

## PEDAGOGICAL GUIDANCE FOR SOUTH AFRICAN CONSUMER STUDIES EDUCATION

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### OPSOMMING

Verbruikerstudie, wat as vak in Suid-Afrikaanse hoërskole aangebied word, het die potensiaal om betekenisvol by te dra tot die ontwikkeling van entrepreneuriese kennis en vaardighede in leerders. Hoewel hierdie vak kompleks en uniek is, bestaan daar onvoldoende pedagogiese leiding vir onderwysers wat Verbruikerstudie aanbied. Die vergelyking van die Verbruikerstudiekurrikulum met verskeie internasionale kurrikula het bevind dat volop pedagogiese leiding bestaan vir vergelykbare en verwante internasionale vakke. 'n Indiepte literatuursoektog is onderneem om vas te stel watter pedagogiese rigtinggewers byeengebring kan word vir Suid-Afrikaanse Verbruikerstudie-onderderrig vanuit verwante internasionale vakke. Verskeie aspekte wat gebruik kan word as grondslag vir die samestelling van breë pedagogiese riglyne vir Verbruikerstudie-onderderrig is geïdentifiseer ten opsigte van fundamentele beginsels, die onderrigbenadering, en voorkeur onderrig-leer strategieë wat in die vak gebruik behoort te word. Daar word aanbeveel dat pedagogiese leiding aan Verbruikerstudie-onderwysers beskikbaar gestel behoort te word en dat verdere navorsing gedoen behoort te word om pedagogie vir Verbruikerstudie te verfyn.

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### INTRODUCTION

Consumer Studies as a secondary school subject is distinctive among related subjects due to its focus on “the consumer”, as opposed to the focus of several related subjects, such as Home Economics or Family and Consumer Sciences, on “the family” (Du Toit, 2014:19). Seven content topics and five practical options

are included in the Consumer Studies curriculum, with entrepreneurial learning stated as key concept in both theory and practical content (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011:8-9). Adding to the complexity of Consumer Studies as subject, is its dynamic character: the constant evolving of the subject to include global issues and reflect up-to-date information related to consumers, such as changing consumer laws (DBE, 2011:30).

Comprehensive pedagogical guidance for teachers is vital (Umalusi, 2014:48) in a subject as complex as Consumer Studies. The potential entrepreneurial learning offered to learners in Consumer Studies can also only be attained if adequate pedagogical guidance is offered to teachers in the subject (Du Toit, 2014:117; Koekemoer & Booyse, 2013; Umalusi, 2012a: 11; 50; 51; 52). However, an in-depth analysis of the Consumer Studies Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) found the document to be lacking in pedagogical guidance (Umalusi, 2012a:36, 49), indicating an urgent need for the development of such guidance for Consumer Studies teachers.

### PROBLEM STATEMENT

Pedagogy should not be reduced to mere methodology (Segall, 2004). Both the Oxford Dictionaries Online (2013) and Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2013) define the term “pedagogy” as the method and practice/ activities of teaching, referring specifically to academic subjects. The Collins English Dictionary (2013) expands the definition to include the “principles, practice, or profession of teaching”. Pedagogy involves more than only teaching-learning strategies, but also the approach to how the subject is taught (or learned) (Richardson, 2003), as well as the principles fundamental to learning in that subject. The pedagogy of a subject consequently has to do with the “how” of the learning of that subject, that is, how learning is and should be constructed (Richardson, 2003).

In a report regarding the state of the South African National Curriculum, teachers pleaded for more guidance and direction in “how to teach” their subjects (Dada *et al*, 2009:48). The

recommendations of that report (Dada *et al*, 2009:62) included that subject-specific pedagogical approaches were to be incorporated in the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) documents for each subject. Unfortunately, this recommendation did not realise in the CAPS policy documents for Consumer Studies and these teachers still have no documented guidance regarding appropriate pedagogical approaches for their subject (Umalusi, 2012a:39). In a recent study benchmarking the South African Consumer Studies CAPS with curricula of related subjects internationally, this lack of pedagogical guidance was mentioned as a serious concern which needed to be addressed (Umalusi, 2014:48).

“The consumer” serves as the central concept throughout the seven content topics<sup>1</sup> in the Consumer Studies curriculum, with the aim of teaching learners about responsible and informed consumer behaviour in respect of the various topics (such as food, clothing and housing) (DBE, 2011:8). An in-depth curriculum analysis found subject content in the South African Consumer Studies curriculum to be broad (covering a multitude of topics and sub-topics) and moderately deep (referring to the depth of coverage required of each topic and sub-topic) (Umalusi, 2012a:22), and covering more topics than related subjects internationally (Umalusi, 2012b:14). Consumer Studies additionally offers learners the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills regarding small-scale production, entrepreneurship and the marketing of quality products in one of five<sup>2</sup> different practical options (DBE, 2011:8-9). Entrepreneurial learning is particularly relevant in the South African context where unemployment is a significant problem (DBE, 2011:22; Umalusi, 2014:47). Consumer Studies is thus a complex and valuable subject which requires clear, unambiguous and succinct pedagogical guidance for its teachers to support them in the effective facilitation of learning in the subject (Booyse *et al*, 2013).

The Consumer Studies curriculum however lacks pedagogical guidelines to support teachers in the effective implementation thereof. The distinctive and dynamic character of the subject adds to the conundrum. The closest comparable subjects to Consumer Studies inter-

nationally were found to be Home Economics (offered in countries such as Botswana, Namibia, Malta and Australia) and Family and Consumer Sciences (offered in the United States of America) (Umalusi, 2014:3). Both these international subjects include practical options in their curricula as well as a broad scope of topics similar to the topics contained in the Consumer Studies curriculum, though the focus in both Home Economics and Family and Consumer Sciences is on “the family” as central concept, as opposed to “the consumer” as focus in Consumer Studies.

Though pedagogical guidance is available in variable amounts in curriculum documents for internationally comparable subjects, curricula are designed for specific contexts, hindering transferability to different environments (Du Toit, 2014:23). A broader approach was therefore employed to gain insight into pedagogies suggested for international subjects comparable to Consumer Studies by investigating literature based on research regarding this topic.

The following question was therefore formulated to guide the research:

*What pedagogical direction might be gleaned for South African Consumer Studies education from research regarding related subjects internationally?*

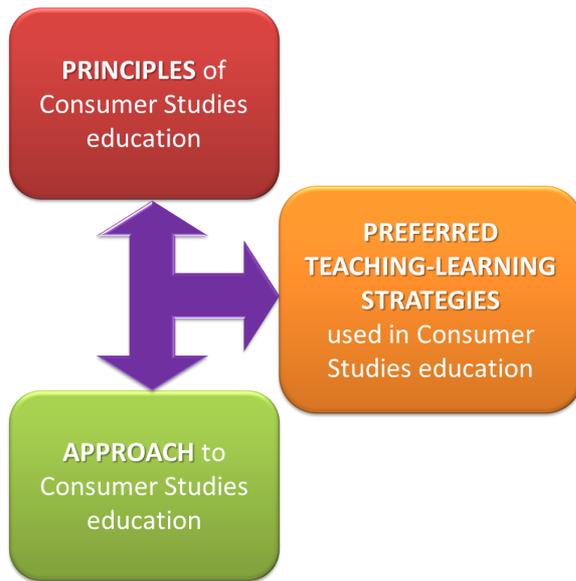
## RESEARCH ORIENTATION

Pedagogy may be viewed through several lenses, with each providing a different perspective on its interpretation. This research was conducted from a constructivist point of view, therefore, in the context of this study, pedagogy refers to the strategies, activities, principles or practices which best support knowledge construction in Consumer Studies education. Correctly applied pedagogies could help in the preparation of teachers, as well as to assess the appropriateness of learning in their subject (Segall, 2004) and should be subject-specific (Lefoka, 2011:265).

