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Exploration of curriculum changes in the learning and teaching methods of economic and management sciences

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Abstract

The phasing out of Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) in intermediate phase has had a negative influence on the performance of learners in the senior phase and the Further Education and Training (FET) band. There is, therefore, an urgent need to engage with this issue, but there is dearth of information related to the methods of teaching EMS in the senior phase. This necessitated our study that is aimed at determining methods that could be used to implement successfully the curriculum of EMS in the senior phase. We adopted a qualitative research approach. The population of the study consisted of circuit manager, teachers, curriculum advisor and principals, selected using a purposive sampling method. Data was collected through semi-structured face-to-face interviews. We found that the recommended teaching strategies should incorporate the use of non-conventional methods that include demonstration, instructional media, co-operation, group discussion, brainstorming, and a problem-based method depending on the topic.

Keywords: commercial subjects, curriculum changes, Economic and Management Sciences, education, intermediate phase, learners

Background

In Curriculum 2005 (C2005), National Curriculum Statement (NCS), Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), economic and management sciences (EMS) was a learning subject from grade four to grade nine as Ngwenya (2019) has reminded us. Curriculum changes in EMS came about when the Department of Basic Education introduced the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012 (Department of Basic Education, 2012). Ngwenya and Maistry (2012) reported that the EMS curriculum ceased to be offered in the intermediate phase, while other streams, like general sciences and sciences were available. Learners, therefore, start to learn sciences and general sciences from intermediate phase, grades 4 to 6, while they interact with EMS only in the senior phase that begins with grade 7. During the era of C2005, NCS, and RNCS, learners, however, started to learn EMS from the intermediate phase (see Majola, 2020) but CAPS phased out the commercial curriculum in this phase and this has become problematic because it has led to learners underperforming in EMS in the senior phase. A study conducted by Siyaya et al. (2021) concluded that the phasing out of EMS in intermediate phase led learners to believe that EMS is not an essential learning subject, and this perception has affected performance in EMS in the senior phase and in commercial subjects in the FET band, as Phakathi (2018) has noted. Phakathi further reported that phasing out EMS in the intermediate phase has had a negative impact on learners because they are now unfamiliar with these subjects.

EMS has been classified by Evans (2010) as a valuable subject which should be compulsory for all learners from grades 7 to 9 since it deals with the satisfaction of people's needs and wants. This subject motivates learners to participate in businesses because it provides them with entrepreneurship skills that they can use, if they so choose, after completing their studies. EMS prepares learners to select commercial subjects in the FET band and touches on overarching economic principles, like demand and supply and concepts like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Coetzee, 2016). The Department of Education (2012) amended NCS to improve the implementation of the curriculum so now each learning subject from grades R–12 has its own unique CAPS documents, subject assessment guidelines, and learning programme guidelines.

According to Van Wyk (2016), EMS encourages learners to be creative and this could then enable them to participate in developing the South African economy. It is a subject that encourages learners to be entrepreneurial in addition to offering a basic understanding of accounting that they could apply in the future. Schreuder (2009) and Farrugia (2019) described EMS as a subject that provides learners with a background in all commercial subjects that include accounting, business studies, and economics, all of which they start studying during the senior phase. Siyaya (2019) mentioned that the Department of Basic Education aims to prepare learners to select the commercial stream in the FET band. Furthermore, Abdullahu and Vokshi (2021) explained that EMS provides the foundations for this commercial stream. It is compulsory for learners to study all the aspects of EMS in the senior phase although accounting dominates. Of the EMS content, 40% is devoted to

accounting, while business studies and economics each make up 30% (Department of Education, 2012).

A comprehensive study conducted by Phakathi (2018) investigated the methods and strategies used in teaching EMS in KwaZulu-Natal but there is still little knowledge available about the learning and teaching of EMS in South Africa. During extensive curriculum transformations teachers should be more innovative in their teaching methods and strategies, but there is limited research related to the methods of teaching EMS in senior phase as part of the current curriculum (Kotze & Van Wyk, 2022). Traxler (2018), for example, outlined some strategies and methods for implementing the curriculum of commercial subjects at FET level but did not consider how to teach EMS in the senior phase. To remedy this gap, empirical evidence on methods and strategies for effectively teaching EMS should be undertaken. Therefore, our objective in this study was to determine the teaching methods that could be adopted to manage curriculum changes in the learning and teaching of EMS.

