



College credit for what you already know™



A college degree could be closer than you think. LearningCounts.org is an innovative online process that helps students earn college credit for what they already know.

We're not giving away college credit. We don't have to. Students have already learned from experiences at work, as community volunteers and leaders, in the military, through job training, through independent reading and many hobbies and open source courseware. To earn college credit for what they already know, students need to prove that the knowledge they have is at the college level. LearningCounts.org helps evaluate the level of their learning through a process called [Prior Learning Assessment \(PLA\)](#). There are three ways to apply for Prior Learning Credit:

Prepare a Portfolio

Students can prepare a portfolio by writing about their learning, making a video of themselves performing a task, providing a product of their work, or having a third party verify their knowledge. **The documentation—or portfolio—they present is then evaluated by a college faculty member.** If what the student has submitted is at the same level as what a successful student in a college-level traditional course could produce, a college faculty member recommends that the student be awarded college credit. Credit recommendations are then registered on an ACE CREDIT transcript. ACE CREDIT recommendations are routinely accepted by thousands of degree granting colleges and universities.

College Board tests

For some subjects students can also take a test to show that they know as much about a topic as someone who passed a traditional college class. The College Board offers nationally recognized examinations that cover many subject areas. Go to [The College Level Examination Program](#) website to see these exams.

ACE CREDIT evaluations

If students have had training at work or in the military, they could already have college credit. [The American Council on Education \(ACE CREDIT\)](#) evaluates training offered by the military, employers, government agencies, and professional associations to see if the training is at the college level. ACE CREDIT also evaluates registered apprenticeships, professional certifications, and exams. If students have had training and ACE CREDIT has evaluated it, they may have college credit and not even know it!



Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) What is it?

Prior Learning Assessment is a term used by educators to describe learning gained outside a traditional academic environment. Put another way, it's learning and knowledge acquired while living your life. Learning acquired through work, employer training programs, military service, independent study, non-credit courses, volunteer or community service, and open source courseware study are all examples of how learning and knowledge may be acquired. Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is the evaluation and assessment of an individual's life learning for college credit, certification, or advanced standing toward further education or training. Approaches to PLA include:

- Portfolio-based assessments, like those done through LearningCounts.org
- Standardized exams such as College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests
- Challenge exams
- Review of corporate, military or service training programs



CAEL

The Council For Adult & Experiential Learning

CAEL is the leader in connecting learning and work for adults. We advocate and innovate on behalf of adult learners, providing opportunities to access education, meaningful work, and economic security. We build workforce organizations' capacity to connect worker skills to employer demands. We provide employers with smart strategies for employee development. We support colleges and universities that wish to attract, retain, and graduate more adult students.



CAEL



PLA and academic success

The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) recently conducted a study on PLA and adult student outcomes. The study examined data on 62,475 adult students at 48 colleges and universities across the country. **CAEL found that students with PLA credit completed degrees at much higher rates than students without such credit. PLA students also had higher persistence rates and a faster time to completion.**



- Earned Associate's Degree
- Earned Bachelor's Degree
- ▨ Did not earn degree

Fueling the Race to Postsecondary Success, CAEL, March 2010

Questions?

Find out how your organization can reap the benefits of making "learning count." Visit LearningCounts.org or email moreinfo@learningcounts.org today.