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**COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION  
PROGRAMME AND THE  
OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN IN THE  
NORTHERN REGION OF GHANA**

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## **Dedication**

To Cilla, Nana, Maaame Amissah and Paa. I hope this inspires you all.

## **Abstract**

### **Complementary Education Programme (CEP) and the Opportunity to Learn In the Northern Region of Ghana**

This study seeks to critically investigate the contribution of the School for Life (SfL) model of complementary education programme (CEP) in providing access to quality basic education in the Northern Region of Ghana. In so doing, it aims to examine the linkage between the SfL curriculum and pedagogy, and that of the Ghanaian lower primary school. This will enable a better understanding of the knowledge and skills that CEP graduates attain to enable them to integrate into formal education. The study is set against the background of the call for a replication of the SfL model as a mechanism for providing basic education to all marginalized communities. It is conducted using qualitative and quantitative approaches that fully capture the perspectives, experiences and learning achievements of pupils and other actors associated with both the complementary and formal education sectors in the Northern Region.

The study examines the planned, implemented and received curricula of the two systems analysing them within a social constructivist framework. Implicit in this analysis is a comparison of the two curricula. This thesis shows that SfL's CEP is not formally structured to meet the requirements of the formal school curriculum. The curriculum materials and training offered to the facilitators do not make mention of the formal school curriculum. SfL has a restrictive focus on literacy and numeracy instruction delivered solely through the mother tongue of the pupils utilising learner centred approaches. Meanwhile the formal school curriculum lacks a clear focus and is embedded within an ambiguous language policy that allows teachers to code switch at their discretion. While the two curricula share similar characteristics of locally relevant themes or topics, the SfL curriculum is functionally relevant as it is designed to meet the social economic lives of the learners and their communities. The study also shows SfL graduates in formal school performing at almost the same level as pupils who enrolled in formal school through the regular route. Thus while SfL graduates miss the first three years of primary schooling, once they enrol in grade 4, there is no significant difference between the performances of the two sets of students.

## **List of Acronyms**

<b>BRAC</b>	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
<b>CEP</b>	Complementary education programme
<b>CRDD</b>	Curriculum Research and Development Division
<b>CREATE</b>	Consortium for Research on Educational Access Transitions and Equity
<b>CRT</b>	Criterion Reference Test
<b>DA</b>	District Assemblies
<b>DANIDA</b>	Danish International Development Agency
<b>DEO</b>	District Education Office
<b>DfID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>EFA</b>	Education for all
<b>EMIS</b>	Education management information system
<b>EQUALL</b>	Education Quality for All
<b>EQUIP</b>	Education Quality Improvement Programme
<b>ESP</b>	Education Strategic Plan
<b>FCUBE</b>	Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
<b>GDCA</b>	Ghanaian Danish Community Association
<b>GES</b>	Ghana Education Service
<b>GOG</b>	Government of Ghana
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Computer Technology
<b>JHS</b>	Junior High School
<b>JSS</b>	Junior Secondary School
<b>Kg</b>	Kindergarten
<b>L1</b>	First Language
<b>L2</b>	Second Language
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Education
<b>NALAP</b>	National Literacy Acceleration Programme
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal

<b>NEA</b>	National Education Assessment
<b>NERP</b>	New Educational Reform Programme
<b>NSCE</b>	New Structure and Content of Education
<b>PAPADEV</b>	Partners in Participatory Development
<b>PMT</b>	Performance Monitoring Test
<b>PRA</b>	Participatory Rural Appraisal
<b>PTA</b>	Parent Teacher Association
<b>SEA</b>	School Education Assessment
<b>SfL</b>	School for Life
<b>SHS</b>	Senior High School
<b>SMC</b>	School Management Committee
<b>SSS</b>	Senior Secondary school
<b>TLMP</b>	Textbooks/Teaching and Learning Materials Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children’s Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

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# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

## **1.1. Preamble**

This study focuses on the School for Life (SfL) complementary education programme (CEP) in the Northern Region of Ghana: its contribution to the provision of access to quality basic education and potential to influence the quality of education in the formal education sector. SfL was introduced in Northern Region in 1995 as a functional literacy programme for out-of-school children between the ages of 8 and 14. SfL offers children (aged 8-14) a nine-month course in the mother tongue, which is aimed at helping children attain basic literacy and numeracy skills, and then integrate into the formal education system at Primary 4 or above following an informal assessment conducted in collaboration with district education officials. Pupils attend SfL classes for three hours per day, five days a week. Classes are held in the local community school (If there is one) after formal classes close in the afternoon or any convenient space designated by the community. Each class has a maximum of 25 learners, preferably 13 girls and 12 boys. Where there are more than 25 children in a community, priority is given to the older ones (i.e. 14 years downwards).

SfL classes are conducted by volunteer facilitators who are literate in their mother tongue and are recruited from and by the community to teach the course. While efforts have been made to recruit female volunteers, majority of the facilitators are male. These facilitators are given an initial three-week intensive training course, and follow-up refresher training workshops and support. Facilitators are paid a monthly stipend by SfL (the equivalent of \$15) and receive additional in-kind support from the community (e.g. farm labour when they attend training workshops).

Facilitators are supported by SfL field staff. Three (3) staff are recruited per District comprising one (1) District Coordinator and two (2) Supervisors. These are responsible for all literacy programme activities in the district. They participate in the animation of communities, organize workshops, courses and other field activities and work with communities to identify facilitators and learners. They coach and monitor facilitators and also carry out advocacy activities at district level. Each supervisor manages between 20- 25 classes and visits each class at least twice a month (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007). A detailed discussion of the history, context and operations of SfL is presented in Chapter 2.



What is striking about the SfL programme is its success in raising the literacy and numeracy levels of out-of-school children and enrolling them in formal schools. Over the last 15 years, over 100,000 children have participated in the SfL programme, with over 70% of them successfully integrated into the formal school system (DFID, 2012; Casely-Hayford and Adom Gharthey, 2007). Graduates transfer to formal schools, entering at Primary 4 or above. Given that these children are generally older than those in the grades they enter<sup>1</sup>, one would anticipate some difficulties in integration, perseverance and learning progress. Research suggests that overage children are at risk of dropping out of formal school (Lewin, 2007). Yet, SfL graduates, although older than their peers, are reputed to easily adapt to their studies, and progress well in the public schools in which they have been integrated (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; Casely-Hayford and Adom Gharthey, 2007; DeStefano et al., 2007).

Researchers argue that this is as a result of its learner-centred pedagogy and the cultural and functional relevance of its curriculum (DFID, 2012; Casely-Hayford and Adom Gharthey, 2007; DeStefano et al., 2007; Hartwell, 2007). All the hallmarks of this curriculum point to a social constructivist approach to curriculum design and delivery – a critical factor, it appears, in the ability of the programme in helping out-of-school children make the successful transition to formal education. This raises questions and potential lessons for the early literacy curriculum at formal basic school level. Does the SfL curriculum deliver better learning outcomes compared to formal basic curriculum, and what lessons does this present for improving access to quality education for disadvantaged out-of-school children in Ghana? A study into the SfL mother-tongue<sup>2</sup> literacy curriculum and instruction can impact on how formal school literacy instruction is delivered especially when only 35% of P6 pupils are proficient in English (the language of the formal school curriculum) at their grade level (MOE, 2012a).

To contextualize the SfL programme, this study also explores the general issue of the disjuncture between curriculum provisions that have been formulated for implementation in Ghana, and the strategies and processes developed to guide its implementation. This provides insights into the theoretical and conceptual perspectives and explanations advanced in the curriculum development and implementation literature, by comparing and contrasting the Complementary Education Programme and the formal school curriculum. The decision to

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<sup>1</sup> In the Ghana formal school system, children enrol in grade 1 at age 6, so the age range from grade 1 to 6 will be 6-11.

<sup>2</sup> In this thesis, mother tongue is used interchangeably with L1 (first language) and local language.

pursue this methodological route is grounded in the need to bring to light the existence and magnitude of a curriculum paradox in Ghana - that is, the difference between a learner-centred and competency-based curriculum as intended and how schools and teachers operationalize it. This discussion also throws more light on the current debate on pedagogical renewal in Ghana and elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa and the importance of aligning curriculum and instruction. The study thus explores the linkage between curriculum implementation and meaningful access to primary education for school-aged children. Implicit in this study, is a comparison of the SfL curriculum with that of the formal primary school's curriculum.

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- How is the SfL curriculum structured and delivered to provide opportunities for children to learn and transition to formal school?
- How do SfL graduates perform in formal primary school following integration?
- To what extent is the SfL curriculum key to the accelerated learning achievement of SfL learners/graduates?
- What do various stakeholders (teachers, parents and the community) perceive as unique in terms of the SfL programme?

In answering these questions, the study investigates and discusses the SfL curriculum from a social constructivist perspective: how SFL is able to develop and implement a learner-centred curriculum; the utilisation of children's L1 to teach literacy and numeracy; the cultural and functional relevance of the school curriculum; the social interaction and dialogue in the classroom that engenders critical teaching and learning and how the various levels of the curriculum (planned, implemented and attained) can be merged.

It is anticipated that the results of the study will contribute to an understanding of how linguistically, culturally, and geographically marginalized and overage children can benefit from an accelerated teaching and learning programme to integrate and thrive at formal primary school. It is also anticipated that the lessons from this study can shed light into how teaching and learning in the formal lower primary education sector in Ghana might be delivered to improve learning outcomes for school children.

## **1.2. Chapter Outline**

This chapter sets out the background to the study. This first section provides a brief description of the study followed by an outline of the chapter. Section three states the purpose of the study, where the research problem, purpose, aim and objectives, rationale, and relevance of outcomes are discussed. Section four outlines the research design including a brief overview of the methodological approach and methods for gathering and analysing data to answer the research questions posed. Finally, an outline of the thesis is presented before the chapter summary.

## **1.3. Statement of Purpose**

### **1.3.1. The problem statement and rationale for the study**

Following the 1990 World Conference on Education, the international community confirmed the entitlement to education as a fundamental human right to be enjoyed by all children. This was further underscored in the Dakar World Education Forum and the subsequent Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs have made the provision of access to high-quality education a key obligation of the state, requiring all nations to legislate in support of it (Chawla- Duggan and Lowe, 2010; UNESCO, 2002). In some respects, Ghana has led the field in its declaration of EFA and the MDGs, its 1992 constitution enjoining the government to provide free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE). This constitutional provision has been enforced through different phases of educational reform since 1995, and culminated in the declaration of free primary education with the provision of the capitation grant<sup>3</sup> in 2004 (MOE, 2008; MOE, 2010).

During the last few years, a range of education initiatives has resulted in improvements in the sector, an increased enrolment rate being the most outstanding. A year after the nationwide introduction of the capitation grant, primary school gross enrolment (GER), that is the total number of all children in primary school, rose by almost 10% yielding a national GER of 92.4 (UNICEF, 2007; MOE, 2006), while Net Enrolment (total number of children of right age in their right classes) rose from 62% to 69% (MOE, 2006). This enrolment growth has been increasing although at a slower pace with the 2010/2011 enrolment reported at 98% and

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<sup>3</sup> The capitation grant replaced all primary school fees in Ghana. Primary schools are awarded a grant by the government based on the number of pupils enrolled. The grant is used to cater for general expenses in running the school such as provision of teaching and learning materials.

78% respectively for GER and NER (MOE, 2012b; MOE, 2009; EMIS, 2008). This increase is closely related to the abolition of school fees and the award of the capitation grant to each school based on pupil population. However, the increased enrolment has affected the quality of teaching in districts in which the number of children per class far exceeds the Ghana Ministry of Education (MOE) target of 35 due to a lack of teachers and school infrastructure (Gilles and Quijada, 2008; MOE, 2008; Akyeampong et al., 2007). Clearly, large classes are likely to overwhelm the abilities of teachers to manage their classes and differentiate instruction.

Decentralisation, teacher training programmes, and school meal initiatives are other factors contributing to progress in the sector. Decentralised education management which has been on-going for over 10 years is a critical focus of the new 2008 Education Act with district education authorities expected to take more responsibility for education development and decision making (MOE, 2012b; GoG, 2008). Teacher Training Colleges have been upgraded from certificate to diploma-awarding institutions, and many more teachers are accessing distance education programmes to upgrade their skills (MOE, 2012b). Free school meal initiatives which used to be implemented by NGOs have since 2009 become a national policy with all districts participating and over 1.5 million pupils benefiting from free school meals across the country (MOE, 2012b; Adzah Dowokpor, 2012).

There are, however, still problems with access for populations in rural and deprived districts across Ghana, especially in the north of the country; and learning outcomes are far below the expectations of stakeholders (DFID, 2012; MOE, 2012a; MOE, 2010; MOE, 2008; UNICEF, 2007). For instance, the 2011 National Education Assessment (NEA) has only 35% and 16% of P6 pupils attaining proficiency in English and Mathematics at their grade level respectively (MOE, 2012a). This is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Complementary education<sup>4</sup> – and the School for Life programme in particular – has therefore been proposed and advocated by various actors, including the Ministry of Education, as a solution to reaching the underserved, hard to reach and poorest communities that the current formal education system has not been able to access (DFID, 2012; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; MOE, 2008; DeStefano et al., 2007; UNICEF, 2007). In order to understand the effectiveness of complementary education in addressing these persistent challenges, a number

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<sup>4</sup> Complementary education is defined as non-formal education that focuses on the provision of basic literacy, numeracy and life skills for out-of-school children or youth (Rose, 2007).

of studies have been conducted on the School for Life Complementary Education Programme (CEP). However, they have largely been at the behest of donors hoping to replicate the initiative or by SfL conducting its own self-evaluation (Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007; Hartwell, 2007; Care International, 2003). As such, they tend to be more descriptive than analytic.

For instance, as part of the Education Quality Improvement Programme (EQUIP) study of complementary education systems funded by USAID, Farrell and Hartwell (2008) conducted a comparative study of four complementary education systems that appear to be making an impact, both in terms of enrolling large numbers of underserved school-aged children and in giving them a real opportunity to achieve learning objectives. These four initiatives are the Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (BRAC) in Bangladesh; Escuela Nueva in Colombia and elsewhere in Latin America; School for Life in Ghana; and the Community School Programme in Egypt. Among others, Farrell and Hartwell (2008) contend that over the ten years of its existence, the SfL programme in Ghana has proven that it is able to effectively help children gain access to education and transfer them to the formal state system. They contend that “the results from these programmes are very good in terms of enrolment, retention, completion, movement to the next level of schooling and measured academic success” (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008:16). However, they concede the need for detailed research on these programmes to determine how these results are attained: “how exactly do these young people learn as well as they obviously do?----why they work as well as they do from a pedagogical or learning theory point of view remains a mystery” (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008:36).

School for Life itself commissioned a study by Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey (2007) as a self-evaluation with SfL staff playing key roles as data collectors. The report highlights the successes of SfL in enrolling almost 100,000 learners over a ten-year period with approximately 70% transitioning into formal schools. In another study, Mfum-Mensah (2011) discusses the collaborative networks that SfL operates in order to achieve its objectives. Using SfL as a case study, the paper explores the levels of collaboration needed in the implementation of Complementary Education Programmes (CEP) and discusses the perceived benefits and challenges of collaboration in CEP implementation. Mfum-Mensah (2009) again discusses and traces the history of the development of SfL curriculum and the consideration that went into the decisions surrounding the development of the curriculum. He notes that the SfL curriculum was developed around four stages: deliberation, design,

implementation, and outcome. While his study discusses the reasons that went into the selection of the content of the curriculum, he concedes the need for more research to illuminate the process of curriculum implementation and how the SfL curriculum actually promotes accelerated learning.

To a large extent, these studies focus on the achievements of SfL: the number of learners it has been able to enrol and, in some respects, the cost-effectiveness of the model. This is in line with an international trend in the Complementary Education Programme (CEP) literature, whereby most of the available information on non-governmental organization (NGO) provision is written from the perspective of international agencies advocating this form of intervention (Rose, 2007).

While these studies of School for Life are enlightening, they have limitations. They do not comprehensively address all the basic elements of an education programme, as the conception of access to education has in recent times been widened to cover not just the physical presence of children in school but also the opportunity to learn (Gilles and Quijada, 2008; Lewin, 2007). For example, the Consortium for Research into Education Access Transition and Equity (CREATE):

...has adopted an extended definition of access that embraces secure enrolment and regular attendance; progression through grades at appropriate ages; meaningful learning which has utility; reasonable access to lower secondary school especially where these are within the basic education cycle; and more equitable opportunities to learn for children from poorer households (Lewin, 2007: 33).

The prevailing literature on complementary education in Ghana focuses narrowly on the ability of SfL to enrol children from marginalized communities on a nine-month programme and integrate them into formal school. While there is some consensus on the value of these results and the need for replication of School for Life to other marginalized and hard to reach areas – especially in northern Ghana – there has been no adequate study of what happens in the CEP classroom over the nine-month period; or what qualifies the children who graduate from SfL for entry to Primary 4 or above of the formal education system. There is also very little information available about actual SfL curriculum content – the knowledge and skills that SfL graduates enter public school with. Thus the available literature seems to dwell more on the traditional requirements for access to education with little attention to the process and quality of teaching and learning that take place in the programme.

