Enhancing the Implementation of the SA NQF
DHET Research Colloquium 2107

RPL for Access to undergraduate and postgraduate study

Alan Ralphs
2008-2016
An emerging RPL policy framework

SAQA RPL Policy 2013
HEQSF Policy 2014
CHE RPL, CAT & Assessment Policy 2016
DHET RPL Coordination Policy 2016

A dynamic and coherent mix of...

• Pioneering RPL projects, practitioners & institutions (public & private)
• Research projects & partnerships
• Consultation and support services
• Conferences and colloquiums
• Collaboration, organisation and coordination across all levels and lines: pivotal role of SAQA
RPL Policy Definitions 1998-2013

• The RPL process is a multi-dimensional one. It is a process through which non-formal learning and informal learning are measured, mediated for recognition across different contexts and certified against the requirements for credit, access, inclusion or advancement in the formal education and training system, or workplace. RPL processes can include guidance and counselling, and extended preparation for assessment.

• SAQA 2013
Council for Higher Education 2016

RPL is more than a process of assessment: rather it is a specialised pedagogical process that also includes the “translation” of informal and non-formal bodies of knowledge into their formal and structured equivalents based on specified competencies.

Assessment criteria for RPL should not simply replicate those for mainstream study, but should seek to accommodate the knowledge and skills gained in practices outside the higher education institution in terms of their value for the envisaged field of study (CHE: 2016:4.2.8)
Overarching Research Question

*What needs to change* for RPL to become a more optimally inclusive and effective practice in mediating the complexities of knowledge recognition and certification in and across different learning pathways and communities of practice in a differentiated but interdependent NQF?
RPL Research: Lines of Enquiry

• Knowledge: What knowledge is valued or excluded: sources, forms, cultures and boundaries?

• RPL Pedagogy: The content, methods, and assessment criteria: do they mediate participation or exclusion?

• Institutional Context: How do institutional cultures, policies, rules impact on inclusive or exclusive nature of RPL?

• Learner Agency: How is learner identity and agency enabled or disabled within different RPL practices – as subjects or objects of the practice?
Knowledge Forms and Boundaries in Educational Discourse (Basil Bernstein)

Knowledge Production
Research and Development

Recontextualisation:
Qualifications and Curriculum Development

Pedagogical Practice
Evaluation Rules-Assessment Criteria
RPL as a Specialised Pedagogy: Inner workings, relations and artistry

Mediation Tools (Dialogical)

Subjects/Agency Practitioners & Learners

Object

ARTISTRY

Norms, Rules & Assessment Criteria

Institution / Community of Practice

Division of Labour

Use value

Exchange value

Knowledge

Boundaries
Three models of RPL as a Specialised Pedagogy

- **Translational**
  - RPL for credit

- **Navigational**
  - RPL for Access

- **Dialogical**
  - In-curriculum
RPL for Access to Undergraduate Study

- Frontline advising – opening the learning conversation
- Information sessions – broadening the learning conversation
- Shortlisting for preselection workshops
- Preselection workshops and testing fundamental literacies (blend of BICS and CALP)
- Portfolio Development Course and mentoring (12 weeks)
- Tests for Access and Placement (R&WPT + NBT + Science Challenge Exams)
- Assessment of Test Results, Learning Portfolios and Interviews
- Administration and Registration
- Post-entry support and monitoring
## Portfolio Development Course for Access to Undergraduate Study: Navigation Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEARNING PORTFOLIO Content and outcomes</th>
<th>NAVIGATION TOOLS Selection and sequence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation statement</td>
<td>Adult education and experiential learning theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills profile and extended CV</td>
<td>Situated learning theory and the sociology of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autobiographical learning history</td>
<td>Narrative theory and learning history</td>
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<tr>
<td>Article and Book Review</td>
<td>Academic Literacy and text-based practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Project Report</td>
<td>Academic Literacy: critical thinking and literature search</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supporting evidence</td>
<td>Learning and assessment</td>
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## Feasibility studies on RPL for Access to Professional Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Nursing</th>
<th>Business</th>
<th>Tourism</th>
<th>Journalism</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated feasibility of RPL</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low-medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Highest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actual feasibility of RPL</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Highest</td>
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</table>
Findings: RPL for access to professional programmes in higher education

• Knowledge arguments held up to a point - BUT ....
• Likely to be knowledge niches in most programmes where RPL is more feasible than elsewhere
• Pedagogic agency on the part of subject specialists is important in accommodating experiential knowledge
• Role of regulatory and professional bodies is key in some fields
• Labour market issues and drivers as important as knowledge-related issues in some fields?
RPL as Specialised Pedagogy: Mediating Learning Across Contexts
Some concerns: coherence, efficiency, impact and sustainability

• National Strategy and Coordination ???
• Funding for RPL in public E&T system???
• Not accepted: the search for a pathway???
• Post School qualifications and articulation within and across the sub-frameworks. TVET and QCTO Qualifications. NASCA???
### RPL Programme Stats UWC 2011-2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2104</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information and Advice</td>
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<td>1352</td>
<td>1044</td>
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<td>1258</td>
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<td>PDC and Test</td>
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<td>96</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Registrations</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>63</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Where have they gone?</strong></td>
<td>1094</td>
<td>972</td>
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<td>996</td>
<td>1192</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Where can they find advice, information and support for their next moves, and the next, and the next?

Is there a case for a RPL Pathways Network and eProfile ???
DHET RPL Coordination Policy (2016)
National RPL implementation strategy

• National Coordinating Mechanism
• Funding and fund management
• Professionalization
• Information Management
• Research
• Support and Advice
• Policy development
• Advocacy and communication

Which NQF body is going to take this on
And when???
Gender Experience and knowledge in adult learning: Alisoun’s daughters Prof. Elana Michelson, 2015

“APEL is an important venue for revisiting the relationship between authorised and devalued forms of knowledge precisely because it formalises it. It is therefore a node for negotiating epistemological visibility and for negotiating new forms of recognition, based not on sameness and equivalence, but on difference and inclusivity”.

![Image of children in a pumpkin patch]