Human Learning: The role of Durable Skills in Workplace Credentialing

Making durable skills visible
11/7/25

Presentation Outline

Topic

Welcome and overview of Education Design Lab

Basic Tenant: Skills Visibility

Durable skills: What are they? How do we define them?

Validating + Integrating Durable Skills

Discussion

Format:
1. *Engage throughout- ask questions along the way*
2. *Polling questions embedded*

About the Lab

We co-design, test, and build new models and approaches to better address program **affordability**, **relevance**, **portability**, and **visibility** in a rapidly changing knowledge economy.
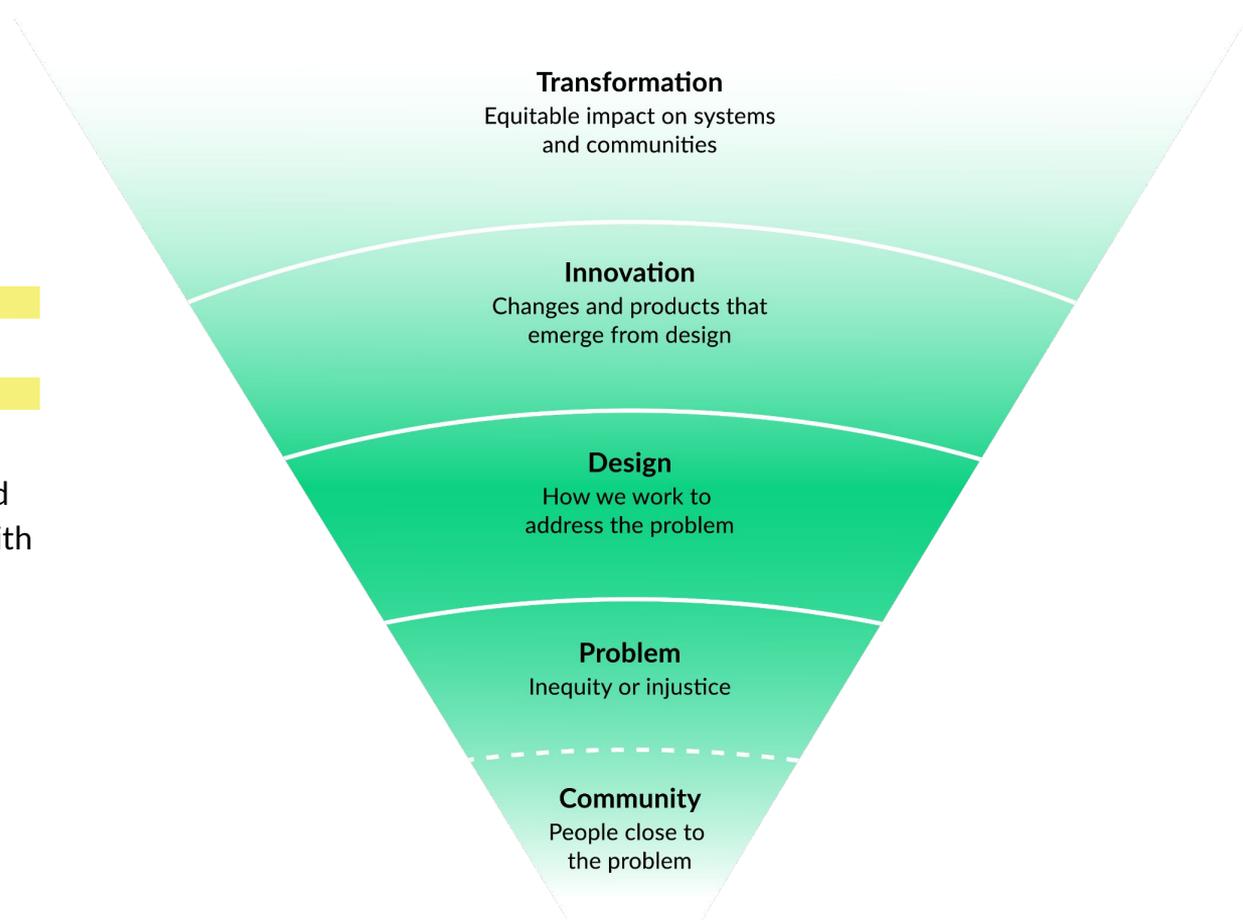
1,190
Colleges
+ Universities
+ Organizations

950
Employers

24
Ecosystems
States, systems, cities

We use the power of design to transform how we learn + work.

