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CREATIVE ARTS WITHOUT CREATIVES? EXAMINING TEACHER PREPAREDNESS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GHANA'S CREATIVE ARTS CURRICULUM IN WINNEBA

[1] Samuel Agbenyo   [1] Eva Akosua Ebeli   [1] Stephen Ayesu Nyanteh

[1] Mark-Millas Fish   [2] Cyril Kpodo   [3] Ernest Kwesi Amponsah

[1] Department of Music Education, University of Education, Winneba
[2] Department of Art Education, University of Education, Winneba
[3] Department of Theatre Arts Education, University of Education, Winneba

sagbenyo@uew.edu.gh

Abstract

Ghana's Creative Arts curriculum integrates music, dance, drama, and visual arts to foster artistic expression in primary schools. However, the curriculum lacks clear guidance on effective instructional methodologies. This gap often results in teachers delivering the subjects in isolation, making it difficult for learners to connect lessons to real-life contexts. This study investigated the training backgrounds of teachers, examined the strategies they employ in implementing the Creative Arts curriculum, and find out creative works done by learners as part of their learning process. Drawing on constructivist and multimodal learning theories, this qualitative case study utilised semi-structured interview, classroom observations, and focus group discussion. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that most teachers lacked formal training to teach the Creative Arts although some could support learners in producing visual artefacts. It was also revealed that many teachers use demonstration and group project strategies to teach the subject, and generally preferred teaching visual arts to performing arts. The study concludes that the subject is often taught by novice teachers assigned as a last resort. It recommends that Creative Arts pedagogy be prioritised during Professional Learning Community (PLC) meetings and that, schools should collaborate with experts from the School of Creative Arts at the University of Education, Winneba, to facilitate rigorous in-service training.

Keywords: Integrated, curriculum, creative arts, holistic development, teacher preparedness

1. Introduction

Creative Arts in Ghana's Basic School curriculum is a combination of subjects such as music, dance, drama and visual arts to offer learners opportunities for artistic exploration and expression. It was introduced in the new Standard-Based Curriculum (SBC) developed and implemented by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) in the 2020. The curriculum was introduced to revitalise and prioritise the teaching and learning of the Creative Arts in schools (Curriculum Research and Development Division [CRDD], 2007). The curriculum emphasises the development of core competencies, including critical thinking, creativity, communication, teamwork, cultural identity, leadership and digital literacy (NaCCA, 2019). While the new SBC reflects a commendable effort to integrate the arts holistically for learner development, the availability of qualified teachers remains a major constraint.

Consequently, teachers continue to teach individual strands of their preference in isolation, rather than adopting an integrated approach that embraces the curriculum holistically. This fragmented delivery impairs learners' ability to connect creative arts concepts to real-life contexts. For example, a naming ceremony - a communal event that draws from music, dance, drama, cultural values, and design-should be taught as an integrated experience rather than as disconnected artistic components. The SBC explicitly supports this pedagogical approach, stating: "Teachers of Creative Arts should present the learner with options that make skills, concepts and experiences in creative arts applicable in other learning areas and real-world situations" (NaCCA, 2019, p. x). This study investigates the training backgrounds of Creative Arts teachers in Winneba, examines the instructional strategies they employ in teaching the subject, and find out creative works that learners are doing in the Creative Arts curriculum.

2. Review of Related Literature

Creative Arts was incorporated into Ghana's primary school curriculum in 2007. According to the Creative Arts syllabus for Primary Schools in Ghana (Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of Ghana Education Service, 2007), Creative Arts is an integrated subject that includes Performing Arts (such as Music, Dance, and Drama), Literary Arts (including Poetry and Recitals), and Visual Arts, which covers areas like drawing, weaving, carving, modeling and casting. "Teachers are expected to teach these subjects in an integrated manner." (Opoku-Asare et al., 2015, p. 2). Although the creative arts disciplines are characterised by peculiarities and methods, they all utilise similar cognitive processes, allowing language and thought to be expressed through diverse representations. Instead of being expressed through traditional written language, creative arts are conveyed in visual, kinesthetic, aural, and tactile forms. Hence, Adom et al. (2021) postulate that involving children in creative arts enables them to communicate in deep and meaningful ways. What this means is that through creative arts, children find the opportunity to convey their emotions, ideas, and experiences, especially when they might lack the words or self-assurance to express them out loud. Activities such as drawing, painting, music, dance, drama, and storytelling offer a supportive and imaginative environment for exploring a wide range of feelings, including happiness, fear, uncertainty, and excitement.

