to say their courses had helped.

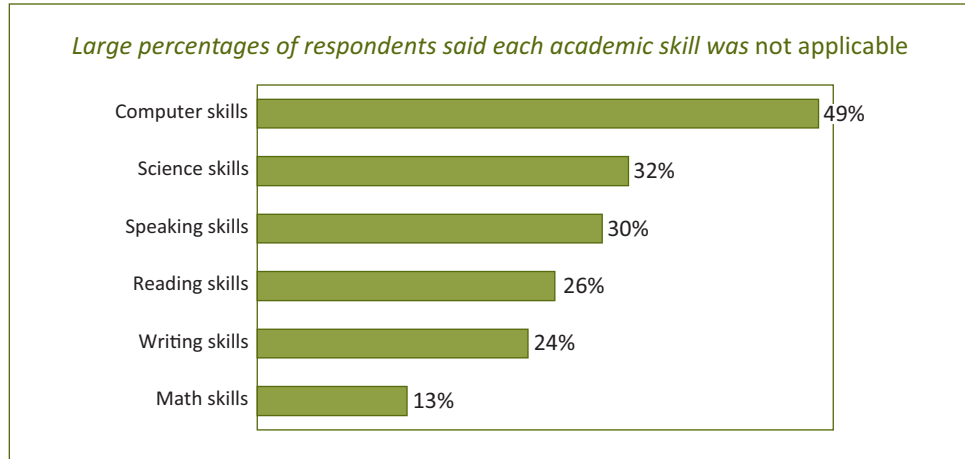


Evaluation of education

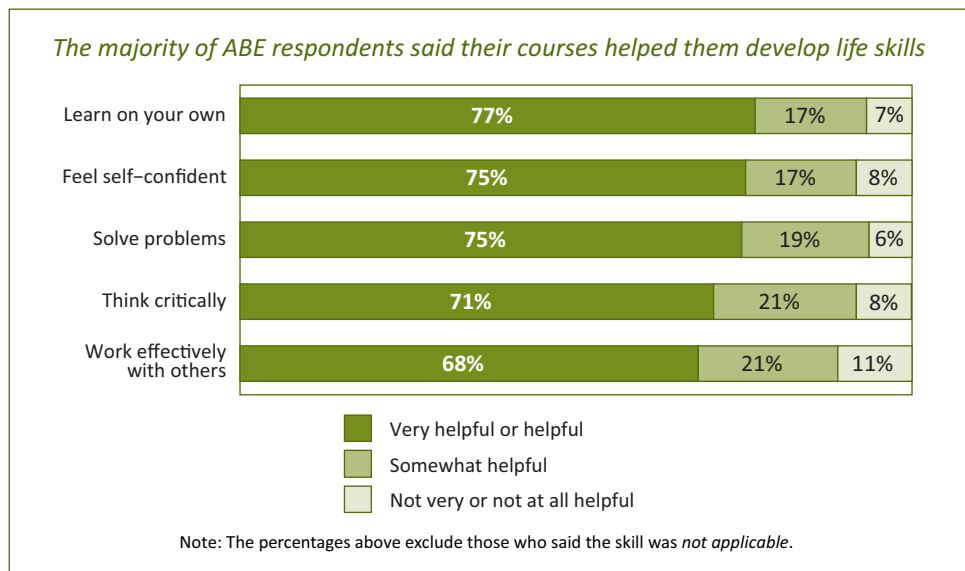
Former students were asked how helpful their ABE courses had been in their development of the following academic skills: writing, reading, speaking, math, computer, and science. They were asked to use a 5-point scale ranging from *very helpful* to *not at all helpful*. For each skill, a majority said their courses had been *very helpful* or *helpful*. Respondents were most likely to give high ratings to the help received developing math skills.



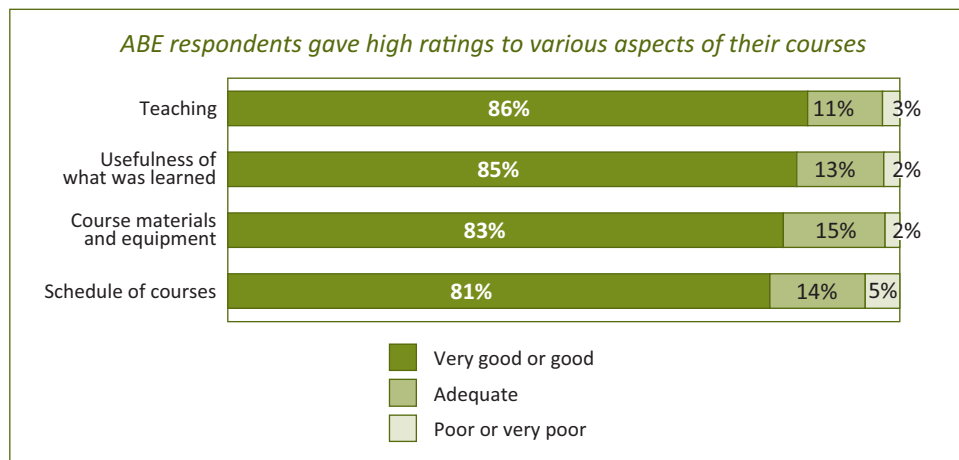
For each of these identified skills, significant numbers of respondents said *not applicable*, indicating they thought the skill was not relevant to the courses they took. The percentages of respondents saying *not applicable* varied by skill, representing from one-tenth (for math skills) to almost one-half of all respondents (for computer skills). This may be the result of students having been enrolled only in specific subject areas; the largest portion of ABE students took mathematics courses, followed by English, then science. Very few courses were in computing.



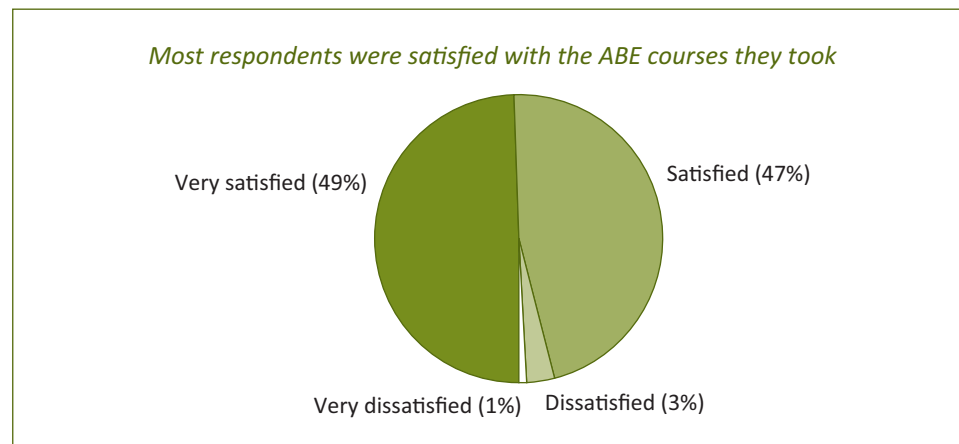
Respondents were also asked to rate a series of other skills that their ABE courses might have helped them develop; they were the abilities to think critically, solve problems, work effectively with others, learn on your own, and feel self-confident. In most cases very few respondents said the skill was not applicable to their courses. The percentages of those saying *not applicable* ranged from 4 percent for *solve problems* to 12 percent for *work effectively with others*. Large majorities of respondents said their courses helped them develop these life skills.



In addition to asking respondents to consider how their courses helped them develop skills, the survey asked them to rate certain aspects of their training, using the following scale: *very good*, *good*, *adequate*, *poor*, or *very poor*. The aspects of their courses that they were asked to rate were the usefulness of what was learned, the course materials and equipment, the schedule of courses, and the teaching. In each case, a large majority of respondents said the aspect was *very good* or *good*.



Survey respondents were asked to say how satisfied they were overall with the courses they took. Almost all (96 percent) were *very satisfied* or *satisfied*.



After providing a rating of their satisfaction level, ABE respondents were asked if they had any other comments about their experience with the courses they took. A sizeable number (40 percent) commented. Over half of the comments made were purely positive. In particular, former students were very appreciative of their teachers, using words like helpful, great, and amazing.

Teachers were great, very helpful, and understanding.

I think the university has an awesome selection of professors and I look forward to my next semester.

The teachers were absolutely amazing.

The teachers were very helpful and very approachable.

Many said their experience was good and helped them prepare for further study.

Very helpful in setting up the basic foundation to continue with post-secondary education.

It was a good learning experience.

It helped prepare for university courses.

The courses got me over my fear of math.

On the other hand, almost one-quarter of those who responded to the question made comments that were largely negative. Many listed personal problems they encountered; the more general complaints were around poor advising, crowded classrooms, and long waiting lists.

Wrong courses. I was led astray and it didn't help with the GED.

I was very dissatisfied with always being on a waiting list for courses.

The class size was too large, and the skill level of the students in the class were too varied.

I felt that when I signed up, the counselling could have been better.

The remaining comments provided a combination of positive and negative observations, often with suggestions for improvement. Many mentioned a need for more flexibility in scheduling, while some wanted a slower teaching pace or more individual help.

They need more spaces available for students to take the courses. There is also a need for a greater variety in the scheduling of the courses.

I think the program needs to be more flexible to meet the challenges faced by adult students.

I felt rushed with the pace of the course. There was a lot of material to cover in the semester.

Should be more availability of courses at different times of day, especially in the evening.

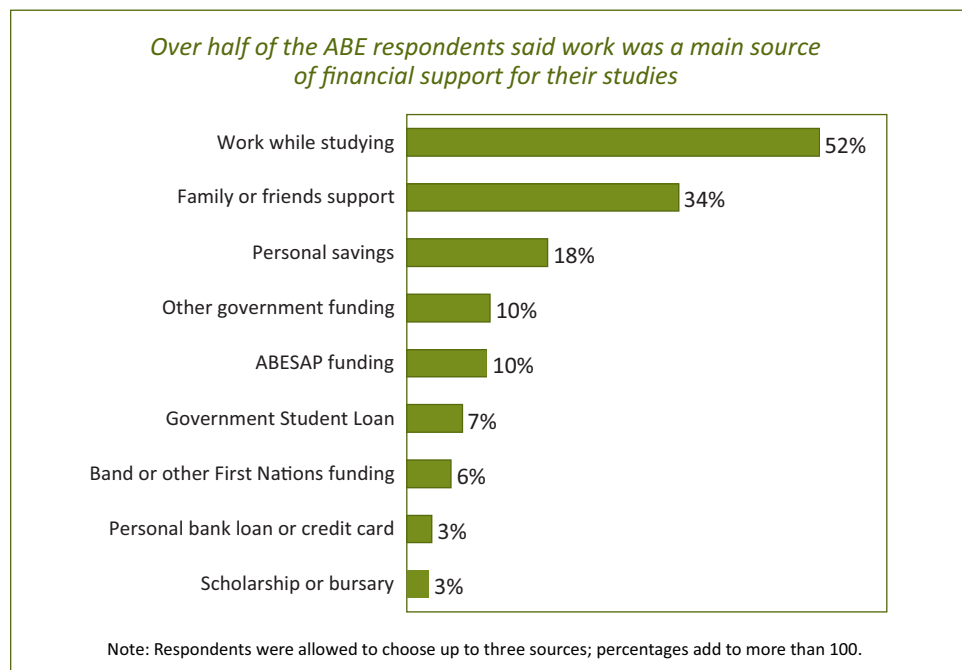
... it goes pretty fast. Maybe slow it down, or offer a pre-introduction course before we begin.

