



Introductory speech

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Dear participants,

I would like to welcome you to the **3rd International Workshop on Curriculum Innovation and Reform: Changing Assessment to improve learning outcomes** organised by Cedefop.

This is the third consecutive year that Cedefop is organising an international workshop on Curriculum Innovation and Reform. This time the focus is on learners' assessment.

You might agree with me that there is little point in introducing new curricula and assessment methods unless they lead to better teaching and learning. For this reason, this year's workshop will look closely at how policy can create effective links between teaching, learning and assessing to benefit learners.

On one hand, there has been considerable activity within the last decade to reform curricula linked to a variety of national and pan-European goals aimed at improving the contribution that initial vocational education and training (IVET) can make to economic and social progress. An important driver of these reforms has been the attempt to focus more explicitly on the outcomes of education and training to make a better fit between the knowledge, skills and competences obtained by graduates and the needs of business. The underlying principle is that, by focusing on outcomes, there will be a much better tailored flow of new entrants into the labour market.

On the other hand, it is widely acknowledged that curriculum reform demands the alignment of learners' assessment frameworks and methods. On the other hand, assessment practices can exert powerful influence on teaching, on the taught curriculum and on education and training institutions ethos and organisation. There is an inevitable tendency to devalue any learning objectives (or learning outcomes) which are difficult to assess by traditional methods. As the way curriculum has been designed and is being taught interacts with assessment policies and practices, curriculum reforms should not be seen in isolation from assessment policies.

To debate on curriculum policies and practices worldwide and their implications to learners' assessment, today, we have with us participants coming from 26 different countries representing older and newer member states of the European Union and covering North, South, West, East and Central Europe. We are also very happy to have representatives from candidate countries, Croatia, and countries beyond Europe, Australia. We also have with us representatives from 4 European and international organisations, namely:

- The European Training Foundation, with which we collaborate closely in several policy issues.
- The International Bureau of education of UNESCO, which has supported our work on curricula since 2009.
- the Organisation of Iberoamerican states for education, science and culture, who also participated in our last year's event and of course
- Cedefop.



As you may see in the brief bibliographical notes included in the booklet placed in your folders, the professional profiles of participants vary including ministry officials, researchers, academic staff and practitioners from the Higher Education and from Vocational Education and Training. I believe this variety is an important added value to our discussions today given we will be discussing two components of education and training systems -the curriculum and the assessment- whose design and delivery depends on different stakeholders and professionals.

THE WORK OF CEDEFOP ON LEARNING OUTCOMES

As you very well know, **the learning outcome approach is fundamental to all European tools and principles**, notably the European qualifications framework, the European credit system for VET and Europass, as well as the EU principles on validation of non-formal learning and the Common Quality Assurance Framework. It is also fundamental to promote citizens' employability, accountability of education and training providers and enable a better dialogue between education and labour market stakeholders.

In recent years, **Cedefop's analytical work** has increasingly focussed on learning outcome approaches in vocational education and training to design and describe qualifications, to set standards and to influence quality assurance, validation and certification approaches.



In 2009, Cedefop organised the **1st International Workshop** to debate innovative curriculum policies and practices in Europe and beyond.

In 2010, a comparative study in nine European countries on [learning outcome approaches in VET curricula](#) was published to provide a better understanding of recent curriculum policies and point to main tendencies and challenges in this field. **This research is now being expanded in all 32 countries** participating in E&T 2020 and Cedefop will continue in the coming years to support evidence-based policy making in Europe.

In 2011, the **2nd International Workshop** took place with a focus on: **An inclusive view to curriculum change**. The conclusions of this workshop have been published in a briefing note entitled: **When defining learning outcomes in curricula, every learner matters** signalling this inclusive and learner-centred approach to curriculum design.

OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP

Our workshop today aims to draw on lessons from current work conducted by Cedefop and other research and international organisations on the implications of learning outcome approaches to the design and implementation of curriculum and assessment policies and practices.



The ultimate goal is to collect evidence about the extent to which learners can benefit from new curricula, innovative teaching and assessment methods.

These insights and the conclusions drawn from the Workshop will contribute to two Cedefop's on-going comparative studies on "European policies and practices in designing and delivering outcome-oriented curricula in VET" and "Assessing learning outcomes in VET".

INTRODUCTION ON THE AGENDA OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop is organised in the form of plenary and parallel working sessions using an interactive approach.

The plenary session of this morning aims to present and discuss the findings of the two above mentioned Cedefop comparative studies. You will have the opportunity to learn among other about curriculum reforms in Europe; how new curricula are designed; which stakeholders are involved; what are the aims and focus of new curricula; and how these are being delivered in different learning environments. Furthermore, you will learn how learners are assessed on the basis of these new curricula; which assessment methods are more in use in Europe; and what challenges still persist for assessing effectively learning outcomes. Developments in two sectors -tourism and electronics - will be analysed in greater detail.



Two parallel sessions will begin at 14:30 following lunch break. You have in your booklet the concrete guidelines of how these sessions will be carried out and I will also explain them to you just before we break for lunch.

The two parallel sessions aim to give you the opportunity to learn from different national cases and draw on lessons for policy development and implementation.

In the first Session entitled: **Ensuring links between curriculum and assessment policies and practices** you will learn from the case studies of **Germany** and **the Netherlands**.

In the second Session named: **Improving teaching, learning and assessment** you will learn from the case studies of **Finland** and **Greece**.

We will finish at 17:30 and at 19:00 we will leave from here to go to the city town for a tour and dinner.

Tomorrow

We will listen to the key messages drawn from the parallel sessions.

At then a session will follow devoted to a worldwide perspective to curriculum and assessment innovation and reform.

Representatives from International Organisations will present developments in different regions of the world, including Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and Australia, providing evidence on:



- How can curriculum and assessment policies strengthen each other?
- How can curriculum and assessment policies work together more effectively to improve learning outcomes in vocational education and training?

National experts acting as Discussants will provide national insights into worldwide developments and lessons learned for policy and practice.

I wish you a fruitful workshop.