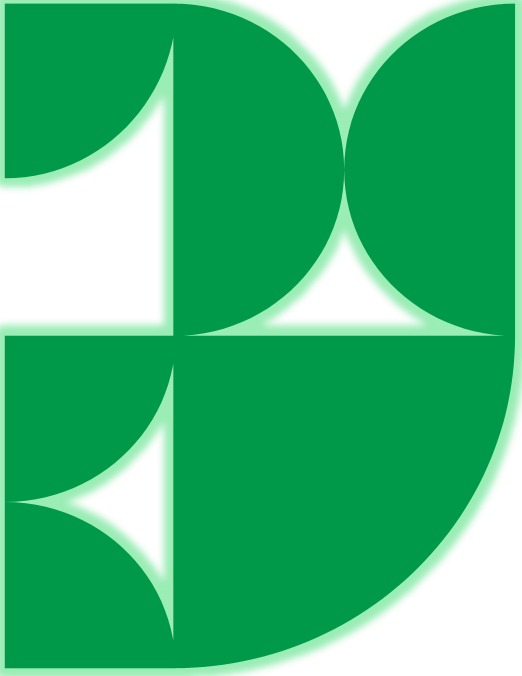


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LEARNING PLAN PROJECT: PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT FEATURES

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INDIVIDUALIZED PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (iPLA)

Introduction

Jobs requiring postsecondary education are projected to reach 70% by 2027. Data from Military One Source shows that 73.30% of Active-Duty Soldiers in Georgia do not have a college degree. Based on renewed and broad interest in credit for prior learning (CPL), the individualized prior learning assessment (iPLA) has become more prominent in postsecondary attainment. A key value in adult education has always been learning from experience (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2022).

Many Soldiers have gained a great deal of education through their day-to-day lives outside of the college and university settings: experience acquired from work, on-the-job training, formal business training, military training, volunteer work, self-study, and countless other organized learning opportunities available through low-cost or no-cost online sources. Colleges and universities can assess that learning to determine if credit can be awarded toward a degree, certificate, or credential. Credit for prior learning (CPL) and prior learning assessment (PLA) are terms that colleges and universities use to evaluate this training.

Approximately 26% of Active-Duty Soldiers have complete college degrees. The significance of credit for prior learning is progressively expanding as millions of adult learners seek new employment opportunities through postsecondary education (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2022a). The fundamental principle here is that what you know is more important than where you learned it (Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, 2022).

Benefits of Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

There is strong evidence that PLA can be an important tool for helping Soldiers leverage what they already know and can do and apply that learning toward a postsecondary credential. The proportion of adult students who take advantage of PLA is only about 10 percent. Not every student is likely to have sufficient knowledge or skills

that qualify them for PLA, or the knowledge they do have is not aligned with their chosen program of study (Liebrandt et al., 2020). However, Soldiers are constantly training and performing tasks to meet mission requirements. Earning college credit through the PLA can help you:

- **Save time and money** - decreases time to obtain a degree and lowers tuition cost.
- **Accelerate your academic progress** by increasing residential credit - complete the program sooner
- **Develop your resume** - demonstrate that prior learning adds valuable skills.
- **Increase chance of completing program** - 49% over a seven-and-a-half-year period, compared to 27 percent of adult students with no PLA credits.
- **Increase completion of credential by more than 17%**. There was a significant improvement for minority students: Hispanic (24%), Blacks (14%), community college (25%), and Pell Grant recipients (19%)
- **Gain understanding**. A different perspective on ways to learn and how to apply that learning in your life, job, community, or additional schooling (American Council on Education, 2022).
- **Eliminate redundancies** associated with reviewing material you have already mastered.
- **Demonstrate the ability to show learning** (American Public University, 2022).

Selecting a College or University

When selecting a college or university, ensure that the accrediting agency is endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education. Lookout for online diploma mills that are not accredited institutions acknowledged by employers and other colleges and universities. Accreditation information should be listed on the institution's website or visit the [Council for Higher Education Accreditation \(CHEA\)](#) database (American Council on Education, 2022).

Some corrupt institutions promise college credit for life experience but do not deliver on their promises. Stay clear of institutions that offer credit without evaluation, lack transparency, and are not accredited nor accepted by the U.S. Department of Education (American Council on Education, 2022).

