

Creating a community of writers: Blogging & the active learning classroom - Ian MacKenzie, Co-director, Writing in the Disciplines at Dawson College <imackenzie@dawsoncollege.qc.ca>



Objective: Create an authentic discourse community (Beaufort 2007) of writer-researchers; replace submission with publication; bypass “one-way street” of instructor-as-examiner audience (Giltrow, 2012).

Course blogs: <https://ecoliteracy14w2014.wordpress.com/> & <https://modellindingindawson2014.wordpress.com/>

Blogging platform	ALC = studio-lab-production-editorial room
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Platform choices & constraints: In-house versus cloud, college policies, instructor learning curve • Design: Aesthetics matter • Architecture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i)Main course blog: Pages (static content): Readings, assignments Posts (dynamic weekly content): Instructor prompts, freelance student posts Comments: Student reading responses, peer & instructor feedback ii)Student groupblogs: Linked to course blog Assignment drafts, peer review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table-based student writing groups • Problem-based curriculum & learning activities • “Flip” class for reading & writing: Blog-based informal responses / formal assignments / freelance student posts • RAFTed formal assignments: Problem-based topic, rhetorical context, real audience, specific genre/format (Bean, 2011) • Collaborative drafting of & feedback on models • Peer review of student drafts on groupblogs • Publish on blog • Feedback on blog

Workflow:

Objective	Blog-based activity
1. Introduce unit problem: Readings, video, Ppt, call for freelance posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post & response: reaction, think-piece, prior experience
2. Elaborate problem: Discussion, research, stakeholder viewpoints, claims & evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post & response: Explore stakeholder positions, raise Qs based on research
3. Introduce assignment: Problem situation, RAFTed writing context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post & model: Qs & collaborative As, discussion of 4 domains (Beaufort, 2007)
4. Advance writing process: Group-based drafting & feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groupblog posts: Student drafting & revision, peer review via comments Plus: Commentary on freelance posts
5. Publication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication & feedback on course blog

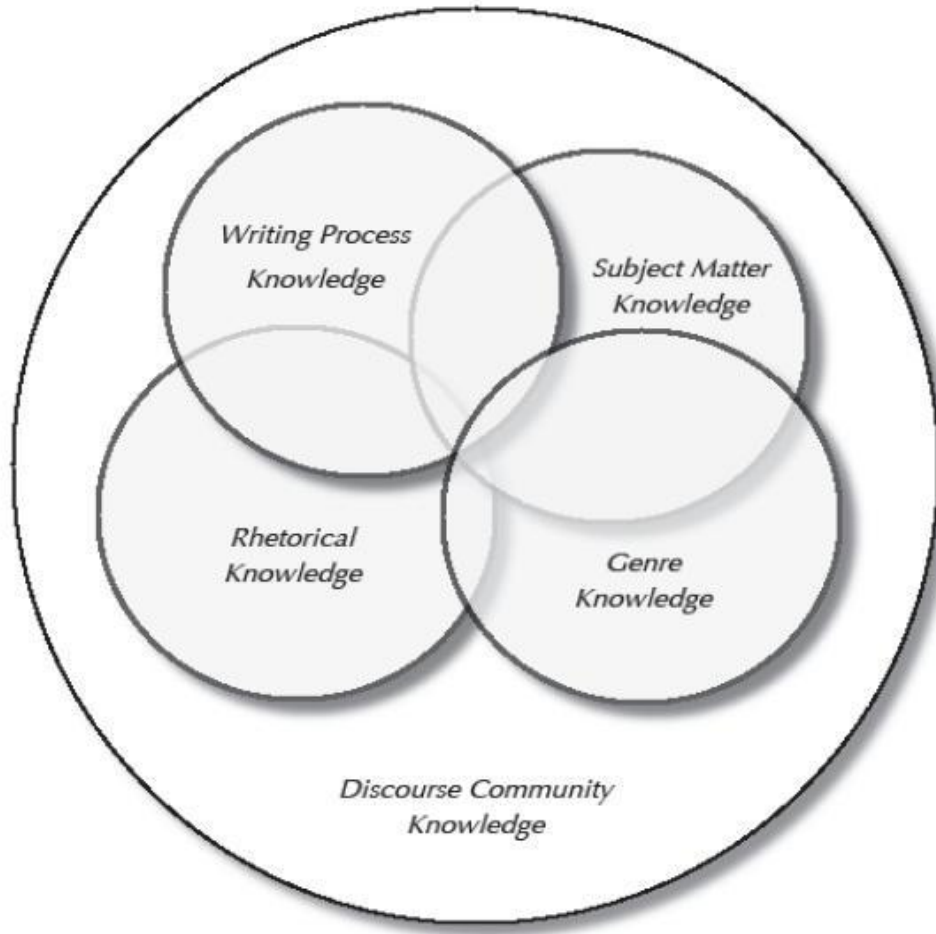


Figure 1 Conceptual Model: Expert Writers Draw on Five Knowledge Domains

Five interrelated key knowledge domains inform the cognitive processes of expert writers as they compose. Discourse community knowledge is the broad overarching domain which informs each of the other knowledge domains essential to composing.

(Beaufort, 2007)

- Resources:** Bean, J. C. (2011). *Engaging ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Beaufort, Anne. (2007) *College Writing and Beyond: A Framework for University Writing Instruction*. Logan: Utah State UP.
- Giltrow, Janet. (2012). "Landscaping with indigenous species: How to replace quizzes, exams, term papers (non-native species) with species native to the research culture." Keynote. 2012 McGill University Writing Conference.