



“Open Recognition 101”

What does open recognition mean?
Why do we need it?

Don Presant, Open Recognition Alliance

learningagents.ca 

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ABOUT THIS NOTES VERSION:

The arrow symbol “→” is merely a signal to advance the slide...

Hi everybody.

It's great to be here, and it'll be great to get this presentation out of the way, so I can play more of a supporting role in Boulder next week and learn from all of you..

I'm very happy say that Open Recognition will have a clear presence at Badge Summit 2023 and I'm here today to help pave the way.

A bit about me first: I like to say that I wear 3 hats: I'm an advocate for Open Recognition, a consultant for digital badges and micro-credentials and a service provider for Open Badges on the CanCred.ca platform, up in Canada.

Today I'm wearing my Advocate hat, so I'll be providing a full-colour version of open recognition as a flexible vision for recognizing identity, learning and achievement.

My main goal is to get people thinking beyond certificates and wanting to learn more about open recognition



Open Badges...

I've earned a lot of them since they were invented in back 2011. Some of these you see are micro-credentials, others were a lot less formal, including community-issued badges...

- like the one from Noah Geisel's BadgeChatK12
- and even self-awarded badges, like the one that commemorates my unsuccessful proposal for the 2011 Macarthur Foundation/HASTAC grants that helped get Open Badges off the ground..

The badges that are most important to me are NOT the micro-credentials – I can't remember the content of most of them, and I can't say that anybody's ever verified them..

- The important badges are the ones that connect me to the learning that I've applied and internalized, and what I've achieved, and the people in my various communities who help me do all that. For example, the **I'm on BORD** badge connects me to co-authoring the Bologna Open Recognition Declaration, a document that started on my Android in the back seat of a car, driving from France to Italy for ePIC 2016
- The badge I'm proudest of is the Open Recognition Ambassador badge, that I first earned back in 2020. I continue to feed and water this badge with ongoing evidence of my advocacy..
- that evidence is linked inside the badge and tracks across several pages in my badge portfolio, to demonstrate to others but also as a reference for me.. today's presentation

included



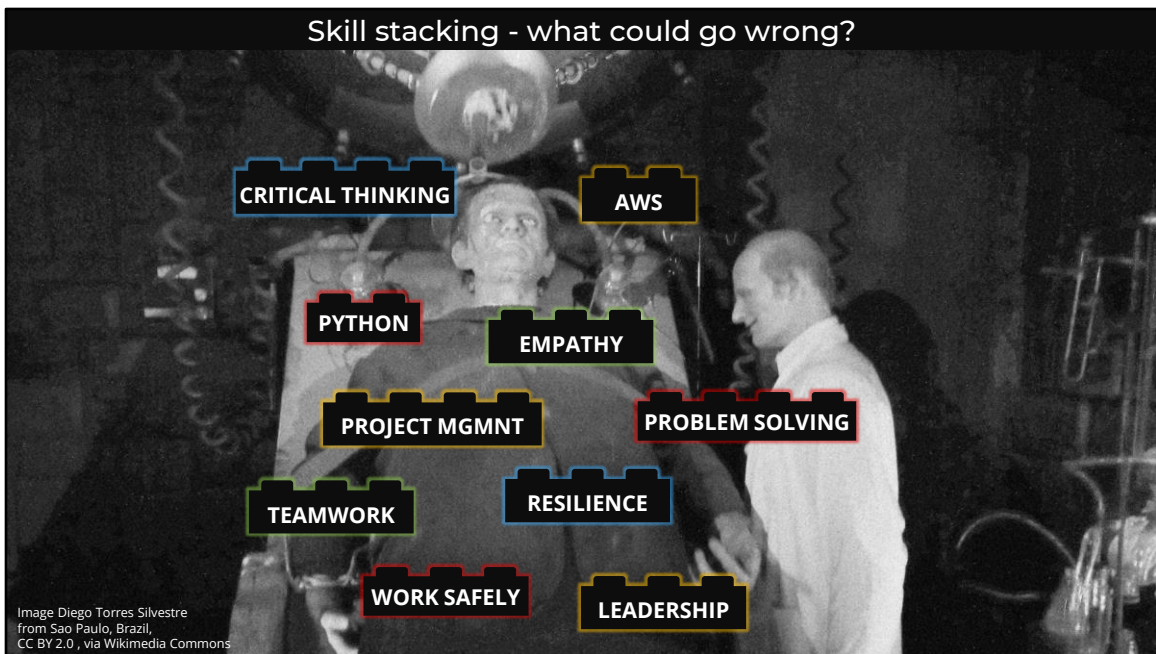
CONTEXT

Why do we need to “open up” recognition?

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So, that was me, through my badges, making the point that the most meaningful badges in my portfolio are not necessarily the ones that are rigorously assessed or aligned to some rigid competency framework.. they're the ones that I can use to tell my story and authenticate my profile in the context of my social and professional communities.

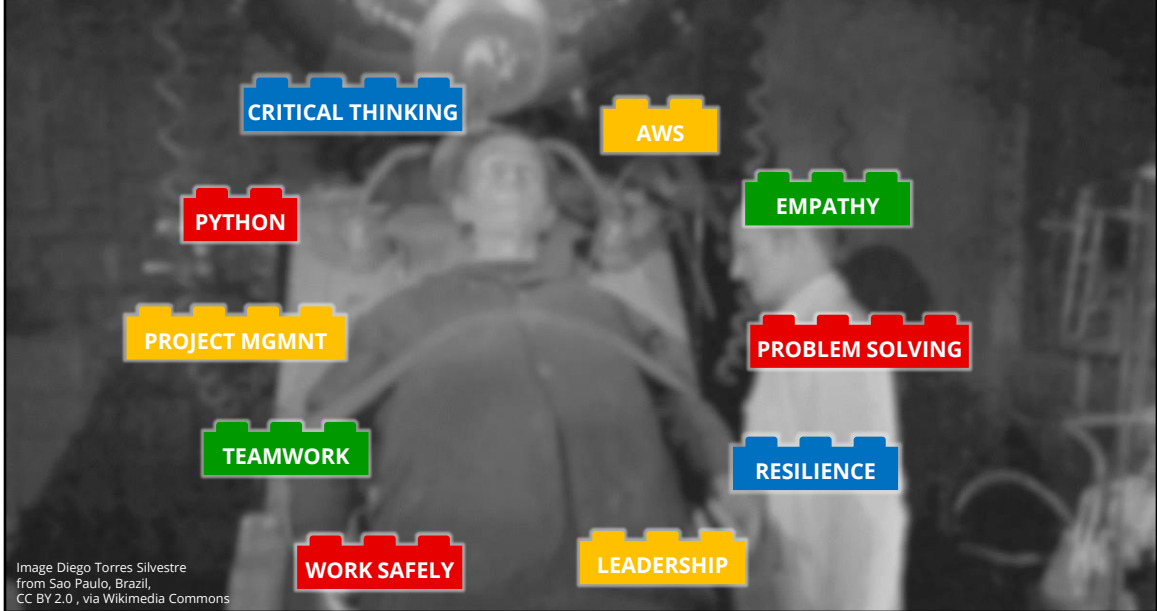
The people I hang out with and I believe that there's value in openness and flexibility. Let's look at the alternative...



My pet name for this is Frankenskillstein.

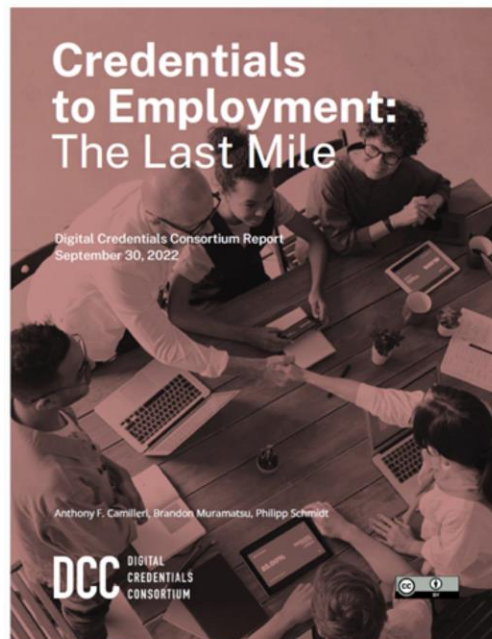
Yes, this is a nightmare exaggeration, but I'm trying to make a point here about some of the dangers of fragmentary, **skills-first** approaches to development and recognition, as opposed to holistic approaches that put the learner at the centre.

Skill stacking - what could go wrong?



... we need to keep learners at the centre and remember that they're human beings, living and learning in specific contexts, not constructs of disembodied skills.

Reality check: are badges REALLY portable workplace skills currency?

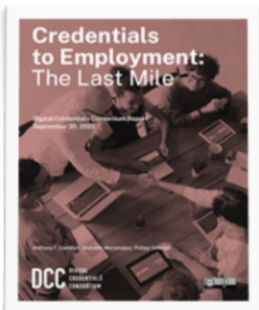


[Credentials to Employment: The Last Mile](#)
[Digital Credentials Consortium 2022](#)

This Digital Credentials Consortium report from last September was a useful reality check about how far actually we are down the road toward skills-based hiring



Reality check: are badges REALLY portable workplace skills currency?



[Credentials to Employment: The Last Mile](#)
[Digital Credentials Consortium 2022](#)

SOME FINDINGS ("NOT YET")

Big gap in employer awareness, closing slowly

Pretty PSE-centric; employers often not at the table

Employer diversity: F500s, SMEs, professions, etc.

Lack of digital trust and endorsement protocols

Big disconnect: future promise vs. current reality: lack of critical mass, tools for an end-to-end ecosystem

Advice for key stakeholders:

INSTITUTIONS

Scale! Add more data!
Be interoperable!

EMPLOYERS

Become Issuers! Develop
competence frameworks!

GOVERNMENTS

Fund innovation!

JOINT ACTION

Integrated
Skills Ecosystem!

...but what about Learners and their Communities?

There's still a long row to hoe between current reality and future promise.

And who's at the planning table? Institutions, employers, governments, sure..

But learners aren't mentioned, nor the communities and organizations that support them.

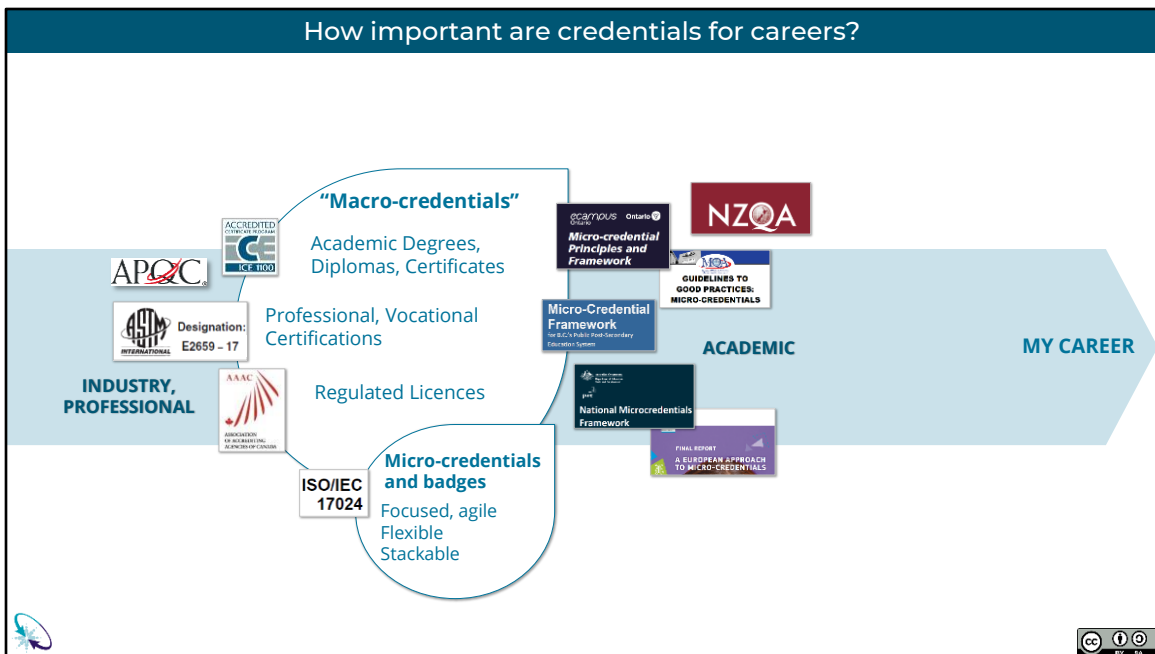


This diagram from the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario helps make clear that learning is a journey and your needs change over time.

