

„Evidence“ about „outcome-orientation“? Austria in a comparative perspective

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Presentation at VETNET-Forum:
“Outcome orientation – where is the evidence?”
28-30 September 2009, ECER'09, Vienna

Agenda

- **Conceptual issues:** meanings of „outcome orientation (OO)“, „evidence“, and „evidence-based policy and practice (EBPP)“
- **Outcome orientation:** a **kind of evidence-based policy and practice?**
- **Austria in a comparative perspective:** what can we learn from the Austrian case, „for good and for bad“?
- **Conclusions:** a demand for political science in EBPP

Agenda

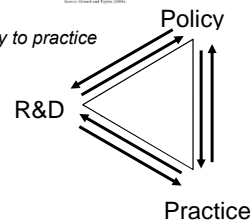
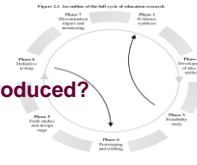
- **Conceptual issues:** meanings of „outcome orientation (OO)“, „evidence“, and „evidence-based policy and practice (EBPP)“

„Outcome orientation (OO)“ conceptual meanings

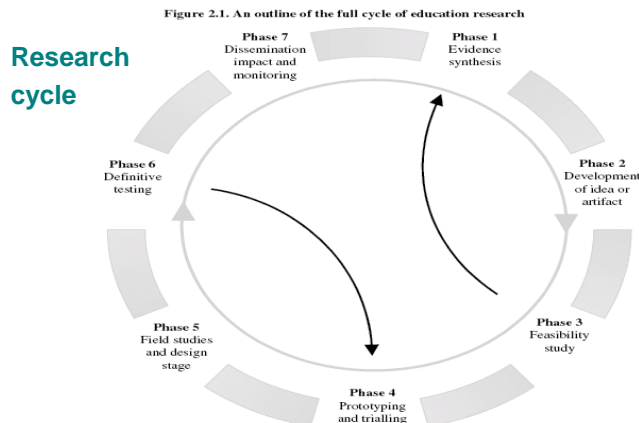
- OO: a **policy proposal**
- Key elements
 - a „topological“ shift of attention **from input & process to results**
 - results related to **goals & objectives** („processual, teleological“)
 - a „normative“ attention to the goals achieved by inputs and processes
(*goals and objectives – results = quality*)
- OO situated at **policy** level, determined to influence **practice** towards some change
 - this important distinction between **policy & practice** tends to be underestimated by both advocates and critics
- Main drivers/instruments towards OO
 - New public management (**NPM**)
 - Large scale assessments, PISA etc. (**LSAs**)
 - EU Lisbon-Goals **Education Training 2010**
 - „**Learning outcomes**“ and the **EQF/NQF**

„Evidence-based Policy&Practice (EBPP)“ conceptual meanings

- ...also a **policy proposal** by OECD, adopted by EU
 - P&P should be based on/informed by „**the best available evidence**“
- Key elements
 - theory/methodology: **what does „best evidence“ mean?**
OECD research cycle
 - mission and knowledge types: how should the **evidence be produced?**
Knowledge types (academic-applied; mode 1,2; „pasteurs quadrant“)
 - brokerage: how to **transfer R&D into PP?**
OECD triangle
different „channels“: R&D to policy, R&D to practice; from policy to practice



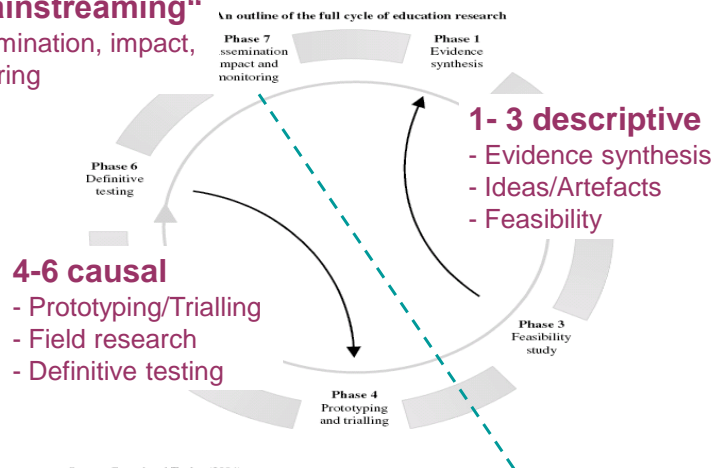
What does „Evidence“ mean? descriptive und causal analysis (OECD'07)



Source: Gorard and Taylor (2004).

