

# LEARNING OUTCOMES IN LAW DISCIPLINES

MEASURING QUALITY OF LEARNING RESULTS IN HE

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*EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LAW MASTER PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE*

**FACULTY OF LAW KAZAN (VOLGA REGION) FEDERAL UNIVERSITY**

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DR HANA HORAK, PROJECT COORDINATOR

DEPARTMENT OF LAW, FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB

JEAN MONNET CHAIR

**INTEREULAWEAST**

European and International Law Master Programme Development in Eastern Europe



Tempus

# Outline

- What are learning outcomes?
- Why are they important for master programme development?
- Writing learning outcomes in master programme
- Writing learning outcomes in modules
- Practical advices in writing learning outcomes
- Learning outcomes: example
- Q&A, discussion



# Notion

# Two approaches

- Teacher – centered approach: focus on teacher's input and course description
- Student – centered approach or outcome based approach: focus on what students should be able to do after the end of the learning process
- Emphasis on the learner and her/his ability to act
- Beginnings in the USA in 1960s and 1970s
- by 2010 all modules and programmes in third level institutions in the EU must be written acc. to rules on LO → raising transparency in HE

# Definition

- Statements of what is expected that the student will be able to do as a result of learning activity (Jenkins and Unwinn, 2001)
- ...outcomes are usually expressed as knowledge, skills or attitudes (American Association of Law Libraries)
- Statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning (ECTS Users' Guide, 2005)

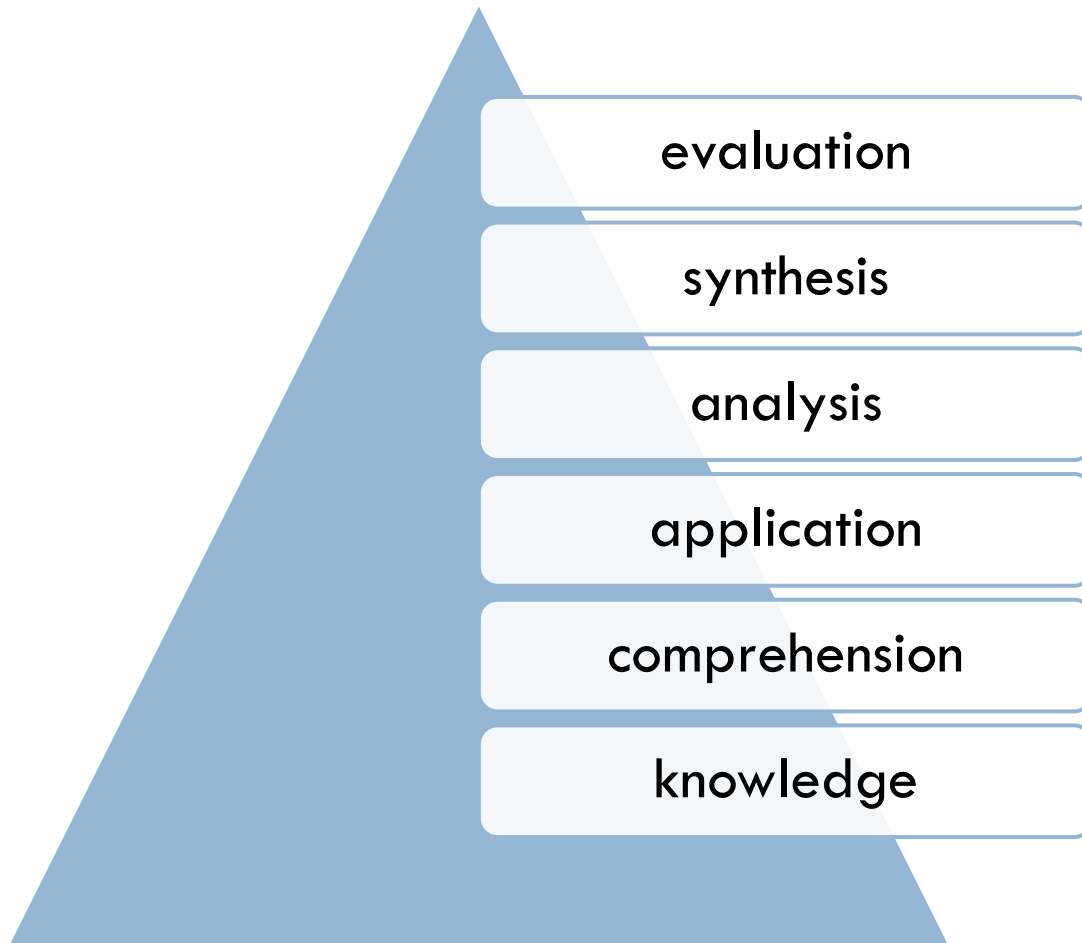
# Tempus Glossary says...

