



PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES IN CREATIVE ARTS: USING THE RIGHT APPROACH FOR EFFECTIVE DELIVERY

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Abstract:

This study examined the possibility of improving the teaching and learning of Creative Arts among Pupils of Akom D/A Primary School. The study aimed at using demonstration and activity methods to enhance the quality of teaching and learning of Creative arts and also to develop pupil's interest in the subject. The study used Qualitative and quantitative methods with Observation and Questionnaire as research instruments to collect data from fifty (50) Pupils in Primary three (3). The data collected was analyzed using tables, charts, figures and percentages. Demonstrations followed by series of practical lessons aroused pupil's interest and improves upon the teaching and learning of Visual arts aspects of the Creative Arts syllabus. It was noted from the students that discussion alone doesn't help them in learning creative Arts. Creative arts subject is practical oriented; therefore any discussion must be followed with demonstration and practical lessons for better appreciation and understanding of the subject.

Keywords: creative arts, demonstration method, activity method, Ghana

1. Introduction

A Chinese adage says "*I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand*". This is the main principle underlying the need to demonstrate and make teaching and learning practical in schools. This is because the more students practice, the more

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perfect they become. Teaching is an art that must be carried out in a well-structured and systematic manner with the appropriate method and materials to help learners learn without difficulty. In addition, care should be taken of individual differences, capabilities and interest of the learner (Gardner, 2007). According to Santrock (2004), Learning is the act of acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing existing knowledge, behaviors, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information. Learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge. Learning produces changes in the organism and the changes produced are relatively permanent. Effective teaching and learning motivate students to learn, see clearly what they are trying to learn and how they can apply the knowledge gained to realize the situation. For learners to learn, it is for the teacher to involve the learners in the teaching and learning process. This would help learners to show interest in the subject (Onasanyo, 2004). Creative Arts is intended to provide young persons with basic skills. It is very interesting yet demanding in nature. This therefore calls for well-trained Creative Arts teachers to handle the subject. Teachers can develop the interest of students by using the right teaching techniques and by using appropriate teaching and learning materials. The teaching of Creative Arts should be practical oriented. The next section therefore discusses the background information about the perceived problems, the purpose, significance and objectives of the study.

A review of the syllabus in 2007 by Anomuah-Mensah committee brought a major inclusion of creative arts; visual and performing art into primary school curriculum. Creative arts were identified as a crucial element for national development, so in an attempt to speed up national development there is the need to lay a strong foundation for national creativity through creative arts. Creative arts are important to the emotional, material, spiritual and intellectual growth of young people. It provides an opportunity for learners to actively participate in creative or artistic process (singing, playing an instrument, drawing, carving, acting, dancing, composition and appreciation) to enhance the growth of one's imagination and self-expression (Creative arts syllabus, 2007). The programme seeks to empower individuals to acquire skills in Design and Technology and therefore preparation for industrial development. In most Basic schools in Ghana, Creative arts is in limbo as most class teachers have ignored to teach the subject. Pupils have been denied the opportunity to acquire basic skills that creative arts offer. Among the challenges teachers and pupils face in the subject include; unavailability of tools and materials, missing links in the curricula of Teacher Training Colleges and Basic schools, lack of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) and lack of basic skills of teachers to teach the subject. Akom D/A Primary have had its share of these challenges (Sieber & Hutcher, 2012).

The Creative arts need practical approach of delivery, the students need to be exposed to hands-on activities but unfortunately most teachers rather adopt teacher-centered approach to teach creative arts which makes it difficult to achieve curriculum objectives of developing the spirit of innovation, creativity and resourcefulness so as to limit over-dependence on other people's technology. These objectives can only be realized when proper and acceptable practices in the classroom are observed.

