

Brave New Educational World

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by Todd Malarczuk, Competency Based Education and Micro-credentials in the Teaching & Learning Centre

If you are like me (old!), you have been accumulating educational and learning credentials for at least a quarter of a century. I have a few degrees on my wall at home, some University transcripts (some still sealed) in a shoebox somewhere, as well as an Academic scholarship that was won, hanging proudly behind the basement bar. On top of that, I think I remember starting a professional portfolio about 15 years ago where I would store things like Letters-of-Reference, Workshop Certificates, Training Certificates (like First Aid and WHMIS), as well as end-of-school-year cards from students that would highlight some of my perceived strengths as an educator.

Truth be told, there was a time when I was the epitome of the term Lifelong Learner. I'd say I'm still learning each and every day. The problem is, if someone asked me about my education and learning, I would merely rhyme off the programs of study and the universities that I have attended. But does that really convey the depth of the learning I have done over the last 35 years? I have done a lot of learning over that time and have come to acquire a significant and diverse skill set. How can I articulate all this learning to someone who is asking (like a potential employer, a boss, or a colleague)? Aside from rambling into their ear or pointing them toward the "Other Strengths and Achievements" section of my resume, what else can I do?

At Seneca, we think we are working toward a solution to this problem. For anyone who carries a smartphone and has something like an Apple Wallet on their phone, there is a way to take the personal credentials we have in our possession (credit card, bank card, COVID vaccine passport, concert tickets, personal identification, and on and on and on) and store them in one handy place. Wouldn't it be great if we could do that with educational credentials? In order for this to happen, the educational credentials we earn must be **digital** and not just pieces of paper. Seneca is going down that road. In the [June 2021 issue of the Academic Newsletter](#), it was reported how our school's Registrar is embarking down an exploratory – and transformational – path, with the investigation of Digital Transcripts. Add

to this, the thousands of micro-credentials that Seneca students have earned and we have the makings of a collection of digital, educational credentials. Micro-credentials are educational credentials (think diploma but much smaller) that are awarded in the form of a digital badge.

In theory, a student at Seneca could graduate with a diploma (with the digital transcript to prove it) as well as other educational credentials such as micro-credentials and other digital badges awarded for other learnings, trainings, and workshops they may have participated in. Now before we start reaching for our smartphones, remember that this is still very new and cutting edge stuff! We are still at the early stages of this roadmap. Some of the conversations happening now involve the idea of a Comprehensive Learner Record (a.k.a. a Digital Wallet) where students can start to store all of their digital, educational credentials. I am confident we will get there one day soon and I can't wait until I can stop looking for that shoebox – I know I put it somewhere!

Save the Date!

Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2023 is on Monday, February 27, 2023 at Newnham Campus! It is a one-day conference dedicated to showcasing and sharing ideas and activities about how to enhance teaching and learning. The focus of *Teaching & Learning Day Winter 2023* is on **Educational Technology**.

More details will be coming soon!

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