Learning Outcomes and Student Workload

**CARDS 2002 Workshop/Seminars on
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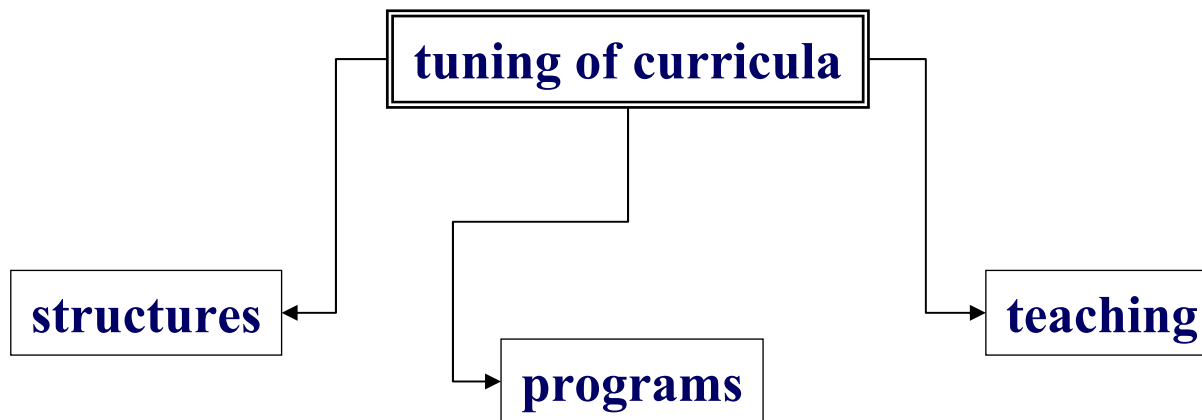**bologna process**

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VISION:

▪ The vision of "Bologna" is a **European Area for Higher Education** (EHEA) by 2010

▪ The EHEA will not be a single, unified higher education system, but a group of more than forty national systems **developing according to jointly agreed principles**

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HOW:

THE TUNING PROJECT

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                    │  tuning of curricula  │
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structures	programs	teaching

tuning is
convergence
common understanding

⟷

tuning is not
making unified, prescriptive
European curricula

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HOME: **HOW:**

tuning is	**tuning is not**
convergence	making unified, prescriptive
common understanding	European curricula

⬌

a search for common reference points →

- **learning outcomes**
- **competences**

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Berlin
Communiqué

' Degree structure: 'Ministers encourage the member states to elaborate a framework of comparable and compatible qualifications for their higher education systems, which should seek to describe qualifications in terms of workload, level, **learning outcomes**, competences and profile. They also undertake to elaborate an overarching framework of qualifications for the European Higher Education Area.'

'Within such frameworks, degrees should have different **defined outcomes**. First and second cycle degrees should have different orientations and various profiles in order to accommodate a diversity of individual, academic and labour market needs. First cycle degrees should give access, in the sense of the Lisbon Recognition Convention, to second cycle programmes. Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies.'

Learning outcomes:

• **Multiple definitions exist but all are fairly similar – two different perspectives:**

*'Learning outcomes are **sets of competences** of what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate at the end of a learning experience.'*

What should a student know, understand and be able to do to be employable?

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➡ ## Competences:

generic subject independant	subject specific subject dependant (skills and knowledge)
Types to be distinguished: ▪ **Instrumental competences:** cognitive abilities, methodological abilities, technological abilities and linguistic abilities ▪ **Interpersonal competences:** individual abilities like social skills (social interaction and co-operation) ▪ **Systemic competences:** abilities and skills concerning whole systems (combination of understanding, sensibility and knowledge; prior acquisition of instrumental and interpersonal competences required)	**Examples of subject specific competences:** **History:** ▪ Ability to identify and utilise appropriate sources of information for research projects. ▪ Ability to organise complex historical information in coherent form. **Chemistry:** ▪ Ability to apply chemistry knowledge and understanding to the solution of qualitative and quantitative problems of an unfamiliar nature.

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Learning outcomes can be regarded as basic educational building blocks that impact at the local, national and international levels.

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Definitions:

Levels of application – learning outcomes have profound implications at the:

1. Institutional/local level:

For the curriculum, teaching, learning and assessment.

2 National:

For the nature and expression of national qualifications frameworks (NQF) and quality assurance regimes.

3. International:

For developing EQF + tools used to express it – cycle and level descriptors. For a massive increase in transparency, mobility and recognition.

