

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A) What is Prior Learning?**

"Learning only takes place in the classroom." While we know this statement is not true, education has limited itself for hundreds of years by recognizing only classroom learning or qualified programs within college institutions in determining actual credit towards a college degree. The EXCEL program at Trinity International University has sought to understand and acknowledge the depth and breadth of learning wherever it takes place through the Prior Learning Assessment program. This program deals specifically with recognition and assessment of college level learning in all walks of life.

What is meant by Prior Learning Assessment? Adults have significant responsibilities ranging from family interests, business interests, church interests and many other areas that make up their schedules each day. As a result of these interests, one's experience in a given area demands, at times, a certain level of expertise. Whether it be as a parent, supervisor at work, Sunday School teacher, spouse or any other role, the experience in that role can generate learning and growth in the individual. Being effective in the work place or in the home or other places life takes adults, demands a process of learning that equals and, in many cases, surpasses the learning that takes place in the classroom. Prior Learning Assessment seeks to acknowledge the learning fostered by those experiences by examining what the individual has understood and learned through the processes of life and all it brings to the individual.

One key concept to note in dealing with Prior Learning Assessment: it is not experience, but learning that takes place within that experience that creates knowledge for each individual. One can experience an event, a process, a period of change, and be able to describe the circumstances that took place without recognizing or understanding the cognitive learning one went through during the significant moment or period in ones' life. As a result, Prior Learning Assessment credit acknowledges learning, not experience, as the source for potential credit recognized by Trinity International University.

### **B) CAEL STANDARDS**

The following are the Ten Standards for Quality Assurance in Assessing Learning for Credit by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL). These standards are recognized by Trinity International University's EXCEL program. They are as follows:

#### **ACADEMIC STANDARDS**

- I) Credit should be awarded only for learning, and not for experience.
- II) College credit should be awarded only for college-level learning.
- III) Credit should be awarded only for learning that has a balance, appropriate to the subject, between theory and practical application.

IV) The determination of competence levels and of credit awards must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic experts.

V) Credit should be appropriate to the academic context in which it is accepted.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE STANDARDS

VI) Credit awards and their transcript entries should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.

Policies and procedures applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available.

VIII) Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded.

IX) All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should receive adequate training for the functions they perform, and there should be provision for their continued professional development.

X) Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served and in the state of the assessment arts.

#### C) PRIOR LEARNING ASSESSMENT IN EXCEL

Prior Learning Assessment in the EXCEL program at Trinity International University is made up of two components: Life Learning Papers (LLP) and Business and Professional Training (BPT). Each area (LLP and BPT) will be addressed individually later in this manual. The following overview examines and explains areas common to both the Life Learning Papers (LLP) and the Business and Professional Training (BPT):

1) Students may petition up to 32 semester hours in Prior Learning Assessment. Each LLP can receive up to four semester hours depending upon the amount petitioned by the student. BPT credit hours are determined by the reader assessing the BPT, thus petitions for BPTs do not include a request for specific credits.

2) Before submitting a Prior Learning Assessment petition, students must submit and receive approval for the LLP or BPT topic, using the appropriate Topic Approval worksheet (found on the PLA page of the Trinity website). The Topic Approval form is to be submitted to the Director of Student Services for approval.

3) Once the topic is approved, each petition submitted must include the Prior Learning Assessment Petition cover sheet filled out completely by the student petitioning the LLP or BPT.

4) Appropriate supporting documentation is needed for all Life Learning Papers (LLP), and Business and Professional Training (BPT).

Note: All supporting documents and certificates should be copies rather than the original documents. Original documents may be requested by the reader and must be supplied by the student, if requested.

4) Students are charged a standard petition fee. For LLPs, there is an additional fee per credit hour petitioned by the student. The fees for LLPs are not based on credit awarded, but on credit petitioned. In the case of BPTs, the fee per credit is based on transcribed credit the student will request once credit has been awarded by the reader. See the current EXCEL Catalog for the latest fees for Prior Learning Assessment credits. Fees are subject to change at the beginning of each new school year. There is no additional fee for rewrites of LLPs or BPTs.

5) Prior Learning Assessment readers include Trinity International University faculty and EXCEL faculty, along with professionals outside the university who have demonstrated expertise in their respective disciplines. Thus, your Prior Learning Assessment will be read by an experienced and knowledgeable professional in the area of study your LLP or BPT has addressed.

6) Each Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) petition must be submitted to the EXCEL Records Office. The evaluation process takes approximately 4-6 weeks to assess. The PLA petition will have one of three of the following recommendations:

a) Granted full or partial credit requested for a LLP, or in the case of a BPT, the credit determined by the evaluator.

If credit is awarded for a LLP or BPT, a letter of notification is sent to the student. LLPs and BPTs that are awarded credit **MUST** remain in the archives of the EXCEL Records Office. You may request your original LLPs and BPTs one year after graduating. Send written request to the EXCEL Records Office.

If full or partial credit is awarded, the EXCEL Records Office will record the credit on the student's TIU transcript.

b) Additional development and/or revisions are necessary to generate the credit requested. The reader will address the areas that are required to satisfactorily fulfill the requirements needed to receive credit.

c) Deny credit for the petition.

7) When submitting a rewrite of a previously written LLP or BPT you must include a new PLA petition sheet along with the revised LLP or BPT. Also include the original LLP or BPT, along with the original PLA petition sheet. The original PLA petition sheet and LLP or BPT is considered to be the one with the original comments of the reader

included, not a duplication of the original. This is necessary so the reader may see if original requests have been addressed by the student in the revised LLP or BPT. Revised LLPs or BPTs must be submitted to the EXCEL Records Office, not to the reader. PLA petitions may only be rewritten twice. If credit is not awarded by the second rewrite, the petition is no longer eligible to be evaluated for college credit.

