



Investing in Educated British Columbians

1995 BC Colleges and Institutes Student Outcomes Report

❖❖❖ THE HIGHLIGHTS ❖❖❖

Prepared for the Colleges and Institutes of BC by the BC Outcomes Working Group
in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training & Human Resources Development Canada.

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BC COLLEGE STUDENTS

An investment in a 'natural resource'

Among BC's abundant natural resources, perhaps one of the most crucial is an educated population, a "natural resource" which will be our most important asset as we move into the twenty-first century.

As a province, we want citizens capable of making informed choices in an increasingly complex, multicultural society. As an economic system, we need skilled workers, able to compete in a global marketplace. To achieve those goals, we must educate in the broadest sense as well as train for specific knowledge and skills.

The colleges and institutes of British Columbia have a unique mandate to do both. The challenge is to assure province-wide access to education in an equitable, efficient framework that responds to a changing world. This report looks at how well they are fulfilling their mandate.

The statistical data summarized here are gathered annually by telephone survey for BC's colleges and institutes and the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. In the Spring of 1995, an attempt was made to contact 26,700 former students approximately 9 months after they had left their college or institute program. Not every student had graduated, but all had stayed in their program

long enough for it to make a difference in their lives. We were able to contact 19,901 (75%) of the targeted students, making for a very reliable data base.

These data assist in program evaluation, support decision making at the institutions and the Ministry, enrich understanding of the labour market and provide information to prospective students about the expected outcomes of different programs.

The survey concentrates on three main issues:

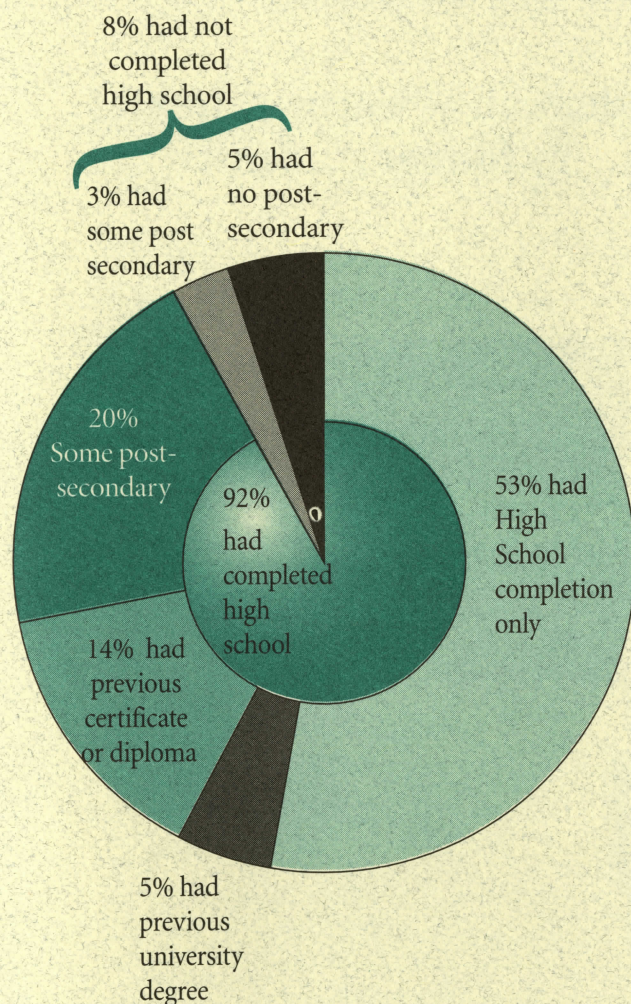
1. Who are the students going through the college and institute system?
2. Do students transfer their educational investment into careers, jobs and further education?
3. Are students satisfied with their investment in education?

Who are the college and institute students?

While there is no 'typical' BC college/institute student, some generalizations can be made. The average age is 25, and slightly more men than women are enrolled.

The great majority of the group surveyed were high school graduates and more than half enrolled to gain job-related skills, 26% of all students intended to complete a degree, and the remaining 17% stated other reasons, most commonly, to decide on a career.

Previous education of students



How do students transfer to employment?