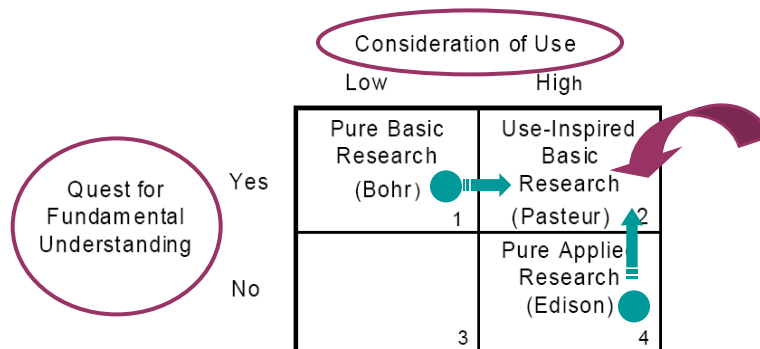
What does „Evidence“ mean? Research cycle: 2 sub-cycles

7 „mainstreaming“
- dissemination, impact, monitoring

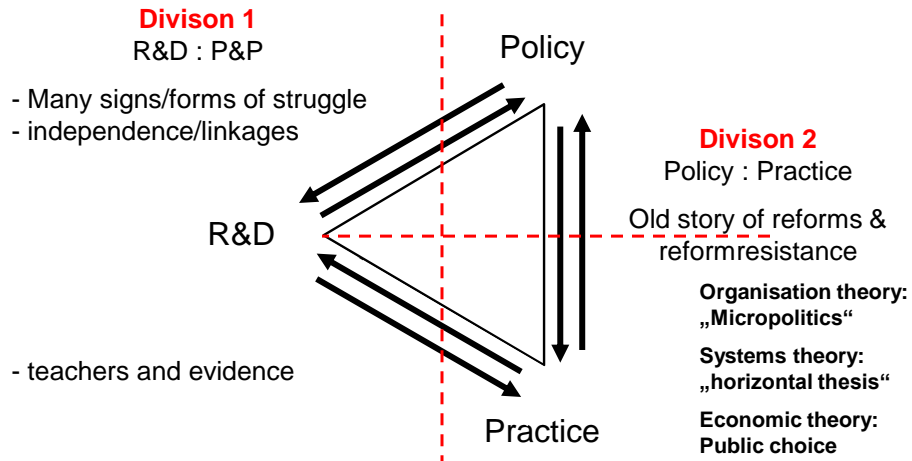


How should evidence be produced? (Stokes 1997)

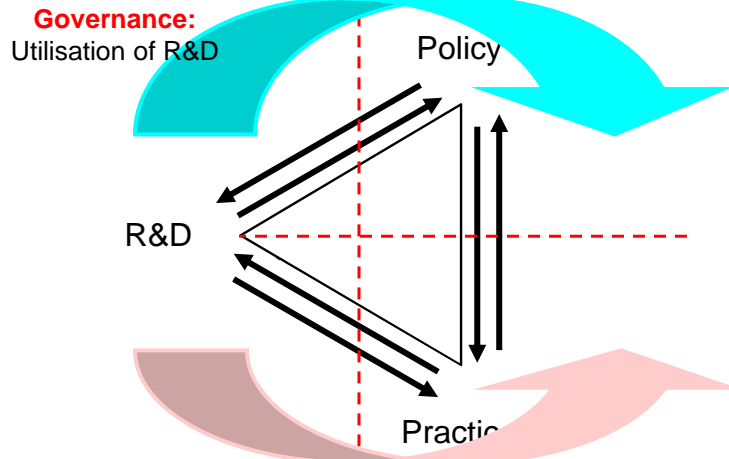
Figure A: Pasteur's Quadrant



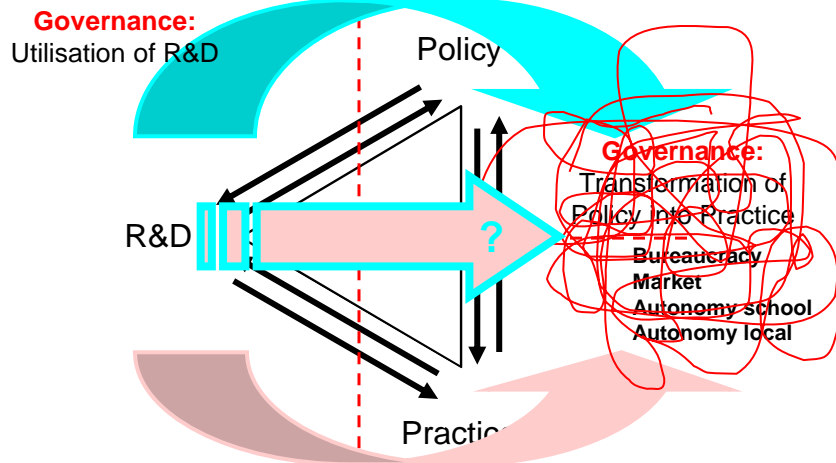
Transfer of R&D into P&P 2 Divisions



Transfer of R&D into P&P 3 channels



Transfer of R&D into P&P 3 channels



Transfer of R&D into P&P summary

- Questions in the triangle, separated to the three channels
 - meaning of OO as evidence based policy?
 - meaning of OO as evidence based practice?
 - meaning of OO as evidence based influence from policy on practice?
- What do we learn from this simple scheme?
 - We can have **OO as evidence based practice** without influence of policy, and we can have OO as **evidence based policy** without influence on practice...
 - ...and **both can be in conflict with each other**...
 - ...and the more influence of R&D, the more complex the channel from policy to praxis might be...
- If we don't expect simple truths, the EBPP proposal **rather can make relations more problematic than more easy**
 - Several divisions within R&D and conflicting evidences between P&P...
 - ...might reinforce demand and quest for „real evidence“... see reseach cycle

