

# The Instructional Processes for the Teaching of Some Difficult Topics in the Ghanaian SHS Visual Art Curriculum

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## Abstract

The researcher investigated four topics' teaching-learning processes or described and analyze strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning of four difficult topics in Ghanaian Visual Art curriculum. The study employed qualitative research approach with descriptive research and quasi experimental design research methods. Data were gathered via questionnaire administration and observation. Purposive and simple random sampling procedures were used to select 49 respondents. Questionnaire urged teachers and students to describe teaching and learning of layout, composition, design and lettering in two Senior High Schools, whether there are shortcomings in the four topics' lessons. Responses revealed that there are no standardized textbooks, inadequate tools, equipment and materials for teachers and students to do practicals in the two SHS. During observation of teaching and learning of the four topics' lessons in General Knowledge in Art, Graphic Design and Picture Making, it was noted that there were few resources available to the two SHS in Ashanti. As a result, Visual Art students were allowed to use bamboo/cane in calligraphy lessons observed. Some students used more colours than required number. Others made spelling, spacing and layout mistakes. Some words were missing in calligraphy/poster works. Some calligraphies were without border designs or initial letters, not decorated. Some objects were out of proportion. A student wrote freestyle letters in boxes. Teachers did not teach topics like optical spacing cartoon, fabric and edition binding practicals. Students produced pictorial posters without letters. A teacher said, citation can be written with black letters only, letters are in some PM3.

**Keywords:** Instructional Processes, Visual Arts, Curriculum, Teaching, Layout.

## 1. Introduction

Visual Arts students pursue compulsory General Knowledge in Art plus one elective from 2-dimensional category (GROUP "A"): Graphic Design, Picture Making and Textiles, and one elective from 3-dimensional (GROUP "B"): Basketry, Ceramics, Jewellery, Leatherwork for final WASSCE (2008 Education Reforms). GKA, GD and PM are 3 Visual Art subjects studied in this article. Some Arts students do not perform well in layout, composition, design and lettering topics in above subjects, The Examiners' Report and WAEC results confirm. There are no standard art textbooks in SHS (Osei-Mensah, 2012), so some teachers neglect essentials of above. Other teachers do not have much knowledge and skills to teach the four. Asumah (2015) agrees that some Graduate teachers do not teach their specialized subjects that they can effectively teach to enable students to understand what they are taught. Few printed foreign books and e-books have 'difficult to interpret and understand' materials on the 4 topics. The few locally written textbooks do not include enough themes to cover the syllabus.

Prelude enquiry by the researcher reveals that some students do not acquire skills in construction of the four topics early, find it difficult to construct the four's artworks and are overloaded in WASSCE projects. Some less endowed SHS in rural areas have under-resourced studios, materials and in-sets for art practicals, resulting in theory only. Some Art teachers also wait till their students have executed art works like WASSCE projects, before helping candidates to correct errors in works, which end up in poor results. The study investigated by describing and analyzing how topics like layout, composition, design and lettering in GKA, GD and PM are taught at the 2 SHS, to establish the impact that they have on students' academic performance in WASSCE.

## 2.1 Teaching

Teaching is directing knowledge towards learners (Tamakloe *et al*, 2005). Thus, teacher, an experienced member transmits ideas and skills to students. Teaching does not happen without a learner. To Delacruz (1997), there is effective teaching when a teacher formulates objectives, selects content, uses relevant teaching-learning resources and designs teaching-learning activities to solve problems, provide for evaluation in teaching and learning process. 'Good Teaching' and 'Effective Teaching' interchangeable terms aim at developing students to their highest potentials or abilities (Rowe *et al*, 2012). Before lessons, Appiah (2014) urges teachers to consult curriculum materials like syllabus and textbook. During lessons, Cornett (2003), Appiah and GD syllabus (2010) recommend child-centred or students' participation to ensure practice based learning. Appiah lists international best practices to teach: Example, learn from known to unknown and especially, analysis of issues. Some teachers who do not give class exercises to end each lesson conjure marks for 30% class works and assignments. Others do the right thing. Singh and Rana (2004) clarify that none of the different methods teachers use is better than the

others. Teachers do not use any single method for success in classroom setting, many successful teachers use different methods. Some other teaching methods are: Discussion and Demonstration. Instructors can use various teaching strategies to improve learning (MERLOT Pedagogy Portal, 2015): Examples - learner-centred teaching, Active Learning and others.

## 2.2 Learning

Learning is activity of gaining knowledge and skill by studying, practicing, being taught or experiencing something (Webster, 2014). Thus, knowledge and skills are acquired. Sintim (2008) notes that, learning continues throughout life and affects things we do, so study of learning is important in many fields. Singh and Rana (2004) posit that teachers' effort will be in vain, if students are not involved in learning experience. Siaw (2009) explains that learners will not learn well, unless they feel secure psychologically. Teachers must therefore create classroom climate, conducive to learning. Berkeley (2018) lists 3 basic learning theories: behaviourism, cognitive, constructivism and social constructivism.

## 2.3 Facilitating Learning

Teachers must teach subjects they can teach better to help students to learn effectively (Siaw, 2009). They must apply theories like Cone of Experience and Socrates' philosophy on questioning in teaching to make learning easy. Dale (1960) developed from his experience in teaching and observation of learners, cone of experience. The cone reveals effective way teachers and students learn through practice, using aids. Sekyere (2015) agrees that, when teaching aids are used in teaching, children understand topics. Artworks make teaching easier, children who create artworks learn easily. Gardner's Multiple Intelligences (1993) is also about people and their potentialities in 7 intelligences. A child who is not good in science can be good in eg, PE. Teachers must expose students to all intelligences to help students to discover their best areas and specialize there as careers. Definitions and description of teaching and learning minor topics by authors and others are pertinent to this study since layout; composition, design and lettering major topics are taught and learnt in SHS.

