Future-Ready Learning: Five trends reshaping the economy and what higher education needs to do in response.

A presentation for the Illinois Board of Higher Education Future of Work and Future of Learning Workgroup
Presented by Nate Anderson (JFF) and Charla Long (C-BEN)
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Trend 1: COVID-19 and Automation

• Unprecedented job loss, uneven distribution
• Hardest hit: Young people, women and people of color
• A significant part of the “recovery” so far has been driven by people leaving the labor market.
• Long-term trend – disengagement from the labor market
• Many families impacted by Great Recession are also impacted today – 10 years of lost economic productivity and growth.
• COVID is accelerating automation, particularly in hard-hit sectors.
• Remote work will continue, although unevenly.
COVID-19’s Impact on Higher Education

• Pre-pandemic, 36M Americans have some college but no degree
• During pandemic, 28M Americans cancelled education plans
  ▪ Disproportionately low income, Black, and Latino or Hispanic learners
• ACE estimates $120B impact on higher ed institutions alone
• U.S. higher ed model endured dramatic change, upheaval and uncertainty
  ▪ ACE President’s Survey showed pressing issues were mental health of students (53%) and faculty/staff (42%), long-term viability (43%), enrollment numbers (39%) and sustaining online environment (30%)
What will higher education look like post-pandemic?

- Greater efficiencies & automation of many functions to enable increased human touch
- Online learning here to stay but there is a need to verify quality
  - May need to win some faculty and learners back after rush to remote learning
- Institutions looking for differentiators and “next big thing”
- Increased awareness of need to (and hopefully commitment to) align to labor market demands
- Commitment to intentionally work on eliminating inequities with new models
Trend 2: Credentialing

- There are 1M unique credentials in the United States.
- More than half of all credentials are produced by non-academic institutions.
- 40% of credentials are badges.
- This reflects a supply strategy; it is not driven by employer demand.
- New Approaches (Google IT)
- The growth in credentials is accelerating. New strategies are needed.
- To move forward focus on:
  2. **Data Capacity**
  3. **Common language and infrastructure**
Higher Ed Response to Credentialing

- Modularize credentials allowing for on-ramps and off-ramps
- Compete and compare by transparently sharing credential composition and outcomes
- Mechanism to acknowledge and count learning from non-accredited postsecondary credentials
- Role as validators of learning when receiving external credentials
Must Encourage and Enable Change

- Tension between status quo and responsible innovation
- Modernize systems to reflect changing conditions
- Regulatory and statutory system
  - Outdated and arbitrary measures of learning
  - Time is the enemy of the poor
- Accreditation system should move from inputs to outcomes
Institutional and System Enhancements

• “Uniqueness” comes from places other than language and infrastructure
  ▪ Look to use open source taxonomies
• Focus on UX/LX Design, use of cutting-edge technology
  ▪ Adaptive learning, AI/ML learning, XR (extended reality) applications
  ▪ Academic freedom balanced against efficient operations
• Personalized and differentiated supports for key learner personas
  ▪ Automation of student supports and services
Trend 3: Skills

- Growing acceptance of and sophistication around skills as a common currency.
- Skills = Data = Jobs
- Skills-based hiring
- HR-focused/employment initiatives around common skills language (JDX, T3)
- New Players
  - Bootcamps and non-traditional providers
  - Registries
  - Skills platforms and Portfolios
  - Badging companies
  - Labor Market Information Providers
Higher Ed’s Resistance to “Skills”

- “Is a degree worth the cost?”
  - Bachelor’s degree yields on average $570,000 earnings over a lifetime
    - Depends on field of study
- Higher ed struggles to articulate graduate outcomes
  - What are the claims institutions make for learners?
  - How do institutions know these claims are true for each learner?
Shift to Competencies as Currency of Learning

- What are your claims? “We graduate critical thinkers…”
  - Define and describe what it looks like
  - Determine how to assess performance
  - Teach to desired level of performance
Performance-Focused, Behaviorally-Based

• Raises vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;

• Gathers and assesses relevant information, using abstract ideas to interpret information, effectively comes to well-reasoned conclusions and solutions, testing them against relevant criteria and standards;

• Thinks open-mindedly within alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as need be, their assumptions, implications, and practical consequences; and

• Communicates effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.
Higher Ed Response to Skills Movement

- Adopt competency-based methods, even if not building full CBE programs
- Clearly articulate claims and measure outcomes using performance-focused, behaviorally-based measures validated by employer partners
- Look for opportunities to connect to national efforts by using common taxonomies
- Examine credentials across the system to see where you can find greater efficiencies, encouraging cross-institutional collaboration
- Align to labor market data and ask institutions to verify relevance of all programs on a regular basis
- Use badges, registries, and LERs/CLRs

Results Guaranteed
Trend 4: Work-Based Learning

- $516 Billion spent annually by employers on training and training wages
- Just under 1M new apprentices in the last 3 years.
- The end of IRAP?
- Market shifts – new entrants (Salesforce, Prologis, Calbright, WGU)
- Value prop = risk reduction for employers, better outcomes for students
- **But who pays?**
- Lifelong learning
- Data-sharing agreements with employers
What’s Needed for a Work-Learn Model

