

Abstract

Some English language learners (ELLs) may not be successful in their English language program due to non-language related physical, emotional or behavioural challenges. Some students may conceal their challenges or diverse abilities upon application to a program for fear of not being accepted, and others may have never been assessed and diagnosed in their country of origin due to fear and shame related to stigma against people with disabilities in their culture. Some students may not have learning challenges in their own culture and may face new challenges when introduced to a new language and a new and different education system. This knowledge translation project proposes that all post-secondary English as a Second Language (ESL) students who are unable to achieve success in their English language studies within a reasonable time and without an identified, obvious mitigating cause should be advised and offered a referral for assessment for a learning disability or other condition that may affect their ability to input, integrate, and output what they are being taught in class. Publicly funded post-secondary institutions in British Columbia (BC) are expected to provide accessibility services to students with diverse abilities. Their policies and services are made available to students on their websites. This study investigated whether private post-secondary language institutions in BC are expected to have and whether they do have accessibility policies and services available to their post-secondary ESL students with diverse abilities. A non-native English speaker friendly policy for international ESL students with diverse abilities was created that could be adopted by any private post-secondary language school in BC. Best practices for assisting ESL students with diverse abilities within this sector are recommended.