

WHAT THE FUTURE: EDUCATION

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nontraditional credentials?**

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GAME CHANGERS



How will we educate our future workforce?



Where did you go to school? It's a pretty common question in the business world and cocktail parties. Not necessarily meant to be judgmental. Although also totally meant to be judgmental, right? How prestigious of a university? Was your school a rival of my school? Are you a Buckeyes fan, specifically?

The answer for Rita J. King, whom you will meet on page 8, is, "I'm not going to say." She has been running an informal experiment since she was 18. In professional contexts, she will not disclose whether she has a degree. Period. She admits that as an entrepreneur, she doesn't often get asked that question, but she did in an interview for her role advising NASA. She declined to respond. She got the job anyway.

Pink Floyd sang, "We don't need no education," in a song that my twins' teacher recently played at their 4th-grade graduation party (🤔). The idea in the song was that education can be used to mold children's minds for evil as well as good. This idea is still playing out, but now with very different views of what exactly is "good" or "evil," depending on whom you ask.

"The role of college degrees — from new alternatives to whether you need them at all — is a theme we explore."

The role of college degrees — from new alternatives to whether you need them at all — is a theme we explore in this issue. We talk through how the entire K-college continuum is preparing tomorrow's workforce. That starting lens allows us to talk about equity, inclusion, the role of tech and the divides tech can both open and close, the skills we're teaching (or not), the politicization of the educational system, alternatives to four-year degrees, and how to pay (or not) for it all.

The future is never certain, but it does feel as if we are at an inflection point. The skills that workers need are rapidly evolving. The technology to teach those skills is advancing exponentially. How and where they will converge is the focus of this issue. Our values as a nation will play into the discussion — fractured as they are. But whatever the outcome, the idea that education in some form needs to be a lifelong process resonates deeply with our panel. As does the importance of educational options existing for everyone.

Read on to see how education could become as flexible as the needs of the humans and workforces it serves.

***Matt Carmichael** is editor of *What the Future* and vice president of editorial strategy at Ipsos in North America.*

81%

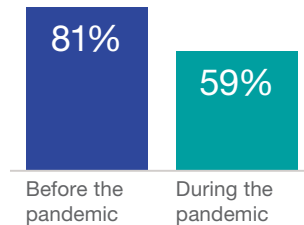
of American adults rate their own K-12 education as good to excellent.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 2,009 U.S. adults.)

The past year disrupted all forms of education

Parents rated their kids' education highly until the pandemic

Q. How would you rate the quality of education your child's school was providing before/has provided during the COVID-19 pandemic? (Net agree*)



55%

of parents with a school-age child say they are worried that their child is falling behind in school due to the pandemic.*

Americans still believe higher education is a part of the American Dream...

Q. Thinking generally about college and higher education, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Net agree)

A college education is part of the American Dream**

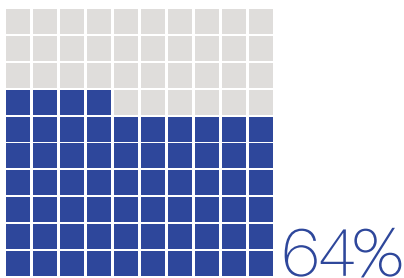
76%

A post-high school education is part of the American Dream***

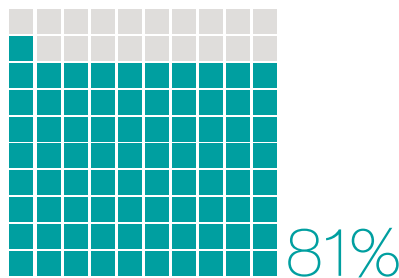
77%

...and worth the investment

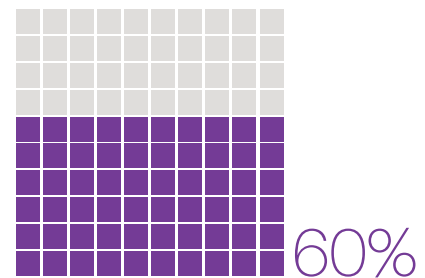
Q. Thinking generally about college and higher education, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Net agree)



I am willing to stretch myself financially to obtain the best opportunity for my future



I am willing to stretch myself financially to obtain the best opportunity for my child's future****



Having a college degree is more important now than it used to be

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 2,009 U.S. adults, including * asked of n=375 parents with a child in school, ** asked of n=1,003, *** asked of n=1,006, **** asked of n=529 parents.)

The Big Question:

How do we ensure that we're aligning education for the future workforce?

Question: Will employers embrace nontraditional credentials?




Lisa Gevelber

**Chief marketing officer,
Americas Region, Google**

21%

of Americans say lack of experience, relevant skills, credentials and/or education top the challenges they face or anticipate facing in achieving their career goals in their desired field.

(Source: McKinsey American Opportunity Study conducted by Ipsos from Mar. 9-Apr. 8, 2021, among 25,109 adults, including 17,483 U.S. adults who are employed, unemployed or a student.)



Lisa Gevelber is chief marketing officer, Americas Region at Google and the founder of Grow with Google, which, among other initiatives, offers certificates online and in-classroom in partnership with technical schools and colleges.

When she thinks **What the Future**, she's focused on bridging skill gaps to drive economic opportunities for the workforce of today and tomorrow.

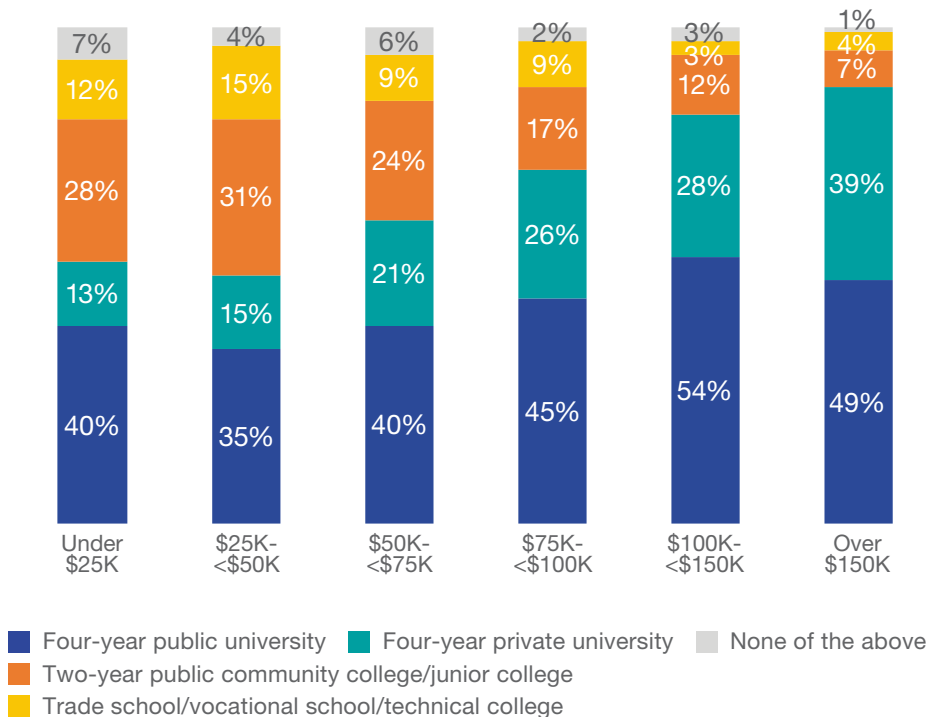
Matt Carmichael: What did you hope to achieve when you started Grow with Google?

