

Research on Prior Learning Assessment published as part of *Organizational and Educational Models* initiative

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Four different study and resource groups have addressed key educational issues as part of the Association's Organizational and Educational Models in Theological Education initiative, one of which focused on Prior Learning Assessment (PLA).

A group of ATS faculty and administrators from schools with experience in using PLA met, researched, explored different approaches, identified key questions and issues, and provided the groundwork for ongoing conversations about PLA and its possible uses in ATS schools to share with the broader ATS membership.

Through a process of exploration and learning together that included gathering additional input from participants at the 2022 ATS/COA Biennial Meeting, the group produced reports on a range of assigned topics:

- Prior Learning Assessment as an Alternate Admission Option at ATS Schools
- Prior Learning Assessment and External Regulation
- Prior Learning Assessment Requirements of Various Accrediting Bodies
- Benefits and Challenges of Prior Learning Assessment
- Processes and Outcomes Related to Prior Learning Assessment



- PLA: Educational Access as Justice
- Global and Multi-linguistic Partners
- Prior Learning Assessment as a Continuing Process

For many years, a wide variety of schools have used methods to assess prior learning. Non-traditional learning has served both to meet certain criteria for admission and, in some cases, to avoid duplication in studies. Recognizing students' prior learning is a crucial part of many programs of competency-based theological education. PLA has become increasingly important as schools seek to reach some underserved constituencies whose learning is not always certified by traditional credentials. PLA has also emerged as an important way to recognize

the learning of those coming to theological studies with significant learning from ministry and work experience.

This [digital resource](#) includes an executive summary of the group's findings on PLA with highlights of key themes and links to the full project reports. [Research reports on multiple modalities](#) were published in the holiday 2023 issue of *Colloquy Online*, and future issues will include reports from the groups that studied competency-based theological education and student human formation. While not intended to be comprehensive, nor the final word on the topics, these reports provide current effective practices and helpful resources to promote ongoing conversation in these areas.

The *Organizational and Educational Models in Theological Education* initiative is focusing on work in the following four areas: (1) Organizational Models, (2) Adaptive Educational Work, (3) Faculty Development, and (4) Formation of Students. In addition to the study and resource groups, identified strategies to complete the work include research (building on findings from the [Educational Models and Practices in Theological Education](#) project and launching new studies) and the [Moving Forward in Mission grants](#).



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Click the booklet to read the reports!