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A Russian Model of a Writing Center: The Case of HSE University

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The writing center movement is a fairly new concept to Russia. The movement started in the 2010s as a response to government initiatives aimed at making the publications of Russian researchers more visible in the global arena. Many Russian writing centers are still in search of their identities and operational modes. This chapter is an attempt to analyze one model of a Russian writing center, the Academic Writing Center (AWC) at HSE University (HSE), as a case. The HSE AWC was established in 2011 and became a pioneer in launching university-supported programs for faculty. Unlike many American and European writing centers, the HSE Academic Writing Center works only with faculty and high-potential groups of researchers. The Center provides educational services to help researchers to master their academic writing and public speaking skills via courses and workshops. It also offers individual consultations on draft papers. To better cater to the needs of the HSE researchers, the AWC has regularly conducted surveys and designed educational programs on demand. The collected data on event attendance and feedback on the organized events allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of this type of model. The analysis of writing needs and challenges that Russian adult learners face when writing papers for publication could contribute to the discussion about effective integration of multi-lingual researchers into the global research community.

The influence of publications in peer-reviewed journals on institutional reputation and global rankings has generated an ever-increasing pressure on faculty to write and publish, particularly in English. The chapters in the first section of this volume as well as the broader literature have shown more and more understanding that faculty struggle to meet writing-related challenges and require institutional support. “For faculty who are hampered by anxiety about writing and publishing, who struggle to make time to write, or who

simply feel too exhausted to write, writing programs can make the difference between a *promising* and a *successful* career.” (Gray et al., 2013, p. 95). Faculty may have little practice of scholarly writing beyond writing dissertations and need to develop their literacy skills and strategies for publication (Flowerdew, 2015; Geller & Eodice, 2013; Lillis & Curry, 2010). In this respect, writing centers and teaching excellence centers have great potential to accommodate the diverse needs of university faculty.

Having had a long history of working with students, American writing centers now have expanded their support to faculty by providing them with a range of programs for their professional development as writers (Geller & Eodice, 2013). Many American writing centers advocate for various literacy events: writing support groups (Clark-Oats & Cahill, 2013; Eodice & Cramer, 2001), writing retreats (Anson, 2013; Shendel et al., 2013), immersive writing residences (Moore et al., 2013), publication-focused workshops, editing consultations, and panels with prolific writers (Baldi et al., 2013). These programs have differed in their scope and depth. The available accounts of successful practices have shown that such programs have promoted and sustained writing in academia. They have helped build a community of writers and hone faculty’s facility in writing for publication.

The problem of seeking ways to assist faculty in writing has seemed especially acute in many multi-lingual centers that work in cultures where English is an additional language (Burgess & Cargill, 2013; Cho, 2009; Englander & Corcoran, 2019; Li et al., 2018). As English-medium journals have a leading role in the research publishing market (Lillis & Curry, 2010), English as an additional language (EAL) scholars are strongly advised to write papers in English. And this inevitably adds an extra burden on EAL faculty. Academics can be well-published in their first language (L1) but have to acquire a different way of communicating their research contributions internationally. The challenges EAL academics face stem not only from lower English facility than that of anglophones (Flowerdew, 1999), but also from different culturally bound thought patterns (Friedlander, 1997; Kaplan, 1966) and “the clash between the two writing traditions” (Korotkina, 2018, p. 320), which academics may not be aware of. Besides, it is known that in comparison with native speakers of English, non-native speakers need more time to produce a written text (Flowerdew, 1999). Realizing the challenges EAL academics encounter, many institutions commit to providing focused support programs in the booming field of English for research publication purposes (ERPP). ERPP is defined as “a branch of EAP addressing the concerns of professional researchers and post-graduate students who need to publish in peer-reviewed international journals” (Cargill

& Burgess, 2008, p. 75), but it is much broader and more complex, especially for those who use English as an additional language. Work within this field requires writers to be aware of genre characteristics and academic rhetorical features, international standards for publication, the steps in the publication process, and etiquette for communication with editors and reviewers (Flowerdew, 2015; Reid, 2010).

