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EMPLOYMENT BARRIERS: PREPARING IMMIGRANT WOMEN FOR THE  
CANADIAN WORKFORCE  
BY  
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A Final Project submitted to the  
Campus Alberta Applied Psychology: Counselling Initiative  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF COUNSELLING

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**CAMPUS ALBERTA APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY:  
COUNSELLING INITIATIVE**

***SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE PAGE***

**Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research**

The undersigned certifies that she or he has read and recommends to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a final project entitled **Employment Barriers: Preparing Immigrant Women for the Canadian Workforce** submitted by **Tammy Roy** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Master of Counselling**.



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August 3, 2007  
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**CAMPUS ALBERTA APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY:  
COUNSELLING INITIATIVE**

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## Abstract

As our global economy progresses, more immigrant women are looking for Canadian employment, only to find out Canadian employers are not looking for them. This document is an outline of a project that is geared towards identifying the key barriers immigrant women experience when searching for Canadian employment. The final product of this project is a website outlining the key barriers and offering suggestions to help immigrant women overcome these obstacles. The intent of this project is to better prepare immigrant women in order to facilitate employment success once in Canada. This document includes a literature review of the barriers to Canadian employment, the procedures undertaken to finalize the project, and a summary of the findings.

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## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Figures.....	viii
Introduction.....	1
<i>Background</i> .....	1
<i>Rationale</i> .....	2
<i>Current Project</i> .....	3
Literature Review.....	5
<i>Gender Issues</i> .....	6
<i>Racism and Discrimination</i> .....	10
<i>Poverty</i> .....	10
<i>Transition Stress</i> .....	12
<i>Language</i> .....	16
<i>Credentials</i> .....	17
<i>Work Experience</i> .....	19
<i>Networking</i> .....	20
<i>Lack of Accurate Information</i> .....	20
Procedures.....	23
<i>The Website</i> .....	24
<i>Technical Process</i> .....	27
The Product.....	28

Synthesis and Implications.....	29
<i>Benefits to Others</i> .....	30
<i>Strengths and Weaknesses</i> .....	33
<i>Efficacy of the Project</i> .....	35
<i>Future Research</i> .....	36
<i>Recommendations</i> .....	38
<i>Personal Learning</i> .....	40
<i>Conclusion</i> .....	40
References.....	42
Appendix.....	53

## List of Figures

Figure 1 Front page of the website.....	28
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## Introduction

### *Background*

Canada is part of a global economy (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2004; Arthur, 2000; Neault, 2002). People are no longer limited to geographical areas in which to seek employment. It is common for Canadians to work overseas, as well as common for people to relocate to Canada for employment. Currently, approximately 200 million people live outside of their country of origin (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006a).

Employers now have the ability to search worldwide for the best employees, resulting in worldwide competition (Neault, 2002). This highly competitive Canadian job market focuses on speed and easy movement of people (Alberta Human Resources and Employment, 2004). It is multicultural and rapidly changing (Neault, 2000). This type of workforce may be a result of a number of factors such as advances in communication technology; reductions in the prices of transportation; and changes in political, economic and social conditions, and trends, at the national and international levels (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2005b).

In 2005, approximately 262,000 immigrants came to Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006a); the Canadian government hopes that this number will continue to increase. Over the years, Canada has maintained the highest per capita immigration rate in the world (Wikipedia, 2007). The point system that is being utilized presently by immigration services, allows highly skilled workers to enter Canada with the hopes that they will contribute to the economic success of our country. Unfortunately, according to research, most immigrants are unable to find suitable employment in their

intended fields (Statistics Canada, 2005b). These results suggest that the Canadian economy has yet to capitalize on valuable resources that would enhance our nation's prosperity.

### *Rationale*

Recently, there have been frequent news reports about the problem of immigrant unemployment rates and underemployment rates in Canada. In a study conducted by Statistics Canada (2003), problems with finding employment was the most common difficulty immigrants experienced when immigrating to Canada. If this continues, there could be a potential decrease in the number of immigrants coming to Canada, which could be detrimental to the Canadian economy and nation building.

The idea for this project came about through my personal experiences as an employment counsellor for immigrant women. There was a noticeable gap between what these women had expected the Canadian employment market to be like, and the realities of it. I was concerned about the women's reactions to those realities and felt that improved pre-immigration information about working in Canada would help to better prepare them for a successful transition.

Researchers suggest that many immigrant women are surprised by the potential difficulties of finding successful employment in Canada, and are disappointed when they realize that often their foreign credentials and work experience are not respected or recognized (Yip, 2005). This information is especially concerning since immigrant women often report being misled and receiving inaccurate information about the realities of finding Canadian employment (Edmonton Social Planning Council [ESPC], 2000). I chose to focus on immigrant women for this project, as they seem to be presented with

additional barriers to successful Canadian employment (Dion & Dion, 2001).

Additionally, through my work, I was already familiar with some of the unique barriers immigrant women face.

### *Current Project*

One method of relaying relevant employment information to pre-immigrant women is through a website. Using the Internet as a means of relaying career related information is becoming more common (Mackert & McDaniels, 1998). A website format has been selected for the current project as it is cost effective, and easily accessible to pre-immigrant women. For the information provider, a website allows immediate flow of large amounts of information, 24 hours a day, worldwide. Maintenance and updates are made easier with a website format, and it is cost effective as it eliminates the cost of printing and shipping. Therefore, the Internet is an effective way to make information available to most people all over the world.

The final outcome of this Campus Alberta Applied Psychology (CAAP) project is an informative website for pre-immigrant women, to facilitate their successful integration into the Canadian workforce. When the possibility of a website containing relevant pre-immigration employment-related information was mentioned to some of my clients, they responded positively and expressed it would be beneficial to future immigrant women. This website includes links to such items as job search websites, as well as information about barriers to employment in Canada. The information for this website was selected based upon a literature review conducted into the specific barriers that affect immigrant women in finding successful employment. For the purposes of this project, successful employment will be defined as an individual's perception of personal success (i.e., when

an immigrant woman determines that she has reached her employment goals). The website is specifically intended for women of other countries who are thinking about relocating to live and work in Canada.

My assumption is that the information on this website will better prepare pre-immigrant women, resulting in a more successful career transition. Researchers have found a connection between preparedness and employment success (Vuori & Vinokur, 2005). People require knowledge about cross-cultural work transitions to be marketable in today's international labour force (Arthur, 2000) and must be prepared for living, learning and working with people from other cultures (Arthur, 2002).

