

Your bridge2careers

for the Digital Media and Film Industries

An Analysis of the Skills, Knowledge, and Abilitie
Needed for a Comprehensive and Well-Qualifie T alent Pipeline



DIGITAL MEDIA AND FILM ROUNDTABLE FUNDERS

Many thanks to the forward-looking funders who made this report possible!



W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION®



BUILDING AMERICA®



El Paso Electric



Executive Summary

Digital Media is one of the most expansive industry sectors in Doña Ana County. Connected to Information Technology, Gaming, Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality, Film, and Media, this industry and related Information Technology provides a wide range of employment options for graduates with the right skills, credentials, degrees, and experiences.

The good news is that there is a holistic, reasonably well-connected education pipeline for talent development here between the Career and Technical Education programs in high school, the Creative Media Technology program at Doña Ana Community College, and the Creative Media Institute of New Mexico State University. Strong partnership with economic development has shown early success in attracting new business to the area, including investments in the film industry statewide.

Barriers to growth at this time lie mostly in misaligned expectations:

- Skill gaps between employers and potential talent
- Incorrect expectations among potential talent of the nature of work in this industry
- The importance of experience above education

However, opportunities for robust and growing partnerships abound:

- Tapping talent with transferrable skills through the Workforce Connections system
- Deeper employer engagement within the talent development pipeline
- Improving alignment of skill-building plus experiential (work-based) learning opportunities
- Career awareness and exploration throughout the education continuum

The following report outlines in specific detail how to holistically build out a local workforce in support of current Digital Media employers, as well as pipelines of talent that can be marketed to attract new employers into the region.

Building the “Bridge” from Education to Opportunity in Doña Ana County’s Digital Media and Film Industries

INTRODUCTION

The related Digital Media and Film Industries provide some of the most exciting and dynamic opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship in Doña Ana County. Thanks to the cross-industry application of Digital Media skills, as well as the technological disruption of multiple industries currently underway, strategically building a steady stream of digitally sophisticated talent will create a growing marketplace for opportunity here. Strengthening the talent pipeline between education and industry will generate deep pools of well-skilled, well-qualified talent while attracting even more employers and more skilled talent to call southern New Mexico home.

In an effort to gain a clear understanding of the holistic talent needs of these employers, The Bridge of Southern New Mexico, in partnership with the Greater Las Cruces Chamber of Commerce, convened representatives of these industries to participate in an Industry Roundtable with two goals:

- Quantify the complex needs of their workforce today and tomorrow
- Explore innovative approaches to meeting those needs with local talent development assets, including K-12 districts, Doña Ana Community College, New Mexico State University, and the Workforce Connections system.

Participants in the Roundtable included:

- Chair, Albert Parra, Corporate Director of Human Resources for Electronic Caregiver and The Bridge of Southern New Mexico Board Member
(High-tech firm leading technological disruption in the Healthcare sector)
- Jerry Prochazka, CEO, Ganymede Games
(Independent game-development studio)
- Don Gray, Director, Film Las Cruces
(Liaison for attracting film and television industry)
- Richard Coltharp, Publisher, Las Cruces Bulletin
(Local weekly news publisher)
- Adrian Velarde, General Manager, KRWG
(Local public broadcasting channel)
- Peter Knapp, Visual Communications Leader, Arrowhead Center at NMSU
(Partners with entrepreneurs and Arrowhead clients on brand strategies, marketing, and communications)

Leveraging elements of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Talent Pipeline Management approach and the license for a survey tool shared with New Mexico State University, The Bridge conducted a survey of the Roundtable members and then distilled the data to create actionable intelligence.

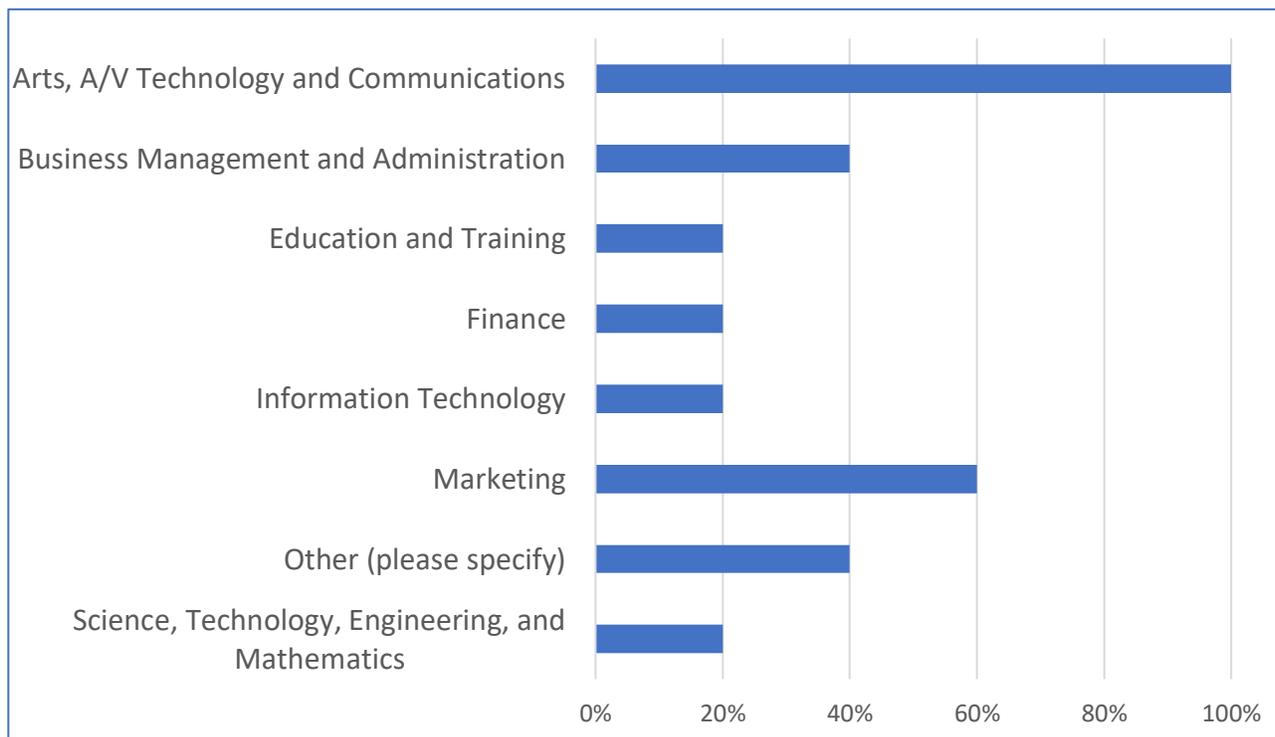
What follows is a summary of the findings. Key challenges have surfaced that require further exploration and innovation to address:

- Skill gaps between employers and potential talent
- Incorrect expectations among potential talent of the nature of work in this industry
- The importance of experience over and above education
- Transient nature of jobs in the film industry and the need to attract longer-term series projects (broadcast and streaming)
- Importance of entrepreneurship skills

ABOUT THE EMPLOYERS AND THEIR JOBS

Roundtable members represent a workforce of almost 280 people at the time of the survey and with the potential of 600 new employees annually, greatly driven by the influx of non-permanent jobs created when film and television productions choose to film in Las Cruces and surrounding areas. Of the total workforce, two employers count for 220 people, but the rest are small businesses. In fact, many of the employers outside of Roundtable members are small and very small businesses, but the opportunities for self-employment, contract employment, and business start-ups are robust.

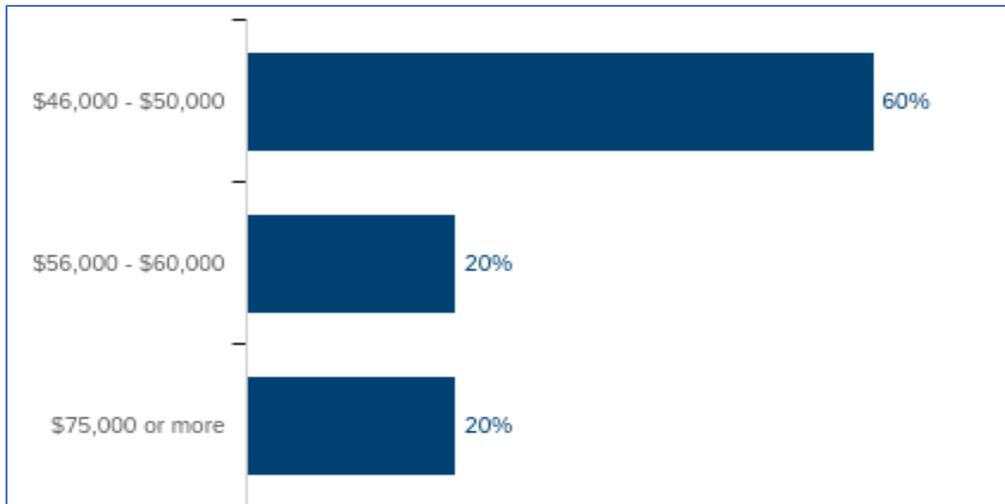
The members of the Roundtable report most hiring is for new positions, and they receive 1,530 applications per year. Just under half (40%) reported struggling to find qualified applicants. All reported new hires range in age from 26-45 to fill a wide range of types of jobs.



