Abstract

A clearly stated lesson objective is considered an essential component of a well-planned lesson. Many teachers of Technology, a relatively new subject in South African schools, teach Technology with rather limited training both in content and methodological approaches. This study sought to investigate and classify lesson objectives framed or implied by teachers in their lesson plans, according to knowledge and cognitive process dimensions. The two-dimensional Taxonomy Table introduced by Krathwohl was adapted for Technology and formed the framework for this study. A mixed modal study was used to investigate sampled lesson objectives described by Technology teachers. Explicitly stated or inferred objectives were classified according to Krathwohl’s Taxonomy Table, after which the objectives in each cell were counted to establish the frequency of occurrence of objectives in each cell in the quantitative phase. In the qualitative phase, specific cases of explicit or inferred objectives were selected in order to examine and discuss lesson objectives in terms of knowledge and cognitive dimensions. It was found that most of the objectives lie on the lower level of the knowledge dimension and address mainly Factual and Conceptual knowledge. Lesson objectives were also positioned low in terms of cognitive levels, with Remember and Understand occurring most frequently in the cognitive process dimension. The paucity of lesson objectives that required complex knowledge and higher-order thinking is disappointing: teaching limited to less complex knowledge types and lower cognitive levels fails to develop learners’ higher-order thinking skills required for further study or independent practice in work environments. A recommendation flowing from the study is that, during pre-service training and in-service teacher support programmes, the importance of clear lesson objectives should be emphasised and assessments planned for such lessons should closely match the lesson objectives. Further research is also needed regarding the reasons for which low cognitive demands are made in the teaching of Technology.

Keywords: Krathwohl’s two-dimensional taxonomy, lesson objectives, cognitive process dimensions, knowledge dimensions, higher cognitive skills.