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Are traditional recognition systems hiding talent pools that could ease skills shortages?

- Wendy Cato May 2024



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Hi, I'm Wendy.

I have no formal qualifications in RPL. I don't even have a degree in teaching / training / assessment, let alone any post-graduate qualifications. Therefore, by Australia's rules, I am **unskilled**.

All I have is over 20 years working at the coal face of RPL, assessing across many industries, assisting those who are also deemed unskilled.

If I immigrated to your country, would you have the processes to recognise my skills?

Make a list of what your country would require and how you would recognise my skills and experiences.





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Current mainstream RPL practices:

Rely on:

- Candidates having workplace documents and / or support from employer to use as evidence
- The 'evidence list' – given to candidates who are told to find what's on the list
- Providing NO support / guidance prior to enrolment, during the process or feedback at the end other to say what units were recognised.

One size does **not** fit all!!



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Australian RPL processes have become document driven with no support for the applicant during the process

However:

There will be people **with paperwork / documents**

There will be people with **some / limited paperwork / documents**

E.g. those in security-type jobs i.e. armed forces, police or even those who work as consultants and under privacy can't show their work to you

There will be people with **no paperwork / documents**
(refugees, fire and/or flood victims)



Existing talent pools hiding in plain sight?

FACT: Countries are shifting from 'old' to 'new' economies

Q: Is the transferability of skill sets from one industry to new contexts being fully recognised?

FACT: Recruitment processes in modern workplaces favour, and even require, formal qualifications

Q: If workers present with the knowledge and experience but without the 'piece of paper', are they being **seen** by recruiters?

Q: Do traditional RPL practices help these people to be **seen**?

To move away from traditional RPL processes

- 1) Build RPL Assessor capability
- 2) Acknowledge and support the
non-employer-supported cohort





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What we know about RPL assessors' capability:

There is **a need for training** in the following areas:

- Ability to implement candidate-centred RPL practices (assessor-led)
- Ability to understand the differences between employer- and non-employer-supported processes
- Strong ability to map evidence (as it will vary)
- Ability to provide targeted gap training, i.e. identify when to assess gaps and provide training to address those gaps (as indicated by the mapping) is warranted
- Ability of the assessor to 'cluster' like units / modules of assessment

None of the above is taught in any courses provided to assessors



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To address RPL assessor capability issues and the national skill shortage issue, I developed the Advanced RPL Assessor micro-credential – housed on the Skills Education portal





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The **Advanced RPL Assessor** micro-credential role-models the candidate-centred experience – it showcases what an RPL process and assessment should be

That is, RPL assessors undertaking the program are experiencing what a candidate-centred process *looks like* whilst completing their own learning



The Advanced RPL Assessor micro-credential course includes:

- ✓ Written pre-enrolment guide on what the course involves and what to expect
- ✓ Welcome videos to orient the learner
- ✓ Course guides on what to do and what is required to successfully complete the course - including assessment requirements
- ✓ Learning materials for asynchronous access: two (2) eBooks and six (6) videos
- ✓ Step-by-step scaffolded learning including formative online quizzes to confirm understanding of key concepts
- ✓ Online chat groups as peer support for those undertaking the training
- ✓ Personalised one-on-one mentoring sessions (with me) when needed/wanted, including accessing feedback on assessment progress
- ✓ Access to **RPL Matters** (a Community of Learning which includes reference materials and sessions from RPL assessors from around the world and across Australia)
- ✓ Allowance for several attempts at the assessment



How do we address skill shortages?

Use other methods of assessing skill and knowledge such as:

- ✓ Challenge tests (practical demonstration (simulated))
- ✓ Oral questioning (which can be recorded using voice-to-text for evidence) instead of copious amounts of writing
- ✓ Use of scenarios to test application of knowledge rather than rote questioning
- ✓ Having 'professional discussions' around scenarios and practical demonstrations using questioning such as: "Why did you use that?", "What would have happened if you did this?" etc.
- ✓ Use technology to assist such as RealWear Navigator / GoPro that allows assessors to watch and talk to people live on the job (great for countries with large areas of remote workers!)

How do we address skill shortages?

Address RPL Assessor capability. Train up RPL assessors to lead the process and to become:

- ✓ RPL **enablers**
- ✓ RPL **translators**
- ✓ RPL **mentors**

Not **just** RPL assessors!





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How would you recognise my experiences and the skills and knowledge that I have gained so that I could be recognised as being **skilled** in your country??





For details of the **Advanced RPL Assessor** micro-credential



For details about **Cato HR** and **eBook** purchases