Understanding the Curriculum Process: Business Studies in Samoa

Faalogo Teleuli Mafoa, National University of Samoa

Abstract

Commercial Studies (Business Studies) was introduced to Samoa Secondary Schools in the mid-1980s as a vocational subject. Its' content was more theoretical in nature compared to vocational subjects like Design Technology, Food and Textile Technology, (Ministry of Education Curriculum Overview, 1998; Okoro, 2011). The publication of the Western Samoa Education Policies 1995-2005 clearly recognized the intention to make changes within the education system in Samoa (Western Samoa Curriculum Overview Document, July 1998). The dual-stream system was then changed to a single-stream system; and thus, harmonizing the curriculum outline for all schools in Samoa. This was also in line with the new structure of Junior High Schools to become Senior Secondary Schools. The Junior High Schools (Years 9-11) were renamed secondary schools (Years 9-12) and when Year 12 level was added all students became eligible to sit the Samoan School Certificate Examination. The Curriculum Materials and Assessment Division (CMAD) designed, developed and revised curriculum and support materials for all schools. Each subject area has a Curriculum Officer within the division and a subject committee comprising of selected teachers from government, mission and private schools (MESC Strategic Policies and Plan, 2006). The Business Studies Curriculum Statement applies to all secondary school students in Samoa (Years 9 to 13), irrespective of gender, ethnicity, belief, ability, social or cultural background (Western Samoa Curriculum Overview Document, 1998). This paper discusses the process of curriculum development in Business Studies from what was in the past (forty years ago) to the present. It describes the curriculum theory, curriculum development process, curriculum development models, curriculum documents and other related research on curriculum implementation pertinent to a full understanding of Business Studies as taught in schools in Samoa.

***Key Words**: Business Studies; Curriculum development; Curriculum materials*

Introduction

Business Studies generally aims to equip teachers with best knowledge and relevant tools on how to encompass student participation in economic activities and to cope with the complexities of modern financial resource management. Thus, nurtures the teaching of accounting and economic topics in all Secondary School levels. However, as identified in the past an imbalance existed in both disciplines from Year 9 to Year 13, which resulted in an immediate revision of the curriculum. A Business Studies Committee was established to review the Strands thus, the four-year level plan was adopted by the Ministry of Education, Sports & Culture (MESC) which consists the following components: Accounting Applications; Financial Accounting; The

Accounting Process; Financial Studies; Production; Consumption and Market; (Business Studies Years 9 – 12 Samoa Secondary Curriculum, 2021).

Curriculum Theory

Many education authorities including Ministries of Education have realised that the old fact-based curricula needed to be replaced by one that emphasised the development of thinking skills, interpersonal skills and creativity rather than simply mastering pieces of past knowledge (Sahlberg, 2005). (Chaudhary, 2015) further points out various factors affecting implementation of curriculum for students need to be considered, with the "learner" being the central factor of the implementation process. These factors include culture, student upbringing and home environment. For example, students raised in a more traditional Samoan household can have different learning needs to students who are from *afakasi* (mixed marriage) households. On the contrary, students in rural areas (villages) and from low-income families will have substantially different learning needs or level of access to resources and materials compared to students who are from urban areas given their convenient access to better facilities and resources.

Morris (1995) stated that governments have stressed legal responsibility to ensure that all pupils have access to a curriculum which has some common elements and that all pupils achieve some minimum levels of competency.

The education system in Samoa was a dual system where the curriculum taught in college (Years 9-13) was different from the curriculum in the junior high schools (Years 9-11). Thus, government policies mandated the change to a single stream system where all secondary schools in Samoa would teach the same curriculum at all levels (Years 9-13). As such, the teaching of Business Studies in the schools was refurbished and established to meet the current changes nationally and globally (WS Curriculum Overview Document, July 1998).

This is also supported by (Haynes, 2000) in her minor thesis stating that the curriculum currently taught in New Zealand schools is the outcome of reforms to the education system that was instituted in the 1980s by the Labour Government and continued in the 1990s by the National Government.

In Africa, (Quan-Baffour, 2009) stated that to make education reflect the ideals and principles of a democratic country the new government that came into power in 1994 had to make drastic changes to both the curriculum and the school system as a whole to give every school child access to education and equal opportunity to work. The education transformation made it mandatory for all schools (rural or urban) to teach the same subjects.

Moreover, in 1986 India implemented the National Policy on Education that initiated a long-term series of programs to improve its education system and ensured all children through primary level have access to education of comparable quality irrespective of caste, creed, location, or sex. By 1995, all children up to age fourteen would have had free and compulsory education (Ministry of Education Report, 1986).

The law in England required all schools to offer pupils a balanced and broadly based curriculum encouraging them to learn and achieve; to promote students' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development; and to prepare students for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life (Machin and Vignoles, 2006).

In 1994, the Indonesian government introduced curriculum reform consisting of a national curriculum (80%) and flexibility given to the provinces in adjusting the curriculum to local needs. The Local Content Curriculum (LCC) aimed at the local situation and context while the national curriculum focused on national development (Minho, Clementina and Erry, 1990).

The Pakistan 1976 Act of Parliament authorized the Ministry of Education (MOE) to appoint competent authorities to perform the different curriculum-related functions (UNESCO, 1998). Certain educational functions such as curriculum planning, policy and designing educational standards were the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education.

The Curriculum Development Process

Most written curricula incorporate one of two forms: a written curriculum syllabus and a curriculum package. A curriculum syllabus includes a rationale for choice of content, goals, and details of expected learning outcomes. A curriculum package consists of textbooks, instructional aids, and tests for students for teacher self-evaluation. It usually includes a teacher's guide containing a comprehensive syllabus, the rationale for choices of content items, teaching goals, and teaching suggestions (Shkedi, 2009).

After extensive consultations between personnel in the ministry (Business Studies Coordinator), the Business Studies committee members and consultants from the development project, a decision was accepted to draft a curriculum document.

The Business Studies curriculum is similar to all other subject areas developed and based on the Samoa Secondary School Curriculum Overview Document with the help of New Zealand consultants in the development project. A national document called the '*Business Studies Curriculum Statement*' was pursed to identify the six Business

Studies strands: Production, Consumption, The Market, Accounting Applications, Financial Accounting and Accounting Process.

There were regular consultation meetings after which trainings of trainers (committee members) were conducted. The committee members trained by the consultants were familiar with the scope of the curriculum statement. The main focus was to understand the content in each of the six strands at different levels (Years 9-13).

The next step involved in-service training workshops for Business Studies teachers from different schools (government, mission, private). The workshops conducted by the trainers through the ministry to familiarize teacher with the curriculum documents (Curriculum Statement and Students' Books)

Further, teachers were given curriculum packages to assist through the development of the curriculum contents, goals, and ideas that transcended the writer's intentions and translated into practice in the local context. Hence begs a question whether teachers as curriculum 'users' consistently follow the thread of the curriculum writer's objectives from the syllabus to the 'package' and finally to classroom teaching (Shkedi, 2009)

Different Curriculum Development Models

The most common curriculum model below is Tyler's (1949) model, cited by Brady (1995) and commonly known as the objectives model (Figure 1) suits the development of the Business Studies curriculum. Tyler's model outlined how to design the curriculum. (Grundy, 1987 and Eisner, 1979) cited by (Marsh, 1992) continues to be widely used in many countries because of its clarity.

Figure 1: The Objectives Model

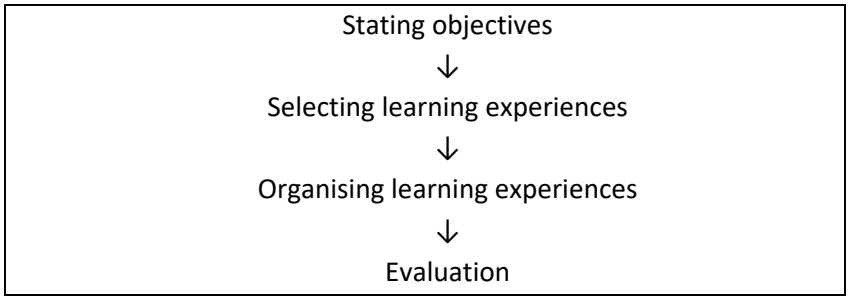


Figure 1 describes the steps in developing a curriculum by making objectives the essential first step before determination of content and methods to achieve those objectives. The learning experiences selected and organized vis., before the

evaluation process. Brady (1995) stated that the process of evaluation determined the extent in which objectives achieved through the selected content and method.