Lisa Gevelber: Our goal was to make sure that the opportunities created by technology are truly available to everyone. It's about making sure that we're not only helping people with economic opportunity, but trying to catalyze the ecosystem to create a more equitable and inclusive job market. If you look at today's jobs, two-thirds of middle-skill jobs—which might require a



Does higher education predict income?

Q. What type of institution did you attend for your education after high school? If you attended more than one school, please think of the last school you attended.



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 1,596 U.S. adults with at least a high school diploma.)

high school degree, but not a diploma — require middle to high levels of digital skills. We wanted to make sure that people have easy ways to learn those skills. No one was born knowing how to use a spreadsheet. So helping people get the skills they need for today’s job has always been the focus, and a big part of that was creating the Google Career Certificates.

Carmichael: How did you build the certificates with employers in mind?

Gevelber: We looked at data to understand which career fields are in demand, growing and will continue to grow for the next five to ten years — and pay well. We took that list and we looked at which of those fields Google had real expertise to contribute and we started building career certificates for those fields. It wasn’t enough to build a certificate. We needed to create employment opportunities for those certificates. We have more than 130 employers who have vetted our certificates and use them as a way to hire candidates. This is the content that we use to train our own people.

Carmichael: Where will a program like Google Career Certificates fit into the educational ecosystem of the future alongside four-year, two-year, vocational programs, etc.?

Gevelber: The certificates are all about providing credible skilling options for job seekers, students and employers.

“No one was born knowing how to use a spreadsheet.”

Some folks will decide never to go to college. Maybe college isn’t accessible for them for one reason or another. And a lot of low-income workers don’t have the luxury to sit in a classroom on a regular schedule. We’re also finding increasingly that institutions of higher education want to include the Google Career Certificates in their programs. Four-year institutions like the State

University of New York, Northeastern University and Purdue University give credit for the Google Career Certificates. I think that’s a really exciting model because it doesn’t have to be an “or” where you get a degree or you get a certificate. I think what we’ll see in the future is more “and.”

Carmichael: Our data show that Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans are more interested in these type of education programs. Can programs like this help with diversity and inclusion, and close gaps in the pipeline?

Gevelber: I really think so. What we’re hearing from employers is an authentic interest in diversifying their workforces. About 53% of our graduates are females and minorities.

Carmichael: What did the pandemic change in terms of our understanding, acceptance and willingness toward virtual education?

Gevelber: We launched our first career certificate in January 2018. The pandemic accelerated a lot of trends that were

already under way. Projections from the World Economic Forum suggest that around 50% of us will need to reskill within the next several years. The environment is right to make a portable, on-demand, easy-to-access, high-quality program. The online channel is an effective one, especially for adult learners who need to be able to access the course on their own time.

Carmichael: I saw an interview where you spoke about the importance of combining life skill lessons with work skill lessons. How does that work?

Gevelber: Well, we also teach problem-solving, critical thinking and, depending on the certificate, a lot of soft skills. For a project management certificate, we teach cross-functional collaboration, we teach influence, we teach how to create psychological safety, because part of managing a project is making sure everyone's on one page and that all the issues and topics come up in a timely way.

“It wasn’t enough to build a certificate. We needed to create employment opportunities for those certificates.”

Carmichael: You’ve used behavioral science to better understand why people don’t complete a program. What are some of the hurdles, and how do you help students overcome them?

Gevelber: One of the principles is called social proof. In essence, that’s the understanding that people are highly influenced by what their peers are doing and that you can use that in an encouraging way. For example, we can put a little machine learning prompt that shows up right alongside important content.

“Hey, do you need help? We can see 70% of your peers review this lecture before they take the assessment.” Or if you don’t pass the assessment on the first try, which lots of people don’t, we can say, “Hey, lots of folks don’t pass on their first try.”

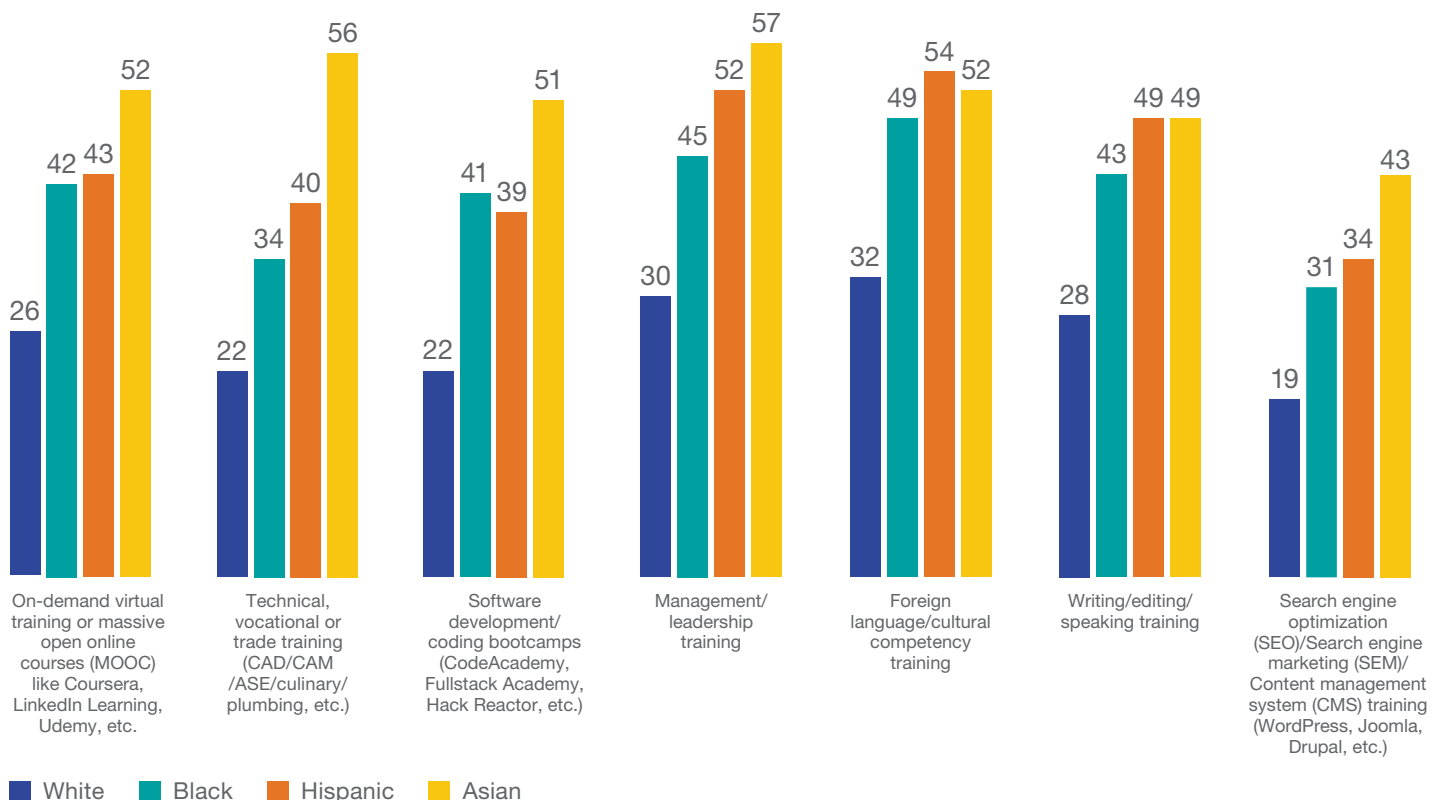
Carmichael: That sounds like a way to mimic some of the experience people might have in an actual classroom and bridging some of the social aspects of in-person school.

