Public Policy – Handout and Activities

A. <u>**Learning Outcomes/Assessment**</u>**:** Upon completion of the 45-minute station on Public Policy, participants will be able to:
1. Describe your understanding of the importance of public policy in your work as an RPL stakeholder/practitioner.
2. Identify ways you can incorporate aspects of the Manual in your work to influence public policy for a more coordinated RPL model in your jurisdiction and in Canada.

B. <u>**Activity 1 – Prior Experience**</u>**:**

1. What organization do you work for/represent and in which jurisdiction?
2. Please share one adult learning/recognition of learning-related guideline, rule, process, or practice **that you follow today** and one that you **would like to put in place** at your organization/in your jurisdiction.

C. <u>**Background/Context**</u>**:**

- **CAPLA Manual Definition of RPL and Policy-related Applications/Organizations:**
  - **What is RPL?:** *The recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a systematic process of identifying, assessing and recognizing what a person knows and can do. The process takes various forms, depending on context* (CAPLA, Introduction, Page 1)*….The focus is on the learning, rather than on where or how the learning occurred. Knowledge, skills, and abilities gained from life experiences may be formal, informal, or non-formal. RPL processes may serve several purposes, including [enabling individuals regarding]: licensure, credit or advanced standing at an academic institution, employment, career planning, recruitment or self-knowledge* (CAPLA, RPL Manual, P.1).
    - Related Notes:
      - *The term "Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)" has been replaced in many jurisdictions with the "Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)". RPL has been used throughout…the Manual* (CAPLA, Introduction, P.1).
      - In Alberta and some jurisdictions, the term <u>RPL</u> has been used to reflect a broad definition of formal (e.g., transfer credit, dual credit, credential recognition) and non-formal and informal (e.g., PLAR) recognition of prior learning, as well as foreign qualification recognition.
  - **Users of the Manual:** *Organizations that use this manual include:*

    • professional organizations and networks • regulatory and licensing professions • immigrant serving and settlement agencies • sector councils and industry organizations • regulated and non-regulated trades • educational institutions • training organizations • employment and career counsellors • business • government (CAPLA, RPL Manual, P.1)

- **Definition, Types/Scope, and Effects/Importance of Public Policy:**
  - *Public Policy is concerned with what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes. It is about political (/social) science(s) and the ability of this discipline to describe, analyze, and explain public policy….Public policy is whatever government choose to do or not to do* (<u>Thomas Dye, as cited in Chandrika, 2012</u>).
  - Public Policy acts on behalf of society and requires a clear action plan that reflects an evaluation that has resulted in identification of values, goals/purpose, and means/actions, and should see a consistent relationship between decisions/effects and the policy/goals; however, policy analysis and political context disconnect often occur (Chandrika, 2012).
  - P*olicy analysis* [is] *an applied social science discipline that employs multiple methods of inquiry to solve practical problems* (<u>Public Policy Analysis</u> – William Dunn, 2011).

- o *Public policy has a number of key attributes:*
  - *Policy is made in response to some sort of issue or problem that requires attention. Policy is what the government chooses to do (actual) or not do (implied) about a particular issue or problem.*
  - *Policy might take the form of law, or regulation, or the set of all the laws and regulations that govern a particular issue or problem.*
  - *Policy is made on behalf of the "public."*
  - *Policy is oriented toward a goal or desired state, such as the solution of a problem.*
  - *Policy is ultimately made by governments, even if the ideas come from outside government or through the interaction of government and the public.*
  - *Policymaking is part of an ongoing process that does not always have a clear beginning or end, since decisions about who will benefit from policies and who will bear any burden resulting from the policy are continually reassessed, revisited and revised* (Project Citizen, Public Policy, Accessed October 2016).

