INTRODUCTION

In 1995, shortly after the first democratic elections, numerous disparities and problems were exposed after the South African government executed a national audit on teaching. In 1997, the Department of Education (DoE) launched its new curriculum policy – *Curriculum 2005*(1) – which in its ideology, content and pedagogical approach strongly contrasted the curriculum that was used at that time (Umalusi, 2014b:11). *Curriculum 2005* drew from curriculum models being used in some highly developed countries and sought to place the South African curriculum among the most progressive international curricula.

(1) *Curriculum 2005* was introduced to the South African school system in 1998 to replace the system which was used up to that point. The new curriculum was intended to eradicate racial irregularities and to introduce a more learner-centred approach in schools (Alexander & November, 2010).
Consumer Studies was phased in to replace Home Economics as a subject in the Further Education and Training (FET)\(^\text{2}\) Phase in South African secondary schools. It was also intended to better align the Consumer Studies curriculum with international curricula and the changing needs of individuals in contemporary times. The focus of the subject shifted from the needs and wants of the family (in Home Economics) to the needs and wants of the consumer in the 21st century (in Consumer Studies) (Umalusi, 2014b:35).

In 2002, the curriculum was reconstructed once again into a Revised National Curriculum Statement, which was approved on 15 April 2002 and implemented in 2004 (DoE, 2003:5-6). This revised version became known as the National Curriculum Statement (NCS). In 2011, the NCS was reviewed yet again. The amended NCS is called the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DoE, 2009; Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011; Pinnock, 2011). On 28 December 2012, the approval of the regulations pertaining to the amended NCS for Grades R-12 was published in the Government Gazette No. 36041.

Regarding the subject title and the subject focus being specifically on consumers, the subject, Consumer Studies, could be considered unique. Research revealed no other country having the same subject, with the same name and precise scope as South African Consumer Studies. The international subjects with a similar scope were found to be Home Economics (in countries such as Botswana, Namibia, Malta and Australia), and Family and Consumer Sciences (in the United States of America). Though the broad scope of Home Economics, and Family and Consumer Sciences is often similar to that of Consumer Studies, the central focus in these subjects is on the family, with topics relating to the well-being of families and family members.

Some of the topics included in South African Consumer Studies were found to be separate subjects in other countries, for example Food Technology (in the United Kingdom), or Food and Health Subject (in Norway).

As indicated previously, this paper only reports on a part of the extensive research study – particularly on the research relating to Consumer Studies. The subsequent sections of this paper therefore only focus on the pedagogical guidance provided by the respective subject curricula, which were analysed in relation to Consumer Studies.

**BACKGROUND**

Pedagogy can be viewed through many lenses, each providing a different perspective on how it is interpreted. This research was conducted from a constructivist point of view, and for that reason, pedagogy in the context of this study refers to the methods, activities, principles or practices that best support the construction of knowledge and skills in Consumer Studies.

The importance of integrating subject “content knowledge and skills with pedagogically appropriate strategies and resources” was highlighted in the National Educational Standards, which was drawn up for Family and Consumer Sciences (i.e. a subject closely related to Consumer Studies) in the USA (Fox & Klemme, 2010:3). Teachers should be knowledgeable regarding the use of specific learning strategies to be able to understand how learning is constructed and to support productive learning (Pickard & Reichelt, 2008:196). In order to support optimal teaching-learning, teachers need the support of well-structured, clear, explicit and quantifiable curricula (Booyse et al., 2013), including clear pedagogical guidance.

