



# Prior Learning Assessment Options for Career Enhancement

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Who is participating today?

**Name, job title,  
organization**



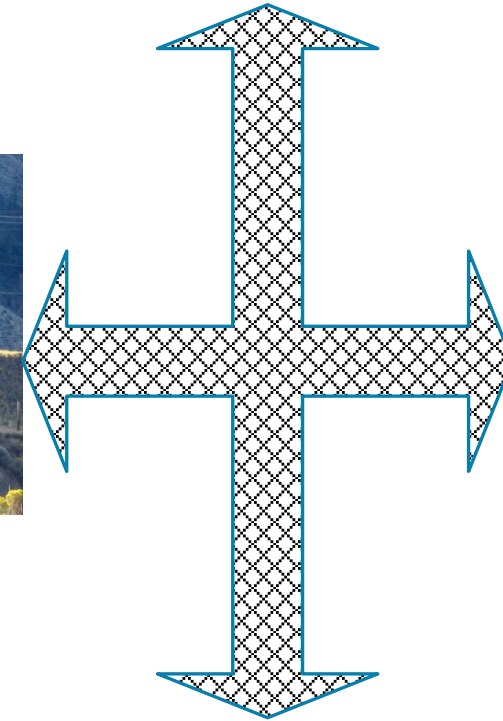
## Land Acknowledgment

The Secwepemc people have a phrase, “Metéltwecw-kt Es Knúcwetwecw-kt” meaning, everyone come together to help one another



About me

...my intersections  
of learning...



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# Today's Session

1. What is PLAR (and all its acronyms)?
2. Informal, non-formal, and formal learning
3. Why PLAR
4. Types of PLAR
5. PLAR in BC
6. How PLAR Impacts Career Enhancement
  - Structural Changes in the Labour Market
  - Growing Need for Advanced Education
  - Increasing Importance of Lifelong Learning
  - Changes in Career Development
  - PLAR's Impact on
    - a) Education Attainment
    - b) The Individual
    - c) Career Development Knowledge
    - d) Career Decision Making
    - e) Career Action
    - f) Career Resiliency and Agility
7. How career practitioners can help clients learn about and navigate PLAR
8. Helping clients identify and document prior learning

## 1. What is PLAR?

- Process that allows students to identify, document, have assessed and gain recognition for their learning done outside of a formal classroom
- Can result in credit and/or advanced entry into multiple post-secondary institutions
- Goes by many names: PLA, RPL, PLAR, RAC, APEL... And some schools use
  - Challenge for credit
  - With permission of Dean
  - Flexible entry

## 2. Types of Learning

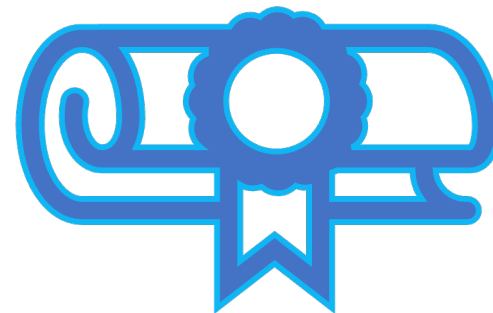
Formal

Informal

Non-formal

# Formal Learning

- Occurs in an organized and structured environment (PSI).
- Is usually recognized by relevant provincial and/or federal authorities, and leads to standardized qualifications such as degrees, diplomas, and certificates.





# Informal Learning

It often results from daily life activities related to work, family, or hobbies/interest

Examples, self-study, reading articles, participating in forums, coaching/mentoring sessions



# Non-formal Learning

- **Non-formal learning:** occurs often through organized participation in workplace-based training, non-credit courses, conferences, MOOCs, and workshops.



#### Image sources:

- <https://www.forbes.com>
- <https://elearningindustry.com/low-cost-employee-training-programs-work>
- <https://www.tlnt.com/dont-mooc-your-executives/>
- <https://www.eurashe.eu/recognition-of-prior-learning-in-higher-education-november-october-2020/>

# Identifying, recognizing, and validating informal and non-formal learning.

PLAR is About

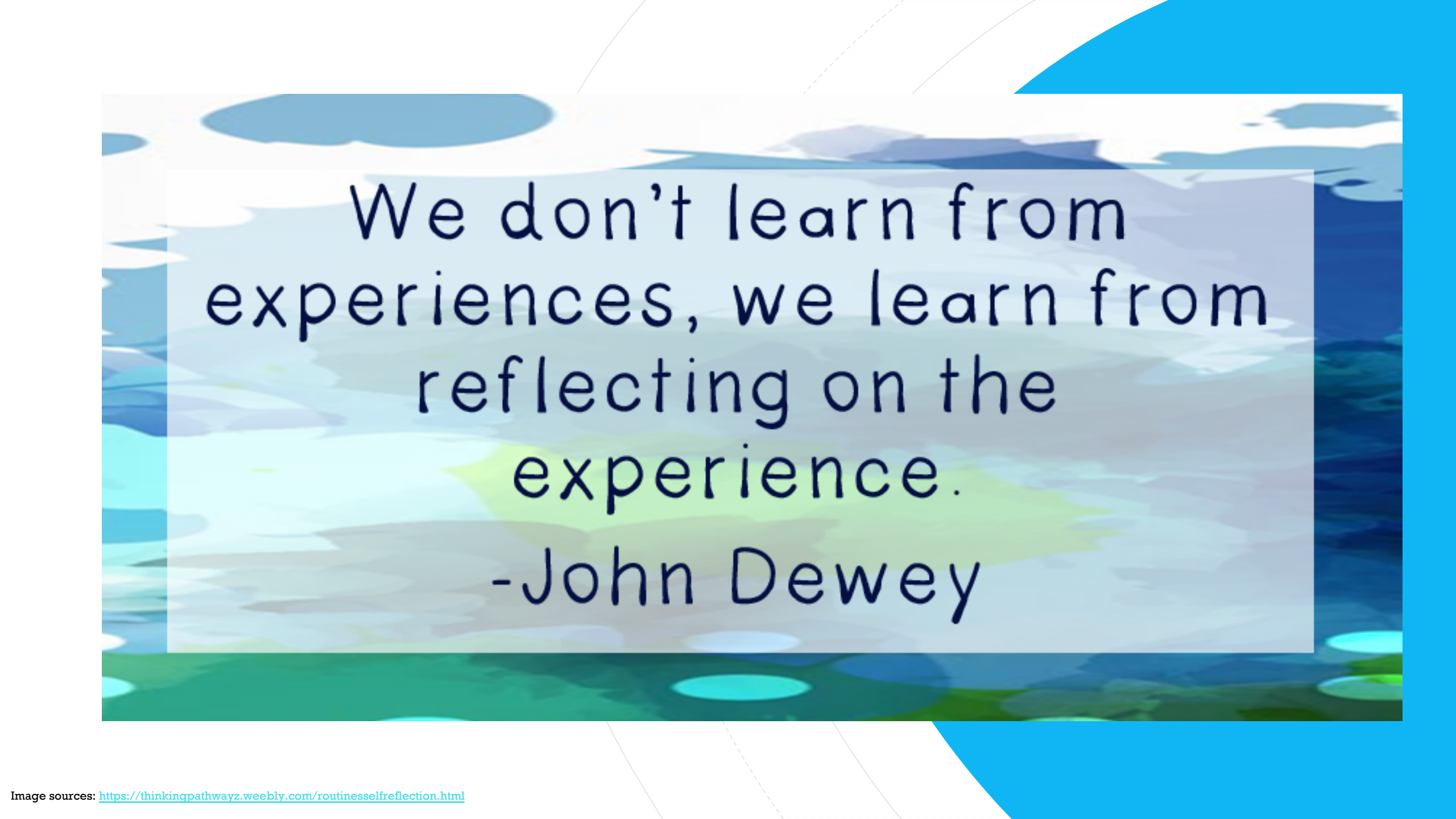




Its about deconstruction of experiences, reflecting on learning, codifying for academic purposes, and, assessing (validation)



GIF source: <http://www.appstate.edu/~logesdg/animated-gifs.html>

The image features a quote by John Dewey centered on a semi-transparent white rectangular box. The background is a vibrant, abstract illustration of water with various shades of blue, green, and teal, suggesting ripples and reflections. The text is written in a dark blue, sans-serif font. The quote reads: "We don't learn from experiences, we learn from reflecting on the experience." Below the quote, the name "-John Dewey" is written in the same font and color.