Assessment of Prior Learning

The Prior Learning Assessment may be fitting if “you have developed college or graduate-level knowledge, skills, and abilities, and are able to demonstrate that these skills meet the learning objectives of an academic course” (American Council on Education, 2022). Prior Learning must be:

- Related to current educational goals and objectives.
- College-level/graduate level and be relevant to a specific course for which the university grants academic credit.

- Transferable to other settings outside that in which it was gained.
- Complemented by relevance of appropriate theories.
- Include evidence to support having achieved course learning objectives. This may include:
 - Certifications/training certificates
 - Professional evaluations
 - Awards/commendations (American Public University, 2022).

According to the American Council of Education (2022), evidence may also include:

Assessments	Examples	Websites (Right click, copy hyperlink, and paste in browser)
Credit by Exam	Advanced Placement (AP) College Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams International Baccalaureate (IB), Excelsior exams (UExcel), DANTES Subject Standardized Tests (DSST)	Credit for Prior Learning AP, IB, CLEP, DSST, Excelsior College, and UExcel exams
Military Training	Military Courses Occupational Specialties	The ACE Military Guide https://jst.doded.mil/jst/
Workplace Training	Corporate Training Certificates	The ACE National Guide ACE Transcripts (acenet.edu)
Professional Certification Independent Studies	Military & Civilian Courses	The ACE National Guide ACE Transcripts (acenet.edu)
Portfolio	Individualized Assessment Work Experience Business Ownership Civic Leadership Hobbies (experiences & non-credit activities)	Sample Portfolio
Faculty-Developed Challenge Exam	Comprehensive Examination	Contact Supporting College/University
Non-College Programs	Learning experiences (Check CCRS Online Director for Sponsors)	National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)
Independent Studies	Topic of Choice working with Faculty Advisor Hobbies	Just for College

Credits earned through PLA are considered non-traditional transfer credits. Guidelines for accrediting agencies limit the amount of non-traditional credit that may be applied towards a degree as listed:

- The maximum number of semester hours for a graduate certificate is nine
- Associate degree - a maximum of 30 semester hours
- Bachelor's degree - not more than sixty semester hours
- Master's - no more than 9 semester hours

To learn more visit the [Council on Adult and Experiential Learning \(CAEL\)](#) and the [American Council on Education](#).

Course Requirements

Undergraduate Students

- Fully admitted and an active student (have student ID number and are not on hold or disenrolled).
- Completed Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE)
- Minimum grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 for courses taken and are not on academic probation (American Public University, 2022).

Graduate Students

- Fully admitted and an active student (have student ID number and are not on hold or disenrolled).
- Completed Transfer Credit Evaluation (TCE)
- Minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 for courses taken to date and are not on academic probation (American Public University, 2022).

Cost: TBD

Course Overview

This is an eight-week accelerated program. Three credit hours are granted for an elective course option. The course is designed to help Soldiers think and write about prior experiences in terms of the learning that can result in college credits.

The course provides an organized sequence of activities designed to provide the Soldier with a methodical approach to requesting credit for learning gained outside a traditional classroom.

Soldiers will differentiate between experience, experiential learning, and learning by experience. Soldiers will examine their personal knowledge, skills, and abilities and use them to create and accomplish educational goals as they learn about learning styles and theories. Soldiers will identify prior learning and present methods by which they can demonstrate that learning. Soldiers will create and submit at least one portfolio for assessment and can submit additional ones after course completion.

Course Goal

Through active reflection, structured and carefully designed exercises, Soldiers will analyze prior learning experiences regarding their knowledge, skills, and abilities and examine their prior learning in terms of critical incidents that led to learning and Kolb's learning. Soldiers will develop the portfolio components that will allow evaluators to assess learning as it applies to course requirements (American Public University, 2022).

Learning Objectives

Upon successfully completing this course, the Soldier will be able to:

LO1: Describe the prior learning assessment

LO2: Describe the importance of PLA for adult learners

LO3: Create an educational plan and record for PLA

LO4: Differentiate between experiential learning, life experience, and traditional classroom learning

LO5: Explain personal learning experiences as it applies to Kolb's learning theory

LO6: Create, categorize, and prepare applicable documents/component to validate request for prior learning credit

LO7: Create and organize a portfolio in accordance with established standards (American Public University, 2022).

