RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING PRACTICES IN UNIVERSITY OF KUOPIO IN FINLAND

The Survey on the Practices of the Recognition of Prior Learning
The survey was carried out during autumn 2007 as part of a bologna process implementation project called “Five Years - Two Degrees” (SY2D). The Finnish SY2D project is a national development project for university education and is funded by the Ministry of Education. One of the key development themes of the SY2D project is the development of tools for the recognition of prior learning (e.g., Personal Study Plans, PSPs) and implementation of the learning outcomes. The aim of the survey was to collect data for development of the RPL practices and for planning the personnel training for university tutors and teachers. The data was collected from teacher tutors by interviews and electric inquiry.

Recognition of Prior Learning Practices
The recognition and assessment of prior learning was conducted at the starting point of the students study path primarily by credit transfer (CT) of prior formal education. The practices of CT differed highly between faculties and departments.

- The CT was done by form for requesting transfer credit and prior learning assessment. It was also done by PSP with the teacher tutor by substituting compulsory core modules by other similar studies.
- The PSP is made by every new student and its is the main tool for the CT process. The recognition of prior learning process with the PSP is described beside.
- The granting of CT was based on the experience of the teacher tutors or/and the teachers which were in charge of the module.
- Certificates or diplomas were the most typical methods at the RPL process. Work experience certifications, interviews and proficiency tests were rarely used. The assessment of the work experience concentrated on what was learned through the experience and this was reported literary.
- Amount of the CT has grown in the recent years. This is among other things because the know-how and the knowledge about the similarities between higher education institutions’ curriculums have increased. The amount of the CT has also grown also since the students have even more prior studies and they are well aware of their opportunity to the CT. On the other hand, students relay to each other information of what can be requested to CT.

Some teacher tutors experienced the CT as quite formal process which is lacking standardized rules and clear assessment criteria for informal and non-formal learning. Teacher tutors hold the view that university needs a clearer quality system to the RPL process which could ensure the coherency and fairness of the recognition and assessment of prior learning.

References

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