Teaching doctoral writing as text work/identity work

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Metaphor for teaching writing: Text work and Identity work

Failure of self help books on doctoral writing: ‘text work’

What is ‘identity work’ in doctoral writing?

‘text-identity imbrication’ is completely ignored (Kamler and Thomson, 2006).
Text and identity work in a literature review

• Metaphors: courtship ritual; military strategy, extending the boundaries...
• Metalanguage: descriptive/critical analysis
• Macro: Structuring the text and variations possible
• Mezzo: Coherence and linking
• Micro: Words to critique texts
• Deckert (1993) surveyed plagiarism recognition among undergraduate Hong Kong students who use English as a Second Language. The methodology in the study involved the use of a questionnaire to derive a quantitative understanding of plagiarism in a private college in Hong Kong. 170 first-year and 41 third year students were surveyed to find out which group had a better understanding of the concept of plagiarism, whether the groups could recognise writing that was ‘plagiaristic by Western standards’. The results showed that the first year students had ‘little familiarity’ with the idea and could not identify plagiarised parts of texts whereas third year students did recognise plagiarism and could identify plagiarised texts. On the basis of this he suggested that first year students need ‘explicit orientation and training on how to avoid plagiarism when writing in a Western academic community’. (p.131).
The topic of plagiarism in the writing of English as a Second Language students has been studied for at least three decades. Deckert’s (1993) study is a typical example of the studies conducted in the 90s. The study is an important contribution to the literature on plagiarism despite its dubious conclusions. It seems to have polarised and helped the crystallisation of attitudes towards plagiarism by non-native writers of English. The methodology in the study involved the use of a questionnaire to derive a quantitative understanding of plagiarism in a private college in Hong Kong. 170 first-year and 41 third year students were surveyed to find out which group had a better understanding of the concept of plagiarism, whether the groups could recognise writing that was ‘plagiaristic by Western standards’. The results showed that the first year students had ‘little familiarity’ with the idea and could not identify plagiarised parts of texts whereas third year students did recognise plagiarism and could identify plagiarised texts. On the basis of this, he suggested that first year students need ‘explicit orientation and training on how to avoid plagiarism when writing in a Western academic community’ (ibid, p.131). On his own admission, the results of his inquiry had the potential to be flawed because, ‘the writing samples could have been too complex’ (ibid, p.142). Nevertheless, the vulnerability of the study lay more in the ‘unjustifiable assumptions’ that he made according to Pennycook (1994, p. 279). Pennycook’s (1994) critique about the untenable position of cultural essentialism that the study adopted resulted in a paradigm shift in the way not just plagiarism, but second language acquisition is viewed.