Introduction

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International / intercultural learning outcomes as a quality feature in higher education

Bolognaseminarium: Mobilitetens roll i högre utbildning

Stockholm, 3rd October 2012
Prelude: Ghent University Association!

Legally established (obligatory) cooperation between:

- 1 university
- 3 university colleges

- +60,000 students; +10,000 employees

- Focused on topics e.g. lifelong learning, internationalisation, the link between fundamental & applied research etc.

- But also practical/logistic issues e.g. facilities, sports, libraries, ICT etc.
Proposition (cf. title of seminar)

“The role of mobility in higher education”

Problems in defining “mobility”

- in terms of length / number of credits
- “credit” vs. “degree” mobility
- mobility for some (exchange students & teachers) → at home for others (I@H)
- virtual mobility

→ Proposal: use term “internationalisation” (definition → see later)
Learning outcomes (and competences) in higher education

The concept of *International/intercultural learning outcomes (ILO’s)*

How to use ILO’s as a quality feature?

Labelling programmes that can guarantee “intercultural / international competent” graduates

Measuring “intercultural / international learning outcomes”
Learning outcomes/competences in higher education
European higher education at the beginning of the 21st Century:

- need for more **flexibility & transparency**
- **shifting** from *input* to *output*
- leads to a changed **learning** paradigm
- **learning outcomes** = the key to this definition:

  “*Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do or is able to demonstrate after completion of any learning process or at the end of a period of learning (knowledge – skills – competences)*”
Focus on Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes can be used (in higher education) at different levels:

- “Module”-level (cf. ECTS-Information Package)
- Assessment criteria and grading criteria
- Descriptors of different qualifications
- National descriptors of qualifications
- National / Discipline specific / Sectoral benchmark statements
- National level descriptors
- Cycle descriptors
Advantages of using Learning outcomes

→ better match between needs of the labour market and education and training provision

→ facilitates transfer and use of qualifications across different countries and education & training systems

→ facilitates validation of non-formal and informal learning

⇒ basis for all qualifications frameworks
Qualifications Frameworks at the European level

→ “Bologna” framework
A Framework of Qualifications for the European Higher Education Area

→ “Copenhagen” framework
European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF-LLL)

→ need for (sectoral &) national frameworks
Writing Learning Outcomes

- Standard approach in Sweden (related to Swedish QF)?
- Popular booklet by D. Kennedy et al: "Writing and Using Learning Outcomes: a practical guide"
- CoRE2-project: "A Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles" (www.core-project.eu)
Example of learning outcome (based upon Core2)

The nurse autonomously builds a professional relationship with a person demanding care, also in non-familiar and/or complex care situations, focused on the somatic, social, psychic and existential wellbeing of that person in a multicultural environment.

5 key elements:
- **Active verb** (cfr. Bloom)
- Type of learning outcome:
  - Knowledge
  - Skill
  - Cognitive process
  - Broader competence (integration)
- **Domain of learning outcome**
- **Level-indicator**
- **Scope and/or context of LO**
The concept of International / intercultural learning outcomes (ILO’s)
What are ILO’s?

- Learning outcomes that in a certain domain and at a certain level have an international and/or intercultural scope and/or context

  ➔ domain: defined by the programme!
  ➔ level: can be different for bachelor, master,...
  ➔ scope and/or context: see hereafter
International and/or intercultural scope and/or context

Intercultural learning outcomes

- **Scope/context:** strategies and skills for functioning in other cultures, intercultural interaction techniques
- **Description:** *learning outcomes which enable effective & appropriate communication with people of other cultures*

International learning outcomes

- **Scope/context:** cognitive & cultural flexibility, sociability, comparative civics, socio-economic geography
- **Description:** *learning outcomes (mostly personal attributes and understanding) which enable effective & appropriate functioning outside one’s environment.*

(based upon Axel Aerden, NVAO)
Defining ILO’s

- Not easy (just like defining any other type of learning outcomes)
- Much has been / still is “assumed”; not made explicit
- Shifts the focus from the process / the means to the outcomes / the aims
Examples of ILO’s (1)

- Have knowledge of business administrative theoretical insights and factual findings on business: environmental knowledge: competitors relations, international cooperation, social responsibility, cultural diversity; interaction between companies and determinants of business development.

