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Letterkenny Institute of Technology

RPL at Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT)

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Contents of Presentation

- **Background** of RPL at Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT).
- Prior **Certified** Learning
- Prior **Experiential** Learning
- **Importance** of RPL in Work Based Learning (**WBL**) programmes
- **Future plans** in relation to RPL at LYIT



About LYIT

- LYIT is a modern third level college based in the North West of Ireland.
- **3000** Full Time learners and **400** part time learners.
- Courses in Business, Computing, Engineering, Tourism & Culinary, Retail, Design, Law, Nursing and Science



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Background to RPL at LYIT

- 2006 LYIT Participated in a government funded project aimed at **Recognising Learning in the Workplace**.
- Specifically the project involved recognising with a third level qualification (e.g. single subject certificate) learning achieved in **IT and Business** that occurred in the individual's personal life or in the work environment.
- LYIT identified generic skills such as **IT, Communications, Sales, Marketing, HRM, Office Admin, Managing People and Customer Care** that local employees could seek accreditation for (provided they successfully completed a RPL portfolio demonstrating their skills).



Background to RPL at LYIT

- The RPL facilitator would **visit local companies**. Originally meet with training manager and explain the RPL initiative and hopefully then present to employees.
- Applicants were expected to prepare a RPL portfolio demonstrating how their experiential learning met module learning outcomes.
- In the first **12 months over 250 employees** prepared portfolios.
- For many of these employees, it was their **first experience** with Higher Education.
- Many then **enrolled** for part time programmes.
- For the first year the emphasis mainly on promoting RPL to employees (not students)



Example of Learner seeking single subject certificate / exemption

- **See RPL assignment**

[Customer Care\RPL Learning Outcomes.doc](#)

- **See Sample Portfolio**

[Customer Care\Customer Care RPL Portfolio Julie.docx](#)

- **See RPL Assessment tool**

[Customer Care\Assessment Sheet.doc](#)



First Steps

- Developed RPL **Policy**
- Provided staff **training** (3 hour workshop)
- Developed RPL **Application** forms
- Developed **Assessor guidance** sheets
- Developed **sample RPL assessments** for experiential learning
- Hosted a **RPL symposium** where national and international experts were invited to deliver presentations.



RPL at LYIT

- Last few slides about promoting RPL to employers and employees which was how LYIT initially got involved in RPL.
- RPL is also promoted to our full and part time learners.
- Deal separately with:
 1. Prior **Certified** Learning
 2. Prior **Experiential** Learning

