

XCredit, or Experience Credit, was developed by Education Design Lab (Lab) to help learners seeking better career outcomes by creating machine-readable ways to verify existing skills when applying for a job or deciding on new career pathways. A missing link in the emerging skills-based economy, with serious implications for equity, is the ability to easily validate a learner's life and working experiences as currency for future opportunities.

The current models of prior learning assessment for informal learning are wholly inadequate: they are labor and time-intensive, involve subjective review, lack transferability, and are not easily integrated with hiring systems. To respond to this need, in partnership, Muzzy Lane and the Lab developed a suite of rigorous, performance-based, auto-graded simulation-based assessments to scale the award of a [21st Century Skills Digital Micro-Credential \(Critical Thinking\)](#), to act as a signal for employability and advancement. These assessments have undergone rigorous user testing and bias review to intentionally address unintended issues that may have diminished equitable outcomes. They are delivered to learners by linking into standard Learning Management System (LMS) platforms using the IMS Global Learning Tools Interoperability (LTI) standard. The LTI Advantage Assignment and Grades Service is used to pass performance data on multiple competencies from the assessments to the LMS.

Skills learned by doing; e.g., lived experiences, can be assessed and credentialed at scale. Currently the assessment of informal learning (i.e. outside the classroom) is a time-consuming, labor-intensive process that can not scale to meet the demands of a skills-based economy. The next-generation assessments are shining examples of how access to these types of assessments, and removal of the "black box" of demonstrated skills can empower individuals, personalize their experience, and maximize the benefit and value of digitized and verified skills in the hiring process.

It is skills, not merely degree proxies, that are a necessary requirement for a more equitable talent marketplace. Employers have substantiated the idea that 21st century skills acquired through informal learning experiences are critical skills for entry or mid-level positions they are looking to fill. To quote just one executive at a leading accounting firm: "We (the company) can teach the technical skills of accounting. What we can't teach, and what we need, are skills such as empathy, collaboration and critical thinking that will allow our employees to properly engage and serve our clients." Another executive in the construction industry commented that a critical thinking digital micro-credential on a candidate's resume would communicate, "that they have demonstrated the ability to ask the pertinent questions and were able to sort through superfluous unimportant information to get to the root cause of a challenge. I would elevate a person with this credential on their resume to the top of the interview pile." To highlight the obvious, the showcased assessments lead to the noted credentials that signal these high priority skills to those seeking talent.

The XCredit project and associated Muzzy Lane assessments alter the basic tenet of traditional learning models. They elevate what someone knows and can do to be visible to others and empowers the opportunity seeker in the process, personalizing skill validation and sharing these accomplishments in the skills ecosystem. Assessments are aligned to key competencies and elevate, through workplace, active simulations, the skills gained through lifelong learning and experiences.