

# Texas Community College Credential Map Research

**Kristy Urbick, Ed.D**

Chair of the Kinesiology and Education Department, Del Mar College

Assistant Professor of Kinesiology

**Stacy Ybarra, Ed.D**

Research Associate, Texas Success Center



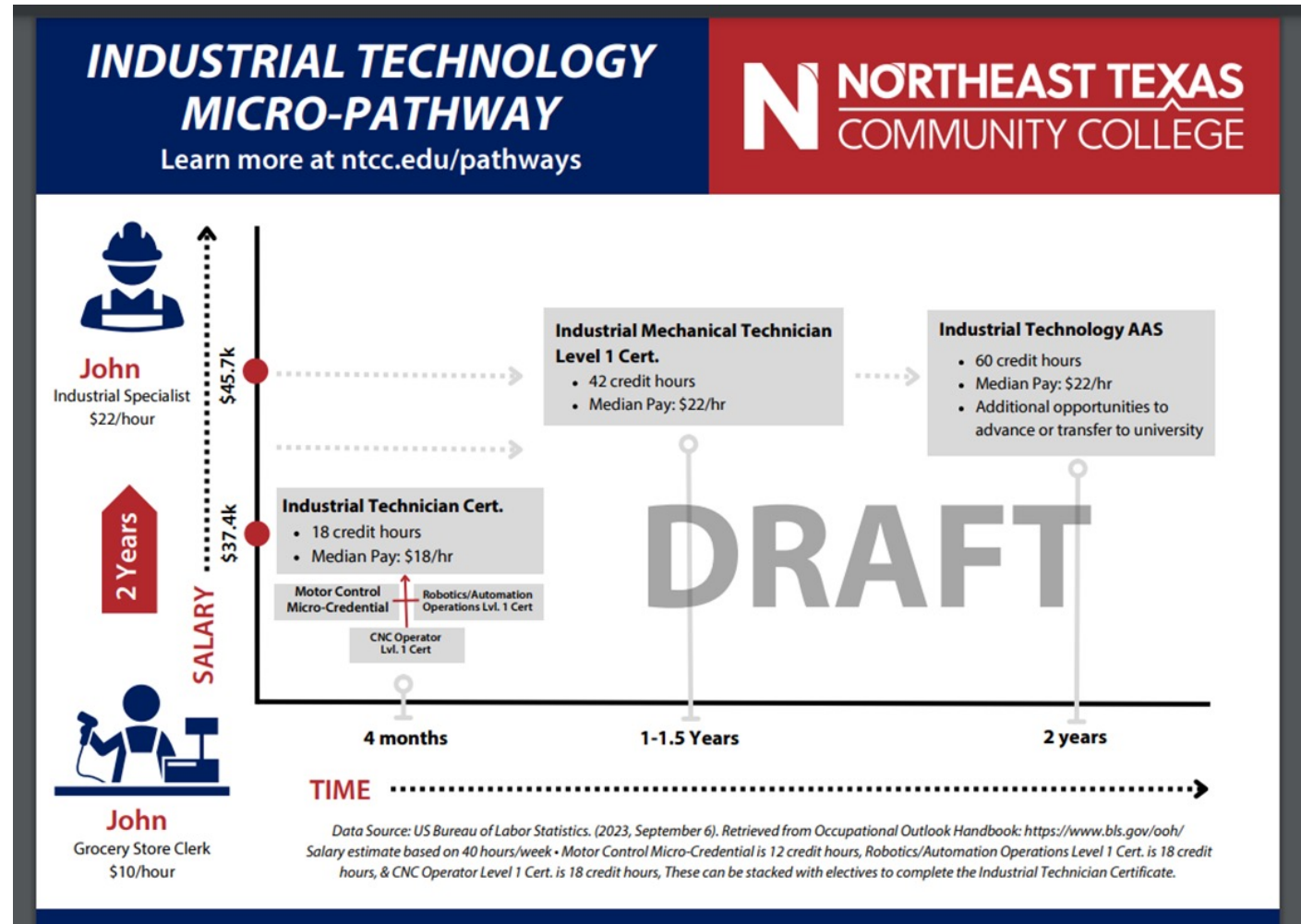
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November 2024

# What is a Credential Map?

Credential maps show how a student can advance through aligned programs at the college that lead to careers with family-sustaining wages.

