

Digital careers badges

Young people's career development at school often goes unrecorded. How can you help young people to document their career learning in a positive and engaging way? Digital badging is a means of acknowledging and celebrating their success in such activities as exploring their career options, demonstrating their employability skills or helping others to find the careers information they need. Indeed, you can design careers missions or challenges for your own students and award them badges that you have published. Over time, you can develop a suite of badges to provide a progressive learning pathway for your students (Ash, 2012). You can also help other schools by making your badges available to them too.

Badges make career learning and assessment exciting and fun. They help to promote higher-level learning in careers by promoting metacognitive understanding and reflection. Students make content through telling their story which resonates well with narrative approaches to careers work (Reid, 2016). Badges also develop essential skills for learning life and work, including digital and social media skills (through the inclusion of photos, text, video, audio and documents in their badge evidence). They harness 'internal' motivation through the types of tasks they perform and 'external' motivation through the award of the badge itself (Bettany, 2016).

Young people can embed links to their badges in a CV, personal statement or portfolio. Selectors and recruiters, not forgetting family and friends, simply click the badge link to open up detailed evidence of what the student had to do to gain the badge.

About digital badges

The non-profit organisation Mozilla introduced free and open source digital badges in 2011 (<http://openbadges.org/>). Since then, the organisations that have started to issue badges include schools and universities, community organisations, government agencies, libraries and museums, event organisers (e.g. British Science Week), companies and training providers.

About Makewaves

Makewaves (www.makewav.es) is one of the leading platforms to promote open badges. The City & Guilds Group has just acquired Makewaves to expand its digital credentialing business which will be known as DigitalMe. You can find out everything you need to know about Makewaves on their website including video case studies of schools that have taken up digital badging. The basic package

is free to use but has few features, e.g. you are limited to 30 minutes of audio or video uploads and you can only create three badges. However, Makewaves Basic comes with a free trial of the professional package which is useful for piloting open badges before your organisation commits itself to buying an annual subscription (£1,947+vat Secondary / £749+vat Primary). Makewaves provides a free training call to help you get started that takes 15-20 minutes and emails you an information sheet and an Essential Makewaves knowledge booklet. You can also find out about safety and security at <https://www.makewav.es/safe>.

Makewaves also operates the Open Badge Academy (<https://www.openbadgeacademy.com/>) which is for organisations wishing to set up their own open badge academy. Examples include:

- O2 (see their 'Interview Primed' badge)
- Working for Success (their badge library includes 'Interview Skills emerging', 'Match Day – Work Experience', 'Enterprise Emerging', 'Resilient – Emerging', 'Starting Out – Emerging')
- YouthFocusNorthEast and City and Guilds (their badge library includes 'Work experienced', 'Teamwork', 'Confidence')
- NHS (see their 'NHS Reporter – Fact Finder' badge)

The badges movement has its supporters and detractors; but there is no substitute for making up your own mind about their relevance and value to your students (Ash, 2012).

Getting started

Visit the Makewaves website and browse 'about Makewaves', the case studies and the public badges library.

For examples of ready-made badges which you can use, see below or go to Cegnet's Makewaves site at <https://www.makewav.es/careersbadges>.

Taking it forward

- Browse badge libraries to find badges that are relevant to your students
- Evaluate the interesting features of the Makewaves platform such as the house points widget, blogs, the like feature, polls and peer feedback
- Suggest a careers pilot of digital badges in your school as a preliminary to developing the use of badges in other curriculum areas such as PSHE and citizenship. Make digital badges part of your approach to setting homework in these subjects. Use the pilot to get testimonies from students, staff, local employers that digital badging makes a difference to outcomes for them
- Find out if any other schools in your network or trust are interested in developing a suite of badges.

Useful links

Ash, K. (2012) 'Digital Badges' Would Represent Students' Skill Acquisition' Education Week 05:03 pp 24-30 [Accessed online <http://www.edweek.org/dd/articles/2012/06/13/03badges.h05.html>]

Bettany, J. (2016) Digital Badging in Initial Teacher Education, BETT Show [Accessed online http://www.bettshow.com/files/day_2_james_bettany.pdf]

Reid, H. (2016) Introduction to Career Counselling and Coaching. London: Sage.

Examples of badges

Employability Badge

Awarded for having demonstrated and evidenced the employability skills expected of you during a work placement or equivalent experience.