INVESTING IN JOB-SKILLS

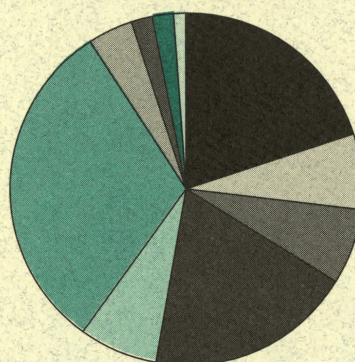
Responding to rapidly changing labour market demands is one of the continual challenges the colleges and institutes face.

The diversity of job-specific training provided by the colleges and institutes is reflected in the number of sectors where students find employment.

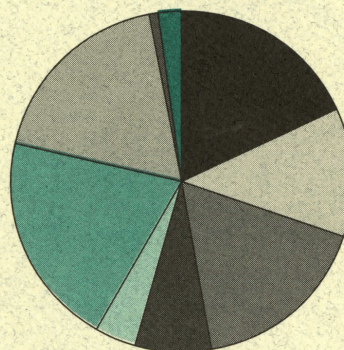
Analysis of the jobs held by former students indicates that 17% are employed in professional positions, 41% in technical and para-professional jobs, and 6% in management jobs. An additional 30% were employed in jobs requiring a minimum of secondary school with on-the-job training.

Occupational distribution of students' training-related jobs

Academic



Career & Vocational



Does training & education rate in the marketplace?

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS

Generally speaking, employment conditions for former college students in BC were favourable in the time between when they left their program and when they were surveyed. Real GDP growth in 1994 for BC was 4.7%, up from 3.1% in 1993. Average employment for June '94 – May '95 grew by 47,000 (2.8% growth) over the preceding 12 month period. However, this was less than the 4% growth for the June '93 – May '94 period over the previous 12 months. Both employment and the labour force grew quite strongly in the first half of 1994, and slowed down during the second half of '94 and the first half of 1995.

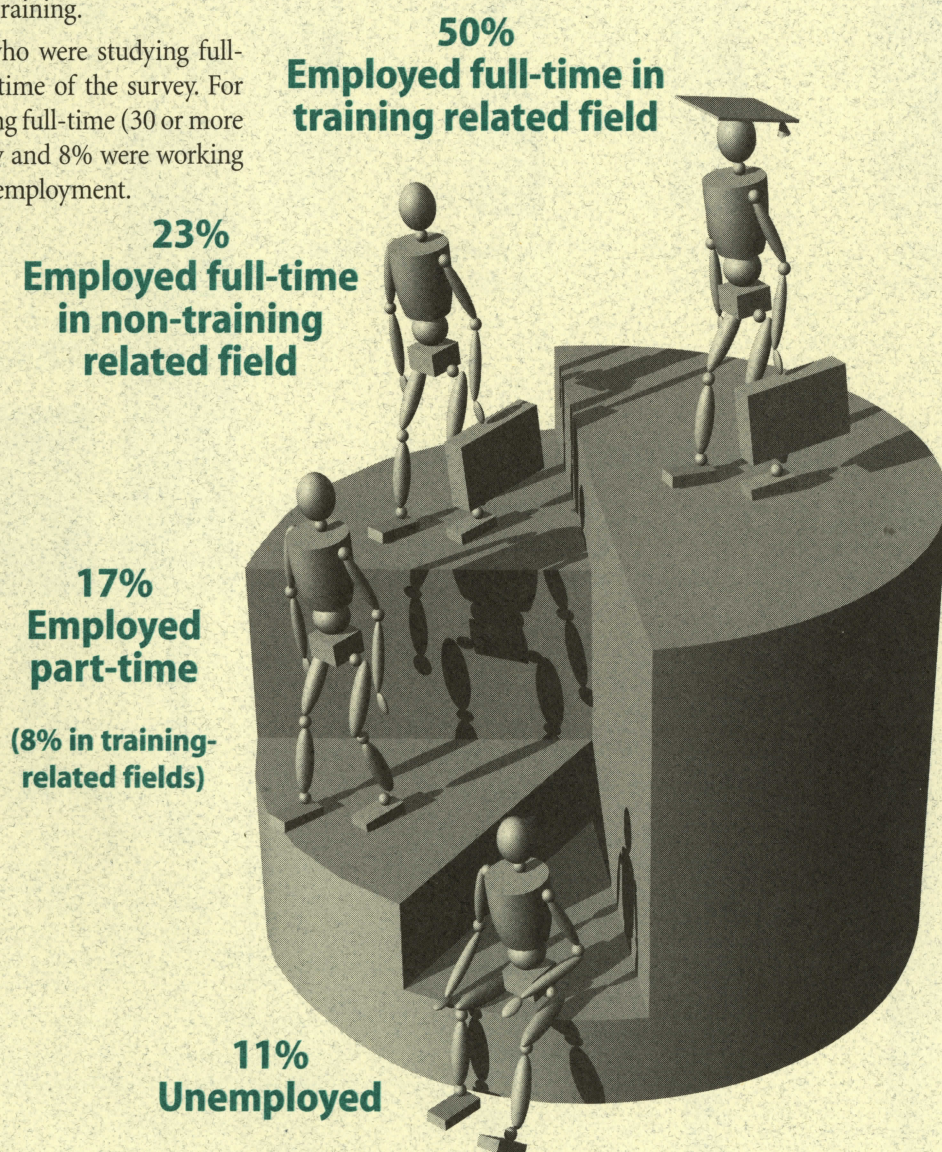
Looking at the college/institute students surveyed, we find 87% of respondents were in the labour force, and 58% of those were employed in jobs directly related to their training.

