



Evaluating the Impact of Visual Arts Teachers' Assessment Strategies on Lifelong Learning in Practical Artworks in Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Region, Ghana

Atta Kusi Ankrah¹ , Victor Boateng Nimoh² ,
Kenneth Osei Yeboah¹  & Mohammed Ibrahim¹ 

¹ Kumasi Technical University, Ghana.

² St. Louis Collage of Education Kumasi, Ghana.

ABSTRACT

Lifelong learning skills are critical in Visual Arts education, equipping students with the ability to adapt to the creative industry's evolving demands. This study thus explored the impact of Visual Arts teachers' assessment strategies on lifelong learning in Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Region, Ghana. Employing a mixed-methods research approach, including questionnaires and interviews, data was collected from 90 respondents out of a total sample of 107 from selected Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, i.e. Serwaa Nyarko Girls Senior High School, Kumasi Anglican Senior High School and Kumasi Academy Senior High School. The findings revealed that a combination of assessment strategies—including portfolio assessment, observation of works in progress, finished product evaluation, and exhibition assessment—is more effective in evaluating student learning than relying on a single method. This holistic approach ensures comprehensive skill development, as students may excel in different assessment types. Additionally, transparent assessment criteria and detailed feedback play a crucial role in enhancing student motivation and engagement. Conversely, an overreliance on product-based evaluation hinders the development of lifelong learning skills, limiting students' ability to reflect, improve, and innovate. The study emphasizes the importance of adopting diverse assessment strategies and investing in teacher professional development to improve Visual Arts education. These findings have significant implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers, guiding efforts to enhance assessment practices and foster continuous learning in Visual Arts education.

Correspondence

Atta Kusi Ankrah

Email:

ankrahkusi4@gmail.com

Publication History

Received:

3rd March, 2025

Accepted:

9th June, 2025

Published:

25th July, 2025

To Cite this Article:

Ankrah, Atta Kusi, Victor Boateng Nimoh, Kenneth Osei Yeboah, and Mohammed Ibrahim. "Evaluating the Impact of Visual Arts Teachers' Assessment Strategies on Lifelong Learning in Practical Artworks in Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Region, Ghana." *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 6, no. 8 (2025): 1571–84. <https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20256822>.

Keywords: *Visual Arts Education, Assessment Strategies, Lifelong Learning, Practical Artworks, Teacher Professional Development*

INTRODUCTION

The development of lifelong learning skills in practical knowledge is fundamental in Visual Arts education, enabling students to adapt to the evolving creative industry and engage in continuous skill development.¹ Assessment strategies employed by Visual Arts educators significantly influence students'

¹ L. Hetland and E. Winner, *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Teaching and Learning through the Arts* (Teachers College, 2001); E. W. Eisner, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind* (Yale University Press, 2002); D. Boughton, "Museums, Exhibitions, and Art Education: Rethinking Assessment," *Studies in Art Education* 54, no. 3 (2013): 233–48.

learning experiences, artistic identities, and ability to think critically and creatively.² Effective assessment fosters problem-solving abilities, innovation, and self-reflection, which are essential competencies for long-term artistic and professional growth.³ However, existing research highlights a disproportionate emphasis on product-based assessment in Visual Arts education, often at the expense of process-based approaches that encourage holistic skill development.⁴ This traditional focus on final artworks rather than the creative journey can lead to a fragmented understanding of artistic competence, limiting students' capacity for continuous learning and innovation.⁵

This study, therefore, examines the impact of Visual Arts teachers' assessment strategies on lifelong learning in practical artworks in some selected SHS in the Ashanti Region, analyzing the relationship between assessment methods, student learning outcomes, and skill acquisition. By exploring effective assessment techniques and their influence on student engagement and creativity, this research aims to enhance assessment frameworks and feedback mechanisms in Visual Arts education. The findings will provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers, contributing to the improvement of arts education practices and policies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessment is a fundamental pillar of education, influencing student learning experiences, instructional quality, and long-term skill development. The importance of assessment strategies in evaluating student learning outcomes cannot be overstated, particularly in disciplines such as Visual Arts, where both process and product are integral to student development.⁶ Assessment not only measures student understanding and progress but also serves as a formative tool for continuous learning and reflection.⁷ When properly implemented, assessment enhances teaching strategies, promotes engagement, and fosters a culture of critical thinking and creativity.⁸

The Role of Assessment in Student Learning and Motivation

The literature strongly supports that well-structured assessment practices positively impact student learning outcomes. Earl and Katz emphasize that assessment can either encourage or discourage students, depending on how it is conducted.⁹ Shepard and Moss, et.al., highlight that transparent assessment criteria and feedback mechanisms are essential for enhancing student motivation and performance.¹⁰ In Visual Arts education, where creativity and self-expression are crucial, clear assessment guidelines help students understand expectations, take ownership of their learning, and refine their artistic abilities.

Feedback is a critical component of assessment, serving as a bridge between learning goals and student performance. Nyquist stresses that strong formative feedback should be accurate, detailed, and actionable, guiding students toward specific improvements.¹¹ DeLuca argues that feedback is most effective when provided in written form, as this allows students to process, reflect, and apply suggestions

² L. Bresler, "What Does It Mean to Teach Art in the Context of Education for a Democratic Society?," *Art Education* 58, no. 5 (2005): 6–12; J. Marshall, "Assessment in Art and Design Education: A Critical Review.," *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 36, no. 1 (2017): 5–18.

³ T. Barrett, "Studies Involving Students' Learning through Art," *Studies in Art Education* 48, no. 3 (2007): 257–74; P. J. Kuttner, "Assessing Creative Learning: A Review of Literature on Arts-Based Education," *Arts Education Policy Review* 116 (2015): 153–61.

⁴ Eisner, *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*; Marshall, "Assessment in Art and Design Education: A Critical Review"; H. Andrade, "A Critical Review of Research on Self-Assessment in the Visual Arts," *Studies in Art Education* 60, no. 2 (2019): 120–37.

⁵ Hetland and Winner, *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Teaching and Learning through the Arts*; Bresler, "What Does It Mean to Teach Art in the Context of Education for a Democratic Society?."

⁶ Bresler, "What Does It Mean to Teach Art in the Context of Education for a Democratic Society?"; Marshall, "Assessment in Art and Design Education: A Critical Review."

⁷ W. Harlen, "Teachers' Summative Practices and Assessment for Learning—Tensions and Synergies," *Curriculum Journal* 16, no. 2 (2005): 207–23.

⁸ Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), "Strategies for Widening Participation in Higher Education: A Guide to Good Practice," *Higher Education Funding Council for England*, 2001.

⁹ L. M. Earl and S. Katz, "Rethinking Assessment: A Framework for Professional Judgment," *Journal of Educational Change* 7, no. 2 (2006): 147–64.

¹⁰ L. A. Shepard, "The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture," *Educational Researcher* 29, no. 7 (2000): 4–14; C. M. Moss, S. M. Brookhart, and B. A. Long, *Administering and Managing the Classroom Environment*. (Pearson Education, 2011).

