Journal of International
Academic Research for Multidisciplinary

A Global Society for Multidisciplinary Research

www.jiarm.com

Editorial Board

LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND POSSIBLE CONCERNS OF THE MARINE FACULTY MEMBERS ON OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Outcomes-based education is a new approach to quality teaching and learning in the Philippines. This study aimed to determine the level of awareness of Marine faculty members in Lyceum International Maritime Academy in the OBE implementation. Descriptive type of research was used in the study. Findings revealed that they are aware in the use of varied teaching and learning activities towards more student-centered activities which are already being practiced in the classroom setting. They are highly concerned with the time element in the implementation of the OBE considering the quantity and quality of students to align the intended learning outcomes and learning activities which require time, effort and resources. The Dean and the department heads must closely scrutinize and check the alignment of intended learning outcomes in the syllabi of faculty members and check the areas of weaknesses in the OBE preparation and implementation.

KEYWORDS: Awareness, Marine Faculty Members, Outcomes-Based Education, Lyceum

INTRODUCTION

Education is facing challenges in terms of worldwide movement of international students mostly from the Asian and African continents to universities in the West to provide an important source of income to those receiving universities (Biggs and Tang, 2010)

With this trend higher education is pressured to come up with quality assurance or quality enhancement of teaching and learning. This means that students demand high profile programmes that will enhance their prospects. Hence, the challenge lies on how the higher institution will provide the relevant approach to teaching that will address those aspects that bear upon teaching and learning.

Along this line, ministers of education from 27 countries met in Bologna in 1999 where the Bologna Process was set in motion. This led countries to set up

national qualification frameworks which define learning outcomes for each of bachelor, master and doctoral levels describing what learners should know, understand and be able to do on the basis of a given qualification. Today, 47 European countries are committed to the process which aims to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on international cooperation and academic exchange in order to facilitate mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff; prepare students for their future careers and for life as active-citizens in democratic societies; and to support their personal development, offer broad access to high quality higher education (Biggs and Tang, 2011)

Outcome-Based Education is a process that involves the structuring of curriculum assessment and reporting reaction in education to reflect the achievement of high order learning and mastery rather than the accumulation of course credits (Tucker, 2004). Although the Bologna Process does not explicitly prescribe an outcome- based approach, according to Biggs and Tang, the emphasis on learning outcomes imply the emphasis on lifelong learning.

Dr. William Spady, the father of OBE, proposed three basic assumptions: all learners can learn and succeed; success breeds success and "teaching institutions control the conditions of success. The OBE focuses on what the learners should learn which is opposite to the traditional education planning. In OBE, what the learners should learn must be identified first, followed by how they are going to learn these. The assessment and teaching strategies will be dependent on the desired learning outcomes Unlike in the traditional planning, the lessons that should be learned will be identified first and from these lessons the outcomes will be identified (Archarya, 2003).

This led the researcher to go deeper into this paradigm shift of teachers using the teacher-centered approach before to the learner-centered approach. Since the LPU is advocating and implementing this approach it is deemed essential to go in-depth into the awareness of the faculty of LIMA to the challenges of the shift. The change may trigger resistance or denial to accept the challenge when in real teaching situation they somehow practice the approach, hence the study will try to concretize the new terminologies, twist and turns of the activities and alignments of concepts to determine their awareness.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This paper aimed to determine the level of awareness to OBE in terms of formulation of learning outcomes, teaching/learning activities and the possible concerns of the LIMA faculty members in the implementation of OBE.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study aimed to describe the level of awareness and possible concerns of the LIMA faculty to the OBE Approach. The researcher used the descriptive design. It describes data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon being studied. The researcher employed selected faculty members of Lyceum International Maritime Academy in Batangas City, Philippines who are teaching during the second semester of SY 2012-2013.

The researcher used a self-prepared questionnaire. The instrument assessed the level of awareness in terms of formulation of learning outcomes and teaching/learning activities and the level of possible concerns in the implementation of OBE. The second part used the 4-Point Likert Scale where 4 is the highest as highly aware/highly concerned, 3 as aware/concerned 2 as less aware/less concerned and 1 not aware/not concerned.

The researcher submitted the constructed questionnaire to four experts on the OBE approach for validation. After incorporating the suggestions of the experts, the researcher approached the LIMA faculty members to answer the validated questionnaire. Questionnaires were gathered and tallied for the statistical treatment of the data. In order to analyze the gathered data, weighted mean was used to determine the level of awareness and possible concerns in the implementation of OBE.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the mean assessment of the faculty on their level of awareness on the formulation of intended learning outcomes.

The composite mean of 2.99 verbally interpreted as aware indicates that the faculty members are well informed on how to formulate the intended learning outcomes. This maybe attributed to the initiative of the administration to acquaint the faculty to the approach through seminars that they scheduled since summer of 2011 and intensified this second semester of 2012.