In a report aimed at improving the South African national curriculum, teachers pleaded for more guidance and direction regarding “how to teach” their subjects (DoE, 2009:48). Some of the recommendations in the Ministerial Task Team report (DoE, 2009:62) referred to the importance of including subject-specific pedagogical approaches in curricula under review. In the case of Consumer Studies, it meant that subject-specific pedagogical approaches had to be incorporated in the amendments to the NCS CAPS documents for each subject in the South African national curriculum. These amendments came into effect in January 2012 (DBE, 2011:3).
Unfortunately, the CAPS documents for several FET subjects did not adhere to this recommendation (Umalusi, 2014a:59)(3), including the CAPS for Consumer Studies. In an overview reporting on research regarding the curriculum analysis of several FET subjects, it is noted that the curricula lack explicit guidance in terms of subject-specific pedagogy (Umalusi, 2014a:59). Other than proposing advice for dealing with inclusivity and diversity in teaching (DBE, 2011:5), suggestions for preferred pedagogical strategies to be used in the teaching of Consumer Studies, are inadequate in the CAPS.

Clear evidence was found in previous research that effective curricula should be well-designed, have clear aims, coherently include content and skills to be taught/learned, indicate preferred pedagogical approach(es) for the specific subject, and consider the context in which the learning will take place (Booyse et al., 2013:86). The benchmarking provided an opportunity to find information about pedagogical guidance in subjects similar to Consumer Studies, which might be useful in the South African context. It was evident that insights gained from this kind of pedagogical guidance provided in the curricula of countries with subjects similar to Consumer Studies, could be considered for inclusion in the South African subject, Consumer Studies, in order to enhance and support effective teaching.

However, the unique focus of Consumer Studies on the consumer (mentioned in the introduction), as well as the divergence in implementation phases in different countries, make benchmarking difficult. Both these difficulties were acknowledged as limitations in the research.

In South Africa, Consumer Studies is only introduced in the last (FET) Phase of the secondary school education. In countries such as Japan, Norway, and the Canadian province of British Columbia, similar subjects are introduced from a young age in much earlier school phases.

In other countries, subjects comparable to Consumer Studies are only offered in selected phases of the education system, for example, Home Economics is only offered up to O-level in Singapore, after which it is omitted from the curriculum. Additionally, some topics contained in similar subjects are not deemed relevant to Consumer Studies content, for example, “Weaning the baby” and “The breastfeeding mother” found in the Kenyan Home Science curriculum (Republic of Kenya Ministry of Education (RKME), 2002:160).

**RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

With no benchmarking history, and the unique character of Consumer Studies with its focus on the consumer and entrepreneurship, a question was raised regarding the pedagogical guidance offered to teachers in this subject. It was questioned if and how extensively pedagogical guidance is offered to teachers in the Consumer Studies curriculum to achieve the aims of the new subject, and specifically to empower learners with the vital entrepreneurial knowledge and skills as is intended in the curriculum.

To address this gap, the following research question guided the part of the research reported in this paper:

What does the comparison between the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for FET Phase Consumer Studies and the counterpart policies from respective other countries reveal about the pedagogical guidance provided in those documents?

Special attention was also given to the potential strengthening of the CAPS in this regard.

The research, on which this paper is based, was conceptualised and conducted by Umalusi (the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training in South Africa). The larger Umalusi-study (including other subjects) focused on an analysis of the subjects in the South African FET Phase in relation to the curricula in Canada (specifically British Columbia), Singapore and Kenya. Besides other considerations, these three countries were purposely selected based on the strength of their outstanding performance in international benchmarking tests, such as TIMMS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study), PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study), and SAQMEC (Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality). It was presumed that the
curricula in the chosen countries form a solid foundation for their learners’ good performance and was therefore considered suitable to include in this benchmarking of curricula. Documentation used for evidence in this research was obtained from the Ministry of Education (or comparable body) of each of these countries. Certain documents, such as the “teacher’s guide” mentioned in the Kenyan Home Science curriculum, were not available to the evaluators and is acknowledged as a limitation of the research. Details of the documents included in the benchmarking of the CAPS for Consumer Studies (DBE, 2011), have been itemised in Table 1.

