Governance, teaching and learning in higher education - what are your learning outcomes for?

Workshop Curriculum Design
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Tine S. Prøitz
University College of Southeast Norway

HSN University College of Southeast Norway

The assignment

- How can one create a curriculum that integrates all current demands of society (diversity, internationalization, 21st century skills etc)?

- What is an integrated approach in curriculum design?

- What factors play a part in this process?

- How does one address this at a practical and system level?

General trends in curriculum development

- Curriculum developments tend to be framed around **capacities, key competencies** and **broader learning outcomes**

- Continuation of **assessable learning outcomes**, less prescriptive in terms of content, but still framed by standards and potentially "assessment driven teaching"

- Researchers worry that the curriculum developments are paired with (or too strongly driven by) economic arguments and motives, that lead to overly rationalistic and/or technical approaches which are contraproductive in teaching and to student learning. (Priestly & Biesta 2013, Fullan & Langworthy 2013, 2014)

Learning outcomes and curriculum

- The renewed focus on LOs in many countries has a double intention of changing higher education systems and the teaching and learning practices within it.

- The introduction of LOs is a policy initiative and a pedagogical undertaking and the curriculum is a policy/strategic document developed for two purposes
  - As a tool for governance, management and quality control
  - As a platform for course design, teaching and learning

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Variations of learning outcomes

- Outcomes of learning for the purpose of including all products of learning (Buss 2008:306).

- Expressive outcomes, defined as:
  - "outcomes of learning where purposes are formulated in the process of action itself as outcomes becomes emergent and clearer during the learning process" (Eisner 1979:103).

- Others suggest using terms with a wider scope, such as intended outcomes specified at the beginning of learning,

- holistic outcomes encompassing ways of thinking and practicing which may not be evident until the end of learning or even after it has been completed,

- and ancillary or emergent learning outcomes at a higher level than those specifically related to the main objectives—value-added learning resulting from the learners' 'own unique journey' (Buss 2008:307, Entwhistle 2005).

Definitions – "classics"

- *Distinguishing the types of human capabilities, considered as learning outcomes, makes possible a refined understanding of the learning process and thus permits a drawing of relatively precise implications for the design of instruction*

  (Gagnè 1974:51)

...essentially what one ends up with, intended or not, after some form of engagement
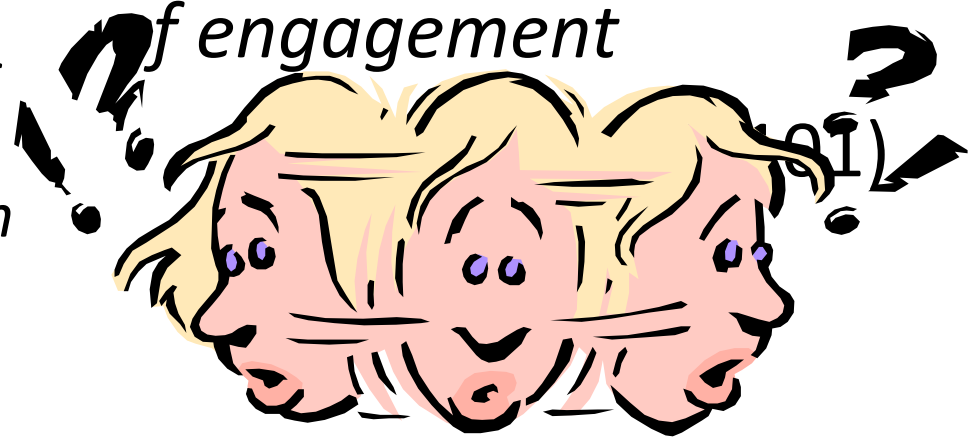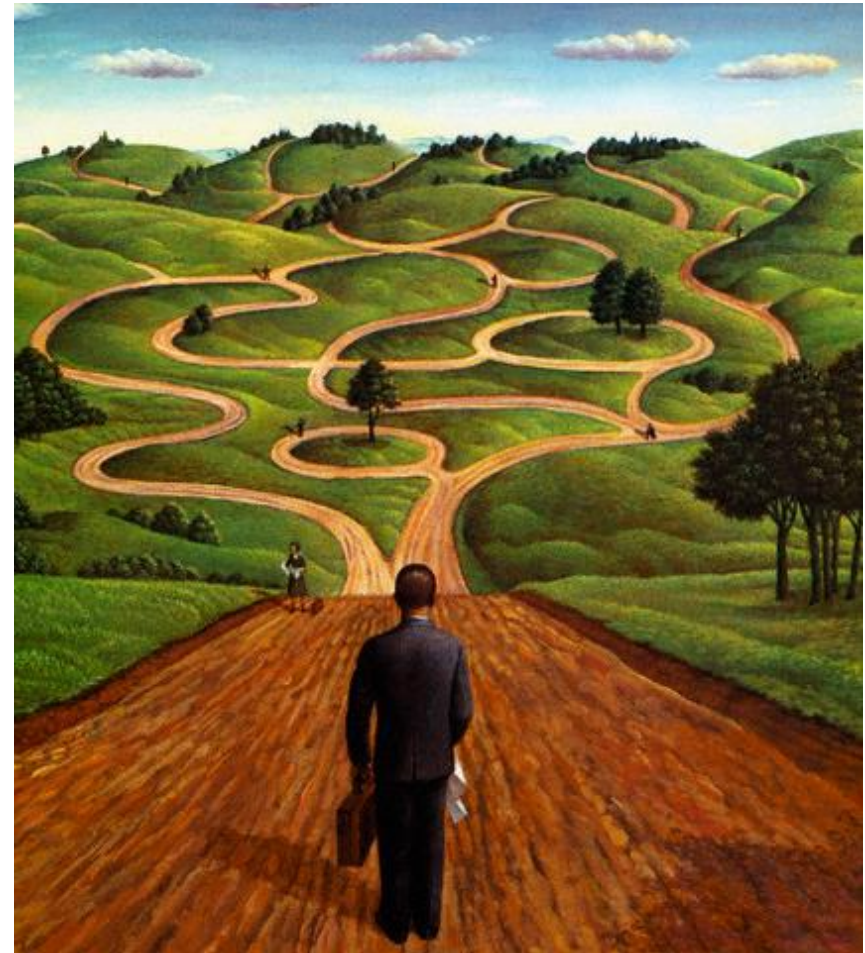