Transformation is only possible if we ground ourselves in the problem and collaborate with people closest to the problem.

Transformation
Equitable impact on systems and communities

Innovation
Changes and products that emerge from design

Design
How we work to address the problem

Problem
Inequity or injustice

Community
People close to the problem

Above all, our design approach serves as an **engine for action and iteration** in addressing barriers that exist between so many of us and our hopes for the future.

Core Principles

Understand

Ideate

Prototype

Action

Iteration

Transformation

Innovation
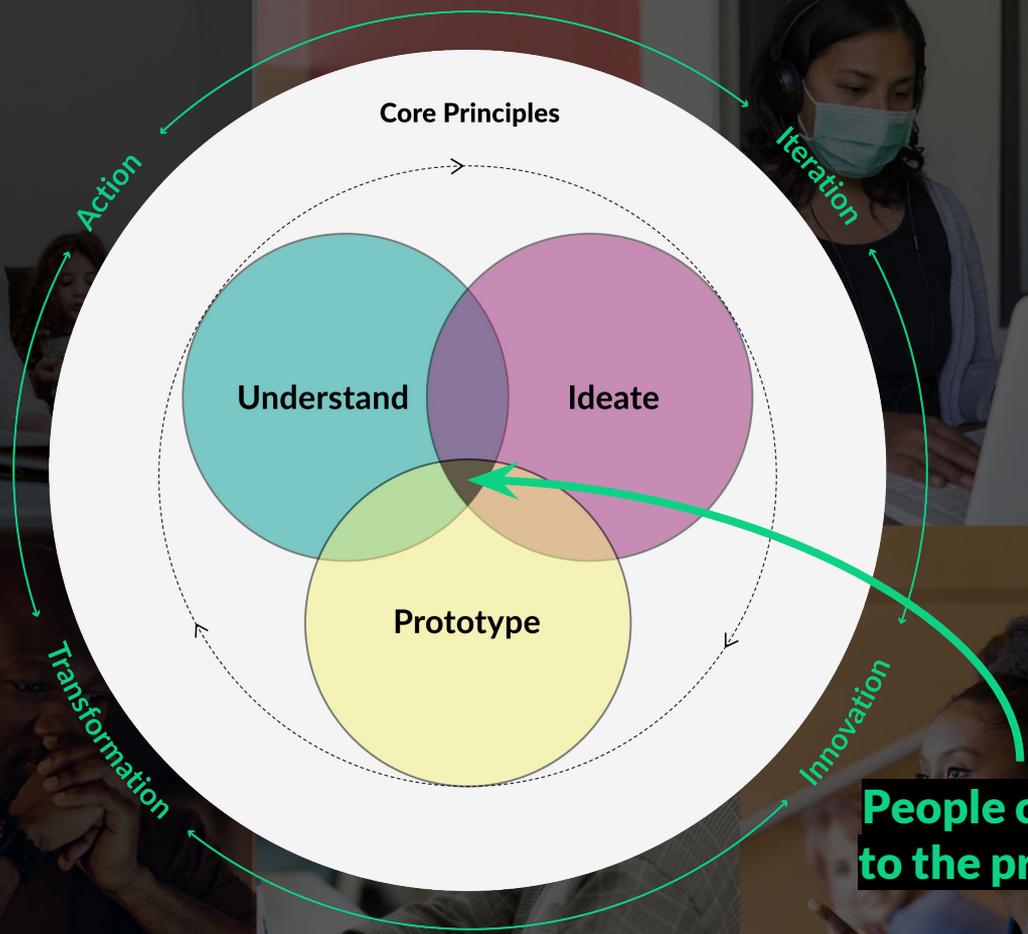
People closest to the problem

What skills are most requested by the industry or employers that you support?

