



## PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN GHANA

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### Abstract:

The study employed qualitative paradigm with descriptive research design. A sample size of thirty-one (31) participants were selected from three schools using purposive sampling techniques. It included Visual Arts Students, Teachers, Heads of department and an official from the municipal education directorate in the study area. The study adopted interview, observation and review of documents as data collection instruments. Data collected were analyzed using simple illustrative examples. It was found that studio facilities and teaching methodologies have some influence on students' learning. It is recommended that the identified academic inadequacies in the schools have to be resolved through adequate resourcing, infrastructure, teacher competency, good BECE entry grades, allowing students to choose their preferred subject base on their interests and also making available the National Teaching Standard for Ghana book for the teachers.

**Keywords:** national teaching standards, visual art, pedagogical strategies

### 1. Introduction

Visual art education is very essential to the development of emotional, material, spiritual and intellectual life. The reason for studying it as the subject is to develop skill and aptitude for learning new knowledge and prepare the student for future education and training that embraces all domains of life. However, there is no doubt then that we need to go the extra mile as a nation in helping our younger generation in developing their

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interest in visual art because whoever is left out in the study of this creative subject might be left out in the field of education. The rationale for the vocationalization of secondary education level is to equip students with skills for paid job and self-employment. This policy appears to have been introduced without serious consideration to findings with respect to equipment supply and maintenance. A survey conducted by the researcher on the performance of visual art students in the Colleges of Education indicated that students from the senior high schools come to the colleges with very good grades in courses in visual art, but notwithstanding, these students, when it comes to both practical and theory lesson, they do not match to their grades. Some cannot even identify the difference between elements and principles of design. Training in visual art, like all practical based subjects, requires specialized facilities for effective teaching and learning. These facilities include studios, laboratories, and workshops furnished with the appropriate furniture.

The visual art programme is mostly characterized by large class size according to the Ghana Education Service code, an ideal class should be thirty-five which means a practical class should be less than thirty-five (35) students. Some schools have as many as seventy students in a class. Ideally, a visual art class should not be more than thirty (30) students, this large number of students in the art class is attributed to the fact that it is regarded as a venue for academically weak students. A visit to most of the schools the municipality did not see differences in this large class.

Akyeampong (2002) opined that one should acquire competencies in art and apply the acquired skills to national development. This assertion is not seen in our visual art students who graduate from the senior high schools in the municipality. The main focus of this study is to find out factors affecting teaching and learning of visual art in the Komenda Edina Eguafo – Abrem Municipality (K.E.E.A).

### **1.1 Objective of the Study**

- To investigate the pedagogical strategies for the teaching and learning of visual art in the K.E.E.A.

### **1.2 Research Question**

- What are the pedagogical strategies used in the teaching and learning of visual art in the K.E.E.A municipality?

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Pedagogy**

Watkins & Mortimore (1999) define pedagogy as the science of teaching. It is about rules and principles that guide effective and efficient activities which lead to learning. Pedagogy is about teaching methods and principles of instruction. It is assisting students through interaction and activity in the ongoing academic and social events of the classroom. *“Pedagogy is the performance of teaching with theories, beliefs, policies, and controversies that inform it”* (Alexander, 2000 p.540). To Alexander pedagogy comprises

laid down activities which are backed by fact which sometimes tend to disagree. Broadly speaking, pedagogy encompasses extensive areas that individuals – ‘pedagogues’ [teachers] and likewise policy-makers involved in the field of education must be aware of. A model knowledge base for teaching according to Turner (2013), comprises of following: subject knowledge – substantive and syntactic knowledge, beliefs about the subject; knowledge of the curriculum; knowledge of different models of teaching; Pedagogical knowledge - both general and pedagogical content knowledge; knowledge of learner - both cognitive and empirical; knowledge of self, that is the teacher itself and knowledge of the educational contexts.

