NATIONAL RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL) CONFERENCE:

Tried and tested, tools, templates

23th – 26th February 2014

Book of abstracts
National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Conference:
Tried and tested, tools, templates

23th – 26th February 2014

Book of abstracts
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Foreword

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is mandated to develop after consultation with the Quality Councils, policy and criteria for assessment, the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2008). This work forms a key part of the development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) – the integrated system for education, training, development and work – in South Africa. RPL in particular, has considerable potential to contribute towards the desired universal access and redress needed.

The well-supported National RPL Conference: Building and expanding existing islands of excellent practice hosted by SAQA in February 2011 was a key milestone in work relating to the RPL part of this mandate, drawing as it did on RPL policy and practice then to date, and bringing together diverse representatives of the whole education and training system to address challenges relating to ‘going to scale’ with RPL in South Africa. The Resolution and Working Document on RPL was an important output from this event; and much has been accomplished in line with this resolution and working document since 2011. Related policy development, organisational RPL implementation, and Ministerial RPL work are the main associated achievements.

In the 2011-2013 period SAQA revised the national RPL policy: the Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2013) is based on extensive research and wide consultation across all sectors making up the South African education and training system. SAQA's RPL Reference Group, a group of 18 representatives from the two education departments, three Quality Councils, public and private Higher Education and Training and Further Education and Training sectors, organised labour, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and other statutory bodies – elected at the 2011 National RPL Conference and via democratic process thereafter – played a key role in this work.

Following direction in the Working Document on RPL SAQA is in the process of assisting RPL implementation in over 20 sectors, including those for Agricultural workers, auto-motor artisans, correctional services, the Education and Labour Relations Council (ELRC), e-TV, Game Rangers, artisans in the Marine Industry (MIASA), medical laboratory scientists, the National Artisan Moderation Body (NAMB), Rand Water, the Road Traffic Management Corporation, the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), the South African Police Services (SAPS), SAQA itself, and the Departments of Defence (DoD), Social Development (DSD), Public Service Administration (DPSA), and Transport (DoT), and others. These initiatives have potential to reach over 200,000 people.

SAQA has worked closely with the Ministerial RPL Task Team since it was tasked by the Minister of Higher Education and Training in 2011, to address key challenges in the movement towards a national RPL system in the country. This work culminated in the National Strategy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

It is intended that the National RPL Conference: Tried and tested, tools, templates will continue this important work in three ways. First, the conference will be used to build common understandings around the multi-faceted nature of RPL and how it works. These understandings were clarified by SAQA’s RPL Reference Group in the course of its work, and will be work-shopped on the first day of the conference. Second, the conference is for sharing successful process models, tools and templates; and models for resourcing and quality assuring RPL. Third – the use of RPL in all sectors, including in Higher Education and Training (HET), in Further Education and Training (FET), for artisans, below NQF Level 1, and across a very wide range of occupations, will be demonstrated.
It is hoped that the conference will make clear, the how-to-details of RPL implementation, for the benefit of learners and workers of all ages, from all social groups, and in all economic and developmental sectors.

Mr Joe Samuels
Chief Executive Officer, SAQA

References


Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a widely known concept in South Africa. Part of the evidence of this reality is that the work of over 100 RPL researchers and over 250 RPL practitioners exists and is known to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Whilst it cannot be said yet, that the national system for RPL in the country is fully operational, great strides are being made in that direction and such a system has at least partly been established. Several milestones can be identified.

An early milestone was the development of Policy for RPL in the Context of the South African National Qualifications Framework (SAQA, 2002) and Criteria and Guidelines for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2003). More recent milestones include an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009) study which found islands of excellent practice scattered throughout the country, and placing South Africa in a very small cluster of countries at the fifth of seven levels towards establishing a national RPL system. The National RPL Conference: Building and expanding existing islands of excellent practice hosted by SAQA in 2011 and attended by over 350 delegates was designed to address challenges identified a couple of months prior to it, relating to resourcing, effective delivery and quality assurance of RPL. Particular conference outputs, namely the Resolution and Working Document on RPL comprise key steps towards the development of a national RPL system in the country as they encompass the views of those present, and provide clear pointers for the way forward in this regard.

Since the National RPL Conference of 2011, the National Policy for the Implementation of RPL (SAQA, 2013) was developed in a democratic process; over 20 organisational RPL initiatives with potential to reach over 200,000 individuals were commenced; all individuals approaching SAQA for RPL-related assistance were also assisted. Following the Resolution of the National RPL Conference of 2011, a Ministerial RPL Task Team was created. This Task Team investigated known challenges in the development towards a national RPL system, and developed their report A National Strategy for RPL (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). All of these developments are clear signs of development of a national RPL system in South Africa.

The National RPL Conference: Tried and tested, tools, templates (RPL2014) seeks to:

- build common understandings around RPL, including understanding the National Policy for Implementing RPL and strategies towards South Africa’s national RPL system, and RPL policy implementation;
- share best RPL practices including effective RPL process models, effective tools and templates, and models for resourcing RPL and quality assurance; and
- demonstrate the use of RPL at all National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels including below NQF Level 1.

To this end, the RPL2014 Organising Team has invited RPL researchers and practitioners from across the country and beyond to come and along and share with conference delegates, their successful RPL initiatives, methods, process models, tools and templates. An enthusiastic and generous response resulted in the over 70 abstracts in this book. Plenary conference sessions cover developments towards the national RPL system; understandings of RPL; snapshots from other countries; a national across-sectors RPL research project, and national RPL initiatives. There will be three breakaways as follows:

Breakaway 1: Implementing RPL in General/ Further Education and Training/ below NQF Level 1

Breakaway 2: Implementing RPL in Higher Education and Training

Breakaway 3: Implementing RPL in the workplace
The abstracts in this book have been organised according to plenary and breakaway sessions, and within these sub-sections, alphabetically by author. For the reader’s convenience the abstracts are also listed by conference session at the start of the book, and alphabetically by author surname at the end of the book. Lists of participating organisations and acronyms are included amongst the front sections of the book.

The RPL2014 Organising Team welcomes you to the National RPL Conference: Tried and tested, tools, templates – we trust that you will enjoy the presentations and find them worthwhile. We also hope that you will contribute to the discussions towards expanding lessons learned regarding RPL thus far. We encourage you to expand your RPL networks in usual and unusual ways, and to come forward with constructive suggestions. We look forward to engaging with you at the conference!

Heidi Bolton,
Director: Research, SAQA

References


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The reader is asked to note that when this book was submitted for printing, the release of the White Paper on Post School Education and Training (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013) was imminent. Any terminology in this book that becomes out of date in relation to this White Paper will be updated in future editions of the book.
# List of acronyms and abbreviations

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<td>ABET</td>
<td>Adult Basic Education and Training</td>
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<td>ACFE</td>
<td>Adult Community and Further Education Board of Victoria</td>
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<td>AgriSETA</td>
<td>Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>AiGroup</td>
<td>Australian Industry Group</td>
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<td>ALLI</td>
<td>African Lifelong Learning Initiative</td>
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<td>APL</td>
<td>Accreditation of Prior Learning</td>
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<td>APMSA</td>
<td>Association for Project Management South Africa</td>
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<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>ARPL</td>
<td>Artisan Recognition of Prior learning</td>
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<td>ATCL</td>
<td>Associate Trinity College London</td>
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<td>BANKSETA</td>
<td>Bank Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>CAT</td>
<td>Credit Accumulation and Transfer</td>
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<td>CATHSSETA</td>
<td>Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>CBET</td>
<td>Competency-Based Education and Training</td>
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<td>CEPD</td>
<td>Centre for Education Policy Development</td>
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<td>CHE</td>
<td>Council on Higher Education</td>
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<td>CoP</td>
<td>Community of Practice</td>
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<td>CPUT</td>
<td>Cape Peninsula University of Technology</td>
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<td>DBE</td>
<td>Department of Basic Education</td>
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<td>DBSA</td>
<td>Development Bank of South Africa</td>
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<td>DHET</td>
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<td>Department of Transport</td>
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<td>Department of Public Service Administration</td>
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<td>Da Vinci Institute</td>
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<td>External Integrated Summative Assessment</td>
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<td>Education and Labour Relations Council</td>
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<td>Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>Extended Public Works Programme</td>
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<td>ETD</td>
<td>Education, Training and Development</td>
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<td>ETDP SETA</td>
<td>Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>e.tv</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>FETI</td>
<td>Further Education and Training Institute</td>
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<td>GED</td>
<td>General Education Development</td>
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<td>GFETQSF</td>
<td>General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework</td>
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<td>GIZ</td>
<td>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zuzammenarbeit</td>
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<td>HELM</td>
<td>Higher Education Leadership and Management</td>
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<td>ICCE</td>
<td>International Council for Coaching Excellence</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organisation</td>
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<td>INSETA</td>
<td>Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>IPMA</td>
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<td>International Standards Organisation</td>
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<td>Local Economic Development Programme</td>
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<td>Long Term Coach Development</td>
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<td>NAMB</td>
<td>National Artisan Moderation Body</td>
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<td>NASCA</td>
<td>National Senior Certificate for Adults</td>
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<td>NCB</td>
<td>National Competence Standard</td>
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<td>NLRD</td>
<td>National Learners’ Records Database</td>
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<td>NQF</td>
<td>National Qualifications Framework</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<td>SASCOC</td>
<td>South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee</td>
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<td>SDA</td>
<td>Skills Development Act</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<td>W&amp;R SETA</td>
<td>Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>WIO-COMPAS</td>
<td>Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals</td>
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<td>WSU</td>
<td>Walter Sisulu University</td>
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Adult Community and Further Education Board of Victoria (ACFE)
African Lifelong Learning Initiative (ALLI)
Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSETA)
Anderson College
Association for Project Management South Africa Certification Body (APMSA)
Australian Industry Group (AiGroup)
Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)
Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD)
Chartall Business College
Da Vinci Institute (DVI)
Department of Basic Education (DBE)
Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)
Department of Social Development (DSD)
Deloitte Consulting (Pty) Ltd
Dutch Knowledge Centre for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)
Empire State College - State University of New York, United States of America
Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA)
Edutel
Further Education and Training Institute (FETI)
Guest Resource Services
INDLELA Trade Test Centre
Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority (INSETA)
International Project Management Association (IPMA)
Intertrain Consulting
iSeleSele Property Academy
Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA)
Mentornet
Namibia Training Authority
PiCompany South Africa
Qualifications Framework Secretariat, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR)
Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
Rhodes University (RU)
Seychelles Qualifications Authority
Southern African Federation of Engineering Organisations (SAFEO)
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC)
Thompson Rivers University, Canada
Tshwane University of Technology (TUT)
Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training
University of Cape Town (UCT)
University of Fort Hare (UFH)
University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)
University of Limpopo (UL)
University of Pretoria (UP)
University of South Africa (UNISA)
University of the Free State (UFS)
University of the Western Cape (UWC)
University of Venda (UNIVEN)
University of Zululand (UZ)
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Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA)
Workers’ College (WC)
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ABSTRACTS
Section 1:
Abstracts for keynotes
Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), skills development, access and redress

Mr Joe Samuels,
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

This presentation focuses on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), articulation in the education and training system, and skills development in South Africa. It has three components. Firstly, it covers RPL achievements in the country, noting progress reported and recommendations made at the National Skills Conference 2011 and the National RPL Conference 2011 as points of reference. It goes on to present important RPL developments since 2011, including plans for RPL policy implementation going forward. Key RPL-related developments include the establishment and work of a Ministerial Task Team for RPL, a national RPL Reference Group which assisted SAQA with the revision of national RPL policy, and considerable implementation of RPL policy with potential to reach over 200,000 candidates. Secondly, the presentation notes milestones in the movement of the country towards a fully integrated system for education and training. Two of the three National Qualifications Framework (NQF) sub-frameworks have been determined, the third is in the process of being finalised and there has been much joint work across all three sub-frameworks. The article closes by pointing to the relevance of these developments for access and progression, redress, and quality in the system for education and training in South Africa.

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Summary

A national strategy for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Ms Michelle Buchler,
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At the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) conference in 2011 organised by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), a key recommendation to the Minister of Higher Education and Training was that he establish a Ministerial Task Team to consider the development of a national strategy for the implementation of RPL. Such a Task Team was established in December 2011, and its report was released for public comment in June 2013 (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013).

A plenary session near the start of the conference will consider the key recommendations for the proposed National RPL Strategy, as well as key developments since the release of the Task Team’s report.

This opening plenary session will be referred to again near the end of the conference in order to reflect holistically on key and critical issues emerging from the conference proceedings as these issues may impact on the finalisation of the national strategy for the implementation of RPL. The conference recommendations will be shared with the Ministry of Higher Education and Training.

Reference


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Abstract

What do we mean by `recognition' in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)? Different understandings and different purposes between stakeholders

Dr Elana Michelson,
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While many practical difficulties complicate cooperative projects in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), one crucial issue is differing understandings by different stakeholders of the meaning and purpose of RPL. Foundational statements such as the assertion that RPL is meant to “open doors of opportunity for people whose academic or career paths have been needlessly blocked because their prior learning has not been assessed and certified” (Republic of South Africa, 1995) can be variously interpreted as promoting RPL as a mechanism for individual mobility or as a mechanism for collective social transformation. Even within the union movement in South Africa of whose vision RPL was originally part, the question of what ‘recognition’ means is not a simple one.

This session will focus, first, on the notion of “recognition” itself, including a discussion of the moral and psychological importance of recognition and an exploration of what Miranda Fricker (2007) calls epistemic injustice, that is, social practices that deny people full recognition of their humanity by undervaluing their knowledge and skills. It will include discussion and small group exercises designed to give participants an opportunity to explore their own understandings of the notion of “recognition” and their beliefs concerning the relationship between social equality, the assessment of prior learning, and the dignity of all work.

As a way to focus discussion and engage participants, the session will focus on four interrelated questions. While these questions are both philosophically challenging and politically contentious, they are foundational to individual and organisational understanding of RPL and the differences of opinions among stakeholders. A central purpose of this session is to clarify individual positions and come to an understanding of why different stakeholders often find themselves working at cross-purposes.

The four questions are listed here, with clarifications:

• What is meant by “recognition” in RPL?

The word “recognition” is ambiguous in English; it can mean, to identify something as similar to something or as already known’ or ‘to grant someone equal human and social status.’ What, then, is the relationship between those two definitions, and why does that matter for RPL?