It is claimed that School for Life graduates generally enter formal school at Primary 4 or beyond. It has also been reported that SfL graduates perform better in formal school than the population of pupils who have progressed through formal school from the beginning of their education (DFID, 2012; Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007; Hartwell, 2007). However, there is no evidence of any formal assessment that compares the performance of these two types of student (integrated SfL graduates and existing formal school pupils), and there is also very little information on what is taught on SfL courses that enables graduates to easily integrate into formal school.

Moreover, there are no studies that compare the two systems (CEP and formal education) side by side in an attempt to understand why CEP graduates are placed at Primary 4 when they have completed only nine months of schooling and why they are judged to do better than their peers when they integrate. Is it the case that very little teaching and learning happens in formal school to begin with so that CEP graduates have an advantage? Whatever the answer to that question, there is a dearth of information on the SfL side about the linkage between the SfL curriculum and pedagogy, and how it prepares learners to benefit from the formal primary school curriculum. Thus comparison is not at all straight forward.

It is also important to note that the MOE has acknowledged the effectiveness of the SfL programme, and has indicated in various documents the possibility of replicating it (DFID, 2012; MOE, 2008; MOE, 2009; MOE, 2010b). Such a call for the extension of the model regards SfL more in terms of the provision of access or enrolment for marginalized communities than the effectiveness of the model's curriculum and pedagogy, although the latter has been acknowledged. However, neither MOE assessments nor other studies have been able to adequately capture the learning experience in terms of curriculum design and implementation, or the nature of teaching and learning that take place on the SfL programme, the very factors that facilitate children's integration into formal school as reported.

Given the poor and deprived backgrounds of these children and the socio-cultural conditions that give rise to their need to enrol in a CEP, it is clear that they have not had the opportunity to acquire the learning skills that P1 formal school children are expected to have at initial entry, such as pre-reading and pre-numeracy knowledge and skills (GES, 2007a). Thus it will be important to learn how this course prepares children with no foundation for formal education to integrate easily into formal school by investigating the knowledge and skills that they attain over the nine-month SfL cycle. It will also be important to investigate from the

perspectives of both SfL graduates in formal school and their teachers how the CEP experience supports participation in the formal education process.

The study therefore analyses the SfL and formal primary school curricula, utilizing syllabi, teaching and learning aids, instructional practices, pupil achievements, and other stakeholders' (including children's) perspectives. This study examines the linkages between the SfL and lower primary formal school curricula both in terms of content and implementation, and provides information on what transpires in the CEP cycle to ensure the smooth integration of graduates into formal school. It aims to go beyond previous studies to explain the effects they have observed. It provides information on how CEP graduates actually perform in formal school, and the obstacles and opportunities to their integration. It considers the overall curriculum and pedagogy of SfL and investigates what the programme delivers to ensure that its pupils are able to learn to read and write effectively and, after nine months, transfer to formal school. The study also explores how SfL graduates are able to meet the knowledge requirements of the lower primary curriculum after such a relatively short course in mother tongue literacy and numeracy.

In studying the CEP curriculum alongside that of the formal school's, this study also throws more light on the curriculum of the formal primary school and contributes to a clearer understanding of what transpires in primary schools in Ghana. Thus it is anticipated that the research findings will have wider implications for curriculum development, and the teaching and learning that takes place at the primary level of the formal education system. It will contribute as well to the development and implementation of effective CEPs in other regions of the developing world. Finally, it will provide valuable information on the options available for providing high quality basic education to marginalized communities in Ghana.

### **1.3.2. Relevance of research outcomes**

In line with Cohen et al.'s (2007) statement about research as a tool for advancing knowledge, promoting progress and enabling humans to relate more effectively to their environment, accomplish their purposes and resolve conflicts, the relevance of the outcomes of this study are threefold. Firstly, the study seeks to provide insight into the curriculum development and implementation interface in Ghana, through shedding light on the policies, principles and practices that support the implementation of the School for Life curriculum.



Also, through the examination of the SfL programme in practice, the assessment of the pupils, the observation of lessons and the interviews and discussion with various stakeholders in the Ghanaian educational system, the study hopes to suggest possible and practical ways by which the factors that promote accelerated learning for SfL learners could serve as pointers for improvements in the formal school system.

This study utilises a social constructivist framework to make a crucial contribution to knowledge in presenting under one study a holistic analysis of the SfL curriculum and how its graduates integrate into the formal school. The social constructivist framework that guides this study offers a platform to investigate and present findings on the major determinants of curriculum development and manifestation including-learner centred education, local language instruction, functional literacy instruction, and cultural and functional relevance of the curriculum. Thus the findings of the study could be helpful for the Government of Ghana and its Education Authorities to develop strategies that are useful for practitioners, teachers and advisers, in improving curriculum development and implementation in formal schools.

#### **1.4. Methodological approach**

This study adopts the social constructivist perspective to research utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods. Social constructivism requires the researcher to rely as much as possible on his or her participants' experiences and views of the situation, which are set within a social and historical context (Creswell, 2008). The study takes the SfL Complementary Education Programme curriculum implementation and institutionalization processes as a case and studies it within its real life context - within a specified social setting - using more than one source of evidence.

Using both qualitative and quantitative approaches, the study comprises four complementary levels: i) documentary analysis of curriculum materials (syllabi, and teaching and learning aids) for SfL and formal primary school; ii) the results of literacy and numeracy tests for Primary 4 and Primary 6 pupils of SfL graduates receiving formal schooling, to assess the performance of SfL graduates as compared to regular pupils; iii) classroom observation to understand the two curricula in action; and iv) focus group discussions and interviews with SfL personnel, CEP graduates in formal school, CEP facilitators, teachers of integrated CEP graduates, parents of CEP graduates in formal school, Ghana Education Service (GES)

officials, and community leaders. Using social constructivist principles as a guide and framework, this study thus offers critical insights into how both the SfL and formal school curricula are negotiated (through critical pedagogies, local language and literacy instruction) to ensure that children have the opportunity to learn.

### **1.5. Organisation of the thesis**

As has so far been illuminated, Chapter 1 is an overview of what is to come. The intention has been to set the tone for the study. The chapter provides a statement of purpose where the general issue to be investigated or under investigation is introduced and the study purpose, aim and objectives, rationale and relevance of outcomes are identified and illuminated before the methodological design employed in the conduct of the study is outlined and explored. In Chapter 2, significant historical issues as well as key facts and features relating to the development and context of education in Ghana and complementary education are identified and discussed.

Chapter 3 foregrounds an appraisal of the theoretical context and the research literature that has implications for this study. It explores the meaning and theories of curriculum development and implementation relative to the CEP and formal school system. It also analyses the nature of school learning with a focus on critical pedagogies, meaningful teaching and learning and effective literacy instruction. Through that, the chapter highlights the conceptual framework that drives the study.

Chapter 4 discusses issues of methodological design. In consideration of the major aim and objectives of the study coupled with the research questions asked, the study adopts a mixed methods case study design to researching the issue at hand. It takes the implementation of SfL's Complementary Education Programme as one example. The study elicited data for analysis from curricula documentation, complemented by observation, pupil assessment and semi-structured open-ended interviews with implementers and actors in the Ghanaian educational system.

Chapters 5, 6 and 7 present and discuss the findings and analysis in this study. These chapters are structured to adequately answer the key research questions. These chapters discuss and analyse data from the documentation, assessment, observations and interviews for the purposes of answering the research questions.

Chapter 8 presents a discussion of the findings of the study along the lines of the research questions posed and provides a summary and conclusion to all the issues raised by the study.

## **1.6. Summary**

This chapter gives an overview of the rationale and relevance of the study. As stated, School for Life's Complementary Education Programme has been researched a number of times, but this study takes a broadened view of the CEP. This study looks at School for Life's Complementary Education Programme, not just as an access to education programme, but also as a programme that offers children an opportunity to read, calculate and survive in the formal school upon integration. Using a social constructivist framework and comparing SfL with the formal school, potential lessons could be learnt to improve curriculum development and implementation in the formal school especially related to literacy instruction.

## **Chapter 2: The Context of the Study**

### **2.0. The development and context of education in Ghana**

This chapter gives an overview of the education system in Ghana, detailing key facts and features which together help define the context of the complementary education programme that is the focus of this study and its linkage with the formal education curriculum in Ghana. The chapter provides four main sections. Section 1 details the national context that underlies the educational enterprise in Ghana. This is followed by the history of education development in Ghana. Section 3 looks at curriculum implementation and pupil performance in Ghana, while section 4 presents the context of complementary education in Northern Ghana.

### **2.1. The context of Ghana.**

Ghana is located in West Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, and bordered by Cote d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Togo. The country of Ghana covers a total area of 238,533 square km (227,533, land and 11,000, water) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Formed from the merger of the British colony of the Gold Coast and the Togoland trust territory, Ghana in 1957 became the first sub-Saharan country in colonial Africa to gain its independence.

Ghana is well endowed with natural resources. Gold and cocoa are major sources of foreign exchange, along with individual remittances. Oil production at Ghana's offshore Jubilee Field began in mid-December 2010 and is expected to boost economic growth. The domestic economy continues to revolve around subsistence agriculture including forestry and fishing. This remains the largest industrial sector employing 41.6% of the economically active population aged 15 years and older. The next major industrial activities are wholesale and retail trade (18.9%) and manufacturing (10.8%) (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Ghana's population currently stands at 24,791,073 with an estimated growth rate of 2.5% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012.) with an age distribution presented in the table below:

**Table 2.1: Ghana Population Distribution**

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
0-14	36.5%	4,568,273	4,468,939
15-64	60%	7,435,449	7,436,204
65 and Over	3.5%	399,937	482,471

*Source: 2010 Census*

Culturally, Ghana is diverse. The estimated population of over 24 million is divided into ten administrative regions and ethnically divided into groups speaking more than 50 indigenous languages (Nudzor, 2007). Overall, there are over seventy-two tribal groups, each having its own customs and language. There are, however, five principal groupings distinguished not only by linguistic affinities but by the possession of common cultural attributes and, to some extent, by common myths of origin. These are the Akan, the Ga-Adangme, the Ewe, the Mole Dagbane, and the Mande speaking people (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012; Nudzor, 2007; Boateng, 1966; Foster, 1965).

This diversity accounts for why English, the language of the colonial power, is still used as the official language and medium of instruction in the Ghanaian education system for Primary 4 upwards (GES, 2012; Nudzor, 2007). Although English is the nation's official language (that is, major language of law, government, and education) it is not spoken by the majority of the Ghanaian people. It is also important to note that this linguistic diversity allows for most Ghanaians to be multilingual with the majority speaking at least two local languages (Prah, 2009).

Religion plays a significant role in education in Ghana. Religious freedom, enshrined in the current Ghana constitution is also reflected in the education system (GOG, 1992). 71.2% of the population profess the Christian faith, followed by Islam (17.6%). Only a small proportion of the population either adheres to traditional religion: 5.2% or are not affiliated to any religion: 5.3% (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). Each of these groups, particularly Christians and Muslims, has titular oversight of its own schools (Nudzor, 2007). These schools are, however, state funded schools with the government being responsible for all expenses including teacher salaries and provision of teaching and learning materials. In many cases, these religiously affiliated schools were established by mission groups; at present, they maintain this affiliation, but they operate within the government system of education (Nudzor, 2007).

Ghana has a 6-year primary education system beginning at age six although two years of kindergarten have recently been made mandatory (GES, 2012). Presently, Ghana has 21,530 primary schools, 8,850 junior secondary schools, 900 senior secondary schools, 52 public training colleges, 5 private training colleges, 5 polytechnic institutions, 4 non-university public tertiary institutions, 8 universities and over 45 private tertiary institutions (MOE, 2012b).

The courses taught at the primary or basic school level (Grades 1-9) include English, Ghanaian language and culture, mathematics, integrated science, social studies, French as a third language in some places, pre-vocational skills, religious and moral education, and physical activities such as music, dance and physical education (GES, 2012; GOG, 2008).

## **2.2. The History, Development and Context of Basic Education in Ghana**

The development and implementation of formal education in Ghana can be divided into three major phases (Nudzor, 2007; Kadingdi, 2004): the pre-independence era, the period from 1951 to 1987, and the period from 1987 to the present. The first phase is described by historians as being dominated by missionary activities with respect to literacy for trade and for teaching of the Bible (Nudzor, 2007; Graham, 1971; Foster, 1965).

As in most of sub-Saharan Africa, Western schooling was introduced into the Gold Coast (later Ghana) by missionaries as early as 1765 and was continued throughout the nineteenth century as a philanthropic enterprise of Christian missions (Graham, 1971; Michel, 1988; Tabulawa, 1997). Writing on the history of education development in Botswana, Tabulawa (1997) notes that the British colonial administration primarily left the provision of formal education to the Christian missionaries and traditional leaders. However, in the Gold Coast, the colonial government began to take an active part in education in 1882, with a board of education nominated to oversee schools inspection and to standardise school management (Antwi, 1992).

In colonial Sub Saharan Africa, the system of education that existed pre independence emphasised literary skills and prepared pupils largely for white collar jobs. Tabulawa (1997) affirms that:

Basically, the model that informed missionary education was bureaucratic, reflecting the mode of manufacturing and commerce that was predominant in nineteenth-century

Britain. This organisational structure was essential for the production of a workforce which would occupy subordinate positions in factories and offices. Because the education was for subordination and domination, it was authoritarian in practice (p. 194).

The curriculum materials used in schools were replicas of those used in English schools. Success in the colonial educational system was measured by performance in examinations designed for pupils growing up in the colonisers' countries whose experiences and needs were different from pupils growing in the colonies (Nudzor, 2007; Tabulawa, 1997).

The second phase in the development of basic education policy and practice was primarily characterized by the activities of the leaders of national independence (Turner, 1971), who aspired to the use of education to assure the decolonizing of the continent (Nudzor, 2007). This was the period that saw the Accelerated Development Plan of 1951 and the 1961 Education Act, under which provisions were made to make basic education free, universal and compulsory for all children from six years of age (Nudzor, 2007; Foster, 1965).

The third phase in this historical account covers the New Educational Reform Programme (NERP) of 1987 leading up to the constitutional provision of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) in 1996 (Nudzor, 2007). The programme focussed on restructuring the entire basic and secondary education system, including improving access through the provision of infrastructure, whilst making the curriculum more relevant to social and economic needs with the introduction of technical, vocational and life skills (MOE, 1996).

As a result of perceived weaknesses in both the 1987 education reform programme and FCUBE policy involving too many subjects being taught and poor management at the primary school, junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary school (SSS) levels (MOE, 2005), a new basic education programme from 4 to 15 years has been introduced by the government with a new education reform and act (GoG, 2008; Nudzor, 2007). This new programme changes the primary–JSS–SSS structure to a two–six–three–three pre-tertiary sequence, comprising two years of kindergarten; six years of primary school; three years of junior high school (JHS); and three years of senior high school (SHS) (GOG, 2008).

Given that the current study is concerned with the formal primary school grades (Kindergarten 1 and 2 and Primary 1-6 of the Basic Education Programme), particular

attention has been paid to the curriculum contents of subjects constituting this level or cycle. As the basis of the current formal Ghanaian education system, primary education seeks to provide children with literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills. Pupils are also exposed to creative activities (art and craft, music and dance); physical education; information and computer technology (ICT); life skills; and citizenship studies (Nudzor, 2007; MOE, 2005). These content areas are incorporated into a revised national curriculum that is intended to focus on literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills (GoG, 2008).

### **2.3. Curriculum Implementation, Teaching and Learning in the Ghana Basic Education Sector**

All Ghanaian primary schools are required to work to nationally prescribed teaching programmes that are contained in the syllabi; that is, they include detailed guidance on what is required to be taught in each year with suggested teaching and learning activities. To ensure that the programmes provide the foundation for a child's basic and further education, the following are stated in the policy guidelines to education reform as the first two goals of the Ghanaian primary school:

- i. Numeracy and literacy, i. e. the ability to count, use numbers, read, write and communicate effectively.
- ii. Laying the foundation for inquiry and creativity (MOE 2008).

The present study analyses in detail the formal primary school English Language, Ghanaian Language and Mathematics syllabi since they correspond to the SfL mandate for the provision of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum provides the overall rationale for an education programme, which includes all the learning that goes on in school whether planned, accidental or as a by-product of the planning process (Kelly, 2009). It is also important to distinguish between the planned or intended curriculum and the received curriculum, which introduces the issues of theory or policy, and practice. There is always what is laid out in the syllabus, which in most cases differs from the lessons pupils actually receive. The difference between theory and practice “may be conscious or unconscious, and the cause of the mismatch being either a deliberate attempt by the teacher to deceive” (Kelly, 2009: p11) or just part of the natural order of things whereby in most cases, the actualization of any venture does not necessarily meet the planner’s vision. The difference may also



determine how children actually perform in schools and how parents and other stakeholders perceive the education system as meeting its core goals.

In Ghana, various stakeholders in education, including parents, teachers, the GES/MOE, and employers, have persistently expressed their concern in the local media about the poor performance of both teachers and pupils in English at all levels of the Ghanaian education system. Results of external examinations such as those conducted by the West Africa Examinations Council, as well as chief examiners' reports, confirm the stakeholders' concerns. Moreover, different assessment tests introduced by the MOE since 1992 in order to monitor achievement in English and Mathematics in public schools indicate low levels of pupil achievement. In Criterion Reference Tests (CRTs) administered, for example, progress in performance was found to be very slow, achievement levels in English improving from a baseline of 2% to only 12.7% in 2002 (USAID, 2003; MOE, 2006).

