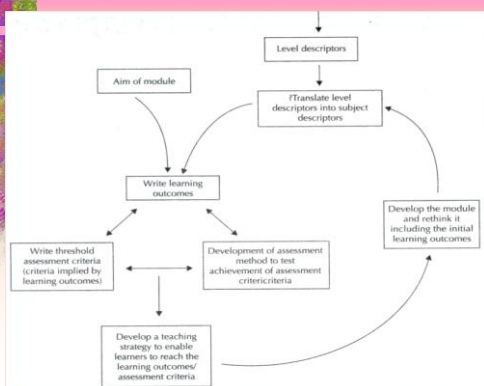


## Linking Levels, Learning outcomes and assessment

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## A map of module development



### Strands represented in level descriptors

#### Strands that relate to the context of the learning

**Change in the complexity of knowledge that is presented**  
– the degree of challenge of the material of learning to the learner;

**Change in the complexity of tasks that the learner is expected to be able to tackle.** This may be expressed in terms of the degree of predictability or structure in the task.

**Change in the support for or guidance given to learners** – the degree of management of that learning or guidance in tasks and the amount of student autonomy allowed for or expected;

#### Strands that relate to the learner's qualities and abilities

**Learner's skills that are not directly related to the development of academic learning** – these may be vocational or employability-related;

**The capacity of learners to be autonomous** - the degree of the learner's responsibilities for her actions in the learning and tackling tasks in the context of formal education and / or in the workplace;

**The ability of learners to study, to research and to manage learning resources and information;**

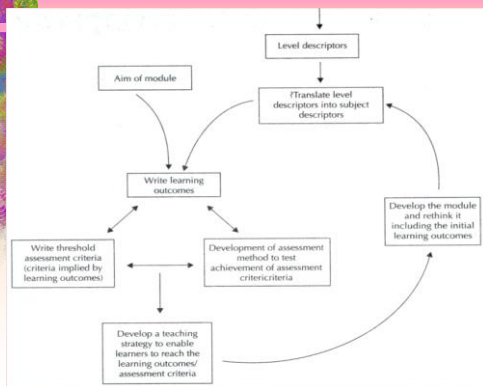
**Self-awareness, self-knowledge, self-management and the ability to evaluate own performance**

**The sophistication of the learner's skills of manipulation of knowledge** (analysis, synthesis evaluation and application);

**The capacity of the learner to deploy knowledge in tackling tasks / solving problems;**

**The learner's range of knowledge and understanding of a discipline / disciplines;**

**The learner's understanding of the nature of knowledge and knowing**



## Definition of a statement of learning outcome

- a statement of what the learner should be able to do at the end of a period of learning in order to demonstrate the achievement of knowledge, understanding or ability to perform. A learning outcome is usually written in association with level descriptors.

## Definition of learning outcome for work on European Qualifications Framework

- Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to be able to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning

## Example of learning outcome

Level 2 Bachelor of Science - Physics:

At the end of the module, the student will be expected to be able to -

- perform correctly calculations on wave functions and in the solution of the Schroedinger equation for a range of one-dimensional problems

## Examples of learning outcomes

Bachelor of Education: Level 2

At the end of the module, the learner will be expected to be able to:

- - explain the more common reasons for difficult behaviour in primary school children in class situations, indicating standard techniques for ameliorating that behaviour

## Example of learning outcome

Level 3 Bachelor of Arts in English:

At the end of the module, the learner is expected to be able to

- demonstrate detailed understanding of the influences of the historical and social context within which the chosen text is set, both from the study of the text itself and from the study of other contemporary literature.

## Examples of learning outcomes

Level 3 Bachelor of Science, Physics

At the end of the module, the student is expected to be able to -

- - describe and explain the function of the basic devices of optoelectronics; optical fibres; liquid crystal displays; bipolar and surface field effect transistors and MOS light emitting diodes

## Some important points

- Learning outcomes need to be assessable
- We may not always assess all of them – but sample
- More than eight or so learning outcomes per module are likely to be more like assessment criteria

## The 'stem' of learning outcomes:

- At the end of the period of learning, the learner is expected to be able to....

## Components of a learning outcome

- A verb that indicates what a learner is expected to be able to do at the end of the period of learning
- Word(s) that indicate on what or with what the learner is acting. If the outcome is about skills then the word(s) may describe the way the skill is performed (eg jump up and down competently
- Word(s) that indicate the nature (in context or in terms of standard) of the performance that is required as evidence that the learning has been achieved.

## A learning outcome for a negotiated learning module

At the end of the module the student is expected to be able to:

- - write an appropriate and agreed learning contract with correctly structured learning outcomes;
- fulfil the learning contract, demonstrating efficiency and autonomy in the management of the required research, learning and reporting

## Why use an outcomes-based approach?

1. An outcomes based is to do with learning and not teaching.

*It is learning that is at the heart education and not teaching!*

## Why use an outcomes-based approach?

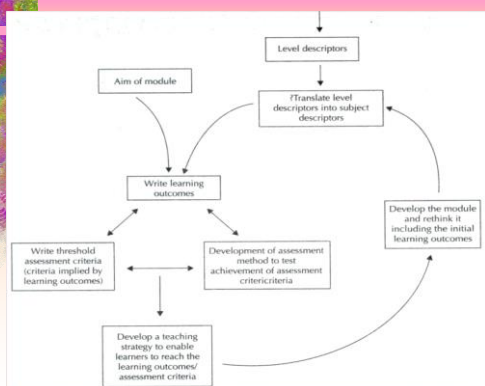
### 2. Learning outcomes are to do with what students *have learnt*.

*They are based on the achievement of learning, - not what you hope that they will learn!*

## Why use an outcomes-based approach?

### 3. Learning outcomes are to do with the representation of learning - not just the learning.

*Learning is an activity of the brain - it is only when the activity is evidenced that we know that it has happened.*



### The advantages of using learning outcomes:

It is good practice to be explicit about what you expect of learners in terms of learning to be attained and the assessment. They link with assessment criteria and assessment practice and indicate teaching strategies.

Learning outcomes provide an indication of the standards that you or the higher education community expects of learners

They are a good way of communicating the learning purpose that the module is intended to fulfil. They provide information to other teachers, students and employers (etc).

Learning outcomes can be a useful tool for communication with external examiners.

The use of learning outcomes provides a means of judging and attaining consistency of volumes and standards of learning within and across institutions.

In the context of a credit-based higher education system, learning outcomes are part of the definition of credit – as part of the measure of volume of learning.

Learning outcomes, perhaps written in relation to benchmarks are a manner in which standards are expressed in higher education.

A set of learning outcomes provides information about what the learner has achieved. It is a kind of transcript.

Skills and other components of learning can be identified in learning outcomes and mapped across a programme.

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