• Can RPL be viewed as a specific practice distinct from the struggle against other forms of social inequity and cultural disrespect?

Mainstream culture typically reflects an unequal valuing of different types of work and different ways of knowing. That form of inequality consistently parallels inequalities of class, gender, and race. What do different understandings of RPL convey about such value judgments? How do RPL practices reflect the ways in which specific human traits and abilities are seen, measured, and rewarded? How can RPL seek to maintain or challenge the cultural mis-valuing of individuals and groups?

• What is the relationship of the struggle for “recognition” to the struggle for “redistribution”?
If the struggle for “recognition” is broadly understood to include demands for social and cultural respect and the struggle for “redistribution” to involve the allocation of material goods, how does RPL bring the two together? How do the two struggles interweave (Fraser and Honeth, 2003)? How do different stakeholders understand the relationship? What should the relationship be?

- Should “recognition” be understood as being individual or collective?

As conventionally understood, RPL assesses the informal learning of individuals on a case-by-case basis. This is problematic in a context such as South Africa, where RPL must be understood as an attempt to redress, not only the mis-valuing of individuals, but systemic social bias and inequity. How might RPL be understood as a demand, not only for the upgrading of jobs and wages based on individual achievement, but for the redressing of the collective disparagement of workers as the bearers of knowledge and expertise?

Through presentation, debate, and discussion, this session attempts to deepen understandings of RPL, clarify the differences among stakeholders, and promote more effective advocacy for RPL for South African workers.

References


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Section 2:

Abstracts for plenary presentations for Conference Sessions 3 - 6
Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for workers and beyond: the coordination of strategic RPL projects by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) – taking RPL to scale through adequate resourcing, effective delivery, and quality assurance

Dr James Keevy,
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Dr Heidi Bolton,
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Dr Loffie Naudé,
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Ms Shirley Lloyd,
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

The coordination of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in South Africa needs to be approached in a systematic manner, and needs to be adequately resourced if it is to be successful. Since the introduction of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa in 1998, RPL has received a lot of attention; by 2009 ‘scattered islands’ of excellent practice had been achieved (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 2009).

As part of the ongoing work towards a national RPL system of high quality in the country, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has developed enabling national policy for the implementation of RPL. The first such policy (SAQA, 2002) with its supporting criteria and guidelines (SAQA, 2003), was widely implemented across most education and training sectors in South Africa. Based on the associated experience, practice and research over the past 10-15 years, extensive sharing of work and consultation, and drawing on pioneering research into an inclusive RPL model conducted within a SAQA-University of the Western Cape (UWC) research partnership, this RPL policy has been revised (SAQA, 2013). Key priorities in the new National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning include common understandings of RPL – which has varied forms and purposes – roles and responsibilities for all RPL stakeholders, and national coordination of RPL. Related developments include the creation and work of a Ministerial RPL Task Team, the work of which led to development of a National Implementation Strategy for RPL. The report of the Task Team, completed in January 2013, makes the case for a state- and employer-driven funding and resourcing model for RPL, as well as a National RPL Institute that will be involved in a range of coordinating activities (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2013).

During this period of renewed attention on RPL, SAQA has been approached by a range of constituencies to support the implementation of RPL in key sectors. Examples of sectors include agriculture, auto-motor artisans, community development, policing, correctional services, defence, public service, transport, the Education and Labour Relations Council, marine industry artisans, medical laboratory scientists, the National Artisan Moderation Body, Rand Water, the Road Traffic Management Corporation, the South African Police Services, the State Information Technology Services, sporting bodies, and others. These strategic RPL projects have been carefully considered by SAQA based on the extent to which they can be taken to scale and also the coverage of important sectors (Michelson 2012).
This paper offers a critical reflection on the impact of the strategic RPL projects that SAQA is involved in within the broader context of the revised RPL policy (SAQA, 2013) and the proposed National Implementation Strategy for RPL (DHET, 2013). The researchers and practitioners who have been involved in both RPL policy development and implementation over several years ask critical questions about the role of SAQA in the coordination of RPL in South Africa going forward.

References


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Abstract

Organisational cases the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is assisting: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a boundary-crossing initiative

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A recent study on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in India indicates that the RPL process requires of learners and assessors that they work together to ‘translate experiences into learning’, which can prove to be difficult for all concerned (Manipal City and Guilds, 2012). To foreground this problem this paper focuses on the interplay between RPL assessor and candidate when determining the kinds of knowledge that need to be exchanged in the assessment process. The research questions addressed are: What is required to translate workplace knowledge into academic knowledge? What is required to translate academic knowledge into workplace understanding? Are disciplinary boundaries too solid to allow such translations? A contrast is indicated between Wenger’s notion of **communities of practice** (Wenger, 2002) and Knorr-Cetina’s (1982) notion of **communities of interest**.

An attempt is made to sketch a ‘third space’ where the RPL assessor and candidate meet to exchange experiential and academic knowledge. It is argued that within this third space, a community of interest is created where the concept of ‘emergence’ (Bhaskar, 2008) plays a role in understanding the interplay between the RPL candidate and the assessor.

An RPL model is suggested that changes the traditional role of the RPL assessor and will possibly make transfer of knowledge more meaningful for RPL candidates than is otherwise the case.

These ideas are applied when working on SAQA-assisted RPL initiatives. Mention will be made of current RPL initiatives including those with the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA).

References


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Abstract

From a pilot project towards common Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL) practices

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Informal apprenticeship refers to the system by which a learner (the apprentice) acquires the skills for a trade or craft in a micro- or small enterprise context, learning and working side by side with an experienced craftsperson (International Labour Organisation, 2012). This International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition is much broader than the approach in current South African practice, in that the concept of Artisan Recognition of Prior Learning (ARPL) occurs widely within the formal medium- to macro-economic contexts, while the micro-economic sector is lagging far behind.

The familiar term within South African skills development discourse - which approaches the limit in terms of the definition of informal apprenticeship - is arguably ARPL. The legislative flexibility within the Skills Development Act, Act 97 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) has led to a proliferation of differentiated sectoral policies. The result is a complex research environment regarding ARPL in terms of the precise measurement of national ARPL indicators, outcomes, outputs and impact. An indicator potentially provides evidence that a certain condition exists or certain results have or have not been achieved (Brizius and Campbell, 1991). Given the flexible legislative environment and diversity of sectoral RPL policies, designing indicators to assess progress in RPL is difficult. In spite of this complexity the primary policy intention is not clouded, but its usability is diminished in teams of generating further knowledge.

On one hand, Akao’s (1991) allusion to creating a plan to manage strategic change initiatives – as an important part of managing change in any system, be it business or social – is useful. In other words, a ‘totally’ correct initial direction for any business or social system cannot be expected.

On the other hand, generic policies such as the National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA], 2013) provide broad and comprehensive guidance for RPL principles that are aligned with the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1994). This RPL policy includes priorities for resourcing, effective delivery and quality assurance of RPL; and the responsibilities of SAQA, the Quality Councils, education institutions and skills development providers, recognised professional bodies, and RPL practitioners and candidates. The earlier White Paper on the National Strategy for the Development and Promotion of Small Business in South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1995) and Integrated Small Enterprise Development Strategy (Republic of South Africa, 2005) create an enabling environment for the accelerated growth of small enterprises following pre-1994 dominance of large capital-intensive firms and neglect of these small enterprises.

At least four Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) – in the manufacturing and engineering; chemical; transport; arts; tourism; hospitality and sport sectors, and INDELA (the only government trade test centre in the country) – have bases for cross-sectoral comparison of existing ARPL practices.

Based on these enabling policies, consensual agreement between these institutions is needed as a matter of urgency if ARPL is going to be taken to scale.
This presentation points to aspects enabled in the policies named here, and areas needing further work.

References


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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): a snapshot from Australia

Ms Alison Vickers,
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In 2005, The Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA) and the Adult Community and Further Education Board of Victoria (ACFE) undertook a joint project to investigate the feasibility of recognising the informal learning of a range of different learners within different contexts (VQA, 2005). As a feasibility study found that effective recognition arrangements could be used to assist adult learners gain the first step towards a qualification by recognising their informal learning.

A Course in Recognised Informal Learning was accredited as a pilot and in 2008 was redeveloped by Chisholm Institute of Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and reaccredited by the Victorian Registration and Qualifications Authority (VRQA). This course is supported by a Course in Assessment of Informal Learning. Both courses are supported by a resource, Informal Learning: Learning from Experience which provides advice for assessors, assessment tools, and case studies.

The course is developed to meet the needs of adult learners, from groups characterised by educational disadvantage, by providing a point of entry into formal learning. The course reflected growing Australian interest in recognising learning that occurs outside the formal education system and how this could contribute to resilient communities.

This course aims to provide a way of:

- providing national recognition for informal learning acquired outside of accredited courses and nationally recognised qualifications;
- potentially incorporating informal learning in accredited courses;
- describing the complexity of learning that individuals attain through informal learning; and
- granting formal recognition for informal learning.

A number of major reports, including research undertaken by the Australian Industry Group, have highlighted the importance of raising adult educational attainment and skill levels to improve workforce participation in Australia. Particular emphasis has been given in the reports, to addressing the needs of adults with low educational attainment and skills levels.

Where relevant and useful, learners seeking recognition for informal learning are assessed against one of the four units of competency of the Course in Recognised Informal Learning. To demonstrate these competencies learners need to:

- apply informal learning for personal/ work purposes in a narrow range of familiar/ predictable contexts;
- apply informal learning for personal/ work purposes in a range of familiar/ predictable contexts;
- apply informal learning for personal/ work purposes in sometimes unfamiliar/ unpredictable contexts; or
- apply informal learning for personal/ work purposes in mostly unpredictable/ unfamiliar contexts.

2 The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Industry Group, the author’s current employer. The author undertook this work while employed by the Victorian Qualifications Authority (VQA).
These units of competency draw on the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level Descriptors to describe the complexity of learning attained through informal learning. Learners who meet the requirements of one of the four units of competency are issued with a nationally recognised Statement of Attainment, *Course in Recognised Informal Learning* at the appropriate AQF level.

The *Course in Recognised Informal Learning* provides credit into any course which allows for the importation of units from other accredited courses as part of the course rules. The recognised competency may also be used to develop and support an application for entry into a vocational qualification or alternatively to negotiate an individual learning and assessment pathway. In addition, learners may use the credential as part of an employment application.

A further development of the Recognition of Informal Learning (RPL) is the uptake of the course in New Zealand and the relationship brokered by the VRQA with Chisholm Institute of TAFE and Otago Polytechnic, which has involved meetings with both parties and Otago Polytechnic inviting a representative from Chisholm to conduct the assessor-training course for staff.

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): a snapshot from Hong Kong

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This paper reports on a planned case study of a pilot project for recognition of competencies acquired on-the-job or via other non-formal or informal learning by a group of experienced bank staff members. The purpose of the pilot is to enable the employees to articulate to a postgraduate level qualification programme offered by an education and training institution in Hong Kong through a learning partnership. The case will take place in a renowned bank in Hong Kong, Bank X, which has a number of experienced product development and management specialists with substantial years of working knowledge in their specialised fields. These specialists will be retiring in around 10 years’ time.

To retain the expertise of these experienced specialists and to plan for succession, Bank X planned to enter into a learning partnership with a local education and training institution to devise a competency-based assessment mechanism. The contents of the assessment mechanism will be in line with the relevant competency requirements set out in the Units of Competency of the banking industry’s Specification of Competency Standards (similar to the National Occupational Standards in the United Kingdom (UK), or equivalent competency standards in Australian Training Packages).

The Specification of Competency Standards is valuable for recognition of on-the-job competencies (that is, prior and current learning) for module exemption, and for articulation to the remaining modules of a full qualification programme.

A variety of flexible delivery modes, such as distance learning, e-learning, portfolio presentations and case studies will be used so that the specialists can complete the programme without the need for much class attendance during or after work. Upon fulfilment of the programme requirements, they will be awarded a qualification in recognition of their demonstrated competencies gained at the workplace. The qualification programme which includes workplace assessment and attendance of required modules will be fully sponsored by Bank X.

Admittedly, banking professionals, despite having substantial years of industry experience, may not necessarily have recognised qualifications. The practice of recognition of workplace competencies through assessment provides a possible route for these experienced practitioners to gain a recognised qualification.

After the first batch of the specialists has gone through the assessment and outstanding training programme, staff members in the lower tier with the potential to be successors in the future will go through the same recognition process to determine their workplace knowledge and skills for module exemption and competency upgrading, and then complete the remaining modules for the qualification.

The concepts informing this study are based on studies of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the workplace (Bjornavold, 2000) and in learning partnerships (Choy and Delahaye, 2011), both of which focus on partnerships between corporations and universities.

The benefits and practical challenges encountered in this pilot will be presented and discussed. It has potential for adaptation and implementation in other occupations and industries.
References


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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): a snapshot from Namibia

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This paper covers a study which reflects on the results of the first Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) pilot conducted in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector in Namibia. The RPL pilot provides a useful example of the implementation of a Competency-Based Education and Training (CBET) approach to learning.

The RPL pilot programme was implemented in three fields of study: Hospitality, Tour Guiding and Road Construction and Maintenance. Candidates in the occupational areas of Hospitality and Tour Guiding were assessed towards a full qualification whereas candidates in Road Construction and Maintenance were assessed towards unit standards.

The selection of candidates was based on set criteria developed by the Industry Skills Committee (ISC) for each of the three occupational areas. The RPL model followed included training and assessment.

The challenges experienced were (i) as the project was rolled out, necessary allocation of additional resources due to the increased demand; (ii) initial reluctance of some sectors to participate in the RPL process; (iii) the perception of RPL as an inferior process which does not meet acceptable academic standards; and (iv) availability of RPL assessors to ensure a credible process and consistency in judgement.

It was found that there is a need to develop a decentralised model for RPL administration processes, as well as a recurrent assessors’ forum to standardise credible RPL processes. It was also found that the use of national unit standards registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to verify knowledge and certificate candidates, should overcome stakeholders’ and industry’s negative perceptions of RPL.

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): a snapshot from the Netherlands

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In the Netherlands Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an instrument to make the potential of the individual visible and to improve human capital management in companies. The purposes of RPL in the Netherlands are currently seen in various contexts as being to:

- increase the employability of individuals and employees;
- get more insight into employees’ capacities and match these with function profiles; and
- accredit prior experience and possibly shorten the duration of continuing training/ education programmes in order to attain nationally recognised qualifications.

