



# BLENDED COURSE CASE SUMMARIES



## Weekly blog writing tasks for formative assessment

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*“Blogs acted as student feedback to us - we could see conceptual understanding, where are the academic literacy gaps and what we need to look at as we go into the next week. We could be quite responsive.”*

*“We looked at the affordances of online space to develop good academic writers, and the online platform provides an opportunity for students to freeze their writing and see a history of their writing development. Students can track themselves - one of the questions we pose at the end of the course is for them to look at their blog writing over the semester to reflect on their writing. It requires them to use their own texts as learning tools.”*



### ABOUT THE COURSE

- First year, first semester course, Writing in the Humanities;
- **Class size:** 200-240 students;
- Developmental writing intensive course for students in the extended degree programme.

### ENABLE APPLIED

Writing in the Humanities is a first-year writing-intensive course designed to provide students with opportunities to engage with academic texts and practice academic reading and writing. A key component of the course is the weekly short writing tasks posted online ('blogs'), that scaffold students' writing endeavours by ensuring there is a structured regular practice with feedback. Through the weekly online discussions and writing tasks, this course uses [Formative assessment and feedback](#) to encourage students to reflect on concepts introduced in class, apply these to their autobiography, and develop their own authorial voice and ideas through experimentation with the craft of writing. Students' blogs also serve as a litmus test for the course's pedagogy. Constant feedback from students through the weekly writing tasks allows the lecturers to adjust their teaching to the needs of students as they progress through the semester. [Responsive teaching](#) is another key principle of Enabling Accessible Blended Learning for Equity (ENABLE).

## HOW

Students are given weekly individual writing tasks which are facilitated using the [Amathuba Discussions tool](#). The blogs are given a participation mark, and students receive actionable feedback that prepares them for their formal academic essays. Thus, while the blogs are less demanding, they are important conceptual building blocks for the academic essays that follow. This method of continuous, low-stakes writing with regular feedback aligns with ENABLE principles by providing flexible, [formative assessment opportunities](#) and [delivering actionable feedback](#) to support student learning and development.

## LINKS

- **Review** the ENABLE FRAMEWORK documents - [Flexible assessment and feedback](#); [Formative assessment and feedback](#); [Actionable feedback](#) and [Responsive teaching](#);
  - **Review** the [Amathuba Discussions Tool](#)
  - **Listen** to the Podcast: [https://f.io/YI\\_cLlkW](https://f.io/YI_cLlkW);
  - Arend, M., Hunma, A., Hutchings, C. and Nomdo, G. (2017) The Messiness of Meaning Making: Examining the Affordances of the Digital Space as a Mentoring and Tutoring Space for the Acquisition of Academic Literacy. *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v5i2.270>;
  - Hunma, A., Arend, M., Nomdo, G., Hutchings, C. and Samson, S. (2019). Revisiting writer identities in discomforting spaces: The envisioned self in writing. *Alternation*, 26(2), pp.89-116.
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