

Learning Outcomes and Credit Systems in Education, esp. Vocational Education and Training

Bologna Seminar: Using Learning Outcomes
1st July 2004

Heriot-Watt University
(Edinburgh Conference Centre), Riccarton, Edinburgh

by Isabelle Le Mouillour
Centre for Research on Higher Education and Work
University of Kassel, Germany

LeMouillour@hochschulforschung.uni-kassel.de



Outline of the workshop

The main issue:

Learning outcomes and credit systems in Education, esp. Vocational Education and Training

- Background of the presentation: European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)
- Main points:
 - Why are learning outcomes relevant to VET? Trends
 - What does this mean for the aims of ECVET?
 - What are the links between learning outcomes and credits?
 - How does ECVET look like? ECVET basic model
- Discussion topics

Work Definition

Learning outcomes = Statements of what a learner can be expected to know, understand and/or do. → **HE**

Learning outcomes = knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the learner in the context of his/her formal, informal and non-formal learning activities. → **ECVET**

Trends

➤ Labour market orientation

- ◆ Mission statement of education institutions
- ◆ Stakeholders' roles
- ◆ Changes in Higher Education

➤ New learning culture

- ◆ Redistribution of the institutional setting
- ◆ Competence orientation
- ◆ Individual responsibility
- ◆ Employability
- ◆ Mobility of the learners

What are credit systems in Higher Education?

- ➔ systems of quantitative accounting and certification of education attainments of individuals within - relatively small – parts of educational programmes.

This means:

- Credit systems as such do not determine the qualitative equivalence.
- Credits are awarded for relatively small parts of study programmes in contrast to interim examinations and certificates (e.g. annual exams, pre-diploma) or final exams and certificates certifying the successful completion of a whole programme (degrees, diplomas etc.).

Aims of credit system in VET

- ➡ Transfer of learning outputs/outcomes and achievements;
- ➡ Articulation between training/education/learning activities and programmes;
- ➡ Accumulation of units towards a partial or a complete qualification;
! Partial VET qualification ! Certification in VET
- ➡ Transparency and mutual recognition of learning outcomes and achievements
- ➡ ...

The learner is at the heart of ECVET

The learner means each individual independent of age, gender, social or professional status who is engaged in lifelong learning activities.

The links between learning outcomes & credits

- ➔ Quantitative approach of learning achievements at individual level:

Function: Transfer

Calculation basis: Workload and time as resource input.

Does it work for VET?

- ➔ Qualitative approach or learner oriented approach

Function: Transfer and accumulation

Calculation basis: Outcomes

Will it work for VET?

Main aspects linked to the outcomes in VET

- ◆ Knowledge, skills and competences:
KSC Typology;
- ◆ Design of the qualification programmes:
Units: outcome-oriented
Modules: process-oriented
- ◆ Qualification frameworks;
- ◆ Individual proficiency.

As for now, in ECVET

- ➔ Each full curriculum or qualification (education/training) programme corresponds to an amount of 120 - credits.
- ➔ The allocation of credits to units is proportional in comparison to the global amount of credits for the education/training programme.
- ➔ Credits are awarded for the achievement of specified and specific learning outcomes (KSCs).
- ➔ Credits for units are allocated after passing an examination/assessment procedure or other means for measuring achievements.
- ➔ The qualitative issue is linked to the establishment of zones of mutual trust, a signal of the quality of institutional co-operation.

ECVET basic model

Announcement:

The ECVET basic model is in a consultation process on the Virtual Community on Credit Transfer.

Accessible to any expert interested!

<http://cedefop.communityzero.com/credittransfer>

Context	Qualification Level	Formal/informal VET systems
Bi-lateral	Intra-level	Formal to formal
Multilateral	Intra-level	Formal to formal

**Study programme
of the VET provider B**

**Study programme
of the VET provider A**

Zone of agreement / memorandum of understanding
in terms of learning outcomes and learning / teaching
objectives.

