

The Teaching and Learning Methods in the Department of Accounting and Finance with Special Reference to Botho University

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Abstract: The teaching of Accounting and Finance is facing a few of problems because nowadays the graduates are expected to work with companies that use advanced information technologies to promote continuous Globalization changes. These changes demand continuous upgrade in both academics as well as in practice. The global market is looking for those potential candidates who can fit into this current changing working environment. In general, the courses provide the students with proper knowledge with skills and necessary ability to adapt for changing environment. The researchers recognized that the teaching methods are vital to influence in several abilities such as: competition, cooperation, teambuilding, honesty, compassion, courage, persistence, responsibility, communication, self-confidence and decision making skills. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to know how it has been influenced these abilities in teaching-learning methods which are practiced in the department of accounting and finance of Botho University. The total population has taken into consideration for the study. This research is empirical in nature containing three parts, the first part deals with design of the study and review of literature about teaching and learning methods in accounting. The second part contains about teaching style and utilizing resources by applying structured questionnaire of 28 lecturers. The third part is consisting of findings and suggestions.

Keywords: Teaching, Learning, Accounting, Finance.

1. Introduction

Botho University was established in 2013 and has rapidly growing over few years to become one of the leading multidisciplinary and high quality educational providers. It was one of the first local tertiary institutions in Botswana to be accredited by Botswana Qualifications Authority (BQA). Under this, one of the faculties is, Faculty of Business and Accounting, under this departments which are evolved are AAT, Accounting and Finance, Business Management, Professional Accounting, Hospitality and sustainable Eco Tourism departments. Under the Department of Accounting and Finance, two degree courses have been offered namely B.Sc Accounting and B.Sc Finance. Since it's a new born university and facing few problems in the degree programme, the researchers realize that the complications may come either from teaching side or from student's point of view. However the researchers have focused to fulfill the gaps from the view point of teaching faculty.

Teaching accounting courses would be challenging as well as rewarding. Accounting students struggle with the new terminology and the unfamiliar concepts of accounting. Bryant and Hunton (2000), Farley and Ramsay (1998), and Krausz et al . (1989) found that learning is enhanced when the students relate the new knowledge to a previous experience learned, putting it in a context that can be used. In his review of the journey of accounting education over the past 50 years, Maher (2000) concludes, "And I am even more convinced than ever before that our primary job as educators is not to teach the "facts" of accounting methods, but to teach the problem-solving skills and the organizational (and social) context in which economic activities are to be conducted." (p. 343) Light body (1997) explains, "many students appear to perceive accounting topics ... to be difficult... This is often attributed to the students' lack of experience in the actual processes which underlie accounting principles being taught". (p. 255). On over-viewing the information provided above, the researchers recognize that the problems could be solved or to overcome through adopting the best possible teaching and learning methods / techniques. The researchers have found that, the pass percentages among the different branches of Botho University (Gaborone, Francistown and Maun) are different from one another even though all of them were controlled and organized by the same module leaders. Therefore, there is a need to examine how the intended teaching and learning methods are being perceived and implemented in the Department of Accounting and Finance at Botho University during the class hours. Hence, this research paper is focused on the effectiveness of teaching and learning strategies and techniques adopted by the teaching faculties within the built environment. The first section of the paper commences with a discussion on the literature for teaching and learning of accounting disciplines, and the various best practice approaches applied within these disciplines. The discussion is complemented with data and an analysis from the assessment results of the selected groups of lecturers in all the three branches who are involved in teaching under the Faculty of Business and Accounting.

