

Implementing PLA in University System of Georgia

Implementing PLA in a State University System: Chapter 2 – Lessons Learned from the Pilot Project

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Funding for this project provided by the
U. S. Department of Education
the University System of Georgia and
Valdosta State University

Introduction & Overview

- University System & VSU Planning of PLA Demonstration > Patricia Paterson
- Development of the PLA Pilot Project at VSU > Mary Ellen Dallman
- Implementation of the PLA Pilot Project > Jerry Merwin
- Evaluation Methods for Nursing > Gayle Taylor

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Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia
"Creating A More Educated Georgia"

Patricia Paterson

- The University System of Georgia's Board of Regents oversees 35 public colleges and universities.
 - four research universities,
 - two regional universities,
 - thirteen state universities,
 - seven state colleges,
 - nine two-year colleges.
- 260,000 students;
- 11,000 faculty;
- 28,500 staff.

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- Valdosta State University
 - One of two Regional Universities in the USG
 - Serves 41 Counties in South Georgia
 - 12,000 Students

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System Goal: Increase Teacher Production

New K-12 Teachers Hired, USG Teacher Production, Projections, and Targets

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System Goal: Increase Market Share of M.Ed. Programs

USG Market Share

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System View: Other Goals

- ❑ Increase graduates in health care professions.
- ❑ Increase retention and graduation rates.
- ❑ Expand capacity by 40%.
- ❑ Create a plan for workforce development.



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PLA as a Tool for Creating a More Educated Georgia

- ❑ Career-changers are a rich source of teachers.
- ❑ More than 40% of students nationally are self-supporting adults age 24 or older. This population brings potentially creditable experience that can accelerate time to graduation.
- ❑ PLA provides a way to build on workers' skills and increase transferability.

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A System View: Enablers of Change

- ❑ Fit with goals and strategic plans of both organizations;
- ❑ Move to Outcomes-Based Teaching;
- ❑ Consultants Morry Fiddler and Catherine Marienau;
- ❑ PLA Coursework;
- ❑ Grant resources.

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PLA Pilot Project: A System View

Why Valdosta State University (VSU)?

- ❑ Strong partnership between USG and VSU;
- ❑ Track Record of Innovation and Follow-Through in P-16 Work;
- ❑ Outcomes-Based Assessments for Teacher Preparation Developed by VSU
- ❑ Strong Leadership;
- ❑ Committed and Forward-Thinking Faculty;
- ❑ Key Player in Transition to Teaching Grant for preparing career-changers to become teachers.

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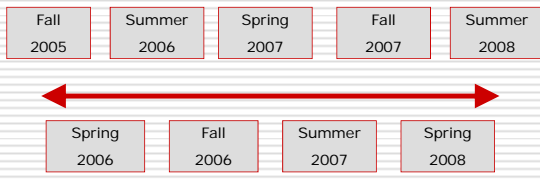
PLA Fit with VSU Strategic Goals

Mary Ellen Dallman

- ❑ From VSU's Strategic Planning Goals: 5 Goals in 5 Years
 - Enrollment & Retention
 - ❑ Assess and implement changes in faculty load, facilities, course offerings & class scheduling to enhance the use of university resources in support of planned growth.
 - ❑ Increase number of students seeking certification and licensure renewal.
 - ❑ **Develop a proposal for programs and program delivery strategies that meet the needs of non-traditional degree seeking students.**
 - Financial Support
 - ❑ Improve profile in the Valdosta community, by continuing to develop external/community partnerships.

