

Skills Development for Future Needs of the Canadian Labour Market:

SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Project

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Knowledge Synthesis Research Team

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- **Meyer Burstein**, Senior Fellow and Director of the Policy and Planning for the Pathways to Prosperity Partnership;
- **Romana Pasca**, Program Coordinator of Skills Connect and Welcoming Communities Program Manager at Immigrant and Multicultural Services Society in Prince George, BC;
- **Allysa Gredling**, Coordinator of the Welcoming Communities Initiative at Kamloops Immigrant Services in Kamloops, BC;
- **Brenda Smith** (MA, MLIS), Distance and Document Delivery Librarian at Thompson Rivers University.
- We wish to acknowledge the contributions of **Tiffany Sampson, Soon Young Jang, Amber Young, Angele Sandha & Amanda Hill** as research assistants.

This project is being undertaken in partnership with Pathways to Prosperity (P2P).

Context

- Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013 - training is not sufficiently aligned to the skills employers need or to the jobs available, resulting in a skills mismatch that leads to higher unemployment and slower economic growth.
- As skilled Canadian-born workers are becoming increasingly difficult to find, immigrants will play a more significant role in Canada's labour force.
- Employers are actively encouraged to hire newcomers; yet newcomers face challenges with the lack of recognition of their foreign education and work credentials.
- Greater involvement of employers in newcomer recruitment and greater reliance on new entry streams - Students, TFWS, and CEC pathways – is creating new service requirements and new patterns of federal and provincial service eligibility and availability.
- There is a need to better understand the possible roles that employers might play in newcomer settlement and adaptation, especially in small cities.

Project Goal

- The goal of the project is to describe the state of knowledge about the behaviour of employers and employer organizations in promoting newcomers' absorption and integration.
- In this panel, my presentation will focus on the literature relating to employer involvement in newcomer settlement and related best practices.

Questions relevant to this panel

- What is the 'value proposition' for hiring newcomers from an employer perspective?
- How could employers be motivated to play a greater role in social and economic integration, and what strategies might provide them with the tools and resources to do so?
- How might settlement agencies assist employers in regard to newcomer settlement?
- What role might employers play vis-à-vis workers' families?

Methodology

- A systematic scoping review of a wide range of literature resources to capture a range of sources (peer-reviewed and grey-literature) and methodologies (qualitative and quantitative).
- Primary purpose is to provide a broad overview of the current research and to document key components in order to identify specific gaps based on the existing research evidence.
- This project has several critical components, including: selecting and identifying relevant online databases, identifying academic databases, identifying search terms, building search strings, creating search alerts, and building a screening process.

Example of Search Terms:

- Immigration
- immigrant
- foreign workers
- employment
- unemployment
- employment skills
- employment outcomes
- employment practices
- Employers
- employed
- economic conditions
- economic integration
- social integration
- future labour market
- labour demand
- labour supply
- labour market outcomes
- occupational status
- occupational prestige
- skills and integration

