

**PERFORMANCE-BASED EDUCATION (PBE) PREDICATED ON OUTCOMES,
SKILLS AND COMPETENCE AGAINST CURRENT CERTIFICATE BASED
QUALIFICATION**

Genevieve Aglazor and B. U. Cornelius-Ukpepi

Departmental of Curriculum and Teaching

Faculty of Education

University of Calabar, Calabar

Cross River State

ABSTRACT: *The traditional methods of teaching have become obsolete and ineffective in preparing students for the 21st century industrialized and technologically-based job market. The stand and deliver lecture methods of more than two decades ago do not provide students with the learning opportunities to acquire critical competences and skills to develop their own knowledge and problem-solve in real life situations (Allais, 2007; Donnelly,(2007). In addition to being spoon-fed facts out of texts, students are not given opportunities to develop appropriate independent learning as well as social skills such as cooperative and collaborative learning, negotiating skills, speaking and listening skills and being open to divergent perspectives on issues. This paper uses qualitative research method, a social justice inquiry approach from the critical social science tradition (Denzin & Lincoln; 2011) to analyse existing literature in areas of performance-based education to compare learning outcomes and competencies against current traditional passive certificate-based qualification. It is hoped that the outcome of this effort will help students develop skills that would assist them to think independently, work cooperatively with their peers while deepening their knowledge base.*

KEYWORDS: Outcome-Based Learning (OBL), Performance-Based Education (PBE), educational outcomes, skills, competence, certificate-based qualifications

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning methods have and continue to morph and evolve with societal changes, technological advancements and labour market demands. In the teaching profession, teaching methods refers to “the general principles, pedagogy and management strategies used for classroom instruction” (Teach.com, 2019:1). There are a lot of different teaching methods and they span a spectrum ranging from the very basic traditional stand-and-deliver (Teacher-Centered) to the complex hands-on, collaborative/cooperative (Student-Centered) inquiry-based and performance-based method where the teacher simply serves as a facilitator. A teacher’s choice of preferred teaching method depends on many factors. Adopting a teaching method is guided by the teacher’s personal training, educational philosophy, area of specialty (subject), availability of teaching

materials/resources, school mission and national commitment to quality education (Teach.com, 2019) Outcome-based approach to education enables pupils to use their knowledge and apply skills in realistic situations. It differs from the traditional approach to education and instills mastery of knowledge and skills; it also measures these knowledge and skills in the context of practical tasks. Consequently, in the continuous call for improved quality of education, and not to be outdone, developing nations like Nigeria need to emulate educational practices like the use of outcome-based educational approaches currently in use.

STUDY METHOD

Before we delve into the literature review, we find it necessary to clearly define the qualitative method that we have adopted in this work. While we make no apologies in defense of qualitative research as a method, we position our work within the qualitative conceptual framework as it suits the real-life human experiences from which this work is drawn. Proponents of the qualitative paradigm contend that quantitative and qualitative methods have become compatible, and “researchers could use both in their empirical inquiries” (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003a, p. 7). They also appeal to a “what works” pragmatic argument, contending that “no incompatibility between quantitative and qualitative methods exists at either the level of practice or that of epistemology . . . there are thus no good reasons for educational researchers to fear forging ahead with ‘what works’” (Howe, 1988, p. 16). And qualitative method has earned its place as “what works” especially in (action) real-life experiential research.

Review of existing literature on Outcome-Based Education (OBE) Defined:

The definition of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) sometimes referred to as Problem/Project-Based Learning (PBL) varies widely depending on educators’ own discipline, personal philosophy and professional orientation. Generally speaking, PBE is a philosophical teaching approach (method) anchored on the premise that the fundamental purpose of education is to change behaviour and to apply the knowledge to problem-solving (Spady, 1994). They add that OBE as a method is designed to structure instruction in ways that allow students apply learned knowledge, using acquired skills in addressing real life meaningful issues. PBE delves beyond the surface theoretically memorized knowledge to enabling students use such knowledge in real time authentic situations. The emphasis is on challenging students to use their higher-thinking skills (examples) to solve a problem, create a product, complete an assignment, research a real-world issue and develop action steps to improving on status quo.

In looking at Peter Green’s personal real-life experience, he presents a relatable perspective of . . . Outcome-Based Education (OBE) in his blog. Peter Greene is a seasoned educator and educational blogger who continues to stay abreast of almost anything ‘education.’ This (His) excerpt is taken from: (<http://curmudgucation.blogspot.com.ng/>) and anchors the prevailing argument, that teachers need to embrace OBE rather than continue in the obsolete stand-and-deliver, teacher-centered teaching method.

