

Educators' Attitude towards Outcomes-Based Educational Approach in English Second Language Learning

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Abstract Determining the educators' attitude towards Outcomes-Based Educational (OBE) approach in English language is essential for the success of any undertaking to shift to a new paradigm in the curriculum. This study used descriptive-correlational research design to investigate to what extent English language educators are accepting or resisting the envisioned education approach in a State University. Quantitative data gathered from researcher-made survey were analyzed using SPSS software. Relationships among variables were determined using the Spearman's rho. Results revealed that the respondents' age, number of years in teaching and educational attainment are positively related to their attitude towards Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). This study has helped in making the educational institution realize the pressing need for their commitment to support academic staff by providing continuing professional development to educators, and a facilitative learning environment to students that will help achieve the desired learning outcomes in English as Second Language (ESL) class.

Keywords: Attitude, educator, English as Second Language (ESL) learning, Outcomes-Based Education (OBE), teaching approach

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1. Introduction

The higher education community has been in the task of switching its methodologies to focus more on the outcomes rather than on the incomes. The individual Higher Education Institution is there to prove that it is able to attract graduates with the appropriate knowledge and skills.

The Philippines is saddled by the fact that yearly it is able to produce graduates that almost always add up to the unemployed and under-employed statistics. Graduates of baccalaureate degrees are said to have mismatched knowledge and skills as compared to what are being demanded by the industries. Truly, job mismatch has always been a dilemma among college graduates [1]. It is also a dilemma among incoming college students because of the fear of not being able to land a job after they finish their baccalaureate degree or if they do, then they might get a job far different from what they have studied. Employers look for knowledge and skills from job applicants. As such, schools are being tasked to provide their students the knowledge and skills that will match industry requirements.

President Benigno Aquino III has already signed an executive order that would put in place an integrated

system of quality education to address the mismatch in jobs and skills and generate employment. The schools need to verify if their students can demonstrate the knowledge and skills. The Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) approach claims that it is very much after on how students can demonstrate their knowledge and skills – hence, the student outcomes. The logic there is on how the schools could assess student outcomes as required by industries. The OBE approach is said to be on track to changing the educational system from inputs based to outputs based.

Traditional learning methodologies insist on the quality of inputs (facilities, curricula, instruction, materials, etc.) to determine student competencies. The traditional methodology assumes that if a particular school would be able to provide good teachers, learning-conducive rooms, state-of-the-art facilities, the latest curricula, advanced learning, etc., then the school is likely to produce employable students. The traditional learning methodologies have failed to capitalize instead on what students could do after undergoing the learning process. A significant part of the OBE processes involve determining appropriate and measurable outcomes. Thus, the OBE is said to be the key to guaranteeing student employability in the future.

Determining the appropriate and measurable outcomes can be very difficult. Since outcomes are different for every field of study, the choice of specific outcomes is

often a source of controversies. For instance, the learning outcomes for structural engineering (a so-called hard science) would be on determining how the students are able to design buildings. Social sciences (so-called soft sciences) however, would be hard-pressed to determine what exactly are the outcomes should be. In English language learning, what exact knowledge and skills (whether written, communicated or expressed) should be assessed?

English remains to be the standard language. The country's predominance in English-based industries (e.g. education, call centers, business process outsourcing, software development, medical transcription, etc.) is due mainly to the relatively high command of the language by the employees. However, the Philippines' edge in English proficiency is said to be declining. Anecdotal reports of call centers revealed that a very small portion of those who apply are being accepted because only three of 100 applicants are proficient in English [2]. University professors lament the inability of college students to comprehend and express themselves in English.

English language educators need not only be preoccupying themselves on the various aspects of teaching the English language. They also need to determine which English knowledge and skills are there to teach and to determine if their students are getting these knowledge and skills.

In order to comply with the envisioned changes in the education system, a new strategy and model for the transfer of knowledge and skills for lecturers have to be envisioned. A flexible learning approach has to be adopted. This approach has to challenge the educator to interpret and stimulate the student's thinking patterns and also to assist the student in the solving of problems. Thus, English language educators will be challenged to engage and act as learners' facilitators rather than as conveyers of knowledge and information in order to adapt to the new paradigm in education. The researcher is of the opinion that this could lead to the development of certain attitudes amongst educators.

This paper seeks to investigate to what extent English language educators are accepting or resisting the envisioned education approach (outcomes-based) and/or what attitudes they may foster towards the envisioned new learning approach to be implemented in a State University.

It specifically: (a) describes the demographics of English professors in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, academic rank, and number of years in teaching; (b) determines the attitude of the English professors in terms of knowledge, belief, feelings, readiness and level of acceptance towards outcomes-based education; and (c) find out the relationship between educators' demographics and attitude towards outcomes-based educational approach in English Second Language (ESL) learning.

