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Graduate Social Studies Teachers' Knowledge Base of the Curriculum Objectives at the Senior High Schools and the Domains They Emphasize on

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Keywords:

Curriculum Objectives, Domains, Graduate Teachers, Knowledge Base, Social Studies.

This study aimed to determine the graduate Social Studies teachers' knowledge base of the curriculum objectives at the Senior High Schools and the domains they emphasize. This study employed a qualitative and interpretive methodology using the case study design. The population for the study included all the 15 graduate Social Studies teachers at the Senior High Schools in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Using the purposive sampling technique, the researchers selected ten (10) trained graduate Social Studies teachers out of the fifteen (15) teachers for the one-on-one interview. Qualitative data collection instruments were used in gathering data for the study. The data collection methods involved an interview guide comprising fifteen (15) semi-structured items for ten (10) graduate Social Studies teachers at the Senior High School level. Most of the graduate Social Studies teachers did not have in-depth knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghanaian Senior High Schools. Even though most of the teachers touted their in-depth knowledge about the curriculum or instructional objectives of teaching the subject during the interview session, data from the observational sheet proved that as many as 7(70%) did not possess in-depth knowledge about the objectives of teaching the subject in Ghana. A few teachers demonstrated sufficient knowledge about the curriculum or instructional objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana. The results also showed that Social Studies teachers' examination questions emphasize the cognitive domain even though almost all participants believed that Social Studies is citizenship education, with its focus being the affective domain. The analysis and the discussions accentuate that most of the graduate teachers engaged in the study demonstrated a very good knowledge of the curriculum or instructional objectives of teaching and learning Social Studies at the Senior High School level. From the foregoing, the researchers conclude that most participants have been trained to handle the subject. The analyses also highlight that the graduate teachers' questions emphasized the cognitive domain of educational objectives. Graduate teachers should be encouraged to be familiar with the objectives of teaching and learning Social Studies. This is because the failure on the part of teachers to consider the curriculum or instructional objectives only militates against the successful implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in Ghana. This will

go a long way to ensuring that graduate teachers familiarize themselves more with the subject's objectives for effective instruction and assessment in Social Studies.

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INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to determine the graduate Social Studies teachers' knowledge base of the curriculum objectives at the Senior High Schools and the domains they emphasize. The introduction of Social Studies and its subsequent growth across the different parts of the world has been informed by various reasons and factors. For instance, it has been used as a partial solution for social problems in many world countries. In Britain, Social Studies was used to legitimize the teaching of social sciences, particularly sociology, as well as prepare students for citizen roles in their society. In the United States of America (USA), social studies have continued their primary function of preparing students for effective citizenship in a democratic society and instilling patriotic ideals in the young ones (Kissock, 1981; Miles, 2020).

The success of Social Studies in solving social problems in Britain, America as well as many other countries of the world triggered the introduction of the subject in several African countries, including Ghana, in the late 1960s (Odumah & Poatob, 2016). According to Adeyemi (2000) and Amanze and Nkhoma (2020), "after independence, Ghanaian leaders, led by Kwame Nkrumah, were of the convictions

that if the system of education is to satisfactorily fulfil its function, it must necessarily rest on a foundation of national development." In Ghana today, there is a general consensus that the fundamental purpose of Social Studies is Citizenship Education. According to Blege (2001) and Ritter (2012), "In the context of Ghana, Social Studies is citizenship education which aims at producing reflective, competent, responsible and participatory citizens."

Similarly, Odumah (2008) and Manfra and Bolick (2017) opine that Social Studies, from its inception, was intended as a nation-building subject and a country's aspiration, therefore, constitutes the basis for teaching it. Furthermore, the Social Studies curriculum for Senior High Schools in Ghana generally considers the subject to be a study of society's problems. The subject is intended to prepare the individual to fit into society by equipping him/her with knowledge about their society's culture and ways of life, its problems, its values, and its hopes for the future (CRDD, 2010).

Social Studies emphasises developing the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that will enable learners to make reflective decisions and act on them to solve their personal and societal

problems. Therefore, Social Studies in the school setting has a unique responsibility to provide students with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to function effectively within their immediate localities and the generality of society in an interdependent world.

This implies that Social Studies is one of the very few subjects consistent and closely tied to the bedrock of the Ghanaian educational policy of national development (Adeyemi, 2000; Amanze & Nkhoma, 2020). However, realising the aforementioned goals and objectives is possible only through the effective implementation of the Social Studies Curriculum.

Meanwhile, Curriculum implementation is aimed at actualizing the planned curriculum. It is the translation of the curriculum contents into practice or action. In the words of Offorma (1994), Nzewi et al. (1995), and Samuel (2017), the implementation of the curriculum is normally done in the classroom through joint efforts of the teacher and learners as well as those concerned. Again, a very significant component of curriculum implementation is the assessment or evaluation of learning outcomes (Ng, 2018). This means that classroom teachers' actions and/or inactions, particularly in assessing learning outcomes, tend to greatly influence the successful implementation of the Social Studies curriculum and, subsequently, the realization of the curriculum goals and objectives.

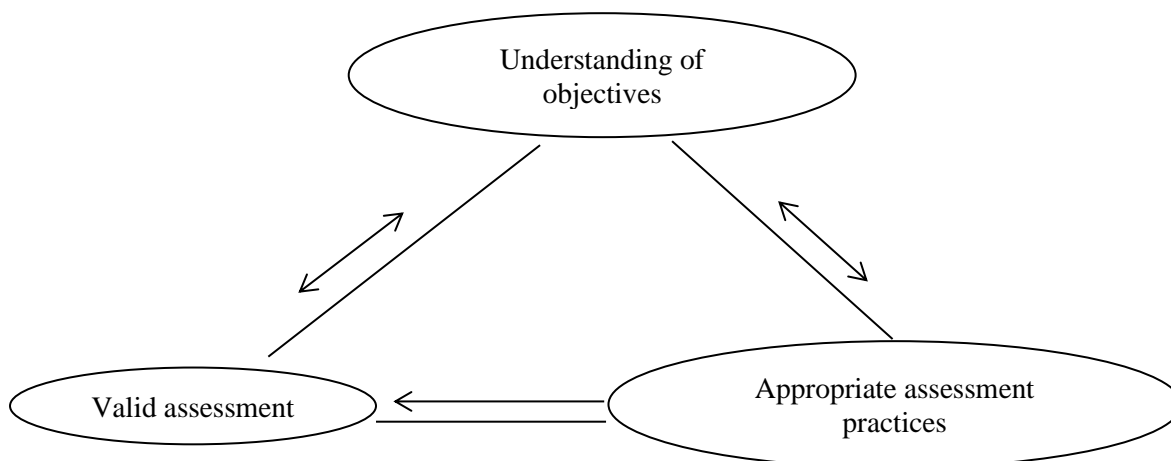
Statement of the Problem

The problem under study is that the level of familiarity of graduate teachers with the objectives of teaching Social Studies and their assessment practices seemingly affects the successful implementation of the Social Studies curriculum at the Senior High School level. One serious defect in the evaluation system is that the measurement of students' achievements is directed mainly towards the measure of cognitive behaviours such as knowledge, understanding and other thinking skills, which are usually acquired after exposure to some learning experiences and

subject matter knowledge. Also, the present assessment practice neglects the assessment of skills, which are normally associated with the personality characteristics of students (Adams, 2021; de Boer & van Rijnsoever, 2021; Obemeata, 1984; Ranjbaran & Alavi, 2017)) whereas a complete assessment must ideally cover all the three domains of educational objectives. From the researchers' observations and experiences, it seems some teachers' knowledge base of the Senior High School Social Studies curriculum objectives is affecting the teaching, assessment and, for that matter, the attainment of the subject goals at the Senior High School level. The researcher complained that the curriculum and its materials were not ready for implementation. In view of the above, this research was intended to examine Graduate Social Studies teachers' knowledge base of the curriculum objectives at the Senior High Schools and the domains they emphasize.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Banks (1990, 2020) and Rajaram (2021), it is not possible to evaluate or assess learning in social studies without clearly identifying instructional goals or objectives. The more clearly and precisely instructional objectives are stated, the more one will be able to obtain precise data on the outcome or result of the instructional process. Coherent with the above assertion, Quartey (1984) argues that it is important to keep in mind the objectives of the subject (Social Studies) when designing test items. From the foregoing, one would not be wrong to conclude that assessment and objectives are opposite sides of the same coin, meaning that effective assessment in Social Studies is largely driven by curriculum or instructional objectives. Test items should, therefore, match with course objectives and instructions to ensure content validity (Airasian, 1994; Zama & Endeley, 2021). In light of the above arguments and assertions, the conceptual framework that guided the study is shown in *Figure 1* below.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework.

The figure above explains how the researcher conceptualised the whole research work. In the figure are three basic elements: instructional objectives, assessment practices, and valid assessment. That is to say that the figure above describes the relationships that exist between teachers' familiarity or understanding of the objectives and assessment practices in the Social Studies classroom.

