COULD DO BETTER? THINKING CRITICALLY ABOUT ASSESSMENT PRACTICES AND PROCESSES IN THE MARKETISED UNIVERSITY

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Outline of Session

• Context
• Case study
• The Critically Thinking Leader modules
• Patchwork text principles
• Practicalities and activity
• Would it work for you?
Context

- Marketised Public Sector
- Greater accountability
- Targeted austerity
- Deregulation and fragmentation
- Greater competition
- Commodification of social goods
- Privileging of public confidence measures
Case Study - BA (Hons) Health and Social Care Leadership and Management

- Part-time provision
- Mainly those in junior/mid management roles in NHS, Social Care, 3rd sector
- High proportion in 'admin' roles
- 70/30 split women to men
- 2 years design phase
- Draws upon previous good practice
- Input by employers, peers, SSC, students
Case Study: Competing Tensions?

- Employer expectations
  - Value for money
  - Less direct contact time
  - Skills based
  - Directly applicable
  - Applied contractualism
  - Measurable impact
- Learner expectations
  - Personal development
  - Career enhancement
  - Job satisfaction
  - Applicability
  - Entitlement as worker not student
  - Performance anxiety
Critically Thinking Leader Modules

- Level 5 linked to personal effectiveness
- Level 6 linked to organisational improvement
- Run across the length of each level (normally 18 months)
- Underpinned by: action learning ethos; assessment for learning principles; collaborative peer engagement and scrutiny; co-creating improvement plans
- Learners and tutor negotiate justified threshold evidence
- Content includes: patchwork text principles, engagement processes, CT concepts, knowledge construction, evidence-based decision making & assumptions, wicked problems, improvement planning models
Patchwork Text (PT) Principles

• Resolves polarities between the essay & reflection
• Integral to development of the 'Critical Being' (Barnett, 1997) & assumes desirability
• PT encourages contrasting way of understanding
• Helps learners to integrate diverse elements & grasp emergent structures
• Helps to construct meaning rather than mastering information
• Positions acquisition of knowledge as process of self-exploration and self-questioning
Patchwork Text Practicalities

- Learners collect/create relevant artefacts & objects (e.g. poem, critical incident analysis, story, feedback) and stitch meaning together
- In CT modules, learners use episodes from assessment to create an ongoing 'meta patchwork text' which can be poignant, informative, challenging
- Scrutiny by continuous peer & tutor review
- Far less daunting as final assessment at each level
- As W-I-P, far less threatening in terms of feedback
- Promotes a much wider representation of understanding their development within context
Your Task - Will it Work for You?

• Using the worked example provided, see if you can think of opportunities within your own subject / curricular area for this way of assessing learning
• Maybe try your own PT by considering how you might stitch together elements of learning from this Conference
• What are the pitfalls and possibilities?

Key References: