



CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Subject Matter Review

Prepared for the Iowa-Advanced Manufacturing Consortium

In compliance with the requirements of the Round Two

Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training (TAACCT) Grant

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College and University Partnerships in the
Center for Education Attainment and Innovation at the
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Introduction

In October 2012, Iowa-Advanced Manufacturing Consortium (I-AM) was awarded a four-year Department of Labor grant as part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training Grant Programs (Appendix A). The grant identified three strategic priorities that would enable Iowa's fifteen community colleges to build capacity for training skilled workers in Iowa's advanced manufacturing sector. Priority 1, to build stacked and latticed curriculum and career pathways in signature programs, included four specific strategies, including Strategy 3: Strengthen Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) options. I-AM contracted with the American Council on Education (ACE) to provide an update and review of Priority 1 - Strategy 3, with particular emphasis on CPL policies and processes. The ACE summative review was scheduled at the end of the grant period.

Scope and Method

I-AM requested an end-of-grant review to include the following:

- A review of each institution's CPL policy, which was completed using CPL policy standards as identified by ACE (Appendix B).
- A review of each institution's process map that outlines the CPL practice for at least one of its grants' signature programs. Process maps were reviewed for beginning point of contact, number of steps that students need to complete the process, and the documentation within the map of clear adherence to college policy and protocol.
- A review of each institution's statement of grant impact with specific review of identified sustainability statements, informed by the ACE Credit for Prior

Learning Implementation Matrix (Appendix C). The grant impact statements were assessed by two ACE evaluators so that inter-rater reliability could be achieved for this review.

- A review of a statement of grant impact on the work of the consortium. I-AM amended the scope-of-work on May 13, 2016, deleting this portion of the review.

CPL Policy Statements

Each institution was asked to provide CPL policy statements. The type and quality of these statements varied widely. Three institutions provided no policy statements at all, but did provide catalog descriptions of degree programs and/or student forms and worksheets from which policy may be inferred. Some colleges provided only new or revised policies, so a full complement of policies was available only by reviewing an October, 2013 the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) report to the I-AM PLA sub-committee which provided, in part, an inventory of the status of CPL at each community college. That inventory (Appendix D) is included as a reference in this report. Other institutions acknowledged that the policy statements provided were still in draft stage or had not yet been fully vetted by the college. The standards used for the review focus on six specific areas, as described below.

Philosophy and Academic Framework

Although CPL initiatives are often seen as a way to expedite students' progress through degree or other credentialing programs, the fact is that best practice in credit for prior learning requires that there be a clear focus on *learning* and how learning acquired outside the academy is perceived by the institution who accepts it. Given that, it is important to anchor CPL

initiatives within philosophical and academic frameworks that are consistent with the institution at large. The processes associated with uncovering prior learning are, by their very definition, student centered; a structure that helps the student frame the continuity of prior learning with current and future learning serves to enhance the student's academic experience and positions the type of reflection that often accompanies best-practice CPL processes.

Thoughtful CPL programs seek out best practices to help inform policy development. In the set of policies provided by I-AM, only one school acknowledged that policy had been developed by using such guidelines and none of the policy statements were linked to the individual school's mission and goals. Iowa Community Colleges who are still in the process of policy development may wish to examine their emerging guidelines using these dimensions of philosophy and academic framework.

Integrity

As with any learning experience, both institutions and students should be concerned about the integrity within the CPL process. Most of the policy statements provided evidence of the concern for integrity within the credit award. Those colleges that provide multiple options for credit evaluation (testing, military training and occupations, portfolios, etc.) ensure integrity in their recognition that students learn and demonstrate that learning in differing ways. The more assessment options available, the more likely it is that students will be able to find a method to appropriately document the learning. Institutions frequently noted the importance of ensuring that prior learning experiences can be directly aligned with college-level learning. Integrity is also enhanced when colleges require evidence of learning in order for the credit award to be made, and two-thirds of the colleges with a stated policy included that component.

The vast majority of the schools specified student costs for using the CPL methods that are available, another indicator of quality in the CPL process.

Other aspects of integrity were not as frequently addressed. Approximately half the policy statements were documented in such a way that confirmed approval through established academic governance structures but it was not clear that all schools had done so. Only two of the college's policy statements referred to alignment with state and/or regional CPL guidelines, and only three institutions documented how their CPL policies could be aligned, as appropriate, with other academic policies. None of the policy statements referred to ways in which the college assures the confidentiality of student artifacts or the proprietary nature of any training materials submitted for review, or otherwise takes into consideration the interests of relevant stakeholders, including students and their employers.

Faculty Qualifications and Engagement

As noted elsewhere in this review, the extent to which faculty are actively engaged in CPL awards at each institution is not clear. Less than one-third of the policy statements made reference to the required qualifications of faculty members (or others) that complete credit reviews. This would be a useful addition to all policy statements, but would be particularly important in those instances where a member of the faculty is not the subject matter expert making an award recommendation. In addition, none of the policy statements referenced protection against conflict of interest on the part of faculty or other reviewers.

