(BC) PLAN SUMMIT 2013
Surging to the Future: Research Informed Policy, Practice and Innovation in the Recognition of Prior Learning

Practitioner Training

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Five Critical Factors Study
Hoffman, Travers, Evans and Treadwell (2009)

Examined PLAR programs across 34 HE Institutions
(2 Canadian, 32 US)

- Critical Factors
  - Institutional philosophy, mission and commitment
  - Institutional Support
  - Program Parameters
  - Practitioner Training
  - Program Feedback and Evaluation
Correlations ranged from $r=0.84$, $p<0.001$ to $r=0.40$, $p<0.04$
Practitioner Training Delivery

- Face-to-face
  - One-on-one
  - Groups
- On-line
- By phone
- Handbook
- Case Studies
- Website
Research indicates practitioner training that uses experiential and applied formats result in greatest transfer of learning.

(Sheckley, 2008; and many others)
Practitioner Training Content

Top Three Areas

- **Common Areas**
  - Overview of the Process (92%)
  - Expectations of Assessor (92%)
  - Expectations of Participant (85%)

- **Critical Areas**
  - Overview of the Process (100%)
  - Expectations of Assessor (96%)
  - How to Evaluate Learning (92%)
    - University Level Learning
    - Professional Certifications
Practitioners and Assessors often do not understand how to evaluate learning and/or the standards
- Work off of own experiences
- Evaluate participant’s experiences

Practitioners and Assessors can have conflicting views within same institutions

Key Interrelationships

- Philosophy, Mission, Commitment
  - Philosophy drives policies and practices
- Program Practices
- Professional Development
  - Understanding philosophy, policies and practices
- Institutional Support
  - Administrative and faculty support critical
- Quality and improvement
Philosophy Impacts Practice

- PLA Practice Types
  - Individualized Learning Portfolios
  - Course Challenge
  - Standardized exams
  - ACE & NCCRS Evaluated Credits (including US Military)
  - Professional Learning evaluations

- Evaluation Methods
  - Matching
  - Non-Matching

- Utilization of PLA Evaluation
  - Credits toward HE Degrees
  - Professional Certifications

How do we evaluate prior learning?
To recognize and assess university level learning
- Prior and Emergent Learning
- Self-authored learning paths

Level Focus:
1. Bachelor’s level
2. Professional Certifications and Graduate Level

Recognize university level learning as primary assessment - Topic specific assessment is secondary

Focus on learning as it develops
Premises & Tenants

**Premises**
- Learning $>$, $<$, $=$, or $\neq$
- Matching Concepts
- Adaptable Assessment – knowledge recognition within a context/schema
- Learning Story is important
- ULL can be assessed before topic

**Tenants**
- Different proportions of knowledge within and across each area
- Needs to have usability without explanation
- Needs to be accessible to students, faculty and evaluators
- Uses ePortfolios/Concepts Maps
International Frameworks

- Regional, National, International, Transnational
  - Mostly in EU countries
  - Australia
  - South African Nations
  - Canada
  - South Asian Nations
  - Small States of the Commonwealth

- Organizational
  - US
  - Labor Agencies

Examining over 40 frameworks from around the world
Types of Frameworks

- Rubrics
- Tables
- Graphical
- Narratives
- Probes/Questions
- Concepts Maps

- Levels
- Tiered Layers
- Comparative
Examined initial frameworks in depth:

- Lumina’s Degree Qualifications Profile
- AAC&U LEAP Rubrics
- Travers (2012) Faculty Perspectives on College-level learning – study
- Travers (2010) Knowledge Domains
Learners need to have specific and applied knowledge within a particular context or experiential setting.
Learners need to understand how their knowledge fits within the broader scope of the field.
Learners need to be able to extend their knowledge beyond specific contexts and understand ways in which this knowledge can be applied in other contexts or situation. In other words, the knowledge is broader than what is needed to apply it in specific situations.
Civic Knowledge

The ability to bring to the learning, contextual awareness from an expanded viewpoint with the awareness of and appreciation for the perspectives of others and to engage one’s own responses to social, environmental and economic challenges at the local, national and global levels.
Learners need to know how to ask pertinent question regarding the topic, know how to find out answers to these questions in order to learn more about it, and use the information to solve problems or apply the information.
Learners need to be able to communicate their knowledge and ideas around the topic.
Self-Knowledge

Learners need to understand themselves as a learner and how they best learn the topic. This includes how they have grown over time, how they continue to grow in their understanding of the topic, and how they have used feedback to learn more.
Conclusion

Practitioner Training Programs

- Delivery should be experiential and applied
- Content needs to address:
  - Philosophies & Policies
  - Expectations of practitioners
  - How to recognize & assess expected learning
Comments? Thoughts?

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