

## MCC High-Impact Practices

The definition of **High-Impact Practice** is: An investment of time and energy over an extended period that has unusually positive effects on student engagement in educationally purposeful behavior.\*

\*Kuh, G. "Foreward," Five High-Impact Practices: Research on Learning Outcomes, Completion, and Quality by Jayne E. Brownell and Lynn E. Swaner, AAC&U, 2010

**Service-Learning** allows students to participate in authentic learning activities through focused curricular projects with community partners. The projects are designed to emphasize student learning and enrichment with a topic that will fill a community need that is defined by the partnering organization. Service-Learning pedagogy emphasizes meaningful learning and reinforcement of classroom concepts, reflection, leadership, civic responsibility and increases the relevancy of education by applying academic instruction to real-life problems.

### **Minimum criteria for assigning a course as being designated as Service-Learning:**

1. The course puts into practice the knowledge and skills learned in the course through a project that fulfills a community need
2. The project is created by the instructor in collaboration with a community partner (i.e. Non-Profit Agency, MCC Department, Public Education, etc.)
  - a. The project must meet a specific community need that an organization would ordinarily not be able to accomplish.
  - b. The project must fall within one of the six models for Service-Learning and be approved by the Service-Learning Faculty Liaison. (Pure Service-Learning, Discipline-Based Service-Learning, Problem-Based Service-Learning, Capstone Classes, Service Internships, Undergraduate Community-Based Action Research)
  - c. The instructor and partner will agree on the outcome of the project and the expectations of students, instructor, and partner agency.
  - d. The project should help meet the CLOs for the course and add to the learning of the academic material.
  - e. Service Learning hours to be transcribed are defined by the instructor in terms of how many hours they feel the students will be working on this project (a minimum of 5 hours), and the weight of the project's grade relative to the overall course
3. Students must reflect on the project – verbally or written form – in terms of their overall learning, networking, and community engagement

**Writing Intensive courses** include formal and informal writing to improve learning. By writing, students cultivate their analytical, critical thinking and communication skills, both within and outside the classroom.

**Minimum criteria for assigning a course as being Writing Intensive:**

**Formal Writing** is writing for an identified reader or readers; therefore, formal writing needs to be organized and edited.

- Semester minimum total of 2,000-2,500 words (the equivalent of 8-10 typewritten, double-spaced pages).
- Formal writing does not have to be completed as one large assignment. In fact, research indicates that shorter formal assignments help students more than simply assigning one long paper.
- Formal writing must meet the minimum proficiency standards as defined by the discipline.
- Examples of formal writing assignments include, but are not limited to, essay and short answer exam questions, research papers, essays, reviews, letters, memos, evaluation reports, critiques, case studies, lab reports, annotated bibliographies, and other discipline-specific writings.

**Informal Writing** is writing for oneself. Informal writing helps the student to think on paper and to learn in active and reflective ways, regardless of discipline. Informal writing promotes learning by encouraging students to actively engage in the subject matter through writing without worrying about being penalized for errors in grammar, content, style, or organization. In this way, students may think and discover through the writing process.

- Although informal writing is not generally evaluated, it may (if collected) be graded for completeness.
- Examples of informal writing assignments include, but are not limited to, short in-class or out-of-class activities, such as taking class notes, recalling on paper the subject of a previous class, clarifying an important idea during a lecture, brainstorming, speculating, journal writing, listing, and rough drafts that will later be re-worked into formal writing assignments.

**Undergraduate Research, Scholarly Inquiry, and Creative Activity (URSICA)** promotes a culture in which students are encouraged to explore, enter, and advance dialogues in their disciplines. This includes all forms of scholarly inquiry and creative activity that encourage student engagement with the processes by which their disciplines are advanced in the world at large.

**Minimum criteria for assigning a course as being URSICA-based:**

- 1) Student(s) will participate in a faculty mentored project and may also have the opportunity to express work through publication, performances, exhibits, or presentations, or sharing their work with an audience.

Or

- 2) Faculty provide undergraduate students active inquiry-based learning throughout the course to scaffold the language and process of research in the classroom, laboratory, library, studio, or field that amount to a minimum 20% of the course work and account for 20% of the grade.

The type of inquiry-based teaching method used, level at which it is applied, goals, and method(s) of assessment will be determined by the instructor(s) teaching the course.

**Field Experiences** provide students with direct experience in a professional work setting, usually related to their career interests. This gives students the benefit of supervision from specialists in the field as well as the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge from the classroom. Students are encouraged to reflect on their professional growth through assignments. Field experiences include but are not limited to: internships, co-ops, practicums, and apprenticeships.

**Minimum criteria for assigning a course as being Field Experience:**

- Minimum of 1 hour per week per credit hour or equivalent across the semester
- Direct guidance is provided by a professional in the work setting/field
- Placement setting is selected in relation to course learning outcomes
- Hands-on, interactive opportunities are provided in the field/work setting, so that students have the opportunity to apply skills from their course
- Ongoing reflection on experiences is facilitated through course assignments/discussions
- Field Experience learning outcomes are linked to course learning outcomes
- Assessment of field experience learning outcomes is linked to course learning outcomes

**Learning Communities** encourage integration of learning across courses and involve students with themes and questions that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more integrated courses as a group and work closely with one another and with professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic through the lenses of different disciplines.

**Minimum criteria for assigning a course as being part of a Learning Community:**

- Two faculty members will meet in advance of the semester to review materials from each of their courses and find concepts, units, ideas, projects, etc. in each that can be linked throughout the semester. As part of this process, the two faculty members will develop a brief statement that will help students to understand the ways in which these courses will be integrated in this learning community.
- The same group of students are enrolled in both classes (i.e., every student enrolled in one class should be enrolled in the other).
- Students will complete an integrated project (or series of projects) that will facilitate their exploration of a common topic from both disciplinary perspectives.
- On at least two occasions during the semester the two classes will meet as one so that students will have the opportunity to experience two faculty members co-teaching, modeling interdisciplinary exploration for the students.
- At the close of the semester, the two faculty members will assess the integrated learning experience for students based on their initial learning objectives and goals.

**Diversity and Global Learning** facilitate students' exploration of cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. Such courses may address U.S. (i.e., domestic) diversity, world cultures, or both, and often explore the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and social class. Readings and class activities may also focus on (but not be limited to) continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by studying abroad.

**Minimum criteria for assigning a course as being Diversity and Global Learning:**

- Course material and assignments (e.g. readings, class presentations; group projects) will engage students with a diverse range of human perspectives and experiences.
- Students will participate in facilitated class discussions in which they can feel safe to ask difficult questions and deepen their thinking about issues of diversity that may seem uncomfortable or intimidating. Such discussions would ideally arise from relevant course material (e.g., assigned readings, films, field trips, service learning experiences).

**Collaborative Learning** combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems as part of a group of interdependent individuals, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening to and reflecting on the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches include but are not limited to: study groups, team-based assignments and writing, face-to-face, debates, joint problem solving, study teams, video lessons, role playing, learning by teaching, cooperative projects and research.

**Minimum criteria for assigning a course as being Collaborative Learning:**

- Students will receive clear criteria on their roles so that they understand the contributions that are expected of them.
- Evaluation will be based on both the final product of collaboration and the individual contributions as defined by their roles.
- Students will reflect on what they have learned from one another in relation to the course content.
- Collaborative activities (e.g. projects and/or assignments) will account for at least 1/3 of in class time **OR** 1/3 of the total grade should be based on collaborative work if some of the work is done outside the classroom.