


Assessing the Impact of Content Knowledge of Economic and Management Sciences Teaching and Learning: A Case Study of Second Year Student-teachers in a South African University



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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to assess the impact of content knowledge on Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) teaching and learning for second-year student-teachers of one selected South African University. It was observed that during the teaching practice, some student-teachers were struggling to impart appropriately some EMS topics like financial literacy to mention a few, in explaining and responding properly and convincingly to learners' questions. This observation triggers the quest to assess the impact of content knowledge of EMS teaching and learning on second-year student-teachers of a selected South African university. Technological pedagogical content knowledge theoretical framework underpinned this research. An interpretivism research paradigm was adopted for this study. A purposive sampling method was used to select six student-teachers enrolled in the Bachelor of Education in Senior Phase and Further Education and Training with specialisation in commerce stream programme in the 2024 academic year. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face as a data collection method to gather data after permission was sought from participants. A thematic approach was used to analyse the data from the participants. The findings revealed that several participants lacked the financial literacy background content knowledge necessary to effectively address the EMS subject. Additionally, omitting EMS themes was found to be a contributing factor in student-teachers' difficulties in effectively teaching the subject. It is recommended that the curriculum offered to student-teachers in the commerce stream be reviewed to enable all of them to gain graduate attributes.

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INTRODUCTION

Since the democratic elections of 1994, concerted efforts have been made by the Department of Basic Education and higher education institutions in developing nations such as South Africa to raise the standard of elementary, and secondary education. Researchers like Cross and Ndofirepi have documented that the Department of Education (DoE) in South Africa highlighted the need to address historical injustices, reform and implement the higher education system to accommodate a new social order in order to respond to opportunities and realities and lessen the impact of the country's urgent socioeconomic

demands after 1994.¹ Embracing transformation, cultural diversity practices, inclusivity, and equal access to the South African education system in general was the main goal of revising and designing the curriculum for schools and higher education institutions. This was done to ensure that its products, learners, and graduates, advanced in impactful knowledge, technological and entrepreneurial skills, as well as adoption of ethical practices. It should be highlighted that the achievement and implementation of the Education for All and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) depend heavily on higher education by providing a transformed, impactful and relevant curriculum to its students. The effectiveness, impact, relevance, and quality of teachers' professional obligations are crucial for the successful implementation and achievement of the MDGs. This indicates that achieving and implementing the MDGs will be a pointless endeavour without the efficacy, influence, and relevance of teachers in carrying out their professional obligations. In light of this, Hanuscin, Lee, and Akerson state that there is broad agreement that having competent teachers is essential to students' learning.² To put it another way, it is doubtful that teachers will be successful in their teaching environment and at their time if they are not well prepared during their pre-service training to carry out their professional tasks. It is expected of the universities and colleges in charge of teacher education programs to provide a revised, timely, and stimulating curriculum in order to train and develop effective teachers with the necessary subject-matter expertise and a variety of pertinent skills to improve teaching and learning. Teachers who are trained and graduated from teacher education programs at universities and colleges need to be able to use their knowledge of pedagogy and subject matter in their teaching in order to help their students conceptualise new ideas.³

Even with the reform of curricula in teacher education programmes offered by universities and colleges, some pre-service teachers still seem to struggle with becoming competent teachers who make an impact on the classroom context. This raises the question of whether teacher education programs and instructors adequately prepare pre-service teachers for the demands and expectations of the classroom. In the researcher's opinion, some pre-service teachers who find it difficult to solicit important information for their studies on their own and instead rely solely on the interaction with lecturers may graduate from the university with insufficient teaching credentials, unable to provide students in classrooms with the impactful content knowledge, applicable skills, and moral principles that are expected of them.

Upon visiting various schools to monitor and assess the second-year pre-service training Bachelor of Education in Senior Phase and Further Education and Training (BEd SP & FET) student-teachers specialising in commerce stream in the 2024 academic year doing teaching practice as one of the requirements for their enrolled programme, it was observed that some of them encountered difficulties in delivering some of the topics especially financial literacy in grades 8 to 9 EMS subject. In some instances, they failed to respond to questions correctly and appropriately and some offered incorrect answers and explanations to the learners' questions.

