

Directed Learning Activities at Skyline College: A Faculty Guide to Extending the Classroom with DLAs



Guide to Creating a Directed Learning Activity

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The Purpose of the Directed Learning Activity

Directed Learning Activities (DLAs) were created at Skyline College to support, complement, and/or supplement in-class learning within the Learning Center setting. The language of the activity should connect to the course assignments, objectives, and/or outcomes. DLAs should be integrated into the curriculum of the host course; therefore, it is recommended that instructors connect the learning, information, and skills from the DLA to class discussion, tests, quizzes, projects, or other in-class activities.

Step 1: Identify a specific need, skill, thought process, etc. that students need additional and varied opportunities to engage in outside of class.

What skill, process, or concept do the students need in order to be successful at a particular assignment or activity in your class, but typically lack? What obstacles do students often face in successfully completing this assignment or activity?

- What type of activity would be different from something they could do as homework?
For example.....
- How will this activity be integrated or connected to your course?
Example needed here
- How will students receive feedback on this activity (tutors, instructor of the course, answer key, etc.)?
As general practice, students meet with a graduate tutor in TLC upon completion of the DLA. This is typically done through a drop-in tutoring session (see DLA flow chart in this guide)
- What are the appropriate materials, tutors, equipment, etc. to support this activity?
DLAs typically contain 1) written response elements, 2) graphic representations to enhance understanding, 3) a brief video segment, and lastly 4) a tutoring session to check for understanding
- Will the Learning Center be able to support the activity (Is it tutor or resource-intensive? Have you consulted with the Instructional Aide in the Learning Center regarding feasibility, etc.)?
It is important to build your DLA collaboratively with TLC staff in order to ensure that tutors and Instructional Aides will be familiar with the activity and TLC has the means to support it.

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Designing Learning Outcomes

Step 2: Determine what kind of learning you want to take place as a result the activity.

Application Skills

Thinking:

- Critical, creative & practical thinking
- Managing projects/managing time

Foundational Knowledge

Understanding and remembering:

- Information
- Ideas

Integration

Connecting:

- Ideas
- People
- Realms of life

Human Dimension

Learning about:

- Oneself
- Others

Learning How to Learn

- Becoming a better student
- Inquiring about a subject
- Self-directed learners

Caring

Developing new...

- Feelings
- Interests

(Taxonomy of Significant Learning from *WHAT IS "SIGNIFICANT LEARNING"?* By Dr. L. Dee Fink; Jossey-Bass, 2003)

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Questions for Reflection:

What types of learning do your students engage in related to the topic/skill/activity you have chosen for this DLA?

What type(s) of learning do your students need to engage in outside of class in this area?

How can you design your directed learning activity to address these types of learning?

What are some of the best practices you use in teaching? What creative activities do you use that engage students in the learning process? How might you be able to transfer these creative practices to the design of the DLA?

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Aligning Your Activity with DLA Criteria

Step 3: Design an activity that meets the criteria of a directed learning activity. Use the checklist to help you think through the possibilities.

Review your activity by evaluating it according to the criteria listed below.

As a result of completing this activity, students will...

- Engage in deep learning and/or a process of learning, not just a product.
- See a connection between the DLA and their coursework.
- Integrate knowledge, skills, concepts, or processes from their course and apply them in the DLA.
- Develop skills and/or strategies rather than just complete exercises.
- Interact with various modes of learning.

This DLA could not be done as homework because it...

- Requires unique resources, materials, or services only available in the Learning Center or online

Specific and clear instructions have been provided to both the student and the Learning Center regarding...

- The expectations of the activity.
- The due date of the activity.
- The feedback or verification needed from the Learning Center.
- Tutor session guidelines for the activity.
- The limitations and restrictions of the activity (is the Learning Center appropriate for this activity? what materials are required or recommended? what type of assistance should be given by the Learning Center tutors/staff for the activity? etc.)

