

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE PERFORMANCE IN GENERAL
KNOWLEDGE IN ART OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ABURA
ASEBU KWAMANKESE DISTRICT IN THE CENTRAL REGION.**

BY
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the Master of Arts (Art Education) and that, to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the University, except where due acknowledgement had been made in the text.

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ABSTRACT

The study assesses the factors that influence academic performance in General Knowledge in Art among Visual Arts, General Art and Home Economics students in the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District of Central Region, Ghana. The study adopted the descriptive method of qualitative research with interview, observation and questionnaire administration to identify the factors that influence Senior High School students' academic performance in General Knowledge in Art in Abura Aseibu Kwamankese District. Using the purposive and simple random sampling techniques, a sample of three schools; 128 respondents comprising 119 students and nine teachers were selected for in-depth study. Of three schools (coded A, B and C) sampled, the study found that the reasons for School A's success at WASSCE is as a result of the availability of teaching learning resource, high teacher competency, experienced teachers; and the attraction and admission of high performance BECE applicants into the Visual Arts and Art-related departments. Students in this well-endowed school have clear advantages over their colleagues in Schools B and C which are less endowed and therefore attract average and low performing candidates. Significantly, the performance of students in Schools B and C was found to be the same. While the personality behind the name of a school influences academic achievement of its students, the study revealed that the communities in which a school is located and educational opportunities they have also directly influence the academic performance and achievement of its students. Environmental factors, lack of studio facilities, and differences in teaching methodologies seem to have some influence on students' learning and performance in the final examinations. However, findings suggest that the identified differences between the schools have to be

resolved through adequate resourcing, infrastructure, teacher competency, good BECE entry grades, experience and qualified teachers in order to address the differences and enhance academic achievement for students across the country.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0: Overview

This chapter provides an introduction to the thesis. It comprises the following subtopics: background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions. It spells out the limitation, delimitation, definition of terms, importance of the study and the organisation of the rest of text.

1.1: Background to the Study

The educational system of any nation is a mirror through which the image of the nation can be seen, shaped and also likely to be shaped. Education, according to many authors, has been and will continue to be the potential cause of change in any society. Education is also meant to develop manpower for different levels of the economy which is an ultimate guarantee of national self-reliance. Hence from the formulation and clarification of purposeful education must emerge the realities of life, taking into account the entire scope of human life and at the same time, considering specific needs of the individual (Singh and Rana cited in Siaw, 2009).

Secondary schools offer a wide range of programme models to meet the needs of students. The secondary education curriculum, according to Nyman and Jenkins (1999), revolves around subjects offered in the World War I era and are being taught by specialists. Students are dynamic people always in progress. They are full of potentials, which have to be discovered and properly channelled hence the inclusion of Art Teaching Curriculum in our school systems.

As improvement in all other sectors of learning grows, problems arise as to the best approaches of instruction in dealing with teaching and learning of General Knowledge in Art (GKA) in Ghanaian schools. The problem of selecting the activities, tools and materials and the syllabuses arises. The attitude of authorities, communities and students towards the teaching and learning of the GKA subject need to be revisited and streamlined towards effective and efficient teaching and learning in Senior High School classrooms. In order to make teaching and learning of GKA meaningful and interesting so that what is learnt remains an integral part of the learner, teachers' and students' approaches and attitudes should be overhauled in order to give an overall knowledge of the subject.

1.2: Statement of the Problem

On many occasions, statements made by government officials, heads of schools and other public individuals indicate that the standard of education in Ghana is improving. This is seen through the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results released by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) in respect of final year Junior and Senior High School students respectively. Contrary to these public statements, the District Chief Executive (DCE) of Abura-Asebu Kwamankese claims that students' performance in the District has constantly not been encouraging. This he said in his address on the 6th of March 2011 at Abura Dunkwa the district capital.

In his address, the DCE referred to the District performance in BECE describing it as not being encouraging when compared with the results of the Central Region as a

whole. For instance, in 2007 and 2008, the District recorded 40.2% and 41.0% passes respectively. In 2009 the District performance dropped to 32.0% out of a total of 2,043 candidates presented. This placed the District at the bottom of the regional BECE league table and on the national front; it was 132nd out of 138 Districts. The AAK district, according to the DCE, had 25% pass in the 2010 BECE results released by the West African Examination council (WAEC), down from the 32 per cent pass recorded in 2009. The DCE noted that only three schools in the district had a 100 per cent pass mark in the 2010 BECE and were commended for their success. Out of four public, one community and two private S.H.S in the district, only one school which is designated as School A was honoured for its constant success at WASSCE and uplifting the name of the District.

Interview with the assistant heads (academic) and a review of the WASSCE result of the public schools in the district from 2006 -2011 revealed School A success at WASSCE. The results of General Knowledge in Art which is a core subject for the Visual Art programme and elective to some Home Economics and General Art students shows constant high performance of students in School A and low performance in the other schools which is designated as Schools B and C.

This research therefore sought to find out why students of school A perform better in GKA than their colleagues in the other two schools in the same district as a means to understand the problem faced by students of GKA in the SHS and to provide recommendations for improving academic Performance in the three schools.

1.3: Objectives

- 1) To identify the factors that lead students of School A to perform well in General Knowledge in Art in the WASSCE in the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District of Central Region.
- 2) To find out the causes of poor performance in General Knowledge in Art in the other two schools.

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1.4: Research Questions

- 1) Why do students of School A pass the General Knowledge in Art subject?
- 2) What factors contribute to poor performance of students of Schools B and C in the WASSCE General Knowledge in Art?

1.5: Delimitation

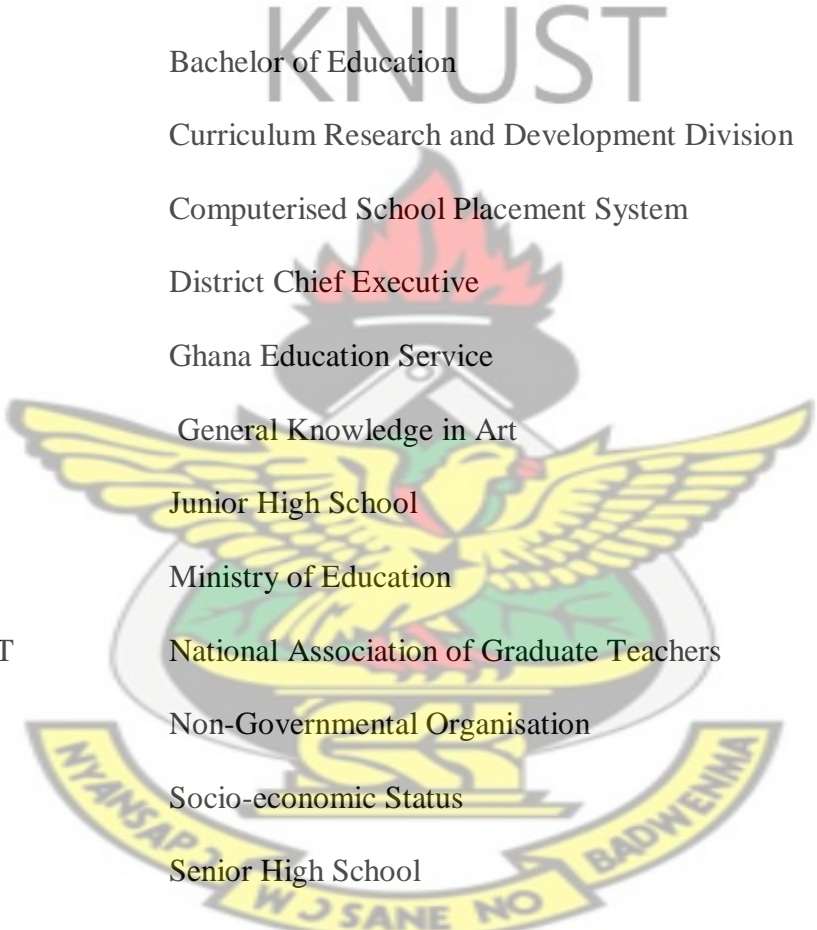
This research is limited to the three public schools in the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District of Central Region, Ghana.

1.6: Limitation

The most significant challenge to this study was time constraints in the data collection, as a much longer period of observation was needed to provide a more accurate reality of the teaching and learning of General Knowledge in Art in the selected schools. Poor record keeping and sheer reluctance on the part of some school Heads to release official documents to enable the researcher take actual figures pertaining to number of staff, student population, examination results and other data they considered “Confidential”

made it difficult for accurate data to be cited in some parts of the individual school reports. Actual figures have been provided where this was possible otherwise estimated numbers were used.

1.7: Abbreviations/Acronyms



BECE	Basic Education Certificate Examination
B.Ed.	Bachelor of Education
CRDD	Curriculum Research and Development Division
CSPS	Computerised School Placement System
DCE	District Chief Executive
GES	Ghana Education Service
GKA	General Knowledge in Art
JHS	Junior High School
MOE	Ministry of Education
NAGRAT	National Association of Graduate Teachers
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SES	Socio-economic Status
SHS	Senior High School
SRP	Students Role Performance
SSSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination
WAEC	West Africa Examinations Council
WASSCE	West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1.8: Importance of the study

This study will be of help to its readers in the following ways:

- It serves as a database for effective teaching and learning of General Knowledge in Art in the Senior High Schools.
- District Directors and Heads of the selected schools can have cause to intensify their request for better resources and material support for their schools.
- It identifies effective useful and functional methodologies to be used to enhance the teaching and learning of GKA in all Ghanaian Senior High Schools.
- Educational planners, administrators, school heads and teachers who are the implementers of the Visual Arts programme will realise the differences in the academic performance of students in GKA in the schools so as to give those lagging behind the necessary support.
- Parents, students and other stakeholders in the educational enterprise can appreciate the problems encountered in the schools and be motivated to help the school administrations to yearn for quality education for their students.

1.9: Profile of Abura Asebu Kwamankese District

According to Bennette (1995), the Abura-Asebu-Kwamankese District (AAKD) the study area is one of the seventeen districts in the Central Region of Akanland, Ghana. AAKD has about 262 communities with Abura-Dunkwa as its capital. Geographically, it has a short coastal strip of 5.2 km along the Gulf of Guinea and stretching inland. The District shares political and administrative boundaries with Cape Coast on the South West, Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira District on the North West, Assin South District

in the North, Mfantseman District on the East and Gulf of Guinea in the South. This opens the district to high rate of migration. Most of the people in the District are farmers who cultivate citrus and other staples such as maize and cassava. There is a factory which processes the farmers' products for export as well as for the Akan market. It is situated in Asebu. Fig.1.1 is a map showing Central Region and the various administrative and political districts. The study district has the Red arrow pointing to it.

The AAK district has a total of 238 public and private schools. There are 201 publicly owned schools and 37 privately- owned schools. There are also seven Senior High Schools in the district, four of which are public. The study covered the three schools that offer General Knowledge in Art as a subject of study.

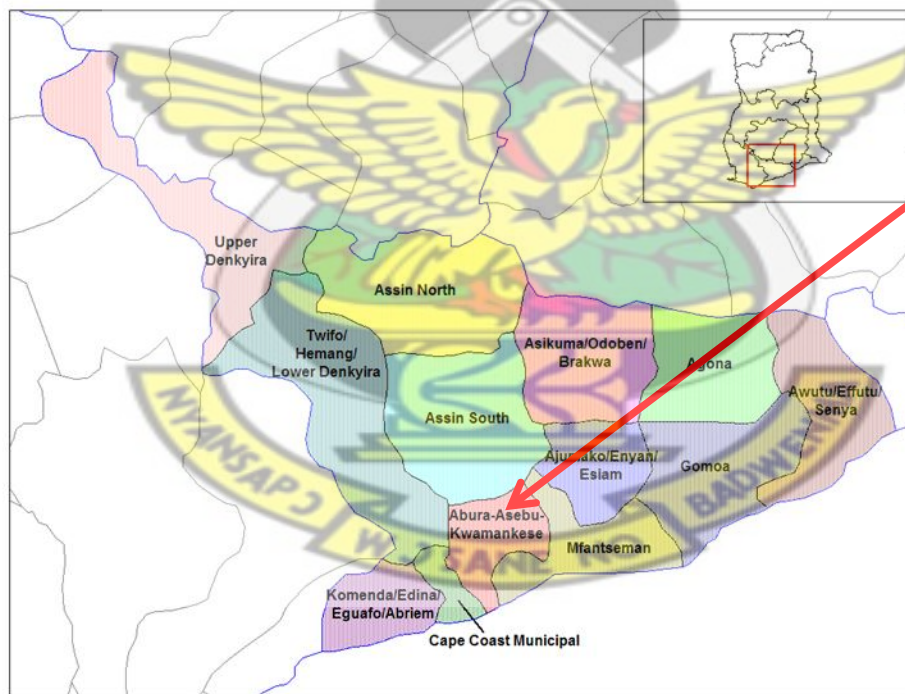


Fig 1.1: Administrative Map of the Central Region.

