

Summary of meeting of OBE Pilot Project Instructors

On 31 March 2009, 16:00 at Room 6424

Participants: Dr. David Mole (AVPAA-UG)
Dr. Nick Noakes (D/CELT)
Dr. Otis Lam (CELT)
Prof. SY Cheng (DSCI, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. King Chow (BIOL, Chair)
Prof. Kenny Chung (BICH, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. Karl Tsim (H/BIOL, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. TK Goh (BIOL, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. Eugene Hung (BIOL, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. Ice Ko (BIOL, Pilot course instructor)
Ms. Lan Yu (BIOL)
Prof. Hazel Tsui (CHEM, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. Jeff Chasnov (MATH, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. Brad Foreman (PHYS, Pilot course instructor)
Prof. Nian Lin (PHYS, Pilot course instructor)
Ms. Crystal Ho (DSCIO)
Ms. Tina Ko (DSCIO)
Mr. Williamson Lam (DSCIO)

Discussion on articulation of Intended Learning Outcome

Actions

- **Writing ILO**

There is a broad consensus that the course ILO was written based on the program ILO. Instructors picked some of the learning outcomes of the program into the course. They selected the learning outcomes which had already been part of the course. In the case of Prof. Karl Tsim, he also picked some elements which need our stronger attention, such as leadership and interpersonal skills, into the course. There are different ways of stating the ILOs. They are fine as long as they communicate the message clearly.

- **Writing ILO for laboratory courses**

Compare with the courses which are delivered through lectures, the learning outcomes of laboratory courses is easier to articulate. The teaching and learning in the laboratory can be easily mapped into different skills of the program learning outcome.

- ***Students' perception on OBE exercise***

Actions

There is a broad perception from instructors that students may not understand the ILO of the course, or the purpose of the outcome based education. It was also commented that students might not pay much attention on the learning outcomes unless they were reflected in the assessment process. A more thorough analysis would be available via the online student survey.

Discussion on designing teaching/learning activities

- ***Using group project to deliver learning outcomes***

Instructors usually introduce additional teaching and learning activities into the course to supplement traditional lecturing. Group project with presentation is a common choice.

- ***Accommodate group project into the course***

In the case of Prof. Karl Tsim, group project was introduced for the leadership and interpersonal skills, the lecture was cut shorter by one week for the presentation. Prof. SY Cheng asked students to form groups to study a section of textbook which was not covered, and then present the material on a Sunday.

- ***Group presentation using posters***

Prof. Ice Ko asked all 240 students to form groups of 4, study a topic and carry out a presentation using posters. With the help of CELT, an extra class on preparing posters by commonly available software was introduced to facilitate the poster presentation.

- ***Implications of new pedagogy***

It was discussed that we might need more coordination at the program level for group projects to reduce students' workload. Instructors also reported that students preferred traditional examination to group projects, and that courses with group projects introduced had a higher dropping rate. While this tactic is fine for elective courses, it may not be applicable to required courses.

Discussion on assessing students' learning outcomes

Actions

- ***Instructor's perceptions on assessment***

It is generally agreed that assessment of subject knowledge is relatively easy. In the laboratory courses, practical examinations are in place for the skills. In traditional lecture courses, instructors hesitate to go without paper based examination. They are not confident to the non-paper based assessments. It is a concern that whether there is too much assessments on students.

- ***Informal assessment***

It was also discussed that whether informal discussions with students can be treated as an assessment. Dr. Nick Noakes suggested that instructors could look for "indicators" which could reflect certain learning outcomes, when informal assessment was carried out.

General Discussions

- ***Focus group meeting with students***

Regarding to the student's attitude towards outcome based education at the course level, Prof. Karl Tsim welcomes the staff from School of Science to conduct a focus group discussion with students at the end of the semester. This is an additional evaluation on top of the online survey by CELT, Instructors are asked to contact the school team for help with this effort.

Instructors:

Reply for focus group discussion with sample of students.

School team:

Carry out focus group discussion for pilot courses.

- ***OBE mapping of courses***

Prof. King Chow reported that the Department of Biology had carried out a course mapping exercise that the ILO and assessment scheme were tabulated against year of study. Such information would be very useful to facilitate the review of curriculum. Prof. David Rossiter of Department of CSE had created an online interface of course mapping exercise and would incorporate the experience of Department of Biology into it. It is planned that the interface will be available

Dept of BIOL:

Share the course mapping interface when ready

Other Depts:

Carry out course mapping in the

before the end of semester to facilitate the OBE mapping of summer. courses of other departments.

- ***The next steps of OBE exercise***

Dr. Nick Noakes summarized that there were a few points worth our attention. We need a deeper collaboration between the program and course for implementing the OBE exercise. We may need more training and induction to our teaching assistants for their role involved in the OBE exercise. We may need to explore mechanisms, such as peer assessment within student groups, for distinguishing students' contribution and learning in groups. We need more communication between instructors, and between instructors and students, on the value of the OBE exercise.

The meeting is adjourned at 5:25pm.