



Kiera Anderson: Okay hello, and welcome to the CIDDL Research and Practice Brief Series. The purpose of this series is to have conversations around the innovative use of technology in special education.

Kiera Anderson: Early childhood, related services, leadership personnel preparation programs. Today we have Dr. Richard Carter as our guest expert to share with us his research and practice about micro-credentials. Welcome, Dr. Carter.

Richard Carter: Thank you, thank you for having me.

Kiera Anderson: So, Dr. Carter, first, I want you to tell us a little bit about your research and practice and how it's applied to your teacher preparation programs.

Richard Carter: Great, well, just soon as I got to the University of Wyoming, I was kind of I was tasked with creating the pilot system for the only one research partner was tasked with creating the initial micro-credential pilot for the state of Wyoming.

Richard Carter: Pretty much brand new to me. Fascinating world because of all that it offers and pretty much what we did was kind of started looking at the initial pieces, which were things like quality.

Richard Carter: What they're going to be, how they are going to be, what credit are they awarded, and then, you know, how they are being distributed, what's the ecosystem has been built around them.

Richard Carter: And just really, really see it as an opportunity, but then also see it as an opportunity with a lot of questions. That's kind of where the research came in.

Richard Carter: And ultimately, what we started doing was looking at what is quality of a micro-credential, how can we determine things like what is covered, how can we determine things like what.

Richard Carter: How, you know how much are they going to be awarded credit by you know by State entities, or by universities, etc. So that's really where we started. Now, that is at the most basic foundational level of where we are with this.

Richard Carter: But again, it's something it's an area that's evolving every day and it's certainly exciting to be a part of.

Kiera Anderson: That is exciting. Thank you. Are there any specific issues that you're trying to address with this?



Kiera Anderson: I hear you saying that you're starting with a purpose, first we have to figure out the purpose.

Kiera Anderson: We're starting small and then we have to determine what exactly goes into the micro-credential, evaluating the quality, the fidelity of that, and then also evaluating how it's going to be graded or how badges are going to be awarded, correct?

Kiera Anderson: Right yes.

Richard Carter: Absolutely, and I think anyone that is interested in micro-credentials right now, your first step is to go look at them because it is in a lot of ways it's a room.

Richard Carter: It's a bit of a departure from the way that historically we've offered

Richard Carter: from traditional professional development. And then, in my case, using them in class how we grade students, how would it allow them to go explore it. In some ways,

Richard Carter: the beauty of it is personalization. You get to kind of go your own route, with some structure.

Richard Carter: But then that's also the challenge in that one, how are we sure that the micro-credentials that are offered are giving that quality experience.

Richard Carter: Two, who's going to do the assessing? Is it going to be you, the professors? Are going to be the third party which you will see most often in the way micro-credentials are set up.

Richard Carter: And then, how do students retain that retained, how do they know that they retain and are able to share their mastery.

Richard Carter: Through badging etc, which you brought up. There's also this is there's a lot of moving parts in micro-credentials and it's not that you understand one aspect, there are multiple things to understand.

Richard Carter: Now, the beauty of that is that they are all connected, you can your micro-credential is connected to your badge. Your badge is connected to your repository of badges. It's just those steps to move through and to be aware of how they kind of stack on each other.

Kiera Anderson: Right, exactly. I love the idea of the tech-enabled personalization of micro-



credentials. I think that

Kiera Anderson: that's very innovative. I think that it's going to take us in a whole different direction. You know as well as I know when it comes down to professional development. Oftentimes it's it's not only costly but

Kiera Anderson: People don't retain that information or carry it on to wherever they're going. So this whole idea of stacking these micro-credentials for a bigger picture of whatever the concept may be, that is, that we're trying to teach and and students are trying to learn is brilliant right.

Richard Carter: Yeah, certainly.

Richard Carter: yeah and I will just say quick I know we want to keep it to, you know, that eight to 10, but I think this is important.

Richard Carter: With personalization what I found is that.

Richard Carter: Offering that initial go find it go chase your own path is great, you still need structure. I mean we still need to guide our students through this process.

Richard Carter: Because it is, it is a bit of a disruption for them to where it, you know, historically, how they have felt like they've been successful in classes.

Richard Carter: Saying okay now it's your turn still be with their still guide them through the process and and you will get that reward that you're looking for.

Kiera Anderson: That that is an excellent point, because we always think about student-centered learning and what does it mean. And if we're just pushing them through what has to be done without any choice we can't really claim that we are offering student-centered learning.

Kiera Anderson: Right, so the process i'm I can only imagine how difficult the process is and looking at all of our state standards, wherever it is that we may be.

Kiera Anderson: And figuring out how we can layer these things to address the standards, while offering that choice and, yes, that guidance has to be there because after all students or students right, you need some guidance.

Richard Carter: yeah maybe for us as well that's for that's for any of us and the guidance doesn't necessarily have to come from an individual, but some structure that still gives us a path



through, I think, is, I think, is crucial.

Kiera Anderson: Absolutely another question: What opportunities do you think micro-credentials may have for improving special education, related services personnel preparation, and leadership personnel preparation, what do you think the opportunities are limitless? What do you think?

Richard Carter: I'll go with limitless. That sounds great because I think, especially when it comes to you know as being a special educator special education teacher for four years.