What skills are most requested by the industry or employers that you support?

technical experise, influencing skills, and leadership

practical, durable skills   Durable   efficient

Life Saving   **Problem solving**   ai skills

Teaming

Teamwork   Leadership   Knowledge

Collaboration

Empathy   **Critical thinking**   Soft   Technical

effective   AI   Technical skills

Management   **Communication**   Resilience

Policy

analytical thinking   Use of AI   Agility   Writing

Hands on

Soft skills   Emotional intelligence

Teameork

Skills specific to our field

Skills Visibility

THE SKILL CYCLE

CONTEXTS

PRACTICES

SKILLS-BASED
HIRING + ADVANCEMENT

SKILLS-BASED
LEARNING

Skill
Development

Skill
Definition

Skill
Validation

Skill
Documentation

Skill
Communication

EMPLOYERS

LEARNERS

EDUCATORS

SKILLS-BASED
CREDENTIALING

Durable skills, defined

Employability skills

Power skills

Essential skills

INITIATIVE
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COLLABORATION
Education Design Lab

CREATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING
Education Design Lab

RESILIENCE
Education Design Lab

CRITICAL THINKING
Education Design Lab

INTERCULTURAL FLUENCY
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EMPATHY
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ORAL COMMUNICATION
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SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING
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Durable skills

Soft skills

Human skills

The Lab's Durable Skills Micro-Credentials

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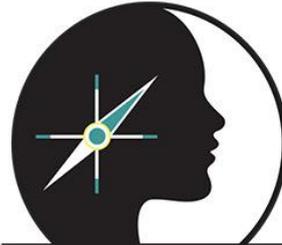
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Anatomy of a Micro-Credential

Gather + Assess Relevant Information
Ground problem-solving in facts rather than assertions.

Identify Patterns
Make sense of data; Recognize commonalities among seemingly unrelated situations.

Question Assumptions
Resist easy answers; probe more deeply; and improve the problem solving process.
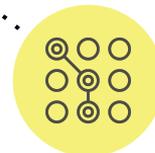
Draw Conclusions
Using logic and reasoning to evaluate arguments, form judgments, and make recommendations.

CRITICAL THINKING
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Earning the Credential

Gather + Assess Relevant Information

+

Identify Patterns

+

Question Assumptions

+

Draw Conclusions

CRITICAL THINKING
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Sub-competency map
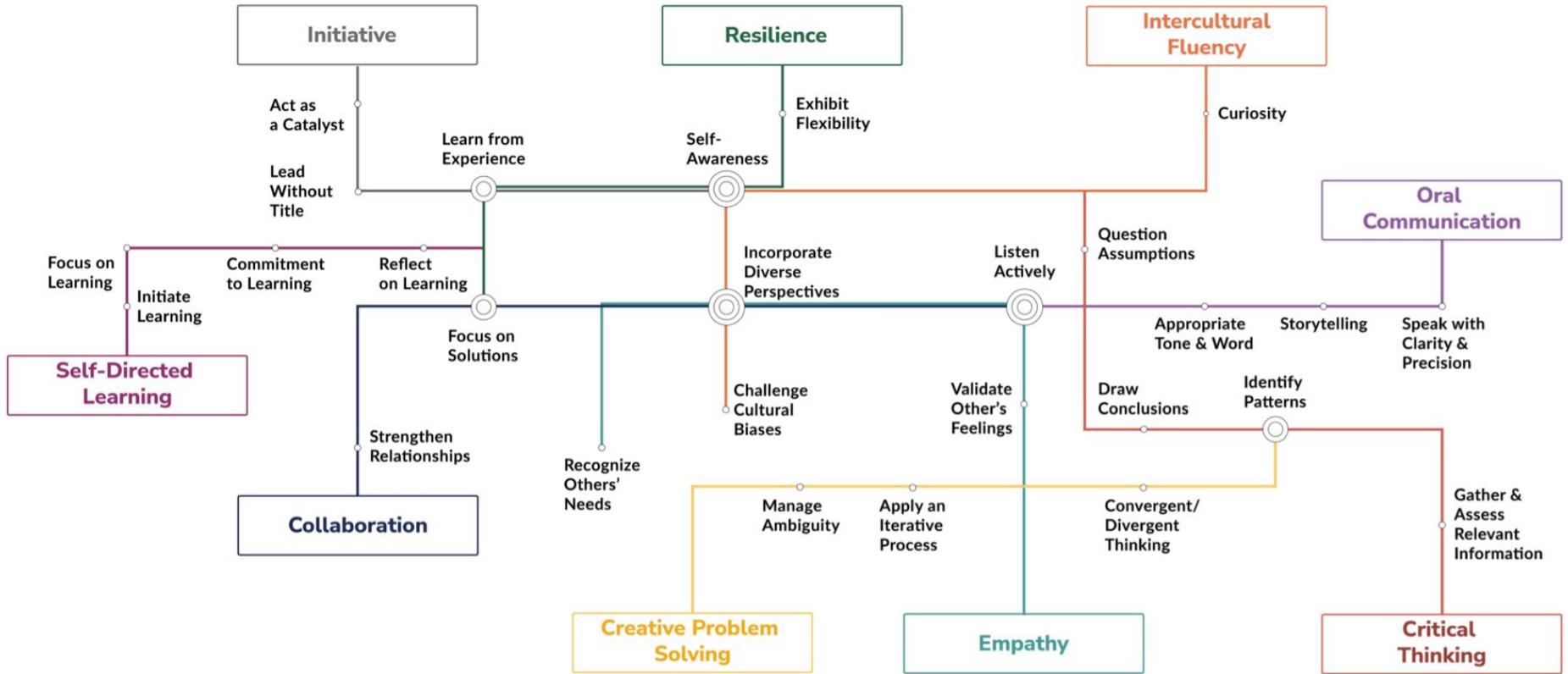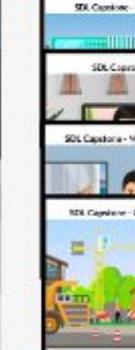
Validating Durable Skills

