



**Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)**

**Topic Guide**

**DCM 303 – Leadership Models**

**Adapted from SUNY – Empire State College**



## Table of Contents

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE.....	2
GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS .....	3
<b>Number of Credits</b> .....	3
<b>Level of Learning</b> .....	3
<b>Page Count and Sources Guidelines</b> .....	3
<b>Additional Resources</b> .....	3
LEARNING OUTCOMES.....	4
WHAT IS LEADERSHIP? .....	5
COMPOSING YOUR PLA PROJECT .....	6
Writing Your PLA Project.....	7
<b>Experience</b> .....	7
<b>Knowledge and/or Practice</b> .....	7
<b>Reflection and Self-Assessment</b> .....	8
PLA ASSESSMENT RUBRIC.....	11
EXAMPLES OF GENERAL PLA TOPICS AND LEVELS OF LEARNING .....	14
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES .....	16
<b>Office of Prior Learning Assessment</b> .....	16
<b>PLA Advisor</b> .....	16
<b>Course Match PLA Examples</b> .....	16
<b>5 Tips About PLA from a Student</b> .....	16
<b>The Writing Center</b> .....	16

## **HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE**

This guide is meant to help you understand the knowledge and skills typically expected of someone who can demonstrate the learning outcomes for DCM 303 – Leadership Models in a PLA Project. This guide is also meant to help you go through the processes of thinking about your experience, refining your academic knowledge, and demonstrating a connection between your experience and knowledge. Answering the following questions and following the prompts will help you develop the essay, which will be your PLA Project.

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

### DCM 303 – Leadership Models Syllabus

#### **Number of Credits**

DCM 303 – Leadership Models is a 4-credit course. Students who have their PLA Course Match Projects for this course accepted will receive 4 credits.

#### **Level of Learning**

As a 300-level class, DCM 303 – Leadership Models should be treated as an advanced college-level course.

#### **Page Count and Sources Guidelines**

- at least 12 pages (2400 words)
- at least 8 sources appropriate for scholarly or professional discourse
- APA style

#### **Additional Resources**

- PLA Advisor ([SCPSPLA@depaul.edu](mailto:SCPSPLA@depaul.edu))
- University Writing Center (<https://condor.depaul.edu/writing/programs-writing-center-scheduling-appointments.html>)
- Purdue Online Writing Lab APA Style Guide ([https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/apa\\_style/apa\\_style\\_introduction.htm](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_style_introduction.htm))

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

Your PLA Project will need to demonstrate how your experience directly meets the Learning Outcomes for the course. Importantly, you will also need demonstrate the Academic Knowledge associated with your experience.

