A REVIEW OF THE ROLE OF SHARED LESSON OBJECTIVES IN SHAPING THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

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Abstract

Lesson objectives are germane parts of every lesson plan and its delivery. More important is the disclosure of these objectives. This paper reviews the role of shared lesson objectives in shaping academic achievements of senior secondary school students. Different views about lesson objectives are analysed, it also looks at how shared lesson objectives help to increase academic achievement of learners in schools. The framework of this review is premised on the cognitive load theory, which considers the intrinsic, germane and extraneous cognitive domains as keys to the formulation and disclosure of every learning objective. It also looks at key considerations for crafting lesson objectives- these are audience, behaviour, condition and degree. It finally, looks at the benefits of shared objectives- clarity, instructional guidance, motivation, alignment with assessment, feedback, collaboration and accountability were identified. It recommended that in developing and disclosure of lesson objectives, students' capacity, maturity level and behaviour should be considered. This would help to effectively differentiate and make provisions for low ability learners while the high ability learners are further encouraged to do more.

Keywords: *Academic achievement. Lesson objectives*

Introduction.

In education, shared learning objectives are essential for directing the processes of instruction, learning, encouraging student participation and enriching academic performance. These goals, which are the result of teacher and student collaboration, give learners a clear idea of what is expected of them during a lesson. Shared learning objectives which is a key component of a

successful lesson allows teachers and students to communicate expectations and results for learning. They give the students a sense of ownership and accountability for their learning by being transparent and clear about the expectations placed on them. Furthermore, shared objectives establish common objectives, support fairness and inclusion by guaranteeing that every student has access to the same expectations and educational opportunities. Beyond simple declarations of the topic, shared learning objectives cover a variety of cognitive, affective, and behavioural outcomes, such as the development of problem-solving abilities and emotional competencies and analytical skills. A focus on the total development of students through shared objectives help to groom lifelong learners who are prepared to flourish in a world that is changing quickly. Shared lesson objectives help to prepare active learners who engage meaningfully in the learning process, this is in tandem with the research of Graham et al (2021) who affirmed that "the effort of the teacher to clarify and share LO with their pupils encourages them to become active in the learning process and not be passive recipients of information"

A number of well-established educational theories and frameworks can be incorporated into the theoretical structure for the impact of shared lesson objectives on students' learning results. However, focus will be on the Cognitive Load Theory. This theoretical framework combines the most important ideas from the theories of motivation, social cognition, and behaviour.

Cognitive Load Theory

The theory reveals that learning becomes challenging or useless when students' ability to assimilate knowledge is exceeded. The levels of cognitive load theory include:

a. *Intrinsic Cognitive Load:* This alludes to the complexity of learning materials. The intricacy of the material and the learner's past knowledge determine it. Hence, reducing intrinsic load through simplification of lesson delivery should be the goal of every lesson objective.

b. *Extraneous Cognitive Load:* This results from either the learning environment or the manner in which the lesson is presented. It is mentally demanding hence; it is seen to be harmful to learning. However, shared lesson objectives ease the pressure of learning. In other words, it is pertinent to reduce extraneous load by ensuring simple presentation and of lesson objectives and lesson content.

c. ***Germane Cognitive Load:*** Due to the cognitive processing involved, the germane load is advantageous for learning since it contributes to the formation of long-term memory representations. Lesson objectives should be designed to enhance germane load.

By giving students precise direction on what they must learn and do, shared instructional objectives are essential for controlling cognitive load. Students can more effectively use their cognitive resources when the objectives are well-defined. This allows them to concentrate on absorbing and integrating new knowledge instead of trying to figure out what the lesson's objectives are.

Key considerations for constructing lesson objectives.

According to Rahayu et al, (2021), there are four major considerations to be referenced before formulating lesson objectives. They also averred that "to facilitate teaching and learning practice, the core and basic competencies are cited in the lesson plan" These considerations are explained below:

The Audience: when developing instructional objectives, the student component is crucial because it guarantees that the objectives are customised to the unique requirements, skills, and interests of the students. The learning process may be made more relevant and engaging by teachers by taking the student into account and matching instructional objectives to their experiences and goals- this gets the learners involved in the process of learning, a form of student centred learning which grants students the autonomous opportunity to learn. This reflects the idea of Joyce (2019) "student-centred learning focuses on individual interest and choice by considering student flexibility and autonomy" Further to this, the critical thinking and problem solving skills of learners are galvanized by getting them involved in the laying the foundation for learning (Chen et al, 2017). This [is because as soon as knowledge is seen as crucial to a student's leaning needs, aspirations, and life, they are inclined to interact with it and remember it. In the same vein, to meet the specific needs of each student or group of students, teachers can differentiate instruction by keeping the student factor in mind. Because of this, regardless of their starting point or learning pace, every student is guaranteed the chance to be in synch with the lesson objectives and ultimately internalize the main subject matter.