2.1 Instructional Strategies for Creative Arts

Ghana's NaCCA (2019) Creative Arts Curriculum emphasises a learner-centered approach, encouraging active participation and self-expression. This aligns with contemporary research by Tromp (2024) who argues that creativity flourishes in environments where students are given the freedom to explore and experiment. The curriculum advocates for practical, hands-on activities such as drawing, painting, drama, music, and dance, which enable students to engage directly with artistic processes. This experiential approach is supported by Eisner's (2018) assertion that arts education should prioritise direct engagement with materials and techniques, allowing students to develop technical skills while nurturing their creative potential. A significant feature of the NaCCA (2019) curriculum is its emphasis on integrating local culture into Creative Arts instruction. By incorporating traditional Ghanaian art forms, such as Adinkra symbols, Kente weaving, and indigenous music and

dance, the curriculum ensures that learning is culturally relevant and meaningful. This approach resonates with Anku's (2020) findings, which highlight the importance of using local art forms to enhance students' cultural identity and pride. Furthermore, integrating cultural elements into the curriculum fosters a sense of belonging and connects students to their heritage, making learning more engaging and impactful.

Collaborative learning is another key strategy emphasised in the literature. Gaunt and Treacy (2020). notes that group activities, such as ensemble performances or collaborative art projects, promote teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills. In providing for this communal spirit, the NaCCA (2019) curriculum requires collaboration among learners through group tasks, such as drama performances and musical ensembles, which provide students with opportunities to learn from one another and build social skills. This approach not only enhances artistic development but also prepares students for real-world collaborative environments. Assessment in Creative Arts education is another critical area addressed in the literature. The NaCCA (2019) curriculum recommends continuous assessment through observation, portfolios, and performance-based evaluations. This aligns with Best (2021) who emphasis on the importance of constructive feedback in nurturing students' artistic growth. By providing specific, actionable feedback, teachers can help students refine their skills and build confidence. Additionally, formative assessment allows educators to tailor instruction to meet individual student needs, ensuring that all learners can thrive.

2.2 Integration in the Creative Arts Curriculum
The definition of arts integration as used in this study is adopted from the Beverley Taylor Sorenson and BYU Arts Partnership (2017), cited in McCulloch, T. R. (2019) thus: Arts integration is viewed as a teaching strategy where students participate in imaginative and reflective activities that involve making connections, interpreting ideas, and applying their understanding across multiple subject areas. True integration is achieved when skills and knowledge from different disciplines are combined in meaningful and genuine ways. Such integration mirrors real-life experiences and equips learners to make constructive contributions to society.

There are arguments for the integration of the creative arts in the school curriculum. Scholars such as Philpott and Plummeridge (2001) believe that the creative arts need to be integrated while Taylor (1992) argues against the practice of integration stating that each aspect of the arts is included in the curriculum for a specific purpose. On the contrary, Philpott and Plummeridge contend that:

> *There is a long history of the arts being regarded as a group of disciplines united by the fact that they are all concerned, in some way, with capacities such as imaginative creativity and self-expressiveness; these are taken to be the characteristic features of the aesthetic realm of experience and meaning. Over the past thirty years several educators and professional bodies have advocated the idea of unity of the arts as a basis for curriculum design and practice. (p. 132)*

It has also been argued that life experiences of the arts exist in integrated form. The arts have always been presented in an integrated manner in cultural activities, social events and performances (Gruska, 2009; Chanda, 1993; Havens, 2002). Indeed, cultural performances that include art and craft, drama, dance and music have not been separated from the holistic life experiences. Ignoring such integration would harm social progress (Mahloane, 2003; Phuthego, 2008). According to Chu (2005) there are two main approaches to integration, namely (1) integration between the arts and other disciplines and (2) integration among the arts areas which can be expanded to embody the four approaches to integration which include intradisciplinary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Mannathoko & Mamvuto, 2018).

Another line of argument is that life experiences of the arts are integrated. The arts have always been presented in an integrated way in cultural activities, social events and performances (Mannathoko & Mberengwa, 2016). Thus, cultural performances that include art and craft, drama, dance and music have

not been separated from the holistic life experiences. Ignoring such integration would harm social progress (Mamvuto, 2019).