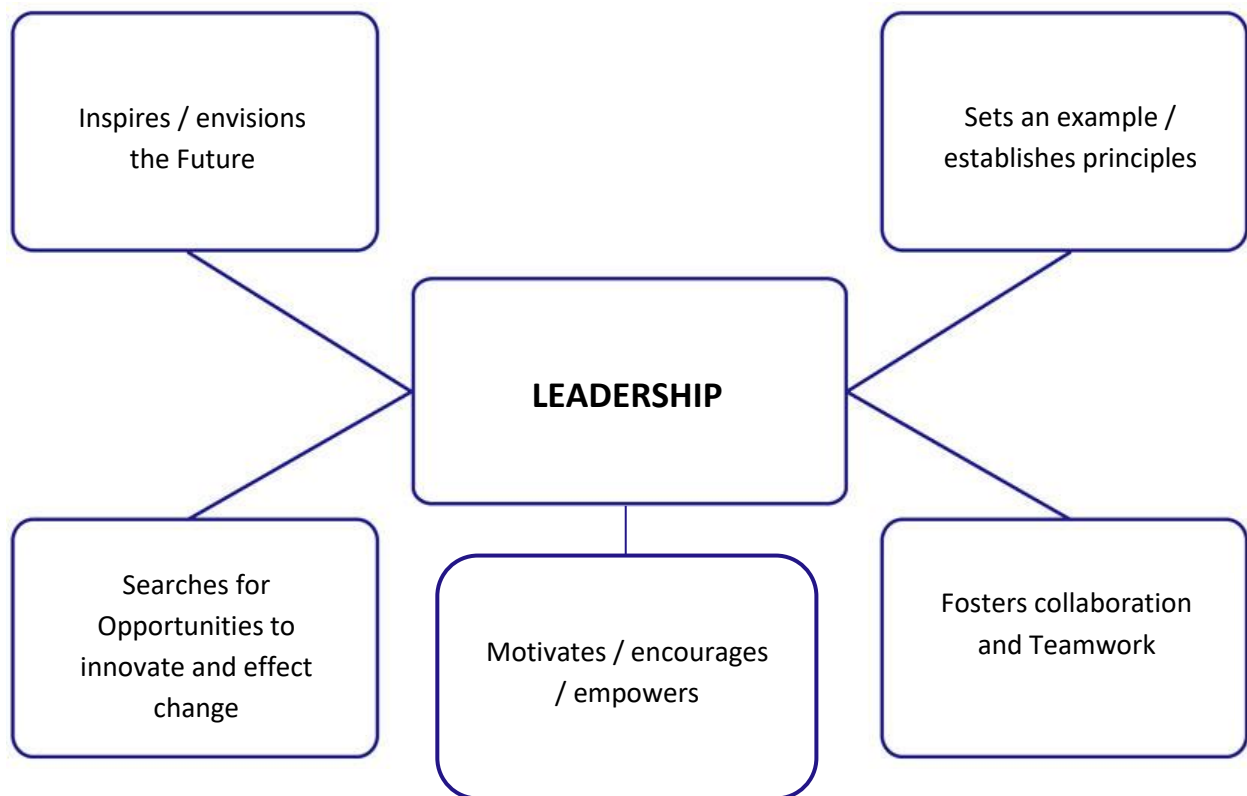
The Learning Outcomes for DCM 303 are:

1. Describe, analyze, compare and contrast the industrial age, transformational, transactional, and situational leadership models.
2. Arrive at a functional definition of leadership.
3. Craft a leadership model that reflects your own leadership insights, values, skills, needs and aspirations.
4. Describe the relationship between leadership ethics and values and leadership models
5. Identify and apply key principles and practices that will strengthen your values-based decision-making skills.
6. Explain the central role that values-based decision making plays in the leadership process.
7. Evaluate your own leadership interests and aspirations, skills, strengths, values and operating methods and demonstrate that growing knowledge in your personal leadership model, a potential guide and resource for your future leadership development plans and activities.
8. Further develop your writing, rhetorical and critical thinking skills.

## WHAT IS LEADERSHIP?

“Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.” Northouse, Peter G. (2012). *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 6th Edition. Sage Publications.

Leadership is a set of skills and behaviors which can be separate from title or assigned role in an organization. Leadership is specifically focused on motivating others to achieve goals based on an articulated vision. By contrast, management is focused on the implementation of established business objectives. The diagram below identifies many aspects of learning in this field. Your learning may fall within some areas and not others, based on your personal experience, and that’s o.k.



## **COMPOSING YOUR PLA PROJECT**

Follow the outline below by considering the questions and prompts to develop your PLA Project. Simply answering questions and prompts are not sufficient – you will need to expand your writing to demonstrate the depth and comprehensive of your understanding of leadership. Footnotes will indicate which learning outcomes you are addressing. Please note learning outcome 8 will be addressed by your ability to draft an essay in clear prose for an academic audience. As you respond and revise them into a cohesive essay, remember that a content expert will assess your PLA project based on your 1) Experience, 2) Knowledge and/or Practice, and 3) Reflection & Self-Assessment.

## **Writing Your PLA Project**

### **Experience**

This criterion requires you to communicate relevant descriptions and explanations of personal and/or professional experience related to learning outcome(s). Describe the experience(s) and how you achieved college-level learning. Provide the context and background of your experience, and provide relevant details regarding what you did. For example, you might include a new skill you acquired, what you observed, how you approached the situation, how you solved a problem, and the outcome. Remember leadership can be embodied in multiple positions but it must involve influencing others.