Reports on the administration of the National Education Assessment (NEA) tests in English and Mathematics for Primary 3 and Primary 6 paint a similar gloomy picture. Since 2004, the GES has implemented National Education Assessment tests, which replaced the previous Criterion Reference Tests and Performance Monitoring Test (PMT). The NEA gives an indicator of the national quality of education at the basic level. It is based on a random, stratified sample of pupils in Primary 3 and Primary 6, utilizing multiple choice test items to assess competency and proficiency at their respective levels. The English assessment consists of subtests in listening, grammar, reading and writing; and the Mathematics assessment investigates pupils' competency with numbers, shapes and space, measurement, and collecting and handling data. The minimum level of competency necessitates a score of 35%, and a score of 55% is required to designate proficiency. The table below outlines the scores from 2005–2011.

**Table 2.2: Overall Distribution of Minimum Competency and Proficiency, NEA by Year**

	Grades, subjects and percentage of pupils reaching Minimum Competency (MC) and Proficiency (Prof)							
	PRIMARY 3				PRIMARY 6			
	ENGLISH		MATHEMATICS		ENGLISH		MATHEMATICS	
	MC	Prof.	M-C	Prof.	MC	Prof.	M-C	Prof.
<b>2005</b>	50.6	16.4	47.2	18.6	63.9	23.6	47.2	9.8
<b>2007</b>	50.2	15.0	42.6	14.6	69.7	26.1	46.2	10.8
<b>2009</b>	57.6	20.0	61.2	25.2	76.9	35.6	61.9	13.8
<b>2011</b>	66.3	24.2	52.6	18.2	78.9	35.3	56.9	16.1

*Source: MOE 2009 National Education Assessment Report.*

Reading the NEA report shows that the percentages of pupils meeting the minimum competency level are higher than those reaching the proficiency level in English and Mathematics in both primary 3 and Primary 6. The percentages of pupils reaching both the minimum competency and proficiency levels increased in 2009, while lower percentages were recorded in 2007 and 2005. Despite the improvements in the 2009 assessment, the MOE conceded that there is still a lot of work to be done to ensure that targets are met. Also noticeable is the fact that the percentage of P3 students achieving minimum competency and proficiency scores in English increased between 2009 and 2011. Similarly, the percentage of P6 students achieving minimum competency in English saw a slight increase between 2009 and 2011, while those achieving proficiency remained stable. Conversely, the percentage of P3 students achieving minimum competency and proficiency in maths decreased. Among P6 students, the percentage achieving minimum competency also decreased while, surprisingly, those achieving proficiency increased slightly (MOE, 2011).

The NEA report also provides a breakdown of results by region. In all four assessments to date, the highest mean scores were achieved by pupils from the Greater Accra Region, which includes the national capital, Accra, while Northern and Upper East regions consistently returned the lowest scores in both Mathematics and English (MOE, 2009). Table 2.2 below gives a regional breakdown of the results for the 2009 Primary 6 English assessment.

**Table 2.3: Performance of Pupils in Primary 6 English by Region, NEA, 2009**

REGION	NUMBER OF PUPILS	OVERALL MEAN %	STANDARD DEVIATION	% REACHING MC	% REACHING PROF.
ASHANTI	4,256	48.9	16.33	79.6	37.3
BRONG AHAFO	2,361	46.3	15.61	75.9	28.8
CENTRAL	2,477	43.6	15.60	69.3	24.1
EASTERN	2,468	50.3	17.15	80.5	40.2
GTR. ACCRA	2,756	57.4	17.16	90.0	58.2
NORTHERN	2,280	39.4	15.11	60.4	16.1
UPPER EAST	1,104	39.8	14.20	60.0	15.6
UPPER WEST	917	47.9	16.85	76.3	34.8
VOLTA	2,799	51.4	17.54	81.1	44.7
WESTERN	2,825	49.4	16.76	79.7	37.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,4243</b>	<b>48.2</b>	<b>17.11</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>35.6</b>

*Source: MOE 2009 National Education Assessment Report.*

These data on pupil achievement in the formal school system show that pupil achievement in the formal school system is low over all, and that calls into question the design and implementation of the primary school curriculum, as well as teaching and learning. This situation coupled with the inadequate provision of textbooks, materials and teacher contact time conspires to prevent the creation of an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning in the primary school, as is indicated by NEA results whereby a quarter of Primary 6 pupils do not achieve minimum competency, and less than 40% achieve proficiency in English, which happens to be the medium in which the curriculum is taught.

These results and their implications are grounds for a more critical examination of formal school programmes, but they also invite scrutiny of other programmes that are touted as providing real opportunities for children to learn. Indeed, Complementary Education Programmes, while providing an access route for marginalized and deprived communities, are also seen as providing real opportunities for children to acquire literacy and numeracy,

and integrate into the formal school system (DeStefano et al., 2007; Hartwell, 2007). Are these programmes, which use untrained teachers, any more effective than the formal school in supporting pupils' learning?

#### **2.4. The Context of School for Life's Complementary Education Programme in Northern Ghana**

Poverty is endemic in Northern Ghana, and the people face formidable challenges with regards to water, food and livelihood. With limited access to potable water and few economic opportunities, younger people especially girls, have few chances to find productive work. . . . 40% of school age children mostly girls, were out of school. The great majority of children do not complete the compulsory nine years of primary school and consequently do not attain a basic level of literacy (Hartwell, 2007:1).

Access to education cannot be separated from the economics of a country or regions in countries. Northern Ghana, comprising the Northern, Upper East and Upper West Regions is the poorest and most deprived part of the country (MOE 2008; MOE 2006; GLSS 2000-2004). Evidence from around the world and in Ghana indicate that access to education is more critical in deprived regions with "low levels of economic development, low levels of democratic participation, high levels of infant and child mortality and morbidity, and low levels of general family health, among others" (Akyeampong et al, 2007:XVII). These socio economic factors coupled with the history of education provision in Ghana, the culture and practices of the peoples of the regions and nature of the settlements have made access to education more difficult in the North (Akyeampong et al, 2007, Casely-Hayford, 2000).

Historically education provision to Northern Ghana has not proceeded at the same pace as that to the south. Due to the education development policies of the colonial government, there was cautious restriction in providing education nationwide. At the heart of the colonial policy were a number of issues ranging from cautious expansion due to quality considerations, not wanting to disturb the Muslim status quo with the presence of Christian missionaries and a deliberate policy of keeping a pool of uneducated manual labour in the North (Benning 1990 cited in Casely-Hayford, 2000; Graham, 1971; Foster, 1965). Post-independence governments have consistently attempted to address this imbalance in a number of ways,

significant among them the Northern peoples or Savannah scholarships introduced by the first post-independence government.

While considerable progress has been made in correcting the imbalance between the North and the South, there is still a gap in access to education between the two parts of Ghana. Fentiman (1999) and her team found interesting disparities in basic school enrolment across Ghana. The study compared school trends in three education circuits<sup>5</sup> in Ghana; one in Northern Ghana and two in the South. The researchers found that there was a wide disparity between the North and the South when it came to education access. While gross enrolment for boys was 42% in Fumbisi in the North, it was 108% in Ziope in the South; girls' enrolment was 61% and 100% respectively. The out-of-school population in the North far outnumbers that in the south of Ghana. A number of studies have found as much, with the numbers being corroborated by the Ministry of Education (Akyeampong et al, 2007; MOE, 2006; Casely- Hayford, 2000; Graham, 1971; Foster, 1965). In Ghana, the proportion of the population that has never attended school in the age group of 6-14 years ranges from a mean of 5% in the Greater Accra region to a mean of 43% in the Northern Region (Akyeampong et al., 2007). Two years after the capitation grant was instituted, the GER in the Northern region of Ghana was 76.2% compared to the national GER of 92.1% (MOE, 2006).

Historically, northern Ghana has had a problem with large numbers of out-of-school children, particularly in remote areas. This has largely been because resource constraints limit the number of primary schools that can be built and staffed. Enrolment and retention suffer because children in rural areas often live too far from school to walk there, and because work demands on children limit the time available for their schooling. Another factor is that classroom overcrowding and outmoded teacher training approaches have limited the achievement of pupils; gender inequalities exacerbate these problems for girls (Mfum-Mensah, 2009; Hartwell, 2007; Casely-Hayford, 2000). The Ghanaian government has focused resources for primary education on formal schooling in general, but although there has been progress, the problems have not been eradicated (from a GER of 65% in 2001 to 92% in 2008).

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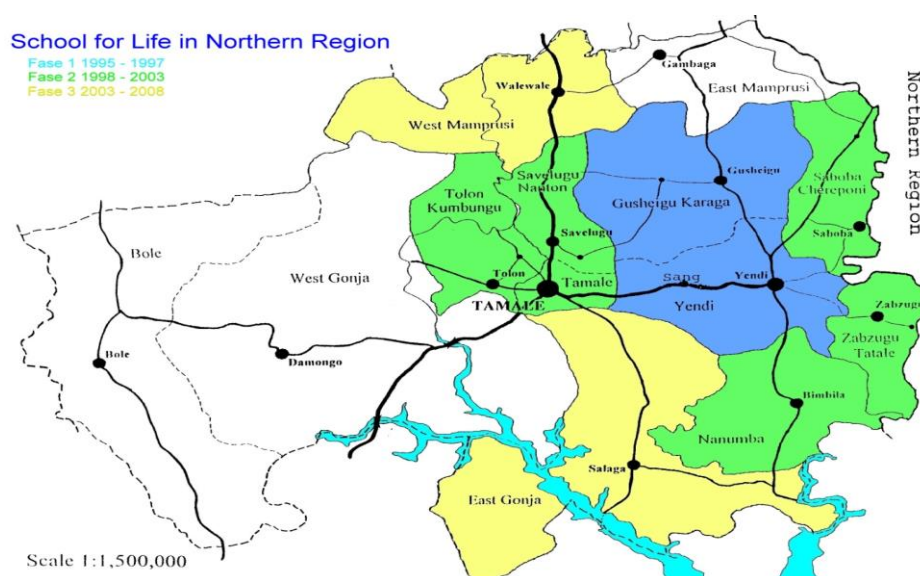
<sup>5</sup> All districts in Ghana are divided into circuits for the purpose of school supervision. Each circuit is managed by a Circuit Supervisor (CS) who has oversight of an average of 10 schools. The CS is supposed to provide on-going management support to schools under his/her jurisdiction and serves as the representative of the District Director to the School Management Committee.

On the other hand it is possible to say that the deprivation of Northern Ghana, a constant blight on the conscience of the country, can be seen as a failure of the post-independence state to rise up to the development expectations of the people. There are arguments to the effect that most communities in Northern Ghana do not receive the same level of education services as the rest of the country especially the south. This perceived unequal distribution of education resources is seen as polarising the country by ensuring more opportunities for people in the south and urban centres to the disadvantage of communities in the north and rural areas (Mfum- Mensah, 2009; Casely Hayford, 2000). Seen from this perspective, School for Life performs the role that the state is unable to perform. In some respects, it takes the pressure off the government, but more importantly it fulfils the aspirations of the people in ensuring that children in these deprived areas can access education (Mfum Mensah, 2009).

With the formal system not able to reach the underserved in Northern Ghana, there has been some advocacy for the government to begin to look at alternative or complementary models of providing access to basic education. Chief among these models is School for Life, which

started in 1995 and is implemented in a partnership between the Ghanaian NGO, Ghanaian Danish Communities Association (GDCA) and the Danish NGO Ghana Venskabsgrupperne i Danmark (GV). Sfl is a programme that works to achieve and sustain increases in functional literacy and in quality and equitable access to relevant basic education as a means for addressing the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and gender inequity in Northern Ghana. The programme offers a complementary approach to education that seeks to support the Ghana Education Service (GES) in its efforts at ensuring education for all” (School for Life, 2008).

**Figure 2.1: School for Life Operating Area**



SfL has been acclaimed both nationally and internationally as an effective model of CEP that is providing opportunities for children in marginalized communities to access formal education through an accelerated literacy and numeracy programme (DFID, 2012; Mfum-Mensah, 2011; Mfum-Mensah, 2009; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; Casely-Hayford and Ghartey, 2007; DeStefano et al, 2007; UNICEF, 2007). This study into its linkage with the formal sector in relation to curriculum content, teaching practices, and the learning experiences of School for Life graduates will be valuable to the on-going national debate on access to high quality basic education.

School for Life aims to achieve and sustain improvements in functional literacy, quality and equitable access to relevant basic education as means of addressing the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and gender inequity in northern Ghana (Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007). The programme complements the state system because it is designed to offer education to children in hard-to-reach communities and those who for socio-economic reasons do not have access to formal primary school. There are, however, instances in which the community and or parents opt for SfL even when they do have access to a formal sector basic school (Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007).

The SfL curriculum is based on meeting the requirements for literacy and numeracy in the first three years of formal education, and is delivered using child-centred, active learning and multi-grade pedagogy (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008). Volunteer facilitators who are literate in their mother tongue are recruited from and by the community to teach the course. These facilitators are given an initial three-week intensive training course, and follow-up teacher training workshops and support (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008).

Since pupils are taught in their mother tongue rather than in English, they are reputed to be more readily able to learn to read, write, and acquire some individual and social routines such as personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, good farming practice, and so forth (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008). To date, the programme has succeeded in enrolling in excess of 100,000 children, over 70% of whom have been integrated into the formal education sector (School for Life, 2010). Table 2.4 below illustrates the annual SfL enrolment and integration figures since 1995.

**Table 2.4: SfL Enrolment and transition Data**

<b>Cycle</b>	<b>No. of classes</b>	<b>No. enrolled</b>	<b>No. withdrawn</b>	<b>No. graduated</b>	<b>% graduated</b>	<b>No. integrated into formal school</b>	<b>% integrated into formal school</b>
<b>1995</b>	100	2,480	213	2,267	91	1,041	46
<b>1996</b>	100	2,431	170	2,261	93	1,075	48
<b>1997</b>	220	5,454	489	4,965	91	2,261	41
<b>1998</b>	250	6,143	573	5,570	91	2,882	52
<b>1999</b>	400	9,814	1,030	8,784	90	5,434	62
<b>2000</b>	400	9,925	964	8,961	90	6,291	70
<b>2001</b>	386	9,728	839	8,889	91	6,417	72
<b>2002</b>	361	9,102	525	8,577	94	7,079	83
<b>2003</b>	360	8,934	296	8,638	97	5,997	69
<b>2004</b>	440	10,959	373	10,586	97	8,596	81
<b>2005</b>	405	10,103	150	9,953	99	8,261	83
<b>2006</b>	370	9,225	99	9,126	99	6,770	74
<b>2007</b>	340	8,455	112	8,343	99	6,781	81
<b>2008</b>	280	6,988	157	6,830	98	6,213	91
<b>Total</b>	4,612	109,741	5,990	103,750		75,098	72

*Source: School for life.*

It is clear that the early years of the programme were comparatively less successful with regard to the integration of graduates into the formal sector; however, the latter five years saw consistently high numbers of learners proceeding to formal school. This could possibly be the result of initial challenges in the set-up of the programme and gaining acceptance from communities.

There is also evidence that since 2004, SfL has focused its efforts more on integration and mainstreaming. This has resulted in the programme being replicated through the USAID-funded Education Quality for All (EQUALL) project, which reached 26,000 children in nine districts; in addition, Partners in Participatory Development (PAPADEV) is also replicating SfL in Sawla District (Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007). However, while it is important to note the number of learners SfL has been able to reach, this study has been concerned with how and what they learn, and how this makes it possible for them to succeed in formal school.

SfL effectiveness has been attributed to the following:

- L1 medium of instruction



- Simple and effective methodology: use of syllabic and phonic methods in the teaching of literacy.
- A book ratio of one to one
- Ability of children to take books home
- Small class sizes (25 maximum)
- A high degree of monitoring, on-site supervision and training provided by programme administrators
- Flexible school hours adjusted to the needs of the community
- The commitment of SfL facilitators

(Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007)

The SfL curriculum and methodology have been described as child-centred, child-friendly and more responsive to assisting children master literacy and numeracy skills. Such a teaching approach has also been described as participatory, and as a method that allows learners the flexibility and opportunity to learn to read and write in their local language by the end of the nine-month cycle (Mfum-Mensah, 2011; Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007; Hartwell, 2007). Describing the SfL's curriculum development process, Mfum-Mensah (2011:358) notes that the aim of the curriculum was to “foster children's critical thinking by teaching them first about things they are familiar with and afterwards introduce new and unfamiliar things”. However, to provide an accurate description of the programme, it will be important to assess whether the above description of SfL applies to the planned, taught and/or received curriculum.

The SfL programme does not follow the national curriculum, which relies on both the Ghanaian languages and English as the media of instruction and includes seven subjects, one of which is a Ghanaian language. The SfL curriculum, on the other hand, is geared towards functional literacy and numeracy, which constitutes the application of achieved knowledge. This curriculum includes three areas of curriculum content only – literacy, numeracy and life skills (Hartwell, 2007). This arrangement begs the question of how the learners gain the ability to proceed to a system in which English is the main medium of instruction if they have no previous knowledge or experience of English.

