

Week 6 Narrative of Competencies #1

Slide 1: Hello and welcome to week 6! We are already at the halfway mark for the course and moving on to the Narrative of Competencies. In this section you will focus in on the course you are challenging and using the course content summary as your guide, explain your learning. This process will take time and a number of reviews and edits so you want to plan your time wisely.

Slide 2: The Narrative of Competencies is where you will explain your learning as it relates to a specific NOVA course. This section, along with the supporting documentation you provide, will be the determiner in whether or not your portfolio earns credit. In the Narrative of Competencies you will tell your learning story as it aligns with each course learning objective/learning outcome. You can see on the screen how the Narrative of Competencies is organized: Learning Objective/Outcome, Documentation, Learning from Experience.

The **Learning Objective / Outcome** will be taken directly from the course content summary and pasted into the Narrative. You will have a separate section for each objective. If there are a couple objectives in your course content summary that are very closely related, you may decide it's best to add both of them to one section in the Narrative and explain your learning for both at the same time.

The **Documentation** you use will directly support your learning claims for each section. You may reference that same piece of documentation in more than one section. There is more information about Documentation in the Assignments tab, Week 8 section in Blackboard.

The **Learning from Experience** section is where you explain your learning as it relates to the course content summary. You will be matching your learning to the specific objective for each section. The Narrative is intended to be focused so that the faculty evaluator can easily see which objective you are addressing and then by reading your learning from experience, identify that you have met the competencies. Please do not confuse focused with short. The Narrative may end up being quite lengthy and this should be because you are including descriptions and giving concrete examples and thoroughly explaining your learning processes, all while focusing on the learning objective. Your understanding and learning grow over time so you will be demonstrating that.

You are explaining your college-level learning so your learning descriptions must focus on concrete experiences, observations, and outcomes. These descriptions must also concentrate on concepts, generalizations, testing of these concepts, and application. The Narrative of Competencies should convey both what you know and how you learned it. The process of your learning must be clear.

Just like we discussed early on in the course, new learning typically brings about change, change in behavior, thought, actions, etc. In this section, you will be explaining that change. You are telling the story of your learning.

Slide 3: Throughout our lives, we are always learning, but not all learning is college-level. To get credit for your portfolios, you must demonstrate that your learning is college-level. These guidelines can help. As you are writing about your learning, keep these guidelines in mind.

The learning is describable. To earn college credit for your experiential learning, you must be able to describe it in your portfolio. It is not the experience that will earn you credit, it is being able to think about it and articulate the learning obtained from that experience.

Your learning is reasonably current. This is especially important in IT and computer courses where it most likely will not be accepted if the learning is past 7 years old. But in most cases, you want your learning to be relatively current. For instance, maybe someone worked as a mechanic over 15 years ago, but for the past 10 years has been working as a manager at a retail store. If that person has not worked on a car since changing jobs, most likely he has forgotten many of the skills and knowledge he had to perform that role. Not only that, but the technology and tools he used have most likely changed, too. On the other hand, if he works as a retail manager but has continued to fix his own car or others' cars on the side that learning can still be considered current.

The learning has general applicability. For your learning to be college level it should be applicable outside of the situation in which it was obtained. Perhaps someone worked in an assembly line at a factory for two years repeatedly performing the same task. Although that person initially learned the skills to perform that task the learning most likely is not applicable outside that setting so would not be considered college level. But let's say that after two years, that person was promoted to manager and in that role has been managing schedules, production, and personnel. Explaining how these learned management principles could be applied in other settings would demonstrate college level learning.

Your learning fits into academic disciplines. At NOVA, the portfolio program is set up as a course-match. Students create portfolios for specific courses in their degree programs. The learning must align with the requirements outlined in the chosen course to earn credits with the portfolio. The way you learned the information or skills may be much different than the method students in the classroom use to learn it, but the learning outcomes will be similar.

Your learning includes both theories and applications. Along with the practical application, you need to also explain *how* you do what you do and *why* you do it that way instead of a different way. Also, if your learning is theoretical, you should be able to apply it in a practical context.

The learning is verifiable. This is the documentation section of your portfolio. The documentation you use needs to further support your learning claims and help prove that you know what you say you know.

And lastly, *it must not repeat learning for which credit has already been awarded.* If you took a NOVA course, you cannot use the learning you gained from that NOVA course as your main learning in the portfolio. You may be able to reference the learning gained from that NOVA course, but it cannot be used as the main source of learning in your Narrative. Your learning must come from your experiences outside the formal classroom, not from a more advanced course you took at NOVA in the same subject area. Along these lines too, if you have attempted and failed a course, you cannot use credit for prior learning (portfolios, tests, etc.) to fulfill those credits.

Slide 4: With those college-level learning guidelines in mind, we want to turn our attention back to the course content summary. In preparation for writing the Narrative of Competencies, we're going to focus this week on completing some prewriting exercises. You may use some of the same techniques reviewed in preparation for writing the Life History Paper.

On the screen you can see an example of the course content summary for NOVA's *CST 100 Principles of Public Speaking* course. Now, as you know since you already chose your course content summaries, they don't all look like this. Some have the objectives nicely laid out with bullets, some are much more extensive in their descriptions, each is a little different.

You will want to study the course content summary for your chosen course. Read through each section and pick it apart. Think about what they are expecting students to know when they finish this course and how each objective or main topic matches up with your experiential learning.

It may be helpful to print out the course content summary and the rubric and make notes on them to clarify things for yourself, match up your learning experiences with specific objectives. Really start thinking and working through how you are going to explain your learning.

Slide 5: Here is an example of a prewriting activity to prepare you to write your Narrative. This is an objective from the CST 100 course content summary on the previous slide. Directly under the learning objective are some of the main topics from the summary that relate to this objective.

On the screen are two learning experiences that align with this course objective along with a couple notes about each experience. This will give you a quick reference to organize your learning before you start writing.

This prewriting is not something you will be turning in, but it is a way to organize your learning and experiences as they relate to the course objectives before jumping into full-on writing the Narrative. You may decide to approach prewriting with a different technique but the main thing is to begin organizing your thoughts.

Slide 6: Lastly as part of your prewriting, you will be turning each learning objective in the course content summary into a learning outcome. The difference between these is tense. A learning objective states that you will do or learn something and a learning outcome is something you have done or learned.

On the screen you can see an example. The top one is the objective and the bottom one is the outcome. You are explaining in your Narrative that you have already learned the information you would have learned in the course, so you will be speaking in terms of outcomes. Writing these learning outcomes and using these to start each section of your learning descriptions will set you up to explain your learning and not just provide a list of duties completed. Including the learning outcome statements in your descriptions will also make it easy for the evaluator to follow your learning explanation.

Slide 7: As you complete your prewriting, you may want to do some research to ensure you are including the vocabulary from the course as well as supplementing with appropriate theories and concepts. You might also want to check information in the course content summary for further understanding. On the screen are some examples of resources that may be helpful.

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