# USE OF TEACHER'S PROFILE DIMENSIONS TO ASSESS SOCIAL STUDIES STUDENT'S LEARNING OUTCOMES AT THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN GHANA

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## ABSTRACT

This study centered on the use of teacher's profile dimensions to assess Social Studies student's learning outcomes in the Senior High Schools in Aowin and Wassa Amenfi West Districts in the Western and Western North Regions of Ghana. The objective of the study was to assess how graduate teachers use profile dimensions to assess student's learning outcomes in teaching and learning of Social Studies in Senior High Schools. This study adopted a multiple case study design. The data were used together to form one case. The population for the study were the Social Studies teachers teaching in the Aowin and Wassa Amenfi West Districts. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to select the twelve (12) graduate Social Studies teachers and senior high schools respectively. The two main instruments employed for data collection in this study are interview guide and observation checklist. The findings concluded that, the way and manner Social Studies teachers assess their learners' learning outcomes in Social Studies lessons was contrary to the main goal and objectives of the subject which is to develop a reflective, concerned, responsible and participatory citizen in the civic life of a country. It is recommended that, since most teachers do not use more authentic forms of profile dimension assessment techniques such as portfolio and peer and self-assessments techniques during lesson delivery, the teacher training institutions/universities should endeavour to infuse in their Social Studies curricula with more authentic forms of profile dimension assessment techniques in order to lay a strong foundation for knowledge base for teaching and assessing the learners learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** Assessment techniques, Profile dimensions, Social studies, Teaching and learning.

## INTRODUCTION

Social Studies teachers in the senior high schools' knowledge of the profile dimensions of the subject enable them to employ skills in the teaching and learning process s to achieve the desired goal (s) and objectives of the subject (Eshun, Zuure, Brew, & Bordoh, 2019). However, it is obvious in contemporary Ghanaian secondary schools that teachers of Social Studies consist of both professionals in the subject and novices (Dee & Cohodes, 2008). They further argued that the prevalence of out-of-field teaching is unacceptably high. One may be doubtful as to whether these out-of-field teachers (novices) and the professionals are aware of the focus of the subject that is solving issues of human survival and the profile dimensions which underline its teaching, learning and assessment and whether they use the Social Studies classroom as a theatre for addressing the current persistent problems of human survival (Ananga & Ayaaba, 2004). This study, therefore, seeks to explore the implications of teacher's knowledge of Social Studies profile dimensions in teaching and learning the subject in the Senior High Schools in Ghana.

## REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

According to Bordoh, Bassaw, & Eshun (2013, p.9) "Formative assessment is the hands-on-deck process of information on the student's academic achievements in the classroom. It is the type of assessment which is ongoing or goes on in the course of instructional delivery." It is against this background that evaluation of student's learning in Social Studies needs to be taken seriously. Inversely, formative assessment is not a single or one-shot event or measurement instrument but an ongoing (minute-by-minute, day-to-day) (Leahy, Lyon, Thompson, &

Wiliam, 2005), planned practice that allows teachers to assess learning after teaching. It also allows teachers to predict and make adjustments regarding their teaching and standardised judgments about student's performance toward state content standards (Clark, 2011; Heritage, 2010). For the purpose that it serves, Madison-Harris, Muoneke, & Times (2012) remarked that formative assessment information is mainly for the teacher and classroom use. They, however, point out that formative assessment can serve different purposes in local educational agencies and may also be used by schools and districts to make data-based decisions at different levels of the system. Formative assessment is part of the progeny or offspring of assessments, and therefore, its purposes can sometimes overlap with interim or benchmark and summative assessments. Notwithstanding that, it is important to dichotomize these different assessments as they obviously serve uniquely different purposes (Madison-Harris et al., 2012), and the quality of the information provided differs. Thus, in Madison-Harris et al. (2012), it was advanced that the purposes of formative assessment are to help teachers target instruction that meets specific learning goals, support student learning, check for progress and determine learning gains, diagnose strengths and weaknesses, check for misconceptions following instruction, differentiate instruction, evaluate the effectiveness of instructional methods or programs, and transform curriculums.

The Curriculum Research and Development Division (CRDD) (2010), now National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) emphasised that in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, both instruction and assessment must be based on the profile dimensions. It goes further to say that in developing assessment procedures, there is the need for Social Studies teachers to select specific objectives in such a way that they

would be able to assess a representative sample of the syllabus objectives. There are many classroom instructional techniques that are part of the repertoire of good teaching. When teachers use sound instructional techniques in the teaching and learning of Social Studies for the purpose of gathering information on students learning, they are applying this information in a formative way. In this sense, formative assessment is pedagogy and clearly cannot be separated from instruction. It is what good teachers do. The distinction lies in what teachers actually do with the information they gather. How is it being used to inform instruction? How is it being shared with and engaging students? It's not teachers just collecting information on students learning; it's what they do with the information they collect (Black, Lee, Harrison, & William, 2004).

