

OVERVIEW OF ART EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA - GHANA

F. K. Duku

University of Education, Winneba

&

P. Osei-Poku

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Abstract

Quality Art education should be the hallmark of the Government of Ghana and Art education authorities for the development of the nation. Teachers of Art at the various levels of education should be well equipped with the necessary artistic training, teaching skills and strategies that would enable them to deliver the subject matter effectively. Quality Art education can be suppressed if there is poor Art teaching and poor performance of Art teachers in Ghanaian schools and colleges. Teachers who fall victim to such situations should not be blamed alone but the system that produced them should also be held responsible. A cursory study of the state of Art teaching in Ghanaian senior high schools makes it imperative to examine the Art education programme in the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). As a first step of the research, this paper studies the enrolment of students admitted over ten academic years; credits, contact hours and structure of courses offered; graduation of students for the period under review; and the extent to which the curriculum is achieving its intended outcome in the teaching profession. The results have indicated, among others, that although the contents of the courses are intensive and extensive, they are nonetheless relevant to cover the requirements for the world of work.

Introduction

Art education, as used in this paper, is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competencies in visual art subjects with substantial pedagogy, carried out in the University of Education, Winneba, (UEW) with the view that the learner could teach art effectively. The Department of Art Education at UEW was established in 1992 by Ghana parliament under PNDC Law 322 to meet the growing demand for qualified teachers necessitated by the 1987 education reforms (UEW, 2011). UEW remained a college until 2004 when Act 672 was enacted to upgrade the status to a full university. In 1998, various courses were designed and run by the department which included the Bachelor's degree. Art education programmes are being offered in the undergraduate programme leading to the award of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) degree.

Courses offered are for long term periods of study and the university has to go through a number of procedures involving discussions and evaluations before a particular course is approved.

The objectives of the undergraduate programme are to:

- equip students with the basic knowledge, analytical skills and methodologies in teaching and managing Art related institutions and organisations.
- produce Art graduates capable of identifying, designing and manipulating local resources and applying them to teaching and learning.
- produce a teacher capable of teaching Art in the Junior and Senior High School levels.

Throughout the stages of development of the Art Education programmes at UEW, no comprehensive evaluation has been done to ascertain the impact of the instituted programme on the recipient schools and the nation at large. Some heads of schools in the Ghana Education Service are quite apprehensive about recruiting Art teachers for fear of non performance. This may be because of non performance of some Art teachers who were previously recruited to the schools of such heads. Without doubt most Art graduates were not trained as Art teachers, but as studio artists for the industry such as in textiles, painting, graphic design, sculpture, ceramics, and metal art. Basically, these graduates come from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. Although these graduates may be good in the skills and techniques of Art production, they lack the requisite pedagogical strategies in ensuring that effective teaching and learning has taken place.

This confirms Daichendt's (2010) assertion that on Master of Fine Art programmes (presumed to be in the USA), those who will teach Art at post-compulsory level receive no instruction in education. Unfortunately, our senior high schools are inundated with these non professional art teachers. The issue becomes more challenging when recruited personnel accept to teach any art subjects in which they did not specialise at the university. For instance, it is not uncommon to find a specialist in sculpture who is teaching graphic design or a textile specialist teaching picture making in the high schools. Orecks (2006) affirms that such teachers lack both an artistic pedagogy and an understanding of the aesthetic qualities of experience.

Inexperienced Art education students on professional attachment may also face difficulty in delivery. Evidence gathered during supervision of UEW students on internship reveals interns' near ineptitude in teaching courses offered them. Amissah (2004, Unpublished) claims that some graduate teachers from the College of Art in KNUST, Department of Art Education in UEW, and polytechnics who teach textiles at the senior high schools are not equipped enough to handle the subject confidently. Ross and Opoku-Asare (2009) also declare that "poor Art teaching and performance of Art teachers especially at the elementary, secondary, and training college levels are factors that exacerbate the quality of Art education in Ghana" p. 2.