Specifically, this website will focus on identifying potential barriers to Canadian employment, and suggestions on how to overcome these barriers are listed. According to Krumboltz's planned happenstance theory, identifying and overcoming barriers does in fact result in successful career transitions (Neault, 2002). Vuori and Vinokur (2005) stated that a prepared individual would possess "...both confidence in his or her job-search skills and the knowledge and emotional readiness to deal with setbacks that are frequently part of the search process" (p. 278). The current project is designed to assist immigrant women, through preparation, to enhance their job search confidence and emotional readiness to deal with the inevitable setbacks during their search for successful employment. If immigrant women were better informed about the realities of employment in Canada, they may then be better prepared. With accurate information prior to immigration they could ensure that their education is valid in Canada, begin to create a business network in Canada, start to research the job market, learn effective job

search techniques, and evaluate how their particular skills fit into the Canadian job market.

Despite an extensive search through other Canadian websites geared towards potential immigrants, a website geared towards immigrant women, which focused on the realities of Canadian employment, and displayed information in a clear, simple manner, was not to be found. I anticipate that the current project will be a unique addition to the information already available on the Internet for pre-immigrant women. In short, the rationale for developing a website to inform pre-immigrant women of the realities of finding suitable employment in Canada is to better prepare them for the challenges in order to ensure their personal success, as well as the success of the Canadian economy. This paper is divided into sections, beginning with a literature review, followed by an outline of the procedures used to create the project, then the project itself, and ending with a discussion of the project results and potential implications.

#### Literature Review

Canada welcomes hundreds of thousands of new immigrants every year (Statistics Canada, 2005b) hoping to provide a better economy for its current citizens and promise of a better life to its future ones. The most common reasons immigrants come to Canada are to improve their families future, join family or close friends, pursue an education, improve their employment situation, or to escape war (Statistics Canada, 2005a). In some cases immigrant women come to Canada involuntarily because they are forced to by their husbands (Hiller & McCaig, 2007). Depending on which country they migrate from, their situation in that country, and the reasons for immigration, each person's experience of Canada will be different. Often immigrants believe that they are going to have a better

life in Canada because this is what they have been told. Unfortunately this is not always the case, especially in the beginning. Key barriers to successful employment for immigrant women described in this section include gender issues, racism/discrimination (Godin & Renaud, 2005; Status of Women Canada [SWC], 2004), poverty (Ryan 2004; Statistics Canada, 2005b), stress of transition (Guindon & Smith, 2002), poor language skills, unrecognized credentials, lack of Canadian work experience (Lee & Westwood, 1996; Yip, 2005), absence of social and professional networks (Yip, 2005), and lack of accurate information (ESPC, 2000).

### *Gender Issues*

Women are confronted with additional barriers to Canadian employment whether personal, or professional, than their male counterparts (Dion & Dion, 2001). Although some of these barriers affect non-immigrant women, they are generally increased for immigrant women. The barriers to successful Canadian employment, and how they affect immigrant and non-immigrant women, will be examined.

### *Professional Women*

Although much improved, gender bias is still found in Canada, partially demonstrated by the fact that many single men still earn more money than single women (Russo & Vaz, 2001; SWC, 2004). The difference in pay is observable at the time of job entry, and the pay gap tends to increase with years of employment (Finnie & Wannell, 2004).

Professional immigrant women have unique challenges when looking for successful employment. In Canada, immigrant women generally have a higher unemployment rate than immigrant men, even though they possess the same level of

credentials (Preston & Man, 1999). This may be because immigrant women are not typically the primary applicants for immigration, but enter Canada as dependents of their husband (Saraswati, 2000). During the immigration process the primary applicants' skills are screened to determine whether their employment skills are needed in Canada (Saraswati). Therefore, immigrant women may arrive in Canada with unmarketable skills. Another unique barrier for immigrant women is that some types of jobs are seen as unacceptable by their culture, limiting the variety of jobs they may find appropriate to pursue (Saraswati).

### *Multiple Roles of Women*

Women often have several roles to fill, which can be a barrier to achieving successful employment in Canada. The traditional family system, still present in many countries, utilizes women as caretakers for the home and children (Press & Johnson, 2004). Although women in North America typically work, they remain as the primary caretakers for the home and children (Perrone, Webb, & Blalock, 2005). Caring for children is the number one determinant to whether or not a woman seeks employment outside of the home (Press & Townsley, 1998). Additionally, caring for their elderly parents is usually the female's responsibility, causing 28% of women with this responsibility to quit their jobs in the United States (Singleton, 2000). This information implies that if a woman must, or chooses to, work outside of the home, she would need to find employment that is flexible enough to allow the balance of roles. This can make it difficult to find desirable employment.

Immigrant women have unique challenges when attempting to balance their roles once in Canada. Similar to North American women, working immigrant women remain

responsible for the same amount of domestic duties as non working women (George & Ramkisson, 1998). As previously mentioned, caring for children is a significant barrier to Canadian employment for women. The difference between North American and immigrant women is that many immigrant women do not want to leave their children with strangers (i.e., daycare) because of cultural norms (Saraswati, 2000). In many other cultures, children are left with family members to be taken care of while their parents work (Preston & Man, 1999). If there is some extended family in Canada that can help out with childcare, women are more likely to find employment (Duleep & Sanders, 1993). However, often extended families remain in the women's home countries, leaving the women to schedule employment around their child's schedule (Preston & Man).

#### *Independent to Dependent*

Not only must immigrant women learn how to deal with multiple roles, they must also learn to cope with role transitions. Once in Canada, many immigrant women find themselves transitioning from a dependent to an independent role (Catolico, 1997). Some women come from patriarchal societies, where they may have played subordinate roles and engaged in unpaid labour (Singerman, 2006). In most patriarchal societies women are not given the option to engage in the labour force (Jun, 2002; Singerman; Zaatari, 2006), therefore forced to be dependent upon their husbands. Although, in Canada, some women do not work and choose to be dependent upon their husbands, Canada is different from patriarchal societies because most women have a choice. This choice reduces negative feelings resulting from repression and exploitation (Zaatari), and the sense of non-existence (Jun, 2002) some women experience in other cultures.

In Canada, women and men are to be treated as equals; we are striving for an egalitarian society. It is common, and generally encouraged, for women to be financially independent. Being treated as an equal may seem to be a positive aspect of immigration for some women; however, it can be stressful for those who are not familiar with being treated in this manner. The stress of this role change can cause tension, and even violence in the family (Vancouver Centre of Excellence, 1999). Husbands may resent the increased freedom of their wives (Espin, 1987), feeling threatened by their wives' enhanced power. However, if the immigrant woman decides to remain in the submissive role she may find herself at risk of isolation from the rest of society (Jun, 2002). For example, she may feel she does not need to learn English, and may not be permitted by her husband to socialize outside of work. Immigrant women are at a risk of social exclusion (Wong, 2000) and several report that it is difficult to form close relationships with women outside of their racial group (Jamal, 1998). Poor English language skills can also prevent women from getting the proper help when they need it (Saraswati, 2000). Groups such as English classes can help women to adapt to their new country (Jun, 2002).

