

# The “Beauty and the Curse” of Scholarly Writing:

A case study of how nursing students learn to write

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2013 Conference  
Canadian Association of Schools of Nursing (CASN)  
Vancouver, B.C.  
June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

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**Susan Chaudoir**, Doctoral candidate Faculty of Education: Disciplinary case study of writing in nursing education

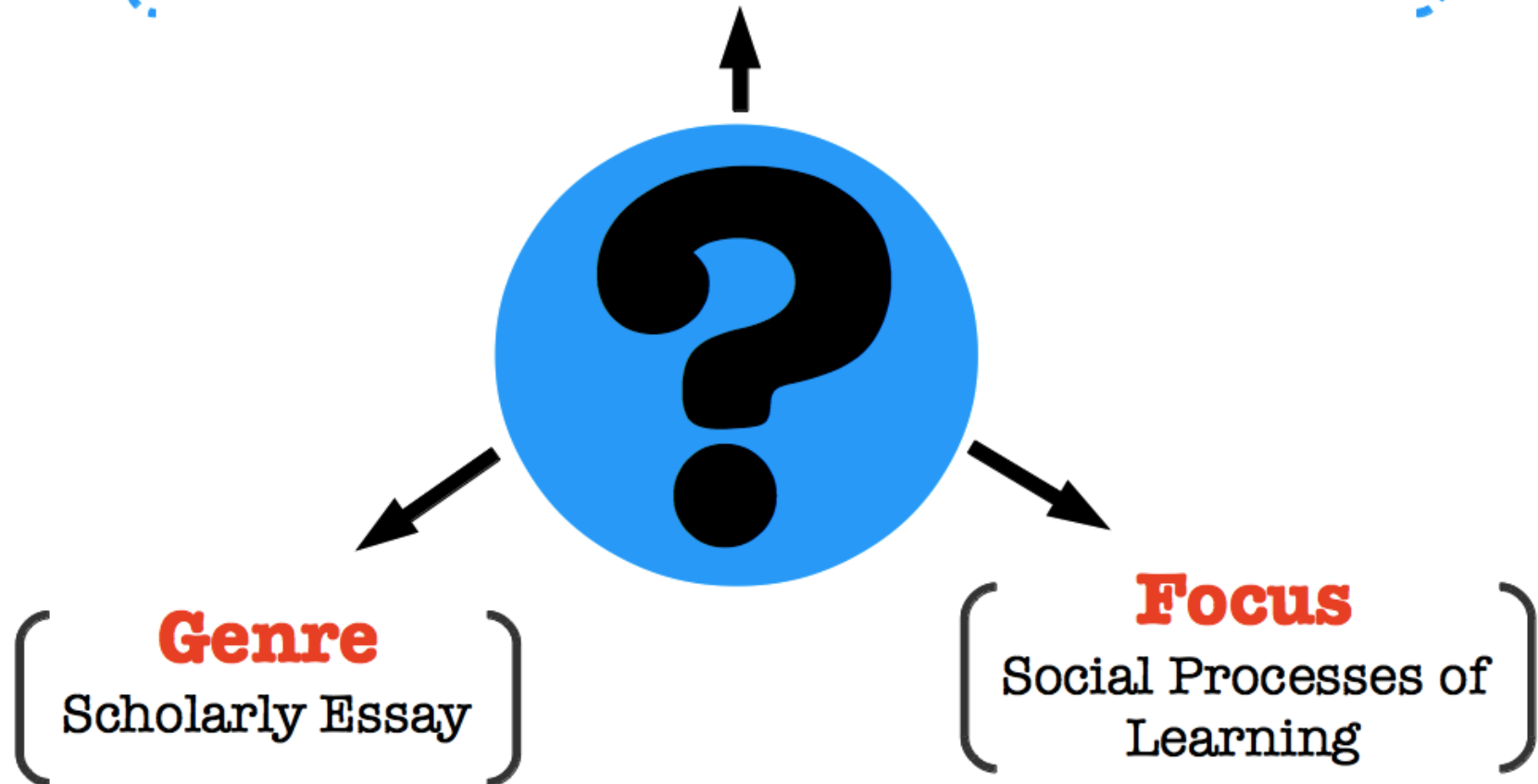
**Anita Liao**, 4th Year Student, Primary Interest: Primary Health Care & Transcultural Nursing

**Sarah McCracken**, RN, BScN, Nurse Educator



## Research Question

How do undergraduate nursing students learn the genres they are asked to write across the nursing curriculum?



