



Report summary
Impact of Skills on Earnings and
Education





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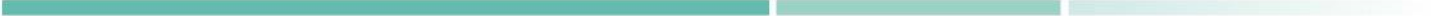
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Official title of the full report: Post-secondary and workplace skills: Critical thinking skills of post-secondary graduates and their post-graduation earnings

Authors of the full report: Education Policy Research Initiative

Why this study

This study looked at how thinking skills of post-secondary education (PSE) graduates impacted the amount of money that they earned after school and their choices to go back to school to get more education.

What we did

The study included students who were in their first or final year of studies in the 2016-2017 academic year. The total number of students included was 410 and 640 for the analyses of post-graduation earnings and further education, respectively. The test used for critical skills was the HEIghten Critical Thinking (HCT) assessment. This test evaluated critical thinking scores and ability levels. The study collected information from three sources:

- student information from a large university and a large college in Ontario
- tax information, and
- student scores from a thinking skills test


The research looked at what types of factors impact the amount of money that graduates earned after school and if graduates go back to school. Factors that impact choices are:

- thinking scores and levels (beginner, intermediate, or advanced skills)
- student information, like gender and age
- what the student studies, and
- type of PSE program

What we found

Some factors impacted money earned after school and one's choice to go back to school. These findings should be used with warning because of the small number of students in the study.

- Graduates who had advanced thinking skills earned more money after school than students with lower skills if they were:
 - male
 - aged 22 to 24, and

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- engineering students
 - Graduates aged 22 to 24 with intermediate thinking skills earned more money after school than 22 to 24 year olds with beginner thinking skills
 - Arts and sciences graduates with advanced thinking skills earned less money than these same graduates with beginner thinking skills
 - Graduates who had advanced thinking skills were more likely to go back and take more education when they were:
 - male
 - studying business
 - in the 20-and-under age group, and
 - graduates of 3-year university level programs
 - Graduates aged 25 and over with intermediate thinking skills were less likely to go back to school

What it means

This study looked at the outcomes of graduates using thinking skills instead of program of study, which is unique. Even though results of this study are mixed, they are important. They show that for graduates, higher thinking skills may mean going back to get more education. Findings can support government programs that support students as they move from education to work.

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