The aim of this article is to report on an investigation into the principles, approaches and preferred teaching-learning strategies utilised internationally in subjects related to Consumer

<sup>1</sup> The seven theory content topics contained in the Consumer Studies CAPS are: (1) The consumer; (2) Food and nutrition; (3) Design elements and principles; (4) Fibres and fabrics; (5) Clothing; (6) Housing; and (7) Entrepreneurship (DBE, 2011:8).

<sup>2</sup> The five practical options, from which learners may choose, are: (1) Food production; (2) Clothing production; (3) Soft Furnishing production; (4) Knitting and crocheting; and (5) Patchwork quilting by hand (DBE, 2011:8).



**FIGURE 1: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEDAGOGICAL PRINCIPLES, PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH AND PREFERRED TEACHING-LEARNING STRATEGIES IN CONSUMER STUDIES EDUCATION**

Studies, which could be used for the scaffolding of pedagogical guidance for Consumer Studies teachers in South Africa. To achieve this aim, the remainder of the article is structured as follows: The next section contains the conceptual-theoretical framework on which the investigation was based, followed by an overview of the international situation regarding pedagogical guidelines for teachers in subjects such as Consumer Studies. The article concludes with a discussion of the findings and recommendations.

### CONCEPTUAL-THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Educational systems which perform well in international comparative testing are structured around clear, rigorous and measurable curricula, supported by teacher training and classroom practice, among other elements (Donnelly, 2007). Teachers in such systems have a clear conceptual understanding of their subjects and spend more time on classroom pedagogy and lesson preparation (Donnelly, 2007). Effective teachers possess many qualities, including pedagogical competencies, subject-specific content knowledge and appropriate classroom practices (Fox *et al*, 2010:8). Teachers' understanding and implementation of subject-specific pedagogies therefore contribute to the successful implementation of the curriculum.

The key concepts of this study were "Consumer Studies education", "pedagogical guidance" and "preferred teaching-learning strategies". Consumer Studies education refers to the subject Consumer Studies, offered in South African secondary schools, and aspects related to the teaching and learning thereof. Pedagogical guidance indicates the specification of guidance available for effective teaching of the subject (Umalusi, 2014:33), including the "principles, practice, or profession of tea-ching" (Collins English Dictionary, 2013).

In this study, three pedagogical elements were focused on, namely the principles fundamental to teaching-learning in Consumer Studies, the approach to how Consumer Studies as subject is taught (or learned), and teaching-learning strategies to be used in Consumer Studies. Principles (of teaching-learning) refer to fundamental or basic realities on which theories can be based and influences actions (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014). Pedagogical principles are perceived as being fundamental to the theories which underpin Consumer Studies. The approach (to a subject) is defined as taking "preliminary steps toward accomplishment or full knowledge" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014). Such an approach describes the theories or methodology underpinning the subject. Preferred teaching-learning strategies constitute methods utilised in the construction of learning in Consumer Studies, which would sustain the principles and approach of the subject. These three elements are interrelated, as illustrated by Figure 1. The pedagogical principles inform the approach in the subject and both these elements are sustained through the implementation of preferred teaching-learning strategies.

The following information was uncovered in the Consumer Studies CAPS regarding pedagogy, though not specified as pedagogy or as guidelines.

#### Principles fundamental to teaching-learning in Consumer Studies

The curriculum document for Consumer Studies describes this subject as follows:

Consumer Studies teaches learners about responsible and informed consumer behaviour in respect of food, clothing, housing, furnishings and household equipment. Consumer Studies aims to teach learners to make informed decisions, and to make optimal use of resources to improve human well-being. In the practical component of the subject learners have oppor-

tunities to produce and market different products. (DBE, 2011:8).

