Challenges in 21st Century Curriculum Design
-Update on the status of the University of Iceland-

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Overview

• Introduction
• Implementation of learning outcomes
  – National implementation
  – Formal status of implementation
  – BORE – findings
• Integration of 21st century competences into the curriculum
• QEF2 - (Quality Enhancement Framework 2)
University of Iceland

• Established in 1911
• Public, comprehensive university
• 13,307 students
• 775 academic staff
• 890 administrative staff
• 5 schools
  – 25 faculties/dep.
  – ca 400 study programs
• Rapid growth in student number and in graduate programs
• Strong research orientation
The Centre for Teaching and Learning

• Educational development unit established in 2001
• One of our role is to support the implementation of learning outcomes (student-centred focus)
National implementation of lo

- Part of the Bologna declaration, 1999
- New Higher Education Act, 2006
- Accreditation of higher education institution – the definition of program level learning outcomes required (2006/2007)
  - top-down/lack of understanding
- First National Qualification Framework published 2006
- Course-level learning outcomes required 2010
- National Qualification Framework revised in 2011 (knowledge, skills and competences)
- National Quality Board established 2010
Figure 2.26: Steering and/or encouraging student assessment procedures to focus on learning outcomes, 2013/14

Source: BFUG questionnaire. HASKOLI ISLANDS

UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND
SURVEY ON STUDENT SATISFACTION

- The timetable works efficiently
- Any changes to the study programme have been communicated effectively
- The study programme is well organized and runs smoothly
It is like a lot of boxes [the courses] and each [teacher] organizes his/her box the way he/she wants. We need someone who can look at the whole picture [the whole program]. It needs to be more wholistic in every way.

— (from interviews with student in UOI reg./self-reports)
BORE – status of the implementation of LO within the University of Iceland

• To what degree are learning outcomes used as a curriculum tool at the program and course levels?
  – Part of a larger co-operative project of the public universities in Iceland (Erasmus+)
  – Academic mentors: Torgny Roxå and Katarina Mårtenson, Lund University
Implementation of Program Level LO

- Í lagi
- Gamla
- Vafamál
Program level learning outcomes at different schools

- FÉL
- HVS
- HUG
- MVS
- VON

Í lagi  Gamla  Vafamál
Are we progressing?
Example of analysis

laga sagnar m.t.t. mælanleika, þarf ekki að skipa upp í þekkingu og færní
engin
Glæsilegt!
Margt gott hér en þarf etv að samþætta og einfalda ath uppsetningu og sagnar í nokk
Allgott :) má þó setja upp á annan hátt því að "til að ná þessum áfanga þarf nemandi
þetta er lýsing á námskeiði, þarf að nota mælanlegar sagnar
gamla, samþætta
gamla, þarf að fara í uppsetningu og skoða hv mtt. mælanleika
laga sagnar, þurfa að vera mælanleg
blanda af gamla og nýja kerfinu, þarf að laga uppsetningu og sagnar
twistað gamla
2, 4 og 5 í lagi, laga sagnar í hinum
Margt gott, laga nr. 3 og 1
laga sagnar, þurfa að vera mælanleg
laga sagnar, þurfa að vera mælanleg
blanda af gamla og nýja kerfinu, þarf að laga uppsetningu og sagnar
Findings

• Analysis of learning outcomes can not be used to determine the quality of curriculum development and design – but...

• Learning outcomes have not yet been seen as a useful tool in curriculum development

• The findings indicate that ...the curriculum process and development is treated in an unproblematic way...curriculum decision are seen as technical and value neutral rather than an act of power and agency. The findings ...suggest a more scholarly engagement and enactment within the curriculum process (Geirsdóttir, 2008, 2011)
Integration of 21st century competences

- Not an issue within the BORE project but general findings indicate that learning outcomes at the program level are mainly domain-specific.

- Such competences are not very visible within the National Quality Framework (2011).

- Are being stressed to a certain degree in recent University Strategies (University of Iceland Strategies, 2011-2016, HÍ21), policies on sustainability and environmental issues, equal rights policy, etc.

- Browsing through the University website provides ample samples of activities directly related to the development of 21st century competences ...
Team Spark
Creating an electric race car

International Day where study opportunities and collaboration abroad is introduced
Health Sciences conference on innovation

Welcoming reception for the 600 international students enrolled this semester
Integration of 21st century skills

Personal development

| Table 34. | The study programme has increased my self-confidence |
| Table 35. | My verbal communication skills have improved |
| Table 36. | My skills to communicate in writing have improved |
| Table 37. | The study programme has made me more capable of dealing with new tasks |
| Table 38. | The study programme has strengthened my ethical judgement |
| Table 39. | The study programme has strengthened my consciousness of sustainability |
| Table 40. | The study programme has strengthened my consciousness of my responsibility to the community |
| Table 41. | The study programme has strengthened my consciousness of equality |
| Table 42. | The study programme has strengthened my critical thinking |
Conclusions

• There are signs that 21st century competences are being developed
  – As curriculum add-on rather than a part of program curriculum
  – Have rarely been defined as learning outcomes (thus not assessed)
  – Are not stressed in the National Quality Framework (2011)
Next steps – working with QEF2

• QEF2 published in 2017 founded on *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015).*
• Focus of self-evaluation on the quality of the study programs
• QEF2 self-report template suggests more holistic (and scholarly) approaches in the curriculum process
2.1.2 Teaching and learning

Aims and leadership of the study programme

Discuss briefly how the programme was originally constructed and how it is regularly revised. Explain the participation of students and external stakeholders in the process. Describe the leadership structure and where the responsibility for quality assurance and enhancement is placed.

Consider the following questions:

- What are the overall programme objectives, are they in line with the UI Strategy (HÍ21) and do they have explicit learning outcomes?
- When were the learning outcomes defined and last discussed?
- Is the content of the programme considered in the light of the latest research in the field thus ensuring that the programme is up to date?
- Who is involved in the revision of the learning outcomes?
- What is the connection between the learning outcomes and National Qualification Framework for higher education?
- Has the programme benefitted from external expertise and reference points?
Structure of the study programme

Describe the structure of the programme (i) in terms of courses/term and (ii) as learning outcomes for the programme as a function of the learning outcomes for individual courses.

Consider the following questions:

- How are the learning outcomes defined and revised for individual courses?
- How are the learning outcomes regularly revised and coordinated across courses?

Table. 11. Structure of the study programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>First year</th>
<th>Second year</th>
<th>Third year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course 1</td>
<td>1 2</td>
<td>3 4</td>
<td>5 6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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References

• Fraser, S.P. and Bosanquet, A.M. (2006). The curriculum? That’s just a unit outline, isn’t it? Studies in higher education, 31(3),269-284
• Guðrún Geirsdóttir (2008). We are caught up in our own world: Conceptions of curriculum within three different disciplines at the University of Iceland. A PhD thesis submitted at the Iceland University of Education.
