

An exploration of the links between confidence, resilience and the uptake of academic literacy support sessions on an undergraduate degree programme

As the diversity of the student body has increased, the work of academics such as Reay (2003; Reay et al., 2005) suggest that students from so-called 'non-traditional' backgrounds can experience significant difficulty in accessing the culture of higher education, which can be further reinforced by a 'invisible pedagogic practices' (Tapp, 2015) which the student needs to access knowledge and learning at this level. Tapp's (2015: 714) suggests that, who asserted that the issue of traditions such as those found in universities which are 'reified' such as 'critical analysis' and 'argument' "can never adequately represent the practice to which they refer". Thus, Shields (2015) argues that terms such as 'analysis' aren't enough, and that these must be broken down to give students feedback which is useful to them.

Lea and Street (1998) suggest that 'literacy' is as much a social practice as it is a set of applied skills. Thus, 'academic literacy' should constitute both study skills and academic socialisation; encompassing the cultural and social dimensions of academic life. This suggests that stand-alone support for 'study skills' which is decontextualized from the holistic university experience could be counterproductive to those students who already feel overwhelmed and incapable of achieving, as it reinforces the idea that they are in deficit, rather than the institution's cultural practices (Hallett, 2013).

The 'ARC' Programme, delivered alongside one undergraduate degree programme at Edge Hill University, aims to develop the Achievement, Resilience and Confidence (ARC) of students on the degree programme by delivering a suite of sessions which address the principle skills of academic writing, reading, constructing an argument, as well as addressing common barriers to achievement such as stress. Of interest for this study, is what the factors are that contribute to building resilience and confidence and those that mitigate against it. This presentation will present findings of a research project evaluating the efficacy of an intervention embedded into an undergraduate academic programme to support the academic socialisation of students into the higher education community.

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