All the foregoing factors that eventually culminate in low quality of Art education do not only cast a slur on those teachers who perform badly but also the system that produced them. It is therefore essential that such a system is critically evaluated to ascertain the facts. There is the need to evaluate the programme to find out their impact on the nation and the future direction of such programme. According to Moore (1983) when there is no evaluation of performance and measurement, the organisation is likely to become choked with services and operations which are outmoded. Education and training needs are constantly changing with changing technology, management processes and modes of delivery. In order to determine the effectiveness of various curricula, it is essential to carry out curriculum evaluation. The philosophical underpinning of this research is based on Socrates' opinion that the "unexamined life is not worth living" (Nowell, 1999:9, Unpublished). For the purpose of this paper the researchers aimed at:

- examining the enrolment of students admitted over ten (10) academic years
- studying the credits, contact hours and structure of courses offered
- examining the graduation of students for the ten (10) year period
- finding out the extent to which the curriculum is achieving its intended outcomes in the teaching profession.

Methodology

This research adopted the mixed methods approach. This offered the researchers a legitimate use of multiple approaches in answering research questions outlined in this research. In this case, (Cresswell, 2003) was of the view that a researcher might collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and merge the data to form one interpretation of the data. This interpretation would provide both quantitative information about magnitude and frequency as well as qualitative information of individual perspectives from participants and the context in which they were commenting on the research problem.

The population available for this research from which data were collected included students pursuing the Art education programme as well as lecturers of the various Art education programmes. Alumni of the Art department, who are teaching in the various institutions in the country, including the heads of such institutions, were also involved. Retired lecturers of the department who are no more in the service of the University were also contacted for their professional responses. The instruments used to gather information for this research were interviews, questionnaires, documentation review, and observation. In all the studies, 140 students from the department of Art Education were the main respondents. Besides, six lecturers 20 alumni of the Art department, 10 heads of institutions and four retired lecturers were contacted.

Results and Discussion

Enrolment

Table 1 provides record of student intake on Art education in the university from 2002 to 2011. The first enrolment for the Bachelor of Education started in the 1999/2000 academic year. Hitherto, the department of Art Education was offering Diploma and Post-diploma certificates to its graduands. From Table 1, it is evident that student enrolment rose gradually from 2002 until it reached its peak in 2005. The study reveals a drop in intake on the undergraduate programme at UEW from 2005 to 2011. This was explained that from 2005 to 2007, the department had an admission quota of 200 students. In 2005, the department was able to admit 188 (94%) of its quota. This figure consistently reduced year by year at the rate of between 16% - 19% until the quota was officially sliced to 150 students for the 2007/2008 academic year. The new quota is highly commendable since the pressure on the limited resources will be minimised to ensure quality of teaching and learning. In 2009/2010 academic year, a new batch of students was admitted to begin the Bachelor of Arts in Art Education. The commencement of that programme brought to an end the Bachelor of Education programme in Art Education. The current state of enrolment affords faculty adequate supervisory role over students they teach and has also reduced the student-lecture ratio to 1:29. This enables faculty to assign students with enough work, assess and discuss the results with students to enhance performance.

Table 1: Number of full-time students enrolled for the period of 2002 to 2011

Academic Year	Bachelor's Degree		
	Male	Female	Total
2002/2003	36	21	57
2003/2004	43	19	62
2004/2005	55	45	100
2005/2006	125	63	188
2006/2007	121	47	168
2007/2008	102	55	157
2008/2009	85	42	127
2009/2010	89	35	124
2010/2011	105	39	144
2011/2012	47	14	61

Entry Requirements

In order to determine the quality of students admitted over the years under review it was pertinent to collect data on the requirements and criteria for gaining admission to study the various programmes in Art Education. UEW (2008) stipulates the requirements of the BA programmes in the following categories:

Senior High School (SHS) Certificate Holders

Must have at least, **six (6)** WASSCE credits including **three (3)** core subjects: English Language, Mathematics and Integrated Science as well as **three (3)** electives in Art subjects with a total aggregate of 36 or better

Mature Applicants

- a. The candidate must have attained the age of 25 years at the time of application. Should have a minimum of a Senior High School Certificate.
- b. *DBS, RSA, ABCE and GBCE Certificate Holders should apply as mature applicants.*
- c. Must pass the UEW Entrance Examination.

Diploma Holders

- a. Must possess a Higher National Diploma or its equivalence from a previous area or field of study in a recognised institution.
- b. The class obtained should be at least, a second class lower division to qualify for placement at level 200 or 300.
- c. Must pass an interview.