1.10: Organisation of the Rest of the Text

Chapter Two covers the review of literature relevant to the topic. Chapter Three deals with the strategies adopted in data collection, the sample and sampling technique, research design, administration of research instruments and data analysis plan. Chapter Four presents the discussion and analysis of the main findings while Chapter Five presents the summary, conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for improving the situation in the schools.



CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0: Overview

This Review of Related Literature consists of views and findings of different writers as documented in books, Encyclopaedias and Journals. The review focuses on academic performance, factors that influence academic performance, teaching, learning and teaching General Knowledge in Art

2.1: Concept of Academic Performance

In educational institutions, success is measured by academic performance, or how well a student meets standards set out by local government and the institution itself. Academic performance according to the Cambridge Dictionary of English (1995) refers to how well a school, college, university, an individual or a group is able to perform when given a learning task, activity or one's achievement in standardized tests in academic pursuit. Academic performance refers to how students deal with their studies and how they cope with or accomplish different tasks given to them by their teacher. Academic performance is related to content and intellect, meaning that academic performance depends on the learner's competence.

2.1.1: Factors influencing student's performance.

Research supports the fact that student performance depends on different socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. The findings of research studies show that student performance is affected by different factors such as Family Background, Learning Environment and Students Role Performance.

1. Family Background

Majoribanks (1996) holds the view that family is the key to a student's life outside of school; it is the most important influence on students' learning and includes factors such as socioeconomic status and family structure. The environment at home is a primary socialization agent and influences a child's interest in school and aspirations for the future.

a. Socio-economic Status (SES)

Majoribanks (1996) defines Socio-economic Status (SES) as a person's overall social position to which attainments in both the social and economic domain contribute. When used in studies of children's school achievement, it refers to the SES of the parents' or family educational level, occupational level and income level (Jeynes 2002). Several comprehensive reviews of the relationship between SES and educational outcomes exist (Eamon, 2005; Majoribanks, 1996; Jeynes 2002). These studies make it clear that those children from low SES families are more likely to exhibit the following patterns in terms of educational outcomes as compared to children from high SES families:

- have lower levels of literacy, numeracy, comprehension and lower retention rates,
- earn lower test scores and are likely to drop out of school

- exhibit higher levels of problematic school behaviour, for instance; truancy and
- are more likely to have difficulties with their studies and display negative attitudes towards school.

Similarly, studies of children's educational achievements over time have also demonstrated that social background remains one of the major sources of educational inequality (Graetz, 1995). In other words, educational success depends very strongly on the socio-economic status of one's parents (Graetz, 1995).

The effect of parental SES on children's educational outcomes according to Barry (2005), may be neutralised, strengthened or mediated by a range of other contextual, family and individual characteristics. Parents may have a low income and a low-status occupation, for example, but nevertheless transmit high educational aspirations to their children. What family members have (material resources, for instance) can often be mediated by what family members do (for example parental support, family cohesion). The social and the economic components of socio-economic status, in other words, may have distinct and separate influences on educational outcomes. While both components are important, social factors (for instance, parents' educational attainments) have been found to be more significant than economic factors, such as a family's capacity to purchase goods and services, in explaining different educational outcomes. It is argued that families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically, foster a higher level of achievement in their children. They also may provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school (Barry, 2005).

b. Family Structure

Socio-economic status may be linked to family structure. There is evidence to show that children from single-parent household do not perform well in school as children from two-parent households (Majoribanks, 1996). Rich (2000) supports this view by explaining that children from single-parent families are likely to have lower educational performance because sole parent families on average have lower levels of income, are headed by parents with lower educational attainment and are less likely to be in the labour force. According to Rich (2000), other factors that are likely to adversely affect educational outcomes of such children compared to those from two-parent families are said to include:

- the custodial parent having less time to spend with children in terms of supervision of school-work and maintaining appropriate levels of discipline,
- increased responsibilities on children such as childcare roles, domestic duties which impede the time available for school work; and
- the nature of parent-child relationships in sole parent families may cause emotional and behavioural problems for the child.

Divorce has been found to negatively affect academic performance (Jeynes, 2002) as students whose parents are divorced are among those who scored lowest on a standardized test. Possible explanations for this relationship, according to Majoribanks (1996) and Jeynes (2002), is that divorce can cause a family's socio-economic status to decrease and parental connection harmed. This reveals that the quality of parents and home background of a student goes a long way to predict the quality and regularity of the satisfaction and provision of a child's functional survival and academic needs. Poor

parental care with gross deprivation of social and economic needs of a child, usually yield poor academic performance of the child.

On the other hand, where a child suffers parental and material deprivation and care due to divorce or death, or absconding of one of the parents, the child's schooling may be affected as the mother alone may not be financially buoyant to pay school fee, purchase books and uniforms, such a child may play truant, thus his performances in school may be adversely affected (Shittu cited in Basil, 2007).

Similarly, good parenting supported by strong economic home background could enhance strong academic performance of the child. This further predicts academic performance where the child is properly counselled in the choice of his/her courses and vocation that matches his mental ability, interest and capability.

2. Learning Environment

Barry (2005) holds the view that, a student's educational outcome and academic success is greatly influenced by the type of school they attend. The school one attends is the institutional environment that sets the parameter of a student's learning experience. Depending on the environment a student can either close or open the doors that lead to academic achievement.

A Learning environment that is free of barriers, or obstacles or distractions such as noise, gas/smoke pollutions and so on can constitute health hazards, which in turn affect or reduce the student's concentration or conceptual focus to learning (Sprinthall cited in Basil, 2007). According to Basil (2007), markets and garages located near schools have always posed a threat to students. Noise and pollution from these sources

have always endangered students' life and concentration. Therefore for an effective learning and high academic performance, schools in both rural and sub-urban and urban areas should be located off zones characterized with smoke/gas pollutions, market centres or garages, as conducive learning environments stimulate learning, understanding and high perception.

Crosnoe, Johnson, and Elder (2004) have suggested that school sector (public or private) and class size are two important structural components of schools. Private schools tend to have better funding and smaller class size than Public schools. The additional funding of Private schools leads to better academic performance and more access to resources such as computers, which have been shown to enhance academic achievement (Eamon, 2005). Smaller class size creates more intimate setting and therefore can increase teacher-students bonding which has also been shown to have a positive effect on students' success.

According to Danesy (2004), Other factors that compliment environmental and socio-economic factors to produce high academic achievements and performance include good teaching, counselling, good administration, good seating arrangement and good building. Dilapidated buildings, lacking mentally stimulating facilities that are characterized with low or no seating arrangements will also be destructive.

Danesy (2004) indicates that the innovative environment do stimulate head start learning and mental perception. It has also been proved that students who come from simulative environments with laboratory equipment or those that are taught with rich instructional aids and pictures perform better than those trained without them. Thus, teaching and learning should be done under organized, planned, and fortified

environment with learning instructional aids to stimulate students' sense of conception, perception and concentration to facilitate systematic understanding and acquisition of knowledge in them.

In sum, a combination of a healthy family background, good environment plus the child being educated in a conducive environment with a fortified learning or instructional aids or motivational incentives prompt academic performance while a lack of this will retard academic performance.

3. Students Role Performance.

Students Role Performance (SRP), according to Barry (2005), is how an individual fulfils the role of a student in an educational institution. SRP involves factors such as Gender and Extracurricular Activities

The effects sex has on a student's academic achievement has been debated and heavily researched over the past several decades (Chambers and Schreiber 2004). Past research has indicated an academic gap between the sexes, with boys ahead of girls. However more recent research shows that the achievement gap has been narrowing and that in some instance girls have higher academic achievement than boys (Eamon, 2005; Majoribanks, 1996 and Jeynes, 2002).

According to Jeynes (2002), there are several explanations for this increasing gender. These include biological differences, gender biases (such as reading being seen as not masculine), teaching, curricula and assessment (for instance less structured approaches to teaching grammar may have weakened boys), literacy performance and socioeconomic factors. The last explanation is of particular interest, especially the finding

that the gender gap continues within each socio-economic level (Majoribanks, 1996). That is, girls have been found to out-perform boys within high or low socio-economic groups. Furthermore, the performance of boys deteriorates more rapidly than the performance of girls as they move down the socio-economic scale. As noted above, the relationship between the performance of boys and socio-economic status is often mediated or partially explained by family structure.

A consensus on whether or not a student's participating in extracurricular activities such as sports will have a positive effect on academic performance has not been reached. From a theoretical point of view, extracurricular activities are viewed as boosting academic performance (Hunt, 2005). Coleman's multiple role theory posits that extracurricular activities provide additional complimentary role for the students that benefit the students academically because the added role of athlete, for example, increases self-esteem and overall participation/interest in school, which can boost grades (Hunt, 2005).

2.1.2: Factors that contribute to student's success in External Examination

Hipp (2005) holds the view that exams are set to assess not just the knowledge of a course but also students' ability to analyse the material, to problem solve and use the concepts in a practical way. Therefore only rote learning (memorisation) of material for exams is rarely the best strategy. Dixon (1988) adds that preparing for exams is a task most students dread as it involves time and hard work and is the cause of a lot of stress and anxiety. Hipp (2005) outlines some of the effective ways to success towards external

examination as: Planning and Time Management, Coverage of Syllabus and Regulations, and Managing Revision.

1. Planning and Time Management

A well-known saying is “if you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. Planning and time management is a key to success. According to Hipp (2005), one needs to use a blank weekly planner to organize study period available to the person. The person should try not to review for more than a couple of hours before the exam- all night cramming sessions are seldom beneficial.

2. Coverage of Syllabus and Regulations

In the view of Dixon (1988), it is important to get the syllabus of the subjects chosen and study the topics by getting the required textbooks and study consistently over a long period. Dixon (1998) advises students to avoid reliance on “short notes” at the beginning of learning a topic. According to him, the fact about the topics must sink into the students. He also advises students to study the regulations governing examinations, particularly about desired behaviour in examination, so that students do not ignorantly involved themselves in malpractice with serious consequences.

Hipp (2005) suggests that it is relevant to learn to answer questions after each topic. This, according to him, will enable the students to determine how far they have assimilated the topic. Students may use past questions, or form their own related questions on the specific topic studied. It is of importance to answer such questions in writing, not glibly orally.

Dixon (1988) advocates that it is good to share knowledge and exchange ideas with mates since one may not have access to all textbooks or knowledge on a topic. He

also advises that students should not join in cramming model answers prepared by somebody else.

3. Managing Revision

Revision is an indispensable part of preparation for exam. Revision helps learning to mature. According Dixon (1988), one completes his course and learns well but it is not the end of it. It should be revised again and again. It is a fact, if students study a chapter well and don't revise it, the learning they have will vanish with the passage of time. Revision does not take much time because you have already learnt it but you revise to refresh your learning. Another advantage is that each time you revise you learn more and you get new ideas.

It is important to keep in mind at all times that exams are a test of recall, not recognition. All revision and exam preparation should be directed towards practising and testing recall. Many students make the mistake of simply reading through their notes again and again until they feel they 'know' it all. However, what they are really learning is to recognise the material. Learning to recall the information requires a much more active approach.

2.1.3: Factors that contribute to student's failure in External Examination

Poor academic performance, according to Aremu and Soka (2003) is a performance that is adjudged by the examinee/testee. Poor academic performance has been observed in secondary school subjects (Adesemowo, 2005). Aremu and Oluwole (2000) stress that academic failure is not only frustrating to the students and the parents;

its effects are equally grave on the society in terms of dearth of manpower in all spheres of the economy and politics.

Morakinyo (2003) believes that the falling level of academic achievement is attributable to teachers' non-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Adesemowo (2005) found out that the attitude of some teachers to their job is reflected in their poor attendance to lessons, lateness to school, unsavory comments about students' performance that could damage their ego, poor method of teaching and the likes which affect students' academic performance.

The question therefore is what is the cause of this fallen standard and poor academic performance of students? Is the fault entirely that of teachers or students or both of them? Is it that students of today are non-achievers because they have low intelligent quotient and a good neutral mechanism to be able to act purposefully, think rationally and deal effectively with academic tasks? Or is it because teachers are no longer putting in much commitment as before? Or is it in teachers' method of teaching and interaction with pupils? Or is the poor performance of students caused by parents' neglect, separation and poverty?

2.2: The Teaching Learning Process

Teaching-learning process is the heart of education. On it depends the fulfilment of the aims and objectives of education. It is the most powerful instrument of education to bring about desired changes in the students. Teaching and learning are related terms. In teaching - learning process, the teacher, the learner, the curriculum and other variables

are organized in a systematic way to attain some pre-determined goal (Bruner cited in Siaw, 2009).

