

# Student Centred Learning and Competences

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# STUDENT CENTRED LEARNING

**Teachers never  
teach anything**

**They only provide a  
menu of  
information which  
students will learn  
when they want or  
need to**

**The more students  
are personally  
involved in their  
lessons, the more  
effectively they  
are likely to learn**

**Teacher-centred:**  
Low level of student choice  
Student passive  
Decisions with teacher



**Student-centred:**  
High level of student choice  
Student active  
Decisions with the student

## Benefits of Student Centred Learning

### Students

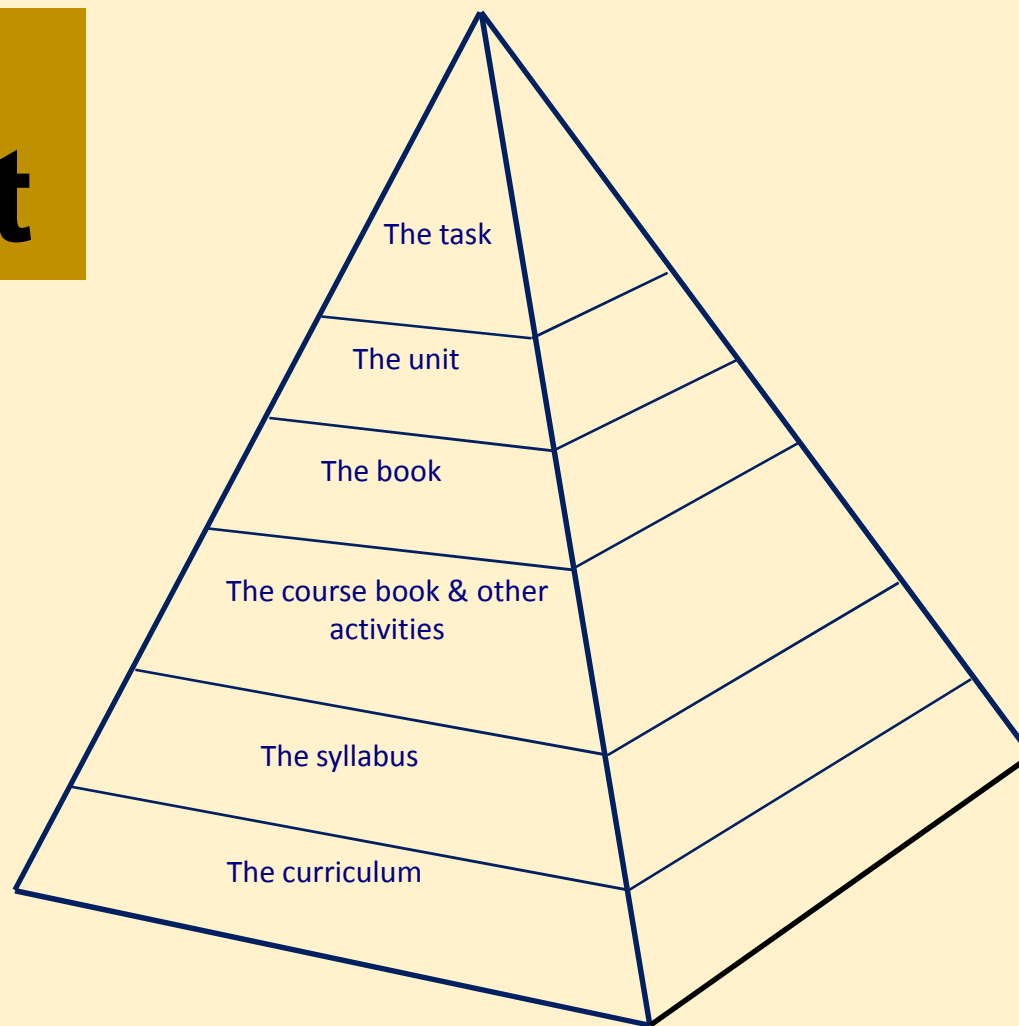
- Can work alone / in small groups, at school / home
- Have access to more materials
- Are involved in what they study
- Take ownership of their learning
- Are more motivated and committed

### Teachers

- Act as facilitators / guides
- Help students to work out learning strategies
- Develop students' research abilities

