



Prairie Metropolis Centre

Working Paper Series

WP11 - 03

The English as a Second Language Needs of Temporary Foreign

Workers in Alberta

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Funders

We are pleased to acknowledge the following organizations that provide funding in support of the Prairie Metropolis Centre: the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada; Citizenship and Immigration Canada; Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Border Services Agency, Canada Economic Development for the Region of Quebec, Canadian Heritage; Statistics Canada; Human Resources and Social Development Canada; Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Department of Justice Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Federal Economic Development of Initiative of Northern Ontario, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; Public Works and Government Services Canada; the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; and Public Safety Canada. The University of Alberta provides PMC with a generous grant and the other participating universities offer supplementary support.



Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper Series

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The English as a Second Language Needs of Temporary Foreign Workers in Alberta

In recent years the province of Alberta, Canada, has experienced exponential growth in the number of temporary foreign workers (TFWs). Although TFWs have the same worker rights as permanent residents and Canadian citizens, these rights are not always acknowledged; TFWs are subject to exploitation by recruiters and employers. TFWs with low English language skills can have limited access to information about their new communities and their rights as workers. Previous research has exposed the flaws of the temporary foreign worker program (TFWP) and the experiences of TFWs, but little is known about the ESL needs of TFWs in Alberta. This study explores the regulation of English language skills, the English language proficiency levels of TFWs and reasons for acquiring English language training (ELT), the accessibility of ELT in terms of options and barriers, and the role of the employer in facilitating or encouraging access to ELT. This study also addresses the extent to which the ESL needs of TFWs is currently being met. Ten employees of immigrant-serving agencies and Community Adult Learning Councils completed questionnaires and/or participated in interviews and one provincial government representative was interviewed. Participants worked directly with TFWs or the TFWP and were chosen to represent rural areas, small and large cities in Alberta. The data presented very diverse results, but suggest overall that the ESL needs of TFWs are not being met. Further research should be conducted to gain a greater understanding of how the ESL needs of TFWs could better be met.

Keywords: temporary foreign worker, temporary foreign worker program, English as a second language, ESL needs, English language proficiency, English language training

In recent years, media and advocacy groups have directed increased attention towards the plight of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) in Alberta with regard to human rights violations by employers and policy shortcomings of the program under which they are admitted (Alboim, 2009; Byl, 2009; CBC News, 2010; Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). While findings have been published on the mistreatment and human rights violations of TFWs, such as the refusal of employers to pay overtime, withholding of rights information from employees, and refusal to pay transportation costs (Byl, 2009), little has been done to explore the English language needs of TFWs and the extent to which those needs are met. Since the exponential increase in TFWs is a relatively new phenomenon in Canada, and particularly in Alberta, it is very timely to conduct research in this area to broaden our understanding of the English needs and proficiency levels of TFWs in Alberta, issues in

accessibility of English language training (ELT), and the extent to which those needs are being met by employers and other ELT providers.

Temporary Foreign Worker Program

The temporary foreign worker program (TFWP) was created in 1973 (Fudge & MacPhail, 2009) to address the short-term employment needs for seasonal agricultural workers, live-in caregivers, and people with highly specialized skills not available in Canada (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2009). In 2002, the federal government introduced the TFWP low-skilled pilot project to address the need for unskilled labour, where workers with lower levels of training who might not meet the economic immigrant selection criteria of official language proficiency, level of education, or occupation classification were readily admitted into Canada on temporary work permits (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2009). Since that time the number of TFWs entering Canada has increased exponentially, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) (2010) reported that 65,748 TFWs resided in Alberta in 2009. This is a significant increase compared with the 15,733 TFWs reported to be residing in Alberta in 2005 (CIC, 2010). Since its inception, the TFWP has changed remarkably from its roots and has become, for employers and employees, the faster and preferred way to bring immigrants into Canada to meet long-term labour shortages (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2009). However, the federal government has been critiqued for adopting a short-term immigration policy in favour of temporary entrants as opposed to federally selected skilled workers, providing a short-term solution for long-term labour needs (Alboim, 2009; Byl 2009).

The TFWP is employer-driven and enables businesses to recruit foreign workers for jobs which they claim they are unable to find sufficient permanent residents or Canadian citizens to perform (Fudge & MacPhail, 2009). Typically, businesses are required to obtain a Labour Market Opinion (LMO) issued by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), who confirm that no Canadian is suitable for the position and that

Canadian terms and conditions of employment are upheld (Fudge & MacPhail, 2009). However, there is an extremely complex assortment of programs associated with specific occupations, and many foreign nationals can access employment in Canada without obtaining an LMO; in 2007, 45% of TFWs admitted to Canada came without an LMO (Fudge & MacPhail, 2009). TFWs are hired under five different levels of National Occupation Class (NOC): 0 for managerial positions, A and B for skilled workers and C and D for semi-skilled workers (Byl, 2009). While the federal government regulates the entry of TFWs, the protection of rights is regulated by the provincial government; the administration of the TFWP has attracted criticism due to this arrangement (Byl, 2009; Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). “Given that the TFWP falls under the jurisdiction of the federal and provincial governments, each of these players is somewhat restricted in its ability to resolve various challenges within the program” (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010, p. 8).

Temporary Foreign Worker Experience in Alberta

TFWs are recruited to work in positions all over the province, evidenced by the locations for which LMOs are granted. In 2009, 31,308 LMOs were granted to employers; only 62% of the requests came from Edmonton and Calgary, and the remainder were from small cities, towns, and rural areas (HRSDC, 2010). Thirteen percent of LMOs granted were identified as being from “Other Alberta,” exclusive from the 19 centres specifically mentioned on the HRSDC website; this suggests that TFWs have a relatively significant presence in rural Alberta.

There is evidence that TFWs are vulnerable with regard to human rights violations. Recruitment agencies have been found guilty of abusive practices; some have been found to illegally charge TFWs recruitment fees instead of charging the employers, and occasionally seek to migrate TFWs to Canada without appropriate documentation, also known as human smuggling (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). TFWs are also restricted by their work visas, which are issued for one employer only; if a TFW’s job ceases to exist, he/she must find another business which can secure an LMO to offer a position. The process can be long, and TFWs may

experience financial hardship during their wait for new employment (Byl, 2009; Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). Unfortunately, some unscrupulous employers fail to uphold aspects of the employment contract; one specific example was the refusal to pay an employee's flight home at the end of employment, as mandated in all TFW contracts. Employers have also been found to provide unsuitable working conditions (Byl, 2009), to fail to compensate appropriately for overtime work (Byl, 2009; CBC News, 2010), and to enlist TFWs in tasks not previously agreed to and below the skill level demanded for the position (Higginbottom, 2011).