- **Contextual Considerations:** Current organizational and government policies and initiatives, economic climate and fiscal and business plan government priorities, local community/organizational/jurisdictional/national social policy-related priorities and environment, community/organization/government/Indigenous consultation

- **Organizational and Jurisdictional Public Policy-related Examples and Sources:**
  - o **CAPLA, E.g.: Links to PLAR Policies and Procedures from across Canada (2010); Quality Assurance for the Recognition of Prior Learning in Canada: The Manual (2015); 2016 Boot Camp Resources**
  - o **UNESCO, E.g.: UNESCO Guidelines for the Recognition, Validation and Accreditation of the Outcomes of Non-formal and Informal Learning (2012)**
  - o **Forum of Labour Market Ministers, E.g.: A Pan-Canadian Framework for the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (2009)**
  - o Forum of Labour Market Ministers and CMEC, E.g.: Toolkit of Promising Practices that assist in the Alignment of Skills and Education Systems with the Needs of the Labour Market (2015)
  - o Achieving our potential: An action plan for prior learning assessment and recognition (PLAR) in Canada. PLA Centre, 2008.
  - o Revisiting the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): A Reflective Inquiry into RPL Practice in Canada (Conrad, 2008).
  - o **Prior Learning Assessment Inside Out (PLAIO), E.g.: PLIRC Database: A New Tool for PLAR Scholars, Practitioners and Policymakers (Wihak, Harris, Friesen, & Van Kleef, Thompson Rivers University, v.1(1), 2012)**
  - o **Conference Board of Canada, E.g.: Brain Gain 2015: The State of Canada's Learning Recognition System (2016) and Canadian Immigration Summit 2016 PowerPoint Brain Gain 2015 Summary (Bloom, 2016);** Brain Gain: The Economic Benefits of Recognizing Learning and Learning Credentials in Canada (Bloom, 2001)
  - o **ARUCC and PCCAT, E.g.: ARUCC/PCCAT Transcript and Transfer Guide (Accessed October 2016)**
  - o **Transfer Alberta, E.g.: PLAR Student Visual (6 Steps) and PLAR Website Section (See Draft under Post-secondary Admission on the PLAR Page at: http://uat.transferalberta.alberta.ca , Username: TransferAlberta , Password: TransferAlberta2016!)**
  - o **ACAT Annual Report 2015/16, Provincial Councils on Credit Transfer: Collaborative Relationships MoU (2014) , ACAT Learner Pathways Modernization Initiative (2014-18), ACAT PLAR Articulation Committee , Open Research Project Invitation**
  - o *Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Post-secondary Advising Handbook* **(NAIT, SAIT) (2016) (see CAPLA Resources)**
  - o Provincial-Territorial Apprentice Mobility Protocol (2015)
  - o Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship Harmonization Initiative (Accessed October 2016)
  - o Trenton MFRC Portfolio Development
  - o Ontario Colleges and McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Agreement Regarding Student Transfer to Sheridan's Business Diploma Program
  - o ESREA Network on Between Global and Local: Adult Learning and Development: Local Change, Social Actions and Adult Learning: Challenges and Responses (2014)
  - o Policy development and implementation procedures for recognition of prior learning: a case study of practice in higher education. Murphy, 2011.
  - o Canada's Public Policy Forum, E.g.: Broadening Talent Pathways: How to Make Cross-sector Mobility Meaningful (2016)

- **Making a Difference, Influencing Policy and Decision Making, and Using the CAPLA RPL Manual:**
  - o Drawing **connections between practitioner examples/sources and relationship to and influence on organizational and public policy-related goals/purpose, means/actions, and decisions/effects** (e.g., action plans, annual reports, MoUs frameworks, initiatives, data, research, technology tools and resources, websites, projects, forums, guidelines, guiding principles, practices, committees).
  - o **Practitioners making a difference** in the lives of learners/stakeholders, **drawing a feasible relationship and shared foundation/understanding/goals** between organizational practice, activities, process, and policy and public policy, with **consistent and meaningful language and communication** regarding desired decisions/effects/outcomes.
  - o Using the CAPLA Manual's **RPL Definition, 9 Guiding Principles for Quality RPL Practice in Canada** (*accessible, consistent, fair, respectful, valid, flexible, rigorous, transparent, professionally supported*), **6 Steps for Quality RPL** (*explain the RPL process, provide information on expected requirements, explain assessment processes/methods/criteria, conduct assessment, provide assessment results, provide advice for next steps*), and **assessment tools and scenarios** to help **provide a structure and consistent criteria for RPL policy-related documents, activities, and practices at your organization and as a common set of shared criteria/known standard for partners within your jurisdiction and among jurisdictions.**

D. Activity 2 – Reflection and Discussion:

1. Is there **a section on a website, some form of policy, or policy-related documentation or activities regarding Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) or other form(s)/term(s) related to learner access and mobility** (e.g., Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR), labour force and career development, employment, integration and settlement of refugees and immigrants, credential recognition, transfer credit, Foreign Qualifications Recognition (FQR), learner pathways and lifelong learning)…
   a. **For your organization?**
   b. **For the relevant government area or ministry in your province/territory/jurisdiction?**

2. What **role(s) do publicly-stated organizational and/or jurisdictional/government policies or policy-related goals, actions, and decisions play in your work** (e.g., documents, information, processes, guidelines, activities/no activities)?