According to Watkins & Mortimore (1999), *“the conceptions of pedagogy have become more complex over time’ because: the knowledge base is continuously changing due to extensive research conducted to elucidate how teaching and learning should be best conducted understanding of a learner or a teacher is getting more explicit, the differentiation of educational settings according to the level of learners, and educational contexts have extended beyond the realm of school”* while many definitions of pedagogy stated above express a deeper meaning [rather than superficial], they convey meanings about teaching and learning. One would contemplate that if pedagogy is about teaching a learner or learning from a teacher, then teaching is inextricable from learning. For this reason, Watkins & Mortimore (1999, p.3), define pedagogy as: *“Any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another.”*

The above definition thus extends the meaning of pedagogy by including “learning in another” that is the learner. Any act of teaching is impossible without the learner, so as to say, that a learner is central to the learning process. Pedagogy could then be defined as: Pedagogy is an act or art of teaching and learning in which a ‘teacher’ is a person who designs, plans and devices any conscious activity to implement learning in another the ‘learner’, who is central to the learning process. It is the ‘conscious activity’ devised by the teacher (or any other person responsible) that determines how learning is organized and implemented for learning to take place. The teaching and learning process during any conscious activity must consider a variety of factors, such as the knowledge base, that is, type, age or need of the learner; different pedagogical approaches of teaching and the instructional strategies that inform the act or art of teaching.

The aforesaid definition of pedagogy situates a teacher and a learner together in the learning process. One of the reasons that pedagogy is a contested term is obviously because of the arguments about how teaching and learning should be conducted as suggested by Watkins and Mortimore, (1999). Whether a teacher and a learner should have some fixed roles or interchangeable roles in this act of a conscious activity is debatable. Pedagogy, when associated with terms like traditional, is generally linked to old methods and functions of transmission approach; with progressive it conveys interaction and becomes transactional and with critical, or radical, it brings empowerment and becomes transformational (as suggested in vast literature).

## **2.2 Pedagogical Knowledge (PK)**

Pedagogical Knowledge (PK) is knowledge about the processes and practices or methods of teaching and learning. It encompasses knowledge of educational purposes, values, aims, and more. It is a generic form of knowledge that applies to student learning, classroom management, lesson plan development and implementation, and student evaluation. It also includes knowledge about techniques or methods used in the classroom; the nature of the target audience; and strategies for evaluating student understanding. A teacher with deep PK understands how students construct knowledge and acquire skills in different ways, and how they develop habits of the mind and dispositions toward learning. As such, pedagogical knowledge requires an understanding of cognitive, social and developmental theories of learning and how they apply to students in the classroom. This makes PK “tools of the trade” and every teacher is required to possess it. This also means that student-teachers should be trained to possess this form of knowledge.

## **2.3 Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK)**

Pedagogical content knowledge (PCK) is the intersection and interaction of pedagogical knowledge and content knowledge. PCK as used in this study is similar to Shulman’s (1986) conceptualization of teaching knowledge applicable to a specific content area. PCK covers knowledge of the core business of teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment and reporting. It also deals with the awareness of students’ prior knowledge, alternative teaching strategies, common content-related misconceptions, and how to forge links and connections among different content-based ideas. It also deals with the flexibility that comes from exploring alternative ways of looking at the same idea or problem, and more, which are considered as essential to effective teaching.

In addition, the PCK addresses the process of knowing the multiple ways of representing and formulating subject matter. PCK, therefore, allows the teacher to focus on making concepts understandable, based on the abilities and interests of learners. In view of this, Shulman as cited in Koehler & Mishra (2006) PCK includes the most regularly taught topics in one’s subject area, the most useful forms of representations of those ideas, and the most powerful analogies, illustrations, examples, explanations, and demonstrations. Shulman (1986) cautions that since there is no single most powerful forms of representation, the teacher must have at hand a veritable armamentarium of alternative forms of representation, some of which are derived from research whereas others originate in the wisdom of practice. Teachers are also expected to have an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult; the conceptions and preconceptions that students of different ages and backgrounds bring with them to learning. If those preconceptions are misconceptions, teachers need knowledge of the strategies most likely to be fruitful in reorganizing the understanding of the learners. Thus, PCK encompasses knowledge of pedagogies and the planning processes that are appropriate and applicable to the teaching of a given content at any given time (Abbitt, 2011). For effective teaching, knowledge of teaching and learning, assessment procedures, awareness of students’ prior knowledge and content-related

misconceptions are very essential. The awareness of these issues constitutes teachers' PCK. It deals with how to design specific subject matter or problems and teach it effectively to suit learners of diverse abilities.

Thus, the acquisition of only CK is as useless as content-free skills (Shulman, 1986). This means that teachers' possession of content knowledge without the skills that will make it comprehensible to students renders it invaluable in the teaching and learning process. In view of this, there is a herculean task on student-teachers to find the appropriate means of ensuring that they have knowledge of the content and knowledge of the pedagogy which forms their PCK.

