The Changing Labor Market, Non-Degree Credentials and the Role of WIBs

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The Rise of Non-Degree Credentials

Rapidly changing labor market

Increased need for lifelong learning, just in time training

Proliferation of different types of NDCs
Many Adults Hold NDCs

In 2016, a total of 27 percent of adults reported having a nondegree credential—a postsecondary certificate, a certification, or a license. (NCES 2017)
### Types and Definitions of Non-Degree Credentials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Sub baccalaureate credit certificates</strong></td>
<td>Credential awarded by an educational institution for completion of a subbaccalaureate credit educational program, usually less than one year in length (short-term and long-term credit)</td>
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<td><strong>Non-credit certificates</strong></td>
<td>Credential awarded by an institution (educational or workplace) for completion of a noncredit educational program</td>
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<td><strong>Apprenticeship</strong></td>
<td>Credential awarded after completion of structured educational and workplace program based on industry and occupational standards.</td>
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<td><strong>Industry certification</strong></td>
<td>Credential awarded by an industry body or governmental agency for demonstration of skills typically via examination based on industry or occupational standards.</td>
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<td><strong>Occupational or professional licensure</strong></td>
<td>Credential awarded by a governmental agency for demonstration of skills in a specific occupation and sometimes also completion of an educational program; often required to work in an occupation.</td>
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<td><strong>Badges, microcredentials</strong></td>
<td>Credential awarded for completion of a short program of study or demonstration of a targeted set of skills; these are newly emerging and are still being developed.</td>
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What Do We Know About NDCs?

• Awarded by a wide range of organizations
  • Colleges, industry groups, unions, government, etc.

• Awarded based on a variety of criteria
  – Course completion, work experience, examination, etc.

• Learning occurs in many locales
  – At school, at work, informally

• Data is located in many sources
  • State data systems, industry data, national surveys
“The Wild West”

- Understanding quality of NDCs is incredibly difficult.
- There is no single system, set of standards or mechanism to help workers, employers, policymakers, and educational institutions define quality or measure it.
- Understanding which NDCs are quality varies by:
  - Geography
  - Industry
  - Consumer
What is a “Quality” NDC?

- Quality from who’s perspective
  - Credential holder vs. employer vs. educational institution vs. policymaker
  - Potential tension in goals
  - Equity implications

- Potential variation based on context, e.g. industry, occupation, labor market, organization

- Variation by type of NDC
Defining Quality for Emerging Credentials

• Conception of quality is similar for traditional and emerging credentials though with slightly different emphasis

• Task force framework provides most broad outlook
  – Outcomes for individuals and society
  – Intentional design
  – Student centered institutions, policies and practices

• Rutgers EERC non-degree credential quality conceptual framework provides similarly broad framework
Uses of Conceptual Frameworks for Quality

• Importance of examining equity

• Quality elements as a guide

• Quality elements as diagnostic tool

• Quality relative to goals

• Quality relative to context
Key Elements of Non-Degree Credential Quality

- **Credential design.** This element includes numerous features, usually decided on by the credential grantor, that define what a credential represents in terms of the competencies it marks and how it seeks to do so.

- **Competencies.** These are the skills and knowledge that the credential aims to represent.

- **Market Processes.** This term refers to the ways that a credential comes to be recognized and have currency in the world.

- **Outcomes.** The accumulation of competencies represented by credentials are expected to generate outcomes of value, typically in terms of the educational, employment, and social advancement of individuals, employers, and society.
Conceptual Model of Non-Degree Credential Quality
Credential Design

- Competency relevance
- Instructional process
- Assessment process – initial and ongoing
- Stackability and portability
- Transparency
- Accessibility and affordability
Competencies

• Demonstrated competencies
  – Including general knowledge, specialized skills, personal skills, and social skills
Market Processes

- Transparency initiatives
- Awareness of the credential and/or the credential grantor
- Endorsements or validations
- State regulation
- Employer hiring practice and politics
- Educational institutions recognition of learning
Outcomes

- Individual economic outcomes
- Individual educational outcomes
- Individual social outcomes
- Employer outcomes
- Societal outcomes
Implications for Policy and Practice

• Need to….
  – Create awareness of non-degree credential quality and how to measure it.
  – Collect better information on non-degree credential quality and outcomes.
  – Develop and promote systems to assess non-degree credential quality.
  – Promote and understand the use of data on non-degree credential quality.

• States are currently developing quality measures that draw from elements of this framework.
Create awareness of non-degree credential quality and how to measure it

- Promote integration of NDCs into educational programs
- Engage conversations about NDCs with employers
- Promote competency-based hiring linked with NDCs
- Facilitate conversations among stakeholders about NDC quality
Collect better information on non-degree credential quality and outcomes

• Integrate into data systems across institutions

• Prompt industry to collect and report on industry certification

• Create incentives to add to tracking systems
Develop and promote systems to assess non-degree credential quality

- State reporting and rating systems
- Eligible Training Provider List
- Consumer report cards
- Credential Registry
- Assessments by educational institutions
Promote and understand the use of data on non-degree credential quality

- Examine data to guide improvements at educational institutions to value NDCs where appropriate

- Promote employer understanding and use of relevant NDCs in hiring and promotion

- Guide policy discussions to ensure NDCs are effectively used to promote economic and educational success
The Role of WIBs Do in NDC Quality

- Local boards work with education providers to create training programs and NDCs
- Local boards help employers understand NDCs
- Local boards help clients choose NDCs
- Local boards make decisions on funding NDCs
- Local boards collect and use data on NDCs
Institutions and Local Areas

• Use/Get credit assessments (ACE)
• Develop credentials with local employers and other interested parties
• Use Prior Learning Assessment (reassessing)
• Offer industry recognized credentials
• Develop competency based learning programs and pathways
• Use a Sector Strategy approach
• Use industry boards and committees
• Develop marketing campaigns
• Collect and share data on credential outcomes
Employers

- Value can be hard to determine
- Relationships are critical (Sector strategies and boards)
- Industry recognized credentials have value (example: In manufacturing MSSC (Manufacturing Skills Standards Council), NIMS, and AWS)
- Used as a screener or supplement
- Competencies are an important language
- Data
Determining Quality, Documenting Quality, and making Quality Transparent:

- State Longitudinal Data System Work
- TAACCCT grant reporting – Missouri
- Financial aid or workforce training dollars (Eligible Training Provider List)
- Create a list – New Jersey’s *Industry Valued Credentials* list
- Collect data including non-credit credentials
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