The relationship is based on teachers' understanding of the curriculum and instructional objectives in Social Studies influencing their assessment practices (Sever & Ersoy, 2019). This means that for teachers to get their assessment practices on target, they must first be abreast with the curriculum goals and instructional objectives of Social Studies. With the goals and objectives as bases, teachers get their assessment practices on target. This leads to the valid assessment of learning outcomes, which subsequently results in the attainment of the goals and objectives of teaching Social Studies.

Objectives/ Aims of Teaching Social Studies in Ghana

Dynneson and Gross (1999) identified that the overall instructional goals of Social Studies are often related to the following concerns:

- to prepare students for a changing world,
- to broaden students' perspectives and understanding of the community, nation, and world,

- to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities they need in both their personal and public lives,
- to help students draw and synthesise knowledge, skills and values that are characteristics of Social Science subject matter,
- to contribute to students' understanding of what it means to live in a complex and pluralistic society,
- to provide students with an understanding of the means and processes of a representative form of government,
- to encourage students to participate in the affairs of society and to work towards establishing a good society and
- to promote important social goals associated with democratic living.

Quarthey (1984, p. 4) also identifies five objectives of studying Social Studies. These are summarized below:

- To develop in students' positive attitudes of togetherness, comradeship, and cooperation towards a healthy nation; the inculcation of appropriate values of honesty, integrity, hard work, fairness, and justice at work and play as one's contribution to the development of the nation.
- To ensure the acquisition of relevant knowledge, which is an essential prerequisite

to personal development as well as to a positive personal contribution to the betterment of mankind.

- To awaken the intellectual curiosity of students in identifying man's problems of survival and in trying to solve these in a positive and objective manner.
- To develop in students a positive attitude to citizenship and a desire to lead others to a similar self-awareness and
- To develop a sympathetic appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of all members of the local community and the wider national and international community.

Furthermore, an attempt by Aggarwal (1982) and Aggarwal (2009) to prescribe objectives for the subject compounded the issue in terms of numbers. He came out with a long list of fifteen goals for teaching Social Studies in the school curriculum as follows;

- Acquaintance with the environment. Social Studies acquaints the child with his/her past and present social, cultural, and geographical environment.
- Interest in socio- economic institutions. Social Studies in schools helps students to take a keen interest in the ways people through various socioeconomic and political institutions.
- Appreciation of cultural heritage.
- Sifting of material. The teaching of Social Studies enables the students to recognise and get rid of what is undesirable and antiquated, especially in the context of social change.
- Development of broadmindedness. Social Studies aims to ensure that narrow, parochial, chauvinistic and obscurantist tendencies are not allowed to grow in our pupils and that they become tolerant and broadminded.
- Development of social commitment. Social Studies endeavours to develop a will and ability in every pupil to participate in the most important task of the reconstruction of society

and economy with a sense of social commitment.

- Faith in the destiny of a nation. Teaching Social Studies aims to develop faith in the minds of the students in the destiny of our nation in terms of promoting a spirit of tolerance and assimilation and peace and harmony among the people of the world.
- Development of insight into human relations. Social Studies is intended to help pupils develop an insight into human relationships, social values, and attitudes.
- Effective participation in social affairs.
- Promotion of ideals enshrined in the constitution.
- Maximisation of economic and social welfare. Social Studies inculcates attitudes and skills for maximisation of economic and social welfare.
- Promotion of peace. Social Studies inculcates attitudes and imparts the knowledge necessary for the achievement of the principal values of a just world order.
- Profitable use of leisure time.
- Foundation of specialisation. Social Studies provides a pattern and experience of study that will serve as a foundation for specialisation at a later stage of students' education. In the early stages, students are made familiar with the elementary knowledge of various disciplines.
- Many-sided development of the personality.

Tamakloe (2008) postulates that the main goal of social studies is to help students develop the ability to make rational decisions so as to enable them to resolve personal problems and influence public policy through social actions. To him, all of these are vital to realizing the aims of citizenship education. Quartey (2003), in his appraisal of the 1987 Social Studies Syllabus for Junior Secondary Schools, summarizes the general objectives of Social Studies as follows:

- Becoming a good citizen who is capable and willing to contribute to national development.
- Being able to make rational decisions and solve personal and societal problems.
- Being able to adapt to changing environment with a view to ensuring sustainable development.
- The development of national consciousness and unity.
- The development of the right attitudes, values, and skills for solving personal and societal problems.

Again, the general aims as provided in the 2010 Social Studies syllabus for Senior High Schools (CRDD 2007; 2010) in Ghana read as follows:

- Develop the ability to adapt to the developing and ever-changing Ghanaian society.
- Develop positive attitudes and values toward individuals and societal issues.
- Develop critical and analytical skills in accessing issues for objective decision-making.
- Develop national consciousness and unity.
- Develop enquiry and problem-solving skills for solving personal and societal problems.
- Become responsible citizens capable and willing to contribute to societal advancement.

Domains of Educational Objectives in Social Studies

From the table above, it can be concluded that Social Studies instructors are to ensure that the appropriate and recognizable action verbs are combined with appropriate Social Studies content to ensure that the objectives of the subject are completely achieved. This means that the performance objectives are to be clearly stated by teachers to the extent that the demonstrated performance is evident enough to aid effective assessment in all three domains (Banks, 1990, 2020; Rajaram, 2021).

Table 1: Cognitive domain of learning

Categories /levels	Description	Sample verbs
Knowledge	Remembering previously learned material, from specific facts to complete theories, but all that is required is recall. That is the ability to recall previously learned material.	Defines, describes, identifies, knows, labels, lists, matches, names, recalls, recognizes, reproduces, selects, states.
Comprehension	The ability to grasp or construct meaning from material. (Lowest level of understanding).	Comprehends, converts, defends, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, generalizes, infers, interprets, paraphrases, predicts, rewrites, summarizes, and translates.
Application	Ability to use learned material or to implement material in new and concrete situations.	Applies, changes, demonstrates, discovers, constructs, manipulates, modifies, relates, operates, predicts, prepares, solves, uses.
Analysis	Separate concepts or materials into component parts and show relationships between parts. Distinguish facts from inference.	Analyses, compares, contrasts, differentiates, discriminates, identifies, illustrates, infers, separates.
Synthesis	The ability to put parts together to form a coherent or unique new whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning, structure, or relationship.	Categorizes, combines, compiles, composes, creates, designs, explains, modifies, organizes, plans, relates, revises.
Evaluation	The ability to judge the worth of material against defined or stated criteria	Appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, criticizes, defends, describes, explains, discriminates, evaluates, interprets, justifies, relates, summarizes.

Source: Adapted from Bloom *et al.* (1956)

Table 2: Revised bloom taxonomy

Category/levels	Meaning
Remembering	Retrieving, recognizing, and recalling relevant knowledge from long-term memory
Understanding	Constructing meaning from oral, written, and graphic messages through interpreting, exemplifying, classifying, summarizing, inferring, comparing, and explaining.
Applying	Carrying out or using a procedure through executing or implementing.
Analysing	Breaking material into constituent parts, determining how the parts relate to one another and to an overall structure or purpose through differentiating, organizing, and attributing.
Evaluating	Making judgments based on criteria and standards through checking and critiquing.
Creating	Putting elements together to form a coherent or functional whole; reorganizing elements into a new pattern or structure through generating, planning, or producing.

Source: Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) and Weatherby-Fell (2015)

Table 3: Affective domain

Levels/ categories	Description	Key Words
Receiving	Awareness is willing to devote attention to a particular topic or activity.	Asks, chooses, describes, follows, gives, holds, identifies, locates, names, points to, selects, sits, erects, replies, uses.
Responding	Active participation is where motivation is not just to attend but to become involved with an activity and gain satisfaction from engaging in it.	Answers, assists, aids, complies, conforms, discusses, greets, helps, labels, performs, practices, presents, reads, recites, reports, selects, tells, writes.
Valuing	Places value on subject and activity. Motivated not by the desire to simply comply but by a commitment to underlying value guiding behaviour.	Completes, demonstrates, differentiates, explains, follows, forms, initiates, invites, joins, justifies, proposes, reads, reports, selects, shares, studies, works.
Organisation	Organizes values by contrasting them, resolving conflicts between them, and creating one's own value system.	Adheres, alters, arranges, combines, compares, completes, defends, explains, formulates, generalizes, identifies, integrates, modifies, orders, organizes, prepares, relates, synthesizes.
Internalizing values	Adopt values and behaviours that become pervasive, consistent, predictable, and characteristic of the learner.	Acts discriminates, displays, influences, listens, modifies, performs, practices, proposes, qualifies, questions, revises, serves, solves, verifies.

