To understand and successfully utilise the learning outcome in Higher Education, must we first destroy it?

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Learning Outcomes

Do they truly represent how learning occurs?
Without context, can words express the learning to be achieved?
After the period of learning the student will be able to: bang a nail into a plank of wood without splitting the wood.

...the entangling and disorientating jungle of details as was experienced by those faced with the system of NVQs developed under the aegis of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications in the UK...” (Yorke 2003).
Even more on language – what level

“describe the strengths and weaknesses of a range of available models and select the most appropriate”

“to use time and resources effectively”

“have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people”

“analyse how texts are shaped by audiences' preferences and opinions”
Context and Community

Careless

Reckless

Using excessive force
Red or Yellow?

http://www.youtube.com/user/MrMartiju#p/a/u/2/6NXegf1h2FA

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NXegf1h2FA - Brown: 6

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=720iEkoERmU - De Jong

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w-Z9WCy5Jxo - Van Persie: 13

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GcdwC5q5cdM – Amateur: 8
Resistance is futile.

Do learning outcomes remove control?
So can we codify learning in a meaningful way?

- for students?
- for academic colleagues?
- for ‘auditors’?

If we try and fail, does that threaten the student experience?
New Models (after Hussey and Smith 2010)

Emergent Learning Outcomes

- ILOs
- Incidental LOs
- Related LOs
- Contiguous LOs
- Ipsative
Questions?

Q1. How are learning outcomes used in your own country? Does use vary according to the type of HE institution?

Q2. To what extent is ‘student-centred’ learning the goal of your institution? Do you think that the use of learning outcomes enables such learning?

Q3. Is the style of teaching and learning in your institution one where the student is in control of the learning? Does this vary according to different elements of learning (eg. pace, extent of knowledge, nature of skills)? What about where work-based learning is involved?

Q4. Could you introduce a model whereby students could usefully negotiate and define their own learning outcomes for any award, at any level? What would be benefits/issues of such an approach?