# AN ASSESSMENT OF LEVEL OF PREPAREDNESS AMONG THE FACULTY OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES IN A PHILIPPINE UNIVERSITY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUTCOMES-BASED EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

An assessment of level of preparedness among the faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences in a Philippine university for the implementation of OBE is an institutional research which was conducted in aid of preparations for a series of faculty development trainings. 72 faculty members were surveyed using a validated researcher designed instrument to measure dimensions of preparedness that included OBE concepts, assessments, learning outcomes, strategies and overall faculty disposition to the framework. The results and discussions point to the current status of faculty preparedness levels to be very low and therefore the need for an andragogy-based change-model to facilitate improvement in OBE faculty preparedness in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

Keywords:  outcomes-based education, Philippines, level of preparedness

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## Introduction

Under CMO No.59, S. 1996, the new general education curriculum, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) allocated about 63 units of common subjects to all four year. These subjects are collectively called the General Education Curriculum (GEC) and are generally offered under the Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CAS) for most universities in the Philippines, including the university for which this research was made. Because of this, CAS is well-known not so much for its degree giving courses but more for being a servicing unit to all colleges in the university. In some cases, the college has been an incubator for new courses that mature from being departments of CAS to becoming independent degree giving colleges. By and large, the college has the highest concentration of faculty members, 72 in the second semester of 2013-2014, who are also interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary. For this reason, the shift in collegiate curriculum from inputs to outcomes-based education(CMO. No. 46 S. 2012), has far reaching implications for CAS.

The shift has been seen to be part of President Benigno S. Aquino III push for broader educational reforms in the country since EDCOM (1992-93). CHED CMO 46, S. 2012, *Policy-standard to enhance quality assurance (QA) in Philippine higher education through an outcomes-based and typology-based QA*puts the purpose of the educational reform in the context of higher education. This reform according to CHED must address the quality of educational services provided to ensure that the graduates are best positioned for the global labor market. Concretely, the shift is made from inputs to outcomes based education to improve the educational services in all higher education program offerings.

Unfortunately, so much discourse on these reforms has focused heavily on financial impacts (Pazzibugan, 2013)of the reform thereby marginalizing the very reason and intent of the reforms. As a result, much preparation has come out to be quantitative and finance related. This study sought to direct the preparations where they are called for, the faculty and their classrooms.

From the onset, this shift makes it compelling for university management and educational managers to re-examine the quality of students' classroom experience that is from the educational service delivery level. Leaders in this new educational context are confronted with important multiple roles. Among them: How to facilitate faculty to be engaged and committed; setting a vision for school stakeholder's transition to outcomes based education standards; exploring ways to best implement the OBE; communicating changes to curriculum with students

and parents; allowing the faculty to take small and big steps to adjust to the rigor and expectations; and creating a culture of reflection among the faculty.

Ultimately this is also a question of self-repositioning within the wider educational market. How ready are the faculty members to live the reality of the reform and reap the benefit in terms of increased recognition of the university by the stakeholders (students and parents) as an institution that guarantee delivery of high quality educational services and ultimately translate into high employability and productivity for graduates and increased enrolment and self-marketing for the university? So far, the university proof of quality given as assurance to stakeholders has been through institutional alignment with external benchmarks through voluntary accreditation and ISO certification rather than customer feedback and increased enrolments. This study tried to highlight faculty preparedness for the 2015 compulsory implementation of OBE in the Philippines based on what they already have prior to formal trainings as well as seeking to enrich any training that may be designed for the same purpose. Through literature review some dimensions were identified to frame the study.

The dimensions of preparedness were considered to be constituted in OBE concepts, assessments, learning outcomes, strategies and overall faculty disposition to the framework. Viewed together these where considered parameters for assessing faculty preparedness for the implementation of OBE in their respective disciplines.

**Statement of the Problem**

The study aimed to provide an assessment of preparedness of the Faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) of a Philippine university for the full implementation OBE framework. The specific problems that the study aimed to answer were the following:

1. At what level are the faculty of CAS in their preparedness regarding conceptual understanding of OBE?

2. At what level are the faculty of CAS in their preparedness regarding understanding of assessments consistent with OBE framework?

3. At what level are the faculty of CAS in their preparedness regarding understanding of the learning outcomes in OBE?

4. At what level are the faculty of CAS in their preparedness regarding understanding of useful teaching strategies employed in OBE?

5. At what level are the faculty of CAS in their preparedness regarding their overall disposition to the OBE framework?

6. What change-model may be developed to facilitate improvement in faculty preparedness for the effective implementation of OBE in the university?

## Significance of the Study

A good university teaching is a major requisite of student learning (Bhatti, 2012) which can only be achieved if the teachers are effective in the delivery of instruction. The teachers play a critical role in the education of today's youth. The curriculum may be appropriate, the books may be updated, the computers are top-of-the-line hardware but without an effective teacher, all of these would be useless. Given the importance of role of teachers in achieving quality education, this study will help the teachers assess their efficacy in the light of OBE. It will help teachers as well to evaluate and harmonize their strategies in delivering the lessons in the context of OBE.

This study will enable the administrators to plan activities that will develop and maximize the good qualities of teachers and to develop policy adjustments in the management of instruction that would foster effective implementation of OBE and promotion of a positive learning experience among the students.

## Scope and Limitation

The study is limited to the full-time faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences. Limiting the study to full-time faculty may confine the study by employment status. Another variable to consider is the tendency of the teachers to consult references such as Google while completing the instrument rather than answering given questions to the best of their conscious stock knowledge. Furthermore, given the closed nature of the instrument used, a multiple choicetest paper, guessing is possible and therefore affecting the results in one direction or another. The study included only the quality of instructions delivered by the teachers in the classroom setting. Activities done outside the classrooms are not part of the study.

## Definition of Terms

OBE concepts:These refer to understanding of the curriculum, designing of syllabus, preparing and using of instructional materials, managing the classroom and assessing the learners.

OBE assessments:  These refer to the nature of and strategies used in conducting assessments for learning and assessment of learning.

OBE learning outcomes:  These refer to the intended competencies that the learner has to achieve or what the learner has to become at the end of the educational experience.

OBE strategies:  These refer to the teaching-learning methodologies employed in facilitating student learning through the carefully and meaningfully designed learning experiences in and out of classroom.

Overall faculty disposition to the OBE framework: this refers to the proximate exposure that a faculty member has as a reflection of his or her ability to apply the OBE framework.

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework to guide this study is culled from two sources which put teachers at the heart of instructional planning in OBE and therefore outlines the case for teacher efficacy in terms of ability to carry out OBE instructional planning. This presupposes the degree of preparedness to implement it effectively (McDaniel, Felder, Gordon, Hrutka& Quinn, 2000; Spady in Berlach& O'Neill, 2008).

Teachers must know the expected outcomes in their teaching in order to truly make the learning experience student-centered. This means that the basic fundamental principles of OBE are observed: begin with the outcome in mind; individual schools design a curriculum around predetermined outcomes; avoid comparing students' performances; calibrating learning so as to allow for individual success; and treat process as important as product.

OBE puts emphasis on structuring the lesson in a way that will ensure the attainment of the learning outcomes. Only then will the students be challenged to become more active learners and more motivated to learn.  To achieve this, McDaniel, Felder, Gordon, Hrutka and Quinn (2000) suggest that the faculty lead and own the process.  The faculty must be responsible for designing of OBE classes, determining what knowledge and skills the students would need and the learning experiences that would show the expected outcomes.  The simple formula set in this research design is to equate the level of teacher knowledge of OBE to the level of preparedness.
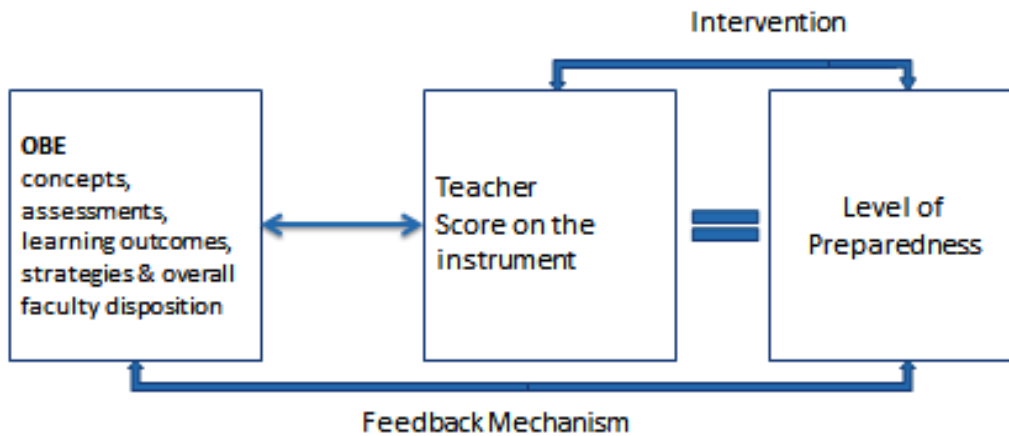
Figure 1:  Theoretical framework of the study