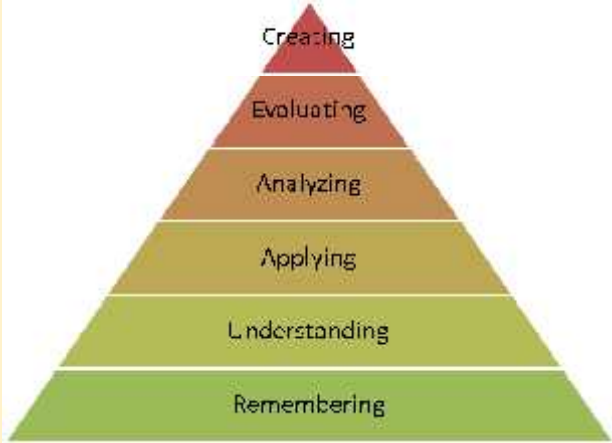
McLean (1997) & Educational Initiative Centre (2004)

# Student volment



## SOME CURRENT TRENDS

Movement toward:  
Competency based versus  
knowledge-based education  
"Side on the Side" versus  
"Stage on the Stage"  
Critical thinking versus specific  
content knowledge



# Relinquishing Control: The Process is the Product

Not:

- Something completely new
- Simply relinquishing the role of lecturer
- Compromising the educational experience

Rather:

- Creating active learning opportunities
- Becoming more student-centered in your teaching approach
- Creating a semi- autonomous classroom



## ACTIVE LEARNING

The active learning approach:

Forces students to think about themselves as learners

Is more about knowledge and skills (intrinsic) and less about tests/grades (extrinsic)

Encourages students to be producers of knowledge rather than just information consumers/containers

Prepares student for 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges





## WHY DOES IT WORK?



- Empowers students
- Forces students to think about themselves as learners
- Creates independence and ownership of learning
- Fosters collaborative learning
- Encourages creativity
- Creates a rich learning environment inside and outside the classroom
- Fosters new skills – problem solving, critical thinking, etc.

## Some Results

Engage  
Debate  
Collaborate  
Compare-Contrast  
Express  
Question  
Discuss  
Create  
Synthesize

Students learn to ask questions, not just repeat back answers

Students become active learners, rather than passive learners

Students build confidence

Students prepare for 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills

## HOW TO DO IT?

Find out who students are and what they expect

What they want to learn?

What questions they have?

Use project-based learning or action research

Employ teams

Assign roles

Let students choose some topics/sequences of material

Use rubrics – and have students create theirs

Introduce learning contracts (especially with teamwork)

Encourage self-assessment



## Challenges

Still need to maintain quality and set high expectations

Still need teaching plan – and need to stick to it

-- but need to be flexible and allow some “wiggle room”

Need to prepare students for the new active model



## Student Centred Learning and Flexible Learning Paths

- Reform of teaching methodologies
- Expansion of student counselling and information support services
- More attention to diverse student needs in QA processes, incl. student participation in quality assurance
- More choices to combine Bachelors and Masters of different orientations (tracks, major/minor combinations)
- Institutional attention to employability at all levels (incl. doctoral)
- Focus on Competences : skills

## Competences

The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning defines competence as follows: “Competence” means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and / or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, competence is described in terms of responsibility and autonomy. (EQF 2008).

# Competence – a “fuzzy” concept (Van der Klink and Boon)

Van der Klink and Boon (2002) describe competence as a “fuzzy concept”

On the positive side they state it is a “useful term, bridging the gap between education and job requirements”

*Int. J. Human Resources Development and Management, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2003* 125

## Competencies: the triumph of a fuzzy concept

Marcel R. van der Klink and Jo Boon

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**Abstract:** This article investigates the current popularity of the concept of competencies. After a brief exploration of perspectives on the concept of competencies, a study will be presented that was conducted in order to gain more insight into the backgrounds of the current status of this concept and to investigate competency-based practices. The study investigated the applications in enterprises and higher education. The last section summarises the main findings and raises some issues that need further elaboration.



## Learning Outcomes and Competences



Declan Kennedy / Áine Hyland / Norma Ryan

### Abstract

There is wide variation in the literature regarding the interpretation of the meaning of the term competence. This interpretation ranges from a description of competence in terms of performance and skills acquired by training to a broad overarching view that encompasses knowledge, understanding, skills, abilities and attitudes. Due to the lack of clarity of the concept of competence, assessment of competences can be very difficult. Some authors warn against associating competence exclusively with skills, others distinguish between the terms competence and competency whilst others treat these terms as being synonymous. The essential problem appears to be that these terms are liberally used as general terms to refer to various aspects of job performance without any attempt being made to give precise definitions of the terms. While various efforts have been made to arrive at a single definition of the term competence, no agreement has been reached and there is still wide variation of meaning between various cultures and between different professions. This is in contrast to the clear definition of the concept of learning outcomes found in the literature. It is recommended that if the term competence is being used, the definition of competence being used in the particular context should be stated and also that competences should be written using the vocabulary of learning outcomes.

