

Needs assessment for the development of OBE-based assessment instruments for the business correspondence course

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Abstrak

Penerapan kurikulum OBE merupakan respons terhadap tuntutan dunia kerja dengan menekankan pada proses pembelajaran dan teknik penilaian yang berorientasi pada capaian kompetensi mahasiswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kebutuhan pengembangan teknik penilaian berbasis OBE. Jenis penelitian ini adalah studi kasus dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian dilaksanakan pada mata kuliah Business Correspondence di Program Studi Pendidikan Administrasi Perkantoran, UNNES. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah seorang dosen pengampu, 12 mahasiswa sebagai sampel yang dipilih secara random dari 124 mahasiswa. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Untuk menentukan kriteria penilaian berbasis OBE, dilakukan studi dokumentasi SKKNI pada kompetensi menulis surat bisnis berbahasa Inggris. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa indikator pengetahuan dan keterampilan dasar mahasiswa yang mengikuti mata kuliah Business Correspondence masih belum mencapai tingkat kemampuan optimal. Selama ini dosen pengampu telah melaksanakan penilaian yang terdiri atas penilaian partisipasi mahasiswa, pretest, kuis individu, tugas proyek kelompok, UTS, dan UAS. Namun, diperlukan konstruksi teknik penilaian yang lebih sistematis dan selaras dengan prinsip OBE. Implikasinya, perlunya pengembangan panduan dan instrumen penilaian berbasis OBE yang aplikatif untuk mendukung proses evaluasi capaian pembelajaran di perguruan tinggi yang telah disesuaikan dengan kriteria penilaian pada SKKNI.

Kata kunci : capaian kompetensi; evaluasi pembelajaran; kurikulum OBE; SKKNI

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Abstract

The implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curricula responds to labor market demands by emphasizing learning processes and assessment techniques oriented toward student competency achievement. This study analyzed the need for developing OBE-based assessment techniques through a qualitative case study conducted in the Business Correspondence course within the Office Administration Education program at Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES). Data sources included one course lecturer and 12 randomly selected students from 124 enrolled participants. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. To determine OBE-based assessment criteria, we conducted document analysis of Indonesian National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI) focusing on English business letter writing competencies. Findings indicate that students' knowledge and basic skills in the Business Correspondence course have not reached optimal levels. Although the lecturer implemented various assessment forms—including participation evaluations, pretests, individual quizzes, group project tasks, midterm examinations, and final examinations—a more systematic and OBE-aligned assessment approach remains necessary. The study highlights the importance of developing practical OBE-based assessment guidelines and instruments to support learning outcome evaluation in higher education, aligned with SKKNI competency assessment criteria.

Keyword: competency achievement; learning evaluation; OBE curriculum; SKKNI

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Introduction

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has fundamentally transformed how people live, work, and interact. Driven by advancements in digital technology, automation, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things (IoT), this revolution differs significantly from its predecessors. While past industrial revolutions required decades to reshape human habits and societal structures, Industry 4.0 has brought substantial changes within less than a decade, indicating an exponentially faster transformation pace than previous industrial revolutions. Unlike earlier shifts that required extended periods to alter workplace norms and societal frameworks, the current transformation evolves exponentially due to automation and digitalization principles (Adha, 2020). This rapid change has created both opportunities and challenges, particularly in employment.

An academic concern arising from these developments is the growing mismatch between labor market demands and graduate qualifications. High graduate unemployment rates are influenced by several factors, including inadequate technical competencies, insufficient soft skills, limited access to labor market information, and educational systems that have not effectively adapted to changing industry needs (Agustina et al., 2023). This misalignment has widespread implications, affecting not only individuals but also national economic productivity, social stability, and long-term competitiveness.

To address these challenges, higher education must undergo a paradigm shift that reorients pedagogy from mere knowledge dissemination toward developing practical and transferable competencies. This shift has led many institutions to adopt Outcome-Based Education (OBE). OBE represents a student-centered approach that emphasizes measurable outcomes—skills, attitudes, and knowledge—directly linked to professional competencies (Dahdi & Iksan, 2018;

Hasanah et al., 2025). By focusing on what students can actually demonstrate with their learning, OBE aims to bridge the gap between education and employment.

OBE is particularly relevant in the Indonesian context, where aligning academic learning outcomes with national competency standards—such as the Indonesian National Qualification Framework (KKNI) and Indonesian National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI)—is critical for producing job-ready graduates. Higher education institutions are expected to design curricula reflecting industry expectations and implement assessment strategies capable of accurately measuring relevant competencies (Handayani, 2020; Cahyadi, 2017).

