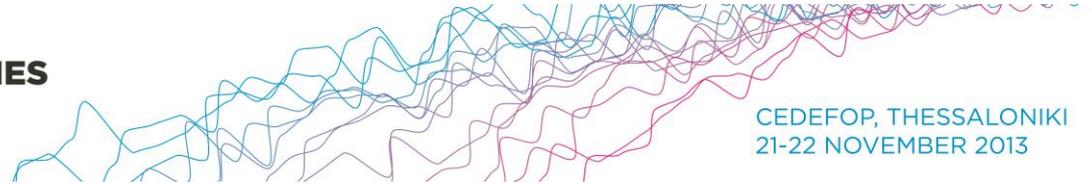




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European Centre
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**THE SHIFT TO
LEARNING OUTCOMES
AND ITS IMPACT**



CEDEFOP, THESSALONIKI
21-22 NOVEMBER 2013

THE SHIFT TO LEARNING OUTCOMES AND ITS IMPACTS:
Taking stock of European policies and practices

Summary of workshops

Jean Gordon, European Institute for Education and social policy



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Overall points

- Putting learners at the centre of processes
- Active involvement stakeholders: who, range, how, what stages
- Issue building trust – links to common understanding & language across sub-sectors E&T, role communities of practice
- Governance through LOs – reality but diversity
- Governance at different levels implies different stakeholders
- Quality assurance



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Overall points (cont.)

- Making benefits LOs visible for all stakeholders. Political level to individuals – includes recognition of qualifications (mobility)
- LOs have influence on teaching, learning & assessment - differences
- Teacher support & ownership
- No obvious connection curriculum change & assessment change
- Issue: supposed clarity LOs? Need professional, qualitative interpretation



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Building process & trust

- Qualifications as currency: understanding of LOs has to be similar across sub-sectors & stakeholders.
- Focus on the role of “communities of practice” to take responsibility, give value, create currency that functions across different disciplines, groups in VET, HE, etc.
- Groups = gatekeepers moving towards common understanding across communities of practice
- Tendency to be negative about the unknown or new: hence important bringing together, building understanding, over time and ensuring there is a process.
- Relationship between LOs & QA: Role of strong QA in building trust.



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Governance

- Governance through LOs has become reality – element of E&T governance
- Not technical or neutral. Linked into political traditions/historical influences. Important understand those aspects.
- Hence diversity among countries
- Governance at different levels = different stakeholders
- Among political choices: tension between control (obligations) or more autonomy (local decisions).
- Need to think about resources for achieving outcomes/outputs



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Stakeholders

- Involve full range of stakeholders (students, social partners) not just employers
- Governance at different levels: clear implications for involvement stakeholders. Need to be conscious of this.
- Issue: who to involve. How and when to involve them? Narrower and broader definitions of stakeholders: labour market, E&T (learners & teachers); civil society
- Making stakeholder involvement systematic. Some countries may need better procedures during definition & implementation phases
- Depending on who is involved – issues of balance and avoiding imbalances. Can have effect on definition of LOs.
- How to make benefits LOs visible for all stakeholders? From political level to individuals – keep it simple!
- Recommendation: move discussion on LOs from just E&T to national LLL strategies
- Good social partner engagement necessary to give weight to agreed LOs to enable the right management to evolve, to give impact to LOs.



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Implementation

- The problem is not the LOs but insufficient implementation strategy at regional/local levels & linked to labour market dimension.
- Bridging theory & practice at institutional level: need guidance & support from national level + space & time.
- Balance top-down / bottom up. Space for local interpretation
- Important for teachers, trainers, school leaders (+ other stakeholders)
- Practitioners not familiar with European tools (QFs, ECVET, validation)



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Local levels

- Local curriculum planning is key.
- Teachers re-interpret according to context, learners, tacit knowledge, expertise, etc.
- Role school leadership
- The tailoring of LO to meet sectoral/ institutional needs but, at the same time ensure some sort of consistency is a challenge.
- Keep the main goals of increased use of LOs in mind: empowering learners, transparency, mobility (cross-sector, qualifications, cross-country). The details can obscure it.



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LOs & qualifications

- Frameworks (EQF, NQFs) & LOs as dynamic process
- Clear social dimension: linking qualifications, understanding changes, understanding level descriptors in practical terms.
- Issue: to what extent description of qualifications in LOs provides added-value in terms social, legal value?



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Learners

- Emphasise putting learners at centre process – helping each learners in their learning
- Implies assessment for learning (formative) as well as assessment of learning (summative)
- Engaging learners in the learning process (Finland). Role of formative assessment.
- Transparency is nice Does it lead to recognition qualifications for individual? (mobility). Purpose is important!



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Teaching, learning & assessment

- Evidence LOs have an influence on teaching, learning & assessment.
- BUT affect pedagogic processes differently for different types E&T.
- Suggestion: VET teachers more involved than in HE.
- Curriculum reform towards LOs – alone does not lead to pedagogic change or in assessment.
- Local curriculum planning critical to reconciling LOs to local needs, particular needs students
- Need strengthen communication between different stakeholders & E&T



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Assessment

- No obvious connection between curriculum change and assessment change
- Assessment is a key issue: assessment criteria are not same as LOs.
- Role of formative assessment – assessing for learning – helping students improve – strategy for closing the gap
- Focus on how and why
- For RPL may be easier to align assessment to LOs
- Issue raised of difficulty in assessing social competences. (Clearly more difficult, but not discussed further). What is captured by assessment – e.g. identity of learner?
- Learning objectives related to values & attitudes: role of ipsative assessment – individual's prior performance



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Supporting teachers & trainers

- Teacher/trainer support = essential. Similar challenges across Europe.
- Emphasise importance of ownership
- Range of tools: networks of teachers, collaboration with enterprises. Understanding varies in different contexts. Can hinder use.
- Working in teams and cooperating = big challenge. One aspect of change in mindset, attitudes & practice
- Team work – including through in-service training
- Role of inspectors in providing support and not just evaluation (incentives to be evaluated)
- Engage teachers & trainers to use LOs to develop pedagogies.



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Quality assurance & review

- Critical have strong links among: LOs, governance, QA.
- Often not made explicit.
- Implies reviewing how LOs are used & linking to existing arrangements.
- Problem if no systematic reviews – follow up needs thinking through after defining goals & identifying stakeholders.



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Completing & discussion

- Put summary in context overall discussion yesterday:
 - Mara's challenges
 - Panel discussion
- Each of the workshop discussions
- What key points from the discussions are missing?
- What links need making?
- Etc.