Another challenge of transitioning from a dependent to an independent role is the lost reliance on others. In some cultures women tend to rely heavily on their extended families, which is typically lost when they move to another country (Catolico, 1997). Such losses can be extremely stressful for immigrant women (Khan & Watson, 2005). Once in Canada immigrants may find themselves without much support, which could be a major transition for those who are used to depending on others.

Transitioning from a society where women are dependent, to a culture where women are encouraged to be independent, is stressful for the entire family. During this transition, women must also deal with the multiple roles presented to them once in Canada. Even if immigrant women cope with these issues successfully, there remains the challenge of finding well-paid employment in Canada.

#### *Racism and Discrimination*

In addition to battling gender issues, some immigrant women must also deal with cultural discrimination. In a study conducted by SWC (2004), some of the immigrant women reported that they experienced racism and/or discrimination, or differential treatment, when getting or looking for employment in Canada. This is apparent especially when looking for jobs that require extensive qualifications and better paying positions (Khan & Watson, 2005). Those women who believed they experienced discrimination at work felt powerless because they needed the job and thought they might get fired if they complained (Wong, 2000). Upon completing an analysis of employment activity, Godin and Renaud (2005) revealed that there is discrimination in the Canadian workforce against immigrants, particularly natives of North Africa and the Middle East. Additionally, Tran's (2004) labour market analysis revealed that visible minorities have more difficulties than non-visible minorities when looking for employment, even though visible minorities are generally more educated. This research suggests that racism is another barrier for immigrant women when looking for Canadian employment.

#### *Poverty*

Beyond gender and cultural issues, the issue of immigrant poverty is important to discuss as a barrier to Canadian employment. According to research, immigrants earn less

money than Canadian-born employees, despite the same credentials (Yip, 2005), and often end up living below the poverty line (Statistics Canada, 2005b). These poverty rates seem to be increasing instead of decreasing, with fewer immigrants being able to find suitable employment (Reitz, 2001). It has been demonstrated through recent studies that poverty levels of recent immigrants are much higher than the rest of the population (Ryan, 2004; Statistics Canada). Although researchers have shown that the longer an immigrant stays in Canada, the more money he or she will make, Hum and Simpson (2000) reported that the economic assimilation process is longer for immigrants, especially women, than for the general population.

On account of low birthrates, an aging population, and global competition, Canada is relying on immigrants more than ever for labour supply (Harvey, Reil, Siu, Blakely, & DiTomaso, 2001). However, according to research conducted by Statistics Canada (2005) only 33% of immigrants found a job in their intended occupation during their first year in Canada, and another 9% did so during their second year. This is unfortunate, as most women who move to Canada are highly educated and motivated, yet remain unable to find desirable employment (ESPC, 2000). Immigrant women, despite their educational background, often end up working in jobs such as a factory worker and house cleaner (Ng, 1990) and are poorly paid (Preston & Mann, 1999). These types of jobs typically do not offer health care benefits (George & Ramkisson, 1998) or opportunities for promotion (Jamal, 1998). Often immigrants end up working long hours in order to meet their basic needs (Neault, 2004). Some work environments, usually occupied by immigrant women, are actually hazardous to their health (Jamal) and labour protections are loosely enforced (Wong, 2000). Typically, recent immigrants find

themselves working at part-time, temporary jobs, or in short-term, full-time positions (Daly & Monsebraaten, 2007). The lack of full-time, permanent positions is a result of a shift in the Canadian job market, and is a key component of poverty (DeWolff, 2000).

Poverty can be a barrier to obtaining successful employment for reasons such as lack of sufficient transportation (Nam, 2005), lack of social networks, and poor neighborhoods (Press & Johnson, 2004). For example, poor neighborhoods may have restricted resources in terms of employment opportunities, affordable childcare, and transportation (Press & Johnson). There is also the added stress of living in an impoverished area. Additionally, women in poverty may be working overtime trying to earn enough money to survive, therefore limiting their time to dedicate to job searches.

Once an immigrant woman falls into poverty, it is difficult to resurface. This is concerning as the above research states that many immigrants end up in poverty. This poverty also affects the Canadian economy; it could do much better if immigrants were allowed to work in their chosen field. Instead, many immigrant women end up working long hours for little money, feeling unhappy with their type of work, and contributing to a poorer economy.

### *Transition Stress*

There is a lot involved in moving to a new country that can be extremely stressful (Alvarez, 1999; Lee & Westwood, 1996). Stress has been defined as “the condition that results when person-environment transactions lead the individual to perceive a discrepancy between the demands of a situation and his or her resources.” (Sarafino, 2006, p. 422). Too much stress can hold women back from seeking employment, as stress can create many physical and psychological symptoms such as depression, and head and

chest pain (Guindon & Smith, 2002). Excessive stress can limit motivation to undertake an effective job search (Guindon & Smith).

Many immigrant women experience culture shock as a result of the stresses involved with confronting new situations, engaging in interpersonal encounters, and mourning their losses (Espin, 1987). Several researchers concur that culture shock refers to "...the multiple demands for adjustment that individuals experience at the cognitive, behavioral, emotional, social, and physiological levels, when they relocate to another culture" (Chapdelaine & Alexitch, 2004, p. 2). As a result of culture shock individuals may experience anxiety, disorientation, confusion, and an increased need to sleep (Wikipedia, 2007). A more positive term to describe the stress from immigration is called acculturative stress. Not all stress involved in immigration is a result of negative circumstances, which culture shock tends to imply (Berry, 2005). Additionally, Berry suggests that the term acculturative stress better encompasses the problematic interaction between the two cultures. In the following section multiple aspects of stress will be outlined in relation to employment barriers for immigrant women, under the headings of cultural adaptation and acculturation, loss, and grief.

#### *Cultural Adaptation and Acculturation*

Over the years, there have been several definitions for acculturation. A more recent definition refers to acculturation as "...the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members" (Berry, 2005, p.5). This definition acknowledges changes in both cultural groups (Berry, 2001), where the next definition is more individualized. Espin explains acculturation as the process of adapting to new customs

and behaviours without necessarily losing old ones (Espin,1987). Acculturation can happen at various rates of time, however adaptation is the term that describes the relatively slower, constant changes that occur over longer periods of time, in the individual or group, in response to external factors (Berry, 2005). Although the acculturation process is different for each individual (Berry, 1997), Espin outlined four stages to acculturation and adaptation consisting of 1) joy and relief, 2) disillusionment, 3) acceptance, and 4) adjustment and reorganization. As a result of a study conducted by Khan and Watson (2005), with Pakistani immigrant women, the authors created their own stages of adaptation and labeled it the Canadian Immigration Experience. The stages of the Canadian Immigration Experience consist of 1) seeking a better future, 2) confronting reality, 3) grieving and mourning, and 4) gains, remains, and coping. In both sets of stages the process begins with hope for a better life. Then once in Canada, the stages suggest that immigrants are confronted with unexpected situations that they eventually learn to cope with.