Hartwell (2007) reports that in 2003, the GES randomly surveyed 367 pupils in 17 SfL classes in 8 districts. It was found that 51.8% read with comprehension, and wrote and calculated with mastery; 29.4% read and calculated well, but could write a few words only;

and 18.8% read and calculated with difficulty, and were not able to write properly at all. The conclusion of this survey was that 81.2% of SfL pupils had minimum competency in Ghanaian language literacy. When compared with the 2003 CRT, which indicated that only 8.7% of formal Primary 6 pupils had mastered English, this report gives some credence to the effectiveness of the SfL curriculum and its methodology.

Despite the interesting findings of this report and its relevance to the GES' goal of investigating effective CEP, the report cannot be considered conclusive. The two assessments are not comparable given that they are in different languages; and there is no evidence that the SfL survey was conducted with standardized testing items as is the case with the CRT. The report does not take into account the differences between the SfL curriculum and the formal school curriculum that may have led to the differences in success rates; rather, it assumes that curriculum and instruction were the same for the children taught in L1 and those taught in L2. Such gaps in the literature on the SfL programme make the present study most relevant.

It is reported that one of the most important elements of the success of SfL is its instruction in the local language, all materials and lessons being in the language of the local community. In contrast, at state school level, there is inconsistency between policy and practice around language and literacy instruction. While the official language policy states that the local language should be the medium of instruction "where feasible" (GoG, 2008), syllabi do not reflect this as they are based on English as the medium of instruction and English as the language that children should initially learn to read and write. To address this, the GES with funding from USAID introduced the National Literacy Acceleration programme (NALAP) in 2009. NALAP is intended to introduce literacy in one of the 11 official Ghanaian languages at the same time as oral English is introduced. It is tied to the Literacy Standards and Milestones and loosely to the syllabi for English and Ghanaian Language. However, research conducted so far, (Adger et al, 2010; USAID, 2011) show that it is not being implemented as intended. NALAP is discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

On the other hand, it has been reported that the SfL approach demonstrates that the use of mother-tongue instruction accelerates literacy acquisition and makes early learning interesting and long lasting (Casely-Hayford and Ghartey, 2007; Hartwell, 2007). The SfL curriculum content therefore may well be more meaningful than that of the formal school in that the former preserves coherence of functional themes in the local context.

All the positive reviews of the curriculum and effectiveness of the SfL programme notwithstanding, there has been very little formal or independent research that is able to assess the programme alongside that of the state basic education system. This is because most of the available data on SfL is open to accusations of bias, given that it tends to originate from the studies of other NGOs that are inclined towards advocacy for this model.

If the SfL curriculum is as effective as it is claimed to be, there is a need for more objective empirical information on how it enables graduates to transfer to and thrive in formal school. It is also critical to understand the theoretical foundation of education delivery in Ghana, and the teaching and learning principles that SfL and the formal school respectively are based upon. This will shed light on the policy and practice interface of the two systems, and illuminate linkages between planned and received curricula that may be relevant in comparing them.

## **2.5. Summary**

By outlining and exploring the context of the study, this chapter gives an understanding of School for Life's Complementary Education Programme and how it interfaces with the formal school system while offering children a real opportunity to learn. The issues raised in this chapter as challenges to the formal primary sector that give rise to a need for the implementation of complementary education in Northern Ghana are predicated on certain education theories and concepts, as well as on economics. These theories and concepts, which are discussed in the next chapter, serve to conceptually frame this study.

## **Chapter 3: The Theoretical Context of the Study**

### **3.0. Theoretical Context of Research**

In undertaking this study, it has become necessary to review and interrogate the prevailing literature and theories that are relevant to it. Section one of this chapter begins the review with an attempt to unravel the concept of social constructivism as it relates to teaching and learning, which becomes the theoretical framework guiding this research because of its prominence in current understandings of how people learn. In discussing social constructivism and its application to this research, it becomes germane to discuss theories around language of instruction, critical pedagogies and literacy instruction in Sub-Saharan Africa. These three subtopics are discussed in sections two, three and four.

Further, since the key research questions relate to the SfL curriculum and how it prepares learners to enrol and perform in the formal school, it has been necessary to review the prevailing literature on models of curriculum development and implementation, which appears in section five. There is a need to delineate what is meant by the term *curriculum* as used in this thesis. The best way to meet this need is to review the literature concerning the different conceptualizations and usages of the term, and derive from the review a model of the curriculum that suits the needs of the present study. This implies looking at the curriculum as planned, implemented and attained. Section six discusses the local and cultural relevance of the curriculum. This is followed by the conceptual framework that guides this study and chapter summary.

This theoretical review is important in that it frames, conceptually and methodologically, the investigation of the necessary prerequisites for meaningful access to education, curriculum analysis and effective teaching and learning. The task in this chapter is to draw on the wider discourses of social constructivism and curriculum studies to develop a better understanding of meaningful access to education. This in turn identifies issues which are the focus of the empirical parts of this study.

### **3.1. Learning as Construction: Social Constructivism**

Social constructivism is based on the principles expounded first by Vygotsky (1987), who pointed out that a child's intellectual development cannot be considered in a social vacuum. Interactions with the child's classmates, friends and parents must be taken into account if a realistic picture is to be painted. Cognitive development takes place as a result of mutual interaction between the child and those people with whom he or she has regular social contact (Pound, 2008; Sutherland, 1992; Vygotsky, 1987). Thus in the view of social constructivists - scholars who have adopted and built on Vygotsky's insights – learning is a social process. Knowledge is neither passively received from the environment nor acquired by discovering an independent pre-existing world outside the mind of the knower (Altinyelken, 2010; Kilpatrick, 1987; von Glasersfeld, 1988; Vygotsky, 1987). In this view, "knowledge schemas (structures)" (Skemp, 1989) have to be constructed by every individual learner in his or her own mind from personal experiences and from social interaction. No one can do that directly for the learner. Furthermore, what is learned through new experiences and interactions depends on the learner's existing knowledge schemas as it is these which determine what is perceived as relevant in a situation and therefore observed.

To reiterate, constructivism is based on the principle that knowledge and understanding are acquired through the construction of mental processes by individuals out of current exposure and based on previous experience. Thus, "information is built into and added onto an individual's current structure of knowledge, understanding and skills. We learn best when we actively construct our own understanding" (Pritchard, 2009: 17).

Perelley (1988) asserts that this constructivist view emphasises three interrelated elements of learning:

First, learning is a process of knowledge construction. Second, people use ... available knowledge to construct new knowledge. Third, learning is highly tuned to the ... situation in which it takes place (Perelley, 1988:875).

The first element suggests that effective learning depends on the intentions, interpretations, self-monitoring, elaborations and representational constructions of the individual learner. The second suggests that what is learned depends on elaboration and extension of prior knowledge. Thus the prior experiences of the learner become the foundation upon which new construction of knowledge is built. Writing on experiential learning, Kolb (1984) regards

education as a social process that is based on carefully cultivated experience. Kolb argues that learning from experience is a natural human development process.

Perelley's second point suggests that individuals learn by using what they already know to construct new knowledge. Thus when teaching is based on the experiences of the learner, there is a strong possibility of achieving favourable results. Effective learning is that which is lasting and provides the pupil with knowledge and skills that can be applied to different situations and contexts (Pritchard, 2009). In other words, it provides the basis for constructing new knowledge. In this regard, Skemp (1989) contends that good teaching can greatly help and the more abstract and hierarchical the knowledge schemas that are to be built, the more this help is needed.

The last of the elements - the notion that learning is tuned to the situation - suggests that knowledge is retained in a meaningful and stable way if it is embedded within the participants' social structure or life situation. In other words, skills and knowledge are not independent of the context in which they are acquired, used and practised. This notion is sometimes called "situated learning." Thus it is not enough to look at the cognitive dimension of learning but to situate what is happening cognitively within a social space and time (Daniels, 1993; Lave and Wenger, 1991).

In social constructivism, learning is effective if there is co-participation of the actors (learners and teachers). This does not happen only in the heads of the individuals. The use of language and its significance and meaning in the learning process can only be made more meaningful when placed in a social context. This implies a highly interactive and productive role for the skills acquired through the learning process (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Lave and Wenger (1991) also contend that

Learning viewed as situated activity has as its central defining characteristics ----- learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skills requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the socio cultural practices of a community (p29)

A key principle of situated learning is that if teaching takes place in a familiar cultural or social context there is more likelihood that actual learning will take place. Alexander (2000) notes that ignoring the culture in teaching and learning

encourages the view that pedagogy carries no educational messages or values in itself but is merely a value-neutral vehicle for transmitting curricular content; and it discourages vital questions about the importance of fit between the pedagogy, the

children being taught, the knowledge domains from which curriculum experiences are drawn. Effective teaching arises from attention to cultural, psychological, epistemological and situational considerations, not merely organisational and technical considerations (p 30).

Wertsch and Bustamante (1993) confirm this notion by noting that in Vygotsky's opinion, "the social dimension of consciousness is primary in time and in fact" (p69). Social constructivist theory thus prioritises sociality and socialisation. This socialisation in learning is achieved through the mediation of various cultural artefacts (Daniels, 2008; Wertsch, 1985). Daniels (2008) notes that the mediation process that ensures social construction and the development of the individual is based on the primacy of the social. In this vein, the child's "social and psychological processes are fundamentally shaped by the mediational means, especially the language they employ" (Wertsch and Bustamante, 1993:70).

Thus, if lessons are based on children's previous experiences, the local context, and local practices, there is a greater incentive to learn. Children have a great deal to offer to the process of constructing knowledge (Giroux, 1989). On the other hand, if lessons are abstract – as is often the case with the formal school – if the language of instruction is alien to learners and the curriculum is at best generalized, and at worst incomprehensible, learning will probably not take place because it is not situated appropriately. Pritchard (2009) contends that learning is a process of interaction between what is known and what is to be discovered; it is a social process and a situated process.

Intervention research conducted from a social constructivist perspective addresses the manner in which school learning activities can be restructured to allow pupils to acquire academic knowledge (scientific concepts) by building on the foundation of personal experience (everyday concepts). Or conversely, pupils may gain insights into their own lives through the application of academic knowledge if the academic knowledge is connected to their situation. The education of the child must therefore be linked to the culture of the child. The environment in which the education takes place and the immediate relevance of said education are also critical in applying this theory.

Social constructivism thus touches all aspects of teaching and learning relevant to this study: the relevance of the curriculum, the role of the teacher, the role of language in learning, the activities of children in the learning process and the culture's influence on children's

learning. The next section discusses the critical issue of language of instruction in formal education.

### **3.2. Language of Instruction or Education**

This section discusses the literature related to the theories, policies and practices of language in education in Ghana and sub Saharan Africa. The social constructivist theories present language “as enormously important in the way children become more cognitively sophisticated as it is in their increase in social affection. This is because language is the means through which children and adults systematise their perceptions” (Gadotti, 1994: 119). Thus it is through the use of language that children’s thinking skills are developed, manifested and at the same time expressed in their relationships with and understanding of the wider society. Alexander (2000) affirms the powerful role of language in shaping what is distinctive about teaching and learning in a particular country especially given the fact that the first years and system of primary education are a “particularly potent arena for cultural transmission and socialization, and . . . it is [in] the discourse between teacher and pupils that education is done or fails to be done” (p5).

In social constructivism, emphasis is placed on the interaction of the learner with the social environment. Learning is effective when it takes place in an interactive environment, builds on existing knowledge, and involves interactive dialogue (Vygotsky 1987). The classroom language of interaction is critical in this process. Existing knowledge is also of fundamental importance as it is this knowledge that is built upon to ensure that effective learning takes place. Vygotsky (1987) affirms the importance of language in the cognitive development of the child by noting its linkage with the culture and social setting within which a child grows. He notes that culture is learnt, passed down, through language. He says that the structures of speech are internalised and become the way in which we learn to think. Thus in multilingual sub-Saharan Africa with foreign language education and curriculum, effective teaching and learning should be predicated on the first language of the child. However, this is not the case in a number of countries including Ghana.

Chapter 2 noted that Ghana is a multi-lingual country with over 50 languages. Of these, only 11 are classified as official Ghanaian languages to be used in the formal school system. But since colonial times through post-independence to the present, selection of the language of



instruction in the Ghana education system—either English or one of the 11 Ghanaian languages—has been inconsistent and varied at best (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009; Prah, 2009).

The language of instruction policy during the colonial era was mixed, utilising both English and the local languages in the primary schools. Post-independence Africa including Ghana has continued this policy of local language instruction with a foreign language, albeit inconsistently. In Ghana, for instance, the language policy is always a politically charged affair. The decision to use the English Language or a Ghanaian Language as the language of instruction in schools has been made not on educational grounds alone, and it is always met with mistrust and misunderstanding from sections of the community without consideration for the good of the learners. However, what happens is that in a number of African countries including Ghana, there is no clear, unambiguous language policy, and there is always a gap between the policy and practice (Dickinson et al, 2010; Pinnock, 2009; Hawes, 1979).

Opoku-Amankwa (2009) notes that:

From 1971 up until 2002, the language-in-education policy in Ghana was generally that the main Ghanaian languages provided for in the curricula of basic schools should be used as the medium of instruction in the first three years of the primary course and, where possible, in the next three years as well (p122)

Thus while the policy makes provision for the local language to be used in the first three years of primary education, there is no prescription for how subsequent years of primary education will be delivered. There is therefore a leaning towards what is generally referred to as early exit local language instruction (Qorro, 2009). Meanwhile, research suggests that this early exit model has not been effective across Africa or elsewhere (Prah, 2009; Qorro, 2009). Writing on the language of education in Tanzania, Qorro (2009) indicates that teachers and children always have difficulty in expressing themselves in the English language resulting in poor performance not only in the subject matter but also in the foreign language. She thus advocates for English to be directly taught as a second or additional language by experts trained for that purpose as the wider school curriculum is implemented in the local language. Pinnock (2009:8) affirms this when she notes that

Teaching through a language which a child does not already know well also fails to give children adequate skills in that language, despite being intended to do so. These problems can be addressed successfully by providing at least six years of mother tongue education, with gradual introduction of other languages from an early stage.

Over the years, language policy in Ghana has fluctuated. It was revised in 2002 making English the only medium of instruction in all primary schools (MOE, 2002; Opoku-Amankwa, 2009). The new Education Reforms in 2008 however reverted the policy making Ghanaian Language the medium of instruction from primary 1 to 3 and English language the medium of instruction thereafter (GOG, 2008). Even then, the wording in the policy does not make it a commitment of the state to ensure that Ghanaian language is used. The policy states that the Ghanaian language will be used as the medium of instruction “where feasible” (GOG, 2008). Thus this leaves the door open for different types of interpretation and implementation models to the disadvantage of the Ghanaian child.

Hawes (1979) notes that regardless of the swings and ambiguity in language policy, it is commonplace for schools and teachers to choose their own language of communication and instruction, either explicitly or implicitly. This is borne out of pure necessity. This choice may be influenced by the official policy, the community’s language attitudes and of course the need to make meaning in the teacher/pupil interaction. As Hawes (1979: 111) notes, the practical decision on actual language choice in the school will be determined by “ease of communication: what language the teacher can teach and what language the children can best understand”. Thus all sorts of patterns may emerge with a particular school utilising different policies and in some cases lessons being taught in more than two languages (Hawes, 1979).

An important element in the language of instruction issue is the status of English. A number of studies discuss the belief that is common among policy officials, parents and communities that learning in English or the foreign language is the key to prestige and economic empowerment (Posel and Casale, 2011; Brock-Utne, 2010; Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009; Qorro 2009; Prah, 2009; Trudell, 2009). Opoku-Amankwa (2009) posits that Ghanaian parents are of the view that the purpose of education is to learn to speak and write in English. Brock-Utne (2010) agrees: “education means primarily learning English for many Africans in the so-called Anglophone Africa. This includes parents and students as well as African governments” (p641). Despite strong evidence that children learn better when they are taught in their local languages, parents still support an English-only instruction. Reasons include distrust of policy developers and donor or foreign experts, and the government’s attempts to bridge the urban/rural divide and create a classless society. Trudell (2009) notes that:

Parents and teachers demonstrate keen awareness of the potential for enhanced learning which use of the local language offers; nevertheless, that advantage is often

outweighed by the prestige and perceived value of the international language as used in the classroom (p553).

Certainly the value of learning an international language cannot be contested, and that is the case in Ghana with regard to English. However, children are far more likely to pick up another (second) language if it is highly present in their daily lives, enabling them to acquire and practice this language through observation and interaction. Few Ghanaian children live in a language environment that would enable them to acquire English naturally. Learning a second language through schooling alone is likely to be much more difficult than acquiring it through daily interaction because the language is not highly present and children have limited opportunities to practice it (Pinnock, 2009; Hawes 1979).

In addition to the inconsistency in the language policy and supposed pressure from communities and parents, there is also evidence that implementation of the language policy is plagued by lack of official support and a disconnect between the language policy and teacher training, deployment, and curriculum development. While many parents are of the opinion that the best way to deliver quality education is through an English-language medium, which is a misconception, it should be the task of the Ministry of Education to explain this misconception to the public, not to build a policy on it (Brock-Utne 2010).

