



# Celebrating 30 Years of Adult Learning Practice & Recognition of Prior Learning

30<sup>th</sup> Annual PLAR Conference Sponsored by:



May 22 – 24, 2019

Travelodge by Wyndham

Belleville, Ontario



## WELCOME

We're glad that you've joined us for this milestone event "Celebrating 30 Years of Adult Learning Practice and Recognition of Prior Learning." The conference is a practice-based gathering where we share our experience and learn from one another. The conference program reflects diverse applications of adult learning principles as evidenced by the Adult Learner Friendly Institution (ALFI) study and Indigenous approaches to learning which utilize PLAR as a key aspect of a comprehensive framework of services to adult learners.

Over the years the conference has focused on a variety of portfolio-assisted approaches to PLAR. In many ways the portfolio process acknowledges that learning is natural, that love of learning is normal and that real learning is passionate learning. The portfolio process often helps individuals rediscover their innate ability to learn and strengthens their desire to take greater control not only of their learning but their lives.

On behalf of the planning committee we hope that you enjoy your time at the conference.

Sincerely,

Mark Gallupe, Chair

30<sup>th</sup> Annual PLAR Conference Planning Committee:

Tayohserón:tye Nikki Auten

Sara Kelleher

Rose Marie Reid

Lynn Wilson

Paul Zakos

*Park Room*

A panel of adult learners will share their first-hand experiences with PLAR. The focus will be on how individuals experience the PLAR process and for some its life-changing impact. The panelists will describe what brought them (life circumstances) to seek out or engage in PLAR, what the experience was like going through PLAR and what impact or lasting effects the process and outcome has had on them and/or their family.

6 pm

**Cash Bar Opens**

*Park Room*

7 pm

**Dinner**

*Park Room*

8 – 12 pm

**Entertainment: The Fade Kings**

*Park Room*

12 pm

**Cash Bar Closes**

*Park Room*

## FRIDAY, MAY 24

7:45 – 8:30 am

**Continental Breakfast**

*Park Room*

8 – 8:30 am

**Registration**

Sara Kelleher

*Second Floor Foyer*

8:30 – 10:15 am

**Plenary Session: Sharing Our Learning & Sustaining Our Practice: Using PLAR to Improve the Quality of Life in Our Communities A Call to Action**

Presenters: Ruth Ingersoll, Rose Marie Reid and Paul Zakos

*Park Room*

10:15 – 10:30 am

**Refreshment Break**

10:30 – 11:30 am

**Closing Ceremony**

Dustin Brant, Maria Hueichaqueo and Heather Green

*Park Room*

**Nyawen'kó:wa A Big Thank You!**

Today's learners need the ability to capture their ideas and experiences in a way that reflects their personal learning journey. E-portfolios can be an advantageous tool in this documentation process. This workshop will introduce participants to the various opportunities that are available with e-Portfolios.

- B Anchoring Many Positive Life Experiences (AMPLE)**  
 Presenter: Lisa McEwen, Hastings County Department of Community & Human Services  
*Moirra Room*

Anchoring Many Positive Life Experiences is a six-week Portfolio Development program, for women only, implemented in the Ontario Works context, using a thematic approach. The presentation will include some of the unique considerations related to the Ontario Works setting as well as specific reflections on best practices, activities and resources. Using the AMPLE analogy, we developed a foundational philosophy related to the idea that we are already enough. Incorporating fun, reflective and strength-based exercises and even a Dr. Seuss book, the program was designed to remove any and all barriers to meaningful self-reflection with the sole purpose of personal empowerment. This workshop will provide an experiential approach to ensuring each participant leaves with a more profound understanding of the portfolio development process. This workshop is created for anyone who may be considering implementing a group-based PLAR program within their work environment.

- C Tunsyuw'en': The Canoe of Life Model of Indigenous Portfolio**  
 Presenter: Sharon Hobenshield, Vancouver Island University  
*Sagonaska Room*

This interactive workshop provides an opportunity for participants to learn about the Coast Salish Canoe of Life model of Indigenous Portfolio development. This reflective process, using Indigenous Principles of Learning, is designed to help Indigenous Adult Learners explore their values, knowledge and experiential learning that comes from family, community and the land. This workshop will cover approaches to support students to gain a sense of who they are, where they come from, where they are going and giving back. This is a process of identity, finding voice and telling their story. As a participant in this workshop you may learn a bit more about yourself, while making connections with others.

