Redefining What Counts: Building Pathways to Higher Ed for Opportunity Youth

By Faby M. Gagne & Megan Stiles Madel
WHY DOES SNHU EXIST?
SNHU transforms the lives of our learners. Our success is defined by our learners’ success.

WHAT DOES SNHU DO?
SNHU expands access to education by providing high-quality, affordable, and innovative pathways that meet the needs of each learner.

HOW DOES SNHU TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF LEARNERS?
We provide the best support in higher education. We focus on each learner.
We relentlessly challenge the status quo.
Innovation dominates our history

- Offering CBE credentials to adults (1932)
- Providing off-site courses to service members (1941)
- Offering online programs (1995)
- Enrolling learners nationwide (2008)
- Creating affordable CBE programs (2012)
- Bringing CBE to refugees worldwide (2016)
OPPORTUNITY

WHAT WINNING LOOKS LIKE: OUR LEARNERS’ SUCCESS

ECONOMIC BARRIERS
DECLINING PUBLIC TRUST IN EDUCATION
IMPACT OF AUTOMATION
DILEMMA OF WORK/LIFE BALANCE
IMPACT OF UNCONTROLLED VARIABLES
FUTURE FORCES AND CHALLENGES

Academic Pathways: COCE / UC / CETA / GEM

GAME CHANGING • FOUNDATION BUILDING • SCOUTING • STRENGTHENING

COMMITMENT 1
Deliver a broad portfolio of high-demand credentials leading to meaningful work and purposeful lives

COMMITMENT 2
Provide the best and most personalized learner support in higher education

COMMITMENT 3
Attract, develop, empower, and retain world class talent to deliver on our mission

COMMITMENT 4
Deploy transformational technology to support next-generation learning on global scale

COMMITMENT 5
Create the capacity and foundation on which to build the 2030 learning ecosystem

TALENT

HISTORY • MISSION • VISION
Our goal is to close the equity gap through the democratization of learning opportunities and making learning count no matter where it happens.
So Why This Merger?!?
How Together We Are Utilizing Badges to Transform the Lives of Learners

1. The Google Grant – Building an Assessment Platform for Opportunity Youth

2. Building Learn + Work Pathways to College Credit through Local Ecosystems
Building an Assessment Platform for Opportunity Youth

“The world in which we live equally distributes talent but it doesn’t always equally distribute opportunity... and our paths are not always the same.”

Paul LeBlanc, President of SNHU
Commencement 2018
There are over 4 Million opportunity youth in America today, or about one in nine teens and young adults (11.7%).

77% of employers believe soft skills are as or more important than technical skills for entry-level roles. Yet, opportunity youth lack a way to translate their skills to employers. We believe that engaging, yet rigorous and bias free assessment is the missing link to the success of opportunity youth. Of the $1 trillion spent each year on educational programs for these youth, less than 5% is spent on assessments of essential workplace skills.

SNHU is building an Authentic Assessment Platform to offer scalable, reliable, and engaging methods for meeting the needs of both opportunity youth and employers.
Opportunity Youth are typically 16-24 years old and marginally engaged with school or work.

The definition includes those:

- out of school and unemployed;
- enrolled in school, but not showing up regularly and not progressing academically;
- enrolled in college part-time and either unemployed or marginally employed;
- not enrolled in school and only working part-time without benefits.

Source: Boston Opportunity Youth Collaborative (2018)
The world’s best talent has ample opportunity available to them. They don’t need to prove themselves with exhaustive assessments. For opportunity youth, the inverse is true—employers will want rigorous, heavy assessment.

David Blake

Co-Founder & Executive Chairman, Degreed
Future Employment Assessment Tool (FEATuring YOU)

Part of the National network.
The Learner Journey

1. **RECRUITMENT**
   1. The journey starts by partnering with community-based organizations nationwide to recruit opportunity youth (18-24 yr. old).

2. **ASSESSMENT**
   2. Youth complete soft skills assessments. “Not Yets” are given opportunity to engage in a learning playlist to level up and retake the assessment.

3. **BADGING**
   3. Those who successfully complete an assessment are issued a digital badge powered by SNHU, available in LRNG, hosted in Badgr, and shareable on social media platforms.