What happens when the rights of TFWs are violated? "The overall administration of the TFWP involves a number of key players who do not always take full responsibility for the protection and well-being of temporary foreign workers" (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010, p. 21). While TFWs technically have the same rights as Canadian workers, due to the complex administration of the TFWP, they can experience a lack of accessibility to protection of rights offered by the provincial and federal governments (Byl, 2009; Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). In the case of an employer refusing to pay for a return flight home, HRSDC cannot force the employer to pay because they do not have any regulatory authority; employment rights are under provincial jurisdiction. In addition, the Alberta government will not enforce payment since it is an expense required by Service Canada's LMO, outside the jurisdiction of the provincial government (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). Further to this, protection of rights is complaint-driven, and TFWs may not complain either because they do not know their rights or they may fear that they will lose their jobs. Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEI) makes information available to inform workers of their rights, but in English only, as are the complaint form and accompanying instructions (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). Thus, TFWs who lack English language skills may face a barrier to understanding their rights, and also a constraint on their ability to complain (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010).

TFWs are living in Canadian society and contributing to the Canadian economy, without all the rights and benefits of permanent residence or Canadian citizenship (Alboim, 2009; Goldring, 2010). Unfortunately, this is

not atypical; around the world, migrant workers and the countries that send them often tolerate a restriction of human rights in order to obtain low-skilled labour opportunities in higher-income countries (Ruhs & Martin, 2008). The maintenance of the TFWP and the lack of protection of TFW rights has resulted in the formalizing of "...a sub-class of foreign workers who are marginalized from society..." (Byl, 2009, p. 31). Goldring (2010) also argues that TFWs should be recognized as having "precarious status," which is to be devoid of some aspect of legal status. She asserts that precarious status is growing and is not temporary, that it fosters social exclusion, and that current policy practice is fostering an unequal citizenship dichotomy. Recent policy changes indicate that the government of Canada shows no signs of eliminating the TFWP. Not only is the TFWP here to stay, but the workers who participate in this program are not temporary either; individuals continue to renew work permits and stay in Alberta and Canada for periods longer than two years (Byl, 2009). In fact, "the vast majority of workers arriving under the TFWP come with the hope of permanent residency and eventual citizenship" (Byl, 2009, p. 23). Some TFWs become permanent residents by applying to the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) while they work and reside in Canada. The requirements and regulations for applying to the AINP vary according to industry and employment type (Government of Alberta, 2010a). However, in 2010 only 5000 positions for the AINP were available, a very small percentage compared with the number of TFWs who reside in the province (Mulder & Templeton, in press). This implies that many TFWs have delusions of permanent residency (Byl, 2009).

English as a Second Language Needs

While reports have been published on the overall experiences of TFWs in Alberta and Canada, very little research has been conducted on the English as a second language (ESL) needs of TFWs in Alberta. Rastin, Derwing, and Ogilvie (2007) surveyed settlement agencies in Alberta regarding the situation of TFWs and found

that they had limited access to information in their new communities due to a lack of English. Other language issues raised related to knowledge about employment rights and occupational safety. TFWs frequently came to settlement agencies to request ESL classes. At the time, the survey also showed that settlement agency funding was allotted for permanent residents only; thus, agencies had no funding to provide services and resources to help TFW clients. Level of English proficiency also played a role in determining if a TFW remained in a poor work environment; low-skilled individuals were less likely to improve their situation because they did not have the language to do so. TFWs found English skills to be a barrier for settlement, and many workers believed that the TFWP was a way to fast-track permanent residency.

It was also discovered that some employers requested ESL training for their TFW employees and that they varied in their willingness to pay for these programs. They also varied in their “expectations of TFW responsibility to contribute time and money, and their ideas of appropriate outcomes” (Rastin, Derwing, & Ogilvie, 2007, p. 3). The Rastin et al. study had only a small sample size and was conducted before the exponential increase in TFWs in Alberta. This is the only research that specifically examined the ESL needs of TFWs, and the results were limited. There is a need to determine the current extent of and provisions for TFWs’ ESL needs.

While employers are not mandated to provide English language training to TFWs, they are responsible for providing English language training for any TFW employees they wish to nominate to the AINP (Government of Alberta, 2010a). Some industry-specific criteria indicates that to be successfully nominated, applicants must meet certain Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) (Pawlikowska-Smith, 2005) that vary depending on the industry, and the nominating employer must pay for any language training necessary for employees to meet those CLBs. For example, a TFW in the food service industry must provide proof of CLB 4 in speaking, listening, reading, and writing for a successful AINP application.

Language and Integration

Having the ability to speak English is a major determinant of immigrant integration, and newcomers without English language skills may experience segregation and isolation (Thomas, 1992). Those who arrive without the ability to speak the language of the host country “face formidable barriers on the road to integration” (de Vries, 1999). Being able to communicate in English is important for immigrants in English-speaking Canada; without acquiring fluency, they may experience limitations in employability and in adapting to Canadian life generally (Neuwirth, 1999). Given the importance of language acquisition for integration, we need to understand the best ways to acquire English language skills. Both formal and informal linguistic environments assist in second language learning in various ways (Shresta, 1998). The classroom provides opportunities for formal and informal learning, but more often formal learning where the teacher has the opportunity to shape learning experiences, in the belief that by doing so, learners will acquire knowledge more efficiently (Ellis, 1990). Schmidt (1990) theorized that in order for a second language to be learned, noticing which results in input must take place. Language instruction can facilitate the input encoding by making formal features of the language being learned more salient (Schmidt, 1990). Pica (1985) also confirmed that learners who received explicit instruction of certain grammatical forms in the classroom were more successful in production of the forms than learners who did not receive formal instruction.

If English language learners are integrated into society, they can continue to improve in proficiency in informal learning environments outside of the classroom through interaction with English speakers. A study by Derwing, Thompson, and Munro (2006) revealed that Slavic speakers learning English made significant improvements in fluency over a 10-month period over Mandarin speakers. A more recent study of the same individuals indicated that the Slavic speakers continued to make progress, whereas the Mandarin speakers did not (Derwing, Munro, & Thomson, 2008). The success of the Slavic speakers was attributed to significantly more

interaction with English speakers. Shresta (1998) also found that while “the formal grammar-based classroom instruction seemed to promote accuracy...the informal natural exposure based on personal contact and meaningful interaction with English-speaking people seemed to promote fluency” (p. 190). The process of integration and the development of English language skills is cyclical; as English skills increase, immigrants can become more integrated into society, and as they become more integrated, their English skills increase.

Positive Government Initiatives

Various organizations have made recommendations for changes in the design and administration of TFWP and a call for equal and fair treatment of TFWs (Alboim, 2009; Byl, 2009; Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2009). The Office of the Auditor General of Canada (2009) has also called for CIC and HRSDC to implement procedures that would ensure the protection of TFWs.