Student Services

Effective CPL services begin with clear and transparent information for students about CPL policies. Iowa colleges can improve policy statements by clearly articulating eligibility

requirements for CPL students and by providing guidelines as to the expected timeline required for the review of transcripts or other artifacts (assurance of a timely review). A pre-assessment tool, such as the advisor CPL checklist created by one of the Iowa schools, and expert advising from qualified personnel are essential to student success. Also useful is the fact that over half the Iowa schools have a documented student appeals process in place, which helps to ensure fairness of services provided.

Credit Management

How colleges manage CPL credits are of vital importance to students. Two-thirds of the Iowa schools allow for credits to be applied to the full complement of degree requirements: general education, major requirements, major electives, and general electives. For those schools that restrict credit application by policy, a clear explanation and justification for such exclusion would be helpful. Most institutional policies provide an explanation as to how credit is transcribed on student records, and most policies include a reference to caps on CPL credit awards. Implications for financial aid awards were less frequently noted in policy statements and alignment of CPL policy with other academic policies, such as transfer credit, were not identified by two-thirds of the colleges.

Planning, Resources, and Improvement

While planning, resources, and improvement are not always a part of written policy, they are increasingly important for the viability of any program. One-fourth of the policy statements did reference the timetable for regular policy review and the alignment of CPL policy within established institutional processes. However, none of the policy statements or established processes referred to the type of data collection and analysis that would be

undertaken to establish tracking of CPL metrics. Such data can be used to evaluate long-term student benefit or the development of a cost-benefit analysis for the institution.

The next sections of the report includes the specific components reviewed for the Iowa Community Colleges, beginning with the process maps created by each college which are designed to identify a student's path when exploring CPL options.

CPL Process Maps

Each community college created a CPL "map" which identified key steps that students and institutional offices would complete while processing CPL credit. A general template was provided for all grantees and each school identified the specific steps required for one of the I-AM programs of study. Overall, the maps were useful in identifying the starting point for each credit request, the key participants involved in processing particular pieces of the request, the number of steps that students would need to complete in order to have a petition for credit evaluated, and the types of institutional approvals that would be built into the process.

Initiation Point

All of the process maps began with a student inquiry about the possibility of receiving credit for prior learning. While it is reasonable to assume that direct service to an individual student is made upon request, two of the fifteen schools realized that there may be ways to engage students in advance of a formal inquiry and therefore included references to their webpages in their process maps (one school referenced the webpage as an initial starting point for students and another referred to the webpage as a resource for students who have an interest in CPL). Unfortunately, none of the schools mentioned the possibility of institutional outreach which would recruit students into the CPL programs or engage students in a way that

would encourage their further exploration. Information sessions, special mailings to students eligible for the non-credit-to-credit option, or social media communication could all be used to encourage eligible students to participate in CPL awards.

Student Action Steps

The number of discrete action steps that students must complete in order to complete CPL requirements ranged from 2-9 after initial inquiry. The most efficient process maps indicated that students would meet with a single point person, often called the Navigator, who would assume responsibility for internal contacts with faculty, chairs or deans, and the registrar's office. Students would then be responsible for providing appropriate artifacts and submitting payment after credits are approved. A few of the process maps indicated that students could initiate the CPL process through engagement with one of many different offices (admissions, veterans' affairs, etc.). This approach is a good way to engage students since their initial requests may be met regardless of inquiry point. More onerous maps increased the number of steps that students would need to complete, including repeated visits to campus to meet with faculty, department chairs, or deans (depending upon the institution) who would provide permission to either continue in the process or to submit artifacts for various CPL methods.

Academic Protocol

All of the process maps identified academic protocol and approvals necessary for CPL credit awards; six of the schools provided great detail on this part of the process. Some of the process maps indicated that deans or divisional chairs would ultimately make a determination on CPL awards. Approximately half the process maps did not show any active faculty

engagement in the CPL process. While this may be due to the size of the institution or its organizational structures, or even the difficulty of sufficiently documenting an institution's process in the spreadsheet, institutions that do not include active faculty engagement may wish to reconsider their processes.

Many of the process maps also included the steps needed to complete an appeal in those cases where credit was not awarded. This is a useful tool for students and helps to maintain integrity in the CPL award process.

Aligning CPL with other Institutional Systems

Payment of fees was identified in each process map. Some institutions require payment of fees for the delivery of CPL services (regardless of the outcome) while other colleges require payment of fees for credit once the credit award has been confirmed. In either case, the process maps were clear as to these logistics. Not every map provided clarity on the relationship between CPL credit review and the status of the student vis-à-vis admissions. While most institutions required students to be admitted to the college before beginning any CPL process, others agreed to share information with students and begin the process in advance of admission.

Non-Credit-to-Credit Conversions

All Iowa community colleges have developed "non-credit-to-credit" conversions to enhance the career and training pathways associated with the I-AM project. In each case, the college undertook a review of non-credit coursework and determined where such training might be applied to one or more of the technical programs offered by the college. In some cases, the college mapped non-credit training to the schools' existing coursework, aligning

student learning outcomes or competencies with the college’s degree requirements. Technical or Interdisciplinary Studies degree programs may serve as a “home” for credit so determined and endorsed by the college. Such academic agreements resemble, in part, articulation agreements that colleges often create with other colleges and are popular across the country. This approach to “transfer of credit”, even with non-academic institutions, is generally seen to be the purview of the respective institution.