8) The following majors are offered for EXCEL Prior Learning Assessments at Trinity International University. The prefix is necessary on PLA petition sheet under department. Prefixes are noted in parentheses after major listing.

- a) Biblical Studies (BI)
- b) Biological Sciences (BIO)
- c) Christian Ministry (CEM)
- d) Communications (COM)
- e) Computer Information Systems (CIS)
- f) Economics & Management (E/M)
- g) Education (ED)
- h) English (ENG)
- i) Human Performance and Wellness (HPW)
- j) Music (MU)
- k) Psychology (PSY)

The reader or representative of the EXCEL Records may change department and/or course title on the petition sheet if another department or course title is more reflective of student's prior learning and corresponds more closely with a comparable college course.

9) Faculty evaluates both the content and the presentation of a Prior Learning Assessment Petition. Each petition must be organized in a format which will clearly communicate learning outcomes. It should also be proofread to insure correct punctuation, spelling, and grammar have been used. If it does not meet these standards it will be returned to the student without the reader evaluating the content, and it would need to be resubmitted once proper corrections have been made.

10) LLPs and BPTs are evaluated on the premise that the awarded grade would be C or better. PLAs are not given an actual grade, they are given credit with no grade recorded, yet must attain a C or better rating from the reader. Any Prior Learning Assessment petition that does not attain a C or better rating is denied and sent back to the student for possible revisions. The C or better standard reflects content; learning outcomes, presentation and grammar, and all four of the criteria are used to determine whether a paper has achieved the grade of C or better standard.

11) Credit awarded for LLPs and BPTs appears on the Trinity International University transcript by the title of the paper submitted. The Prior Learning Assessment credits will appear on transcript as a course taken at Trinity International University. As a result, titles selected by student should be condensed, yet descriptive seeking to be as academic and professional as the paper will allow.

12) All Life Learning Papers (LLPs) and Business and Professional Training petitions (BPTs) are evaluated from the perspective of ones' own Christian or spiritual growth. Each PLA petition needs to address the personal growth and development that you achieved in your own spiritual journey. For some topics, the growth of your faith may not be applicable, yet this should be noted within your LLP or BPT.

**REMEMBER:** A petition is just that, a petition for credit. Submission of a petition does not guarantee that a student will receive credit.

## **II. BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING (BPT)**

One of the two components of Prior Learning Assessment is Business and Professional Training (BPT). It deals with college level learning that a student has accomplished through seminars, courses, training sessions, non-accredited professional schools, conferences, or other means of training through business related functions or professional related functions. Each of the training experiences must be certified by the sponsoring agency. Some examples of certified learning include:

- 1) American Institute of Banking courses
- 2) American Management Association courses
- 3) Policy Academy courses
- 4) Pilot's licenses (private, instrument, commercial)
- 5) Real Estate license
- 6) Broker's license
- 7) Formal seminars and/or courses provided by public and private organizations and employers

**NOTE:** When utilizing Business and Professional Training (BPT) to petition for college credit, **ONLY COLLEGE LEVEL TRAINING** experiences are eligible for college credit. Students are encouraged to review various college catalogs to determine if general subject material covered in a training experience would fit a college course.

Each BPT, along with all Prior Learning Assessment petitions, must be sent to the EXCEL Records Office. The BPT will then be sent to the appropriate reader for assessment. The process of evaluation takes approximately 4-6 weeks to complete from the time the EXCEL Records Office receives the BPT to the time it is reported back to student. Each Business and Professional Training petition includes the following:

A) Prior Learning Assessment Petition sheet (contains both BPT and LLP petitions)

- 1) PLA petition sheet must be filled out completely with appropriate areas for BPT explained thoroughly.

B) Summary describing the training experience covering all of the following:

- 1) Descriptions of the learning outcomes/principles presented in training.
- 2) Examples of class activities and texts and/or curriculum used in training.
- 3) Development of extracurricular research utilized in training by the instructor dealing with texts and/or curriculum, articles and personal experience to support core content. Petitioners must site relevant and current theories and research in the discipline. At least three sources are required (textbooks, articles etc.)
- 4) Description of how this training was relevant to the student, how the knowledge acquired has enhanced personal growth and aspects of personal application dealing specifically with how the Business and Professional Training has helped the student in the workplace or on a personal or professional level.

The summary should be as long as necessary to communicate to the reader the nature of the training, the amount of preparation and intensity the Business and Professional Training exhibited, and the amount of college level learning that the student achieved. It is necessary to communicate through the learning outcomes what the student has personally learned through the Business and Professional Training. Attendance and completion of training does not necessarily allow for credit. The student must convey clearly what he/she has learned from the training experience.

C) Appropriate documentation must include both of the following areas:

- 1) Syllabus, detailed brochure, pamphlet, training notebook or other resource utilized by training detailing the instruction given. Should cover as many of the following concepts as possible:
  - a) Information about the agency
  - b) Information about the instructor's educational background
  - c) Location where the training was offered
  - d) A list of texts and/or supporting materials used
  - e) Format of the course (i.e., amount of lecture, discussion, media, etc.)
  - f) Outside assignments
  - g) Learning objectives of the training
  - h) Topics covered in training
  - i) Criteria for successful completion of training
- 2) Certificate or letter of verification from the sponsoring organization on professional letterhead verifying student's participation in and successful completion of the training that took place with appropriate dates and times that training took place.

Note: If either one of the criteria for documentation can not be located or produced by the student, the student must secure documentation from the sponsoring organization and/or instructor before BPT will be evaluated.