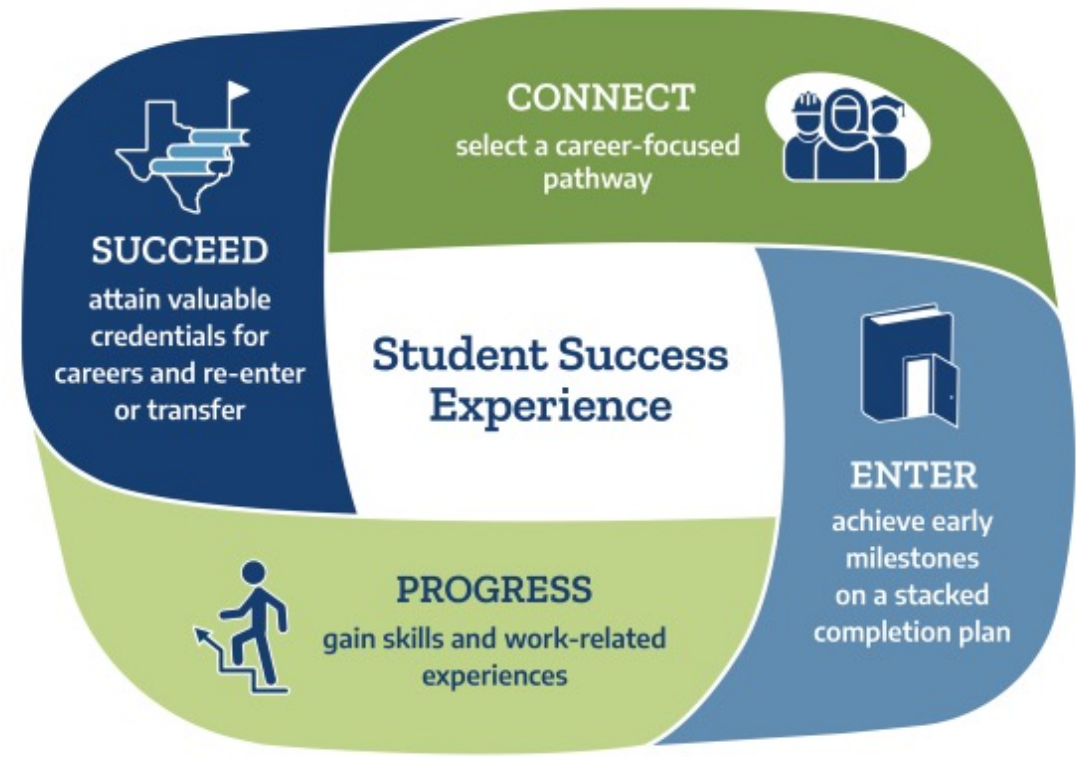
A credential map can help students navigate academic and workforce pathways and can also help students identify and earn short-term credentials.



# Project Background Information

Advance work for the November 2023 Pathways Institute

- How do you compare maps?
- What should a credential map look like and what information should be provided?



# Texas Community College Typology Classification

- Overall Layout
  - Linear Progression
  - Modular
  - Hybrid
- Organization
  - Chronological
  - Grouped by category
  - Clustered by skillset
- Tone
  - Professional
  - Engaging
  - Motivational
  - Dynamic
- Type of Map
  - Flow Chart
  - Roadmap
  - Pyramid
  - Timeline map
  - X and Y axis chart



# Scoring Credential Maps - 3-Point Scale

## Font, color, and graphics:

- Consistence color coding
- Font color
- Visual Appeal
- Language
- Graphical pathway (arrows)
- Consistent formatting

## Type of information included:

- Credit Hours
- Salary/Pay
- Credential Type
- Time to completion
- Job outcomes
- Student support
- Course scheduling



# Research Steps

1. Created Research Proposal
  - Project overview, research question, purpose, methodology and maintaining confidentiality
  - Focus group protocol
  - Focus group questions
2. Received IRB Approval
3. Conducted focus groups
4. Made final recommendations
5. Submitted final report to the Texas Success Center



# Research Question

What are the student perspectives on the design and content presentation of credential maps developed by Texas community colleges?



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# Focus Group Information

- 3 Focus groups in March of 2024
  - 15 student participants
- Demographics questionnaire
- Form for comments and notes
- 5 Credential maps reviewed





# Focus Group Discussion

- Initial impressions of credential maps
- Layout and design
- Information clarity
- Flow of information
- Decision-making information
- Tone and messaging
- Overall preferences



