# Building a community of writers in a university



### Take one university...

- 20 hours teaching per week
- High number of 'second-career' academics
- Focus on applied courses
- **W** Key priority: improved position in REF



...one writing group

What is the role of a writing community in developing the writing practices of academics?

#### An ethnographic study: telling their stories

Thinking differently about writing "Writing is much more of a priority...I've

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Making the tacit explicit

"[It was] a
space to
acknowledge
that the
writing
process is
complex and
emotionally
draining but
ultimately
potentially
satisfying."

g Coconstructing ideas and understanding

"[A space] for discussion and debate...you test and work through those ideas that are kind of bubbling up from the surface."

### Building a community

"It feels like I
am among
friends who
share my
goals and can
help keep me
on track."
"I learned
about how
other people
work, how
they think
about writing."

## Producing writing

"The story paints a picture of progress with writing, but also some false starts, derailments and changes of direction... challenges and triumphs."

#### The end of a chapter



Writing spaces need to be:

- About *process* before *productivity*
- Both social and individual
- Both *visible* and *protected*



Participants developed a more coherent sense of their wider academic identity and began to see writing as a legitimate and valuable activity.



The interplay between individual and institutional is key: the University needs to clearly articulate the nature and purpose of writing within the institution.