

Micro-credentials and Skills-based Learning: Notes from the Micro-credential Field in the U.S.

As you enter, please put the following in the chat:

- Name
- Organization
- Last skill you learned or refined



Odelia Young

Director, Micro-credentials
Digital Promise

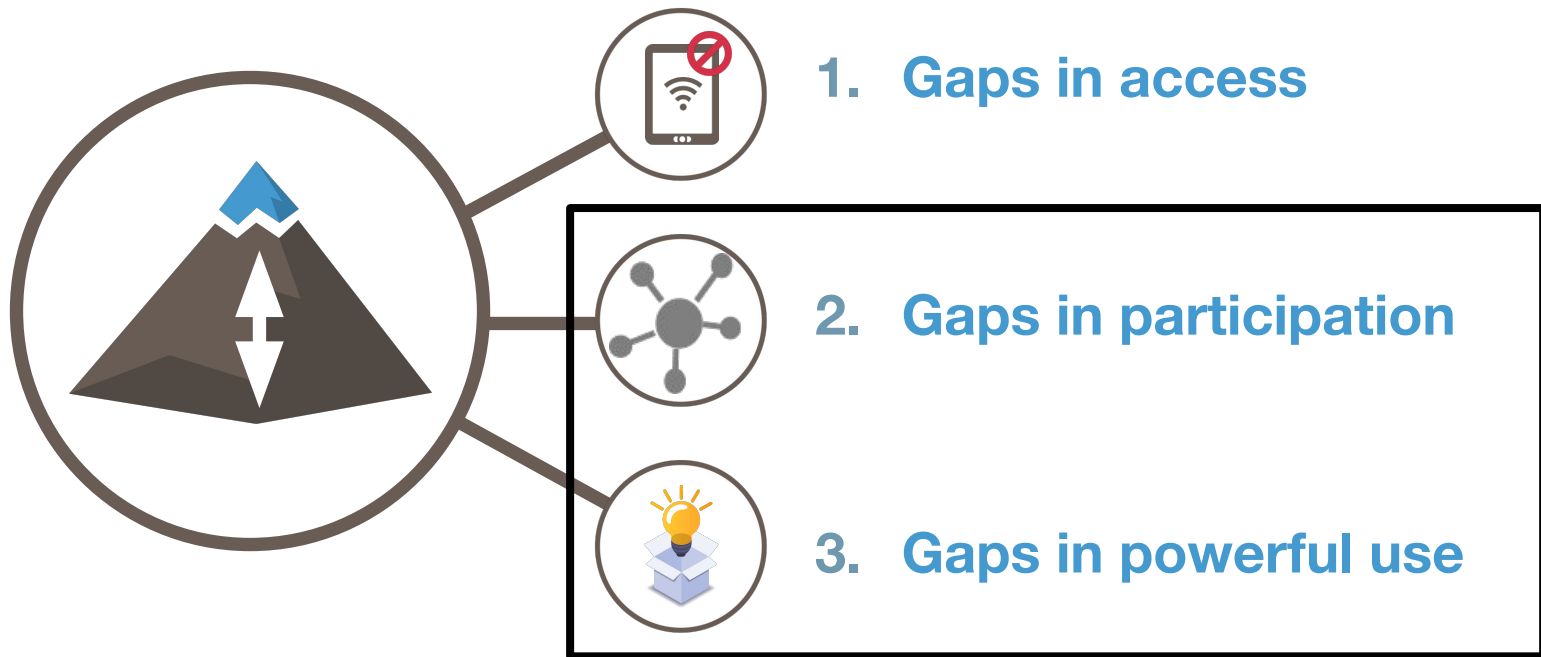


Objectives

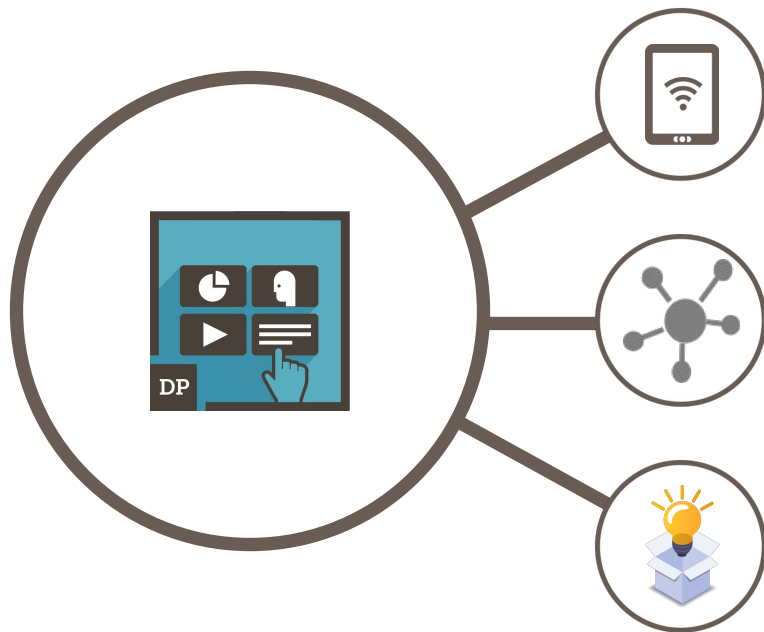
- Overview of the development and increase in demand for micro-credentials in the U.S.
- Learnings from the past 5 years in the field
- Innovative and promising work in the field
- Discussions and reflections on micro-credentials across the globe