This situation in Ghana is consistent with other African former colonies. Trudell (2009) points out that

Even when African states do express official agreement with the goals of local language education, the necessary material or institutional support is not always available for successful implementation of such programmes. Many local language-medium programmes in African schools are plagued by implementational problems such as curricula that are ill adapted to the use of local languages, insufficient teacher training and inadequate provision of materials in the local languages (p553)

The negative implications of such policy can be seen both at the community level and in how children develop critical thinking skills, or fail to do so. Trudell (2009) notes that making the colonial or foreign language the standard through which success or education is determined tends to devalue the culture of the people and makes communities accept their language and culture as inferior, thereby eroding national confidence. “Much of that cultural cost lies in the divide in language and culture that grows between educated children and their communities of origin” (Trudell, 2009:555).

### **3.2.1. Implications of Language of Instruction Policy**

The lack of consistency in and support for an effective language policy that ensures that children learn in the language that they are most familiar with obviously creates a lot of challenges in the education sector. Principal among them is the fact that very little learning takes place as seen in the results of the Ghana NEA presented in chapter 2 above, simply because children are not being educated consistently in a language they can understand.

Pinnock (2009) states that the language of instruction is the critical factor in low achievement of learners across the developing world especially in the many situations where the children do not use the school language at home. Pinnock (2009) cites a number of studies to confirm this assertion – including the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), a test of mathematics and science ability conducted in 36 countries at Grade 4 and 48 countries at Grade 8; assessments from the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ II) from 2000 to 2002; and data from the Young Lives Project which offers further insights into the role language plays in inequality of education outcomes in Ethiopia, India, Peru and Vietnam. These assessments consistently show that teaching children in a language they do not use at home and in their daily lives results in poor performance in literacy, numeracy and other areas of learning (Pinnock, 2009; Alidou et al, 2006).

A number of researchers have pointed to the ill effects of the focus on English. Posel and Casale (2011) note that parents want their children to study English because of the perceived returns in the labour market, but there is enough evidence to show that an English-language medium education is always counterproductive when children have very little exposure to the English language. They note that:

Pupils have little exposure to English in their home environment; teachers themselves may not be English language proficient; and classes frequently are taught in a combination of an African mother tongue and English although students are assessed in English. Furthermore, many studies suggest that children need to be proficient in reading and writing in their home language first before they can become proficient in English and before they can translate conceptual concepts into a second language (p449)

The Qorro (2009) study points out that in Tanzania students generally do not have access to English. Thus making it the language of instruction hinders the delivery of quality education. When English is used, the interaction between the teacher and learners which is supposed to

lead to a construction of knowledge is limited as the learners cannot communicate effectively in the foreign language. In his study on the language policy in Ghana, Opoku-Amankwa found that as a result of the English medium of instruction, the classroom talk and interaction was teacher centred

as many pupils are unable to communicate fluently in English, the medium of instruction. Pupils' responses were largely praises as they clapped for their classmates who answered correctly and choruses ... Indeed, it can be argued that participants in our case study school are colluding in an elaborate pretence: the teacher pretends to be teaching and the pupils pretend to be learning (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009:128-130).

Opoku-Amankwa (2009) concludes that an effective language of instruction is critical in ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning and "the language of communication in the classroom is vital for the achievement of literacy and learning goals" (p132). The language of instruction policy or lack of policy thus becomes one of the vexing barriers to effective schooling in Ghana (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009).

If formal education is to ensure that children build the necessary knowledge and skills needed to be productive, then surely it must be delivered in a medium that children and teachers can use in building knowledge. It is only through the utilisation of a familiar language that teachers and learners can construct knowledge in the classroom. Broadly, children learn best in the language that they use most expertly, most often and at home. In the constructivist view, they build their understanding of the world based on linking new concepts into what is already familiar to them. Pinnock (2009), however, cautions that a local language of instruction will not automatically guarantee success in children's learning. She notes that

It is important to highlight that quality learning outcomes will not automatically be achieved if children are taught in their first language. However, if other components of quality education are receiving investment and are improving, but the language of teaching is unfamiliar to the child, the evidence indicates that the effect of other quality improvements will be significantly weakened. Where the other elements of quality education are not in place, an unfamiliar school language is likely to significantly reduce the scope for learning (p18)

The language situation in schools has implications for literacy acquisition and learning achievement in the primary level of schooling. The language of instruction is therefore critical in determining whether the education is teacher-centred or learner-centred and whether children learn to read meaningfully in school. This study thus investigates and discusses the use of the local language instruction in the development and implementation of

the curricula of School for Life and the formal primary school. The study shows how School for Life uses local language to accelerate learning and to ensure that learners acquire literacy skills that ease their integration into formal school. At the same time the use of language in the formal school is discussed to throw light on how the formal school language of instruction policy is manifested and its impact on curriculum implementation and pupil learning.

Language choice is integral to how knowledge is socially constructed in the classroom through meaningful dialogue and how children make meaning out of the curriculum materials through reading. The matter of language choice at school is especially important to teaching reading, since oral language development is essential to learning how to read. The next section discusses literacy instruction.

### **3.3. Literacy Instruction**

Sutherland (1992) notes that once a child starts formal schooling, reading becomes the most important cognitive challenge. The nature of this challenge has been characterized in different ways, but social constructivism has been quite influential. According to this paradigm, learning to read involves the child in repeatedly interacting with text. The child must not simply decode mechanically - representing the written text orally - but he or she must bring to bear knowledge of the world and an emerging capacity to handle text in order to interpret its meaning. Getting meaning from text always involves interacting with it in order to draw inferences. Through repeated experiences with text, and with guidance from the teacher, the child gradually internalises the reading process. In a similar vein, Gadotti (1994) notes that for Freire,

the process of literacy is an act of creation of knowledge. . . . It is essential that the pupil assume the position of someone who is concretely apprehending the object in order to learn the object. There will be no significant learning if the pupil fails to establish a relationship with the object (p24).

Such sociocultural understandings of the reading process have influenced literacy instruction. Citing Hickman (1985), Sutherland (1992) notes that Vygotskian principles underlie instructional approaches used in children's early reading programmes such as picture reading, in which the reader draws inferences from illustrations and later uses them in comprehending

text, and the language experience approach, in which children generate texts based on their experience and the teacher writes them.

In order to learn to read, children have to be taught directly. The American National Reading Panel (NRP) presents a research synthesis on the five skills that children need to be taught in order to master the rudiments of reading: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Comprehension and Vocabulary (Adu-Yeboah, 2011; Akeampong et al, 2011; NRP, 2000). Akyeampong et al. (2011) assert that

. . . these five reading skills are soon orchestrated simultaneously, working together in a causal relationship . . . although there is some difference of agreement among experts in terms of emphasis (p24).

It is important to note that the NRP report was based on teaching reading to children with English as their first language. There is however a consensus in the literature (Dubeck et al, 2012; Akyeampong et al, 2011) that the principles espoused in this report for effective literacy instruction are applicable to the African context if children learn to read in a language they know. They are also relevant for teaching children to read a second language that they are learning. However, learning to read that second language is more efficient if children have already learned how to read in their own language.

Various strategies are recommended for effective literacy instruction. Some way of teaching children to produce the oral version of what appears on the page is an essential element. Alternatives include phonics (learning the relationship between letters and sounds, and ways of blending them in order to “sound out” print) and look and say, also called whole word (acquiring knowledge of individual words, especially such “sight words” as those English words that cannot be sounded out, such as *the* and *sight*). Whole word language instruction encourages students to select their own reading material and emphasizes recognizing words in context. It is not uncommon to find teachers using a combination of these approaches in classrooms.

Dubeck et al. (2012:49), however, note that

the most effective beginning reading instruction includes phonics [and] emphasizes meaning, language, and connected text. This practice is sometimes called a *balanced approach*

O’Sullivan (2003) notes that the current trend seems to be the use of an eclectic approach, encompassing a variety of strategies within “bottom-up and top-down” approaches. The

former focuses on developing children's word recognition skills, using mainly look-and-say and phonics strategies while the latter consists of extended reading utilising context and pictures (O'Sullivan, 2003). Children need to have knowledge of phonics to enable them develop skills to tackle new words and decode them accordingly. There is a strong relationship between children and individual's ability to decipher phonemes and syllables and the ability to read words and extended sentences. The look and say approach to reading has also been seen to be relevant and expedient in teaching words as they occur in sentences and on their own. However, this approach is more useful when children are learning to read in their own language and so are familiar with the words and how they are used. Equally important in this regard is the enlargement of children's vocabulary through oral practice which eventually leads to children being able to comprehend texts. In addition to teaching sound-to-symbol relationships and vocabulary, teaching phonological awareness and comprehension strategies, as well as encouraging fluent reading have been shown to reduce reading difficulties and increase reading achievement in the United States (NRP, 2000).

As managers of the curriculum, teachers have options as to which approaches they use in literacy instruction. A number of factors come into play when teachers decide how to teach literacy. These may depend on the interests of the teacher, the teacher's familiarity with the approaches, the official policy or mandate, or the most convenient method (Dubeck et al., 2012).

Teachers who understand the way reading develops can offer explicit and systematic instruction to their students. Explicit means that the concept is directly taught and modeled so the student does not have to infer what the teacher means. Systematic instruction progresses in a sequence moving from easiest to most difficult. Although a balanced approach to literacy instruction is recommended, one component of it—teaching the relationship between sounds and symbols (i.e. letters)—is essential for preventing reading difficulties (Dubeck et al., 2012: 49).

A critical point that needs to be emphasised is the role of language in literacy instruction and acquisition. There is consensus in the literature that the key determinant of learning to read is mastery over the language of instruction and the learner's repertoire of vocabulary in the language of instruction that will assist in the construction of meaning. Regardless of the strategy used, if the learner does not have sufficient mastery of the language of literacy it will be difficult for literacy instruction to achieve its purpose (Dubeck et al, 2012; Akyeampong et al, 2011; Dickinson et al., 2010; Pearson and Herbert, 2010; Trudell, 2009). Language thus becomes an underlying factor. It is both the essence of text and the medium through which



literacy is acquired (Dickinson et al., 2010). The implication of this assertion for multilingual African classrooms is that literacy instruction should be delivered in the local or first language of the learner. When children acquire literacy in their own language, it is then possible to transfer essential literacy skills to the second or foreign language. There is evidence that children cannot be satisfactorily taught to read in two languages at the same time. They will be better English readers if they learn to speak that language first and are taught to read it after they have mastered reading skills in their mother tongue (Dubeck et al, 2012; Akyeampong et al, 2011; Trudell, 2009). Hawes (1979) asserts that

Mastery of the code of reading is intimately bound up with oral competence in a language. Once the code is mastered it is relatively easy to transfer the skill to another language. But to learn to read in a language where the spoken word is not well understood is to invite pseudo-literacy of the kind so painfully apparent in many countries (79-81).

In the previous section, it was noted that the lack of a clear and effective language of instruction policy that prioritises the use of local languages has obvious implication for the teaching and acquisition of literacy across Africa. The lack of a coherent local language policy coupled with limited access to print or reading materials and ineffective teacher training all account for the low literacy levels being reported across Sub-Saharan Africa (Dubeck et al, 2012; O’Sullivan, 2003).

The above language and literacy issues are all relevant to the current study particularly because it is suggested that one of the important characteristics of the SfL programme is its local language literacy instruction (Casely-Hayford and Adom Gharthey, 2007; Hartwell; 2007). Equally important is the fact that one of the core objectives of the formal school curriculum is children acquiring literacy (GoG, 2008; GES, 2007a). The study thus discusses how literacy instruction is developed and delivered in SfL compared to the formal school; how local literacy skills assist SfL graduates to perform in formal school; and the lessons that can be learned from SfL to impact on formal school literacy instruction.

### **3.4. Critical Pedagogy**

Another essential theoretical perspective for addressing the research questions concerns pedagogy, since understanding of the pedagogy utilised in the two programmes under study is crucial in social constructivist research. Discussions related to pedagogical renewal and reform have been going on in Sub-Saharan Africa since independence from colonial rule.

(Altinyeken, 2010; Tabulawa, 2010). Post the EFA and MDGs, a number of African countries with the support of Western donor and bilateral agencies have initiated reforms aimed at promoting a new approach to teaching and learning (Altinyeken, 2010; Tabulawa, 2010; Elliott and Grigorenko, 2007; Dembele and Lefoka, 2007; Akyeampong et al., 2006; O'Sullivan, 2004; Tabulawa, 1997). The new approach has been termed as learner-centred or learning-centred education. In current research on pedagogical renewal or reform in Africa, the term learner-centred education is used almost interchangeably with child-centred education, participatory education, discovery-based learning, critical teaching and learning, inquiry-based teaching and learning, and outcomes-based education (Altinyeken, 2010; Tabulawa, 2010; Akyeampong et al, 2006; O'Sullivan, 2004). Tabulawa (2010) posits that these pedagogical approaches are all strands of the same pedagogical paradigm. They differ from each other only in so far as they posit different degrees of autonomy for the learner. They are however united by four common principles: a shift from the formal, rigid and traditional teacher centred approach of the 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century education introduced by the missionaries; emphasis on activity of children as central to the teaching and learning process; the centrality of the learner in the educational process; and a common epistemological foundation, which is social constructivism.

Learner-centred education stems from the theory of social constructivism discussed above, which views knowledge as socially constructed, education as a social process, and teaching and learning as social interaction with the child an active participant, not a passive recipient of knowledge (Altinyeken, 2010; Tabulawea, 2010). Whereas Piaget's theories of human development focused on the child, Vygotsky focused more on the teacher and the teacher's role in the social interaction of learning. Vygotsky saw activity by the children as central to education and the teacher as an interventionist who supports the child through the *zone of proximal development*, which lies just beyond the domain in which the child has achieved competence-challenging the child toward his or her full potential (Pound, 2008; Glassman, 2001; Davydov, 1995; Sutherland, 1992). The teacher thus scaffolds the child toward competence in any skill.

The major role that this theoretical perspective ascribes to the teacher is that of an inductor or 'guide'. As a facilitator, the teacher's role crucially involves the creation of opportunities for pupils to actively engage in tasks that enable them to inquire or investigate principles being learned. The teacher's role also includes providing a supportive learning environment and offering appropriate learning challenges. The latter requires the use of activities that are open

and less structured and involve the use of pupils' own procedures or methods. Such activities are often presented in problem situations and they enable pupils to encounter learning through intellectual strategies like relationship or pattern searching and experimentation; formulation and testing conjectures about relationships; and formulation of explanations for observed rules (Jeffrey, 1978).

Social constructivism also envisages that effective education can only be applicable when the school links up with the home, there is a meeting of the teacher's mind with that of the child and the informal education that takes place in the community becomes a starting point for the formal education of the school (Glassman, 2001; Davydov, 1995; Sutherland, 1992). Social constructivism calls for teaching methods which appear to diminish the direct teaching role and authority of the teacher. In other words, constructivism calls for teachers to move away from traditional teaching methods. This approach has come to be referred to as critical teaching or learner-centred education. The two terms are used interchangeably in this thesis.

Critical teaching is seen as teaching “situated in the right context or environment, drawing on local knowledge and analogies that register with learners. It is also imperative for the teacher to believe that learners do not come empty and both teachers and learners share and produce knowledge in the classroom” (Sefa Dei, 2004:90). Giroux (1989: 165)) posits that

Critical pedagogy...is fundamentally concerned with student experiences, it takes the problems and the needs of the students themselves as a starting point. This suggests both confirming and legitimating the knowledge and experience through which students give meaning to their lives.

This approach to teaching and learning has become a prevailing item in education development in sub-Saharan Africa (Schweisfurth 2011; Mtika and Gates, 2010; Tabulawa, 1997; Akyeampong et al, 2006; Harley et al, 2000). While it is not a completely novel idea, learner-centred education is being seen more and more as enjoying “wide donor support through aid programmes and smaller projects and localised innovations” (Schweisfurth 2011:425). Mtika and Gates (2010:397) note that the approach is an “effective answer to the dominance of a transmissive teacher-centred education, which is blamed for leading to rote-learning and stifling critical and creative thinking among pupils”.

Learner-centred education and critical teaching involves the teacher in working with pupils, guiding them to create and interact with knowledge rather than regurgitating information from rote learning. (Schweisfurth 2011; Mtika and Gates, 2010). Critical teaching challenges

the learner to create linkages between instruction and learning. Learners are then able to move from the mere regurgitation of facts to a “critical analysis of social and political construction of knowledge” (Sefa Dei, 2004:91).

Critical teaching allows learners to utilise their own creative instinct and resourcefulness to analyse and appreciate relevant information as they create knowledge. Critical teaching cannot therefore be separated from the issues of power relations in the education process. The learning process allows for appreciating the dynamics of power in the classroom situation both in the content of the curriculum and the methodology of transmission. With the sharing of power between the teacher and the learner that occurs when education is a social process, there are differential learning outcomes (Sefa Dei, 2004; Giroux, 1989; Gadotti, 1994; Freire, 1970).

Shifting the role of the teacher to facilitator denies the transmission metaphor of teaching and the corresponding reception metaphor of learning. Teachers who see their roles largely as facilitators of learning believe that the goal of teaching is not only to enable pupils to acquire knowledge of a collection of concepts and skills, but also to enable them to engage with that knowledge in order to think for themselves and become good problem solvers and problem posers (Gadotti, 1994; Giroux, 1989; Freire, 1970).

Learner-centred education makes a considerably greater demand on teachers than the methods that many African teachers are used to. However, implementing learner centred education reforms comes with a lot of challenges. One of them is that it may be difficult to reconcile the results achieved with the amount of donor funds that have gone into supporting this approach to teaching and learning (Schweisfurth 2011; Tabulawa, 2010; Altinyelken, 2010; Akyeampong et al, 2006; Tabulawa, 1997). The challenges for learner-centred education reforms in Sub Saharan Africa are discussed below.

