Learning without boundaries: Short Learning Programmes and international collaboration

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The problem of credit

- a means of quantifying and recognising learning, expressed as numbers of credits at a specific level, indicating the amount and difficulty of the learning achieved.

- But: is it measuring competency, knowledge, experience, ability?

- Is 10 hours of class contact equal to 10 hours of work experience?

- Is academic credit the only currency?

- Do students really understand this?

- How do the different frameworks equate?

- Can micro-credentials ever add up to a valid higher education award?

- Are international equivalents really equivalent?
The context
A common UK framework?
I’m afraid not!

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<th>Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework</th>
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A common European Framework?

Tabelle des échelles de notation

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Suède : U = Underkant (Fail)  G = Godkant (Pass)  VG = V. II Godkind (Pass with distinction)

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And just when you thought you knew what it was all about…. 

Formal = with structure and learning outcomes 
NAL = non-accredited learning

Learning type

FORMAL (ACCREDITED)
e.g. qualification or module

FORMAL (NON-ACCREDITED)
OR NON-FORMAL
e.g. BOC/MOOC
Short courses (NALs)

INFORMAL
e.g. language, experience, work based learning

Accreditation - may or may not be separate stage

Credit transfer or Direct Entry

New process...

Recognition of Prior Experiential Learning (RPEL)
Scotland - RPL

Journey from Informal to Formal Learning (JIFL)
(Often called Informal)

OU RPL
Recognition of Prior Learning (exemption)

JIFL

Just when you thought you knew what it was all about….
The boundaries are not just national
Some Research findings…

Perceptions of RPL
- People who haven’t done HE see people who have as somehow being better or smarter.
- It is not until you are in a working environment where you actually get to use that knowledge and those skills that it starts to make sense and actually becomes a useable education.
- … people look down on learning from experience and rate HE study more.

Student Views
- You need to find a way of comparing that knowledge that someone has built up with…the academic knowledge that someone has gained.
- It might be difficult to record and monitor and to find the right organisation to actually accredit or validate what the prior learning has been.
- My concern is how you measure prior learning and make sure that it is at the appropriate level.
Academic attitudes

- They will only get the credit once they have done some study with us as well to ensure they have this HE input to their studies.

- …you have to ask the question, - well how are we going to evaluate what skills they do have and what stage they are at?

- There have to be measures which equate with the measures of validity in the academic worlds so traditionally that has been something like essays or exams or something where you are proving what you know is on the same level.

I think we should but…

- Arts has difficulty in handling this new vocational agenda. It is much less clear to many people how Arts is relevant to vocations.

- Some people might think it would be just as easy to do the actual course.

- There is a reluctance for colleagues to engage with it as they are generally nervous about it as it is seen as possibly lowering standards.
Ivory towers persist?

● It is academic snobbery. It is pure and simple self preservation of what it means to be a higher education institute and preserving status of what that is

● … because of the conceit (Dunkelhaftigkeit) of our academic education itself. Universities are pretty stuck-up and conceited

●. The issues we work with the most are the internal objections. ‘We have our own way of thinking: what we do is the right thing’
Examples of learning across boundaries

- **UK NARIC** is the designated United Kingdom national agency for the recognition and comparison of international qualifications and skills. It performs this official function on behalf of the UK Government (www.naric.org.uk)

- **ERASMUS Student Network**

- **Double and joint degree programs**, A joint degree is a single degree that two or more partner universities offer, while a double degree, also referred to as a dual degree, is two degrees that two universities award. Eg National University of Singapore-Sciences Po double degree program

- **OERu** - connects learners around the world with defined pathways to education, created by recognised educators and assessed by renowned global institutions. The learning is free and credentialing is very affordable.
OUUK Empty Boxes

- Shell module
- Generic learning outcomes
- Learner defines content in collaboration with tutor
- Assessment by reflective portfolio

- Can include:
  - MOOCs
  - OERs
  - Work experience
  - Employer training

- Can be an entire short learning programme or part of it.

- Can be cheaper and quicker to study

- Could support refugees and migrants with partial qualifications

- Can be shaped to employer needs/requirements.
Our mission: open to...