Quashigah, Eshun, & Mensah (2013, p.84) assert that "the pedagogical content knowledge of Social Studies teachers do influence the way they assess their lessons." This assertion is supported by Eshun and Bordoh (2013, p.173) when they opined that "the background knowledge of Social Studies teachers is built from their training institutions and this goes to influence the way they teach (i.e., selection of content, unit or topic, formulation of objective(s), mode of teaching, and assessment tool used)." As a result of this, implementers of the Social Studies curriculum need to be abreast with how the subject is assessed formatively to achieve the profile dimensions. However, Bordoh and Eshun (2013, p.107) stressed that "due to hasty nature in formulating formative assessment and scoring, tutors laid emphasis on cognitive domain to the neglect of affective and psychomotor domains which are also of paramount importance." With this, much is needed to assist Social Studies teachers to be abreast with the nature and the content of Social Studies in a harmonized subject matter required to improve the quality of teaching and learning (Bekoe & Eshun, 2013).

Some of the instructional techniques that can be used formatively in the teaching and learning of Social Studies Profile dimensions in order to achieve the desired goal and objectives of the subject include the following:

According to Reeves (2000) there are two major techniques in formative/alternative assessment namely: 1) performance or authentic assessment and, 2) Portfolio assessment. To him, authentic assessment can be described in terms of two major concepts; 1) performance and, 2) authenticity. The former refers to a student's generation of a response that may be directly and indirectly observed and the latter refers to the nature of the task, which presents a real-world issue (Elliott, 1995). Bailey (1998) points out the potential benefits of authentic/performance tests by referring to their highly contextualised nature. The latter makes a link between instruction and the real-world experience of any given learner through meaningful tasks (Flanagan, 2000). Winking (1997) claims that the authenticity of the tasks urges the learners to resort to higher-order thinking skills to solve real-life problems. However, according to Flanagan (2000), there are three approaches in alternative assessment: Authentic assessment, Performance-based assessment and Constructivist assessment.

Similarly, Kulieke et al. (1990) assert that formative assessment also encompasses two major techniques labeled as portfolios and projects. Portfolio development is not a new concept in the history of education. Portfolios originated with artists' collections of their works and have long been used to demonstrate competences (Bintz, 1991). In response to the need for alternative and more authentic assessment practices, portfolios have become one of the communal/commonest formative assessment techniques as compared to the traditional assessment methods (Maslovaty & Kuzi, 1999).

According to William and Thompson (2008), gathering purposeful examples of student's works that demonstrate their effort, progress, and level of understanding over a period of time, compose the main features of the portfolio. However, what has changed over the course of time is the format and content, making portfolios meaningful and purposeful. Based on the constructivist theories, which advocate that learning has

to be constructed by the learners themselves, rather than being imparted by the teachers, portfolio assessment requires students to provide selected evidence to show that their learning is relevant to the course objectives that has taken place. They also have to justify the selected portfolio items with reference to the course objectives (Stodolsky, 1984). Portfolios involve student's work with a display of mastery of skill in relation to the task at hand (Kulieke et al., 1990). In other words, portfolio assignments as part and parcel of formative assessment emphasise the construction of knowledge for the final product through suitable mechanisms.

Wiggins and McTighe (2007) maintain that unlike the traditional forms of assessment that take a "snapshot" of students at one point in time, portfolios function like a photo album containing a variety of photos taken at different times and different contexts. Similarly, Herrera, Murry & Cabral (2007) assert that the content of portfolios, which incorporate a collection of student work, some indications on how a student rated him/herself on the process and product included and the evidence of how those products met the established criteria. Portfolios are advantageous in that apart from their being an authentic experience; they replicate processes which require problem-solving approaches. According to Wiggin and McTighe (2007), the importance of considering the intended purposes for developing portfolios is by establishing the targets for their use. An instructor can decide what kind of student work to incorporate, who should manage it, how often to review it, and more. The instructors regularly assign students to include writing samples, reflections, drawings, reading longs, student self-evaluation, and progress notes, visuals and audio clips, among the many.

A project on the other hand, is similarly a goal-oriented task which is realised in any form of plan development, research proposal and art work which requires learners to use their own skills and strategies to solve a problem (Flanagan, 2000). According to Tamakloe, Amedahe, & Atta (2005, p. 338) "project as a formative profile dimension assessment technique was developed to change the traditional classroom which was characterised by restlessness, lack of interest, passivity and activities which had very little or nothing to do with student's real-life situations." To them, project differs from other profile dimension assessment techniques in the sense that it usually results in creating something concrete/tangible like a map, a model of a house or landform, a booklet (project) or an amenity which could be used in a community for various purposes. The project assessment technique has as its major characteristic to be the acceptance of an assignment by the students who is then free to work independently to reach the requirements with the teacher coming in to offer help as and when necessary.

It must be emphasized that the importance of the project as a Social Studies profile dimension assessment technique in the teaching and learning of the subject cannot be underestimated. Tamakloe et al. (2005) assert that the over-crowdedness of time tables in second cycle institutions which has resulted in the creation of many areas of study, has brought to the fore the need to make increasing use of the project assessment technique. To them, project as a profile dimension assessment technique allows for the use of individual study times by the student to reduce the problems which have arisen as a result of the over-crowdedness on the school time tables.

