February 2021, Learning Labels Release of New Features and Apps

Access from Standard and Mobile Web Browsers, Google Android, and Microsoft Windows 10

www.skillslabel.com

Build Learning Pathways and Dashboards

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Currently Patent Pending

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Map Learning in Skills. Map Jobs in Skills.
Combine to Create Pathways.

In the last few months, my team released three Android applications and a Microsoft Windows 10 application. Before that, I added significant features with the web application. I wanted to do a typical in-person release (fun), show how they work and get some live feedback. But given the current restrictions, this cannot take place. Instead, I am going to do a video release.

I want to concentrate on the main features here. Earlier this year, I released a book, which is a good resource for understanding the inspiration, concepts, and future vision of this application. Here is a very brief introduction to how the system works.

Learning labels is a patent pending system to manage and track skills. Learning and job labels are a standard representation of learning expectations and job requirements. Connect them together to develop learning pathways and dashboards. The subtle difference between the two: pathways are direct linkages of elements and dashboards are a responsive grid. They work together.

The general hierarchy of the learning labels system are:

Jobs. At the top. Courses (Syllabi in the application). Projects / Lesson Plans. Tasks / Experiences. At the Bottom. There are also Users (Learners and Workers.)

Jobs and Tasks are represented as 'Job Labels' and 'Learning Labels' respectively. All the elements appear as tiles. All (but users) include a full webpage with supporting information. All include definitions in skills and Skill Points.

The target areas of the application / technology include

- Standard Education (K-12)
    o Teachers, curriculum designers, curators of standards
- Higher Education
    o Professors, deans of school/colleges, career centers, and colleges.
- Publishers and Creators of Education Resources (games, books, VR, videos, etc.)
- Curators of Education and Training Standards.
- Company / Corporate Trainers.
- HR / Job Posting Functions.
- Workforce Development
- Instructional Designer and Other Learning Practitioners.

Standard Web Application

There is a quick, guided signup process. Currently, subscriptions fees are waived. Creating an account is free. Use and download of the apps are free and do not require a login. Though, full usage requires a valid, admin account.

Creating a Learning Label

Once you register, you are guided to create your first learning label. This is the crux of the application – a way to define a single unit of learning on a task / experience level. It is layered and deep.

To help along the process (shorten the path in creating a learning label), there is a 'skills parser' that reads a block of content and produces a suggestive ranked list of skills. As the example shows, this could include a website URL, or copied and paste text, and/or actual Word, PDF, or TXT files. There is planned

advancement with this feature, so keep checking and giving us suggestions. One big one includes website URLs you want the web parser to recognize.

The learning labels are meant to not only define the learning expectations, but also the cost and time investment (why related fields are included with the learning labels). The premise is to give learners and practitioners all the information they need to make 'basis of comparison decisions' of resources. Furthermore, the data gets aggregated along with the pathways: to quantify the results.

There are ways to add Requirement and PreRequisite Icons to the learning labels. This defines what is needed to consume the resource (platform, computer, internet connection, etc.) and how to prepare for the experience, respectively. And a PreRequiste could simple be a reference to another learning label.

The skills section begins the defining process of learning to skills. This where a practitioner defines up to 10 skills and allots frequency, intensity, and difficulty in applying the skill. (All verifiable in a peer review learning labels mapping process.) On a skill-by-skill basis, an algorithm calculates Skills Points – a next generation learning measurement, also marked for future advancement.

Furthermore, there is a deep integration with learning and training standards. This is meant to anchor the expectations. Essentially, a Currently supports a few national sets of standards; there is functionality to add your own custom sets of standards; and per request, our support team could add new ones.

The interface includes an auto-complete to reference the standards and searching on standards and adding them to labels (as a 1 to 1 or 1 to many reference).

A search is also built into the application to search on any set of terms (jobs, fields, disciplines, degrees, personality traits, etc.) to return a list of skills to quickly add them to the learning labels.

After the skills section, there is further layering. There is functionality to create and assign assessments (quizzes in the application, with auto grading) and graphical badges (to show collect upon completion).