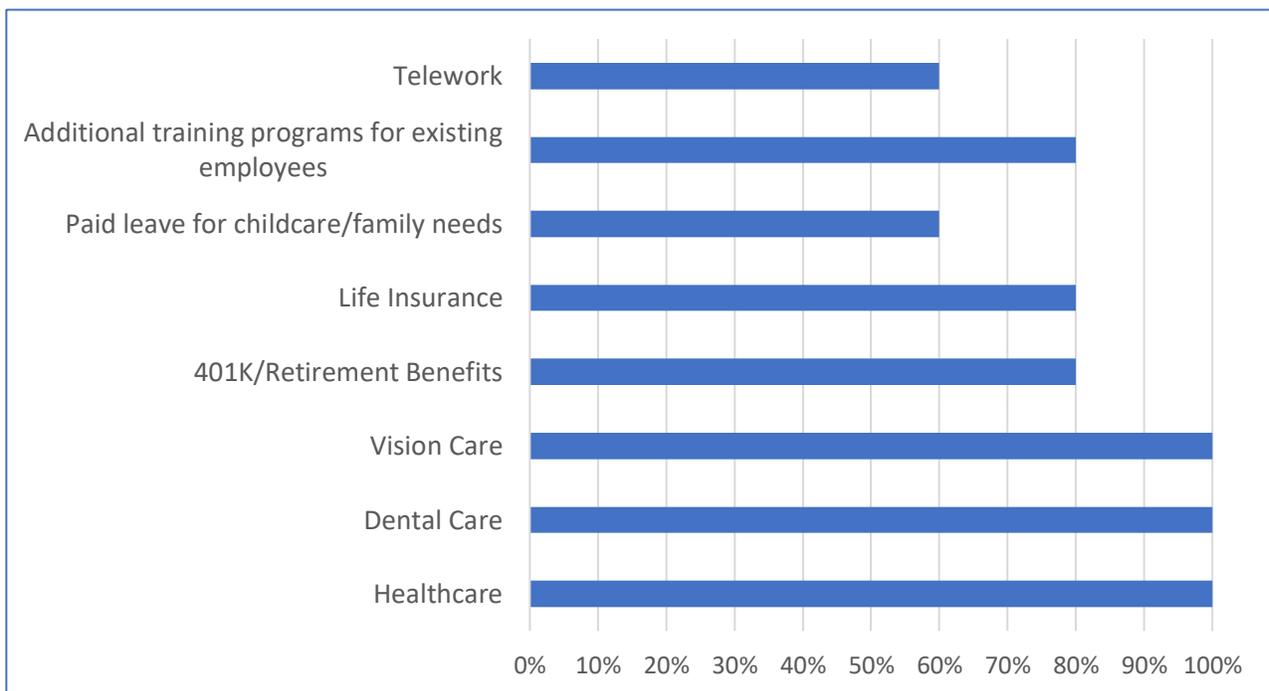
Those who chose the “other” category specified:

- Creative
- Communications Management
- Human Resources
- Digital Art
- Software Development

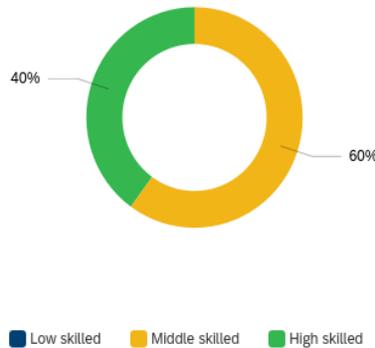
Average salaries for employees in this industry trend well above the local median income.



Additionally, employers offer attractive benefit packages for their employees.



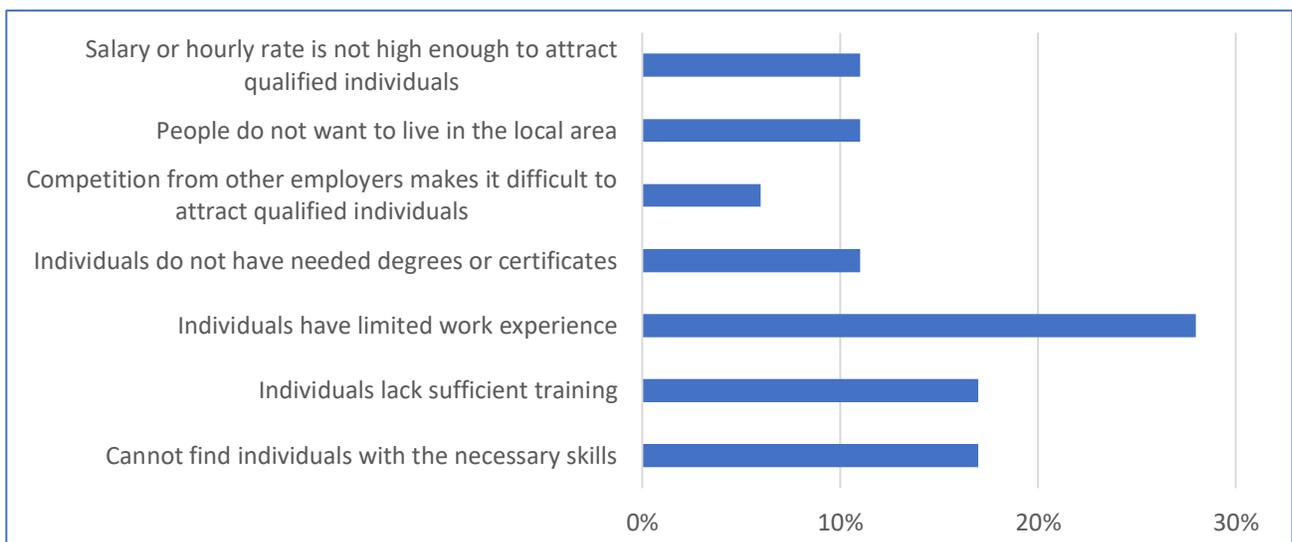
Roundtable members indicate the jobs that are hardest to fill are at the middle- and high-skilled levels.



Adrian Velarde said the skills they need at KRWG are very specialized: broadcast engineers, tower climbers, and Aggie Vision producers. Don Gray said the film industry uses a lot of specialty skills that are transferrable from other industries, like electricians and set construction, but at a pace and for temporary purposes unlike other industries. Peter Knapp said the Arrowhead Center does incorporate entry level staff in their work, but only those who have skills in the Adobe Design Suite. Knapp specifically mentioned being mindful of those who are self-taught and can demonstrate really strong skills in their work.

Because of the high value placed on experience, all of the Roundtable members indicated that they offer opportunities for work-based learning through internships, including some specifically mentioned in Game Design, Tech, and Art.

This industry was mixed on whether they had trouble filling jobs: 40% said yes; 60% said no. When they struggled to fill jobs, the reasons were fairly mixed:



Roundtable members did identify the hardest jobs to fill were usually in areas where there was great need for specialty. They also indicated how many jobs are available at each level:

A Lot of Jobs:

- Construction
- Mid-Senior Level
- Engineer
- 3D Artists

Some Jobs:

- Welding
- Software Engineers
- Graphic Artists
- Web Developer

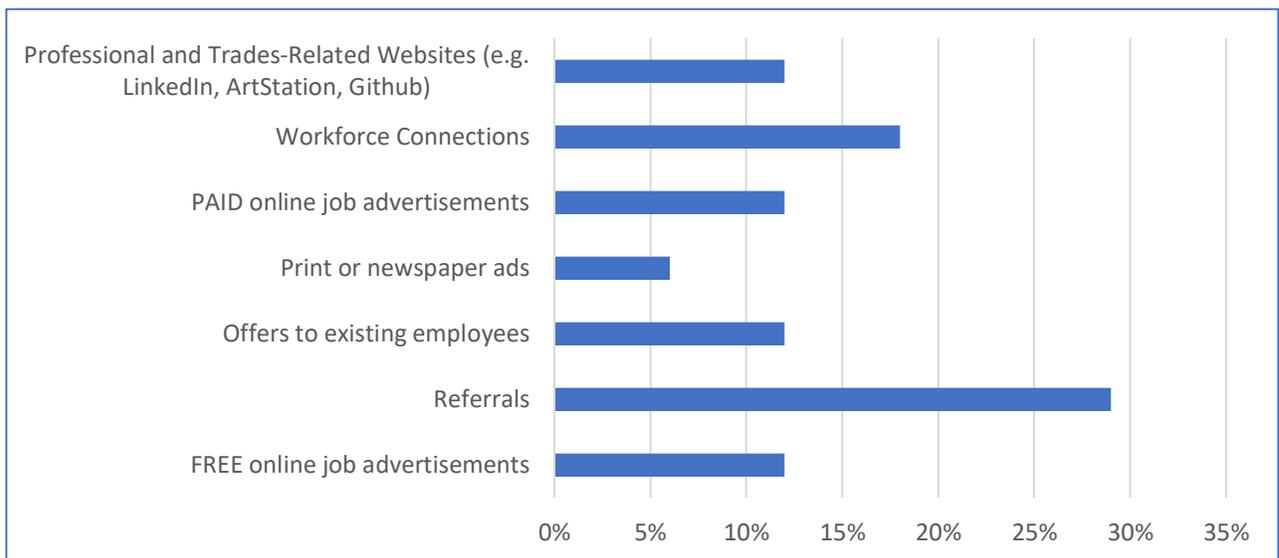
Very Few Jobs:

- Grip and Electric
- Web Developer
- Game Designers
- 2D Artists
- Director of Fiscal Administration and Station Operations
- Broadcast Engineers

Albert Parra said his biggest challenge is just not having the right talent in the local area. Velarde said they try to find people who have the base skills and are adaptable and willing to learn, but when they try to attract specialized talent from elsewhere, they promote the quality of life in Las Cruces and the benefits available through the university system.

Prochazka offered another opinion on the challenge. “It’s hard to get someone out of the mindset that ‘this is a job.’ We need people who can deliver a professional level of production. Someone who has built something, who’s curious, driven, and ready to work in this kind of environment.” He described it as a collaboration that is aligned to a vision on a project. Gray agreed, characterizing it as “a culture of getting it done” and a “lifestyle.”