## 2.4 Characteristics of GKA, GD and PM as Some Components of Visual Art Programme

The GKA composite subject was extracted from visual arts subjects studied at SHS level to give students a broad based knowledge and skills in art's theory and practice (CRDD, 2008). The GD syllabus aids students to develop skills in drawing, illustration, posters, greeting cards, lettering, painting, printing, package constructions, book craft to convey messages and others (CRDD: 2008, GD syllabus: 2010). The PM is art of representing images like persons, objects and scenes. It comprises drawing, painting, printing, collage, mosaic, appliqué, pyrography and photography. Many girls avoid PM because they lack level of drawing skills required, but are more interested in representational drawing (Evans-Solomon & Opoku-Asare, 2011).

## 2.5 Overview of Layout, Composition, Design and Lettering

**2.5.1 Layouts:** It is arrangement of elements like shapes, text and others (GD syllabus, 2010). Dogbe (2004) discusses the units/elements in layout. He analyzes and interpretes posters, plaque and other plates. Fabric design, landscape drawing and shapes he analyzed imply that layouts without letters exist. He and Ameyaw-Benneh (2014) have similar ideas about layout with letters and define layout, discuss thumbnails, roughs, finished, production and text arrangement. The GD syllabus (2010) discusses formats: Portrait – Vertical placement of given area eg, paper for work. Landscape – Horizontal placement, layout settings in books, posters and others. Sarpong (2016) lists procedures for side, saddle stitching and multi section binding: 2, 3 and 4 stitch sewing. Ameyaw-Benneh (2014) lists procedure for hard cover for books: Cut 2 backing boards, few millimeters larger than book. Cut piece for spine, lighter than cover board. Cut binding cloth, longer and larger than spine. Paste backing boards to cloth with spine board between them. Turn over excess binding cloth and paste it inside boards. Fix book into case with glue (casing-in). Paste end papers to case. Binding styles for case bound books: ½, ¼th, ¾th and full binding.

In Saddle stitched Magazine (GD3, 2011), put light leaves in cartridge paper and saddle stitch. In 2 page calendar, design January to June on first sheet of paper and July to December on second sheet, use comb binding method to fasten 2 sheets. Or create designs on sheet's front and back. Cut, paste, use present or any future year (WASSCE GD3, 2013). Collate and glue sheets in perfect binding only. Authors and art syllabi's definitions and descriptions of layout are pertinent to this study since plaques, calendars, posters and calligraphy, which involve arrangement of types appear in WASSCE GKA2 and GD3 project and theory. Compositions without letters and almost all other art works have layouts in them.

**2.5.2 Composition** – It is organization of elements, guided by principles into picture (PM Syllabus, 2010). Bartel (2010) discusses principles of art and cites emphasis, unity, opposition, balance, variety, repetition and colour saturation. To him, most artists put emphasis off centre and balance it with minor themes. Some artists avoid emphasis and make all parts of work interesting. Join complementary layers and or effects to produce attractive

whole/harmony. Unity with diversity e.g., 2 different birds is better than unity without changes. Opposition uses contrasting visual concepts, eg, dark and light. Repeat similar shape but change size or keep size, but change colour for variety and unity. Repetition with changes is better than those without changes. Radial balance is like Cathedral's sunflower/rose windows with everything around a centre.

Bartel, GD syllabus and Sarpong agree that both sides of symmetrical/formal balance are similar in visual weight, stiff and mirrored e.g., butterfly. Asymmetrical/informal balance which is not mirrored is better. The GD and PM syllabi (2010) tell teachers to arrange various objects for students to observe relationship between parts of object, between objects (how big is one object than other/s), and picture area. Teachers must teach drawing from imagination, memory or observation of sceneries like seascape and landscape, guided by principles. This help students make pictures from scenes, events and issues through observation, based on memory/imagination and depict eg, vanishing point, horizon, advancing and receding objects. Scenery composition: Visit a place to observe and make pictures from scenes, events and issues. Memory - you have seen a scene/experienced event before, and you draw what is stored in memory. Draw pictures from imagination, based on stories and issues, eg, life in Ghana by 2020 or others. Scene is not seen, or event, not experienced but are expressed in abstract/realistically.

The PM syllabus (2010) says, in composition from objects, emphasis is on perception, objectivity and resemblance. Negative area is unoccupied; image(s) occupy positive area. Students must create: (a) Realistic/abstract picture of event, issue or scene to decorate eg. A home or hospital (2007, WASSCE PM3), (b) Paint or cut and paste Realistic/abstract art to depict Ghanaian colour symbolism on ideas or issues and (c) A one or 2 colour pictorial print on topic, using printmaking process eg. serigraphy/intaglio/relief. Marquetry's procedure: sketches, trace, transfer design, cut design on veneer, paste templates on surface. Teachers must teach students: head's proportion to adult body, difference between proportion of adult's head and that of child in relation to respective bodies through practical exercise, using a model if any. Students must paint/shade human/animal figures to show mood. Draw and paint infant, adolescent, adult and aged's portraits at different angles e.g. frontal, profile and  $\frac{3}{4}$ th views. Use model, if any, and pencils to compare head and other parts of body, and use head length as unit to measure figures' parts for proportion. Draw adult's figure and animal's, measure how many head lengths go into full figure and parts of: nursery child, primary school pupil, JSS, SHS students and teacher.

Draw whole figures (postures and actions). Compare feet's length to lower and upper legs' lengths, classmates' heads to bodies and draw. The GKA students either answer 2Aa: Composition (Drawing and Painting) – Still life (natural/artificial objects or both) or 2Ab: Imaginative composition. PM3 students execute on spot, memory or imaginative composition themes like "market" or "unity". In PM3 tips like mosaic, collage, marquetry, mixed media, applique, montage, cut and paste materials on surfaces, except painting and printmaking. GKA candidates only draw/paint works.

