

Assessment of Teaching and Learning of Art Related Subjects in the Colleges of Education in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in the Colleges of Education in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana. The purpose of the study was to assess the reasons limiting student choice of visual Art as their elective subject. The research design used for the study was descriptive survey.

Four Colleges of Education were sampled by means of simple random sampling and stratified sampling methods. Simple random sampling method was used to select the four Colleges of Education and stratified sampling method for the selection of the students. The sample size was four hundred, comprising of four hundred students.

From the results of the study, it was found that Students do not choose Art as their elective subject because of the way the tutors handle the subject. The selection of Art Related subjects can be promoted by educating the students on the importance of Art as a vocation. The recommendation is that tutors should be given in-service training to up-grade their knowledge on the methodology of art.

INTRODUCTION

The usefulness and contribution of Vocational and Technical Educational training is seen in diverse ways in the development of a country. It is therefore regarded as a foundation course and a tool which helps learners to acquire both theoretical and practical skills and knowledge. At the basic level, the course is designed to awaken and develop the child's potential in creative abilities, and also to help the child to use a wide range of materials, tools, instruments and other resources suitable to express ideas, and to communicate their feelings. At the Junior High School level, the course is designed for students to appreciate the fact that Ghana has a mixture of rich indigenous culture and modern life (Ministry of Education, 2004). At the Senior High School level, the rationale for the Visual Art Education is encouraging the appreciation of a person's artistic and cultural heritage, as well as educating the whole person – head, hand, and the heart. At the tertiary level in the Colleges of Education, the course is designed to provide the foundation for the vocational subjects selected for the Pre-Vocational skills in the diploma programme. It covers fundamental concepts that will prepare the mind of the generalist teacher–trainee for the Pre-Vocational and Technical skills (Ministry of Education, 2004).

Ocvirk, Bone, Stinson and Wigg (1962) (cited in Quayson, 2006) have observed that Art has meant different things to different people at different times. This is not surprising given the fact that after numerous attempts by different authorities to define Art, they have not been successful but have come out with different interpretations at different times. Ocvirk, Bone, Stinson and Wigg (1962) again explained that 'the term as we used it today probably was derived from the Renaissance words "Arti" and "Arte"'. "Arti" in the 14th – 16th centuries meant design of the crafts and Arte was the word for craftsmanship, meaning knowledge or materials used by the Artist.

Quayson (2006) defined Art as the expression of creative skills and imagination through visual medium such as painting, drawing, and sculpture and characterised Art as the expression of inner feelings by individuals. Gaitzell, Hurwitz, and Day (1982) explains Art as an expression of a person's reaction to experiences in his or her life given form through the use of design and materials. Ocvirk et al (1962) as cited in (Quayson, 2006) on the other hand stated that "Art deals with visual signs to convey ideas, moods, or generalized emotional experiences."

Art plays a major role in all activities of every nation like political, economic, social, religious and personal activities. In Ghana, however, there are many misconceptions about the subject Art. Amenuke (1979) highlighted some of the misconceptions. According to him, people think art is for those with low intelligent quotient. In the Senior High Schools, students who feel they cannot pursue courses in Science, Business and General Arts take Visual Art related courses and add them to their courses since they feel Visual Art is an easy course, hence their failure to take the course seriously.

Parents and tutors on the other hand are very much ignorant about Art and its relevance to national development. Some feel Art is not important while others are of the opinion that Art is only drawing and does not require any intellectual thinking. Hence, their preference for other subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Business or Medicine. It has been observed by Amenuke (1979) that if various sections of the public can

understand the role of Art in our society as well as in education, it will be accorded the same value as other courses.

Students also consider Visual Art as a separate course from the rest of the courses in the colleges of Education in the Central and Western regions of Ghana. They think that subjects like the Mathematics, English, Information and Communication Technology (I.C.T), and Science are core subjects which are more relevant than other elective courses such as Visual Art and Catering which are not requirements requisite for further tertiary education like the Universities and Polytechnics. Students therefore need to take inspirations from modern African Artists such as Professor Ablade Glover who specialised in painting and textile design, Nana Yaw BoakyeGhanata who specialised in graphic design and illustration, Dr. S.K. Amenuke a renowned painter in promoting Ghanaian and African identity.

