

Developing Place-based Assignments to Engage Writing Intensive Students

Center for Teaching Excellence Teaching Matters Series
Thursday, March 10, 2016

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Agenda

View Our Trailer

Learn the Background of Our Research

Consider Theory & Research from Writing across the Curriculum/Writing in the Disciplines

Glimpse Our Development of [Our Scholarspace Community](#)

View Sample Assignments and Reflections Upon the Place-based Approach

Collaborate to Adapt Some Approaches for your W Course

Handouts for This Workshop

Research Participants

Research Questions

- Instructors
- Students

Place-based Writing Intensive Assignment Handout

Student Challenges and Reflections Handout

Our Google Site

<https://sites.google.com/a/hawaii.edu/pbhui/>

W Hallmarks

1. The course **uses writing to promote the learning** of course materials.
2. The course **provides interaction between teacher and students while students do assigned writing**; in effect, the instructor acts as an expert and the student as an apprentice in a community of writers.
3. **Writing contributes significantly to each student's course grade.** Writing assignments must make up at least 40% of each student's course grade.
4. The course requires students to do a substantial amount of writing--a minimum of **4000 words**, or about 16 pages.
5. To allow for meaningful professor-student interaction on each student's writing, the class is restricted to 20 students.

Engaging Writing Students through Geographic Place

Our Google site provides background on the project, including research methodologies, participants, contextualizing research and theory from composition & rhetoric, WAC/WID, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). It also includes this trailer:

<https://sites.google.com/a/hawaii.edu/pbhui/?pli=1>

Place-based Writing Theory and Research

Review of W Applications and Renewals in Fall 2012 revealed that **as many as 25%** included an assignment focused on our geographic place, aligning with theory & research from composition & rhetoric:

- the mind is inseparably linked to the environment (Owens, 2006, p. 368) suggesting that localized writing instruction heightens students' understandings of sustainability (Owens, 2011)
- “ecocomposition” can engage students (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002, 2006) and de-center classrooms (Plevin, 2001)
- place-based writing can counter a “dis-location” that might emerge on commuter campuses (Mauk, 2003)
- students can probe local histories and otherwise engage rhetorically through composing “deep maps” (Brooke & McIntosh, 2007)

Steps to Investigate this Trend in W Instruction

Spring 2013: Henry gains IRB approval for the research, including video-recording instructors and students [Research Questions Handout]

Spring 2013-Fall 2014: Purposive sampling garners 17 instructors and 32 students across 16 departments [Research Participants Handout]

Spring 2015: Undergraduate Aimee Yamanaka parses videos by question

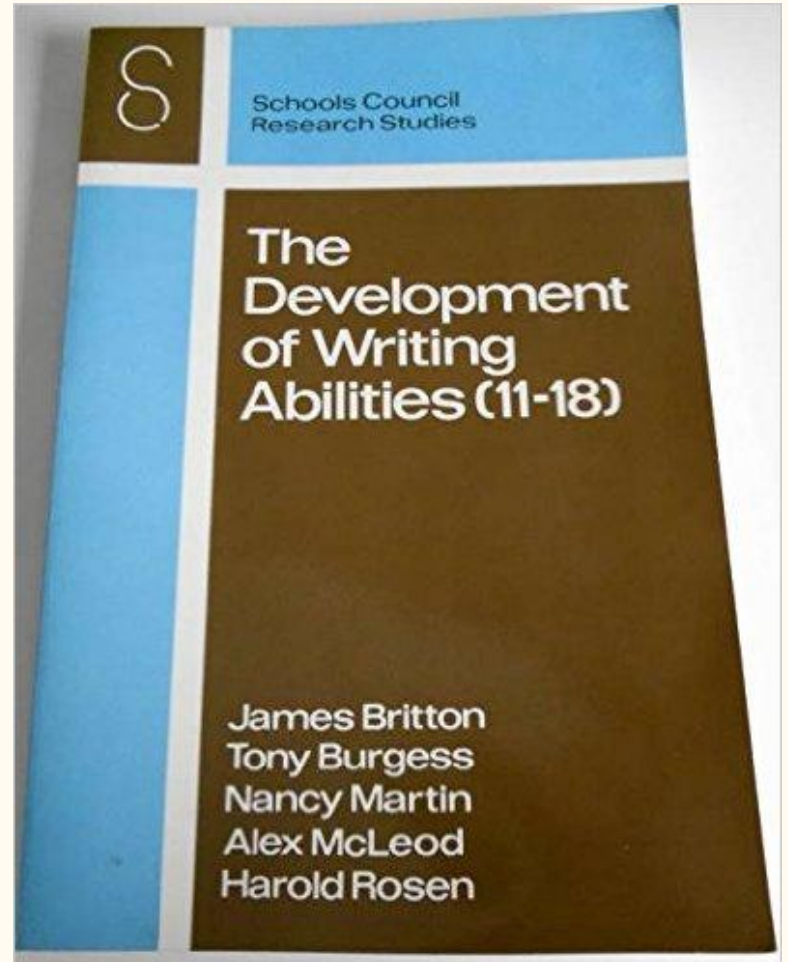
Spring 2015: Henry, Shea, and Ka‘alele join six other participants in a graduate seminar on WAC/WID to assemble the videos and code them