**2.5.3 Design:** Sarpong (2015) says, it is plan within a work of art. Screen Prints: Teachers must teach blocking-out screen methods like lacquer, paper stencil, Touché and photographic (solar/light exposure box), print single and multi-colour designs with screen (GD syllabus, 2010). GKA syllabus lists screen printing procedure: Attach mesh to wooden frame. Themes, sketches, select best one, transfer. Design is smaller than screen block. Screen preparation: i. Paper stencil: - transfer design onto paper. Cut out positive areas to be printed. Attach stencil to stretcher, using masking tape. Leave allowance for ink duct. Screen is ready for printing. ii. Candle Wax/Shellac or Lacquer screens: - Transfer design onto stretcher. Block negative areas with molten wax/thinned shellac/lacquer, using brush. Do test print and block pinholes, if any. Screen is ready.

iii. Photographic screen: - coat stretcher with photographic solution, place it in dark room to dry. Place design with face up on shooting box's glass. Put primed stretcher on design. Fill stretcher's inside with sand and switch on exposing light for 5 minutes. Remove stretcher and wash with water. Screen is ready. GKA syllabus (2010) lists Screen printing procedure: Prepare printing table. Place eg, T-shirt on it. Put screen on 'T'- shirt. Fetch paste into ink duct. Pull paste across screen with squeegee to print. Go over, if deeper print is needed. Remove screen and wash with water for future use. Allow print to dry, iron design to fix. Paste is water or oil-based.

To PM syllabus (2010), other printing processes are - Direct print: Apply paste to textured surface. Press/stamp/roll image carrier on substrate. Repeat process for repetitive design. Block Printing: Select theme, transfer best sketch unto block - soft wood/foam/tyrofoam/cocoyam. Cut off negative area. Apply paste to block. Stamp inked block on substrate to print. Repeat process; organize, if repetitive design is needed. If it is 3-colour wood cut print (1995, PM3), use block printing method. The 1993 PM3 students produced original 3-colour block print, with mushroom as motif. Examiners' Report (1998) commended candidates for producing block prints and adding background textures by spraying or splashing. In 1998 PM3, skills in woodcut/linocut, colour separation and printing was used to execute 3-colour 'Outdoor Ceremony' picture (WAEC Examiners' Report, Picture Making 3, 1998). Relief Printing: is done with raised surface - Cut shapes out from cardboard and leaves and glue to example, plywood. Apply paint and print. Two types of paper stencilling: Use paper stencil and foam

for dabbing to print. Affix paper stencil on screen and print with squeegee. Fabric, wrapper, logo and posters are types of design themes in WASSCE GKA 2B and GD3 project work. PM3 students print.

**2.5.4 Lettering** - Letters are grouped into 4 categories: Rounded, Narrow, Wide straight-stroked and Medium or normal size (GD syllabus: 2010, Gyau and Obiri-Yeboah: 2011). Gothic letters' strokes have equal thickness and no serifs. Roman letters have thick, thin strokes and serifs. In freestyle, create words/letters to illustrate ideas, conditions or objects e.g., use nail's shape to write NAIL, write "Ice Cold" or "Snow" by designing each letter to have ice/snow's form. Three types of spacing: Mechanical - equal spaces between letters (ineffective). Optical - spaces between letters depend on letters' shapes (effective). Kerning - Letters overlap in words, or little or no spaces between letters. In mechanical spacing, use grid rules to construct block letters. With the exception of 'W' and 'M' which take 5 boxes down, 5 across, and 'I' which takes 5 boxes down, one across, other block capital letters take 5 squares down and 3 squares across (Nuakoh, 2004 and Ameyaw-Benneh, 2012).

Nuakoh (2004) discusses and provides examples of freehand letterings, suitable for WASSCE GKA2 and GD3 small labels, brochures, packages, calendars, fabric design, wrappers or others. Slightly used pen can be used to write bold words. To Beckett (2013), best colours for gothic letters are: glossy black for body text, vermilion (orange-red) for capital letters or titles and gold for decoration. Kewa (2005) categorizes freestyle lettering (Semantic, Composite, Segmented and Continuous freestyle), based on appearance, uses and design, with pictures and how to design them. "Freestyle" seems as if it is free and without rules or designers can design whatever they like. But scholars and authorities argue that, freedoms must be guided by rules, so Kewa tried to guide. Thompson (1955) agrees and advises students to consider principles of form, balance and construction before developing their own styles.

Authors must thus publish more books on freestyle for students. Contrarily, Ameyaw-Benneh (2014) says, freestyle letters are formed without rules. Italic is slanting version of any typeface. Capital italic vertical strokes slant towards right, except letters 'A', 'M', 'V' and 'W' which have erect vertical strokes in them, To Abankwa (2001), cards, book covers, posters, labels, border decorations or others are designed in calligraphy. Unfortunately, teaching calligraphy is a problem in SHS. A beginner who aspires to be a good calligrapher must write and know the structure of 26 letters of alphabet. Steps must guide him to constantly practice letters' strokes till he can write them perfectly/accurately, before writing words with them. This means, only hand written letters that portray artistic qualities are calligraphies.

To EHow Contributor (2014), main things needed in calligraphy are pen and paper. Morris (2014) agrees that calligraphy begins with thick and thin strokes, up to decorating works with flourishes and starting to develop a style. Abankwa, Morris and Contributor advise beginners to learn to make plenty thick and thin strokes with normal pen, using calligraphy book or help from online, before using special calligraphy pen. Morris says, though she is lefty, she can follow right-hander's instructions. Hold carpenter's broad pencil/broad pen at 45 degrees to practise strokes. Letters are in most GD3 works and in GKA 2B Question 2: "lettering/calligraphy" works, and in most 2B Question 3 designs. Authors and others only described the four topics without vividly listing procedure for executing works like paintings or packages, how teachers must teach and how students must learn the four in GKA, GD and PM.

### 3. Methodology

Qualitative approach was used for the study to provide in-depth description of data on teaching and learning experiences. The researcher distributed 2 sets of questionnaire in 2 SHS. He observed 8 lessons on 4 topics. Descriptive method, suitable for school setting was employed to describe, analyze and evaluate existing teaching and learning approaches of the 4 topics' in 2 SHS. Quasi-Experimental method was also used.

**Table 3.1: Population**

Name of Schools	All Visual Arts Teachers	All SHS One, 2 and 3 Visual Arts Students	Total
TKSHS	8	161	169
SENGSHS	10	90	100
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>269</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

Target population was 146. It comprises All GKA, GD and PM teachers in Visual Art departments of 2 SHS =18, and all Form 2 and 3 GKA, GD and PM students in Visual Art departments of the 2 SHS =128. Accessible population was 98. It comprises 18 GKA, GD and PM teachers and SHS 2 and 3 GKA, GD and PM students in the two schools, totalling 80.

