



Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)

Topic Guide

DCM 318 – Social Justice in the Professions

Adapted from SUNY – Empire State College



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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 318 – Social Justice in the Professions 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 your PLA Project.

GENERAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS

DCM 318 – Social Justice in the Professions Syllabus

Number of Credits

DCM 318 – Social Justice in the Professions is a 2-credit course. Students who have their PLA Course Match Projects for this course accepted will receive 2 credits.

Level of Learning

As a 300-level class, DCM 318 – Social Justice in the Professions should be treated as an advanced college-level course.

Page Count and Sources Guidelines

- at least 6 pages (1200 words)
- at least 4 sources appropriate for scholarly or professional discourse
- APA style

Additional Resources

- PLA Advisor (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.html)

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 318 are:

1. Comprehend the term “social justice” and some of the key meanings, debates, histories and applications associated with it
2. Describe key aspects of your proposed profession
3. Consider thoughtfully how social justice issues, problems and/or action might intersect with your proposed profession
4. Understand and critically examine a specific social justice struggle in philosophical and historical context
5. Display awareness of a range of perspectives on inequality in US society
6. Discuss what the terms “identity” and “recognition” denote in the context of discussions of multiculturalism and social justice
7. Address the above goals in discursive contexts such as discussion conferences, journal entries, exercises and major assignments

PLA Guide

Social Justice in the Professions

How to Use this Guide

This guide is meant to help you understand the knowledge and skills typically expected of someone who has a college-level understanding of Social Justice in the Workplace.

This guide is also meant to help you go through the processes of thinking about your learning and writing your Prior Learning Request by answering the following questions, which will be explained more fully in the section Writing your PLA Request:

1. Describe what you do.
2. Compare a real and hypothetical situation in this field.
3. Identify informal “rules” in this field.
4. Examine the role of a professional in this field.
5. Apply your knowledge in a problem-solving situation.
6. Identify critical issues in the field.
7. Teach others.
8. Offer additional information or evidence of your learning.

Typical Learning Experiences

The following list is not all inclusive; you may have learned in other ways.

Awareness, sensitivity and inclusion of social justice through work experiences	Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator
Chief Diversity Officer	Diversity Trainer or related learning professional
Human Resource Manager, Specialist	Workplace Training
Manager/ Supervisor	Personal or professional travel
Military Experience	

What is Social Justice in the Professions?

Social Justice in the Professions involves understanding the complexities of equity and justice with regard to the distribution of resources and opportunities. Social justice intersects with professions as people consider how to pursue ways in which professional values, practices and codes can intersect with social justice concerns, issues and activism. Individuals cultivate ethical awareness and disposition toward social justice. Additionally, those with experience social justice also have knowledge of specific social justice movement(s).

The diagram below identifies some aspects of learning in this field. Your learning may fall within some areas and not others, based on your personal experience, and that's okay.



COMPOSING YOUR PLA PROJECT

Follow the outline below by responding to the questions and prompts to develop your PLA Project. Footnotes will indicate which learning outcomes you are addressing. Please note learning outcome 7 will be addressed by your ability to draft a project for an academic audience. As you respond and revise them into cohesive portfolio, 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.

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.

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 4 sources appropriate for scholarly or professional discourse and use APA style for citations.

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.

Writing Your PLA Request

Please answer the questions below to the best of your ability.

1. In your own words, *What is social justice?* How does this compare to other definitions of social justice?¹

2. How do you see social justice as a workplace issue? How does social justice affect key aspects of your current or potential profession?²

3. Describe an event in your professional career, which involved a social justice issue. What actions did you take? What were the outcomes? Examine how this event fits within a philosophical and historical context.³

4. What are the characteristics of a workplace that is committed to diversity and social justice? Compare and contrast the ideal workplace with those you work or have worked in. What are the problems that a workplace faces when it is not diverse and lacks a social justice focus? Describe any personal experiences that relate to these problems. In particular, relate your discussion to concepts and definitions of “identity” and “recognition.”⁴

5. Your organization has decided to create an office for Diversity and Inclusion. You have been tasked with developing the charter for this new office. In your charter, be sure to include the following:

- a. The mission of the office
- b. A brief glossary of terms
- c. Resources and relationships that the office will engage with
- d. List some of your proposed initiatives
 - a. Explain how these initiatives display awareness of and incorporate a range of perspective on inequality in US Society
- e. Explain the full scope of responsibilities of this office:
 - b. Explain how these responsibilities display awareness of and incorporate a range of perspective on inequality in US Society
 - c. Explain how multiculturalism and social justice will be incorporated into the responsibilities
- b. Think about and then respond to two or three of the following questions:
 - a. Why might it be difficult to create a comprehensive list of all dimensions of diversity?
 - b. Why is workplace diversity such a complex issue?
 - c. To what extent is the workplace a microcosm of society? Why do stereotypes and prejudices persist?⁵

¹ Learning Outcome 1

² Learning Outcome 2

³ Learning Outcomes 3 and 4

⁴ Learning Outcome 6

⁵ Learning Outcomes 3, 5, and 6

4. Use the knowledge in a problem-solving situation

You have just begun a new job at a new organization. How would you discern the extent to which the organization is committed to social justice and multiculturalism? How would you discern the organization's awareness of a range of perspectives on inequality in the US?⁶

5. Teach others

Describe the elements that you would infuse into a proposed training program to ensure that participants of the program acquire knowledge, awareness, and understanding of a contemporary social justice issue within a historical and philosophical context.⁷

6. Offer any additional information or thoughts on this topic that you would like to discuss as part of your PLA evaluation.

⁶ Learning Outcomes 5 and 6

⁷ Learning Outcome 4

PLA ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

The content expert who will assess your project will 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
EXPERIENCE: 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>KNOWLEDGE AND/OR PRACTICE:</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>REFLECTION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT</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 as it relates to the experience(s).</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 well they accomplished.</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>

EXAMPLES OF GENERAL PLA TOPICS AND LEVELS OF LEARNING

	Building	Project Management	Spanish Culture	Professional Communication
NOT college-level	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
Beginning college-level	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
Developing college-level	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

Accomplished college-level	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)

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!