They further indicated that if the aim of education is to inculcate in the student the habit of studying on his/her own to enhance the chance of life-long education, it appears reasonable that the student must be given an ample opportunity to go through project to learn how to formulate problems, provide answers to the problems through research and should be able to evaluate the learning progress of his/her own learning. However, due to its cumulative nature, this kind of formative assessment technique calls for more responsibility on the part of the students and more commitment on the part of the teachers (Bailey, 1998). It is laborious on the part of the teacher as it consumes more time and energy to make decisions on the values of the diverse products that the students present (Bailey, 1998).

In another development, according to Adu-Yeboah, Quainoo & Koffie (2012), questioning skill is one of the formative assessment techniques employed by Social Studies teachers in assessing student's learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. To them, questions are statements for which a reply is expected. They further said that at every stage in education, questions are the core around which communication between the teacher and pupils take place and that questioning skills have become significant skills which are apparent in measuring students thinking skills and attitudinal change.

African Social and Environmental Studies Programme (ASESP) (1992) indicates that all knowledge starts from a question and therefore questioning is fundamental to learning. It is in the light of this that some educators regard questioning as one of the first teaching skills of an effective teacher. Thus, studies on what Social Studies teachers actually do in their classrooms show that approximately 30% of their class time is spent in asking verbal questions and another quarter is devoted to reviewing, giving and grading test questions (ASESP, 1992).

Questions continue to be an essential component in the classroom across grade levels and content areas. Questions take varied forms and places as well as different demands on students. Whereas some questions require only factual recall and do not provoke analysis, others challenge students to analyse, synthesize and evaluate information. The various levels of questions have been categorized into two broad categories, namely: lower-level and higher-level questions. Black (2001) defines lower-level questions as those requiring students to recall specific knowledge from their text or teacher's questions or notes. To Black, lower-level questions make modest intellectual demands on learners and hence, have been the type of questions most commonly used in the teaching and learning process since the beginning of the twentieth century. He further said that these questions are used between fifty (50) and eighty (80) percent of the instructional time and they require students only to engage in knowledge level and comprehension level thinking for the purpose of recalling and explanation of information. A research work by Bekoe, Eshun & Bordoh (2013) on Formative Assessment Techniques Tutors use to Assess Teacher-Trainees' Learning in Social Studies in Colleges of Education in Ghana posit that interactive formative assessments promote learning outcomes through questioning in the form of dialogue. This confirmed that in a classroom setting that tutors asked questions in open discussion; use questions and answers to introduce their lesson; and students were called to summarize what they learnt after the lesson. This implies that, questioning is of major use in assessing all learning activities in the classroom situation.

Black (2001) on the other hand asserts that higher-level questions, otherwise known as open-ended, interpretive, evaluative, inquiry, inferential and synthesise questions are those requiring students to elaborate the information given and answer with deeper thinking and evidence. This implies that this type of question requires complex thinking at the levels of application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. According to Dietel, Herman & Knuth (1991), higher-level or open-ended questioning strategies should be embedded in lesson/unit planning. Thus, asking better higher-level or open-ended questions allows an opportunity for deeper thinking and provides teachers with significant insight into the degree and depth of understanding. Questions of this nature engage students in classroom dialogue that both uncovers and expands learning. An "exit slip"- a strategy which requires students to write responses to questions a teacher poses at the end of a class period to determine student's understanding of the day's lesson or quick checks during instruction such as "thumbs up/down" or "red/green" (stop/go) cards are also examples of questioning strategies that elicit immediate information about student learning. Helping students to ask better questions is another aspect of this formative assessment technique or strategy. Whether written or oral, both lower and higher-level questions serve as powerful cues as to what teachers value in the text or lecture. Therefore, it is imperative for Social Studies teachers to use both lower and higher-level questions in

assessing student's learning outcomes so as to promote their critical, analytical and logical thinking skills.

Furthermore, peer and self-assessments are vital formative assessment techniques in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. According to Black et al. (2004), students will achieve more if they are fully engaged in their own learning process, aware of what they need to learn and why, and what they need to do to reach it. To them, self and peer assessments help to create a learning community within a classroom. Students who can reflect while engaged in metacognitive thinking are involved in their learning. When students have been involved in criteria and goal setting, self-evaluation is a logical step in the learning process. With peer evaluation, students see each other as resources for understanding and checking for quality work against previously established criteria (Black et al., 2004).

While this is undisputable, Black et al. (2004) cautioned teachers that peer and self-assessments could only be meaningful in the classroom if they are used to assist students, especially low achievers, to develop the knowledge and skills of assessment (e.g., goals, criteria and interpretation). Peer assessment, as complementary to self-assessment (Black et al., 2004), is generally recognized as an integral component of formative assessment (Noonan & Duncan, 2005). Although the definition for peer assessment varies, evaluators generally agree that peer assessment involves "one student's assessment of the performance or success of another student" (Noonan & Duncan, 2005, p.2). This process may involve various types of activities, such as peer feedback and peer learning.