The lukewarm attitude of students to the Visual Art related programme in the Colleges of Education in Ghana presents favourable grounds for critical investigation into the Theoretical and conceptual framework on the existing teaching and learning of visual Art courses to determine how students perceive the study of Art related courses in the Colleges of Education in Ghana.

METHODOLOGY

The research design used was that of descriptive survey. The descriptive survey was used to gather the necessary information and report on the processes sequentially and analytically. The descriptive survey allows the collection of data in order to test hypotheses or answer questions concerning the current status (factors limiting the choice of arts as elective subject

Furthermore, this method is applicable when the researcher attempted to describe aspects of population (the students in the Colleges of Education) by selecting unbiased sample of individuals who were asked to complete questionnaires.

Population

The target population for this study comprised all form one students and form two Art – Related students in the selected Colleges of Education in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana, which are OLA College of Education, Komenda College of Education, Holy Child College of Education and Wiawso College of Education. Forms one and two Art–Related students were selected because they are the right group of respondents to help in the investigation. The Visual Art course is a core and is compulsory for all the first year students during the first semester. For the second years, it is elective and the course is taken in both the first and second semesters.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The sample size for the study is four hundred (400) comprising four hundred students. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the four Colleges of Education out of the six Colleges of Education in the Central and Western Regions of Ghana. To select the four Colleges of Education, the names of the Colleges were written on pieces of paper. Six pieces of paper were folded and kept in a container. Four colleges of education were sampled out of the six by picking the first four folded papers from the container. Stratified sampling was used to group and select the students. This is because the students were in different year group, level 100 and level 200. The stratified sampling again was used to select three hundred and nineteen (319) level 100 students because they were also into different classes: these are classes one A, B, C, D and E.

The selection of the eighty-one (81) second year elective students was done by using the purposive sampling method because they were few in number and also they are the very people who could provide the needed information on the factors limiting the choice of Art as an elective subject.

The papers were folded, placed into a container and thoroughly mixed. The pieces of paper were randomly sampled from the container. Sampling of students was carried out at Holy Child College of Education and then Wiawso College of Education, Komenda College of Education and Our Lady of Apostle (OLA) College of Education respectively. One hundred students were selected from each of the four selected Colleges of Education. Table two shows the number of first and second year students who were selected for the study.

The distribution of students from the selected Colleges of Education used as respondents for the study is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Sample of Student Respondent's by Colleges

Name of College	First year	Second year	Total
O.L.A College of Education	85	15	100
HolyChild College of Education	92	8	100
Komenda College of Education	64	36	100
Wiauso College of Education	78	22	100

Research Instruments

To obtain data to answer the research questions, two main instruments were used. These were questionnaire and observation guide Nakpa (1997) described a questionnaire as a carefully structured instrument for data collection in accordance with specifications of the research questions or hypothesis. The questionnaire was used because the respondents were in the tertiary institution and that they were literate who could read and write. Questionnaires again were used to elicit written responses from the students from the selected schools to answer the research questions. They were intended to ascertain opinions, facts, perceptions and attitudes from the population.

The questionnaire for students had seven sections made up of thirty items. The items in section A of the questionnaire were on demographic data of the respondents, teaching techniques/methods, factors that limit the choice of Art as a subject.

The main objective for the use of the observation guide was to assess teaching –learning interaction specifically. This was to find out the use of teaching techniques during the teaching of Art lesson. Generally, the observation guide was to confirm or cross-validate the responses that were supplied in the questionnaires.

Pilot-Testing of Research Instrument

Questionnaires and observation guides were edited several times from different perspectives especially by my supervisors to substantiate their validity. The questions were subsequently restructured. The pre-test was conducted to find out how valid the questionnaires were. The questionnaire was then pre-tested in two different Colleges of Education which had similar characteristics as the selected colleges for the study. The characteristics were that, in all the Colleges of Education, all the first year students do Visual Art as a core subject which is compulsory during the first semester. There were also few level two hundred students who have registered the subject as their elective. The Colleges are Wesley College of Education, Kumasi and St. Monica's College of Education, Ashanti Mampong. The main purpose of the pre-test was to validate the appropriateness of the items. The items were tested on (40) forty students. It was also to find out how long it would take students to respond to the questions and again to detect difficult sentences, concepts, and wording.

