# Strategies for Transformative Change

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE RESEARCH AND LEADERSHIP

## Transformative Change Initiative Overview

The Transformative Change Initiative (TCI) is dedicated to assisting community colleges to scale-up innovations that improve student outcomes and program, organization, and system performance.

## Transformative Change Definition

Raising the individual, organizational and system performance of community colleges to unprecedented levels without sacrificing their historic commitment to access and equity.

## BUILDING A FOUNDATIONAL MODEL FOR CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING

*Making the Future: The Wisconsin Strategy*, under the leadership of Northeast Wisconsin Technical College (NWTC), received a Round Two U.S. Department of Labor Trade Adjustment Assistance for Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grant. The consortium brought together all 16 colleges in the Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS) to develop, improve, and expand adult educational training pathways to careers in advanced manufacturing.

The consortium created an alignment of systems statewide around locally identified strategic priorities to achieve the following goals:
1. Increase the attainment of industry-recognized credentials
2. Introduce innovative and effective curriculum development and delivery
3. Increase and improve employment outcomes

The colleges have collaborated to implement Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) practices throughout each of their autonomous districts to help attract and retain adult students. Identifying early within the grant period that colleges had various levels of application, the consortium laid the foundation for building CPL policies and procedures within the individual institutions through process mapping. Key partners in these efforts included Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the Wisconsin Technical College System.



http://advancewisconsin.org/

## Major Factors that Influenced the Statewide Implementation of CPL

- **Leadership.** Executive leadership in the colleges had identified the need to work more closely together to secure competitive grant funds and increase Wisconsin's visibility. Their joint efforts included the establishment of the Presidents' Association Statewide Sub-Committee on Alternative Funding and Grants (PSSGA) which has grant writers from all 16 colleges.

- **Shared understanding/commitment.** While the colleges had a history of working together on state-driven initiatives, this was the first time that all colleges chose to lead a state-wide effort. They agreed to invest the time necessary to develop a system-wide framework for assessing and granting CPL.

- **Buy-in.** A strategic consortium team aligned executive and senior level vision to project scope to ensure support and commitment at all levels, including WTCS, by leveraging expertise of three colleges identified early in the project planning.

## SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS OF THE CREDIT FOR PRIOR LEARNING MODEL IMPLEMENTATION

### Knowledge Building

Information was gathered to understand the state of CPL at each of the colleges. CAEL was brought in to review and summarize current practices and make recommendations to advance CPL across all colleges.

A learning cycle model coached colleges through the scope of work by:

- Conducting a multi-part webinar series that allowed colleges to draft process maps, understand roles of key players, and highlight gaps and opportunities.
- Identifying commonalities, including the need for a CPL campus champion and system data tracking standardization, as well as the benefits of establishing communities of practice.
- Disseminating CPL practices to over 150 college leaders and staff through a WTCS-hosted summit.

Administrator training was also held to identify business models supporting CPL, with 30 individual from 12 colleges participating. Professional development will be provided for advisors, faculty, and others.

> *"We have been able to increase momentum on the college campus of our implementation of an improved prior learning assessment infrastructure – there's a lot of buzz on the campus, the culture is changing and people are really embracing it."*
>
> Dena Constantineau
> Academic Advisor for Manufacturing
> Waukesha County Technical College

### Impact

- CPL is actively being discussed within several WTCS groups (e.g. presidents association, registrars, and institutional researchers).
- All colleges used the Shared Assessment exercise designed for the welding program, even if they did not offer welding.
- Several colleges are planning to institutionalize a CPL position.
- WTCS identified two internal CPL champions to support state-wide college efforts.
- Intake Tool is being piloted by colleges to assist students with CPL artifact collection.
- WTCS added a CPL outcome-based performance funding measure.
- CPL efforts will continue to evolve as part of Wisconsin's state-wide TAACCCT Rounds III and IV.

> *"In completing my portfolio, I realized that in the job market I have many skills that directly translate into courses that are in programs and I can turn that work experience into college credit and advance standing in programs."*
>
> Matt, student in Manufacturing Systems
> Maintenance Technician Program (MSMT)
> Western Technical College

### Leadership

Leaders at multiple levels were engaged in activities to support the implementation of the CPL model. WTCS designated two Education Directors to manage CPL efforts and leads were identified at each college to ensure institutional engagement. Regular progress updates provided to executive and senior leaders facilitated high-level discussions and offered opportunities to realign efforts, as needed. Leader colleges were also selected to champion efforts, disseminate information, share successes and challenges, and present at conferences.

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