

**Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
Activity on the
Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (RNFIL)**



**Report
Province of Prince Edward Island**

Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC)

Recognition of Informal and Non-formal Learning in Prince Edward Island

Background

Workplace Education PEI (WEDPEI) has been the primary facilitator of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Services in PEI since 1999. Workplace Education PEI is a partnership of business, labour and government. The greatest demand in recognizing learning is facilitating the development of learning portfolios for which WEDPEI uses Essential Skills (ES) as its foundation.

PLAR services provided through WEDPEI include:

- delivering PLAR and portfolio development information through workshops and presentations to businesses, institutions, professional organizations
- providing PLAR Practitioner Certification through workshops that are 30 hours in duration followed by the assessment of a completed learning portfolio and practicum supervision
- delivering and facilitating learning portfolio development training in the workplace, high schools and post-secondary institutions
- promoting, facilitating and assisting in the development of PLAR processes in credit granting institutions.
- training career counselors in portfolio development. This ensures counselors have the skills to help clients in workforce transitioning, workplace mobility and career development.

Following the **Recognizing Learning Joint National Conference for Prior Learning Assessment and Qualification Recognition** in October, 2001 that resulted in the *Halifax Declaration for the Recognition of Prior Learning*, the Prince Edward Island Department of Education adopted in principle the Declaration that states:

- The recognition of prior learning is fundamental to a lifelong learning culture.
- All learning should be recognized or considered by educational, professional and work organizations.
- Canadians including immigrants to Canada should have the right to have their prior learning assessed and recognized.
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Sustainability

As with all processes, long term funding is essential to sustain services and development. Some employers have funded employees in the development of their learning portfolios while most funding comes from project based proposals. The question of who assesses portfolios in the recognition of learning is also linked to budget demands. We are gradually moving towards a fee for service model that will gradually help sustain the service of recognizing learning.

Challenges in recognizing informal and non-formal learning are mainly centred on **who** recognizes the learning. This is a challenge for those who want their learning recognized and for those who should be the people to do the recognizing. The simple answer to the question about who recognizes the learning is that it has to be the person or organization that a person needs to have recognize the learning, eg a potential employer, an institution of higher learning, or a professional organization like a medical society or engineers association.

Recognizing non-formal and informal learning is a long slow process. Major progress has been made over the last 10 years but we have a long way to go before we can unequivocally state that the recognition process is imbedded in all areas. As can be seen from the following activity update, a good deal of work is being done at the university and community college to incorporate the recognition of learning that students and potential students have gained through informal and non-formal learning opportunities.

Updates

Public Schools- In 2003, WEDPEI responded to a request from a local highschool for assistance in helping students prepare learning portfolios in The Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism program. Following this initial response, PLAR Practitioner Advisors were trained to assist high school students complete learning portfolios.

Portfolios are now being used in transition programs in eight high schools on Prince Edward Island. Student profiles include students transitioning from highschool directly into the workplace and students transitioning from high school into community college.

Holland College - WEDPEI has been involved with Holland College for several years. Projects and results include:

- researching and producing an initial PLAR implementation plan
- training instructors in Portfolio Development
- developing and delivering a Portfolio Orientation for Research and Development project
- training facilitators and assisting staff at the Atlantic Police Academy to incorporate portfolio development into their Correctional Officers Program
- participating in a PLAR advisory group with both Holland College and UPEI.

University of Prince Edward Island - WEDPEI is presently assisting UPEI in the development of a PLAR implementation plan and in developing learning outcomes for a Bachelor of General Studies Degree.

WEDPEI delivers workshops and information sessions on portfolio development and PLAR for students such as graduating nurses and program chairs to one-on-one sessions with faculty and students. These sessions have led to the development of initiatives and programs which include the following courses:

- **TP102-** WEDPEI developed course content and facilitates portfolio development for students in the Transitions Program (TP102). The Transitions Program Learning

Portfolios assist students in creating academic learning plans, career plans and goals development. After a one year pilot program, credit can now be awarded to transitions students with a pass or fail rating based on the completion of a learning portfolio. Credit awarded is U193, Developing a Learning Portfolio.

- **U193** -WEDPEI developed and co-delivers, Developing a Learning Portfolio, a credit course at UPEI. Student profiles are mature adult learners who have been in the workforce for a number of years and need a degree to progress in their workplace. Student profiles include employees from provincial and federal governments, UPEI, Maritime Electric and civilian RCMP. Credit is awarded as a pass or fail, based on the completion of a learning portfolio.
- Plans for the coming year include working with the Business Faculty at the University of Prince Edward Island to develop a portfolio information session and possible pilot project.