

A Tale of Two In-sessionals: Challenges and Opportunities as explored through a Critical Friend relationship

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Overview

- Contexts
- Change management in the pandemic
- What actually happened in 2020
- Support from a Critical Friend relationship
- Two examples from each context
- Future plans
- Conclusions

Durham University Context

Academic Development for Students (part of the Durham Centre for Academic Development)

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graph LR; A[Academic Development for Students (part of the Durham Centre for Academic Development)] --- B[Discipline specific sessions]; A --- C[One-to-one writing and skills support]; A --- D[Centralised academic skills classes];
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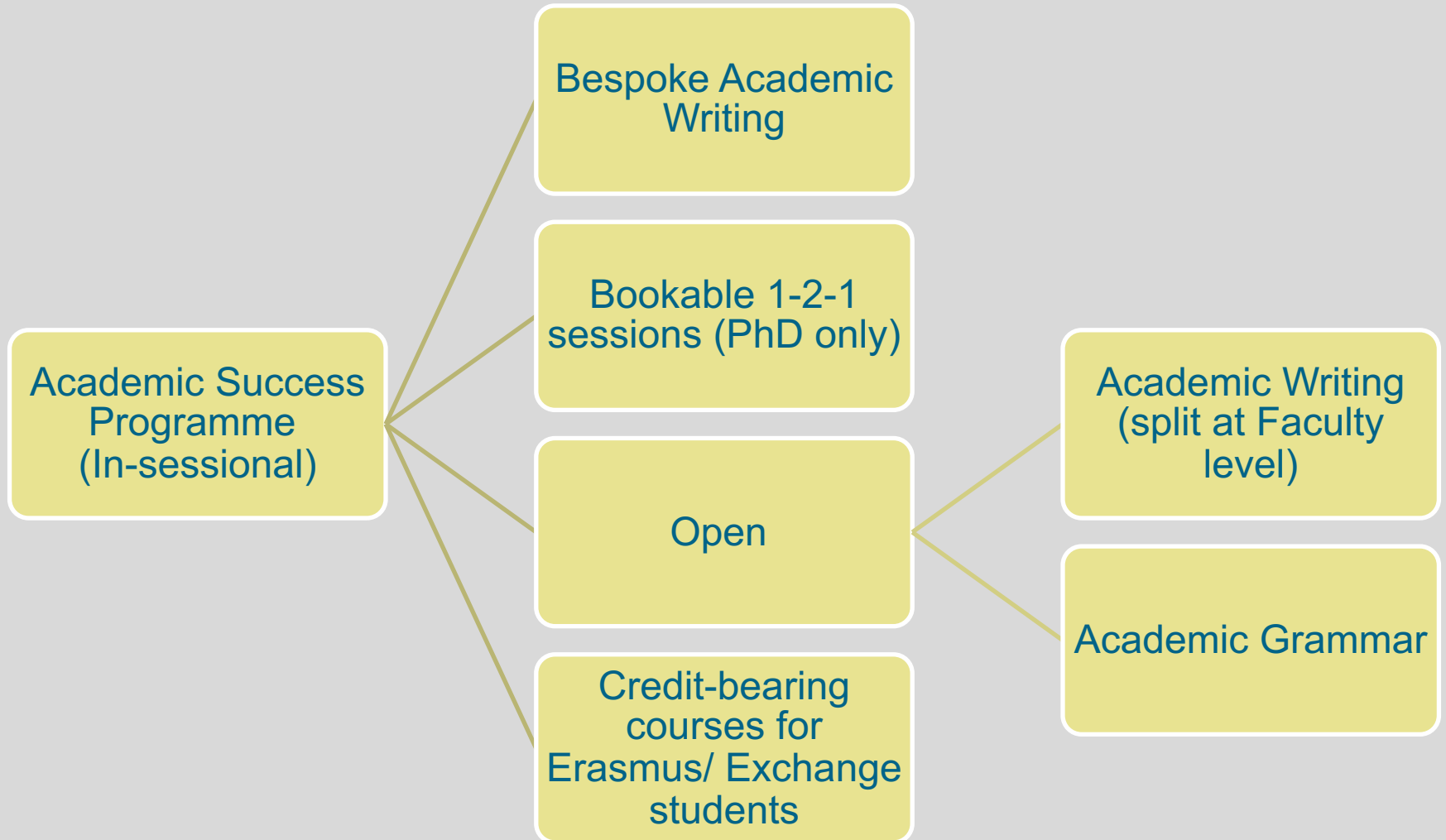
Discipline specific sessions