Though this is not stated explicitly anywhere in the document, the overarching principle in the Consumer Studies curriculum is “the consumer” and is found in all seven of the theory topics per grade (Umalusi, 2012a:33). Entrepreneurial knowledge and skills development is the second key principle of the Consumer Studies curriculum (Umalusi, 2014:3, 21, 24), though this too is not explicitly stated. Both consumer issues and entrepreneurial learning are key aspects to address the socio-economic problems in South-Africa (Umalusi, 2014:21), validating the importance of Consumer Studies for learners in this particular context.

Though no subject-specific principles are described in the Consumer Studies curriculum, a list of generic principles underpinning the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* has been included in the document (DBE, 2011: 4-5). These principles would also be applicable to Consumer Studies education. Several of the principles listed, such as social transformation, human rights and valuing indigenous systems, have a political rationale. Two of the generic principles might however, be considered as exploitable to develop subject-specific Consumer Studies pedagogical guidelines, specifically:

Active and critical learning: encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths, and

High knowledge and high skills: the minimum standards of knowledge and skills to be achieved at each grade are specified and set high, achievable standards in all subjects (sic.) (DBE, 2011:4).

Still, generic principles are not sufficient to guide teachers to effectively teach a complex subject such as Consumer Studies and it is left to the discretion of teachers to decide how to approach the teaching of the subject (Umalusi, 2012a:35-36).

### **The approach to teaching-learning in Consumer Studies education**

The Consumer Studies CAPS is a content-based document, designed around seven theory topics, indicating the minimum subject content to be covered in each year within the phase

(DBE, 2011:8; 14-15; Umalusi, 2012a:47; Umalusi, 2014:11). Additionally, the practical work and theory prescribed in the curriculum for one production option has to be completed concurrently (DBE, 2011:8). The simultaneous teaching and learning of theoretical content, as well as practical content and skills (which are not necessarily related), create a complex teaching situation. Theoretical content learned in certain topics and sub-topics need to be implemented in other content sections and practical tasks (DBE, 2011:22). An example of this is the sub-topic “costing of products” taught as part of theory content in Grade 10, which has to be implemented in all practical production options across all grades, such as practical lesson 9: Costing of a given recipe (Grade 10) (DBE, 2011:39) as well as in “Costing of a menu and calculating the selling price per person” in Grade 12 (DBE, 2011:42). The need for an integrated, holistic approach to teaching and learning in Consumer Studies education is obvious from this example, but has not been stated as a pedagogical requirement in the subject.

The single mention of an approach to teaching-learning in the Consumer Studies CAPS, is the reference to *Active and critical learning: encouraging an active and critical approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths*, listed as part of the generic principles of the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* (DBE, 2011:4). This generic principle might thus serve as a general guideline for the approach to teaching-learning in Consumer Studies. This statement is still imprecise though and does not contain subject-specific pedagogical guidance for Consumer Studies teachers.

A previous Consumer Studies curriculum document (Department of Education (DoE), 2008:7) as well as two other studies found that “learner-centred teaching is an important teaching approach included in the document” (Umalusi, 2012a:5), and that Consumer Studies actively involves learners in linking learned content and skills to real-life situations through hands-on problem-solving (Du Toit, 2014:1). This approach is however not explicitly stated anywhere in the CAPS document currently in use, though it might be inferred.

### **Preferred teaching-learning strategies in Consumer Studies education**

Subject-specific strategies to support effective teaching-learning are not included in the Consu-

mer Studies curriculum. A single reference to the utilisation of assessment and formative feedback to improve the process of learning and teaching was found in the document (DBE, 2011:60), which might be construed as a “strategy” to foster teaching and learning.

The Consumer Studies CAPS does however, contain a section with the heading “The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12”, which aims to produce learners that are able to (DBE, 2011:5): solve problems, think critically and creatively, collaborate and communicate, organise and display management and research skills, and who show environmental, social and global awareness (DBE, 2011:5). Inclusive teaching to support the diversity of learners in South African schools is also mentioned briefly (DBE, 2011:5). As with other elements mentioned in this study regarding the CAPS, these learner competencies are generic, and not subject-specific. However, these learner competencies (and the reference to inclusive teaching) could be considered as potential parameters which could be utilised to formulate more specific pedagogical guidelines regarding teaching-learning strategies.