The provincial government has also undertaken initiatives to address the issues. Thomas Lucaszuk, Minister of AEI, acknowledged that the TFWP is no longer working and mandated a review of the impact that TFWs have had on the workforce of the province (Audette, 2010). The provincial government opened Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Offices in Edmonton and Calgary and the Temporary Foreign Worker Advisory Hotline to provide TFWs with assistance in learning about their rights and remedying situations that involve unfair, unsafe, or unhealthy working conditions (Government of Alberta, 2010b). In the summer of 2008, the Alberta government also launched a pilot project to fund nine immigrant serving agencies to provide settlement services for TFWs in six communities in the province (Nakache & Kinoshita, 2010). Between September 2008 and June 2009, Catholic Social Services in Alberta assisted nearly 800 TFWs. The funding of this pilot project was extended to June 2010. In light of the provincial government’s willingness to address the issues TFWs experience, this is an opportune time to contribute to the momentum and to explore the needs of TFWs.

The Present Study

Although the literature provides various views on the issue of TFWs and the TFWP, there are key underlying messages. First, there are gaps in the policy and administration of the TFWP, which have led to negligence in protecting the human rights of TFWs. Second, the TFWP is a temporary solution to Canada's long-term employment needs, resulting in long-term negligence in protecting the human rights of TFWs. Third, the TFWP is being institutionalized as a permanent fixture of immigration policy in Canada and therefore has long-term implications for immigration to Canada. The TFWP is fostering a second-class worker population with limited rights, little chance of integration and in many instances, serious exploitation. A contributing factor to limited integration is a lack of English language skills, which can be improved through formal language instruction. However, the provincial and federal governments likely believe that since TFWs are not permanent members of society, there is no need for their integration. Since the permanency of temporary foreign workers in Canada appears to be inevitable at this time, it is timely to undertake research that explores the ESL needs of TFWs. The purpose of this research is to determine the ESL needs of TFWs currently living in Alberta.

Research Questions

1) What are the English language proficiency levels, language requirements for TFWs across varying worksites, the number of TFWs currently enrolled in ESL programming, and the reasons why TFWs need English language training (ELT)?

2) To what extent is English language training (ELT) accessible to TFWs? Accessibility is defined as the availability of qualified ESL teachers and classes/technology options in Alberta for TFWs, the hours that existing classes are offered and individual scheduling conflicts with those classes, and transportation to access available classes.

3) To what extent are employers providing or facilitating access to the ESL training needed by TFWs for safe and successful labour?

Methodology

Participants

Eleven individuals participated in this study. Participants A and B represented Small Town 1 and were staff members of Community Adult Learning Centres (CALCs) who worked for the ELT program that served TFWs. Eight participants were staff members at settlement agencies across Alberta that received funding from the provincial government to offer services to TFWs as part of a pilot project in 2008 (Government of Alberta, 2010b). These staff members worked directly with TFWs or for the department that provided services for TFWs at their agency. Participant C represented Small City 1, Participant D represented Small City 2, Participant E represented Small City 3, and Participant F represented Small City 4. Participant G represented Large City 1, and Participants H, I, and J represented Large City 2. Participant K was a civil servant from AEI who was knowledgeable about and shares responsibility for the TFWP.

Procedure

Participants from the settlement agencies were asked to complete an online questionnaire consisting of 19 items designed to address the research questions. Originally, the plan was to review completed questionnaires and select interviewees based on their potential to provide further details. However, the questionnaire was designed on the assumption that the organization that participants represented offered ELT to TFWs, but some of the organizations did not offer ELT to TFWs. It became apparent that the questionnaire was not an effective tool for collecting data, as the majority of the items were not applicable to some of the participants. One questionnaire was fully completed and three were partially completed online. Participants who could not complete the questionnaire online were interviewed with re-phrased questions from the original

questionnaire to capture data based on their interaction with TFWs. Eight individuals participated in semi-structured interviews, six by telephone and two in person. The duration of interviews varied, the shortest being 15 minutes and the longest being 53 minutes, and were recorded using the ClearRecord application on an iPhone4. The responses to the questionnaires were compiled and the interviews were transcribed for analysis and interpretation. Answers to open-ended questions were categorized and classified thematically.

Results

Research Question 1: English as a Second Language Needs

Proficiency levels and inquiries for English language training. It is difficult to capture the actual English language proficiency levels of TFWs in Alberta, since very few attend formal English programs in which proficiency is assessed. Participants from Small Town 1, Small City 4, and Large City 2 represented institutions that provided ELT to temporary foreign workers; participants from Small Cities 1, 2, and 3, and Large City 1 represented institutions that did not.

Participant F representing Small City 4 reported that when ESL programming was first accessed at their institution, TFWs' proficiency levels ranged from pre-beginner (literacy), beginner (CLB 1 to 2), and low-intermediate (CLB 3 to 4). Participant I representing Large City 2 reported that TFWs' proficiency levels ranged from beginner (CLB 1 to 2), low-intermediate (CLB 3 to 4), and high-intermediate (CLB 5 to 6) at her institution.

In the case of Participant C from Small City 1 and Participant D from Small City 2, where no community providers offer ELT to TFWs, both indicated that they had only 10 to 15 inquiries in 2010 for English language training and that those who inquired had basic English proficiency, based on brief interactions. The participants attributed the low number of inquiries for ELT to three factors: First, TFWs may not need ELT because they already are sufficiently proficient in English. Many TFWs come from the Philippines, where English is spoken

fluently. Second, TFWs may not inquire because they know that there are no English language services available to them. Third, TFWs may not think to inquire because they have come to Canada to work and do not expect to learn English unless they decide to apply to the AINP. Participant C indicated that it is difficult to know what the needs are when no programming is available to be offered; if resources for ELT existed for TFWs, there might be more inquiries, and then it might be possible to identify why they are or are not taking advantage of resources.

To be honest there aren't a lot of resources and...these foreign workers are not really asking for it either...But perhaps if the resources were there, then we would kinda identify...why they're not picking up the resources...If I knew of resources that I could send them to, then I'm pretty sure they would [access them]. (Participant 3)

Most plainly put, if the services were offered, there may be confirmation that they are needed.

Participant D acknowledged that many of the TFWs in the area of Small City 2 actually live in camps in close proximity to worksites out of town, and that they rarely come to the city and do not visit the settlement agency, making it impossible for settlement workers to know what TFWs' needs are, English or other.

Participants G and H indicated that TFWs often come seeking services other than ELT, but when the settlement workers detect that there is a need for the TFWs to improve English skills, they inform them of ELT opportunities available and make a referral. Participant H remarked that although TFWs do not seek assistance for ELT, often a lack of English skills created the issue for which they are seeking help. Thus, there are TFWs who need ESL training but are not cognizant of that need.