Since 2012, there is an increasing focus on RPL as a labour market instrument. RPL is one of the instruments that help individuals and organisations to become more employable. At the moment the Knowledge Centre and the Ministry of Education entered into debates with RPL-providers on how to position RPL both as an instrument for shortening formal education and to validate competencies against learning outcomes of related qualifications in a specific sector.

In the Dutch RPL system, every organisation can become an RPL provider as long as it works according to the RPL quality code and has been evaluated by an evaluating organisation. The evaluation is performed every three years against standards set. The details of providers that are certified are entered into a National Register. These RPL providers are called ‘registered providers’ and their RPL customers (individuals and companies) receive tax benefits for performing RPL.

The quality code for RPL itself aims to achieve transparency and comparability and make RPL accessible. Most of the RPL providers are organisations for vocational education, higher professional education, and private schools. However, there is a growing number of RPL providers related to intermediate organisations, sector organisations and career management organisations.

To identify and stimulate RPL within specific sectors such as building and infrastructure, and the finance sector, the model of Public Value by Mark Moore (1995) could be used. The model describes three aspects defining the conditions of creating value for the public.

Public value is determined by basic needs of individuals, groups and the society as a whole and the relationships between these. The value RPL adds for the public is validating competencies and increasing mobility in the labour market. Legitimacy and support refers to the commitment of all concerned including private organisations and sector councils, to the RPL processes. Without commitment to RPL, the effects of RPL and public value will be incidental and small. The organisational capacity refers to capacity in terms of RPL procedures, quality assurance and infrastructure. This model has been successfully used to implement RPL in specific sectors in the Netherlands.
The Dutch Knowledge Centre for Accrediting Prior Learning (APL) is responsible for the management and dissemination of knowledge about RPL. It also plays an important role in the further development of RPL in the Netherlands and in all matters concerning quality standards for RPL. The Knowledge Centre works under the guidance of the Dutch Ministry of Education.

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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): a snapshot from the Seychelles

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Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA)

Ms Joan Armade,
Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA)

The Seychelles Government supports a strategy to create a knowledge-based society and promote lifelong learning. This strategy is focused on recognising the professional achievements of individuals and opening access for people to more advanced qualifications. The concept of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been introduced in the Seychelles to facilitate the possibility of every Seychellois who has some kind of knowledge and experience obtained from informal training, to work towards achieving a first qualification which can lead to higher and more advanced qualifications along the way.

The purpose of implementation of RPL in the Seychelles is two-fold. Firstly, the aim is to allow individuals who have gained significant experience in a particular field to become qualified. Secondly, the intention is to grant a just and fair level to a qualification which may have been pitched at a lower level on the Seychelles National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in the past (Minister’s briefing on RPL, 2011: 1).

The Seychelles Qualifications Authority (SQA) was established by Act 12 of 2005, with specific functions, such as formulating and implementing a national qualifications framework; to review the policies and criteria on which the framework of qualifications is based; and to facilitate learners’ access to and progression within the national education and training system.

The SQA is mandated to develop and implement policy and guidelines for RPL. It is in pursuance of these particular aims, that the SQA has decided to review its RPL policy and guidelines, based on lessons learned from three RPL pilot projects: (i) in Hairdressing; (ii) in Carpentry; and (iii) in Nursing for Environmental Health and Dental Surgery. These three pilot projects and the development of the current RPL policy and guidelines ran over the period of 2007 to 2011, and form the basis of the discourse around the reviewing process for the RPL policy and guidelines.

A new Minister of Labour and Human Resource Development has been appointed, who has given strong support for RPL. The Minister aims to integrate RPL into the skills development and lifelong learning programme which is being implemented in his Ministry, and to address scarce and critical skills. A new Minister of Education has been appointed as well.

The three RPL projects (Hairdressing, Carpentry and Nursing for Environmental Health and Dental Surgery) will form the basis of this presentation. The findings and recommendations from the review process will be presented. It is suggested that an inclusive approach to RPL, including Human Resource (HR) Managers and employment agencies as key stakeholders, is a positive step to ensure that scarce and critical skills can be recognized. Through this inclusive approach the possibility is created for a pipeline for a skilled and competent workforce in the Seychelles.
Reference


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South African Police Service (SAPS) bands: a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) benchmarking exercise

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The South African Police Services (SAPS) train their band members and have developed syllabi spanning a range of music levels for this purpose. Between 2011 and 2013 a benchmarking exercise was carried out, in which the SAPS music syllabi were benchmarked broadly against their nationally and internationally recognised counterparts developed and used by the University of South Africa (UNISA), Trinity College London and the Royal Schools of Music. Although the intention has always been to offer an accredited programme, the SAPS did not complete the accreditation process in the past. Over the years a cadre of band members have been trained in-house and have been qualified with SAPS without national recognition of their music skills outside of SAPS.

In a partnership between the SAPS and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) a process was put in place which aimed to: (i) facilitate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes for the SAPS Tshwane Band; and (ii) assist with the related qualification development process that will take place with the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). The first stage of the RPL process was to start off with a benchmarking exercise in which the competencies of the Band members were assessed by evaluators from Trinity College London. The levels of performance of SAPS Tshwane Band members and the band as a whole were sought in relation to Trinity music grades.

In the benchmarking exercise the SAPS Tshwane Band performed five pieces of music in front of an audience. They were officially assessed by staff from Trinity College London. It was found that SAPS Tshwane Band was performing at Associate Trinity College London (ATCL) level, which is at NQF Level 5 and is one level above Trinity Music Grade 8. Lower-level band members were found to be performing at Trinity Music Grades 6-8 levels.

Following this benchmarking exercise, SAPS bands in South Africa’s nine provinces can now enter a SAQA-facilitated RPL process with Trinity College London. This work will be done within a partnership that includes SAPS, SAQA, the QCTO, the Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority (SASSETA), and the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA). Recognised music qualifications will be developed for the SAPS, and assistance will be provided for RPL practices in future.

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Abstract

A Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiative for the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)

Mr Andries Pelser, Edutel

Although a formal Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy had long been in existence in the Public Services, the actual implementation of that policy and RPL interventions were few due to the time-consuming and restrictive nature of the collation of portfolios of evidence. In 2012 it was decided to streamline the process as far as possible and consider new assessment techniques in order to make the process feasible for the RPL candidates.

After revision of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) RPL policy with inputs from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), DPSA and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zuzammenarbeit (GIZ), Edutel was commissioned to launch a pilot project with 23 RPL candidates employed by various government departments across South Africa. The qualification against which the RPL was to take place was the Further Education and Training Certificate: Generic Management: Public Administration at NQF Level 4. This initiative was extremely well received by the candidates and the process was speedily initiated.

From the outset, attempts were made to make the process straight-forward and comprehensible for both the candidates and their line managers. Candidates had to apply formally for the RPL assessment by providing written motivation for their inclusion and by supplying all relevant documents prior to the process. The necessary documents included copies of previous performance appraisals.

All candidates were invited to an orientation session, where they were briefed with regard to the requirements of the qualification, its purpose and the RPL approach that would be followed. A skills audit was conducted to benchmark the relevant assessment criteria of the full qualification against each employee’s then current skills and knowledge base. This exercise resulted in identifying the gaps which would warrant further training and assessment interventions. Such interventions were planned well in advance and each candidate received a rollout plan of the relevant formal training which they would need to attend. Line Managers were also capacitated in their roles as facilitators of evidence collection.

The RPL assessment instruments were integrated into the Public Services environment and addressed the specific needs of the various RPL candidates. The issue of time was considered and the most cost effective assessment methods were utilised. Assessment techniques encompassed questioning that made use of case studies; knowledge questionnaires; and checklists to be completed by line managers after behavioural observation in naturally occurring workplace circumstances. These instruments were benchmarked against known best practice assessment principles and were found to be valid and reliable for use within the Public Services environment. The observation checklists particularly indicated the currency and authenticity of the evidence gathered, which in an RPL context, is of significance.

Once the actual RPL commenced, a Project Steering Committee was established. This Committee met on a monthly basis. At these meetings, progress reports were tabled; identified challenges were discussed and possible solutions determined.
Managers reported that candidate's attitudes were positive towards the RPL process and that the RPL process was feasible for the organisation. The process contributed to the credibility of the assessment. However, managers also reported that the timeframes were too tight and that more time was needed because of the workloads of both candidates and their line managers.

Once the pilot project was completed, the DPSA's RPL Policy and Procedures were amended to include the following phases:

- application and pre-screening, including skills audits;
- preparation of the candidate and evidence collection;
- assessment through observation and questioning;
- moderation;
- feedback;
- remediation; and
- certification.

A full RPL documentation pack, including detailed instructions, was compiled for use within any Public Services Department in South Africa, with the intention that the RPL initiative will grow and more employees will be able to make use of these effective methods of gaining acknowledgement for skills and knowledge acquired non-formally and informally.

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Abstract

Professionalisation of Community Development and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): developing a model

Ms Cornel Hart,
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South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Community Development is of strategic importance due to its relevance for every South African government department and programme. Examples include (a) the War-on-Poverty programme; (b) the Local Economic Development (LED) Programme; (c) the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP); and (d) and the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development (ISRD) Programme.

To provide the country with expertise in Community Development, Community Development qualifications are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) at NQF Levels 4, 5 and 8. These qualifications aim at promoting skills and knowledge for developing sustainable, holistic and integrated community well-being. The qualifications on Levels 4 and 5 have now been re-developed following processes determined by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO), for the development of occupational qualifications.

New initiatives aim to provide the Community Development sector with three products: (i) a pathway towards professionalisation of Community Development services; (ii) a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) model; and (iii) articulation possibilities between all the Community Development qualifications (at NQF Levels 4, 5 and 8), as well as articulation between these qualifications and all other related certificates, diplomas and degrees.

The RPL process includes the development of an RPL model based on multi-disciplinary content together with a Fieldwork Practice Guide that will enable Community Development practitioners and workers to engage with the RPL process. As it was recognized that many Community Development workers and practitioners have either gained knowledge through completing qualifications related to Community Development work and/or through work experience, the RPL model includes RPL both for access and for credit with the possibility of credit accumulation and transfer (CAT). Based on audits performed by the Department of Social Development (DSD), it is estimated that around 50 000 – 70 000 persons currently working in the Community Development sector could benefit from the RPL process towards professionalization within the sector.

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5 Under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (Republic of South Africa, 2008), the South African NQF comprises three coordinated sub-frameworks – the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF), the Higher Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF), and the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF). These sub-frameworks are overseen by Umalusi; the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) respectively.
Report

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) initiative of the South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC)

Ms Desiree Vardhan,
South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC)

Ms Shirley Lloyd,
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

Following the launch of the South African Coaching Framework in November 2011 [South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee (SASCOC), 2011], agreement was reached between SASCOC and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) on the need for a National Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Pilot Project for coaches and coach developers.

The intention to initiate the National RPL Pilot Project was announced by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SAQA, Mr Joe Samuels, at the SASCOC National Coaching Conference in November 2012. This announcement was followed by further liaison between SASCOC and SAQA staff, leading to the production of a document on how the National RPL Pilot Project will be conducted.

The National RPL Pilot Project in Sport Coaching will take place in the context of the National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2013). The Project is aimed at providing access to learning, part qualifications and qualifications for sport coaches and coach developers. The Project is of national importance in that coaches provide positive sport-related experiences for millions of South Africans every year. Coaching is in a pivotal position to support transformation in that it promotes engagement and inclusion, and contributes to health and wellbeing as well contributing to sporting success nationally and internationally.

In the first instance, 11 National Federations will be involved based on their state of readiness and their engagement within the SASCOC National Coach Developer Programme. A key first step in the process will be the alignment of National Federation Programmes in coach education with the South African model for Long Term Coach Development (LTCD) and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In addition, Coach Developer programmes of national federations will be aligned and integrated with the emerging South African Coach Developer Programme and NQF.

The National Federation has been identified as being in a position to progress with the first phase of the Pilot Project. Both SAQA and SASCOC are fully committed to this important project and see it as a key step in promoting learning pathways, qualifications and transformational opportunities for coaches and coach developers in South Africa.

To become effective across a range of roles and in a dynamic environment, coaches need high quality training and support. To this end, SASCOC has more recently launched a capacity building programme to recruit, train and deploy a nationwide workforce to design and deliver coach education programmes at national, provincial and district levels.

The intention is that the programme will support coach, administrator and officials’ development over time, but in the first phase it has focused on coach development. The Long-term Coach Developer Pathway is aligned to the South African Coaching Pathway. Suitably experienced and qualified coaches (or coaching/performance experts) wishing to train to become coach developers would typically enter at the District level and then with further training and practice, progress to Provincial and National levels according to skill level, time and need.
The fact that RPL is being used to provide a pipeline of dynamic, enthusiastic and proactive people with a positive growth mindset, a genuine interest in people and belief in an individual’s potential through dedication and hard work to develop new skills, is a benefit. Through this RPL project a cohort of coach developers are being developed who are committed to being part of an exciting new national initiative that has potential to contribute to the creation of effective, inclusive, cohesive and ethical coaching systems that promote transformation and excellence at all levels of sport.

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Abstract

Synergies in recognition

Mr Auburn Daniels,
South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) developed its first Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy in 2002 which in 2003 expanded to include a document on criteria and guidelines for RPL (SAQA, 2002; SAQA, 2003). In subsequent years these two documents were updated and aligned with the NQF Act 67 of 2008 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], Department of Education [DoE], 2008) which replaced the South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 of 1995 (RSA, DoE, 1995). In 2013, the new National Policy for the Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2013) was developed via widely participatory democratic process, and published. This revised policy explicitly stipulates eight objectives for implementation. One of the objectives enunciates: “Enable potential candidates to attain recognition of the appropriate knowledge and skills required for personal development and employment” (SAQA, 2013: 4).

This paper explores the relationship between the objective of RPL, of attaining recognition for personal development and employment, and the objectives used in the credential evaluation process used for foreign qualifications when individuals seek to work or study further in South Africa.

Credential evaluation is the comparability assessment of foreign qualifications with the Level Descriptors of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (SAQA, 2012). It is argued that there is (i) a prominent difference between the two processes; and (ii) a common dominator.