→ HEQCO is Higher Ed focused by definition, so I've added some other elements that help build out the journey for Lifelong Learning

Badges and credentials can help in different ways at different stages of your journey, often at times of transition, whether from school to work, or from one career to another. No matter what stage you're at, badges can make you and your skills visible.

But much this feeds into the narrative of credentials for careers.. let's have a closer look at the current role that credentials really play in advancing careers.



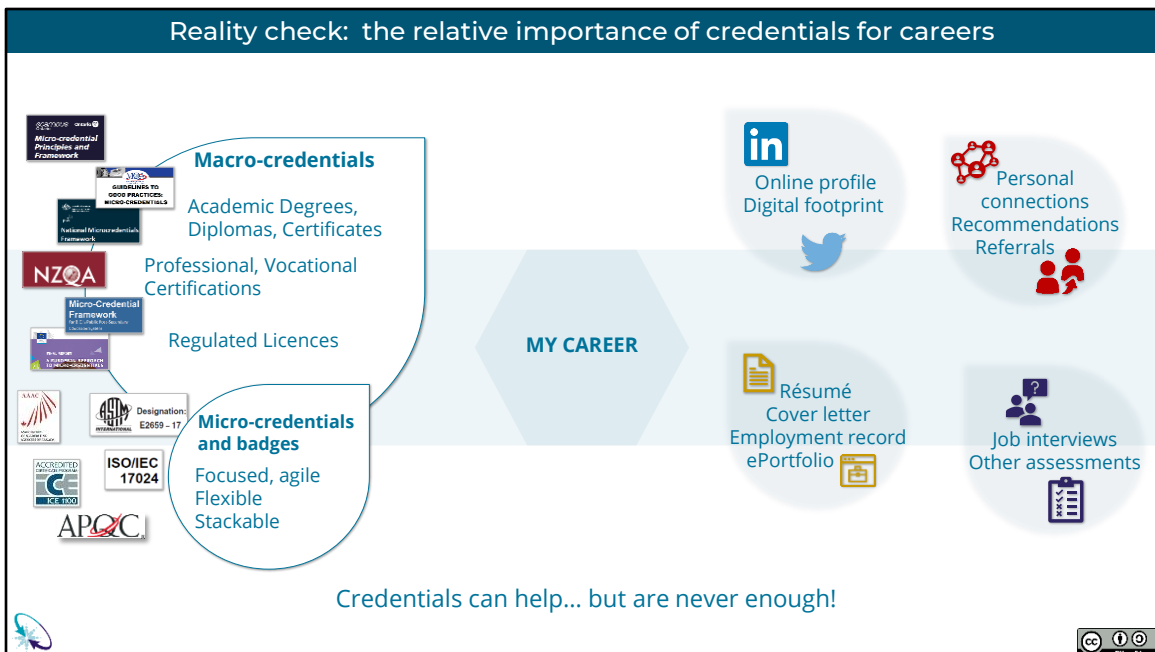
Academic institutions and professional bodies are justifiably proud of their big macro-credentials. These diplomas and certifications are often required for entrance into professions, for example.

→ Elaborate quality systems have been built up around them. But these macro-credentials take a long time to develop and earn, and they don't change very quickly.

→ Enter micro-credentials: focused, relevant, agile.. And potentially **stackable** into macro-credentials, although that can make them a lot less agile...

All these credentials are supposedly tickets to jobs and careers.

→ But in terms of **actually** finding a job and pursuing a career...



...we still have the resume and cover letter..

→ Hopefully we've got a profile on LinkedIn

→ If we're lucky and work at it, our personal networks can help us make connections... that's usually been a big factor for me

→ Ultimately, the job interview is always going to happen, with all those behavioural and situational questions... and maybe other types of assessment, checking out not just what your skills are, but what you'd be like to work with... are you **really** a team-focused problem solver?

→ So... credentials can help get you the interview and they can support what you say in the interview, but ultimately the employer needs to know who **YOU ARE**, not what credentials you have. Professions, especially regulated ones, are different, but not really: a diploma is necessary, but not sufficient.

Learning and Employment Records may help in the future, but they're still more promise than reality, partly because life is messy...

Learning in a VUCA world: lifelong, life-wide

Volatile

Uncertain

Complex

Ambiguous



After all, it's a messy VUCA world that we're living in:

Volatile

Uncertain

Complex

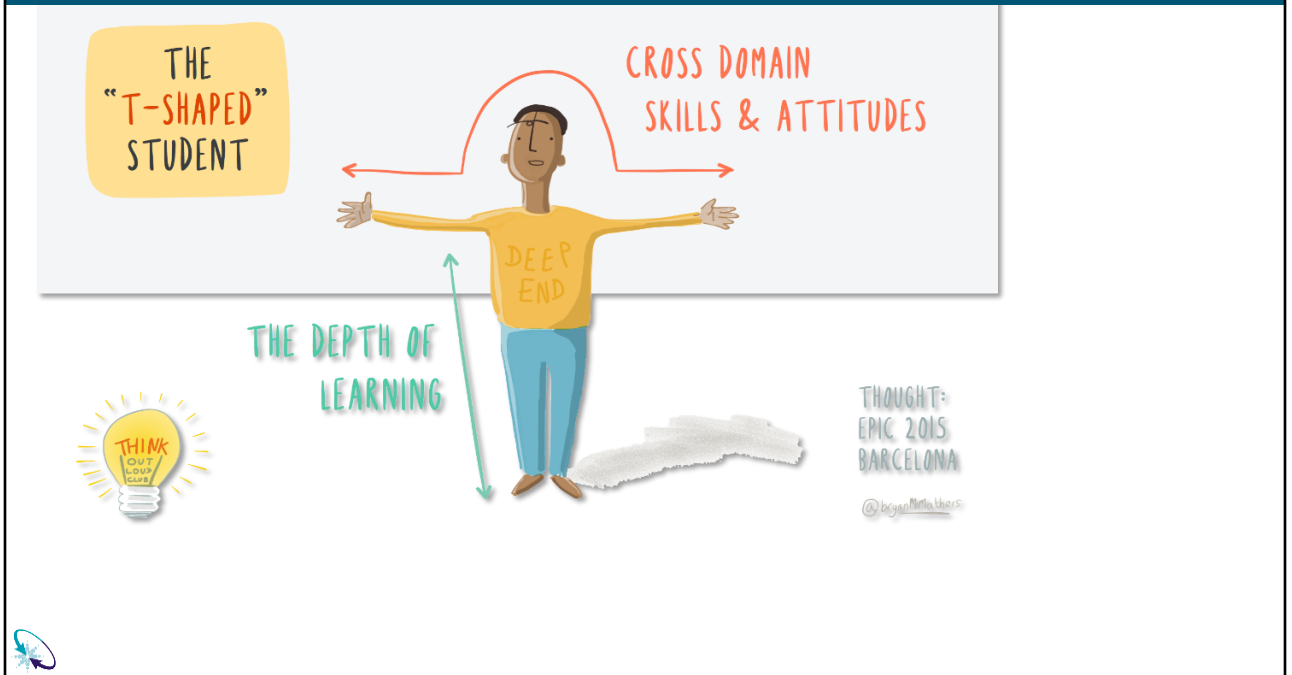
Ambiguous

This is a world that steadfastly resists compartmentalization of skills and knowledge into neat little bricks that we can stack into coherent structures.



Let me ask you, have you ever tried stacking Lego and Mega Blocks?
Blended learning, anyone?

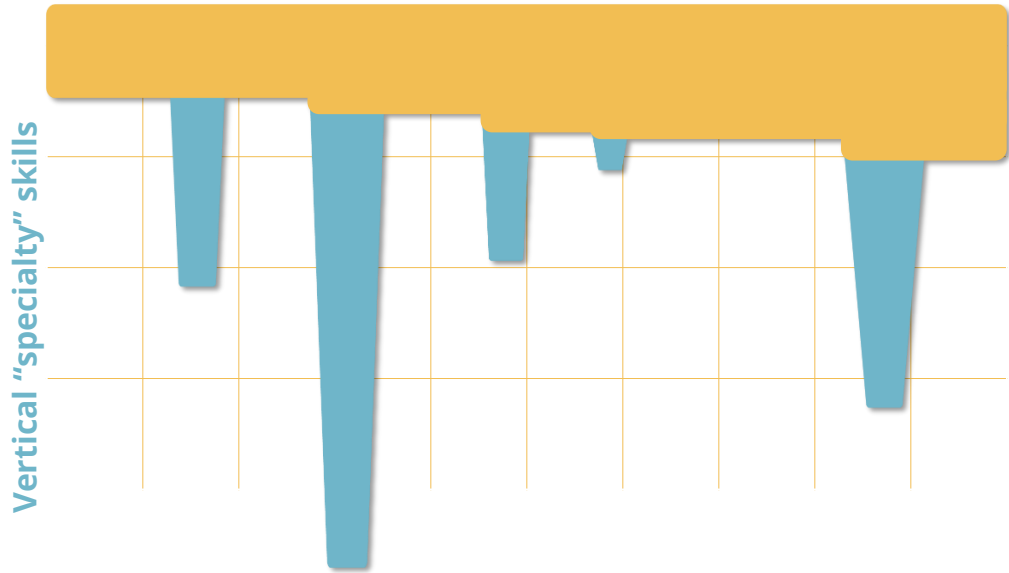
Skills are hard to isolate



You may have heard talk about the T-shaped student or maybe “learner” is a better term...

The vertical dimension represents a deep knowledge of a domain or a specialized skill, the horizontal dimension represents the general knowledge and personal and social skills that you carry forward through life...

Horizontal “transversal” skills



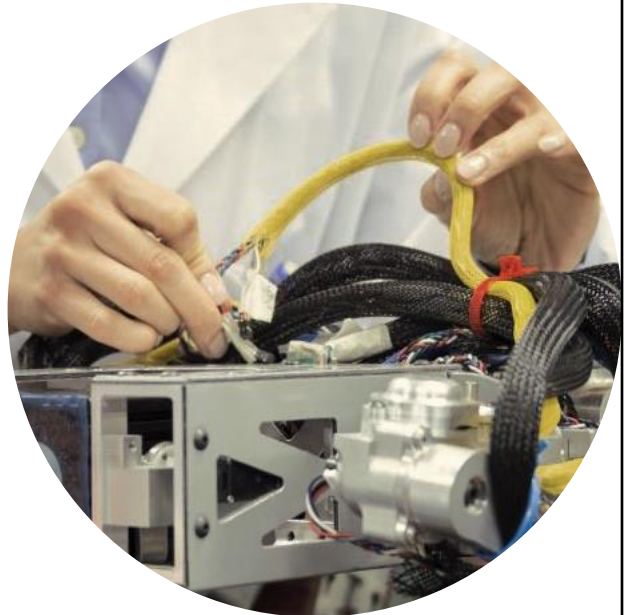
adapted from Strada Institute – Robot Ready

... and that life or career can be a long one...

