

# Teaching Creative Arts in Public Primary Schools: Assessing Resource Accessibility and Instructional Strategy Challenges in Effutu Municipality

Ms Gertrude Essuman<sup>1</sup>, Thomas Nyaabila Abugre, PhD<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Awudu Salaam Mohammed<sup>3</sup>, Nurudeen Idriss Muhammed<sup>4</sup>, Mrs Justina Adu<sup>5</sup>, Prof. Michael Subbey<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Bia Lamlighter College of Education, Ghana

<sup>4</sup>Bagabaga College of Education, Ghana

<sup>5,6</sup>University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to assess teachers' instructional strategy challenges in teaching creative arts lessons in the Effutu Municipality. The study was underpinned by the pragmatist paradigm and influenced by the mixed method research approach. The sequential explanatory mixed method design was used for the study with a target population of 75 lower primary school teachers in the Effutu Municipality. The study sampled all 75 lower primary school teachers from public basic schools in the municipality using census technique. 5 teachers were purposefully sampled for the interview. The data was gathered using questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide. While the reliability of the instrument was ascertained through a Cronbach Alpha coefficient value of 0.78, trustworthiness of the interview was ensured through credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability. The data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, mean of means, standard deviations, and thematic approach. The study revealed that drums, costumes, scissors, televisions are some of the accessible resources in the Effutu Municipality. Again, classroom size, teachers' beliefs of teaching and learning, learners' interest, availability of resources, teaching experience, time allocation, academic qualification, national curriculum, and availability of technology were factors that influence teachers' choice of instructional strategy. However, the national curriculum and learners' interest have the greatest influence on teacher's choice of instructional resources for teaching creative arts lessons while academic qualification does not influence the respondent's choice of teacher's instructional strategy in the Effutu Municipality. It was therefore recommended that head teachers should encourage the use of appropriate instructional strategies and resources in the teaching and learning of creative arts.

**Keywords:** teachers' assessment, creative arts resources, primary schools, instructional strategies, challenges, accessibility

## INTRODUCTION

Creative Arts is an expression of what is in children's minds and their ability to see things in different ways (Robinson, 2015), while the Ghana Teaching Syllabus for Creative Arts (2007) defines Creative Arts as an amalgamation of Visual Arts (drawing, weaving, modelling, casting, carving and painting), Sewing, and Performing Arts (music, dance and drama). This word originally, means every child's art is different, based on their own imagination and choice of how and what they want to create. It is also the creativity and exploration of children's ideas which brings out their expressive side by capturing their imagination (Duffy, 2006). This gives them the freedom to appreciate the elements in nature that begin a colourful journey which allows them to create an original piece of work that is so exclusive. According to Kindler (2008) Creative Arts consist of art and craft, music, and dance.

Early learning experiences and hands-on activities provide a strong base for brain and sensory motor development in children (Prentice, 2000). These functions have a direct influence on children's creativity, expressions, learning skills, emotional and social development. For this reason, Creative Arts is considered an important element in many curriculum areas for children. It therefore provides sensory motor development and

a small muscle skills when children are allowed to explore by using paint brushes and water (Prentice, 2000). The finger and hand grips are developed when children use chubby crayons and coloured pencils to sketch and colour. When children are exposed to a variety of mixed-media and natural resource materials to complete their artwork, they can acquire skills that help in small muscle and large motor development. Thus, teachers must support children in their choices of mediums and allow them to explore and be open-ended when they are engaged in any artwork (Prentice, 2000). The creative arts engage children across all domains cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical, it is therefore important to develop these creative arts among learners using developmentally appropriate instructional strategies (Mayesky, 2013).

Sarfo (2007) defines instructional strategies as the procedures or set of techniques selected by the teacher to help learners experience the message that the teacher wants to put across. It also refers to the various ways or processes by which interaction between teachers and learners can be beneficial and lead to learning. However, Singh and Rana (2004) describe instructional strategies as something designed to establish interactions between the teacher, the student and the subject matter or a combination of these three to influence directly or indirectly the learning process.

The new standard-based curriculum specified that Creative Arts teachers use project-based learning, exploration, inquiry-based learning, procedural learning, and experiential learning instructional strategies in facilitating teaching and learning (NaCCA, 2019). These instructional strategies can help the development of language, emotion, social, physical, cognitive, creativity and children's spirituality, attitude, and value (Loy, 2011; Rebecca, 2011, Pekdemir & Akyol, 2015; Cooper, 2016). All these can be successful when there is a good combination of the Instructional strategies and instructional resources.