In Ghana, the Creative Arts Curriculum, developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA, 2019, p. ix) underlines the importance of integrating various art forms, cultural elements, and interdisciplinary connections to create a rich and meaningful educational experience. The NaCCA (2019) Creative Arts Curriculum specifically emphasises the integration of multiple art forms, including "music, dance, drama, drawing, modelling, casting, weaving, etc.", into a cohesive learning and application of same "…in real-world situations." The curriculum demands instruction in a manner that ensures that "learners are exposed to the 3Hs of Head (cognitive/mind/thinking), Hand (psychomotor/body) and Heart (affective/feelings) …" which suggests the need to provide them with sensory experiences" (p. x).

This approach corroborates Tordini (2018) who argues that integrating diverse art forms encourages students to explore connections between disciplines, fostering creativity and critical thinking in ways that demonstrate real-life contexts of learners. By engaging students in activities such as creating visual art inspired by music or performing dramas that incorporate dance, the curriculum provides opportunities for learners to experience the interconnectedness of the arts. This holistic approach not only enhances artistic skills but also promotes cognitive, physical, and socio-emotional development of learners.

Cultural integration is another key aspect of the NaCCA (2019) curriculum, which incorporates traditional Ghanaian art forms, such as Adinkra symbols, Kente weaving, and indigenous music and dance, into the learning process. This focus on cultural relevance is supported by Salam's (2020) research, which highlights the importance of using local art forms to strengthen students' cultural identity and pride. By embedding cultural elements into the curriculum, educators can create a learning environment that is both meaningful and engaging, helping students connect their artistic experiences to their heritage and community (Sheridan et al., 2022).

Interdisciplinary integration is also a significant feature of the NaCCA (2019) curriculum, which encourages connections between Creative Arts and other subjects, such as history, language, and social studies. This approach is consistent with Eisner's (2018) assertion that integrating arts with other disciplines enriches the learning experience and helps students see the relevance of the arts in broader contexts. For example, students might explore historical events through drama or use visual arts to illustrate literary themes. Such interdisciplinary connections deepen students' understanding of both the arts and other subjects, fostering a more comprehensive and interconnected knowledge base.

Assessment practices in the NaCCA (2019) curriculum also reflect an integrated approach, combining formative and summative methods to evaluate students' artistic growth. Continuous assessment through observation, portfolios, and performance-based evaluations allows educators to provide constructive feedback and tailor instruction to individual needs. This aligns with the emphasis laid by Tutunaru (2023) on the importance of feedback in nurturing students' artistic development.

The integration of creative arts (visual arts and performing arts) in primary school curricula has gained significant attention in contemporary educational discourse. This review examines current literature (2015-2025) exploring the pedagogical benefits, implementation challenges, and outcomes of arts integration in primary education. Drawing from 40 scholarly sources, the analysis reveals consistent evidence supporting arts integration while identifying critical gaps in research and practice.

2.3 Pedagogical Foundations

Research indicates that arts integration aligns with constructivist learning theories by promoting active, experiential knowledge construction (Burnard & Colucci-Gray, 2021). This approach differs markedly

from traditional siloed arts instruction by embedding creative processes across subject areas (Ewing, 2020). Studies demonstrate that when teachers employ arts integration strategies, students exhibit enhanced engagement and deeper content understanding (Bamford, 2020; Russell-Bowie, 2020) backed by neuroscientific research, which provides compelling evidence for arts integration, demonstrating that multimodal arts activities stimulate diverse neural pathways (Hallam, 2015; Lim et al., 2021). This biological perspective complements educational research indicating that arts integration supports holistic learner development in ways that traditional instruction often fails to achieve (Hetland et al., 2015). Particularly noteworthy are findings that arts integration benefits students with learning differences by providing alternative pathways for expression and understanding (Anderson, 2018).

Furthermore, a substantial body of research documents the academic benefits of arts integration. For instance, Catterall et al. (2018) found statistically significant improvements in literacy outcomes when drama strategies were incorporated into language arts instruction. Similar gains have been documented where visual arts integration enhanced spatial reasoning and problem-solving skills (Schaffer & Stern, 2019). These findings challenge persistent misconceptions that arts education detracts from academic achievement (Winner et al., 2016). A longitudinal eight-year study (Vaughn & Winner, 2018) offers particularly compelling evidence, which revealed that students receiving consistent arts-integrated instruction outperformed peers on standardised measures while demonstrating greater school engagement. Such findings have led researchers to argue for reconceptualising arts as a central tool for holistic learner development rather than separated peripheral disciplines subjected to segregated personal preferences in academic exercises (Eisner, 2017).

