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Examining the Use of Folk Resources for Creative Arts Education in Ghana's Basic Schools

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Abstract

Implementing curricula that parallel children's cultural histories and language and Ghana Education Service's (GES) approved creative arts resources precipitated the need to review materials listed in the new national creative arts curriculum (2019). This study explores the availability, accessibility, and cultural alignment of creative arts materials and shows how using folk resources serves as an incentive for culturally sustaining resource development in Ghana's music and visual arts education. A semi-structured interview of six creative arts teachers revealed that while teachers use Ghanaian folklore-informed books on the market, schools have infrastructure needs and lack indigenous music instruments and visual arts materials for the new

curriculum. Highlighting the quality and availability of folk resources, we recommend optimizing community human and material resources, engaging education research professionals and classroom teachers in dialogue, and monitoring and evaluating school programs.

Introduction

Most teachers in Ghana's early grade classrooms[1] consciously use teaching and learning materials to support positive instructional outcomes. Teachers need to access suitable instructional materials for the creative arts[2] to thrive in the early years. Examples are textbooks, song collections, workbooks, visual aids, storybooks, instruments, interactive whiteboards, audio recordings, physical manipulatives, etc. In this paper, our focus is on using and honoring resources in the local Ghanaian culture, which we call African folk resources in education. These, within the creative arts, include traditional music genres, dances, theatre, and indigenous ways of making art and crafts.

Each curriculum reform effort in Ghana, since independence, has sought to deliver a curriculum that aligns with its culture. However, while Ghana's curricular efforts have impacted the creative arts, we argue that there has been little follow-through on resources or skills to deliver these reforms. Limited attention to resources and skill development, in the long run, will affect the implementation of any culturally aligned curriculum. Three reform efforts in the published 1998, 2007, and 2019 curriculum documents are the focus of this paper. Whereas the 1998 syllabus marked a shift from cultural relevancy to discipline-specific arts (music and dance), the 2007 and 2019 documents highlighted critical thinking and cultural alignment in the creative arts as essential for the 21st century Ghanaian. For example, promoted in 2007 was an integration framework that put the African folk arts in the center of learning. Integration in education reflects the African lived experience because it addresses the multifaceted nature of all knowledge as social, cultural, philosophical, historical, and psychological (Addo et al., 2003). However, although all teachers were to teach creative arts, neither teacher preparation workshops nor African folk resources were available to implement the 2007 curriculum successfully. Most concerning is that, while curriculum developers

[1] Ghana Education Service has embraced United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) parameters for school-aged children. Early years are all children between 4 to 8 years, Kindergarten to Grade or Primary Three. For more information, see: https://www.unicef.org/ghana/reports/national-early-learning-and-development-standards

[2] The Creative Arts in the Ghana Education Service Curriculum includes experiences in Visual art (two- and three-dimensional arts) and the Performing Arts (dance, drama, and music).

created syllabi that put Ghana in a unique position to implement innovative practices with indigenous materials, the current reform efforts have suffered the same fate as previous ones.

Culturally enriching and sustaining resources are crucial for successful implementation (Paris, 2012 p. 95). Thus, we posit that a culturally sustaining pedagogy that seeks to preserve, foster, and maintain creative arts, literate, and cultural pluralism in schooling must inform curriculum development and implementation (Paris & Alim, 2017). We frame our argument with Gay's culturally responsive teaching and Paris's culturally sustaining pedagogy (Gay, 2010; Paris, 2012). Our focus, however, is not on nurturing cultural and linguistic competencies of minoritized groups and offering access to dominant cultural competencies (Paris, p. 91). Instead, culturally sustaining practices, our frame, encourages accessing and promoting materials that celebrate the dynamic natures of Ghanaian children's lived experiences with indigenous, colonial, and global cultures. We seek to connect to home, school, and the diversity of Ghanaian society in curriculum development and resource use in implementation. Therefore, in what follows, we examine the issues that have informed African folk materials in 1998, 2007, and 2019 curricula. Then, using semi-structured interviews with six early-year teachers, we summarize materials teachers use to implement Ghana's creative arts curriculum and evaluate their accessibility and cultural alignment.

Enculturation Efforts in Curricula Reform

Ghana's history of "formal education" began with castle schools that served trading posts. Before then, education occurred within the community, with everyone contributing to what children learned. When the British took over around 1821, castle schools became colonial schools (Pinto, 2019). Later, the Christian church played a significant role in developing Ghana's formal education, starting with the arrival of the Basel missionaries in 1828 and other missionary denominations. All these groups imposed their ideas on resources suitable for use in Ghana's schools. For example, missionaries imported western instruments at the turn of the 20th century for use in worship and these led to the development of school brass and fife bands (Flolu, 1994, p. 63).