With the whole application, creating learning and job labels are what take the most time. Use of the skills parser, default values, referencing standards, and using a search greatly speeds up the process. Altogether, in UI testing, the process takes no longer than a minute or two. There are a few caveats:

- **A label is universal.** One label represents one task or experience, no matter who produces the label. There is a 'cloning' process where practitioners share a label and get all the functionality behind it (but the definitions remain static).
- **Use of an API.** process to create learning labels in a coded process.
- **Bulk creating of labels.** There is a basic design to create learning labels in bulk. Do a single upload of a CSV file to create a whole series of learning labels at once.
- **Boosting the skills parser.** A future advanced skills parser might be able to fill in most of the fields in a learning label.
- **Bottom-up process.** Once a learning label is built, all the data (including Skill Points) gets aggregated across parent elements and pathways.

Managing Labels

There are a number of ways to use labels once they are created:

Putting labels into a series.

In a class, your students might have many different skill levels. Create a single label, then create a series based on performance (up to 10 outcomes) per label.

In onboarding, put a new worker through a series of labels to assess current skills and identify relevant training exercises.

Grading Users.

There is an option to grade the results of a task represented as a label. This signifies completion and, with a series, what to do next.

Public Landing Page

A page to access each of the views: labels, maps (built in peer review process), and flashcards (prep learners for an experience). The number one suggestion for learning labels is to verify the accuracy of the expectations through a peer review process. From a public landing page, a reviewer can conduct a full peer review using the 'graphical map' view for a learning label.

A review checks the frequency, intensity and difficulty a skill is applied in an experience. Also, the reviewer checks any standards referenced and optionally leaves comment.

From the landing page, there are links to download and share representations of the label in different file formats, in social media, email, and possible to get a QR code. There is a one-click link to import the learning label into Google Classroom. Finally, embedding on a website.

Standards

In the web application, there is a section to create a set of standards: either one at a time or with a single CSV upload. If allowed (copyright privileges), a user might upload a recognized education or training standard. Or a group of practitioners might create their own set and align them to skills.

Quizzes

In the web application, there is a section to create quizzes (assessments) to assign to labels. The interface includes auto grading and suggestions to the next label in a series after completing a quiz.

Interactive Pure and Structured Dashboard

In the web application, there is pure and structured dashboard interface. The structure dashboard puts the element in specific columns and rows, the user chooses. The pure dashboard allows for elements to be placed anywhere in the dashboard. (And this the layout on the other platforms.) The interface is fast and functional.

And this is the primary interface to create learning pathways and dashboards. The smart, intuitive interface allows for changing the sort order and making assignment with not much effort – just drag an element onto a parent element. With the web application, the change appears real time and flickers like a stock price.

Access, modifying, and creating learning dashboards is an effective way to setup a learning environment with all these elements and then respond to what transpires. More on this in the mobile apps.

The pathways are elements connected together. As they collect, they appear with skill aggregates on a skill-by-skill basis. The linkages are not meant to be loosely connected and less stringent and static as a standard curriculum or degree. Though, they could be if necessary.

(These pathways based on skills are a solution. They are meant to be fluent and responsive to the changing demands on workers. New skills are getting added so quickly, other are becoming obsolete.)

Jobs Interface (Job Labels)

There is full CRUD functionality to manage jobs. This built similarly as the learning labels interface. There is also a 'skills parser' as you start to create the label. Similar idea. Here a job poster might reference a resume file or an online job description. These job labels are also meant to provide an ROI decision for a job seeker. There are more composition fields supported with a rich text editor.

With the skills section, up to 20 skills get added to the label. There is a separation between past experience and first year application of a skill. There is a similar interface to reference standards. And there is a search interface to help find skill for the job.

Syllabus Interface

Creating a full syllabus is on a separate website (www.skillsyllabus.com). There are all the standard fields of a syllabus (many of them with a rich text editor) along with a section for working with the learning labels assigned to the syllabus. Each syllabus is printable as a PDF.

The interface supports personalized learning in three ways: creating series (what we already talked about), letting learners / workers choose (like 5 of 10 tasks), and specifically assigning tasks to learners directly.

