

December 2023

Hosted at Missoula College last month, the Education Design Lab led a T-Profile session and a student focus group. The T-Profile session, an interactive dialogue and skills mapping activity with Bitterroot Health, deepened our understanding of the optimal skills required to excel in the medical assistant role. Some highlights of what we discovered:

- Job descriptions may not accurately reflect the evolving skills employers need, creating an opportunity for us to support the recredentialing of roles, through micro-pathway design.
- Employers are willing to train for many skills, making it critical for college and employer partners to collaborate on curriculum design.



Missoula College students engage in the L(earner) Journey: A Gallery Walk, during the student focus group. November 14, 2023.

To better understand student experiences and the resources they require at various stages of their l(earner) journey, we asked students to unpack the challenges and opportunities at each checkpoint towards achieving their academic and career goals. Some highlights of what we learned:

- Having little work experience when entering the workforce was noted as a challenge.
- Students indicated that the College does a great job of providing support with resume and portfolio building, through career services.
- Students found it challenging to showcase skills, but noted that proper training and certifications helps support them in communicating what they know and can do.



VISION
Our Guiding Star

The shared vision for our *Year-to-Career* micro-pathway work is to collaboratively design and market pathways to increase the value of career-connected, workforce education and training across the state of Montana by streamlining our ability to connect our students to pathways that lead to industry recognized credentials that result in sustainable wage jobs.

Current Design Phase



DESIGN

Deep dive into employer needs, institutional processes and micro-pathway models

Next Steps

- **Schedule Additional T-Profile Sessions**
- **Learner Journey Mapping**

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Working students can benefit from academic and career pathways that are padded with work-based learning opportunities and support services that promote classroom and workplace success. How will we utilize the insights we've gained from l(earners) to make effective design decisions? Here is some of what we heard:



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“Why Missoula College? Missoula College is home. I wanted to get all of my generals out of the way, for half the price. I feel like that's a pretty good reason... and to spend more time with my grandparents.”

“I wanted to look into the healthcare profession and luckily that is one of the only, I would say, financially sustainable jobs, in Hamilton at least, that I'm interested in.”

“I've been working in media as an editor, since I graduated, and then moved to Hamilton. I have a three-year-old daughter, and with the pandemic and how turbulent media is, I started looking at other avenues because I wasn't sure if this was a good financially sustainable pathway, especially with a mortgage and family and everything.”

I don't know what I hope to learn. I'm just happy to be included. Happy to be involved. My ultimate career goal is to go on and get my bachelor's in reconstruction as well as my associate's degree in mortuary science so I can make eyeballs and lips and stuff like that. That's my ultimate goal.

Ongoing training I think is really huge, especially with how quickly every kind of career area and technology is constantly advancing.

Now my ultimate career goals, I don't have a clue. You know, I mean, I had a career. Retirement didn't work. I'm still trying to find my way through this. what brought me to school was to be of service to my own age group.