We Seek to Close the Digital Learning Gap



Micro-credential Work



1. **Platform Provider**

2. **Thought Leadership & Advocacy**

3. **Research & Implementation**

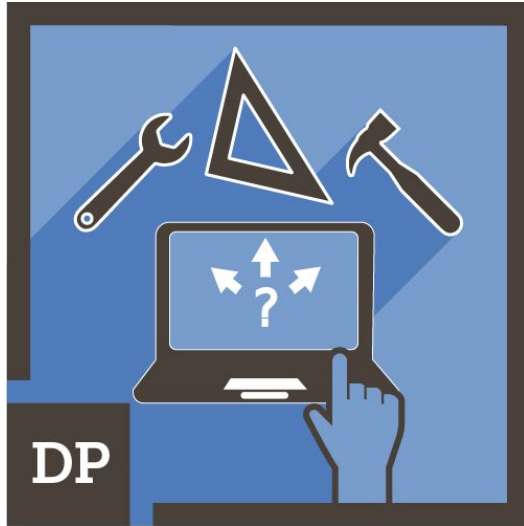
A Question of Definition

How would you define
a micro-credential?

Tell us in the chat.



What is a Micro-credential?

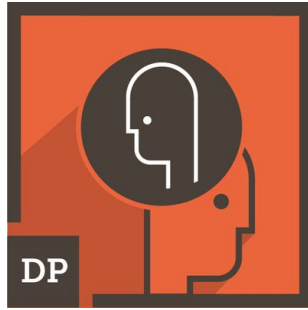


A digital certification that verifies an individual's competence in a specific skill or set of skills.

The Uniqueness of Micro-credentials



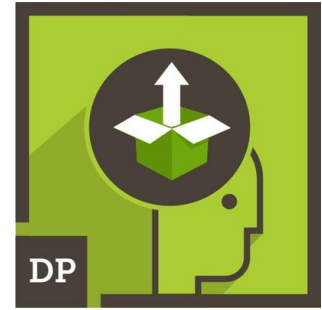
**Personalized
Learning &
Democratization**