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Administrative Implementation of PLA Pilot Project at VSU



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Fall 2005-Fall 2007 Activities

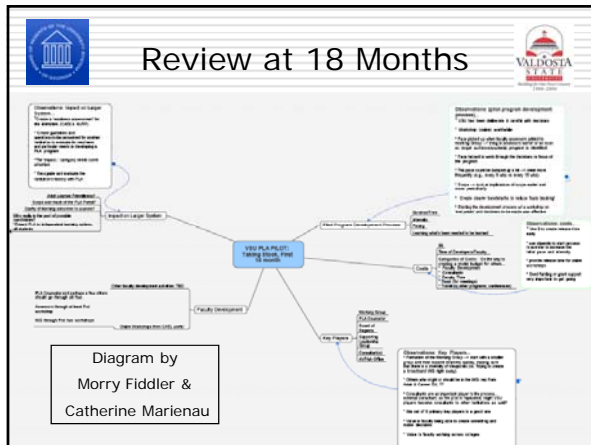
- ❑ Established PLA Working Group and Supporting Leadership Group
- ❑ PLA Workshops I & II
- ❑ Set Objectives & Program Evaluation Plan
- ❑ Developed & Revised PLA Handbook
- ❑ Designated PLA Counselor
- ❑ Began Recruitment of Faculty Assessors
- ❑ PLA Handbook online
- ❑ Course Approval for PLA 2000

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Demonstration Project Process

Working Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs, Chair ❑ 4 Arts & Sciences faculty ❑ 4 College Of Education faculty ❑ Registrar's Representative ❑ Board Of Regents Liaison ❑ PLA Consultants 	Supporting Leadership Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) Assistant VPAA Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences Dean of the College of Education Dean of the Graduate School Dean of Student Affairs Dean of the College of the Arts Assistant to the President for Strategic Research & Analysis Registrar Director of Admissions Director of the College of Education Advising Center
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PLA Pilot Marketing

Gerald Merwin

- ❑ Marketing to colleges & departments, students
- ❑ External marketing – Public Schools in Region, Adults Back to College (ABC), & Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber – other related community efforts
- ❑ Web site development overview

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VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT AT VSU

What is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?

PLA is a process through which students identify areas of relevant learning from their past experiences, demonstrate that learning through appropriate documentation, and submit their materials so that they can be assessed and possibly awarded academic credit relative to specific course objectives at VSU.

The Council of Adult and Experiential Learning defines PLA as follows: "The recognition of learning gained from experiences that may be granted credit or otherwise certified." The assessment of learning attained through experiences irrespective of the time and place in which they occurred." (Assessing Learning, 2nd edition, by Murray Fiddler, Catherine Marienau, and Urban Webster & JZ)

Valdosta State University is initiating a Prior Learning Assessment pilot program effective Fall Semester 2007. This new initiative will be piloted with selective courses and departments during this beginning year. A handbook is available to provide students, faculty, administrators, and other interested individuals with information needed when seeking credit for prior learning which is related to specific courses at Valdosta State University. The handbook will be revised after Fall Semester 2007 based upon lessons learned from the first semester of the pilot program. See the latest version of the handbook by selecting the link below that best meets your needs for a document format.

[PLA Handbook \(PDF\)](#)
[PLA Handbook \(Web Version\)](#)

Announcement: PLA 2000 Prior Learning Documentation: This course is being offered online during the 2009 Summer and Fall terms. Please contact Dr. Jerry Merwin for more information: jmerwin@valdosta.edu.

For more information on PLA contact:
 Dr. Jerry Merwin
 Office: 108 West Hall
 Phone: 229-333-6378



PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA) SITE MAP

PLA Web Site Map

PLA Site Map



<p>Preface, Introduction, Description of Courses</p> <p>Preface & Acknowledgements (Provides background information on the development of the PLA Program at VSU)</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is prior learning? • Why has Valdosta State University decided to adopt PLA? • What is PLA? • Who is eligible to participate in PLA? • How should interested students determine if PLA is right for them? • What are some ways of earning credit for prior learning? • What are the national criteria for quality assurance in assessing learning for credit? • What are the advantages of PLA? <p>Description of Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kinds of courses are available for PLA credits? • What courses are not available for credit by portfolio? 	<p>Documentation Course</p> <p>PLA Documentation Course Information</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is PLA Portfolio development? • What does the PLA Counselor do? • How can prior learning be made to match the learning outcomes at Valdosta State University? • What are the learning outcomes at Valdosta State University? • How do students register for the PLA Documentation Course? • What are the PLA documentation course requirements? • What are the appropriate PLA Documentation Course enrollment and completion times? • What should the portfolio for the PLA Documentation Course include? • How are portfolios evaluated for credit? • When will students learn what credit they have received? • Do students get feedback from the portfolio assessor? • How do students resubmit portfolios? • How will credit be recorded on students' transcripts? • PLA Documentation Course Summary
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 **Spring 2008** 