(Prideaux n.d.,) mentioned that prescriptive models like the "objectives model," which arose from the initial work of Tyler distinguished the specification of verbs acceptable when writing the so called "behavioural objectives." Once defined, the objectives were then used to determine the other elements of the curriculum (content, teaching and learning strategies, assessment and evaluation).

This is supported by the behavioural approach coined by Frederick Taylor, which is based on blueprints where goals and objectives are specified, content and activities are also arranged to match the learning objectives set at the beginning aimed to achieve efficiency (Alonsabe, n.d.,). Ornstein and Hunkins (2004) emphasized the importance of planning in curriculum design. They also noted that although many curriculum models existed, most were classified as Technical or Non-Technical approaches. In the Technical–Scientific approach, curriculum development is a useful blueprint for structuring the learning environment. The approach has been described as logical, efficient and effective in delivering education.

(Maclean, 2006) stated that nursing education accepted the Tylerian approach to demonstrate acceptable levels of competence for nursing practice because of the technical view of curriculum epitomized by the Tylerian objectives-based model that focused on measurable, quantifiable outcomes partly for nursing as a profession. However, in her study she examined the appropriateness of the behavioural measurement of outcomes for nursing educational practices. She stated that nursing education must shift its focus from the technical curriculum to encompass humanistic principles and critical reflection, compatible with currently accepted nursing values.

Similarly, development of the Business Studies curriculum followed this model. The first step specified the aim and objectives of Business Studies followed by the strands (content). In terms of the strands, the decision made for three economics and three accounting strands from Years 9-13 indicating a balance for both economics and accounting topics. Each strand has specific aims developed from the general aim. In this case, specific aim for the strand with the achievement objectives designed to focus the teacher on the learning experiences students would take part. The specific aims of each strand established a clear and structured progression of achievement objectives that span Years 9-11 for Business Studies, Years 12 and 13 for economics and accounting as illustrated by Figure 2 below.

(Hawes, 1979) cited by (Pasha, 2012) proposed student-centered models in which the teacher acted as facilitator rather than content authority. The model focused on

the importance of aspects of physical situation, teacher behavior, and pupil behavior, which added to the four main existing components.

Tyler's model has attracted some criticism—for example, it is difficult and time consuming to construct behavioural objectives. A more serious criticism is that the model restricted the curriculum to a narrow range of student skills and knowledge that can be readily expressed in behavioural terms. Higher order thinking, problem solving, and processes for acquiring values may be excluded because they could not be simply stated in behavioural terms. As a consequent of such criticism, the objectives model has waned in popularity. The importance of being clear about the purpose of the curriculum is well accepted. Clearly stated objectives provided a good starting point, but behavioural objectives are no longer accepted as the "gold standard" for curriculum design.

Similarly, criticism in higher education that these models are over-burdening curriculum and showed lack of coherence and inadequate skills of graduates. Hence, new higher education curriculum models have been developed to accommodate new means of delivery, access and storage of information and to incorporate more flexibility into the existing curriculum to provide better access for a wider range of students (Moran, 1995; Tinkler, Lepani and Mitchell, 1996; Mitchell and Bluer, 1997) cited by (Pasha, 2012).

On the other hand, in the non-technical, non-scientific approach there are many different curriculum models (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). The key focus in this approach is not on the content, or learning outcomes, but on the learner. The two examples of non-technical are deliberative models addressed to complete freedom for students to choose what they would like to learn; and the post-positivist, a non-prescriptive approach that allowed for unexpected and creative learning to occur (Ornstein and Hunkins, 2004). In contrast, Alsubaie (2016) explores a different approach that is more teacher focused. Thus underscores the essential role the teacher has in implementing a curriculum model and states that it is the last important stage in curriculum development.

Further (Handler, 2010) believes the teacher should be an integral part in the development of any curriculum, and therefore their involvement in the process is mandatory.

Figure 2: Structure of the Business Studies Curriculum

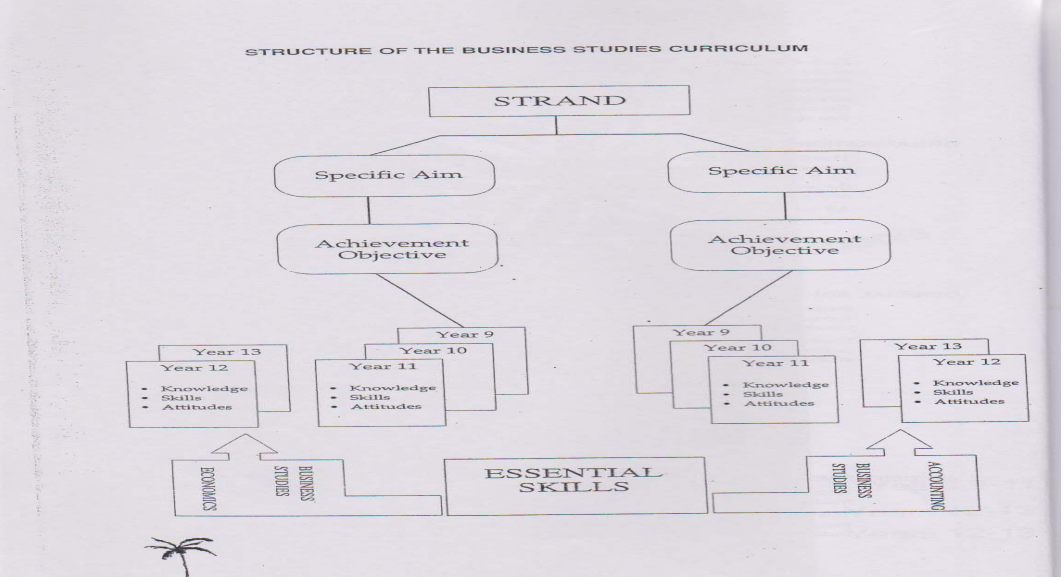


Figure 2 describes the structure of Business Studies curriculum at all levels (Years 9-13) and what is taught at each level. Years 9 to 11 are taught Business Studies while at Years 12 and 13 economics and accounting are taught as two separate subjects (Ministry of Education – Business Studies Curriculum Statement, 1998). Essential skills such as communication and language are also emphasised with teachers attending to communication (speaking, writing) and language (listening, reading, and viewing) as requirements of Business Studies. These skills are taught together with the appropriate content (Ministry of Education Samoa Secondary School Curriculum Overview Document, 1998).

Curriculum Documents – Official Guide for Teachers

Teachers enjoy teaching others if they are taught well and know what and how to teach. A case study by (Treagust and Rennie 1993) involving six Australian secondary schools in implementing technology in the school curriculum confirmed the need for complete documentation about intended and implementation so that new faculty members are kept informed about direction and progress.

(McGee 1997) attested that curriculum statements are part of the total curriculum. These form the basis on which curriculum decisions in contexts made and work alongside class programmes. While there are many different factors that shape what happens in teaching and learning, curriculum documents remain the key factor (Luke et al., 2016). Hence, map out the level of knowledge, skill, and content

taught by teachers in their relevant subject areas, like Business Studies. Curriculum materials for the secondary level included curriculum statements for subject areas, students' books, teacher guides, off the shelf texts and in-service modules supplied by the ministry every five years (Ministry of Education Strategic Policies and Plan, 2006-2015). Hence, the Business Studies curriculum statement for Years 9-12 adhered to all secondary schools in Samoa, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, belief, and ability, social or cultural background.

