

TRINITY COLLEGE OF THE BIBLE AND TRINITY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

PORTFOLIO HANDBOOK

Revised
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Trinity College of the Bible and Trinity Theological Seminary

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ABBREVIATIONS

CLN Course Learning Narrative

F2F Face to Face

KM Kolb Model

TOLC Trinity Online Learning Center

PLA Prior Learning Assessment

MISSION STATEMENT

The Portfolio process appreciates the prior learning of students. It appreciates the potential for intellectual growth and the possibility for earning academic credits based on their prior learning via a rigorous evaluation for creditable learning. For students who may benefit from Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) at Trinity, it can lead to advancement in a degree program with possible savings in time and cost. Trinity's PLA process is guided by the following values:

- A student's prior learning has potential for personal and professional growth
- 2) One's prior learning may possibly represent creditable learning
- 3) Students deserve the opportunity to earn a degree and desire and need support to succeed
- 4) Input from Trinity faculty and staff, persons outside the institution, and students is essential and enlisted for "assessment of assessment" of prior learning. The Director of Portfolio Assessment and the Portfolio Advisory Committee work to facilitate this "assessment of assessment" of prior learning in the Portfolio Process at the institution.

This handbook presents policies and procedures for PLA at Trinity College of the Bible and Trinity Theological Seminary. Prior Learning Assessment allows students to submit a Portfolio to give evidence in support of their claim for creditable learning (learning worthy of academic credits). Prior Learning Assessment at Trinity does not guarantee the awarding of academic credits because a student submits a Portfolio. Prior Learning Assessment at Trinity allows only the opportunity for the assessment of a student's Portfolio for creditable learning (determine if prior learning is worthy of academic credits). The development and writing of a Portfolio by a student can be personally beneficial to the student as the student explores hidden knowledge and makes explicit this knowledge in the form of concepts and principles. The exercise of developing a Portfolio can identify critical knowledge to guide a student's leadership and ministry in the church or para-church and foster personal and spiritual growth.

For any questions about PLA and the Portfolio process, students can contact:

- Andy Armstrong, Academic Advisor, 812-853-0611, Ext. 1009, e-mail: aarmstrong@trinitysem.edu.
- □ Dr. Max Sturdvant, Jr., Director of Portfolio Assessment, 812-853-0611, Ext. 1042, e-mail: msturdivant@trinitysem.edu.

CREDIT MODEL

Trinity assigns zero or three credits to an individual's assessed, subject matter evidence of learning (the Course Learning Narrative plus other documentation) based on such criteria as:

- 1) Demonstration of "breadth and depth" of the subject matter—Bachelor's level
- 2) Demonstration of greater "breadth and depth" (greater complexity of learning outcomes)—Master's level
- 3) Description and discussion of learning in theoretical or conceptual language (principles, models, methods) and the application of this knowledge to ministry practice
- Correlation (not necessarily duplication) to Trinity course descriptions and objectives or course descriptions and objectives from accredited higher education institutions
- 5) Correlation to competencies or skills reflected in the degree program objectives.

This criteria constitutes what the institution regards as creditable learning.

DEFINITIONS

David Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning: At Trinity, the development of content to give evidence of a student's claim of creditable learning in the Course Learning Narratives contained in a student's Portfolio is based on this model of learning. The processes, functions, or elements of learning in Kolb's Model consist of Concrete Experiences, Observation/Reflection, Forming Abstract Concepts, and Testing in New Situations. Kolb theorizes that one must move through each of these elements or functions to experience "deep learning." Portfolio assessors utilize Kolb's Model to evaluate a submitted Portfolio to measure learning and to evaluate for creditable learning. See APPENDIX 1.

Portfolio: A document or collection of evidence in support of a student's claim of creditable learning via the institution's prior learning assessment process.

Prior Experiential Learning: Learning acquired from life, work, ministry, or other profession (i.e. *concrete experiences*) prior to Trinity course/degree work and generally after age 18 (after high school diploma or its equivalency). Such learning usually consists of learning experiences outside the traditional school classroom (i.e. formal learning, brick and mortar, seat time). It does not, however, exclude learning experienced in a classroom setting (e.g., workshops, conferences, training or professional development classes). Examples of *concrete experiences* include but may not be limited to: participation in workshops and conferences; study and research for writing pieces or projects; life, work, ministry, or other professional experiences; college level coursework.

