

# EMERGING CONVERSATIONS:

Tutors and students speak out on  
first-year writing in nursing education

5<sup>th</sup> Research Showcase

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## WHAT WAS STUDIED?

**First-year students and tutors**  
were asked to share experiences of  
teaching and learning a Year 1  
clinical writing assignment

# LITERATURE

## ➤ **Intellectual Development**

(Baxter-Magolda, 2004)

## ➤ **Discipline-specific Pedagogy**

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

## ➤ **Writing & Writing Assignments**

(Troxler & Oermann, 2011; White, 2007; Whitehead, 2002)

# METHODOLOGY

- **INTERDISCIPLINARY FRAMEWORKS:** Situated learning, Writing-to-learn, Institutional Ethnography
- **PARTICIPANTS:** Year 1 nursing students (n=11) and tutors (n=4)
- **ASSIGNMENT:** Community Practice Project
- **METHOD:** Classroom observation; semi-structured interviews; focus group; peer writing sessions; textual analysis of assignment documents
- **ANALYSIS:** Content analysis (Neuendorf, 2002)

# FINDINGS

## THE SOCIAL NATURE OF LEARNING-TO-WRITE IN NURSING

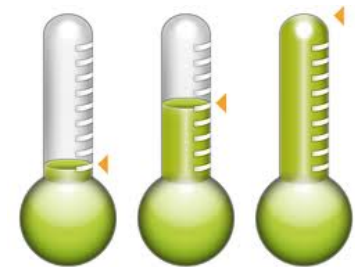
### RELATIONSHIP OF ANXIETY TO THE LEARNING PROCESS

Inherent expectations and assumptions

**Provoked**  
by writing assignments

# YEAR 1 ACADEMIC CULTURE

Students	Tutors
“given” knowledge	“co-participants”
Assumption <i>fuels</i> Anxiety	
Constraints in learning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• High mark value (60%)</li><li>• APA style of writing</li></ul>	Constraints in teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6-week course length</li><li>• Prioritizing learning objectives</li></ul>







## Year 1 student's culture:

- ☒ Express Ideas
- ☒ Read Documents
- ☒ Write APA Style

# OPENING CONVERSATIONS

Year 1 Students	Year 1 Tutors
WRITING PERSPECTIVES	WRITING PERSPECTIVES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We are looking for the purpose behind your assignments</li><li>2. We look to tutors to help write clearly about content</li><li>3. Unexplained complimentary comments are not useful</li><li>4. Our relationship with tutors is central to our learning</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Allow peer-group writing sessions</li><li>2. Provide assignment-specific rubrics and scoring guides</li><li>3. Integrate teaching-to-write strategies as part of instructional professional development</li></ol>



# UNDERSTANDING WRITING CULTURE

① **DISCIPLINARY WRITING IS CULTURAL:** Preparing for professional practice is like learning a second language. Year 1 is a transitional period.

(Alcalay, 2004)



# DECODING TUTOR/STUDENT RESPONSES

We thought students/tutors would talk about the assignment.

Instead . . .

*We discovered a constellation of personal, political, relational, emotional, and epistemological dynamics that were previously unknown to us.*





Thank you.

**We WELCOME COMMENTS**  
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Misunderstanding the assignment: First-year students and the anxieties of teaching

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**<http://hdl.handle.net/10402/era.25705>**