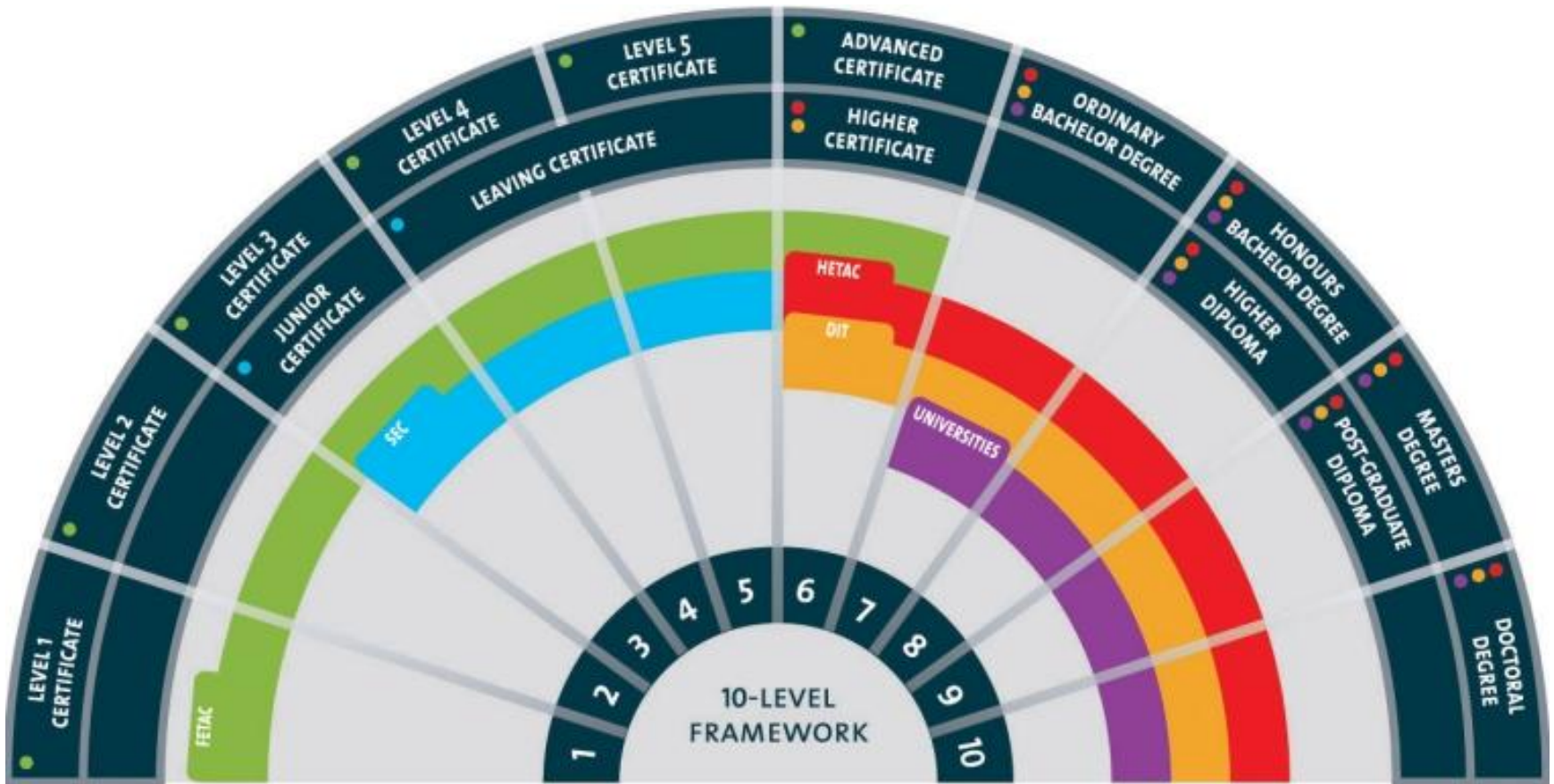


Prior *Certified* Learning

- Prior Certified Learning is learning that has **already been accredited** by an awarding body or other state recognised colleges/institutes (national and international qualifications).
- This prior learning can be **recognised** on the National Framework of Qualifications and may entitle the applicant to:
 - **Admission** to a programme or course of study.
 - The award of **Advanced** academic standing.
 - The award of **Exemptions** from some parts of a programme.



Framework of Qualifications



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Assessing Prior Certified Learning

- When assessing the prior learning, consider the following:
 - **Level** of Prior Award in the National Framework of Qualifications (**NFQ**)
 - **Comparison** of learning outcomes (sufficiently similar)
 - **Currency** of learning



Prior Certified Learning at LYIT (when seeking exemptions)

- Each year LYIT would receive **400-500 applications** from Full Time learners seeking exemptions based on prior certified learning.
- RPL Facilitator **visits all first year programmes** and delivers 15 minute presentation on RPL for learners.
 - Explains the 3 conditions (level, similar LO and currency)
- Learners that believe they are entitled to exemption complete **RPL application form** and attach details of prior qualifications and get their lecturer to sign the form for approval.



Prior Certified Learning at LYIT (when seeking exemptions)

- Completed form submitted to RPL Facilitator.
- Applications for exemption for semester 1 made before **October 1st** and **February 1st** for semester 2.



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Prior Certified Forms

- **Application Form**

[Customer Care\RPCL\RPCL Application Form.doc](#)

- **Guidance Sheet for Assessor / Lecturer**

[Customer Care\RPCL\Guidance Sheet.doc](#)



Recognition of Prior *Experiential* Learning (RPEL)



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Recognition of Prior *Experiential* Learning (RPEL)

- This involves the awarding of credit for **learning** from experience.
- Mostly for Mature learners (+23) on programmes and learners on WBL programmes
- Used sometimes for:
 - Learners seeking **entry** to programmes where they don't meet the formal requirements e.g. MSc in Innovation and Leadership(explain later).
 - Used at LYIT for **single subject** certificates
 - Used for gaining **credits** in full time / part time and WBL Programmes.



Recognition of Prior *Experiential* Learning

- In this case, the candidate must demonstrate that the learning experience has occurred by e.g. producing a **Portfolio of Evidence** to support the claim for access, exemption or credit (in some instances the assessor may decide to use an alternative method of assessment, e.g. **presentation, observation, interview or examination**).



Recognition of Prior *Experiential* Learning

- The portfolio the learner has to submit will be based on the learning outcomes of the module(s)/ programme he/she seeks credits for.
- Evidence contained in the portfolio may include:
 - References
 - CV
 - Job Descriptions and experiences
 - Details of any training completed
 - Certificates for qualifications, training courses etc...
 - Sample work
 - Evidence from the learner's personal life
 - Professional licenses/registrations or membership of professional organisations



Example where RPEL is used to access a Programme

- LYIT deliver an **Executive Masters in Innovation and Leadership**.
- Target Audience is Business owners in the NW of Ireland seeking to make their organisation more innovative.
- Normally **minimum entry requirement** for Master Programme is a Honours Degree.
- The majority of applicants to this programme did not achieve Honours Degree standard but had significant Business Management experience.
- LYIT had to develop a RPL Assessment that would match the Honours Degree (Level 8 standards).



