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Original Article

## Implementing History Curriculum in Basic Schools: Techniques and Challenges

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Effective nurturing and adding worth to our customs, traditions, and culture signalise the significance of History in the school curriculum. History is a potent subject that requires the employment of diverse techniques to motivate learners' desire to understand the subject. Nevertheless, History as a subject has been plugged with a myriad of challenges that need to be addressed swiftly. The study sought to inquire about the effective implementation of the History curriculum in basic schools. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. A convenience sampling technique was used to gather data from 32 public school History teachers who resided in the municipal educational circuit with the researchers. Three independent experts in History education who did not have an interest in the study scrutinised the questionnaire items to ensure face, content and construct validity. Data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study showed that History teachers most of the time employed discussion, brainstorming and lectures during instructional delivery. However, debates and field trips were the least practised instructional delivery techniques. Also, inadequate teaching and learning resources, poor continuous professional development of teachers, inadequate funds for field trips, and limited content knowledge of History teachers were some challenges that limit the effective teaching and learning of History in basic schools. The study recommended that adequate provision of teaching-learning aids, in addition to continuous professional development for teachers, would improve their content knowledge in the subject. This would further improve the implementation of the History curriculum.

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**INTRODUCTION**

Teaching and learning in and outside the confines of the learning environment are indispensable facets of the curriculum. The curriculum is the basis of teaching and learning (Depree, 2017), which represents the visage of educational notions in usage (Parson & Beauchamp, 2012). Effective teaching and learning suggest that learners exhibit relevant knowledge, attitudes, and skills to solve issues or problems that threaten the life of their society. The school curriculum has the prime goal of modifying learners’ behaviour and making learners useful through the continuous practical execution of the various subjects, courses of study, and syllabuses. This process assists learners to earn adequate experience or knowledge. It is, therefore, significant to realise that learners are the focus of the curriculum implementation process. Curriculum implementation occurs as learners embody the planned experiences, skills, knowledge, attitudes, and ideas that are targeted at enhancing learners to serve as concerned, reflective, and participatory members of society (Chaudhary, 2015).

This has manifested in the learning environment being moved from an objectivist (chalk and talk) teacher’s stance to a subjectivist (inquiry-based) teacher’s stance. This current shift in pedagogical process in our classroom setting indicates that the new educational system or context requires learners to be at the centre, who steer the pace of activities in the learning environment. Learners are charged to possess critical thinking skills, creativity, innovation, problem-solving skills, communication and collaboration skills, and leadership skills. For such potentials to be clear and bright, it all hinges on the ability of the teacher. Teachers are the leading implementers in the educational ecosystem

(Calderhead, 1996). Research by Pultorak (1996) and Kaltakci (2011) showed that teachers are vanguards to learners’ academic accomplishments vis-à-vis effective diversity such as attitudes, beliefs, and values. The preparation of teachers needs to emphasise the quality of teachers, which will correlate with good feedback from the learners. Teachers possess a repertoire of knowledge and capabilities that decouple them from other professions. According to Shulman (1986), teachers need to have total command of the content and pedagogy, which is a requisite that will enhance learners’ comprehension of the strands they learn in the classroom. This is termed as pedagogical content knowledge: the fusion of content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge.

This is a unique domain for teachers and their professional development. It extends to the practice of effective feedback which aids the teachers to modify their instructional methods, techniques, strategies, and also understand whether learners are through with the lesson or vice versa. Teaching History at the basic school level is a daunting task on the part of both learners and teachers due to the intangible traits of the subject. Bih-Ni (2023) argues that History is a whole adventure that involves the total modification of the content that enhances learners’ comprehension of the subject. Therefore, teachers need to be inclined with the pedagogical content knowledge and the philosophy underlying the subject. Unfortunately, the researchers’ observations and interactions with many basic schools History teachers and students reveal that History teachers have difficulties teaching the subject which does not heighten learners’ interest in the subject. Our observations and interactions validate the findings of Adeyinka (1989;1990) and Oppong (2009), who both posit that practising the

conventional mode of teaching History does not make learners enthused about the discipline at the basic school level. Baba et al. (2022) further opine that the main challenge to the effective teaching of History lessons is the uninteresting pedagogical approaches teachers utilise in imparting knowledge to learners. To Ghosh et al. (2018), the pedagogical approach to teaching History relies heavily on textbooks. This does not motivate learners' desire for lessons. The above reveals the diverse issues which beset basic school History teachers in their lessons. The objectives of this study, therefore, is to investigate the instructional techniques History teachers utilise during delivery. It further touches on the challenges the teachers encounter, which inhibit the teaching of History in basic schools.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Meaning of History

