

THE STANDING OF THE CURRICULUM FOR CONSUMER STUDIES AS SCHOOL SUBJECT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

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OPSOMMING

Verbruikerstudie het die potensiaal om 'n positiewe impak te hê op Suid-Afrikaanse leerders en gemeenskappe. Dit word reeds vir 'n aantal jare onderrig in skole, maar die stand van die vak Verbruikerstudie in die Nasionale Senior Sertifikaat (n NKR Vlak 4 kwalifikasie) is nog nie vasgestel nie. 'n Multi-metodiese navorsingsontwerp is gebruik om kurrikulum dokumente kwantitatief te analiseer en vergelyk, asook kwalitatief in sommige gevalle om die kwalitatiewe data te steun. Die instrument wat gebruik is in die ondersoek van die kurrikula word teoreties begrond deur Bernstein se teorieë oor kurrikulum en opvoedkunde (1990; 1996) en die bevindinge van Donnelly (1999, 2002, 2005) aangaande die kenmerke van onderwyssisteme wat deurgaans goed presteer in internasionale metingstoetse. Die navorsings-bevindinge in hierdie studie gee 'n aanduiding van die stand van die huidige Verbruikerstudie kurrikulum en die waargenome impak daarvan op die Suid-Afrikaanse konteks. Aanbevelings word gemaak ter versterking van die kurrikulum en die toepassingswaarde daarvan.

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Note: This study reports on part of a larger study conducted by Umalusi about the position of the Services Subjects (Consumer Studies, Tourism and Hospitality Studies) in South Africa.

INTRODUCTION

Given that Consumer Studies is a designated subject for which the number of learners writing the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Grade 12 final examination increases every year, the potential to have a large, positive impact on consumers and communities in South Africa becomes ever greater. In 2012, almost 36 000 candidates wrote Consumer Studies, almost 3000 up from the year before.

The question is though: "What is the quality of Consumer Studies as a designated subject in the National Senior Certificate as Level 4 qualification on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)?" The point of departure in searching for answers to this question was to draw on the comparative research undertaken by Umalusi in 2011 - 2012 to establish the quality of the Consumer Studies curriculum. This curriculum underpins the subject with a range of cognitive demand expected in the exit-level (Grade 12) assessments.

The research on which this paper is based was conceptualised and conducted by Umalusi, the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training. Umalusi performs its functions in terms of the General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act (Act 58 of 2001), the NQF Act (Act 67 of 2008) and the National Education Policy Act (NEPA)

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(Act 27 of 1996). Umalusi's research investigated the curricula for both the South African Department of Basic Education's (DBE) and Department of Higher Education's (DHET) Services Subjects, which include Consumer Studies, Hospitality Studies and Tourism.

This paper only reports on a part of this extensive research, and particularly on the research related to Consumer Studies. Subsequent sections of this paper therefore only focus on this section of the research.

Consumer Studies can contribute positively to South-African society in many ways (Koekemoer & Booyse, 2013:544), including (but not limited to) offering learners expansive opportunities for entrepreneurial learning. This aspect of the curriculum is especially relevant in the current context, with sustained high levels of unemployment in many parts of the country (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), 2013). But, to be able to support the potential positive impact which the subject might have, a number of elements need to be in position. Such elements include, amongst other things, well-trained and qualified teachers, access to resources, transferability of learnt content, and a curriculum which effectively supports teaching and learning in the subject.

Various models, systems and plans exist which describe in detail the requirements for curricula in order for it to support teaching and learning most effectively. The research of the Netherlands Institute for Curriculum Development (SLO) (2009), Donnelly (1999, 2002, 2005, 2007), and Schmidt, *et al.* (2005) were particularly employed to scaffold this research study. In addition, the study is contextually situated within the broad curriculum theories developed by Basil Bernstein (1990) about rules of relation, selection, sequencing, and pacing of knowledge. The emphasis on the relationship between what the curriculum intends (its aims), how it is scaffolded or structured, and how it is assessed (Bernstein 1990, 1996) is also considered.

