

Term paper on academic writing

Technology, Development



The term quality education has been currently been emphasized. This emphasis helps in improving the quality of education at all levels. It will be agreed that up to now most of the people in all walks of life view education as a perfect tool that enhances acquisition of knowledge. This is not different among the university students. Universities, being the highest institutions of learning, require the highest form of independence in thoughts and action. This autonomy is what is required to propel the current society into the future.

Education, which is as old as humanity, endeavors to bring some characteristic changes in the individual and to equip them with rationality that is required to solve arising problems. Education therefore is the the most important aspect of experience that aims at bringing formative effect on the mind, character and the general stance of individuals on certain important issues in society (Ryan, 2011, p. 16).

It is through education that society transmits its knowledge, skills, and values that are held dearly by the society to the younger generation and all members of the society as a whole. For proper acquisition of the required knowledge and skills, teachers direct the education of students. At university level the shift rather moves from the teacher centered approach to the student centred approach geared at ensuring that the individual is able to apply the gained knowledge and solve societal issues that are relevant to their lives.

This therefore brings in the aspect of critical thinking. From its simplest understanding, it involves questioning of ideas based on a given systematic analysis of certain logics. To some extent it revolves around assessment of

statements. Critical thinking is a decision making process that interrogates information to evaluate it and judge whether it is true or false, and whether it should be believed or not. Also how one should act upon it.

This kind of thinking is high quality as it involves thinking about thinking in search of a deeper understanding of things. In education critical thinking involves active participation of the learner in a bid to understand the ideas and principles related to their study. It is in this way that critical thinking in itself adds quality to education, mostly at the university level.

This kind of thinking is intertwined- meaning that it is a back and forth kind of thinking. As one is faced with a problem they think about it and further evaluate if the solution identified is best suited for the problem. This in essence brings out the more comprehensive aspect of a disciplined process of thinking which involves actively and skillfully conceptualization, application, and evaluating information gathered. The information can be from our observation, experiences, reflections, reasoning, or as a result of communication.

At the university level critical thinking would require ones ability to question their own ideas so as to avoid errors in thought. Thinking might be criticized based on the fact that there is no enough information, important information at times can be withheld, or on the other hand the information may not be known. In addition unjustified inferences and use of inappropriate concepts can be another hindrance. Thinking at times can be unclear, inaccurate, irrelevant, and illogical. Due to ignorance it may also lead to a misplaced application of the learned skills of thinking.

Proper evaluation of ones ideas therefore does not only improve the ability

to come up with better solutions to certain academic issues but also necessitates creativity- this is the main aspect of concern in the current world. Unless such students learn how to generate ideas and evaluate them into some sensible and practical manner it becomes very difficult to reach levels of academic success which society can appreciate in terms of new mechanisms and strategies of solving their problems.

It has been clearly shown that range of learning and teaching approaches have been found that might be employed in order to help develop students' learning skills and develop mental abilities at the university level while at the same time enhance high academic standards in these institutions (Boud, 1993, p. 56).

At the university level of education the most important critical aspect to be developed is the ability to exercise independent learning, reading and writing in addition to the development of critical thinking in one thinking skills. These skills can be developed by using various strategies that will be geared at bringing out a different person all together.

For any academic course where the student is given an opportunity to negotiate or give a view on the contents of the study or the nature of the teaching sessions or learning material goes along way in offering the student the required independence and appreciation of learning at such a level.

However due to the constraints within the syllabus or program of study such sentiments to some extent are brushed away (Brook, Hunt and Hughes, 1994, p. 38). In order to enhance learning the university administration should be in apposition to develop flexible modules that would allow the views of the students to be accommodated.

Percy, Ramsden and Lewin (2001, p. 10) in their definition of content literacy explained that it is the ability to use reading and writing in order to acquire new content in any given discipline. To enhance ability of this kind it encompasses general literacy skills. Those of understanding the meaning of the text, locating the main focus point in the text and other aspects related to the same.

To increase the development of good reading skills it requires one to learn to read and re-read again in order to comprehend. Reading while isolating the key points and issues and at the same time being critical is the most important strategy that an individual can put in place to ensure and enhance proper reading skills. A good reader will always distinguish the purpose of reading that is is it for academic purpose or it it reading as form of leisure (Brinks, 2010, p. 27).

