Supporting diverse first year undergraduates to develop academic writing practices: Starting at the end with critical thinking

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Aims of the presentation

 Sketch out our strategies for developing embedded academic writing strategies across a faculty – ongoing and provisional

Ask for your input - sharing experiences and strategies



Why worry about academic writing development?



 What actually constitutes 'good' writing is notoriously difficult to define (Lillis 2001, Leas and Street 1998)

• However, the power of the concept of 'good academic writing' is all pervasive in the academy (Lillis and Thomas 2003; Ivanic and Romy, 1994).

Academic writing development as a socially situated practice.

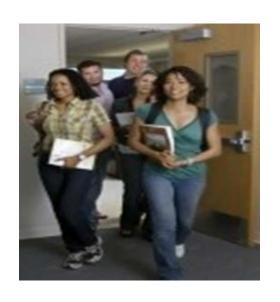
• Street's 'ideological' view of literacy argues writing has many different forms, and a variety of purposes (1984).

• Individuals are always active transformers of the literacies that they employ, not just passive recipients (Barton & Hamilton, 1998).

 Lecturers and students are engaged in an inherently dialectical relationship around writing in which both parties actively produce, consume and transform each others' writing (and that of others) (Maclure, 2006).

Setting the scene with student support around academic writing

- English context
- HEI traditions of support for academic
- writing
- BCU
- Faculty issues
- Student body/students needs in BCU





Making the transition to holistic/embedded academic writing development in higher education: our aims



To highlight academic writing and feedback strategies making them explicit to staff and first and year students

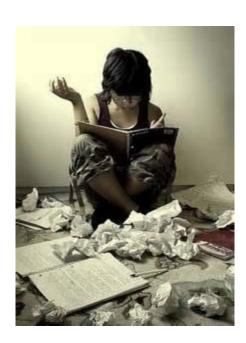
To move beyond the technical aspects of support to look at the whole academic writing process for first year students

To shift support into subject specialisms and

- out of deficit
- out of generic support strategies

Why is there a problem with first year academic writing?

- We ask first year students to engage with
- new kinds of writing



We are aware that first year students often need support with their writing

 We set assignments that assume students understand how we want them to write

Staff Issues



- Often not clear who should take responsibility for developing students' academic writing
- Lack of training and confidence
- The lecturers on the ground faced are with heavy workload
- How does one find the time to support students within subject specialist teaching
- Easier to pass students on to franchised/generic support

Institutional issues



 Senior managers need to think more critically about supporting teaching staff to support first year students' transitions into academic writing in higher education

 The institution needs to think critically about creating a new crioss university environment for support for first years students (and all students) which is:

- Dialogic
- Non-judgemental
- enabling



Our model of academic writing support



Collaborative approach Student and staff dialogue needs to be facilitated around **Academic writing**

- Drafting
- Assessment criteria
- Marking
- Feedback

Subject teaching teams need to have ownership of the whole process Whole faculty approach – students need to have parity of experiences

BUT HOW TO MAKE IT WORK !!



Edvoucation is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world an

3 Initiatives for 2014/15

Feedback questionnaire

Formative feedback project

Embedding academic writing Away days



Issues for discussion



- Does our setting raise issues similar to those you have experienced in your own institution?
- What strategies have you used to up the status and usefulness of a holistic/embedded approach to managing students' transitions into higher education
- How important is the language we use
- around academic writing?
- Formative feedback?



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