

career  
development manitoba



A PRACTITIONER'S  
GUIDE TO  
**RECOGNIZING  
YOUR PRIOR  
LEARNING**

**YOUR** FUTURE **YOUR** WAY

**Manitoba** 



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# Introduction

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Learning is a lifelong process. The client resource, **A Guide to Recognizing Your Prior Learning**, contains information and worksheets to support clients to begin the RPL process. The detailed information found within the client resource is not repeated here. Instead the focus of this guide will be to provide facilitators with additional information, tips and strategies for helping clients successful engage in RPL.

This guide covers the core concepts related to recognizing prior learning. Practitioners are encouraged to adapt materials to their personal style and needs of their clients.

## Guiding Frameworks

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Many skills can be developed through engaging in the RPL process. In the following sections, relevant skills/competencies are identified from three frameworks: Blueprint for Life/Work Designs, Essential Skills and Employability Skills 2000+.

### Blueprint for Life/Work Designs

Participating in a RPL process develops the following Blueprint competencies:

- Competency 1 – build and maintain a positive self-image
  - Level 1 – build a positive self-image while discovering its influence on self and others
- Competency 5 – locate and effectively use life/work information
  - Level 1 – discover and understand life/work information
  - Level 2 – locate, understand and use life/work information
- Competency 8 – make life/work enhancing decisions
  - Level 3 – engage in life/work decision making

### Essential Skills

Engaging in Recognition of Prior Learning will enhance the following Essential Skills:

- reading text
- document use
- writing
- oral communication
- working with others
- continuous learning
- thinking skills
- computer use (if conducting online research or building an online portfolio)

## Employability Skills 2000+

Engaging in Recognition of Prior Learning will develop:

- Fundamental Skills
  - communicate
  - manage information
- Personal Management Skills
  - demonstrate positive attitudes and behaviours
  - be responsible
  - be adaptable
  - learn continuously
- Teamwork Skills (if working with clients in groups)

## Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners

Supporting individuals to recognize and document their prior learning is an important role for career development practitioners. To do this well, practitioners would need all of the core competencies outlined in the Standards and Guidelines: Professional/Ethical Behaviour, Interpersonal Competence, Career Development Knowledge, and Needs Assessment and Referral Expertise.

In addition, supporting individuals to document their prior learning and get it recognized overlaps with many of the Areas of Specialization in the Standards and Guidelines, including:

- Assessment
- Facilitated and Individual Group Learning
- Career Counselling
- Information and Resource Management
- Work Development

# Preparing for Your Workshop or Individual Session

You'll need to review and gather the following items as you prepare to deliver the workshop or work individually with a client. Some practitioners like to use photocopied handouts of the charts and activities in the guide; this leaves the client guide fresh and clean for individual use after the session. Others prefer to have clients write directly into the guide, ensuring that all of the topical information stays in one place. Your personal preference will impact the resources you need to gather as you prepare for your workshop or individual session.

## Required:

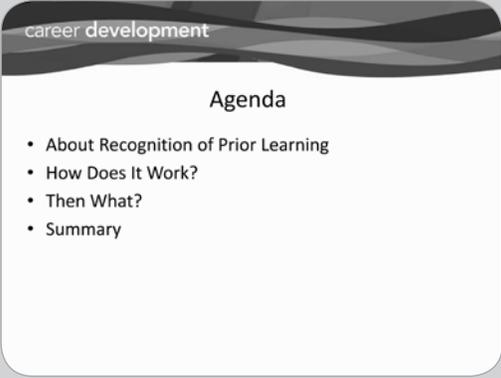
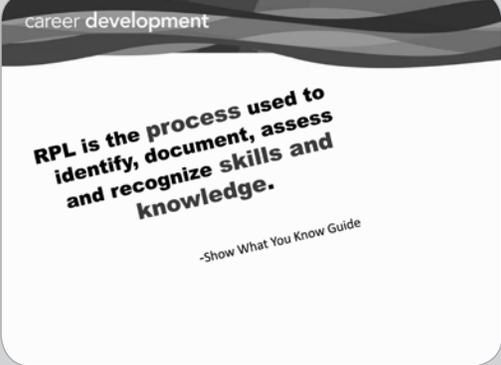
- **A Guide to Recognizing Your Prior Learning** (one copy per participant)
- pens, pencils
- for workshops:
  - o computer, LCD projector and screen
  - o flip chart paper and markers

