

Higher education's outcomes-based education: Bane or boon?

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ABSTRACT

Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) encompasses the learning, awareness, abilities, and viewpoints that students should learn to attain their successful and satisfying life cycles as human beings, members of society, and at employment. However, OBE has recently become a topic of debate and controversy. Some critics consider this educational approach ineffective, while others see it as a solution to a country's educational problems. In this context, it is important to consider the nature of outcomes-based education and the challenges that come with its implementation in the Philippines. Rather than criticizing the notions associated with it, this paper focuses on such a reflection. The paper introduces several important notions (both good and bad) in Outcomes-Based Education and recommends methods in which these concepts may perhaps be studied further. This paper is not purposed to negate the system nor to agree with the sets of standards embedded in this kind of system in Philippine education but to establish awareness on how this system works. But if OBE will be a miracle cure in the Philippines (or a plague to the country), Filipinos must play their part in order to achieve the ideal goals since they are the ones who are greatly affected either way.

Keywords: Educational philosophy, Higher education, Outcomes-based education, Philippines, Schools

1. INTRODUCTION

The responsibility for planning students' learning through the curriculum belongs to schools but schools do not always do this very well, as various educational evaluations and research undertakings have recently demonstrated. One of the panaceas proposed as a remedy to this problem is an optimistic philosophy of educational reform based on a "success for all" worldview known as "Outcomes-Based Education." Outcomes-based education is an educational technique that concentrates and integrates the system of education upon what all students must learn, understand, and be capable of accomplishing in order to graduate with a desirable standard of expertise, according to CHED (Commission on Higher Education). It is a reorganization of academic program, evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms to reflect the accomplishment of higher order learning and mastery (Mercado, 2014).

Spady (1994) as the primary proponent and a major contributor to the notion of OBE, provides the most extensive explanation of the theory that underpins OBE. According to Spady (1994) Outcomes-Based Education implies "clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be successful at the end of their learning experiences". This necessitates commencing with a clear vision of what learners ought to learn, later constructing the curricula, practices, and assessment to guarantee that this knowledge level is achieved. However, according to Spady's description, OBE is an approach of making plans, distributing, and assessing directions that necessitates trustees, educators, and scholars to base their decisions and energies on the preferred schooling attainment — implications that are demonstrated in terms of personal student performance. As a result, Outcomes-Based Education comprises the understanding, concepts, abilities, and dispositions that students should acquire in order to optimize their full capacities and live effective and productive lives as humans, members of the community, and employees.

OBE has recently become a topic of debate and contention. Some detractors consider this educational approach as ineffective, while others see it as a solution to educational problems. In this context, it's important to consider the nature of outcomes-based education and the challenges that come with its implementation in

the Philippines. Rather than criticizing the notions associated with it, this paper focuses on such a reflection. The paper introduces several important notions (both good and bad) in OBE and recommends methods in which these concepts could be studied further.

While the administration was in power, it was a moment of immense energy, rejuvenation, accomplishment, and enthusiasm for basic education under Benigno Aquino III, who campaigned as an education president (2010–2016), yet it was a moment of drift for higher education in the Philippines due to the significantly effective K-12 restructuring. Some of this was due to the enormity of the K-12 reform, which compelled the country and its educators to concentrate on its requirements: determining how to narrow the two-year international gap, establishing a two-year senior high school (SHS, Grades 11-12) after high school (Grades 1-10, now Junior High School), determining how to improve the old curriculum, ensuring greater cohort survival, integrating former tertiary level courses released into SHS, and making senior high school a broad sense college access while having to accept that far too many students may not be able to attend college (Tabora, 2016).

The stated change's enormous significance has had a significant impact on tertiary education. The CHED Memorandum Order 46 s2012, titled "Policy Standard to Enhance Quality Assurance in Philippine Higher Education via an Outcomes-Based and Typology-Based QA," is now in operation in public and private universities and colleges. The order was given following a series of discussions between HEIs and CHED, and it shifted the focus of modern Philippine education from input to production. The CHED Memorandum Order governs the execution of the Outcomes-Based Education system around the nation.

According to Mercado (2014), the Philippines is now concentrating on OBE for several reasons: **Globalization of Education** – OBE is promoted by international education agreements; **International Trends** – International Professionals Registries, particularly for engineering courses, demand the accomplishment of an OBE-accredited curriculum; and **Global Mobility for Professional Practice** — To promote global integration, the Commission on Higher Education will necessitate the formation of an OBE System. As a result, it has been suggested that scholastic societies, specifically colleges, engage in a progressively more significant responsibility in growing and producing our human capital in order to help reach these goals of international recognition and global skills acquisition. Hence, this paper would like to determine how OBE brings about an impact to the educational system in the country and to promote awareness to these changes.