Russia is also part of the race for higher university ratings. Government initiatives aimed at making the publications of Russian researchers more visible in the global arena resulted in the Russian writing center movement, which started in the 2010s (see Chapter 1 and Chapter 5). Now, Russian writing centers are gaining momentum; however, many of them are still in search of their identities and operational modes. Many emerging centers find themselves at a crossroads: choosing whether to introduce translation and proofreading services to researchers or to offer various educational programs. The cultural and institutional contexts, the aims writing centers pursue, and the resources they have, inevitably lead to a range of writing center models. Obviously, there is no universal blueprint for a faculty-focused writing center. However, sharing successful approaches could be helpful for other writing centers that explore opportunities for integrating multi-lingual researchers into the global research community.

In this chapter, I will describe the operational model of the Academic Writing Center (AWC) at HSE University, Moscow. Part of the HSE internationalization policy is creating a stimulating environment for the faculty so that they can publish papers in international peer-reviewed journals, thus enhancing the institutional profile and visibility (HSE University, 2020). The university has built a system of faculty professional development in which the AWC plays an important role. The operational model of the Center is based on the assumption that it should satisfy the needs of academics, employing strategies that are effective for cultivating their professional career growth. The major principles of the model are institutionalized support for the Center's educational services, developing customized client-oriented programs, and ensuring equal and free access to all HSE employees.

Among the key indicators of the success of the AWC, I consider the rise in usage, clients' positive evaluation of the Center's services, and the Center's ability to adapt to the changing environment. I will describe the AWC's activities, share clients' feedback, and also present data on the writing needs and challenges of Russian scholars, which the Center collected from 2015 to 2019.

I suggest that a university committed to faculty support should develop a well-thought-out strategy and create optimum conditions for professional development. I assert that the model of the HSE Academic Writing Center

proves to be effective in assisting scholars to cope with a demanding reality and can be generalizable to other faculty-focused writing centers given institutional support.

This article could also contribute to the heated debate on the idea of a writing center (Bouquet & Lerner, 2008; Salem & Follet, 2013) by adding another cultural perspective. Writing centers can work not only with students but can also offer and facilitate a spectrum of customized programs for faculty development. Centers can be agents of change by having an impact on the writing culture of the university.

Russian Cultural Context for Writing Centers

Although the role of writing centers is increasing in Russia, they still have a long way to go in coping with the challenges the Russian cultural context imposes on them. One of the major challenges is that the ambitious, top-down goals of increasing the international visibility of Russian scholars' research have not been supported by the system of education itself. As academic writing in English has yet to be developed as a discipline in Russia and introduced into university curricula (Korotkina, 2017, 2018; see also Chapter 1, Chapter 3, and Chapter 5), scholars' prior education does not provide much practice with composed writing in English, which is typical of many other EFL/ESL writers (Leki, 1992). Russian academics' writing skills in English are usually limited. Consequently, many writing centers have to take on the responsibility of filling the gaps in their clients' formal education. In addition to fixing mechanical problems, writing centers have to teach basic process writing skills, facilitate researchers' critical reading skills in English, and stimulate their academic vocabulary development.

Another challenge all Russian writing centers experience is lack of qualified staff to assist academics in their research writing, which may not be an issue in U.S. centers. Russian centers have tried to employ native speakers of English, but not all universities can afford this. Usually, Russian teachers of English serve as tutors, very often as part-timers. The paradox of the situation in Russia is that very often the blind lead the blind: teachers of English, having an instrumental use of the language do not publish much but have to teach others how to publish internationally (Bogolepova, 2016; see also Chapter 4). Writing instructors themselves need training in order to offer ERPP courses, "those that teach the genres of the English language research article and associated activities, with the primary goal of enhancing the participants' ability to write for international publication" (Li et al., 2018, p. 117).

Having directed two writing centers, I realize how hard it is to find an instructor who has profound knowledge of EAP/ESAP/ERPP. Until recently, there were almost no degree specialists in the area of academic writing or in rhetoric and composition, as pedagogical universities train would-be instructors for secondary schools focusing on teaching general English. Pedagogical university graduates often have no formal training in academic writing in English and learn in the process of teaching. Being employed as university instructors, they explore various opportunities for self-development in order to master their ESP/EAP teaching skills. We definitely need a network of writing professionals to support each other.

