


## Learning outcomes at universities – HE\_LeO ... and beyond

Cedefop Expert Workshop „Linking them for the Best?“  
Thessaloniki, 21-22 January 2010

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## Agenda



### HE\_LeO

Cornerstones, aims and insights

### ...and beyond

Context, process, insights and challenges

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## Competence Orientation and Learning Outcomes in Higher Education

(funded by the the Leonardo da Vinci Initiative, 2007-2008)

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## Cornerstones

- Linking different European and national threads of discussions on EQF (NQF) and QF-EHEA
- Partnership of universities and ministries – different perspectives and different fields of action
- Five different countries – AT, BG, DE, HU, ES
- On different levels – national, institutional and program level
- Different entry points – accreditation, curriculum development and evaluation

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## Aims

- To bring competence orientation and learning outcomes into universities
- To „use“ the EQF for dealing with Bologna in-depth
- To strengthen competence orientation and learning outcomes in the study programs

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## Insights I – what we found out...

- **Time** - paradigm shift from teaching to learning/from input to outcome takes time
- **Motivation and incentives** - important prerequisites for the implementation of competence orientation and learning outcomes
- **Understanding and translation** - development of a shared understanding and a translation in the own (institutional) context is necessary

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## Insights II – what we left out...

- **The issue of competence** – too many different meanings; we took the other route: everything is shown in the learning outcomes
- **The perspectives of teachers and learners** – the whole implementation process takes years and brings new issues

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... and beyond  
Development of study programs based on  
learning outcomes

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## Context

- Start up: new university with focus on professional studies
- master programs for professionals with first university degree and two or more years of professional experience
- Focus on professional usability with theory-based reflection -> Interdisciplinary approach
- Qualifications Framework: EHEA Framework and German Higher Education Framework, other regulations
- ECTS as credit system

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## Processes

- program development teams: scientific staff, experts from the field, actors from enterprises
- In a first step: focus on what students at the end of the master program should be able to do = **learning outcomes on program level**
- Broken down in modules, courses, to the smallest learning blocks within the program

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## First insights

- Although all involved were motivated, in a first round we ended up with:
- Focus on content and aims of the program *instead of* focus on its learning outcomes
- Focus on cognitive and methodic skills *instead of* a taking in „soft skills“
- Preference of “classical” forms of assessment *instead of* assessing what the student should be able to do

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## Points to remember for this shift of paradigm

An outcomes based approach focuses:

- on the learner instead of the teacher. We are interested in learning and not teaching.
- on the outcomes of learning, not the process of learning. It is the outcome that matters.
- on the representation of the outcomes of the learning – we seek the evidence of learning.

Jennifer Moon

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## Insights and challenges on program level and on institutional level

- it needs a combination of top-down and bottom up approaches for the implementation of learning outcomes
- curriculum development with an outcome-based approach is cyclic
- Clarification of the benefit for the involved
- meaningful and “doable” cycles of evaluation and adaptation – manageable for the involved actors and the system



**Thank you for attention!**

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