For some, History is literature; for others, facts; for some, delving into archives; for others, interpretations of the sources; for some, an art; for others, a science; for some, drudgery; for others, a romance; for some, an explanation of the present; and for others a revelation and a realization of the past, for the development of society (Adjepong, 2020; Thorndike, as cited in Barzun & Graff, 1977). History as a subject explores the past that purports the factors that have modified the current society. The subject deals with significant past endeavours of a group of people, so that we understand how we earned our identity and culture. As a scholarly field of study, it aids in increasing the creative capabilities and evaluative thinking skills of learners because it informs students to analyse, synthesise, evaluate, and interpret past activities carefully to make informed and rational choices. History prepares learners with relevant moral lessons and vivid directions that relate to our daily lives in society.

As Ghanaian people, our comprehension of History among us is about significant historical improvement and events that encompass the

migration of various ethnic groups into the country and the development of the traditional socio-political institutions, economic institutions, the family, clan, inheritance, and formation of various state systems. It includes the affiliation with the outside world in terms of political, economic, and social repercussions of our connection, which subsumes the decline of political and economic independence, the recapture of our political, social, and economic sovereignty, and the rise of the modern state of Ghana. Moreover, there is an urgent need to acknowledge and appreciate the worth of our culture. Students' study of the History of Ghana would make them identify, understand, and acknowledge the life, sacrifice, and toil of our forbearers. They will learn about the interrelationship between the various ethnic groups to foster national pride and identity, and to enhance national integration. In a nutshell, learners will learn about leaders who exhibit selfless, patriotic, honest, humble, and industrious leadership qualities, thereby students emulate such good behaviours and attitudes for a better Ghana.

### Philosophy of Teaching and Learning History

The underlying philosophy of history is the social reconstructivism outlook. This philosophy explains that the school is a potent tool to solve social problems. Social reconstructivism not only aims to educate a generation of problem solvers but also tries to identify and correct many noteworthy social problems that hamper society's advancement. This philosophy holds that schools should manifest in real-life situations and education should provide pragmatic and deeper learning opportunities to scaffold life (Hill, 2006). This concurs with the Ghanaian History curriculum for basic schools, which is based on the need to produce citizens who can reconstruct the past by describing, analysing and judging the worth of previous occurrences. The curriculum aims that learners should evaluate and discover the structure of human behaviour and dispense their expectations on how previous occurrences control the present from an abreast

position. The teaching of History would make learners become digital literates, evaluative thinkers, imaginative thinkers, efficient communicators, and also global citizens. The learning philosophy of History is coherent with the facts that the History classroom serves as a springboard that makes prudent utilisation of the learner-centred techniques of teaching. These teaching techniques consist of field trips, demonstrations, discussions, role-play, simulation and demonstration. The teacher plays a peripheral role in assisting learners to describe and analyse issues raised, tracing patterns of societal and human behaviour, and dispensing their knowledge on contemporary occurrences in the country based on their prior knowledge of Ghanaian History. The learners are encouraged to explore strands (topics) through effective questioning and inquiries. The Ghanaian History curriculum for primary schools is underpinned by seven historical concepts: causes and consequences, significance, similarities and differences, context and chronology, continuity and change, evidence, and interpretation.

### Importance of History

The Ministry of Education (NaCCA, 2019) shows that, at the heart of Ghana's Basic Schools' History curriculum is the belief in nurturing honest, creative and responsible citizens. As such, History is important in the following manner:

- *Respect*: This includes respect for the nation of Ghana, its institutions, laws, culture and respect among its citizens and friends of Ghana.
- *Diversity*: Ghana is a multicultural society in which every citizen enjoys fundamental rights and responsibilities. The discipline helps students to respect the views of all persons and to see national diversity as a powerful force for national development. History, therefore, promotes social cohesion.
- *Equity*: The socio-economic development across the country is uneven. History, therefore,

makes it necessary to ensure an equitable distribution of resources based on the unique needs of Ghanaians who come from diverse backgrounds. Students' understanding of these differences provides an equal opportunity to all, and all strive to care for one another both personally and professionally.

