

I didn't learn anything...
RPL IMPLEMENTATION IN
ESTONIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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TOP-DOWN

HE sector led

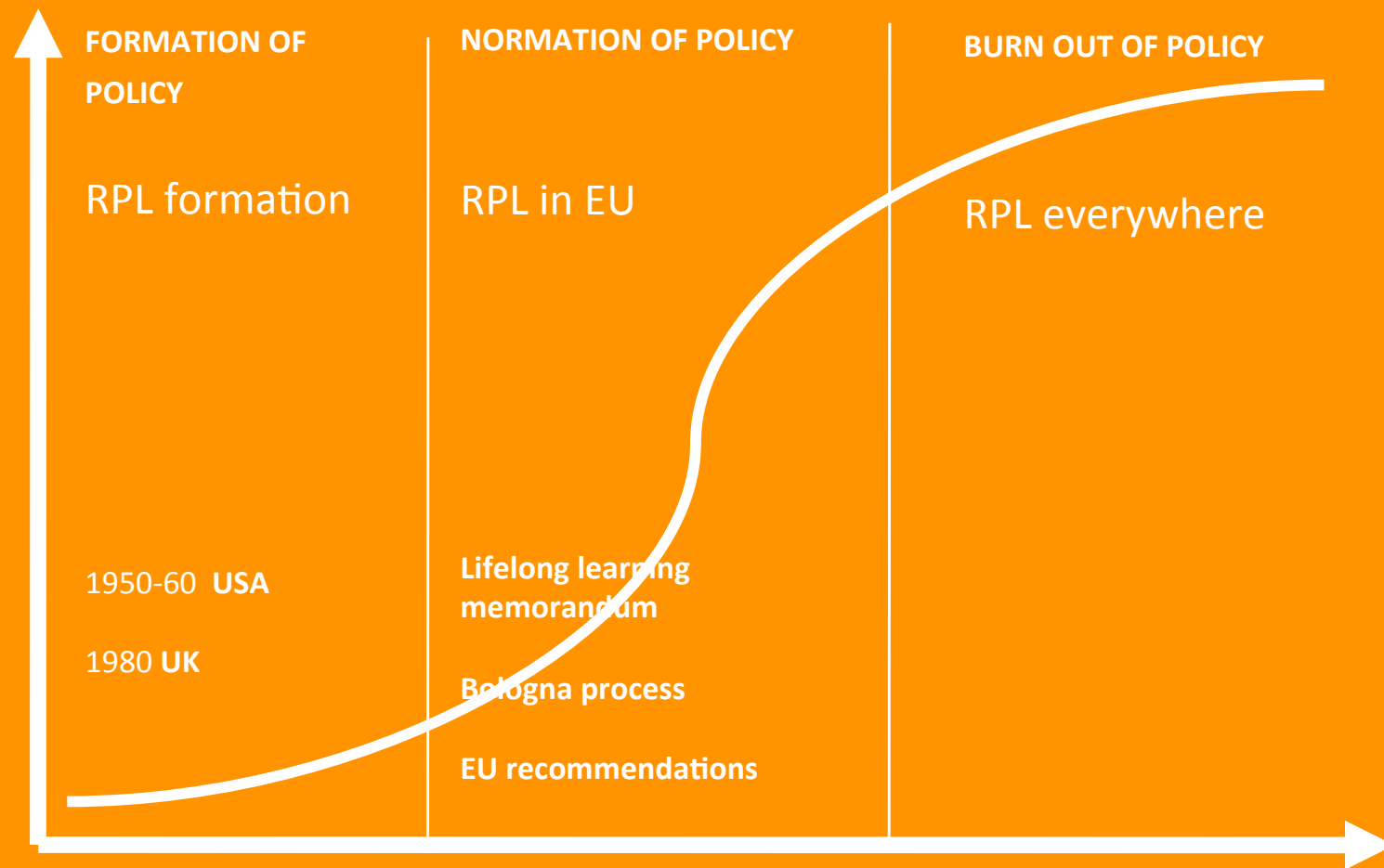
Funding

Legislated

Borrowed practices

NO to access

POLICY BORROWING AND LENDING



Stainer-Khamsi 2006, 2004, Popkewitz

- **Social justice**
 - Individual opportunities, widening access to education
- **Social change**
 - Making the competence of the population visible
- **Economic development and labor market**
 - Using existing competencies more effectively

• (Andersson 2003)

RPL ADAPTED TO THE SYSTEM

- Focuses on the demands of the educational system or the labor market
- Individuals competencies are measured and assessed according to the prescribed criteria that determine which specific competence and knowledge are useful
- Knowledge and competencies are regarded as products or goods
- the individuals whose competence satisfies formal demands are the only group that can take advantage of this kind of RPL

RPL CHANGING THE SYSTEM

- All knowledge is valuable in itself and therefore the individual's knowledge and competence could be accepted, even if the formal merits are lacking
- Untraditional groups enter the system as a result of RPL. These groups gain access to the system not just because their competence meets the demands of the system but because the system recognizes the individuals' experience and competence on their own merits
- The individuals enter the system with their knowledge, experiences and perspectives, they are able to bring about changes in the system from inside.

RPL as *SALVATION*

EU policy as a driving force in RPL development

RPL aimed at labor market needs and
educational mobility

RPL will save us!

RPL is *DECEPTIVE*

RPL APPLICANT

TYPICAL

- Advantaged groups
- Knows well formal education system and its opportunities
- Interested in saving time
- Maximum use of prior studies
- They want more of RPL!
- Do they need RPL?