Prior Learning Assessment (PLA): Process of assessing a student's Portfolio to measure learning described and evaluate for creditable learning (whether learning described is worthy of academic credits).

Course Learning Narrative (CLN): Contained in the Portfolio, a narrative the student develops and writes to give evidence in support of the student's claim of creditable learning related to a specific subject area as prescribed in the title, description, and objectives of a college or university level course. Course Learning Narratives are a required method of measurement in the Portfolio. The student will develop and write a Course Learning Narrative for each subject area in support of the student's claim for creditable learning. Faculty Assessors of a Portfolio may initiate the use of additional methods of measurement (e.g., interview, home-grown examination specific to subject area) in the process of assessing evidence in support of a student's claim of creditable learning.

Other terms and definitions are covered in the online Portfolio Classroom in the Trinity Online Learning Center (TOLC).

PORTFOLIO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Portfolio Submission

Portfolio Option

- Students to receive advisement on the Portfolio Option.
- Students utilizing the Portfolio Option will submit in their initial Portfolio submission their signature to the Agreement Form included in the Certification page of the Portfolio to indicate their understanding and agreement to the terms and criteria of the Portfolio submission.
- A student will be required to submit all subject matter or course evidence of learning in their initial Portfolio submission for assessment of possible creditable learning.
- Students can submit their initial Portfolio copy at any point during their degree program studies.
- Once a student activates the Portfolio Option, a deadline of 6 months for the initial Portfolio submission will apply.
- The Portfolio with all CLNs and any additional documentation (evidence of learning) for subject areas or courses a student wants the institution to assess for possible creditable learning must be received by the institution at least seven months out from the student's desired degree award date. See the Student Handbook for the institution's degree award dates and the lessons submission deadline for each degree award date.

Resubmissions of a Portfolio

 A student is allowed 2 resubmissions at no additional Portfolio charges following the initial Portfolio submission for evaluation by the same assessors.

Fees

- \$300 Portfolio Option Fee at the Bachelor's level.
- \$300 Portfolio Option Fee at the Master's level.
- For both the Bachelor and Master's level, \$50 Portfolio CLN Fee will be collected for each CLN (evidence of learning for each subject area or course) contained in the initial Portfolio submission.
- Payment required to activate the Portfolio Option (no exceptions).

Assessment Timeline

 The in-house timeline for assessment of a Portfolio is 45 days from the date of receipt of a student's Portfolio. Certain constraints may necessitate an extended assessment period.

Credit Award Limits

Bachelor

 Any credits given for prior learning will not exceed one-fourth of the credits required for the degree. Bachelor: 120 credits for degree; maximum of 30 credits allowable via a combination of the Portfolio Option and Credit by Examination, not including transfer.

Master

 Any credits given for prior learning cannot exceed one-fourth of the credits required for the degree. Maximum of 9 credits via a combination of the Portfolio Option and transfer credit.

Portfolio and Degree Level

Bachelor

- Courses (subject areas) cited in the Portfolio are to be Undergraduate level courses only (at Trinity, 100-400 level courses).
- Course Learning Narratives in a Portfolio cannot duplicate completed Trinity courses or transferable credits.
- Course Learning Narratives in the Portfolio submitted at the Associate Degree level cannot be used again in a submitted Portfolio at the Bachelor's Degree level: duplication is not permitted.
- Students can use general education elective or non-core courses (i.e. course titles, descriptions, and objectives) at Trinity or from accredited higher education institutions to show evidence of creditable learning (using Master level courses or subject areas is not permitted).