Table 1 Mean Assessment of the Faculty on their Awareness in the Formulation of Intended Learning outcomes

Formulation of intended learning Outcomes	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. The intended learning outcomes at the institutional level are statements of what the alumni of the university are supposed to be able to do and manifest	2.14	Less Aware	8
2. Outcome action verbs to use are those that emphasize learning and understanding that come from the student activities.	3.18	Aware	2.5
3. The intended learning outcomes state that the student is able to decide what to do with the topic and at what level.	3.16	Aware	4
4. The intended learning outcomes at the programme level are statements that specify a definite aim based on the content in the curriculum and the teaching of the programme.	3.32	Aware	1
5. Verbs used are aligned to teaching /learning activities and assessment tasks.	3.18	Aware	2.5
6. The intended learning outcomes at the course level are not expectations of what they can become but clarifications of what they are able to perform after teaching that they cannot perform previously.	2.94	Aware	6
7. Curriculum mapping is a systematic means of ensuring alignment between programme ILOs and graduate outcomes and course ILOs and programme ILOs.	2.92	Aware	7
8. In designing and writing course intended learning outcomes balance between content and depth for teaching the topic requires careful thought	3.14	Aware	5
Composite Mean	**2.99**	**Aware**	

Legend: 3.50 -4.00 = Highly Aware; 2.50-3.49= Aware; 1.50-2.49= Less Aware; 1.00-1.49= Not Aware

First in rank in the awareness is the awareness of the faculty in the formulation of intended learning outcomes on the programme level (3.32) since they are the ones assigned to teach the content of the curriculum. It is therefore the responsibility of the

faculty assigned to teach the content to strategize the approaches towards concretizing the intended learning outcomes.

Next in rank is the use of verbs that is student-centered (2.5) and have to be aligned to the teaching and learning activities (2.5). Having been exposed to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive skills, they are able to get a good idea of the intellectual skills characterized by the levels of knowledge, comprehension, application analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Hence, in the SOLO taxonomy which stands for structure of the observed learning outcome introduced by Biggs and Collins in 1982 which provides a systematic way of describing how a learner's performance grows in complexity when mastering many academic tasks, their background on the of Bloom's taxonomy will enable them to scrutinize the quantitative and qualitative stage of learning to structure the complexity of the learning skills. This will further the ability of the teacher to formulate outcomes which will lead students to decide how to go about with the task on hand and the level. This is evidenced by their awareness which is fourth in rank in this area. Added to this is the awareness of the importance of taking into consideration the balance between content and depth of topic to ensure that understanding and not mere retention of facts is given serious thought.

The formulation of intended learning outcomes on the course level got a mean score of 2.94 though verbally interpreted as aware, may post some reservations to the faculty since this will entail choices of outcomes that have to produce a product as a result of the learning outcome intended depending on the nature of the subject and the students involved. This also requires alignment between programme and graduate objective and course and programme objectives which needs careful curriculum review now termed as curriculum mapping which may sound something new to them got a mean of 2.92, though also verbally interpreted as aware is the lowest in rank.. The LIMA faculty are less aware of the intended outcome at the institutional level since indication of the desired results will be determined by the manifestations of the alumni in their chosen fields and may require years to determine.

Table 2 presents the mean assessment of the faculty on teaching and learning activities. The composite mean of 3.27 verbally interpreted as aware indicates that the faculty of LIMA though knowledgeable of varied strategies which allow students to interact and to involve themselves in classroom activities rather than the teacher doing the tasks for them needs further models for implementation to fully attain expertise in student-centered teaching/learning activities.

Table 2 Assessment of the Faculty on Teaching and Learning Activities (TLA)

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLA)	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. In the choice of teaching and learning activity to instill creativity, there is a need for a solid knowledge base to make it function in most high level of thinking to generate "hypothesize, "theorize" or reflect"	3.16	Aware	8
2. Course preparation assignments are intended to give the students a sense of responsibility, involvement and initiative to seek evidences.	3.26	Aware	3.5
3. The student activities give them opportunities for organizing ideas, planning, reflecting and writing essays.	3.24	Aware	5.5
4. When giving a lecture, note taking recording is separated from comprehension to give time to students to check their notes.	3.34	Aware	2
5. Work along exercises are not merely for retention of knowledge but should help student follow the lecture and actively visualize the application of concepts.	3.22	Aware	7
6. The art of questioning should emphasize the difference between convergent and divergent, high or low level questioning.	3.10	Aware	10
7. Teaching activities are such that will allow students to structure the information by establishing logical interconnection of the received information.	3.12	Aware	9
8. Instead of just listening to the teacher, the students are given readings for students to discuss, exchange notes and end up with a consensus.	3.80	Highly Aware	1
9. Activities which allow a variety of kinds of group work that allow students to collaborate with each other as partners to deal with queries, share concerns or to seek clarification.	3.26	Aware	3.5
10. The classroom setting should be on a reflective-knowledge mode rather than just knowledge building mode	3.24	Aware	5.5
Composite Mean	**3.27**	**Aware**	