- D PLAR Learners Panel: Reflecting on the Impact of PLAR**  
 Panel Moderator: Carolyn Mann  
 Panelists: Andrea Graham, Lori Huston, Mike Kinsey and Neil Kerby

- 12 – 4 pm **Registration**  
 Sara Kelleher  
*Second Floor Foyer*

- 1 – 2 pm **Opening Ceremony**  
 Dustin Brant, Maria Hueichaqueo and Heather Green  
*Park Room*

- Welcome**  
 Ann Drennan, Senior Vice-President Academic & Chief Learning Officer, Loyalist College

- Words of Greeting**  
 Warren "Smokey" Thomas, President of Ontario Public Service Employees Union (conference sponsor)

- 2 – 3 pm **Plenary Session:**  
**i. A Tribute to Deb Blower**  
**ii. A Reflective Dialogue on Where We've Been in the Past 30 Years & Where We're Going with PLAR/RPL & Adult Learning Practice**  
 Panelists: Paul Zakos, Carolyn Mann and Mark Gallupe  
*Park Room*

- 3 – 3:15 pm **Refreshment Break**

- 3:15 – 4:45 pm **Workshops #1**

- A Introduction to Portfolio-Assisted PLAR (Part 1)**  
 Presenters: Rose Marie Reid, Professor/PLAR Facilitator, Loyalist College and Neil Kerby, Community & Justice Studies Professor, Loyalist College  
*Sagonaska Room*

Portfolio development is an essential skill for navigating the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, there is no "one size fits all" portfolio, making the skill of developing portfolio(s) more important than ever. The portfolio development process can be transformative, or it can be very focused and practical, depending on the goal of the candidate. In either case, a PLAR Portfolio empowers learners to identify, articulate and describe what they know and can do. This interactive workshop will introduce principles and practices of Portfolio-assisted PLAR. It will focus on the types and uses of portfolios and will introduce the skill of tailoring a portfolio to its specific purpose. A template and tools to support development of a PLAR Portfolio will be shared.

**B PLAR & Portfolio Development: Strengthening Indigenous Cultures & Languages, Promoting Healing & Social Justice**

*How do PLAR Advisors use the portfolio process to support the documentation and affirmation of Indigenous knowledge? How can PLAR be explored in the context of “Truth and Reconciliation” and the call to action?*

Presenters: Kahehtë:ktha’ Janice Brant and Paul Zakos  
*Belleville Room*

The portfolio can take many forms in an Indigenous context. It can be facilitated to support education and employment goals, and self-reflection and personal awareness in all aspects of our lives. It can include receiving teachings about our cultural and spiritual identity as Indigenous peoples. In some cases, the portfolio is used as a tool to help document and affirm Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing by recording our life experiences, articulating skills, ceremonies, practices, and providing evidence of learning. Understanding the art and process of reframing our experiences as Indigenous peoples can be healing and result in a greater ability to improve one’s life and to develop the capacity to reciprocate this to others. Translating traditional ways of knowing, protocols, rituals, ceremonies, and language into beliefs, value sets, and skill sets illustrates the power of the portfolio to recognize how, for example, land-based traditional Indigenous knowledge is relevant today.

In this important time of “Truth and Reconciliation” in Canada, we can access the power of PLAR in the call to action. We are invited to hear the stories of Indigenous peoples. Not just pleasant stories or stories dressed up in colourful costumes to make us feel good, but the truth about the hardship of colonization and appropriation of Indigenous peoples; from their lands, languages, and seeds to their images, designs, clothing, technologies, tools, and stories. This is the wisdom of Indigenous peoples as they remain a strong and resilient presence in Canada. In this workshop we will share some of our experiences implementing PLAR and Portfolio Development with Indigenous peoples across Canada and internationally. We will highlight some of our important observations and learning arising from our role as PLAR advisors and discuss strategies and processes to better recognize and validate Indigenous knowledge. There will be time for dialogue and feedback on our presentation.