First, RPL involves the evaluation of informal and non-formal learning whilst credential evaluation primarily focuses on the assessment of formal learning.

Second, both processes are essentially about the recognition of learning outcomes of an individual. On a macro level, the objectives are to enhance access to the labour market or progression within it, or to enable individuals to contribute to society, study further, acquire formal qualifications, or be socially mobile.

References


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Section 3:

Abstract for the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Research Partner panel presentation
Abstract

Crossing the lines: the search for optimally inclusive Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) practices in South Africa

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Professor Linda Cooper,  
University of Cape Town (UCT)

Mr Kessie Moodley,  
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Dr Karen Deller,  
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The project on which this paper reports is funded by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA); it is a SAQA-University of the Western Cape long-term Research partnership project.

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) practices are commonly understood as a specialised form of assessment practice and this view has been accentuated on a global scale with the advent of new policy instruments such as competency-based training and outcomes-based education. Ralphs (2012) argues that this understanding is misleading however as recent research suggests that much of the invisible work of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is pedagogical, with assessment being but one crucial aspect of the practice. Others (Michelson, 2006; Harris, 2006; Cooper, 2006) have argued that whilst RPL is predominantly about assessment, what RPL affords is based on assumptions about knowledge, learning and qualifications which tend to render invisible the criteria by which some forms of knowledge are judged to be credit worthy and others are not. This paper takes up these challenges and makes the case for more careful scrutiny of the pedagogical nature of, and sociologies involved in, RPL practices.

The paper summarises the findings of a collaborative research project across four different sites of RPL practice in South Africa. Two sites offer RPL access to undergraduate and postgraduate study respectively; a third site offers RPL for credit towards a vocational qualification in Business Administration; and the fourth features a model of RPL integral to curriculum in the diploma programmes offered by the Worker’s College. The focus for the project is on ‘optimal inclusion’, in other words, on including the highest number of candidates. Four lines of enquiry (covering the knowledge, pedagogy, institutional context, and learner agency aspects of the RPL process) were used to describe the practices at these sites.

The findings were used to develop a conceptual framework for an inclusive RPL model. It was found that each case involves ‘boundary crossing’. A number of key features and concepts associated with the boundary crossing (or ‘transgressing’) nature of the discourse are presented and discussed with reference to the different case studies. The features to be presented include the rules, tools, and forms of pedagogic agency and artistry involved in mediating the ‘dialogue’ between different discourses and related sources of epistemological authority. Findings include an analysis of the learning narratives of a sample of participants as they navigate their way within and

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6 SAQA partners with public Higher Education Institutions for long term research towards implementation and development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) in South Africa. These partnerships are typically for three to five years, and include outputs such as peer reviewed papers and books, research events, and post-graduate study. Past SAQA Research Partnership projects have focused on building the public Further Education and Training (FET) College sector, Lifelong Learning, Learning Pathways, the impact of the NQF, learning for sustainable development, and other areas. The project presented here focuses on cross-sector studies of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) towards an inclusive and enabling RPL model for use in national implementation of RPL.
across different practices and learning pathways in the system. The paper concludes with a brief reflection on the significance of these findings for the new National Policy for the Implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2013), and strategies for implementing this policy.

References


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Section 4:

Abstracts on implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-Framework (GFETQSF)
Abstract

Can a public examination be considered a form of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)?

Ms Elizabeth Burroughs,
Umalusi: Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training

The importance of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a crucial part of the national educational discourse in South Africa results from its intimate connection with political imperatives such as the transformation of education. Through RPL, learners previously denied learning opportunities and/ or recognition for what they already know, are intended to have access to further learning and/or employment opportunities, thus transforming education and training into an arena where multiple forms of lifelong learning are available.

The group whose educational need perhaps most urgently requires to be addressed is that group of youngish adults who have not acquired a much coveted school-leaving certificate, and for whom there is currently no educational opportunity to make good that desire. It is estimated that this group presently includes 12 million South Africans and grows with each year that passes.

The experience of Umalusi, the Council for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training, as the quality assurer of large-scale national qualifications, has persuaded it of the relative cost-effectiveness of using national assessments to evaluate and report on the skills and knowledge of many learners across a large variety of contexts. On those grounds, Umalusi has sought to develop an adult qualification which builds on the lessons learned from quality assuring schooling.

The National Senior Certificate for Adults (NASCA) has been developed as a qualification that minimizes the number of extraneous demands to be made on adult learners and focuses on presenting opportunities where they can show what they know. Its conception means that there are no formal additional instructional and/or assessment requirements in the form of classes, tests or tasks which might hinder admission to the challenge examinations where a person is encouraged to demonstrate what he or she knows. This minimization of additional requirements is intended to allow for the measurement of learning that has taken place in a variety of contexts, not merely in the formal.

Based on an established and well-respected qualification in the United States of America called the General Education Development (GED) credential, the NASCA uses a series of examinations that allow examinees to demonstrate that they have acquired skills and knowledge comparable to that gained by young people through twelve years of schooling.

In this paper, the nature of the qualification is explained, highlighting the features of its implementation that will encourage adults to engage with the challenge of becoming courageous lifelong learners once more.

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Abstract

Tools for the trade: an investigation into Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tools and processes used in public Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges

Mr Nigel Prinsloo,
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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the public Further Education and Training (FET) College sector continues to be an under-researched area in South Africa. However this sector is viewed as being a critical component in a proposed National Strategy for the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Implementation (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2013).

Prinsloo (2009) notes that there needs to be both uniform RPL guidelines and reduced complexity in its implementation to allow for better implementation of the practice. This paper reports on the conceptualisation and desktop research of a larger research project in the Western Cape looking specifically at RPL assessment tools and processes at public FET colleges.

Currently colleges practise three forms of assessment that could culminate in RPL. Firstly there is an entry assessment referred to as the PACE test. This diagnostic test is used to ascertain the competence of the students’ language and maths skills. Secondly there is the evaluation (also referred to as the pre-trade test) to identify gaps in the candidates’ abilities. Finally, there is the Trade Test completed over two days which culminates in the awarding of a Trade Test Certificate.

The larger investigation on which this paper reports relied on descriptions of first-hand experiences obtained through semi-structured interviews with practitioners and candidates. The research locates the data within critical theory constructs that juxtapose policy formulation and the systemic implementation of RPL. The research and current paper intend to bring practitioner and candidate perspectives to the discourse on RPL.

References


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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): does it provide a second chance for unemployed people?

Mr Mike Lenaghan,
African Lifelong Learning Initiative (ALLI)

The African Lifelong Learning Initiative (ALLI) is currently cooperating with a Further Education and Training (FET) College located in the Eastern Cape Province to assist with the establishment of a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Unit at one of the main campuses of the College. The establishment of the RPL Unit will be functional in 2014. It is being seen as a pilot which could be expanded to other colleges.

Cooperation with FET Colleges in the Eastern Cape Province is an initiative to reach out to unemployed people to provide opportunities for development and to obtain recognition for what they know and can do regardless of how they have obtained the knowledge and skills concerned.

ALLI’s approach is to introduce an entry-eligibility level which can be pitched at below NQF Level 1 and which allows RPL candidates to be assessed against one unit of learning at a time. The learning unit could be a subject such as bookkeeping or a trade such as bricklaying.

The intention is that the above incremental approach to recognition of knowledge and skills will expand development opportunities by providing an opportunity to display knowledge and skills; and recognition of building blocks towards obtaining a trade or a qualification registered on the national Qualifications Framework (NQF).

To capture recognition of successfully completed units of learning a transcript called The Growing Evidence Transcript is created on which the results of assessment are recorded. The transcript serves as evidence of assessed knowledge which will be issued by the FET College doing the assessment. The aim is to establish the credibility of the Growing Evidence Transcript within the FET College sector once the implementation has been piloted and completed in 2014. Credibility would potentially allow RPL candidates to transfer their ‘credits’ to another College if so required.

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Abstract

Recognition of skills and knowledge gained formally and informally

Mr Anderson Bakili,
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With the introduction of the Skills Development Act (SDA) (Republic of South Africa, 1998) and the National Qualifications Framework Act (Republic of South Africa, 2008), implementing learnerships means developing and assessing individuals against nationally registered qualifications and part qualifications for the learnership concerned. These qualifications and part qualifications are developed under the oversight of the Quality Councils and if the offerings meet the set criteria, they are registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). Learners assessed in this context will gain credits that will be captured on the National Learners' Record Database (NLRD).

The introduction of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) was legislated previously through the South African Qualifications Act (Republic of South Africa, 1995) and the Higher Education Act (Republic of South Africa, 1997), and was clearly promoted in the White Paper on Higher Education, Paper 3 of 1997 (Republic of South Africa, 1997). RPL is regarded in South Africa as one of the means whereby equity and redress for past inequalities can be promoted. It is crucial for all Higher Education Institutions to introduce and maintain the practice of RPL in a way that supports the notion of lifelong learning and outcomes-based education.

The implementation of an RPL system for part qualifications has potential to assist in providing an accurate picture of the current skills and knowledge levels of learners registered for learnerships in any given organisation. It also has potential to focus training on the actual learner skills gaps.

In this paper it is argued that:

- the principles of good assessment must be adhered to at all times;
- it is important that there is consistency in the evaluation of the learning process through the use of objective and structured assessment against nationally registered qualifications or part qualifications;
- valid and reliable assessment tools must be used at all times to assess learners;
- a transparent and fair assessment process needs to be implemented in the organisation concerned;
- assessors need to be competent to assess and be held accountable for assessment decisions;
- there must be provision for RPL;
- there must be clear appeals processes for learners;
- learner assessment records need to be accurately kept; and
- the organisation of the assessment needs to be aligned to the national assessment policy.

Skills and knowledge gained through formal, informal learning and non-formal experiences could be recognised by using a variety of assessment methods. RPL processes can be used to establish whether the learner possesses the competencies specified in the outcomes of a part qualification and to issue the learner with a nationally recognised record of credits.
The formal records of student achievements need to be issued from the Registrar’s or the Principal’s office of the institution the student attended.

Activities undertaken in the workplace - the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes - are related to tasks, processes and outcomes in the work environment. These activities may include informal in-service training, on-the-job training, self-directed learning by doing, development by other staff members, and other aspects. All of these activities could potentially count towards a qualification or part qualification.

It is acknowledged that all learning has value. Anderson College accepts the challenge to assess prior learning and award credit that is aligned to programmes that promote lifelong learning. In this paper it is emphasised that comprehensive assessment systems with the quality aspects outlined here, and that are aligned to the new National Policy and Criteria for Designing and Implementing Assessment (SAQA, 2013), and must be reflected in the visions and missions of all institutions of learning.

References


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Abstract

The requirements for legislation to support effective Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

*Dr Hannes Nel,*
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It is well-known that legislation can either hamper or support skills development, including the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). In this respect there are three salient questions that need to be addressed.

- How do the objectives, spirit and content of the relevant legislation enable RPL?
- How is legislation interpreted at different levels in Education, Training and Development (ETD)?
- How can legislation be utilised to ensure that RPL is implemented in such a manner that it will support lifelong learning?

Case studies involving Mentornet and lessons learned will be used to elucidate arguments, and suggestions will be made on how RPL that supports lifelong learning can be facilitated.

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Section 5:

Abstracts on implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF)
Abstract

How to use Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to recognise practical wisdom?

Dr Christine Wihak,
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Various scholars who have worked in the South African context (Breier, 2009; Harris, 1999, 2006; Michelson, 2006) have noted that in the context of formal education, much valuable learning may go unrecognized because it does not conform to expected knowledge structures. “Procrustean” RPL (Harris, 1999) requires learners to match their learning to the specified outcomes of courses or programs in order to earn credit, and ignores any learning that falls outside of those boundaries. This approach disadvantages RPL petitioners whose learning from experience and non-formal education has not followed the orderly structure of a prescriptive curriculum. The question thus arises: how could learning that is currently discounted in formal education be recognized through RPL?

In this presentation, I will describe an approach to RPL that is based on generic outcomes of a liberal arts program. Thompson Rivers University (formerly the British Columbia Open University) has been using this “generic competency” approach for two decades to award blocks of elective credits towards a variety of credentials. Although portfolio-based, the approach allows learners wide flexibility in describing and documenting their learning.

First, I will discuss the philosophy of “readiness to graduate” that underlies our approach and how it relates to employers’ expectations of graduates. I will present details of the process, including definitions of our Eight Critical Competencies, supports given to learners in preparing their petitions, extracts from sample portfolios, rubrics used by assessors, and sample reports.

Second, I will also briefly touch on assessor qualifications and training and fee structures. In addition, I will provide an introduction to other North American institutions that are using a similar approach, and the relationship to the developing trend of “service learning” in North American Higher Education (Wong, 2011).

Finally, I will discuss with participants some of the barriers that might occur in the South African context to introducing such an approach to using RPL for assessing what Breier (2009) has called “Practical Wisdom”.

References


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Abstract

Recognising the learning of dung beetles and others at grassroots level

Ms Jane Quin,
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A broadly common purpose of education is to ‘make the world better’. It is, however, a mistake to presume that this always implies ‘for everyone’. Within an unequal world, those working with the dominant discourse consciously or unconsciously educate to keep it that way. My work purposefully positions itself against such a perspective. It unequivocally assumes that everyone matters and that nothing is neutral.

A paradoxical difficulty facing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) practitioners is that we battle for recognition of more marginal pedagogical practices while we simultaneously battle for mainstream recognition of the overall concept. Recognising the role of marginalisation of people and education practices in the repetition and reconstruction of structural social inequality and oppression, my work is concerned with value and validation in the opposite direction. That is, promoting pedagogical praxis that is from and for subordinate social groups and discourses aiming toward justice and equity through educational ways of being.

Working within such socio-political spaces from radical feminist groups in South Africa and London, to seminars with academics on Critical Difference or Activism in Higher Education, to large undergraduate classes and communities of practicing teachers for social justice, my work uses the same principles of recognising the valuable experiential learning of all participants. Our collective lives are the material through which we collaboratively learn to read the world in order to change it – for the better, for everyone. It is basically a tried and tested process of ‘old-fashioned’ consciousness-raising through critical self-reflexivity appropriate to the people and their local context nested within the global construct.