The quality was good, but I needed more individual teaching at the time.

Student finances

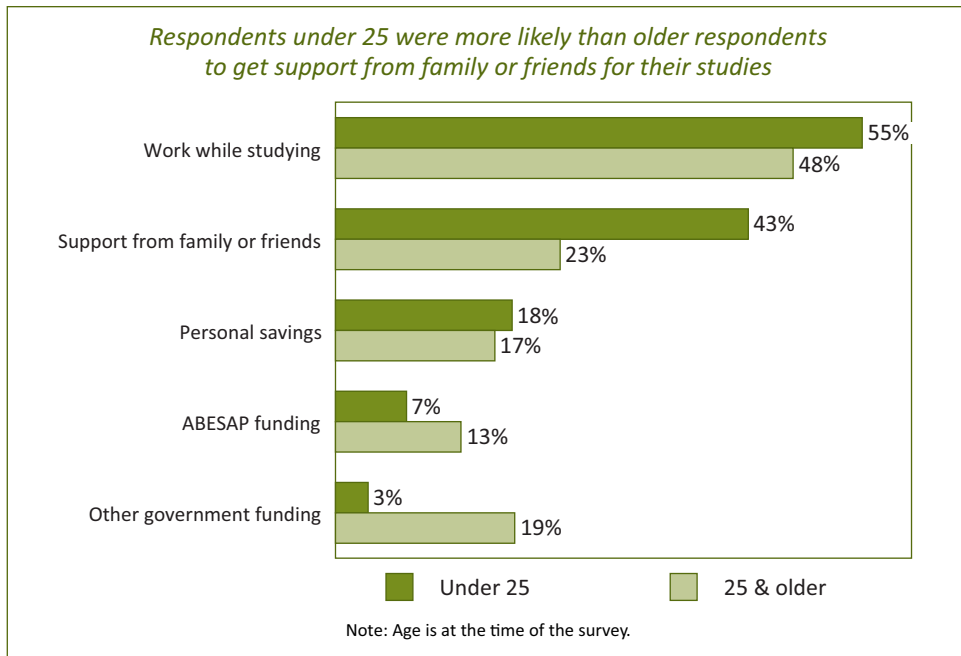
Post-secondary program planners and policy makers need information to develop and improve financial aid policies. The former students who were surveyed were asked to help by providing information on how they financed their courses and how they supported themselves during their studies.

Over half (52 percent) of ABE respondents said that employment while they studied was a main source of funding. Many others relied on the support of family or friends or used personal savings as a main source. Ten percent of respondents said that the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) was a main source of financial support.²



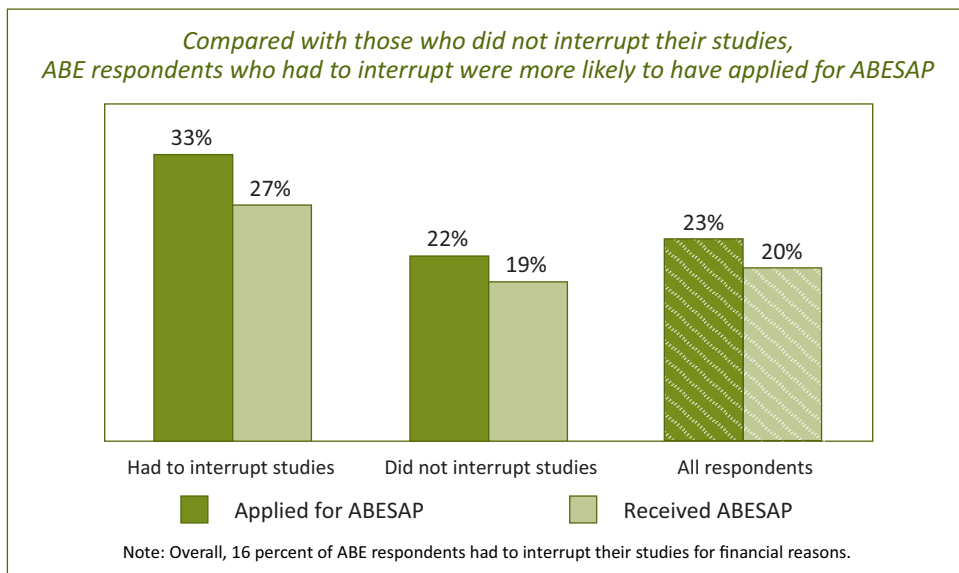
Former students who were younger than 25 when surveyed were much more likely than older respondents to have used support from family or friends: 43 percent versus 23 percent. Younger respondents were less likely than others to have used government funding (ABESAP or other government funding, such as E.I., child tax credits, income assistance, pension) as a main source of funding support for their studies.

² The Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program provides grants to help meet direct educational costs including tuition fees, books, supplies, and if applicable, transportation and unsubsidized child-care costs.

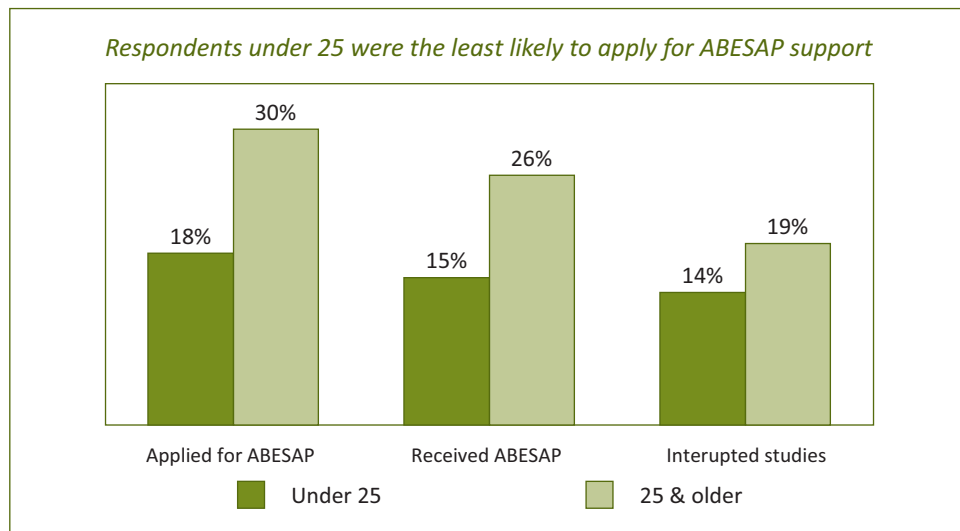


Former students were asked directly if they had applied to receive financial assistance from the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) offered through StudentAid BC. Just under one-quarter (23 percent) of the ABE respondents applied for ABESAP funding. Of those who applied, 86 percent received the funding—out of all ABE respondents, 20 percent received ABESAP funding for their studies.

Overall, 16 percent of ABE respondents had to interrupt their studies for financial reasons. These respondents were more likely than the respondents who did not interrupt their studies to have asked for support from ABESAP: 33 percent and 22 percent, respectively.



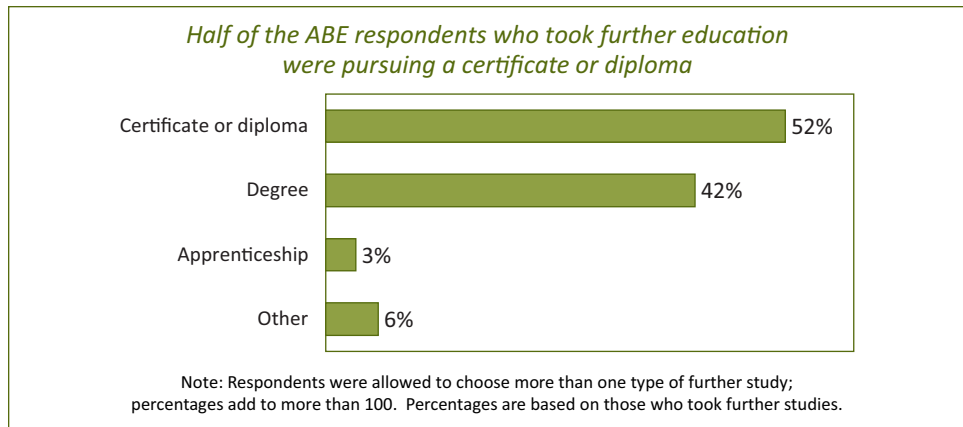
The youngest group of respondents—those under 25, who represent over half of the ABE respondents—were the least likely to apply for and receive ABESAP support. Of those who applied, the under 25 group received ABESAP support at about the same rate as older respondents. Compared with respondents 25 and older, younger respondents were less likely to say they had to interrupt their studies for financial reasons.



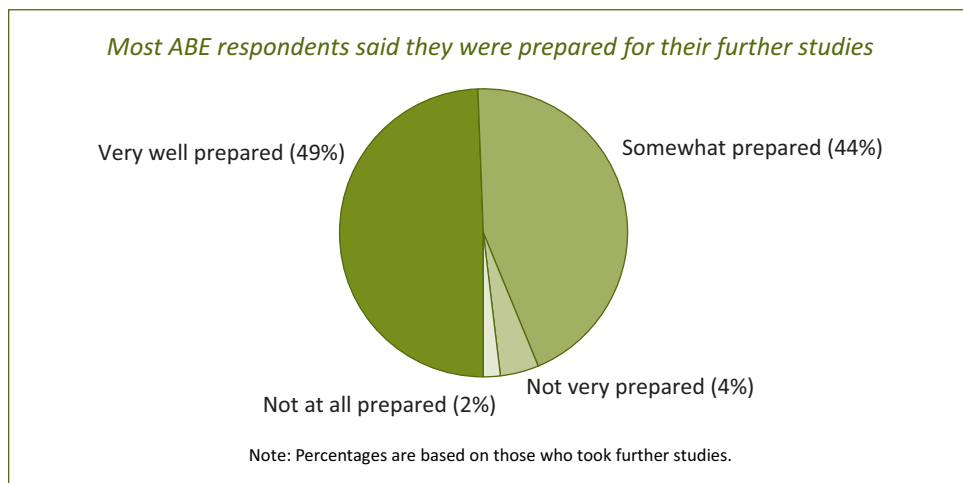
Further education

At the time of the survey, a majority (58 percent) of ABE respondents were enrolled in a program of study or taking courses other than ABE. Of the respondents who were not studying when surveyed, almost one-third (30 percent) had taken additional courses since leaving their ABE studies. In all, 71 percent of former ABE students pursued some form of further education.