It is informative to examine the ideal teaching-learning process, as proposed by Laurillard (1994) who argues that there are four aspects of the teaching-learning process namely: discussion, interaction, adaptation and reflection. Discussion according to Laurillard is between the teacher and the learner. Interaction is between the learner and some aspect of the world defined by the teacher. Adaptation is of the world by the teacher and action by the learner. Reflection is on the learner's performance by both teacher and learner. Laurillard considers how different educational media and styles can be described in these terms. For example, a textbook represents a one-way flow of knowledge from the teacher's conceptual knowledge to the student's conceptual knowledge. A lecture or tutorial may be seen the same way, but there is a possibility of meaningful discussion between teacher and learner.

2.2.1: Concept of Teaching

According to Smith (1997), teaching is a system of action involving an agent, an end in view, and a situation including two sets of factors-those over which the agent has no control (such as class size, size of classroom, physical characteristics of pupil) and those that the teacher can modify (such as ways of asking questions or ideas gleaned). Smith therefore defines teaching as undertaking certain ethical tasks or activities, the intention of which is to induce learning.

Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2005) have defined teaching as directing knowledge towards the learner. To Kochhar (2004), teaching is not a mechanical process but a rather intricate, exacting and challenging job. Though teaching is poorly paid, Kochhar explains that its riches are of a different order, less tangible but more lasting - that is satisfaction of personal fulfilment. Farrant (1996) explains teaching as a “process that facilitates learning”. Teaching and learning are therefore described as the two sides of a coin because teaching does not happen without a learner (Amissah, Sam-Tagoe, Amoah and Mereku, 2002). Some other definitions given to teaching by Amissah et al are as follows:

- Teaching is the means whereby an experienced member of a group guides and directs pupils in their total growth and development.
- It is also the activity that the teachers demonstrate to reflect their philosophy of education.
- Teaching is an interpersonal influence aimed at changing the way or behaviour in which other persons can or will behave.
- It is a system of actions intended to induce learning.
- It is an activity aimed at the achievement of learning and practiced in such a way as to respect the learners’ intellectual integrity and capacity.

The above definitions show how teaching has been subjected to a variety of descriptions and definitions. While some authors describe teaching as an art because it gives the teacher an opportunity to do something creative like moulding personalities and the mind, others describe teaching as a science because it hinges on a specified body of knowledge - psychology. In this sense, Kochhar (2004) asserts that “teaching is a

complex art of guiding pupils through a variety of selected experiences towards the attainment of a widening field of learning”. Hence teaching directs growth and development. As the art involves the mind, the heart and the hand, so is teaching (Amissah et al, 2002). The authors assert that teaching is the art of inducing students to behave in such ways that are assumed to lead to learning. This connotes that teaching is all about creativity because the personality is at play. It is out of passion that a person can teach effectively and it takes a creative teacher to impact on the learner. Therefore teaching can be defined as the art and a conscious act of transmitting knowledge, skills, attitude and values in a systematic and an orderly procedure to induce learning for positive growth and development.

2.2.2: Maxims of Teaching

Teaching activities and instructional procedure are performed by using maxims of teaching. The term ‘Maxim of teaching, according to Smith (1997), may be defined as rules for presenting terms and concepts to make them easy to comprehend in classroom teaching. They are the guidelines for teaching. The maxims of teaching are very helpful in obtaining the active involvement and participation of the learners in the teaching - learning process. They quicken the interest of the learners and motivate them to learn. They make the students attentive to the teaching- learning process. According to Kochhar (2004), a good teacher must be familiar with the general maxims for effective teaching, some of which are the following: Proceed from the known to the unknown, Proceed from Simple to Complex, Proceed from the Concrete to Abstract, Proceed from Particular to

General, Proceed from Psychological to Logical, Proceed from Whole to Part, and from Analysis to Synthesis.

It must be accepted that in the ultimate analysis maxims are meant to be our servants and not masters. Moreover, by and large, they are interrelated. Different maxims suit different situations. It is therefore essential that a judicious use be made of each maxim. They are means and not end in themselves.

2.2.3: Characteristics of Good Teaching

A good teacher is one who knows the capabilities of his learners and has understanding of what his or her students need to learn. This implies that the skill of teaching lies in knowing who, what and how to teach and above all to be able to judge when (Farrant, 1996). Good teaching demands great skill irrespective of the level of teaching. It does not depend on the learner any more as Amissah et al (2002) indicate. Thus teaching has become complicated due to the increasingly intricate phase of human personality and society. The idea is that a teacher must bear in mind certain principles of good teaching while dealing with the students.

According to Kochhar (2004) good teachers exhibit the following characteristics:

- Recognize individual differences among people,
- Create the learning situation,
- Challenge the child to learn,
- Encourage general development,
- Cause, facilitate and promote learning.

It is clear from the above discussion that efficient or good teachers must have a sound knowledge of what their people must know and have the ability to relate the content, method, sequence and pace of work to individual needs; to use the environment and appropriate media to support learning, use a range of teaching strategies skilfully and have enthusiasm for the subject (Farrant, 1996). It is the teacher's duty and vital responsibility to motivate students in ascertaining their inner strengths and abilities and to discover what truly inspires them. The good teacher is therefore the one who has the willingness and passion to teach; respects and understands the individual learner, and creates learning situations that build up values in the individual learner for personal and societal satisfaction. It is vital therefore for the teachers to teach what they can teach better in order to facilitate effective learning for the students (Siaw, 2009).

2.3: Concept of Learning

Learning is defined as a relatively permanent change in behaviour that occurs as a result of prior experience. (Brown, Amuah, Anyage, Frimpong & Koomson, 2000). To Brown et al, learning is understood as the modification of behaviour through practice, training, or experience. This is supplemented with five important components of learning:

- Learning involves change, but not all changes reflect learning.
- Learning is reflected in behaviour, the change in behaviour should occur as a result of experience, practice or training and the practice or experience must be reinforced in order for learning to occur.

Learning, according to Farrant (1996), is the process by which we acquire and retain attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and capabilities that cannot be attributed to inherited behaviour patterns or physical growth. To Farrant, capacity for learning is innate and is based on psychological factors while rate of learning is based on both inherited and environmental factors. In contrast to this assertion, Skinner (as cited in Farrant, 1996) opines that learning is seen as a series of experiences, each of which influences behaviour. Learning results should therefore be considered in terms of understanding the core processes within the content standards.

Farrant further explains that as much as the teacher's job is concerned, it is his duty to help the learner go through each of the learning stages in an efficient manner. Efficient learning therefore requires readiness, motivation and involvement on the part of the learner.

2.3.1: Forms of Learning

Four forms of learning identified by Smith and Blake (2005) are formal, informal, incidental, problem based and situated learning. Formal learning follows a curriculum and a sequence of planned teaching and learning activities. Informal learning is not structured like the classroom situation but the learner sets out to learn something for himself. It is achieved through observation, discussion with others, asking questions, and even making mistakes and learning from them. Incidental learning happens as the result of other activity. In Situated learning, the knowledge acquired is used in the same situation in which it is gained. With Problem-based learning, activities are associated with solving a problem. The set problem can be in a formal setting in order to result in

particular learning outcomes, or the learning may be achieved informally through working on a real life problem.

Billet (as quoted in Agbenatogbe, 2011) categorizes the forms of knowledge that are required for people to work effectively in to ‘prostitutional’ (referring to knowing about things for example, facts, theories); ‘procedural’ that is learning how to do things; ‘dispositional’ which refers to the attitudes and how to interact and behave, and ‘strategic knowledge’ Gott (as cited in Agbenatogbe, 2011), which involves the ability to make judgements (knowing when to apply which knowledge to which problem).

Dreyfus (as cited in Agbenatogbe, 2011) proposes an influential five-stage model of expertise development. This model tells the stages through which a learner moves from being “empty vessels” to be filled with knowledge to become constructors of knowledge. These are “novice”, “advanced beginner”, “competent”, “proficient”, and “expert”. People who are highly expert in a task move to what is known as ‘automaticity’. This is where the task can be carried out automatically. This suggests that learning is supposed to progress learners (p. 15)

2.3.2: Learning Styles

Giles, Pitre and Womack (2003) refer to learning styles as the uniqueness of how each learner receives and processes new information through their senses. The National Association of Secondary Principals of United States of America (as cited in Giles et al, 2003) defines learning styles as “the composite of characteristic cognitive, affective, and physiological factors that serve as relatively stable indicators of how a learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to the learning environment”. Some of the other phrases used

interchangeably with learning styles include perceptual styles, learning modalities, and learning preferences (Giles et al, 2003).

Giles et al (2003) point out that each individual is born with certain preferences toward particular styles but culture, experience, and development influence these preferences. The four most common learning styles are visual, aural, reading-writing, and tactile. Most people learn through all modalities but have certain strengths and weakness in a specific modality. Some people have an equal propensity for more than one style, which is titled as the multimodal style. This preference can be determined through various testing instruments. Once a person's learning style is ascertained, accommodations can be made to increase academic achievement and creativity, as well as improve attitudes toward learning. The different learning styles are explained as follows.

1. The Visual (Spatial) Learning Style

The Visual learner processes information most effectively when information is seen. Depictions could include charts, graphs, flow charts, and all the symbolic arrows, circles, hierarchies and other devices that instructors use to represent what could have been presented in words. These learners think in pictures and have vivid imaginations. Most people are classified as visual learners. A visual learner's suggestions focus on the use of visual aids to increase information processing (Giles et al, 2003).

Learning strategies for Visual Learning style

Giles et al (2003) indicate that to help visual learners' teachers need to:

- Replace words with symbols or initials
- Translate concepts into pictures and diagrams.
- Underline or highlight notes or textbooks with different colours.
- Practise turning visuals back into words.
- Make flashcards of key information with words, symbols and diagrams.

2. The Aural Learning Style

In the view of Giles et al (2003), aural learners process information most effectively when the information is spoken or heard. These learners respond well to lectures and discussions and are excellent listeners. They also like to talk and enjoy music and dramas. When trying to recall information, aural learners can often “hear” the way someone told them the information. An aural learner needs to discuss the new improvement that point to the benefits of obtaining information in an oral language format.

Learning Strategies for Aural Learning Style

- Attend lectures and tutorials.
- Discuss topics with instructor and other students.
- Put summarised notes on tape and listen to them.
- Join a study group or have a “study buddy”.
- Tape or record lectures.

- Talk aloud when recalling information or solving problems

3. The Reading-Writing Learning Style

Reading-Writing learners process information very efficiently when presented in a written language format. This type of learner benefits greatly from instructors who use the blackboard to highlight salient points or provide outlines of the lecture material. When trying to recall information, reading/writing learner finds training manuals very comprehensive if they are put into written language format (Giles et al, 2003).

Learning Strategies for Reading-Writing Learning Style

- Write out important information again.
- Read notes silently.
- Organise any diagrams into statements.
- Rewrite the ideas and principles in other words.
- Make flashcards of words and concepts that need to be memorised.

4. The Kinaesthetic-Tactile Learning Style

Giles et al (2003) explain that kinaesthetic-tactile learner processes information actively through physical means. Kinaesthetic learning refers to whole body movement while tactile learning refers only to the sense of touch. These learners gesticulate when speaking, are poor listeners, and lose interest in long speeches. Most students who do not perform well in school may be Kinaesthetic-tactile learners, if teaching methods are devoid of practical activities. The crux of this learning style is that the learner is

connected to real situations through experience, example, practice, or simulation. A Kinaesthetic-tactile learner does well in “hands on” demonstrations and field experiences.

Learning Strategies for Kinaesthetic-tactile Learning Style

- Sit near the instructor in classroom situations.
- Read aloud from textbooks and notes.
- Copy key points onto large writing surface such as chalkboard or easel board.
- Copy key points using word processing software.
- Listen to audiotapes of notes while exercising.
- Take in information through field trips, laboratories, trial and error, exhibits, collections, and hands-on examples.
- Put real life examples into notes summary.
- Recall experiments and role-play.

2.3.3: Educational Implications of Learning Styles

According to Giles et al (2003), a teacher who uses the ideas of learning styles exposes their students to many approaches to intellectual exercise. The activities planned by these teachers are more students-centred than traditional activities. Three steps have been pointed out in implementing learning styles in education. The first step is to diagnose the preferred learning style of the students. Secondly, the teacher has to outline the group preferences and weaknesses. For instance, are most students visual learners? Finally, assess the current instructional methods to determine whether they are adequate or require more flexibility.

Giles et al (2003) conclude that when teaching an individual, teachers should present the most difficult concepts in a style preferred by the learner. Easier concepts should be introduced in a different style. When teaching an entire class, teachers should use all learning styles in their presentation if they are to reach every student.

