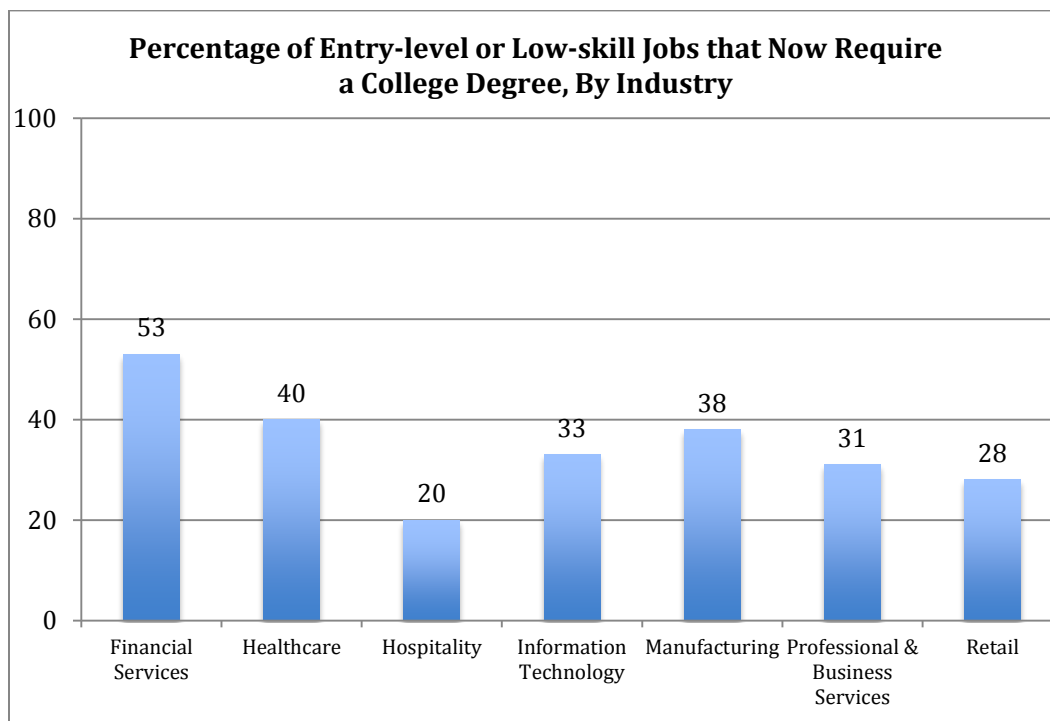


Lesson 3.7: Preparing Students to Work in a Global Economy

Imagine you are a time traveller from the 50s. What would you notice about the modern U.S. if you arrived here today? Well, first of all you might wonder about these little rectangular pieces of plastic people walk around looking at and talking in to. And once you found out what they did? You'd *know* you were in a science fiction movie!

Today's students will work in a world that would be almost unrecognizable to workers 50 or 60 years ago. Technology is such a large part of our world, and — as a result — our labor markets have become more globalized. It's an exciting time, but it also means the knowledge and skills these markets demand have changed. Jobs that used to require only a high school education — like being a mechanic or a landscaper, for example, now rely on the ability to analyze technical manuals at Reading Level. They also increasingly require testing and certification.

Take a look at this graph:¹



Clearly, the number of options for individuals who do not pursue post-secondary education is shrinking.

¹ Citation: CareerBuilder. (2013). *CareerBuilder: College grads filling lower-skilled jobs*. Retrieved from http://www.careerbuilder.com/share/aboutus/pressreleasesdetail.aspx?sd=3%2f28%2f2013&siteid=cbpr&sc_cmp1=cb_pr747_&id=pr747&ed=12%2f31%2f2013

Today's students will also work in more fluid, less predictable environments: Twenty-first century workers not only need more specialized knowledge to work in more specialized and technical fields, they must also be able to *apply* their knowledge in a more complex, interconnected and swiftly changing world. To be successful, they need to be: problem solvers, action takers, collaborative workers, and effective communicators.

Knowing how to help students develop these global workforce skills is important information for educators, particularly because teachers are under pressure to focus on content knowledge due to testing requirements. To successfully cover both, consider ways to incorporate key content knowledge with skills like:

- investigating the world
- recognizing multiple perspectives
- communicating ideas and
- taking action.

Not only has the growth of technology and globalization led to a highly competitive job market that demands more of workers, it has also opened more possibilities for individuals from diverse regions of the world to work collaboratively. A truly modern education must, then, equip young people with cultural competency. Exposing students to a variety of cultures through literature, news stories, case studies and guest speakers can help increase awareness of the wider world and encourage students to see differences as valuable and important.

The bottom line? Making classrooms and schools more global helps student become ready to take on the world!