INPLASY PROTOCOL

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One-to-one Academic Writing Tutorials: A Scoping Review Protocol

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Review question / Objective: This scoping review seeks to a. map and explore the extent, range, and nature of research activity on individual/one-to-one tutorials to support university students with academic writing; and b. identify gaps in the evidence base where research has not yet been conducted. The review adopts the five-stage iterative model for conducting scoping studies proposed by Arksey and O'Malley (2005), supplemented by more recent guidance on how to conduct and report on scoping reviews (Pham et al 2014; Trico et al 2016). To formulate the question of the scoping review, the PICO model (Population, Intervention, Comparator, Outcome) was used introducing a structured format for framing review questions allowing for consistency and rigour in systematic reviewing (Stone 2002). The concepts that this scoping review seeks to map were grouped under the relevant PICO components, resulting in the primary research question that the review seeks to address and explore, as follows: "What is known from the existing literature/What is the current state of knowledge about individual/one-to-one tutorials (intervention) to support academic writing (outcome) for university students/students in higher education (population)?"

INPLASY registration number: This protocol was registered with the International Platform of Registered Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocols (INPLASY) on 15 February 2023 and was last updated on 15 February 2023 (registration number INPLASY202320063).

INTRODUCTION

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O'Malley (2005), supplemented by more recent guidance on how to conduct and report on scoping reviews (Pham et al 2014; Trico et al 2016). To formulate the question of the scoping review, the PICO model (Population, Intervention, Comparator, Outcome) was used introducing a structured format for framing review questions allowing for consistency and rigour in systematic reviewing (Stone 2002). The concepts that this scoping review seeks to map were grouped under the relevant PICO components, resulting in the primary research question that the review seeks to address and explore, as follows: "What is known from the existing literature/ What is the current state of knowledge about individual/one-to-one tutorials (intervention) to support academic writing (outcome) for university students/students in higher education (population)?"

Background: Research evidence indicates an increase in the number of students interested to engage in one-to-one time with their tutors, seeking advice on a range of academic skills, predominantly academic writing (Wisker et al 2007; Caldwell et al 2018) and that students who engage in tutorial sessions perceive this learning experience as quite supportive and empowering and, as such, extremely important for their studies in higher education (Wisker et al 2007). Acknowledging the impact that one-to-one tutorials can have on student learning, they are increasingly being integrated into the teaching curriculum of academic literacy support including pre-sessional support, in-sessional support and support embedded across the disciplines. There are, however, serious limitations when it comes to planning, designing, and delivering one-to-one tutorials. To start with, academic literacy support tutors enter the profession from a range of backgrounds with a wide experience base and, while most of them do have formal training in classroom/group teaching, training for one-to-one teaching (individual tutorials) seems to be less common (Caldwell et al 2018). Also, while both students and tutors call for more

structured and focused support for one-to-one tutorial situations in terms of purpose and structure (Blythman et al 2006; Thomas et al 2017), there seems to be lack of literature and practical training guides on how such situations should be approached (Webster 2017). Moreover, existing research appears to be focusing on different aspects of one-to-one tutorials including but not limited to perceptions and expectations, teacher training, advice giving, interactional processes, feedback, and evaluation (Walker and Elias 1987; Guthrie 1997; Thonus 1999; 2002; Mackiewicz 2005; Kim and Silver 2016; Wingate 2019).

Rationale: It is therefore essential to plan, design, and conduct a scoping review that will allow for a preliminary mapping of existing literature of the field. A scoping review has been selected as the most appropriate approach to chart, collate, summarise, and report on research evidence of significant breadth that has not been comprehensively and systematically explored so far (Colquhoun et al 2014). This is first scoping review to examine the extent, range, and nature of research activity on individual/one-to-one tutorials on academic writing in higher education and identify gaps in current knowledge to allow for future research to be shaped to address and explore the gaps identified.

METHODS

Strategy of data synthesis:
Search Strategy - In consultation with an experienced information specialist, part of Student Library Services at Teesside University, the search strategy to guide database searches was developed. Only studies reporting on primary research, available in English and published in peer-reviewed journals were considered for inclusion. A mixture of keywords comprising combinations and synonyms, joined together by the Boolean operators (OR, AND) were used with appropriate wildcards being applied to account for plurals and variation in spelling. A draft of the main search strategy can be found below: (higher education OR university OR academic) [Title/Abstract] AND (tutorial*

OR tutoring OR consultation*) [Title/Abstract] AND writing [Title/Abstract].

Data Sources - The main search strategy was systematically applied to the following electronic databases: Education Research Complete (EBSCO interface 1969 onwards), Education Resource Information Centre (ERIC) (EBSCO interface 1966 onwards), and Web of Science (1900 onwards). The latter was included to account for studies published in peer reviewed journals whose scope lies in scientific disciplines other than education. Preliminary searches were restricted to titles, abstracts, and keywords. Reference lists were also hand searched and relevant studies were added to data sources.