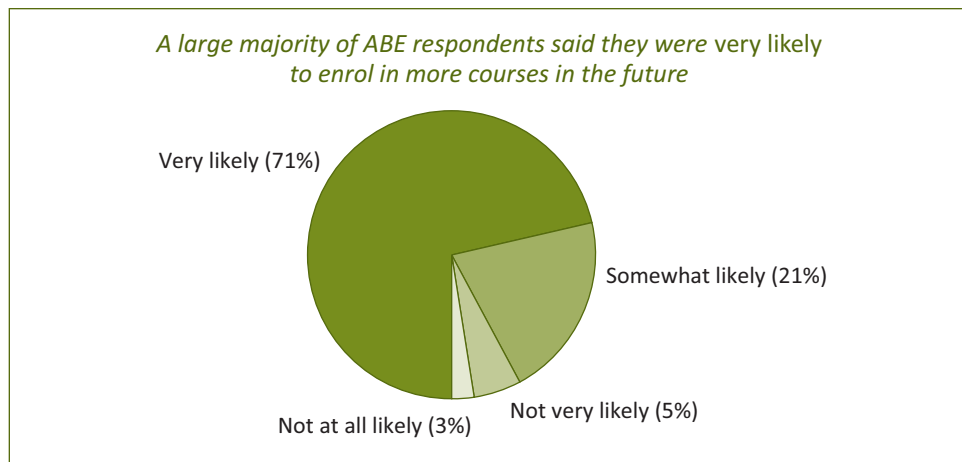
Over half (52 percent) of the respondents who took or were taking further education were studying for a diploma or certificate, although almost as many were enrolled in degree programs. A small number of respondents went into apprenticeships; others took courses for employment or personal interest, and a few were taking prerequisites for unspecified programs.



Almost all of the respondents who took further education said their ABE studies had prepared them for the courses they enrolled in since: 94 percent said they were *very well* or *somewhat prepared*.



All respondents, including those who had already taken or were taking further studies, were asked to rate the likelihood that they would enrol in any more courses at a B.C. college, institute, or university in the future. A majority of 71 percent said it was *very likely*, and a further 21 percent said it was *somewhat likely*.



Employment outcomes

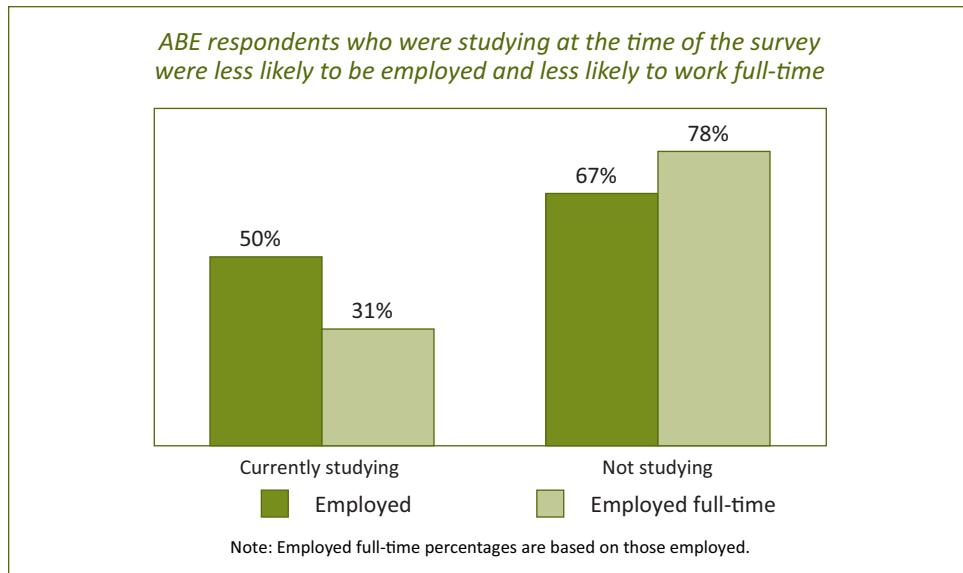
At the time of the survey, 70 percent of former ABE students were in the labour force; that is, they were employed or looking for work. Based on those in the labour force, the unemployment rate was 17 percent.³

The rate of participation in the labour force was affected by the number of respondents who elected to continue their studies rather than look for employment. Of those who were *not* studying at the time of the survey, 84 percent were in the labour force, and 67 percent were employed.

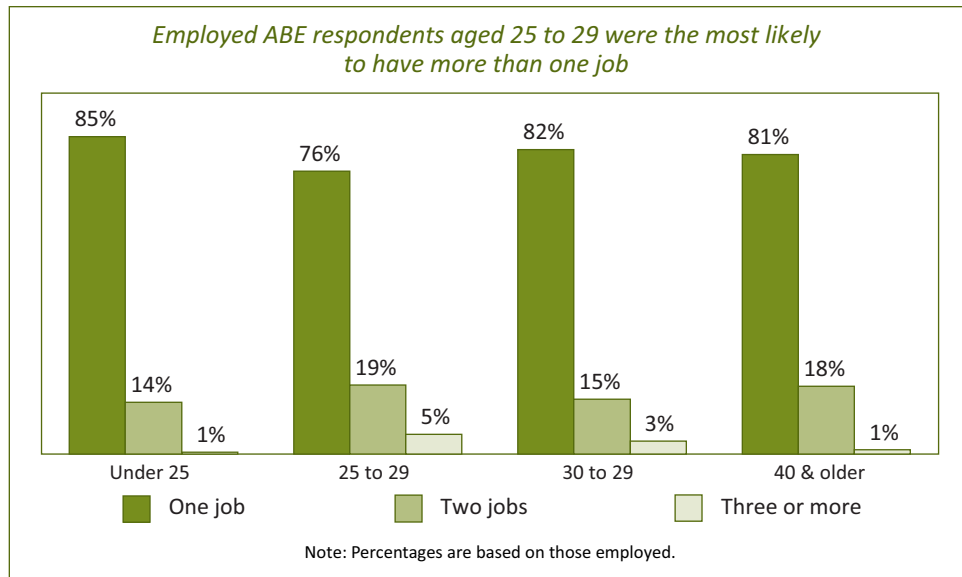
Well over half (57 percent) of all ABE respondents were employed, and over half (54 percent) of those respondents worked full-time.⁴ Part-time employment is quite common among students, so it is not surprising that the rate of full-time work was much higher for those who were *not* studying at the time of the survey. Over three-quarters (78 percent) of employed respondents who were not also studying when surveyed worked full-time.

³ The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percentage of the labour force.

⁴ Full-time employment is defined as 30 or more paid hours per week, at all jobs.

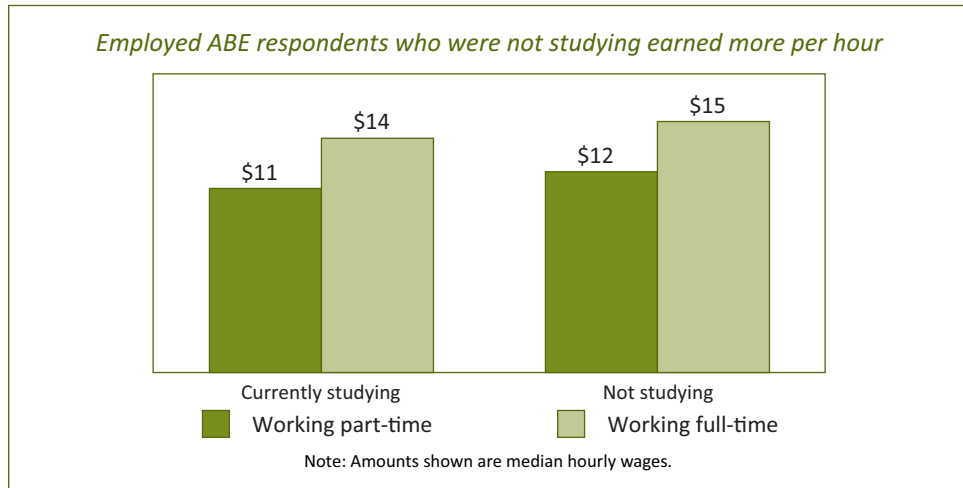


Most employed respondents (83 percent) had one job; 15 percent had two jobs, and 2 percent had three or more jobs. There were some differences by age. Former students who were younger than 25 at the time of the survey, were the least likely to have more than one job—15 percent had two or more jobs. The group of ABE respondents who were 25 to 29 when they were surveyed were the most likely to have more than one job: 24 percent had two or more jobs.

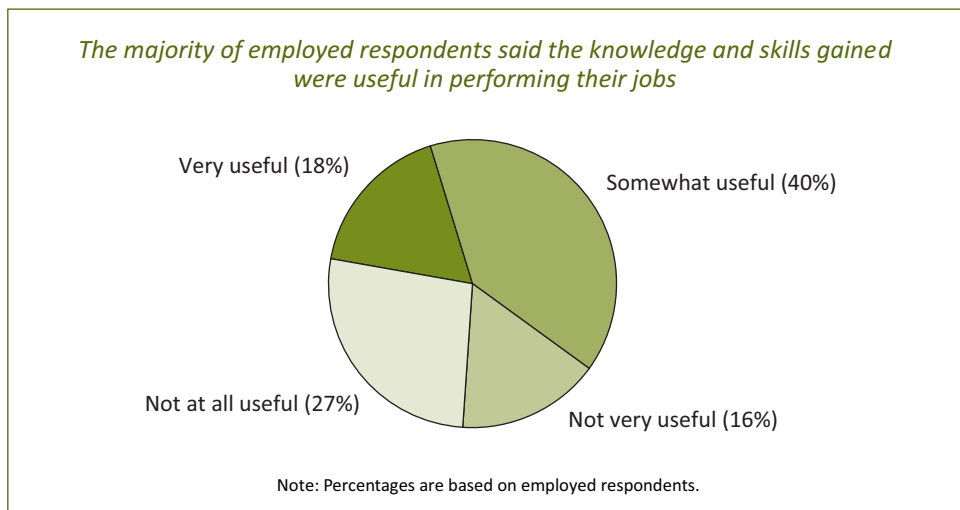


The employed respondents were asked to give their gross salary or hourly wage before deductions. If they had more than one job, they were asked to give the amount earned at their main job (the one at which they worked the most hours). The median

wage of former ABE students was \$13 per hour.⁵ Those who were working full-time made more: \$15 per hour. Employed respondents who were studying at the time of survey and working part-time made less, at \$11 dollars per hour.