Participant G indicated that when the funding pilot program began in 2008, there were many inquiries for ELT, but since then they receive approximately three inquiries a week. The proficiency levels of these TFWs are unknown since the agency is not in a position to assess them; however, they rarely encounter clients

without basic spoken English skills. At the beginning of the pilot project, there were more inquiries for basic English, but now the inquiries are for more advanced training based on permanent residency goals.

Permanent residency. Participant K believed that while most highly skilled TFWs plan to live in Alberta temporarily, many TFWs in low-skilled occupations hope to become permanent residents in the future. Participant D indicated that a few inquiries for ELT from TFWs were for upgrading skills to take the IELTS or TOEFL exams, which suggests that they are seeking a language proficiency score to submit with an AINP application. Participant B also observed that some TFWs desire ELT in preparation for the IELTS or TOEFL exams for post-secondary entrance, which suggests they are already planning to pursue post-secondary education as permanent residents. In Small City 3 where basic ELT, or CLB levels 1 to 4 was available to TFWs, Participant E reported receiving inquiries from TFWs who are eligible for the AINP who were looking for ELT to prepare for the IELTS exams. In Small City 3, most TFWs in the community intended to become permanent residents. Interestingly, since many of the TFWs are applying for permanent residency, they have brought their families with them to settle. This has created new challenges in providing ESL training for the spouses of TFWs and their children, as the immigrant-serving agency has found an increase in inquiries for ESL training for spouses. Participant H acknowledged the desire of some TFWs to become permanent residents when she said: ...The mentality of our government is [that] they're temporary so they're going to go home, but the reality is they wanna stay, and they're going to do everything possible to stay...

Settlement. Participants unanimously agreed that TFWs seek ELT for settlement reasons. TFWs may also take classes for exposure to Canadian culture and for personal development. Participant B from Small Town 1 observed that TFWs want to integrate into their communities: "...they want to speak like [the locals], they want to be part of the language, they want to be part of the community quite often, if given the chance." Participant A from the same community indicated that TFWs who attended ESL classes also benefited from the

opportunities for social interaction and building friendships. These TFWs also experienced improved confidence and self-esteem that led to feeling comfortable in the community. Students looked forward to these classes and expressed a desire to continue classes after the first term. Participant B captured a general sentiment felt by the participants when she said:

...If they want to stay, our feeling is, why can't we help them with that, because they're going to become citizens and wanna participate, because they all seem to want to be part of the community, they all seem like they really want that, and not to be too different.

Employment. Participant K acknowledged that if TFWs do not have adequate levels of English language skills for the workplace, their health and safety could be compromised, and their lives and the lives of their co-workers could be in jeopardy. She also advised that individuals working in customer service may be subject to discrimination. Generally, high-skilled TFWs appear to have adequate English language training to function in the workplace and in the community. It is the low-skilled TFWs whose limited English language skills can be a critical issue. TFWs with limited comprehension skills are more vulnerable to exploitation or persecution by their employers. Participant K said:

I think when you look at the higher skilled occupations, most of those people do have adequate [ESL] training so that they can function, it's in the [low-skilled occupations] where it is more critical the issues are, and probably there is more vulnerability and I think as well if they don't understand the language there is that chance that of them being um, open to persecution of the employer, or you know, they are more vulnerable for sure.

Another need for ELT that came to light during interviews was that of skilled workers in trades who are required to pass a Red Seal exam in English to become ticketed journeymen. Participant H explained that upon arrival to Canada, TFWs in most trades have six months to adjust to their new work environment until they take

a Red Seal exam. Many TFWs do not have adequate English language proficiency to successfully challenge this multiple-choice exam, which is necessary for continuing to work in Canada and to earn a salary comparable to a journeyman. Participant H described how challenging this exam is for TFWs; successful TFWs who speak ESL usually challenge the exam more than once or “they’re incredibly dedicated or incredibly smart”. At this time, it appears that no official supportive training or language coaching is in place to assist these workers to improve their English language skills in preparation for the exam. One area that is particularly difficult for these individuals is the unfamiliar English vocabulary of the trade. They don’t often make their needs known to settlement workers at immigrant-serving agencies, because they have a tendency to be more independent in finding the resources they need, but as Participant H said: “Yeah, they’re a little more independent but that doesn’t mean they’re not struggling.”

Protection of rights. Participant G explained when TFWs have been deceived by employers or recruiting agencies, it is often because they cannot comprehend English or articulate their needs. She said:

We have actually experienced a foreign worker who would sign a contract in his language back in his country, and when he comes here in [our city], he signs another contract which is in English, which [he/she] totally does not understand...and there are foreign workers who are being mistreated and they can’t express themselves and they would rather not voice out what they feel and what they think, even if they’re aware that they’re being mistreated, because they cannot express themselves. So even if they’re being mistreated, it’s something that they can’t really help. And you know they are just sometimes asked to sign documents, which they don’t understand. Yeah, so that’s um, one of the things, one of the many things actually, that happens, if they have a language barrier.

She went on to explain that it is the semi-skilled workers who are typically prone to abuse, because they work in occupations that do not require much interaction in English.

Participant H explained that sometimes TFWs require enhanced English language skills to improve their situation when they are being exploited or abused by an employer who speaks the same native language. Interestingly, these TFWs do not appear to require ESL for the workplace or for settlement needs, but when they find themselves in an abusive situation, they do not have the English language skills or confidence to seek help outside of their first language community. This issue has been observed to occur in isolation in rural areas, but because of the seriousness of the abuse, TFWs have eventually found their way to a large city to seek assistance. Participant H explained that although there were fewer than ten cases of this nature in the past year, they require a huge demand of settlement workers' time and resources.

While this account highlights the needs of rural TFWs, Participant E observed that she did not have many inquiries from TFWs living in rural areas and that most inquiries were from seasonal agricultural workers. She believed that the TFWs they knew of living in rural areas were skilled workers who did not require English language services.

Specific language needs. Participant A indicated that there was an observed need for the “soft-skills” of English, such as conversational skills and pragmatics, but that those TFWs who were not attending the ESL class provided by their organization didn't necessarily perceive that they had a need for this training. Participant B believed that the TFWs who were attending the evening course felt that their needs were being met; TFWs wanted training in idiomatic speech and improved listening for reduced forms (e.g. *'whatcha doin'*, *'where ya goin'*). TFWs were also keen to develop small-talk skills and techniques for smooth conversation flow. TFWs also expressed a desire for pronunciation instruction and to learn about Canadian humour to help them integrate into the community. Another perceived need is for recovery speech acts, such as asking the interlocutor to

repeat him/herself when communication has broken down. According to Participant B, the TFWs felt embarrassed that they do not understand and therefore are reluctant to ask for clarification. She said:

You know, [native-speakers] just presume that the knowledge is there, and they just start talking, and [TFWs] feel embarrassed or reluctant to say they don't understand. So I think there is that out there, because when I've talked to a couple of them from the hospital, I say "Will you get everything that is said?" They say, "No." "Well, what happens when you don't understand?" "Well, we just work through it." Like they don't say, "Can you repeat that?" or whatever, so I think everybody would benefit from that.

