

prov·ing ground

ˈprōvɪŋ ɡraʊnd/

noun

an environment that serves to demonstrate whether something, such as a theory or product, really works.

The best way to determine if someone can do something is to see them to do it. If we want to know whether students have active listening skills, it makes sense to have them demonstrate how to listen actively -- i.e., to require the performance we wish to elicit and evaluate.



Speak With Clarity & Precision: Elevator Pitch

Proving Ground Overview

The purpose of this assessment is to give you an opportunity to practice something you'll need to do a lot in the workplace—speak with clarity and precision.

Proving Ground Directions

For this assessment, you will deliver a one-minute "elevator pitch" to Sara Summit, the Vice President of New Product Development at Acme Unlimited, where you work in the Marketing department. You have run into Ms. Summit while you are both waiting for your salads to be made in the cafeteria. You decide to take advantage of this opportunity and convince her that Acme needs someone of your generation -- ideally, you -- to represent the voice of younger consumers in the new product development process.

Before giving your pitch, review the resources on the elevator pitch and complete the exercises. Your pitch needs to include a hook, a call to action, and a reason to remember you. Most of all, you need to speak with clarity, precision, and confidence, and to accomplish your goals in no more than one minute. Plan out your pitch and record it when you are ready.

Rubric

Criteria	Description	Yes	Not Yet
Uses an effective hook	You capture the audience's attention effectively		
Establishes a clear protagonist	You made your purpose clear within the first quarter of speech		
Provides clear call to action	You are clear and concise in your ask from the audience		
Shows confidence	Your voice and body language exhibit composure and experience		
Uses time constraints effectively	You adhere to time constraints without using fluff or running out of time at the end		

Education Design Lab

The Lab's 21st Century Skills Badges are comprised of performance assessments "The Proving Ground" at the sub-competency level. Each badge has 4 core sub-competency components, so students go through a series of 4 Proving Grounds for each badge they earn.

By their very nature, competencies are applied; they are about doing, not simply knowing. This is particularly relevant given employers' well-documented frustration with the inability of most college graduates to apply their content knowledge in the workplace. These 21st Century Skills Badges can play an important role in demonstrating that students who have earned these badges can indeed apply their knowledge and skills in context where and when it is needed.

The Proving Ground is a place for an employer to see students flexing their skill muscles in a relevant and useful way. While it's important for students to learn how to write a research paper, and it does help build upon many of our 21st century skills, it's not an artifact employers are likely to use when judging a job candidate. Instead, the Proving Ground asks students to apply those skills to work-based scenarios like gathering and evaluating stats for a presentation, confronting a difficult situation with a manager, or recognizing biases in the office.

The Lab believes these 21st Century Skills are being learned everywhere; from gathering the neighborhood kids for a game of capture the flag, to writing an APA style research paper for your US History class. No matter where the skills are practiced and developed, all learners will be able to strut their stuff (skills) in the Proving Ground, so employers can quickly and clearly see their skills translated into a situation that's relevant and realistic.

Jump in and see the Proving Ground assessments along with the rest of the FREE Badge Toolkit: Sign up at eddesignlab.org/badge-access-form/