However, a critical challenge remains: while curricula and instructional methods increasingly align with OBE principles, assessment technique development often lags behind pedagogical innovation. Research indicates a disconnect between intended learning outcomes and evaluation tools (Wahyudi & Heksaputra, 2023). Assessment practices remain predominantly summative and grade-oriented, frequently failing to measure actual workplace competencies such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking, which undermines OBE's core objective.

Although OBE has gained wide acceptance, studies examining OBE-based assessment technique implementation within specific disciplines remain limited, particularly in vocational and applied language courses such as business correspondence. While such courses play key roles in fostering students' practical communication abilities for professional contexts, limited research addresses the adequacy and design of their assessment approaches.

Previous studies have highlighted OBE's potential in enhancing educational quality. For instance, Dahdi and Iksan (2018) demonstrated how OBE improves student engagement and learning effectiveness when aligned with well-designed assessment tools. Similarly, Gea and Koto (2024) provided empirical evidence that OBE-based methods improve practical and soft skills in vocational education, especially in hands-on fields such as culinary arts. Hasanah et al. (2025) emphasized the need for competency-based approaches to replace traditional content-heavy models, particularly in developing 21st-century skills. However, limited research has explored OBE-aligned assessment implementation in communication-based or language-oriented courses, despite their importance in preparing graduates for a globalized, service-oriented job market.

Despite recognizing OBE's value, there is a noticeable lack of research on how assessment techniques in business correspondence courses can align with OBE principles and national competency standards (SKKNI). Assessment strategies in these courses often rely on outdated models, such as rote memorization or grammar accuracy tests, rather than evaluating real-world communication skills.

This research's urgency is highlighted by several factors: the changing nature of work in the digital economy, where effective communication is a key transferable skill; the misalignment between graduate competencies and employer expectations, particularly in soft skills areas; and the Indonesian government's policy direction, which emphasizes integrating higher education outcomes with national competency frameworks (KKNI and SKKNI). This aligns with Vitchenko et al.'s (2022) findings, which highlight the need for empirical, discipline-specific studies to guide effective assessment redesign from generic methods to contextually appropriate, outcome-oriented assessments.

Although OBE has been widely adopted in higher education as a response to labor market demands, its implementation in learning assessment still faces several challenges. A key issue is the alignment between assessment techniques and intended learning outcomes. In business correspondence courses, research exploring how assessment techniques can be designed to align with OBE principles and SKKNI remains limited.

Based on this gap, the present study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- (1). What are the current competency levels of students taking the business correspondence course?
- (2). What assessment methods are currently used to evaluate student competencies in the course?
- (3). What are the expectations of lecturers and students regarding the development of OBE-based assessment techniques?

Accordingly, this study aims to conduct a needs assessment for developing OBE-based assessment techniques in the business correspondence learning process. We will discuss several aspects, including current student competency levels, methods currently used to assess student

competencies, and lecturer and student expectations toward developing OBE-aligned assessment methods. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to improving educational assessment practices by providing evidence-based recommendations for designing effective, fair, and industry-relevant evaluation systems in applied correspondence education.

Research methodology

Research Design

This research adopted a qualitative case study approach. As a case study, the objective was to conduct an in-depth examination of the urgency for developing OBE-based assessment techniques within a Business Correspondence class over a two-month period. The goal was to obtain comprehensive and detailed understanding of the reasons underlying the importance of developing such assessment techniques, which were then analyzed to formulate evidence-based arguments supporting their necessity (Abdussamad, 2021).

According to Fiantika (2022), case studies aim to answer "how" or "why" questions by focusing on real-life contexts or phenomena occurring within specific settings. Case studies document particular phenomena in written form, typically bounded by time and context. Some scholars argue that due to their contextual and descriptive nature, case study research is not intended for predicting future behavior but rather for providing deep insights into particular events or practices. In this study, the specificity lay in conducting a needs analysis for developing OBE-based assessment techniques in the Business Correspondence course within the Office Administration Education program at Universitas Negeri Semarang, carried out from February to March 2025.

Research Setting and Subjects

This research was conducted in the Business Correspondence course under the Office Administration Education Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Semarang. The study was carried out over two months, from February to March 2025. Study subjects included one lecturer responsible for teaching the Business Correspondence course, Ms. Tusyanah, S.Pd., M.Pd., and all 124 students enrolled in the course. According to Abdussamad (2021), these individuals constitute the research population—the group of people directly related to the research topic and meeting required criteria within the defined research unit.

