

University of Houston-Clear Lake
Office of Institutional Effectiveness
QEP 2022-Survey Results

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What is your affiliation with UHCL (student, faculty, staff, alumni, community member, other)?	faculty
Q1. Strategic Theme Addressed:	Educational Achievement
Q2. Brief description/overview of topic:	<p>In recent conversations regarding the economic state of the University of Houston-Clear Lake, two themes that have echoed are student retention and preparing students for a successful future. Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) are two widespread movements in composition pedagogy that work in concert to support student learning and engagement, student persistence, and simultaneously prepare students for a successful future. Currently, 51% of American colleges and universities have a WAC/WID program in place (Gladstein and Fralitz, 2013). In addition, employers routinely demand strong writing and communication skills (AAC&U, 2015; Droz & Jacobs, 2019; National Commission on Writing, 2004; Ruff and Carter, 2015). However, very few college professors are trained to teach or assess writing and even fewer are taught to integrate writing into their content courses. What's more, faculty are often frustrated by the amount of time it takes to design effective writing assignments and to grade them. Instituting professional writing and communication as the next QEP topic will allow UHCL to provide the professional development necessary for faculty to integrate writing and professional communication more thoughtfully, purposefully, and efficiently. Further, for students we will cultivate a lifelong invaluable and desirable strength and support high-impact teaching and learning at the same time.</p> <p>If Writing and Professional Communication is selected as the next QEP topic, the topic will build on the CFD Faculty Fellowship projects "Maximum Impact: Cultivating Writing Across the Curriculum at UHCL" and "Developing Writing-Focused Faculty at UHCL" awarded in AY 2018-19 and AY 2019-20 respectively. Dr. Jacobs has also been awarded a Texas LEAP Fellowship to further enhance the professional development aspects of the program in Fall 2020. Thus, the foundation for Writing and Professional Communication as the next QEP topic is already firmly in place.</p>

Q3. How will this improve student learning at UHCL?

If Writing and Professional Communication is selected as the next QEP topic, student learning will be enhanced in numerous ways.

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (Kuh, 2008) has named ten High-Impact Practices (HIPs) to improve quality instruction and student learning. There are ten HIPs, but one of them has a ripple-effect throughout several of the other practices and is prime for development here on our campus: Writing-Intensive Courses. These are courses that “emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects” (Kuh, 2008). Kuh explains that students need to practice writing for multiple purposes, for different audiences, and in different disciplines. Thus, the real benefit happens when writing is not only taught in the first year and as a stand-alone course, but ALSO, when writing is purposefully integrated into major courses throughout a degree program. “The effectiveness of this repeated practice ‘across the curriculum’ has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry” (Kuh, 2008, p. 10). Further, writing intensive courses, if well-implemented, support several other HIPs, including collaborative assignments and projects, undergraduate research, service-learning, and capstone projects (see <https://www.aacu.org/leap/hips>). Additionally, HIPs benefit all types of students, but “historically underserved students tend to benefit more from engaging in educationally purposeful activities than majority students” (Kuh, 2008, p. 17). Kuh specifically names Hispanic students and students first in their families to attend college, two populations that are of special interest at UHCL.

Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) and Writing in the Disciplines (WID) are two widespread movements in composition pedagogy that work in concert to support student learning and engagement. Both recognize that writing varies tremendously from one discipline to another and that writing cannot be adequately taught in one course or in a handful of dedicated writing courses. Instead, WAC/WID seeks to engage students in multiple ways of knowing and multiple ways of engaging with content, echoing the AAC&U description of writing as a high-impact practice. In addition, writing is a cognitive activity, instrumental to learning itself, a means to think through material and deepen understanding of concepts (Adler-Kassner and Wardle, 2015; Council of Writing Program Administrators, 2011; Eodice, et. al., 2017). Thus, WAC describes “writing to learn” pedagogical tools such as one-minute papers, reflection, and freewriting. WID, on the other hand, employs the rhetorical modes of each discipline and the genres and conventions encountered in the disciplines. Both are integral to student engagement and learning. Meaningful writing instruction involves a combination of WAC/WID practices, where students use writing in low-stakes situations as they work to learn new material, and in high-stakes situations where they are taught and then evaluated on disciplinary writing conventions.

Thus, not only will student’s gain more knowledge about and practice with discipline-specific writing and communication, but with writing as a vehicle for thinking and learning more deeply, learning of all course content will be enhanced as well.

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Droz, P., & Jacobs, L. (2019). Genre Chameleon: Email, Professional Writing Curriculum, and Workplace Writing Expectations. *Technical Communication*, 66(1), 68–92.
Eodice, M., Geller, A. E., & Lerner, N. (2017). *The Meaningful Writing Project: Learning, Teaching and Writing in Higher Education*. Utah State University Press.

	<p>http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=4790023 Gladstein, J., & Fralix, B. (2013). National census on writing. https://writingcensus.swarthmore.edu</p> <p>Kuh, G. D. (2008). High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter. Association of American Colleges and Universities.</p> <p>Jacobs, L. (2018). Maximum Impact: Cultivating Writing Across the Curriculum at UHCL. Center for Faculty Development. Faculty Fellowship Proposal awarded April, 2018.</p> <p>Jacobs, L. (2019). Developing Writing-Focused Faculty at UHCL. Center for Faculty Development. Faculty Fellowship Proposal awarded March, 2019.</p> <p>Jacobs, L. (2019). Writing-Focused Faculty Professional Development Series. LEAP Texas. Faculty Fellowship Proposal awarded December, 2019.</p> <p>National Commission on Writing. (2004). Writing: A Ticket to Work... Or a Ticket Out: A Survey of Business Leaders. College Board.</p>
<p>Q4. What are 3-5 learning outcomes that will lead to observable and measurable results?</p>	<p>The following outcomes are borrowed from other QEP plans that have chosen to focus on writing. Our unique set of outcomes will need to be developed in collaboration with faculty across disciplines and based on our collective values. However, these serve nicely as examples of potential outcomes for this topic.</p> <p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> --Convey their explanations, analyses and/or arguments effectively through their written assignments. --Synthesize information and/or multiple viewpoints related to the problem, question, or topic --Apply appropriate research methods, theoretical framework and/or genre conventions to the problem, question, or topic --Reflect on or evaluate what was learned. <p>(Florida National College, 2011; Texas College, n.d.)</p>