

The background of the slide is a green chalkboard. In the lower-left quadrant, two pink chalk sticks are positioned diagonally. The chalkboard is covered with various white chalk markings, including a large 'A' at the bottom, a 'V' in the middle, and a 'C' on the left side. The text is overlaid on the upper right portion of the board.

Challenges in Developing Learning Outcomes for Undergraduate Language Programmes: Experience in the English and Chinese Subjects

*Dr. WANG Lixun & Dr. Cheung Sau Hung
The Hong Kong Institute of Education
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Part I

Developing Outcomes Based Learning for the BEd (English Language) Programme



Background

The English Department OBL Project: Sep 08 - Dec 09

Objectives of the Project:

- Help the Institute to work out a set of Generic Outcomes for all HKIEd students studying the BEd programmes;
- Draft a set of programme level outcomes for the BEd (English Language) programme based on literature review and surveys;
- Carry out 2-3 case studies, building OBL into the teaching of 2-3 selected courses;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot study

Background

- Rationale behind designing the OBL System:

The design of the OBL system will need to take into account the goals and standards for student learning not only in developing curriculum, but also in designing instructional strategies and assessments and in building the technical and organizational capacity to support outcome-based reform.





First Challenge

- Forging consensus around a shared vision among the stakeholders:

Building a community of learners by including all who have a stake in the success of the department and involving these stakeholders in creating a shared vision of the well-educated student for the 21st century is critical in establishing an outcome-based system.

(Fitzpatrick, 1994)

Response to the 1st Challenge

- All who have a stake in the achievement of students have the opportunity to become engaged actively and each person's perspective is respected and considered while developing a consensus position, e.g.
 - *The colleagues of the department*
 - *The prospective employers of the English major, such as school principals and English panelchairs etc.*

Response to the 1st Challenge

- Achieving consensus does not require total agreement, but it does require a firm commitment on the part of each stakeholder to support the position developed through an open and collaborative process. Channels for developing a consensus position are:
 - *Department Meetings*
 - *Department Teaching & Learning Committee (DTLC) Meetings*
 - *OBL Project Team Meetings*
 - *Circulation of documents via emails*

Response to the 1st Challenge

- Remarks:

Developing a shared vision is an ongoing journey that once initiated leads to a never-ending trail of working drafts.

This will be challenged by new understandings about emerging issues and problems that students need to address as well as by new insights into the potential of young people as learners. Thus, we must commit to the continuous renewal and refinement of the vision of the successful graduate.





Second Challenge

- **Willingness to employ organized abandonment:**

Developing an outcome-based system requires making tough decisions about learning outcomes that truly matter, and those outcomes must be distinguished clearly from the information that students have been exposed to superficially in the past.

(Fitzpatrick, 1994)

Response to the 2nd Challenge

- Several drafts of Programme Learning Outcomes (POs) are developed with the advice from the Project consultant and the Institute OBL consultants:
 - *From 34 items of learning outcomes to 19 items to 13 items to the existing 9 items*
 - *During the process, we abandoned those learning outcomes that are not specific to the English Language subject.*

Third Challenge

- Capacity building that focuses on individual and organizational development:

Supporting the development of technical skills required to implement an outcome-based instructional system must be addressed by providing ongoing professional development programs for all who are responsible for instruction.

(Fitzpatrick, 1994)

Response to the 3rd Challenge

- Apply for the Teaching Development Grant of the Institute
- Appoint an OBL Project consultant from overseas
- Organize seminars conducted by the Project consultant and the Project supervisor for staff development in OBL implementation
- Attend the seminars/workshops organized by the OBL Unit of the Institute
- Attend the UGC Symposium on OBL implementation

Fourth Challenge

- **A commitment to a systems perspective**

This commitment calls for defining learning outcomes that will serve not only as the basis for curriculum development efforts but also as the decision screen for selecting the most promising instructional strategies to help students achieve the learning outcomes.

(Fitzpatrick, 1994)



Response to the 4th Challenge

- Selected 4 courses for pilot study; two in Fall 2009 while the other two in Spring 2010
- The course coordinators of the 4 piloting courses revisit their course outlines and construct assessment tasks and assessment criterion to align with the Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs), and the latter should map with the Programme Learning Outcomes (POs)
- Compile evaluation reports on the pilot courses before finalizing the course outlines

Conclusion

- These challenges in establishing an outcome-based instructional system--building a shared vision, employing organized abandonment, capacity building, and a commitment to a systems perspective--**require a tremendous investment of time and energy by all who have a stake in the success of the department.**
- The return on that investment can yield significant dividends in terms of student learning and **tremendous opportunities usually accompanying the great challenges.**
- We can **make a real difference in student learning** by leading our Institute through changes needed to become genuine outcome-based systems for teaching and learning.

Reference

Fitzpatrick, K.A. (1994) The Leadership Challenges of Outcome-Based Reform. *School Administrator*. September 1994 Issue.