2.4 Social-Emotional Development

Beyond cognitive benefits studies highlight the socioemotional advantages of arts integration. Drama-based approaches have proven particularly effective in developing empathy and perspective-taking skills (Bowell & Heap, 2017). Group music activities foster cooperation and emotional regulation (Hallam, 2015), while visual arts projects provide non-verbal outlets for emotional expression (Dinham, 2021).

Research also indicates that arts integration can mitigate behavioral challenges. Upitis et al. (2017) documented reduced classroom disruptions when teachers employed regular arts-integrated strategies. These effects were particularly pronounced among students with emotional and behavioral disorders, suggesting the therapeutic potential of arts integration (Bresler, 2019).

2.5 Implementation Challenges

Despite demonstrated benefits, significant barriers impede widespread arts integration. Teacher preparedness emerges as a persistent challenge, with many primary educators reporting limited confidence in arts pedagogy (Russell-Bowie, 2020). This lack of preparation often stems from inadequate preservice training, as noted in multiple international contexts (Burnard, 2018).

Resource limitations present another major obstacle. Schools serving disadvantaged communities frequently lack basic arts materials and specialist support (Bresler, 2019). Even when resources exist, competing demands from standardised testing regimes often marginalise arts integration efforts (Winner et al., 2016). Crow (2020) suggests that these challenges are exacerbated in rural and remote settings.

2.6 Emerging Innovations

Studies explore promising strategies for overcoming implementation barriers. Digital technologies show particular potential, with apps and online platforms enabling arts integration even in resource-limited settings (Crow, 2020). Community partnerships have also proven effective, with local artists and cultural organisations helping to bridge resource gaps (Dinham, 2021). Professional development models have evolved significantly. Rather than one-off workshops, sustained collaborative programmes demonstrate greater impact on teacher practice (Burnard & Colucci-Gray, 2021). Action research approaches, where teachers systematically study their own arts integration efforts, have gained traction as particularly effective models (Anderson, 2018).

2.7 Policy Implications

Researchers consistently call for arts integration to be embedded in teacher education programmes (Russell-Bowie, 2020). Policy analyses suggest that accountability measures should value arts-rich learning environments alongside traditional academic metrics (Eisner, 2017). Funding models require reexamination, with several studies advocating for equitable resource allocation across school communities (Bamford, 2020). International comparisons reveal that nations with strong arts education policies achieve more consistent implementation (Winner et al., 2016), suggesting the importance of top-down support.

2.8 Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was underpinned by the constructivist and the multimodal learning theories. Constructivist principles such as active learning, scaffolding, and social interaction play a key role in the integration of musical arts with other creative disciplines (Rieger et al. 2020). These principles foster an environment where students actively engage, collaborate, and build their understanding of both music and other art forms. In a classroom setting, students may engage in hands-on projects where they compose and perform music inspired by visual artworks or create visual representations of musical compositions.

As Brahimi et al. (2019) contended, this active involvement helps them connect theory to practice, whether through creating a painting that matches a musical mood or experimenting with sound as part of a multimedia art piece, thereby encouraging exploration, critical thinking, and innovation. Students can also be guided to explore the nexus between music, dance, and theater and learn how to apply musical structure and rhythm into physical movement through a project work where they create a dance choreography based on a piece of music. This requires them to actively demonstrate their understanding of diverse artistic domains, while engaging deeply with their learning.

According to Brahimi et al. (2019), applying constructivist principles fosters the integration of music with other creative disciplines, which further encourages an experiential learning environment where students actively engage in the process, build on prior knowledge with the help of supportive structures, and learn through social collaboration. In a musical drama setting, for instance, students work together to design the set, write scripts, compose the music, and perform, and offer construction peer feedback by critiquing each other's sound designs or visual representations of a musical piece, using social discourse to refine and enhance their final product. This kind of approach not only deepens their understanding of music and other creative forms but also develops their ability to think critically and work collaboratively in interdisciplinary contexts.

The multimodal learning theory supports an amalgamation of visual, auditory and kinesthetic dimensions in the teaching of music and other arts. Premised on this theory, Theodotou (2021) argues

that learners comprehend and retain information better when multiple senses - sight, sound, and movement - are activated together. This theory is especially useful in teaching the Creative Arts, as it allows learners to communicate and explore ideas through a range of artistic forms such as music, dance, drama and visual media.

