

Exploring Pedagogic and Practical Intersections of Academic Writing Support for Students in Higher Education.

María José González

Roisin Donnelly 

Technology University Dublin, maria-jose.gonzalez@tudublin.ie

Abstract.

This case study explores undergraduate and postgraduate student perceptions of the nature and effectiveness of academic writing provision and practice in a university in Ireland. Its focus is the Academic Writing Centre (AWC), a university-wide initiative to support all students. It discusses students' perceptions as to the academic writing support provided at the AWC and students' preferred writing strategies. The research design used a qualitative approach to gather data on students' perceptions of the academic writing support received at one-to-one consultations. Data was gathered via a student survey (n=21) sent to all students who avail of the AWC's one-to-one support. Findings indicate that students value support strategies that address the affective domain and reflection and feedback to support them develop as academic writers. The results help consolidate the AWC's current role to academic writing support and inform the future development of the Centre.

Keywords: Academic Writing Centre; Affective Domain; Critical Thinking; Faculty Professional Development; Feedback; Pedagogy; Writing Instruction.

1. Introduction.

This research was conducted in a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in Ireland in 2016-2018, and is joining the broader pedagogical and scholarly discussion on the focus and challenges of academic writing centres and Professional Development (PD) modules in supporting and sustaining the development of academic writing for students and Faculty respectively. We have chosen to present the research as two connected case studies. The first one presents the Faculty-facing perspective while this case study explores the student-facing initiative. There

are strong inter-related dimensions across both case studies. This dual format allows readers to engage with the specific case study that interest them more particularly or to read both and gain a more in-depth view of how the two strands of AWC and AWP module worked together.

A study by Ntereke and Ramoroka (2015) helped frame this research, due to its dual focus on perceptions of students and Faculty. These case studies bring insight into the perceptions about academic writing held by those who engage in the writing process in HEIs. Across the two case studies, the institutional supports that are explored are a newly established Academic Writing Centre (AWC), which is the focus of this case study, and a Professional Development Module for Faculty and postgraduate students (see Donnelly & Gonzalez, 2022).

Ntereke and Ramoroka (2015) have previously reported that effective academic writing skills are a requirement for success in HE because academic disciplines use them as a form of assessment, and have drawn on a number of studies to support this view, including Hyland (2011), Evans and Green (2007) and Zhu (2004). Taking this on board, regardless of whether it happens in class or at the writing centre, academic writing support should take into account students' views on how effective are the activities and instruction they receive.

More particularly, while research remains underdeveloped in identifying writing difficulties for students at undergraduate and postgraduate level, as Ntereke and Ramoroka (2015) report, difficulties experienced with academic writing are not exclusive to first year students and can continue through the undergraduate programme and onto postgraduate level (Imose, Coffey, Merryweather, Norton, & Foxcroft, 2014). In particular, Ping and Ma (2017) explore the academic writing support required by students writing their theses and dissertations and report on the dearth of empirical studies in this area.

The HEI in this study has been aware of the need for writing skills development for some time, and had established an Academic Writing Centre (AWC) designed to support students' writing. The AWC offers its one-to-one consultations to all students regardless of discipline or level, undergraduate as well as postgraduate students. However, despite students being able to avail of this support, Faculty across disciplines remained concerned that their students' writing skills were not meeting generic academic writing expectations. As a result, we wanted to explore Faculty perceptions on the in-class instruction they provide to students, coupled with an exploration of students' views regarding the effectiveness of academic writing support and the pedagogical approach used in the AWC.

Thus, while there were two research objectives identified for the full study, this case study

presents the findings from the students' perspective on the academic writing support at the AWC:

- How are initial approaches to academic writing support provision being perceived by students attending the AWC, and what support strategies are preferred in academic writing?

