

**Group** Bachelor of Social Science, Community and Youth Work (BSocSciCYW)

**Department** Department of Applied Social Studies

**Colleagues** Mick O'Brien  
Hilary Tierney

**Overview** CTL has worked closely with colleagues from Department of Applied Social Studies for several years. Over this time, CTL colleagues have developed an understanding of the discipline of Community and Youth Work, as a result of this close collaboration, and a reasonable sense of what it means to write in this discipline.

In semester 1 of academic year 2023-24 Alison Farrell worked with Applied Social Studies colleagues Mick O'Brien (Module Co-ordinator) and Hilary Tierney (Associate Professor) to better understand the writing requirements for a cohort of undergraduate students and to work with Department colleagues to support those students as writers.

**Process** The process began with a connection between the colleagues from Applied Social Studies and CTL in order to explore a potential collaboration towards supporting their BSocSciCYW students as writers. The colleagues discussed the challenges that students face regarding writing and mapped out possible topics for exploration in a series of workshops. It was agreed that the final workshop in the series would be designed around students' needs as self-reported. A discipline-specific text (a journal article) was used in the workshops to explore topics such as critical reading, disciplinary discourse, genre, form, argument, conventions including referencing etc. The workshops also explored writing processes and what John Bean describes as 'the ability to think rhetorically- to size up a writing situation in terms of audience, purpose and genre - and then to make appropriate composing decisions based on this analysis.' (Bean, 2011, p. 51)

### Mapping to WEC features

Maynooth University is adopting an institutionally-sensitive approach to WEC while also drawing on the work by Anson and Flash on key WEC features (see below Table 1). Mapping to these features provides a useful framework for examining and articulating the work being completed in the collaborations between CTL and departments.

**Table 1. Core Features of the WEC model by Anson and Flash, taken from Anson, 2021, p. 10 and adapted to include detail on localisation with BSocSci CYW, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University**

Feature	Feature explained	Localisation with Applied Social Studies
Locus	Locates within academic departments and empowers	Applied Social Studies colleagues and students identified the writing aims and

	and gives ownership to the faculty (and students) to name and describe relevant writing aims, and to determine their curricular integration and terms of assessment.	challenges, and workshops responded to these. Curricular integration is addressed through the use of discipline and course-specific materials, and through the inclusion of writing-focused workshops and other writing support into credit-bearing modules. The workshops contribute to students' achievement of the module outcomes and associated assessment.
Orientation	Conceptually-oriented: recognizes the power of writing-related assumptions to drive or block the integration of writing instruction across the disciplines and is designed to draw out often tacit knowledge about writing that defines ways of knowing and doing in the discipline.	The workshops are situated within the discipline. Writing is recognised as a way of explaining and enacting the discipline and the profession of Community and Youth Work.
Data Use	Collects local data (including writing assignments, student writing, survey data, direct assessment of student writing) and involves faculty in recurring episodes of data interpretation and analysis.	Not addressed
Mediation	Involves an intermediary (a writing expert) who facilitates the work of articulating writing knowledge, planning interventions, assessing results, and engaging in an ongoing partnership with departmental stakeholders.	Colleague from CTL collaborated with Applied Social Studies to articulate writing knowledge and plan intervention. On this occasion, this colleague facilitated the workshops in direct consultation with the Department. Engagement has been ongoing with the Department and ideally will continue to be so.
Support	Is bolstered by the ongoing partnership of writing and teaching support offices, and by administrative, financial, and other support for individual units, but is not entirely dependent on these.	Collaborative model with CTL working in partnership with Applied Social Studies colleagues. The model is reciprocal with colleagues from each department learning from each other. This is a model of inter-dependence rather than one of dependence by either party.
Sustainability	Promotes long-term practices, scales gradually, is sensitive to internal change and inertia, and	The relationship between CTL and Applied Social Studies is ongoing. The WEC Framework and related scholarship

	periodically or regularly revisits and revises the original efforts.	and processes could contribute to its sustainability.
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### **Next Steps**

CTL and Applied Social Studies colleagues will

- consider the experience of this collaboration
- explore future collaboration.

CTL will continue to develop their WEC programme by capturing the learning from WEC work across the university and adjusting their approach accordingly.

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