



## **Alignment between Teachers' Assessment Practices and Principles of Outcomes-Based Education in the Context of Philippine Education Reform**

### **Dennis Alonzo**

Lecturer, School of Education, University of New South Wales Sydney, Australia,  
[d.alonzo@unsw.edu.au](mailto:d.alonzo@unsw.edu.au)

### **Jean Bejano**

Assoc. Prof., College of Education, University of Southeastern Philippines, Davao City,  
Philippines, [jean.bejano@usep.edu.ph](mailto:jean.bejano@usep.edu.ph)

### **Velma Labad**

Assoc. Prof., College of Education, University of Southeastern Philippines, Davao City,  
Philippines, [velma.labad@usep.edu.ph](mailto:velma.labad@usep.edu.ph)

Teacher assessment practices are critically important to improving student learning. This study aimed to explore the alignment of Philippine Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE) teachers' assessment practices to outcomes-based education, one of the philosophical frameworks underpinning the educational reforms in the Philippines. Data were gathered by analysing 12 units of work using Berlach and McNaught's (2007) elements of outcomes-based assessment as the analytical framework. Additional data were gathered through interviews with teachers and assessment experts. Based on data analysis, there are key issues identified including unclear learning outcomes, limited use of assessment strategies and misalignment to skills being assessed, incoherent assessment tasks, low focus on the use of criteria and standards, dominant use of paper-pencil test, isolated assessment practices from learning and teaching activities and teacher-driven assessment practices as opposed to student-centred assessment approaches. Findings reveal that TLE teachers have requisite assessment knowledge for using outcomes-based education but is not fully translated into their actual assessment practices. The school context shapes the alignment of teacher assessment practices to outcomes-based education reform. These findings imply that a more systemic approach is needed to align teacher assessment practices to outcomes-based education.

**Keywords:** teacher assessment practices, outcomes-based education, outcomes-based assessment, technology, livelihood education

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the underlying theoretical underpinnings of the K to 12 basic education reforms in the Philippines is the outcomes-based education (OBE), which is based on the seminal work of Spady (1994). This reform emphasises the alignment of all learning, teaching and assessment activities to pre-specified outcomes (Biggs & Tang, 2007). There have been documented challenges and issues in the implementation of OBE in the Philippine context, including clarity on teachers' roles and responsibilities and students' and curriculum design (De Guzman et al., 2017), but no specific studies outline the key challenges in its assessment components. This area needs a deeper study because assessment plays critical role in improving learning and teaching (Hattie, 2008; Wiliam, 2017). Teachers' assessment knowledge and skills enable them to design and implement appropriate assessment strategies to gather evidence of student learning, and use this information to make highly contextualised, fair, consistent and trustworthy assessment decisions to inform learning and teaching (Alonzo, 2016; 2020). In particular, assessment results highlight individual students' achievement and areas needing further support (Mandinach & Gummer, 2016). In addition, students' engagement increases their understanding of the learning outcomes and success criteria (Hughes, 2014), and develops their agency to act on feedback to further improve their learning (Boud & Dawson, 2021). Thus, it is critical that the design of learning and teaching activities should be informed by the assessment component of the course based on the predetermined outcomes (Glasson, 2009; Spady, 1998).

It is critical that teachers' assessment practices must be coherent to what is required to measure specific learning outcomes. This ability of teachers to use effective assessment is known as assessment literacy (Alonzo, 2016). This construct is increasingly becoming the focus of teacher professional development in the current educational reforms (Alonzo, 2020). The curriculum shift to OBE has strong implications for departure from testing to a more authentic assessment. In principle, any assessment reform requires changes in teachers' pedagogical skills (Klenowski, 1998). It requires teachers to have a plethora of assessment strategies ready for use, whichever is most appropriate to measure learning outcomes. The inappropriateness of assessment strategy, including sharing learning outcomes, using of success criteria, eliciting and giving feedback, testing, and other forms of assessment, to measure a particular outcome would have significant implications to the inference drawn from assessment results, which consequently will impact any decisions made regarding students' learning (Roever & McNamara, 2006).