The type of observation instrument used was the structured observation. There, the researcher visited a particular class where Art lesson went on, the researcher used the observation guide to look out for number of students present in class against the number on roll, the methodology used by the tutors, and the student's attitudes towards the lesson, and their level of participation. The questionnaires were collected thirty minutes after distribution. The pre-test was conducted first week of January 2010. The reliability co-efficient of the instrument was 0.70. Data was also gathered by observing Art- Related lessons. The purpose was to cross check views expressed on the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Procedure

The questionnaire was coded for tabulation and analysis. This provided the opportunity for checking whether respondents followed instructions uniformly and that all questionnaires were checked one at a time.

All questions were grouped under various headings and analysed one after the other. Each item in the questionnaire was treated as a separate entity, analysed independent of the other. Other responses for each item in the questionnaire were analysed with Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS 12.0) for windows. Descriptive statistics involving measure of central tendency were also used to summarize the data.

Percentages, frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation were used to analyse data on, factors that limits the choice of Art by students and teaching strategies Art tutors employ to ensure effective teaching and learning in the Colleges of Education

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Age Distribution of Students

Field data showed that the age distribution of the students ranged from 20 years to 35 years and above. Majority of them who formed 61% of the student respondents were between the ages of 20 and 25 years. Only 2% were 35 years and above.

In the Colleges of Education, various programmes are offered. It is the responsibility of the students to decide on the subject or course to offer as their elective. Age is one of the most important factors that influence the choice of a particular course of study. A matured student chooses subjects which he or she is interested in and is capable of handling without any external influence. However, if student are not matured and cannot take concrete decisions on their own, the choice of an elective subject can be influenced by factors such as peer groups, the environment and parental control. In a study conducted by Amenuke (1979), it was reported that the choice of subject by students at the ages of 20 – 25 years are being influenced by factors such as parental control and peer group influence as well as other environmental factors which include where the children live, who looks after them, whether they are loved and wanted, whether they are encouraged to learn or ignored or prevented from learning by over-protection. Such external influence can have adverse effects on the students' academic performance because they may be influenced to choose a subject which they are not interested in or the subject may be too difficult for them.

Teaching Strategies Employed by Art Tutors in the Selected Colleges of Education

This research question sought to find out the teaching strategies Art tutors employ to enhance effective teaching of Art in the Colleges of Education. Table 4 depicts the respondents' opinions on the teaching strategies used by Art tutors

Table 2: Students' Opinions on the Methods of Teaching Arts in the Colleges of Education in Central and Western Regions

Teaching Technique	Respondent	Never N %	Rarely N %	Occasionally N %	Regularly N %	Mean	Standard Deviation
Lecture	S	27 6.8	1 51 12.5	112 28.0	210 52.3	3.5	1.43
Discussion	S	3 0.8	8 20.0	156 39.0	233 58.3	3.01	1.86
Activity	S	8 2.0	145 36.3	235 58.8	12 3.0	3.14 3.17	1.92 1.09
Field Work	S	80 20.0	310 77.5	10 2.5	- -	2.01	0.96
Dramatization	S	11 2.7	91 22.7	293 73.2	5 1.4	2.05	0.12
Question and Answer	S	-	-	80 20.0	320 80.0	3.92	0.05

Key

S – Students

The methods of teaching used by Art tutors were discussion, field work, and dramatization, question and answer methods. Others were lecture and activity methods. From Table 4, student observed that most of the tutors used the lecture method of teaching. 52.3% of the students responded that their tutors used the lecture method regularly in the classroom.

The lecture method is one of the methods mostly used by the Art tutors. This method of teaching ensures passive learning because it does not involve the students much in the teaching and learning process. They only have to listen to the information given by the teachers. Aggrey (1999) said the lecture method does not encourage students to analyse. Aggrey emphasised that student's attention should be focused on the child-

centered method or activity method of teaching to ensure effective learning and reasoning. Blecher (1971) on his part said teaching is not telling but it is an Art and the teachers are Artists. Art tutors are to involve the students in the teaching and learning situation.