Yet another challenge is the demand for quick results, both on the part of universities and faculty themselves. Being busy multi-taskers, academics are practical and results oriented (Bogolepova et al., 2017; Harmer, 2007; Knowles, 1984, 1990), critical, and demanding. They are likely to be very selective and self-directed, which implies that writing centers need to offer services that can help them achieve results in the shortest possible time. However, academics' low level of English can be an inhibiting factor for publication success in English (Frumina & West, 2012). As many authors have used the services of professional translators or teachers of English for years, they often perceive emerging writing centers as free translation agencies or "fix-it shops" (North, 1984, p. 435). It would be a generalization to state that all Russian academics have a low level of English (Korotkina, 2017); however, academics should realize that learning to write in English is a better strategy than just translating or proofreading texts with the help of others. It takes time and institutional policy to change such perceptions and persuade academics to invest effort in mastering their writing skills in English.

As my observations as a writing instructor show, Russian English has a range of distinctive features: sentences tend to be long and wordy, paragraphs unfocused; Russian writers overuse passive voice and synonyms, making referents unclear; writing is non-linear and less guided; there are many unsupported generalizations and weak arguments; and the authorial voice is often not developed. These claims are supported by some studies on Russian undergraduates' writing (Chuikova, 2018; Pospelova, 2016; Terenin, 2015; see also Chapter 8). Even those who are well versed in English need focused training on higher-order concerns before brushing up on language accuracy. As Korotkina (2018) has argued, "in Russia, the deeply rooted tradition of opaque and wordy writing that developed in the period of the Soviet isolation, creates more problems for scholars than the lack of English" (p. 320). We all, including Russian writing instructors, need to acquire a different argumentation paradigm and awareness of the reader's expectations. We all need

to consciously apply editing strategies to make texts intelligible and more accessible to international readers.

Many of these culture-specific factors, however, can be overcome, as our experience has indicated. Centers need to raise clients' awareness of cultural differences of academic discourse and teach researchers to conform to international conventions of research writing to fulfill editors and reviewers' expectations. Centers need to offer customized services, taking into consideration clients' writing facility and specific writing needs. It seems more efficient to promote life-long learning strategies than to orient authors toward quick results. There are definitely multiple ways of investing in writing support initiatives, and there is no model that fits all. I would like to contribute to the discussion about faculty support by sharing one model of a writing center that can work well given institutional investment.

HSE's Model of a Writing Center

The HSE Academic Writing Center was established in 2011 at the initiative of the university administration. From the very beginning, the Center was designed as a space for professional development to enable academics to get their papers in print. The AWC gradually introduced short-term courses: six in the period from 2011 to 2013. The Center also organized 30 lectures and 140 proofreading sessions in the same period (Bakin, 2013). The first trial-and-error steps helped the Center shape up its philosophy and policy from investing money in papers to investing it in developing the skills of writers. The Center has been rapidly advancing in four major directions: as a research lab, an educational hub, a consultancy service, and a resource center.

Structurally, the Center is part of the HSE Academic Development Department, supervised by a vice-rector and financially supported by the university. According to the Center's policy, all services are free for the HSE faculty. Operationally, we have organized all the events on the Moscow campus and have reached other campuses online. All the events have required online registration. The Center has regularly advertised its services and events on the Center's site, via corporate email, and on social media. We have also participated in adaptation programs for new faculty and organized the Academic Writing Center Day to promote the Center's activities.

The Center is governed by a full-time director and two managers. On a contract basis, we employ four consultants and from five to 10 trainers annually. Three consultants are native speakers of English, and one is bilingual, who was invited in response to a consistent client demand for a Russian-speaking consultant. The consultants come from various educational backgrounds, all

having editing experience as a pre-requisite. They run individual consultations and sometimes do workshops. The trainers who conduct courses and seminars are primarily Russian university teachers of English. We carefully select both trainers and consultants and provide them with on-going training, support them methodologically, create resources and training materials, and thoroughly monitor the quality of services. The predicted downstream effect of the professional development of trainers may be improvement of academic writing programs for students, too.