Perfect or ideal preparedness in this framework means that the teacher score reflects full knowledge of OBE concepts, assessments, learning outcomes, strategies and overall faculty disposition to the implementation of OBE. The degree of mismatch reflects the level of preparedness presented as feedback mechanism. And from that level an intervention has to be made in form of clearly targeted faculty development training.

**Review of Related Literature**

The university sector in many countries continues to change at an increasingly hectic rate including the nature of universities and the university mission, more corporatized and competitive for markets (Biggs & Tang, 2007). The drivers of change are too many, making managing change more an art than a science (Jick&Peiperl, 2003). Even amid seemingly rational-linear changes, the contingent-organic changes tend to profoundly override and outweigh the rational-linear ones skewing resulting change to more undesirable latent consequences. Against a myriad of potential challenges facing educational organizations, they must be successful by coping effectively with the multi-layered "implications of new technology, globalization, changing social and political climates, new competitive threats, shifting economic conditions, industry consolidation, swings in consumer preferences, and new performance and legal standards" (Hughes, Ginnett, &Curphy, 2012, p.556).

While these may be seen as externally driven changes, there are new challenges arising from within the educational sector such as a shift from input-based education to learner-centered teaching and learning (Aldridge & Goldman, 2002; Attard, 2010; Biggs & Tang, 2007; CHED, 2012). The financial model for higher education is equally in question. A mismatch exists between student expectations and institutional services. Non-traditional students are now the norm in higher education. Globalization is changing international student recruitment. There are more options for students than ever before. Services must support the reality of individual students.   It is difficult to keep pace with rate of technological change. The bulk of funding, for example, does no longer come from religious charities, non-government philanthropists, or government agencies.   Rather it comes from student fees forcing the universities to become customer focus and quality conscious.

In this case, what goes on in the economic sector has direct implication to the university management. This presents profound effects on both students and on university teaching in addition to managing the regulatory environment.

*Institutional Preparedness*

On the onset, we have to elucidate the specific nature of change to be prepared for. Jocelyn Right (2013) drew on the work of Robert Marzano, Taxonomy of Educational Change, to provide a framework for examining educational reform:

> Educational change is a broad term that refers to both shifting paradigms within education and efforts of reform within education. The former is often a part of the latter, since most change within the field of education is initiated for the improvement of the institution. Similarly, shifting perspectives within the field of education are most often a result of an awareness of new ideas and new needs. The efforts taken to adjust to those new ideas and meet those needs can be categorized as educational change. (Abstract)

Right (2013) found in Marzano a classification of two kinds of educational change. First-order change refers to any surface level change that is a response to new ideas. Accordingly, this level of change calls for the response in which the new ideas must fit into the current conceptual

framework within education and failure to which entails that the change is rejected in favor of maintaining the current framework. Second-order change refers to reform and actual change within the field. It concerns itself with the accepted norms and current conceptual framework but works with those for change rather than change to those norms. The current paradigm is part of the change process, but compatibility with it does not determine the success of the change. For Marzano, it is this second-order change that is the more substantive and genuine change. He observes that failed reform is usually a result of a failure to address this second-order change.

To this effect, educational managers as well as their clients and stakeholders need ways to prospectively assess preparedness for them to know what they can expect in implementing reforms and establish fall backs and safeguards.

