

Introduction

Group learning can serve as the stimulus or a resource to the development of a personal learning project (PLP). This planning template has been developed to enable you to create one or more personal learning projects leveraging your participation in group learning.

About Personal Learning Projects

Personal learning projects are self-planned learning activities, developed to answer a question, issue, or problem you have identified in your professional practice. Although the majority of the questions, issues or problems you develop are relevant to your role as a Medical Expert, PLPs can also address questions relevant to any CanMEDS Role. Evidence however suggests that many questions either are not pursued (or go unanswered)¹ or are not formulated well² and thus can make them difficult to answer.

The question(s) you identify will enable you to create a learning plan that involves selecting relevant sources of information to enable you to reach a conclusion regarding the learning outcome(s) for your practice. Common sources of information include scientific literature (e.g. systematic reviews), practice guidelines, talking to experts or colleagues, or participating in group learning activities. The final part of the PLP is reflecting on what you have learned, or the changes you anticipate implementing and recording the process and conclusions in MAINPORT.

Pre (name of event) Planning

Step 1: Question development

Before you leave to participate in a group learning activity, review the learning objectives and description of each session and in the space provided develop one or two questions you believe the activity can answer.

I would like the (name of event) to answer (record up to 2 questions):

Question 1:

Question 2:

1 Gorman, P., & Helfand, M. (1995), Information seeking in primary care: How physicians choose which clinical questions to pursue and which to leave unanswered, *Medical Decision Making*, 15: 113-119.

2 Horsley, T., O'Neill, J., C. Campbell, The quality of questions and use of resources in self-directed learning: Personal learning projects in the maintenance of certification, *JCEHP*, 29(2): 91-97.

Step 2: Develop a Learning Plan

Once you have defined your question (s), the next step is to develop a learning plan. The learning plan could include:

- Reading any pre-circulated material;
- Attending specific group sessions at the activity;
- Accessing other relevant resources.

Learning at the (name of event)

The formal (plenary session, large and small group activities) and informal (collegial discussions at breaks or over lunch) activities are resources you can leverage to answer the question(s) you developed. Use the space below to record any ideas or evidence that contributed to your learning during the activity.

After the (name of event)

Step 3: Defining the Learning Outcomes

When the activity is complete, the intention is to reflect what you have done and determined:

- You have learned enough to answer the question(s) you raised OR;
- You need to modify your learning plan and continue learning by exploring additional resources.

The conclusions or outcomes you reach for your professional practice can include either:

- Confirming your current knowledge or skills or practice
- Expanding your knowledge, skills, competencies or attitudes
- Changing some aspect of your practice
- Enhancing your performance or improving practice outcomes

Once you have defined the conclusion or learning outcome – there is one more step you need to complete.

Documenting What You Learned

Step 4: Documenting your PLP in MAINPORT

The final step in the PLP process is documenting the question you pursued and the outcomes you reached in MAINPORT. When you access MAINPORT using a computer or a hand-held device, the new documentation templates will provide you with two options:

- Document as you learn by entering some information; save as incomplete; and add to or revise what you have documented in the future;
- Enter information in all of the mandatory fields when the PLP is complete and then submit for credit.

In MAINPORT the template to document each PLP is found in Section 2: Planned Learning.

There are several mandatory and optional fields for each personal learning project!

MAINPORT Mandatory Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The question or issue you defined• The learning outcome or conclusion you reached• The date the project was completed• The total time (in hours) you spent learning
MAINPORT Optional Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The resource(s) you used to learn• Link the PLP to individual CanMEDS Role

Recording time learning:

Please include the total time (by 15 minute increments) you spent identifying and developing the questions, accessing and appraising resources, determining the learning outcomes and recording the PLP in MAINPORT.

For example: Let's assume you spent:

- 15 minutes developing a question and creating a learning plan;
- 2 hours reading pre-circulated material;
- 2 hours attending the group learning session relevant to your question;
- 15 minutes reflecting on and identifying the conclusion for your practice;
- 15 minutes recording the PLP in MAINPORT.

Total Time = 4.75 hours or 9.5 credits

NOTE: Enter the total time in hours and MAINPORT will do the calculations for you!

Some Practical Suggestions:

1. Recording questions as you practice:

Although raising and answering questions is a natural learning strategy for physicians, the majority of questions in practice are not pursued. Recording questions as they occur will enable you to create a learning plan that addresses those issues that are most relevant to your practice. You can access MAINPORT using a hand held device or the web to record the questions you have raised but do not have the time to pursue immediately in the '**Holding Area**'.

2. Each clinical question or issue you develop is a reflection of a specific need you have defined. In that regard it is helpful to consider the following ideas (where applicable) as you develop questions.

Question content: Is your question intended to focus on: etiology, pathophysiology, clinical features, diagnosis, treatment or management options, prevention, prognosis?

Question Domains: Have you described the population, the intervention or exposure, the comparison that should be considered, or the outcome of interest?

3. The sources of evidence that you select will be dependent in part on the urgency you need to apply the evidence. For immediate application (for example at the point of care) consider accessing summarized sources of evidence and/or seeking the advice of colleagues.

For more information on PLPs please contact the Membership Services Centre at 1-800-461-9895 or contact the CPD educator in your province.