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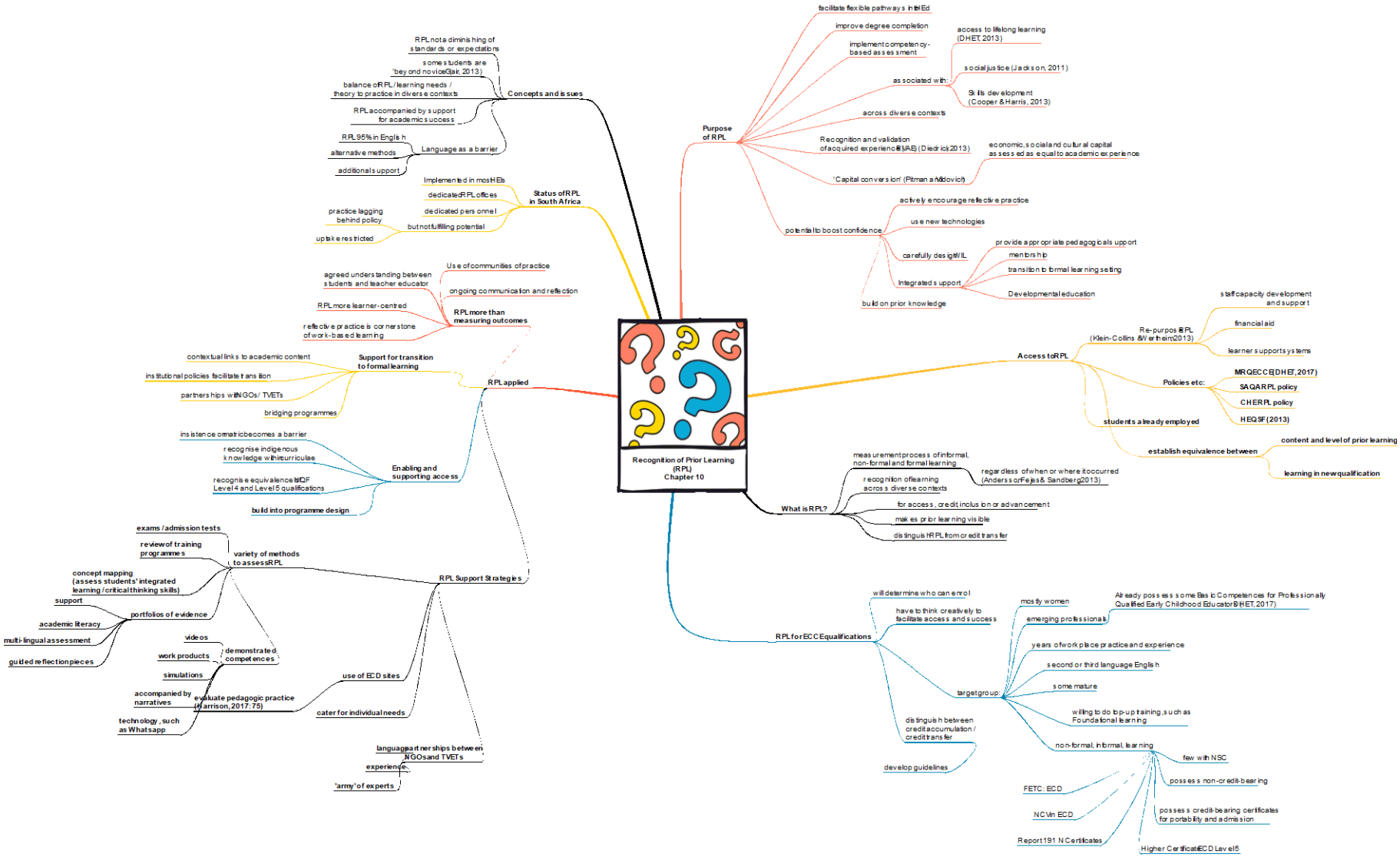
Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Chapter 10
Purpose of RPL
facilitate flexible pathways in HEd
improve degree completion
implement competency-based assessment
associated with:
access to lifelong learning (DHET, 2013)
social justice (Jackson, 2011)
Skills development (Cooper & Harris, 2013)
across diverse contexts
Recognition and validation of acquired experience (RVAE) (Diedrick, 2013)
economic, social and cultural capital as assessed as equal to academic experience
'Capital conversion' (Pitman & Vidovich)
potential to boost confidence
actively encourage reflective practice
use new technologies
provide appropriate pedagogical support
mentorship
transition to formal learning setting
Developmental education
carefully designed VIL
Integrated support
build on prior knowledge
Access to RPL
Re-purposing RPL (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013)
staff capacity development and support
financial aid
learner supports systems
Policies etc:
MRQECCE (DHET, 2017)
SAQA RPL policy
CHE RPL policy
HEQSF (2013)
students already employed
establish equivalence between
content and level of prior learning
learning in new qualification
What is RPL?
measurement process of informal, non-formal and formal learning
regardless of when or where it occurred (Anderson, Feijes & Sandberg, 2013)
recognition of learning across diverse contexts
for access, credit inclusion or advancement
makes prior learning visible
distinguish RPL from credit transfer
RPL for ECCE Qualifications
will determine who can enrol
have to think creatively to facilitate access and success
target group:
mostly women
emerging professionals
Already possess some Basic Competences for Professionally Qualified Early Childhood Educator (DHET, 2017)
years of work place practice and experience
second or third language English
some mature
willing to do top-up training, such as Foundational learning
non-formal, informal, learning
few with NSC
possess non-credit-bearing
possess credit-bearing certificates for portability and admission
Higher Certificate ECD Level 5
Report 191 N Certificates
NCVn ECD
FETC: ECD
distinguish between credit accumulation / credit transfer
develop guidelines
RPL Support Strategies
variety of methods to assess RPL
exams / admission tests
review of training programmes
concept mapping (assess students' integrated learning / critical thinking skills)
portfolios of evidence
support
academic literacy
multi-lingual assessment
guided reflection pieces
demonstrated competences
videos
work products
simulations
accompanied by narratives
evaluate pedagogic practice (Harrison, 2017: 75)
technology, such as Whatsapp
use of ECD sites
cater for individual needs
language
partnerships between NGOs and TVETs
experience
'army' of experts
RPL applied
Support for transition to formal learning
contextual links to academic content
institutional policies facilitate transition
partnerships with NGOs/ TVETs
bridging programmes
RPL more than measuring outcomes
Use of communities of practice
agreed understanding between students and teacher educator
ongoing communication and reflection
RPL more learner-centred
reflective practice is cornerstone of work-based learning
Enabling and supporting access
institutionalised barrier
recognise indigenous knowledge within curriculae
recognise equivalence to NQF Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications
build into programme design
Concepts and issues
RPL not a diminishing of standards or expectations
some students are 'beyond novice' (Blair, 2013)
balance of RPL / learning needs / theory to practice in diverse contexts
RPL accompanied by support for academic success
Language as a barrier
RPL 95% in English
alternative methods
additional support
Status of RPL in South Africa
Implemented in most HEIs
dedicated RPL offices
dedicated personnel
but not fulfilling potential
practice lagging behind policy
uptake restricted