Boolean techniques were used to combined search terms for effective matches.⁴

Key Academic Databases

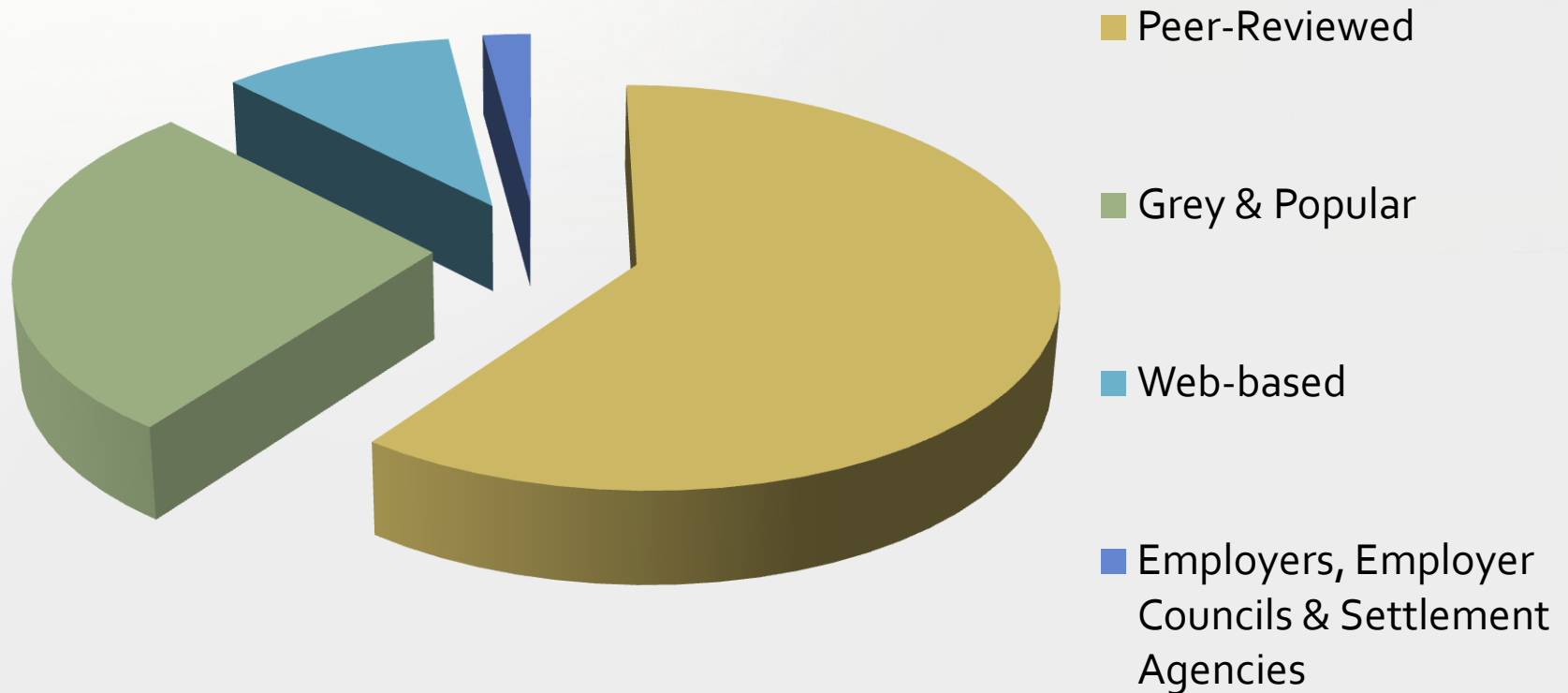
- America History and Life
- Cambridge Journals Online
- Canadian Research Index
- CBCA Reference
- Conference Board of Canada
- EconLit
- Government of Canada Publications
- JSTOR
- Oxford Electronic Journals
- Periodicals Archive Online
- Project Muse
- Sage Journals
- Social Sciences Citation Index
- Sociological Abstracts
- SpringerLINK
- Statistics Canada
- Wiley Online Library
- Academic Search Complete
- Business Source Complete
- Social Services Abstracts
- Canadian Newsstand

•Titles and/or abstracts of search results were scanned, and 541 promising articles were identified and uploaded to RefWorks for more in depth analysis.