Literature on related subjects internationally was then explored in an effort to gather information which might be utilised to develop “clear, unambiguous and succinct guidance regarding preferred pedagogies for Consumer Studies”, as was recommended by Booyse *et al* (2013).

## RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The aim of the investigation was to identify elements in research and literature on Consumer Studies and subjects related to Consumer Studies (specifically Home Economics and Family and Consumer Sciences), which might be utilised for the development of pedagogical guidance in South African Consumer Studies education.

This qualitative investigation was conducted from a constructivist point of view. Obtainable literature regarding pedagogies used in Home Economics and Family and Consumer Sciences, was investigated, since these two subjects were found to be the closest subjects related to Consumer Studies (Umalusi, 2014:3). The broad diversity of content and structuring of curricula for these subjects internationally (Umalusi, 2014:66), led to a decision to focus on obtainable international literature regarding pedagogy for these two subjects, rather than on

curriculum documentation. Obtainable literature on research regarding Consumer Studies education in the South African context was studied as well. Information was then analysed iteratively to develop and expound upon findings from the initial (Umalusi, 2014) curriculum analyses, which utilised purposely designed instruments to investigate several curriculum dimensions, one of which was the specification of pedagogical guidance.

Broad categories were used to group pedagogical guidelines regarding (1) principles fundamental to learning in subjects such as Consumer Studies; (2) the approach to how the subjects related to Consumer Studies is taught; and (3) preferred teaching-learning strategies utilised in subjects related to Consumer Studies. Inductive interpretation was employed to make meaning of the findings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following findings emerged about pedagogical principles, approaches and teaching-learning strategies utilised in subjects related to Consumer Studies. The findings are discussed in relation to available literature regarding Consumer Studies education and its relevance to the South African context.

### Principles fundamental to teaching-learning in international subjects related to Consumer Studies

Smith (2013) suggests that “social issues of the times should inform the directions” of education in subjects in this field. Meaningful, real-life issues should form the focus of the Family and Consumer Sciences curriculum to develop responsible, action-orientated citizens and is based on the principle of “teaching for personal and socially responsible action” (Laster & Johnson, 2001). Related to the principles suggested here, is the need which was identified for dynamic, lifelong learning by Consumer Studies teachers to enable them to teach current and up-to-date subject content (Du Toit, 2014:21). The transference of Consumer Studies learning (both content and skills) to real-life contexts is seen as fundamental (Du Toit, 2014:21) and links to this information.

Sustainable consumption surfaced as a guiding principle in subjects such as Home Economics and Family and Consumer Sciences (Johnson, 2013; McGregor, 2009). Also addressed under the concept of “environmental sustainabili-

ty" (Smith & De Zwart, 2010), this core principle is used in Home Economics to develop responsible decision-making and sustainable consumption, addressing issues such as environmental impact, the conditions of production of products, as well as how products influence the consumers. The Consumer Studies CAPS conforms to this principle through including the following as part of the description of the subject: *Consumer Studies teaches learners about responsible and informed consumer behaviour...* (DBE, 2011:8), though it is not stated as a principle.

Learning in Home Economics should be useful to the learner, as well as the community within which the learner lives, and should contribute to the global community. Knowledge and skills developed in such subjects should be beneficial not only when they are learned, but ought to also contribute to preparing learners for the world of work (Smith & De Zwart, 2010). Street (2006) affirms that Home Economics content should be relevant to the current and future lives of learners.

A principle related to this, is that 21st century skills should be embedded in Consumer Studies education, to empower learners with the skills which they will need to function effectively in the present era (Du Toit, 2014:21). The development of learners in subjects like Family and Consumer Sciences should include cooperation and collaboration with members of society, as well as the world of work in order to prepare learners for their various life roles in a holistic manner (Way, 2010:60).