Evidence of their exposure to allowing students to do the task is the high awareness of the teacher in giving assigned readings (3.80). The students are able to exchange notes, discuss and arrive at a consensus instead of just listening to the teacher and waiting for the guide questions to understand the readings. The LIMA faculty are only aware that lectures are not merely giving information (3.34) but test

of understanding by allowing the students to reflect on their notes and to share their insights and information which may somehow imply that when giving lectures they stopped at just merely giving information. Allowing students to be responsible in seeking evidences (3.26), and share whatever information they gathered through group work (3.26), enhancing their skills to collaborate and deal with queries and clarification on their own all verbally interpreted as aware though acceptable to the LIMA faculty may have the element of time involve in the execution of the desired learning income on the topics involved. The balance between content and depth must be considered in the choice of activities. Last in the rank are their awareness to the reflective rather than just knowledge building mode of the classroom setting, allowing students to plan, organize, reflect and write essays (5.5), visualization of concepts (3.22), hypothesizing and theorizing (3.16), establishing logical connection in the information gathered (3.12), and the art of questioning (3.10), which all belong to high level of thinking dictates a need to hone and sharpen the minds of the faculty along these skills, which is the challenge of the OBE approach.

Table 3Possible Concerns in the Implementation of OBE

Possible Concerns in the Implementation of OBE	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1. Resistance to deviate from the comfort zone of previous practice to the challenge of adopting a new approach	3.06	Concerned	7
2. The quality and number of students to deal with.	3.34	Concerned	2
3. The bulk of documentation of student activities, analyzing and follow-up of manifested learning outcome	3.16	Concerned	6
4. Time element in the preparation and execution of student activities to cover the syllabus content.	3.60	Highly Concerned	1
5. Availability of resource materials	3.32	Concerned	3
6. The nature of the subject taught.	3.24	Concerned	4
7. Alignment of objectives to student activities and outcomes.	3.23	Concerned	5
Composite Mean	**3.28**	**Concerned**	

Legend: 3.50 -4.00 = Highly Concerned; 2.50-3.49= Concerned; 1.50-2.49= Less Concerned; 1.00-1.49= Not Concerned

Table 3 presents the possible concerns of the faculty in the implementation of the OBE Approach. The composite mean of 3.28 verbally interpreted as concerned is

an indication of apprehension of the faculty in the full implementation of the OBE Approach.

Foremost in their concerns is the time element in the preparation and execution of the student activities to cover the syllabus content (3.60), which ranks 1. Though they are aware in considering the content and depth in the choice of the topics to include in the syllabus, rank 2 in their concerns is the quality and number of students (3.34) which could affect the execution of the choice in the strategies using the student-centered approach which at times is time consuming due to the differences in the background of student's learning experiences.

Added to this is the availability of resource materials (3.32), ranking 3rd in their concerns especially in the use of modern technology wherein the faculty has to be resourceful to provide the demands in the choice of teaching and learning activities. Fourth in rank is their concern in the nature of the subject taught (3.24) which in their past experiences in the subject they may feel more effective than using a new approach. Faculty members are also concerned in the alignment of objectives to student activities and outcomes (3.23) since in the preparation of the syllabus right from the start the outcomes has to be identified unlike in the previous preparation of syllabus where there is a leeway in the choice of the activities in the execution of the learning outcomes. The task of documentation of student's output and follow- up of manifested learning outcomes (3.16) is burdensome to the faculty with the number of students to attend to. The faculty members are also concerned with adopting to change (3.06), though it is in the lowest rank.

According to a model of teacher change by Thomas Guskey (2002) significant change of teachers' attitudes and beliefs occurs primarily after they gain evidence of improvements in student learning which means that teachers who have not yet experience something new and have not seen evidences of its effectiveness may contribute to their resistance to change. However, the willingness of the faculty to venture into the unknown is reinforced when they believe that it will contribute to the improvement of the teaching and learning outputs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Marine faculty member are aware in the formulation of intended learning outcomes in the areas of programme and course preparation where they have direct involvement and are adept in the choice of action verbs but less aware in the level of graduate outcomes and alignment between graduate and programme outcomes and programme and course outcomes. They are aware in the use of varied teaching and learning activities which means that approaches towards more student-centered activities are already being practiced in the classroom setting. They are highly concerned with the time element in the implementation of the OBE considering the number and quality of students to align the intended learning outcomes and learning activities which require time, effort and resources.

The Dean and the department heads must closely scrutinize and check the alignment of intended learning outcomes in the syllabi of faculty members and check the areas where the weaknesses in the preparation. Though the LIMA faculty members are aware in the choice of teaching and learning activities, implementation in actual classroom situation has to be closely monitored to reinforce that their strategies jibe with the OBE approach. Dean and department heads may provide avenues for the LIMA faculty members to share their reflections and experiences in the use of the OBE approach so that the language of OBE maybe a part of their everyday conversations. The Human Resource department may intensify the awareness of the Marine faculty members on the OBE approach through seminars which will showcase models of its implementation. Further studies on the awareness of the LIMA faculty on the area of assessment and implementation of the OBE approach may be undertaken.

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