### *Dimensions of Preparedness*

Dimensions of preparedness may include evaluating the resources and activities that are easiest to quantify to provide some insight into what resilience and adaptability systems would facilitate achieving implementing the intended reforms. Other efforts can go beyond inventorying resources to develop preparedness standards, assess less-tangible factors (such as training and leadership) and educational and institutional aims, strategic objectives and operational objectives vis-à-vis expected changes. Taken together, these two methods can generate insights into preparedness and answer some fundamental questions of the educational leaders and the stakeholders.

### *Common Factors in School Reforms*

Brian (2012) described formal education in most part of the world as "creatures of the state." He simply means that the government manages the installation of the hard (buildings, facilities) and soft (curriculum) structures which comprise the educational system. The government runs the public school system and regulates the independent providers. It follows that since the government controls the educational system, it is the government who initiates the reforms which it deems necessary.

Agezo (2009) explained that school reforms differ in content, directions and pace but have five common factors:

1. The government believes that the changing the conditions under which student learn can accelerate improvement, raise the achievement and ensure the competitiveness of the students;

2. The change will address the issues arising from the perceived fragmentation of personal and social values;

3. Challenge the teachers' existing practice;

4. The reforms entail increase the workload of the teachers; and

5. Government does not pay attention to the concerns of the teachers such as their level of job satisfaction, commitment and level of preparedness for the change.

Four of the five factors identified pertain to the teachers and the effect of the reforms in the teachers. Agezo (2009) emphasized the increasing role of the teachers in educational reforms.

*Outcomes-based Education*

The Commission of Higher Education in Memorandum No. 46 series 2012 prioritizes the development and implementation of outcomes-based approach to quality assurance monitoring and evaluation. As indicated in the memorandum, "Mature evaluation systems are based upon outcomes, looking particularly into the intended, implemented and achieved learning outcomes" (p.4).

This implies that the student is the center of the teaching process and learning can only be established based on the expected outcomes. Spady ( in Berlach& O'Neill, p. 50) established basic fundamental principles of OBE, namely, (1) begin with the outcome in mind; (2) individual schools design a curriculum around predetermined outcomes; (3) comparing students' performances is educationally counter-productive; (4) all learning should be calibrated so as to allow for individual success; (5) process is at least as important as product; (6) the importance of me is emphasized in the process; and (7) traditional schooling paradigms are 'educentric icebergs' and as such passé.

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Outcomes-based education puts emphasis on structuring the lesson in a way that will ensure the attainment of the learning outcomes. As a consequence of outcomes-based education, the students will be challenged to become more active learners and more motivated to learn. They are weaned out from being passive and dependent to motivated and independent learners. To achieve this, McDaniel, Felder, Gordon, Hrutka and Quinn (2000) suggested that the faculty should be involved and must own the process. This is possible if the faculty is free to design their OBE classes. The faculty determines what knowledge and skills the students would need and the learning experiences that would show the expected outcomes.

### Qualities of Good Teaching

The concept of good teaching has been the subject of debates not only among administrators and students but teachers as well. There have been studies which define what good teaching means. There are teachers who regarded good teaching as a form of conversation (Shakespear, 2008). It is specifically, a dialogue between two individuals with distinct identity. In this case, the dialogue is between the teacher and the students. Often times, teaching has been reduced to a monologue with the teacher dominating all the conversation in the classroom. Good teaching is not confined within a box, both the teachers and the students have to interact and share their ideas, talents, knowledge, skills and perspectives.

Duarte (2013) concluded that good teachers tend to embrace constructivist principles and are committed to facilitating learning that is deep, engaged, experientially-based, empowering, reflective, and life-long. Constructivism implies that "literally, the teachers have to enable their students to learn by doing. It simply means that deep learning will occur if the students are able to synthesize and apply on their own the knowledge they have learned in the classroom. This highlights the importance of motivating the students to learn. Good teaching redounds to teachers who are able to inspire the students to learn.

The cited studies indicated that good teaching is achieved when the students have imbibed the lesson through their initiatives.

## Methodology

The research utilized a mixed-method design which combines quantitative with qualitative data. The approach recognizes the importance of both qualitative and quantitative

data in supporting the findings of the study.  The blending of the qualitative and quantitative data enriched the data and anchored the findings of the study on evidence.

