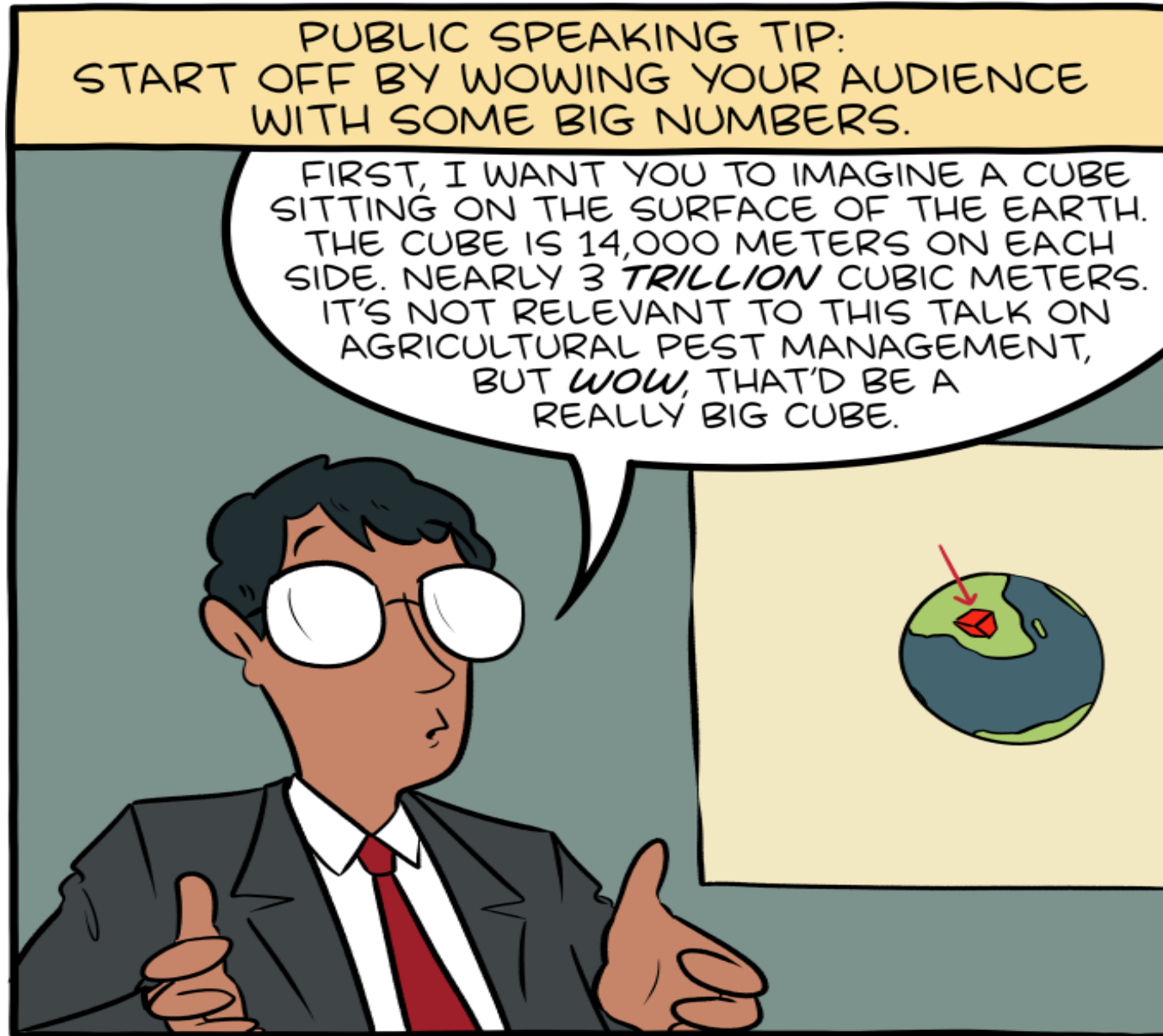# The Wild West of Alternate Credentials

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What makes a credential "alternative"?