Make sure to check with the Learning Center before implementing the DLA regarding...

- The approval of the DLA
- Available resources and tutors in the Learning Center for the DLA
- Timing of the DLA (How long does the center need to make copies, train tutors, provide the resources as appropriate, etc?)
- The time frame to complete the activity – Is the activity in the DLA designed to work within the specified time frame? This should be approximately one hour.

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Student Feedback: Were the Outcomes Achieved?

Step 4: Create feedback for the student through an answer key, tutor or instructor feedback, and/or through in-class activities such as tests, quizzes, discussion, projects, etc.

Tutors are typically the mechanism you will use to give the student feedback regarding this directed learning activity, so consider the key elements they will need to address in providing the student feedback.

Once you have completed creating this Directed Learning Activity, meet with the Learning Center Manager or Instructional Aide and ask him/her to review your DLA and give you feedback related to Step 3 criteria.

Referring Students to TLC to complete a DLA

DLA Referral Form: TLC will provide all faculty using DLAs the form below to refer students



THE LEARNING CENTER

DLA Referral Form

Student Name (please print) _____

Instructor last name (please print) _____

Course Name and Number _____

DLA to be completed _____

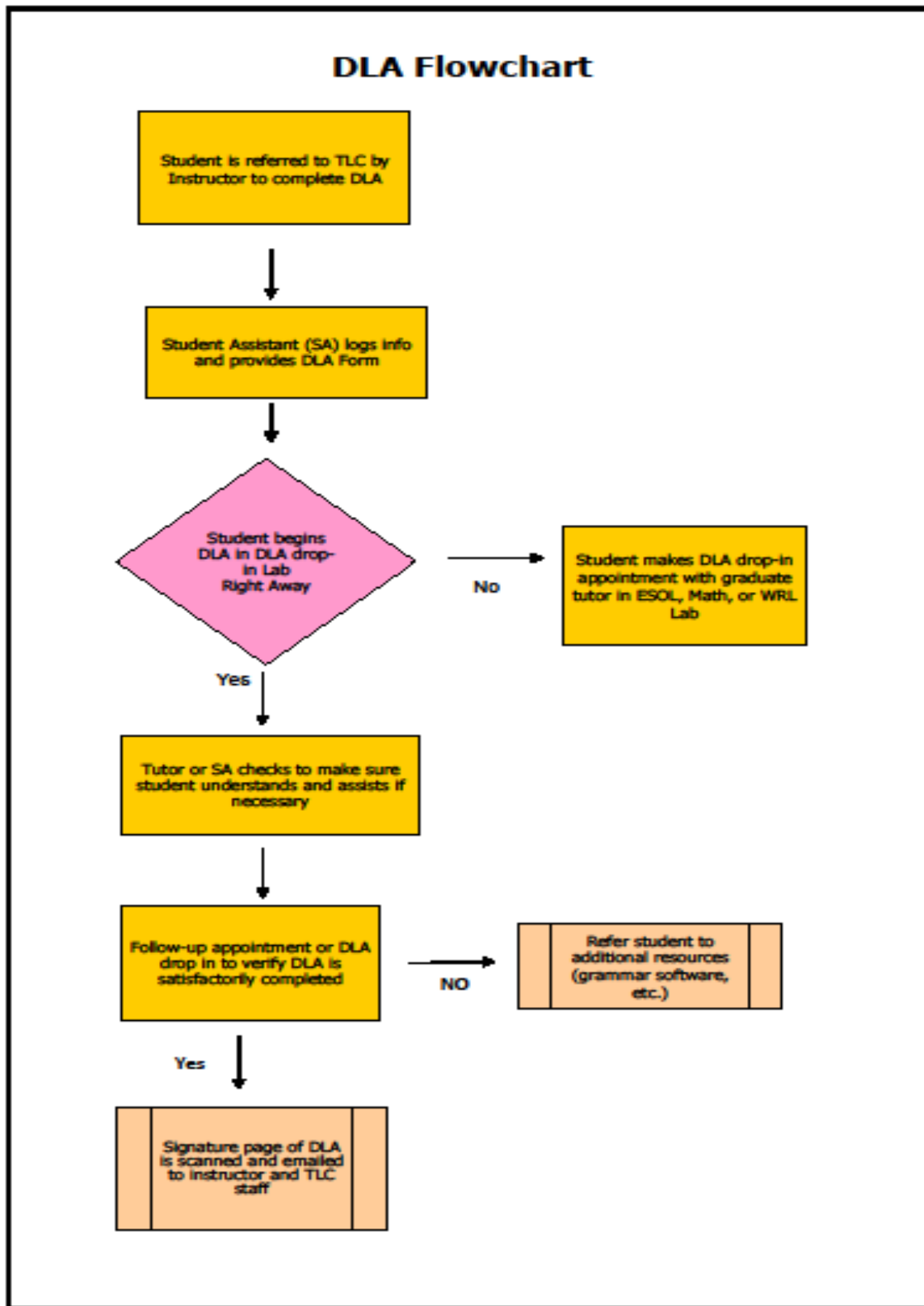
Date _____

Faculty Signature _____

.....
Date Rec'd TLC:

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DLA Flow Chart:



DLA Evaluation Rubric

This guide is used by graduate tutors and TLC staff to determine whether or not the student has completed and understands the DLA in its entirety. Each student presenting a completed DLA must be able to demonstrate competence and understanding of the objective according to the rubric criteria below in the context of a tutoring session with a graduate tutor in the Learning Center.

Criteria	Meets Minimum Requirements	Needs Additional Work
Timeliness	The student completed DLA in the appropriate time frame.	The student failed to complete DLA in the appropriate time frame.
Completion	The student thoroughly completed all steps of the DLA.	The student did not complete one or more steps in the DLA
Comprehension/ Metacognition	The student can effectively explain the concepts and skills learned in the DLA.	The student fails to explain the concepts and skills from the DLA and/or is confused on what is to be communicated.