In this particular study, the qualitative data was used to clarify and corroborate the quantitative data.  Such approach provided a dynamic view of the phenomenon.  The quantitative data was obtained through a survey of the faculty while the qualitative data was from the focus group discussion and interviews with selected informants.

The study involved all the full-time faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences, size of 72 including department heads.

The collection of data was done per college and employed the following methods:

a.  A survey (a multiple choice test paper) was developed by the researchers.  It was subjected to content validation with experts in the field of education.  Face validation was carried out as well as a reliability test using Cronbach alpha. The paper was then administered to all faculty members of college.

b.  In-depth interviews were carried out for additional information from department heads and selected individuals purposively selected to further clarify the findings from the survey.

The frequency, mean, and percentile of the quantitative data were determined per variable: OBE concepts, assessments, learning outcomes, strategies and overall faculty disposition to the framework. The scores were analyzed using Microsoft Excel while the interpretation utilized the benchmarks derived from the reviewed literature and studies.

**Results and Discussions**

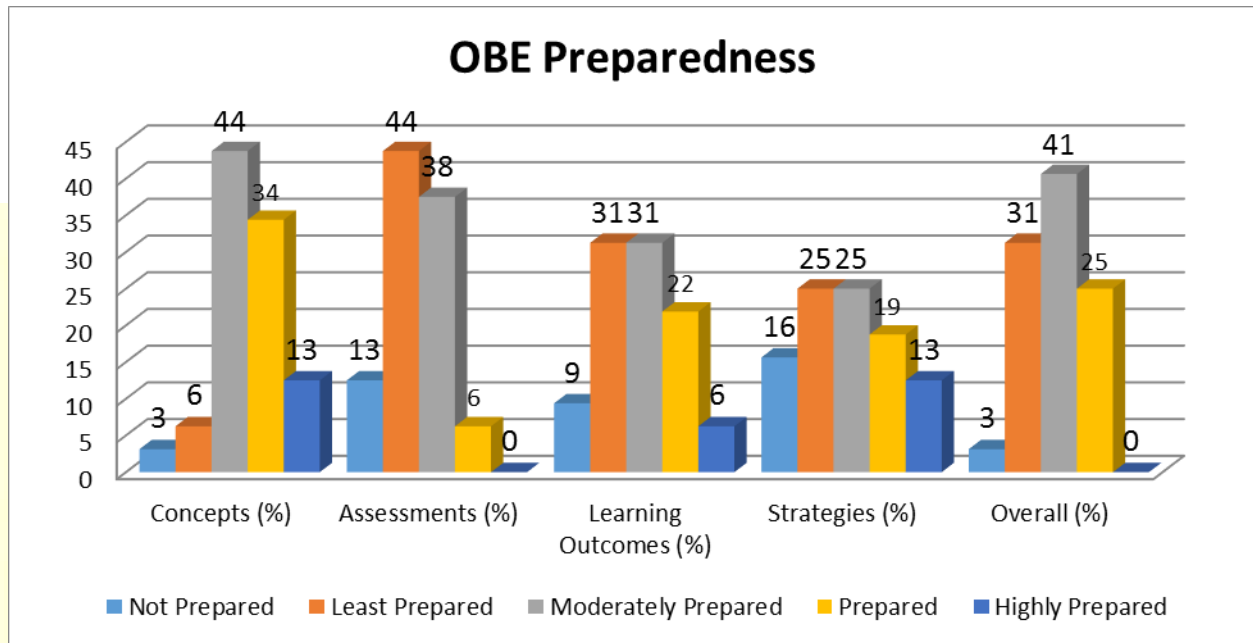The following table presents the results of the survey on the items.



Table 1: Survey results on Faculty OBE Preparedness

1. In terms of the level preparedness of the CAS faculty regarding conceptual understanding of OBE, the table shows that high scores where made reflecting moderate preparedness (44%) and prepared (34%) with only 3% suggesting Not Prepared in terms of OBE concepts. This means that the faculty have good conceptual knowledge of OBE and level of preparedness is high owing to a series of seminars attended since the start of CHED led discussion about OBE. Some have also confirmed that they accessed on-line information about OBE concepts which they claim to be available and informative. By implication, the faculty development training to be designed should be less on the concepts and theories for the CAS.

