



Erasmus+

Dolnośląska Szkoła Wyższa



RPL IN THE UK

THE UNIVERSITY OF
WARWICK



UNIwersytet Gdański

- Began in the 1980s – introduced from the USA
- CAEL – Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (USA) supported and guided the UK Learning from Experience Trust
- Part of the widening participation strategy
- Response to economic factors – need for a more skilled workforce
- Social factors – need for social inclusion

- APEL (Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning) more commonly used in UK
- RPL originated from South Africa
- Other terms used in UK:
 - APL – Accreditation of Prior Learning: both prior certificated learning and experimental learning
 - APCL – Accreditation of Prior Certificated Learning: certificate from previous educational learning

- Students document learning from life and work (informal learning)
- Produce a portfolio
- Used to gain access to a course
- Or advanced standing in higher education
- Used as an entrance qualification to HE for those who don't have the 'traditional' qualifications (initial function in UK)

- **Al**important means for women to gain recognition for life experiences
- Students referred to advisers in the institutions to guide them to make an APEL claim
- Need to demonstrate the learning which has occurred as a result of experiences
- And that learning has occurred at a level appropriate for the study

- APEL mostly used for accreditation in the UK
- Values experience as a form of learning and knowledge
- Challenges traditional academic knowledge
- Recognises that adults bring with them a range of skills and knowledge to the learning process
- Individualises learning

- Bridges the divide between formal and informal learning
- Knowledge is derived from the learner rather than the teacher
- Learning is recognised, valued, assessed or accredited with RPL (Harris, 2006)
- Does quantify something which is qualitative

Two Models of RPL in UK (Butterworth, 1992)

- **Developmental:** based on experiential learning theory & practice – emphasis on social justice, inclusion and democratisation of institutional practices. Students evaluate their prior learning, reflection is central, process of learning important
- Producing a portfolio is central
- **Credit-exchange model:** emerged with the development of national vocational qualifications.
- Emphasis on providing evidence of performance and achievement

- Used more widely in the post 1992 universities and further educational colleges than in 'traditional' universities and more strongly developed in Scotland than England
- In some institutions RPL is seen as time-consuming and difficult (Merrifield et al, 2000)

- **Despite the long use of APEL/RPL there is no standardisation of use across the different educational sectors**
- **Also used differently within higher education institutions – no one way of doing it**
- **Increasingly being used in relation to work-based learning**
- **Good practice has been identified in the Voluntary and Community sectors (NIACE, 2008)**