Recognition of Prior, Experiential and Informal Learning

A Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships Seminar

Friday 26th February 2016
Context

- Research and scholarship within the Centre for Inclusion and Collaborative Partnerships (CICP)

- Journal for Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning
  http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/openu/jwplll

- Biennial Widening Participation conference – 27th and 28th April 2016, Jury’s Inn, Milton Keynes

- Supports the deliver of the OU’s Widening Access and Success Strategy
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Event Title</th>
<th>Speaker/Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday 23 October 2015</td>
<td>First in Family</td>
<td>Michael Young Building Room 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 7&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; December 2015</td>
<td>Open Educational Resources/Open Educational Practices</td>
<td>Central Meeting Room 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; February 2016</td>
<td>Recognition of Prior Learning</td>
<td>Central Meeting Room 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday 10&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; March 2016</td>
<td>Access Seminar</td>
<td>Manchester Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 15&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; June 2016</td>
<td>HE in FE</td>
<td>Central Meeting Room 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Have your say….

- On Twitter @access_observe #OUFirstinFamily
- By contributing to our journal
- By presenting at our conference
- Completing our evaluation form

Email: WP-Research-Seminars@open.ac.uk
Welcome to our speakers …

- Dr Liz Marr, Director, CICP, The Open University
- Dr Darryll Bravenboer, Deputy Director, Institute for Work Based Learning, Middlesex University
- Evaghn DeSouza / Jenny Goff, National Networks for Collaborative Outreach (NNCO) project, CICP, OU
- Dr Jon Talbot, Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor, Centre for Work Related Studies, University of Chester.
The Naming of CATS

The problem of nomenclature in using RPL to widen participation

Liz Marr: Director CICP, Open University
The naming of cats is a difficult matter
It isn't just one of your holiday games
You may think at first I'm mad as a hatter
When I tell you a cat must have three different names
I say tomato...

- RPL: Recognition of prior learning
- APL: Accreditation of Prior Learning
- APCL: Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning
- APEL: accreditation of prior experiential learning
- Advanced Standing
- Direct Entry
- Credit transfer
What exactly is credit?

- a means of quantifying and recognising learning, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level, indicating the amount and difficulty of the learning achieved.

- But: is it measuring competency, knowledge, experience, ability?

- Is 10 hours of class contact equal to 10 hours of work experience?

- Is academic credit the only currency?

- Do students really understand this?
Some Research findings…

Perceptions of RPL
- People who haven’t done HE see people who have as somehow being better or smarter.
- It is not until you are in a working environment where you actually get to use that knowledge and those skills that it starts to make sense and actually becomes a useable education.
- … people look down on learning from experience and rate HE study more.

Student Views
- You need to find a way of comparing that knowledge that someone has built up with…the academic knowledge that someone has gained.
- It might be difficult to record and monitor and to find the right organisation to actually accredit or validate what the prior learning has been.
- My concern is how you measure prior learning and make sure that it is at the appropriate level.

Academic attitudes
- They will only get the credit once they have done some study with us as well to ensure they have this HE input to their studies.
- …you have to ask the question, - well how are we going to evaluate what skills they do have and what stage they are at?
- There have to be measures which equate with the measures of validity in the academic worlds so traditionally that has been something like essays or exams or something where you are proving what you know is on the same level.
Academic attitudes

- They will only get the credit once they have done some study with us as well to ensure they have this HE input to their studies.

- …you have to ask the question, - well how are we going to evaluate what skills they do have and what stage they are at?

- There have to be measures which equate with the measures of validity in the academic worlds so traditionally that has been something like essays or exams or something where you are proving what you know is on the same level.

I think we should but…

- Arts has difficulty in handling this new vocational agenda. It is much less clear to many people how Arts is relevant to vocations.

- Some people might think it would be just as easy to do the actual course.

- There is a reluctance for colleagues to engage with it as they are generally nervous about it as it is seen as possibly lowering standards.
Ivory towers persist?

- It is academic snobbery. It is pure and simple self preservation of what it means to be a higher education institute and preserving status of what that is

- ... because of the conceit (Dunkelhaftigkeit) of our academic education itself. Universities are pretty stuck-up and conceited

- The issues we work with the most are the internal objections. ‘We have our own way of thinking: what we do is the right thing’
Muddying the water – dilemmas in recognising learning

- Ability vs knowledge
- Vocational vs academic learning
- Experiential learning vs theoretical knowledge
- Rote learning vs professional development
- A clash of life worlds?
And just when you thought you knew what it was all about....

**Learning type**
- FORMAL (ACCREDITED) e.g. qualification or module
- FORMAL (NON-ACCREDITED) OR NON-FORMAL e.g. BOC/MOOC Short courses (NALs)
- INFORMAL e.g. language, experience, work based learning

**Accreditation** ("granting credit or recognition")
- Accreditation - may or may not be separate stage

**OU RPL** Recognition of Prior Learning (exemption)
- Credit transfer or Direct Entry
- New process..

**Journey from Informal to Formal Learning (JIFL)**

Formal = with structure and learning outcomes
NAL = non-accredited learning

Scotland - RPL
When you notice a cat in profound meditation,
The reason, I tell you, is always the same:
His mind is engaged in a rapt contemplation
Of the thought, of the thought, of the thought of his name:
His ineffable effable
Effanineffable
Deep and inscrutable singular name