Ghana's first prime minister, Kwame Nkrumah (1912-1972), had a passion for educating the African child in African ways.[3] Therefore, he encouraged all Ghanaians to exercise their intellectual and development strengths in all sectors to address societal challenges (Adu-Gyamfi, Donkoh, and Addo, 2016). However, challenges persisted. While post-independence governments enacted educational reforms to highlight the culture and welfare of Ghanaians,

[3] Ghana gained independence from Great Britain on March 6, 1956.

colonial contacts affected and modified indigenous customs, systems of governance, institutions, and values and, therefore, the interest of the people concerning resources. Three curricula reforms between 1996-2002, 2003-2014, and post-2015 intensified the enculturation discourse in arts education. Before these reform efforts, cultural assimilation reflecting the erstwhile colonial education persisted in Ghana's post-colonial antecedents (Acquah & Mensah, 2021; Nortey, et al., 2021). In what follows, we detail literature on teaching materials contextualized within these three educational reforms.

Ghana's Recent Educational Reforms and Teaching Materials Development

Some have argued that political interests, unclear arts policy, limited funding, and confused mechanisms for resource distribution compound whether resources required to fulfill the curriculum demands are available in schools (Akrofi, 2002; Flolu 2000; Koomson, 2002; Yeboah et al. 2017). From this perspective, it would be easy to assume that once the Ghana Education Service (GES) solves these problems, resource alignment and availability for teaching the arts in Ghana would be moot. However, a review of the literature on teaching and learning materials in the three periods suggests otherwise. Determining who needs to create such materials, their content, and where and how to access them is complicated.

Phase One

The first reform effort from 1996-2002 increased teachers' awareness of using local materials as instructional resources marked a significant change in the creative arts. The curriculum demands that all early childhood teachers teach creative skills. However, unclear arts policy and inherent conceptual problems plagued the effort to unshackle colonial mindsets. This curriculum review occurred in tandem with Ghana's 1996 Free and Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program to improve education quality with revised teaching materials and community involvement, among other success indicators (Akyeampong, 2010). Two curricula were in operation, the 1998 *Music and Dance Syllabus for Primary Schools* and *the Music and Dance syllabus* (2001) for teacher education.

Between 1996-2002, even though there was a move towards creating an educational system that synthesized indigenous Ghanaian culture and traditional orality with modern education's literary and scientific resources, many tensions arose (Flolu, 2000, p. 27). For example, the pressure in music was whether or not and how to teach Western music versus African music (Akrofi, 2002). The curriculum reflected a need for western instruments beyond the financial reach and equal distribution in Ghanaian primary schools. Amplifying the confusion was the expectation that children would gain knowledge, understanding, and performance skills in Traditional African Music, Western Arts Music, and Popular Music (Mereku, 2000). While the 1998 syllabus was child-centered and practical, identifying needed resources was confusing, rendering a disenfranchised curriculum implementation.

Also, during this period, Nketia (1999) published *A guide for the preparation of primary school African music teaching manuals*, which summarized the conversations of resource persons from various Sub-Saharan African countries (Kongo, 2007, p. 91). Implicit in the manual *was* the mandate to harness African folk resources for the child's sociocultural development and teaching fundamentals, music in the community, songs, musical instruments, instrumental ensembles, and dance. Contributors outlined age-appropriate child-centered learning approaches and provided models for identifying folk resources for music education. Therefore, preparing teachers with the competencies to use such resources in teacher education programs was necessary.

Similarly, another researcher documented the cultural relevance and aesthetic values of visual, performing, and verbal art forms (Ayiku, 1998). Ayiku identified and explained symbolic expressions and meanings in indigenous crafts that can be the foundation for visual arts education grounded in African philosophical thought. Despite these efforts, a cultural confusion similar to that in music education has persisted. Visual arts' genesis in Ghanaian schooling in 1908 was a prevocational drawing experience for children to develop hand and eye coordination (Edusei, 2004). Then, missionaries viewed indigenous art forms as questionable and therefore did not implement them in schools. Thus, teachers had no stipulated materials to fill the cultural void created by visual arts education history. While there were curricula for Music and Dance, there was no national curriculum for visual arts in primary education during this period (Edusei, 2004).

Phase Two

The Sisyphean task continued from 2003-2014. Ushering in this second reform effort was the 2004 Whole School Development (WSD) program, adopted to improve educational practice, management function, access, and education participation. The WSD program accentuated discussions about arts quality and relevance. In this regard, the 2007 Creative Arts Curriculum was a shift from the 1998 curriculum. It included Sewing and Visual arts, for the first time, with Music, Dance, and Drama. Disciplinary areas were presented separately within the syllabus, even though the intent was to promote integrated learning across the arts disciplines. The 2007 curriculum emphasized cultural representation; however, access to singing and voice resources, indigenous Ghanaian songs, Ghanaian instruments, knowledge, and Ghanaian music and dance skills were not explicit in teacher education (Flolu, 2004). Also, although children's contribution to their learning provided a direct avenue for addressing resources, they did not feature in teacher education. For example, playground music pedagogy in singing games offers suggestions for integrating the arts in classroom pedagogy (Dzansi, 2004). Further, children add to their knowledge while exploring and using materials from their

environment (Ampeh, 2011). Providing materials from their surroundings advanced creative arts instruction because the materials were from children's worlds (Ampeh, 2011).