Upon arrival in Canada, immigrants encounter cultural barriers, such as the English language. Immigrants are also introduced to new spiritual and political beliefs, as well as different laws they are required to obey. In the SWC (2004) study, 64% of the respondents affirmed that their health worsened after relocating to Canada, mostly due to the stress of the immigration process and cultural adaptation. Some argue that the cross-cultural transition is more difficult for women (Bystydzienski, Resnik, & Voshali, 1995). Excessive stress can negatively affect a person's health, which in turn affects a person's ability to search for and hold a job.

### *Loss*

Loss is a key component of the adaptation process and a source of stress (Espin, 1987). Immigrant women may experience emotional, cultural, and social losses. Recent immigrant women have reported feeling a loss of identity, energy, socio-economic standing, and self-esteem as a result of their lost career (Judd, 2004). At the same time, many are mourning the loss of traditional values (Choudhry, 2001). Some immigrant women expressed that the most painful losses were of prosperity, the good life, and professional status (Khan & Watson, 2005). One of the women in the study expressed that “Canada left us without any money. We lost everything” (Khan & Watson, p.310). These losses left them feeling inadequate and worthless. Another key loss for these women was the loss of a safety net (someone to be there if they needed help). In other words, they missed the support of family and friends. These immigrant women admitted to experiencing deep pain over their losses.

### *Grief*

Once immigrants acknowledge their losses, Espin (1987) believed that grieving the loss of loved ones and home country is a natural and important psychological process. Depression is something that most immigrant women experience as they grieve the loss of their culture, social connections, and relationships (Alvarez, 1999). In Khan and Watson’s (2005) study, the women expressed anger, frustration, and blame while grieving for the loss of their dreams of a prosperous life in Canada. Other common emotions experienced during the grief cycle include shock, denial, guilt, fear, exhaustion, depression, and confusion (Arch, 2002).

Both grief and loss are major components of cultural adaptation and acculturation. During the adaptation process, much stress is present as new immigrants struggle to adjust to their new life, and mourn the loss of their old one. Stress is a serious issue during the immigration process and can affect one's employment outcomes.

### *Language*

Poor language skills are the number one barrier to finding Canadian employment (Yip, 2005). The ability to speak one of Canada's two official languages is crucial when looking for employment in Canada. Statistics Canada (2003) reported that over one half (52%) of immigrants who spoke either English or French found employment, whereas only one third (33%) of those without these skills found employment once in Canada. The majority of provinces in Canada require employees to speak English at the job site, and knowledge of the French language is considered an asset. When considering employing recent immigrants to Canada, employers evaluate language skills based on oral language skills, writing, reading, and computer literacy (Lee & Westwood, 1996). This would include business language, which may not be covered in a general English or French learning program.

Many women who immigrate to Canada have little to no English or French language skills, and are generally less likely than men to have knowledge of one of the official languages (Statistics Canada, 2003). Lack of language skills can be problematic, as demonstrated by this immigrant woman: "I could not go anywhere and I still cannot because I don't know any English and I feel I will get lost if I move out of this house" (Choudhry, 2001, p. 385). Some women do not try to learn English or French, even after arriving in Canada; reasons may include their husband's disapproval (Kouritzin, 2000).

The inability to speak one of Canada's official languages is problematic when attempting to integrate into Canadian society and find employment.

Not only do employers want their employees to speak English or French, but some researchers suggested that an immigrant's accent might also affect employment outcomes (Creese & Kambere, 2003; Neault, 2004). Creese and Kambere's study with African women proposed that employers might associate some English accents with a poor ability to speak English. Perception of literacy levels is especially important to immigrants, as low literacy levels provide more of an employment barrier for immigrants than similar literacy levels among non-immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2004).

It can be implied from the above research that it is extremely important for an immigrant woman to speak English or French in order to gain successful employment. However, even if she can speak an official Canadian language she may still be discriminated against because of her accent and/or immigrant status. Poor language skills, along with lack of recognized credentials and Canadian work experience, make up the top three barriers to Canadian employment (Lee & Westwood, 1996; Yip, 2005).

### *Credentials*

Beyond English language skills, educational credentials are also important when looking for Canadian employment. Pursuing a college or university education is key to a successful career (Roksa, 2005). Many professions in Canada are regulated and require an appropriate level of education at a recognized educational institution (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006b). Employers generally do not offer extensive on the job training like they used to, therefore relying more on educational credentials (Neault, 2002). Credentials are more important to women than men in their careers, especially for

entry-level positions; men are more likely than women to get a job or promotion without the appropriate credentials (Muzzin, Brown, & Hornosty, 1995). Therefore it is vital that women have appropriate credentials in order to ensure a satisfying career for themselves.

Immigrant women in particular have problems attaining employment on account of credentials. Unrecognized credentials are more likely to occur when the educational institution is out of the country. Statistics Canada (2003) reported that only 4 in 10 immigrants had their credentials validated. As a result, 6 in 10 immigrants did not have their credentials assessed or they were rejected, suggesting that a high percentage of foreign credentials are not valued in Canada. Between the years of 1991 and 2001, approximately one in four university educated immigrants, who recently arrived in Canada, worked at a job that required only a high school education (Burrows, 2007). Although many immigrants are employed in positions that do not require higher education, researchers demonstrate that recent immigrants are more educated than the average Canadian (Preston & Mann, 1999). It is also important to note that immigrant unemployment rates do not decline with higher foreign credentials (Preston & Mann).

Brouwer (1999) advised that the majority of employers have a difficult time assessing foreign qualifications and work experience, therefore resorting to formal assessments. It is important that immigrants have their credentials assessed as soon as possible, as often there is a large difference in standards between countries. For example, a Master's degree in one country may be equal to a Bachelor's in Canada. Reitz (2003) reported that, especially with professional and managerial positions, Canadian employers often hire someone with local credentials over a candidate with foreign credentials; this is especially true for immigrant women. As a result, immigrant women should be prepared

to continue their education in Canada if they wish to proceed along the same career path as prior to immigration.

### *Work Experience*

The third of the top three barriers to employment for immigrant women is the lack of Canadian work experience (Lee & Westwood, 1996; Yip, 2005). It is common knowledge that, in Canada, employers want the job applicant to have work experience in the area relevant to the job description. This can be a “catch 22” for most people as, in order to get work experience, someone must be willing to hire. Not only do employers want relevant work experience, they want extensive work experience and will often hire the person who has the most. Past work experience can also affect the amount of earnings later on in one’s career (Finnie & Wannell, 2004). Therefore, it may be difficult for someone to make a good salary with little relevant work experience.