Though various elements which could be interpreted as pedagogical principles for subjects related to Consumer Studies were found in literature, the most recurrent ones relevant to the South African context are the following: subjects as dynamic as Consumer Studies should reflect current issues and relevant matters, a principle which might be attained through lifelong learning of Consumer Studies teachers. Sustainable consumption is a current, relevant issue, both worldwide and in South Africa, which should serve as guiding principle in Consumer Studies education. Knowledge and skills learned in Consumer Studies should be relevant to the lives of learners, as well as the communities they reside in. Such knowledge and skills should assist in the preparation of learners for their future careers, as well as for their optimal functioning in the 21st century.

However, suitable and clear guidance to support the two central principles inferred in the South African Consumer Studies curriculum, namely consumer issues and entrepreneurial learning, were not found. This was problematic, since an earlier study found that the preparation of Consumer Studies teachers in South Africa did not include extensive entrepreneurial learning (Koekemoer & Booyse, 2013). Amplifying the problem is the fact that teachers who are not specifically trained in entrepreneurial learning might hamper learners' understanding of this principle (Kunkwenzu, 2007:140).

### **The approach to teaching-learning in international subjects related to Consumer Studies**

In the benchmarking study conducted with regards to the South African Consumer Studies curriculum (Umalusi, 2014), the evaluators approved of the holistic, well-balanced approach favoured in the Singaporean and British Columbian curriculum documents. The nature of the subject, the context in which the learning takes place, the language of learning, the learner (and the 21st century skills needed by learners to cope in this era), the professional competency of the teacher, parental involvement, as well as utilising information technology to support teaching-learning, were all elements which contribute to such a holistic approach (Umalusi, 2014:35).

McGregor (2011) used a spider plant metaphor to accentuate Home Economics as a holistic, professional system, whereas Johnson (2013) emphasised this point by stating that the topics and themes embedded within Home Economics should "explicitly, unambiguously" be connected within and across grades. Two pedagogical approaches which could be utilised to develop holistic pedagogical guidance for South African Consumer Studies educators were identified from literature, namely the constructivist approach and the critical science-based approach.

In a constructivist approach to teaching-learning, learners construct their own knowledge and understanding by using problem-solving, comprehension and authentic or real-life experiences to scaffold learning (Christie, 2005; Smith, 2009). Content is presented holistically, including the development of learners' knowledge construction (not mere knowledge reproduction), skills and attitudes (Christie, 2005). Reflection (metacognition) and critical thinking play an important part in the

constructivist approach and students are challenged to do more than “just” learn knowledge content (Christie, 2005; Smith, 2009).

The following characteristics of constructivist pedagogical approaches are regarded as useful in the South African context (Smith, 2009 quoting Richardson, 2003):

- learner-centred learning;
- collaboration between individuals to develop a shared understanding of content;
- incorporating content knowledge into the learning in various ways;
- extending learners to develop their learning and understanding beyond content;
- developing learners’ metacognition; and
- support of future learning.

The philosophical shift in the pedagogical approach for Home Economics toward constructivism was also reported by Street (2006) who mentioned that such an approach included more learner-centred aspects such as “encouraging students to clarify their own ideas, make their own decisions, use critical analysis, reflect on their learning, use research tools and strategies, explore issues, encourages discussion, group work, and ensuring higher order tasks involving the generation, application, analysis, and synthesis of ideas”.

Though the critical science-based approach focuses more on consumerism (consuming rather than producing products), it also utilises hands-on activities for the development of integrated knowledge, skills, problem-solving and critical thinking (Montgomery, 2010). Real-life problems are addressed through integrated learning, including social and cognitive skills (Montgomery, 2010). In line with this approach, Smith (2010) describes Home Economics as “a form of citizen education”, which promotes critical thinking and moral reasoning to solve problems to the benefit of society.

