Micro-What? Innovating Through Skills-Based Micro-credentials

UBC Celebrate Learning Week

UBC Extended Learning, May 9, 2022

Agenda

- ✅ Welcome, Land Acknowledgement and Introductions
- ✅ Housekeeping and General Items
- ✅ Panelist: Larry Bouthillier
- ✅ Q&A for Larry
- ✅ Panelists: Kate Stewart & Aika Sembay
- ✅ Q&A for Kate, Aika and all panelists
- ✅ Wrap-Up

Larry Bouthillier

Executive Director, Extended Learning

What is a Micro-Credential?

"A Micro-Credential is a certification of assessed competencies that is additional, alternate, complementary to, or a component of a formal qualification."

- Colleges & Institutes Canada, 2021

"A microcredential is a representation of learning, awarded for completion of a short program that is focused on a discrete set of competencies (i.e., skills, knowledge, attributes), and is sometimes related to other credentials."

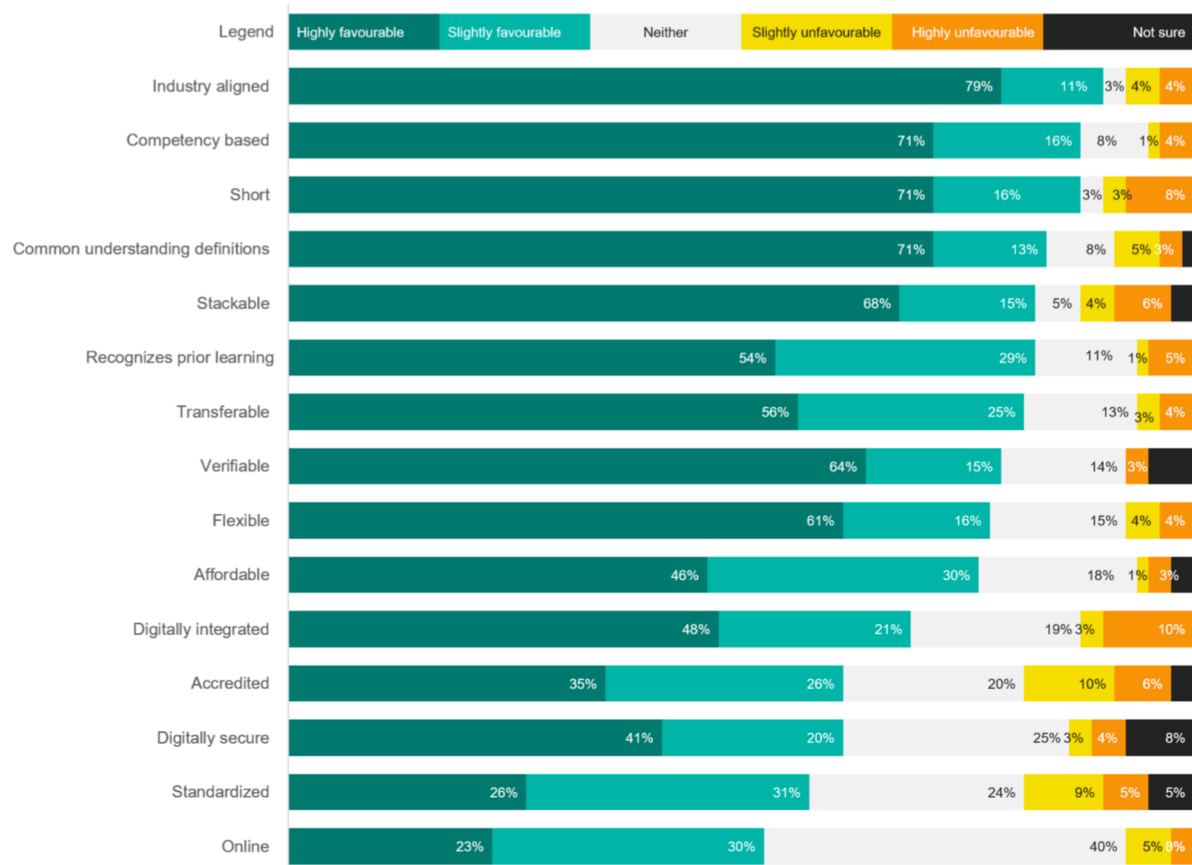- Higher Ed Quality Council of Ontario, 2021