#### **3.4.1. Challenges to Learner Centred Education**

Learner-centred education has epistemological, philosophical and social foundations (Tabulawa, 2010). Thus the approach is value laden. However, the approach is typically presented as value neutral when it is prescribed, financed and enforced by foreign donors. Typically, it is presented as a one size fits all without taking cognisance of the context of the African classrooms and their teaching and learning participants. Thus learner-centred reforms

have been met with a lot of resistance in African classrooms and there is very little to show for all the resources that have been invested in pedagogical reforms across Sub Saharan Africa (Schweisfurth 2011; Tabulawa, 2010; Altinyelken, 2010; Akyeampong et al., 2006; O’Sullivan, 2004).

One of the problems of introducing teaching methods that favour constructivism, according to Orton (1996), is that we all, to a greater or lesser extent, live within a cultural milieu which encourages the view that the teacher is the authority and the ultimate source of knowledge and wisdom, at least within school. Moreover, teachers are generally conservative with regard to curricular change. They have been found to be most receptive to proposals for change that fit with current classroom procedures and do not cause major disruptions (Doyle and Ponder, 1977). Teachers are generally slow to respond to change because they normally find it safe to use methods that are consistent with their views or beliefs about the nature of teaching and learning. Teachers will not be happy to implement recommendations of an official curriculum document if there is a wide gap between their conceptions of the nature of teaching and how it is learned and the models of teaching and learning underpinning the intended curriculum. Furthermore, in most developing countries, limited resources make the task of asking the teacher to respond to changes in classroom teaching methods not impossible but very difficult (Beeby, 1966).

Mtika and Gates (2010) list a number of other factors that work against effective implementation of learner-centred education reforms in developing countries. In Malawi, they found that the principal factors hindering the implementation of learner-centred education were the culture of the school, teachers’ training, the culture of the pupils and classroom structures. They note that teachers being trained in new approaches find themselves conflicted when they have to confront the theory and practice interface. The teachers themselves do not have any experience of being beneficiaries of learner-centred education, neither through their own schooling experience nor their training experience. This confirms Beeby’s (1966:44) assertion that in developing countries, teachers “are the prisoners of their own narrow experience.” Mtika and Gates also found that the schools’ existing pedagogical cultures serve as stumbling blocks to teachers who have been trained in new approaches to teaching and learning. Newly trained teachers usually have to conform to the existing school culture which is by and large teacher-centred. These coupled with the culture of the pupils who are more inclined to obey instruction rather than participate in an inquiry based learning activity, and the existing school infrastructure and resource constraints all

combine to ensure that learner-centred approaches are typically not implemented with any degree of seriousness and effectiveness.

In Botswana, Tabulawa (1997) sees the introduction of learner-centred education as an attempt to engineer a complete paradigm shift in the orientation of teachers. He posits that reforms have not been successful because they do not factor in the socio historical origins of education and the teaching paradigm that it represents. He notes that:

It is of the utmost significance to understand that the pedagogical suggestions ... were effectively a request for teachers to make a paradigm shift from the banking education pedagogical paradigm [the notion that information is acquired and stored up] to the learner centred pedagogical paradigm. It should, however, be noted from the onset that these two pedagogical paradigms are fundamentally different because they are founded upon incongruent epistemological assumptions (p191).

He traces the history of education development in Botswana and concludes that formal education was primarily a colonial and missionary tool geared towards subordination of the colonised. Since “education was for subordination and domination, it was authoritarian in practice” and teacher-centred (p194). He affirms that:

the nineteenth- and twentieth-century schooling model was bureaucratic and authoritarian in style, based on a deficit system conception of the child and on the objectivist, rationalist epistemology. Such then was the nature of the educational model that was exported, not only to Botswana, but also to many other African countries, by the missionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (p194).

This paradigm coupled with the traditional hierarchical culture of the local people served to ensure that teaching in formal school retained a teacher centred characteristic that cannot be easily done away with without a proper understanding of the social context. Teachers continue to see their roles as imparting knowledge while students see their roles as receiving knowledge. This is an entrenched mental orientation that takes time to unravel and must be addressed in its relevant social context.

The challenges to learner centred education are myriad. Yet, the School for Life programme has been reported to utilise learner-centred instructional practices to facilitate teaching and learning. The GES also encourages teachers in formal school to utilise this approach but acknowledges the challenges in implementing learner-centred pedagogy. This study will therefore investigate how SfL is implementing learner-centred instruction and how it has been able to overcome the challenges inherent in post-colonial Africa’s attempt at teaching

and learning paradigm shift. The next section turns from pedagogy to the school curriculum, a concept that has been discussed and defined variously.

### **3.5. The term *Curriculum***

We appear to be confronted by two different views of curriculum. On the one hand the curriculum is seen as an intention, plan or prescription, an idea about what one will like to happen in schools. On the other, it is seen as the existing state of affairs in schools, what does, in fact happen (Stenhouse in Hawes, 1979:3).

Definitions of curriculum are complicated by the fact that the selection and provision of curriculum is done by different groups of people in different contexts. The curriculum involves activities generated by the school, or an education authority with responsibility for managing what happens in the school. The curriculum may also include topics beyond what has been considered the academic province of the school: issues related to health, farming, family life, community life. The curriculum is also spread by teachers, materials, older children and peers, through direct teaching, individual learning, informal contact and example (Kelly, 2009; Hawes, 1979). Curriculum development and implementation involve not only the inculcation of knowledge but also the generation of attitudes and skills. Thus what constitutes curriculum is diffuse.

Eraut et al. (1975:11) say that although the term *curriculum* is problematic and difficult to define, it can be described or characterized “as the set of broad decisions about what is to be taught and how it is to be taught, that determine the general framework within which lessons are planned and learning takes place”. These decisions are often undocumented and even where documented; there may be divergences between the curriculum as planned and the curriculum as taught. So which version is the true curriculum and how does one analyze it? Eraut et al. say that we can come close to describing it by collecting evidence about it, but there is no true version--no exact description. Shulman (2004) also notes that:

The curriculum is represented by the full range of programmes designed for the teaching of particular subjects and topics at a given level, the variety of instructional materials available in relation to those programmes, and the set of characteristics that serve as both the indications and counter indications for the use of particular curriculum program materials in particular circumstances. . . . The curriculum and [its associated materials] are the *materia medica* of pedagogy, the *pharmacopeia* from which the teacher draws those tools of teaching that present or exemplify particular content and remediate or evaluate the adequacy of student accomplishments (p204).

Kelly (2009:9) adds that

Any definition of curriculum, if it is to be practically effective and productive, must offer much more than a statement about the knowledge--content or merely the subjects which schooling is to teach, transmit or deliver. It must go far beyond this to an explanation and indeed a justification of the purposes of such transmission and an exploration of the effects that exposure to such knowledge and such subjects is likely to have, or is intended to have, on its recipients.

It is also important to emphasize, Eraut et al. (1975) claims, that in understanding and studying the curriculum, "it is never the curriculum itself that we analyze but the evidence about it ... documentary evidence in the form of plans or curriculum materials, which are readily available, and empirical evidence in the form of observations, opinions etc. which require special collection". Curriculum analysis can be based on documentary evidence alone or empirical evidence alone or both (p 11).

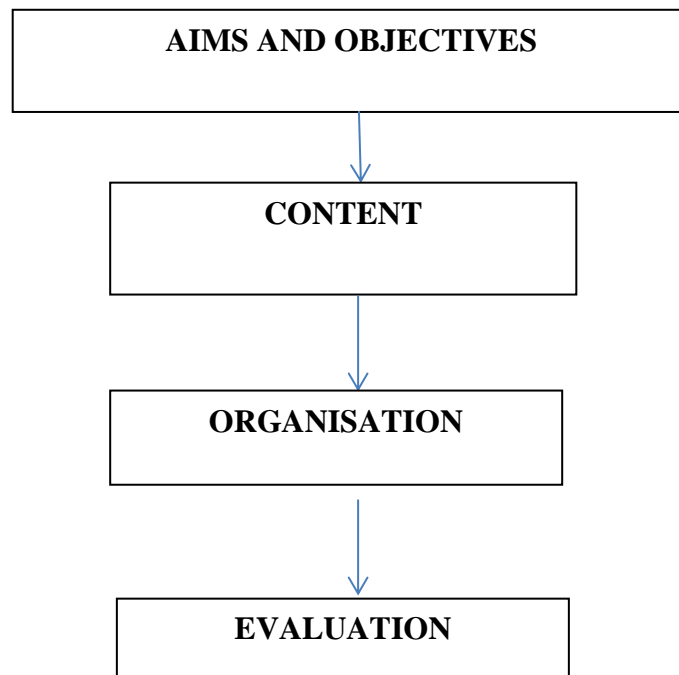
According to Taba (1962), the foundations for a comprehensive theory of curriculum planning were only laid in the 1930s, although studies related to the curriculum have a much longer history. Before the 1930s, educators had very vague notions about the term *curriculum*. It was roughly used to refer to the course of study offered by an educational institution, and by a course of study was usually meant the content of the instruction. In fact, many educators at that time did not distinguish between a curriculum and a syllabus. Even relatively recently, some educators have still used this view of a curriculum. Begle, for example, considered a mathematics curriculum as "mathematical objects ... and the content of the instructional program devoted to these mathematical objects" (Begle, 1979). Begle is by no means an exception among educators in the usage of the term *curriculum*.

In the early post-War period, Tyler was perhaps the foremost educator to systematically study this concept of curriculum and he insisted that it was more than mere content plus instruction. In his classic book "Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction", he listed four basic questions to be considered in connection with a curriculum (1949:1):

1. *What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?*
2. *What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?*
3. *How can these educational experiences be effectively organised?*
4. *How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained?*



From the time of Tyler, educators began to talk about "curriculum models", and Tyler's model was conceived as a linear one, consisting of four components, as shown below:



**Figure 3.1: Tyler's Model of Curriculum**

The model specifies not only the components of a curriculum, but also the relationship between them. According to Tyler, we first determine the aims and objectives of the education system or programme. The content of instruction flows from the aims and objectives and also determines how to organise the teaching and learning process. The evaluation strategy completes this logical flow and is used to assess whether the aims and objectives of the curriculum are met.

Most subsequent curriculum models can be considered derivatives of Tyler's model. Wheeler (1967), for example, sees curriculum development and implementation as a cycle. He suggested a cyclical model and the components he comes up with can be said to be derivative of Tyler's:

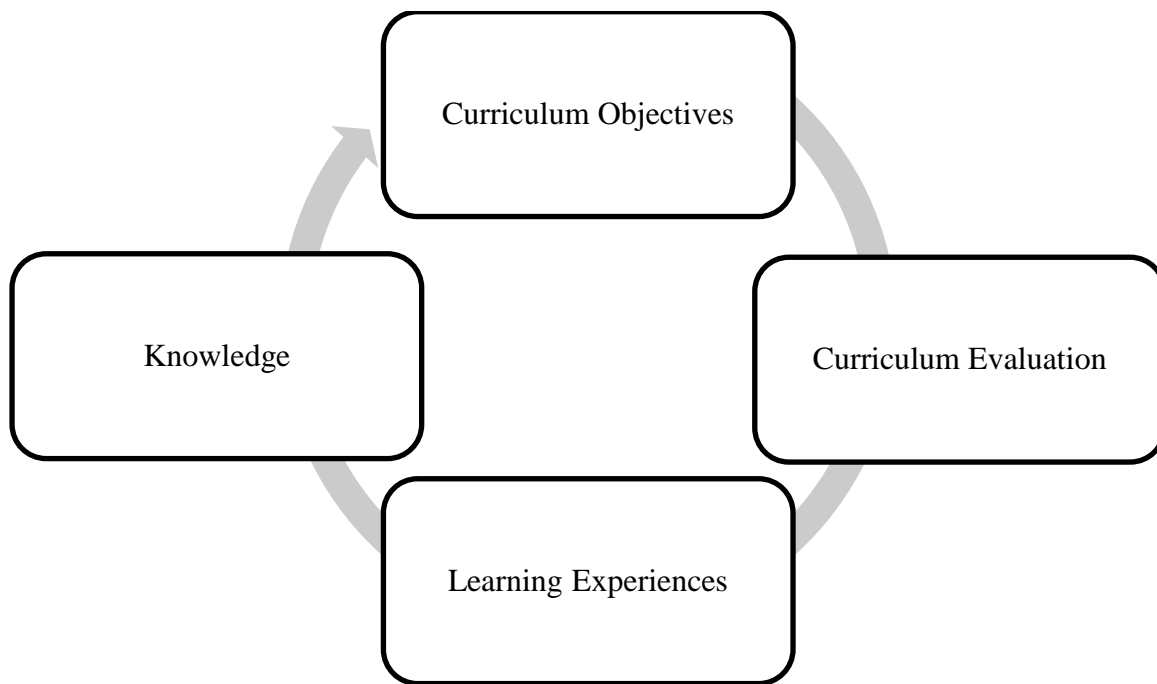
**Figure 3.2: Wheeler's Model**



Wheeler emphasised the cyclical nature of the curriculum process with one component determining the subsequent component. Thus the curriculum is seen not as a static process but a dynamic one. The components identified by Wheeler are akin to that of Tyler even though he comes up with five components. In critiquing Wheeler's model, it is important to note that while in theory, the pupil assessment should lead to determining the aims and objectives, curriculum development in practice does not always work like that. Thus the model functions as an ideal, rather than a practical guide.

Another model of curriculum, that offered by Kerr (1968), went further in stressing the interrelationship between all the curriculum components. The model is depicted in figure 3.3 below:

**Figure 3.3: Kerr's Model**

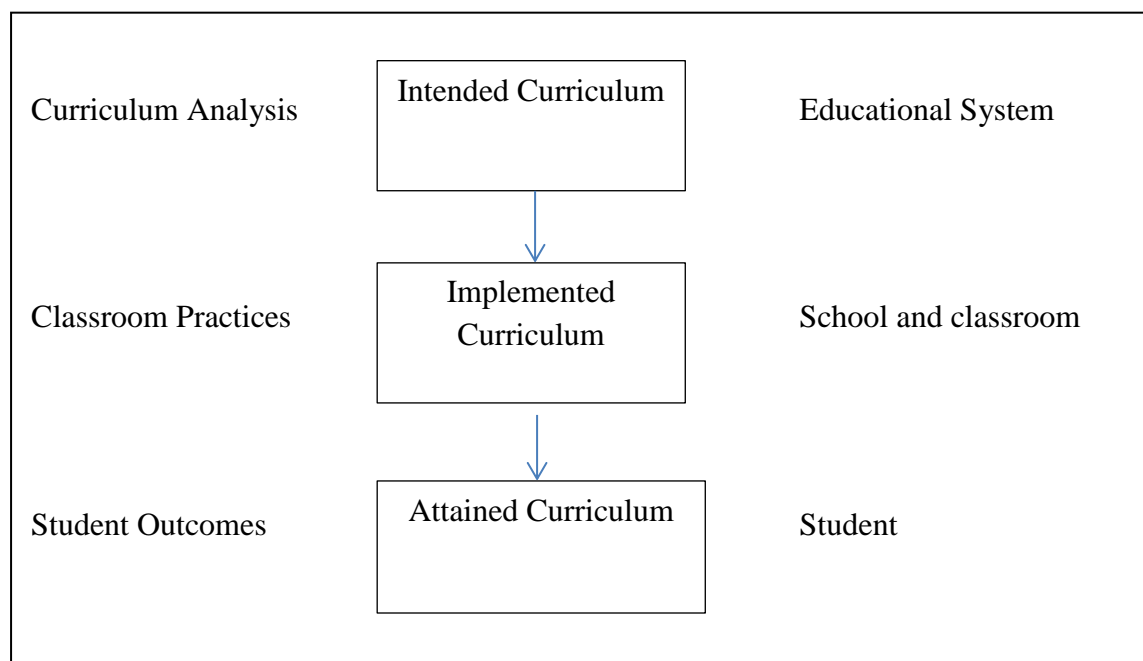


For Kerr, even Wheeler's cyclical conception of a curriculum is not dynamic enough. Kerr's contribution is to pin-point the interactive nature of a curriculum. All the components of a curriculum, in Kerr's view, affect each other. The curriculum objectives, for example, affect not only the knowledge chosen in the instruction, but also the learning experience to be organized for the students and the curriculum evaluation exercise. Evaluation, on the other hand, does not only inform the aims and objectives, but also affects both the knowledge taught and the organization of the learning experience for students.

Another model of the curriculum which is critical to this study and has influenced many studies into curriculum development is that which came out of the Second International Mathematics Study (SIMS) organized by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA). The conceptual model used in the SIMS conceives a curriculum as being made up of three levels (Travers and Westbury, 1989): the intended, the implemented and the attained levels. The intended curriculum refers to intention at the educational system level. This information can be obtained from government officials and from officially published documents such as syllabuses, curriculum guides, circulars, and so forth. The implemented curriculum refers to the curriculum as transacted in the classroom, and, there is no reason to believe that this is necessarily identical to the intended curriculum.