Even though an immigrant woman may have significant work experience in her area of employment from her native country, Canadian employers want Canadian work experience (Lee & Westwood, 1996; Yip, 2005). Employers may be wary of international experience as the type of position may not be the same as in Canada. For example, a teacher in China may do things differently than a teacher in Canada. Therefore, international experience may not be relevant to a similar Canadian position. Immigrants are then required to do such things as volunteer, or participate in a work experience program, in order to obtain the appropriate work experience. Some immigrant women find it challenging to get Canadian work experience in the area in which they hope to someday be employed (Khan & Watson, 2005). With a lack of Canadian work experience, immigrant women are at risk of being unemployable in their area of choice,

and may always be underpaid, even after several years working in their desired profession.

### *Networking*

Another key barrier to immigrant employment is the lack of a social and/or professional network (Yip, 2005). Networking is the number one way to find successful employment in Canada (Neault, 2004). In Canada 80% of job openings are not advertised and depend upon the job seeker to network to get information about them (University of Calgary, n.d.). It is suggested that many employment positions are found through contacting friends, family, and other acquaintances (Wanberg, Kanfer, & Banas, 2000). Networking is very important when looking for jobs, which may make it difficult for immigrants with limited local relationships.

Immigrant women in particular may have challenges with networking, especially if they do not speak English well, or are embarrassed about their English accent. Additionally, immigrant women may not be familiar or comfortable with networking and may lack the skills appropriate for successful networking. For example, they may not be familiar with how to dress, or what they should say in a professional networking situation. Therefore, without the appropriate networks in place, and lacking networking skills, immigrant women are faced with yet another barrier to finding Canadian employment.

### *Lack of Accurate Information*

The final barrier to employment is lack of accurate employment information. Research in this area will be explored in this section, outlining immigrant women's reactions to the realities of Canadian employment, and the availability of information for

pre-immigrant women. Following this discussion, the use of the Internet in providing information will be examined.

### *Realities of Canadian Employment*

Immigrant women are often disappointed when they realize that achieving their dream of a better life in Canada may not be as easy as they thought (ESPC, 2000). They are surprised that attaining their dream jobs, for which they have been trained, may take several years, rather than happening immediately after arrival (ESPC). Soon after settling into their new country many are informed that their foreign credentials are not valid here, and their work experience not respected (Neault, 2004). In the SWC (2004) study, female participants admitted to anticipating a brighter economic future, peace, social security, freedom, residence, and employment once they arrived in Canada. Even after actively looking for relevant information prior to immigration (e.g., through the Internet, from overseas immigration officers, and from family and friends who were already living in Canada), immigrant women were still shocked by the realities of employment in Canada (Judd, 2004). It can be implied from this research that not only is there a lack of information available for pre-immigrant women, but the information available may be misleading.

### *Lack of Valid Information*

Several women who were new to Canada reported that they were misinformed about the employment realities prior to their immigration and wish that they had received accurate information (ESPC, 2000). Some women suggested that they were provided with false hope because of the claim that Canada is the “land of opportunity” (Khan & Watson, 2005, p.309). Immigrant women also admitted that they did not know where to

look for information about educational credentials, employment opportunities, family counselling, and support services (SWC, 2004), and wished that these services would be made more available (Preston & Man, 1999). Brouwer (1999) and Judd (2004) found similar results and both acknowledged that there is a lack of pre-relocation information about Canadian employment available for potential immigrants. In addition to employment information, Brouwer reported that there is a lack of access to adequate language and occupational-specific education and training in Canada. Judd suggested that more information be provided to pre-immigrant women about the Canadian labour market, and the credentials and qualifications necessary for their occupation. Neault (2004) stated that more accurate pre-departure information could have assisted some immigrants in making more informed career choices.

#### *Internet*

One method of providing employment information to pre-immigrant women would be through a resource website. Research from a recent study estimated that 729.2 million people have Internet access, with approximately 516 million living outside of English speaking countries (Global Reach, 2004). Therefore, it is a reasonable assumption that many pre-immigrant women would have access to the Internet. This study also revealed that the amount of Internet use is increasing every year. Morohan-Martin (2000) described the Internet as the "...world's largest virtual library" (p.684). This recent invention allows for almost any question to be answered with a click of a button for those millions of people with Internet access.

There are many different reasons for people to use the Internet, but finding information is one of the most valued aspects among Internet users (Anderson &

Morahan-Martin, 2000). Finding information online is inexpensive, relatively easy, and is convenient for people who live in areas with limited resources (Anderson & Morahan-Martin). The Internet could be used to prepare immigrant women for the realities of Canadian employment so that they are not surprised and disappointed when they attempt to search for employment in their desired fields.

The focus of this literature review was on the employment barriers that many new immigrant women face once they arrive in Canada. The barriers to successful immigrant employment described in this section consisted of gender issues, racism/discrimination, poverty, stress of transition, poor networks, lack of accurate information, weak English or French language skills, unrecognizable credentials, and lack of Canadian work experience. The latter three are reported to be the most severe barriers.

#### Procedures

As a former employment counsellor, I noticed that there was a gap between what immigrant women expected in terms of Canadian employment, and what the realities were. A literature review was conducted in this area to explore this gap further. The information in the research suggested that there is a lack of adequate information available to pre-immigrant women on the realities of finding successful employment in Canada. The literature review also focused on other specific barriers to employment in Canada, for immigrant women. Most of the articles for this literature review were found through academic sources, reputable sites on the Internet, and immigrant serving agencies throughout Canada. The majority of the articles were extracted from the most current versions of academic databases including PsycINFO, SocIndex, Vocational and Career Collection, Academic Search Premier, ERIC, and, Psychology and Behavioural Sciences

Collection. Key words used in this search included Canadian employment, employment barriers, employment discrimination, immigrants, immigration, immigrant jobs, international employment, poverty, relocation stress, women, women employment, and women's roles.

### *The Website*

Upon finishing the literature review, a website was created to help pre-immigrant women to find successful employment in Canada. When creating the website, I followed Wagner's (1999) suggestions as to what a "good" website should like look like. Wagner outlined the basics of a good website, based on content selection, authority, layout and design, information structure, and the links used on their Web pages. When creating the current website, I followed the above criteria, as well as suggestions from other researchers concerning its design (McGovern, 2002; Tillman, 2003; Weiler, 2000).