For that reason, it was curious to see references to “portfolio evaluation” by some institutions who were also engaging the non-credit-to-credit CPL tool. Portfolio evaluations are typically used to determine individual student levels of competencies (see Table 1), while academic agreements are used to provide credit awards for training providing by third parties. It would not seem necessary for students who have completed a specified training program, for which credit has already been determined, to also be required to compile a portfolio to demonstrate levels of learning or other competencies.

Table 1. CPL Classifications

	Institutional Evaluations	Third-party Evaluations
Individual Evaluations	Departmental Challenge Examinations Student Portfolios	CLEP Exams Advanced Placement Exams DSST Credit by Exam Excelsior College Examination Program
Sponsored Learning Program Evaluation	Local Academic Agreements Consortium for the Assessment of College Equivalency (CASE)	ACE Military Training and Occupation Review ACE CREDIT National College Credit Recommendation Service (NCCRS)

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Statements of Grant Impact

Each institution provided a brief summary on the impact the college experienced as part of the grant. The impact statements that pertained specifically to CPL initiatives were reviewed using the ACE CPL Implementation Matrix (Appendix C).

1. New and emerging schools are those who have a general understanding of CPL and a demonstrated institutional interest in using it;
2. Developing institutions are beginning to develop standard policies and procedures or are working to re-energize their work with CPL from a single unit to an institution-wide practice; and
3. Effective practice institutions – those colleges who have a broad and deep understanding of CPL policies and use that information to integrate and sustain systematic CPL practices.

Two-thirds of the Iowa Community Colleges appear to be developing their work with CPL. Many of the impact statements referred to revisiting or updating CPL policies and protocol, broadening the methods determined to be acceptable or the application of those methods to different types of coursework (general education, degree requirements, or degree electives). Developing institutions were also focused on faculty involvement, increased communication across the campus, and faculty vetting of policies and practices, such as the development of course crosswalks or articulated credit. A few institutions spoke of new initiatives for sharing CPL information on the college website or finding other ways to communicate with students, such as orientation or advising. Coordination of CPL policies and

practices after the end of the grant period was a concern for a few institutions that do not yet have a solid infrastructure in place to guarantee that CPL initiatives will move forward. Only five of the 15 institutions referenced their ability to sustain the work that they've accomplished with CPL during the grant period, although others in the group may be focusing on those efforts and simply didn't report it in the impact statements.

Individual College Reports

Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC)

DMACC is developing its work with CPL policies and practices. The college provides a variety of CPL methods that students may use to document prior learning experiences, and public information is made available on the webpage (link provided by institution). Policies are clearly documented and appropriate academic approvals are in place. The CPL process map shows that students who hope to engage the CPL process follow clearly identified processes with faculty and staff members; however, students may be required to meet with program chairs, staff,, and either a dean or provost during some portion of the process, which may be burdensome for students. According to the grant impact statement, DMACC has been working to bring student awareness to the CPL process and is focusing on implementation, such as reducing the number of steps needed for students to take advantage of credit award opportunities. The college has a workgroup that is focused on mapping the credit award process for apprenticeship students and increasing visibility and service. There are plans in place to sustain the work that DMACC has completed during the grant period.

Eastern Iowa Community College (EICC)

EICC is developing its work with CPL practices, although the college limits CPL methods to standardized tests and portfolio review. No overarching policy on for CPL was provided, but each discrete method has an accompanying statement that documents student and institutional guidelines. EICC students are supported by an advocate (Navigator/Advisor) in the processes associated with earning CPL; this may include meetings with the Navigator as well as with the dean and faculty members. The process map for EICC shows that students make the decision to enroll for credit or non-credit programs after the CPL process is completed. It is not clear that this approach would be useful since students might complete all review processes and then determine that EICC's for-credit options are not suitable to meet the student's goals. EICC's grant impact statement indicates that the college is in the process of updating all its CPL policies and procedures and that the veterans affairs office (assuming with appropriate academic input) is beginning to crosswalk military training to the college's coursework. There are plans in place to sustain the work that EICC has completed during the grant period.

Hawkeye Community College (HCC)

HCC appears to be in the emerging stages of implementing credit for prior learning. Although the CAEL 2013 inventory noted that HCC utilizes a number of methods for prior learning assessment, no policy statements were provided for the review and none were noted in the CAEL 2013 report. HCC's policies may be embedded in the guidelines provided to students, but no overarching policy statement was evident. Instead, the college did provide a description of one degree program (Interdisciplinary Studies) that is identified for some CPL

students. HCC's process map was devoted to the process for military students. The map indicates that a student with incoming military credit could speak with any number of contacts about credit (the Veteran's Coordinator, admissions representatives, or the Project Lead) and that after applying to the college, the student's military transcript is reviewed for credit. During this process, students are required to meet with the department dean. Overall, the process seems clear and without onerous steps. Establishing a process for military transcripts and credit awards was included in HCC's grant impact statement.