Anderson (2025) indicates that within Creative Arts education, multimodal strategies allow learners to develop and convey ideas using a blend of language, images, sound, space, and movement. For example, creating a film that incorporates speech, visual elements, audio cues, and music helps students gain a richer understanding of artistic themes. Combining these various modes not only enhances the educational experience but also reflects the layered and multifaceted nature of professional artistic work.

Thus, the multimodal instruction promotes student engagement through teamwork and shared projects that utilise a range of communication methods. Through collaborative tasks, students strengthen essential skills such as analysis, creative thinking, and effective communication. These group experiences support the development of originality and inventiveness, both key elements in artistic growth. Moreover, the use of modern technologies and multimedia tools gives learners opportunities to showcase their work to wider audiences, enriching their educational journey even further. The constructivist and the multimodal learning theories, therefore, provide an appropriate underpinning for this study.

3. Methodology

Underpinned by the constructivist and multimodal theories (Yin, 2018), this research was situated in the qualitative paradigm, using case study design. The study was conducted in Winneba and focused on public primary schools which were pre-demarcated into three administrative zones namely the Eastern, the Central and the Western Zones. By means of snowballing, the Cultural Co-ordinator at Winneba Municipal Office of the Ghana Education Service helped to select the school with the highest number of Creative Arts teachers in each zone, identified as schools A, B, and C from the Eastern, Central and Western Zones, respectively. Realising that each of the schools had three streams, implying that there were eighteen Creative Arts teachers in each school, we employed the assistance of respective headmasters to select six teachers with the highest number of years of teaching the creative Arts after their pre-service teacher training programmes, in addition to two Headteachers (Ht), giving a sample size of 20 from a total population of 57. One of the Ht was not available to offer data.

Using the government-accredited Creative Arts curriculum (NaCCA, 2019) for Ghana's primary schools as a benchmark, we investigated the training backgrounds of the teachers. Through classroom observations and focus group discussions, we also examined instructional strategies being used by the teachers to implement the Creative Arts curriculum. Upon obtaining permission from the headteachers and having individually informed consent of the teachers, a meeting was scheduled. All teachers participated in focus group discussions held on school-by-school basis, having six teachers in each group. The discussion in each group lasted for an average of one hour.

During the focus group discussion in one of the schools, we were informed that two of the participants had gone for a workshop elsewhere. So, we resorted to telephone interviews, on the next day, lasting for approximately thirty-minute, to solicit data from each of them. Furthermore, creative works produced by the learners were observed. Asking semi-structured questions, we did not control what teachers said about their training backgrounds and teaching strategies. Rather, we asked participants to clarify the information they provided, where there was a need. Once we had gathered enough information, with no new information across participants, we established data saturation as Patton (2015) recommends. Thematic analysis was done by going through the six main phases as demonstrated by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke thus (a) familiarisation with the data, (b) generation of codes, (c) generation of initial themes, (d) reviewing initial themes, (e) defining and naming themes, and (f) writing the research report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). We began with deductive coding, guided by the

research objectives, and then, used inductive coding to derive unpredicted codes directly from the data itself.

4. Data Presentation and Discussion

This study sought to investigate the training backgrounds of Creative Arts teachers and observe teaching strategies employed by the teachers in public primary schools within Winneba, in the Central Region of Ghana. It also aimed to find out artistic works that learners were able to do as part of their learning process. The interviews and focus group discussions unearthed the training backgrounds in addition to other demographic data on the participants, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic data on participants (Ht represents Headteacher)

S/N	Teacher (Initials)	Highest Level of Education	Years of Teaching CA
1	EY	B. A. Early Grade Ed.	1
2	FA	B.Sc. Accounting	8
3	RT	Diploma in Basic Ed.	3
4	SJ	B.A. Social Studies Ed.	1
5	VM	B.Sc. Agric. Science	½
6	WS	B.Sc. Accounting	12
7	LF	B. A. Art Education	13
8	DA	B. A. Twi Education	4
9	SN	B. A. Music Education	1
10	ET	B. A. Graphic Design	5
11	DO	B. A. Art Education	2
12	GA	B. A. Fante Education	2
13	SK	B. A. Special Education	1
14	RK	B. Ed. Graphic Design	5
15	FT	B. A. Art Education	4
16	IP	B.A. Social Studies Ed.	4
17	CP	B. A. Art Education	9
18	AK	B. A. Fante Education	1
19	Ht 1	N/A	N/A
20	Ht 2	N/A	N/A

Source: Field Data

The data demonstrated that the teachers had diverse durations of experiences in teaching the Creative Arts. Twelve (12) teachers have taught the subject for less than 5 years and four (4) teachers taught it for 5-10 years, while two (2) other teachers had taught the subject for 11-15 year.

