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Dr. Dumisa Celumusa Mabuza
Department of Consumer
Sciences Education and
Community Development
Faculty of Consumer Sciences,
University of Swaziland
P.O. Luyengo, Swaziland

Prof. Simon Bheki Khoza
Professor, Discipline of
Curriculum Studies and
Educational Technology
School of Education
Edgewood Campus (P/bag X03,
Ashwood, 3605) University of
KwaZulu-Natal

Educators reflections of the instructional time in JC integrated consumer science curriculum

Dr. Dumisa Celumusa Mabuza and Prof. Simon Bheki Khoza

Abstract

The instructional time concept triggered an outcry in the teaching of Consumer Sciences in Swaziland, mostly on the magnitude and quality time educators have for instruction, this having power to influence student achievement. This study therefore explored the reflections of the educators on the instructional time. Four data generation methods; reflective activity, interviews, observation, and focus groups through action research were used. The findings hold that educators have limited time for teaching Consumer Sciences. Even though they are aware of this and the way in which it affects their teaching, they have no idea how much time is sufficient, and what the expectations of the curriculum are. Moreover, educators practise looping, confirming that this is a very effective practice. On the other hand, both Consumer Sciences educators and school administrators, while there is no policy document in control, take up instructional time through sporting activities and poor classroom management. It is recommended that Consumer Sciences lessons be allocated at least six periods of 45 minutes a week. The Ministry of Education should amend a policy document to specify recommended time for the subject and control use of instructional time taken up by other school activities.

Keywords: Instructional time, allocated time, recommended time, looping, period

1. Introduction

Given the tireless focus on students' academic performance throughout the globe, one major drive is ensuring that learners receive maximum exposure to subject matter and that this is greatly influenced by the time factor (Jez and Wassmer, 2015) ^[10]. While policymakers and educational researchers continue to search for effective interventions for raising such performance, school administrators often endorse the use of extended learning time (Wolfe, 2009; Ayodele, 2014) ^[31, 1]. Time, however, is not the only variable, albeit a critical factor, that influences academic achievement. Time becomes crucial in the sense that it is a non-renewable resource, limited to 24 hours a day. Similarly, Ayodele (2014) ^[1] observes that instructional time is not only imperative but a scarce resource in the teaching day. This suggests that instructional time is limited to hours in a day, days in a week, and number of weeks per school calendar year. In addition, with the exception of Brazil, daily school time around the globe runs on average from 8a.m. to 4p.m. Researchers (Telischak, 2017; Cattaneo, Oggenfuss and Wolter, 2017; Jez and Wassmer, 2015) ^[28, 5, 10] assert that there is a positive relationship between instructional time and academic performance.

By contrast, Jez and Wassmer (2011), together with other scholars (Wößmann, 2003; Dolton and Marcenaro-Gutierrez, 2009) ^[32], record inconclusive empirical evidence that extended instructional time has a positive influence on academic achievement, particularly in developing countries. There are time variables other than length. Educators, who are directly affected by time deficiency or who manipulate time variables to influence their production, must reflect on their practice in order to review past experiences that work, and those that have significant influence in future and in the academic achievement.

1.2 Problem Statement

It is common knowledge that teaching and learning take place within a very limited time. There is a growing habit of Swaziland educators teaching Consumer Sciences after hours, on weekends, and during school holidays. This suggests that there is a challenge of limited teaching time in Swaziland.

Correspondence

Dr. Dumisa Celumusa Mabuza
Department of Consumer
Sciences Education and
Community Development
Faculty of Consumer Sciences,
University of Swaziland
P.O. Luyengo, Swaziland

Educators in Consumer Sciences therefore need to strike a balance between time for theory lessons, and practical lessons, rather than sacrificing their spare time to improve performance (Harber and Davies, 2005) ^[9]. Educators depend on time concepts such as the allocated time, transition times, inter alia. In addition, since research reports a controversial relationship between instructional time and learning in developing countries (Ayodele, 2014) ^[11], educator reflections on the time concepts become a necessity. Lastly, there are no studies exploring the reflection of Consumer Sciences educators on the time concept, with the exception of Harber and Davies (2005) ^[9], who compared the effects of time use in Nigeria and Swaziland. These countries, both being developing countries, could not yield the same result; thus the researchers concluded that such could be explained with reference to local culture and the concept of learning.