It is too risky and harmful for learners to be poorly taught critical subjects such as those involving Accounting basic concepts and principles only to find that teachers themselves lack the content knowledge and teaching approaches to present such subjects. Researchers like Sentsho and Mudau agree with the assertion raised above by this research when they state that learner performance in the financial literacy component of EMS is poor year by year which could contribute to decreasing the interest of learners to enrol the commercial subjects in their higher grades.⁴ It could have detrimental effects on the learners' academic achievement and interest to mention a few to enrol such subjects in higher grades. On that note, Hosal-Akman and Simga-Mugan argue that prompt action to save the Accounting educational field is essential to start at early grades such as the primary education level of learners.⁵ From the

¹ Michael Cross and Amasa Ndofirepi, *Knowledge and Change in African Universities: Volume 1 – Current Debates*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-842-6>.

² Cross and Ndofirepi, *Knowledge and Change in African Universities: Volume 1 – Current Debates*.

³ Lee S. Shulman, "Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching," *Educational Researcher* 15, no. 2 (February 1, 1986): 4–14, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X015002004>.

⁴ Tsholofelo Audrey Sentsho and Patience Kelebogile Mudau, "Teachers' Experiences of Teaching the Financial Literacy Component to Enhance Learner Performance in Economic and Management Sciences," *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research* 5, no. 3 (2023): 29–43.

⁵ Nazli Hosal-Akman and Can Simga-Mugan, "An Assessment of the Effects of Teaching Methods on Academic Performance of Students in Accounting Courses," *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 47, no. 3 (August 2010): 251–60, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2010.498176>.

researcher's personal experience, students who do well in EMS could be motivated to pursue careers as auditors, accountants, or entrepreneurs in developing nations like South Africa.

It should be noted that the economy needs people who are equipped with these much-needed skills.⁶ This would help to reduce the high unemployment rate that currently exists in the country as stated in South African Statistics of Employment 2024.⁷ This implies that understanding the subject at early grades could influence the learners to excel in the subject even if they do it in their higher grades provided, they have been guided and prepared professionally, correctly, and academically by their competent teachers in their teaching profession. This observation triggered the quest to find out how the content knowledge in Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) teaching and learning impacts second-year pre-service teachers to their delivery of lessons in the classroom context. The next section constitutes the literature review which covers the readiness of student-teachers to understand and teach the EMS subject and the influence of scholarship of teaching and learning to lecturers in their professional duties in general.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Readiness of Student-teachers to understand and teach the EMS subject

A study conducted in Ghana to examine the technological pedagogical content knowledge of 370 university students by Kwakye Apau confirmed that the students in question lacked the technological pedagogical content knowledge required for classroom teaching.⁸ The reason for their lack of technological pedagogical content knowledge emanated from their pre-service teacher education programme which did not integrate the technology content and skills to empower them in their academic journey. It has also been noted that the difficulty experienced by Malawian teachers emerged from the fact that their pre-service programme did not prepare them well to offer to teach while infusing technology. Similarly, studies conducted by Steenkamp, Frick, and Baard, and Sofat and Hiro, about the challenges faced by first-year Accounting students at the tertiary education level, have attributed some of these challenges to the lack of solid background from the secondary school system among others.⁹ Glennie et al. have asserted that the educational problems that contribute to the current crisis in education in South Africa include insufficient qualified teaching staff.¹⁰ Hence, it can be argued that the quality, relevance, and impact of teacher education programmes are the key to the preparation and development of competent teachers.

As Akdemir points out, one of the most important things for the student-teacher's professional growth is their readiness to teach.¹¹ This statement seems to imply that a teacher's capacity to teach students the necessary knowledge, skills, and ethical values depends on the appropriate teacher education programs, the methods they have learned, and their capacity to transfer these qualities. It can be learned that when student-teachers lack appropriate and impactful content knowledge in their pre-service training, they are likely to fail to execute their professional duties optimally, efficiently and effectively for improved learning. The study did not show the expertise of lecturers in the integration of technological pedagogical content knowledge to showcase and capacitate their student-teachers.

