



## Achieving Multidimensional Educational Goals Through Standard-Oriented Teaching. An Application to STEM Education

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Socially and in relation to the individual, schools' mission for STEM education is not limited to the teaching of knowledge and cognitive skills. Although they form an important basis for dealing with today's challenges in a self-confident and responsible manner, they alone are not enough. Positive attitudes towards learning are additional important prerequisites for lifelong learning and participation in society. However, national educational standards still focus mainly on developing cognitive competencies. They hardly take into account multidimensional educational goals that combine both cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes. At the classroom level, in everyday school life, addressing both is one of the greatest challenges. Introducing standard-oriented curricula may have the potential to shift teachers' professional perception also to non-cognitive educational goals. We argue that, in order to foster multidimensional educational goals, they need to be more clearly addressed at the policy, teacher training, and teaching level. One important research agenda within STEM education for the next years will be to examine and discuss the connection between the implementation of standard-oriented teaching, the achievement of multiple educational goals, and teachers' professional competence.

Keywords: interest, motivation, social-emotional learning, standard-oriented teaching, cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, mathematics and science education, teachers' professional competence

## INTRODUCTION

Both, socially and in relation to the individual, the mission of schools for STEM education (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) is not limited to the teaching of (content) knowledge and cognitive skills. However, in daily school life, the focus of teaching is mostly on strengthening achievement development and performance (Schiepe-Tiska, 2019). Little room is given to explicitly strive for other learning goals such as developing interests or social-emotional learning. If anything, these goals are addressed implicitly or they are perceived as side effects to reaching cognitive learning goals. Hence, schools often do not provide resources (e.g., instruction materials, specific courses or activities) or create conditions (e.g., training teachers, devoting teaching hours, receiving school administration support), that would promote striving for other learning goals (Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2021). The global Coronavirus pandemic in 2020 has made this obvious again, as the main interest in public awareness had been on how much learning losses students would experience due to school closings. However, although cognitive learning outcomes form an important foundation for dealing

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1

with today's challenges in a self-confident and responsible manner, they alone are not enough. They need to be complemented by so called "non-cognitive" factors as additional and important school outcomes (e.g., Schiepe-Tiska, Rozcen et al., 2016; OECD, 2018a). Together, cognitive and noncognitive outcomes can be summarized under the term of *multidimensional educational goals*.

In STEM education, reaching multidimensional educational goals is particularly important at the end of compulsory school as this is a decisive phase of identity development. At this point, students develop clear ideas about themselves, and clarify their relation with others and the world in general. Thus, in addition to questions about ones' own interests or ideas about occupational choices, the examination with social and political participation becomes more relevant (Blossfeld et al., 2015; Schiepe-Tiska, 2019).

International large-scale assessments such as the *Programme* for International Student Assessment (PISA) also have adapted the perspective of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes for mathematics and science (OECD, 2017; OECD, 2018b). This was an important step as PISA aims to provide an internationally embedded, realistic view of countries' reached learning outcomes (i.e., benchmarking), that are oriented at defined standards (i.e., monitoring). At the country level, these frameworks provide opportunities to engage in normative discussions about cultures' central objectives that are important for our current understanding of the world—regarding education in general and STEM education in particular. These discussions, in turn, are reflected in present school practices and teaching policies.

For instance, the poor performance of Germany in PISA 2000 introduced a change in its educational policy perspective (Klieme et al., 2003). While before it was mainly oriented towards a defined curriculum (input orientation), the question of which learning goals should be achieved (output orientation) came more into focus. One of the goals had been to give teachers more space and freedom about how to reach different learning goals. Consequently, standardoriented curricula were introduced, which may have the potential to shift teachers' professional perception to noncognitive educational goals in addition to cognitive outcomes. For the next years, an important research agenda within STEM education will be to examine and discuss the connection between fostering multidimensional educational goals, the implementation of standard-oriented teaching, and teachers' professional competence.