A curriculum should contain clear, succinct, unambiguous, easily understood, measurable statements of learning (Donnelly, 2007). To support this goal, a list of desired dimensions or characteristics for curricula (as part of effective education systems) was compiled from the work of the above-mentioned authors, and was used to analyse the South African Consumer Studies curriculum. The dimensions or characteristics

for effective curricula require that they should:

- be well designed
- have clear aims (sometimes referred to as intended curriculum or outcomes)
- specify content coverage, including
 - ◊ reflecting the subject's main emphasis
 - ◊ breadth and depth of specification for knowledge and skills
 - ◊ weighting of topics and time allocation
- be well-structured and coherently include content and skills to be learnt/taught, as well as demonstrating the relationships and integration between
 - ◊ topics within curriculum
 - ◊ subjects within the curriculum, and
 - ◊ the subject and the world of work
- clearly indicate the sequencing, pacing and progression of knowledge and skills to be learnt/taught
- indicate preferred pedagogical approach(es) for the specific subject
- include clear assessment guidance.

The context within which a curriculum is intended to function should also be considered, especially its possible impact on the country, industry, teachers and learners.

The documents included in the comparative analysis of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2003) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (2011) were: The National Curriculum Statement: Consumer Studies for Grades 10-12 (Department of Education (DoE), 2003), the National Curriculum Statement, Learning Programme Guidelines: Consumer Studies (DoE, 2008 (b)), the Subject Assessment Guidelines (DoE, 2008 (a)) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Consumer Studies Grades 10-12 (Department of Basic Education (DBE), 2011) Specifically, the initial NCS developed for Consumer Studies (DoE, 2003) was compared to the amended NCS referred to as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Consumer Studies (DBE, 2011), which was phased in from 2012 - 2014.

The CAPS replaced the NCS mainly as a result of recommendations made by the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (Dada *et al.*, 2009). The Task Team was appointed by the (then) Minister of Basic Education, Minister Matshekga, to investigate the difficulties which were being experienced in the use of the NCS, and to develop recommendations to address

such difficulties effectively. The CAPS is therefore an amended NCS, developed to address the recommendations of the Task Team.

Since the introduction of the subject in 2006 to replace Home Economics, the two South African curricula for Consumer Studies have not been analysed formally regarding their design, aims, structure and other anticipated dimensions. One of the aims of the expanded research was to address this gap. Umalusi has been mandated to ensure quality in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase and was therefore well positioned to take on and execute this task.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Recognising the important role that this subject plays in the South-African context, the research aimed to investigate, analyse and compare the previous and current curricula for Consumer Studies regarding their

- adherence to dimensions and characteristics specified in existing successful curriculum models, and
- their perceived possible contribution to the South-African context.

METHODOLOGY

The research was based mainly on document analyses and was approached from a constructivist viewpoint, on the understanding that a curriculum is put together using many variables which add to its value. A mixed-methods design was used in this study, where quantitative data was used (in some instances) to support the qualitative data gleaned from the documents. Data was collected through an in-depth document- and curriculum analysis using purposely-designed instruments. An iterative data analysis was followed by an inductive interpretation of the data to make meaning of the findings from the data collected.

The research was conceptualised and conducted by Umalusi in collaboration with the National Department of Tourism and the Culture Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA). Representatives from higher education institutions, departments of education, teachers in practice, subject advisors, curriculum or methodology experts and industry stakeholders were included in the research teams.

The questioning regarding the dimensions and characteristics for effective curricula identified from the scholarly review has been developed and refined over a successive series of research studies (Umalusi, 2006; 2007) resulting in purposefully-designed instruments with which to analyse curricula. The instruments used for the curriculum evaluation have been refined to allow for both quantitative and qualitative reporting on the similarities and differences between curricula. Additionally, the specific practical character of Consumer Studies as a school subject was also addressed in the analysis. Specific dimensions or characteristics were defined and investigated as follows.

Curriculum design

Curriculum design refers broadly to the central design principle underlying the curriculum. The various documents which comprise the curriculum, as well as the function of each contributing document as part of the curriculum, are also important in this part of the analysis.

Curricula were analysed and compared to broad organisational designs such as 'a spiral curriculum'; 'outcomes-based'; 'standards-based'; 'syllabus' and 'topic- structured'.

Curriculum aims

The general aims stipulated in the curriculum documents are regarded as reflecting the broadest qualification intentions, and include reference to issues such as responsibility towards the environment; health, safety and security; social transformation and understanding ethics and values. These general aims are common to all the subject curriculum statements or guidelines for a particular qualification – and they may be quite similar across related qualifications coming as they do from a single education and training system. The generic cross-cutting aims are viewed as adapted generic aims related to the critical cross-field outcomes, but are translated in the curriculum statement in terms of actual subject content. The subject-specific aims are to be solely related to the core intent/objective of the discipline which needs to be achieved through the teaching and learning of the subject.

