



Virtual workshop

The shift to learning outcomes: rhetoric or reality? **24 May 2024**

Background note

Is the shift to learning outcomes really taking place? How do trainers, teachers and learners view the approach? What is happening in practice? These are some of the questions the virtual workshop will touch upon.

The learning outcomes principle – emphasising and clarifying what a learner is expected to know, be able to do and understand at the end of a learning process – now underpins most European education and training systems. Used in different settings and for different purposes – ranging from qualifications frameworks to qualification standards, curricula and assessment criteria – learning outcomes often influence the way teaching and learning is organised and carried out. According to Cedefop, all European countries are now actively using learning outcomes (or competence) statements when defining, reviewing, and refining the content and profile of their education, training and skills provisions and strategy practices (Cedefop, 2009; 2016; 2017, 2021; 2022a; 2022b; 2022c) ⁽¹⁾.

However, the impact of learning outcomes statements on teaching, learning and assessment is less researched and more difficult to evaluate, especially due to the emergence of extensive online provision. The wider challenge lies in translating learning outcomes intentions and statements into actual outcomes of learning; into knowledge, skills and competences acquired and used by individuals at work or in broader life contexts. In addition, while well-known to some researchers and policy-makers, the learning outcomes approach is not equally familiar to those in charge of implementing it or benefiting from it. The awareness of practitioners, teachers, trainers and learners is of particular importance; the decisive question is whether the main principles of the approach are identified and seen as relevant to their daily work.

The selection of teaching methodologies and techniques has implications, not only for teachers and learners but also in the design of education and training programmes. The learning context, classroom or workplace additionally influences the way learning outcomes

⁽¹⁾ Relevant Cedefop publications are available here: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/projects/learning-outcomes/publications>

statements can be translated into actual outcomes, and the way pedagogical theories and tools can be used.

Workshop objectives

The workshop will offer policy-makers, stakeholders, experts, researchers and practitioners a platform to engage in discussions on the overall influence of learning outcomes on teaching, learning and assessment in IVET. Cedefop's interim findings from its (2023) study [The shift to learning outcomes: rhetoric or reality?](#) and insights from the new [Policy brief: Learning outcomes going global](#) will also be presented in the workshop. The study seeks to analyse the learning outcomes transformation in schools and apprenticeships, focusing on initial vocational education and training.

Workshop methodology

Following a keynote speech on Cedefop's study, and a presentation from the European Commission on the current state of play, participants will be hear practitioners' views (teachers/learners) on the implementation of the learning outcomes approach.

The workshop will be an opportunity for participants to compare approaches and exchange experiences, as part of a continuous European effort to connect practitioners and improve practices in this area. They will also hear examples of national case studies and exchange insights in three dedicated breakout sessions:

Topic 1: The impact of learning-outcomes-based curricula on teaching practices (in school-based programmes)

The first breakout session will focus on the way the learning outcomes approach influences teaching practices. While much attention is paid to the role of learning outcomes in supporting transparency of qualifications and transferability of learning achievements, their role in changing and transforming teaching is frequently based on assumptions rather than empirical findings. The breakout session will consider issues such as the way learning outcomes are formulated and organised; the learning environment (classroom or workplace); the way teachers work together to plan local curricula; the degree of autonomy of schools as well as teachers, and their relationship with the school management; the resources and learning material available; and the guidance received.

Guiding questions:

1. To what extent are teachers/students aware of the learning-outcomes-based requirements?
2. What is the impact of the learning outcomes approach on the actual implementation of teaching, learning and assessment in everyday practice?
3. What can be done to ensure learning outcomes are widely known and accepted in the future?

Topic 2: The influence of learning-outcomes-based curricula in company training (as part of apprenticeship programmes)

Breakout session 2 will provide insights into how learning outcomes influence the interaction between VET teachers, trainers/company instructors, work colleagues and apprentices. The way teachers/trainers and company instructors interpret learning outcomes and adapt them to the workplace stands out as particularly relevant. Although committed and competent instructors and trainers are crucial to ensuring the quality and relevance of apprenticeships, we lack systematic knowledge of whether and how the shift to learning outcomes influences their roles and responsibilities.

Guiding questions:

1. How do learning-outcomes-based curricula inform, influence and/or steer work-based learning?
2. To what extent and how do company trainers use the learning-outcomes-based curricula to plan and perform their job as trainers?
3. To what extent are apprentices aware of the learning-outcomes-based requirements and how does this influence their progression?