Literature review

The post-apartheid era in South Africa brought with it the first democratic election, and many changes, in, for instance, the curricula of several subjects and also in many policies. Policies were amended to rectify the inequalities of the pre-1994 school curriculum and these were aimed at allowing all Black and white learners to follow the same curriculum. This was in reaction to the fact that during the apartheid era, white and Black learners had different curricula as Coetzee (2016) has noted. Additionally, the current curriculum in South Africa moved from privileging teacher-centred methods to learner-centred ones to allow learners to be active participants in their own learning (Assan & Lumand 2012). Some of the more recent curriculum changes, however, have had negative effects on learners in relation to studying commercial subjects. For example, the literature shows that most learners are performing poorly because they lack a background in EMS in the General Education and Training (GET) band (Mbude, 2018). These poor results have created an impression among learners that commercial subjects are difficult because they acquire the foundation in EMS only in the senior phase. As Siyaya et al. (2021) have observed, schools that are offering commercial subjects in South Africa have only a small number of learners enrolled for these subjects.

The literature shows that these curriculum changes affect teachers adversely since many of them do not specialise in EMS (Ngwenya, 2019). Teachers use their unrelated experiences to teach EMS since most of them do not have accounting as their specialisation and therefore they do not focus on this. Economics and accounting are highly conceptual domains and specialised fields of knowledge and understanding. The ability to do accounting and understand economics and to teach these subjects effectively relies on individuals' understanding of the relevant principles and concepts on the one hand, and procedures on the other, and the relationship between these (Siyaya et al., 2021).

One of the factors that affects teaching is the time allocated for EMS in the senior phase; it is two hours per week which is not enough to cover the content (Phakathi, 2018). Additionally,

teachers fail to cover the curriculum content of EMS because it is a combination of business studies, economics, and accounting. A study by Ngwenya and Nzuza (2022) suggested that EMS must be given more time along with the social sciences and natural sciences that have three hours per week. Clearly, this limited time allocation affects learners negatively and this is evident in the low enrolment for the commercial stream in the FET phase (Mbude, 2018). The literature indicates that in developed countries like Japan and the United State of America learners are performing well on commercial subjects in both primary and secondary schools whereas in South Africa learners are underperforming in EMS (Mishra & Gupta, 2020).

Theoretical framework

In our current study, we adopted a social constructivist theory in curriculum development and design that emphasises societal needs over individual interests. This theory stresses that learners' educational development is imperative and that learners must become critical thinkers (Mishra & Gupta, 2020). Farrugia (2019) indicated that successful handling of EMS requires learners who are critical thinkers because it is a practical subject that exploits the learners' past experiences. According to social constructivist theory, learners learn through sharing information with one another, to change their individual behaviours and attitudes because knowledge is constructed based on learners' personal experiences of the environment (Watkins & Frumin, 2021). Constructivist theory encourages teachers to use different methods and strategies to teach learners. In EMS, learners should be exposed to diverse teaching methods such as working in groups so that they can share information. Also, learning through discussion is essential to mastering this subject. This is in line with Ali (2020) who recommended that when teaching EMS, teachers should allow learners to share their experiences. This develops curiosity so learners are prompted to ask many questions and, by doing so, improve their thinking capacity. This theory requires that teachers be trained to implement the EMS curriculum effectively (Majola, 2020). The changes in the EMS curriculum emphasise that educator-training is essential, and teachers should attend more workshops to become familiar with the curriculum changes (Bao, 2020).

Bantwini (2009), discussed the challenge faced by schools that offer EMS related to the shortage of curriculum advisors and qualified teachers of commercial subjects since this makes quality assurance and the monitoring of the subject possible in only a few schools. Many schools that teach commerce end up not being visited for a whole year. This is a significant factor which hinders the success intended by the curriculum changes in the teaching and learning of EMS. Van Romburgh (2014) found that there is a strong need for support from commerce curriculum advisors so that they can check and monitor the process of curriculum change in every school to support teaching and learning of EMS.

