Open**Badges**

LEARNER STORIES: How badges can lead to jobs and new learning opportunities

X **PROBLEM:** Eduardo is learning computer and digital literacy skills outside of school -- but has no easy way to get public recognition for them.

SOLUTION:

1 **Earn badges.** Eduardo earns digital literacy and new media badges from a local Learning Network. And finds pathways to "level-up" his skill set.

2 **Collect and display those badges.** Eduardo is then able to share his accomplishments with his teachers and classmates.

3 **Unlock new career and learning opportunities.** Eduardo's teachers, peers and future employers gain a more complete picture of his talents.

Eduardo: Connecting learning inside and outside the classroom

Eduardo is a 16-year-old Chicago southsider. His school has a traditional academic curriculum with few options for learning about his real passion: computers. But he is also actively engaged in developing skills and interests outside the classroom, through informal learning with peers.

Eduardo is learning storyboarding and making short films in digital media workshops, mentoring younger kids at a local "Fab Lab," and took second prize in a recent hackfest competition. But until now, Eduardo had no way to gain credit or recognition for these skills, or carry them to his school and other contexts.

How badges help: Get recognition for digital literacy skills outside of school

Badges help Eduardo get recognition for the skills he's developing outside of school. Eduardo submits his latest movie project and storyboards for the Storyboarding and Movie Maker badge from the Chicago Learning Network. His peers and facilitators review his work using a defined set of criteria, and issue Eduardo the Movie Maker badge. One of Eduardo's collaborators also awards him the Good Teammate badge.

Eduardo looks up the badge collection of a peer he admires to see which additional badges he should focus on to "level up" his skill set. He then shares his badge collection at school. Eduardo's teachers are impressed and ask him to assist with a narrative activity in class. He leads his classmates through a storyboarding exercise, building esteem and earning recognition from his classmates.

The result: demonstrating new abilities to teachers, peers and future employers

Badges connect Eduardo's learning inside and outside the classroom, demonstrating his abilities to his teachers, peers and himself. This helps Eduardo's teachers fully evaluate him as a student, understand his strengths, and capitalize on his interests. Outside of school within the Learning Networks environment, badges help Eduardo build confidence, form relationships, and find new ways to develop his skill set.

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