Topic 3: The influence of learning outcomes on assessment

Breakout session 3 will focus on the influence of learning outcomes on assessment in IVET. In the development of qualifications and learning programmes, it is important to ensure consistency between intended learning outcomes, the delivery model (here in particular teaching and learning methods – the pedagogical approach) and assessment criteria, formative as well as summative. This is seen as increasing transparency for all stakeholders and supporting meaningful and effective learning. Assessment is the process by which achieved learning outcomes are appraised against intended learning outcomes. However, at present there is lack of sufficient evidence on the ‘deeper’ impact of learning outcomes, notably on assessment forms.

Guiding questions:

1. What is the relationship between curriculum statements/intentions (intended learning outcomes), assessment processes and assessment results (achieved learning outcomes)?
2. To what extent is the teaching and learning process informed and/or steered by assessment criteria?
3. How are complex learning outcomes, notably transversal skills and competences, addressed and assessed?

At the end of the workshop, international experts will be invited to share their views focusing on the global dimension of the approach across systems and borders. Although countries around the globe employ learning outcomes when defining, reviewing, and refining the

content and profile of their education, training and skills provisions, they often struggle to keep up with, and abreast of, changing demands.

Programme

Date: 24 May 2024 **Time:** 9.00 – 13.40 (CET)

CET	
9.00 – 9.15	Joining online – technical tests
9.15 – 9.20	<p>Welcome and introduction Loukas Zahilas, Head of Department for VET and qualifications, Cedefop</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participant welcome • Context and objectives of the workshop • Housekeeping rules
9.20 – 9.40	<p>Opening address Chair: Loukas Zahilas, Cedefop</p> <p>Jürgen Siebel, Executive Director, Cedefop</p> <p>Koen Nomden, Team Leader for ‘Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications’, DG EMPL, European Commission <i>European guidelines – Short description of qualifications based on learning outcomes</i></p> <p>Slido</p>
9.40 – 10.15	<p>Keynote speech Chair: Loukas Zahilas, Cedefop</p> <p>The shift to learning outcomes: the influence on pedagogical theory and tools Anastasia Pouliou, Expert in qualifications and credentials – Future of VET, Cedefop</p> <p>Research tools and methodology Donatas Pocius, PPMI</p> <p>Q&A on Cedefop’s research on learning outcomes</p>
10.15 – 10.40	<p>Teachers’/Learners’ views on the implementation of learning outcomes Chair – Loukas Zahilas, Cedefop</p> <p>Slido</p> <p>Michael Carstairs, Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE), Ireland Student, Bray Institute of Further Education (BIFE), Ireland Daan Veltman, Student Regio College Netherlands</p>
10.40 – 10.55	Health break
10.55 – 11.00	<p>Methodology of breakout sessions Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop</p>

<p>11.00 – 12.20</p>	<p>Parallel breakout sessions</p> <p>Topic 1: The impact of learning-outcomes-based curricula on teaching practices (in school-based programmes) Moderator: Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Janet Looney, Director, European Institute of Education and Social Policy – EIESP • Jerzy Wisniewski, Vice-Chair of European Institute of Education and Social Policy – EIESP, Poland <p><i>Rapporteur: Vasileios Symeonidis, Cedefop</i></p> <hr/> <p>Topic 2: The influence of learning-outcomes-based curricula in company training (as part of apprenticeship programmes) Moderator: Iraklis Pliakis, Cedefop</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simon Broek, Ockham IPS • Mariya Dzhengozova, Bulgaria case study, 3s Research & Consulting <p><i>Rapporteur: Enfal Zeynep Suzin, Cedefop</i></p> <hr/> <p>Topic 3: The influence of learning outcomes on assessment Moderator: Zelda Azzarà, Cedefop</p> <p>Panellists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Karin Luomi-Messerer, 3s Research & Consulting • Jostein Kvisterøy, Cedefop <p><i>Rapporteur: Monika Auzinger, 3s Research & Consulting</i></p>
<p>12.20 – 12.30</p>	<p>Health break</p>
<p>12.30 – 12.40</p>	<p>Reporting from breakout sessions</p>
<p>12.40 – 13.30</p>	<p>Panel discussion Chair –Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop</p> <p>Learning outcomes going global – Observations from international experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Rosenstock, Human Capital Development Expert – Coordinator for qualifications, ETF • Japie Nel, Senior Manager, South African Qualification Authority, South Africa • Borhene Chakroun, Director of Policies and Lifelong Learning Systems Division at UNESCO-Headquarters • Marieke Vandeweyer, Senior Policy Analyst, Directorate for Education and Skills, EDU, OECD • James Keevy, Chief Executive Officer, The Education Hub, South Africa <p>Discussion</p>

13.30 – 13.40

Concluding remarks and work ahead

Anastasia Pouliou, Cedefop
Loukas Zahilas, Cedefop

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