Improving Student Outcomes:

Quantifying the Impact of Creative Skills on College and Career

October 2021

Adobe

Now more than ever, higher ed institutions must show and deliver value.

With rising tuition prices and fallout from the pandemic, the value of higher education has increasingly come into question.

"College debt crisis drives more students away from four-year schools" **CNBC**

"Is it time to rethink the value of college? Higher education may not be doomed, but it's in trouble." **Vox**

"600,000 fewer students enrolled in college this spring, survey finds" **Higher Ed Dive**

"Generation Unemployed: Another Class of Graduates Faces Pandemic-Scarred Future" **NPR**

"A Generation of American Men Give Up on College" **The Wall Street Journal**

"For many students, the prospect of a new year in college is exciting and stressful" **The Washington Post**

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There's no disputing that the global business world sees **creative skills as critical for the workforce.**

World Economic Forum predicts creative and digital literacy skills among the top ten required in the workforce in 2025.

Bloomberg reports creative problem solving, communication, strategic thinking are most desired but hardest to find skills.

The Economist predicts creative thinking and problem solving will be the #1 most valued skills for future workplaces.

LinkedIn reveals that creativity ranks as #1 most in-demand workforce skill in 2019 and 2020.

Adobe found employers seek communication and creativity in 2 million job postings, yet 75% of resumes do not list them as a skill.

Quantifying the impact of creative skills on student success

Adobe partnered with **Civitas Learning** and **LinkedIn** to learn more.

Quantified proof of the value of creative skills.

We wanted to measure the impact of creative and digital literacy skills on student outcomes—and make it actionable for institutions.

CIVITAS

Civitas Learning systematically and rigorously measured the impact of integrating the teaching of creative and digital literacy skills—using Adobe Creative Cloud as the primary tool—across the curriculum at three higher education institutions with at varying levels of Creative Cloud deployment. Most of the data cited are from the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA).

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn insights demonstrate the positive impact of having creative skills on the career trajectory of recent graduates and those that are already in the job market, across a broad range of job functions and industries.

We found a significant benefit to students—and institutions in which they're enrolled—near term and long term.

Improving student grades

Developing key skills leads to quantifiable outcomes across student segments from first-term to traditionally underserved.

Improving student retention

Institutions that teach these skills provide proven, measurable value to students, making it easier to retain them.

Improving post-grad job prospects

Many of those entering the workforce with creative skills are more in demand and garner higher salaries.
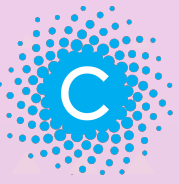
Improving long-term career trajectory

Creative skills provide benefits, a competitive edge, and an improved career trajectory for many.

Measuring student success in the classroom

Civitas Learning research measured student outcomes in four areas.

Course Mastery

earning an A or B grade in the course
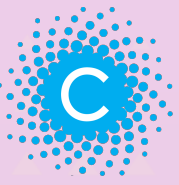
Course Grades

on a four-point scale

Term GPA

grades earned in a term, on a four-point scale

Persistence

re-enrolling at the institution from term to term

Research found that students who use Creative Cloud in their classes demonstrate:

Course Mastery

Higher rates of
A and B grades

Course Grades

Higher grades
overall

Term GPA

Higher GPAs

Persistence

Higher rates of
returning the
next term

Methodology

CIVITAS

- First ever systematic and rigorous measure of the impact of teaching Adobe Creative Cloud across the curriculum

- Sought to measure the impact of Creative Cloud in the curriculum on student success through four outcome metrics: course mastery, course grades, GPA, and persistence

- Focused on three higher education institutions

- Analyzed customer provided data from Fall 2019, Spring 2020, and Fall 2020 semesters

- Multi-modal approach
  - Standardized higher ed outcomes
  - Standardized qualitative focus groups with set questions
  - Informal conversations and context gathering

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY
FULLERTON

UTSA.
The University of Texas
at San Antonio™

EAST TENNESSEE STATE
UNIVERSITY

Creative Cloud had a clear impact on **course mastery** across subjects.

ACROSS ALL STUDENTS, THOSE IN CREATIVE CLOUD COURSES ACHIEVED

4.5%

HIGHER RATES OF A & B GRADES
OVER THOSE WHO WERE NOT

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Course grades were also positively impacted by use of Creative Cloud in assignments.