### 3. Methodology

This was qualitative research with a population comprising all the three Senior High Schools in the Komenda Edina Eguafo-Abrem (KEEA) Municipality. The population included visual art students, visual art teachers, Heads of visual art department and officials of the KEEA educational directorate. The purposive sampling technique was used to select thirty-one (31) participants involving the following;

- 1) six (6) visual art students from each school comprising two (2) first years, two second years (2) and two third (2)
- 2) three (3) visual art teachers from each of the selected schools,
- 3) one (1) visual art heads of department one from each school.
- 4) one (1) official from the municipal directorate.

The instruments used in this research include observation, interview, review of documents and reports. In order not to disrupt the teaching and learning programme of the schools, intensive negotiation was held with the school authority as to the nature of the study, the benefit to be derived by the teachers, students and the school as a whole and their expected role. The municipal directorate was also contacted based on arrangement. In this research, it examined the qualification of the art teachers, their work experience as well as the mode of selection of students into visual art classes.

### 4. Presentation and Discussion of Findings

**Research Question:** What are the pedagogical strategies used in teaching and learning of visual art in the K.E.E.A municipality?

The research question was subdivided into two questions in order to appropriately address the pedagogical strategies used in the teaching and learning of Visual Art. The findings have been discussed under the questions below;

#### 4.1 How Are Teaching and Learning of Visual Art in the K.E.E.A Aligned to the Best Practices?

The research question looks at the first domains of the National Teacher's Standard for Ghana (2017) as a measure of what was pertaining in the three selected schools. The standards are, Professional Values and Attitudes, Professional Knowledge and

Professional Practice. These three standards have various sub-sections under each of the three main headings which were used as a checklist. In this objective, the researcher looked at Professional Values and Attitude and Professional Knowledge as Professional practice has been taken care of.

### **A. Professional Development**

Under this, the teacher is supposed to critique his or her practice (keeping in mind gender responsive practice) and show agency in improving learning sometimes with a peer, mentor, or with a group of teachers in the school. The study revealed that about 75% of the teachers in the selected schools do not critique their practice after teaching. When they finish teaching that is all. Whether the students understood or not is not a matter to them. An interview with one teacher as how often he engages in reflective teaching, said 'my aim of my students is to pass their exam and as they do so there is no need for what you are asking me'. This revelation suggests that he did not do so simply because what he wanted his students to achieve is to pass his paper at the end of the day. He further stated that, "*when your students are able to pass the external examination, you are covered*". It was again evidenced that teachers in the selected schools do not reflect on their teaching as only one teacher was having a reflective log book, journal of portfolio written.

Again, teachers are supposed to improve his/her personal professional development through life-long teaching and continuous professional development. They do this by identifying gaps in knowledge, going beyond the textbooks, and carrying out self-directed study through accessing libraries, the internet, experienced colleagues and applying new learning from Continuous Professional Development. An interview with some of the teachers pointed out that apart from the textbooks that were supplied by the government, they do not use any other books. When asked whether they use the internet and libraries to search for new information, one of the teachers from Kemenstec said that they do not have access to the internet on campus so sometimes when it becomes necessary, he travels to the nearby town, Elmina to browse. My observation in the schools proved that as there was no sign of internet connectivity on campus. Three out of the nine teachers had evidence of study note, portfolios, Certificate of attendance of Continuous Professional Development courses, Gender Responsive Scorecard for teachers and National Gender Handbook. Even with this, two of the three teachers were not having the National Gender Handbook. This suggests that the majority of the teachers do not have adequate current information about teaching trends.

The study revealed that only one of them indicated that he had ever used a resource person in his teaching. An interview with some of the teachers indicated that the cost involved in bringing a resource person becomes their own cost. An interview with one of the headmasters said "*I expect my teachers to be versatile and able to do things on their own*". This is an indication that the Head master is not prepared to afford the cost involved in bringing in a resource person. This in effect does not encourage the teachers to bring in people who are well versed in a specialized area to assist the students when it comes to practical works. Some also indicated that it will be embarrassing bringing somebody to teach your class as your students may take you as not knowing what to do.

This was an indication that some of the teachers were also not willing to bring in resource persons for the fears of embarrassment.