- *Commitment to achieving excellence*: Learners are taught to appreciate the opportunities provided through History and persist in doing their best in whatever field of endeavour as global citizens. Thus, History encourages innovativeness through creative and critical thinking and the use of contemporary technology.
- *Teamwork/Collaboration*: History encourages students to become committed to team-oriented working and learning environments. This also means that learners acquire an attitude of tolerance to be able to live peacefully with all persons.
- *Truth and Integrity*: The subject aims to develop learners into individuals who will consistently tell the truth irrespective of the consequences. In addition, be morally upright with the attitude of doing the right thing even when no one is watching. Also, being true to themselves and being willing to live by the values of honesty and compassion. Equally important, the ethos or culture of the workplace, including integrity and perseverance, must underpin the learning of History to allow learners to apply skills and competencies in the world of work.

### Instructional Techniques Utilised by History Teachers

According to Jyothish (2021), Boadu et.al. (2020), Okai et al. (n.d), teaching History through the transaction of knowledge is aimed to create desirable changes of behaviour. This is done between the teacher and the students through a planned series of activities in the classroom. These

planned activities, which are the teaching techniques to communicate the curriculum, include debates, simulations, demonstrations, problem-solving techniques, lectures, storytelling, biographical techniques, field-trips to monuments and historical sites, study tours to archives and museums, and libraries. History teaching also encourages the usage of graphic aids, display boards, and audio-visual aids. These are practised to make teaching the discipline easier and to involve students. Tailoring these courses to satisfy student diversity is an important ingredient in using a humanistic approach, which makes History much fulfilling in the sense of personal development, such as a better understanding of one's self, self-confidence, love, emotional support, motivation, and psychomotor development. This provides a satisfactory learning experience for both students and teachers.

### **Challenges History Teachers Encounter in Teaching the Discipline**

According to Boyle et al. (2007), inadequate funds to embark on field trips is a serious challenge that subverts the smooth implementation of the History curriculum. Teaching History has evolved from a didactic approach to the utilisation of a learner-centred approach to instruction. This denotes that the instructional delivery is not restricted to only the classroom but also outside the confines of the school environment. A field trip is an educational trip that allows learners to experience real-world learning. It stimulates learners to inquire about significant historical occurrences. However, inadequate funds to embark on field trips stifles the effective and efficient implementation of the History curriculum. This is validated by the findings of Bassaw et al. (2022), who assert that financial constraints impede Social Studies lessons, which are in harmony with History lessons.

Also, Ruto (2013) posit that inadequate continuous professional development of History teachers is a challenge that clouds the effective implementation of the History curriculum. Continuous professional

development emphasises improving, building, and heightening individual or group educators' capabilities (content, pedagogy, pedagogical-content, teacher reflective practices). He further posits that History teachers are not provided the opportunity to attend in-service training and workshops due to financial constraints. Gyamfuah (2021) asserts that teachers are not motivated to pursue further studies in History education. This corresponds with the challenges History teachers encounter in their instructional process.

In addition, teachers are deemed to be inclined with adequate pedagogical content knowledge of the History curriculum. However, this seems inadequate. This knowledge adequacy will make teachers employ diverse teaching methods, techniques, and strategies that will make History lessons entertaining and enthusiastic. Boadu (2015) supports this view that History teachers should exhibit adequate knowledge and skills in teaching the subject. On the contrary, due to inadequate resources, training, and motivation, teachers are hollow with the concept, content, and pedagogy of History as a subject.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **The Curriculum Implementation and Change Theory**

The Curriculum Implementation and Change Theory, notably advanced by Michael Fullan (2007), explores how educational reforms are adopted and implemented in schools. It posits that curriculum change is a complex process influenced by multiple factors, including teacher curriculum orientations and practices (beliefs), professional development, available resources, and administrative support (Looney, 2014). In the context of History education, research has shown that teachers often struggle with implementing curriculum reforms due to a mismatch between prescribed curricula and classroom realities (Oppong, 2009). This disconnect is worsened when teachers lack adequate training or when their



professional orientations differ from the curriculum's intentions. Fullan's theory highlights the importance of teacher agency, continuous training, and contextual adaptability in ensuring successful curriculum implementation. This aligns with the study's focus on how History teachers implement the curriculum in Ghanaian Basic schools through their instructional delivery techniques.

### **Constructivist Learning Theory**

Constructivist Learning Theory, pioneered by Jean Piaget (1936) and Lev Vygotsky (1978), asserts that learners actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive it. This theory has been extensively applied in education, particularly in advocating for student-centred approaches that promote critical thinking and problem-solving (Nieminen et al., 2022). In History education, constructivism suggests that students should engage in active inquiry, discussions, debates, and real-world problem-solving activities. However, research indicates that many teachers continue to rely on traditional, lecture-based techniques rather than adopting constructivist pedagogies (Richard et al., 2023). The study uses constructivist learning theory to examine whether teachers' instructional techniques translate into student-centred instructional practices.

