RESOURCING RPL

Human Resources for RPL
And
Institutionalizing RPL
THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

“I’m right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me.”
THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM IS AN OBVIOUS TRUTH THAT IS BEING IGNORED OR GOES UNADDRESSD

PEOPLE IN THE ‘ROOM’ WHO PRETEND THE ELEPHANT IS NOT THERE HAVE CHOSEN TO CONCERN THEMSELVES WITH TANGENTIAL ISSUES RATHER THAN DEAL WITH THE LOOMING BIG ONE.
PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Context and reframing
- Case studies
- Closing comments
In its purest form: You ask an individual to examine something from a completely different perspective from their usual comfort zone.
Bolman and Deal (1997) write about four ‘frames’

- The structural frame
- The Human Resource frame
- The political frame
- The symbolic frame
We say

- NQFs recognize the contribution made by lifelong learning and work experiences translated into credits through RPL comparable with those obtained through formal schooling, further education or higher education.
- RPL ‘addresses the visible and invisible barriers to learning and assessment
- RPL approaches must be viable, sustainable and credible
- Credible and ready institutions should conduct RPL assessment
Reframing cont.

**We do**

- Approach RPL to scale with caution
- View RPL praxis with concern or ‘sceptism’
- Speak about its cost, bureaucracy, length of time to deliver, institutional ‘unreadiness’
- Question its validity and sustainability
- View RPL assessment as somehow ‘inferior’

**TIME TO REFRAME OUR THINKING**
HR AND INSTITUTIONAL READINESS

Human Resources in RPL
- coordinator (appropriately qualified)
- Facilitator/s
- Learner support (professionally qualified)
- CAS
- Assessors and Moderators (Quality assurance)
- Data manager/s

Institutional readiness
- Vision and mission
- Governance and administration
- Institutional integrity
- Institutional effectiveness
- Qualifications and programmes
- Student support and Development
- Information and learning resources
- Physical resources
- Financial resources
- Policies, guidelines and other resources
Institutions involved in RPL

- Work places
- Education and Training Institutions
- Quality Councils/authorities
Context for case studies

- ‘The Financial Advisors and Intermediary Services (FAIS) Act: Specific learning and assessment interventions were called for to develop and measure these qualifications and skills’. (Jonathan Dixon: DEO: FSB)

- ‘Black brokers faced financial ruin and possible exclusion from the industry. The INSETA was able to unpack ‘the abstract regulatory environment and lead black brokers through the terrain, ....by affording in excess of 5000 black intermediaries an opportunity to write accreditation exams in the last five years’. (Jay Mngoma: Senate: Black Brokers Forum)
Case study 1: Independent Examinations Board (IEB)

**CONTEXT**

‘The INSETA raised concerns about the *fundamental component* of the NQF recorded insurance qualifications with the IEB. These took three forms:

- Who would provide and quality assure the fundamentals
- How could they be assured that equivalent credits were in fact ‘equivalent’
- How could they standardize the achievement of financial literacy across all insurance qualifications’ (King, M: IEB.2003)
IEB: HR AND INSTITUTIONAL READINESS

• Human Resources
  ✓ Superbly qualified staff
  ✓ Project coordinators
  ✓ SACE accredited Facilitators, assessors and moderators
  ✓ Data recorders
  ✓ IEB accredited by DoE (now DBE) compliant with all ETQA requirements

• Institutional readiness
  ✓ ETQA accredited; policies, guidelines and ‘going concern’
  ✓ Workplaces supportive
• The IEB advised an **initial pilot project** comprising 7 workplaces and 130 learners.
• The group comprised the pilot learners and grade 12 ‘graduates’ (not part of 130)
• RPL assessment of NQF Level 4 language and mathematics fundamental components
• Accepted that grade 12 symbols can represent a wide range of competence, whereas ‘registered unit standards pin competence at a particular level’ (IEB: 2003)
• The RPL assessment results would not replace the senior certificate equivalences.
FINDINGS