### **B. Community of Practice**

In the Community of practice a teacher is supposed to be guided by legal and ethical teacher codes of conduct in their development as a professional teacher. This is done through showing high levels of attendance and punctuality. Demonstrate a high regard for policies of the Ministry of Education/Ghana Education Service and those of the school in which they teach. Acts within policies that defines their professional duties and responsibilities and has high respect for female and males' dignity, wellbeing and rights; Demonstrates knowledge of MoE/ GES ethical codes, (Gender and Sexual Harassment policy) and lives according to their remit (National Teacher's Standard for Ghana 2017). An observation into the teachers' attendance indicated that about 70% of the teachers do not attend classes all the time. Those who attended classes usually went in late. This according to the teachers was because most of them were not staying on campus. A further check revealed that none of the sampled teachers has a copy of GES/MoES policies on Teacher Ethics, Gender and Sexual harassment. According to the (National Teachers' Standard for Ghana 2017), the teacher is again supposed to positively engage with colleagues, students, parents, School Management Committee, Parent-Teacher Association and wider public as part of a community of practice this according to the National Standard for Ghana, can be done through attending and contributing to school meetings.

Organizing parent-teacher consultations, SMC and PTA meetings. This will serve as a platform for the teacher as well as the parents to jaw- jaw. The teacher must know about the local area where they are practicing, is aware of their learners' backgrounds, and is seen to engage in school and local events, festivals, faith activities. Encourage parents to support their children in their education. An observation from the Head teacher's records minutes of meetings showed significance absenteeism on the part of the teachers selected. An interview with the selected teachers indicated that they do not play any role in their community of practice apart from teaching.

### **C. Professional Knowledge**

Under the Professional Knowledge, the teacher ought to demonstrate familiarity with the education system and the key policies guiding it. None of the teachers had any copy of the key policies. Again, the teacher must have comprehensive knowledge of the official school curriculum, including learning outcomes. This according to the Teachers' Standard, is achieved through references in curriculum planning; knows what learners should have learnt in the previous year and the next, and across the curriculum; discusses issues in implementing and covering the curriculum, particularly for more vulnerable groups and considers how to support learners to attain expected curricular outcomes. Understands how gender inequality can affect learner outcomes. The study revealed that teachers were only having the teaching syllabus. No benchmark was found as they do not even have folders which indicate long and short term plans. There were no

examination frameworks from the selected teachers. The only document made available was the scoring sheets for the end of term examination.

In addition, the teacher must have secured content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge. This according to the Standard, is seen when the teacher's subject knowledge goes beyond what is contained within the curriculum and textbook; identifies and addresses gaps in their subject knowledge through self-study; articulates high standards of literacy and correct use of oral and written language. They have a developed understanding of how to use ICT in their practice. The teacher knows a wide variety of ways of organizing learning, and recognises the advantages and disadvantages of teacher and learner-centered and gender responsive pedagogies: the teacher is creative in their pedagogy, using environments other than the classroom as appropriate, drawing on other adults, nature, the local community. National Teachers' Standard for Ghana (2017).

All teachers have good technological pedagogical knowledge, knowing how to incorporate ICT into their practice to support learning. Teacher's explanations, strategies and resources demonstrate they know how to apply content knowledge imaginatively; learners are cognitively challenged and stimulated; teacher asks probing questions to both females and males, and responds knowledgeably to learners' own questions and difficulties around specific topics. The 21st century learning skills where the role of the teacher has changed from being entrusted with the "*transmission of knowledge to supporting and guiding self-regulated student learning*", (Vermunt, 2005). This means the use of Information and Communication Technology has become very paramount in the teaching and learning process.

Arko-Cobbah (2004, p.267) refers to the central role of information and communication technology (ICT) as a "*central component of the learning process, especially when it comes to student centred learning*". Technology, therefore, can be of use both inside, to help teachers in creating an interactive classroom environment, as well as outside the classroom, in order to enhance students' learning processes and complement what is learnt in a classroom setting. This can empower students to access information and analyse it critically in their own time and space. The use of ICT in teaching and learning of Visual Art in the selected schools was seen as very minimal as only one was equipped with an under equipped ICT laboratory. The rest of the two schools were not having computer laboratories.

Teachers must know learners' common misconceptions in a subject. The study revealed that evaluation was done only by the teachers which do not give room for the students to learn new knowledge as they appreciate the works of others. Students are not given the opportunity to know where they went wrong and what could have been done. An observation in a class revealed a teacher using tertiary colour in place of a complimentary colour. In a picture making class a student explained mosaic as collage but the teacher did not correct it. In another school a student was asked to leave the class because he was not having a calligraphy pen in a lettering class instead of guiding him to improvise. In addition, the teacher must take account of and respects learners' cultural, linguistic socioeconomic and educational backgrounds in their planning and teaching.