In response to the 2007 curriculum, art educators and planners published materials that emphasized cultural representation but not pedagogical implications. *Music and Dance for Colleges of Education: Principles and Practice (*Amuah et al., 2011) prepared future teachers to address the new curriculum and *Music and Dance for the Basic School Teacher (*Amuah & Adum-Attah, 2016) for teachers to use in schools. The teacher education text included pedagogical suggestions. Still, there were no texts for teachers to use for visual art in the early grades. However, given their inauguration into the national creative arts curriculum, visual arts teachers assembled materials gathered while in teacher education programs for delivering the curriculum.

Phase Three

Post-2015, a crucial educational development impetus from the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NaCCA) occurred. The new curriculum centered the 4 Rs, Reading, wRiting, aRithmetic, and cReativity as foundational skills for lifelong learning and national development and moved from an objectives-based to a standards-based curriculum (Opoku-Amankwa, 2019). Accordingly, curriculum developers organized workshops to support teachers in developing 21st-century pedagogical skills. To the extent that teachers at these workshops created cultural resources that demanded creative thinking, the impetus during this period has increased teachers' capacity to produce pertinent teaching materials. Because the subject is compulsory for all early years learners, training colleges prepare all teachers to teach creative arts in schools (Essel, et al., 2017; Mereku, 2000).

Creative arts resources speak to a significant shift in the philosophy of Ghana's music and visual arts education history (Nketia, 1999; Flolu, 2004). Colonial education and missionary endeavors had transformed thinking about the arts to the extent that teachers still look beyond Ghana for ideas and resources, although the colonial era is long gone. Until teachers can move beyond a dependency positioning, they will be unable to "see" their community's rich resources. Some work has begun. Developing teaching and learning resources in workshops post-2015 is exciting because it acknowledges resource developers' identity as culture bearers. The trend also raises the likelihood of resource design, quality, and availability aligning with Ghanaian culture (Fusheni & Bukari, 2017). Working with six teachers and one headteacher teaching in Yendi, Bukari and Fusheni (2017) guided teachers in identifying local materials and preparing creative arts teaching resources. Motivated by this experience, teacher participants continued to create instructional material after their workshop.

Similarly, researchers argued that visual arts teachers could not use the lack of government resources to justify the absence of instructional materials by repurposing waste materials as appropriate instructional resources for visual art lessons in Ghana (Yeboah et al., 2017). They directed teachers to recycle paper, fabric, and plastic waste materials as viable instructional resources. Like the Fusheni and Bukari (2017) project, they saw increased teacher creativity in resource development (Yeboah et al., 2017). Other researchers also found breadth in instructional resources made from natural resources and increased conceptual understanding for children after observing and interviewing 26 kindergarten teachers teaching creative arts (Adu et al., 2017).

Given the wealth of information gathered in the literature that supports using materials from within the culture, it is promising that NaCCA is taking an assets stance and has called for content developers and artists to compile and create school materials that align with Ghana's culture. Such materials are crucial for culturally sustaining or supporting practices. Culturally supporting practices include accessing and promoting materials that celebrate the dynamic nature of Ghanaian children's lived interactions and nurturing sociocultural and linguistic competencies of indigenous, colonial, and global cultures. Next, we address how African folk materials are crucial components of culturally sustaining pedagogy and practices.

Reforms and Materials as Critical Components in Culturally Sustaining Practices

While culturally sustaining pedagogy is invaluable for examining folk resources for creative arts education, we must make distinctions for Ghana's Basic School. Using African folk resources in schooling requires a philosophical shift for music and visual arts education. Culturally sustaining practices acknowledges and departs from Gloria Ladson-Billings' work on culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP) and Geneva Gay's culturally responsive teaching (Ladson-Billings 1995, 2014; Acquah, 2010). Aligning with Ladson-Billings' CRP, using African folk arts is relevant to the children's culture and, after Gay, is responsive to their learning needs. Ultimately, such learning engagements are culturally sustaining because folk arts that inform Ghanaian children's world ensure their academic, cultural, and social-civic success (Ladson-Billings, 2014). However, we refrain from using the term "Culturally Relevant Pedagogy," an example of asset pedagogies that repositioned and honored the culture of minorities in US schooling where white middle-class dominant cultural norms are entrenched (Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995, 2014). Ghana's cultural diversity rests in experiences within the various indigenous cultures, colonial and current global cultures to which all children belong (Addo, 1995). Issues of race are not paramount in the delivery of learning as they are in countries like the United States of America.

Consequently, it is essential to clarify our use of culturally sustaining pedagogies as distinct from the expression in other scholarly contexts, hence, the expression, culturally sustaining

practices. In this paper, culturally sustaining practices address linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism in education (Paris, 2012). Also, like Gay's responsive teaching, this project acknowledges our global reality as we connect to home, school, and the diversity of Ghanaian society (Gay, 2010).

A culturally sustaining practice in Ghana pays attention to the materials we select because they signal what we care about in our culture. Resources highlight and reinforce our histories, literature, languages, and ways of being because our interactions and experiences summarize our culture. Because Ghanaians center community culture, situated learning sustains our culture. Culturally sustaining practices demand the respectful integration of knowledge with resources relevant to Ghanaians (Pinto, 2019). Accordingly, schools will graduate students empowered to identify, access, and navigate indigenous cultures, colonial and global cultures.