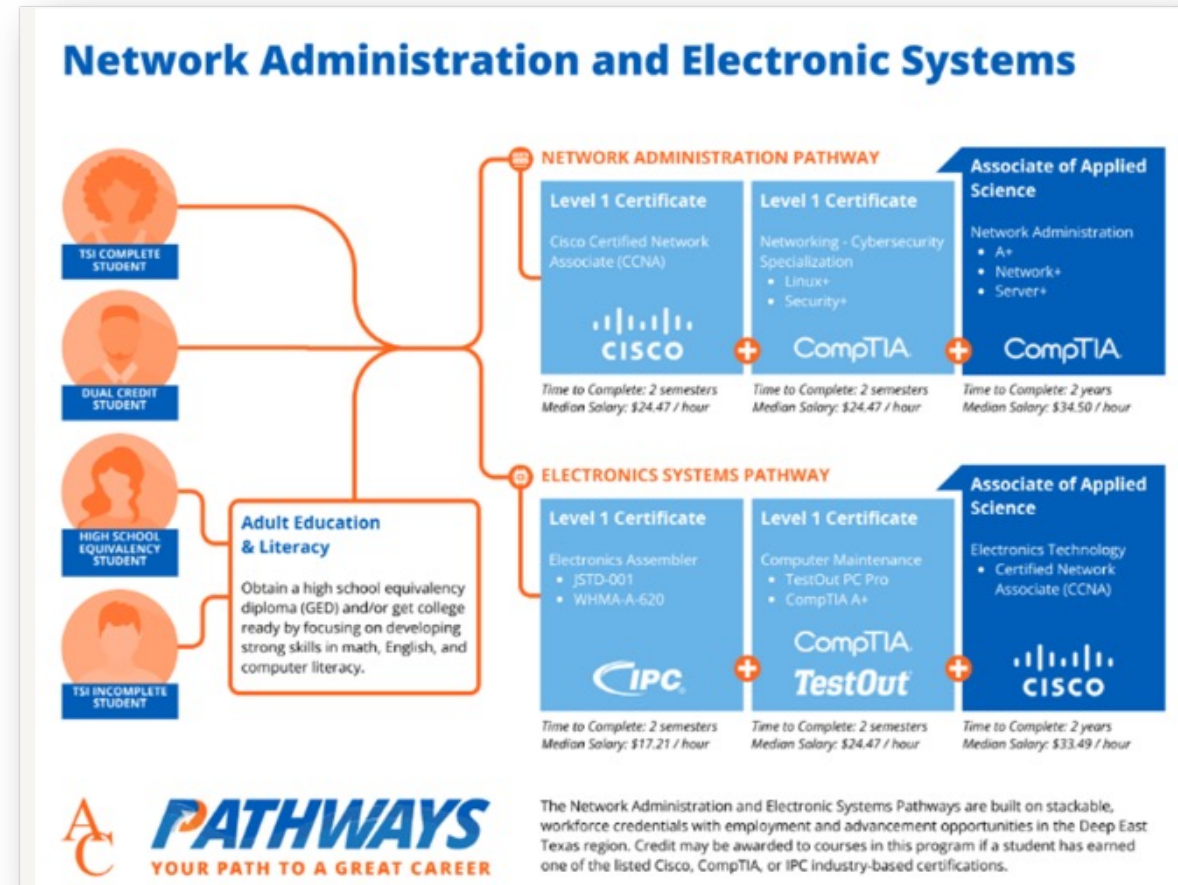
# Focus Group Demographics

- 71% identified as male
- 87% 18 to 24 years old
- 64% were full-time students
- 80% enrolled in a transfer program
- 60% employed
- 57% of the participants were Latinx or Hispanic, followed by 15% Black or African American, and 15% White, Non-Latinx or Non-Hispanic



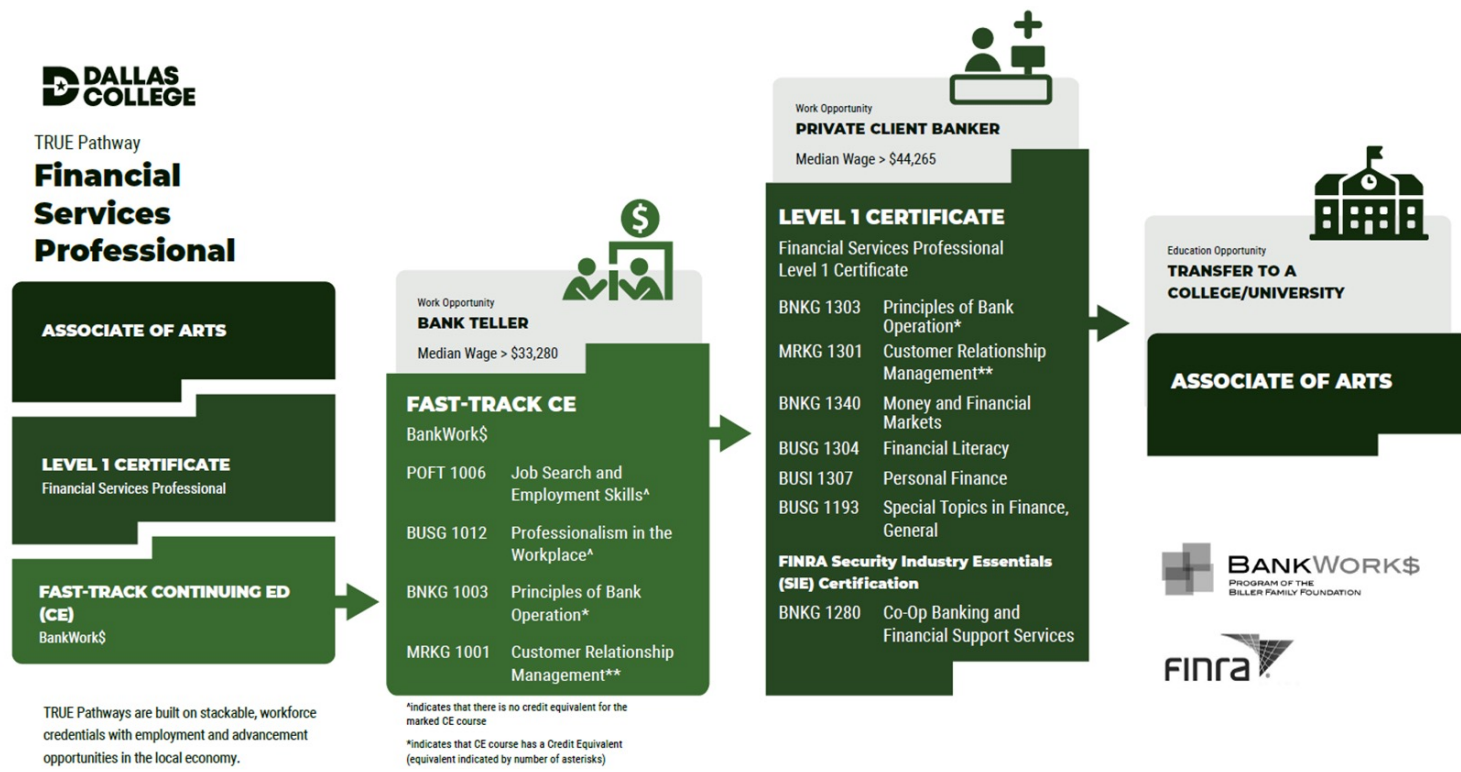
# Findings- Credential Map 1

- Pros: Easy to understand mapping, bold and complementary color choice, favorite pathway diagram.
- Cons: Unnecessary information about student starting point, misleading times from semesters to years, unclear font in blue boxes, confusion about what information is most important.
- Recommendations: Improve clarity of starting point, clarify font and color choices, ensure key information is prominent.