School Certificate/GCE Holders

- a. **Five (5)** credits at GCE "O" Level including English Language and Mathematics as well as **two (2)** "A" Level subjects
- b. Passes other than General Paper in relevant subjects. Applicants with 'A' Level results which are more than five (5) years old should apply as mature applicants.

It should be noted that the entry requirements for the degree have been the standard for admission of students and anything short of them may stifle the quality of training. Admissions were found to be strictly on merit. To a large extent, applicants who were admitted on the basis of 'protocol' were found to have satisfied the minimum entry requirements before concessions were given. This measure has raised the quality of students' performance thereby ensuring effective teaching and learning in the lecture rooms.

Courses (categories, their credits and contact hours)

With reference to the undergraduate coursework, the Art education programme at UEW requires a maximum of 138 credits from first year to the third year. The Art components take a total of 87 credits with university general courses taking the remaining 51 credits. This is supposed to provide adequate hands-on training and cognitive skills to enable graduates teach with confidence. The programme structure is to increase the contact hours for elective courses in which the students would specialise thus, building their capacity to teach elective Visual Art subjects, at pre-tertiary levels.

Every course pursued in the undergraduate Art education programme has a three credit weighting except a course on School Internship. However, the contact hours (CH) may differ depending on the nature of course – the course could be purely theoretical, purely practical or mixed. Students should meet their course lecturers at least three hours a week. On

the average, a semester has thirteen weeks of teaching out of the sixteen weeks. Normally registration runs concurrently with lectures while the remaining three weeks are used for end of semester examinations.

In effect, the total number of contact hours for a course within a semester ranges from 36 hours to 72 hours. The implication is that students should find extra hours for independent studies to supplement the official contact hours otherwise little impact could be made. In applying this principle to the larger domain, it was realised that a student typically makes 2,184 hours within four years of the course duration. This figure comprises 923 hours of general courses prescribed by the department, a total of 598 hours of the two elective courses (this could compose of either 338 hours or 260 hours depending on where the student's final studio research course is taken from) and 663 hours of the university's general courses that are pursued by all undergraduate students in the UEW (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of Credits and Contact Hours

Course Category	Total Credits	Contact Hours (F x 13)		Total Contact Hours
		Theory	Practical	
General Art Courses	54	624	299	923
Elective I (2-Dimensional Art)	18	130	208	338
Elective II (3-Dimensional Art)	15	130	130	260
University Courses	51	663	0	663
Total	138	1547	637	2184

Source: Field study at UEW

When further analysed, it can be realised that students spend too much time pursuing General Art courses (54 credits or 39.13%) and the General University courses (51 credits or 39.96%) while the two electives make 33 credits or 23.91%. By implication, the objective set by the department "to produce a teacher capable of teaching Art in the Junior and Senior High School levels" may not be achievable. A student pursues a maximum of 6 credits within a year in any of the two electives. This is quite on the low side to make any meaningful impact on the students so far as skill training is concerned. This is in sharp contrast with the General Art courses whose credits rise to 21 as maximum and General University courses having 15 credits maximum (Table 3). Much focus should be geared towards the major programme areas of the student's choice. They form the basis of specialist professional training of the prospective Art teacher.

Table 3: Credit distribution among the domains

Level	Credits	General Art Courses	Elective I (2D) Art	Elective II (3D) Art	General University Courses
Level 100	45	18 (40%)	6 (13.3%)	6 (13.3%)	15 (33.3%)
Level 200	39	12 (30.8%)	6 (15.4%)	6 (15.4%)	15 (38.5%)
Level 300	39	21 (53.9%)	6 (15.4%)	3 (7.7%)	9 (23.1%)
Level 400	15	3 (20.0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	12 (80.0%)
Total	138	54 (39.13%)	18 (13.04%)	15 (10.87%)	51 (36.96%)

Source: Field study at UEW

Course Description and Content

Most of the prescribed courses in the Art Education undergraduate curriculum have detailed descriptions that guide lecturers to handle the courses effectively. However, there are a few others that have skeletal descriptions. These courses have descriptions that make it difficult to deduce their import. The course descriptions have revealed some disparities in

content. Some fall short of providing course objectives while others have inadequate course contents. This is due to the fact that courses have been handled by different lecturers. The course content should normally outline the topics meant to be studied in the semester. This defines learning outcomes that reflect the course and is expressed in the knowledge, skills and understanding to be attained by students.

