

ASSESSING THE ALIGNMENT OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION PRINCIPLES IN CLASSROOM PRACTICE: PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS AND FACULTY

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess how outcomes-based education (OBE) is translated into actual classroom practice at Baliuag University. Selected engineering students and faculty members participated in the initial conduct of the study. The Outcomes-Based Learning Environment Questionnaire (OBLEQ) was used to describe how the dimensions of OBE are applied in instruction. The dimensions were involvement, investigation, cooperation, equity, differentiation, personal relevance, and responsibility for own learning. A *t*-test was used to determine if significant differences existed between the actual and preferred classroom practices by students, and analysis of variance was used to know if there were significant differences among the students' assessment of actual and preferred classroom instruction and teachers' assessment of their teaching. The study revealed that the classroom application of all dimensions of OBE was high as perceived by students and very high by teachers. However, significant differences occurred in the results between the students' assessment of actual and preferred classroom practices. No significant difference was recorded in the overall assessment of the OBE dimensions between students and teachers. Differentiation is the only dimension that showed a significant difference between the students' assessment of actual and preferred classroom instruction and the teachers' assessment of their teaching.

Keywords: education, instruction, learning, monitoring, outcomes-based

Over the past decades, instructional approaches and modes of delivery have undergone significant transformation to meet the evolving needs of learners in a rapidly changing educational landscape. Education today demands flexibility, innovation, and learner-centered strategies to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Traditional, teacher-centered models are increasingly being replaced by approaches that emphasize active participation, collaboration, and competency development. This shift reflects a growing recognition that learning is not merely the transmission of knowledge but a dynamic process shaped by the environment in which it occurs.

Among the critical factors influencing educational success, the learning environment has consistently emerged as a key determinant, attracting sustained attention from researchers over the last three decades (Closs et al., 2022; Fraser, 2002). Empirical evidence from studies conducted in Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Canada underscores the strong link between the quality of the learning

environment and student outcomes (Aldridge & Fraser, 2000; Fraser & Chionh, 2000; Margianti et al., 2001; Raaflaub & Fraser, 2002; Riah & Fraser, 1998; Zandvliet & Fraser, 1999). These findings highlighted the need for instructional models that actively engage learners and create conditions conducive to achieving meaningful educational outcomes. In this context, the question is no longer whether the learning environment matters, but how educational institutions can design and sustain environments that maximize student success.

Outcomes-based education (OBE) has emerged as a transformative framework aimed at addressing this challenge. OBE shifts the focus from what teachers teach to what learners are expected to achieve, promoting clarity of goals and alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. However, the successful implementation of OBE requires more than policy adoption; it demands fundamental shifts in curriculum design, instructional strategies, and assessment practices, as well as a redefinition of teacher roles and responsibilities (Nguyen et al., 2024). Spady (1994) asserted that OBE begins with a clear articulation of what learners should be able to demonstrate as a result of their educational experience. This vision can only be realized through deliberate alignment of all components of the learning process. Central to OBE is the belief that all students can achieve high levels of competency when expectations are explicit and learning experiences are structured to support success (Qiao & Fu, 2022). When these principles are effectively applied, students become active participants in classroom decision-making, fostering engagement and shared accountability—hallmarks of OBE.

Despite its promise, translating OBE principles into actual classroom practice remains a critical challenge for many institutions. While administrators, educators, parents, and students all play roles in implementation, the classroom teacher ultimately serves as the linchpin for success (Chameera et al., 2023; Katawazai, 2021). Teachers must not only understand the philosophy behind OBE but also possess the skills and resources to integrate its principles into daily instruction. This raises an important question: To what extent do institutional efforts to implement OBE translate into tangible changes in classroom practice? Addressing this question is essential because the effectiveness of OBE cannot be measured solely by policy documents or curriculum frameworks; it must be evaluated in terms of its impact on teaching and learning at the classroom level.

Recognizing these imperatives, Baliuag University has taken proactive steps toward OBE adoption through faculty development initiatives and alignment of program learning outcomes with institutional objectives and industry standards. These efforts reflect a commitment to educational quality and responsiveness to global trends. However, the extent to which these initiatives have influenced classroom practices—and whether they reflect the core principles of OBE—remains unclear. This gap underscores the significance of the present study, which aims to assess how outcomes-based education is operationalized in actual classroom settings at Baliuag University. By examining this alignment, the study sought to provide insights that could inform continuous improvement in teaching and learning, ensuring that OBE moves beyond theory into effective practice. Ultimately, the findings of this research would contribute to the broader discourse on educational reform, offering evidence-based recommendations for strengthening OBE implementation and enhancing student learning outcomes.