We'll have to change how we work many times in our careers, even if we stay in the same place

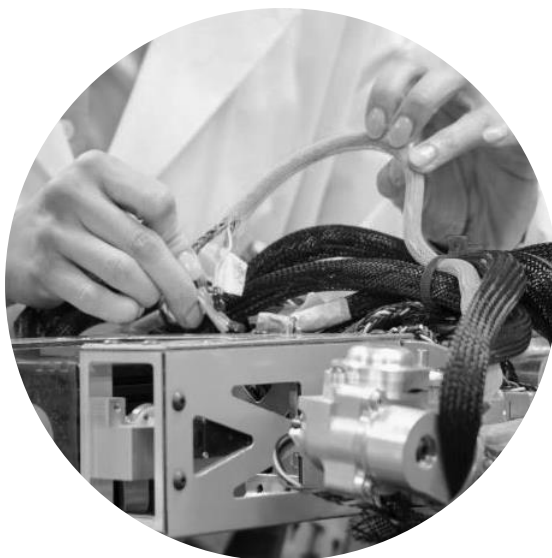
That means we have to keep on learning: developing new vertical skills, and deepening our horizontal skills, so that's why the horizontal is getting deeper

Holistic view of the “T”



The T-shaped metaphor is a useful way to think about skills, but the reality is more holistic than that....

Holistic view of the "T"

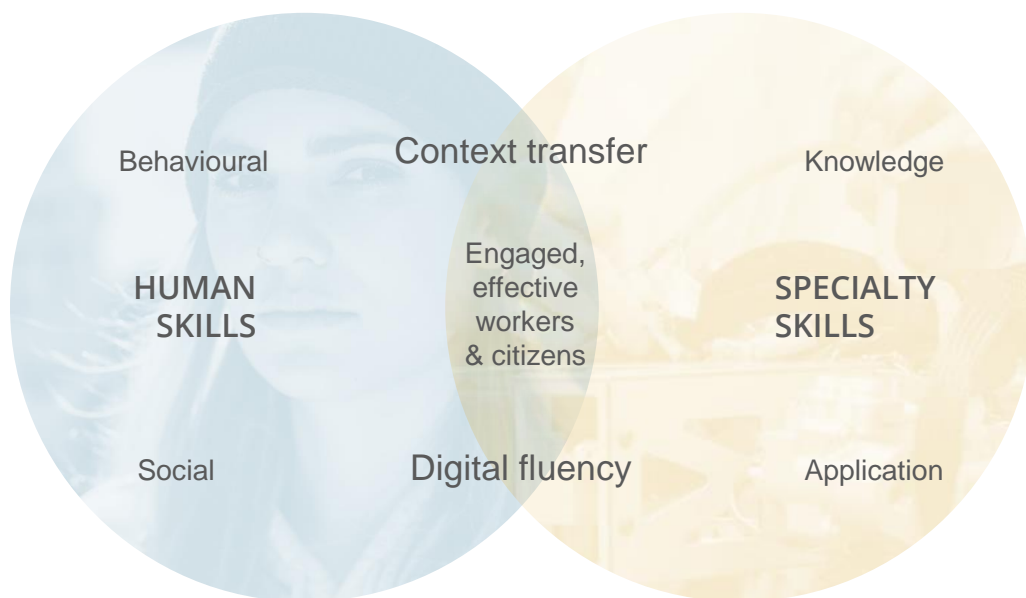


Holistic view of the “T”



These skills overlap and interact with each other....

Holistic view of the “T”



The more holistic view is that Human Skills and Speciality or Technical Skills work together, so that social and behavioural skills can provide the glue for domain knowledge and the application of skills and help with transferring skills and knowledge from one context to another.

Digital fluency is a horizontal skill that's becoming more and more important.

The dynamic combination of these skills is what we need to become engaged and effective..... and resilient.

Most micro-credentials & digital badges use “Open Badges”

Portable digital documents
of learning achievement

Visual image & data
Easily shared

Structured data with links to
verification & more info

Credentials are portable across silos, for employment, reskilling & flexible lifelong careers

Badge information (metadata)

MANDATORY

- ✓ Badge name
- ✓ Description
- ✓ Criteria
- ✓ Issuer
- ✓ Recipient
- ✓ Issue Date
- ✓ Badge image

OPTIONAL

- ☐ Expiry date
- ☐ Evidence
- ☐ Alignment
- ☐ Endorsement
- ☐ Language(s)
- ☐ Tags



AGILE LEARNING PATHWAYS

Modular, stackable, remixable
...personalized

MAKES LEARNING VISIBLE

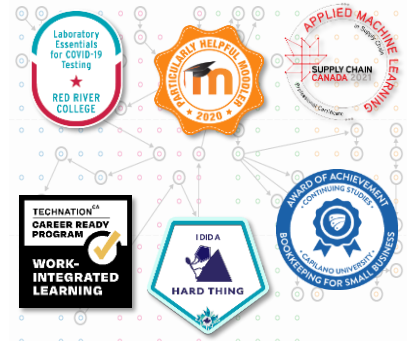
Icons, learning maps, progress

SOCIAL PROFILE, FOOTPRINT

Branding for earners *and* issuers
Socialized in online communities

QUALITY, VERIFICATION

Transparent claims by issuers
backed by evidence & endorsements
makes learning quality visible



I believe that the reason we're talking about micro-credentials in 2023 is because of the disruption of Open Badges back in 2011.

→ Open Badges were invented by Mozilla Foundation as a more inclusive and authentic way to recognize lifewide learning and achievement. In 2017, Mozilla passed the standard over to 1EdTech, which has tended to change the focus from communities to institutions.

The (continuing) emergence of micro-credentials

MICRO-CREDENTIAL (UNESCO)

1. a record of **focused learning achievement** verifying what the learner knows, understands or can do;
2. includes **assessment** based on clearly defined standards and is awarded by a trusted provider;
3. has **stand-alone value** and may also contribute to or complement other micro-credentials or macro-credentials, including through recognition of prior learning; and
4. meets the standards required by relevant **quality assurance**.

(Oliver-UNESCO, 2021)

INFORMAL BADGE

"A digital credential awarded in **diverse contexts** for learning and achievement, often informally with **no structured assessment**. It may be used for **appreciative, formative** or summative recognition depending on the context and purpose."

(Presant, 2021, 2023)

OPEN BADGES – THE CONTAINER

"A **flexible standard for portable digital credentials** that embeds structured credential metadata inside image files."
(Adapted from 1Edtech)

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Around 2014-2015 we started hearing about micro-credentials, what I would call the formal end of the recognition spectrum.

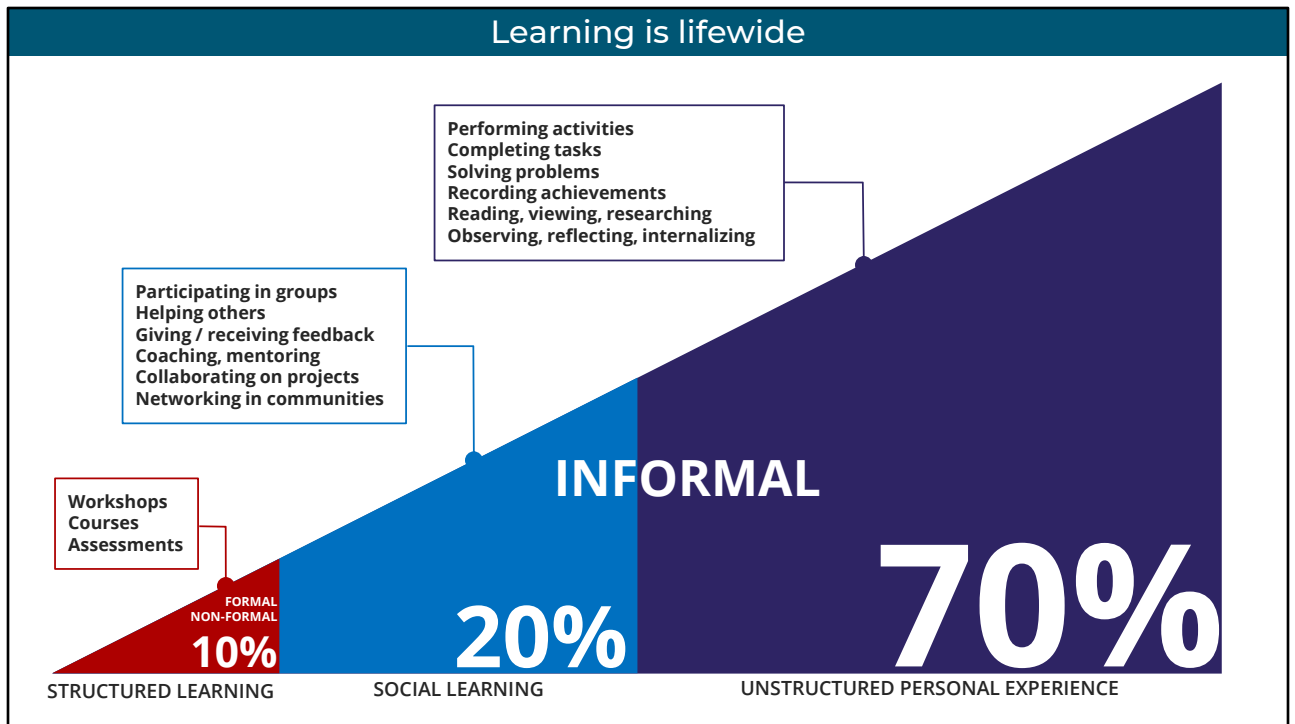
→ There's still some wrangling about definition, but this one from UNESCO captures a lot of common themes. I was an advisor on the project. One element that's not there is the notion of workplace relevance, which most definitions do have.

→ Beyond micro-credentials though, we still have a need for Mozilla's original vision: flexible ways to recognize lifewide learning and achievement to make a difference in people's lives. That includes **informal** learning and recognition. After all, most of the learning we do is informal and we should have better ways of recognizing it. I made this point during the launch event for the UNESCO document and I continue to make the point every chance I get... like today

→ The key takeaway here is that Open Badges is a **flexible** standard container that can include formal and informal digital credentials. The credential can describe itself and communicate its purpose.

It's a big tent that we can all learn how to share.

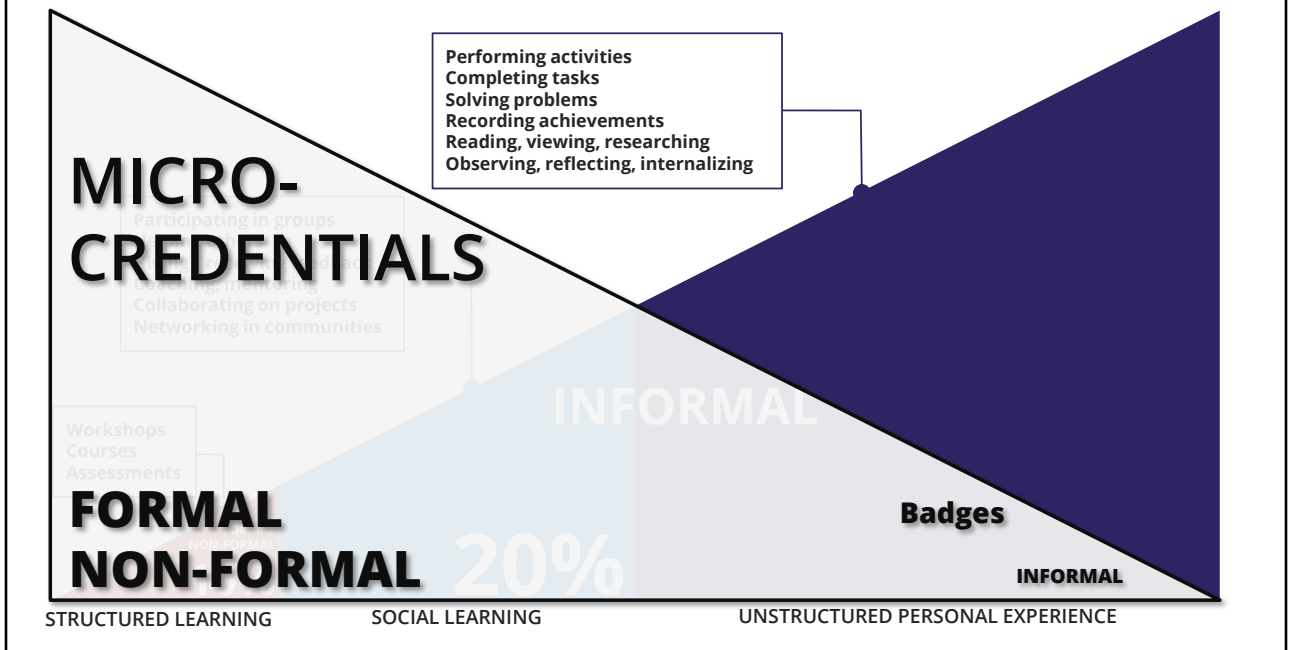
Doug Belshaw and Sheryl Grant will be covering these issues more thoroughly in their long panel just before the final plenary on Tuesday..



