

Another tool for demonstrating learning: supplemental narrative

Sometimes, when a learning criterion or program goal is very factual or has the potential to be fact-laden, such as “Interprets the evolution of the Human Services field from several viewpoints” (see example in Appendix E of the PLAR handbook), your mentor will suggest that you write a supplemental narrative to either replace or complement your learning statements.

The supplemental narrative is essentially a mini-essay in which you explain your knowledge about the topic. It is written in essay format and should be concise, clear, and on-topic.

Its placement in the portfolio is important for assessors to easily find it and understand its role in demonstrating your learning. The title of your Supplemental Narrative must state what learning criterion or program goal it is connected to. In the “Supporting Documentation” column of the competency worksheet or learning statement template, list the Supplemental Narrative beside the affected statement and specify its location (page number). It should immediately follow the learning statement that it is connected to.

Examples of use of supplementary learning narrative

Examples of supplemental narratives are provided below. In the examples, the learner is addressing specific program learning outcomes (#3 and #9) from the relevant criteria according to their specific program criteria. The learner applies a supplemental narrative to several learning outcomes as appropriate. Each supplemental narrative is immediately following the learning statement they are connected to.

Example: Use of supplemental narrative

#3: Nurtures Value-Based Learning: Uses Values to Guide Theory and Practice			
Learning Criteria	Learning Statements	Origin of Learning	Supporting Documentation
Promotes values and ethics in self, colleagues and clientele	Compose information promoting the continuation of prior vision, mission, and values of the organization to staff and tenants so it is clear that the founding values continue to guide services within the new facility.	The Care Centre 2004 – 2009	Tab 6
	Measure how well I lead and am able to maintain my values and ethics in work by following my personal motto, “lead by example in all things in all ways” so staff understand that what is expected of them is also expected at the management level.	The Care Centre 2004 – 2009	Supplemental Narrative (following)
	Measure staff morale and job satisfaction by surveying staff annually using key performance areas and benchmarks to identify areas of challenge and success to promote ethical practice in care giving and in teamwork.	The JH Home 1990 - 2004	Tab 8 Tab 10
	Develop an employee appreciation and recognition program with the involvement of all team members in order to lessen divisions between departments, foster team building and cooperation, reinforce the values and mission of the organization and boost morale.	The JH Home 1990 - 2004	Tab 8 Tab 10
	Evaluate the effectiveness of annual staff appreciation recognition events by requesting and then comparing participant responses, including recommendations for future events so that staff continue to shape the event, which generates continued interest and involvement.	The JH Home 1990 - 2004	Tab 8 Tab 10
Supplemental narrative to preceding learning statement			

(Promotes values and ethics in self, colleagues and clientele)

In the late fall of 2004 I was involved in the opening of The Care Centre. During the course of 4 days we transferred 205 residents and 60% of the staff from the JH Home to the Care Centre. When the organization became established, we realized that we needed to implement a new culture that incorporated the history of both the JH Home and the old Care Centre Hospital. The Care Centre Hospital was closed and renovated to accommodate Long Term Care. The Health System conducted a strategic planning session that steered the Care Centre on a path to create a new culture. In order to start the development of the Care Centre we realized that first we needed to set the foundation through the vision, mission and values statement.

I was elected the chair for this committee and set the structure and timeline for the completion of the document. Working on the vision, mission and values document for the Care Centre allowed me to delve deeply into the roots of the organization. As the point person I was instrumental in the development and critical review of the final document. During this process I was able to work collaboratively with the senior team at the Care Centre to ensure that the roots of the founding Catholic Sisters were well established in the final document. The Sisters are deeply rooted in caring for the marginal and providing for the needy, while supporting the staff, residents and family. This is the basis for the care that we provide and challenges us to maintain this level of excellence in our care today.

This process allowed me to look at ethics and values in a very personal way. I continue to incorporate the statement in the policies and procedures that I write for the Care Centre and am able to measure their success in the appropriate following of the policies. Being a part of the team who built the foundation allows me to ensure that the residents' rights are considered and respected in everything we do, from recreation and therapy to nursing and personal care. I believe this is the key to our successful care giving and positive response from both staff and families. I am able to set up an environment of open discussion with families, residents and staff to foster relationships and build trust in the team.

In presenting the mission, vision and value statements to staff, residents and families through presentations, in-servicing, distributing flyers and posting framed copies throughout the organization. We were able to incorporate them as a part of the fabric of the facility. This allows us to refer easily to our values and encourage people to "walk the walk".

Example 2: Use of supplemental narrative

#9 Knows History of and Breadth of the Sector of Human Services: Demonstrates Familiarity with the History and Evolution of the Human Services Along with Several of its Fields			
Learning Criteria	Learning Statements	Origin of Learning	Supporting Documentation
Interprets the evolution of the Human Services field from several viewpoints	Translate a strong working knowledge of the Human Services Sector through work experience in the evolution and refinements in diagnosis and understanding of dementia as a disease. Illustrate an understanding that care plans must be tailored to individual clients in order to best care for each client reducing medication and providing dignified care.	The Care Centre 2004 – 2009	Supplemental Narrative (following)
	Distinguish developments in care practices by diagramming the overlap in care requirements regardless of patients' age, physical or developmental strengths and challenges so others can visualize how each life stage and individual health status brings with them complex, and sometimes multiple medical issues that impact growth and recovery.	The JH Home 1990 - 2004	Tab 7 Tab 8 Tab 10
	Recognize the importance of continuing education by comparing my current skills set to changes in health technology and legislation to improve skills and remain cognizant of changes in the field that affect policy and practice.	The JH Home 1990 - 2004	Tab 7 Tab 8 Tab 10
Supplemental Narrative to Preceding Learning Statement (Interprets the evolution of the Human Services field from several viewpoints)			
<p>I am fortunate to have over 20 years of experience in the Human Services field. I have learned to apply a strong working knowledge of a wide variety of Human Services Sectors, including physically challenged adults, developmentally delayed children, the cognitively impaired and the aging population. My knowledge of working in these areas has evolved in many ways; from working directly with the clients in the above areas and growing to a position of supervisor of staff in the</p>			

Human Service Sector to Manager and decision maker within the Human Services Sector. I also grew in my understanding of vast areas of human services by diversifying the clientele who I work with as well as being a mother of two children I am actively involved in my family's leisure, community and volunteer interests.

I continue to work collaboratively with co-workers to improve the field of Human Services for the future. I develop individualized care plans for the clients in Long Term Care in consultation with a multidisciplinary team which includes an Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Registered Nurse, Registered Practical Nurse, Dietitian, Chaplain, Physician, Social Worker, Counselor, family member and client. I evaluate effectiveness of care plan, formulate changes to improve the outcome for the client and set up opportunities for discussion with team for conferences to improve the services we are providing our clients.

Over the past 20 years I have been a part of significant change in the delivery and focus of care for the clients I have been honored to work with. There has been a significant increase in the focus of dignity in care from the past and push towards individualized needs of each person as evolved. Medication restraints have gone from acceptable regular use to use only when deemed truly necessary. Reality orientation, a program that was used in dementia clients to bring them to our reality, has shifted to validation therapy to encourage us to allow the dementia client's reality to resolve old issues and focus on their needs. In my opinion all these things have improved the care that we give and shifted the paradigm from staff focus to a much gentler client focus. Families have become an integral part of the care team that has expanded from personal care to various therapy modalities. These changes along with my constant need for improving my knowledge base in the Human Service Sector have allowed me to grow in my field and in my personal life.