¹¹ J. D. Nyquist, "The Benefits and Challenges of Using Student Peer Review in the Arts," *Arts Education Policy Review* 105, no. 1 (2003): 2–8.

to their work.¹² However, feedback alone is insufficient unless paired with appropriate assessment methods that provide a comprehensive understanding of student learning.¹³

The Limitations of Product-Based Assessment in Visual Arts

Traditional assessment approaches in Visual Arts have often emphasized product-based evaluation, which assesses only the final artwork without considering the creative process, experimentation, and problem-solving involved. While summative assessment is important for evaluating final mastery, research indicates that over-reliance on product-based assessment limits student growth and engagement.¹⁴ Instead, a balanced approach that includes portfolio assessment, observational methods, and exhibition-based evaluation is necessary to capture the full scope of student learning.

A Holistic Approach to Assessment in Visual Arts Education

Assessment in Visual Arts education must go beyond simply evaluating final products and instead capture the entire creative process, from concept development to final presentation. A well-rounded assessment strategy integrates portfolio assessment, observation of works in progress, finished product evaluation, and exhibition assessment, ensuring a comprehensive and fair evaluation of student learning. These strategies collectively promote artistic growth, self-reflection, technical skill development, and presentation confidence.

Portfolio Assessment: Documenting Artistic Growth

Portfolio assessment is a valuable tool for tracking artistic progress over time, providing students with tangible evidence of their skill development and creative journey.¹⁵ Unlike one-time evaluations, portfolios offer a longitudinal perspective on student learning, allowing both educators and students to recognize growth, identify areas for improvement, and refine techniques. Furthermore, Andrade emphasizes that portfolios encourage self-reflection and revision, which are essential aspects of the artistic process.¹⁶ By reviewing their previous works, students develop a deeper understanding of their artistic evolution, fostering a habit of continuous improvement.

Observation of Works in Progress: Assessing Creativity and Engagement

Another essential assessment strategy in Visual Arts education is observation of works in progress, which provides educators with insights into student engagement, creativity, and technique development.¹⁷ This approach enables teachers to assess how students conceptualize and execute their ideas, rather than focusing solely on the final product. By offering real-time feedback, educators can guide students throughout their creative journey, addressing challenges, encouraging experimentation, and reinforcing positive artistic behaviors. Observation-based assessment ensures that students remain actively engaged in their learning process, as they receive ongoing support and constructive feedback.

Finished Product Assessment: Evaluating Technical and Creative Execution

While portfolio and process-based assessments are crucial, evaluating the final artwork remains an important aspect of assessment in Visual Arts education. Finished product assessment focuses on technical skill, composition, and creativity, providing an overall measure of a student's artistic proficiency. However, this method alone is insufficient in capturing the full scope of a student's learning experience. To ensure a more complete evaluation, finished product assessment should be used in conjunction with process-based methods, such as portfolio and observational assessment. By doing so, educators gain a fuller picture of a student's artistic abilities, recognizing both creative effort and final execution.

¹² C. DeLuca, "Assessment in the Arts: A Review of the Literature," *Studies in Art Education* 51, no. 2 (2010): 135–54.

¹³ H. Gruber, "Evaluation of Student Learning in the Arts," *Arts Education Policy Review* 96, no. 2 (1994): 2–7; H. Gruber, "Assessment in the Arts: A Review of the Literature," *Studies in Art Education* 39, no. 2 (1998): 132–46; H. Gruber and J. Hobbs, "Evaluation of Student Learning in the Arts: A Review of the Literature," *Arts Education Policy Review* 104, no. 2 (2002): 2–8.

¹⁴ Boughton, "Museums, Exhibitions, and Art Education: Rethinking Assessment"; Andrade, "A Critical Review of Research on Self-Assessment in the Visual Arts."

¹⁵ Gruber, "Evaluation of Student Learning in the Arts"; Gruber, "Assessment in the Arts: A Review of the Literature."

¹⁶ Andrade, "A Critical Review of Research on Self-Assessment in the Visual Arts."

¹⁷ Gruber and Hobbs, "Evaluation of Student Learning in the Arts: A Review of the Literature."

Exhibition Assessment: Enhancing Presentation and Critical Thinking Skills

Beyond the creation of artwork, students must also develop the ability to articulate their artistic intent and creative decisions. Exhibition assessment provides an opportunity for students to present and defend their work, fostering artistic confidence and communication skills.¹⁸ This form of assessment goes beyond teacher evaluations, as it encourages peer and external evaluation, allowing for a broader and more holistic appreciation of student work. Through exhibitions, students gain insight into how their work is perceived by others, enhancing their ability to receive constructive criticism and refine their artistic voice.

By integrating multiple assessment strategies, educators can ensure a holistic and fair evaluation of student learning, capturing both the process and product of artistic expression. Portfolio assessment tracks progress over time, observational assessment provides real-time feedback, finished product assessment evaluates technical skills, and exhibition assessment enhances presentation abilities. Together, these approaches support a comprehensive and student-centered evaluation system, fostering lifelong artistic growth and creative confidence.

The Importance of Transparent Assessment Criteria

A key element in effective assessment is clarity in assessment criteria. Shepard and Moss, et.al., argue that students perform better when they clearly understand how their work will be evaluated.¹⁹ Well-defined rubrics, written guidelines, and structured feedback mechanisms enable students to set learning goals, self-regulate their progress, and refine their artistic practice.²⁰ When students are actively involved in the assessment process, they are more engaged, motivated, and capable of independent artistic growth.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a mixed-methods research approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative paradigms to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of assessment strategies on lifelong learning in Visual Arts education.²¹ The research design incorporated phenomenology to explore participants' lived experiences and evaluation methods to assess the effectiveness of assessment strategies in improving student learning outcomes.

A descriptive survey design was employed to collect data from three Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, targeting Visual Arts teachers and students as key stakeholders in the assessment process. The study utilized a stratified random sampling technique to ensure broad representation across different schools and experience levels. A total of 107 respondents were selected, out of which 90 participants provided valid responses for analysis.

Data was collected using structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, allowing for both standardized responses and in-depth qualitative insights. The questionnaire included closed-ended and open-ended questions designed to capture perspectives on assessment strategies, feedback mechanisms, and their influence on lifelong learning. The semi-structured interviews enabled deeper exploration of teachers' and students' experiences with assessment methods in Visual Arts education.

The collected data was categorized into thematic areas for analysis. Quantitative data from the questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions and percentages, to identify trends in assessment strategies.²² Qualitative data from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, where recurring themes were identified to understand teachers' and students' perceptions of assessment. The phenomenological approach ensured that the lived experiences of participants were captured, while the evaluation method assessed the effectiveness of various assessment techniques in improving student engagement and learning outcomes.

Ethical principles were adhered to throughout the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with

¹⁸ Boughton, "Museums, Exhibitions, and Art Education: Rethinking Assessment."

