Evaluation of RPL applicant’s knowledge claims into fourth year study

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• RPL was done before 2005, harmonized in 2006 resulting in the RPL policy being approved in 2007.
• Making provision for “access” and “advanced standing”.
• RPL is part of Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) – providing academic support to students and academic staff.
• Successful RPL cases total about 70 per year.
Theoretical Approach for study

KNOWLEDGE CLAIMS IN RPL: Project Management

- RPL applicant – knowledge claim before entering Higher Education
- RPL applicant – knowledge claim after entering Higher Education
- Academic interpretation of RPL knowledge claim before entering Higher Education
- Academic interpretation of RPL knowledge claim after entering Higher Education
Knowledge claims
RPL for access into the BTech: Project Management.

**KC Before HE**
- What knowledge do the candidates claim to have?
- What is the knowledge the academics are looking for?
- The interpretation of the knowledge claim by the academics.

**KC After HE**
- What knowledge is developed in HE?
- Influence of prior knowledge
- Interaction between prior and new knowledge
BTech: Project Management

• Generic fourth year programme with no National Diploma (ND) underpinning it.

• RPL assessment process consists off:
  o Screening based on CV.
  o Short portfolio aimed at evaluating academic ability and evaluating project involvement.
  o Computerized test to test numeracy, cognitive ability and logical thinking.
  o Interview to get to know the person
Evaluation of the portfolio

• Background should be in project management to ensure relevant and sufficient work experience for the assessment to go ahead.
• The person has to be in a managerial position basic awareness of PLOC should be demonstrated.
• Evidence from the workplace provides insight into the role the individual plays within a project and what is regarded as a project.
Evaluation Test and Interview.

• The test has three choice questions aimed at the industry the applicant is from, application of project know-how, theory not explicitly required.
• Test includes a reflection question about achievements and career plans and numeracy.
• During the interviews involvement and understanding of projects is discussed.
Interpretation of assessment before HE

- Academics have developed a deeper understanding for the RPL applicant.
- Changes to the nature of the questions reflect an interpretation of the entry requirements of the course as it applies to RPL.
- Industry specific questions indicate an understanding on learning taking place in different industries.
- Inclusion of Numeracy and Computerisation – reflects demands of the course.
“Importance of theory”

• Confusing - some emphasis is placed on project management theory especially in the screening (short curses).
• Test and the POE emphasis is placed on ability and reflection on work being done.
• Realisation that applicants in general don’t know theory – RPL candidates know more!
• Emphasis is placed on logical thinking, cognitive ability and writing skills – these are seen as tools to cope with learning in HE.
Interpretation of knowledge

• Confusing – not sure what knowledge is looked for rather ability.
• Use “Retrospective and prospective action” Shalem and Steinberg (2006) to explain the interpretation.
• Candidates present their own interpretation of their knowledge, but it is being evaluated through a tacit paradigm by the academics.
Knowledge in the University

• They do well in their studies and no one has dropped out!
• Some of the RPL students take on leadership roles in class and in group work.
• RPL students use their workplace knowledge and competence to participate in class.
• Workplace knowledge is sometimes “cloned” into assignments giving it a realistic perspective.
• Not all curriculum provide opportunity for workplace knowledge to be used, due to a theoretical approach of the subject.
Knowledge Claim after HE

• Knowledge developed in HE builds on what the RPL student already knows.
• The prior knowledge informs class discussions and in some assignments.
• Not all subjects’ curriculum embrace workplace knowledge, placing emphasis on theory.
• “Toolbox of applicable knowledge” (Barnett 2006) is being enhanced.
Cross pollination

- Knowledge “Before HE” and “After HE” resonate with each other was found in this study.
- Ability to use and apply knowledge from the workplace in HE is in-line with the concept of “mutual enhancement”. (Eruat, 2004)
- Development of HEQF is an opportunity to include workplace knowledge in the curriculum.
- HEQF includes RPL in admission process into a qualification.
Thank you

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