### **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**

Developed by Icek Ajzen (1988, 1991), the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) posits that intentions, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control influence behaviour. This theory is frequently applied in education to examine how teacher beliefs influence classroom practices (Phillips, 2019). Studies suggest that teachers' beliefs about the nature of knowledge, learning, and their role in the classroom significantly impact their instructional choices (Opoku et al., 2020). However, there is often a disconnect between teachers' beliefs and their actual classroom practices, particularly in integrating critical thinking

and civic engagement. By applying TPB, this study explored whether History teachers' instructional techniques and the challenges they encounter influence their willingness and ability to adopt innovative teaching and learning practices.

This study is guided by three main theories. Curriculum implementation and change theory inform how the History curriculum is introduced and adopted within Ghana's educational setting. The constructivist learning theory shapes the understanding of how students learn best, focusing on relevant knowledge construction. Finally, the theory of planned behaviour helps analyse the factors influencing the adoption of new teaching techniques and strategies related to the History curriculum.

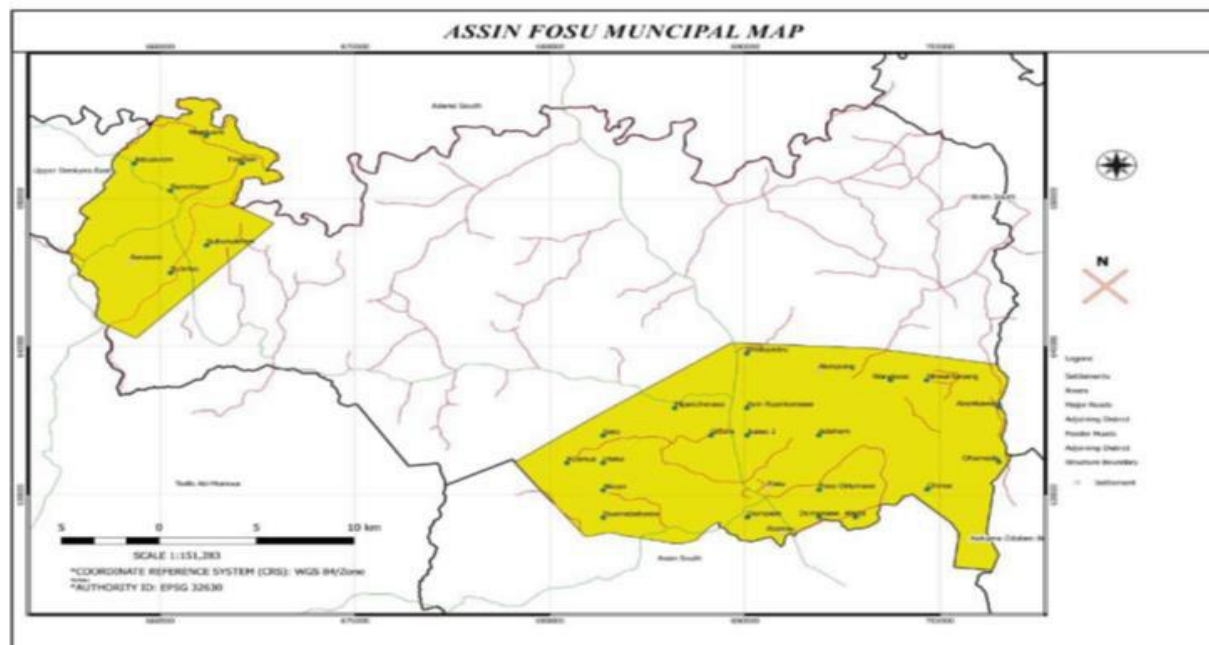
### **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive research survey was employed to study the implementation of the History curriculum in Ghanaian basic schools. The accessible population for the study was 32 public basic school History teachers who were sampled through a convenience procedure. These were primary school History teachers who, together with the researchers, resided in the municipal educational circuit the study was undertaken, and who were willing to respond to the questionnaire items. Data was collected from respondents during their recess period. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and ensured the anonymity of their identities and the information they provided. Questionnaire items based on the study objectives were administered to the respondents. Three independent experts in History education who did not have an interest in the study scrutinised the questionnaire items. This was to ensure face, content and construct validity. Data was analysed using frequencies and percentages. A key strength of the design is the ability to collect data at a faster rate. However, this design has a weak power of generalisation of findings. The sample was obtained through a convenient method, and therefore, the sample is not representative of basic school History

teachers in the Assin Fosu Municipality, in which the study was conducted. Therefore, the findings of the study are limited to the sample and only suggest

that other basic school History teachers in the Municipality may have similar views about History curriculum implementation.

