

From Folk High School to University: Non-Formal Learning Translated into Formal Recognition *(Odd Haddal, Norway)*

Glossary (1)

- ❑ Articulation (into): The process of translating learning outcomes from different arenas into units that are used by the awarding institution, in this case: university credits
 - ❑ The major: The student's main course of study at the university
 - ❑ Prior learning: "Realkompetanse"; formal, non-formal, and informal learning OR the knowledge, know-how, and/or competences acquired through previously *unrecognized* training or experience
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Glossary (2)

- Documentation: “Records” of learning activities or outcomes
 - Validation: The process of assessing and recognizing a wide range of knowledge, know-how, skills and competences which people develop throughout their lives in different contexts
 - Formal Recognition: The process of granting official status to competences, either through the award of certificates or through the grant of equivalence, credit units, validation of gained competences
 - *Social recognition*: through acknowledgment of the value of competences by economic and social stakeholders
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The Plan

- A plan involving a folk high school in Norway and a regional university in the US, for their students to benefit from each other's learning arenas
 - The articulation plan (*a detailed plan for the recognition of prior learning based on the learning programs in both institutions*) is being developed between one folk high school and one university, but with the potential of being applied to sister schools and sister universities
 - The students in the folk high school's two-semester course called *Outdoor Life: A Comprehensive Approach* will be guaranteed academic credits from the university's *Department of Physical Education and Recreation*
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Participants

- Norway: The folk high school has a strong outdoor life profile. It is located on the west coast of Norway, with access to the sea, the mountains, and glaciers
 - The US: The university also has a strong outdoor life and recreation program. Its campus is located in the Midwest by the Mississippi River, close to farm land and the prairie
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Participants (2)

□ The University

- Associate (2 years), Baccalaureate (Bachelor, 4 years) and Masters (6 years) degrees
- 8000 students
- 65 undergraduate programs
- 12 graduate programs

□ The Folk High School

- Several two-semester courses in outdoor life
 - Up to 30 short courses (electives)
 - 100 students
 - No exams, no degrees
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Program Principles (1)

- ❑ Formal recognition (university credits) of non-formal and informal learning (a folk high school learning program)
 - ❑ Credits to be based on the “prior learning” (“realkompetanse”) principle
 - ❑ Recognition based on the curriculum at the university
 - ❑ Credit applies to students from both Norway and the US
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Program Principles (2)

- ❑ Credit will be given for program-specific courses and may be given for general courses
 - ❑ Recognition of a learning arena, not of individual students
 - ❑ No exams or individual assessments required in program arena
 - ❑ Folk high school students need the school's documentation of the learning program, attendance, and competencies
 - ❑ Credits outside the outdoor life course, such as language credits, will require individual assessments (for now), based on the university's adult entry principles
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The Adult Entry Program (1)

"The university established the Adult Entry Program in an effort to serve the educational needs of adult students within its service area, on and off campus. The program is for adults wanting to pursue a baccalaureate or an Associate of Arts degree.

This unique and innovative program provides the opportunity for an assessment and review of prior learning acquired through informal education or life/work experience. The university validates credits earned, and they apply toward your degree program."

The Adult Entry Program (2)

"The Adult Entry advisor and the student explore the goals the student has in mind, and the nature of the student's prior learning. After being admitted, the documentation and assessment process may begin.

Informal educational experiences that are equivalent to college-level learning are described and documented by the student in consultation with the Adult Entry advisor. These experiences may include, but are not limited to, work skills, non-credit seminars and workshops, volunteer work, leisure or recreational skills, talents, or independent study."

Summary

- ❑ The articulation plan is for both Norwegian and American students pursuing a baccalaureate degree
 - ❑ This plan validates prior a specific learning program at the folk high school. The university recognizes credits earned toward the degree
 - ❑ Additional (informal or non-formal) educational experiences equivalent to college-level learning are documented through an agreement between the university and the school, based on the adult entry principles
 - ❑ These experiences may also include seminars, workshops, electives, interpersonal and personal skills, volunteer work, leisure or recreational skills, talents, or independent study
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Procedures

- Making a transition between two cultures
 - Folk high schools and American universities are usually very different in educational philosophy (*character building vs. subject focus*)
 - Translating the documentation
 - The learning program at the folk high school
 - Subject matter
 - Social learning
 - Cultural and language learning
 - A description of what a folk high school is – and is not
 - Interpreting the documentation
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University Credits

