



THE PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT POTATO SALAD TOOLKIT

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Thursday, November 20th, 3:10 PM
Session 5.4

Menu

- What is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?
- What ingredients to include in your recipe for PLA potato salad?
- Types of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Sources of PLA within your institution
- PLA Standards
- PLA Support



Capella University

- Capella University was founded in 1993
- Accredited by the Higher Learning Commissions and currently a member of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.
- We are an online institution that is located in downtown, Minneapolis
- 35,791 Active students
- 71% Enrolled in Graduate programs
- Average age of our student is 40
- 94% of our students are part-time



Capella University

- 1,488 Faculty members
- 43 Degree programs
- 142 Graduate and Undergraduate specializations
- 25 Certificate programs
- Over 1,660 courses
- In 2012, Capella University learners that received prior learning assessment credit had an 84% persistence rate.




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Potato Salad

by Zack Danger Brown

Home Updates 27 Backers 6,911 Comments 1,154 Columbus, OH Food

Funded! This project was successfully funded on August 2.



6,911
Backers

\$55,492
pledged of \$10 goal

0
seconds to go

Project by
Zack Danger Brown
Columbus, OH

First created · 8 backed

Zack Brown 719 friends

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I'm making potato salad.

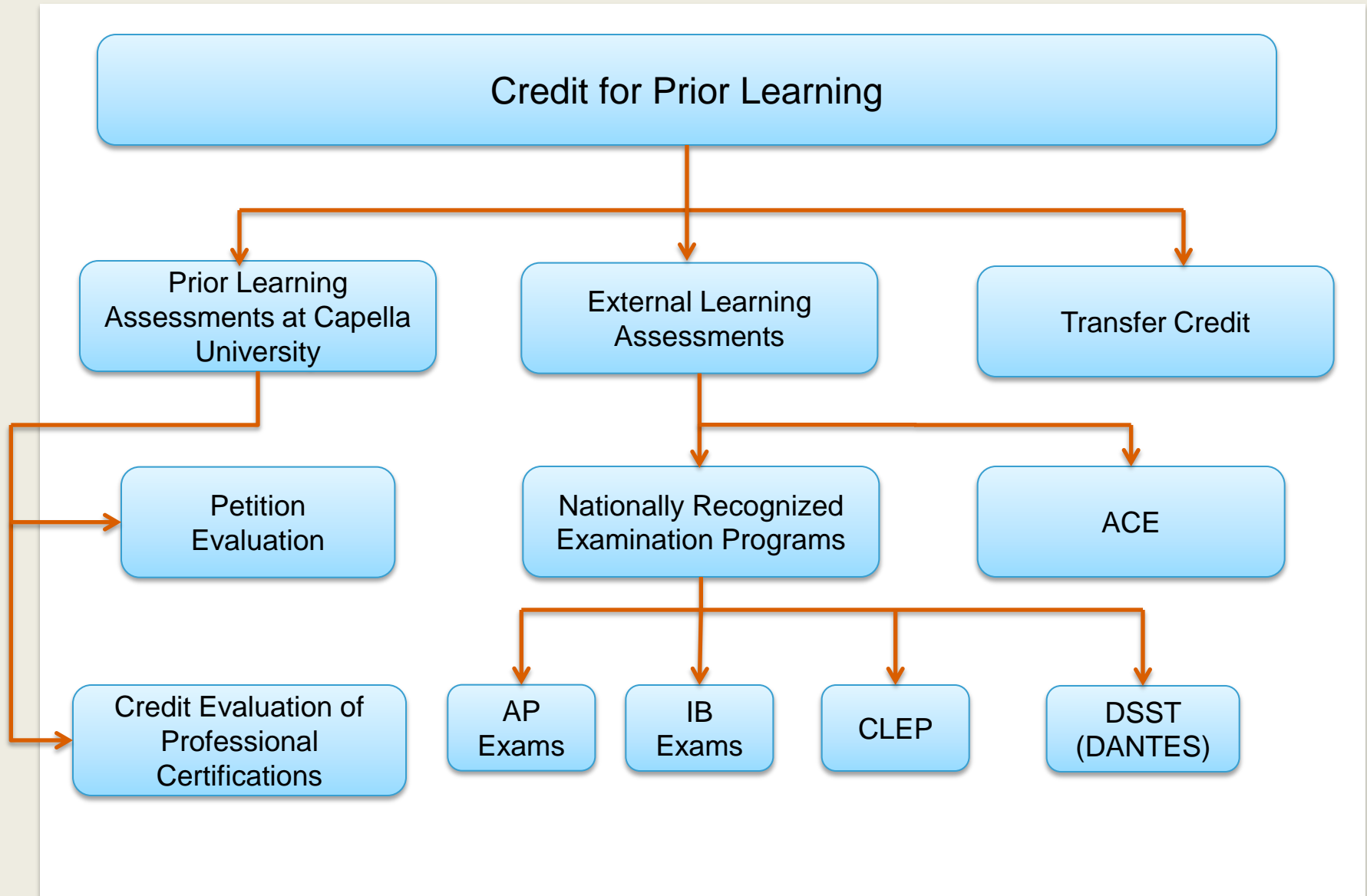
Basically I'm just making potato salad. I haven't decided what kind yet.