2. In terms of the level of preparedness among the faculty of CAS regarding understanding of assessments consistent with OBE framework, the table shows the faculty have low level of preparedness. Majority scores were at Least Prepared (44%) followed by Moderately Prepared (38%) with the rest of scores skewed toward weak preparedness. This reflects the teacher-centered and input-based teaching that have dominated the teaching practice in higher Philippine education for too long and where one type of

summative assessment, which is written examination, have been a dominant type. This highlights, too, the need for faculty exposure to contemporary teaching strategies and corresponding assessment systems.

3. In terms of the level of preparedness among the faculty of CAS regarding understanding of the Learning outcomes in OBE, the table reveals that the faculty are fairly prepared: Moderately Prepared (31%), Prepared (22%) and Highly Prepared (6%) together accounts for a 60% with Least Prepared (31%) and Not Prepared (9%) accounting only for 40%. This means that the faculty have a good understanding of what Learning Outcomes are in OBE though not fully. In terms of training design, this means that quality time has to be spent on refining their understanding of Learning Outcomes.

4. In terms of the level of preparedness among the faculty of CAS regarding understanding of useful teaching strategies employed in OBE, data reveals mixed situation regarding the level of preparedness. Compared to scores of other variables, here Not Prepared is explicitly strong at 16% and Least Prepared at 25% together forming 41%. This calls for attention especially if Moderately Prepared is to be counted in favour of this direction or simply omitted. However, the same may be said of the other side where Prepared stands at 19% and Highly Prepared at 13% and a combined score of 32%. On that note, it may be construed that the trend is towards not or less prepared. In terms of training intervention, there is a need to provide a strong training on contemporary teaching strategies which can help to give the faculty a wide range of options for their OBE use. This is also a reflection of the traditional teaching strategies that have popularized textbook use, rote memory, content and activity driven teaching that revolve around the teacher.

5. At what level are the faculty of CAS in their preparedness regarding their overall disposition to the OBE framework? Data reveals that the overall level of preparedness is low. Not prepared (3%) and Least Prepared (31%) account for 34 % and adding Moderately Prepared (41%) with Prepared at 25% and zero Highly Prepared, this leads to an overall less prepared tendency which has also been verbalized in interviews. It is also worth noting that a solid Prepared at 25% is a good starting point implying that faculty members are to a significant extent prepared for the implementation of OBE.

6. Given the results on the selected variable, it is important that certain elements are considered in the design and delivery of a change-model to facilitate improvement in faculty preparedness for the effective implementation of OBE in the university. The change-model proposed here is founded on learning model known as *andragogy*.