### *Content Selection*

The content on the Web pages should be consistent with the purpose of the website (Wagner, 1999). The intention of this website was to inform immigrant women of potential barriers to successful employment in Canada, and provide them with strategies for overcoming them. The content chosen for the website briefly outlines each potential barrier found through the literature review, with suggestions to reduce the effects of these barriers. The suggestions included links to other websites, as well as content derived from other reputable sources. Some of the suggestions came from academic articles and others were based upon my own experience as an employment counsellor for immigrant women.

Weiler suggested that the type and purpose of the website should be clear, along with a clearly stated target audience (Weiler, 2000). Additionally, the words chosen for the content should be selective and appropriate for the audience (McGovern, 2002). The purpose of the website and the target audience is clearly stated on the homepage of the site developed for this project. I also believe that the user will clearly recognize the type of website as one that provides information. I was particular when wording the content of the website, choosing simple, clear language that would be appropriate for someone whose first language is one other than English. The simplified language for the website included no metaphors, slang, or uncommon words. Additionally, I was aware of any wording that might be interpreted in multiple manners.

#### *Authority*

In order to inform the audience that it is a reputable website, my name, position, credentials and contact information are clearly stated. There is an entire page devoted to information about myself, which also provides a short explanation of why I chose to create this website. Feedback concerning the website is encouraged, in addition to any questions users may have about the content on the website. Additionally, the date on which the website was last updated will appear on every page to ensure the consumer of receiving current information.

#### *Layout and Design*

It is important for a good website to be easy to use, and well organized (Tillman, 2003). Upon opening the website link, a home page will be displayed outlining the purpose of the website, and other important information about the site. From here the user can click on any tab. The website is organized into specific content areas. Each area is

written on tabs on the left hand side of the screen. The user can simply click on the tab that contains the desired content, and be redirected to that page. The tab bar will appear on every page so that the user can navigate any part of the website, at any time.

### *Information Structure*

The structure for the present website adheres to what professionals deem as a good website; follows a logical order, and is clear and concise (Wagner, 1999). Also, according to the research, it is important that the title of a good website reflect the principle idea of the website (Weiler, 2000). I believe that the title, “Coming to Canada,” does in fact reflect the main ideas of the website. Additionally, it is important that references are included, the website’s URL is clearly written, and that copyright restrictions are visible (Weiler). It has also been revealed that most readers are impatient when reading websites (McGovern, 2002). Since it is difficult to keep the attention of the reader, I recorded only the most relevant information, and kept the content of each individual Web page to a minimum.

### *Links*

Wagner (1999) revealed that a good website should contain links that are sufficiently identified, arranged logically, and are current and reliable. All websites that were linked to the current website were examined for reliability, and are all up to date. The links on the website have been converted into hotlinks in order to clearly identify the name of the website without having to write in the link’s Web addresses as well. Hotlinks help to keep the website looking simple and less cluttered, which could be beneficial to someone who has trouble reading the English language. Lastly, the links are placed to correspond to the content surrounding them. For example, links to ESL schools are

located under the language tab that contains a discussion on the importance of knowing the English language.

The links used in the current project were identified using the search engines Google and Yahoo. These are both popular search engines (Tillman, 2003), which may be because of the wide variety and numerous sites they search. Tillman reported that it is difficult to determine which search engines are the best on account of the constant changes happening to the Internet (2003). I searched sites with information about the labour market, ESL credentials, locating immigrant serving agencies, education, and other relevant topics. Additionally, a list of popular job search sites was created. I looked for websites which were easy to use, well organized, provided relevant information, lacked subscription fees, were produced by a reputable source who maintained and recorded updates, and offered reliable and current links. Key search words used to locate these sites included: Canadian labour market, Canadian immigrant agencies, ESL Canada, credential assessments Canada, Canadian education, and online education.

### *Technical Process*

After all the content had been collected, and other decisions concerning the website were completed, the actual construction of the website began. I had technical support from a friend to create the website structure. However, I was in control of all decisions concerning the website including the design layout, the actual content, and the placement of the content. I selected pictures for the website from a search of Google images. Simplicity was key; I chose a fairly conservative format for the website. Additionally, I wanted it obvious for users to know it was a Canadian website and chose to show off pictures of the Canadian flag on every page. The use of the Canadian flag

was officially approved by Canadian Heritage to use on this website (see Appendix for letter of approval).

### *Conclusion*

Following a literature review on the barriers to successful Canadian employment for immigrant women, an informative website was created. The design adhered to current standards for good websites. A review of the website's content selection, focus on authority, layout and design, information structure, and choice and placement of links, was outlined. The majority of the project was completed on my own; however, assistance was provided to complete the technical design of the website. The outcome of this project is a quality website, which provides pre-immigrant women with information about potential barriers to successful employment in Canada, and offers suggestions on how to overcome those barriers.

### *The Product*

The final product of this website is an informative website for pre-immigrant women. The purpose of the website is to assist immigrant women in finding successful employment in Canada. The website is available at [www.brianforrester.com/tammyroy/coming2canada](http://www.brianforrester.com/tammyroy/coming2canada). The website offers the information about: (a) language skills (including general information about language skills in Canada and links to English language programs); (b) credentials (including links to educational assessment services, educational requirement information, and Canadian educational programs); (c) other barriers (including information about specific barriers and ways to help overcome them); (d) job links (including links to Canadian job banks, Canadian labour market information, and job search services); (e) programs (including work

placement programs, and immigrant serving agencies across Canada; and (f) tips (stress management tips, and tips to finding employment in Canada). There is also a section containing the references used to create the website, as well as a section providing information about the author, why this website section was created, and contact information.

Figure 1. Front page of the website.



## Synthesis and Implications

The final result of this project is a user friendly website titled “Coming to Canada.” It has been created to inform pre-immigrant women of the realities of

employment in Canada, and better prepare them to more easily attain success. This section of the project will encapsulate the focus of the project and its outcomes. The specific components that will be discussed in this section are: how the website can be of benefit to others, the strengths and weaknesses of the project, potential implications of efficacy, future research, recommendations, and personal learning.

### *Benefits to Others*

Although this particular project was geared towards pre-immigrant women, some of the information available on this website can be helpful to others. Anyone looking for employment, or anyone helping someone to find employment in Canada, can benefit from the Coming to Canada website. In particular, career and general counsellors can utilize this website to help assist their clients.

### *Career Counsellors*

Career counsellors can direct their clients to the website in conjunction with counselling. Career counsellors can also use this website to inform themselves about potential employment barriers which immigrant women may experience, as multicultural competence is essential to career counsellors (Evans & Larrabee, 2002). This website can assist career counsellors in their quest to become more multiculturally competent.

According to the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners [CSGDC] (2004), career practitioners must meet certain expectations and possess specific knowledge in the field of career development. Specific to career counsellors, these guidelines state that they must be able to describe such concepts as barriers to career development, types of educational/training opportunities and resources,

and computerized career planning systems, and must also be able to work with labour market information.