When it came to how Roundtable members find talent, there’s no clear, dominant mechanism, for recruitment for this industry.



Electronic Caregiver (ECG), KRWG, and Arrowhead all benefit from their relationships with NMSU. KRWG and Arrowhead are part of the NMSU system and have access to talent pursuing degrees on their way to a career or who have already graduated. Velarde also said that his staff, as well as that of Arrowhead, have to fit within the overall structure of the NMSU pay classifications. In that past, he's been unable to offer more competitive salaries that would help attract specialty-skilled talent to move to Las Cruces.

As a private sector employer, ECG has established a formal partnership with the university and has an Electronic Caregiver Lab space on campus, where students train on virtual and augmented reality and its application to healthcare. ECG's current staff is almost completely comprised of NMSU alumni, illustrating the power of this kind of industry partnership.

Jerry Prochazka said recruitment for Ganymede is based heavily on Linked In and referrals. As a gaming company, Prochazka wants to see previous work product in evaluating candidates, because he's not looking for someone to do a job...he's looking for someone with a "passion and hungry" for creating an experience their customers will thoroughly enjoy.

Hiring in the Film Industry is completely unique and driven by relationships and referrals. Union membership is frequently the beginning of the process, as it is an industry where you start at the ground level and work your way up. Hiring in this industry is so unique, Film Las Cruces worked with two Career and Technical Education teachers in the Gadsden District to develop the first "curriculum" for how to get a job in film.

From the curriculum, "For most jobs, you are basically like an independent contractor. You work for a few days, weeks or months on a certain project and then you are done. You are paid an hourly wage, but you won't get benefits, unless you are a member of a union or guild, and the project is a unionized project. In addition, the hours can be long: 10-14+ hours a day, six days a week. That said, the pay is good and if you get steady work, you can make a good living doing fun and interesting work.

"Next, you need to understand that your ability to find consistent work will depend on how well you build relationships in the industry. You don't have to be friends with everyone you work with, but you do have to build relationships with people who know they can trust you to be professional and to do what you say you are going to do. You will be working for people who are taking big risks with their time and money. They will do as much as they can to minimize the risk involved in hiring a huge group of short-term employees by hiring people they know and trust or hiring people who come recommended by people they know and trust. This means that your reputation as a hardworking, professional, expert in your craft is your ticket to consistent employment."

To find the full curriculum, visit Film Las Cruces' website: <http://www.filmlascruces.com/get-a-job-in-film/> or by visiting NewMexicoTrueTalent.org.

THE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND ABILITIES NEEDED FOR SUCCESS

Roundtable members were able to very specifically identify skills needed for the majority of jobs in these industries and the skill-levels of potential job candidates in five areas:

- Math
- Reading, Writing, and Language
- Employability
- Technology
- Digital Literacy

What emerged is a picture of the ideal candidate, as well as dramatic disconnects in the talent pipeline.

IDEAL CANDIDATE FOR DIGITAL MEDIA AND FILM INDUSTRIES

Based on Industry Roundtable participant responses, here is a comprehensive picture of what skills, credentials, and degrees are valued by employers in this industry

Math:

- Adding and Subtracting
- Multiplying and Dividing
- Using fractions, decimals, and percentages
- Reading graphs and charts with numerical information
- Taking or interpreting a measurement

Reading, Writing, and Language:

- Reading at a reasonable speed
- Applying information that is read
- Assessing credibility of written content
- Identifying main points from written content
- Producing clear writing
- Correct spelling and grammar in writing and speaking

Employability:

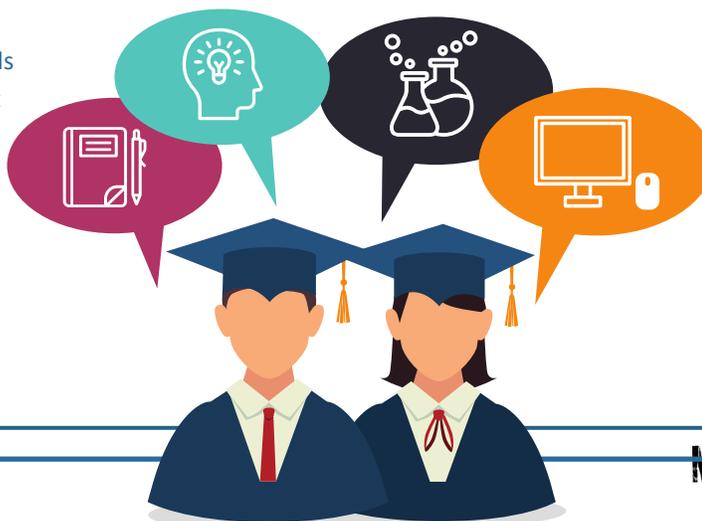
- Communication
- Enthusiasm and Attitude
- Networking
- Problem Solving and Critical Thinking
- Professionalism
- Teamwork and Working with Diverse Teams
- Cultural Competence
- Customer Empathy
- Initiative
- Interpersonal Skills
- Self-Management
- Self-Awareness

Technology:

- Adapting to and learning new technology (devices, apps, software, etc.)
- Understanding data storage and retrieval (cloud storage, networks)
- Using spreadsheet programs (Excel)
- Using presentation programs (PowerPoint)
- Using word processing programs (Word)
- Writing and responding to emails
- Using video/photography programs (Adobe Suite, Final Cut Pro, etc.)

Digital Literacy:

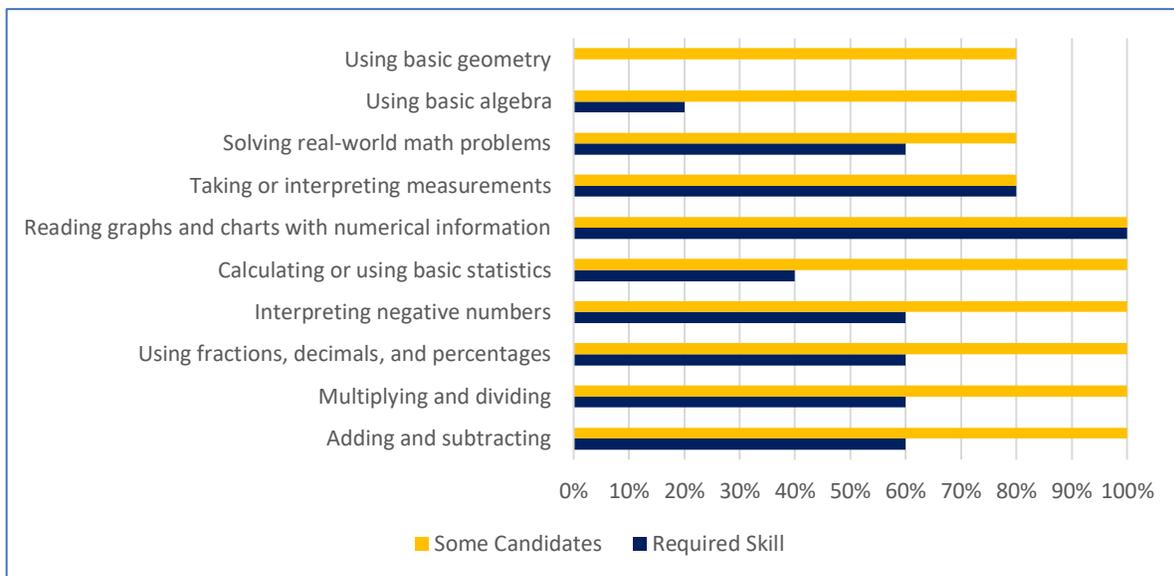
- Using digital resources to learn new skills
- Finding information to resolve technology problems
- Evaluating the credibility of digital sources
- Using technology to collaborate with others (online team discussion tools)
- Using effective search strategies to locate information
- Gathering information from digital sources and sharing it with others
- Accessing information to troubleshoot problems with technology



The skills gaps between required skills and what skills candidates seem to have illustrated the importance of education and workforce in instilling those skills in those who seek careers in this industry. Employers indicated which were and were not required skills, then were able to assess the skill level of candidates by choosing “Most,” “Some,” or “No” for the candidates that they see.

In four of the five categories, employers indicated only “Some,” not “Most,” and only a few “No,” candidates seem to have these skills. To be clear, there were high percentages in the “some” category, including areas in which the “some” answers outpaced the need for those skills as required. The skill gaps are illustrated in the graphs below.