Another method which is mostly used by the Art tutors is the discussion method of teaching. Majority of the students, representing 58.3%, confirmed that their tutors regularly used the discussion method of teaching. There were variations in the responses of the students on the use of this method of teaching Art. Discussion method is very important in the teaching and learning process because it requires the students to express their views willingly on a particular topic. Art as a subject of study requires the use of both the hand and mind. However, the discussion method does not involve the use of the hands and this sometimes does not help the students acquire the basic skills needed for Art lessons. This may not make the student to develop interest in the subject.

On the use of activity method in teaching and learning of Art in the Colleges of Education, the students, representing 58.8% said their tutors occasionally use the activity method to teach Art. Another 36.5% of the students said their tutors rarely use the activity method when teaching Art Related Courses.

Activity method of teaching involves the learners and the teachers in the teaching and learning process. It actively involves the use of the hands. Using this method enables the students to use their hands and mind in the learning process and is necessary to enhance effective teaching and learning in the school. Occasional use of this method means students are not frequently made to use their hands to carry out practical activities such as drawing and painting. It is often said that practice makes man perfect. Practical activities involve the use of instructional materials. Occasional use of activity method of teaching may be due to inadequate instructional materials and resources. Bamfo, et al (2001) identified some of the problems facing teachers during the teaching and learning process are inadequate funds, inadequate textbooks and learning materials. (Tamakloe, et al 1996). They on their part stated that participatory approach of teaching highly involves the learners in the teaching and learning process and enables them to acquire skills and attitudes which motivate learners and produce critical thinkers and problem solvers. The finding was also confirmed by 77.5% of the students representing the majority of the students who said their tutors occasionally use the field work method to teach Art. A standard deviation value of 0.96 indicates that there was no variation in their opinions.

Fieldwork method of teaching is an important method used in the teaching and learning of Art because it helps the students to see the objects in their real life situation and gives them the opportunity to practice what they have been taught in the classroom. The occasional use of this method may be due to lack of resources and instructional materials, financial resources for feeding, transport, and many others. This finding confirms that of Bamfo, et al. (2001) who similarly reported that problems faced by teachers in the teaching of Art- Related subjects include inadequate provision of textbooks, funds, and teaching learning materials.

It was also found that tutors occasionally use the demonstration method of teaching. This was confirmed by 50% of the students respectively.

From the responses of students, it was evident that demonstration approach to teaching is occasionally used by the tutors. It is unfortunate that this method of teaching which lay much emphasis on teaching and learning by doing is seldom used by the tutors to enhance effective teaching and learning. This does not motivate the students to learn Art. Consequently they do not show interest in the subject because of the way the tutors teach the subject. Tamakloe et al (1996) reported that since demonstration method of teaching is a participatory approach which highly involves the learners in the teaching and learning process, skills and attitudes are best acquired and developed through the use of this method. Failure to use this approach does not motivate the learners. It does not also help to produce critical thinkers and problem solvers.

Finally, tutors in the Colleges of Education regularly use the question and answer method of teaching in the classroom. This statement is confirmed by 80% of the students. This implies that the question and answer method of teaching is a very popular method that is used by the Art tutors in the classroom.

Factors Limiting the Choice of Art as an Elective Subject in the Colleges of Education

The study also sought to find out why students do not choose Art as their elective subject during their second year. Table 6 shows the responses of the respondents on the factors that limit the choice of Art as elective subject by students.

31% of the students indicated that they strongly agree that Art is a difficult subject. Another 31% of them indicated that they agree that Art is a difficult subject.

Students may find Art to be a difficult subject because of the poor foundation they might have had at the Senior High School and Junior High School. At these levels much attention is not paid to the study of Art. Art lessons are used for different things such as reading, making brooms and weeding. Kudevoh (1987) reported that teaching Art in the second cycle institutions poses a lot of problems to the Art teacher because there is a total silence on the teaching of the subject in the first cycle schools especially in the preparatory schools where much emphasis is laid on the teaching of science, mathematics, social studies and English language.

