

# A Perspective from Canada on RPL, the Credit Bank

Susan Forseille, Director PLAR, January 16, 2024



**TRU**

Two small photographs showing a scenic view of a university campus with mountains in the background, and a group of people walking on a paved path.

**Benefits**

**PLAR  
Paths**

**What is  
Next?**

**What Questions  
Do You Have?**  
[sforseille@tru.ca](mailto:sforseille@tru.ca)





**THOMPSON  
RIVERS  
UNIVERSITY**



**Where**

**Facts &  
Figures**

**Legislation &  
Policy**

# 1997-2024







**THOMPSON  
RIVERS  
UNIVERSITY**



**Where**

**Facts &  
Figures**

**Legislation &  
Policy**

# Facts & Figures

- PLAR (prior learning assessment & recognition) is a process to assess informal and non-formal learning
- TRU has one of largest PLAR programs in Canada
- Awards over 70% of PLAR credit in British Columbia (BC)
- Most of this credit comes from one particular type of PLAR...

## Facts and Figures

TRU at a Glance  
2022-23



9  
FACULTIES  
AND  
SCHOOLS



27,632

Headcount

All Students

On campus 14,525

Open Learning 14,996

Dually enrolled 1,889

Indigenous\* 2,708

24%

International  
Students

Headcount:

6,678

From  
112 Countries

Total FTEs

13,306

Domestic: 9,001

Indigenous: 1,273\*

Course Enrolments

114,287

On campus 82,064

Open Learning 32,223





**THOMPSON  
RIVERS  
UNIVERSITY**



**Where**

**Facts &  
Figures**

**Legislation &  
Policy**



**THOMPSON  
RIVERS  
UNIVERSITY**



**Where**

**Facts &  
Figures**

**Legislation &  
Policy**



# Legislation & Policy

## #1 Provincial Legislation:



- Section 3(1)(d) states TRU's purpose is "to provide an open learning educational credit bank for students."



## #2 - TRU Policies:

- The TRU PLAR Policy states "*Thompson Rivers University (TRU) recognizes that adult learners acquire knowledge and skills through life and work experience. Through prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR), TRU will assess this knowledge and skills and grant credit/ recognition for the learning that has taken place.*"





**THOMPSON  
RIVERS  
UNIVERSITY**



**Where**

**Facts &  
Figures**

**Legislation &  
Policy**



# A Perspective from Canada on RPL, the Credit Bank

Susan Forseille, Director PLAR, January 16, 2024



**TRU**

Two small photographs showing a scenic view of a university campus with mountains in the background, and a group of people walking on a paved path.

**Benefits**

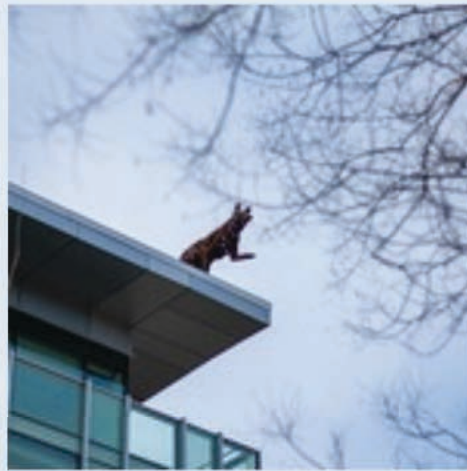
**PLAR  
Paths**

**What is  
Next?**

**What Questions  
Do You Have?**  
[sforseille@tru.ca](mailto:sforseille@tru.ca)



# Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR)



**PLAR Paths**

**Credit Bank**

**A Few  
Statistics**

# 4 PLAR Paths at TRU



## Path #1 - Course-Based

- Allows students to petition for specific course credit



## Path #2 - Challenge Exams

- Summative exam based on course learning objectives



## Path #3 - Competency-Based

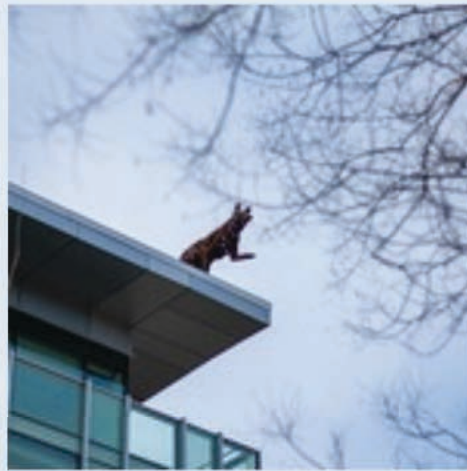
- Based on Institutional Learning Outcomes, the competencies/transversal skills
- Students can receive over two years of credit



## Path #4 - Credit Bank...



# Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR)



**PLAR Paths**

**Credit Bank**

**A Few  
Statistics**

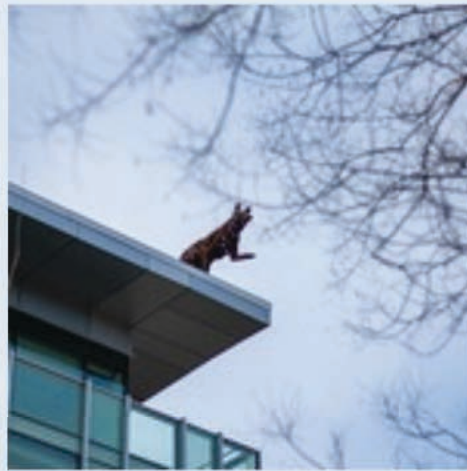
# Credit Bank Overview

- Allows students to receive credit for pre-assessed training from select employers, private trainers, and continuing studies programs
- Sample of partnerships,
  - Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologist
  - Canadian Flight Center
  - City of Calgary Emergency Services
  - Insurance Institute of Canada
  - Vancouver Academy of Music
  - Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Services
- [Full list at www.tru.ca/distance/plar-ol/creditbank.html](http://www.tru.ca/distance/plar-ol/creditbank.html)





# Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR)



**PLAR Paths**

**Credit Bank**

**A Few  
Statistics**

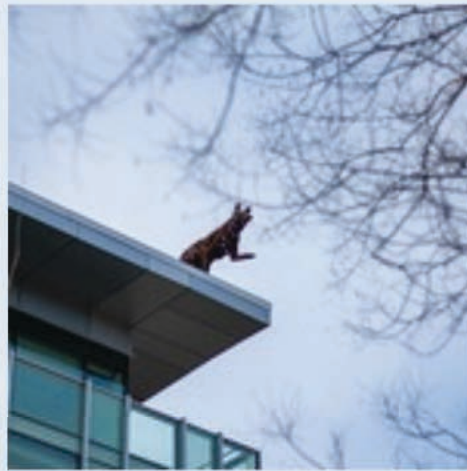
# Credit Bank Statistics

- Curently over 100 pathways into TRU programs through Credit Bank:
  - 30+ pathways range from 3-45 credits
  - 13 pathways offering 45+ credits (over one year of studies)
  - 28 pathways offering 60+ credits (over two years of studies)
  - 6 pathways offering 90+ credits (over 3 years of studies)
- The credit bank accounts for 67% of all TRU PLAR credits awarded
- And may be about to grow exponentially





# Prior Learning Assessment & Recognition (PLAR)



**PLAR Paths**

**Credit Bank**

**A Few  
Statistics**



# A Perspective from Canada on RPL, the Credit Bank

Susan Forseille, Director PLAR, January 16, 2024



**TRU**

Two small photographs showing a scenic view of a university campus with mountains in the background, and a group of people walking on a paved path.

**Benefits**

**PLAR  
Paths**

**What is  
Next?**

**What Questions  
Do You Have?**  
[sforseille@tru.ca](mailto:sforseille@tru.ca)



# Benefits of Credit Bank - Student

- **Education**

- Saves time & money
- Completion rates increase 9-34% (depending on program)
- GPA increases 9-16%

- **Career**

- Increased awareness and confidence in skills, knowledge, experience
- Enhanced career understanding, confidence, action
- Improved opportunities to shift into emerging labour market(s)

- **Personal**

- Increases perceptions of self-worth, social inclusion, and ontological security (sense of place and security in the world)
- Better understand areas need more education or skill development

**\*This information is from my PhD research**



# Benefits of Credit Bank - TRU

- Recruitment & retention increases (America's Call for Higher Education Redesign, shares that 75% of Americans would be more likely to enroll in higher education if they could receive credit for what they already know) (Lumina Foundation 2013)
- Increased grant from provincial government
- Increased access for rural, mature, and Indigenous students (business, social work, trades, health)





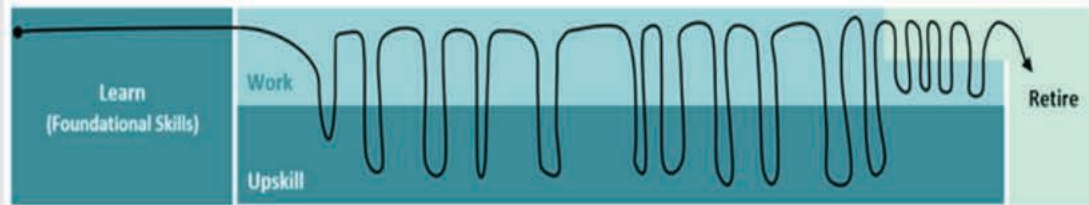
# Benefits of Credit Bank - Province

- The 5th industrial revolution is fueling structural changes in both the labour market and higher education
  - Life long & life wide learning
  - Reskilling/upskilling
  - Multiple career shifts
  - More people leaving labour market than joining it
  - Need to reduce barriers keeping people out of the labour market)