1.3 Literature Review

The time concept in curriculum was first discussed by a veteran American psychologist, Edward Thorndike, later by Charles Judd (Mahoney, 1916) ^[17]. The latter was concerned about 'time', 'attention' and 'rate of instruction' as variables for teaching and learning. When referring to instructional time, other, related, words used are duration, rate, period, and attention (Loewer, 2009) ^[15]. Instructional time is divided into seven types. These include allocated time, time-on-task, academic learning time, transition time, perseverance, and pace. Studies seem to suggest reflection as an important resource that helps educators to understand the management of time in curriculum issues. However, even though literature acknowledges that time is a resource in the hand of the educator, no literature has explored educator reflections with regard to the use of this resource. Studies (Schön & DeSanctis (2013); Van Manen, 1977; Khoza, 2015) ^[27, 30, 12] categorise reflections into three that I found to be representing own, public, and professional (certified) interests in the curriculum. The APS Group Scotland (APSGS) defined instructional as all the time educators and students use for the purpose of attaining educational purposes (APSGS, 2011). Their definition embraces the allocated time (McLeod *et al.*, 2003; OECD, 2014) ^[21], engaged time (Saloviita, 2013) ^[26], time-on-task (Laster and Johnson, 2001) ^[13], transition time (Ylimaki, 2013) ^[33], waiting time (Mantyi-Ncube 2012) ^[18], perseverance (Bausell, 2010) ^[3], and pace (Bausell, 2010) ^[3]. Consumer Sciences educator reflections are therefore expected to be driven by either certified reflections (allocated time, time-on-task, academic learning time, and engaged time), public reflections (transition time, looping), and own reflections (perseverance, pace). These instructional times influence one another directly, and eventually affect the performance of learners.

1.3.1 Professional times

The certified reflections (discipline/vertical) (Khoza, 2015) ^[12] are embodied in the domain of experts in the form of research work, tested methods, and what the international community recommends about time allocated to or for engagement in the teaching of Consumer Sciences. Allocated time is defined as the time that the region, district, school, or teacher offers the learners for instruction. It is the total time for teacher instruction and student learning (McLeod, Fisher and Hoover, 2003) ^[21]. Allocated time has always been the challenge with most schools in Swaziland, in which teachers complain that much time is allocated to sporting activities when subjects such as Consumer Sciences need more time for their practical work (Mabuza, 2014) ^[16]. There is, however, no evidence

unearthed by research on whether the time allocated in the curriculum documents is sufficient to cover subject matter, effectively allowing the teacher to practise and demonstrate all necessary learning activities. However, there is a link between time and learning. The OECD (2014) ^[23] concludes that allocated time differs from country to country, according to whether different grade levels and nature of the subject are compulsory. While this may suggest policy influences, the actual time with which the learners are 'engaged' can affect allocated time. This is because engaged time is always a subset of allocated time (Saloviita, 2013) ^[26]. This denotes that, although time is allocated, teachers may not comprehensively engage students in the learning situation at all times. Another element of engaged time on particular learning experience or tasks of a theme in the curriculum is 'time-on-task'. This is usually confused with engagement time, yet it is more specific to a certain task. For example, in a bread-making lesson in Food Preparation, time-on-demonstration must be planned and used effectively (Laster and Johnson, 2001) ^[13]. Consumer Sciences teachers must be competent in all skills to be presented, otherwise, a great deal of time is not only wasted on the task but, on quiet moments and arrangement of learners, particularly in demonstrations.

1.3.2 Social/Public times

The public reflections or societal (Van Manen, 1977) ^[30] or reflections on society (Khoza, 2015) ^[12] are a collective influence from friends and colleagues that nevertheless finds its way into the educators' practice. It can influence the instructional time. For example, transition time is brought about the way classroom interactions are handled. Transition time is a 'non-instructional' time before and after some instructional activities (Ylimaki, 2013, 126) ^[33]. However, this time may be deliberately planned to allow smooth transition from one subject to the next. This is common in Consumer Sciences in which in large classes, students can wait the whole period for the teacher in clothing and textile to check one sewing process (Mantyi-Ncube, 2012) ^[18]. This can be further affected by a change of teacher.