4.1 Training Background of Creative Arts Teachers
Table 1 above indicates that many Creative Arts teachers had training backgrounds that were not relevant to the subject. Out of the 18 participants, who were classroom teachers in the study, only 8 teachers had a first degree in programmes that could be considered as aspects of the Creative Arts. Thus, four teachers had a Bachelor of Arts in Arts (B. A.) in Art Education; two teachers had B. A. in Graphic Design, while only one teacher had B. A. in Music Education. The remaining ten teachers had a first degree but in areas that were not relevant to the Creative Arts. They included one teacher having B. A. in Early Grade Education, one teacher having Diploma in Basic Education, two teachers having B. A.

Social Studies Education, while two teachers had B. Sc. in Accounting. Others included one teacher who held B. A. in Twi Education, two holding B.A. in Fante Education, and one teacher with a B. A. in Special Education. This implies that the majority of teachers in Winneba lacked the requisite training background to implement the Creative Arts curriculum. This curriculum content-teacher expertise incompatibility was evident when one of the participants shared his sense of frustration, saying:

> *As for me, Music is the most difficult thing for me. Sometimes, I don't even know what to do. They say you should demonstrate the dance movements to the learners. But how to do the demonstration, they don't tell you. So, if I realise that I can't do it, I have to skip it and choose something else that I can do with the class. ... I think they have to do something about it.*

On the contrary, the teacher who had the music education background indicated that she could teach some other aspects within the visual arts strand:

> *I do drawing and modelling with them. Sometimes we do paper. But as for the jewelry and the rest, I don't do them because I am not know much about how to do them.*

A headteacher confirmed this sense of deficiency by disclosing that

> *The teachers are trying their best, but many of them are struggling with the subject.*

The headteacher proceeded by soliciting expert support for the teacher, thus:

> *We will be very grateful if you can organise a workshop for us.*

Another headteacher remarked:

> *Some Creative Arts teachers teach the subject, based on their limited understanding of its content.*

Similarly, another headteacher observed this:

> *The background knowledge of most teachers in Creative Arts is low… teachers lack the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to effectively teach the subject.*

These perceived limitations were understandable, as many of the teachers had not received specialised training in Creative Arts education.

4.2 Instructional Strategies Used by Teachers

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.

According to Sarfo (2007), instructional strategies refer to the methods or techniques that a teacher chooses to ensure students grasp the intended knowledge, skill, or attitude. These strategies include various approaches that promote meaningful interaction between teachers and students, ultimately enhancing learning. Similarly, Singh and Rana (2004) define instructional strategies as deliberate plans

that create engagement among the teacher, students, and content-or any combination of these-to influence the learning process, either directly or indirectly. Delacrux (1997) characterises instructional strategies as an all-encompassing teaching framework that both structures subject content and directs the design of learning materials and activities while guiding students' engagement.

Data from classroom observations and interviews with the teachers indicated that the teacher used two main instructional strategies in teaching the Creative Arts. These are as demonstration and group discussion. One of the teachers describe how he engaged his learners during Creative Arts lessons, using the demonstration strategy thus:

> *I make sure they are all attentive while I do it for them to see. First, I show them the clay, and the picture of the object that is to be modelled, e. g. an animal. I then proceed by demonstrating how to roll, pinch, and shape the clay into forms, explaining each movement slowly and encouraging them to follow along. As they worked, I walk around, offering gentle feedback, thus, praising their effort, showing them how to refine details with tools, and helping them overcome challenges like sticking pieces together. Through this interactive, hands-on approach thereby ensuring a joyful, supportive classroom atmosphere.*

Demonstration refers to the teacher performing an activity so that learners can observe how it is done to help prepare learner to transfer theory to practical application. Furthermore, the demonstration strategy involves the teacher showing learners how to do something (Adekoya & Olatoye, 2011). Demonstration helps the learner to acquire knowledge by modelling the teacher (demonstrator) while promoting self-confidence and providing opportunity for targeted questions and answers. It also allows attention to be focused on specific details rather than general theories although it is of limited value for people who do not learn best by observing others, may not be appropriate for the different learning rates of the participants, and requires that demonstrator have specialised expertise.