¹⁹ Shepard, "The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture"; Moss, Brookhart, and Long, *Administering and Managing the Classroom Environment*.

²⁰ D. R. Sadler, "Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems," *Instructional Science* 18, no. 2 (1989): 119–44; William K Kay, *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*, vol. 255 (Oxford University Press, USA, 2011).

²¹ John W Creswell and Vicki L Plano Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (Sage publications, 2017).

²² A. Field, *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*, 5th ed. (SAGE Publications, 2018).

the right to withdraw from the study at any point without consequence. The research followed ethical guidelines in ensuring that data collection and reporting were conducted with integrity and respect for participants' rights.

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study examined the impact of assessment strategies on lifelong learning in Visual Arts education. The findings highlight key aspects such as the reasons for assessment, methods used, and how assessment information is utilized. By aligning these results with existing literature, the discussion provides insights into improving assessment practices to enhance student engagement, motivation, and skill development.

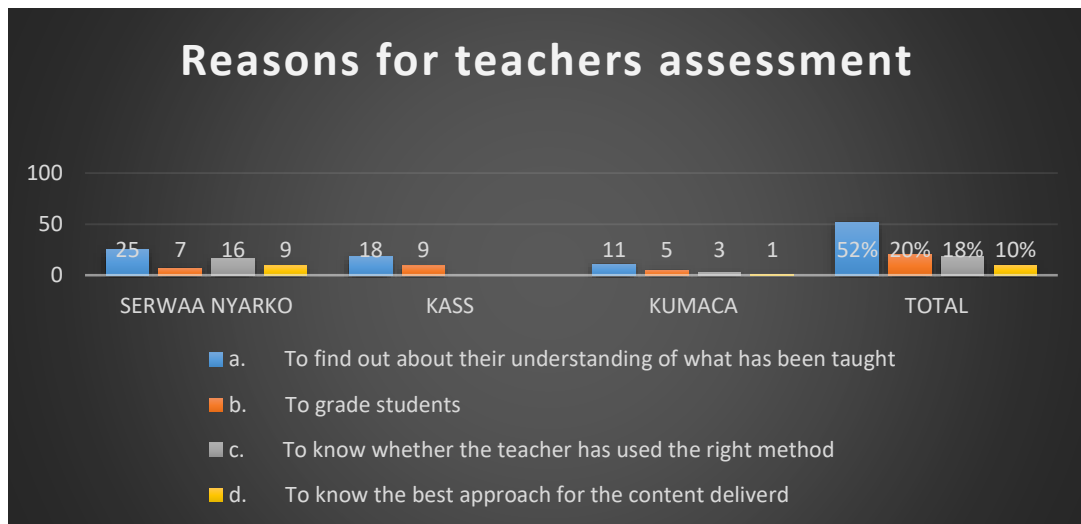


Fig 1: Reasons for teachers' assessment of students

Assessment plays a crucial role in education, serving as a fundamental tool for both evaluating student learning and enhancing teaching effectiveness. The findings from this study indicate that the primary purpose of assessment, as reported by 52% of teachers, is to measure students' understanding of the content taught. This aligns with the work of Shepard and Black and Wiliam, who emphasize that formative assessment is essential for monitoring students' progress, identifying learning gaps, and improving instructional delivery.²³ Formative assessment is particularly beneficial in Visual Arts education, where learning is not just about the final product but also about the process of artistic creation. By continuously assessing students' understanding, teachers can make real-time adjustments to their instructional strategies, ensuring a more personalized and effective learning experience. For instance, one of the questions focused on the number of years taught, and whether it had any influence on assessment strategies. This is what the interviewee from NaCCA said:

"The teachers' competency knowledge in assessment strategies does not depend on the number of years taught, but their knowledge in content knowledge, knowledge in pedagogy, content knowledge in subject matter they are teaching, and content knowledge in assessment."

The study also revealed that 20% of teachers use assessment primarily for grading students, reflecting the practice of summative assessment. While grading is necessary for evaluating student performance and providing credentials, caution that overemphasis on summative assessment can hinder deep learning. When students focus primarily on grades rather than understanding and skill development, they may become less engaged in creative exploration and more concerned with meeting grading criteria. In Visual Arts, where creativity and experimentation are key learning outcomes, it is essential to balance summative assessment with more flexible, process-oriented assessment methods that allow students to take risks and refine their artistic skills.

In addition to evaluating student learning, 18% of teachers use assessment as a tool for improving their teaching methods, an approach supported by Brookhart and Shute. Assessment can serve as a

²³ Shepard, "The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture"; Paul Black and Dylan Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning," *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* 5, no. 1 (1998): 7-74.

feedback mechanism for teachers, helping them identify which instructional strategies are most effective and which areas require improvement.²⁴ When teachers analyze student performance data, they gain insights into their own teaching effectiveness, allowing them to refine lesson plans, modify instructional approaches, and enhance student engagement. This practice aligns with research advocating for teacher reflective practice, where assessment results are not only used to evaluate students but also to guide professional growth and instructional improvement.

The lowest percentage (10%) of teachers reported using assessment to determine the best approach for content delivery. This finding suggests that while assessment is widely recognized as a means of evaluating student progress, fewer teachers see it as a tool for curriculum refinement. However, Hattie and Timperley argue that assessment should play a critical role in shaping curriculum design by identifying the most effective teaching strategies and content structures.²⁵ In Visual Arts education, where students have diverse learning styles and creative processes, using assessment to refine content delivery is essential for ensuring that all students receive an equitable and enriching learning experience.

The findings of this study align with existing research, reinforcing the idea that assessment serves multiple functions in education, from measuring student understanding to informing instructional practices and curriculum design. While formative assessment is most commonly used to monitor learning, summative assessment remains important for evaluating performance.