This according to the Standard is done through investigating and taking notes of each learner's background. Again, acknowledging where they may have gaps in their education, extra domestic work (especially for females), be vulnerable to early drop out and act on this to overcome disadvantage. They know why some learners may have irregular attendance and seek to improve this. They code-switch as appropriate to ensure all can understand lesson content; seat learners carefully to support one another; talks with respect about all learners; draws sensitively on learners' backgrounds in their teaching. Examination of the teacher's lesson plan revealed that teachers do not indicate examples that allow the students to explore the environment. This was evidenced when students' exercises were observed. It was seen that most of the questions were closed ended questions.

## **4.2 What Are the Learning Strategies for Teaching and Learning of Visual Art in the K.E.E.A?**

### **A. Teaching and Learning Processes**

Kyriacou (1995) described teaching as the ability to impart knowledge to a group of people, or it is to show the way to something or a process. Teaching is the passing on of ideas, knowledge, skills, attitudes, beliefs and feelings to someone, with the aim of bringing about particular change in that person. The change should then lead to different behaviour. Tamakloe et al. believed that the involvement of the student in the teaching-learning process where the student is given the chance to participate fully in the process makes teaching complete. This implies that a lesson that is considered to have been taught is one that has been learned. Teaching and learning are therefore described as the two sides of a coin because teaching does not happen without a learner (Amissah, Oppong-Frimpong, & Sam-Tagoe, 2009). In observing the teaching and learning process in the sampled schools, the following indicators were used: teaching methods versus learning style, instructional periods for General Knowledge in Art (GKA) lessons, syllabus, and frequency of practical lessons.

### **B. Teaching Methods**

On how a teaching strategy could be used to instruct a learner and influence the learner's style, the study revealed that teachers in the sampled schools preferred using class discussion, demonstration and brainstorming to deliver the GKA lessons. Observations during GKA lessons at two schools indicated otherwise. The Lecture method was used in the GKA lessons observed in the classrooms. This suggests that students who are not auditory learners may be put off by long lectures and may not benefit from the lessons. The planners of the GKA syllabus (CRDD, 2008) recommend that 40% of GKA instructional hours should be given to the teaching of practical skills at the SHS level. From the findings, it could be said that it was unhealthy for GKA teachers to use the lecture method as the main strategy in teaching this practical subject. This lecture method of teaching does not fulfill the rationale for the programme which is to equip students with the necessary creative skills and acquire competency (CRDD 2008).

### **C. Learning Style**

The study revealed that 11 students did not have any idea as to how they learnt, while 7 of them knew how they learn best through cooperative, independent learning, practical activities and lecture. The 11 of students who did not have any idea could probably excel if they applied their best learning styles to what was taught them. Once a person's learning style is ascertained, accommodation can be made to increase academic achievement and creativity, as well as improve attitudes towards learning.

### **D. Instructional Periods for GKA lessons**

Three out of seven teacher respondents reported that the period allocated to GKA lessons was not adequate to teach all the topics listed in the syllabus. The responses obtained indicated that one school operated seven periods, while the other two operate five periods per week. This indicates that six out of nine teacher respondents were not complying with the stipulated number of periods recommended by the syllabus and therefore being unable to complete the syllabus. As the syllabus stipulates, two periods per week should be allocated to Art History, Appreciation and General Concept in Art while five periods per week should be allocated to the practical component (CRDD, 2008). The implication is that those with enough instructional periods have more time for both practical and theory lessons if the time was utilized well.

### **E. Practical Lessons per Term**

One of the general aims of learning GKA is to develop the ability to harmonize opposing ideas, contradictions and inconsistencies to design and produce artwork. In accordance with this aim, the teaching syllabus instructs that five periods per week be allocated to the practical component of the course (CRDD, 2008).