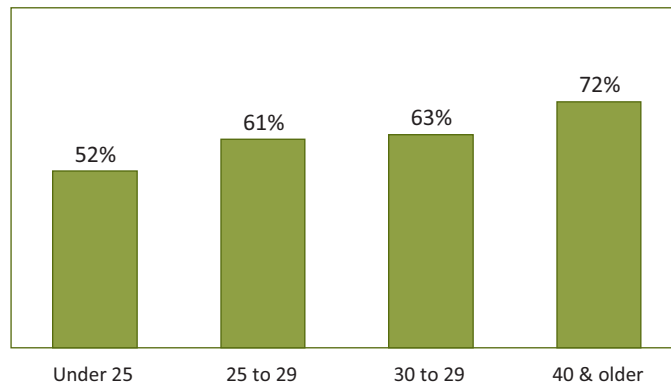
Employed respondents were asked how useful the knowledge and skills they gained in their ABE courses were in performing their jobs. Even though the majority of respondents had enrolled in their courses to prepare for further education not for employment, well over half of those who were asked this question said the courses had been *very* or *somewhat* useful.



Older respondents gave more positive ratings of the usefulness of the knowledge and skills gained. The percentage of those who said their courses were *very* or *somewhat* useful rose 20 percentage points, from those under 25 (52 percent) to those 40 and older (72 percent).

⁵ All wage amounts shown are medians.

The percentage of respondents who said the knowledge and skills they gained in their ABE courses were very or somewhat useful in performing their jobs increased with age



Note: Percentages above are based on employed respondents. Age is at the time of the survey.

Findings: Former ESL Students

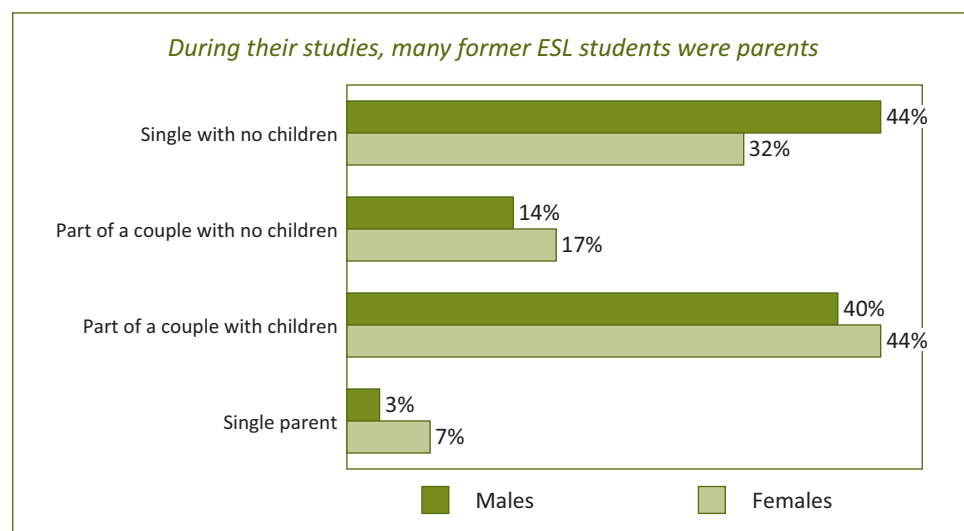
In 2011, 812 former English as a Second Language (ESL) students responded to the Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey, for a response rate of 48 percent. (The number of eligible students and respondents by institution can be found in the [Appendix](#).)

Description of former ESL students

The DEVSO survey included a number of questions intended to collect information to help those who are responsible for developing programs and planning services for developmental students. Data on gender and age come from administrative records.

Compared with their ABE counterparts, The former ESL students who responded to the DEVSO survey were significantly older. Their median age at the time of the survey was 34 and almost two-thirds (66 percent) were 30 or older.

Almost half (48 percent) of ESL respondents were parents during their studies, and over two-thirds (68 percent) were female. Female respondents were somewhat more likely than male respondents to have been parents when they took their ESL courses.



Almost all (98 percent) of the ESL respondents were born outside of Canada. Over one-third (35 percent) of the 2011 respondents were from China, including Hong Kong. A further 12 percent were from Iran and 9 percent from India. In total, 68

countries were named, although the top three countries accounted for 56 percent of respondents.

Almost all of the ESL respondents were born outside of Canada

Country of Origin	
China and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region	35%
Iran	12%
India	9%
Philippines	4%
Korea, South	4%
Russian Federation	4%
Taiwan	3%
Mexico	2%
Ukraine	2%
Canada	2%
Colombia	2%
Romania	2%
Japan	1%
Peru	1%
Thailand	1%
Viet Nam	1%
Belarus	1%
Brazil	1%
Chile	1%
Germany	1%
Korea, North	1%
Serbia	1%
Guatemala	1%
Turkey	1%
Other	10%

The survey respondents who were born outside of Canada were asked what their immigration status had been during their studies. Seventy-five percent said they were permanent residents, and 22 percent said they were naturalized Canadian citizens.

During their studies, the majority of ESL respondents were permanent residents

Immigration/Citizenship Status	n	%
Permanent resident/landed immigrant	577	75%
Canadian citizen	168	22%
Other visa	14	2%
Permanent resident/refugee	4	1%
Refugee claimant	4	1%
Other	3	0%

Note: Percentages are based on those born outside Canada.

The former students who were born outside Canada were asked what their highest level of formal education had been before they came to Canada. A large majority (74 percent) had studied at the post-secondary level and over half (56 percent) had a degree—a bachelor’s or higher.

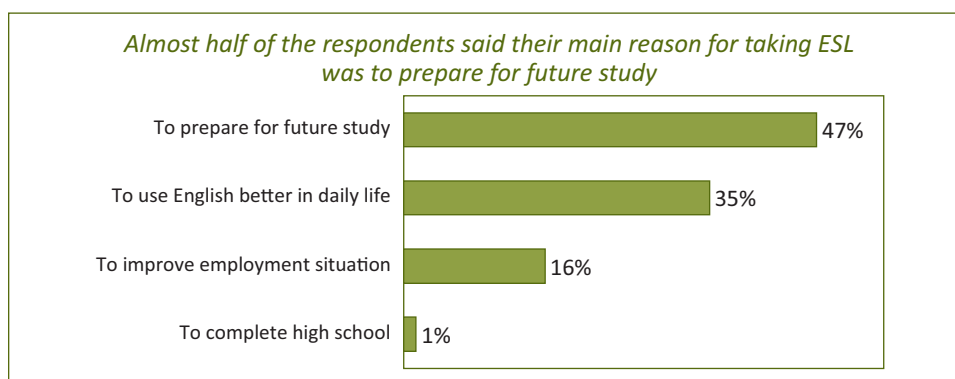
The majority of respondents had received a post-secondary credential before coming to Canada

Highest Level of Education	
Masters, doctorate, law, medicine or other graduate degree	14%
Certificate or diploma above Bachelor’s level	2%
Bachelor’s degree	41%
Post-secondary certificate, diploma, or trades qualification	11%
Some post-secondary (no credential)	7%
High school diploma	21%
Did not complete high school	5%

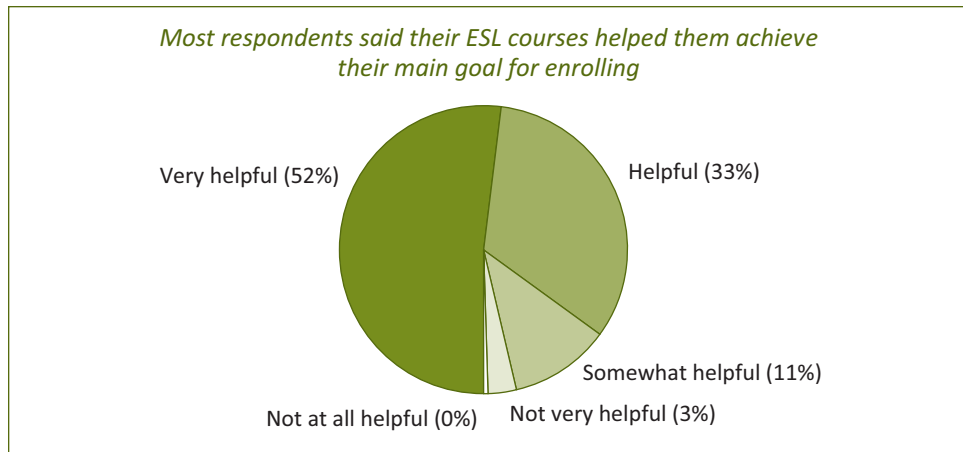
Note: Percentages are based on those born outside Canada.

Reasons for enrolling

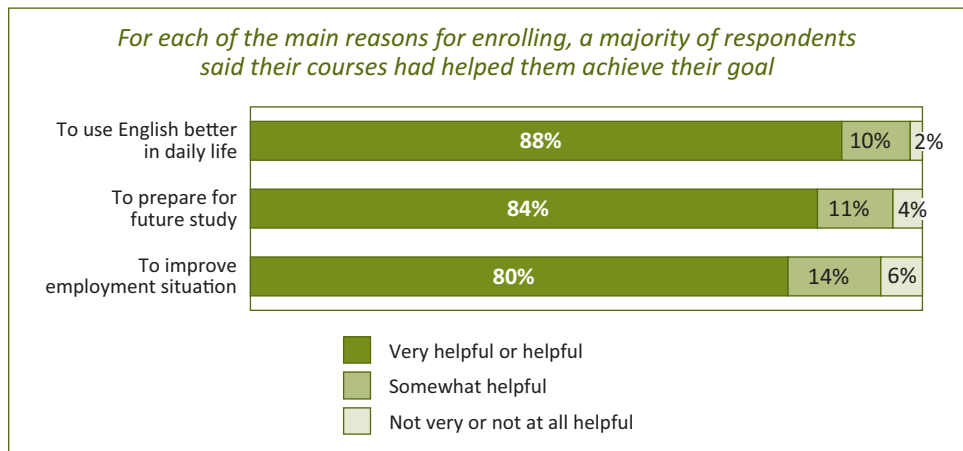
Former students were asked to think back to the time when they first started their courses and to state their most important goal or reason for enrolling in their ESL studies. Almost half (47 percent) of the respondents who answered this question said they took the courses to prepare for future study. Over one-third said they studied to use English better in daily life, and a smaller proportion wanted to improve their employment situation.



Most respondents said their ESL courses helped them achieve their most important goal for enrolling: overall, 96 percent said their courses were *very helpful*, *helpful*, or *somewhat helpful*.