- Stackable
- Usually digital (but not always)
- May or may not have formal accreditation
- Geared towards employment
- Often pursued by "adult" learners

Non-Traditional/Adult Learners

- Delayed enrollment
- Part-time attendance
- Financially independent
- Work full-time
- Have dependents
- Single parent
- No previous credentials

National Center for Education Statistics 2015

The landscape and current administration

Remove the credit-hour definition

Allow the outsourcing of academic programs to nonaccredited providers via partnerships

Online programs do not have to be approved to operate in every state where they enroll students

Accreditors can define who qualifies as an instructor rather than the department

Eliminate restrictions on religious colleges' participation in student aid

Loosen restrictions on TEACH Grant recipients

TERM	DEFINITION
Competency Based Professional Learning	Learning activities that result in the participants demonstrating evidence of achievement of specified outcomes.
Continuing Education Unit (CEU)	Credit for hours spent participating in professional learning at a ratio of 1 CEU per 10 hours of learning.
Micro-credential	Recognition achieved through demonstrating mastery of a defined skill or competency, including industry-recognized competencies.
Credential	The acknowledged completion of a thoughtfully designed series or multiple sets of recognized competencies that an educator earned by demonstrating mastery of the defined skills or competencies. (see Micro-credential)
Stack	One organized set of credentials that an educator earns by demonstrating mastery of the described skills or competencies. Also referred to as a cluster, collection, assemblage, or amassment.
Stackability	The idea that micro-credentials build upon or complement each other to represent a carefully assembled set of professional skills.
Badge	Digital or physical representation of a micro-credential, stack, or credential.

Earner	The educator or professional submitting evidence for the micro-credential.
Issuer	The group or organization that has created the micro-credential and validates the educator's competence in the defined skill or set of skills.
Recognizer	The person or organization (often the Local Education Agency or school administrator) that recognizes and accepts the micro-credential, stack, or credential as a representation of the educator's skill or competence (formally, through CEUs or licensure procedures, or informally through hiring practices and recognition).
Reviewer	An expert, often times an educator that has previously demonstrated mastery of skill(s) required for the micro-credential, evaluates evidences to determine if the competency has been demonstrated.
Review Process	A reviewer utilizes a rigorous rubric and scoring guide to evaluate evidences.
Backpack	A repository where earners can collect digital badges from a variety of issuers.
Portability	The ability to earn badges from anywhere, then share them wherever you want—on social networking profiles, job sites, email signatures, and on your personal website.
Verifiability	There is meta data attached to the badge that provides information about who issued the badge, when it was earned, what was required to earn it, and any additional relevant details.

Open Badging Initiative (OBI)

Mozilla created a free, open software designed to help individuals earn and organizations design OBI compliant badges.

The OBI standards state that

micro-credentials/badges must be

- portable
- stackable
- verifiable
- open

What are Micro-credentials?

Micro-credential	Badge
Recognition achieved through demonstrating mastery of a defined skill or competency, including industry-recognized competencies.	Digital or physical representation of a micro-credential, stack, or credential.

A note about digital documents…

Participating Institutions

- American Public University System (APUS)
- Charter Oak State College
- Excelsior College
- Rio Salado Community College
- SUNY Empire State College
- Thomas Edison State University

Additional Institutions
- Harper College
- Anne Arundel Community College
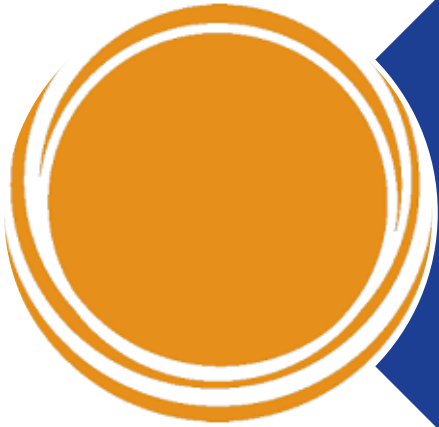- Capella University

Program Structures/Types

- OneTranscript
  - Transcripted credit from a variety of sources
- Credit by evaluation (CBE)
  - Competency exams
- Center for Post-Traditional Instruction, Training, and Learning Program (CAPITAL)
  - credit equivalence for workforce training programs
- Portfolio reviews

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Key Players

ECE

Lumina Foundation

- Credential Engine

UNESCO

- European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)
- European Training Foundation (ETF)

