

**The Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO) presents**  
**Rethinking higher ed: Beyond {the buzzwords}**  
**November 7-8, 2013**  
**Sheraton Centre Toronto**

**Day One**  
**November 7, 2013**

**Session 4B | Break on through: Outside the classroom**  
*Alternative avenues for learning*

*Facilitator: Richard Wiggers, HEQCO*  
*Sunny Lee, Mozilla Foundation*  
*Jay Peterson, Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' and Roofers' Conference*  
*Kane Sarhan, Enstitute*

Sunny Lee presented Mozilla's Open Badge Infrastructure (OBI) program as a way for learners to substantiate skills and abilities developed in today's online, non-conventional learning environment. This new system allows learning and skills providers to attach metadata to a badge, comprised of an image file, which details the achievements of the badge holder. This is a response to the gamification of accomplishments, seen in achievements and badges attained in video games and on sites like StackOverflow, where your reputation is reflected by your badges. Unlike these examples, however, Mozilla's OBI is cross-compatible: you carry your achievement badges in your virtual backpack and share them on other sites. Mozilla's aim is to help owners communicate their skills beyond the traditional environment of grades and degrees, leading to greater opportunity.

Jay Peterson then talked about the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers' apprenticeship program for at-risk youth, called Hammer Heads. Its principle goal is to respond to the youth unemployment crisis by offering advice and training to young people for what is often seen as a fallback job, when in reality it is one of the few growth industries in Ontario. Like Mozilla's Open Badge Infrastructure, Hammer Heads is an alternative method for people to make use of their potential. Half of registered apprentices were not aware of their current program when they were in high school, despite a 70% growth in construction in Ontario since 1995. The Hammer Heads responded to Toronto's summer of the gun in 2005 by trying to do something about the number of kids dying from violence. They started linking youth from under-resourced communities to apprenticeship opportunities in the construction industry. They produced a school training model and are trying to improve pathways to apprenticeships throughout the province. This involves expanding the training infrastructure in schools and colleges, which requires support from those schools and from the government.

Lastly, Kane Sarhan told the story of Enstitute. Sarhan dropped out of college three times, sensing that it wasn't helping him; less than 15% of the student's time is spent in the classroom in the US. He started setting up internships and then decided to set up his own university, built on an internship model. When it opened, Enstitute had 500 applications in 30 days for a 10-person program. Enstitute decided to build an apprenticeship program for the 21st century with the goal of producing graduates well prepared for the workforce. The students work at companies getting real-world skills like business design and entrepreneurship, using a structure comprising 80% on-the-job learning, with the remaining time made

up of online content, and IRL and community learning. The organization started with 11 students in 2012 with 500 applicants, and will have 100 students by the end of 2013.