Skills Validation

Skills Validation Defined:

The process by which an assertion ("I assert that I have a skill!") is substantiated.

- Typically conducted by qualified 3rd party
- Creates trust that individual possesses a skill
- Based on a shared understanding of meaning of a skill
- Indicates level and context of a skill
- Can be conducted through various methods

Durable Skill Validation Simulation Assessments

Skills Validation Methods

Landscape Review of Types

- ➔ Self-assertions
- ➔ Assessments
- ➔ Skill Demonstrations
- ➔ Existing Media
- ➔ Experience Translation
- ➔ Performance Evaluation
- ➔ Endorsements

Defining New Skills Validation Methods

A (Draft) Formula

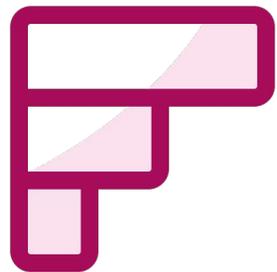VALIDATION METHOD = WHAT (Source of Evidence) + HOW (Method of Analysis)

Quality Rubric for Skills Validation

A flexible rubric for evaluating the quality and effectiveness of skills assessments and other validators. Ideal for anyone seeking to ensure tools are equity-centered and user-friendly.

Consider these quality indicators when thinking about durable skill validation tools.

Workforce Quality Rubric: A tool to evaluate skills assessments and validators ,2025, Raftery.

What is the role of ai in durable skills validation?

Presenting with animations, GIFs or speaker notes? Enable our Chrome extension

slido

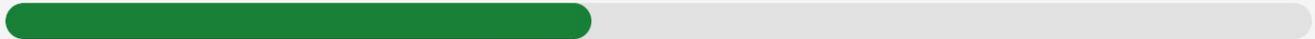## What is the role of ai in durable skills validation?

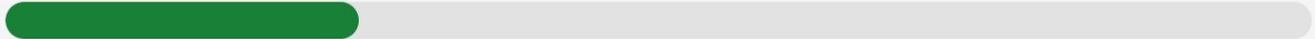1.   Used to generate contextual and personalized assessments

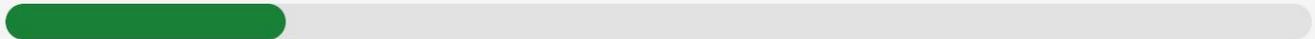2.   Used to create assessments faster, increasing retake options

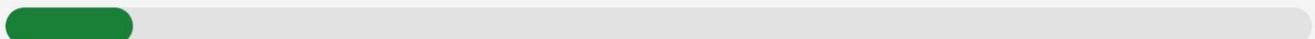3.   Used to score/assess to candidate response