**C Portfolio Development at the Trenton Military Family Resource Centre: A Bridge From Military to Civilian Life**

Presenter: Liz Nicholas, Employment & Education Coordinator, Military Family Resource Centre, Trenton  
*Moira Room*

workshop will introduce you to a team of PLAR Practitioners who collaborate to support each other’s practice. It was born out of an outreach project at Loyalist College, with a goal to build community capacity for PLAR practice beyond the walls of the institution. Practitioners from Canadian Mental Health Association, Hastings County Social Services, Community Employment Services, Trenton MFRC and Three Oaks Foundation had completed PLAR Practitioner Certificates. They have designed and delivered portfolio development training with groups of clients. The Practitioners came together to share resources, tools and best practices. What resulted was a supportive learning network who meet regularly to build practice. The PLAR COP will present its group portfolio and toolkit and share lessons learned. The benefits of a COP and tips for how to develop it in your home community will be shared in this interactive workshop.

**D Assessing Experiential Learning**

Presenter: Mark Gallupe, Professor, PLAR Facilitator, Loyalist College  
*Sagonaska Room*

Assessing a portfolio, based on experiential learning, for college or university credit or for employment can seem like a daunting task for some people. Assessing experiential learning is a little different than ‘traditional’ assessment methods of formal learning. This workshop will examine the basic principles of assessment such as reliability, validity, authenticity and currency and how they relate to assessing prior learning. Participants will have an opportunity to work with a sample portfolio and practice their assessment skills. Factors that influence assessment decisions will be discussed (i.e. rater bias).

12 – 1 pm

**Lunch**

*Park Room*

1 – 2:15 pm

**Plenary Session: The International Indigenous RPL Collective**

Chair: Paul Zakos

Panelists: Karihwakeron Tim Thompson, Maria Hueichaqueo and Sharon Hobenshield

2:15 – 2:30 pm

**Refreshment Break**

2:30 – 4 pm

**Workshops #4**

**A Documenting Your Journey with E-Portfolios**

Presenter: Tricia Bonner, Centre for the Advancement of Teaching & Learning, Loyalist College  
*Belleville Room*

**A School, College, Work Initiative: Developing Portfolios with Youth**

Presenters: Ruth Forget, Professor, Loyalist College and Sarah McIntyre, Instructor, Loyalist College  
*Belleville Room*

The School, College, Work Initiative (SCWI) is a provincial program for high school students who are able to attain a high school and college credit if they successfully complete the Portfolio Development and Principles of Learning courses. These dual credit courses have been offered at Loyalist College since 2012 with 14 cohorts having gone through them. This workshop will explore the lessons learned from the dual credit courses and from the learners who have taken them and the instructors who taught them. This will include the changing face of learners, how to utilize and embrace technology in the learning environment and ways to use it assisting learners to build their portfolio.

**B The Kairos Blanket Exercise (Part 2)**

Presenters: Heather Green, Associate Professor, Ryerson University and Bruce Weaver, Indigenous Community Member, Guelph  
*Park Room*

The Kairos Blanket Exercise is an experiential tool to help participants understand the historic and contemporary relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. This participatory workshop will help participants understand how colonization of the land we now know as Canada has impacted the people who lived here long before settlers arrived. Through this exercise participants will explore the nation-to-nation relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, how this relationship has been damaged over the years, and how they can work toward reconciliation. The exercise is preceded by a traditional opening and smudging and followed by a sharing circle to allow all participants to express their feelings and understandings.

**C Community of Practitioners (PLAR-COP): Sustaining PLAR Practice**

Presenters: Rose Marie Reid, Brittany Thompson, Leah Morgan, Lorraine Hogan, Lisa McEwen, Lynda Carr-Mulholland, Kelly McGuire-Smith, Liz Nicholas and Joanne Leith

How do you take that next step to action following training? This

The Trenton Military Family Resource Centre (MFRC) has been utilizing the tried, proven and true concepts and tools of PLAR/ Portfolio Development to span the obstacles impacting successful career and employment transition for our unique community members. The Portfolio Development program, offered in partnership with Loyalist College, will be presented along with our best practices, tips, tricks and lessons learned while we also celebrate the strong and enduring relationships we have built in the process.

