

Successful implementation of Outcome-Based Learning at course level: key issues

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Outline

- The essence of OBL
- Design of CILOs
- Keys to successful implementation of OBL at course level

The 'Essence' of OBL

- In OBL, what matters ultimately is not what is taught, but what is **learned**;
- Teachers must set appropriate course intended **learning outcomes**, instead of teaching objects;
- **Constructive alignment: What** we teach, **how** we teach and how we **assess** ought to be **aligned** with the **intended learning outcomes**, such that they are fully consistent with each other;
- The quality of teaching is to be judged by the **quality of learning** that takes place.

Factors affecting the success of OBL

- First, what the student is to learn must be clearly identified.
- Second, the student's progress is based on demonstrated achievement.
- Third, multiple instructional and assessment strategies need to be available to meet the needs of each student.
- And finally, adequate time and assistance need to be provided so that each student can reach the maximum potential.

(Towers, 1996)

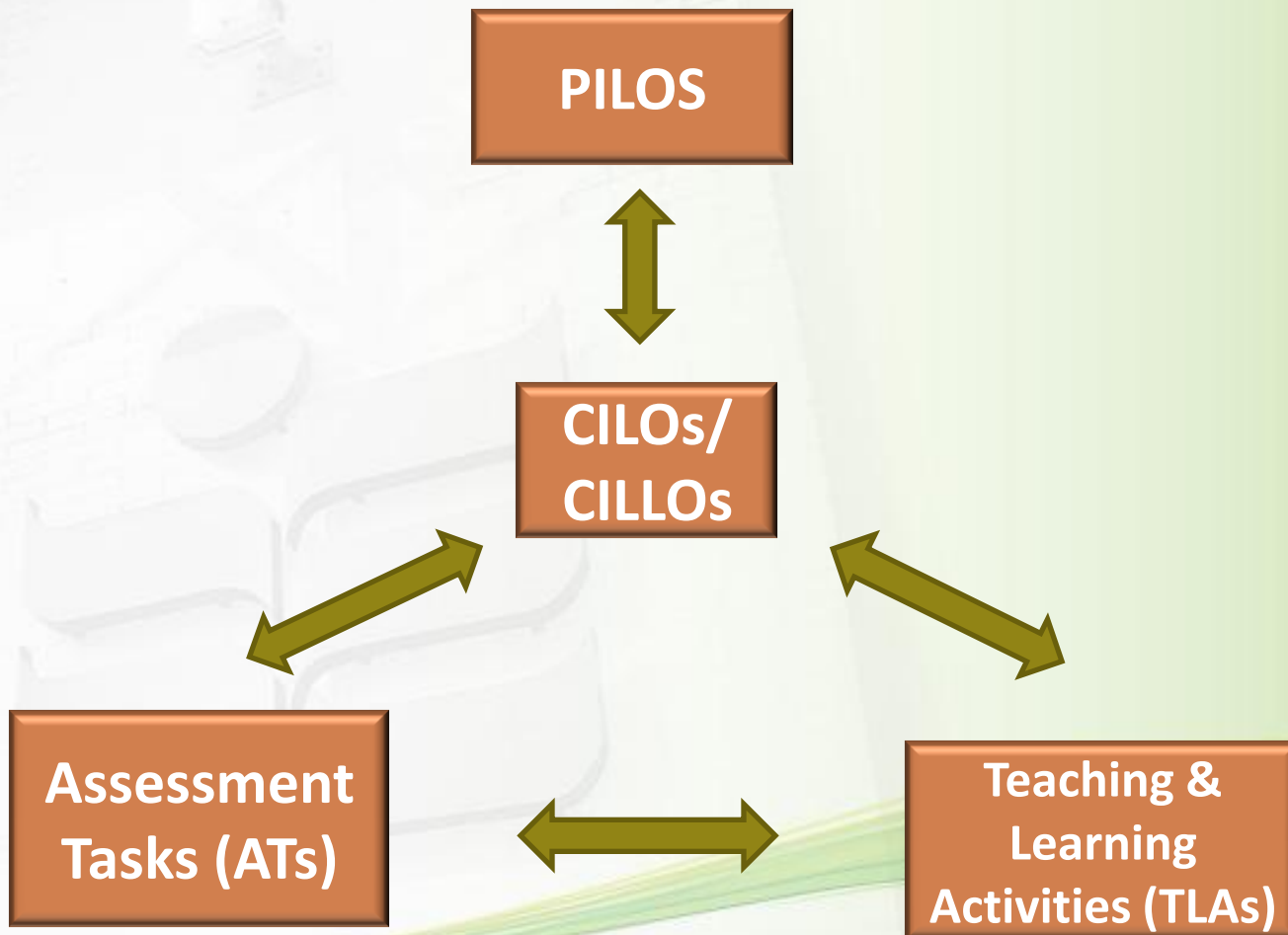
A Comparison between the Traditional Teaching Approach and the Outcome-based Approach

Traditional Teaching Approach	Outcome-based Approach
Teacher-centered	Learner-centered
Teacher as Instructor	Teacher as Partner / Facilitator
Focus on teacher's input	Focus on learner's output
Rigid and controlling	Flexible and empowering
Emphasis on products	Emphasis on progress / overall learning experience
Course objectives	Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
Norm-referenced assessment	Criterion-referenced assessment
Content-based & content delivery	Ability-based & ability building

Designing 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 (ATs)** to directly measure the achievement of these outcomes, and use feedback from assessment to improve teaching and assessment as appropriate.

The Alignment Process



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 Linguistics” (Example)

- After successful completion of the course, students will be able to:
 - 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):

After successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a level of academic literacy appropriate to basic linguistic description and the construction of a Wikibook. **[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 learning outcome is to demonstrate high level of academic literacy, then it is crucial to ask students to carry out academic reading and writing activities.

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 Linguistics”

Assessment Tasks (ATs)	Weighting (%)	CILOs / CILLOs
a. Wikibook group task: students works in groups to write chapters for a student-authored academic textbook based on the course content, each student writes about 1,000 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, 2007)

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

Assessment Marking Criteria

Traditional course outline	OBL course outline
Assessment Marking Criteria	Assessment Marking Criteria
<p>Only ONE rubric of marking criteria for the assessment tasks, which is a set of generic criteria for all written assessments in the English Department.</p>	<p>Three different sets of rubrics of assessment criteria for Task 1 to Task 3.</p> <p>Guiding principles for writing the Assessment Criteria for assessment tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The Assessment Criteria should map with the CILOs.2. The criteria should be articulated in a transparent way.3. The criteria need to be observable and easy to be measured with evidence.4. The criteria should demonstrate what your expectations on the students are.5. Apart from the common generic skills of most of the assessment tasks, we have to design specific criteria which match a particular assessment task.

Conclusion: Keys to Success

- To implement OBL successfully, it is essential to:
 - come up with a set of Generic Learning Outcomes (GILOs) at the institute level;
 - develop a set of Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) which map onto the generic outcomes properly;
 - design Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs) based on the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes at course level;
 - ensure that the teaching and assessing strategies are closely aligned with the Course Intended Learning Outcomes.

Conclusion: Keys to Success

- Four essential elements of implementing OBL successfully at **course level**:
 - Set **Attractive, Comprehensible, Attainable and Coherent CILOs**;
 - CILOs must be carefully **mapped** onto the Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs);
 - CILOs, TLAs, ATs and marking criteria must all **align with the CILOs**;
 - **Reflections** by students and the tutor are important for further improvement of OBL.

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