Through student participation in the objective-setting process, teachers can make sure that assessment strategies match what students should know. Measurement of student achievement and decision-making regarding education are greatly aided by assessment procedures (Black & William, 2009). Also, teachers can find areas where learning objectives need to be changed

or adjusted to support students' learning by periodically assessing students' comprehension and skill development. In the same vein, fairness is fostered in evaluation as students know what is expected of them and how their learning will be evaluated. Therefore, a precise and well-defined instructional goal provides a road map for instruction and evaluation. Furthermore, students are more committed to their own learning and growth when they have a say in determining the objectives and consequences of their education, this draws from the theory of constructivism which makes a case for students to construct the path in which their learning would tilt towards (Tangney, 2014). This fosters a smooth partnership between students and teachers and by extension a seamless collaborative effort among the students.

Furthermore, shared lesson objectives is indicative of a proper level of differentiation in the learning process. A popular strategy for improving learning outcomes is differentiated instruction, which entails modifying lesson objectives and curriculum to meet the requirements of a wide range of students as a result of differentiation. Tomlinson (2015) view differentiation as a phenomenon which makes "learners differ in terms of background experience, culture, language, gender, interest, readiness to learn, modes of learning, speed of learning, support systems for learning, self-awareness as a learner, confidence as a learner, independence as a learner, and a host of other ways"

Teachers can make necessary adjustments to objectives of the lesson so that they are suitably demanding and available to all students- this can be done by utilising student data and feedback.

Behaviour: students' behaviour has a big impact on how engaged they are with class material, including how much they pay attention, participate, and cooperate. Lesson objectives can be matched with students' behavioural preferences so that teachers can provide engaging activities and learning opportunities that motivate students to participate actively, hence, students' psychology should be duly considered in preparing lesson objectives (Schutz and Muis, 2024). Furthermore, behaviour issues that students display might hinder their ability to meet the goals of the class. Attention deficiencies, disruptive behaviour, and socio-emotional problems are a few examples of these difficulties. Teachers should proactively address these issues by creating instructional techniques and interventions that take into account the behaviour of their students while establishing targets. Similarly, it is more probable that students will behave appropriately and participate in learning activities in a productive way when they are aware of the expectations placed on both academic performance and behaviour. Hence, teachers can convey to students the value of polite behaviour, involvement, and teamwork in accomplishing learning objectives by including behavioural standards into instructional objectives. In the

same vein, to evaluate students' development and give them performance feedback, lesson objectives are strictly considered.

Additionally, students may be required to exhibit particular behaviours or abilities in order to meet certain class objectives, such as effective communication, collaboration, or self-regulation. By extension, teachers can offer targeted assistance and scaffolding to help students acquire and hone these abilities over time by defining these behavioural expectations in the objectives.

Condition: this refers to the required condition or atmosphere in which learning takes place. It refers to the different elements and situations that affect how students pick up new information, abilities, and behaviours. Age, developmental stage, past knowledge, learning preferences, and cultural background are some factors that affect how students interact with the subject matter and what they can accomplish. Hence, childhood experiences play a big role in determining the receptive condition of learners in the classroom (Anda, Porter & Brown, 2020). By extension, in addition to addressing gaps in educational attainment and access, learning objectives should include the socioeconomic background of students' lives. For students from a variety of socioeconomic situations, teachers must work to create goals that are both relevant and achievable. It is important to create objectives that are in line with the intellectual requirements of the topic, meaning that students should not find them unduly difficult or too simple to complete, hence, difficult tasks may need several objectives that cover various learning facets or phases. Additionally, distinct objectives may be required for various teaching methodologies, including inquiry-based learning, cooperative learning, and direct instruction, in order to successfully steer students' learning experiences. In conclusion, learning environment such as classroom design, available resources and the social interactions within it influences lesson objectives.