The more people experience the productivity of democratic participatory practices the more we generate knowledge that recognises value in the learning from alternate people and places. This is the dung-beetle process. These environmentally valuable creatures mirror the role of people on the ground using their contextual material to make the world richer through the way they act in and upon the earth at the grassroots.

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): a trans-disciplinary engagement opportunity for Higher Education Institutions

Professor Benjamin Anderson,
Da Vinci Institute

The Honourable Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande (2011: 5) stated: “… the humanities and social sciences (HSS) at South African universities seem to be in a crisis and should be a lot stronger in order to play the role they could be playing in the development of our society, our economy and our intellectual life…”

In view of the above statement one could ask: What could the contribution of the learning experiences of working adults be in strengthening the Management Sciences at Higher Education Institutions and in society at large?

The Charter for Humanities and Social Sciences (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011) argues that the Social Sciences should emphasize the creation of a context within which a responsible and ethical citizenry can be developed and nurtured in an attempt to secure scholarly engagement that will be sensitive towards the long-term developmental goals of our society.

To do such within the context of a dynamic and sometimes volatile social system, where socio-economic upheavals seem to have become the norm rather than the exception and where communities seem to have become more polarized around issues of inequality and identity than was previously the case, is indeed a challenge.

However, trans-disciplinary engagements with experienced working adults may provide an opportunity in general for the Social Sciences and for the Management Sciences in particular, to explore the benefits of incorporating and acknowledging their insights, perspectives and potential contributions into its disciplinary fold. In so doing, trans-disciplinary engagement could involve co-creation of a new reality for management within the workplace, and society at large.

Since 2009 the Da Vinci Institute has embarked on a trans-disciplinary journey, engaging with prospective postgraduate students, who are experienced working adults and who have indicated a desire to participate in the Masters programme at the Institute. Lessons learned and insights gained from this journey will be incorporated in the presentation. The present paper is based on original research, including case studies of particular trans-disciplinary engagements.

This paper argues that if Higher Education intends to serve the needs of a diverse society, an appreciation of the diverse backgrounds and experiences of prospective or currently working adult learners (within the Management Sciences and elsewhere) needs to be developed. The Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) experiences of students can indeed contribute towards this debate.

Bibliography


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Abstract

Using Appreciative Inquiry to improve Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) practices

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is an educational approach intended to enhance access and articulation, the mobility of students, redress, transformation and life-long learning. However, implementing RPL is riddled with challenges and many institutions focus only on what is wrong with RPL and why it should not be implemented. Focusing on deficits is demoralising and it embeds a negative perception of RPL. There was a dire need to explore the use of Appreciative Inquiry (AI) to determine what works well in RPL at the University of the Free State (UFS) and to reframe RPL as a relevant practice.

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is an action research approach that is used in organisational change and numerous other fields and it relates to Positive Psychology. Researchers such as Whitney and Trosten-Bloom (2003); Cooperrider, Whitney, Stavros and Fry (2008); and Cockell and McArthur-Blair (2012) have demonstrated that building on the strengths of systems and individuals generates positive action and change.

Using a descriptive case study, AI is applied to explore students’ perceptions of their RPL processes and learning journeys that resulted in their being successful students. A questionnaire was sent to a purposive sample of 46 RPL students; eight responded. The questionnaire contained positive questions covering the 4-D Cycle of AI that consists of Discovery (appreciating); Dream (envisioning); Design (co-constructing what should be) and Destiny (sustaining change and implementation).

First, the Discovery Phase of the 4-D Cycle (appreciating) revealed that amongst other aspects the respondents appreciated the affirmation they experienced in the RPL process. They took pride in their completion of a professional document that reflected the scope of their learning and in being admitted into the RPL programme. Furthermore they valued the support they received in the RPL portfolio development processes.

Second, in the Dream Phase the students built on the best of what they had experienced regarding RPL and suggested improvements relating to feedback on the formative assessment outcome, simplifying the structure of the portfolio, extended marketing of RPL opportunities, and additional assessment tasks.

Third, in both the Design and Destiny Phases the structure of the portfolio of evidence, the guidelines for and the outcomes of learning were simplified. At the RPL workshops opportunities were provided for candidates to tell their own stories using the AI cycle to reframe their RPL experiences.

Challenges experienced in the present research included the unavailability of the current addresses of RPL students resulting in a small number of selected respondents receiving and engaging with the project. However the data gathered from the students who responded were sufficiently rich in detail to render satisfactory results.

It was found that AI can be used fruitfully to reframe some of the differences associated with RPL in order to improve and renew RPL practices. AI requires a commitment to thinking about possibilities and the capacity and flexibility to facilitate the changes required to address the ideals of enhanced access and life-long learning that could hopefully affect transformation and redress.
References


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The ‘knowledge question’ in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education: do insights from empirical research provide a basis for an institutional self-evaluation tool regarding the feasibility of RPL in particular disciplines and programmes?

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of two pieces of empirical research addressing the ‘knowledge question’ in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in relation to Higher Education programmes. The first piece of research addressed postgraduate programmes across a range of disciplines in a South African Higher Education Institution and was published in the *International Journal of Lifelong Education* (Cooper and Harris, 2012). The second piece focused on undergraduate programmes in a Canadian university in 2013. The aim of both pieces of research was to explore whether the nature of the discipline or knowledge domain offered affordances or barriers to RPL. In interview surveys, academics were asked their views on the feasibility of RPL in relation in their discipline and programmes. Data analysis drew primarily on concepts from the sociology of education (Bernstein, 2000) to identify different forms of knowledge and the ways they are formatted and formulated as curricula.

The paper will present and compare the findings of both pieces of research. The findings suggest that the disciplinary context or knowledge domain into which an RPL candidate is seeking access does play a role in determining the feasibility of RPL. However, a range of other factors also come into play, for example the commitment and will of individual academics or teams; various manifestations of pedagogic agency; particular interpretations of RPL policy; faculty culture, size, space and capacity; the role of professional bodies, and industry and labour market factors such as degree of regulation and the nature of knowledge production. These factors will be discussed in detail.

Finally, the paper will explore whether the findings provide the basis for a theorised tool for institutional self-evaluation regarding the feasibility of RPL.

References


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Abstract

The implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education and Training: institutionalising RPL

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The purpose of this paper is to reflect on experiences associated with the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and to create awareness about critical factors that account for successful RPL implementation, as well as the challenges encountered.

This paper uses Legitimacy Theory (Suchman, 1995) to reflect on selected RPL cases, and provides a framework for the evaluation of RPL activities in a Higher Education Institution (HEI). Informed by the tenets of strategic and institutional legitimacy, the paper considers managerial agency in advocating RPL, the set of constituting beliefs about RPL, and how these theoretical or philosophical orientations about RPL frame, focus and direct RPL activities in the HEI.

The paper shows how the articulation needs of Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges in the catchment area of a particular HEI serve as one of the constitutive pressures that give impetus and an imperative to RPL activities. Procedural legitimacy in the form of socially accepted techniques and procedures, as well as structural legitimacy in the form of structures, processes, and the capacity to perform RPL activities are considered.

Lastly, cognitive legitimacy is used to assess the acceptance of RPL as necessary and inevitable, and its perceived comprehensibility by faculties.

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Positioning Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) systems and processes within the normative value system of a socially responsive university

Mr Valindawo Dwayi, 
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The ambitious goals of the National Development Plan of South Africa (National Planning Commission, 2011) demand a concerted and accelerated effort in order to develop and effectively implement increased opportunities for access to Higher Education and Training, particularly in the context of the developing economy of the country. However, the historical, systemic, and structural challenges that still confront some Higher Education Institutions in South Africa pose serious challenges for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policies as mechanisms to increase opportunities for access to Higher Education, especially for people in previously marginalised communities.

This presentation reports on a study of RPL systems and processes in a selected university, in which the role of Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM) was evaluated to assess the implementation and impact of the RPL policy of the institution. Research data were collected via a survey questionnaire, and from organisational records. Research respondents involved a sample of Heads of Departments and the RPL Programme Manager. The respondents are seen as being critical elements of the RPL ecosystem above the level of the learner.

In this presentation, an argument will be made that RPL policy implementation in Higher Education must be framed within the progressive agenda of social reconstruction, and within the normative value system of a socially responsive university. HELM roles are critically important elements for policy implementation. Discussion of the research findings includes sketching the implications for governance in Higher Education in general, and HELM capacity for policy implementation in particular.

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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) candidates’ perceptions of the RPL process

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) whereby skills and knowledge gained by individuals outside formal learning processes are mediated, assessed and granted formal recognition, is gaining momentum amongst Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in South Africa as an alternative access route. RPL can take place both in workplaces and educational institutions. In the latter case, it has tended to occur mainly around registration time although it can be used at any point in candidate’s studies when necessary.

It is both impractical and undesirable to prescribe the details of any given RPL process recognising that each academic discipline has its unique approaches, that each person applying for RPL comes with a unique history and that there is a wide range of valid RPL methods and processes. RPL candidates’ understanding and perceptions of these processes might be detrimental to them in their attempts to provide adequate evidence to qualify. The question: What knowledge do candidates claim to have? might be interpreted differently by various role players in the process, hence the concept of RPL is often confused with that of credit transfer, especially by students.

An embedded mixed research method was used to investigate students’ perceptions of RPL, where the mixed method was dominated by a quantitative approach. Data were collected in a ‘within-stage mixed-model design’ which involved use of a questionnaire that included a summated rating scale (quantitative method) and one or more open-ended questions (qualitative method). A quantitative dominant mixed methods research is a kind of ‘mixed’ research in which one has a ‘quantitative, post-positivist view’ of the research process, while concurrently recognising that the addition of qualitative data and approaches are likely to benefit most research projects (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie and Turner, 2007), where qualitative methods are embedded in quantitative research designs (Creswell, 2009).

Results showed that students have differing perceptions about RPL processes. The challenges raised include use of confusing language in RPL processes, lack of awareness of what was available regarding RPL and inadequate support for evidence gathering and compilation of portfolios of evidence. This article recommends that RPL practitioners should clearly understand the relationship between RPL and assessment. Language around RPL should be as simple as possible, especially for potential candidates. Policy should inform practitioners and candidates, and empower all RPL stakeholders to find the most appropriate approaches for their individual circumstances.

References


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Abstract
Assessing prior learning in English Business Communication at a University of Technology

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SAQA has recently reviewed its National Policy for Implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (SAQA, 2013), an indication that the RPL endeavour is taken seriously in South Africa. Similarly Higher Education Institutions are expected to have institutional policies in place that embrace the principles of RPL and show the same commitment as that shown in the national policy. These institutional policies should be implemented by faculties and departments in their specific contexts.

This paper reports on the progress made in a study that explores ways in which traditional assessment methods applicable to English Business Communication can be modified to include RPL. The term English Business Communication is an umbrella term used by a specific Language Department as it renders services relating to Communication across five faculties and their departments in Higher Education Institution in question.

To gain insight into the various ways in which assessment methods could be tailored to recognise prior learning in English Business Communication, qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Data collection methods included questionnaires, semi-structured interviews with assessors, focus group interviews with previous RPL candidates, and documentary analysis of all the written and oral assessments.

The main challenges uncovered during the research regarding assessing prior learning for English Business Communication included the aspects that follow.

• Assessors are accustomed to using traditional assessment methods. However, the challenge is that one cannot assess prior learning via traditional assessment methods and that assessors, therefore, had to rethink the way in which they could assess prior learning.
• RPL candidates held the perception that their experiences alone measured in terms of numbers of years should gain them credits for the Communication subject.
• Candidates did not realise that they would be assessed strictly against a specific set of learning outcomes. Given the opportunity to prepare a Portfolio of Evidence that demonstrates their prior learning, they included many items that had limited relevance to the learning outcomes of the course.
• Sometimes candidates included documents where the authorship was not clear.

These insights will assist the Language Department in the selected institution of learning, in its adaptation of the assessment methods for the diverse range of courses at the University, and hence streamline the whole RPL process. The outcomes of this study could possibly be used to adapt assessment for other subjects as well, and in other institutions.

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Abstract

The impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on promotion of access to Higher Education: a case study of five Universities of Technology in South Africa

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) has been applied at many Universities of Technology in South Africa (pre-merger and post-merger) as a tool to allocate credits and promote access to further studies.

The aim of this paper is to share experiences of the way RPL has been applied at five Universities of Technology in South Africa. The paper is based on a comparative study and critical analysis of the systems, processes and practices (also theories) at these institutions over the past two years.

It was found that the RPL process has not been immune from abuse and misinterpretations resulting in further exclusion of needy students and students at risk. In many instances, it has been applied haphazardly, and without regard for the learners’ needs and/ or policy directives.

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Abstract

Preparation, interpretation and analysis of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) within a Community of Practice: RPL at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Ms Frederika de Graaff,
Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)

Mr Eugene Fester,
Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT)

Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) as a Higher Education Institution (HEI) has had a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) policy since its establishment in 2005. The success rate of RPL at the institution has however been mixed: some academic departments are willing to engage with RPL processes, while others are not. This paper addresses the successes and failures of the implementation of RPL at CPUT.

The Institution’s RPL policy (Updated RPL Policy approved in March 2013) defines RPL as an epistemological process that enables mature and experienced individuals to document, analyse and present their own learning. This paper attempts to address two aspects of this type of RPL; firstly, how the Institution builds capacity among its academic staff members in order to prepare them to deal with RPL applications and secondly, how one faculty implements RPL and the lessons that can be learnt from this faculty.

The first part of the paper deals with the development of understanding of RPL by academic staff members in order to be able to plan, handle, process, interpret and assess an RPL application. At CPUT, RPL facilitators (academic staff members tasked with RPL) are required to undergo formal training for this work. The course is part of the Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (SAQA ID 90679). A researcher facilitates the programme, using previously received RPL applications as case studies. The six week programme aims to develop the knowledge and know-how of the RPL facilitators, and results in an RPL assessment plan for the academic department concerned. This plan enables the RPL facilitators to take the process forward within their academic departments and to prepare for RPL applications submitted against qualifications towards which they are working.

The second part of the paper is about the interpretation and implementation of the RPL process within one faculty. The faculty has an RPL Committee through which RPL applications are processed. Assessment tools and methods used in this faculty are evaluated. The paper reflects on the development of this Committee into a community of practice (CoP) (Wenger, 1998). For the RPL facilitators, the CoP has become a learning/reflective space where challenges are interrogated and discussion and advice are shared by peers.