1.1 Context and rationale.

The context for the work is a HEI in Ireland (Technological University Dublin) with 22,000 students and over 1000 Faculty. Two separate centres play a key role in supporting academic writing at University level: the Academic Writing Centre (AWC) and the central Learning, Teaching, and Technology Centre (LTTC). While the AWC is a student-facing support, the LTTC is responsible for the provision of a range of postgraduate level modules offered to Faculty as part of their continuous professional development (PD). These modules are also offered to post-graduate students completing masters' programmes at the LTTC. Collaboration between the two units has been a feature since the AWC's inception. This productive collaboration has translated into a range of activities such as workshops, development of resources and materials as well as research projects.

The setting and nature of the academic writing support provided by the AWC comprises a number of targeted activities aimed at developing students' academic writing. For the purpose of this research, we concentrate exclusively on one of those activities, namely one-to-one consultations. Students opt to attend one-to-one consultations at the AWC of their own accord or on their lecturer's advice. They may only avail of a maximum of one-hour individual (one-to-one) consultation per week. During the one-to-one consultation with an academic writing tutor the student has the opportunity to discuss their specific writing concern. The approach to academic writing support was non-directive (Clark, 2001) which is characterised by minimal intervention on the part of the tutor. The nature of non-directive instruction has been previously explored with Corbett (2015, p.25) arguing that "*no single issue in writing centre and peer tutoring theory and practice gets at the heart of one-to-one, small group, or classroom instruction as the question of directive/non-directive teaching methods.*"

The role of tutor in the AWC is key in supporting students. Writing tutors undergo training in advance of meeting students on the individual consultations. They are PhD students engaged in research and writing in their own discipline. AWC tutors are competent writers themselves,

and their focus is to help the individual student develop their writing competence. O'Sullivan, Tighe-Mooney, Lenihan and Farrell (2015) provide extensive insights into the tutor role in Irish HE, and discuss that tutors are typically either peer tutors or expert tutors. The make-up of the tutor team will vary from institution to institution and will be impacted by any number of factors, not least among them the pedagogical philosophy/approach adopted by the writing centre and the available resources.

There was a clear rationale for undertaking this study - to show students that their opinions are valued and to use findings from the study to inform the tutoring approach at future one-to-one consultations at the AWC. Clarence (2011) argued that there is a gap between what Faculty and tutors think students need to do to develop as competent writers and thinkers, and what these Faculty are doing to help students achieve this goal.

Additionally, a Writing Centre, focused as it can be on holistic student writing development, can reach out to Faculty to begin to close the gap, and grow from knowledge to practice through collaboration and joint production of research and scholarship. Such a partnership between a Writing Centre and disciplinary Faculty, in this instance via the central Learning, Teaching, and Technology Centre (LTTC) mediation, is needed to ensure that student writing development is more holistic, better supported, and more sustainable in the long term. After all, writing development is an '*institutional*' issue (Lea & Street, 1998) or should at least be considered thus as the institution's rules and regulations shape the conventions and boundaries of the writing practices. This current study is a first step towards such a partnership in this Irish HEI.

2. Bridging literatures.

This case study provides an opportunity to consider students' views on perceptions of effectiveness of the pedagogic approach and writing strategies they engaged in at one-to-one consultations in the AWC. It connects with a gradual shift in the literature from an almost exclusive focus on students' academic writing inadequacy and in the words of Gleason (2001) a move away from the pedagogy of correction towards a pedagogy of success and applicability. An additional perspective is provided by Lea and Street (2006) who examined the contrasting expectations and interpretations of Faculty and students regarding undergraduate students' written assignments. This current study continues the discussion on the nature of writing practices from these dual perspectives. Thus, this case study aims to consider students' views on perceptions of effectiveness of the pedagogic approach and writing strategies they engaged

in at one-to-one consultations.

There were three intersecting areas of literature explored to support this research, namely:

- In order to investigate the current nature of student-facing support in academic writing provision, the tutoring approach and self-efficacy were explored.
- Complementing this is an exploration of Faculty needs, with a particular focus on the effectiveness of current PD opportunities in academic writing provided for them.
- An exploration on reflection and feedback for writing, and in particular how to best raise awareness among both students and Faculty about writing practices.