Source: Adapted from Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964)

Table 4: Psychomotor domain

Levels/ Major categories	Description	Key words
Perception (Level 1)	The process of becoming aware of objects, qualities, etc., by way of senses. Basic in situation-interpretation-action chain leading to motor activity. This may include sensory stimulation, cue selection, and translation.	Associate, Compare, Feel, Hear, Identify, Inspect, Listen, Notice, Recognize, Scan, Select, Smell, Taste
Set (Level 2)	Readiness for a particular kind of action or experience. This readiness or preparatory adjustment may be mental, physical, or emotional.	Adjust, Arrange, Comprehend, Identify, Locate, Organize, Recognize, Respond, Select
Guided Response (Level 3)	Overt behavioural act of an individual under the guidance of an instructor or following a model or set criteria. This may include imitation of another person or trial and error until an appropriate response is obtained.	Adapt, Correct, Imitate, Match, Practice, Repeat, Reproduce, Simulate
Mechanism (Level 4)	Occurs when a learned response has become habitual. At this level the learner has achieved certain confidence and proficiency or performance. The act becomes part of his/her repertoire of possible responses to stimuli and demands of situations.	Assemble, Fasten, Manipulate, Mix, Mold, Set-up, Shape
Complex (Level 5)	Overt Response Performance of a motor act that is considered complex because of the movement pattern required. It may include resolution of uncertainty, i.e., done without hesitation, and automatic performance, finely coordinated with great ease and muscle control.	Adjust, Combine, Coordinate, Integrate, Manipulate, Regulate
Adaptation (Level 6)	Altering motor activities to meet the demands of problematic situations.	Adapt, Adjust, Alter, Convert, Correct, Integrate, Order, Standardize
Origination (Level 7)	Creating new motor acts or ways of manipulating materials out of skills, abilities and understandings developed in the psychomotor area.	Construct, Create, Design, Develop, Formulate, Invent

Source: Adapted from Simpson (1966)

Table 5: Revised psychomotor domain

Cognitive process	Affective process	Social Studies Skills
to recall	to prefer	to construct (a model)
to recite	to choose	to draw (a map)
to describe	to believe in	to interpret (symbols)
to identify	to react positively or negatively toward	to locate (countries)
to compare	to respond to	to identify (time zones)
to contrast	to judge as good or bad	to measure (a distance)
to evaluate	to approve	to determine the slope (from a contour map)
to solve	to comply with	to translate (colour codes)
to apply	to acclaim	to show the distortion of various map projections
to observe	to react with pleasure	
to analyse		

Adapted from Banks (1990, 2020)

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative and interpretive methodology using the case study design. The population for the study included all the 15 graduate Social Studies teachers at the Senior High Schools in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Qualitative data collection instruments were used in gathering data for the study. The data collection methods involved an interview guide made up of fifteen (15) semi-structured items for ten (10) graduate Social Studies teachers at the Senior High level. Lesson observation checklist made up of eighteen (18) items and documents on Social Studies end-of-term examination questions were collected from five (5) trained Social Studies teachers at the Senior High School level. With the objectives of the study serving as a guide, the researchers began the analysis of data first and foremost by the transcription of data. The tape-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim from the oral to the written forms as notes and subsequently typed out. After careful and repetitive reading through the qualitative data from the transcribed tape-recorded interview, observational data were analysed using the interpretive method based on the themes arrived at in the data collection.

FINDINGS

Graduate Teachers' Knowledge-Base of the Social Studies Curriculum or Instructional Objectives

This research theme sets out to determine how familiar Social Studies teachers are with the curriculum or instructional objectives. The major focus of this section is to examine graduate teachers' knowledge base of the Senior High School Social Studies curriculum objectives.

The above theme was used in order to answer the research question:

How familiar are graduate teachers with the Social Studies curriculum objectives at the Senior High School level?

In a bid to answer the research question, the researchers sought the participants' views on the

following items: What is your general understanding of the term objectives? What will you say is the ultimate objective or goal of teaching Social Studies in Ghana? What is/are your source(s) of knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana? How familiar are you with the objectives of Social Studies? How different are curriculum objectives from instructional objectives? Do you have a personal copy of the Social Studies Syllabus for Senior High Schools? And how often do you read/refresh your mind on the general objectives of the subject?

The participants' understanding of what the term objective means is discussed below. On the first item that reads; *what is your general understanding of the term objectives?* Below are some of the responses given by the Social Studies teachers teaching the subject at the Senior High School level engaged in the study:

Gabriel (not real name), who has been teaching the subject for sixteen (16) years, had this to say: *"My understanding of the term objectives is what the teacher expects students to have learnt by the end of the lesson"*. Wisdom (not real name), who has also taught the subject for not less than eighteen years, had this to say: *"In relation to the subject, it is the set achievements that you want to have at the end of an instructional period, i.e., an immediate knowledge acquired"*. Isabella (not real name), who has been in the Social Studies classroom for ten (10) years, also had to say, *"Okay, to my knowledge, objectives are the statements that describe the desired outcome of the curriculum, a lesson plan, or a learning activity"*.

Ben (not real name), who has taught Social Studies for three (3) years, expressed his thought as *"It is the goal intended to be attained at the end of a lesson or a programme"*. Kankam (not real name), one of the male participants who has taught the subject just for a little over a year, also had this to say: *"They are the dreams you intend to achieve at the end of a successful lesson"*.

It is observed that the responses given above by the participants indicate that even though they expressed their ideas of the term objective in different words, the participants were expressing almost the same idea. The ideas shared by the various participants coincided with Dhand (1966) and Kim (2018) when they stated that objectives are the more immediate goals of education which have a more direct application in the classroom, meaning that objectives relate to the content and the learning experience of a course, and can be measured directly. From the above, it can be conjectured that the participants possess in-depth knowledge and have a good understanding of the term. With such a very good understanding of the term, as demonstrated by the participants, it implies that their in-depth understanding of the term culminates in the effective teaching and learning of the subject, at least at the Senior High School level.

The second item on the interview guide reads: *what will you say is the ultimate objective/goal of teaching Social Studies in Ghana?* Eight (8) participants shared their views as follows;

Wisdom (not real name), who has been teaching Social Studies for eighteen (18) years, stated that:

“In Ghana, i.e. in national words, the teaching of Social Studies is to actually bring learning and acquiring of knowledge to students and out of that students will be equipped with the necessary, what we call knowledge, attitude, skills, and values so that you be able to fit in the society and do what is appropriate or right.”

“Yeah, the ultimate goal or objective of teaching Social Studies is to make sure that students are built up in their knowledge and skills so that they can be well fitted into the world of work in Ghana, So, also to be fitted into the society so that they can be able to identify societal problems and find lasting solutions to these problems” (Samuel).

“It is to prepare the individual into the society” (Kankam)

“Thank you, eerrm... I will say the ultimate goal of teaching Social Studies in Ghana is to make students well informed so that they can be useful citizens to enable them to contribute their quota towards national development” (Somoah).

“In fact, if you look at the scope of Social Studies, one can say it is aimed at helping the individual to fit well into society” (John).

Errrm, specifically, I think the objective of teaching Social Studies is to help students develop critical thinking and also to instil in them a sense of patriotism. Hence, they become useful to the country (Eva).

“I will say it is to prepare individuals to fit and adapt to the changing environment of our society” (Ben)

“Well, I think the ultimate objective of teaching Social Studies in Ghana is about citizenship education. It educates individuals, especially the young ones, to become enlighten citizens and equip them with knowledge about their culture and ways of life” (Isabella).

The views above show that eight (8) participants out of ten (10) share similar views concerning the ultimate goal or objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana. Thus, they believe that the ultimate goal of teaching Social Studies is citizenship education because the subject prepares learners to fit well into society and contribute their quota to the development of the country. Their views coincide with Martorella (1994) and Ciullo (2015), who, in their appraisal, asserts that the basic purpose of Social Studies is to develop reflective, competent, and concerned citizens. Similarly, citizenship education, according to Aggarwal (2009), is ‘the development of the ideas, beliefs, habits, behaviour and attitudes of the individual so that he may become a useful member of the society and contribute his share for the uplift of the society’.

This means that the mission of Social Studies is to help the individual in society be responsible,

participatory, and concerned about issues that confront them and society. However, the other two participants also had this to say when the same question was put to them:

“It is to help the students to acquire problem-solving skills” (Paul)

“The goal of teaching Social Studies in Ghana is to equip the students with an integrated body of knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help him/her to solve personal and societal problems” (Gabriel).

Paul and Gabriel, who have been teaching the subject for twenty (20) and sixteen (16) years, respectively, shared a common view about the ultimate goal of teaching Social Studies in Ghana. To them, the subject empowers students with the knowledge and skills to solve problems. This is to say that Social Studies is a problem-solving subject. Their views are in line with Quartey (1984), who asserts that Social Studies equips the individual with the tools necessary for solving both personal and community-related problems.

When the third question, which reads: *what is your source(s) of knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana?* was put to the participants, they responded as follows:

Well, as a subject in senior high school, we all know that there is a syllabus to that effect that you need to follow as a guided record to achieve your objectives. There again, we may also have other sources of textbook materials that we read from, but basically, it is the syllabus that we follow (Wisdom).

As a teacher, the main source of knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies is the syllabus. The syllabus provides you with the main source of knowledge about the objectives; although there are some other sources, the syllabus is the main one (John).