- A learning outcome is defined as a statement of what a **learner knows, understands and is able to do on completion of a learning process**. This concept **emphasises the results of learning rather than focusing on inputs such as length of study**. Learning outcomes are specified in **three categories – as knowledge, skills and competence**. As a result, **qualifications capture a broad scope of learning outcomes, including theoretical knowledge, practical and technical skills, and social competences** where the ability to work with others is crucial.

# Aims vs objectives vs LO

- Aims are teacher-focused ie show teacher's intention what her/his lecture intends to cover in general – general teaching intention
- Objectives indicate specific goals which teacher intends to achieve – specific information on teaching achievements
- But LO should fit within the aims and content of the module and/or programme – point where teacher's intention and students' expectations meet


# Six levels of knowing (Bloom)





# Importance of assessment

“From our students’ point of view, assessment always defines the actual curriculum” (Ramsden, 2003)

Learning Outcomes  Assessment

The realization of LO cannot be proved without some assessment technique eg direct assessment tool in form of written exams, projects, theses, journals or indirect assessment forms of surveys, analyses of curricula etc.

# Importance for master programme development

- Precise and clear list of LOs as quality assurance tool
- Clarification of learning results
- Attraction of students to take part in master programme
- Increasing transparency in HE
- “... starting point for a viable model of design of curricula in higher education which shifts the emphasis from input and process to the celebration of student learning” (Allan J, 1996)
- Help in course and module design
- Clear information for labour market on the achievements and features associated with particular qualification

# Pros

- Can help curriculum design by detection of overlaps between existing modules, programmes and qualifications
- Increasing transparency and allows comparability of standards concerning qualifications
- Indicates new “added” value to current programmes which should be replaced by new one
- Good LOs represent clear set of statements what benefits could be expected after successful study – help students with their choice of module, programme and qualification
- Help in design of teaching material
- Criterion for teaching methodology related to LO – lectures, seminars, discussions, moot courts, practice
- Increasing student mobility by facilitating recognition of their qualifications and diplomas - other institutions know what kind of knowledge, skill and competence certain master programme “brings”

# Shortcomings

- Too narrow list of LOs
- Too ambitious list of LOs
- Not paying attention to time framework in which those LOs should be achieved
- Too theoretical, less promotion of thinking and practical skills
- Too abstract and too general

**Conservative  
vs liberal view  
of learning**

# Writing modul LO (1)

- LO specify the essential learning for module (Kennedy, 2007)
- specify the minimum standard for passing a module
- small list vs long list of LO
- < 8, 5-9 recommended (Bingham, 1999)
- depending on the size of the module
- wishes vs reality
- simple and clear description
- measurable
- follow Bloom's taxonomy due to already existing list of common verbs to express list of LO
- use active and unambiguous verbs (Fry et al, 2000)

# Writing modul LO (2)

- use active verbs such as arrange, collect, defend, compare, apply...
- one verb per LO
- avoid vague terms
- use plain sentences
- LO of the module should correlated to LO of the Programme
- envisage measurement tools
- pay attention to the timespan
- pay attention to students's feedback
- consult other colleagues
- put emphasis on application of results, their analysis, synthesis and evaluation

# Writing programme LO (1)

- definition: description of essential knowledge, skills and attitudes that it is intended that graduates of the programme will be able to demonstrate (Kennedy, 2007)
- the same as those for modules
- 5-10 LOs per programme
- 2 types:
  - ▣ LO which can be assessed in course of the Programme
  - ▣ LO as indication to stakeholders at labour market what kind of practical performance they can expect from the graduates at the end of the Programme – labour market orientation

# Writing programme LO (2)

- **NOTA BENE:** programme LOs are not compilation of module LOs, the mere sum of component modules
- Where can that be seen?
  - ▣ **elective courses within the same programme**
  - ▣ ie when there is a choice of modules within a programme there may be skills common to all students within the programme although they do not listen the same combination of modules (Dillon and Hodgkinson, 2000)
  - ▣ the Programme should provide minimum skills and competences for all attendees and specific related but modul LO should be within the framework of programme LO