**Learner
Agency**



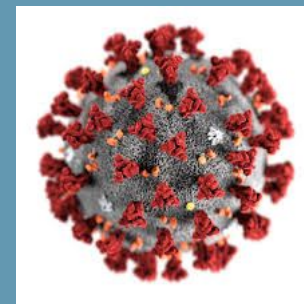
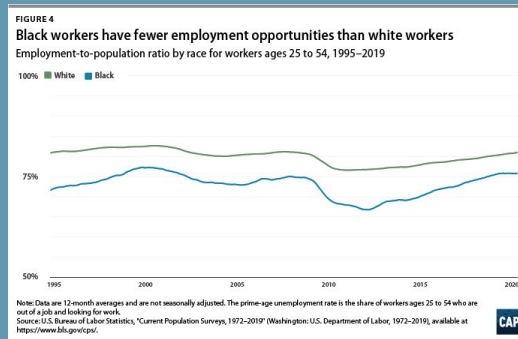
**Communicating
Skills &
Experiences**



**Learning Inside &
Outside Traditional
Programs**

Micro-credentials: A Developing Field





2014

2015

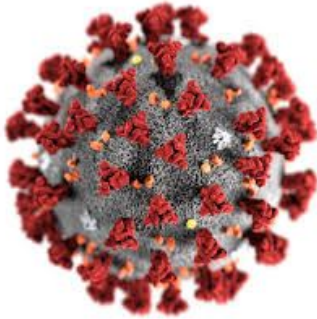
2018

2020

2021



The COVID-19 Acceleration



- Consistent interest in non-degree and skills-training options
- Cuts in operational costs by companies, leading to layoffs and furloughs
- Job uncertainty
- Price of post-secondary
- Flexibility



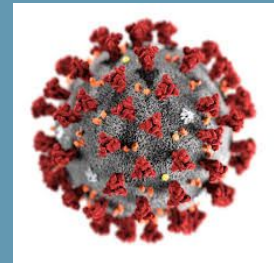
2014

2015

2018

2020

2021



Early Years



- Ecosystem approach
- Research-based framework
- User experience and design

2014 **2015**

Maturing Years



Refining and Expanding Years

- Technical infrastructure
- Interoperability
- Coalitions and networks
- Continued focus on centering the learner experience, particularly BIPOC communities