- Social communicative skills: be able to deal with other people and be able to work in a team with people with different backgrounds and expertise; be able to function in an international business context, often in foreign countries; be able to communicate with professional and non-professional partners from different fields of language and culture; be able to communicate in the English language.
Examples of ILO’s (2)

- interpret and accept your personal place in society; understand and interpret cultural limitations and restrictions; be able to appreciate cultural differences.

- The ability to gather information, to spot and analyze trends and impacts of changes in the international business and the cultural environment, to develop a vision on these trends and to advise management (IBMS)
Examples of ILO’s (3)

- Reflecting and theorizing upon the impact of society, culture and diversity on occupation and participation for health and well being of individuals and communities (Eur. Master in OT)

- Have a working knowledge of all relevant legal precedents involving the crime of genocide - both national and international - as well as international instruments dealing with crime (LL.M. International Criminal Law)
Effects of this outlook

Internationalisation
(i.e. the international experiences of persons and the international dimension of curricula)

results into

ILO’s

International / intercultural learning outcomes

necessitate

Internationalisation

Intercultural

Mobility

Internationalisation
Effects of this outlook

Internationalisation (i.e. the international experiences of persons and the international dimension of curricula)

If defined & measured

But it can be the royal way

learning outcomes

International / intercultural

necessitate

results into

ILO's
Growing importance of “international/intercultural LO’s”

- Internationalisation (as a process; if made explicit and measured) can have an impact on students LO’s
- Can be an important feature of a (higher education) programme
  - Influences graduates’ employability
  - Influences students’ choices
  - Influences choice for partner institutions
- It becomes a QUALITY indicator or even QUALITY feature
  ➔ interesting/important to label this
How to use ILO’s as a quality feature?

I HAVE THE ABILITY TO QUANTIFY THE UNQUANTIFIABLE.

THAT IS WHY THEY CALL ME DOGBERT THE QUANTIFIER.

WHO CALLS YOU THAT?

EIGHT PEOPLE.
NVAO pilot project

- “Internationalisation as a distinctive (quality) feature” (DQF) at programme level [and at institutional level]
- DQF = part of our accreditation system
- Developed by Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organisation (NVAO)
- Been tested in 21 pilots (2010-11)
- (Now:) Framework with 5 standards & 15 criteria (3 criteria per standard)
Standard 1: Vision on internationalisation

Criterion 1a: Shared vision
The programme has a vision on internationalisation. This vision is supported by stakeholders within and outside the programme.

Criterion 1b: Verifiable objectives
The vision on internationalisation includes verifiable objectives.

Criterion 1c: Improvement-oriented evaluations
The vision on internationalisation is evaluated periodically and this evaluation forms the basis for improvement measures.

Assessment: Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).
Internationalisation as a distinctive (quality) feature: standards & criteria

**Standard 2: Learning outcomes**

**Criterion 2a: Intended learning outcomes**
The intended *international and intercultural learning outcomes* defined by the programme are a clear reflection of its vision on internationalisation.

**Criterion 2b: Student assessment**
The methods that are used for the assessment of students are suitable for measuring the achievement of the intended *international and intercultural learning outcomes*.

**Criterion 2c: Graduate achievement**
The programme can demonstrate that the intended *international and intercultural learning outcomes* are achieved by its graduates.

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).
Internationalisation as a distinctive (quality) feature: standards & criteria

**Standard 3: Teaching and Learning**

**Criterion 3a: Curriculum**
The content and structure of the curriculum enable the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

**Criterion 3b: Teaching methods**
The teaching methods enable the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

**Criterion 3c: Learning environment**
The learning environment is suitable for achieving the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).
Internationalisation as a distinctive (quality) feature: standards & criteria

**Standard 4: Staff**

**Criterion 4a:** Staff composition
The composition of the staff (in quality and quantity) facilitates the achievement of the intended international and intercultural learning outcomes.

