



Articulating Learning Objectives and Outcomes in the ICT English Language Classroom

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Abstract

The timeless continuum of learning often expands beyond specific and concrete building blocks of expectations for measurable outcomes and accomplishments. Language learning is rather a pipeline with essential connections welded together to transport knowledge and information that will serve the learner well and lead to pathways of success and achievement [1]. How do we measure these endeavors and ensure that we are achieving valuable outcomes and objectives, particularly in the online language integrated classroom? This study will explore the strong commitment to student success through educational experiences and the measurable attainment of specific outcomes and objectives. The spectrum of educational activities in the ICT classroom lends itself well to the cognitive development and personal success of students asking essential questions and incorporating engaging activities [2]. This study is divided into three sections that include planning and preparation for lessons in the online classroom, design and incorporation of specific course and learning objectives, and assessment of learning outcomes utilizing in-depth analysis models. Each one of these areas will be discussed as it relates to language learning and ICT focusing on priorities and student success. Further exploration and accompanying methodology explore the details and implications of these emerging expectations and are addressed by supporting materials, data, and recommendations focusing on the challenges of diverging language pathways as we articulate objectives and outcomes of online education in the English language virtual classroom.

Keywords: *Articulating, Objectives, ICT, Outcomes, Language.*

1. Introduction

The measurable attainment of specific outcomes and objectives has often been a critical factor when identifying success in the online language integrated classroom, particularly in the ICT English language learning classroom. Clearly, student success is at the heart of lessons designed to enhance English language learning and benefit students in the global virtual classroom. Educational opportunities that support flexible learning and effective planning of pedagogy and methodology will result in positive outcomes and help to connect the classroom with the global learning environment. The literature on assessment of learning objectives and outcomes through various forms of assessment focuses largely on quantitative and standardized measurements of success. Subsequent research and expanded definitions of assessment have made significant changes in these models. The online teaching experience has been valuable in its stress on engagement, discussion groups in learning, and providing professional insight in narrowing the learning gap and facilitating stronger support for flexible learning and effective planning of pedagogy and methodology. This manuscript provides an overview of the value of learning objectives and outcomes among students in the online ICT English language classroom, and examines the literature and research addressing assessment in a variety of dimensions of cognitive and affective learning.

2. The value of learning objectives

Learning objectives are crucial for both the professor and the student, and well written objectives will contribute positively to the learning process through numerous measures particularly in the ICT English language learning classroom and online virtual settings. Faculty who publish and communicate clear lesson and course goals and objectives that are identified and explained to students are successful in meeting their educational expectations for students. Learning objectives have the ability to promote and strengthen student learning along multiple pathways. Clearly articulated learning objectives enable students to differentiate among types of knowledge. Among the types of knowledge that have been identified in the research literature by Anderson & Krothwahl, 2001, two kinds emerge clearly [3]. One is declarative knowledge, or the knowledge of facts and concepts that can be stated or declared. A second type of knowledge is often referred to as procedural knowledge, because it involves knowing how and knowing when to apply various procedures, methods, theories, styles, or approaches. Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy [4] addresses writing learning



objectives for the **cognitive** or knowing, **psychomotor** which is doing or skill, and **affective** or attitude domains. Bloom categorized the cognitive into the following six levels, starting from simple recall or recognition of facts, knowledge level, through increasingly more complex and abstract mental levels, to the highest order of **evaluation**.

- Knowledge
- Comprehension
- Application
- Analysis
- Synthesis
- Evaluation

Later, authors revised his taxonomy, particularly the cognitive domain and made edits that addressed current knowledge in the field [5, 6].

3. Planning and preparation for lessons in the online classroom

It is crucial for every instructor to provide educational programs, however they are delivered, with appropriate content and rigor that are consistent with the course objectives and culminate in achievement of clearly identified student learning outcomes. Appropriate planning and preparation with timelines and rubrics is the key to a successful outcome. Adequate time and a clear understanding of the content and expectations for each lesson and component is essential. Creative curriculum and lesson plans are critical components for the achievement of learning goals and objectives. Learning objectives describe the purpose of the activity, establish the expectations and results, and then identify the methodology used to accomplish these goals [7]. Numerous guides and suggestions for excellent online learning methods exist that educators can access to assist them with their teaching endeavors and lead to positive outcomes, particularly in an online educational setting. Many of the sample planning documents are adaptable by grade level and subject and contain key words leading to measurable outcomes. Lesson planning apps and websites will assist educators in the efforts to bring lesson planning and design into the 21st century with the latest online tools and features.