In 2019, we launched a new project—School of Trainers—with the aim of enabling university teachers of English to develop self-study materials and conduct workshops for academics in the field of research writing. We have just opened a resource center, and now we are seeking ways to engage more clients with self-study materials.

Target Audience

HSE academics, like those in other Russian universities, have a jagged language profile. There are no institutional employment requirements concerning the level of proficiency in English; however, the faculty are encouraged to publish their research in high-profile international peer-reviewed journals. To cater to the different language needs of the faculty, the university created a system of multi-level English professional development (PD) programs to provide an opportunity for faculty to improve their general language skills. The AWC deals more with writing for publication problems.

We were interested in the language level of our clients. To identify their readiness for academic communication in English, the Center launched a diagnostic module for the university talent pool program participants in 2018 ($n = 106$) and in 2019 ($n = 100$). They have been our primary audience. The fact that all of them were selected for this university-supported program indicates that all of them were ambitious, career-focused, and goal-oriented. For this group, publications in English are crucial for getting financial bonuses from the university. The module aimed to identify researchers' language needs so that we could make informed decisions about targeted PD programs for the clients. Another objective of the module was to provide each participant with personalized feedback about the level of English and recommendations for improvement.

The module results showed that the majority of this group of high achievers had Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) scale scores of B2 (Council of Europe, 2014) and higher (see Table 6.1). Although the B2 level, which corresponds to independent users of the language,

seems like the very minimum for efficient academic writing, these intermediate level learners need both linguistic support and training in anglophone conventions of research writing. They were unlikely to be formally trained in writing an article in English; therefore, they also needed focused training on genre features, rhetorical patterns, and navigating the publication process to meet journal submission requirements.

Table 6.1. Level of Language Proficiency According to CEFR

| Level | | A1 | A2 | B1 | B2 | C1 | C2 |
|----------|------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Speaking | 2018 | – | 5% | 8% | 36% | 32% | 8% |
| | 2019 | – | 7% | 17% | 42% | 27% | 7% |
| Writing | 2018 | – | 4% | 13% | 37% | 27% | 10% |
| | 2019 | 2% | 7% | 31% | 37% | 17% | 6% |

Asking participants directly about their particular writing difficulties for publication (Brookes & Grundy, 2009; Flowerdew, 1999) can give valuable information about each individual researcher’s problems and the strategies they use to cope with these problems.

The respondents to the Center’s survey on consultations ($n = 104$) identified three top language challenges as barriers to English-medium publications: grammar and syntax (61.5%), punctuation (55.8%), and clarity of expression (41.3%). Participants reported particular difficulty with articles, sentence structure, sequence of tenses, and word combinability. We obtained the same results from the diagnostic module participants. Answering the question about their writing challenges, all diagnostic module participants voiced the concern that they lacked native-like fluency of expression, and grammar and vocabulary were stumbling blocks that prevented them from writing clearly. These findings confirm that lexicogrammatical features of academic discourse are typical challenges for all EAL writers (Flowerdew, 1999). While learners focus more on lower-order concerns, trainers have observed that the problems often lie much deeper: learners have had problems with audience awareness, paragraphing, organization of ideas, stating an argument clearly, text coherence and cohesion.

I have already emphasized the importance of planning the Center’s work in accordance with the audience profile. The AWC puts a premium on analyzing clients’ needs and challenges. In order to collect the most comprehensive data, we have developed a system of evaluation criteria and feedback collection from clients. We conduct several surveys annually to identify clients’ requests and measure their level of service satisfaction. All these data

are vitally important for the Center's success, as "the most effective materials are those which are based on thorough understanding of learners' needs, that is their language difficulties, their learning objectives, their style of learning, the stage of their conceptual development . . ." (Jolly & Bolitho, 2011, p. 128). Drawing on the survey results, we decide on the topics, design courses and seminars, and tailor materials to clients' particular needs, which helps us to improve our services overall.

In the next section, I will describe these activities in more detail and present some data collected by the Center, which might be interesting to other faculty-focused writing centers.