Agenda

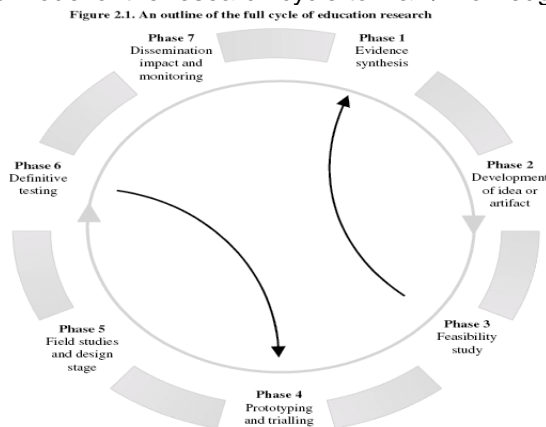
- **Conceptual issues:** meanings of „outcome orientation (OO)“, „evidence“, and „evidence-based policy and practice (EBPP)“
- **Outcome orientation: a kind of evidence-based policy and practice?**

OO a case of EBPP?

- Let us apply the model of the research cycle to R&D/knowledge about OO:

- „evidenc borrower
- ...so the indeed, f
the **EU**
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of pr
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- what abc evidence

EQF/N



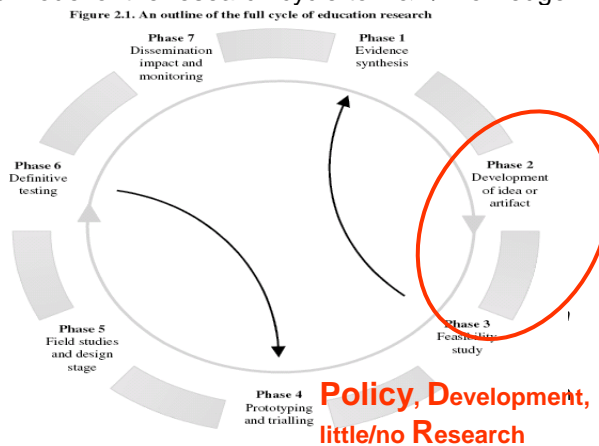
Source: Gorard and Taylor (2004).

OO a case of EBPP?

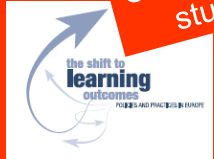
- Let us apply the model of the research cycle to R&D/knowledge about OO: Where are we?
 - „evidence synthesis“ was **not possible**, because the concept was borrowed from other sectors (business) ...
 - ...so the **second step** was taken **first**: to develop **ideas and artefacts**, and indeed, plenty of them have come up, already mentioned
 - the EU ET 2010, including the OMC, and the procedures of reporting, indicators, peer learning activities, benchmarks*
 - the LSAs as outcome measurement and data production, used for production of evidence*
 - the increasing focus on learning outcomes (LOs), including competence/y models, standards and quality assurance (CQAF, EQARF)*
 - the EQF/NQF process that pushes towards Los, including validation and recognition of prior learning*
 - and the Bologna-process has also been driven towards OO*
 - what about the following steps? Rather „**prototyping/trialling**“ by policy, use of development, little or no research...
 - EQF/NQF: new artefact, before the previous (LOs) has been implemented...*

OO a case of EBPP?

- Let us apply the model of the research cycle to R&D/knowledge about OO:
 - „evident borrower“
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 - the **EU** peer
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 - what abc evidence
 - **EQF/NQF**



OO a case of EBPP? ...finally the tail wags the dog?



CEDEFOP-
study

...“after the fact”

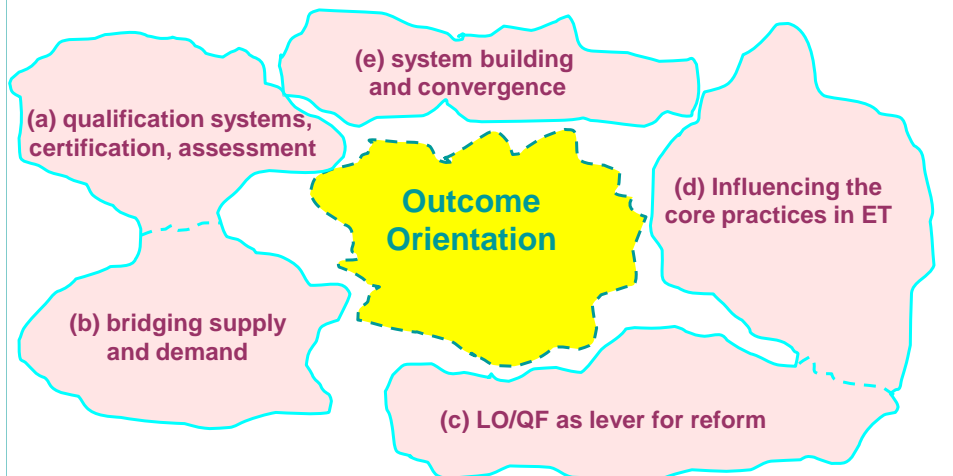
Anne Boudier et al.:
...tremendous time pressure...