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Chapter 10 Summary

1. What is RPL?

a. measurement process of informal, non-formal and formal learning regardless of when or where it occurred (Andersson, Fejes & Sandberg, 2013)
b. recognition of learning across diverse contexts
c. for access, credit, inclusion or advancement
d. makes prior learning visible
e. distinguish RPL from credit transfer

2. Purpose of RPL

a. facilitate flexible pathways into HEd
b. improve degree completion
c. implement competency-based assessment
d. Recognition and validation of acquired experience (RVAE) (Diedrick, 2013)
e. associated with:
    i. access to lifelong learning (DHET, 2013)
    ii. social justice (Jackson, 2011)
    iii. Skills development (Cooper & Harris, 2013)
f. across diverse contexts
g. 'Capital conversion' (Pitman and Vidovich)
    i. economic, social and cultural capital assessed as equal to academic experience
h. potential to boost confidence
    i. actively encourage reflective practice
    ii. use new technologies
    iii. carefully design WIL
    iv. Integrated support
        - provide appropriate pedagogical support
        - mentorship
        - transition to formal learning setting
        - Developmental education
    v. build on prior knowledge

3. Status of RPL in South Africa

a. Implemented in most HEIs
b. dedicated RPL offices
c. dedicated personnel
d. not fulfilling potential
e. practice lagging behind policy
f. uptake restricted

