

Assessment of teachers' instructional strategies in creative arts lessons in public schools within the effutu municipality

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ABSTRACT

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

Keywords: teachers' assessment, creative arts instructional strategies, primary schools

1. INTRODUCTION

Creative Arts is an expression of what is in children's minds and their ability to see things in different ways (Robinson, 2015), while the Ghana Teaching Syllabus for Creative Arts (2007) defines

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

Early learning experiences and hands-on activities provide a strong base for brain and sensory motor development in children (Prentice, 2000). These functions have a direct influence on children's creativity, expressions, learning skills, emotional and social development. For this reason, Creative Arts is considered an important element in many curriculum areas for children. It, therefore, provides sensory motor development and small muscle skills when children are allowed to explore by using paint brushes and water (Prentice, 2000). The finger and hand grips are developed when children use chubby crayons and coloured pencils to sketch and colour. When children are exposed to a variety of mixed-media and natural resource materials to complete their artwork, they are able to acquire skills that help in small muscle and large motor development. Thus, teachers must support children in their choices of mediums and allow them to explore and be open-ended when they are engaged in any artwork (Prentice, 2000). The creative arts engage children across all domains cognitive, language, social, emotional, and physical, it is therefore important to develop these creative arts among learners using developmentally appropriate instructional strategies (Mayesky, 2013).

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

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

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

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

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

According to Simonton (2000), People who work with young children need to understand creativity and have the skill to help and encourage children to express their creative natures. Teachers should be able to identify creativity in children and be able to help them develop a willingness to express this creativity. The most important thing to realize about creativity is that everyone possesses a certain amount of it. Some people are a little more creative, some are a little less, and no one is uncreative (Simonton, 2000). It is therefore the duty of the teacher at the early stage of the children to use the best instructional pedagogies to bring out the creativity in him or her.

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

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

solving skills, especially when children are challenged with experiences such as three-dimensional problems that are inherent in sculpting experiences. Teachers, therefore, need to use the appropriate use appropriate instructional strategies to help the children to acquire these skills.

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

Research Objectives

The study sought to find out about:

1. The various instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality.
2. The factors that influence teachers' choice of instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the various instructional strategies used for teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality?
2. What factors influence teacher's choice of instructional strategies used for teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality

2. METHODOLOGY

Research design

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

of the research problem; more analysis, specifically through qualitative data collection, is needed to refine, extend, or explain the general picture (Creswell, 2013).

Population

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

Sample and Sampling Technique

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

Instruments for Data Collection

The study employed a closed-ended questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide as data collection instruments for this study.

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

Data Analysis Procedure

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

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: What are the various instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality?

The respondents were asked some questions to indicate the various instructional strategies they employed in teaching creative arts lessons. In answering this question, some statements (item 1-6) were provided which respondents had to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement. The data were analysed and discussed using mean and standard deviation. A mean score of 2.50 and above indicates

indicate the use of an instructional strategy in teaching creative arts lessons and mean score of 2.49 and below indicates that an instructional strategy was not commonly used in teaching creative arts lessons. Quantitative results are shown in Table 1 followed by the interview results.

Table 1: Instructional Strategies Used in Teaching Creative Arts Lessons

Instructional strategy	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
I use brainstorming when teaching creative arts	75	2.84	1.04
When teaching creative arts, I employ cooperative learning as a teaching strategy	75	3.11	0.93
Dramatization is used when I am teaching a creative arts lesson	75	3.03	0.93
I engage learners in nature walk when teaching creative arts	75	3.24	0.86
I employ independent learning when teaching creative arts	75	2.47	1.05
Experiential learning is used when I am teaching a creative arts lesson	75	3.01	0.87
Total Mean/Std. Dev.	450	17.7	5.76
Mean of means/Std. Dev.	75	2.95	0.95

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Data on Table 1 shows the instructional strategies used by the respondents in teaching creative arts lessons. As evident in Table 7, it was found that majority ($M=2.84$; $SD=1.040$) of the respondents agreed that they engage learners in nature walk when teaching creative arts. Majority of the respondents also agreed ($M=3.11$; $SD=0.938$) to the statement ‘when teaching creative arts, I employ cooperative learning as a teaching strategy’.

