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Abstract

In this paper, we shed light on the evolution of a framework for quality within University College Cork, Ireland amid a rapidly changing terrain of higher education globally. We move beyond a culture of compliance and accountability to analyze what happens when students (undergraduate and post graduate) are positioned in the higher education transitional space that requires the crossing of thresholds. A liminal space (Turner, 1969) is a transformative state in the process of learning in which there is an epistemological reformulation of a students' meaning frame and an ontological or subjective shift. This 'betwixt and between space' can be experienced as vulnerable but also as pregnant with opportunities for transformation and empowerment. Drawing on student perspectives and using the anthropological concept of 'liminality' we illustrate how students, with the help of both

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formal institutional strategies and less formal experiences, negotiate this higher education space. We explore the extent to which innovative strategies create 'safe places' that host ambiguity, where tension is flagged and ameliorated, and which encourage freedom provide opportunities to see and test alternative textings of reality (Brueggemann, 1995). This paper brings together micro student experience in higher education and the theory of threshold concepts and liminality. It provides a lens through which to further explore and develop institutional approaches and sector wide best practice that facilitates and supports a high quality student experience. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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