

**Group** Masters in Community and Youth Work (MCYW)

**Department** Department of Applied Social Studies

**Colleagues** Trish Brennan  
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 Trish Brennan (programme co-ordinator for the Masters in Community and Youth Work) and Hilary Tierney (Associate Professor) to better understand the writing requirements for their Masters students and to collaborate 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 postgraduate students as writers. The colleagues discussed the particular challenges that postgraduate part-time students face regarding writing and considered possible topics for exploration in a series of workshops. It was agreed that Hilary and Alison would plan and co-facilitate the sessions which would address persistent writing concerns for postgraduates and specific elements that the group identified as being especially relevant. In the first instance it was agreed to provide three workshops which would cover the following topics:

- Ways into writing
- Referencing and the building blocks of writing
- Writing processes

A pre-workshop questionnaire was shared with participants. This purpose of this questionnaire was twofold:

- To provide students with the opportunity to reflect on their attitudes to writing and their writing processes including generating text, revising, feedback, and awareness and control of writing process.
- To capture where the group are as a community of writers.

Questionnaire findings were shared with participants. It was anticipated that the questionnaire would be completed again with the community towards the

end of the first year of the programme in order to see if there was any shift in perceptions.

### 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 MCYW, Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University**

Feature	Feature explained	Localisation with Applied Social Studies
Locus	Locates within academic departments and empowers 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.	Applied Social Studies colleagues and students identified the writing aims and challenges, and workshops responded to these. Curricular integration is addressed through the use of discipline and course-specific materials, specific reference to and targeting of the course written outputs, 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 and the profession. Writing is recognised as a way of explaining and enacting the discipline, of contributing to the ongoing professional development of participants (all of whom are working in Community and Youth Work settings), and of contributing more broadly to the profession of Community and Youth Work in Ireland and potentially beyond.
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.	Pre and post writing workshop questionnaire used as a learning tool for participants and Applied Social Studies colleagues.

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.	Colleagues from CTL and Applied Social Studies collaborated to articulate writing knowledge, plan the workshops and to team-teach them.  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 periodically or regularly revisits and revises the original efforts.	The relationship between CTL and Applied Social Studies is ongoing. The WEC Framework and related scholarship and processes could contribute to its sustainability.

### 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.

Trish Brennan, Department of Applied Social Studies  
Alison Farrell, Centre for Teaching and Learning  
Hilary Tierney, Department of Applied Social Studies

January 2024