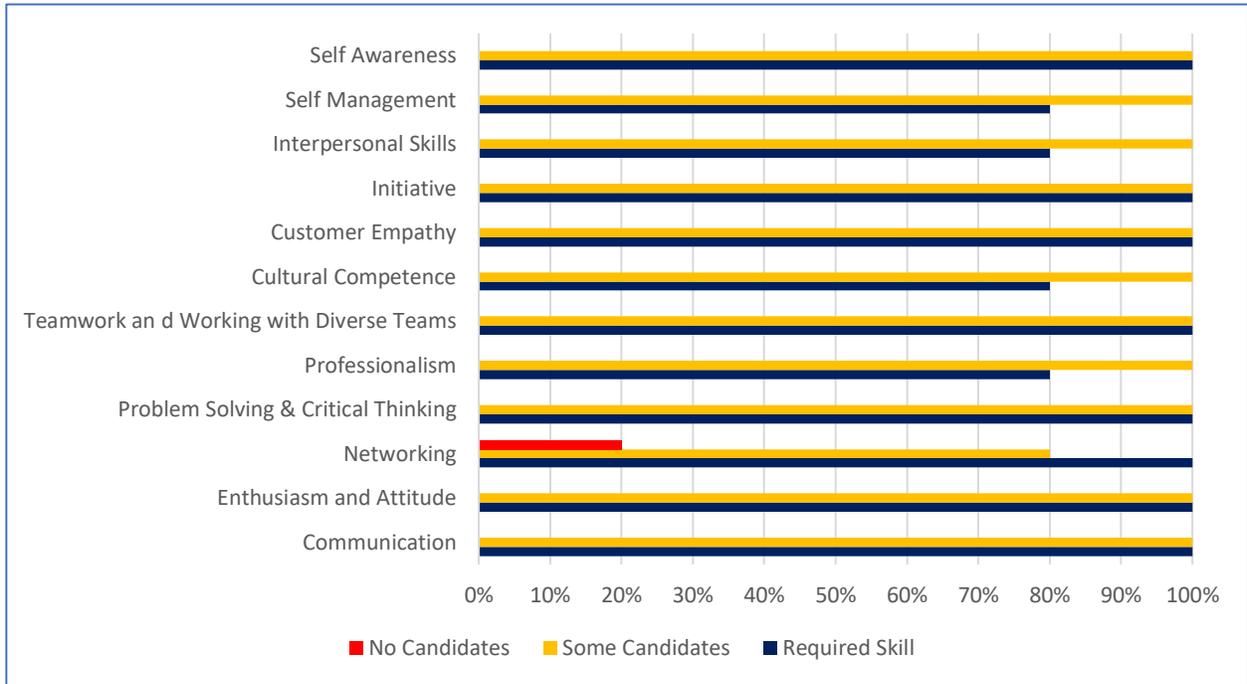
Math



While math skills posted some of the lowest percentages among all skill sets, Parra said he can’t see how anyone could be successful in this industry without most of these math skill sets.

Employability

The greatest misalignment in skills showed up in employability or “soft” skills that have long been identified by employers as some of their largest workforce challenges.

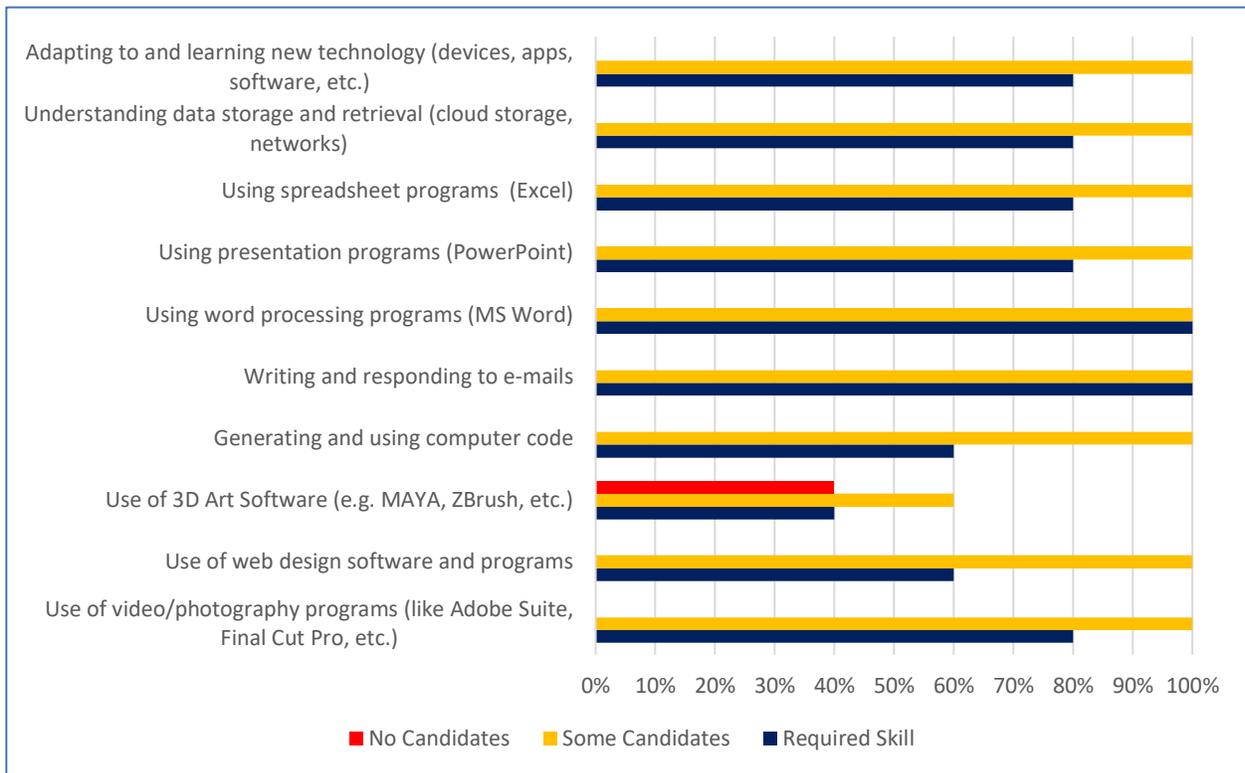


Gray said functioning as part of a team is highly valued in film, because production is a team effort. “When some part of the team fails, it’s very apparent in the final product.” Prochazka said, “It’s all about attitude and personal skills. People being able to get along with you.” He said communication skills are very important.

Knapp affirmed the importance of how staff members relate to each other in contributing to the overall mission of an organization. He said, “The great thing about working at Arrowhead is that no one is greater or more important than anyone else, and it’s people with good attitudes that get promoted.”

Technology

Technology skills are indispensable in this industry, with only three technology skills not reaching an 80% threshold by employers in the industry.



Additionally, Roundtable members indicated specific programming languages vital to their work:

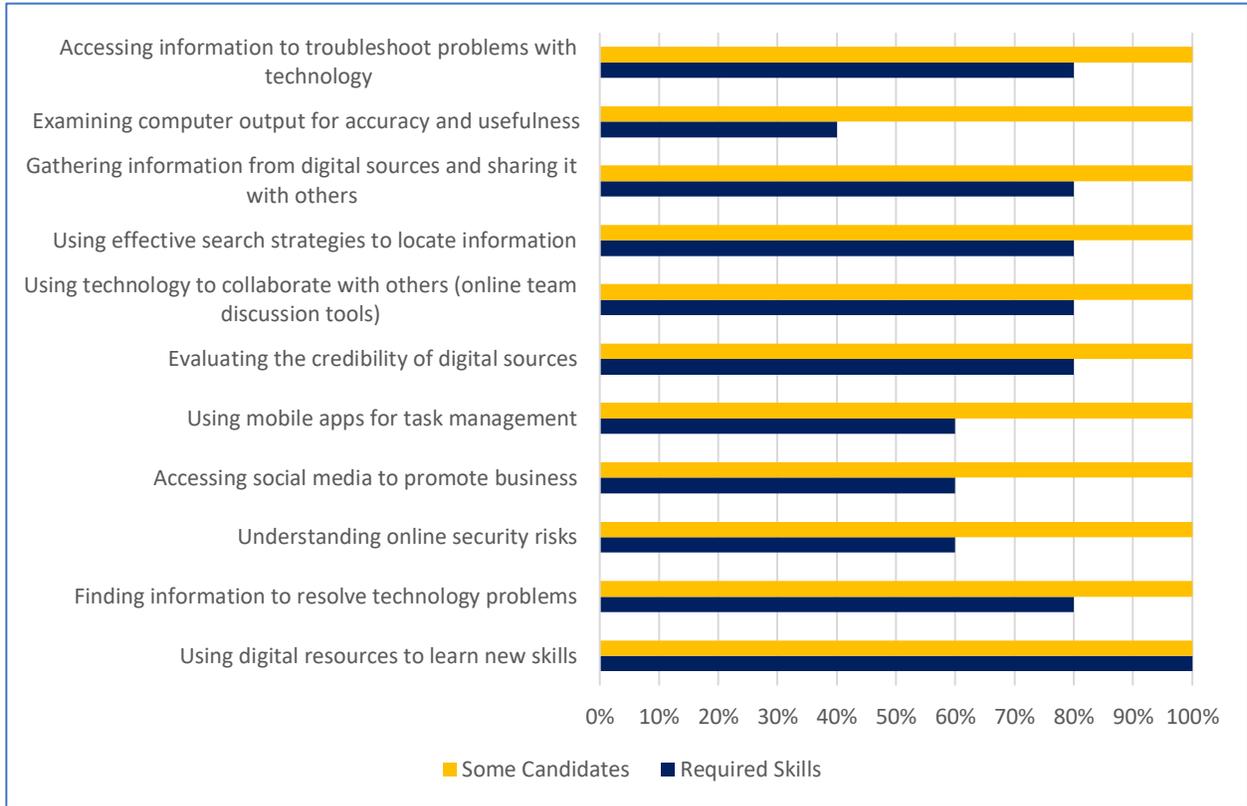
- HTML 5
- Cascade
- JavaScript
- Python
- nodeJS
- C++

Game design was also highlighted as a necessary skill.

The Roundtable did specifically say they “felt good” about the skills of job candidates from DACC and NMSU in this area, indicating their perceived value of their post-secondary partnerships.

