Opportunity-Ready

Micro-credentials to Engage the Incarcerated Population
It began with a conversation...

“Tell me more about this digital badge stuff. I wonder if it could work for the women at the jail.”
-Matt Tardie
It is becoming a narrative...

“The time spent in incarceration does not have to be wasted time. It can be used very purposefully...I believe personally that...you can change the trajectory of your future.”

-Commissioner Randall Liberty, MDOC
Opportunity-Ready Pathway
The Design Challenge

• Address life-readiness, education-readiness, & work-readiness skills
• Delivery through secure tablet vendor, Edovo
• Honor the human connection
• Authentically assess completion evidence

“Embrace the Shake”
Design Decisions

• Driven by research and empathy interviews
• Deliver in podcast format – “the human textbook”
• Create workbooks for learners to draw, doodle, capture thought responses, and reflect on topics
• Assess through storytelling and plan development
The Curriculum: An Iterative Process
## Life-Ready: The prototype

**Overarching Theme:** “Experience is Everywhere”

25 podcasts (7 minutes each)

**Experience is Everywhere:** Introduction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Power of Expression</th>
<th>The Power of Emotion</th>
<th>The Power of Storytelling</th>
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<td>The Power of Persistence</td>
<td>The Power of Self-Advocacy</td>
<td>The Power of Peers</td>
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<td>The Power of Connection</td>
<td>The Power of Conscious Decision-Making</td>
<td>The Power of Now</td>
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<td>The Power of Motivation</td>
<td>The Power of Creation</td>
<td>Final Exercise: Random Autobiography</td>
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The Workbook

- Space to draw and capture notes while listening
- Transcripts of podcasts
- Reflection questions to answer for each topic
- Other associated exercises
- Random Autobiography samples, instructions, & template
Life-Ready Partnerships

Brian Welsh, EMCC Student Navigator

Tasia Lima, TRiO Advisor

Jeremy White, TRiO Advisor

Dee Nichols & Susan Bennett-Armistead, UMaine Literacy Faculty & What’s Now, What’s Next founders

Terri Swanson, Community Leader

Jane Loxterkamp, ECE Faculty

Andrew Clifford, Main Street Music Studios

Mark Nason, Eric Ferguson & Mike Hambrock, NESCOM

Green Tank Productions (music)

Brian Hill, CEO & Founder of Edovo

Commissioner Liberty, MDOC

Current students, including those who were formerly incarcerated
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education-Ready</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Power of Self-Assessment: Who are you as a learner?</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Learning Styles</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Resilience</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Power of Choice: Your Learning Path</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Study Skills</strong></td>
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<td><strong>The Admissions Process</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Financial Aid</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Prior Learning</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Advising</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Final Exercise: Personalized Learning Plan</strong></td>
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Education-Ready Partnerships

Brian Welsh, EMCC Student Navigator
Lauren Quinn, Coordinator of Advising & Registration
Luke Bulley, EMCC Financial Aid Advisor
Elizabeth Castro, Admissions
Cynthia Young, EMCC Librarian
Current EMCC students
Benjamin Church (music)
Under Construction: Adult Education, Workforce Development, other customized content
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Work-Ready</td>
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<td>The Power of Exploration: Career Assessment</td>
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<td>Career Assessment Reflection</td>
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<td>21st Century Skills Badges: New World of Work</td>
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<td>21st Century Skills Reflection</td>
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<td>Professional Etiquette</td>
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<td>Employer Expectations</td>
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<td>Job Search Basics</td>
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<td>Resume &amp; Cover Letter Basics</td>
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<td>What to Expect in an Interview</td>
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<td>5-Minute Futures: 15 podcasts featuring local business &amp; community leaders</td>
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<td>Next Steps Action Plan</td>
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<td>Work-Ready Partnerships</td>
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<td><strong>Brian Langley</strong>: former Senator, local restaurant owner, Executive Director of Bridge Academy Maine</td>
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<td><strong>Employees from Jackson Labs</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Mid-Maine Chamber of Commerce</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Members of MCCS Board of Trustees</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Thomas Brennan, Nestle Waters North America (Poland, Maine)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Central Maine Healthcare</strong></td>
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<td><strong>David Barber, Barber Foods (Portland, Maine)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Michael Bourque, MEMIC</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Backyard Farms</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Northern Light Healthcare</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bangor Region Chamber of Commerce</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Donna Cassese, Forest Industry Consultant</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bill Whitmore, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Bill Trevaskis (music)</strong></td>
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Opportunity-Ready

Cumulative Reflection:
Where were you when you began?
Where are you now?
Where are you going?
What have you learned from this experience?
Life-Ready Pilot: Mountain View Correctional Facility

- 18 Participants, range in age and length of sentence, medium security units
- Facilitation:
  - 2 Peer Badge Ambassadors (paid positions through MDOC)
  - 3-person team (plus Augie, the therapy dog) from EMCC (frequent visits early on, decreasing over time)
User Feedback