**Figure 1: Map of Assin Fosu Municipality**



**Source:** Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) (2014)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis and reporting have been organised into two folds. The first part reports the results

obtained from the instructional techniques History teachers utilise, while the second section is on the challenges History teachers encounter in the implementation of the History curriculum.

**Table 1: Instructional Techniques Utilised by History Teachers**

Instructional Techniques	Most of the time	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
<i>Discussion</i>	<b>23</b> (72%)	<b>08</b> (25%)	<b>01</b> (3%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<i>Lecture</i>	<b>11</b> (34.3%)	<b>10</b> (31.1%)	<b>06</b> (18.7%)	<b>05</b> (15.6%)
<i>Brainstorming</i>	<b>14</b> (43.8%)	<b>16</b> (50%)	<b>02</b> (6.3%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<i>Role-play</i>	<b>09</b> (28%)	<b>09</b> (28%)	<b>10</b> (31.2%)	<b>04</b> (12.5%)
<i>Project-based</i>	<b>05</b> (15.6%)	<b>12</b> (37.5%)	<b>11</b> (34.3%)	<b>04</b> (12.5%)
<i>Simulation</i>	<b>02</b> (6.27%)	<b>12</b> (37.5%)	<b>11</b> (34.3%)	<b>04</b> (12.5%)
<i>Debate</i>	<b>01</b> (3%)	<b>08</b> (25%)	<b>10</b> (31.2%)	<b>12</b> (37.5%)
<i>Field-trip</i>	<b>01</b> (3%)	<b>13</b> (40.6%)	<b>08</b> (25%)	<b>09</b> (28%)

Source: *Field Survey, 2025.*

**Table 1** reports on teachers' frequency of teaching techniques applied in teaching History. **23** teachers who represent 72% of the responses indicate that they most of the time utilise discussion. **14** (43.2%) teachers most of the time utilised brainstorming. **11** teachers, who represent (34.3%), also most of the

time employed lectures. **12** teachers who represent 37.5% never utilised debate, whilst **9** teachers represent 28% never practised field trips. In addition, **16** (50%) teachers reported that they utilised brainstorming occasionally. **13** teachers (40.6%) utilised field trips. **12** teachers (37.5%)

utilised both project-based and simulation. However, **13** teachers (40.6%) revealed that they rarely utilised simulation. **11** teachers (34.3%)

rarely practised project-based instructional delivery. **10** teachers (31.2%) showed that they utilised debate and role-play rarely.

**Table 2: Challenges History Teachers Encounter during Instructional Delivery**

Challenges	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<i>Large class size</i>	<b>08</b> (25%)	<b>13</b> (40.6%)	<b>06</b> (18.7%)	<b>04</b> (12.5%)
<i>Inadequate allotted time</i>	<b>05</b> (15.6%)	<b>13</b> (40.6%)	<b>12</b> (37.5%)	<b>01</b> (3%)
<i>Inadequate teacher content knowledge.</i>	<b>14</b> (43.8%)	<b>04</b> (12.5%)	<b>09</b> (28%)	<b>04</b> (12.5%)
<i>Inadequate TLRs</i>	<b>23</b> (72%)	<b>08</b> (25%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<i>Inadequate funds for field-trips</i>	<b>18</b> (56.2%)	<b>13</b> (40.6%)	<b>0</b> (0%)	<b>0</b> (0%)
<i>Inadequate continuous professional development for history teaching</i>	<b>20</b> (62.5%)	<b>09</b> (28%)	<b>02</b> (6.2%)	<b>0</b> (0%)

Source: *Field Survey, 2025.*

From **Table 2**, some of the challenges that cloud the effective implementation of the History curriculum are displayed. **23** teachers who represent 72% respondents strongly agreed that inadequate teaching and learning resources is the prime challenge. **20** teachers, which represents 62.5% strongly reported on inadequate continuous professional development of History teachers. **18** teachers (56.2%) strongly agreed with the item “inadequate funds to embark on field trips”. More, **14** teachers representing 43.8% strongly agreed with the point “inadequate teacher content knowledge”.