While Greene (2017) presents a single case, in the qualitative paradigm, his personal real-life experience with his high school dance class provides valid data for analysis.

He does an excellent job detailing the processes his dance class goes to put up a performance, and paints a visual for the reader with statements like this:

“In the course of assembling the show, each student learns a different set of lessons that depend a great deal on what roles they receive and what skills they bring to the table, as well as their ambition and adventurousness of spirit.”

So, his teaching style provides a learning experience that *“is extremely **personalized.**”* (Greene, 2018:1). He practices not only individualized instruction but also collaborate with instructors from a sister-school. Green notes:

Every theater production is a collaboration of some sort, and that collaboration is always shaped by the approaches of the people involved” My lead actor may need to learn about comedic timing, while one of my chorus folks may need to learn about the importance of the chorus in a show. My leading actress may need to learn about how to flesh out a character when the writers haven't given you much to work with. He pains-takingly designs individualised lessons that are different for every different role and every different cast member. (P. 2)

Green’s teaching approach is a model of outcome or performance-based task that according to him, *“literally comes with a script for putting on a show that is the very definition of a performance-based learning experience.”* (P.2)

Like most proponents of the outcome or performance-based teaching method, Green argues that it is an experience that, in an absolutely authentic manner, helps each student grow and learn and discover new greatness in him/herself. “It is an absolutely real learning and growth experience.” (Peter Greene at Monday, March 06, 2017).

While some would argue that Green’s example is Theatre Arts; and that teachers can’t do the same thing in History, English, or Social Studies classes. I lend my voice to Green that as primary school teachers, Junior and Senior Secondary School (J/SSS) teachers, and university lecturers for many years, it is clear that outcome-based methods can be used at all levels of teaching and learning and in all content areas.

The concept of OBE

In a 2017 Nigeria, the pressure has never been greater than now to improve the quality of education to meet the societal, socio-economic and technological needs of the times. Historically, educational systems and schools have been blamed for students’ declining academic performance. This led to the 1980s and the 1990s witnessing efforts at transforming educational structure, content as well as teaching approaches. Many nations explored different models and approaches to teaching and learning. One such model is outcome-based method which has been adopted in education systems around the world, at multiple levels to address the changing needs of the labour markets. For the purposes of this paper, Performance-based education and Outcome-based education will be used interchangeably.

Australia and South Africa adopted Outcome-Based Education (OBE) policies in the early 1990s (Allais, 2007; Donnelly & Kevin (2007) in response to the needs for demonstrable knowledge and skills. The United States has had an OBE programme in place since 1994 (Austin & Tammy, 2000) that has been adapted over the years and evolved into other kinds of programmes. In 2005, Hong Kong adopted an outcome-based approach for its universities (Kennedy, 2011). Similarly, Malaysia implemented OBE in all of their public-school systems in 2008 (Mohayidin, 2008). In 2012 the European commission proposed an education shift to focus on outcomes, across the European Union. As far back as 1989 the international community advanced an effort to accept OBE as a legitimate instructional method. This led to the creation of the Washington Accord which was an agreement to accept undergraduate engineering degrees that were obtained using OBE methods. As of 2014, Australia, Canada, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States all signed on to this accord (International Engineering Alliance, 2012)

Fast forward to the 1990s, OBE became widely accepted as an authentic and objective instructional method against the traditional stand-and-deliver teacher-centered method. It became one of the revolutionary cures for the global decline in quality of education. It re-positioned learning in the hands of students who demonstrated ownership of their learning. This empowering strategy also charged students to take responsibility for and be accountable for their individual learning outcome.

Spady (1994), an avid believer in OBE promised that OBE would shift the focus from content (curriculum) to student if programme designs were guided by these three goals:

- i. All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day or in the same way
- ii. Each success by a student breeds more success
- iii. Schools control the conditions of success

His argument, backed by child and developmental psychologists is that, if educators and educational institutions create the right environment, any student can be prepared for any academic, vocational and professional career. That is, guided by patience, encouragement and kind support, all students can be successful at something, at their individual pace. And Performance-Based Education is the right tool for this approach to education. While conceptually, OBE sounds like it has a single perspective, there are slight variations within the model.

