

# Enhancing the Implementation of the SA NQF

## DHET Research Colloquium 2107

### **RPL for Access to undergraduate and postgraduate study**

Alan Ralphs



UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE

A place of quality, a place to grow, from hope to action through knowledge

# 2008-2016

## An emerging RPL policy framework

SAQA RPL Policy 2013

HEQSF Policy 2014

CHE RPL, CAT & Assessment Policy 2016

DHET RPL Coordination Policy 2016



### A dynamic and coherent mix of...

- Pioneering RPL projects, practitioners & institutions (public & private)
- Research projects & partnerships
- Consultation and support services
- Conferences and colloquiums
- Collaboration, organisation and coordination across all levels and lines: pivotal role of SAQA

# RPL Policy Definitions 1998-2013

- The RPL process is a **multi-dimensional** one. It is a **process** through which non-formal learning and informal learning are measured, **mediated** for recognition **across different contexts** and certified against the requirements for **credit, access, inclusion or advancement** in the formal education and training system, or workplace. RPL processes can include **guidance and counselling**, and extended **preparation for assessment**
- **SAQA 2013**

# Council for Higher Education 2016

**RPL is more than a process of assessment:** rather it is a specialised pedagogical process that also includes the “translation” of informal and non-formal bodies of knowledge into their formal and structured equivalents based on specified competencies.

Assessment criteria for RPL **should not simply replicate those for mainstream study**, but should seek to accommodate the knowledge and skills gained in **practices outside the higher education institution** in terms of their value for the envisaged field of study (CHE: 2016:4.2.8)