2. FURTHER CLARIFICATIONS

2.1. Outcomes-based education

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is a contemporary project in Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) and secondary schools that has received significant support from the administration and regulatory organizations. Direct studies of OBE designed courses and their implementation in the classroom, on the other hand, are limited. It is both conceivable and beneficial to perform an evaluation study in order to gain insight into the applicability of an outcomes-based curriculum in the Philippine junior high school context and to learn from the program's creators and practitioners. Preparing the OBE curriculum has been time-consuming, difficult, and exhausting. Teachers' time, training, and resources have all been limited. Teacher awareness of OBE, horizontal and vertically articulated, supply of defined parameters/standards of learning, aligned, authentic, and suitable classroom activities, and aware of the status are among the top approaches mentioned by instructors. However, there have been inconsistencies in terms of student mastery of skills and time spent preparing outputs. Students don't always show the desired outcomes (knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) in the same way or at the same time. A defined vision-mission-goals (VMG) and collegial interaction among teachers who are specialists in their area and pedagogy are required for successful OBE implementation (Alata, 2019).

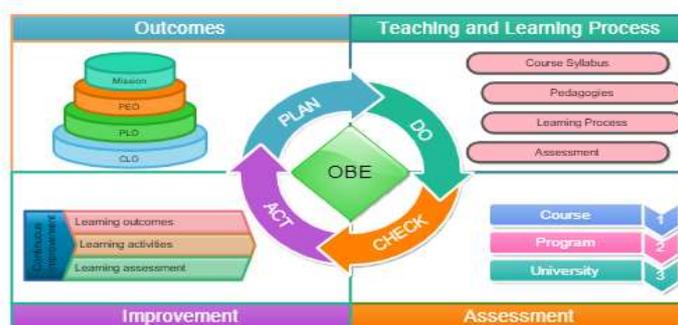


Figure 1. Outcome-based education (OBE) framework consistency with PDCA(Plan-Do-Check-Act) principle

Norinpe, Ganbold and Tungalag (2018).

Assessment experience on program learning outcomes

As the world becomes a global village, so does the international interchange of commodities and services. Countries provide an international legal framework for academic qualifications to ensure that professionals participating in the exchange have the same level of competency. These accreditation frameworks are based on learning outcomes (OBE). The Philippine Qualifications Framework, the Commission on Higher Education Memorandum Order Number 46, and the global push for transformative education all served as forerunners to OBE in the Philippines. OBE is the educational system that prepares students to meet the greatest professional requirements. These requirements are included into program results, competences, and instructional aims and priorities. These same elements serve as the foundation for deciding which topics to cover, how to teach them, and evaluating them to the exact specifications (Sana, Roxas & Reyes, 2015).

2.2. Country’s policies and proposed actions on outcomes-based education curriculum

According to the Higher Education Act of 1994, the Commission on Higher Education, or CHED, is responsible for the overall management and supervision of Philippine higher education. All postsecondary schools and universities in the Philippines, including public and private higher education establishments, as well as degree-granting programmes, are regulated by the Commission on Higher Education. Philippine universities and colleges have set the following goals to attain high-quality education: requirement of high-quality degree and diploma education; production and dissemination of information in a broad array of disciplines that are sensitive and appropriate to continuously adjusting internal and overseas contexts; granted the ability for worthy of respect and competent Filipinos to better learning outcomes; and enhancement of sociocultural, systemic, and person rates of return and benefits resulting from utilitarian activities.

With the goals outlined by the HEIs, they believe that Outcomes-Based Education is the only solution. But the question is whether the government's funds are sufficient to make this shift. The framework for Outcomes-based Education outlines the country's rules and recommendations for OBE curriculum. The framework covers activity and task planning, as well as other teaching decisions, all of which should be made with the goal of "reaching and measuring the desired learning outcomes." Teachers must keep the learning goals in mind when making instructional decisions and designing lessons. They must also build learning environments that are welcoming, demanding, stimulating, inspiring, supportive, guiding, and encouraging a culture of lifelong learning, all while following the OBE syllabi.

In addition, teaching and learning activities (TLAs) and assessment methodologies (AMs) for the subject/course should be constructively matched with the intended learning outcomes (ILOs). In my

experience as a teacher, I find it taxing (particularly in the creation of syllabi), but it has proven to be relatively useful and a decent method in my profession as time has passed. The most difficult aspect of this type of curriculum is determining the subject's demands before implementing such a syllabus and subject. Overall, I think it's "somewhat" effective.

Furthermore, Outcomes-Based Education is linked to three (3) levels of outcomes: **Program Outcomes** (sets of areas of expertise (information, abilities, and attitudes) that all students are supposed to exemplify at the end of the Programme); **Course Outcomes** (refer to the information, morals, and abilities that all scholars are required to showcase at the culmination of the program; and **Learning Outcomes** (refer to the information, morals, and abilities that all scholars are anticipated to illustrate at the completion of the subject).

