

An Ethic for Working with Difference as a Reflexive Academic

Reflexivity
Dialogue
Relationships

Seeking educational excellence can comprise many philosophies, practices and discourses. This is one example that centres on the importance of the academic's willingness to be reflexive about their work in the classroom. This reflexivity needs to be exercised from within an ethical rigour that I shall refer to as critical cross culturality. Here reflexivity goes beyond the popular notion of "reflection on practice" to include all types of self-disciplining, compassionate activism across differences of knowledge, power and identity. The moment by moment aim is to model, practice and learn a-new how to engage in non-exploitative relationships as the basis for enabling education for freedom (hooks, 1994).

A key part of this reflexivity is to de-centre those aspects of self as an academic that are counter-productive to dialogic relationships with students and colleagues. Dialogue is the opposite to exploitation and exclusion and is the space from within which educational excellence can be co-created.

Elements of dialogic practice are identified and some examples of what these might involve at a micro teaching level are presented. I hope this will demonstrate the power of embodied, emotional and contextually mediated knowledge and the power of collaborative relationships from within contested and uncertain academic spaces.

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