**AGILE WORK–LEARN MODEL**
- Student Supports
- Learner Journey
- Interoperable Systems
- Assessment Repository
- Credentialing Strategy
- Engaged Employers
- Shared Language

**METHOD FOR GAINING COMPETENCIES**
- Prior Learning Assessment
- Military–Based Learning
- Civic Engagement
- Work-Based Learning
- Microcredential
- Stackable Certificate
- Non-Accredited Training
- Higher Ed Learning
Higher Ed’s Response to Work-Based Learning

• Wholeheartedly embrace it
• Develop acumen in leveraging work-based learning for:
  ▪ Competency identification
  ▪ Short-term, stackable credentials – Just in time learning
  ▪ Prior learning assessments
  ▪ Enhancing relevance of program content and assessment
• Be a strategic partner
  ▪ Embed in work environments as extension of T&D function
  ▪ Create customized, white label content
  ▪ Co-create training and academic programs, share assessment tools and assessors
  ▪ Securely exchange learning records
Trend 5: Linked Data and Outcomes Tracking

• New data, tools and methodologies are creating much richer pictures of jobs and careers.

• Now possible to track student outcomes (employment status, wages, career trajectory) AND project what credentials and skills have the most predictive power for future jobs and careers.

• New efforts are underway:
  • Private/Public links (National student clearinghouse/NAM)
  • Skills datasets (Emsi)
  • Supply/demand trackers (Emsi)
  • Data trusts (BrightHive)
  • Outcomes-focused (O4OI)
  • Outcomes-learning (AdeptID)
  • State investments (VA OEE)
Higher Ed Response to Linked Data & Outcomes

• Invest in data collection – all the way down to the competency/module level
  ▪ Who do you serve? Who do you not serve well? Who would you want to serve? What would it take to serve these learners?

• Prepare to publicly report for each credential
  ▪ Employability scores
  ▪ Career readiness from graduate and employer perspectives
  ▪ Value when comparing cost of acquisition to wage earnings at certain points

• Leverage data available in design and continuous improvement of programs
  ▪ Make evidence-based decisions such as when to begin, alter, or close programs

• Hold programs accountable for outcomes achieved
Lifelong Engagement

• Overcoming the one and done mentality
  ▪ Use of level of mastery shows need for continued growth post completion

• Support graduates with transition to career
  ▪ Workflow learning post-graduation

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<th>Level</th>
<th>Performance Indicators and Behavioral Examples</th>
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<td>4 Master/Guru</td>
<td>• Initiates or authorizes needed major organizational change; is an expert at change management (e.g., motivates organization toward needed change by constantly communicating vision of the preferred future that the change promises).&lt;br&gt;• Is sought out to lead major change initiatives; successfully drives major change initiatives through the organization.&lt;br&gt;• Understands the importance of managing transitions; establishes transition teams to successfully realize needed change.</td>
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<td>3 Exceptional/Expert</td>
<td>• Is considered a valuable resource during organizational transitions; often serves on transition teams.&lt;br&gt;• Consistently tests the temperature of organization/team/individual during transitions to ensure immediate action can take place; identifies those needing additional guidance and counsels them on how to effectively implement change.&lt;br&gt;• Recognizes that change is often a positive opportunity for those involved, uses change as a growth opportunity through coaching staff, and generates recommendations for change to help with organization and team growth.&lt;br&gt;• Proactively presents opportunities for change; seeks innovative ways to operate, enjoys challenges.</td>
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<td>2 Proficient/Practitioner</td>
<td>• Is seen by team as a ‘change agent’ and leader when change occurs; influences others to see the benefits of change and possible positive outcomes.&lt;br&gt;• Understands the leadership responsibility in publicly supporting needed change.&lt;br&gt;• Skillfully manages the human side of functional change (e.g., involves others, frequently communicates preferred future, develops transition plans, celebrates milestones, etc.).&lt;br&gt;• Employs basic change techniques (e.g., involves others, introduces change at right pace, honors past contributions, etc.).</td>
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<td>1 Basic/Elementary</td>
<td>• Adaptable; recognizes that change is necessary; has the ability to “roll with it.”&lt;br&gt;• Handles organizational change smoothly; visibly supports organizational change initiatives; saves any criticism for behind closed doors with higher authority.&lt;br&gt;• Personally models required change; does not take change personally; remains calm, supportive and productive during change.&lt;br&gt;• Is positive and optimistic about change; has a “glass half full” philosophy that allows persistent enthusiasm during change.</td>
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<td>0 Inadequate</td>
<td>• Is unskilled at change management; doesn’t understand basic change management techniques, introduces change too quickly, doesn’t manage transition well, or makes change for the sake of change alone.&lt;br&gt;• Lacks emotional control during change; is uncomfortable with ambiguity; displays apprehension about suggested change.&lt;br&gt;• Resists or is unable to adjust to change; inflexible, too rigid, reinforces the status quo, wants things the way they used to be; “this isn’t how we used to do it.”&lt;br&gt;• Undermines change efforts; ignores, avoids, blocks, complains, etc.; speaks negatively or gossips about change but does not speak to those in authority.</td>
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Questions?

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