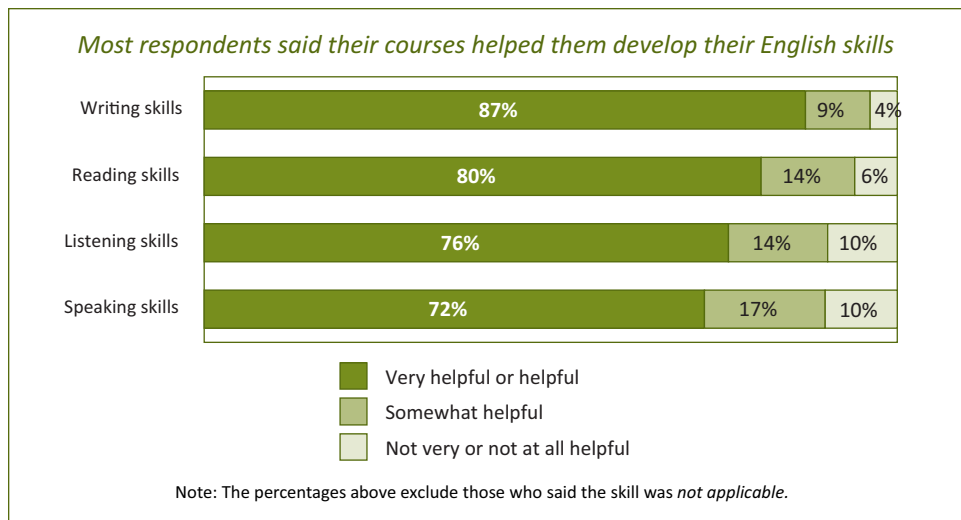


For each of the three main reasons for enrolling, the majority of respondents said their courses had helped them achieve that goal: from 94 to 98 percent said their courses were *very helpful*, *helpful*, or *somewhat helpful*.

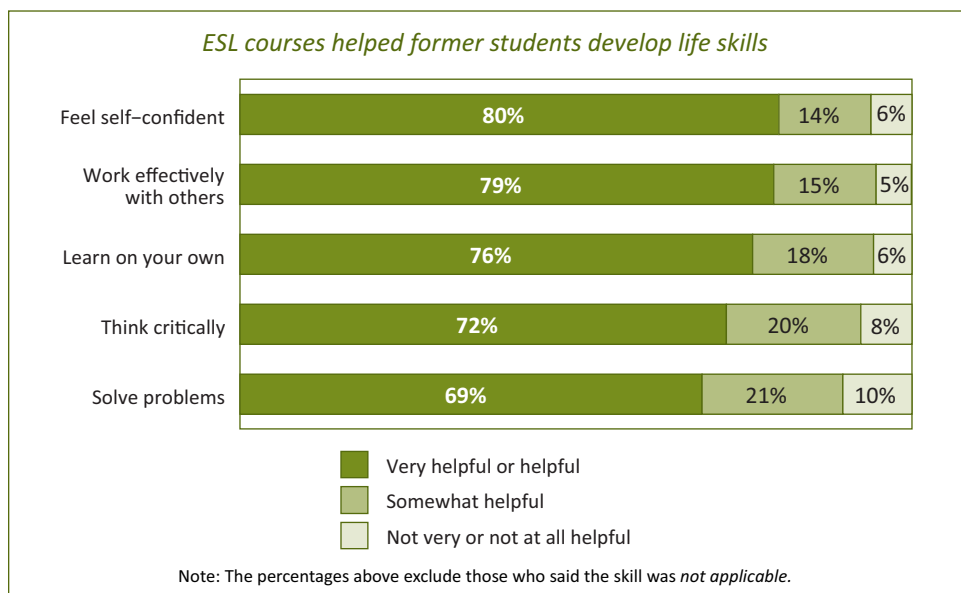


Evaluation of education

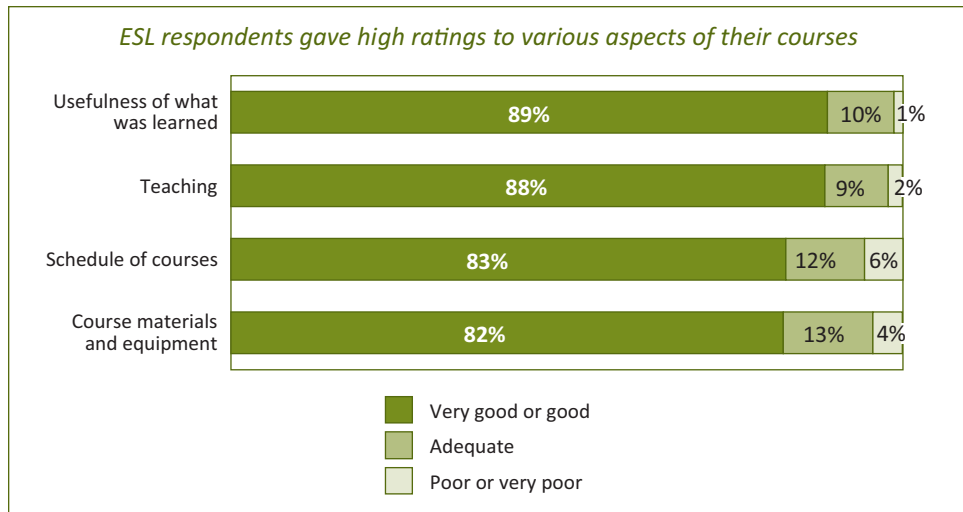
Former students were asked to rate the helpfulness of their courses with regard to development of English skills: writing, reading, listening, and speaking. Most respondents said they found their courses to be *very helpful* or *helpful*. They were most likely to give high ratings to the help received developing writing skills. For each skill listed, a few respondents (2 to 3 percent) said that particular skill wasn't applicable to their studies.



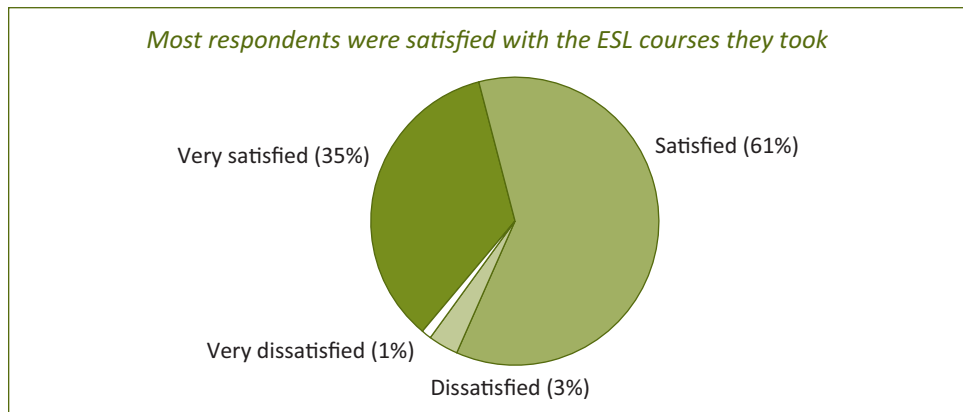
Survey respondents were also asked to rate how their courses helped them develop a range of other skills, including critical thinking and self-confidence. Again, in all cases, a majority rated their courses *very helpful* or *helpful*. Not surprisingly, given the focus of English language training courses, the ratings for these life skills were not quite as high as those given to the development of English skills.



Survey respondents were also asked to rate certain aspects of their studies: the usefulness of what was learned, the course materials and equipment, the schedule of courses, and the teaching. The majority of respondents gave ratings of *very good* or *good* to all items; in particular, they gave high ratings to the usefulness of what was learned—89 percent said it was *very good* or *good*.



Former ESL students were asked to give an overall satisfaction rating to the courses they took—95 percent said they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied*. This compares favourably with the satisfaction ratings given by ESL respondents to the 2010 DEVSO Survey, where 94 percent said they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied*.



After providing a rating of their satisfaction level, respondents were asked if they had any other comments about their experience with the courses they took. Over half (53 percent) of ESL respondents made a comment. Well over one-third of the comments were entirely positive, noting how helpful the courses had been and that the teachers and teaching methods were good.

The teachers were very helpful.

The courses helped me get a better job.

The teaching methods were helpful for newly immigrated students.

They really helped with my understanding of English grammar.

I was very satisfied because I had very good teachers.... The course was very useful to me and it was a very good experience.

These classes helped me to have self-confidence in order to go into society and find a job, and even go to university.

The courses were very helpful with my work, and everything I learned was very necessary for communicating on the job.

The ESL course was very helpful for entry into further studies.

While more than one-third of the comments were positive, fewer than one-third were negative. Although many of the negative comments described personal problems, the more general comments showed frustration with the marking standards or administrative processes and difficulty with the material or the way it was taught.

I feel uncomfortable speaking English and ESL [was] not very helpful.

I think the marking standards frustrated me ... I never knew why I failed.

The courses seemed like they were too easy at higher levels

Learning vocabulary by memorization is not effective. All the vocabulary that was not used in real life was forgotten.

Process for admission is very hard ... registering for my second class was not possible because it was full.

The remaining responses were a combination of positive and negative and usually included a suggestion for improvement. Respondents were concerned about the cost of the courses and wanted more flexibility in scheduling. A number mentioned they wanted more information on Canadian culture, and many noted that they could have used more practice speaking.

I think that the financial aid for education is not enough.

Immigrants should all receive [support] so that we can learn about Canadian history and culture as well as language.

There should be more flexibility in the times that courses are offered to students.

I hope that the instructors can teach more local culture ... it would make the learning more relevant to local life.

It would be beneficial to include more oral English practice.

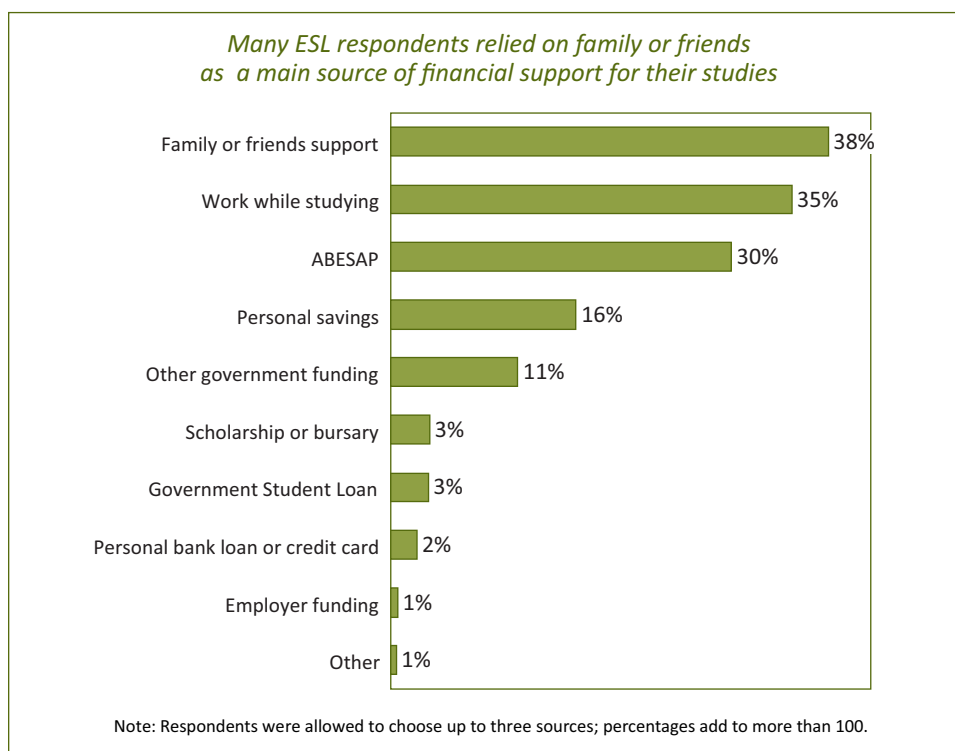
More courses and/or course offerings for English pronunciation skills would be very helpful.