According to Boafo (2010), the teaching and learning of creative arts is in crisis as most Ghanaian teachers in Basic Schools do not have the requisite skills to handle the course. Creative Arts is practically oriented subject that improves quality of life of an individual when applied appropriately. The lack of appropriate methodology for Creative arts lessons has led to poor performance among Primary three (3) pupils of Akom D/A Primary School Ghana and this is a source of worry that needs to be looked at so as to build pupils' interest in the area and possibly, develop a career out of the discipline. Creative Arts subject is supposed to expose pupils to activities that will build their confidence and also, imbibe in them the skills of doing something new. The study was guided with the following objectives; to use activity method to improve students' participation in the study of Creative Arts. The following were the research questions for the study; will pupils' participation in Creative arts improve when activity method of teaching is used? How will the use of demonstration method of teaching rekindle the interest of pupils and help them to acquire creative skills?

2. Methodology

The study used both Qualitative and Quantitative methods with Observation and Questionnaire as research instruments. The data collected were analyzed and presented using tables, charts, figures and percentages. In tackling the problem identified at Akom D/A Primary School, The study used practical action research with appropriate interventional strategies to solve the problem. The study took place at Akom D/A Primary School and lasted for twelve (12) weeks. It covered Primary three (3) pupils of the school. The total population of pupils at Akom D/A Primary School is three hundred and ten (310). Convenience sampling technique was used to sample fifty (50) pupils in Primary three (3).

2.1 Intervention Procedure

When learners are not learning as effectively as the teacher would want them to, it might be due to how the teacher manages the environment (Tamakloe et al., 2005). Based on the poor performance of the students in the pre-intervention stage, the study adopted various strategies to uplift the falling standard of Creative Arts in Ghanaian schools. A weekly timetable with a well planned activities was employed to enable students develop an appreciation and enjoyment of aesthetic activities, including drawing, painting, modeling, printing, doodling, lettering etc., develop the skills and knowledge necessary to express himself or herself through various aesthetic activities. The strategies also included the use of appropriate tools and materials such as pencils, pens, brushes, poster colours, papers, clay, cutting knife, etc. It must be noted that the study did not include performing arts aspects of the creative arts syllabus.

2.2 Lesson Presentation and pupil's participation

For each of the topics, teaching and learning materials such as paint/ink, brushes, papers, pencils, colour pencils, crayons, pastels, palettes, cutting tools and other natural

and artificial objects were made available. Objectives of each lesson were first discussed with the pupils. Questioning and explanation were used for the introduction of the various lessons. The questions were used to elicit pupils' previous knowledge on the topic under study. In the presentation stage of the lessons, Pupils were taken through series of demonstrations to give them a first-hand experience of the topics and to whip up their interests. In the practical lessons, Pupils were put into groups and each group consisted of five (5) pupils. Leaders were selected for each group to coordinate the activities of the groups. Various tasks were assigned to the groups after they have listened and observed practical demonstrations of the topics. There was strict supervision and monitoring of each group and members were offered the necessary assistance. The monitoring ensured full participation of members of the various group. Every member in the groups was spotted working as seen in Fig. 3. As Onasanya (2004) indicates, practical activity can reduce boredom on the part of learners. The pre-instructional planning incorporated principles such as stimulus variation, feedback, reinforcement, learner' participation, and so on. In the conclusions of the lessons, pupils' were asked to tidy up the classroom, after which their works were displayed in front of the classrooms and were given the opportunity to talk about their works.



Figure 1: Poster colour used for practical lessons



Figure 2: Pupils preparing the surface of a glass for monoprinting

Figures 1 & 2 show paints (poster colours) that were used for some of the practical lessons in printmaking and colourwork. Techniques in paper dabbing, direct and mono-printing were practiced by the pupils. As seen in Figure 2, the pupils were preparing a surface for mono-printing. In this lesson, rollers and brushes were used by pupils to spread paint on the surface of a glass and then used their fingers and sticks to make interesting patterns, shapes or designs after which the printing materials (paper) was placed over the surface of the inked image area. The paper was pressed evenly and removed gently to dry. This lesson was meant to assist pupils to acquire skills in designing, appreciation, creativity etc. the result is seen in the Figures 3 & 4 below.