Alternatives to the usage of lerning outcomes:

- **Most countries express their curriculum in terms of what the student will cover – the course content**

- **An input-focused approach is employed**

- **Programmes are expressed in terms of time taken, access requirements, staffing and resources**

- **Qualification descriptions are articulated in general terms, often in relation to other qualifications (higher or lower) in undeveloped qualification frameworks**

Learning outcomes bring

change in teaching/learning paradigm:

Teacher - centered ⟷ **Student - centered**

• Teachers serve as the centre of epistemological knowledge, directing

the learning process and controlling students' access to information.

• Students are viewed as 'empty vessels' and learning is viewed as an

additive process.

• Instruction is geared for the

• Students are not passive. They come with their own perceptual

frameworks

• Students learn in different ways (Briggs-Myers, 1980; Kolb,1984).

• Learning is an active dynamic process

• Students construct their own meaning by talking, listening, writing,reading, and reflecting on content, ideas, issues and concerns

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Learning outcomes bring

more focus on skills and competences:

Traditionaly ⟷ **LO as a part of Bologna process**

Traditionally higher education was relatively explicit about the knowledge (outcomes) to be achieved, or at least the knowledge covered by the curriculum.

It is becoming increasingly widespread practice that as wide a range of the outcomes as possible are specified.

It was however somewhat less explicit on the skills or competences required for the award a given qualification.

Such explicit specification facilitates the comparison of qualifications.

Competences, such as those of critical evaluation, were and are embedded or implicit in the

- **The use of learning outcomes is intimately linked to the adoption of student-centred learning**

- **Learning outcomes are a integral part of output-focused approach to teaching, learning and assessment**

- **The role of the teacher moves towards being a facilitator/manager of the learning process**

- **Learning outcomes relate to external reference points (qualifications descriptors, levels, level descriptors, subject benchmark statements) that constitute 'new style' qualification frameworks**

Learning outcomes and ECTS

ECTS

- initially conceived as a measure of work load

        central point of the first phase of the Tuning project (2000-2002)

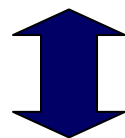**- further developed to include the concept of learning outcomes**

        central point of the second phase of the Tuning project (2003-2004)

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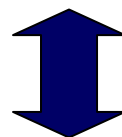# Learning outcomes, activities and workload

ECTS

learning outcomes
- expressed in terms of competences

activities
- planed to achieve **learning outcomes**

workload
- expressed in time (work hours) needed for the **activities**

Learning outcomes and workload

model for determining student workload:

- It is crucial that the teacher *and* the student focus on the learning outcomes to be achieved and the competences to be obtained.

- The teacher should reflect on which educational activities are more relevant for reaching the learning outcomes of the unit.

- The teacher should have a notion of the average student work time required for each of the activities selected for the unit.

- The student has a crucial role in the monitoring process to determine whether the estimated student workload is realistic.

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Main objectives of the second phase of the Tuning project (2003-2004)

- To fine-tune the general methodology for measuring workload developed as part of phase I of Tuning, to make this methodology operational and to test it at the level of subject areas.

- To establish a link between competences and ECTS credits and to test the use of the ECTS as a tool for curriculum design.

- To develop the role of different approaches regarding teaching, learning, assessment and performance, within the framework of curriculum design.

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Conclusion: Learning Outcomes & the Bologna Process:

1. Adoption of easily readable and comparable degrees:

• Aids existing recognition tool + makes qualifications more transparent

• Makes credential evaluation easier + improves judgements

2. A system essentially based on two (three) main cycles:

• Effective cycle, level and qualification descriptors depend on learning outcomes

• Effective NQF + EQF are built on learning outcomes

3. Establishment of a series of credits:

• The evolution of ECTS will depend on credits expressed in terms of LO

• Allows the quantification of learning achievement from different contexts

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Conclusion: Learning Outcomes & the Bologna Process:

4. Promotion of mobility:

• Curriculum transparency helps student exchange + recognition of studies

• Promotes precise judgements about the curriculum

5. Promotion of cooperation in quality assurance:

• Building on common methodological approaches (LO) improves QA

• Adoption of external reference points helps to develop universal standards and accurate cross-border judgements about qualifications and QA systems

6. Promotion of European dimension in higher education:

• LO facilitates the fit and design of joint degrees + makes study programme components transparent

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Conclusion: Learning Outcomes & the Bologna Process:

7. Lifelong learning

• Credits based on LO are the only tool to link VET and HE

• Credits linked to levels can create all-encompassing credit and qualifications frameworks for lifelong learning

8. Higher education and students:

• The employability of students is enhanced by highlighting generic skills and competences

• Student-centred learning involves active learning + a better learning experience

9. Attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area:

• A modern, effective, efficient, world-leading education zone is facilitated by the adoption of LO