See full bio Contact me

Pledge \$1 or more

2086 backers

With your help, we'll be on our way to a successful potato salad. You will get



What is Prior Learning Assessment at Capella?

- PLA is a process by which learners demonstrate that they have mastered the competencies of one or more specific Capella courses. ([3.04.11 Transfer Credit and Prior Learning Assessment](#))
- The competencies in the PLA assessments are the same as those offered in our course room.
- Two questions we ask our learners
 - // What do you know? (About this course competency)
 - // What have you done with this knowledge?



Prior Learning Assessment Process at Capella

- An evaluation or assessment of knowledge gained outside of an academic credit bearing course.

- Not for life experience but learning and knowledge which have been gained through this life experience

- Credit is granted:
 - // For a specific Capella course
 - // Upon evaluation by faculty subject matter experts
 - // For demonstrating competencies at a “B” grade level or higher
 - // For learning appropriate to the level of the course competencies.

Forms of Prior Learning Assessment

- Nationally recognized exams – CLEP or DSST
- Industry recognized credentials
- Advanced Placement exams
- ACE Recommendations
- Petition or portfolio review – Learning Counts
- Customized training programs for credit
- Articulated high school to college credits



Potential Sources of PLA

- Corporate Training Programs
- Learning attained through “on the job” experience
- Professional certifications or certificates
- Mentoring
- Volunteer work
- Hobbies
- MOOC’s
- Community service



Benefits of Prior Learning Assessment

- Students can:
 - // Focus on learning new information rather than reviewing what they already know.

 - // Express their knowledge in multiple formats and choose ways most comfortable to them

 - // Reduce time to completion and total cost of their program

 - // Complete with ½ the debt of other graduates



Where to Start

- Start with areas where faculty are more receptive, and that have a population of students with relevant expertise
- Review syllabi and textbooks, to determine commonalities across instructors
- Establish learning outcomes for each course based on commonalities
- Review the learning outcomes with the faculty for approval

Creating Stakeholder Buy-In:

- Understand stakeholder needs and viewpoints to know how to position your initiatives, or ask for support
- PLA aligns to national objectives of college affordability and completion
- Faculty leadership that they will be the decision makers on what credit is awarded
- Mutual goals and reliance are the best incentive for others to help you in achieving your goals



“CONSISTENCY – EVERY INGREDIENT HAD TO HAVE A REASON”

“College-level learning is the same, whether acquired in the traditional college classroom or through non-collegiate sources. This equivalency is validated by academically sound and rigorous prior-learning assessment methods.”

-- *State Policy Approaches to Support Prior Learning Assessment – Resource Guide for State Leaders 2012 by CAEL*



What to consider when creating your own PLA program

- Student population – Target market
 - // Majority of our PLA is done by IT students
- Teaching objectives/outcomes
- Structure
 - // Start small and slowly expand your schools PLA portfolio
- Assessment Process
 - // Quality feedback
- Policies/Procedures/Practices
 - // Grading
 - // Transcribing

Case Study Method

Consider using a case study method, where instructors construct a case study that requires the learner to demonstrate knowledge through solving a problem or addressing an issue

Security Management

You are the Director of Security for the Mall of America and have been requested to lend assistance to the Minnesota Governors Office in providing security for the Governor who will be making an appearance at the mall. Articulate how your private security force will function with state and local law enforcement agencies? Discuss what measures you will take regarding physical and informational security prior to and during the visit. Analyze and describe the precautions to be taken to mitigate possible chemical, biological, nuclear, and radioactive terrorist threats. Identify how your security team will address the five principle levels of protection during the visit. In your advance report to law enforcement your operational security (OPSEC) plan and communications security (COMSEC) plans.

Standards for Assessing Learning – Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

Credit is awarded for:

- learning – not experience
- appropriate subject matter and higher-level learning
- by academic subject matter or credentialing experts

Transcript

- Clearly describe what learning is being recognized
- Avoid giving credit twice for the same learning

Standards for Assessing Learning – Council of Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)

Best practices

- Include a provision to appeal
- Fully disclosed and available to all participants in the assessment process
- Assessment process should be maintained and reviewed as program outcomes/objectives change within your institution
- Fees associated with the assessment
 - // Based on services performed in the assessment process
 - // Not determined by the amount of credit awarded
- All assessors involved should receive training and continuing professional development for fields under their review

PLA Resources

- Consider [LearningCounts](#) for your students to explore their prior learning assessment opportunities
- [American Council on Education](#) (ACE). College Credit Recommendation Service (CREDIT) that was built to evaluate learning outside of the traditional course room.
- [National College Credit Recommendation Service](#) (formerly National PONSI).
- [Council for Ault Experiential Learning](#) (CAEL)
 - // Webinars
 - // Workshops
 - // Certifications
 - [4 PLA Workshops](#) through DePaul University

Questions?



Thank You

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