2. Literature Review

As early as 1902 John Dewey, who was the chief advocate of the learner-centered curriculum, attempted to establish a curriculum that is balanced, in which the learning content obtain the learners' interests and needs. Schools around the globe proposed the same paradigm

shift from an educator and content-driven curriculum to an outcomes-based and learner-centered curriculum which is OBE.

There are many definitions of OBE stated by different researchers in the field. According to Reference [3] Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) means focusing and organizing an education system around what is essential for all learners to be able to succeed at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for learners to be able to do, then organizing curriculum, teaching, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens. OBE is therefore, a learner-centered approach and an outcomes-oriented curriculum model.

OBE is an approach to education as well as a type of learning process wherein decisions about the curriculum are driven by the exit learning outcomes that the students should display at the end of the course [4,5].

In the OBE pedagogy, learners work collaboratively posing questions, arriving at and formulating conjectures and discussing the validity of solutions [6]. According to Reference [7] the educator's role is to promote discourse in which learners listen to, respond to, and question the educator and one another and try to convince themselves and one another of the validity of particular representations, solutions, conjectures, and answers.

In this study, OBE will mean a change of instruction from content to learning outcomes. Thus it is meant for a holistic approach to education which makes use of holistic classroom teaching techniques. OBE is a term used to imply that everything will be designed and organized around the intended outcomes, which a learner needs to demonstrate at the end of the learning program.

Educators are key contributors to the transformation of OBE. An educator is a person who is professionally and didactically trained and who is qualified, as far as his or her respective subject(s) and his or her occupation is concerned, to carry out educative teaching [8]. In this study, the term educator refers to the part time and full-time English instructors and professors of the Laguna State Polytechnic University-Los Baños Campus (LSPU-LBC).

According to Reference [9], the OBE approach promotes the effective use and integration of various teaching and learning strategies by the educator, as well as the learners. The use of the OBE approach in English Second Language (ESL) classrooms aims to develop learners' competency and the ability to use English in authentic situations, such as during formal and informal conversations.

Heugh, Siergruhn and Pluddermann [10] point out that educators and learners in the ESL classroom are involved in the communicative process when using strategies such as direct instruction, discussion, group work, co-operative learning, problem solving, and learner research and performance activities effectively. Educators need to integrate these strategies in ESL teaching and learning. The language skills of writing, listening, reading and speaking are needed by ESL learners in order to complete the task-based activities that forms part of the OBE approach. Learners in the Grade eight ESL classrooms are to be given the opportunity to be actively involved in task-based activities such as debates, discussions and problem solving.

According to Leamnson [11], learners verbalize thoughts via inventive language. Inventive language is when the ESL educator aims to activate the language senses of the learners in order to enforce verbal thought. This may lead learners to engage in activities that aim to improve English language skills. Such activities help to convert “fuzzy associations” in the brain into “firm verbalized ideas” [11]. Through participation in the ESL learning activities, learners become actively involved in their own learning.

Reference [12] points out those teaching and learning strategies describe the ways in which educators apply skills, techniques and styles. Educators need to apply a variety of teaching strategies to allow learners to demonstrate the learning they have mastered. One such strategy is where learners engage collaboratively in pairs or groups in order to enhance the acquisition of ESL. The ESL educator should guide the process while learners provide outputs such as dialogues, role-plays and games. Such activities provide learners with opportunities to speak, listen, write and read [13]. For instance, grammar knowledge involves not only the learning of certain set rules, but also entails learning how to manipulate language devices well in conveying certain meanings.

Sakian [14] uses radio programs as a strategy to assist in the teaching of ESL. Radio programs, such as talk shows on current topics and contemporary events that affect the community, provide opportunities for learners to openly make language inputs and meaningful expressions in the ESL classroom. Radio programs also prepare learners for authentic communication, as well as independent language enrichment in the environment outside the class situation.

Ali [10] says that ESL communication is a way of promoting growth of intelligent, creative and lateral thinking in order to emulate and uncultured ESL learners with English values. Learners develop themselves when they use and communicate in English. The inability to exercise the use of English in the ESL classrooms will hamper learners’ competency in communication.

The majority of learners from previously disadvantaged schools battle with ESL communication related activities because they are not proficient in English. ESL educators need to change from an educator-centered approach to a learner-centered approach. This change affects the strategies of ESL educators as they are used to the previously traditional teaching and learning strategies. Traditional teaching strategies in the languages, such as the use of the telling method hamper the learners’ cognition and as a result lead to underachievement.

