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**Mining for Credentials: Using PLAR to  
Recognize, Empower and Enable a  
Workforce**

# Session Overview

- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
- SIAST PLAR Capacity
- Applications of PLAR for Industry
- Overview of mine worker credentialing initiative

# Recognition of Prior Learning

- Transfer Credit
  - Credit from one post secondary institute to another
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)
  - Involves assessment of prior learning
- Qualification Recognition
  - Used most often with foreign trained individuals

# PLAR

- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)
  - Involves assessment of prior learning including:
    - learning from work experience
    - Learning from volunteer and other related experience
    - Work based training

# Prior Learning Assessments

- Assessments involve application of knowledge skills and attitudes
- Validation of experience and learning
- Minimizes written testing
- Focuses on demonstration which replicates workplace scenarios
- Behavioral Descriptive Interviewing (BDI) commonly used for PLAR as well as for recruitment in HR applications

# Workplace Applications of PLAR

- When recruiting, non-credentialed skills can be verified against job requirements
- Used for verification of expertise when promoting
- Employees can gain credit for experiential learning, creating efficiencies in training
- Employers can validate employee skills creating efficiencies in training and ensuring quality
- Facilitate the smooth redeployment of workforce internally and externally

# PLAR Capacity at SIAST

- **8 programs with program level PLAR**
- **11 block challenges in PLAR database**
- **74 programs have PLAR candidate guides**
- **115 programs with PLAR availability**
- **839 courses in PLAR database**
- **1,032 Courses challenged through PLAR last year.**
  - **98% of completed challenges successful**

# Moving PLAR beyond the Institution

- Assessing the skills of Immigrants
- Industry sector applications of PLAR
  - Certification of mine workers through PLAR
- Building capacity at the macro level



# Immigration Applications

## SIAST Skills Passport Program (SINP)

- Employer selects skill and knowledge requirements from a menu of outcomes.
- SIAST PLAR assessment resources used to guide overseas assessment.
- Skills and knowledge verified by SIAST providing employers confidence.

# SIAST - Building PLAR Capacity

- Training for institutions in PLAR and PLAR assessment models.
- Contracted by the Alberta Ministry of Advanced Education and Technology.
- Consulting and support services to industry and industry associations
- Training available for those wanting to become RPL Practitioners - **RPLP program.**

# Overview of the Mine Worker Credentialing Initiative



- Goal to recognize and certify the knowledge skills and abilities of mine workers to increase their job site mobility.
- Align college curriculum with industry occupational standards.
- Certify mine workers against established industry competencies/college credit.
- Identify gaps and customize training.

# A Sectoral Approach



## Certifying Mine Workers through PLAR Processes

- Workers in the Canadian mining industry have not historically had their skills recognized through credentials.
- The mining industry developed standards for three occupational groupings:
  - Hardrock underground miners
  - Surface miners
  - Mineral process operators



## Vision

To increase recognition of skills and competencies, support worker mobility and create consistent, quality training.

## Strategy

- ✓ Occupational analysis and standards
- ✓ Certification of workers
- ✓ Accreditation of training

# Certification Program Mission



## Create a credential that will

- be recognized by employers across the country.
- facilitate the transition of workers from one workplace to another.
- document the skills, competencies and knowledge of workers in undesignated occupations.
- help retain these workers within the industry by giving recognition for demonstrated competency.

# The Strategy



- The model was designed for a “skills passport” documentation specifically for undesignated mining occupations.
- Assessment of prior learning needed to be based on nationally established occupational standards.
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition needed to be rigorous and consistent with accepted practice.

# Pilot Project



- Two undesignated occupations were selected for development.
- Selected pilot site was a mine in New Brunswick slated for decommissioning within two years.
- Partner institutions were selected.
- SIAST was selected to design the PLAR model.



# A Partnership Between



# The Plan



- CCNB Bathurst personnel took a lead role in developing the PLAR assessments.
- SIAST provided the model for developments, PLAR expertise, guidance and support during the development.

# The Plan continued...



- SIAST and Aurora provided curriculum.
- Xstrata Mining provided the content expertise, testing site and personnel.
- MIHR provided coordination and funding.

# Completed deliverables included:



- PLAR assessor guide(s) for each course.
- Candidate information guide.
- Candidate action plan.

