

A Framework for Outcomes-based Course Design

Outcomes-based education (OBE) is an approach to teaching that begins with uncovering what educators expect their students to know at the end of a program. OBE is growing in popularity because it's created with the student in mind, and centered around flexibility and clarity of objectives.

This template is meant to help instructors, at a high level, understand the framework for converting their existing material into material that is outcomes-based.

It starts by thinking about the real-world skills that you want your students to have by the end. Working back from those final outcomes, you develop your assessments of the students, then choose the supporting material.

Many of the principles are based on Grant Wiggins & Jay McTighe's work on Understanding by Design and have been adapted into something that's quick and actionable for instructors.

Outcomes-Based Learning Conversion Template

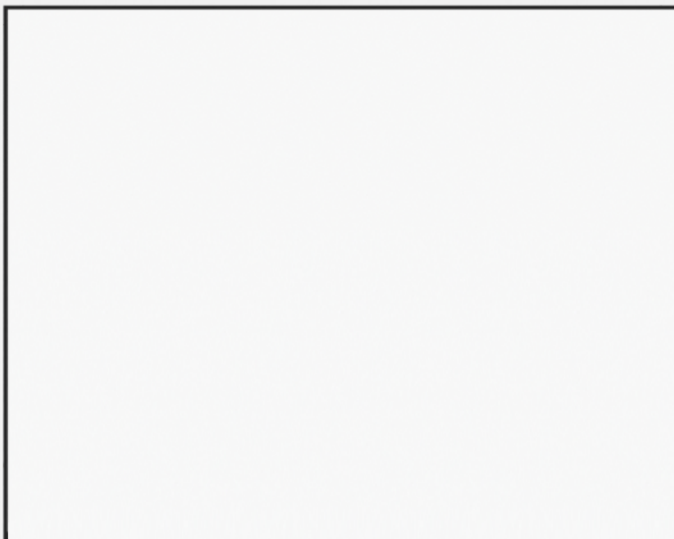
A simple, actionable framework that will help you build outcomes-based courses

List existing course outcomes:



For each existing outcome, keep it if it's outcomes-based. If not, throw it out.

Outcomes that made the cut + new outcomes uncovered:



Teaching Tip

You might know these as: Objectives, Goals, Competencies, etc.

Teaching Tip

Ask yourself if the competencies are bound by what "you've always done in the classroom" or what the students actually need in the real world. What skills, knowledge, and behaviours would students need on the job?

Teaching Tip

As you think of these real-world skills, add more outcomes to this box. It's entirely possible that you're throwing out all of your old outcomes if they were not based on real-world requirements.

One by one, let's work back from the outcomes that you've finalized above.

Outcome:

Authentic ways of assessing outcome:

Outcome:

Authentic ways of assessing outcome:

Outcome:

Authentic ways of assessing outcome:

Teaching Tip

Each of these assessments should be an authentic assessment. This means it's assessing the student's skills by mirroring what they will see in the real world. Sometimes, existing assessments can be simply modified to make them more authentic.

Teaching Tip

Example: have students write a project plan to demonstrate knowledge of Project Management

Non-example: have students list the ways to do a project plan

Teaching Tip

Example: have students play musical instrument, with special attention to tempo

Non-example: give students multiple-choice test on different musical time scales

One by one, let's work back from the assessments that you've finalized above.

Assessment:

Supporting materials:

Assessment:

Supporting materials:

Assessment:

Supporting materials:

Teaching Tip

Materials don't have to just be textbooks, and often they aren't. Often, students learn best when the way they are taught is varied [1]. Always keep in mind those end outcomes that you determined in the first section. Make sure the materials you're using are grounded in the real world.

Teaching Tip

To play to different students' strengths, consider using different resources such as audio recordings, video recordings, photographs, illustrations, or animations. Use the resource that will best correspond to what the student will be doing in the real-world.