

Student Centric Outcome Based Education – A Progressive Approach to Teaching and Learning

There are two approaches to teaching and learning philosophies in Education. They are “Content Based (Input based/Traditional)” and “Outcome (Competency) Based (OBE)”.

The content based education approach focuses more on delivery of content than in ensuring that the student has learned the content; the education is teacher centric and the motivation to learn, for the student, has to come from the teacher and the student is a passive learner. The education that most of us have received is content based and from experience we know how much time we had to spend to adopt to the real- life problem- solving environment.

Outcome based education prepares a student to achieve a set of stated learning outcomes and measures the extent of achievement right through the learning period. The subject/module tutor writes a set of learning outcomes that a student should be able to do after learning a given subject/course and the learning outcomes are measured using innovative assessment methods. The learning outcomes include cognitive abilities, attitudes and practical skills that a student is required to develop while learning a subject/module/course. It is expected that by mastering the stated learning outcomes, a student will be able to perform a defined task in the subject/course area with the right attitude and in a professional manner. The tutor uses Bloom’s taxonomy while writing the outcomes and writing learning outcomes demands a greater ingenuity in the tutor. This philosophy of learning makes the student an active learner; the tutor a good facilitator and together they lay the foundation for lifelong learning.

In outcome based education, the Course Aim, Course Objectives and Course Learning Outcomes are decided and written by the course team. The course aim, course objectives and intended learning outcomes are further broken down into subject aim, subject objectives and subject intended learning outcomes. The subject content (curriculum) is written in a manner that will help achieve the subject intended learning outcomes. The intended learning outcomes for each subject are important than the subject content. The subject tutor can organize the teaching content and choose variety of teaching methods to achieve the intended learning outcomes, thus making the subject content rather dynamic. The subject learning outcomes, subject content and subject assessment methods are like three vertices of a triangle. A change in any one vertex requires a dynamic change in the other two vertices. To explain, if a change in learning outcome is decided based on student feedback , the teaching staff can quickly make corresponding changes to the subject content and assessment methods thereby enriching the learning experience. This breaks the monotony for both student and tutor alike and creates an enjoyable teaching and learning environment in a university. The adoption of OBE philosophy by the universities is a progressive approach to teaching and learning.

OBE was a popular term in the United States during the 1980s and early 1990s. It is also called **mastery education, performance-based education**; presently, almost all developed countries have adopted the outcome based education in their Schools and Universities.

Is this outcome based education something easy to evolve and adopt? The answer is no. Once Margery H. Davis (JVME 30(3) © 2003 AAVMC) proponent of OBE, while visiting Chile, stayed in a hotel that was undergoing structural alterations and there was a notice to hotel guests pinned at the entrance. This notice said, “Sorry for the inconvenience –but you’ll love the result when it is finished”, the same may be said about the shift to outcome –based education from content based education.

In India, academic bodies have started realizing the importance of outcome based education only recently. M.S. Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences is well versed in this art as many of its faculties have been practicing this for the last fourteen (14) years. The M.S. Ramaiah School of Advanced Studies (MSRSAS), one of the constituents of the University was offering a number of postgraduate courses in engineering and management in partnership with Coventry University of the UK, using OBE methodologies and teaching strategies during the 14 years of this association.

Recently, in an informal way, I enquired with one of my students, about his experience after undergoing the OBE course for the past two years at MSRSAS. He replied, “Sir, your course has instilled a lot of self confidence in me. Now, I know, how to build my Career.” This is the value addition that students can expect from outcome based education.

So, Parents and Students, if you are Goal Oriented, then my suggestion is that you should opt for a university which has embraced outcome based education across its faculties. The faculties at M.S. Ramaiah University of Applied Sciences have been practicing this education philosophy for the last 14 years making us eminently capable of delivering relevant education and skills.

Please visit the academic pages on our website to get a feel of OBE at MSRUAS.

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