#### 3.1. Sampling Techniques

The researcher was aware that some Arts teachers and students could provide appropriate data, so they were purposely sampled and questioned to understand and describe approaches to teaching and learning of the 4 topics.

Stratified Random Sampling ensured that all art teachers, Form 2 and 3 Visual Arts students in 2 SHS had equal chances of being selected for in-depth study. 98 accessible populations, chosen randomly was divided into 2 strata, ST – 1: 18 GKA, GD and PM teachers in TKSHS (8) and DASHS (10), and ST – 2: 80 Form 2 and 3 GKA, GD and PM students in TKSHS (40) and DASHS (40). 50% size was chosen out of accessible population of 98. Sample size is 49.

**Table 3.4: Schematic Overview of Stratification and Sampling Procedure**

<b>Population Level</b>	<u>Accessible Population</u> <b>98</b>	
<b>Equalization level</b>	<u>ST1</u> <b>18</b>	<u>ST2</u> <b>80</b>
<b>Randomization Level</b> <b>(50 % Sample)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Total Randomized Stratified Sample</b> <b>(Data Level)</b>	<u>ST1 + ST2</u> <b>49</b>	

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

### 3.2 Research Instruments

The study employed questionnaire and observation.

#### 3.2.1 Questionnaire

Two sets of questionnaires were used in this study, one for Visual Art teachers and the other for Visual Art students in 2 SHS. 49 copies of questionnaires were distributed, 9 for teachers and 40 for students. The breakdown: TKSHS – 4 for teachers and 20 for students, SENGSHS – 5 for teachers and 20 for students. The researcher retrieved the 49 copies. Questionnaire with 22 questions was used to collect data from Visual Art teachers for study. It was based on teaching and learning of topics like layout, composition, design and lettering in GKA, GD and PM. Similar Questionnaire for students comprised 23 questions. Students were urged to complete questionnaire and return them to researcher after a week, unlike teachers who returned theirs after 2 weeks.

#### 3.2.2 Observation

The researcher observed 8 lessons on 4 topics in classrooms and studios of 2 SHS. He prepared observation guide to observe teaching-learning activities like: organization of instruction, in-depth knowledge of subject, classwork, teachers' circulation and performance, and students' classroom behaviour.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents questionnaire responses on teaching and learning of 4 topics in GKA, GD and PM and 8 observed lessons on the 4 topics in 2 SHS in Ashanti.

### 4.1 Profile of the 2 SHS

TKSHS is in Kumawu, capital of Sekyere Kumawu district - Ashanti. It is a mixed-sex SHS. It offers GKA, GD and PM. SENGSHS is in Kumasi, capital of Ashanti. It is a single-sex SHS and offers GKA, GD and PM. The 2 SHS have boarding facilities.

### 4.2 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

#### 4.3 Questionnaire Administered to Visual Art teachers on Teaching and Learning of 4 Topics under GKA, GD and PM in 2 SHS

##### Teachers' understanding of layout, composition, design and lettering topics

The 4 respondents at TKSHS and 5 at SENGSHS (100%) were able to choose correct definitions for the 4 topics. Layout is defined as: Structured arrangement of items within certain limits or plan for such arrangement. Composition is: Act of combining parts or elements to form a whole. Design is: A plan within an art work. Lettering is: Art of writing alphabetic symbols into words.

##### Principles guiding the construction of 4 topics.

The 9 respondents (100%) said that rhythm, balance, variety and harmony are among principles which guide construction of layout, composition, design and lettering.

##### Technical ideas about the four topics

Four TKSHS respondents (44.4%) stated that some Visual Art teachers in their school do not have enough technical ideas about the 4 topics and therefore, teach plenty theory and few practicals, since their curriculum training did not cover those areas, due to early specialization at tertiary. Also, they do not get enough incentives/remuneration to motivate them to work harder or necessary textbooks for teaching the topics. They

also do not have enough means to upgrade their skills. Sekyere (2015) agrees that Colleges of Education's products are not broad-based, due to early specializations; eg, primary school, and subject specializations teaching. During 47<sup>th</sup> session of International Conference on Education in Geneva in 2014, GES said, teachers in Ghana's deprived areas must benefit from incentives like: 20% of their basic salary as inducement allowance, free accommodation, borehole water and study leave with pay after serving 2 years. Three SENGSHS respondents (33.3%) said that above assertion is true, 2 others objected (22.2%).

#### **Whether Candidates are Overloaded during WASSCE Practicals**

The 9 respondents (100%) advocated that some teachers do not constantly help students in art practicals, due to family responsibilities, lack of campus accommodation, truancy, under-resourced art studios, materials and others. Affected students perform badly in 5-day WASSCE 3 project. Within a month, teachers and students overstrain themselves and send shoddy/slightly corrected works to WAEC. They therefore urged schools to provide required resources for practicals to help teachers to constantly teach especially, the 4 topics' practicals before WASSCE project 3 arrive.

#### **Facilities in Departments**

Resources like textbooks, stationery, furniture, equipment and recreational facilities are essential to effective education and positively influence academic performance (MOE, 1994). Usage of these facilities in teaching helps students to learn effectively. Sekyere (2015) agrees that visual teaching aids like objects and pictures, audio aids like recorded tapes and discs used in teaching, help students to understand lesson well. On whether there are art studios in the schools for practicals, minority of respondents stated that their schools have studios which according to some, have inadequate resources. Majority responded 'no' and explained that they do practicals in classrooms and under trees. There was ill-equipped

Studio in each SHS. For instance, there were some long tables, but no padded tables among them. A TKSHS GKA teacher explained that he teaches theory in classroom and practicals in studio, PM theory and practicals take place in studio, whilst GD is taught in classrooms.

#### **In-service training/workshops for teachers**

Three TKSHS respondents (33.3%) said, no in-sets are organized for art teachers. They therefore called for regular in-sets/workshops for teachers. They also advised HODs to supervise or spur teachers to teach especially, practicals effectively and mark assignments. Only one (11.1%) said in-sets are organized for teachers. He suggested that other incentives like teaching-learning materials must be provided to improve teachers' condition of service to enable them to work harder. 4 SENGSHS respondents (44.4%) said, no in-sets are organized for teachers. Only one (11.1%) stated that in-sets are organized.

