

WHAT DO COURSE GRADES TELL US ABOUT THE QUALITY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES?

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The aim of this research project is, firstly, to explore the complexity of assessment of learning outcomes in higher education and secondly, to produce knowledge for enhancing the quality of learning outcomes and university education. Thirdly, the aim is to create reliable indicators of the quality of higher education and the quality of learning outcomes that are based on in-depth qualitative analyses. There is an urgent need to develop inventories and other forms of measuring learning outcomes in a reliable and comparable way.

When examining the assessment of student learning outcomes, the focus should be on both *what* to assess and *how* it is assessed. Such questions are not just theoretically interesting, but also significant in practice for university educators seeking to understand how to promote high quality learning. Previous research has shown that not all types of knowledge or skills have similar relevance in relation to student achievement. In addition, disciplinary differences need to be taken into account when focusing on these questions. The knowledge and skills required from the students are likely to vary between disciplines and students' deep approach to learning may have different characteristics in diverse disciplines.

In more detail, the following research questions are addressed:

1. What is deep approach in different disciplines?
2. What kinds of knowledge and skills are assessed in different disciplines in higher education (in Bachelor level courses)?
3. How are knowledge and skills assessed in different disciplines?
4. Does the variation in course grades (GPA) mirror the variation in learning outcomes?
5. What kinds of knowledge and skills are required from the students to maintain the required study pace?

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