- Add transcripts to workbook; more scenarios to react to
- “People here don’t want to earn ‘badges’...but they want to join the program when I tell them about it.” (The language we use matters)
- Education staff and officers reported increased connection and morale on the units
- Feedback changed our approach to the Education-Ready/Work-Ready content
Successes

- 10 out of 18 completed – some participants stopped but most were interrupted by transfer/release
- 2 participants wrote autobiographies of between 40 and 50 pages
- One wrote and recorded a song
- One graduated with Associate’s degree – received a scholarship to complete his last class for degree based on program participation
- 4 other participants were given scholarships to complete a college course through UMaine-Augusta
• 2 participants were accepted as apprentices to the Culinary Program, which was approved by DOL Apprenticeship Program
• One participant who was released has applied to EMCC – he is accessing student food pantry supports and making steps to complete placement tests as he also works to find secure housing
• One participant wrote letters directly to the Commissioner advocating for additional programming and was visited personally by the Commissioner in response
• Over 200 other individuals in MDOC facilities accessed the content through the Edovo platform
Lessons Learned

• The human connection is essential
• Internal supports and external supports are required – the most successful approach includes a trained internal facilitator
• For incarcerated populations, consistent weekly or bi-weekly facilitation from an external instructor is required
• Development of Opportunity-Ready Micro-credential Facilitator training to address internal supports is necessary (currently in development)
Scaling the Pathway: All Learners Count

Although designed with incarcerated groups in mind, the pathway is moving beyond those borders...

- Life-Ready content is embedded in EMCC Human Relations courses
- 5 person pilot with CourageLIVES; Working to integrate with Bangor Area Recovery Network
- 17 person pilot with Bridge Academy (high school students)
- Discussions underway to offer in 2 other county jail programs, including What’s Now, What’s Next

We are also in discussion with a local employer to customize the pathway for their employee onboarding process
Scaling the Pathway: All Learners Count

All populations will identify an internal facilitator

All internal facilitators will participate in Opportunity-Ready Facilitator Training

EMCC staff will support the creation of any additional content customized to the access population

EMCC staff will validate completion evidence and be responsible for issuing of badges
Opportunity-Ready in the context of a bigger picture...
National, State and Local Initiatives

Lumina Foundation focus

- State attainment goals capture credentials AND degrees – “credential of value”
- “All Learning Counts” grant
Statewide Initiative: 60% of adults ages 25+ holding a post-secondary credential of value by 2025 (Adopted Maine State Legislature, 2018)
All Learning Counts Grant Partners

Maine's Public Universities
University of Maine System

UMA

Adult Education MAINE
Learning for Work and Life

EDUCATE MAINE

1865 THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

Wabanaki Center

Maine's Community Colleges

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Eastern Maine Community College

MAINE STATE LIBRARY

edovo
ALC-Maine Target Populations

• Incarcerated
• Low Income
• People of Color/New Mainers
• Native Americans
ALC-Maine Goals

- Allow learners, who have experienced prior “educational trauma” and generational poverty, to earn affordable, achievable, stackable micro-credentials, building confidence and opening the door to desirable jobs and careers
- Earn multiple, valued Industry/Association and other micro-badges
- Set continuous lifelong learning goals (stop in and out)
**Level 1**

**Introduction & Foundation**
- Introduction to topic/theme
- Foundational work
- College and career readiness

**Level 2**

**Training & Practice**
- Courses, Modules
- Bootcamps, Certificates
- Professional Development
- Workshops, Training

**Level 3**

**Application & Feedback**
- Internships
- Co-ops
- Work-based learning
- Experiential learning
- Apprenticeships, Jobs
Opportunity-Ready & ALC-Maine

The incarcerated subcommittee:

• Will support training of internal facilitators at other MDOC facilities (and support completion for the 200+ who have accessed content)

• Will support connection of content to UMaine Augusta’s 2nd Chance Pell degrees offered at MDOC facilities (3 credit college success course)

• Expansion of pathway offering to Somerset County Jail (5 person pilot) and the PACE program through Penobscot County Jail and Riverside Adult Ed (20 person pilot)
“One of the best things we can do is heal the harm...”

—Finding Fred, Episode 9, “Help the Helpers”
Implications: The Access Continuum

Physical Incarceration

- Most restrictive environment
- Limited access – internet, program options, outside world

Systemic/Cultural Incarceration

- Perceived as least restrictive environment (not in prison)
- For vulnerable populations in rural areas, barriers can create a most restrictive environment

Trauma

Stigma

Substance Use

Poverty
We are changing the conversation.
When all learning counts...
“[Learners] lives are the literature upon which the experience is built – the text from which they analyze – there is power in this.”
Megan London, Eastern Maine Community College
mlondon@emcc.edu
Katy Grant, Maine Department of Corrections
Katy.Grant@maine.gov
Joseph L'Africain: Maine Community College System
jlafricain@mccs.me.edu
Claire Sullivan, University of Maine System
claires@maine.edu