4. **EMPLOYMENT**
   4. SNHU is also partnering with employer partners to offer employment opportunities, (e.g., job interview), to youth who’ve earned a digital badge powered by SNHU.
Learners will be able to earn badges reflecting their strengths by validating soft skills

• Core Score measures 5 competencies aligned with the National Retail Services (NRSI) Retail Competency Model
• 15-minute completion time
• Demonstrated convergent and predictive validity of employment outcomes
• Valued by employers (Hyatt, Tufts Medical)
• *45 minute game-based assessment of problem solving.
• Currently in conversations with the Registrar to see if these diagnostic assessments can later count as SNHU credit via a PLA process.
Crisis in space measures four components of Problem Solving Skills (AACU; PISA):
1. Identify Strategies
2. Implement Solutions
3. Explore Unfamiliar Systems
4. Problem Solving with Full Information
A. If the angle is 14.9° and the ISS’s speed is 11,090 km/hr, click and hold the On button for exactly 3 seconds.
B. If the angle is 7.1°, refer to Secondary Steps regardless of any other information.
C. If the angle is less than 3° and the fuel reserve is less than 20%, hold and release the On button when the altitude is at 380 km.
D. If the fuel reserve is less than 20% and the ISS’s speed is 11,500 km/hr, hold and release the On button when the altitude is at 380 km.
E. If the angle is less than 3° and the fuel reserve is more than 30%, click the On button at any time.
F. If none of these apply, proceed to the Secondary Steps below.

Secondary Steps: For more information, click the Track Speed button. Based on the asteroid’s speed, you must click the ON button when the ISS is at a specific altitude.

Asteroid Speed:

A. More than 30 km/sec - click when altitude is between 360 to 400 km.
B. Between 26 and 29 km/sec - click when altitude is 410 km.
C. Between 23 and 25 km/sec - click...
Timeline and Output to Date

An Authentic Assessment Platform that will test assumptions about opportunities and skills in the workforce

**WHAT:** Testing the assumption that talent is equally distributed, but opportunity isn’t

**WHY:** Employers need help identifying market ready candidates with soft skills. Young adults from underserved communities lack the ability to translate their soft skills into a credible and visible certification that employers can recognize.

**HOW:** SNHU is building an Authentic Assessment Platform with likeminded employers and testing its validity in high-need areas

- **July 31, 2018:** Minimum Viable Product defined and previewed
- **Jan. 31, 2019:** Product piloted
- **July 31, 2019:** Outcome metrics (employment readiness, acquisition, retention)
- **Jan. 31, 2020:** Tool deployed and 2,000 completed assessments
The Challenge

- 1 in 5 American high school students will drop out by the time they reach 12th grade.
- 5.5 million young adults nationwide, ages 16-24, are neither in school nor working.
- Young people are struggling to connect their academic learning to real world opportunities
- 40% of companies report they can’t find qualified workers.

Learning must evolve in order to reverse this cycle.
The Opportunity

We know learning can happen anywhere, anytime, but opportunities for learning are not equitably distributed. Affluent teens have greater access to rich learning experiences both in and out of school.

This opportunity gap perpetuates social inequity and locks economically disadvantaged youth into cycles of poverty.

We are missing out on chances to support a new, diverse generation of innovators and leaders.
LRNG is building pathways in order to:

- Show opportunity youth what is possible & inspire them to follow a pathway
- Increase critical competencies necessary to prepare opportunity youth for the future of work, while increasing access to higher education
- Make participation in the learning ecosystem easy and intuitive for local partners so everyone can participate
No Learning Journey is Linear, No Two Journeys are the Same
The Learner Journey

1. Exploration (Non-credit bearing)
2. Skill Development (with Local Partners)
3. Employment Experience (with SYEP & Local Partners)
4. Skill Development (with Local Partners)
5. College Credit
Timeline and Output to Date

A pathway to higher education and the future of work as a building block toward an inclusive local learning ecosystem

Dec. 20 2018
Local Stakeholder Buy-in in Pilot Locations

Jan. 31 2019
Minimum Viable Product defined (data, tech, support, curriculum, projects)

April 31 2019
Build Awareness in Pilot Locations

Oct. 1 2019
Pilot Complete

Dec. 31 2019
Develop plan to scale across multiple local contexts based on pilot data & outcomes
Thank you!

m.madel@lrng.org
f.gagne@snhu.edu