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SMARTPHONES TO SUPPORT LEARNING AND TEACHING: DIVERGENT PERSPECTIVES

Abstract:

Learning-teaching support media for the subject Consumer Studies are scarce. This subject offers great entrepreneurship potential for learners, is growing in popularity and is being expanded to more school phases in the South African school system. In addition, Consumer Studies includes a broad variation of topics, which obliges these subject teachers to have a broad and deep knowledge of all the diverse topics. It is therefore imperative to provide teachers with media they can use to support them in the teaching, and learners in the learning, of Consumer Studies. After a recent survey indicated that digital technologies such as smartphones abound in South Africa, the potential of these devices to serve as learning-teaching support media for the subject Consumer Studies in particular, was explored. To gain deeper insight into how smartphones can contribute to learning and teaching – particularly in Consumer Studies – with the ultimate purpose of enhancing the preparation of Consumer Studies student teachers, qualitative exploratory desktop research was employed. The findings indicated that, despite numerous ways in which smartphones could serve as learning-teaching support media, particularly for Consumer Studies, using these devices for learning and teaching is not uncomplicated. Several pitfalls associated with the use of smartphones also emerged. The divergent perspectives that emerged from the findings were used to make recommendations that could be used in the preparation of student teachers to teach the subject and to which practising teachers could refer when utilising smartphones as learning-teaching support media.

Keywords:

Consumer Studies, learning-teaching support media, smartphones, student teachers, teacher training, teaching technologies

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