We don't learn from  
experiences, we learn from  
reflecting on the  
experience.

-John Dewey

# 3. Why PLAR?

## Your thoughts

**In Chat, what is the value in having informal and non-formal learning assessed and validated?**



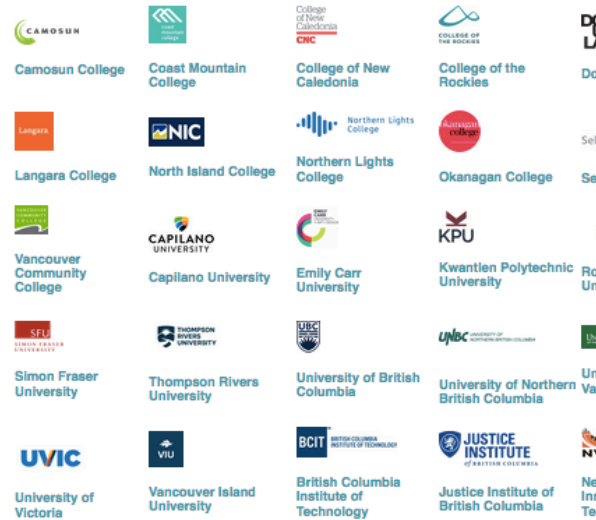
## 4. Types of PLAR

(Source: from a provincial research project on PLAR in BC PSI)

- **Course-based**
  - Students demonstrates they have met course learning outcomes (assessment can include an exam, interview, samples of work, demonstration of skill, a portfolio, etc.) (20/25)
- **Competency-based**
  - Assessment of “human” skills (communication, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, independent learning, intellectual maturity, etc.) for a block of elective credits (4/25)
- **Advanced Placement**
  - Placing students into a higher year(s) of program/degree (6/25)
- **Credit-bank**
  - Pre-assessment of non-formal training (selected employers, private schools, or continuing studies programs) (2/25)

## 5. PLAR in BC

### Post-Secondary Institutions:



### Kwantlen Polytechnic University

PLAR Landing Page: [kpu.ca/registr/pla](http://kpu.ca/registr/pla)

**Applicant requirements:** Applicants must have been admitted into a Kwantlen Polytechnic Program.

**How do students apply?** Contact designated PLAR Program Advisor for the course in which you are seeking prior learning assessment.

**Fees:** Same as the course tuition. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) through TRU follows TRU fees.

**Types of PLAR offered:** Course-specific (through MOU), program-based.

**Credit award limits:** Each program will determine individually. Maximum of 50% of program credits can be PLAR or transfer credit.

**Assessment methods:** Challenge exam, standardized test, portfolio, demonstration, interview, worksite assessment, self-assessment, external evaluation.

**Process steps:** Students must contact the designated PLAR program advisor for the course in which you are seeking. PLAR Program Advisor will conduct a pre-assessment, then the PLAR request is forwarded to designated PLAR Assessor who will then contact the student to select the assessment method and deadline. PLAR Assessor will submit the results of the assessment to the Office of the Registrar.

**Student support provided:** PLAR Assessor will discuss assessment method and timeline with the student.

**Can students withdraw from the process?** Information not available.

**How are credits recognized on transcripts?** The prior learning assessment attempt will appear on the transcript whether successful or not. Course-specific is not indicated as PLAR credit.