2.4: Teaching and Learning of General Knowledge in Art

Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku and Baffoe (1991) explain Art in a wider sense which leaves no gap between art-history, appreciation, aesthetics and production. General Knowledge in Art provides broad-based information in the history of art, creativity and appreciation, and teaches basic elements and principles of art as well as skills in their application to various practical art processes. GKA is a composite subject that was teased out from all the Visual Arts subjects studied at the SHS level to provide the students with broad based knowledge and skills in the theory and practice of art.

The theory aspect is meant to widen the student's scope of art vocabulary in order to equip them with the requisite communication skills that would enable them talk knowledgeably in the subject. The practical component serves to reinforce through planned repetition, what is learned in the individual subject areas of the Visual Arts programme (CRDD, 2008). In a collective term, the main objective is to influence the students to develop the love for appreciation of the cultural and aesthetic value of Ghanaian arts.

General Aims of GKA

With emphasis on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes in Visual Arts for individual and national development, the CRDD (2008) explains the aims of the GKA syllabus as to help students to:

- appreciate art as an integral part of living.
- develop pride, confidence and patriotism through appreciation of students own art creations.
- acquire skills and compete in modes of appreciation, judgment and criticism in art. This makes them visually literate.
- develop the capacity for creativity through exposure to variety of art activities using traditional and contemporary tools and materials.
- acquire perceptual and analytical skills through art experience and the processes of self-expression and communication.
- develop the awareness of the values of their own arts.
- equip them with visual knowledge through the appreciation of artefacts: historical, sociological, religious, anthropological and psychological knowledge about society as recorded in artefacts.
- acquire basic entrepreneurial skill for self-employment.
- develop skills in the use of the computer to design and make art works.
- be aware of the variety of vocations available in the field of art and opt to choose a career in the field of art.

Scope of Content

The programme involves the history, principles and practices of Visual Art as a vocation. It is designed to offer the students adequate foundation for further education in art. However, students who may not choose to further their education beyond SHS can also acquire enough knowledge and skills. GKA is a build-up on Basic Design and Technology which is offered at the Junior High School (JHS) in Ghana. GKA is a compulsory subject for Visual Art students (CRDD, 2008).

Time Allocation

The syllabus suggests that two periods per week should be allocated to Art History, Appreciation and General Concepts in Art, while five periods per week be allocated to the practical component. Each year's work should be planned according to three terms but retaining the logical sequence of topics (CRDD, 2008). This suggests that for effective teaching and learning of GKA, not less than seven periods per week be allocated for it.

Practical Skills

According to CRDD (2008), practical skills entail pre-imaging to solve practical problems, demonstration of manipulative skills using tools (equipment) and materials to carry out practical operations. The teaching and assessment of practical skills should involve projects and creative practical tasks. This aspect is given 40% of the teaching, learning and testing time to emphasise the point that GKA is more inclined towards the gaining of practical skills at the SHS level. Skills required for effective practical work are

the handling of tools (equipment or materials), observation, craftsmanship (draughtsmanship), perception, creativity and communication. The GKA syllabus reveals that the programme is purposefully designed to provide employable skills to its students hence the emphasis on practical skills. This therefore implies that, should the practical component of the subject be neglected, then the future of the students would be hindered. This suggests that the practical component of the subject is very important since it is meant to provide employable skills for students who study GKA.

2.4.1: Importance of GKA

The broad base nature of the General Knowledge in Art subject caters for the cognitive, psychomotor and the affective domains of the students. It brings to light that, the structure of the subject makes the students well integrated when studied. This will develop their ability to think, feel and act creatively with the visual materials. Amenuke et al (1991).

The subject provides the student the opportunity to acquire skills in apprenticeship and serves as a foundation for making appropriate choices of programme at the tertiary level.

General Knowledge in Art provides for students the ability to exercise their civic rights and responsibilities by producing art works. This activity helps exercise the muscles and keep their body healthy and aid in developing sound mental health.

The activities in G.K.A. provide opportunity for students to study the local tools, materials and technology; and through these creative abilities, the artists are able to

develop new tools and equipment which enhance productivity in sectors such as agriculture and the manufacturing industries.

GKA is meant to foster and promote creativity through a variety of art activities using the relevant tools and materials. Also it is important for a developing country to rapidly open up opportunities for work. The implication is to provide opportunities for student to acquire the relevant knowledge, skills, and aesthetic experiences necessary for the youth of Ghana to appreciate their environment, to equip themselves with trades and vocation, otherwise set up their own businesses in order to contribute their quota as responsible citizens to promote socio-economic development (CRDD 2008, UNESCO 2001).

The subject when studied will help the students to be self-sufficient and less dependent. Thus, the students have the opportunity to manage resources to achieve optimum satisfaction in life through practical skills in planning and organization through Art.

2.4.2: Career Opportunities in GKA

According to Boateng (2004), GKA offers employment opportunities for students. The course provides for students, a creative base for small-scale and rural art industries. Amenuke et al (1999) have outlined the career opportunities as Textiles Designing, Graphic Designing, Sculptor, Painter and Ceramists. Randall (2002) groups the career opportunities outlined by Amenuke et al into Art Directors, Craft Artists, Fine Artists and Multimedia Artists.

According to Randall (2002), Art directors come up with the visual concepts for everything from billboard advertisements to magazine layouts to videos and websites. Not all work in advertising; some create the look of editorial publications, such as newspapers. Art directors to him include: Graphic Designers, Photographers, Web Designer, and Desktop Publishers.

In his view, fine artists create visual art, usually specializing in a specific type, such as painting or sculpture and illustrations that are often displayed in museums and galleries. Fine artists include painters, sculptors, and graphic designers.

Craft artists create works of art that have a practical as well as an artistic purpose, including ceramics, jewellery, art glass, quilts, furniture, welding, and weavings. Craft artists includes: ceramists, textile designer, etc.

Multimedia artists are contemporary artists who use a wide range of media to communicate their art. Multimedia art includes, by definition, more than one medium; therefore multimedia artists use visual art in combination with sound art, moving images and other media. The art can take the form of installation art, found objects presented in an artistic form, or kinetic sculpture, among others.

Multimedia artists also create special effects and animated images for movies, television programs, and computer games. They either draw by hand or use computers to design the large series of pictures that form animated images. Most multimedia artists work in the motion picture, video, advertising, and computer systems design industries. Some multimedia artists create storyboards (presentations in a series of scenes similar to a comic strip) for commercials that help advertising agencies decide which commercials to produce. They may also draw storyboards for movies and animated programs.

Storyboards help guide the placement of actors and cameras in the television and motion picture industries, as well as other pre-production details for commercials (Randall, 2002).

Multimedia artists can help us envision worlds that are beyond our imagination: galaxies far, far away; trips to the future and the past; even a glimpse of our world through someone else's eyes. As a multimedia artist, one may work in film, video game design, advertising, Web development, or animation. Multimedia artists use computers to create characters, landscapes, and special effects for much of the media we consume today. One may also be responsible for drawing storyboards of scenes and plotlines for producers to evaluate. Multimedia artists work with programmers to bring their creations to life. The title of multimedia artist can also apply to fine artists who utilize film and computers in their creative projects (Randall, 2002).

The careers explained in this section shows how the study of GKA provides opportunity for art students to gain livelihoods and at the same time enable them to perform constructive service to society. This can serve as a motivation to increase students' performance.

2.4.3: Summary of Chief Examiners' Report in GKA from June 2005 to May 2009.

The WAEC Chief Examiner's report of 2005-2009 indicates improved students' performance in GKA for the period; yet there is room for further improvement.

Candidates' Strengths

According to the report, candidates' strength were their knowledge about the proper use of tools and materials and the way they answered the questions.

Candidates' weaknesses

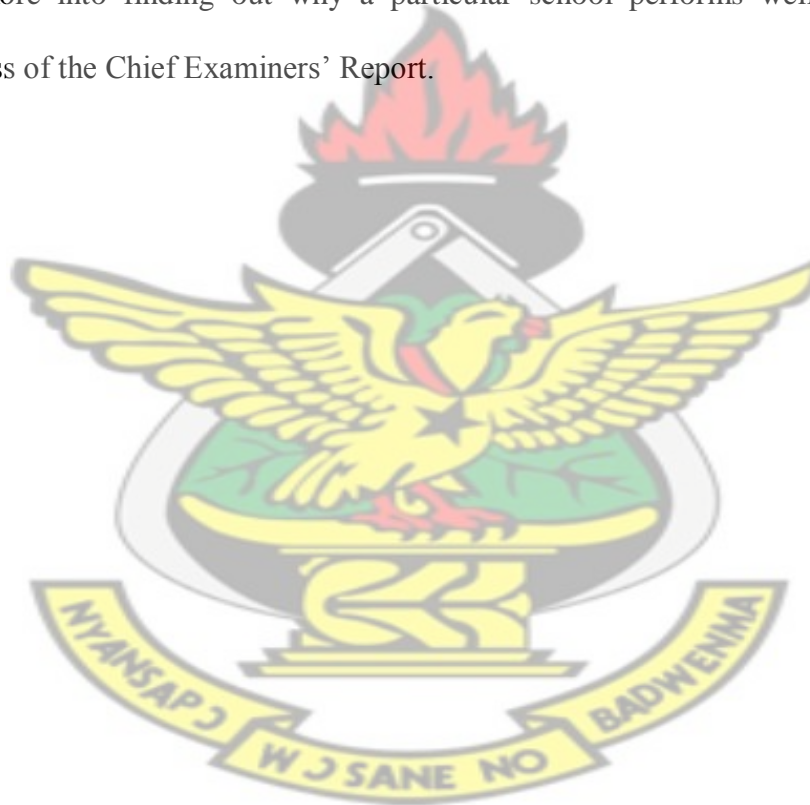
In spite of the considerably improvement shown by students in their performance in the last five years, the report still stated some weakness which was attributed to students understanding of the English language. The report attests to Visual Art students having poor communication skills which affect their presentation as well as sentence structure. They also disregard the rubrics and frequently deviate from the requirements of the question which adversely affects their performance in GKA.

The report also inferred that, GKA students do not take their lessons seriously and as a result of this, transfer of knowledge from classroom could not be carried out during examinations.

Drawing and painting was seen as one of the major problems identified in the report which also stated that most of the candidates could not draw simple shapes, let alone compose a picture or design a pattern for a fabric throughout the five years studied. Although the candidates were familiar with the subject matter, they were not adequately equipped with in-depth knowledge to answer the questions satisfactorily. This shows that from June 2005 to May 2009, students' performance in G.K.A at WASSCE was unsatisfactorily. GKA teachers and students can remedy this situation if the teachers encourage their students to read more books to improve on their communication skills.

Teachers should also take their time to teach students how to prepare for external examinations as well as how to answer questions in simple sentences. This will prevent the use of long and winding sentences that can save the students from deviating from the issues raised in the exams.

The reports are important to the researcher as it gives insight about students' general performance. This will help the researcher to fully understand and help analyse the WASSCE results of the various schools under study. It will also help the researcher to probe more into finding out why a particular school performs well than the others regardless of the Chief Examiners' Report.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0: Overview

This chapter describes the research method employed in exploring the disparities in the performance of students in some selected Senior High Schools in the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District in the Central Region. It spells out the research approach, research design and sampling technique. These are followed by the description of instruments, the primary and secondary data, administration of instrument, data collection procedures and data analysis plan.

3.1: Research Design

The study employed a qualitative research methods and instruments to elicit data. Descriptive research design was selected for qualitative research approach. The qualitative research approach provides an inside perspective as well as in-depth insight into the phenomenon under study. According to Rubin and Babbie (2001), qualitative research has the ability to provide the researcher a comprehensive perspective resulting in a deeper understanding. For Bell (2004), qualitative approach offers the researcher insight and understanding into the individual's perceptions of the world.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative approach focuses on how social experience is created and given meaning. This means that qualitative research paradigm has a high tendency to achieve both in-depth and insider perspective of the phenomenon under study as well as to provide answers to the research questions. The qualitative research method was adopted for this study to ensure that the research is

enriched by the strength of the approach as well as answer the research questions guiding the study.

3.2: Population for the Study

Population has been defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2001) as a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that conform to specific criteria in research. In this study, the target population was made up of all teachers and students of General Knowledge in Art in the public Senior High Schools in Abura-Aseibu Kwamankese District of Central Region, Ghana.

Studying the whole population would have greatly enhanced the outcome of the study. However, this is often most impracticable owing to the limited academic period for the study. Sampling therefore became the only effective means for conducting the study.

3.3: Sampling Techniques

The purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used simultaneously to identify and select a number of schools, teachers and students on whom to base the study. The purposive sampling technique ensured that only schools, teachers and students of General Knowledge in Art were selected. The simple random technique ensured that all class levels in the selected schools had equal chances of being selected for in-depth study.

