

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) Opportunity Proposal
Masters in Literacy Studies Program
Western Michigan University (WMU) – Effective Fall 2022

Overview: During 2020, WMU adopted a policy allowing graduate programs to grant credit via Prior Learning Assessments (PLA). This document describes the process developed by the Literacy Studies unit faculty, to review and potentially award credits via PLA for a course within the Masters in Literacy Studies program.

Eligible Course: The faculty identified LS 6240 Reading Assessment and Effective Instruction as a course eligible for PLA credit. LS 6240 is a required course in the Masters in Literacy Studies Program in WMU. For context, see Appendix A which shows the list of required courses in the program and where LS 6240 falls in the sequence. Per WMU policy, PLA credits can be no more than 50% of the total program credits (rounding to the nearest full course as needed).

Students who believe they have mastered the standards/learning outcomes for LS 6240 must provide sufficient evidence of mastery through a detailed portfolio.

Application, Portfolio Development & Review Procedures

1. Interested students must first have applied for or be admitted to the MA in Literacy Studies program.
2. Contact Dr. Laura Teichert, Program Coordinator, to discuss whether you might be eligible for PLA credits and the PLA process.
3. Even prior to acceptance to the program, students can complete a PLA Review Application form (available online). To do this, students will need to enroll in a non-credit [Portfolio Development Course](#) (offered by WMU), and upon completion of this course, may submit their detailed portfolio. Such portfolio shall offer sufficient evidence of their prior learning demonstrating acquisition of the learning outcomes established for LS 6240.
4. Enrolling in the Portfolio Development Course costs \$400. If the portfolio is reviewed and not awarded credit, students have a one-time opportunity to revise and resubmit their portfolio. Students will be charged \$100 for the review of a resubmitted portfolio.
5. PLA Review Applications and associated evidence may be submitted at any time during an academic year. Applications will be reviewed by at least two faculty members within a

30-day period during the academic year semesters (i.e., fall & spring).

6. All decisions on any credits awarded are to be made by the Literacy Studies program faculty based on evidence offered by the applicant of prior learning and evaluated using a standard rubric (see Appendix C).
7. Any credits awarded will not be placed on a student's transcript until admitted to a specific graduate degree or certificate program. All such credits will be posted on transcript as "credit earned by PLA examination" without letter grade, and not counted in the grade point average. Such credits can be used to meet all other university graduation requirements (such as minimum number of credits completed at WMU for a given degree).

Program Details, LS 6240 Course Information, and PLA Application Evaluation

Appendix A lists the required courses for the MA in Literacy Studies Program and where LS 6240 falls in the sequence. Appendix B includes a description of LS 6240 and the course learning outcomes. Appendix C presents the associated rubric used to evaluate whether the evidence submitted by the applicant meets such outcomes

Appendix A MA in Literacy Studies Program Coursework

LS 6100 Theory and Research in Reading and Literacy Instruction
LS 6170 Reading in the Content Areas (Disciplinary Literacy)
LS 6300 Teaching Reading in a Diverse Society
LS 6180 Literacy Acquisition and Reading Instruction
LS 6240 Reading Assessment and Effective Instruction
LS 6320 Literacy Coaching
LS 6400 Clinical Practice for Reading Specialists
LS 6420 Action Research Seminar (Capstone)
LS 5980 I Elective 1
LS 5980 II Elective 2

Appendix B LS 6240 Reading Assessment and Effective Instruction

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Graduate students/candidates will use a variety of assessment tools and practices to plan and evaluate effective reading and writing instruction. Content includes analyzing different types of

assessments, learning how to interpret the results, using this information to plan effective instruction for struggling readers, and ultimately communicating this information to a variety of audiences.

This course conceptualizes reading assessment as a process of becoming informed about learners and their instructional needs. The course focuses on the development of evidence-based individualized learning experiences for struggling readers. Candidates will complete a semester-long reader study (i.e., at least 14 hours) using informal and formal assessments, individual and collaborative instructional design and implementation, observations, and effective communication with peers, parents/families/caregivers, school personnel, and instructors.

Prerequisites: Graduate level LS 6100 Minimum Grade of C, or Graduate level LS 6180 Minimum Grade of C.

This course addresses standards 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 from the International Literacy Association's Standards for Reading Professionals. Candidates will tutor struggling readers in a supervised practicum using video and GoReact, conduct ongoing assessments and share the final reader study report with parents/families/caregivers and/or schools to make recommendations for continued learning and decision-making.

COURSE GOALS (Learning Outcomes)

Students in the course will ...

- develop a conceptual framework for linking literacy assessment and instruction using foundational knowledge
- understand and use appropriate instructional approaches to support language and literacy development with an emphasis on comprehension
- understand and use various assessment instruments, interpret results, and use data to inform instruction
- understand the reading/writing connection as part of the interactive nature of language and learning
- develop skill and ease in diagnostic teaching practices based on sound assessment and best instructional practices
- develop communication skills in relating students' needs to caregivers, teachers, and other stakeholders
- use a variety of print and digital resources to support effective instruction
- analyze your own literacy assessment and instruction
- communicate with interested parties (caregivers, teachers, schools, clinical supervisors) to gather and share data on assessments, instructional goals, and make recommendations for parents and teachers to support decision-making
- seek a variety of professional resources for addressing students' needs in reading, writing and language development

- understand how to implement and interpret pre- and post- oral reading assessments, standards-based performance tasks, and other required literacy assessments
- write a professional evaluation of your assessments and tutoring sessions with your tutee
- reflect on your own and others' teaching effectiveness in this clinical experience

Appendix C

Portfolio Standard Rubric (found in Elearning)

Rubric for Portfolio-Based Assessment of Prior Learning: Assessment Guidance for Students and Faculty

The "assessment criteria" in this rubric are designed to evaluate whether a portfolio provides clear evidence that a student who is requesting credit has mastered course learning outcomes and competencies.



