

The meaning of learning outcomes – depending on what you do and where you stand

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The presentation and the project

Two goals for the presentation:

1. Summarize the results of a case study of how learning outcomes are conceptualized by:
 - International scholars (document analysis of publications)
 - Norwegian teachers (interview of 41 teachers on grading practices) and
 - Norwegian policy makers (document analysis national budget from 1997-2011)
2. Facilitate an arena for discussion of the meaning of learning outcomes.
 - Is there such a thing as a common/universal or even dominant conceptualization of learning outcomes?

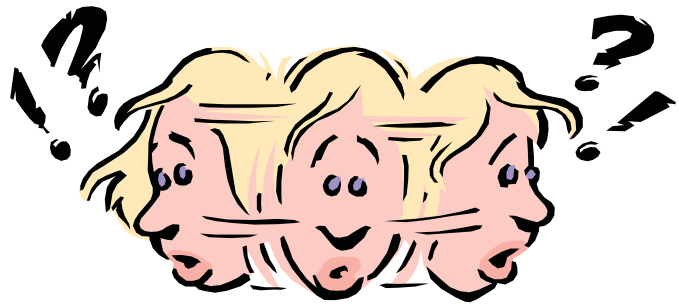
Definisjoner – ”klassikere”

- *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*

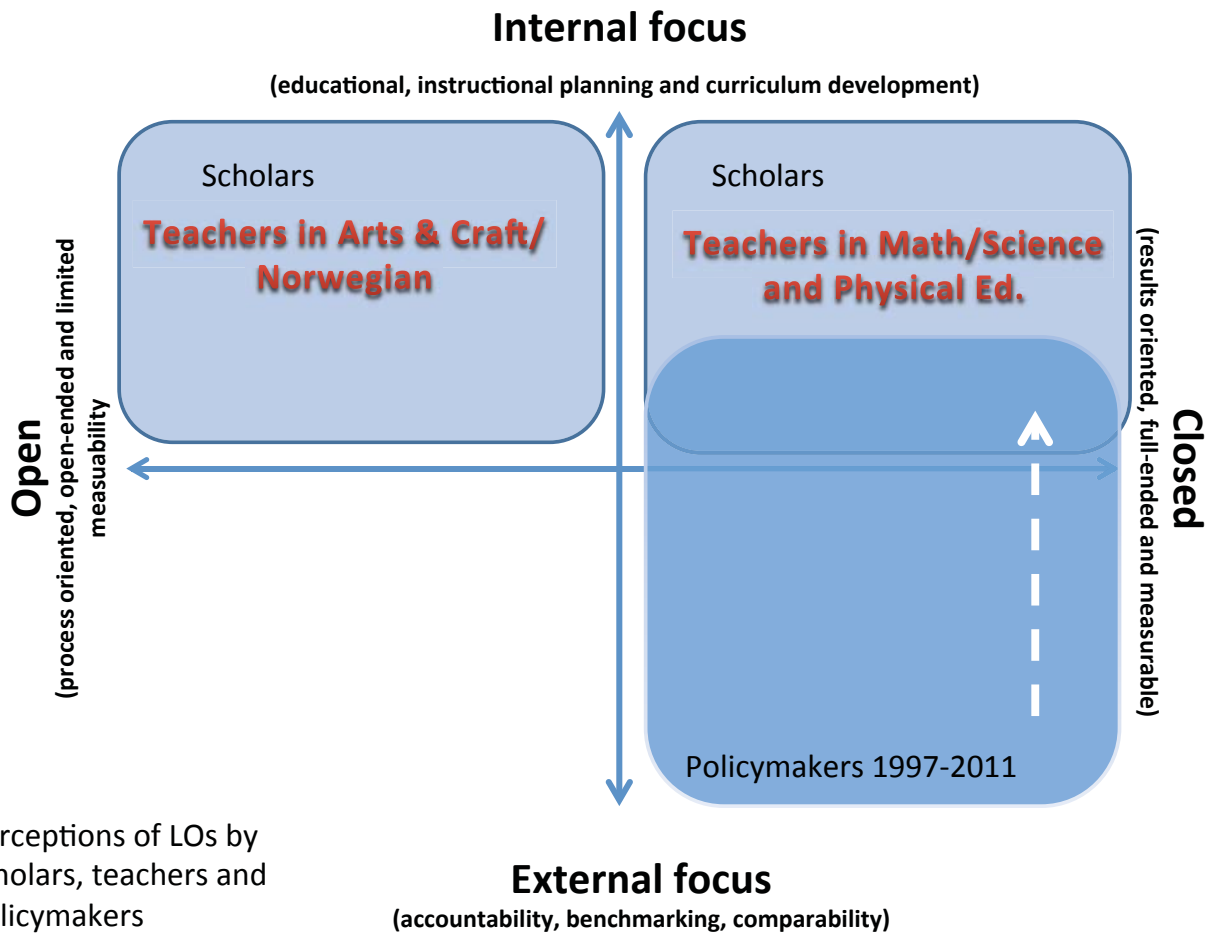
(Gagnè 1974:51)

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

(Eisner 1979:101)



- ✓ *A learning outcome is a written statement of what the successful student/learner is expected to be able to do at the end of the module/course unit, or qualification. (Adam 2004)*
- ✓ *Learning outcomes refer to the personal changes or benefits that follow as a result of learning. Such changes or benefits can be measured in terms of abilities or achievements. (Nusche 2008)*
- ✓ *Learning outcomes represent what is formally assessed and accredited to the student and they offer a starting point for a viable model for the design of curricula in higher education which shifts emphasis from input and process to the celebration of student learning. (Allan 1996)*
- ✓ *Outcomes are singular, measurable, standardised and unequivocal second-order consequences of the management and pedagogy of schools and school systems and are constructed within a view of knowledge that is largely fixed, supposedly objective, uncontested, a-historical and unitary. (Smyth and Dow 1998:295)*



Issues of concern?

- Scholars operate with a far broader concept than the two other groups, but mostly with an internal focus, missing out the external focus?
- Policymakers mainly closed and externally focused approach, missing out the internal and more open approach?
- Teachers inside focused, subject important for their perception of LOs

**HOW DO THEY UNDERSTAND
EACH OTHER?**

A dominant conceptualization of LOs?

Where do you stand?

Undergraduate, graduate/professional student learning outcomes at IUPUI: “Student learning outcomes are statements that specify what students will know, be able to do, or be able to demonstrate as a result of successful completion of the experience. Outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills, attitudes or value.”

<http://www.iupui.edu/~bulletin/iupui/2010-2012/undergraduate/Student-Learning-Outcomes/index.shtml>

The case studies

- Prøitz, T. S. (2010) Learning outcomes. What are they? Who defines them? When and where are they defined? *Educational assessment, evaluation and accountability*. Vol 22, No 2 pp. 119-137
- Prøitz, T. S. (2011) Variation and validity in final grading – subjects matter. *Education Inquiry*, in press
- Prøitz, T. S. (2012) Learning outcomes as key concept in policy documents. in progress