- Provided Training for Faculty Assessors:
 - Background of PLA Program at VSU by VSU Working Group Members
 - Portfolio Development Workshop by Dr. Denise Hart, CAEL Consultant
- Faculty Assessors Developed Evaluation Methods:
 - Created PLA Evaluation Methods for 27 Courses in 11 Subject Areas
- Offered First PLA 2000 Online through WebCT Vista

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 **Summer 2008** 

- Offered Second PLA 2000 Online
- Evaluated 5 Students:
 - Nursing > 3 Students in RN-BSN Program
 - Perspectives (General Education Core Course) > 1 Student for PERS 2730 Internet Technology Perspectives
 - Adult & Career Education > 1 Student for ACED 3400 Applied Computer Technology
- Granted Credit > Total 42 credit hours earned by 4 students



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 **Evaluation Methods for RN to BSN Program** 



Gayle Taylor

- Getting Started > Requirements
- Selection of Courses
- Orientation of Students
- Examples of Tasks & Activities in Evaluations

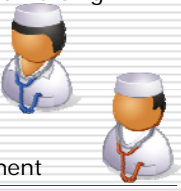
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 **Getting Started** 

- Setting Parameters
 - > 5 years clinical experience as a nurse
- Assessing Eligibility
 - Selection by Assessor
 - Number of students that can be supervised
 - Willingness to communicate often
- Using Skilled Assessors
 - Must be Certified Nursing Instructors

 **Nursing PLA Courses** 

- At Present: 4 courses in one semester:
 - Principles of Baccalaureate Nursing Education
 - Community as Client
 - Nursing Informatics
 - Advanced Health Assessment



 **Orientation of Students** 


- Help student decide how many courses
 - 1, 2, 3 or 4 Nursing Courses
- Give outline of expectations for each course
 - Journals Formal papers
 - Research APA format
 - Essays Comprehensive exams
 - Head-to-Toe Assessment Check-Off
 - Presentations to an Audience

Orientation of Students (cont)

- Orient to WebCT
 - Specific to each college
- Explain Application for Credit
 - Start application from the beginning
- Student's Letter(s) of Experience (> 5 yrs)
 - Can be more than one area of experience

What I Provide for Each Course

- Nursing Syllabi
 - Re-formatted to exclude didactic instruction
- Rubric
 - Sources of learning experiences
 - Evidence of learning competencies
 - Quality of presentation of submission
 - Portfolio of all materials
 - CD of all materials
- PLA Credit Form
 - To be turned in at end of semester for grade (pass/fail)
- PLA request for Letter of Experience
 - Generic request to student's supervisor for proof of experience with assessment tool with questions provided

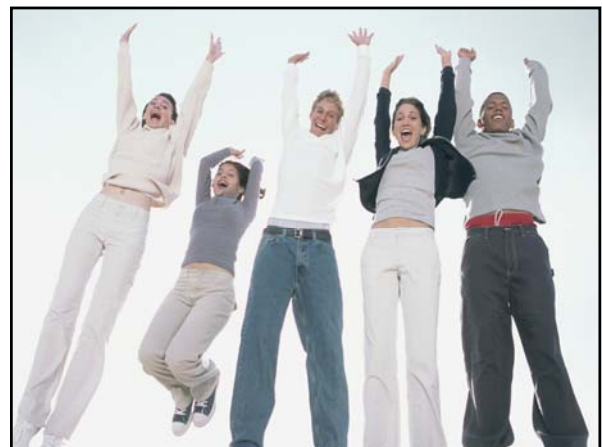




Core Courses vs. Courses for Major in Nursing


- Core courses
 - Exam with proof of experience in certain area may be sufficient to assess evidence of learning
- Major Courses
 - Board of Nursing for each state (stringent rules to follow) Each objective for the course must align with the learning outcomes