Peer assessment, a formative assessment technique, is critical to student's interaction, understanding and learning gains (Anthony & Lewis, 2008). It enables students to take control over their own learning and to gain insight into their own performance (Heywood, 2000). This really shows that "formative assessment provides the teacher with a bridge between assessment and teaching as it is an essential way of creating independent, reflective learners who can plan and assess their own progress" (Bordoh et al., 2013, p.9). This gives students time to process new information, guide their own learning, with the teacher providing help where necessary or appropriate.

Black et al. (2003) emphasized that in order to enrich peer assessment and use it productively, students should be trained to assess their peers purposefully, with the goal of improving learning. As students comment on their peers' work, they use informal language, which is commonly understood by them. In addition, according to Herrera et al. (2007), given the concept of peer-assessment, students compare other student's work with the acceptance criteria, which enables them to discern outstanding elements of both their own and their classmate's performance and products. Gipps (1992), on his part, also indicated that peer assessment is believed to enable learners to develop abilities and skills denied to them in a learning environment in which the teacher assesses their work. In other words, it provides learners with the opportunity to take responsibility for analyzing, monitoring, and evaluating aspects of both the learning process and the product of their peers.

Eshun and Effrim (2007, p.1) also define a test as "A task or series of tasks which are used to measure specific traits or attributes in people." To them, in schools, tests are usually thought of as paper-and-pencil instruments with a series of questions that students must answer. "Tests are classified in different ways using criteria like purpose, uses and nature" (Eshun & Effrim, 2007, p.3). Consequently, according to them, some of the common tests administered in the teaching and learning process are achievement, diagnoses, aptitude, intelligence, norm-referenced and criterion-reference test. They further indicated that there are other types of test like recognition versus free response, speed versus power, maximum performance versus typical performance, objective versus subjective, paper-and-pencil versus performance, oral group versus individual, language versus non-language,

structured versus projective, product versus process and external observation versus self-report tests.

Finally, observation has been recognized as one of the formative assessment techniques in the teaching and learning of Social Studies (Black, Harrison, Lee, Marshall, & Wiliam, 2003). According to Marshall and Rossman (1995), observation is the systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, and artifacts' in a social setting. Although all teachers use this assessment technique to appraise their learners, not all of them are skillful in its application. Much of what is called observation might properly be described as a disorganized set of impressions the teacher obtains during the course of instruction, essentially on a catch-as-catch-can basis. That is to say, the teacher who makes the most of observation knows what he/she is looking for systematises observation and makes an attempt to objectify the information so obtained. To this end, it is suggested that in observation, the teacher must spell out exactly the traits to be evaluated and state evidence of these traits in terms of learner behaviour, select certain learners for intensive observation and study them rather than observing in "general" and record observations in writing and not depend on memory-keeping a written record of information obtained through observation, and maintain this record over a period of time to establish a definite pattern in the learner's behaviour.

Observing students can provide valuable information about how students are progressing and what strategies they are using to learn. Black et al. (2003) further said that observations go beyond walking around the room to see if students are on task or need clarification. Observations assist teachers in gathering evidence of student's learning to inform instructional planning. This evidence can be recorded and used as feedback for students about their learning or as anecdotal data shared with them during conferences. It must be stressed that all of these techniques are integral to the formative assessment process, and they have been suggested by models of effective Senior High School instruction.

**Statement of the problem**

Assessment procedures in Social Studies profile dimensions in the Senior High School curriculum are affecting the teaching, assessment and attainment of the subject's goals and objectives. Thus, it looks as if there is a huge or vast gap between intended objectives and actual classroom practices in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in Ghana. This requires Social Studies teachers to be aware of the profile dimensions of the subject to enable them to use formative assessment in assessing instructional objectives in the teaching and learning process. This made the researchers conduct a study into teacher's use of profile dimensions to assess Social Studies student's learning outcomes in the Senior High Schools in Ghana.

**OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of the study was to assess how graduate teachers use profile dimensions to assess student's learning outcomes in teaching and learning Social Studies in Senior High Schools.

**RESEARCH QUESTION**

How do graduate teachers use profile dimensions to assess Social Studies student's learning outcomes in Senior High Schools?

