Integrating Undergraduate Research and Inquiry and other High-Impact Educational Practices in First-Year Student Learning Community

Summary of Faculty Learning Community Experience
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**Focus**: My original focus was on how to integrate scientific research into my SLS class for students in the Science FLC. Initially I was thinking in terms of research on a “scientific” topic, but through discussions in the FLC I realized that the SLS class itself, and the value of the “strategies for success” that students learn in the class, was an ideal focus for student research. In particular, I realized that by doing research about writing, students could learn how to improve their own writing as they learned the critical thinking and analysis skills required to do research. The FLC also helped me to expand my focus to include other high-impact educational practices.

**Outcomes**: I wanted to develop new strategies for incorporating research into my classes, especially the freshman SLS course, identify clear learning objectives for student research, and define meaningful criteria for assessing the impact of student research projects on their learning.

The project I developed through this FLC will engage freshmen students in all aspects of research as they investigate the nature of good writing and the process of writing well. My hope is that as students take on the dual roles of learner and researcher, they will learn how to continually improve their own writing, learn the value of critical inquiry, and help me learn how to be a more effective teacher.

**Assessment**: I achieved all of my outcomes for this FLC. The plan I developed for integrating student research into my SLS course will serve as the scaffolding for a curriculum that incorporates multiple high-impact educational practices throughout the course. The learning objectives and assessment criteria developed for this project will serve as a guide in the creation of detailed course content and lesson plans.

**Issues/Recommendations**: Time constraints were often a problem, but this was mostly due to my heavy teaching load, and my serious illness, during the fall semester. It would have been helpful to have a single place on Blackboard where all “assignments” were listed and could be submitted – it seems like I ended up submitting a lot of assignments by email, and I’m still not sure that I didn’t miss something I’m unaware of.