Another time concept is 'looping'. This is an approach in which students remain in the care of the same teacher for several years, that is, the teacher moves with the students to the next level (McCown and Sherman, 2002) ^[19]. "Looping can provide a consistency and continuity that students need to be successful" (McCown and Sherman, 2002, 17) ^[19]. However, studies reviewed that measured the influence of looping on student performance have yielded inconsistent findings. Studies such as (Bogart, 2002; Roberts 2003; McCown and Sherman, 2002) ^[19, 25] report a positive influence of looping on academic achievement. By contrast, studies conducted by Lavender (2005) ^[14] and Thomas (2005) ^[29] recorded little or no difference between academic achievement of students in looping programmes compared with their peers in traditional classes. Thomas (2005) ^[29], for example, conducted a retrospective causal comparative study to explore the effects of looping on achievement and self-efficiency. Results showed no real statistical difference between the experimental and control groups in terms of student performance. The looping concept, therefore, emphasises a period of continued interaction, soliciting public reflections on students having the same teacher for a period of three years.

1.3.3 Own times

The own reflection, critical reflection (Van Manen, 1977) ^[30], or everyday experience (Khoza, 2015) ^[12], indicates

educators' own judgment or justification of practices in the use of time while teaching Consumer Sciences. This involves subjective activities and personal meanings that drive the educators' actions within the environment of teaching Consumer Sciences. It therefore concerns the teachers' own 'pace' of teaching. Pace carries the connotation of speed; however, speed cannot be measured without consideration of the amount of work covered in a certain period (Bausell, 2010) [3]. The term 'period' is widely used to denote school times and timetabling. This refers to the amount of content covered or instruction delivered during a particular time period. This depends on an individual teacher's ability to expose students to more content within the same time than other teachers. Kerr (2015) [11] observes that, even though some students may be quicker workers than others, lessons must be adequately paced. The number of topics/themes covered in the first term by the teacher may depend on how quickly the students finish making their bespoke garments. However, the Consumer Sciences policy document in Swaziland does not give any guidance on pace of teaching. Furthermore, the educator's pace is greatly influenced by students' perseverance which reflects the students' willingness to be engaged (Bausell, 2010) [3]. While engagement is defined in terms of teachers' effort to engage learners in the instruction, perseverance is the extent to which students are willing and able to spend time on learning a particular concept or undertaking a task. The perseverance concept is influenced by own reflection on the part of the student, normally gauged by the level of motivation of the student.

1.4 Research Questions

The purpose of this research work was to explore educators' reflections of the instructional time laid down in the Swaziland JC Integrated Consumer Sciences curriculum. A research purpose statement answers the 'why' of this study being conducted. However, research questions hypothesise the direct queries and problems the research intends to solve (Noddings, 2007) [22]. Therefore, this study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are educators' reflections on the instructional time concept when teaching the Integrated Consumer Sciences curriculum at junior secondary level?
2. Why do educators reflect on the Consumer Sciences instructional time in particular ways?
3. What lesson(s) may be learnt from the educators' reflections on instructional time for purposes of improving the curriculum?

2. Methodology

This article utilised a qualitative research approach grounded on the critical paradigm laying down rules and regulations that established and defined the boundaries, and guided me on how to act within those boundaries in order to be successful. This paradigm became critical for this study on a two-fold basis; one being that Consumer Sciences is a social science. Literature has proved that a critical paradigm provides a powerful and influential framework for social sciences in extending the interpretivist mandate to understand the society; however, critiquing it and taking action. Secondly, the critical paradigm liberates participants from historical and structural social phenomena. Moreover, apart from enlightening the Consumer Sciences educators and challenging them to take action, the critical paradigm has been used extensively by Consumer Sciences curriculum studies (McGregor and

Murnane, 2010) [20]. Such an exploration is better achieved by employing a self-reflective enquiry, an action research, for the educators to be actively involved in reflecting on their practices with the aim of improving their teaching time in Consumer Sciences.

Purposive and convenience sampling procedures were used to generate data. The sample size consisted of nine (9) educators from the Manzini and Hhohho regions of Swaziland. Ethical concerns were observed according to the Rand Afrikaans University 2002 guidelines for ethical concerns. Participants were therefore informed of all their rights. Their real names were concealed. They were referred to as Educators 1 to 9. For triangulation purposes, three data-generation methods (one-to-one semi-structured interviews, reflection activity, and observation) were used.

To establish trustworthiness of the qualitative research data, data was first gathered from multiple sources for the purpose of enhancing its genuineness (Creswell, 2013) [6]. A voice recorder was used to verify that data gathered was consistent across the sources of data, for triangulation purposes, that is, providing a detailed research method, offering a rich description of the settings and context of the Consumer Sciences educators interviewed, to improve its transferability. For dependability, we outlined the processes of reporting data in detail, thus enabling future researchers to repeat this study. The same results would not necessarily be gained. Direct quotations were noted, for readers to access authenticity of findings. An assistant researcher was used to collect comparable data. This ensured that the study's findings are the outcome of the reflections and ideas of the educators, with no characteristics and preferences of one's own, thus enhancing confirmability. Lastly, the credibility of the research instruments was strengthened through use of a panel of educationists and through peer scrutiny. A review was given on whether the interview questions really reflected and presented the construct and content that solved research questions through the phases of action research.