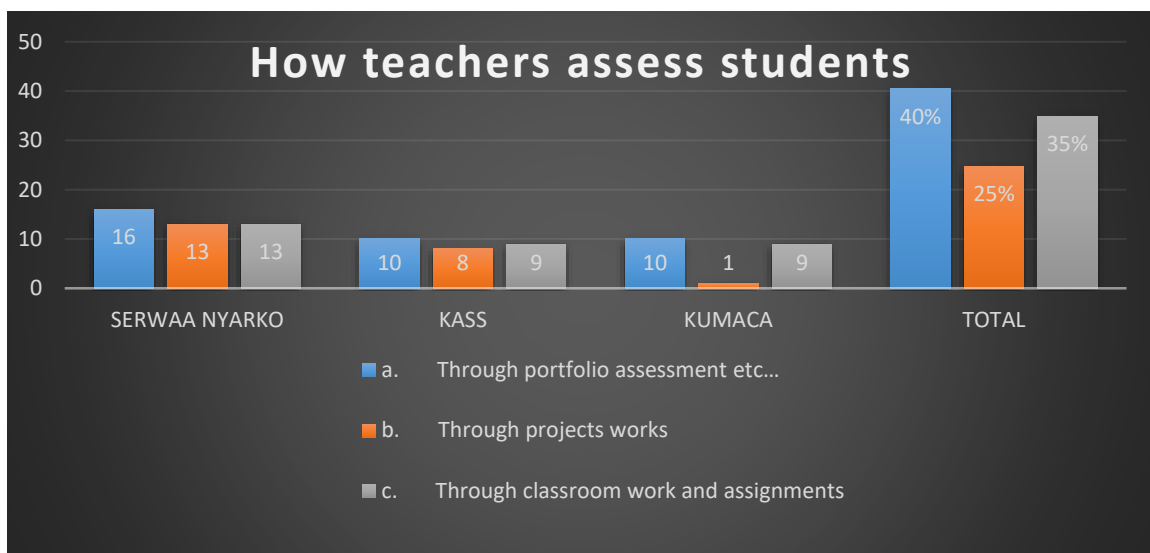


Fig 2: How do Teachers assess students

The data indicates that the most common assessment method used by teachers is portfolio assessment (40%), followed by classroom work and assignments (35%), and project work (25%). This distribution aligns with contemporary literature on formative and summative assessment strategies, highlighting the importance of using multiple approaches to assess student learning effectively.

The prominence of portfolio assessment (40%) aligns with studies by Gruber and Hobbs and Boughton, who emphasize that portfolios provide a comprehensive view of student progress over time.²⁶ Portfolios allow teachers to assess both the creative process and final product, making them ideal for subjects like Visual Arts, where skill development is as crucial as the final artwork.²⁷ Moreover, Andrade suggests that portfolio-based assessments enhance students' ability to self-reflect and improve their work based on continuous feedback.²⁸

²⁴ S. M. Brookhart, "How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading," ASCD, 2013; Valerie J. Shute, "Focus on Formative Feedback," *Review of Educational Research* 78, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 153–89, <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654307313795>.

²⁵ John Hattie and Helen Timperley, "The Power of Feedback," *Review of Educational Research* 77, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 81–112, <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>.

²⁶ Gruber and Hobbs, "Evaluation of Student Learning in the Arts: A Review of the Literature"; Boughton, "Museums, Exhibitions, and Art Education: Rethinking Assessment."

²⁷ Barrett, "Studies Involving Students' Learning through Art."; B. Wilson, "Creativity, Assessment, and the Arts," in *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*, ed. E. W. Eisner and M. D. Day (Alexandria, Virginia: National Art Education Association, 2015), 199–219.

²⁸ Andrade, "A Critical Review of Research on Self-Assessment in the Visual Arts."

With 35% of teachers using classroom work and assignments, the data reflects the integration of traditional assessment strategies that focus on daily engagement and structured learning. Classroom assignments allow teachers to monitor student progress regularly and provide timely feedback, reinforcing learning. However, Gikandi et al. caution that over-reliance on classroom work can sometimes limit creativity and independent exploration, especially in practical subjects like Visual Arts.²⁹

Project-based assessment (25%) is an essential strategy that fosters problem-solving, collaboration, and critical thinking, as supported by Thomas and Blumenfeld et al.³⁰ Research suggests that project-based learning (PBL) enhances student engagement and deep learning, making it a powerful tool in Visual Arts education.³¹ However, the lower percentage in this study may indicate that teachers find it resource-intensive and difficult to assess consistently, a challenge also noted by Gulikers et al.³²

The findings support the argument that multiple assessment strategies should be used to capture diverse student abilities. A balanced approach integrating portfolio assessment, classroom work, and project-based learning provides a holistic evaluation of students, catering to different learning styles and skill levels.

This study reinforces the importance of portfolio assessment as a preferred method in Visual Arts education due to its ability to capture both process and product. However, classroom-based and project-based assessments also play critical roles in providing regular feedback and fostering creativity. To optimize student learning outcomes, educators should employ a combination of these methods to ensure a comprehensive and student-centered approach to assessment.

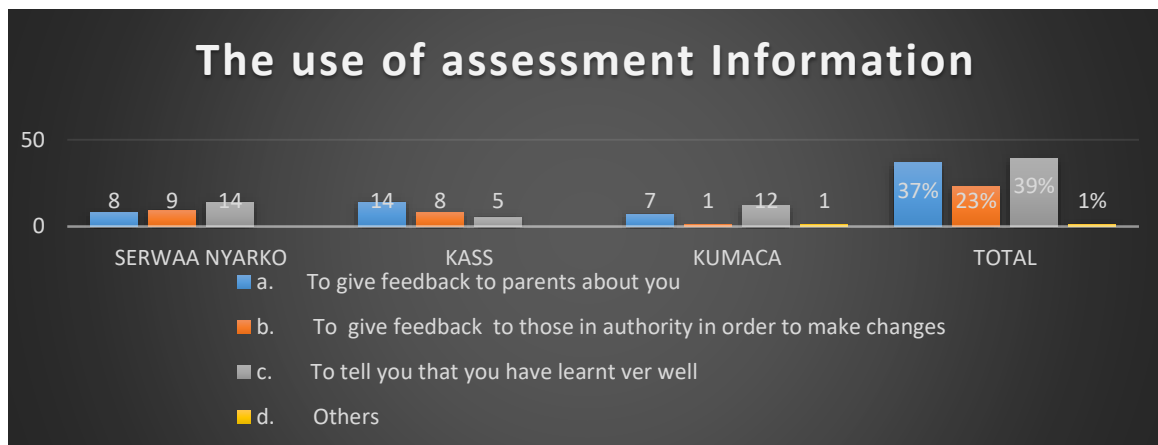


Fig 3: The use of Assessment Information

The findings highlight that assessment serves multiple purposes, with the majority (39%) indicating that it is primarily used to confirm student learning. This aligns with research by Shepard and Black and Wiliam, who emphasize that assessment is essential for tracking student progress and reinforcing learning.³³ Sadler further supports this by arguing that assessment helps students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, enabling them to take ownership of their learning.³⁴ The role of assessment for learning, as discussed by Singh et al., underscores the importance of using assessment not just as an evaluation tool but as a means to enhance learning through feedback and instructional adjustments.³⁵

²⁹ J.W. Gikandi, D. Morrow, and N.E. Davis, "Online Formative Assessment in Higher Education: A Review of the Literature," *Computers & Education* 57, no. 4 (December 2011): 2333–51, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.06.004>.

³⁰ Thomas C. Reeves, "Alternative Assessment Approaches for Online Learning Environments in Higher Education," *Journal of Educational Computing Research* 23, no. 1 (July 1, 2000): 101–11, <https://doi.org/10.2190/GYMQ-78FA-WMTX-J06C>; Jennifer A. Fredricks, Phyllis C. Blumenfeld, and Alison H. Paris, "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence," *Review of Educational Research* 74, no. 1 (2004): 59–109.

³¹ DeLuca, "Assessment in the Arts: A Review of the Literature."

