

Tracking Cougar Curriculum



September 2016

Collin Programs Garner Recognition for Best PLA Practices by the Perkins' State Leadership Project

Collin College programs featured to illustrate the variety of ways faculty assess prior learning included Nursing, Real Estate, CISCO Computer Networking, Culinary and Pastry Arts, Emergency Medical Services Professions, Police Academy and Basic Firefighter. All of these programs, along with conversion of selected military training vetted by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), received recognition as a part of Collin's successful application of

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) to help students who have real world experience in their chosen fields get a jump start on earning a related credential. While all of the featured programs make use of PLA, their different processes served to highlight the customization that can occur when designing a system to award credit to students for learning that occurred outside of traditional colleges and universities.

The Innovative Best Practice Institution award was announced August 3, 2016, at the final conference of the statewide PLA Portal Project funded through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Throughout the project, Collin College shared lessons learned and served as an effective practice contributor to the project's professional development training resources, supporting new and emerging or developing practices at other Texas institutions.

Higher Completion Through PLA! In national research involving 62,000 adult learners, CAEL found that students with PLA credit had better academic outcomes regarding graduation rates and persistence than other adult students. This advantage was found regardless of institutional type, size, and private or public status, the student's academic ability or GPA, the student's age, gender, race/ethnicity, and receipt of financial aid. Based on this research, it appears that a boost from PLA may allow students to experience relatively rapid progress toward their end goal and higher completion rates.

In all higher education models of the PLA process, faculty control the assessment selection and the criteria for awarding credit. Workforce faculty and discipline leads are invited to examine foundational curriculum to see whether students with prior learning can demonstrate any of the specific course outcomes.

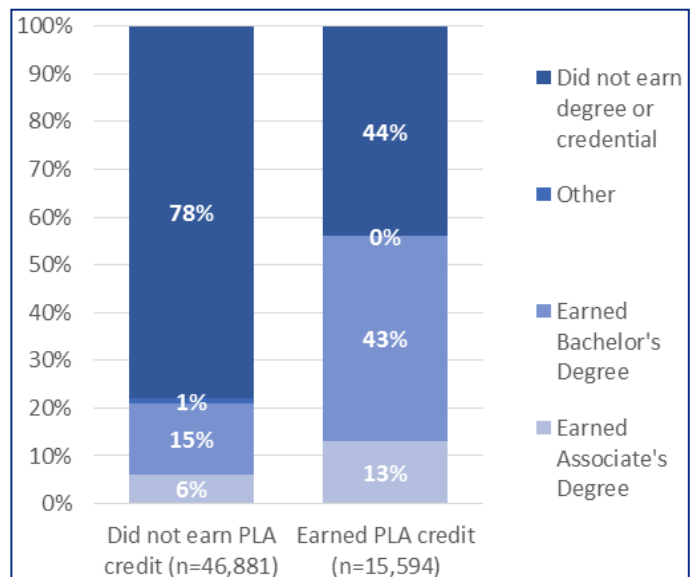
GENERAL EDUCATION CORE OBJECTIVES

- Critical Thinking
- Communication
- Empirical and Quantitative Skills
- Teamwork
- Personal Responsibility
- Social Responsibility

FOUNDATIONAL COMPONENT AREAS (with credit hours)

- American History (6)
- Communication (6)
- Creative Arts (3)
- Government/Political Science (6)
- Language, Philosophy and Culture (3)
- Life & Physical Sciences (6)
- Mathematics (3)
- Social & Behavioral Sciences (3)
- Component Area Option [distributed across the components] (6)

Degree Completion PLA Credit Earned vs. No PLA Credit Earned



Source: Klein-Collins, R. (2010). Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success. CAEL. Retrieved from <http://www.cael.org/pla/publication/fueling-the-race-to-postsecondary-success>.