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Supporting Academic Writing Through the Lens of Critical Thinking

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Supporting academic writing through the lens of critical thinking

Dr Roisin Donnelly

Abstract

Academic writing in the context of producing quality research articles is something which all academics engage in and there is evidence of increased attention to supporting the development of the writing and subsequent output of academics and research students. However, while scholarly writing is learnt in complex ways, critical thinking is an intrinsic part of such writing. In practice the teaching of critical thinking is difficult and there is a lack of discussion about what it means within the context of the writing process. This study describes a pedagogic intervention with a group of academic staff to support the participants not only to explore critical thinking in their own writing, but to consider in depth how they would apply this learning to their work with students in higher education.

Abstract

Within the context of an academic writing module on a postgraduate programme for academic staff in Irish higher education, an action research approach was used with participants to improve their understanding of the role of critical thinking in the academic writing process. The data suggests that the pedagogic intervention resulted in greater confidence in terms of participants' critical writing skills and also supported them to help their students in the academic writing process. An exploratory model is proposed for critical academic writing encompassing a series of scaffolded in-class activities, virtual peer learning, and tutor feedback – culminating in the publication and dissemination of individual practice-based educational research.

A Reflective Report on

Values Informing Professional Practice in Educating the Educators

Dr Roisin Donnelly, Dublin Institute of Technology

LICE Conference, 10th November 2014

Presentation Overview

- My context in academic development in Ireland

- Academic values and influences

- Understanding how academics learn

- Developing people and processes

- Professionalism, Scholarship

- Working in and developing learning communities

- Ongoing challenges facing academic developers

My Context

DIT Grangegorman

DUBLIN

How will you grow?

QUALITY NEW ACADEMIC
LEARNING EDUCATION
FEEDBACK PEDAGOGY
DEVELOPMENT INNOVATIVE ONLINE
PROGRAMS TEACHING
DESIGN WATTLE GROUP METHODS
DELIVERY COURSES STUDENTS
DEVELOP WORKSHOPS DESIGN
TUTORS RESEARCH STAFF

Academic values and influences

Professional journey

Immediacy of results

Academic Development Values & Influences

- **Collaboration**
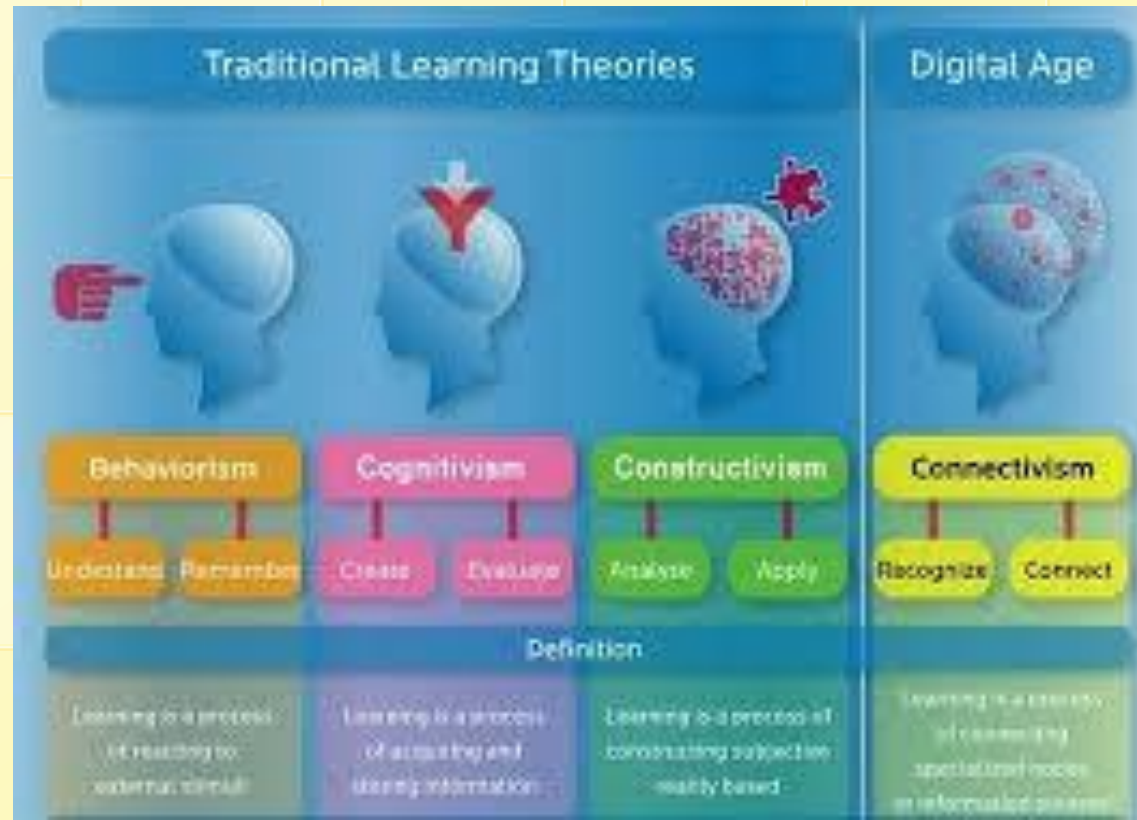
- **Respect**

- **Support**

- **Challenge**

- **Creativity**

- **Personal & Professional Experience**

- **Collegial Community**

- **Scholarship: Ideas Blender**

- **Research & Reflection**

- **Professional Networks**

Understanding how academics learn

situated within existing academic cultures and focus on conceptual change

place emphasis on academic reflective practice

Developing people and processes

What influences professional learning?

- the need to expand our repertoire of research-based instructional skills
- development should be embedded in and connected to our daily work
- should be surrounded by a culture that encourages innovation, experimentation, & continuous improvement

embracing media more & embracing more media

Professionalism

Defining my professional identity:
empathy, commitment, honesty, respect (the expertise of others), open-mindedness, openness to change, ability to relate to the experiences of others, communication skills, and collegiality...

THIRD SPACE

"IN MATTERS OF STYLE, *swim* WITH THE CURRENT. IN MATTERS OF PRINCIPLE, *stand* LIKE A ROCK."
-Thomas Jefferson

Scholarship

Irish Journal of Academic Practice

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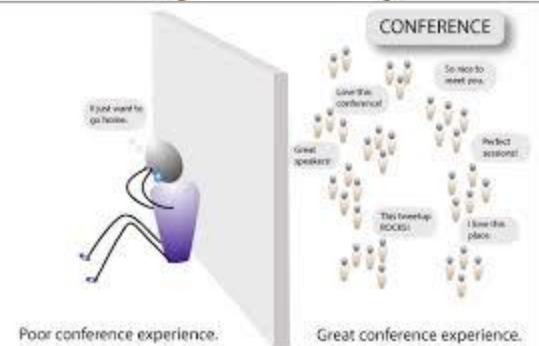
Working in and developing learning communities

Academia - highly attractive profession in terms of challenging tasks and leeway to shape one's work?

Academic development - change agent or complacent educator?

Boundary spanners

Supported through networking

Ongoing Challenges

compassion formative character hope
persevere competent flexible clarity
imaginative courage effective patience

l e a d e r s h i p

faithful empathetic innovative curious
competitive diverse humility social
sacrifice ethical global vision discerning

CHANGES AHEAD!

"VALUES are not just WORDS
VALUES are what we LIVE BY"

ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT IS NOT AN INTENTIONAL CAREER CHOICE BUT A 'DESTINATION THAT SEEKS US'

Questions