More major players
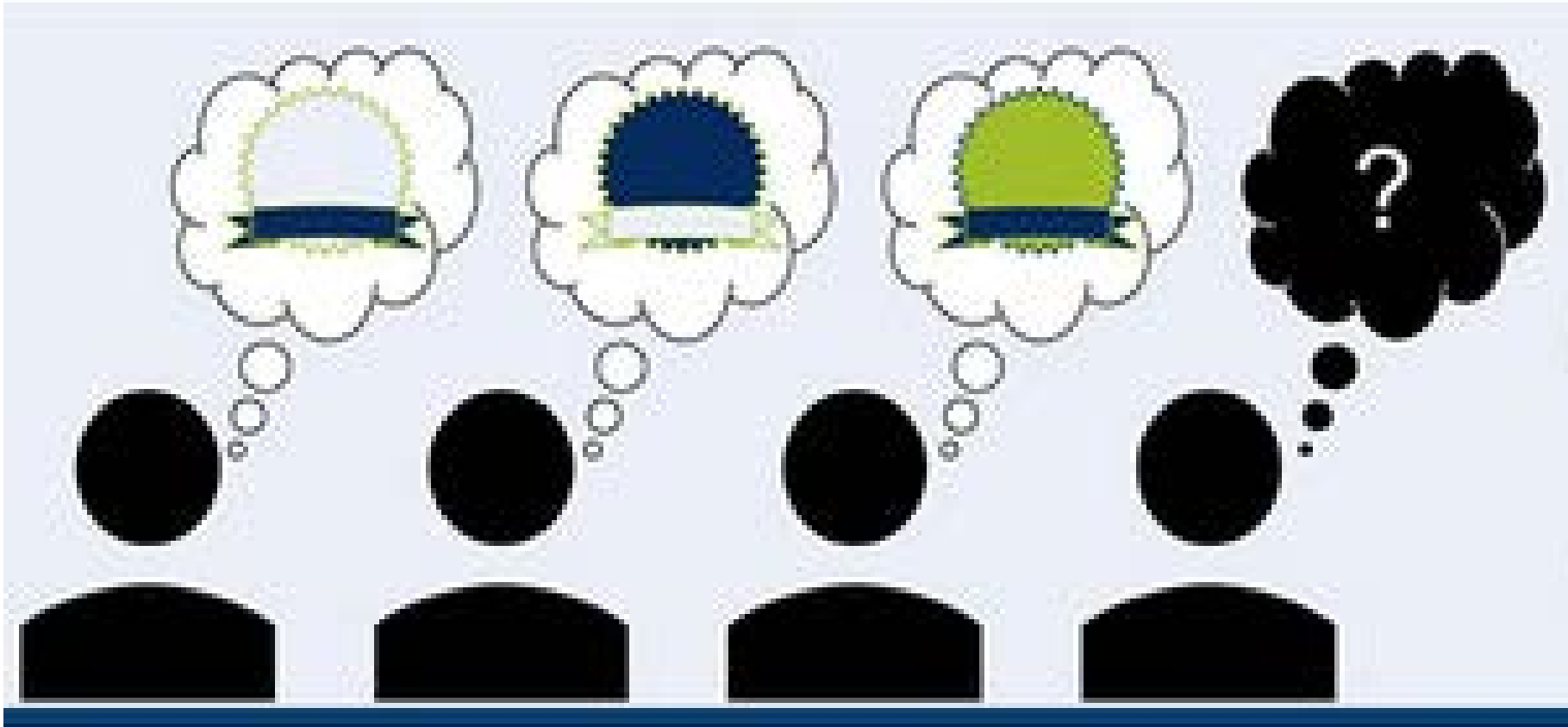
American College of Education (ACE)

- https://www.ace.edu/

National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)

- http://www.nationalccrs.org/

Consortium for the Assessment of College Equivalencies (CACE)

- http://www.cacereviews.org/

What's the objective of a degree?

Models of Learning

Competency Based

- Participants demonstrate achievement through specified learning outcomes

Time Based

- Seat time is required to for completion of specified outcomes

The Emperor's New Clothes?

- Accountability & Quality Assurance
- Qualification Frameworks
- Rapid growth & expansion

Why so popular?

- Offer a personalized learning experience

- Depth of learning is increased via the demonstration of mastery

- Micro-credentials recognize achievements, often in a digital manner

- Can be used for career advancement

- Often lead to a desire to gain and learn more

What's on the horizon?

Resources & Images

- http://www.ncpublicschools.org/micro-credentialing/overview/
- https://purduenext.purdue.edu/benefits-to-employers/ceu-microcredential
- https://learn.canvas.net/courses/450/pages/leverage-your-participation-badges-course-certificate-and-ceu
- https://www.iacet.org/resources/iacet-openbadge-verification-tool/
- https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2019/04/24/mit-and-8-other-universities-partner-shared-digital-credential
- https://postsecondary.gatesfoundation.org/postsecondary-value/?utm_medium=ihe&utm_source=paid&utm_content=eblast&utm_campaign=aw_us_gradseason
- https://pixabay.com/photos/

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