The sampling technique employed was purposive sampling, selected based on the following considerations (Rulam, 2014): First, the research's informative nature required gathering as much relevant information as possible from participants. Second, the researcher selected subjects who were easily accessible to minimize the risk of collecting subjective or biased data. Third, specific study stages required in-depth investigation, aiming to generalize findings to broader contexts. Therefore, the final sample consisted of one lecturer and four students from each class section, totaling one lecturer and 12 students who served as research participants.

Data Collection Method

Data collection methods refer to techniques used by researchers to gather research data. This study used two data types: primary and secondary data. According to Widoyoko (2012), primary data are obtained directly from first sources or collected by researchers, such as through interviews and observations. In contrast, secondary data are obtained from second-hand sources, which are further processed and acquired from others, such as through documentation.

In-depth interview.

In-depth interviews are commonly used data collection techniques in qualitative research. In this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with the course lecturer as the main data source or research subject. The interviews were unstructured, allowing the lecturer, as the study subject, freedom to answer the researcher's questions openly. While the researcher prepared research

questions, no predetermined answers were provided. Multiple interviews were conducted with the lecturer to confirm collected information (Afrizal, 2014).

The researcher prepared an interview guide to serve as a boundary for information that must be obtained during the interview process. The interview guide was aimed at gathering information regarding (1). Types of assessments previously conducted- Four questions explored assessment kinds used in the learning process, particularly in the business correspondence course. (2). Assessment blueprints and indicators - Five questions explored assessment planning and structure. (3). Expectations regarding OBE-based assessment technique development - Four questions gathered insights and opinions regarding outcome-based education.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with students in a structured manner, where the researcher developed a framework of questions to obtain information (Rulam, 2014). Structured interviews were conducted with 12 students as a sample to obtain data such as assessment types used in the Business Correspondence course and students' opinions regarding their course expectations.

Table 1

Interview Guideline

No.	Interview Questions
Types of assessments that have been carried out	
1.	What types of assessment have been used in the learning process?
2.	What is the proportion between formative and summative assessment in the business correspondence course?
3.	Have project-based assessment, case studies, or laboratory practices been used?
4.	What extent are students involved in the assessment process, for example through self-assessment or peer assessment?
Assessment blue print and indicators	
5.	Is there an assessment blueprint prepared before conducting the assessment?
6.	What indicators are used to assess students' knowledge aspects?
7.	How are students' skills measured in the business correspondence course?
8.	Have the assessment indicators been aligned with the course learning outcome (CLOs)
9.	What is the process for determining the weight of each assessment indicator?
Expectations for the development of OBE-based assessment techniques	
10.	Are you familiar with the concept of OBE (outcome-based education)? If so, to what extent has it been implemented in assessment?
11.	In your opinion, what challenges are faced in implementing OBE-based assessment?
12.	What type pf assessment technique do you think would be more effective in measuring learning outcome?
13.	Do you have any expectations or suggestions regarding the development of an OBE based assessment system?

Observation.

According to Abdussamad (2021), data collection through observation is conducted systematically and intentionally, involving observing and recording investigated phenomena. The researcher was directly involved in lecture activities, making this participatory observation. The observation guide served as a means of confirming and validating interview results, such as assessment types that had been used. By attending and participating in the classroom, the researcher could ensure that interview findings regarding assessment types aligned with actual conducted activities.

The observation guide is structured into three main areas of focus to assess the assessment documentation. The guideline examines the availability of assessment blueprints, investigating whether formal assessment blueprints exist and evaluating the extent of their completeness. It also focuses on the clarity of assessment indicators by examining the clarity and specificity of indicators used to assess student learning. Additionally, it evaluates the alignment with assessment activities by assessing how well the actual assessment activities correspond to the blueprint. The guide consists

of blueprint alignment with assessment and assessment activities, as well as measurement of student skills to assess whether and how student competencies are evaluated.

This observation guideline is designed to evaluate the quality and alignment of assessment documents, focusing on planning, clarity of indicators, implementation consistency, variety of assessment methods, and skill measurement. It ensures that assessments are well-documented, outcome-oriented, and comprehensive.

According to Widoyoko (2012), an observer who acts as a participant in classroom observation activities gains access to a wide range of information, including confidential data. In this participatory observation approach, the researcher is granted maximum freedom to gather information relevant to the research objectives.

