

## **SIGNIFICANCE OF OUTCOME BASED EDUCATION IN THE QUALITY ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

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### **Abstract**

*Outcome- based education is a system where all the parts and aspects of education are focused on the outcome of the course. The students take up courses with a certain goal of developing skills or gaining knowledge and they have to complete the goal by end of the course. There is no specific style or time limit of learning. The student can learn as per their choice. The faculty members, moderators, and instructors guide the students based on the target outcomes.*

*Outcomes based education (OBE) is a process that involves the restructuring of curriculum, assessment and reporting practices in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course credits” (Tucker, 2004). Thus, the primary aim of OBE is to facilitate desired changes within the learners, by increasing knowledge, developing skills and/or positively influencing attitudes, values and judgment. OBE embodies the idea that the best way to learn is to first determine what needs to be achieved. Once the end goal (product or outcome) has been determined the strategies, processes, techniques, and other ways and means can be put into place to achieve the goal.*

**Keywords:** *Outcome-based education (OBE), Teaching, Learning, Assessments.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

OBE is defined as a “...comprehensive approach to organizing and operating an education system that is focused in and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning sought from each student” (Spady, 1994). Outcomes are clear learning results that learners have to demonstrate at the end of significant learning experiences: what learners can actually do with what they know and have learned. Outcomes are actions/ performances that embody and reflect learner competence in using content, information, ideas and tools successfully. Geysler (1999) says when learners do important things with what they know they have taken a significant step beyond knowing itself. Vella, Berardinelli & Burrow (1998) reminds us of the importance of accountability mechanisms (learner assessment) that directly reflect student

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performance and help learners “know what they know”. Thus, outcomes describe the results of learning over a period of time – the results of what is learned versus what is taught.

An outcomes-based approach to education dates back some 500 years to craft guilds of the Middle Ages in Europe in the form of apprenticeship training models and there are many examples still in place today (Spady, 1996). Malan (2000) analysed past educational reforms that influenced OBE and identified the following:

### **TYLER’S EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES**

In 1950, Tyler identified fundamental issues important when developing and planning instruction, including purpose, content, organization and evaluation. (Arjun, 1998 cited in Malan, 2000).

### **BLOOM’S MASTERY LEARNING**

Bloom taxonomies for educational objectives emerged in the 1950s and helped to determine whether learners had attained acceptable standards compared to desired learning outcomes. His mastery learning theory lead most learners are successful in their learning tasks. This notion is reflected in OBE. Other characteristics of mastery learning include:

- Ascertaining prerequisite knowledge or skills to attain goals (outcomes).
- Using different media and materials to create enriched teaching/learning contexts.
- Formative evaluation to provide feedback for both teaching and learning improvement

### **COMPETENCY BASED EDUCATION**

It was introduced in the 1960s in North America in response to growing concerns that students were not being taught what they required after they left school. Malan (2000) summarizes the following

Components from the competency-based literature, noting their prominent in OBE:

- Explicit learning outcomes with respect to the required skills and concomitant proficiency (standard for assessment)
- A flexible timeframe to master skills.
- Adaptable programmes to ensure optimum learner guidance.
- Support for the notion the learner is accountable for his or her own achievement.

## **GLASER'S CRITERION-REFERENCED LEARNING**

In 1963, Glaser described criterion-referenced measurement as that which locates a student's test behaviour on a continuum ranging from "no proficiency" to "perfect performance". Criterion reference instruction and assessment are based on attaining specific outcomes and on testing for competence in terms of stated criterion.

## **SPADY'S OBE APPROACH**

It closely resembles Mager's (1962) guidelines in terms of expected performance, conditions under which it is attained and standards for assessed quality. Competence in the required outcome (learner behaviours) is demonstrated by culminated of significant learning within a context, and specific timeframe required by the individual learner. OBE is explored detail in the following sections.

## **STRENGTHS OF OUTCOME-BASED EDUCATION**

Whether OBE education is suitable for traditional education setups, in an organizational setting with adult on-the-job learners, the outcome-based approach has obvious benefits. Let us look at a few of these.

- **Clear Purpose**

Both students and educators are aware of the desired outcomes right from the beginning, so they know what they are working towards. When dealing with adult learners, this can be a very attractive quality.

- **Practical Emphasis**

There can be less theoretical talk and more action in outcome-based training. If a training upskills employee, then they will need to show, they have learned the skills at the end of the assessment. The decision-makers gear the curriculum toward this.

- **Flexible Approach**

It is up to the ingenuity of the educator to impart the content so all students can absorb and understand it. Assessments need not be rigid—they should provide every opportunity for students to show their mastery. We know this as 'expanded opportunity'—students get every chance to succeed.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

- **Student – cantered:** It places the students at the center of the processes by focusing on student learning outcomes.
- **Faculty – driven:** It encourages faculty responsibility for teaching, assessing program outcomes, and motivating participation from the students.
- **Meaningful:** It provides data to guide the teacher in making valid and continuing improvement in instruction and assessment activities.

