

## **THE REAL WORLD: INTEGRATING CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES INTO THE CURRICULUM OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES TEACHERS**

Ifraj Shamsid-Deen  
Clarkston Middle School

Bettye P. Smith  
The University of Georgia

Family and consumer sciences teachers create, incorporate and provide practical knowledge about real life situations that will allow students to make appropriate decisions (American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, 2001). Using contextual teaching and learning will help FCS teachers relate the subject matter content more effectively to real life experiences. The purpose of this study was to examine contextual teaching and learning in family and consumer sciences curriculum to determine how willing FCS teachers were to incorporate contextual teaching and learning into their curriculum based on the knowledge they have of contextual teaching and learning. The population consisted of FCS teachers in Georgia who attended the 2001 Winter In-Service meeting. Of the 350 surveys disbursed, 230 were returned, completed, and usable for this study. The return rate was 66%. The instrument used for measuring contextual teaching and learning consisted of 14 items including 5 demographic questions, and 9 Likert-type scale items. Of the nine Likert-type items, 4 were concerned with FCS teachers knowledge of contextual teaching and learning, and 5 regarding the frequency at which contextual teaching and learning strategies were used in FCS classrooms. A four-point Likert scale was used (1= strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=agree, 4=strongly agree). Regarding the level of knowledge of FCS teachers had of contextual teaching and learning, almost half (48%) believed they could define contextual teaching and learning. On the other hand, FCS teachers were both willing and interested (93% and 77%, respectively) to integrate contextual teaching and learning strategies into their curriculum. Interestingly enough, 78% of the teachers reported using contextual teaching and learning strategies daily. It is suggested that all FCS teachers be educated about contextual teaching and learning, allowing them to be able to integrate teaching in context strategies on a daily basis. This will allow students the opportunity to more easily transfer the necessary information needed to make decisions in real life situations.

### **About the Authors**

Ifraj Shamsid-Deen, M.Ed., is a Family and Consumer Science teacher at Clarkston Middle School. Bettye P. Smith, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor in the Department of Occupational Studies at The University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia.