

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF ADULT LEARNERS IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

Thomas M. Kaputa
Zimbabwe Open University
Zimbabwe
Email: kaputatm@zou.ac.zw

ABSTRACT

In 2001 the Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) embarked on the recruitment of Adult learners through accreditation of prior learning (APL). This was in recognition that Adult learners who embark on open and distance learning (ODL) have a variety of learning experiences which relate to the world of work which can be incorporated into their degree programmes. The ZOU in recognition of the above philosophy and practice went ahead and admitted students into the counselling degree programme using the APL route. The assumption was that the learner's would achieve personal development and growth through their involvement in APL advisement and assessment. This qualitative study therefore aimed to find out what the APL student's experiences were. Convenient sampling was used to select two the students. An extensive open interview was carried out with them. Lecturers and Administrators were also interviewed to solicit their views on the student's experiences. The findings revealed that the students lacked adequate support. ODL institutions need to improve awareness of APL and support to student.

Keywords: Accreditation of prior learning, open and distance learning, programmes.