Micro-credentials are fine, but it's a bit like trying to boil the ocean, because learning is lifewide and hard to control. Most of it happens in the wild, outside the classroom: it's informal and usually unstructured, sometimes work with others, sometimes by ourselves as we navigate all the things that we need to get done. These examples align to something called 70-20-10 ratio. Some people like to quibble about the exact percentages, but most of us agree about the basic point: you can't take a course about everything.

→ Trouble is...

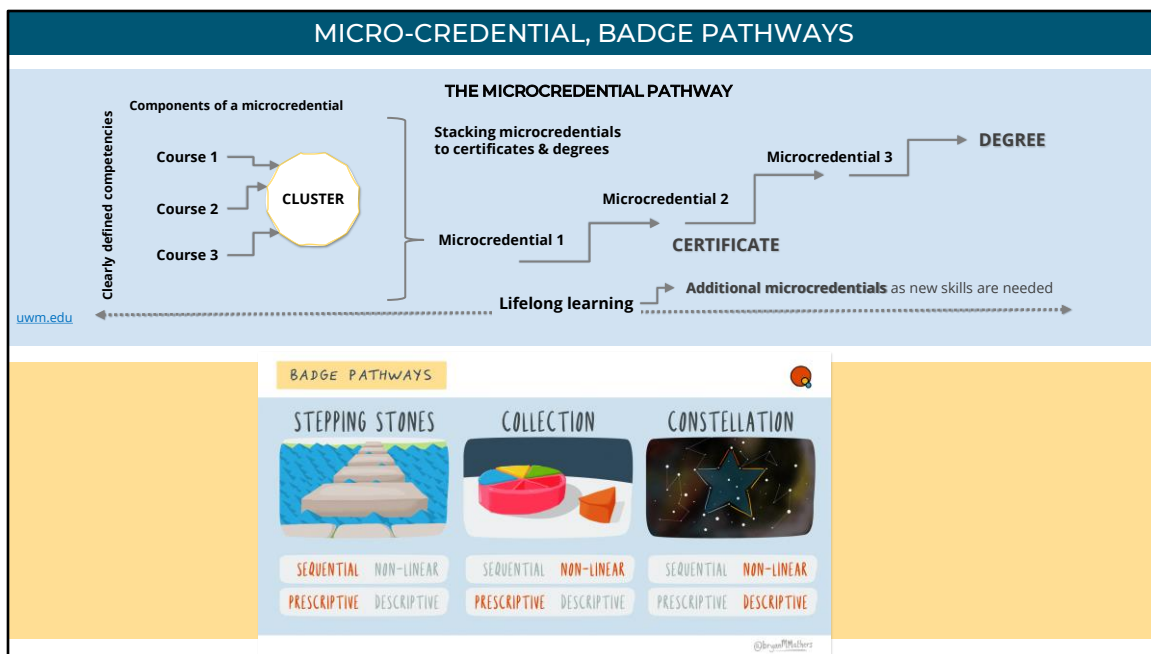
Learning is lifewide



... a lot of the approaches to micro-credentials that I've seen assume that you can do it all through courses and programs.

There should be more **agile** ways to meet rapidly changing needs and help learners apply, transfer **and demonstrate** what they already know and can do, as a whole package, not just isolated technical skills.

Certainly there need to be more opportunities for experience, demonstration, reflection, feedback, projects, and other ways to apply education to real world performance, **IF** your focus is workplace relevance... again, badges can do a lot of different things.



We like to organize and rationalize things, but we need to understand that our logical constructs don't tell the whole story and may not be the best way to engage learners, especially diverse learners.

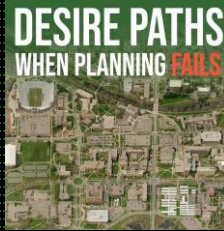
→ Sometimes, instead of prescribing, we should be describing...

As Serge Ravet, an international thought leader in this space likes to say.... →



... "the map is NOT the territory."

Desire pathways



Mind The Map



bryanmmathers.com



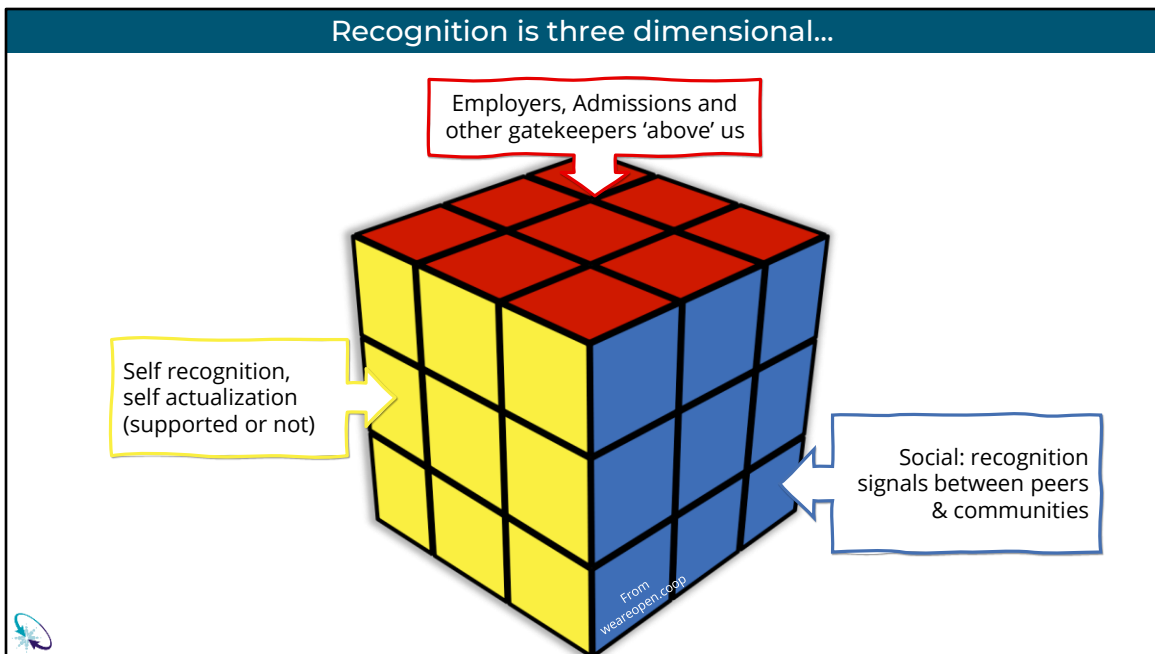
pixabay.com



... And journeys can take more than one path.

Pathways can be designed and encouraged, but we can't predict the future and we shouldn't force a single way of doing things.

What we **can** do is enable multiple futures by engaging interest, recognizing achievements, encouraging exploration and appreciating progress.



Recognition is not just top down and verified by authorities,...

- It's about identity and self-actualization, how you explain yourself, perhaps supported by evidence, perhaps not.
- Even more, recognition can be social, coming from individual peers or a broader community

Recognition can and should be more democratic and flexible than certificates and diplomas.

Bologna Open Recognition Declaration (2016)

Open recognition for all

"All access", "full spectrum" participation and ownership by learners, educators, citizens and organisations for global systems of recognition.

Open recognition technologies and infrastructure

A trustworthy system of human and machine verifiable learning credentials based on open standards.

Open recognition policies

Inclusive policies for formal, non-formal and informal recognition, with bridges between all three.

Multiple developmental pathways, flexibility and accessibility for socially excluded and disenfranchised groups.

Read and sign the
Bologna Open Recognition Declaration at
openrecognition.org/bord/

EARN THE BADGE



The invention of Open Badges did open up recognition and many of these equity-inspired principles are captured in that Bologna Open Recognition Declaration that I co-wrote with Serge Ravet and Nate Otto wrote in the car in 2016, which is now stewarded by the Open Recognition Alliance.

We all deserve to be recognized and to have the power to recognize others, across a full spectrum of formality. Open recognition is for everybody... technologies and policies should support this.

I encourage you to read the Declaration and sign it, either for yourself or on behalf of your organization.

In the first session on Tuesday, Philippe Petitqueux will tell you how the government of Normandy signed a version of this declaration in late 2022 to guide their recognition policy in the region.

What is open recognition anyway?

“

Open Recognition is the awareness and appreciation of talents, skills and aspirations in ways that go beyond credentialing. This includes recognising the rights of individuals, communities, and territories to apply their own labels and definitions. Their frameworks may be emergent and/or implicit.

”

OPEN RECOGNITION
IS FOR EVERYBODY



<https://blog.weareopen.coop/what-is-open-recognition-anyway-9f38ec1f8629>



Doug Belshaw of **We Are Open Coop** pulled this definition of Open Recognition together, which works for a lot of us..

This may be part of his badgesplaining on Monday, or maybe his long panel on Tuesday

Doug is wearing a few hats himself,

→ including stewardship of a community of practice called... **Open Recognition is for Everybody..**

How does Open Recognition compare to micro-credentials?

Aspect	Micro-credentials	Open Recognition badges
Focus	Specific skills and competencies – workplace relevance	Lifelong learning, varied experiences and achievements
Issuing body	Educational institutions, “recognised organizations”	Any individual or organisation, including peer recognition and self-assertion
Assessment	Formal, often tied to specific courses – “summative”	Formal, informal, non-formal or unassessed – “appreciative”
Recognition	Mostly academic, professional, employability-focused	Broad spectrum of social recognition
Value proposition compared to formal education	Alternative, complementary to, or stacking toward “macro-credentials”	Independent, inclusive recognition of lifelong, lifewide learning
Barriers to entry	Potentially high (cost, time, reputation, etc.)	Low, or none

[Adapted from WAO](#)

As I’ve said, we Open Recognition folks think micro-credentials are fine, but why stop there?

Open Recognition can **include** micro-credentials but can also **extend** them and do things that micro-credentials can’t...

Open Recognition can respond more quickly to changing context than course-based approaches than can take months or even years to develop.

→ Open recognition can add value



Components of a Social Theory of Learning: An Initial Inventory
Reproduced from [Communities of Practice \(Wenger 1998\)](#)

I've mentioned communities and social learning a few times in this presentation and lot of my thinking is based on the work of Etienne Wenger and his pioneering research on communities of practice related to workplace skills. And I'm grateful to Serge Ravet for bringing my attention back to him.

For Wenger, learning, especially lifewide learning is inherently social:

- Meaning is about making sense of experience, both individual and collective
- Practice is about shared approaches to knowledge and organizing work
- Community is about social constructs for participation
- Identity is about how learning changes who we are and what we become in communities

This social theory of learning is very powerful lens for open recognition and we're going to pick it up later in the presentation..

