



The Rise of Microcredentials in Education

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The Rise of Micro-Credentials in Education



The way the micro-credential is structured you are given assignments with just enough information to force you to dig a bit deeper. I felt I was supported by the instructor and by my peers in the cohort. This has been an excellent learning experience for me and I would highly recommend it.

mi•cro - cre•den•tial
|'mʌkrəʊ| |krɪ'denʃ(ə)|

noun

A mini-degree or certificate in a specific topic/content area.

Micro-Credentials have been on the rise in recent years and continue to gain momentum within school districts and among educators globally. Approaches to Professional Development within education have come under scrutiny in recent years due to their insufficient effects on classroom practice.

[The New Teacher Project](#) released [The Mirage Report](#) on August 4, 2015. A two-year study on teacher professional development in School Districts. The study found the following:

- School systems are making a massive and laudable investment in teacher improvement—far larger than most people realize.
- Most teachers do not appear to improve substantially from year to year, even though many have not yet mastered critical skills.
- We found no evidence that any particular kind or amount of professional development consistently helps teachers improve.
- School systems are failing to help teachers understand how to improve—or even that they have room to improve at all.

“The micro-credential forced my hand in getting active with social media. Through using social media, I’ve learned how valuable of a tool it can be for making connections with other educators and schools around the world!”

The study also recommended ways for schools and districts to improve on teacher professional development:

- Define “development” clearly, as observable, measurable progress toward an ambitious standard for teaching and student learning.
- Give teachers a clear, deep understanding of their own performance and progress.
- Encourage improvement with meaningful rewards and consequences.

I would never have guessed that I would be traveling to k-12 districts all over the country talking about purposeful technology integration. That's because 5 years ago, I could tell you ZERO about technology, much less, authentic and meaningful use of technology in the classroom. I didn't use tech in my class because I was afraid of it. That all changed once I joined COETAIL and became a Google Certified Trainer. Certificate Of Educational Technology And Information Literacy (COETAIL) and the Google Trainer certification go hand-in-hand. While the Google Trainer certification gave me more of the tech skill-set, COETAIL gave me the mindset to be an innovative leader to push thinking and change the way we think about education. COETAIL and the GET program is the perfect partnership!

Reports such as The Mirage report have added to the rise of the micro-credential in education as meaningful and purposeful learning that leads to real change within school organizations.

There are three very clear reasons why Micro-credentials are on the rise in education.

Micro-credentials:

Define “development” clearly, as observable, measurable progress toward an ambitious standard for teaching and student learning.

The “stackability” of micro-credentials lead to observable and measurable progress. As educators move through a micro-credential they earn “badges” of completion on their way to meeting standards and improving student learning. Micro-credentials like [Eduro Learning’s](#) that are backed by regionally accredited universities allow teachers to earn university credit while finishing a micro-credentials and guaranteeing the rigor of the credential program based on teacher standards.

Give teachers a clear, deep understanding of their own performance and progress.

Micro-credentials that use a [mastery learning](#) approach allow educators to monitor their own performance and progress through a certificate program, while at the same time being held to high standards by their colleagues and instructors. Furthermore, Micro-credential programs are job embedded, allowing for educators to take a reflective approach to learning. As educators learn new skills, theories and concepts they can immediately apply their new learning in their classrooms and then reflect on them in an open and supportive environment within the learning community. The reflective approach to learning in a professional development setting has shown proven results (see [J. Moon](#), 1999 and [D. Schon](#), 1990) in education. Applying this approach to an online micro-credential leads to deeper learning within the learning community.

Encourage improvement with meaningful rewards and consequences.

By using strong research based approaches to learning, being flexible and being online, micro-credentials are on the rise. Progressive school districts are starting to adopt micro-credentials for educators across the district and partnering with companies like Eduro Learning to facilitate the courses and oversee the credential process. By focusing their approach on long-term, stackable learning modules, school districts are using micro-credentials to change the culture of their schools and districts. By using a micro-credential program that is supported by a university, school districts reward educators with steps on the salary scale as they progress through their micro-credential. On the other end, administrators can follow the progress of educators through their micro-credential program and use it as a way to evaluate educators towards their individual professional development goals.

For many years organizations like Google, Apple and Microsoft have been rewarding educators with badges if they take a set of courses. These badges or micro-credentials have lead to teachers “badging up” their knowledge in the educational technology field. Being able to become a “Google Certified Educator” or an “Apple Distinguished Educators” or a “Microsoft Innovative Educator” was the real start of micro-credentials in schools. However, they are not backed by any university credits and at times the rigor of their programs have been called into question as these companies focused on badging educators with tool knowledge rather than focusing on authentic and purposeful use of technology.

The difference between these badge programs and a true micro-credential degree is the backing of universities in awarding continuing education credits that can lead to pay increases and/or teacher re-certification. A quality micro-credential degree should have university credits attached to insure the rigor and authenticity of the program. Schools, school districts and educators can all benefit from the rise of the micro-credential and its influence on the culture of teaching and learning.



I think the biggest take away has been the total churning out step by step process of making us understand each and every aspect of the needs, skills and demands required out of a teacher by enabling us to be more confident and helping others to understand in the same way especially owning a blog.

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