Gevelber: It’s such a good way to bring in the emotional support and insider tips. We all know that our jobs are a little bit about how well you know the topic you’re working on and a little bit about knowing how to be successful in a job. Most of us learn along the way, but if we can help people learn it as they’re doing the certificate, they bring that with them. It’s not just about being successful in their job, but those are all great skills for life.

Matt Carmichael is the editor of What the Future and VP of editorial strategy for Ipsos in North America.

As employers aim for diversity, will training needs differ?

Q. How interested, if at all, are you in pursuing any of the following training, education or credentialing programs? (% Interested)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 2,009 U.S. adults.)

Did the pandemic boost credibility for e-learning?



The pandemic has shifted how we acquire new skills from kindergarten to graduate and continuing education. It has pushed the door further open for the future of education to include hybrid online/at-home learning. This provides e-learning brands the opportunity to elevate their legitimacy as teaching resources, whether self-guided or in partnership with schools or companies.

E-learning will be increasingly critical in the future because most adults say they need more relevant work experience, skills, credentials and education to achieve their career goals, per a recent Ipsos study on behalf of McKinsey. About half of employed adults and two-thirds of unemployed job seekers cite relevant work experience as a challenge. Then, about half of employed adults and half of unemployed who are looking for jobs say they need more relevant skills. For working adults or parents who may not be able to study full-time or when classes are in session, online learning offers the most flexibility.

The potential for tech brands is wide open if employers embrace them as learners have. Already, among the tools available, YouTube is the platform of choice for learning, per another recent Ipsos study. It reveals that six in ten participants choose the video platform as their online learning source ahead of employer training, online university courses and other online learning portals. Along with this, 56% rely on tech brands to provide better learning tools and platforms post-pandemic.

Within these programs, adaptive learning technologies can support students with online tutors driven by artificial intelligence. They can deliver personalized instructions based on students' needs and provide immediate feedback with auto-grading. To increase credibility with older students, tech brands could partner with well-established universities to create curricula for continuing education.

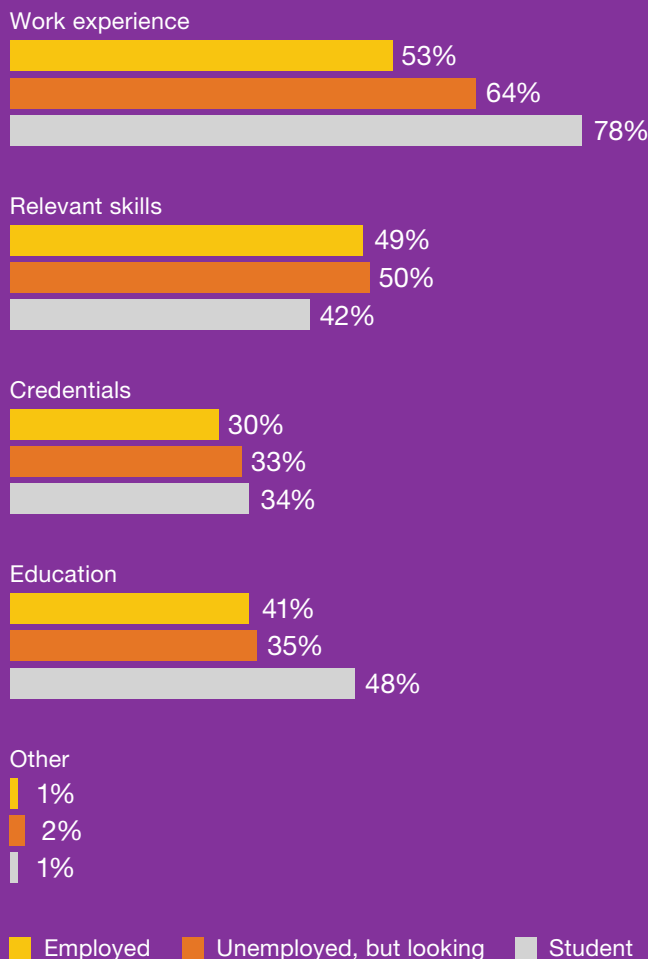
The University of California, Berkeley, has started implementing adaptive learning technologies that automatically generate personalized help on the fly, based on AI learnings from past student interactions with the course.

Education in the future will be a more personalized experience, taking into account the knowledge people already hold, what they want to learn and specific learning challenges they face. In other words, as during the pandemic, technology is poised to shape education in all its forms for the workforce of the future.

Emmanuel Probst is a senior vice president of U.S. Brand and Creative Excellence at Ipsos.

What's holding people back from meeting their career goals?

Q. You answered that experience, relevant skills, credentials, and/or education are a challenge. Which of the following best describes what you believe you need? Select all that apply. (% Selected)



(Source: McKinsey American Opportunity Study conducted by Ipsos from Mar. 9-Apr. 8, 2021, among 25,109 adults, including 5,532 who cite needing more or different skills as challenges to achieving career goals.)

Question:

Do you need college to learn the most sought-after skill?



Rita J. King

Co-founder, Science House

Rita J. King is the co-founder of Science House, a future-focused consultancy in New York billed as a “cathedral to imagination.”

She is launching a learning platform called Model Meetings to teach us how to make essential improvements to an activity in which we spend much of our workdays.

She’s partnering with Dr. Gabriel Silva at the University of California, San Diego, to launch a multidisciplinary lab focused on “applied imagination.”

When she thinks **What the Future**, she wants to understand how to build creativity directly into all aspects of our college education and beyond.