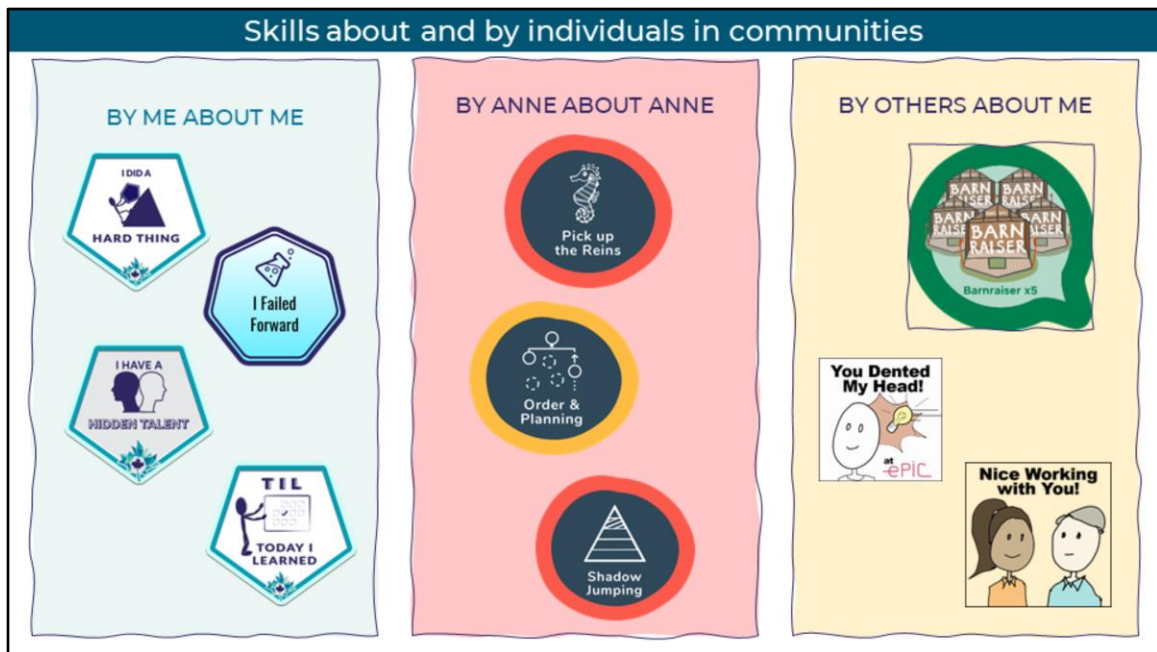


EXAMPLES

“Opening up” recognition

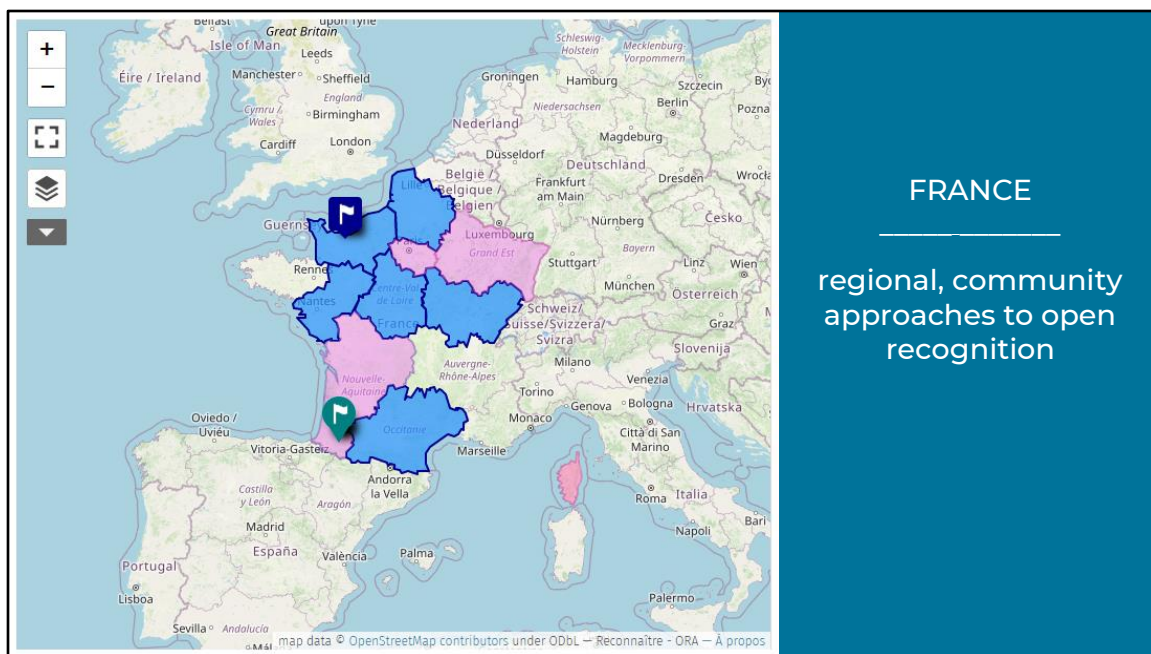
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This has all been a little high level so far, let’s explore some examples to make things a little more concrete...



I've been working with a number of other colleagues in the Open Recognition community to walk the talk, with real-life examples of open recognition badges in action...

- Some of these are self-issued, often with reflective prompts as scaffolding ...
- but these ones from Anne Hilliger We Are Open Coop were created by her from scratch to capture the onboarding that she's been doing as an intern in the coop. These badges replacing a pre-conceived pathway that the co-op team had prepared in advance for her because they're more meaningful to her. For example, the shadow jumping one relates to getting over yourself: jumping over the shadow of your self-doubts and just getting stuck in. Anne's use case will be covered in more detail in the Badgesplaining by Doug Belshaw and Laura Hilliger on Monday
- And here are some peer-issued badges that we use to recognize each other. For example, Barnraiser x5 recognizes my work on our collaborative badge.wiki, and "You Dented my Head" means somebody said or did something that "made an impression" on somebody else...



I have to say that France is a leader in terms of open recognition, partly due to legislation and policy, partly due to a different cultural approach. They have developed the concept of learning territories, regional partnerships that focus on community and personal engagement.

They held an Open Badges conference in Normandy just a few weeks ago, organized by a consortium called “Badgeons la Normandie” or “Let’s Badge Normandy.”

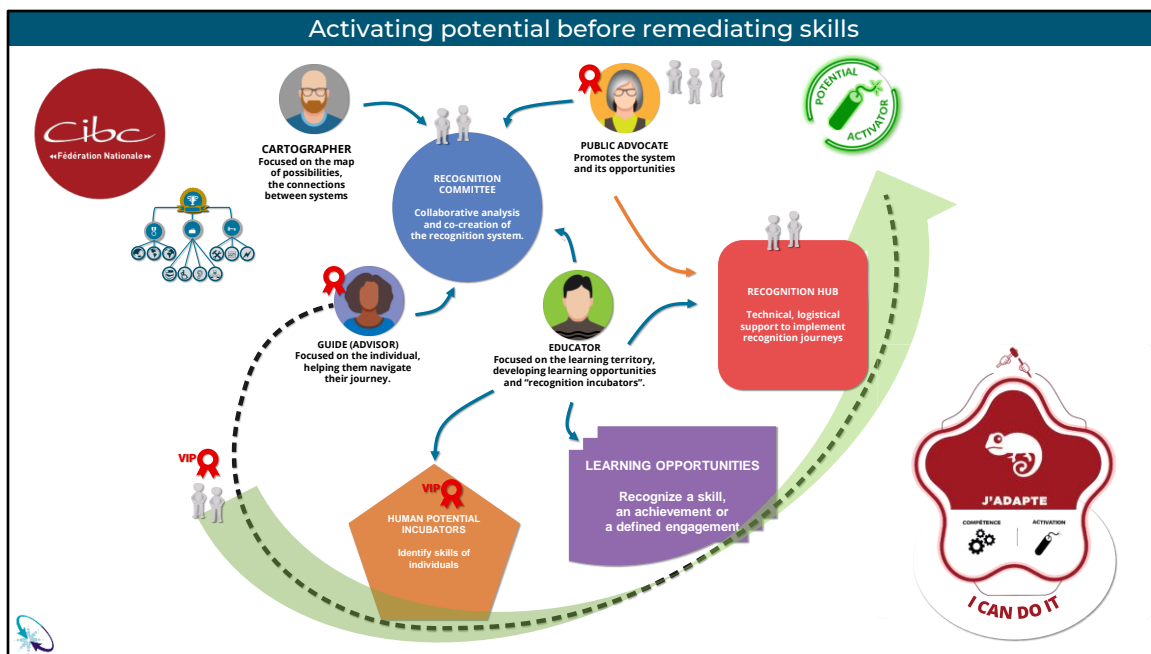
You can learn more about “Let’s Badge Normandy” and Open Recognition in France at Philippe Petitqueux’s Rapid Fire session first thing Tuesday morning.



I have to say that France is a leader in terms of open recognition, partly due to legislation and policy, partly due to a different cultural approach. They have developed the concept of learning territories, regional partnerships that focus on community and personal engagement.

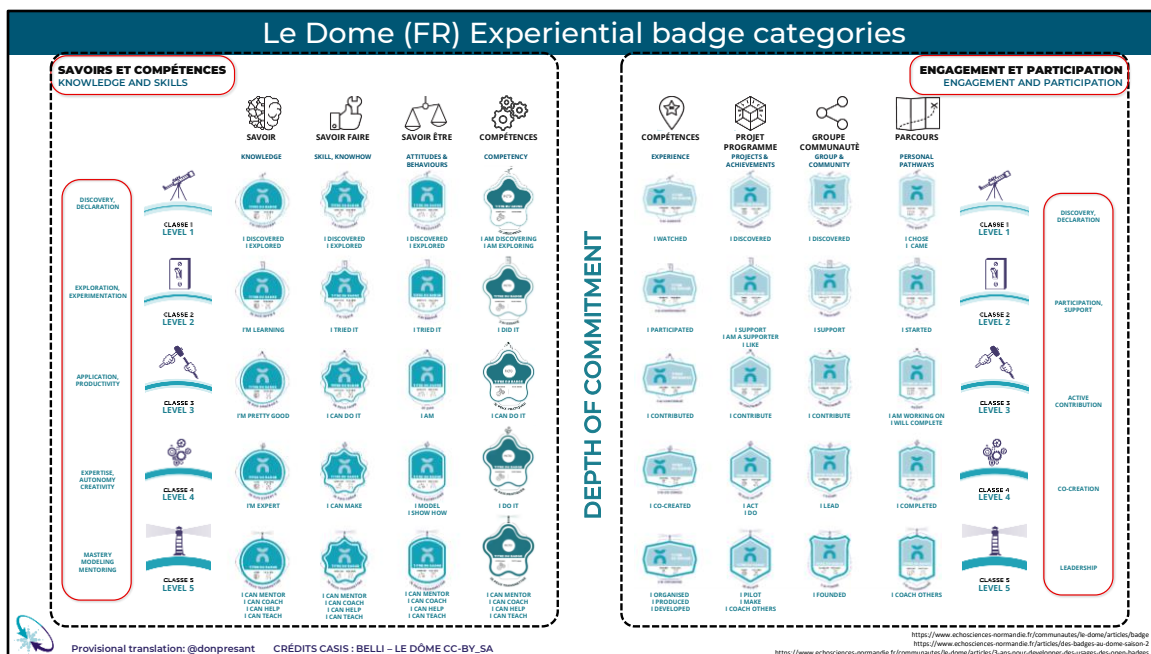
The first regional consortium to get off the ground was called “Badgeons la Normandie” or “Let’s Badge Normandy.”, and Normandy was the location for a national open badges forum in just a few weeks ago...

You can learn more about “Let’s Badge Normandy” and Open Recognition networks in France at Philippe Petitqueux’s Rapid Fire session first thing Tuesday morning.



Here's an example of opening up recognition for underserved populations in France. CIBC is a national network of skills assessment centres that function less as testing centres and more as human potential activators, with a varied toolset that includes interest inventories, skills benchmarking, connection to learning opportunities and then connection to employment, leveraging networks within regions.

→ And badges...



CIBC uses this matrix of experiential badge categories as a menu to design badges for their clients.

Don't worry too much about all the detail, I'm just using it here to show you the breadth of recognition across the top,

→ from knowledge and skills

→ to engagement and participation.