**METHODOLOGY**

The research approach employed for this study is qualitative. The research design adopted for this study was a Multiple Case Study. The multiple case study design was used to produce detailed descriptions of the use of teacher's profile dimensions to assess Social Studies student's learning outcomes in Senior High Schools. The population for the study was all teachers teaching Social Studies in the Senior High Schools in Ghana. The target population for the study was all graduate Social Studies teachers in the three Senior High Schools within the two study areas- Aowin and Wassa Amenfi West Districts in the

Western and Western North Regions of Ghana. Social Studies teachers in these three schools, namely Nana Brentu Senior High Technical School, Asankrangwa Senior High Technical School and Asankrangwa Senior High School, are six (6), three (3) and three (3) respectively. Purposive and convenience sampling techniques were used to select the twelve (12) graduate Social Studies teachers and senior high schools, respectively. The two main instruments employed for data collection in this study are interview guide and observation checklist. Data were analysed by the use of the Interpretive Method (IM) based on the themes arrived at in the data collection. The themes were related to the research question and interpreted on the number of issues raised by participants.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section discusses Social Studies profile dimensions and assessment techniques employed by Social Studies teachers in teaching and learning the subject. The main objective of this section was to assess how graduate teachers use the profile dimensions to assess student's learning outcomes in teaching and learning Social Studies in Senior High Schools. The above theme is used in order to arrive at answers to the research question:

*How do graduate teachers use profile dimensions to assess Social Studies student's learning outcomes in senior high schools?*

Some items were placed in the semi-structured interview and the observation checklist to seek graduate teacher's responses on the issue. In the first place, interviews were granted to the teachers based on their lessons taught. Also, the respondent's (teachers) lessons were observed when they were teaching in their various classrooms. In answering this research question, items 1-4 were placed on the interview guide to solicit relevant information from the respondents.

Item 1, which reads- *which of the following profile dimension assessment techniques do you use in assessing student's learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies?* is discussed under this section. The profile dimension assessment techniques included in the interview guide were; Portfolio, Project, Questioning, Peer and Self-assessment, Test, Think-Pair-Share, and Observation. In analysing this, the researcher used frequencies and percentages, as shown in table 1

**Table 1: Graduate teacher's views on profile dimension assessment techniques used in assessing student's learning outcomes in social studies**

| Responses | Yes (%) | NO (%) | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Portfolio assessment | 2(16.7) | 10(83.3) | 12(100) |
| Project | 8(66.7) | 4(33.3) | 12(100) |
| Questioning | 12(100) | - | 12(100) |
| Peer and self – assessment | 5(41.7) | 7(58.3) | 12(100) |
| Test | 12(100) | - | 12(100) |
| Think-Pair-Share | 2(16.7) | 10(83.3) | 12(100) |
| Observation | 11(91.7) | 1(8.3) | 12(100) |

Source: Field Survey December, 2017.

Table 1 shows that graduate Social Studies teachers used various Social Studies profile dimension assessment techniques in assessing learners learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of the subject to meet their learners' needs. The effectiveness of the teaching-learning process depends on the kind of assessment techniques adopted. This coincides with the CRDD (2010) assertion that in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, both instruction and assessment must be based on the profile dimensions. It goes further to say that in developing assessment procedures, there is the need for Social Studies teachers to select specific objectives in such a way that they would be able to assess a representative sample of the syllabus objectives.

From table 1, the most used profile dimension assessment techniques by teachers in the teaching and learning of Social

Studies are Questioning and Test respectively, since all the 12 (100%) respondents interviewed responded "Yes" to indicate that they use them to assess their learners' learning outcomes in the teaching and learning process. What this means is that most graduate Social Studies teachers found the use of Questioning and Test profile assessment techniques as a simple, easier and faster way of assessing students learning outcomes. With respect to the questioning, the implication is that students who cannot talk in class will be seen as not good and participate less in the learning process. As indicated in the literature, Adu-Yeboah et al. (2012) assert that questioning skill is one of the formative assessment techniques employed by Social Studies teachers in assessing student's learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. To them, questions are statements for which a reply is expected. They further said that at every stage in education, questions are the core around which communication between the teacher and pupils takes place and that questioning skills have become significant skills which are apparent in measuring students thinking skills and behavioural change. ASESP (1992) also as indicated in the literature, said that all knowledge starts from a question and therefore questioning is fundamental to learning.

Again, most 11 (91.7%) of the respondents use the observation as a profile dimension assessment technique to assess their learners' learning outcomes, whereas most 10 (83.3%) did not use the Portfolio assessment and Think-Pair-Share, respectively. As indicated in the literature, observation has been recognized as one of the formative assessment techniques in the teaching and learning of Social Studies (Black et al., 2003).

When a follow-up question was asked as to why portfolio profile assessment technique is not used, the following were some of the responses given by the participants: Eric (not real name) has this to say *it is very complex to use and also the cost involved in its use is too high*. Evelyn (not real name) also indicated that *it entails a lot…involves a lot of money and also problem of storing them*. These views from the participants confirmed that of Bailey (1998) when he said that due to the cumulative nature of portfolio as a profile dimension assessment technique, it calls for more responsibility on the part of the students and more commitment on the part of the teachers. He further said that the use of portfolio assessment is laborious on the part of the teacher as it consumes more time and energy to make decisions on the values of the diverse product that the students present.