We draw on these developments and argue that more balance between cognitive and non-cognitive learning goals is needed—at both the system and the school level. We introduce the concept of multidimensional educational goals and apply it to STEM. Using the example of Germany, we will outline how a change in educational policy perspective—from input to output—may facilitate this balance. We will discuss the potential and challenges of standard-oriented teaching for pursuing different learning goals. Moreover, we will briefly present a current research project studying these relationships, which will be linked to PISA 2022 in Germany.

# MULTIDIMENSIONAL EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN STEM

Multidimensional educational goals provide a framework in which both, cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes, are presented. In contrast to cognitive outcomes, non-cognitive outcomes are characterized as constructs that are not identified with traditional indicators of cognitive capability or intellectual functioning (Rieger et al., 2017). According to multiple reviews and studies, these factors are essential for success in education as well as in occupation (Almlund et al., 2011; Kautz, et al., 2014) and they are important prerequisites for lifelong learning and an active participation in society (e.g., Prenzel, 2012; Schiepe-Tiska, Roczen et al., 2016). They shape the identity and personality of students and thus-together with cognitive outcomes-influence decisions about educational pathways (e.g., Parker et al., 2014). This is particularly relevant as the United States as well as Europe report an increasing need for STEM professionals at different levels of expertise (Cappelli, 2015; Cedefop, 2017). This trend is still growing with the worlds' change due to technological progress and digitalization.

Hence, in STEM education, non-cognitive outcomes are not only determinants of cognitive learning outcomes, but important educational goals themselves (see also Blossfeld et al., 2015; Schiepe-Tiska, Roczen et al., 2016). They influence whether students engage actively and of own accord in situations where science and mathematics competencies are necessary. Science provides the most profound explanations we have about our material world and the ability to reason mathematically and understand computational thinking concepts is important for keeping up with the worlds' change driven by new technologies. Hence, students need to recognize how important and significant STEM education is for their daily life and the society. Only when they feel meaningfully connected to STEM they are willing to engage with STEM and address ethical and political dilemmas such as climate change, develop critical orientations and thinking skills, and value scientific approaches to inquiry (cf. OECD, 2018b; OECD, 2020).

In the research tradition of science education, non-cognitive outcomes are mostly summarized under the umbrella term attitudes. Attitudes are an individual's affective, cognitive, and behavioral reactions towards an object or phenomenon (Rosenberg and Hovland, 1960). In science, they can be differentiated into attitudes towards science and scientific attitudes (Gardner 1975; Klopfer 1971; Osborne et al., 2003). Attitudes towards science refer to the affects, beliefs, and values students hold about an object such as school science or scientists themselves (Tytler and Osborne, 2012). They include constructs such as interest in and enjoyment of science, perceived value of science, or attitudes of peers and friends towards science (see also Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2016). Scientific attitudes refer to how students think about science. They display dispositions to look for material explanations and to being skeptical about many of these explanations (Osborne et al., 2003). For both facets, however, there is still no consensus about how many subconstructs exist, how these can be classified, or how they can



be labeled and interpreted (see Kerr and Murphy, 2012 for a similar argument).

In contrast to science, in mathematics, the importance of attitudes is more hesitantly accepted (Hannula et al., 2016; Schukajlow et al., 2017). The most examined non-cognitive characteristic is mathematics anxiety (e.g., Strohmaier et al., 2020). It is a common phenomenon across countries, cultures, and ages and it massively influences students' mathematics achievement and their willingness to engage with mathematics beyond the school context (e.g., OECD, 2013; Schiepe-Tiska and Schmidtner, 2013). Other non-cognitive outcomes such as interest in mathematics or mathematics self-concept/selfefficacy are additionally important but less often examined. However, for example, for high-achieving students in these motivational-affective mathematics. characteristics explain why and how these students translate their potential into performance (Ziernwald et al., 2021).

From a practical perspective, one major challenge for STEM teachers when pursuing multidimensional learning goals is that they can influence or compete with each other. For example, in depth analyses of Germanys' PISA 2015 data showed that science teaching, providing students with cognitive activating learning opportunities, such as explaining ideas or drawing conclusions, as well as doing experiments was related to higher levels of science competencies as compared to teaching that is little cognitive activating and does not allow conducting own experiments. However, for enjoyment and interest, the picture was more differentiated. Only teaching that offered cognitive activating learning activities and the possibility of doing experiments more often was related to higher science enjoyment and interest. Cognitive activating science teaching with rare opportunities for doing experiments was less related to science enjoyment (Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2016). Hence, a balanced consideration of cognitive and non-cognitive learning goals is needed.