In agreement with Kotze and Van Wyk (2022), the current study revealed that most teachers are using teacher-centred methods to teach EMS in the senior phase, and this presents a challenge because learners are not participating actively while they are learning. Effective teaching strategies for EMS, such as demonstration, group discussion, co-operative learning,

using textbooks and lectures, assist learners to perform competently since they better understand the content (Phakathi, 2018). Monobe (2014), however, maintained that the use of the group discussion method in EMS is not appropriate because differently abled learners feel uncomfortable and are not productive in comparison with those who seem to benefit more from group discussions.

During C2005, NCS, and RNCS, learners went to the senior phase with a foundation in commerce. According to Sithole and Lumadi (2012) and Izci (2017), the CAPS policy document downgraded EMS and since then, there have been no amendments done to restore EMS to the intermediate phase. The phasing out of EMS in the intermediate phase caused many EMS educators to be redeployed in South Africa (Phakathi, 2018). A study by Abdullahu & Vokshi (2021) attested that most teachers complain that learners proceed to the senior phase without having any foundation in commerce because of the phasing out of EMS in the intermediate phase, and that is the direct reason for learners' unsatisfactory performance in the senior phase. Monobe, as far back as 2014, affirmed that the curriculum changes in EMS and the poor performance, came about when CAPS was introduced in the South African education system in 2012.

Research methodology

Research design

A multiple case study can be used in qualitative research since it allows researchers to collect data from two or more places (Bao, 2020) and this was appropriate to this study because we were collecting data from different schools. In addition, this qualitative research approach was deemed suitable because it generated a substantial amount of data from a few participants. In the case of qualitative studies, generalisations are made in relation to theory rather than about a population (Saunders et al., 2016).

Population and sampling

The population consisted of teachers and principals of schools, curriculum advisors of EMS, and managers of the Man'ombe Circuit. The school principals were included because they have a leadership role in curriculum implementation and formulation in the schools, while the teachers are involved directly in engaging with the content of EMS and delivering this to the learners. Curriculum advisors were included because they support educators and monitor their work, while the circuit managers are the overseers of the whole curriculum of a circuit. The Man'ombe Circuit has a total of 56 schools, primary and secondary, and we chose seven of the best-performing schools and seven of the poorly performing ones. The study, therefore, was conducted in 14 schools in the Man'ombe Circuit. We chose the two types of schools to enable the worst performing ones to adopt the best practices which, in turn, facilitate improved performance. The average performing schools were not included because they do not need major interventions.

We used a purposive sampling technique because it enabled us to select suitable participants who had the potential to deliver useful data that could contribute to the solutions to the

research problem and to its questions (see Watkins & Frumin, 2021). The purposive sampling methodology was useful because it allowed us to get rich data from participants who were involved directly in the management, teaching, and learning of EMS which we needed to make a valuable contribution.

A total of 20 participants were involved in the study, 14 educators for senior phase, four principals from primary and secondary schools, one curriculum advisor of EMS, and the manager of Man'ombe Circuit. The participants were classified into seven teachers from well-performing schools, seven teachers from under-performing schools, two principals from well-performing schools and two principals from under-performing schools. A curriculum advisor was part of this study because they support educators and monitor their work, and the circuit manager is the overseer of the whole curriculum of the circuit.

Data collection

Data was collected using the face-to-face semi-structured interview method since this process allows participants to answer questions that are posed by the researcher, and this can provide rich data (Mishra & Gupta, 2020). Before the face-to-face interviews were conducted, appointments were made telephonically and sessions in the schools were held in the office of the principal. Interviews with the circuit manager and the curriculum advisor were held in the office of the circuit manager. All the participants were aware of the purpose and aims of the study, and they were informed of their right to withdraw if they had any concerns. We also analysed documents, such as record sheets for EMS CAPS, to check the performance of learners in EMS in the senior phase.

Data analysis

The collected data was processed through a thematic analysis to allow the grouping or categorisation of data into themes and sub-themes (Cohen et al., 2018). The analysis was inductive, so it allowed for the exploration of the information which was, subsequently, divided into themes and sub-themes.