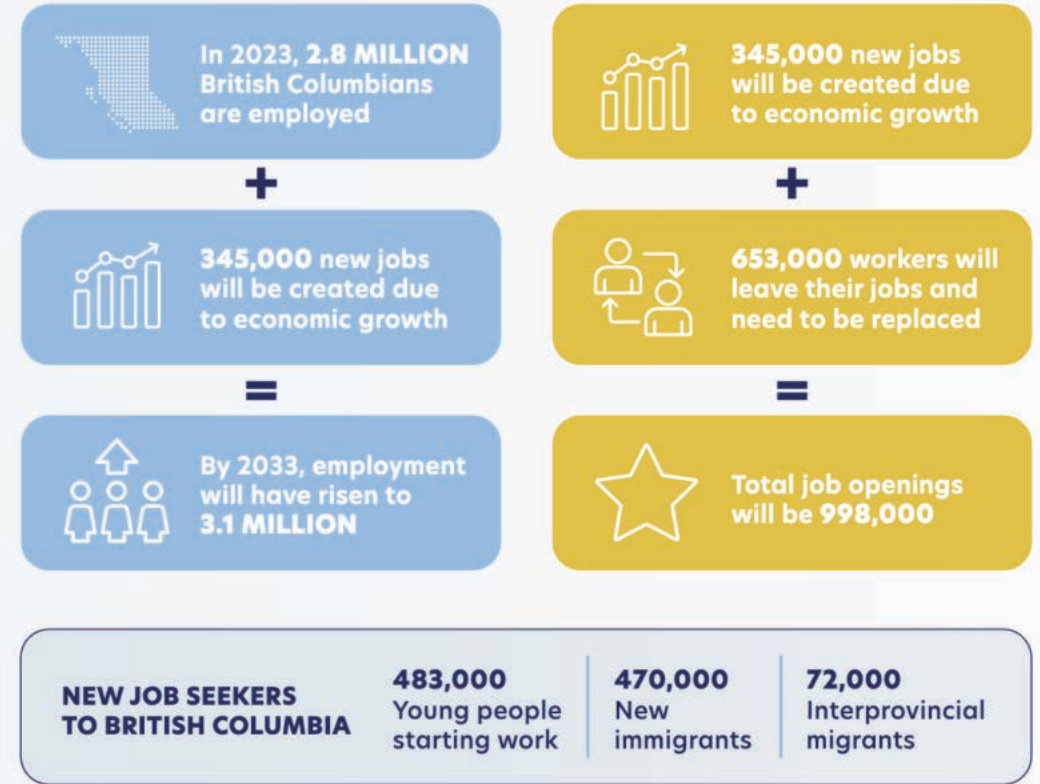
Traditional Model:



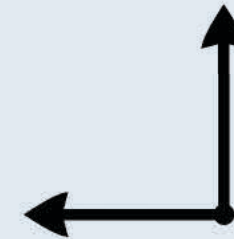
Lifelong Learning Model:



## OVER THE NEXT 10 YEARS



British Columbia Labour Market Outlook, 2023 edition





# A Perspective from Canada on RPL, the Credit Bank

Susan Forseille, Director PLAR, January 16, 2024



**TRU**

Two small photographs showing a campus scene with buildings and a group of people walking on a path.

