Accessibility, criticality, visibility: Academic literacies in widening participation HE contexts

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Widening Participation in HE

Student profile is varied in terms of

- Previous educational experience
- Length of time they have been away from formal education
- Relationship with the English language (mother tongue, second or additional language)

Students benefit from

A balance between

- Language Learning
- Language Development
- Literacy Enhancement

The case studies

Support students in

- Gaining **access** to and being able **to mobilize** linguistic and semiotic resources

- Developing a **critical approach** to academic/professional contexts, practices and discourses

- Increasing their **visibility** as active participants in processes of knowledge display, transformation and creation

Case study 1: Accessibility

To activate effective linguistic and semiotic resources when representing knowledge (display, transformation, and creation):

- **Constitutive nature** of language in knowledge representation;
- **Key textual and discursive features** in disciplinary academic genres; and
- **Alternative means of expression** and their possible impact on knowledge representation.

Reflective writing in education

- The role of reflection in education [**professional practice**]
- Language for reflective writing [**constitutive nature of language**]
- A reflective text [**textual & discursive features**]
- From reflective notes to academic reports [**alternative means of expressions and their effects**]

Case study 2: Criticality

To develop levels of criticality that involve considerations of language(s), texts, contexts, <u>and</u> attitudes to themselves and others:

- Analysis of **contextual elements**
- Their present **role as student writers** and future **role as professionals**
- The **role of discourses and texts in academic/professional contexts**

Examining care in nursing

- Critiquing the care provided to a patient (e.g. type 2 diabetes condition) [**roles as future professionals**]
- Considering who the patient is, the patient's cultural background and beliefs, the relationship with their GP, the nurse and hospital consultant [**contextual elements**]
- Analysing how texts/discourses represent professional practices [**roles of texts/ discourses**]

From cases to theory

- **Access to** and **mobilization** of resources needed for active participation in academic/ professional contexts (e.g. Lillis, 2001;Turner, 2011)
- **Critical analysis** of the multiple factors involved in academic and professional practices, avoiding monolithic entities (Freire & Macedo, 2002)
- **Visibility** through the development of writer voice, writer identity, and dialogue (Lillis, 2003)

Adapted from Gimenez & Thomas (2015)

Conclusion

Key sociolinguistic studies (e.g. Blommaert, 2005; Gee, 1999; Hymes, 1996) have demonstrated that success in education is largely determined by the linguistic and semiotic resources individuals possess, are familiar with, and have access to.

We should then consider students' linguistic background and semiotic resources as **constitutive elements of our pedagogic practices and artefacts**.

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