One of the areas highly emphasised in the K to 12 curriculum to adhere to OBE is the TLE courses where outcomes are explicitly stated as skills or products. In this context, assessment activities are geared towards assessing students' application of their knowledge to specific tasks. At present, although there is a claim that teachers' assessment knowledge and skills are aligned with OBE (De Guzman et al., 2017), there is little empirical evidence that teachers' assessment practices have shifted towards OBE and are consistently practised. Our study explores how the underlying philosophy of OBE is reflected on teachers' assessment design and how is translated into their actual

classroom practices. Our study contributes to understanding how assessment is being implemented in a specific context, the Philippine Technology and Livelihood Education (TLE). Specifically, it contributes to identifying professional development opportunities and system level support for teachers to further enhance the effectiveness of their assessment practices. This is important in researching assessment as it is a context-driven construct. The policies and many contextual factors influence how assessment is constructed and implemented by teachers (Alonzo, et al., 2021; Narathakoon et al., 2020).

### Review of Literature

#### Implementation of Outcomes-Based Education in Various Education System

Apart from the Philippines, a few education bureaucracies have adopted and implemented OBE due to its positive impact in raising the standards of education by impacting students' achievement significantly (Akir et al., 2012; Spady, 1998). A summary of educational bureaucracies that implement OBE is shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
Countries implementing OBE

| Country   | Purpose   | Issues   |
|-----------|---|--|
| Hong Kong | to promote quality assurance and enhancing good practices                             | Shifting teachers' practice from content-focus curriculum to outcomes-focused curriculum; low students' engagement |
| Australia | to raise the quality and status of education  | teachers' resistance to adopt; different approaches adopted by each state; pressure of accountability measures     |
| Malaysia  | to support internationalisation and attainment of a global level of quality assurance | Teacher workload, issues with curriculum implementation, system and administrator support                          |

In Hong Kong, the implementation of OBE is managed by an inter-institutional task force on Outcomes-based Approaches in Student Learning set up in 2007. This is done in support of promoting quality assurance and enhancing good practices. In addition, the implementation of OBE is a strategic response to the industry demands for graduates with higher levels of skills both in work-related skills, communication skills and other thinking skills like critical thinking and problem-solving. The study of Lixun (2011) highlights some issues of implementing OBE in the country. As OBE is slowly gaining traction, teachers finding it hard to shift their focus from content-focus curriculum to outcomes-focused curriculum. In addition, implementation of OBE presents challenges for students. They remain passive learners despite OBE assessments require active engagement in the process. They need to understand the intended outcomes and levels of performance required.

In Australia, the implementation of OBE aimed to raise the quality and status of education. However, the implementation of OBE was not well-received as evident in teachers' resistance to adopt its philosophy (Berlach & McNaught, 2007). There were various movements across the states to resist its implementation. It was noted by Donnelly (2007) that OBE fails to shift teachers' practices, which has been deeply rooted to constructivist approach. The OBE curriculum did not explicitly identify essential learning associated with key learning areas. The learning outcomes specified are vague and hence presents challenges for teachers to assess. Also, the implementation of OBE, which fosters deep learning, competes with the accountability measures. More time is needed for OBE, but the highly structured curriculum does not give any flexibility for teachers.

In Malaysia, the implementation of OBE at higher learning institutions, both public and private, has been particularly emphasised. In the OBE system, there are learning domains, cognitive, psychomotor and affective aspects determined by the Malaysia Quality Agency (MQA). Furthermore, eight domains of learning outcomes are provided, and the domains are essential to the quality standards of the higher education system in Malaysia (Karim & Yin Yin, 2013). There are issues associated with OBE implementation in Malaysia including teachers' workload, which they do not have enough time to engage students in learning and assessment; poor curriculum implementation; and lack of system and administrator support for teachers (Damit et al., 2021).