**Benefits**

**PLAR  
Paths**

**What is  
Next?**

**What Questions  
Do You Have?**  
[sforseille@tru.ca](mailto:sforseille@tru.ca)



# Exponential Growth?



Project #1

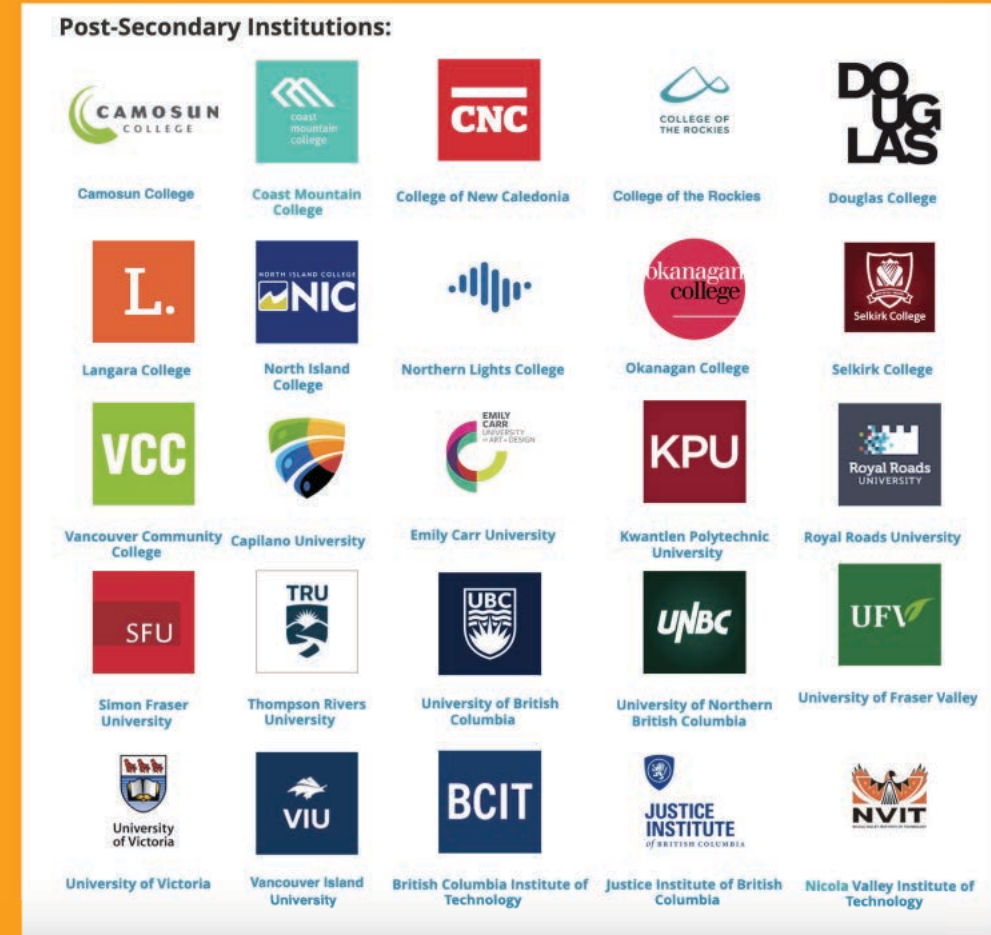
Project #2

Project #3

# Project #1, 2018, 2021, 2022

## State of PLAR in British Columbia

- 2018 & 2022 Environmental Scan & Needs Assessment for the credit bank in 25 PSI in BC
- 2021 Which PSI in BC have something similar to a Credit Bank?
  - What need/want with Credit Bank





# Exponential Growth?



Project #1

Project #2

Project #3

# Project #2, 2023

## Micro-Credential Assessment

- Adopted and refined TRU PLAR's Credit Bank assessment processes to assess 10 micro-credentials for academic credit
  - The development of a Micro-credential Assessment Committee
  - Development of a critical information summary
  - The selection and training of faculty assessors
  - The development of a final report, recommendations, and webinar materials
- More conversations with provincial government





# Exponential Growth?



Project #1

Project #2

Project #3

# Project #3, currently A Provincial Credit Bank?



- Negotiating with the provincial government to develop, implement, and administer a provincial credit bank



- Provincial repository of credit bank agreements (what taught, how learning assessed, suggested credit award, stacking & laddering options, etc.)

- \$22 million (CAD) over 5 years



- Year 1 plan
- Year 2-3 design
- Year 4-5 develop and implement
- 250 agreements by year 5



- Working with the 25 public post-secondary institutions, BC Chamber of Commerce, BC Assembly of First Nations, CPHR, Immigrant Services Society of BC, employment centres, etc.



# Exponential Growth?



Project #1

Project #2

Project #3



# A Perspective from Canada on RPL, the Credit Bank

Susan Forseille, Director PLAR, January 16, 2024



**TRU**

Two small photographs showing a scenic view of a university campus with mountains in the background, and a group of people walking on a paved path.

**Benefits**

**PLAR  
Paths**

**What is  
Next?**

**What Questions  
Do You Have?**  
[sforseille@tru.ca](mailto:sforseille@tru.ca)



# What Questions (or Advice) Do You Have?



[sforseille@tru.ca](mailto:sforseille@tru.ca)

# A Perspective from Canada on RPL, the Credit Bank

Susan Forseille, Director PLAR, January 16, 2024



**TRU**

Two small inset photographs showing a scenic view of a university campus with mountains in the background, and a group of people walking on a paved path.

**Benefits**

**PLAR  
Paths**

**What is  
Next?**

**What Questions  
Do You Have?**  
[sforseille@tru.ca](mailto:sforseille@tru.ca)