



introducing the prior learning centre

We live in a world that tends to focus on one's education as their primary source of learning. The reality is that formal education is only one part of our learning and skill development. Important skills come from our work (whether paid or volunteer), our hobbies and all of our experiences. We are all learners and we are constantly adding to our skills and knowledge in everything we do. The challenge is to recognize this learning ourselves, and then to be able to prove to others that we have certain skills and competencies.

This is where the Prior Learning Centre can help. We're a nationally-recognized centre of excellence in providing Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) programs and services. We help people reflect upon, identify, organize and describe the learning from throughout their lives. This record of learning is then presented in a way that others can recognize and value.

Most people seriously underestimate what they know and can do

Our own skills tend to become invisible to us over time. As you become familiar with a new task or job, you gradually stop thinking consciously about the knowledge and skills you have – you just do what needs to be done. So we forget that what might seem simple and straightforward for you – building a shed, introducing a speaker, caring for an elderly parent, organizing an event – can seem extremely complicated and intimidating to someone else. In other words, you know much more than you think you know.

“All those things I did – raising children – you think that they’re not important, but they’re really skills. After doing Portfolio, I realized that. Since I’ve come back to school, I have a new confidence. My only regret is not doing it sooner.” – Angela Bailey

All learning deserves to be recognized

Experiential learning often goes unrecognized by both you and – of equal importance – the world around you. It is not, of course, that you’ve stopped learning after leaving school – on the contrary, your knowledge, skills and talents are essential to the economy, your workplace, community and family. Your challenge is getting these learning achievements recognized.

“Before I did Portfolio, I felt frustrated and stuck in my life. Once I could see the whole picture, I could see the thread that connected all these parts. I was able to pick up that thread and go with it. Now I see opportunities instead of obstacles.” – Cheryl Newman, Department of National Defense

Introducing PLAR

This is where Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) can make a crucial, confidence-boosting difference. PLAR helps people reflect upon, identify, organize, and describe learning from throughout their life. This includes learning from formal settings like schools and professional programs, and also informal learning acquired at home, in the community, in hobbies, volunteer work, and travel, for example. This record of learning, and the confidence that comes from creating it, is a crucial tool in the pursuit of new opportunities.

For individuals, PLAR means realizing your full potential and achieving your goals in life.

For employers, both public and private, PLAR means smarter training, better recruitment, and a more loyal and productive workforce.