The Business Studies curriculum in Samoa delineated the progression of skills and knowledge for students in secondary schools. Its framework based on the ten principles that linked the national curriculum to the day-to-day school curriculum, scope of the curriculum statement, general aims, specific aims, approaches to teaching and learning, including language and communication skills, curriculum strands and achievement objectives.

Students' textbooks (Book 1 Economics, book 2 Accounting) were developed and distributed to all the schools (government, mission and private). Teachers use students' books (Books 1 and 2) as guide to the yearly programmes and plan to prepare units of economics and accounting for classroom teaching.

The Importance of Professional Development in Teacher Quality

McGee (1997) argued teachers placed in a central role as curriculum decision makers should have a high degree of professional autonomy. (Alsubaie, 2016) strongly supported this and more recently reiterated the same thing - that there should be major advances in teacher development in order for teachers to actively reflect on society's needs in each stage of the curriculum development process. To enable teachers to carry out their curriculum implementation task effectively, they need to be given ample opportunities to familiarize themselves with the curriculum and curriculum related issues. Higher-quality teachers can engage in higher-quality teaching practices in their classrooms may lead to improved student learning outcomes. This is the main expectation of all stakeholders of education – parents, students, government and the community. The high expectations of education stakeholders could be met when teachers' content knowledge is improved. In the process of upskilling and participating in curriculum development, teachers are empowered along the way which ultimately lead to increased performance and higher learning achievements (Carl, 2009).

Content knowledge according to (Shulman 1996) is the knowledge, understanding, skill and disposition that learned by schoolchildren. This content knowledge relies on the teacher having a good source of literature and a basic understanding of the

subject taught and a wider knowledge base to be able to impart alternative explanations of similar ideas or philosophies (Shulman, 1996).

(Shulman, 1996) in his early studies of teacher learning, emphasised pedagogical content knowledge as one aspect of conception that fits well with the centrality of subject matter. Furthermore, (Shulman 2002, 2003) paid more attention on how teachers transform their individual experiences into more generalized experiences. (Price, 2009) supported the need for teachers to have opportunities to be engaged in successful elements of in-depth professional learning such as in-class modelling, observation and feedback, and co-construction of teaching and planning where they would be able to demonstrate improved pedagogical content knowledge. Shulman and Shulman (2004) described an accomplished teacher as a member of a professional community who is ready, willing and able to teach and to learn from his or her experiences.

Boe and Gilford (1992) stated that the quality and competency of a teacher has a direct relationship to teacher qualifications, tested ability and teacher professionalism, the degree to which teachers are given responsibility and authority over their work and classroom practice. Saunders' (2000) viewed effective teachers at a mature stage of development are well versed in their subject matter. They practice pedagogy (i.e. teaching strategies) appropriate for content; create and sustain an effective learning environment; reflect on their teaching and children's responses; and make changes to the learning environment where necessary; have a strong sense of ethics, are committed to teaching and care about their students.

Professional development experiences enable teachers to continue to grow and inquire about their practices even after formal professional development has ended (Franke, Carpenter, Levi, & Fennema, 2001).

Positive Impacts of On-going Professional Development

A fundamental goal for teacher professional development is for teachers to learn how to continue learning from their practice. However, professional development often designed to help teachers learn to implement particular teaching techniques in single sessions (Hawley & Valli, 1999; Hill, 2004). The purpose of getting teachers committed to an innovation is to enhance their knowledge of the programmes. This means teachers need to be trained and workshops have to be organised from time to time so that there is support from within and outside the school in receiving on-going curriculum professional development (Science Curriculum Implementation Questionnaire) cited by (Minho, Clementina and Erry, 1990). This is further supported by Tournaki et al., (2011) in which they highlighted that one of their key

research findings was the need for professional development opportunities to be ongoing and highly focused on improving inquiry-based instruction.

In most developing countries, including South Africa, changes do take place in the curriculum from time to time according to society's current national needs. Teachers therefore need some in-service training to enable them to implement new changes in the curriculum (Quan-Baffour & Arko-Achemfour, 2009)

In-service training is part of the general professional growth of teachers and continuous professional development of teachers support student learning and achievement. It may involve activities that develop individual teacher's skills, knowledge, expertise and other desired teacher characteristics. Moreover, as a structural training activity it also develops the skills and capabilities of teachers in defined areas with the purpose of enhancing student learning (Kriek, 2005). In-service training regarded as professional development relating to life-long development programmes that focus on a wide range of knowledge, skills and attitudes designed to promote personal and professional growth and to teach students more effectively.

Findings that emerged from research on a '*Review of 10 Mathematics Inservice Project'* (MIP, 1989) verified that regular and ongoing fortnightly workshop sessions enabled participants to try ideas in their classrooms and reflect on their experiences at subsequent sessions. These sessions allowed participants to mix regularly with their peers as well as discuss and explore various issues relating to mathematics education.

Professional development continues at different levels to update teachers and to build up a relationship with ministry personnel, a relationship with other teachers in their region (districts) and a relationship in their own schools. McGee (1997) corroborated that teacher development occurs at various levels; national level, regional level and school- based level. Thus, this collaboration among teachers is a goal that has received wide attention towards school improvement and individual teacher development.

Effective Development and Processes

Effective professional learning challenged teachers' prevailing beliefs (Timperley et al., 2007). It was identified the majority of teachers were not comfortable in both economics and accounting, which was a concern in the teaching of the subjects as those that preferred accounting would concentrate on that and likewise if the teacher was more comfortable with economics. Bell and Gilbert (1996) stated that professional development as a part of teacher development involved not only the use of different teaching activities but also the development of the beliefs and

conceptions underlying the activities. Little (1984) supported this view that leaders who themselves model effective professional learning, learn more by examining their own practice and working alongside staff as they puzzle their way through improvement efforts together.

McArdle and Coutts (2003) identified two of the personal qualities of teachers considered good at their job. First, the sense of strength (an ability indeed a desire to make things happen and to act effectively), and second, the confidence to be comfortable with responsibility and to continue to act. McArdle and Coutts believed that the presence of these qualities assisted teachers to become better teachers and to contribute to activities that would develop them even more.

A shortage of appropriately trained economics and accounting teachers capable of providing the necessary teaching had been identified in earlier years and still continued to be an issue. A subject inspection report (Department of Education, 2002) provided by an overseas consultant conducting the trainers' training workshop, was still relevant to accounting and economics lecturers. Teaching and fostering interests amongst accounting and economics students require improved content knowledge by using a variety of textbooks and easy access to internet as sources of information apart from the curriculum materials provided.

Forms of Teacher Collaboration

In order to master the processes of teaching, teachers are also being encouraged to acquire attributes such as commitment to continuous formal and informal professional learning to respond to the rapid changing world of their students and the demands of policy for improving standards (Cochran-Smith and Little, 1992; Day, 1999). (Hargreaves 1992) pointed out that social development could facilitate to a certain extent when teachers' beliefs and values strengthened their own development and those of others. Staff retreat and departmental meetings open up avenues for teachers to discuss and update the curriculum. Professional development activities like unit planning, resource making, and compilation of lesson presentations need to be shared amongst teachers.

(Nelson and Slavit, 2009) reiterated that support should be given to teachers to grow professionally. (Smith et al., 2003) in their paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Education and New Zealand Association for Research in Education in Auckland reported ways in which professional groups (school-wide improvement, staff development and classroom development) in schools could contribute to creating professional learning and teaching in the classrooms, with staff members as well as the schools. Teachers should share impressive pedagogical practices with colleagues to benefit all.

The Ministry of Education started Business Studies in-service of secondary teachers in 1991 with an Australian funded project. The focus was mainly on the content where the overseas consultant and facilitators discussed the syllabus with the participants. However, not all teachers had a chance to attend. This was due to limited funds so only a few invited to participate. Thus, teacher that attended these benefited from the training and these participants tasked to share their experiences and knowledge with teachers of their own districts or their own schools.