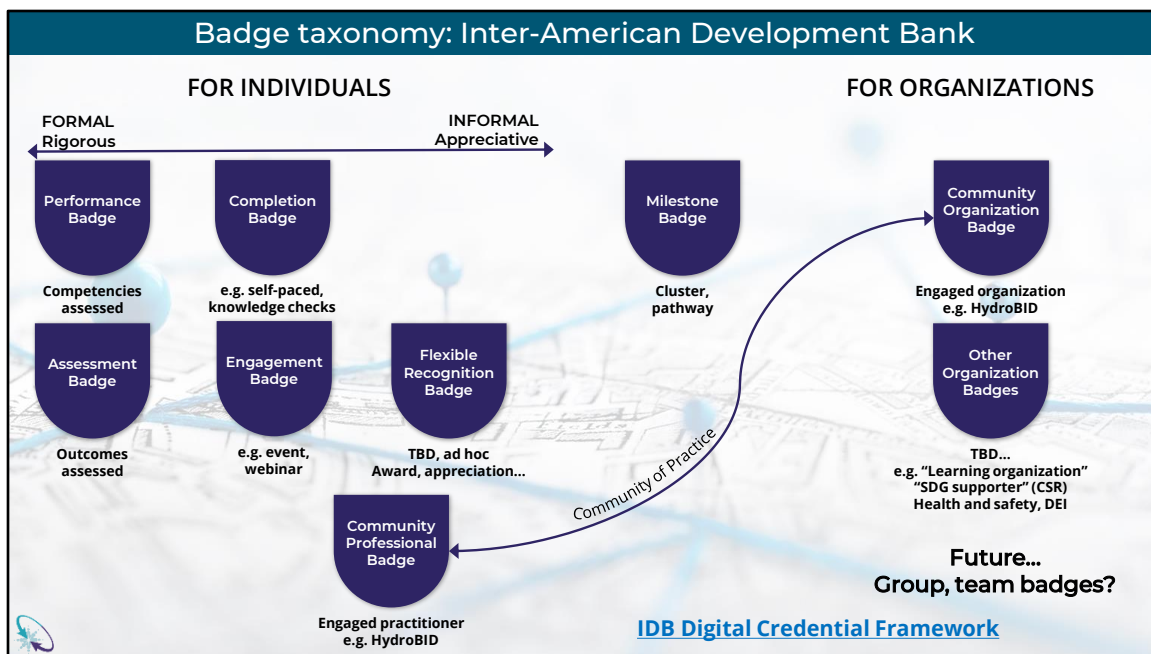
→ The vertical is levels of **commitment**, ranging from initial discovery, through to mastery and coaching others.

Many French organizations beyond CIBC are starting to use this matrix as a guide for more **appreciative** approaches to learning and recognition.



Here's an example of “opening up” recognition in a fairly structured organization.

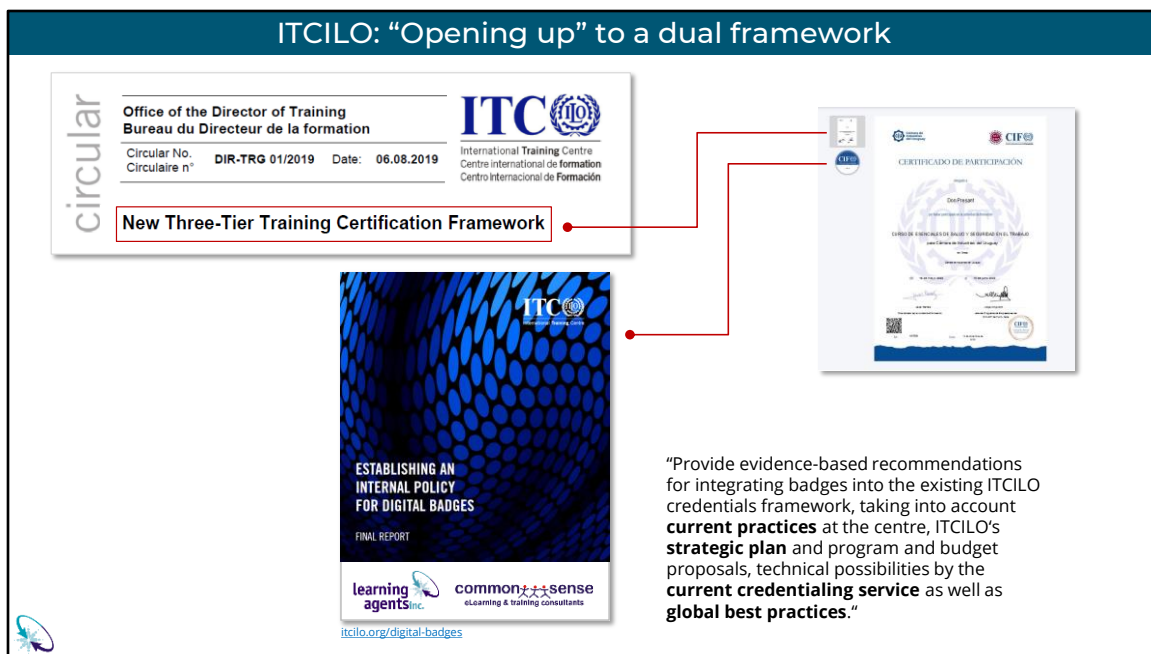
- The Inter-American Development Bank or IDB is based in Washington DC,
- Its focus is socio-economic development across Latin America and the Caribbean.
- IDB's digital credentials are designed to make visible the professional development of IDB staff and partners. This includes building communities of practice around economic development issues such as international water resource management. The team is quite innovative but as a whole,
- the IDB culture is somewhat hierarchical and formal academic qualifications are valued highly. So the team has needed to take care when introducing alternative credentials.



- I consulted with some smart people at IDB to develop a clear taxonomy for their badges that could flexibly accommodate a wide spectrum of formality
- Stella Porto will be going into more detail about this in her session on Monday, but this is a quick overview...
We could call the more formal IDB badges micro-credentials, but IDB avoids the term to prevent the fostering of a binary credential mindset, such as micro-credentials/badges, credit/non-credit, high value/low value, and so on.

Some things to highlight here...

- **Flexible recognition** badges are for emergent and customizable ways to recognize a wide variety of achievements. These can be pre-designed or ad hoc.
 - They have developed a Community Professional badge for individuals who have actively engaged in their community..
 - Plus, they're working towards Community Organization badges to recognize organizations as distinct actors who have formed partnerships, developed plans, collaborated on projects or helped create, transfer or adopt knowledge and innovation for development. Think of MoUs on steroids, or badges to track change management.
 - They also plan to develop other Organization badges that build on the notion of Learning Organizations and group recognition, so this area of the Framework will probably change shape over the short to medium term.
- So.. more than micro-credentials..
- They published a detailed public framework earlier this year that will evolve over time and can be adapted by others








I was able to apply my learning from the IDB experience to the needs of another development organization, this time in the United Nations System.

ITCILO is the training centre for the International Labour Organization. It runs training, learning and capacity development services for governments, employers' organizations, workers' organizations and other partners in support of Decent Work and sustainable development.

The Centre had implemented a pretty formal **three-tier certification framework** in 2019 and a digital credentialing solution to support it in September 2020. Their credentialing platform enabled them to issue digital badges as well as certificates, but there was no guidance for it, which was causing some confusion.

→ They asked Learning Agents and a partner in Vienna called common sense to make a series of recommendations for a complementary **badge** framework that could **open up** recognition to less formal contexts.

→ We based our recommendations on research that included their current practices, strategic plan, the affordances of the credentialing platform and effective recognition practices of other organizations such as IDB..

ITCILO: informal badged recognition opportunities to explore		
Events		<p>Suggested in platform provider blog, supported in focus groups.</p> <p>Examples include Speaker recognition, Participants (digital lanyard ID, reflective feedback, learning journeys at events)</p> <p>Addresses Centre goals: a) Digitalised and scalable solutions for development; b) Big data measurement of impact</p>
Membership		<p>Suggested from many sources.</p> <p>Examples include communities of practice, communities of inquiry, alumni networks.</p> <p>Addresses Centre goals: a) Individual and institutional capacity development; b) Organisational collaboration and co-creation</p>
Skills embedded in training courses		<p>Suggested in the survey and global HE practice.</p> <p>Examples include digital skills, machinery and domain speciality skills</p> <p>Addresses Centre goal: a) Individual and institutional capacity development</p>
Personalised learning journeys		<p>Suggested in the survey and global practice. Mapped to goals and outcomes for individuals and organisations</p> <p>Examples include badges as self-ratings of knowledge application, badges as modular learning journals.</p> <p>Addresses Centre goals: a) Learner autonomy, personalisation of learning; b) Capacity development: individual / institutional</p>
"Learning organisations"		<p>Suggested in global practice</p> <p>Examples emerging in the Centre's Transformation change management initiatives: helping training and non-training services to work together</p> <p>Addresses Centre goals: a) Individual and institutional capacity development; b) Organisational collaboration and co-creation</p>

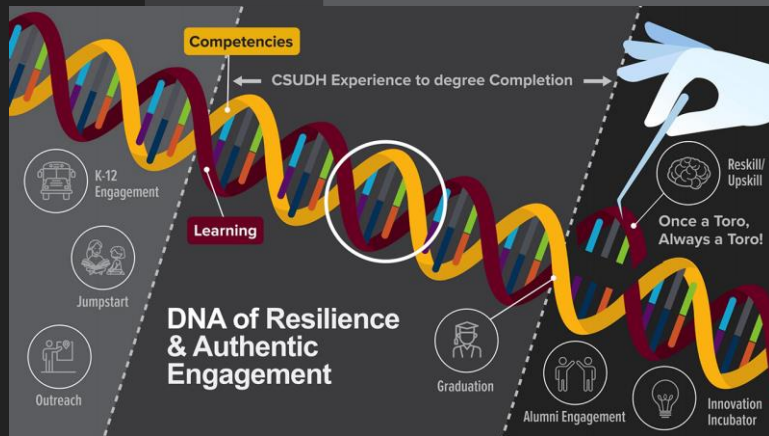
→ → →

Here are most of the recommendations.. the first three are not all that earth-shattering,

- but we were very pleased that they took on board the notion of personalized learning journeys that can include self-assertion
- and also the notion of learning organisations as an approach to change management

So again, more than micro-credentials..

CSUDH-Work Integration Network: Attract, Retain, Launch, Sustain



One last example, led by another member of our open recognition community who's presenting at the Badge Summit.. I'll try not to steal all her thunder.

Krystal Rawls is the Designer & Director of the Work Integration Network at Cal State Dominguez Hills, or CSUDH. Her focus is on the retention and ultimate success of First Generation and college transfer students..

High Impact Practices (HIPs) Embedded In Real Life

aacu.org/trending-topics/high-impact

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH IMPACT PRACTICES

Evidence-based teaching and learning practices

Setting appropriately high expectations of students.

Interaction with faculty and peers about substantive matters.

Real-world applications.

Experiences with diversity.

Frequent feedback.

Reflection and integrative learning.

Demonstrated competence.



The Teaching Center

San Diego State University

REFERENCES

Walt, George D., and David E. Schneider. High Impact Educational Practices: What They Are, Why They Matter to Students, and Why They Matter. Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2018.

General Education

Practical Competence

Personal and Social Development

Deep Learning

CSUDH



High-Impact Practices at CSUDH

I DON'T LIKE WHEN PEOPLE SAY, 'WE NEED TO PREPARE OUR STUDENTS FOR THE REAL WORLD.' THE TRUTH IS, SOME OF THEM ARE EXPERIENCING MORE OF A 'REAL WORLD' THAN WE WILL EVER KNOW. WHAT WE NEED TO DO IS PREPARE THEM FOR A BETTER WORLD.

Krystal's team does this through the implementation of High Impact learning Practices

- These practices are authentically embedded in the current lives and future goals of these students,
- who have overcome many barriers to reach here...



These high-impact practices include **co-creation** of recognition, and they're in the process of developing a framework to support it, borrowing liberally from the IDB framework as a starting point. These credentials are an alternative or supplementary narrative to the micro-credentials that CSUDH produces on another platform. If you're interested in learning more, I suggest you check out Krystal's Rapid Fire session called "Open Recognition for Retention" on Tuesday.



Before moving to the conclusion, I'd like to mention an exciting new solution for open recognition called ORCA.