Instructional resources have been observed as a powerful strategy to bring about effective teaching and learning. The importance of quality and adequate instructional resources in teaching and learning can occur through their effective utilization during classroom teaching and learning process. Instructional resources therefore include all the tools, materials, and everything that teachers use to make the teaching and learning more interesting and memorable. (Adeogun, 2001).

The teaching of creative arts in the Ghanaian basic schools can be quite tricky due to the lack of requisite preparation for implementing the syllabus which has also plunged its teaching and learning into crisis (Boafo-Agyeman, 2010). This is because the primary school teachers who teach the creative arts at the basic level are generalist teachers (Boafo-Agyeman, 2010). According to Ampeh (2011) these teachers have difficulty identifying the appropriate instructional strategies and activities relevant to the achievement of the objective that will enhance the creative development of Ghanaian children as specified in the Creative Arts syllabus (Zakaria, 2010; Ampeh, 2011; & Osei-Sarfo. 2012).

According to Cornelius (2004) and Barnabas (2005) if quality creative art excels, it will contribute to poverty alleviation and the sustainability of social and economic development of the nation via job creation. However, realistic as this may be, there are inherent problems that creative art is facing in its development. Notable among them are shortage of qualified art teachers, inadequate teaching facilities, funding, poor governance, and social identity.

According to Simonton (2000) People who work with young children need to understand creativity and have the skill to help and encourage children to express their creative natures. Teachers should be able to identify creativity in children and be able to help them develop a willingness to express this creativity. The most important thing to realize about creativity is that everyone possesses a certain amount of it. Some people are little more creative, some are little less, and no one is uncreative. (Simonton, 2000). It is therefore the duty of the teacher at the early stage of the children to use the best instructional pedagogies to bring out the creativity in him or her. Creative arts are very crucial at this stage of child development because it helps children develop across many domains and developments. Early childhood educators, therefore, have the main role to plan creative activities with the child's overall development in mind.

Creative arts contribute to the development of critical thinking and learning skills recognition and development, mental representations of what they observe or imagine from their world and symbolic

representations. Children and adults create symbols of their experiences to think about them, problem solve, and make sense of experiences (Timmermans, 2005). Drawing with children can represent what they know about the world. It illustrates, choose to translate ideas and experiences into a visual language. This is their way of thinking aloud. Children are exposed to visual arts materials which are an aspect of creative arts at an early age, their critical thinking skills and abilities develop (Cornett & Smithrim, 2001). Problem-solving become noticeable as children use symbols to represent their ideas in art and they begin to develop rules about how they work with the materials. For example, when children work in specific sequences (drawing of head, eyes, nose and then mouth) and have specific rules about space and location of elements in their drawings, a problem-solving process is being used. Similarly, when children work with paints and modelling materials, they explore the attributes of the materials. This leads them to discover cause and effect, balance, symmetry, solidity, fluidity, absorption, and dilution, these skills are not developed in isolation, and they are taught using the appropriate instructional strategies (Craig et al. 2002).

As children explore artefacts and have discussions about them, they share information that supports them in becoming valuable members of a community. These will be beneficial, if the Creative Arts teachers in the basic one to three use instructional pedagogies such as project-based learning, exploration, inquire-based learning, procedural learning, and experiential learning instructional strategies in facilitating teaching and learning (NaCCA, 2019). These teaching strategies will build supportive environments in which they will build their self-esteem. When appropriate teaching pedagogies are used in teaching creative arts it helps them to take pride in the works of arts they create, develop problem solving skills, especially when children are challenged with experiences such as three-dimensional problems that are inherent in sculpting experiences. Teachers, therefore, need to use the appropriate use appropriate instructional strategies to help the children to acquire these skills.