Reform efforts will be short-lived if resource production steps do not address the quality of locally produced materials, standardization, equity, and equality in distribution. Cultural suitability in resource development and documentation has much to do with the accuracy of the information, sequencing suggestions (Abadzidor 2006), student voice (Addo, 1995; Dzansi, 2004; Ampeh, 2011), the teacher voice (Nantwi, et al. 2019), and community resources.

Consequently, basic assumptions, key concepts, and teaching methods in Ghana need to be culturally sustaining, reconnecting children with their social reality. Further, connecting arts education with home highlights and reinforces Ghana's histories and ways of being. In the end, if envisioned appropriately, using African folk resources will interest teachers who seek to honor their culture. For example, digitization of folk materials increases the arts' sustaining enrichment in schools and reaches a broad audience (Boamah & Liew 2016). Therefore, culturally sustaining practices are not about becoming culturally aware but harnessing situated resources for Ghanaian teachers to use in creative arts instruction.

One thing is sure: quality culturally aligned materials, like folk arts, must support creative arts' advancement regardless of whether they were created at workshops or prepared by content developers. Culturally aligning with indigenous cultural practices and resources means selecting teaching and learning materials (TLMs) from within the culture, such as artwork, crafts, music instruments, and natural resources found and used in the environment and community. Only then will the 2019 curriculum implementation meet the GES's ideals for the 21st century Ghanaian. The purpose of this study was to determine the availability, accessibility, and cultural alignment of creative arts materials and show how using folk resources serves as an incentive for culturally sustaining resource development in Ghana's music and visual arts education. This study's central questions are: What teaching and learning

materials (TLMs) do teachers say they use for Creative Arts in Ghana? How accessible are these materials to teachers? What incentives exist for teachers to use African folk resources in creative arts education?

Methods

Our approach to determining the availability, accessibility, and cultural alignment of creative arts materials was a qualitative case study with a constructivist and interpretivist orientation (Yin, 2018). Using the government-accredited creative arts curriculum (2019) for Ghana's primary schools as a benchmark, we investigated the required TLMs. To gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives of materials they use, we conducted interviews, a vital case study data source (Yin, 2018). We evaluated learning materials in print and on websites to confirm and corroborate what we found from teacher interviews.

Interview Protocol Development

A semi-structured interview guide developed consisted of 13 areas that included the list of proposed TLMs in the early grade national curriculum from the GES (See appendix A for Interview Protocol). Questions included requests for demographic information and about the source and access to materials.

Participants

Six creative arts teachers from different schools participated in the study (see Figure 1). The first interviewee, a graduate from one institution, recommended the other teachers, snowballing the sample. We will use the abbreviated names from Figure 1 to indicate which interviewees provided evidence of results.

Teacher	Sex	Age	Class	School	Education	Experience	Region
KE	male	37	Class 3	Private	Bachelors	13 years	Central
NE	female	45	Kindergarten	Public	Masters	22 years	Central
KA	male	26	Class 1	Private	Bachelors	8 months	Central
GA	female	29	Class 1	Public	Bachelors	4 years	Ashanti
MA	female	27	Kindergarten	Private	Bachelors	3 years	Greater Accra
PE	female	30	Kindergarten	Public	Bachelors	3 years	Central

Figure 1. Demographic Information.

Interview

All teachers participated in one interview.[4] After reading a consent form and granting permission, each participant chose the most conducive time for the interview. We conducted thirty-minute to fifty-minute phone interviews with each participant over three weeks.[5] Asking open-ended questions, we did not control what teachers said about their TLMs. Bounding our cases by participant and data collection period, April 2020, a case study design was appropriate (Yin, 2018). We also asked participants to clarify the information they provided. Once we had gathered enough information, with no new information across participants, we established data saturation (Patton, 2015).

[4] The purpose of case studies is not to generalize to populations but to theoretical propositions, that is, to make analytic generalizations (Yin 2018, p. 20-21). Thus, we make analytic generalizations about teachers' material use from conditions they specify in interviews.

[5] Interviews are human interactions with attendant uncertainties, and therefore the duration of each interview varies. (See Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. Pearson. One Lake Street, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey 07458).

Data Analysis

After we audio-recorded and transcribed interviews verbatim, interviewees received the transcripts to verify and clarify information. Data analysis began with a narrative description of each case, each teacher. Then, we conducted a conventional content analysis of the interview transcripts and textbooks on the market and web-based materials, teacher, and pupil-created materials to determine if they corroborate with classroom resources (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Using constant comparison across teacher cases, we managed and coded our data, developed categories, and assessed the data's trustworthiness and dependability (Cypress, 2017; Seale, 1999). To achieve intercoder reliability, as co-authors, we discussed each interview. Then, we provided a summary analysis of themes in response to the project questions. Therefore, working within an interpretive paradigm, we made sense of our data by thinking through our participants' subjective epistemology and acknowledged their varied realities to present our report (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017).

Results and Discussion

In what follows, I present the results in response to our three research questions: What teaching and learning materials (TLMs) do teachers say they use for Creative Arts in Ghana? How accessible are these materials to teachers? What incentives exist for teachers to use African folk resources in creative arts education?