As you reflect upon your leadership experiences, consider ones that show how you met the Learning Outcomes for the course. You are welcome to choose:

- one experience where you met all the Learning outcomes
- or you can choose multiple examples that align with specific groupings of Learning Outcomes.

#### **Please consider the following:**

- What were/are the positions that you have held which relate to this PLA? These positions could either be professional, volunteer, or personal?
  - o What leadership training, if any, did you receive?
- Describe scenarios in which you demonstrated leadership. It may be helpful to consider specific problems or challenges that you successfully addressed through your leadership.
  - o Briefly describe your role in that scenario.
  - o How did you demonstrate leadership?
  - o What was the result?
  - o What did you learn from that scenario?
  - o How did/could you apply that learning to another scenario (for example, at your workplace or a different setting)?
- Reflect on your leadership positions and scenarios.
  - o What insights did you gain?
  - o What values did you demonstrate?
  - o What skills did you gain?
  - o What were your leadership needs in these positions?

### **Knowledge and/or Practice**

This criterion requires you to demonstrate understanding of relevant theories, models, or best practices related to learning outcome(s). You must demonstrate understanding of relationship

among relevant theories, models, or best practices. Describe and cite the relevant theories, models, practices, and perspectives related to your experience.

Remember you will need to use at least 8 sources appropriate for scholarly or professional discourse and use APA style for citations.

**Please consider the following:**

- Describe, analyze, compare and contrast the industrial age, transformational, transactional, and situational leadership models<sup>1</sup>.
  - The following encyclopedia entries can help you improve your basic understanding these models
    - [Transformational and Transactional Leadership](#)
      - Burns, J. (2004). Transformational and transactional leadership. In G. R. Goethals G. J. Sorenson, & J. M. Burns (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of leadership* (Vol. 1, pp. 1559-1566). SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://www-doi-org.ezproxy.depaul.edu/10.4135/9781412952392.n356>
    - [Situational and Contingency Approaches to Leadership](#)
      - Goethals, G. R., Sorenson, G. J., & Burns, J. M. (2004). Situational and contingency approaches to leadership. In *Encyclopedia of leadership* (Vol. 1, pp. 1430-1436). SAGE Publications, Inc., <https://www-doi-org.ezproxy.depaul.edu/10.4135/9781412952392.n327>
- What profession, discipline and/or academic area does your experience belong?
- What is the name of the theory, model, or perspective that best describes your experience?
- How does the basis of your experience relate or compare/contrast to other theories and models?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses associated with the body of knowledge where your experience fits?

**Reflection and Self-Assessment**

This criterion requires you to demonstrate reflect upon experience and critically assess your abilities and experiences in relationship to the sources you have included. You must provide self-assessment of your experience showing how it relates to the academic sources you are citing.

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<sup>1</sup> Learning outcome 1

**Please consider the following:**

- Describe the skills and characteristics of an effective leader.
  - How do these skills and characteristics compare and contrast to those described or implied in the industrial age, transformational, transactional, and situational leadership models?
- Identify several leaders with whom you are familiar. You may have met these leaders in your personal or professional life or read about them.
  - What do you consider their strengths as leaders?
  - What do you consider their weaknesses as leaders?
  - What qualities or practices were you able to take away from their respective styles?
  - What leadership characteristics do they have in common?
  - How do these characteristics relate to the leadership models?
  - How do they differ?
  - How do these characteristics relate to the leadership models?
- Describe the relationship between leadership ethics and values and leadership models.<sup>2</sup>
- Explain the central role that values-based decision making plays in the leadership process.<sup>3</sup>
- Where does your experience “fit” in the general body of academic knowledge?
- Based on your understanding of the academic knowledge, how would you assess the success or efficacy of your experience?
- Based on your research, how would you change your experience to be more successful or to get more out of it?
- Describe the relationship between leadership ethics and values and leadership models.<sup>4</sup>
- Explain the central role that values-based decision-making plays in the leadership process.<sup>5</sup>
- Considering the leadership behaviors and practices in the previous diagram, your own experiences, and information you find in academic sources:
  - Write a personal definition of leadership.<sup>6</sup>
  - Please provide examples of your leadership that you think fall under these broad leadership behaviors and practices.

