

Why Public Schools Need Outcome-Based Education

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Public school graduates in the Philippines often face the bitter reality of unemployment or underemployment despite years of formal education. Many leave school with diplomas but without the practical skills and competencies employers demand. This gap has left countless young Filipinos feeling lost and disillusioned, their potential stifled by an outdated system. The truth is that a diploma alone no longer guarantees a bright future, it must come with skills and adaptability.

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) was introduced as a response to this problem. It shifts the focus from traditional memorization to developing real-world abilities that students can apply beyond the classroom. OBE promotes flexible learning, recognizing that students learn in different ways and at different paces. OBE recognizes this diversity and aims to cultivate well-rounded graduates who are not just knowledgeable but also competent and confident (Carlos & Dacoco, 2021).

Yet the implementation of OBE in public schools has faced steep challenges. Many schools simply do not have the resources—whether it's proper equipment, updated learning materials, or well-designed classrooms to fully adopt OBE methods. Teachers, already burdened with large class sizes and administrative tasks, often lack the training and support needed to make OBE work. In some rural areas, schools don't even have enough chairs or textbooks, let alone the facilities to foster hands-on learning. According to a report by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, these resource gaps limit teachers' ability to teach skills-based education, making OBE little more than a paper policy (Baguio, 2019).

These struggles have real consequences. Many graduates end up in jobs that don't match their degrees or can't find work at all. This mismatch creates frustration and a sense of wasted opportunity, both for young Filipinos and for the country's economy. Employers are also left grappling with new hires who lack basic workplace skills like problem-solving or communication. It's a tragic cycle that deepens poverty and inequality, hindering national progress (Deluria, 2024).

Even in institutions that try to apply OBE faithfully, challenges persist. In private and religious schools, for instance, standardization often clashes with deeply rooted teaching traditions. Doromal (2020) examined several Augustinian schools in Negros and found that while OBE has been introduced, adherence to traditional instruction often overrides efforts toward performance-based assessment and learner-centered practices.

Despite these issues, many educators continue to innovate within their means. Some schools have begun involving students more actively in designing classroom goals and linking lessons to community issues. In higher education settings, best practices from graduate programs offer models that public basic education can follow. Hapinat (2023) emphasized the value of institutionalizing accreditation processes rooted in OBE to create consistency and accountability in achieving learning outcomes. These approaches could be adapted to improve teaching and learning in public schools as well.

This situation demands urgent action. Education policymakers must ensure public schools are equipped, not just with physical resources, but also with continuous teacher training and curriculum updates that reflect what today's workplaces truly

need. Schools, in turn, should partner with industries to ensure that learning outcomes are in step with economic realities. Let us not allow another generation of graduates to leave school unprepared and undervalued. It is time to make outcome-based education more than just an idea, it must be our standard for empowering Filipino youth.

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