Creative Arts Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) used

Teachers used varying materials, print, music instruments, visual arts tools, and the worldwide web to teach Ghana's Creative Arts Curriculum.

Print Materials

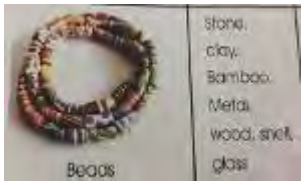
According to our creative arts teacher interviewees, two published texts, *Creative Arts for Basic Schools* by Henry Adjei Amankwah and *Creative Arts for Basic Three* by Francis Benjamin Appiah and Martha Ankomah, were popular among teachers. Although these books were not GES-approved, they align with and cover relevant curriculum topics. Headteachers, therefore, encouraged teachers to buy and use such books available on the market.

Creative Arts for Basic Schools covers the history and way of life of some communities in Ghana. In the visual arts sections, artworks produced or found in Ghana's local communities like stools, earthenware, metalwork, paper, stone, bamboo, wood, shell, etc., are beautifully illustrated in the book (see examples in Figure 2). Pupils picked ideas from illustrations as inspiration for their artworks. Ghanaian music and dances feature in the performing arts section of the textbook. Thus, pictures of dancers dressed in full regalia adorn the text in

addition to traditional (e.g., Adowa, Agbadza, and Bamaaya), art, popular music, and musical theater.

Appiah and Ankomah organize the Excellence Series' *Creative Arts for Basic Three* to reflect Ghana's academic calendar. Students studied the history, beliefs, taboos, religion, chieftaincy, and artworks of people from Africa, Europe, Asia, and America in the first term. Therefore, in contrast to Amankwah's text, the content is geographically broad and globally situated. In the second term, children studied the visual and performing artworks of the natural and human-made environment, forests, deserts, etc. Topics for the third term were emerging issues, such as plastic waste, conflict, pollution, human trafficking, road safety, and diseases. Information on visual arts presented in print suggested practical activities such as printing, modeling, drawing, and collage work. The textbook lists only a few of the recommended GES tools and materials.

Stool



Beads

Apentema, Petia, Kete, Abrukuwa, Dawuru

Adowa dance

Figure 2. Images within Textbooks.

Both textbooks reflected siloed teacher education institutions' curriculum. Music and dance are placed together in one section while the visual arts are in another area (Addo, 2014). For example, the first three textbook illustrations above focus on material makeup. The fourth picture of people dancing Adowa brings together beadwork, drums, dress, gesture, and music. However, while beautifully illustrated, the images may present an erroneous categorization of the arts. Children and their teachers deserve the opportunity to experience art-form peculiarities without the burden of institutional categories and materials (Opoku Bonsu et al., 2017, p. 16). Exploring artform peculiarities, both socio-cultural and spatial-temporal, will align with Ghanaian culture.

Music Resources

Rich indigenous instruments notwithstanding, schools in this study crave a "normal" band, an expression used by one of our interviewees (GA) to describe the drum set, bass guitar, organ, or keyboard. The word "normal" and the instrument choices privilege western instruments over Ghanaian indigenous instruments. Limited indigenous instruments in schools, expressed by our interviewees, spotlights colonial mindsets' persistence in creative arts education. For example, a marching drum was available for marching at school assemblies of all interviewees. Therefore, although the curriculum called for Ghanaian musical resources, the teachers could not implement it with folk arts as a central focus.

The impact of Ghana's colonial past on teachers' cultural capital was a lack of interest and confidence about integrating African-centered music instruments in schools. For example, PA was not interested in teaching music, so the early childhood teacher who had the knowledge capital taught music in the creative arts curriculum. Perhaps PA's problem was a perceived limited knowledge of music in the community, songs, and musical instruments, as well as resources to teach African music's essence and meaning within its context, roles, values, and performance practices (Nketia, 1999). Where available, the music teacher (KA and MA's school) or someone with the cultural capital taught the music unit in the creative arts curriculum. Therefore, having materials does not guarantee that teachers will address all aspects of the creative arts.

Visual Arts Resources

Visual arts teaching requires hands-on resources and their availability depends on teacher or parent support for the creative arts. Parents and teachers provided brushes, chalk pastels, oil pastels, and other supplies. Hence, at the very least, all Ghanaian children received pencils for artwork.

Ghana's educational focus on examinable subjects and symbols of progress like western science, technology, and mathematics has challenged the arts' welfare because it is a "helping" subject (National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework, 2017, p. 21). Unsurprisingly, some parents complain about art because they misunderstand the creative arts' contribution to children's academic success and, consequently, do not advocate for the priority of creative arts resources with administrators vis-à-vis other curriculum areas. Instead, parents appear interested in children memorizing rhymes (KE); however, this neocolonial mindset minimizes their appreciation for the creative arts in Ghana's primary education (Adu-Gymafi et al., 2016). KE maintained,

> "One major challenge is that people do not really have any understanding when it comes to creative arts. Basically, when they see children drawing, parents complain

> because they draw and scribble on walls at home. Also, in school, similar complaints are heard from other teachers."

