Clanwilliam Institute
Writing Tutor Service

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Writing Centre Tutor
Agenda

Clanwilliam Institute Writing tutor ↔ Adaptation of Writing Centre to specific circumstances of Institute

• Outline Clanwilliam Institute Programmes and stage of engagement with QQI
• What is a writing centre?
• What does Clanwilliam Institute writing tutor actually do?
• Why develop a writing centre?
• Core principles of writing centres
• Future focus
“The Maynooth University Guide to Setting up a Writing Centre” (2015)
Alison Farrell and Sharon Tighe-Mooney

• The Writing Centre, Centre for Teaching and Learning, Maynooth University, Co. Kildare

• Collaborative project between Maynooth University and its SIDF cluster partners, Athlone Institute of Technology, Dublin City University and Dundalk Institute of Technology.

3 Year Masters in Systemic Psychotherapy;
1 year professional programme

SUBJECTS
Theory;
Clinical Practice;
Ethics and Inclusivity;
Research

ASSESSMENTS
Written assignments <=> Continuous Assessment <=> Examination of Oral and Written Presentation

FOCUS OF ASSESSMENTS
Subject specific learning <=> Integration <=> Practice
Clanwilliam Institute Life Cycle of Engagement

2005-2007
• QA engagement
• Programme Accreditation

2012
Programmatic Review

2012
Institutional Review

Family Therapy Association of Ireland             European Association of Psychotherapy
History of Writing Centres

• Generally:
  Cater for educational diversity; grounded in social change
    • US – proliferation after WW2 – cater for returning GI’s
    • South Africa – 1990’s – cater for diversification of higher education

• Why?
  • Driven by crisis narratives? “the crisis of access, the crisis of literacy, and the crisis of funding” (Cirillo-McCarthy, 2012, p. 84)
    • And/or
  • Driven by enhancement objectives
What is a writing centre

• Writing centres vary in shapes, sizes, and settings.
• Usually connected to writing programmes or teaching and learning centres
• serve the entire institution,
  • Writing centres are available for students at all levels of writing proficiency
  • Core activity: Tutorials offered in a one-to-one setting
  • Tutors are coaches and collaborators, not teachers
  • Each student’s individual needs are the focus of the tutorial
Writing centre activities

- Drop-in writing help
- One-to-one tutoring by appointment
- Discipline-specific work
- Group working space
- Access to relevant materials and on-line resources
- **Workshops** (Work in progress; using features of Word; referencing)
- **Scheduled topic specific sessions** (Referencing; constructing an argument; structuring a thesis)
- **The provision of Writers’ retreats/masterclasses**
One to one tutorial: Focus of the sessions

• Tutors work on any stage of the writing process, from outlining to final revision,

• Students are asked to bring any writing that they have done so far, including assignment instructions/guidelines. It can also be useful to have access to handbook/referencing and style guide etc.

• providing guidance on how to:
  • Read the question
  • organise ideas
  • make convincing arguments
  • reach the right audience
  • identify and eliminate common grammatical errors

• Tutoring is not a drop-off proofreading and editing service.
Establishing a student centred collaborative space: What this might look like

Tutor: What would you like to focus on?

Student: I have the first draft of my assignment.

What would you like to focus on in this assignment

I'm not sure..

What do you think you have done well and not so well? What has your feedback told you about what you do well and not so well?

My structure is ok and I have good ideas but my writing does not get it across

Ok. Lets look at how you form your sentences and your paragraphs - the mechanics of writing. And lets also look at how you construct your arguments

Focus on Student’s work
Group work: Different focus to individual tutoring

• To act as a general guide, not to cover every situation
  • (how do I go about a writing task? How do I go about writing?)

• To guide on generalities; specifics are up to the student
  • (the focus is on how to write, you need to apply this to your own writing)

• To guide on how a student can come to know and come to do
  • (where do I go, what do I do, what do I look up if I am not sure? how do I check what I am unsure of?)
Why develop a writing centre? 1. Responding to identified need

Clanwilliam Institute Context:

- **Students**: Responding to diversity - Mature; in clinical work settings; diverse education backgrounds; English as second language

- **Academic context**:
  - Development of Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct policy
  - Focus on collaborative learning

- **Professional context**: Professionalization of Psychotherapy; Increased requirements for skills in written communication

- **Wider contexts**: Change as discourse driven and discourse led; Proliferation of genres

- **Personal contexts**: Writing as learning; writing as transformative; writing as joyful and self-enhancing
Why develop a writing centre? 2. Policy Context

• National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 [Hunt Report] (Department of Education and Skills, 2011)
  Identified key generic skills – “analytic reasoning, critical thinking, the ability to generate fresh ideas, and the practical application of theory. ... ease in written communication“ (p. 57)

• ESG (2015, draft)
  • 1.3 Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment
  • 1.6 Learning resources and student support

• QQI Assessment and Standards (2013)
  • (A&S, 2013: 2.1.1. 4 b) “Fair assessment is inclusive. It recognises that different people can have different learning needs, styles and approaches”
  • (A&S, 2013 2.2.5) “Good academic conduct is encouraged and supported.”
The dynamic evolution of quality discourses

• Academic standards (maintain and demonstrate) : Writing as key
• Assessments: Written and oral presentations – Language as key/Transferability of skills
• Recognition of different learning styles
• Emphasis on embracing student-centred pedagogy
• Increased access to HE
• Increased diversification of student body
Clanwilliam Institute Writing Tutor: Student-led curriculum

- **Year 1**: Introduction to academic writing; Mechanics of writing; Referencing
- **Year 2**: Writing in different genres (Ethics Research Board submission; Research Proposal)
- **Year 3**: Writing a dissertation. Structure; Content of different chapters; Flow; Avoiding repetition; Troubleshooting (Figures, page numbers, Table of contents)
- **Year 4**: Developing professional identity as a writer; considering regulatory context; writing for publication; writing case notes
Core Principles

• How do we write
  ❖ Writing as a learned skill;
  ❖ Writing as a separate activity;
  ❖ Everyone can learn to write.

