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.1
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.2 So, it seems useful to align both the assessment and the teaching methods at the learning outcomes.
3. A student-centered approach3 rather leads to a competence acquisition for the students than a teacher-centered approach.4

Methodology

Research question:  Which factors inhibit or promote competence-based testing/assessment in universities? 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. 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.

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 practise and the juridical basic conditions play a minor part in the perception of the lecturers.

Preliminary findings

Endogenous Factors

The decisive factor is in the examiner themselves. He/She designs tests according to his teaching approach. 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.

Prospect

The perception of basic conditions has an influence on the development of people mindsets.5 Strict (juridical) conditions for the conception of assessment/testing can promote a teacher-centered approach.6 The committees which decide on the basic conditions of assessment exist of Professors. A teaching-centered approach is still widespread among the Professors.

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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.