**Accept other institutions' PLAR credits?** No.

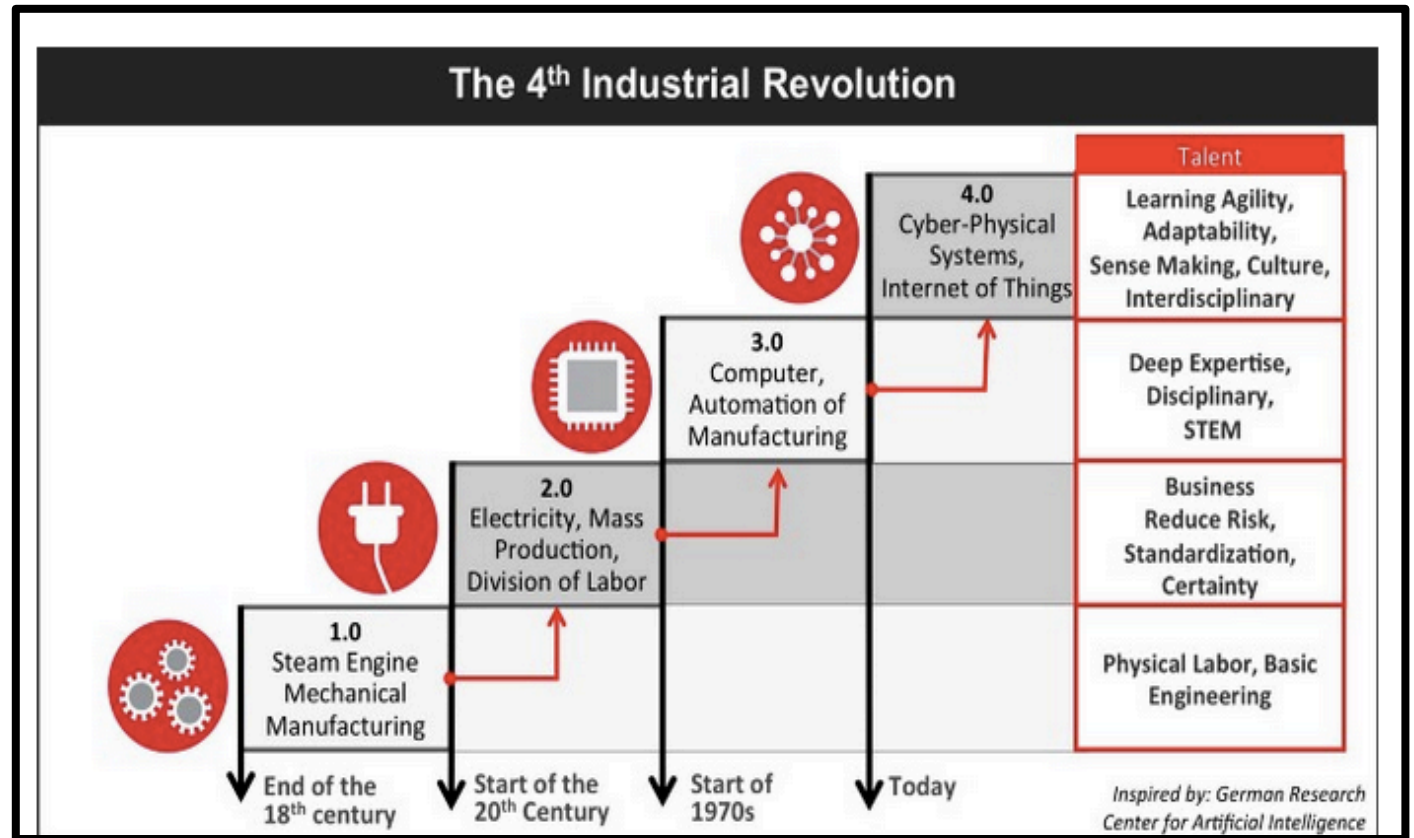
- BC PLAN has a list of all the public post-secondary institutions with links to websites and basic information on prior learning assessment offered, <https://bcplan.ca/plar-in-bc/>

# 6. Multiple and Related Benefits of PLAR From Career Enhancement Perspectives



Image source: <https://www.idrinstitute.org/2013/05/06/culture-not-like-iceberg/>