Ethical issues

We selected suitable participants who had knowledge and experience in curriculum changes in EMS. Before the data-collection process commenced, we communicated with the participants about convenient times, explained the purpose of selecting them and what was expected from them. All the participants were treated fairly and the information from the interviews was recorded. Participation was voluntary and, as mentioned above, we also assured the participants that if they felt uncomfortable, they could withdraw so no participant was forced to participate in this study. Participants' confidentiality was respected since only the researchers had access to the information of the participants during and after the process. They were accorded numbers instead of pseudonyms. Maree and Van Der Westhuizen (2019) as well as Charmaz (2018) have noted that it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the participants' right to privacy is respected and always protected. When we were

interviewing the educators, the principals of the schools were not in their offices so the participants' right to privacy was respected.

Findings

In this study the participants identified various methods that can be used to teach EMS as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Teaching methods that can be used in EMS

- Textbooks
- Demonstrations
- Lectures
- Co-operative method
- Instructional media
- Questions-and-answers
- Group discussions
- Brainstorming
- Problem-based method

Textbook method

The results showed that most of teachers were using textbooks in the teaching and learning of EMS. They used this method, even in large classes, because textbooks were the only resource that learners had.[1]

> P1: I think it is the method that can be used allowing learners to read the specific chapter and summarise it on their own. The use of textbook is important, especially, in large classes.
>
> P5: On my side, I think the textbook method is the best because textbooks are the only resources that we have in schools.
>
> P15: I recommend educators to use the textbook method because every school has the prescribed textbook for EMS, and it also saves time to use this method.
>
> P19: The use of the textbook method is the best for small and large classes.

Based on the above evidence, the textbook method is significant because textbooks are available in all schools. Textbooks are also easy to use in both small and large classes. This means that in schools where other resources are lacking, the use of textbooks cannot be avoided although this does not necessarily lead to high learner performance.

[1] The participant responses have not been edited.

Demonstrations

The views of the participants were that that teachers can use the demonstrations for the teaching and learning of EMS in the senior phase, since there are many diverse topics that need to be demonstrated in EMS.

> P2: I recommend the demonstration method. Teacher should demonstrate a certain product in class during teaching and learning because EMS is a practical subject, and it needs to be taught practically.
>
> P3: I think the demonstration method is the best in the teaching of EMS because the subject itself requires educators and learners to do practical work in some topics.
>
> P10: Demonstration method is the best in teaching EMS. Most of the topics, like advertisements, entrepreneurship, as well as goods and services need to be demonstrated in class to make learners understand.
>
> P16: I think the demonstration method and the question-and-answer method is useful as they are part of the learner-centred approach.

Based on the views mentioned by participants, many topics in EMS need to be demonstrated. The method is also important during the learning and teaching of practical work. This implies that the demonstration method leads to the understanding of practical work and, therefore, improves the pass rate.

Lectures

The results revealed that lecturing was the best approach to be used in the teaching and learning of EMS in the senior phase. The use of the lecture method saves a lot of time because during the process the educators present the lessons while the learners listen.

> P4: The lecture method is the best in teaching EMS, as time allocation for EMS is two hours per week. This method saves a lot of time because the teacher is the one who is explaining while learners are listening.
>
> P8: Oh, I think the lecture method emphasises the important points and it maintains focus on the outcome.
>
> P11: I recommend the teacher-cantered approach in the teaching of EMS as limited time is available to cover the content.
>
> P19: The lecture method is useful because it saves time, and it can be used in large or small classes.

The participants indicated that the lecture method is the best in a situation where less time is allocated for a subject. The participants also indicated that when one is using the lecture method, it is easy to explain important points and to maintain focus on the outcome. This

implies that the lecture method may continue to be used to save time and not necessarily to improve learner performance.

Co-operative method

The results shows that the co-operative method during teaching and learning of EMS is useful. During co-operative learning, teachers group learners according to their strengths and weaknesses so that they can assist one another.

> P6: Co-operative learning method by grouping learners according to their abilities so that they can assist each other during teaching and learning of EMS.

> P1: I recommend co-operative and demonstration methods because educators can use them by grouping learners together for a specific topic and assist learners to have self-confidence.

> P8: The use of the co-operative strategy is the best in the teaching and learning of commercial subjects.

> P19: I recommend co-operative strategy by arranging learners together according to their skills and knowledge.

The co-operative method, in which learners are grouped according to their abilities, is learner-centred, and learners take a more active role in their learning. Learners who struggle can learn from those who are managing. Although the method has merits, it should be used alongside other methods since learners who need help cannot always depend on other learners.

Instructional media

The findings revealed that the instructional media method is appropriate when teaching learners EMS. This method involves the use of computers, record tapes, overhead projectors, and videos in the teaching and learning of EMS in the senior phase.

> P3: I suggest the instructional-media method, such as overhead projectors, slides, tape recorders and videos, in teaching EMS because they assist learners to see what they are learning about and to understand the content better.

> P7: I think the instructional-media method as they save time.

> P9: Instructional-media method by allowing learners to use computers to search for information and pictures while learning in class.

> P18: I recommend instructional-media method in the teaching and learning of EMS.

Regarding the instructional-media method, the participants revealed that it is appropriate for teaching EMS since it saves time, allows teachers and learners to use materials from the environment, and improves learners' understanding and their performance.

Question-and-answer method

Another method that is used to the implement EMS curriculum is the question-and-answer method. Teachers use this learner-centred approach by asking learners questions which they answer in class.

> P7: I suggest the question-and-answer method by involving learners while teaching them. This method is also called a learner-centred method.
>
> P9: I recommend the question-and-answer method because educators can be assessing learners while they are learning at the same time.
>
> P15: I think the learner-centred approach, also known as 'question-and-answer method' is the best in the teaching and learning of EMS.
>
> P16: I think the demonstration method and question-and answer- method are useful as they are part of the learner-centred approach.

The results have shown that the question-and-answer method is recommended for its learner-centred approach. Participants also revealed that the method is also preferred for ensuring that learning and assessment take place at the same time. Thus, the ability to instruct and assess at the same time is another important component to consider in the choice of teaching and learning methods. However, the number of learners who can provide answers to questions posed by teachers is limited by time constraints.

Group-discussion method

Participants were of the view that the group-discussion method has significant merit in the teaching and learning of EMS. Teachers group learners according to their abilities, for example, those who are struggling, those who are average, and those who are above average learners work in groups to allow them to assist one another as they learn.

> P13: The group-discussion method, by grouping learners together and giving them specific topics in order for them to discuss; learners will learn from one another through discussions.
>
> P1: I recommend the co-operative and demonstration methods because the educators can use them by grouping learners together for a specific topic and assist learners to have self-confidence; it also brings competition amongst learners.
>
> P8: Educators can use the group-discussion method by arranging learners together so that learners can assist one another; it also motivates differently abled learners to perform.

> P18: In the teaching of commercial subjects, the use of the group-discussion approach is the best by arranging learners together, according to their capabilities.'

Brainstorming

The results indicated that the use of brainstorming is recommended for small classes. By using this method, teachers allow their learners to share ideas and knowledge.

> P14: I recommend the brainstorming method. It is used with small classes where learners share their ideas together.

> P4: I suggest the brainstorming method to be used in our schools as it improves learners' thinking skills.

> P11: The brainstorming method is the best because it allows learners to be creative and it also promotes teamwork among the learners.

> P16: I think the brainstorming strategy is the best, because most of the topics for entrepreneurship allow teachers to use this strategy.

From the above comments, it is evident that brainstorming is recommended for small classes. Based on the results, it is also important to note that this also improves learners' thinking skills, creativity, and teamwork and it increases the pass rate. However, brainstorming can be used only on selected topics.

Problem-based method

The participants' view was that the use of the problem-based method was the best for EMS teaching and learning, although teachers could use this method only if there were a problem that needed to be investigated. In such a situation, the teachers allow learners to do the investigations on their own.

> P6: I suggest the problem-based method because it allows learners to identify problems and solve them on their own.

> P11: The problem-based method, by allowing learners to investigate the problems on their own and come up with solutions.

> P13: I recommend project-based method which is also known as "problem-based" to be used in the teaching and learning of EMS.

> P17: The use of the project-based approach is the best; by giving learners projects and they do them without the assistance of the educator.

Regarding the problem-based method, the participants indicated that it allows learners to identify and investigate problems on their own and arrive at solutions. This implies that the

problem-based method encourages learners to become independent and this increases favourable learning outcomes.

Discussion

The textbook method is considered the best approach to assist learners while they are learning EMS in class since every school has textbooks that learners can use during the teaching and learning of EMS (Ali, 2020). The findings of the current study concur with this and revealed that most teachers were using the textbook method in the teaching and learning of EMS because textbooks were the only resources the learners had.

