

5 Tips about PLA from a Student

- **Scholarly sources:** The textbooks and materials that are required for the actual course in which credit is being requested should be referenced and cited in the PLA. I initially used professional articles and materials that I used at work but the feedback I received was that they were not considered to be scholarly sources. This was discouraging at first but made total sense once I made the revisions. Lesson learned – cite the course textbooks and use the DePaul Library to find sources rather than a Google search!
- **Academic audience:** My writing was based on how I would explain things to someone at work because my experience and knowledge comes from a business setting rather than a classroom. As a result, I assumed terminology and some concepts would be known by the reviewer. Lesson learned – explain in great detail how the professional experience connects directly to the scholarly sources and clearly define any terms/concepts.
- **Evidence:** Provide any documentation that demonstrates the learning or how concepts were applied. I included timelines, excerpts from project plans and feedback, screen shots, metrics with results and marketing plans. The evidence was copied into a single document with a brief explanation of each item and how it connected to the learning outcomes for the course. Lesson learned – provide as much detail as possible to demonstrate learning that connects to the course in which credit is being requested.
- **Self-reflection:** Describe how the knowledge was acquired through the experiences. My initial submission explained what I did but needed more context on what/how I learned through the experience to better connect to the scholarly sources. For example, I learned through getting feedback in the workplace from managers/customers, trying different methods to improve the process and making adjustments to improve results. Adding that context helped to demonstrate learning which strengthened my submission. Lesson learned – describe what was learned, how it was learned and anything that could have been done differently to help better connect work experiences to what would have been learned in a college-level course.
- **DePaul Writing Center:** Feedback from the Writing Center was priceless! I really struggled with the APA style and got great feedback from the Writing Center on that and how to improve my writing. In addition to the style guidance, feedback included how to better cite the sources, grammar/punctuation and sentence structure. I sent to the Writing Center for review after each draft and before the final assessment was submitted. I initially thought this was just another step in a very long process but it really does help! Lesson learned – use the Writing Center early and often.