### **4.4 Analysis of Students' Questionnaire**

#### **Distribution of Students who Offer GKA, GD and PM**

15 majority of students (37.5%) offer GD at TKSHS but there were only 5 (12.5%) for PM. This means GD is students in mixed schools' popular choice, especially girls who want to avoid figure drawing in PM. Fresh students choose elective art subjects after orientations at TKSHS. At SENGSHS, 9 respondents (22.5%) study GD. 11 also (27.5%) study PM. Thus GD and PM is "girl-friendly" in all-girls SHS. GKA is compulsory.

#### **Whether teachers give students assignments and mark them**

17 respondents (42.5%) said TKSHS art teachers give students enough exercises/ assignments. Only 3 (7.5%) stated that the teachers do not give enough. 18 of them explained that art teachers mark assignments. Only 2 said that teachers do not mark. 19 SENGSHS students (47.5%) said, teachers give enough assignments on art and mark. Only one girl (2.5%) stated that teachers give enough but cannot mark all.

#### **Skills learnt by students**

18 respondents (45%) at TKSHS stated that they have learnt how to make artifacts, drawing, lettering, logo, posters, printmaking and packaging in GD and aspects of PM like painting and landscape. Only 2 (5%) said they have not learnt any skill. The 20 SENGSHS (50%) respondents said they have learnt skills. Some cited painting, shading and designing.

#### **Conditions in the Selected Schools for Learning of Visual Arts**

18 students (45%) stated that condition at TKSHS is favourable for learning of visual arts. Only 2 (5%) stated that condition is not conducive to learning of art. Teachers and students must therefore make use of favourable condition, work harder for better results. 2 SENGSHS (5%) respondents said the condition in their school is favourable for art. 16 others (40%) stated that condition is not favourable, 2 did not respond (5%).

#### **Facilities in Departments**

#### **Students' ability to understand information in foreign books on layout, composition, design and lettering**

18 TKSHS respondents (45%) said they understand information in foreign books on the 4 topics. Only 2 (5%) asserted that they are unable to understand the information. 16 SENGSHS respondents (40%) said they understand information. Only 2 (5%) said that they do not comprehend. Two did not say anything (5%).

### Whether few local books on 4 topics contain relevant themes and ideas for effective learning.

13 respondents (32.5%) in TKSHS noted that the few local books contain required ideas for effective learning of above 4 topics. 7 or 17.5% said, local books on the 4 do not contain necessary ideas and clarified that they do more research on the four. Some said they rely on teachers' notes to learn the topics effectively. Solutions to some WASSCE questions like 'balanced design' (GKA2, 1995) and others are not in local books. 18 SENGSHS students (45%) said few local books on the four contain themes and ideas for learning the 4 topics. 2 did not respond (5%). Most teachers had lost confidence in out-dated GKA by Amenuke *et al* and were using options in teaching hours. Examples, TKSHS students use Sap Series in PM and GKA periods, SENGSHS students use Courtesy Adom Series in GKA periods.

### Art studio for practicals

19 students (47.5%) stated that TKSHS has art studio. Only one (2.5%) said he does his art practicals in classroom. 14 SENGSHS students (35%) said they have studio but majority said it is not well equipped. 6 others (15%) stated that they have no studio so they do practicals in classroom or in house.

### Funds to purchase teaching and learning resources

12 respondents (30%) at TKSHS stated that department gives students some learning materials, but students buy the rest. Some explained that PM students get most materials, whilst GD students receive few. Only 8 (20%) stated that department does not give resources to students. Some of the 8 clarified that they buy resources, research or further learn and produce artifacts with improvised materials at times. Only one SENGSHS student (2.5%) said, department gives her resources. 19 students (47.5%) stated that they buy. These are some items students buy or parents buy for them after receiving list from teachers at times: ruler, pencils, poster colours, brushes, apron, spray and adhesive.

### Working tables

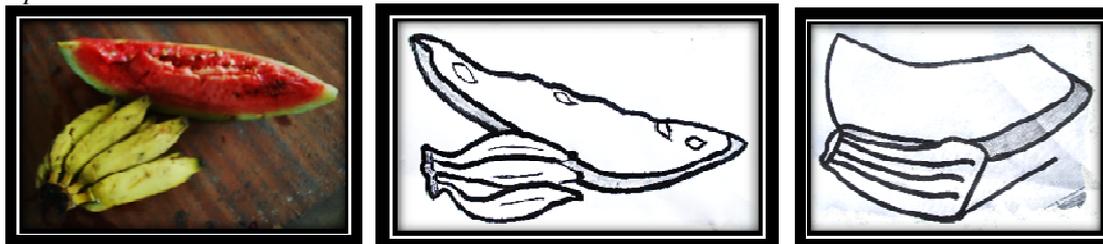
19 respondents (47.5%) said TKSHS has working tables. Only one (2.5%) noted that the school has, but GKA and GD students work on small desks in classrooms. PM students use longer tables in studios where they always have lessons. 14 stated (35%) that SENGSHS has working tables for works. Only 5 (12.5%) noted that they do not have such tables so they work on classroom desks which are hard to work on, due to their smaller sizes.

## 4.5 Findings from Observation on Teaching and Learning of Layout in GKA, GD and PM in the Study Schools.

### i. TKSHS

**Organization:** At TKSHS, GKA teacher used still life composition (fruits) to teach layout. He arranged sliced water melon and bunch of bananas for Form 2VA students to draw and shade in sketchpads.

**Presentation:** Lesson took place on Friday, so students only drew objects' outlines. They could not use objects which were almost rotten to complete their works in next week. Banana and sliced water melon had irregular shapes which could not be replaced, unlike objects with permanent shapes like 2 milo tins. *See sample of composition below:*



**Fig. 1a: A composition of sliced Water Mellon and bunch of bananas for exercises by the teacher.**

**Analysis:** In Fig. 1b-c above, TKSHS students could only draw bananas and water melon's outlines, since they were not given enough time. When drawing perishable objects without regular shapes, lesson must take place in beginning of week and completed within the week before objects rot.