However, because the curriculum lists a wide range of materials, schools need parent support for resource supply to overcome disparities in material distribution across the curriculum (Apeanti & Asiedu-Addo, 2016).

Web-based Materials

When information is unavailable in textbooks, all six teachers turned to the World Wide Web (WWW) and searched Google, Pinterest, and DuckDuckGo (KA). The internet provided materials for the full spectrum of the creative arts curriculum TLMs (GA, KA). The 2007 reform efforts encouraged technology integration, hence its use in the creative arts. However, although curriculum scope implementation increased with internet use, teaching quality and standards will vary across schools without setting standards for internet resource identification.

Teachers and Pupils Who Use These Resources

Teachers create materials to support selected topics that align with their professional expertise. The use of teacher-created materials has increased in the post-2015 teacher education reform effort (Ampeh, 2011; Fusheni, & Bukari 2017; Yeboah et al., 2017). The United Kingdom's Transforming Teacher Education and Learning (T-TEL) program supports Ghanaian teacher pedagogy with activity-based learning, TLMs, and group work (Akyeampong, 2017). It may be helpful for teacher education institutions to prepare teachers to teach more than drawing or musical games in creative arts (Agyemang-Boafo, 2010; Adu, 2019). For example, teachers in three kindergarten schools in the Agona Kwanyarko traditional area did not use their forty-six selected pieces to enhance reading purposefully (Mensah, 2016). While they had access to materials, the teachers needed direction on using the songs to teach reading. To reduce cultural confusion and inadequate disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge, teacher education institutions must actively address the limited resources for curriculum implementation.

Despite the shortage of resources, children's creativity abounds with materials parents and schools provide. They create idiophones or self-sounding instruments made from materials in the natural environment—for example, shakers made from paper plates and rice. When teachers use or discuss their artwork in class, children are, in effect, adding to TLMs. All interviewees shared that pupil's drawings were suitable for display on classroom bulletin boards and used for teaching. Pupil-created resources remain the one of the best avenues for children's optimal learning (Ampeh, 2011).

Access to Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)

The scarcity of resources did not deter Ghana's teachers from using accessible materials when teaching creative arts.

Print Materials

Schools, homes, and teachers provide printed materials. We learned that each school had at least a copy of the National Curriculum on the creative arts. However, having only one copy of the curriculum limits equitable accessibility. Not only might a teacher monopolize the document, but limited resources can hamper lesson preparation. As NE stated, "The challenge is that the syllabus is just one, for the school. We cannot bring it home to use. If they provided enough, we would not have difficulty in preparing. Then we do not have textbooks. They have to give us teachers' guides so that we know what is required because if you are a teacher who is not into the arts, you will not know."[6]

Music Resources

Where funding was not the problem, private primary schools provided music resources from indigenous and western cultures. Hence, our private school interviewees (KE and MA) mentioned that children in grade four or 9-year-olds and above learned to play keyboards and African instruments and not in the critical early childhood stages. The reason was that older children are less likely to damage the instruments. Instead, schools invited experienced and trained musicians to play for the children. KE noted that schools with means rented music instruments for speech and prize-giving day.

Accessibility also has to do with neocolonial mindsets, with roots in the church formation and historical shadowing of the English public school (Steiner-Khamsi & Quist, 2000). In music education, these mindsets have manifested as playing western instruments, pride in western scholarship, and fear of not being on par with educational practices in other countries (Akrofi & Flolu 2007). The cultural confusion that emerges from this mindset impacts policy (Flolu, 2004), curriculum content (Mereku, 2000), and administrators' perception of needed creative arts materials. A leaning toward the western curriculum demands resource funds beyond what GES can provide.

Visual Arts Resources

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[6] NE used "they" to refer to whoever is responsible for resource acquisition.

The disparity in available resources depended on whether the schools were public or private or had adequate infrastructure. Art resources like dry materials for making marks[7] were available in five schools except for NE's school, which did not have electricity. The private school teacher, MA, had both craft tools and wet materials for making marks. Public schools only had embossment tools. The most popular wet tools, as per our interviewees, were pens, markers, ink, and colorants. When needed, the private school teacher offered a list of materials to the headteacher for acquisition. Although listed in the curriculum, the teachers did not use cutting tools in early childhood education to avoid safety concerns. The teachers used available measuring materials like rulers, measuring tape, and personal equipment to teach modeling or sewing. Paper, odds and ends, adhesives, starch glue for the artwork were abundant.

Teachers only used paper for art surfaces. KE explained how painting the walls versus on paper impacted their work with children (KE, Personal communication, April 2020):

> KE: They say there is a particular color used to paint the building, so by scribbling and so on, we are distorting the school's beauty.
> JA: Does this then mean you can't even paste teaching-learning materials on the wall?
> KE: Usually, after drawing on paper, then we use sellotape and stick art on the wall. There are no items drawn on the walls. We remove the artwork later!