Table 2

Observation guideline

No.	Observation focus
Assessment Documents	
1.	Availability of assessment blueprint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available and complete • Available but incomplete • Not available
2.	Clarity of assessment indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge indicators are clearly defined • Skill indicators are clearly defined • Indicators are not defined or still general
Alignment with assessment activities	
3.	Alignment blueprint with assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Question or tasks align with the blueprint • Some misalignment between blueprint and instruments • No clear connection Types of instruments use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective test • Essay test • Project based assignment • Practical/simulation
Measurement of student skills	
4.	Measurement of student skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skill indicators are included in rubric/assessment • Measurement is conducted through practice, presentation, or demonstration • No specific skill measurement

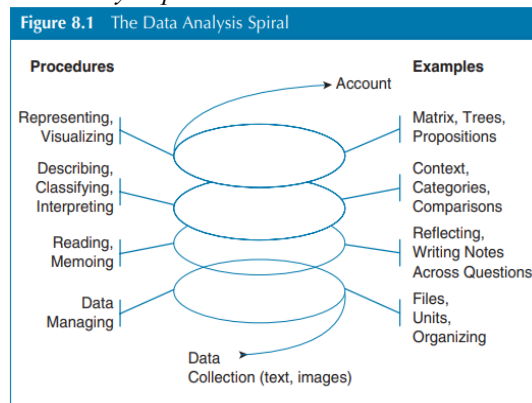
Documentation

This method, also referred to as document analysis, is a data collection technique that involves analyzing the content of documents related to the research objectives (Widoyoko, 2012). The documents examined in this research include the RPS (Rencana Pembelajaran Semester/Semester Learning Plan), SKKNI (Standar Kompetensi Kerja Nasional Indonesia/Indonesian National Work Competency Standards), and student grade records. The SKKNI document, which outlines professional administrative competencies, is utilized to identify the skills required for the workforce in creating business correspondence using English. The RPS review aims to obtain data on CPL (Capaian Pembelajaran Lulusan/Graduate Learning Outcomes) and CPMK (Capaian Pembelajaran Mata Kuliah/Course Learning Outcomes) to ensure alignment with the KKKNI (Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia/Indonesian National Qualifications Framework). The grade records are used to gather empirical evidence of the implementation of student competency assessments in the Business Correspondence course, which have been conducted through assignments and quizzes throughout the course duration.

Data analysis

The process of constructing the case study in this research follows the stages proposed by Creswell (2013), as illustrated in Figure 1. The research construction process employs spiral analysis, which consists of four main stages: data management, reading and memoing, describing, classifying and interpreting, and representing and visualizing.

Figure 1
Data analysis process



Source: (Cresswell, 2013)

As illustrated in Figure 1, the data analysis process was conducted in four structured and systematic stages. The first stage is data management. In this stage, all data collected through interview recordings, observation notes, and document reviews were compiled and organized systematically. Each source was labeled with identifiers (e.g., interview codes such as "L1" for lecturer or "S1" for student) and sorted into folders based on data type. Files were then categorized thematically using matrix tables to facilitate thematic grouping, such as "psychomotor skills," "assessment techniques," and "lecturer perceptions."

The second stage is reading and memoing. Once organized, the researcher conducted repeated readings of the grouped data. During this phase, memos were written in the margins or in a digital log to capture key ideas, reflections, or emerging patterns from each participant's statement. Each relevant statement or segment of data was assigned a code. For example, "C1" for comments on assessment challenges or "C2" for descriptions of practical skills demonstrated. These codes served as the foundation for theme development.

The third stage involves describing, classifying, and interpreting the data. In this analytical stage, the researcher began by writing detailed descriptions of observed psychomotor competencies and the learning context, drawing on classroom observations and document analysis. Data were classified into meaning units by grouping similar codes into subthemes (e.g., skill demonstration, feedback process, evaluation criteria). Subsequently, an interpretive process was applied to explore deeper meanings behind the patterns, for example, analyzing how lecturers select assessment types or how students respond to certain evaluation methods. Tables summarizing findings from document analysis (e.g., RPS or assessment rubrics) were included to support and illustrate the narrative.

The fourth stage is representing and visualizing. The final stage involved presenting the analyzed data in a coherent and reader-friendly format. Themes and subthemes were narrated descriptively and supported with direct quotes from participants. Additionally, visual representations such as summary tables, thematic charts, and coding matrices were included to enhance clarity and allow readers to trace the findings back to the raw data. This ensured that the presentation of results was both accessible and evidence-based.