- of the research cycle to OO: Where are
 - is **not possible**, because the concept was
 - ers (business) ...
 - taken **first**: to develop **ideas and artefacts**, and
 - come up, already mentioned
 - OMC, and the procedures of reporting, indicators,
 - benchmarks
 - Outcome measurement and data collection, used for production of
 - vidence
 - the increasing focus on learning outcomes, including competence models,
 - standards and accreditation (e.g. EFMD EQUIS)
 - the EQF/NQF: new artefacts, including validation and recognition
 - process has also been driven towards OO
 - when the following steps? Rather „**prototyping/trialling**“ by policy,
use of development, little or no research...
 - EQF/NQF: new artefact, before the previous (LOs) has been implemented...finally...**

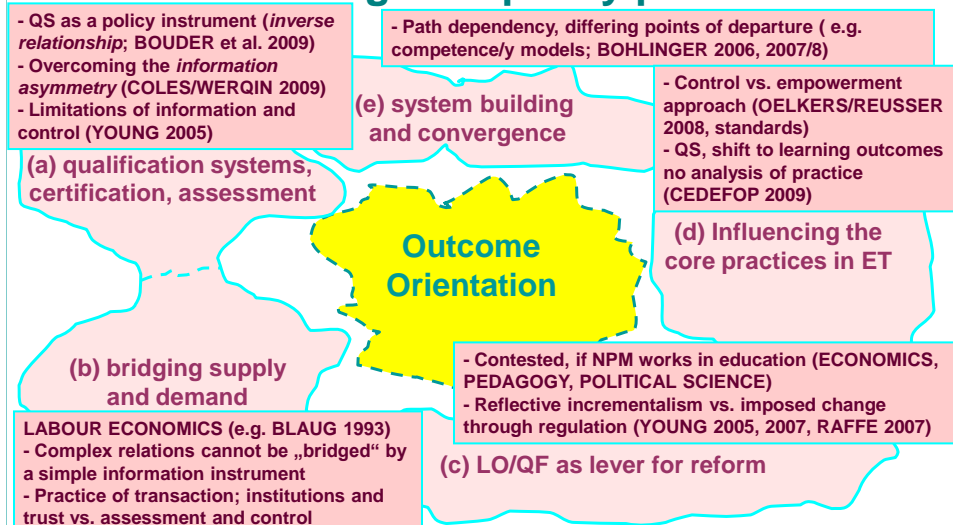
OO a case of EBPP? research topics

- state of R&D: **advocacy** vs. **conceptual debate** about complex ideas and artefacts
- a stylised account: recent research and the ideas/artefacts about OO
 - EU Goals ET 2010
 - LSAs and LOs
 - LOs and QF
 - LLL

Recent research: a conglomerate of evidence against policy/practice?



Recent research: a conglomerate of evidence against policy/practice?

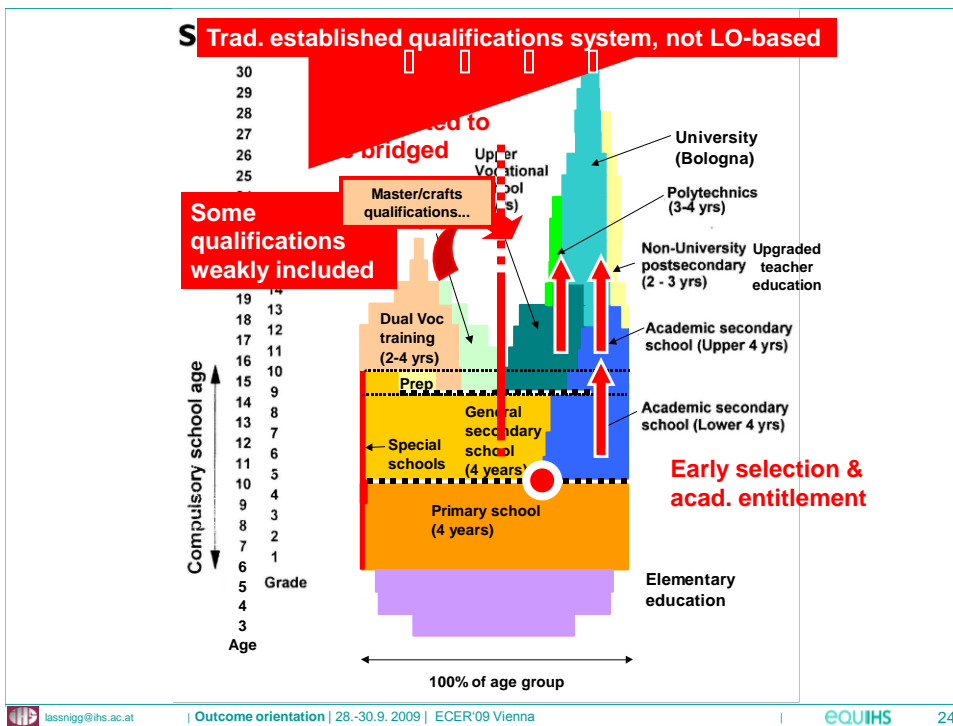
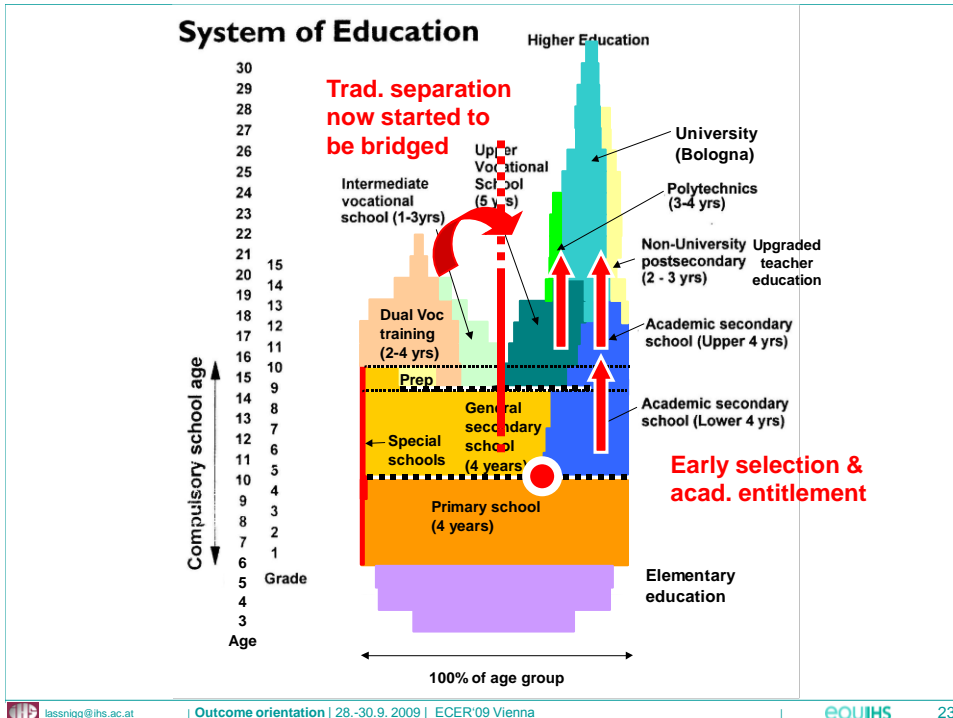