## STANDARD-ORIENTED TEACHING

National educational standards formulate subject-specific and interdisciplinary cognitive basic qualifications that students in a country should have acquired by a certain point in their school careers (e.g., KMK, 2003; KMK, 2005). These standards mainly formulate cognitive learning goals but, in part, they also refer to non-cognitive outcomes.

One of the main learning environments to address multidimensional educational goals in STEM systematically is the classroom (see **Figure 1**). Normative, pedagogical principles and current standards play an important role in schools and describe features of "good" teaching (Berliner, 2005). For example, good science teaching is oriented at the idea of inquiry-based science teaching, in which students experiment and solve authentic science problems while learning the underlying scientific principles and developing corresponding concepts (Bruner, 1961).

In Germany, national educational standards were introduced as part of the educational reform in response to Germanys' poor results in STEM in the first participation in TIMSS and PISA (Baumert et al., 2001; Beaton et al., 1996). These standards are formulated for different levels of educational qualification. For example, in mathematics, the standards for the intermediate school leaving certificate state that "the mission of school education goes beyond the acquisition of cognitive skills. Together with other subjects, mathematics teaching also aims at personality development and value orientation" (KMK, 2003, p. 6). This multidimensional formulation of learning goals in relation to standard-oriented teaching is in line with initiatives in other countries such as United Kingdom, Canada, the United States, or Switzerland (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010; EDK, 2011; Department for Education, 2014; Ontario M. o. E., 2006).

Germanys' national standards represent not only a joint, mandatory framework for quality assurance of STEM teaching but also for the development of STEM teaching (KMK, 2010). Consequently, introducing the standards aimed at shifting the focus in teaching from being exclusively on the input, (i.e., learning and subject content) to more predefined, explicitly stated learning goals (i.e., output). Hence, the standards define requirements and liabilities that should be achieved at a particular point in time (Klieme et al., 2003), but in contrast to conventional curricula they are less detailed and do not prescribe in detail which topics have to be covered and how these topics have to be sequenced in particular (KMK, 2010). In theory, these standards can give teachers more freedom to choose how to reach learning goals as they "do not define the intervention methods or materials necessary to support students" (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p.4). Hence, they offer possibilities to focus on achieving cognitive and non-cognitive educational goals (KMK, 2010).

Orienting teaching at defined standards (in Germany called competence-oriented teaching), describes a new dimension of "good" teaching (Helmke, 2017; Müller et al., 2013; see Figure 1). However, it has rarely been tested empirically whether it is also a criterion for "effective" teaching (Berliner, 2005), that enables the achievement of multidimensional goals. Moreover, how standard-oriented teaching is related to other criteria of high effective teaching has also rarely been examined. One challenge is that, up to now, no consistent definition of standard-oriented teaching besides its focus on learning outcomes and the organization of learning as a cumulative process exists (Lenski et al., 2017). One suggestion for approaching a definition is made by Drieschner (2009), who describes four characteristics of standard-oriented teaching: 1) it establishes links between learning contents and real-life problems, 2) it encourages an active examination of a specific subject area, for example by enabling students to find several solutions or to formulate their own questions, 3) it reinforces social learning activities, and 4) it provides learning materials that are appropriate for students at different competence levels. However, again, the focus is more on reaching cognitive learning goals rather than taking a multidimensional perspective.

## **DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

The world of the 21st century is characterized by rapid developments - above all in technology. In order to deal with the resulting environmental, economic, and social challenges, it is educations' responsibility to equip future generations for the growing complexity as well as for dealing with increasing uncertainties (OECD, 2018a). Hence, education should not only focus on the development of subject-specific knowledge, but simultaneously on a broader set of skills, attitudes, and values. In STEM, a balanced pursuit of both cognitive and non-cognitive educational goals should be a central aim. In order to foster such multidimensional educational goals, they need to be addressed at different levels.