Degree: this focuses on setting objectives that gradually scaffold students' learning from what they currently known to more complex concepts or abilities, which would help them build upon their existing knowledge. To this end, differentiation and variation of class goals are necessary to fulfil the unique requirements and readiness levels of students, given their varying degrees of assimilation. In other words, the teaching methodology builds on simple-to-complex principle. Since learning objectives are categorised into hierarchical stages of cognitive complexity, lesson objectives are frequently organised in accordance with frameworks like Bloom's Taxonomy or others. The proper cognitive level for the objectives determines how well students have assimilated the subject content- therefore, the order of lesson goals need to be logical and cohesive, building upon one another to support the development of cumulative

learning and skills. The pace and depth of learning determine the degree of absorption; when students show mastery and are prepared to graduate to the next level, the objectives become more complicated and sophisticated. This is also evidenced in the degree of differentiation of learning, low and high ability learners are considered in the formation of learning objectives, this is critically considered by the teacher with the cooperation of the learners (Serafimova, 2019)

Relationship between shared lesson objectives and students' academic performance.

A well laid-down or clearly spelt out lesson objectives have a positive impact on students' academic performance, it guides students sequentially and help to build on lesson delivery from simple to complex, known to unknown. In other words, when lesson objectives are clearly defined and communicated to students, particular keeping in mind the adoption of Blooms taxonomy, students learn better, and they have a full grasp of what is being taught. Although there are some variances to this though, Wong (2022) affirmed in his research that there is no correlation between students' performance and identification of lesson objectives, he further identified gaps between students connection of identified lesson objectives and what was eventually learnt. The overarching aim of lesson objectives is to effectively meet student learning needs, this is revealed in the research of (Chizhik and Chizhik, 2018, Rahayu, 2021). In addition to this, there is a connection between lesson objectives and success criteria, the objectives of a lesson indicate teacher's anticipated expectation and response from the students by the end of the lesson, meanwhile, success criteria focuses on skills and knowledge which students are expected to have garnered at the end of the lesson (Jayne, 2015). By extension, success criteria mirrors how well students have internalised learning objectives.

The benefits of clearly stated lesson objectives are:

1. **Clarity and Focus:** When teachers and students have goals, it helps everyone in the class know what is required of them. This clarity guides teaching and learning activities toward achieving those goals. An elicited evidence of learning during lesson is the very fact that students engage actively through questioning. They probe into how the lesson objectives align with the topic content; this in itself brings clarity and better understanding of the subject matter (Gewertz, 2015).

   By having shared learning objectives, the teacher and students make sure that they are both aware of the expectations for the lesson's content. A coherent learning environment is facilitated by this congruence between the objectives of the teacher and the comprehension

of students. Furthermore, Shared learning objectives remove confusion by outlining precisely what is expected of students. This clears up misunderstanding and improves comprehension since students know exactly what abilities or information they ought to have by the end of the class. Similarly, learning objectives give the lesson a central focus; by aiding the prioritisation of tasks and information. They guarantee that the classroom time is dedicated to teaching fundamental ideas and abilities.

2. **Instructional Guidance:** Teachers are assisted in constructing activities which helps in choosing effective teaching methods. They also develop evaluations that are in line with the desired learning goals. Teachers might utilise lesson objectives as a guide for proper class design. In other words, students are more likely to participate actively in the process of learning if they have a clear goal in mind. Having well-defined learning objectives may inspire students by providing them with direction and a feeling of purpose; which can boost their engagement and excitement.

3. **Student Motivation and Engagement**: Students who have clear objectives are better able to comprehend the lesson's significance and goal; which increases their motivation to study. Students are more likely to actively engage in the learning process when they are aware of the goals they are aiming to achieve. A well-motivated learner actively participates in the learning. This active participation can be traced to a well outlined, drafted and clearly spelt objectives (Graham et al, 2021). Similarly, as a result of having shared objectives, students feel more motivated and in control of their education.

