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Navigating a Future No One Can Predict:

What Today's Students
Will Need Now for
Tomorrow's Jobs



Things Are Moving Quickly

We are at the beginning of a major labor force shift—akin to the time when workers began setting down their ploughs and heading for factories. Or, when the factories shuttered, and millions hustled to re-train themselves for the knowledge economy and service industry.

What is the future of work? No one completely knows the answer, but we do know some of the changes on the horizon. Consider this:

- According to a report by McKinsey & Company, by the year 2030, “**All workers will need to adapt**, as their occupations evolve alongside increasingly capable machines. Some of that adaptation will require higher educational attainment, or spending more time on activities that require social and emotional skills, creativity, high-level cognitive capabilities and other skills relatively hard to automate.”
- A 2016 study by LinkedIn found that **Millennials change jobs four times in their first 10 years after college**, compared to just two changes in that time period by Gen Xers.
- An analysis by Third Way found **major labor shortages in the healthcare, education, and technology sectors**, and existing shortages in the manufacturing sector will increase as Baby Boomers begin to retire.

If all that sounds really far off, remember **today’s kindergarteners are the high school graduating class of 2030**. That’s just a little more than a decade away, and, according to a report by the

Institute for the Future, **well more than half of the jobs that will be available in 2030 don’t exist today**. The next generation of high school graduates will be faced with a whole new set of jobs that don’t yet exist. And, the work force is changing vastly between each generation: a graduate in the class of 1970 worked in an average of one or two jobs in their lifetime, vs. five to ten jobs for a graduate in the class of 1990. This trend is continuing with recent graduates, for whom the average job tenure is between one and two years.

If we don’t know what the future of work will look like, how can we prepare students for success? At NewSchools, we are sure this new landscape will require a new, expanded definition of student success. It will require tools and supports that help students develop the skills they’ll need to be successful, regardless of the job market—**skills like how to self-advocate, find a career path, seek out mentors, and access resources and training opportunities**. We have been thinking a lot about how we at NewSchools can help our entrepreneurs respond to this need, so we set out to learn more about the shifting workforce and the best ways to support students.





What Today's Students Say They Need

Students closest to entering the workforce are already experiencing the early effects of this shift and will be forced to navigate an employment landscape vastly different than that of their parents, teachers or guidance counselors.

After conducting market research with educators, ed tech developers and other experts on the future of work, we learned a great deal about the rapidly changing workforce facing students—both immediately, and in the years ahead—and the challenges of the schools supporting them. Based on this research, we believe the most promising innovations will support students by:

- Weaving exploration of college and career pathways into core academic experiences;
- Enabling experiential learning that authentically connects school and work;
- Increasing access to college and career guidance, mentorship and counseling resources; and
- Creating new opportunities to earn and utilize credits, badges and other signals of competence and achievement.

Our team decided to dig deeper and speak directly to high school students about their experiences and what they think they need to be better prepared to achieve their most ambitious dreams and plans. **Through a combination of focus groups and surveys with more than 300 high school students in California, we learned a great deal more about what students are thinking.** Hearing their concerns will help us support solutions—not just for them, but also for the younger students who will be soon following them into this uncharted landscape.

Here's What We Learned:



MOST JOBS THAT WILL BE AVAILABLE IN 2030 DON'T EXIST TODAY



Only 1/2 of students

FEEL CONFIDENT THAT THEIR EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE WILL PREPARE THEM FOR THOSE NEW JOBS



92%

92 percent

OF STUDENTS USED TECHNOLOGY TO RESEARCH COLLEGE OPTIONS



77%

77 percent

USED TECHNOLOGY TO RESEARCH CAREERS



98 percent

OF STUDENTS SAID USING TECHNOLOGY IS VALUABLE FOR COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING



ALMOST **2/3** OF STUDENTS TAKING CTE COURSES FOUND THEM TO BE A HELPFUL PART OF THEIR COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING



STUDENTS WHO USE COLLEGE AND CAREER RESOURCES AT SCHOOL ARE

55 percent more likely

TO HAVE A CLEAR IDEA OF THE TYPE OF JOB THEY'D LIKE TO HAVE

Data taken from a survey of 293 students conducted by WestEd for NewSchools in February 2018.



Anecdotally, there were some common themes that popped up when we asked students how technology could help with college and career planning, including using technology to make it easier to connect with advisers, find out more about specific careers, and streamline the process:

“ I like the idea of videos following people around their jobs, but then edited and shortened to 5-10 minutes. Virtual job shadowing.”

“ Being able to link your PSAT scores and grades to a college scouting website, so you could have your GPA PSAT/SAT and AP credit in the same spot as your ideal campus, major of interest, etc. I just want everything that may impact your college decision in one place.”

“ If there could be a phone number to call if you have any questions, like a 24/7 college hotline... because I think about what I'm going to do with my life at like 3 a.m.”



Now Is The Time

How can we bridge the gap between what we're giving students today and what they will need to be successful in the future?

Although there are many possible solutions, at NewSchools, we believe in the power of innovative school models, which is why we invest in teams of educators and education entrepreneurs who are reimagining learning. We also understand the importance of sophisticated tools that support educators and students. Our research told us a great deal about the technologies students are already using, and the tools and resources they wish existed. Armed with that information, and, our knowledge that the pace of change is only going to accelerate, we are asking ourselves: how can we seed ideas that will create solutions for problems that are just emerging now? And, we are calling on all our partners and colleagues to join us in thinking differently.

For NewSchools, that meant launching [a new funding opportunity](#) for early and mid-stage ed tech companies focused on preparing middle and high school students for the future of work. But that is just one of the many ways to begin tackling this huge undertaking. The sector needs to be thinking now about how to prepare students across the spectrum, from kindergarteners and elementary students to high school students and adult learners.

This report and our ed tech challenge are just a small piece of the solution. That's why we encourage every educator, education organization, and entrepreneur to join us in creating new ways to prepare students for success in the future of work.