Educational Services

Having the aim of empowering faculty's academic writing and public speaking skills, the Center provides such educational services as courses, workshops, and individual consultations. We offer 10 annual professional development courses in English, which vary in learning outputs, length (from 12 to 36 academic hours), and format (face-to-face, blended, or online). The courses are tailored to accommodate our clients' requests. All the courses are offered on a competitive basis and require a letter of motivation. They target learners with a certain level of proficiency in English, starting at the B2 level. Some of the courses focus on the structure of a research article and anglophone conventions of research writing (e.g., "Introduction to academic writing," "Basics of writing an empirical article"). Others involve analysis of journals and readership, writing and revision strategies (e.g., "Writing a draft for publication"). Other courses incorporate more work on lexicogrammatical features of academic discourse and acquisition of the particular register (e.g., "Syntax of academic writing," "Vocabulary-building strategies").

The number of course participants remains stable—around 150 people per year. Although the quality of the courses have been positively evaluated by participants (the mean score was 9.2 out of ten in 2019) we have had quite a high rate of dropouts (around 20%). The major reasons for quitting the courses, as surveys have shown, have been clients' big workloads, frequent business trips, lack of free time, inconvenient schedule, and tough home assignments, which involve writing, rewriting, and editing. We have still been looking for solutions to cope with the issue of dropouts.

All our surveys show that the clients favor short-term educational services more, as they are not as time consuming as courses. This has prompted us to increase the number of workshops and seminars. We organize them every

two weeks (20 per year). They are four-hour interactive and practice-oriented classes. The evaluation mean of workshops and seminars in 2019, which was 8.8, indicates clients' engagement and interest. The data collected by the Center show that attendance rates at seminars and workshops grew from 153 people in 2015 to 591 people in 2019. Seminars have attracted not only Russian scholars but also international faculty employed by HSE. Such growth in attendance can be explained not only by the increase in the number of seminars but, most importantly, by improved advertising techniques and a broader scope of topics.

Surveys serve as a rich source of seminar topics to cover. The most frequently requested topics since 2017 have included typical mistakes of Russian writers, features of a research article, argumentation, dealing with reviewers, punctuation, grammar, and academic vocabulary. Demand for oral academic communication has been persistently strong since 2015, including conference presentations and giving lectures in English. Based on these data, we have created a range of seminars to meet these needs. Primarily, we have focused on the global issues of research writing, article genre requirements, and language problems. One of the most recent requests is organizing seminars in narrow discipline fields: law, philosophy, history, and mathematics. Due to the lack of resources and expertise, we cannot accommodate the needs connected with specific kinds of discipline-oriented discourse (Swales, 1990) fully. Nevertheless, we have attempted to invite HSE discipline specialists with a good command of English and organized a series of seminars for researchers from law and energy engineering departments. Collaboration with prolific discipline writers seems promising, as our experience has shown.

As indicated by our surveys, the most popular service has been the one-on-one consultation. Consultations have been gaining more and more popularity over the past three years—the number of consultations went up from 261 in 2015 to 847 in 2019. It took us a while to change clients' do-all-the-fixing-for-me attitude and to make them primary agents of the sessions. At the beginning, consultations were called proofreading sessions, requiring little effort from authors. Gradual systematic work led to a change in the situation. We have written detailed guidelines for both consultees and consultants. We encourage our clients to finalize their draft research papers or conference proposals before scheduling a session. We recommend self-editing their texts first. Authors are also required to study target journal standards and requirements. Such home assignments may influence the amount of text that is processed during one-hour sessions. What is important for administering consultations is the number of sessions necessary to com-

plete the editing of one draft. The survey results on consultations showed that 33.7 percent of clients completed editing their draft papers within two consultations (two hours); but the majority needed more sessions. The time largely depends on the language quality of the initial draft. In general, the Center's users (64.4%) have come to consultations with one paper per year. Usually, we do not register clients for consecutive meetings, and the number of sessions should not exceed three per month. Such rules were established to accommodate the needs of as many clients as possible and avoid providing services to a limited number of faculty members.