Example where RPEL is used to access a Programme

- Applicants without the Honours Degree prepare portfolio with following sections:

Section 1 About the Applicant

Section 2 Functions of Management

- Planning
- Organising
- Directing
- Staffing
- Controlling

Section 3 - Details of Prior Learning (Accredited and Non Accredited)

Section 4 - Supporting documents (e.g. references, achievements, etc....)

Applicants also undergo RPL interview as part of assessment



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Example where RPEL is used to access a Programme

➤ **See Sample Portfolio**

[Masters - RPL\Sample RPL Portfolio.docx](#)

➤ **See Assessment Sheet**

[Masters - RPL\Assessment sheet.doc](#)



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HOW RPL can be integrated into Work Based Learning Programmes



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Role of RPL in Work Based Learning (WBL) Programmes

- After developing good relationships with numerous organizations through the RPL initiative promoting learning in the workplace, LYIT then commenced developing WBL programmes with local, national and international employers.
- Employers wanted custom designed programmes whereby:
 - Learning in the workplace was recognised (**RPEL**)
 - **Employer had input** into design and delivery of programme
 - **Assessments linked** to making improvements in the workplace
 - **Minimal disturbance** to productivity.



Role of RPL in Work Based Learning Programmes

What is a WBL programme?

- A **partnership** between an external organisation and a HE provider.
- The learners involved are **employed** in an external organisation.
- The learning programme derives from the **needs of the workplace** and the learner and not from a pre-defined academic curriculum.
- Learners engage in a process of **recognition of current knowledge**, skills and competencies prior to commencement.
- **Assessment** linked to workplace.
- The learning outcomes are **assessed by the HE provider**.



3. BBS IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

- 2009, Irish Business and Employer Confederation (IBEC) Retail Skillnet approached Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) about the possibility of jointly developing and delivering a Work Based Learning Retail Degree Programme.
- LYIT - good track record working in partnership with employers.
- Dedicated Work Based Learning Facilitator
- IBEC wanted a programme whereby learners (full time retail practitioners) received significant recognition for skills already acquired in the workplace.



3. BBS IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

- The programme commenced in Dublin September 2012.
- 64 places available on the course. Over 200 applications.
- Will be run in 2 campuses next year
- 55 of the 180 credits completed through RPL (experiential learning, thus reducing the cost and time of delivery)



Semester 1 (September –January)

Semester 2 (February-June)

**YEAR
1**

- Learner Development
- IT for Retail
- Marketing Principles

- Communications (RPL)
- Legal issues in Retail
- Retail Marketing

*Work placement for 360 hours **RPL** Portfolio (30 credits)*

**YEAR
2**

- HRM in Retail
- Economics
- Business Management (RPL)

- Psychology and Work
- Business Information Systems.
- Retail Management.
- Retail Store Design (RPL)

**YEAR
3**

- Accounting for Retail
- Consumer Behaviour in Retail (RPL)
- Market Research
- Operations Management

- Service Marketing in Retail. (RPL)
- Strategic Retail Management.
- E-Commerce in Retail.
- Entrepreneurship & Innovation

3. BBS IN RETAIL MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

- Learners will be expected to attend class / training for 2 days per month between September and May (with complimentary on-line support).
- Learners also receive 30 credits for learning achieved in their own workplace. In order to gain these 30 credits, learners are expected to prepare a **Work Based Learning** portfolio that provides evidence on how the programme has improved the learner's performance in the workplace.
- Good example of how to combine RPL, WBL, E-learning.



Managing People - Heaton's

- Level 7 Minor Award
- 4 Day Course aimed at store managers (normally take 8-12 days)
- Covered
 - Recruitment & Selection
 - Training
 - Control
 - Leadership
 - Employee Motivation
 - Discipline
- Assessment linked to learners making improvements in their workplace (RPEL)
- Combines RPL, WBL and traditional lectures....



Making WBL WORK

LYIT conducted extensive research into WBL and found following key to success:

1. Trust and Commitment
2. Significant Communication between provider and employer
3. RPL plays significant role
4. Planning and Direction
5. Bespoke programme
6. Flexible (content and dates...)
7. WBL Assessment
8. Bridging Cultural Differences
9. Informed lectures
10. Dedicated WBL Facilitator
11. Induction and Learner Development module



Next Steps in RPL

- E-Portfolio where learners submit experiential learning on a website
 - Learners will be able to complete a generic RPL portfolio that can be used for HE recognition and employment.
- Host RPL & WBL Symposium 2013
- Development of a RPL Module for staff
- RPL Book
- Hoping to get involved in an international project with other RPL practitioners interested in linking RPL and WBL
- Development of more minor awards where 50% completed through RPL and 50% through taught lecture.
- Getting a Masters student to complete research into RPL
- Complete PhD in role of RPL in promoting WBL



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