While this example was brought up by one individual in a small town, it is plausible that TFWs living all over the province experience similar English language needs to function in the community and at work. When other participants were asked why TFWs want to take English classes, they unanimously indicated that one of the reasons is work-related, although they did not elaborate.

Research Question 2: Access to English Language Training

Issues in Access to English Language Training

Although certain settlement agencies in the province have funding to provide services to TFWs, ESL training is not included in the package. Participant G explained that this is the ultimate barrier to ELT access: while settlement agencies and ESL providers may utilize federal or provincial funding to offer ESL classes to permanent residents or Canadian citizens, funding is not available for TFWs.

Another issue for access to ESL training is work hour conflicts with scheduled ESL classes in the community and colleges, as TFWs with irregular schedules or who often work overtime may not be able to attend class regularly. Participant C confirmed that it is unlikely TFWs would access college classes because they

are usually offered during the day. In some places special classes are offered in the evening to accommodate TFW student schedules, but Participants E and H acknowledged that there are still those whose work schedules do not allow them to attend. Participant G noted that often TFWs will take the more undesirable, inconvenient shifts at work that other employees are not willing to take, and that this makes it difficult or impossible to attend ESL classes regularly. Evening classes are the best time for many TFWs, and some employers are more willing than others to make provisions for their employees to attend. Participant B confirmed that if employers support the attendance of their employees at ESL classes, then they make sure employees are available. Participant F, who represented an immigrant-serving agency offering ELT to TFWs, commented that most of their students found the hours of the ESL courses convenient because they were offered at the end of a typical work day, and that students were encouraged to negotiate with their employers for a change of shift to accommodate class times.

Participant H acknowledged the challenge of providing additional ESL classes. It is difficult to find the resources to promote an evening course, when the agency is going beyond their mandate; they keep flyers at their agency and promote the course if someone asks, but have been unable to find the means to advertise outside of the agency. Lack of awareness of available ESL training is in itself an issue for access. Participant B reinforced that if TFWs' English proficiency is low and they do not have a cooperative employer who is willing to inform them of available ESL options, TFWs may not be aware that the service exists.

Another barrier to ESL training for TFWs is the expense of some available classes. Participants E and K confirmed that TFWs are required to pay international student fees for college and university classes, which are expensive and unaffordable to most. Participant H confirmed that agency-provided ESL classes that charge what seems to be a reasonable fee can still be a financial burden on TFWs. Participant K related the feelings of TFWs when she said:

Some of them would wanna go take university courses, but they have to pay international fees...and they're here to work so there are issues around that. So yeah, I think that, for those folks, there's a, they feel frustrated...you know, that they can't really better their skills.

Knowledge of rights has also proven to be a barrier for accessing ESL services. The TFW permit indicates that TFWs may not take courses or training which are six months or longer in length. However, Participant G explained that some TFWs incorrectly believe that they are required to obtain permission from their employers to attend a course in their free time, even if its duration is less than six months.

The foreign workers, sometimes they feel that they owe it to the employer that they have to ask permission [to take a course less than six months long]...they do not have to do that. Of course they are allowed to [take an ESL course] in their free time, right? (Participant G).

It can be inferred that if there are TFWs who are uncomfortable asking for permission or think it is inappropriate to do so, or have an employer who also leads them to believe this is the case, they will likely not access ELT.

Rural English Language Training Opportunities

Participant K indicated that rural communities value TFWs and view them as a way of keeping the community population sustainable, as more young people move to the cities. Some are concerned that the TFWs in their communities do not have the language they need to function in the community. She also advised that CALCs, funded by Advanced Education and Technology and located throughout the province, provide ESL training in their communities and often act as settlement agencies when none exist. One CALC represented by Participants A and B in Small Town 1 offered one-on-one tutoring free to the community and part-time structured classes two hours a week for ten or twelve weeks for a small fee. Although TFWs do not qualify for one-on-one tutoring, which is designated for Canadian citizens and permanent residents, TFWs attend the

weekly evening classes with other Canadians and permanent residents. In 2010, this agency received approximately 13 inquiries for ELT by TFWs, which developed into a class of seven people, five of whom were TFWs. The most recent class in early 2011 included seven students, six of whom were TFWs from Chile, Mexico, and Sri Lanka. Typically, the instructor of the class made CLB assessments of language proficiency at the outset of the course and adjusted course content to meet the needs of the class. Students were welcome to repeat the course as often as they liked. The instructor who taught this course was not an officially certified ESL teacher but held a degree, 13 years' experience, and was described by Participant A as highly capable, providing instruction "above par." Returning students received training in writing and written grammatical skills, and some even received assistance in preparation for the TOEFL and IELTS. Participant A also commented that although this resource exists, there may be TFWs who desire ELT but do not have confidence that the program will meet their needs.

Most of the TFWs who attended ESL classes actually lived on farms outside of Small Town 1, and the employer provided them with a vehicle to commute to ESL classes, approximately 15 to 20 minutes away on highway roads. Participant B acknowledged that those living in rural situations could find accessing ELT difficult if their employers make no transportation available to them, or if transportation is infrequent.

Access to English Language Training in Small Cities

Four small cities in Alberta were represented in this study. Participants C and D indicated that basic English language training for TFWs is not provided by a community agency in Small Cities 1 and 2. Community-based programming is funded for citizens and permanent residents and not accessible to TFWs. The only TFW option for English language training is the local college, where international fees are charged. Both Participants C and D indicated that their agencies wanted to offer English classes for TFWs, but they were unable to do so because funding had not been available. As Participant C said: "To be honest, [ELT access is] very, very limited. I

don't even know of any private places that would have some retired teachers who would offer these services to these people.”

However, in Small City 4, ESL training is made available to TFWs by an immigrant-serving agency in the form of an evening class that meets twice a week for nine to twelve weeks. TFWs are required to pay a \$75.00 fee for the class. The ESL proficiency levels of the classes offered are from beginner to intermediate, and in January 2011, approximately 24 TFWs were in attendance across five different classes in session, integrated with permanent residents. Approximately 2% of TFW students attending the evening class live in rural areas outside of Small City 4. The home countries of TFWs who attend the classes are Colombia, El Salvador, Romania, Russia, Sri Lanka, and Ukraine. The participant representing this agency indicated that by attending these classes, the TFWs eventually become more fluent in speaking and writing English and are able to communicate better in the workplace.

In Small Cities 1, 2, and 4, transportation has not proven to be an issue for TFWs, as public transportation is available and adequate, and many places are accessible on foot. In Small City 4 the average commute time to ESL class is 20 to 30 minutes by car or public transportation.