*Barriers to career development.* The importance of knowledge of barriers to employment is outlined in the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (2004). Identifying specific barriers are important to career counsellors so that they can help their clients cope with and overcome them. In order to demonstrate this competency, career counsellors must be aware of issues that the client might be dealing with such as cultural issues, language or literacy issues, discrimination, and gender issues.

*Educational (training) resources.* It is reported in the guidelines that knowledge of educational and training resources are important to career counsellors in order to assist their clients in developing career plans, and to make them aware of options (CSGDC, 2004). Counsellors should be able to inform clients about appropriate educational programs including private and on-line training. They should also be able to provide their clients with information pertaining to networking opportunities, placement offices, community services, and volunteer work.

*Computerized career planning systems.* It is reported in the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (2004) that career counsellors should be aware of the numerous career resources available, and possess the ability to use these resources effectively with clients. For example, it is important for counsellors to be aware of the many Internet sites available to assist clients in their job searches. They should know the strengths and limitations of the sites, as well as how to teach the client to use them.

*Labour market information.* It is important for career counsellors to have the ability to work with labour market information (Fouad, 2007), as it is a part of the career decision-making process (CSGDC, 2004). Career counsellors should be able to identify the sources of labour market information, analyze and interpret the information, and assist their clients in using relevant labour market information (CSGDC).

The website that I have created addresses these four elements of career counselling, therefore assisting career counsellors in meeting the expectations set out by the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (2004). Career counsellors are expected to cover a great deal of information; however, they are not always equipped to complete the task. A lack of funding can sometimes create an atmosphere of a job placement service, rather than a counselling service (Ng, 1990). Additionally immigrant women may be desperate for employment and may not be willing to participate in a lengthy series of counselling sessions. The Coming to Canada website can provide clients with additional information in conjunction with counselling sessions, as well as provide information to the career counsellor.

### *General Counsellors*

Counsellors have an ethical obligation to strive to understand and respect the diversity of their clients (Schulz, 2000). A counsellor can expect to have a wide variety of clients, from many different cultures. It is likely that a counsellor who is not trained in career counselling will sometimes encounter clients who would like assistance with their careers. A counsellor may even encounter an immigrant woman who needs employment assistance. The awareness of the connection between a client's personal and professional life is beginning to deepen (Evans & Larrabee, 2002). Employment is a major component

of the lives of most people. Therefore, it is beneficial for any counsellor to have some knowledge of career challenges, and resources in this area.

The generalized employment information available on the website created for this project could benefit just about anyone wanting help, or providing help, with employment. This includes career counsellors, general counsellors, and their clients. Although there is some information specific to pre-immigrant women, much of the information on the site can be generalized to other populations.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses*

Overall, I believe this project has several strengths and a few minor weaknesses. The strengths of this project consist of the number of people it can impact, the use of the Internet as a means of presenting the information, and the structure of the website. Lack of an advertising plan and control over website links can be considered weaknesses of the project.

### *Strengths*

As previously discussed, one of the strengths of the Coming to Canada website is the amount of people it can actually benefit. Although some information on the website is specific to pre-immigrant women, much of the information is general enough to be relevant for other populations. Other populations that could use this site may include men, landed immigrants, and counsellors.

Additionally, utilizing a website as a means of providing information is a strength in itself; there are several benefits to this method. Information can be accessed immediately through the Internet (Davies, Turcotte, Hess, & Smithson, 1997) and it is highly accessible and affordable to use. There is no charge to access the information on

the Coming to Canada website. It is also cost-efficient to the developer as there are no printing and shipping fees, and the cost to host a website is relatively low.

Another strength lies in the website's structure. For example, the website is uncluttered, follows a consistent format, and is geared towards its target audience (i.e., pre-immigrant women). Coming to Canada does not require extensive software to view, as complex software may not be available in some parts of the world. I believe that immigrant women will find this website beneficial because it uses simple language, is easy to navigate, and the information is very specific and not overwhelming. Shorter word length, and simple sentence structure assists in better recall and recognition (Rix, 2004), which is especially helpful to those who speak English as a second language. Commonplace words, and simple sentences that reflect the core message for the website, are used frequently throughout the site.

Additionally, I attempted to keep the website itself relatively small, in order to avoid confusion. Even though English is my first language, when searching other career websites, I often found myself becoming confused. I believe this confusion was partially a result of the large amounts of information available on the sites. If the user is looking for additional information that is not specific to this website, there are several links which lead to additional information within the realm of employment in Canada.

### *Weaknesses*

Although I believe that the website is quite strong, there are some weaknesses. One weakness is the fact that I have not yet created a plan to advertise the website. An informative website cannot help people unless they are aware of its existence. What I have done to help pre-immigrant women locate this site is create the content of the

website with search engine optimization in mind. This enables and encourages high rankings in the popular search engines such as Google, Yahoo, and MSN. Additionally, I plan to contact some Canadian immigrant service agencies and encourage them to link my website to theirs for promotional purposes.

Other weaknesses are a result of including other website links on my site. Using website links on my site can direct the client to specific information immediately; however, the information on these other websites is not in my control. For example, the operators of these websites may add information that I may not agree with, or advertisements that are not credible. This will require continuous effort on my part to check up on these sites to ensure they remain appropriate. If I believe that a site is no longer suitable, I will remove the link from my site. Additionally, the links included in my site may become obsolete. In this case the links will have to be removed from my website, and be replaced by other helpful links. Although this will require some time and effort on my part, it is actually a strength of using a website format. A website format allows the owner to easily make changes to the site, whereas a paper format may require more effort to alter.

Beyond the minor weaknesses of this project, involving advertising and links, lay several strengths. The project is strong because it benefits many people, uses a valuable means to relay its information, and provides an effective website structure. The strength of this project lends to its efficacy.

#### *Efficacy of Project*

The efficacy of the project is demonstrated through the website's content and the usefulness of self-servicing tools. Providing clients with employment information was

among the top five most effective methods to help clients attain successful employment (Fouad, 2007). Providing career information is an aspect of traditional career counselling (McDonald, 2002). This may include exposing the client to different career options and job opportunities. Therefore, because the website created for this project links clients with information about job opportunities, and Canadian labour market information, it could be considered an effective method in finding successful employment.

In the past, the Canadian government had difficulty meeting the demands of people requiring employment counselling, and began promoting the use of self-service tools (Davies, et al., 1997). The tools were designed to assist the client in becoming more proactive in his/her job search through examining potential barriers and providing suggestions on how to resolve them. Additional information, such as how to locate appropriate resources and current job openings, also became available through these self-service tools. The Coming to Canada website is similar to what the government has been promoting, as it allows clients to help themselves with such things as overcoming barriers, and locating additional resources. The content of the Coming to Canada website, combined with its ability to be used as a self-servicing tool, contributes to the efficacy of the project.