- Short
- Focused
- Competency-based
- May be stackable
- per CICan: the requirement of assessment, the close involvement with industry, and the aim of meeting labour market needs with workplace competencies

Characteristics of a Micro-Credential

Legend: Highly favourable | Slightly favourable | Neither | Slightly unfavourable | Highly unfavourable | Not sure

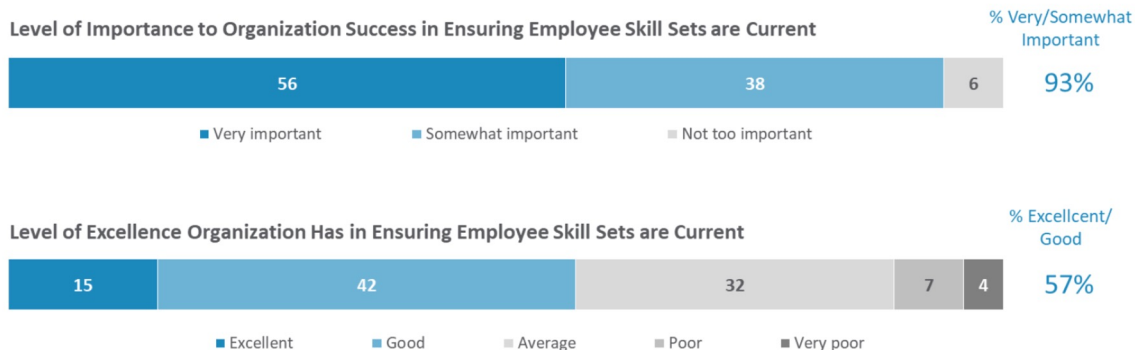| Characteristic	Highly favourable	Slightly favourable	Neither	Slightly unfavourable	Highly unfavourable	Not sure
Industry aligned	79%	11%	3%	4%	4%	
Competency based	71%	16%	8%	1%	4%	
Short	71%	16%	3%	3%	8%	
Common understanding definitions	71%	13%	8%	5%	3%	
Stackable	68%	15%	5%	4%	6%	
Recognizes prior learning	54%	29%	11%	1%	5%	
Transferable	56%	25%	13%	3%	4%	
Verifiable	64%	15%	14%	3%		
Flexible	61%	16%	15%	4%	4%	
Affordable	46%	30%	18%	1%	3%	
Digitally integrated	48%	21%	19%	3%	10%	
Accredited	35%	26%	20%	10%	6%	
Digitally secure	41%	20%	25%	3%	4%	8%
Standardized	26%	31%	24%	9%	5%	5%
Online	23%	30%	40%	5%		

Source: *The Status of Microcredentials in Canadian Colleges and Institutes, Environmental Scan Report*
Colleges & Institutes Canada, 2021

Figure 1: Level of importance and excellence in ensuring employee skill sets are current

Level of Importance to Organization Success in Ensuring Employee Skill Sets are Current

% Very/Somewhat Important

56	38	6

93%

■ Very important ■ Somewhat important ■ Not too important

Level of Excellence Organization Has in Ensuring Employee Skill Sets are Current

% Excellcent/ Good

15	42	32	7	4

57%

■ Excellent ■ Good ■ Average ■ Poor ■ Very poor

Figure 2: Ease in hiring people with needed skills

Level of Ease in Hiring People with the Kinds of Skills Needed

% Easy

33%

4	29	41	24	2

■ Very easy ■ Somewhat easy ■ Not too easy ■ Not at all easy ■ Don't know/Not sure

Survey of ~100s of employers, companies say they need skilled people, but many aren't sure how to do that - they need partners. Both for educating their staff, but for filling the pipeline of potential employees with skilled people.
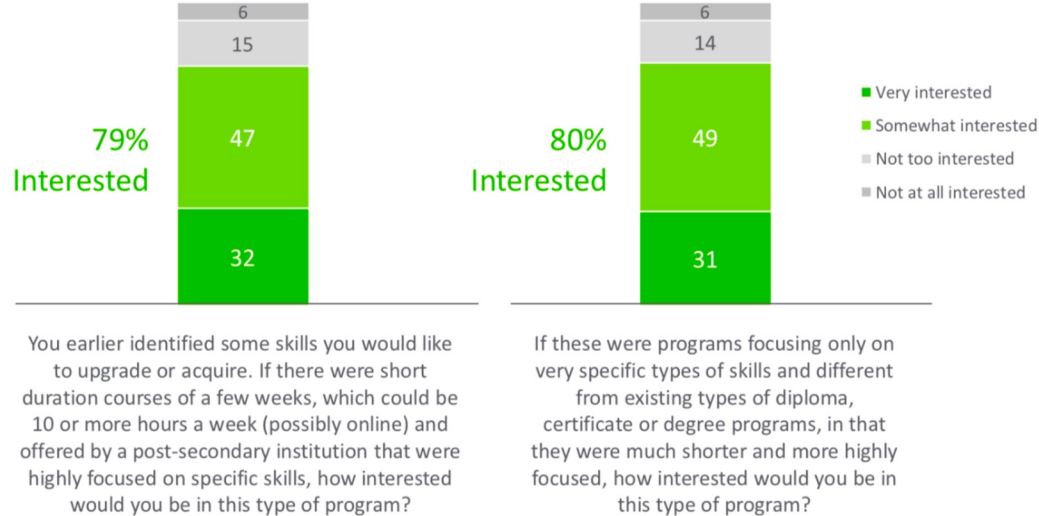
Source: MICRO- CREDENTIALS, Mainstreaming Mid-Career Skills Development, Roadmaps and Challenges, Higher Education Strategy Associates (HESA), 2020

INTEREST IN MICROCREDENTIALS - EMPLOYEES

There is a high level of interest among employees in short duration, highly focused courses where they could upgrade or acquire skills.

79% Interested	6	
	15	
	47	
	32	

80% Interested	6	
	14	
	49	
	31	

- Very interested
- Somewhat interested
- Not too interested
- Not at all interested

You earlier identified some skills you would like to upgrade or acquire. If there were short duration courses of a few weeks, which could be 10 or more hours a week (possibly online) and offered by a post-secondary institution that were highly focused on specific skills, how interested would you be in this type of program?

If these were programs focusing only on very specific types of skills and different from existing types of diploma, certificate or degree programs, in that they were much shorter and more highly focused, how interested would you be in this type of program?

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MAEST Support 2020-2022

- \>$9M provided for up to 50 Micro-Credential Programs in BC

- 13 Micro-credentials (and similar) funded at UBC-V in the last ~two years
- \>$1M
- 6 Departments and Faculties
    - ExL
    - Computer Science
    - Medicine
    - Forestry
    - Land and Food Systems
    - Allard

Barriers & Challenges

Faculty & Institutions:

- Finding the balance between brevity and mastery
- Promotion of programs - this is different from degree programs
- Low-cost, short duration can create sustainability challenges (financial & operational)
- Gap exists between employer need and learner demand
- Competition for low-cost, short courses is fierce:
  - *U.S. businesses are eligible to receive up to 500 scholarships for Google Career Certificates on Coursera, valid through December 18, 2024. https://grow.google/employee-development

Learners:

- lack of time (31%)
- cost (18%)
- a belief that relevant short courses do not exist (16%)

Everyone:

- Credibility and a common understanding of what these are (implications on frameworks and branding)

Distinction between DCs and micro-creds

- "Badges" are a useful way to communicate an achievement, not the achievement itself

Kate Stewart

Senior Consultant, Program Development

Academic Services, Extended Learning

Aika Sembay

Manager, Program Development, Research & Design

Academic Services, Extended Learning

Workforce and Educational Trends

The changing nature of work requires continuous reskilling and upskilling:

- Digitization, accelerated by the pandemic, calls for adaptability, resilience and continuous learning: the World Economic Forum holds that 50% of employees will need reskilling by 2025.