Each portfolio should be assessed on five criteria:

Sources of Learning

The initial expectation is that a portfolio should portray the experiences that are related to the course learning outcomes, and should illustrate how the prior learning addresses the outcomes expected for the course. A successful candidate must document and describe the learning experiences and how the past education is appropriate for the stated learning outcomes and competencies.

Demonstration of Learning

The portfolio should contain appropriate materials and artifacts that support the demonstration of learning outcomes. The artifacts chosen (e.g. certificates of completed training courses, military records, work projects and programs from performances) should readily support the chosen learning and skills. The artifacts should be dependent upon and appropriate to the field of study.

Mastering Knowledge and Skills

The portfolio should demonstrate that the student has mastered the knowledge and skills for the course learning outcomes and can apply them in practice for a sustained period. (NOTE: Concrete experience should be long enough to allow the student to meet expectations (e.g., if a student worked in a position for two weeks, it is doubtful that she/he would have sufficient experience to meet the expectations of the course learning outcomes.) It is not enough for the student to address all of the learning outcomes. It must also be shown that she/he can apply them in practice and to a different learning and problem solution.

Reflection on Learning

The portfolio should demonstrate that the student has employed self-evaluation and critical reflection to examine what produced her/his positive personal growth and expertise, and what learning actions were effective. Through the portfolio, the student should show an ability to build upon her/his knowledge and improve her/his performance by implementing strategies and recognizing knowledge gained by her/his concrete experience through reflection – and by applying that learning in her/his concrete experience. (Many adult learners employ self-reflection by completing an annual review when they self-identify their strengths and discuss how they will leverage their strengths to achieve goals for the coming year.)

Presentation

The portfolio should include all of the required elements (as defined by each institution), and these elements should be presented in a clear and well-organized manner. In addition, the quality of the written, visual and/or digital presentation should meet postsecondary standards with no errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

The student should be scored on each criterion, based on the following ratings scale:

- Does not meet expectations: 0 points
- Partially meets expectations: 1 point
- Meets expectations: 2 points
- Exceeds expectations 3 points

Guidance for all of these ratings is provided in the assessment rubric. The recommended score for a successful (i.e., passing) portfolio is 10, with a score of at least 2 in each of the initial three assessment criteria (i.e., Sources of Learning, Demonstration of Learning, & Mastering Knowledge & Skills).

Course Number:

Date Submitted:

Criteria	Does not meet expectations (0)	Partially meets expectations (1)	Meets expectations (2)	Exceeds expectations (3)	Score
Sources of Learning Experiences relevant to learning outcomes	Documentation and description of learning experiences related to course learning outcomes are lacking or substantially inadequate	Documentation and description of learning experiences related to course learning outcomes are not effectively or completely presented	Documentation and description of learning experiences related to course learning outcomes are appropriate and effectively presented	Documentation and description of learning experiences related to course learning outcomes exceed expectations	
Demonstration of Learning Artifacts	The portfolio's materials and artifacts are not appropriate and/or adequate, and are not supported by the presentation	The portfolio materials and artifacts are not fully supported by or connected to the course's learning outcomes	The portfolio includes appropriate artifacts that support the demonstration of learning outcomes	The presentation of artifacts is convincing, with strong support for the course's learning outcomes	
Mastering Knowledge & Skills Application of Learning	The portfolio provides little evidence of the student's ability to use knowledge and skills for the course's learning outcomes in practice	The portfolio demonstrates the student's ability to use the knowledge and skills for the course learning outcomes in practice is limited	The portfolio documents the acquisition of knowledge and skills for the course learning outcomes, with some ability to apply them in practice	The portfolio demonstrates the student has mastered the knowledge and skills for the course learning outcomes and can apply them in practice	
Reflection on Learning Aligned with course learning outcomes	The portfolio provides little or no evidence of reflection to increase learning aligned with the course learning outcomes for which credit is being sought	The portfolio provides inadequate evidence of reflection to increase learning aligned with the course learning outcomes for which credit is being sought	The portfolio provides evidence of reflection to increase learning aligned with the course learning outcomes for which credit is being sought	The portfolio shows that the student has reflected with substantial depth upon how the prior learning experience is aligned to the course learning outcomes for which credit is being sought	
Presentation Completeness and quality of the portfolio presentation	Assembly instructions have not been followed with critical portfolio elements not included; the quality of written, visual and/or digital presentation does not meet postsecondary standards	Most of the expected elements are included; the quality of written, visual and/or digital presentation does not meet postsecondary standards with too many errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation	The portfolio is well organized with all critical elements included; the quality of written, visual and/or digital the presentation is competent with no errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation	The portfolio is well organized with all critical elements included; learning is well documented with writing and production skills that exceed those of most college students	
Overall Assessment	The recommended cut score for a successful (i.e., passing) portfolio is 10, with a score of at least 2 in each of the initial three assessment criteria (i.e., Sources of Learning, Demonstration of Learning, & Mastering Knowledge & Skills).				TOTAL: 0