#### *Future Research*

The area of employment and immigration is rich and diverse, presenting several unique research opportunities. Through the course of my research for this project I discovered several interesting research ideas. Future researchers may choose to focus in the direction of immigrant men and employment, utilize focus groups in their research, or conduct a follow-up study on the usefulness of the Coming to Canada website.

### *Men*

Since my project was focused on employment barriers experienced by immigrant women, I think that it would be interesting to conduct research specific to the barriers that immigrant men experience. I was unable to find much research specific to men, which leads me to believe that it would be beneficial to research. For example, because of their traditional role as the family “bread winner” are men more likely to settle on an unsatisfying job position in order to bring in more money? An immigrant support agency in Calgary, Alberta reported that male participation is low in many services (Bhandari, Horvath, & To, 2006). I wonder if their low attendance would contribute to unsuccessful employment for men.

### *Focus Groups*

Further research into barriers to employment for immigrant women could utilize focus groups. Through focus groups, the researcher can find out detailed information about what the client wants and how he or she can be helped. The researcher could present questions such as “What knowledge do you wish you had prior to immigration?” and “What do you think would be beneficial to put on a website for pre-immigrant women?” to a group of recently immigrated women. Generally, the atmosphere of focus groups is a unregulated, non-threatening environment, where clients can feed off of the ideas of the other group members, and speak freely about their needs (McGarvey, et al., 2006).

### *Website Follow-Up*

As a follow up to the current project, research conducted on the effectiveness of this website would be beneficial. The results of the study may encourage others to create

similar websites, and provide information on how this type of website can be improved upon. This could also be researched using a focus group of women who utilized this site prior to immigrating to Canada. A similar study could also evaluate the same website's usefulness for male immigrants.

Although there are many opportunities for new research in the area of immigrant employment, the three ideas listed above can be closely linked to the research conducted for this particular project. Similar research can focus on employment barriers specific to men, as there is lack of research in this area. Additionally, future researchers can utilize the benefits of focus groups in combination with the research obtained in the project. Finally, a follow-up of the effectiveness of this website would be useful so that the current website could be improved and similar websites created.

#### *Recommendations*

Upon completion of this project I have discovered other possibilities that may assist pre-immigrant women in finding successful careers once in Canada. Ideas that may assist immigrant women include on-line education, and on-line networking. Other recommendations that are a direct result of the research provided in this paper are listed at the end of this segment.

#### *On-Line Education*

For women who have not yet left for Canada I would suggest conducting research into what educational programs are most valued in Canada and/or enroll in on-line educational programs that are recognized in Canada. Online education programs are growing in popularity, and there is an increased diversity of learners (Vrasidas & Zembylas, 2003). There are several online programs based out of Canada that offer

education to students from all over the world (Canadian Virtual University [CVU], 2004). On-line education is an effective way to learn (Wentzell, 2002) and may slightly enhance student's performance more so than traditional methods of teaching (Allen et al., 2004). Students enjoy on-line learning for the flexibility and convenience (White, 2000).

### *On-Line Networking*

Additionally, I would suggest that women engage in international on-line networking to make contacts before moving to Canada. There are several online professional networking services that can assist people in making contacts, and finding jobs, all over the world (Digital Enterprise Research Institute, 2004). Online networking is becoming more popular and offers such methods as public chat rooms to connect people (Economist, 2004). Ultimately, online networking before arriving in Canada will help to speed up the process of finding successful employment.

### *Other Recommendations*

As a direct result of the research outlined in the literature review, my recommendations are as follows: (a) encourage pre-immigrant/immigrant women to utilize technology in their job searches, (b) encourage pre-immigrant women to be well prepared prior to leaving for Canada, and (c) encourage career counsellors to become and remain aware of the unique challenges immigrant women face while looking for successful employment in Canada.

Online networking and education could be used as effective methods to improve employment success of immigrant women once in Canada. Additionally, research in the literature review section of this project provides the basis upon which further

recommendations may be drawn. Hopefully these methods to enhance employment success will become more prominent in the near future.

### *Personal Learning*

Through this process I have gained valuable knowledge, including what needs to be done in order to help immigrant women during their transition into the Canadian workforce. What stands out the most, however, is the increasing validity and usefulness of a project such as this one. All the research I read further confirmed my belief that immigrant women are in dire need of support, and helping them to find employment would be beneficial. What I did not realize was the extent of their poor situations after arriving in Canada. The actual amount they struggle is beyond what I had originally imagined.

Additionally, I now believe that the website I have created will be even more beneficial than I had originally anticipated. I am very pleased that I decided to go in this direction for my final project and am delighted with the outcome. I am confident that this website will be beneficial to not only immigrant women, but also to anyone who is looking for employment, or assisting someone in finding successful employment.

### *Conclusion*

This project was originally geared towards creating a medium that would benefit pre-immigrant women in finding successful employment in Canada, because of their extreme difficulties in doing so. The final outcome of the project ended up being much more than simply a medium to help pre-immigrant women, but a resource that would also help many others. There are several strengths to this project including utilizing the Internet as a medium to provide information, and the simplicity of the actual site.

Although the project has some inherent weaknesses, I do not believe they compromise its effectiveness. Future researchers in this area may choose to examine specific employment barriers that immigrant men experience, use focus groups in their research, and/or examine the effects that this website had on the people who used it. The process of developing this project has brought my attention to the severity of the situation immigrant women experience, and just how much this website can help them. Additionally, I have learned how others can help immigrant women; I hope that others will consider my recommendations.

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## Appendix

### Approval Letter for use of the Canadian Flag

My technical support person arranged permission to use the Canadian flag and is temporarily hosting the web site until it is moved to its new home at [www.coming2canada.ca](http://www.coming2canada.ca).



Ottawa, K1A 0M5  
May 7, 2007

Brian Forrester  


Dear Mr. Forrester:

Thank you for your letter of May 2, 2007, in which you seek permission to use the National Flag of Canada on the Web site [www.coming2canada.ca](http://www.coming2canada.ca), which was created as part of a school project. A copy of the proposed use was attached.

As you know, the National Flag of Canada is protected under subsection 9(1) of the *Trade Marks Act* (chapter T-13, Statutes of Canada) against unauthorized use in connection with commercial activities, as a trade-mark or otherwise. The Department has no objection to your use of the National Flag of Canada as per your proposal.

If you have any further questions regarding this matter or any other, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Forbes at (819) 956-2216.

Please accept our best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Isabelle McLeod  
Senior State Ceremonial Officer  
State Ceremonial and Corporate  
Events Directorate

Canada 