Validity and Credibility of Data

The data validity in this research is not measured using statistical validity and reliability, but rather through the four criteria of trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), as cited in Miles and Jozefowicz-Simbeni (2010), which consist of:

Credibility refers to the extent to which the data and research findings can be trusted by participants and readers. To ensure data credibility, several steps were taken. Triangulation of sources and techniques was employed by combining various data collection methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted with one lecturer who teaches the course and 12 students enrolled in it. Observation was conducted during classroom sessions, where the researcher was physically present and acted as a passive participant to closely examine teaching strategies, student engagement, and classroom interactions. Document analysis involved reviewing the course syllabus (RPS), teaching materials, and student learning outcomes. To enhance data validity, member checking was applied by confirming the initial interpretations of the data with the research participants, namely, the lecturer and students. This process was conducted after preliminary analysis through open discussions to ensure that the interpreted meanings accurately reflected the participants' actual experiences and perspectives. Additionally, prolonged engagement was established through the researcher's continuous involvement in the learning environment throughout two months. A professional and consistent relationship was built with both the lecturer and the students, allowing the researcher to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the research context through sustained and immersive observation.

Transferability aims to ensure applicability by presenting a comprehensive and detailed description of the research setting, including the institutional context, the nature of the course under study, and the structure of the teaching and learning process. Specific information was provided regarding the participants, such as their academic background, year of study, and level of engagement in the course. During data collection, contextual elements such as the classroom environment, learning methods used by the lecturer, and the dynamics of student participation were thoroughly documented. The interview and observation protocols were also described in detail, including time, location, and the situational context in which the data were gathered. These rich descriptions were intentionally included to enable readers to determine the extent to which findings may be relevant or applicable to similar educational settings and contexts. By clearly outlining the boundaries and conditions of the research, the study allows others to make informed judgments about the potential for transferability to other situations.

Dependability was ensured by implementing clear and systematic procedures that allow the research process to be consistently followed and transparently audited. An audit trail was developed to document every stage of the research, including detailed records of data collection procedures (including interview guides, observation notes, and documentation analysis), data organization methods (including coding schemes and category development), and the rationale behind each analytical decision made during the study. Additionally, peer debriefing was conducted by engaging a fellow researcher who was not directly involved in the study. This peer acted as a critical reviewer, providing independent feedback through regular discussions focused on the research process, the credibility of interpretations, and the consistency of the findings with the data. These discussions helped to identify potential biases and ensured that the research remained aligned with the principles of qualitative case study methodology. Through these measures, the study maintained a dependable structure that can be reviewed and, if necessary, replicated in similar contexts.

Confirmability was established to ensure that the research findings were grounded in the data and not influenced by the researcher's personal biases or assumptions. To achieve this, the researcher maintained a reflective journal throughout the research process. This journal contained regular entries that documented the researcher's thoughts, assumptions, and decisions during data collection and analysis. These reflections were kept separate from the field notes to clearly distinguish between raw data and the researcher's interpretations or reactions. Additionally, supporting documentation such as complete interview transcripts, observation logs, and annotated

documents were systematically organized and stored. These materials serve as a data trail that allows external reviewers or other researchers to trace the origin of specific findings back to the original sources. This process increases transparency and allows others to evaluate the objectivity and neutrality of the conclusions drawn. By implementing these strategies, the study ensured that the findings emerged from participants' perspectives and the actual field data, rather than the researcher's personal viewpoints.

Research Scope

Based on the descriptions above, the researcher establishes the scope of this study, which is limited to the assessment of learning conducted by lecturers of the Business Correspondence course in the Office Administration Education program at the Faculty of Economics and Business, State University of Semarang in 2025. The study does not include an evaluation of student learning outcomes directly, but instead focuses on the assessment instruments and practices used by lecturers. The main focus of this research is on the availability and quality of assessment blueprints and indicators, rather than on the content or substance of the course material. The assessment techniques reviewed in this study are limited to the context of implementing the Outcome-Based Education (OBE) curriculum, with an emphasis on assessments that support the achievement of learning outcomes. The primary data were collected through interviews and observations, making the gathered information qualitative and exploratory, rather than quantitative..

Results and Discussion

Research Result

The Current Competency Levels of Students in Business Correspondence Course

Based on interviews and documentation, several general conditions have been identified regarding students' competencies in the Business Correspondence course. These conditions are aligned with the Indonesian National Work Competency Standards (SKKNI, 2024), specifically the unit titled "Writing Business Letters in English." According to information obtained from the lecturer, there are competency-related issues among students that have become the main focus in the Business Correspondence course, as they significantly impact both student learning outcomes and the overall quality of graduates in the office administration program. Through document analysis, the data presented in Table 3 were obtained, which represent the current knowledge and skill scores of students.