Table 3: Factors Limiting the Choice of Art as an Elective Subject in the Colleges of Education

Factors Limiting the Choice of Art as an Elective Subject	Respondents	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation
Students find Art as a difficult subject	S	67 (17)	88 (22)	122 (31)	123 (30)	3.17	1.92
Lack of interest in Art as a subject of study	S	71 (18)	52 (13)	129 (32)	148 (37)	3.81	0.54
Lack of tools and materials for teaching and learning of Art	S	21 (5)	41 (10)	171 (43)	167 (42)	3.84	0.10
Lack of appropriate use of teaching methods in teaching Art.	S	22 (6)	54 (14)	152 (38)	172 (43)	3.8	0.82
Peer group influence	S	5 (1)	27 (7)	268 (67)	104 (25)	3.9	0.31

By the time the students reach the Colleges of Education they virtually have limited level of knowledge in the subject. Consequently, they tend to lose interest in the subject.

Besides, lack of interest in Art was identified as another factor that limits student's choice of the subject. As indicated in the table, 32% of the students agreed and 37% of the remaining students strongly agreed that they were not interested in Art. There was no variation in their responses as indicated by a standard deviation of 0.54.

Lack of interest on the part of the students may be due to the negative attitude of teachers towards the teaching and learning of the subject at the basic school as well as some tutors low level of knowledge in the subject. When students have limited knowledge in a particular subject, they tend not to be interested in that subject. Their limited knowledge can be attributed to the poor foundation they had at the basic school as a result of the way the teachers teach the subject. Kudevoh (1987) said the teachers of the basic schools pay little or no attention to the teaching and learning of Art. Some of them devote the Art period for games, cracking of palm kernels, collection of sand from the beach and many others. Others are not interested in Art as a subject and as a result, they find it difficult to motivate the pupils to study the subject. In addition some of the students who have interest in Art find it difficult to sustain the interest due to total neglect in their formal schools and they end up dodging all Art lessons.

Another factor limiting the choice of Art as an elective subject by the students was lack of tools and materials for teaching and learning of Art. 43% of the students agreed and 42% strongly agreed that there was lack of tools and materials for teaching and learning Art in the selected colleges of education. There was no variation in the responses of the students.

Lack of tools and materials for effective teaching and learning of Art adversely affect the performance of the students and make them feel reluctant to choose the subject as their elective. In a study conducted by Smith (1974), it was reported that lack of studios as well as teaching and learning materials like tools and machines make teaching and learning difficult for both the teachers and students. Inadequate instructional materials do not enhance effective teaching and learning. Students easily forget what they have been taught since teaching without an instructional material does not make learning permanent.

Again, 43% of the students strongly agreed that the use of inappropriate teaching methods is a factor limiting their choice of Art as their elective subject. 38% of the remaining students agreed that they did not choose Art as their elective subject because of the inappropriate teaching methods the tutors used.

From the result of the study, it was observed that most of the Art tutors use the lecture method of teaching, discussion method as well as question and answer method to teach Art in the Colleges of Education. These methods are not always appropriate for teaching Art because Art is a practical oriented course. The use of inappropriate teaching methods may be due to lack of instructional materials in the Colleges of Education. Without adequate instructional materials, teaching methods like activity method and demonstration methods cannot be used during the instructional period. It requires funds before tutors can embark on field work. Smith (1974) reported that some heads of institutions feel reluctant to give out money for practical work in Art.

Finally, peer group influence was identified as another factor limiting the choice of Art as an elective subject in the Colleges of Education. 67% of the students agreed that they did not choose Art as their elective subject because of peer group influence.

This implies that peer group influence is one of the major factors limiting the choice of Art as an elective subject in the Colleges of Education. This finding confirms that of Mussen and Conger (1974). They reported that peer group pressure forms a greater part of students' choice of subject as well as the school environment, teachers, the school setting and types of friends' students associate with influence the choice of subject. Smith (1974) also reported that vocational interest of adolescents may be influenced by occupational activities of the members of the family or older friends who have achieved success in their fields. If students are influenced to choose a subjects which are difficult, it becomes a burden for them and this can adversely affect their performance as well as the interest they have for the subject.