The following additional information should also be understood by students before submitting a Business and Professional Training petition (BPT):

Credit hours are not petitioned in Business and Professional Training petitions (BPT). Credit is awarded by the reader who assesses the training experience of the student. Credit awarded is not confined to a limited amount such as Life Learning papers (LLP) which are limited to 1 to 4 credits, thus a student could potentially earn up to 32 credit hours for one petition (32 hours is the maximum hours awarded in Prior Learning Assessment). If the student does not need all of the hours received from the BPT, the student may request the number of transcribed hours the student wishes to receive. (e.g., if a student received 16 hours for Professional Training as a missionary through a BPT, yet only needed 12 hours to satisfactorily complete requirements for his/her degree, the student need only request and pay for 12 of the 16 credit hours awarded.)

3) A student may combine up to four Business and Professional Training experiences on one Prior Learning Assessment petition if they meet all of the following criteria:

a) Each BPT is sponsored by the same organization or agency.

b) Each BPT is dealing with the same general topic.

c) Each BPT submitted under one petition was no longer than 40 hours in duration. Any BPT over 40 hours must be submitted on an individual basis.

4) While readers are professionals in the area of your BPT, and familiar with many common training programs, please refrain from abbreviating names of courses or agencies without, first, giving the non-abbreviated name. (i.e., The American Red Cross {ARC}, Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation {CPR})

5) Faculty evaluate both the content and presentation of a Business and Professional Training petition. Each BPT petition must be organized in a format which will clearly communicate learning outcomes, and be proofread to ensure correct punctuation, spelling, and grammar have been utilized throughout the BPT.

Note: A learning outcome consists of a fact (rule, law or principle), or a feeling (value, theory or conviction), dealing with the identification of what has been learned, the interaction of the process of how one came to his/her present conclusion and the application in the student's life in appropriate ways. To say one has learned from an experience requires a level of ownership which demands that one works through the issue and then makes the issue his/her own. Thus a learning outcome must have three elements (identification, process, application) to allow the student to convey that actual learning has taken place and that it has changed the person as a result. (See Section for more information regarding learning outcomes)

6) If not deemed college level learning, no credit will be awarded. In most cases in Business and Professional Training petitions, the amount of credit is final, without the possibility of revision. It is the student's obligation to convey the training information as completely as possible and revisions are unlikely because training can not be altered. Possible reviews of BPTs are granted when further research and/or updated current research is requested by the reader to further clarify your BPT.

7) Business and Professional Training can be utilized from past training sessions ONLY if BPT is timely and true to current measuring standards. Training completed in the distant past may only be awarded credit if information and knowledge in the specified area is still relatively accurate. (eg., if, with the dramatic changes in medicine or computers, the initial training is out of date with the current trends or facts and the original training could and/or would not be vital by current standards, the training will be viewed as outdated and not worthy of current college credit.)

8) The number of hours each training seminar or course represents is but one of the measurements used to determine how much credit is awarded. Generally, for every 30 hours of training, one credit is awarded. The 30:1 ratio is based on the premise that most college credit demands 15 hours of classroom time for one credit (15:1). It is also generally accepted that most Business and Professional training does not have the intensity, nor work load of a college course. Yet, it is also understood that some Business and Professional training does require a difficult work load and has similar intensity to that of a college classroom. Given that variability, the reader can determine his or her own ratio between 15:1 and 30:1 or above, based on the clear and concise information reported by the student. Out of class preparation is a 30:1 ratio for most college courses and out of class preparation for BPTs follows the same logic as previously suggested and thus is given a 60:1 ratio, with potential of reader adjusting to 30:1. A designated area on the petition sheet requires actual classroom time in hours and actual preparation time in hours.

Note: While the 30:1 ratio is a good evaluating tool for the student, the BPT is measured and assessed credit by hours, learning outcomes, personal application, presentation of paper, and appearance of paper. Thus hours are just one factor utilized by the reader to assess credit.

REMEMBER: A petition is just that, a petition for credit. Submission of a petition does not guarantee that a student will receive credit.

### **III. LIFE LEARNING PAPERS (LLP)**

The second component, in which to earn credit in Prior Learning Assessment, is through Life Learning Papers (LLP). Life Learning Papers allow the student to express college level learning across a variety of academic disciplines acquired through life experiences. The key component

of Life Learning Papers is not reflected by experience, but what you learned as a result of that experience. As with all Prior Learning Assessment petitions the learning must be college level learning. These significant learning experiences are translated into learning outcomes that reflect how knowledge was acquired integrating theory, principles, laws, rules, values, or convictions, along with spiritual growth.

Participation in an event does not necessarily constitute college level learning. One can accurately demonstrate the fact that the experience has happened and verify through supporting documentation the legitimacy of an event that took place, yet these items only substantiate participation in an event. Each LLP covers both the life experience one was involved in and the college level knowledge one came to understand through the experience. To demonstrate the college level knowledge one has experienced, the process and development of that knowledge must be thoughtfully and logically expressed.

In Section IV of this Prior Learning Assessment Manual the preparation, format and development of writing Life Learning Papers will be discussed, along with a detailed definition and explanation of what constitutes a learning outcome. The following information conveys other significant procedural concerns which the student must reflect in each Life Learning Paper:

- 1) The student petitions for credit in Life Learning Papers. The amount of credit that can be earned is up to 4 credits. Generally, the average LLP is worth 3 credits which corresponds with most college courses which also earns 3 credits.
- 2) Life Learning Papers are based on experiential college level learning, not on previous college course work. Writing an LLP based on course work that was not transferable, or information gathered from transcribed course work is not acceptable.
- 3) Readers of Life Learning Papers are TIU faculty, EXCEL faculty, or professionals in the field of expertise that you are writing about. As a result, learning outcomes should be succinct and accurately described in the area of discipline your LLP deals with. Books, articles, journals, or other resources you have utilized to help you know more about the topic you are writing about can act as foundational material in your LLP. Proper citation and a complete bibliography are required when utilizing any secondary source.