Digital Literacy

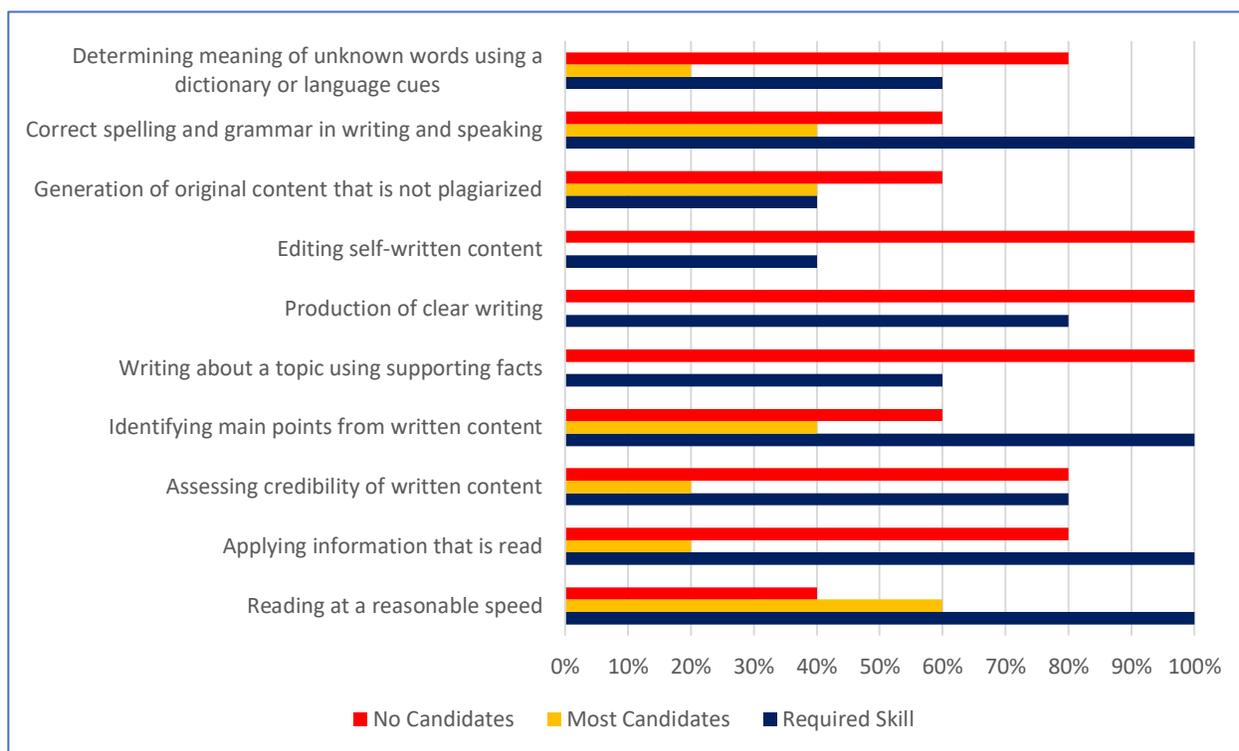
Due to their interconnection with Technology skills, Digital Literacy skills also ranked high among Roundtable members.



Parra said what they look for is a baseline foundation of skills that they need, and ECG will help them hone-in on the skills they need for the job itself.

It is important to note that there was a drastic change in Roundtable members' responses to Reading, Writing, and Language skills. Their evaluation of candidates showed a stark contrast from what they said of the previous skills. A few Roundtable members chose "most" when stating their evaluation of candidates, but there were a far larger number of "no" candidate answers.

Reading, Writing, and Language



The Roundtable members indicated that even if people don't come with these skills, they must be willing to expend the effort to learn them. Great communication and self-editing skills were specifically called out.

Looking at the skill graphs as a whole, Roundtable members clearly outline the specific skills needed and where there are currently gaps in their prospective talent. The Roundtable painted a very clear picture of what the programs that build this workforce need to do to build a talent pool with the knowledge, skills, and abilities that supports success in, and growth of, these industries. Additional graphs that show how Roundtable members ranking the importance of each skill can be found in the Appendix of this report.

Additionally, the Roundtable spoke to new skills, knowledge, and abilities that their employees will need to keep them and their organizations at the cutting edge of their industries:

- More digital skills
- Social media management and photography
- High understanding of typography and design principals
- Understanding shifting dynamics in technology well enough to know what's on the horizon and how to use it to improve the product
- Self-learning
- IT

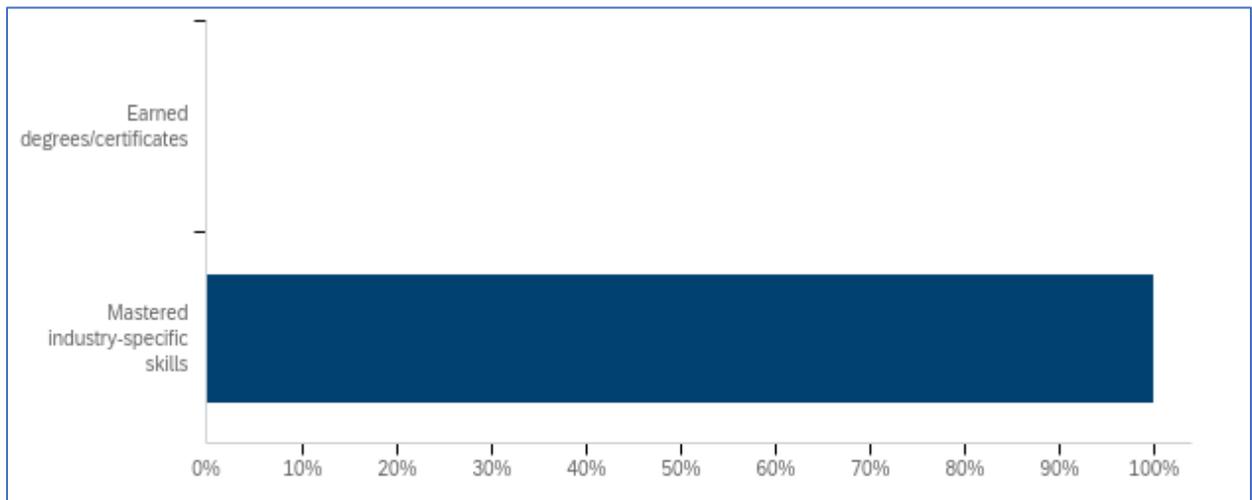
- Marketing
- Adaptability

The recent reauthorization of funding for Career and Technical Education prioritized more than \$1 million in investment in the county’s districts and Doña Ana Community College, including programs in Information Technology and Digital Media. Countywide, we have a robust set of courses and programs from high school to community college and university, but the gaps illustrate a fairly significant misalignment between those programs and employers’ needs. Bolstering the voice and involvement of employers in curriculum and program design up front must take priority to ensure these investments produce the greatest benefits for students, graduates, and employers.

We can leverage the entire continuum from middle school to high school to DACC’s Creative Media Technology program and New Mexico State’s Creative Media Institute to build skills, but as we learned from the Roundtable, education is only the beginning. What Roundtable members value far more is experience and produced work.

DEGREES, SKILLS, AND EXPERIENCE

Fully 100% of the Roundtable members view mastery of industry-specific skills as the greatest predictor of workforce success.

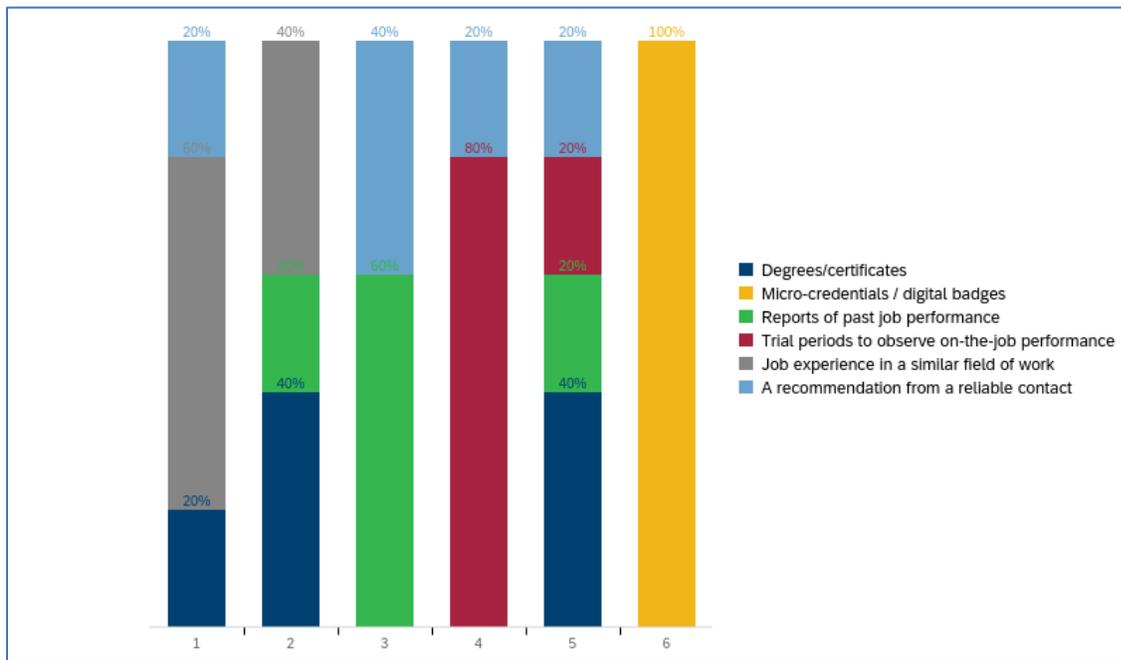


Gray said that Film, in particular, doesn’t place high value on degrees. “They want to know if you can deliver. Those with film school degrees may be the least qualified at times,” because the industry is built on gaining experience and understanding as individuals progress in responsibility and leadership on a film set.

Prochazka said, “Degrees don’t include customer empathy and soft skills. This is increasing in demand. How well do our employees understand the needs of the customer?”

Electronic Caregiver, on the other hand, does hire primarily four-year degreed candidates, as well as graduate degrees in the health and IT sectors. Using an avatar named Addison, Electronic Caregiver’s products use computer technology to proactively monitor the health of their clients, as well as respond to their needs for telehealth, prescriptions, and even COVID contact tracing.