A. Supporting studies

There is vast literature in accounting education journals,

which acknowledges the need to improve student interaction and learning outcomes within the disciplines of accounting. Research undertaken in this field, has acknowledged the difficulty and restrictions in teaching accounting subjects and Lloyd and Abbey (2009) were of the opinion that a “central recurring theme in business education is the optimal strategy for improving introductory accounting” (pp23) followed by a desire to engage in active learning processes to maintain the students interest. During the 1990s, faculty members who taught accounting to accounting students were surveyed, and the results indicated that lectures were the most favored style of teaching followed by the seminar/tutorial format (Brown and Guilding, 1993). A criticism of this trend was the observation that students “are not being encouraged to exercise and express independent thought”. This notion was also earlier reiterated by Richardson 1988. In addition, the importance of communication skills was highlighted by Zaid, Abraham (1994) where it was observed that accounting graduates were lacking in the written report style required to disseminate information to their clients. Other suggestions during the following years included the need to set goals and objectives for the students to master, and for the lecturer to provide immediate feedback of assessments to the students. The specific accounting language was also highlighted as an issue, and sometimes viewed by students as a “foreign” language. Borja (2003) also recommended that at the beginning of each class, a review be undertaken of the accounting vocabulary discussed previously to assist the students with increasing their comprehension level. A comparison of teaching styles by Leveson (2004) concluded that the quality of teaching could be improved with technical and procedural information, with the addition of providing the student with a conceptual process of accounting which contained clearly specified learning objectives. A similar observation was noted by Buckhaults and Fisher (2011) who identified students learning and interest could increase if the lecturers were more familiar with the course material! The introduction of technology has also seen a new approach to teaching many subjects and accounting is no exception. Swanson, and Schmidt (2007) criticized academia’s narrow focus on teaching professional codes of conduct and recommend that accounting academia mobilize their resources to identify teaching strategies. They believe that a drawback to the integrated course approach is that without an academic basis in ethics, students lack the knowledge and critical thinking skills to address ethical issues. They recommend that accounting programs offer a standalone ethics course at the beginning of an accounting program to deliver the message that ethics is an important topic in an accounting program says by Fisher and Swanson (2005). Dellaportas (2006) also believes that a discrete course in ethics and accounting should be included in accounting programs. Jennings (2004) identifies key cases (i.e., Worldcom and Enron) and other works that represent ethical failures of the previous decade that can be used in accounting classrooms to explore ethical dilemmas and how

to resolve them. Similar study has been undertaken by Massey and Van Hise (2009) discussed the advantages of using trained ethicists, but acknowledged the problem of limited resources and recommended that accounting faculty train and prepare for the role. Blanthorne et.al (2007) research concluded that the accounting faculty was most suited to teach ethics in accounting classes. Massey and Van Hise (2009) and Blanthorne et al . (2007) also noted that accounting faculty was intimidated by the prospect to teach ethics in accounting courses because they felt unqualified. Can et al (2012) evaluated the effectiveness of conducting accounting lectures with the use of power point presentations and concluded that students who were taught via the blackboard gained a deeper understanding of the subject if this was integrated with the use of the application of the subject. However, Holtzblatt and Tschakert (2011) favoured the use of digital technology for accounting students to increase student motivation and fully engage student learning. Potter and Johnston (2006) explored the application of interactive on-line learning systems and noted a positive association with exam performance. Therefore, over the years, research indicates a need to improve the teaching style of lecturers, who teach accounting. So the question arises on how we can improve the teaching delivery to maintain adequate interest and engagement with the built environment students, and simultaneously achieve the desired learning outcomes and pass class tests and exams. This paper is going to fill in this gap.

B. Research questions

Based on the identification of problem, the researchers raised few questions;

- Which are the best methods for student’s self-learning in the view of faculty ‘perspective’
- What are the learning outcomes need to be tracked at the course, program, and department, University, and institution levels? What course of action necessary to demonstrate progress in learning and improvement of educational quality?
- What kind of training will be required to assist faculty and staff to translate the data into best practices? What kind of incentives and rewards might be required to encourage participation?

2. Objectives of the study

The core objective of the study has teaching and effective learning by classroom practices and shows how to implement them by using step-by-step hands-on strategies. However, the researchers have identified some dependent objectives like,

- To know and learn the teaching and learning methods at FBA in Botho
- To establish the best methods for student’s self-learning suggested by lecturers
- To facilitate qualitative class room management techniques
- To improve the maximum utilization of resources in

teaching and learning methods

A. The approach

The Study was empirical in nature; both primary as well as secondary data has been collected for the purpose of the study. To fulfill the objectives of the study, the researchers have identified the following points to enhance the teaching and learning methods. So, the structured questionnaires were focused to on the following;

- Teaching methods
- Utilization of various resources during lecture
- Lecturer's perception for students self-learning
- Class-room management techniques
- Perceptions over teaching methods

B. Pilot study

The researchers have conducted the pilot study with five different lecturers. The researchers have identified some weaknesses in the questionnaire and it has been improved based on the interview.

