



Digital Micro-Credentialing as a Model for Professional Learning



**Dr. Rachel Shepherd &
Dr. Erin West**

Empowering Teacher Learning
Project

Appalachian State University

Introduction



ETL Program Overview

Empowering Teacher Learning (ETL) is a 5-year, \$12M research project funded by the Department of Education that will measure the impacts of a new model for teacher professional learning.

In the ETL model, teachers engage in a self-directed professional learning journey as they earn licensure renewal credits (CEUs) and stipends by completing teacher-selected, online, competency-based micro-credentials.



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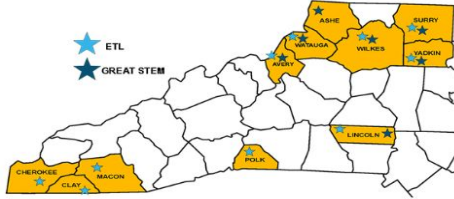
**North Carolina
DPI**



**Digital
Promise**

What is your project?

We Partner with Districts



Teachers Choose To Join Our Program



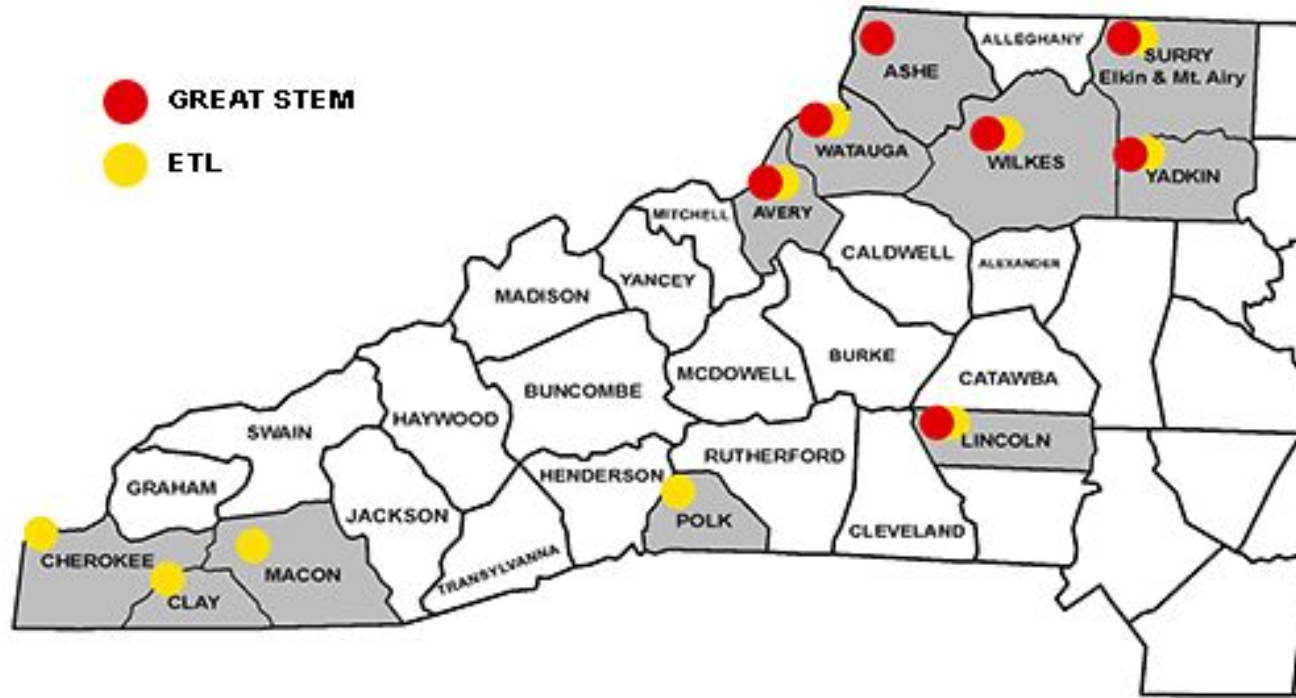
Teachers Earn CEUs & Stipends for their Time