### ii. SENGSHS

**Organization:** The Form One SENGSHS GKA teacher adopted poster design to teach layout. He entered the studio and urged the students to complete previous posters class work. Most students developed thumbnail lettering and illustrations from their scrapbooks and transferred sketches from light sheets onto portrait format cartridge papers for final works.

**Presentation:** The teacher did not give adequate directions; each student was allowed to select a theme to design a poster with any lettering and illustration. Works were executed with acrylics and brush without palettes, so some students mixed acrylic colours on sachet water packages. They designed the text with stylized Roman, sanserif, freestyle and freehand letters. Words were drawn in-between two parallel lines, in-between cap, waist and base lines. Some words were drawn without lines. Some words and illustrations were artistic but others were not. When lesson was about to end, he went round to assist those who were finding it difficult to paint curved

and straight outlines of letters. No student used grid. *Below are some posters:*



2a: Student's work



2b: Student's work



2c: Student's work

Figure 2a-c: *Layout in Poster Designs by some SENGSHS students.*

**Analysis:** In figure 2a above, the word “orange” was drawn without leaving space at extreme left. The words “orange drink” in fig. 2a and “ice cream” in fig. 2b are also outlined with black. According to WAEC marker, if a candidate outlines words/images with another colour after painting, marks are deducted. It is assumed that the student was not skillful enough to paint letters/images without eg, black outlines. Letters in “orange”, including ‘g’ are in x-height. Thus ‘g’ wrongly has same height like other letters in “orange”. The GD teacher should have limited the students to a particular topic, for instance, “Anna’s Fast Food” to help him to easily prepare a marking scheme. Students limited themselves to portrait formats for various themes. Some words and images could have been arranged on landscape. Square papers are not recommended, since to Ameyaw-Benneh, it is uninteresting as it does not suggest movement and change.

#### 4.6 Teaching and Learning of Composition in GKA, GD and PM in 2 SHS.

##### i. TKSHS

**Organization:** At TKSHS, PM teacher adopted collage to teach composition. He started the lesson as soon as he entered art studio. Different materials were arranged and glued on plywoods to produce collage works. Topic for classwork was “Village Scene”. He used project and discussion methods.

**Presentation:** He urged the 2VA students to compose sketches on bond papers and trace onto plywood for final collage works. He asked questions on collage and recognized responses, went round to help students who were finding it difficult to sketch. Materials: fabric, leaves, sawdust, paint and others. *Tracing “Village Scenes” on bond paper onto plywood:* Spread carbon paper on plywood and spread bond paper with sketch of village scene on carbon paper. Trace village scene on bond paper onto plywood. *Cut and Paste:* Put a piece of tracing paper on eg, a shirt in ‘village scene’ on bond paper/plywood and trace shirt onto tracing paper. Put carbon paper on real fabric, put piece of tracing paper with shirt on carbon and trace shirt on tracing paper onto fabric. Cut shirt’s shape out from fabric with scissors and paste on location of man’s shirt on plywood. Students followed this cut and paste process to complete the works.

**Other method:** Use Tracing paper alone to trace “village scene” on bond paper onto plywood by shading back of tracing paper along pencil lines and tracing onto plywood. In cut and paste also, put piece of tracing paper on plywood’s/bond paper’s shirt, and trace shirt onto tracing paper. Turn tracing paper’s back and shade shirt’s outline. Trace shirt on tracing paper onto fabric. Cut shirt’s shape out of fabric and paste on location of shirt on plywood, using white glue. Teacher urged them to paint the sky directly or paint on paper and paste. After completion, varnish was not applied. *Samples of collage are displayed below:*



Fig.3a



Fig.3b

Figure.3a-b: *Collage works by some TKSHS students.*

**Analysis:** In figs.3a and b, linear perspective is not properly seen, since objects in front like firewood and cooking pot were depicted smaller, as compared to stout human figures behind.

##### ii. SENGSHS

**Organization:** At SENGSHS, GKA teacher used still life to teach composition in 3VA. He arranged a cup, pencils, 3 note books and bag for students to draw and shade on cartridge papers.

**Presentation:** He urged students to look at objects and sketch what they see. He did not allow them to use HB for sketching but softer BB, 3B or others. Students used coloured pencils to shade. Few shaded the objects with objective colours, but most used subjective, since WAEC scheme allows students to use actual/objective or subjective colours to shade/paint natural/artificial objects in GKA2. Emphasis is rather on tonal gradation. *See samples below:*



4a: Actual objects composed by the teacher.



4b: Student's work.



4c: Student's work

Figure 4a-c: *Actual objects & samples of composition from objects (Colour Pencil) by SENGSHS students.*

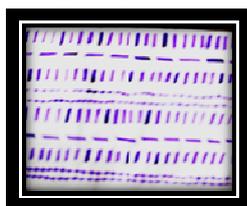
**Analysis:** It is advisable to shade backgrounds with cool colours like blue, green or violet, and foregrounds with warm colours like reddish brown, orange brown, yellow ochre and others, whether objects were painted/shaded with subjective or objective colours. In fig. 4b, the researcher opines that green colour should have been used for background and orange for foreground. In fig 4c, student did not observe the objects and drew cylindrical cup, instead of conical. Teacher should have drawn the composition's sample on felt board for students.

#### 4.7 Teaching and Learning of Design in GKA and GD in 2 SHS.

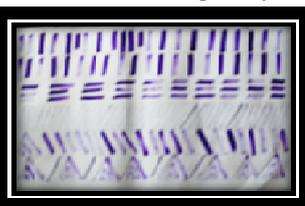
##### i. TKSHS

**Organization:** At TKSHS, the GKA teacher used calligraphy to teach design. He urged Form 2VA students to complete previous thick and thin strokes lesson in sketch pads. He sacked those who did not bring sketchpads and allowed only 5 students with sketchpads to stay in classroom. They did not practice with even-stroke pens (metal), but with cane (broad pen) and iodine. Front and back tips of canes were cut flat.