C. Population and sample size

The FBA has comprised of two departments namely Accounting and business. In the department of accounting pertaining of AAT, Accounting and Finance, Business Management, Professional Accounting, Hospitality and sustainable Eco Tourism department. Out of the above, Department of Accounting and Finance, run two degree Viz., (B.Sc, Accounting and B.Sc Finance). The researchers have focused on the lecturers who were handling the degree level courses. The researchers have identified the 28 lecturers who are currently undertaking the degree level programmes. Therefore the total population has been taken into account for the purpose of the sample.

D. The tools

The researchers has formulated the structured questionnaire and collected the data through online by Monkey Survey method. Simple percentage, mean and Likert five point scale has been implemented by the researchers for analysis purposes. The entire paper has followed by Anderson method.

E. Period of the Study

The study has been conducted for the academic tenure of 2015-2016 of the semester July-December 2015.

F. Limitations of the study

- The Study has been conducted relating to Faculty of Business and Accounting, Botho University. This study may or may not be applicable for other faculties.
- The Study has been conducted during June – December 2015, So some of the course may or may not followed by the next semester. Hence, some of the result will not be applicable for forthcoming semesters.
- The management system of Botho would be different

from other Universities; therefore some of the outcomes may not be applicable for other educational institutions

- The study has been limited to the teaching and learning methods used in Faculty of Business and Accounting and not in student's perspective.

G. Discussion

Using the five constructivist themes as a framework, the qualitative analysis explored by the lectures expectations of quality teaching in the disciplines of business, accounting and finance. When the researchers considered the age factor of the respondents, (see appendix, Table: 1) the age group of above 41 years were occupied higher percentage (61.90) of total respondents. Another group which has good percentage (33.33) of respondents is between the ages of 31 to 40 years. The researchers have noticed that the age group of less than 30 years has only less than 5 percent. It is advisable that the Institution needs to facilitate to establish and recruit the young faculties for the growth of the institution as well as for the development of the society. The researchers has identified that more than 95 percent of the respondent are above the age limit of 30 years and above. Hence, the data which has been shared and collected would give reliable information for bringing up a better result of teaching and learning methods in the department of accounting and finance. Through the feedback result of this research would be useful to be adopted in the Institution to establish the better working environment for the faculty since they are experiencing in their day to day activities in the educational institution. The researchers have ascertained that 90 percent of the faculty members in the department are male and the remaining are the female faculties (see appendix, Table: 2). It shows that there is vast difference in among gender. If the institution takes initiation to increase the female faculty members then it could be balancing among the faculty gender and at the same time, the institution would be opening the wide range of opportunities to encourage the potential female faculty members. When the researchers analyzed the education background (see appendix, Table: 4) of the faculty members in the department reveals that more than 47 percent of faculty are holding Master of Philosophy or Ph.D. and 19 percent of the faculty members are Diploma or Professional holders. The faculty members who are above the Master's level are more 80 percent. The researchers have come to a conclusion that the department is having well qualified and experienced faculty members. As per the knowledge of the researchers most of the management staff levels are from the Diploma or Professional holders. It is advisable if those who has Masters of Philosophy or Ph.D. holders are to be given the management staff level positions, because those who has Masters of Philosophy or Ph.D. has wide range of exposure at the degree level education in order to bring out a quality output from the faculty members of the department. The researchers have concluded that most of the faculty members are efficiently utilizing the resources like white board, virtual black board and projectors. The researchers