Specifically, this study answered the following questions:

1. How may the students' perceptions of their actual and preferred learning environment be distributed in terms of:
 - 1.1 involvement;
 - 1.2 investigation;
 - 1.3 cooperation;
 - 1.4 equity;
 - 1.5 differentiation;
 - 1.6 personal relevance; and
 - 1.7 responsibility to own learning?
2. Are there significant differences between students' perceptions of their actual and preferred learning environment in terms of:
 - 2.1 involvement;
 - 2.2 investigation;
 - 2.3 cooperation;
 - 2.4 equity;
 - 2.5 differentiation;
 - 2.6 personal relevance; and
 - 2.7 responsibility to own learning?
3. How do faculty members participate in/implement the following dimensions of outcomes-based education on the classroom:
 - 3.1 involvement;
 - 3.2 investigation;
 - 3.3 cooperation;
 - 3.4 equity;
 - 3.5 differentiation;
 - 3.6 personal relevance; and
 - 3.7 responsibility to own learning?
4. Do the faculty members' perceptions of their classroom OBE practice differ from the students' perceptions of actual and preferred classroom instruction?

Conceptual Framework and Theoretical Framework

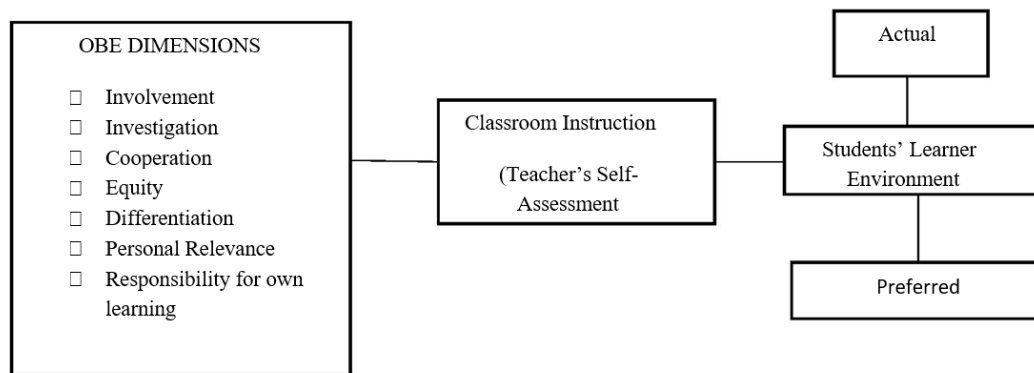


Figure 1. An Instructional Framework of Outcome-Based Education Dimensions

This study was anchored on Rudolph Moos' dimensions for classifying human environments that are used to develop measures of school and classroom climate (1974). The first dimension is relationship, which refers to the involvement of people and how they support each other in the environment. Personal development is the second dimension, which pertains to the goal of personal growth and enhancement. The third dimension is the system maintenance and change, which refers to how the environment meets the needs and adapts to changes.

The three dimensions encompass the key concepts related to understanding classroom climate, which include (a) social system organization, (b) social attitudes, (c) staff and student morale, (d) power, control, guidance, support, and evaluation structures, and (e) curricular and instructional practices.

The Outcomes-Based Learning Environment Questionnaire (OBLEQ) consists of seven scales with eight items per scale. The OBLEQ includes scales from existing instruments that are considered relevant to the philosophy of outcomes-based education, including Moos' dimensions. The dimensions/scales of the OBLEQ are the following:

- Involvement—this is related to OBE's premise of making the learners active participants in the learning process.
- Investigation—this is related to OBE's premise that learners must do things while the teacher acts only as the facilitator of learning.
- Cooperation—this is related to OBE's premise that learners should collaborate in learning rather than compete.
- Equity—this is related to OBE's premise that all learners are to be treated in the same way.

- Differentiation—this is related to OBE’s premise that learners can learn and succeed but not at the same time and same pace.
- Personal relevance—this is related to OBE’s premise that learning must be meaningful to the learners; this is possible if it is seen to be relevant to their everyday life experiences.
- Responsibility for own learning—this is related to OBE’s premise that accountability for performance rests with learners.