Table 3
Students Competency Conditions

Aspect	Assessment Indicators	Students Competency Condition	
Knowledge	Basic sentence structure and paragraph writing	Average score: 7.5	assignment
	Organizing information	Average score: 7.5	assignment
	Use of formal letter format: formal opening, statement of purpose, request, confirmation, information, clarification, intended action, and formal closing	Average score: 7.0	assignment
Skills	Use of appropriate English letter sentences	Average score: 7.5	assignment
	Use of complex grammatical constructions to convey accurate meaning and intent	Average score: 7.5	assignment
	Ability to identify the purpose of letter	Average score: 8.5	assignment

Based on Table 3, student competencies are divided into two main aspects: knowledge and skills. The knowledge aspect describes understanding and application of concepts related to business correspondence. The indicators consist of basic sentence structure and paragraph writing, where students demonstrate moderate competency with an average score of 7.5. For organizing information competence, students show a similar level of competency, also scoring 7.5 on average. This indicates they are fairly able to present ideas in a structured manner. In the competence of using formal letter format (including formal opening, statement of purpose, request, confirmation, information, clarification, intended action, and formal closing), students perform slightly lower in this area, with an average score of 7.3. This needs improvement in adhering to formal structure conventions.

In the skills aspect, which measures students' practical ability to apply language skills in writing formal business letters, the indicators consist of the use of appropriate English letter sentences, which shows good practical command, with a 7.5 average score. For the use of complex grammatical constructions to convey accurate meaning and intent, with a 7.5 average score, students demonstrate an adequate ability to use advanced grammar structures effectively. The competence in the ability to identify the purpose of the letter is the strongest area, with an average score of 8.5. This indicates that students are highly competent in understanding and defining the objective of their correspondence.

Overall, students demonstrate moderate to strong competence in both knowledge and skill aspects of business correspondence. The highest performance is seen in their ability to identify the purpose of letters, while the area needing improvement is the proper use of formal letter formatting.

The Current Methods Used to Assess Student Competencies

Based on observation, interviews, and documentation, the current methods used to assess student competencies are participation assessment (weight: 10%), pretest assessment/initial student ability (weight: 5%), individual quiz assessment (weight: 12%), group assignment (weight: 40%), midterm exam UTS (weight: 15%), and final exam UAS (weight: 18%). This is consistent with findings of previous studies (Rasyid et al., 2022) describing the course being evaluated in technical drawing. The data evaluated include course grades, covering participation, assignments, midterm exam (UTS), and final exam (UAS). The weighting in participation, assignments, midterm, and final exam toward the final grade is determined by the course instructor. The grade weighting also depends on the category of the course, whether it is theoretical, practical, or a combination of both.

Participation Assessment (Weight: 10%)

Participation assessment is a crucial component for evaluating active student engagement during the learning process. It includes attendance, contribution to class discussions, initiative in answering or asking questions, and involvement in various academic activities organized by the lecturer. This assessment aims to encourage students to be more proactive, critical, and confident in expressing their ideas verbally in a constructive academic environment, particularly in English. As supported by Sudipa et al. (2022), student learning participation is reflected through assessments conducted by lecturers during the teaching and learning process. Student participation is evaluated based on each individual's abilities, and every lecturer applies their own criteria when determining participation grades for students in each course. These criteria play a significant role in decision-making, particularly in assigning participation grades to students.

Moreover, student participation reflects attitudes and learning ethics such as discipline, responsibility, and communication skills. The participatory assessment serves as an indicator of the students' interest and attention to the Business Correspondence subject. Student interest and attention can improve learning outcomes, which is in line with the research by Rahamawanto and Indrawati (2019), who conclude that reading interest and learning engagement are important factors that significantly influence students' learning outcomes in any subject. Students with a high interest in reading tend to have broader knowledge and access to more information, which greatly supports the learning process. Therefore, participation not only contributes to the final grade but also plays a

significant role in the development of soft skills, which will be crucial for students' future careers and social interactions.

Pretest Assessment/Initial Student Ability (Weight: 5%)

The pretest is conducted at the beginning of the course to assess students' foundational knowledge before starting the Business Correspondence class. This initial step helps identify students' readiness levels, allowing the lecturer to prepare more tailored teaching strategies. The pretest also serves as a tool to differentiate students' knowledge levels, making it easier to classify them accordingly. The pretest is administered using Google Forms, which enables students to see their results immediately.

In addition to being an initial measurement tool, the pretest aims to motivate students to focus more on the course. It also helps students become more aware of their understanding of foundational material and areas that need improvement. The goal is for students to be more active and engaged in class discussions and activities. According to research by Adri (2020), pretests can increase student outcomes, motivate students to prepare for the course, and enhance participation.

