

A group of approximately 20 people are gathered outdoors in a courtyard-like setting. They are seated on various chairs and are engaged in conversation or a group activity. The scene is framed by large, mature trees with dense green foliage. In the background, there is a white building with a red-tiled roof and a red metal gate. The overall atmosphere is bright and open.

Writing Intensive Courses: Design, Implementation, Equity, Assessment & Scale

LOW STAKES WRITING ASSIGNMENT

“In a very real sense, education is initiation into a discourse community*, a process of learning how to use language in a certain way to become accepted, literate, or as is often the case in American higher education, credentialed in some profession” – David Russel

*discourse community – A group of people who share a set of discourses, understood as basic values and assumptions, and ways of communicating about those goals, including specialized vocabulary and specialized genre. Linguist John Swales defined discourse communities as “groups that have goals or purposes and use communication to achieve these goals.”

Historically Underserved Students Benefit Even More from High Impact Practices

Too Few Students Participate in High-Impact Practices and Some Groups of Students Participate Much More than Others

High Impact Practices Have a Positive Impact on Learning and Completion

*--The Leap Vision of Learning,
Association of American Colleges and Universities*

Writing Across The Curriculum

- 1. Writing is a complex activity, and writing problems are numerous and varied
- 2. Writing is a process as well as a product
- 3. Writing is a learning activity as well as a communication activity
- 4. Writing helps students learn the content of a field
- 5. Writing helps students learn the communication patterns within a discourse community
- 6. Students learn to write well by writing in localized contexts and by receiving responses from writers within those contexts.

Writing in the Disciplines

- 1. Writing is a practice
- 2. Writing expectations and performances are discipline specific
- 3. Much of what an accomplished writer knows about writing remains tacit.
- 4. Tacit knowledge is communicated through apprenticeship.

Writing intensive courses

- A WI course includes carefully crafted formal writing assignments that are linked to the unfolding of course material. Assignments are not "add-ons."
- Formal writing assignments are guided; that is, assignment sheets are detailed and students receive ongoing feedback and advice on work in progress.
- The assignments and guidance build on the work of the foundational writing courses to promote a common vocabulary and approach to the writing process; there is an emphasis on critical reading and thinking as well as an insistence on professional preparation of written work.
- **Writing to Learn is writing that is closely associated with the learning process as it occurs in class (lecture or discussion) and as it occurs outside of class (reading and assignments). It is the effort to articulate thoughts that move students toward clarity and coherence.**
- Students:
 - write more and get used to it
 - think more about what they are reading or listening to
 - become more reflective and more aware of what they do and do not know
 - do better on formal writing assignments

(York College)

National Survey of Student Engagement

- Students say they learn most when their writing assignments:
 - 1. Encourage **interaction** (peer review, teaching feedback, writing center visits)
 - 2. Require **authentic meaning-making** and communication (synthesis of information directed at specific audiences)
 - 3. Provide clear expectations (content and scope, organization and development, engagement & choice)

Core Strategies

- Low Stakes- High Stakes
- Scaffolding
- Response and Levels of Response to Student Writing

Faculty /Staff Development

- CUNY Writing Fellows
- WAC Clearinghouse
- Advisors and Staff

Resources/Scale/Integration/Assessment

- Bronx Community College
- Queensborough Graduation Requirement
- Outcomes
- VALUE Rubrics

Equity and Access

- Advisement
- Form - Thought and Process
- Writing in the Disciplines
- Modality- Online WI

Are students:

- Investing time and effort?
- Interacting with faculty and peers about substantive matters?
 - Experiencing diversity?
 - Responding to more frequent feedback?
 - Reflecting and integrating learning?
- Discovering relevance of learning through real-world application?

High Impact Practices: Eight Key Elements

- Performance expectations set at **appropriately** high levels
- Significant investment of time and effort by students over an extended period of time
- Interactions with faculty and peers about substantive matters
- **Experiences with diversity, wherein students are exposed to and must contend with people and circumstances that differ from those with which students are familiar**
- Frequent, timely and constructive feedback
- Periodic, structure opportunities to reflect and integrate learning
- **Opportunities to discover relevance of learning through real-world applications**
- **Public demonstrations of competence**

Ensuring Quality & Taking High-Impact Practices to Scale (Kuh, O'Donnell, Reed)

Model

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“WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY”

- Scale – Integration – Resources –
- Design -Faculty/Staff Development - Assessment - Equity and Access

"...[HIPS] transformed my teaching"— Keeping it High Impact

- Are you:
 - finding the process and planning engaging?
 - interacting with colleagues differently?
 - making connections across disciplines?
 - questioning your assumptions about teaching and learning?

Questions?

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