Nevertheless, it seems as though the teachers in the study area have inadequate required knowledge and skills in using the strategies outlined by National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA). The researcher's interactions with some of the teachers in the Effutu Municipality reveals that, the creative arts lesson delivery is not effective in the early childhood classes, this was because many of the children lack skills in writing, cutting, gluing, and tearing, so they find it difficult in using simple art tools (drawing and writing tools) and have no interest in the creative art works. The teachers also indicated that this reflected the instructional strategies used in teaching the creative arts at the early grade. However no empirical study has been conducted to support claims made by teachers in the Effutu Municipality, there is therefore the need to assess the instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons in public primary schools in the Effutu Municipality. Teachers often used teaching methodologies and strategies that are inappropriate in relation to the capabilities and age of the children (Artwatch Ghana, 2017). This study, therefore, sought to assess the instructional strategies used in creative arts lessons in primary schools in the Effutu Municipality.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study sought to find out about:

Examine the resources that are available for teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

To ascertain the challenges teachers, face when teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

## **Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

What resources are available for teachers the teaching of creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

What challenges do teachers face using instructional strategies for teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

## METHODOLOGY

### Research design

The study adopted the sequential explanatory mixed method research design. The mixed-methods sequential explanatory design consists of two distinct phases: quantitative followed by qualitative (Creswell et al., 2003). In this design, the researcher first collected and analysed the quantitative (numeric) data. The qualitative (text) data were collected and analysed second in the sequence and helped to explain, and elaborate on, the quantitative results obtained in the first phase. The second phase builds on the first, quantitative phase and the two phases are connected in the intermediate stage in the study. The approach is advantageous because the quantitative data and results provide a general picture of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture (Creswell, 2013).

### Population

The population for the study consisted of all the 75 public lower primary school teachers within the Municipality. However, the accessible population consisted of only the 75 public lower primary school teachers within the Municipality.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

Census sampling was used to select all the 75 public lower primary school teachers for the study. Census sampling technique is where a researcher selects all the members of the population as the sample (Borg & Gall, 2007). The reason was that all the 75 teachers were expected to teach creative arts in their respective schools and the size was manageable to the researcher. Again, purposive sampling technique was used to select five (5) teachers out of the sample for interview purposes.

### Instruments for Data Collection

Instrument for data collection is a tool that is used by researchers for collection of data in social science research (Bhandarkar & Wilkinson, 2010). The study employed a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide as data collection instruments for this study.

Instruments were validated and pilot tested. The questionnaire had a reliability coefficient of 0.78. By the research design used, the quantitative data were first collected, analysed, and followed up with the collection and analysis of the qualitative data. The follow up with the qualitative data was based on the result of the questionnaire responses on the various instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons.

### Data Analysis

Responses from respondents in the questionnaire were tallied to get the number of respondents who answer each set of items. SPSS (Statistical Product and Service Solutions (IBM SPSS, 20) statistical tables and frequencies in percentages were used to analyse the quantitative data obtained which were presented in a tabular form in accordance with the research questions. The qualitative analysis was done using thematic analysis. The researcher analysed the interview data manually into themes.

Themes were then developed from the findings for discussion.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question one: What resources are available for teachers in teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

In answering this question, some statements (item 16-22) were provided which respondents had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. The data were analysed and discussed using mean and standard deviation. A mean score of 2.50 and above indicate the availability of resources and a mean score of 2.49 and below indicates the absence of resources. The results have been presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Availability of Resources in teaching creative art lessons**

<b>Instructional strategy</b>		<b>N</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Sd</b>
I use drum when teaching creative arts		75		3.05	1.012
I use costumes when teaching creative arts		75		2.91	2.579
I use scissors when engaging learners in creative arts activities.		75		3.16	0.876
I teach creative arts with design cutting tools		75		3.24	0.778
I use television when teaching creative arts		75		2.43	1.021
I use audiocassette when teaching creative arts		75		3.12	0.793
I use ink and brushes when teaching creative arts.		75		2.43	1.021
<b>Total Mean/Std. Dev.</b>		<b>525</b>		<b>20.34</b>	<b>7.073</b>
<b>Mean of means/Std. Dev.</b>		<b>75</b>		<b>2.91</b>	<b>1.010</b>

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 1 presents results of data collected from respondents on resources available for teaching creative art lessons. From the table, majority of the respondents (M=3.05; SD=1.012) agreed that they use drum when teaching creative arts. Also, responding to the statement ‘I use costumes in teaching creative arts lessons, Majority of the respondents (M=2.91; SD=2.579). With a mean and standard deviation of 3.16 and 0.876, majority of the respondents agreed to the statement, ‘I use scissors when engaging learners in creative arts activities. Further, majority of the respondents (M=3.24; SD=0.778) agreed that they teach creative art with design cutting tools.