As stated by Schulman, teachers must be knowledgeable about the curriculum, the pedagogy required to teach it, and the subject matter they are expected to teach in order to be competent, influential, and relevant in their professional roles.¹² Given the aforementioned, assert that student-teachers who lack sufficient understanding of the concept of the infinite limit of a sequence in mathematics teaching and

⁶ Glynis Rholeen Schreuder, "Teacher Professional Development: The Case of Quality Teaching in Accounting at Selected Western Cape Secondary Schools" (Cape Peninsula University of Technology, 2014).

⁷ William Manga Mokofe, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Unemployment in South Africa: A Continuing Challenge," *Kazan University Law Review* 9, no. 1 (2024): 7–27.

⁸ S. K. Apau, "Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge Preparedness of Student-Teachers of the Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education (DASSE) of University of Cape Coast" (University of Cape Coast, 2016).

⁹ L.P., Baard, R.S. and Frick, B.L. Steenkamp, "Department of Curriculum Studies: University of Stellenbosch.," *SAJAR*, 2009; R. and Hiro P. 2008. Sofat, "Basic Accounting.," *South African Council of Educators*, (PHI Learning Pty Ltd., 1998).

¹⁰ Jenny Glennie et al., *Perspectives on Open and Distance Learning: Open Educational Resources and Change in Higher Education: Reflection from Practice* (Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO, 2012).

¹¹ Öznur Ataş Akdemir, "Academic Procrastination Behaviors of Preservice Teachers in Turkish Context," *World Journal of Education* 9, no. 2 (March 13, 2019): 13, <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v9n2p13>.

¹² Shulman, "Those Who Understand: Knowledge Growth in Teaching."

learning will surely impart this to their learners.¹³ It appears from this statement that misconceptions and misrepresentations of teachings to learners are likely to arise in the teaching and learning environment because of student teachers' lack of content knowledge in the specific school subjects that they are expected to teach.

Influence of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to Lecturers

Over the course of three decades, Tight claims that the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), or more simply put, the relationship between research and teaching and learning, has gained popularity as a topic for practice, research, and conversation in higher education.¹⁴ This study is of the view that given the time frame in which academics like Boyer created the concept of SoTL, content knowledge gaps coupled with user-friendly teaching methodologies could be identified and addressed through research to improve the pre-service teachers' learning if all lecturers were actively participating in the SoTL.¹⁵ This assertion is supported by the researcher's observations that during their teaching practices in schools, some pre-service teachers find it difficult to introduce and present lesson topics in EMS related to subjects like accounting or financial literacy when they are exposed to the classroom context.

Boyer asserts that in order to accomplish their scholarly teaching goals and ensure student learning, lecturers should become familiar with and use the four forms of SoTL.¹⁶ In order to identify the obstacles, flaws, and gaps in their teaching methods, modalities of instruction, and course content, lecturers are expected to undertake research. The second and third forms expert lecturers to incorporate and implement the best teaching methods, update the curriculum to make it more powerful and relevant, and use a variety of teaching modalities to meet the diverse needs of students with varying learning styles and abilities. The final form of SoTL involves lecturers using the findings of their research to inform their academic instruction. One could argue that lecturers who use the SoTL in their teaching practices could be of assistance to pre-service teachers since they would be able to address all of the identified problem areas such as what to teach and how to teach it in order to prevent the production of teacher graduates who are not well-prepared to present and execute their duties in classroom contexts. Thus, it is claimed that teaching and learning scholarship is crucial for lecturers to improve their teaching practices and approaches as well as the selection of educative and relevant curriculum materials to enhance the students' learning by identifying through research the problematic issues that pre-service teachers face and using that valuable information to guide their instruction.¹⁷