The course should offer more opportunities to practice speaking skills, such as more in-class speaking.

Student finances

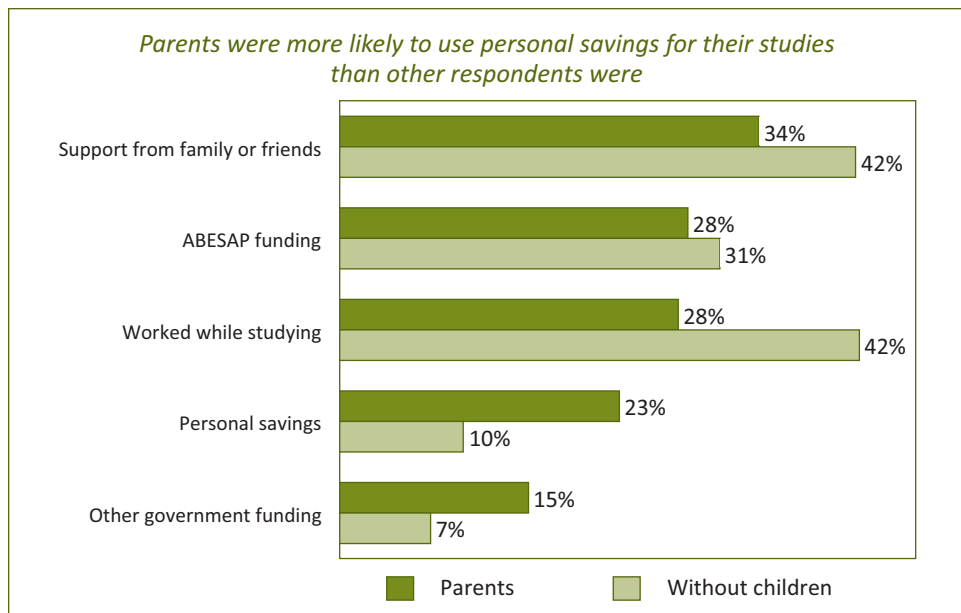
Post-secondary program planners and policy makers need information to develop and improve financial aid policies. The former students who were surveyed were asked to help by providing information on how they financed their courses and how they supported themselves during their studies.

A large portion (38 percent) of ESL respondents said that they relied on support from family or friends as a main source of funding. Almost as many (35 percent) worked while they studied. A significant number (30 percent) said that the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) was a main source of financial support.⁶



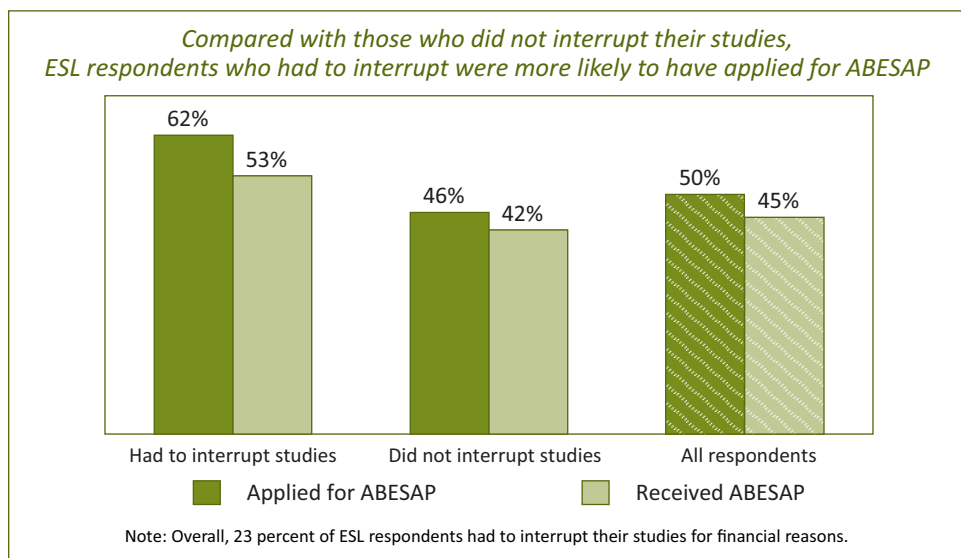
Respondents who were parents were less likely than those without children to have cited work while studying as a main source of funding support for their studies. They were also less likely to have had support from family and friends and somewhat more likely to use personal savings and government funding other than ABESAP (child tax credits, income assistance, etc.).

⁶ The Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program provides grants to help meet direct educational costs including tuition fees, books, supplies, and if applicable, transportation and unsubsidized child-care costs.



Former students were asked directly if they had applied to receive financial assistance from the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program (ABESAP) offered through StudentAid BC. Almost half (49 percent) of ESL respondents said they had applied for funding under ABESAP. Of those who applied, 91 percent received funding—that represents 45 percent of all ESL respondents.

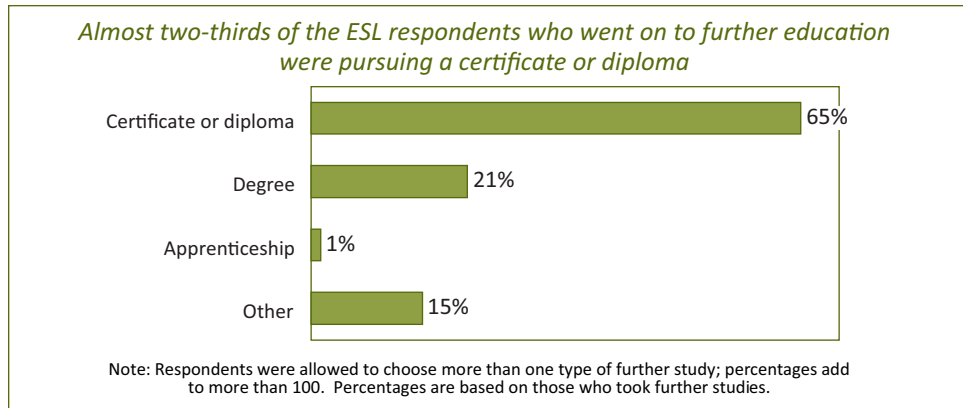
Overall, 23 percent of ESL respondents had to interrupt their studies for financial reasons. These respondents were more likely than others to have asked for support from ABESAP: 62 percent and 46 percent, respectively.



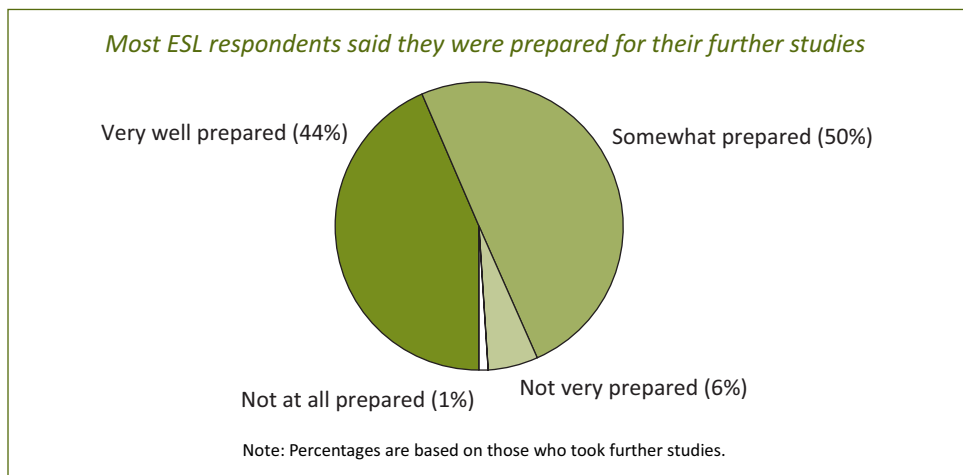
Further education

When they were surveyed, 44 percent of ESL respondents said they were enrolled in a program of study or taking courses other than ESL. Of those who were not studying when surveyed, 33 percent had taken additional courses since leaving their ESL studies. In all, 63 percent of ESL respondents said they pursued some form of further education.

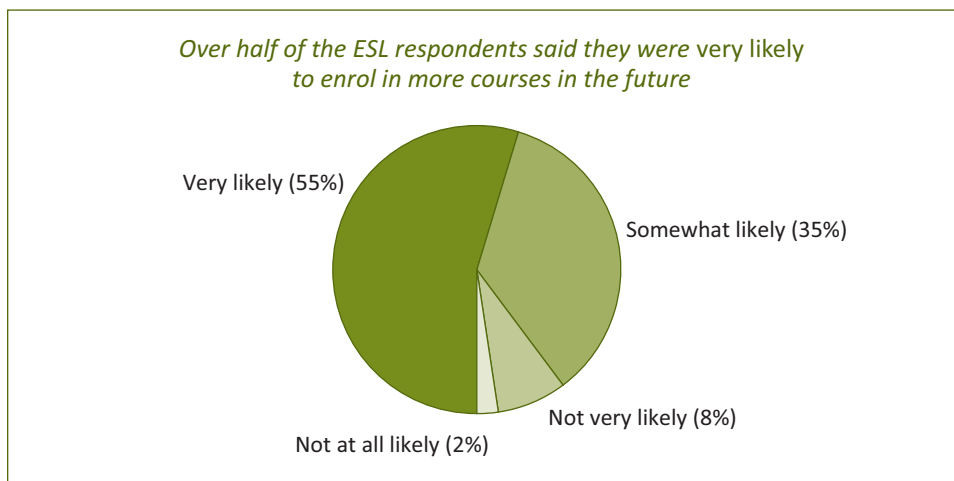
Almost two-thirds (65 percent) of those who took or were taking further education were studying for a diploma or certificate. A significant number were enrolled in degree programs, and many others were in courses for employment or personal interest or taking prerequisites for unspecified programs.



Almost all of the respondents in further education said their ESL studies had prepared them for the courses they enrolled in since: 93 percent said they were *very well* or *somewhat prepared*.



All respondents, including those who had already taken or were taking further studies, were asked to rate the likelihood that they would enrol in any more courses at a B.C. college, institute, or university in the future. A majority of 55 percent said it was *very likely*, and a further 35 percent said it was *somewhat likely*.