Similarly, Somoah, Ben and Eva commented as follows:

The first source of my knowledge is making reference to the Social Studies Syllabus and

consulting other Social Studies textbooks (Somoah)

Basically, I get my sources from the syllabus and the teacher’s guide provided to us by the government (Ben).

My major source of knowledge is from the syllabus (Social Studies syllabus) (Eva).

From the above, it is indicative that five (5) out of the ten (10) participants are on point in stating that the Social Studies syllabus is their major source of knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana. With this, the SHS Social Studies curriculum emphasizes that both instruction and assessment be based on the profile dimensions of the subject. Thus, in selecting content and developing assessment procedures, teachers of the subject are encouraged to select specific objectives in such a way that it assesses a representative sample of the syllabus objectives (CRDD, 2010; Zama & Endeley, 2021). This implies that the five (5) participants mentioned above are assisting in the effective implementation of the Social Studies curriculum, at least in their small corner. That is to say that their efforts will contribute to the realization of the general aims and objectives of teaching the subject (Offorma, 1994; Samuel, 2017).

On the other hand, the responses of the other five (5) participants to the same question were not encouraging. Below are their responses;

“Since Social Studies is to address personal and societal problems, I look at one source of the knowledge as a societal problem, i.e. problems facing the society and also some of the changes occurring to our society today” (Gabriel)

Precisely, some of my sources are from the archives, Journals, syllabuses, and other books from my degree courses, where professor Talabi, professor Awoyemi, Professor Quartey, Oduma and others, their handouts have given the knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana, (Samuel).

Teacher's guide (Kankam).

In a related development, Isabella and Paul, who have had ten (10) and twenty (20) years of experience respectively in teaching the subject, also expressed common views as follows:

It may be civic education, economics, history, or from the general curriculum (Isabella).

“You know, Social Studies deals with social issues; they are with things that are happening around us, from our daily life activities, internet, books, and television. They are a source of information or knowledge to me as a teacher and students as well about the objectives of teaching Social Studies (Paul).

According to Offorma (1994) and Samuel (2017), the Social Studies syllabus is the official document for the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum, which is expected to be carried out mainly by classroom teachers together with other stakeholders. As an official document, it is expected that teachers of the subject select appropriate content, teaching methods and, most importantly, the objectives for teaching, with the Social Studies syllabus as a guide and a major source of information to ensure the attainment of the objectives and general aims of the subject. Hence, some participants like Gabriel and Samuel, who respectively have sixteen (16) and twenty (20) years of experience in teaching the subject, say, for example, that *“since Social Studies is to address personal and societal problems, I look at one source of the knowledge as a societal problem, i.e., problems facing the society and also some of the changes occurring to our society today”*, is highly unsatisfactory.

And for Samuel also to state that;

“Some of my sources are from the archives, Journals, and other books from my degree courses, where professor Talabi, professor Awoyemi, Professor Quartey, Oduma and others handouts have given the knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social

Studies in Ghana, is equally unsatisfactory and not precise enough.

As graduate teachers who have an appreciable number of years in teaching the subject, one would have expected that the participants mentioned above would have given a more satisfactory and precise response by mentioning the Social Studies teaching syllabus for Ghanaian Senior High Schools other than archives and handouts from first-degree programme which may be outdated.

This is consistent with Clemmer's (1971) assertion that the teacher who aims to teach from a global viewpoint will need help, both in keeping abreast of the current curricula and in having available the most recent findings of social science and educational research which could affect the attitudes of his or her students.

From the responses given above by five (5) out of the ten (10) participants, it can be inferred that their source(s) of knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana is problematic. This is because to completely abandon the Social Studies syllabus, which is supposed to be the official document for the implementation of the Social Studies curriculum provided by the Curriculum Research and Development Division of the Ghana education service and to refer to other sources such as archives and outdated handout as sources for the knowledge of the objectives of teaching the subject can best be described as unprofessional. This implies that the participants are not helping to effectively implement the social studies curriculum and, consequently, not aiding in the realization of the ultimate goal of teaching and learning social studies in Ghana.

With item four (4) on the interview guide, which reads; *how familiar are you with the objectives of teaching Social Studies*, the following were some of the responses elicited from the graduate Social Studies teachers:

Three of the participants in persons of Wisdom, John and Isabella, shared their views as indicated below:

Well, let me say that for a long period of time that I used the syllabus, it became something like basic rudiments that with the tutor of Social Studies because that is my area of specialization ... o I am very well familiar with the objectives of teaching Social Studies, (Wisdom).

I am very familiar with it, especially as I have taught the subject consistently for three years now. And it is almost repeating, and you do almost the same thing all the time, so you become more familiar with the objectives of the subject, (John).

I think I go through them each time I have a new topic to be treated. I have to revisit it to ensure that I am on the right path (Isabella).

In a similar manner, Somoah, who has been teaching the subject for three years, also had this to say:

Oo, I am very familiar with the objectives because since I seek for or the sole aim of the subject is to make students informed to enable them to be useful members of society, I am very familiar because that is what guides me in all aspects of teaching the subject, (Somoah).

Finally, Eva, with seven years of teaching experience, also shared a similar view and said this:

Mmmm ... I am quite familiar, very familiar with it (Eva).

A cursory look at the responses above suggests that at least five (5) out of the ten (10), representing 50% of the participants engaged in this study, are very familiar with the objectives of teaching the subject. This implies that the familiarity of these participants with the curriculum or instructional objectives of teaching and learning Social Studies assists them in the effective teaching of the subject. This is because the curriculum or instructional objectives serve as the driving force for the effective teaching and assessment of learners' learning outcomes in the subject since the general/instructional objectives

form the basis for the selection of appropriate content and test construction (CRDD, 2010).

Meanwhile, some of the participants (Paul and Samuel) also gave some interesting responses to this same question, as presented below:

Oo, I am very much familiar with, and you know, the syllabus even stated in percentage wise the knowledge that must be acquired, the knowledge, the skill, and the values. Even when you are setting questions, you do not set questions only based on knowledge, but you also set them to cover values and attitudes. So, I am very much familiar (Paul).

Yes, my familiarity with the objective is that anytime I teach Social Studies, I am able to attain the main objectives of having to ask students what they know about the subject, what they have been taught and what and what, at the end of the day, it tells how far my objectives are familiar to my teaching (Samuel).

Ben and Kankam also gave similar interesting responses as follows:

I am somehow familiar with some of the topics and objectives (Ben).

Being in my first year, I am not very familiar with it (Kankam).

From the responses above, one can conclude that the participants' familiarity with the objectives of teaching Social Studies is very low. In responding to the question, Ben, for instance, stated that he is somehow familiar with some of the topics and objectives. Having taught the subject for three (3) years, one would have expected that the graduate teacher should have acquainted himself more with the objectives of teaching the subject. As suggested, teachers of the subject are to, as a matter of duty, read the general objectives very carefully before teaching and after teaching each unit (CRDD, 2010). This is to ensure that teachers teach to adequately cover both the general and curriculum objectives. However, it is evident from above that as many as four (4) participants out of the ten (10) graduate Social Studies teachers

sampled for the study are not familiar with the general objectives of the subject. This could imply that these teachers are not effectively teaching the subject in their various schools in the study area, and this is likely to negatively affect the attainment of the subject goals.

When the fifth item on the interview guide, which reads *how different curriculum objectives from instructional objectives* were, was posed to the participants, the following comments were gathered:

To my understanding and my point of view, the curriculum objective is the total outcome of teaching Social Studies, while the instructional objective is what you want the students to learn in every topic [Gabriel].

The instructional objective is to go with the immediate, where the teacher is engaged with the students in a classroom within a particular period of time and what he wants to achieve based on a particular lesson or topic but with the curriculum, the objective is that the long term that you want to achieve which shape out up the end of the day that the students within three years' period course will be able to go through whatever you have to achieve. On that basis, that is where WAEC will examine them to know what they have through knowledge acquisition [Wisdom].

“Okay, curriculum objectives are the set aims that a subject seeks to achieve at the end of the period of study, so for example, for three years now whiles, the instructional objective is what the teacher intends to achieve at the end of each period he or she has with the students”, [Eva].

Likewise, the following participants shared similar views as indicated below:

“Curriculum objectives are very broad, and they are achieved over a long period, usually after the study period. For example, in the SHS, you are expected to complete or achieve the curriculum objectives within the three-

year scope. Unlike the instructional objectives, which are achieved within a time frame, it can even be 40 minutes or, let's say, an hour or 2 hours. The instructional objectives are achieved in a short period, i.e., within a meeting with the students” [John].

“You know, the curriculum objective is a broad base, and the instructional objective is a suggested objective for the teacher. And with the suggested one, you can also alter it to suit a student. The curriculum objective is long term, and the instructional objective is short term” [Paul].

“I can say the instructional objective is deduced from the curriculum objective, and curriculum objectives are broader than the instructional objective. Curriculum objectives are attained at the end of a program, and then instructional objectives are what you want to attain after teaching a particular lesson or topic” [Ben].