METHODOLOGY

In this research, the interpretivism research paradigm was adopted. Interpretivism is described by Chowdhury as the use of research approaches by researchers which emphasise the meaningful nature of people's character and participation in both social and cultural life.¹⁸ The interpretivism research paradigm was adopted in this research on the basis that it promotes the value of qualitative data in pursuit of knowing the impact of content knowledge of second-year pre-service student teachers on EMS teaching and learning.¹⁹ Junjie and Yingxin, concur with Chowdhury when they argue that interpretivist researchers adopt interpretivism with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon in a complex context.²⁰

¹³ Mónica Arnal-Palacián and Javier Claros-Mellado, "Specialized Content Knowledge of Pre-Service Teachers on the Infinite Limit of a Sequence.," *Mathematics Teaching Research Journal* 14, no. 1 (2022): 187.

¹⁴ Malcolm Tight, "Tracking the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning," *Policy Reviews in Higher Education* 2, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 61–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23322969.2017.1390690>.

¹⁵ Ernest L Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*. (ERIC, 1990).

¹⁶ Boyer, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*.

¹⁷ Hadijah Jaffri, Narina A. Samah, and Lokman Mohd Tahir, "Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: How Does It Perceive by Engineering Lecturers?," in *2014 International Conference on Teaching and Learning in Computing and Engineering* (IEEE, 2014), 186–89, <https://doi.org/10.1109/LaTiCE.2014.43>. p. 433

¹⁸ Muhammad Faisal Chowdhury, "Interpretivism in Aiding Our Understanding of the Contemporary Social World," *Open Journal of Philosophy* 04, no. 03 (2014): 432–38, <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2014.43047>.

¹⁹ Chowdhury, "Interpretivism in Aiding Our Understanding of the Contemporary Social World."

²⁰ Ma Junjie and Ma Yingxin, "The Discussions of Positivism and Interpretivism.," *Online Submission* 4, no. 1 (2022): 10–14. P. 50

A case study research design was adopted in this research. A case study research design is chosen on the basis that it helps to investigate a real-life phenomenon in depth and within its environmental context to gain a better understanding of “how” and “why” things happen as well. This research examined a case of second-year BEd SP & FET pre-service teachers specialising in the commerce stream in the 2024 academic year. The participants were chosen from a university's undergraduate teacher education programmes. Noteworthy is the fact that their enrolment in EMS and any two of the three FET commerce disciplines was a relevant factor in their selection. In South African school system design and practice, grades 4 to 9 learners are mandatory to do the EMS as one of the school subjects. For effectively delivering lessons on issues within the subject in question, it is, therefore, necessary for student-teachers and teachers as well to have a solid comprehension of the content knowledge of the EMS subject.

The qualitative research approach was used in this investigation. According to McMillan and Schumacher qualitative research is an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings or research field and analysing the collected data by using verbal explanations not numbers, percentages, and graphs.²¹

A purposive sampling method was used to select six BEd SP & FET pre-service teachers specialising in the commerce stream where the EMS module is one of their subject specialisations to be empowered in its teaching in grades 4 to 9. The participants selected are three female and three male BEd SP & FET specialisation in commerce stream who are second year of their study level in the 2024 academic year. The purposive sampling method was adopted in this research because it helps the researcher to access the most valuable and relevant insights from the key informants due to their experiences, feelings, opinions, ideas, practices, and so forth regarding the phenomenon being investigated.²²

Semi-structured interviews were adopted face-to-face with the participants as a data collection method. Semi-structured interviews were used in this research because they permit interviews to be focused while still giving the investigator the autonomy to explore pertinent ideas that may come up during the interviews, which could further enhance understanding of the phenomenon being explored.²³

An interview schedule guide was developed with questions that were used during the interview sessions. To make the participants focused, the questions were crafted in the interview schedule to probe them as a means to solicit their responses with respect to the phenomenon being explored. The questions were as follows:

- Have you ever studied Accounting in grades 10 to 12?
- What are the reasons for NOT doing Accounting at University?
- What problematic areas or topics were difficult for you in the EMS subject?
- What lesson topics are making you uncomfortable in teaching the EMS subject?
- What factors are making you uncomfortable teaching EMS?
- Suggest ways or strategies that the university or BEd SP & FET program must do or have to help you to be comfortable in teaching EMS.