## Optional:

- PowerPoint slides, printed three or six slides per page; one set per client
- handouts from the client guide
  - o Show What You Know Guide

# PowerPoint Slides

The following presentation contains 25 slides; reviewing the slide content, engaging in discussions with participants, and completing the activities should result in a three hour workshop (times listed are estimates and may depend on factors including number of participants). Discussions and activities can be expanded or contracted depending on the time you have available to conduct the workshop. Where applicable, the facilitator notes will mention how to make adjustments for time constraints. Note: the content within the following slides may be challenging to read due to size; see the PowerPoint document to review the complete content.

 A slide titled "career development" with the subtitle "Recognizing Your Prior Learning". The background features a grayscale image of two people holding up a large, dark, curved banner.	<p>Welcome participants to workshop Introductions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have participants introduce themselves.</li><li>• An icebreaker activity can be incorporated; see Icebreakers/Energizers section for more information.</li></ul> <p>Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Expect introductions to take three-to-five minutes per participant. Icebreakers may take longer. Workshop time will need to be adjusted accordingly.</li></ul>
 A slide titled "career development" with the subtitle "Agenda". The background features a grayscale image of a person's hands holding a large, dark, curved banner.	<p>Briefly review agenda to provide participants with an overview of the workshop.</p> <p>Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• three-to-five minutes</li></ul>
 A slide titled "career development" with the subtitle "RPL is the process used to identify, document, assess and recognize skills and knowledge." The background features a grayscale image of a person's hands holding a large, dark, curved banner. Below the main text, it says "-Show What You Know Guide".	<p>Review quote; discuss the notion of RPL and the value it can have.</p> <p>Time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• three-to-five minutes</li></ul>

### Why Use RPL?

- For a personal assessment to help with:
  - Career planning
  - Writing targeted resumes for self-marketing
  - Preparing for an interview
  - Creating a portfolio
- Gain credits in academic or skills training program
- Gain credits towards occupational or professional licensing and certification

Remember to emphasize that RPL isn't just used for education credit.

Stress that the RPL process allows individuals to take stock of what skills they have attained through education, work, volunteering and life.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Why Use RPL? (Cont.)

- Achieve different employment possibilities
- Advance your career
- Get hired
- Recognize a need for training
- Shorten training time

### RPL Can Help To...

- Identify personal strengths, interests, skills, knowledge, and abilities
- Show what you know
- Identify new options and choices
- Get credit at schools where RPL is used
- Identify a broader range of your skills and knowledge
- Save time and money
- Help employers understand what you can do

Introduce the concept of Show What You Know (copy of **Show What You Know** resource is in **Appendix A** of the client guide).

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Show What You Know By...

- Providing samples of your work
- Demonstrating skills
- Building an evidence file
- Creating a portfolio
- Discussing, meeting, or interviewing with an expert
- Doing an assignment
- Taking a challenge test, exam, or assessment
- Developing a targeted resume

Provide samples of evidence. For example: letters, transcripts, work samples.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Getting Started

- Step 1: Plan with confidence and intention
- Step 2: Identify your experiences, knowledge, and skills
- Step 3: Identify your transferrable skills
- Step 4: Document what you know you can do
- Step 5: Write about Your Learning
- Step 6: How do I get there? Create your action plan

Note: Participants will be given an opportunity to work through each step as it is discussed. Remind participants they will probably not be able to complete each step during the workshop (ex: Step Four Document What You Know and Do). Encourage participants to work through each step as best they can then continue as they collect more items to include (ex: completing a course and receiving a certificate).

Time:

- three-to-five minutes

### Step 1: Plan With Confidence and Intention

- Identify your career, education, and employment paths
- Reflect on
  - Who you are now and what you love to do
  - The jobs you “dreamed” of doing
  - What excites and inspires you
  - What you enjoy doing
  - Your special gifts and skills
  - What tasks you think you’d be good at
  - Where you’d like your career to go and what you need to get there

Refer participants to the “**Plan with Confidence and Intention**” activity within the Show What You Know Guide in **Appendix A** of the client guide.

