



BECOMING AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE ART TEACHER IN PRE-TERTIARY SCHOOLS IN GHANA

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Introduction

In every field of endeavour trainees and new entrance often experience anxieties which sometimes make them psychologically unbalance. These anxieties stem from the fear of unknown challenges that might confront them in their new job or profession. It is with much enthusiasm that 'Artwatch Ghana', a creative art think tank managed by experienced professional art educators, partner with the amalgam of the four associations in the School of Creative Arts to organize this seminar for the benefit of the students in the faculty. The focus of this presentation is on the nature of art, scope of art, concept of teaching, methods of teaching, challenges of school-based pre-tertiary art education in Ghana, qualities of an efficient and effective art teacher and strategies for teaching art effectively.

Nature of art

Many scholars have expressed various ideas to define the nature of art but there has not been any universally accepted definition for art due to the infinite nature of the subject. Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku and Baffoe (1999), for instance see art as a design and explain design as a plan used to produce an art work. Deckie (1993) defines art as a creative process that produces an artwork characterized by aesthetic and non-aesthetic qualities. Analysis of the above definitions or art reveals that art is a creative process or plan that results in a tangible or non-tangible artistic product which possesses physical and intrinsic qualities. The complexities that characterize the nature of art have engaged academic discussions for years. Getlein, (2002) also emphasizes that it is impossible to exhaustively describe the nature of art and suggests that we can deepen our understanding of the nature of art if we ask the following questions about an artwork: "Who made it? Is it beautiful? Does it depict appearances faithfully? What does it mean? and others.

Inherent in the complexity of the nature of art are certain distinct qualities that permeate through all opinions shared about art. It includes the following:

- ❖ Art is characterized by high application of creativity
- ❖ Art is a universal visual and non-visual language



- ❖ Art is self-expression
- ❖ Art is the epitome of physical beauty
- ❖ Art is the manifestation of intuitive creative ability
- ❖ Art is idealistic
- ❖ Art is pragmatic
- ❖ Art is originality
- ❖ Art is innovative
- ❖ Art is a functional activity or product.

Scope of art

Art is classified into creative arts and liberal arts (Ogumor, 1993). He further explains that liberal arts apply low level of creativity and includes subjects such as psychology, history, philosophy and literature whilst creative arts apply high level of creativity and categorized it into performing arts and visual arts. Amenuke et al (1999) also buttress Ogumor's classification and categorize art broadly into two: performing art and visual art and give examples of performing art as music, drama, dance, comedy, poetry and others; and visual arts as sculpture, ceramics, painting, graphic art, metal art, textiles, basketry, leather works, jewelry, body art, architecture, stage designing interior decoration, fashion design amongst others.

Concept of teaching

Another complex subject in education is the concept of teaching. Various opinions have been expressed by different organizations and individuals about the nature of teaching. To some, teaching is an art, method, process or science of imparting knowledge, skills and values into a learner. Others also view teaching as the process of inducing learners to like learning. Some also say, teaching involves the process of leading and guiding a learner to find knowledge and develop skills and values. Reflections on these opinions establish a symbiotic relationship between a learner and a teacher which is cardinal in achieving effective teaching and learning in every education system including school-based education.

Learning on the other hand, is individualized and concerns a learner. It involves a change that occurs in an individual or learner which is brought about by developing new skills, understanding a scientific law, changing an attitude, or acquiring new knowledge or experience. Learning relatively brings about a permanent change and it is acquired intentionally or unintentionally (Reece & Walker, 1997). The authors further stated that methods of learning include observation, reading, discussion, listening, practice and others and mentioned some learning theories as behaviorism, cognitivism, humanism, idealism and pragmatism. Reo (1998) also describes teaching as a set of events outside a learner which are designed to support internal processes of learning. He adds that teaching is an instruction which is outside the learner and learning is internal to a learner.



In formal education, learning to a large extent is induced by effective teaching, therefore, there is the need to establish a cordial and friendly relationship between a learner and his/her teacher because both depend on each other for success. This brings us to find out what must be the role of a learner and a teacher in the teaching and learning process? As we set out to unlock this puzzle, it is important to emphasize that there are certain unique personal qualities required of an art teacher and art student which require perfect reconciliation to create the necessary rapport before effective teaching and learning can take place. Below are some of the qualities required of an efficient and effective art teacher:

- ❖ Must be knowledgeable in the subject area.
- ❖ Must have high standard of technical skills (Craftsmanship).
- ❖ He/she must be creative, versatile and original.
- ❖ Must be flexible and dynamic.
- ❖ Must be entrepreneur minded, analytical, curious and resourceful.
- ❖ Must be current and proactive.
- ❖ Must be patient, polite and affable.
- ❖ Inspirational and a role model (Vivualmanna.com, 2012).