# Findings- Credential Map 2

- Pros: Clear and detailed information about courses and pathways.
- Cons: Conflicting information, unclear time frame, extraneous information about class codes, lack of clarity in title and layout.
- Recommendations: Resolve conflicting information, provide a clear timeline, remove extraneous details, improve title clarity and overall layout.

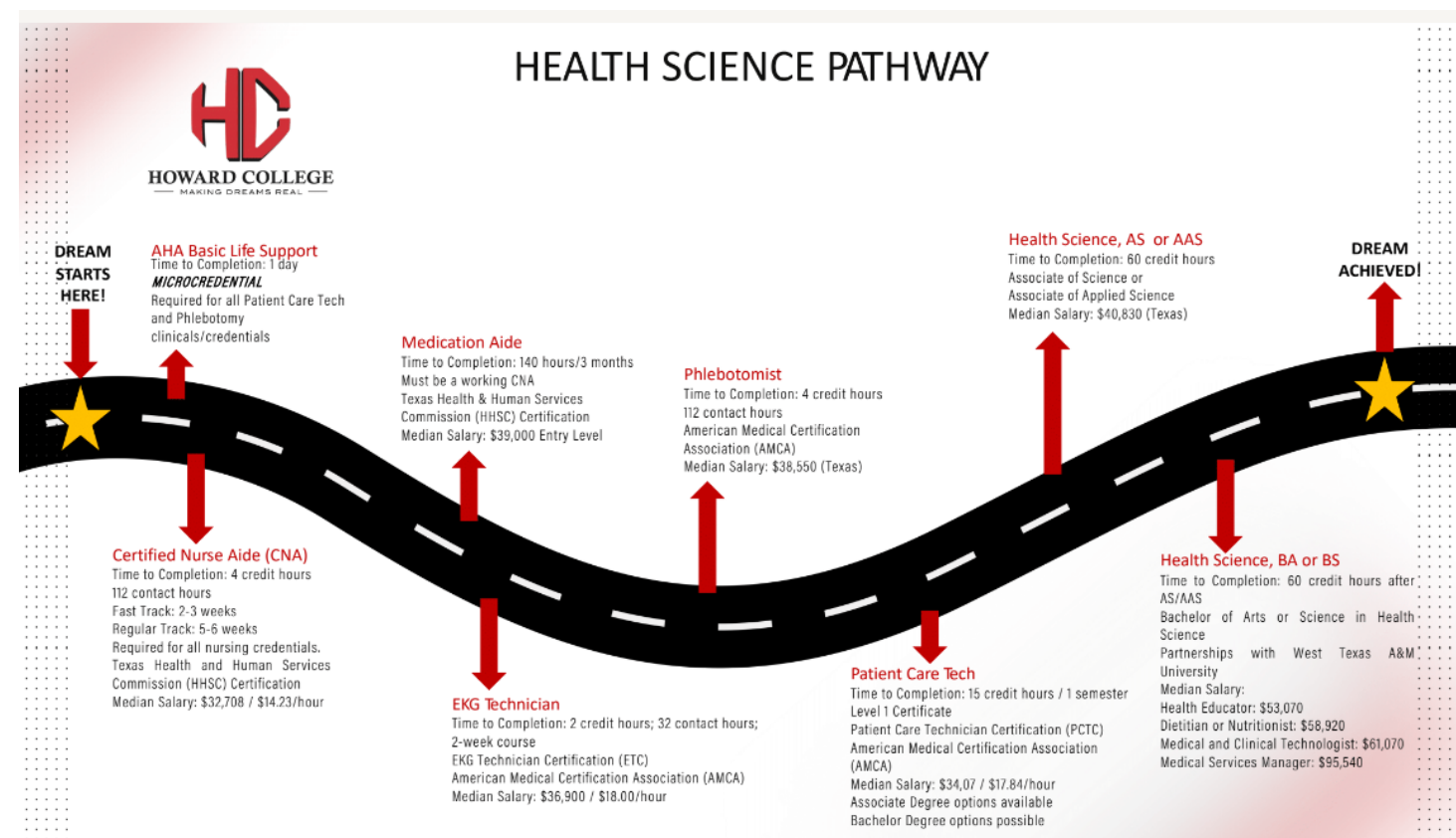


# Findings- Credential Map 3

- Pros: Informative and interactive, straightforward layout.
- Cons: Wordy, unclear end goal, overwhelming information.
- Recommendations: Simplify language, clarify end goal, organize information into more digestible sections.