Figure 3: Pupils observing the various steps in printmaking



Figure 4: Pupils making drawing of an object that is placed before them

2.3 Post Intervention

After the pupils have been taken through interventional activities, a practical lesson was conducted to evaluate pupils' performance. The result showed an upward improvement of pupil's performance thus creativity and skills. In this, about 47 (94%) pupils scored above 50% or 5 out of 10 marks in all the assignments and exercises. This is illustrated in table 3. The works were evaluated with the following assessment criterion: creativity, originality, craftsmanship, and finishing. Below are samples of the works pupils executed at the end of the interventional activities.



Figure 5: Sample of Pupils work on frottage printing

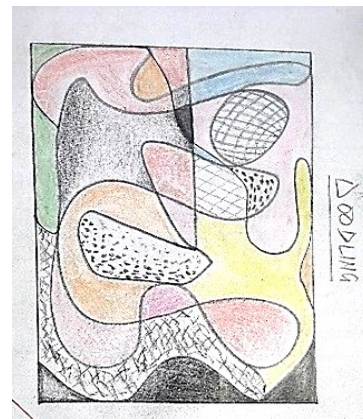


Figure 6: Sample of Pupils work on doodling

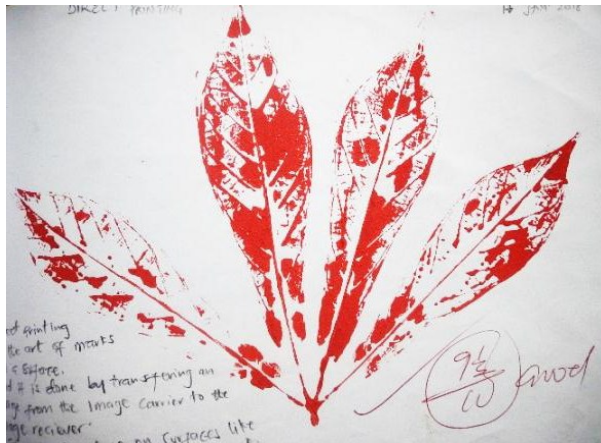


Figure 7: Sample of Pupils work on direct printing make with a leaf

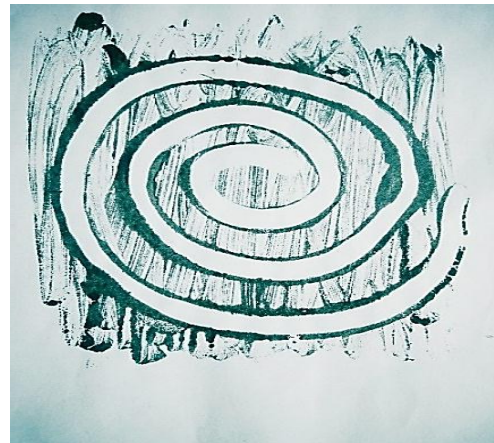


Figure 8: Sample of Pupils work on monoprinting



Figure 9 and 10: Patterns of different colours made with paper dabbing techniques

3. Findings and Discussions of Results

This section is primarily concerned with research findings, analysis, and presentation of results. The statistical tables highlight percentages with respect to responses from pupils on the questionnaire items and research questions. The findings are presented in different tables – pre-intervention, intervention and post-intervention stages.

Table 1: Pre-intervention Stage

Scores	Frequency	Percentages (%)
90 – 100	-	-
80 – 89	-	-
70 – 79	-	-
60 – 69	-	-
50 – 59	-	-
40 – 49	4	8
30 – 39	12	16
20 – 29	23	24
10 – 19	3	46
0 – 9	8	6
Total	50	100

Sources: Author’s field work, 2015.

Table 1 above shows pupils' performances during the pre- intervention period practical lessons. Pupils' performance was very poor and therefore, needed intervention. From the table above, 8% of the students scored between 40-49, 16% scored between 30-39, 24% also scored 20-29, while 46% scored 10-19 and lastly, 6% scored between 0-9. This pre – intervention test indicates that all the students were below average and needed assistance to enable them improve upon their performances.