12 out of the 18 teachers indicated that the students have between one to three practical lessons per term with the 6 indicating that they have practical lessons only once in a term. This shows that practical lessons are inadequate. Given the importance of practical lessons in GKA education (40% as specified by CRDD, 2008), this finding has the potential to negatively affect the performance of the students. The GKA syllabus reveals that the programme is purposefully designed to provide employable skills to its students hence the emphasis on practical skills (CRDD 2008). Interactions with two teachers in one of the schools revealed that student numbers were so huge that assigning them with many practical works meant assigning oneself the burden of too much marking. Besides, the teachers confirmed that though the school provided funding for some of the expensive materials and tools, students complained of not having money to buy the few ones.

It was also revealed through interviews with the Home Economics and General Arts students and confirmed during the observation that since Visual Art students normally do practical exercise in two other elective Visual Art subjects, teachers do not give practical work to their GKA students as they are expected to do. This attribute is negatively affecting the performance of GKA students particularly those in Home Economics and General Arts. Teachers of GKA must therefore address this problem

because the practical component is so vital that the GKA syllabus emphasizes it (CRDD, 2008).

### **F. Mode of Assessment**

Black and William (1998) define assessment as all structures undertaken by teachers or their students to be used as feedback in order to make modification in the teaching and learning activities in what they engage in. Preparation towards examination does not begin a week to the event, although it might be more intense towards the examination. To maximise the chances of a satisfactory result in examinations, one needs to start preparation as early as possible. The questionnaire on preparation before, during and after the WASSCE examination sought to demand responses on evaluation, area of specialization, answering of examination questions, filling and using of the WAEC Answer Sheet. In assessing students' evaluation during and after lessons, all the teacher respondents (100%) agreed to students' evaluation during and after lessons. The above information is significant to the study because evaluating lessons helps in knowing to what extent instructional objectives had been achieved and to know the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. This will enhance students' academic performance.

### **G. Classroom Organisation and Management**

Brophy and Good (1986) defined classroom management as a teacher's efforts to establish and maintain the classroom as an effective environment for teaching and learning. This involves management of the learning environment and management of students' behavior, teacher's readiness as well as the students, motivational level, teacher's relationship with students, the personality of the teacher, as well as the competencies of the teacher. It also includes all the activities taken by the teacher and the learner to ensure that the classroom environment has all the resources and ideas that will make teaching and learning effective. An observation in the selected school revealed an alarming number of students in one class which made the sitting arrangement in such a way that the teacher cannot walk through to make corrections.

The relationship among teachers and students were cordial except one school where the teacher seemed to be unfriendly. This according to the students did not give them the opportunity to express their idea as the teacher rebuked every wrong answer given by students. There were no rules pasted in the class of the selected schools that direct students conduct. An interview with one of the teachers said "*these students are matured so they should know better.*" Questions were fairly distributed among the students. Teachers personalities were 'modest' with no mannerism found among the selected schools. In a Graphics design lesson on lettering observed, the teacher explained 'ascenders' as "*letters which have thin and thick strokes*". So, one of the students, a good one, tried to prompt the teacher and the teacher argued with the students that the definition was correct. This showed some level of unprepared teacher. Class control among the selected schools was very poor. This was due to the large number of students in the class.

## H. Professional Commitment

Kumar (2005), described commitment as total organismic direction involving not only the conscious mind but the whole direction which is gradually achieved by the individual through a close relationship in which even unconscious tendencies are as much respected as conscious choices. Commitment is a state of attachment that defines the relationship between an actor (an individual, a group or organization) and an entity (commitment target).

Professional commitment is the feeling of dedication among the individuals of a group towards their profession.

## I. Areas of commitment

- 1) **Commitment to the learner.** Learners need teachers who understand them and their needs with sensitivity. They need to be looked after by teachers who understand their instincts, learning needs and tendencies along with their capacities and abilities. Among the selected, the individuals with learning challenges were not cared for. This was evidenced when the students interviewed told me that whenever they are given work to do in the class the teacher does not go round to supervise.
- 2) **Commitments to the society.** The school and community have symbolic relations between them. Teachers need to orient the community towards the importance of education as a lifelong process and also motivate them to take it in that perspective. Teachers need to have deep concern and commitment towards the community. The study revealed that out of the nine teachers interviewed, only three of them relate well with the community. One of them is a referee who normally handles matches in the community, another one also a local preacher in one of the churches in the community and the other one has bought a taxi for a member in the community to work with. The rest said they have little involvement in the community.
- 3) **Commitment to the profession.** Teachers are entrusted by the community to shoulder the responsibility of shaping the present generation for the future through the process of teaching and learning. Committed professionals should adopt various innovative methods of teaching taking into consideration how best to learn and bring about effective learning. About 30% of the teachers in the selected schools come to school late and sometimes miss their lessons. When interviewed it was indicated that they don't have accommodation on campus. An observed lesson showed that a teacher had not prepared the lesson notes for three weeks. And those who had prepared, were not up to date.
- 4) **Commitment to basic values.** Every community expects the teachers to follow a value-based approach in their personal life so as to become role models for the future generation. The study revealed that teachers from the selected schools adhere to the rules of the schools as well as that of the community.