However, few of the respondents (M=2.43; SD=1.021) agreed to the statement ‘I use television when teaching creative arts lessons. This may be because of inadequate fund towards the provision of teaching and learning resources. Responding to the statement. ‘I use audiocassette when teaching creative arts, majority of the respondents (M=3.12; SD=0.793) agreed to the statement. However, few of the respondents (M=2.43; SD=1.021) agreed that they use ink and brushes when teaching creative arts.

The data presented on the table implies that majority of the respondents make use of design cutting tools, audiocassette, drum, scissors, and costume. This may be because of the availability of these instructional resources. The availability and use of these instructional materials will improve students' performance. However, few of the respondents make use of television, ink, and brushes. This implies television and ink, and brushes are not available. The availability and use of instructional materials will improve pupils understanding. According to Adeogun (2001), the importance of instructional resources is also evident in the performance of students. It is, therefore, necessary for steps to be taken to provide the respondents with the instructional materials that are not available (television, ink, and brushes). This finding confirms Farombi (1998), which opined that the availability, adequacy, and relevance of instructional materials in classrooms can influence quality teaching, which can have positive effect on students' learning and academic performance.

In the process of presentation, the views of the participants are interspersed with essential quotations to expound their personal views to the extent as their behaviour is concerned. The data sought not only to explore and explain the quantitative findings but added depth and richness to the study. It is worthy of note that only vital responses are provided for the analysis.

### **Theme 1: Resources available for teaching creative arts.**

The availability of resources and materials for teaching plays a key role in the learning process. It helps pupils to understand what is taught and increase class participation. To make the teaching and learning of creative art interesting, resources must be readily available. In this direction, the participants were asked question on the availability of instructional resources for teaching creative art lessons. The participants have the following to say about the availability of resources in teaching creative art lessons. The excerpts below represent the views of participants.

"... I use samples of learner's artworks. For example, drawings, paintings, paper bags, posters, etc. To support specific learning objective in creative arts, again, to facilitate teaching and learning and further understanding of specific topics ..." (T3).

"... Poster colours, manila cards, clay, drums, tape, the learners sometimes bring cloth from the house, and I sometimes use my laptop..." (T1).

"...I use colours, crayons, cardboard, clay, laptop etc. To make them understand the topics..." (T1).

It depends on the topic you are teaching, sometimes the learners bring their own resources and sometimes too I bring those that I can provide, for example, drums, cloth, crayon, shells, hair gear etc. When you see you remember so when I use those resources for example the cloth used in dancing, whenever the child will be asked the materials the Fante's and Effutu's use in their dance, the child will not find it difficult because they have experienced how they dress (T3).

The comments from the participants indicated that there are some instructional resources that are available in the schools. The use of these instructional resources will improve pupil's academic performance. The instructional resources available include laptop, learners' artworks, crayons, and drums. However, these resources are not enough, so pupils are asked to bring or prepare other unavailable instructional resources. This finding confirms findings from Farombi (1998), who opined that the availability, adequacy, and relevance of instructional materials in classrooms can influence quality teaching, which can have positive effect on students' learning and academic performance.

**Research Question 2: What challenges do teachers face when using instructional strategies in teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality?**

In answering this question, some statements were provided which respondents had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. The data were analysed and discussed using mean and standard deviation. A mean score of 2.50 and above indicate the existence the challenge and a mean score of 2.49 and below indicates the absence of the challenge. The results are presented in Table 10.

**Table 1: Challenges teachers face in teaching creative arts.**

Instructional strategy	N	Mean	Sd
Inadequate qualified staff to teach creative arts lesson is a challenge	75	2.81	0.988
Inadequacy of teaching and learning facilities for teaching creative arts	75	2.96	0.883
Inadequate funding for purchasing instructional resources is a challenge	75	2.81	0.988
Learners' negative attitudes towards the teaching and learning of creative arts is a challenge	75	2.55	0.924
Inadequacy of curriculum planning and development	75	1.92	0.850
<b>Total Mean/Std. Dev.</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>13.05</b>	<b>4.633</b>
<b>Mean of means/Std. Dev.</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>2.61</b>	<b>0.925</b>

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

From the data in table 10, it can be observed that majority of the respondents (M=2.81; SD=0.954) agreed that there is inadequate qualified staff to teach creative art lessons. This confirms the findings of Cornelius (2004) that creative art is faced with shortage of the supply of qualified art teachers.

