



WILMINGTON

COLLEGE

Prior Learning
Assessment
Guide for Students

July 2005

The Prior Learning Assessment Guide for Students

The Prior Learning Assessment Guide for Students was adapted from *The Student Handbook for Competency-based Evaluation* by Wilmington College, *The Handbook for Preparing A Portfolio* by the East Central Colleges with offices at Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia, and *Portfolio Development* from the University of Wisconsin, Superior. Wilmington College acknowledges their efforts and appreciates their permission to use these publications as a model.

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Table of Contents

Preface.....	vii
 <u>CHAPTER 1</u>	
Introduction.....	1
Frequently Asked Questions about Prior Learning Assessment.....	2
 <u>CHAPTER 2</u>	
Qualifications for Prior Learning Assessment.....	7
PLA Checklist.....	9
Procedures.....	10
 <u>CHAPTER 3</u>	
Portfolio Contents.....	11
Preparing the Portfolio.....	12
Documentation.....	16
Evaluation Procedure.....	17
Presentation.....	18
 <u>APPENDICES</u>	
A Sample Resume.....	19
B Sample Essay.....	23
C CLEP.....	29
D DANTES.....	33
E Excelsior.....	37

Preface

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a process that helps you earn credit for the skills and knowledge you already possess regardless of how or where the learning took place.

Although PLA credit is recognized in some of Wilmington College's graduate programs, the procedures outlined in this guide are primarily directed toward students in undergraduate programs. Other sources of credit outlined in this guide such as credit earned through CLEP and DAN TES, examinations apply only to undergraduate programs.

Graduate students in academic programs that accept PLA for credit should contact their program coordinators for information on the specific PLA requirements.

CHAPTER 1

PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, higher education has responded to an increasing number of adults seeking an advanced education. These adults are often motivated by the need to achieve employment, maintain job security, earn advancement, and/or achieve some personal satisfaction - the desire to simply say, "I did it!" Educators have also observed that these adults often bring to the formal learning environment a broad range of experience and knowledge that may be equivalent to college related learning.

Wilmington College recognizes that college level learning takes place both in and out of the classroom. That process is called Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

This guide describes the portfolio development and assessment process used in PLA. The burden of PLA portfolio development is placed on you, the student. You will meet with a faculty member to determine if you qualify for PLA and then prepare a portfolio that documents your experience and the knowledge gained as a result of that experience.

The PLA approach is an alternative method for earning college credits. The process may require a considerable amount of your time. Please read the following pages carefully and talk with your academic advisor or program coordinator to determine if the PLA approach is the right choice for you.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT

What is Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)?

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is a process that enables you to gain credit for what you have already learned through professional training, life experiences, job related activities, or volunteer work. PLA makes it possible for you to earn credit towards a degree for the skills and knowledge you already possess.

What are the benefits of PLA?

- Achieve your educational goals in less time and with less cost.
- Receive college credit for what you have learned.
- More career mobility opportunities.
- PLA can satisfy your credit deficiencies in general education or electives.

How do I get credit for my prior learning?

You will prepare a portfolio documenting your prior learning. In the portfolio, you will include evidence that you have the knowledge and skills which match the outcomes identified for a particular course or courses. Applying for prior learning assessment and preparing a portfolio does not guarantee that credit will be awarded.

What is a portfolio?

A portfolio is a formal written communication that you will develop and present if you decide to request credit or recognition for prior learning. Your portfolio must make its case by identifying learning clearly and succinctly, and it must provide sufficient supporting information and documentation so that faculty can use it, alone or in combination with other evidence, as the basis for their evaluation.

How much credit can I earn using PLA?

Undergraduate students can earn a total of up to 15 credits through PLA or up to 45 combined credits through PLA, credit-by-exam, and Challenge by Examination. Many academic programs restrict the number of PLA credits that may be applied to the major core courses. In such cases, PLA credit may be applied to free electives or general studies courses. You and your program coordinator or academic advisor will discuss the number of courses and credit hours that you can realistically apply for using prior learning. Graduate students should speak with their academic program coordinator to determine how much credit, if any, may be earned through PLA.

What is the difference between Transfer Credit and Prior Learning Assessment?

Transfer credit involves the examination of your educational credentials (transcripts) from accredited educational institutions.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) is the assessment and evaluation of learning acquired through work/life experiences against course or program learning outcomes for which credit is being sought.

How much does it cost?

Fees for PLA credit are significantly less than tuition fees for traditional courses. Current PLA fees are listed in the current academic catalog and on the college's web page.

Will someone guide me in developing a portfolio?

A Prior Learning Assessment advisor will work with you. This person will help you understand the process but will not write or assemble the portfolio for you. It is your responsibility to gather all necessary documentation and put together a portfolio. The portfolio must document college-level learning.

How long will it take?

Putting together a portfolio which successfully earns credit requires a significant amount of time and organization. Documenting your prior learning and matching it to course outcomes can take days, weeks, or months.

How well do I have to write?

It is important to remember that the faculty evaluator can only assess what is presented in the portfolio. The portfolio must be clear, concise, well organized, comprehensive, and free of both grammar and spelling errors.

What are the characteristics of someone undertaking writing a portfolio?