96%

of high school graduates attended some form of continuing education.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 1,596 U.S. adults with at least a high school diploma.)



“Creativity is a very misunderstood concept. This is important because it happens to be the top skill employers say they’re looking for.”

Matt Carmichael: Most Americans follow traditional ideals about college and its role in the American dream. But there’s a falloff between the older and younger folks. What does that portend?

Rita J. King: Every system has its own hierarchy that develops over time, its own culture that develops over time. Academia is no different. Young people have been conditioned to believe that you get educated and then you enter the hierarchy and then your goal is to ascend in this hierarchy. But the hierarchy is not functional anymore, even intrinsically. Extrinsically, it’s really dysfunctional for the planet and the people who live on it.

Carmichael: Is a degree essential today?

King: A lot of our clients at Science House are CEOs for large global companies. They always try to hire people who have degrees. But what if a lot of the best coders, for example, don’t have degrees? On the other hand, there are many benefits to being immersed in an educational environment for four years. Many of those benefits don’t accrue until later. This is why I love humanities and liberal arts. You take a broad smattering of classes to see what might interest you that you didn’t know. There are

huge benefits socially to getting educated. I would never argue against education, but what I am arguing for is lifelong learning.

Carmichael: Why is creativity so important?

King: Creativity is a very misunderstood concept. This is important because it happens to be the top skill employers say they’re looking for. Creativity is everywhere, and you can apply it to anything. The number one thing that most large companies need to apply creativity to right now is eliminating the bureaucratic clutter that is keeping them from achieving the innovation that they all love to talk about.

Carmichael: How so?

King: Companies need to start applying creative thinking to improving their process flows, but that doesn’t seem glamorous, right? We think of creativity as belonging to a very small group of people. A few years ago, I went to an advertising conference in New York. Before anyone said a word, I knew exactly who the “creatives” were and who was on the “client side.” At the end of the day, their jobs are the same, ostensibly: to move whatever it is you’re selling. All of you have an obligation to be creative regardless of what your niche in the overall output is.

Carmichael: Certificate and skills programs are ways to add to your education throughout your career. How do you bake creativity into that sort of education?

King: Model Meetings certifies you in the skill of applying creativity to the way you use your time at work. It’s a flywheel and the course teaches you how to engage in that flywheel to align people and purpose for better results and less stress. Creativity is a process. It’s not some natural fairy dust that some people are born with and some people aren’t. Everyone can improve their creativity. It’s absolutely a learnable skill.

Carmichael: Obviously a lot of schools had to go virtual this year. Do you think hybridized education will continue?

King: Hybridization of education and work is something I’ve been studying since 2002 or so because we needed to advance hybridization at a much more rapid clip. Virtual worlds offer incredible opportunities for really deep, experiential education. Then the pandemic comes along, and everybody is scrambling to figure out how to educate children via Zoom. A lot of the children don’t even have laptops at home. It’ll take years before we really understand the consequences of the division between who was properly educated during the pandemic and who was not.

“Creativity is a process. It’s not some natural fairy dust that some people are born with and some people aren’t.”

Carmichael: Does that widen or close diversity and inclusion gaps at the college level?

King: When you’re in-person, it creates a lot of opportunities for cliquishness. There are benefits to that, but there are a lot of drawbacks. Hybridization offers a chance for people to be included on their contributions, not on whether they fit the stereotype of what a successful person is supposed to look and act like.

Carmichael: But isn’t part of the value of an undergrad education the connection to a community? Those bonds are a lot easier to forge in-person than online only.

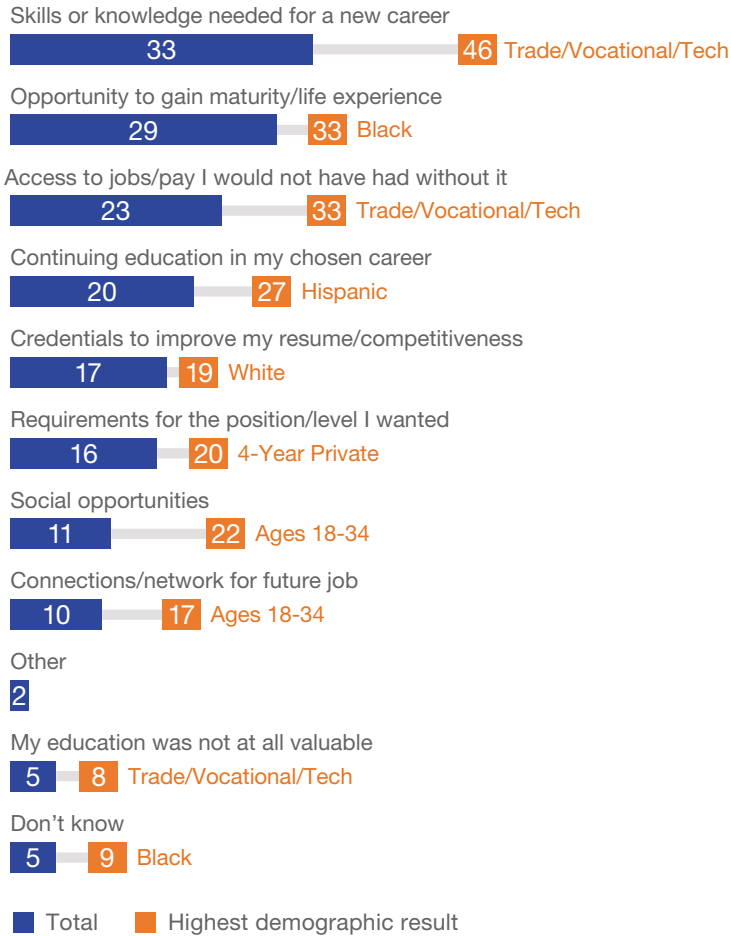
King: I’m not arguing against the necessity for in-person interactions, but I would challenge us also to think about what does that mean to be for four years in a group of people who are mostly in your own age bracket, right? The only interactions you have with people who aren’t in your age bracket are either family members or professors.

Right now, we have an opportunity to rethink what that should look like instead of just reacting.

Matt Carmichael is the editor of What the Future and VP of editorial strategy for Ipsos in North America.

For whom does higher education add value?