Each participant's interview took between twenty-five and thirty minutes, with the English language being used as the research language. This practice of affording all the interviewed participants was done to ensure that there is fairness to all of them in the process of data collection. Their responses were captured during interviews using a notepad and video recorder after being granted permission by the participants to gather exactly their words verbatim. The video recorder was also used to replay it to the participants for their verification, certification and alteration of responses where possible. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to play it again throughout the data analysis phase.

The participants were given consent forms to verify their willingness and agreement to engage in the research, and due authorisation was obtained to perform the study from the appropriate committees prior to its execution. To maintain privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, participants were assured that fictitious names would be used instead of their real names and during the data analysis. This practice is

²¹ J.H. Macmillan and S. Schumacher, *Research in Education* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc., 2006).

²² Harsh Suri, “Purposeful Sampling in Qualitative Research Synthesis,” *Qualitative Research Journal* 11, no.2(2011):63–75.

²³ Cormac McGrath, Per J. Palmgren, and Matilda Liljedahl, “Twelve Tips for Conducting Qualitative Research Interviews,” *Medical Teacher* 41, no. 9 (September 2, 2019): 1002–6, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149>.

in line with what Maree proposes and encourages the researchers to ensure and adhere to ethical measures.²⁴

The thematic approach was adopted to analyse the data. Thematic analysis was chosen in this research because it is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting patterns of meaning ('themes') within qualitative data to understand what participants think, feel and do.²⁵ According to Braun and Clarke, the thematic approach is a qualitative analytical method which identifies, analyse and reports patterns within data, minimally organises and describes the data set in rich detail and interprets various aspects of the research topic.²⁶ The collected data was organised, grouped into manageable units, and synthesised to search for similar patterns as well as discover what was important and what was to be learnt.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

In this section, the generated findings are presented, followed by the questions crafted in the interview schedule guide and used during the interview sessions with participants. The excerpts verbatim are presented in line with the questions and with brief interpretations. The last part of this section presents a discussion of the findings. The information gathered from the six second-year BEd SP & FET student-teachers specialising in the commerce stream revealed that they encounter difficulties when it comes to teaching and studying EMS. Data from the participants showed that the programme structure for student-teachers does not necessarily consider a pass in grade 12 Accounting subject and with no provision for those without a pass in Accounting and content background of financial literacy. It also emerged that some lecturers skipped some topics based on the assumption that the pre-service teachers might have already possessed the skipped content in EMS.

In question 1, participants were asked to reflect on whether they studied Accounting or not in their grade 12. Out of six participants, only one had confirmed that she studied Accounting subject in grade 12. The few examples of excerpts selected as responses to the above question are as follows:

Participant 1 replied: *"No, I did not do Accounting as it was phased out from my school because of poor performance by grade 12 learners in previous years."*

Another participant responded as follows: *"No, I have not done Accounting in grade 12."*

From this, it can be inferred that pre-service teachers who did not take Accounting in grade 12 and failed to understand the financial literacy lessons that are part of the Accounting component of EMS may find it difficult to teach the EMS subject to the learners the subject matter effectively.

The second question asked to participants was as follows: What are the reasons for NOT studying Accounting at University?

The few listed excerpts below are their responses to the question above.