The comments made by the participants, as shown above, indicate that the majority of the graduate Social Studies teachers in the study area share similar views about how different curriculum objectives are from instructional objectives. Their comments suggest that curriculum objectives are broader in scope than instructional objectives; thus, instructional objectives are deduced from the curriculum objectives or aims in line with the literature. In connection with the above comments, it is inscribed in the 2010 Social Studies syllabus that General Objectives have been listed at the beginning of each section of the syllabus, that is, just below the theme of the section and that the general objectives are linked to the general aims for teaching Social Studies as listed on page (ii) of the syllabus, (CRDD, 2010). Dhand (1966) added that curriculum objectives are the more remote educational goals that lend direction to the teaching of a subject. They are the outcomes of teaching, relatively more lasting in nature, which cannot be measured directly and which denote the contribution the subject in reference makes toward a realization of the ultimate aims of education (Kim, 2018).

Nonetheless, the instructional objectives are the more immediate goals of education that have a more direct application in the classroom, meaning that instructional objectives relate to the content and the learning experience of a course and can be measured directly.

With the majority of the participants possessing adequate knowledge in distinguishing curriculum objectives from instructional objectives, it is inferred that they will be able to effectively apply the dynamics in the selection of content and instructional methodology to ensure the successful realization of the subject goals in Ghana.

When this question was posed, *do you have a personal copy of the Social Studies syllabus for Senior High Schools?* It was revealed that almost all the participants responded in the affirmative. The following comments by some of the participants from the transcriptions confirm this:

“Yes, of course, I have a copy. I have both soft and hard copies.” [Paul]

“Yes, I have. Hardcopy” [Gabriel]

“Yes. It is a softcopy” [Ben]

“Yes, please, I have one. It is a hardcopy” [Isabella]

The following participants also made similar comments as follows:

“Yes, I do. It is a hardcopy in the form of a pamphlet” [Wisdom]

“Yes, I have. A hardcopy” [Eva]

“Yes, I have the softcopy” [Somoah]

The above comments show that nine (9) out of the ten (10) participants, representing 90%, have a personal copy of the Social Studies teaching syllabus for Ghanaian Senior High School. As major stakeholders of Social Studies education in Ghana, Social Studies teachers contribute greatly to the successful implementation of the subject. Clandinin and Connelly (1992) and Kim and Jeong (2018) shared a similar sentiment when they posited that teachers are not just delivery

mechanisms or conduits for curriculum; rather, they are creators or makers of curriculum (“Image-Maker in Residence: Connected Sociologies Curriculum Project,” 2021). This means that social studies teachers should possess good knowledge about the subject they handle. Meanwhile, the orientation teachers have on curriculum may impact what they believe about and what and how they assess learning (Nyaaba et al., 2023; Mensah, 2012). By this, it is argued that the possession of the Social Studies syllabus by the majority of the participants, as seen above, suggests that they may not only have a very good orientation of the subject but that by the possession of the syllabus, an official policy document for the subject (Coles, 2003), it will help the teachers to adequately prepare for class. This finding is supported by Costigen's (2005) assertion that individuals who are adequately prepared in content knowledge can be effective teachers in the classroom.

When the seventh item on the interview guide was posed, *how often did you read or refresh your mind on the general objectives of the subject?* The following are some of the comments the question attracted from the participants:

Remarks by Paul, Gabriel and Wisdom indicate that they refresh their minds on the objectives of the subject on a timely basis.

“Very often, on a termly basis” [Paul]

“I usually do that when I am preparing my scheme of work for each term” [Gabriel]

“Quite regular, thus, at the beginning of the term when preparing lesson schemes and plans. I refer to the syllabus to know where you have reached and where to take off or start, and then what you want to achieve; you know the syllabus is categorized into 1 and 2 years.” [Wisdom]

Isabella, Eva, and Samuel shared similar views on the same question, and their comments show that they read through to refresh their mind on the objectives of the subject on a weekly basis. The

direct quotations from the transcription as used below confirm the above.

“Weekly, I do it weekly to refresh my mind”.
[Isabella]

“I do that almost every week when I am preparing my lesson notes. I make sure I look at it and much it with whatever I am going to teach within the week” [Eva].

“Anytime I am about teaching the subject, I use it, so I can say that all the time, almost every time, most especially when I am about to prepare the scheme of work and the expanded scheme of work, I use it frequently” [Samuel].

From the above responses, it is revealed that whereas 50% of the participants refresh their minds on the general objectives on a termly basis, the result also shows that four (4) out of the ten (10) participants (40%) refresh their minds on the general objectives on a weekly basis. Even though one may argue that participants who refresh their minds on the objectives on a weekly basis are doing a more satisfactory job as compared to the other participants who, on a termly basis, read through the general objectives, it was, however, interesting to find out that both practices are contrary to what is known to be the best practices. According to the 2010 edition of the Social Studies syllabus for Senior High Schools, the latest edition for that matter, the general objectives are linked to the general aims and form the basis for the selection of instructional objectives, instructional methodology and assessment in Social Studies. In this regard, the teaching syllabus further recommends that teachers of the subject read the general aims and objectives carefully before and after teaching a unit (CRDD, 2010; Zama & Endeley, 2021). The idea is to ensure that teachers not only adequately cover these objectives in their course of teaching but also cover them in their assessment practices. From the above, it is concluded that these participants are not effectively teaching to help attain the general objectives of teaching the subject in Ghana, as they teach without giving

much consideration to the curriculum objectives. As Conant (1963) and Torphy et al. (2020) postulated, “If a teacher is largely ignorant or unformed, he can do much harm”. When teachers possess inaccurate and inadequate information or conceive of knowledge in narrow ways, they may pass on these ideas to their students (Colgan & Maxwell, 2019; Popkewitz, 2018).

However, out of the ten (10) participants, only one participant seems to have come very close to the practice of reading through the objectives regularly as prescribed by the 2010 Social Studies teaching syllabus. When the same question was asked, this very participant commented that

“Every day, because if I have a lesson and if I want to make preparations towards what I will be teaching tomorrow or the next time, I have to consult the objectives, looking at what I seek to achieve at the end of the lesson, I make reference to the objectives when I am teaching a new topic and read through again after teaching”, [Somoah].

This implies that this particular participant is effectively teaching to assist the attainment of the general objectives and the curriculum objectives of teaching Social Studies in Ghana. This participant’s comment is in line with the argument that no effective teaching and assessment can take place without first considering the objectives of teaching the subject (Banks, 1990, 2020; CRDD, 2010; Rajaram, 2021), hence familiarizes himself with the general objectives as well as the curriculum objectives in teaching the subject.

Table 6 discloses that on item 1, which concentrates on the teachers’ knowledge about Social Studies curriculum or instructional objectives, even though no participant was rated average, 2(20%) out of the participants rated very good. Again, 2(20%) of the participants were rated as Good, whereas 2(20%) were rated below Average, and as many as 4(40%) were rated not available. This shows that the majority of the participants, thus, 6(60%) of the participants, did not have in-depth knowledge about the instructional or curriculum objectives of teaching

Social Studies in the study area as against 4(40%) who demonstrated some high-level knowledge about the objectives of teaching Social Studies.

Item 2, which talks about teachers’ lesson plans, clearly states specific objectives for the lesson; the data reveal that 3(30%) of the total participants were rated very good, with 1(10%) being rated good as they clearly stated objectives of their lessons either written in ink or orally stating them. In the meantime, whereas 1(10%) was rated below average, there were as many as 5(50%) who were rated not available because they did not have prepared lesson plans for their lessons. On average, there were 4(40%) who clearly stated objectives for their lessons, with as many as 6(60%) not clearly stated objectives for the

lessons largely because they did not prepare lesson plans for the lessons taught. It is important to indicate that per the data, the majority of the graduate Social Studies 6(60%) do not clearly state the objectives of their lessons. This practice is contrary to what the literature proposes to be the best practice. The literature is clear about the significant of stating the objectives of a lesson. The objectives are said to be the driving force of the entire delivery of a lesson as they guide the teacher right from the selection of appropriate content, instructional technique, and assessment technique in Social Studies (Banks, 1990, 2020; CRDD, 2010; Quartey, 1990; Rajaram, 2021). To them, there cannot be any effective teaching and assessment of learning in Social Studies without first considering the instructional objectives.