Perceptions of learning

Learning outcome as the defining point of departure

- Adopting a learning outcomes oriented curriculum approach has consequences for the design of the curriculum and its functionality

- It positions LOs as the defining point of departure
  - What do I want the students to achieve and
  - how will I know that they have achieved it? (Otter 1995)

Multiple layers of LOs and interlinked documents

TABLE 1 Overview of interlinked documents

Levels and types of documents	English case	
National	National standards For teachers QTS standards N For Nurses in the UK the N Midwifery Council Standards registration nursing. Benchmarks statements	
Institutional	Institutional standards for Programme Handbooks.	(Institutional template for Programme Handbooks)
Programme	Programme specification for validation purposes Programme n	Programme plan
Subject		
Module	Module Specifications Practice assessment document (PAD) School based training handbooks (for teaching) Mi Mini	

> The candidate has broad knowledge of important topics, theories, issues, processes, tools and methods within the field

> The student can share professional views and experience and contribute in developing justifiable nursing practice

> I will be able to accurately record and document manual and electronic blood pressure, pulse, respiration, temperature.

What kind of LOs do we need?

- The looseness of LOs seem to be a primary advantage as regulative mechanisms for policy, teaching, learning and assessment.

- At bullet point level, LOs are precise enough to warrant an acceptable level of transparency and loose enough to allow different and conflicting interpretations.

- The first is essential in a policy context and the latter in an academic education context.

Results oriented, full-ended, measurability

(Gagne 1974)

Examples of learning outcomes

Process oriented open-ended limited measurability

(Eisner 1979)

Behavioral outcomes	**Problem-solving outcomes**	**Expressive outcomes**
The student is able to….	The student is able to find out…	
-run 60 meter within 11 sec.	-how to evaluate the results of the class on the 60 meter test	-I have experienced the excitement and energy of running on time.
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-describe three traits of the Nordic model and how it is challenged by international movements in assessment	-how to prepare and present a lecture on a given thematic on the Nordic model that meets the requirements of the evaluation committee	-inspired by the given thematic I can use theories and concepts to develop my ideas and express them in a lecture.

To sum up…

- Curriculum is a two sided phenomenon – it is a policy document for governing, management and quality control and it is a platform for pedagogy and teaching and learning.

- Adopting LO oriented approach requires taking the LO as the point of departure

- Different levels of the education system requires different Los for various audiences and purposes

- It is important to keep LOs at overall levels loosely defined to allow Los at teaching and learning levels to function

- Integration of various generic skills and competencies can be done by using various types of LOs

tine.proitz@usn.no

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