Srinivasan, Wilkes, Stevenson, Nguyen, and Slavin (2007) posit that the group project teaching strategy seeks to help the group focus on creative problem solving through collaboration. Using the group project strategy, the facilitator encourages discovery in a manner in which both the learners and facilitator share responsibility for achieving a desired learning goal. During a focus group discussion, a participant shared information on how she employed the group project strategy in his Creative Arts lessons as follows:

> *For weaving, since we don't have enough resources, sometimes, I put the learners in small groups like 3-5 in a group and they work together. We begin the lesson by watching, and discussing a brief video of skilled weavers to provide a guide and inspiration. Then, each member of the group takes turns weaving and supporting one another in maintaining proper tension and pattern consistency. The group project approach helps to enhance their understanding of weaving techniques and also help them develop necessary skills such as teamwork, creative thinking, and collective satisfaction in their finished work.*

Group projects makes learners actively involved participants and stimulates peer group learning while helping participants explore pre-existing knowledge and build on what they know. Group discussion also facilitates exchange of ideas and awareness of mutual concerns; and promotes development of critical thinking skills. It can, however, potentially degenerate into off-task or social conversations, and can be frustrating for learners when they are at significantly distinct levels of knowledge and skill.

4.3 Integration Strategy

Several studies revealed that the most appropriate strategy for teaching the Creative Arts was to integrate Creative Arts content (Mamvuto, 2019; Mannathoko & Mberengwa, 2016; Philpott & Plummeridge, 2001; Tordini, 2018). Contrarily, the participants indicated that they were not familiar with the use of integration as a strategy for teaching Creative Arts. Although some of them knew the term in relation to other subjects, they did know how it applied to teaching the Creative Arts. This was evident when one participant admitted:

> *I know that we have integration in other subjects like Integrated Science but I have not heard about integrated Creative Arts before. So, I don't know how it is done.*

Another participant expressed his understanding of integration, stating that:

> *Integration in education was a policy that was introduced some years ago for teaching general literacy skills, where every teacher, regardless of subject area, was required to pay attention to proper language development of the learner. However, in Creative Arts, I don't actually do that integration.*

4.4 Creative Works of the Learners

It is worth-reporting that depending on the artistic ability of each teacher the individual teachers taught a particular aspect of the Creative Art curriculum separately, ignoring the other aspects. This separate-aspect teaching strategy could enable their learners produce some creative works as shown in Figure 1 below. However, the teacher could not engage learners to discuss functional interconnectivities of these art works in real-life contexts, partly because their insight is limited to only one aspect of the curriculum.
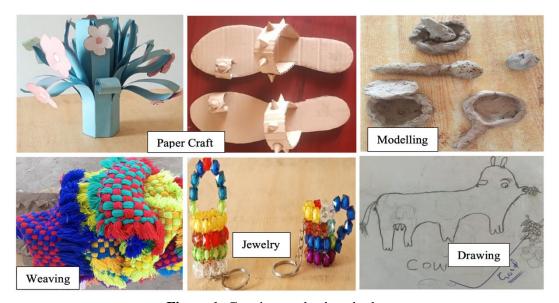

Figure 1: Creative works done by learners

Source: Field data

Findings of this study revealed that teachers in Winneba had taught the Creative Arts for a varying number of years (1-13). The teaching experience, backed by innate creative abilities and, apparent necessity, propelled the novice teacher to engage learners in some basic artistic activities. This sense of

determination among the teachers was found worthwhile as it commensurate the spirit of the curriculum, intended to reinvigorate the prioritisation Creative Arts curriculum instruction in the schools (Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) of Ghana Education Service, 2007), to tap its known benefits for learners in particular and the nation in general.

Also, findings of the study indicated that the teachers did not have training backgrounds in Creative Arts instruction that could enable them use the integration strategy. This finding corroborates an earlier finding where Nompula (2012) argues that teachers did not know how to integrate the different areas of arts and culture learning, despite having theoretical ideas of how to do it. This shortfall created the situation where each teacher taught only a selected aspect of the curriculum in their lessons, thereby neglecting the other aspects; a practice that fails to meet the holistic learner-development expectation of the Creative Art curriculum.

