

21st Century Skills Badges

Over the past three years, the Lab has engaged a wide range of school administrators and faculty, students, and employers in the co-design of meaningful 21st century skills badges that transform the way learners recognize and activate their skills.

12

SCHOOLS

Students design and implement pilots

300+

LEARNERS

Feedback on pilot badge earning processes and potential tech solutions

50+

EMPLOYERS

*Feedback on badge criteria
Student mock interviews
Insight into hiring practices*

The work has yielded a rigorous and transformative badge earning process, combining knowledge, assessment, and experience and reflection.

Each skill has 4 core sub-competencies that make up the badge. There is a performance-based assessment associated with each of the sub-competencies which must be completed to stack up to the awarding of the badge.



Initiative

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century leadership skills, which include the capacity to: **motivate and influence others; act as a catalyst; demonstrate self-awareness, and learn from experience.**

Lead without a title Individuals motivate and guide others; raising the morale of their group; and taking responsibility for what needs to be done.

Act as a catalyst Individuals galvanize action; identifying and seizing opportunities for change; and overcoming inertia.

Demonstrate self-awareness Individuals evaluate their own performance; recognizing their motivations; and managing their anxiety.

Learn from experience Individuals welcome and apply feedback; resisting defensiveness; and seeing "failure" as an opportunity for greater understanding.

Developed in partnership with Georgetown University



Collaboration

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century collaboration skills, which include the capacity to: **work productively with others toward a common goal by: valuing and strengthening relationships; incorporating diverse viewpoints, using active listening skills; and focusing on solutions rather than problems**

Strengthen relationships Individuals create networks through which they access and provide resources, information, and support.

Listen actively Individuals form productive working relationships; ensuring that others feel heard and valued; and grasping and retaining information.

Incorporate diverse perspectives Individuals enlarge the conversation; challenging their own thinking; and maximizing group effectiveness.

Focus on solutions Individuals create the forward momentum that advances the work of the organization.

Developed in partnership with University of Arizona



Creative Problem Solving

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century creative problem-solving skills, which include the capacity to: **exercise both divergent and convergent thinking; identify patterns; manage ambiguity; and apply an iterative process**

Exercise convergent and divergent thinking Individuals generate fresh ideas and apply a process for evaluating them.

Identify patterns Individuals recognize commonalities among situations that may at first appear unrelated; framing problems more accurately; and accessing relevant solutions.

Manage ambiguity Individuals trust the process; tolerating their own anxiety; and gathering information before settling on solutions prematurely.

Apply an iterative process Individuals systematically test ideas; challenging their own preconceptions; and expanding the range of potential solutions.

Developed in partnership with University of Virginia



Critical Thinking

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century critical thinking skills, which include the capacity to **gather and assess relevant information; identify patterns; question assumptions; and support ideas with evidence.**

Gather and assess relevant information Individuals ground problem-solving in facts rather than assertions.

Identify patterns Individuals make sense of data; recognizing commonalities among seemingly unrelated situations; and framing novel problems in familiar terms.

Question assumptions Individuals resist easy answers; probing more deeply; and improving the problem-solving process.

Draw conclusions Individuals use logic and reasoning to evaluate arguments, form judgments, and make recommendations.

Developed in partnership with Andrews University, Aquinas College, and Hope College



I feel that I can use the badge as a talking-point on my next interview. I can expand on the details, and even share my narrative of how I embody resilience.

- Junior, George Mason University



Intercultural Fluency

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century intercultural fluency, which includes the capacity to recognize and challenge one's own cultural biases; show curiosity; demonstrate self-awareness; and incorporate diverse perspectives.

Recognize and challenge one's own cultural biases Individuals reject "othering"; working effectively in multicultural settings; and avoiding ethnocentrism.

Show curiosity Individuals demonstrate cognitive and affective openness to and interest in change and difference.

Demonstrate self-awareness Individuals evaluate their own performance; recognizing their motivations; and managing their anxiety.

Incorporate diverse perspectives Individuals enlarge the conversation; challenging their own thinking; and maximizing group effectiveness.

Developed in partnership with Vassar College



Empathy

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century skills in empathy, which include the capacity to listen actively; validate others' feelings and perceptions; incorporate diverse perspectives; and recognize others' needs and values.

Listen actively Individuals forming productive working relationships; ensuring that others feel heard and valued; and grasping and retaining information.

Provide validation Individuals create a safe and participatory environment in which each member of a team can contribute.

Identify others' needs and values Individuals put themselves in others' shoes.

Incorporate diverse perspectives Individuals enlarge the conversation; challenging their own thinking; and maximizing group effectiveness.

Developed in partnership with Bay Path University



Oral Communication

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century oral communication skills, which include the capacity to speak with clarity and precision; adjust tone and word choice for both formal and informal settings; listen actively, and recognize nonverbal cues.

Speak with clarity and precision Individuals communicate ideas and information effectively, minimizing unintended confusion, misinformation, and offence.

Use appropriate tone and word choice Individuals adjust their style and approach for different settings; building rapport; and communicating up and down the organization.

Listen actively Individuals recognize and respond to both verbal and nonverbal cues; by ensuring that others feel heard and valued.

Tell stories to express ideas Individuals capture their audience; using the components of storytelling to draw attention.

Developed in partnership with Makerere University and Tunis Business School



Resilience

The individual who has earned this badge has demonstrated 21st century resilience, which includes the capacity to learn from experience; exhibit flexibility; demonstrate self-awareness, and focus on solutions.

Learn from experience Individuals welcome and apply feedback; resisting defensiveness; seeing "failure" as an opportunity for greater understanding; and cultivating optimism by consciously challenging negative self-talk.

Exhibit flexibility Individuals adapt and adjust to new and changing situations.

Demonstrate self-awareness Individuals evaluate their own performance; recognizing their motivations; and managing their anxiety.

Focus on solutions Individuals create the forward momentum that advances the work of the organization.

Developed in partnership with George Mason University

Interested in adopting the Badges?

Contact us at labinfo@eddesignlab.org

The Education Design Lab was founded to bring the latest in design, innovation tools, and processes to bear on the 'wicked' problems facing education today. The Lab's team combines deep vertical expertise in higher education with training in design and innovation processes. Beginning with an obsessive focus on the student journey, understanding the dreams and challenges of "non-traditional" learners, we help our partners design, test and pilot transformative changes in the postsecondary education landscape.