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# Findings- Credential Map 4

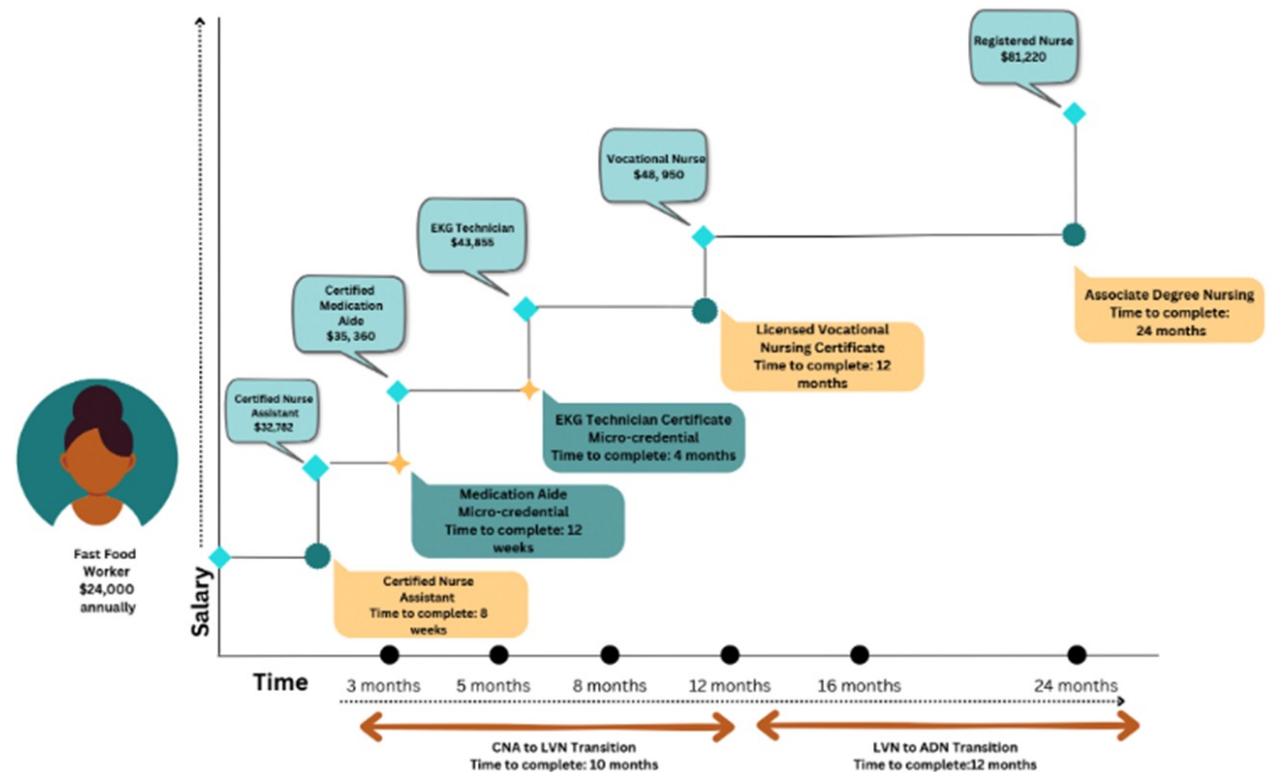
- Pros: Clear layout.
- Cons: Lack of key for symbols, confusion about time periods, unnecessary information about fast food jobs.
- Recommendations: Include a key for symbols, clarify time periods, remove irrelevant information.



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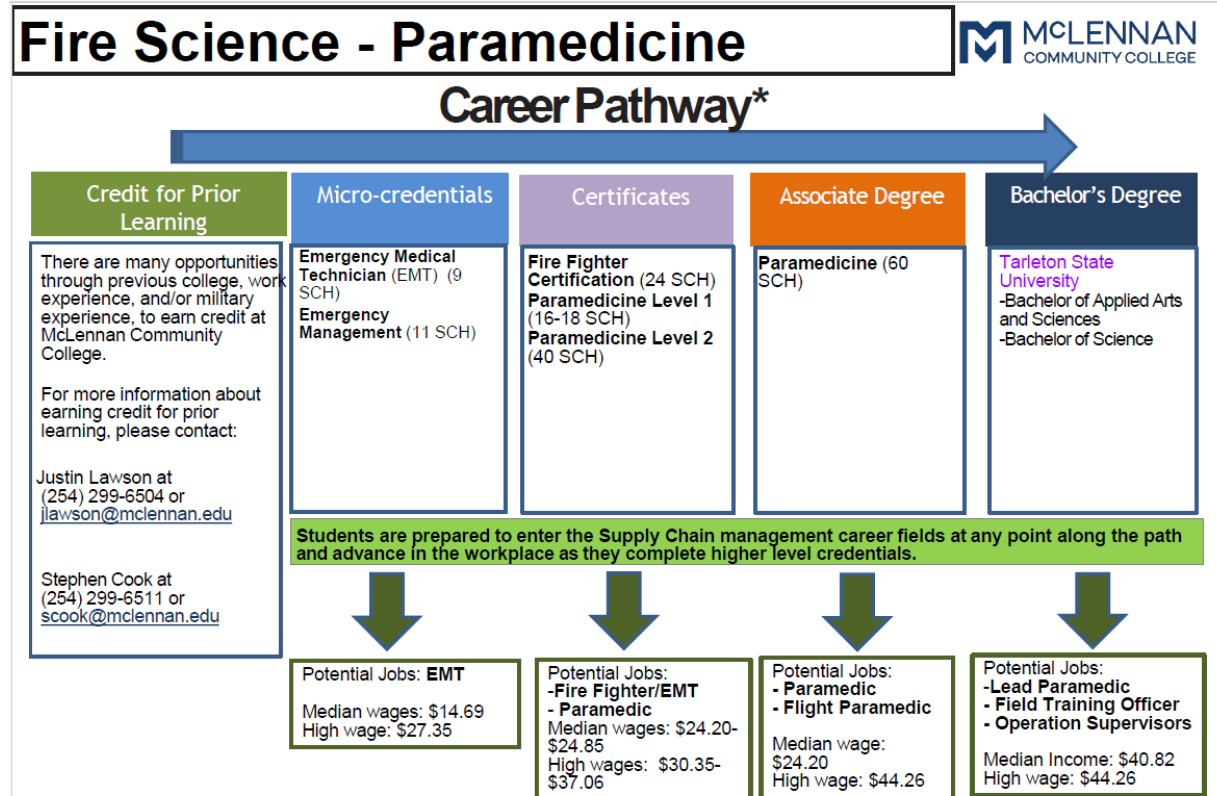
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Nursing Credential Map