This case study focuses in the first area.

2.1 Student-facing support: Academic Writing Centre.

Literature on academic writing inadequacy of first year undergraduate students has focused on how to improve pedagogy and less on exploring the views of the students on the instruction and activities that are meant to set them up for third level writing. Gopee and Dean (2013) report that there has been relatively little research into students' perceptions of the active support that they need and receive to succeed as academic writers. Findings from their study discuss that certain students struggle as academic writers if they do not receive tuition on appropriate and effective academic writing through institutional provisions, or through non-institutional strategies, that can promote success with the writing process. They also report uncertainty over the extent to which nurse educators are expected to teach academic writing skills, alongside their discipline-specific subject areas. This ambiguity on who is best placed to teach academic writing to students is replicated over many disciplines. Writing in the Disciplines (WID) scholarship maintains that writing instruction is best delivered as '*an integral, ongoing part of disciplinary learning for all students*' (Mitchell & Eviston, 2006, p.72) However, while writing instruction is most successful when delivered alongside discipline-specific content by discipline experts, the remit of writing centres worldwide is to provide an additional space to support students away from classroom pressures and constraints.

The AWC was established as a pilot project in 2014 in response to specific challenges posed by the increasing diversity of the student body (National Strategy for HE, 2011). These challenges are further amplified by identified deficits in the area of academic writing reported by

Faculty at the University and explored in a series of reports published by the Irish Department of Education and Skills (DES, 2008; 2011). The AWC is envisioned as a welcoming and inclusive space for all students regardless of discipline (STEM, Business, Arts & Tourism); level of study (undergraduate and postgraduate); educational background (direct entry route from secondary education and return to education); format of study (part-time and full-time); and cultural and/or linguistic origin (national and international students). It provides an invaluable support to all students as they face up to the challenges of learning to write in a new academic environment and grappling with unknown conventions and formats (Lea, 1998).

The AWC's main area of activity as a student-facing support service is its one-to-one consultations. Students are welcomed to avail of the support as often as they wish and encouraged to view their attendance as a learning opportunity, rather than as a quick solution to a written assignment emergency. Thus, the AWC aspires to support students' learning about writing on an ongoing basis. The format of the one-to-one support offers students individualised attention and the opportunity to discuss their writing concerns with an academic writing tutor (a PhD student and competent writer). Analysis of data relating to student visits in the academic year 2015/16 shows that the main users of the AWC are full-time undergraduate students with the highest proportion being mature students (*'adult learners'* or *'returning students'*) closely followed in numbers by international students (O'Sullivan et al., 2015).

While the highest proportion of students attending the AWC's one-to-one consultations come from the mature and international cohort, the nature of the support provided remains consistent for all students. It reflects Thesen and Van Pletzen's (cited in Wingate & Tribble (2012), assertion that regardless of students' first language or mode of entry to HE, they are all learning to write in their academic subject.

The AWC adopts the following concepts as its guiding principles: student-centredness as explored by North (1984); a collaborative tutoring style considered by Harris (1992); a dialogic approach to supporting students discussed in Lillis (2006) and defined by (Nystrand, 1997, p. 2 cited in Wingate 2019) as "*a dialogic mode of interaction in which tutor and students share ideas and develop their own knowledge*"; and Ryan and Zimmerelli's (2010) exploration of the writing process with its various stages from pre-writing to writing to editing and revising.

With these guiding principles in mind the AWC adheres to an approach which aims to situate the students as the central agents and drivers of the interaction at one-to-one consultations.

It is expected that this approach will afford students a unique opportunity to reflect on their

approach to writing and to learn from this reflection. In turn, the combination of agency and reflection may demystify writing, be transformative, and facilitate students to become better, more adept and flexible writers.

3. Methodology.

The research design can be characterised as qualitative, with data collected via a survey of students who attended one-to-one consultations at the AWC. The online survey probes into students' perceptions and beliefs about academic writing support and was used to explore the students' perception of the effectiveness of activities and support given at the AWC one-to-one consultations. Therefore, the data gathered aligns with the stated research objective for this case study.

As part of the ethical dimension to this study, the BERA guidelines (2011) were consulted and all participants' permissions had been obtained through statements of informed consent. This was so that they understood the process in which they were to be engaged, including why their participation was necessary, how it would be used, how and to whom it would be reported, and by signing, they indicated their agreement to participation without any duress prior to the research getting underway. This research project complied with the Institution's guidelines and standards for ethical research and was approved by the Institution's Research Ethical Committee on 23rd June 2016 (Ethical Clearance reference is 16-42).

4. Findings, analysis and discussion of the student perspective.

The student survey was distributed to the 140 students who had attended one-to-one consultations at the AWC during the academic year 2015-2016. In line with the AWC's ethos and approach to academic writing support, the AWC welcomes all students who seek support to attend its one-to-one consultations. Therefore, all attendees were invited to participate in the research by filling in the student survey questionnaire. Regrettably, the overall response to the invitation was low as only 42 responded; furthermore, only 21 of the overall 42 completed all questions in the survey. A possible explanation to the poor response may be related to the fact that the survey was sent to students at the end of the academic year and perhaps the time that had elapsed between the student's one-to-one consultation at the AWC and the request to participate in the survey impacted negatively in the response rate. It is important to acknowledge

the low survey response rate for students and its associated impacts in interpreting the data.

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was employed to analyse responses and to generate themes in relation to the initial approaches to academic writing support provision being perceived by students and Faculty in an Irish HEI, and what support strategies for students and Faculty prefer in academic writing. A number of common themes emerged from responses to the students' survey: motivation for engagement with the AWC, most valuable writing strategies; and common perspectives on AW support provision.

4.1 Student profile and motivations.

Even though the overall number of student survey responses is low, the interpretation of the data reveals interesting facts. Firstly, data related to the profile of respondents show that the majority are full-time undergraduate students and that more than half of the respondents are mature students (i.e. 13 out of the 21). Also, it can be inferred from the students' responses in relation to what is their first language that almost half (i.e. 9 out of 21) belonged to the international student cohort. These results are in line with previous data related to students' appointments at the AWC in the academic year 2015/2016.

In terms of students' motivations for engagement with academic writing supports, responses show that 8 out of 21 respondents seek the support of the AWC as soon as they receive instructions for their written assignment. This indicates students' motivation and pro-activeness in addressing academic writing issues from the outset. Furthermore, Table 1 shows data related to what prompts students to seek support and avail of the AWC's one-to-one consultations and two main issues are identified: need for reassurance (i.e. confidence building) and need for support of a '*technical*' nature.

Table 1: What prompted you to make a one-to-one consultation?

Need for reassurance and support to address uncertainty	Need for support of a 'technical' nature (i.e. integration of ideas in the academic assignment and use of appropriate academic language)	Other (no explanation provided)	Responses
10 (47.6%)	10 (47.6%)	1 4.7%	21

The need for reassurance and support to address uncertainty closely aligns to the role that the affective domain (Bloom et al., 1956) and the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Pajares, 2003; Maguire, 1989; Maguire, Reynolds & Delahunt 2016) plays in supporting learning. This concept fits in well with the ethical and pedagogical approach embraced by the AWC, which recognises that a welcoming, supportive, and non-judgmental approach creates optimal conditions for learning to occur. Additionally, the need for specific support of a *'technical'* nature on issues such as the integration of ideas in a written assignment and the use of appropriate academic language in writing shows students' awareness about the specific challenges posed by writing in an academic setting. Issues of a *'technical'* nature were further explored, and students' responses indicate that *'technical'* issues of more mechanical/lower order level such as editing and correcting grammatical mistakes outweigh concerns of a higher order such as structuring the written assignment, deciding on ideas to be included, constructing an argument, and carrying out a literature review [only 2 indicating that a literature review was of concern, while 6 indicated editing as the primary concern]. Table 2 shows students' responses to this question.

Table 2: What aspect of completing your written assignment was causing you particular concern?

Deciding on how to organise and structure the assignment	Editing and correcting grammatical/spelling mistakes	Deciding on what ideas to include	Literature Review	Putting together an argument	Responses
8 (38.1%)	6 (28.5%)	3 (14.2%)	2 (9.5%)	2 (9.5%)	21

4.2 Students' most valuable writing strategies.

Students' preferences in relation to strategies used during the one-to-one consultations afford significant value to engaging in a process of reflection. In particular, the data shows that reflection on ideas/content to include in the written assignment, and on structure and language are recognised by respondents as the most frequently used strategies during individual consultations. Reflection in the context of a one-to-one consultation at the AWC is encouraged by offering the student a context for the session. At the start of the session the student is asked: What would you like to talk about during this session? What would you like to explore today? and at the end, the student is prompted to reflect on the interaction with questions such as: What was helpful? Did we address your concerns? These questions aid both the student and the tutor in framing the session and in steering the conversation to the aspect of their academic writing that the student wishes to explore. This process affords the student time to pause and reflect on what they have learnt about the writing task itself, and about themselves as writers/learners. Yancey (1998) argues that reflection is an essential element of learning, and in particular of writing. Tutors provide feedback at the one-to-one consultations by using dialogue as a means to engage students in a process of reflection. In this regard, students are asked to clarify, explain, or elaborate on a specific aspect of writing and this brings about reflection. Dison (1998), cited in Granville and Dison (2009), uses the label '*interactive comments*' for this type of question and finds that it is a constructive means of providing feedback to students. Delivering feedback through dialogue allows for collaboration to emerge and places tutor and student at an equal level as they seek to construct meaning together. This approach explored by Ivanic, Clarke and Rimmershaw (2000) shows the relevance of dialogue in providing feedback that establishes a '*partnership with the student*' on a dialogic and democratic basis. In addition, Fernsten's and Reda's (2011) exploration on how critical reflection activities represent an acknowledgement of the difficulties encountered by student writers and the importance to facilitate an environment where those difficulties can be explored and understood provide a useful framework for the AWC. Table 3 presents responses to the range of strategies used at one-to-one consultations.

Table 3: Which of the strategies below were used during your consultation at the AWC?

Answer Choices	Responses
Reflecting on the relevance of the points/ideas I had included and their connection to the essay question	9 (45%)
Reflecting on structure of essay/dissertation	9 (45%)
Reflecting on academic language	7 (35%)
Reflecting on using a critical thinking approach to the writing task	6 (30%)
Reflecting on the objectivity of the research I had undertaken	5 (25%)
Articulating verbally what the title of the assignment was asking me to do	4 (20%)
Reading written work aloud	4 (20%)
Articulating verbally what I had written	4 (20%)
Identifying gaps in the literature	3 (15%)
Reflecting on building and argument by sequencing ideas	2 (10%)
Generating ideas on topic using Mind maps	2 (10%)
Looking at relevant online resources	1 (5%)

Finally, when students were asked to evaluate the effect the visit/s to the AWC had on their writing, the data shows that 5 out of 21 respondents reported increased confidence in their ability to write academically and an equal number felt they still needed to avail of academic writing supports. Additionally, only 4 out of the 21 respondents stated that they had achieved a clearer understanding of what is involved in academic writing, and 2 out of the 21 stated that they had developed good writing strategies as a result of the AWC support. This shows that students perceive the impact of an isolated one-to-one consultation as modest in terms of acquiring the necessary writing competence. This is not surprising as a single consultation is unlikely to accomplish competence.