**D The Key Role of the PLAR Advisor**

Presenter: Mark Gallupe, Professor/PLAR Facilitator, Loyalist College  
*Park Room*

The role of PLAR advisor is crucial to the success of a PLAR Program. This workshop will review the underlying principles of adult learning and identify the attitudes, knowledge, skills and processes needed to effectively perform the duties of an advisor. Case studies will be used to allow participants the opportunity to apply some of the advising techniques.

7 pm

**Plenary Session: The Role of First Nations Technical Institute & the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment in the Development of PLAR**

Presenters: Bruce Millar, Former President of FNTI and Bonnie Kennedy, Executive Director of CAPLA  
*Park Room*

8 pm

**Wine & Cheese Reception**

*Sagonaska Room*

**THURSDAY, MAY 23**

8 am

**Registration**

Sara Kelleher  
*Second Floor Foyer*

8:45 – 10:15 am

**Workshops #2**

**A Introduction to Portfolio-Assisted PLAR (Part 2)**

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*Sagonaska Room*

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of developing portfolio(s) more important than ever. The portfolio development process can be transformative, or it can be very focused and practical, depending on the goal of the candidate. In either case, a PLAR Portfolio empowers learners to identify, articulate and describe what they know and can do. This interactive workshop will introduce principles and practices of Portfolio-assisted PLAR. It will focus on the types and uses of portfolios and will introduce the skill of tailoring a portfolio to its specific purpose. A template and tools to support development of a PLAR Portfolio will be shared.

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Presenters: Heather Green, Assistant Professor, Ryerson University and Bruce Weaver, Indigenous Community Member, Guelph Park Room

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### **C Getting Our Stories Straight: A Meditation on PLAR & the Present**

Presenter: Bill Pigrim, Manager, Community Employment Choices, Strathroy Moira Room

We live in an age of ever escalating stress and agitation. Normal everyday decisions concerning employment or education are fraught with indecision and anxiety. Social media has forced each of us to take strong positions on subjects about which we are profoundly ill informed. The experts are no different. As an older adult I am becoming more aware that my generation, the baby boomers, has a lot to answer for when it comes to the way we continue to influence the current crisis in government environment and political discourse. We have forgotten who we are and we are reluctant to own our own past. Younger cohorts are struggling to make their own ways in this antagonistic environment. We are all being stripped of our compassion and good will to-

wards each other. As a long time practitioner of Prior Learning I see a possibility for hope. We need to stop. To recalibrate. To reflect on our stories and realize that they have never been static but fluid and we have the possibility of seeing with new eyes and embark on the dangerous process of knowing and being known. In this workshop I would like to have a conversation about how Prior Learning could initiate and move that process forward.

### **D Quality Assurance in Adult Learning Practice: Examining the CAPLA Principles for RPL within the Adult Learner Friendly Institution (ALFI) Framework**

Presenters: Glen Brouwer, Principal, Sunrise Adult Learning Centres, Manitoba and Paul Zakos, Board Member, International Indigenous RPL Collective Belleville Room

In 2007, the Canadian Federal Government funded a project known as the Adult Learner Friendly Institution or ALFI<sup>Can</sup>. This initiative focused on improving access to education and training for adults by developing a comprehensive set of principles for use by educational institutions and community-based organizations to assess their services to adult learners. The Canadian project was based on a 1999 benchmarking study in the USA by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) in collaboration with the American Productivity and Quality Centre. The result was the identification of eight principles of best practice and performance indicators which were integrated into an evidence-based, self-evaluation framework. A completed self-evaluation results in the creation of an institutional portfolio highlighting strengths and gaps in services to adult learners providing clarity for future strategic planning activities. In 2015, the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) implemented a project funded by the Federal Government aimed at creating Quality Assurance (QA) guidelines for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This project included a manual to support the delivery and effectiveness of RPL services across Canada.

This workshop will:

1. Describe the context from which the ALFI principles emerged.
2. Explore the relationship between the ALFI principles and the CAPLA QA guidelines.
3. Discuss the need for a more in-depth, evidence-based assessment of services to adult learners.
4. Advocate for the inclusion of an ALFI component in the QA processes for post-secondary institutions currently underway in provinces such as Ontario.

10:15 – 10:30 am **Refreshment Break**