4. Design and incorporation of learning objectives

Through creative design of learning objectives, students will be able to understand and accomplish the key expectations and measurable outcomes of the lesson in the ICT English language learning classroom. Evidence and supporting documentation must be provided indicating that students are meeting the specific objectives. Learning objectives that are clearly written and are well-organized across the lesson must be in place. The use of specific and measurable verbs should describe the behavior and accomplishments at the appropriate level of learning. Vocabulary that is well understood and can be easily communicated is necessary particularly in the ICT English language learning classroom. The objectives should be clear to students who need to know what they are learning and why this is an expectation. Clear objectives identify the desired outcome of each activity and connect the steps of the lesson. Learning outcomes need to be present for course activities and meaningful feedback and assessment should be provided. An emphasis needs to be placed on student success, and outcomes and links made available to document this information. Curriculum aligned to program content goals and developed by qualified faculty that is learner-centered, focused on best practices, and consistent with these program goals and outcomes is tantamount to success. As lessons that are well organized, carefully constructed and focus on learning objectives are designed, students will benefit and lesson mastery is increased. Where two or more university instructors are teaching the same online course, collaboration and planning of course objectives among colleagues is valuable. The dedication and hard work of the faculty to ensure student success is always beneficial and faculty members who provide personal attention and educational experiences are recognized by students. In addition to specific learning objectives, written instructions need to be provided for each lesson to accompany the objectives. It is also helpful for the instructor to designate a time frame or expectation regarding the amount of time that will be required to complete each task. In the case of assignments that include group discussions or feedback to other students' work, clear and concise directions must be provided that will guide each student through the discussion or reflection and ensures that students are actively engaged in the learning activities.



5. Assessment of learning outcomes

Assessment procedures must be in place to guide and provide oversight and focus on criteria to demonstrate breadth of knowledge and determine if learning objectives are effective and outcomes are in place in the ICT English language learning classroom. In order to put student learning at the forefront of the academic planning process, objectives need to lead to activities that will ascertain what a student knows or can accomplish following completion of the lesson. In this way, educators can alleviate any obstacles to learning and determine whether students are making the progress that is expected. It is helpful when student feedback is provided in written form and professors are responsive according to a specific timeline. There are guides both lengthy and brief that can be accessed on line and in hard copies to focus on the design of objectives that are measurable and will result in appropriate and valid assessment. Assessment that is beneficial can be further documented by concrete assessment activities as well as links to curriculum, various testing activities, and additional data. Course curricular assessment initiatives should align with the overall identified outcomes and strategic priorities for the course. An emphasis placed on student centered learning activities and acquisition of knowledge will lead to an assessment framework that can be utilized to align program components with learning. It is helpful if students are provided with a rubric and clear expectations for each activity. Professors who take the time to provide detailed feedback that is meaningful while interacting with students on assignments will observe beneficial results. When students are required to do lengthy activities that have several components throughout the course and culminate with a final project, it is essential for the professor to determine the progress that the student is making and provide feedback at a series of levels and steps during the assignment.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

In the online educational setting, educational opportunities that support flexible learning and effective planning of pedagogy and methodology with clear, specific and measurable objectives will result in positive outcomes. Faculty who are clearly involved in the design and implementation, as well as decision making related to curriculum, will demonstrate an increased interest and effectiveness in online course design as well as the assessment of learning outcomes. Faculty autonomy and decision-making opportunities focusing on concrete objectives linked to course content and goals will result in evaluation of learning consistent with this valuable process of collecting information. As long as student success is central to the learning goals and at the forefront of the course objectives, appropriate assessment techniques and activities will support learning endeavors. The online setting, and then systematic solutions seeking emphasis on articulating learning objectives in the English Language Learning discipline, lend themselves uniquely to an ICT approach to learning the specialized English required for many fields, and the students, educators and practitioners in these fields will be the ultimate beneficiaries.

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