Presentation and Analysis of Observation Data

All the four Colleges of Education were observed in regard to the following issues based on non-participant observation.

- i. Tutors style of teaching
- ii. Number of students in class

In all the selected College of Education, it was observed that the tutors used lecture methods as well as question and answer methods to teach practical topics such as colour work, print making and poster making in a double period lesson in Diploma in Basic Education Classes (DBE 1A and 1B). In level 200, elective classes, the teachers again used discussion method of teaching to teach Art topics such as T-Shirt, Banners, and Posters. The dominance of the lecture method, discussion method, question and answer methods as the researcher observed apparently led to boredom and lack practical illustrations. This resultantly led to theory-based learning which is generally contrary to art education which is largely skilled based. This confirms the findings on research question two that tutors frequently use the lecture method, discussion method as well as question and answer method of teaching to teach practical topics in Art test and external exams.

Averages of 20 students were in each of the DBE classes on two consecutive visits when the researcher visited the colleges. This shows that the students were not attending Art classes regularly.

The study was conducted in the Central and Western regions of Ghana. The purpose of the study was to assess the teaching and learning of Art-related subject. Specifically the study sought to find out why most of the students in the college do not choose Art as their elective subject during the second year of their Diploma in Basic Education Programme.

Descriptive research was used in the conduct of the study. The population of the study consisted of Art tutors, first year and second year Art students in the selected Colleges of Education. Simple random sampling method was used to sample the Colleges of Education and the level hundred students and purposive sampling method for the tutors and level two hundred students. Holy Child College of Education, Komenda College of Education and Wiawso College of Education were the sampled Colleges of Education. The sample size was 408 consisting of 400 students and 8 tutors.

Questionnaires and observation were the research instruments that were used to conduct the study. Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS 12.0) for windows was used to analyse the data and percentages as well as means, frequency distributions and analysis of variance were used to analyse the data.

Major Findings

Teaching Strategies of Visual Art Tutors

The result revealed that most widely used methods of teaching Art were lecture, discussion, activity, field work, and demonstration, question and answer methods. Of these methods, lecture, discussion and question and answer were frequently used in the classroom. In as much as the tutors fulfilled the requirement of a good teacher through the use of a variety of methods, however, the apparent limited use of the demonstration method which enhances the teaching of practical subject such as Visual Art was a setback in the tutors teaching strategies.

Factor Limiting the Choice of Visual Art by Student as an Elective Subject

The result revealed that the major factors that limited the choice of Art as an elective subject by the students were lack of interest in the subject Art, the perception of Art being a difficult subject, lack of tools and materials, use of inappropriate teaching methods, parental control and peer group pressure. It can be said that the root courses of one or a combination of these factors can be traced to the earlier school days (primary and secondary) during which Visual Art has not been given prominence. Thus until Visual Art is given the needed attention in the lower schools, it will not be considered a subject of choice at the highest level on the educational ladder.

Conclusions

The main conclusions that can be drawn with due reference to the purpose and objectives of the research is that although (as regards to factors limiting the choice of Art as elective subject) in the Colleges of Education in the Central and Western Regions), however, there are constraints that needs to be addressed.

i. Inappropriate teaching methods

The inadequacy of the teaching learning resources makes tutors resort to the use of question and answer method, lecture method and discussion method instead of activity, demonstration and field work methods which require adequate resources for effective teaching and learning to take place.

ii. Factors hindering students' choice of Visual art as an elective subject.

The findings were that students do not choose Art as their elective subjects because of the way the tutors use inappropriate teaching methods to handle the subject due to inadequate resources in the colleges. It makes the students lose interest in the subject. Peer group pressure, parental influence, unfavourable environmental conditions also make students neglect the subject.

Recommendations for the study based on the findings: Tutors of Colleges of Education should be taken through periodic workshops on the use of variety of teaching methods and strategies Ghana Education Service should upgrade teachers' skills on improvising in the wake of official constraints.

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