Abstract

Financial literacy is taught as part of the Economic Management Sciences (EMS) curriculum from Grade 7 to 9 in all South African government schools. It is grounded in the principles and methods of the discipline of accounting. Research has shown that in order for teachers to be able to teach a subject they need to possess a knowledge base comprised of subject matter knowledge, knowledge of the curriculum, knowledge of learners and pedagogical content knowledge. EMS teachers who teach financial literacy have different teaching qualifications and subject specialisations. Some EMS teachers studied to teach EMS in their Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree, others did a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). PGCE graduates may or may not have majored in cognate subjects for EMS, and may or may not have experience in the field of finance. This qualitative research study was based on the premise that EMS teachers' constructs of accounting may influence the way that they teach the financial literacy section of the EMS curriculum. The study explored Grade 9 EMS teachers' constructs of accounting and their pedagogical reasoning for teaching financial literacy. It did not include observation of the teachers' practices. Data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with eight Grade 9 financial literacy teachers who teach in the north of Johannesburg, in government schools.The study found that a teacher's construct of the subject influences their understanding of the knowledge structure of the subject they teach, and this impacts on the teacher's reasoning about how to teach financial literacy to their learners.

Key words: Teachers' constructs of accounting; subject matter knowledge; pedagogical content knowledge; EMS; financial literacy.