Participant 3 answered, *"Well I know Accounting but it is difficult for me to explain it to another person, so that is why I chose not to do it."*

Participant 4 replied, *"I chose not to pursue Accounting at university because I have a stronger interest in other subjects like Business Studies and Economics. Accounting felt too technical for me and somehow challenging and I did not see myself working in a field that requires deep accounting knowledge."*

Participant 5 gave the answer as follows: *"I figured out that my strength is more extreme in the theory of Economics and Business Studies than calculations in Accounting. Accounting was always a bit challenging for me, so that's why I decided not to do it. Financial Literacy topic(s) was problematic for me."*

Participant 6 responded, *"I did not do Accounting at university because it requires mathematical skills so it deters me who struggles with math and I prefer non-numeric subjects."*

It seems that some pre-service teachers found it difficult to apply their knowledge and instructional strategies in a way that would help students understand the learning material. This demonstrates that they lack the necessary preparation from their learning institution and enrolled programmes to effectively impart their knowledge to others, particularly learners. Some of the

²⁴ K. Maree, *First Step in Research* (Pretoria: Van Schilk, 2007).

²⁵ Victoria Clarke and Virginia Braun, "Thematic Analysis," *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 12, no. 3 (May 4, 2017): 297 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2016.1262613>.

²⁶ Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 79.

participants confirm that their accounting and financial literacy in the context of EMS's topic understanding is either non-existent or very restricted. The pre-service teachers in the cohort who are not proficient in basic Accounting and financial literacy within EMS may have an impact on learners' academic achievement and teaching abilities because they are ill-equipped in their pre-service training to teach the EMS subject.

The third question was raised to draw the pre-service teachers' reflections on what problematic areas or topics were difficult for them in the EMS subject. They responded that they struggle to present topics involving financial literacy in the EMS subject. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 expressed the following statements, *"The accounting section of EMS, especially understanding debits and credits, the general ledger, and financial statements, was quite challenging. I struggled with the practical application of these concepts. Balance sheet, it was difficult to explain and balance it, also learners were failing to grasp it. Financial Literacy topic(s) was problematic for me."*

The aforementioned reflections make it evident that pre-service teachers struggle with financial literacy because they lack the accounting and financial literacy knowledge necessary to teach the EMS subject in an effective manner.

The purpose of the fourth question was to elicit from the participants how comfortable and competent they felt teaching the EMS subject. The question was as follows: What lesson topics are making you uncomfortable teaching the EMS subject? Of the six participants, five of them reported that teaching the financial literacy lesson topic in EMS makes them feel quite uncomfortable. One of the participants replied, *"As much as it is not a difficult learning area, there are topics such as financial literacy which give a bit of a problem in teaching and learning of EMS."* The second participant said, *"The Financial Literacy part is uncomfortable for me to teach EMS. Teaching financial accounting topics such as balance sheets, income statements, and the trial balance makes me uncomfortable because I do not feel confident with the technical details."*

The participants stated that they are uncomfortable teaching financial literacy in EMS since it necessitates a deep comprehension of accounting ideas and principles in order to improve learners' comprehension.

As a means to gather factors from the participants that make them not competent in teaching the EMS subject, the following question was probed: What factors are making you uncomfortable teaching EMS? The participants shared the following responses:

Participant 1 replied, *"I feel that my knowledge is not enough to guide learners effectively."*

Participants 2 and 3 said, *"The lack of deep understanding and confidence in the accounting aspects of the EMS curriculum, particularly in handling financial statements and balance sheets, makes me uncomfortable. I feel that my knowledge is not enough to guide learners effectively. The fact that I did not do Accounting in high school made it a bit difficult for me to teach some EMS lessons as they often require Accounting skills. More exposure to teaching methods specific to EMS would also boost my confidence."*

Participant 5 replied, *"I think it would be better if lecturers do not skip certain topics/lessons as they assume that we already understand them. The incompleteness of the syllabus by way of skipping some of the topics could impact our teaching competencies when we are in schools for example during teaching practice. The quality lecturers of EMS is a question to me because if we were provided sufficient support and reflective teaching practices, I would have not experienced challenges."*

From their answers, it became clear that the programme in which they are registered does not provide for the capping of pre-service teachers who did not do Accounting or missed to cover and comprehend financial literacy in their secondary education. Additionally, it was discovered that the lecturers had omitted some portions from the EMS module. Had these sections not been omitted, they would have gained the necessary content expertise to teach all the EMS subject topics to learners successfully and with confidence during teaching practice.

