Developing academic writing with Turnitin

AIMS
To provide students’ with tools with which they can increase their confidence and skill in academic writing, specifically:
- paraphrasing
- correctly integrating and acknowledging sources within text
- referencing

PRINCIPLES
Training and support in the use of Turnitin should be:
- available to all
- affordable and sustainable
- self-directed
- peer-supported

DELIVERY
Training consists of a one-hour workshop, run by a postgraduate student and supported by several undergraduate facilitators. The workshop includes an explanation of the software and the opportunity to upload a piece of work and discuss the originality report. At the end of the session, students complete a short test, an evaluation survey and are then given continued access to Turnitin.

SUPPORT
Students have access to a VLE site of support material, including information on interpreting the Turnitin originality report, and they can send queries to academic writing tutors via a confidential blog. The VLE site is a ‘safe space’ where students can review drafts of their work and students have access to it throughout their time at the University of York.

RESULTS
Student feedback:
- Great and ingenious application. Catch me red handed. It is good to know that I should go back and rewrite most of my work much more appropriately.
- This training session has been very useful and has helped me to understand the potential problems with paraphrasing. I think using the software will help to highlight potential problems and help to reduce the likelihood of me plagiarising work.
- I found this very helpful and demystifying; it would probably have been helpful to have had an extra 20 minutes to use the software with assistance.

On average, feedback has been very positive, with the majority of students finding the software useful and the workshop training comprehensive.