

TITLE

Towards proactive recognition of prior learning through work-based learning opportunities

SUB-TITLE

Developing accessible assessment methods aligned with SHU learning, teaching and assessment policy

AIM

What did you set out to do and why? (100 words)

In this case study, the course leader worked to develop an innovative opportunity for recognised prior learning (RPL) through an e-portfolio-based narrative approach. The course was the level 7 MSc TELIC programme for a group of mainly Dutch and Belgian professional students. Through careful philosophical, curricular and pedagogical (re)consideration of existing learning, teaching and assessment (LTA) quality procedures, an alternative, relevant and accessible assessment process was achieved with strong external examiner endorsement.

BENEFITS

About 3 or 4 bullet points (50 words)

- *Enhanced student experience with higher attainment and success rates*
- *Enhanced perceived employer value through pragmatic focus on workload*
- *More efficient learning and assessment process for learner*
- *Innovative use of existing LTA policies and processes*

THE APPROACH

What's involved and what happened (up to 350 words)

Students were required to produce a reflective, narrative driven e-portfolio based upon negotiated and agreed work-based learning focus. Three elements underpinned the drive to introduce a RPL approach to assessment, which was deemed to be ideal for part-time, online and distance learning provision.

1. ***Philosophical:*** *With committed professional learners, there is often relevant employee experience (and employer desires) which can become side-lined through a traditional module-based curriculum focus. By emphasising such experience as a legitimate learning opportunity, it can be drawn close into programme assessment practices.*

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- 2. Curricular:** *We can choose to take a more aware approach to RPL opportunities that exist within existing course development and approval processes. There is an opportunity for portfolio work to demonstrate learner competence that often goes unrealised because of the additional work to develop and implement it in a programme.*
- 3. Pedagogical:** *Developing the approach recognises an opportunity to ‘flip’ learning practice for more efficient and effective use of student and SHU resources. Giving learners an opportunity to self manage the development of their own work-based evidence toward assessment achievement promotes strong reflective ownership of learning practice and attainment.*

THE OUTCOME

What was the result of this intervention or activity? Do you have any evidence you can include? (150 words)

This assessment innovation is ‘work in progress’ which can be creatively developed for different programmes. The initial trial with a group of students on the MSc TELIC course achieved both great student feedback and exemplary external examiner comments.

“What surprised me was not just how effective the process was but that all the components of the pedagogy, including the assessment, were already in place in the system while so few people had taken advantage of this approach to date” (Richard Pountney, Course Tutor)

“What was really useful was learning new things and seeing how that related to my own professional practice. The portfolio approach was perfect for this – not only for recognising what I had already done but deepening my understanding and learning in my professional role.”
(Martin Said, Senior Teacher, XP School, Doncaster)

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Will you be developing this? Why? How? Or scaling up the approach? (100 words)

The enabling DEEP-developed work-based learning framework (WBLF) provides a fantastic opportunity for RPL through the ‘negotiated learning’ core module. This is a prime area for this sort of portfolio-based accessible assessment work, with the right learners on the right course.

The HDA end point assessment (EPA) may also benefit from this portfolio-based RPL approach. However, be mindful not to commit portfolio contents for multiple module assessment.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO OTHER STAFF

We can interview you or you can complete this yourself. Please contact Cathy Malone or submit your case study to: c.malone@shu.ac.uk

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(100 words)

Working a bit harder to understand the opportunities we already have in front of us through existing mechanisms, like the RPL process options and the enabling WBLF, allows us to get beyond the ‘I didn’t know we could do that...’ that often limits our opportunities to innovate – we sometimes don’t know what we don’t know...

Establish strong ‘partnership’ relationships with the different SHU stakeholder groups, e.g. DEEP, faculty quality teams and external examiners, to ensure as collective an understanding as possible about what you are trying to achieve as you develop alternative assessment strategies like this.

Be mindful that innovative assessment strategies require careful consideration of work-plan resourcing implications to ensure that students are supported and administrative work can be completed throughout the module/programme lifecycle.

FURTHER & RELATED INFORMATION

Useful links or references to help people who are thinking about following your lead.

MSc TELIC e-portfolio (and associated APEL IC1 form):

<https://sites.google.com/a/vdab.be/msctelic-apel-ic1-eportfolio-mdv/home>

See also <http://www.telic-stories.co.uk> – stories about the impact of the course on professional learning

PROFILE

Tutor name(s): Richard Pountney **[add headshot photo to case study]**

Faculty: Development & Society, Department of Education

Size of cohort: Small

Key themes: accessible assessment, negotiated learning, recognised prior learning (RPL), work-based learning (WBL), work-based learning framework (WBLF), e-portfolio.