Eligibility criteria: A comprehensive list of eligibility criteria to facilitate the screening process was developed. Exclusion criteria included:

1 - studies not reporting on primary data/empirical research (e.g., reviews or discussion papers),

2 - studies not reporting on higher education (e.g., secondary education, college);

3 - studies reporting on tutorials on skills other than academic writing (e.g., academic reading, presentation skills),

4 - studies reporting on academic writing in contexts other than individual/one-to-one tutorials (e.g., peer or group tutorials, video tutorials, asynchronous online tutorials),

5 - studies reporting on course or programme evaluation which might include individual/one-to-one tutorials alongside lectures, seminars, workshops (with tutorial records being used for triangulation),

6 - studies published in languages other than English,

7 - conference proceedings or abstracts only.

Source of evidence screening and selection: 1132 studies were identified through database searches (Education Research Complete and ERIC: 418; Web of Science: 714) and exported on EndNote 20 for sorting and deduplication. 271 studies were removed, resulting in a sample of 861

studies, potentially eligible for inclusion. These studies were imported on Rayyan, the Intelligent Systematic Review tool, for screening and inclusion.

Study Selection

Title and abstract screening were conducted independently by two reviewers and any discrepancies/disagreements were resolved by discussion and consensus. Full texts of potentially eligible studies were assessed by the first author (AB) and reviewed by the third author (EP) in cases of uncertainty.

Quality Appraisal

No quality appraisal of eligible studies was required for selection, as the methodology proposed by Arksey and O' Malley (based on which this scoping review was designed) intentionally omits this step. While this could be perceived as a possible methodological limitation of the present review (Levac et al. 2010), it was not deemed necessary given the primary aim of this work being to map the existing literature on the field of individual/one-to-one tutorials on academic writing to avoid narrowing down the amount of research evidence to be reported.

Data management: Data Extraction - A charting framework to guide data extraction was developed using Microsoft Excel. The initial framework including a detailed list of the information that should be charted from each study was pilot tested on two relevant, recently published, papers identified through a Google Scholar search. Results of the pilot testing were discussed with the team members, and the initial framework was refined through discussion and consensus. The refined data charting framework comprised information, as follows: citation information (e.g., number of authors, year of publication, journal of publication), study details (e.g., country of research, aim, study design, recruitment setting and timeline, data sources, approach to analysis), key findings, limitations, and implications/recommendations for research, policy, and practice.

Reporting results / Analysis of the evidence: The first part of the proposed

scoping review will attempt to map and explore the extent, range and nature of research activity pertaining to individual/one-to-one tutorials to support students with academic writing in higher education employing bibliometric techniques to identify and report on the distribution of a series of pre-determined indicators including:

1 - geographical distribution,
2 - temporal trends,
3 - authorship,
4 - journal of publication,
5 - country of research activity,
6 - research methodologies

Bibliometric analysis is a popular and rigorous method for exploring and analysing large volumes of scientific data enabling researchers to unpack the evolutionary nuances of a specific field, while shedding light on the emerging areas in that field (Donthu et al 2021). Bibliometrics is the method used to display the research pattern and research activity and identify the volume and growth pattern of literature on a certain topic. Furthermore, bibliometric analysis is a suitable methodology to spot important research themes and gaps in existing or current research activity.

Presentation of the results: The review will then go further to identify and report on study aims, key findings, study limitations, and implications/recommendations for research, policy, and practice using narrative synthesis. This will allow to capture the different areas that existing research on individual/one-to-one academic writing tutorials has focused on (e.g., structure, process, roles, interaction), identify patterns (commonalities and differences) between studies reporting on similar areas, summarise the main findings produced, discuss issues pertaining to study limitations, and explore what authors propose as possible ways forward indicating gaps in existing knowledge. 'Narrative synthesis' refers to an approach to the systematic review and synthesis of findings from multiple studies that relies primarily on the use of words and text to summarise and explain the findings of the

synthesis (Popay et al 2006; 5). Narrative synthesis goes beyond the act of simply describing and summarising the main features of included studies. It enables investigation of similarities and differences between studies, exploration of relationships within the data and results in a summary of knowledge related to a specific review question that may be used to inform practice or policy.

Ethical Approval

Considering this scoping review reports on secondary data from primary research, all of which being obtained/derived from sources that that openly accessible in the public domain, no ethical approval or ethical clearance was required for this part of the proposed research.

Language restriction: English.

Country(ies) involved: UK.

Keywords: individual/one-to-one, tutorials, consultations, academic writing, higher education.

Dissemination plans: Review findings will be disseminated through publication in leading international peer-reviewed journals and/or presentation(s) at national/international conferences, congresses or other events.

Contributions of each author:
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