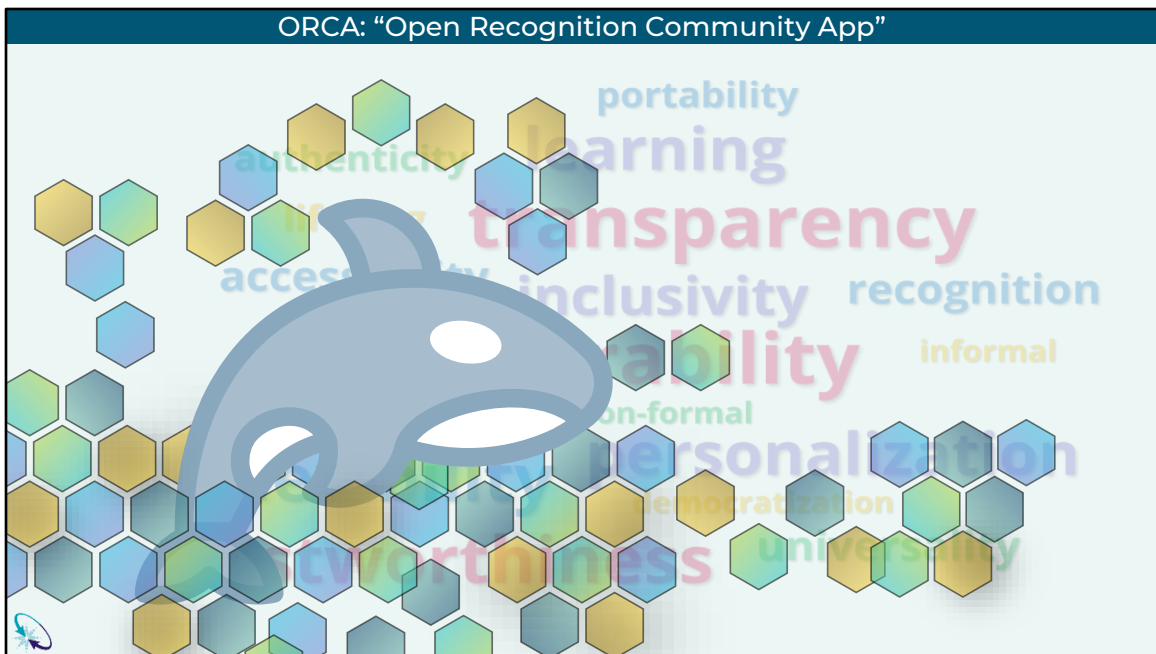


ORCA is a beta application, due to be released in December. It's the product of a collaboration between Serge Ravet of Reconnaissance in France and Nate Otto, formerly of Badgr, now Skybridge Skills. As an aside, Serge and Nate were the other co-authors of the Bologna Open Recognition Declaration in that car on the way to ePIC 2016.

ORCA is designed to support more open approaches to the recognition of individuals and inter-connected communities, using social learning in Communities of Practice as a model. ORCA is built on W3C standard verifiable claims, operating as Open Badges and Attributes. Attributes are lightweight tags that are independent of badges, but can be linked to them as skills, or values, or endorsements or any other kind of attribute. They are also used as word clouds that become rallying points for communities.



ORCA is all about helping individuals recognize themselves and others across different communities that can overlap and be components of larger communities, where attributes can be shared by the community and across communities. Much less about static certificates, much more about the recognition of emerging knowledge, context and connections.



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ORCA is an open source application with an open communication protocol. If you want to learn more about this at Badge Summit, I suggest you check out Nate Otto's table talk on Monday at 1230.



Wrapping Up

What was all this about?

This has been a pretty fast-paced session, let me see if I can leave you with a few things as we come to a close...



Open Badges began as an inclusive way to recognize authentic *lifewide* achievements and that power is still embedded in its DNA.

In 2023, we're in the early stages of reacting to the disruptive impact of generative AI which will have a lifewide impact of its own, in ways that are currently hard to predict. In the badges and micro-credentials world, there are lots of conversations and even pilot projects exploring how learning, assessment and recognition can benefit from large sets of unstructured, "life happens" data, that goes way beyond what can currently be captured in a micro-credential.

But let's not get carried away by the hype. For example, Mozilla never actually promised that earning badge **X** would automatically get you job **Y**, just like pressing a button...

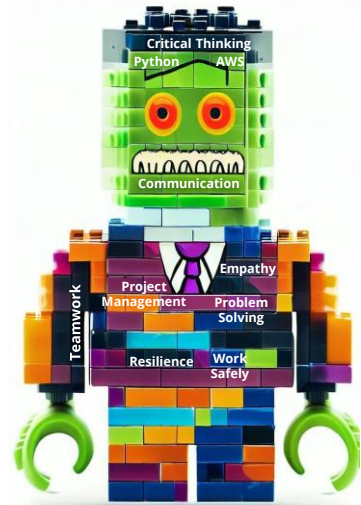
Badges and badge collections are more about helping you tell your story as it evolves, maybe with some verifiable support, as appropriate

Who gets to tell your story?



Adapted from
Ben Freeman CC-BY

or...



Adapted from Ben Freeman CC-BY

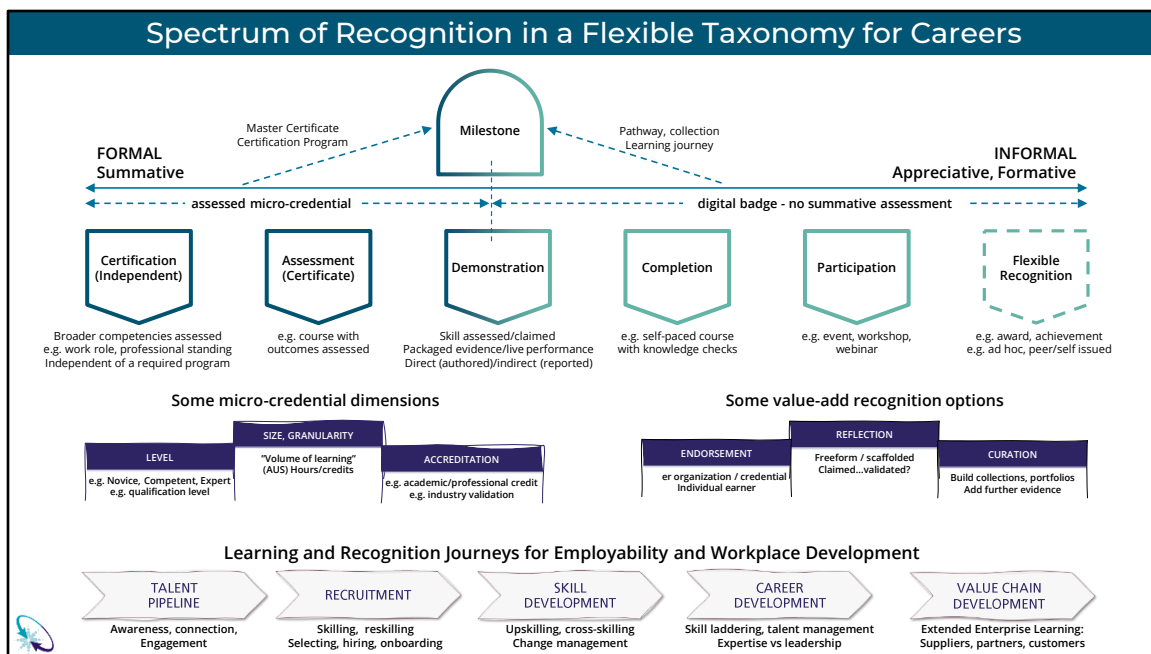
This is the kind of value we're trying to achieve with badges. It's about authentic connection: connecting people to themselves and to their communities.

There's a concept from Japan referring to what gives a person a sense of purpose, a reason for living, and it's all about balancing internal interests, abilities and goals with external concerns like making a living... it's called **ikigai**

- We have things we **love** to do.
- We have things we're **good at**
- We **have to** do some things to get paid
- And most of us would **like to** do things that the world needs

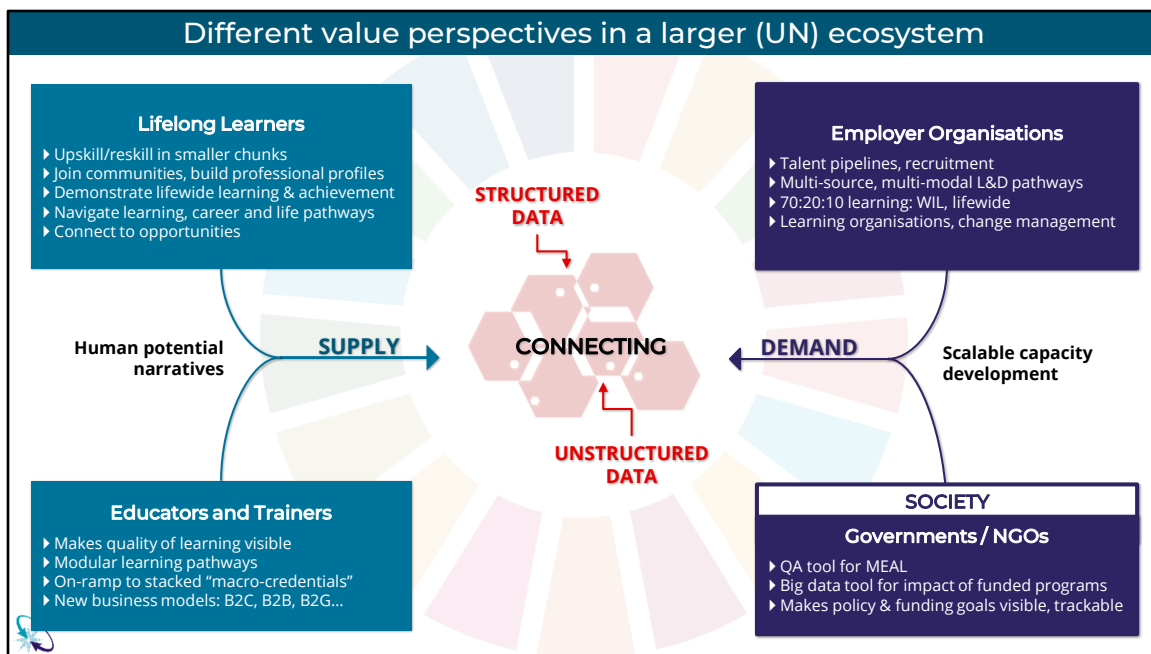
Harmonizing these can lead to fulfilling lives and careers..

- Compare that human-centred approach to one that focuses solely on skills...
- To this.



Like I was saying earlier, it's a big tent: we can support a broad spectrum of recognition from formal micro-credentials to informal badges. We do that by providing transparent taxonomies and clear quality guidelines to ensure that badges are fit for purpose and match expectations for everyone involved

This is the current version of a high-level meta-framework my company Learning Agents and CanCred are using to support our work. You're welcome to adapt for your own use if you like.



Speaking of high-level, we were asked by ITCILO to present a global view in a webinar for the broader UN community, and this is what we came up with:

We’re all stakeholders with diverse needs and goals in a larger ecosystem..