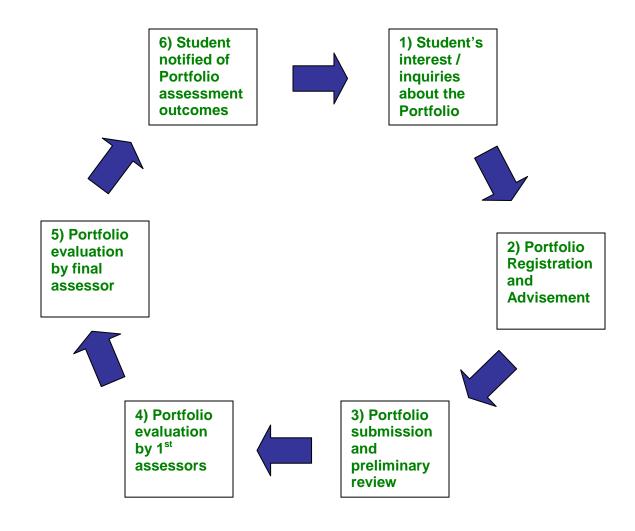
Master

- Course Learning Narratives in a Portfolio are restricted to Trinity Master level courses only.
- Course Learning Narratives cannot duplicate completed Trinity Graduate level courses or transferable credits.
- Each CLN in a Portfolio must contain at least one original work product (product created by the student) as additional evidence in support of a student's claim of creditable learning.
- Duplication of an original work product in a Portfolio is not allowed (i.e. cannot use original work product for more than one CLN in a Portfolio).
- If a student was awarded course credit at the Undergraduate level via a
 Portfolio submission, the student must produce CLNs and additional evidence
 of creditable learning per Graduate level course which does not duplicate
 CLNs and other evidence of learning submitted in the Undergraduate
 Portfolio. Consult the Director of Portfolio Assessment for advisement in this
 area.

Portfolio Seminars/Webinars

- The Portfolio Concepts, Development and Writing seminar/webinar is available to students annually for a fee. See the Portfolio Concepts, Development and Writing Study Guide.
- -0- Credit Hours

Trinity's Portfolio Process



Detail of Trinity's Portfolio Process

1) Student interest in and inquiry about the Portfolio.

2) Portfolio Registration and Advisement

- Advisement and guidance of student on potential benefit of and preparation of the Portfolio.
- ⇒ The Director of Portfolio Assessment can assess with student the possibility and potential of prior creditable learning; assess needs of learner; guide the student on the development of the Portfolio.
- ⇒ The Academic Advisor/Portfolio Specialist can assist students in registering for the Portfolio Option and advise students on protocols and content requirements for the Portfolio.
- ⇒ Students can access the online Portfolio Classroom located in the Trinity Online Learning Center (TOLC) for tutorial and instruction on the Portfolio.

3) Portfolio submission; preliminary review

- Review by the Associate Registrar of CLNs submitted by student for the Portfolio and student's academic records to ensure no duplication of credits.
- ⇒ Portfolio to be returned to student with letter of explanation from the Senior Academic Advisor if a student's Portfolio fails preliminary review (preliminary review does not constitute the official, first-time submission or resubmission of the Portfolio by a student).

4) Evaluation by 1st assessors (subject matter experts)

- Referral of a student's Portfolio to 1st faculty assessors (subject matter experts) upon passing preliminary review (constitutes the official, first-time submission or resubmission of the Portfolio by a student).
- The number of 1st faculty assessors is dependent upon the number of subject areas or courses that the student offers as evidence in support of the student's claim of creditable learning.

⇒ 1st faculty assessors will complete the appropriate Assessment Form for each CLN in the Portfolio. See Appendices 2 and 3.

5) Evaluation by final assessor (credentialing expert)

- ⇒ Final assessor (the Director of Portfolio Assessment) to assess student's Portfolio and assessment outcomes by 1st faculty assessors.
- Optional conference initiated by final assessor with 1st faculty assessors, other faculty or outside experts, the Portfolio Advisory Committee (each represents optional consultants and assessors) as necessary to discuss student's Portfolio. The student as necessary may be involved in this optional conference process.

6) Student notified of assessment outcomes

- ⇒ The Academic Advisor/Portfolio Specialist to communicate to student assessment outcomes.
- → A student is allowed 2 resubmissions at no additional Portfolio charges following the initial Portfolio submission for evaluation by the same assessors.
- The student will be informed in writing of the number of any awarded credit hours. If the total amount of targeted credit hours was not approved, the student must then respond in writing within 30 days of the e-mail/mailing date of the notification from Trinity to accept the number of awarded credit hours or indicate interest in resubmitting the portfolio to apply for the number of credits targeted at the time of the original or official Portfolio submission.
- Any academic credits awarded via the Portfolio are entered in student's transcripts.
- □ To appeal assessment outcomes of a Portfolio submission
 (following exhaustion of resubmissions), a student can follow
 procedures for appeal as prescribed under COMPLAINTS /
 GRIEVANCES in the Student Handbook. Any approved
 resubmission upon appeal will be subject to a resubmission fee per
 policies on resubmitted works. See the Student Handbook.