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<sup>2</sup> Learning outcome 4

<sup>3</sup> Learning outcome 6

<sup>4</sup> Learning outcome 4

<sup>5</sup> Learning outcome 6

<sup>6</sup> Learning outcome 2

- What reading, self-development or other experiences have helped develop your leadership knowledge or skills?
  - Describe a model of leadership that relates to your definition of leadership.
    - Explain how this model reflects your leadership insights, values, skills, needs and aspirations.<sup>7</sup>
  - Identify and apply key principles and practices that will strengthen your values-based decision-making skills.<sup>8</sup>
    - What leadership training, if any, did you receive?
- Based on everything you have learned about leadership, what are some typical challenges leaders face and how do they overcome them.
  - Evaluate your own leadership interests and aspirations, skills, strengths, values and operating methods and demonstrate that growing knowledge in your personal leadership model, a potential guide and resource for your future leadership development plans and activities.<sup>9</sup>
  - Offer any additional information or thoughts on this topic that you would like to discuss as part of your PLA evaluation.
  - Consider adding any evidence (certificates, letters of testimony, leadership materials you developed, etc.)
    - Remember to explain how your evidence relates to the one or more of the learning outcomes.

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<sup>7</sup> Learning outcome 3

<sup>8</sup> Learning outcome 5

<sup>9</sup> Learning outcome 7

## PLA ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

The content expert who will assess your project will determine whether you have demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes for the class with the following rubric.

Score	Result	Meaning
9-7 Points	Accept	Student is awarded credit for PLA project.
6-5 Points	Revise and Resubmit	Student has 2 weeks to revise PLA project based on content expert feedback.
4 – 0 Points	Not Accepted	Student is not awarded credit for PLA project.

	Accomplished College-Level Learning	Developing College-level Learning	Beginning College-level Learning	Not College-level Learning
	3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
<b>EXPERIENCE:</b>  Effectively communicates relevant explanation of personal and/or professional experience(s) related to learning outcome(s).	Explanation of experience(s) is comprehensive and detailed. The context and background of experience(s) are described with specific details. There is a clear relationship between the description of the experience(s) and learning outcome(s). Provides specific evidence that learning occurred.	Explanation of experience(s) and the context and background of experience(s) are generally present though with some gaps. There is a general relationship between the description of experience(s) and the learning outcomes(s). Provides general evidence that learning occurred.	Explanation of experience is simplistic and/or incomplete. Minimal context or background of experience(s) was provided. Explanation of relationship between experience(s) and learning outcome(s) is linked but superficial, and is assumed but not explicit. Provides minimal evidence that learning occurred.	Explanation and description of the experience(s) is unclear and/or non-specific. No context or background of the experience was provided. The relationship between experience(s) and the learning outcome(s) is non-existent or scholarly investigation irrelevant. Provides no evidence that learning occurred. Experience is conflated with learning (i.e., length of time is equivalent to mastery).

<p><b>KNOWLEDGE AND/OR PRACTICE:</b></p> <p>Effectively communicates relevant theories and/or best practices related to learning outcome(s).</p>	<p>Explanation describes relevant concepts and/or practices and provides analysis (compares/contrasts) with other relevant ideas. Explanation demonstrates critique of strengths/weaknesses of ideas. Secondary sources are appropriate for scholarly or professional discourse.</p>	<p>Explanation generally describes relevant concepts and/or practice, and references other relevant ideas. Explanation may demonstrate adequate description of key idea(s) but there may be gaps in relating it to others. Secondary sources are generally appropriate for scholarly or professional discourse but may exclude key disciplinary concepts and/or be out-of-date.</p>	<p>Explanation superficially describes concepts and/or practice. Conceptual focus may be misdirected or ancillary. Explanation is mainly factual with limited analytical engagement. Secondary sources are included but markedly exclude key disciplinary concepts, are misused, and/or are inappropriate for scholarly or professional discourse.</p>	<p>Lack of evidence or understanding of relevant concepts and/or best practices. Lack of appropriate secondary sources and understanding of knowledge related to learning outcome(s).</p>
<p><b>REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p>Effectively reflects upon experience and critically self-assesses abilities in relationship to relevant body of knowledge.</p>	<p>Reflection on experience(s) specifically connects to broader body of knowledge. Recognizes relationship and provides clear critique and/or explanation of the significance of the connection. Provides critical self-assessment including descriptions of personal strengths and weaknesses as it relates to the experience(s).</p>	<p>Reflection on experience(s) generally connects to broader body of knowledge. Recognizes overall relationship and provides some critique and explanation of the significance of the connection. Provides some level of self-assessment including general descriptions of personal abilities</p>	<p>Reflection on experiences(s) minimally connects to broader body of knowledge. Recognizes that there is a relationship but is unable to critique or adequately explain the significance of the connection. Provides superficial level of self-assessment that focuses on what one accomplished rather than how</p>	<p>Lack of reflection on how experience connects to broader body of knowledge. Lack of evidence connecting experience within body of knowledge. Lack of self-assessment on one's abilities or performance.</p>