• ‘All learners (majority not 1st language English speakers) achieved language standards to a high level

• Those who had been in the workplace for a while, as opposed to those who had newly left school coped better with the ‘workplace application’ language uses

• Those who had mathematics in their Senior Certificate did not achieve competence in the NQF level 2 mathematics assessment, primarily because they were not familiar with the problem –solving contextualized applications to the work place and specifically to the financial services environment’. (IEB, 2003)
ETQA readiness to address findings

- Clear policies for RPL assessments of fundamentals
- Concession policy for language and mathematics achievements through RPL
- Learning material development for support for free on website
- Bridging programmes for those who did not fulfill assessment requirements, available ‘online’.
- Re-assessment opportunities at IEB or accredited RPL agency
- Pilot implemented to scale in the Industry based on Concession policy and lessons learnt from the pilot.
Case study two: professional body and university

• Large scale implementation of RPL to scale in Insurance industry for FAIS compliance
• Two RPL ‘providers’ - a Nationally and internationally respected professional body and a large distance education university
• Project comprised:
  - Awareness campaign
  - Equivalence mapping
  - RPL assessment via case study/multiple choice written assessments
Case study two Cont.

- **SCALE**: 17,000 financial advisors/planners
- **Advocacy campaign**: ‘remove the fear’
- **Equivalence mapping**: Cost effectiveness and efficiency; in itself an RPL tool (CAT)
- **RPL assessment tool**: valid, relevant, authentic, reliable, across NQF levels 2, 4 and 5
- Aligning all case study questions to NQF registered Insurance qualifications, assessment criteria and specific outcomes
Lessons learnt

• Questions had to be reset due to
  – Complexity and bad phrasing
  – Negative questioning ‘techniques’
  – Mainly euro-centric examples in case studies
  – Incorrect language usage leading to ambiguity
  – Unrealistic case studies that did not assess knowledge and competence and applied knowledge

Data capturing challenged due to contestation between examining body and logistics partner.
PROCESS, SUCCESSES AND LESSONS LEARNT

• Reliance on SAQA ETQA accreditation to do the ‘job’
• ETQA readiness and institutional readiness
• Industry specialists designed RPL assessment covering **950 questions in 6 ‘papers’**
• Logistics and assisting QA ‘arbiters’ - the university - excellent ‘readiness’
• ‘Pass rate’ – 81%
Case study three: Portfolios of evidence. Work based and facilitator
Case Study Three: cont.

Context: Pilot project for large scale roll out

- Large insurance company and 15 senior executives
- Global corporate culture
- Risk averse company
- Three months turn around time
- Higher Education context
- Portfolio of evidence and individual oral presentation as source of assessment
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<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES</th>
<th>SUCCESSES</th>
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<td>• Initial open hostility due to ‘interference’ and misplaced ‘blame’ for circumstances</td>
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<td>• Intrusion into business and work</td>
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<td>• Validity of the process</td>
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<td>• SAQA, ETQA, RPL unknown concepts</td>
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<td>• Fear factor due to FAIS regulations</td>
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<td>• Clear COMMUNICAITON and clarification of ‘rules of engagement’</td>
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<td>• Clear RPL guidelines</td>
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<td>• Partnering with the RPL candidate - We not You</td>
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<td>• Availability of facilitator and support of company</td>
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<td>• Gap analysis of needs of the group viz a viz the individuals</td>
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<td>• Useful elements required in PoE</td>
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<td>• 14 successful completions</td>
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<td>• Became the model for RPL PoE assessments to scale</td>
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Conclusion

• Can we ask ‘If we do….?’
• Should we not be asking ‘What if we don’t’?
• Lip service?
• Can we still defend ‘my way’ only?
• Quantitative vs Qualitative? Or Both?
IN TIME WE SHALL BE IN A POSITION TO BESTOW ON SOUTH AFRICA THE GREATEST POSSIBLE GIFT – A MORE HUMAN FACE

Steve Biko