

DETC Occasional Paper Number 17

How to Assess Experiential Learning

by

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Introduction

Earning an academic degree is never easy, especially when it's done through distance education. Any ways an institution can help motivate a student earn his or her degree is beneficial to both the student and the institution.

There are several ways a student can earn academic credits towards a degree. A student can transfer credits from other accredited colleges and universities, or a student can earn credit through equivalency exams sponsored by the Educational Testing Service, such as CLEP, the Regents Examinations and DANTES. The American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service recommends credits for a variety of non-traditional education, such as military, corporate, and distance learning programs. In addition, a student can earn credit towards his/her degree for prior experiential learning. This is the topic we will explore in this Occasional Paper.

According to *DETC's 1998 Distance Education Survey*, the average age of the student enrolled in DETC-accredited institutions is 31. This means that the student has probably been working for several years prior to pursuing a degree. Through the evaluation of life experience, students can prove that they have gained credit-worthy skills and knowledge outside the classroom. Church functions, military training, traveling, seminars, volunteering, independent study, and on-the-job training are all different types of learning experiences. Portfolio assessment can be used to help students turn their learning experiences into credit that can be used toward earning their degree.

The Accrediting Commission of the Distance Education and Training Council addresses the issue of credit for experiential learning in the *DETC Accreditation Handbook*, Tab C. 9-Policy on Degree Programs, IV. Program Requirements, E. Transfer and Equivalent. It states:

*A maximum of one-half of the credits required for associate or master's degrees may be given through transfer of credit or a combination of transfer credit and experiential or equivalent credit. For baccalaureate degrees, a maximum of three-fourths of the credits required may be awarded for transfer credits. For no student, however, may the credit given for experiential or equivalent learning exceed **one-fourth of the credits** required for a degree.*

For both transfer credit and equivalent credit purposes, adequate validating procedures must be clearly stated and published, and the institution must consistently apply these procedures.

The critical issue here is what constitutes an “adequate” validating procedure? This Occasional Paper includes practical suggestions on how you can help your students create a clearly written and precise portfolio of prior learning experiences. We will also discuss how you can validate your procedures for awarding academic credits. Once the procedures are in place, it is up to your faculties to make certain that these procedures are consistently applied.

Understanding the Terms

In order to begin the process of evaluating prior learning experiences, you should first understand the following terms:

Prior Experiential Learning: is any prior learning experience that was not part of a college or university course and does not-in or of itself-carry academic degree credit. Learning can take place in a variety of settings including, but not limited to, the following:

- On-the-job training
- Military training
- Volunteer work
- Conventions and conferences
- Continuing education courses
- Teaching a course/class
- Hobbies and recreational activities
- Community/religious service
- Personal travel
- Seminars and workshops
- Training programs or in-service courses
- Independent research
- Awards, publications, or memberships

Experiential Learning Credit: is credit (semester units/hours) that is awarded based on learning that is gained through work or life experiences. An institution can only award credit based on how well students demonstrates what they have learned through their experiences.

Portfolio Assessment: is the way students verify how they have learned or developed knowledge through their experiences. Students must demonstrate how their learning experiences are equal to those that students would get from going to a “traditional” residential college or university.

How Credit is Awarded

What most students do not realize is that a collegiate institution **cannot** award credit for life or work experience. The credit that is awarded is based on a student’s depth and quality of “learning” that is derived from the life or work experience. Credit awarded based solely on the experience itself does **not** meet the standards required of experiential learning programs.

Credit is awarded based on measurable learning outcomes. If a student can demonstrate that: a) they have acquired specific learning skills; b) how they acquired these skills; c) how these skills can be

viewed as equivalent to those gained in a college-level course; and d) proof that these skills were acquired, then they would be eligible to earn academic credit.

Academic and Administrative Standards

In his book, *Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles & Procedures*, Urban Whitaker (1989) states that there are ten standards for assessing learning for credit. He breaks these down into two categories: academic and administrative.