(McGee, 1997) articulated that teacher development occurred at various levels; national level, regional level and school- based level. Therefore, collaboration among teachers is a goal that has received more attention towards school improvement and individual teacher development. Furthermore, the principals arranged regional meetings between schools in their own districts and school based workshops discussing what had already covered in the national level training. This has not been the case for years as people tended to focus only on the training conducted by the ministry as (Fine, 1993) pointed out that school-based resources and decision-making had been narrowed vis., expansion. Exchange of teaching between teachers of the same district contributed to positive relationship with each other and assisted in improving curriculum needs. As (Hargreaves, 1994), (Talbert and MacLaughlin, 1994) pointed out teachers must have the desire to know how to learn from and collaborate effectively with others around them – colleagues, leaders, students and themselves.

(Ronfeldt et al., 2015) expanded more on this teacher collaboration concept by acknowledging there is a wide variation between teacher collaborations across different schools. Some teachers were frequently meeting to learn from each other, while others rarely had meetings or any collaborative opportunities. The positive co-relation between higher teacher collaboration and higher learner achievements remains a challenge where schools and countries are different.

Certified Teachers vs Trained Teachers

Some teachers have no business trainings were assigned to teach Business Studies whilst trained Business Studies teachers do not teach the subject. Given the contemporary dilemma, teachers with just alternative teaching certificates are teaching in classes against teachers who undertook a full teacher education programme. This has resulted the school-based programme was not implemented by the principal and staff. Trainings delivered by the ministry were conducted occasionally in schools for teachers to plan their own program in alignment with the ministry's program. (Linek et al, 2012) goes into detail regarding the current issue with a teacher getting an alternative certification but with knowledge and relevant

practical experience to the subject area which we will refer to as “certified teacher”, and a teacher who has undertaken a full teaching program majoring in the subject area, in this case, “trained teacher”. There is a lot of discontent around the current issue. Lately, certified teachers have become increasingly common, although, its’ effectiveness over the traditional counter-option remains undefined.

A case study by Quan-Baffour and Achemfour (2009) on *‘An Agenda to Improve Business Studies Teaching in South African Countryside Schools’* expressed that teachers should be more qualified and knowledgeable in particular subjects and very conversant with delivery methods. These two authors observed many accounting, economics and management teachers have insufficient content knowledge of the subjects they teach. The reason being that most countryside teachers were trained in under-resourced training colleges with little emphasis on content knowledge of Business Studies subjects.

The South African Department of Education (2003) affirmed that the kind of teacher envisaged to contribute to the transformation of education through effective teaching should be well qualified. (Saunders, 2000) viewed effective teachers as using pedagogy appropriate for content to create and sustain an effective learning environment; it supported one of the goals of the Samoa education system (Western Samoa Education Policies, 1995-2005) as;

> *“Formation of active, interactive and creative pedagogies to develop the ability to analyse knowledge critically in a learning environment which encourages inquiry, debate and independent thought and stimulate imagination and allow for individual expression” (Western Samoa Curriculum Overview Document, 1998, p. 3)*

Australian Schools Council (1990) stated that teachers needed to have a thorough grasp of the content of what they are teaching. Their knowledge should be sufficient to have an understanding of the underlying structure of their subject matter, and its relationship to other areas of knowledge. They should be able to convey its complexity and richness thus sound teachers as labeled by (Arko-Achemfour and Quan-Baffour, 2009) would positively affect decisions on curriculum implementation. There is a need to be flexible with what we plan, how we organize, what we teach, how we teach to be able to move along with our work.

(McArdle and Coutts, 2003) paper reported that experiences of designing, leading and teaching programs drawn on continuing professional development of teachers in primary, secondary, tertiary schools, had in common a focus on post-qualifying studies. The participants were already qualified and had experience of working in their chosen profession undertaking further studies in the same profession. The programs emphasised improvement and extension of professional practice through academic studies at either undergraduate or postgraduate levels.

Like any other new educational programme, successful implementation of the Business Studies curriculum at the junior secondary school is dependent on the availability of the necessary equipment and materials as well as competent teachers (Iyeke and Okoro 2004) and (Amaewhule and Okwuanaso 2004) cited by (Okoro 2011). The importance of qualified teachers in an educational programme cannot be overemphasised. (Osu, 1988) and (Anadi, 1992) cited by (Okoro, 2011) noted that the strength of an educational system is largely dependent on the quality of its teachers.

References

Alonsabe, D.O.C. 2009 *Curriculum approaches*, *Curriculum Approaches*. Available at: http://olga-curriculum.blogspot.com/2009/02/curriculum-approaches.html (Accessed: April 10, 2023).

Alsubaie, M. A. 2016 *'Curriculum Development: Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Development'* Journal of Education and Practice. Vol 7, no. 9, pp. 106-107, viewed 8 April 2023, https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1095725.pdf.

Boe, E.E., and Gilford, D. M. 1992. *Summary of conference proceedings in teacher supply. Demand and quality policy issues, models and databases.* Washington DC National Academy Press

Brady, L. 1995. *Curriculum Development.* Australia: Prentice Hall

Carl, A. 2009 *Teacher empowerment through curriculum development theory into practice.* Juta &Company Ltd.

Chaudhary, G. K. 2015. *Factors affecting curriculum implementation for students.* International Journal of Applied Research 2015, vol1(12), pp. 984-986, viewed 8 April, 2023, https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/54842577/downloaded_file-13-libre.pdf?1509149662=&response-content-disposition=inline%3B+filename%3DFactors_affecting_curriculum_implementat.pdf&Expires=1681724528&Signature=dART9eA3lGdu63Q8~mGHBJni44kgK5Rw3-uyW2zVJie3kKtMIFbd8jTeHmVSVoBiqCUix1vuJI5zbapAiEdei41jGcD6u4x9qBwdD~FqOuQJtUSowpwPvK2AwBvySirnfkifh2j7p1al7dp2yKZPUhH4Y~xyZqDIYdljO8dBq1QH9pxH2AlsR1DgeJU-YzdjHlvi67wcHTw7lBGgxIlcWBjLp~89uMBMMNffucNgGjQ3p0dIiVLcaWbVSbkMLcWQFLDcWUzijWhYlslSIAbfMznPbZcHWuuo-jwyP5OHab~-5vKMxpRoY6k9zrboXM6CZm9Lau7za7q2mzvqZBiasA__&Key-Pair-Id=APKAJLOHF5GGSLRBV4ZA.

Department of Education. (1995). *Western Samoa education policies* 1995-2005. Samoa: Department of Education.

Department of Education. (1998). *Samoa secondary school curriculum:Curriculum overview document.* Samoa: Department of Education.

Handler, B. 2010. "Teacher as Curriculum Leader". A consideration of the appropriateness of that role assignment to classroom-based practitioners. *International Journal of Teacher Leadership.* Volume 3. ISSN: 1934-9726.

Haynes, F. (2000). *Technology education.* Why and how it came part of the New Zealand school curriculum (thesis).

Linek, W. M., Sampson, M. B., and Haas, L., Nylan., and M., Moore, L., and Sadler, D., 2012. *The Impact of Teacher Preparation: A Study of Alternative Certification and Traditionally Prepared Teachers in their First Year of Teaching.* Issues in Teacher Education. Vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 3-21

Luke, A., Weir, K. and Woods, A. 2013. *Curriculum, Syllabus Design and equity: A Primer and model*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 12-24

Machin, S & Vignoles, A. 2006. *Education policy in UK.* Centre for the economy of education, Houghton St. London WC 2A 2C

Marsh, C. (1992) Key concepts for understanding curriculum. London. Palmer Press

McArdle. K., Coutts. N. (2003) A strong core of qualities – a model of the professional educator that moves beyond reflection. *Studies in Continuing Education, Vol 25, No.2*

McGee, C. 1997. *Teachers and curriculum decision-making.* Palmerston North: Dunmore.