Individual Quiz Assessment (Weight: 12%)

The quiz is a form of formative assessment conducted periodically to evaluate students' understanding of the material taught. This assessment is done individually, reflecting each student's mastery of the subject without external interference. The quizzes are administered through the Quizizz platform, allowing students to see their results immediately. Additionally, the lecturer can set time limits for the quizzes.

The quiz results serve as a basis for evaluating the teaching methods used and providing direct feedback to students. They also help foster students' independence and discipline in their learning. Quizzes are announced a week in advance, with six quizzes scheduled throughout the course, each focusing on a specific type of letter. Currently, three quizzes have been conducted: Quiz 1 on the concept of business letters, Quiz 2 on inquiry letters, and Quiz 3 on sales letters. This individual quiz assessment contributes 12% to the final grade, encouraging students to prepare consistently for each session. The quiz serves as a link between the learning process and the results achieved, while also enhancing students' sense of responsibility for their learning progress.

Group Assignment (Weight: 40%)

The group assignment is designed to assess students' ability to collaborate in solving a problem or project collectively. Technically, students are divided into small groups of three to complete case-based tasks, projects, or discuss specific topics. The assessment evaluates not only the final result but also the teamwork process and individual participation within the group.

By completing group assignments, students can develop interpersonal skills such as communication, negotiation, and leadership. The experience of working in teams will help students navigate group dynamics, resolve conflicts, and appreciate diverse opinions. Group assignments are highly relevant to preparing students for the challenges of the workforce, where collaboration across disciplines is a common expectation.

Midterm Exam (UTS) (Weight: 15%)

The Midterm Exam (UTS) is a summative assessment conducted at the midpoint of the semester to measure students' mastery over half of the material covered. Similar to quizzes, the UTS also serves as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and provides a basis for improvements in the second half of the semester. The UTS score gives an initial overview of students' academic achievements. The exam was held on April 10, 2025.

In addition to serving as an evaluation tool, the UTS is expected to motivate students to review the material thoroughly and comprehensively. It is often seen as a critical opportunity for

students to assess their progress, adjust their study strategies, and better prepare for the final exam (UAS). The UTS is strategically important, accounting for 15% of the final grade.

Final Exam (UAS) (Weight: 18%)

The Final Exam (UAS) is the concluding assessment that evaluates students' overall learning throughout the semester. The exam consists of various types of questions, including multiple-choice, short-answer, essay, analytical essay, and project-based simulation questions. The UAS is an individual assessment that requires students to demonstrate critical thinking, logical reasoning, and the ability to integrate concepts learned throughout the course.

The UAS holds significant weight in the final grade, contributing 18%. It serves as a key indicator of success in the Business Correspondence course. The final exam provides an opportunity for students to demonstrate consistency in their learning over the semester. The score obtained in the UAS can be seen as a reflection of students' efforts in both independent study and class activities. It is a determining factor in students' graduation and their overall competence in the course.

Expectations Toward Assessment Techniques Based on OBE to Be Developed

Based on this research, several recommendations are provided regarding the development of competency assessment instruments for students based on Outcome-Based Education (OBE), specifically in the Business Correspondence course. Based on observations, interviews, and document studies, there are several components that need to be emphasized in OBE-based assessment to enhance the quality of higher education graduates.

The lecturer hopes the OBE assessment framework can be developed comprehensively to reflect the achievement of all Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), covering aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The OBE assessment should not only focus on cognitive abilities but also measure students' applied and psychomotor skills in completing tasks or projects in Business Correspondence. This is in line with research by Negara et al. (2024), which states that OBE can improve students' character and quality of education. OBE is eligible to be a curriculum framework.

The lecturer hopes OBE-based assessment can improve the quality of the learning process by creating more effective and directed teaching strategies. This will encourage students to learn more actively, independently, and responsibly for their learning outcomes, as every learning activity is directly linked to the defined learning achievements. According to Muzakir (2023), the lecturer provides support and resources for students to achieve the best outcomes, with the learning process focusing on constructive alignment.

The lecturer hopes the development of the OBE assessment framework can contribute to building an objective, transparent, and accountable evaluation system. With measurable indicators and rubrics, the evaluation can reflect students' overall competencies. This will strengthen the recognition of graduate quality both nationally and internationally and help address the demands of an increasingly competitive and dynamic workforce. This is in line with the study by Wahyudi and Heksaputra (2023), which states that the application of OBE-based assessment can display final grades based on course and graduate learning outcomes. Learning outcomes derived from final grades can serve as an aspect for academic programs to formulate better learning guidelines in the future.

