

Prior Learning International Research Centre (PLIRC): an international research agenda for the recognition of prior learning

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Abstract

The recognition of learning acquired outside of formal learning systems is referred differently in various parts of the globe. In Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Denmark and South Africa the term recognition of prior learning (RPL) is used. In Canada prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) is used, the USA uses prior learning prior learning assessment (PLA) whilst the UK tends to use accreditation of prior learning (APL). A recent OECD publication *Recognising Non-Formal and Informal Learning: Outcomes, Policies and Practices*, (Werquin, 2010) reports on the findings of a study of 22 OECD countries. The study listed the following findings:

- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is high on policy agendas;
- Recognition gives non-formal and informal learning outcomes value for further formal learning;
- Recognition gives non-formal and informal learning outcomes value in the labour market and;
- Recognition delivers a range of benefits (for individuals, employers, educational providers, trade unions, social partners and governments) and improves equity (Werquin 2010, pp. 7–8).

In 2009 the Thompson Rivers University (TRU) in Kamloops, B C, Canada through its Open Learning (OL) Division, launched an initiative to develop a new Prior Learning International Research Centre (PLIRC). The vision for the Centre, which is headed by Dr. Christine Wihak, Director of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) at TRU-OL, is to stimulate innovative and provocative research concerning prior learning and the theory, policy and practice of its assessment and/or recognition and/or validation. Prior learning occurs at the intersection of research on workplace, learning and society and as such has relevance to education and training. It is envisaged that PLIRC will provide an international forum for networking amongst scholars of RPL and will actively promote dissemination of research findings to practitioners and policy makers alike. The Centre would like to engage international academics and applied researchers to participate and join the Centre in international collaborative research around RPL.

With the initiative to develop an international research agenda, the scholars attending PLIRC's inaugural meeting made presentations on the state of prior

learning research in their own countries/regions and/or their own personal research in the area. As its first research initiative, the PLIRC board members agreed to assemble these presentations in the form of a monograph, with Mignonne Breier and Judy Harris acting as editors. The intention is to publish the monograph in 2010.

The ePortfolio Australia Conference 2010 provides a valuable opportunity to gauge the interest of Australian practitioners, applied researchers and academics with research interests in ePortfolios and RPL. This poster presentation provides an avenue for input into the PLIRC international research agenda and to explore possible future research collaborations with the international RPL research community.

Members of the PLIRC Board of Directors are:

Mignonne Breier, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Roslyn Cameron, Southern Cross University, Australia
Judy Harris, Bishop Grosseteste University College, England
Helen Pokorny, University of Westminster, England
Nan Travers, Empire State College, USA
Joy Van Kleef, Doctoral student, Paris Universit s
Patrick Werquin, OECD, Paris Universit s, France
Ruth Whittaker, Glasgow Caledonian, Scotland
Angie Wong, University of Saskatchewan, Canada

Biography

Roslyn Cameron

Ros Cameron lecturers and researches in the field of human resource management and development (HRM/HRD) in the School of Commerce and Management at Southern Cross University on the Gold Coast. Ros is the Course Coordinator for a new postgraduate course, the Graduate Certificate in Recruitment, Placement & Career Development aimed at the employment and recruitment services industries. She is currently Project Leader for a CRC Rail research project focused on Skilled Migration for the Rail Industry and is on the project team for another two CRC Rail projects looking at developing a Skills Recognition Framework and Attraction and Image for the Rail Industry.

Ros is a Board Member of the newly formed *Prior Learning International Research Centre (PLIRC) based in Canada.*

She is Editor for a new Journal titled: International Journal of Mixed Methods in Applied Business and Policy Research.

Research Interests: Skilled Migration; skill recognition systems (RPL); use of ePortfolios for RPL; e-Recruitment, performance management, workforce and succession planning, career development; Leadership, personality type and global leadership; Global mobility skills and global perspectives and; mixed method research methodologies.