Note: When utilizing secondary information, any thought or phrase used by an author must be acknowledged and credited to that author. Violation of that principle constitutes plagiarism, which is against TIU and EXCEL policy.

- 4) When scripture passages have been a source of inspiration, direction, or guidance in any way they should be integrated into your LLP. The growth and development of the student's spiritual maturity in the topic addressed in the LLP is essential. All LLPs should incorporate spiritual growth reflected in personal application. For example, if writing a paper on supervision in your place of work, your own spiritual maturity hopefully is reflected in the supervisor you are, and should be addressed in your LLP. When citing scripture passages, make sure references are cited properly and are in context. Spiritual emphasis is based on learning principles, rather than personal

testimony.

5) A key component of Life Learning Papers is personal application. While learning outcomes reflect the actual principles of learning that has taken place through an experience, personal application reveals how that learning has been integrated into personal habits, lifestyle or cognitive understanding. If a learning outcome has not been personalized by applying it to other areas of one's life, the actual learning one may have acquired may not have been sufficiently processed and/or developed to substantiate significant learning.

6) Documentation is required in all Life Learning Papers. Documentation is utilized to verify that actual events and/or experiences took place as described in one's LLP. Birth certificates, marriage licenses, letters from employers or other forms of documentation are necessary. Documentation is placed in the appendix section of an LLP, following the contents of the LLP. The reader may request additional documentation as deemed necessary to document your learning experience(s).

Note: All supporting documents and certificates should be copies rather than the original documents. Original documents may be requested by the reader and must be supplied by the student, if requested.

7) While the writing style of each student is unique, and length of LLPs will vary, the following information may act as a guide:

<i># of Credits Petitioned</i>	<i># of Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Length of LLP (pages)</i>
1	2,3	6 – 8
2	3 – 5	9 – 11
3	5 – 7	12 - 15
4	8 – 10	16 - 20

Only in unusual circumstances should the body of an LLP be over 25 pages. The student must be able to condense and prioritize information that is relevant to each LLP. The length of an LLP in no way reflects learning. The learning outcomes that are identified, and the process of development of the learning outcomes are the most significant measurement of a successful LLP.

8) All Life Learning Papers, along with all Business and Professional Training petitions, are turned into the EXCEL Records Office. This includes all revisions, even if you know who the reader was that read your original LLP. The same reader is used throughout the processing of a LLP unless that reader is no longer available. You may have two revisions to complete your LLP. If at that time credit has not been awarded, that LLP will not be eligible for further revisions and will not be allowed credit. There is no additional charge to students for any revisions.

9) For those students who major in Interpersonal and Group Communication, and have

successfully completed the Life Assessment Course in your major, the paper you wrote for Course 2 (Life Assessment) will not necessarily meet the criteria demanded for successful completion of an LLP. An LLP for college credit is scrutinized in a more thorough and comprehensive manner when petitioning for credit. When petitioning for credit, understand that the readers who are assessing one's work are people who have expertise in the subject area. Thus the evaluating process is significantly different than the guidelines utilized by the professor in assessing your paper for the Life Assessment course.

#### **IV. HOW TO DEVELOP A LIFE LEARNING PAPER (LLP)**

"Learning requires active effort by the learner." (Kemp, p.23) In developing one's LLP, the active effort required is the attempt to communicate college level learning one has acquired through the life situations one has experienced. These are communicated through learning outcomes. In this section learning outcomes will be addressed and defined, preparation and format of an LLP will be explained, and how the LLP will be critiqued will be identified, along with other concepts that will help achieve successful completion of Life Learning Papers for credit.

##### *A. Learning Outcomes*

Learning outcomes are the tangible measurements in which one develops the conceptualization of learning in LLPs. The question one must first ask is how do we learn, and then understand the different types of learning. In 1956, Benjamin Bloom developed Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives which describe how we learn and the level of complexity one's learning has achieved. In his work, Bloom identified three domains in the way someone learns. These include the following:

- 1) Cognitive domain: objectives which emphasize remembering or reproducing something which has presumably been learned, as well as objectives which involve the solving of some intellectual task for which the individual has to determine the essential problem and then reorder given material or combine it with ideas, methods, or procedures previously learned.
  - largest proportion of educational objectives fall into this domain
  - deals with objective fact or theory
  
- 2) Affective domain: objectives which emphasize a feeling tone, an emotion, or degree of acceptance or rejection.
  - deals with interests, attitudes, appreciations, values and emotional sets or biases
  
- 3) Psycho motor domain: objectives which emphasize some muscular or motor skills, some manipulation of material and objects, some act which requires a neuromuscular coordination.
  - deals with psychomotor behaviors one can classify through physical skills relating to athletics, the performing arts, the manipulation of tools, the operation of machines and other equipment, speaking and writing (Kemp, p. 26)

(Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, pgs. 6, 7)

For the purpose of developing an LLP in this section, the first two domains, cognitive and affective, will be explored. In dealing with the cognitive and affective domains one needs to understand the difference between the two and how they are seen in unison. Cognitive learning is based on objective knowledge such as facts, whereas affective learning is more subjective dealing with feeling. "From the cognitive point of view, all mental facts are intellections. From the subjective (affective) point of view, all are feelings." (Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, p. 46) While these two unique ways of learning are fundamentally different, they are also tightly intertwined. (Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, p. 62) The two domains will be explored separately to further identify each of them.

### 1) Cognitive domain

In explaining the cognitive expression of learning, one is dealing with, as stated previously, objective fact. Yet, fact is combined with other facts to make up the knowledge one has and the way one utilizes that knowledge makes up the person we are. This demands process in determining what one has learned and how we are changed as a result of what we have learned. The degree of complexity in the cognitive domain as described by Bloom is developed through six levels of increasing complexity in his taxonomy. They are as follows:

Level 1: Knowledge - ability to memorize, recall or otherwise repeat information presented earlier.