The term 'labour force' excludes those who were studying full-time or not seeking employment at the time of the survey. For those in the labour force, 50% were working full-time (30 or more hours per week) at the time of the survey and 8% were working part-time, all of these in training-related employment.

At the time they were surveyed, 76% of career & vocational students in the labour force were working full-time, and 13% were working part-time. For those academic respondents considered to be in the labour force, 67% were working full-time and 23% had part-time work. Since academic programs do not, for the most part, have a specific occupational focus, it is rare for these students' employment to have an obvious link to their studies.

Of students in training-related employment, 29% already had a job when they started their studies; 60% took 1-3 months to find a job after completion, and 11% reported a search over 3 months.

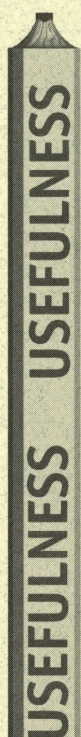
The graphic below illustrates the employment status of all former students in the labour force.



Note: all reported percentages have been rounded to the nearest percent; depending on the rounding, the sum may be slightly more or less than 100%

Usefulness of training in getting a job

46%



Very useful

About 69% of students report that their training was useful in getting a job. In rating their job readiness for training-related jobs obtained after graduation, more than half of the students say they were very well prepared, and an additional 39% say they were somewhat prepared.

23%



Somewhat useful

8%



Not really useful

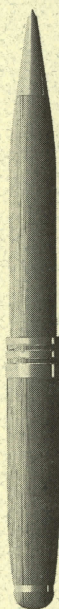
23%



Not at all useful

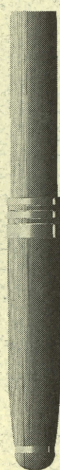
Students' job readiness

54%



Entirely job ready

39%



Somewhat job ready

Once hired into training-related jobs, 93% of students report that their training made them job-ready.

5%



Not really job ready

2%



Not at all job ready

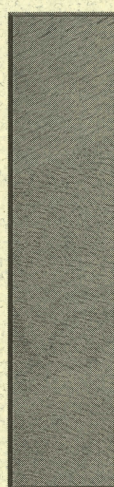
Do students transfer to further education?

Some 40% of respondents have taken further study since they finished their program, 32% at a BC university or college. At the time they were surveyed in May and June, 22% reported that studying was their "main activity"; 89% of these students reported they were attending full-time.

Those students who transferred chose many different kinds of institutions. "Other" in the graph below includes out-of-province universities, professional training programs (eg. CGA) and private training institutions.

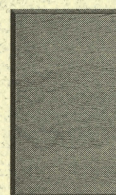
Destinations of transferring students

47%



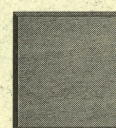
BC University

18%



BC College

11%



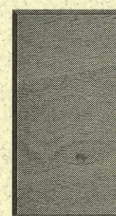
BC Institute

5%



BC University College

20%



Other

Seventy-nine per cent of these students continued their studies in a related field.