Successful candidates must be self-directed, well organized and confident in their skills. They must be competent writers and have the time and energy to devote to the writing of a portfolio. Your particular situation is a good topic to explore with your prior learning assessment advisor.

Do I need a separate portfolio for each course?

No, you may develop one portfolio for several courses. You will, however, be required to write a separate reflective essay for each course for which you are seeking PLA credit. Your prior learning assessment advisor will work with you to decide how the portfolio should be organized and presented.

Who evaluates my portfolio?

Your prior learning assessment advisor will conduct an initial evaluation of your finished portfolio and then will forward your portfolio to appropriate faculty evaluators to evaluate specific subject areas.

Will I receive a grade?

Portfolios are given either a satisfactory (credit awarded) or unsatisfactory (no credit awarded). The results of your portfolio evaluation will not affect your Grade Point Average (GPA). Any credits awarded will not affect your GPA.

Can I PLA a course I have already failed?

No, you may not use PLA credit for any courses you have failed at Wilmington College.

Are there methods of earning credit *other than* developing a portfolio?

Yes, undergraduate students may earn credit through credit-by-exam. Over 2900 accredited schools offer the opportunity for students to earn college credit by taking the CLEP, DANTES/DSST, and Excelsior College Exams (ECE). These tests are recognized as a common method for students to obtain credit by non-traditional means and earn credits for what they have learned outside the classroom environment. Each examination is defined below, and more detailed information on these examinations can be found in Appendices C – E.

Students may not receive credit for a lower-level CLEP or DSST examination if they have already completed a higher-level course in that subject area. Credits may not be earned through CLEP or DSST examinations whose content duplicates that of other examinations by which credit was previously earned.

There is a fee associated with each of these examinations from each testing service; however, Wilmington College does not charge the student any fee for transferring in these credits. Contact your academic advisor for more information.

CLEP examinations cover material taught in courses that most students take as requirements in the first two years of college. CLEP offers exams in more than 30 subjects, including languages, business, science, math, and history. Many satisfy core general studies and elective requirements. A passing score on CLEP examinations may be worth 3 to 6 semester hours of credit depending on the examination.

DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Test) is an extensive series of examinations in college subjects that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate courses. The exams include over 35 subjects, ranging from Art of the Western World to Principles of Public Speaking. A passing score on each of these exams is worth 3 semester hours.

ECE (Excelsior College Exams) Wilmington College recognizes Excelsior College Examinations (ECE) for credit. Excelsior has 40 examinations in the arts, sciences, business, nursing, and education.

What is the Challenge by Examination Process?

The Challenge By Examination process is a method of assessment other than portfolio. These written and non-written examinations are developed and evaluated by Wilmington College subject-expert faculty to measure your learning achievements against course learning outcomes. Not all Wilmington College courses have a credit-by-examination option. Students pay the same tuition rate for Challenge by Examination as they do for enrolling in the course.

CHAPTER 2

IS PLA FOR YOU?

QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT (PLA)

To be eligible for a PLA, you must be fully matriculated, and the college must be in receipt of all of your transcripts. The maximum number of credits that may be awarded through PLA is 15, which may count as part of the Wilmington College residency requirement.

With the exception of some departmental restrictions, you may request a PLA for undergraduate courses offered at Wilmington College and listed in the current Academic Catalog. Since 100 and 200 level courses are fundamental courses, they are generally more easily adapted to a PLA than are 300 and 400 level courses. The upper level courses tend to be more comprehensive. For further information on specific course restrictions, see your academic advisor.

To determine if your experience/prior learning meets the requirements of PLA, you should know that credit is not awarded simply for experience. You must be able to demonstrate a level of learning as a result of your experience. The quality as well as the quantity of your previous experience is the basis for the evaluation. The relationship between that experience and academic standards is the justification for the award of credit.

The knowledge and skills (prior learning) you have acquired as a result of experience is measured against objectives in a specific course to determine credit award. The reflective essay must demonstrate that your prior learning generally meets the objectives of the course you are seeking credit for.

1. All learning must be verifiable. You must be able to demonstrate that you possess the learning which you claim. Our faculty will be able to measure the learning which you have acquired from:

- a. Formal, recognized, and well documented training programs conducted by:
 - 1) U.S. military
 - 2) business, industry and trade groups
 - 3) government organizations

- 4) professional organizations
- 5) certificates
- 6) employment records

2. The learning must be equivalent to college-level work. Wilmington College requires that prior learning be related to courses listed in the current catalog before credit is awarded. Consideration may be given to broad subject areas traditionally offered at other accredited colleges or universities.

3. The learning must have a subject matter knowledge base. Credit is awarded for skills that require a theoretical knowledge. For example, if you have ten years of experience as a manager or supervisor and you are seeking credit for a management course, your reflective essay must indicate how your experience relates to the management theories taught in the course. It is a good idea to read the syllabus and textbook(s) used in the course.

4. The learning should have a general applicability outside of the specific situation in which it was acquired. For example, Wilmington College will not award credit for knowing the specific procedure for processing personnel applications which apply to only one firm/company. In each reflective essay for the course in which you are seeking PLA credit, you must explain how you gained the knowledge in your professional environment and also how you applied that knowledge to other situations.