Iowa Central Community College (ICCC)

ICCC appears to be in the emerging stages of implementing credit for prior learning. In lieu of a policy statement on CPL, the college provided a summary from their 2014-15 catalog on advanced placement, credit by examination, and advanced standing. Placement test scores were also provided, but it is unclear how these references pertain to CPL. ICCC's process map documented that fees and testing would not be required for students who completed the non-credit programs that are targeted in the grant, which is a positive; in addition, the overall process map resulted in "advanced standing" designations, similar to what the college has with the Iowa Department of Corrections. The grant impact statement reiterated the college's focus, which was the establishment of the advanced standing non-credit certificates, which are used to align the non-credit with credit offerings. According to the grant statement, these pathways are serving as models for other non-credit to credit options in ways similar to the previously defined corrections pathways.

Indian Hills Community College (IHCC)

IHCC is developing its work with CPL and provided a summary policy on credit for prior learning, defined as credit by examination, experiential learning/work experience credit, transfer credit, military education and training, non-credit articulated learning, non-credit non-articulated learning, industry recognized, and third-party portable certificates and/or licensures. The college is using a committee structure to award credit for prior learning and also has developed rubrics for that evaluation. Recommendations are made by the committee; the dean makes the final determination on credit awards. The college also noted that full information on the CPL process is available on the Continuing Education Website. It's not clear how students who may not be focused on continuing education would find that information or identify Continuing Education as the conduit for CLEP, ACE, or other non-industry trainings. The college noted that this new policy statement was developed during the grant period and allows students to earn up to 18 technical credits through prior learning assessment. The college notes that the new policy will stay in effect after the grant has concluded, and should provide more opportunities for potential students by providing them with opportunities to earn credit from learning acquired by work and other life experiences.

Iowa Lakes Community College (ILCC)

ILCC appears to be in the emerging stages of implementing credit for prior learning. No policy statement was provided for the final grant summary, but the college did provide an experiential credit request form and portfolio sheet. The CPL process map shows that students would be required to complete multiple steps in order to submit prior learning assessment

documentation, including meetings with both the dean and appropriate faculty members before PLA materials could be submitted. The student would initiate an inquiry with admissions, and then be referred to the webpage for additional information before making the appointments with the dean and multiple meetings with faculty. This requirement may serve as a disincentive to students who wish to pursue CPL options. ILCC notes that the work of the grant, in particular the development of the flowchart, has prompted further discussions about credit for prior learning awards on campus. The goal is to achieve greater consistency and efficiency with student requests.

Iowa Valley Community College (IVCC)

IVCC is developing its work with credit for prior learning. In addition to providing the 2013 policy and procedures statement, the college also provided the revised policies that have been in effect since board approval in 2015. These updated policies were part of the college's work within the grant. Moreover, the college has prepared an action plan complete with short- and long-term goals and identified accountability. The college notes that consistency in the evaluation of credit awards is needed, along with greater communication to both faculty and students about CPL options. The process map appears to be efficient, in that the student meets with only the I-HUM director once cleared by admissions. The I-HUM director manages many of the processes for CPL and students are only required to manage those aspects of the process that is pertinent to their work (provide documentation, payment of fees, etc.). Integration of faculty into further discussions and decision-making is a key indicator of success in CPL programs; IVCC is wise to focus on the need for faculty engagement in its work.

Iowa Western Community College (IWCC)

IWCC is developing its work with credit for prior learning. The college provided a comprehensive set of documents to verify how the college has incorporated CPL into the work of the grant. The policy statement included significant indicators effective practice, including the incorporation of CAEL best practice guidelines and a discussion of how credit for prior learning incorporates the college's perspectives on teaching and learning. The policy statement also serves as a handbook for students who are developing portfolios to verify prior learning experiences; however, one great limitation of the policy is that it seems to apply only to students who are enrolled in the Applied Business Management program; it's not clear how the policies apply to students in other programs, including those targeted by the grant. IWCC's process map was comprehensive in that it showed a student's path through all the CPL options that are available at the school. Within each option, there appears to be streamlined processes for students and overall efficiency. The college notes that, during the grant period, CPL policies have been updated and expanded and that the pathway from the non-credit MPT program is in place, pending curriculum development.

Kirkwood Community College (KCC)

KCC is developing its work with credit for prior learning. The college provided a (draft) CPL policy statement along with an alternative credit policy statement, which includes a reference to the conversion of non-credit to credit work. Supporting documents demonstrate how student learning outcomes and competencies are equated between non-credit and credit coursework; they also document the credentials of the instructors who serve the non-credit

provider. Each of these is an additional step that helps to ensure the integrity of the assessment. The process map for students at KCC appears to be efficient and timely. Student advisors serve as the intermediary between the student and the evaluation process. The current CPL policy and procedures were not new within the grant; the PACE Industrial Maintenance program is approved under the college's existing policy.