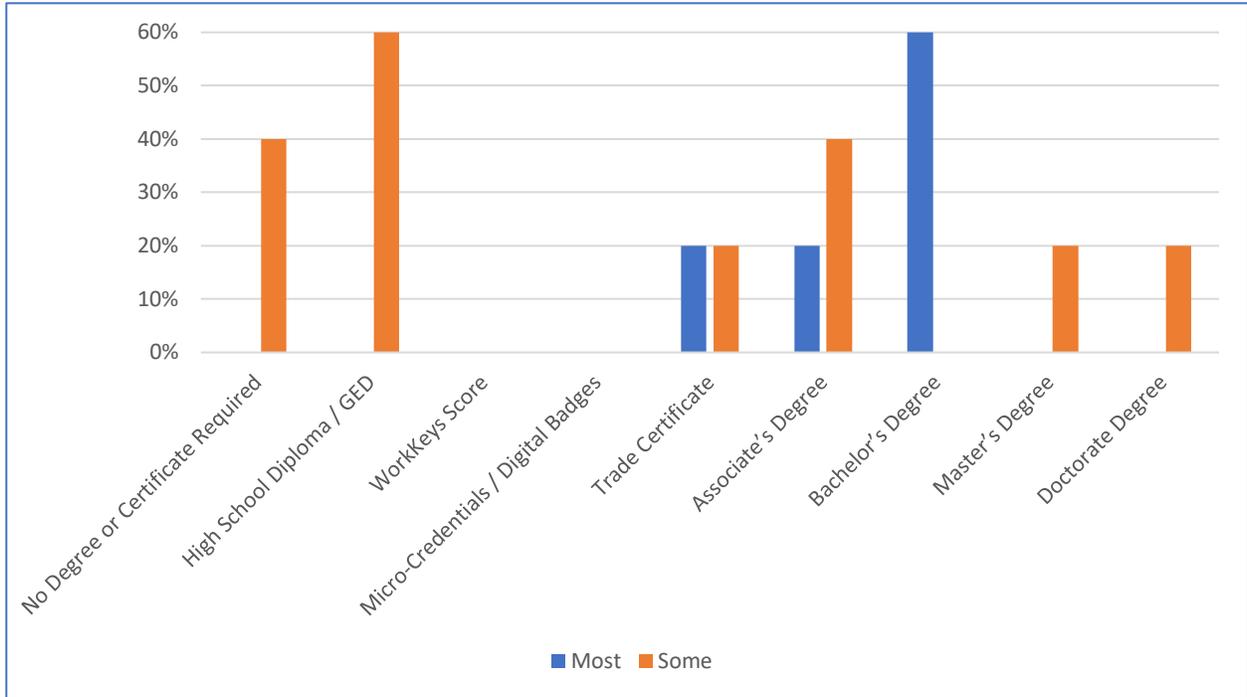
Participants ranked a candidate’s job skills based on the most and least useful information:



When asked what work-related or other experiences brought value to their workforce, their responses varied:

- Previous experience (relevant to the industry, internships, in fast-paced structured environment)
- Products (portfolio, had created something of value)
- Industry knowledge
- Relationships (personal connections to coworkers)
- Communication and technical writing skills (including listening)

In terms of education, there are opportunities at many levels, except for micro-credentials, digital badges, and WorkKeys scores, which have no perceived value to this industry.



Degrees and credentials do tell Roundtable members about a candidate’s ability to think critically, understand basic principles of design, and work, study, accomplish tasks, and show up on time. Velarde said that, because KRWG is on the NMSU campus, they place more value on degrees than would otherwise be the case in commercial media.

Roundtable members indicated which degrees and credentials carry the most value to them.

Four Year:

- Arts and Fine Arts
- Graphic Design
- STEM-related
- Computer Science/IT
- Journalism
- Game Design
- Communication
- 3D Art
- Marketing

Two Year:

- Digital Graphics Technology
- Game Design
- IT
- Web Design
- 3D Art
- Digital Video

Trade and Certificate-Level Credentials:

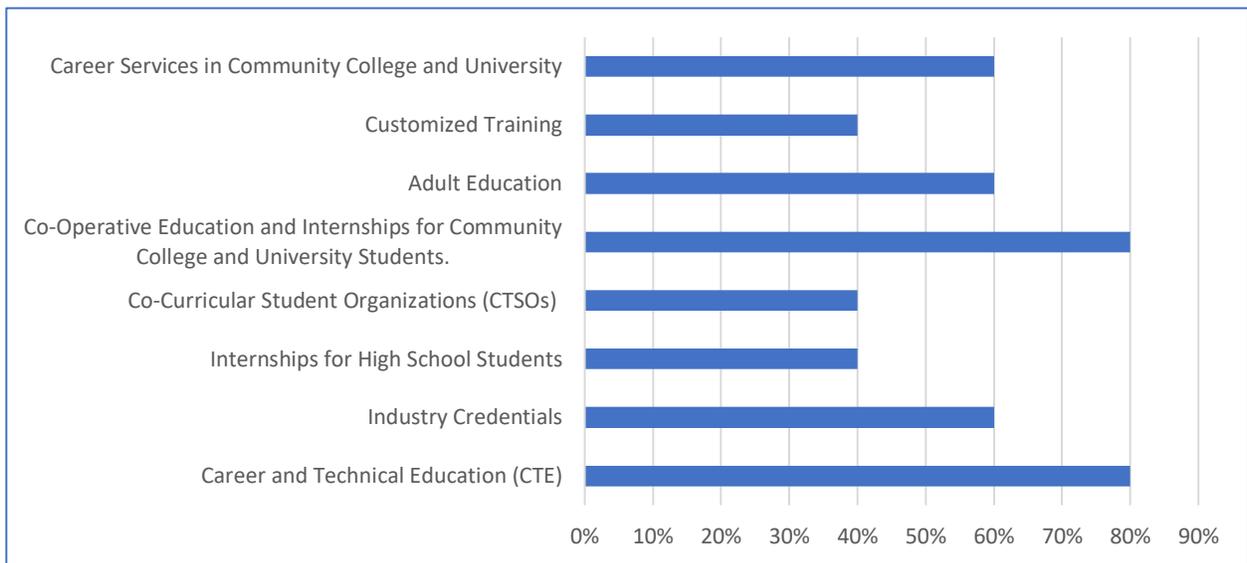
- Construction
- Graphics and Animation
- Amazon Web Services
- Web Design
- Microsoft Certifications
- Digital Video

For those who don't have degrees and certificates, there are still opportunities for employment:

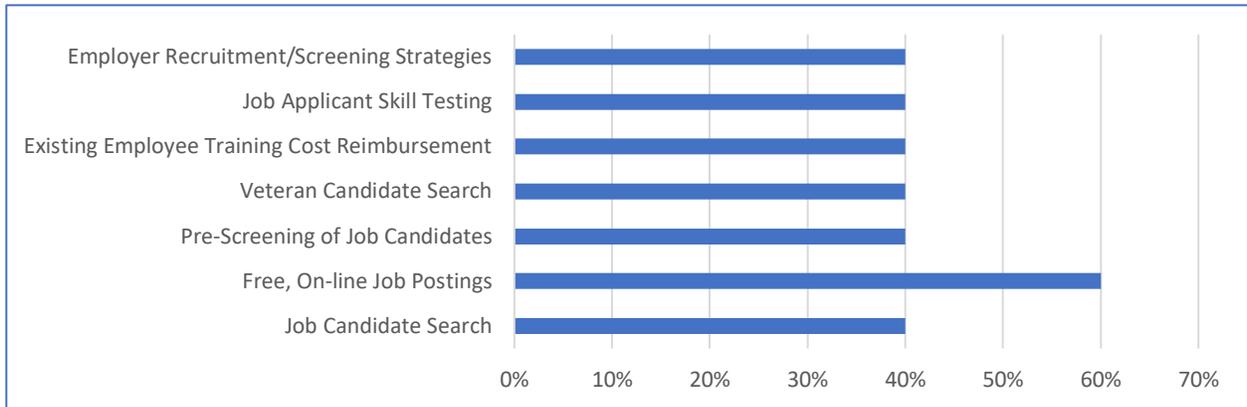
- Construction
- Print Production Artist
- Sales
- Broadcast Engineer
- Locations
- Contracting Artist
- Clerical-Related
- Administrative Assistant
- Grip
- Electric
- Podcaster
- Customer Service/Server
- Costumes/Make-up
- Warehouse Laborer

STRENGTHENING THE TIES IN THE TALENT DEVELOPMENT CONTINUUM

Our Roundtable members have a fairly good awareness of the educational assets available to help them build their talent, and 100% of them think these programs are valuable.



The Workforce Connections system does have some awareness among employers, but it needs to conduct more outreach to help employers understand the full range of services available to them.



Gray indicated he felt Film Las Cruces had a good relationship with the local Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board. The board recently approved jobs in this industry as “in demand” which makes them available for funding of both hiring and training.

Knapp stated, “It may be nice to see a training with folks from (Workforce Connections) that would talk to Arrowhead Center periodically to give us more information on what is available. But overall, we are very happy with the workforce development partners.”

KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTNERSHIP AND INNOVATION

The path forward for constructing a robust talent pipeline for Doña Ana County centers on four key themes:

- Tapping talent with transferrable skills
- Deeper employer engagement within the talent development pipeline
- Improving alignment of skill-building + experiential (work-based) learning opportunities
- Career awareness and exploration

Transferrable Skills

There is available, experienced talent for this industry right now. Of the 10,200 unemployed as of this writing there are hundreds from related occupations that may have transferrable skills:

- 190 in Business and Financial Services
- 981 in Office and Administration
- 566 in Construction and Extraction
- 65 in Computer and Mathematical
- 47 in Architecture and Engineering

The Workforce Connections system is tasked with helping those who’ve become displaced by COVID to regain employment. But, they are also tasked with supporting employers in hiring new talent, including job screening, apprenticeships, placement, on-the-job training, providing tax credits to offset 50% of six months of wages for qualifying applicants, and covering employer training costs should new hires or existing staff need additional training. The Thriving

Families initiative being led by the Community Action Agency may also be a good partner in talent development and cultivation. Working across partners, Thriving Families is uniquely focused on helping single mothers of young children get the education and training to secure family-sustaining employment in some of our area’s most-family friendly industries.