# Why this Study?

We don't know how scholarly writing enables/constrains professional development as students progress from Year 1 to Year 4.

(Carroll, 2002; Whitehead, 2002)



# Literature

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**Professional  
Development**

(Baxter-Magolda, 2004)

**Contextual  
Pedagogy**

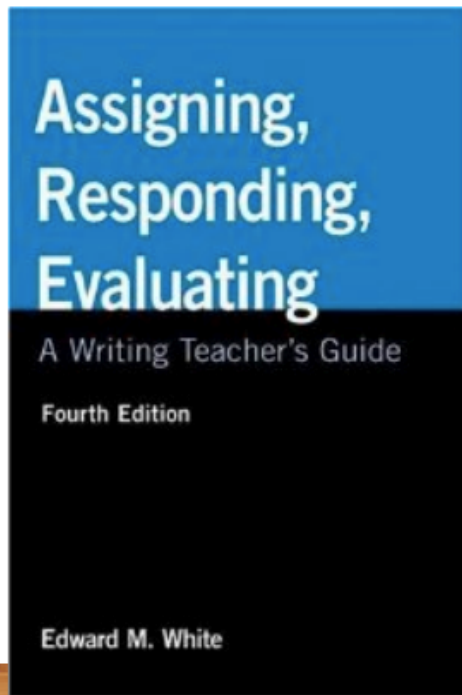
(Bean, 2011; Lave, 1991;  
Miller, 1994)

**Writing  
Assignments**

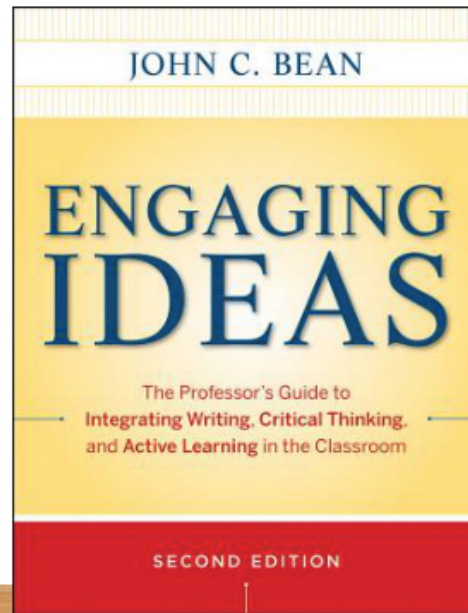
(Troxler & Oermann, 2011;  
Whitehead, 2002;  
Rooda & Nardi, 1999)