Furthermore, when the respondents were asked as to whether they use Peer and Self-assessment as one of the profile dimension assessment techniques in assessing learners' outcomes, 5 (41.7%) out of the total number of 12 respondents responded 'Yes' as against 7 (58.3%) constituting the majority who responded 'No' to show their inability to use this assessment technique. According to Black et al. (2004), as indicated in the literature, students will achieve more if they are fully engaged in their own learning process, aware of what they need to learn and why, and what they need to do to reach it. To them, self and peer assessments help to create a learning community within a classroom. Students who can reflect while engaged in metacognitive thinking are involved in their learning. Similarly, Black et al. (2004), in supporting the assertion, said that when students have been involved in criteria and goal setting, self-evaluation is a logical step in the learning process. With peer evaluation, students see each other as resources for understanding and checking for quality work against previously established criteria. Thus, the implication of the above results indicates that since students are not engaged in peer and self-assessment, they will not be able to achieve more, will not be aware of what they need to learn and why and what they need to do to reach it.

Finally, table 1 also revealed that 8 (83.3%) out of the total respondents of 12 responded 'Yes' to indicate that they use the project as a means to assess their learners' learning outcomes in the teaching and learning process, except only 4 (33.3%) who responded 'No' to indicate their inability to use this profile dimension assessment technique. This means that most of the teachers use a goal-oriented task profile dimension assessment technique which seeks to enable learners' use their own skills and strategies to overcome a problem to assess their learner's learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. This is in line with the assertion of Flanagan (2000) that a project is a goal-oriented task which requires learners to use their own skills and strategies to solve a problem, as indicated in the literature. The implication of the overall results shows that graduate teachers teaching Social Studies at the Senior High Schools concentrate or stick to the use of certain profile dimension assessment techniques that they are familiar with to the neglect of others.

When the respondents were asked item 2 question-*which other profile dimension assessment techniques apart from those mentioned above do you use to assess your students learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies?* as indicated by item ten (10) on the interview guide, the respondents in answering the question said the following:

Evelyn (not the real name), one of the female respondents who has been teaching Social Studies for the past six years, has this to say *We do a class presentation on an individual basis… We also do a group presentation.* Doris (not the real name), another female respondent who has been teaching the subject for the past six years also said that *I use class assignments and group work.* Eric (not the real name), who has also taught the subject for one year, has this to say *I use debate sometimes, group work and sometimes presentations.* Joseph (not the real name), who has been teaching the subject for the past nine years, responded that *I use class exercise and assignment.* Bismark (not the real name) has this to say *Ok, l use debates, presentations and group discussions.* Solomon (not real name) also said that *Ok, that one is assignment and group work.* Mensah (not real name) said *assignment and group work.* Last but not least, Enoch (not real name) who has been teaching the subject for nine years, has this to say *I let them go on the excursion, give assignment and group work.* These comments from the respondents though varied in views, suggest that most of them had been using other profile dimension assessment techniques apart from those already indicated in assessing their learners' learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. However, the responses reveal that the most commonly used other profile dimension assessment techniques in the teaching and learning of Social Studies by these graduate Social Studies teachers were group work and assignments.

With regard to item 3 on the interview guide, which reads- *how do the assessment techniques you employ in your teaching assist in the attainment of your instructional objectives stated in behavioural terms?.* The following responses were given:

Evelyn, (not the real name), one of the respondents who has been teaching the subject for the past six years, has this to say:
*Ok with the test, if the test is given and the average score is not encouraging then as a teacher I get to know that either in my teaching the students did not understand or what I taught was not well understood, so as a teacher, I go back to evaluate my teaching methods and possibly re-teach what I taught them after I give a final test to see if the behavioural outcome would be achieved.*

Doris (not the real name), one of the respondents who has taught the subject for the past six years, had this to say:
*Of course, when l employ the assessment techniques, the response that l get helps me to either make changes in the delivery of the lesson towards the attainment of the objectives, so if l am getting the right responses, then it means that l am attaining the objectives.*

Again, Eric (not the real name), who has been teaching the subject for one year, also has this to say:
*The assessment techniques that l use after the assessment… l analysed the results then decides on the average score to either give remedial teaching or come and re-teach the topic all again, so l think it helps me a lot to achieve whatever stated objective.*

Furthermore, Desmond (not the real name), one of the interviewees who has been teaching the subject for the past seven years, has this to say:
*I think they help a lot because whatever you have taught, you need to find out if the students have understood and not*

understanding alone but whether it has affected their affective dimensions… So these are the things l think can help me to evaluate to find out whatever l teach, whether they understand or not.

John (not the real name), who has taught the subject for the past nine years, also said this:

*Yeah, the responses from the students will tell me that the impartation l did whether they understood me or not… so if more of the student's responses to the test are wrong, it means that the lesson delivery there was some defects somewhere so that will enable me to do remedial teaching.*

Solomon (not the real name), who has been teaching the subject for the past two years, has this to say:

*You see, the assessment technique that l use helps me to find out as to whether the students have understood the topic that l taught them and indeed it thus, help me whether l have to push further or continuing teaching that topic again or should end it there based on the knowledge they have acquired about the topic.*

Finally, Mensah (not the real name), one of the respondents, also has this to say:

*With the questioning when l finished teaching, l normally ask a question for them to answer, so when they are able to answer the question, it means that my objectives have been achieved… And with respect to test l make sure that within the month I conduct two tests l grade them and when l find out that the mark that they have is not anything to write home about, l re-test them with the same questions to know whether with their second chance they would have the opportunity to get a higher mark.*

The implication of the above is that most of the respondents responded that the profile dimension assessment techniques they employ in their teaching assist them to do remedial teaching whenever their students fail to understand whatever lessons they teach so as to attain the instructional objectives stated in behavioural terms as far as their lessons are concerned. This means that formative profile dimensions' assessment techniques can enhance the efficacy of Social Studies graduate teacher's instructional strategies in order to attain the stated behavioural instructional objectives meant for the lessons to be taught.