UNUSUAL

- Marginalized groups
- Has work experience
- Has studied in numerous ways but...
- Unfamiliar with university
- Values learning and opportunity to study
- How can they be supported?

70% of students are aware of RPL

83% have never applied for RPL

13% have applied for recognition of prior studies

less than 2% have applied for recognition of
experiential learning

RPL as a tool for *POWER*

- The power of recognizing knowledge rests with the university
- In order for learning to be recognized by the university it must be presented according to norms and regulations laid down by the institution.
- RPL could become a powerful tool of **control** and **exclusion** as applicant has to learn RPL discourse rather than RPL being something that recognizes what they already know.

- **Councillors** see RPL counselling as a very problematic part of their everyday work.
 - Applicants are not aware of the RPL process nor their own learning
 - Lack of skills for supporting applicants and understanding their prior learning
- **Assessors** see applicants problematic as well.
 - Applicants have lack of knowledge about the curriculum, their own knowledge, reflective writing is poor and supportive documents are often not enough
- **Applicants** say that different sources of knowledge might be recognized in university if you as an applicant can put that knowledge in the form that university expects it.

RPL is *INSTRUMENTAL*

- Applicants are quite happy with RPL.
- Except that assessment procedures are often unclear and counseling is focusing on filling in application forms and not supporting self-analysis.
- RPL is seen as a technicality and the full potential of the process is not used in the university.

Can applicants learning fit to the pre-determined traditional university?
How RPL changes the university?
Is RPL a learning process?

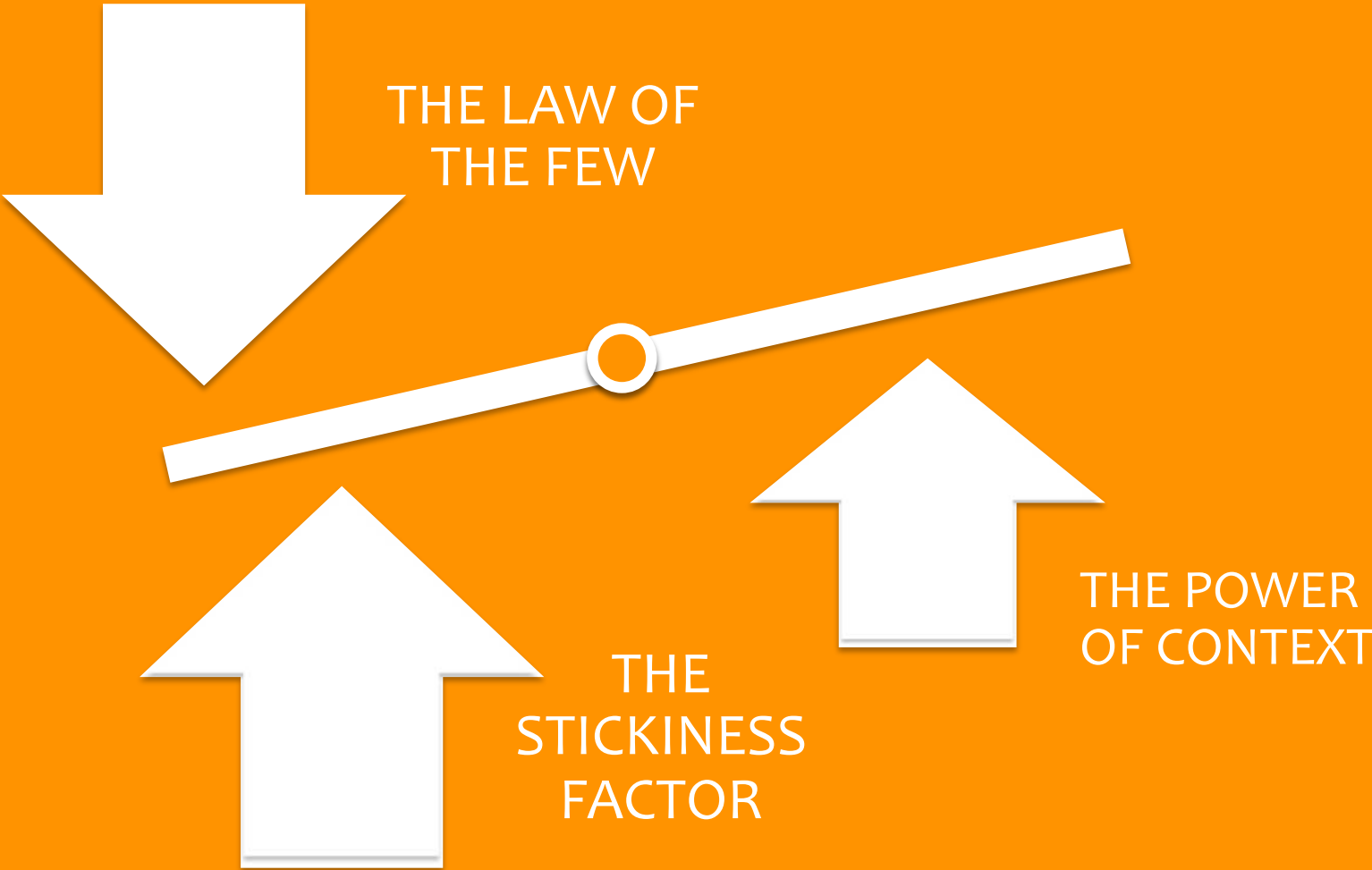
QUESTIONS?

*The beautiful thing about
learning is that no one can
take it away from you.*

- BB King

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TIPPING POINT



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