Table 2: Results of pupils' performance during intervention stage

Scores	Frequency	Percentages (%)
90 – 100	-	-
80 – 89	-	-
70 – 79	18	36
60 – 69	13	26
50 – 59	8	16
40 – 49	10	20
30 – 39	1	2
20- 29	-	-
10 – 19	-	-
0 – 9	-	-
Total	50	100

Sources: Author's Source: Authors' field work, 2015

At the intervention stage, the strategies that were used brought improvement in pupils' performance. There was a significant improvement in the pupil's performance. From the table 2, 11 pupils representing 22% scored below average whilst 39 pupils forming 78% scored above average. This indicates substantial improvement compared to performances recorded prior to the intervention stage.

Table 3: Post interventional Stage of Practical Lessons

Scores	Frequency	Percentages (%)
90 -100	-	-
80 – 89	13	26
70 – 79	18	36
60 – 69	8	16
50 – 59	8	16
40 – 49	3	6
30 – 39	-	-
20 – 29	-	-
10 – 19	-	-
0 – 9	-	-
Total	50	100

Sources: Author's field work, January, 2018

The table 3 above indicates that after implementing the intervention activities, pupils did well in their practical lessons. As seen in Table 3, 47 pupils making 94% scored above average, while 3 pupils constituting 6% scored below average. The pupils realized great improvement upon their performance and this goes to buttress Watkins (2012) belief that demonstration in practical lessons is surely a good way of facilitating knowledge.

3.1 Students' Response

Various responses were solicited from the pupils on the use of activity method of teaching they have been exposed to.

Table 4: Does the activity method of teaching such as demonstration arouse and sustain your interest in the creative art?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	10	40
Yes	40	60
Total	50	100

Source: Author's field work, 2015.

From table 4 above, out of 50 respondents, 40 pupils forming 80% agreed to the view that activity method such as demonstration arouses and sustains their interest in the subject, whereas 10 pupils constituting 20% of the pupils dissented with the view that it was time consuming so they did not have enough time to practice. The above statistics depict that demonstration method improve teaching and learning of Creative Arts. This is because demonstration lessons help students to imitate the teacher during the lesson delivery. This is to buttress the point that learners learn best when they are given the opportunity to practice what they learn.

Table 5: Do you have interest in group work?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	16	32
Yes	34	68
Total	50	100

Source: Author's field work, 2015.

Table 5 indicates the use of group work where pupils are allowed to work in teams, and this led to increase their interest in the subject. The data confirmed that the use of group work is an effective tool for equipping pupils and improving upon the teaching and learning of the subject. Group work reinforces individual pupils' skills including the ability to break complex tasks into parts and steps, plan and manage time, refine understanding through discussion and explanation. It is therefore not surprising that 68% of the pupils indicated their interest in group work.

Table 6: What challenges do you face during Creative arts lessons?