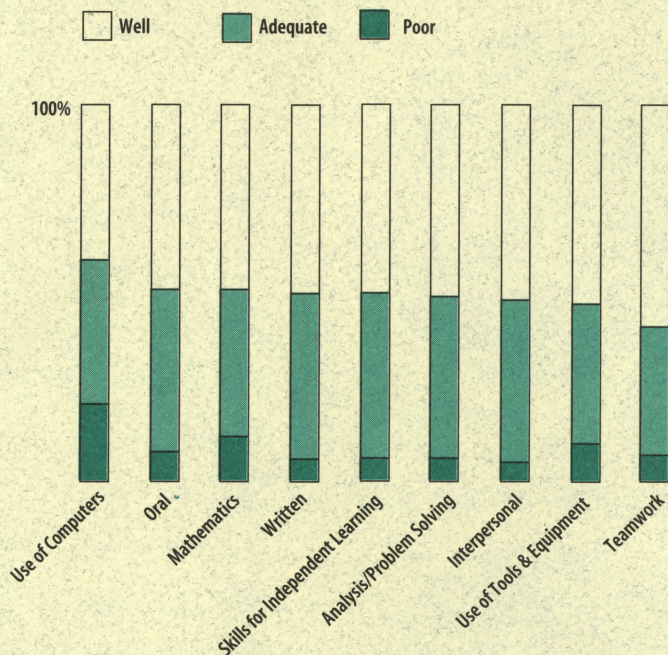
The majority (95%) of those students whose further study was related to their college-level studies felt "very well prepared" and "somewhat prepared".

Are students satisfied with their educational investment?

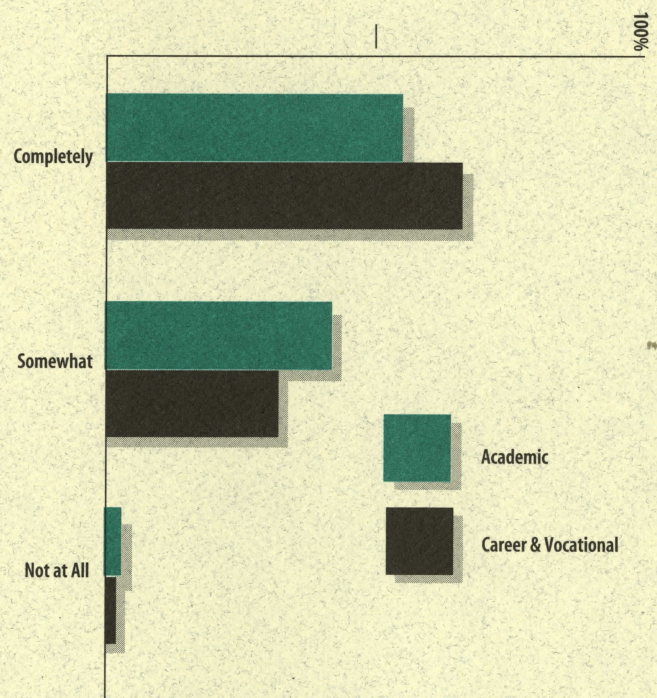
Modern life requires more than just job-skills; it requires a set of transferable general skills that enable the student to learn throughout life and to adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. Students in this survey reported high levels of skill development in the area of written and oral communication, which the Conference Board of Canada (1993) regards as one of the most important employment criteria, closely followed by teamwork and interpersonal skills. Students were very positive about their level of preparation in all of the employability skills.

Former college and institute students gave high marks to most of their educational experiences. On a three point scale (good, adequate, poor), 68% rated the quality of teaching "good" and 28% rated it "adequate". Sixty-eight percent gave a "good" rating when asked about the availability of instructors (24% "adequate"). The majority of students were also positive about the organization of their programs and text books and learning materials. While students had different goals when they enrolled, 83% reported that they had completely or mostly met their goals. Former students were also asked how worthwhile their studies were; overall 97% found them completely or somewhat worthwhile.

Evaluation of employability skill development by former students



Evaluation of worth of studies by former students



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