

## Why teachers don't test competence-based

Sabrina Strazny (MBA)

Educational Development Unit, University of Bern, Switzerland

### Assumptions

1. Assessment is central for student learning. Students adapt their learning methods automatically to fit exams. Any learning strategies that go beyond the requirements of the test are ignored since they are not seen as useful.<sup>1</sup>
2. Assessment is competence-oriented when a deep approach to learning is stimulated. But it's only successful if it's used in combination with student-activating teaching methods.<sup>2</sup> So, it seems useful to align both the assessment and the teaching methods at the learning outcomes.
3. A student-centered approach\* rather leads to a competence acquisition for the students than a teacher-centered approach.<sup>3</sup>

### Methodology

- Research question:** Which factors inhibit or promote competence-based testing/assessment in universities?
- Course of action:** To address this question, the factors which influence teachers when selecting and designing their exams were first identified. The factors will be verified by qualitative interviews with university teachers and completed.
- Findings:** The findings of the study will be published in 2017. Basic clues are revealed which move us further toward competence-oriented testing. The quality of higher education will profit.

### Preliminary findings

#### Endogenous Factors

The decisive factor is in the examiner themselves. He/She designs tests according to his teaching approach.<sup>4</sup> This approach is being developed during socialisation from being an undergraduate or a graduate student to become a PHD student, a research employee up to a professor. The respective teaching approach is marked by their own learning and teaching biography and the culture of the field of research.<sup>5</sup>