have identified that 100 percent of the faculty are using Lecture method (see appendix, Table: 6) and followed by 90 percent of the faculty are preferred to assign individual home based assignments. 75 percent of the faculty members are practicing the group work and providing assignments during the class hours. The researchers are noticed that less than 5 percent of the faculty members are taking out the students for company visitation. It is showing that there is an obvious lacking of obtaining practical learning knowledge for the students in their related field. The researches have proposed for the students to learn by themselves by allotting some of the contents of the topic to cover themselves due to time constraint to cover according to the milestone. During this process, the researchers has recommended various techniques (see appendix Tables 7 & 8) which were also suggested by the lecturers to be used for learning. In this part more than 71 percent of the lecturers has suggested that the participation of interactive and to carry-out discussions among the students to know and develop the skills of self- learning. More than 66 percent of the respondents suggest that the students are to be given read and work-out type of problems and case-studies. And they also recommended to learn through media such as virtual black-board, available video lectures and other sources etc., When the researchers has noticed in the weighted scaling techniques which proves that (4.22) are agreed for interactive and to carry-out discussions among the students to know and develop the skills of self-learning and followed by (4.15) accepted by the respondents that the students are to be given read and work-out type of problems and case-studies. And they also recommended to learn through media such as virtual black-board, available video lectures and other sources etc., The researchers identified that the class room management would influence the better understanding and would bring about a better academic performance among the students, for which the researchers has established nine different components to develop class room management (see appendix Table 9). More than 50 percent of the respondents are strongly agreed to implement some of the significant regulations to improve the quality of class room management such as student's regular participation for class hours, to meet submission of their assignments before the deadline, paying attention for the student's feed-back concerning their lectures and making the students to get understand and not to involve in any social media and other unrelated activities during the class hours. So the researchers have proposed to give orientation to the staff concerning the class room management techniques and strategies. When the researchers has inquired with the respondents concerning about the satisfaction of current teaching methods – most of the respondents are responded that they are happy and satisfied with the current methods which they are using and few of them showed interest that they would like to enhance and would like to improve their teaching techniques'.

H. Suggestions and recommendations

- The researchers has identified that more than 95

percent of the respondent are above the age limit of 30 years and above. It is recommendable that the Institution needs to facilitate to establish and recruit the young faculties for the growth of the institution as well as for the development of the society. So that when there is a mixture age group of personnel would be well balanced for the future development of the institution and mixture gender would able to understand the younger generation and also able to provide better interactive ideas to improve well and managed a and organized class room management.

- The researchers have ascertained that 90 percent of the faculty members in the department are male and the remaining are the female faculties, so, the institution needs to take an initiation to increase the female faculty members to balance the faculty gender and to promote the wide range of opportunities for female employment in teaching.
- More than 47 percent of faculties are holding Masters of Philosophy or Ph.D. and 19 percent of the faculty members are Diploma or Professional holders. The researchers have found most of the management staff levels are from the Diploma or Professional holders. It is recommended that if those who have Masters of Philosophy or Ph.D. holders are to be given the management staff level positions, which has wide range of exposure at the degree level education in order to bring out a quality output from the faculty members of the department.
- More than 50 percent of the respondents are strongly agreed to implement some of the significant regulations to improve the quality of class room management such as student's regular participation during class hours, to meet submission of their assignments before the deadline, paying attention for the student's feed-back concerning their lectures and making the students to get understand and not to involve in any social media and other unrelated activities during the class hours. So the researchers have proposed to give orientation to the staff concerning the class room management techniques and strategies.
- The faculty are required to be coordinated with their respective coordinator's to discuss about the weekly proceedings that have to be carried out and to be followed uniformly in all the centers to have a better co-ordination among the faculty members in order to produce a better academic performance among the students and to produce a well quality generated to the global market.

I. Scope for the further Studies

- The study has been conducted of teaching and learning methods in FBA and there is better scope to conduct

this study in student's perspective.

- The study has covered in FBA alone and greater further scope is available to be conducted for Botho as a whole.
- This study has been conducted in a formal way, if the same has been conducted in an informal way which would have achieved better results.

3. Conclusion

Based on the above discussion, Department of Accounting and Finance provides significant exposure to the students, the researchers found that the teaching and learning methods are taking place smoothly. However, the researchers have observed that the department needs improvement in some of the areas such as, those who have Masters of Philosophy and Doctorates in Philosophy would be given the management level positions so that the better output would be achieved from the faculty.

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