3.4: The Sample

According to Ghana Education Service (GES) records, there are four public Senior High Schools in the District. Of the number, three offer General Knowledge in Art which is studied by Visual Arts Students as a core subject and also by some Home Economics and General Art students as an elective subject. The study respondents consisted of nine teachers and 120 students. Each participating school therefore provided three teachers and 40 students. In line with much qualitative research, the sample schools are named only as schools A, B, C to conceal their identity since permission was not sought to disclose them in the report.

3.5: Data Collection Instruments

The most appropriate research instruments considered and employed were observation, which falls in the category of researcher-completed instruments; questionnaire and interview which are informant-completed instruments (Frankel and Wallen, 1996). Data from multiple choice sources were collected with the aim that all would converge to establish a particular theory or an opinion (Leedy and Ormrod, 2002).

3.5.1: Questionnaire

In view of Leedy and Ormrod (2005), questionnaires offer participants the advantage of answering questions with the assurance of anonymity for their responses. Questionnaires are fast and convenient and given the level of education of both the teachers and students in the schools, it was not likely for them to misinterpret the questions and give misleading answers. The use of questionnaires ensured that

quantifiable responses were obtained for the purpose of establishing relationships between the identified variables and the responses.

The closed- and open-ended questions were used. Closed-ended questions were used to control responses and open-ended questions to supply in-depth information relevant to the study. The questionnaire sought to answer questions on socio-demographic data, availability of resources, teaching and learning methods, preparation before, during and after examination. Of the 129 questionnaires that were administered in the three schools, 128 (99%) were completed and submitted.

3.5.2: Interviews

Frankel and Wallen (1996) explain that interviews are taken to find out from people things that we cannot directly observed or notice. They point to the fact that one cannot observe everything, for instance feelings, thoughts and intentions. One also cannot observe the behaviour that took place in the past. In light of this the researcher structured informal face - to - face interviews with the sampled students, teachers and assistant heads (academic affairs) of the three schools. The interviews were a follow-up to the questionnaire. This was used to enable participants who could not express themselves well in the questionnaire to provide the needed information. The interview touched on issues such as the resources available for teaching and learning GKA and the past GKA students' records for example. Appendix 2 has the interview guide.

3.5.3: Observation

According to the Sage Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods (2008), observation is the use of one's senses to look and listen in a systematic and purposeful way to learn about a phenomenon of interest. Observation was used to gain insight into the various teaching techniques and methods used by the teachers in the General Knowledge in Art class for the theory and practical lessons.

In this study, the researcher acted as a complete observer and sat in the classrooms during instructional hours to collect data from students and teachers in the three selected schools without participating in the activities they engaged in. The focus was on the teacher-student interactions during the instructional hours for both theory and practical lessons. For one academic term in 2012, 10 weeks of direct observation of classroom and studio activities was done by the researcher in the three sampled schools. In all, 21 visits were made to the three schools - seven times in each school while each observation lasted 20 to 45 minutes per visit.

3.6: Types of Data

The primary data were collected using questionnaire, observation and guided interviews. The secondary data collected for the study were from books, journals, internet source, reports and records from 2006 to 2011 WASSCE results from the various schools.

3.7: Administration of Instruments

Personal visits were made to the schools with a letter introducing the researcher and the need for her to be assisted to collect data for her thesis as well as the purpose of it from the Head of General Art Studies to the Heads of the participating schools.

In collecting the primary data from the participating schools, the purpose of the study was explained to the respondents. The assistant heads arranged for an announcement to be made regarding the study, and encouraged the students and the teachers to give the needed support and cooperation. The purpose of the study was explained each time of meeting by the researcher. The questionnaire and the guided interviews were administrated and conducted personally by the researcher, with the assistance of the head of the Visual Art Department. Because observation was conducted during a formal contact session on a particular day, only those students and teachers attending class on the day of the observation were given questionnaires and interviewed.

The interviews took place after class sections and each interview took an average of 15 minutes. The interviews were done one on one. The questions were simplified for easy understanding and accurate responses.

In order to get a fair distribution of the questionnaires, interviews and observations, each school was visited seven times. On each day of visit in the participating schools, six respondent including teachers and students were interviewed. At the end of the data collection, 126 participants were interviewed in the three schools with 42 participants being interviewed in each of the three schools.

3.8: Data Collection Procedures

A questionnaire each was designed for both GKA teachers and students. On the questionnaire administered to the teachers, some were answered and returned immediately while teachers who could not return theirs immediately were given time for collection. With the students, the questionnaire was administered to them by appointment and they were returned immediately. In all, the researcher administered the questionnaire personally.

The researcher had a schedule with the various teachers for the observation exercise. On the appointed dates, the research was guided by an observational checklist (see Appendix 3) to record his observations. The personnel for the interview were readily available to answer the researcher so there was no need to reschedule appointments.

3.9: Data Analysis Plan

The data collected in the form of field notes through questionnaire administration, interview and observation were transcribed into narratives and descriptive forms. To answer the research questions, descriptive statistics was employed, where the researcher used frequencies and percentages to make the interpretation of the results more meaningful, conclusions were drawn and recommendation made. The details of this will appear in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0: Overview

This chapter presents the procedure for analyzing data gathered through observation, interviews and questionnaires on the perceived disparities in the performance of GKA Students in Abura-Aseibu Kwamankese District of Ghana. It offers a comparison of WASSCE examination results for the selected schools and explores the factors that explain such variations.

4.1: Profile of the Study Area.

School A

School A has a population of about 1,900 students with about 107 of them studying General knowledge in Arts. This is a mixed- sex school with boarding facilities but some of the students are day . School A is enclosed with a secured fence wall. The school has a well structured art studio with tables and benches.

School B

School B has a population of about 1,450 of which 195 students offer G.K.A as a subject. It is a mixed-sex school named after the community it is located. It has no boarding facilities but a hostel facility of sixty-five beds for female students. The school is not fenced. There is neither an art studio nor working tables for practical lessons. The school offers GKA as a compulsory elective subject for the Home Economics and General Art students.

School C

School C has a population of about 1900 students with 219 studying General Knowledge in Art as a subject. It is a mixed-sex school with boarding facilities but most of the students are not boarders. They live on their own in the community and near-by towns. The school is not fenced. It has no art studio. Most students do their practical works on the classroom desks.

4.2: Background Characteristics of Respondents

Male and female students constituted the study respondents. The 119 student respondents selected consisted of 71 males (representing 60%) and 48 females (representing 40%). This gender imbalance was also observed with the teacher respondents which had six out of nine teachers (representing 67%) being males and three being (33%) females. Males clearly dominate the student and teacher population in the study area. This shows a clear gender imbalance in favour of male teachers with the teaching and learning of General Knowledge in Art in the sampled schools.

The study area has four of the teacher respondent who have a minimum of a first degree qualifications whiles five of them have master's degrees. This attests to a generally high standard of education for the teachers but as to how higher education translates into effective teaching of General Knowledge in Art is another researchable issue. Also, seven of the teachers were professionally trained whiles two were non-professionals. The non- professionals would have to go for training because the rules and regulation of Ghana National Association of Teachers (GNAT, 2008) stipulate that all teachers in GES should have an adequate professional and the minimum standard for

admission to the professional grade should be Teachers' Certificate 'A'. This deficiency is likely to negatively affect the students' performance in GKA. However, some variations were observed in the educational qualifications of the teachers in the three study schools which show a disparity as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Educational Qualification of Teachers

Qualification of Teachers	Designation of Schools					
	School A		School B		School C	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
First Degree in Art.	0	0	2	66.7	2	66.7
Masters Degree in Art.	3	100	1	33.3	1	33.3
Total	3	100	3	100	3	100

Source: Fieldwork 2012.

A study of Table 1 reveals that the qualification of teachers in School B is the same as that of School C. All three teachers in School A had the highest level of postgraduate training and qualification. This implies that School A has more highly qualified teachers than Schools B and C. The presence of many teachers with higher educational qualification suggests that students in School A receive effective teaching but further research will have to be conducted to verify this.

Working Experience of Teachers.

In addition to School 'A' having teachers with higher qualifications, as compared to Schools B and C, School A also has teachers whose classroom teaching experience ranging from 16 to 25 years as seen from Table 2 which also indicates that one of the respondent in School B has done less than five years teaching. Two and three teachers respectively in Schools B and C have done up to 15 years teaching. The length of years the teachers had served in the classroom suggests the possibility of them acquiring much knowledge and expertise in sharing, coaching and mentoring of younger teachers, active involvement in decision making in the schools as well as using their rich teaching experience to help the less experienced teachers to raise academic achievement for their students (Siaw, 2009). This means that students might be experiencing good teaching of GKA to do well in WASSCE as the DCE's speech (2011) indicates.

Table 2: Designation and Working Experience of Teachers

Years of Work Experience.	Designation of Schools					
	School A		School B		School C	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Less than 5 years	0	0	1	33.3	0	0
5-15 years	0	0	2	66.7	3	100
16-25 years	3	100	0	0	0	0
Total	3	100	3	100	3	100

Source: Fieldwork 2012.

Teacher Placement Satisfaction

In assessing teachers' satisfaction with their placement, six (67%) of the nine teacher respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the schools in which they were teaching. Only three (33%) of them indicated that they were not satisfied with where they were (Figure 4.1). This suggests that teachers who expressed satisfaction with their placement are more likely to be motivated to bring out their best to improve upon their students' learning towards higher performance.

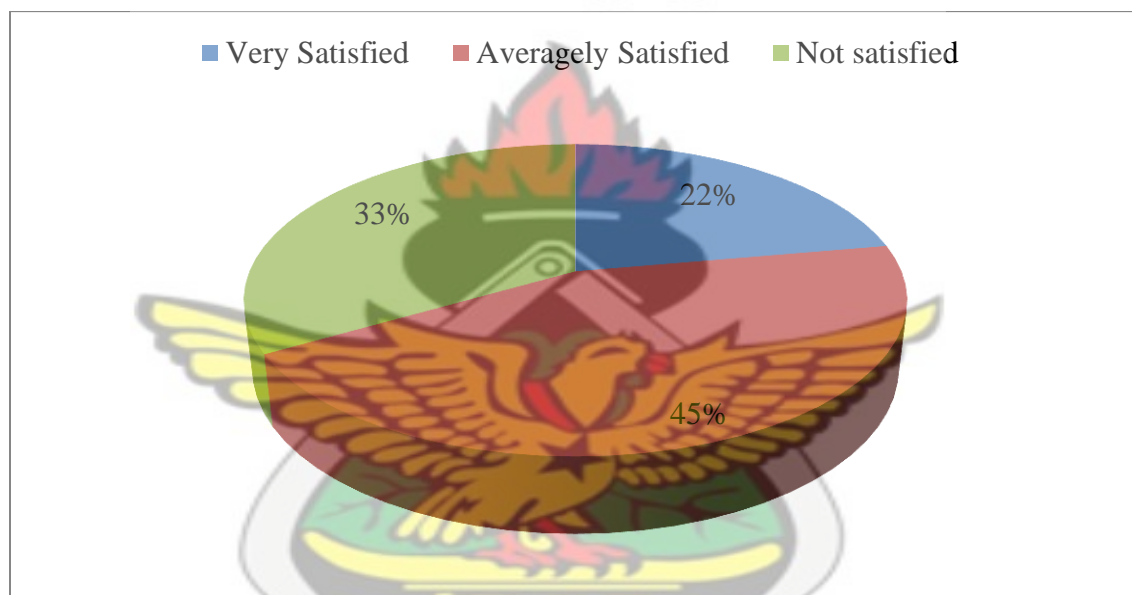


Figure 4.1: Teacher Placement Satisfaction.

Source: Field work:2012.

The study revealed that the three Art teachers who were not satisfied with their placement were in Schools B and C respectively. The three teachers in school A indicated that they were satisfied with their placement of work. This result is significant given that unhappiness about one's placement of school does affect one's performance.

3: Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources

The fieldwork revealed a relative lack of resources in the three selected schools. This was measured by the availability of resources including art studio, working table, funding for practical works, supply of textbooks and technological resource of GKA lessons. The observation and interview showed the existence of some working tables, art studio, textbooks, computers and funding in some of the schools. School A had greater access to resources than Schools B and C.

Art Studio

The study revealed that Schools B and C had no art studio. In dealing with the lack of art studio, the alternative resources used by the students in Schools B and C for practical works include the classroom, school compound, dormitory, hostel and home space. 51(65%) out of 79 students use their classrooms for practical works. This is followed by the use of school compound (13.8%), hostel space (10%), home spaces (6.2%) and dormitory space (5%). This makes it quite difficult for the students to execute their practical works and for them to display such works for appreciation and exhibition. None of the teachers in Schools B and C worked at home as an alternative to the absence of art studio. The most used alternative among the teachers was the classroom space. As many as 5 (83%) out of six teachers indicated they use their classrooms in the absence of art studios for practical lessons. School A on the other hand has a well-furnished art studio with working tables and benches. The studio has a small room that is used as a departmental library where art books are kept for students' reference. Adedeji & Owoeye

(2002) point out that attractive facilities such as laboratories, libraries, instructional materials and art studio are a major contributing factor to high academic performance.