THE FOLLOWING CHECKLIST IS PROVIDED TO ASSIST YOU IN DETERMINING IF PLA IS FOR YOU:

- I have at least five years of post high school work experience
- My work experience includes leadership or management responsibilities
- I completed formal training (in-class or on-line) as part of my employment
- I have attended professional seminars or conferences
- I have completed non-credit college courses
- I have earned certificates or licenses required for professionals in my field
- I am or was a member of the armed forces
- I have lived in a foreign country or traveled extensively since high school
- I have participated extensively in community work or volunteer services
- I have authored published work (letters to editor, training guides, articles, etc.)
- Is a CLEP, DANTES, or Excelsior College Examination available for the course I would like to receive credit for through PLA?

If you have checked off any of the above, PLA may be an alternative for you to earn credit. Contact your program coordinator for more information.

PROCEDURES

Now that you have reviewed the checklist and have decided to develop a PLA portfolio for academic credit, the following steps are provided to help you:

1. Read Chapter 3 of this manual and start gathering all of your documentation (licenses, transcripts, diplomas, etc.).
2. Obtain a copy of a *Transfer Credit and Evaluation and Program Guide* from the Office of Academic Advising. This will be used by your program coordinator in determining your eligibility for PLA. Use this visit to the Office of Academic Advising to make an appointment and meet with your academic advisor. This would be an excellent time to clarify what courses are remaining for the completion of your degree. Knowing this information may also help you to determine if there are any other courses which you could complete through the PLA approach.
3. Make an appointment with your program coordinator to discuss the courses for which you desire to receive credit through PLA. Your program coordinator will assign, or will be your PLA advisor and will complete an Academic Approval Form.
4. After your program coordinator signs the Academic Approval Form, you will take it to the Registrar's Office and may register for your PLA course(s). You will be assessed the PLA fees at the time of registration.
5. Make an appointment with your PLA advisor(s). You may have more than one PLA advisor if the courses for which you are seeking credit are from different academic areas.
6. Begin developing your portfolio.
7. Maintain contact with your advisor(s) throughout the portfolio development process. Be sure that your advisor(s) know about your progress and about any delays that occur.
8. Submit your completed portfolio to your PLA advisor. From the time of PLA registration, you have 15 weeks to complete the portfolio. If you have unforeseen delays, you may request an extension from your advisor. Your advisor will then post a grade of "I" for Incomplete. This is not an automatic process, you must request the extension.
9. Your advisor will notify you when the evaluation is complete. If credit is awarded, your advisor will forward the results to the Registrar's Office.

CHAPTER 3

DEVELOPING YOUR PORTFOLIO

PORTFOLIO CONTENTS

A Prior Learning Assessment portfolio is a comprehensive document. It requires that you:

1. examine and list your previous experience in order to identify areas of college-level learning.
2. communicate in the reflective essay exactly what learning took place and where and how it was applied.
3. prove through documentation that learning occurred.

Listed below is a checklist of the required sections of a portfolio and a brief description of each. They should appear in the order presented unless there are compelling reasons for altering the presentation. The following chapter will explain each section in greater detail with suggestions, guidelines, and examples.

✓ **1. Resume**

Name, Address

Goals/objectives

Occupation

Work experience

Education

Interests and activities

Affiliations/memberships/volunteer/community service

✓ **2. Inventory of Experience**

A list of all your learning experiences since high school

✓ **3. Specific Credit Requests**

List the courses for which credit is requested. The list should include the course number and title, course description, course learning objectives, description and amount of credit requested. This information should be presented in alpha-numeric order (by course prefix and number).

✓ **4. Reflective Essay(s)**

The reflective essay is a narrative, focusing on post-high school experience which resulted in learning outcomes for which credit is sought. A separate reflective essay is required for each course for which you are requesting PLA credit.

✓ **5. Documentation**

Include letters, certificates, clippings, etc. that constitute evidence that you have the experience which has yielded knowledge equivalent to learning at the collegiate level.

PREPARING THE PORTFOLIO

Now that you understand the rationale for preparing a portfolio and have an overview of the contents, carefully read all of the following detailed descriptions/discussions of each required section of the portfolio. Included are step-by-step instructions and examples to aid you as you prepare your personal document. Please keep in mind that examples are just that – illustrations of format and types of content. Your own experience as well as your personal style of writing should make your portfolio unique.

Resume

A resume gives the faculty evaluator a brief overview of your major employment and educational experience. If you already have a resume, you may need to update it before including it in your portfolio. If you have never developed a resume, we suggest the format in Appendix A in the back of this booklet. While this particular format is not the standard used for job hunting, it is suitable for your portfolio.

Inventory of Experience

As a beginning step, list everything that you have accomplished since graduation from high school. Include jobs, education, military experience, community/volunteer/religious involvement, hobbies, recreational activities, and travel. As each memory triggers another, you will probably find yourself listing

experiences and activities which you had previously forgotten.

Once you have completed your list, review and organize it, either chronologically or topically. This list may provide a rough outline for subsequent use. This process will assist you in identifying experiences which you see as significant because you:

1. believe you learned a great deal.
2. are pleased with what you achieved.
3. received appreciation and/or recognition from others.
4. expended considerable time, energy, or money.
5. found the experience very enjoyable.
6. found the experience very painful.

When you have organized your experiences and activities, you might find it useful to review them by asking yourself some specific questions. For example:

1. What did I learn from this experience?
2. What skills did I acquire or utilize?
3. Was the activity of greater/lesser importance in the total picture of my personal development?
4. Did it lead to some future experience?

Identifying Appropriate Courses

Identifying a relationship between your work/life experiences and specific course objectives will require some research on your part. Begin by looking at your inventory of experience and asking yourself:

1. What knowledge / skills / attitudes did I possess when I began?
2. What knowledge / skills / attitudes did I utilize while I was involved in the job / activity?
3. What new knowledge / skills / attitudes did I learn (am still learning) as a result of the job / activity?
4. How do I apply this knowledge and / or these skills and attitudes today?

Next, take a look at the Wilmington College catalog for specific course descriptions that may align with your experiences.

When you think you have identified (a) possible course(s), obtain a copy of the syllabus and compare the objectives of the course with your outside training/experience. Each course syllabus is available on the college web page. Review the textbook(s) listed on the syllabus. If possible, discuss course content and/or expectations with the professor(s) who teach the course(s). For additional help contact your prior learning assessment advisor

As you further define the courses for which you believe you qualify, be sure to note whether any prerequisites are required. All prerequisites must be met in order to take and complete any course – including a course being completed through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

When you have finally determined the specific courses and credit for which you desire a PLA, you are ready to work on your reflective essay(s).

Reflective Essay(s)

In this section, you will demonstrate that your prior learning experience is college-level knowledge. You will need to provide exact descriptions of your knowledge of both theory and application in a separate essay for each course for which you are requesting PLA credit. Each essay should begin with the course number, title, and learning objectives for that course. A sample essay is provided in Appendix B.

While reading your essay(s), the evaluator(s) will look for several points of discussion which are not directly related to a given field of knowledge, but are an important part of conveying what you have learned.

- 1) Your experience
- 2) How knowledge was acquired from your experience
- 3) How knowledge was applied and used—the learning outcomes
- 4) Evidence of mental processing of knowledge
- 5) Evidence of generalization or conceptualization of knowledge.

There is not a specific length required for each essay; however, it should be long enough to ensure that you are communicating as clearly and accurately as possible. As you write, do not assume that the reader knows and understands all about your work and/or life. Be specific, provide details, and define vocabulary unique to your field. Be sure to include information about all experiences for which you intend to seek credit. For example, if you are asking for credit for a course in marketing but fail to mention your specific training in marketing and experience in the field your evaluator is likely to be confused, and your credit request could be jeopardized.

Carefully analyze the course outcomes (objectives/goals) on the syllabus as if they were essay exam questions. Write a solid, appropriately detailed essay for each one and support your claim of knowledge with written documentation. You may want to address each course objective/goal separately in your essay to ensure the evaluator can clearly see how you met each objective.

You must demonstrate understanding of the basic theories, issues, topics, or principles of the course in order to receive credit. For example, if you are asking for credit in public speaking, you would be expected to discuss briefly the topics covered in such a course - categorizing types of speeches, choosing a topic, making an outline, doing research, presenting the speech, analyzing the audience, etc. The course syllabus and textbook would be very helpful at this point.

You are also expected to know and use, in intelligent ways, the terminology pertinent to the course. If requesting credit for a basic psychology course, you should be familiar with terms such as “conditioned response,” “Pavlov” and “skinner box.” Obviously the more theoretical the course, the more theory you will need to discuss. A reference to the documentation which supports your knowledge is also required.

Once you complete the theoretical component, you should then explain how you gained the knowledge. Was it through workshops and training seminars? Perhaps it included discussions with experts in the field, on-the-job training from a supervisor, or reading textbooks on the subject.

In this section, you should also tell your reader how you have applied your knowledge. For example, you may have attended a seminar on “Fayol’s” theories of management, and upon returning to your job decided to implement some of Fayol’s concepts. As part of your explanation, you should tell about the seminar, describe Fayol’s theories, and discuss your implementation in the workplace. You would also need to include observations of the results and your analysis of the effort. If you have documentation of the above, it should be included in the portfolio.

When you have completed a rough draft of your essay, have someone - spouse, friend or co-worker - review it. Accept his/her comments on the clarity of your writing and on the quality of the grammar, punctuation, etc. Also, ask him/her to comment honestly on the amount of detail and whether you have provided sufficient supporting evidence of your experiences. Make revisions accordingly.

DOCUMENTATION

The purpose of documentation is to prove that you have the knowledge that you say you have or that you have accomplished what you say you have accomplished. Documentation supports and strengthens your credit requests. Generally, the best documentation is something you have produced. Documentation should be tangible, and it must be submitted along with your portfolio. The following recommendations regarding documentation may be helpful:

1. Be prepared to furnish proof that you did, in fact, produce the document/product which you are presenting.
2. A variety of products/documentation will support your claim for credit better than a single item.
3. The documentation should verify both the quantity and the quality of the experience.
4. Products should be clearly identified and logically connected to the credit requested.
5. Unless you state otherwise, the documentation/products provided will be considered to be public information.
6. When individual documentation is long or comprehensive, underline/highlight those parts of the document that are relevant to the credits requested.
7. Finally, you can furnish too much documentation. The faculty evaluator is only interested in the proof that supports the credits being requested. He/she is not interested in superfluous information. In fact, documentation that does not support your request may cloud the issue and delay the award of credit.