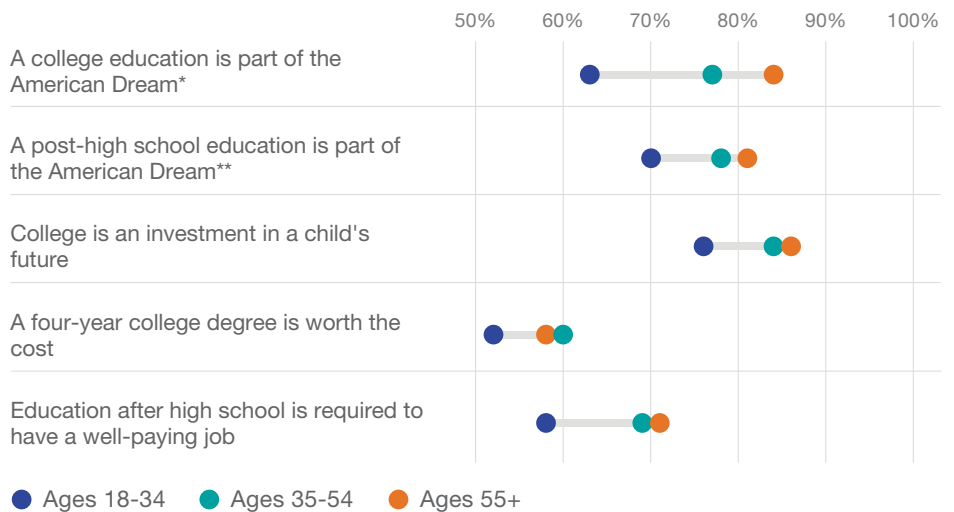
Q. Thinking about the education you received after high school, what do you think is the most valuable aspect of the education you received? You may select up to two. (% Total)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 1,596 U.S. adults with at least a high school diploma.)

Who thinks higher ed is most worth it?

Q. Thinking generally about college and higher education, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Net agree)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 2,009 U.S. adults, including *asked of n=1,003 and ** asked of n= 1,006.)

What would free college change?



END STUDENT DEBT
#collegeforall #millionstudentmarch

Higher education can be one of the largest expenses in a person's life. Many young people don't have the resources or opportunity to prepare financially for this expense. About half of bachelor's degree recipients from four-year colleges and universities graduated with debt, according to the College Board. They hold an average of \$28,800 in student loans. That begs the question: What would change if college, at least up to a bachelor's degree, were free?

President Biden campaigned on a platform that included ambitious changes for higher education. He already has laid the groundwork for student debt cancellation. Most Americans, especially college grads, recently surveyed by Ipsos agree that college is a valuable investment in the future.

Yet the majority want to see big changes. Half of Americans support making a bachelor's degree free at four-year colleges, according to a Country Financial/Ipsos poll. Two-thirds support making an associate's degree free at community colleges. Millennials are most likely to strongly support free education.

For students and their parents, cost-free higher education could be life-changing. Nearly six in ten respondents in the Country Financial-Ipsos poll believe student debt policy reform will make college more accessible to more people. There are generational differences, of course. Many iGen and Millennials strongly agree with this, but nearly four in ten Baby Boomers think that student loan forgiveness will not stimulate the economy.

If a policy like this were to become law, it could spur massive changes and open up a valuable pipeline to employment to a greater portion of the workforce, easing some of the labor crunch we see today. One thing is for sure: the revenue structure for higher education would change as well as how students are recruited.

Changes are already under way with the Supreme Court's ruling that the NCAA must let student athletes receive education-related compensation for their athletic participation. This could be just the beginning of the revolution.

Jennifer Berg is a director in Ipsos' U.S. Public Affairs service line.

How does having a degree shape how we value higher education?

Q. Thinking generally about college and higher education, please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. (Net agree)

I am willing to stretch myself financially to obtain the best opportunity for my future



I am willing to stretch myself financially to obtain the best opportunity for my child's future*



I would send my child to college for the intellectual and social experience regardless of whether they earned more money with a college degree*



■ College degree ■ No college degree

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 2,009 U.S. adults, including * asked of n=529 parents.)

Question:

Did education lose a decade or gain a new path forward?



Steven Wolfe Pereira

CEO & co-founder, Encantos

When Steven Wolfe Pereira talks about his ed tech company, Encantos, it's easy for his enthusiasm rub off on you. His genuine zest for reimagining literacy, learning and life skills through "storyteaching," both online and off, is catching.

Fast Company recently named the creator platform company he co-founded in 2016 as one of the "Most Innovative Companies in the World." When he thinks **What the Future**, Wolfe Pereira believes K-12 education will be more direct, digital and personalized.

78%

of parents with children at home have kids of K-12 school age.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 485 U.S. parents.)



Do parents and students have access to the tools they need?

Q. To what extent, do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Technology is a valuable tool for education



My child has access to reliable internet at home



I have the skills or know-how to help my child use the technology required for online learning



My home computer or laptop is in good working condition



It is easy for my child to use the technology needed for online learning



My child qualifies for a free computer/tablet from their school district



■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Not applicable

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 375 U.S. adults with a child or children in school.)

Kate MacArthur: At the beginning of the pandemic, you wrote that 2020 would be “The Lost School Year.” How did reality compare to what you predicted?

Steven Wolfe Pereira: It really is a tale of two cities. The families that had means took their kids out of school. They hired private teachers, private tutors, personalized digital schooling, advanced classes, coding classes, and these families and their kids have thrived during the pandemic.

On the flip side, you have the majority of families that don’t have those means that were probably the essential workers on the front lines. They were relying on school for food. They’re relying on school for childcare. For those families, it’s not going to be just a lost school year, it’s going to be a lost school decade. There’s a lot that has been exposed throughout the pandemic and one of them is not just income inequality, but education inequality.

MacArthur: What’s top of mind for you for preparing young people to one day be in the workforce?

Wolfe Pereira: This is the era of artificial intelligence, and anything that can be automated will be. Machines will certainly

be better at memorizing things and spitting back formulas and facts. We’ve been trained on rote memorization and standardized testing. That whole “20th century” approach is not going to be sufficient, especially for the skills that kids are going to need to thrive in the 21st century.

“You’re going to see a revolution in home schooling, but not the old definition of home schooling.”

MacArthur: Like what?

Wolfe Pereira: Kids are not taught anything relevant about financial literacy. Think about media and information literacy. And how do you actually teach kids social-emotional skills, things around adaptability, resiliency, flexibility, leadership, entrepreneurship,

mindfulness, empathy? When you have a society growing up glued to screens, it’s very hard for kids to learn these skills.

MacArthur: The pandemic accelerated digital trends. How will that impact the digital divide?

Wolfe Pereira: There are over millions of households that don’t have broadband access in the U.S., especially in the Black and brown communities that may not have the income or the digital literacy. It becomes a major stumbling block. But it’s not just about access to Wi-Fi or a device. Is there even a room that could be dedicated for the child’s ability to focus? And it’s the emotional effects of kids not being able to engage with other students.