# Findings- Credential Map 5

- Pros: Color coding is helpful, simple layout.
- Cons: Poor formatting, too many words, unclear information.
- Recommendations: Improve formatting and spacing, simplify language, clarify information.



Ask about our scholarship opportunities

Wage data from CareerOneStop by U.S. Department of Labor

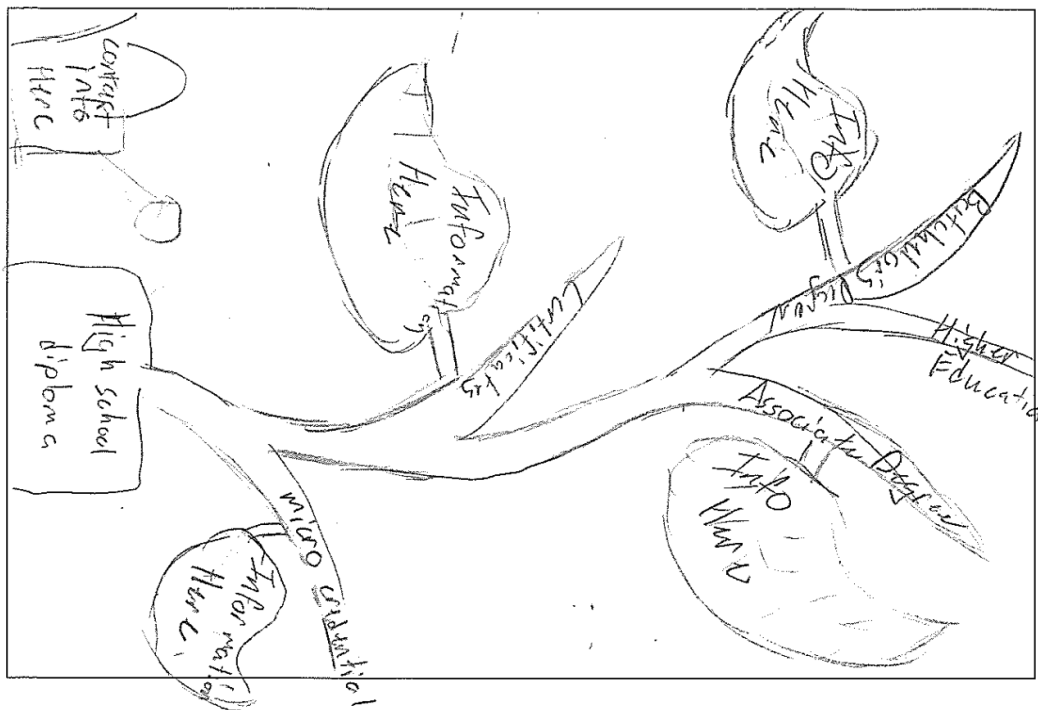
This map has been adapted with permission from Gateway Technical College under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.