In ESL communication, educators and learners interact in a meaningful way. Van Schalkwyk [9] defines communication as a two-way process in which feedback takes place when a certain medium is in use. The medium creates understanding not only to educators (the encoders of inputs), but also and most importantly to learners (the decoders of outputs). In teaching and learning, a meaningful interaction that takes place between educators and learners brings about effective ESL communication.

OBE was adopted as the approach that would enable the articulation between education and training, recognition of prior learning, and thus increased mobility for learners between different vocations [15].

3. Methodology

This section presents the research design, sampling technique, research instrument, procedure, and statistical treatment used in the study.

3.1. Research Design

The study used descriptive-correlational research design to address the educators’ attitude towards OBE approach in ESL learning.

It considered the background characteristics of the respondents, and their knowledge, beliefs, feelings or acceptance level and readiness towards implementing the outcomes-based educational approach in ESL learning at LSPU-LBC.

These involve issues that relate to teaching a specific course, such as how a teacher understands and believes what to teach in that course, how to teach, and correspondingly to what extent they agree with those related ideas of OBE approach.

3.2. Sampling Technique

The researcher used purposive sampling and total enumeration of all English educators of LSPU-LBC for the first semester of the academic year 2015-2016. A total of 15 respondents participated in answering the researcher-made questionnaire. The researcher-made questionnaire was validated by subject specialists. The instrument was pilot tested to five English professors who were not part of the respondents. This resulted in slight alterations in the protocol.

3.3. Instrument

The study used researcher-made questionnaire consisting of two parts. The first part determines the demographics of the respondents in terms of age, sex, highest educational attainment, academic rank and number of years in teaching. The second part is composed of 25 attitudinal statements reflecting to the knowledge, beliefs, feelings, readiness, and acceptance levels of English language educators towards the OBE. These are measured using four-point Likert scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

3.4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data gathered was analyzed using SPSS software. Descriptive statistics such as the mean, frequency counts, and percentage distributions were used in tabular presentations of the results. Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient or Spearman’s rho was utilized to determine the relationships among the demographics and attitude towards outcomes-based educational approach in ESL learning.

4. Results and Discussions

This section presents the detailed discussion of all data gathered which were organized according to the objectives of the study. Quantified data were tabulated, analyzed and interpreted.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Age Range	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
20-30	4	26.7
31-40	4	26.7
41-50	3	20.0
51-60	3	20.0
61-70	1	6.7
Total	15	100
Sex		
Male	6	40.0
Female	9	60.0
Total	15	100
Highest Educational Attainment		
Bachelor's Degree	1	6.67
with MA/MS units	6	40.0
Master's Degree	5	33.3
with EdD/PhD units	3	20.0
Total	15	100
Academic Rank		
Part-time	6	40.0
Instructor I - III	5	33.3
Asst.Prof. I - IV	4	26.7
Total	15	100
No. of years in teaching		
0-4	5	33.3
5-9	6	40.0
20+yrs.	4	26.7
Total	15	100

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents in terms of age, sex, educational attainment, academic rank and length of teaching service. Most of their ages range from 20-40 years old which is 53.2% of the total population. A total of 15 respondents participated in filling out the survey questionnaire. Majority is female, which is about 60% of the respondents. Most of them are currently taking up their Masters' degree which is 40% of the total population. Forty percent (40%) of them are part-

time instructors, while only four (26.6%) are Assistant Professor. Most of them have been into teaching from five to nine years in the service.

4.1. Educator's Attitude towards OBE Approach in ESL Learning

Attitude is measured using a survey questionnaire consisting of 25 attitudinal statements/items reflecting to the English educators' knowledge, beliefs, feelings, acceptance level and readiness towards OBE approach.

Table 2 presents the educator's attitude as measured by their perceived level of knowledge, beliefs, feelings, readiness and acceptance towards OBE approach.

Based on the data gathered the educators have positive attitude towards OBE, in terms of their knowledge, belief, feelings, acceptance level and readiness in handling and facilitating an English Second Language class. Considering that the majority of the respondents are part-time instructors and their ages are ranging from 20-40 years old or within the middle adulthood stage, educators are more likely to be optimistic, positive or open to educational changes. Most of them believe that OBE will allow them to be more flexible in employing a variety of teaching methods in ESL class. They believed (3.67=SA) that OBE indeed provides all ESL students with equal educational opportunities. Thus, it will raise the standards of students' academic achievements in English allowing them to have the competencies needed in the field of work or industry.

However, taking into consideration some constraints particularly in terms of the class size where OBE approaches could be applied. This has to do with its successful implementation if employed accordingly, something which the respondents also confirmed.