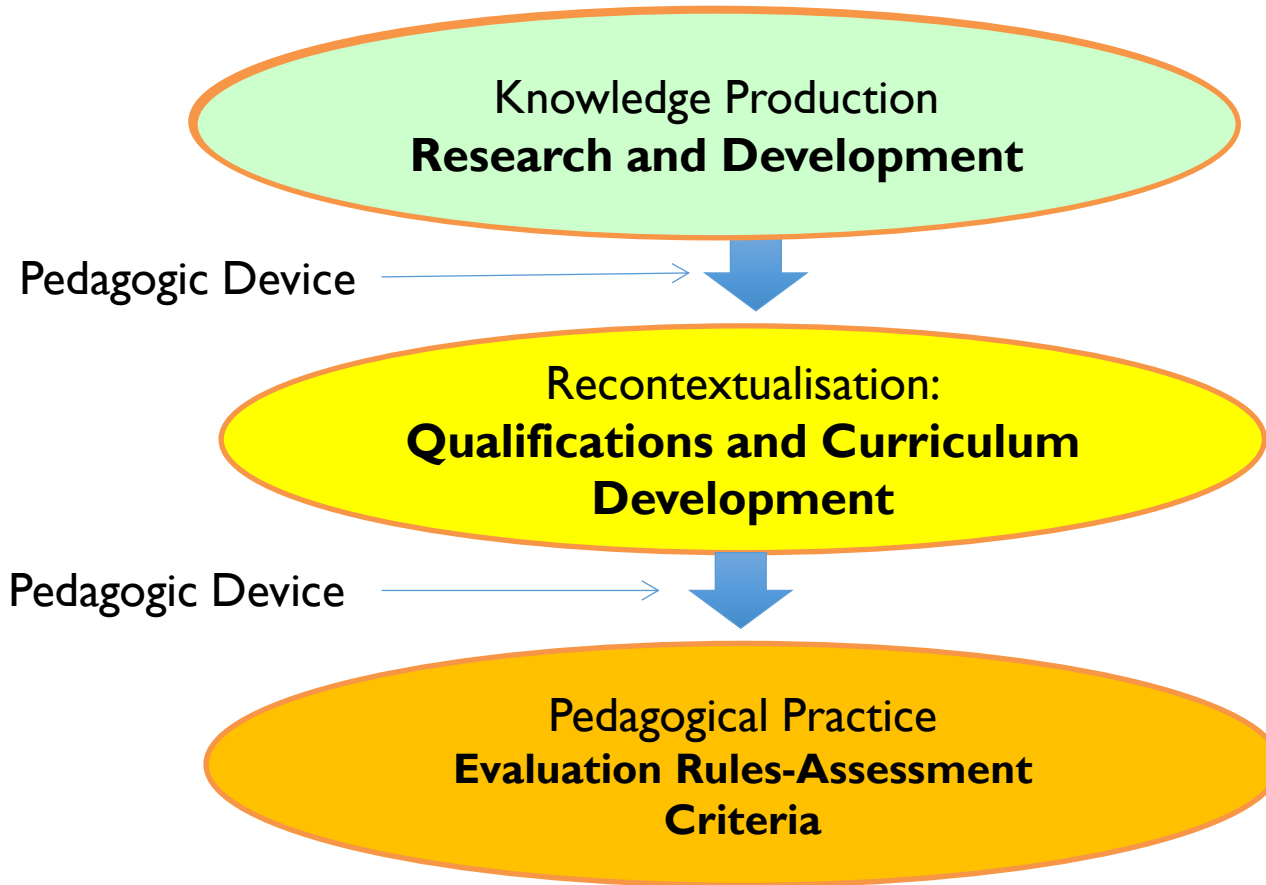
## Overarching Research Question

**What needs to change** for RPL to become a more optimally inclusive and effective practice in mediating the complexities of knowledge recognition and certification in and across different learning pathways and communities of practice in a differentiated but interdependent NQF?