**METHODOLOGY**

Umalusi developed the instrument used for the benchmarking to allow for both quantitative and qualitative reporting on the curricula. A successive series of studies by Umalusi have developed and refined the investigated curriculum dimensions (2004, 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2014b). The research questions driving the study were the following:

*What does the comparison between the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for FET Phase (Grades 10 to 12) and the counterpart policies from British Columbia, Singapore and Kenya reveal about:

a) the relative depth and breadth of the content covered in the respective curricula;

b) the overall design, structure and coherence of the curricula;

c) the level of specification of various aspects of the curricula; and

d) the guidance provided by the curricula for the teaching and assessment of the subject, with special attention given to the strengthening of the CAPS? In addition, are there critical factors that appear to be emerging in the curricula that should be considered in the South African context? (Umalusi, 2014b:20).*

Evaluators from higher education institutions, departments of education, subject advisors and teachers in practice, as well as curriculum and pedagogical experts, were commissioned to analyse the documents and write up the findings.

The qualitative part of the study was

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: DETAILS OF DOCUMENTS USED IN THIS INVESTIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (South Africa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Basic Education. 2011. National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12. Pretoria: Government Printing Works.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 British Columbia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Ministry of Education. 2014a. Food and Nutrition GCE Ordinary Level (Subject 6087)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore Ministry of Education. 2014b. Introduction to Enterprise Development GCE Ordinary Level Syllabus SP01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Kenya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pedagogical guidance for consumer studies reflected in the South African curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS): an international benchmarking study.

The South African CAPS documents for Consumer Studies (see Table 1) were found to be user-friendly, since the documents are well structured and have concise language that is easy to read and understand. Only the CAPS document for Consumer Studies was analysed in detail, since the other two documents contain general, non-subject-specific guidelines (see Table 1). The CAPS contains some general background about the South African national curriculum; general information about the organisation and structuring of the subject Consumer Studies; content-based aims for the subject; content-based teaching plans for theory and practical lessons; and explicit assessment guidance (DBE, 2011).

It was found that the British Columbian documents were well structured with tables of contents, concepts at a glance, outcomes and achievement indicators, suggested instructional strategies, and suggested assessment strategies for each outcome with recommended learning resources. An integrated resource package has been included in each course in the curriculum. These resource packages for each subject provide subject teachers with an introduction to the course, aspects to consider when delivering the programme, prescribed learning outcomes, learner achievement indicators, and a glossary (British Columbia Ministry of Education (BCME), 1998, 2007a, 2007b) (see Table 1). In addition, assessment and evaluation samples are included in the resource packages.

The Singaporean documents (Singapore Ministry of Education (SME), 2012, 2014a, 2014b) were found moderately user-friendly: while the learning outcomes and assessment objectives are clearly indicated, the layout, format and subject summary are inconsistent between different subject documents. No guidelines are included for the implementation of the subjects. Aims and assessment objectives, topics and learning outcomes have been included, as well as an examination format and criteria for assignments.

The Kenyan curriculum documents were found insufficiently user-friendly. In the introduction of this document, a “Teacher’s Guide in Lesson Preparation” is mentioned; however, this teacher’s guide was unavailable for review, adding to the rating of insufficient user-friendliness. The introduction to the document is followed by the subject-specific content for Home Science, which comprises a detailed list of topics and sub-topics to be covered in each form. No evidence regarding assessment specification was found, though the introduction of the document indicates that practical and written assignments should regularly be given.
Pedagogical guidance was found regarding the implementation of the subject, other than “teachers are called upon to be creative and improvise materials and equipment appropriately” (RKME, 2002:149). Overall, the evaluators found that the document lacks important information.

Central design principle

To further contextualise the pedagogical guidance offered in each curricula, it was also considered necessary to include findings regarding the central design principle (i.e. the technical design aspect that organises the curriculum) of each reviewed curricula. The curricula with evidence of learning outcomes were considered outcomes-based, whereas curricula that mainly specified content or topics with or without content-linked objectives were considered as having a syllabus-type (content-based) central design principle.

It was found that the South African CAPS for Consumer Studies has a content-based curriculum design. Though “Specific aims of Consumer Studies” are mentioned (DBE, 2011:8), no reference is made to learning outcomes for Consumer Studies or the other investigated FET subjects (Umalusi, 2014a:38), and the curriculum contains a large section prescribing content topics and sub-topics as minimum content to be covered (DBE, 2011:14-59). The evaluators perceived the subject aims mentioned for Consumer Studies, as a list of content topics with no specification, description or action verbs.