4.3 Student perspectives on academic writing support provision.

In interpreting the data collected for students in relation to the nature of the support they received, it revealed that there is an important emotional component to the type of support received. This emotional support and raising awareness of the affective domain helps students traverse this new terrain and build up their confidence and resilience to face up to the challenges of completing a written assignment. Affective attributes identified were: enabling, student-centredness, empowering, motivation, dealing with uncertainty, encouraging, peer support,

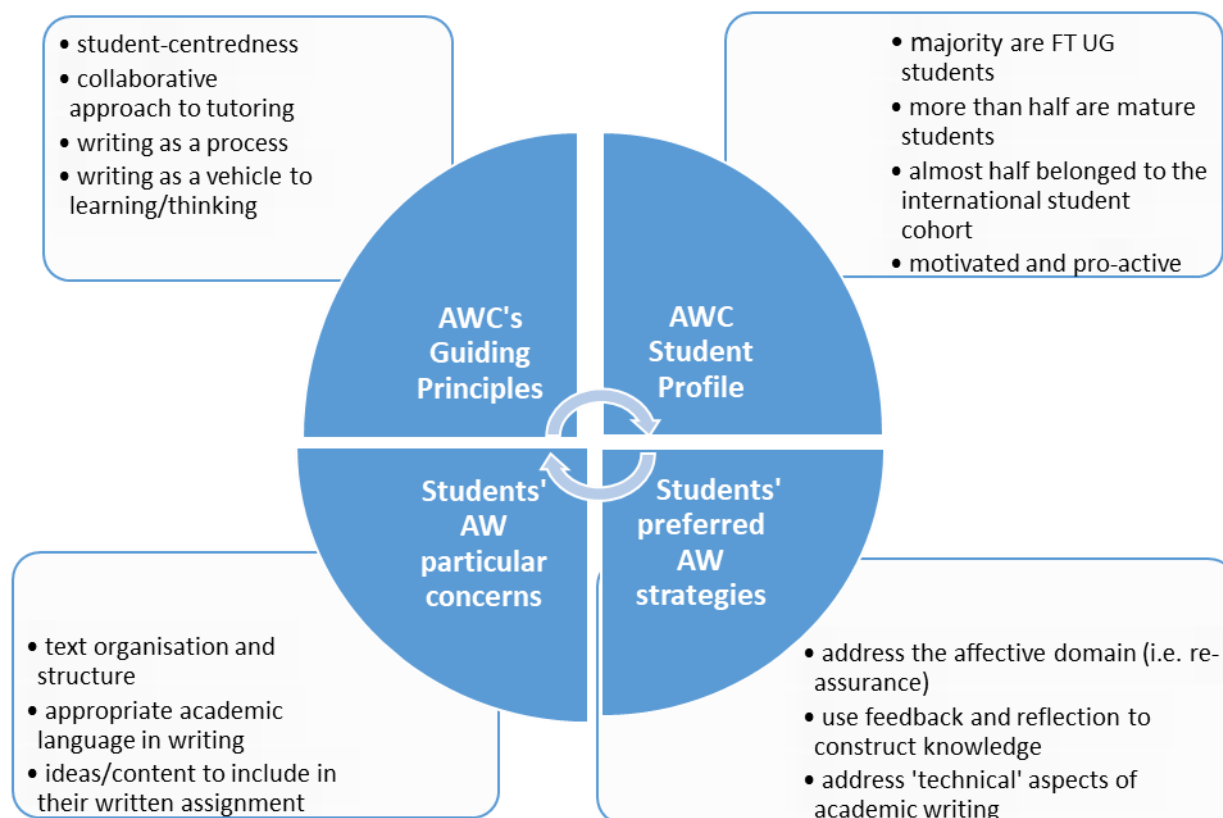
scaffolding, formative feedback, self-reflection. Findings from Pitt and Norton (2017) suggest that emotional reactions play a significant part in determining how students will act on the feedback they receive, and they introduce the concept of '*emotional backwash*'.