McLean, B.L. 2006. "*Technical Curriculum Models: Are they appropriate for nursing profession"* Journal of Advanced Nursing. Volume 17. Issue 7 Pages 871-876

MinHo, Y. and Clementina, A. and Erry, U. 1990. *The Reform of Secondary Education in Indonesia during the 1990s:* Improving Relevance and Quality through Curriculum Decentralization Implementing the curriculum in Indonesia

Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, (1998). *Curriculum overview document. statement Years 9-13* Apia: Government of Samoa.

Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture (2006) Strategic Policies and Plan (2006-2015). *Education Statistical Digest* 2006 Samoa. Apia:

Morris, R. C. 1996 *The status of school curriculum reform.* The Educational Forum, 60 (3), 222-227.

Morrison, I. (1997). Negotiating the NZ English curriculum (thesis)

Okoro, J. 2011. *"Strategies for Enhancing the Functionality of Business Studies in the Universal Basic Education Programme in South Nigeria"* Crown Research in Education Volume 1, Issue 2 pages 18-23

Ornstein, A.C. and Hunkins, F.P. 2004. *Curriculum foundations, principles and issues.*

Pasha, M. A. 2012. *Education in Pakistan:* Changing patterns of computing discipline

Price, G. (2008) Scaffolding teacher learning: *Examining teacher practice and the professional development process of teachers with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) learners.*

Quan-Baffour, K.P.Q., and Achemfour, A. A. 2009 *Problems of education in the 21st century: Bridging the content knowledge:*an agenda to improve business studies teaching in south African countryside schools.Vol 12. No 108. pp 108-110

Ronfeldt, M. *et al.* (2015) "Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement," *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(3), pp. 475–514. Viewed 11 April 2023, https://doi.org/https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.3102/0002831215585562.

Sahlberg, P. 2005. *Education reform and economic competitiveness.* Paper prepared for the international convention of principals in Cape Town, South Africa

Saunders, I. 2000. *Effective Schooling in Rural Africa.* Report 2. Key issues concerning School effectivenessShkedi, A. 2009. "*From Curriculum Guide to Classroom Practice*" Teachers' narratives of classroom application. Journal of curriculum studies Volume 41, Issue 6

Shulman, L.S 1996. Those who understand: knowledge growth in teaching. Educational researcher, 15(2), 4-14

Shulman, L.S and Shulman, J. H. 2004. "*How and What Teachers Learn: A shifting Perspective"*Journal of curriculum Studies, Volume 36, Issue 2 pages 257-271

Slavit, D. and Nelson, T. H., and Kennedy, A. 2009. *Perspectives on Supported Collaborative Teacher Inquiry.* Routledge NY 10016

Smith, G. S. and Mockler, N. and Normanhust, L., (2003) "Holding a Mirror to Professional Learning" - Annual Conference of the Australian Association for Research in Educationand New Zealand Association for Research in Education, Auckland Nov 29-Dec 3, 2003

Tournaki, E., Lyublinskaya, I. and Carolan, B. 2011. "An ongoing professional development program and its impact on teacher effectiveness," *The Teacher Educator*, 46(4), pp. 299–315. Viewed 10 April 2023, Available at: https://doi.org/https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/08878730.2011.604711. Western Samoa Education Policies 1995-2005

Reflection-In-Action as a model for Reflection: A tertiary teacher's account from Samoa

Sesilia Lauano, National University of Samoa

Abstract

Whether formally or informally, reflection is a natural process that we all experience in life. Reflection is central in education and the process of it allows educators to identify areas that require improvement in their personal development and teaching practice. This paper highlights the author's application of Stage Two of Schön's (1991), Reflective Model, namely the Reflection-in-Action Stage in teaching management degree courses offered in the Bachelor of Commerce at the National University of Samoa. The author contends that Reflection-in-Action is an effective way to encourage the pursuit of excellence in teaching and promote a student-centred learning environment.

Keywords: reflection, reflect-in-action, tertiary education, Samoa,

Introduction

Reflection is part of life. As a people, be it at the workplace, village setting, church community or even in the comfort of our homes, we experience positive encounters alongside the unexpected twists and turns of life. Regardless of our role, identities and designations, reflection is an important tool for personal growth and development. In our personal lives, reflection often occurs in less formal ways where we reflect on our day's work while driving home, cooking, or even during television commercials. More formally, troubling experiences may be reflected in the presence of friends, spouses, support groups or counsellors (Daudelin 1996). In the field of teaching, reflection is considered crucial (Clara 2015). Through reflection, we as educators are able to pause, think about, reminisce, evaluate and appreciate the beauty of life while at the same time helping us to recover, learn from the blunders of our actions and find ways to strengthen and improve our character and personal development.

The concept of reflection is not new. Reflection and its importance were pointed out as far back as the times of the Ancient Greek Philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle emphasised it was possible to gain practical insight into the world and experience of it by paying attention to our emotions and our reflections in the 'real world' (Bulman 2008). The idea of considering reflection as a way to improve teacher practices can

be traced back to the work of John Dewey in 1933. An educationalist and philosopher by profession, Dewey (1933:9) defined reflection as

"Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends"

In the context of teacher development, a significant number of studies have highlighted the benefits of reflection in influencing teachers' thinking and practices (Glazer and Abbot 2004; Hatton and Smith 1995; Sweeney 2003; Zeichener and Liston 1996).Other common benefits emphasise on how reflection has been able to help teachers become more efficient and effective teachers through the process of evaluating strengths and weaknesses (Loughran 1995; Melville, Fazio, Bartley, and Jones 2008). Reflection has also enabled teachers to recognise their own mistakes and failures and identify student needs to better facilitate teaching practices, and assessment development and find ways to track student growth and process more effectively. Many authors contend that the process of critical reflection leads to more teachers becoming more confident in their classroom management skills and teaching delivery strategies (Korthagen 2010, Melville, Fazio, Bartley & Jones 2008, Slade, Burnham, Catalana, and Waters 2019). A fair number of teachers have also credited the process of reflection on their ability to improve and enhance their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, becoming more culturally inclusive while encouraging a positive learning environment (e.g. Brookfield 1995; Butville, Hanrhan and Wolkenhauer 2021; Calderhead 1989; Carrington and Selva 2010).

Dewey (1933) highlights, that effective educators are reflective educators and educators and need to engage regularly in a process of self-reflection to improve their professional practices. Although not all educators carry out reflective teaching (Shandomo 2010), Dewey (1933, 1938) maintains, that reflective teaching is a critical component of learning from experience as it is directly linked to an action or experience, and emotions and feelings are part of reflective thinking. Another philosopher who has played a critical role in the development of reflection in professional education is Donald Schön (1983, 1987, 1996). Schön (1983, 1987) based his work on that of Dewey (1933) and considered that practice is fundamental to development in education.

While Aristotle's view of reflection is based on a reflection-on-action (where individuals think back after an experience on what they have done), (Schön 1987), concentrates more on reflection-in-action where people are able to think about their actions and practices during their experience of it. Jarvis 1992, notes that reflection is a lot more than thinking, and educators need to appreciate the potential of reflection to improve their performance by learning from their experiences.

Brockbank and McGill (1998) share the same sentiment that reflection is more than thinking as the process of reflection is intermingled with people's emotions and feelings and the goal is to learn from experience and practice ways to do better (Bulman, Lathlean and Gobbi 2012).

While reflection is crucial for teacher development in education, there is a degree of uncertainty as to the meaning of reflection due to the vast number of approaches to the concept (Clara 2015). For instance, Davis (2006) looks at reflection from a perspective of productive reflection which requires the teacher to integrate into their teaching different ideas to improve their teaching. Boud (2010) is another advocate of this type of reflection who has been widely referenced, but as organisational rather than an individual pursuit.

Postholm (2008) on the other hand views reflection as a forceful reflection while Korthagen (2001, 2010), argues that reflection is a transition between different types of knowledge. The ambiguity in the notion of reflection has been identified by various researchers (eg: Akbari 2007; Mena, Sanchez and Tillema 2011), posing challenges for teaching and education practice (Clara 2015; Rodgers 2002). Alden and Durham (2012) and Edwards (2013) talk about reflection-before-action and Edwards (2013, 2014) proposes reflection-beyond-action.