McKeachie, Welbert and Marilla, (2006), Gross and Barbara (1993) and Popper (1965) are in support of these qualities. Phillips and Burbules (2000) who suggest the following as the qualities required of a great art teacher:

Qualities of Great Art teacher

Teacher and Students' Emotion, Motivation, and Behavior	Teacher and Student Interaction
Enjoy their subject	Impartial
Enjoy their students	Value their students' diverse cultures, talents, and ways of learning.
Take risks and "push the envelope"	Are approachable
Are lively and inspiring	Are aware of nonverbal dynamics.
Work to keep themselves and their Students from becoming complacent	Learn from their students and tell them so.
Foster self-motivation in their students.	<u>Encourage cooperation</u> among students.
Don't give up on their students.	Are empathetic.
Encourage each of their students to believe in themselves.	Inspire students to develop self confidence
Organization and Planning	Presentation
Are organized.	Incorporate visuals, movement, sound, experiences, anecdotes to make the lesson interesting.
Keep good records.	Listen well.



Plan carefully.	Encourage active learning by getting students to talk, write, move, and create.
Start and end the class on time.	Know their subject thoroughly, yet present it succinctly.
Have their materials in order.	Set a good pace and vary the pace.
Share the plan for the day in a handout/pdf or on the board.	Speak naturally, clearly, and loud enough but not too loud.
	Have a sense of humor/fun, but know how to keep order.

Garner (2014) also says a good art teacher will reach his students verbal/linguistically, mathematical/logically, bodily/kinesthically, visual/spatial, musically/rhythmically, interpersonally, intra-personally and naturalistically. He stressed that the more these intelligence are addressed in a lesson, the more students are reached and learn. He therefore admonishes that several of these intelligences must be integrated in an art lesson. Below are some integrated activities that can be used to address various intelligence in an art lesson:

Intelligence	Learning activities
Linguistics	Write-ups, research reports, jury, presentations, poetry, etc.
Logical	Idea development, problem-solving, designing, interpretation etc.
Kinesthetic	Modeling, carving, weaving lettering, dancing, etc.
Visual	Illustration, computer graphics, painting, drawing, designing of posters etc.
Musical	playing instruments, composing, creating lyrical patterns, singing, etc.
Interpersonal	Group discussions, field research, group projects, industrial attachments, etc.
Intra-personal	Self-directed projects, self-assessment, goal setting, emotional processing etc.

Students must also be self-motivated, have interest in the creative art subject, be intelligent, creative, curious, versatile, dynamic, flexible, original, analytical, resilient, patient, tolerant and hardworking. On the other hand, students who exhibit reverse of these traits will not compliment the art teacher's effort to facilitate teaching and learning. As much as the above qualities are relevant for art teachers and students, an efficient and effective art teacher must apply relevant teaching methods and strategies which are inherent in the following teaching processes: Pre-teaching planning (preparation of lesson order, scheme of work and lesson plan), lesson delivery and lesson evaluation (Dave, 1975; Aitken, 2014).

Pre-teaching planning: An efficient art teacher will consider the following before and during the preparation of lesson order, scheme of work and lesson plan:

- ❖ Plans his/her lesson order and scheme of work base on the subject syllabus
- ❖ Prepares professional lesson order and detailed scheme of work before the ensuing team commences



- ❖ Re-organize his/her topics to suit students learning abilities and facilitate progressive assimilation.
- ❖ Breaks down the teaching topics to relevant measurable general and specific objectives
- ❖ Organize lesson objectives systematically from easiest to complex
- ❖ Allocate realistic and flexible timeline for the topics outlined in the pre-teaching materials
- ❖ Prepares factual and concise teaching or instructional notes to build the content for each lesson
- ❖ Select relevant Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs) and teaching or instructional methods and strategies to deliver each specific object
- ❖ Plans relevant classroom teacher and learner activities
- ❖ Plans relevant questions to be used to evaluate every specific objective
- ❖ Looks for relevant reference publications and sources to guide students' further research and independent studies on the topics taught.

Lesson delivery: An efficient and effective art teacher would employ the following strategies during the implementation of a lesson:

- ❖ Uses the lesson plan as a guide
- ❖ Uses students Relevant Previous Knowledge to introduce his/her lessons
- ❖ Puts up a friendly behaviour to attract students' attention
- ❖ Uses simple expressions or language to deliver lessons
- ❖ Presents lessons to the level of students' intellectual abilities
- ❖ Articulates facts clearly and emphasize on core points
- ❖ Helps students to identify relevant differences and similarities in and between the topic and previous topics or other subjects
- ❖ Uses thought-provoking questions to keep students alert
- ❖ Encourages every student in the class to play active role in the teaching and learning process
- ❖ Aid students to correct misunderstandings in facts and concepts
- ❖ Uses the correct TLMs and teaching method(s) at the right time
- ❖ Uses comical interludes to ease students' tension and sustain their attention
- ❖ Distributes questions evenly according to student's abilities
- ❖ Uses relevant local examples during lesson presentations to facilitate their assimilation
- ❖ Exhibits high level of mastery the subject area and over the topic under discussion
- ❖ Presents lesson in a logical sequence that will facilitate students understanding of a process. Example from knowledge to the highest level of Blooms' taxonomy of learning
- ❖ Applies principles of 'sociometry' when putting students into groups
- ❖ Assigns task to every student according to his/her abilities
- ❖ Uses varying teaching methods and strategies



