How can students become engaged in the definition, refinement and evaluation of learning goals and objectives?

• Wolfgang M Prodinger

Workshop

Workshop design:

Oriented towards students, who (want to) participate in curriculum reform. Announced topics: How content can students be with current learning objectives? How specific should learning objectives be with regard to exam preparation? How lively is the "life-cycle" of learning objectives?

Workshop report:

Students from two Austrian universities (Salzburg, Innsbruck) and teachers from all Austrian universities and from abroad participated. According to the students, the longer the interval for high-stake exams (1 year or few weeks) the higher the need for formal learning objectives (LO). Students felt that they can prepare well for short-interval exams without any LO. Existing LO were seen as too much aloof and unspecific with regard to exam preparation, whereas clear-cut definitions of the learning matter were often missing.

The formulation of LO, particular clinical LO, should be a country-wide joint effort, e.g. by critical adoption of existing similar LO catalogues. An approach via wiki to establish a LO-catalogue was suggested as a transparent procedure in this direction. Universities should retain their specific approaches to teach and assess the items; State-run country-wide exams were opposed.

Students particularly miss psychomotor (and affective) LO, whereas cognitive LO dominate. Few courses already assess practically along psychomotor LO (communication skills with standardized patients, basic clerkship skills by OSCE); although slow, this is a significant progress compared to the old curricula.

Corresponding author:

• Dr. Wolfgang M Prodinger, Medizinische Universität Innsbruck, Dept. for Hygiene, Mikrobiology and Social Medizin, Fritz-Pregl-Straße 3, A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria
wolfgang.prodinger@i-med.ac.at

1 Medizinische Universität Innsbruck, Dept. for Hygiene, Mikrobiology and Social Medizin, Innsbruck, Austria