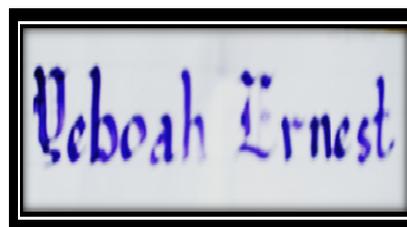
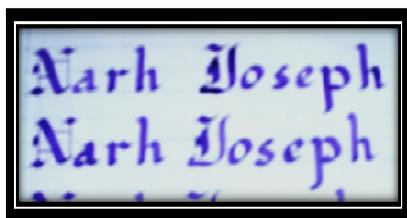
**Presentation:** Students wrote strokes in-between horizontal lines, without border lines. They held pens at 45 degrees angle to horizontal lines on paper and practiced basic vertical, horizontal, oblique lines and curves, major form lines in letters. He went round to help students who were finding it difficult to write strokes and advised them to practice on rough papers before writing strokes in sketch pads. He wrote eggs of border designs for students to practice. In the following week, they wrote small letters in 2 horizontal lines. Later on, they wrote their names in 2cm, 2cm, 2cm horizontal lines. *See examples of calligraphy below:*



5a: Pen Strokes by two Students.



5b: Lettering practice by a Student



5c: Two Students Write their Names

Figure 5a-c: a/Samples of Calligraphy strokes, b/. Lettering practice and c./Two TKSHS students write their names.

## ii. SENGSHS

**Organization:** It was observed that GD teacher adopted Pictorial Poster to teach design. Theme - “Importance of Storing Water”.

**Presentation:** He explained that in pictorial poster, students either use pictures and letters or pictures only. He limited them to pictures only. He continued that “Purely Pictorial Poster” resembles pictorial poster but WAEC sets questions on pictorial poster only. Some students sketched pictures in magazines, newspapers and others and combined them into single works. The teacher also advised some students to let someone pose for them to sketch. See samples of pictorial posters below:



Figure 6: Samples of pictorial posters by SENGSHS students.

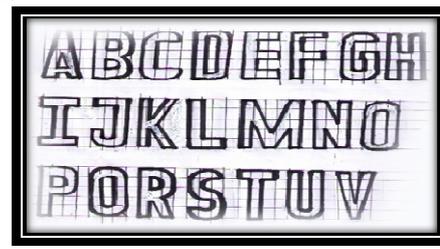
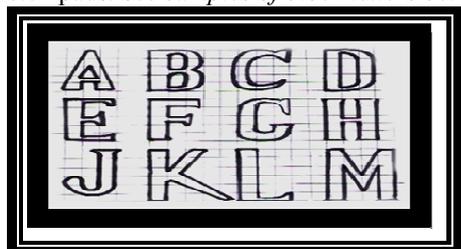
**Analysis:** The researcher opines that GD teacher should have urged all 3VA students to use caption like ‘Store Water’ and pictures. If he was aware of WAEC marking scheme, he would have urged all the students to use pictures and letters.

## 4.8 Teaching and Learning of Lettering in GKA and GD in the 2 SHS.

### i. TKSHS

**Organization:** In Form One Visual Arts classroom, the teacher adopted lettering to teach lettering. He explained block lettering before definition and evolution of lettering. The class used Sarp Series textbook (2014) for lesson. Some students read one after the other, whilst he explained.

**Presentation:** The GKA teacher became focused, when he retouched on block lettering, freestyle and calligraphy, major forms of lettering. He stated that in freestyle, shapes from natural/artificial environment are used to write ‘A’ to ‘Z’ letters, without citing egs. like leaf’s shape to write a “leaf”. He discussed Pictograph, like Egyptians’ hieroglyphics, common to Ashantis’ “Adinkra symbol”. He also explained Ideography in which sun represents “day” and Phonetic in which picture is sound representing sign. He stated that lettering is important to visual artists, especially Graphic designers and did not exclude Picture Makers. He said, letters are added to some images in PM to make images more meaningful. He urged students to produce lettering pens from cane/bamboo next term, since original calligraphy pens are costly. He also said that citation can be written with text/black letters only, like ancient days. As homework, he urged students to draw capital Roman or sanserif lettering in sketch pads. See samples of block letters below:



Figures 7a & b: Samples of Roman or sanserif lettering by TKSHS students.

**Analysis:** Figure 7a-b show some letters like ‘C’, ‘J’, ‘K’ and ‘S’ which were not properly drawn in boxes. Some students mixed Roman and Gothic letters. Gothic capital letter ‘J’ is drawn with bar on top towards left

like those in Sap Series and some other local pamphlets, as if it is '7'. In freestyle, student wrongly drew letters in boxes. The GD syllabus describes decorative initial letters as text's first letters. Most calligraphy works, seen in the 2 SHS were began with black/decorative letters and finished with modern calligraphy text. Few were written without initial letters. A word written with black letters is rare in SHS. Only one capital black letter is used as initial in each calligraphy.

## ii. SENGSHS

**Organization:** The GKA teacher used calligraphy to teach lettering. Form 3VA students continued previous calligraphy in GKA lesson in studio. Students used bamboo and iodine to write the statement: "I am indebted to my father for living but to my teacher for living well", Alexander the Great.

**Presentation:** Most 3VA students used portrait format, few used landscape. Students drew border lines around papers for border designs before drawing horizontal lines. Some sprinkled colours to create dots at backgrounds before ruling horizontal lines, but others ruled horizontal lines only. Most students used pencils to write words before applying iodine. There were 2cm between cap and waist, 2cm waist and base, 2cm base and drop in some works, preferably – 2cm between cap and waist, 3cm waist and base and 2cm base and drop lines in others. Some students got equal sizes of letters in above. Few students wrote words in 4 horizontal lines. Others drew 2 horizontals and wrote words in-between with bamboo, without initially writing with pencil. Most students started with decorative letters. Teacher circulated on few occasions to demonstrate how some letters are written to some students. He urged a student who wrote some words, bigger than others or words on top, bigger than those below, instead of same sizes to do the work again. *See samples of calligraphy:*