**Criterion 4b:** International experience and competence
Staff members have sufficient international experience, intercultural competences and language skills.

**Criterion 4c:** Services provided to staff
The services provided to the staff (e.g. training, facilities, staff exchanges) are in line with the staff composition and facilitate international experiences, intercultural competences and language skills.

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).
Internationalisation as a distinctive (quality) feature: standards & criteria

**Standard 5: Students**

**Criterion 5a: Student group composition**
The composition of the student group (diversity of national and cultural backgrounds) is in line with the programme’s vision on internationalisation.

**Criterion 5b: International experience**
The international experience gained by students is adequate and in line with the programme’s internationalisation vision.

**Criterion 5c: Services provided to students**
The services provided to the students (e.g. information provision, counselling, guidance, accommodation, Diploma Supplement) are adequate and in line with the composition of the student group.

**Assessment:** Unsatisfactory, satisfactory, good or excellent (weighted and substantiated).
Labelling programmes that can guarantee “intercultural / international competent” graduates
Procedure

- Voluntary process! (for pilot: first come – first served)
- Self-evaluation report (following the outline of the framework)
- 1-day site visit by expert panel
- Report with judgement and advice (→ possibility to “grow”;
satisfactory – good – excellent)
- Decision by NVAO-board (made public)
The Panels

Composition:

- A chair (with experience in internationalisation)
- An international expert (with background in QA)
- A subject/domain specialist
- A student
- An NVAO secretary
- An NVAO Process coordinator
- External observer(s) (in some cases)
Evaluation of the pilot (1)

Generally positive realms by stakeholders involved in the pilot process (HEI’s, experts, NVAO,...)

- The pilot has created a sort of dynamism
- Overall state of internationalisation at the programme level in the Netherlands and Flanders → “satisfactory” to “good”
- On individual standards/criteria many cases of good practice and excellence have been found, only very few unsatisfactory cases.
Evaluation of the pilot (2)

But some things need further clarification / adjustments / developments in the field:

- Lack of an *explicit* vision/mission/policy with respect to internationalisation at the programme level
- Many programmes take an implicit or instrumental approach to internationalisation → not sufficient
- Many programmes have not / only implicitly thought about the *intercultural and international* LO’s and even less have made explicit how to assess these.

(again here: implicit or instrumental approach)
Evaluation of the pilot (3)

[continued]

• Relationship between ‘intended’ and ‘achieved’ learning outcomes is a difficult issue

• Problematic:
  - explicit intentions but not measurable achievements and
  - [vice versa] clear achievements, which cannot be clearly linked to the (implicit!) intensions?
  → are the achievements intentionally, as a result of the overall quality of the programme, or rather ‘incidentally’, missing a structured foundation (and hence not a valid quality indicator)?
New chapter: European pilot

- Coordinated by European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA)
- Project selected/funded by EU: Certificate for the Quality of Internationalisation (CeQuInt)

- 14 partners from 11 countries, consisting of quality assurance agencies from Austria, Belgium (Flanders), Croatia, Germany (2), Finland, France (2), the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Spain (2), the Academic Cooperation Association (ACA) and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). NVAO is the coordinating agency.
Check

http://www.ecaconsortium.net/main/projects/cequint

for more information
Measuring “intercultural / international competence”
Measuring “intercultural / international competence”

- One of the key criteria (and definitely the most difficult one):
  “The intended international and intercultural learning outcomes are demonstrably achieved by the programme’s graduates.”

- Remember: LO’s “as defined by the programme”, i.e. can be generic, subject-specific or a combination
Measuring “intercultural / international competence”

- **Challenge:** **how to demonstrate** the achievement of these defined international and intercultural learning outcomes
  - Cf. tendency towards competence based learning → assessment of competences is a challenge anyhow
  - How to demonstrate these are the result of internationalisation?
- Difficult, but is this a reason not to do it?
Measuring “intercultural / international competence”

- More and more: attention to the assessment of learning outcomes
  - AHELO-project (OECD)
  - APEL-procedures
  - In many competence-oriented programmes

One of the conclusions...