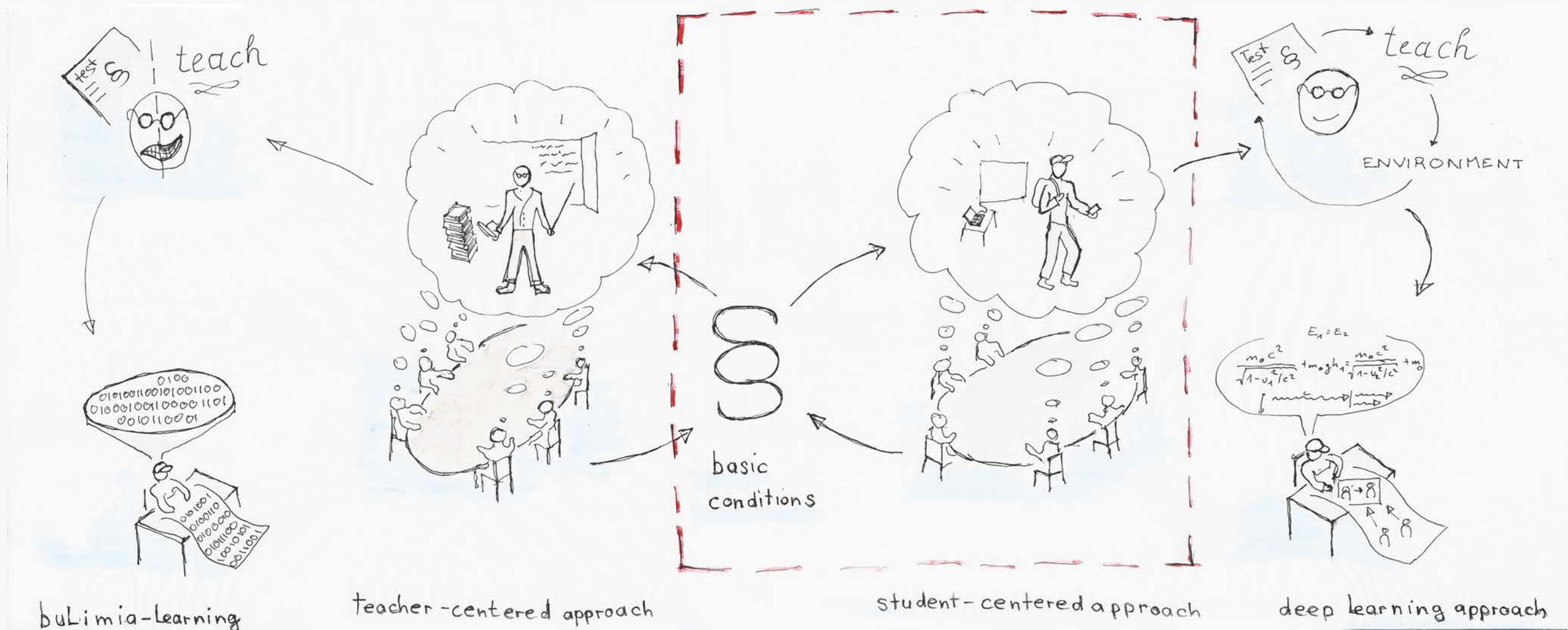
#### Exogenous Factors

Political and institutional conditions affect the conception of assessments only marginally. The own university is seen as an obstacle to be overcome by the realisation of necessary measures. The effort of the exam practice and the juridical basic conditions play a minor part in the perception of the lecturers.

### Prospect

The perception of basic conditions has an influence on the development of people mindsets.<sup>7</sup> Strict (juridical) conditions for the conception of assessment/testing can promote a teacher-centered approach.<sup>6</sup> The committees which decide on the basic conditions of assessment exist of Professors. A teaching-centered approach is still widespread among the Professors.

It can be assumed that there is a circulation which keeps itself. The aim of the current study is to examine this subject more deeply and to consider the relationships. We as actors of Educational Development, as university teachers and as political actors, have the chance to push reflexion and establish open basic conditions.



<sup>1</sup>cf. Gruber, H. and Mandl, H. und Renkl, A. (2000) Was lernen wir in Schule und Hochschule: Träges Wissen? In: Mandl, Heinz und Gerstenmeier, J., (eds.) Die Kluft zwischen Wissen und Handeln : empirische und theoretische Lösungsansätze.

<sup>2</sup> cf. Struyven, K.; Dochy, F.; Janssens, S. & Gielen, S. (2006): On the dynamics of students' approaches to learning: The effects of the teaching/learning environments. In: Learning and Instruction, 16 (4), 279-294

<sup>3</sup> cf. Prosser, M. & Trigwell, K. (2014): Qualitative variation in constructive alignment in curriculum design. In: High Educ 57, 141-154

<sup>4</sup> cf. Nowakowski, A., Vervecken, D., Braun, E. & Hannover, B. (2012). Was Hochschuldozierende aus Lehrevaluations-Rückmeldungen lernen können. Der differenzielle Einfluss prozessverser ergebnisorientierten Feedbacks auf Lehrorientierungen. Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft, 15(2), 253-271.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Wildt, J. (2001): Ein hochschuldidaktischer Blick auf Lehren und Lernen in gestuften Studiengängen, in: Welbers, U. (Hg.): Studienreform mit Bachelor und Master. Neuwied/Kriftel, 25-43

<sup>6</sup> cf. Biggs, J.B. (1989): Approaches to the Enhancement of Tertiary Teaching. Higher Education Research & Development, 8 (1), 7-25

<sup>7</sup> cf. McLean, M. & Blackwell, R. (1997): Opportunity Knocks? Professionalism and excellence in university teaching. Teachers and Teaching, 3 (1), 85-99

<sup>8</sup> cf. Trigwell K. & Prosser, M. (1996): Changing approaches to teaching: A relational perspective. Studies in Higher education, 21 (3), 275-284

<sup>9</sup> cf. Hurrelmann, K. (2012) : Sozialisation. Das Modell der produktiven Realitätsverarbeitung. 10. vollst. überarb. Auflage, Weinheim und Basel

\* Trigwell and Prosser describe 5 approaches to teaching:

- A Teacher-focused strategy with the intention of transmitting information to students.
  - B Teacher-focused strategy with the intention that students acquire the concepts of the discipline
  - C A teacher/student interaction strategy with the intention that students acquire the concepts of the discipline
  - D A student-focused strategy aimed at students developing their conceptions
  - E A student-focused strategy aimed at students changing their conceptions
- A and B are the teacher-centered orientations, D and E the student-centered orientations, C bridges the two orientations.

Centre for Continuing Education (ZUW)  
 Schanzenekstrasse 1  
 3001 Bern  
 Switzerland  
 sabrina.strazny@zuw.unibe.ch  
 www.hd.unibe.ch