2020

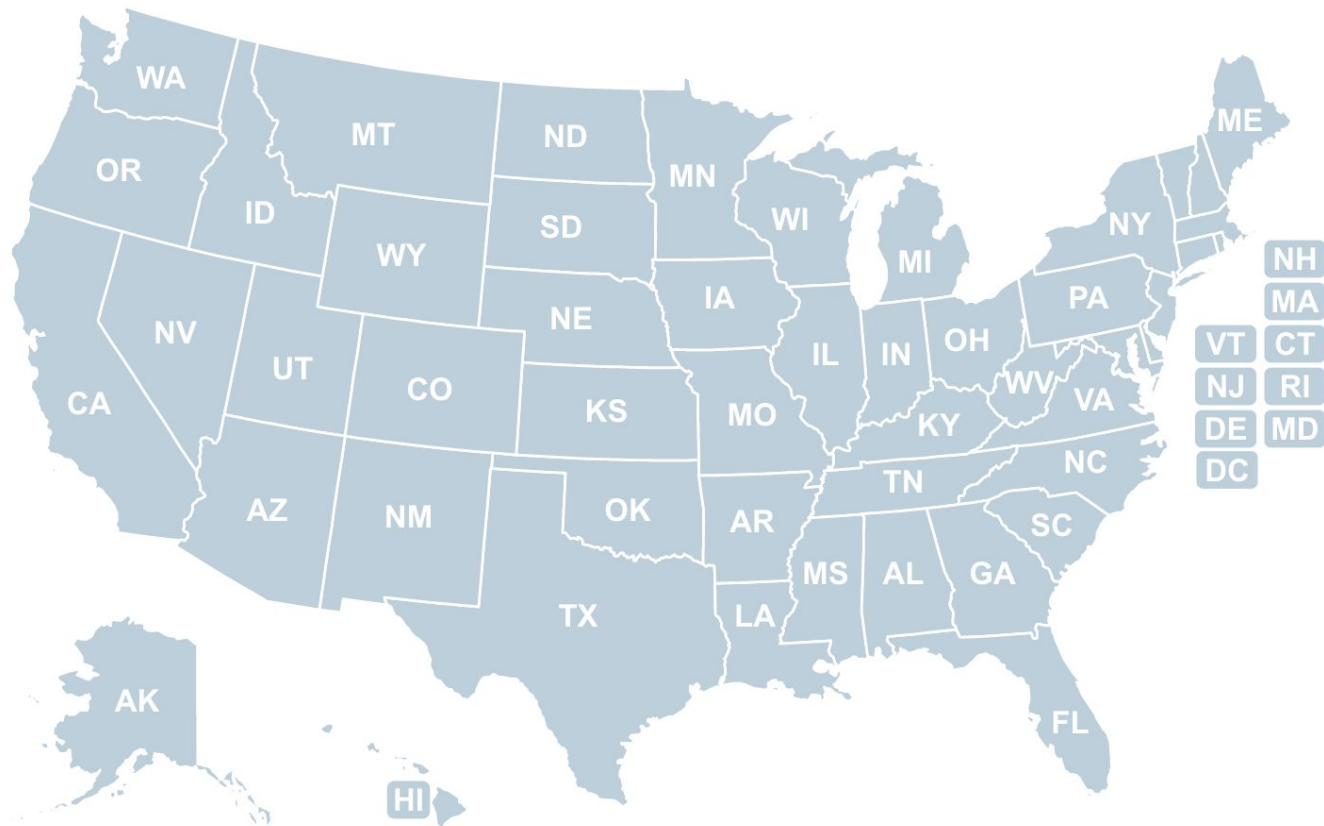
2021

**What about our story
is similar or different to
what you see in your
organization or
country?**

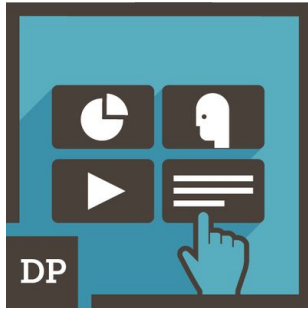


Filters

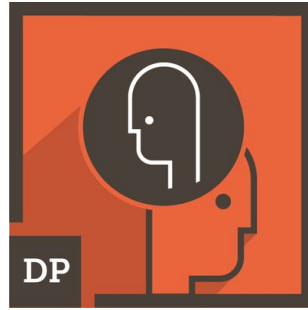
- ☐ Educators in the state have earned micro-credentials [i](#)
- ☐ District-level instituted micro-credential policies [i](#)
- ☐ State-level instituted micro-credential policies [i](#)
- ☐ Institutes of higher education instituted micro-credentials [i](#)



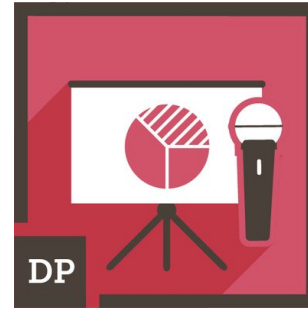
Micro-credential Uses



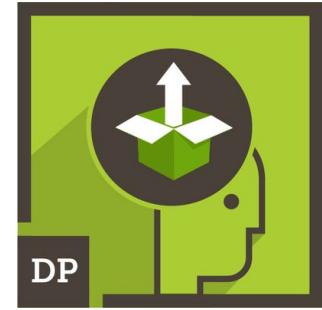
**Professional
learning
opportunities**



**Onramps to
degree
programs**



**Upskilling &
career
advancement**



**Signalers for
moving across job
fields**

Policy Levers

- 1 Allowance of federal and state funds explicitly for micro-credentials**
- 2 State-level agencies providing guidance for regional and local bodies, within and across states**
- 3 Collaborations between economic and employment agencies and educational institutions**

