

Critical voice in student writing: principles for a pedagogy

Octavia Harris

Senior Lecturer

Nottingham Language Centre

octavia.harris@ntu.ac.uk

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- Personal
- Unique
- Individuality
- Critical Voice



"If I'm going to sing like somebody else, I don't need to sing at all." --Billie Holiday

What is critical voice?

- Ideational, interpersonal, textual positioning (Ivanic and Camps, 2001).
- Reasoned propositions (Moon, 2004).
- Stance and engagement (Hyland, 2005).

Critical voice: issues in student writing

- Higher education to develop disposition of criticality (Barnett, 1997).
- Unsupported assertions linked to lower grades/voice v's evidence/not sure how much voice to include/unequal power relationship (Read et al. 2001).
- Authorial identity (Pittam et al., 2009).

Background to the study

Action research

Student writers: Six in-sessional MA ELT

Cycle 1: semi-structured interviews, focus groups, talk around text

Preliminary findings:

- Desire to express voice but not sure how
- Evidence dominates voice
- Excludes voice if no supporting evidence
- Reluctant to be critical of evidence with voice

Cycle 2: Design pedagogy

Research Questions

1. What constitutes a pedagogy of critical self-reflection?
2. What are the processes, experiences and difficulties for students in developing a critical voice?

Research Questions continued

3. How can a pedagogy of critical self-reflection contribute to EAP staff understanding the processes, experiences and difficulties involved in the development of a critical voice?

Question for the researcher

4. How can the researcher develop critical voice in dialogue and written feedback?

Overview of Principles of Pedagogy

- 1. To raise awareness of constructions and reconstructions of knowledge: individually and collaboratively.*
- 2. To raise awareness of critical self-reflection.*
- 3. To develop critical voice in writing.*

1. To raise awareness of constructions and reconstructions of knowledge: individually and collaboratively.

Social constructivist approach

- Reality is socially and experientially constructed (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).
- Reality is pluralistic, plastic and emic 'the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it' (Schwandt, 1994).
- Expressed through language (Holquist 1990; Schwandt, 1994).

What is being constructed?

Knowledge consists of:

- Understanding the world
- Constructing concepts, meaning-making
- Reconstruction – new experiences
- Validity of knowledge is valid (Schwandt, 1994).

How is knowledge constructed?

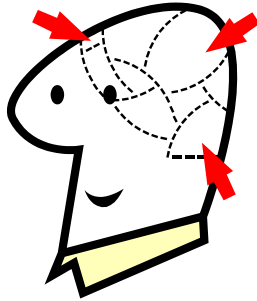
Actively engaging in dialogue

- Dialogue Holquist(Bakhtin, 1990).
- Critical dialectical discourse (Mezirow, 2008).
- Communicative learning (Habermas, 1981).
- Collaborative (Bruffe, 1999).

2. To raise awareness of critical self-reflection and critical reflection in collaborative dialogue

- Epistemic critical self-reflection of assumptions and (Mezirow, 1998) and justified propositions , group work (Mezirow, 2003).
- Social constructionist approach to reflexivity is relational in group work (Gergen and Gergen, 1991).
- Reflexivity and knowledge: deconstruction of knowledge through postmodernist/poststructural thinking (Fook, 2004).

The individual and collaborative dialogue



Constructivist pedagogies
(von Glaserfeld, 1995)

Construction and
reconstruction of reality

Critical self-reflection

Deconstruction

Collaborative dialogue

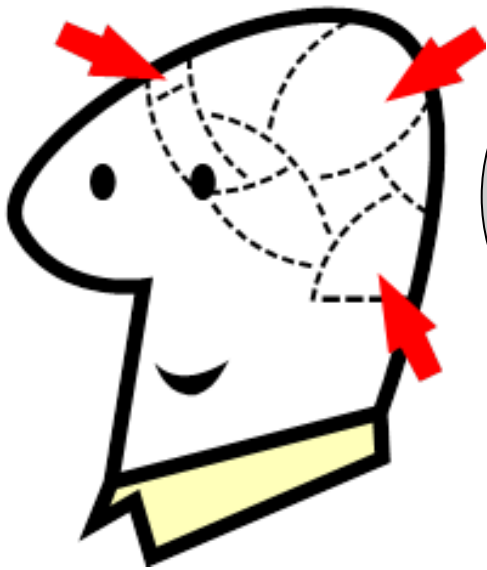


Pedagogy of critical voice

Construction of
knowledge
Critical self reflection

Critical friends:
Reciprocal
questioning

Development
of critical voice



3. *To develop critical voice in writing*



- Self representation (Ivanic, 1998).
- Stance towards author (Matusda and Tardy, 2007).
- Reader-writer relationship (Hyland, 2001).

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