Working Tables

A significant majority of 85 (71%) out of 119 of the student respondents indicated that they do not have working tables in their schools. On the contrary, 5 (55.6%) out of nine teacher respondents reported they had working tables in their schools. The data seem to suggest a mixed perception of the availability of working tables in the schools under study. In coping with the lack of working tables, the students reported they resort to doing their studio work on classroom desks, and the dining hall tables. Majority of the students (81%) use their classroom desks for practical works. Classroom desks also came up as the most used alternative (100%) by the teachers for practical classes. Like the students, dining hall tables came up as the second most important alternative to working table. This shows that teachers and students frequently use classroom desks for practical lessons but personal experience shows that the desks are uncomfortable, rough and not suitable for art purposes hence no quality work will be produced at the end.

Supply of Textbooks

The study revealed that the GKA Textbooks supplied by the government are not enough. School A keep theirs in the departmental library. This suggests that students lack enough reading materials. All the teachers in the sampled schools under study were not satisfied with the content of GKA textbook. According to the teachers in the sampled schools, the book was published in 1991, the teaching syllabus has been revised at least

three times while the book remain unrevised. These indicate that the GKA textbook should be revised immediately since the present one does not conform to the current syllabus.

Technological Resources for GKA Department

The GKA teaching syllabus demands that students handle and use computers for artworks. The study shows that no computers had been allocated to the Visual Art Departments of Schools B and C to help teachers demonstrate any concept to the students. The ICT laboratories in the sampled schools are so choked with activities that no space can be allotted to the GKA students. This implies that GKA students are not being exposed to application of modern technologies to the subject. School A departmental Library has five desktop computers which according to the teachers and students were provided by the Headmaster. The computers in school A are used by GKA students in groups of fives.

Funding

In view of the student respondents, the second available resource in the selected schools is funding. Out of 119 student respondents, 39 (33%) of the students' respondents indicated that their school provides funds for the purchase of tools and materials for practical works. The study revealed that 80 (67%) of the student respondents did not have access to funding provided by their school. On the part of the teachers, six (66.7%) out of nine indicated that their schools do provide funds for the Arts subject. The data suggests a mixed perception of the provision of funds for the various Art departments in the schools

under study. The survey revealed that School B is better financed than School A and C. This suggests that a school with adequate funds will be able to acquire enough materials for practical work which is the hallmark of GKA subject.

The questionnaire revealed alternative sources of funding as Personal and Class Contribution. The study indicates that 80 (67%) of students in the absence of funding from their school, make personal financial contributions to purchase tools and materials for practical works.

4.4: Teaching and Learning Process

The Teaching-learning process is the heart of education. On it depends the fulfillment of the aims and objectives of education. It is the most powerful instrument of education to bring about desired changes in the students (Laurillard 1994). In observing teaching and learning processes in the sampled schools, the following indicators were used: teaching methods versus learning style, instructional periods for GKA lessons, syllabus, and frequency of practical lessons.

Teaching Methods versus learning style

The study revealed that out of 119 students' responses, 23(19%) did not have any idea as to how they learn while 96(73%) knew how they learn best through practical means, cooperative, lecture and independent learning. This 19% of students could probably excel if they apply their best learning styles to what is taught them. This is supported by Giles et al (2003) who indicate that 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. This is shown in Fig 4.2

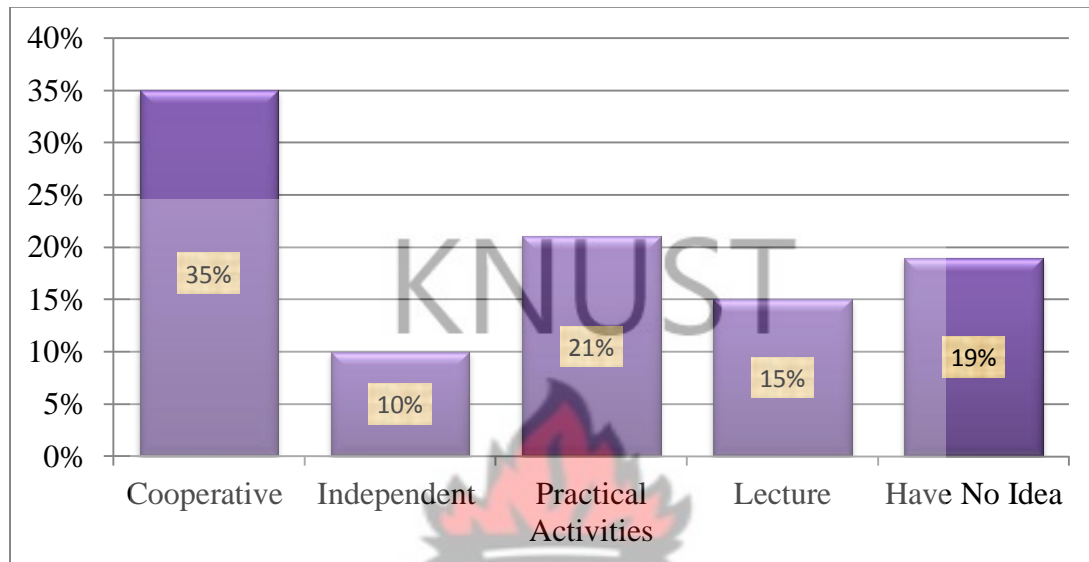


Fig 4.2: Students' Learning Style

On how a teaching strategy can be used to instruct a learner and influence the learner's learning style, the questionnaire administered revealed that teachers in the sampled schools preferred using class discussion, demonstration and brainstorming to deliver the GKA lessons. Observation during GKA lessons in Schools B and C 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 can be said that it is 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 the students with the necessary creative skills and acquire competency (CRDD 2008).

Instructional Periods for GKA lessons

Three out of seven teacher respondents reported that the period allocated to GKA lessons is not adequate to teach all the topics listed in the syllabus. The responses obtained indicated that School A operates seven periods, School B has five periods and C six periods per week. This indicates that six out of nine teacher respondents are 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 is utilized well.

Practical lessons per Term

One of the general aims of learning GKA is to develop the ability to harmonise, opposing ideas, contradictions and inconsistencies to design and produce art work. 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). However, Fig 4.3 indicates that the teachers do not adhere to the periods allocated to the practical aspect of the subject in the syllabus.

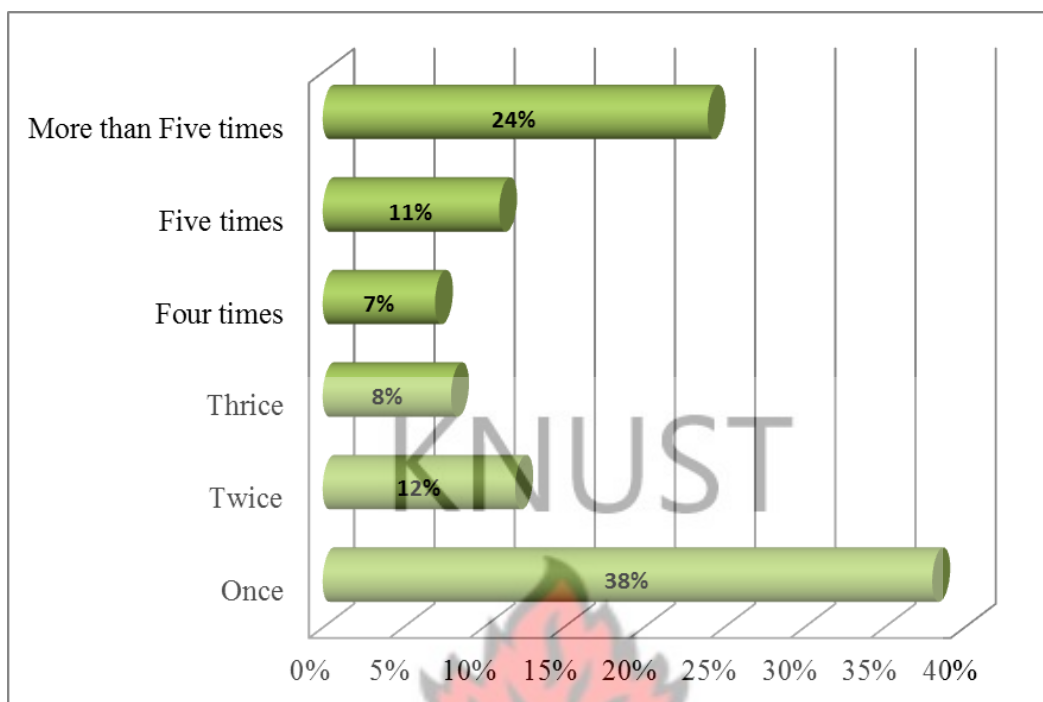


Fig 4:3 Practical Lessons per Term

A critical look at Fig 4.3 shows that 69 (58%) of the responses indicated that the students have between one to three practical lessons per term with 46 (38%) of the students 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 General Knowledge in Art education (40% as specified by CRDD, 2008), this finding has the potential to negatively affect the performance of the students. However, almost a quarter 29 (24%) of the students indicated that they have more than five practical lessons in a term. The data further shows that the tendency for students to have a single practical lesson per term is highest in School B with 51.5% responses. The details are provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Number of Practical Lessons per Term

Number of Practical Lessons per Term	Location of Schools						Total
	School A		School B		School C		
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
Once	7	17.5	21	53.8	18	45	46
Twice	3	7.5	5	12.9	6	15	14
Thrice	4	10	3	7.7	2	5	9
Four times	3	7.5	0	0	5	12.5	8
Five times	6	15	3	7.7	4	10	13
More than Five times	17	42.5	7	17.9	5	12.5	29
Total	40	100	39	100	40	100	119

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.

A study of Table 3 indicates that having more practical lessons per term is highest in school A. However, the difference between Schools A and B in terms of the number of practical lessons per term is wide, considering the 42.5% and 17.9% responses given by students in the respective areas. 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 School B revealed that student numbers are so huge that assigning them many practical works means assigning oneself the burden of too much marking. Besides, the teachers confirmed that though the school provides funding

for some of the expensive materials and tools, students complain of not having money to buy the few ones.

It was also revealed through interviews with the Home Economics and General Art students and confirmed during the observation that since Visual Art subject, normally do practical exercise in two other elective visual Art subject teachers do not give practical work to their students as they are expected to do. This attribute is negatively affecting the performance of GKA Students particularly Home Economics and General Art students. Teachers of GKA must therefore address this problem because the practical component is so vital that the GKA syllabus emphasizes it (CRDD, 2008).

The GKA Syllabus

CRDD (2008) defines syllabus as an outline and summary of topics to be covered in an education. A syllabus lays out the itinerary for the term, and is a student's first reference book. On the question of whether teachers in the various schools use the WAEC syllabus alongside the Ghana Education Service (GES) syllabus, the responses are that a minority of 55.6% out of 9 teachers knowing about the WAEC syllabus do not use it. They make use of only the GES syllabus with the reason that the WAEC syllabus is often not available. The only syllabus given out is the GES one. There seems not to be any significant variation of responses in the different locations in relation to syllabus. However, the interview indicated that 66.7% of 3 of teacher respondent in school A make use of the WAEC syllabus alongside the GES syllabus. This is significant because the

WAEC syllabus serves as a guideline when getting set for examination. It outlines the areas needed for concentration in each sub-topic in the general topic.

4.5: Preparation Before, During and After Examination

Preparation towards examination does not begin a week to the exams, although it might be more intense towards the examination. To maximise the chances of a satisfactory result in exams, one needs to start preparation as early as possible. The Questionnaire on Preparation Before, During and After Examination sought to answer questions on Evaluation, Area of Specialisation, answering of examination questions, filling and using of the WAEC Answer Sheet.

Evaluation

According to Eshun & Effrim (2008), Evaluation is the pivot of educational system which gives an exact idea of what has actually been achieved at the end of a particular period or stage as a result of the teaching-learning experiences, provided in the classroom. It determines the extent to which the aims and objectives are being attained. Again, the maintenance of good educational programmes and the improvement of techniques and procedures of education also require good evaluation. 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.

Teachers Area of Specialization

In many teaching situations, the role of the teacher is that of facilitator of learning: leading discussions, asking open-ended questions, guiding process and task, and enabling active participation of learners and engagement with idea (Williams & Burden 1997). In assessing the extent to which the teachers teach in their area of specialization, it was observed that 66.7% out of 3 teachers in School B and 33.3% out of 3 teachers in School C do not teach subjects in their areas of specialisation. Since teachers are not specialised in areas they are teaching, they may lack the technical skills, the knowledge and attitude in that particular subject. This can affect teaching to the understanding of the learner hence a negative effect in the learning process.

