**Proposal**

As a teacher I am interested in education. At times, I question the efficacy of an education system with rooted in the industrial revolution and designed to create workers who can conform to time, rote task, and factory culture. Of all the various reforms proposed one that I find most intriguing is the idea of gamification. Rooted in videogame theory and design gamification is a process to make real-life processes more like videogames; that is to say, more engaging, fun, custom, and rewarding.

With all of this in mind, I want to find out if it is feasible to reform Ontario Secondary schools from a system of 30 credits to a system of 120 badges.

*Preliminary Secondary sources…*

1. <https://blogs.commons.georgetown.edu/everhart/competency-based-learning/>
2. <http://online-learning-online.blogspot.ca/2013/12/digital-badges-as-alternative.html>
3. <http://edutechwiki.unige.ch/en/Educational_badges>
4. <http://www.edudemic.com/guides/the-teachers-guide-to-badges-in-education/>
5. <https://chronicle.com/article/Badges-Earned-Online-Pose/130241/>
6. <http://wcetblog.wordpress.com/2013/10/10/badgescreditsaccreditation/>

In addition to the Review of Information I will do an original investigation that includes a 20 question survey for about badges as an alternative to credits

**Badges as Alternative to Credits**

**Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to examine and provide recommendations on the topic of badges as an alternative to credits in high school. Specifically, whether fractal, short, and specific badges should replace the semester long credit as the main pedagogical unit in Ontario’s secondary schools? Factors to consider are whether or not this makes sense logistically and pedagogically. Moreover, whether or not there would be support for a reform such as this.

*What are Badges?*

Digital badges are a more fine-grained way for schools to offer accreditation. Unlike the broad strokes of traditional credits and diplomas, digital badges show the skills and abilities of the holder to the wider world. Badges take a shorter amount of time to attain and are more fractal or videogame like with levels of proficiency to work through. Digital badge portfolios can also hyperlink to examples of the holder’s proficiencies—providing employers, school admissions officers, and the wider world. For instance a badge in digital video editing would hyperlink to an example of edited digital video completed by the holder.

**Review of Information**

As a new way of looking at accreditation, Digital Badges offer several advantages and pose several challenges in their adoption. Advantages include archived and searchable proofs for accreditation; open frameworks for groups to issue badges; and granularity or stackable credentials. Challenges include oversight, and accreditation of issuers; and in the high school context a reconceptualization of the curriculum at its very core.

**Badges as digital proof of skill mastery**

Badges offer a very customizable and precise way to accredit a learner. According to openbadges.org this customizability is more specific than traditional degrees. Badges can: “Illustrate wide sets of skills and achievements; Provide concrete evidence and proof of skills, achievements, and interests; (and)Help unlock new career and learning opportunities.” What is interesting here is the proof and concrete evidence. Instead of throwing work out at the end of a semester and simply having a credit tallied on a sheet in the guidance counselor’s office, badges can hyperlink to work that demonstrates the learners proficiency in that particular badge. That is to say if a learner earns a badge in writing news reports the digital badge will link to the best examples of the learner’s news reports.

The corollary of this evidence-based accreditation is that the issuer of the badge absolutely must have “clearly articulated competencies” or look fors. “In other words, Badges represent what a badge holder can do, not just what someone remembers. Further, the ‘doing’ must be proven, not merely asserted.” WCET

Proof in the world of digital badges means imagining a world in which high school learners earn badges that depict, to potential post-secondary destinations, a fine grained depiction of a student’s actual skill set with e-portfolio style links to completed and polished works that prove definitively the student can perform a specific skill.

**Granularity and Stackable Credits**

What does a high school diploma actually tell the world? In a streamed system like Ontario’s, each diploma has a different meaning to the holder and to the wider world. With students taking one of three streams: locally developed/work place, applied/college, and academic/university on its face a diploma can mean three different things. In addition to this, students can take a variety of course from each stream. This renders the diploma itself rather meaningless from an objective standpoint.

The advantage of Digital Badges are that they are …. **(I need to finish this here)**

I“Digital badges represent a new, innovative mechanism for verifying achievement and attainment of pre-specified skills and competencies.[[1]](http://wcetblog.wordpress.com/Users/cmorrison/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/GZ8WPG9D/badges%20credits%20accreditation%20%28WCET%29%20docx%20.docx#_ftn1) As we’ve been learning during the “Badges: New Currency for Professional Credentials” MOOC co-sponsored by WCET ([badges.coursesites.com](http://badges.coursesites.com/))[[2]](http://wcetblog.wordpress.com/Users/cmorrison/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/Temporary%20Internet%20Files/Content.Outlook/GZ8WPG9D/badges%20credits%20accreditation%20%28WCET%29%20docx%20.docx#_ftn2), many postsecondary institutions are considering, even preparing to implement, badges within academic programs and for faculty development.” - https://chronicle.com/article/Badges-Earned-Online-Pose/130241/

“Educational upstarts across the Web are adopting systems of "badges" to certify skills and abilities. If scouting focuses on outdoorsy skills like tying knots, these badges denote areas employers might look for, like mentorship or digital video editing. Many of the new digital badges are easy to attain—intentionally so—to keep students motivated, while others signal mastery of fine-grained skills that are not formally recognized in a traditional classroom.” - http://wcetblog.wordpress.com/2013/10/10/badgescreditsaccreditation/

**Survey:** Digital Badges

1. You are
	1. Teacher
	2. Student
	3. Parent
	4. None of the above
2. The Ontario Secondary School Diploma is
	1. Very effective in demonstrating a graduates skills and abilities
	2. Effective in demonstrating a graduates skills and abilities
	3. Neutral in demonstrating a graduates skills and abilities
	4. Poor in demonstrating a graduates skills and abilities
	5. Very poor in demonstrating a graduates skills and abilities
3. The high school credit is
	1. A very effective stop point for teenaged learners
	2. An effective stop point for teenaged learners
	3. A neutral stop point for teenaged learners
	4. A poor stop point for teenaged learners
	5. A very poor stop point for teenaged learners
4. Students should be able to save their progress like in a videogame
	1. Strongly agree
	2. Agree
	3. Neutral
	4. Disagree
	5. Strongly disagree
5. There should be a more exact way for students to prove what they are able to do.
	1. Strongly agree
	2. Agree
	3. Neutral
	4. Disagree
	5. Strongly disagree
6. Do you think the government should have a new plan for Ontario secondary school courses? Strongly agree
	1. Agree
	2. Neutral
	3. Disagree
	4. Strongly disagree
7. It would be difficult but worthwhile to re-jig the Ontario Secondary school curriculum
	1. Agree
	2. Neutral
	3. Disagree
	4. Strongly disagree
8. I think it makes sense to replace 30 high school credits with short specific badges that measure skills and learnings with proof attached.
	1. Agree
	2. Neutral
	3. Disagree
	4. Strongly disagree
9. The last Royal Commission on education in Ontario was in 1995. It time for a new Royal Commission on education in Ontario
	1. Agree
	2. Neutral
	3. Disagree
	4. Strongly disagree
10. It would be easier for all education stakeholders including teachers, students and parents if a system of badges were introduced to replace high school credits.
	1. Agree
	2. Neutral
	3. Disagree
	4. Strongly disagree

10 more here!!!