Now the sessions focus on assisting academics in their development as writers by providing authors with text-specific comments on their scholarly texts. In line with tutor pedagogy (Reynolds, 2012), the consultations provide a dialogic space where authors are encouraged to actively participate in improving their texts. Using the constructivist approach, the consultants lead authors to construct new knowledge based on their previous experiences (Hoover, 1996). The consultants help to identify language problems and offer guidance for correcting them in order to strengthen the readability of the text. They also provide strategies for revision, additional resources and recommendations for further development. The sessions help writers to not only make the text mechanically sound but also to ensure its rhetorical effect. Importantly, the content of the paper entirely remains the responsibility of the author.

The working language of consultations is English, as we believe that "languageing" (Swain, 2006) creates an opportunity for authors to be engaged in discussion about the language and develop collaboration and negotiation through the medium of English. However, if authors opt for a session with a Russian expert, the session can be conducted either in English or in Russian. Russian is usually chosen by authors with less speaking facility.

It is vital to monitor the quality of consultations. In the fall of 2018, we conducted two surveys. The first survey was aimed at clients who used the consultancy services in 2018; 104 people responded to this survey online. The questionnaire was designed to find out how consultations contribute to the development of authors' writing skills and whether consultations help in the publishing process. Our findings show that 83.7 percent of respondents stated that consultations helped them to develop their writing skills. In particular, the respondents noticed improvement in lexicogrammatical aspects, especially in the use of articles (85%) and punctuation (65.5%), which appeared to be the most challenging issues. The respondents also developed their self-editing skills (50.5%) and became more conscious of sentence length (50.5%), which led to overall clarity of the text.

To a set of questions about publication activity, the respondents answered that 90 percent of papers that went through the consultancy service in 2018 had been accepted for publication. Forty-nine percent of these were published in journals indexed in Web of Science (WOS) and Scopus in such discipline areas as economics, education, business, computer science, sociology, mathematics, statistics, applied linguistics, etc. This number may imply the high quality of the consultancy service; however, we clearly realize that such publication success cannot be attributed to the language “cure” alone. Certainly, very much depends on the quality of the research itself and the right choice of the journal.

The second survey we conducted over the course of three months from January to April 2019 was to get insights into the quality of consultations and to receive feedback on the consultants’ performance. Paper-based questionnaires were distributed to 165 clients immediately after their consultations. Clients evaluated sessions given by our four consultants according to such criteria as interactivity, clarity of explanation, pace, atmosphere, and efficiency. The results were really impressive: the respondents rated consultants’ overall performance as 3.92 on a 4-point scale; three consultants received a maximum score for clarity of explanation, pace, and atmosphere, which suggests their high level of expertise.

The consultants have used various techniques, which have included Socratic questioning, asking for clarification, explaining rules, giving examples, or asking the researcher to read the paper aloud. The choice of techniques has depended on the consultant as well as on the clients’ preference. All the consultants explained difficult points (40–68%) and invited learners to join a discussion (45–72%). The findings on effective techniques help us recommend our visitors to the consultant whose approach suits them best.

After eight years of the Center’s work, I can state that the writing center model that was developed over the years can be regarded as successful in accomplishing the goals the Center sets for itself. Surveys conducted with the help of the Center of Institutional Research in 2015, 2017, and 2018 allowed us to trace the dynamics and focus on general trends in the Center’s development. The results of the surveys revealed significant growth in awareness of the Center and its services among the university faculty from 76 percent in 2015 to 96 percent in 2018.

An important indicator of the Center’s progress is the attendance rate of its users, which we regularly collect. As can be seen from Figure 6.1, the attendance steadily increases with a slight drop in 2016, which can be accounted for by a change in the managerial team.