### **Outcomes-Based Education in the Philippines TLE Courses**

TLE courses are offered in junior high schools in the Philippines. The adoption of outcomes-based education, as the underlying philosophy of these courses, is based on the direction of the K-12 education reforms in the country. After finishing junior high school, it is envisioned that students are more equipped for technological, vocational and livelihood track in senior high school.

To meet this education goal, teachers teaching TLE courses and other courses in general are mandated to re-design their courses using the philosophy of OBE. As indicated in the Department of Education Order No. 8, series of 2015, what is emphasised is the extensive use of task-based learning and output-oriented assessment activities that reflect the real-industry world. At the end of the courses, students can apply for skills assessment in a government-certification body known as the Technical Education and Skills Development (TESDA) to be awarded the National Certificate 2 as evidence of their graduate-level skills for a specific TLE competency. In other words, the training is done in high schools, but the certification is awarded by TESDA, which requires students to demonstrate their TLE competencies. Hence, given this scenario, it is critical that TLE teachers use learning, teaching, and assessment activities aligned to the intended outcomes indicated in the TLE curriculum and TESDA certification requirements.

To fully realise the philosophy of OBE, the Department of Education of the Philippines has developed extensive professional development programs for teachers to prepare

them for OBE curriculum implementation effectively. There have been claims that teachers' knowledge and skills in OBE are within and above the acceptable level of performance (De Guzman *et al.*, 2017), but there is no strong empirical evidence, drawn from qualitative and quantitative data, to support this claim. Given these claims and the dearth of literature outlining the challenges in the use of assessment to support the OBE implementation, our study sought answers to the following questions:

- 1) how do TLE teachers' lesson plans reflect the principles and practices of OBE in their assessment design; and
- 2) how do TLE teachers translate their assessment knowledge and skills in their classroom practices?

We developed an analytical framework to assess teachers' assessment practices in curriculum design to answer these questions. Answers to these questions will identify opportunities for teachers' professional development. It will also help schools to develop a particular strategy to establish a strong assessment culture underpinned by the philosophy and practices of OBE, as it was shown in previous research that a school-wide approach to assessment reform is more effective when teachers are fully supported (Alonzo, Leverett, *et al.*, 2021).

#### **Analytical Framework for Examining OBE Practices**

The analytical framework used in this study is based on the five principles of OBE as summarised by Berlach and McNaught (2007): "(1) begin with the end (outcome) in mind, (2) individual schools design a curriculum around predetermined outcomes, (3) comparing student performance is educationally counter-productive, (4) all learning should be calibrated to allow for individual success, and (5) process is at least as important as product" (p.4). We analysed teachers' assessment practices that are aligned to these principles. Our literature review revealed six elements that define teacher assessment practices in OBE. These six elements are used as analytical framework to analyse TLE teachers' assessment practices. These are:

1) *Clear and explicit outcomes.* This aspect of OBE addresses principle number one on beginning with the end in mind. Teachers' skills in writing clear and explicit learning outcomes have been widely documented to support student learning (Glasson, 2009; Hendry & Anderson, 2013; Wimshurst & Manning, 2012). The learning outcomes provide the overall framework for curriculum design, learning and teaching activities and assessment approach (Glasson, 2009).

2) *Use of a range of assessment strategies to measure outcomes.* The development and use of assessment strategies in the classroom is guided by learning outcomes. In other words, this dimension requires teacher judgment in developing or selecting appropriate assessment methods, for which the typology developed by Davison (2007) of teachers' AfL practices is beneficial. A range of assessment strategies, including in-class contingent formative assessment-whiles -teaching, more planned integrated formative assessment, more formal assessment modelled on summative assessment but used for formative purposes, and prescribed summative assessments are suggested. This