Adedoyin and Soykan (2020) indicated that the textbook method can even be used in large classes since teachers can give learners specific topics in EMS and allow them to read and then summarise the points. Furthermore, Van Wyk (2016) mentioned that in the teaching and learning of EMS, the textbook method is relevant because in these books financial concepts are well explained, and the accounting transactions are clearly outlined. Consequently, there is no need for learners to buy study guides for EMS in the senior phase since every piece of information is accessible in the textbooks. This is particularly true in rural schools that have fewer resources. The textbook method cannot, however, be used without other methods. As alluded to by Maulana et al. (2022), it makes the learning process less varied, monotonous, and does not link to the local content.

Our study revealed that the demonstration method can also make learners understand the content of EMS. The results find support from Lightner and Lighter-Law's 2016 study, which concluded that this method assists learners to master specific topics more easily since it is the responsibility of teachers to demonstrate things in class during EMS. Leoste et al. (2019) revealed that in the developed countries, like Japan, learners produce things while they are learning. Most topics in EMS need to be demonstrated so that learners can understand the content and obtain quality results at the end. In England, teachers are trained on how to demonstrate things while teaching learners because through demonstrations learners can understand a whole chapter in a subject in a relatively short time (Kraten & Stuebs Jr., 2021). Most developed countries use the demonstration method, and they are far advanced in education in comparison with Africa (Kotze & Van Wyk, 2022). According to Isa et al. (2020), when they are using the demonstration method, teachers spend more time on planning and talk less while learners learn more. Using the demonstration method allows teachers to use resources from the environment, attract attention, and increase learner performance (Umara, 2022).

The views of the participants were that the lecture method can also be used effectively in the learning and teaching of EMS. The results align with Tak Yin Leung Nguyen and Pearson (2018) who noted that this method is used by teachers while teaching learners a specific topic and that teachers use this method to transfer concise information to the learners. During the lesson, learners are not actively involved as only the teacher presents the lesson to them (Van Wyk, 2007; 2016). The lecture method saves a lot of time, so is appropriate to the teaching of EMS, because, as already pointed out, according to the CAPS policy document, time

allocation for EMS is only two hours per week. This method can be used in the teaching and learning of EMS because it is effective in large or small classes; the approach serves to have teachers focus on essential points so they can organise the content accordingly (Siyaya, 2019). This is in contrast with Isa et al. (2020) who stated that the lecture method is teacher-centred and passive, it encourages rote learning and fails to create interest in the learners. Therefore, other methods should also be incorporated along with the lecture method.

In agreement with the results of the current study, Candido et al. (2020), mentioned that co-operative learning is used in EMS because it results in team rewards when outcomes are met. Individual responsibility is also encouraged so that team members learn that they must be capable of fulfilling the assessment requirements without the aid of their team-mates. This method motivates learners, gives them self-confidence, and improves their communication skills (Traxler, 2018). EMS teachers can use this method, for instance, when teaching learners financial literacy as part of accounting, since it is a difficult concept for learners but when they do accountancy transactions together and assist one another in the group, the learning process is facilitated (Okougbo et al., 2021). The method encourages learners to co-operate rather than to compete with one another as they work together to attain group goals (Sunday et al., 2021). The co-operative method should be used only to complement other methods and for relevant topics.

The results showed that learners learn better if teachers use the instructional-media approach successfully. These results concur with those of Ali (2020) who noted that EMS teachers can use the instructional-media method constructively by, for example, employing overhead projectors and developing slides since this saves time, and this does not require the teacher to write notes on the chalkboard. Learners can see pictures more clearly through instructional media than when they are using prescribed textbooks (Phakathi, 2018). Kotze and Van Wyk (2022) recommended that in a large class, the use of an overhead projector is suitable because every learner can see what is happening on the wall screen. Additionally, EMS is a subject that requires teachers to do demonstrations while teaching in class. For example, on the topic of advertisements, teachers can prepare and display advertisements for any suitable products to demonstrate the topic to the learners.