Participant E representing Small City 3 described yet another scenario for access to ELT for TFWs. The agency she represented did not provide ESL training to TFWs, but referred them to the local CALC, which offers ESL classes CLB 1 to 4, and to the local college, which offers intermediate to advanced ESL training. The participant acknowledged that TFWs were taking courses at the college, despite the high international student fees, thus investing a lot of money to further their ESL. Participant E believed that while basic ESL needs are met by the large company that employs most TFWs in this city, and by the local CALC, there is still a greater need for ESL for TFWs to fully function in society, carry on more complex conversations, and increase employability after

becoming permanent residents. She also acknowledged that the ESL needs of the families of these TFWs who reside with them in this small city are not being met.

In response to the demand for extra practice in speaking English by TFWs, the immigrant-serving agency in Small City 3 has initiated monthly conversation cafés, providing an opportunity for TFWs who generally speak their native language to practice English. Several volunteers choose themes to stimulate conversations in English, and, although it is minimal, it is a service that the agency can provide. Most of the TFWs who attend the conversation café and or inquire into additional English language training are identified as Latin American.

In this city a public transportation system is not available and, while many places are within walking distance, the winter weather can become problematic for those TFWs who do not have a driving license or access to vehicles. In addition, the local college is located outside the city, not within walking distance, and is inaccessible without a vehicle. The only option for those without cars is a taxi service, which is expensive.

Access to ESL Training in Large Cities

Even among large cities, the provision of ESL training varies. In Large City 1, the immigrant-serving agency with funding to serve TFWs does not provide formal ESL courses. Instead, Participant G explained that TFWs are referred to a list of churches and libraries that offer ESL classes. At the public library, TFWs must pay the minimal membership fee, but they can access basic, intermediate, and advanced ESL classes as well as conversational English classes. Some churches provide volunteer-based English classes for a fee and some are free, and they also offer evening conversation cafés for TFWs and permanent residents. The participant was unable to provide details about the nature of the ELT courses offered by the churches in this city. ESL is typically available in the evenings and on weekends, but the availability depends on the library branches and the demand in the area. The participant acknowledged that library and church classes, while not as in depth or strenuous as college classes or other, more expensive formal training, still allow TFWs to study English to some degree. The

majority of TFWs making ELT inquiries in Large City 1 come from Latin America, while others are from Europe and China; some of the inquiries for ELT come from communities in the surrounding area.

In an attempt to meet demands for English conversation practice, the immigrant-serving agency in Large City 1 also provides an English Zone, a monthly fellowship night where TFWs can come together to practice speaking English. Although mostly attended by Filipino workers, TFWs from other countries also attend to take the opportunity to practice speaking English.

In Large City 2, an immigrant-serving agency offers ESL classes for TFWs two hours a night, two nights a week for ten weeks, for a fee of \$200. These classes were specially developed to accommodate the demand by TFWs for English language instruction. The fee covers the cost of two instructors, who teach one beginner and one low-intermediate class. Participant I confirmed that in 2010, 43 students were registered in the program over the course of the year, and at the time of data collection, eight students were enrolled. Past and current students come from Bosnia, Cameroon, Chile, Ghana, Guatemala, Korea, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Ukraine, and Vietnam. Participant H confirmed that students may repeat the course, but this rarely happens, most likely due to the cost, which TFWs may find expensive. This immigrant-serving agency also provides a weekly, volunteer-run “Conversation Corner” in the evening for TFWs to practice English conversation skills. The participant representing this agency admitted that this session is difficult to offer, given the limited availability of volunteers and the TFWs, but it is available.

When asked if the ESL instruction provided was meeting the TFW student needs, Participant H first suggested that it depended on what their needs were, but after further thought admitted:

Well, if their need is to have their English proficient enough to write the IELTS for permanent residency, then no, definitely not. But if it's to give them...conversation [for] the workplace, I

don't think it's enough...Ten weeks, two nights a week, two hours? It takes a lot more practice than that to really improve your English.

In Large City 2, transportation has proven to be a challenge for TFWs attending ESL classes. Although an attempt has been made to offer classes in convenient locations, most students who do not have access to a vehicle may have very long commutes on public transportation after evening class to reach outlying neighborhoods.

Participants G and H explained that statistics regarding TFWs' participation in ESL classes or ELT training are unavailable. When agencies receive ELT inquiries TFWs are referred to other ELT providers, but no records are kept of TFWs who actually access those providers.

Research Question 3: Regulation and Employers

Regulation and English Language Training

Participant K confirmed that at this time, there is no regulation regarding the English language proficiency level of TFWs who are brought to Canada. Neither the provincial nor the federal government take responsibility for adequate English language proficiency levels; it is the responsibility of the recruiter and/or employers to ensure that TFWs have the language skills required to be competent in their employment before coming to Canada. The recruiter and/or employer determine the appropriate English proficiency level for the position in question, and presumably assess this through interviews and occasionally testing. Methods of assessment are unregulated, and may not be comprehensive if they assess only speaking and listening skills and not reading and writing abilities. Participant H suggested that some recruiters may even falsely confirm that TFWs have the appropriate English proficiency to meet the demands of employers and generate profits. Participant K explained that employers generally understand that it is their responsibility to ensure TFWs have sufficient language to work safely; however, there is no process in place to monitor this. In addition, she

acknowledged that there are no guidelines or regulations to determine appropriate proficiency levels for successful functioning in the community. For example, while an individual's language skills may meet the language demands of a janitorial position where little communication is required, he/she may not have the English language skills required to carry out daily business in the community. The only instance where employers are mandated to provide ELT for TFWs is when it comes to applications for the AINP. Employers who are willing to nominate their semi-skilled TFWs eligible for the AINP are required to provide ELT to help employees meet English language proficiency criteria for the application.

Employers and English Language Training

Participant K indicated that concern for employees' ability to integrate varies considerably among employers:

You have some really good employers who are very concerned about [their employees' ability to function in the community], while there's other ones who [believe] "These guys are here to work for me" and make a profit. So I mean, there's a real array of ideas and values...

Participants A and B related accounts of employers who made it possible for employees to attend ESL classes by adjusting their work schedules and providing funding for ELT. Participants A, B, F, and G indicated that their institutions had been approached by employers looking for ESL instruction for their employees; in one instance, the institution represented by Participant G was able to supply an instructor to teach onsite, and in the other three instances employers provided funding for ELT.

Small City 3 is home to a company that employs over 700 TFWs, according to Participant E. The company provides mandatory onsite ELT for those TFWs who are deemed to require it. She acknowledged that ESL training at CLB levels 1 to 4 is offered, but was unsure of the length of the classes or to what extent these classes

met the needs of the TFWs. She advised that the company was somewhat isolated from the community and typically did not work well with community groups, creating challenges for service providers.