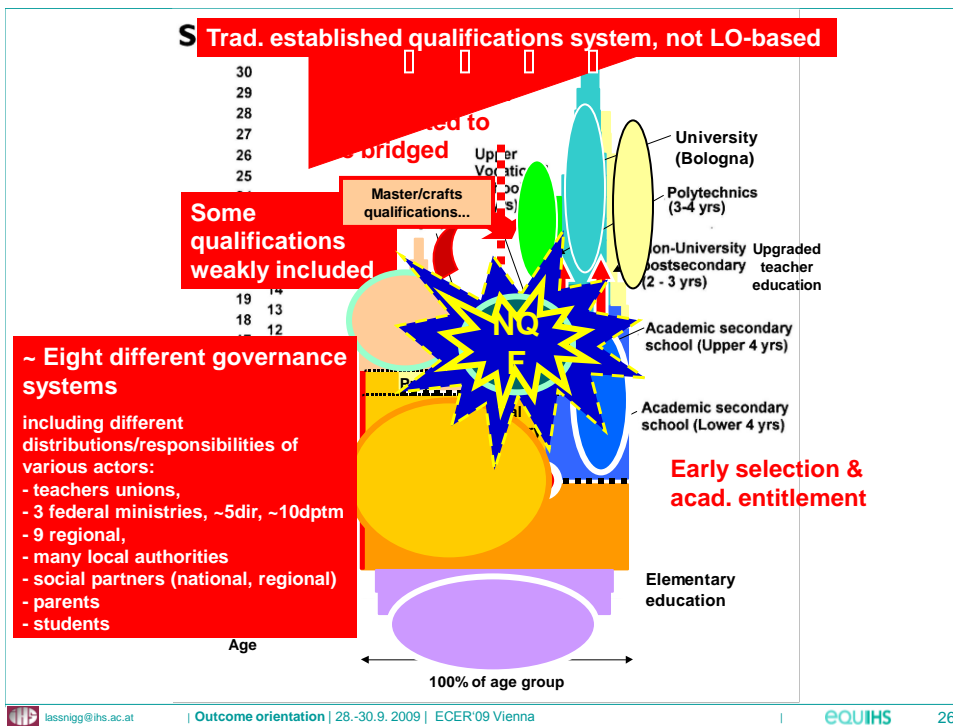
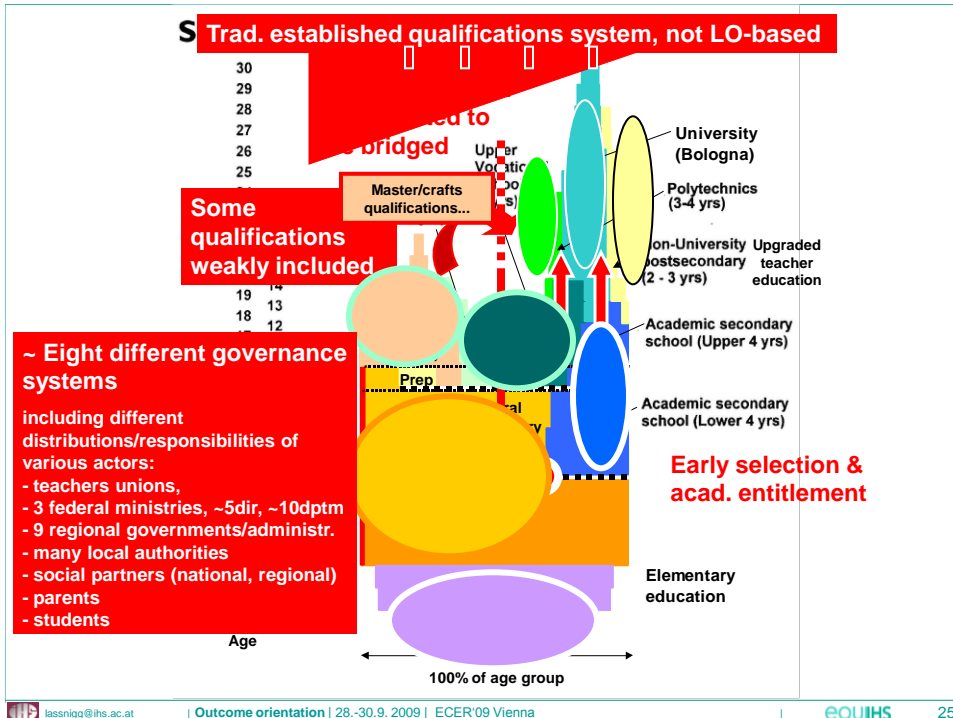
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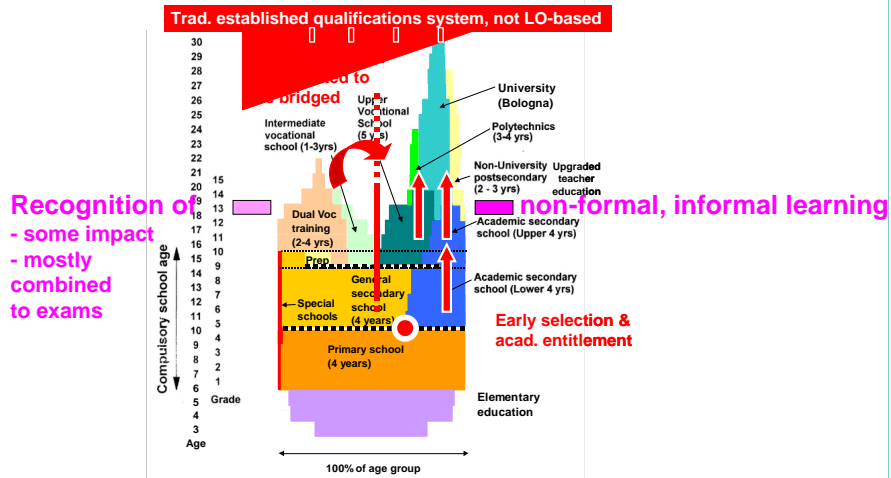
AUSTRIA ...from OO to LO and QF (...the tail...)