Teachers revealed that they use the question-and-answer method by asking learners questions which they answer in class. The literature also shows that this method is used to demonstrate whether they have understood the content or not (Sule, 2013); the method also promotes the active participation of learners in class. Kotze and Van Wyk (2022) believed that EMS teachers can use this method after each lesson or specific topic. During the question-and-answer sessions, learners' reasoning capacity starts to improve; it also encourages differently abled learners to participate in the lesson by answering questions posed by the teacher (Ngwenya and Maistry, 2012). This method is particularly suitable for the teaching of commercial subjects in the FET band and EMS in the senior phase. Teachers can use this method to improve learners' cognitive and reasoning skills and to arouse their interest. The question-and-answer method should be combined with the lecture method and cannot be used

to check on the knowledge of the learners, because not all learners are given the opportunity to answer questions.

Some participants were of the view that the group-discussion method was valuable in the teaching and learning of EMS. This finding corroborates that of Burton (2015) who asserted that EMS teachers can use this method when they want learners to present in class or to prepare learners to take part in debates. Most learners, according to Abdullahu and Vokshi (2021) are underperforming in financial literacy, and EMS teachers declare this topic a challenge for the learners. Teachers, therefore, could group learners and give them different transaction records like, for instance, a cash payment journal, cash receipt journal, balance sheets, income statement and accounting equations so that they can learn to assist one another. George (2020) maintained that the use of this method in EMS can promote teamwork for all learners. Group discussions cannot, however, be used satisfactorily in large classes.

In this study, the brainstorming method was found to be productive with small classes. This finding concurs with Bao (2020) who declared that this method assists learners to be critical thinkers and improves their reasoning capacities. Okougbo et al. (2021) reported that most teachers in South Africa do not use this method because they are not well trained. Although brainstorming enhances learner interaction, creativity, and learning outcomes, not all topics can be covered using this method. It is suitable for subjects such as entrepreneurship, especially during an idea generation exercise.

Participants' views were that the problem-based method was very beneficial in terms of improving pass rate, and during teaching and learning, although teachers could use this method only if there was a problem that needed to be investigated. The literature attests that teachers also use this method when they want to equip learners with problem-solving skills and if they want learners to investigate certain problems in the EMS content (Traxler, 2018). A study conducted by Moayen (2015) suggested that teachers should give learners case studies and allow them to analyse and identify a problem embedded in a situation. Abdullahu and Vokshi (2021) recommended this method since it assists learners to master many topics in EMS. Although the problem-based method is positively associated with student involvement, it works only when there is a problem to be solved.

Limitations

The study took place in Man'ombe Circuit with 56 schools and therefore the findings may not be transferrable to other regions. Whether the findings of this study might apply to schools in cities, with more resources, needs further study.

Contribution

The study has revealed new learning and teaching methods of EMS such as co-operative, instructional-media, group-discussion, brainstorming, and problem-based methods. The new

methods have great potential to improve learner participation, creative thinking skills, and levels of performance.

Conclusions

The study focused on the effectiveness of various methods that can be implemented in the teaching of EMS in the senior phase. The curriculum changes in EMS allow teachers to use various methods and strategies that can result in learners performing well in the subject. The conventional methods of teaching such as textbooks and lecture methods are teacher centred and do not give enough room for students' participation. The question-and-answer method allows students to participate but it does not give all learners an opportunity to answer questions. These methods should be combined with a component of active learning.

An instructional media method such as the use of projectors, makes it possible for teachers to include local content that increases learners' understanding and improves the pass rate. Brainstorming and problem-solving methods improve learner interaction, interest, and creativity. They should be used when teaching topics that deal with idea generation as in entrepreneurship. The co-operative method is learner-centred and should be used particularly as an intervention strategy for learners who are at the risk of failing.

Depending on the topic and the learning objective to be achieved, the demonstration method should be used to complement other forms of delivery such as the use of instructional media. Group-discussions encourage active participation but are suitable only for small classes.

The coverage of the EMS curriculum can be managed easily if teachers use the different approaches listed above, in accordance with the special circumstances in their schools.

It is recommended that teachers attend training courses on new teaching methods such as brainstorming and problem-solving. Professional training courses for teachers are also necessary to provide guidance on how to facilitate small group discussion effectively. Teachers should assist learners on structuring discussions to enhance the effectiveness of the group discussion method. Teachers should also use more than one method to improve learners' understanding and increase learners' performance.

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