include self and peer assessment (Nejad & Mahfoodh, 2019). The appropriateness of assessment methods is determined by how best the learning outcomes can be measured. For example, the use of formative assessment (interview, questioning, checklist) can provide teachers with evidence of learning and achievement (Stiggins & Chappuis, 2005) and to determine what needs to be done to improve learning and teaching (Black et al., 2003). Also, teachers can use it to engage students in the learning and teaching activities and assessment (Black & Wiliam, 2009), which any approach that helps students learn is critical in increasing student learning gains (Lau & Ho, 2016). Similarly, teachers can use summative assessment to determine the final learning outcomes and inform future teaching and learning activities (Biggs, 1998). To effectively select and use appropriate assessment strategies, trustworthiness issues (low reliability of formative assessment and limited scope of summative assessment) are critical to the quality of information gathered. Hence, across the range of assessment activities, teachers need to ensure the reliability and validity of assessment, which include the application of measurement principles even in formative assessment (Bennett, 2011), quality (Herman et al., 2006), sufficiency (Smith, 2003), and various sources (Moss, 2003) of assessment information and their social consequences (McNamara & Roever, 2006).

3) *Use of criteria and standards.* The use of criteria and standards (rubrics) in assessment has significant implications for learning and teaching. Using clear criteria and standards will increase teacher clarity, which Hattie (2008) has shown to affect student achievement significantly. It is well-supported that the criteria and standards make learning outcomes more transparent, allow teachers to select the most appropriate instructional design, and facilitate accurate monitoring of students' learning progress (Wolf & Stevens, 2007). Consequently, teachers' use of criteria and standards significantly improve students' learning (Guo & Wei, 2019). Hafner and Hafner (2003) stress that when assessment criteria and standards are available, students can better engage in self-assessment to identify their strengths and weaknesses. In addition, they can engage in peer assessment and give accurate feedback to their peers (Menéndez-Varela & Gregori-Giralt, 2018). In other words, the use of criteria and standards provide tools for students to engage in assessment effectively.

4) *Alignment of criteria and standards to learning outcomes.* The criteria and standards should be aligned with learning outcomes (Glasson, 2009). The criteria should specify the indicators of achievement of the learning outcomes, whilst the standards should describe the increasing complexities of expected performance. The clarity of criteria and standards has a significant impact on increasing student learning and could facilitate peer assessment (Abram et al., 2002)

5) *Alignment of tasks to learning outcomes.* The design of assessment tasks should capture the knowledge and skills being developed as outlined in the learning outcomes. In other words, assessment tasks need to be encompassing and inclusive where students can use various approaches to demonstrate their learning best. This practise is rooted in the fact that there exists a wide variability in students' interests, abilities and learning needs, which, when taken as inputs to learning and teaching, can significantly influence

the success of each student (Fogarty & Pete, 2010; Tomlinson & McTighe, 2006). Also, the tasks are described with reference to criteria and standards. The description highlights the set of knowledge and skills required to demonstrate success. This enhances student understanding of the quality of performance expected from them.

6) *Coherence among learning, teaching and assessment activities.* This aspect of outcomes-based education is critical for attaining the learning outcomes. This lends strong support from the concept of constructive alignment (Wang et al., 2012), which was initially proposed by (Biggs & Tang, 2007), where the learning outcomes are used as guides to develop and implement teaching approach that facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and development of skills. In addition, this concept requires teachers to develop and implement assessment strategies that appropriately measure student learning against the desired outcomes.

## **METHOD**

This study used descriptive design using document analysis and interviews. Teachers were recruited to participate in the focus group. Six teachers from public secondary schools in the Philippines expressed their interest to participate in the study.

The first stage involved an analysis of the unit of work of the teacher participants. Two lesson plans were asked from the participants. The analytical framework described above was used to assess the alignment of the lesson plan to the principles and practices of OBE. Three assessment practitioners were recruited to rate the lesson plans according to OBE design. The rating was binary in nature where assessment experts tick the elements of OBE that are reflected in the sample lesson plans. The percentage of lesson plans that adhere to the elements are reported in Table 2. To ensure common understanding of the analytical framework for assessing the lesson plans, the assessment experts were engaged in a discussion around the use of the framework. They were then provided an opportunity to practice the assessment procedure using three sample lesson plans. After individually rating each lesson plan, they moderated their judgment through discussion. After consistency has been achieved, all 12 lesson plans were assessed by them for the final data gathering. Spot checking was conducted to ensure rating consistency, and an interview was conducted with these experts to explore their rationale for giving their rating.