TERMS OF SUBMISSION

The process of PLA may be new to many Trinity students. Therefore, it is appropriate and necessary to highlight certain important considerations to promote understanding of PLA.

- ✓ Prior Learning Assessment and submission of a Portfolio does not guarantee awarding of credits but only to allow a student the opportunity to provide documentation in support of the student's claim of creditable learning for evaluation by faculty assessors who will determine whether a student's prior learning is worthy of credits. Assessors can assign zero or three credits for each subject area or CLN. A student can be awarded credits up to the number targeted in the Portfolio submission.
- ✓ A student's Portfolio will be kept as an institutional record. Students will need to make copies of their submitted Portfolio for their personal records.
- ✓ A student will need to be familiar with the contents of the Portfolio Handbook as well as the instructional contents in the online Portfolio Classroom prior to the start of developing and writing the Portfolio. Students will be asked to indicate that they are familiar with these contents and other terms via their signature of the Portfolio Agreement included in the Certification page of the initial Portfolio submission. This signature represents agreement to the terms and criteria for developing and writing a Portfolio and agreement to the understanding that the development and writing of a Portfolio does not guarantee awarding of academic credits.

TEN CAEL STANDARDS FOR ASSESSING LEARNING

The Portfolio Advisory Committee has adopted the "10 CAEL Standards for Assessing Learning" by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and implemented them as follows. These standards are provided with each portfolio as a reminder of how experiential learning should be evaluated.

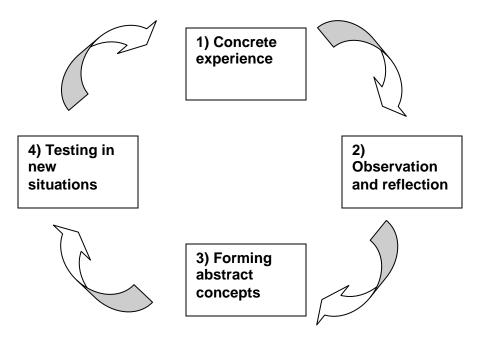
- Credit or its equivalent should be awarded for learning, and not for experience.
 Trinity assesses learning, not the amount of experience. To assist study
 - Trinity assesses learning, *not* the amount of experience. To assist students in exploring and writing about their prior learning, Trinity requires students to follow David Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning in the development of Course Learning Narratives.
- 2. Assessment should be based on standards and criteria for the level of acceptable learning that are both agreed upon and made public. Policies and procedures of the Portfolio Process at Trinity are approved by the institution's faculty. The faculty approved grading rubrics for Bachelor and Master level Portfolios that faculty assessors use in assessing prior learning. These rubrics are included in the Portfolio Handbook. The online Portfolio Classroom with audio lectures, file attachments, and instructions communicate expectations for the Portfolio. The Portfolio Handbook is available on the school's Web site as well as in the Trinity Online Learning Center for students to review policies and procedures of prior learning assessment.
- 3. Assessment should be treated as an integral part of learning, not separate from it, and should be based on an understanding of learning processes. A core value of grading at Trinity is "grading represents an essential element of teaching by the instructor/grader." It is the faculty assessors' interest that students 1) benefit personally, professionally, and academically through creating the Portfolio; 2) gain new knowledge through the process of writing the Portfolio; and 3) form and articulate principles and practices for leadership and ministry praxis as a result of developing the Portfolio.
- 4. The determination of credit awards and competence levels must be made by appropriate subject matter and academic or credentialing experts. Portfolios are assigned to qualified faculty assessors knowledgeable in the subject areas they teach. Trinity may in certain circumstances utilize outside qualified assessors.