Students comment on the importance of building up their confidence, the need to be reassured. Confidence needs to be bolstered, and students can thrive when they see that an expert, a tutor at the AWC, believes in them as writers and thinkers. Provision of positive affirmation about their ability to write, to learn to write, or to complete the writing task is important to students. This positive affirmation is instrumental in making writing a reality, in completing and submitting the written assignment. This emotional support uses empathy and motivation as its main focus to enable students to strive to complete the writing task, and to encourage them to believe that it is within their intellectual, organisational, and personal ability to complete the assignment. On the other hand, students also require what could be termed as '*technical support*'. This is clear as students emphasise the need for technical support relevant to the different stages of the writing process. Structuring a written assignment, constructing an argument and ideation, the use of appropriate academic language, and undertaking the literature review are some of the most important identified '*technical*' supports. There were some common learning and tutoring strategies identified as helpful in technical writing and the cognitive domain. Key common areas classified as most helpful were writing as a process, the importance of planning, structuring, scaffolding, editing, technical language, critical thinking, and argument building - which align with findings from both Moore (2003) and Brady and Singh-Corcoran (2016).

Furthermore, engaging in reflection and conversation about the various writing stages is seen by students as central to developing the ability to complete the written assignment. This iterative process of reflection and feedback allows them to explore the use of new writing conventions, to engage in critical thinking, to adopt a position and construct an argument, and more importantly to develop and acquire new knowledge about writing and about themselves as writers.

Working collaboratively is one of the cornerstones of the approach taken to supporting students in developing their academic writing competence. A collaborative approach paves the way for promoting reflection. As it can be seen from students' responses, '*reflecting*' is identified as the main and preferred strategy used during one-to-one consultations (Table 3). Reflection centres on technical aspects such as relevance of ideas and arguments used, structure, academic language, use of critical thinking, and objectivity.

Figure 1: Overview AWC's guiding principles, student profile, their academic writing concerns and preferred academic writing strategies.



4.4 Recommendations on the intersection of academic writing support for the future.

It is useful to underline the common pedagogical approach for the AWC and the AWP module. Both Faculty and students discussed the importance of confidence building in the writing support received. This is evident in student responses in which 47% select the need to receive reassurance or to address their uncertainty when asked what prompted them to make a one-to-one appointment at the AWC. Likewise, Faculty's comments identified confidence building and empowering participation as the underlying foundation to the pedagogical approach to the AWP module. It is also interesting to report that the philosophical underpinnings to the nature of support lent to students on the AWC's one-to-one consultations mirrors the underpinnings for the AWP module.

While the research described the current activities in supporting academic writing at institutional level by the AWC and the AWP module, work is ongoing to develop a scalable strategy that

could increase the effectiveness of this collaboration between the two Centres as the colleges move to a single campus and include a shared vision for academic writing support at institutional level. Clarence (2011) argues that in order to become a significant part of teaching and learning in HE more generally, writing centres will need to work increasingly with Faculty to address the writing and reading needs of students in a supportive, critical and collaborative space that better serves the needs of both parties. Similarly, Gopee and Dean (2013) argue that institutional provisions for academic writing development, such as a dedicated writing support department, and non-institutional factors such as peer-collaboration should be fully recognised, supported and resourced.

There are implications for supporting academic writing that arise from the findings discussed in this study. Findings point to the fact that writing is a skill that develops over time, and requires constant practice and support. Therefore, the need to extend the duration of the support of academic writing in order to help learners master the conventions of writing an academic paper is underscored. It is envisaged that as part of the future development of the AWC additional activities may need to focus on highlighting the centrality of writing for academic success. Additionally, the AWC will need to adopt a pro-active role to establish close links with academics and programmes in order to embed academic writing in the curriculum and also to provide additional activities to involve students in becoming more adept at academic writing. We will be exploring ways to collaborate with Faculty after they complete the AWP module and the use of the strategies they experienced to teach analysis, synthesis, research and critical thinking as a way of supporting their own students' writing.