Course Delivery Method and Format

This course is located @ <https://www.to be determined> and starts every 2nd Monday. This eight-week course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work flexibly and completely online. Students will have access to an online learning management system 72 hours before class starts. The assigned faculty/instructor will provide support throughout this course.

Assignments/Lessons: Weekly readings and lessons are located in the “Lessons” module. Some assignments will become part of the portfolio. Assignments that are part of the final portfolio must be corrected before adding to the final product. Assignments and lessons are available on the first day of the course. However, you may work ahead; but the reading and associated assignments must be done in the order they appear because the topics for each week build for the next. Class Assignments are due on Sunday NLT 2359 (CST).

Discussions: Read all instructions before posting your response on the “Discussion Forum.” Active participation is expected, and responses should demonstrate an understanding of the topic. APA citations, punctuation, and correct grammar are required. Discussion Question responses are due on Friday NLT 2359 (CST), and replies to two classmates NLT Sunday 2359 (CST). Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Post initial response to forum by 2359 (CST) Friday.
- Initial response should show a thorough analysis of the topic and 250 – 500 words.
- Reply to at least two classmates by 2359 (CST) Sunday.

Test and Quizzes: None

Course Material

Course material will be available via the online learning management system (LMS).

Required Readings: See Military Resources and course schedule for details.

Military Resources

- [ACE Military Guide](#)
- [ACE National Guide](#)
- [ArmyIgnitED](#)
- [Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support \(DANTES\)](#)
- [Department of Defense Voluntary Education](#)
- [Joint Services Transcript](#)
- [Learner Transfer Guide](#)
- [Student Guide to Credit for Prior Learning](#)
- [Air University](#)
- [Coast Guard Institute](#)
- [Community College of the Air Force](#)
- [Navy College Program](#)
- [USMC Training and Education Command](#)

Each week there will be readings/resources that are relevant to the curriculum.

Week 7 Final Product: Portfolio

1. Portfolio Cover Page
2. Table of Content
3. Chronological Autobiography
4. Resume
5. Course Competency Matrix
6. Learning Narrative
7. Sample Recommendation and Documentation supporting request for PLA
8. Portfolio

Course Schedule

Success in this course depends on your active learning, participation, and discussion each week. Prior to beginning the lesson students should first check the weekly announcements for any updates.

Time	Topic
Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • PLA Policies & Procedures • Kolb Learning Style Inventory 4.0 • Personal Learning Inventory
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding PLA Importance & Processes • Portfolio Requirements • Recognition of Prior Learning • Finding Syllabus for PLA Request
Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Mapping • Creating a Portfolio
Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Assessment Inventory & Rating your Life • Analyzing Critical Incidents • Defining Experiential Learning, Life Experiences, and Traditional Classroom learning
Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyzing Course Competency • Educational Strategy, Inventory, and Learning Narrative
Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resume Templates & Creating a Resume • Creating a Career Autobiography • Creating a Narrative with Outline
Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating Title Page, Table of Contents and Rubric • Correcting, and Compiling Portfolio Documentation & Components
Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Project: Portfolio

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- American Council on Education. (2022). *Student guide to credit for prior learning. About Credit for Prior Learning*. <https://www.acenet.edu/Programs-Services/Pages/Credit-Transcripts/Student-Guide-to-Credit-for-Prior-Learning.aspx>
- American Public University. (2022). *Prior learning assessment for academic credit*. <https://www.apu.apus.edu/academic/degrees-and-programs/pla.html?ga=2.90869850.1531893206.1667525542-1476098173.1667525542>
- Kratzer, D., Soares, L., Spires, M. (2021). *Recognition of learning across military corporate settings: How ACE blends standard processes, disciplinary expertise, and context to ensure quality*. <https://www.wiche.edu/key-initiatives/recognition-of-learning/recognition-of-learning-across-military-and-corporate-settings/>
- Leibrandt, S., Klein-Collins, R., Lane, P. (2020). *Recognizing prior learning in the COVID-19 era: helping displaced workers and students one credit at a time*. https://www.wiche.edu/key-initiatives/recognition-of-learning/#_Landscape