An integrative approach to OBL course design for effective implementation

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The concept of OBL in our Institute

- **Making Learning Explicit**
- **Performance-based**
- **Evidence-based**
- **Learning performed in contexts**
- **Learning is more holistic and complex**
- **With accountability toward the profession, community, government and stakeholders**
- **Integrative**

- *K. Kennedy (June, 2008). Outcomes Based Learning: Concepts, issues and action. Document drafted for HKIEd.*

The OBL Course Design

- Adopts a student-centred approach
- Constructive alignment between learning, teaching and assessment

- Using an "alignment" approach:
- - starts with what students are expected to learn
- - formulates the learning outcome statements (CILOs)
- - selects appropriate objectives and content
- - creates the teaching and learning environment
- - provides learning opportunities and activities
- - uses multi-tasks assessment

Integrative Practice I - Linking ILOs – TLAs – ATs

- What do I intend my students to be able to do after taking the course? (ILOs)

- To what standards should they achieve?(Standard)

 ILO statement –what to do and to what levels?

- How do I supply learning activities that will help them achieve those outcomes? (TLAs)

TLAs – require students to apply, invent, generate new ideas, diagnose and solve problems

- *How do I assess the students to see how well they have achieved the standards? (ATs)*

ATs – tell us how students can use knowledge in academically and professionally appropriate ways.

(John Biggs & Catherine Tang, 2007)

Integrative Practice II – Mapping CILOs with PILOs

- Strong and coherent linkage between CILOs and PiLOs
- Drawing up a matrix - Programme ILOs and Course ILOs should be checked to avoid overlapping and redundancy of CILOs
- Curricular components of course design should be aligned
- CILOs and PILOs should beckon each other for alignment and support *Ewell (2006)*

- PILOs are derived from the attributes of the ideal graduate, the general aims, requirements of the profession and judgments of the programme committees.
- CILOs require constructive alignment of curricular components. We need appropriate verbs to establish level of ILOs

Example:

One of the major roles of the OBL Unit is to assist both the programme committees (i.e. the Bachelor of Education programmes) and the individual teaching staff to develop intended learning outcomes (ILOs).

- Integrates conventional teaching with innovative teaching strategies

- Aims to foster active and engaged learning

- Makes the students do the work

- Let students experience all sorts of learning

- Encourages write up of post-lesson reflective journals

Examples:

CHI Dept - *OBL pilot tutors shared their teaching plan in adopting new teaching methods that they had not used before, e.g. on-line discussions, object probe, 3-min speech on front of the class audience, etc.*

CCA Dept (Music) – *OBL pilot tutor used post-lesson reflective writing to evaluate TLAs*

TLA (1)

Integrative Practice IV – Adopting multi-tasks for both analytic and holistic assessment

- Requires a major rethinking of the assessment methods that we used to practice
- Assessment should be authentic to the discipline
- Assessment tasks should foster learning
- Requires multi-tasks created for more holistic and complex outcomes
- Grading should be integration of both holistic as well as analytic

Examples:

CLE (Putonghua Section) – adopted multi-tasks for language learning

CCA Dept (Visual Arts) – adopted one major task on product assessment and 5 sub-tasks on process assessment

Integrative Practice V - Focusing on integration of professional knowledge, skills and values performed in contexts

- This is a curriculum vision in course design
- A whole person development approach
- Outcomes are integrated for broad learning (broader conception of competencies)
- Design and select key tasks central to the profession
- Needs support from the teaching staff, the students, all the stakeholders

Example:

CHI Dept – *Pilot tutor integrated knowledge, skills and values to design activities and assessment tasks on "Chinese creative writing"*

Integrative Approach VI - Completing the assessment "feedback loop" through piloting courses on a small scale

- OBL Piloting refers to rehearsing the process of information-based improvement on OBL course design

- Pilot tutors can experience the benefits of the process themselves

- The piloting process refers to:

- - how to create meaningful learning outcomes statements

- - how to incorporate them into curricular design

- - how to select appropriate content

- - how to deliver specific teaching practices

- - how to design an assessment system to evaluate student learning

- - how to gather evidence during the course of teaching that the learning outcomes are being achieved

Integrative Approach VI - Completing the assessment "feedback loop" through piloting courses on a small scale

- The assessment "feedback loop" refers to:

    - Identifying a learning problem

    - Gathering evidence related to the problem

    - Using this evidence to help formulate a solution

- Through action research, many pilot tutors have been collecting data to complete the assessment feedback loop

Examples:

Pilot course tutors in HKIEd use a number of data collection strategies: rating and rank-order preference scales, classroom observations, video and audio recordings, teaching plans, students' assignments, worksheets, reflective journals, interviews, etc.

Integrative Practice VII – Launching staff development programmes to include generic seminars and individual consultations

- The OBL Unit in LTTC has been launching a series of generic outcome seminars and workshops as well as professional support on implementation of OBL courses

- The OBL Unit in LTTC has proactively offered Departmental and OBL Champions' workshops to introduce OBL concepts prior to their course designs

- The OBL Unit in LTTC has worked with individual staff or team of staff on a consulting basis to cater for their needs on applying outcome-based concepts and techniques

Examples:

Currently, all academic departments and two centres (for Languages and General Education) have participated in the OBL development.

HKIEd's Institutional Learning Outcomes ILOs (7 Generic Outocmes)

- 1. Problem Solving
- 2. Critical and Reflective Thinking
- 3. Creative and Critical Thinking
- 4. Ethical Understanding and Decision Making
- 5. Effective Communication
- 6. Social Interaction
- 7. Global and Multi-cultural Perspective

Some difficulties to overcome:

- A change of mindset - The key word in enabling this change is not to "think," but to "do." This applies to both academic staff (as teachers) and students (as learners).

- Solely mapping disciplinary outcomes against general competencies - Ever since our Institute formulated 7 generic outcomes (regarded as general competencies) for students, some academic departments have tempted to map their disciplinary aims and content against these areas of general competence

- Irrelevance in course design - Isolating the development and assessment of such competencies from the natural contexts relevant to the course that students are taking will affect the teacher preparation programme

- Lack of Integration of theory and practice in implementation .

Conclusion

- To this author, both "intoxicated with" and "drifting away from" the teaching, learning and assessment of general competencies (generic outcomes) should be avoided.

- It is important, therefore, to see how academic teaching staff can strike a balance between the two practices in their course design, rather than integrating the general and the subject-specific competencies.

- Our OBL Unit supports many types of integrative practices for our academic teaching staff during the piloting process of OBL courses.

Development of CILOs – a collaboration of General Education colleagues with the OBL Team

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