Time:

- 15 minutes

### Step 2: Identify Your Experiences, Knowledge, and Skills

- Provide a better picture of yourself
- Document experiences in
  - Work
  - Community
  - Home
  - Educational and training

Refer participants to Frank’s example in **Appendix B** of the client guide.

Refer participants to the “**Identify Your Experiences, Knowledge, and Skills**” activity within the Show What You Know Guide in **Appendix A** of the client guide.

Time:

- 15 minutes

**Step 3: Identify Your Transferrable Skills**

- Skills can be
  - Transferred from one occupation to another
  - Developed throughout a person’s life
  - Developed through formal and informal learning
- Reflect on Canada’s 9 Essential Skills
  - Identify how you developed and used each skill

Refer participants to Frank’s example in **Appendix B** of the client guide.

Refer participants to the “**Identify Transferrable Skills**” activity within the Show What You Know Guide in **Appendix A** of the client guide.

Note: be prepared to introduce the Essential Skills framework:

- numeracy
- writing
- reading
- document use
- thinking skills
- continuous learning
- working with others
- computer use
- oral communication

Go to:

<http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/LES/index.shtml> for additional information on Essential Skills.

Time:

- 15 minutes

**Step 4: Document What You Know and Can Do**

- Gather evidence of your skills
  - Degrees or certificates
  - Thank-you letters
  - Letters of reference
  - Awards
  - Samples of work
  - Examples of technology skills
  - Transcripts
  - Pictures
  - Videos

Refer participants to Frank’s example in **Appendix B** of the client guide.

Refer participants to the “**Document What You Know and Can Do**” activity within the **Show What You Know Guide** in **Appendix A** of the client guide.

Time:

- 15 minutes

**Step 5: Write About Your Learning**

- Explore how you could use this learning in the future in other settings

Refer participants to the “**Write About Your Learning**” activity within the Show What You Know Guide in Appendix A of the client guide.

Discuss situations where you can use your learning.

- other work settings, volunteer work...

Time:

- 15 minutes

### Step 6: How Do I Get There? Create Your Action Plan

- Review your assets – knowledge and skills
- Match assets to job requirements
- Set goals and create action steps to
  - Learn additional knowledge and skills for new job
  - Get the new job

Refer participants to the “**How Do I Get There**” activity within the **Show What You Know Guide** in **Appendix A** of the client guide.

Discuss resources such as Manitoba Prospects and Job Futures.

Encourage participants to visit a Manitoba Employment Centre or Adult Learning Centre for help getting started with the RPL process.

Time:

- 15 minutes

### Time to “Show What You Know”

- Complete the Show What You Know booklet
  - Step One: Plan With Confidence and Intention
  - Step Two: Identify Your Experiences, Knowledge, and Skills
  - Step Three: Identify Your Transferrable Skills
  - Step Four: Document What You Know and Do
  - Step Five: Write about Your Learning
  - Step 6: How Do I Get There? Create an Action Plan

Note: An option for this workshop would be to review all the steps then have the participants complete the activities, as noted on the slide. If participants have been “building as they go” then either delete or revise this slide to say “review the following worksheets”.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Then What?

- Use the skills and knowledge you’ve identified to
  - Develop a targeted resume for self-marketing
  - Organize a portfolio
  - Plan your career
  - Prepare for an interview
  - Consider academic credit
  - Get credential recognition

Ask participants, how do you see yourself using RPL in the future?

Time:

- 10 minutes

### Develop a Targeted Resume

- Use **Show What You Know** exercises to target your resume
  - Show why you’re the best applicant for the job
- To learn more about the company or position, review
  - Job advertisement
  - Company website
  - Annual reports

Refer participants to **A Guide to Writing Resumes** for more information.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Organize a Portfolio

- Include items that show
  - What you've learned
  - What you know
  - What you can do
- Developing a portfolio takes both time and effort

Refer participants to **A Guide to Building a Career Portfolio** for more information.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Plan Your Career

- RPL is a good first step in career planning
- Use career planning to
  - Enter the workforce
  - Plan for education
  - Deal with changing workplace demands
  - Anticipate trends or changes
  - Identify skills to upgrade or strengthen

Refer participants to **A Guide to Planning Your Career** for more information.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Prepare for an Interview

- Use interviews to sell your skills and knowledge
- To prepare for an interview
  - Identify relevant skills and knowledge
  - Review
    - Notes from informational interviews
    - Job advertisements
    - Job descriptions

Refer participants to **A Guide to Outstanding Interviews** for more information.