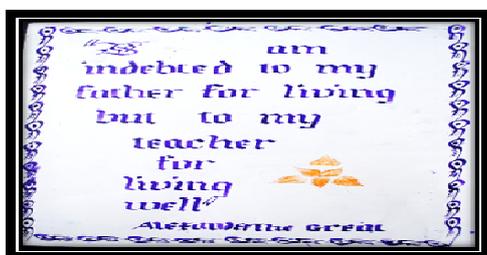
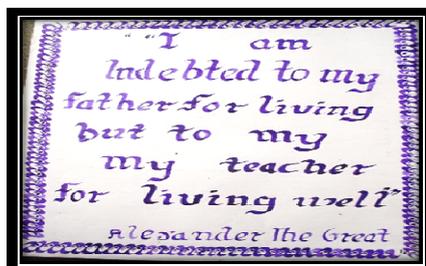


Fig.8a: Student's work



8b: Student's work

Figure 9a-b: *Samples of calligraphy by SENGSHS students.*

**Analysis:** In fig.8a, student left large space between 'I' and "am". Initial decoration was not properly drawn. Single words were arranged on some lines below. In fig. 8b, initial "inverted commas" and "my" wrongly appeared twice. Initial letter 'I' was not decorated. In others, iodine was watery so works did not stand out well. 2 words were written on each line, instead of varieties like 2, 3 and 4. GKA2 candidates execute works on 55cm by 37/37.5cm papers. But GD3 candidates paint works on paper, print on fabric/paper (2-dimensional), construct packages, stitch, bind books and others (3-dimensional), PM3 students execute works on paper, plywood/chipboard or canvas.

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

Questionnaire responses and data from observed lessons on layout, composition, design and lettering topics in GKA, GD and PM disclosed some shortcomings in teaching and learning of above 4 topics in 2 SHS in Ashanti Region. Responses revealed that some teachers give assignments, prepare schemes to award marks and promote only qualified students. Other teachers conjure marks for 30% continuous assessment. The few differences between the 2 SHS in particular, and other rural and urban SHS in Ghana can be resolved through adequate resourcing, offering of GD and PM in any SHS where Visual Arts is pursued, infrastructure, good BECE entry grades, experienced and qualified (competent) teachers. These will bridge gaps and ensure higher achievement in Visual Arts by students in Ghana. Inadequate practical lessons, inadequate and under-resourced studios, computer lessons, lack of standard textbooks on the 4 topics and others prevent students from acquiring enough knowledge and skills in GKA, GD and PM. Teachers who complete a topic and give assignments on the topic help students to get enough skills for answering all questions on such topics and prevent students from copying other people's works for submission as exams pieces. Teachers who give students enough exercises and mark all and those who give few and mark, contribute more to learning of visual art than those who give few and are unable to mark all, or those who give enough but are able to mark few.

It was observed that there were some gaps in teaching and learning of the 4 topics in the 2 SHS which buttress data from questionnaire responses. A student wrote freestyle letters in boxes. A teacher said, black letters alone are used to complete a citation. Improvised resources are used for some works eg, bamboo/cane for calligraphy. The researcher noted some spelling, spacing and other layout errors in some students' works. Some

words were missing in some calligraphies and posters. Some calligraphies' borders and initial letters were not decorated. Some objects were out of proportion. Students created pictorial poster with pictures only. Teachers and students elicit or combine notes from various textbooks for subjects like sculpture and GD lessons. Some artificial and natural objects with irregular shapes rot after few days and it is difficult to get replacements.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been suggested to enhance effective teaching and learning of layout, composition, design and lettering topics in GKA, GD and PM subjects in the 2 SHS in Ashanti and in all SHS in Ghana, based on findings and lessons learnt from study.

1. Since there is lack of Art textbooks, new topics on economics, ICT or others in 2010 GKA syllabus must be included in GKA by Amenuke *et al.* Some outmoded information must be updated to enable it to regain its status as main GKA textbook in SHS nationwide. Locally written GKA, GD and PM pamphlets must be well edited to ensure quality materials. Government must import relevant art textbooks and urge students to constantly read. Since most local Art books exclude vital topics or lack focus, GES, CRDD, MOE, art teachers or resource persons in art department, students and lecturers in tertiary institutions like Faculty of Art - KNUST, UEW - Winneba, Takoradi Polytechnic must come together and produce standard textbooks for GKA, GD and PM. Each Standard Art book must contain all topics in that subject's syllabus with information on layout, composition, design and lettering to help art students to perform better. If writers fail to do so, future revised GKA textbook which suits modern trends can at least be used in teaching GKA, GD and PM.

2. Teachers must give enough assignments, prepare a scheme to fairly award marks and help promote only qualified students to next senior class. They must not manufacture marks for 30% continuous assessment to render school based assessment (factored in external WASSCE) reliable and narrow the differences in assessment of students in SHS and ensure parity. Students must be helped to prepare sufficiently for exams to enable them write incident free exams or avoid involving themselves in exams malpractices. Invigilators and all those who process and handle exams questions/answers must be educated on dangers of exams malpractices. Less endowed SHS must follow current trends in especially syllabi to enable students to answer questions in line with that and compete favourably with all students nationwide. Example, teachers must teach theory and practicals and discuss students' practical works with them.

3. Art teachers must teach with current syllabi and complete it. GKA teachers must be serious with practical component, irrespective of other electives students study. They must give equal attention to all categories of students who study the subject. GKA, GD and PM teachers must practice their art or have positive attitudes towards their profession to inspire their students to work harder for achievement. They must prepare lesson notes for vetting by HODs on Mondays, whilst Assistant Headmaster vets that of HODs. They must also train students to be competent in the 4 topics to enable students to get good grades in WASSCE for further studies or acquire employable skills needed in industries.

4. Government agencies, NGOs, school administrations and other stakeholders must provide infrastructure and equipment like resourced art studios, computers and darkrooms for teaching and learning of GKA, GD and PM in SHS to sustain quality Visual Arts education in Ghana and improve parity.

5. Visual Arts departments must organize excursions/field trips to museums, art exhibition and galleries for on-the-spot interaction with artists and their works. The MOE and GES must organise regular workshops and in-set training for Art teachers, especially those in less endowed rural areas for more ideas on the 4 topics or introduce teachers to effective teaching strategies. Teachers in deprived areas must be invited for Visual Art 3 workshops occasionally, despite long distance between their schools and Kumasi or huge transportation cost. Heads must not just administer schools but also monitor their teachers to ensure that they use new knowledge and skills acquired, by paying them surprise visits in class to inspect what and how they teach.

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