One-to-one writing and skills support

Centralised academic skills classes

University of Manchester Context

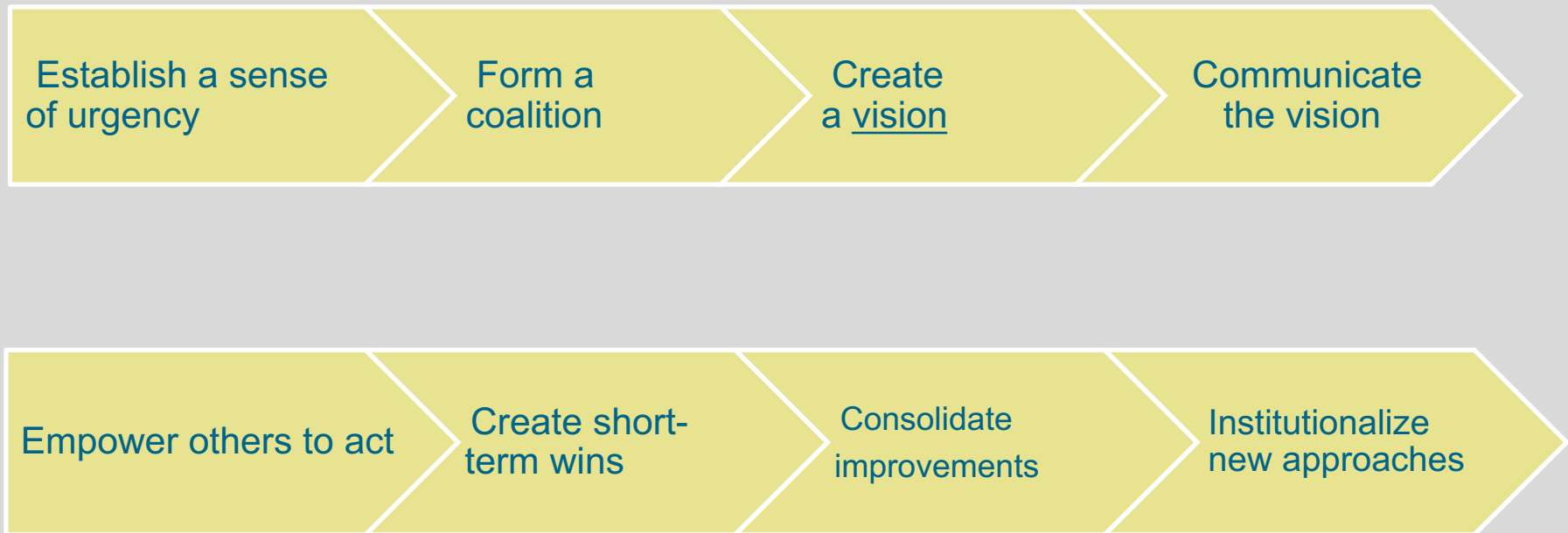
University Language Centre



The Critical Friend (CF) Relationship (May 2020 to date)

- Strategic thinking
- External Examiner/CF dual role – funding
- Evolving identity “we need to shape this role”
- Reciprocal
- COVID-19 - pushed us – not business as usual
- Creating a space to discuss practicalities and theorise

Change management – Kotter's (1995) eight stage model



What actually happened in 2020

- We couldn't follow change management models
- Change curve (Wiggins, 2019)
 - Kubler Ross
- How we managed our teams
- As echoed in Bruce and Stakounis (2021), we found we had to engage in 'emergency remote teaching' (Hodges et al. 2020, p.3)

Support from a Critical Friend relationship



Dialogic peer coaching in teacher leadership (Charteris and Smardon 2014)

'Being listened to and listening to others has an almost magical effect on our expressions as a professional. Issues and problems are held at arm's length and examined from all sides, instead of being subjected to quick opinions and ready solutions' (Lambert 2003, p. 426)

Dialogic reflection (Mann and Walsh 2017)

1. Strategic discussion about the direction of our courses

University of Manchester:

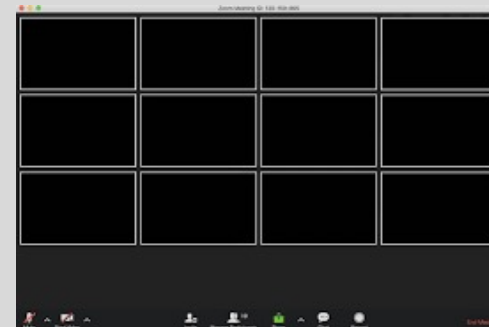
- Affordances of online turn
 - Increased quality asynchronous component
- Re-working Academic Success Open Programme
 - Greater liaison with schools