Level 2: Comprehension - ability to interpret or restate the information acquired in Level 1 on your own terms.

Level 3: Application - ability to use or apply information, theories, principles, or laws to new situations.

Level 4: Analysis - ability to divide complex knowledge into its separate parts and to recognize the relationship of those parts.

Level 5: Synthesis - ability to bring together separate elements of knowledge to form new patterns or wholes.

Level 6: Evaluation - ability to make judgments or appraisals based on knowledge or given criteria.

"The more complex and higher categories of the cognitive domain require far more sophisticated learning experience than the single communication of a correct idea or event to the student. Much more motivation is required, much more activity and participation on the part of the learner is necessary, and more opportunities must be available to help the individual gain insight into the processes he/she uses as well as misuses if these more complex objectives are to be

achieved." (Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, p. 77)

Action verbs can help the student recognize higher intellectual levels within the cognitive domain. They describe the level of action and comprehension one has mastered on the issue of complexity. The following chart helps to show the different levels of the action verb:

Verbs Applicable to the Levels in the Cognitive Domain (Note: Depending on the use, some verbs may apply to more than one level.)

*1. Knowledge*

arrange  
define  
duplicate  
label  
list  
memorize  
name  
order  
recognize  
relate  
recall  
repeat  
reproduce

*2. Comprehension*

classify  
describe  
discuss  
explain  
express  
identify  
indicate  
locate  
recognize  
report  
restate  
review  
select  
tell  
translate

*3. Application*

apply  
choose  
demonstrate  
dramatize  
employ  
illustrate  
interpret  
operate  
practice  
schedule  
sketch  
solve  
use

*4. Analysis*

analyze  
appraise  
calculate  
categorize  
compare  
contrast  
criticize  
diagram  
differentiate  
discriminate  
distinguish  
examine  
experiment  
inventory  
question  
test

*5. Synthesis*

arrange  
assemble  
collect  
compose  
construct  
create  
design  
formulate  
manage  
organize  
plan  
prepare  
propose  
set up  
write

*6. Evaluation*

appraise  
argue  
assess  
attach  
choose  
compare  
defend  
estimate  
judge  
predict  
rate  
score  
select  
support  
value  
evaluate

(Kemp, p. 31)

In understanding the cognitive domain, one must attempt to comprehend the diversity of facts, rules and principles that make up a particular field of study and recognize the different levels of understanding that identifies the complexity of the learning one has amassed. It is not enough to

know, if one does not then respond to that knowledge in appropriate ways. If one knows fire burns, yet then consciously attempts to interact with fire and gets seriously burned, it is safe to assume what the person has known about fire has not matured to the point of putting that knowledge to use.

## 2) Affective Domain

Affective Domain, dealing with subjective, feeling oriented attitudes, interests or values, is much more difficult to convey in regards to learning than the cognitive levels of learning. It is much easier to explain and understand a fact such as George Washington being the first United States president, than to effectively communicate a value such as why honesty is important. "If we are to muster the tremendous effort and resources required to bring about basic changes in the more complex affective behaviors, we must be certain of the importance and desirability of these new objectives. It is not merely to desire a new objective or to will others to be molded in the image we find desirable or satisfactory. We must find ways of understanding and determining what objectives are central and significant if we are to summon the appropriate effort to achieve these more complex objectives." (Krathwohl, Bloom, and Masia, p. 90)

Who are we? How did one get to the point of who one is? These require a level and process of complexity that Bloom attempts to qualify. The Affective Domain Taxonomy considers the following:

1.0 Receiving (attending): recognition of the existence of certain phenomena and stimuli

1.1 Awareness: consciousness of something

1.2 Willingness to receive: tolerate a given stimuli, not to avoid it... involves a neutrality or suspend judgment toward stimulus

1.3 Controlled or selected concerned with a new attention: phenomenon, how does it fit

2.0 Responding: begin to examine beyond merely acknowledging it exists

2.1 Acquiescence in responding: makes a response, not fully accepted the necessity for doing so

2.2 Willingness to respond: voluntary response to stimuli

2.3 Satisfaction in response: the decision to respond brings about satisfaction

3.0 Valuing: ascribing of worth, somewhat tentative, belief is not yet firmly founded

3.1 Acceptance of a Value: understanding stimuli has worth

3.2 Reference for a Value: not just accepting, but sufficiently committed to the value to

pursue it

3.3 Commitment (conviction): high degree of certainty, a sense of loyalty is established

4.0 Organization: how does this value fit in regards to other values already established?

4.1 Conceptualization of an understanding of relation value: to other previously formed values or values that are currently in process

4.2 Organization of a value brings together a complex of system: values, possibly disparate values, in ordered relationship to one another

5.0 Characterization by values is in place, one's value or value complex: own personality is identified to value system or philosophies of life

5.1 Generalized set: gives internal consistency to system of attitudes and values at any particular moment, predisposition to act in a certain way

5.2 Characterization: objectives which concerns one's view of the universe, one philosophy of life, a value system having as its objective the whole of what is known or knowable

(Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia, pgs. 95 - 170)

In communicating learning outcomes from the affective domain one must show the process of knowing and believing each value or attitude, how it has affected the life of the student and the steps of organization and function each value has become in living out one's convictions.

Having explained briefly the cognitive and affective domains, how then can one define a learning outcome? A learning outcome consists of a fact (rule, law or principle), or a feeling (value, theory or conviction), dealing with the identification of what has been learned, the interaction of the process of how one came to his/her present conclusion and then application in the student's life in appropriate ways. To say one has learned from an experience requires a level of ownership, which demands that one, works through the issue and then makes the issue his/her own. Thus a learning outcome must have the three elements (identification, process, application) to allow the student to convey that actual learning has taken place and that it has changed the person as a result.

### *B. Preparation of the LLP*

In preparation for beginning your Life Learning Paper (LLP) each student will need to do a great deal of thinking about learning. In choosing a topic, the student should start by identifying areas in which he/she has college level knowledge. Knowledge gained through experience can be acquired in the context of a single, significant event, or through a combination of events over an extended period of time.

Another approach to identifying college level knowledge through life experiences is to make a list of competencies. Begin each statement with "I know..." or "I can..." This approach is useful in identifying knowledge and skills within a given topic area, i.e., regarding supervision, I know..., I can..., I have learned..., etc. The student can then identify specific areas of knowledge or skills acquired through what you have learned and mastered through life experience.

Do not limit exploration to work-related learning when identifying areas of knowledge. Much college level learning can be acquired from other life experiences such as hobbies (art, music, drama, athletics, craftsmanship), community work (youth leadership and/or ministry, political campaigns, volunteer service), or church involvement to name a few.

The following are some subject areas and topics in which college credit has been granted:

**Art Special Topics - ART**

Interior Decorating, Art Studies, Oil/Watercolor Painting, Photography, Jewel Making, Art History, Woodworking.

**Biology Special Topics - BIO**

Environment, Ecology, Organic Gardening, Wildlife, Diabetes, Nutrition.

**Christian Education and Ministry Special Topics - CEM**

Church Administration, Christian Education, Evangelism, Youth Ministry, Pastoral Ministry.

**Computer Information Systems Special Topics - CIS**

Hardware, Programming Languages, Information Management, Networks.

**Economics and Management Special Topics - E/M**

Accounting, Supervision Experience, Marketing, Marketing Research, Wage Negotiations, Labor Unions, Labor Disputes, Credit Unions, Production Planning, Quality Control, Personnel, Public Relations, Real Estate, Sales, Advertising, Purchasing and Inventory Control, Taxation, Regulation, Legal Aspects, Training, Interviewing.

**Education Special Topics - ED**

Comparative Education, Educational Strategies, Classroom Management, Organization of Day Care Centers, Working with Parents, Learning Resource Centers, Adult Education, Teaching Methods.

**English Special Topics - ENG**

Literature, Journalism.

**Human Performance and Wellness (Physical Education) Special Topics - HPW**

Physical Fitness, Athletic Training, Organizing Sports, Coaching, Scuba Diving, Individual/Team Sports.

### Psychology Special Topics - PSY

Aging, Alcoholism, Behavior Modification, Child Abuse, Coping with Illness or Disabilities, Counseling, Divorce, Drug Abuse, Family Crisis Intervention, Juvenile Delinquency, Parenting, Stress, Death and Dying, Dealing with the Terminally Ill, Single Lifestyle, Pregnancy.

### Sociology Special Topics - SOC

Culture Comparisons, Enculturation, Immigration, Working Mothers, Social Work, Volunteerism, Welfare, Marriage and Family, Courts, Justice System, Community Organizations, Agencies, Fund Raising, Urban Planning.

These examples are to help one identify potential LLP topics, yet one should not be limited to this list if one's learning is more diverse. Students should identify the subject area that one feels the LLP accurately represents. See list on Trinity International University majors this manual.

Titles for LLPs should be equivalent to course titles found in college or university catalogs. Refrain from using "I" or "my" in titles of LLPs and attempt to make titles as academic as you can while reflecting the learning the LLP represents.

Note: The title of your LLP can not be exactly the same as any course you have already taken in the EXCEL program or any other academic program. Duplication of a previous course or PLA may not be accepted for credit. Once a topic has been identified, in order to determine if it can be used to petition for credit, the student must identify a course description in the EXCEL catalog which fits the learning before moving forward.

Next, learning outcomes must be explored and examined. It is fair to say that learning outcomes measure the success of one's overall LLP more than any other aspect of a student's LLP. In identifying one's learning outcomes a student must understand that basic informational learning outcomes will most likely constitute lower division credit. The complexity and level of expertise is crucial in determining lower and upper division credit. Review earlier section describing the degree of complexity in cognitive and affective types of learning for help in determining lower and upper division.

### *C. Format of the LLP*

A Life Learning Paper begins with an introduction, is followed by the body of reflections on the college level knowledge acquired through life learning reflected by learning outcomes and personal application, and concludes with a summary and reflection on how one has developed as a result of college level experiential learning.

#### 1) Introduction

As with any well organized paper, a LLP should have a clear introduction. Every LLP should begin with an attention grabbing paragraph, followed by a topic paragraph. The topic paragraph is a very important organization tool, and serves as a road map or outline of the rest of the paper. If using the LLP to petition for credit, this topic paragraph will serve as a course description.

The topic paragraph should be preceded by the title of the LLP. The topic paragraph should include one or two sentences about life experience, and then summarize the learning outcomes to be addressed in the body of the LLP. For example, a student petitioning for credit in "Small Business Management" might write a topic paragraph similar to the following:

### Small Business Management

Since 1976, I have been the owner/manager of the XYZ Tool Company. I have been responsible for all aspects of running a small business. I have learned a great deal about advertising, supervision of personnel, inventory, pricing, the legal market and the purchase of raw materials at reasonable prices.

#### 2) Body

The body of the LLP should discuss in detail the learning experience and the learning outcomes identified in the topic paragraph. If the student identifies additional life experiences and/or learning outcomes in the process of writing the body of the LLP, they should be added to the topic paragraph.

In the body of the LLP, the student will want to demonstrate both the extent and the complexity of the knowledge and intellectual skills acquired through life experience. In particular, the student will want to include reflections on how the knowledge was acquired and subsequent applications of that knowledge to new life experiences. (Identification, Process, Application)

Both the knowledge acquired and the life experience through which knowledge was acquired must be described in the body of the LLP. (Identification and Process) However, of these two areas, describing the knowledge acquired is the most crucial. The appropriate life experience should be used to identify the source of the knowledge acquired (include research materials, texts etc.), yet thereafter, life experience should be used as examples of the student's comprehension of process and application of that knowledge.