		as it relates to the experience(s).	well they accomplished.	
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## EXAMPLES OF GENERAL PLA TOPICS AND LEVELS OF LEARNING

	<b>Building</b>	<b>Project Management</b>	<b>Spanish Culture</b>	<b>Professional Communication</b>
<b>NOT college-level</b>	Know how to put up wallboard	Work to complete items on a checklist given to you	Traveled in Spain twice, for two weeks each time	Sends emails and text messages at work
<b>Beginning college-level</b>	Describe why walls are constructed a certain way	Create a timeline and supervise the completion of tasks	Describe trends and practices related to daily life, holidays, food, religion, etc.; familiar with some Spanish history related to contemporary attitudes and practices  List trends and practices related to daily life, holidays, food, religion, etc.  Describe some aspects of Spanish history	Communicates in the workplace by writing emails, instant messages and reports for a general audience
<b>Developing college-level</b>	Describe why walls are constructed a certain way  Understand how to design a building so the walls stay up  Explain why walls are constructed a certain way  List the advantages and disadvantages of different methods for building a wall	Create a timeline and supervise the completion of tasks  Work to create cooperation of all parties concerned with the project	Discuss trends and practices related to daily life, holidays, food, religion, etc.  Identify sub-groups within the overall culture  Describe some aspects of Spanish history related to contemporary attitudes and practices  .	Communicates in the workplace by writing emails, instant messages and reports for a variety of stakeholders  Identifies characteristics of different professional communication genres

<b>Accomplished college-level</b>	Make decisions to design a building so the walls stay up	Create a timeline and supervise the completion of tasks	Analyze nuances related to attitudes and practices	Analyzes professional communication genres to develop complex, diverse, and effective written and oral communication
	Explain why walls are constructed a certain way	Work to create cooperation of all parties concerned with the project	Identify sub-groups within the overall culture and analyze the sub-groups relationships with each other	Adjusts communications to mindfully consider audience, situation, context, and style
	Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of different methods for building a wall	analyze problems or issues and amend the plan; evaluate the outcome of the project	Compare Spanish history with contemporary attitudes and practices	

This topic guide was modified from [SUNY – Empire State College’s Diversity in the Workplace PLA Topic Guide](#).

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Office of Prior Learning Assessment (OPLA)**

The Office of Prior Learning Assessment website provides guidance for students seeking to be awarded college credit for prior experience.

#### **PLA Advisor ([SCPSPLA@depaul.edu](mailto:SCPSPLA@depaul.edu))**

A Prior Learning Assessment advisor is available to help you throughout the process. They can help you understand the requirements of a PLA project and are happy to provide feedback on in-progress work.

#### **Course Match PLA Examples**

Scroll down to find a few examples of completed Course Match PLA projects.

#### **5 Tips About PLA from a Student**

Just what it sounds like—a student who has successfully completed PLA projects shares their tips for success.

#### **The Writing Center**

Peer writing tutors are available to help at all stages of the writing process. They can review completed work, in-progress drafts, and even assist with planning and outlining. You can meet with a tutor in-person or online!