

ECONOMICS IN THE CURRICULUM

by

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*An analysis of economics in the
curriculum and its relationship to
pedagogy and students' perceptions of
the subject*

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This analysis uses an *Intuitive Inquiry* (Anderson & Braud, 2011), which encourages the use of intuition and reflection in dialogue, in order to build theory and draw conclusions.

The steps are:

1. Topic clarified through imaginal dialogue,
2. Prepare a list of preliminary interpretative lenses through reflection and reading,
3. Gathering data via teacher-participant interviews and surveys,
4. Reinterpret the preliminary lenses through engagement with the data,
5. Discussion of final lenses and implications.

Fewer students are choosing to study economics as a senior secondary subject in favour of business studies. Prior to the introduction of a business studies course in New South Wales in 1991, 35 to 40 per cent of students studied economics (Conroy, 2012), that figure now stands at less than 8 per cent. Other states have experienced a similar pattern of dwindling numbers.

A number of reasons may be given for this decline (Schug, 2011):

- Economics teachers may come from a history or geography background and lack the support and specialist knowledge to deliver an economics course,
- Economics can become mired in an encyclopedic coverage of facts, concepts and graphs due to curriculum constraints,

- Mathematical skills underpin economic equations and calculations which marginalises some students.

The Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn is an extensive area encompassing wide variations in ICSEA values, and geographical location. Secondary schools operate under multiple curriculums: the Australian Curriculum (AC), AC(NSW) and BOSTES syllabus. A close study of enrolment details would provide a statistically relevant comparison between the HSC in NSW and continuous assessment used in the Australian Capital Territory in Years 11 and 12. The new AC for Business and Economics has provided some starting points for Years 7-10 and there needs to be a thorough investigation as to how the curriculum can attract a wider variety of students and the pedagogy teachers are successfully employing in that endeavor.

In this study, I am undertaking a case study using semi-structured interviews and a survey through questionnaire to determine if there are differences in pedagogy and practice, stemming from the curriculum. “Teachers learn by constantly making connections between their personal knowledge and the collective knowledge of their peers” (Ponté, 2010, p. 544) and this case study attempts to utilize that knowledge. This knowledge also includes academic and professional knowledge and how that is constructed and applied in situated contexts. It connects with the Humanities Professional Learning Community of the Canberra Goulburn Archdiocese and the results will be published in the *Economics and Business Educators* Journal. There may also be the opportunity to share these findings at the Business Educators Australasian Biennial Conference in Canberra in 2018. Sustained and intensive collaboration comes from multiple perspectives repeated in multiple contexts in order for teachers to make a connection with their daily practice.

References

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