The evaluators had to indicate the extent to which the curriculum aims are general (related to broad, general societal, economic or political goals); generic cross-cutting or cross-field (related to generic skills such as critical thinking

or problem solving, relevant across a range of subjects, but which are not subject-specific) or subject-specific (related to the specific subject in question).

Curriculum content coverage (breadth, depth, weighting)

The major content/concepts/topics/skill areas in the respective Learning Programme Guidelines, as well as the number of topics had to be identified. Researchers also had to indicate how clearly the content/topics is/are specified.

The analysis of the degree of **depth** included considerations such as the extent to which the curricula provide learners with the opportunity to move from a superficial or primitive grasp of a topic to a more refined and powerful grasp of it. In other words, the depth of a curriculum refers to the extent to which topics are to be explored. When a topic is given a significant amount of time and the expectation is for engagement at a demanding conceptual level, the topic is considered to have been covered in depth.

Degree of depth was recorded as *high*, *medium* or *low*, where a high degree of specification refers to content/topics with extremely clear and subject-specific specification and very little chance for educators to attach multiple interpretations to the topic. Moderately clear subject-specific specifications with some generic statements /skills or some topics underspecified were judged as being a medium (degree of) specification of topics. Where the research teams found no clear subject-specific specification or where minimal guidance is provided for users and multiple interpretations are allowed for, low specification is indicated.

Significant omissions or additions of content were noted in the respective curricula. The **breadth** of the curriculum is determined by the number of different topics specified: the greater the number of topics, the broader the curriculum to be covered in the given time. It should be noted that a broad curriculum is not in and of itself 'a good thing' since other factors also come into play, as is evident from the sub-sections that follow.

The percentage of **time allocated** to each of the topics (content and/or skills) was used to support the perceived weighting of topics. If a topic was allocated three weeks, as opposed to two lessons, it was perceived as to weigh more – need more teaching time as part of curriculum.

Sequencing

Sequencing as a curriculum requirement might be more critical in certain subjects than in others. In Mathematics and Physical Science, for example, the sequencing of topics is important because earlier content must have been acquired in order to learn more advanced concepts and skills. While all subjects will have some sequencing requirements, the sequencing may be less stringent in subjects which are perceived to be horizontal in structure. Nevertheless, sequencing of content can be of great assistance to teachers (and others such as material developers).

The level of specification of sequencing in the curricula being evaluated had to be described, using the following descriptors: *high* indicates that the order in which topics are to be taught is clearly specified and prescribed; *moderate* specification refers to situations where a general order in which topics are expected to be taught is suggested, but with allowance for some discretion on the part of the teacher; and *low* indicates that no particular order is indicated in which the educator should present or teach the topics, and the sequencing of content is at the discretion of the teacher.

Pacing

The stipulation of pacing in the curriculum documents refers to the relationship between the volume of learning material (topics to be covered) and the particular timeframe given to the subject.

A high degree of specificity is rated as *high*. Where the researchers found a moderate degree of specification of pacing, which provides the broad parameters regarding what should be covered, and when, over the course of the grade, the specification was considered to be *moderate*. A *low* indication refers to pacing in instances where how to proceed is at the discretion of the teacher and where little or no indication is given of the rate at which content should be covered, much beyond a specification of content per level.

It should be noted, however, that low and high are not necessarily value judgements about pacing. High levels of specification may be thought appropriate where many teachers are poorly educated and trained. Alternatively, high levels of specification could be regarded as unnecessarily constraining on experienced and

knowledgeable teachers, especially if there is an insistence on treating a national curriculum as the letter of the law.

Progression

An analysis of progression across grades often helps to pinpoint potential difficulties, for example, in the case where a topic may be introduced in one level, neglected in a second, and then suddenly becomes both conceptually demanding and difficult in the last of the three levels. Looking for progression helps researchers to check whether the content is logically organized within a level and then across levels.

Progression of topics within a grade and across grades (Grades 10, 11 and 12), and how they changed or developed over the three years in the FET phase, had to be described.

Progression was indicated as *strong* if evidence was found of clear movement from one type of related content/concept/skill to another, or a clear progression in terms of increasing complexity or difficulty in a topic from one grade to the next. *Moderate* was used where some indications of a shift to different content/concepts/skills were found, or where some instances pointed to an increase in the complexity or difficulty at which topics are addressed at different levels. *Weak* progression was indicated when very little indication of progression in terms of shift of content/concept/skill from one level to the next could be found, or where little evidence of increasing complexity or difficulty is evident across levels. *None* was used as indicator where no shift in the content/concept/skill or change in complexity/difficulty from one level to the next was evident.