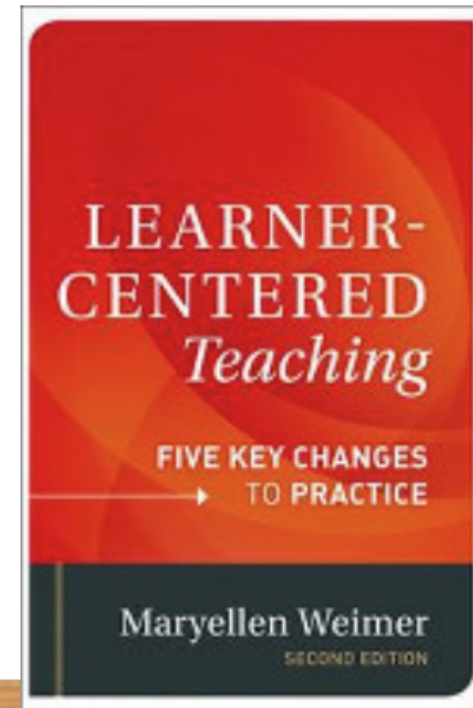
# Other Research



Ed White (2007)  
Assigning, Responding,  
Evaluating  
4th Edition



John Bean (2011)  
Engaging Ideas  
2nd Edition



Maryellen Weimer  
(2013)  
Learner-Centered  
Teaching  
2nd Edition



# Case Study Methodology

## **INTERDISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORKS:**

Rhetorical genre, Situated learning, Writing-to-learn

## **PARTICIPANTS:**

N=31 nursing students (n=25) and instructors (n=6)

## **ASSIGNMENT:**

Scholarly Essay

## **METHOD: Institutional Ethnography**

Classroom observation; semi-structured interviews; focus group; peer writing sessions; textual analysis of assignment documents

## **ANALYSIS:**

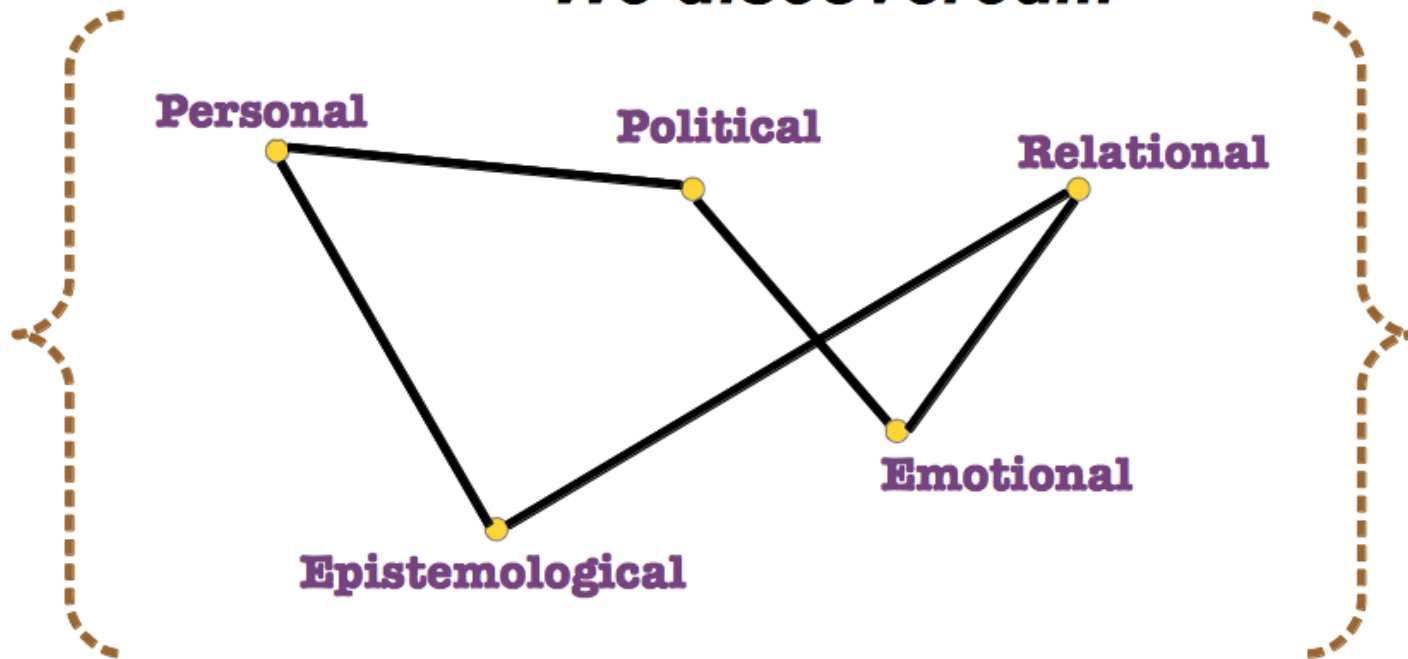
Content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002)



We thought students would talk about the scholarly essay.