Also, with a mean and standard deviation score of 2.96 and 0.883 respectively, majority of the respondents indicated that there is inadequacy of teaching and learning facilities for teaching creative art lessons. This represents the highest mean. It therefore implies that inadequate qualified staff in teaching creative arts lessons is a major challenge indicated by the respondents. Further, inadequate funding for purchasing instructional resources is another challenge agreed by majority of the respondents (M=2.81; SD=0.988). This implies government is failing to provide fund towards the purchase of instructional resources to aid pupils understanding of creative arts lessons. This finding confirms the findings of majority of the respondents who agreed that there were inadequate teaching and learning materials for teaching creative arts lessons. Again, majority of the respondents (M= 2.55; SD= 0.924) agreed to the statement 'Learners' negative attitudes towards the teaching and learning of creative arts is a challenge.' This will affect pupils understanding of creative art lessons.

However, few of the respondents indicated that, inadequate planning and curriculum development was a challenge. This implies that, planning and development of a curriculum is not a challenge in teaching creative art lessons.

The data implies that, inadequate teaching and learning facilities, inadequate qualified staff, inadequate funding towards the preparation of instructional materials and learner's negative attitude towards the teaching and learning of creative art lessons were the major challenge facing creative art teachers in the Effutu Municipality. However, inadequate teaching and learning facilities was the major challenge. This finding is confirmed by Barnabas (2005), which stated that problem areas affecting creative arts education, is inadequate teaching facilities and limited accessibility to modern instructional facilities. Research in art education shows that, most schools are faced with the issue of lack of art materials and purpose-build art studios in pre-school through secondary and colleges of education for the teaching of creative arts. Because of the availability of some facilities, the goal of the curriculum is likely not to be met.

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**Theme 2: Challenges teachers' face when teaching creative arts.**

The teaching and learning of creative arts have over the years has come with their own self-imposed and system-imposed challenges which negate the efforts of teachers in the realization of outcomes. For this and many more reasons, the study gathered some the views of participants on the challenges teachers encounter in their quest to teach creative arts. When the participants were asked to comment on the most recurring challenges and why they think it is a challenge, all of them mentioned lack of textbooks, unavailability of teaching and learning resources or materials, teacher knowledge and large class size. The following expressions show summaries of the above themes:

“... Lack of textbooks, because the textbooks are not there, it makes teaching and learning of creative to be very difficult and sometimes organizing and controlling becomes a problem. It really a challenge because of the lack of textbooks and other materials, so I think if they make the materials available, teaching of creative arts will be very effective...” (T5).

“...Large class size, inadequate materials like textbooks etc. It is a challenge because we have large class size and the materials for teaching are not there to facilitate teaching...” (T1).

“...Lack of teaching and learning materials. It is a challenge because it does not help you as a teacher to achieve your target, your target is to impact some knowledge into their lives...” (T2)

“...Teacher's knowledge. Because if you are not well vested in the subject you will only teach the topics you are comfortable with and leave the difficult ones ...”(T2).

Inadequate teaching and learning resources appear to be a major challenge to the teaching and learning of creative arts. This is in line with the findings of Barnabas (2005), which stated that a problem area affecting creative art education is inadequate teaching facilities and limited accessibility to modern instructional facilities. Research in art education shows that, most schools are faced with the issue of lack of art materials and purpose-build art studios in pre-school through secondary and colleges of education for the teaching of creative art. Because of the availability of some facilities, the goal of the curriculum is likely not to be met. Despite these challenges the participants indicated that they were doing their best to support the teaching and learning of creative arts and called on authorities to come to their aid by providing the needed support to enable them to teach the subject to their maximum ability.

## CONCLUSION

On the strength of the findings, it is concluded that design cutting tools, audiocassette, drum, scissors, and costume are the resources available for teaching creative arts lessons in the Effutu Municipality. Again, the Concluding challenges teachers' face when teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality were inadequate teaching and learning facilities, inadequate qualified staff, inadequate funding towards the preparation of instructional materials and learner's negative attitude towards the teaching and learning of creative art lessons.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusion of this study, it is recommended that Follow-up support should be provided by the Effutu Metropolitan Assembly, Winneba Educational Directorate and Ghana Education Service in the schools to monitor the use of resources for teaching creative art lessons. Challenges in the teaching and learning of creative art lessons should be tackled by Winneba Educational Directorate, the head teacher's, and policy makers through the provision of unavailable teaching and learning resources.

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