Kinds of OBE

According to William Spady (1994), there are three broad types of Outcome-Based Education (OBE):

- i. Traditional OBE which measures the learning outcomes in terms of students' mastery of the established curriculum.
- ii. Transitional OBE which measures the learning outcomes of students in terms of generic or higher-order competencies such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication skills and teamwork.

- iii. Transformational OBE which measures the learning outcomes of students in terms of broad category of disciplinary knowledge and skills (i.e., multi-disciplined), generic competencies, attitudes and values required by the industry or society.

What are the essential elements of Outcome-Based Education?

Most Outcome-Based Education programmes are complex in structure, diverse in assessment methods, authentic in content, open-ended, product/process oriented and time sensitive.

Well designed, implemented and supervised PBE programme enables students to solve open-ended problems which have multiple possible correct solutions within a certain amount of time, just like real life situation demand.

The following characteristics should be remembered when designing a performance task:

- It has various outcomes; it does not require one right answer.
- It is integrative, combining different skills.
- It encourages problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- It encourages divergent thinking.
- It focuses on both product and process.
- It promotes independent learning, involving planning, revising and summation.
- It builds on pupils' prior experience.
- It can include opportunities for peer interaction and collaborative learning.
- It enables self-assessment and reflection.
- It is interesting, challenging, meaningful and authentic.
- It requires time to complete.

(Adapted from Birnbaum, 1997)

Organising Principles of Outcome-Based Education (OBE)

Spady (1994) identifies four organizing principles of OBE:

- i. Clarity of focus: All teaching and learning activities must be systematically related to the broad and specific outcomes identified for the educational program and these must be clearly identified for students. These outcomes may be achieved in different ways.
- ii. Designing back: Curriculum content should flow clearly from the most general valued outcomes, to related more specific outcomes, to class lesson activities. Assessment should be integrated with these outcomes in a coherent manner. In this way the program of study for a student within and across year levels would have a clear relationship to curriculum goals.

- iii. High expectations for all students: This principle requires that successful and challenging learning experiences and achievement of high standards be part of learning for all students. Identification of the achievement of high standards of performance in relation to criteria established for achievement of outcomes becomes the focus of assessment in OBE.
- iv. Teachers must provide expanded opportunities to allow for achievement of outcomes in a variety of ways: Associated with principle 3 is the view that different learners may take different routes, and different amounts of time or different numbers of attempts, to achieve the same outcome.

A consistent theme in Spady's work is that OBE systems make WHAT and WHETHER students learn successfully more important than WHEN and HOW they learn it.

Advantages of OBE

In an address to the Australian Primary Principals Association, Spady (2006) described some advantages of Outcome-Based Education. He noted the following:

- Essence of the Model: Expanded consciousness of one's spiritual nature or potential
- Nature of Learning: Developing one's intuitive connection to universal wisdom
- Major Outcome Measure: Taking full responsibility for one's life and learning experiences
- Key Pedagogy: Meditative exploration by quieting the conscious mind
- Temporal Structure: Learner-controlled timing/group-enhanced experience

While this is by no means an exhaustive list of the advantages of OBE, it underscores the advocates' belief in its effectiveness as viable instructional method with a potential to improve quality of students' learning. This makes the argument that it is a better substitute for the old model of traditional teaching of stand-and-deliver and endless notes copying and regurgitation at the end of the semester.

Concept of traditional teaching methods defined

Traditional teaching is a method of teaching where learners are mere recipients of information without getting involved actively in the learning process. It is teacher-centred and does not give the learner opportunity to explore any learning situation. According to Novak (1998) traditional teaching is concerned with the teacher being the controller of the learning environment. Power and responsibility are held by the teacher and they play the role of instructor (in the form of lectures) and decision maker (in regards to curriculum content and specific outcomes). The author further said that in a traditional teaching, students are regarded as having 'knowledge holes' that need to be filled with information. In short, the traditional teacher views that it is the teacher that causes learning to occur. Also, Theroux (2002) in Johnson and Johnson (1991) said that learning in

traditional teaching is chiefly associated within the classroom and is often [competitive](#). The lesson's content and delivery are considered to be most important and students master knowledge through drill and practice (such as rote learning). Traditional teaching methods are described as being teacher-oriented, in a lecture style and are inflexible. In a traditional classroom, the teacher usually taught lessons by introducing skills using a blackboard and verbal explanation or lecture. Students are assigned Practical work, followed by feedback from the teacher.

