



'The Future of VET – the way forward'
Cedefop Conference

Parallel Session 2: 'Testing for learning
or teaching to the test? The future of
assessment'

5-6 December 2022

Reflections on the role of assessment in describing and developing skills

Wojciech Stęchły

Educational Research Institute, Warsaw

SGH Warsaw School of Economics



1

assessment of transversal skills and competences

2

relation of assessment to learning outcomes descriptions,
teaching and learning

3

Schrödinger's cat and transparency

Project rationale: Although key competences are high on a policy agenda, systemic solutions for development and assessment of transversal key competences remain to a large extent an 'uncharted territory'.

Study scope:

- development and assessment of TKC
- transversal key competences (TKC)
 - personal, social and learning competence
 - civic competences
 - entrepreneurship competence
 - cultural awareness and expression competence
- 6 European countries: AT, FR, LV, NO, PL, SK

Q: How can assessment approaches address increasingly complex requirements to general knowledge and transversal skills and competences?

SELECTED FINDINGS

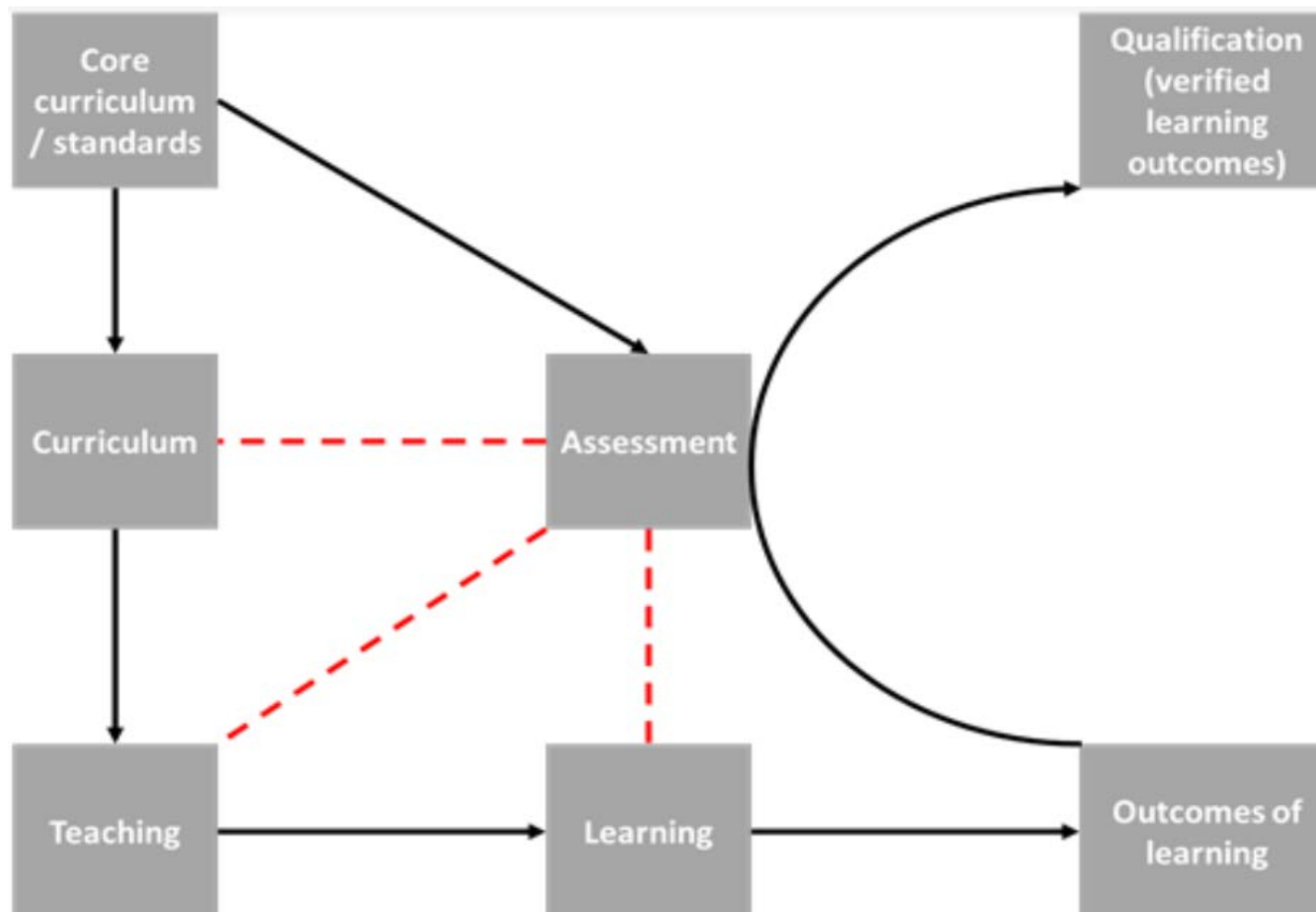
1. TKC's are being assessed only to a very limited extent, mostly during continuous assessment conducted by teachers
2. assessment of TKC's are – apart from some cases – almost non-existent within the assessment leading to a certification
3. uneven distribution: some TKC's are much less frequently mentioned in documents
4. TKC's descriptions are polarized - ranging from an analytical category to a way of performing a task

USEFUL PERSPECTIVE?

Role of informal institutions:

- informal institutions relate to normative, cognitive or procedural aspects affecting or regulating our behaviour.
- informal institutions seem to be crucial determinants of transversal key competences development (including their formulation, assessment and delivery)
- the study has not allowed for rejecting a statement that: “teaching for examinations” and/or “learning for tests” are relevant informal institutions for TKC’s development (on the contrary!)

CENTRAL ROLE OF ASSESSMENT





THE SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT METAPHOR

- the transversal skill remains in „superposition” until it interacts with the world or is observed. When this happens, the superposition collapses into one or another of the possible definite states
- for example „civic competence” denotes a broad scope of contexts / realisations: understanding the society, participation in public affairs as well as specific values and identity (e.g. democratic values, European, national identity)
- the interactions/observations can happen on different levels, e.g.:
 - describing learning outcomes
 - operationalization in learning (classroom / workplace practice)
 - external assessment
 - workplace utilization



THE SCHRÖDINGER'S CAT METAPHOR

- the schrödinger's cat thought experiment was originally designed to show that quantum particles follow a different set of rules than macro-scale objects such as cats [and show the absurdity of it...]
- here, the intangible transversal skills seem to react differently than specific skills (which are possibly less prone to be „dumbed down”)
- the seemingly solid notion of skill (as objectively observable personal traits) does not reflect its socially constructed and subjective character



EXTERNALITIES OF TRANSPARENCY (et al.)?

Consider the following statements:

- learners have a right to receive precise information about the scope of expected learning outcomes and the mode of assessment
- learning outcomes should be measurable, possible to assess
- it should be possible to verify LO's in different ways, so their description should not be dependent on one mode of learning or assessment
- the assessment should be valid and reliable – between individuals in the same programme/qualification even if it is conducted by different institutions or at different times

How to strike the right balance between implementing the above and limiting the 'dumbing down' effect on education?

„Prowadzenie i rozwój Zintegrowanego Rejestru
Kwalifikacji (etap 2)”

Projekt współfinansowany ze środków Unii Europejskiej
w ramach Europejskiego Funduszu Społecznego



Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych instytut badawczy

ul. Górczewska 8, 01-180 Warszawa

tel.: +48 22 24 17 100, +48 22 24 17 111

e-mail: rejestr@ibe.edu.pl

www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl | www.ibe.edu.pl