Table 6: Observation of graduate teachers’ knowledgebase of Social Studies curriculum/instructional objectives

Items	VG	G	Av	BAv	NA
Teachers’ knowledge of Social Studies curriculum/instructional objectives	2 (20.0)	2 (20.0)	–	2 (20.0)	4 (40.0)
Teachers’ lesson plan clearly states specific objectives for the lesson	3 (30.0)	1 (10.0)	–	1 (10.0)	5 (50.0)
Teachers’ familiarity with instructional objectives	2 (20.0)	2 (20.0)	–	3 (30.0)	3 (30.0)
Relevance of specific instructional objectives to the lesson	–	4 (40.0)	2 (20.0)	–	4 (40.0)
Linkage of instructional objective(s) with curriculum objective(s)	1 (10.0)	2 (20.0)	–	3 (30.0)	4 (40.0)
Teacher quotes or uses the syllabus reference number	1 (10.0)	–	2 (20.0)	–	7 (70.0)

Key: VG = Very Good; G = Good; Av =Average; BAv = Below Average; NA = Not Available

Source: Field Observation, 2018

As Mensah (2012) puts it, the starting point of every classroom activity (teaching and assessment) is the statement of the instructional objectives. This point stresses the significance of instructional/ curriculum objectives in the activities of teachers, particularly in the Social Studies classroom, meaning that an ideal graduate in Social Studies should be familiar with the curriculum objectives and have at their fingertips their instructional objectives for effective delivery of lessons one evidence of that is seen in either stating them in written form or orally.

It is also seen from *Table 6* that, on item 3, which focuses on teachers’ familiarity with instructional

objectives, the data revealed that out of the ten (10) participants sampled for the study, 2(20%) were rated very good with 2(20%) also rated good because they demonstrated that they possessed sufficient knowledge about their instructional objectives. However, whereas 3(30%) were rated below average, 3(30%) were rated not available largely because not only did they fail to prepare lesson notes, but they also failed to orally state their objective(s) for their lessons. As the driving force of an entire teaching experience, thus, from the preparation stage through to the delivery to the evaluation stage, every good Social Studies teacher should demonstrate a high level of

familiarity with the objectives of teaching a particular lesson (Banks, 1990, 2020; Rajaram, 2021). Contrary to this suggestion, the majority of the participants per the data indicated that they were not very familiar with the objectives of teaching Social Studies lessons, as an aggregate of 6 participants, representing 60%, did not show sufficient familiarity with the objectives for their lessons. By this, it is inferred that the majority of the graduate teachers in the study area are not well organised and effective as far as their instruction and other classroom activities are concerned.

Furthermore, on the fourth (4th) item, which concentrates on the relevance of specific instructional objectives to the lesson, the data indicate that whereas none of the participants was rated as very good, as many as 4(40%) participants were rated not available with the reason that majority of the participants failed to clearly state objectives for their lessons. But 2(20%) were also rated as average, with 4(40%) rated as good for satisfactorily stating relevant objectives for their lessons.

With the fifth (5th) item on the observational sheet, which reads linkage of instructional objectives(s) with curriculum objective(s), the data gathered shows that out of the ten (10) participants observed, only 1(10%) was rated as very good as this participant's stated instructional objectives link-up with the curriculum objectives with 4(40%) rated as Not available. Meanwhile, it is evident from the table that 1(10%) was rated Very Good, 2(20%) participants were rated as Good, and 3(30%) were also rated as Below Average. This means that there are as many as 7(70%) participants whose instructional objectives did not link up sufficiently with the general objectives.

Lastly, on item 6, which reads, teacher quotes or use the syllabus reference number, the data from the observational session indicates that out of the ten (10) graduate teachers sampled for the study, only 1(10%) was rated as Very good with as many as 7(70%) being rated as Not Available. The data also shows that none (0%) was rated either Good or Below Average, but 2 (20%) were rated as Average. This means that an aggregate majority

of the total population sampled for the study does not quote the syllabus reference number largely because many of the graduate Social Studies teachers observed did not prepare their lesson notes; hence, there is no evidence of the use of the syllabus reference number. Meanwhile, as an easy way for selecting objectives for test construction, teachers of the subject are required as a matter of necessity to consider the syllabus reference number in their test construction, among others, to be able to develop a test that accurately reflects the importance of the various skills taught in class (CRDD, 2010). This same argument is further advanced by Ellis (2002) when he mentioned that it is important that teachers recognize the necessity of developing unit or instructional objectives using clear terms in all domains of learning.

The result of the research question with a theme set out to determine how familiar Social Studies teachers are with the curriculum/ instructional objectives shows that the majority of the ten (10) graduate teachers sampled for the study have sufficient knowledge about the objectives of teaching social studies in Ghana as per the interview session. However, the data from the observational sheet proved otherwise. Thus, the Table indicated that as many as 7(70%) did not possess in-depth knowledge about the objectives of teaching the subject in Ghanaian Senior High Schools. As confirmed by the literature, a teacher who aims to teach from a global viewpoint will need help, both in keeping abreast of the current curricula and in having available the most recent findings of social science and educational research, which could affect the attitudes of his or her students (Clemmer, 1971).

Domains of Educational Objectives Social Studies Teachers' Questions Emphasize

The focus of this section is to explore the domains of the educational objectives Social Studies teachers emphasize. The above theme served as a guide to answer the research question:

Which of the domains of educational objectives do Social Studies teachers' questions emphasize?

The researcher employed semi-structured interviews and document analysis as tools to collect data on this particular theme. The issues that were placed on the interview included the following: *What are the types of questions you use to assess your students? How does the nature of Social Studies influence the type of questions you use to assess your students? Which domains of learning do you often measure in your class exercises and end-of-term exams? Give reasons for your answer, and finally, which assessment techniques do you use in evaluating learners in Social Studies?*

When participants were asked this question- *what are the types of questions you use to assess your students?* The following comments represented the views of the participants.

"Some are open questions, some are wide questions for explanation or detailed information that you want, and some are just to mention or to state something that calls for immediate one-stop-gap answer. We also have multiple-choice questions. So, depending on the situation, I ask either lower or higher-order questions" [Wisdom].

"Okay, use different methods to assess my students. I employ the lower order question as well as the higher order questions to help them balance in the class" [Eva]

"Mostly I use the open-ended questions and sometimes close-ended questions" [Isabella].

Likewise, Paul and John shared similar views as follows:

"Combination of all, higher and lower order questions" [Paul].

"Alright, see, we have the dimensions that you can often assess. We have the knowledge; thus, you can test the knowledge and understanding of how the students apply what the teacher has taught them in their daily

lives. So, questions that I set are in all these areas; they are not one line" [John].

Similarly, the following participants also shared views that were not different from the other participants above. This is evident in their comments below:

"Usually based on the level of students I have and how they respond to the question, I use open-ended questions" [Gabriel].

"This one will depend on the level of understanding the students. If the students' understanding is very high, then it means high-order questions should be used for the students. That is, you should be able to set questions that would enable them to think critically beyond the books. But if the level of understanding of the student is very low, then you must somehow consider using the lower-order questions for them. Because if the level is low and you use high, they may not be able to answer the questions" [Somoah].

From the above comments, it is clear that the participants share common views concerning this particular issue. Out of a total of ten participants, there were as many as seven graduate Social Studies teachers who believed that to effectively evaluate learning in Social Studies, test items must be a combination of higher and lower-order questions. The views of the participants coincided with Parkay and Stanford (2001) when they remarked that effective teachers use a repertoire of teaching models and assessment strategies depending on their situations and the goals and objectives they wish to attain. This goes to say that an effective teacher makes use of effective and varied assessments which increase potential and cognitive skills as well as other domains of learning in students. The reason is that assessment is expected not only to take care of students' knowledge and comprehension but beyond that, evaluation of skills, growth in application, analysis, synthesis, as well as development of positive attitude are important. From the foregoing, it is implied that the majority of the participants in the study area are engaged in

assessment practices that fairly assess learning to cut across lower and higher levels.

On the other hand, the following participants shared views quite different from the seven above as follows:

“High order questions, normally I don’t use lower order questions because I want my students to think critically” [Ben].

“Some of the types of questions are on multiple choices; sometimes we look at criterion aspect so that you know how far the students follow- eheerr. So multiple choices and others, you know, when you are doing with multiple choices, it let the student think very faster and pay attention to what you are teaching” [Samuel].

As indicated above, the last two participants appear to suggest that in their assessment practices, they only give attention to either higher or lower levels of questioning. Their positions seem to be contrary to the literature. For instance, Jarolimek (1986) argues that once varied outcomes are expected from Social Studies instruction, it presupposes that teachers of the subject must resort to the use of a broad basis of evaluation strategies. It is therefore inferred from the above that these graduate teachers, per their practices, may not be effectively assessing learning and, hence, are not perhaps contributing to the attainment of the goals of teaching Social Studies in Ghana.

When this question was asked, how does the nature of Social Studies influence the type of questions you use to assess your students? The following views were elicited:

“Social Studies itself is multi-disciplinary. This means it borrows from other fields of study like geography, history, commerce, and then economics as well. So, in setting assessment questions, I try to pick from various areas. If you are not careful, you may limit yourself to one line, especially if you are so good at geography; your questions may follow the geography aspect. So, I try to cover

the various dimensions of the subject area so that the child will be holistic in the subject area” [John].

