# Implementing Outcome-Based Learning (OBL) at Course Level in the English Department

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# OVERVIEW

◎ English Department OBL Project Update

◎ Principles of Outcome-Based Learning

◎ Implementing OBL at Course Level

⊙ The design of appropriate Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) to map with the PILOs

⊙ The adjustment of teaching and assessing strategies to align with the CILOs

⊙ Methods of evaluating and refining the OBL implementation at course level

◎ Summary

# OBL Project Update

◎ Departmental OBL Project

⦿ Started in August 2008

⦿ Project Outcomes to date

- BEd(EL) Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) , mapping with the Institute's Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs).

- All BEd (EL) course outlines, including the new ones for the 335 curriculum, have been converted into OBL format.

- In 2009-10, 4 colleagues piloted OBL in their courses.

- In 2010-11, 3 colleagues piloted OBL in Semester 1, while 16 piloted in Semester 2.

# Outcome-Based Learning

◎ Definition:

Clearly focusing and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all student to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences. This means starting with a clear picture of what is important for students to be able to do, then organizing the curriculum, instruction, and assessment to make sure this learning ultimately happens (Spady, 1994:1).

# Outcome-Based Learning

- OBL moves away from an input view of curriculum (what will be covered) to a student achievement perspective (what students will do).

- In reality inputs and outcomes are not strictly separable and are mutually influencing.

# Outcome-Based Learning

- Features of outcome-based education system:
  - Creation of a curriculum framework that outlines specific, measurable outcomes.
  - Standards-based assessment that determines whether students have achieved the stated standard.
    - Assessment may take *any* form, but must measure whether the student knows the required information or can perform the required task.
  - A commitment that all students of all groups will ultimately reach the same minimum standards.

◎ Outcomes based education is drawn from vocational education – assessment of tasks which can be performed.

- ◉ Assessment purpose: obtaining evidence that students can perform identified tasks.

- ◉ Assessment criteria: demonstration through actual performance of identified tasks.

- ◉ Assessment reporting: statement that students can perform stated tasks.

◎ Vocational models may not match completely with academic requirements – e.g. control of a body of knowledge.

- ◉ Assessment may need to include elements other than performance on tasks.

- ◉ Assessment may need to establish pre-requisite knowledge for performing tasks as an element of assessing performance.

# Outcome-Based Learning and Assessment

⦿ Assessment of outcomes for complex behaviours – e.g. teaching – is only partial.

  ⊙ Assesses classes of behaviours not discrete behaviours.

  ⊙ Complex behaviours are multifaceted and tasks may address only parts of a behaviour.

# DESIGN COURSES ADOPTING THE OBL APPROACH

◎ Begin with **the end** in mind *(Spady's principle of "designing down")* and brainstorm the outcomes of your course (use appropriate verbs);

◎ Decide on a number of (around 2-6) essential **intended learning outcomes**, i.e. what you want your students to be able to do at the end of the course successfully *(Spady's principle of "clarity of focus")*, which should map with the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs);

◎ Design the teaching and learning activities (**TLAs**) which help students to achieve these outcomes;

◎ Develop authentic **assessment tasks** to directly measure the achievement of these outcomes, and use feedback from assessment to improve teaching and assessment as appropriate.

# THE ALIGNMENT PROCESS

PILOS

CILOs/ CILLOs

Assessment Tasks (ATs)

