
The Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Needs of English for Academic Purposes Practitioners (EAP) who Deliver Academic Literacies to students with Specific Learning Differences (SpLDs)

TRACEY CELESTIN

DSB 3.10 - 14:45

Although it is difficult to pinpoint an exact time when learning support was created to assist students in higher education, it has been at the forefront since the last decade to assist with student learning. Therefore, it has increasingly added value to those that need assistance covering areas critical thinking and reflective writing. Subsequently EAP Practitioners have a significant role as they provide students with learning aids to develop their academic literacies (Cunningham:2015, 30-31). For this talk I would like to present how provisions are implemented through continuous professional development to cater for EAP staff. More so, the key theme of the presentation will be to focus on how that support is provided to students with specific learning differences (SpLDs).

In other research it has identified that there is a shift regarding how an inclusive learning environment can contribute towards this development partly to changes with disability funding. In doing so students with SpLDs are relying more on professional services to obtain help with their studies from those who are not qualified with any disability qualifications. In that instances students are either being signposted from their lecturers, disability and dyslexia support (DDS) or self-directed to obtain academic literacy guidance (Liasidou, 2015: 33).

Recent changes to the Disability Funding Allowance has made higher education providers review whether staff are equipped in the way they should be to provide learning support to all students. Fundamentally due to these challenges there has been a shift in how guidance is implemented (Student Finance, 2016). This will also coincide with my paper as I will be focusing on how EAP departments like the ones I currently work for provide support to students within professional services. The literature provides an avenue that is connected

to learning support as I will be investigating their relationship with Disability and Dyslexia Services (DDS) departments when students are in need of guidance to assist with their progression.

Reflection has also been referred to as conducive to the development of staff working in professional services, especially for those within learning support. This also draws reference to the notion of a strong critical undercurrent that centres its interests to the student experience but does not equally focus on continuous professional development of staff. More so in relation to best practice and sharing of ideas across UK universities (Gourlay and Oliver: 2017, 28-29). My presentation will draw links to this study as it also encourages more proficient learner autonomy to adapt a self-help approach. I intend to explore this by bearing in mind that students have individual learning needs. Consequently, this paper will evaluate which areas are relevant to catering for the needs of EAP staff in order to assist students with SpLDs UK universities.