# Structural Changes in Labour Market

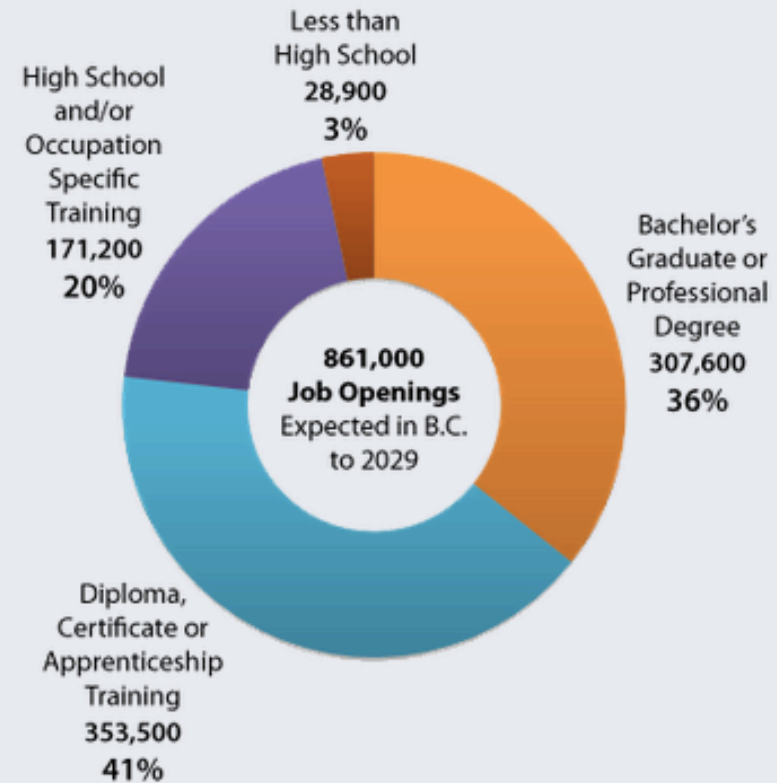


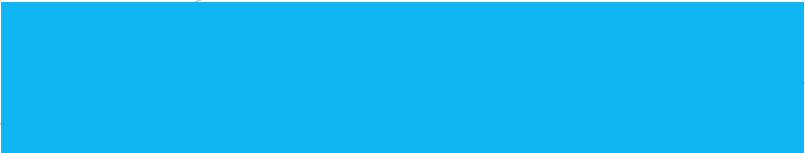
Covid has

- Enhanced and quickened patterns already emerging
  - 45% of jobs are vulnerable to automation (15% at high risk)
