



Working Group 1 – 25 September 2015 – terminology

A precise terminology is critical for learning outcomes descriptions to do their job and serve their purpose. Overall we can observe that learning outcomes in many cases are described according to a similar basic structure. The following example (provided by Germany in response to PLF questionnaire) illustrates this:

The learner is able to do [action verb] [what] [how] [in which context] [on what level]

Example 1: “He/She is able to advice costumers in Spanish taking into account their wishes and explaining the “Daily Special” in a confident manner.”

Example 2: “He/She is able to prepare and issue transportation documents using the appropriate software depending on the mode of transport by herself.”

This structure captures well both the simplicity and the complexity of developing and using a learning outcomes terminology. One of the terminological challenges relate to the use of action verbs to address level and complexity of learning. The Irish list of action verbs used for VET-qualifications at EQF level 3-4 is annexed.



Ireland Guide to
Action Verbs.docx

Questions for the working group

The following ‘menu’ of questions can be used as a starting point for the working group. The working group should decide on which questions to focus on, also questions not listed here, thus signalling what is considered to be key challenges in this area:

1. Which are the main terminological issues/challenges encountered when writing learning outcomes in VET standards/curricula?
2. To what extent is the definition of learning outcomes based on a predefined structure and/or taxonomy, e.g. the example above?
3. To what extent is a predefined structure in common or differ between qualifications and qualification areas/sectors?
4. To what extent is terminological guidance provided to describe learning outcomes?

5. To what extent is definition and writing of learning outcomes subject to quality assurance?
6. What is the theoretical point of departure for the definition and writing of learning outcomes? Which are the practical/political implications?
7. What are, in your opinion, pros and cons of creating standardised templates for describing domains of learning outcomes (horizontal dimension) and levels (vertical dimension)?