By the comment above, it is obvious that the participant considers the subject to be an amalgamation of the social sciences by nature. It appears that this participant engages in assessment practices such that his assessment will have a resemblance to the discrete Social Science subjects of Geography, Economics, Government, and History to mention to mention but a few. This view seems to depart from how the developers of the 2010 Social Studies Syllabus view it. Social studies, according to CRDD (2010), is a study of society's problems. The subject prepares the individual to fit into society by equipping him/her with knowledge about the culture and ways of life of their society. Even though the subject borrows knowledge from other disciplines, such as geography, history, sociology, psychology, economics, and civic education, it is integrated into a subject that stands on its own. Hence, they need to be taught and assessed as such. From the above, it is conjectured that this participant’s view of the nature of the subject negatively affects the effective teaching and assessment of the subject in the study area and the country as a whole.

However, the following participants hold a different view from the one above; the rest of the participants shared the same views as shown below:

“If you look at the nature of Social Studies, Social Studies is a subject that is country bound, it means it is limited Ghana, so if you look at the nature of social studies, it helps me because It directs and guides me to set questions that are in the syllabus and also set questions to solve personal and societal issues that concerns Ghana” [Gabriel].

“Okay, as I said, looking at the general objectives of Social Studies, one of them says It helps individuals or learners to be well informed, which implies that questions must be set so that when they respond to those questions, they will be able to reflect on those

questions and as time goes on, they will be able to put those things into practice” [Somoah].

“You see, by the nature of Social Studies, sometimes you do not go strictly or straight forward answers. When we are setting questions sometimes, we set questions that the student will apply the knowledge they have acquired” [Paul]

In a similar manner, Wisdom, Eva, and Isabella shared the following views:

“Yes, you know the nature of social studies questions have become something of citizenship education, and in this case, you are looking at how the individual goes through the subject and is shaped by the subject, and for that reason, the student is giving shape to have those qualities and know more about himself and the society he belongs to” [Wisdom]

“Yes, yes, it does influence the type of questions I set because social studies concern itself with critical thinking. Then, the questions should be such that students think and are able to produce something meaningful from their thoughts. And just write anything or say anything and accept that it is true. But to use the mind to think critically, yes” [Eva]

“The...the...the study of or Social Studies is a subject that is broad, and it is open-minded. It makes students or people have that deep thinking or critical thinking. So that has helped me too always since it is very broad. This always makes me allow my students to think and to apply their thinking capacity” [Isabella]

Further, Ben and Samuel also had this to say on the same issue of how the nature of the subject influences their assessment items and practise in general:

“Social Studies, as I said earlier, helps the individual to adapt to the changing environment, and this adaptation is attitude,

so at the end of their course, I believe my students may change their attitude towards a particular phenomenon. So, I can say that students acquire knowledge and attitudes” [Ben].

“Social studies is a day-to-day activity; it goes with our societal inputs, so it affects the person’s life, so in a time of this when you are assessing the students, in generality you have to send the student back to what they know already to what they do not know so it should be within them the question should affect them. For example, in terms of environmental sanitation, you ask the students how they themselves keep themselves clean and how they keep the environment clean before their externalities. Sometimes they think that when they do it within their circles it all, but sometimes sicknesses can be generated from all over the places” [Samuel].

A critical look at the views shared above indicates that the majority of the participants hold similar views on what they consider the nature of Social Studies to be and how that influences the type of questions they use in assessing learning among their students. Thus, they believe that the nature of social studies is problem-solving; hence, they employ assessment tools that engage learners in thinking critically to find solutions to personal and societal problems. The views expressed by the participants above are in agreement with the literature as most scholars and writers argue that Social Studies is citizenship education, hence problem-solving in nature (Banks, 1990, 2020; Blege, 2001; Odumah & Poatob, 2016; Rajaram, 2021; Ritter, 2012; “Values Education as Perceived by Social Studies Teachers in Objective and Practice Dimensions,” 2017)

The views of the participants also coincide with Quartey’s assertion that the nature of Social Studies complicates the assessment task. He therefore suggested that teachers who are concerned about the progress of the subject, besides measuring growth in knowledge and skill, teachers should also assess changes in their students’ values and attitudes (Quartey, 1990).

This calls for the use of multi-faceted activities and assessment techniques (Jarolimek, 1986) to ensure that learning in Social Studies is effectively assessed for the attainment of the goals of teaching the subject in Ghana.

When this question was called for, *which domains of learning do you often measure in your class exercises and end-of-term exams?* Give reasons for your answer, and their views were varied as follows:

“Eerrmm... I will say all three types of domains will have to be considered, i.e., the cognitive, affective, and then the last one to be psychomotor, because once you administer a test or in exams, they have to sit down and think that is cognitive; their thinking abilities, then when we come to the affective, the feeling that they have about the question or how they should go by. And then maybe the psychomotor will have to be doing some sort of movement, and even if they are writing, responding to the questions, they have to use their hands; apart from that, if they are embarking on any educational trip, they move from one place to another. So, in that regard, I can say that all three types of domains are being used” [Somaoh].

“Okay, usually in my end-of-term exams, these are the domains I cover: Knowledge and understanding, analysis of issues; I also look at skills and values, creativity, and application of knowledge, how the child can apply the knowledge to solve personal and societal problems” [Gabriel].

“Oow, the three domains are all used. We cannot ignore any of them: the cognitive, the affective, and the psychomotor. So, I set questions to cut across to reflect the three domains” [Paul].

The following participants (Eva, John, and Wisdom) also shared similar views with the first three (3) participants above. This is evident in their comments quoted below:

“I measure all the domains but mostly on the cognitive and the affective domains. Yes, cognitive because Social Studies has to do with critical thinking. If it is critical thinking, then it is only important that I pay much attention to developing students’ brains or minds or their acts of thinking. And it is effective because we are saying the subject helps us to instil discipline and become patriotic. Then, it means that I have to focus more on the aspect of the student’s life. So that they become useful not only to themselves but also to the nation at large” [Eva]

“If you refer to the syllabus, assessing students is holistic, thus, through the various dimensions. And I think there are three (3). You have to assess their knowledge and understanding, their application also and what is the other one” [John]

“Affective domain is where the child is able to come out, show appreciation, and demonstrate the understanding of what the students have learned. The psycho-motto domain becomes the project manipulative, so let me say it cuts across all domains. Yes, you do not just use a particular one” [Wisdom].

All the comments made by the participants above indicated that they attach importance to all three educational domains of learning; hence, they set questions to cut across all the domains. Even though Eva’s comments suggest that she emphasizes the cognitive a little over the other two, in the final analysis, all responses by the six participants show that they measure learning in all three domains. The literature significantly affirms this finding that assessment of students’ learning behaviour is expected to be carried out in totality. That is, it assesses students’ learning in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Quartey, 1990; CRDD, 2007; 2010).

On the same item, Samuel had this to say:

“Nmmm... normally, it is the affective domain. You see, because the affective talks about relationships, how to relate to the students, how the student should feel about

others so that that ethnocentrism, that ethnic conflict is removed from the student's minds so the affective is more to me when I am teaching Social Studies so know the relationship so that the student is able to come out with their weism aspect of education so that when they are in class, discrimination and injustice and intolerance and other things are done away with so that we can become one i.e. oneness is more of what Social Studies is looking for" [Samuel].

The comment by Samuel above is rather very interesting. The participants, by his comment, appear to suggest that apart from the affective domain of the educational objectives, the others, such as cognitive and psychomotor domains, are not significant as far as Social Studies is concerned. In as much as the affective domain of learning is central as far as the teaching and learning of Social Studies is concerned, Miller (2005) argued that the other domains of educational objectives are equally important in producing holistic citizens who are capable of contributing immensely to finding lasting solutions to societal problems. This is to say that learning is a multi-domain process involving intellect, emotion, and physical skills. In other words, learning is associated with behavioural changes in the cognitive, affective (attitudes and feelings and psychomotor domains (Farrant, 1980; Florez, 2013).

From the above, it is concluded that this participant is probably not assessing learning in social studies in a manner that will help produce holistic individuals capable of solving their own personal problems, not to mention the problems of society.

However, the following participants also shared their views as follows:

"Normally, its cognitive and affective domains" [Ben]

"I normally use cognitive and affective domains. My reason is that, as the general objectives imply that they should, at the end of the programme, they should be able to fit well

into society, they should be intellectuals, to be on their own, I give them more of the cognitive, the applications and then brainstorming" [Isabella]

The views shared by Ben and Isabella (participants in the study) revealed that their test items emphasize the cognitive and affective domains and the neglect of the psychomotor domains. Their views, however coincide with Dhand's (1966) and Kim's (2018) assertion that the psychomotor domains are not "directly applicable to the area of Social Studies. That is to say, the psychomotor domain of educational objectives appears to emphasize muscular or motor skills and hence has no locus in the teaching, learning and assessment of Social Studies content.

The implication of the above findings is that the participants perhaps are not engaged in holistically assessing learning in Social Studies, particularly in the study area. This could affect the lofty goal of the subject, which is to produce reflective and competent citizens who are capable of prescribing solutions to our numerous personal and societal problems. At this point, it is important to reiterate that social studies as a subject is considered to be citizenship education, which deals with societal problems relating to the survival of the individual and society. This is possible only by inculcating in students the relevant knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills (Blege, 2001; Ritter, 2012). That is to say that even though assessing learning in the affective domain is crucial as far as Social Studies is concerned, it is equally important to fairly assess learning in the cognitive and psychomotor domains as the subject deals not only with equipping learners with attitudes and values but also equipping them with as it were, relevant knowledge and skills. In any case, it is argued that some of our attitudes, values and feelings emanate from the knowledge we possess (Quartey, 1990); hence, there is the need to also focus some attention on other domains, such as the cognitive domains of learning. This calls for a complete

assessment of Social Studies, which must ideally cover all three domains of educational objectives.

