reconnect

Reconnecting relationships through technology

Are Micro-credentials the Netflix of the tertiary education industry? And how do we ensure they are 'bingeworthy'?

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When Netflix revealed its trailblazing subscription video streaming service, it was both a game changer and disruptor in the digital entertainment industry. Are micro-credentials set to do the same? Certainly, micro-credentials are both disrupting and paving the way to a new tertiary & professional education landscape. Like Netflix, Micro-credentials offer flexibility, can be 'on-demand' and can represent a range of topics or themes that can be personalised to individual choices and needs. However, in a learning context, there is much more to ensuring they are 'bingeworthy' for both learners and industries. By 'bingeworthy', we mean engaging and meaningful enough to motivate the learner to want to complete more and for industry to be convinced of their value.

With the rush toward micro-credentials, there is ambiguity about what it takes to make these verifiable learning achievements high value to institutions, learners and employers. Ensuring a strong value proposition for all stakeholders and a great experience are critical in determining whether they will be 'bingeworthy' and worthy of investment. Our team uses a combination of Design Thinking (Liedtka & Ogilvies, 2011; Liedtka, 2018) and 'Participatory Co-Design' (PCD) (Kristiansen & Bloch-Poulsen, 2013), to conceptualise, design, pilot, learn and iterate micro-credentials.

Design thinking offers a systematic way of problem solving and solution-finding that is people-centred and iterative and uses a variety of ethnographic research techniques as well as other sense-making tools (Liedtka, 2018). The 'intellectual roots' of design theory are steeped in a design process that is learning-focused and hypothesis-driven (Schon, 1982). Defining attributes include 'problem centredness, nonlinearity, optionality and the presence of uncertainty and ambiguity' (Liedtka, 2015, p.926).

The concept 'Participatory Co-Design' is derived from Sociocultural Theory and represents a theoretical commitment to learning from, and designing for, local contexts' (Gomez, Kya and Mancevice, 2018, p.403). For us, it offers a powerful pathway to productive partnerships that combine educational and industry expertise and insights to assess the current state, reimagine the future state and find solutions that work and are meaningful for all stakeholders. This is key to the stakeholder value chain and fundamental in designing the micro-credential experience.

Our poster follows our process for getting started with micro-credentials and what comprises micro-credential experiences that are 'bingeworthy'.

Keywords: Micro-credentials; Co-design; Design thinking; Bingeworthy.

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