4. **Assessment Alignment:** Based on shared objectives, tests that measure students' comprehension and proficiency with the material are created. Teachers may make sure they are evaluating material that was meant to be taught by matching assessments to the specified objectives. Shared lesson objectives help to effectively assess learners, Heritage (2010) and Jayne, (2015) affirmed that lesson objectives and success criteria help to drive the process of assessment for learning otherwise known as formative assessment. Additionally, teachers can see potential problem areas in their students' learning and make timely interventions to clear up any misunderstandings or issues by routinely referring to the objectives and evaluating the students' comprehension.

5. **Monitoring and Feedback**: Based on set goals of the lesson, it is possible to keep track of students' progress and give prompt feedback. In order to modify lessons or offer more help as necessary, teachers can evaluate whether or not students are reaching the objectives. Through shared learning objectives, teachers can harvest feedback from students, which

would in turn help in the teaching and learning process. In order to assist students realise where they are making progress and where they still need to develop in respect to the learning goals, teachers might provide them feedback that is directly related to the stated objectives. In other words, lesson objectives and success criteria are strong feedback tools which help in improving quality of teaching and learning (Winarno et al, 2019). Feedback may also be modified to meet certain learning objectives, assisting students in identifying their areas of strength and weaknesses.

6. **Collaboration, Communication and Reflection**: Teachers, students, and parents may work together more easily when they have shared objectives. They enable more effective communication amongst all stakeholders by giving a consistent vocabulary for talking about learning objectives and advancement. Having specific learning objectives promotes learning reflection. Students can evaluate their learning to ascertain if they have achieved the lesson's goals at the conclusion of the session.

7. **Accountability and Differentiation:** Through clearly set lesson objectives both educators and learners are held responsible for their respective contributions to the process of teaching and learning. In order to accomplish the goals, students must actively participate in learning activities, and teachers are responsible for creating lessons that promote those goals. With shared lesson objectives, teachers may adapt their teaching to meet the various requirements of their learners. To make sure that every student has the chance to meet the desired learning goals, teachers might also adjust the way they teach, give more assistance, or assign enrichment activities to the low level learners, while the high flyers are given high order tasks with reference to the learning objectives.

Conclusion

Lesson objectives that are clearly established provide educators and students with a foundation for guidance. Teachers stay focused and coherent in their teaching techniques by following clear objectives that serve as a blueprint for the lesson. They also provide students with a clear idea of expectations, which helps them to feel motivated and purposeful in their academic pursuits. Also, maximizing student learning outcomes requires alignment between the objectives of the subject matter, instructional activities and the methods of evaluation. Student comprehension, application, and knowledge retention are all improved when objectives are in line with instructional methodologies and assessment instruments.

Ultimately, the data in this study clearly demonstrates that clearly stated lesson objectives have a major impact on secondary students' academic performance because they give instruction direction and clarity—all of which help to create the best possible learning environment for students to succeed in.

Recommendation.

This paper provides the following as major recommendations:

i. In developing lesson objectives, the unique requirements of the students which are skills, and interest should be considered. Teachers should understand the interconnectivity of students' behaviour and alignment of lesson objectives. Therefore, teachers should ensure that their teaching methodology aligns with diverse needs and learning capacities of students.

ii. The success of every lesson is guaranteed if the behavioural and psychological needs of the learners are fully considered. In other words, it is very important that considerations should be given to students' background and behaviour before drafting objectives for a lesson. Based on their ethnic, religious, social and economic class, students respond to lesson differently. Therefore, the germane effect of these factors should be considered before drafting lesson objectives.

iii. In the same vein, the ages and maturity level of learners are critical to the formation and delivery of a lesson. Students' ages play a crucial role in their attention and retention abilities, hence, it is necessary for teachers to place credence on this because a lesson content and objective which is understood creates an independent learner.

iv. Similarly, differentiation strategy should be used to capture learners at all levels in the classroom. It is necessary to share objectives with the learners in order to ensure learners' needs are met, from the low ability to the high ability ones.

v. There should be proper usage of verbs to depict the appropriation Blooms taxonomy of learning. Not all leaners operate at very complex levels of learning, hence, it is important to graduate from simple to complex levels of learning and to share this plan with the learners.

vi. No student is designed to fail, hence, lesson plans should be developed in a way that it meets learners at the point of their needs. Hence, they should be privy to the plan and methodology of the lesson. They should not be left in the dark about what they intend to learn. Ultimately, both formative and summative assessments should reflect what is

captured in the lesson objectives- questions should graduate from simple to complex levels at equal weighting.

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