Fall 2015: Scholarspace Community “Place-based Writing across the Disciplines is created, with 680 video clips

WAC/WID Roots, 1975

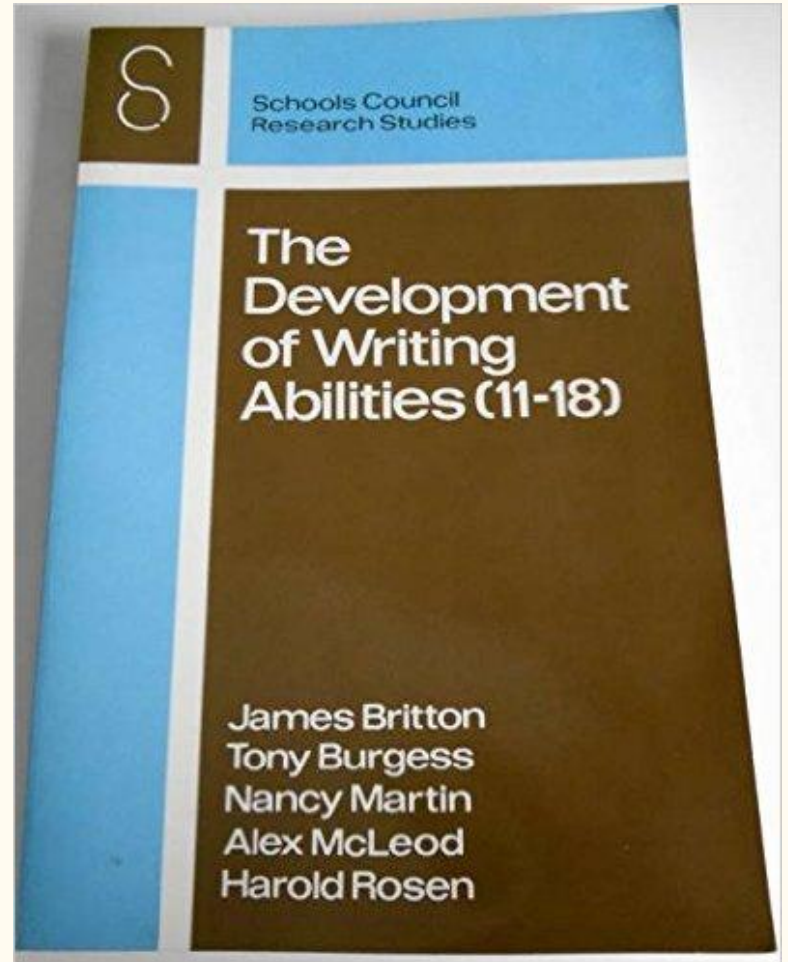
Analyzed 2100 writing samples

Established dichotomy of “expressive” vs. “transactional writing”: “writing to learn” vs. “learning to write” (or “writing in the disciplines”)



“Involved” vs. “Perfunctory”

“When involved, the writer made the task his own and began to write to satisfy himself as well his teacher; in perfunctory writing he seemed to satisfy only the minimum demands of the task.” (7)



WAC Clearinghouse

The WAC Clearinghouse includes helpful information about WAC/WID as well as examples of “writing to learn” and “writing in the disciplines”