2. Platforms

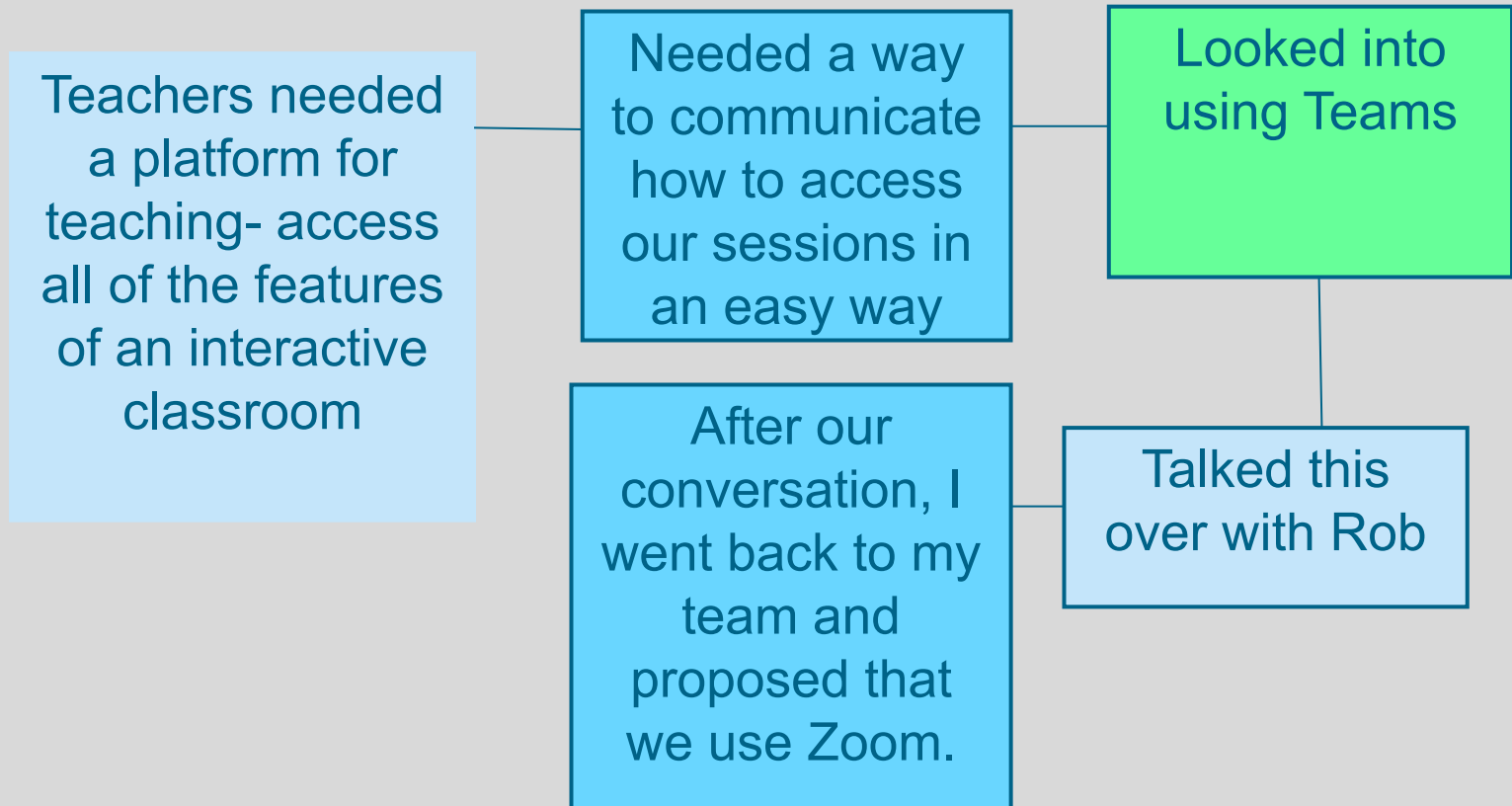
Large one-off sessions for home and international students

Teachers don't usually know their students-How will the teachers cope?

No continuity beforehand to have students prepare or complete an asynchronous activity to then follow up in class.



2. Platforms



3. Landscape for 2021-22- what's the new normal?

Conversations e.g. at Manchester

- Flexible Learning Programme (George 2021)
 - "explanatory material [will be] ...asynchronous"
 - "synchronous [for diving] deeper into the material, ask questions, do practical work and have in-depth discussions"
- Hybrid delivery
 - Tutor/student experience
 - Communicative classroom v. lecture

4. Challenges with providing students with individual feedback on academic writing

Our one –to-one writing consultations were more popular than ever this year

Impossible to meet student demand

One-to-One Services



Get in touch

dcad.enquiries@durham.ac.uk

We offer a wide range of one-to-one tutorials in Academic Writing and in Maths & Statistics:

4. Challenges with providing students with individual feedback on academic writing

Tutors reported that for many consultations, they were discussing similar themes with multiple students

We cover these skills in our Academic Skills sessions but there isn't much writing practice in these.

Talked over Rob's writing camp idea in our critical friend meetings- we're now planning on facilitating something similar in the next academic year

Future plans

- Formalising ‘critical friendship’ in 21-22 by
 - identifying different problems
 - working through them through dialogue
 - Looking into dialogic reflection (Mann and Walsh 2017)
- We’re looking into identifying ‘critical incidents’ in our management/coordination areas and structured reflection (Mann and Walsh 2017)
- Impact on our centres/wider EAP

Conclusion

- Value of our experiences in 20-21
- Plans to continue: 21-22 and beyond
- Implications for leadership and management in EAP sector

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