Both the constructivist and the critical science-based approaches suggest a holistic, learner-centred methodology which utilise critical thinking and integrated knowledge and skills development to construct solutions for real-life problems. Utilising either of these approaches as guidance for Consumer Studies pedagogy would support the realisation of the aims of the *National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12* (DBE, 2011:4) to deliver learners with skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, communication, or social awareness. In addi-

tion, both approaches align with South African research (Du Toit, 2014:1; Koekemoer & Booyse, 2013; Umalusi, 2012a:5) which endorses a learner-centred approach and is focused on real-life situations. It would also contribute to the facilitation of inclusive teaching in the diverse contexts found in South African schools.

### **Preferred teaching-learning strategies in international subjects related to Consumer Studies**

Teachers’ knowledge regarding subject-appropriate teaching-learning strategies and processes will foster more productive learning by learners (Pickard & Reichelt, 2008) and will enable them to provide more constructive feedback to learners (Street, 2006). Effective teaching of subject content knowledge and skills will make the learning more relevant to the lives of the learners (Umalusi, 2012:52). It is therefore imperative that educators receive clear, unambiguous pedagogical guidance in this regard.

The following preferable teaching-learning strategies in subjects related to Consumer Studies, were identified from the literature:

- develop collaborative and cooperative learning among learners, among teachers, and between learners and teachers (McGregor, 2009);
- require critical thinking (Erickson et al, 2010:175; McGregor, 2010);
- encourage equity among learners to support diversity (Thompson & Wheeler, 2010:240);
- reflect and consider global knowledge (Spires, et al, 2012:6);
- entail hands-on, practical application of knowledge (Smith & De Zwart, 2010);
- expect independent and continued lifelong learning in the real world (Shamsid-Deen & Smith, 2006);
- necessitate problem-solving (Fox & Klemme, 2010:3; Erickson et al, 2010:175; Savery, 2006) and
- utilise learner-centred learning, which connects learning to real-life (Lefoka, 2011:87; McGregor, 2009; Smith & De Zwart, 2011).

Though this seems like an extensive list of requirements, it might be constructive to consider these requirements as guidelines for the identification of preferred teaching-learning strategies for a subject as complex as Consumer Studies. Contextual teaching and learning

and action-orientated learning were identified as strategies successfully implemented in subjects related to Consumer Studies and which adhere to most of the requirements listed here.

Smith (2007:8-15; 2010) describes four contextual teaching-learning strategies in detail, selected on their prior use and compatibility to the subject matter in Family and Consumer Sciences, namely problem-based learning, project-based learning, inquiry-based learning and cooperative learning. These four strategies were found to have various advantages in the teaching and learning of Family and Consumer Sciences, including that they helped learners to connect learning content to real-life situations subject matter was mastered to a better degree and problem-solving and higher-order thinking skills were promoted. The context in which the teaching-learning takes place is also considered to be critical in the implementation of these strategies (Smith, 2010).

Hitch and Youat (2002:172) recommend the use of action-orientated learning strategies in Family and Consumer Sciences, citing reasons such as increased learner involvement, more focused and deeper learning and understanding, increased learner responsibility for learning, creative thinking, problem-solving, learner motivation, collaboration, learning-through-doing, creating challenges and accommodating different learning styles (Hitch & Youatt, 2002:171-174). Role-play, educational games and simulation of life experiences (amongst others) are discussed as action-orientated strategies. Debriefing or reflection at the end of such action-orientated strategies is important to further support learning (Helle *et al*, 2006; Hitch & Youatt, 2002:200).

Teaching-learning strategies can however not be considered in isolation. In the 21st century, two issues closely related to teaching-learning strategies deserve at least some mention here. Erickson *et al* (2010:175) recommend that resources (in relation to teaching-learning) should be managed responsibly (sustainable consumption, considering the environment in such selections), and that technology should be utilised to support teaching-learning in Family and Consumer Sciences. These same two issues emerged during the Umalusi Consumer Studies benchmarking research, in the Kenyan Home Science curriculum document which mentions that teachers are expected to improvise materials and equipment, economically utilising local resources and that they

should incorporate "electronic media" to enhance teaching-learning (Umalusi, 2014:35).