The researchers on whose work the present research is based held one-on-one discussions with the individuals in the Committee. The following topics were discussed in the form of open ended questions.

- What was the influence of the training programme on the interpretation of RPL applications?
- Was the department adequately prepared for reflections on the RPL applications received and the knowledge claims presented by the applicants?
- Are changes required for the future in terms of the validity and effectiveness of the development and use of the assessment tools and methods?
- What lessons were learnt in terms of the role of the Committee in providing support for the RPL processes?
- What were the successes and failures of the RPL processes followed?
This paper reflects on the training programme as a method for the capacity building of academic staff members. The paper also evaluates the effectiveness of the training programme together with the CoP, for improving the uptake of RPL applications by academic departments - as an alternative method of admission into the university and/ or for the granting of credits.

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A critique of the theory and practice divide in the assessment of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) candidates

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The main purpose of this paper is to problematise the divide between theory and practice in professional qualifications offered by Higher Education Institutions while simultaneously proposing an innovative strategy for assessing contextual or practical knowledge within the context of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

The paper examines what is often portrayed as an unbridgeable chasm between contextual and conceptual knowledge in the assessment of portfolios of evidence submitted by candidates who wish to access Higher Education programmes through the RPL route. A common assumption which informs evaluations and decisions when RPL candidates are assessed is that in most instances candidates have sufficiently and demonstrably mastered practical or contextual knowledge but lack the requisite theoretical or conceptual knowledge to function competently in their chosen professions. Therefore candidates are often required to enrol for theory modules and are exempted from ‘practical’ ones. The paper challenges the assumptions about the nature of knowledge and knowing which inform these decisions.

Focusing on selected cases of RPL applications at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) the paper seeks to critique the often-unexamined view that theory is fundamentally different from practice. The paper examines a selection of comments made by expert assessors with a view to uncover the bias in favour of theoretical knowledge. The paper argues that theoretical or conceptual knowledge is intricately woven into practical knowledge. It is therefore not prudent or helpful to regard the conceptual knowledge as taking precedence over practical knowledge when assessing candidates for admission into Higher Education programmes.

Instead of requiring that learners enrol for basic theory modules or courses, assessors should devise assessment tasks that will prompt candidates to render explicit the often-implicit theoretical principles and approaches which inform practice.

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Abstract

Quality assurance in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): some lessons

Dr Elizabeth Smith,
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The Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) process within any organisation is a formally legislated process incorporating many post-1994 national directives for educational transformation in South Africa (Smith, 2004). RPL in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Further Education and Training Institutions (FETs) is a process of mediation and assessment, to be closely aligned with institutional academic and administrative processes on the one hand, and human resource development strategies on the other. As such, RPL processes should be integrated into processes such as recurruculation, access management, learner support, and transformation.

The purpose of RPL within organisations is to deliver RPL candidates who have undergone several processes including preparation, mentoring, assessment, counselling, and career pathing. RPL candidate skills and knowledge gaps would have been identified and remedied or would be in the process of being addressed. RPL candidates are likely to expect a next step in a negotiated process: enrolment in formal training programmes (Further Education and Training [FET] or Higher Education [HET]) or recognition in the workplace. Any RPL process should comprise a systematic strategy by means of which the prior learning of the candidate is rigorously assessed in terms of outcomes, and formally accredited. The related results should be formally documented as part of the system.

For credibility a strategy for quality assurance should form an integral part of the process of RPL. Quality assurance should ideally occur at three levels: at national, agency and candidate levels. Experience has proved that it should include a number of variables; be based on international best practice; be customised to meet the challenges of the unique South African context; and incorporate RPL-user perspectives.

Smith’s (2004) strategy design for the implementation and management of RPL is built around three specialised activities to be carried out systematically:

- planning RPL;
- implementing RPL; and
- quality assuring RPL processes.

Each of these specialised activities, occurring at institutional level (pertaining to the organisation as a whole); at agency level (pertaining to the responsible assessing agency) and at candidate level, combine to form an integrated step-by-step process for the planning, implementation, management and quality assurance of RPL.

Quality assurance of an RPL system should comprise both ongoing benchmarking as well as ongoing review. It is suggested that:

- benchmarking the design of the RPL process be carried out not only at the outset of the design, but also periodically throughout the introductory phase of RPL within the organization; and
- the system needs to be reviewed once it has been implemented, and that reviews should occur regularly throughout the life of the project.

In the decade after Smith’s (2004) strategy - spanning the years 2004-2014 - new national directives, guidelines, policies and research, both in South Africa and abroad, have brought about new thinking and created new perspectives on RPL.
This paper will reflect the changes in the complex landscape of quality assurance in RPL, gleaned from post-2004 literature and initiatives.

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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) for access: Master’s and Doctoral candidates

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is generally perceived to be reasonably easy to implement when part qualifications or learning outcomes of specific formal qualifications are used as measures of learner competence. When an RPL assessment and accreditation system is carried out against publicly available criteria; formally moderated, verified, and ratified by the Higher Education Institution’s decision-makers and documented and recorded for public scrutiny; a candidate may gain access to, advanced standing in, or credits towards, a formal qualification. This system is followed by most or all Higher Education Institutions in South Africa where RPL is an accepted process for first or Honours degrees.

The question now arises: is it possible to assess and accredit an RPL candidate for access into a Master’s degree or Doctorate if s/he presents a credible experience profile, but does not meet the academic pre-requisites? If it is possible, how can this be done?

An RPL assessment system has been developed at UNISA, which is used across disciplines to assess potential Master’s and Doctoral candidates’ competence to access their chosen degrees in all six faculties (colleges) of the university. Candidate assessment at this level has varied from:

- individuals who present with extensive conference and/or publication histories in their fields, but only undergraduate degrees; to
- individuals with first degrees in unrelated disciplines; to
- individuals with international undergraduate degrees.

The generic Level Descriptors for National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 9 and 10 (South African Qualifications Authority, 2012) are used as the basis for assessing the readiness of these candidates for their chosen degrees.

This presentation draws on case studies of real-life candidate applications across various disciplines. Findings from analysis of the cases, recommendations by academic staff, and workable solutions will be shared and discussed with conference delegates.

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The influence of learner profiles in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

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This presentation is built on research done to determine the influence of learner profiles on Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) processes and assessment. To realise this purpose, the learner profiles were described and consequently learning outcomes were formulated for a portfolio workshop.

The research found that learner profiles included distinctive personal traits, such as motivation, task orientation, a sense of responsibility and an orientation towards the future. The nature of the learner profile as well as of informal learning gained within diverse learning contexts requires directed preparation for assessment. The learners who were the research participants, regarded the portfolio workshop as a sustainable learning process and as a transformational learning experience. The role the workshop played was multidimensional: (i) it served as preparation for compiling the portfolio; and (ii) it empowered and prepared the learners on a personal level, and for the context of tertiary education.

Based on the research findings, the recommendations for an RPL approach include the four aspects that follow.

- Firstly, the learner’s voice should be afforded recognition.
- Secondly, individualised preparation for assessment is essential.
- Thirdly, the preparation should follow an assessment approach which is a sustainable learning process.
- Finally, given that the learning outcomes for the portfolio workshop made a contribution towards supporting the learners in bridging the learning contexts of informal learning and academic learning, workshops or structured mentoring sessions should form an important part of the RPL process.

The research potentially makes a valuable contribution to RPL practices as it shows how holistic learner profiles can guide approaches to RPL. The aim of RPL to bring about transformation will only become a reality if a learner-centred approach that recognises and empowers learners on personal and academic levels is followed.

The format and content of the portfolio workshop has proved to be a tried-and-tested tool. The focus of this presentation is to share an effective approach to portfolio development workshops as preparation for RPL assessments. It gives clear pointers on aspects of learner profiles to be considered in the preparation for RPL assessments. It shares some learning outcomes of a portfolio workshop as an effective preparation tool for mature adult learners with experience.

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Section 6:

Abstracts on implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework (OQSF)
Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) as a social entrepreneurial praxis: the example of five case studies in the Insurance Industry

Ms Shirley Lloyd,
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A social entrepreneur is defined as one who “aims for value in the form of large-scale activities or practices of transformational benefit that accrues either to a significant segment of society or to society at large” (Martin and Osberg, 2007: 34).

This paper examines the phenomenon of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) applied to scale, primarily through a social entrepreneurship lens and referenced against an Actor Network Theory (ANT) perspective. Using grounded theory and case study methodologies, the study to which the paper refers contextualizes RPL as a practice within the phenomenon of social entrepreneurship. In doing so the paper references literature comprising research and current discourse about social entrepreneurship, ANT, recognition and validation of lifelong learning and all forms of learning. The inquiry on which the paper draws proposes to demonstrate that both the social entrepreneurial value and mainstream and large scale praxis and implementation of RPL is not yet fully developed or recognized due to various barriers; not least of which are resistance to move beyond the traditional and ‘trusted’ forms of qualification assessment and achievement; general mistrust and suspicion of the integrity of the RPL assessment process and quality assurance thereof.

The inquiry on which the paper draws uses a qualitative approach, presented through five case studies of interlinked RPL projects over a period of seven years in the Insurance Industry. The five cases form the basis from which answers to the research questions are sought. The main research question asks whether RPL processes and practices can be classified as social entrepreneurial practice, and whether a social entrepreneurial approach has benefit and adds value for individuals, society, and to RPL processes. To answer this question and the secondary question, it is important to understand the concept of social entrepreneurship, its underpinning theoretical framework and its elements. The secondary questions, which derive from the main research question, focus on elements of a social entrepreneurial approach which are evidenced in the RPL case studies in the research.

A new focus is premised through the study, namely that RPL has a social entrepreneurial role in contexts that favour all learners who could potentially benefit socially, economically and intellectually. The entrepreneurial element of RPL capitalizes on using all necessary resources to develop, implement and achieve entrepreneurial ends. The entrepreneurial ends include sustainability, transformational value and replication of the proposed model. The social element of RPL is that its social mission is explicit and central. RPL, seen in this way, brings a new equilibrium into how non-formal, workplace and informal learning are recognized to the benefit of South African society in particular and other developing societies in general.

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The Association for Project Management South Africa (APMSA)-International Project Management Association (IPMA) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) context and tools

Mr Wessel Pieters,
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The Association for Project Management South Africa’s (APMSA’s) certification body (APMSA-Sert) manages the Project Manager Certification Programme ‘4-L-C’ (Four Level Certification), under the guidance and validation of the International Project Management Association (IPMA). The certification regime is described in the National Certification Rules and Guidelines which are country-specific and underwritten by the IPMA Certification Validation Management Board. This regime is based on the International Standards Organisation (ISO) 17024 Guideline for the Certification of Persons plus additional combined requirements based on the IPMA experience of 60 countries after the certification of more than 100 000 project managers. The South African National Competency Standard (NCB) is based on the IPMA Competence Baseline (IPMA, 2010) which is aligned with the ISO 21500 Project Management Guideline.

There are 46 elements describing project management competence in four (project management) levels of complexity. These elements are grouped in ranges relative to technical aspects of project management, behavioural requirements of project managers, and the contextual positioning of the project within the legal and financial environments of businesses.

The assessment taxonomy covers a range from ‘0 to 10’ marks for all four levels, providing more detailed ranking of criteria within levels than is provided by the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level Descriptors. This detail brings certain advantages of inter-level alignment and is aligned with the NQF in the country.

The certification assessment uses different tools like examinations, assignments, reports, workshops, interviews and Personal Preference Profiling (PPP) adjusted for the management and management support services groups.

This paper elaborates on the regime, the standard, taxonomy rules and tools employed in an RPL certification process.

References and sources of further information

Association for Project Management South Africa (APMSA). www.apmsa.org.za


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Abstract

The Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) Programme: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in action

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Ms Meg Pahad,  
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The implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in South Africa and elsewhere has been fraught with difficulties, many of which arise from the reluctance of institutions and employers to accept different forms of knowledge generated in different contexts as having equivalent value. The Western Indian Ocean Certification of Marine Protected Area Professionals (WIO-COMPAS) programme provides an example of an RPL model which works in its own context, serves its own professionals and meets its own purposes. Although it is not offered as a model that is generally replicable in other contexts, it is one from which a considerable amount can be learnt. Perhaps the main learning is that RPL models need to grow organically within specific contexts, and not be imposed in line with particular generic theoretical approaches. Another lesson may be the recognition of the critical importance of fundamental assessment principles as demonstrated by the rigour and the richness of this model.

The paper presents the WIO-COMPAS model and describes some of its features. The developers of the model did not initially engage with the debates around assessment approaches and methodologies but rather focussed on developing a contextually appropriate professional competence assessment process. In essence the WIO-COMPAS model evolved into RPL by default rather than by design.

The presentation explores five aspects of RPL and links these to the WIO-COMPAS model. These aspects are: (i) overcoming barriers to RPL; (ii) the main purpose of the RPL assessment in a specific context; (iii) giving value to experiential and work-based learning; (iv) providing opportunities to demonstrate competence in different ways; and (v) the broader RPL process and its role in personal and professional development.

The WIO-COMPAS certification programme has developed into a sound, rigorous and respected RPL model for Marine Protected Area Professionals. Certificates are offered at three levels: Level 1 - Marine Field Operations; Level 2 - Site Management; and Level 3 - Strategy, Policy and Planning.

The greatest strength of the WIO-COMPAS RPL model is its foundation on the real competences needed for effective functioning in the workplace. At present WIO-COMPAS can claim with considerable justification that it truly illustrates RPL that works.

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7 The WIO-COMPAS levels do not relate to South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels as this certification programme was developed and is used across many countries.
Abstract

Strategies for optimising Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) models for Sub-Saharan Africa: the case of the Construction Sector

Mr Martin Manuhwa,
Southern African Federation of Engineering Organisations (SAFEO)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is described in the new National Policy for the Implementation of RPL (South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA], 2013) as a set of processes through which the prior knowledge and skills of a person are made visible, mediated and assessed. Learners may use this formal recognition or validation for entry to a programme of study in place of the usual entry requirements or for achievement of a part or full qualification so as to avoid repeating learning they can demonstrate. This recognition or validation can also be used for recognition in the workplace.

The objectives of this paper are (i) to identify the essential elements that are part of RPL processes; and (ii) to examine when and why RPL could be used. The paper presents and explores how RPL processes could be set up and managed to benefit individuals, organisations and other entities including Higher Education Institutions and Further Education and Training Colleges. Challenges identified in successful RPL programmes in selected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, will be presented.