- As of 2020 the unrealized value of skill Canadian skill shortages was estimated at $25 billion, an increase from $15 billion in 2015 (Conference Board of Canada).

Figure 1. The changing nature of a career

Length of career	Average tenure in a job	Half-life of a learned skill
60 to 70 years	4.5 years	5 years

Sources: Lynda Gratton and Andrew Scott, *The 100-Year Life: Living and Working in an Age of Longevity* (Bloomsbury, 2016); Douglas Thomas and John Seely Brown, *A New Culture of Learning: Cultivating the Imagination for a World of Constant Change* (CreateSpace, January 4, 2011).

Deloitte University Press | dupress.deloitte.com

Introducing the New BC Micro-credential Framework

- Micro-credentialing helps address labour market skills gaps to create a more resilient workforce, and increases accessibility for learners who may not have the time or financial means to complete a full degree.

- **Micro-credentialing is a BC governmental priority**: the pilot projects funded under the BC Ministry of Advanced Education Skills and Training (MAEST) grant have helped inform a new BC Micro-credential Framework and Guiding Principles:

- **BC Micro-credential Framework definition:**

> **Definition**
>
> Micro-credentials recognize stand-alone, short duration learning experiences that are competency-base, align with industry, employer, community and/or Indigenous community needs and can be assessed and recognized for employment or learning purposes

BC Micro-credential Framework: Guiding Principles

Principle	Description
Access:	Should increase access to education, employment and be accessible to a range of learners. Tuition should align with the duration, skill level, learners targeted and expected micro-credential outcomes.
Quality:	Developed and assessed through a process that assures value / and facilitates recognition by employers and post-secondary institutions.
Relevance:	Provide opportunities for in-demand upskilling/reskilling, and align with labour market demand, employer/learner needs, Indigenous needs, government priorities, and institutional excellence/expertise.
Collaboration & coodination:	Developed through engagement/collaboration with relevant education partners, Indigenous communities and stakeholders. Post-secondary institutions should, where possible, collaborate to reduce unnecessary duplication and enhance laddering/transfer opportunities.
Employer and industry engagement:	Employers and industry sectors will be engaged in the identification and development of micro-credentials and ongoing refinements.
Clarity & transparency:	The micro-credential's purpose, benefit, delivery and recognized competencies should be clear to prospects prior to enrolment.

Current Draft UBC (Vancouver) Non-credit Credential Policies

Level	Assessment Type			Learning Activities Scope
	Learner presence verified	**Completion of all tasks verified**	**Performance level verified**	
Certificate	✓	✓	✓	Minimum 150 hrs
Micro-certificate (UBCV)	✓	✓	✓	Minimum of 50 hrs
Certificate of Proficiency	✓	✓	✓	< 150 hrs (UBCO) < 50 hrs (UBCV)
Certificate of Completion	✓	✓		< 150 hrs (UBCO) < 50 hrs (UBCV)
Certificate of Participation	✓			< 150 hrs (UBCO) < 50 hrs (UBCV)

Senate Approval Path

⬍

Faculty /Extended Learning Approval Path

Note: policy is undergoing review and may be subject to change.

UBC Micro-certificate in Blockchain Innovation and Implementation

- **8-week, two-course (55 hour)** program for professionals seeking to champion blockchain strategy and implementation, developed by Blockchain@UBC in partnership with UBC Extended Learning.

- Learners evaluate blockchain use cases and opportunities, and get to create a real world blockchain solution in a hands-on, industry-assessed design challenge.

✔ 100% online, part-time   ✔ Self-paced with live instructor-led sessions

✔ Industry and academic expert perspectives   ✔ Real-life case studies and applied projects

✔ Networking opportunities

UBC Blockchain Micro-certificate: Sample Learner Feedback

"The concepts covered in the course built logically from week to week to prepare for the Design Challenge. It was helpful to see how other participants applied blockchain concepts to areas of interest to them - **instructor feedback** on those ideas was very helpful in understanding how blockchain could be best utilized."