**Kennedy D, Hyland A and Ryan N (2009) Learning Outcomes and Competences, Bologna Handbook, Introducing Bologna Objectives and Tools, B2.3-3, 1 – 18.**



## Issues with use of 'Competence' in the Tuning Guide

Confusion of Competences which is in conflict with the definition of Competence used in the European Qualifications Framework

Confusion about the relationship between Competence and Learning Outcomes and Incorrectly links Learning Outcomes to competences

### Learning Outcomes, Degree Profiles, Tuning Project and Competences

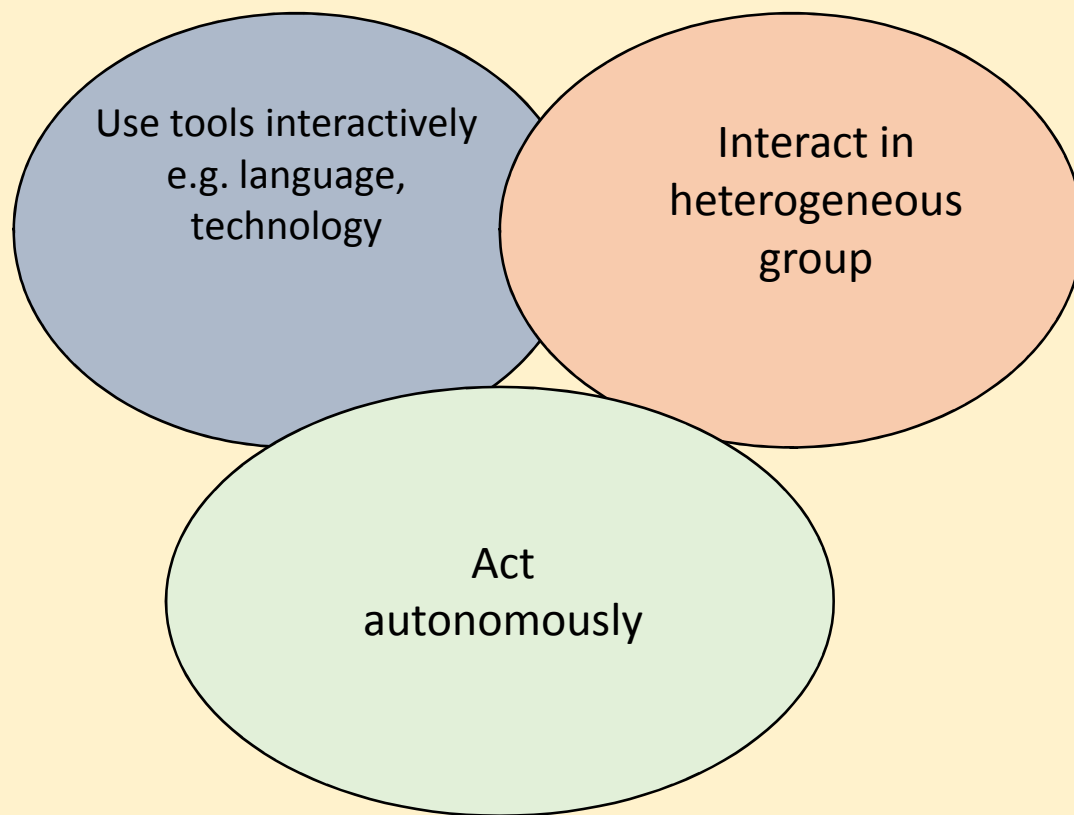
Including a review of "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe. A Guide to Formulating Degree Programme Profiles – Including Programme Competences and Programme Learning Outcomes" Published by the Competences in Education and Recognition Project 2 (CoRe2)



Andy Gibbs  
Declan Kennedy  
Anthony Vickers

This paper outlines the background to the role of Learning Outcomes in the Bologna Process and discusses module learning outcomes, programme learning outcomes and programme specifications used to describe the intended learning outcomes of Higher Education programmes. The concept of constructive alignment is also discussed and exemplar material is provided to assist colleagues in higher education to implement constructive alignment in their programmes. A review is then undertaken of the above Tuning publication and serious concern is expressed regarding its content. The authors conclude that the confusion generated by this publication could seriously damage the considerable progress made in implementing the Bologna Process in many countries. The authors emphasise the fact that the Bologna Process can be fully implemented without reference to the Tuning Project.

A competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context. For example, the ability to communicate effectively is a competency that may draw on an individual's knowledge of language, practical IT skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating (PISA:OECD)



ECD, 2005

Long Learning Key Competence	Description
Communicate in mother tongue	ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts;
Communicate in foreign languages	in addition to the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue, mediation and intercultural understanding. The level of proficiency depends on several factors and the capacity for listening, speaking, reading and writing;
Mathematical competence & basic competences in science and technology	the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations, with the emphasis being placed on process, activity and knowledge. Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of knowledge and methodologies that explain the natural world. These involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and the responsibility of each individual as a citizen;
Digital competence	involves the confident and critical use of information society technology (IST) and thus basic skills in information and communication technology (ICT)
Ability to learn	the ability to pursue and organise one's own learning, either individually or in groups, in accordance with one's own needs, and awareness of methods and opportunities
Social and civic competences	personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence, and particularly knowledge of social and political concepts and structures (democracy, justice, equality, citizenship and civil rights), equips individuals to engage in active and democratic participation;
Initiative and entrepreneurship	the ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. The individual is aware of the context of his/her work and is able to seize opportunities that arise. It is the foundation for acquiring more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance
Cultural awareness and expression	involves appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media (music, performing arts, literature and the visual arts).

**Competence and competences are job related descriptions of an action, behaviour or outcome that should be demonstrated in individual's performance**

(TRACE Project number: 2005-2028/001 LE2-51OREF Leonardo da Vinci Pilot Project)

It must be noted that competency can be more than the observed performance

The potential can be higher than the actual performance

Competency can come up differently in different type of contexts and the visible performance is the concrete expression of competency, i.e. being competent

(TRACE Project number: 2005-2028/001 LE2-51OREF Leonardo da Vinci Pilot Project)

Based on the examination of published literature from France, the United Kingdom, Germany and the United States of America, the following composite definition of competence is offered -

Competence includes:

- i) Cognitive competence involving the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially
- ii) Functional competence (skills or know-how), those things that a person should be able to do when they are functioning in a given area of work, learning or social activity
- iii) Personal competence involving knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation
- iv) Ethical competence involving the possession of certain personal and professional values

# Classes of Competences in Higher Education

The first group is considered to be comprised of social, self, systematic and domain related competences – or transversal abilities and skills - whilst field specific competences are related to labour market requirements (Schaeper, 2008)



## Field Specific Competences

### Adult Nurses

Adult nurses must understand and apply current legislation to all service users, paying special attention to the protection of vulnerable people, including those with **complex needs arising from ageing, cognitive impairment, long-term conditions and those approaching the end of life** (Nursing & Midwifery Council, UK)

Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements **to older people with complex needs**



Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements to people with **complex needs and cognitive impairment**



Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements to people with **complex needs and Long term conditions**



Apply current legal, ethical and professional requirements to people with **complex needs as they near end of life**



## Transversal Skills - social, self, systematic and domain related competences

The skills individuals have which are relevant to jobs and occupations other than the ones they currently have or have recently had. These skills may also have been acquired through non-work or leisure activities or through participation in education or training.

More generally, these are skills which have been learned in one context or to master a special situation/problem and can be transferred to another context. (EU Lifelong Learning Guidance Policy Network)

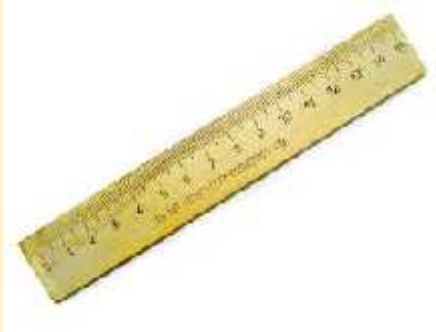
- Collaborate on tasks
- Use office software
- Negotiate
- Share information

(European Skills, Competence, Qualifications and Occupations)





# Assessment & Evaluation



## Hard measures:

Comparison of learning using different teaching methods (Teaching as Research: TAR).

Standardized tests.

## Soft measures:

Attendance.

Energy in the room.

Student satisfaction.

Instructor evaluations.

Instructor satisfaction.





## Transversal Skills – Assessment and Evaluation?

ATS 2020 funded by the EU under the Key Action 3 of the Erasmus+ programme. Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is the coordinator of a Consortium in which 17 organisations from ten countries are partners: Cyprus, Austria, Croatia, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Lithuania, Spain, Slovenia and Estonia



ATS2020 project aims to propose a model for students' learning that facilitates students to develop transversal skills. At the same time it aims to give teachers innovative tools to assess these skills. The project will test and further develop assessment approaches and practices in 10 pilot countries working with 250 schools and involving 1000 teachers and 10,000 learners. The evidence will help national ministries and the EU to formulate informed policies and implementation strategies in this area.

The project began in March 2015 and will finish in February 2018.



<http://www.innove.ee/en/organization/international-cooperation/projects-activities/assessment-of-transversal-skills-2020>

# Questions

# Thank you!