Employer Engagement in the Talent Pipeline

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce championed the role of business leadership in talent development with their Talent Pipeline Management approach. Their report, [Connected to Careers: Expanding Employer Leadership In Career Development](#), called employers to play a stronger partnership role in education in order to close ever-widening skill gaps. It recommended:

- Representing the business community in schools
- Serving as a subject matter expert on career pathways
- Helping vetting and matching students with employers through EXCEL and summer employment
- Validating skills acquired during work-based learning experiences
- Organizing diverse talent sourcing networks
 - Working with teachers to identify diverse and high-caliber candidates with interests aligned to target industries

The Workforce Talent Collaborative built out this model in the structure of five “ships” of work-based learning:

- Leadership
- Mentorship
- Internship
- Apprenticeship
- Externships for Teachers

The Industry Roundtable is the foundation of leadership, as this report and conversations with employers will help to create better alignment between education and employment by clarifying skills, credentials, and experiences the lead to success in the workforce of this industry. The goal of the Roundtable process is to facilitate the establishment of relationships between employers, students, teachers, and Workforce Connection personnel.

By building “roll-up-your-sleeves” partnerships with the Career and Technical Education instructors at the high school and college level in something far more robust and meaningful than an advisory committee, knowledge gaps between what’s taught and what’s needed can be closed. Roundtable members and their staff members can talk directly with students to share expectations, point them toward high-value college credentials and degrees, and help them identify ways to gain the experiences and produced finished products that will be valued by their future employers.

Teacher externships have the greatest possible impact in this industry and have already been tested and proved. Two teachers in the Gadsden District spent one week with staff at Film Las Cruces and the results included:

- The curriculum about how to get a job in film
- Film Las Cruces staff visited Chaparral High School to learn more about their equipment and how students are being trained
- Film Las Cruces staff was able to explore potential locations for future shoots
- The teacher were equipped with more information about the expectations and information to pass on to their students looking to pursue careers in film

Additionally, employers partnering with education could spark talent competitions among students that supports hands-on learning, produces portfolio projects, and identifies the region's top talent for future recruitment.

Increasing the integration of the Workforce Connections system into this continuum can expand the apprenticeship model into Digital Media with significant financial benefits to the employer, as well as a worker they, themselves, have trained. Partnering with the One-Stop Operator and Apprenticeship Coordinator for the Southwest region will open the door to expanding more opportunities for employer and future workforce talent.

[Improving Alignment of Skill-Building + Experiential \(work-based\) Learning Opportunities](#)

Using the data from this report, educators across the continuum can embed the characteristics of an ideal candidate into career pathways and career courses aligned to these industries. The large gaps in Reading, Writing, and Language skills begs for a stronger partnership between core teachers in English Language Arts (ELA) with CTE instructors. Middle school students may benefit from building awareness of these careers as part of ELA coursework.

The resounding voice of employers about the importance of experience and produced content points to the need to embed development of a portfolio of work alongside instruction. Students in the ACE program, as well as CTE programs, can demonstrate their mastery of skills through student-produced films, web design, animation projects, games, and more. The demonstration of a "passion" for the work, alongside a body of work, support high school graduates in entering the field even while pursuing post-secondary education. Those pursuing film-related careers would benefit from having the "how to get a job in film" curriculum integrated into instruction and supporting students in securing union membership as soon as possible. Embedding internships, apprenticeships, community-service related projects, and portfolios of completed work will give students assets that increase their marketability when they are ready to pursue their careers.

Additionally, students would benefit from entrepreneurship training in each of the digital media pathways. Student-led enterprises, in or out of school, will enrich their ability to take on contract work or establish home-grown businesses across the spectrum. Innoventure at the Arrowhead Center would be an excellent partner for students in K-12, at no cost to the school. Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among students in these training programs translates to

the employability skills valued by Roundtable members and/or sets students up to establish businesses of their own that are not limited by the needs solely of Doña Ana County. Tapping into crowd-sourcing and free-lance platforms, our students would be well-positioned to engage in a borderless economy. Arrowhead's other entrepreneurship programs (Biz Sprint, Studio G), as well as the small Business Development Center at Doña Ana Community College's Workforce Training Center, would be well positioned to cultivate micro-enterprises and small businesses for adult students who are in credential and degree programs or recent graduates.

Career Awareness and Exploration

The reauthorization of the funding stream for Career and Technical Education calls for increased access to career exploration starting as young as middle school. There is such a wide breadth in these careers that early exposure could help students build foundational skills from middle to high school, specializing in a more targeted career pathway midway through high school. Dual credit courses in the CTE pathways would propel students toward the excellent programs in CMT (DACC) and/or CMI (NMSU) to help them earn relevant credentials on their way toward degrees.

DACC's excellent career exploration tool, Career Coach Assessment, helps to take the guess work out for students. Upon completion of an assessment of skills and interest, Career Coach points them to specific certificate and degree paths aligned to their areas of interest. Additionally, the Department of Workforce Solutions' Why I Work online tool helps students connect the cost of living to careers in various industries that provide the level of income they'll need to have the life they envision. Pay scales in Digital Media vary widely. It will be important for students to be well-informed of the earning potential of their career pathway choices.

CONCLUSION

Digital Media and Film have been identified in multiple economic development efforts, including Governor Michelle Lujan-Grisham’s targeted industries for diversifying the state economy. Dona Ana County is uniquely equipped to build a strong, connected talent pipeline that will supply our current employer base, but give our economic developers a commodity to “sell” to those looking for the right business climate to succeed. Workforce talent, low cost of living, and quality of life are three key factors in business recruitment, all of which gives this community a competitive advantage for attracting new Digital Media businesses to New Mexico. Prochazka projects that Ganymede is only the first gaming company that will ultimately choose to locate in Las Cruces because of the talent that is available here. Those competitive advantages translate to even more opportunities for those who live here.

Thanks to the invest of time in the Roundtable, we have a much clearer picture of what the outcomes of our education and workforce system need to be. By beginning with the end in mind, we can now back-map the full talent development pathway.

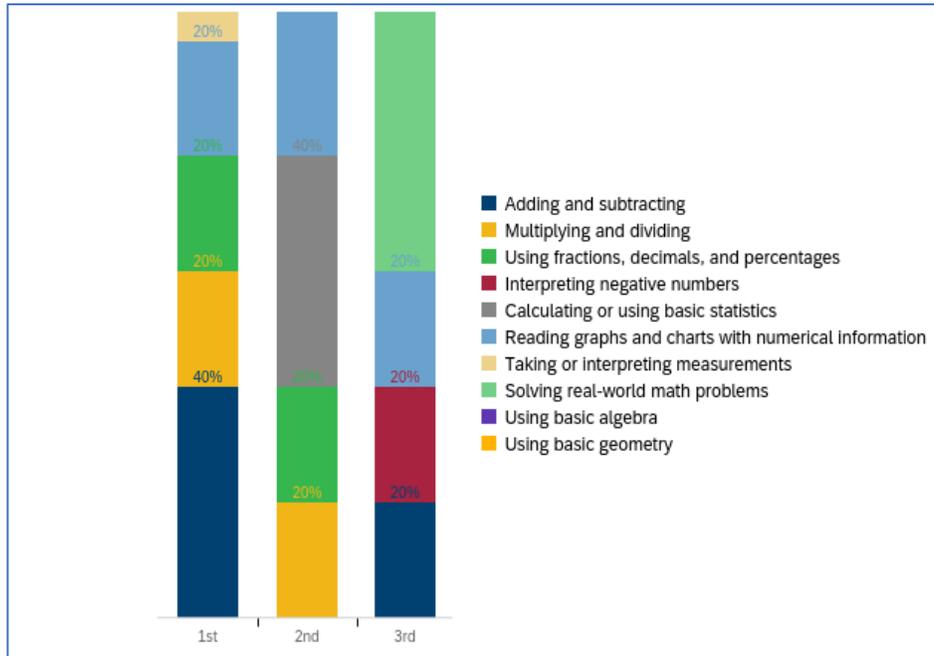
Mobilizing this generation of technology natives to make the most of their earning potential in these connected industries will change the economic trajectory of entire families. Employment and entrepreneurship will be robust for the long-term. Despite the “buzz” focused in the Albuquerque area, our county is well positioned to provide an even better, safer business climate for new companies. Having the workforce talent available and a pipeline that can produce even more talent will ensure we capitalize on the state’s commitment to investment in these industries through JTIP (Job Training Incentive Program) and LEDA (Local Economic Development Act) funds. The exodus of companies out of New York, California, Washington, and other high-tax states will benefit New Mexico, if we can make a strong case for attraction.

Only Albuquerque can compete with Doña Ana County for talent production. That said, building awareness, closing our skills gaps, and strengthening partnerships with new and existing employers will ensure we capture a sizable share of the Digital Media and Film industry in New Mexico.