The British Columbian Home Economics curriculum prescribes learning outcomes with suggested achievement indicators for each learning outcome (e.g. BCME, 2007b:18-22). The Singaporean curricula for Food and Nutrition, and the Introduction to Enterprise Development, are also outcomes-based (Singapore Ministry of Education (SME), 2014a:2-4). Within each topic, a range of sub-topics is aligned with the learning outcomes (SME, 2014a:2-4). In the Kenyan Home Science curriculum, general and specific objectives have been linked to content, for example, topic 3.0.0 (Safety in the Home and First Aid) has specific objectives listed under 3.1.0 and content listed under 3.2.0 (RKME, 2002:151).

It was assumed that curricula, which the evaluators have found to be more user-friendly, would also be perceived as such by teachers using those curricula. User-friendly curricula allow easy access to information in the documents, enabling teachers to quickly find and use interlinking sections in their subject’s curriculum. Having a well-structured curriculum with clearly organised information supporting the subject’s aims or outcomes, would also support teachers in their task. Subject aims or outcomes can only be fully achieved if the subject is taught and learned in a manner that supports its overall aims or outcomes (Booyse et al., 2013:93).

Specification of pedagogical approaches

The evaluators kept the introductory exploration of the concept “pedagogy” in mind while analysing the curriculum documents. They investigated how pedagogy is translated in the teaching (or learning) methods, the approach to how the subject is taught (or learned), as well as the principles fundamental to learning in that subject.

In the Umalusi-study, evaluators were expected to provide a brief description of the subject-specific pedagogical approaches provided in the curricula (if any were specified), and to indicate the extent to which the curriculum provides explicit guidance regarding the preferred pedagogical approach to be adopted. The following descriptors were used: high describes a curriculum where detailed guidance is given regarding the preferred general and/or subject-specific pedagogical approach to be taken;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2: PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH SPECIFIED IN CURRICULUM DOCUMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAPS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-specific pedagogical approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of indication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
moderate describes a curriculum where some guidance is given regarding the preferred general and/or subject-specific pedagogical approach to be taken; low describes a curriculum where the preferred general or subject-specific pedagogical approach is mentioned in a few places, but no details are provided; and none describes a curriculum that provides no information or guidance regarding the general and/or subject-specific pedagogical approach. Table 2 details the subject-specific pedagogical approaches and the level of specification or guidance included in the investigated international curricula.

Though no subject-specific pedagogical approach has been included in the South African CAPS for Consumer Studies, the generic principles for this curriculum include references to “active and critical learning”, and “high knowledge and high skills” (DBE, 2011:4). These generic principles would also be applicable to Consumer Studies as part of the national curriculum. These principles imply that the teaching-learning process should develop high standards or levels of knowledge and skills, using active learning approaches that will develop critical thinking skills in learners. Addressing inclusivity and diversity in teaching is also briefly mentioned (DBE, 2011:5) and should be included in the Consumer Studies pedagogy.

A high degree of pedagogical specification was found in the British Columbian Home Economics curriculum. Detailed suggestions have been included regarding preferred instructional strategies (BCME, 1998:5). These suggestions include:

- the development of strategies to promote the relevancy and usefulness of Home Economics as a subject (transferability of learning to real-life situations is highlighted);
- the fostering and development of skills for both individuals and groups (specifically problem-solving and communication);
- the use of technology to support teaching and learning;
- fostering the optimal use and management of resources (including time, money, energy and skills);
- the fostering of research and critical thinking skills; and
- supporting the development of problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Though the integration of generic cross-curricular interests, such as sustainable consumption, aboriginal studies and gender equality have been intentionally integrated in the curriculum (BCME, 1998:7; C-3), they were not specified as pedagogical principles for Home Economics. A subject-specific section labelled “Considerations for Instruction in Home Economics” has also been included in the curriculum (BCME, 1998:8). Each of the course-specific documents for Food and Nutrition, and Textiles, includes a detailed section describing generic methods for implementing Home Economics, such as the requirement in the subject for critical thinking and metacognition (BCME, 2007a:4; 2007b:4). The domains of learning and cognitive levels are also mentioned and explicitly linked to the specific outcomes and classroom assessment model (BCME, 2007b:17).