Case studies of RPL practices in the Engineering Construction Sector were sought. Initiatives found were analysed and grouped into the three broad areas of formal, informal and non-formal learning systems. A framework and a scope were developed for the analysis. The framework was premised on the impact and costs of implementation of RPL in the selected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The RPL strategies and models found in the countries investigated are discussed in view of their quest to optimize delivery value in their education systems. The widespread development of RPL requirements in engineering and infrastructure development courses were evaluated and suitable strategies are proffered for various scenarios.

It was found that RPL in the Construction Sector requires elaboration of a comprehensive strategy that includes the contributions of all stakeholders, including stakeholders in the public sector, private companies, and consumers.

Some of the most effective strategies proposed by stakeholders are:

• to ensure that RPL is designed to offer learners flexibility; and
• that it is essential that the process of awarding credit or part of a qualification for prior learning is regulated and managed to ensure quality. This aspect is especially important as the credit which learners gain through RPL has to have exactly the same weight and value as credit gained by completing a traditionally assessed learning programme.

Reference


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Abstract

An alternative Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) model to meet unique skills needs: lessons from the Grain Silo Industry

Ms Johannie Bayman,
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Compliance with international Food Hygiene and Food Safety regulations requires grain silo owners to ensure that all employed workers are certified against nationally recognised qualifications as evidence of their competence to handle and store grains and oilseeds hygienically and safely in accordance with industry/workplace standards. Based on low staff turnover - in general workers remain in the sector for their full working lives - the industry made a strategic decision to embark on a process to recognise the prior learning (including formal training interventions and informal and non-formal learning) and workplace experience of certain categories of grain silo workers.

The industry representative body, Grain Silo Industry (Pty) Ltd was mandated by its members to coordinate a solution to the industry’s critical skills needs. A consultative process resulted in Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) being selected as the best solution to meet the industry’s skills development needs. A suitable solution had to meet challenges such as: the size of the industry; the seasonal nature of the business environment; the geographical spread of grain silo owner organisations; the large component of illiterate/semi-literate and older workers; and the socio-economic context and highly regulated working environment affecting skills development in the industry.

Feasibility of available offerings soon indicated that no ‘off-the-shelf’ solution met the industry’s specific needs. Deloitte was contracted to design a customised skills development solution, and was made fully aware that an RPL programme in the agricultural sector could be particularly challenging, especially in terms of its adaptability and industry readiness, the time to adjust to change, and the accessibility of RPL to all learners.

Deloitte designed a unique computer-based ‘e-RPL’ model which includes methodology to collect evidence across occupational, skills and cognitive levels, and integrates other assessment instruments. The e-RPL model can be replicated across economic sectors/industries. The e-RPL model was built using the most up-to-date multimedia including audio, written and visual aids in its design and development process. The model aims to support candidates and RPL practitioners (including employers) during the evidence collection process. The design of the Deloitte e-RPL and Assessment Model allows for portability to deliver RPL programmes to large numbers of candidates at multiple sites across a wide geographical range within a shorter time and via a less costly process than those of traditional RPL programmes.

Following a successful pilot phase funded by the Agricultural Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSETA), Deloitte’s e-RPL model rolled out nationally during the Amabele e-RPL Grain Silo Industry Project, for which AgriSETA allocated proportionate discretionary funding. AgriSETA funding was supplemented by participating Grain Silo Industry employers who contributed 50% of costs towards each e-RPL candidate.

The Amabele e-RPL project proved that it is possible to assess literate, semiliterate and illiterate learners, using an alternate but very structured approach. The programme involved consultation and capacity building of all stakeholders. The Amabele e-RPL project was delivered during a nine month period across eight provinces at 18 mostly rural sites and involved participation of 16 grain silo owner organisations under the stewardship of their industry body. It resulted in 1187 e-RPL candidates receiving certification for full or part qualifications at NQF Levels 1-3!
This presentation sketches the e-RPL project – with its processes, tools and lessons learned – as an alternative RPL model.

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Summary

A practical Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) approach in the Pulp and Paper Industry

Ms Erica Botha,
Intertrain Consulting

Mr Johan Els,
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Ms Linda Prinsloo,
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The Pulp and Paper industry in South Africa witnessed changes in requirements for full-time staff and staff complements which made a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) intervention necessary. RPL had potential in the following types of instances where: (i) the entrants or inexperienced but qualified staff entering the Pulp and Paper environment would require prior technical skills training to operate mill-specific machinery and equipment; (ii) experienced and in many cases, older employees often had no formal qualification(s) in place; (iii) recruitment specifications had changed over the last few years – where matric or an equivalent qualification with pass marks in both Maths and Science is now required for appointment to a permanent position within mills; and (iv) job specifications changed as the education system had evolved. Employees need to have a combination of work experience and work-related qualifications before they can be considered for promotion.

The RPL process comprised a thorough preparation phase whereby all RPL tools and instruments as well as learning materials at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 1-4 were developed and assessors trained. Candidates were required to compile a Portfolio of Evidence (PoE) under the guidance of their respective assessors. Candidates also had to undergo a concise theoretical assessment before practical activities could be scheduled.

The practical RPL activities were performed by registered assessors and moderators. Feedback to learners was given during and after the practical sessions. Where gaps were identified in terms of evidence/experience these were discussed with the candidate and addressed. Further opportunities were given for candidates to ‘close out’ gaps. On-site external moderation was conducted. All parties involved including all RPL candidates, assessors, internal and external moderators and advisors were requested to be available for verification purposes. Interviews and documentary reviews were used as parts of the moderation processes. Assessment outcomes were verified and portfolios moderated by Forestry Industry Education and Training Authority (FIETA) staff. FIETA registered competent candidates on the National Learners Records’ Database (NLRD) against current unit standards.

One of the most important lessons learned was that if job descriptions were linked to part-qualifications, the RPL process became easier to manage, as workplace practices could be linked to the knowledge and practical requirements of part-qualifications. This paper shares the details of the project and the lessons learned.

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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in manufacturing and engineering contexts: a reflection on trials and tribulations in, and lessons learned for, searching for redress

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Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA)

The transformational intent of Recognition of Prior learning (RPL) has been widely debated, researched and sought in implementation during the past 20 years since the achievement of democracy in South Africa. Issues addressed include challenges embedded in epistemology, different approaches, methodologies, and a variety of sectoral templates and toolkits. It could be argued that regardless of the way in which RPL is implemented, it is all towards the ‘greater good’ and in principle contributes towards socio-economic transformation. However, there is another view which emphasises that a technicist approach to RPL merely creates expectations and pays no more than lip service to the true (transformational) meaning of RPL and the related notions of articulation, and credit accumulation and transfer (CAT).

It is in light of the contradictions emerging from different understandings of RPL that the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) started to ask: “What is not RPL?” By metaphorically turning RPL upside down, and by specifically referring to artisans and artisanal RPL rollout plans in manufacturing and engineering, merSETA grappled with this ‘reversed’ question when scoping the merSETA’s 2013/14 RPL project and sub-projects. The question became particularly important when interrogating the revised National Policy for Implementing the Recognition of Prior Learning (South African Qualifications Authority [SAQA], 2013), the Ministerial RPL Task Team Report on RPL (Department of Higher Education and Training [DHET], 2013) and various related RPL documents in the occupational domain. Across these documents, interpretations have varied from RPL being seen as a mere access tool, and RPL being understood as involving a process including learning, assessment and formative support throughout the RPL process, which would assist redress.

The merSETA as a collective comprising business, organised labour and critical interest groups, positioned the plans for its 2013/14 RPL project and sub-projects as redress initiatives. In this presentation the merSETA outlines the trials, tribulations and experiences in implementing these projects. The presentation also reflects on the lessons learned in previous RPL projects.

References


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Abstract

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA) Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Pilot Project case study

Ms Inger Marrian,
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The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA) hosted a national Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) conference on 28 April 2010. The Conference identified a need within the Wholesale and Retail sector for an RPL pilot project. The opinions of representatives of organised labour, employers and government were raised at the conference.

Findings from the Conference discussions relevant for this pilot included that:

• employers view RPL as an onerous process, very labour intensive without having any real returns on investment;
• labour views RPL as an opportunity for members to be recognised for their work experience and supports mass implementation of RPL;
• the RPL toolkit developed by the W&R SETA had been fully embraced and customised, but needed updating; and
• there was a dire need for a systematically structured RPL model in order to enable successful RPL implementation on a large scale.

To address the concerns raised, W&R SETA initiated an RPL Pilot Project in September 2011 which was completed in August 2012. The aim of the Project as identified in the W&R SETA Sector Skills Plan (W&R SETA, 2011) was to pilot RPL in three provinces, namely Gauteng, KwaZulu- Natal and the Western Cape.

The objectives of the Pilot Project were to:

• develop a model for RPL implementation in the Wholesale and Retail sector;
• develop a funding model for the implementation of RPL in the sector;
• develop best practice guidelines for RPL in the sector;
• update the W&R SETA RPL toolkit; and
• capacitate Unions to implement RPL.

The main findings of the Pilot Project were that:

(i) best RPL practices should include on-the-job observation as well as the traditional portfolio assessment processes as there is a need for both approaches;

(ii) the recruitment and selection of RPL candidates is a challenging phase in the RPL process: potential and actual candidates need intensive support from their workplace supervisors and coaches from recruitment throughout the RPL process;

(iii) RPL should be funded by 75% of the management and delivery grants for learnerships and skills programmes, and the possibility of claiming South African Revenue Services (SARS) learnership rebates for RPL processes undertaken should be investigated. The fact that the skills programme phase of RPL is costly in rural areas needs to be taken into account.
W&RSETA agreed to implement a further RPL project for 500 learners using the recommendations from this Pilot Project.

References


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Abstract

Developing models for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Community Development and Early Childhood Development (ECD)

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Ms Michelle Buchler,
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In August 2013 the Education, Training and Development Practices (ETDP) Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) in partnership with the Departments of Social Development (DSD) and Basic Education (DBE), began a project to develop Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) models for the Community Development and Early Childhood Development (ECD) sub-sectors. As part of its current strategic plan, the ETDP SETA is also committed to establishing RPL centres, and the Community Development and Early Childhood Development (ECD) RPL projects will feed into that process.

In the case of the Community Development component, new occupational qualifications are being developed, and the project will therefore need to include developing tools for mapping legacy qualifications, non-formal training and prior experiential learning ‘against’ the new occupational qualifications. Part of this process will involve building understanding and developing recommendations for additional or ‘top-up’ training that may be needed to enable RPL candidates to obtain the relevant occupational qualifications.

The ECD component will focus on the birth-to-four age group for which the DBE has developed a curriculum which was gazetted for public comment in August 2013. As with the Community Development component, a mapping process will be undertaken.

Both components will be supported by literature and document reviews (local and international), as well as by quantitative and qualitative research processes with a strong focus on potential RPL candidates. This phase of the project will be used to develop models for RPL implementation for Community Development and ECD practitioners, with the second phase developing the processes and tools.

This presentation focuses on providing an overview of the local and international reviews, the profiles of Community Development workers and ECD practitioners who will need RPL, emerging issues relating to curriculum and qualifications, and how these aspects shape RPL implementation approaches, including the establishment of RPL centres.

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Abstract

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT): catalysts for skills, knowledge and employability - the case of the Insurance Sector

*Dr Karen Deller,*  
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The Bank Sector Education and Training Authority (BANKSETA) appointed Chartall Business College to manage the implementation of its Credit Accumulation and Transfer (CAT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) projects.

Under the projects, employers in the sector may apply to have their internal training courses mapped to part qualifications for the purposes of earning exemption from selected part qualifications (this, broadly, is the CAT process). The outcome of this alignment is that employees who have completed internal courses may apply to be exempt from the matched part qualifications on condition that they complete the balance of a qualification.

The project is a two-year project. At the time of writing this abstract over 1000 employees in the sector had engaged with the credit transfer process and been awarded exemptions for matched parts of qualifications. Most of these employees then embarked upon the RPL process to complete their full qualification using one of three delivery methods. These delivery methods are sketched here together with comments on their appropriateness.

The first method works well for large groups where members of the group have the same part qualifications as each other to complete, in order to achieve the full qualification concerned. Direct Sales Agents who have all completed the same internal training are an example of such a group. Face-to-face sessions can be scheduled to assist employees to go through the RPL process for the remaining parts of the qualification needed, and the portfolios can then be completed ‘in class’. Advantages of this approach are that there are high portfolio submission rates, high first-time competency rates, and high numbers of candidates completing the qualification in a short period of time. A disadvantage is that whole groups of people are out of the workplace for a number of days.

Second, the use of electronic-only assessment is appropriate when people from different job classes are enrolled on the project, and where there is little overlap between part qualifications that need to be completed towards the full qualifications. These people need to be self-motivated and highly knowledgeable and literate.

This model is web and email based. Learners complete their assessments electronically using Chartall Business College’s custom designed e-portfolio system. Employees are completing different assessments so there is little opportunity for class interaction. There is individual support-on-demand via instant messaging and phone. The advantage of this method is minimal disruption to productivity. Disadvantages are lower portfolio submission rates, and lower first-time competency rates, and it takes longer to complete the qualification.

The third method is appropriate for less knowledgeable (but still self-motivated employees). It involves e-learning where people from different job classes are enrolled on the project and where there is little overlap between part qualifications that need to be completed towards the full qualifications.

In this model there is structured e-learning support for each part qualification, supported by paper-based or electronic assessment, depending on the business needs. The advantage is low level disruption to productivity, although e-learning may need to be viewed during working hours. Synchronicity is not needed: learners can access e-learning at different times. The disadvantages are moderately lower portfolio submission rates and moderately
lower first-time competency rates although the time it takes to complete the qualification can be controlled more easily than the electronic-only assessment model described as the second option above.

This presentation describes and compares the three delivery methods, looking at which worked best for different employers and employees. The participation of unemployed people is also explored – using simulations and role plays in addition to generic policies and processes.

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): an evaluation of the Insurance Sector Education Training Authority’s (INSETA’s) practices

Ms Nadia Starr, 
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Dr Jason le Grange, 
Consultant

The Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority (INSETA) considers Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to be a valuable way to recognise the previous learning experiences of those working in the sector, through a formal assessment process.