Skills Taxonomies and Pathways



Lifelong Learner Project



- **Development of a “Teacher Wallet”**
- **Data ownership and control over verified credentials and certifications, including micro-credentials**
- **Standards-based, interoperable blockchain technology**
- **Economic mobility and expanded opportunities**

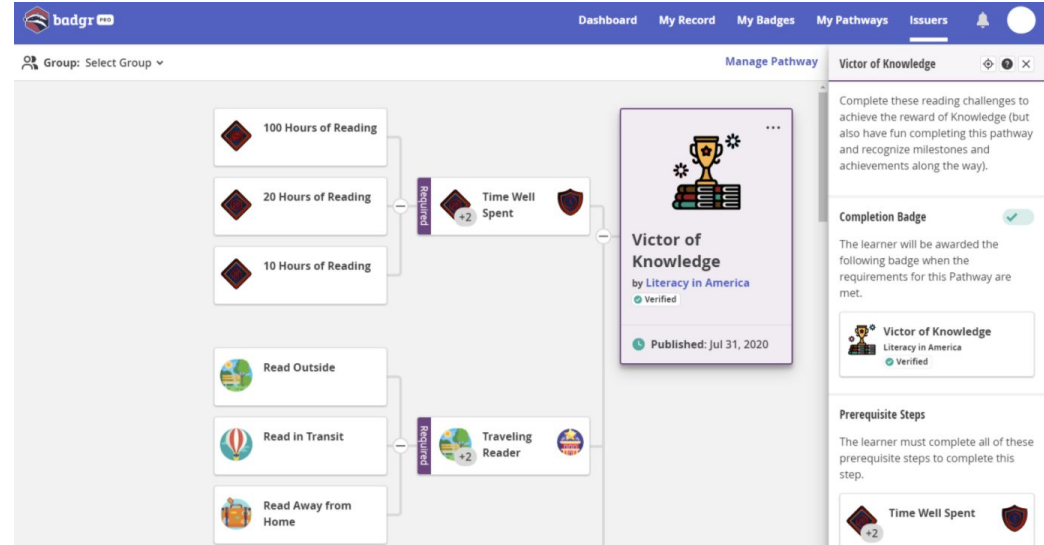
THE LIFELONG LEARNER PROJECT

Powered by Teachers

Badgr Pathways



- Map out ‘badged’ curriculum for learners
- Valuable information for learners on possible certification paths
- Ability to create complex paths with options and with multiple organizations
- Greater meaning and cohesion behind micro-credential engagement



Open Skills Network



- Coalition of employers, education providers, and other stakeholders aimed at breaking down the silos in skills data
- Skills-driven labor market, matching learners with opportunities and benefiting employers
- Creating a National Network of Skills Libraries
- Cultivating community for widespread adoption



Learning and Employment Records



- Digital record of learning and work linked to an individual and combined with other digital records to support their pursuit of educational and employment opportunities
- Documentation of learning wherever and whenever it happens
- Focused on interoperability
- Discussions on how best to include working people in the design and development



TWO QUESTIONS

**How will the market
share play out?**



**Who will the
ecosystem serve?**

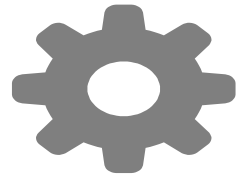


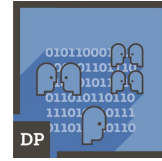
“Most design processes are structured in ways that make it impossible to see, engage with, account for, or attempt to remedy the unequal distribution of benefits and burdens they reproduce.”

- Costanza-Chock, S. (2020) *Design Justice: Community-Led Practices to Build the Worlds We Need*

**Will micro-credentials
become a powerful tool to
support those traditionally
on the margins?**

**Or a tool that simply
reinforces the status quo?**





- What is top of mind for you?
- What are you reflecting on?
- What will you learn more about or do when you leave here?