Completion of PLA Semester

- RN-BSN Nursing student can complete the equivalent of one year of study in one semester using the PLA method.
- Assessor keeps on file:
 - Portfolio
 - CD
- University keeps on file:
 - CD




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Project Outcomes Students Earning Credit

- Robert H. Evaluated by C. Tillman
- Psychology Major
- PERS 2730 Internet Perspectives (2)
- Mary S. Evaluated by G. Taylor
- RN to BSN Program
- NURS 3150 Prin. of Bac. Nursing Ed. (3)
- NURS 3220 Community as Client (5)
- NURS 4060 Advanced Health Assess. (4)
- NURS 4400 Nursing Informatics (3)
- Sam R. Evaluated by G. Taylor
- RN to BSN Program
- NURS 3150 Prin. of Bac. Nursing Ed. (3)
- NURS 3220 Community as Client (5)
- NURS 4060 Advanced Health Assess. (4)
- NURS 4400 Nursing Informatics (3)
- Rebecca A. Evaluated by G. Taylor
- RN to BSN Program
- NURS 3220 Community as Client (5)
- NURS 4060 Advanced Health Assess. (4)


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Project Outcomes Faculty Assessors Trained

- Robert Bauer (PSYC)
- Heather Brasell (MSED)
- Catherine Christie (PERS)
- Mary Ellen Dallman (ECED)
- Linda de la Garza (CHEM)
- Sheri Gravett (Asst. VP AA)
- Carl Hand (SOCY)
- Christine James (PHIL)
- Steven Lahr (ART)
- Chunlei Liu (CS)
- Jerry Merwin (PA)
- Jim Neinow (BIOL)
- Chere Peguesse (ENGL)
- Rudy Prine (CRJU)
- Beverley Blake (Oasis)
- Nanci Sheetz (Deaf ED)
- Barbara Stanley (MSED)
- Gayle Taylor (NURS)
- Cheri Tillman (PERS)
- Marsha Walden (GENS)
- Arsalan Wares (MATH)
- Vesta Whistler (ACED)
- Mary Willis (ACED)
- Zhiguang Xu (CS)


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Project Outcomes Courses Available for PLA

- ACED 1100 Intro to Business
- ACED 2050 Com. for the Workplace
- ACED 3100 Computer Systems
- ACED 3400 Applied Computer Tech
- CHEM 1211 Principles of Chemistry I
- CHEM 1212 Principles of Chemistry II
- CRJU 2100 Survey of Law Enforcement
- CRJU 4910 Internship in Crim Justice
- CS 4121 Data Com. & Networks I
- CS 4122 Data Com & Networks II
- CS 4345 Operating Systems
- Mathematics
- MSED 7002 Content Methods
- MSED 7005 Teaching Internship I
- NURS 3150 Prin of Bac Nursing Ed
- NURS 3220 Community as Client
- NURS 4060 Advanced Health Assess
- NURS 4400 Nursing Informatics
- PERS 2160 Perspectives on Leadership
- PERS 2690 Multicultural America
- PERS 2710 Exploring Success
- PERS 2730 Internet Technology
- SCI 3103 Nat Hist for Mid Sch Teach
- SOCI 3190 Clinical Sociology
- SOCI 4540 Internship in Sociology
- SPEC 2110 American Sign Language I
- SPEC 2120 American Sign Language II


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Students Currently Seeking Credit > Major

- 7 Students > Deaf Education
- 2 Students > Nursing
- 3 Students > Criminal Justice
- 1 Student > Biology
- 1 Student > Chemistry
- 1 Student > Sociology

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USG System Plans for Expansion of PLA

- April 2008 PLA Workshop for Faculty & Administrators from USG Schools
- So far 13 Schools Have Plans for PLA
- USG, VSU Faculty & Administrators Provide Consultation, Advice, Assistance for other USG Schools

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- Gayle Taylor <tgtaylor@valdosta.edu>

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