

Executive Summary: XCredit Design Insights

Early Lessons in Validating Skills + Lived Experiences

Pilot by the numbers



Education Design Lab's XCredit initiative seeks to validate and credential skills gained through work and life experience.

Leveraging a set of skill validation tools and methods, most notably a suite of 21st century (or “soft”) skills assessments, XCredit provides open, low-cost ways for individuals to get “credit” for skills gained from their prior work and life experience. Through skills validation, our aim is to create enhanced employment opportunities and foster improved economic mobility.

Over the past two years, in collaboration with partners across the skills ecosystem, we’ve conducted two pilots and extensive testing:

- Military Jobseeker Pilot: For transitioning military members and veterans seeking opportunities in the civilian workforce.
- Internal Mobility Pilot: For employed individuals seeking internal mobility within their organizations.
- Civilian testing: For all opportunity seekers

By participating in these pilots, individuals had the opportunity to:

- Receive industry-recognized credentials by validating existing 21st century skills.
- Take ownership of their credentials and share them with prospective employers.

The Road Ahead

As the nation further embraces skills-based programming and hiring, we must keep validation at the forefront, prioritizing the needs of STARs (individuals Skilled Through Alternative Routes, rather than a bachelor’s degree) and employers.

In the coming years, the Lab will lead a national skills validation movement by implementing pilots and expanding our practice through the Center for Skills Validation. We expect to provide concrete evidence of the value of skills validation for STARs, employers, and ecosystem stakeholders, sharing our insights along the way.

Insights

During the two-year initiative, we gathered a wide range of insights, organized by key stakeholders who participants:

Opportunity seeker

1. When validating skills through assessments, opportunity seekers want transparent scoring and comprehensive feedback to ensure they understand how their skills are assessed, their strengths, and their areas for growth
2. To maximize user involvement, it is crucial to reduce administrative and cognitive complexity by streamlining skill validation processes

Employers

1. Employers recognize the importance of 21st century skills in the hiring process. These skills are perceived as vital for adapting to the rapidly evolving technological and societal landscape, fostering collaboration in diverse teams, and confronting the challenges posed by the digital age.
2. To effectively adopt and implement skill validation within their organizations, employers require streamlined processes and enhanced technical support to overcome organizational and technical barriers.

Multi-stakeholder

1. Opportunity seekers and partner organizations prioritize both skill validation and skill development. They recognize the dual importance of demonstrating current competencies and continually enhancing their skill sets to thrive in a dynamic environment.
2. Skills validation is an emerging field, which brings inherent ambiguity regarding its value to opportunity seekers, workforce intermediaries, and employers. To foster greater stakeholder engagement, it's crucial to provide personalized support and adopt co-design approaches.
3. Connecting siloed skills efforts and fostering interoperability is essential to strengthening the impact of skills validation.