Moreover, **13** teachers (40.6%) agreed that large class sizes, inadequate time, and funds to embark on field trips obstruct the effective implementation of the History curriculum. **9** teachers (29%) agreed that inadequate continuous professional development of teachers is a challenge to History curriculum implementation. Furthermore, **12** teachers who represent 37.5% of the respondents disagreed that inadequate time challenges the effective implementation of the History curriculum. **9** (29%) teachers also disagreed on inadequate teachers' content knowledge, whereas **4** (12.5%) teachers strongly disagreed with large classes.

## DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that History teachers predominantly employed discussion, brainstorming,

and lecture techniques in their instructional routine. Simulation, project-based, and role-play are the least utilised instructional techniques by History teachers. On the other hand, inadequate teaching and learning resources, inadequate continuous professional development for teachers, inadequate funds to embark on field trips, and inadequate teachers' content knowledge are some challenges basic school History teachers encounter in the implementation of the curriculum. Wijayasari et al. (2020) assert that History lessons should make both learners and teachers inquire thoroughly into past occurrences in our society. They opined that History is not static, with recalling past occurrences but rather gathering data, analysing, synthesising, and drawing evaluative conclusions to solve persistent setbacks in society. Therefore, Boadu (2016) is of the view that teaching History means rediscovering previous occurrences through music, dance, folktale, architecture, and other varied forms of art. This signals the potent avenues of transferring worthy historical antecedents and values that were favourably revered and acknowledged in our society.

The study's findings on the steady use of discussion, brainstorming, and lecture are consistent with studies from Barton (2019). He inquired about the discussion technique and its effects on the performance of students in History classrooms. He revealed that the discussion technique gives learners



the opportunity to express their thoughts and participate actively in classroom interactions. For basic school learners, discussion enhances learners' listening and oratory skills. Khan (2003) indicated that brainstorming is frequently used by basic school History teachers. This instructional technique allows learners to generate a lot of ideas and responses. In addition, this technique provides a democratic atmosphere for learners with differing opinions.

Nevertheless, the study discovered that the field trip technique is not employed by History teachers. This finding supports that of Bassaw et al (2022). These researchers studied teachers' use of field trips to evaluate Social Studies (which integrates History) lessons and accounts that the field trip technique is limited by multiple issues, such as financial constraints, poor field trip organisation, inadequate support from school administrators, and inadequate time to undertake them. This may be one of the cardinal motives that limit the employment of field trips by History teachers who were involved in this research.

The present study discovered inadequate teaching resources as a principal issue that renders the History instructional process ineffective. This concurs with Cobbold et al. (2010), who posit that the inadequacy of teaching aids is a major setback that undermines the teaching of History in Ghanaian basic schools. Njorge (2019) and Ajoke (2017) assert that teaching aids such as newspapers, videos, and documentaries motivate learners to learn better. It makes abstract concepts comprehensible for learners and improves teachers' efficiency in classroom activities.

### **Implication of the Study**

For the attainment of the individual and national educational aims of Ghana, including the world (SDGs), History as a discipline has a major role to help us all know where we were and are coming from, where we are presently at, and where we all want to be, with the aim to build the World We

Want. The teaching and learning of History, therefore, must be administered effectively and efficiently in such a way as to maximise growth and development benefits globally. The failure to do so has the potential of posing a setback to the attainment of individual, national and internationally agreed aims of education, growth and development goals, which are embodied in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

History is a significant subject in the school curriculum that purports to acquaint learners with enormous skills, attitudes, and knowledge that make them either continually practice or comprehend previous occurrences. Based on past events, History makes learners build a sense of patriotism, nation-building, and evaluative thinking skills. Teachers and learners act as the pivot to accomplish the effective implementation of the History curriculum in basic schools. The basic school History teachers who participated in the study utilised multifaceted instructional techniques that enticed learners' interest in the lesson. The dominant instructional techniques utilised by History teachers include discussion, brainstorming, and lecture techniques. The participants indicated that inadequate teaching aids, inadequate continuous professional development of History teachers, inadequate funds to embark on field trips, and inadequate content knowledge are challenges that hinder the implementation of the history curriculum in basic schools.

This study recommends that there should be adequate provision of teaching and learning aids in addition to continuous professional development for History teachers to be abreast with current content knowledge in the subject. This would help teachers to utilise teaching techniques such as debate, fieldtrips, which are metacognitive level of learning.

### **Areas for Further Research**

The researchers propose further studies into the ideal methods, techniques and strategies for

teaching and learning of History strands from the perspectives of students. Also, replication of this study is encouraged in other parts of the country and around the world.

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