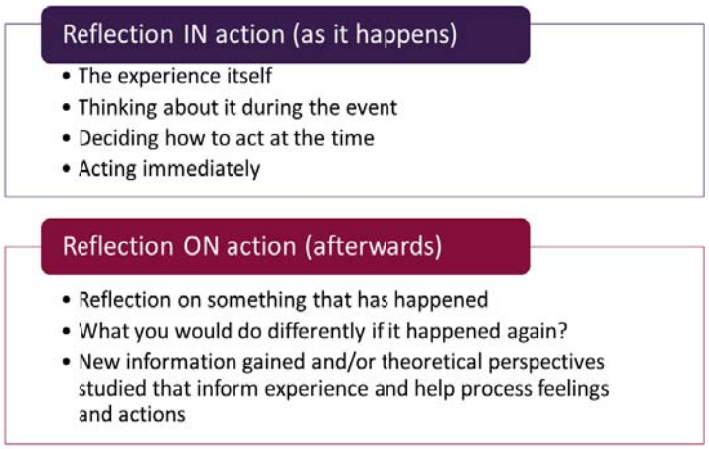
Despite the various notions of reflection in education, teaching and learning, reflection is an imperative component of a teacher's professional development. As a tool, it has been applied in many parts of education (Crowe and O'Malley 2006; Markkanen, Välimäki, Anttila and Kuuskorpi2020). Personal reflection associated with one's own performance provides critical insight into one's self-awareness, analysis, critique and evaluation of events (Boyd and Fales 1983; Wong, Kember, Chung, and Yan 1995). The most common reflective methods used by educators and practitioners of different disciplines are reflective journals and reflective writings, that document personal experiences and lessons learned (Crowe and O'Malley 2006; Schon 1991). In education, reflective teachers offer an opportunity to fulfil student needs more effectively, adapt teaching strategies to encourage student-centred learning techniques (Boyd and Fales 1983; Wong et al. 1995). Since reflection relies on the recollection of events and the methods used for pondering, assessing and evaluating an event or experience, Beavers, Orange and Kirkwood (2017) contend that reflection is effective when educators are provided with the right guidance and appropriate tools for reflection.

Searching for a Reflection Model

The vision of the National University of Samoa states: 'A university of excellence in research, Samoan studies, quality education and training in response to national and regional development needs' (NUS, 2023:36). The university promotes eight core values of which one emphasises the pursuit of excellence and seeks to apply the highest standards to benefit our communities. At the university, it is encouraged and expected that teachers engage in some form of reflection as a tool to improve teacher development and maintain quality training and education. However, that task is the individual responsibility of the lecturer and like Shandomo (2010), not all educators carry out reflective teaching. At our faculty level, much of the dialogue is around teacher reflection or any form of 'reflection on action' where lecturers after a semester would think back about what they have done (e.g. reflection on delivery and assessment methods, intervention techniques used for at-risk students to name a few). Informal reflection discussions take place in department meetings or between colleagues but staff have yet to engage in formal faculty or departmental-facilitated teacher reflection method. The only formal statistic that captures a lecturer's teaching performance is via student evaluations conducted at the end of the year.

The pursuit of excellence in teaching provides the motivation to search for established models of reflection as a way to help improve my teaching and development as a university lecturer. I came across Schön's (1991), Reflective Model in Semester 2 of 2021.

The SCHÖN (1991) Reflective Model



Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991), work has attracted much attention from teacher educators. Schön (1991), offered a model of reflection based on three concepts. The first is knowing-in-action, the second is reflection-in-action and the third is reflection-on-action. This above model is largely applied in health and medical care where nurses and caregivers are encouraged to use reflection-in-action as an approach to high alert responses to critical situations as they arise. It has also been widely applied across an extensive range of disciplines such as business, education, and social work (Clara 2015; Daudelin 1996; Munby 1989).

In stage one, knowing-in-action suggests that the educator is equipped with the right skills, qualifications and expertise to perform certain tasks. At this stage, an educator would be expected to be well aware of the course objectives, expected outcomes and delivery modes of the courses they are assigned to teach. They would have already organised lesson plans, activities and supplementary resources to ensure students have access to the learning materials and necessary equipment to achieve the learning outcomes of a course before the start of a course or programme.

In stage two, reflection-in-action represents the active evaluation of thoughts, actions, and practices during action and is also referred to as 'thinking on feet' during the process of teaching (Schön 1983, 1987, 1991). For educators, this means reflecting on actions that can be done to deal with situations happening in real-time in-class lectures, tutorials or student consultations. Furthermore, it also requires the educator to reflect on their emotions and feelings as the time of the experience as well as other factors that may have contributed to the occurrence of the experience.

In Stage Three, Reflection-on-action, includes a full account of the event or experience after it has happened. In this case, educators are required to reflect on the experience in terms of what happened, how it happened, why it happened, lessons learned and how educators can go about dealing with similar experiences in the future.

After reading various applications of the model, I was interested in Stage Two: reflection-in-action for many reasons. As a management and marketing lecturer, reflecting in action matters across organisational contexts (Weick 2002). The conceptual management skills I teach to my students in class considers the challenges of environmental uncertainty whereby the problem-solving skills of a manager are largely dependent on their ability to think on their feet. Given the disciplines I teach, I saw a relationship between Schön's(1983, 1987, 1991) reflection-in-action and the managerial skills that professionals practise. The response that practitioners apply in business and entrepreneurship also aligns with

Schön's (1987:26-9), reflection-in-action components: "routinized action, encounter of surprise, reflection and new action".

Yanow 2001 explains Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991) Reflection in Action takes place 'in the moment' such that the reflection takes place in the midst of action. In management and organisational studies, Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991) Reflection in Action influential work has been the focus of reflection and action in management practice. In fact, in business and entrepreneurship, Reflection in Action is considered the kind of thinking professionals are highly encouraged to engage in as it guides the way they think and perform their work (e.g. Yanow & Tsoukas 2009). Crossam and Sorrenti (2002:29) also promote this line of thought and stress that" spontaneous actions feature prominently in organisations". Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991) Reflection in Action work has been largely influential on professional work and experiences in various organisational settings such as teaching,planning, management, business, and nursing (Burgoyne and Reynalds 1997; Liedka and Rosenblum 1996; Vince 2002).

Application of Reflection in Action

In this section of the paper, it is important to firstly highlight that way one would go about applying Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991), Reflection in Action can be guided by the reflection questions identified by Ryan & Cooper (2006). I offer scenarios to demonstrate how I used the reflection questions by Ryan and Cooper (2006), to guide my application of Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991), Stage Two (Reflection in Action).

1. *What am I doing and why?*
2. *How can I better meet my students' needs?*
3. *What options are available?*
4. *How can I encourage more involvement or learning on the part of the students?*
5. *Have I considered my own values as a professional and my comfort level in acting on those values?*
6. *What conscious choice can I make to make a difference?*

Scenario 1: Changing individual problem-solving case scenarios to group interactive problem-solving discussions

One of the courses I teach is Business Strategic Management. This course is designed to enable the learner to demonstrate critical and strategic thinking, decision-making, analytical skills, and management and leadership skills through planning, managing and operating a business. I incorporated into my fourteen-week (14) semester lesson plan case study scenarios as activities to stimulate the student's critical thinking. Initially, I planned that at the start of each lesson, I would introduce as an

ice-breaker, a short (one-page) international case study relevant to the allocated management topic for the week. Each case study had up to four questions that students were expected to answer individually. In week two, the first case study titled: *'Bridgestone – Becoming the first tyre brand to synergise promoted answers and business profiles: Drive consideration through thought leadership'* was distributed at the beginning of the class.

Students were given five minutes to read the case study and another five minutes to complete the questions to be discussed. At the end of this activity, there was barely a discussion of the questions. From the student's feedback, more than half of them had not heard of Bridgestone as a company or a competitive tyre brand. Student answers were more descriptive and summative and lacked evidence of clear and rational thinking to justify their thoughts and answers. I realised from that moment forward, that I needed to rethink the types of case study scenarios if I were to continue using such activities to stimulate critical thinking.