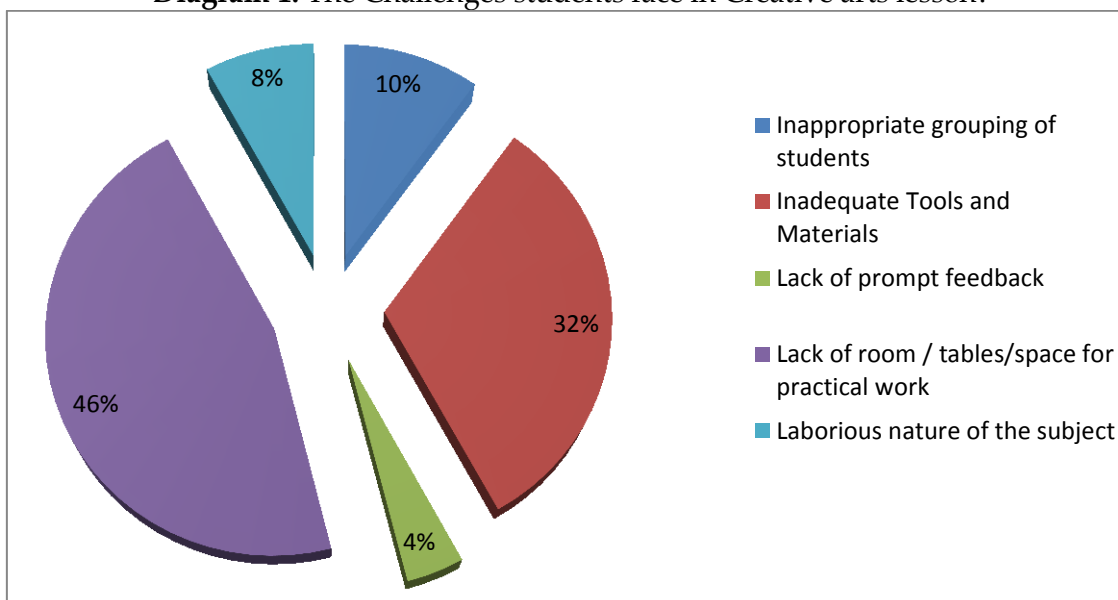
Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inappropriate grouping of students	5	10
Inadequate tools and materials	16	32
Lack of feedback	2	4
Unavailability room/space/tables	23	46
Laboriousness	4	8
Total	50	100

Source: Author's field work, 2015.

The data above point to the fact that unavailability of room/space for practical lessons and inadequate tools and materials do not make Creative arts lessons interesting to

pupils. In their responses, 23 pupils making 46% cited unavailability of tables, rooms/space and 16 pupils constituting 32% alluded to inadequate tools and materials respectively. Inappropriate grouping of pupils during lessons, lack of prompt feedback, laborious nature of creative arts were all mentioned among the challenges pupils face in Creative arts lessons. Below is a chart showing the various challenges pupils encounter.

Diagram 1: The Challenges students face in Creative arts lesson?



Source: Author's field work, 2015.

3.2 Teachers' Response

Teachers' responses to the following questions have been discussed

1. Do you use teaching and learning materials in Creative art lessons?
2. Do you motivate your students during Creative arts lessons?

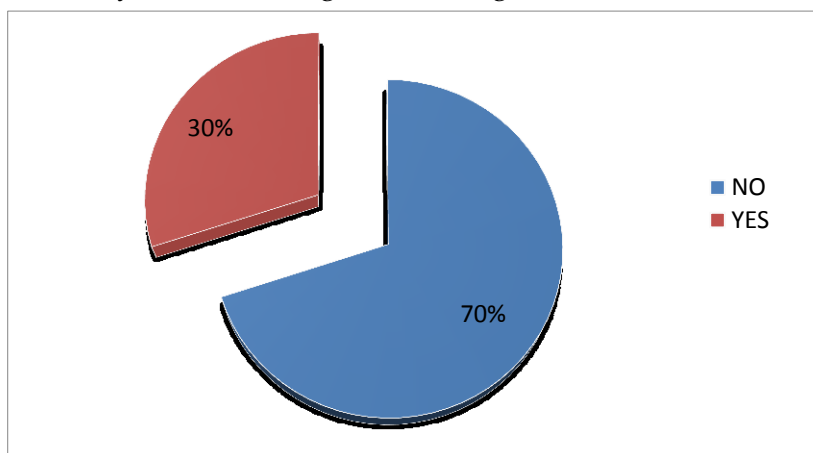
Table 7: Do you use teaching and learning materials in Creative arts lessons?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	7	70
Yes	3	30
Total	10	100

Source: Author's field work, 2015.

The information above indicate that an overwhelming majority of teachers thus (70 %) stated that they do not use adequate instructional resources because some of the materials are expensive (i.e. acrylic paint, poster colors, rollers, brushes, colour pencils etc.) to the extent that neither the teacher nor the learner can afford and again the school does not provide any of these resources as well as the government. Below is a chart showing the percentages of teachers who use instructional resources in Creative Arts lessons and those who do not use instructional resources in teaching Creative Arts.