Employment outcomes

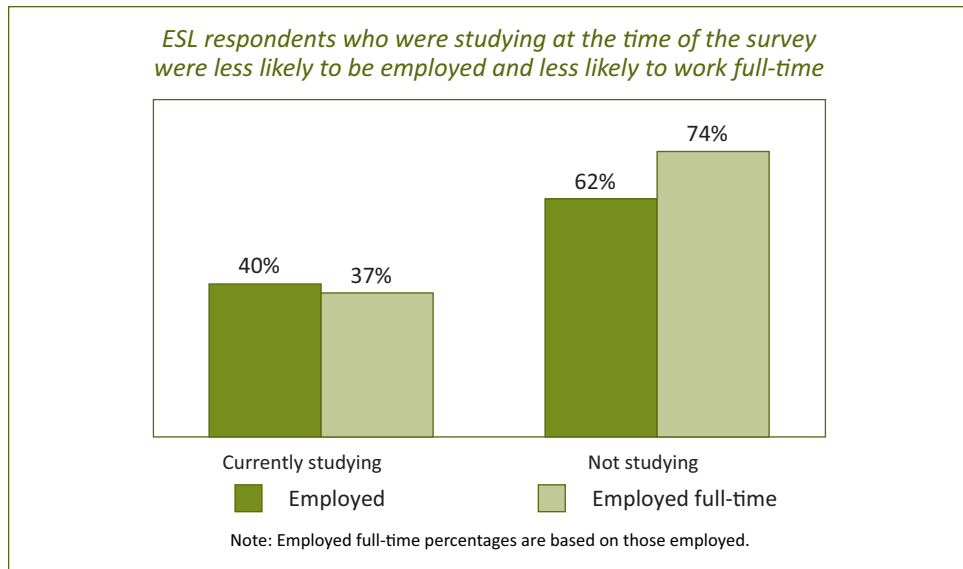
At the time of the survey, 71 percent of ESL respondents were in the labour force; that is, they were employed or looking for work. Based on those in the labour force, the unemployment rate was 25 percent.⁷

The rate of participation in the labour force was affected by the number of respondents who elected to continue their studies rather than look for employment. Of those who were *not* studying at the time of the survey, 81 percent were in the labour force, and 62 percent were employed.

Over half (52 percent) of all ESL respondents were employed, and 62 percent of those who were employed worked full-time.⁸ Part-time employment is quite common among students, so it is not surprising that the rate of full-time work was much higher for those who were *not* studying at the time of the survey. Almost three-quarters (74 percent) of employed respondents who were not also studying when surveyed worked full-time.

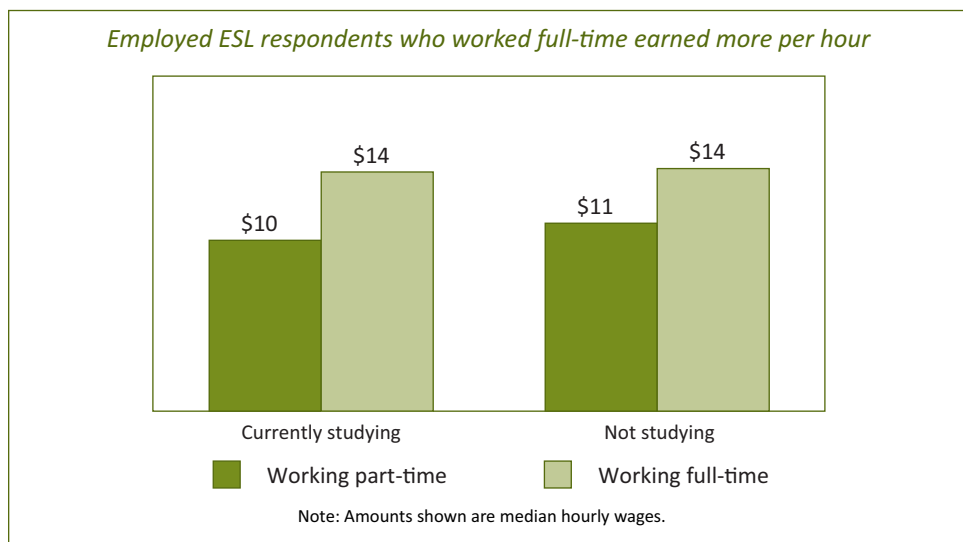
⁷ The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed as a percentage of the labour force.

⁸ Full-time employment is defined as 30 or more paid hours per week, at all jobs.



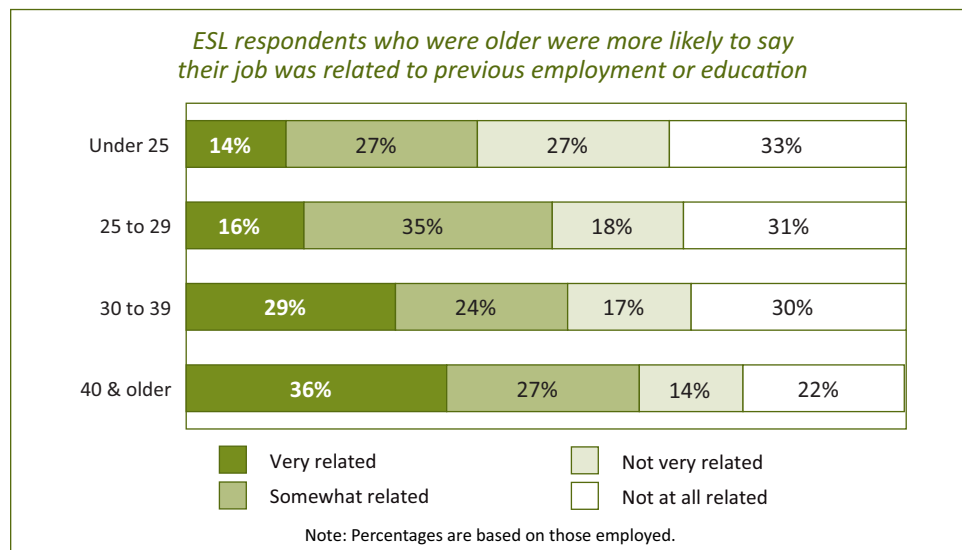
Most employed respondents (88 percent) had one job. Of the 12 percent of respondents who had more than one job, very few had more than two (only four respondents had more than two jobs). The number of jobs did not vary much for those currently studying or by age.

The employed respondents were asked to give their gross salary or hourly wage before deductions. If they had more than one job, they were asked to give the amount earned at their main job (the one at which they worked the most hours). The median wage of ESL respondents was \$13 per hour.⁹ Those who were working full-time made a little more: \$14 per hour. Employed respondents who were studying at the time of survey and working part-time made less: \$10 per hour.

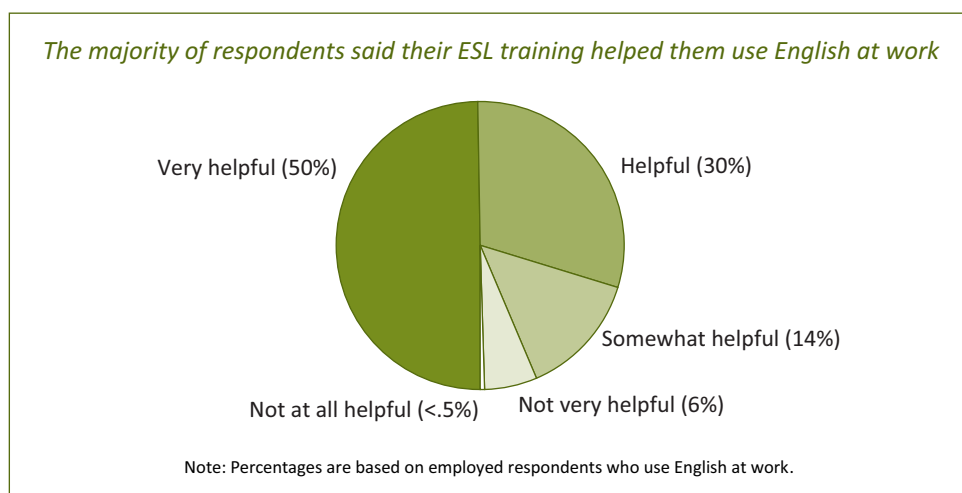


⁹ All wage amounts shown are medians.

Employed ESL respondents were asked if their current job was related to any education or employment they had before they began their English studies at a B.C. post-secondary institution. (If they had more than one job, they were asked to think about their main job—the one at which they worked the most hours.) Over half (54 percent) said it was *very* or *somewhat related*. Older students were more likely than younger ones to have jobs that were related to previous education or employment: 36 percent of those 40 and older said their job was *very related* and 27 percent said it was *somewhat related*.



The employed ESL respondents were also asked if they spoke English at work, and if so, how their English language training helped them in the workplace. Almost all (97 percent) said they spoke English at work, and most said their ESL courses helped them: 80 percent of those who used English at work said their training was *very helpful* or *helpful*.



Conclusion

The developmental programs and courses delivered in B.C.'s public post-secondary system are diverse, as are the students who take them. Students enrol in these courses for many reasons, although the majority want to take these studies to help them prepare for further education. In particular, Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs are usually taken by those who need to upgrade their academic skills before they pursue post-secondary studies. English as a Second Language (ESL) training helps those who are learning English as an additional language to prepare for employment and further education.

The 2011 Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey was conducted with 2,509 former developmental students, collecting information for the Province and post-secondary institutions that will help develop policies, programs, and services for ABE and ESL students.

Former ABE Students

The former ABE students who were surveyed tended to be young—their median age at the time of the survey was 24. Over three-quarters of the respondents had a high school diploma or equivalent before they enrolled in their ABE courses. The rate of high school completion was significantly higher for younger students (those under 25), compared with older students (those over 40).

A small percentage of respondents took ABE courses to complete high school or improve their employment situation, but most respondents said their reason for enrolling in ABE courses was to prepare for further education—they needed to upgrade skills or complete specific credits to be able to apply for post-secondary studies. Whatever their reason for enrolling, most respondents said their courses helped them achieve their most important goal.

Respondents were asked to rate the help they received to develop specific skills. Math skills were rated high by the largest portion of respondents, followed by science skills, then writing. A much lower percentage of respondents gave high ratings to the help they received in developing computer skills. The ratings parallel the proportions of students who took courses in those subject areas: the largest number of courses taken was in mathematics, followed by science courses, then English or writing courses. There were very few courses in computers.

Irrespective of subject area, large majorities of respondents said their courses helped them develop life skills, such as the ability to learn on their own, feel self-confident, and solve problems. They also gave high ratings to some general aspects of their courses, especially to the quality of teaching and the usefulness of what they learned. Almost all respondents said they were *very satisfied* or *satisfied* with their courses.

When asked if they wanted to say anything else about their experiences, respondents made comments that supported the ratings they had given—there were many compliments to teachers and many notes about being well prepared for further study. Some respondents had negative comments about long wait lists, large class sizes, and inflexible schedules, while others turned their comments into suggestions for improvement: pace courses more for learners (e.g., a slower pace for older learners), provide more individual help, and be more flexible with course scheduling. This last suggestion was made a number of times, in spite of the rating of *very good* or *good* that was given to *the schedule of your courses* by the majority of respondents.

More flexibility in scheduling would be especially helpful for those who were working while they studied—over half of the respondents said that employment was a main source of financial support for their studies. Support from family or friends was also important for ABE students, especially for those who were younger. Older students were more likely than younger to request financial aid from the Adult Basic Education Student Assistance Program.