As you collect your documentation you will find that some courses or experiences are easier to support than others.

Your documentation should be organized so that your faculty evaluator can easily find it and identify its relationship to a specific credit request.

EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Once you have finished gathering information, organizing the documentation, and writing the request, you are ready to put your product into its final form. While evaluating your portfolio, your faculty evaluator will apply several criteria. For example he/she will consider whether:

1. You have supplied direct evidence of the connection between your experience and the requested college credit.
2. You have proven conclusively that the work submitted is yours.
3. The caliber of your experience and knowledge is sufficient to merit receipt of college credit.
4. The scope of your learning is substantial enough to meet the requirements of a three-credit, college-level course of study.

After the assessment coordinator reviews the completed portfolio, it is evaluated by faculty experts who do the actual awarding of credit. Students are notified of credits awarded when the faculty evaluation is complete. Because of the detailed work in portfolio assessment, the entire process requires an extended period of time.

If a portfolio is organizationally incorrect or inadequately articulated and documented, the portfolio will be returned immediately to the student with suggestions for improvement or expansion. The student will then be required to resubmit the portfolio for review and evaluation.

Normally, one copy of the portfolio is required to be submitted. If additional copies are needed, your PLA advisor will tell you how many additional copies will be required.

PRESENTATION

The professional appearance of your portfolio will lend additional credibility to your college-level skills. The following is the required format of the portfolio:

Portfolios that do not match the required format will be returned without being evaluated.

1. The contents of each copy of the portfolio **must be contained in a stiff-backed 3-ring notebook**. The notebook in which the portfolio is contained must be able to sit on a bookshelf in an upright position.
2. Your name, address, and phone number must appear on the front cover of the notebook *and* on the spine.
3. All sections of the portfolio must be **clearly separated by dividers and labeled**.
4. All pages of the portfolio must be numbered consecutively – with the first page of the resume as page 1.
5. All student-written or constructed materials **must be typed with double-spacing** on 8 ½ x 11 white paper.
6. All documents and certificates **must be copies** rather than originals. However, originals must be available upon request.
7. Each section must include only what is required for that section. Additional documentation may be included as appendices and must be noted as such in a Table of Appendices.
8. All material must be proofread for typographical and grammatical errors.
9. Duplicate portfolios may be submitted for more expedient evaluation.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE RESUMES

1234 West South Street
Main City, DE 19991

302-555-1000

Max Benson

Objective	YOUR Objectives here (You should include both your education and career objectives.)		
Experience	2000–Present	Arbor Shoe	Wilmington, DE
	National Sales Manager		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased sales from \$50 million to \$100 million. ▪ Doubled sales per representative from \$5 million to \$10 million. ▪ Suggested new products that increased earnings by 23%. 		
	1995–2000	FERGUSON AND BARDWELL	COLUMBIA, SC
	District Sales Manager		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased regional sales from \$25 million to \$350 million. ▪ Managed 250 sales representatives in 10 Western states. ▪ Implemented training course for new recruits — speeding profitability. 		
	1990–1994	DUFFY VINEYARDS	SOUTH RIDGE, SC
	Senior Sales Representative		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expanded sales team from 50 to 100 representatives. ▪ Tripled division revenues for each sales associate. ▪ Expanded sales to include mass-market accounts. 		
	1985–1990	LIT WARE, INC.	SOUTH RIDGE, SC
	Sales Representative		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expanded territorial sales by 400%. ▪ Received company's highest sales award four years in a row. ▪ Developed Excellence in Sales training course. 		
Education	1983–1985	South Ridge Community College,	South Ridge, SC
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A.A., Business Administration and Computer Science. ▪ Graduated <i>with a 3.6 GPA</i> 		
Interests	SR Board of Directors, running, gardening, carpentry, computers.		