- Impacted women, youth and immigrants particularly hard
- Less work for those with low and middle skills, enhanced work for those with high skills

# 77% of jobs in BC in 2029 will require PSE

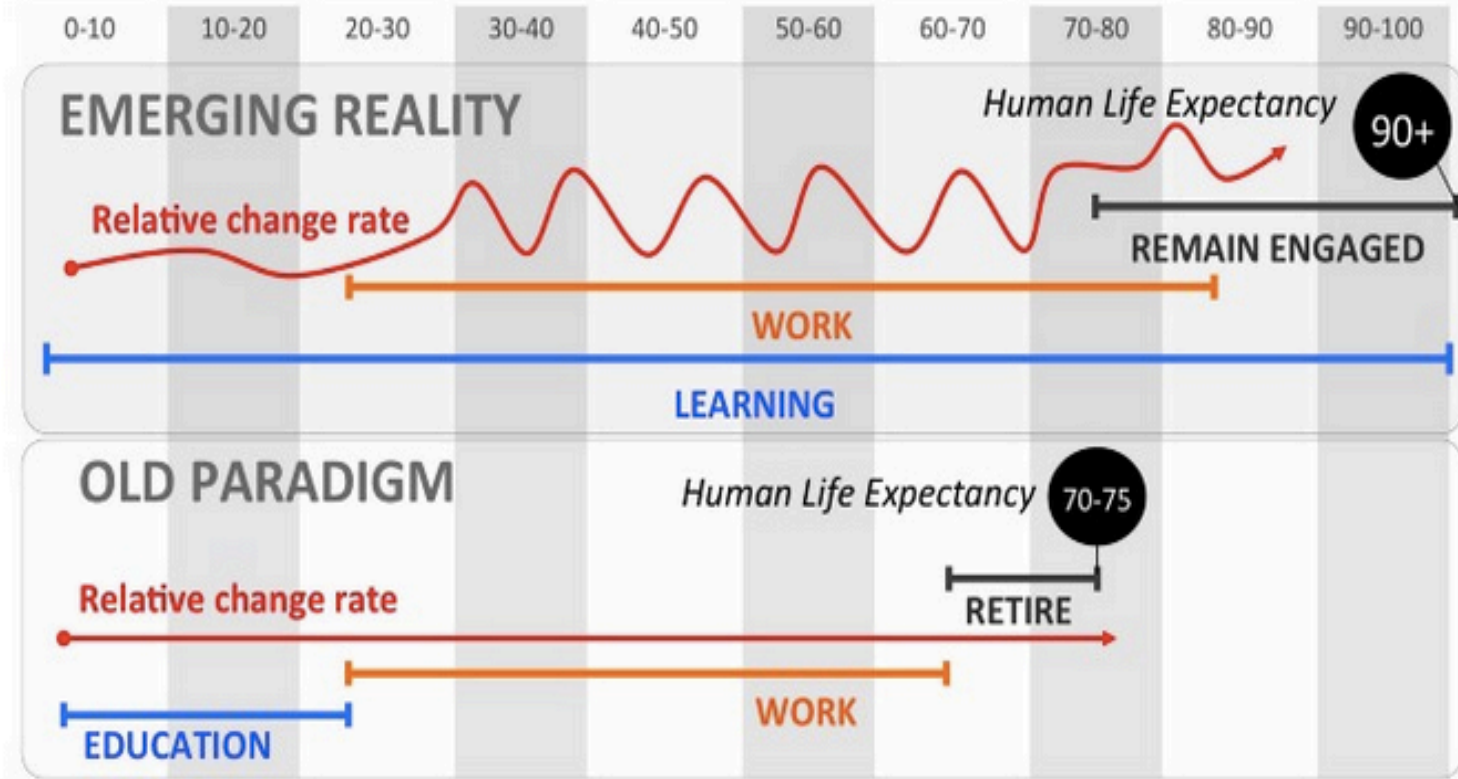
Credential  
Creep and  
Growing Need  
for Advanced  
Education