The courses are structured from foundation to advanced level to provide enough knowledge for students to broaden their scope on the courses to prepare them to become competent teachers to handle the various levels of pre-university institutions. Content selection is determined by what knowledge, concepts, principles, generalisations, theories, techniques and procedures in the Art subjects that are intended to be imparted. A critical study reveals five broad content domains – philosophical, structural, formative, historical and relational (Detmers, 1980). The scope of the philosophical content includes ideas and meanings embodied in works of art which determine the form a work of art takes and various conceptions of truth and realism.

The structural content is made up of elements and principles of design that govern the production of art articles, compositional processes, ways of structuring visual elements, visual qualities of materials and visual qualities achieved through the use of various tools.

In the formative content, learners are offered the opportunity to study the techniques of working, skills and abilities involved in Art production, capabilities of the artist in the use of tools and materials, potentials of a given medium and the criteria for judging quality of performance and product. The historical content is concerned with the chronological development of visual arts in given contexts. It also involves the connection of the past with present and future. Finally, the relational content is the content created by merging the activities in visual arts in other disciplines. It is set forward to expose learners to understand the relatedness of visual art subjects and the other disciplines.

Other findings

These findings were from responses received in studying the depth of course contents taught at the Art Education department. Respondents were 140 students on the programme and the summary of the findings has been presented in Table 4 below.

When enquired about the appropriateness of the credits assigned to the courses in relation to the workload, majority 80, (57.1%) as against 60 (42.9%) responded in the negative. This, in their view, indicated that more hours could be assigned to the courses. In effect, the increase in course credits will increase the hours teachers spend with students in the studios and classrooms. In finding out if the goals of the Art education programme were consistently pursued 100 (71.4%) respondents agreed that the goals of the programme were consistently pursued whereas 40 (28.6%) respondents disagreed. This is an indication that the programme had been planned to meet the test of time. Students attest to the resilience of the outcome in line with the output.

Some courses are developed with relatively difficult contents. It was enquired whether or not the levels of difficulty in the programme were appropriate. Eighty one (57.9%) as against 59 (42.1%) respondents were of the view that the difficulty level was appropriate. This implies that though the programme is very challenging, it is not overwhelming. There is a comforting zone from where students could take respite after some difficulties. Faculty should therefore adjust the levels of such courses to meet the needs of students without necessarily losing their values.

The Art Education curriculum should train professional Art teachers and so 117 (83.6%) as opposed to 23 (16.4%) respondents agreed that the programme contributed significantly to their professional training. Young (1999) concludes that modern societies rely on the school curriculum to give each generation access to existing knowledge. This is an

indication that the Art education curriculum has inbuilt structures to ensure that not only are students trained as Art teachers but also developed professionally.

The relevance or otherwise of the subject matter to real world issues presented in the programme received 99 (70.7%) of the respondents agreeing while 41 (29.3%) disagreed. By this, majority of the respondents' affirmation of the relevance of the programme to the real world was made apparent whilst the few students who declined were found to have wrong perception about Art. These few students may not take their studies seriously and this may reflect in their teaching during teaching practice and also in their posted schools after graduation. Ideally, by the time a candidate graduated from the programme, he/she would be aware of what the world expected from him/her. Consideration was therefore given to the programme's validity, significance, feasibility, scope, sequence, and utility.

Closely related to the above is when respondents were asked to substantiate whether the course materials were adequate for learning the subject matter or not. A hundred (71.4%) respondents viewed the current course materials for learning the subject matter as inadequate. However, 40 (28.6%) of the respondents confirmed that the course materials were adequate for learning the subject matter. It is a truism that any serious minded student who knows the benefit of his/her programme will crave for adequate and relevant materials for quality learning whereas the unconcerned ones may be satisfied with anything available. This is a challenge to both students and parents because Art Education is a programme that lends itself heavily to the use of materials for teaching and learning. In this view, students pursuing this programme are sometimes made to pay practical fees with the view to purchasing materials for their use and for the use of lecturers for demonstration purposes.