#### 3) Conclusion

The conclusion of the LLP summarizes the student's learning outcomes as identified in the introduction topic paragraph, and as expounded upon in the body of the LLP. The conclusion allows the student to bring the LLP to a close by referring back to the attention grabbing paragraph, finishing a story, or explaining how the learning outcomes have helped in the student's Christian walk and personal growth.

#### 4) Documentation

An appendix should follow the introduction, body and conclusion of the LLP that provides documentation verifying the life experience and supports the learning outcomes within the LLP. Keep in mind that the university is more interested in the fact you can demonstrate the learning you have gained from your experiences, rather than creating an appendix that furnishes a vast amount of documentation.

Spend more time analyzing the learning outcomes from your life experiences, and then spend enough time collecting documentation to sufficiently verify to a responsible person that you have, in fact, participated in the experiences which you have described.

Note: To do a good job on an LLP, the student should not expect to be able to compose the final product on the first attempt. The student should begin with an outline of the LLP, and expect to write at least two drafts before composing the final draft. The following is an optional LLP outline provided to help the student organize a Life Learning Paper.

## **Optional LLP Outline**

### **I. Introduction**

A. Attention Grabbing Paragraph

B. Topic Paragraph Title (LLP title)

C. Topic Paragraph (learning outcomes to be developed in your LLP)

1. Learning outcome #1

2. Learning outcome #2

3. Learning outcome #3, (etc.)

### **II. Body**

A. Learning Outcome #1

1. Describe your learning outcome in detail

2. Explain the process that demonstrates how you came to learn whatever your learning outcome represents

3. Apply this learning outcome to a different setting, or describe why the learning outcome is only appropriate for the setting in which it was acquired

4. Describe how this learning outcome affects your Christian journey and personal growth

B. Learning Outcome #2

1. Repeat procedure above, this will be repeated until all learning outcomes are covered

### **III. Conclusion**

A. Restate the Topic Paragraph Title, giving a brief overview of what your title represents

B. Review each of the Learning Outcomes presented in the body of the LLP

C. Draw the LLP to a close, refer back to your attention grabber, relate how what you

have learned has changed your life or helped you in your Christian walk

#### IV. Documentation

A. Attach in an appendix, supporting documentation verifying the life experience and your learning outcomes

NOTE: If you are writing a LLP with the intent to petition for credit, keep in mind that only COLLEGE LEVEL LEARNING experiences are eligible for college credit. Students are encouraged to review various college and/or university catalogs to determine if the general subject matter covered in a life experience would fit a college curriculum.

REMEMBER: A petition is just that, a petition for credit. Submission of a petition does not guarantee that the student will receive credit.

#### *D. Evaluation Process of LLPs*

In assessing the LLP, the process is designed to bring about clarity and a precise measurement to which LLPs are evaluated. This is necessary when students, for whatever reason(s), need to revise an LLP to receive credit. The following information will provide a roadmap in allowing students to understand the components that the readers of the LLPs are utilizing in assessing the student's LLP.

Faculty evaluate both the content and the presentation of a Life Learning Paper Prior Learning Assessment petition. Each LLP petition must be organized in the format described in the previous section, and proofread to insure that correct punctuation, spelling, and grammar have been used. Specific analysis of a LLP petition includes:

##### I. Presentation

- A. Is the LLP well organized?
- B. Is it well written, i.e., correct grammar, spelling punctuation?

##### II. Topic Choice

- A. Is the topic capable of generating college credit?
- B. Is the topic focused clearly?
- C. Does the LLP title match the learning outcomes described in the topic paragraph?

The evaluator looks for college equivalent knowledge that includes: identification of theories and concepts, process of the specific experience from which the knowledge of theories and concepts were gained, and specific applications.

##### III. Concrete Experience

- A. Is personal experience evident in the LLP?
- B. Has the student described clearly his or her own involvement in the experience?
- C. Are examples relevant to the topic?
- D. Is there enough detail in regards to process to give a clear picture of the learning outcomes?

The evaluator will examine the LLP to see that it contains both college level learning outcomes as well as life experience.

**REMEMBER:** a LLP is neither an autobiography of a portion of a student's life, nor is it

a traditional college paper. The student's knowledge and learning outcomes should form the structure of the LLP with life experience providing the frame of reference for that knowledge and its application.

#### IV. Learning Outcomes

A. Does the student discuss cognitive or affective learning which apply to the topic?

B. Are resources used (books, printed materials, people, etc.) cited correctly?

C. Is there evidence that the student has observed patterns (i.e., recurring behaviors, etc.)?

Evaluators look for evidence of knowledge within the given subject you identify and the process that took place to acquire that knowledge. For example, it is not sufficient just to present a fact or principle. An evaluator might respond by saying, "So what? What do you understand about what this means or implies? Can you explain in greater detail? Where is the evidence that you have thought about your process in learning this knowledge?"

In other words, the evaluator is looking for evidence that the student has interacted with the process of knowing and, in doing so, gained understanding of it. These intellectual skills and abilities reflect the student's thinking processes, and must be evident in the LLP in addition to the knowledge itself.

Remember, the evaluator is looking for the student to demonstrate understanding of the knowledge of the subject being described. If the life experience included reading, the evaluator will want to know not only what was read, but also why that particular reading material was chosen and how the information was useful.

Furthermore, there must be an obvious relationship in the LLP between the student's knowledge and the corresponding life experience. For example, it is not acceptable to write about one's experience as a supervisor followed by a term paper on theories of supervision. There would be no connection between the student's experience as a supervisor and those theories. The student must relate how the knowledge was acquired in direct relationship with one's experience in the subject.