Discuss taking evidence to support relevant skills during an interview.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Consider Academic Credit

- Use RPL to gain academic credit
  - A standard process doesn't exist
  - Check with each academic institution
- Credit doesn't always need to be at post-secondary level
  - Complete your high school diploma
  - Earn high school credits to prepare for college or university
  - Complete your General Educational Development (Grade 12, GED)

Advise participants that each college or university will have their own RPL process.

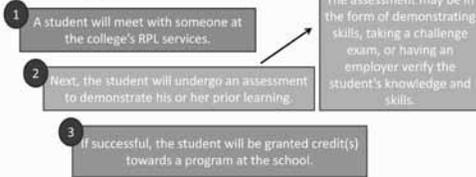
- Get information from local institutions on the RPL process and review.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### RPL Process Example

- Winnipeg Technical College



Be prepared with some examples to review with clients.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Get Credential Recognition

- RPL is also useful for recognizing credentials
- Manitoba has supports for
  - Foreign trained trade professionals
    - Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program (MPNP)
  - Newcomers to the province

Refer participants to the **Get Credential Recognition** section of the client guide for additional information.

Time:

- five-to-seven minutes

### Summary

- Purpose of RPL: get recognition for what you know and do
  - Skills and knowledge come from many life experiences
- RPL is flexible; helps individuals with different needs
- No standard RPL process in place in Manitoba or Canada
- Gaining credit doesn't always have to be post-secondary
  - RPL process useful for recognizing credentials
  - Province of Manitoba has several credential recognition supports

Try to weave in points from the discussions that have occurred. Use this time to allow participants to ask questions about the workshop.

Time:

- five-to-ten minutes



Thank participants for their time. Advise them where they can go to get further assistance.

If desired, have participants complete a workshop evaluation form.

Time:

- two-to-three minutes; more if an evaluation is being completed.

# Additional Tips and Strategies

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- Use Glossary of Terms to familiarize yourself with RPL terms
- Keep in mind there is no standard RPL process in place in Manitoba (or Canada)
- Join Manitoba Prior Learning Assessment Network (MPLAN) to stay current

# For More Information on Recognizing Prior Learning

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## **Earn College Credit for What You Know**

[www.amazon.ca](http://www.amazon.ca)

Book to support college students to earn RPL credits for lifelong learning experiences

## **Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment**

[www.capla.ca/](http://www.capla.ca/)

Member benefits include opportunities to share and learn from others, newsletters, links to resources, and special workshop rates. Cost: \$75.00 pp / \$300.00 Group (two-to-nine people)

## **Igniting the Power Within**

[www.ignitingthepowerwithin.ca](http://www.ignitingthepowerwithin.ca)

Provides certification workshops on Essential Skills and Recognizing Prior Learning.

## **Workplace Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Committee**

[www.wplar.ca](http://www.wplar.ca)

Website developed through business, labour, and government partnership to oversee recognition of prior learning in the workplace

## **CAPLA Recognition for Learning**

[http://recognitionforlearning.ca/index\\_e.php](http://recognitionforlearning.ca/index_e.php)

The Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment is an online community dedicated to advancing and promoting RPL practices

# Glossary of Terms

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**Assessment:** A process of developing, delivering, and evaluating prior learning.

**Assessment Method:** A procedure used to identify and measure prior learning.

**Assessment Options:** There are a number of ways that a candidate can demonstrate his or her learning. These are defined below:

- **Portfolio Development** is the process of collecting, substantiating, and organizing documented evidence to support a candidate's claim for RPL credit or recognition.
- **Oral Questioning** refers to a structured interview between an assessor and a candidate that is intended to permit the assessor to probe the depth and breadth of candidate learning and to give the candidate the opportunity to provide supplementary evidence to support his or her credit claim.
- **Challenge Exam** is intended for students who wish to claim credit for a course that they have not completed. Challenge exams may either be directly linked to specific course content or to a set of generic outcomes.
- **Case Study** is a tool that permits a candidate to demonstrate or apply a skill set to a set of circumstances.
- **Demonstration** is a performance completed by an individual learner and witnessed by the assessor. It includes but is not limited to structured interviews, product assessments, role-plays, simulations, presentations, and oral examinations.
- **Simulations** are an attempt to replicate workplace conditions in order that a candidate may demonstrate his or her competence in a range of critical skills.

