

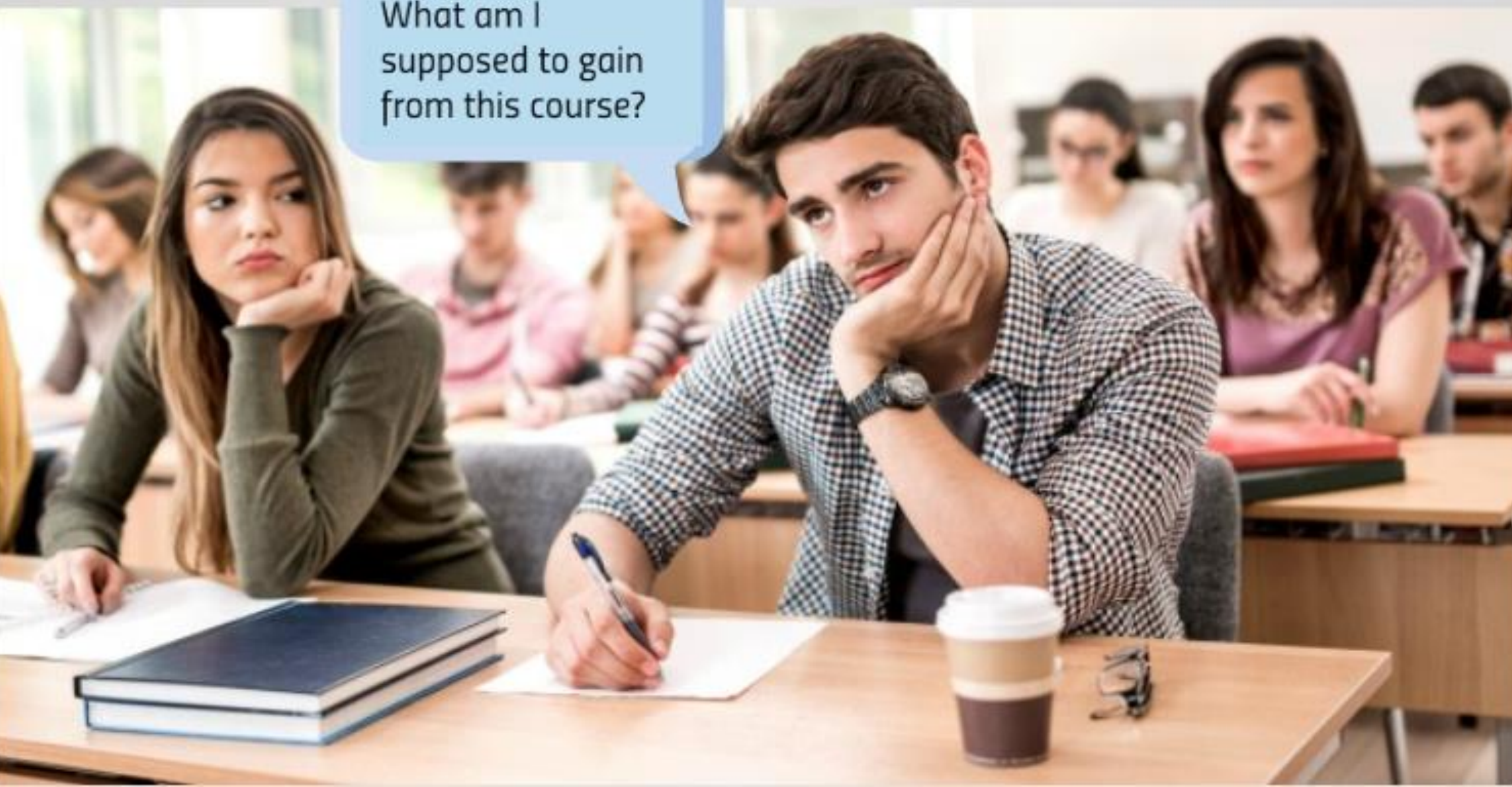


# Learning outcomes: building the trust for higher education among students



Kaija Kumpas-Lenk, Phd  
Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education

What am I  
supposed to gain  
from this course?



# Learning outcomes

**Learning outcomes** - the skills, knowledge and attitudes students ought to achieve as a result of their learning provide students a clear understanding what is the purpose of their learning.

Learning outcomes serve many purposes in higher education which all aim to help to build trust for students.

Learning outcomes:

- support the implementation of student-centred learning paradigm and help universities to provide more individualized learning paths for diverse groups of students;
- provide transparency;
- are valuable for improving the quality of higher education.

# Overview of the study

How the design of learning outcomes relates to student achievement of learning outcomes, their engagement and motivation to study?

## Mixed method study 6 higher education institutions in Estonia

### QUALITATIVE

78 bachelor level course units and 380 learning outcomes

Bloom's Taxonomy of cognitive demand – design of learning outcomes

### QANTITATIVE

1329 student perceptions  
eVALUate survey

- How well students achieved the learning outcomes;
- How motivated were students to learn;
- Did students think about how to learn more effectively;
- Did they prepare for the lectures and seminars to take the maximum out of these.

