

REASONS FOR CHOOSING A CANADIAN LOCATION

1. After graduation — perceived employment opportunities are better than in Mexico or the United States.
2. Lower cost at a similar quality level to the average American university.
3. Previous experience in Canada: e.g. tourist, ESL student.
4. Recommended by relatives, friends or school faculty.
5. Safer and cleaner than both Mexico and the United States.
6. Offers the precise areas of study desired.
7. Offers a francophone culture.
8. Relatives in Canada.
9. Alternative to American universities.

Source: Focus group study conducted by InfoMex for the Canadian Embassy in Mexico, December 1995.

LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

The language training market is dominated by about a dozen firms. Many of them are affiliates of large international organizations. The largest is *Interlingua*. The economic crisis has improved the competitiveness of these schools relative to foreign alternatives. For the same reason, freelance English teachers are emerging as important competition even for the English as a Second Language (ESL) schools in Mexico. Since foreign language teaching is not regulated, anyone can enter this business. As a result, there are many individuals teaching English and French and, in a few cases, they are illegally using courseware from the major schools. Executives of the major schools said in interviews that they tend to get former students back when they realize the lower effectiveness of freelance teachers. They say that the gradual recovery of the economy is also contributing to this trend.

Berlitz was one of the hardest hit by devaluation, because this school has standardized dollar-based fees around the world. Also, its clientele included large companies and banks, which reduced its training expenditures during the crisis. The advantage Berlitz possesses is a strong focus on conversational skills. In an effort to stay competitive, the other major schools are trying to offer more hours of training for the same fee. This approach has been relatively successful for schools such as *Interlingua* and Quick Learning.