# Evidence File/Portfolio



- Authentic Assessment
  - employer validations
  - job descriptions
  - resume
  - performance evaluations
  - letters of recommendation
  - workplace training/professional development

# Accomplishments of Pilot



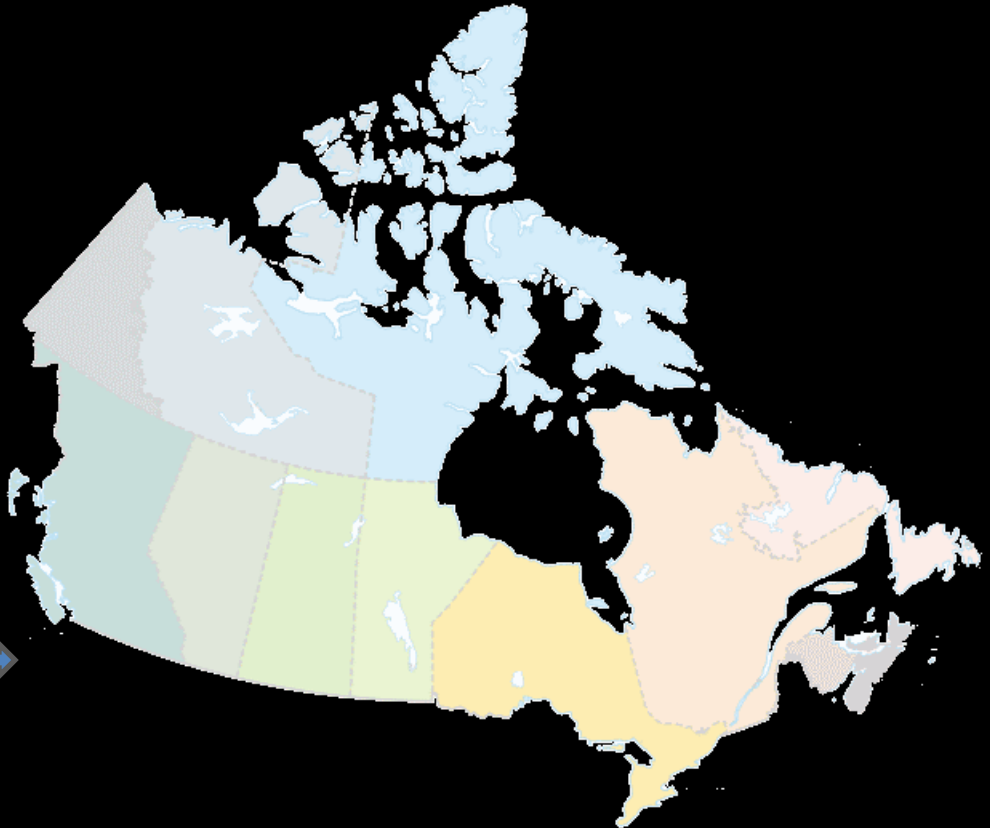
- Post Secondary training program outcomes aligned with occupational standards.
- PLAR assessment tools developed for two occupations.
- Assessors trained in conducting PLAR assessments.
- Pilot assessments conducted with over 125 miners.

# Pilot Stage Two



- Pilot sites in six more sites across Canada

- BC 3 →
- NWT 1 →
- Manitoba 1 →
- Ontario 1 →
- Brunswick Mine 1 →



# Recognition for Experiential Learning



## PLAR process

- Builds confidence of candidates through performance based assessments.
- Recognizes the skills of workers.
- Maintains integrity of mining credentials.
- Provides consistency across the industry.





CANADIAN MINING CREDENTIALS PROGRAM  
PROGRAMME DES TITRES DE COMPÉTENCES  
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE CANADIENNE

MOBILITY



RECOGNITION  
CONSISTENCY  
DEDICATION  
OPPORTUNITY



Canadian Mining Credentials Program:  
**Certification and  
Workplace Assessment**



CERTIFICATION

Defining the work we do!

**MiHRM** | MINING INDUSTRY  
HUMAN RESOURCES COUNCIL  
CONSEIL DES RESSOURCES HUMAINES  
DE L'INDUSTRIE MINIÈRE

EXPERTISE