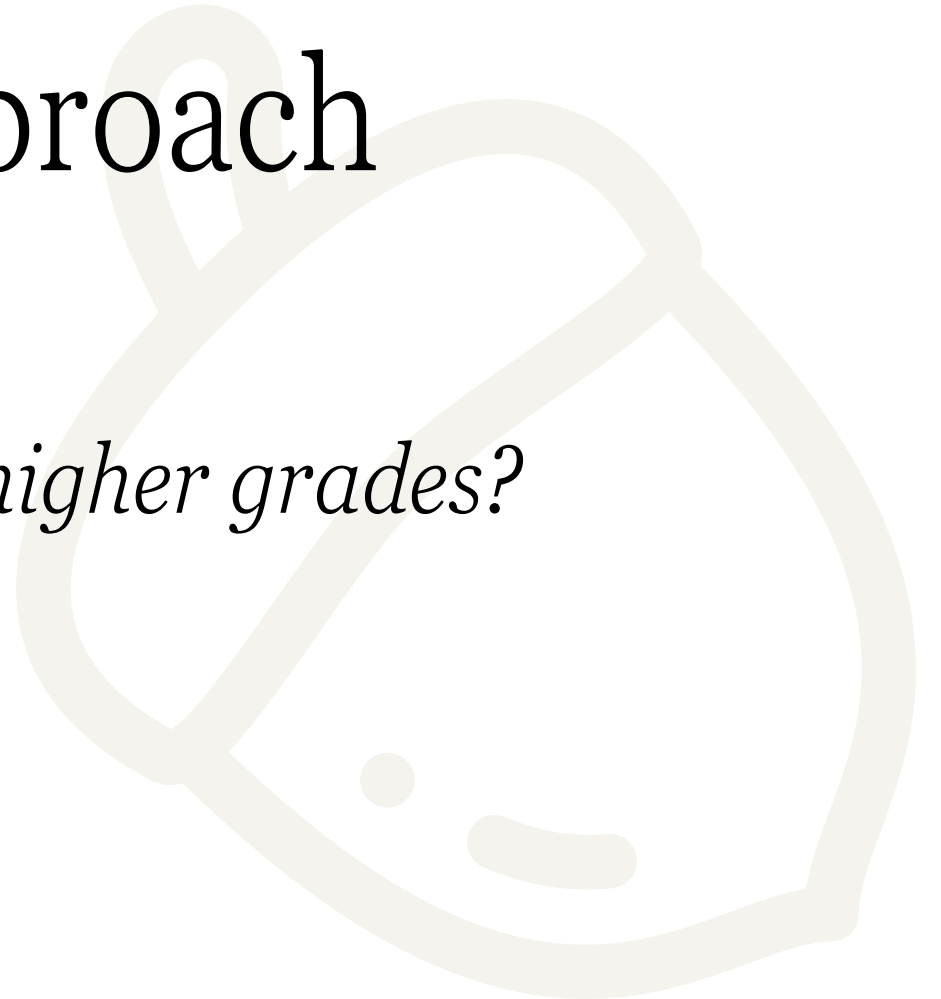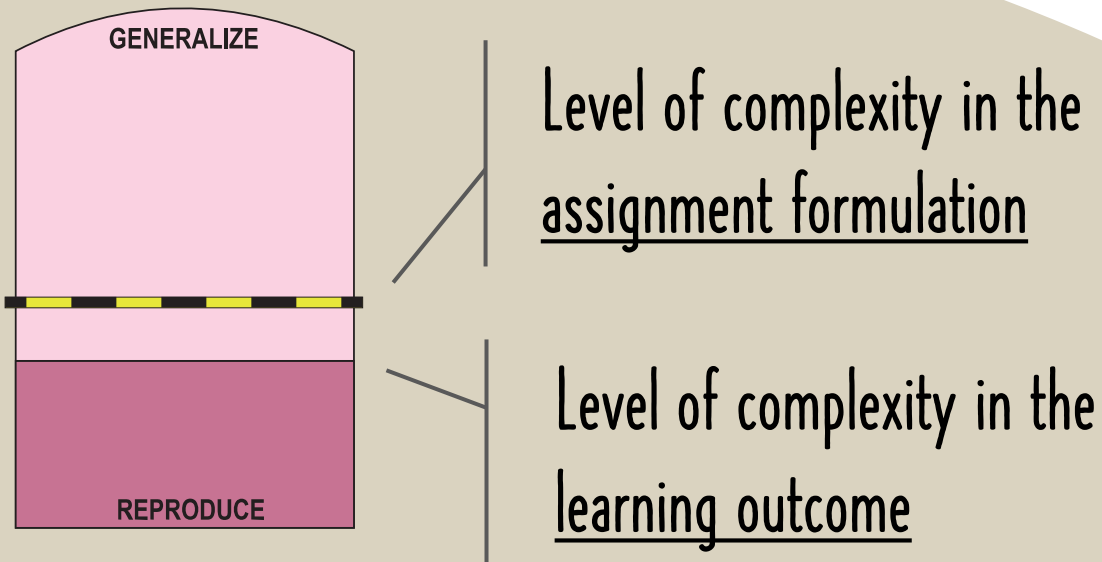# The Acorn Approach

Pedher Johansson

What is our objectives with higher grades?