In stage 2, an in-depth interview was conducted with the teacher participants. This is to gather further evidence on how they implement OBE in their classroom. Questions asked include their bases for deciding what assessment activity to use, how to measure complex learning outcomes, how they ensure the trustworthiness of their marking, and challenges of OBE implementation.

## **FINDINGS**

In this section, we present the results of document analysis and focus group interviews. The results are presented using the six elements with a discussion about the overall design of the course and how each course embodies the principles of OBE, the views of the assessment experts and teachers in using OBE and how they implement it.

Table 2 presents the rating of the three assessors on the lesson plans. In all elements of OBE used for the analytical framework of his study, there is a high level of agreement amongst the assessors.

Table 2  
Alignment of lesson plans to OBE principles and practices

| Elements of OBE  | AE1 (%) | AE2 (%) | AE3 (%) | Average (%) |
|--|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Clarity of learning outcomes                                 | 66.67   | 75      | 66.67   | 69.45       |
| Use of a range of assessment tasks                           |         |         |         |             |
| 1) test/quizzes  | 91.67   | 91.67   | 91.67   | 91.67       |
| 2) portfolio   | 16.67   | 16.67   | 16.67   | 16.67       |
| 3) research tasks  | 33.33   | 33.33   | 33.33   | 33.33       |
| 4) oral exam/class participation                             | 91.67   | 91.67   | 91.67   | 91.67       |
| 5) performance-based   | 58.33   | 58.33   | 58.33   | 58.33       |
| Use of criteria and standards                                |         |         |         |             |
| 1) holistic  | 25.00   | 25.00   | 25.00   | 25.00       |
| 2) analytic  | 58.33   | 58.33   | 58.33   | 58.33       |
| Alignment of criteria and standards to learning outcomes     | 50.00   | 58.33   | 50.00   | 52.78       |
| Alignment of tasks to learning outcomes                      | 66.67   | 58.33   | 58.33   | 61.11       |
| Coherence among learning, teaching and assessment activities | 58.33   | 58.33   | 58.33   | 58.33       |

*AE = Assessment Expert*

### **Clarity of Learning Outcomes**

Of the 12 lesson plans, 69.45% has clear learning outcomes. They are written in a language that is appropriate to the student cohort. Other lesson plans have 'ambiguous learning outcomes, used unmeasurable action words (Assessment Expert: AE2)' and 'do not follow the progression of skills based on Bloom's taxonomy (AE3)'. Teacher interviews revealed the thought processes used by teachers in writing learning outcomes. Some of the teachers explicitly state that, 'I make sure that learning outcomes are clear, and I used only those verbs recommended in Bloom's taxonomy. When I used other words that are not on the list, I always think how to measure those words (Teacher: T3).' This was further corroborated by another teacher who explained that 'my familiarity with the action words that can be measured is the key to writing clear learning outcomes (T4).' In addition, the progression of skills in Bloom's taxonomy is deemed a good guide by teachers. this was summarised by one teacher: 'when I write learning outcomes, I follow the increasing levels of thinking skills in Bloom's taxonomy as my guide (T1).' For example, 'when the task requires students to apply their knowledge in assembling



Personal Computer (PC) unit, I think backwards and ask myself, what low level thinking skills are needed to properly assemble a PC (T1).' Contrary to this group of teachers, there those who write their learning outcomes based on their assumptions. One teacher said, 'I don't really mind making my learning outcomes very clear. Anyway, they are just on the paper. What really matters is the way you teach (T2).' Another teacher further supported this by explaining that 'even how clear your learning outcomes are, if you are bad in teaching, then your students will not learn anything. It's the effectiveness of teaching that matters; things that happen in the classroom rather than what's on the paper (T5).'