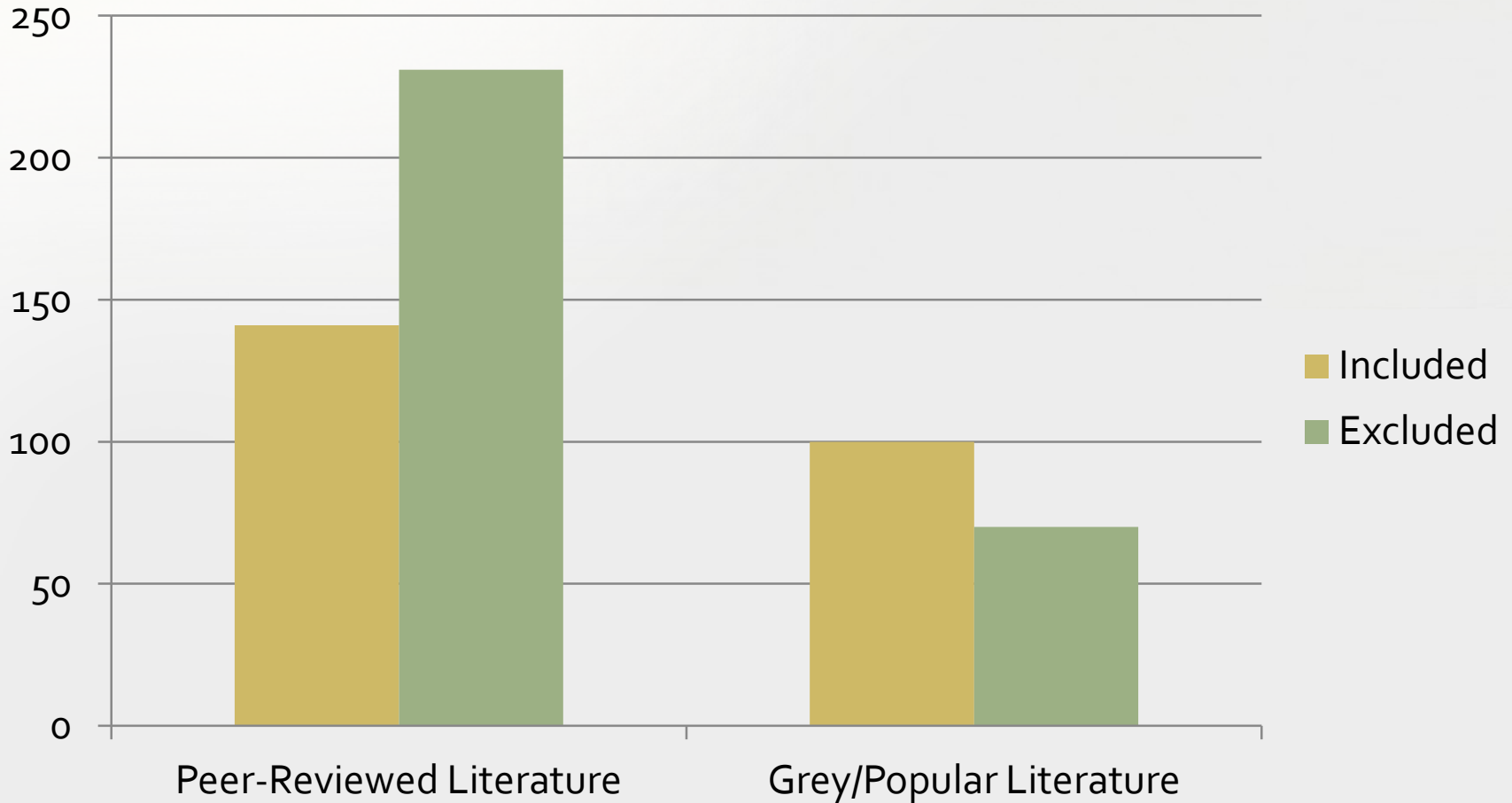
Grey Literature

- Promising grey literature was retrieved from several sources, including: government ministries, non-profit organizations, and sector networks.
- To date there are 63 promising documents from web sources.
- 179 emails were sent to employers, employer councils, and settlement agencies to request additional literature.

Results for Potential Literature



Inclusion and Exclusion of Literature



Number of Articles and Identified Themes

	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	Theme 6	Theme 7	Theme 8	Theme 9
Academic	71	41	57	6	9	7	36	10	0
Grey/ Popular	39	8	25	0	6	7	8	10	0
	Theme 10	Theme 11	Theme 12	Theme 13	Theme 14	Theme 15	Theme 16	Theme 17	Theme 18
Academic	5	2	23	17	6	3	3	41	8
Grey/ Popular	3	3	4	17	1	5	3	20	6

Themes (most prevalent in literature)

T.1) Supply and demand of skills for the labour market (71,39)

T.3) Impact of immigration-related policies and programs on supply and development of skills (57,25)

T.17) Solutions to better integrate skilled immigrants in labour market (41,20)