³² Judith T. M. Gulikers et al., "The Effect of Practical Experience on Perceptions of Assessment Authenticity, Study Approach, and Learning Outcomes," *Learning and Instruction* 18, no. 2 (2008): 172–86.

³³ Shepard, "The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture"; Black and Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning."

³⁴ Sadler, "Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems."

³⁵ Asheena Singh-Pillay, Douglas Sibusiso Sotsaka, and Jose P. Abraham, "Interconnectedness Of Engineering Graphics And Design Teachers' Understanding Of And Teaching Of Assembly Drawing," *PONTE International Journal of Science and Research* 73, no. 6 (2017).

The second significant use of assessment, providing feedback to parents (37%), aligns with Epstein and Guskey, who stress the importance of parental involvement in student learning.³⁶ When parents are well-informed about their child's progress, they can provide the necessary support to enhance motivation and achievement. This also facilitates better collaboration between home and school, leading to improved learning outcomes.

Another 23% of responses indicate that assessment information is used to inform authorities for curriculum and policy adjustments, consistent with the arguments of Harlen and Earl and Katz.³⁷ These researchers emphasize that assessment data should guide instructional improvements and policy decisions. Brookhart suggests that when administrators analyze assessment data, they can identify gaps in teaching methods and implement necessary reforms.³⁸ The Dzobo Committee demonstrated the impact of assessment-informed policy changes, leading to the restructuring of Ghana's education system, particularly in the Visual Arts curriculum.³⁹

The 1% response rate for other uses of assessment suggests that teachers and students primarily focus on assessment for student learning, parental communication, and institutional changes. However, Gikandi et al. argue that assessment information can also be used for instructional innovations, personalized learning, and peer collaboration, ensuring a more adaptive and responsive education system.⁴⁰

These findings reinforce the multi-faceted role of assessment in education, supporting student learning, engaging parents, and informing institutional decisions. A balanced approach integrating formative and summative assessments is essential for achieving comprehensive educational improvements. Schools should ensure that assessment data is effectively communicated to students, parents, and policymakers, maximizing its impact on teaching and learning.

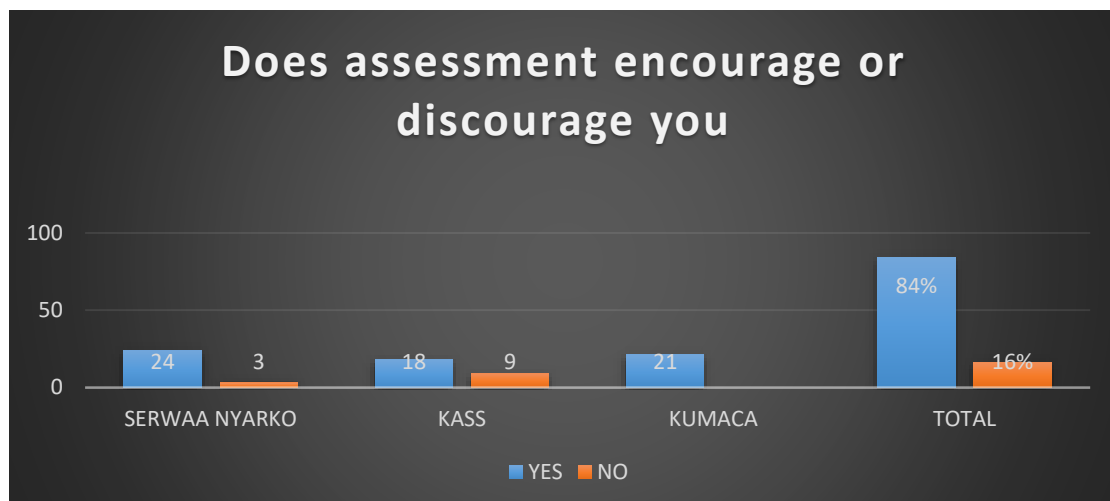


Fig. 4: Impact of assessment on teaching

The findings highlight that assessment plays a crucial role in shaping student motivation and learning experiences, with 84% of students feeling encouraged by assessment and only 16% feeling discouraged. These results align with research emphasizing that well-structured formative assessments promote engagement, self-improvement, and deeper learning.⁴¹ The Growth Mindset Theory by Dweck,

³⁶ Joyce L Epstein, "School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools," *ADOLESCENCE-SAN DIEGO*- 37 (2002): 435; Thomas R. Guskey, "Professional Development and Teacher Change," *Teachers and Teaching* 8, no. 3 (August 25, 2002): 381–91, <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>.

³⁷ Harlen, "Teachers' Summative Practices and Assessment for Learning—Tensions and Synergies"; Earl and Katz, "Rethinking Assessment: A Framework for Professional Judgment."

³⁸ Brookhart, "How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading."

³⁹ E. Quayson, *Education Reforms in Ghana: Achievements and Challenges* (Ghana Education Service, 2006); K. Edusei, "Reforms in the Visual Arts Curriculum in Ghanaian Secondary Schools" (Winneba: University of Education, 2004).

⁴⁰ Gikandi, Morrow, and Davis, "Online Formative Assessment in Higher Education: A Review of the Literature."

⁴¹ Black and Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning"; Hattie and Timperley, "The Power of Feedback."

suggests that students who see assessment as an opportunity to track progress and receive constructive feedback are more likely to be motivated and perform better in their studies.⁴²

A key factor in motivating students is the transparency of assessment criteria and feedback. Studies by Shepard and Moss, Brookhart and Long highlight that when students clearly understand how they are being assessed, they are more engaged and take responsibility for their learning.⁴³ The Goal-setting Theory by Locke and Latham further supports this by emphasizing that measurable academic goals reinforce intrinsic motivation and commitment to learning.⁴⁴

However, the 16% of students who feel discouraged suggests that certain assessment practices may cause anxiety and disengagement. Research on summative assessment stress.⁴⁵ Wiliam indicates that an overemphasis on grades rather than learning can lead to fear of failure and reduced confidence.⁴⁶ Earl and Katz argue that unclear or overly critical feedback can discourage students,⁴⁷ while test anxiety theory explains that high-stakes assessments increase stress and negatively impact performance.⁴⁸

To address this, a balanced assessment approach integrating formative and summative strategies is essential.⁴⁹ Implementing low-stakes assessments and self-assessment techniques can help students see mistakes as learning opportunities rather than failures.⁵⁰ When teachers provide constructive, actionable feedback, students shift from a performance-oriented mindset to a learning-oriented mindset, reducing anxiety and increasing motivation.