Northwest Iowa Community College (NCC)

NCC is developing its work with credit for prior learning. The college submitted a one-page policy statement that included a reference to self-directed study as well as credit by exam, credit for experiential learning, and military credit; however, there was limited information available on the specifics of the policy or how it might be implemented. The NCC process map indicates that, within the steps completed, a faculty member is assigned to assist students with portfolio development (credit for experiential learning) and that the dean subsequently reviews the documentation for the credit award. The college noted that the grant allowed them to review and modify the CPL policies and procedures.

North Iowa Area Community College (NIACC)

NIACC is developing its work with credit for prior learning. The college provided an excerpt from the college catalog to describe the processes associated with portfolio review. Statements from March 2016 provide additional information on other credit options, including three options for standardized testing. Overall, the policy statements provided guidelines and regulations for students who wish to complete CPL, but they did not provide an overall indication of policy purpose or the types of governance systems that were followed for the new

policies. The process map for completion of the portfolio included up to nine different steps and multiple appointments with a college counselor or division chair. Given the requirement for students to complete a one-credit hour course, the need for repeated visits to college counselors was not fully explained. NIACC indicated that the grant permitted them to update CPL policies, seek new CPL options, and use the process map to describe the CPL process to students, faculty, staff, and administration. NIACC noted that some of the policies were underutilized and hopes that the grant work will expand that usage in the future.

Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC)

NICC is developing its work with credit for prior learning. The college's existing policy was revised in April, 2014 and provides explicit information on how students shall move through the approval-to-participate and evaluation stages. A corresponding policy was provided for proficiency examinations (n.d.) including CLEP, AP, and Military Experience. It is not clear if "military experience" refers to ACE credit evaluations or DSST examination. The policies, in all methods, provide limitations to which types of credit can be completed via the alternative methods (for example, general education is not typically an option for CPL). One unique tool that NICC provided was the "Credit for Prior Learning Intake Advisor Questionnaire" which allows the advisor to quickly and efficiently determine if the student is a good candidate for this set of tools. The NICC process map identifies a number of steps to be completed before credit is awarded; however, many of the steps are identified as being completed by counselors and staff, so the process for students appears to be streamlined and efficient. The college reports that they have updated their credit for prior learning processes to accept two industry

certifications as proof of prior learning. In addition, the college reports that they have a hands-on tool (the intake instrument) to use for an early indicator of CPL eligibility.

Southeastern Community College (SCC)

SCC appears to be in the emerging stages of implementing credit for prior learning. The policy document that SCC submitted provided three policies. Two of these (Credit by Arrangement and Class Performance Standards) do not appear to be directly connected to CPL. The third policy, Institutional Proficiency Examination Guidelines, is directly connected with credit for prior learning CPL. The portfolio process (no policy provided) is identified as part of the SCC Center for Business, which appears to be a unit outside the academic programs and part of a continuing education non-credit service, so the applicability of portfolio to the entire student body isn't clear. The SCC process map indicates that a department coordinator is the lead contact for students who wish to participate in CPL initiatives; no faculty interaction or approval from department chair or dean is noted. SCC's Manufacturing Skills Certificate has been mapped via a non-credit to credit worksheet, a useful tool for providing consistency and service to students. SCC's work associated with credit for prior learning is on-going and they did identify programs which didn't yet have a specific alignment in place.

Southwest Iowa Community College (SWCC)

SWCC appears to be in the emerging stages of implementing credit for prior learning. SWCC originally lacked a policy to award credit to potential students. During the grant period, they formed a committee and worked through the process of policy development. The college noted that the grant forced them to develop a procedure to award credit for prior work

experience. It appears that documentation of all the work completed may not have been submitted. Policies from years past (written in 2002 and revised in 2011), focused on non-credit to credit processes but more updated policies were not available. Although the CAEL 2013 report indicates that SWCC does accept a number of standardized examinations, no end-of-grant information was provided for review. The process map may reflect the emerging nature of SWCC's work. It appears to have some reiterative steps, as students who would first contact admissions for CPL information and possibly receive it upon the initial inquiry might be routed back to admissions for additional information.

Western Iowa Tech Community College (WITCC)

WITCC appears to be in the emerging stages of implementing credit for prior learning. Although a consolidated policy for CPL was not provided, the college did document (mostly via student forms) the processes that are used to award credit for prior learning, including the extensive steps that the registrar's office staff would follow for transcribing the credit. Policy can only be inferred from these forms. The process map indicates that the Advisor/Navigator takes significant responsibility for guiding the student through the various steps of prior learning assessment. This liaison should support the student's work and make the process more streamlined and efficient for the student. In its impact statement, WITCC makes a commitment to continue to implement CPL policies and processes beyond the life of the grant.

Recommendations

Institutions that are in the early stages of implementing a comprehensive CPL program may wish to focus on developing a sustainable infrastructure for prior learning assessment

initiatives. An internal advisory board, comprised in part of interested faculty members, is useful to help craft CPL policy. Many institutions find it helpful to seek policy and practice models among peer institutions; others send institutional representatives to attend professional conferences or invite CPL experts to campus to hold in-service sessions. A knowledgeable and qualified student support unit will help to ensure that students are informed and encouraged to use CPL options.