**Assessor:** The specialist who is responsible for assessing a candidate's knowledge, skill, and judgement. The assessor will be an expert with specialized knowledge in the subject area being assessed.

**Case Study:** A tool used to assist the candidate to demonstrate or apply a skill set to a set of circumstances.

**Documentation:** Evidence that supports the claim for prior learning experience. Documentation may be in the form of transcripts, licenses, certificates, job descriptions, articles written, products produced, letters, evaluations, etc.

**Equivalency:** When the content of two or more types of learning are compared based on standards, learning level and process .

**Evidence:** The array of evidence used to prove prior learning - in the form of written documents, work samples, or demonstrations – that are used to substantiate his or her RPL claims.

- Direct Evidence: The learner produces the evidence. (Products, performances, reports, plans, etc. created by the candidate.)
- Indirect Evidence: Information about the learner’s achievements.

**Experiential Learning:** The attributes of skills, knowledge, and values that are acquired through work and life experience rather than through formal, recognized educational programs.

**Flexible Assessment:** The process of measuring, evaluating, defining, and granting credit for learning acquired through experientially gained knowledge, skills, and judgement.

**Formal Learning:** Courses or programs taken at recognized educational institutions, with related assessment processes and credits.

**Informal Learning:** Learning gained from life and work experiences.

**Learning Contract:** The arrangement made between the individual applying for RPL and the RPL Assessor detailing the terms and conditions for the individual to complete the learning outcomes required to recognize prior learning .

**Learning Outcomes:** The measurable knowledge, skills, and capacity for judgement which a person is expected to have developed or acquired as the result of a course of study of a set of identifiable experiences. Also described as what a person knows and can do.

**Letter of Verification:** A formal letter prepared on letterhead that may be used to authenticate work or to verify a candidate’s participation in a project.

**Non-formal Learning:** The skills and knowledge gained through learning experiences including on-the-job or industry based training, professional development workshops, seminars, private study, or work experience.

**Portfolio:** An organized collection of materials developed by a learner, which describes, records, and verifies learning achievements, as well as personal goals.

**Portfolio Development:** The process of collecting and organizing evidence to support a person’s learning through classroom, distance learning, or advisory structures.

**Reflective Thought:** Refers to thinking back on specific experiences and finding answers to questions such as:

- What did I learn?
- What did I learn about myself during the process?
- Which earlier learning experiences led me to this learning experience?
- How have I adapted this learning experience to related experiences?
- What evidence can I provide to substantiate my learning?

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR):**

A process that involves the identification, documentation, assessment, and recognition of the learning you have acquired through formal and informal learning. The process of recognizing and granting credit for skills, knowledge, and competencies that have been acquired experientially, that is, through work experience, unrecognized education or training, self-study, volunteer activities and hobbies.

**Rigorous Assessment:** Extent to which assessment must be done for conclusive proof of learning.

**RPL Advisor:** A person who is responsible for facilitating candidates through the process. Often is a link to administration and assessors.

**RPL Assessor:** A content specialist who is responsible for assessing candidate's learning.

**RPL Facilitator:** An individual who is responsible for setting up credible systems, advocating and supporting practitioners and learners.

**RPL Practitioner:** An individual working with RPL in the capacity of Advisor, Assessor, Facilitator, or Administrator.

**Technical Requirements:** Refers to a set of evaluation criteria that can be attached to direct and indirect evidence. These include

- **Authenticity** asks if the candidate can prove conclusive ownership of the submitted evidence.
- **Sufficiency** asks if there is enough evidence to prove conclusively that the skill or knowledge claimed can be transferred from one context to another.
- **Currency** asks if the evidence represents current professional/vocational levels of competency.
- **Reliability** asks if the measurement criteria are sufficiently unambiguous to ensure that subsequent assessments of the same evidence would produce similar credit recommendations.