Illustrating higher grades

The learning objectives defines knowledge and skills necessary for a passing grade
i.e., the grades **A-D** are often <u>unregulated</u> in the course plan
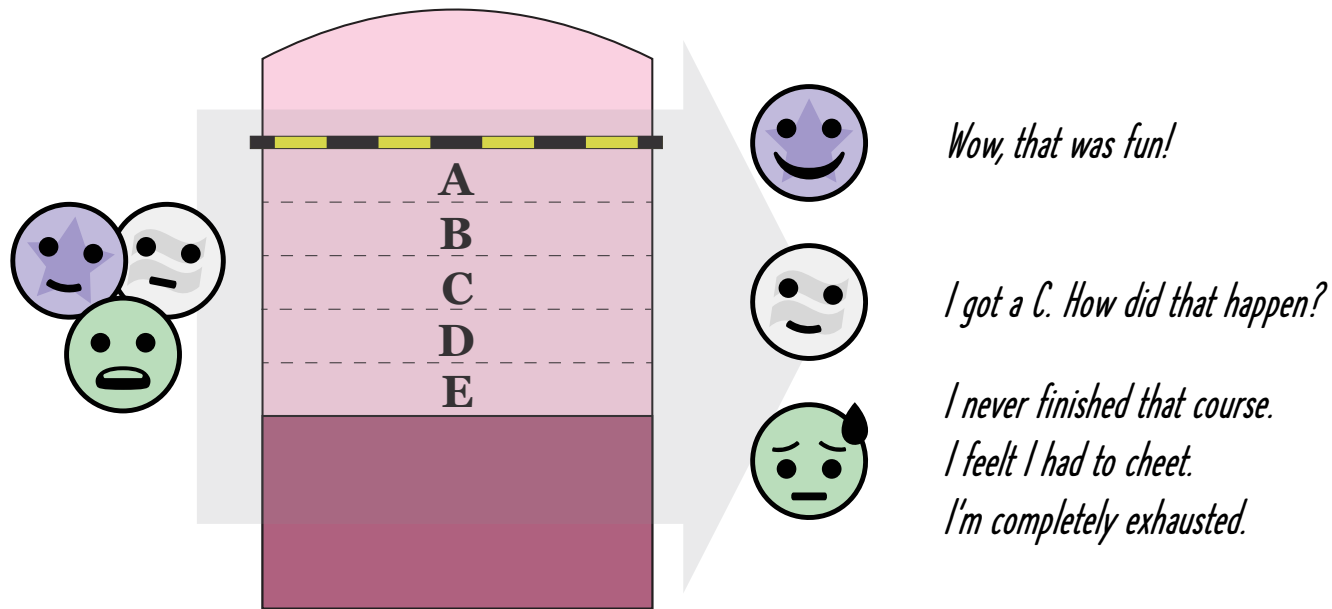
The Subject Domain

GENERALIZE

REPRODUCE

Level of complexity in the <u>assignment formulation</u>

Level of complexity in the <u>learning outcome</u>

The Students

Ambitious Alex

Passing Parker

Struggling Skyler

The Jumping-the-nest Approach

A for a flawless solution
E for an acceptable solution.

A
B
C
D
E

Wow, that was fun!

I got a C. How did that happen?

I never finished that course.
I feelt I had to cheet.
I'm completely exhausted.