# Practical guidelines for writing LO (1)

- Using precise action verbs:
  - *to distinguish, to arrange, to collect, to define, to describe, to recall, to repeat to reproduce,*
  - *to associate, to clarify, to differentiate, to interpret, to predict, to recognise, to translate to review,*
  - *to apply, to demonstrate, to prepare, to organise to appraise, to debate, to point out, to separate, to question, to categorise to*
- choose,*
- *to assemble, to adjust, to identify, to list, to apply*
- *to solve, to compare, to deduce, to argue, to combine, to design, to explain, to formulate, to plan, to propose, to sum up,*
- *to assess, to conclude, to convince, to judge, to predict, to recommend, to challenge, to defend*

# Practical guidelines for writing LO (2)

- Structuring of statement:
  - ▣ One verb per statement
  - ▣ Simple sentences as a prerequisite for understanding
  - ▣ Less than 10 outcomes per modul

# Practical guidelines for writing LO (3)

- ▣ Introduce criteria for quality and quantitative assessment of LO
- ▣ Bear in mind the timespan for achievement of LO
- ▣ Consult other professionals and students on list of LO
- ▣ Bear in mind the type of addressees – students, students working in practice, students working in academic community...
- ▣ Be specific about expectations
- ▣ Avoid multi-interpretable expression as understand, know, be aware of, be familiar with, be acquainted – what do these words mean in a given context?



## **EXAMPLES:**

- 1. PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A POSTGRADUATE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LAW MASTER DEGREE**
- 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A MODULE IN BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE**
- 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A MODULE IN COMPETITION LAW IN THE EU AND USA**

# **Example 1. PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A POSTGRADUATE EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL LAW MASTER DEGREE**

- On completion of this programme, it is expected that the students will be able to:
  - To describe the main legal institutes of EU and International Law
  - To recognise economic context of EU law and International law
  - To differentiate legal nature of national, EU and International law
  - To interpret main features of certain situation in business practice
  - To apply provisions of EU and International law in business practice
  - To formulate legal standpoints applicable to certain situation arising out of business practice
  - To predict legal consequences of business performance
  - To recommend legal solution of certain business issue
  - To defend legal position of principal in business negotiations

## **Example 2. LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A MODULE IN BUSINESS FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN LAW**

- ❑ Module title: Business Foreign Language in Law
- ❑ Module Code: BFL 1001
- ❑ Learning outcomes written by Hana Horak, PhD

On successful completion of this module students should be able to:

- ❑ define basic foreign language terms
- ❑ translate short legal sentences in foreign language and *vice versa*
- ❑ Use legal expressions in written and oral communication in business practice
- ❑ Compare civil law and common law terminology for certain legal institute
- ❑ Formulate sentences and legal texts using terms and expressions
- ❑ Appraise the role of business foreign language in day-to-day communication

## ***Example 3. LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR A MODULE IN COMPETITION LAW IN THE EU AND RF***

- Module title: Competition Law in the EU and RF
- Module Code: CL 1001
- Learning outcomes written by Hana Horak, PhD
  
- On successful completion of this module students should be able to:
  - ▣ recognise economic reasons of competition regulation
  - ▣ define basic competition law terms
  - ▣ identify competition law related issues of business transactions
  - ▣ recognise what kind of market behaviour constitutes anticompetitive practice
  - ▣ to apply knowledge of merger and cartel law in the course of particular business transaction
  - ▣ to distinguish various forms of anticompetitive practice
  - ▣ to compare various forms of anticompetitive practice
  - ▣ to propose solutions for competition law issues
  - ▣ to predict competition law effects of particular business transaction

# Conclusion: Be Dynamic

- LO stand for sth our students need to absorb in form of knowledge, skills and competences
- Be practical and labour-market oriented: LO should be reflection of labour-market needs which stand in correlation with students needs
- Labour market is dynamic area: knowledge, skills and competences of 20th century and 21st century are not the same
- Thus make reviews of existing LOs and revise them if necessary to be in touch with external changes
- That way modules/programmes will be attractive for students and recognised in wider public



# Literature

- S Adam, An introduction to learning outcomes: A consideration of the nature, function and position of learning outcomes in the creation of the European Higher Education Area, article B.2.3-1 in Eric Froment, Jürgen Kohler, Lewis Purser and Lesley Wilson (eds.): *EUA Bologna Handbook – Making Bologna Work* (Berlin 2006: Raabe Verlag) available at <http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=129>
- D Kennedy, *Writing and Using Learning Outcomes: A Practical Guide* (University College Cork, Cork 2007)
- Presentation by D Kennedy, *Everything you need to know about Writing and Using Learning Outcomes*, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Beirut, Lebanon, 29 June 2012



# **Questions and Answers**

## **Discussion**



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!**