Academic Standards:

1. Credit should be awarded only for learning and not for experience.
2. College credit should be awarded only for college level learning.
3. Credit should be awarded only for learning that has a balance, appropriate to the subject, between theory and practical application.
4. Appropriate subject matter and academic experts must make the determination of competence levels and of credit awards.
5. Credit should be appropriate to the academic context in which it is accepted.

Administrative Standards:

6. Credit awards and their transcript entries should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
7. Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available.
8. Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.
9. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should receive adequate training for the functions they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development.
10. Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served and in the state of the assessment arts.

Keeping these concepts in mind, institutions may award experiential learning credit if the student can demonstrate that his/her prior learning experiences are:

- equivalent to college or university level learning
- a balance between theory and practice
- directly related to the degree program and requirements he/she is pursuing
- measurable

Portfolio Assessment

As students develop their portfolios, they begin a journey of self-exploration and self-acknowledgment. They will better understand how and what they have learned through their experiences. Their portfolios will become instruments that they can also use in job interviews and performance evaluations.

The most important thing students should remember in designing their portfolio is that they have to convince faculty members that their learning experiences resulted in college-level learning. The more documentation that they provide, the more research they undertake, the more they revise and review what they've written, the better the likelihood that they will convince faculty that they deserve experiential learning credit.

How Portfolio Assessment Works

First, a student should choose an area in which he/she believes that he/she has college level knowledge and skills. For each area, the student must find a course description from any well-known resources as the following:

- an institution's catalog
- a catalog from any institution that is accredited by a recognized accrediting agency
- ACE's *Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services*
- ACE's *National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs*.

The description needs to match the acquired knowledge and skills. Each course description must represent a course taught in semester (not quarter) hours. A student should submit a portfolio for each area he/she wishes to earn credit. Since most courses are awarded three semester credits, a student will probably earn three semester credits for each portfolio submitted.

How Much Credit can be Awarded?

The DETC's Accrediting Commission requires a **minimum of**:

- 60 semester hours for an Associate degree
- 120 semester hours for a Baccalaureate degree
- 36 semester hours for a Master's degree

Let's say that your institution's degree programs consist of the minimum required semester hours. This means a maximum of 30 semester hours for an Associate's degree, 18 semester hours for a Master's degree, and 90 semester hours for a Baccalaureate degree may be given through transfer of credit or a **combination** of transfer credit and experiential or equivalent credit.

If a student is pursuing an Associate's degree, one could possibly be awarded up to 15 credits for experiential learning. If a student is pursuing a Bachelor's degree, he/she may earn up to 15 semester credits towards his/her lower division general education requirements, as well as an additional 15 semester credits towards the 60 upper division requirements. A maximum of 60 credits in a combination of transferred courses and experiential learning credit may be applied to the lower division area. A maximum of 30 credits in combination of transferred courses and experiential learning credit may be applied towards the upper division.

If a student is pursuing a Master's degree, one may earn up to 9 semester credits towards graduate level elective or core courses. If students have already transferred the maximum of 6 credits towards their degree program, they can only earn up to 3 additional semester credits through the Experiential Learning program.

Duplication of Credit

A student should not be allowed to submit a portfolio that duplicates course work previously taken at your institution or transferred in from another institution. Students should also make certain that they choose an area for which they have not already earned credit.

Transferring Experiential Learning Credit

Experiential learning credit may or may not transfer to satisfy course requirements at other institutions. When transferred, it is usually applied toward a student's elective requirements. Most institutions prefer to award similar types of credit using their own procedures. Any experiential learning credit that a student receives will appear on their official college transcript and will show that a degree requirement has been met. The credit will be marked as credit for "Portfolio Assessment" and will specify the content area.

Letter grades are not assigned to experiential learning credits. A student will receive a "CR," which stands for "credit," and the number of semester credits earned. If a student does not receive credit upon submission of a portfolio, no entry will be noted on his/her official college transcript.

The Evaluation Process

Step One: Student Submits a Portfolio for Assessment

A student must submit a portfolio for each subject for which one is requesting credit. An advisor should check to see if all the necessary forms submitted are complete and that the content of a student's portfolio is clear and understandable. If the portfolio is lacking any supporting documentation, the advisor should indicate what is needed and return the portfolio to the student.