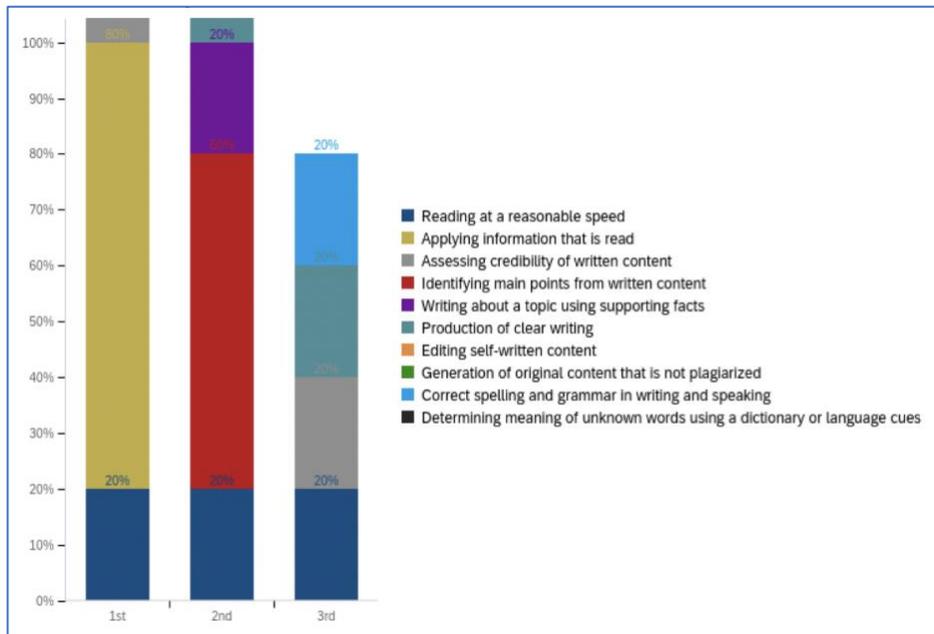
Appendix

Roundtable members were asked to rank skills by level of importance. Following are their rankings by subject area.

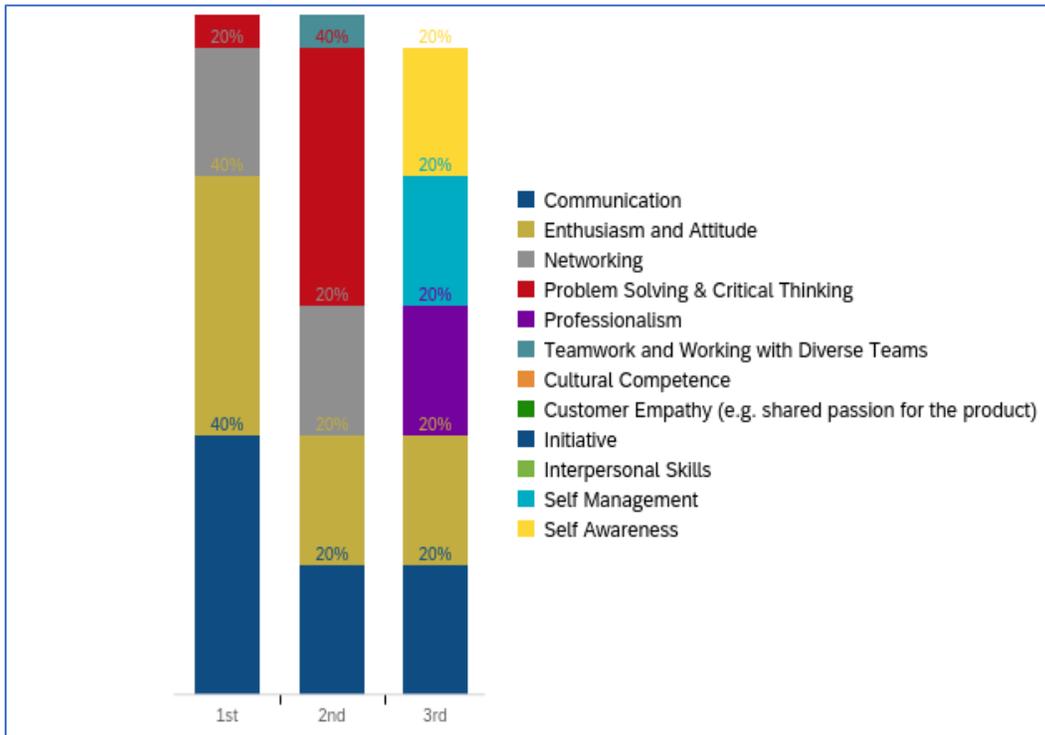
Math



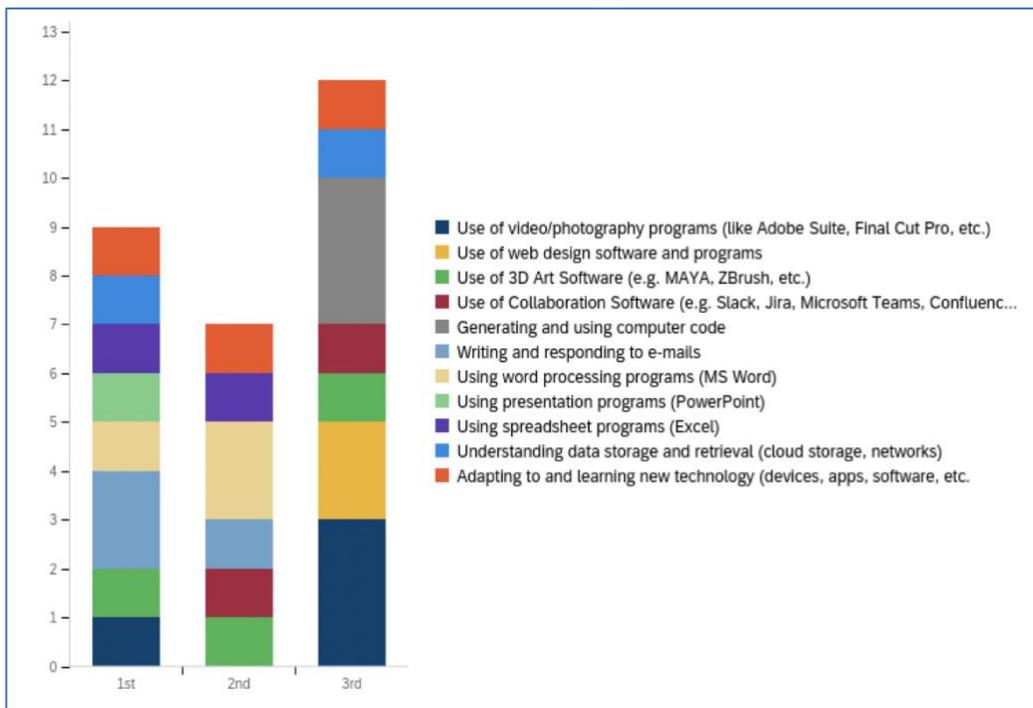
Reading, Writing, Language



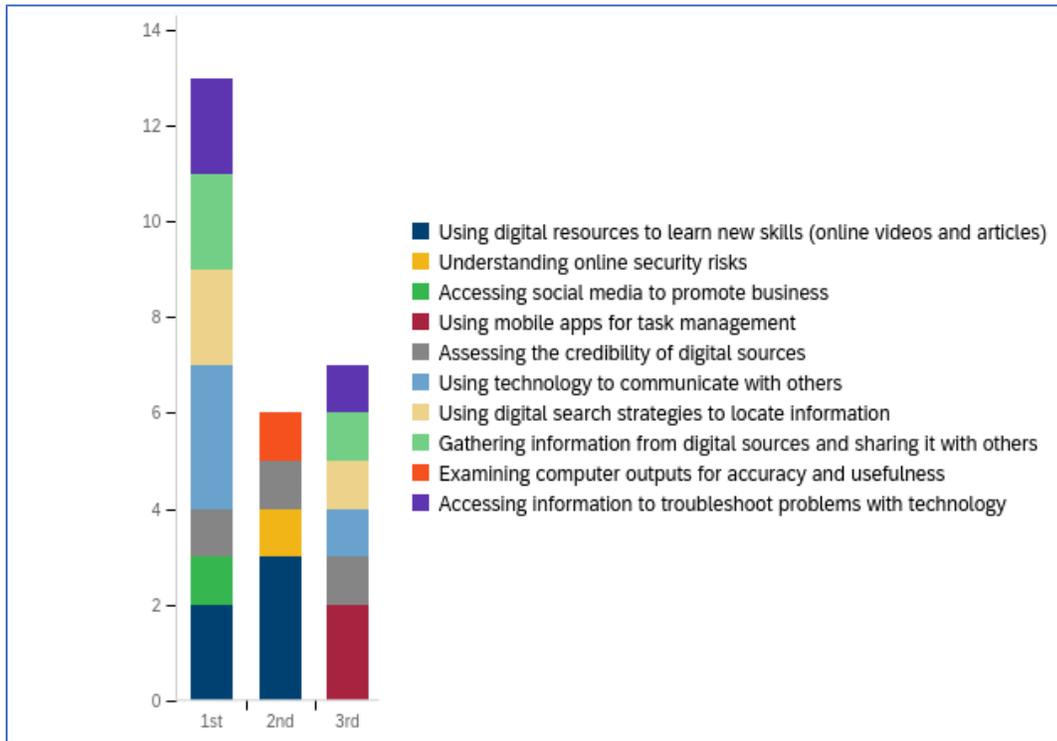
Employability



Technology



Digital Literacy



DIGITAL MEDIA AND FILM INDUSTRY ROUNDTABLE

A Special Thank You

We are deeply grateful to the team of leaders who served on our Industry Roundtable. Their commitment of time, wisdom, experience, and their spirit of innovation provided us actionable intelligence to holistically prepare our New Mexico True Talent to be ready for some of the best jobs in our county. We look forward to our continued partnership!



The Bridge of Southern New Mexico
3655 Research Drive • Las Cruces, NM 88003
(575) 646-2527 • thebridgeofsnm.org