Course Connections	The student can explain connections between their coursework and the DLA.	The student cannot explain a connection between their coursework and DLA.
Independent Learning/ Building Schema	The student demonstrates understanding of concepts and skills learned from this DLA and how they will use those concepts and skills in future coursework.	The student cannot demonstrate understanding of the concepts and skills learned in the DLA and/or how those concepts and skills will be used in future coursework.

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DLA Program Assessment

At the end of each semester, a review of completed DLAs will be conducted to determine overall effectiveness as judged by participating faculty, students, tutors, and TLC tutors and staff.

Key Metrics

- The number of students who were referred and successfully completed one or more DLAs, by subject
- The number of students who were referred, but did not successfully complete the DLA
- The time needed, on average, for a student to complete each DLA

Participating Faculty Survey

Sample questions with a Likert scale response element include:

1. Did you notice any improvement or change in your student's overall academic ability as a result of the student completing one or more DLAs?
2. Did you notice any Improvement in the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of the key concept that the DLA is focused on?

Participating Student Survey

A survey will be sent electronically to students to gauge their feelings about the effectiveness and impact of the DLA(s) they have completed on their academic abilities, confidence, and semester success. Sample questions with a Likert scale response element include:

1. Did the DLA(s) you completed increase your awareness of strengths and challenges in your academic work?
2. Did the DLA(s) you completed increase your awareness and/or willingness to seek support services on campus?
3. Did the DLA(s) you completed increase your personal development in areas such as study skills, persistence and academic proficiency?
4. An optional, open-response element question will request suggestions and/or feedback from the student regarding content areas or skills that they recommend be added as DLAs.

Student Success Data Gathering

Working with the Office of Planning, Research, and Institutional Effectiveness we will measure the effect of completed DLAs on: term-to-term completion, semester success and course and institutional retention rates.