Examples:
- 50% for an E on a written exam.
- Vague criteria for grading

Time-consuming to grade
- How to find traces of skill in a mess
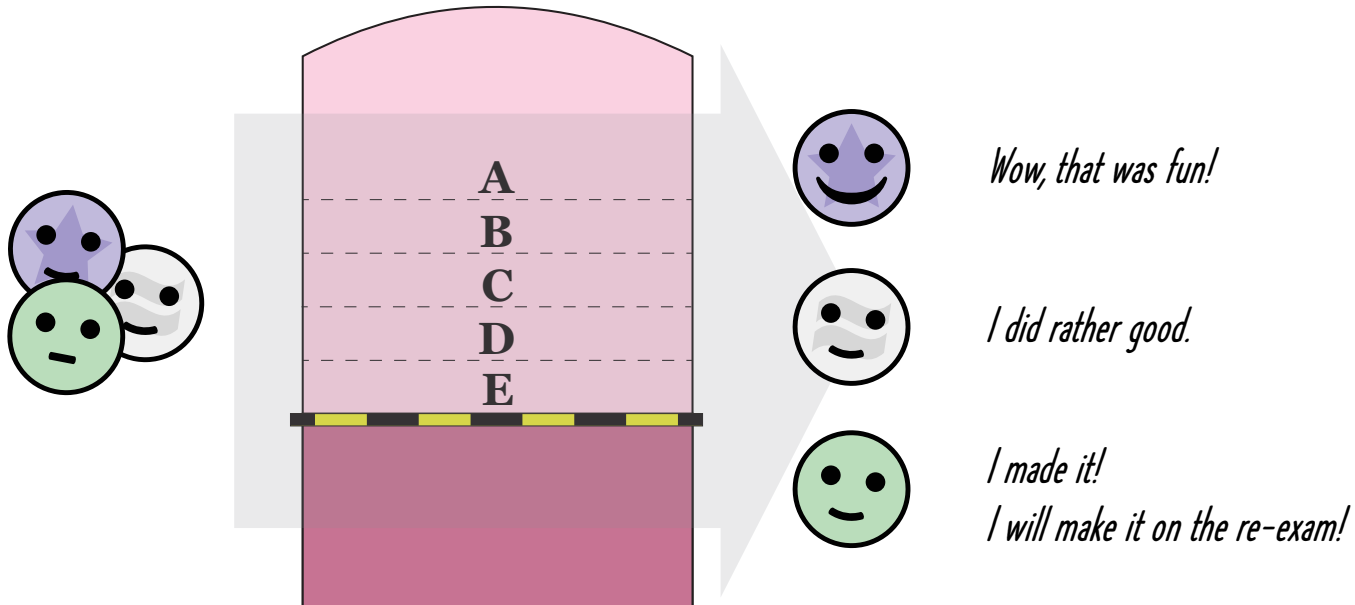
Time-consuming to tutor
- A lot of questions

Wrong questions
- Most questions will be outside of the scope of the learning objectives
- Struggling Skyler think he is stupid and don't even ask questions

The Sprinter Approach

A for "more of" a learning outcome.
E for achieving the learning outcome.

Wow, that was fun!

I did rather good.

I made it!
I will make it on the re-exam!

Examples

- A two-part exam - One part for passing, one part for higher grades

- Bonus for a more complex solution

Somewhat easier to tutor

- Less questions, and more questions from Struggling Skyler

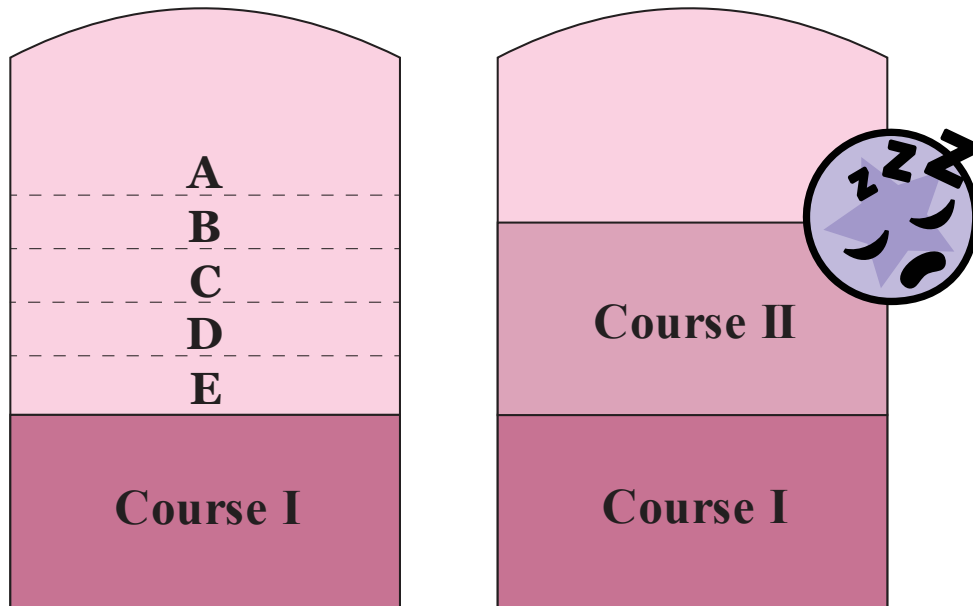- Takes time to create assignments

Easier to grade

- The passing part is easy

Questions on learning obj.