4.   Used to establish psychometric support for the assessment itself

5.   Used to cull out demonstrated skill during work process

6.   Other

Validating Durable Skills: A Four-Part Framework

1 DEFINITION

Define a skill, along with what it looks like in practice

2 LEVEL

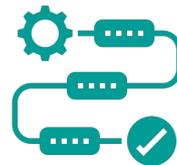Identify the level at which the skill must be demonstrated

3 CONTEXT

Identify the context in which the skill must be demonstrated

4 METHOD

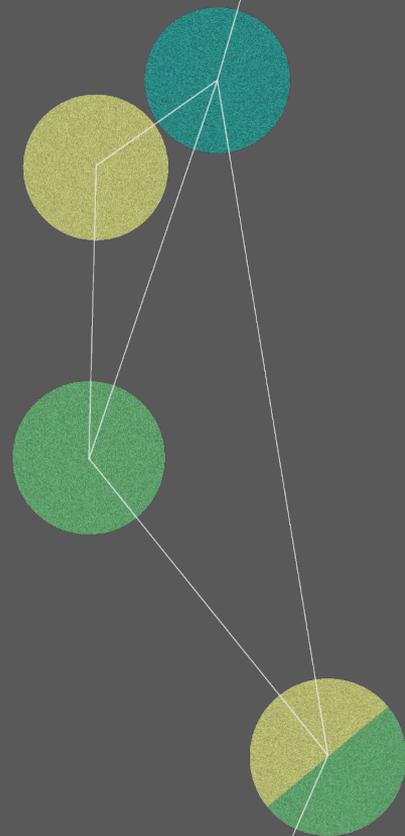Identify the method by which the skill will be validated

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What about proficiency and levels?

Level	1 Support	2 Act	3 Enable	4 Propel

Level 1 - Support

Workers at the Support level perform structured and routine tasks within defined guidelines, achieving milestones set by supervisors. They exercise limited discretion in their work, addressing familiar issues and informally supporting their peers. They solve common problems with established methods and readily available resources.

Level 2 - Act

Workers at the Act level independently apply their skills to manage and prioritize a diverse array of tasks. They develop and optimize their personal workflows and make strategic suggestions for process improvements when applicable, potentially overseeing peers in structured contexts. They are responsible for a broad array of tasks and use established methods to address complex and non-routine challenges.

Level 3 - Enable

Workers at the Enable level apply strategic organizational rules to lead and direct projects. They are accountable for significant decisions that shape team and/or organizational policies and contribute to established objectives. Operating under minimal supervision, they manage complex work and use innovative approaches, demonstrating leadership in dynamic and challenging environments.

Level 4 - Propel

Workers at the Propel level manage and lead through strategic leadership and high-level decision-making. They steer the organization toward long-term success through formal and informal supervision and mentorship. They apply innovative practices using their intuitive judgment to navigate unfamiliar, complex, or challenging situations with a clear vision for future changes.

Context

Context

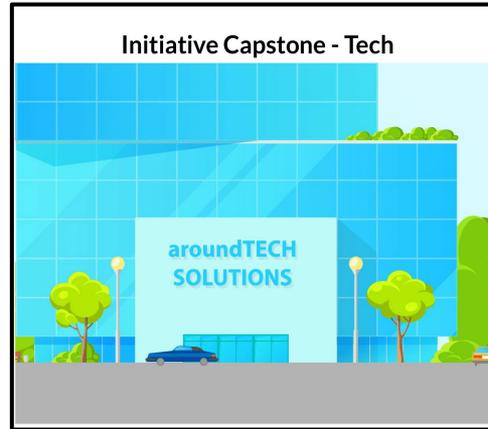**DO THIS:** **Identify the context in which the skill must be demonstrated**

Employers: *"Context matters!"*

Consider articulating:
- Industry
- Organization type + size
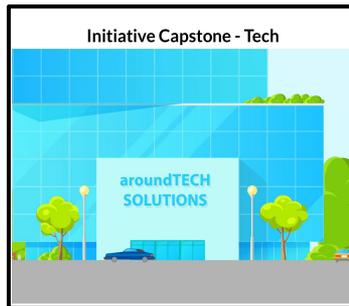- Job role
- Location (if relevant)