In preparing for the week three ice-breaker activity, I applied the reflection questions approach by Ryan and Cooper (2006), to guide my application of Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991), Stage Two (Reflection in Action).

Table 1.1 Application of Ryan and Cooper's (2006) Reflection Questions

Ryan & Cooper (2006) Reflection Questions	Reflection Responses
1. What am I doing and why?	I am changing my approach to how I facilitate application-based case scenarios because my approach in Week 2 did not encourage or stimulate the critical and strategic thinking skills I wanted students to practise
2. How can I better meet my students' needs?	I need to find ways to better understand the different types of student learners (visual, auditory, read/write, kinaesthetic) I have in my classroom and attempt to customise activities to stimulate different learning styles
3. What options are available?	Explore local or regional business case studies whereby students are familiar with the companies I choose, or aim to distribute the case studies a week before they are discussed in class
4. How can I encourage more involvement or learning on the part of the students?	I may need to explain with examples or demonstrate how to critique and apply strategic thinking. I would have to find creative ways to foster an ethos of participation
5. Have I considered my own values as a professional and my comfort level in acting on those values?	The importance of providing quality teaching encourages me to explore new techniques to stimulate critical thinking and foster a positive learning environment
6. What conscious choice can I make to make a difference?	I am willing to change my usual way of teaching and class delivery for the benefit of my students.

I began to utilise Ryan and Cooper's (2006) Reflection Questions more often during the semester to help structure how I should reflect during the 'doing' stage (that is, reflecting on the incident while it can still benefit the learning). As an outcome of my application of Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991), Stage Two (Reflection in Action), instead of waiting for the class or the semester to end or waiting for the Student Evaluation results, I tweaked the facilitation of class activities to encourage student participation created a more student-oriented environment that promoted hands on

learning. For instance, during the week four lecture, I talked about a local example of Mena as a Fashion brand to contextualise management theoretical concepts. I observed a lot more response and discussion from the students.

In preparing for week four, I decided to contextualise the concepts covered for each week from this point forward to more local examples. There was a lack of local business case studies on any business or management concept. Instead of relying on international case studies to explain and elaborate on core concepts, I used a localisation approach and referred to local and Pacific business examples.

Throughout the semester, as I incorporated local and regional business examples to explain management theories, I noted a lot more student participation in the application of concepts to critical and strategic thinking. This was largely because the companies included in our discussions were local and familiar companies. I noticed an immediate change in student attitude toward management problem-solving. The level of interactive participation increased and I observed apositive display of student confidence and interest. My classroom experiences from weeks two and three completely changed how I facilitated class discussions, group activities and icebreakers right throughout the semester. From week five onwards, I included short video clips to help highlight key theoretical concepts relevant to various business problem-solving techniques and to help pinpoint effective risk management strategies in different business situations. These short video clips helped the students in the application stages of a theoretical concept.

This scenario demonstrates my attempt as a lecturer to improve my teaching. In weeks two and three, I reflected on my icebreaker techniques and took action based on 'real-time' classroom student responses and feedback. By applying a 'thinking on feet' approach advocated by Schön (1983, 1987, 1991), I felt that the students were provided with a more student-centred learning environment (Boyd and Fales 1983; Wong et al, 1995). The Student Evaluation results from this course indicated a 97% positive response to questions that related to student satisfaction with class delivery, level of student interest stimulated as a result of the course and students stating that the course sessions were interesting and engaging (See Student Evaluation - Table 1.2)

Table 1.2 illustrates the official results of the student evaluations conducted by the Quality Programs and Services Unit, at the National University of Samoa for Students-Evaluation for HMG390 (Business Strategic Management) Semester 2, 2022

Course: HMG390 **Class List: 38** **Respondents: 31 (82%)**				
Academic Value				
	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)	Non Response (%)
1) I have achieved the course objective(s)	94	6	0	0
2) I think this course satisfies my expectations	100	0	0	0
3) I understand the course content	100	0	0	0
4) Class sessions are interesting and engaging	97	3	0	0
5) Class sessions are well organized	97	3	0	0
6) Student participation is encouraged	97	3	0	0
7) Students are aware what is expected of them	97	3	0	0
8) This course makes me more interested in this field of study	100	0	0	0
Course Work				
	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)	Non Response (%)
9) Assessment of this course was well spaced out	100	0	0	0
10) Feedback on assessment is useful to my learning	100	0	0	0
11) Feedback on assessment is timely	94	6	0	0
12) Assessment results are fair	87	13	0	0
13) Course readings are valuable to my learning	97	3	0	0
14) Course textbooks help me learn what I need to know	90	10	0	0
15) Course hand-outs and PowerPoint presentations are easy to understand	100	0	0	0
16) There are enough resources and equipment for all class sessions	94	6	0	0
Teaching Staff				

	Positive (%)	Neutral (%)	Negative (%)	Non Response (%)
17)The lecturer communicates clearly at all times	100	0	0	0
18) The lecturer is punctual and always present in classes	97	3	0	0
19)The lecturer provides help when I seek help	100	0	0	0
20)The lecturer is an effective teacher	97	3	0	0
21) Tutorials expand my understanding of the Course	100	0	0	0
22) The tutor communicates clearly at all times	100	0	0	0

Scenario Two: Progressive assignment checks

To further illustrate the usefulness of reflection-in-action to my teaching, I demonstrate a scenario in the Business Strategic Management (HMG390) course I teach. This course is a full course work paper. One of these assessments is the Group Business Management Plan worth 30 percent of the total course marks. This assessment covered all the learning outcomes of the course. Initially, I had planned to distribute the assignment instructions in week five. The students during the week three class suggested the option of receiving the final group report instructions in week four rather than the scheduled week five plan. In class, I assessed the type of students enrolled and realised that many of the students were part-time students and full-time working parents with many competing family, work, and community priorities.

From my assessment of the situation, I changed the approach to completing the final group report. Instead of providing students the opportunity to ask questions relating to the business management plan starting at week nine, I encouraged students to ask questions starting from week four. To ensure that students worked on their assignments early, I encouraged an assessment culture that promoted incremental work and introduced to the students the concept of living assignment document. The essence of this approach is based on the practice of starting any of the assignments and on a weekly basis, either in class, during tutorials or individual student consultations, students had the opportunity to show me their progress for comments and feedback. Their assignments therefore become living documents in the sense that amendments are not left to the due date of an assignment, but done much earlier in the process of completing an assignment.

My constant checking, revising, and providing feedback on students' living assignment documents provided better guidance and mentoring assistance that I could have if I had stuck to my initial planned schedule. My efforts to break down assignment tasks into clear, manageable and well monitored tasks is reflected in the Student Evaluation (see Table 1.2) indicated by a 100% positive result in students' feedback related to timing of course assessments and the timely feedback provided.

Discussion and Conclusion

Schön's Reflection in Action model (1983, 1987, 1991), helped me to improve my teaching. With the assistance of the questions provided by Ryan & Cooper (2006), the six questions were helpful in my application of Schön's (1983, 1987, 1991), Stage Two (Reflection in Action). The benefits of reflection on my own development echoes that of the current reflection literature. Firstly, having a structured set of questions to base my Reflection in Action on helped me to think about my class activities and assignment designs in a logical, easy-to-manage step-by-step process (Sweeney 2003; Zeichener and Liston 1996). I was able to identify areas of weakness that needed to be improved on (Melville, Fazio, Bartley, and Jones 2008).

The core reason for deciding to adapt and change throughout the semester teaching weeks was that I wanted to better cater for the needs of my students. By changing the way I facilitated application activities, I became more confident in my teaching and delivery strategies, a benefit also indicated in previous reflection studies (Slade, Burnham, Catalana, and Waters 2019). For instance, I noted that students were more responsive to local case studies than international case studies. Bylocalising business management examples, I encouraged more participation and student involvement in their learning by contextualising theoretical concepts in local scenarios. Throughout Semester 2. 2022 I also pondered on my own values as a lecturer and although the common comfort level action would be to ignore and avoid constant change, I felt in my heart that I was not being true to my educator role if I was not willing to adapt to better teaching practices. The constant change in my teaching practices consumed a lot of energy and required a high degree of flexibility and active listening to my student's feedback. However making the conscious choice to improve and make a difference in teaching and learning was my ultimate drive in the pursuit of excellence in teaching.