The findings emphasize that clear, supportive, and student-centered assessment practices significantly enhance motivation. By fostering transparency, goal-setting, and feedback-driven learning, educators can ensure that assessment remains a tool for growth rather than a source of stress. A balanced approach, where assessment is used not just for grading but as a means of guiding student progress and self-improvement, is essential for maximizing student engagement, reducing anxiety, and promoting lifelong learning.⁵¹

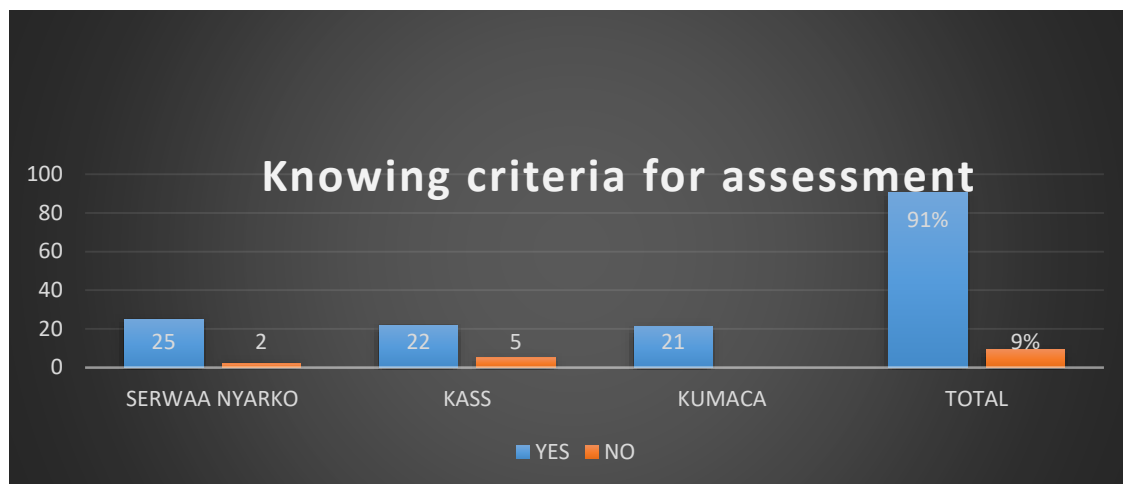


Fig 5: Impact of assessment on student performance

The findings strongly indicate that 91% of students believe that knowing assessment criteria enhances their learning, while only 9% do not share this view. This aligns with recent literature and empirical studies, which highlight that transparency in assessment criteria fosters student engagement,

⁴² C. S. Dweck, *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* (Random House, 2006).

⁴³ Shepard, "The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture"; Moss, Brookhart, and Long, *Administering and Managing the Classroom Environment*.

⁴⁴ Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham, "Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35-Year Odyssey.," *American Psychologist* 57, no. 9 (September 2002): 705–17, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.57.9.705>.

⁴⁵ Harlen, "Teachers' Summative Practices and Assessment for Learning—Tensions and Synergies."

⁴⁶ Dylan Wiliam, *Embedded Formative Assessment* (Solution Tree Press, 2011).

⁴⁷ Earl and Katz, "Rethinking Assessment: A Framework for Professional Judgment."

⁴⁸ Moshe Zeidner, "Test Anxiety in Educational Contexts," in *Emotion in Education* (Elsevier, 2007), 165–84, <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012372545-5/50011-3>.

⁴⁹ Black and Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning"; Hattie and Timperley, "The Power of Feedback."

⁵⁰ Sadler, "Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems"; Brookhart, "How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading."

⁵¹ Hattie and Timperley, "The Power of Feedback."

motivation, and improved academic performance.⁵² When students clearly understand how they will be assessed, they can better align their efforts with learning objectives, leading to higher achievement and self-regulation.⁵³

Research suggests that clear assessment criteria help students develop a sense of ownership over their learning, as they can track their progress and make necessary improvements.⁵⁴ This supports goal-setting theory which argues that students with clear academic goals tend to perform better due to increased motivation and self-direction.⁵⁵ Additionally, Andrade and Valtcheva emphasize that transparent assessment fosters self-assessment skills, allowing students to identify gaps and refine their work before final submission.⁵⁶ This is particularly relevant in Visual Arts education, where iterative feedback and continuous skill development are essential.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive perception, 9% of students reported feeling that knowing assessment criteria did not impact their learning. This small percentage highlights the negative consequences of unclear assessment standards, such as confusion, anxiety, and disengagement. When students do not know what is expected of them, they experience increased stress, which negatively affects their performance. Earl and Katz further caution that assessment without transparency can lead to perceived bias or unfair grading, reducing student confidence in the evaluation process.⁵⁷

Given these findings, educators should prioritize explicit communication of assessment criteria. Providing rubrics, exemplars, and clear grading descriptors helps students understand what constitutes high-quality work and allows them to approach tasks with confidence. In Visual Arts education, it is particularly beneficial to establish clear performance descriptors, as this helps both teachers and students evaluate progress and determine next steps for improvement.

The findings strongly reinforce the importance of transparency in assessment criteria, as it enhances student motivation, self-regulation, and academic performance. Educators should ensure that assessment guidelines are clearly communicated, consistently applied, and reinforced with formative feedback, allowing students to track their progress and refine their skills effectively. By making assessment expectations clear, students gain confidence, engage more deeply in learning, and achieve higher levels of academic success.

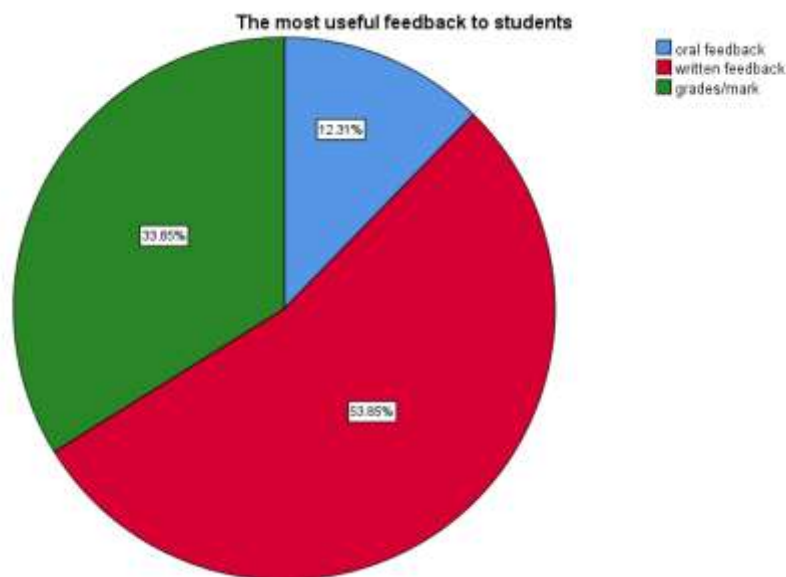


Figure 6: The most useful feedback to students

⁵² Shepard, "The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture"; Brookhart, "How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading."

⁵³ Sadler, "Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems."

⁵⁴ Moss, Brookhart, and Long, *Administering and Managing the Classroom Environment*.

⁵⁵ Locke and Latham, "Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35-Year Odyssey."

⁵⁶ Heidi Andrade and Anna Valtcheva, "Promoting Learning and Achievement Through Self-Assessment," *Theory Into Practice* 48, no. 1 (January 2009): 12–19, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802577544>.