- ❑ American students attending the folk high school for one school year will receive a minimum of 18 credits towards a major in physical education and recreation
 - ❑ Norwegian students applying to this university for the same major will receive the same number of credits
 - ❑ In some cases, up to 28 credits may be awarded, including f. inst. foreign language credits
 - ❑ A full annual (two semesters) load is 32 credits
 - ❑ A Bachelor's degree requires 128 credits, an Associate degree requires 64
 - ❑ The number of credits awarded has not yet been finally determined, but is subject to negotiation
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Benefits

- ❑ College students attending the folk high school will experience a regular folk high school year
 - ❑ Students attending the university will be able to use their folk high school learning during their studies
 - ❑ Both institutions gain a potential partner for staff development and staff exchanges
 - ❑ Both the folk high school and the university will admit motivated and knowledgeable international students
 - ❑ Both institutions strengthen their international profile
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Costs

- ❑ All credits at the university carry a price tag (tuition fee). Room and board are additional costs
 - ❑ The folk high school charges for room and board (plus excursions and materials)
 - ❑ The university is considering charging (subsidized) in-state tuition fees and adding a cross-cultural scholarship to the agreement with the folk high school
 - ❑ Future negotiations will include a request for even lower tuition fees for transferred credits
 - ❑ The participating students will also be eligible for reduced university fees
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Examples

Folk High School Topics

- Sea Kayaking
- Rock Climbing
- Glacier Course
- Hiking in the Mountains
- First Aid
- Life on the Coast
- Summiting
- Telemark Skiing
- Ice Climbing
- Food Preparation & Ski Maintenance
- Winter Hike
- Snow Kiting

University Courses

- Recreation Programming
 - Outdoor Pursuits
 - Organization and Administration of Recreation
 - Evaluation in Recreation
 - Internship in Recreation
 - Recreational Leadership
 - Recreational Facilities and Area Design
 - Wilderness Ethics, Safety, and Survival
 - Adventure Travel
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Challenges and Dilemmas

A meeting of two cultures:

- ❑ Grassroots vs. central authorities
- ❑ Inclusive vs. exclusive environments
- ❑ Open vs. selective admittance
- ❑ Value-based vs. content-based enterprise
- ❑ Participatory and internal vs. accredited and external learning program

Who does the validation?

- ❑ The university validates and recognizes the learning arena. Is there any other competent body that could do this?
 - ❑ What role would a public validation agency play?
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Future Possibilities

- ❑ Documentation/validation of learning at the folk high school may lead to changes in the learning program
 - ❑ Documentation/validation of their own learning by the folk high school students may lead to a better understanding of “learning to learn”
 - ❑ Documentation/validation of their own competencies by the folk high school staff may lead to a better understanding of their own need for professional development
 - ❑ Documentation/validation of the staff competencies may lead the folk high school to make better plans for professional development
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Timeline and Activities

- ❑ Spring 2006: Initial contact, visit from university officials to Norway
 - ❑ Spring 2006: Planning between liaison (from central Norwegian folk high school organization) and the folk high school
 - ❑ Spring 2006: Visit by liaison to university. First negotiations
 - ❑ Fall 2006: Exchange, translation, and evaluation of documents
 - ❑ Spring 2007: Financial questions considered
 - ❑ Fall 2007: Meeting in USA of folk high school principal and university dean
 - ❑ Spring 2008: Finalizing articulation agreement
 - ❑ Fall 2008: Students start attending folk high school and university
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People

- At the folk high school
 - The principal
 - The main outdoor life teacher
 - Liaison
 - A folk high school consultant with connections to the university
 - At the university
 - The Dean of Education
 - The Director of International Studies
 - The Chair of the Department
 - A faculty member
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Overarching Goals

- ❑ To create knowledge and build character through experiential learning, teaching, interpersonal contact, and active participation
 - ❑ To challenge students to take responsibility for their own life, for their fellow man, and for the environment
 - ❑ To develop respect for nature and use it responsibly, learn how to live and work in harmony with nature
 - ❑ To meet and develop respect for students of other cultures, views, and religions
 - ❑ To create international meeting places
 - ❑ To provide a natural setting for learning or improving a foreign language
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Folk High Schools in Norway

- ❑ Folk high schools, one-year residential schools independent from the regular educational system, conduct no formal examinations and issue no degrees. Using dialogue-based and democratic methods, folk high schools are places of learning and self-discovery where students are encouraged to grow.
 - ❑ All students receive a certificate of completion detailing their course of study and extracurricular activities. A folk high school typically enrolls 70 -100 students, most of them having finished their secondary (high school) education.
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