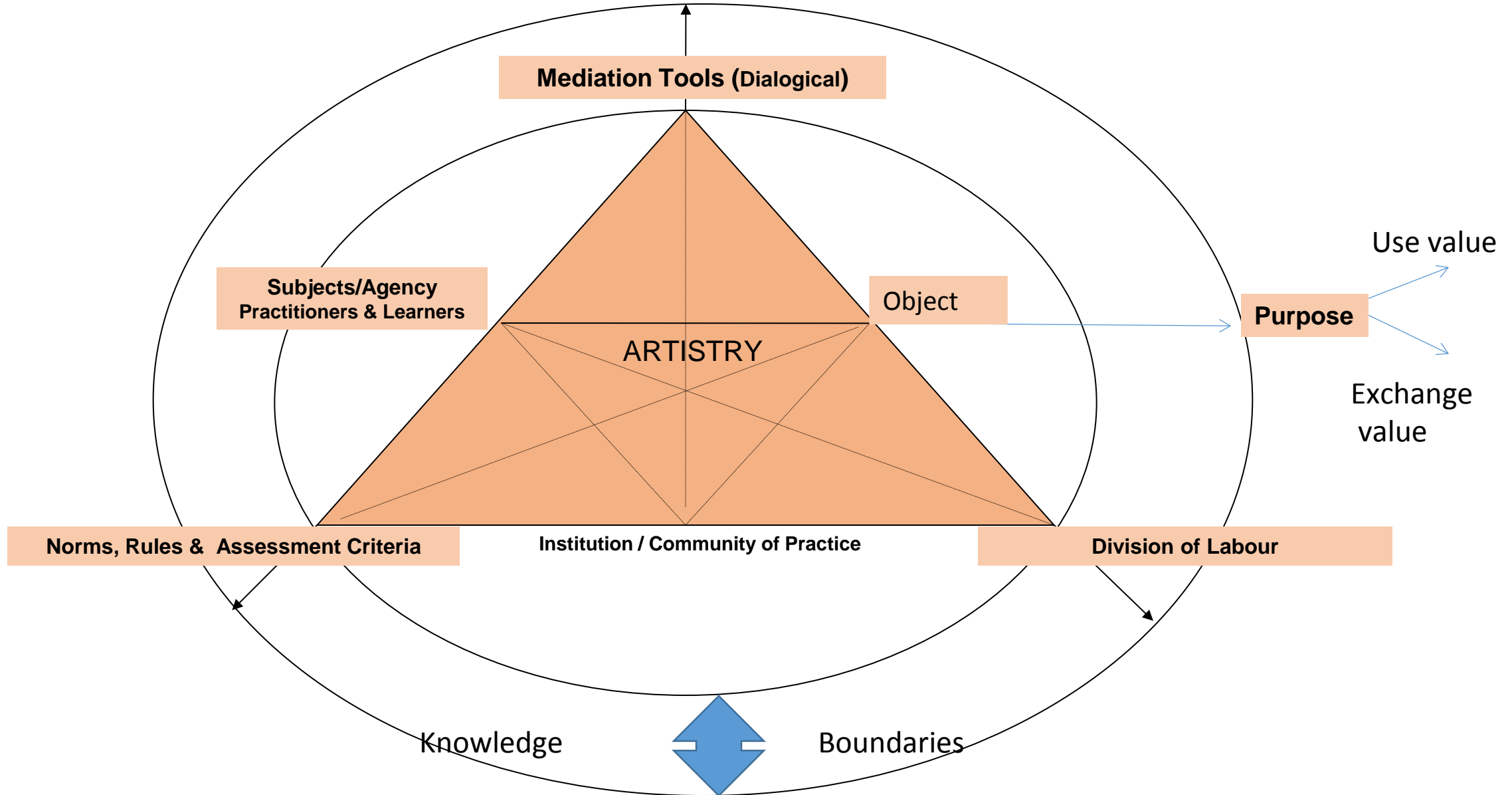
# RPL Research: Lines of Enquiry

- Knowledge: What knowledge is valued or excluded: sources, forms, cultures and boundaries?
- RPL Pedagogy: The content, methods, and assessment criteria: do they mediate participation or exclusion?
- Institutional Context: How do institutional cultures, policies, rules impact on inclusive or exclusive nature of RPL?
- Learner Agency: How is learner identity and agency enabled or disabled within different RPL practices – as subjects or objects of the practice?

# Knowledge Forms and Boundaries in Educational Discourse (Basil Bernstein)



# RPL as a Specialised Pedagogy: Inner workings, relations and artistry

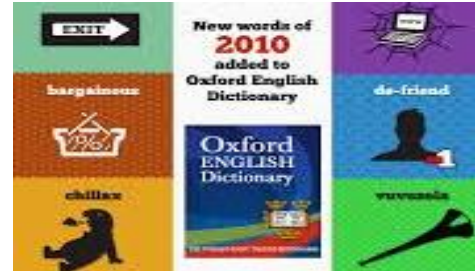




# Three models of RPL as a Specialised Pedagogy

- **Translational**

- RPL for credit



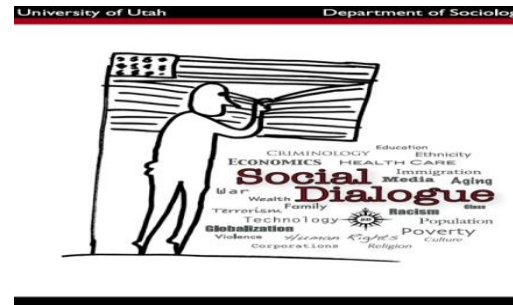
- **Navigational**

- RPL for Access



- **Dialogical**

- In-curriculum



# RPL for Access to Undergraduate Study

- **Frontline advising –opening the learning conversation**
- Information sessions – broadening the learning conversation
- Shortlisting for preselection workshops
- Preselection workshops and testing fundamental literacies (blend of BICS and CALP)
- **Portfolio Development Course and mentoring (12 weeks)**
- Tests for Access and Placement (R&WPT + NBT + Science Challenge Exams)
- **Assessment of Test Results, Learning Portfolios and Interviews**
- Administration and Registration
- Post-entry support and monitoring

