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

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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).
References