Finally, on item fifteen in the interview guide, which reads, *which assessment techniques do you use in evaluating learners in Social Studies?* The participants, again, shared their views by making these comments as shown below:

This is what Gabriel (one of the participants) had to say. His view seems quite different from the other participants, as will be seen subsequently:

“Some of the assessment techniques I use is certain times I use brainstorming, certain times I allow students to dramatize what they have been taught, certain times I also allow students to role-play and this guide me to achieve the objectives” [Gabriel]

The assessment techniques employed by this particular participant show that he focuses on the assessment of the affective and psychomotor domains. For example, the use of role-play as a technique is said to be more appropriate for the assessment of learning in the affective domain (Callahan et al., 2019; Dynneson & Gross, 1999; Odebiyi, 2023). Again, the use of techniques such as brainstorming and dramatization measures learning fairly well in the cognitive and psychomotor domains. From the above, it is concluded that the participant assesses learning across the three domains of educational objectives. By this, one can say that the participant is helping to produce holistic individuals who are capable of effectively performing their roles as good citizens.

However, at the pose of this follow-up question, apart from the assessment technique you have already mentioned, how often do you employ techniques such as Likert scale, portfolio, and observational sheets in your assessment practices? Gabriel shared the following comments:

“Normally, because of the huge numbers, we consider oral test, pen, and paper group work and sometimes project work. And sometimes we lack the resources to use some of these techniques”.

From the comments above, it appears that even though the participant seems to be familiar with the aforementioned assessment techniques, these techniques have perhaps never been used in his assessment practices. The words of the participants, such as *“... sometimes we lack the resources to use some of these techniques”*, lend credence to the above extrapolation. Per the above, it is suggestive that the assessment practices employed by the participants depart from what the literature prescribes as being best practices thus, employing varied assessment techniques in assessing learning in Social Studies (Callahan et al., 2019; Dynneson & Gross, 1999; Jarolimek, 1986; Odebiyi, 2023). The implication is that this participant, by this practice, fails to assess varied outcomes as expected from Social Studies instructions.

In another development, all the other participants shared almost the same views, as revealed by their comments as follows:

“Oral questioning, test, pen and paper and sometimes group work” [Ben]

“Errm, mostly I combine the two; I do the essay type, and sometimes I do oral questions. Sometimes, the student does not learn, so they copy from their friends, so as you ask them oral questions and award marks if they have really learnt, they can explain to you to get it. So mostly, apart from the essay, I do oral questioning” [Wisdom].

“Because Social Studies is usually concerned with things around us, I employ oral questioning to find out if the students are familiar with the things going on around us in connection with the lesson we are having. Other times, I employ individual assessment, where I turn to look at how the student has understood the lesson taught” [Paul].

Other participants also shared similar views with the participants above; this is evident from their comments quoted below from the transcribed data:

“Thank you very much. I have used so many techniques in evaluating learners in social studies. We have administration of test items, brainstorming sessions or allowing students and their ability to close the lesson will also tell you that the lesson has been successfully taught on their response to questions at the end of the lesson or of something of that...”
[Kankam]

“Test is obvious; I use test and assignments, individual assignments” [Eva].

When this follow-up question was asked, apart from these techniques, you mentioned how often you also use techniques such as the Likert scale, project, portfolio, and observational sheet. This is what Samuel had to say:

“with the attitudinal scales and portfolio, those ones are there, but you see, this time actually, looking at the curriculum and the time given, for example, each period is made up of 40 minutes and a maximum of 2 hours, and if something crops up it means that you are not going to have all the 2 hours to be with the child so it means that the little time you get you to try to rush through ahaaa... this doesn't give us much time to go through all these types of assessments. So, we often do the written type, what we call pencil-and-paper or pen and paper; write and let me see what you have learnt”.

From the participant's comment, it is clear that due to time constraints, she does not employ varied assessment techniques that adequately assess learning in Social Studies. What is common among graduate teachers in the study area is the use of tests (paper and pencil) to the neglect of other equally important techniques such as the Likert scale and observational sheet, just to mention a few. This suggests that the graduate teachers may not be assessing learning to cover all the domains of learning. This could seriously work against the realization of the goals of teaching and learning Social Studies, particularly in the Senior High Schools and the country at large.

On the same issue regarding the assessment techniques used by the participants, Samuel also had this to say:

“Eerrmm, usually, the written test is mostly used; that one is most common. Personally, what I also do is give them project work. Sometimes, too, we do group discussions and presentation work. It gives an opportunity to students to go and read, and sometimes some of the things they come out with are mind-boggling” [Samuel].

From the above, it is clear that most of the graduate teachers interviewed employ tests as their major technique for assessing learning in Social Studies. It appears that the use of test techniques is common among Social Studies teachers, at least in the study area. This observation is confirmed by Lissitz and Schafer (2002) and Tucker and Uline (2015), who found out that, in most schools in the world, assessment in education involves merely testing and grading. Meanwhile, Social Studies education reforms point to the fact that one short test cannot adequately assess the complex nature of students (Tan & Ng, 2018). As Quartey (1990) declares, it is very “difficult to use test device to obtain the true attitudes, values and feelings of learners”. According to him, direct questions under a test situation will prompt students to provide answers that will not reflect what students truly feel but rather what they ought to feel. This goes to say that graduate Social Studies teachers should focus attention on activities and assessment techniques which not only enhance understanding but also develop insights into students' critical thinking prowess, such as observations, interviews, performance tasks, role play, projects, portfolios, presentations and self-assessments (Dyneson & Gross, 1999; Odebiyi, 2023; Wiliam, 2006) as these are considered essential parts of implementing current approaches to teaching and assessment in Social Studies.

Furthermore, documents on Social Studies end-of-term examination questions set by the teachers were collected as data for the study. This was done in order to substantiate data collected during the

interview session. With the taxonomy of educational objectives proposed by (Bloom et al., 1964), the Social Studies end-of-term

examination questions were analysed. The researcher made use of simple tables and percentages for the analyses.

Table 7: Distribution of exam questions vis-à-vis various domains of learning

Domains of learning	Teachers					Total
	A	B	C	D	E	
Cognitive	45(18.8)	49(20.5)	48(20.0)	48(20.0)	49(20.5)	239(100.0)
Affective	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Psychomotor	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)

A, B, C, D & E – TEACHERS

The results from *Table 7* revealed that the graduate teachers' questions mostly measure learning in the cognitive domain with no attention to the affective and psychomotor domains. This finding is not surprising at all, as all the participants mostly employed the paper and pencil (test) assessment technique in their assessment practices. None of the participants, apart from the paper and pencil technique, made use of other techniques such as the observational sheets, Likert scale, Wray behavioural scale and other non-test techniques mentioned in the literature, citing large class size, time and other resources constraints. Hence even though the participants claimed to measure learning in all the domains, it turned out, per the documentary analyses, as shown by *Table 2* that teachers question emphasizes the cognitive domains of learning.

CONCLUSION

The analysis and the discussions accentuate that most of the graduate teachers engaged in the study demonstrated a very good knowledge of the curriculum or instructional objectives of teaching and learning Social Studies at the Senior High School level. From the foregoing, the researchers conclude that most of the participants have been trained to handle the subject. The analyses also highlight that the graduate teachers' questions emphasized the cognitive domain of educational objectives. It also came up that even though teachers recognize the nature of Social Studies and the need to combine non-test techniques with paper-and-pencil tests, they only employ paper-and-pencil tests, citing reasons such as large class size, time, and resource constraints. The results clearly show that the participants' assessment

practices are inconsistent with the main goals and objectives of the subject, which is to develop a reflective, concerned, responsible, and participatory citizen in the civic life of a country.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings, the following recommendations are made for the effective teaching, learning and assessment in the area of Social Studies:

Since the objective is the pivot around which the entire instructional process evolves, graduate teachers should be encouraged to be familiar with the objectives of teaching and learning Social Studies. This is because the failure on the part of teachers to consider the curriculum or instructional objectives only militates against the successful implementation of the Social Studies curriculum in Ghana. This will go a long way to ensuring that graduate teachers familiarise themselves more with the objectives of the subject for effective instruction and assessment in Social Studies.

Since most teachers do not consider the curriculum or instructional objectives in the teaching, learning and assessment of Social Studies, sensitization workshops and in-service training should be organized by the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the Ghana Education Service (GES) for graduate teachers handling the subject at all levels on the need to always have the objectives at the back of their minds. By this, teachers would be reminded to always consider the general aims and objectives in the selection of appropriate content, methodologies, and assessment techniques.

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