### **Use of a Range of Assessment Strategies**

The most dominant types of assessment used by teachers are tests or quizzes and oral recitation. Eleven out of 12 lesson plans have included these assessment types. It is interesting to note that those assessment types that require performance are the least utilised. This indicates that the system is still exam-dominated, which is contrary to the whole philosophy of OBE where assessment tasks should be more of performance-based. This is explicitly articulated in the DepEd Order No. 18, s., 2015, that 60 percent of the assessment activities should require students to demonstrate their skills instead of memory recall or paper-pencil test.

Although a summative assessment culture still drives the system (Lau, 2016), there is evidence of the use of some outcomes-based assessment strategies including performance-based assessment, portfolio and research activities. In the interview, most teachers acknowledged the necessity of using performance-based assessment strategies. However, they need to be realistic in their approach to assessment. "Even how much we want to use performance-based assessment, there are challenges within our school including lack of equipment, inadequate time, and our ability to develop performance-based assessment and rubrics (T6).' Teachers pointed out that their adherence to test is a systemic issue rather than skills issue because the schools do not have the necessary equipment for performance assessment. As summarised by one teacher, 'we could surely develop performance-based assessment tasks if there are available equipment and supplies in the school. How can we ask our students to do something if we do not have the resources (T5)?' Despite these issues, teachers are using approaches to deliver the best assessment approach. "I use simulation if there is a lack of equipment. There are available online tools that can be used to assess students' skills (T1).' One teacher said, "I even bring my personal tools for my students to use when the school does not provide (T3).

### **Use of Criteria and Standards**

Teachers deem the use of rubrics extremely helpful in their teaching and in helping students learn more effectively. It is 'a tool for students to know what criteria their work will be assessed (T6)' and 'an important teaching component that makes it easier for me to communicate my expectations with my students (T5).' Teacher also finds the value of criteria and standards in ensuring the trustworthiness of assessment because 'they make assessment more accurate (T2).' It addresses fairness as well:

because students are clear with the levels of performance, you expect from them. They can aim for higher level of performance by addressing the skills described in the rubrics. If there are disagreements between my mark and their perception of their performance, we discuss their output using the rubrics. They negotiate and present more evidence of their learning. I think the rubrics develop also their critical thinking and self-assessment. I find it amazing how students bring the rubrics with me and ask me to reconsider my mark. I allow them to negotiate because in a way, it develops their communication skills also (T3).

Although teachers recognise that criteria and standards are helpful tools, lesson plans do not include criteria and standards even with performance assessment as part of their assessment approach. This questions how some teachers with no rubrics in their lesson plans can fairly assess student performance. Careful investigation of the results shows a significant percentage (25 percent) of lesson plan with holistic criteria and standards. The individual criteria are not explicitly identified. Some teachers said, 'I do not include my rubrics in my lesson plan. I hand them down to my students during class time. I have all sorts of rubrics for all my performance-based requirements (T2).'

All six teachers emphasised the need to develop their skills in developing criteria and standards. Although they have undertaken training on writing rubrics, they feel the need to have more professional training on this area. Further, they underscored the need to develop their knowledge and skills in using criteria and rubrics to engage students in the assessment process to optimise learning gains.

#### **Alignment of Criteria and Standards to Learning Outcomes**

The inclusion of criteria and standards in the lesson plan does not guarantee that these are helpful in learning and teaching. Only 52.78 percent are considered to be aligned to the learning outcomes. When teachers are asked their bases for developing their criteria and standards, most of them said they adopted existing rubrics. This was observed by assessment experts who unanimously gave a low rating and stressed that, 'there are criteria which are not aligned to the learning outcomes (A2).'

This is the problem when rubrics are adopted without modifying to the context of specific tasks. Teachers 'need to adapt the criteria and standards and make sure that the criteria used reflect the outcomes they want their students to demonstrate (A1).'