Example of a Study Skills Directed Learning Activity



The Learning Center

Directed Learning Activity: Annotation and Talking to the Text

IMPORTANT NOTE: All the activities (5) in this DLA must be completed in their entirety before meeting with a tutor and receiving credit. Where indicated, complete your work on this sheet.

Objective: Through step-by-step practice, and other activities, this exercise will teach students how to annotate while they read so they can understand and retain written material and actively engage with texts.

Step 1: What is annotation?

Step 2: Why annotate?

Step 3: How to annotate

Step 4: Talking to the Text Video

Step 5: Practice Talking to the Text with a tutor

Step 1: What is annotation?

Annotating is an organized method to take notes as you read and involves marking up a text as you read it. It usually involves adding your own thoughts, questions and observations in the margins, circling unknown terms and vocabulary, underlining or highlighting main points and good quotes, and coding (briefly summing up passages in a few key words).

Step 2: Why annotate?

- It turns you into an active reader engaging closely with the text.
- Being an active reader improves comprehension and retention of what you read.
- You can use your notes to select material to include in a more formal paper.
- It can help you better understand complex texts through breaking them down.
- You can circle unknown terms and then look them all up after you are finished reading (looking them up as you read will disrupt your understanding and enjoyment of the text)
- You can navigate a well-marked text quickly to find quotes and evidence for papers and open book exams.
- You can refresh your memory of the text easily by re-reading your notes and what you have highlighted without having to re-read the entire text.

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Step 3: How to annotate

There are different methods for marking a text. Often you will use a variety of the following methods AS YOU READ:

- (1) In the left margin, write your own QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS, adding your own reactions, observations and queries as you read.
- (2) Throughout the text, UNDERLINE OR HIGHLIGHT the main points and good quotes.
- (3) Throughout the text, CIRCLE unknown vocabulary and after you read, look up the words and write in the definitions.
- (4) In the right margin, CODE, meaning write a one-to-three word description that captures the essence of large chunks of text. This will create an easy to read summary in the right margin.
- (5) After reading the entire text, go back and see if you can locate and LABEL THE THESIS. If it is not directly stated, write out the thesis in your own words.

Step 4: Talking to the Text Video

Go to: www.youtube.com

Search for the video titled “Talking to the Text – full version” by West LA Digital *OR* enter the web address below into an internet browser to go directly to the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owzB6ldY1CM>

Step 5: Practice Talking to the Text with a tutor

Read the text below carefully. As you read, annotate out-loud with a tutor.

“The Meaning of Work” by Rodrigo Joseph Rodriguez

Had you been born during my day, you would have known the meaning of work, my father says in Spanish. He looks at my hands and arms. “Had you not gone to college,” Papi says, “you would be working.” Perhaps I would have never boxed my books and said goodbye in the pursuit of academic success. Moreover, I would not spend so much time in libraries, universities, and museums. Instead, I would think of more familiar life: marriage, family, a steady salary.

To Papi, after all, this was the dream that founded the United States, a country with immeasurable opportunity - the opportunities he rarely had, since he worked and lived in the shadows, speaking Spanish and following the cotton circuit. For Papi, doing work means doing

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physical labor, not sitting before a computer screen or curled up on the foldout La-Z-Boy with a book. It means using arm and muscle, putting your hands to everyday use.

Late in the evening, after we finished our homework and had our dinner, Papi would arrive from the refinery with dusty hair and an aching body. His lunchbox often held a treat for the first child who'd greet him as he entered the house. Work, work, work. He did not want his children to lead such a life. "If you study hard, you won't have to work like me," he'd warn us in Spanish. "Use this," he'd say, pointing to his head.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Steps (1-5) in this DLA must be completed before meeting with a tutor.

Confirmation that the **DLA for Annotation and Talking to the Text** is complete:

Student Name (print): _____

Student G #: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

TLC Staff/ Gr.Tutor Signature: _____ Date: _____