Respondents, again, were asked whether or not the evaluation methods employed by teachers reflected the important aspects of the programme. Ninety eight (70%) as against 42 (30%) of the respondents agreed that the evaluation methods reflected the important aspects of the programme. Students engage Art for two reasons: to acquire knowledge and to attain a good class for better job acquisition. Evaluation methods employed by teachers are therefore of more concern to students. Students understand that they are in the programme to acquire knowledge for their future employments. They are also aware that their future employment acquisition will greatly be influenced by the current grades they obtain. It is expected that teachers would explain to students the requirements of each grading system employed. This would afford the students an insight into teachers' expectations and enable them work towards achieving them more consciously.

Table 4: Responses on depth of courses taught

No	Question	Frequency		Percentage	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
1	Are the credits assigned to the courses appropriate to the workload?	80	60	57.1	42.9
2	Are the stated objectives of the courses consistently pursued?	40	100	28.6	71.4
3	In general, is the level of difficulty in the courses appropriate?	59	81	42.1	57.9
4	Do the courses contribute significantly to your professional training?	23	117	16.4	83.6
5	Is the relevance of the subject matter to real world issues made apparent?	41	99	29.3	70.7
6	Are the course contents sufficient to meet your job requirement?	42	98	30	70
7	Are the course materials adequate for learning the subject matter?	100	40	71.4	28.6
8	Do the evaluation methods reflect the important aspects of the courses?	42	98	30	70

Graduation

Relating the enrolment rate in Table 1 to the number of degrees awarded by UEW in Table 5, it is apparent that the completion rate of the B.Ed (Art Education) degree has not been static. In most cases, the graduation rate has been higher than the recorded numbers for that batch. This is as a result of the Diploma applicants that are enrolled at level 200 along the way. For instance, during the 2006/2007 academic year, 168 candidates were admitted to read Bachelor of Education in Art Education. These candidates were required to graduate in 2009/2010. It could, however, be observed that 180 candidates were graduated. The additional 12 students were from the Diploma holders group that joined at level 200. The graduation range has been from 98 percent to 100 percent. Only a few students were unable to graduate on schedule due to their inability of such students to satisfy the graduation requirements. Quality teaching is an influential factor on learning outcomes. Faculty ensures that students comply with graduation requirements, thereby, attending all lectures for registered courses and submitting their assignment on time. UEW is better able to disseminate quality teaching initiatives because of the information fluidity and straightforward decision-making process that characterise them. The UEW quality assurance evaluations foster institutional involvement in supporting quality teaching thereby ensuring strict compliance with laid down standards of the various departments.

Table 5: The number of degrees awarded in Art Education from 2002 to 2010.

Academic Year	Bachelor's		Total
	Male	Female	
2001/2002	5	1	6
2002/2003	17	5	22
2003/2004	30	7	37
2004/2005	51	13	64
2005/2006	60	15	75
2006/2007	55	16	71
2007/2008	56	49	105
2008/2009	108	77	185
2009/2010	127	23	180
2010/2011	89	41	130

Source: UEW (2002 – 2011). Basic Statistics

Conclusion

This initial examination of the Art Education programme in UEW has brought out vital revelations for the concern of stakeholders. The proposed solutions in the discussion paragraphs of this paper need to be considered by relevant authorities in education in general and Art education in particular. The non performance of some Art teachers that has brought about this study can now be inferred from some aspects of the analyses of the study. This includes the unenthusiastic nature of such students due to their negative perception about the programme which adversely affect their teaching performance and the non-professional teachers on the field teaching Art. The department studied has tried to solve some of these problems through seminars, workshops, exhibitions and thesis themes on issues of negative perception about Art Education.

The enrolment and graduation of good students, as a major factor for quality art education, has also been found to be of prime concern for the Art department studied. This novelty can culminate in turning out improved Art teachers in the foreseeable future. This perceived improvement in the quality of the emerging graduates should be maintained to ensure that Art educators find a more fitting place in the education fraternity. The study has also indicated that although the contents of the courses are intensive and enormous, they are

relevant to cover the requirements for the world of work. It is recommended that non professional Art teachers be upgraded to do educational courses to equip them with the pedagogical strategies to improve teaching and learning of Art in Ghanaian schools and colleges for national development.

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