

Work Based Learning and RPL



RPL Bologna Seminar

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Overview



Work Based Learning
at Middlesex University

- “ Introducing the Institute for Work Based Learning
- “ Introducing work based learning
- “ Uses of RPL
- “ Examples of individual recognition
- “ Issues in academic/professional learning
- “ Conclusion

Institute for Work Based Learning:



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- “ has pioneered APL/APEL (RPL) processes in Work Based Learning programmes for over 10 years
- “ offers WBL qualifications from Certificate to Doctorate
- “ was awarded a Queen's Prize for Excellence and Innovation in 1996
- “ gained Centre for Excellence in Work Based Learning status in 2005
- “ recently gained significant funds to develop an organisational learning network



Work Based Learning:

- “ can be defined as a flexible and modern way of learning through, at, and for work+and has wide applications eg: professional learning & praxis, apprenticeships, work placements etc.
- “ can integrate the university and the work place as sources of knowledge . socially and economically desirable
- “ values and professionalises learning - enhancing individual/organisational knowledge & performance through professionally relevant learning such as strategically-focused projects



Work Based Learning:

- “ can identify and transform tacit individual knowledge and know-how into explicit and useable knowledge and intellectual capital
- “ can generate new knowledge and practices
- “ enables mature learners to access university learning by providing an academic framework for recognising and validating previous/current learning

The use of RPL within work based learning programmes:



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- “ to identify knowledge, skills and competencies . retrospective and current
- “ as a forward-looking reflective review of learning
- “ to identify learning %gaps+
- “ as a tool for personal/professional development
- “ to recognise that learning occurs in multiple sites and ways
- “ to consolidate previous learning
- “ to transform subjective experience into statements of objective learning and learning outcomes that can be formally recognised
- “ to accredit organisational learning

Accrediting organisational learning

- “ For example:
 - . formal training courses
 - . informal learning activities
 - . core competency frameworks and performance standards

- “ Some benefits include:
 - . motivation and raising skills and capabilities to meet new challenges
 - . providing a coherent learning framework
 - . benchmarking and quality assurance



Some RPL concerns

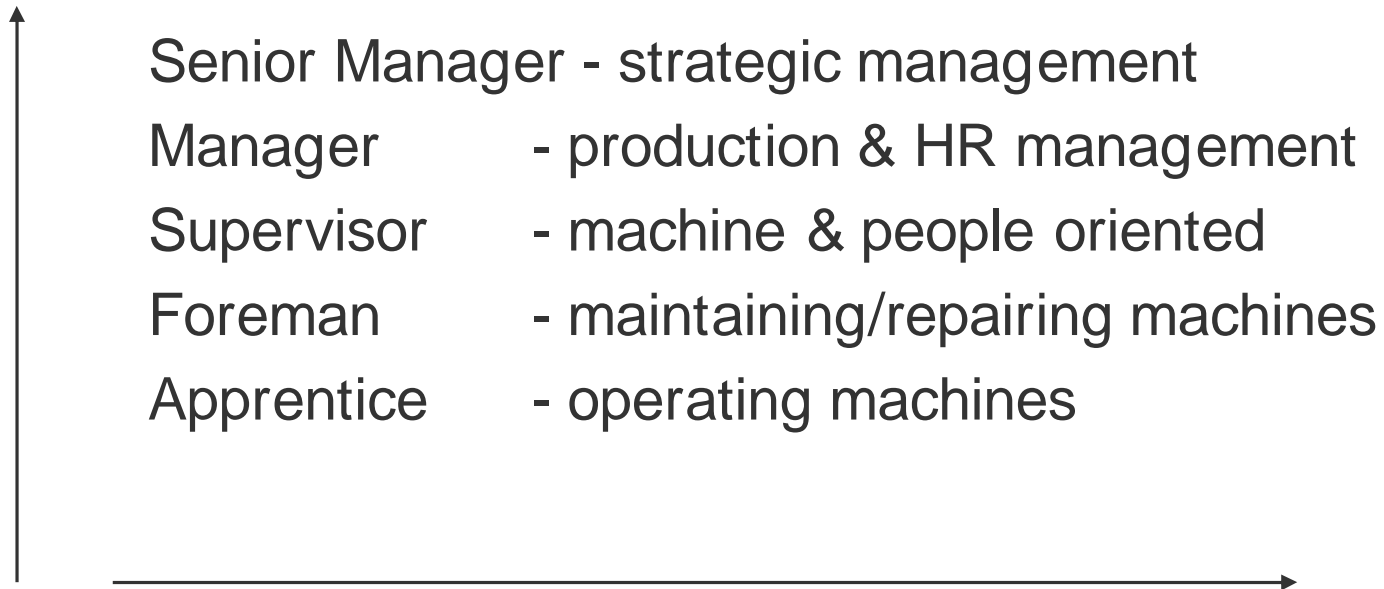
- “ **Quality** . is experiential learning comparable to learning from taught HET programmes?
- “ **Assessment** . is it valid and reliable?
- “ **Resources** . very resource-intensive in terms of costs, university time, training staff etc..
- “ **Awards** - are they given away?