It might represent:

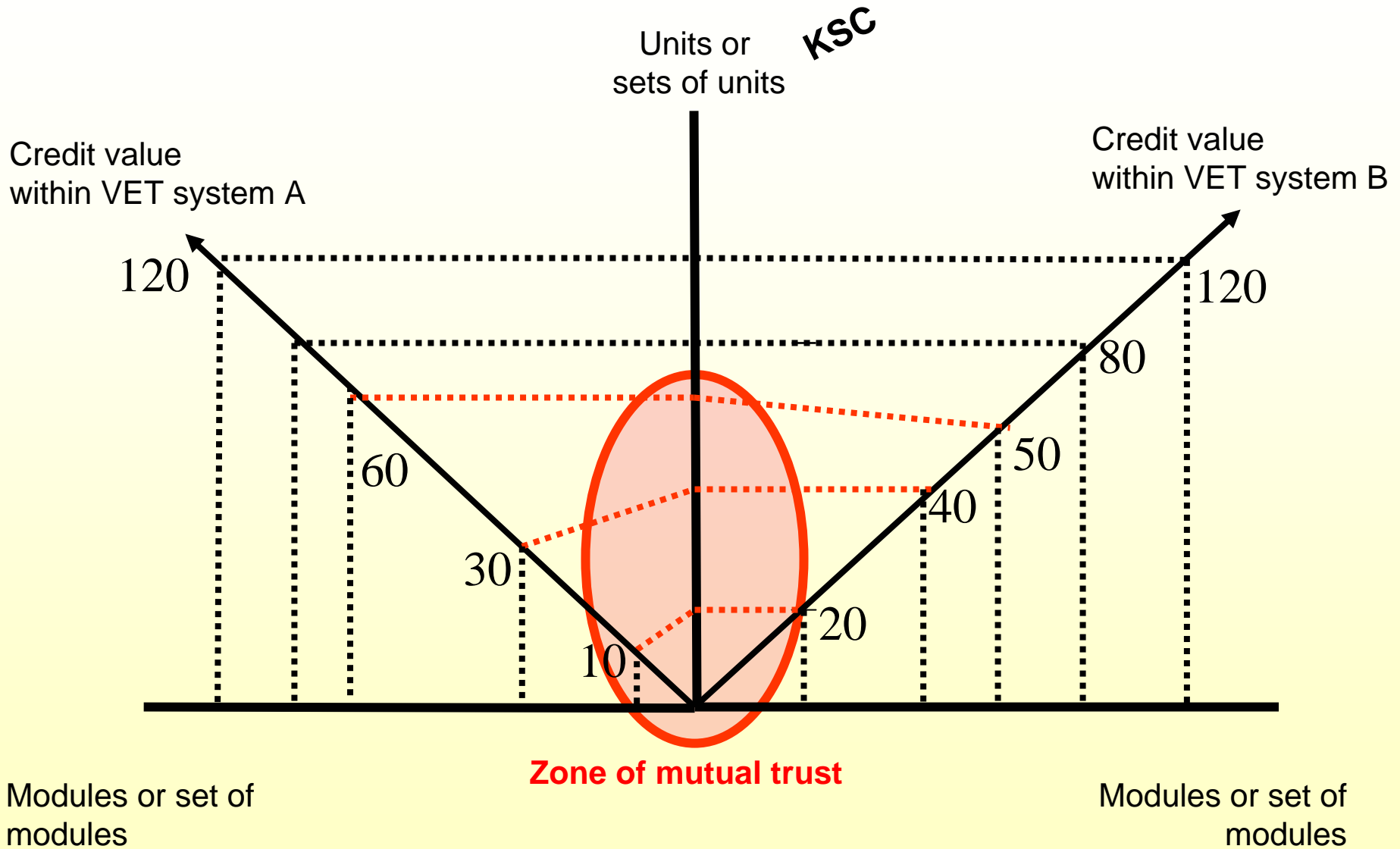
For A: 10 hours of school-type teaching,
600 hours of workplace learning

For B: 200 hours of school-type teaching,
400 hours of workplace learning,
200 hours of personal project work