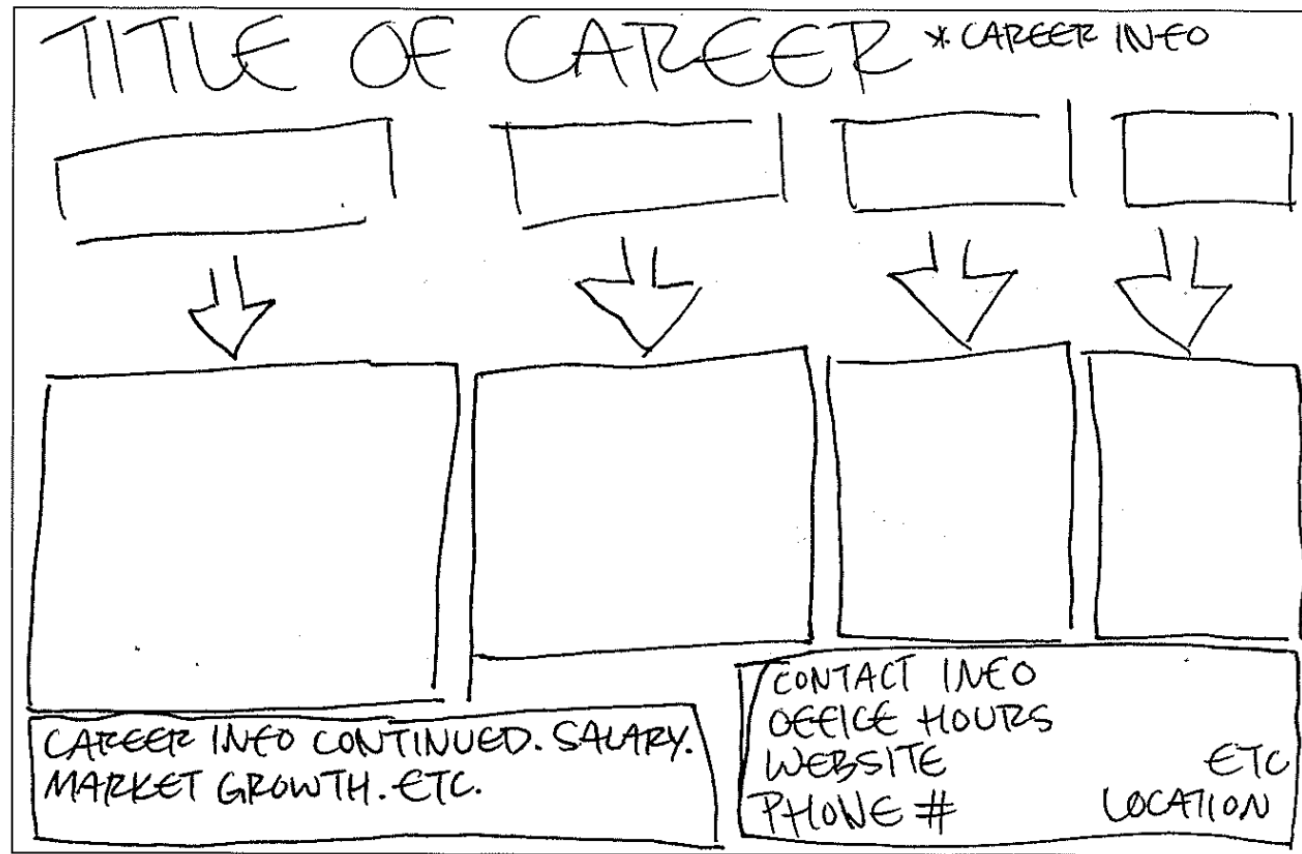
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# Student Examples

Draw a credential map:

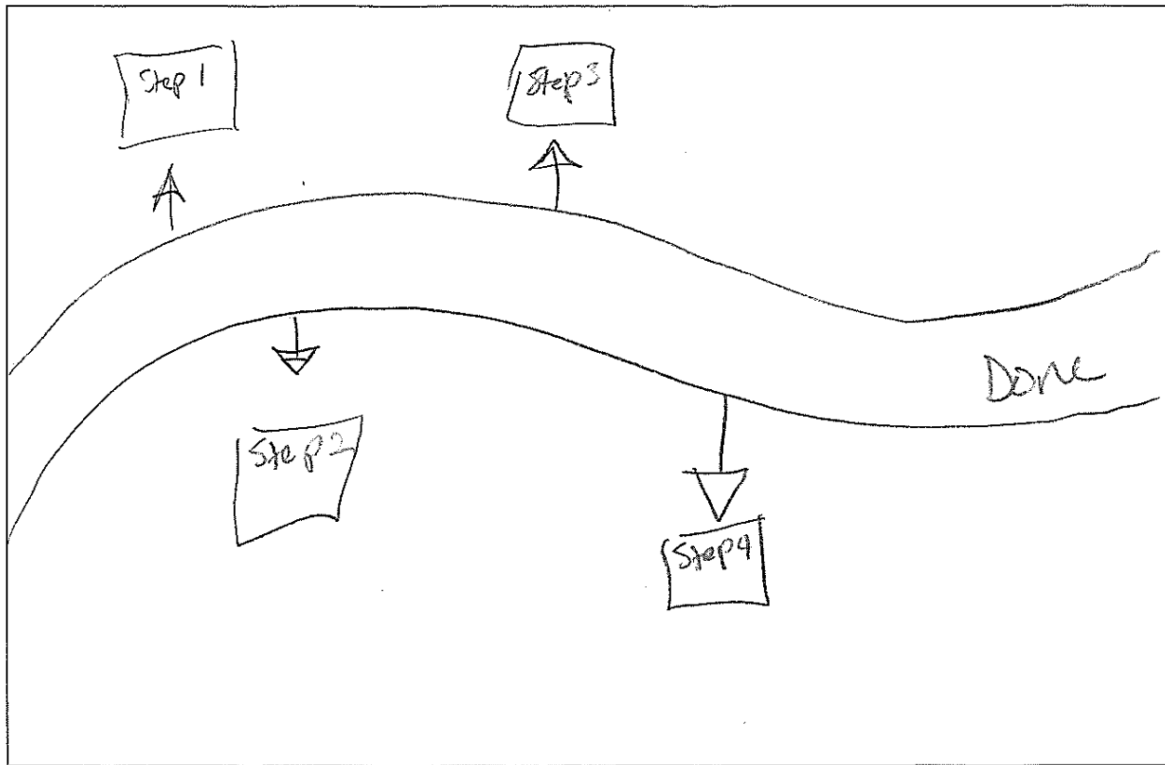


Draw a credential map:

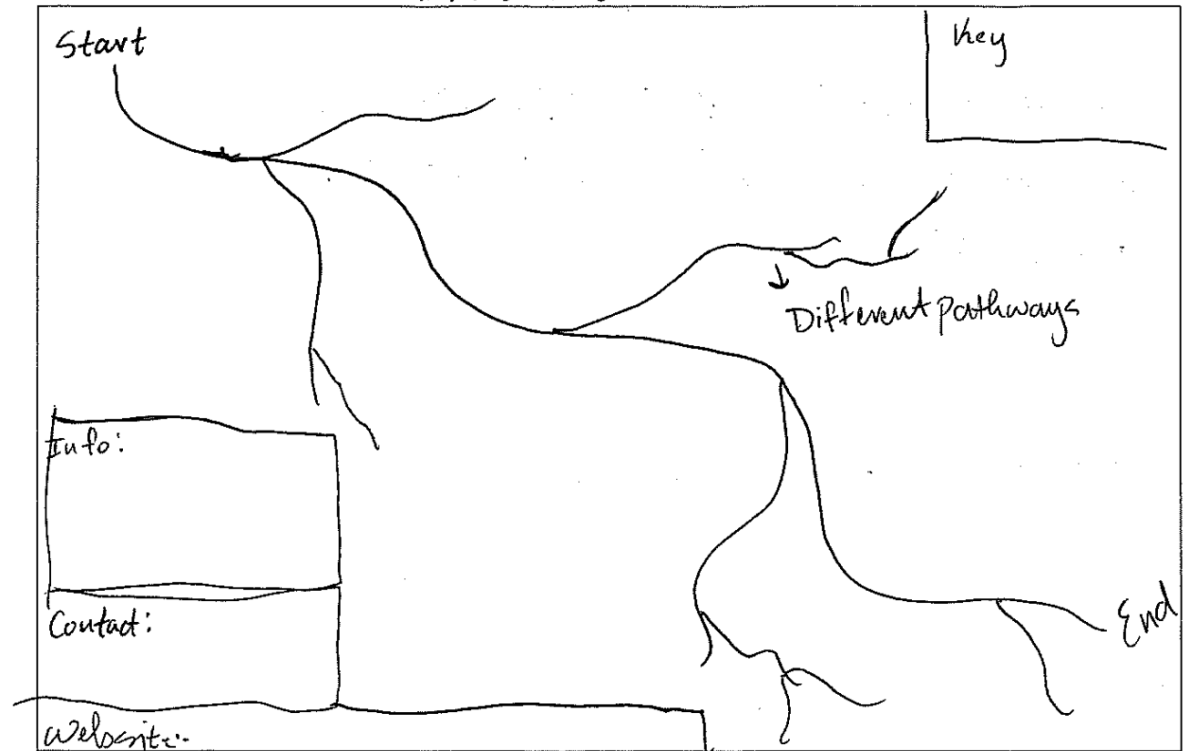




# Student Examples Cont.



Draw a circular map. *Flow like a river*



# Findings and Analysis

1. **Clear Pathways:** Students need to see a clear and logical progression from entry to completion of a credential.
2. **Course Information:** Students need to know the courses required for each credential.
3. **Time to Completion:** Students need to know how long it will take to complete each credential.
4. **Job Outlook and Salary Information:** Students need to understand the potential job opportunities and earning potential associated with each credential.
5. **Prerequisites:** Students need to know if there are any prerequisites required for entry into each credential program.
6. **Support Services:** Students may need additional support services to help them succeed in their credential programs.
7. **Transferability of Credits:** Students may want to know if credits earned in one credential program can be transferred to another program.
8. **Cost of Program:** Students need to understand the cost associated with each credential program.
9. **Contact Information:** Students may have questions or need additional information about the credential programs.
10. **Interactive Features:** Interactive features can enhance the usability and engagement of the credential map.
11. **Accessibility Features:** All students, including those with disabilities, should be able to access and use the credential map.
12. **Course Scheduling Options:** Flexibility in course scheduling is highly beneficial for students.



# Actionable Recommendations

- **Clear Pathways:** Provide clear, easy-to-follow pathways for different credentials and career goals.
- **Time Frames:** Clearly indicate the time it takes to complete each pathway.
- **Salary Information:** Include median salary expectations for each credential.
- **Course Details:** Provide detailed information about courses and requirements.
- **Contact Information:** Include contact information for relevant departments or advisors.
- **Key Symbols:** Provide a key for any symbols used in the map.
- **Simple Language:** Use simple, easy-to-understand language throughout the map.
- **Visual Appeal:** Use colors and graphics to make the map visually appealing and easy to navigate.



# Research Conclusion

- Students value clarity, simplicity, and relevance in credential maps.
- Essential to provide clear pathways, detailed information, and visual appeal while avoiding extraneous details and unclear language.
- Incorporating these elements can help students make informed decisions about their educational and career pathways.



# References

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**Thank you!**

**Kristy Urbick, Ed.D**  
kurbick2@delmar.edu



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