

Academic Practices & Communities of Practices: can academics open up the disciplines to new learners?

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Introduction

- Us & our teaching; community of practice
- Aims for today
 - Reflect on our disciplines and communities of practice and consider how students are invited in to these
 - Independent learning as be a troublesome concept
 - Alternatives to de-contextualised study skills
 - Academic practices within the discipline

Activity 1

- Are there ways of thinking, researching, writing and practicing which are peculiar to your discipline?
- If so, how are these conveyed to students?

Our Independent Learning Research: background

- Rejection of the 'study skills' module
- Unclear and over-ambitious expectations around independent learning
- Active learning and UPR enough?

Our Independent Learning Research: Conclusions

- Reject the use of independent learning, focus on facilitating learning
- Continue to use active learning approaches & unconditional positive regard for our students
- Valuing action research
- Working with students as co-researchers
- Continue to explore how we can help students to develop academic practices within their disciplines

Academic practices in Criminology: our pilot

- Is criminology a discipline?
- Theory and criminology
- Crime in the media
- Criminological practice
- Research and criminology
- Criminology as a multidisciplinary subject
- Academic writing about crime & criminology
- Academic sources [online] for criminology

Academic practices and communities of practice: the way forward for 21st Century academics ?

- Is the focus on academic practices within the discipline the right focus?
- How can we ask our learners about this?
- Have academic colleagues embraced these approaches? How did you achieve this?
- How do academic practices within the discipline link to threshold concepts? And communities of practice?
- Whose academic practices? Who decides? Can we agree? And are they fixed?

Implications for practice?

- Alternatives to the moribund study skills module
- Academic practices which we should initiate our UG students into and not wait until they are post graduates until we socialize them into the discipline; members of a community of a practice.
- Unmasks the 'hidden curriculum'
- But it's not unproblematic - Meyer and Land have noted the *"difficulty experienced by expert practitioners looking back across the threshold they have personally long since crossed and attempting to understand [...] the difficulties faced from [...] student perspectives"* (p 5, 2003)

Conclusions

- We will take UPR and active learning to our graves!
- The next stage of our academic practices research: event with criminology colleagues

- Please get in touch:
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Influential texts

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