

Challenges Encountered By A Cohort Of Non-traditional Science Students In An Accelerated Degree Programme

*39th Pacific Circle Consortium Conference: Mapping 21st Eduscapes
The University of the South Pacific, Fiji, 2-4 July, 2015*

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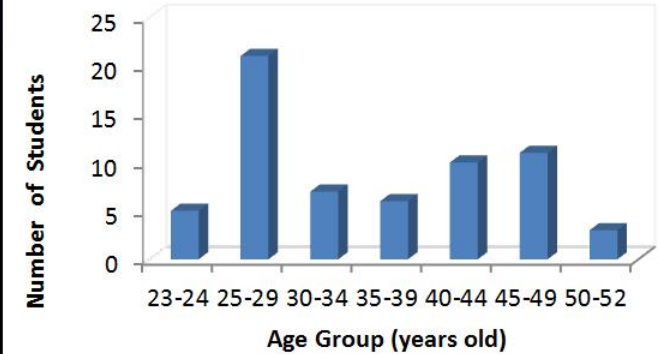
Outline

- **The Programme**
- **The Cohort**
- **Challenges**
- **Learning support**
- **Recommendations**

- **The Science Teachers Accelerated Programme (STAP) is a joint initiative between the Samoan Government and the Faculty of Science, Technology & Environment (FSTE), University of the South Pacific which commenced in June 2014.**
- **The major objective of this venture being upskilling the 63 teachers enrolled in the programme by providing a tailor-made Bachelor of Science Degree in 2 years.**
- **50% of the 16-18 courses for the programme has been successfully completed by majority students**



**Age → 24 to 52
years**



Nontraditional

**Employment → Full
time secondary school
teachers**

**Time lapse since last
tertiary education → 2 to
23 years**

The Challenges

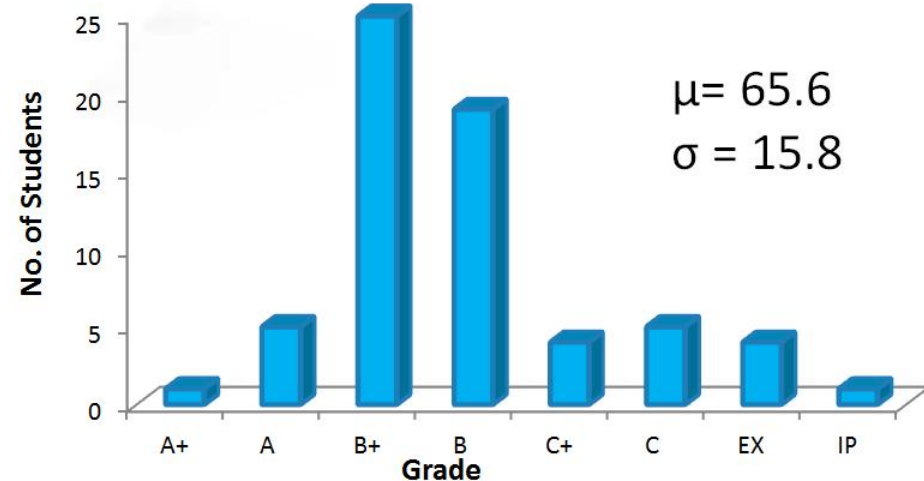
Personal and Socio-cultural

	Mean	% Agree	% Strongly Agree
Time management	3.72	35.9	33.3
Late Assignment submission	3.36	48.7	12.8
Family commitments	3.64	51.3	15.4
Work Commitments	4.28	48.7	38.5

The Challenges

ICT

- $\bar{x} = 3.41$; $sd =$ (using a 5 point Likert scale) with rating of 33.3% for agree and 25.6% strongly agree
- UU100 STAP results were found to be statistically significantly lower than past three years flexi school final marks 2014 ($U = 3583.5$, $p = 0.0003$), 2013 ($U = 2460.5$, $p = 0.000$) and 2012 ($U = 3791$, $p = 0.000$)



The Challenges

Numeracy Skills

- $\bar{x} = 2.95$; $sd = 1.15$ (using a 5 point Likert scale) with rating of 25.6% for agree and 7.7% strongly agree
- 2 Mathematics units were offered in Semester 2 which had an average pass rate of 60.6%
- Mathematics flexi school was organised to bring the students who had not passed in semester 2 in par with the cohort which secured average pass rate of 91.7%
- MA102 STAP results were found to be statistically significantly lower than 2013 Laucala results ($U = 1315$, $p = 0.011$) where as comparison with 2014 results ($U = 1797$, $p = 0.630$) and 2012 results ($U = 2344.5$, $p = 0.286$), yielded no significant difference

The Challenges

Geographical and Financial

- 66.7 % students indicated that they face financial difficulties especially travelling to and from the campus.
- 63% students reside in Upolu and 37% in Savaii.
- $\bar{x} = 4.13$; $sd = 0.98$ (using a 5 point Likert scale) with rating of 48.7% for agree and 38.5% strongly agree that they face difficulties travelling to and from the campus



Learning Support

1. eMentoring

The eMentoring support was provided using Big Blue Button (BBB). Likert scale rating of 1-5 was used to evaluate students' satisfaction where $\bar{x} = 4.22$; $sd = 0.48$, indicated that this service was useful.

2. Tablets

eRepository since the devices were preloaded with course materials and OERs. Wi-Fi capability allows students to connect to wireless Internet services on campus or connect to other wireless networks.



Learning Support

3. Tutorial Support

4. Social Media

Social media was harnessed to allow flexibility in communicating with the facilitators using the STAP Facebook group and messages

5. Moodle Support

6. SMS Notifications

7. IT Support

Monday, 18 May 2015

1:54 PM: thanks Swasti but do we have second test for PH202 on Monday 25 next week please ! that is on the class news and announcement

2:03 PM: I'll confirm that after asking the course coordinator.

3:50 PM:
Talofa,
Please note that the PH202 short test that is organized on May 25th is for Non-STAP students. Your short test would be organized during the STAP tutorial visit from 1st to 3rd June.
Please let me know if you have further questions.
Regards
Swasti

Learning Support

Student feedback on the helpfulness of support services

	Mean	% Agree	% Strongly Agree
Feedback from facilitators	4.05	53.8	25.6
Tutorial support	4.38	41.0	48.7
SMS notifications	4.18	66.7	25.6
Moodle messages	4.33	61.5	35.9

Recommendations

- It is important to understand the nature of difficulties faced by the students
- Support services tailored to the specific needs of the students can increase students success and retention
- Learner centered approach