The Groundhog-Day Effect

Not this again...

A risk when you have

- progression in learning outcomes between two courses.

- a "more of" approach for higher grades.

The Learning Objectives
implies what's important knowledge what's not.

- Certain academic traits are never trained.
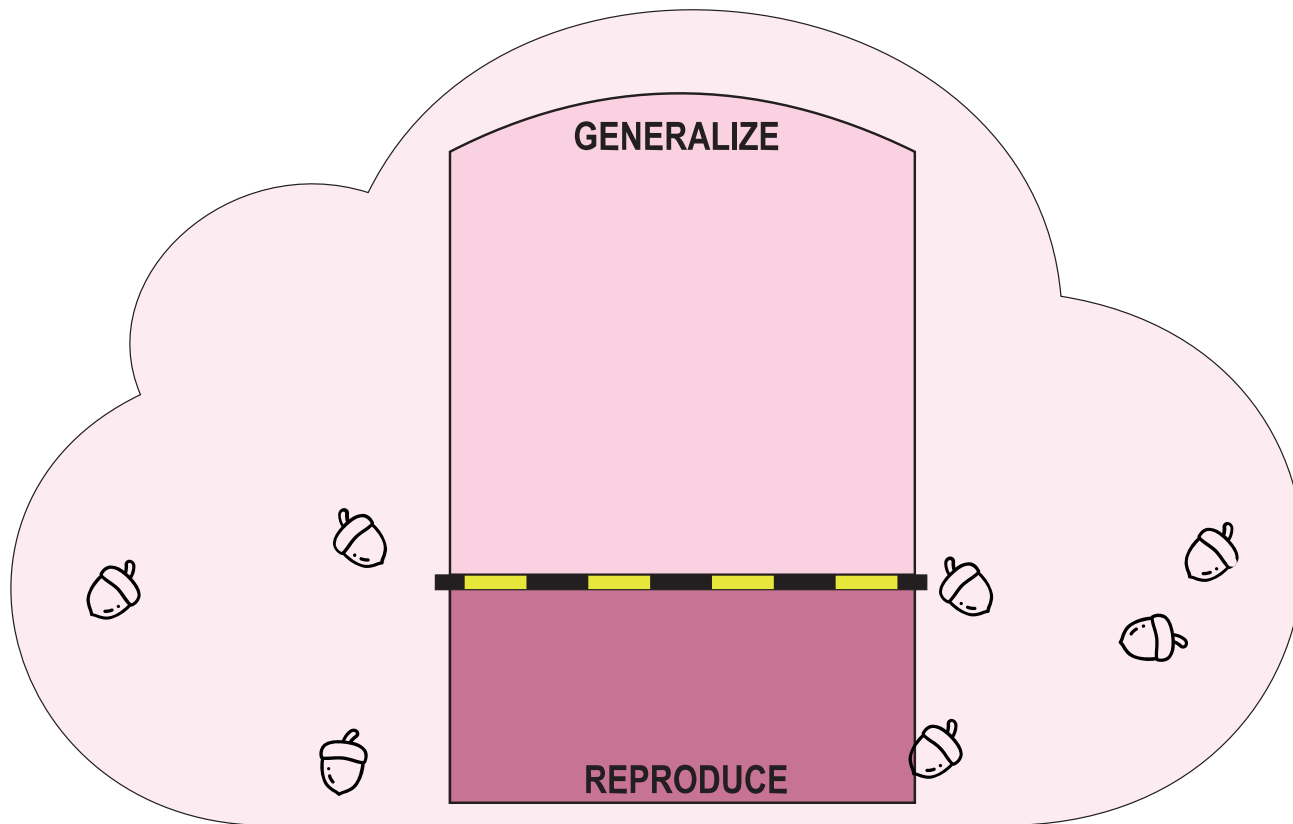- Some questions are never asked.

What about the rest?

Ambitious students should

- Be curious and explore the unknown;
- Take responsibility of their own learning;
- Motivate others.

The Acorn Approach

Let the students free and assess what they bring home

GENERALIZE

REPRODUCE

1. Place acorns sideways, not forward
2. Give (vague) directions but with clear assessment criteria
3. Focus on Struggling Skyler.

Expected Outcome

- Ambitious Alex will search the entire field with few questions asked - Easy Tutoring

- It doesn't matter if Alex and Parker find the correct acorn or not, as long as they have shown skill in the chosen trait - Easy grading

- You will have time for Struggling Skyler

- You will have fun discussions