Developing institutions may be in the process of revising policy statements or adding academic agreements or course crosswalks to the CPL instruments available to students. These institutions will want to continue to find ways to engage faculty in CPL processes, and they may wish to identify other personnel who can support CPL programs or “one-stops” for students. Communication with students can be increased by expanding webpage presence or other strategies, such as specific student information sessions on topics pertaining to CPL or the integration of CPL discussions into all new student orientations. Developing institutions may seek ways to coordinate CPL-related programs and services across the campus so that CPL is not relegated to a single set of programs.

Ideally, CPL is seen as a learning option for students. Granted, the credit award may be given for learning acquired outside of the college classroom, but the positioning of that learning as part of a lifelong learning continuum is an important step for students who may be entering the community college for the first time. Institutions who wish to engage in effective practice with CPL will recognize the diversity of entering students and provide multiple instruments by which prior learning can be assessed. Different approaches to CPL can be useful across the

student's enrollment; therefore, expert advising is needed to encourage students to explore CPL methods as they become appropriate to the student's pathway. As with any other learning option, CPL policies and practices can be selected in light of how they support the institutional, including alignment with mission and goals, curriculum, and diversity of learners.

Conclusion

The requirements for the I-AM TAACCCT grant were to provide a comprehensive strategy to increase the number of skilled workers in Iowa's advanced manufacturing section. The advancement of CPL policies and practices was a sub-component of that work. This review documents only a portion of the activities that were used to encourage educators and staff members to enhance CPL policies and practices around the state.

The review indicates that institutions within the Iowa Community College System are, overall, actively developing their work with credit for prior learning. For many institutions, the TAACCCT grant has encouraged revisiting and redevelopment of CPL policies and other infrastructure components in ways that will provide improved services to students. For other institutions, the work has ignited significant interest in expanding CPL offerings to students within I-AM as well as those students who are enrolled in other program areas. As members of the Iowa community colleges continue their respective work, they can be guided by institutional mission and their goals for students; through CPL, they can continue to place the student at the center of learning, actively connecting learning from past experiences to future education.

Appendix A: I-AM: An Iowa Community College Initiative to Elevate Advanced Manufacturing



In response to a documented shortage of skilled workers in Iowa's advanced manufacturing sector, the 15 Iowa community colleges have formed a consortium known as the Iowa-Advanced Manufacturing (I-AM) Consortium, to collaboratively build the training capacity necessary to meet industry demand and arm Iowans with the skills they need to engage in Iowa's workforce.

In October of 2012, I-AM was awarded \$12,951,165.00 (over 4 years) by the Department of Labor's Employment Training Administration as part of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College Career Training (TAACCCT) Grant Program.

Priority 1: Build stacked and latticed curriculum and career pathways in signature programs

- Strategy 1: Align curricula with relevant industry-recognized certifications including NCRC, AWS & NIMS certifications
- Strategy 2: Align noncredit offerings with credit courses
- Strategy 3: Strengthen Credit for Prior Learning options
- Strategy 4: Establish AWS Accredited Testing Facilities (ATF) throughout the state

Deliverables:

- Audited & realigned curricula, certified instructors, updated state-of-the-art training facilities
- Audited curricula, course alignment, transcripting process for non-credit to credit, CPL policies and processes
- AWS accredited ATFs at DMACC, EICC, ICC, IHCC, ILCC, IVCC, KCC, and WITCC

Priority 2: Build a steady pipeline of skilled workers for Iowa's in-demand, advanced manufacturing occupations

- Strategy 1: Develop a plan for remediation and contextualized learning
- Strategy 2: Utilize intensive advising at the community colleges to best match individuals to programs of study and educate them regarding career pathways
- Strategy 3: Launch a statewide marketing effort
- Strategy 4: Strengthen articulation from AAS to BAS at University of Iowa
- Strategy 5: Enhance technology-enabled learning

Deliverables:

- Statewide digital literacy curriculum, additional online & blended learning options, shared curriculum for core manufacturing competencies
- Tracking & advising model, blueprint for career pathways
- Statewide and regional marketing plan, employment and career website
- Manufacturing transfer student agreement and MOU with University of Iowa, manufacturing added to BAS options, advising model

Priority 3: Improve the collaboration and alignment between community college programs, the workforce system, and targeted industry employers to keep and create high quality jobs in Iowa

- Strategy 1: Engage employers and business associations in a systematic way
- Strategy 2: Engage the Workforce system in a systematic way

Deliverables:

- Strengthened relationships with employers and business associations
- Strengthened relationships with Workforce system



SIGNATURE PROGRAMS:

Signature Manufacturing Programs	DMAC C	EICC	HCC	ICC	IHCC	ILCC	IVCC	IWCC	KCC	NIAC C	NICC	NCC	SCC	SWC C	WITC C	Third-party credential
Welding Technician/Technology	NCC, C, D, A	NCC, C, D, A	NCC, C, D	NCC, C, D	D, A	NCC, C, D	C, D	NCC		C, D, A	NCC, C	NCC, C, D, A		NCC, D, A	NCC, C, D	NCR C, AWS
Machining/CNC/Tool & Die		NCC, C, A	NCC, C, D, A		D, A		NCC, D, A			C, D, A	C	NCC, C, D, A				NCR C, NIMS
Industrial Maintenance	NCC, C, D, A			NCC, D				NCC	NCC, C, D, A		C, A			NCC, C, D, A	NCC, C, D	NCR C, CPT
Industrial Automation									NCC, C, D, A							NCRC
Manufacturing Technician/Technology													NCC			NCRC, MSSC, SME
Robotics Certificate		AWS - American Welding Society		Metalworking Skills				Technician								NCRC
APCS - Association for Operations Transportation & Logistics		MSSC - Manufacturing Skills		SME - Society for Manufacturing					NCC, C, D, A				NCC			NCR C, APIC S

OUTCOME PROJECTIONS:

Outcome Measures	Total
1. Total unique participants served.	2,728
2. Total number of participants who have completed a TAACCCT-funded program of study.	1,676
3. Total number of participants still retained in their program of study or another TAACCCT-funded program.	851
4. Total number of participants completing credit hours.	2,382
5. Total number of participants earning credentials.	1,961
6. Total number of participants enrolled in further education after grant-funded program of study completion.	292
7. Total number of participants employed after TAACCCT-funded program of study completion.	1,478
8. Total number of participants retained in employment after program of study completion.	1,333
9. Total number of those participants employed at enrollment (for purposes of this reporting, "incumbent workers" who receive a wage increase post-enrollment.	899

INDUSTRY PARTNERS:

In addition to a partnership with the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI), I-AM is partnering with the following industry employers who have signed letters of commitment in support of this initiative:

Berry Plastics, PEM Ltd, ALMACO, Alum-Line Inc., Brownmed Inc., Centro Inc., CNH America, Ellison Technologies Automation, Fisher Controls Intl., General Mills, GKN Armstrong Wheels, Tyson Foods Inc., GMT Corp., GMM, John Deere, IN Tolerance, Infastech, Kinze, Meridian, Midwest Metal Products, IDFI Inc., Dethmers Manufacturing, Quatro Composites, Sukup Mfg. Co., Henderson Products Inc., Caterpillar, Oral-B Labs, Scranton Mfg. Co., Iowa Tool and Mfg. Inc., P.O.G. Labs, Vermeer Corp., Warren Distribution Inc., Winegard Co., Sabre Industries Inc., Gelita USA

This workforce solution is 100% financed through a \$12,951,162 grant from the Department of Labor's Employment & Training Administration.

Appendix B: Credit for Prior Learning Policy Standards
(For the review of CPL policy and related policy documents)

Standard One: Philosophy and Academic Framework

CPL policy is grounded in the institution's philosophical and academic and framework and is consistent with institutional mission, goals, and approaches to learning

Indicators:

- CPL policies have an underlying philosophy and an identified pedagogical framework that is student centered and acknowledges the continuity of prior learning with current and future student learning.
- CPL policy identifies a set of best practices that has informed policy development.
- The CPL policy states how it aligns with the institution's mission and goals.

Standard Two: Integrity

CPL policy ensures that all stakeholders (including institutional representatives, students, and any external contributors) promote integrity in the evaluation and documentation of prior learning.

Indicators:

- CPL policy adheres to standards from regional, state, and professional accrediting bodies concerning the award of credit for prior learning.
- CPL policy ensures fairness, consistency, balance and flexibility in the awarding of credit.
- CPL policy mandates the assurance of college-level learning in all credit awards.
- CPL policy acknowledges multiple and diverse sources of student learning and encourages the use of multiple methods to assess prior learning.
- CPL policy mandates evidence-based credit recommendations.
- CPL policy development considers the interests of relevant stakeholders, including students and employers.
- CPL policy includes a statement of fees or other costs associated with prior learning assessment.
- CPL policy assures that credit is awarded only one time for any individual learning experience.
- CPL policy assures the protection of academic integrity in ways that are consistent with existing institutional academic policy.

- CPL policy follows institutional guidelines and governance processes for academic policy approvals.
- CPL policy assures confidentiality of student artifacts and the protection of the proprietary nature of any training materials submitted for review.

Standard Three: Faculty Qualifications and Engagement

CPL policy assures the involvement of qualified faculty or other subject matter experts.

Indicators:

- CPL policy includes a statement as to the required qualifications of faculty members who complete credit reviews and make credit recommendations.
- CPL policy includes references protection against conflict of interest on the part of faculty reviewers.

Standard Four: Student Services

CPL policy assures that students receive effective services.

Indicators:

- CPL policy clearly articulates eligibility requirements for students who wish to earn credit for prior learning.
- CPL policy provides that qualified personnel provide an assessment of student preparedness to engage in CPL processes.
- CPL policy requires that student advising is provided by qualified and trained personnel.
- CPL policy assures that students will receive an accurate and timely review of CPL transcripts or other materials.
- CPL policy includes a clearly identified student appeal process.
- CPL policies are clear and transparent and are widely communicated and readily available to faculty and students.