Teaching & Learning Activities (TLAs)
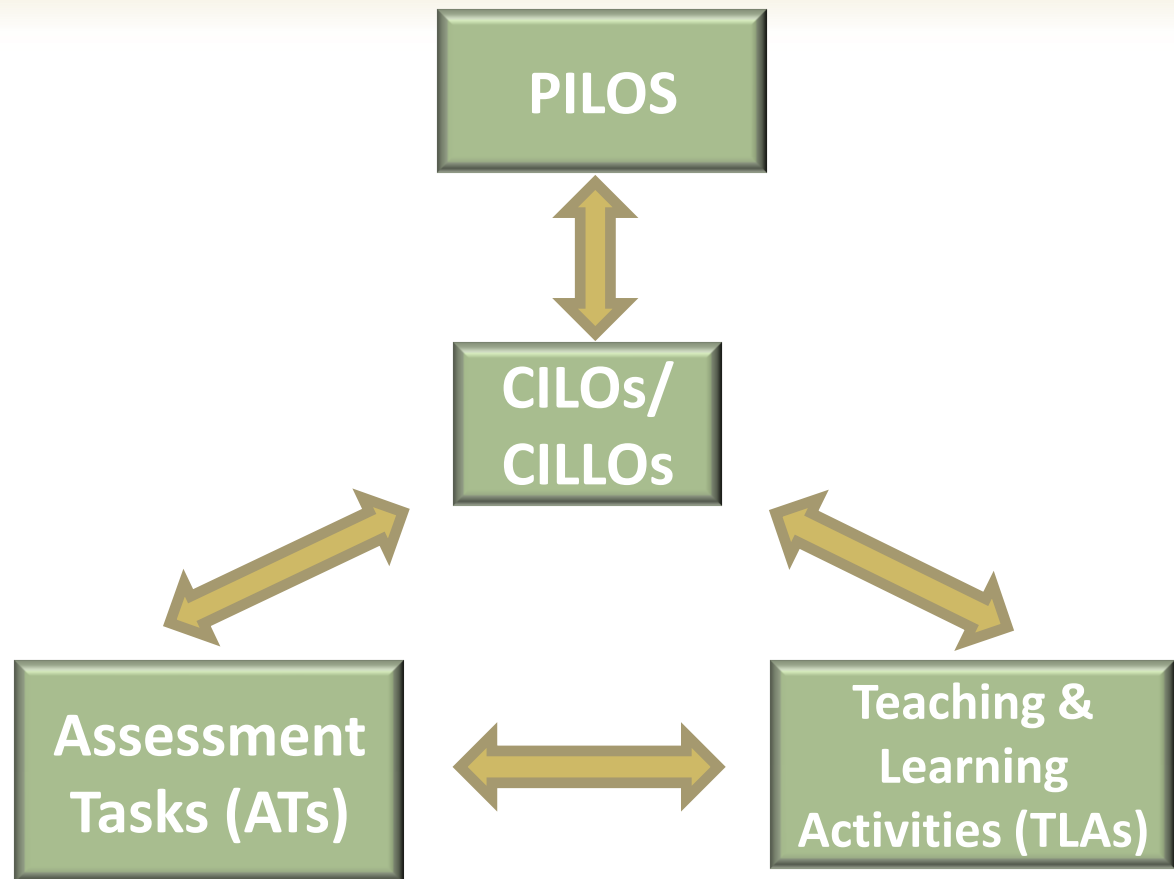
# Course intended learning outcomes (CILOs)

- CILOs are the anticipated knowledge, skills and/or qualities that a student may exhibit by the end of a discrete learning period.

- CILOs provide clear guidance for the planning and development of the teaching process, including the design and organization of materials, the selection of the most appropriate teaching methods, as well as providing a measure for quality assurance (Biggs, 2003).

# WHAT KINDS OF CILOS?

◎ The CILOs must be:

⊙ Attractive: students want to achieve them

⊙ Comprehensible: students know the meaning

⊙ Attainable: students can learn to achieve them

⊙ Coherent: they map with the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs)

(Baume, 2005)

# CILOs of the course "Introduction to Language Studies" (example)

◎ analyse and articulate the nature, structures and functions of the English language as a rich and complex system; **[PILO1 (SK1)]**

◎ apply principles of language to the specifics of the English language System; **[PILO1 (SK1)]**

◎ demonstrate a clear understanding of the roles and value of different varieties of English and their uses. **[PILO9 (GC3)]**

# Course intended language learning outcomes (CILLOs)

◎ Transforming the former 'language objectives' into the Course Intended Language Learning Outcomes (CILLOs) in the course "Introduction to Language studies": e.g.

⊙ demonstrate an appropriate level of English academic literacy in speaking, writing and online contexts; **[PILO3 (SK3)**]

⊙ use appropriate academic language to work collaboratively in an effective way to develop English academic literacy and subject knowledge. **[PILO3 (SK3)]**

# MAP CILOS/CILLOS WITH PILOS

- All CILOs/CILLOs have been mapped onto different Programme Intended Learning Outcomes, such as PILO1 (SK1), PILO3 (SK3) or PILO9 (GC3).

- Through careful mapping, all PILOs are reflected in different courses, and all CILOs/CILLOs address certain PILOs.

- Students are guaranteed to achieve the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes after completing all the courses in the BEd (EL) programme.

# Adjust teaching & assessing strategies to align with CILOs

- It is crucial that the teaching and learning activities are adjusted after finalizing the CILOs, so as to help the students to achieve these outcomes. For example:

  - If one of the learning outcomes of a course is collaborative learning, it is necessary to design activities such as group projects and group oral presentations.

  - If another learning outcome is to demonstrate high level of academic literacy, then it is crucial to ask students to carry out online and offline academic reading, write literature reviews, and carry out other activities related to academic writing.

# ADJUST TEACHING & ASSESSING STRATEGIES TO ALIGN WITH CILOS

- The assessing strategies must also be revisited and if necessary revised so that they are aligned with the learning outcomes. Without doing so, it will be highly problematic to show whether students have achieved certain learning outcomes by the end of a course.