Discussion

Based on interviews, observations, and document reviews, it was found that students' competencies in the Business Correspondence course need improvement, especially in sentence structure, paragraph organization, and formal letter formatting in English. Students struggle to construct effective sentences and paragraphs that meet professional communication standards and are not fully familiar with the formal structure of business letters. Additionally, students face challenges with complex grammatical structures, though some can identify the purpose of a letter. These findings emphasize the need for more intensive, structured teaching to help students master

professional business letter writing skills, as supported by Noor and Mulyani (2016), who suggest that a process skills approach in business correspondence courses can improve learning outcomes because it involves students in critical thinking and problem-solving stages in a practical context.

The gap in students' competencies in writing formal business letters highlights the urgent need for a more contextualized and structured instructional approach. A process-based pedagogy, which emphasizes drafting, revising, and reflective practices, has proven effective in improving professional writing skills, as it moves beyond product-focused teaching and fosters deeper cognitive engagement (Noor & Mulyani, 2016). Such an approach allows students to develop writing proficiency that aligns with real-world communication demands.

The development of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) assessments received positive feedback from instructors, as it helps focus student learning on measurable outcomes relevant to the workforce. Instructors appreciate that OBE evaluates cognitive skills as well as critical thinking, collaboration, and professional attitudes. While initial challenges like adapting to the new format may arise, instructors believe OBE will support the transformation of education to better meet job market demands, in line with Gea and Koto (2024), who found that OBE enhances understanding and critical thinking. However, as noted by Ludvik (2019), the success of OBE heavily relies on clear learning outcomes, valid assessment design, and the readiness of instructors to make pedagogical adjustments.

The implementation of Outcome-Based Education (OBE) offers a promising framework for aligning academic instruction with workplace expectations. By focusing on measurable learning outcomes, OBE encourages the development of essential competencies such as professional communication, collaboration, and problem-solving (Harden, 2007). However, the success of OBE relies heavily on valid assessment design and faculty readiness. Without these, OBE risks reducing learning to mere achievement of indicators, rather than fostering meaningful understanding and critical thinking (Biggs et al., 2022).

Student assessment is carried out through various methods, including participation, pretests, quizzes, group assignments, midterms, and finals. These assessments help develop responsibility, teamwork, and practical skills while encouraging active learning. Instructors hope the development of a comprehensive OBE assessment system will better reflect all aspects of graduate learning outcomes, improve learning quality, and provide more objective evaluations. This approach is expected to prepare students for the competitive job market, as also highlighted by Wahyudi et al. (2023), who developed an OBE-based assessment application in a technical program. However, as criticized by Biggs et al. (2022), the main challenge of OBE is the risk of simplifying learning to merely fulfilling indicators, rather than developing deep understanding and reflective skills.

Moreover, the integration of process-oriented instruction and OBE-aligned assessment is seen as a powerful strategy for cultivating higher-order thinking skills and graduate employability (Boud & Falchikov, 2006). In today's competitive and global job market, adaptive, objective, and technology-supported assessment systems such as the OBE-based application developed by Wahyudi et al. (2023) are essential for driving meaningful education transformation.

Therefore, educational reform must go beyond changes in assessment practices. It requires a comprehensive shift in teaching methodology, active student engagement, and faculty development. The key to success lies in the integrated implementation of process-based pedagogy, outcome-oriented evaluation, and supportive digital technologies.

Conclusion

This study highlights the mismatch between current assessment methods and the principles of OBE, particularly in higher education contexts. It emphasizes the need for assessment systems that are competency-oriented, especially those aligned with the SKKNI. By focusing on the business correspondence course within the office administration education program, this research offers empirical evidence of students' ongoing difficulties in mastering practical business correspondence skills. The study lays the groundwork for developing a technology-based assessment framework, offering a concrete direction for future innovations in instructional design. It contributes to academic discourse on digital transformation in education, specifically by proposing an OBE assessment

application that can support educators in aligning assessments with measurable competencies. The study strengthens the academic argument for aligning learning outcomes with real-world job market requirements. It provides a practical lens through which researchers and educators can view the constructive alignment of teaching, learning, and assessment with national and industry standards. The recommendations for future research should focus on the design, development, and usability testing of an OBE-based assessment application. Developing an application-based OBE assessment framework invites interdisciplinary collaboration between fields such as educational technology, instructional design, vocational education, and software engineering. This creates space for new academic investigations that blend pedagogy with system development and usability studies.

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