Source: Adobe Civitas Study 2021; data represents students from UTSA.

ACROSS ALL STUDENTS, THOSE IN CREATIVE CLOUD COURSES ACHIEVED

8%

HIGHER COURSE GRADES
OVER THOSE WHO WERE NOT

Higher course grades achieved by students in courses using Creative Cloud

BLACK AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS EARNED

2.2x

HIGHER COURSE GRADES VS. ALL STUDENTS

FIRST TERM STUDENTS EARNED

2.4x

HIGHER COURSE GRADES
VS. ALL STUDENTS

LOWEST PERFORMING STUDENTS EARNED

1.7x

HIGHER COURSE GRADES
VS. ALL STUDENTS

This increase in **course grades** was even more profound among **key segments of the student population.**

Further, **students in the bottom quartile** saw benefits across other courses with **higher term GPAs.**

STUDENTS ENROLLED IN COURSES USING CREATIVE CLOUD EARNED

.2⬆

HIGHER GPA
VS. THOSE WHO WERE NOT

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Creative Cloud also had a measurable impact on **retention among students in the bottom quartile.**

STUDENTS IN COURSES USING CREATIVE CLOUD WERE

8%

MORE LIKELY TO RETURN TO SCHOOL THE NEXT TERM THAN THOSE WHO WERE NOT

Source: Adobe Civitas Study 2021; data represents students from UTSA in the bottom quartile, defined as those least likely to earn a high course grade or persist to the next term.

Measuring student success beyond the classroom

Methodology

LINKEDIN

- Conducted in Q2 2021 and based on data from a sample of LinkedIn user activity from 2018-2021

- Includes aggregated internal data across LinkedIn users, focusing on global hires (since 2018) and recent graduates (since 2017)

- Commissioned by Adobe, this study includes data around top skills featured on LinkedIn user profiles, and increased demand for creative skills—defined as creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, communication, and creative problem solving.

Though these findings support inferences that positive benefits are associated with possession of creative skills within certain industries and functions, this data should be taken as a snapshot of findings based on a sample and not as proof of causation.

Industry increasingly values essential **creative skills**.

THE VOLUME OF HIRES POSSESSING CREATIVE SKILLS HAS GROWN

78%

IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

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Recent graduates with **creative skills** outperform those without.

RECENT GRADUATES WORKING IN VARIED FUNCTIONS SECURED HIGHER STARTING SALARIES OF UP TO

16%

WHEN THEY LISTED CREATIVE SKILLS ON THEIR LINKEDIN PROFILES COMPARED TO THOSE WHO DID NOT POSSESS OR PROMOTE THESE SKILLS

