**Kinds of Learning**

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**Kinds of Learning Based on HOW you learned:**

**Explicit Learning**

Explicit Learningis usually something that is directly "taught," often by an expert who shares specific material, organized formally, and evaluated in prescribed ways. Methods of evaluating explicit learning include objective tests, essays, term papers and sometimes demonstrations or simulations....Your transcript credits [from accredited colleges], pre-evaluated certificates, military training credits, and CLEP or other examination credits fall into this category….This kind of explicit college level learning transfers very easily into Empire State College with literally no questions asked.

However, some of you may also have gained some explicit learning from non-accredited sources such as computer training, religious institutions, cooking schools, Open Education Resources (OERs) like Coursera and other MOOCs (massive online open courses) or from a wide variety of other training venues….Because the source of your learning is not already "stamped approved" by an accrediting body and/or you have no "grade" to measure your attainment, you have to tell us what you learned so that one of our evaluators can verify that you know what you say you know...and, honestly, that what the source of your learning taught you is close to what is generally agreed upon by other scholars who do teach in accredited institutions.  Some of the PLA essays you write may fall into this category.   If you are asking for affirmation of this kind of organized learning, your best bet is to get a course syllabus or even a course description from an accredited college that offers a similar course and address the main points of your PLA essay to the main points covered in the syllabus.

**Tacit Learning**

Tacit Learning can also be college level. It is a bit different from explicit learning in that no one actually designed your overall learning experience. Tacit learning experiences take place as your own brain makes connections and sense of your experiences.   It occurs at a "gut" level. It is that sense you have inside yourself that you "just understand" a complex idea or you "just know" how to do something. Tacit learning often comes from long practice. For instance, an excellent baseball player may "just know" how to pitch to a particular batter on a rainy, windy day. As a counselor for thirty years or so, I often seem to "just know" the right way to approach a particular person to help her feel comfortable and at ease. I "just know" the questions to ask (and the questions not to ask) to have a successful outcome. An artist may "just know" what lines, color and texture are needed for a beautiful painting. The problem with such tacit level learning is that it is hard to put into words so that another person can evaluate your knowledge and skills….Articulating this knowledge is what your mentor will help you do through the PLA process.

**Kinds of Learning Based on WHAT you Learned:**

**Factual or Informational Learning**

Factual learning involves information about a particular topic. It includes such things as the terminology used in a particular field, the processes usually followed, and various verifiable details. Much of our learning in elementary and high school falls into the category of factual learning. Things like the date of the Declaration of Independence or the multiplication tables or the alphabet or basic grammar rules or the periodic table of the elements or the bones of the body are in this category. Factual learning may involve memorization. Factual learning is usually detailed and is often specific to a particular situation. **To be college level, factual learning must be generalizable to more than one setting.**  For instance, you may have had to learn a specific computerized record keeping system that was unique to a particular business, but.no matter how difficult it may have been to learn, it would probably not be college level learning.   On the other hand, if over the years you have learned the principles used in creating a computerized record keeping system and have applied them and/or can compare and contrast the advantages and disadvantages of different computerized systems, you may have college level learning.

**Procedural, Process or Skill-Based Learning**

Procedural learning involves "how" to do something. Some examples of procedural learning include how to actively listen in an intake interview, how to insert a catheter, … how to run a meeting, etc. … Procedural learning usually addresses skills. **Like factual learning, to be college level, procedural learning must be generalizable to more than one setting, and learners need to know ... not only how to do something but the theories behind why it is done in that way, and how the procedures fit into a broader set of skills.** In the examples above, listening skills are a part of the broader skill set used in human service areas such as case management,… how to insert a catheter is part of basic nursing skills, how to run a meeting is part of administrative skills….None of these specific skills on its own is enough for college level credit, but skills may be creditable when put together in a coherent package of knowledge and skills.  Evaluators use a variety of methods of measuring skill learning including role plays, case studies, portfolios, etc. to determine how well you understand and can apply procedures.

**Critical Reflection**

Critical Reflection involves the ability to analyze complex issues, develop a position, and express your ideas clearly so that others can understand them. It occurs when you combine elements such as your own experience and thoughts with reading, thoughtful conversations with others, as well other sources of information.... Critical reflection is one indication of higher level learning and is usually expected in advanced level work. Examples of this kind of learning would include the development of an ethical framework, determining your own philosophy of management, articulating your approach to parenting, developing an approach to counseling. Generally. reflective learning emerges from a variety of elements.

**Problem Solving**

Problem solving … involves the ability to identify a problem, generate and research possible solutions, select an appropriate course of action, try the course of action, and evaluate results. Advanced PLA often involves your ability to demonstrate that you know how to use and apply the problem solving methods commonly used in a particular academic discipline or professional field. Problem solving abilities may be evaluated through such things as case studies or role plays.

**Connected Learning**

Connected learning is the ability to work with others, building on their ideas to create new projects, new ideas, and/or to solve problems. It has to do with skills such as the ability to listen, the ability to express one's own ideas, and the ability to pull together seemingly different ideas into new approaches. Connected learning has become especially important as many organizations have moved to a team approach to problem solving. In your PLA requests and in your discussions with evaluators, you may want to talk about how you have used connected learning in various projects, especially if you are asking for advanced credit in various fields of management or direct service delivery.

**Perspective Transformation**

Perspective transformation occurs when a learning experience is so intense that it changes your view of the world or an important part of it, usually for the better. An example of perspective transformation I have had personally includes the experience of living in the inner city and learning first-hand about the kindness and courage of many who are economically disadvantaged. It changed my view of the so-called "culture of poverty" forever. Incidents of perspective transformation may appropriately be included in credit-by-evaluation requests if they are also backed up by reading and reflection. For instance, I might have included the story of how my perspective on poverty has changed, in a PLA essay on Power and Privilege, but I would also include examples from readings and a well-thought-out theoretical framework for understanding the issues to demonstrate a thorough, sophisticated understanding of a very complex topic.