It is also important to give due credence to the emotional support needed for academic writing. Antoniou and Moriarty (2008) have argued that advice is rarely provided on managing creative and emotional facets of scholarly writing - factors that greatly contribute to writing quality and success. Murray and Moore (2006) have previously discussed strategies for supporting the emotional dimensions of writing. The findings in this study indicate that Faculty and students at one-to-one consultations require similar strategies to support them with writing. Within the context of one-to-one consultations, in order to fully support students, it is essential to conduct sessions in a way that provides a balanced approach between confidence building and support of a 'technical' nature. Mackiewicz and Thompson (2013) discuss the tutors' role in developing students' confidence and ability to complete academic assignments at the required level.

4.5 Limitations of the study.

A significant limitation of the research is the low number of student respondents (15%). The issue of low student response rate was linked to the timing of the survey. Additionally, other issues may be related to the nature of the AWC support which directly respond to the students' initiative to seek support and may comprise a single one-to-one consultation. From a different perspective, an additional limitation to this research may be connected to the students' lack of sufficient awareness of themselves as writers in an academic setting and perhaps a focus group may have provided a more conducive format to elicit detailed responses and specific insights as to useful academic writing strategies and the nature of the interaction with an academic writing tutor at a one-to-one consultation.

5. Conclusion.

This qualitative case study set out to explore student perceptions on the effectiveness of academic writing activities and instruction provided in an Irish HEI using a cross sectional online survey of students. Thus, the work presented here explores the work of the AWC, a student-facing initiative, and student perspectives (UG and PG) on the academic support received at one-to-one consultations.

The findings highlight useful insights to inform the development and future provision of academic writing support across the institution. First of all, students' awareness of their need for reassurance when completing an academic assignment places the role of addressing the affective domain as central in engaging students at one-to-one consultations. Addressing the affective domain paves the way to deal with students' academic writing issues related to the specificities and technicalities of academic writing. Students are keenly aware of the challenges around organisation and structure of the written assignment as well as the use of appropriate academic language.

Not surprisingly, as students grapple with the technicalities of academic writing, their preferred reflective strategies address issues of paper structure and organisation, and their request for meaningful feedback encourages them to become reflective about their writing. All in all, the integration of considerations pertaining to various domains from the affective to the cognitive and the use of a range of associated strategies that promotes reflection connect well with the guiding principles and tutoring style at the AWC. At a more granular level, academic writing

support at one-to-one consultations should concentrate on issues of the overall structure of the written piece and in some instances for some students an appreciation of language accuracy issues (grammar, sentence structure, punctuation).

These ideas should frame the academic writing support offered at one-to-one consultations. It also has direct implications for the AWC's approach to training future academic writing tutors.

Furthermore, the work of the AWC should extend to supporting the development of a holistic approach to academic writing at University level.

The results presented here have implications not only for one-to-one consultations at the AWC but also for classroom pedagogy, in that Faculty need to consider the perceptions and needs of students if they are to fully adopt a learner-centred approach. It is recommended that the need to develop a deeper understanding on how to promote self-efficacy and reduce feelings of anxiety and/or inadequacy through meaningful dialogue at the one-to-one consultations is also adopted by Faculty. The role of feedback and reflection within a collaborative approach motivates and encourages students to successfully engage with the written task and potentially enhance their learning about writing and their overall writing competence. What emerged is that the perceptions to the process approach to writing, dialogue and feedback are beneficial to students. However, it is well documented that the in class time dedicated to teaching academic writing is inadequate and that it should be increased. Similarly, there is a need for the AWC to play a role in curriculum development and to promote a focus on academic writing and its importance for students' academic success. The challenge ahead is that given limited resources, how can the AWC extend its work and reach out to students and Faculty alike?

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