RECENT GRADUATES WITH CREATIVE SKILLS IN THEIR LINKEDIN PROFILES ARE

2x

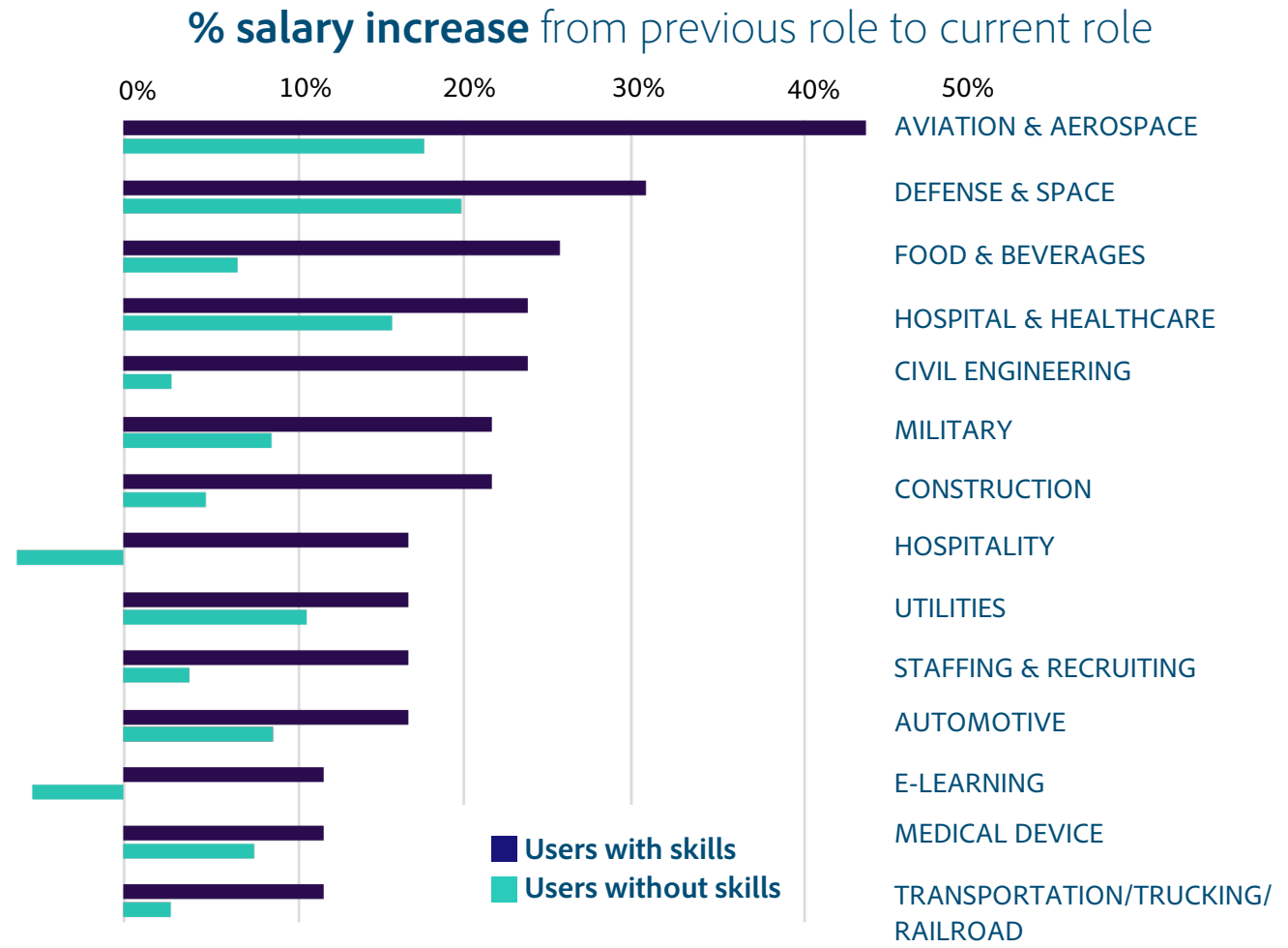AS LIKELY TO BE IN **LINKEDIN'S YOUNG & UPWARDLY MOBILE SEGMENT***

Professionals with creative skills saw higher salary increases across wide range of industries.

in

IN PAST THREE YEARS, PROFESSIONALS WITH CREATIVE SKILLS SAW UP TO

2-3x

HIGHER SALARY INCREASES AND GREATER CAREER TRAJECTORY
ACROSS VARIED INDUSTRIES THAN
THOSE WHO DID NOT CITE THESE SKILLS

Creative skills also seemed to offer downside protection for those industries most impacted by the pandemic.

% salary increase from previous role to current role

0%   10%   20%   30%   40%   50%

AVIATION & AEROSPACE
DEFENSE & SPACE
FOOD & BEVERAGES
HOSPITAL & HEALTHCARE
CIVIL ENGINEERING
MILITARY
CONSTRUCTION
HOSPITALITY
UTILITIES
STAFFING & RECRUITING
AUTOMOTIVE
E-LEARNING
MEDICAL DEVICE
TRANSPORTATION/TRUCKING/ RAILROAD

■ Users with skills
■ Users without skills

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Professionals with creative skills saw bigger salary increases across a wide range of job functions.

in (LinkedIn logo)