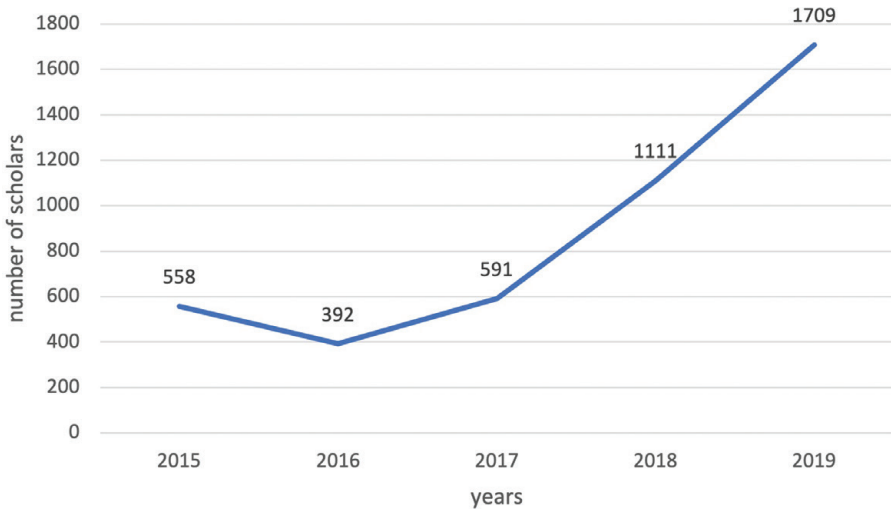


Figure 6.1. Number of scholars attending the AWC events per year.

Overall, the Center has become more noticeable in the university. There is a demand for expanding the Center's services to students. We sometimes consult with university teachers on students' writing assignments. We were also able to meet certain challenges the Center experienced at the beginning. For instance, more faculty from specific departments use the Center's services; we observe an increase in the number of applicants for the courses; we have gathered a group of writing instructors. We have also managed to create a collaborative space and make consultations educational. Yet, some problems still remain unsolved: we would like to have a wider reach on other campuses, to better cater to field-specific requests, and to offer more online events.

Necessity for Collaboration

I strongly believe that having similar goals and challenges, Russian faculty-focused writing centers should channel their efforts into networking. For the sake of creating opportunities for professional development, the National Consortium of Writing Centers was established in 2016. It aims to unite all writing instructors in Russia, disseminating the best practices and resources via conferences, on-site seminars, and courses (Bazanova & Korotkina, 2017).

All centers can benefit greatly from cooperation and expertise sharing. That is why we often invite Russian and international speakers from other writing centers and universities, experts in academic writing, textbook writers, journal editors, American fellows, and prolific writers in English.

Invited speakers run seminars and courses to contribute to the Center's program development. At the same time, as the AWC director, I receive frequent invitations from different Russian universities to run seminars and courses for the faculty and writing center staff. The geography of the Center's outreach is very wide, from Kaliningrad to Vladivostok. I have trained teachers in many universities and presented at summer schools and writing institutes and national and international conferences in Russia and abroad. These Center outreach activities demonstrate that the AWC experience is in demand.

I clearly realize that not all centers have as much institutional support and as many resources as HSE University. That is why we strive to share our experience. Recently, the AWC has offered internships for teaching instructors and writing center staff and received several applications. Although the local contexts of Russian universities vary, each writing center has gained considerable experience. We need to learn from each other and adopt and adapt best practices.

Conclusion

Having put considerable pressure on researchers to publish internationally, universities should bear this burden too and create a conducive environment for academic work. Assisting faculty as writers can take different forms and models, as the literature has shown. Russian writing centers have a promising future in offering writing services to faculty, given institutional support and collaboration. However, writing centers need clear, well-thought-out policies to operate effectively. All the services should be based on a thorough analysis of clients' needs. No matter how diverse the conditions may be, investing time and effort in helping faculty to "publish and flourish" (Gray et al., 2013, p. 96) seems to be an important mission of writing centers.

The model employed by the Academic Writing Center at HSE University appears to be efficient in achieving the goal of assisting academics to communicate their research results internationally. The Center has created formal and informal spaces for diverse collaboration and expertise sharing. The chosen university strategy of investing time, effort, and resources in facilitating the professional development of the faculty will pay off in the long run.

The AWC has great potential for growth and development to engage with the broader global community, launching international projects, and participating in international conferences. I do hope that the Center's experience can be useful for other faculty-focused centers, especially those that operate outside the anglophone world.

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