GLOSSARY OF EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION TERMS

Experiential Education: "Any form of education that emphasizes personal experience of the learner rather than learning from lectures, books, and other second-hand sources." (McBrien & Brandt, 1997). The terms defined below, commonly used in higher education settings, provide comment about their use at Towson University.

[Graduate]Assistant: "Non-tenured employment position in higher education as an aide to one or more faculty or staff members as either a 'teaching assistant' or a 'research assistant.' Such positions or 'assistantships' pay modest salaries through the academic year and are often awarded as financial aid to graduate students." (Hawes & Hawes, 1982). Graduate assistants generally do not earn academic credit.

Clinical experience/fieldwork experience: Entails the practice of learned didactic and experiential skills in a health care setting under the supervision of a credentialed practitioner. (Contributor: Joyce MacKinnon). TU's clinical courses include those in nursing, occupational therapy, clinical psychology and audiology/speech-language pathology.

Cooperative Program: "Special program offered by a college and university in which students alternate work and study, usually spending a number of weeks in full-time study and a number in full-time employment away from the campus." (Hawes & Hawes, 1982). A student generally may opt whether or not to earn credit for this type of experience. Some students earn credit during one or two but not all work periods. A TU student would enroll in a departmental internship course to earn credit for a "co-op" experience. On a TU transcript, the term "co-op" is used to designate courses/credits earned at other domestic institutions via the National Student Exchange Program.

Parallel Experience: A form of cooperative education in which students simultaneously attend classes part time and work part time (15-20 hours per week) during consecutive school semesters. (National Association of Colleges and Employers Web site)

Fieldwork: "In higher education, research carried out away from the institution and in direct contact with the people, natural phenomena, or other entities being studied; especially frequent in fields including anthropology, archaeology, sociology, earth sciences, and environmental studies." (Hawes & Hawes, 1982). Fieldwork is incorporated into other classes and/or uses courses labeled by other terms on this list.

Internship: "Short-term, supervised work experience in a student's field of interest for which the student may earn academic credit. Work can be part-time or full-time, paid or unpaid, on or off campus." (Hawes & Hawes, 1982). “Internship” is the most commonly used term for credit-bearing experiential learning at TU. In the ‘90s, the university curriculum committee adopted “internship” as a common term.
**Practicum:** "1. A course or student exercise involving practical experience as well as theoretical study. 2. Supervised experience in counseling as part of professional pre-service education of counselors."

(Hawes & Hawes, 1982).

**Service Learning:** Service learning is defined as a "course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students (a) participate in an organized service activity that meets identified community needs and (b) reflect on the service activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility." (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995).

**Student Teacher:** "A student in professional teacher education who is gaining required experience in supervised teaching." (Hawes & Hawes, 1982).

**REFERENCES**


* Parallel Experience is, in fact, cooperative education, just as alternating full-time semesters is cooperative education. Both structures are included in the Accreditation Council for Cooperative Education's accreditation guidelines and also included in guidelines for the federal government. Therefore, listing parallel experience separately from Cooperative Education is a little confusing.

The parallel co-op structure allows students to attend school part or full time while working in major-related paid work experiences part time, usually 20 hours/week, no fewer than 15 hours/week. These work experiences cover consecutive terms, usually four, sometimes three, and are expected to be progressively responsible as the student increases in academic preparation. All of the requirements for co-op apply so that students complete learning objectives and reflective assignments to help them process their co-op assignment as a learning experience.

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