Badge mission

Task 1 – Showing personal responsibility

Arrive on time; wear suitable clothing; listen to instructions; show that you are making an effort; keep your workspace tidy and observe health and safety procedures

Task 2 – Working in a team

Contribute to getting the work done that you are asked to do to the best of your ability; offer to help others with their tasks when you have finished what you are doing

Task 3 – Caring for customers

Greet customers and clients in the proper way; provide them with a good service and if you cannot help them, refer them to someone in the organisation who can

Not sure how to go about winning the badge?

Employability is about showing that you have the personal and social skills to get and keep a job.

A digital diary or log is a useful way of recording your experience. You can ask your supervisor or teacher to add comments, saying what you did well, and take photos, e.g. of you serving customers.

Careers librarian badge

Awarded for having demonstrated and evidenced the skills needed to maintain the information resources in the school's careers library for at least one term

Badge mission

Task 1 – Library stock

Use a careers library classification system to code resources; label, date and file new information; order and/or download new resources

Task 2 – Displays and presentations

Keep the careers library tidy; put up signs, posters and displays; keep noticeboards up-to-date; give introductory talks to small groups of students

Task 3 – Users' enquiries

Welcome students and help them find the information they need including printed and digital resources; show users how to borrow or get copies of resources;

Not sure how to go about winning the badge?

Keep a training record – these will be the notes you make on the training you are given to be a careers librarian by the school librarian and the careers teacher and/or careers adviser. It could include a list of your duties, how to catalogue resources, how to make a good display, how to show other students how to use a particular careers programme, how to make resources accessible to users with special needs, etc.

Keep a work log so that you have a record of your work plan (i.e. the jobs you planned to do including details of any other jobs that library or careers staff ask you to do. Your work log could include:

- Examples of the questions you ask other students in order to find out what they are looking for and then what you do depending on their reply
- how you helped other students to find the 'best' information for what they wanted to find out
- how you encouraged other students to

Ask a member of staff to sign, date and comment on your training record and work log.

Take photos of any posters or displays that you create. A national celebration event such as Apprenticeships Week or British Science Week is a good opportunity to raise awareness of the school's careers resources relating to it.

Save a digital copy of a poster or leaflet that you made to show other students how to find and use the school's careers information resources.

Save a copy of a PowerPoint presentation you made, e.g. for a digital display screen around school, for a talk to a small group of students.

Careers explorer badge

Awarded for having demonstrated and evidenced the skills needed to draw up a shortlist of jobs that interest you, researched information about one of those jobs in more detail and explained its attractions and challenges for you.

Badge mission

Task 1 – Shortlist of jobs

Use a matching and elimination process to draw up a shortlist of 5-10 jobs that interest you and that you could consider as possible future career options

Task 2 – Job study

Research one of the jobs on your shortlist referring to more than one source of information and record key details such as description of the work, personal qualities and skills needed for the job, entry requirements and what the prospects are like, including earnings potential

Task 3 - Reflection

Explain why the job you have researched could be a good match for you and anything you are not sure about; outline what you intend to do next to carry on exploring your career options

Not sure how to go about winning the badge?

One way of drawing up a shortlist of jobs that might suit you (Task 1) is to answer a careers questionnaire about your interests and skills that gives you matched job suggestions from which you can choose between 5 and 10 jobs that you would like to investigate further. Many careers websites for young people have this kind of questionnaire. Your school may be able to recommend one for you to use that lets you download your results and save them in the form of an action plan.

You can gather information about one of the jobs on your shortlist (Task 2) in many different ways, e.g. look at the printed and online resources in the school library, search for articles on the internet and in the media, talk to family and friends, interview employers who come into school or have a stand at a careers fair. You could present your job study as a document, a PowerPoint or make a video of yourself giving a talk to the class about the job you have researched.

To carry out your reflection (Task 3), you could have a discussion with your tutor or write a reflection in your diary, blog or personal digital space (e.g. digital record of achievement).

Careers rep badge

Awarded for having demonstrated and evidenced the skills needed to contribute to the planning, delivery and evaluation of the careers programme by helping the careers staff for at least one term

Badge mission

Task 1 – Help other students

Tell students about upcoming careers events and resources that could be useful to them

Task 2 – Give feedback to staff

Let careers staff know what other students think about the careers programme

Task 3 – Ambassadors

Assist careers staff at school careers events and activities

Not sure how to go about winning the badge?

Careers reps are volunteers who help the careers staff to run the careers programme. They might give important messages to tutor groups, be on duty in the careers library or take part in a focus group discussion about the careers programme. They might also help with the running of a careers event by meeting and greeting parents and other students, looking after visitors and generally helping with the organisation of the event.

Keep a record of participation, e.g. training that you are given, planning meetings with careers staff, duties undertaken.

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