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OBJECTIVE	Sales management trainee position; goal to lead and train a sales staff
EDUCATION	B.A., Communication Studies, Public Relations Option, Marketing Minor , December 2002 Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, VA Semester at Sea , Spring 2001 GPA: In-major: 3.3./4.0 Overall: 2.6/4.0 Earned 50% of educational expenses
SKILLS	<p>Marketing / Sales / Promotion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grossed \$15,000 in three months with summer painting business ▪ Raised \$600.00 in advertising space for fraternity folder project ▪ Raised \$400.00 for fraternity sponsored car show ▪ Created informational brochure for apartment leasing company ▪ Developed advertising campaign for class project <p>Management / Training / Organizational Ability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Managed daily activities of own painting business including renting/purchasing equipment and supplies, hiring assistants, budgeting, payroll ▪ Arranged client contracts for painting business ▪ Assisted in organizing talent show and benefit auction for Semester at Sea ▪ Coordinated sales presentation strategy for fraternity car show and trained others in sales techniques ▪ Trained new restaurant employees ▪ Aided in refurbishing and renovating a restaurant ▪ Performed restaurant duties ranging from busboy to night manager <p>Communications / Language / Creative Projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Created multimedia presentation using slides, music, and narration to brief incoming Virginia Tech students during orientation ▪ Developed sales presentations and assisted with advertising campaigns including radio spots, newspaper ads, billboards, posters, brochures ▪ Traveled around the world with Semester at Sea and used conversational Spanish skills
WORK EXPERIENCE	Self-Employed , (Partnership) Sunrise Painters, Reston, VA, Summer 2001 Waiter , Leonard's of Washington, Washington, DC, Summers 1999, 2000, 2001
ACTIVITIES	Pi Sigma Epsilon - National fraternity in marketing, sales management and selling Theater Arts , Virginia Tech Several roles in: " <i>The Bride</i> ," " <i>The Monster and Steven</i> ," " <i>If Men Played Cards as Women</i> ."

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE REFLECTIVE ESSAY

I am requesting credit for the following course:

BBM 411
Operations and Systems Management
3 credits

Course Description: The course reviews the design, operation, control, and monitoring of the operations system in a variety of organizations. Topics include forecasting, operations planning and scheduling, materials requirements, purchasing, process design, and quality management. Additional analysis of major problems faced by operations managers at different levels of management is included.

Course Objectives:

1. Discuss how goods and services are produced, delivered, and serviced in both factory and non-factory environments.
2. Describe the conditions through which production takes place, i.e., the part managers and workers play in performing production activities and the use of mathematics and computer models to aid the manager in decision making.
3. Determine the advantages and disadvantages of the alternative courses of action open to the manager. This creates an awareness that there are many facets in decision making that make most managerial decisions difficult.
4. Understand the ways in which production operation decisions relate to other functional areas of the organization such as marketing, finance, personnel, engineering, data processing, accounting, and purchasing.

Background

I have had more than 20 years of operations management experience. I have a working knowledge of all aspects of management including organizational structure, scheduling, inventory control, facility layout, quality control, and special project management. My work experience is also in product planning, market analysis, public relations, and, advertising operations, and personnel management.

I have gained my knowledge in the field of production and inventory control through three methods; self-study, formal training, and professional seminars/meetings.

Self-Study

Whenever I approach a new challenge, I always prepare myself by ensuring I have the knowledge I need to succeed. This preparation includes subscribing to professional journals, reading textbooks, and even purchasing and viewing lecture videos. Once I've gained the fundamental knowledge I need or am interested in, I keep myself current on professional developments in the specific field or subject through my readings. I have devoted countless hours of reading and studying textbooks and reference books in operations and systems management. The more noted ones are:

Argyris, C. (1999). *On organizational learning*. (2nd Ed). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers

Chapman, S. N. (2006). *The fundamentals of production planning and control*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Plossl, G.W. (1985). *Production and inventory control: Principles and techniques*, (2nd Ed). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Schroeder, R. G. (2003). *Operations management with student CD-Rom: Contemporary concept*. (2nd Ed). New York: McGraw Hill.

Senge, P. M. (1994). *The fifth discipline*. New York, NY: Currency Doubleday.

While some of the books I've read are fundamental textbooks used to teach operations and systems management, other books I've read such as Senge (1994) focus not on the specific operations field but on making the entire organization function as a system. I believe Senge's proposed "systems thinking" method is vital in helping a corporation to become a "learning organization." By studying outside the fringes of operations management, I've learned that all personnel at all levels of an organization must be integrated into the company functions (sales, product design, etc.) to "expand the ability to produce." Another book that has helped me in my study of operations management, while not specifically an operations management book but presents theories I believe are vital for operations management, is *On Organizational Management* (Argyris, 1999). Both Argyris' and Senge's work on learning organizations have helped me to understand how the operations manager must develop an open communications network with organizational peers, subordinates, and superiors in order to develop a systems approach to operations management.

My readings also include respected trade journals and technical papers. I subscribe to and have thoroughly read the *Journal of the American Production and Inventory Control Society* for the past seven years. This journal is published once per quarter and contains many articles from practitioners, professors, and industry consultants. I have had an article published in this peer reviewed journal on operations management. In my article, I discussed some major control issues that face organizations that maintain inventory. I used the company that I work for as some exemplars of excellence. A copy of the article is in the documentation section of this portfolio.

Formal Training

I attended formal training in operations and systems management in November, 1994. The course was offered by George Plossl in Atlanta, Georgia. This was an in-residence course held over one week (40 classroom hours). The major focus of the curriculum was on production and inventory control functions. Several programs and methods used in the manufacturing field were presented and discussed.

The course was taught by Dr. Stephen Chapman of North Carolina State University, a noted author and faculty member in the Business Division at North Carolina State. The course outlined the basic concepts of inventory, categories of inventory, and inventory control. The topic of production activity control was discussed in detail including prioritizing work, scheduling, loading, and corrective action. There were also situations given to solve on the computer using those techniques. During the seminar, the participants worked in groups on simulation activities involving production planning and control. A copy of my graduation certificate from the course is included in the documentation section of this portfolio.