⁵⁷ Earl and Katz, "Rethinking Assessment: A Framework for Professional Judgment."

Feedback is a crucial component of assessment, directly influencing student learning, motivation, and performance. The findings reveal that written feedback (53.85%) is the most helpful form of feedback for students, while grades/marks (12.31%) are the least helpful. These results align with existing literature, which emphasizes that effective formative feedback provides students with clear, actionable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement.⁵⁸

Effectiveness of Written Feedback

Written feedback emerged as the most preferred form because it provides specific, detailed explanations that guide students on how to improve their work.⁵⁹ According to Nyquist, strong formative assessment feedback should contain accurate evaluations, explanations, and specific actions students can take to enhance learning.⁶⁰ This aligns with Black and Wiliam, who argue that quality feedback promotes self-regulation, allowing students to actively engage in their learning and correct their mistakes.⁶¹

However, one challenge associated with written feedback is whether all students can fully comprehend the critique provided. Price et al. highlight that for written feedback to be effective, it must be clearly structured, personalized, and delivered in a manner that students can interpret and apply.⁶² Furthermore, Gibbs and Simpson suggest that feedback should be timely and connected to learning objectives to maximize its impact on student progress.⁶³

Limitations of Grades/Marks as Feedback

The study also found that grades or marks were the least effective form of feedback (12.31%), confirming findings from previous research that grades alone provide limited learning benefits.⁶⁴ Marks indicate student performance but do not explain errors or suggest improvements, making it difficult for students to understand why they received a particular score. For example, when a teacher assigns 30/50 on a practical Visual Arts assignment, a student may struggle to understand why they lost the remaining marks. Without specific feedback on what went wrong and how to improve, students may become disengaged or frustrated with their performance. Research by Hounsell suggests that grades alone fail to provide meaningful learning experiences, as they do not encourage reflection, problem-solving, or deeper engagement with the subject matter.⁶⁵

Integrating Multiple Forms of Feedback for Effective Learning

Given the strengths of written feedback and the limitations of grades, a balanced approach incorporating multiple feedback methods is recommended. Hattie and Timperley emphasize that effective feedback should be clear, actionable, and designed to guide future learning.⁶⁶ Andrade and Du suggest using a combination of written feedback, verbal discussions, and self-assessment opportunities to reinforce learning and ensure students fully understand their areas for improvement.⁶⁷ The findings confirm that written feedback is the most effective in guiding student learning, while grades alone provide minimal instructional value. To optimize learning, teachers should integrate written feedback with verbal explanations and detailed performance criteria to ensure students understand their mistakes and know how to improve. A comprehensive feedback system that combines detailed written feedback, verbal clarification, and grading will enhance student engagement, self-regulation, and overall academic performance.

⁵⁸ Nyquist, "The Benefits and Challenges of Using Student Peer Review in the Arts"; Hattie and Timperley, "The Power of Feedback."

⁵⁹ Sadler, "Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems"; Brookhart, "How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading."

⁶⁰ Nyquist, "The Benefits and Challenges of Using Student Peer Review in the Arts."

⁶¹ Black and Wiliam, "Assessment and Classroom Learning."

⁶² Margaret Price et al., "Feedback: All That Effort, but What Is the Effect?," *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 35, no. 3 (May 2010): 277–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930903541007>.

⁶³ Graham Gibbs and Claire Simpson, "Conditions under Which Assessment Supports Students' Learning," *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, no. 1 (2005): 3–31.

⁶⁴ Wiliam, *Embedded Formative Assessment*; Shute, "Focus on Formative Feedback."

⁶⁵ D. Hounsell, "Towards More Sustainable Feedback to Students," in *Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education: Learning for the Longer Term*, ed. D Boud and N. Falchikov (Routledge, 2007), 101–13.

⁶⁶ Hattie and Timperley, "The Power of Feedback."

⁶⁷ Heidi Andrade and Ying Du, "Student Responses to Criteria-referenced Self-assessment," *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 32, no. 2 (April 2007): 159–81, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930600801928>.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research recommends a multi-faceted assessment strategy developed by stakeholders, i.e. the Ministry of Education and School Governing Councils, which will enhance feedback systems, ensuring clear communication of assessment standards, and providing professional development opportunities for educators. This will promote the integration of both formative and summative assessments to facilitate ongoing learning. Furthermore, educational policymakers are urged to adopt a variety of assessment techniques in schools..

CONCLUSION

Assessment plays a pivotal role in shaping student learning outcomes and fostering lifelong learning skills in Visual Arts education. This study has demonstrated that a diverse and well-structured assessment framework is essential for the holistic development of students in Senior High Schools in the Ashanti Region, Ghana. The findings emphasize that portfolio assessment, observation of works in progress, finished product evaluation, and exhibition assessment collectively provide a comprehensive evaluation of student learning. Relying solely on product-based assessment limits students' ability to engage in reflective learning, critical thinking, and continuous artistic development.

Furthermore, the study highlights that transparent assessment criteria and constructive feedback mechanisms are vital in motivating students and helping them understand their progress and areas for improvement. The findings suggest that when students receive clear feedback and understand the expectations of assessment, they are more likely to engage actively in their learning process and refine their artistic skills. Additionally, the study underscores the importance of teacher professional development in enhancing the effectiveness of assessment strategies, ensuring that educators adopt diverse and student-centered assessment practices that promote creativity, self-reflection, and skill mastery.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Andrade, H. "A Critical Review of Research on Self-Assessment in the Visual Arts." *Studies in Art Education* 60, no. 2 (2019): 120–37.
- Andrade, Heidi, and Ying Du. "Student Responses to Criteria-referenced Self-assessment." *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 32, no. 2 (April 2007): 159–81.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930600801928>.
- Andrade, Heidi, and Anna Valtcheva. "Promoting Learning and Achievement Through Self-Assessment." *Theory Into Practice* 48, no. 1 (January 2009): 12–19.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00405840802577544>.
- Barrett, T. "Studies Involving Students' Learning through Art." *Studies in Art Education* 48, no. 3 (2007): 257–74.
- Black, Paul, and Dylan Wiliam. "Assessment and Classroom Learning." *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice* 5, no. 1 (1998): 7–74.
- Boughton, D. "Museums, Exhibitions, and Art Education: Rethinking Assessment." *Studies in Art Education* 54, no. 3 (2013): 233–48.
- Bresler, L. "What Does It Mean to Teach Art in the Context of Education for a Democratic Society?" *Art Education* 58, no. 5 (2005): 6–12.
- Brookhart, S. M. "How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading." ASCD, 2013.
- Creswell, John W, and Vicki L Plano Clark. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Sage Publications, 2017.
- DeLuca, C. "Assessment in the Arts: A Review of the Literature." *Studies in Art Education* 51, no. 2 (2010): 135–54.
- Dweck, C. S. *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success*. Random House, 2006.
- Earl, L. M., and S. Katz. "Rethinking Assessment: A Framework for Professional Judgment." *Journal of Educational Change* 7, no. 2 (2006): 147–64.
- Edusei, K. "Reforms in the Visual Arts Curriculum in Ghanaian Secondary Schools." Winneba: University of Education, 2004.

