

Implications of Differences and Similarities of Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy

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ABSTRACT The differences and similarities between the learning areas Mathematics and Mathematical Literacy have been debated. Nine years after the introduction of Mathematical Literacy in South Africa, this debate is still raging. This paper reports on an analysis of teachers' views on mathematics (M) and Mathematical Literacy (ML) tasks, in some selected schools in Gauteng, South Africa. In this paper, four (M) and four (ML) teachers from four schools, with contrasting backgrounds, were asked to state their views and experiences of M and ML tasks. The findings revealed that no clear distinctions were made between M and ML tasks as seen by teachers who participated in the study. Those tasks, which were part of mathematics, were deemed to emanate from ML papers. Similarly, tasks that were taken from ML papers were viewed as M tasks. Therefore, the researchers recommend that, in order to minimise confusion, ML teachers should be adequately trained in the content of Mathematical Literacy in the way Mathematical Literacy differs from Mathematics.