#### **Alignment of Assessment Tasks to Learning Outcomes**

The alignment of tasks to learning outcomes is critical to assess how students have achieved the learning outcomes effectively. Only slightly higher than 50 percent of the lesson plans have assessment tasks that could assess the specified learning outcomes. One of the assessors pointed out that, 'the dominance of quizzes and test compromises the whole assessment strategies. How can you assess baking using a multiple-choice test? There was no evidence that students are asked to bake something (A3).'

Based on the interview, teachers have expressed that they are aware that some of their assessment tasks are not aligned to the learning outcomes. This was explained by

teacher 3:

Our learning outcomes are written for ideal situations. We assume that all resources that we and our students' need to demonstrate the indicated outcomes are available. Then, when assessment comes, we have to ensure that we know that our students learn something. We try really hard to give the best for our students, but when the equipment needed is not available, we resort to just giving tests and exams.

Another teacher puts it into context:

You cannot expect us to measure all the learning outcomes given our school condition. Sometimes, we go to partner industries to give our students a hands-on experience, but up to that only. We do not have the equipment for our students to play around and develop their skills. We struggle a lot to teach TLE courses...it would be better if DepEd will ensure that all equipment needed to develop and assess the skills indicated in the curriculum guides are supplied to the schools before the school year. While the equipment is not available, we test our students' retention of basic knowledge and hoping that when they encounter the equipment one day, they know how to perform the skills required and produce the expected output (T4).

#### **Coherence among Learning, Teaching and Assessment Activities**

One key aspect of OBE is the alignment of learning, teaching and assessment activities. This is related to the concept of constructive alignment by Biggs (1996). Based on the results, only 58.33% of the lesson plans have coherent learning, teaching and assessment activities. Key observations of the assessors include:

- 1) there are assessment tasks that need modelling and simulation, but class reporting is used as a teaching strategy instead (AE3);
- 2) lecture is the dominant teaching strategy, and it may not suit well to most of the learning outcomes (AE3);
- 3) there is little evidence that students play an active role in learning and teaching. Most of the activities are teacher-driven, with most activities facilitated by the teachers (AE1);
- 4) assessment is always indicated as a form of measurement to judge student learning. There is little evidence that assessment activities are used for formative purposes (AE2); and
- 5) assessment activities are isolated from learning and teaching activities. There are only a few lesson plans where assessment activities are integral to learning and teaching activities. Most lesson plans have assessment activities towards the end of the teaching episode (AE2).

Interviews revealed that teachers are aware that their teaching activities should be

aligned to the learning outcomes and assessment activities. However, teachers express that their implementation of such is hindered by the school context. 'We have to be realistic to deal with all the shortcomings that are out of our control (T5).' 'In principle, we know what we must do, but in practice, we have to do what are given the circumstance. I think, that's still a good practice (T6).'

## **DISCUSSION**

There are significant key findings in our study that highlight key challenges in implementing assessment strategies that adhere to OBE design. These findings present professional development learning opportunities for teachers and a call for a more systemic reform across schools.

First, it is evident that teachers have the requisite knowledge for OBE curriculum design and implementation. Although the results of assessing their lesson plans based on the analytical framework show otherwise, teachers can explicitly discuss their roles and responsibilities in implementing OBE. This finding provides empirical evidence to the claim of De Guzman et al., (2017) that teachers have certain level of knowledge and skills in OBE. This is a good indication that teachers have a high level of knowledge required for OBE implementation to be successful. As in any educational reform, teachers' knowledge and skills are the critical starting point for successful implementation. However, it was highlighted in the findings that teachers have difficulty operationalising their assessment knowledge and skills to support students in their learning effectively.

