Rebels with a cause – can we disrupt assessment practice in professional education?

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Professional education allows learners to meet the required standards of proficiency in their chosen future profession, for example as a nurse, social worker or teacher. Therefore, much of the content and associated proficiencies are defined by the relevant professional body. In this session, we will share our experiences of developing the assessment strategy for Pre-registration Nursing programmes at the University of Central Lancashire and initiate round table discussions on disruptive innovation of assessment practice.

Our newly designed programme reflects an active learning approach in which students are engaged in meaningful activity to put them at the centre of their own learning. Assessment for/as learning rather than merely testing memory (Medland, 2016) is a key feature of this design and has required us to reflect on what the future nurse will be required to do in a professional context.

To develop the assessment strategy, we have intensively engaged with a wide range of students, staff, patients and user/carers which has been a messy complex process. By bringing a range of stakeholder groups together to make collective decisions, tensions will inevitably surface and require attention to resolve (Lock et al., 2018). We have taken a coaching, co-creative approach to inspire the culture shift from traditional to contemporary approaches to learning and teaching. As Flavin and Quintero (2018) demonstrate in their strategy review, universities are "more likely to pursue sustaining or efficiency than disruptive innovation". This is similarly true for professional bodies therefore creating a range of flexible, inclusive assessments has challenged us to find and walk the line between creativity and constraints.

We are optimistic that the resulting authentic assessments will prepare graduates for working and living in their global, digitally enabled future. We also believe this change process has increased staff confidence and capability in disrupting assessment practice.

Flavin, M., & Quintero, V. (2018). UK higher education institutions' technology-enhanced learning strategies from the perspective of disruptive innovation.*Research in Learning Technology, 26*.

Lock, J., Kim, B., Koh, K., & Wilcox, G. (2018). Navigating the Tensions of Innovative Assessment and Pedagogy in Higher Education. The Canadian Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 9 (1)

Medland, E. (2016) Assessment in higher education: drivers, barriers and directions for change in the UK, Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 41:1, 81-96.