• Why focus on academic writing?
  ❖ Writing as Academic Literacy;
  ❖ Writing as a mode of learning.

➢ How does this translate into the practice of the writing tutor?
1. Elements of writing: Inside the text

2. Elements of writing: Outside the text

3. Combining elements of writing: The writing process
   • Drafting and editing at different levels—Paragraph; Sentence; Phrase; Word.
   • Drafting and editing for different purposes—References; Flow; Language; Grammar; Spelling.
   • Argument—Using evidence to argue a case; Stating your opinions

4. Professional and academic writing: Approaching the text.

5. Professional and academic writing: Positioning yourself as writer
How do people tend to write these texts?
Sentence structure?
Complex/long sentences?
How do I include my opinion and perspective?
How do I include references?
Length
Headings
What do I put in the introduction, body conclusions?
Font, size, spacing?
Referencing

Elements of writing: Inside the text

Content
What content is included/excluded in this genre/style?

Structure
What are the different parts of the text?

Language
Using your voice as a writer. How can you improve this voice?

Format
What should the text look like?

• Introduction
• Literature review
• Discussion
• Argument
• Conclusion
• Reflections
• References

• Evidence
• Examples
• Argument
• Description
• Reflections
• Referencing
• Interesting

• How do people tend to write these texts?
• Sentence structure?
• Complex/long sentences?
• How do I include my opinion and perspective?
• How do I include references?
Elements of context: Outside the text
(This view helps to Prepare for writing)

- Genre
  - What is the purpose of this text? What question / task am I addressing?

- Audience
  - Who reads these texts? Are there multiple readers?

- Purpose
  - Why am I writing this way?
  - Why are readers reading this text?

- Style
  - What characteristics should this genre posses?

- Elements of context: Outside the text
  - Assignment
  - Funding application
  - Programme evaluation
  - Research proposals
  - Book reviews
  - Literature reviews
  - Reflexive writing

- Elements of context: Inside the text
  - Discipline specific?
  - Managers?
  - Tutors?
  - Students
  - Service users?
  - Funders?

- Style characteristics
  - Formal?
  - Informal?
  - Referencing?
  - Argument?
  - Use of I?
The writing process
Writing Process

- Prepare
- Research
- Draft
- Edit/review
- Finalise
## Preparing a text: Putting it all together

Gather together relevant documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference guide</th>
<th>Style guide</th>
<th>Specific instructions</th>
<th>Additional texts</th>
<th>Task specific document</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Interrogate the documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inside the text</th>
<th>Outside the text</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Genre</td>
<td>Keywords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Format</td>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Focus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group, Order, and Document Information
What system of representation works best for you? Move from Template to Your Design
Careful Preparation => groundwork for deciding **structure and content**

Future Focus:

Transferability of academic writing to professional contexts;
Distinguishing between academic and professional writing.
Academic and Professional Writing
Developing writing skills across contexts: tasks

• **Different kinds of writing, each with their own conventions** (*genres*)

  => task: recognise and identify conventions with different genres

**Different ways of writing** (*styles*) **associated with different genres**

  ⇒ TASK: Develop your own voice in different genres

• **Different contexts** of writing

  Professional (internal service documents and external review/policy/quality document)

  Academic (Assignments; research proposals; research reports; writing for publication)

  ⇒ TASK: Developing expertise in identifying contextual requirements on your writing

**Different ways of writing in different disciplines/services**

  ⇒ Task: Become a practised, skilled writer; developing your writing process
Differences between academic and professional texts (1)

**Academic Writing**

- **Academic regulations** (Academic impropriety)
- **Discipline specific writing requirements** (use of I; what counts as evidence)
- Task specific requirements (research; opinion; descriptive)
- Particular assessment requirements
  - In this assignment you should...

**Professional Writing**

- **Regulatory requirements**: Data protection; Client confidentiality and consent; Legal limits and restraints
- **Service specific requirements**: Policies and procedures; Precedents and conventions
  - Culture
- Task specific requirements
  - Service relationship with audience; Service requirements for communication with audience
- Particular task requirements
  - Consultation process? Who is named as author?
Differences between academic and professional texts (2)

**Academic**

- **You are author**
- **Genre**: Academic Writing conventions: Assignment; Research; Article.
- **Audience**: Usually clearly identifiable, Assessor? Ethics Board? Discipline?
- **Purpose**: Information? Analysis? Description? Funding
- **Style**: Usually comes within academic writing style

**Professional**

- **Are you or your organisation author?**
- **Genre**: Considerable variation - internal; external; information; funding;
- **Audience**: May not be clearly identifiable. Need to attend to organisation policy
- **Multiple possible purposes**: Who will use text for what purpose
- **Multiple possible styles**
Resources


- University of Limerick Writing Centre, Available at: [http://www.ul.ie/rwc/](http://www.ul.ie/rwc/)