- Eisner, E. W. *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*. Yale University Press, 2002.
- Epstein, Joyce L. "School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Preparing Educators and Improving Schools." *ADOLESCENCE-SAN DIEGO*- 37 (2002): 435.
- Field, A. *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. 5th ed. SAGE Publications, 2018.
- Fredricks, Jennifer A, Phyllis C Blumenfeld, and Alison H Paris. "School Engagement: Potential of the Concept, State of the Evidence." *Review of Educational Research* 74, no. 1 (2004): 59–109.
- Gibbs, Graham, and Claire Simpson. "Conditions under Which Assessment Supports Students' Learning." *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, no. 1 (2005): 3–31.
- Gikandi, J.W., D. Morrow, and N.E. Davis. "Online Formative Assessment in Higher Education: A Review of the Literature." *Computers & Education* 57, no. 4 (December 2011): 2333–51. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2011.06.004>.
- Gruber, H. "Assessment in the Arts: A Review of the Literature." *Studies in Art Education* 39, no. 2 (1998): 132–46.
- . "Evaluation of Student Learning in the Arts." *Arts Education Policy Review* 96, no. 2 (1994): 2–7.
- Gruber, H., and J. Hobbs. "Evaluation of Student Learning in the Arts: A Review of the Literature." *Arts Education Policy Review* 104, no. 2 (2002): 2–8.
- Gulikers, Judith T M, Liesbeth Kester, Paul A Kirschner, and Theo J Bastiaens. "The Effect of Practical Experience on Perceptions of Assessment Authenticity, Study Approach, and Learning Outcomes." *Learning and Instruction* 18, no. 2 (2008): 172–86.
- Guskey, Thomas R. "Professional Development and Teacher Change." *Teachers and Teaching* 8, no. 3 (August 25, 2002): 381–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135406002100000512>.
- Harlen, W. "Teachers' Summative Practices and Assessment for Learning—Tensions and Synergies." *Curriculum Journal* 16, no. 2 (2005): 207–23.
- Hattie, John, and Helen Timperley. "The Power of Feedback." *Review of Educational Research* 77, no. 1 (March 1, 2007): 81–112. <https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487>.
- Hetland, L., and E. Winner. *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Teaching and Learning through the Arts*. Teachers College, 2001.
- Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). "Strategies for Widening Participation in Higher Education: A Guide to Good Practice." *Higher Education Funding Council for England*, 2001.
- Hounsell, D. "Towards More Sustainable Feedback to Students." In *Rethinking Assessment in Higher Education: Learning for the Longer Term*, edited by D Boud and N. Falchikov, 101–13. Routledge, 2007.
- Kay, William K. *Pentecostalism: A Very Short Introduction*. Vol. 255. Oxford University Press, USA, 2011.
- Kuttner, P. J. "Assessing Creative Learning: A Review of Literature on Arts-Based Education." *Arts Education Policy Review* 116 (2015): 153–61.
- Locke, Edwin A., and Gary P. Latham. "Building a Practically Useful Theory of Goal Setting and Task Motivation: A 35-Year Odyssey." *American Psychologist* 57, no. 9 (September 2002): 705–17. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.57.9.705>.
- Marshall, J. "Assessment in Art and Design Education: A Critical Review." *International Journal of Art & Design Education* 36, no. 1 (2017): 5–18.
- Moss, C. M., S. M. Brookhart, and B. A. Long. *Administering and Managing the Classroom Environment*. Pearson Education, 2011.
- Nyquist, J. D. "The Benefits and Challenges of Using Student Peer Review in the Arts." *Arts Education Policy Review* 105, no. 1 (2003): 2–8.
- Price, Margaret, Karen Handley, Jill Millar, and Berry O'Donovan. "Feedback : All That Effort, but What Is the Effect?" *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 35, no. 3 (May 2010): 277–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602930903541007>.
- Quayson, E. *Education Reforms in Ghana: Achievements and Challenges*. Ghana Education Service, 2006.
- Reeves, Thomas C. "Alternative Assessment Approaches for Online Learning Environments in Higher

- Education.” *Journal of Educational Computing Research* 23, no. 1 (July 1, 2000): 101–11. <https://doi.org/10.2190/GYMQ-78FA-WMTX-J06C>.
- Sadler, D. R. “Formative Assessment and the Design of Instructional Systems.” *Instructional Science* 18, no. 2 (1989): 119–44.
- Shepard, L. A. “The Role of Assessment in a Learning Culture.” *Educational Researcher* 29, no. 7 (2000): 4–14.
- Shute, Valerie J. “Focus on Formative Feedback.” *Review of Educational Research* 78, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 153–89. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654307313795>.
- Singh-Pillay, Asheena, Douglas Sibusiso Sotsaka, and Jose P Abraham. “Interconnectedness Of Engineering Graphics And Design Teachers’ Understanding Of And Teaching Of Assembly Drawing.” *PONTE International Journal of Science and Research* 73, no. 6 (2017).
- Wiliam, Dylan. *Embedded Formative Assessment*. Solution Tree Press, 2011.
- Wilson, B. “Creativity, Assessment, and the Arts.” In *Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education*, edited by E. W. Eisner and M. D. Day, 199–219. Alexandria, Virginia: National Art Education Association, 2015.
- Zeidner, Moshe. “Test Anxiety in Educational Contexts.” In *Emotion in Education*, 165–84. Elsevier, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012372545-5/50011-3>.

ABOUT AUTHORS

Dr. Atta Kusi Ankrah is a Lecturer at Kumasi Technical University. His research focuses on how assessments of Visual art students’ practical works should be conducted. He is a curriculum Developer currently working on the curriculum for the Diploma students in his Department at the University. He is also a specialist in item writing.

Mr. Victor Nimoh Boateng serves as an Assistant Lecturer in Art Education at St. Louis College of Education, Kumasi. As a passionate interventionist, he leverages art-based strategies to support individual learners and underrepresented groups. His research explores the intersections between art, technology, and Ghanaian culture, advocating for culturally responsive pedagogy enhanced by digital tools.

Mr. Kenneth Osei Yeboah is a lecturer in Communication Design at Kumasi Technical University, Ghana, with a keen focus on design education, curriculum development, and visual communication research. He holds an MPhil in Communication Design and has led notable studies on graphic design finishing quality, therapeutic art practices, and modern photography techniques.

Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim is an academic and researcher from Tamale, born in Old Tafo, Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. He teaches in the Fashion Design and Textile Studies Department at Kumasi Technical University. Ibrahim is pursuing a PhD in Art and Culture at the Department of Music at the University of Education, Winneba (UEW). He holds multiple degrees, including an MPhil in Fashion Design Technology from KNUST and an MTech in Fashion Design and Textile Technology from UEW. His research focuses on textile design, fashion design, creative design, fashion history, critical thinking, and sustainability.