Professional Seminars/Meetings.

I have attended many meetings, seminars, and programs over the past ten years dealing specifically with operations management profession. These seminars and meetings are detailed on my resume and life inventory list. The most significant have been; regular monthly meetings of the Columbus APICS Chapter, where each month a different speaker covers a topic, usually generic to production control. Sometimes these courses were not applicable directly to my work environment but they all helped build my knowledge base in operations management. On many occasions I was able to take what was presented in a seminar and synthesize it with a previous article or book I read or a previous seminar and apply theory to my environment. For example, on one occasion, I attended a presentation on the logistics involved in the frozen food industry. I was able to combine what I learned in that seminar with my previous knowledge on quality control measurements in manufacturing and developed a new standard measurement that was implemented and is still used today at ABX manufacturing.

I attended the 1990 APICS National Conference held in Cleveland, Ohio, where several professionals in the field discussed specific concerns related to production and inventory control in industry in general, along with suggested solutions to them. I also attended seminars conducted by the experts in the field; G.W. Plossl, Richard Alban, and Dick Lang.

When I attend a meeting or seminar that is featuring a noted expert in operations management, I make it a point to get the opportunity to meet and speak with him/her. My conversations normally have focused on one of their publications or their presentation. I've not only learned that many of these experts are very approachable and willing to share their vast knowledge, but I've also been able to learn some "tricks-of-the-trade." The following is a list of some of the experts I have spoken with:

- George W. Plossl who is a major industry consultant and the author of several accepted textbooks on inventory management and operations management;
- J. Nicholas Edward, who is a major industry consultant with Rath and Strong Consulting Company;
- Richard Alban who is the former plant manager at Black and Decker and;
- Cash Powell, who is President of Cash Powell and Associates.

Application of Knowledge (STUDENT SHOULD ADDRESS EACH COURSE OBJECTIVE)

Course Learning Objective: Discuss how goods and services are produced, delivered, and serviced in both factory and non- factory environments.

In 1994, I was employed by the parts department of a major automobile manufacturer. The site had not fully implemented Just-in-Time (JIT) supply and delivery techniques. JIT is a process that requires that products be made and delivered just when they are needed. Our goal was to reduce inventory carrying costs, which are costs of receiving, handling, storing, and insuring inventory. At that time, we were storing four days of parts. In other words, if our suppliers stopped producing or shipping, we had enough parts on-hand to keep the assembly line running for four days. Considering the production capacity of the plant we were supplying, we were storing millions of dollars of inventory on-site just to ensure we could always meet their production needs. Further investigation revealed that most of our suppliers were storing approximately the same amount of

inventory to insure that they could always meet our needs should their production line slow or their suppliers fail to deliver.

I learned that the key to reducing the inventory was through better manufacturing quality control. A JIT operation requires high-quality processes. Defective products are incompatible with JIT since there is no product on hand in reserve just in case defective products are made and have to be replaced for pending customer orders.

We had to minimize inventory, shorten cycle times, and eliminate defects. This is where Senge's and Argyris' systems approach and learning organizational theories would be key to our success. All facets of our manufacturing process would need to be analyzed to make the change. A combined effort of the supply chain (in both directions) was mandatory.

Our inventory was based on forecasted sales orders. We would forecast the needs of the plant in advance of production, order all parts and other necessary inputs, prepare a production schedule; and finally ship it from finished goods inventory. Rather than manufacture based on forecasts, with JIT we were to manufacture based on the daily demand of our customer. To make this happen we instituted a TQM program at all levels of the organization.

(ADDRESS OTHER OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE)

APPENDIX C

CLEP

The College-Level Examination Program® or CLEP provides students of any age with the opportunity to demonstrate college-level achievement through a program of exams in undergraduate college courses. Wilmington College recognizes these examinations for credit (see table 1). If there is a CLEP examination available for a subject you are attempting to receive prior learning credit, you are highly encouraged to take the examination.

CLEP examinations cover material taught in courses that most students take as requirements in the first two years of college. The examinations are designed to correspond to one-semester courses; some, however, correspond to full-year or two-year courses.

Before registering for a CLEP test, check with your academic advisor about the tests you intend to take. Any duplication of classroom work and CLEP will result in the appropriate subtraction of CLEP hours. CLEP scores do not affect a student's grade point average; they are pass/fail. For more information about CLEP go to: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/clep/exams.html>.