- **History: outcome orientation without learning outcomes**
 - Emphasis on **governance** reform and **structure** issues
*fragmented and politicised **bureaucracy** dominating and prevailing*
Polytechnic (FH) reform 1990s: quest for school autonomy (school programmes);
UNI-reform 2002 (political control and performance contracts)
 - **Bottom-up school development** supported somewhat within prevailing structures (mainly school programmes, defining goals and implementation)
- **PISA 2003 and standards as first move towards LOs**
 - Strong move towards mechanisms of **empowerment oriented quality assurance/quality development**
QIBB: comprehensive framework in VET
Standards in GE: mountains and mouses?
- **NQF: visibility/positioning of qualifications - avoidance of LOs/reform (no regulation, no entitlement for progress)**
 - Strong emphasis on **visibility** and **comprehensiveness**
 - **Quick fix for LO-based NQF without having LO-based qualifications**

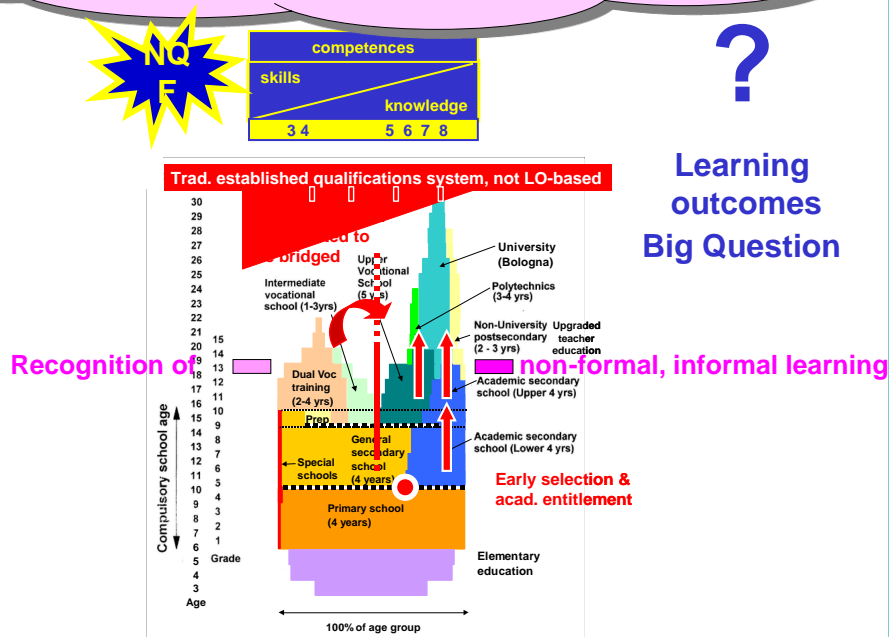




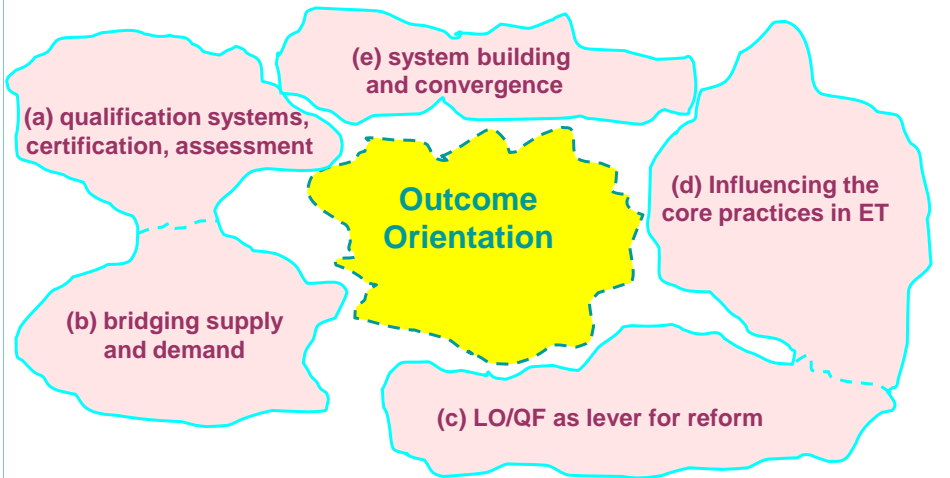
employment



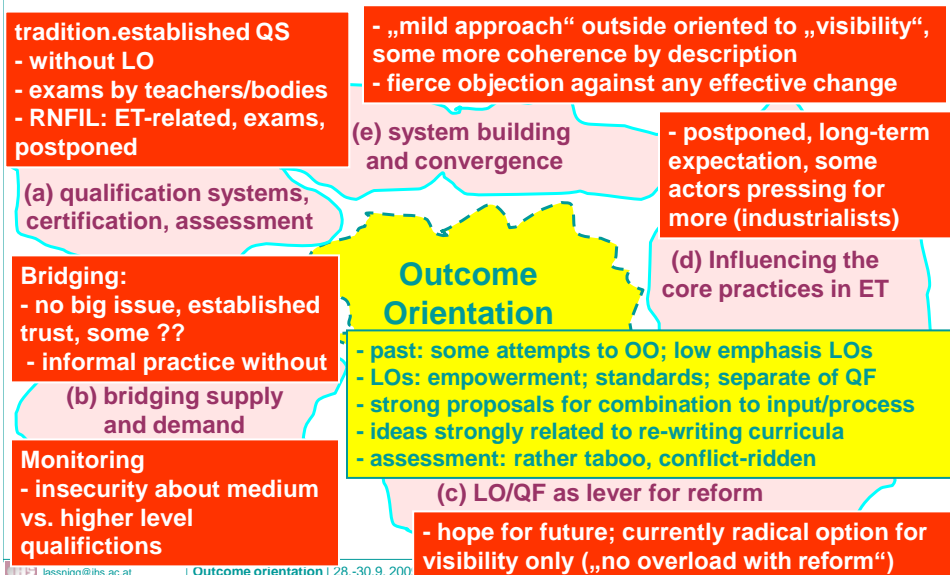
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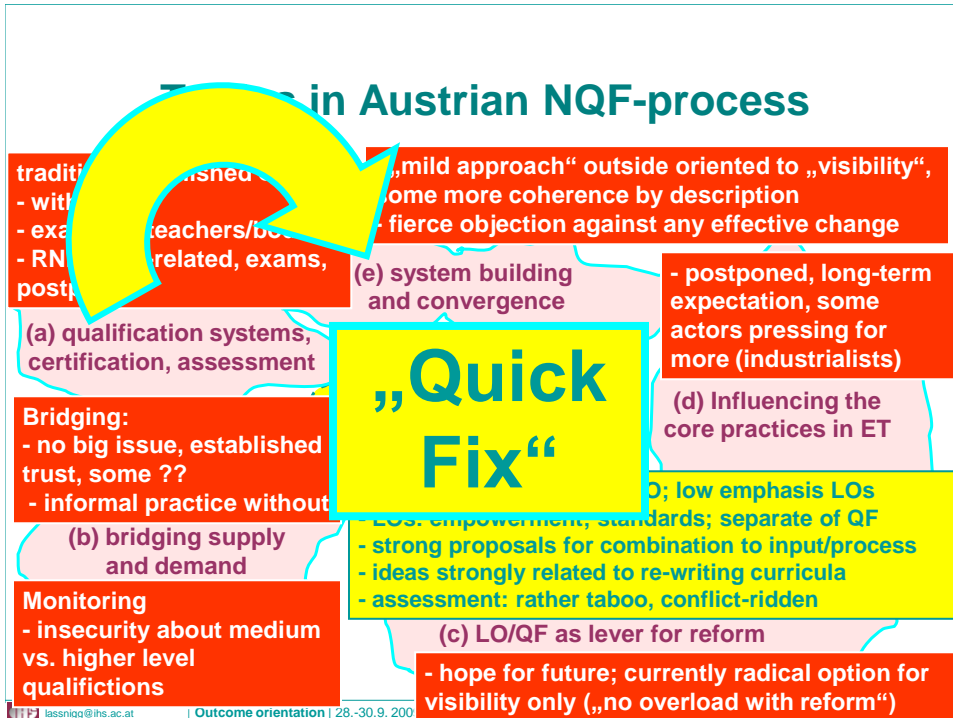