The action research had two phases. Each method was therefore administered twice, that is, once in each phase, to enhance data analysis. The framework analysis was used and is commended with regard to thorough organisation of data, retaining a link to data, thematic analysis, case analysis, and combining examples and explanations. Themes generated from the literature organised the data, and the findings are presented thematically, using direct quotations to express the voices of educators (Creswell, 2013) [6].

3. Findings and Discussions

3.1 Allocated Time vs. Recommended Time

All educators reflected on allocated time but with different time allocated per school ranging from 35 minutes to 55 minutes per period. These periods are either as short as 35 minutes (Educator 4), rather lengthy at 50 – 55 minutes (Educators 3 and 9), or moderate at 40 – 45 minutes (Educators 3 and 4). The educator reflections hold that the time duration for teaching Consumer Sciences is between 40 to 45 minutes. This conclusion is not only based on the fact that most (six) educators were found using such a period duration. This arises from reflections by Educators 3, 4, and 9, on challenges associated with periods either too short or too long. Educator 4 observed that 35 minutes is too short a period, and has negative effects on the practical lessons. Even though she has double periods (70 minutes) allocated for the practical lessons, she lamented that very few lessons can be completed within that time, compelling her to use her

personal time to conduct practical lessons: “Each period is 35 minutes. Our two periods then are 70 minutes and it’s difficult. Only few practical can be finished in 70 minutes. Then I normally do it on Saturdays because we always have arguments with the other teachers because our lessons normally spill over to the next class”. Similarly, Educators 3 and 9’s reflections indicate that a period of 50 or 55 minutes is too long for the students’ attention span. Even though educators complained that the time they had was limited and thus they are unable to complete the syllabus, we noted during observation that their students exhibited signs of exhaustion, and kept yawning and stretching during class. The limited time, according to the educators, was calculated on the number of periods they have. This therefore leads to the question of how much time should be allocated to the teaching of Consumer Sciences.

Subsequently, the fact that educators reflected on challenges and on the limited time they have, none of them was clear on how much time is recommended in the curriculum. It may therefore be difficult to draw a conclusion. Teachers claimed that the syllabus is too lengthy. It may be that the allocated time does not tally with recommended time. Secondly, educators expect school administrators to allocate Consumer Sciences ‘more’ time without specifying exactly how much time is adequate.

In the case of Educator 4, even though she is not sure of the number of periods she should be allocated, 4 periods per week/cycle is decidedly too little time, at 35 minutes per period: “there is a lot of content to be covered whilst there is less time allocated for it in the timetable”. All other educators indicated that the number of periods per cycle amounts to too little time compared with the amount of content in Consumer Sciences. This problem in allocation of teaching time may be expected in this curriculum. Both the Swaziland education policy sector for 2011 and the Consumer Sciences curriculum documents are silent about the recommended school period for secondary schools, or period duration and number of periods to be allocated (allocated time) for Consumer Sciences. This explains why the educators were not satisfied with the allocated time; similarly, the school administrators have no document guiding them in the allocation of instructional times for the curriculum. The practice of allocating too little time for teaching as gleaned from the educators’ reflections, concurs with findings from Loewer (2009) ^[15] that schools tend to assign far too little time to instruction. However, subjects with practical orientation such as Consumer Sciences need more periods or even double periods allocated, to allow and support teaching and learning activities so as to increase student engagement (Farenga and Ness, 2015; OECD, 2014) ^[23]. Other studies (Loewer, 2009; Kerr, 2015) ^[15, 11] therefore suggest that allocating too little time for instruction negatively affects the performance of the students. This was evident in the educator reflections that this affects their teaching: “limited teaching time hinders me from experimenting many teaching methods that can be beneficial to my students but they need a lot of time that I don’t have”, Educator 3 grumbled. Notable is that educators reflected with conviction that allocated time is outside their control, that curriculum designers and school authorities are responsible for regulation of allocated time, thus being influenced by certified reflections.