E. Next Steps: Where do I Go from Here?

Notes/Ideas for Activity 3 and How to Begin or Build on Your Current Context –

Incorporating Tools, System Components, Assessment, Advising and the RPL MANUAL to Influence Public Policy and Promote a More Coordinated RPL Model in Your Organization, Jurisdiction, and Canada:

1. **Identify Organizational and Government Policy-related Alignment and Grounding re: Tools, Systems, Assessment and Advising/Career Counseling – For Example:** Linkages between Policy-related documents and activities and Vision/Mission/Principles/Values/Mandates and Roles, Business/Operational Plans, Funding Models, Initiatives and Projects, Data Collection and Research, Learner/Advisor/Assessor and Assessment/Marketing Tools, Training and Professional Development, Advisors and Facilitators, Quality Assurance and Assessment/Standards, Other Key Organizational Areas and Government Mandates, CAPLA/the MANUAL/Organizations using the MANUAL Across Canada/Common Messaging and Shared Approaches that consider organizational/local/national needs and contexts

2. **Identify a way to start within your current organizational and funding structures, building as you go, and making linkages to and evidence-based arguments for aspects of public policy** in support of organizational actions and needs and vice versa. You may have a formal policy or you may not. Either way, you can be **building forward towards clear goals with attainable steps within your mandate and your jurisdiction to move towards recognition of RPL as a normal/expected aspect of practice**. **Practice can drive policy. Public-facing documents, tools, and guidance on websites support/inform policy. The decisions you/your organization and the government make and share publicly with others (and those decisions not made) are forms of policy**, even if they are not in a formal Policy document.

3. **Use your organizational mandate and roles, purpose, and values to help ground your RPL argument.** Also, **collect data** about and from your stakeholders/clients/learners and why RPL is needed, and potentially complete a **risk and/or cost/benefit analysis** for both the organization and society (e.g., broader economy, social benefits).

4. **Use the CAPLA RPL Manual's RPL definition, 9 guiding principles, and 6 steps to help frame the structure and direction of your RPL process and approach/model**. These items can help to ground your process and criteria and contribute to reflecting consistency for RPL across Canada, while also allowing for flexibility to adapt to your organization/jurisdiction/context.

5. **Identify what content and mechanisms are missing/needed in policy-related documentation and activities in your organization and in your jurisdiction to support RPL** accessibility/validity/reliability/trust, labour force and development, and learner pathways and mobility in Canada. Use the related learner and organizational assessment tools in CAPLA's RPL Manual to help with this assessment.

6. **Build on your initial organizational and jurisdictional structures. Build a phased-in plan** for addressing missing/needed policy-related content and mechanisms for RPL. **Use consistent language and regularly communicate consistent internal and external messages regarding RPL regarding values, goals/purpose, means/actions, and desired decisions/effects, including via your website**. **Build additional partnerships/relationships** with other organizations and jurisdictions to further build research/data collection to inform best practices and evidence-based decision making on an ongoing basis.

F. Activity 3 – Discussion and Application:

1. What aspects of the "How To…" section at this Station **best apply to the specific context of your work, organization, and jurisdiction**?
2. What is the **best/most feasible way you can apply** relevant "How to…" information from this Station and the Manual's RPL Definition, 9 Principles, and 6 Steps to your work to influence an organizational approach to RPL process and criteria?
3. In **what way(s) can this application of RPL process and criteria help to inform RPL standards and a more coordinated RPL organizational model/policy at your organization and with other partners** in your jurisdiction and/or Canada?
4. What is your **best next step(s) or starting point(s) to begin to link your practice and effect on organizational policy to effecting change on RPL public policy** in your jurisdiction and/or in Canada?

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