



Building Healthy Labour Markets in Newfoundland and Labrador

**A Provincial Labour Market Symposium
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Bonnie Kennedy, Executive Director, CAPLA



What is the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment? (CAPLA)

“an association to assist in the advancement of prior learning assessment and recognition”

“ a national organization with an international perspective”

www.capla.ca



What is the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment? (CAPLA)

- non-profit organization that advocates for a society that values continuous learning opportunities and formal recognition of prior learning from work and life experiences
- formed in 1994, incorporated in 1997
- over 300 members (individuals, organizations, groups) from across Canada and abroad
- elected Board of Directors



What is prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) ?

- a process of identifying, evaluating and documenting informal and non-formal learning achievements; used to prove competencies in industry, to challenge for academic credit in school boards/colleges/universities, to demonstrate skills and abilities in the workplace, to help occupational bodies determine the skills and knowledge of the foreign-trained
- a mechanism for individuals, employers, communities and Canada to discover and utilize the 'hidden icebergs' of adult learning
- a transformational process for self-management



What is going on in the PLAR community?

- PLAR events every year (biennial HRSDC Forums since 1995 and CAPLA's fall workshops); resources at www.capla.ca, www.canadasportfolio.ca and www.recognitionforlearning.ca; research such as “Developing Benchmarks for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition – Practitioners Perspectives and Guidelines” (2000, CAPLA), “Spring 2003 Snapshot of the Current Status of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) in Canada’s Public Post-Secondary Institutions” (2003, CMEC), “An Online Portfolio Development Model for the Going to Canada Portal” (2003, HRSDC), “Recognizing the Prior Learning (RPL) of Immigrants to Canada: Moving Towards Consistency and Excellence” (2006, CAPLA)



What does the research tell us?

- “Insufficient prior learning assessment and recognition capacity is another important gap in our learning infrastructure.” (Knowledge Matters, HRSDC, 2002)
- “There is major learning recognition gap in Canada today. If eliminated, it would give Canadians an additional \$4.1 billion – \$5.9 billion in income annually. “ (Bloom, 2001)
- “More than half of all Canadian adults and 60% of those employed would be more interested in enrolling in further education if their prior informal learning and work experiences were recognized.” (Livingstone, 2005)
- “A major gap (in knowledge) is ...local factors which contribute to unique PLAR developments in each jurisdiction (and) of particular importance (is)...the place of PLAR within comprehensive policy frameworks for adult and lifelong learning; factors that lead to higher uptake of PLAR; approaches to quality assurance; the relationship of PLAR to International Credential Evaluation..” (Wihak, 2006)



Trends and Best Practices

- Changes in the nature of work – the need to identify, document and evaluate one’s own prior learning to ensure employability
- Values at work – “expectations of balance and synergy; work as a noble cause; personal growth and development; partnership; community at work; trust” (Izzo & Withers)
- Demographic realities – global competition for skilled workers, aging baby boomers, skill shortages, pace of technology, diversity in the labour force
- Building PLAR approaches into the organization’s HR Strategic Plan for employee development, succession planning, retention, recruitment
- Developing PLAR expertise amongst career practitioners and HR professionals
- Using career portfolio approaches to help workers bridge into the labour force and for ongoing education/training opportunities