3.2 Looping in Consumer Sciences

Looping is a concept endorsed by public reflections in the classrooms that facilitate a continuous relationship and

communication between students and the teacher as the teacher progresses with the students to next level. The JC Consumer Sciences curriculum is taught from Form 1 to Form 3, thus looping is a possibility. Educators’ reflections indicate that educators practise looping and find it beneficial to both the students and the learners. Educator 7, for example, noted that looping obliges each educator to put more effort in her teaching and assume sole responsibility of the performance of students, as read from the external examinations at the end of third year (Form 3); “we do looping because if not, the other teacher does not put more effort or that will not be responsible as she knows that anyways next year she won’t be with that class”. For the students, educators noted that looping carries more benefits as they develop rapport with a teacher. They further assert that students are likely to perform well academically when taught by the same teacher throughout. Educator 7 continued: “we once combined students with intention of separating them later in Form 2, where they were assigned a new teacher. This arrangement affected the learners to the point that their performance dropped. They cited changing teachers as main problem...that they are not used to the teacher. However, they picked up after some time. But they don’t like it really”. This suggests that, once students develop such rapport, they wish to continue under instruction of the same teacher, even in the senior phase. Similarly, Educator 4 narrated her experience, suggesting that educators and students grow attached through looping: “this is a very effective practise. It develops a sense of responsibility. It also helps the students because they develop rapport with the teacher. I was once out of school for some time when I had to nurse my son in hospital. My students refused to be taken by my colleague in their project or practical. They do not believe other teachers can teach them the way I do. I also learn to understand their capabilities and personalities and that helps in my teaching”. Again, the reflection by Educator 4 intimates that both educators and students benefit from looping. Consequently, the teaching and learning process is improved. Lastly, Educators 2 and 6 observed that looping prevented unnecessary time being lost during the transition period and time when teacher and students learn from and about each other.

The observation by Educators 2 and 6 concurs with findings by McLeod *et al.* (2003) ^[21] who celebrated looping after observing that looping eliminated transition time, and thus allowed the teacher to thoroughly explain concepts. In the long run, the students’ educational needs are met. Similarly, other studies (McCown and Sherman, 2002; Roberts, 2003; Bogart, 2002) ^[19, 25] report a positive influence of looping on academic achievement. Furthermore, the study yielded positive educator reflections on looping, even though the Consumer Sciences curriculum policy document provides no comments about this feature. Educators have therefore acquired this practice through public reflections and it has worked out well for their teaching. The educator reflections on looping therefore have answered in the affirmative the question communicated through a memo by the US Department of Education in 1913:

“Shall teachers in graded city schools be advanced from grade to grade with their pupils through a series of two, three, four, or more years, so that they may come to know the children they teach and be able to build the work of the latter years on that of the earlier years...?” (Mahoney 1916, 5) ^[17].

3.3 Time Wastage

Educator reflections indicate that educators were consistent

about limited time and further pointed to time wastage as another setback. Apart from the fact that the allocated time is too short, the situation is worsened by time wastage during the second term (May to August). For example, Educator 2 noted that teaching time is shrunk by sporting activities that interrupt teaching: “Again I teach on Saturday because much time is lost through sporting activities during the second term. My school is very good in sport and as a private school, it has almost all the sport facilities so the participation of student take long thus consuming much of the teaching time”. Educator 4 shared the same sentiments, suggesting that the more the school wins ball games, the more they progress from circuit to regional to national competitions, resulting in further time loss: “time is wasted yet there is this second term where a lot of time is waited on sports. My school participate strongly in football and the school soccer players are recruited from local teams in the community and that means we compete till the national competitions which means more time wasted as there would be no classes when there are ball games. The effects can be seen mostly in the clothing coursework”, Educator 4 complained. All other educators were affected by sport during the second term; however, this hit hard for Educators 2, 3, 4, and 9: their schools were good at football, and thus competed till the end of the second term. Educators therefore try to cover lost time by teaching on holidays and weekends. Educators are therefore committed to helping their students finish the curriculum before the date for external examinations in November. These reflections concur with Mabuza’s (2014) ^[16] findings that teachers in Swaziland are challenged by too much time spent on sporting activities when subjects like Consumer Sciences need more time allocated to practical work.

