WORKING OUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT: THE WHERE, HOW AND WHY AND DISCERNMENT OF EARLY INQUIRY THROUGH LITERATURE

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When considering students’ apparent reluctance to read, engage and show skills of discernment over their choice of literature there are a series of implicit, pedagogical expectations that spring readily to mind. To meet these expectations requires the practice of directed and self-directed reading, ability to source literature and gain knowledge and appreciation of the underlying concepts and principles. To manage expectations also requires the development of evaluation and interpretation within the given context all of which is critical to academic success (QAA 2011.)

Scholarship skills that promote research and inquiry are not always explicit to the student body, nor acknowledged by their lecturers. As such, it creates a gap between those who know and those who do not. This gap calls into question the need to re-think our pedagogical actions and ‘bring out the human elements of education and act in the best interest of students and their learning (Castle2006: 1095). The last four years have provided a recurring theme from our respective students and their voices that reflect, ‘They wished they had read more’. With this in mind the method of using a ‘hot seat’ original idea (Ginnis, 2002) commenced. This method was discussed and used with students across their undergraduate studies.

Lecturers demonstrated the sourcing of e-learning journals, strategies for reading with judiciousness when taking the ‘hot seat’ identified key themes, interesting tensions and or theories. The method justified the selection of text and either signposted the source and recommended the reading or disputed its worth. This whole process of taking the ‘hot seat’ lasted between 2 -5 minutes. The students when sitting on the hot seat were asked to cooperate, work agentively and with criticality. This process was underpinned by the ideology of both ‘caring and sharing knowledge’ and students in the ‘hot seat’ began to evaluate their reading; reveal their understanding and knowledge base; and provided indicators of positionality to the wider group.

The ‘initial wariness’ of process has proven to increase the quality, and quantity of literature read, it has reduced the demand for ‘directed reading’ and provides opportunity for peer review and critique

References