Participant B observed that some employers initially seemed interested in providing onsite ESL training for their employees, but were not willing to keep an employee on salary during class time or may expect employees to attend over a lunch hour, which employees find unfavourable; not all employers are as welcoming to onsite ELT as others. Participant A related:

[Holding on-site classes] is something we really tried, and the problem that we run into is...it's time away from work for ... employees, and [employers] aren't prepared to keep that employee on their salary during a class time, and the employee, to expect them to give up their lunch hour, is just, there's not the welcome attitude that one would hope.

Participants A and B indicated that rural TFWs were referred to them for ELT by their employers, who led the agency to believe that their TFW employees had much lower ESL proficiency than they actually did. When Participants A and B met the TFWs, they found that their English language skills were much higher than the employers' descriptions, which may be due to a lack of communication between employers and employees, or to a lack of reasonable expectation on the employers' part.

Discussion

Research Question 1: Are English as a Second Language Needs Being Met?

The ESL needs of TFWs are varied, and each individual's access to ELT is affected by his/her unique situation, based on available ELT services in the area, transportation, work schedule conflicts, and employers' willingness to make concessions for ELT training. Efforts being made by agencies across the province are an attempt to meet these needs, and where classes are offered, they are said to help TFWs to improve their

proficiency at basic and intermediate levels and increase confidence to integrate in the community. It was mentioned by participants in small and large cities that TFWs would like to attend more advanced college level classes to better their English language skills beyond basic and intermediate levels, but the expense is a significant barrier. As full-time employees of Canadian businesses, paying Canadian taxes, TFWs should be exempt from paying international fees for part-time courses offered at post-secondary institutions.

Participant H noted a specific area where TFW ESL needs is not being met in regards to preparation for the Red Seal exam. Employers in the trades should be mandated to provide support as required in preparation for the Red Seal exam by providing textbooks and tutors as needed.

The data highlight specific linguistic and language needs of TFWs; these include specific foci to assist TFWs with better comprehension on the job and improved interactions in public. Currently, AEI has contracted Alberta Teachers of English as a Second Language (ATESL) to develop a set of guidelines for curriculum writing, or a curriculum framework. All ESL providers in the province should have access to this framework, which they can utilize to develop courses to address the specific English language needs of TFWs. Courses could be delivered in-person by trained ESL teachers or offered online to TFWs in rural settings. The federal government should also consider allowing TFWs to integrate into part-time evening LINC classes, where possible, with permanent residents.

Sometimes TFWs do not recognize that they have a need for ESL training, or they do not make inquiries into ELT at settlement agencies. There are many reasons why TFWs do not inquire into further ESL training; it is important to acknowledge that a low number of inquiries is not necessarily representative of ESL needs. It is very difficult to draw conclusions about the ESL needs of TFWs.

Research Question 2: Opportunities for English Language Training

As mentioned earlier, the distribution of labour market opinions (LMOs) in Alberta indicates that a significant percentage of TFWs are employed in rural areas across the province (HRSDC, 2010). While one might infer that opportunities for ELT would be more limited in small towns than in larger centres, the data reveal that in some cases, the reverse is true. This is largely due to the CALCs and the provisions they make to include TFWs in ESL classes, and the indication that in two small cities ELT opportunities provided by settlement agencies or CALCs did not exist. ELT training for TFWs should become a part of the mandate of CALCs so they are encouraged to continue offering ELT training to TFWs in rural settings and small cities. Funding should be provided for program promotion, the hiring of ESL instructors, and the training of current staff.

Research Question 3: Regulation and Employers

Although employers are not mandated to provide ESL training to TFWs, some employers recognize that needs for ELT exist, and provide transportation to ESL classes, accommodate work schedules, and even grant funding for TFWs to take classes. Participants who worked directly with TFWs in these classes explained that the students benefited by increasing their confidence and language for integrating into the community, increasing fluency, and increasing ability to communicate in the workplace. However, employers who provide these opportunities appear to be few, and there are many other TFWs who could benefit from additional ELT training for integration and work-related purposes.

While participants agreed that ELT was necessary for TFW work needs, little elaboration was offered. Participant K suggested that occupational health and safety is at risk if TFWs do not have sufficient English language proficiency. Although she acknowledged that the expectation exists that TFWs arrive in Canada with sufficient English skills, other participants revealed that some TFWs were entering ELT courses at CLB 1 – 4, which implies that their English language proficiency is relatively low. That individuals are on the job with very limited English skills, thus hazardous to them and their co-workers is cause for serious concern. If TFWs do not

arrive with adequate levels of English language proficiency, the employer should be mandated to make concessions for employees to learn English, by allowing flexibility of hours to attend classes and providing funding for courses. Employers should also encourage TFWs to attend ESL classes when necessary and possible. The provincial government should instigate comprehensive monitoring to ensure that employers meet their responsibilities.

To ensure that TFWs arrive with the appropriate level of English language proficiency to meet work and integration needs, the federal and provincial governments should initiate discussion regarding the regulation and monitoring of English language proficiency levels. With the assistance of ESL specialists, employers and governments should work together to determine appropriate language levels, and a system for monitoring the English language proficiency levels of TFWs before or upon arrival in Canada should be developed to encourage the recruitment of TFWs with appropriate proficiency levels for work and integration.

The data indicated that often TFWs are unaware that they are allowed to take ESL training, or are unaware of the opportunities available in the community. Before and/or upon arrival to Alberta, explicit information should be provided to TFWs of their rights with regard to taking courses less than six months long. They should also be made aware that they do not need their employer's permission to take ELT. Information should also be made explicit regarding opportunities for ELT in all communities in English and in the native language of TFWs if necessary.

Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of this study was the small number of participants. Representatives from only one small town, four small cities, and two large cities participated in this study, and most communities reported very different responses to TFWs. Therefore, it is difficult to make generalizations regarding the ESL needs of and ELT

services provided to TFWs in Alberta. Future research could expand on what has already been accomplished by collecting data from other rural areas, small towns, and another small city.

The data were limited to the collective knowledge of participants. Therefore, there could be other ESL needs of TFWs that are not captured here, or there could be other ESL services provided to TFWs in the respective communities represented that have not been mentioned. Data may also be inaccurate due to human error in reporting.

Although the study confirmed that TFWs required ELT for settlement and work needs, participants were not asked to elaborate. Future research, such as case studies, should be conducted to increase our understanding of these needs.

There is a need to learn to what extent TFWs benefit from the current ESL options available to them. To gain a greater understanding of this, research could be conducted to monitor the progress of and benefits to TFWs who attend ESL evening classes or weekly conversation cafés.