## 5. Summary of Key Findings

The last objective talked about how teaching and learning of visuals are aligned to best practices. To achieve this objective, the National Teacher's Standard for Ghana, prepared by the National Teaching Council, was adopted as a checklist for teachers. The standard had the following headings: Professional Values and Attitude and Professional Knowledge. Under the professional value and attitude, the teacher is supposed to critique his or her practice (keeping in mind gender responsive practice) and show agency in improving learning sometimes with a peer, mentor, or with a group of teachers in the school.

The interview revealed that about 75% of the teachers in the selected schools do not critique their practice after teaching. When the teachers finish teaching, they do not monitor the progress of the students after class. An interview with one teacher as how often he engaged in reflective teaching, gave a shocking revelation when he said, simply because what he wanted his students to achieve was to pass his paper at the end of the final examination. It was again evidence that they do not reflect on their teaching as none of these teachers was having a reflective log, journal or portfolio written.

The study revealed that none of the teachers was having a personal copy of the curriculum. No benchmark was found as they do not even have folders which indicate long and short term plans. There was no examination framework from the selected teachers. The only document made available to me was the scoring sheets for the end of term examination.

All teachers have good technological pedagogical knowledge, knowing how to incorporate ICT into their practice to support learning. Teacher's explanations, strategies and resources demonstrate they know how to apply content knowledge imaginatively; learners are cognitively challenged and stimulated; teacher asks probing questions to both females and males and responds knowledgeably to learners' own questions and difficulties around specific topics.

## 6. Conclusion

The following conclusions were made from the findings.

- Teachers are not staying around campus; they normally come to school late and miss early classes. Some of the students are selected by the school to offer visual art based on their grades. This affects the performance of the students.
- Basic tools and materials are woefully inadequate in the selected schools which limit the creativity in the student. Funding of the visual art was a major challenge to the selected schools as the students used their own money to buy basic tools and materials.
- Teachers used a lecture method of teaching in their delivery making it difficult for the students to acquire practical skills due to huge class size. Number of periods allocated for the visual art is less which made it difficult to engage in regular practical demonstration.

- The ratio of students to teacher was very high as compared to the standard set by the National Accreditation Board. This made it difficult for the teacher to easily move in and made corrections. Students were not taken to field strips and exhibitions to learn new things.
- Teachers do not engage in reflective practice to assess the performance, making them remain in the old way of doing things. Teachers do not attend workshops and in-service training regularly to develop their professional practice. The National Teachers' Standard book which is the pivot of teaching was not available to most of the teachers in the selected schools. Most of the teachers relied only on the curriculum and available textbooks.

## **7. Recommendation**

- 1) Students should be made to select subjects based on their interest.
- 2) Teachers should be made to teach in their area of specialization to ensure efficiency.
- 3) Teachers should be encouraged to engage resource persons where necessary.
- 4) The school should at least provide a shed for the visual art department to avoid the use of the normal classroom as alternative studio. With that, the students can as well keep their practical works there.
- 5) The class size should be at most twenty-five students in a class so that teachers can adopt practical related methods in teaching instead of lecture methods.
- 6) At least twenty periods a week should be allocated to the teaching and learning of visual art so that maximum time will be used for practical works to equip the students with the needed basic skills.
- 7) Field trips and exhibitions as a method of teaching visual art should be encouraged so that the students will experience real life situations to buttress what is taught in the classroom.
- 8) The National Teacher Standard Book for Ghana should be made available to all teachers.
- 9) Teachers should as much as possible engage in reflective practice to evaluate their teaching to make amends.
- 10) Teachers should be abreast with the pedagogical content knowledge of their subject area so that they can effectively teach the subject.

### **7.1 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The study focused pedagogical practices in the teaching and learning of visual art in the KEEA. The researchers therefore suggest that similar study could be conducted in other parts of the country to improve teaching and learning of visual arts nationwide.

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