

University of Arkansas - Fort Smith
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General Syllabus

PLA 3003: Prior Learning Practices

Credit Hours: 3 Lecture Hours: 3 Laboratory or other types of Hours: 0

Prerequisite(s): Admission into the ADCP program

Effective Catalog: 2020 / 2021

I. Course Information

A. Catalog Description

The course examines prior learning assessment models and how to effectively document prior learning gained from workplace experiences, training programs, military training, and certification programs. Students are guided through the preparation and compilation of all components of the evaluation of prior learning through the development of a professional portfolio.

B. Additional Information

This course covers the nature and structure of academic pursuits and personal circumstances of adult re-entry students as well as non-traditional students. It is a required course for all students enrolled in the Adult Degree Completion Program at the University of Arkansas, Fort Smith and should be taken during the first semester of enrollment. Students participate in hands-on activities to help them explore their learning styles, develop effective time management skills, and design strategies, and resource access to help them reach their academic goals.

II. Student Learning Outcomes

A. Subject Matter

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Evaluate activities, skills and resources to reach academic goals.
2. Identify appropriate standards to judge past learning, time management skills, and learning styles.
3. Interpret personal attributes to promote effective interactions and communication with others.
4. Examine models of prior learning assessment and the process for documenting learning gained from work experiences.

5. Identify the cycles of Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.
6. Assemble an inventory of prior learning that identifies and categorizes that learning.
7. Illustrate critical reflection skills to rethink the nature and value of learning from experience in reading, writing, and oral/written communication.
8. Identify opportunities to petition for prior learning and utilize appropriate guides for credit awards.
9. Secure documentation of prior learning and examples of learning application.
10. Organize documentation into prior learning categories.
11. Develop advanced college-level writing that demonstrates learning.
12. Create a professional portfolio.
13. Formulate an academic plan for the completion of baccalaureate degree.
14. Write a plan for ongoing career development and lifelong learning.

B. University Learning Outcomes

This course enhances student abilities in the following areas:

Communication Skills (written and oral)

Students will communicate effectively with audiences in diverse formats and settings.

Analytical Skills

Critical Thinking Skills

Students will draw conclusions and solve problems, as well as effectively apply evaluative skills in examining appropriate avenues for non-traditional college credit.

Global and Cultural Perspectives

Students will reflect upon cultural differences and their implications for interacting with people from backgrounds and cultures other than their own.

III. Major Course Topics

- A. Student success
- B. Prior learning assessment (PLA)
- C. Theoretical underpinnings of PLA
- D. Kolb and Bloom Model
- E. Learning styles
- F. Time management strategies
- G. Inventorying learning and categorizing PLA
- H. Petitioning for prior learning
- I. Documentation for application of PLA
- J. Guides for non-traditional credit
- K. PLA and application for prior learning
- L. Documentation of PLA into areas of specialization