#### V. Application of Concepts

A. Is there evidence that the student has a working knowledge of the topic area?

B. Does the student specify how applications could be made in other situations?

C. Has the knowledge, skills, techniques and/or ideas learned been applied to other situations or groups?

The evaluator looks for the student's ability to apply the knowledge that has been learned in other situations. The evaluator will not award credit for knowledge limited to a given experience if the knowledge has not been processed and owned in other areas of one's life. Knowing a specific company's policies and procedures for disciplining employees does not transfer in the student knowing about his/her individual viewpoints on how discipline should be administered. The evaluator will look for the student's ability to evaluate the situation and find principles which can be applied effectively to related situations.

## VI. Personal Growth and Development

A. Does the student articulate how his/her learning has helped with their own personal growth and/or Christian walk?

B. Is it apparent that these learning outcomes and life experiences have affected or was affected by the student's Christian belief or religious experience?

C. Does the student articulate how his/her learning outcomes can be used to enhance the Christian community or the religious community you call your own?

As the LLP is developed, it is important to include how the learning outcomes and corresponding life experience have affected the student's individual faith development and personal growth. The Christian adult learner must consider his or her stewardship of the knowledge acquired. Integrating faith and learning is a necessary part of a Christian liberal arts education. For example, the student should ask the following:

- How is my perception of an experience colored by my faith?
- How does the experience and the knowledge acquired change my life?
- How can it be used to enhance my ministry?
- How has this experience and knowledge changed my direction or focus in the way I view the world?

As a candidate for a Christian liberal arts degree it is important to understand how all aspects of the student's education apply to one's faith and the interaction between that faith and who we are. In some subject areas it may be more difficult to identify immediate spiritual applications or implications.

## VII. Documentation

A. Is adequate and relevant documentation provided to support the student's involvement in the experience?

All LLPs must have documentation. Documentation is the verification of specific prior learning. The following guidelines are offered in compiling appropriate documentation for a LLP:

1) Documenting professional experience

Employment records, awards, letters of commendation, letters of corroboration from supervisors, peers, clients, congratulations on high performance, promotion evaluations, evidence of promotion, evidence of suggestion adopted, samples of work produced, membership in professional or trade organizations, scores on licensing exams, military separation papers, bills of sale, rating forms, military records, and work samples.

2) Documenting community service activities

Commendations, awards, newspaper and magazine clippings, letters of corroboration from co-volunteers, clients served, supervisors.

3) Documenting special accomplishments

Books published, pictures painted, music written, patents obtained, mementos from countries lived in or traveled to, machine(s) designed, exhibits such as shells, plants, etc., speeches given, programs from performances, writing samples, audio-visual presentation, proposals written.

4) Using letters as documentation

Letters can be used for verifying many learning outcomes. When a student asks someone to write a letter of verification, the person from whom the letter is requested should be given explicit instructions on what the letter should contain. The following should be used as guidelines for letters of verification:

a. The individual writing the letter must know the student and have first-hand knowledge of the experiential activity which the student has cited.

b. The author of the letter should state clearly the nature of the relationship with the student.

c. The letter should be written on the official stationery of the company or organization with which the author is associated. If a personal letter is sent, dealing with non-professional areas, have the author include their address and phone number where they might be reached.

d. The content of the letter should focus on the duties, responsibilities, tasks or activities which were inherent in the experience under consideration. In addition, the letter should set down the context of experience (the who, what, when, why, for how long, where, etc.).

e. A special accomplishment resulting in a product requires documentation in the form of one or more letters of verification authored by persons who

observed the student while he/she was developing the project.

f. The student should make it clear to the author that the letter to be written is one of verification, not recommendation.

Note: The university is more interested in the fact that you can demonstrate the learning you have gained from your experiences, rather than an appendix that furnishes a "mountain" of documentation.

## Credit For Prior Learning Assessment Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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To determine which methods of Credit for Prior Learning might apply to you, it is necessary to first look at your major learning experiences. Please answer the following questions. Do not try to specifically identify each item, but give some general indication if you feel you have gained knowledge in these areas. You may need to retrace for specific documentation in some areas.

Have you previously attended non-college credit educational programs, courses associated with a job, or on-the-job training? If yes, then list the courses, workshops and seminars that you completed.

Have you participated in community activities or church groups, held office, coordinated or belonged to an organization? If yes, then list those activities.

Do you have some special interests or skills, including vocational or leisure-time activities?  
Have you gained knowledge from reading, study, travel, or life experiences?

List any jobs that included training that you feel was similar to college level learning. Include any apprenticeship training, licenses held and certificates received.

## **Key Concepts in Dealing with Prior Learning Assessments**

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It is not the experience, but the learning that takes place within that experience that creates knowledge for each individual. Prior Learning Assessments acknowledge learning, not the experience, as a source of credit.

Therefore, identify previous learning experiences by asking yourself the following questions:

What did I learn?

How did I learn it?

Where did I learn it?

Why did I learn it?

**Prior Learning Assessment Topic Approval  
Life Learning Paper**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

---

Proposed Title \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Hours Requested \_\_\_\_\_

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1. What did you do to acquire the learning described below?

2. State your specific learning outcomes.

3. List documentation to be submitted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

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Approved to petition for credit \_\_\_\_\_

Not Approved to petition for credit \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director of EXCEL Student Services*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Prior Learning Assessment Topic Approval  
Business and Professional Training**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

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Proposed Title \_\_\_\_\_

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1. What did you do to acquire the learning described below? Who was the sponsoring agency?

2. State your specific learning outcomes/principles presented in the training.

3. List documentation to be submitted.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Student Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

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Approved to petition for credit \_\_\_\_\_

Not Approved to petition for credit \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Director of EXCEL Student Services*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*