Curriculum coherence

Curriculum coherence was determined by analysing the curriculum aims, the content/concept/skill coverage, the sequencing and the progression in the curriculum documents.

A judgement had to be made on the coherence of the subject curriculum, by considering the following questions:

- Are there sensible connections and points of coordination between topics that learners study in the subject within a grade and as they advance through the grades?
- Is there a logical, and if appropriate, hierarchical sequence of knowledge over time?
- Alternatively, are there logical and sensible

shifts in the content that is specified at different levels? Is a particular form of reasoning or a conceptual logic evident in the ordering of the knowledge?

Integration of content/subject(s)

The extent to which explicit relationships and connections are made between topics **within the subject**, was analysed using the following descriptors: *high* refers to a curriculum where an effort has been made to encourage an understanding of the relationships between different topics within the subject; *moderate* refers to a curriculum where, in a few places, relationships and connections between different topics, are referred to; and *low* refers to a curriculum where there is little or no explicit indication of the relationships and connections between different topics within the subject.

How Consumer Studies is consciously integrated **across the curriculum with other subjects**, or kept separate, was analysed using the following descriptors: *high* refers to a curriculum where an effort has been made to understand and encourage integration across a number of different subjects; *moderate* refers to a curriculum where, in a few places, reference is made to other subjects, or connections to topics in other subjects are referred to; and *low* refers to a curriculum where the approach keeps subjects very separate from one another and there is very little or no reference to other subjects.

Explicit relationships and connections indicated **between the subject content and learners' everyday knowledge and experience**, and whether or not this knowledge is seen as part of the curriculum, were analysed using the following descriptors: *high* indicates that learners' everyday world and knowledge, the world of work and communities are constantly referenced and form part of the contextualizing knowledge specified in the curriculum; *moderate* indicates that learners' everyday world and knowledge, the world of work and of learners' communities are referenced in a few places in the curriculum, but not seemingly as a conscious strategy; and *low* indicates that the curriculum emphasizes only subject-specific knowledge, and that there are few or no references to the everyday knowledge of learners, their communities or the world of work.

Preferred pedagogical approach(es)

Researchers were asked to describe the extent to which the curriculum documents provide explicit guidance regarding the preferred pedagogical approach(es) 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 pedagogic approach to be taken; *moderate* describes a curriculum where some guidance is given regarding the preferred general and/or subject-specific pedagogic approach to be taken; *low* describes a curriculum where the preferred general or subject-specific pedagogic 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 pedagogic approach.

Assessment guidance

An overview of the nature and extent of the assessment required in a subject (on a specific level) should be provided in curricula, including any information that would contribute towards a general understanding of the approach taken towards assessment.

Researchers were required to indicate whether both internal and external assessment processes are stipulated, and if so, what proportion of the total assessment is apportioned to each. Specifically, the number and types of assessment tasks specified in the Subject Guidelines, and the dominant types of assessment specified, had to be distinguished.

The degree of **specificity** of assessment guidance had to be analysed, using the following descriptors: *general* means that only generic assessment guidance is given; *subject-specific* means that subject-specific assessment guidelines are provided; *both* means that both general guidance and subject-specific guidelines are provided; and *neither* refers to a curriculum where no assessment guidance is provided at all.

The degree of **clarity** of guidance regarding assessment was indicated by the use of the following descriptors: *high* describes assessment guidance that provides detailed, specific, clear, and comprehensive information, and is not likely to result in differing interpretations of the assessment requirements; *moderate* describes assessment guidance that provides mo-

derate amounts of information regarding assessment that is generally clear, but which leaves scope for differing interpretations of the assessment requirements; *low* describes assessment guidance that provides only broad statements about assessment that lack clarity and which allow for multiple interpretations; and *none* describes a curriculum where no guidance regarding assessment is provided.

Perceived impact of curriculum in South African context

Through attempting to discern the ideal learner who is projected in the respective curricula, and the central values underpinning the curricula, information was gleaned about the perceived implications for country, industry, teachers and learners. This also gave some indication of how well the curricula aim to prepare learners for operational skills and/or systemic thinking (managerial) skills.