4. Concepts and issues

a. RPL not a diminishing of standards or expectations
b. some students are 'beyond novice' (Gair, 2013)
c. balance of RPL / learning needs / theory to practice in diverse contexts
d. RPL accompanied by support for academic success

e. Language as a barrier
   i. RPL 95% in English
   ii. alternative methods
   iii. additional support

5. Access to RPL

a. Re-purpose RPL (Klein-Collins & Wertheim, 2013)
   i. staff capacity development and support
   ii. financial aid
   iii. learner support systems
b. Policies etc:
   i. MRQECCE (DHET, 2017)
   ii. SAQA RPL policy
   iii. CHE RPL policy
   iv. HEQSF (2013)
c. students already employed
d. establish equivalence between
   i. content and level of prior learning
   ii. learning in new qualification

6. RPL for ECCE qualifications

a. will determine who can enrol
b. have to think creatively to facilitate access and success
c. target group:
   i. mostly women
   ii. some mature
   iii. non-formal, informal, learning
      - few with NSC
      - possess non-credit-bearing
      - possess credit-bearing certificates for portability and admission
      - FETC: ECD
      - NCV in ECD
      - Report 191 N Certificates
      - Higher Certificate ECD Level 5
   iv. years of workplace practice and experience
   v. second or third language English
   vi. emerging professionals who already possess some Basic Competences for Professionally Qualified Early Childhood Educators (DHET, 2017)
   vii. willing to do top-up training, such as Foundational learning
d. distinguish between credit accumulation / credit transfer
   i. develop guidelines

7. RPL applied

a. RPL more than measuring outcomes
   i. ongoing communication and reflection
   ii. Use of communities of practice

iii. agreed understanding between students and teacher educator
iv. RPL more learner-centred
v. reflective practice is cornerstone of work-based learning

b. Support for transition to formal learning

i. contextual links to academic content
ii. bridging programmes
iii. partnerships with NGOs / TVETs
iv. institutional policies facilitate transition

c. Enabling and supporting access

i. recognise equivalence of NQF Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications
ii. insistence on matric becomes a barrier
iii. recognise indigenous knowledge within curriculae
iv. build into programme design

d. RPL Support Strategies

i. variety of methods to assess RPL
   - exams / admission tests
   - portfolios of evidence
     a. support
     b. academic literacy
     c. multi-lingual assessment
     d. guided reflection pieces
   - review of training programmes
   - concept mapping (assess students' integrated learning / critical thinking skills)
   - demonstrated competences
     a. videos, work products, simulations
     b. accompanied by narratives
     c. technology, such as Whatsapp

ii. use of ECD sites to evaluate pedagogic practice (Harrison, 2017:75)
iii. cater for individual needs
iv. partnerships between NGOs and TVETs have potential to provide
   - language
   - experience
   - 'army' of experts

Summary of key issues / questions raised / what practice means

Key issue	Questions raised	What does this mean in practice in my institution?
What is RPL?	• In what ways is RPL the same and different for ECCE from other HE studies? • In what ways is RPL the same and different for ECCE in HEIs and NGOs / TVETs? • What can HEIs, NGOs and TVETs learn from each other irt RPL?	1. What do we already do? 2. What is non-negotiable? 3. What do we want to do / change? 4. What does this mean in practice? 5. What is possible now? 6. What is possible short to medium term? 7. What is nice to have but not feasible yet? 8. How is this affected by the mode of provision in my institution (face to face, blended, fully online)
Purpose of RPL	• How has our thinking changed? • Does it need to change more? • Who needs to be on board? • How will we do that?	
Status of RPL in South Africa	• What are some reasons for HEIs lagging behind in RPL practice?	
Concepts and issues	• What is the key issue that hinders, or could hinder, the implementation of RPL in ECCE? • What are some ideas for overcoming this challenge?	
Access to RPL	• How can we re-purpose RPL for ECCE qualifications? • How can we creatively think about RPL for access and success?	
RPL applied	• What support do students need during RPL? • Who can provide that support? • What support do HEIs need to implement RPL? • What does it mean to recognise indigenous knowledge for RPL? • What does it mean to recognise the equivalence of NQF Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications for RPL into ECCE programmes? • What does it mean to build RPL into the design of ECCE programmes? Does that only apply to HEIs? • What is the relationship between RPL, developmental education and work integrated learning, if any?	