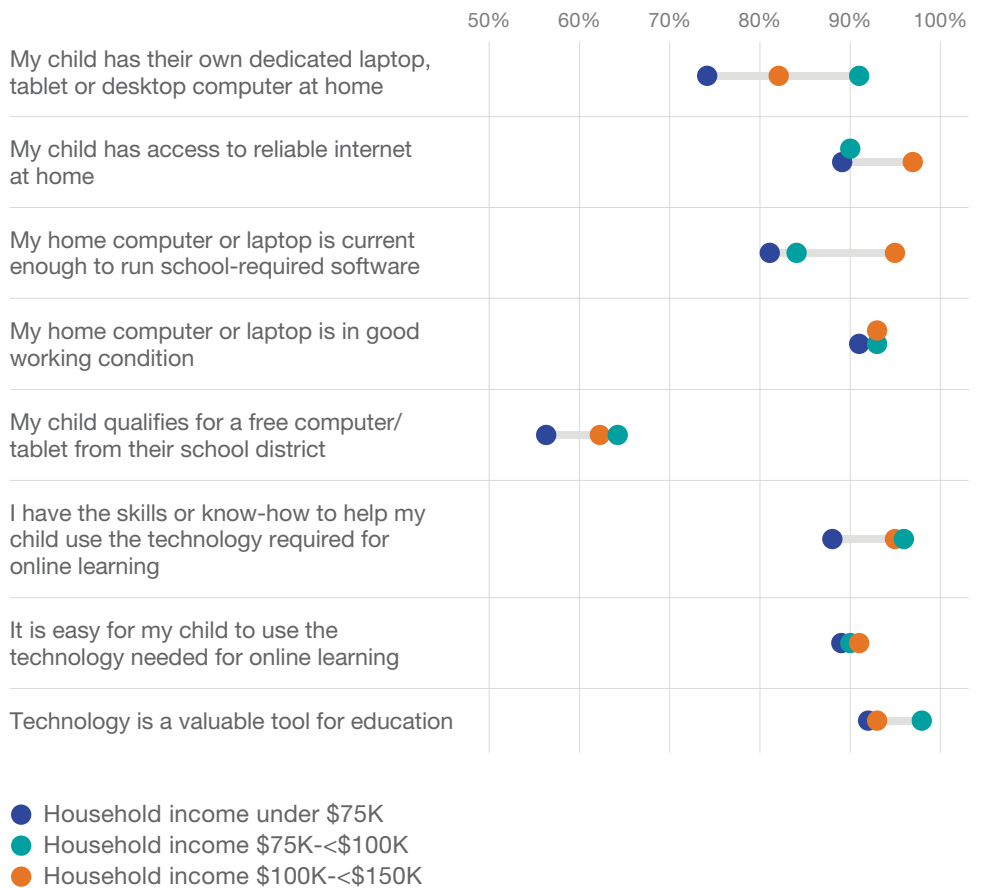
MacArthur: What do think is going to stick going forward?

Wolfe Pereira: You’re going to see a revolution in home schooling, but not the old definition of home schooling. It’s more about enrichment and extending the learning from the classroom into the living room. A lot of new offerings have cropped up in the past 12 months, going direct to consumers, giving parents more choice, more resources to do supplemental learning at home.

“We have such incredibly personalized advertising and e-commerce. But where you need personalization the most — education, because we all learn differently — why on Earth do we not have personalized learning?”

How does income affect access to tools?

Q. To what extent, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Net agree)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 375 U.S. parents.)

MacArthur: School systems still dictate how kids will matriculate to the next level. How will that work?

Wolfe Pereira: There’s going to be a lot of debate about that because you’re seeing a lot of people questioning, “OK, what exactly is being taught in my school?” Part of it has to do with politicization of school boards.

Just look at critical race theory and how that’s become a lightning rod in certain places. On the flip side, when you have more than 50% of our kids in America being diverse, you’re seeing a demand for representation.

There’s a whole gap in education when it comes to Black history. And that’s not even going anywhere near the absence of Latino history, right? That’s where technology and entrepreneurship are cropping up to fill those gaps.

MacArthur: How do you make sure that the students who need these things the most get them?

Wolfe Pereira: We offer our creator platform free for teachers.

MacArthur: How will you make money with this business model while keeping the playing field level?

Wolfe Pereira: We have consumers subscribing the same way that you subscribe to Netflix. Think of Encantos as “Roblox meets Masterclass for Kids.” Teachers receive engagement-based payouts for their “storyworlds” on the Encantos platform, which can become a source of supplemental income. We don’t take any advertising. We also believe that teaching isn’t limited to teachers. We’ll have lots of fans for popular creators on our platform similar to the cult following around certain instructors on Peloton.

MacArthur: Are direct-to-consumer models going to revolutionize education?

Wolfe Pereira: Think about retail. Amazon now has all that first-party data they’re using to personalize the experience. They can only do that if they have that first-party data relationship with you. So now every retailer is trying to figure out how to do that. Now it’s every industry, and education is no different. In general, we have such incredibly personalized advertising and e-commerce. But where you need personalization the most — education, because we all learn differently — why on Earth do we not have personalized learning?

Kate MacArthur is deputy editor of What the Future and deputy editor of editorial for Ipsos in North America.

Can the classroom transcend our partisan times?

Virtually all Americans support the importance of education and believe that schools set up students to navigate their careers and lives.

However, the American education system has not escaped the political polarization impacting the rest of society. Especially with race dominating the national conversation, partisans are pulling further apart on the “true” story of race in America. As a consequence, Americans are split around what values should be taught in schools and whom to trust with educating the next generation.

Already, a majority of Americans agree that public education can be unequal. Yet while Americans on both sides of the aisle agree that where students live plays a role in their academic success, they are less likely to agree on how well-equipped schools are to help students of all races and ethnicities get ahead in their lives and careers.

Opinion splits even further around including lessons about racism in the school curriculum. According to Axios/Ipsos polling, just 42% of Republicans agree that it should be a part of history lessons, compared to 88% of Democrats. Americans are especially divided on whether schools should teach about institutional racism, per a new Ipsos survey of 2,009 Americans.

In short, partisans exist at the opposite ends of the spectrum on how race and America’s legacy of slavery ought to be presented in schools. Conservative reactions to initiatives like the 1619 Project, efforts to ban the teaching of critical race theory in schools at the

state level, or attempts by former President Trump to create a “patriotic education” commission make this clear.

Education, after all, is crucial for the future workforce and talent pipeline. As students move beyond school, the values they have been taught and the lessons they have learned about America’s past will inform how they inhabit those new roles and spaces as workers and citizens. If education systems aren’t in alignment with the larger social contract, they risk failing students in one of their primary goals.

Chris Jackson is a senior vice president in Ipsos’ U.S. Public Affairs service line.

Is education polarized, too?

Q. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Net agree)



(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 2,009 U.S. adults.)

Question: How should we fund and evolve the supply chain of the future workforce?



Cindy Cisneros

Vice president of education programs, Committee for Economic Development, The Conference Board



As vice president of education programs at the Committee for Economic Development of The Conference Board, Cindy Cisneros helps shape education policy from early learning to post-high school workforce development.

When she thinks **What the Future**, she pictures communities preparing children earlier, bringing more stakeholders to the table and planning additional education options for after high school.

53%

of Americans had access to career and college fairs during high school.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted May 13-17, 2021, among 2,010 U.S. adults.)