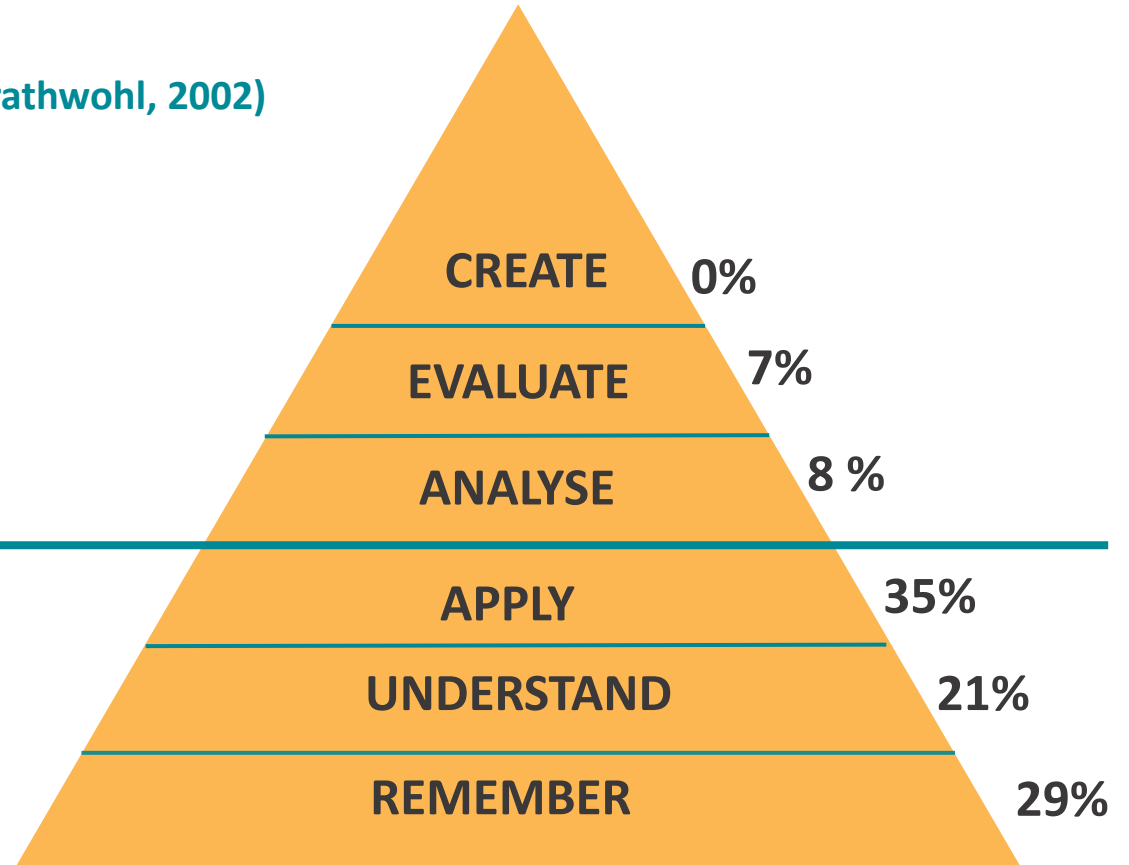
QANTITATIVE – determining the relationships

# How were learning outcomes designed?

## Bloom's Taxonomy (Krathwohl, 2002)

Higher order cognitive thinking skills

Lower order cognitive thinking skills **85%**



Higher education institutions focus on memorising and applying facts instead of developing transferable skills. The question is how demanding and educative is the learning process for students, if learning outcomes are only designed at lower levels of cognitive demand?

# Students perceptions to their achievement of learning outcomes, engagement and motivation to study

Majority of students' perceptions revealed that they achieved the course unit learning outcomes and were motivated to study.

However, approximately 30% of students were not engaged to make the best use of their learning possibilities, nor did they think about how they could have learned more effectively in the studied course unit.

If students are not engaged to their learning, then the question is, how much trust do they actually have for the outcome-based system?



# How the design of learning outcomes relates to student achievement of learning outcomes, their engagement and motivation to study?

The design of the learning outcomes relates to how students perceive their achievement of learning outcomes, motivation and engagement.

Students were more likely to be engaged to their studies and motivated to achieve the learning outcomes, which were designed at the higher order of cognitive demand.

Designing learning outcomes from a student perspective does not instantly lead students to engage in their learning.

Most of learning outcomes should be designed at higher levels of cognitive demand to avoid student disengagement with their studies.



# Conclusions

The role of higher education institutions is to provide something **new**, to prepare students for facing and developing the future society.

To do that, Estonian higher education needs to upgrade their standards in teaching and learning. Transform to student-centered learning.


Students should be guided how to develop and use higher order thinking skills for operating with facts.

Implementation of learning outcomes should be systematic, transparent and reflect the actual activities undertaken in learning situations.

The question of “**What was I supposed to gain from this course**” is a relevant input from students. It shows that the design of learning outcomes matters in building the trust for higher education among students. Hence, the key in building the trust for higher education lays on the involvement and participation of all the stakeholders, especially from students.





A diverse group of students in a classroom setting, smiling and using laptops. The students are of various ethnicities and are seated at desks. In the foreground, a Black woman, a young man of Asian descent, and a white woman are smiling. Behind them, other students are also smiling and looking towards the camera. Several laptops are open on the desks. The background shows a window with greenery outside.

The design of  
learning outcomes  
matters!



Your questions and comments are welcome!

Thank You!

contact

[Kaija.Kumpas-Lenk@archimedes.ee](mailto:Kaija.Kumpas-Lenk@archimedes.ee)