T.2) Employer and/or employer organization's role in absorption and integration of newcomers (41,8)

T.7) Promising practices and/or policies for absorption and integration of newcomers (36,8)

T.13) Employer's perspectives on hiring newcomers or temporary foreign workers (17,17)

Gaps (in literature)

- T.9) Employers role vis-à-vis workers' families (0)
- T.11) Employers' perspective on skills shortage (2,3)
- T.16) Knowledge of employer capacity and practices for assisting in newcomer settlement (3, 3)
- T.4) Employers 'value proposition' for hiring newcomers (6,0)
- T.14) Gaps or barriers between community services and employers (6,1)
- T.10) Employers' use of immigrant flows to accelerate labour market absorption (5,3)
- T.15) Labour market skills implementation from employer perspective (3,5)

Preliminary Findings

- Employers play a central role in the social integration of immigrants in the labour market, but have received scant attention in research literature (Rodriguez, 2004).
- There are gaps in the literature as to what employers might do –or currently do – to help newcomers and their families settle.
- Numerous toolkits, guides, and resources are available for employers to assist with recruitment, building a welcoming and inclusive workplace, retention, and engagement in the workplace. Far less is available on the actual perspectives of employers.

Preliminary Findings

- Literature identifies some of the challenges to employ newcomers because of their lack of experience or knowledge of the specific position available. Their credentials are also hard to have recognized in Canada and employers have difficulties assessing their foreign experience. Different education and training systems may also make comparisons difficult. Language is also a concern for immigrants with a lack of fluency in English and/or French. Consequently, some of these factors may lead skilled immigrants being unemployed or underemployed in Canada.

Preliminary Findings

- To meet labour market needs employers use Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW) within global political economy (and global skills shortage).
- TFW program intends to serve employers' needs, to help fill vacant positions as rapidly as possible. Employers are also seeking more foreign-trained workers, and many employers need permanent employees (The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2012).

Preliminary Findings

- Immigrant and Newcomer Employers' Councils support employers with the integration of internationally trained individuals in the workplace.
- Non-profits facilitate the social and economic integration of immigrants and newcomers by providing employment counselling, preparation and placement services.

Employers in Francophone Minority Communities

- Demographic growth of Alberta's Francophone population over the last ten years has resulted in a number of working-age Francophones exceeding the number of available French-language positions. Francophone immigrants who want jobs commensurate with their education level are limited by the small number of jobs on the market requiring mastery of French and not English. Need to consider the role of employers in recruitment, and socio-economic integration, of Francophone minority communities.

Preliminary Findings

- There is no single, magic solution to skills needs across Canada. Different labour markets require different responses. Consider locally-driven initiatives for immigration and integration.
- Rural and remote areas of Canada with fewer formal training institutions may need greater flexibility with respect to developing and delivering training opportunities.

Preliminary Findings

- Foreign students are a potential stream of highly skilled immigrants who, due to their investments in education and training in Canada, higher language proficiency, and social networking, are expected to integrate relatively quickly into the Canadian labour market and society.
- There are gaps in the literature on employers' motivation to hire foreign students who transition to permanent resident status in Canada, and their potential contributions.

Employment Practices

- More 'leading' employers are adopting good immigrant employment practices particularly in the financial, health care, energy and manufacturing sectors; using combinations of practices to hire, integrate and retain skilled immigrant employees; working towards religious and cultural accommodations for all employees; and working towards diversity on their boards (ALLIES, 2013).
- Found largely in Toronto, Vancouver, & Calgary.

Employer-sponsored Training

- Upskilling the workforce: Employer-sponsored training (Canadian Chamber of Commerce, October 2013)
- Partnerships and networks linking employers, postsecondary institutions, and other training providers have been developed, and programs and supports have become more responsive to the needs of local labour markets.
- Integration services are supported.

Summary of Employers' Practices

- Recruitment and hiring
- Credential recognition
- Mentoring
- Internships
- Upgrading skills and designations
- Language training
- Partnerships (with community organizations that focus on skilled immigrant employment)
- Diversity training

(ALLIES, January 2011)

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Thank you!

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