Kate MacArthur: What's the most important thing to focus on in preparing our future workforce?

Cindy Cisneros: Readiness is a really important element. That was further highlighted as a result of the pandemic in terms of asking ourselves, "What is quality education, what does it mean to deliver education for students, how are our students actually learning and what is the best way to promote that type of learning?" We need to understand that those conversations happen primarily at the local level, especially in education, which is a decentralized system in the U.S. The business community is an important voice and has an important perspective to help impact that conversation. They really are the ultimate consumer of the education system.

MacArthur: How should employers be involved?

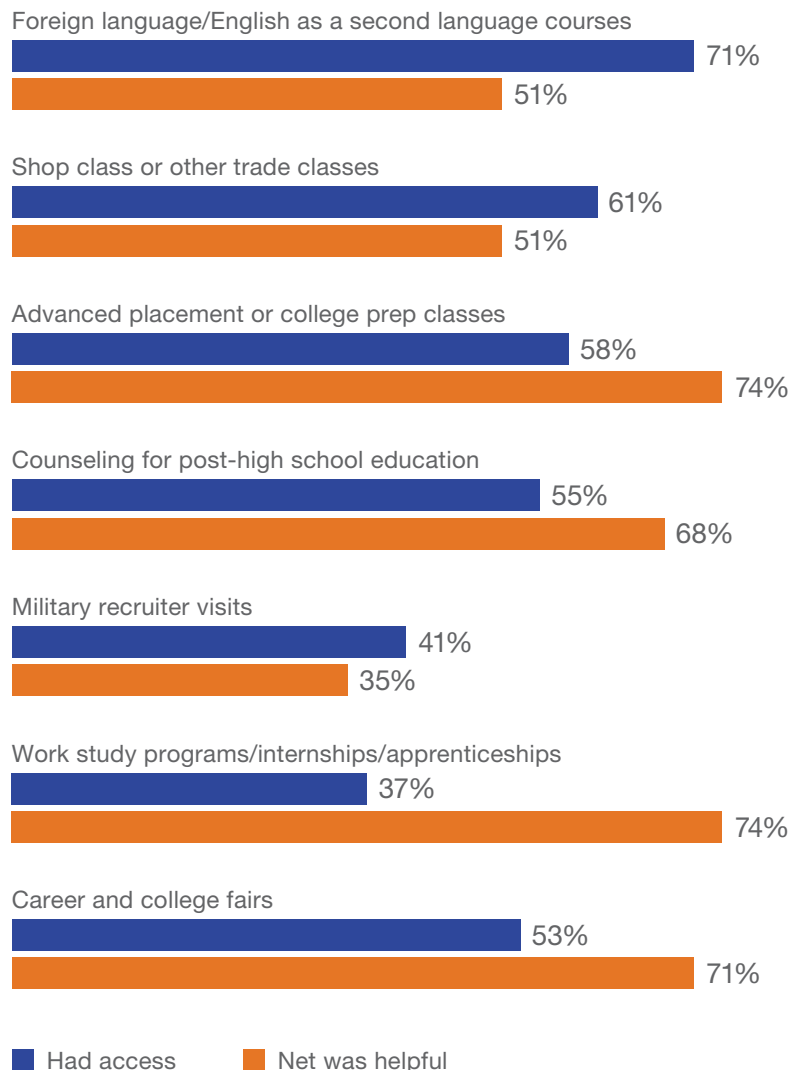
Cisneros: Getting employer's perspective and understanding on what they're thinking about as it relates to workplace



“It’s during those earliest years when the foundation is laid for all future learning, including those executive function skills that employers value so greatly.”

What high school prep is most useful for future careers?

Q. Which, if any, of the following did you have access to during your high school education? How helpful, if at all, were each of the following in helping you choose your career path?*



readiness and tapping their knowledge and expertise can help influence the thinking on problem-solving such as through public-private partnerships with education institutions.

MacArthur: What’s been the biggest shift or dynamic in the way that we think about workplace readiness for high school students?

Cisneros: You actually have to start at the beginning. The timeframe of birth to 5 is an exceptionally robust period of brain development for children. It’s during those earliest years when the foundation is laid for all future learning, including those executive function skills that employers value so greatly.

Those types of skills—employability skills, soft skills—those really reflect critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, communications. Those are the kinds of skills highly valued by employers, more so than even content knowledge and training.

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 2,009 U.S. adults. *Question asked only if had access in high school education.)

MacArthur: Are there any good existing examples?

Cisneros: There's a very innovative and excellent program in Cajon Valley Union School District outside of San Diego, called the World of Work. It is designed to introduce students from kindergarten through high school to the possibilities of different fields of work. It helps them explore their own interests and things that they like to do and presents opportunities for learning about various career pathways. Part of the program includes linking students directly with individuals from the business community and other sectors in specific fields. It's not just about the content skills of reading, writing, math, science, history, and civics, but a program that supports thinking about their evolution as a citizen and what path that they will choose for vocational pursuit.

MacArthur: How has the pandemic shaped how students think about future careers?

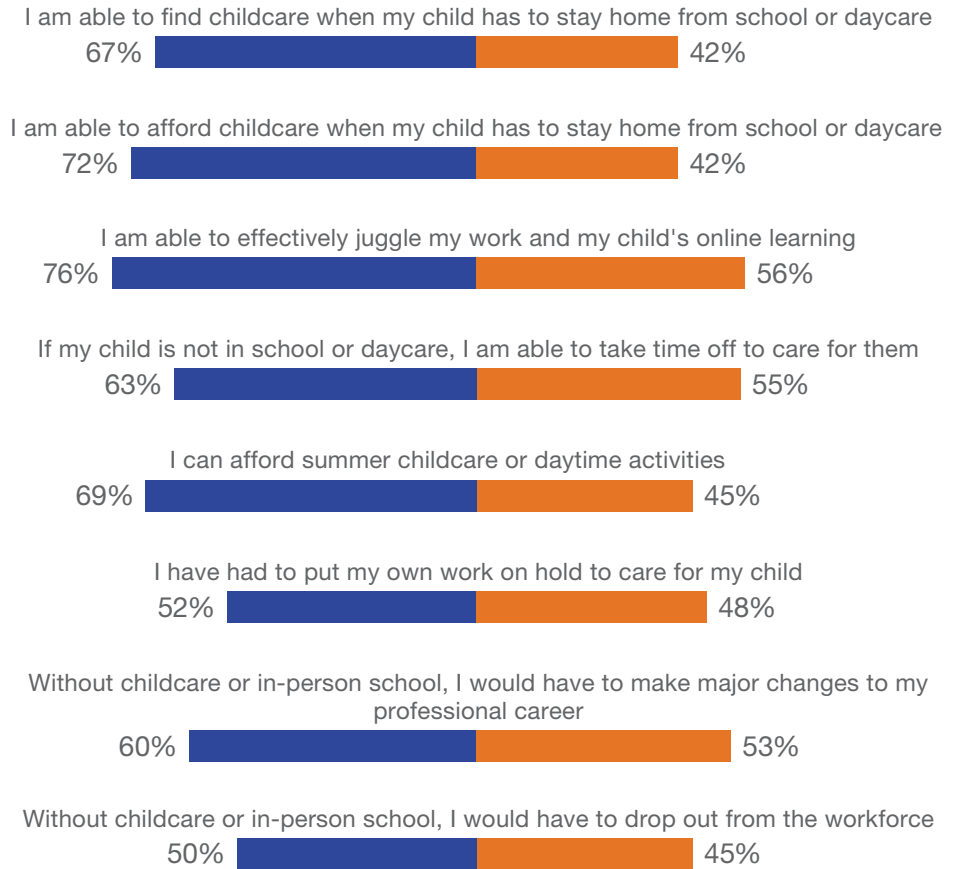
Cisneros: The pandemic has highlighted the need for jobs that have a strong application of technology: computational sciences and cybersecurity, with privacy and security becoming increased issues of concern. It's definitely helped highlight and focus on a certain set of jobs that are very STEM-based and that will influence the offerings in schools and colleges for the future.