Table 2. Educator's attitude towards OBE approach in ESL learning

Knowledge	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I know where to start with an OBE approach in ESL class.	3.60	SA
2. I am able to align the world of learning with the world of work.	3.60	SA
3. I know how to facilitate an outcomes-based ESL class.	3.67	SA
4. I am equipped to establish a satisfactory OBE classroom climate, providing cooperative, well directed and purposeful activities.	3.27	A
5. My knowledge of the assessment techniques for OBE is adequate.	2.94	A
Beliefs		
6. I believe that most OBE approaches prepare the student better for the workplace.	3.53	SA
7. I believe OBE will raise the standards of students' academic achievements in English.	3.73	SA
8. I believe that an OBE approach to learning would require more liaisons with industry.	3.60	SA
9. I believe that OBE will allow me to be more flexible in employing a variety of teaching methods in ESL class.	3.73	SA
10. I believe that OBE approach will provide all ESL students with equal educational opportunities.	3.67	SA
Feelings		
11. I feel that OBE approaches require more responsibilities from Academics than content driven approaches.	3.60	SA
12. I feel that an OBE approach to ESL learning would not be a waste of time.	3.67	SA
13. I feel that traditional pen and paper tests to assess student competencies do not always benefit the students.	3.33	A
14. I feel that OBE approach is the best learning approach	3.26	A
15. I feel that OBE will provide me with an opportunity to ensure that all learners achieve success	3.46	SA
Readiness		
16. I have conflict of interests between an OBE approach and the content approach of learning.	2.93	A
17. I am more interested in presenting OBE approach than content driven approach in ESL classes	3.27	A
18. Knowing that OBE is mandatory motivates me to do more preparation.	3.33	A
19. I believe that my interest in OBE approach to ESL learning enhances my ability to be a good facilitator.	3.46	SA
20. I believe that large classes at LSPU (more than 40 students per group) will hinder the successful implementation of OBE.	3.40	A
Acceptance Level		
21. My daily schedule allows for adequate preparation time of OBE approaches.	3.00	A
22. I have the available resources to present ESL lessons using OBE approach.	2.87	A
23. I believe that my experience in teaching will help me to adapt to an OBE approach of learning.	3.46	SA
24. I do a lot of subject-related reading in order to improve my knowledge and understanding of OBE approaches.	3.46	SA
25. I have received adequate training in OBE.	2.53	A

Range: 3.45-4.00 - Strongly Agree (SA); 2.45-3.44- Agree (A); 1.45-2.44- Disagree (D); 1.00-1.44- Strongly Disagree (SD).

Response on the level of acceptance show how their experiences in teaching help them to adapt to an OBE approach (3.46=SA). Although, they agreed with their exposure to some trainings (2.53=A). And yet their increasing awareness, knowledge and understanding of its principles, is something which they perceived a product of their individual pursuit (3.46=SA).

On the other hand, statement concerning the availability of resources (2.87=A) needed for successful implementation of OBE in ESL classes is another area. The respondents perceived it as one that needs to be considered.

4.2. Relationship between the Educator's Demographics and Attitude towards OBE

Table 3 presents the summary of the correlation coefficients of educators' demographics and attitude towards OBE. Spearman's Rho Correlation Coefficient reveals a positive relationship between educators' demographics and attitude towards OBE. The relationship of certain demographics to attitude ranges from very low to moderate degree such as the educator's sex ($r=.16$), educational attainment ($r=.34$), academic rank ($r=.22$), and years in teaching ($r=.22$).

Table 3. Correlation coefficients of educators' demographics and attitude towards OBE

n 15	Age	Sex	Educational Attainment	Academic Rank	Years in Teaching
Attitude	0.41	0.158	0.344	0.343	0.224

r value : 1.0- Perfect; .70 to .99- Very High; .50 to .69- Substantial; .30 to .49- Moderate; .10 to .29 Low; .01 to .09- Negligible.

Although age, as indicated by the correlation coefficient ($r=.41$) has to do with educators' attitude towards OBE approach, this means that as the educator gets older, his or her attitude towards OBE approach might be moderately associated either positively/favorably or negatively/not so favorably. Therefore, educator's attitude changes as influenced by their professional training and experiences.

5. Conclusion

The study proves how the focus of education has shifted from the educator to learner. However, this shift requires change within the educational system in order to facilitate learning. Establishing an OBE system for education is the best way for a particular learner to reach the desired outcomes. The role of the educator is to enable and encourage all learners to achieve essential outcomes while the learner actively participates in and contributes towards the learning process. However, this major role of the educators should be backed up with substantial actions and concrete support from those who are in authority to better implement the desired curriculum and its approaches.

Truly, OBE demands a strong institutional commitment to continuing professional development of its faculty to better serve its major stakeholders, the learners. With a strong determination combined with collaboration and harmony among human and material resources, indeed successful implementation of OBE will reach far beyond anyone could imagine.

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