THE HISTORY OF TRADITIONAL TEACHING METHODS

Prior to the advent OBE in teaching and learning, much earlier focus according to Closson (2013, p.1) has been “on content, on the knowledge to be acquired by each student”. He adds that, previously, “if students learned the information and performed well on tests and assignments, they received credit for the course and moved on to the next class”. This became known as the ‘curriculum-centered’ because the focus was the content being taught; and the purpose for teaching it was to produce academically (theoretically) competent students. Within this structure, daily class schedules were organized around the content to be taught. In the end, the teacher could not really tell which students learned the content and which students did not. This was left to the end of the term when tests and exams were administered. Some described the process as punitive because it was frustrating, humiliating and even discouraging to some students who performed poorly.

Advantages of traditional method

Advantages of traditional method of teaching have progressively diminished with the advent of other methods like PBE. A couple of them are listed below.

1. It is flexible and the teacher is in charge.
2. It is convenient with large classes of students

Disadvantages of traditional method

Conversely, the disadvantages of the traditional methods seem to be increasingly questioned. They include:

1. Struggling students who have learning difficulties and are unable to cope with how the lessons are delivered.
2. Above-average students are also disadvantaged because the lessons are not challenging enough. This means that students in either category are at an instant disadvantage compared to an average student without a learning disability.
3. It is teacher- centred and does not give the learner opportunity to explore any learning situation.

Critical comparative analyses of traditional and OBE methods

This section looks at traditional teaching methods and how they compare to performance-based education. Teachnology (2017) maintained that teachers have limitless possibilities when it comes to the methods of instruction that they can use but most of the time they merely use the traditional methods of teaching. Arguably the most widely used models of instruction are Instructor-Based models. These teaching methods focus on the teacher and more often than not they involve the teacher thoroughly explaining the subject matter with little to no student interaction. This may be the most straightforward method but its efficiency is reduced due to the short attention span some students have. Since teachers do not interact with their students when they are using Instructor-Based teaching models, most students lose their focus and their mind tends to wander.

The progression of education should follow the progression of modernized skills demanded by contemporary labour market. The traditional teaching methods may have been successful in the past, but the perspective of the current generation vary from those of the previous generation. This calls for new innovative teaching models like PBE that cater specially to the students of today. Of course, it is not wise to throw away all of the models that the past teachers have painstakingly created. These commonly used models are popular for a reason and that reason is that they were once incredibly successful. This is why it is recommended to use these models as a basis for the new ones. If there is a way to transfer the advantages of these teaching methods to the new concepts then teachers should do everything in their power to merge the past and the present into one innovative teaching method.

The traditional classroom has the following features:

In order to avoid the pitfalls of reverting to the convenience of the traditional stand-and-deliver method, teachers need to be able recognize elements of the traditional classroom practices. In the traditional classroom:

- Curriculum begins with the parts of the whole and emphasizes basic skills
- Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued
- Materials are primarily textbooks and workbooks
- Learning is based on repetition.
- Teachers disseminate information to students; students are recipients of knowledge.
- Teacher's role is directive, rooted in authority.
- Assessment is through testing, correct answers.
- Knowledge is seen as inert.
- Students work primarily alone.

(Educational Broadcasting Corporation, 2004).

How can teachers begin to ease into PBE as an instructional method?

Similarly, in order to ease into the PBE model, Teachers can follow these steps.

- i. Clearly identify outcomes/goals/objectives of the programme
- ii. Determining whether the standards for the programme will be state, national or global
- iii. Identify and address the learning gaps that necessitate the programme implementation
- iv. Design curriculum
- v. Identify sources of materials and or create materials
- vi. Determine assessment tool
- vii. Teach content
- viii. Assess performance

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is concluded that, for learners to benefit from instruction and enhance their learning outcomes in any subject, teachers have to change the way instruction is presented in the classroom. The era where the teacher is the custodian of knowledge and the learners are mere recipients of knowledge is outdated and it is evidence in the poor performance of learners in schools. When a teacher employs innovative teaching methods such as Outcome-based teaching, learners will become active participants and be more accountable for their learning. This will in turn improve their learning outcomes. With OBL, students will develop competence- based skills and become effective and active learners and no learner will be left behind.

The following recommendations are made.

1. Teachers should make their classrooms interactive by using OBE to help students acquire competence-based skills.
2. Teachers should utilize the principles of OBL to reduce disciplinary problems because when student are engaged in the task at hand, the propensity for misbehavior is reduced.
3. Government should organize retraining workshops to update teachers' knowledge on OBL

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PBE, PBL and OBL. are they the same