Finally, when respondents were asked item 4 question- *how do Social Studies profile dimensions influence the way you assess your students?* as shown in item 12 on the interview guide, the responses from the Social Studies graduate teachers interviewed are as follows:

Doris (not the real name), one of the female respondents who has taught Social Studies for the past six years, has this to *say:*

*You know l believe that in Social Studies, the three dimensions that the teacher is to develop that is affective, psychomotor and cognitive… l believe that Social Studies concentrates more on the affective domain so l set my questions towards getting responses from their affection such as their feelings, likes, dislikes, dispositions, etc.*

Evelyn (not the real name), another female respondent who has been teaching the subject for the past six years, said that:

*Ok thank you with the knowledge as I mentioned earlier… after you had gone through all the assessment procedures and you realize that the knowledge obtained is (may be) not in accordance with what you taught, it means you were not able to obtain or achieve your teaching objectives… So with you having*

knowledge and understanding as one of the profile dimensions, it helps you, the teacher, to be able to go through the teaching and learning successfully because if at the end of your teaching the students did not understand what you taught them then it means your teaching was not effective or you did not even teach at all.

Emmanuel (not the real name), who has been teaching the subject for the past six years, also responded that:

*It influences them in this way, as it helps them or me as a teacher to see whether the objectives that are actually arrived at because it is through this assessment that you will be able to tell the outcome of their response to tell whether you have actually done what is expected of you then you then you have also received the expected response from the students.*

The responses were given by the respondents above though varied; it could be inferred that the respondents were of the view that Social studies profile dimensions enable them to determine the exact Taxonomy of learning- cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains to be exhibited by learners during the instructional process.

In addition to the above responses, Eric (not the real name), another respondent who has been teaching the subject for one year, has this to say:

*In fact, it guides me a lot because before l even set a question, l base my questioning on the profile dimensions and so l will say the profile dimension is my guiding principle for all the questions that l set.*

Last but not least, Enoch (not the real name), one of the respondents who has been teaching Social Studies for the past nine years and was not able to give a satisfactory response, has this to say:

*Anyway, it helps you assess your students say, how I should prepare myself before going to class considering a lot of or sources of information that will equip me with the knowledge to go to class because l the teacher cannot go to class without being equipped with the knowledge and without the knowledge you cannot impart the lesson for the students to understand.*

The implication of the views of the respondents interviewed indicates that most of them are aware of the importance of Social Studies profile dimensions and also of the view that Social Studies profile dimensions influence the way they assess their learners' learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies in one way or the other.

In another development, all the 12 respondents' lessons were observed whiles they were teaching in their various classrooms after they had been interviewed. This was done to make sure that the data gathered during the interview sessions were in line with the observation made. With this, an observation checklist (Very Good, Good, Average, Below Average and Not Available) was used. The items under this research questions included: teacher uses other profile assessment techniques to evaluate lessons, profile dimensions' assessment techniques enable the teacher to achieve instructional objectives and teacher uses profile dimensions to influence the assessment of the learners in Social Studies lessons. Frequencies and percentages were used to compute items 3-5 in the observation checklist. In all, 12 respondents (Social Studies teachers) lessons were observed and rated. The results are presented in table 2.

**Table 2: Observation of teachers responses on social studies profile dimensions and assessment techniques**

| Items | Very good (%) | Good (%) | Average (%) | Below average (%) | Not available (%) | Total (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Teacher uses other profile dimension assessment techniques to evaluate lessons | – | – | 5(41.7%) | 5(41.7%) | 2(16.6%) | 12(100) |
| 2. Profile dimensions assessment techniques enable the teacher to achieve instructional objectives | – | 4(33.3%) | 5(41.7%) | 3(25.0%) | – | 12(100) |
| 3. Teacher uses profile dimensions to influence the assessment of the learners in social studies lessons | – | 3(25.0%) | 6(50.0%) | 3(25.0%) | – | 12(100) |

Source: Field Observation, December 2017

From table 2, the data reveal that for item 1, which reads – teacher uses other profile assessment techniques to evaluate lessons, out of the 12 respondents, none of them was rated Very Good or Good. Five (41.7%) out of the total number of 12 rated Average, 5 (41.7%) Below Average and 2 (16.7%) rated Not Available. This indicates that most 10 (83.3%) out of the total respondents of 12 use other profile dimension assessment techniques to evaluate their lessons, except only 2 (16.7%) respondents who did not use other profile dimension assessment techniques to evaluate their lessons. It must therefore be noted that the finding from the observation is in consonance with the results obtained during the interview session. This is because in both cases, the majority of the respondents indicated that they use other profile dimensions' assessment techniques in assessing their learners learning outcomes in the teaching and learning of Social Studies, except only a few of the respondents who indicated otherwise.