DISCUSSION

Implications of Programme Structure to Students

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) report stated that the inability of institutions to meet minimum standards of intellectual credibility in terms of the relationship between theoretical, practical, and

experiential knowledge, internal coherence, and alignment with purpose is the root cause of the greatest problems in program design.²⁷ This claim seems to imply that universities, through their faculty and staff members in units, have a significant influence and mandate in creating programmes that are made available with the knowledge of who will benefit from them when they are finished. This statement suggests that gaps in the planned programmes could be filled in to give the students or applicants access to relevant and effective programmes after staff members have completed tracer studies and collaborated with their advisory boards made up of various relevant stakeholders who have contributed to the programme design.

Banks et al. contend that the objective of the teacher education programme is to equip student teachers with a set of competencies, which might be idiosyncratic and context-specific, to cope with the complex challenges in their everyday teaching work. In the data collected, it was raised by one of the participants that he struggled to share or deliver the content to another one in an understandable manner.²⁸ In this case, Banks, et al., the proper programme structure if it is appropriately followed by lecturers and pre-service teachers helps the latter to put their learning from the teacher education programme into practice.²⁹

Some researchers like Cheng, Cheng and Tang are of the opinion that programmes' theories should be put into practice in real situations to address or prevent the economic, social, political, technological, and legal issues of the countries by students and lecturers.³⁰ This implies the content offered in that programme should be able to capacitate the students to apply it to their workplaces. Pre-service teachers should be able to demonstrate and apply their competence to learners through good lesson presentation if they have mastered the relevant skills and teaching modalities in addition to the learning material.

When there is a content gap in the programme structure, students experience challenges in executing their expected duties in the classroom context. It was divulged by the majority of participants that they encounter difficulties in EMS teaching and learning in the financial literacy part due to the insufficient or lack thereof subject content knowledge in their previous and current studies. Additionally, the lack of special support for individuals who have never understood financial literacy and have not completed accounting coursework in their prior studies exacerbates their levels of incompetence in EMS teaching and learning, which has an adverse effect on students' learning.

Incompletion of the Syllabus Coverage by Lecturers in the Form of Skipping Certain Topics

The syllabus for each module or subject in educational institutions consists of themes that must be addressed in order to meet the objectives of the course, which include better learning, efficient instruction, completed assessment tasks with guidance and feedback, and enhanced learning outcomes. Effective lecturers are necessary for the accomplishment of the learning outcomes set in the course outlines of the modules. According to this statement, students especially those who depend entirely on their lecturers for interaction tend not to exhibit the expected graduate attributes when lecturers fail to fulfil the learning objectives of the courses by not finishing the topics that are meant to be covered in that year of study. In light of this assertion, Shower contends that teachers' curriculum approaches and offering practices have an impact on student learning and motivation.³¹ The lecturers who are underperforming by not finishing the curriculum tasks assigned to them ought to be aware that this is negatively affecting the professional competencies and development of their students especially those who rely on interaction with lecturers in accessing the required information. It should be noted such a cohort of lecturers is depriving their

²⁷ Crain Soudien, *Report on the National Review of Academic and Professional Programmes in Education* (Council on Higher Education, 2010).

²⁸ Frank Banks et al., "Teacher Early Professional Development: The Context," in *Early Professional Development for Teachers*, ed. F. Banks and A.S. Mayes (David Fulton Publishers, 2012), 1–9.

²⁹ Banks et al., "Teacher Early Professional Development: The Context."

³⁰ May M.H. Cheng, Annie Y.N. Cheng, and Sylvia Y.F. Tang, "Closing the Gap between the Theory and Practice of Teaching: Implications for Teacher Education Programmes in Hong Kong," *Journal of Education for Teaching* 36, no. 1 (February 25, 2010): 91–104, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02607470903462222>.