Furthermore, during the observation session, we noted that the educators also contribute a great deal towards time wastage, albeit insignificant compared with that lost to sporting activities. Educators waste time during transition of periods. This is mainly because the Consumer Sciences laboratories are far away from the other classes, yet students have to move between the two distant venues. Also, Educators 4, 5, and 8 wasted much time asking the same question repeatedly when it was obvious that students did not know answer. Educators fail to account for the small pieces of lost time which accumulate every day. Transition time, therefore, eventually decreases the allocated time for instruction. This is common in Consumer Sciences, especially in large classes (Mantyi-Ncube, 2012) ^[18]. The time lost to sporting activities would, however, be expected in this curriculum. Both the education sector policy and the Consumer Sciences curriculum policy document are silent on provision and management of sports at schools. Phase Two of the study and the focus group discussion enlightened educators on other activities and practices they need to avoid to save time. This includes limiting transition time, leaving students with another teacher when absent, and developing handy pupils’ notes as opposed to writing notes on chalkboards for copying by students.

3.4 Pace and Perseverance

Teaching pace and students’ perseverance to handle instruction are time concepts that educators were not aware of in the first phase. During the planning for Phase Two, educators were given PISA (2013) ^[24] writings on factors or indicators associated with students’ drive and motivation, along with curriculum documents from neighbouring countries. This was to assist teachers to grasp how time can negatively affect teaching and learning through teachers’ pace

and duration of lesson. This therefore accounts for own reflections in controlling the teaching speed. The educators appreciated the teaching guidance offered in the CAPS Consumer Studies, wishing that the Swaziland curriculum could be structured similarly. For example, Educator 3 attested that: “I think the South African curriculum is very clear, providing time durations with which a teacher is expected to finish a particular topic. I really struggled in my early years of teaching for some time I would think I am too fast or too slow”. Educator 6 added that, owing to the nature of the syllabus, however, it was difficult to consider perseverance, and that all teachers were focused on maximizing the pace. The South African CAPS is driven by certified reflections; this confusion was expected in the Swaziland curriculum as the curriculum policy document does not provide guidelines. On the other hand, Educator 5 defended the curriculum document, saying that “there is a scheme book where you [teacher] set the pace before time. It then gives a clear roadmap and set targets [educator was given curriculum documents from South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho.]. I believe the scheme book was meant to serve and develop something like that demonstrated in the South African curriculum. This means the pace in Swaziland is set by the teacher while in other countries it’s predetermined by the curriculum body”. Action research was therefore effective in emancipating the educators’ own reflections. Since this study has proved that the educators are greatly driven by certified and public reflections, the curriculum policy document had need of detailing some guidelines. Educators, therefore, must consider students’ perseverance and use it appropriately to enhance students’ retention (PISA, 2013) ^[24].

4. Summary and Conclusions

This exploration has documented the fact that instructional time stands as a key curriculum concept influencing the direction of the teaching and learning process in general. Time, however, is presented in different variables of magnitude (the amount of time) and quality, that is, how effectively time has been employed in instruction-related activities. The term ‘duration’ has been used for length of time. School time is thus broken into segments or ‘periods’, or unit time duration for a minimum time duration for any instructional activity. Consumer Sciences, as a practical skills-oriented subject in Swaziland, ought to be allocated at least six 45-minute periods a week for effective teaching. In addition, educators suggest that practical lessons need more time, therefore the subject should not be awarded average time along with other subjects. However, having lamented that the allocated time is insufficient to cover the content, much time is also lost to sporting activities that even the Ministry of Education fails to control. Consumer Sciences educators also waste a great deal of time during demonstrations, in which educators are not always clear on subject matter or have succumbed to poor planning and classroom arrangement. Educators need to be competent and observe a clear planning guideline prior to the teaching episode.

In addition, both literature and findings of this study confirm that looping benefits both the educator and the students as they bond throughout the years. Lastly, teaching pace and student perseverance are time concepts that the educators seem not to consider much, yet such factors do affect the allocated time and quality of time educators and students spend while exploring the curriculum. All educators are

concerned with completing the syllabus as early as possible yet recording maximum retention, therefore, allocated time must be sufficient and teacher's pace be kept at adequate levels that will not affect students' perseverance in taking instruction. Both the own and certified reflections therefore have not been observed in this curriculum. This renders it to public reflections that lead to time wastage and failure to observe the interests of the both the educator and the students. It may be concluded that the educators reflected in this way because: a) both the Swaziland education policy sector for 2011 and the Consumer Sciences curriculum documents are reticent on the recommended school period for secondary schools or period duration and number of periods to be allocated (allocated time) for Consumer Sciences. This gives administrators the leeway to use their discretion in time allocation; b) Consumer Sciences laboratories are situated at a distance from the other classes, yet students move from their normal classes to the labs. This wastes time, thus lengthening the waiting and transition time. Therefore government's failure to regulate teaching and sporting time affects the teaching and learning process.

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