

RPL: More Than A Tick Box Exercise

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The requirements outlined for RPL, in particular in the context of apprenticeships, can lead colleagues to consider it an administrative process – a tick box exercise.

This is to overlook the role of academic judgement which takes place throughout, and which can be used to include or exclude consideration of valid learning depending on the perspective taken.

Keywords: recognition of prior learning (RPL), academic judgement, apprenticeships

Biography

Anita Walsh joined Birkbeck in September 2005. She joined as a Senior Lecturer in Work-Based Learning, and has recently become a Professor of Work-Based Learning.

Previously Anita was a Senior Lecturer at Kingston University, where she was a member of the University's Academic Development Centre with responsibility for the areas of work-based learning and experiential learning. She was also the Associate Director of the Learning from Experience Trust for a number of years while she has been at Birkbeck.

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Anita is an expert in designing academic programmes which are based on the experiential learning gained through activities in the workplace. In 2009 she was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship for her work in this area. Her main research interest is in the role of experience in learning and in the development of professional expertise, and the pedagogy required to support such learning. Her work is internationally recognised and she has published widely on the need to integrate appropriate learning from outside the academy into the higher education curriculum, basing her arguments on the validity of informal experiential learning and epistemologies of practice. Anita uses her publications and conference papers to encourage more active consideration of the pedagogic and epistemological issues related to a wider recognition of such learning.