Teachers complete Micro-Credentials & Give Us Feedback

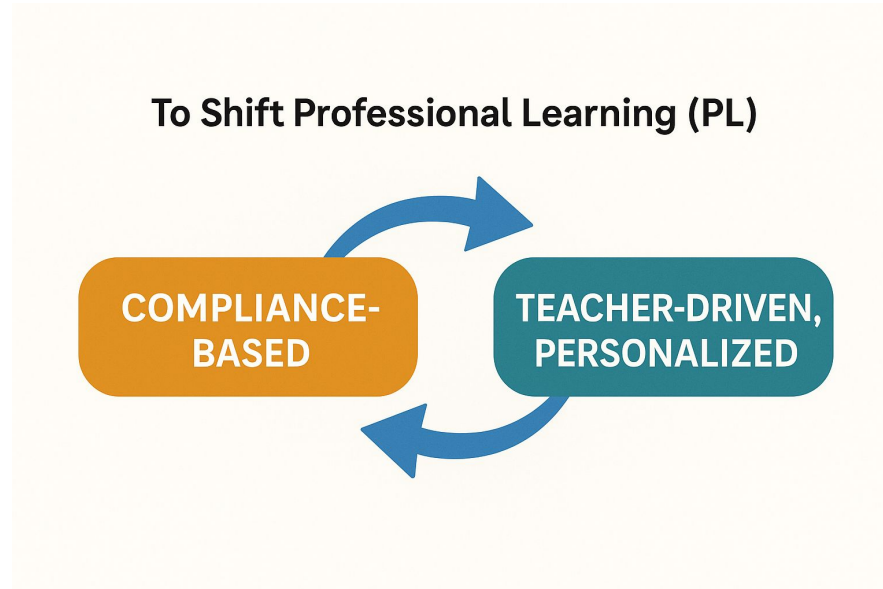


Participating School Districts



Our Goal

- Shift professional learning (PL) from compliance-based to teacher-driven, personalized models

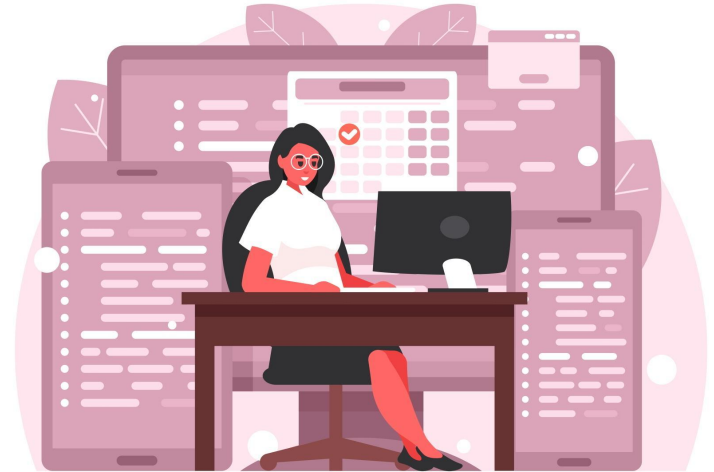


Why Micro-Credentialing?

Traditional PD challenges: one-size-fits-all, time-based, limited follow-through

Micro-credentials (MCs) offer:

- Competency-based learning
- Teacher choice and agency
- Immediate classroom application
- On-demand, digital access



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The ETL Process



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Our Framework for Teacher Learning

Self-directed, flexible structure

Competency-based with authentic evidence submission

Includes:

- Learning modules
- Reflection and goal setting
- Peer/mentor feedback
- Implementation tools



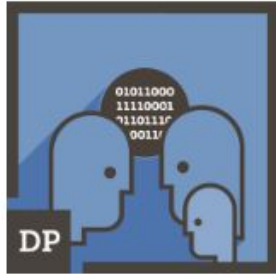
What is a microcredential?

- Certification earned by demonstrating competency (learning by doing)
- Thin slices of learning that focus on one topic of learning
- Research-supported strategies
- Individualized pathways for learning that can be completed by teachers on their time
- Collaborative



Student Goal Setting

Examples of Micro-Credential Topics



Using Data to
Communicate
with Families



Connecting with
Students



Team
Agreements for
Student
Collaboration



Choosing
Learning
Strategies

Teacher NCEES Standard:

II. Teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students

Teacher NCEES Standard:

IV. Teachers facilitate learning for their students.

Technology and Delivery

- Delivered via user-friendly digital platforms
- Compatible with LMS and badge systems
- Designed for equitable access in rural areas
- Scalable across K–12 and higher education faculty



Your Turn: Check out the Microcredentials



How do teachers choose MCs?

1. Needs Assessment

Teachers take a self-assessment which highlights strengths and opportunities for growth.

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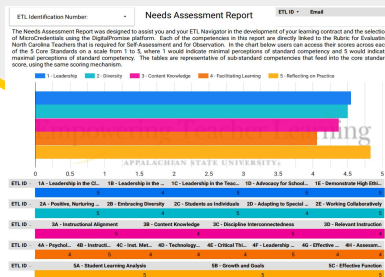
2. Self-Directed Learning Plan

Teachers create a plan for their own professional learning throughout the school year focused on their needs.

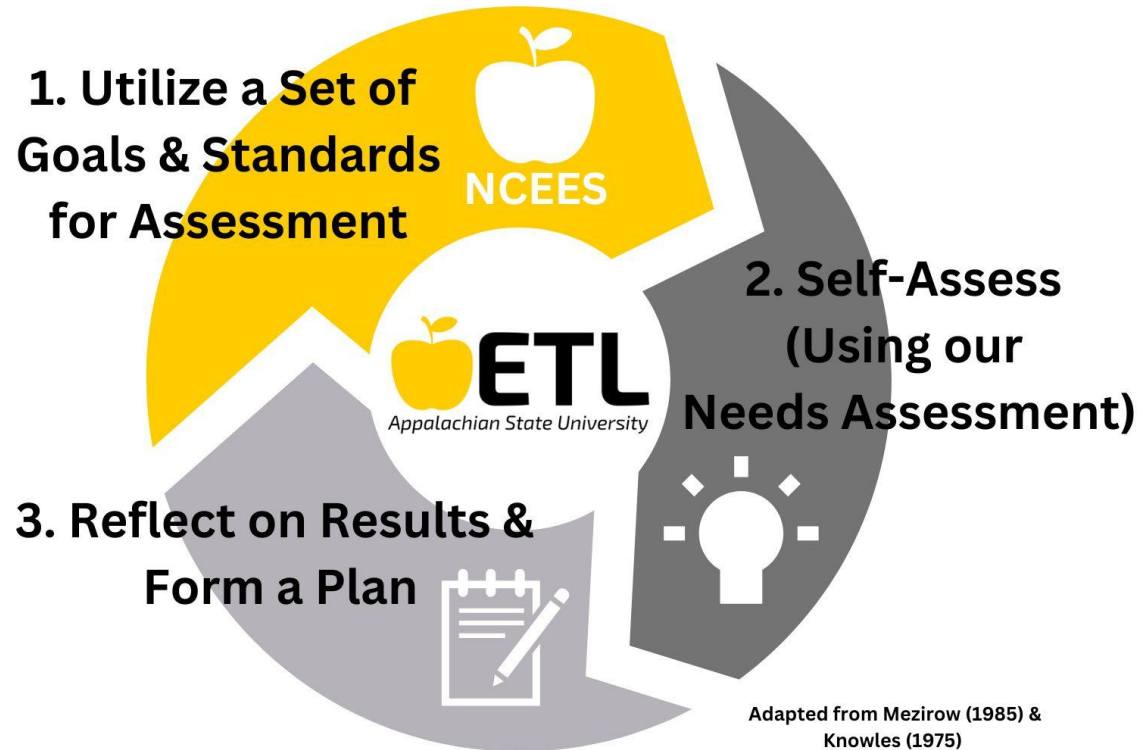
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3. Micro-credential Selection

Teachers select micro-credentials that bolster their goals and professional learning plan.



How do teachers form their plans?



How can MCs Empower Teachers?

- Teachers are given VOICE and CHOICE in their professional learning
- MCs can be aligned with school or district-level goals to support learning for all professionals
- When collaborating, teachers learn together!

Microcredentials



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Empowering Teacher Learning in Action

Teachers select credentials aligned with their context and student needs

Examples of topics:

- Equitable grading practices
- Culturally responsive teaching
- STEM integration
- Personalized learning pathways



Expanding the Model to Higher Ed

Faculty use MCs for:

- Instructional design innovation
- Inclusive teaching practices
- Assessment redesign
- Encourages cross-role collaboration and reflective practice



Early Impact and Feedback

Increased teacher engagement and satisfaction

Evidence of change in instructional practice

Growing demand across districts and university departments

Teacher responses:

- Ophelia: “Although a stipend is nice, this particular micro-credential is an area in which I am trying to truly improve in my classroom instruction and probably would have done regardless of a stipend.”
- Paula: “If only there were more time in the day, I would not mind completing a lot more MCs because they are a good learning process and allow for you to reflect on your teaching practices.”



How do MCs Impact Teaching?

- *“I feel confident that the strategies I implemented to complete my MCs impacted student learning but also helped me realize that I need to also focus on how I will reteach.”*
- *“I have applied what I learned this year directly to my instruction, so it had an impact on learning in my classroom.”*
- *“This process has had a positive impact on my students. They are learning the material better. They enjoy some of the things that I have implemented.”*

What do teachers think of the program?

- *“My experience with the ETL program has been invaluable in empowering me to direct my own professional learning. Through this program, I am better empowered to take ownership of my professional learning journey, equipping me with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to perform to a higher standard in my specialized field of students with cognitive and social-emotional disabilities.”*
- *“The self directed learning aspect encourages me to do new things with my students. For example, I changed my beginning of the year unit to fit the Personal Purpose Micro-credential, which pushed me to incorporate more writing and self selected ways to assess learning early on in the school year.”*

Now & the Future



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Challenges and Lessons Learned

- Time and tech constraints for some users
- Importance of ongoing coaching and support
- Building trust and buy-in through relationships

Our Vision for the Future:

- Develop sustainable, transformative PL ecosystems
- Continue to learn from teachers