  - In the past, when lecturers took the objective-oriented approach, it is often found that some of the learning objectives are not addressed by any of the assessment tasks.

  - When adopting the OBL approach, we need to adjust the assessment tasks to ensure that all the learning outcomes have been addressed by the assessment tasks to some extent.

# ADJUST TEACHING & ASSESSING STRATEGIES TO ALIGN WITH CILOS

- When constructing assessment tasks to align with the CILOs, we could follow a set of guiding questions and a number of steps.

  - ◆ Guiding questions like:

    - ⊙ Which Course Intended Learning Outcomes will you work with?

  - ◆ Steps for constructing assessment tasks:

    *Step 1*: Identify Components/General Criteria

    - ⊙ What does this outcome mean?

    - ⊙ Develop some general criteria that describe your expectations for student performance of this outcome.

# Adjust teaching & assessing strategies to align with cilos

- ◆ Steps for constructing assessment tasks:  (cont'd)

  *Step 2*: Design an Instrument or Process using the  GRASPS model (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005))

  - ➢ Goal
  - ➢ Role
  - ➢ Audience
  - ➢ Situation
  - ➢ Product/Performance/Purpose
  - ➢ Standards and Criteria for Success

# Assessment tasks of "introduction to language studies"

| Assessment Tasks | Weighting (%) | CILOs/ CILLOs |
|---|---|---|
| a. Wikibook group task: students work in groups to write chapters for a student-authored academic textbook based on the course content, each student writes about 1000 words. | 35 | $CILO_{1, 2, 3}$ $CILLO_1$ |
| b. 15-minute group presentation of the framework of the particular chapter. | 10 | $CILO_{1, 2, 3}$ $CILLO_{1, 2}$ |
| c. Individual written essay (1,000 words). | 35 | $CILO_{1, 2, 3}$ $CILLO_{1,}$ |
| d. Collaborative work: reading and commenting on all groups' wikibook chapters; participating in all seminar activities. | 10 | $CILO_{1, 2, 3}$ $CILLO_2$ |
| e. Short online weekly quizzes. | 10 | $CILO_{1, 2, 3}$ |

# FEATURES OF OBL ASSESSMENT

◎ must be aligned with the outcomes that are being measured

◎ should focus on the knowledge and skills that are most important for learners to learn

◎ should be designed to engage learners in higher-order thinking

◎ should be comprehensive to address all the important outcomes

◎ procedures should be fair and reliable

(Killen, 2009)

# Outcome-based assessment

- ◎ Authentic assessment: performance assessment, like the performance of the skills

- ◎ Formative assessment: short quizzes, reflective journals

- ◎ Summative assessment: examinations

- ◎ Continuous assessment: participation in class activities, presentations, etc., which all contribute to the completion of a project

- ◎ Criterion-referenced assessment: compare the performances of individual learners with performance criteria that are established before learners attempt the assessment task

# Evaluation of OBL in courses

◎ Students

⊙ Mid-course Evaluation

⊙ End-of-course Evaluation

⊙ The evaluation results can inform the lecturers the necessary revision of the course outlines and their teaching strategies.

◎ Lecturers

⊙ Reflection Form

⊙ For professional growth, lecturers reflect on their implementation of OBL in their courses to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

# EVALUATION OF OBL IN COURSES

◎ The survey data of the End-of-course evaluation demonstrates the existence of five factors

- ⊙ Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) [Q.1 & Q.2]

- ⊙ Planning, design and alignment of the course [Q.3 – Q.5]

- ⊙ Learning and teaching activities of the course [Q.6 – Q.8]

- ⊙ Course assessment [Q.9]

- ⊙ Feasibility/Comparison [Q.10 – Q.13]

# Evaluation of OBL in courses

◎ Lecturers who piloted OBL in their courses in Semester 2 (2010-11) have all conducted the mid-course and end-of course evaluations on OBL implementation in their courses. The data analysis reports of these surveys are compiled by the SRA of the FLAN OBL team. By now, the data-analysis results of the Mid-course Evaluation surveys have been sent back to the lecturers, the data analysis of End-of-course Evaluation surveys is still in progress.

# OUTCOMES AT MULTIPLE LEVELS

Program outcome

Inferred assessment

Course outcome

Course outcome

Course outcome

Actual assessment

# Outcomes at multiple levels

◎ Consequences

⊙ Need to map course level against program level to ensure that

○ Program level outcomes are actually assessed

○ Complexity of behaviours is represented in assessment

○ Curriculum changes do not invalidate claims about known (certified) abilities of students