

Digital Badging Program

Today, we're going to be exploring a new pilot digital badging project which helps students gain experience in leadership and other life skills. So, let's hear from these students and see what they have to say.

Every month we pick a different badge that we would like to earn and then we're given some online materials and we go over the materials and kind of use those to create a project or an activity or do something that shows the badge assessors that we have the knowledge to earn the badge.

I did the "Advocate Badge and, so, what we're doing is we're making hats and friendship bracelets for the Maine Home for Little Wanderers. Currently, I'm trying to connect with my high school and trying to see if kids there can make either bracelets or some hats. It's definitely really fun. It's helping me with my network skills.

Over the summer I did my Gold Award for Girl Scouts and I made a raised garden bed for the homeless shelter. So, the last badge I did was about leadership. I basically talked about how throughout my project how I was leading my team to get it accomplished.

My first digital badging project was a publication I wrote with Dr. Rybakova this summer on COVID-19 in the classroom. We wrote that this summer, I originally just did it because I was very interested in it. I had really no other reason, but she approached me with the digital badging project and was like "you can use this for that", so, I said, "You know, that sounds like a great idea; get some extra credentials on my resume be able to say publicly that I did that.

The badge is, you know, being able to represent everybody who is diverse and stuff and, so, it really focused around diversity and I wanted to take that and I wanted to focus a little bit more on how we all have some sense of privilege and how we can use that privilege to benefit from each other, but it doesn't negate any struggles that you have.

Getting back into doing a project that surrounds us and is really focused on diversity and stuff really helped me kind of remember why we do it.

It's going out into the community, getting some real-world experience, doing some real things in the community, and kind of building your portfolio and resume off of that.

I definitely think that I have branched out within the Thomas community. I've connected with people that maybe I wouldn't have otherwise through doing these projects. They're

things that maybe we wouldn't learn about in classes otherwise and, so, I'm getting this knowledge that I can then use in my career as a teacher.

We can listen to seminars, listen to speeches all day long, but we're only going to get so far unless we really put ourselves in those shoes and do it ourselves and that's why I think Thomas is doing a great job with providing this badge, you know, and I really like it. I think it's a great idea!

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