It could be said that the current discourse around RPL in South Africa is partly based on views expressed in contributions such as: The RPL conundrum: Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in a teacher upgrading programme (Breier, 2007); Towards the development of an RPL model for the South African Insurance Sector (Deller, 2007); RPL: power pedagogy and possibility (Harris, 2000); and contributions made by other South African researchers such as Carola Steinberg, Linda Cooper, Ruksana Osman and Yael Shalem as voiced in Re-theorising the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (Andersson and Harris, 2006).

Significant research was carried out by Deller (2008) which involved a model widely considered to be suitable for the Insurance Sector. The research provided a critical analysis of how RPL could be implemented in the sector. The model included conceptual frameworks and practical recommendations for the sector.

This paper interrogates how RPL is viewed within the Insurance Sector. It evaluates the specific policy, models, practices and quality assurance requirements implemented by INSETA to date. The review includes perceptions and awareness noted from the workplace and by training providers, and considers how the sector and its role-players have understood RPL provision up to the present time.

Furthermore, the role of quality assurance is evaluated, and a model is suggested for ensuring that RPL processes are evaluated using eight core criteria developed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (SAQA, 2002) in order to maintain the integrity of the qualification and part-qualifications obtained through RPL.

Finally, the current barriers within the sector, namely costs, resources and capacity are considered, as well as what the future of RPL is, within the sector. It is intended that this research will complement and help to expand further the discourse around RPL within the Insurance Industry.

References


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Abstract

Implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): lessons for employers and Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges – a mini workshop

Karen Deller,
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Chartall Business College is a provider of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) services to corporates and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Most of the RPL is for credit for either a full or part-qualification. Many employees require qualifications for regulatory purposes, as a qualification-to-practice requirement has been introduced for their professions. This is the case for example, in the Real Estate and Financial Services industries. Some employers just want to offer RPL to assist staff to earn a full qualification.

Chartall Business College has developed an implementation model for its RPL projects. This model has its conceptual roots in a doctoral thesis involving RPL research and in which an RPL-for-credit model was proposed (Deller, 2008).

This workshop provides a practical view of an RPL model, an RPL process and RPL assessment tools.

The design of the assessment tools is one of the most important factors in the success of the entire RPL process. The design of the assessment tools should not be a random act, conducted in a way that simply meets the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) checklist requirements. It needs to be rooted in the overall pedagogical approach of the provider who designs and uses the tools. The design of the tools reflects many aspects of the providers’ approach to RPL, for example the aspects described here:

- **Who are the planned recipients of RPL?** If the planned recipients are mainly employed, then the assessment tools can be more contextual and artefact based, whereas if the planned recipients are going to be unemployed (or employed but with no access to systems and documents) then the tools need to be more project and simulation based.

- **Who is ‘in charge’ of the RPL process?** If the provider believes that the candidate is ‘in charge’ and responsible for what happens in the RPL process, then the tools will be presented in layman’s language; whereas if the provider believes that the assessor is ‘in charge’ then the tools can be presented using training and development jargon (new assessment tool designers tend to default to the latter scenario, whereas more experienced designers move towards the former as they understand the importance of tool design).

- **What is the desired outcome of the RPL process?** If the desired outcome is to find the candidate competent then the tools will be simple, easy to use and understand, non-repetitive and focused, with a flexible marking rubric. If the provider is ‘afraid’ or unable to award a full qualification using RPL alone then the tools are more likely to be repetitive, difficult to understand and the marking grid will be rigid. Marking rubrics will lead to not-yet-competent decisions if they are too focused and specific. It is worth noting that it is not easy to create a rubric in an RPL environment because it is impossible to cover every possible life experience of every possible RPL candidate.

- **What kind of support is to be offered to RPL candidates?** Some providers believe that no support is necessary and that if the RPL candidate has the required learning then they will be able to demonstrate

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8 These are observations gleaned from personal experiences. Over the past eight years external verifications have been conducted for various SETAs by the facilitator during which underlying pedagogy and academic approaches were interrogated. It was noticed how approaches and views were reflected in tool design.
this learning without support – and their RPL processes reflect this. Other providers believe that because the learning possessed by an RPL candidate was gained in a different context and format to the context and format in which it is being assessed, candidates need support and the implementation model and tools of these providers reflect this. Candidates would need this kind of support for example when learning was achieved in an unstructured way in the workplace, and the RPL assessment is structured in an academic way.

• **What is the provider’s view on assessment?** Some providers see assessment as an incremental process which allows candidates to submit remedial evidence if found to be not-yet-competent. An alternative view is that with RPL you either ‘know it or you don’t’ and if you are unable to present complete evidence of competence first time around then you are a candidate for training and not for RPL. Both of these views impact on the way RPL tools are structured and the way the RPL process is implemented.

The workshop will address how these considerations have influenced the design of RPL and its assessment tools. The logic model used by Chartall Business College for RPL implementation will be work-shopped. The session will be practical and information will be shared step-by-step. Recommendations to improve implementation will be discussed for different types of candidates and differing types and levels of qualifications.

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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Real Estate Sector

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Legislation promulgated in the Government Gazette No 31125, June 2008 (Republic of South Africa, 2008) stipulates that individuals in the Estate Agent Industry should become qualified professional members of the profession. Potential effects of this legislation on the morale and lives of Estate Agents and financial repercussions on the Real Estate Industry needed to be researched, and the iSeleSele Property Academy devised a project to do so.

The purpose of the research was (i) to understand the mind-sets of Estate Agents around Recognition of Prior learning (RPL), (ii) to ascertain the impact this Real Estate Industry-related legislation had on the personal development of Estate Agents and (iii) to assess the reach of the impact of this legislation in the Real Estate Sector.

A qualitative research method was used to observe/ascertain the responses and reactions of Estate Agents affected by the legislation. Special attention was given to a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) tool available for Estate Agents where perceptions of the curriculum content and fitness for purpose were investigated.

Interviews and questionnaires were used to capture the experiences, comments and observations of experts, principals and learners in the Real Estate Industry. A sample of individuals was purposively selected in order to elicit a range of views.

It was found that:

i. ascertaining eligibility and candidate selection were very important parts of the RPL process;
ii. the RPL process was easier and more meaningful if candidates embarked on it willingly and were committed to it, and management of candidate expectations was key in these respects;
iii. the terminology in unit standards proved to be a barrier which made portfolio development more complicated than it needed to be;
iv. the requirements for fundamentals for a second language were unrealistic;
v. the assistance of RPL assessors who were subject matter experts was essential; and
vi. particular occupational areas needed their own exemption matrices and evidence guides to match the specific qualifications and workplace requirements concerned.

It is important for successful RPL, for qualifications thus obtained to have credibility in the industry. The RPL process needs to support the quality of these qualifications every step of the way. This presentation shares useful lessons learned towards these ends.

Reference


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Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Energy and Water Sector in South Africa

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In 2013 the Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA) Board decided to pilot Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in the Water Sector. PiCompany South Africa was asked to draft a proposal that outlines how the development of EWSETA RPL practices can be realised based on their experience and models in the development of RPL. The proposal focused on capacitating training providers and employees within the EWSETA responsible for RPL implementation. It was part of the process to develop RPL policies and procedures together with the relevant stakeholders in the sector.

The RPL pilot programme is partly based on best practices within other Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) in South Africa and partly on best practices within organisations from abroad, in Europe in general, and on sectoral approaches in the Netherlands in particular. As a partner and expert on RPL, CINOP, a Dutch organization that manages the Dutch Knowledge Centre for Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) under the guidance of the Ministry of Education in the Netherlands, is involved in the project. The RPL pilot programme is uniquely tailored for South Africa.

Successful execution of RPL in a specific sector requires the involvement of important stakeholders in that sector. Clear and common vision and strategy regarding RPL is a condition for success.

The pilot in the Energy and Water Sector is based on a ‘strategic triangle’ called The Public Value Model (Moore, 1995). This model is successfully used to implement RPL in the Netherlands including in the Building and Infrastructure and Financial Sectors, and especially in the Dutch National Police force. The purpose of the strategic triangle is to focus attention on three questions closely related to each other and essential for implementing RPL.

- What is the important public value of RPL?
- What sources of legitimacy and support could be relied upon to create public value for RPL?
- What operational (social, technical and infrastructural) capabilities would the organisation of the pilot rely on to deliver desired results?

The RPL pilot programme will commence rollout in November 2013, starting with discussions on the approach and methodology to be used. Interactive discussion with participants will take place around the following questions.

- What are the main issues in your sector concerning learning and development?
- How can RPL play a role in your sector?
- How can this approach be useful in your sector?
- What are known success factors in sectoral approaches to RPL?
- How can we learn and share experiences together?

At the National RPL Conference: tried-and tested, tools templates (February, 2014) participant inputs will be sought.
Reference


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Abstract

Transformation through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) – an employer’s perspective

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When I first heard the term ‘Recognition of Prior Learning’ (RPL) several years ago, I thought that it would end up being another buzzword, spoken about but no action - I was so wrong.

I would like to share the story about a middle-aged Black woman, who has been employed by e.tv since it started in 1998. She will be named ‘Pat’ to protect her privacy.

Pat is a single mother. She has a matric certificate and has been employed in various junior administrative positions over the last 15 years. Pat has dedicated her life and finances to ensuring that her child receives a good education. Now in her mid-fourties, with her child at university, Pat took a look at her life and her career, and decided that she wanted to develop her own life. She applied for a more senior position within the company, also in the administrative field, despite the fact that she did not have the qualification as per the job requirements. After an interview, Pat was told that she was unsuccessful.

While Pat was so busy putting her child through school, she did not take the time to focus on her own needs in terms of her further studies. Now that she had decided to address her own needs, she spoke to the company’s training department and asked what her options were. She really wanted to grow, but could not see herself enrolling for night or weekend classes - even though she realised that the lack of a formal qualification seemed to be the only thing standing in her way of climbing up the corporate ladder. She realised that all her years of work experience must count for something.

Upon agreement with the relevant managers, Pat was enrolled in a learning programme with potential to give her the recognition that she needed. e.tv found a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA)-accredited training provider who accepted Pat via an RPL process into a Learnership in Business Administration (at National Qualifications Framework [NQF] Level 3). Pat would have to attend one day of classes every six weeks for a year and submit work-related assignments (for formative assessment) between classes. At the end of this process, she would have to complete a summative assessment which would be used to determine her overall competency.

e.tv set up a team of mentors and the resources required to help Pat to achieve her goals. At various times in the process PAT could be seen sitting at her desk with a smile on her face. She would look at fellow employees and say: “I am so happy to be getting a qualification after so many years.” She would say that she could not wait to get home to share with her child what she learned in her classes. She was also very excited about the additional knowledge and hands-on experience that she gained throughout the programme.

Over a year has passed since this journey began – and as all concerned eagerly await the final assessment outcome, Pat seems to be a different person. Her confidence has grown and she has a spring in her step. There’s no stopping her now.

For e.tv, PRL is a reality. e.tv is transforming its workplace – and the lives of its employees – by making RPL work. RPL is an extremely useful tool to use to empower South Africa, even in small steps - one individual at a time.

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Abstract

Implementing Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Wholesale and Retail workplaces at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Levels 2-4

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In this paper the actual process, value, cost and time, in a project in which qualifications obtained through a Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) process and skills programmes at Further Education and Training (FET) level are discussed.

The RPL exercise was done in a rural area against the National Certificate: Wholesale and Retail Operations, at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 2, and three skills programmes: Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) Merchandiser (NQF Level 3); Team Supervisor (NQF Level 4); and Cashier (NQF Level 2). These programmes are accredited by the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA).

All 35 of the RPL candidates were employed in one of three towns, namely Nigel (10), Paul Pietersburg (12) and Piet Retief (13). The requirements were that the RPL had to be done during working hours.

The RPL process included identifying and addressing gaps in learning. In a study of the project, time used for preparing for, doing, and giving feedback on assessment was compared across the RPL processes and traditional classroom and workplace learning. The report on the RPL project is presented with an indication of the number of RPL candidates who were successful.

This paper presents the reason for the RPL project; the model, methods and tools used in the RPL process; the way the RPL candidates were recruited and selected; the time and other resources needed; and the roles played by the different stakeholders involved.

This presentation shares lessons learned in this project, towards building successful RPL practices in the Wholesale and Retail Sector and beyond.

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Section 7:

Abstracts for the closing plenary
Abstract

National Learners’ Records Database (NLRD): a message

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Since its inception and up to the present, South Africa’s National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has made provision for the achievement of qualifications and part qualifications through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). Six of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) via three Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs), have made extensive use of this provision. The RPL records of these SETAs and institutions have been loaded onto the National Learners’ Records Database (NLRD). Several other institutions, including some of the Public Higher Education Institutions, are known to implement RPL, but their records have not yet been submitted to SAQA for recording on the NLRD.

The present analysis focuses on RPL records currently on the NLRD, and specifically on the achievement of qualifications through RPL. There are more than 25 000 records of achievement of qualifications by more than 23 000 people via 253 providers. The NQF Levels referred to, in the analysis, are those of the 10-level NQF (“new” levels) adopted under the NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008 (Republic of South Africa, Department of Higher Education and Training, 2008).

Approximately 150 different qualifications at NQF Levels 1 to 8 have been achieved through RPL, mostly in the field of Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology at NQF Levels 1 to 4, followed by the field of Physical Planning and Construction, then the field of Business, Commerce and Management Studies. While a further three fields show fewer RPL records, six NQF fields have no records of achievement of qualifications through RPL.

Although the largest number of qualifications achieved through RPL was in Manufacturing, Engineering and Technology, the majority of the 25 000-plus achievements were in the field of Services, mostly at NQF Levels 1 and 4, followed by achievements in Business, Commerce and Management Studies, mostly at Level 2. The presentation based on this paper will examine which specific qualifications have the greatest number of achievements through RPL.

The largest group of people who have achieved qualifications through RPL, as recorded on the NLRD to date, is African women, followed by white women, African men and white men.

While it is encouraging to note the utilisation of RPL and the recording of achievements by the institutions mentioned, broader utilisation of RPL and communication of these records to the NLRD is needed. Loading all of the records will enable national acknowledgement of the true extent of learner achievements via RPL and analysis of RPL-related trends over time. The revised National Policy for the Implementation of RPL (SAQA, 2013) requires uploading of RPL achievements; NLRD staff members are available to assist with this work.
Reference


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