- 5. Credit or other credentialing should be appropriate to the context in which it is awarded and accepted.
 Trinity endeavors to integrate theoretical principles and practical application in the education of students to prepare for ministry in the real world. Through the documentation of the portfolio students are required not only to demonstrate knowledge of relevant concepts and principles, but also to articulate and assess how these concepts and principles have been or can be applied in their personal or professional life.
- 6. If awards are for credit, transcript entries should clearly describe what learning is being recognized and should be monitored to avoid giving credit twice for the same learning.
 Courses from accredited higher education institutions which students choose to include in their documentation to support their claim of creditable learning are reviewed by the Associate Registrar. The Associate Registrar checks these courses against the student's transcript and current Trinity courses to ensure no duplication of credit will be awarded. The total number of any awarded academic credits via the Portfolio is registered on the student's transcript. Also, a student's Portfolio Evaluation Form along with a copy of the Portfolio Table of Contents listing the courses or subject areas in the Portfolio are placed in the student's academic file.
- 7. Policies, procedures, and criteria applied to assessment, including provision for appeal, should be fully disclosed and prominently available to all parties involved in the assessment process.
 The Portfolio Handbook documents the policies and procedures of prior learning assessment at Trinity. A student who has a grievance related to assessment outcomes of the portfolio may petition the Academic Committee.
- 8. Fees charged for assessment should be based on the services performed in the process and not determined by the amount of credit awarded. The institution charges students a base Portfolio Option Fee of \$300 for the evaluation of the portfolio. A Portfolio CLN Fee of \$50 is charged for each Course Learning Narrative (CLN) that is submitted for evaluation for credit. This uniform fee structure is based on the expense of tracking and processing prior learning assessment for the institution, and it is independent of the number of academic credits awarded, if any.
- 9. All personnel involved in the assessment of learning should pursue and receive adequate training and continuing professional development for the functions they perform.
 The Director of Portfolio Assessment and the Portfolio Advisory Committee value and utilize CAEL as a resource for information, guidance, and training in the portfolio process. The Director of Portfolio Assessment has received training from CAEL in the assessment and administration of prior learning assessment (PLA) and leads the training of faculty assessors on PLA.

 10. Assessment programs should be regularly monitored, reviewed, evaluated, and revised as needed to reflect changes in the needs being served, the purposes being met, and the state of the assessment arts. Dr. Max Sturdivant serves as the Director of Portfolio Assessment and is responsible for monitoring the portfolio process and best practices of portfolio assessment. He has earned the CAEL Certificate of Achievement as a Prior Learning Assessor.

APPENDIX 1

The Kolb Model of Experiential Learning¹



⇒In the Kolb Model, the process of learning generally begins with one's experiences: action by the individual with the effects of that action seen in the situation. Experience is "what happens" to an individual, to others, and in the situation. This process of "what happens" which can produce learning or learning outcomes can be described as the "life curriculum." This emphasis on life experience(s) from which learning can occur broadens the context for learning beyond the more traditional contexts in higher education: classroom, library, labs; on campus or campus-sponsored experiences and events. The Kolb Model has been applied to both teaching and learning theory to effect retention of information and ideas and serves as a basis for the pedagogical theory of prior learning assessment in higher education. Kolb asserts that for the learning he defines and describes (note diagram above) to occur, an individual must experience all the processes or elements he identifies (i.e., complete the cycle). The significant implication of Kolb's cyclical model is that the experience(s) must produce learning outcomes, evidenced in the elements or processes of "forming abstract concepts" and "testing in new situations." Relative to PLA, we assess learning; not experience(s). Relating to the Portfolio process, we consider personal, ministry or professional contexts and experiences of persons and assess for creditable learning outcomes from these experiences via the documentation a student submits in support of the student's claim of creditable learning.

¹ David A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1984).

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Detail of the Kolb Model: Application to Trinity's Mission and Vision

Processes	Descriptions		
Concrete Experience	✓ Personal ministry, professional, or		
	life experiences or events		
	✓ Experience(s) via the senses		
Observation and Reflection	✓ Remembering and reflecting on		
	experiences/events		
	✓ Effects or outcomes of		
	experiences/events		
	✓ Images or ideas retained		
Forming Abstract Concepts	✓ Generating new ideas/concepts		
	from experiences/events		
	✓ Formation of concepts, principles,		
	methods, models from		
	experiences/events		
Testing in New Situations	✓ Applying concepts, principles,		
	methods, models to professional or		
	ministry situations		
	✓ Explores formations or reformations		
	of concepts/ideas as a result of		
	their application to professional or		
	ministry situations		