At the educational system level, although multidimensional goals are to some extend included in countries' national standards, standards' focus is still on developing knowledge that can be applied to different contexts and rather disregard noncognitive learning goals (KMK, 2003; KMK, 2005). School laws and policies may name different non-cognitive goals more specifically, but they are still rather abstract declarations of intent and often a hodgepodge of characteristics (see also Blossfeld et al., 2015). Germanys' current PISA results reflect this flaw: Although, students' mathematics and science competencies were stable above the OECD-average (Reinhold et al., 2019; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2019), enjoyment and instrumental motivation in both—mathematics and science—were below the OECD-average and declined between two PISA cycles (Schiepe-Tiska and Schmidtner, 2013; Schiepe-Tiska et al., 2016). This was also true for science self-efficacy. In order to enable a systematic development of multidimensional goals, first, they would need to be defined, classified, and specifically named for different developmental stages in countries' national educational standards.

At the school and classroom level, concepts of how to foster these goals explicitly together with and in addition to cognitive outcomes are needed. The teachers' mission is to transfer these goals into practice. For that, standard-oriented teaching can offer a fruitful and promising framework as it gives teachers more open spaces for designing their teaching and focusing on different learning goals. However, in order to enable them for pursuing multidimensional goals, awareness needs to be created by including them as mandatory part in teacher training curricula. Teachers need to be trained in identifying and evaluating multidimensional learning goals and to develop their diagnostic competences beyond students' achievement. Researchers could support teachers in that by developing suitable instruments focusing on identifying evaluating and multidimensional goals. Needless to say, teachers' own development of professional competence should be organized under the perspective of a multidimensional development so they can function as role models for their students.

In addition, specific recommendations and examples on how to implement striving for multiple goals in daily (subject-specific) classrooms are missing. One opportunity for the design of standard-oriented teaching, that may support teachers in addressing multidimensional goals, are tasks (Besser et al., 2013). Tasks play a prominent role particularly in STEM education (Knoll, 2003). In mathematics instruction, they represent central learning opportunities (Reiss and Hammer, 2013) that determine the course of instruction almost completely (Kuger et al., 2017). In science, (textbook) tasks play a somewhat less central, but still important role and are often used as lessons' supplements (Wendt et al., 2017). Tasks offer numerous possibilities to focus on real-life problems, initiate active and in-depth examinations, as well as social learning processes. Hence, they have the potential to offer learning opportunities addressing different cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes (e.g., Rellensmann and Schukajlow, 2017). However, an analysis of current German mathematics and physics textbook tasks showed that the theoretical opportunities for the motivational potential of tasks remain unexploited (Heinle et al., 2021).

From a research perspective, thus far, there is no evidence to what extent multidimensional goals are considered in current teaching practice. Our research project "Classroom Experience, Characteristics & Outcome: Multidimensional educational goals and the views of students and teachers" (Ceco) draws on this gap and examines the relation between multidimensional educational goals, standard-oriented teaching, and teachers' professional competence in mathematics and science by using a multimethod design (Ceco Team, 2020). We will investigate to what extend teachers consider different learning goals defined in PISA and nationals' educational standards while preparing and teaching their lessons and how this relates to the selection and design of tasks they use for learning vs. examinations. Linked to PISA 2022, Ceco supplements the international design of the PISA study in Germany with specific components at the input, process, and outcome levels. Two ninth grades as well as their mathematics and science teachers will be sampled additionally.

They will be visited in a mathematics and science lessons to assess teaching characteristics as well as motivational-affective learning goals in particular. In addition, tasks will be analyzed regarding their orientation on competencies defined in PISA and Germanys' national standards as well as their cognitive activating and motivational potential. The results will provide the opportunity to compare rather distal teaching and learning characteristics from PISA with more proximal characteristics in daily school life. Moreover, the link with PISA will enable examining aspects of achievement, motivational, and socioeconomic heterogeneity of classes related to standard-oriented teaching and multidimensional learning goals.

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