In fact, research and experience tell us that there is usually a discrepancy between the intended and implemented curriculum. By conceptually differentiating between these two levels, the extent of the consistency between the two levels can be highlighted for study. The third level pertains to the curriculum as attained by the students—that is the achievements of students, however achievements are defined. Again, experience tells us that there are usually discrepancies between student attainment, what the students are intended to learn and what they are actually taught in the classroom. Explorations on the discrepancies between the three levels would be very revealing to the educator who is interested to understand the "curriculum" of a place. The SIMS model is represented in fig.3.4 (Travers, 1989:6):

**Figure 3.4: SIMS model**



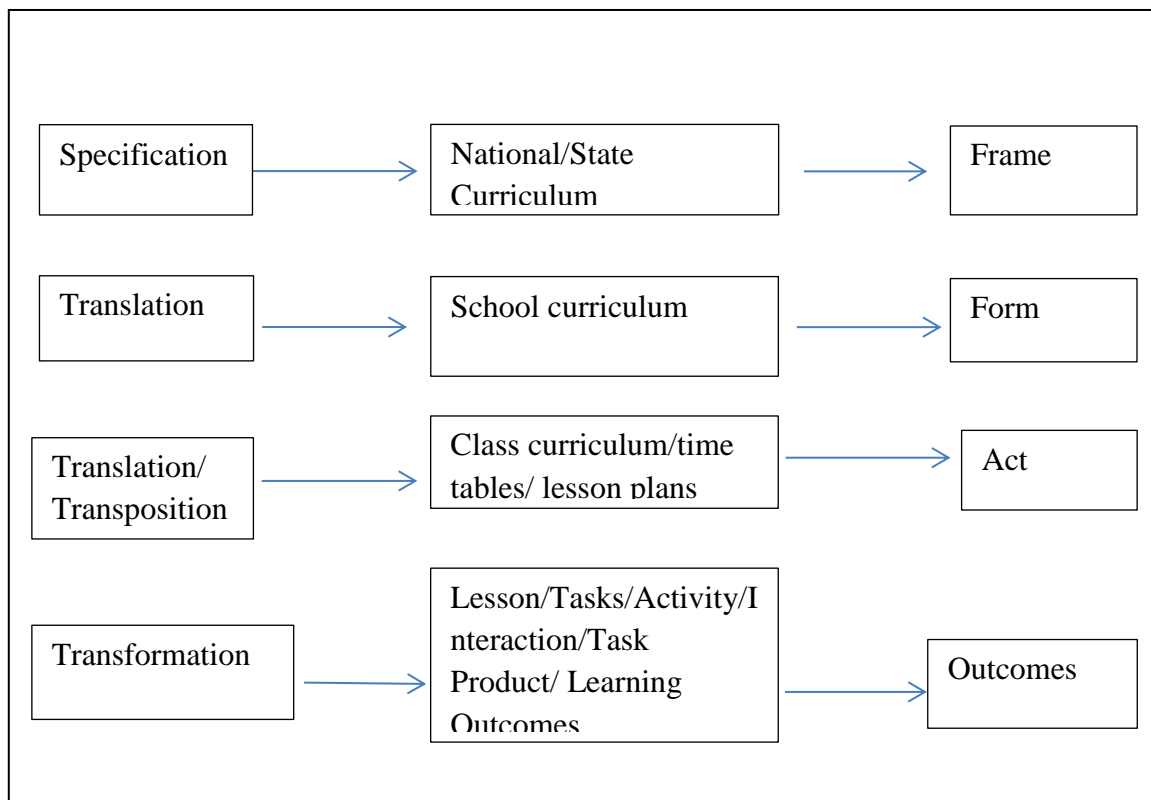
The SIMS model affords a comprehensive description of what the curriculum should and does encompass and thus it is this model that is adopted in this study to help answer the research questions. In the model suggested in figure 3.4, the intended curriculum will by necessity include the aims and objectives as specified in the official documents, the intended content to be covered as set out in the official syllabus, and the officially intended methods to be used. The implemented curriculum also consists of Content and Methods, and these two components are influenced by the teacher's classroom practice and the environment within which learning happens. The attained curriculum comprises student achievement and

attitudes, and these are affected by the teaching methods and content at the implemented curriculum level.

Alexander (2000) broadens the notion of curriculum in defining it, making a link between curriculum and pedagogy and the three levels of the curriculum noted above. Alexander looks at previous definitions of curriculum as “most of what went on in schools” (p 548). He cites Bruner (1968) as defining curriculum to reflect “not only the nature of knowledge itself but also the nature of the knower and the knowledge-getting process” (Alexander, 2000: 551). Alexander thus uses the notion of pedagogy to encompass the entire teaching and learning that takes place. He notes that pedagogy contains both teaching and “its contingent discourses about the character of culture, the purposes of education, and the nature of childhood and learning and the structure of knowledge” (Alexander, 2000: 551).

Alexander also identifies various aspects of the school process as all having a bearing on curriculum and pedagogy. These include: space, pupil organization, time, routine, rule, ritual, task activities, interactions and judgment. He sees the various levels of the curriculum as “a series of translations, transpositions and transformations from its initial status as published statutory requirements or non-statutory guidance”. These series come about as a result of a process of metamorphosis beginning with the national or planned curriculum and ending with what he terms an “array of understandings in respect of each specified curriculum goal and domain that the pupil acquires as a result of his or her classroom activities and encounters” (Alexander, 2000:552). He notes that embedded in the metamorphosis process is a succession of “shifts” and “moves” from “specification to transaction as teachers and pupils interpret, modify and add to the meanings that it embodies” (Alexander, 2000:552). He posits that the curriculum is translated into blocks or programmes in the timetable, transposed into lesson plans and transformed in the actual teaching and learning activities that take place in the classroom. The extent to which these processes or series vary will differ from context to context. Alexander’s metamorphosis model can be seen in the following diagram:

**Figure 3.5: Curriculum Metamorphosis**



Thus, different researchers have different conceptualizations of a curriculum. As far as the present study is concerned, there has been the need to identify a comprehensive understanding of curriculum that will guide the data collection and analysis needed to answer the research questions. This study takes the view that the curriculum is inclusive of three levels - that is, the planned, implemented and attained. The manifestation of these three levels should have as a central piece a social constructivist process that has the child and interaction as critical to a meaningful metamorphosis of the curriculum as noted by Alexander (2000). This metamorphosis can be meaningful if the curriculum is culturally relevant to the participants.

### **3.6. Local and Cultural Relevance of the Curriculum**

To reprise what has been said above, social constructivism advocates involving the teacher as the assistant to the learner in building a knowledge base, and creating a learning community that supports children to reach their full potential. In Vygotskian terms, the child must be supported in working within his or her zone of proximal development, and education or

socialisation cannot take place in a vacuum. Social constructivism also envisages that effective education can only occur when there is a meeting of minds between the teacher and the child; the informal education that takes place in the community is a starting point for the formal education of the school; and the school connects with the home (Pound, 2008; Glassman, 2001; Davydov, 1995; Sutherland, 1992).

Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky puts less emphasis on biological inheritance and much more on culture as a determinant of how effectively a child is educated or socialized (Pound, 2008; Sutherland, 1992). In Ghana, both the formal school and School for Life classroom exhibit a concern for cultural significance in that topics for study are all selected from the culture of the prospective beneficiaries. Indeed, the topics in the School for Life literacy primers and the Facilitator's Manual are all locally relevant (See Appendix 13 for a detailed list of topics). Using cattle rearing, farming and other socio-economic activities as avenues to teach literacy makes it possible for learners to identify with the text and also bring their own knowledge to the learning process. It also encourages the kind of teacher–pupil interaction that promotes learning, according to social constructivist theories. Both teacher and pupil are able to bring resources to the learning activity.

Writing on Vygotsky, Sutherland (1992) notes that in the process of becoming socialised into their culture children learn to understand things that are common features of their social experience, for example the norms for social interaction, health, nutrition, authority and responsibility, songs, history and so forth. Thus the context in which education takes place must be taken into account in order to understand what goes on in classrooms, from a specific example of a particular child's behaviour to the overarching school practices across the year. Writing on culture and pedagogy, Alexander (2000) notes that

life in schools and classrooms is an aspect of our wider society: a culture does not stop at the gates. The character and dynamics of school life are shaped by the values that shape other aspects of our national life. The strength of our primary schools is the strength of our society; their weaknesses are our society's weaknesses (p30).

Any education that does not take cognisance of the culture of the people and the context of schooling is bound to be problematic. Alexander (2000) posits that

we must accept the proposition that the culture in which the schools in a country or state are located, and which its teachers and pupils share, is a powerful determinant of the character of the school and classroom life as are the unique institutional dynamics, local circumstances and interpersonal chemistries which make one school or classroom different from another (p 266).

The issue of connecting schools to their cultural context was recognized even before the topic was raised in the work of the social constructivists. Thompson (1983) notes that in Africa, attempts were being made as early as 1847 to make Western education more relevant to the colonies' needs. Practical subjects were being introduced in 1881 in Sierra Leone and 1882 in the Gold Coast. In India too, similar attempts had been started between the 1880s and 1900. Despite these local attempts, it was only after the First World War that initiatives were actually taken on a wider scale to connect schools to their sociocultural context. Two Phelps-Stokes missions were commissioned to Africa by the British Government who as a consequence, produced a memo on Education in Tropical Africa in 1925. The Belgium Government also came out with a report on the Congo. According to Lillis and Sinclair (1980) the emphasis in all these cases was on Agriculture and Vocational Education as related to the needs of the communities (see also Graham, 1971; Turner, J. 1968; Foster, 1965)

But the pendulum swung away from the search for cultural relevance when educational planners and economists decided that the best way for Third World countries to achieve the success of industrialized countries was to emulate their education systems. This meant increasing educational opportunity with an emphasis on the formal academic aspects of education. This of course was still in the pre-independence era of these countries. Thus, in the 1950s and 60s, education was viewed as the central avenue to achieve not only economic development but political and social development as well. Emphasis was on the quantitative expansion of educational programmes with little or no consideration for their contents or relevance (Sefa Dei, 2004; Bacchus, 1988; Bray et al 1986; Coombs and Ahmed, 1973). Such was the belief in formal education that at a meeting in Addis Ababa in 1961, Education Ministers from many African countries decided to set their targets on achieving Universal Primary Education (U.P.E.) by 1980. Universal Primary Education, a newly fashionable term in the wake of the MDGs and World Education forum, usually refers to attendance and individuals' physical presence in schools (Sefa Dei, 2004).

But when many countries realized that this goal could not be achieved, the concept of U.P.E. was broadened to cover the new notion of basic education, which according to Hawes, (1979) had implications for curriculum reforms. Thus, the pendulum has swung back to the search for relevance of education programmes, a concern that was accentuated by increasing rates of school leaver unemployment and low economic growth rates in the modern sector (Bray et



al., 1986). In this respect, Bude (1985) notes that in many African countries, where new policies for more suitable education are being considered, particular emphasis is being placed on the cooperation between the school and community. He goes on to say: “Active participation between school and community and even in non-school sectors was meant to underline the fact that the school was seeking to orientate itself towards the requirements of the majority of the population and in the past decade, this has met with increasing support” Bude (1985:17).

If the curriculum is irrelevant to the local community, there is a sense of disconnect between the beneficiaries of the education system and the school process, which invariably leads to disaffection and inadequate learning.

“The separation of education from local communities has left many poor rural communities disenfranchised from schooling, both in access and content. The separation of education from local communities in Ghana must be understood as the privileging of schooling over education” (Sefa Dei, 2004:9)

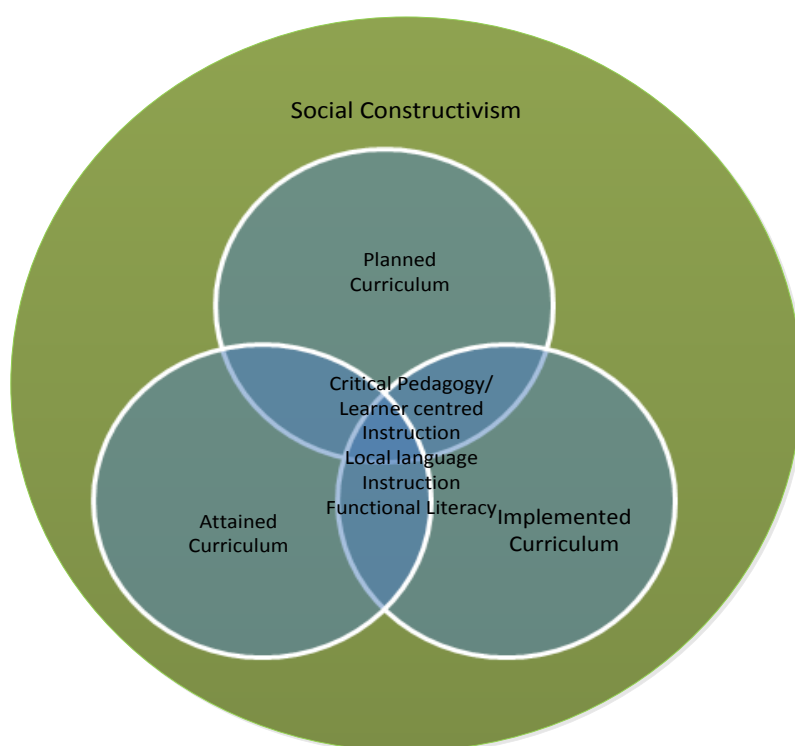
Rural children often find themselves at the mercy of a curriculum that is designed by and for children of more affluent societies. This fact is sometimes attributed to the middle-class background of curriculum developers. Children are sometimes expected to learn of places of interest and new technology such as the railway, post office, highway, computers, and so forth-concepts that they may not have come across before and to which, therefore, they do not bring the background knowledge that can be presumed for more affluent learners. While it may not be feasible to constrain the curriculum to meet the realities of the most isolated rural community children, the reality needs to be faced that there are many marginalised rural children and that curriculum must be developed taking cognisance of such learners (Hawes, 1979).

### **3.7. The Conceptual Framework**

The review of the literature above suggests that this study adopts a model of curriculum that enables a comprehensive discussion and understanding of the School for Life curriculum in all its facets. To this end, the planned, implemented and attained levels of the curriculum will all feature in this study. This is because it is only by understanding all three levels that a clearer picture of children’s learning can emerge. Given that the study is involved with both the non-state sector and the state, the plan or intention of the framers of curriculum is equally

important. So is how the plan is implemented. But more important is what comes out of the plan - that is the learning that takes place as a result of the implementation of the curriculum.

It has been established that in this study the question of how children learn will be analyzed through a social constructive framework. This is not only because social constructivism is the theory that is best respected at this time as accounting for learning, but also that this theory best describes the process of complementary education and the learning that children undergo as a result of enrolling in the programme. In figure 3.5 below, the relationship between social constructivism and the three levels of the curriculum is depicted.



**Figure 3.6: Study Framework**

The three curriculum levels denoted bring to the fore the distinction between the planned or intended curriculum and the received curriculum, which again brings up the issue of theory/policy and practice. There is always what is laid out in the syllabus which in most cases may be different from what the students actually receive (Kelly, 2009; Alexander, 2000). It is therefore critical to get a clearer picture of what is actually received by the students in the school. While the planned or intended curriculum may be known and seen by all, the received or actualized curriculum can only be seen in practice. And using this picture

to gain a fuller understanding of the gaps that exist between the policy and practice can lead to realistic strategies that can bridge the gaps to reach the expected goals of the education sector.

Kelly (2009) also says that understanding the curriculum implies embracing

at least four major dimensions of education planning and practice: the intentions of the planners, the procedures adopted for the implementation of those intentions, the actual experiences of the pupils resulting from teachers' direct attempts to carry out their or the planners' intentions, and the hidden learning that occurs as a byproduct of the organization of the curriculum, and indeed the school (p13).

The definition adopted here, therefore, is that the curriculum is the totality of the experiences that the pupil has as a result of the provision made for teaching and learning. No originality is claimed for the definition suggested. It is based on the curriculum models reviewed in this chapter, but it is intended to embrace the strengths of the various curriculum models, and to provide a comprehensive and workable model for the present study.

It is important to emphasise again that the key point in social constructivism is the interaction between the teacher and the learner with meaningful learning being the goal of that interaction. It becomes social construction of knowledge if the teacher who is seen as the knowledgeable other, the guide and facilitator of knowledge interacts with the children, making use of the experiences and social contexts of the children. The teacher's pedagogical content knowledge, part of which is gleaned from the planned curriculum must also be relevant to the experiences and daily lives of the learners. It is the interaction of these components and parties that constitute social construction of knowledge. The teacher comes with the formal knowledge - that is the curriculum content or planned curriculum - with the learner coming with family and social experiences. However, the teacher's knowledge must be structured around the context of the child so that there is meaningful interaction.

The social interaction: The meeting point of the learners' experience and the teachers' knowledge is in the implementation and receipt of the curriculum or construction of knowledge which is learner centred. Learner-centred education then becomes an aspect of social constructivism. Interaction leads to learner-centred education as the interaction is predicated on meeting the needs of the child. Critical to this social interaction is dialogue. Dialogue becomes a key tool in the social construction process. But this dialogue can only

happen if the teacher and learner share a common language. Thus the language of instruction becomes a critical component of the social construction process. That is why teaching in the language most familiar to children is key in ensuring that children participate and that there is an interactive classroom experience. There cannot be dialogue if the two parties in this process—that is teacher and learners—do not share a language, or if the tools of the process—that is the planned curriculum in the form of the materials, textbooks and methodology—are also in a foreign language or if other aspects of the environment within which the learning is taking place do not promote social interaction.

