



Recognizing Prior Learning (RPL) is a capacity building tool for organizations and communities

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Rural Development Institute (RDI)






- **Established** in 1987 as a research center at Brandon University
- **Goal:** Improve the well-being of rural communities and regions through research, collaboration and development
- **Prioritizes** community-based and applied research, working directly with rural communities to develop place-based solutions
- **Research areas:** Community assessment & capacity building, agriculture, climate change, immigration, economic development

CASE EXAMPLE: Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC)



RPLC Project Evaluation – Survey of Students

Survey Design - 37 respondents:

- 5pt Likert scale  **Greatly Diminished**  **Slightly Diminished**  **No Impact**  **Improved Slightly**  **Improved Considerably**
- Four major dimensions of the RPLC skill evaluation:
 - Academic Skills*
 - Policy Skills*
 - Management Skills*
 - 21st Century Skills*

Survey Results – Assessing Student Learning

Students reflected on the development of their skills in those 4 key areas which correspond with **Scholarship** and **Leadership**

- **Academic Skills** - writing articles, lit. reviews, policy briefs | collaborating with researchers and policy-makers
 - Results = on average slight or considerable improvement at 63.6%
- **Policy Skills** - policy analysis, development & implementation | collaborating with community members
 - Results = on average slight or considerable improvement at 63.3%

Survey Results – Recognizing Student Learning

Students awarded Certificates in **Scholarship** and **Leadership**

Criteria of Assessment:

- **Management Skills** - time management, organizing events, interacting with the public, public speaking
 - Results = on average slight or considerable improvement at 64.4%
- **21st Century Skills** - digital skills, information management, creative content, critical thinking, problem solving
 - Results = on average slight or considerable improvement at 82.1%

Recognizing Student Learning

Students awarded Certificates in:

Scholarship – those students (7) that excelled in scholarship, contributing 2 or more instances to the development of content and knowledge in RPLC

Leadership – those students (14) that excelled in leadership, contributing to the running and success of RPLC over multiple years in the project





international Award

GAINING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS
AND RURAL KNOWLEDGE

Excellence in Leadership,
Sustainability Contributing to the
Running and Success in RPLC

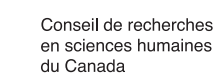
Michael Blatherwick

Brandon University

4 years of Partnership
2015 - 2019

KOFI CAMPBELL
PROVOST & VICE-PRESIDENT (ACADEMIC)

WILLIAM ASHTON
PROJECT DIRECTOR



RPLC Certificates as Digital Badges

Designing options for Badges:



Designing a framework for Recognizing Learning and Achievements of RDI Team members

Exploring options to expand RDI job descriptions:

- Baseline job roles and responsibilities
- Incentives to be awarded badges based on demonstration of achievements and advancements in learning

Potential Badges:

- Scholarship; Project Management; Essential Skills; 21st Century Digital Skills

Designing a framework for Recognizing Learning and Achievements of RDI as an organization

RDI undergoes an RPL Assessment Process

- Conducts an Internal self-assessment and
- Develops an RDI portfolio with evidence of expertise and competence level in key areas, e.g.,
 - Rural policy development
 - Government, Regional & Community Engagement and Collaboration
 - Project Management – design and implementation
 - Rural Policy Sectors
- Engages in an External Validation

Goal: Validation would provide a foundation for RDI to assess organizations and communities.

RPL at a Community Level

Identifying and validating Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes within a Community:

- Follow RPL assessment practices within the context of Asset-mapping:
 - Systematic process of cataloging key services, benefits, and resources within the community, such as individuals' skill sets, organizational resources, physical space, institutions, associations, and elements of the local economy to help identify the capacities to address community needs, design and implement community projects, and improve social and economic well-being.

Amended from <https://www.ruralhealthinfo.org/toolkits/rural-toolkit/1/asset-identification>

Goal: Recognition would validate the community's capacities and strengths to engage in community development.

Differentiating RPL Assessment Levels

Whose learning is involved?

- Individuals
- Aggregated Individuals
- Aggregated Organizational
- Aggregated Community

Challenges

- Who is qualified to recognize an Organization's or Community's competencies?
- What assessment methods are most applicable?
- RPL Assessment process can be time consuming and difficult to coordinate.
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Opportunities

- Badges for Organizations & Communities advertise their successes
- Successes showcase collective strength/empowerment rather than highlighting individuals alone
- RPL process identifies Strengths, Deficits, Gaps needing learning to be better prepared for future projects
- Enhanced capacity reduces need for costly external expertise/consultants
- Recognizing the diversity of a community's learning encourage involvement
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Acknowledgements

Appreciations to Aleksi Virratvouri & Marco Pagani for their data analysis of the RPLC Survey and their work on the evaluation of RPLC skill building

Thank you to Don Presant for his overview of Digital Badges

Any Questions or Comments?

Thank You/Merci