High subject-specific guidance regarding considerations for program delivery is included in the form of detailed specification in the curricula for Food and Nutrition (BCME, 2007a:11-15), and Textiles (BCME, 2007b:11-15). Guidance is provided regarding addressing local contexts, safety considerations, confidentiality, utilising technology for teaching-learning, copyright and responsibility, and inclusivity (including working with the community and families). The recommended pedagogical approach for Home Economics and its courses in British Columbia was found coherent and well balanced, reflecting the nature of the subject, the importance of the learning for the learner, and the context in which the learning will take place. Though teaching content is structured around outcomes, outcomes-based learning is not denoted as a particular pedagogical principle.

A holistic pedagogical approach forms the foundation of the Singaporean curriculum, allowing the language of learning (bilingualism), the learner (21st century skills are emphasised), the teacher (professional competency), involvement of parents, and the utilisation of information technology to support teaching-learning (SME, 2012:1-2). No subject-specific details or guidance have been included in documentation (SME, 2014a & SME, 2014b) regarding recommended or preferred pedagogical approaches. It was therefore found that the level of pedagogical indication in the Singaporean curricula is low, despite the holistic pedagogical foundation of the whole curriculum.

The Kenyan curriculum for Home Science contains limited guidance with only a few ambiguous pedagogical references. Teachers
are expected to improvise materials and equipment, utilise local resources and incorporate electronic media to enhance teaching-learning (RKME, 2002:149), which implies a creative teaching approach to Home Science. In addition, suggestions are included for continued learning or updating teaching content and using resources frugally (RKME, 2002:149).

Suitability of the pedagogical approaches specified for learners at FET level

In addition to providing descriptions of the subject-specific pedagogical approaches and the extent to which curricula provide guidance in this regard, evaluators were also expected to comment on the appropriateness of the pedagogical approaches specified in the curricula for learners at the FET (or comparable) level of development. The limitation of incomplete curriculum documentation available to the evaluators, made it difficult to benchmark the type of learner envisioned in the curricula for Consumer Studies and similar subjects.

The CAPS reflects the political sentiments of South Africa, describing learners to echo inclusivity and diversity, specifically addressing socio-economic background, race, gender, physical ability or intellectual ability (DBE, 2011:4). Additionally, the South African NCS for Grades R-12 (in general) aims to produce learners who are able to solve problems, work collaboratively with others, can manage and organise themselves and their activities, can conduct research, can communicate effectively, and will understand the world as a set of related systems (DBE, 2011:5), amongst other expectations. These expectations are general and not level- or subject-specific, but are mostly suitable for learners in the FET Phase. No pedagogical guidance is however included to support the attainment of the expectations for learners and therefore the evaluators could not comment on this aspect.

The British Columbian curriculum documents also address learner diversity, alongside explicit guidance and suggestions of addressing learner diversity in the teaching of Home Economics (BCME, 1998:11). These curriculum documents also included guidance regarding gender equity, and the means to deal with sensitive issues in the subject (BCME, 1998:9). The pedagogical guidance included in these documents was found suitable for Grades 11 and 12 learners. The evaluators were of the opinion that the British Columbian curriculum seemed to envision learners and teachers to be able to deal with much more challenging cognitive demands in thinking than the other curricula.

The investigated Singaporean documents did not mention the type of learner envisioned in the subject, nor subject-specific pedagogical guidance.

Except for a single mention of addressing “gender responsiveness” to encourage both girls and boys to take Home Science in Kenya (RKME, 2002:149), no mention is made regarding the type of learner envisioned in the subject, nor is preferred pedagogy addressed.