³¹ Saad F. Shower, "Classroom-Level Curriculum Development: EFL Teachers as Curriculum-Developers, Curriculum-Makers and Curriculum-Transmitters," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 26, no. 2 (2010): 173–84.

students of important knowledge and pertinent teaching strategies that are essential for their learning and expertise in their areas of specialisation.

Ibrahim conducted a study in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and discovered that the country's modular-based curriculum and pedagogical approaches were to blame for students' inability to apply their knowledge in science and mathematics.³² As it was cited by one of the participants some lecturers skip some of the topics under the impression that at the study level for the pre-service teachers, they do not see any need to teach the skipped topics. If the pre-service teachers in this practice have some content that they have not been exposed to either by their lecturers or by themselves during their pre-service training as professional teachers, they will leave the universities with inadequate content understanding. The data analysis revealed and validated those individuals lacking financial literacy content experience discomfort and inability to manage the EMS subject effectively. This could lead to recurrent consequences for learners, as they may choose to omit or misrepresent topics due to inadequate content knowledge. This suggests that the pre-service teachers in question may not learn as much from their lecturers if they choose such an approach. It is noteworthy to mention that, if lecturers give student instructors an opportunity to gain the necessary content knowledge for professional development, teacher preparation may have an impact on class design, presentation, and assessment as significant teaching duties.³³ To sum up, Ibrahim and Alhosani propose that curricular coverage can impact students' academic and professional outcomes, particularly when it enables learners to apply their knowledge to real-world scenarios and serves as a performance indicator of lecturers where their pre-service teachers are indicating their readiness for full engagement in society.³⁴

Discussion Summary

The research has revealed that the lecturers' duties to pre-service teachers are crucial in shaping them to be effective, relevant, and impactful teachers to enhance the quality of education in schools. The courses offered play a critical role in the graduates' attributes. This implies that if the programmes or courses are irrelevant to the education of graduates, the expected graduate attributes cannot be achieved and the societal problems cannot be addressed. It is advisable that regular programme and module reviews are prioritised by the universities to ensure that they offer relevant and impactful programmes aligned to the countries' needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings expressed in the data analysis of this paper, it is recommended that the Department of Housing which is responsible for the BEd SP & FET with specialisation in the commerce stream needs to re-visit its programme structure with the intention to include the financial literacy part in Business Studies module to fill in the content knowledge gap to all the affected pre-service teachers. It is further recommended that the student evaluation for the teaching of lecturers be done and monitored quarterly to assess the gaps affecting the pre-service teachers for early intervention. The co-teaching of the module is suggested to overcome the problematic areas experienced by both lecturers and pre-service teachers for scholarship of teaching and learning purposes. The lecturers should be encouraged to make use of the comments and suggestions made by students in those evaluation forms. Additionally, the tracer studies involving pre-service teachers are recommended for scholarly teaching and improved student learning.

CONCLUSION

The thrust of this research was to assess the content knowledge on Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) teaching and learning for second-year student-teachers of one selected South African University. It can be concluded that relevant background content knowledge of EMS is critical to student-teachers to enable them to deliver their lessons to learners appropriately. It should be avoided skipping the topics of

³² Ali Ibrahim and Najwa Alhosani, "Impact of Language and Curriculum on Student International Exam Performances in the United Arab Emirates," *Cogent Education* 7, no. 1 (2020): 1808284.

³³ Anne K Morris and James Hiebert, "Effects of Teacher Preparation Courses: Do Graduates Use What They Learned to Plan Mathematics Lessons?," *American Educational Research Journal* 54, no. 3 (2017): 524–67.

³⁴ Ibrahim and Alhosani, "Impact of Language and Curriculum on Student International Exam Performances in the United Arab Emirates."

the subject on the basis of the assumption that the students might have covered in their previous grades. By doing so, in some instances, it has adverse effects on the students' academic performance, graduate attributes and success rate. The reflections and recommendations about the lecturer's teaching style and practice furnished by students should be incorporated into the improvement plans of the Faculty or College offering teacher education programmes for enhanced learning and scholarly teaching.

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