"**The overall team design component** was really useful. It definitely helped having **different viewpoints** when trying to build a blockchain application."

"The course really benefited from having so many **diverse and interesting students**. I **learned a lot just by listening to the Q&A in class**. I also really liked the recorded videos/slides. Those were the BEST way to learn the fundamentals."

"Fantastic program that provided a **great opportunity to meet others** who are interested in blockchain technology."

"Opportunity to **network with individuals from a wide range of backgrounds**. Passionate instructors. Awesome guests at the networking event. Expert **interview podcasts**."

"The instructors set an upbeat, positive tone for this course and made an otherwise complex subject modular and **more approachable**, and more **easily understood**."

UBC Micro-certificate in Cybersecurity Strategy and Risk Management

This is part-time program designed for leaders and professionals who need to understand, assess and champion cybersecurity initiatives.

Developed and taught by industry experts, this 55-hour interactive online program offers proactive approaches for creating strategic cybersecurity policies and managing cybersecurity threats within your organization.
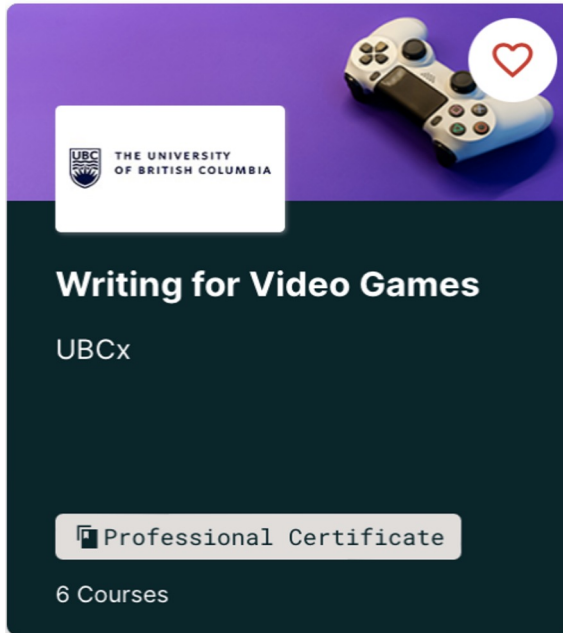
Come away with a holistic, foundational understanding of good cybersecurity hygiene, practical strategies to anticipate, mitigate and respond to cyber risks, and the skills to communicate and gain support for your plans.

- **Format:** 100% online instructor-supported with weekly live sessions, combined with self-paced independent study
- **Duration:** Two courses of four weeks each, plus a one-week break in between courses

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Professional Certificate in Writing for Video Games

Offered by UBC's School of Creative Writing on [edX.org](edX.org)

Writing for Video Games

UBCx

🔲 Professional Certificate

6 Courses

In this Professional Certificate Program, you'll learn the tools and techniques of writing for video games in a comprehensive program designed by successful, working game writers and teachers.
From story and character development to worldbuilding and interactive narrative, this Certificate will help you excel in a business that requires creative, flexible team players.

- 6 courses, total of 30 weeks
- 100% online, self-paced
- 4-6 hours estimated weekly commitment

Contact Us

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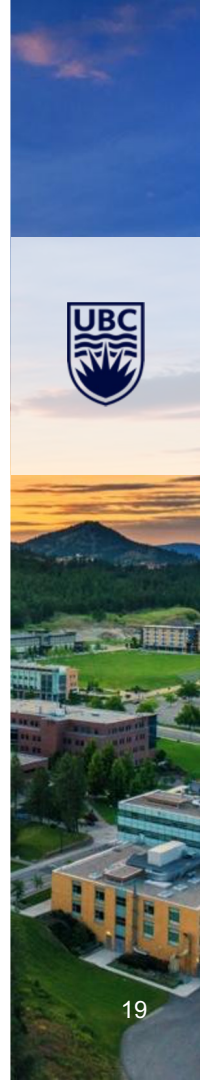larry.bouthillier@ubc.ca

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Thank you for joining us!