Step Two: Portfolio is Reviewed by a Faculty Member

If the application is complete, the advisor will forward the portfolio to a faculty member with an expertise in the subject area. The faculty member will check to see that the student has:

- submitted a clear and organized portfolio;
- submitted all of the required documents;
- demonstrated a balance between theory and practice;
- submitted portfolios based on measurable learning outcomes; and
- demonstrated that their learning reflects college level learning and writing skills.

Step Three: Faculty Awards or Denies Credit

After reviewing all the documentation and the entire portfolio as measured against the above criteria, the faculty member will award or deny credit. Students are given copies of the evaluation forms with the faculty member's comments. Once students have submitted portfolios they become the property of the institution. Encourage students to make copies of every document before submitting them to the institution for assessment.

Most institutions also let students appeal credit denial by having them write to the institution stating their reasons for appealing, usually within 30 days. A committee reviews the appeals and makes a final decision on disputes regarding the awarding of credit.

Writing a Portfolio

The following is an overview of how a portfolio should be structured. Students should be encouraged to enhance their portfolio by giving it their personal flavor. Not only should it be grammatically correct, it should also show the student's personality and knowledge in the field.

The following elements should include the following information:

- Cover sheet
- Application
- Letter of Purpose
- Copies of College Transcripts
- Table of Contents
- Life History
- Chronological Time-Line
- Career and Life Goals Statement
- Competency Statement

When a student submits a portfolio, it must be typewritten, doubled-spaced, and numbered. A student should submit two copies of a portfolio and the documentation. Each of the above sections should be clearly identified. They don't have to include information that doesn't directly relate to their learning experiences. They should use only information and evidence that is specifically related to what they are trying to prove. The clearer they are, the more understandable their portfolio will be.

Although students may use this structure as a guide, they should be encouraged to elaborate and design their presentations in anyway they choose.

- **Cover Sheet:** The cover sheet includes the basic personal information. If a student is submitting more than one portfolio, this should be noted on the cover sheet.

- **Application:** The *Experiential Learning Application for Portfolio Assessment* includes the student's name, social security number, address, phone numbers, date, and portfolio review fee. Mailing instructions should also be included on this form (see below).

<i>Experiential Learning</i> Application for Portfolio Assessment		
Last Name	First Name	
SS#	Date	
Street Address		
City	State	ZIP
Home Phone	Work Phone	
Fee: \$200 per portfolio submitted		
Enclosed is my check or money order for \$200 for my portfolio assessment.		
Did you remember to include two (2) copies of your portfolio?		
Please submit to: XYZ Institute, Credit Evaluation, 222 4th Street, Nowhere, VA 22222.		

- **Letter of Purpose:** This is a cover letter, which introduces the student to the evaluator and states what he/she is requesting for credit. This letter should be brief and to-the-point. Students don't need to discuss their background or life history (see below).

December 5, 1999
XYZ Institute
Attn: Credit Evaluation
222 4th Street
Nowhere, VA 22222

To Whom It May Concern:

I am currently a student in the Master of Science degree program. I am requesting consideration of my application for the prior experiential learning credit program.

I have included all the appropriate documentation to demonstrate my prior experiential learning. I feel confident that the evidence submitted will prove how I have learned through my prior experiences.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Marilyn Denison

- **College Transcripts:** Students should include **unofficial** copies of transcripts from all previously attended institutions. This gives the evaluator an idea about the types of courses that the student has taken and in what areas he/she has knowledge. The student should be reminded that the evaluator does not have access to his/her student file. Since the evaluator needs to have a complete picture of the student's past experiences, copies of academic transcripts are helpful.

- **Table of Contents:** A portfolio should be organized in a way that is understandable by the evaluator. By including an accurate "Table of Contents" the evaluator can quickly find and review the material.

- **Life History:** This is a written narrative about three different areas of a student's life: personal, career, and education. This narrative should start with these activities since the student's graduation "ory" is an important part of a portfolio because it helps the student focus on what past experiences were actually learning experiences. This section should be written in free-form style. A student should pretend that he/she is writing an entry in a journal. This step-by-step process will demonstrate how the student's thought processes and learning develop. At the end of the narrative, the evaluator should have the student's entire "life history."

Example of Life History

1979 - Graduation from High School

This was an exciting year for me. The beginning of a new life, or so I thought. I thought that the world was mine for the taking. I had started a job as a cashier at Burger King making \$2.50 an hour and was saving towards a new car. I was footloose and fancy free. No love interests or friends to hassle me. I had not even begun to think about college or education. I couldn't imagine how I would pay for school.

1980 - Family tragedy

This year my mother died suddenly from a fast-growing cancer. I was devastated. I could not even begin to think about work or school or anything else for that matter. All my life I had been pushed to by my mother to achieve and now my pillar of strength was gone.

1985 - Graduation from college

It took me quite a long time, but I finally accomplished my goal +graduated from college with a degree in Psychology. I was able to pay for college by working full-time as Assistant Manager at Burger King. Through this job, I have learned how to manage, communicate with others, and accomplish goals within short periods of time. It's amazing to me how I have come this far. Following my mother's death, I began to be intrigued by the personal dynamic of my family and how each family member coped with her death. This fascination has led me to want to continue my education as a bereavement counselor.

1989 - Getting married

Ten years after high school I am finally tying the knot. I met and fell in love with a fellow social worker at St. Mary's Hospital. He is a wonderful human being who was also pushed into social work because of a death in the family. This is only the beginning of our commonalities. David has decided to take another position elsewhere following our honeymoon. He believes that it will be easier if we have no conflict of interests and shared case loads. I agree because I am seriously considering starting a family anyway. Who knows how long I will be employed there.

- **Chronological Time-Line:** This time-line is an outline of the Life History narrative mentioned above. The purpose of this outline is to help students focus and narrow the events in their life where actual learning took place. The time-line will also show ongoing developments in certain areas such as communication or management (see example below). Students may also use graphs or charts to describe the events in their time-lines, as long as the format remains clear and understandable. A student should include events such as marriage, the birth of children, moving, divorce or death under the "Personal" category; military status, volunteer work or employment changes under the "Career" category; and schools attended, seminars/workshops attended, or in-service courses completed under the "Education" category.

Example of Chronological Time-Line

1979

Significant Event:	Graduation from high school
Personal:	Feelings of independence; scared of real world
Career:	Worked for Burger King, Bronx, NY
Education:	Concluded high school education
Acquired Learning:	Customer service and communication Group interaction

1980

Significant Event:	Loss of Mother
Personal:	Coped with loss; grief-stricken
Career:	Worked for Burger King, Bronx, NY
Education:	N/A
Acquired Learning:	Public speaking; presented statistical information at employee meetings Training: trained 50 employees on work procedures Cost analysis: developed budgets and profit/loss statements

- **Career and Life Goals Statement:** This is a free-structured personal statement, which will describe a student's career, personal, and educational goals. This "Statement" is important because it shows the evaluators how students specifically intend to continue their learning and reach their goals. They may describe goals that they have set in the past, include information on how they achieved these goals, and state the goals they have for the future. They can write the "Statement" as an essay or as a series of statements. If they write the "Statement" as an essay, they should include an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

- **Competency Statement:** This involves several parts:

1. **Selection of a Course Description:** Course descriptions can be found in any regionally or nationally accredited college or university catalog, the institution's catalog, or in the ACE's Guides. The description should be for a course being currently taught and for which credit is given. For every course objective that is listed in the course description, a student needs to show how he/she has met this objective through documented learning experiences. A student may choose a course description that matches a core requirement in the degree program. Some institutions will allow a student to choose one that covers an area not currently being offered by an institution. However, the area must still be related to the degree program. In this case, the credits a student earns would be applied to elective requirements.