Reflection was not an activity I actively invested time in until I started using it as a self-development tool last year. I discovered that the Reflection in Action technique was an effective way to overcome Reflection On Action, which is a reflection that is done at the end of a semester. The Reflection in Action allowed me to improve on

my teaching practice throughout the semester and I was able to address and find solutions to student concerns pertaining to my teaching styles (Waters 2019).

While it is true that not all educators engage in reflection, the process of effective reflection is necessary to the development of education at all levels (Schön1987, 1991). I have realised the value of reflection on my own personal development and performance as a university lecturer. I feel that the Reflection in Action encouraged a positive student-centred learning environment, as I was able to change various teaching practices to meet the learning needs of local students. The subtle and sometimes radical changes made to my teaching techniques paid off. HMG390 students achieved above average marks and their level of satisfaction in various aspects of my teaching performance and delivery was indicated in the 97%-100% positive satisfaction rates. Student-centred learning techniques foster effective breeding grounds for effective teaching and learning (Boyd and Fales 1983; Wong et al 1995). Going forward, I and convinced that incorporating Ryan and Cooper's (2006) Reflection Questions helped to structure my approach to reflection. I envision that sharing my experiences in this paper will encourage more local lecturers to explore Reflection in Action as a way to improve their teaching practices and teacher development.

References

Akbari, R. (2007). Reflections on reflection: A critical appraisal of reflective practices in L2 teacher education. System, 35, 192-207.

Beavers, E., A. Orange, and D. Kirkwood. 2017. Fostering critical and reflective thinking in an authentic learning situation. Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education 38 (1): 3–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/10901027.2016.1274693.

Boyd, E., and A. Fales. 1983. Reflective Learning -Key to Learning from Experience. Journal of Humanistic Psychology 23 (2): 99-117.

Brockbank, A. and McGill, I. (1998) Facilitating Reflective Learning in Higher Education. Society for Research in Higher Education/Open University Press, Buckingham.

Brookfield, S. (1995). Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher. Jossey-Bass.

Bulman, C. (2008). An introduction to reflection. Reflective practice in nursing, 4, 1-24.

Bulman, C., Lathlean, J. and Gobbi, M. (2012). The concept of reflection in nursing: qualitative findings on student and teacher perspectives. Nurse Education Today 32(5), e8–e13Burgoyne, J. and Reynolds, M. (Eds) (1997). Management Learning: Integrating Perspectives in Theory and Practice. London: Sage.

Butville, B., Hanrhan, S., &Wolkenhauer, R. (2021). Prepared to take responsibility: Practitioner inquiry for social justice in a professional development school partnership. SchoolUniversity Partnerships, 14(3), 167-190.

Calderhead, J. (1989). Reflective teaching and teacher education. Teaching and Teacher Education, 5, 43-51.

Carrington, S., &Selva, G. (2010). Critical social theory and transformative learning: Evidence in pre-service teachers' service-learning reflection logs. Higher Education Research & Development, 29(1), 45-57. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360903421384

Clarà, M. (2015). What is reflection? Looking for clarity in an ambiguous notion. Journal of teacher education, 66(3), 261-271.

Crossan, M. and Sorrenti, M. (2002). 'Making sense of improvisation'. In Kamoche, K. N., Pina e Cunha, M. and Vieira da Cunha, J. (Eds), Organizational Improvisation. London: Routledge, 29–51.

Crowe, M.T., and J. O'Malley. 2006. Teaching critical reflections skills for advanced mental health nursing practice: a deconstructive-reconstructive approach. Issues and Innovations in Nursing Education. Journal of Advanced Nursing 56 (1): 79-87. doi:10.1111/j.1365-2648.2006.03982.x

Daudelin, M. W. (1996). Learning from experience through reflection. Organizational dynamics, 24(3), 36-48.

Davis, E. A. (2006). Characterizing productive reflection among preservice elementary teachers:Seeing what matters. Teaching and Teacher Education, 22, 281-301.

Dewey, J. (1933) How We Think. A Restatement of the Relation of Reflective Thinking to the Educative Process. DC Heath, Massachusetts.

Dewey, J. (1938). Experience and education. New York: Macmillan.

Glazer, C., Abbot, L., & Harris, J. (2004). A teacher-developed process for collaborative professional reflection. Reflective Practice, 5(1), 33–46.

Hatton, N., & Smith, D. (1995). Reflection in teacher education: Towards definition and implementation. Teaching and Teacher Education, 11(1), 33–49.

Jarvis, P. (1992) Reflective practice and nursing. Nurse Education Today, 12, 174–181.

Korthagen, F. (2001). A reflection on reflection. In Linking practice and theory (pp. 67-84). Routledge.

Korthagen, F. A. J. (2010). How teacher education can make a difference. Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy, 36(4), 407-423.

Liedka, J. M. and Rosenblum, J. W. (1996). 'Shaping conversations: making strategy, managing change'. California Management Review, 39, 141–57.

Loughran, J. (1995). Practicing what I preach: Modeling reflection practices to student teachers.Research in Science Education, 25(4), 431–451.

Markkanen, P., Välimäki, M., Anttila, M., &Kuuskorpi, M. (2020). A reflective cycle: Understanding challenging situations in a school setting. Educational Research, 62(1), 46-62.

Melville, W., Fazio, X., Bartley, A., & Jones, D. (2008). Inquiry experience and reflection: Pre-service science teachers' capacity for teaching inquiry. Journal of Science Teacher Education, 19(5), 474–494.

Mena, J., Sanchez, E., &Tillema, H. H. (2011). Promoting teacher reflection: What is said to be done. Journal of Education for Teaching: International Research and Pedagogy, 37(1), 21-36.National University of Samoa, 2023. NUS 2023 Calendar, National University of Samoa, Samoa.

Postholm, M. B. (2008). Teachers developing practice: Reflection as a key activity. Teaching and Teacher Education, 24, 1717-1728.
Rodgers, C. (2002). Defining reflection: Another look at John Dewey and reflective thinking. Teachers College Record, 104(4), 842-866.
Ryan, K., & Cooper, J. M. (2006). Those who can, teach. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Schon, D. A. (1983). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. New York: Basic Books.
Schön, D.A. (1987) Educating the Reflective Practitioner. Jossey-Bass, San Francisco.
Schön, D. A. (1991). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.
Schön, D. A. (1996). Educating the reflective practitioner: Toward a new design for teaching and learning in the professions. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
Shandomo, H. M. (2010). The role of critical reflection in teacher education. School-University Partnerships, 4(1), 101-113.
Slade, M. L., Burnham, T. J., Catalana, S. M., & Waters, T. (2019). The impact of reflective practice on teacher candidates' learning. International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, 13(2), 1-8. https://doi.org/10.20429/ijsotl.2019.130215
Sweeney, A.E. (2003). Articulating the relationships between theory and practice in science teaching: A model for teacher professional development. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, 9(2), 107–132.
Vince, R. (2002). 'Organizing reflection'. Management Learning, 33, 63–78.
Yanow, D. (2001). 'Learning in and from improvising: lessons from theater for organizational learning'. Reflections, The Society for Organizational Learning Journal, 2, 58–62.
Yanow, D., & Tsoukas, H. (2009). What is reflection-in-action? A phenomenological account. Journal of management studies, 46(8), 1339-1364.
Wong, F.K.Y., D. Kember, L.Y.F. Chung, L. Yan. 1995. Assessing the levels of student reflection from reflective journals. Journal of Advanced Nursing 22 (1): 48-57. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2648.1995.22010048.x.
Zeichner, K.M., & Liston, D.P. (1996). Reflective teaching: An introduction. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.