Projects Interface

This is the least build element of the application. Currently appears as a website with the labels assigned to the project and some other supporting fields.

Search

Finally, another strong feature of the learning and job labels system is an online search. The design of the labels is highly data centric, meaning they read well for searches (as opposed to a graphic, or encrypted data). There is already a algorithm in place for context and skills based searches. One strong feature is functionality to sort the order skills appear on the labels based on the search result.

The results of the dashboard appear in the same interactive dashboard to manage the labels. Very easy to toggle between tiles, labels, and credentials and put them into place to make basis of comparison decisions.

This was a big influence in the design of the labels, what it the best way to express expectations in a way to make comparisons. At this stage, it is not possible to see an effective search because there are not enough learning labels created. But this is clearly a big incentive to start stocking the database with labels.

Android Apps

There are three Android application for the learning labels technology. So many devices run Google Android, creating native Android apps is a good way to give more access to learning practitioners on the go. The apps are designed and tested for smartphones, tablets, and Chromebooks. A lot of attention was put on the layout and usage for smartphones; this is the primary reason to keep three separate apps (though there is functionality to move between the apps).

Future interaction for Google Android is to get the labels on smartphone watches. Imagine toggling through a series of labels as tiles, then choosing one to appear on another mobile device. Also, look to integrate the apps and Google Classroom. With the website application, there is already a single click integration – do something similar with the mobile apps.

Learning Labels Create

This application allows for a logged in admin user to create any one of the elements. The interface is designed for a mobile, touch enabled device (so limited typing and layering). This is probably the fastest way to create the elements. Once created, they appear as elements in the data set. Later, they could be modified from the website application.

Learning Labels Dashboard

This provides a version of the pure dashboard from the web application. Includes all the same features. Works fast in the native Android grid. Works well not only on smartphones, but also tablets and Chromebooks.

The value proposition is to modify learning pathways and dashboards when the inspiration hits. A teacher before, during, or after a class might think to assign a task to a student or group of students based on the experience. A trainer might modify a training module. Or a job poster modify job requirements. Simply drag items to make assignments or setup a sort order.

Learning Labels Paged

This is an informative paged application to show the different elements, dashboards, and pathways. The tiles are large and legible and show the skill definitions and aggregates. Navigating through the sections and elements by swiping. Show pathways by marking them in color based on their source.

The value proposition is to change learning pathways. Add elements to pathways without closing a window and navigating through a series. Also, seeing the skills and skill aggregates in a table summarized the pathways.

Windows 10 App

Windows 10 application combines the three Android apps into a single interface; the advantage is in sharing the same login and loading across apps. This is good because the target audience for the application are the desktop and tablet users running Windows 10. But works on smaller devices too.

Let see how the application works. Same design and layout as shown in the Android Apps. The dashboard is crisp and effective on a larger screen. Quick and effortless to make changes to a pathway. Starting with an empty dashboard and add elements is fast.

Toggle between the apps by clicking on the Nav button in the lower left corner.

In the Learning Labels Paged Application, the pathways data grid is effective in showing the skills and aggregates of the pathway. Works well on a larger screen.

Similar to the Android Learning Label Create application, a user must login to the interface twice. But, once after the login is saved in the application on the device.

The huge value proposition is giving learning practitioners access to their learning elements, pathways, and dashboards running Windows 10. Most of us are running a desktop or tablet running this operating system. The apps are faster than accessing through a web browser and there are many ways for richer, deeper development (such as remembering logins and working with other applications).

I think a learning labels might be a great way to summarize the learning taking place in an Xbox game, for example. Might be worth exploring access on Xbox too.

Mobile Website Applications

Finally, all the mobile applications (Android and Windows 10) are also built mobile optimized for browsers. So, currently, if you cannot access an Android or Windows 10 device, access the apps in a standard browser (works in each of them). Much of the design and planned functionality of the mobile app derived from building the mobile first applications last year. New features and concepts will probably appear first in these mobile web applications.

One function on the Paged Application, not in the mobile applications, is a peer review from a Skill Map on a tablet device. A practitioner reviews a resource and taps on the screen to record and agree to expectations represented on a learning label.