Students should make sure they choose a course description that describes the same level course for which they are trying to earn credit. Within the "Competency Statement" section, students should include photocopies of the course descriptions and the cover of the catalogs from which it was found. Photocopies must show: 1) Catalog year(s); (2) School name/Agency name; and (3) Course description as it appears in the catalog.

2. **Learning Background:** This section is where the student shows his/her learning experiences and explains how and where learning experiences were obtained. It should be written clearly and be grammatically correct. It may be from two to five pages in length. Here is where a student must convince the evaluator that the student experiences show measurable learning outcomes. The student should write as much as possible to demonstrate this. The student can use the "Life -Line" to help him/her find where important learning experiences happened and what accomplishments derived from the learning.

The most difficult part in writing the "Learning Background" is identifying the prior learning experiences and relating them to the course objectives. The more information a student gives, the easier it is to show an evaluator that his/her learning experiences have equal value to those taught in a classroom setting. It's best if a student concentrates on one aspect of his/her life to demonstrate equivalency, although he/she may have extensive experience in other areas.

3. **Learning Outcomes:** This section of the portfolio is where students relate their own learning to the specific description they have chosen. Because many course descriptions are shortened versions of the course objectives, it may help if students get a copy of the course syllabus. By using the "Description" part of the "Learning Outcomes," students can cite the objectives listed in the syllabus as their learning outcomes. At this point, the evaluator has read the student's life history and background regarding how the student's learning was acquired, now the evaluator recognizes what was learned.

When developing learning outcomes, a student should keep in mind that the following statements must:

- persuade an evaluator that the student has accomplished specific learning outcomes;

- clearly show what the student can do and what the student knows;
- demonstrate a balance between theory and practice; and
- show that they have knowledge, which can be applied to different situations.

Use "I" statements such as "I know," "I can," or "I learned."

4. Evidence: After the "Learning Outcomes" section of the *Competency Statement*, students will provide the documentation that supports their prior experiential learning. A good rule of thumb is to provide documentation for each learning outcome that they specify. The documentation should confirm learning, not merely experience. The following are sample items used to document prior experiential learning:

- awards, letters of commendation
- book lists/materials read
- completed class assignments
- course description or outline
- course transcripts
- description of requirements for licensure/certification
- evidence of completion
- explanation of tasks performed
- explanation of ranking or classification
- job descriptions
- licenses/diplomas
- membership requirements for professional organizations
- membership in professional organizations
- military separation papers
- military records
- notes taken in class
- performance evaluations
- performance standards for acquiring licenses
- publications
- scores on licensing exams
- syllabi
- third-party verification letters
- verification of enrollment letter
- work projects (proposals, reports, schematics)

Copies of diplomas, licenses, certification or registrations should be notarized as a "true copy of the original." All of the evidence should be clearly identified to show which learning outcome is being documented.

Third Party Verification Letters

The best type of evidence to support one's learning outcomes is third-party verification letters. These letters are written by immediate supervisors, past employers, work associates, community leaders, or any other individual with firsthand knowledge of a student's abilities and his/her learning experiences. These individuals verify a student's prior experiential learning, they are not recommending a student for an award of experiential credit (see example below).

October 14, 1999

XYZ Institute
Attn: Credit Evaluation
222 4th Street
Nowhere, VA 22222

To Whom It May Concern:

As Director of the Crofton Hospital Laboratory, I am enclosing the supporting documentation for the laboratory training and experience for Ms. Denison. I have been Ms. Denison's direct supervisor for over ten years.

Documentation:

- a. Medical Technologist (ASCP) Job Description
- b. Laboratory Technician I (unregistered) Job Description
- c. Workstation Check Lists
- d. Current Performance Evaluation

Please note that Ms. Denison functions in the capacity of Laboratory Technician I. Referring to the Job Descriptions reveals that all duties and responsibilities, as well as the Working Conditions and Demands are identical for Medical Technologist (ASCP) and Laboratory Technician I (unregistered).

Ms. Denison began her career at Crofton Hospital in September of 1973 and remains a current valuable employee in excellent standing and regard.