All considerations about organizing, instruction, and assessment are governed by four simple questions within the context of the OBE premises and philosophies presented in this paper: How much do we want students to learn? Why is it important for pupils to understand this knowledge? How then can we help students to understand these principles more effectively? Then how will we know when learners have absorbed the information? After all, OBE is about the needs of the learners and how to address those needs.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This paper utilizes the qualitative study method. Further, it is criticism research. Criticism research entails the assessing of merits and faults. Although the difference between interpreting and critique could be nuanced, one main distinction is that, while explanation entails discovering significance in the experimental narrative, criticism entails relating the research article to other scientific works. Making communal judgements about texts, or "texts against texts," is an essential notion in criticism; Scholes (1986) argues that criticism is not a question of personal desire or whim. Instead, criticism can only be directed towards a certain group or point of view. As a result, critique cannot be based only on the text; rather, it must be based on the application of some external frameworks to the text. In science, we strive to teach learners to think like members of the professional society and how to develop research principles and techniques.

A problem of the study is frequently addressed to the reader in the study's opening (Bassett & Bassett, 2003). Depending on the context of investigation, various scholars will regard this as the purpose of the study. For either instance, the description ought to at least provide the readers a general idea of what will be investigated (Polit & Beck, 2006). Broad issues are frequently multi-faceted, and they must be narrowed and concentrated before being explored. The review of the literature might be extremely useful in this situation (Whall, Sinclair & Parahoo, 2006).

A research critique is an analysis of a research undertaken that focuses on its strengths and limitations. Qualitative research is a broad word that encompasses a wide range of qualitative research methods. The key requirements in a research critique can be gathered in a series of questions for the procedure of critiquing research" (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative studies are important to understand how people perceive their life experience, how they build their realms, and what meaning they ascribe to their personal experiences (Boswell & Cannon, 2009).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There is no single formula for how higher education institutions should be formed and controlled, or for the programs that should be offered in order to meet societal objectives. In today's Philippines, higher education is motivated by theoretical orientations that emphasize the quest and production of information, abilities, ideals, and mindsets that will enable Filipinos to be useful members of the general public. Its objective is to enhance every person's value of life cycle in the Philippines. Higher education in the Philippines also aims to tap into the productive capability of the country's human resource base in order to boost the country's international competitiveness.

The Commission on Higher Education has worked to make education in schools global and similar to that of advanced developed countries since its inception. This is achieved by evaluating curriculum programs across

all fields on a regular basis in order to make them more sensitive to policy objectives as well as the worldwide demand for importance and content. So many of these advances in science and technology brought in constant learning modes, ease of movement, and international competitiveness, giving rise to a new educational field.

Furthermore, students' tertiary education competences are critical to their future success and happiness, the country's productivity and ability to compete in the global economy, and the maintenance of healthy and civic-minded individuals who are actively engaged in their communities. It is now not just the responsibility of individual professors, but also the obligation of higher education institutions to ensure that college graduates have the necessary knowledge, abilities, and temperament to exhibit self-efficacy and civic duty (Custodio, Espita & Siy, 2017).

There is nothing wrong with it if we look at it through the lens of CHED's recommended Outcomes-based Education viewpoint. But the terrible truth is that we can't be completely idealistic and see things happening the way we expect them to. Instead of experimenting and implementing it without the supervision of the other constituents who are equally affected and concerned about this issue, plan and organize it well. Schools and government should be conscious of their environment. As a result, there should be an understanding of the contributions to society that are required, such as graduate employability and technology transfer potential.

"Employability" refers to the societal role of future graduates, rather than the short-term satisfaction of today's labor market requirements. The current economic crisis emphasizes the importance of focusing on how diversified and multifaceted, innovative, and entrepreneurial future graduates must be. Universities teach students how to comprehend, synthesize, combine, and analyze information – they prepare tomorrow's imaginative, responsible entrepreneurs. Institutions should not solely focus on providing professionals with immediately applicable knowledge, as European universities face considerably deeper difficulties than simply contributing to the knowledge society and economy. Universities should be safe and free havens for the development of visionaries and research that has no obvious and/or immediate commercial impact (Killen, 2000).

It's not always easy to transition from a student to a professional in life. When it comes to professional life, students must deal with a lot of obstacles. Students are obliged to become accustomed to the ever-changing career natural environment by placing their theoretical understanding into practice in the contemporary world of employment. By incorporating theoretical skills and understanding throughout educational internship opportunities, students can easily apply their beliefs in the workplace. Thus, it should also be recommended that institutions, stakeholders, and workplace environment work hand in hand, concentrating on communicating and having a direct line to them, focusing on the development side, and providing them with good opportunity with professionals in the industry and acquire industry mentors as it was viewed positively by the interns. Requiring every student to complete an internship or other work-related experiential course is a significant commitment for both college and industry personnel (Genelza, 2022).