The concept of andragogy is generally accredited to Malcolm Knowles who popularized it in the United States in the 1970s (Whitmyer, 1999). Knowles, according to Whitmyer (1999), defined andragogy as "the art and science of helping adults learn," which he contrasted with the use of "pedagogy," which he says was originally concerned with helping children learn. Knowles claimed that andragogy rests on four crucial assumptions about adult learners and how they differ from child learners. Andragogy assumes that, as people mature (1) their self-concept moves from dependence to self-direction, (2) their growing reservoir of experience begins to serve as a resource for learning, (3) their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly toward the developmental tasks of their social roles, and (4) they want to apply what they have learned right away to life's real challenges.
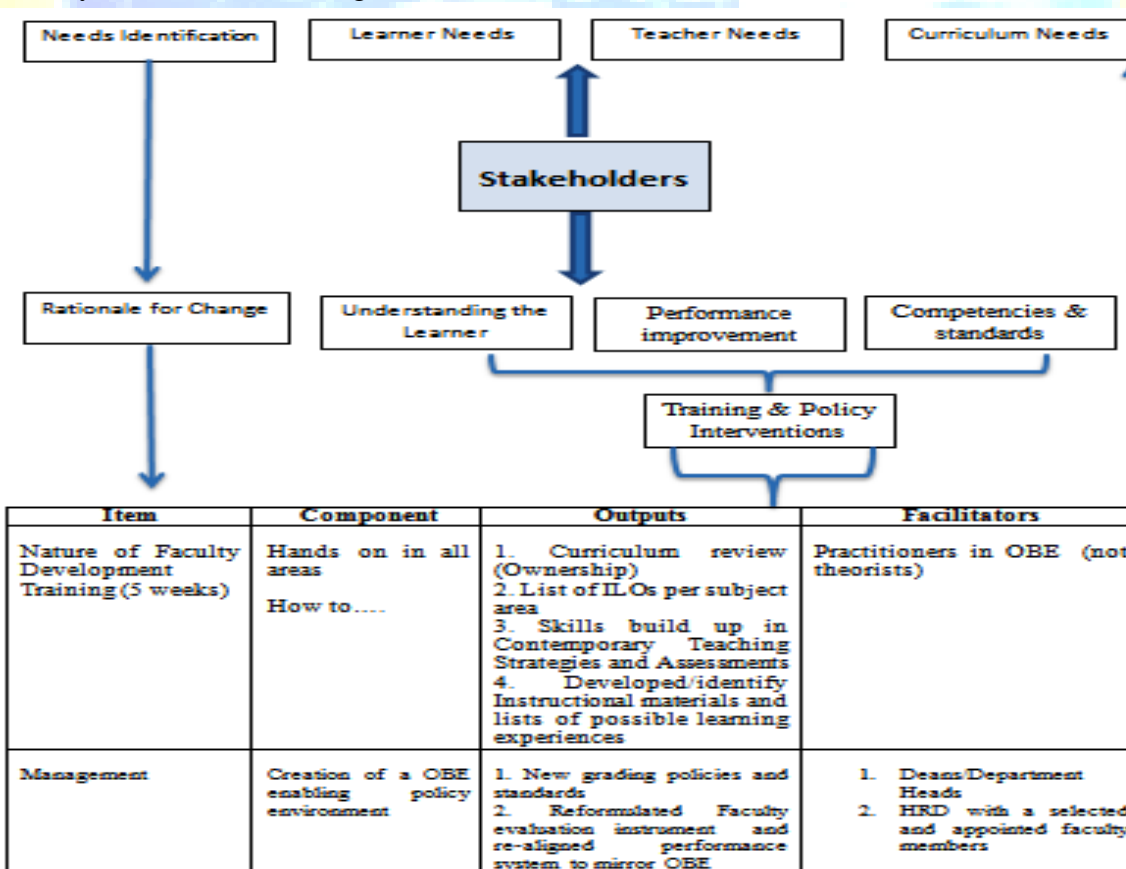


| Item | Component | Outputs | Facilitators |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nature of Faculty Development Training (5 weeks) | Hands on in all areas<br><br>How to….. | 1. Curriculum review (Ownership)<br>2. List of ILOs per subject area<br>3. Skills build up in Contemporary Teaching Strategies and Assessments<br>4. Developed/identify Instructional materials and lists of possible learning experiences | Practitioners in OBE (not theorists) |
| Management | Creation of a OBE enabling policy environment | 1. New grading policies and standards<br>2. Reformulated Faculty evaluation instrument and re-aligned performance system to mirror OBE | 1. Deans/Department Heads<br>2. HRD with a selected and appointed faculty members |

Figure 2: Change model for improving OBE faculty preparedness

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Whitmyer (1999) points out that as a consequence of the nature of adult learning, identification of needs must mirror life enhancement or performance improvement expectations if adults have to be fully changed. The training intervention has to be less theoretical and more practical. Instructional designs (training intervention) must center on subject matter that is relevant, life-centered, task-centered, problem- centered, (how-to) and learning facilitation rather than teaching. This can help optimize self-reflective and transformation. The faculty would benefit more with a design that will be less on teaching and more on actual workshop towards production of materials and case scenarios.

For the learning process, there must be the following ingredients: active learning, critical and reflective thinking, shared visioning; simulations through team learning, casestudies, role play, on-the-job experience, new information, interpretation, practice adaptation, and integration.

The foregoing results and discussions point to the current status of faculty preparedness levels to be very low and therefore the need for an andragogy-based change-model to facilitate improvement in OBE faculty preparedness in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS).

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