Diagram 2: Do you use teaching and learning materials in Creative arts lessons?



Source: Author's field work, 2015.

Table 8: Do you motivate students during Creative arts lessons?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
No	0	0
Yes	10	100
Total	10	100

Source: Author's field work, 2015.

The data above clearly indicates that, teachers motivate their students during Creative arts lessons, but the kind of motivation they offer is not relevant to the subject in question. This is evident in the fact that an overwhelming majority of teachers use toffees as motivation to learners. Among the teachers sampled, only one uses art materials and prompt feedback as a source of motivation. To motivate students, materials such as papers, paint, crayons, pencils, brushes, pens, etc. must be used. It must be noted that, visual arts curriculum provides opportunities to pupils to explore, express and experiment with ideas and to investigate possibilities of a range of materials and processes, through drawing, painting and colouring, printing, clay work, construction, stitching etc. therefore the use of toffees, biscuits and other sweet foods are not ideal for motivating learners.

3.3 Implication to practice

Art has traditionally been an important part of early childhood education all over the world. According to Friedrich Froebel, the father of kindergarten, art activities are important, not because they allowed teachers to recognize children with unusual abilities, but because they encouraged each child's "*full and all-sided development*" (Peerzada, 2016). An appropriate method of teaching art helps children to develop their cognitive, social, and motor abilities. As Froebel recognized, making art and enjoying the art of other people is very important to the development of the whole child. The study highlights the use of demonstration and activity methods of teaching as an effective way to train the learner to develop observation and listening skills. The use of appropriate teaching technique stimulates and sustains learners' interest because in

most instances, it involves the use of concrete objects which at times may be new to the learners.

4. Conclusions

This research sought to find ways of improving the teaching and learning of Creative Arts in the Primary Schools. The specific objectives were to find out whether the use of activity method (demonstration) were effective in developing pupils' interest and improving teaching and learning of the Visual arts aspects of the Creative Arts. A class of fifty (50) pupils at Akom D/A Primary School was used for the study. Intervention strategies in the form of demonstration and practical work were adopted to offer pupils first-hand experience and to whip up their interests in Creative arts. The outcomes of the research brought to bear the effectiveness of activity method of teaching Creative Arts. Moreover, appropriate grouping of learners thus homogeneous, heterogeneous or mixed ability grouping of learners helps students to learn from each other. Most students said they see a lot of benefits in the study of Creative and Arts; it helped them to express themselves. Based on the research findings and results, it could be concluded that the use of activity based method such as demonstrations, and group work are very effective for teaching practical lessons in Creative Arts. The results of this research have shown how significant activity-based methods are to the interest of pupils who study Creative Arts and how it can improve the teaching and learning of the subject in the Primary School.

4.1 Recommendation

Based on the information obtained from the response of the pupils, the following recommendations are made to help improve upon the teaching and learning of Creative Arts; it is incumbent on creative art teachers to provide prompt feedback to learners after they have finished their class works, assignments and projects as this will enable learners identify their strengths and weaknesses. Lack of feedback discourages Pupils. In addition, some students dislike been grouped for practical lesson because of social misfits, therefore, a group size of 3-5 for practical lessons is better for effective participation. School authorities and parents should provide enough practical tools and materials to pupils for effective teaching and learning of Creative Arts. Art studio, benches, tables, chairs and other equipment must be provided to teachers and Pupils by school management, parents, policy makers and all stakeholders who are concerned with effective curriculum delivery in Creative arts. Lastly, teachers must adopt proper seating arrangement in creative arts lessons at all times.

4.2 Suggestion for future research

A research into effective ways of equipping teachers with the prerequisite skills necessary to teach both visual and performing arts aspects of the creative arts syllabus could be conducted. It is believed that this would help empower teachers with the needed skills to handle the subject effectively.

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