Students must be trained as responsible persons and mature citizens in addition to obtaining new knowledge and skills. Offering opportunities for ethical reasoning to generate awareness among students and graduates of the ethical dimensions of their words and deeds in the context in which they live, and act is also part of forming responsible individuals. Society is becoming increasingly multicultural, and higher education student populations are following suit. Universities can thus be expected to be of benefit to their communities by encouraging intercultural understanding and conversation, as well as building intercultural competences that will enable graduates to behave more effectively and responsibly in a multicultural context (Collier, 2000). In this notion, Outcomes-based Education might be a bane or a boon to the Philippine System depending on how we perceive it as useful or not. Either way, it all depends on us how we see and feel it as good or bad to our country.

It is worth noting that not all academics are in favor of OBE. This can also be due to a disagreement with the mandated goals, but it is more often due to a disagreement with the central assumption of pre-determining academic performance (at least in relation to what they teach). These major problems can be addressed separately. You are free to refute the set objectives (for example, some of the means to the study); but this is not a great foundation for critiquing the outcomes-based education concept (for example, its underlying concepts) (Glatthorn, 2005).

The framework for outcome-based education (OBE) focuses and organizes the curricula upon specifically defined student learning outcomes. It has been recognized as a significant paradigm change in instructional

principles and practice, which emphasizes what students understand and can do as a result of a learning opportunity or obtaining a degree rather than a teacher-centered approach that emphasizes what is presented (Tam, 2014; Biggs, 2014).

A variety of causes have affected the Philippines' transition to OBE. First, there is a rising international trend toward using outcome-based education as a framework for ensuring that the curriculum, instruction, and assessment are all aligned to ensure that graduates meet degree level standards. Second, as a result of globalization, the concept of a borderless and seamless education has gained traction among academic institutions. Third, industry, workplace, and stakeholders push academic institutions to produce graduates who can compete locally and worldwide while also contributing to local, national, and global development. Fourth, graduates with international-standard competencies are more likely to thrive in their professional practice and to display higher global mobility. Finally, according to the Philippine Qualifications Framework, OBE is necessary to "create national standards and levels for outcomes of education and training, skills and competences" (Sana, Roxas & Reyes, 2015).

Studies show that students' self-ratings in ability and confidence have improved over time to compensate for these issues (Brody et al, 2004; Jacobs et al, 2007; Lai and Ramesh, 2006 as cited by Morcke et al, 2013). According to such studies an outcomes-based education aided in the development of subject-specific information, skills, and attitudes (Perera, 2013; Mohayidin, Suandi, Mustapha & Konting, 2008).

Since the adoption of OBE in some Philippine universities, students have shown a strong propensity to be more fruitful after guidance (An, 2014), and OBE has been helpful in terms of improving academics, instruction, and attitude (Borsoto, Lescano, Maquimot, Santorce, Simbulan & Pagcaliwangan, 2014), with OBE-knowledgeable teaching staff contributing significantly to the achievement of organisational and program objectives (Laguador & Dotong, 2014). However, there is a significant lack of research on competency measurement in higher education (Zlatkin-Troitschanskais, Shavelson & Kuhn, 2015), the impact of academic results on learning and teaching (Morcke et al, n.d.), and the numerous factors that affect academics' use of learning outcomes (Zlatkin-Troitschanskais, Shavelson & Kuhn, 2015; Dobbins et al., 2016). OBE is a program that matches education to genuine job opportunities. Higher education institutions in the Philippines are urged to embrace OBE not only for them to be successful locally and internationally but to work towards transformative learning.

5. CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This paper provides educational insights and awareness regarding Outcomes-based Education in the Philippines. The paper could be useful for those individuals and/or groups interested in educational demands, particularly OBE, not only in the Philippines but also in other countries.

6. CONCLUSION

Higher education is about much more than preparing the next generation of employees and imparting scientific information for the benefit of society's economy. Students must be trained as responsible persons and mature citizens in addition to obtaining new knowledge and skills. Only in this way will future graduates have the skills and knowledge to contribute to the growth of the society – to start new businesses, create new occupations, find new solutions to issues, work in multi-cultural settings, and so on.

OBE may or may not be a boon or a bane to the Philippine educational system, but the people who brought about these changes tried their best for the good of our country. This paper does not negate the system or agree with the standards that are stated in this type of educational system in the Philippines. But whether this is a miracle cure or a plague for the country, Filipinos should help attain the ideals because they are the ones who would be mostly affected.

7. DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The author makes a declaration of no conflict of interest.

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