IN PAST THREE YEARS, PROFESSIONALS WITH CREATIVE SKILLS SAW UP TO

2-3x

HIGHER SALARY INCREASES IN VARIED JOB FUNCTIONS

% salary increase from previous role to current role

| | 0% | 5% | 10% | 15% | 20% |

HEALTHCARE SERVICES

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES

SALES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

HUMAN RESOURCES

QUALITY ASSURANCE

■ **Users with skills**
■ **Users without skills**

Source: LinkedIn Study 2021; internal data - global hires since Jan 2018; data represents increase when moving between roles during time frame of analysis
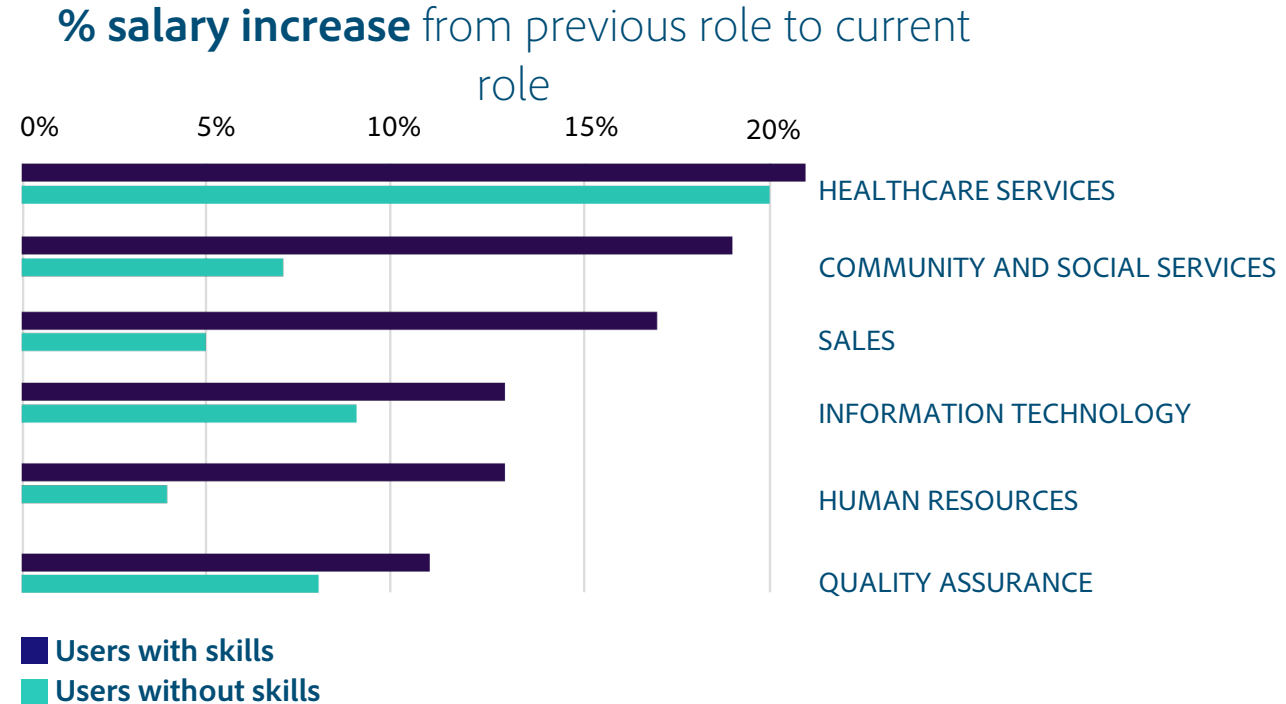
In summary, creative skills are essential to success in school and long after.

Benchmark research validates the impact of curricular use of Creative Cloud on student learning and success.

Research validates a comprehensive and strategic approach to implementing Creative Cloud in curriculum and focusing on faculty development.

Demographic-based findings were especially significant.

Demand for creativity has increased in the workforce in the past five years and showcasing these skills in your LinkedIn profile improves career trajectory.

How to achieve the best outcomes—are you ready?

Set students up for success

LEADERS

Ensure your faculty are ready to teach creative and digital literacy skills across your institution with the latest creative tools and curricula. [Learn more](#).

FACULTY

Learn more about this research and how to incorporate creative and digital literacy skills across the curriculum. Explore [free lesson plans](#) and professional development on the [Adobe Education Exchange](#).

STUDENTS

Seek out opportunities to learn essential skills like creativity and digital literacy. And be sure to highlight creative skills on your resume and LinkedIn profile.