It is, therefore. heartwarming that literature presents a compelling case for arts integration in primary education, documenting benefits across cognitive, academic, and socioemotional domains (Samuels, 2024; Srivastava, 2023; Weisberg et al., 2025; Xie & Sun, 2024). However, realising this potential requires addressing persistent implementation challenges through improved teacher preparation, resource allocation, and policy support (Burnard & Colucci-Gray, 2021)

The extensive argument for the use of the integrated approach to teaching Creative Arts demonstrates its significant advantages over traditional siloed methods, where different teachers deliver separate arts disciplines or the same teacher teaches the various aspects in a segregated approach. The evidence demonstrated in research findings shows that integrated strategies foster deeper cognitive connections by allowing students to explore the natural nexus between visual arts, music, drama, and dance (Anderson, 2018; Bamford, 2020; Winner et al., 2016). This approach mirrors real-world creative practice, where artistic disciplines rarely exist in isolation, and has been shown to enhance creative problem-solving skills by 23% compared to single-discipline instruction (Sheridan et al., 2022).

Finally, the call by teachers and headteachers for workshops (in-service training programmes and continuous professional development) on Creative Arts teaching strategies, with emphasis on integration, demands an imperative focus, following the discovery that the pedagogical benefits of integrated arts instruction extend beyond cognitive gains to include improved teaching/learning, more meaningful assessment practices, and life-long collaborations. When generalist and specialist teachers co-plan integrated units, they create richer learning experiences that leverage their combined expertise (Ewing, 2020; Russell-Bowie, 2020). This collaborative model also addresses common implementation barriers such as scheduling conflicts and resource duplication that often plague siloed arts programmes (Crow, 2020; Upitis et al., 2017). Furthermore, holistic assessment of cross-arts projects provides educators with more comprehensive insights into student learning than discipline-specific evaluations, better capturing the complexity of creative development (Dinham, 2021). These advantages suggest that integrated approaches such as intradisciplinary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary (Mannathoko & Mamvuto, 2018) not only improve Creative Arts education quality but also make it more sustainable within standard school structures.

Despite these demonstrated benefits, challenges remain in transitioning from compartmentalised to integrated arts instruction. Many teachers report needing additional professional development to confidently implement interdisciplinary arts strategies (Bresler, 2019; Burnard, 2018). However, successful case studies highlight that when schools provide adequate planning time and professional learning opportunities, integrated arts programmes flourish and demonstrate measurable impacts on both artistic development and academic achievement (Catterall et al., 2018; Hallam, 2015). The growing body of research strongly suggests that educational systems should prioritise integrated approach to instruction to prepare students for a world that values creative, interdisciplinary thinking and to ensure equitable access to comprehensive arts education for all learners. Finally, the study corroborates Addo and Adu (2022) that integration in Creative Arts education in Ghana's primary schools reflects the African lived experience because it addresses the multifaceted nature of all

knowledge as social, cultural, philosophical, historical, and psychological. To reap the intended benefits of teaching and learning the Creative Arts, then, means approaching it through integration.

5. Conclusions

This study sought to investigate out the training backgrounds of Creative Arts teachers. It was also meant to find out strategies employed by teachers in teaching the Creative Arts curriculum and artworks produced by learners in the pursuit of the curriculum. Findings indicated that the teachers had diverse extents of experience in teaching the Creative Arts for an average of 4 years.

However, the majority of teachers in Winneba lacked a relevant training background to effectively implement the Creative Arts curriculum. The training deficit had led to a state of frustration among teachers, as they were compelled to teach the subject because there were no teachers with the requisite training to do so. The teachers, therefore, treated the curriculum with a picky attitude towards the binary strands and their analogous content details; choosing to teach their preferred topics, while ignoring their perceived difficult areas, which, in most instances, were Music, Dance and Drama (the Performing Arts).

Despite their training deficiencies, it was observed that the teachers employed their capabilities in the individual aspects of the arts to help their learners produce artworks in the areas of paper craft, modelling, weaving, jewelry, and drawing. Their major difficulty was the inability to integrate the various aspects of the Creative Arts - visual arts and performing arts - in their lessons as expected of a trained Creative Arts teacher.

Future research will employ more diverse methodologies and cultural perspectives to offer further in-depth understanding of the transformative potential of the integrated pedagogy in the Creative Arts Education. Finally, additional research on effective ways of equipping teachers with the prerequisite skills necessary to teach both visual and performing arts aspects of the creative arts syllabus could be conducted. It is believed that this would help empower teachers with the needed skills to implement the Creative Arts curriculum effectively and efficiently.

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