“Although the methodology clearly needs some refinement (...), we are convinced that measuring achieved international/intercultural learning outcomes is one of the most effective, impartial (i.e. not biased by disciplines, cultures, activities,...) and all-embracing ways of measuring the impact of internationalisation.”
IMPACT-project: Research outline

An evaluation of the impact of internationalisation on the higher education curricula

Defining possible correlations / causal relationships

- **Input**: International activities
- **Core**: Curriculum
- **Output**: Graduates’ Competences

Level of achievement (⇒ possible success)

- **Indicators + CTV**
- **Result indicators**
Focus: generic competences (< “Tuning” project) made concrete in a disciplinary context

Examples of these competences:

- Capacity for analysis and synthesis
- Capacity for applying knowledge in practice
- Planning and time management
- Basic general knowledge in the field of study
- Grounding in basic knowledge of the profession in practice
- Oral and written communication in native language
- Research skills
- Capacity to learn
- Information management skills (ability to retrieve and analyse information from different sources)
- Critical and self-critical abilities
- Capacity to adapt to new situations
- Problem solving
- Decision-making
- Teamwork
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership
- Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team
- Ability to communicate with non-experts (in the field)
- Appreciation of diversity and multiculturality
- Ability to work in an international context
- Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries
- Ability to work autonomously
- Project design and management
- Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit
- Ethical commitment
- Concern for quality
- Will to succeed
Competence 1: Perseverance

In these and similar situations, are you the kind of person who has the competency / attitude to persevere and cope with the situation?

**Business management**
During the start-up phase of an important project being carried out for a customer, a colleague falls ill. The project manager asks you to stand in for your colleague for a few days. That is not easy, because you have to master a new product for another project that is being planned at the same time.

**History**
A colleague on the editorial team of a TV broadcaster falls ill. The editor asks you to stand in for your colleague for a few days. That is not easy, because you have to do a lot of research for an election debate at the same time.

**Nursing**
In an intensive care unit there is a sudden increase in the number of patients in a critical condition due to accidents during the weekend. The nursing team is struggling with a staff shortage. Your head of department asks you to work a number of extra consecutive days. That is not easy, because a new system has just been introduced for recording notes. You have to master that as well.

**Mathematics/geology**
During the start-up phase of an important research project, a colleague falls ill. The project manager asks you to stand in for your colleague for a few days. That is not easy, because you have to master a new method of analysis at the same time.
IMPACT-project: Issues in the report

- For each competence: table with most relevant data, e.g.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competence level before training</th>
<th>Graduates</th>
<th>Teachers (about graduates)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>'Short'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence level before training</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence level after training</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance of competence</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact internationalisation</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Important assumptions:
  - teachers are able to assess student LO's
  - students can cope with self-assessments (but what if not...)

‘short’= also implicit, not intensive, superfluous,...

‘long’= +3months, intensive, explicit,...

Statistically relevant!
Impact on competences

- Intensive/long international experience most clearly influenced: perseverance, communicating in other languages and multi-cultural openness; to a lesser extent independent decision-making, using the Internet and interdisciplinary work.

- International dimension has an impact on developing projects, carrying out research independently, synthesising information, solving problems, using the Internet, making ethical choices, selecting relevant information and working in an interdisciplinary way.
IMPACT-project:
Relevant conclusions for this discussion

- Linking “internationalisation input” (type/length/intensity/... of activities, level of services,...), to “students’ learning outcomes” = possible and relevant

- The “level” of this correlation is a relevant indicator for the quality of the programme’s internationalisation (including – of course – mobility)
Enhances the quality of internationalisation (and of the programme!)

Growing importance of international / intercultural learning outcomes

Conclusions

Trigger for a quality label

Necessary to measure it

Interesting for (some) programmes to use this as a distinctive (quality) feature
The intended learning outcome for this presentation was:

To know all about the ancestors of the presenter...
The intended learning outcome for this presentation was:

*In the framework of his/her professional development, the participant masters the concept of (international / intercultural) learning outcomes and how it can be used as a quality feature, internally and externally.*
Thank you for your attention

Any questions?

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"Harris, when I said 'any questions' I was using only a figure of speech."