The comparative analysis regarding the quality and standing of the NCS and the CAPS summarised the findings from the overarching study pertaining Consumer Studies as subject, the most important of which are captured in the following section.

FINDINGS

The analyses and comparison of the NCS and CAPS produced the following findings.

Curriculum design

The central design principle for the NCS is outcomes based, but the CAPS is more content-based. The CAPS, which was found to be better structured and more self-explanatory than the NCS, consists of three documents, each with a specific purpose as part of that curriculum. The three documents, each with its explanatory title, are: the CAPS (*Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement*) for each approved school subject as listed in the policy document (in this case, Consumer Studies); the *National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 12*, and the *National Protocol for Assessment Grades R – 12*. The latter two documents are common to all the subjects across all the phases.

Curriculum aims

The generic cross-cutting aims are the same for both the NCS and the CAPS, and include references to issues such as responsibility towards the environment; health, safety and security; social transformation and understanding ethics and values. The Learning Outcomes (LO) of the NCS were interpreted as subject-specific aims, whereas in the CAPS the subject content is listed as the subject-specific aims. Table 1 indicates how the aims are more clearly stipulated and specified in the CAPS than in the NCS.

Curriculum content coverage (breadth, depth, weighting)

The emphasis in both curricula is on the consumer and the needs of the consumer, with entrepreneurial learning featuring prominently. Both the CAPS and NCS were found to have broad content coverage, each covering a wide spectrum of content topics with practical skills integrated as part of the expected learning. Most of the topics were covered in moderate depth, possibly as a result of the wide range of topics included. The degree of specification of topics in the CAPS is rated as high, with detailed descriptions of content topics and practical skills to be taught. The NCS was found to have a moderate degree of specification, mostly due to

TABLE 1: NATURE AND SPECIFICATION OF AIMS IN THE NCS AND CAPS

NCS	COMMON %	CAPS
General aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights • Social and environmental justice 	10%	General aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to higher education • Transition into workplace • Profile of learner competencies • Comparable education to other countries
Cross-cutting [critical cross-field] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical and developmental outcomes 	30%	Cross-cutting [critical cross-field] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative thinking – problem solving • Team work • Organization & management • Research • Communication • Utilization of science & technology • Responsible citizen
Subject-specific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsible & informed consumers • Sustainable use of resources • Production of marketable products 	60%	Subject-specific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making & consumer behaviour • Use of resources – optimal human well-being

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF TIME ALLOCATED TO TOPICS IN THE NCS AND CAPS

LEARNING OUTCOMES IN THE NCS		CENTRAL TOPICS IN CAPS		Knowledge Content 62.5%
1. Management of the Consumer Role	12%	1. The consumer	26.6%*	
2. Knowledgeable Consumer Choices	40%	2. Food and nutrition	24.4%*	
3. Responsible Use of Resources	18%	3. Design elements and principles	4.4%*	
4. Production and marketing of Food, Clothing and Soft Furnishing Products (5% theory of the practical & 25% practical skills).	30%	4. Fibres and fabrics	8%*	
		5. Clothing	6.6%*	
		6. Housing and interior	10%*	
		7. Entrepreneurship	20%*	
		Practical options, including theory of practical and actual practical tasks.	37.5%**	

*The knowledge content topics add up to 100%.

**The assessment requirements of the subject dictate that 37,5% of subject teaching, learning and assessment should be allocated to practical.

the outcomes-based approach used in the structure of the curriculum. In addition, the CAPS was found to include additional information, covering current globally-significant topics such as global warming and sustainable consumption. Some content has been renamed to reflect current preferred terminology, or has been moved to a different grade in the CAPS than it was in the NCS.

The weighting of topics was measured by analysing the time allocated to each topic in the curricula. Practical aspects of the subject had 7,5% more time allocated in the CAPS than in the NCS. The higher specification of topics in the CAPS allowed for a more detailed analysis of weighting, which has been reflected in Table 2. The research team found that breadth and depth are in constant tension, because the greater the depth expected, the fewer the topics which can be covered in the time available. Ideally, a subject curriculum must attempt to find a balance between these diverging curriculum impulses – something which may be achieved by covering certain topics in greater depth while conceding the need to cover a range of other topics more quickly and in a way that demands less intellectual rigour.

Sequencing

Specification of sequence is rated as moderate in both curricula. Content specified in the curricula may be taught in a sequence suited to the teacher's need, as long as the content is covered within the timeframe specified by the curricula.