Context: Example

Context: Your Turn

Initiative Capstone - Construction

Initiative Capstone - Tech

aroundTECH SOLUTIONS

Initiative Capstone - Manufacturing

Initiative Capstone - Healthcare

EMERGENCY

DO THIS:

Identify the context in which the skill must be demonstrated

Validating Durable Skills: A Four-Part Framework
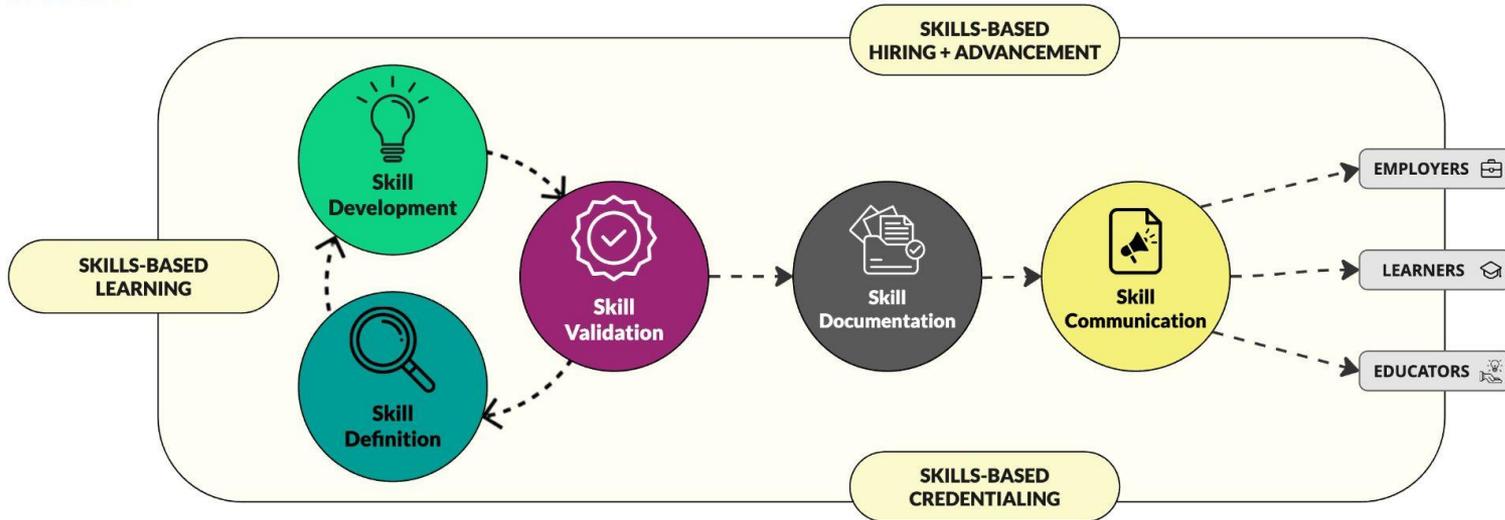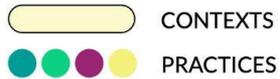
Which Skill?		
DEFINITION *Define a skill, along with what it looks like in practice*	Consider: • Competency frameworks • Skills taxonomies • Content standards	
METHOD *Identify the method by which the skill will be validated*	Consider: Evidence + Evaluation • What evidence you'll gather • How you'll evaluate that evidence	
LEVEL *Identify the level at which the skill must be demonstrated*	Consider: • Proficiency levels • A career ladder • A role's autonomy, influence, and complexity	
CONTEXT *Identify the context in which the skill must be demonstrated*	Consider: • Industry • Job Role • Organization Size + Type	

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How do you see the integration of durable skills into your credential(s)?

Skills Visibility

THE SKILL CYCLE

CONTEXTS

PRACTICES

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SKILLS-BASED LEARNING

Skill Validation

Skill Documentation

Skill Communication

Skill Definition

SKILLS-BASED CREDENTIALING

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LEARNERS

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Connect with me!

Naomi Boyer

nboyer@eddesignlab.org
Chief Innovation Officer
Education Design Lab

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