MacArthur: There's also a dual dynamic happening where a lot of kids are rejecting higher education. How do you address that for the future?

Cisneros: We know that business leaders believe students are not graduating ready to step into the workplace. Over 60% of new jobs require some form of post-secondary training. It may not be college, but it will require some other type of educational training. There's a proliferation of bootcamps for software coding and different variations on that alternative certification approach and theme. There's a recognition that we can get students focused and working more directly on particular subject areas, and skill them in shorter amounts of time. The community colleges in particular have been responsive to this growing need in the field and can more easily adapt to provide these types of opportunities and programs.

How does childcare factor into careers?

Q. Thinking about your needs as a working parent, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Net agree)



■ Male ■ Female

(Source: Ipsos survey conducted Jun. 15-17, 2021, among 485 U.S. parents.)

MacArthur: Are there any model programs that stand out?

Cisneros: One is the P-TECH model, which was established for students in nine different states who receive a combination of hands-on academic education, as well as technical and workplace experiences. The P-TECH system integrates high school and college coursework and students participate in workplace opportunities like internships. One report on New York City's P-TECH high schools studied a sample of students, mostly African-American and Hispanic, and found that they had experienced increased career exposure and were more likely to earn credits in work-based learning than students at non P-TECH high schools in New York City.

MacArthur: What will it take to get companies to make the investment?

Cisneros: There's far more recognition, especially coming off of the pandemic year, that the problems can be so unwieldy and so big that you need all key stakeholders, including the business sector, to be at the table along with the local innovation, the local creativity, and the local flexibility that help create those choices and solve the issues in each community. It is in their collective interests to do so in order to achieve economic prosperity for all.

Kate MacArthur is deputy editor of What the Future and deputy editor of editorial for Ipsos in North America.

How can employers support an equitable employment recovery?

In the workforce, women and people of color were disproportionately impacted during the pandemic.

Partially this was due to the professions hit hardest in terms of wage and job loss. That is dramatically clear in a study Ipsos conducted for McKinsey that illustrates how across many sectors women were more impacted by pandemic job cuts, as were people of color.

This paradoxically comes at a time when all sectors are striving for more diverse workplaces. Market research, as an industry, is no different. These data point to a near-term future where employers need to double down on efforts toward inclusivity.

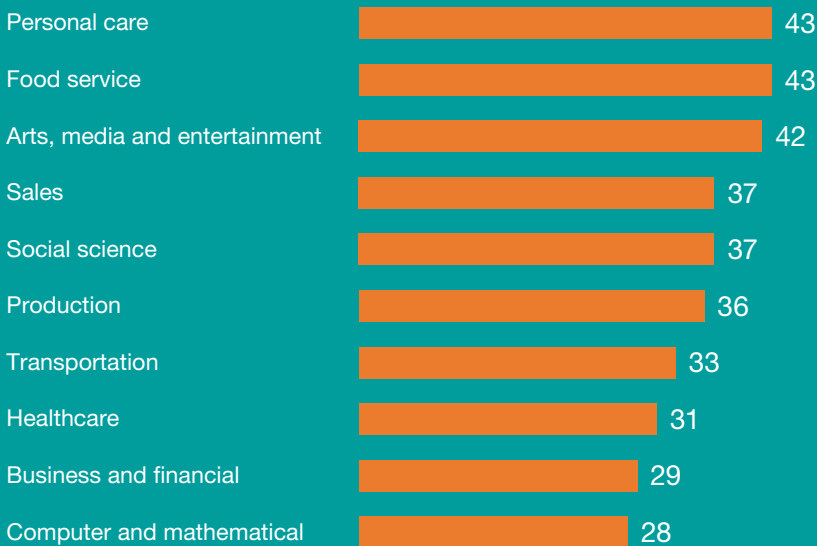
Even returning to the pre-pandemic levels, hobbled by the pandemic, will take concerted effort. Furthering the equity in America's workforce to the goals laid out in the before times will require employers to examine and reexamine expectations for the training and qualifications expected when they hire employees. Employers will also need to reconsider how they reskill and upskill workers, and what training they should provide on an ongoing basis.

***Pierre Le Manh** is the deputy CEO of Ipsos, and CEO of Ipsos in North America.*

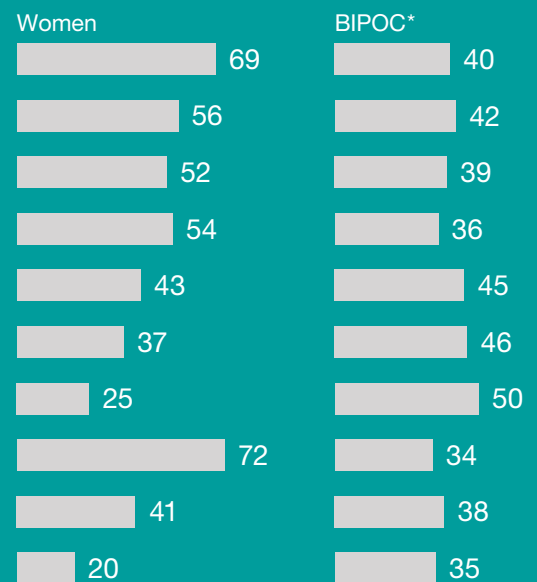
What job sectors have the most ground to make up for women and workers of color?

Q. Has your employment status changed over the past 12 months? If so, please indicate how. You may select all that apply. (% Those who selected a change)

% of workers reporting loss of income or job over past 12 months by occupation.



% Workers in occupation group



(Source: McKinsey American Opportunity Study conducted by Ipsos from Mar. 9-Apr. 8, 2021, among 25,109 adults. *BIPOC denotes Black, Indigenous, and people of color.)

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GAME CHANGERS