Pacing

Pacing is highly stipulated in the CAPS, with clear indications of how much time should be spent on specific content. In the NCS, almost no indication was found of pacing.

Progression

Strong indications of progression within the FET phase were found in both curricula. An increase in content to be covered, as well as in the complexity of content, is evident in both curricula. Complexity of practical skills required by both the NCS and CAPS were also found to increase across grades.

Curriculum coherence

Strong evidence was found of curriculum coherence. Sensible connections and co-ordinated advances between topics within the grades were found in both curricula. The consumer is the golden thread underlying the Consumer Studies curriculum and this overarching principle, (the consumer), is noticeable in each topic covered.

Integration of content/subject(s)

Topics in each of the curricula were well-integrated, with *the consumer* as central concept evident in all other topics. Though it is not specified explicitly in either of the curricula, the researchers found from experience that there are a number of points where subject integration takes place, such as calculations for product pricing (integration with Mathematics). High levels of integration between the curriculum content specified and the everyday lives of learners were found. Many explicit examples were found relating subject content to real-life experiences.

Preferred pedagogical approach(es)

Neither of the curricula included specific pedagogical approaches to be employed in general, nor in the teaching and learning of Consumer Studies specifically.

Assessment guidance

The assessment guidance provided in the NCS is very broad and generic and could be addressing any subject, whereas the CAPS contains clear and specific assessment guidelines for the management of assessment in Consumer Studies.

Potential impact of curriculum in South African context

The researchers found that the subject Consumer Studies could potentially contribute in a positive way to the South African society as a whole, especially through (but not limited to) the entrepreneurial learning which is embedded in the subject, as well as through preparing learners to be responsible consumers. The perception that such learning could help to reduce unemployment in this country was widely agreed on. All researchers agreed that the CAPS better supports the teachers of the subject than the NCS did, mainly due to clearer content specification and assessment guidance.

The curricula cover a wide range of topics with moderate depth, which were perceived as giving learners a wide, but unspecific, knowledge base. This was perceived as slightly negative, since industry generally requires more specific career preparation.

The NCS included references to careers which the subject Consumer Studies offers. No references to career paths has been included in the CAPS which was perceived by researchers as negative, since this could result in learners not understanding the full potential the subject has.

The findings lead to the following conclusions and recommendations being made.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential positive impact which the subject Consumer Studies holds for learners and the South-African society in general, is considerable. The many clear instances of integration of learning content with the lives of learners were seen to underscore the usefulness of the subject. In order to support this subject's positive potential optimally, teachers do need to be supported by well-structured, clear, explicit and quantifiable curricula.

The CAPS has clear advantages above the NCS, in that it provides detailed, clear guidance regarding subject content to be taught, as well as subject-specific assessment guidance. The CAPS is well-structured and more user-friendly than the NCS. The CAPS adhered to more of the dimensions and characteristics recommended for effective curricula in literature, than the NCS did. Most of the recommendations made by the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement (DoE, 2009), have been included and executed in the CAPS for Consumer Studies. Overall, the researchers considered the CAPS a useful tool to support the teaching and learning of Consumer Studies in the South African context. There are, however, still a couple of areas for improvement, which could increase the usefulness of the CAPS for Consumer Studies. The following recommendations for the improvement of the CAPS were made as a result of this study:

The lack of pedagogical input in the curricula, especially subject-specific guidance for Consumer Studies, is a major concern. To reap the full potential benefit of the subject, it has to be

taught and learned in a manner which supports its overall aims. Clear, unambiguous and succinct guidance regarding preferred pedagogies for Consumer Studies should be included in curriculum. This is especially true considering the practical aspects included in the subject, and the entrepreneurial learning embedded in the content. More research is needed in this field to provide greater insight into preferred pedagogies for Consumer Studies which would optimally support teaching and learning in and of the subject.

The exclusion of career paths offered by Consumer Studies in the CAPS probably will have a negative impact on the number of learners opting to take the subject in the FET phase. Including clear and detailed career options which the subject offers as part of the curriculum might clarify to teachers, learners, as well as the general public (such as parents of learners), the wide career potential which the subject offers to its learners. It is recommended that a section covering this aspect be included in the curriculum.

Including these two recommended aspects into the CAPS for Consumer Studies would further increase its usefulness and support the aims of the curriculum. More research is needed to analyse and assess how the curricula are assessed and if such assessments supports the general aims of these curricula.

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