While the teachers may have preferred having their students create art on wall surfaces, they accepted the school policy. Interestingly, wall art *Sansa Akroma* has existed since Palaeolithic times (Antwi & Adi-Dako, 2014). The indigenous art on mud homes in Bolgatanga, Northern Ghana, to its contemporary expression on private schools, kiosks, hotels, residential homes, resonates with cultural practice.

Web-Based Materials

Accessing the WWW demands bandwidth strength and electricity. Using web-based materials assumes that teachers have access to education technology. Not all teachers will access the WWW without their smartphones, especially as only 43% of primary schools have electricity (Ministry of Education, 2019). Four teachers (KE, GA, MA, KA) interviewed had computers and digital equipment (whiteboards and smartboards). They all had blackboards. Having printed materials was a viable alternative for teachers without infrastructure (NE) or technological equipment (PE).

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[7] Making marks is how artists use tools to draw lines and make dots and patterns to create art.

Folk Arts Resources in Culturally Sustainable Practices

Teaching with folk arts makes integrating learning across the curriculum possible. Although an expectation of the new curriculum, not all teachers integrate across the curriculum because not all teachers have expertise in more than one creative arts area. Folk arts resource availability helps teachers overcome disciplinary silos and embrace strategies that reflect African lived experiences. For example, using a popular Ghanaian singing game called *Sansa Akroma* to integrate music and mathematics, KE explained how critical thinking is possible in the following dialogue:

> KE: For example, if I want to teach counting, I use *Sansa Akroma.* With this, the children learn both counting and the song.
> JA: How is that done?
> KE: Stones or oranges or tangerine preferably can be used. They are kids, so I always use oranges. As they move the stones and sing, they learn the songs, counting, and reasoning skills.
>
> [KE sings] *Sansa akroma nena wuo ɔkyekyer nkokɔma*
> *ɔse ɔkɛ yɛ adwuma nena awuo, ɔkyekyer nkokɔma*
> So, if Ama moves it, it is one; if Kofi moves it, it is two; if Adwoa moves it, it is three. They are counting; They are learning vocabulary.
> JA: The songs also have a vocabulary.
> KE: There is something known as eye-hand coordination; if you are not careful, you will hit someone's hand. So reasoning skills also emerge.
> JA: Connecting to reasoning skills, how do they gauge and move the stones?
> KE: Yes, you measure and move.
>
> See Figure 3 for the transcription of *Sansa Akroma.*

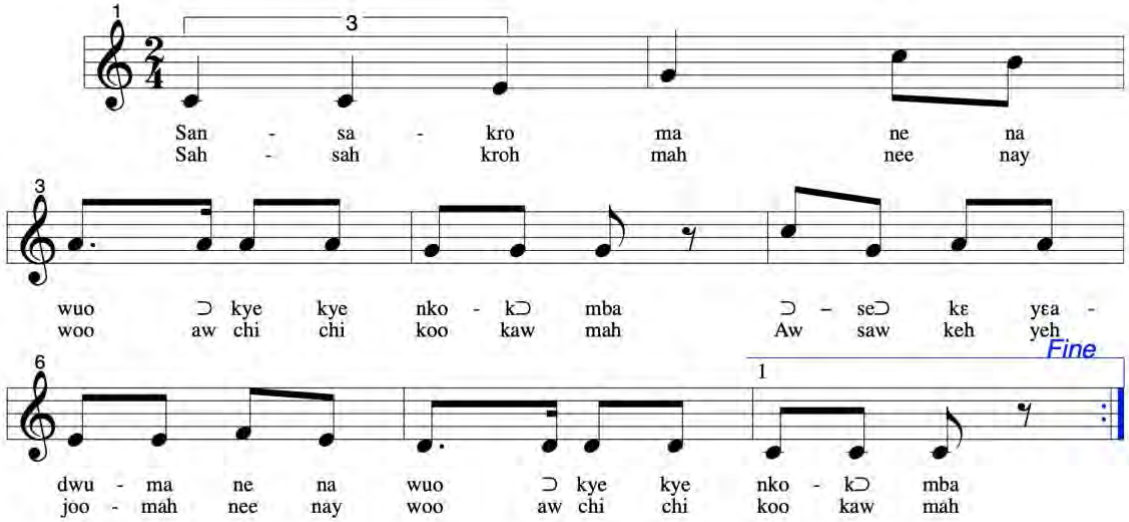

Figure 3. *Sansa Akroma*

Deconstructing *Sansa Akroma*, KE demonstrated how folk art materials can be used for quality integrated culturally sustained teaching. Likewise, folk songs and rhymes essential in early childhood teaching impacted reading fluency and learning engagement at four preschool centers in the Gomoa East district in Ghana's central region (Adu & Frimpong, 2018). Therefore, accessing musical, cultural, and pedagogical elements in folk materials is a springboard for interdisciplinary and integrated learning (Addo, 2014). Identifying and distributing African folk art collections across schools is worthwhile for Ghana's teachers to implement culturally sustaining practices.

Incentives for using folk arts and natural resources include invigorating lessons, effective learning retention, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Harnessing appropriate resources in the school's proximity can lead to innovative pedagogy. KE's comments on *Sansa Akroma* demonstrated his ability to see novel teaching with cultural resources. The availability of folk art materials will increase a teachers' ability to use them as "a door in" for learning across the curriculum.