A classroom observation in School B revealed a teacher with B.Ed. Home Economics teaching G.K.A and a teacher with BA Publishing Studies teaching G.K.A. An interview conducted revealed that the teachers had a basic knowledge in Art in their Secondary and University Education. This compelled them to teach the G.K.A since according to them it is the basis of Art. The topic being treated by BA Publishing teacher was Renaissance Art. It was observed that she was reading the handout to the students to copy with no detailed explanation of some of the terms.

A similar thing happened in School C where a B.Ed. Home Economics teacher teaches G.K.A. It was observed that she only takes the theory aspect of a topic to teach,

for an Art teacher to take the practical aspect of that topic being treated by her. Different information on a particular topic was given to the students by the teachers. It was observed in few of the teaching learning processes of G.K.A that during revision on what has been taught previously, students were given different answers from what the Art teacher expected. According to the students that was what their female teacher taught them. This was not so in school A where all the teachers teach their specialized areas.

This might be a major reason why they tend to excel academically. This confirms Brunner's (cited in Siaw, 2009) assertion that people come out best when they are put there to do what they can do better.

Answering of Examination Questions

How to answer questions in examination has a big impact on how many points one will be awarded. It is one of the candidate weakness stated in the Chief Examiners Report (2005-2009). In responding to the Questionnaire statement "students must be well informed on how to answer examination questions", the entire respondents representing 100% agreed to the above statement. On whether students are taught how to answer examination questions, majority of the students' respondents (70%) indicated that they have not been taught how to answer questions in examination. This was contrary to the teachers' view as 100% of them indicated they had taught their students how to answer questions in examination. By location therefore, students in School A emerged as the most important in terms of being taught how to answer examination questions. This was followed by students in Schools C and B.

WAEC Answer Sheet

In response to whether the students were taught how to correctly fill the WAEC Answer Sheet, majority representing 80 (67%) out of 119 of the respondents said Yes with a minority of 39 (33%) responding No. With the question of whether students are using the Answer Sheet in their terminal exams, a significant majority answered No. The interview and observation sessions revealed that the three sampled schools did not use the WAEC Answer Sheet in their terminal examination. It was observed that, only Form Four students use the WAEC Answer Sheet in their mock exams. The teachers revealed that though it is of importance for students to be taught how to fill and use the Answer Sheet in their terminal examination, it is very expensive to acquire because of the student population. This suggests that lack of practice could affect the performance of students in the WASSCE since some of the students will not be able to shade their index numbers as well as the answers properly.

4.6: Teachers and Students Challenges

When asked to list the difficulties teachers and students encounter as they teach and learn GKA, 90 (75.6%) of the 119 students and the nine teachers raise the following factors:

The students noted that:

- Some schools lack working studios and working tables.
- The notes given by GKA teachers are too many. Students have problem understanding them.

- The GKA textbooks are not adequate. Many students have no copies.

Teachers challenges stated were:

- Teaching syllabus has no accompanying textbooks.
- Lack of computers to teach designing.
- Students are not able to acquire the needed tools and materials for practical exercise.
- Periods allocated to GKA lessons in some schools are not enough to help students obtain in-depth knowledge on the subject.

Intervention is needed for the above mentioned challenges by teachers and students to help raise students' performance in GKA at WASSCE.

Measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning of GKA.

Teachers and students suggested that:

- GKA textbooks should be reproduced and made available to all student.
- Enough working tables should be provided by school authorities.
- There should be enough reading materials for students and teachers.
- Schools libraries should be stocked with books on Art.
- Art studios and computers should be provided for the Art Department.
- Provision of tools and materials for teachers to demonstrate practical lessons.

4.7: Inferential (Functional) Factors

- Educational Trips
- Art Exhibitions
- Speech Day

Educational Trips

Field trips is one of the recommended educational exercises that help to concretise some of the concept presented in the classroom setting (CRDD 2008). The questionnaire revealed that only 40 (34%) of the 119 students had ever gone on an educational field trip while 66% said they had never been anywhere. As Hurwitz and Day (2001) suggest, field trips to art galleries or museums are especially beneficial because students are able to experience original works of art of a high quality that serves as a form of reference to them.

Art Exhibitions

An art exhibition is a public display of artefacts to show how to market skills, discoveries or inventions. Exhibitions could be individual, group, class, school, community, district, regional or international (CRDD 2008). It was noted that 39 (33%) of 119 respondents had never had art exhibition organized in their school even though these students has spent three to four years in school. The 80 (67%) who had witnessed an art exhibition were students from school A and C. School A organise Art Exhibition yearly while School C organize Art Exhibition occassionaly. This is not good enough, because students are missing a chapter of the GKA syllabus which is devoted to art

exhibition. It also suggests that the students are not exhibiting their practical works (if any) for appreciation, though the syllabus requires this.

Speech and Prize Giving Day

The study reveals that School A annually organises Speech and Prize Giving Day in which students of excellence and good behaviour are celebrated and prizes are given to honour them. School B witnessed its second Speech and Prize Giving Day in January 2011 with over twenty years of its establishment. School C also had its second Speech and Prize Giving Day in February 2012 with over sixty years of establishment. The Visual Arts department in School A was put in charge of the decorative activities and were made to produce souvenirs for their 71st speech and prize giving day which was held on the 8th of November, 2011. This according to the teachers in School A makes the Visual Arts students feel part of the school and it increases their self-confidence and self-esteem.

4.8: Environmental Factors

A learning environment that is free of barriers, or obstacles or distractions such as noise, gas/smoke pollutions and so on can constitute health hazards, which in turn affect or reduce the student's concentration or conceptual focus to learning (Sprinthall cited in Basil, 2007). The survey reveals that Schools A and B are sited near roads while School C is sited near the Community Market Center. According to Basil (2007), markets and garages located near schools have always posed a threat to students. Noise and pollution from these sources have always endangered students' life and concentration. Therefore for an effective learning and high academic performance, schools in both rural and sub-

urban and urban areas should be located off zones, characterized with smoke/gas pollutions, market centres or garages, as conducive learning environments stimulate learning, understanding and high perception.

4.9 Comparison of Students Academic Performance in the Sampled Schools under study.

Academic performance of General Knowledge in Art students in the selected schools between 2006 and 2011 was compared to identify their similarities and differences. This was based on the WAEC grading system for WASSCE. The results are analyzed as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: WAEC Grading Scale for WASSCE

Marks	WASSCE Grade	SSCE Equivalent	Remarks
100-80	A ₁	A	Excellent
79-70	B ₂	B	Very Good
69-65	B ₃	C	Good
64-60	C ₄		Credit
59-55	C ₅	D	Credit
54-50	C ₆		Credit
49-45	D ₇		Pass
44-40	E ₈	E	Pass
39 and below	F ₉	F	Fail

Source: WAEC

Table 5: BECE Results of Visual Art Students in the Selected Schools from 2004-2007.

2004		Designation				
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of Students	%	Number of Students	%	Number of Students	%
6-12	21	33.3	0	0	3	5
13-24	35	55.6	0	0	37	61.7
25and above	7	11.1	0	0	20	33.3
Total	63	100	0	0	60	100
2005		Designation				
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
6-12	22	64.7	3	5.5	5	13.2
13-24	11	35.3	30	55.6	46	65.7
25and above	0	0	21	38.9	19	21.1
Total	33	100	54	100	70	100
2006		Designation				
	School A		School B		School C	

Grade	Number of students	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
6-12	24	80	0	0	2	2.3
13-24	5	16.7	54	68.4	66	75
25 and above	1	3.3	23	31.6	20	22.7
Total	30	100	79	100	88	100
2007						
Designation						
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
6-12	30	85.7	9	8.9	8	10
13-24	5	14.3	87	86.1	65	81.3
25 and above	0	0	5	5.0	7	8.7
Total	35	100	101	100	80	100

Source: Fieldwork 2012.

Data as presented in Table 5, shows that out of 63 students admitted into school A in 2004, 21 (33.3) had aggregate 6 – 12 (distinction). In school C, as many as 38 out of the total of 60 students admitted had grade 13 – 24 as against the 35 out of 63 in school A. It is also seen that schools C recorded the highest average and highest weak grades of candidates, whiles the school A recorded the lowest grade of candidates.

The year 2005 did not show much difference over the previous year. School A did not admit any students with grade 25 or above but took a few of the average performance students 11 (35.3%) out of the 33 students. The school also recorded the highest number of good students with 64.7%. School C admitted more of the average students 46 (65.7%). School B recorded the second highest intake of the average students, highest weak students and lowest students with distinction 3(5.5).

In 2006, school B and C students' intake increased from 45 to 79 and 63 to 88 respectively. School C recorded the highest number of average students were admitted.

The year 2007 showed much variance as 30 (85.7) out of 35 students admitted into school A had distinction (grade 6-12) with only 5 (14.3%) average students. School B was the second highest with students having distinction and highest with students having average aggregate. School C had the highest weak candidates with 7 out of 90 in total.

Findings on the grades of students reveal that School A admitted majority of students with only BECE aggregate 6 -12 with few average grades of 13-24 depending on the subject area and on protocol basis. The rest of the poor grades are pushed down to Schools B and C. This infers that inputs reflect in the output for School A, B and C.

Table 6: WASSCE Result for General Knowledge in Art from 2006-2011.

2006		Designation				
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of students	%	Number of Students	%	Number of students	%
A	3	5.2	0	0	0	0
B	18	31	0	0	0	0
C	17	29.2	0	0	17	34.7
D	14	24.2	0	0	0	0
E	5	8.6	0	0	11	22.4
F	1	1.8	0	0	21	42.9
Total	58	100	0	0	49	100
2007		Designation				
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
A	1	1.6	0	0	0	0
B	9	14.5	0	0	0	0
C	29	46.8	0	0	19	35.2
D	14	22.6	0	0	15	27.8

E	7	11.3	0	0	0	0
F	2	3.2	0	0	20	37
Total	62	100	0	0	54	100
2008						
Designation						
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
A	5	15.1	0	0	0	0
B	12	36.4	4	7.8	2	3
C	9	27.3	0	0	15	21.7
D	7	21.2	26	51	25	36.2
E	0	0	0	0	8	11.6
F	0	0	21	41.2	19	27.5
Total	33	100	51	100	69	100
2009						
Designation						
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
A	0	0	1	1.4	0	0
B	10	41.7	0	0	1	1.4
C	9	37.5	18	26.5	8	11.4

D	5	20.8	24	35.3	31	44.3
E	0	0	14	20.6	21	30
F	0	0	11	16.2	9	12.9
Total	24	100	68	100	70	100
2011						
Designation						
Grade	School A		School B		School C	
	Number of students	%	Number of students	%	Number of students	%
A	4	14.8	0	0	1	1.4
B	17	63	2	2.2	5	6.9
C	4	14.8	29	31.5	15	20.9
D	2	7.4	30	32.6	25	34.7
E	0	0	15	16.3	15	20.8
F	0	0	16	17.4	11	15.3
Total	27	100	92	100	72	100

Source: Fieldwork 2012.

It can be seen from Table 6 that between 2006 and 2007 school B was not offering General Knowledge in Art. In 2006 no students in school C scored grade A, B and D. Majority of students in School A scored grade B in 2008-2011. A significant majority of students in School B and C scored grade D in 2008 and 2009. From 2008-2011 no students in School A had grade E and F with few grade C's and D's. A significant number of students from School C failed the subject in 2006-2011. Grade F in

School B kept on a rise and fall cycle from 2008-2011 as shown in Table 14. A study of Table 14 indicates that students' performance in Schools B and C in the G.K.A subject was poor.

It can be concluded from Table 5 & Table 6 that students' performance varies in relation to schools. School A receives the good grade students and therefore their output tends to be better at WASSCE than Schools B and C which receive the majority of weak and average students. This infers that inputs reflect in the output for School A. This confirms Adedeji & Owoeye's (2002) idea that the educational background of a student is a major contributing factor to teaching and learning processes and also serves as a spring board for further education.