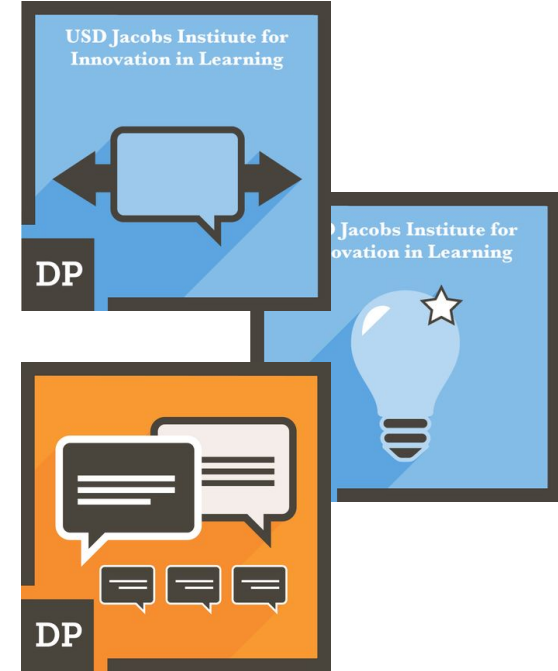
ETL 23-24: Year in Review

73 different MC titles awarded!

Most Popular MCs

1. Using Exit Tickets Effectively (40)
2. Communicating with Guardians (33)
3. Think-Pair-Share for Critical Thinking (29)
4. Fundamental Spreadsheet Skills (15)
5. Check for Understanding (13)

Many of the above were done in partnership with PLCs/schools! Remember:
“Self-directed learning does not happen in isolation.”



Empowering Teacher Learning: Growing a Transformative PL Ecosystem

Current Work

-  **Expanding** our digital library of micro-credentials
-  **Integrating** with state licensure and recertification systems
-  **Building** PL communities around micro-credential clusters

Impact and Vision for the Future

Impact

-  Teachers report **positive experiences** directing their own learning
-  Notable **impact on student engagement and outcomes**

Vision for the Future

-  Develop **sustainable, transformative PL ecosystems**
-  Continue to **learn from teachers**
-  Extend partnerships with **NCDPI and other forward-thinking organizations**

How can I adapt this framework?

Think

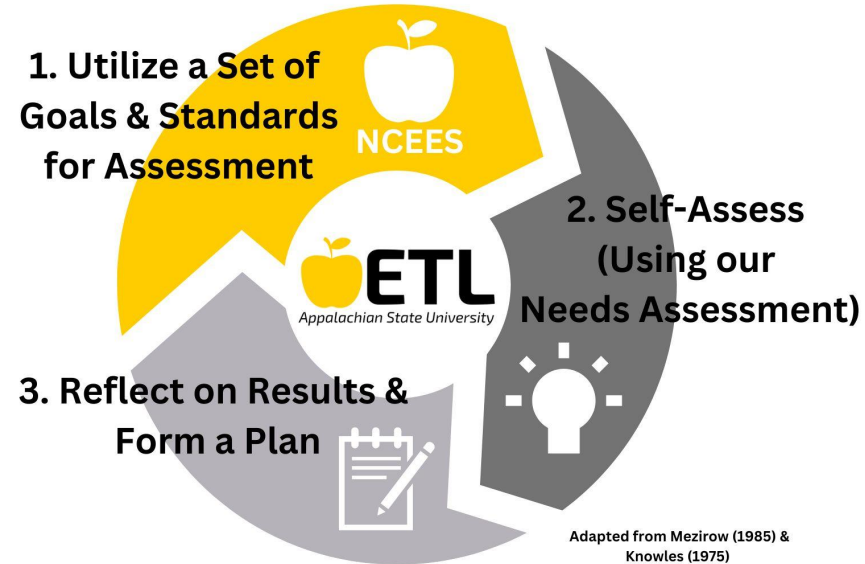
What standards or goals do I need to reflect on?

Self-Assess

What do I need to learn about?

Reflect

*What will this reflection inform?
Create actionable next steps*



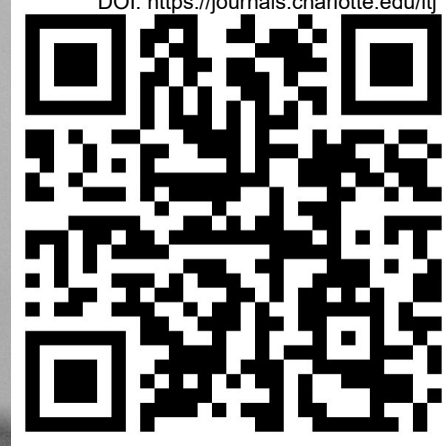
Questions and Discussion



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How might micro-credentialing support your faculty or district PL goals?



Thank You!

Contact Information:

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