Balancing content and scope in a global space begins with knowing about and accessing local musical arts culture. A culturally enriching and sustaining education depends on accessing, creating, and playing with creative materials (Paris, 2012). However, attempting to cover West African regional creative arts in the early grades might diminish teachers' ability to use and honor resources that originate in the local Ghanaian culture. Teachers can reference

regional cultures, if necessary, provided the teacher education curriculum models making global connections.

Ghanaian children create riddles, puzzles, and toys that enrich a culturally sustaining creative arts curriculum. *Kinky FooFoo* (https://kinkyfoofoo.wordpress.com/tag/riddles-jokes-from-ghana/), a website that exemplifies children's ingenuity, displays children's stories, poems, biographies, riddles, and puzzles created in an orphanage in Obuasi, Ghana. More resources like this provide viable, culturally aligned TLMs.

Recommendations for Curricular Resources

A close look at critical thinking teaching processes might help overcome disparities in distributing arts resources (Osei Poku & Gyekye-Ampofo, 2017). Two websites are of particular interest: *The Book in School,* and *Ghana Rocks: A Regional Guide to Ghanaian Crafts*. *The Book in School* (https://en.thebookinschool.com/), a developing mural site, invites children to design together and critically evaluate their aesthetic choices while connecting across the curriculum. Using the *Book in School* as a pedagogical frame, children could evaluate African children's literature, historical and cultural events, discuss their aesthetic choices, group dynamics, and time management, and make collective creative choices on what to display on walls. Fulfilling one of the Creative Art Syllabus' objectives and developing the children's art of critique, the mural project pushes boundaries of school expectations. It encourages teachers to negotiate with the administration for resources.

Ghana Rocks: A Regional Guide to Ghanaian Crafts (http://www.africancrafts.com/ghana.php) provides a holistic view of Ghana's folk resources and history, organized by regions. Ghana Rocks emphasizes visual arts with links to well-known artists, painters, weavers, and puppeteers. If *Ghana Rocks* were expanded to address all creative arts curriculum areas, it would be an invaluable resource.

Public response to the creative arts is changing. On December 17, 2020, Ghana's Minister of Tourism, Arts, and Culture announced the passing of the Creative Arts Bill, which provides a framework for regulating its creative economy (Hansen, 2020). This effort will increase public value for the arts in education. Schools could take advantage of this direction by soliciting funds to support folk arts resources. Perhaps Ghanaian parents may be more inclined to support the creative arts as an avenue for national development with this Bill's passing.

Knowing that not all information on the internet is appropriate for teaching children the creative arts, in-service training and a clearinghouse are suitable places to assess teachers' choices. A portfolio with strategies for developing instructional materials—print, multimedia,

and kinesthetic, may help build quality culturally enriching teaching materials. Further, synthesizing "indigenous Ghanaian culture and traditional orality with modern education's literary and scientific resources" is daunting (Flolu, 2000, p.27). A group of local artists, community members, teachers, teacher educators, and curriculum writers and consultants could produce a comprehensive text that serves all schools regardless of need. This diverse group with varying experiences could create web and print materials aligned with the GES curriculum. Providing comprehensive textbooks is essential and must be prioritized in areas with infrastructure challenges.

The participants talked about child-made art as creative arts resources. Previous studies confirm the breadth of creative arts resources if educators used, for example, playground games (Addo, 1995; Ampeh, 2011; Dzansi, 2004; Mereku, 2000). Therefore, a recommendation on a selected amount of agreed-upon local resources that must be available in all schools can happen at the regional or district level.

In-service training addressing resource development for early childhood teachers must be regular, according to our interviewees. A couple of sessions a year would increase educators' ability to design and use folk materials and provide the context for a) evaluating resources in print and on the web, and b) identifying coaches for guiding teachers. Subject area supervisors who offer in-service training and act as coaches are essential for increasing teachers' confidence in resource development.

Conclusion

Ghana has made progress in creating a curriculum to harness folk material, yet there is still a long way to go toward accessibility and alignment. Since this paper's writing, NaCCA has announced a new textbook for the creative arts, Nyarko and Annor's (2020) *Creative Arts for Primary Schools.* It includes a teacher's guide for the lower primary and student guides for each grade level. A single stand-alone arts curriculum paradigm is no longer valid with Ghana's current educational policy for integrated creative arts in primary education. Folk materials would be best to achieve the African philosophical approach to integrate the visual, aural, and kinesthetic with varying expressions of culturally bound rituals.

Developing folk art materials for creative arts education in Ghana will never be easy, especially as educators need to overcome the "old ways" of doing things. Our review of music and visual arts resources and interviews with teachers raise issues, from the lack of equipment to infrastructure challenges. There is hope, since the 2019 creative arts curriculum requires resources that align with Ghanaian culture. Establishing the operational framework and equipment is one thing; however, deploying and optimizing resources for national goals involves engaging education research professionals, classroom teachers, and the ongoing

monitoring and evaluation of school programs. Teachers, administrators, and policymakers need folk arts development programs to promote, implement, and sustain a pro-cultural arts curriculum.

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