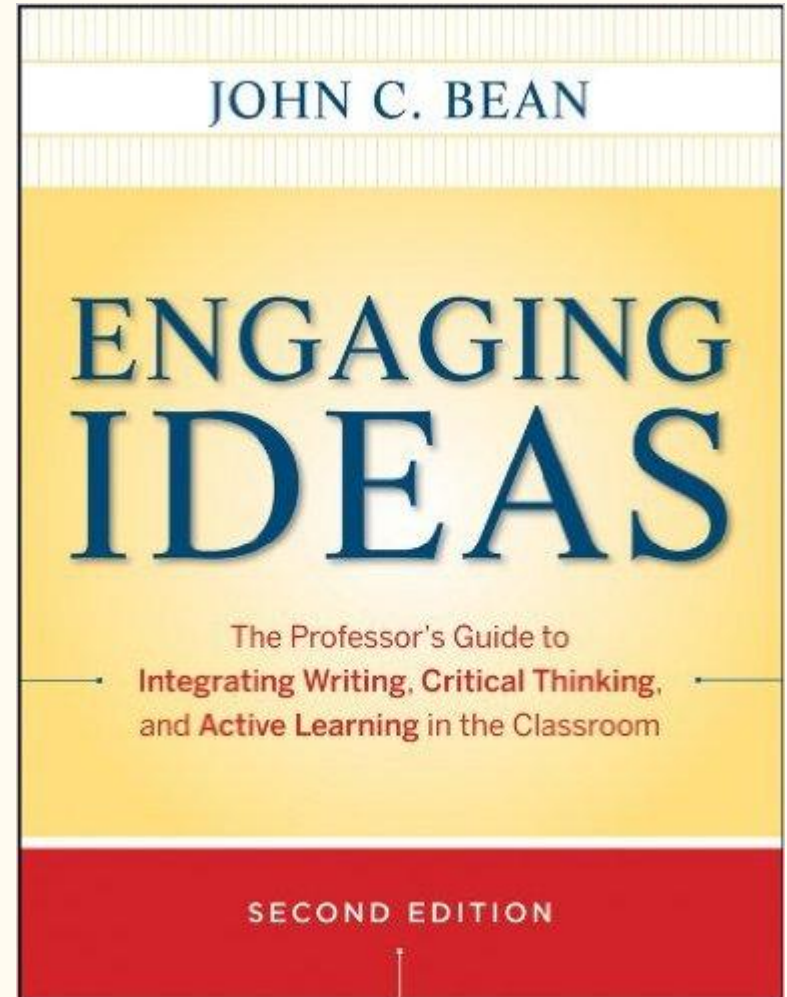
<http://wac.colostate.edu/resources.cfm>

Engaging Ideas

You can read the e-book for free via
Hamilton Library:

<https://uhmanoa.lib.hawaii.edu/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=4261624>

(Scroll to the bottom of the page for the
link.)



Engaging Ideas

1 Using Writing to Promote Thinking: A Busy Professor's Guide to the Whole Book

PART 1 UNDERSTANDING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THINKING AND WRITING

2 How Writing Is Related to Critical Thinking

3 Helping Writers Think Rhetorically

4 Using a Range of Genres to Extend Critical Thinking and Deepen Learning

5 Dealing with Issues of Grammar and Correctness

PART 2 DESIGNING PROBLEM-BASED ASSIGNMENTS

6 Formal Writing Assignments

7 Informal, Exploratory Writing Activities

Engaging Ideas

PART 3 COACHING STUDENTS AS LEARNERS, THINKERS, AND WRITERS

8 Designing Tasks to Promote Active Thinking and Learning

9 Helping Students Read Difficult Texts

10 Using Small Groups to Coach Thinking and Teach Disciplinary Argument

11 Bringing More Critical Thinking into Lectures and Discussions

12 Enhancing Learning and Critical Thinking in Essay Exams

13 Designing and Sequencing Assignments to Teach Undergraduate Research

PART 4 READING, COMMENTING ON, AND GRADING STUDENT WRITING

14 Using Rubrics to Develop and Apply Grading Criteria

15 Coaching the Writing Process and Handling the Paper Load

16 Writing Comments on Students' Papers

Writing Assignments across All Disciplines

Our handout displays a variety of “writing to learn” and “learning to write” assignments that position students in geographic places and leverage this positioning to stoke writing engagement.

Challenges Students Faced

Our handout displays a selection of excerpts from student responses regarding challenges faced when responding to writing assignments (student question 3).

Students' Reflections on How They Changed

Our handout displays a selection of excerpts from student reflections on how they changed as a result of the course (student question 7).

Peruse our Scholarspace Community

Suggested approaches:

Browse the [Topic Guide](#) on our Google Site

OR

Use the search feature on [ScholarSpace](#) to locate clips from handouts