Beyond Traditional Transcripts: Using Digital Badging to Document a Mastery of Knowledge and Skills
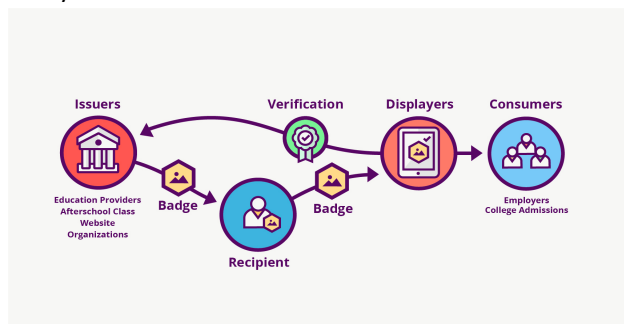
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Background

Goal-oriented modalities of learning have long been used in educational settings to promote engagement and encourage a step-by-step approach to the acquisition of skills and knowledge. A new way to do this is with digital badges.

Digital badging provides virtual tracking of skill development and knowledge. The tracking is contained in the metadata of the badge (see above) and is used to verify the mastery of skills and knowledge. Research has found that badges can help learners understand and translate their experiences to share them with employers or can be used by learners looking to upskill or reskill to meet their professional goals.

Employers appreciate badging because it provides more detail and evidence of mastery of skills in a particular area or field. In addition, research has found after some initial resistance, college faculty and administration have come to see how badging can enable students to demonstrate expertise that is not reflected on a student's regular transcripts. Badging has the potential to link learning from many areas to the skills needed in the 21st century workplace and can help support employability by aligning learner achievements to professional competencies and industry standards.

The Division of Continuing Education & Community Engagement began granting digital badges in January 2019 for the state-mandated courses we provide for caregivers. In order to determine the usefulness and utility of digital badging, in December, 2019 we will survey those that have received badges over the course of the past year.

People who received the badge will be asked:

- how they used the badges:
    - on their resume,
    - on their LinkedIn profile,
    - in their email signature,
- what benefits the badges have provided including response from employer(s),
- career progression,
- and other results related to badging.

Survey collection will conclude on February 1, 2020. Results will be shared with the UW-Green Bay campuses.

References:

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Matkin, Gary W., (2018) Alternative Credentials: An Imperative for Higher Education. *Center for Studies in Higher Education,* 2:1-7.

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