4.10: Comparison of the Sampled Schools based on Findings

The findings from the questionnaire, observation and interview for objective one and two that is: factors that lead School A to perform well in GKA at WASSCE and causes of poor performance in General Knowledge in Art in the other two schools were:

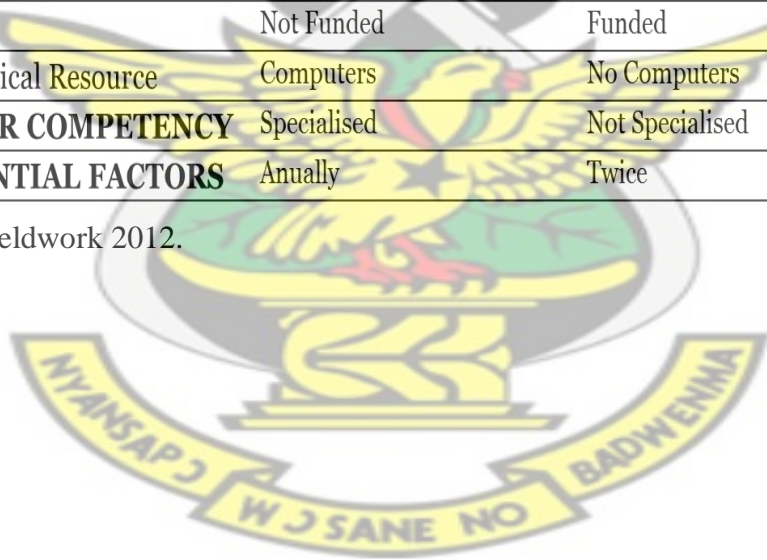
- Entry Grade of BECE Applicant of Visual Art students in the Sampled Schools
- Teaching and learning Process of GKA in the Sampled Schools
- Availability of Teaching and Learning Resource for GKA Lessons
- Teacher Competency
- Environmental Factors and
- Inferential (Functional) Factors

The findings are analyzed as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Comparison of the Sampled Schools Based on the Findings

FINDINGS	SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B	SCHOOL C
ENTRY GRADES	Distinction	Average/Low	Average/Low
TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS			
Teaching Methods	Demonstration/Discussions	Lecture Method	Lecture Method
Instructional Period	7 Periods	5 Periods	6 Periods
Syllabus (WAEC)	Use	Do-Not Use	Do Not Uses
Practical Lessons per Term	More than Five times	Once	Twice
AVAILABILITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCE			
Art Studio	Well Structured Art Studio	No Art Studio	No Art Studio
Working Tables	Working Tables	No Working Tables	No Working Tables
Funding	Not Funded	Funded	Not Funded
Technological Resource	Computers	No Computers	No Computers
TEACHER COMPETENCY	Specialised	Not Specialised	Specialised
INFERENTIAL FACTORS	Anually	Twice	Twice

Source: Fieldwork 2012.



CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Summary

The study aimed at finding out the factors that influence the performance of General Knowledge in Art subject among students in the Visual Art and some Home Economics and General Art Course at WASSCE in the Abura-Asebu Kwamankese District.

Studio for practical lessons and working tables are not available in School B and C. Students therefore do their practical works on the school compound and in the classroom on classroom desks. This does not augur well for the quality and volume of practical work that Visual Arts, Home Economics and General Art students in these schools need to do in order to compete favourably at WASSCE with those who study under good environments since all SHS students write the same final examinations in Ghana.

As the study clearly reveals, the BECE results cited in the study indicate that students admitted into School A are generally those who had good BECE grades and therefore their output tends to be better at WASSCE. This infers that inputs reflect in the output for School A, B and C.

It emerged from the study that the GKA textbook which was published in 1991 is the only book supplied by the Ministry of Education for the Visual Art programme. This book is of limited use to students and has to be revised.

The study reveals that some of the teachers in School B and C do not teach their area of specialization. These teachers may lack the technical skills, the knowledge and attitude in the GKA subject.

Visual Art Department in the School B and C have no computers to help train students though computer generated works form a cardinal part of modern art works.

The study revealed that Learning Environments that are free of barriers or distractions such as noise, gas/smoke pollutions and so on can constitute health hazards, which in turn affect or reduce the student's concentration or conceptual focus to learning. The survey reveals that Schools A and B are sited near roads while School C is sited near the Community Market Center.

5.1: Conclusions

The major conclusion drawn from this study is that, the identified differences between the schools have to be resolved through adequate resourcing, infrastructure, teacher competency, good BECE entry grades, experience and qualified teachers, in order to address the differences and enhance academic achievement for students across the country.

The lack of additional GKA textbooks, absence of practical lessons and studios, practical computer lessons and lack of up-to-date textbooks in teaching of GKA also places serious limitations on the knowledge and skills that the students could absorb on the programme.

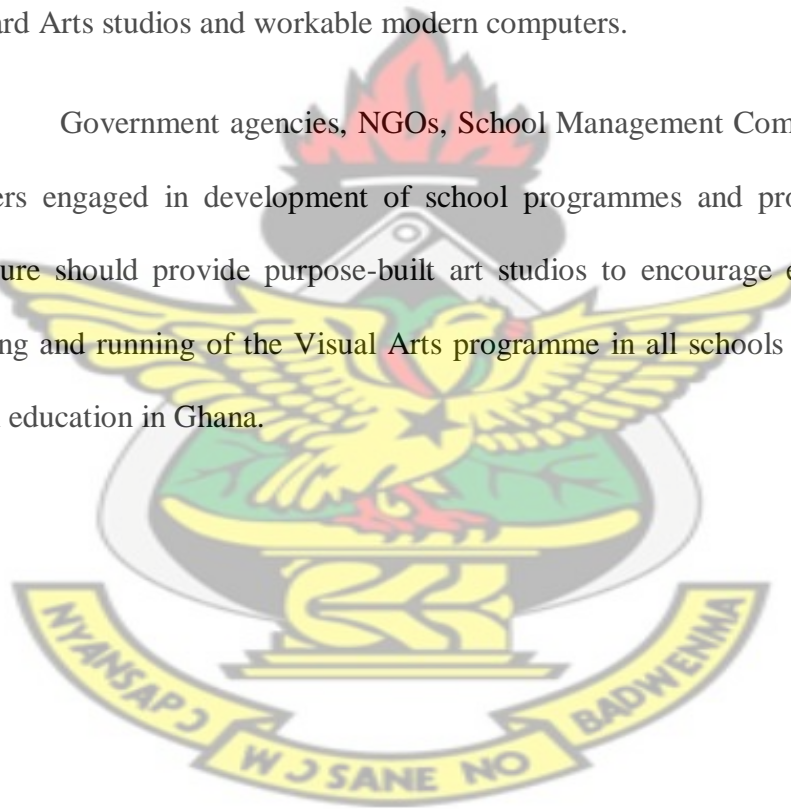
5.2: Recommendations

1. Educational Institutions should organize excursions and field trips to museums, art exhibition and Art galleries for on-the-spot interaction with artists and their works.
2. MOE and GES should organise regular workshops and in-service training to introduce all teachers to more effective teaching strategies. The Heads should not just administer the schools but also effectively monitor their teachers to ensure they put new knowledge and skills acquired to use by giving them surprise visits in class to inspect what and how they are teaching.
3. There should be a regular Regional and District exhibition of artefacts in order to promote General Knowledge in Art works in the country.
4. GES and the National Association of Graduate Teachers (NAGRAT) should ensure that graduate teachers teach their respective specialist subjects so that their students will understand what they are taught.
5. The GKA teachers should be encouraged taking the practical components of the subject very seriously irrespective of other electives students study. Teachers should give equal attention to all the categories of students who study the subject.
6. The current GKA textbooks should be revised by the GES and other suitable GKA textbooks should be introduced and made available to students in the right numbers.

7. Visual Arts teachers should practice their art to encourage their students to be confident by infusing the 'can-do-spirit' in them to help them develop the drive to achieve and believe that achievement is possible for them. Teachers should also be encouraged to redefine their attitudes towards their profession and to develop love, passion and commitment for effective teaching and learning.

8. The schools administration should provide all necessary infrastructure and equipment for effective practical training of the students. This should include practical and standard Arts studios and workable modern computers.

9. Government agencies, NGOs, School Management Committees and other stakeholders engaged in development of school programmes and provision of school infrastructure should provide purpose-built art studios to encourage effective teaching and learning and running of the Visual Arts programme in all schools to sustain quality vocational education in Ghana.



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Appendix 1

Letter to the Selected Schools



Appendix 2: Interview Guide.

General Knowledge in Art Teachers

- Are special tuition /coaching available for low scores in terminal examination?
- Are GKA textbooks and hand-outs available for students to learn?
- Are you teaching in your area of specialisation?
- Do teachers involve students in the teaching and learning process?
- Have your students been supplied with the government approved GKA textbooks?
- Are you satisfied with content of the GKA textbooks so far?
- What problem do you face as a GKA Teacher?

General Knowledge in Art Students

- How often do you have Art Exhibitions in your school?
- Have you ever been to Educational trip in relation to GKA?
- How often do you have Speech and Prize Giving Day in your school?
- What role do Visual Art students play during Speech and Prize Giving Day?
- What problem do you have in studying GKA?

Appendix 3: OBSERVATION GUIDE

Angle of Observation

Rating Scale

Teaching and learning

5 4 3 2 1

1. Preparation before lessons
2. In-depth of knowledge of subject
3. Relating subject matter to nature
4. Kind of examples given
5. Attitude towards subject
6. Communication
7. Clarity of communication
8. Evaluation of lesson delivered
9. Teacher- response to answer

How Lessons are Organised

1. Lesson aid and material
2. Available Art studio
3. Available tools and materials
4. The use of text books and handout
5. Infrastructure

Rating scale

Excellent	5
Very Good	4
Good	3
Faire	2
Poor	1

Appendix 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

College of Art and Social Sciences

Department of General Arts Studies

I am Felicity Osei-Mensah, a second year graduate student of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. As part of the academic requirement, I am conducting a research on the performance of students in G.K.A in Abura Aseibu Kwamankese District. I assure you that any information provided shall be used solely for academic purposes, confidentiality is assured.

(Please tick and specify when appropriate)

Section A: Background Characteristics

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age

(a) Less than 30 ☐ (b) 40-50 ☐

(c) 30-40 ☐ (d) 50 & above ☐

3. Educational Qualification

(a) HND ☐ (b) First Degree ☐

(c) Masters ☐ (d) Postgraduate Diploma ☐

(e) Specify

4. Teaching Experience:

a. Less than 5yrs ☐

b. 6 – 15 yrs ☐

c. 16 – 25 yrs ☐

e. 26yrs and above ☐

5. When did you start teaching here?

(a) Less than a yr [] (b) 1-5 yrs [] (c) 5-10 yrs [] (d) above 10 yrs []

6. Prior to your posting where did you anticipate going?.....

.....

7. How are you satisfied with your placement?

Very satisfy [] Averagely satisfy [] Not satisfy []

8. Give reasons.....

.....

Section B: Availability of Resources

9. Do you have an art studio []. Yes []. No

10. If No, where do you work?

.....

11. Does your school make funds available for purchase of teaching resources? []. Yes []. No

12. If No specify how you cope.....

.....

Section C: Teaching and Learning Methods

9. Do you have any methods of teaching G.K.A Yes []. No [].

10. If yes, mention some

11. Which teaching method do you prefer?.....

12. Why?.....

14. How many periods do you teach in a week?

15. Is it enough? Yes [] No []

16. If No what do you suggests?.....
17. Are there any special period for practicals? Yes [] No []
28. If No why?.....
19. How many periods have been allocated for practicals?.....
20. How many times do you have practical's in a week?.....

THANK YOU!!!

KNUST



Appendix 5:

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

College of Art and Social Sciences

Department of General Arts Studies

I am Felicity Osei-Mensah, a second year graduate student of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. As part of the academic requirement, I am conducting a research on the performance of students in G.K.A in Abura-Aseibu Kwamankese District. I assure you that any information provided shall be used solely for academic purposes, confidentiality is assured.

(Please tick and specify when appropriate)

Section A: Background Characteristics

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age

(a) Less than 15 ☐ (b) 15 – 18 ☐ (c) 18 and above ☐

3. Educational level?

Form One ☐ Form Two ☐ Form three ☐ Form Four ☐

Section B: Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources

4. Do you have an art studio? ☐ Yes ☐ No

5. If No, where do you work?

6. Does your school make funds available for the purchase of learning materials? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. If No, specify how you cope.....

Section C: learning processes

8. Which of the following learning methods do you prefer? Learning by doing/practicing ☐ Learning by observation ☐ Co-operative learning ☐ Independent learning ☐ Route learning ☐

9. Why?.....

.....

10. Which of the learning methods makes you better understand the GKA lesson?.....

.....

11. How many periods do you have for the G.K.A in a week.....

12. Are there special period for practicals Yes [] No []

13. How many times do you have practicals in a week.....

Section D: Preparation Before, During and After Examination

14. Students must be evaluated during and after lessons.

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral []

d. Disagree [] e. Strongly Disagree []

15. Have you been taught how to complete the WAEC Entry Sheet Correctly during Examination?

Yes [] No []

16. Students must be well informed on how to answer examination questions?

a. Strongly Agree [] b. Agree [] c. Neutral []

d. Disagree [] e. Strongly Disagree []

17. What form of assistance do teachers give students during WASSCE?

.....
.....
.....
.....

18. What in your opinion are the three main reasons for student's success?

a.....

b.....

c.....

THANK YOU.