

Thinking about WEC – some considerations

Several factors must be considered when individuals and/or departments are thinking about initiating a Writing-Enriched Curriculum (WEC) approach in their higher education setting:

- 1 Consultation and community
- 2 Rationale and purpose
- 3 Context
- 4 Approach
- 5 Linking with Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)



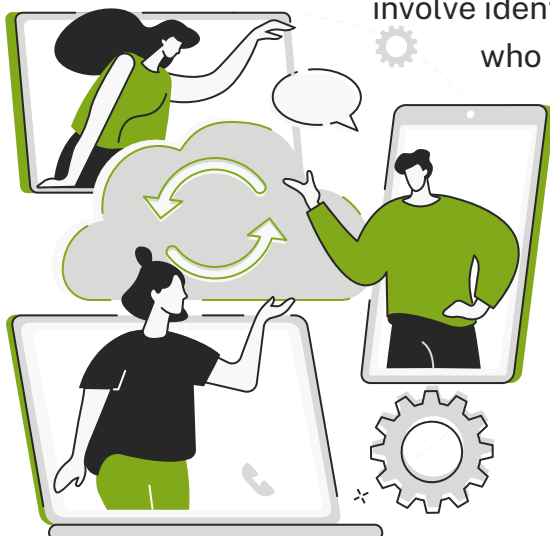
1 Consultation and community

Because WEC has as key features participation and a collaborative approach, an important first step when considering WEC in any institutional setting is to identify appropriate partners for the initiative. This may involve the development of a community of practice, the establishment of an advisory or expert group, or the setting up of an institutional or departmental working group. Taking a group approach means that the responsibility for work is shared and capacity building across the department is facilitated. The WEC team within the department will develop local expertise as part of the work and will be the contacts for teaching and learning colleagues who are supporting WEC centrally. The consultation phase and community building may

involve identifying experts, either within or beyond the institution, who can help with the development of robust and research informed approaches to WEC.

Growing a community in this manner may contribute to the project's success and the ongoing contribution to conversations on campus, nationally and more broadly about WEC.

A shared approach allows for different perspectives to shape the initiative and helps to secure buy-in for the work through shared ownership of the process, aims, plans and outcomes.



2 Rationale and purpose

Much like other teaching, learning and assessment initiatives, when one is considering the introduction and/or the development of WEC the rationale behind the integration of this approach as part of a department's pedagogical portfolio requires clear articulation. Identifying the purpose of the work will help to establish a shared understanding across all the partners involved and will help to define a direction of travel. As part of the identification of the motivation and justification for the introduction of WEC, staff and students may wish to explore the value added in this approach, either in tandem with or over and above other models, towards student writing development.

3 Optimising

Any initiative which has the intention of positively impacting on the student experience and on student engagement needs to be mindful of the particularities of the context. This could involve a consideration of explicit departmental and institutional parameters, for instance programme and module documentation and processes, professional body requirements, marks and standards, and the surfacing of tacit understandings associated with how writing is currently supported within existing teaching, learning and assessment. A consideration of context will also involve reflecting on the relationality between WEC and other approaches that support students as learners and as writers. Considering how different approaches can complement each other will help in the avoidance of duplication of effort and can potentially strengthen the work by linking with existing pedagogies towards optimizing student engagement and pedagogical intentions which already exist within the discipline and/or more broadly on campus.

4 Approach

While there are some shared WEC principles which generally underpin initiatives of this nature, each approach to WEC needs to be context-sensitive, reflective of the specific university community and mindful of purpose. In order to avoid confusion and to contribute to consistency and coherence the approach to WEC needs to be developed in a shared and collaborative manner which will provide structure for the initiative as a whole and to the day-to-day work associated with implementing WEC.





Agreed templates, writing plans and resources to guide the work need to be either identified or developed as part of the process. In turn, the process itself will need to be clarified as part of shared conversations between writing experts, discipline experts, students and other relevant stakeholders.

5 Linking with Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

Because of its focus on evidence based and research informed practice, WEC work offers a significant opportunity for writing experts, departmental colleagues and students to collaboratively research teaching, learning and assessment which has a focus on writing development. With the appropriate ethical permissions, WEC can form the basis for pedagogical investigation and SoTL work towards publication and the enriching of the scholarship foundation for WEC and similar models, while also contributing to knowledge about writing within a discipline including necessary exploration of the use of GenAI in higher education student and research writing.



The development of WEC in an institution will most likely be an iterative process which is enhanced through application and feedback. Institutional, departmental and individual learning and enquiry will help to refine the process so that it is reflective of the needs of staff and students, and so that it is fit for purpose mindful of shifts in the higher education landscape.



Writing-Enriched Curriculum (WEC) is a Maynooth University Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) professional learning and curriculum initiative towards supporting students as writers.

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