Conclusion

Canada's answer to an employment shortage in skilled and semi-skilled labour areas is the TFWP. As Canada continues to recruit individuals who are denied the rights available to citizens and permanent residents, including access to federal English language training, or put individuals with low English skills in vulnerable situations with employers, we are fostering the development of an underclass. This scenario can be avoided by providing TFWs with similar rights to ESL access realized by permanent residents. "Temporary foreign workers contribute to the Canadian economy, and all Canadians, indirectly, are beneficiaries" (Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, 2009, p. 5). Therefore, TFWs deserve the same benefits that permanent residents enjoy. Formal opportunities for learning have provided evidence for the successful improvement of English language skills (Ellis, 1990). The ability to communicate in English also promotes opportunities for integration

into society (Thomas, 1992). If opportunities for formal ELT were available to TFWs, they could improve their skills, work more safely, improve their opportunities for integration in the community, and possibly overcome exploitative situations. Regulation and monitoring of English language proficiency levels of TFWs and the mandate of employers to provide ELT is also necessary to help circumvent exploitation. The TFWP may be permanent, but if funding is provided for ELT opportunities for TFWs, the distance of marginalization will become smaller as TFWs begin to enjoy the same access to language classes as their permanent resident neighbours.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire for Settlement Agencies

Demographics

1. What is your position?
2. How long have you worked in this position?

ESL Needs of Temporary Foreign Workers

1. Are there temporary foreign workers (TFWs) attending ESL classes at your institution?

If the answer is no, go to question **23**. If the answer is yes, continue to question 2.

2. What are the proficiency levels of the classes they are taking? (Example: beginner, intermediate, advanced, CLB 3)

3. How many TFWs in total accessed ESL programming at your agency in 2010?

4. How many TFWs currently access ESL programming at your agency (January 2011)?

5. What countries are they from and what are their first languages?

6. What are the proficiency levels of TFWs when they first access ESL programming at your agency? Check all that apply.

- A. Pre-beginner (Literacy)
- B. Beginner (CLB 1 – 2)
- C. Low-intermediate (CLB 3 – 4)
- D. High-intermediate (CLB 5 – 6)
- E. Advanced (CLB 7+)

7. What time of day are ESL classes that TFWs access offered? Check all that apply.

- A. Evening
- B. Daytime
- C. Weekends
- D. Other: _____

8. How many weeks are the ESL classes that TFWs participate in offered? Please check all that apply.

- A. Less than 4 weeks
- B. 4 to 8 weeks
- C. Nine to 12 weeks
- D. 13 – 16 weeks
- E. Over 17 weeks

9. Why do TFW students take your ESL classes? Select all that apply.

- A. Work needs
- B. Settlement needs
- C. Work and settlement needs
- D. Other (please specify) _____.

10. To what extent do the number of hours of ESL instruction offered to TFWs meet their ESL needs? Please elaborate. (open ended)

11. What have been the greatest challenges for your agency in addressing the ESL needs of TFWs? (open ended)

Accessibility of English Language Training

12. How many instructors teach classes with TFWs in them?

13. How many classes do you offer that have TFW students in attendance?

14. Are there separate classes for TFW students only, or are they integrated with permanent residents?

15. To what extent do your instructors have resources that meet the needs of TFWs?

16. What percentage of TFWs at your institution accessing ESL services live outside the city of your agency?

17. For those TFWs outside of your city who do not come to your centre, does your institution provide alternative ESL programming options? If yes, how, and what methods do you use? Please elaborate.

18. What methods of transportation do students use to get to your ESL courses?

19. Do TFW students have difficulty accessing transportation to your courses? How long is the average commute for a TFW to your institution?

20. Do TFWs have scheduling (work hour) conflicts with the ESL courses your institution offers? Please elaborate.

21. How do you accommodate these scheduling conflicts? Please elaborate.

22. What are the primary issues for access to ESL programming?

Employers and ESL Training

23. Has your institution been approached by employers wanting ESL instruction for their TFW employees? Have you been able to meet their needs?

24. Does your institution provide ESL teachers for onsite training of any employers?

25. Are any TFWs provided funding by their employer to receive ESL training at your institution?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Provincial Civil Servant

A. Demographic questions

1. What is your relationship to the temporary foreign worker program (TFWP)?
2. How familiar are you with the program?
3. How long have you been involved with the TFWP?

B. Facts and figures

4. I am interested in knowing information regarding TFWs and employers. For example, the number of employers who apply for LMOs (Labour Market Opinions), who employs the largest number of TFWs and who employs the smallest number, and what are those numbers. Also, are there any statistics on the first languages of TFWs, including English?

C. English language training

6. What are the regulations surrounding English language training for TFWs? Is anyone responsible? Do you know what the rationale is for these regulations? For example, is it for on-the-job safety reasons? Where are these regulations documented?
7. I understand that employers wishing to nominate TFWs to the AINP program are required to provide English language training to assist employees to meet the English proficiency for the required CLBs for the various work sectors. Just to clarify, is this the only area that English language training is mandated?
8. Further probing (only ask if not answered by previous question): To expand on previous question, what are the *employer* responsibilities with respect to English language training? To what extent are employers meeting these responsibilities? Do you know a number or what percentage of employers who are meeting these responsibilities?
9. Follow up to previous question: How is this monitored? What are the issues that affect the extent to which employers meet these responsibilities?

10. Has there been dialogue between employers and policy makers in government about English language proficiency level qualifications for work sites? For example, has a large employer of TFWs such as a construction company asked that a certain English language proficiency level be mandated by government? Or vice versa?

11. To what extent do you believe English language skills, or lack of English language skills have proven to be a challenge for TFWs and the TFWP? What are potential sources of the problem? For example, is there a lack of potential workers with language skills, or an inability to accurately assess them in their home countries?

12. Do employers or recruiters assess language skills before bringing TFWs to Canada? How is this done?

D. Government perspectives

13. I know that the TFWs are categorized according to National Occupation Classification (NOC) levels. This includes managerial or professional TFWs and semi-skilled TFWs. Are all skill levels (0,A,B,C, & D, OR managerial/professional and semi-skilled) of NOC (National Occupation Classification) eligible for permanent residency in Canada? Are the Canadian Experience Class (CEC) and the Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program (AINP) the only routes for TFWs to become permanent residents while in Canada? Is there a limit to how many TFWs an employer can nominate for the AINP (percentage or number)?

14. Thomas Lucaszuk, Minister of Alberta Employment and Immigration, acknowledged that the temporary foreign worker program is not working. What do you think are the problems?

15. Further probe: Do you think English language proficiency is a problem?

16. Question for provincial civil servants: MP Teresa Woo Paw is currently conducting a review of the impact of the TFW program on all affected individuals. When will the results of this review be available?

17. Is there anything else you would like to mention that I haven't asked about?

18. Do you know of any federal employees who could also answer similar questions?