

# Learning outcomes and their role in the future development of the Bologna process

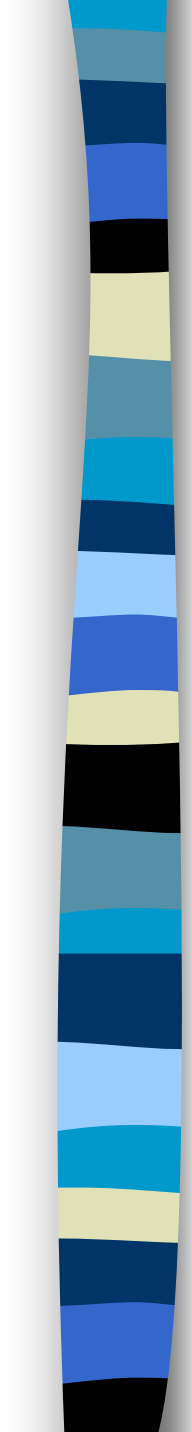
*Stephen Adam, University of Westminster.*

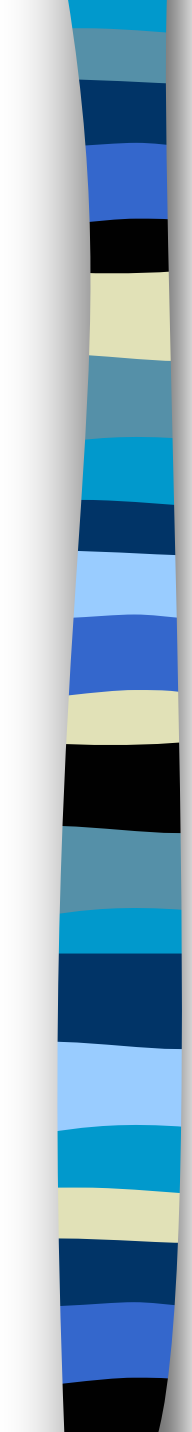


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- **Their role depends on your vision of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) 2010. Learning outcomes need to be an all-pervasive, core element if the EHEA is to be efficient, effective, transparent and non-invasive (non-regulatory).**
- **Learning outcomes' impact at local, national and international levels in terms of what they are, what they represent (philosophy) and what they do...**
  - highlight teaching, learning, assessment linkage
  - sharpen the focus on learning + promote student-centred learning + improve curriculum design
  - improve quality + aid quality assurance + standard setting
  - increase national and international transparency, mobility and recognition (EQF)

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- **Learning outcomes and student-centred learning (SCL) have massive implications for the role of HEIs in the Bologna process - on the organisation, conduct, assessment and content of learning. Their introduction can focus the Bologna process more on institutions rather than current ministry-dominated structural reforms.**
  - **On the negative side learning outcomes have a potentially destructive role if they are imposed in any clumsy top-down manner.**
  - **Learning outcomes have implications for all 10 Bologna ‘action lines’ and the three priority areas:**
    1. Quality Assurance – external reference points
    2. Two/three cycle system – clear cycle descriptors
    3. Recognition of degrees and periods of study – transparency + zones of confidence

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- **Learning outcomes can provide the common currency to build lifelong learning systems (integrate VET and HE, etc.)**
  - **The main challenge is to find effective ways to share good practice, involve all stakeholders, and develop common understanding of learning outcomes across Europe.**
  - **A strong case can be made that they are the essential building blocks for open, transparent, flexible higher education systems.**
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