# Portfolio Development Course for Access to Undergraduate Study: Navigation Tools

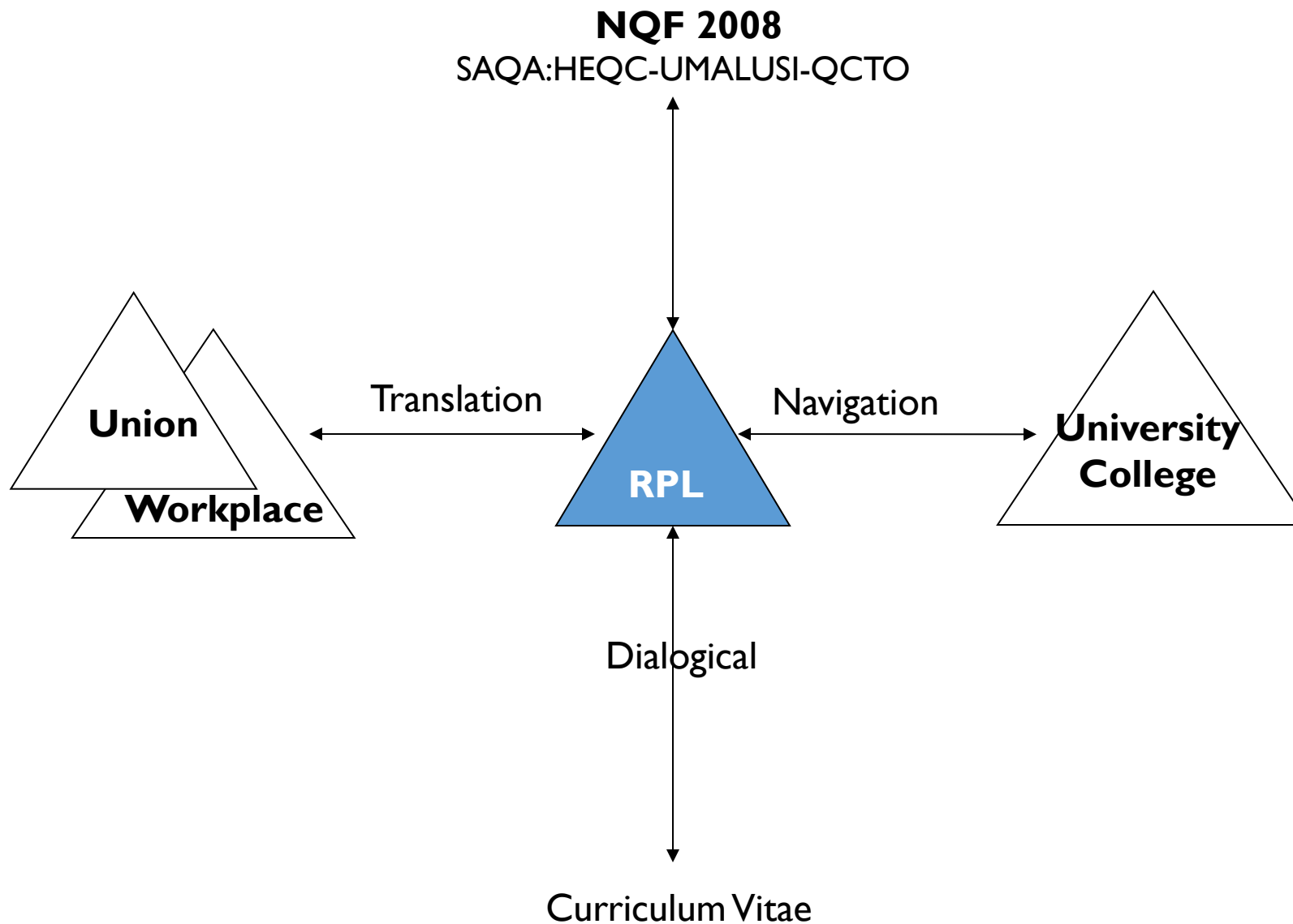
LEARNING PORTFOLIO Content and outcomes	NAVIGATION TOOLS Selection and sequence
Motivation statement	Adult education and experiential learning theory
Skills profile and extended CV	Situated learning theory and the sociology of knowledge
Autobiographical learning history	Narrative theory and learning history
Article and Book Review	Academic Literacy and text-based practices
Special Project Report	Academic Literacy: critical thinking and literature search
Supporting evidence	Learning and assessment

# Feasibility studies on RPL for Access to Professional Programmes

	Science	Nursing	Business	Tourism	Journalism
Anticipated feasibility of RPL	Low	Low-medium	Medium	High	Highest
Actual feasibility of RPL	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Highest

# Findings: RPL for access to professional programmes in higher education

- Knowledge arguments held up to a point - BUT ....
- Likely to be knowledge niches in most programmes where RPL is more feasible than elsewhere
- Pedagogic agency on the part of subject specialists is important in accommodating experiential knowledge
- Role of regulatory and professional bodies is key in some fields
- Labour market issues and drivers as important as knowledge-related issues in some fields?



**RPL as Specialised Pedagogy:  
Mediating Learning Across Contexts**

# Some concerns: coherence, efficiency, impact and sustainability

- National Strategy and Coordination ???
- Funding for RPL in public E&T system???
- Not accepted: the search for a pathway???
- Post School qualifications and articulation within and across the sub-frameworks. TVET and QCTO Qualifications. NASCA???



# RPL Programme Stats UWC 2011-2016

	2011	2012	2013	2104	2105	2016
Information and Advice	1153	1026	1352	1044	1253	1258
PDC and Test	122	96	103	102	125	135
Registrations	59	54	44	48	61	63
Where have they gone?	1094	972	1308	996	1192	1195

Where can they find advice, information and support for their next moves, and the next, and the next?

Is there a case for a RPL Pathways Network and eProfile ???



# DHET RPL Coordination Policy (2016)

## National RPL implementation strategy

- National Coordinating Mechanism
- **Funding and fund management**
- Professionalization
- Information Management
- Research
- Support and Advice
- Policy development
- Advocacy and communication



www.shutterstock.com · 507849073

Which NQF body is going to take this on  
And when???

# Gender Experience and knowledge in adult learning: Alisoun's daughters Prof. Elana Michelson, 2015

“APEL is an important venue for revisiting the relationship between authorised and devalued forms of knowledge precisely because it formalises it. It is therefore a node for negotiating epistemological visibility and for negotiating new forms of recognition, based not on sameness and equivalence, but on difference and inclusivity”.