Second, findings highlight some key areas for teacher development opportunities. Firstly, there is a necessity to assist teachers and develop their skills in writing clear and explicit learning outcomes to ensure that the skills required for students to demonstrate are well-articulated in the lesson plan. Although it can be argued that lesson plans are just guides, and any improvement can be done in the actual teaching, Glasson (2009) argues that clear lesson plans with explicit learning outcomes are most likely to be successfully implemented. He further argues that lesson plans with clear learning outcomes is the starting point for effective learning and teaching. Second, teachers' skills in adapting existing rubrics to their specific assessment tasks must also be revisited. This will ensure that the criteria contain the necessary elements to assess student learning. Consequently, it will ensure that the skills indicated in the learning outcomes are accurately measured. The benefits of using clear and explicit criteria are well documented in the literature (Griffin, 2018). Hence, criteria and standards should be integral parts of the OBE course and implementation. Doing this will ensure that teacher assessment practices, particularly their decision making concerning students' achievement of the learning outcomes, are more valid, reliable and trustworthy (Griffin, 2007; Menéndez-Varela & Gregori-Giralt, 2018). Thirdly, there is also a need to assess teachers' skills in ensuring coherence among learning, teaching and assessment activities. This lends support to the principles of constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2007). The careful planning of learning, teaching and assessment activities is the key for developing and implementing coherent and more effective teaching (Lui & Shum, 2012). The need for teacher professional development in OBE has been earlier cited by

Brindley (2001) that it is one of the ways forward to realise the potential of OBE in optimising students' outcomes.

Third, the findings of this study highlight the impact of school context in shaping teachers' assessment practices. Apart from the need of teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in OBE implementation, a large part of the challenge is systemic by nature. What is highlighted in the results is the systemic constraint for OBE implementation. This issue has been cited by Damit et al., (2021) in implementing OBE in Malaysia. The lack of system and administrator support for teachers compromise the effectiveness of teachers. The limited resources to develop students' required skills pushes teachers to continue using exams rather than designing authentic assessment activities, which raises issues on the trustworthiness of their assessment practices and continues to compromise student learning. Increasing teacher OBE skills will not answer the constraint currently identified in this study.

Similarly, the systemic culture of the examination-driven education system needs to be revisited for the successful implementation of OBE. There is a need to look at the political and technical problems in the implementation of OBE. This may thoroughly redevelop the OBE culture within schools and across the education bureaucracy.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

In conclusion, our findings provide an initial view on the actual OBE practices of TLE teachers. We have highlighted critical issues that need to be addressed to further strengthen the implementation of OBE reform in the Philippines. We outline some recommendations for practice and further research.

To support teachers, they should be provided with a range of professional development programs focused on operationalising their assessment knowledge and skills to support students learning more effectively in the context of OBE. As shown in the findings, teachers have a high level of understanding of the role of assessment in OBE framework, but they cannot implement it in their actual practice. The professional development programs should ensure how teachers' theoretical knowledge in assessment can be translated into practical knowledge to support students' learning.

Apart from the need of teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in OBE implementation, a large part of the challenge is systemic by nature. What is highlighted in the results is the systemic constraint for OBE implementation. The lack of resources to develop students' required skills pushes teachers to continue using exams rather than designing authentic assessment activities, which raises issues on the trustworthiness of their assessment practices and continues to compromise student learning. Increasing teacher OBE skills will not answer the constraint currently identified in this study. Thus, addressing these systems issues should be an integral part of OBE implementation. Teachers should be provided with resources needed, including time and supportive policy. These resources will enable teachers to design and implement assessment activities that will measure the outcomes being taught.

In terms of future research, it is ideal to conduct a validation study through classroom

observations and student interviews to triangulate the findings further. Classroom observations will show how teachers are implementing OBE in their classroom and to validate their claims. These additional data gathering will confirm the results of this study based on the analysis of units of work and focus group discussions. Furthermore, there is a need to explore students' beliefs about assessment and how they impact teacher assessment practices. This may highlight the context-driven nature of assessment (Chen & Brown, 2018). Also, there is a need to consider more lesson plans to establish patterns and themes TLE teachers' assessment practices. It would be ideal to get all lesson plans within a year to establish a more holistic picture of teacher assessment practices in the context of OBE.

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