# Findings

*Instead...*  
*We discovered...*





# Conceptual Enablers of Scholarly Writing

## Disciplinary Discourse

- Evidence-based practice



## Professional Discourse

- Clinical judgment

***Personal + Academic + Professional***

(Dewar, 2012; McNamara, 2010)



# Concrete Enablers

<b>Lower Years</b> (Years 1 & 2)	<b>Upper Years</b> (Years 3 & 4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• APA format &amp; style</li><li>• Academic sources</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicating relevance of scholarly essay</li></ul>
<b>Across All Years</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Definitions:</b> e.g., “scholarly” “primary research article”</li><li>• <b>Purpose</b> of assignments</li></ul>	

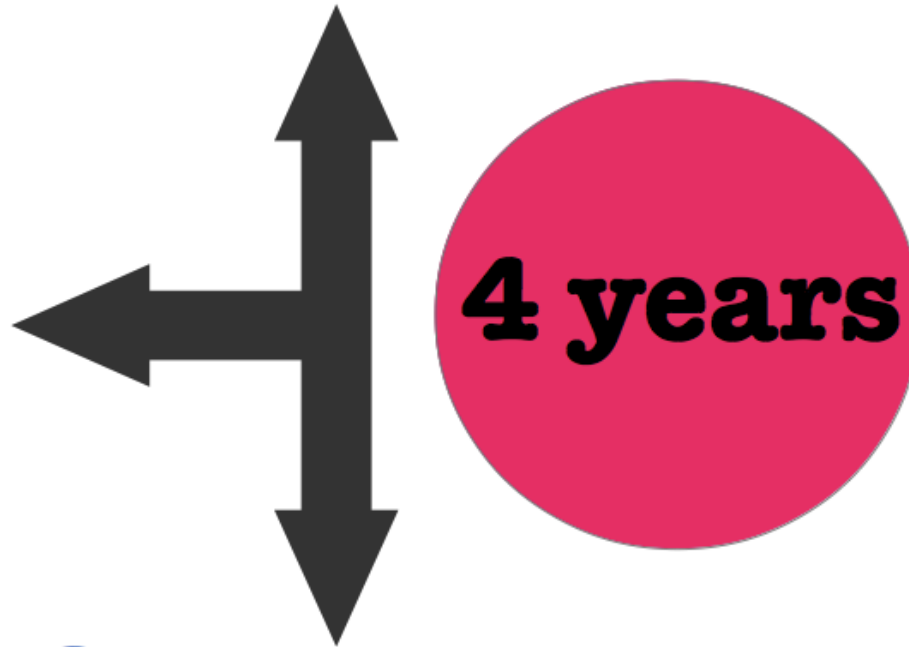


# Writing Culture in Nursing

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> **100** Writing Assignments

**14** Recurring  
Genres



**6** - Week Courses



# Opening the Conversation



How is my APA formatting?



**Year 1**

I'm stuck on my thesis.



**Year 2**



How can I paraphrase this into my essay?



Is scholarly writing relevant to my preceptorship?



**Year 3**

**Year 4**



# Building Capacity

Create scaffolding through conversations that open the dimensions of academic, disciplinary, and professional discourse in the classroom:

▲ **Structured Informality** (Werder & Otis, 2010, p. 18)

▲ **Teacher Immediacy** (Richmond, 2006)