The research findings led to the conclusions and recommendations that will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The curricula reviewed for the purposes of benchmarking the South African CAPS for Consumer Studies are diverse and dealt with similar (but not exactly the same) subjects. This comparative analysis was therefore complicated. The following conclusions could, however, be drawn from the investigation:

The CAPS document for Consumer Studies is overall adequate, but pedagogical guidance is lacking, as was found in the investigation of other FET subjects (Umalusi, 2014a:59). The British Columbian curriculum is considered comprehensive, coherent and well structured. The content in the Singaporean curricula for the O-levels (SME, 2014a, 2014b) is not constructively comparable to that of the Consumer Studies curriculum. The Kenyan curriculum is exceedingly suitable in the Kenyan context (from the evaluators’ viewpoint); however, not all its content is applicable for the South African Consumer Studies curriculum.

Levels of pedagogical guidance included in the different countries’ curricula are diverse. Limited pedagogical guidance, with inadequate reference made to this important aspect, was found in the CAPS document for South African Consumer Studies, the Singaporean curricula, and the Kenyan Home Science curriculum. The British Columbian curricula showed evidence of clear and detailed subject-specific pedagogical guidance.

Subject-specific pedagogical guidance is an important aspect that should be included in
curriculum documents, particularly because teachers’ knowledge regarding subject-appropriate pedagogy fosters more productive learning by learners (Pickard & Reichelt, 2008:196). To reinforce the potential advantages associated with Consumer Studies, this subject has to be taught and learned in a manner that will support its overall aims. This, in turn, implies that clear and concise pedagogical guidance should be included in the South African Consumer Studies curriculum, specifically regarding entrepreneurial learning and the practical production aspects included in the subject content (Booyse et al., 2013:93). Therefore, it seems to be a critical deficiency that subject-specific pedagogical guidance is so inadequate in most of the investigated curricula.

The benchmarking of the CAPS with the curricula of British Columbia, Singapore and Kenya led to the following recommendations, which could contribute to the strengthening of the CAPS for Consumer Studies:

In the Singaporean curriculum for “Introduction to Enterprise Development”, a simple business plan is developed to support entrepreneurial learning. This practice of integrating elements of entrepreneurial learning into a single, life-relevant unit is recommended for inclusion in the CAPS for Consumer Studies, whereas entrepreneurial elements are currently dealt with separately, but not as a whole.

Clear and detailed subject-specific pedagogical guidance, as was found in the British Columbian documents (BCME, 1998:16), should be included in the CAPS for Consumer Studies. Such guidance should not only include teaching-learning strategies, but the principles fundamental to learning in Consumer Studies – especially entrepreneurial learning – should also be stipulated. Detailed guidance regarding activities and practices, which best supports the construction of knowledge and skills in Consumer Studies, should be included. The curriculum document should include more guidance regarding the preferred approach to how the subject is taught (or learned), as well as the principles fundamental to learning in Consumer Studies.

Both the Singaporean documents (SME, 2012:2) and the British Columbian documents (BCME, 1998:5) explicitly address the utilisation of technology (and specifically information technology) in the subject. The utilisation of technology to support teaching and learning (thereby contributing to pedagogy) in Consumer Studies should be addressed in the curriculum by providing teachers with structured guidance to make teaching and learning in this subject even more relevant in the 21st century and to learners of this century. Such technology should not be limited to computers and tablets, but should also include smartphone technologies to partially allow for the vast discrepancies in resource distribution in South African schools.

Structured and organised collaboration between teachers and other role-players in the subject (e.g. industry, departmental personnel and community members) in Consumer Studies is essential and could be promoted through the inclusion of guidance in the curriculum regarding the appropriate use of social media, blogs, podcasts and webinars, for example. The horizons of teachers and learners in this subject would be expanded and teachers would be provided with reputable points of contact and information for such communication, and for further research.

REFERENCES


Pedagogical guidance for consumer studies reflected in the South African curriculum and assessment policy statement (CAPS): an international benchmarking