**PLA Guide**

**Public Speaking**

**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 **Public Speaking.**

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.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** In addition to answering the questions in this guide, you may be asked to provide an audio or visual example of your speaking or to do an impromptu speech for the evaluator.

**Typical Learning Experiences**

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Organizational spokesperson | Manager or supervisor |
| Clergy | Human resource trainer |
| Sales professional | Teacher |
| Fundraiser | Organizational and community leader |
| Board member | Motivational speaker |
| Toastmaster’s training\* | Dale Carnegie training\* |

\*Some training may be pre-approved for credits; check with your mentor.

**What is Public Speaking?**Public Speaking deals with the intentional delivery of information to a broad audience. Public speakers offer messages to audiences of various sizes and levels in both formal and informal settings. The concepts of “intention” and “audience” are key. Public speakers plan their communication to engage their audience and react to audience response. Public speaking is NOT merely leading meetings, speaking at small work meetings, or posting a YouTube video, which may yield other types of communications learning. Instead, public speakers tell a story and intend to connect to an audience in real or virtual media.

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. You can consult other guides or use the general guide if they are more appropriate to your learning.

**Public Speaking Process Overview**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Preparation** | **Delivery** | **Evaluation** |
| * Identifying Topic/Goal * Conducting Research * Developing Content Appropriate to Delivery Mode (e.g face-to-face, virtual) * Conducting Audience Analysis * Organizing Information * (Intro/Body/Conclusion) * Creating Effective Openings/Closings * Practicing the Speech, including timing yourself | * Methods (e.g. impromptu, planned) * Verbal Strategies (e.g. rate, pauses) * Nonverbal Strategies (e.g. eye contact, gestures, movement) * Establishing Credibility * Using Presentation Aids * Managing Anxiety * Managing Q & A and Disruptive Audience Members * Managing Time Constraints and Changes | * Gathering audience feedback * Assessing one’s own strengths and weaknesses * Reflecting and refining speech for future * Learning from other speakers |

**Writing your PLA Request**Please answer all of the following eight questions.

1. Describe what you do. (answer a-d)
2. What public speaking experience do you have?
3. What formal or informal training have you had, or what books or materials have you used to learn about public speaking?
4. What kind or type of public speaking do you do? (e.g., provide information , persuade others to do something, teach others)
5. Describe yourself as a speaker – what is your style of public speaking?
6. Think about a typical public speaking situation for you. How do you: (answer a-j)
7. Prepare for an upcoming presentation in terms of your process of creating the presentation?
8. Prepare for an upcoming presentation in terms of the knowledge of the room, equipment, the space (real or virtual) that you’re in?
9. Decide whether to use an outline, brief notes, or other speaker preparations?
10. Decide when and if to use visuals?
11. Establish your credibility as a speaker?
12. Know if you’re connecting with the audience?
13. Adjust your delivery based on audience reaction or feedback?
14. Deal with interruptions?
15. Typically evaluate the experience?
16. Compare your initial public speaking experiences with your current ones? What have you personally learned as you’ve grown as a public speaker?
17. Choose three adjectives that describe effective public speakers and three that describe ineffective public speakers, and explain why.
18. What informal, general rules have you developed for yourself when speaking in public?

5. Using your informal rules, plus your understanding of what makes a credible and effective public speaker, explain what you would do and why in one of the following public speaking situations. *Use ONE of the scenarios below or offer your own:*

* You were invited to speak on a particular topic, but the audience asked you to address a different, more pressing topic.
* Equipment fails.
* You prepared to speak to an audience of 100, but only 20 show up (or vice versa).
* You’re asked by an audience member to clarify a concept by offering information that could be considered private or classified.
* Your own

1. What would you teach others? What training topics would you focus on if you were working with a new public speaker? What would be your 4-6 priorities for training?
2. What trends do you currently see in public speaking, and how might you address those trends?
3. Please offer any additional information or thoughts on this topic that you would like to discuss as part of your PLA.

**Information to Help You Decide Credit Specifications for Your Request**College-level learning means that you can talk about what you know in some detail, come up with some general insights and “rules” about the topic, and apply those insights and rules to new situations.

* Public Speaking is typically considered applied or **non-liberal** but could be liberal if experience and learning is more broad or philosophical in nature.
* Public Speaking sometimes fulfills **General Education in Basic Communications**, usually as a partial general education credit (or none).

**Number of Credits**To determine the number of credits to request, think about your experience using this guide. If you answered most of the questions easily, and feel that you can confidently discuss areas related to this topic, you may want to request 3-4 credits, which is the equivalent of one college course. After your discussion, your evaluator will have the opportunity to recommend fewer or more credits based on his/her evaluation of your learning.

**Level of Credits**To determine the level of your request think about your comfort level answering the questions. Did you feel confident answering the questions that asked you to interpret, analyze, compare, or generalize? Reflect on your learning in light of the information below to help you determine whether to request introductory or advanced-level credit. If you aren’t sure, discuss this with your mentor.

**Introductory college-level learning** (freshman/sophomore) means that you understand:

* Basic concepts, theories, and principles of a topic.

**Advanced college-level learning** (junior/senior level) means that you understand the topic more broadly and deeply. You may understand:

* What the broader field is about, based on your experience.
* Why something is done in a certain way.
* What you, yourself, think about the topic or field, as a result of blending others’ perspectives with your own understanding and judgment.
* How to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information more abstractly, applying methods usually used in that field.

**Examples of General PLA Topics and Level of Learning**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **PLA Topic – Building** | **PLA Topic – Project Management** | **PLA Topic – Spanish Culture** |
| **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 |
| **Intro. college-level** | Understand why walls are constructed a certain way | Create a timeline and supervise the completion of tasks | Understand trends and practices related to daily life, holidays, food, religion, etc. Understand some Spanish history related to contemporary attitudes and practices |