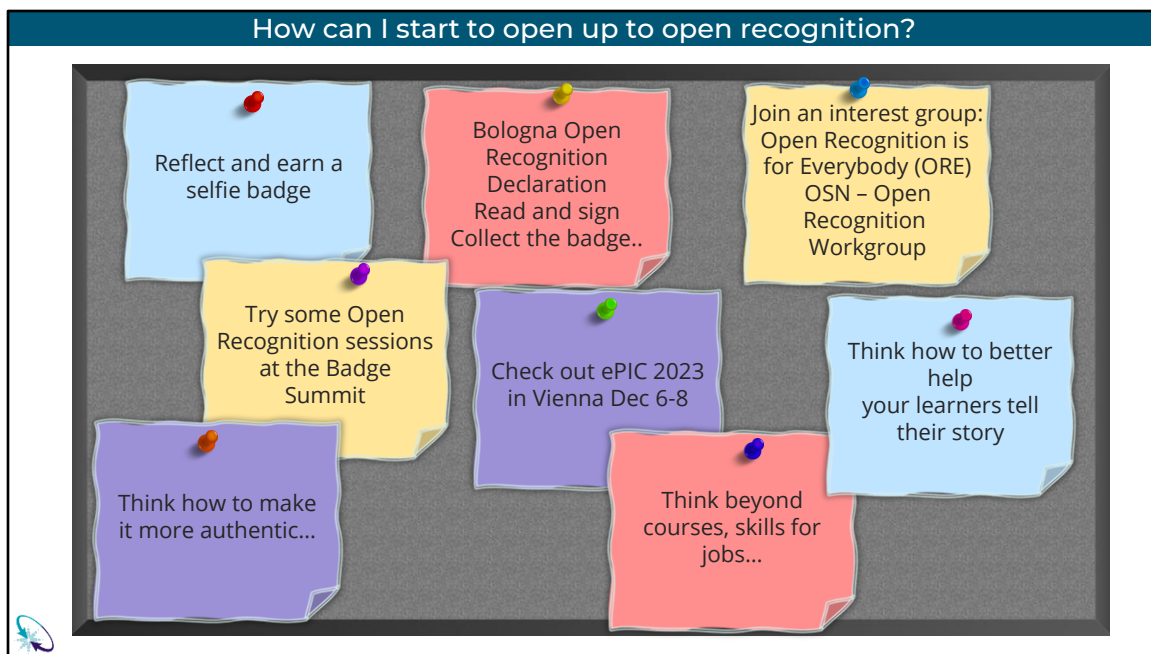
- Learners need to build skills, but also to connect to others to have rewarding lives and careers
- Employer organisations need to build the skills of their workers but also need to grow and change as organisations
- Educators and trainers need to show how they can make a difference in the lives of learners and help provide the skills that employers need
- Governments and NGOs need tools to inform their policies and programs
- On the one side you have many stories of stories of human potential..
- On the other you have the multiple goals at scale..
- The trick is to find ways to properly match these needs..
- And have a positive impact on the common good... without losing track of the individual.

Open Recognition Principles Proposed to OSN

- ▶ A commitment to making all relevant forms of recognition **visible and actionable**.
- ▶ A realization that **informal and non-formal recognition have legitimacy and value** by themselves and do not always need “translation” into formal systems, e.g., credit hours or university-defined competency frameworks.
- ▶ An acknowledgment that **skills are dynamic and evolving**—skills held by an individual may deepen or diminish over time and skills definitions will evolve with changing economic conditions and technologies
- ▶ An acknowledgment that **individuals and communities have a right to name their skills** and contribute to the larger community of skills definitions and frameworks, e.g., RSDs.
- ▶ A commitment to developing tools and networks that recognize not only standardized “top down” skills frameworks, but also foster the emergence of dynamic and future-oriented **“bottom-up” skills frameworks**.
- ▶ A commitment to facilitating partnerships that value **individual and community-generated** skills frameworks/RSDs.
- ▶ A commitment to **engagement and amplification of non-dominant cultures, “New Majority learners”, marginalized communities’** own definitions of RSDs and providing pathways to expand and/or create frameworks.



I worked with my colleagues in the OSN Open Recognition Workgroup to develop these principles as a way of messaging Open Recognition to the rest of the Open Skills Network but we think they can be useful for others as well



If you allow me, I'll make some suggestions about early steps you can take to open yourselves up to open recognition..

- You'll have a chance to earn at least one open recognition badge in this presentation..
- You can also read and sign the Bologna Open Recognition Declaration and earn another badge
- You can check out the open recognition sessions at the on-site Badge Summit next week – I have a list of them coming up..
- We also have a couple of community groups that you can look at joining
- You can join us at the ePIC 2023 conference in Vienna in December

In general...

- I encourage you to think beyond courses and programs, to how to activate the passion and potential of your learners, help them tell their stories

Open Recognition at the Badge Summit			
TUESDAY, JULY 18			
12:30 pm – 1:15 pm	Pre-conference webinar: How can we open up the recognition of lifelong learning? <i>Don Presant</i>		
MONDAY, JULY 24		TUESDAY, JULY 25	
8:30 am – 11:30 am	Pre-conference: Open Recognition Unconference <i>Open Recognition POSSE</i>	8:45 am – 9:15 am	Rapid Fire: Let's badge Normandy: toward a learning territory <i>Philippe Petitqueux</i>
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm	Table Talk: Badges in your community TODAY <i>Nate Otto</i>	9:45 am – 10:15 am	Rapid Fire: Open Recognition for retention <i>Krystal Rawls</i>
12:30 pm – 1:45 pm	Table Talk: Business model and technologies that support microcredential design <i>Justin Mason</i>	10:45 am – 11:15 am	Rapid Fire: Building a sustainable digital badge initiative <i>Stella Porto, Romina Flores</i>
2:15 pm – 3:30 pm	Table Talk: Microcredential Developer OER <i>Justin Mason</i>	2:00 pm – 2:45 pm	Long Panel: Expanding Open Recognition through organizations, communities and regions <i>Julie Keane, Stella Porto, Krystal Rawls, Philippe Petitqueux, Don Presant</i>
3:45 pm	Badgesplaining: Open Recognition is for Everyone <i>Doug Belshaw, Laura Hilliger</i>	3:00 pm – 3:45 pm	Long Panel: Trust us: Open Recognition and Microcredentials as Proof <i>Doug Belshaw, Sheryl Grant</i>
WEDNESDAY, JULY 26			
9:00 am – 12:00 pm	Post-conference Workshop: Getting weird with the Open Badges Recognition Alliance <i>Open Recognition POSSE</i>		

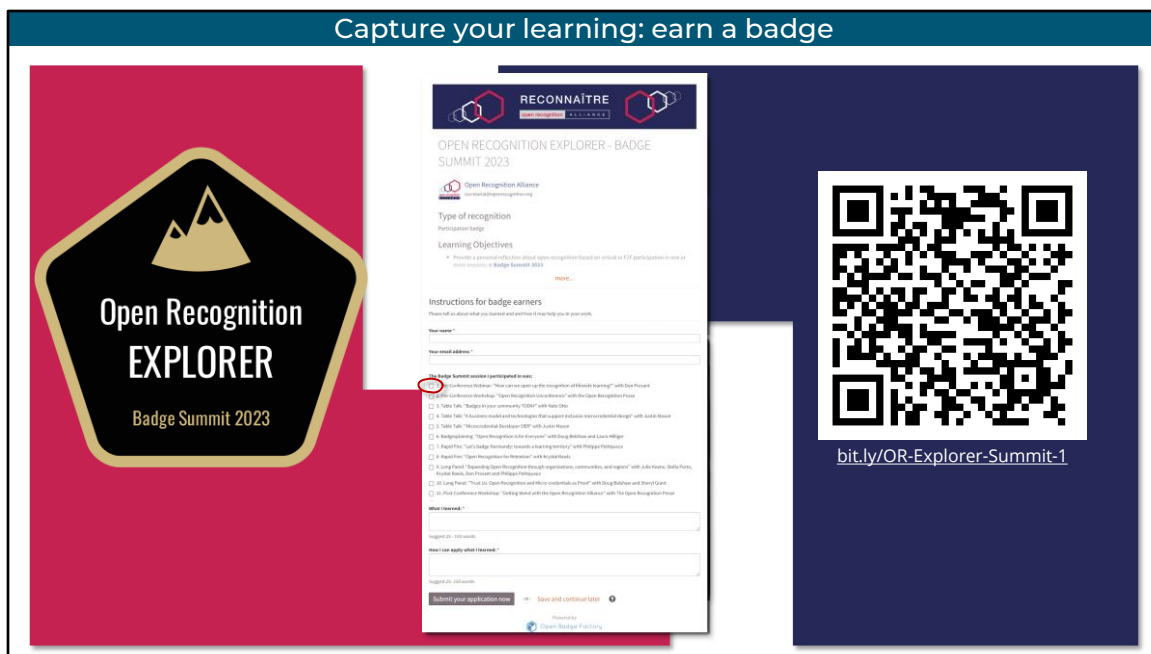


If you're interested in learning more about Open Recognition, here's the list of Open Recognition sessions at Badge Summit 2023..

- First thing Monday morning, we have a pre-conference **unconference on open recognition**, hosted by what I'm calling the Open Recognition Posse.
Unconference means a fluid agenda that we'll assemble based on the needs and numbers of the participants: that can include more 101 stuff or breakouts for deep dives into ways of opening up recognition, or even going full open
- In the first set of Table Talks after lunch, **Nate Otto** can talk to you about how the Open Recognition Community App or ORCA can organically recognize the things that matter in your community, starting small, and refining the badge system as you go,,
- Justin Mason can talk to you about how Clarkson University is having success partnering with organizations to co-design & co-value microcredentials with an inclusive design mindset..
- ... and Justin is back in the second set of table talks to share his Micro-credential Developer OERToolkit, a guided process for developing co-curricular micro-credentials.
- Later on Monday afternoon, Doug Belshaw and Laura Hilliger will be badgesplaining how Open Recognition is for everyone, using the Anne Hilliger example that I was sketching earlier..
- Tuesday morning kicks off with a Rapid Fire session on Let's Badge Normandy, **the** flagship example from France, demonstrating how Open Badges coupled with open recognition practices can make a significant contribution to the creation of a learning territory.
- Krystal Rawls from Cal State has a session in the second set of Rapid Fires exploring how Open Recognition can increase retention of underrepresented minority students, acting as a catalyst for student engagement.
- In the third set of Rapid Fires, you can learn more from Stella Porto and Romina Flores how they

are guiding their badge initiative within the Inter-American Development Bank. This will be less about open recognition, though she will be featuring their badge taxonomy as a way to **open up** recognition..

- Tuesday afternoon, I'll be part of a long panel showcasing real-world examples of Open Recognition systems that promote equity and lifelong learning, led by Julie Keane of Participate.com with Stella Porto of Inter-American Development Bank, Krystal from CSUDH, and Philippe from Let's Badge Normandy
- Later in the afternoon, Old Guard members Doug Belshaw and Sheryl Grant will look back to 2010 and revisit the origins of Open Recognition and micro-credentials, and discuss the evolution, influence, and potential challenges and impact of both on trust in learning. I'm really looking forward to that one, should be a great capstone.
- If you're sticking around on Wednesday, we'd love to see you at our post-conference workshop, where we'll be discussing next steps for open recognition, including the exploration of an open recognition toolkit, and how we can advance open recognition in the Americas, learning from initiatives like Let's Badge Normandy and Reconnaissance, the Open Recognition Alliance in Europe..



Finally, did you learn something today? I hope so...

If so, here's your chance to capture that learning now with a Participation badge from the Open Recognition Alliance. And not just participation, we're asking for some **light** reflection that can help you remember and help us improve future presentations.

For this session, if you complete this form by ticking the first box and telling me what you learned and how you might apply that in your work, I'll issue a digital badge that will contain a speaking notes version of today's presentation deck and a link to the recording, if I can get permission.

So you'll have the content of the presentation and what you thought about it, all in one digital package.
Not a micro-credential, more of a learning capsule that may be useful going forward.

As you can see, you'll also have an itinerary of the other open recognition sessions



epic.openrecognition.org



community.openskillsnetwork.org



app.participate.com

Join the conversations

Don's Ambassador badge

(claim your badge...)



bit.ly/OR-Explorer-Summit-1



bit.ly/OR-A-CCP

We're pretty much at the end of my rant, I've got some more detail here about joining the various conversations about open recognition in addition to the Badge Summit..

→ ePIC 2023 in Vienna is shaping up to be a great year for this conference with some names you'll recognize, such as Badge Summit's very own Noah Geisel, Meena Naik from JFF Labs, Krystal Rawls from CSUDH and others from the Open Recognition posse.. and Nate Otto and Serge Ravet plan to release ORCA 1.0 at the conference in December.

→ Meanwhile, you'll be very welcome to join one or both of the communities of practice we have going, either the Open Recognition Workgroup in the Open Skills Network...

→ or Keep Badges Weird on Participate.com,

→ now transitioning to a new name, ORE: "Open Recognition is for Everybody".. because it is.

→ There's my Open Recognition ambassador badge that links out to my portfolio.. it's got links to other presentations, if you're interested

→ And here's that application again for the Open Recognition Explorer badge, which is a great way to join the conversation!

I'm happy to take questions if we have any time left.