Increasing  
Importance of  
Lifelong Learning

### Why Does It Matter: Longevity + Change Rates





# Changes in Career Development

## ■ Past

- Goods and labour
- Dependent on employer
- Paternalistic
- Short career decision making
- Rate of change is gradual
- Predictable and linear
- Supplies income
- Limited career changes
- Seniority = promotion
- Hopes to retire at 65

## ■ Present

- Information and knowledge
- Independent (self)
- Autonomous
- Fluid career decision making
- Rate of change increasing
- Uncertain and non-linear
- Fulfillment and learning
- Multiple career changes
- Performance = employability
- The 100 year career??



Image sources:

- <https://www.facebook.com/CustomAndClassic/posts/evolucion-de-pickup-dodge-ram/884032161939934/>
- <https://www.thestreet.com/investing/stocks/tesla-unveils-cybertruck-electric-pickup-truck-15177972>



What Does  
PLAR Have To  
Do With This?

## How PLAR Supports Education Attainment

Less expensive

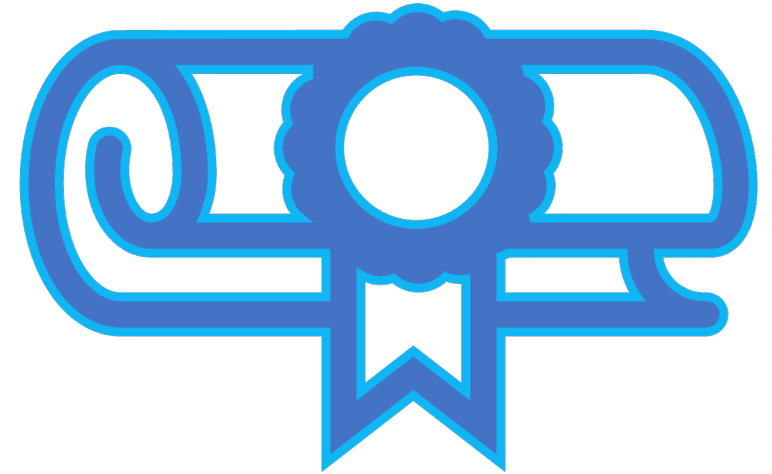
More flexible (time) so you can work

Increased GPA

Increased Completion Rates

Quicker Time to Completion

Equity and Access



**Makes Learning Visible to Self and Others**

## Impact of PLAR on the Individual

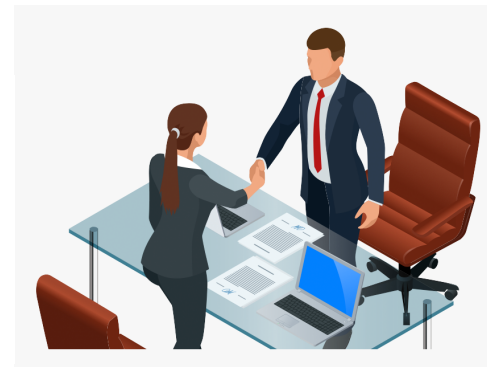
- PLAR processes require extensive self-reflection on learning from experience, which fosters enhanced:
  - Self-awareness
  - Confidence (in self, knowledge, and skills)
  - Legitimization
  - Coherent and clearer thinking
  - Self-understanding
  - Self-acceptance
  - Self-esteem
  - More receptive to embrace future learning
  - Increased sense of personal and professional self

(Delleville, 2019 & Romaniuk/Snart, 2000)

## Impact of PLAR on Career Development Knowledge

### Reflection Enhances Understanding of

- The skills, abilities, and education needed for diverse occupations
- Career pathway options
- Current and relevant labour market and what it means to THEM
- An enhanced understanding of areas they need more development in
- The ability to articulate their employability skills and competencies





# Career Decision Making

## Requires

- Knowing yourself AND what motivates you
- Thinking strategically about your interests, skills talents, abilities, personality and values

## Traditional Career Theory Tells Us

- There is a strong correlation between confidence and career decision making





Career Action

## My Early Research Indicates

- Students tend to experience an increase in their professional self-confidence when they have successfully completed PLAR
- There is a higher propensity for PLAR students to be pro-active and motivated in their career development
- They are strategic and intentional in their career planning

**PLAR impacts  
enhanced  
employability, agility  
and career progression**

## 7. How career practioners can help clients learn about and navigate prior learning options

- Will take some detective skills, patience, persistence
- Few schools have a centralized prior learning office
- Key words to search
  - “prior learning”
  - ”plar”
  - “rpl”
  - “advanced entry”
- Speak to recruiters, admissions officers, program and/or recruitment advisors, chairs, deans

## 8. Helping clients identify and document prior learning

- Much like helping pull out information from resume, ask probing questions
- Help draw out what is known
  - Provide evidence of learning claims (letters of reference, samples of work, employee evaluations, certificates, conference descriptions, etc.)
- Help with their reflection on learning by describing the experience and identifying the learning
  - Uncover and make explicit what they have discovered and achieved.
  - Ask what does this experience mean and how does it inform future action?
- Experience does not equal learning, *“It’s essential to understand that learning does not come automatically with experience and learning differs from person to person. Credit and recognition is given when you demonstrate and validate learning from experiences and not for the experiences themselves. In fact, the Golden Rule of PLAR is: **“credit for learning, not experience”** CAPLA, <https://capla.ca/what-is-rpl/>*

What are you going to do with this information?

Key take “aways”

One thing you are going to do today, tomorrow, next week?



Why this  
image for this  
presentation?

# Sources

- BC Labour Market Outlook (2019), <https://www.workbc.ca/Labour-Market-Industry/Labour-Market-Outlook.aspx>
- Delleville, V. (2019). Enhancing Adult Student Outcomes and Employability with Prior Learning Assessment. *New Directions For Adult and Continuing Education*, No. 163, 83-93.
- Harris, J., Wihak, C. & Van Kleef, J. (Eds). (2014). *Handbook of the Recognition of Prior Learning: Research into practice*. Leicester: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).
- OECD Preparing for the Future of Work, <http://www.oecd.org/publications/preparing-for-the-future-of-work-in-canada-05c1b185-en.htm>
- Romiuk, K. & Snart, F. (2000) Enhancing employability: the role of prior learning assessment portfolios. *Journal of Workplace Learning: Employee Counselling Today*, Volume 12 (1), pp. 29-34.



Contact Me



More information at: <https://ceric.ca/2020/10/prior-learning-unlocking-a-little-known-career-superpower/>

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