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Outcome-Based Education: New Learning Paradigm

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At the beginning of twentieth century, a growing number of educators, professionals and representatives of the business community in Western countries began to realise the shortcomings of traditional education (TE) system. The system cannot help learners effectively implement their earned knowledge in the real-world environments. Moreover, TE model does not inspire learners to come up with their own ways of approaching and solving problems. As globalisation continues to shape national and international marketplaces, employers' needs are constantly changing. To help ensure a successful transition in students' careers, academic institutions in addition to imparting knowledge also need to focus on development of communication skills, entrepreneurship, innovation and creative systematic thinking in students. To develop a system that will be more appropriate in the present context, educationists and policymakers in Bangladesh need to spend time in understanding the advantages offered by the model implemented in Western countries over traditional model.

The TE model gives students very little say in what they learn. The only way to gain knowledge is to follow a set curriculum in a set order. The curriculum design has focused on the transmission of discrete pieces of information and has not set any outcome goals. Teachers mainly focus on effective delivery of topics of courses and do not help students in developing the competencies and achieving mastery. They do not monitor academic progress of each student. Therefore, TE model is for mass consumption rather than individual needs, learning styles, and outcome goals. This trait suppresses the creative side of their personality and they never get to know their strengths. Consequently educators were looking for an alternative education model. Since that time Outcome-Based Education (OBE), a learning outcome approach to teaching and learning is receiving strong support at an international level and universities in Western countries have adopted OBE. Many countries in Asia

have also implemented OBE substituting their old systems. OBE is a learning model (Spady, 1986) that organises curriculum content and learning activities around specific, demonstrable outcomes. Educators are embracing outcome-based learning because it means that students are coming out of the classroom with the skills they need for the real world.

In a traditional education system, actual achievement of a learner is neither measured nor required by the institution system. Learners are given grades and rankings compared to each

based approach, curriculum design of a programme begins with clearly defined student learning outcomes. Intended learning outcomes (ILOs) are statements of a learning achievement and are expressed in terms of what the student is expected to achieve on completion of the programme, that provide clear information about student attainment – the knowledge, skills and essential qualities. Learning outcomes (i) help teachers to tell students more precisely what is expected of them, (ii) help teachers select the appropriate teaching strategy matched to the in-

some outcomes during their study. There are some outcomes called the exit outcomes. The drafting exit outcomes are the most complex and difficult part of the implementation process and the most crucial to success. Educators should need to understand the importance of involving all segments of the community in generating clearly defined outcomes, since these outcomes will ultimately reflect community values. The challenging task is also of developing performance-based indicators to gauge how well students will achieve essential outcomes is a critical step. Each course has 3-5 Course Learning Outcome (CLO) outcomes. If a student fails to achieve any ILO or ILOs well, instructor will give him/her time to achieve them before giving him/her any grade.

In Bangladesh about a two million strong educated workforce is entering the job market every year. Providing employment opportunity to such a huge population is a difficult task for the government as well as local private sectors. It is, therefore, imperative for institutions to mentor youths for entrepreneurship and also to develop high level skills and competencies for placing them in global job markets. Youths will create jobs for themselves and also make them more competitive in the global market. Institutions in Bangladesh should think about adopting OBE for the improvement of education system and transform youths for success in the world. However, there is a history of failure of implementing OBE in many countries. At the initial stage of implementation, we will not change the existing grading and exam system but accept widely practised teaching methods. Curriculum of a programme will be designed targeting some predetermined objectives. Teachers will set questions to test whether students achieve CLOs and ILOs. However, the lack of expertise in the country may call for foreign OBE specialists to train our teachers and guiding them how to design curricula and effective teaching-learning.

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other. The highest-performing learners are given the highest grades and test scores, and the lowest performing learners are given low grades. The failure of some learners is accepted as a natural and unavoidable circumstance. On the contrary, OBE propositions every student can succeed by making learning meaningful, even though every student is not expected to perform at exactly the same level – learning at the same pace and in the same way as peers.

Spady (1989) defines OBE as “a comprehensive approach to organising and operating an education system that is focused on and defined by the successful demonstrations of learning sought from each student”. In the outcome-

tended learning outcome, e.g. lecture, seminar, group work, tutorial, discussion, peer group presentation or laboratory class, (iii) help students to learn more effectively: students know where they stand and the curriculum is made more open to them and (iv) make it clear what students can hope to gain from following a particular course or lecture. Stakeholders such as teachers, students, parents and employers are involved in selecting learning outcomes of a programme. With a socio-constructivist base that makes allowances for stakeholder input, OBE is becoming a living educational model, adapting to new demands and needs.

There are two categories of outcomes. Students need to demonstrate

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