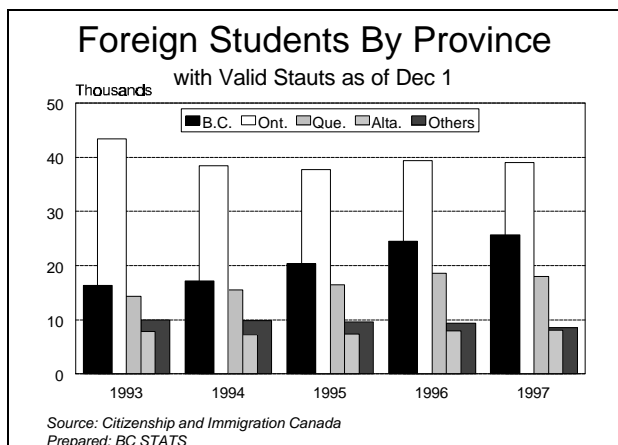


Special Feature: Foreign Students Studying in British Columbia

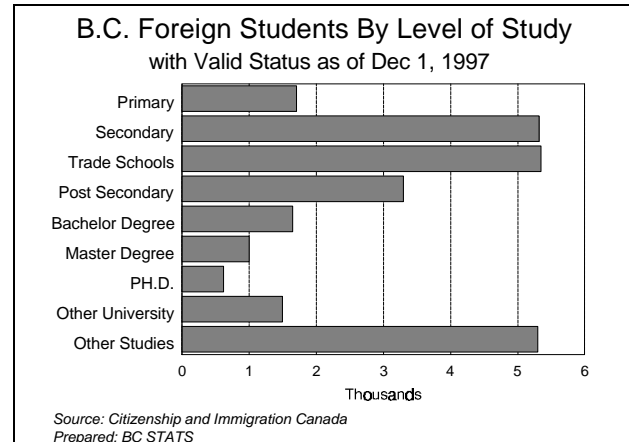
Foreign students studying in Canada are counted as part of the population under the category of non-permanent residents. The length of stay of foreign students varies according to the duration of their programs of study ranging from a few months to several years. Similar to immigrants, foreign students in Canada or British Columbia come from a diversity of cultural backgrounds and tend to concentrate in major metropolitan areas. On the other hand, foreign students differ from immigrants in their life style and consumption patterns due to the fact that foreign students are engaged in school activities and that their residence in Canada is short term.

There were a total of 99,359 foreign students holding a valid student visa in Canada as of December 1, 1997. British Columbia, the second most favored province for foreign students, was host to about 26 per cent or 25,726 of these foreign students in 1997. Ontario and Quebec, being the first and third most favored provinces, each hosted 39 per cent (39,078 students) and 18 per cent (17,977 students) in 1997, respectively.



Among all provinces, British Columbia shows the fastest growth in the number of foreign students. Between 1995 and 1997, the number of students studying in B.C. has grown in almost all levels of studies, except for those seeking a bachelor or PHD degree. English as secondary language studies (ESL)

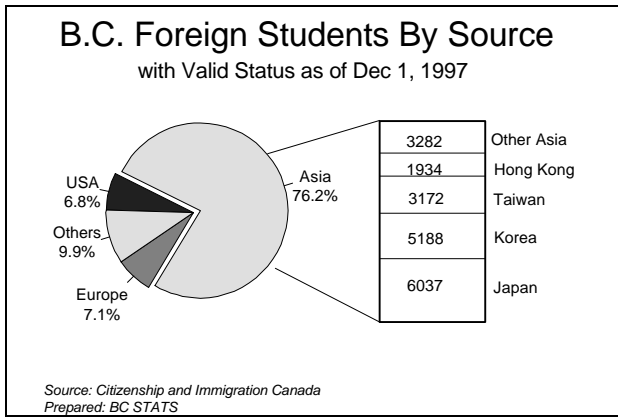
offered by private institutions shows the fastest growth in the enrollment.



Of all the foreign students studying in B.C. as of December 1997, seven per cent enrolled in primary school level, 21 per cent were in secondary school level, 34 per cent were in trade schools or colleges, 18 per cent were in universities, and 20 per cent were in other studies, which mainly include privately offered ESL programs and training programs offered by government or private agencies.

Most foreign students studying in B.C. came from Asia, followed by the United States, and Europe. As of the end of 1997, more than 76 per cent of the foreign students in B.C. came from Asian countries. Foreign students from the United States and European countries (1,749 and 1,818 respectively) accounted for about 18 per cent of the B.C. total.

Most Asian students came from Japan, followed by Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong. At the end of 1997, students from these four countries accounted for 83 per cent of all Asian foreign students in the province. While the number of Japanese and Korean students grew in the last three years, the number of Hong Kong students declined from 2,888 students in 1993 to 1,934 students in 1997.



A relatively higher proportion of students from Asia enrolled in trade schools, colleges, or ESL programs, whereas a higher proportion of students from the United States or Europe enrolled in university, secondary or primary level of studies.

Many factors affect how foreign students choose their place of study in Canada. These may include provincial policy and regulations related to foreign students, level of school fees and affordability between locations, quality of education institutions, standard of living and climate. Also, it is believed that the inflow of foreign students is influenced by immigration levels as there is a tendency for foreign students to choose a place of study closer to where their relatives or friends live.

It is reasonable to expect that B.C. will continue to be a favored choice for foreign students, especially those from Asia, due to its mild climate, proximity to Asian countries, and the fact that BC has received a high number of Asian immigrants each year during the last decade. However, it is possible that the number of foreign students to B.C. may be negatively affected by the recent downturns in the economies of Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Currently, there is a category of foreign students studying in Canada whose status and statistics are not tracked. These are the short term students who came to study in a language program of less than three months and in which a student visa is not required. These students can enter Canada as visitors and participate in language study programs, or may enter Canada without any visa if they hold a passport from a country that requires no visa entering Canada. As a result of the non-visa requirement, statistics for these students are not available. Also, Citizenship and Immigration Canada is considering expanding this category to cover all study programs and extending the non-visa requirement for program duration from the current three months to six months.

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