

Recent prior learning essay

[Business](#), [Employee](#)



Recent Prior Learning

Recent Prior Learning (RPL) is the process by which institutions of higher learning, especially colleges and universities, evaluate learning that has been acquired outside the conventional classroom when assigning academic credit to their students [CITATION Wer10 p 34 | 1033]. The learning could have been acquired from military training, work experience, corporate training, independent study or civic activity. It aims at recognizing skills and knowledge acquired through informal or non-formal learning. There are various methods used to evaluate prior learning. These include; regular exams, portfolio assessment, campus challenge exams and evaluation of training programs [CITATION Eva00 p 167 | 1033].

There are many benefits that the government aims to achieve through the implementation of Recent Prior Learning in colleges and universities. First, the government aims at minimizing duplication of training which in turn reduce budgetary allocation to such programs; these funds could be diverted to more pressing matters. It will create space in higher learning institutions enabling them to recruit and retain more students. Elimination of unnecessary training also improves institutional efficiency.

The government aims to encourage a working partnership between corporate organizations and learning institutions. Increased globalization has resulted in a very dynamic skill structure of the labor market, creating a mismatch between labor supply and labor demand. There is a shortage of employees with the necessary skills such as management skills, teamwork skills, communication skills and numeracy skills. It is common for employers to complain that fresh graduates from colleges lack certain skills that are

needed for them to work in their organizations. The government aims to bridge this mismatch through Recent Prior Learning which will in turn reduce both the level of real and disguised unemployment.

The government aims at improving the productive capability of the workforce. Upgrading knowledge and skills is one of the ways of improving productivity. Prior learning Recognition will encourage employees to upgrade their knowledge and skills because they will spend lesser time in college. Recent prior learning will also improve employees self confidence and self esteem by assisting them develop their careers which will positively impact on their productivity. Improved productivity will translate to higher nation output, national income and hence economic growth.

The government seeks to increase the literacy levels. Recent Prior Learning will encourage more people to seek college education. This is because college education will be; less costly and hence affordable, it will take shorter time to complete a college or university program and it will be easier to identify areas of study to pursue. This will go a long way in reducing the illiterate population.

Although adaptation of Recent Prior learning is beneficial to the government, employees and employers, there have been various barriers to its implementation. These barriers include; lack of awareness of Prior learning Recognition, the exclusive language used in recognition, complexity of the recognition process, participation preference in learning and learners devaluing their experiential learning [CITATION Smi09 p 89 | 1033].

Many learners are ignorant about recent prior learning and how they can access it. Overseas research indicate that majority of Australian residential

employees have little understanding of vocational education and were unaware prior learning recognition [CITATION Smi09 | 1033]. This lack of awareness means that fewer people will choose recent prior learning as a mode of study despite the numerous benefits associated with it. There is also minimal research in tracing how successful Recent Prior Learning students have progressed or performed, either in career progression or further studies. This contributes to ignorance of the effectiveness of the process that makes potential learners reluctant to choose it.

The complexity associated with the process of recognition is another major impediment to its success. Prior learning recognition in institutions is time consuming, very bureaucratic, excessively detailed and sometimes difficult to understand. The amount and type of evidence learners are required to produce demand a lot of time to accumulate. The process of assessment is also unnecessarily complicated and cumbersome. The language and jargon used in the recognition process makes learners view it as difficult. This is a disincentive to students wishing to seek prior learning recognition and to learning institutions that want to implement it [CITATION Har00 p 88 | 1033].

Many learners seeking academic credits based on informal and non-formal learning may not have the right language to illustrate their life and work experiences in a manner that meets the requirements of academic discourse. Preparation of a successful application by a learner requires expression of the outcomes of the prior learning they have received against a given set of learning outcomes. It is difficult to translate experiential learning into a rigid framework of formally constructed learning outcomes.

Prior learning recognition aims at recognizing various methods of acquiring discipline-based knowledge other than through formal learning; however there is demand for equivalence of certification between assessments made through the recognition process and the standard measures of academic credentials. Assessors find it difficult to accommodate the various forms of knowledge and translate them to standard academic units. This means that many people are locked out despite having the relevant experience because they could not put it in a language required by assessors [CITATION Sou94 p 127 | 1033].

Some individuals do not appreciate what they learned informally and the value of the knowledge they acquired through life and work experience. This is also an impediment to prior learning recognition. Many people are unaware of the valuable knowledge they have acquired through years of informal and non-formal training. Learners may also not be able to find documentary proof or historical evidence that is required in the recognition assessment process. Such individuals cannot consider the extent to which the knowledge they have gained informally could make them qualify for recognition. They would therefore not choose recognition when they want to upgrade their skills.

Many learners find much more sense of security from undergoing conventional learning process than through the process of prior learning. It has been observed that some of the learners who have gone through the prior learning recognition process and were successfully granted exemptions to parts of the course still opt to fully undertake the course. This is because they attach a lot of value in the conventional learning process or they feel it

is an opportunity to revise the knowledge they have. Some people also prefer the support that is given in formal learning by the constant reviews and fixed schedule than working through the recognition process that does not have a clear description.

Lastly, some barriers are workplace related. Conflicts arise in the workplace between the time required to do prior learning recognition assessment, attending formal learning for units the learner has not been exempted and doing productive work in their workplace. It also has a great impact on salary negotiations and expectation of higher rewards by employees. This occasionally makes employers reluctant to allow their employees to undergo the process.

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