- ❖ Stands his/her authority on the class to gain maximum class control
- ❖ Uses appropriate reinforcement(s) to boost students' enthusiasm
- ❖ Encourages and guides students to apply the knowledge, skills, values and competencies they have acquired in real life situations

Lesson evaluation: An efficient and effective art teacher would employ the following strategies to evaluate his/her lesson/teaching outcomes:

- ❖ Uses knowledge and understanding questions to measure students' level of assimilation in class during the lesson.
- ❖ Uses application and evaluation questions for homework assignments
- ❖ Uses salient points to evaluate students' level of assimilation when concluding a lesson
- ❖ Uses text specification table to plan and prepare end of term and year examination questions
- ❖ Prepares end-of-term and year examinations to measure various levels of Bloom's taxonomy
- ❖ Allocate time and weight to questions according to their level of difficulty
- ❖ Prepares good marking scheme to score his/her questions (Atiase, 1971).

Apart from the suggestions outlined above, incredibleart.org, (2014) have also pointed out the following instructional methods and strategies art teachers can employ in their teaching to improve teaching and learning, They must:

- ❖ Encourage project-based learning among their students
- ❖ Use integrated thematic instruction approach
- ❖ Use enquiry-based learning approach
- ❖ Learning style of student strategy
- ❖ Multiple intelligence approach
- ❖ Prepare and evaluate their lessons based on Bloom's taxonomy of learning.

Aside these tidbits, it is imperative that as new entrance into the teaching fraternity, you must have prior information about the conditions that pertain in our schools so that you can make relevant adjustments on the field. Below are some of the challenges that are confronting pre-tertiary art education (Essel, Agyarkoh, Sumaila, and Yankson, 2014) in Ghana:

- ❖ Inadequate trained art educators in our basic schools
- ❖ Lack of art workshops, tools and equipment in basic schools
- ❖ Negative attitudes of some headmasters, teachers and parents towards creative arts programmes
- ❖ Calibre of students placed or admitted into the creative arts programmes in Senior High Schools especially, *grades C to D* Day boarding schools.
- ❖ Attitude of some students from other programmes towards creative arts students in SHS



- ❖ Attitude of some teachers from other programmes towards creative arts students and tutors in SHS and JHS
- ❖ Low enrolment into creative arts programmes at SHS and JHS

These and other challenges bedeviling art education in Ghana have created false stigma on the programme. It therefore behooves on you as you join your senior colleagues on the field to play significant roles to complement their efforts in conscientizing the public to correct the negative perceptions towards the programme. Finally, I would conclude by leaving you with the following suggestions which I believe will help you on the field. You must:

- ❖ Endeavour to set-up art shop at your station when necessary or exhibit a sense of art entrepreneurship inside and outside the school and the community you live.
- ❖ Encourage your students to execute art contracts for students, teachers and people in the community.
- ❖ Guide your students to execute murals and environmental sculptures in and outside your school and undertake minor art related projects for the school.
- ❖ Lead your students to organize departmental exhibitions in the school and the community.
- ❖ Play active role in publicity and exhibition committees during organization of speech-days, home coming, and anniversaries in your schools.
- ❖ Initiate or encourage the formation of visual art club or association, drama, poetry, music and dancing club in the school.
- ❖ Encourage the membership of the creative arts association(s) in your school to embark on community service or exercise social responsibility in the community.
- ❖ Join professional art associations, such as Ghana Art Teachers Association (GATA)
- ❖ Be an advocate for creative arts in your school.
- ❖ Engage colleague teachers from different departments in discussions on creative arts
- ❖ Endeavour to publish a textbook or compile a handout on the subject(s) you teach
- ❖ Encourage music and literature students to join musical and drama groups outside the school
- ❖ Encourage visual art students to attach themselves to art shops in the town or locality or undertake industrial attachments in with relevant art companies during vacations
- ❖ Organize regular field trip for the students to visit relevant art companies, centres, workshops, galleries, museums, art exhibitions, bazars, and art faculties and departments in tertiary institutions.
- ❖ Prepare students to take part in creative arts drama competitions, art festivals, workshops and clinics
- ❖ Take part in co-curricular activities



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