A very large majority went on to further education, most to pursue a post-secondary credential. Almost all of those who continued studying said their ABE courses helped prepare them for their further studies. Whether they were studying or not at the time of the survey, almost all of the respondents said they were *very likely* or *somewhat likely* to enrol in more courses at a B.C. college, institute, or university in the future.

The high rate of further education had an impact on the labour force participation rate and on the percentage of respondents who were employed when they were surveyed. The employment rate of those who were working and studying at the time of the survey was significantly lower than the rate of those who were working only. Of those who were employed, the majority acknowledged that the knowledge and skills they gained through their ABE courses were useful in the performance of their jobs. Older respondents (40 and older) were much more likely than younger respondents (under 25) to say what they learned was useful for their employment.

The outcomes of former ABE students reflect their reasons for enrolling and the focus of the courses—preparation for further education. Respondents' high rates of further education and their stated interest in future studies are evidence of the success of ABE preparatory studies.

Former ESL Students

The former ESL students who responded to the DEVSO survey were significantly older than their ABE counterparts, with a median age of 34 at the time of the survey. Over two-thirds were female and almost half were parents during their studies. Virtually all ESL respondents were born outside Canada; at the time they took their ESL courses, three-quarters were permanent residents.

The majority of the ESL respondents who were from outside Canada had post-secondary credentials. In spite of their high level of education, almost half of the respondents said that preparation for further study was the reason they enrolled in ESL courses. Others wanted to become more fluent in English or improve their employment situation. Whatever their reason for enrolling, almost all respondents said their courses helped them achieve their main goal. In particular, those who wanted to use English better were even more likely than others to say their courses helped them achieve their goal.

ESL respondents were also likely to say their courses helped them develop the basic English skills of writing, reading, listening, and speaking. The skills ratings were ranked in that order, with writing skills receiving the most *very helpful* or *helpful* ratings and speaking skills, the least (although the percentage who said their courses helped them to develop speaking skills was still a significant majority).

Former ESL students also gave high ratings to how their courses helped them develop a number of life skills, particularly the abilities to feel self-confident and work with others. Given that the emphasis of ESL training is on developing language skills, the positive ratings given for the development of these other skills suggest that the benefits of ESL courses extend beyond the classroom.

ESL respondents were very likely to give high ratings to specific aspects of their courses, particularly the usefulness of what they learned and the quality of the teaching. The comments made by many respondents confirmed the ratings: they praised the teaching and described how they were helped with employment, for further studies, and in society. On the other hand, many respondents noted that they could have used more practice speaking. Some wanted more flexibility in scheduling and others were concerned about the cost of the courses.

The most-often cited sources of financial support used by respondents during their studies were family or friends, employment, and ABESAP, in that order. Almost half of the ESL respondents had received assistance from ABESAP. In spite of reported financial support from a variety of sources, almost one-quarter of ESL respondents had to interrupt their studies at some point for financial reasons.

Many former ESL students were successful in pursuing further education—almost two-thirds took further studies after leaving their ESL courses. Nearly all of the respondents who continued their studies said they had been *very well* or *somewhat prepared* by their ESL courses. Whether they were studying or not at the time of the survey, most respondents said it was likely they would enrol in more courses at a B.C. college, institute, or university in the future.

As with the former ABE students, ESL respondents were less likely to be in the labour force and less likely to be employed if they were studying at the time of the survey. Respondents who were employed were asked if they spoke English at work, and if so, how their English language training helped them in the workplace; almost all spoke English at work, and most said their ESL courses helped them.

The success of ESL courses manifests in high rates of further education and in the confirmations of the usefulness of the training, as well as in the very favourable ratings given to the helpfulness of the courses.

Appendix: Survey methodology

Cohort

To be included in the 2011 DEVSO survey cohort, students had to satisfy four selection criteria.

These criteria for the ABE cohort are:

1. Enrolled as a domestic student between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. (Students identified as International students on the basis of their tuition fee are excluded.)
2. Completed at least three ABE courses (at any level) in the past three years (between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2010).
3. Completed at least one upper-level* ABE course between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.
4. Absent from ABE courses from July 1, 2010 to date of extraction (can be taking non-ABE courses during that period at the Institution)

These criteria for the ESL cohort are:

1. Enrolled as a domestic student between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. (Students identified as International students on the basis of their tuition fee are excluded.)
2. Completed at least two ESL courses (at any level) in the past three years (between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2010).
3. Completed at least one upper-level* ESL course between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.
4. Absent from ESL courses from July 1, 2010 to date of extraction (can be taking non-ESL courses during that period at the Institution)

*For the purposes of this cohort, former 'upper-level' students are defined as follows:

- ABE includes ABE/College Prep courses at Intermediate level (roughly equivalent to grade 10) or higher.
- ESL Intermediate level (articulates to Access level 6 or Canadian Language Benchmark level 5) or higher.

Data Collection

The 2011 Developmental Student Outcomes (DEVSO) Survey was delivered by mixed-mode: telephone and web. Field testing of the survey instrument was conducted by telephone, between January 20 and 22, 2011, resulting in 80 completed surveys. The data collection contractor noted that some ESL respondents had language difficulties and needed the interviewers to slow down, while some ABE respondents preferred the

survey go quickly; the interviewers were coached to note the type of former student before launching the survey. No changes to the questionnaire were recommended.

Full telephone survey administration began January 27 continuing through April 9, 2011, with the e-mailing of survey invitations starting January 27 to 30. Online survey completions were accepted up to April 13, 2011.

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

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

In total, 2,509 surveys were completed, and of these, 2,000 were completed by telephone and 509 were completed by web. Of the surveys conducted by telephone, the average survey administration time was 11.6 minutes (10.5 minutes for ABE respondents and 13.7 minutes for ESL respondents).

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

Call Result	n	% of Cohort
Completion	2509	45.1%
Left Message/Call Again	914	16.4%
Not in Service/Wrong Number	475	8.5%
DA searched, new leads unconfirmed	301	5.4%
Non Qualifier	281	5.1%
Respondent Refusal	244	4.4%
DA searched, new leads incorrect	214	3.8%
No Answer	192	3.5%
Soft Appointment	122	2.2%
Respondent Wants to Do Online	65	1.2%
No Phone Number/Incomplete Number	62	1.1%
Language Case	50	0.9%
Hard Appointment	42	0.8%
Travel/Moved out of Canada/US	33	0.6%
Busy Signal	12	0.2%
Problem Communicating with Respondent	12	0.2%
Incomplete Survey	10	0.2%
Fax/Modem Line	8	0.1%
Travel Within Canada/US	7	0.1%
Moved/Left Toll-Free Number	6	0.1%
Serious illness/Deceased	2	0.0%
Total	5,561	100.0%

Response rates by institution

In total, 5,561 former developmental students (3,885 ABE and 1,676 ESL) were eligible to participate in the survey. Of these, 2,509 completed the survey, yielding an overall response rate of 45 percent. The ABE response rate was 43.7 percent (1,697 respondents) and the ESL rate was 48.4 percent (812 respondents).

2011 Developmental Student Outcomes Survey Report of Findings

	2011 Cohort	Respondents	Response Rate	Telephone Rate	Web Rate
BC Institute of Technology ABE	100	56	56.0%	47.0%	9.0%
BC Institute of Technology ESL	177	91	51.4%	37.3%	14.1%
Camosun College ABE	388	169	43.6%	37.4%	6.2%
Camosun College ESL	135	73	54.1%	43.7%	10.4%
Capilano University ABE	256	103	40.2%	34.4%	5.9%
Capilano University ESL	51	28	54.9%	45.1%	9.8%
College of New Caledonia ABE	164	77	47.0%	32.3%	14.6%
College of New Caledonia ESL	10	6	60.0%	30.0%	30.0%
College of the Rockies ABE	54	20	37.0%	31.5%	5.6%
College of the Rockies ESL	#	#	#	#	#
Douglas College ABE	107	48	44.9%	36.4%	8.4%
Douglas College ESL	129	64	49.6%	38.8%	10.9%
Kwantlen Polytechnic University ABE	404	183	45.3%	37.9%	7.4%
Kwantlen Polytechnic University ESL	165	87	52.7%	38.8%	13.9%
Langara College ABE	74	34	45.9%	37.8%	8.1%
Langara College ESL	70	37	52.9%	42.9%	10.0%
Nicola Valley Institute of Technology ABE	70	27	38.6%	31.4%	7.1%
North Island College ABE	139	75	54.0%	39.6%	14.4%
North Island College ESL	11	5	45.5%	27.3%	18.2%
Northern Lights College ABE	66	27	40.9%	34.8%	6.1%
Northern Lights College ESL	#	#	#	#	#
Northwest Community College ABE	108	58	53.7%	37.0%	16.7%
Okanagan College ABE	479	213	44.5%	31.1%	13.4%
Okanagan College ESL	47	18	38.3%	21.3%	17.0%
Selkirk College ABE	131	65	49.6%	37.4%	12.2%
Selkirk College ESL	#	#	#	#	#
Thompson Rivers University ABE	356	135	37.9%	31.5%	6.5%
Thompson Rivers University ESL	10	6	60.0%	30.0%	30.0%
University of the Fraser Valley ABE	189	73	38.6%	38.6%	0.0%
University of the Fraser Valley ESL	131	59	45.0%	45.0%	0.0%
Vancouver Community College ABE	282	132	46.8%	36.2%	10.6%
Vancouver Community College ESL	719	327	45.5%	37.7%	7.8%
Vancouver Island University ABE	518	202	39.0%	29.9%	9.1%
Vancouver Island University ESL	12	6	50.0%	41.7%	8.3%
TOTAL ABE	3,885	1,697	43.7%	34.7%	8.9%
TOTAL ESL	1,676	812	48.4%	38.8%	9.7%
TOTAL DEVSO	5,561	2,509	45.1%	36.0%	9.2%

#Low numbers are masked to preserve confidentiality.

Reporting

BC Stats was responsible for cleaning and validating the data received from the data collection contractor. Based on these data (the responses to the survey questionnaire), the necessary variables were derived for analysis and reporting. Summary reports were produced and distributed to post-secondary institutions and the Ministry of Advanced Education in May 2011. The reports presented the results of most survey questions and of derived labour market indicators.

The former students who were interviewed—45 percent of those eligible for surveying—were those from the cohort who could be located and who agreed to be surveyed. They may not be representative of all former developmental students.

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

Analysis for this report included frequencies, crosstabs, and comparison of means; in addition, several tests were used to determine if the observed differences between groups were statistically significant. A statistically significant result is one that cannot reasonably be explained by chance alone.

For consistency and ease of presentation, most percentages in the report text, tables, and charts have been rounded; as a result, totals may not always add to 100. For charts with a smaller scale, some differences between charted data points that have the same rounded value label may be noticeable, because data were plotted using one to three decimal places.

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

Questionnaire

A copy of the 2011 Development Student Outcomes Survey questionnaire is available at: outcomes.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DEVSO/DEVSOQuestionnaire.aspx.



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