Richard Carter: The PD that I went to was definitely that "sit and get" and it was the whole school type.

Richard Carter: You know, you know school wide initiatives that maybe, yes, I was a part of but really didn't speak to the needs of my practice.

Richard Carter: So, here, now is that opportunity as this ecosystem of micro-credentials is being built out and we have quality quality micro-credentials that speak to multiple areas.

Richard Carter: Yeah I do, you know, the IEP is individualized right? So, my students are unique.

Richard Carter: Their needs are unique. Well, here, I don't need to wait for, you know, a specialist to come in as much I don't need for that. You know, I don't need for PD, you know. I don't need an approval for, you know, something to come in. I can go and explore at a very.

Richard Carter: You know, at time-efficient, I will say because it allows me to do it whenever I, you know, whenever I can.

Richard Carter: I can, I can explore these my needs in ways that I just haven't had the opportunity to before. I can do as many as I want. I can do as few as I'm required or I can do none, you know. So, I think it also offers that ability for you to go and and really.

Richard Carter: invest in learning more and more about how to serve each one of your students over time, which is again something we just have not had access to for many before.

Kiera Anderson: Absolutely, I love that you mentioned personalization again.

Kiera Anderson: And, and also the fact that, when we look at you know micro-credentials, getting badges, stacking them on top of each other.



Kiera Anderson: When we look at that personalization, think of all the time within education that we have spent

Kiera Anderson: googling or trying to find things for a certain child, you know, because like you said, all children are unique.

Kiera Anderson: And we spend all this time trying to find resources of our own I really feel like these micro-credentials are going to offer

Kiera Anderson: Easier access like you talked about to be able to find things. Not only that, now we can get credit for the work that we're doing and learning about something specific for a specific child or a specific group of children, which is excellent work one.

Kiera Anderson: Um, one, and one more question: how, what resources or tools would you provide for those who want to learn more about your work? Is there a direction we can point them in?

Richard Carter: Well, and for micro-credentialing, I would I would suggest starting with the platforms. I mean that's really where you need to begin to.

Richard Carter: One, what, how these are structured? Two, how they how you might utilize them in your in your practice.

Richard Carter: Because it really does, I mean with micro-credentials, you have a number of a number of organizations and number of individuals that are creating them that may or may not, you know have.

Richard Carter: You know, have a great

Richard Carter: The best understanding of of how of how to provide instruction. I'm trying to say this in a very kind way because again it's something that's new with something. That's novel we're all growing on each time.

Richard Carter: So, you will see some poor quality micro-credentials and then you'll see some that just blow your mind amazing.

Richard Carter: And that's for you really to understand what you would say yes, I would offer this or no, I would not offer this. They also they also give you an opportunity to learn how others in you know, in education, are, you know, are



Richard Carter: are giving opportunities for individuals to show mastery of their learning. And then it also shows kind of a different architecture into how we provide the resources, you know

Richard Carter: literature, etc, to guide students to understanding.

Richard Carter: So I would start there. I would also start with ideas of badging, so I would go to badgr B-A-D-G-R. And I would look at, okay, this is one part, this is my backpack or my kind of repository of badgr that i've earned. What does that look like?

Richard Carter: Okay, what is access to LearningDesigned.org, which is a platform that offers micro-credentials and also is closely related to the CIDDL Center.

Richard Carter: How does this work? What does it look like? What are the resources that I can access here? I can start my account look around to see what's available.

Richard Carter: Another one would be Digital Promise, which offers quite a bit of micro-credentials. And then as well, NEA offers a large large bank of micro-credentials. There are others as well. I'm just kind of those are three big ones.

Richard Carter: So really familiarize yourself with that. This is definitely an area where the research is behind the practice.

Richard Carter: This is off has been often moving for a few years. Research is catching up. It will take some time as it often does.

Richard Carter: However, in that time, our key areas are going to be the, you know, that we're all looking out for is granularity.

Richard Carter: Micro-credential, how small do we get a micro-credential to call it a micro-credential and not a full-on module. Like what is that, you know, the perfect amount that is that a teacher or student could learn in one sitting. The second is going to be ideas of

Richard Carter: quality, which we talked about extensively here. The others are going to be what they what they're worth. So, if you're equating

Richard Carter: A micro-credential to professional development, for instance

Richard Carter: What is one "sit and get" eight-hour type, you know, event worth for PD versus what is one micro-credentialing. In the state of Wyoming, what we've done is negotiated with our PTSB.



Richard Carter: that one micro-credential equals .5 credits. You need two credits a year

Richard Carter: To maintain or you need one credit a year to maintain your licensure. So the way it works is that you would do your PD and then, if you wanted to do micro-credentials, you did two you're well on your way.

Richard Carter: That's going to shake up over time as well as we kind of get as we all kind of coalesce of what this means.

Kiera Anderson: Right right, okay, excellent. Well. Thank you, so much, Dr. Carter for sharing your research and practice about micro credentials. We really appreciate your time and work.

Kiera Anderson: For more information about CIDDL Research and Practice Briefs and other resources for higher education and related services, please go to [ciddl.org](http://ciddl.org). Don't forget to follow us on social media, subscribe to our channel, and leave us a message. Thank you all for joining us today.