The mere fact of identifying these will depict different environmental settings geared at the purpose of the reading. Good reading practices involves as you read within the reading try to put your mind to recall what the concepts that are involved. This enhances one's memory and the ability to recall in the near future. At the university level to enhance independence in thinking, one's ideas should be respected and the person given ample time to explain the points that he or she postulates. This hence can be analysed and evaluated to know there is illogical connection before such ideas are disregarded.

Increased interaction at the university level, enhances cooperation and academic associations inform of group works. Certain concepts of education learned in group works are very hard to be forgotten. Concentrated efforts

by students to receive guidance and training in their respective programs and other relevant areas pertaining to proposal development , data collection and presentation techniques has offered an upperhand opportunity to enhance independence at the university level.

Once the group agrees on the deadline of finishing some of the assignments they divide the work and each individual works individually and upon approval of every work of each member it can be combined. Within the groups the members who are involved also allow the aspect of divergent ideas which forms the basis for critical and creative thinking as a result it enhances this important quality that later becomes an important tool in acquisition of knowledge and skills at such a level (Twardy, 2000, p. 11).

At the university in a bid to develop creativity and improvement in writing the university administration has been to an extent organizing school competition and the best students who emerge from such competitions acknowledged. This has motivated many more and has been a good source of improved writing skills among different students.

Given that some of the motivational aspects put in place by the university administration have been applauded by many students, it still remains that awarding of scholarships to students enables reading and criticality to be enhanced among the university students (Paul and Elder, 2002, p. 69).

Awarding of best students scholarships has seen an emergence of academicians who are intellectual enough to address the challenges of the current world.

Nightingale and O'Neil (1994, p. 43) argued that in order to enhance learning the teachers should appreciate and encourage learners to be self-reliant and

establish independent modes of learning. Whereby, one of the projects would aim at designing independent learning opportunities

Science and technology, for some time now has experienced drastic change over time and learners more so at the university level need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge. This is significant to counteract this explosion of knowledge that is posing higher literacy demands.

According to Boud (1988, p. 87), formal education cannot be expected to offer one with enough knowledge to last for a life time; teachers have turned their attention to helping learners to develop knowledge and skills suited for independent learning. One of the ways of promoting this development is through teaching reading in content areas, with the primary purpose of helping learners acquire the necessary strategies to use during reading. This is in order to acquire new knowledge from the necessary materials, whether books or electronic media required in their subjects

Independent study and reading capabilities is simply students working on their own. This is because reading is efficient when students have an active role to play forming a significant part in choosing their own direction, discovering their own learning potential and resources. Also in deciding their best suited own course of action and reflecting on the possible outcome of their involvement in the whole process.

In conclusion if students have to develop the essential skills required in the enhancement of university knowledge and academic competence, then all the efforts have to be geared towards letting the student be actively involved and to a large extent left to think autonomously. Through well organised group works and other incentive modes of encouraging studies at

the university level it would be better to track creativity earlier and see new ways of solving the current global problems through innovative ways.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Boud, D. (1988). *Developing Student Autonomy in Learning*. London: Kogan.

Brink, R. (2010). *Critical Thinking for Students*. New Jersey: Wiley

Brook, I. Hunt, J. and Hughes, P. (1994). *Constraints on Student Centred learning Practices*. Oxford: OUP

Nightingale, P. and O'Neil, M. (1994). *Achieving Quality Learning in Higher Education*. London: Kogan Page.

Paul, R. and Elder, L. (2002). *Critical Thinking: Tools for taking charge of your professional and personal life*. Boston: FT Press

Percy, K. Ramsden, P. and Lewin, J. (2001). *Independent Study: Two Examples from English Higher Education*. Buckingham: Society for Research.

Ryan, V. (2011). *Beyond Feelings*. New Jersey: McGraw-Hill.

Twardy, R. (2000). *Argument Maps Improve Critical Thinking*. *Teaching Philosophy*, 27 (2), pp. 9-13.