

The use of learning outcomes approaches in education and training in Denmark

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The Danish educational tradition:

- ▶ *"Dannelse"*
 - ▶ Philosophical
 - ▶ Fulfilling your potential as a human being and a citizen in society
 - ▶ Absence of tests and exams
 - ▶ Outcomes not measurable
- ▶ *"Uddannelse"*
 - ▶ Functional
 - ▶ Acquiring the ability to carry out a specific (job) function
 - ▶ Test/exams as quality assurance in relation to tasks and functions
 - ▶ Outcomes measurable

General implications

- Very broad descriptions of learning objectives (once you become too specific and focused, you risk losing the "dannelsen"-perspective);
- Crucial role of the teacher and a very large degree of autonomy with regard to methods

The shift to a learning outcomes approach

- ▶ Different historicity and drivers in different educational sectors:

VET (2000) - lifelong learning, APL, esteem of VET

Higher Education (2005) - transparency, comparability, Bologna-declaration

General education (2012) - "the PISA-shock"

Example: VET

Basic information about (I)VET in Denmark:

- All IVET-programmes are alternance-based and organised as apprenticeships (block release);
- IVET builds on traditions back from medieval times;
- Social partners develop and update occupational standards for each trade;
- IVET-learners generally start with a 1-year basic course, which divided into two phases and is school-based;
- IVET attracts relatively few young people, and most of the brightest opt for general upper secondary education.

LO in VET as a tool for governance:

- ▶ Learning outcomes of VET-programmes described (in terms of "competences for desired terminal behaviour" or "*slutkompetencer*") introduced around the turn of the millenium to facilitate accreditation of prior learning;
- ▶ Learning outcomes described for transitions within basic course and from basic course to main course (in terms of "knowledge, skills and competences") introduced from 2012 in order to support "thresholds" (conditions for transition from one level to the next).

LOs in VET as a tool for influencing teaching/learning/assessment

- *In the school-periods:* learning outcomes described in terms of units (*læringselementer*) and their components (*målepinde*) to facilitate teaching, learning and assessment;
- *In the placement periods:* learning outcomes described for each placement period in terms of "competences" (*praktikmål*) as tasks that the learner should master at the completion of the period.

NB: Not obligatory, and uneven across the whole spectrum of programmes and VET-schools!

Resistance to LO-approaches:

- Behaviouristic models that simplify education and training and reduce elements of "dannelse" (dumbing-down of education and training)
- Role of teachers transformed from one of *responsibility* (taking charge of individuals' learning and developing processes) to *accountability* (making sure that learners pass the tests), leading to a reduction of richness.

Barriers

- No agreed formulas for defining, writing and using learning outcomes, even within sectors ("conceptual obscurity");
- - defining and writing learning outcomes is a huge technical challenge to many stakeholders and practitioners.