Since the current job descriptions do not include some of the areas performed in the lab, an additional comment of descriptions is necessary.

Additional Description:

- a. Has worked on all three shifts without supervision ~~accepting~~ responsibility for tasks and hospital wide communications.
- b. Quality control of performance and documentation ~~concept~~ and practice understandings.
- c. Provides orientation for new employees, student instruction, instruction for co-workers.
- d. Troubleshooting ~~Hematology~~, Chemistry, Urinalysis
- e. Phlebotomy Skills ~~Veni~~ punctures, arterial puncture: blood gases; IV injections: isotopes, blood volume; donor phlebotomy; infants and pediatrics
- f. Skill areas ~~Hematology~~, Urinalysis, Chemistry, Stat Lab, and Microbiology.

The Laboratory experience and training for Ms. Denison far exceeds those of a one year program or MLT program. She displays a high level of competency and responsibility with motivation.

Please feel free to contact me for further descriptions or comments. We will be actively supporting Ms. Denison in her pursuit of excellence and advancement.

Sincerely,

John Adams, MT (ASCP)
Laboratory Director

Verification letters have to be written on official letterhead, signed and dated. The individual should include: (1) his/her relationship to the student and length of time of relationship; (2) qualifications for verifying a student's prior experiential learning; and (3) identify the student's competencies, rather than what types of tasks a student has completed.

Letters should be submitted for each learning outcome that a student is supporting. Students should make sure the individual writing the verification letter submits a separate letter for each outcome that they are attempting to verify.

Evaluating Portfolios

The faculty member chosen to evaluate a portfolio must have the appropriate credentials and/or expertise in the content field. When evaluating a portfolio, the faculty member must:

- determine if the course description adequately describes learning outcomes for the specific course cited;
- evaluate the scope of the student's experiential learning;
- assess the process by which the student rationalizes their experiential learning as being equivalent to college-level learning outcomes; and
- determine whether the evidence submitted clearly supports that learning occurred.

The faculty member is evaluating whether the student has provided information and evidence to show that learning has, indeed, occurred. The faculty member must document that agreements with the student's rationale.

Assessment Form

To help them document their impressions of the content of the students' portfolios, faculty members may use the following assessment form. This form covers several areas including:

- general evaluator comments
- learning outcomes assessment
- evidence assessment
- credit recommendations

Faculty members are encouraged to make comments concerning each of the sections on the Assessment Form (see example below).

Portfolio Evaluation Assessment Form

Student Name: _____ Student ID# _____

Program # _____ Course# (if applicable) _____

Area of Concentration _____ # of credits req. for assessment _____

GENERAL EVALUATOR COMMENTS

Yes No

- 1. Does the portfolio contain all required information?
- 2. Is the portfolio clear and organized?
- 3. Does the portfolio show a balance between theory and practice?
- 4. Has the student addressed each of the objectives listed in the course description?

If *no* to any of the above, please explain (use additional sheets if necessary):

LEARNING OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT

Yes No

- 1. Did the student choose an appropriate course description?
- 2. Did the student show how learning was acquired?
- 3. Does the student express a genuine understanding of the field?
- 4. Does the student display college-level writing skills?

If *no* to any of the above, please explain (use additional sheets if necessary):

EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT

Yes No

- 1. Does the evidence support the claims outlined in the Learning Outcomes?
- 2. Has the student established authenticity of the evidence?
- 3. Summarize why the evidence given in the student's portfolio

adequately supports the student's assertions.