Topics in Austrian NQF-process



Topics in Austrian NQF-process

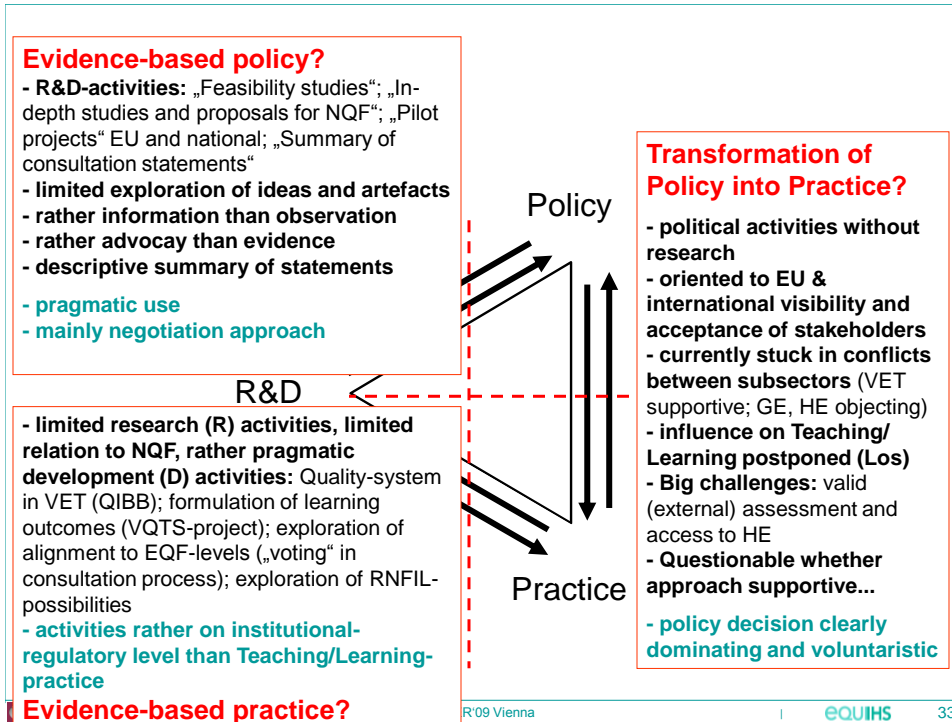




AUSTRIA - outcome orientation: evidence-based policy and practice?

- The case of NQF

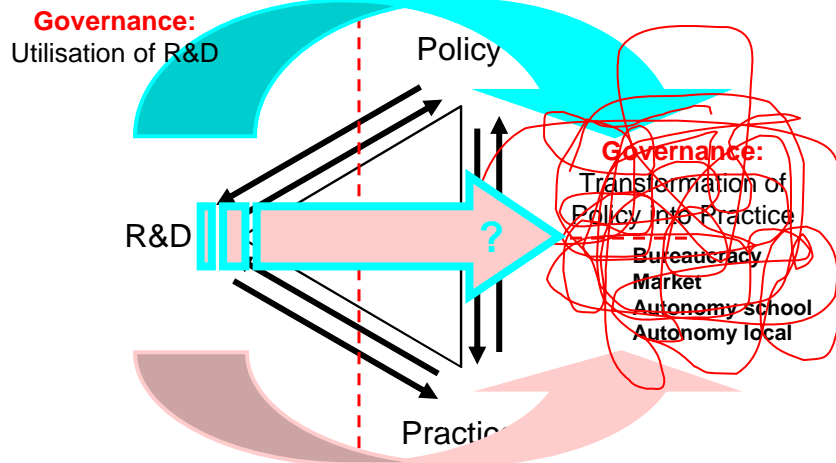
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Transfer of R&D into P&P 3 channels



Evidence-based policy?

- **R&D-activities:** „Feasibility studies“; „In-depth studies and proposals for NQF“; „Pilot projects“ EU and national; „Summary of consultation statements“

- I ■ Involvement of R&D comparatively strong & related to policy...
- r ■ ...however: limited commission, limited time, limited expertise...
- r ■ ...thus: **involvement of R&D does not necessarily mean EBPP**
- f ■ Needed: more discussion and debate about research methodology, and what evidence might mean...
 - r ■ R&D restricted to the very early stages of the research-cycle
- t ■ ...this does not hold only for Austria, but also for EU-level activities
 - r ■ e.g., do „pilot-projects“ meet criteria of EBPP?
- i ■ ...so there are many demands on R&D...
- r ■ ...a specific high-priority demand: to include **political science** thinking in EBPP: **Understanding why and how the policy design itself hinders EBPP...**

Conclusions EBPP

Evidence-based practice?

The End

**Thank you
for your attention !**

Material

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