Most of the teachers agreed ($M=3.03$; $SD=0.936$) with the statement that “Dramatization is used when I am teaching a creative arts lesson”. It was also found that teachers agreed ($M=3.03$; $SD=0.936$) to the use of experiential learning in teaching creative arts lessons. From Table 1, it was found that most of the teachers agreed ($M=3.24$; $SD=0.867$) to the statement that they use brainstorming when teaching creative arts.

To the statement ‘I employ independent learning when teaching creative arts,’ it was found that most of the few of the respondent agreed ($M=2.47$; $SD=1.057$) to the statement.

From Table 1, it can be observed that majority of the respondents use instructional strategies in teaching creative arts, especially, the use of nature walks in teaching creative arts lessons. This is confirmed by the mean of mean score of ($M=3.01$; $SD=0.878$). The standard deviation score indicates that most of the respondents’ response concerning the items was similar and clustery around the mean score. This implies that the respondents use brainstorming, dramatization, independent learning, cooperative learning, and experiential learning in teaching creative art lessons. The use of these instructional strategies will promote self-confidence and motivation, provide opportunity for targeted questions and

answers helps participants explore pre-existing knowledge and build on what they know; facilitates exchange of ideas and awareness of mutual concerns; and promotes development of critical thinking skills.

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

Theme 1: Instructional Strategies used in Teaching Creative Arts.

To answer the research question 1, the participants were asked to mention some instructional strategies they use in teaching creative arts lessons and why the use such strategies. The following excerpts throw more light on the theme under discussion:

“...Creative arts are more of activity based so I use the activity method, demonstration, role play and sometimes I use the discussion method. The creative arts are more of activities and the learners we are handling learn more by doing and seeing so I use these methods for them to have a feel of whatever they are learning...” (T1).

“... Think pair share, dramatization, brainstorming etc. are some of the instructional strategies I used in teaching for them to understand the concept....” (T1).

“... Field trips, Reading, nature walk, whole class discussion and involving them in practical etc. Creative arts are more practical, and they need to have a feel of it. For example, taking them on a field trip or nature walk for them to understand the topic under discussion...” (T2).

“... There are several strategies used in teaching creative arts, some includes Brain storming, exploration, modelling, roleplay, cooperative learning, discussion, think pair share, group discussion, and experimenting...” (T3).

It can be seen from the foregoing extracts that majority of the participants use with brainstorming, discussion, demonstration and think pair share in teaching creative art lessons. This confirms the mean values of these instructional strategies in the quantitative analysis. The use of these resources implies that there will improve the academic performance of pupils.

Table 2: Factors that influence the choice of instructional strategies used in teaching creative art lessons.

Instructional strategy	N	Mean	S.d
I consider the classroom size before selecting a creative arts instructional strategy	75	3.05	1.01
My beliefs regarding creative arts teaching and learning influence my choice of an	75	2.91	2.57

instructional strategy			
I consider learners interest when selecting an instructional strategy	75	3.16	0.87
The resources available is considered before I choose an instructional strategy	75	3.24	0.77
My teaching experience influences my choice for an instructional strategy	75	2.87	0.89
I choose an instructional strategy considering the time allocated for the creative arts lesson	75	3.12	0.79
My academic qualification influences the choice of instructional strategy to be used	75	2.43	1.02
I am guided by the national curriculum when selecting an instructional strategy	75	3.49	0.60
Availability of technology influences my choice for an instructional strategy	75	2.95	0.91
Total Mean/Std. Dev.	675	27.22	9.46
Mean of means/Std Dev.	75	3.02	1.05

Source: Fieldwork (2022)

Table 2 presents results of data collected from respondents on factors that influence their choice of instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons. From the table, majority of the respondents ($M=3.05$; $SD=1.012$) agreed that classroom size is a factor that influences the kind of instructional strategy used in teaching creative art lessons.

