The P/L/D Diagnostic

Is your initiative Performance, Learning — or Development?

Most of what we call "development" is not. Hard work feels developmental, but **hard ≠ developmental**. This one-page tool helps you see what you are really running.

The framework: two axes — time and space

	Performance	Learning	Development
Time	Days to weeks	Weeks to months	Years
Space	This context only	Similar contexts	Unfamiliar contexts
Transfer test	New role? It doesn't travel.	New role, similar work? It transfers.	New role, unfamiliar work? It holds.

Development used to be a by-product of work. As routine experience is automated away, it now has to be designed on purpose.

Warm-up: which one is development?

- **A.** A new manager inherits a failing team. Fix it in 90 days or it is restructured. Weekly coaching from her director.
- **B.** A high-potential shadows a senior leader for six months, debriefing weekly with a coach on what they observed.
- **C.** A compliance e-learning with branching scenarios, a test and a certificate.

Answer: A is **Performance** (known task, 90-day horizon — the coaching is support). B is **Learning** (observing, not owning; strip the safety net and give her the outcome, and it becomes development). C is **Performance** (bound to this compliance context).

The diagnostic — apply it to something live

1. Initiative I'm running (real, not hypothetical)	
2. Transfer test — New role? New country? New industry? → P / L / D	
3. What I designed it as	P / L / D
4. What it actually is (be honest)	P / L / D
5. One level up — what would move it to the next category?	

The gap between rows 3 and 4 is your insight.

Evaluate each with its own lens

- **Performance:** Did we deliver — on time, on budget?
- **Learning:** Did we level up? Can we apply it elsewhere?
- **Development:** Are we ready for the unknown — confident and humble?

Check yourself

- Do I reward speed, or insight?
- Do people have space to experiment, or only to execute?
- Are we surviving now, or building capacity for the unknown?

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