

How the process of doctoral enquiry developed my openness and criticality

Abstract

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In my recently concluded doctoral enquiry I evaluate and make public nine years of my educational practice at Strathmore University (Kenya). My research focuses on the process of transformation in myself and others through the development of my teaching and learning methods and fostering positive educational relationships with those around me.

In this paper I will show how the process of my doctoral research helped me to develop my openness to critical engagement with my own ideas and those of others. This allowed me to identify the deeper values underlying my practice and my relations with students and colleagues. Simultaneously I clarified the historical dimension of the evolution of these values.

In this contribution I will highlight some key features that enabled me to evaluate my doctoral research and make it public. I will refer to elements which are normal within this context, but which require one to foster openness to sharing their ideas by interacting with and learning from others. For example, the very first feedback I received from my potential supervisor opened up a totally new horizon for my doctoral enquiry. It also required me to engage in a critically intellectual mind shift to adjust to the proposal. Other contributors to developing my openness and criticality were the process of self-reflection; on-going recourse to student feedback; the transfer paper and oral exam; the use of video and photos to evaluate myself in the classroom; critical analysis of my findings using philosophical and theological perspectives; presentation of my research at various conferences; the oral defence of my final dissertation, etc.

My paper will illustrate how I held myself accountable for my doctoral enquiry by evaluating and making it public through openness to and critical engagement with others.

References:

Dean, C. 2013. "Creating a spiration of love in freedom for personal growth at Strathmore University (Kenya)". Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Available from: <http://doras.dcu.ie/19418/>.