Majority of the respondents, ($M=2.91$; $SD=2.579$) agreed that their beliefs about teaching and learning influence their choice of instructional strategy. It was found that ($M=3.16$; $SD=0.876$) agreed that they consider learners' interest when selecting an instructional strategy. Most of the teachers agreed ($M=3.24$; $SD=0.778$) with the statement that they consider resources available before choosing an instructional strategy. To the statement "My teaching experience influences my choice for an instructional strategy," it was found that most of the teachers agreed ($M=2.87$, $SD=0.890$) to the statement. Also, majority of the respondent agreed ($M=2.43$; $SD=0.21$) to the statement "My academic qualification influences the choice of instructional strategy to be used". This implies that, academic qualification does not influence the choice instructional strategies used by the respondents in teaching creative arts lessons. Responding to the statement "My teaching experience influences my choice for an instructional strategy," majority of the respondents ($M=2.87$; $SD=0.890$) agreed that their teaching experiences influences their choice of instructional strategies. Majority of the respondents ($M=3.12$; $SD=0.793$) agreed that they choose an instructional strategy considering the time allocated for the creative arts lesson, majority of respondents indicated that they are guided by the national curriculum when selecting an instructional strategy. The statement has the highest mean and standard deviation of 3.49 and 0.601, respectively. The standard deviation score indicated that the respondents have similar responses to the statement. Again, majority of the respondents agreed ($M=2.95$; $SD=0.914$) that availability of technology influences their choice of instructional strategy.

Generally, it can be observed from the data that, among classroom size, teachers' beliefs of teaching and learning, learners' interest, availability of resources, teaching experience, time allocation, academic qualification, national curriculum and availability of technology, the national curriculum and learners' interest have the greatest influence the respondents choice of instructional strategy while academic qualification does not influence the respondents choice of instructional strategy. This implies that teaching and learning of creative arts is meaningful, enjoyable, and interesting. According to Osei-Sarfo (2012), when instructional materials are chosen in connection to student's interest, class size, and relevance to teaching and learning, students are forced to become active participants in the teaching and learning process. Also, the finding is in line with the findings of Boafo-Agyeman (2010) which stated that many primary school teachers depend on the curriculum or syllabus for using appropriate instructional materials and activities relevant to achievement of the objective of enhancing the creative development of Ghanaian children.

4. KEY FINDINGS

The following were the main findings of the study:

1. Brainstorming, dramatization, independent learning, cooperative learning, and experiential learning are the instructional strategies used in teaching creative art lessons in the Effutu Municipality.
2. Classroom size, teachers' beliefs of teaching and learning, learners' interest, availability of resources, teaching experience, time allocation, academic qualification, national curriculum, and availability of technology were factors that influences teachers' choice of instructional strategy. However, the national curriculum and learners' interest have the greatest influence on teacher's choice of instructional resources for teaching creative arts lessons while academic qualification does not influence the respondent's choice of teacher's instructional strategy in the Effutu Municipality.

5. CONCLUSION

The study provides much evidence to conclude that the instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons among primary school learners in the Effutu Municipality were brainstorming, dramatization, independent learning, cooperative learning, and experiential learning, the study concludes that teachers' choice of instructional strategies used in teaching creative arts lessons in Public Primary Schools in the Effutu Municipality are influenced by classroom size, teachers' beliefs of teaching and learning, learners' interest, availability of resources, teaching experience, time allocation, academic qualification, national curriculum, and availability of technology were factors that influences teachers' choice of instructional strategy.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it is recommended that for Heads of selected schools to encourage creative art teachers to make appropriate use of instructional strategies and resources in the teaching and learning process because of the numerous benefits of the use of instructional strategies, resources, and facilities to both teachers and pupils. Also, the Head teachers should design training programmes for teachers on the importance of instructional resources to teaching and learning of creative arts.

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