If *no* to any of the above, please explain (use additional sheets if necessary):

EVALUATOR'S COMMENTS

CREDIT RECOMMENDATIONS

- Credit has been awarded
- Credit has been denied
- More information required (please see suggestions)

If credit has been denied, please check all that are applicable:

- learning outcomes section was too brief;
- learning outcomes section does not demonstrate college level writing skills;
- evidence does not support knowledge outlined in course description;
- evidence does not support all the objectives outlined in course description;
- the student has not established the authenticity of the evidence;
- it is unclear how the knowledge was acquired;
- the student's knowledge is limited, it does not cover the entire scope of the course;
- the student's knowledge is not college level;

___ the course description is not appropriate.

Alternate course description:

_____ from _____
Course Title Institution

SUGGESTIONS

- ___ the learning outcomes section needs to be rewritten; please elaborate
- ___ you need to provide evidence which directly relates to your stated learning outcomes
- ___ other: _____

Information Due by: _____

Evaluator's Name Evaluator's Signature Date

Conclusion

Putting together a clearly written and documented portfolio of prior learning experience is not an easy process. It takes a lot of time and effort on the part of the student. Students will have to remember experiences that may have happened years ago. And, they will have to put a lot of thought into how these experiences were "learning" experiences, and persuasively justify why they merit the award of credit. An institution should work in partnership with its students and may want to offer a course in "How to Prepare a Portfolio."

After students put their portfolios together, they will feel a great sense of accomplishment because they will be looking back and realizing, probably for the first time, how much they really learned and how much they have done throughout their lives.

Helping your students to complete a degree program is a rewarding undertaking. And, by assessing and giving them the credit they deserve for their learning gained through life experiences, you will strongly encourage them to complete their degree.

By following the suggestions mentioned in this paper, an institution can satisfy the Accrediting Commission's requirements for having adequate validating procedures, which are "clearly stated and published." But please remember, it is up to your institution and your faculty to apply these procedures consistently!

Reference Section

For more information on the topic of experiential learning, please contact:

Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL)
243 South Wabash Avenue, Suite 800
Chicago, IL 60604
312-922-5909: Web Site: <http://www.cael.org>

College Level Examination Program (CLEP)
P.O. Box 6601
Princeton, NJ 08541-6601
1-800-257-9558: 609-771-7865: Web Site: <http://www.collegeboard.com>

ACE College Recommendation Service
One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 250
Washington, D.C. 20036-1193
202-939-9433: Web Site: <http://www.acenet.edu>

Useful Publications

Assessing Learning: A CAEL Handbook for Faculty
by Susan Simosko and Associates
\$17.50, ISBN: 07872-33471 (available from CAEL)

Assessing Learning: Standards, Principles, and Procedures
by Urban Whitaker
\$17.50 , ISBN: 07872-3348X (available from CAEL)

Earn College Credit for What You Know (Third Edition)
by Lois Lamdin
\$24.97, ISBN: 07872-3573-3 (available from CAEL)

Guide to the Evaluation of Educational Experience in the Armed Services
published by American Council on Education, ISBN 1-57356-054-3
available from Oryx Press, 1-800-279-6799; <http://www.oryxpress.com/catace.htm>

National Guide to Educational Credit for Training Programs
published by American Council on Education, ISBN 1-57356-035-9
available from Orxy Press, 1-800-279-6799; <http://www.oryxpress.com/catace.htm>

Pocket Guide to College Credits and Degrees
by Jacqueline E. Johnson, Jo Ann Robinson, and Sally R. Welch
\$9.95, ISBN: 0-8268-1465-4 (available from ACE)

Prior Learning Assessment: A Guidebook to American Institutional Practices
by Brian J. Zucker, Chantell C. Johnson, and Thomas A. Flint
\$24.95 (available from CAEL)

About the Author

Ms. Lisa J. Davis has been with the California College for Health Sciences in National City, California for seven years in the capacity of credit evaluator. She was promoted to Dean of Student Affairs in 1995 and is responsible for the administration of the Student Services Department, which includes Admissions and Records, Testing, Student Advisement and Credit Evaluation. Ms. Davis currently administers the experiential learning program and has recently been hired by the Bureau for Private Postsecondary and Vocational Education in California as an intermittent education specialist conducting compliance and licensure audits.

In 1990, Ms. Davis earned her Bachelor's degree in English and in 1991, she earned a Masters in Education with a concentration in Counseling from the University of San Diego.

In addition to writing the *Experiential Learning Handbook: Your Guide to Portfolio Assessment*, Ms. Davis also authored *Faculty Policies and Procedures: Experiential Learning Program*.