Pedagogical strategies to develop essential 21st century skills in learners should include technology of some kind (Ho, 2010:50). Utilising technology (such as social media) in Home Economics facilitates authentic learning, boosts learner involvement, promotes global citizenship, improves learner interest and strengthens communication skills, both between students and between students and professionals in the field (Edstrom, 2013:192-193), thereby supporting the principles underpinning the subject.

The teaching-learning strategies that emerged would advance the principles suggested for Consumer Studies education, specifically the principle of learning arranged around real-life issues. The development of various 21st century skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving which is embedded in these teaching-learning strategies, adds to their suitability for use in Consumer Studies. In addition, these skills form part of the list of expected competencies suggested in the Consumer Studies CAPS (DBE, 2011:5), further signifying their pedagogical relevance. Both contextual teaching and learning and action-orientated learning would advance the holistic, learner-centred approach suggested for subjects such as Consumer Studies in the literature. Utilising technology and considering the impact of selecting resources to support teaching-learning, would uphold the principle of sustainable consumption and developing additional 21st century skills.

## CONCLUSIONS

Consumer Studies teachers need clear, unambiguous and detailed pedagogical guidance to facilitate the teaching of this complex and unique subject. Though such guidance is absent in the curriculum documentation, much insight was gleaned from international literature regarding preferred pedagogy in subjects related to Consumer Studies.

Principles such as useful, life-relevant learning; transferability of learning to other contexts and the intentional development of 21st century skills should underpin Consumer Studies. The specific focus in the South African Consumer Studies curriculum on consumer issues and entrepreneurial learning necessitates the employment of these two elements as guiding principles in the subject.

A holistic, practical and learner-centred approach which links learning and content to real-life situations, utilising problem-solving and critical thinking, should be followed in Consumer Studies education. Constructivist or critical-science-based methodologies would be useful in scaffolding pedagogical guidance in this regard.

Action-orientated and contextual teaching-learning strategies are preferable in Consumer Studies education. Such strategies should intentionally include the fostering of 21st century skills in learners as part of their learning in the subject. Technology and sustainable practices should be employed to bolster the efficiency of these strategies to support teaching and learning in Consumer Studies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Subsequent to the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations can be made regarding pedagogical principles, approaches and preferred teaching-learning strategies to be used for Consumer Studies education.

Entrepreneurial learning is fundamental in South African Consumer Studies education and should underpin and inform pedagogy in the subject. Life-relevant learning, which is transferable to novel contexts, should be used as a pedagogical principle in Consumer Studies education. In addition, the fostering of 21st century skills as part of learning should be a guiding principle in Consumer Studies pedagogy and education.

Consumer Studies should be approached holistically and not be dealt with in topics and sub-topics or in separate units. A learner-centred approach should be followed where teachers facilitate, rather than teach the learning in the subject. Learners should be encouraged to utilise critical thinking and problem-solving skills to address real-life issues in Consumer Studies education.

Practical, action-orientated teaching-learning strategies should be utilised to support life-relevant and lifelong learning in Consumer Studies education. Rote memorisation of content should be strongly discouraged. In a country such as South Africa, with its many diverse learning environments, the context in which the learning takes place should be considered as significant when selecting teaching-learning strategies. Guidance should

be provided to teachers for the selection, integration and responsible utilisation of instructional technologies to support teaching-learning in Consumer Studies education. In support of this goal, the responsible and sustainable use of resources, including locally available assets, should be emphasised to assist teachers in schools with limited resources.

In conclusion: Consumer Studies as school subject can contribute greatly to the development of South African learners as responsible consumers with practical entrepreneurial skills. Clear pedagogical guidance is however needed to support Consumer Studies teachers in the teaching and learning thereof to realise the subject's full potential.

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<sup>3</sup> The three Umalusi studies will be published in one comprehensive report in November 2014, titled "What's in the CAPS package: Consumer Studies". The author did not have access to the comprehensive document at the time of publication of this paper.

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