APPENDIX 2

ASSESSMENT FORM UNDERGRADUATE PORTFOLIO

The Following to be Completed by 1 st Assessors			
CLN Content Categories	Content Criteria (Check Items and Criteria Which Apply)		
Introduction	Identifies purpose/objectives of CLN.		
Concrete Experience (KM)	☐ Clearly identifies ministry, professional, or life experience(s) (i.e. names, dates, places) ☐ Describes activities/tasks performed ☐ Indicates organizational, institutional, program or ministry results/outcomes.		
Observation/Reflection (KM)	 □ Explains and offers observation about relationships, issues, situations □ Discusses effects of experience(s) on the student and/or other persons □ Describes situations which led to learning □ Discusses what most stands out from experience □ Reflects on what the student learned about him/herself □ Explains who/what influenced his/her thinking and why. 		
Forming Abstract Concepts (KM)	 □ Draws conclusions from experience(s) □ Discusses important theories, concepts, models, or principles derived from experience(s) cited □ Content reasonably reflects a depth and breadth of the subject matter. □ Considers how theories, concepts, models, or 		

	principles can guide ministry or professional practice Describes and discusses new knowledge and skills acquired. Learning described reasonably corresponds to course description and objectives Learning described demonstrates competencies reflected in the degree program objectives.		
Testing in New Situations (KM)	 □ Explains how this new learning was applied in professional or ministry situations □ Discusses creatively how this new learning can be applied in future professional or ministry situations □ Discusses evidence which supports theories, concepts, models, or principles conveyed in Forming Abstract Concepts section of CLN □ Explains how concepts, models, principles, ideas (from Forming Abstract Concepts section) changed his/her ministry or professional practice □ Explores formations or reformations of concepts and ideas as a result of their application to professional or ministry situations. 		
Conclusion	Summarizes learning outcomes from experience(s).		
General Criteria			
 □ Professional in appearance □ CLN demonstrates an ability to comprehend information and translate information into new knowledge □ The CLN represents a level of detail that gives a clear picture of learning 			

Additional evidence of learning is appropriate and adequate for the experience described and discussed.			
Rating (check) Exceptional Strong Satisfactory Marginal	nal/Unacceptable		
 Assessor's Name: Credit Recommendation (0 or 3): Rationale for Credit Recommendation: 			

APPENDIX 3

ASSESSMENT FORM GRADUATE PORTFOLIO

The Following to be Completed by 1 st Assessors			
CLN Content Categories	Content Criteria (Check Items and Criteria Which Apply)		
Introduction	Identifies purpose/objectives of CLN.		
Concrete Experience (KM)	 □ Clearly identifies ministry, professional, or life experience(s) (i.e. names, dates, places) □ Describes activities/tasks performed □ Indicates organizational, institutional, program or ministry results/outcomes. 		
Observation/Reflection (KM)	 □ Explains and offers observation about relationships, issues, situations □ Discusses effects of experience(s) on the student and/or other persons □ Describes situations which led to learning □ Discusses what most stands out from experience □ Reflects on what the student learned about him/herself □ Explains who/what influenced his/her thinking and why. 		
Forming Abstract Concepts (KM)	□ Draws conclusions from experience(s) □ Discusses important theories, concepts, models, or principles derived from experience(s) cited □ Content reflects a greater breadth and depth (greater complexity of learning outcomes) of the subject		

	matter. Considers how theories, concepts, models, or principles can guide ministry or professional practice
	Describes and discusses new knowledge and skills acquired.
	Learning described reasonably corresponds to course description and objectives
	Learning described demonstrates competencies reflected in the degree
	program objectives.
Testing in New Situations (KM)	Explains how this new learning was applied in professional or ministry
	situations Discusses creatively how this new learning can be applied in future professional
	or ministry situations Discusses evidence which supports theories, concepts, models, or principles conveyed in Forming Abstract Concepts section of CLN
	Explains how concepts, models, principles, ideas (from Forming Abstract Concepts section) changed his/her ministry or professional practice
	Explores formations or reformations of concepts and ideas as a result of their application to professional or ministry situations.
Conclusion	Summarizes learning
	outcomes from experience(s).

	information into new knowledge			
Rating (check)	Exceptional	Strong	Satisfactory	Marginal/Unacceptable
Assessor's Name: Credit Recommendation (0 or 3): Rationale for Credit Recommendation: Date Completed:				