## PROCEDURE OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

- Identification of the educational objectives of the subject / course.
- Listing of learning outcomes specified for each subject or course.
- Drafting of outcomes assessment procedure.

## TYPES OF OUTCOMES IN EDUCATION

Two types of outcomes: 1) Immediate outcomes & 2) Deferred Outcomes.

### Immediate outcomes:

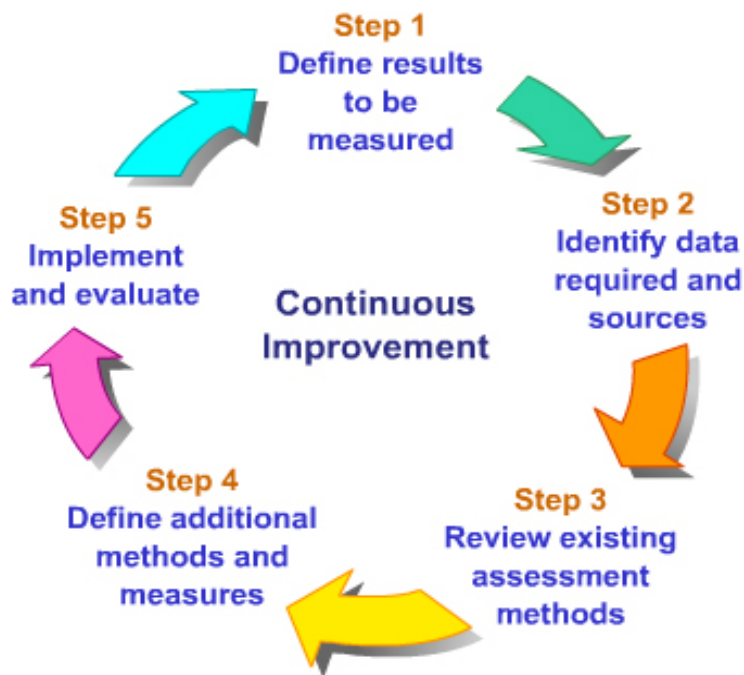
These are competencies or skills acquired upon completion of a subject or course, a grade level, a segment of the program, or of the programme itself. (Example: Passing the board exam, initial job placement)

### Deferred outcomes:

- These refer to the ability to apply cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills / competencies in various situations many years after completion of a subject, grade level, or degree program. (Example: Success in a professional practice or occupation, Awards and recognition related to field)

## DESIGNING ASSESSMENT TASKS

Outcome-based assessment (OBA) asks us to first identify what it is we expect students to be able to do once they have completed a course or program. It then asks us to provide evidence that they are able to do so it is therefore a key part of outcome-based education and used to determine whether a qualification has been achieved.



### Assessment Tools and Methods

- **Summative assessment**

The gathering of information at the conclusion of a course, program, or undergraduate career to improve learning or to meet accountability demands. When used for improvement, impacts the next cohort of students taking the course or program. Examples: examining student final exams in a course to see if certain specific areas of the curriculum were understood less well than others; analysing senior projects for the ability to integrate across disciplines.

- **Criterion-referenced assessment**

The student is assessed in reference to some student outcome that can be expected as a result of an education experience. Criteria are qualities that can provide evidence of achievement of goals or outcomes, such as comprehension of concepts introduced or reinforced, a kind of inquiry behaviour encouraged, or a technique practiced for its potential contribution to the skill of the artist/student or the meaning/communication of the artwork. It makes sense to assess in terms of what a teacher believes was taught.

- **Authentic assessments**

Assessment that fits meaningful, real-life learning experiences. It includes recording evidence of the learning process, applications in products and performances, perception of visual and

audio relationships, integrations of new knowledge, reflecting profitably on one's own progress, and interpreting meaning in consideration of contextual facts.

- **Performance assessments**

An observation of the process of creating an answer or product that demonstrates a student's knowledge and/or skills. Directly observable, student-generated evidence of learning.

## **CONCLUSION**

The significance and benefits of OBE principles as discussed above involve active roles played by relevant parties such as administrators, educators, parents, teachers and even students themselves. OBE promises high level of learning not for few students but for all students. The approach facilitates the achievement of prescribed learning outcomes, which is characterized by its appropriateness to each learner's development level and experienced based learning. In the OBE system, students are given freedom to study the content of the course in a way that it can help them learn it. In general, learning outcomes are being benefited when they influence all components of the curriculum. The outcomes cover the scope and structure of the course content through which students will develop the knowledge, skills and values; focus the instructional methods so that each learning activity has its specific purpose; determine the way in which student placement and advancement will be organized; determine how student learning will be assessed; and focus attention on the learning environment in order to achieve the outcomes.

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