Also, for item 2, which says profile dimensions' assessment techniques enable the teacher to achieve instructional objectives, the table shows that none of the respondents out of the 12 was rated Very Good or Not Available. Four (33.3%) out of the total number of 12 rated Good, 5 (41.7%) rated Average, and 3 (25.0%) rated Below Average. This indicates that all the 12 (100.0%) respondents agreed that profile dimensions' assessment techniques enable them to achieve their instructional objectives, but 4 (33.3%) satisfactorily use them to achieve their instructional objectives; hence were rated Good as against 8 (66.7%) unsatisfactorily did not and so were rated Average and Below Average.

Finally, the results as indicated from the table on item 3, which reads teacher uses profile dimensions to influence the assessment of the learners in Social Studies lessons, reveal that, out of the total number of 12 respondents, none of them rated Very Good or Not Available, 3 (25.0%) rated Good, 6 (50.0%) rated Average and 3 (25.0%) rated Below Average. This is an indication that all 12 (100.0%) of the respondents use profile dimensions to influence the assessment of learners in Social Studies lessons. On this item, it is evident that the finding derived from the observation made is in line with that of the interview conducted since in both cases, all the 12 (100.0%) respondents did say that profile dimensions' assessment techniques influence the assessment of learners in Social Studies lessons except 1 (8.3%) who even though during the interview session indicated so but could not satisfactorily respond to the question as expected.

Results from research question revealed that the mostly used profile dimension assessment techniques by teachers in the teaching and learning of Social Studies are Questioning and Test respectively since all the 12 (100%) respondents interviewed responded "Yes" to indicate that they use them to assess their learners' learning outcomes in the teaching and learning process as shown in table 2 majority 9 (75.0%) out of the 12 respondents who were interviewed had been using other profile dimension assessment techniques apart from those already indicated in assessing their learners' learning outcomes except 3 (25.0%) who did not; most 7 (58.3%) of the respondents responded that the profile dimension assessment techniques they employ in their teaching assist them to do remedial teaching whenever their students fail to understand whatever lessons they teach so as to attain the instructional objectives stated in behavioural terms as far as their lessons are concerned; most 10 (83.3%) out of the total respondents of 12 use other profile dimension assessment techniques to evaluate their lessons except only 2 (16.7%) respondents who did not use other profile dimension assessment techniques to evaluate their lessons; all the 12 (100.0%) respondents agreed that profile dimensions assessment techniques enable them to achieve their instructional objectives and all the 12 (100.0%) respondents use profile dimensions to influence the assessment of learners in Social Studies lessons.

## CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the profile dimension assessment techniques used in assessing learners' learning outcomes in

Social Studies were mainly those measuring cognitive outcomes specifically, those that catered for knowledge of recall and a little bit of comprehension. The findings concluded that the way and manner Social Studies teachers assess their learners' learning outcomes in Social Studies lessons was contrary to the main goal and objectives of the subject, which is to develop a reflective, concerned, responsible and participatory citizen in civic life of a country. It is recommended that, since most teachers do not use more authentic forms of profile dimension assessment techniques such as portfolio and peer and self-assessment techniques during lesson delivery, the teacher training institutions/universities should endeavour to infuse in their Social Studies curricula with more authentic forms of profile dimension assessment techniques in order to lay a strong foundation for the knowledge base for teaching and assessing the learners learning outcomes.

It is also recommended that students taught and assessed not in conformity with Social Studies profile dimensions is a problem. This is because students might not be exposed to more practical lessons to enable them to grasp the relevant concepts involved in the teaching and learning of Social Studies. An inadequate grasp of Social Studies concepts in the classroom affects learners' ability to apply what they learn to real-life situations and hence affects student's performance in expository questions. Thus, the very impact of the subject is never felt in the teaching and learning process.

## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization: Anthony Bordoh.; Methodology: Anthony Bordoh Emmanuel Brew; Software: Alexander Kingsford Otoo; Validation: Alexander Kingsford Otoo, Anthony Bordoh, Emmanuel Brew; Investigation: Anthony Bordoh.; Resources: Emmanuel Brew.; Data Curation: Anthony Bordoh, Emmanuel Brew, Alexander Kingsford Otoo, Philip Owusu-Ansah Eric Osei Yaw.; Writing original draft preparation: Anthony Bordoh; Writing: Anthony Bordoh Emmanuel Brew Alexander Kingsford Otoo; Visualization: Philip Owusu-Ansah, Eric Osei Yaw;.; Supervision Emmanuel Brew; Project administration Philip Owusu-Ansah, Eric Osei Yaw; Funding acquisition: Anthony Bordoh, Emmanuel Brew, Alexander Otoo, Philip Owusu-Ansah, Eric Osei Yaw

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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