Methods

The descriptive correlation method was employed in the study to describe the characteristics of individual variables significant to the study. Comparing of means was correspondingly considered appropriate for the study since it shows the relationship between two variables.

The respondents of this study were forty-two (42) students and three (3) faculty members from the College of Engineering. The students were asked to assess the learning environment in their (3) professional courses.

The Outcomes-Based Learning Environment Questionnaire (OBLEQ) postulated by Seopa, Laugksch, Aldridge, and Fraser (2003) which was used in this study. The questionnaire for teachers contains the same scale as that for students, with the statements constructed from the viewpoint of the teachers.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Students’ Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Learning Environment (N=42)

OBE Dimensions	Actual		Preferred	
	Mean	Interp.	Mean	Interp.
1. Involvement	3.64	High	4.03	High
2. Investigation	3.75	High	4.06	High
3. Cooperation	4.14	High	4.35	Very High
4. Equity	3.98	High	4.32	Very High
5. Differentiation	3.53	High	4.08	High
6. Personal Relevance	3.93	High	4.23	Very High
7. Responsibility For Own Learning	3.89	High	4.29	Very High
Overall	3.84	High	4.21	Very High

Table 1 presents the assessment of students of the instruction used in the classroom. The students' perceptions of their actual learning environment are high in all dimensions. On the other hand, their preferred learning environment recorded very high in cooperation, equity, personal relevance, and responsibility for their own learning. This implies that students would like to have more learning experiences that are collaborative in nature, to be treated more equally by the teachers, to further understand the practical application of knowledge, and to be more accountable in the learning process.

Table 2

Comparison of Means Between Students' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Learning Environment (alpha .05)

OBE Dimensions (Actual-Preferred)	Paired Difference			
	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	Sig.
1. Involvement	-.389881	.716850	-3.525	.001
2. Investigation	-.309524	.268007	-7.485	.000
3. Cooperation	-.214286	.280578	-4.950	.000
4. Equity	-.336310	.314158	-6.938	.000
5. Differentiation	-.550595	.314850	-11.333	.000
6. Personal Relevance	-.300595	.277538	-7.019	.000
7. Responsibility For Own Learning	-.395833	.414042	-6.196	.000
Overall	-.3741497	.3146041	-7.707	.000

Table 2 shows the mean differences of the assessment of students of the actual and preferred learning environment. There are significant differences between students' perceptions of their actual and preferred learning environment in all dimensions. Differentiation recorded the highest mean difference of .55. It could be surmised that students want their teachers to take into account their individual differences in delivering instruction.

Table 3
Faculty Members' Implementation of OBE in the Classroom

OBE Dimensions	Mean	Interpretation
1. Involvement	4.54	Very High
2. Investigation	4.50	Very High
3. Cooperation	4.54	Very High
4. Equity	4.67	Very High
5. Differentiation	4.08	High
6. Personal Relevance	4.33	Very High
7. Responsibility For Own Learning	4.54	Very High
Overall	4.46	Very High

Table 3 presents the assessment of teachers of their own practice of OBE in classroom instruction. The faculty members' assessment of their OBE practice/implementation in the classroom is very high in terms of involvement, investigation, cooperation, equity, personal relevance, and responsibility to own learning and high in differentiation.

Table 4
Comparison of Means Among Faculty Members' Perceptions of OBE Practice and Students' Perceptions of Actual and Preferred Classroom Instruction (alpha .05)

OBE Dimensions	<i>F</i>	Sig.
1. Involvement	2.128	.126
2. Investigation	2.479	.090
3. Cooperation	1.041	.358
4. Equity	2.646	.077
5. Differentiation	3.723	.028
6. Personal Relevance	1.506	.228
7. Responsibility For Own Learning	3.174	.047
Overall	2.434	.094

Table 4 shows if there are significant differences that occur between the assessment of teachers and students of the classroom application of OBE. There are no significant differences recorded in the overall assessment of the OBE dimensions between students and teachers. However, two (2) OBE dimensions, differentiation and responsibility to own learning, had recorded significant differences. Differentiation works on the OBE premise that learners demonstrate achievement of outcomes over time and according to their own abilities. Students may prefer to work at their own speed and be given varied choices of activities that match their abilities. Catering to individual differences in the context of classroom instruction may be quite a challenge when class size usually averages 25 students.

While the results implied relatively positive and high practice of OBE in classroom instruction, it is recommended that the faculty members of BU should continue to seek and adapt more innovative instruction to sustain the practice of OBE that creates an effective learning environment.

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