Standard Five: Credit Management

CPL policy clearly identifies how credits are organized and applied to student records.

Indicators:

- CPL policy allows for credits to be applied to the full complement of degree requirements: general education, major requirements, major electives, general electives.
- CPL credits are appropriately identified on the student's transcript in accordance with guidelines of AACRAO or other professional associations.
- CPL policy is articulated clearly in terms of its relationship to other academic policies, such as transfer of credit.
- CPL policy alerts students to any implications for financial aid as a result of CPL credit awards.
- CPL policy identifies any maximum caps on CPL credit awards.

Standard Six: Planning, Resources, Improvement

CPL policy assures current and continuous improvement by providing sufficient infrastructure to support policy implementation.

Indicators:




- CPL policy is regularly reviewed through established institutional processes and may be revised according to those processes.
- CPL policy encourages structured data collection and analysis, including established tracking of student benefit and success and an identified financial model for cost-benefit analysis.

Appendix C: Credit for Prior Learning Implementation Matrix



Credit for Prior Learning Implementation Matrix



INSTITUTIONAL STAGES		New/Emerging Stage	Developing Stage	Effective Practice Stage
DEFINITIONS AND ACTIVITIES	Faculty engagement and development 	Forms advisory group to craft policy and practice; attends conferences; invites experts to provide overviews.	Creates venues for information-sharing across institutional constituencies; involves faculty groups in developing and vetting policies/practices, such as crosswalks and articulations.	Provides professional opportunities for faculty and staff, including conferences, research, and writing; encourages faculty to include CPL activities in annual reviews, and promotion/tenure evaluations; implements incentives and areas of recognition.
	Student outreach and support 	Directs students to current CPL options through academic advising and program coordination.	Shares information on website and uses other venues to communicate with students, such as orientation and advising.	Informs students of CPL options prior to admission; provides expert advising about prior learning assessment; uses all types of communication tools to share information with students, from outreach with potential students to graduation.
	Infrastructure, policies, and processes 	Scans the landscape for current and informal institutional CPL practices; seeks policy and practice models among peer institutions.	Expands current policy and practice; puts people and structures into place to manage programs; begins to coordinate CPL-related programs and services.	Selects appropriate CPL tools that fit institutional context, curriculum and recognize diversity of learners and their experiences; promotes active use of CPL in all degree areas, including major requirements and general education; well-managed with established policies and practices. Embeds CPL within other programs, such as competency-based learning.

Appendix D: Current Prior Learning Assessment Policies and Practices

A CAEL Report for the PLA Sub-Committee of the I-AM Consortium

Part III: PLA Matrix

Part III: PLA Matrix

The Colleges across the I-AM consortium exhibit both similarities and differences in the types of assessments contemplated in their respective policies. The table below shows the various methods' use across the consortium. Subsequent tables show additional detail on how the particular methods are employed.

Institution	PLA policy	National For-Credit Exams	Military Transcript Evaluation	Portfolio Review	ACE	Institutional Challenge Exams	Other
Des Moines Area Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 30 credits DANTES DSST	Yes	Yes, max of 18 credits	Yes	Yes	AP, max of 30 credits Certificate/license to credit, training to credit, continuing ed to credit for a max of 18 credits
Eastern Iowa Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 30 credits DANTES DSST	No	Yes, max of 46 credit hours	No	No	AP
Hawkeye Community College	N	CLEP, max of 30 credits	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	OSHA Certification (can waive requirement), and the Interdisciplinary Studies program.
Iowa Central Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 30 credits	No	No	No	Yes	AP; some licenses and credentials for credit; Advanced Standing credit
Indian Hills Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 16 credit hours DANTES DSST	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	None
Iowa Lakes Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 30 credit hours DANTES DSST	No	No	No	No	AP
Iowa Valley Community College District	Y	CLEP, max of 30 credit hours DANTES DSST	Yes, max of 30 credits	No	Yes	Yes, max of 30 credit hours	AP, a Partial Credit program involving independent study, and a Cooperative Education program.
Iowa Western Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 20 semester hours	Yes	Yes – but only to students in Applied Business Management program, max of 30 credits	Yes	Yes	AP; non-credit to credit program

North Iowa Area Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 30 credits	Yes	Yes, max of 30 credits	Yes	Yes	AP
Kirkwood Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 18 credit hours	No	Yes, max of 18 credits	No	No	Alternative Credit Program; Accepts AP, max of 18 credits.
Northeast Iowa Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 18 credits	Yes	Yes, max of 18 credits	No	No	High School articulation program (AP)
Northwest Iowa Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 30 credits	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Credit for Experiential Learning program in place – used less than 5x per year.
Southeastern Community College	Y	CLEP	Yes	No	No	Yes	Credit by Arrangement program, IPE exams, skilled trades degree program.
Southwestern Community College	Y	CLEP, max of 30 semester hours DANTES DSST	No	No	No	Yes	Non-credit to credit transfer program
Western Iowa Tech Community College	Y	CLEP, DANTES DSST	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	AP