Table 1
CLEP Examination and Wilmington College Equivalent Courses

Test Title	Semester Hrs.	Minimum exam score for credit	WC Course Equivalent
English Composition w/Essay	6	50	ENG 101/102
Natural Sciences	6	50	Natural Science Elective
College Mathematics	6	50	MAT 205
Humanities	6	50	Humanities or Free Electives
Social Sciences & History	6	50	Social Science Elective
American Government	3	50	Government or Free Elective
American Literature	6	50	HUM, LIT, or Free Elective
Analyzing & Interpreting Literature	6	50	HUM, LIT, or Free Elective
Calculus	6	50	MAT 102, 205, or 304
College Algebra	3	50	MAT 101 or 205
College Algebra - Trigonometry	3	50	MAT 101, 205, or 200
College Level French Level I (ONE TEST) Level II	6 12	50 62	Humanities or Free Electives

Table 1 continues

Table 1 continued

Test Title	Semester Hrs.	Minimum exam score for credit	WC Course Equivalent
College Level German Level I (ONE TEST) Level II	6 12	50 63	Humanities or Free Electives
College Level Spanish Level I (ONE TEST) Level II	6 12	50 66	Humanities or Free Electives
English Literature	6	50	Humanities or Free Electives
Freshman College Comp	6	50	Free Elective
General Biology	6	50	SCI 232
General Chemistry	6	50	SCI 315
History of the U.S. I	3	50	Social Science or Free Elective
History of the U.S.II	3	50	HIS 314, Social Science or Free Elective
Human Growth & Development	3	50	PSY 204
Information Systems & Computer Applications.	3	50	MIS 320, BCS 205, 206 or 210
Introductory Business Law	3	50	BLA 101
Introduction to Educational Psychology	3	50	Free Elective
Introductory Psychology	3	50	PSY 101
Introductory Sociology	3	50	SOC 101
Principles of Accounting	6	50	BAC 101 or 102
Principles of Macroeconomics	3	50	ECO 101
Principles of Management	3	50	BBM 201
Principles of Marketing	3	50	BMK 305
Principles of Microeconomics	3	50	ECO 102
Trigonometry	3	50	MAT 200
Western Civilization I	3	50	Social Science or Free Elective
Western Civilization II	3	50	Social Science or Free Elective

APPENDIX D

DANTES/DSST

The DSST (DANTES Subject Standardized Tests) program is an extensive series of examinations in college subjects that are comparable to the final or end-of-course examinations in undergraduate courses. You can earn 3 semester hours of credit per test. If a DSST examination is available for a subject for which you are attempting to receive prior learning credit, you are highly encouraged to take the examination.

The test fee to take a DSST is approximately \$60. Before you take a DSST, consult with your academic advisor to be sure the test fits your curriculum.

For more information, including information about the Official DSST Test Preparation Guide and study guides, go to: <http://www.getcollegetcredit.com/>

The DSSTs are:

BUSINESS

Introduction to Business
 Business Law II
 Introduction to Computing
 Principles of Finance
 Principles of Financial Accounting
 Management Information Systems
 Money and Banking
 Organizational Behavior
 Personal Finance
 Human Resource Management
 Principles of Supervision

HUMANITIES

Art of the Western World
 An Introduction to the Modern Middle East
 Introduction to World Religions
 Ethics in America

MATHEMATICS

Business Mathematics
 Fundamentals of College Algebra
 Principles of Statistics

SCIENCES

Astronomy
 Environment & Humanity: The Race to Save the Planet Earth
 Principles of Physical Geology
 Principles of Physical Science I

SOCIAL SCIENCES

General Anthropology
 Civil War and Reconstruction
 Contemporary Western Europe 1946-1990
 Fundamentals of Counseling
 Drug & Alcohol Abuse
 Human/Cultural Geography
 Here's to Your Health
 A History of the Vietnam War
 Lifespan Developmental Psychology
 Principles of Public Speaking
 Technical Writing
 Rise & Fall of the Soviet Union
 Criminal Justice
 Introduction to Law Enforcement

EDUCATION

Foundations of Education

APPENDIX E

EXCELSIOR COLLEGE EXAMINATIONS

Excelsior College Examinations

Wilmington College recognizes Excelsior College Examinations (ECE) for credit. If an ECE examination is available for a topic for which you are attempting to receive prior learning credit, you are encouraged to take the examination. **Obtain approval** from your academic advisor prior to registering for an ECE to ensure the credit will be accepted for your program of study. Examination scores are considered Pass/Fail and do not affect your grade point average.

You may register online with Excelsior College for examinations. More information on ECE can be found at www.excelsior.edu.

Excelsior Examinations can be completed locally at:

THOMSON PROMETRIC TEST CENTER

1304 CENTERVILLE RD
WILMINGTON, DE 19804
Phone: (302)998-3817 Site Code: 9065

The following examinations are offered by Excelsior College.

Abnormal Psychology

Adult Nursing

American Dream

Anatomy & Physiology

College Writing

Community Health Nursing

English Composition

Ethics: Theory & Practice

Foundations of Gerontology

Fundamentals of Nursing

Health Restoration: I & II

History of Nazi Germany

Human Resource Management

Labor Relations

Life Span Development Psychology

Literacy Instruction in the Elementary School

Management & Leadership in Nursing

Maternal & Child Nursing (Associate)

Maternal & Child Nursing (Bach.)

Maternity Nursing

Microbiology

Nursing Concepts 1

Nursing Concepts 2

Nursing Concepts 3

Nursing Concepts 4

Nursing Concepts 5

Nursing Concepts-Foundations of Professional Practice

Organizational Behavior

Pathophysiology

Professional Nursing - Issues and Concepts

Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing

Psychology of Adulthood & Aging

Religions of the World

Research Methods in Psychology

Research in Nursing (Baccalaureate)

Statistics

World Population