Model of Individual RPL Recognition



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TIME



SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, EXPERIENCE, LEARNING

WBL MA Programme Example: John, Senior Manager – no degree



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Semester 1 APEL portfolio:

- “ APEL: 10 ECTS Level (L) 3 + 30 L 4
+
Module: 5 at L 4

Semester 2:

- “ Research & programme planning modules:
10 L 4 + 5 L 3

Semester 3:

- “ Work based project in systemic change = 30 L 4

Total : 90 credits - MA

WBL BA Programme Example: Susan – FE Teacher

Semester 1 APEL portfolio:

- “ Existing Certificate in Teaching Further Education =
30 ECTS at Level (L) 1 + 30 L 2 (APL)
+
 - “ APEL: **15 L1 + 20 L 2 + 25 at L 3**
+
 - “ Module: **5 at L 2**
+
 - “ Transferable skills: **10 L1**

Total APL/APEL credits: 120



Programme continued:

Semester 2:

- “ Research & programme planning modules = **10 L 3**
+ 5 L 2

Semester 3:

- “ Work based project on Integrating Deaf People into Mainstream Further Education . **30 L 3**
- “ **Total : 180 credits - BA**



Doctorate by RPL

- “ Growth in professional doctorates for leading professionals
- “ Doctorate in Professional Studies by Public Works developed in 2004/05
- “ 3 completions, 7 current candidates
- “ Examples: coaching, anti-fraud, literature, managing/leading change, evaluation of regeneration fund impact
- “ Structure: interview, registration for min. 2 semesters, context statement demonstrating leading edge knowledge and how submitted claim/works meet level descriptors, viva

Individual RPL Portfolio Claim

* denotes tutor interventions



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- “ **CV** . extended to 2/3 pages *
- “ **Job description (JD)** . describing **real** work tasks, not official JD *
- “ List of potential **areas of learning** from CV & JD *
- “ **Areas of learning** identify and analyse: *
 - “ informal and non-formal experiential learning
 - “ thematic learning
 - “ horizontal learning
- “ Previous credit-rated formal learning
- “ Evidence to support claims
- “ Reflection on learning *
- “ Portfolio assessment and accreditation *

WBL abilities and assessment criteria example

ANALYSIS & SYNTHESIS OF INFORMATION AND IDEAS WILL:

- “ L1: be sufficient to present an argument
- “ L2: be sufficient to indicate further areas for development
- “ L3: be sufficient to make judgments & derive principles to guide future action
- “ L4: result in creation of knowledge of significance to others

Issues in academic/professional learning



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- “ Who holds real knowledge . university, professionals or both?
- “ Importance of parity and equality in learning process . not top-down knowledge transfer
- “ Need for mutual engagement to find new interfaces between academic and real-world learning
- “ Need for syncretism between work and academic knowledge loci



Issues continued:

- “ Inability of learners to express learning within set academic requirements . lack of critical academic skills, not knowledge
- “ Is there knowledge denigration when not in required academic formats?
- “ Should universities unilaterally set knowledge/learning frameworks and assessment methods?
- “ Do university roles and functions need to change in order to engage more with real-world knowledge and with individuals on their own terms?



Conclusion

- “ RPL has significant potential within academic work based programmes as tool for access or accreditation
- “ RPL can confer status and social benefits on the individual
- “ RPL can be a way of engaging with learners and organisations
- “ RPL could act as an equaliser between work and the academy
- “ RPL processes present new opportunities for universities