# Instructors like Sarah Say...

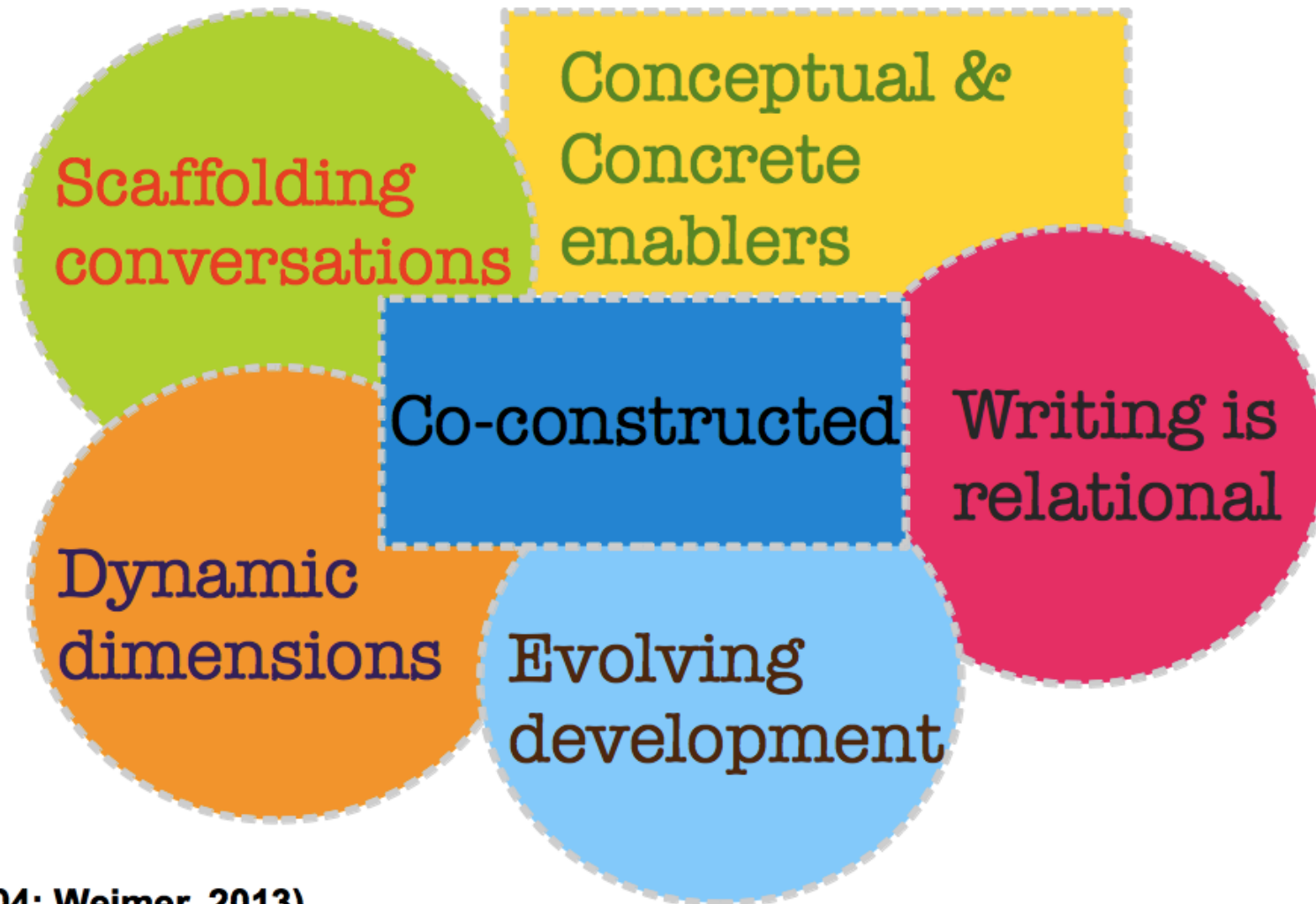


Relationship  
**Learning-centred**  
Dialogue  
Intellectual  
**Emotional**  
Dance  
Intentional  
Connection  
Strengthen  
**Space**





# Understanding Student Writing in Nursing



(Bain, 2004; Weimer, 2013)



# Thank You

We welcome your questions

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