Main elements

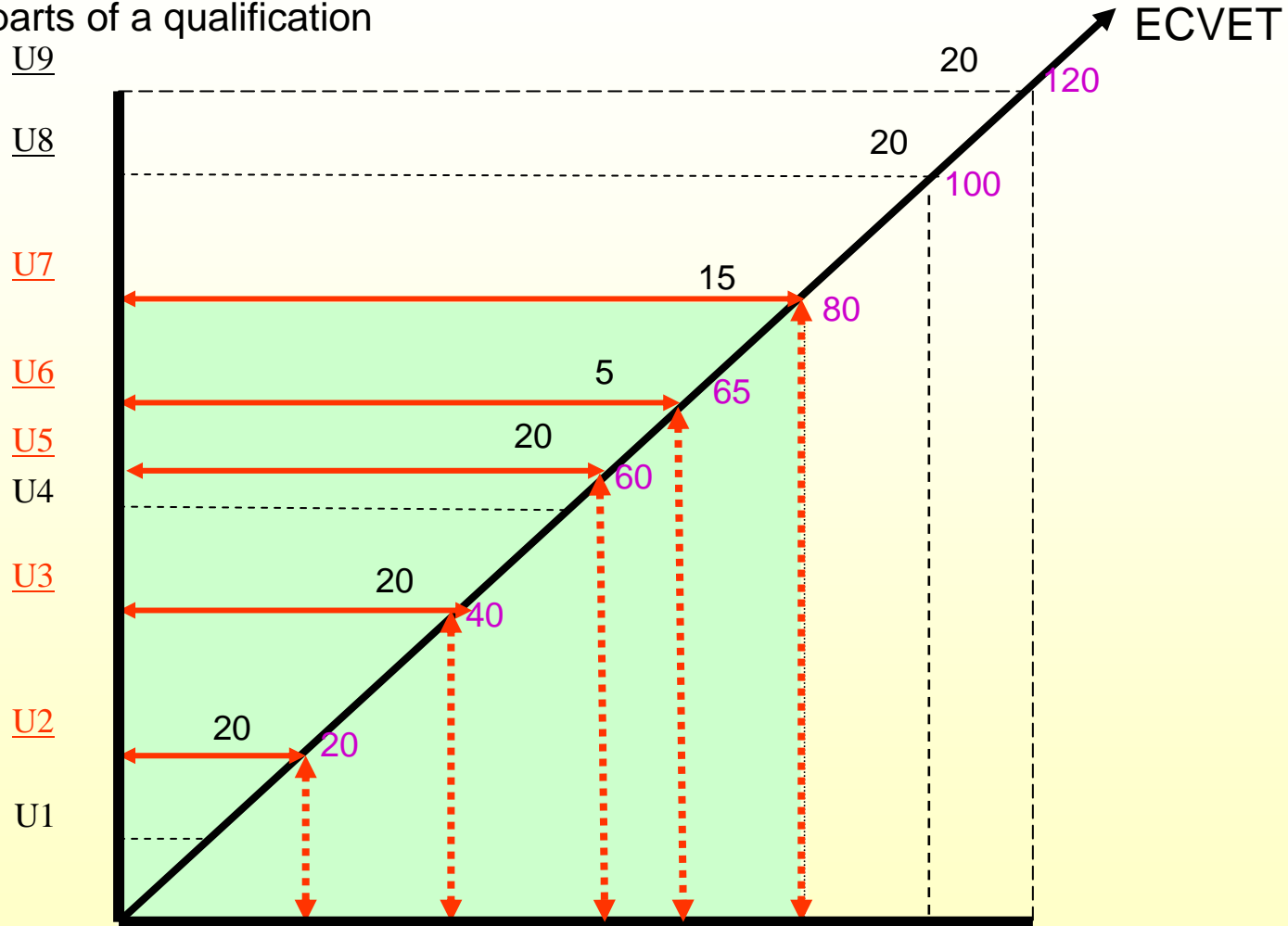
- ◆ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)
- ◆ Guaranteed value in terms of credits for learning outcomes
- ◆ Learning pathways and the role of modules
- ◆ Zones of mutual trust
- ◆ Convention of 120 credits for a full qualification

Overall perspective



One country perspective

Units or sets of units,
Outputs, outcomes, training
targets, parts of a qualification



Area of mobility

(Set of) training modules leading
to a qualification,
student workload for a programme

Discussion topics

1. Which elements of credit systems are important to ensure the compatibility between ECVET and ECTS and the lifelong perspective from VET to HE ?
2. Which elements are relevant for the transfer of learning outcomes from VET to HE?

Thank you for your attention