Thus the framework for this study takes cognisance of the linkages among the planned, implemented and received curriculum. These three levels of the curriculum must be seen in one organic whole but more importantly they have to be negotiated within a social constructivist mode that has at its centre meaningful dialogue through the use of mother-tongue instruction, learner-centred methodologies and social, cultural and functional relevance of the curriculum. The next chapter discusses the methodology that is utilised in exploring the aspects of curriculum and the links among them, in order to answer the research questions through a social constructivist perspective.

### **3.8. Summary**

This chapter has reviewed the relevant literature that helps to answer the research questions. The social constructivist framework that serves as guide to this study has been discussed with particular attention to the literature on language of instruction, literacy instruction and critical pedagogies. This is because for the social interaction that is necessary for the construction of knowledge in both School for Life and the formal school depends on as clear understanding of how these issues are theorised and understood in the current debate on curriculum development and implementation in Ghana and sub-Saharan Africa. Also critical is the adoption of a model of curriculum that takes cognisance of the three levels of planned, implemented and attained curriculum.

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1. Outline

This chapter explores issues of methodological design. It begins with an outline of the research questions that drive the study. This is followed by a description and justification for the research approach and strategy adopted respectively, as well as the study's conceptual framework. Thereafter, data gathering sources, methods and techniques for analysis are outlined and explored in detail. The research design is completed by brief descriptions of ethical considerations and limitations, as well as the delimitations of the study.

Whilst the choice of methodology was largely determined by a consideration of the background to the study – particularly with regard to the issues appertaining to curriculum analysis, teaching and learning discussed in the literature review that gave rise to this undertaking – the rationale for taking this methodological route stems from a need to ensure that the findings of the inquiry are thoroughly grounded in the evidence gathered rather than mere speculation or weak inference. Equally important was the need to utilise a methodology that fits into a social constructivist framework for research.

### 4.2. Research Questions

This study investigates the School for Life Complementary Education Programme in the Northern Region of Ghana. It seeks to examine the curriculum content, pedagogy, and implementation of the programme, and how it is able to offer children the opportunity to learn and integrate into formal school. The study discusses how the three levels of the curriculum (planned, implemented and attained) are negotiated in both the School for Life and the formal school system. To address this issue, the study analyses School for Life and formal primary school curricula in terms of their respective syllabi, teaching and learning materials, teaching practice, pupil achievement and perspectives, and the experiences of children and other key stakeholders. From this aim, the following questions emanate:

- *How is the School for Life curriculum structured and delivered to provide opportunities for children to learn and transition to formal school?*
- *How do School for Life graduates perform in formal primary school following integration?*

- *To what extent is the School for Life curriculum key to the accelerated learning achievement of School for Life learners/graduates?*
- *What do various stakeholders (teachers, parents and the community) perceive as unique in terms of the School for Life programme?*

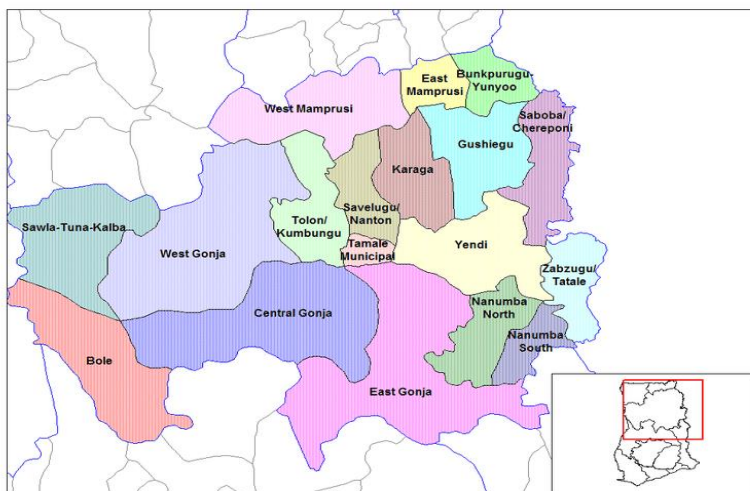
### 4.3. Research Setting

#### 4.3.1. Selecting the Research Site

As is clear from the discussion so far, this study was born out of a concern for the perceived inadequacies of international and national discourses and literature on the linkage between complementary education programmes and the formal school curriculum. It was with this in mind that the research setting had to be selected. Moreover, in addition to more pragmatic issues such as safety and the relative ease of obtaining research permission in Ghana, a number of other considerations influenced the choice of setting.

After careful sifting of the available choices, the Tolon Kumbungu District of the Northern Region of Ghana was finally settled upon. Tolon Kumbungu was one of the first districts to be created by the government of Ghana in 1988 as part of the decentralization process. With a current population of 249,691 and occupying some 2,741 square kilometres, it shares borders with West Mamprusi District to the north, West Gonja to the west, Savelugu Nanton to the south, and the regional capital of Tamale Metropolis to the east. The district has 226 communities, with its capital being Tolon, and Kumbungu the second capital.

**Figure 4.1: Map of the Northern Region of Ghana**



There are 145 primary schools in Tolon Kumbungu District, 22 of which are in urban centres and 123 in the rural areas. Table 3.1 below gives school enrolment data for the district.

**Table 4.1: Tolon Kumbungu School Enrolment Data (2007–2009)**

	School-age Children			Enrolled Children			Out-of-school Children		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
<b>2007</b>	15,211	14,553	29,764	12,712	9,431	22,143	2,499	5,122	7,621
<b>2008</b>	15,621	14,946	30,567	14,466	11,153	25,619	1,455	3,793	5,248
<b>2009</b>	16,043	15,350	31,393	15,292	11,723	27,015	771	3,627	4,398

*Source: Tolon Kumbungu District Assembly.*

Tolon Kumbungu was selected because it had been running CEP classes since 1999, it had been participating in SfL for over ten years, and the programme's classes were still operational. During this time, SfL had enrolled over 1,000 learners a year in 154 communities (School for Life, 2010). Tolon Kumbungu therefore provided an excellent focal point from which to consider the issues that concerned this study, the district's long and continuing association with SfL, and the situation in the formal education sector.

In order to answer the above research questions adequately, existing literature, studies, and other documentation on the implementation of the School for Life Complementary Education Programme were analysed in order to determine how it had been able to prepare learners for transition into the formal basic education sector. The documentary study includes an analysis of School for Life and primary school curricula and pedagogical materials, including respective syllabi, as well as the teaching and learning materials utilized in each system.

The documentary analysis was complemented by primary field research in ten formal primary schools, which had enrolled School for Life graduates and two School for Life communities in Tolon Kumbungu District. In the ten primary schools, National Education Assessment test instruments were used to assess the performance of all Primary 4 and Primary 6 pupils. The former comprised those children who had just been transferred from SfL in the current academic year; while the latter consisted of SfL graduates who had subsequently progressed through the formal education system.

Two out of the ten school communities that were also SfL beneficiaries were selected for lesson observation, and interviews and discussions with various stakeholders, including pupils, teachers, facilitators, parents and village leaders. Selection of two communities enables exploring the possibility of comparing their respective experiences. However, as they were seen to have virtually identical characteristics, inclusion of such a comparison in the analysis would have obscured the typicality of the contexts under investigation. Nevertheless, it was possible to observe both education systems in operation in these two communities, and also interview various actors associated with SfL and government-run schools.

The two school communities selected for in-depth study were Gbulahagu and Woribogu Kukuo. With an estimated population of 533 (319 females and 214 males) distributed in 64 households, the small rural settlement of Gbulahagu is situated on the main Tamale–Tolon road, 4 miles from Tolon, the district capital, and 12 Miles from Tamale, the regional capital. A larger semi-rural community in the heart of the district, Woribogu Kukuo, has an estimated population of 2,000 distributed in 215 households, and is located 11 miles from Tolon and 12 miles from Tamale. Farming is the main economic activity, both communities growing cereals and yams, and rearing livestock.

Gbulahagu and Woribogu Kukuo both have well-constructed primary schools, which were established in 1984 and 1993 respectively; they have also hosted SfL for ten and eight years respectively. These two communities were selected for the present study due to such long association with the Complementary Education Programme, being regarded as having accumulated the requisite experience to achieve the perspectives necessary for addressing the research questions.

The study examined the implementation of the SfL curriculum and compared it with the manner in which that of the formal school was delivered. The investigation also entailed discussions with SfL learners and those graduates who had proceeded to formal school, in order to gain an understanding of the experience and knowledge acquired on the SfL course, and how this was of help to them as formal school pupils.



#### **4.3.2. Access to Research Sites and Participants**

A formal letter was written to the Ghanaian education authorities to seek permission to involve selected GES officials and school communities in Tolon Kumbungu District in the study. In accordance with research ethics, this clearly spelt out the conditions under which the study would be conducted and the benefits therein for the GES. It also clarified the purpose of the study, and the fact that the researcher was a Ghanaian national and student of the University of Sussex, UK; that the project was being conducted under the auspices of University authorities; and that it would constitute the basis of a thesis to be submitted in consideration for the award of a doctorate.

Following receipt of formal approval from the Ghanaian education authorities, letters seeking permission to conduct the study indicating my credentials; the purpose of the undertaking; and its date, time, place and issues to be covered were despatched to SfL and the Tolon Kumbungu District Director of Education (see Appendix 11 for samples of the letter of approval and that seeking permission).

Again, upon reaching Ghana to undertake the fieldwork, I obtained a formal letter of introduction from the GES Director of Basic Schools to be sent to the various participants, enclosing an introductory letter from my supervisor at Sussex. This added weight to the study, and aided access to participants and interviewees, since I was studying abroad and did not personally know the majority of them. The District Director also wrote a covering letter acknowledging and approving the study, and appointed a circuit supervisor as the person responsible for ensuring that all schools, communities and participants were informed of the study.

#### **4.3.3. Data Collection Phases**

Data were collected during two separate field visits:

Phase 1: The first visit of ten weeks (May–August 2010) was used to gain an initial understanding of the setting and what was happening on the ground. Using Accra and Tamale as bases, I made weekly trips to various communities in Tolon Kumbungu District. These were supported by SfL, who helped provide access to school communities. This phase of the project was used to observe CEP classes and talk to various actors, including GES and SfL staff. The first visit was also used to refine NEA testing materials, and sharpen research focus

and tools. Finally, in Phase 1, I collected all the relevant documents, and teaching and learning materials that comprised both CEP and formal school curricula.

Phase 2: The second visit of four months (March–June 2011) focused on more in-depth follow-up interviews with the various actors involved. Such interviews were conducted with children (both in and out of school), formal school teachers, SfL facilitators, and the local management committees that were involved in supporting Complementary Education Programmes. I conducted these interviews myself with the aid of a research assistant, who acted as my interpreter and helped in gaining a better understanding of the issues discussed. This visit was also used to observe both Complementary Education Programme and formal school lessons, and to conduct the testing of formal school pupils. Finally, Phase 2 helped to clarify the accuracy of the data collected in Phase 1.

#### **4.4. Primary Researcher Identity**

This study draws upon my personal experience with the education sector in northern Ghana. Between 2004 and 2008, I worked on the Education Quality for All (EQUALL) project, which was funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), where I was responsible for managing its CEP component. The latter was a corollary of the SfL programme that was aimed at increasing access to education for underserved populations in Northern Ghana. The project was operational in 9 districts of northern Ghana, enrolling a total of 26,250 children aged 8 to 14 years to participate in an 11-month mother tongue literacy, numeracy and basic spoken English programme. From 2004 to 2008, approximately 22,000 of these learners transitioned into the formal education sector.

My role entailed much interaction with GES personnel participating in various programmes and activities organized by the project. This experience afforded me a good deal of insight into the education sector in northern Ghana from both complementary and formal education perspectives. Managing the CEP also entailed working with communities to mobilize their support and process of taking ownership of the intervention, through which I gained valuable experience in community perspectives on education supply and demand.

What this experience brought to the fore was that the government's introduction of the capitation grant notwithstanding, there were still communities with out-of-school populations who were beyond the reach of the formal primary school sector, meaning that complementary

education was a critical option if access, literacy and numeracy rates were to be increased. Indeed, the formal schooling system – with its fixed timetable and rigid structure – was not designed to accommodate the sparse settlements and their unique economic and cultural practices that characterize most of northern Ghana. Even where formal schools were accessible, communities had their own values, practices and priorities that affected the way in which education was accessed.

When the EQUALL project was launched in 2004, a period that coincided with the introduction of the capitation grant, there was a certain feeling – especially from the GES perspective – that a Complementary Education Programme was no longer relevant in light of the amelioration of financial schooling costs. However, working in these remote communities, it became clear that the capitation grant was not a panacea for the resolution of all barriers to access in the North. While the relevance of the CEP was confirmed and the criteria that made the CEP relevant to these communities had not changed, there were questions around the sustained transition of graduates and the extent to which CEP assisted communities to access education. There was no clear indication of how successful such learners were once they accessed the formal education system. Moreover, the reception graduates could expect on entering formal school; their survival in the system; and whether CEP acted as a catalyst for community demand for formal education were further questions that came up for inquiry.

What was apparent was that the State system alone was incapable of reaching the really underserved populations of the North. On the other hand, while the CEP met a real need in providing some form of education, on its own it did not really fulfil the aspirations of the people, as it was seen as a means of accessing formal education and not an end in itself.

The present study thus provides an opportunity for an in-depth inquiry into such questions about the CEP and access to formal basic education in this region. It strives to take cognizance of all the aforementioned issues and questions, and, in so doing, attempts to provide some answers as to how Ghana can tackle access questions related to the marginalized and remote communities of Northern Ghana.

#### **4.5. Research Perspective**

This study was designed to employ a mixed methods approach that utilized both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The call for multivariate methodologies to enhance education research and theory development is not new (Bryman, 2008, 1988; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Cohen et al., 2001; Nachmias, 1996). However, since I aimed to conduct a study of the SfL Complementary Education Programme and how it prepared learners for entry into and accomplishment at formal school – which necessarily took into account the curricula of both, comparisons of pupil performance, and the perspectives and experiences of learners and other education stakeholders – my approach was to adopt methods that would facilitate an in-depth interrogation of the research questions. Moreover, I combined both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques because the integrated use of both strategies allowed compensation for the weaknesses of each and maximization of the strengths in both (Creswell, 2008; Bryman, 2008; Brewer and Hunter, 2006).

Previous experiences in Ghana with respect to data availability and reliability make the combined use of these approaches to research a prudent one for a study of this kind. The argument that these two approaches are complementary rather than competing also justifies and promotes the use and combination of both. Indeed, a research design that integrates data generated by both quantitative and qualitative methods is more profitable than stressing their differences and thus limiting the options (Creswell, 2008; Bryman, 2008; Brewer and Hunter, 2006).

The procedure of combining different research methods is also one aspect of triangulation that constitutes a system of checks and balances. Denzin (1989: 234) identifies triangulation as the “use of multiple methods to overcome the inherent weaknesses of single measurements and methods.” Numerous studies have employed an approach combining qualitative and quantitative methods. In recent years in particular, it has been common to use survey procedures together with various individual accounts to highlight different points of view; thus, when quantitative results are combined with interpretive perspectives, a fuller explanation of social phenomena may result (Bryman, 2008; Creswell, 2008; Denzin, 1989).

However, it should be emphasized that the main thrust of the present study derives from qualitative data, which is used to gain a deeper understanding of how various actors – especially pupils and teachers – experience the planned, taught and received curricula of both School for Life and the formal school.

The paradigm used by qualitative researchers varies with the set of theories and beliefs each brings to his or her work. The present study is based on social constructivist principles because I believe that they offer the best theoretical model for achieving the goal of capturing views and experiences derived from the implementation of SfL in Northern Region, and determining how lessons learned from this intervention might affect the provision of high quality basic education in Ghana as a whole.

In social constructivist research, individuals seek to construct meaning or understanding of people's lives based on practical experiences (Creswell, 2007). This approach allows for multiple meanings and subjectivity of perception, which enable the researcher to strive for identifying a complexity of views and experiences rather than merely accepting a status quo description as an acceptable way of thinking. Social constructivism allows the researcher to rely as much as possible on his or her participants' experiences and views of the situation, which are set within a social and historical context. Bosk (1989 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) regards the qualitative researcher as being in a privileged position, as an observer and interviewer in receipt of the unique 'gift' of developing a research relationship with his or her subjects or participants. Developing a relationship with the participants ensures that there is trust between the researcher and the researched and also the research is able to capture the human aspect of the research and through that there is a social construction of data.

Questions of reliability and validity have sometimes been raised with regard to qualitative research methods, but such a notion is readily countered:

One might be tempted to discard the qualitative interview as a research method – the knowledge obtained is not objective, but subjective in the sense that it depends too much on the subjects interviewed ... On the contrary, it is in fact a strength of the interview conversation to capture the multitude of subjects' views of a theme and to picture manifold and controversial human worlds (Kvale, 1996: 16).

Qualitative research is valid when it locates the researcher in the real world of the subject or phenomenon under study. The methods consist of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible and realistic; which means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of – or interpret – phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). As a result, careful qualitative research is reliable.

Qualitative research methodology is characterized as inductive, emergent, and shaped by the researcher's experience of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2007). Some topics may emerge from the participants themselves rather than all being identified beforehand by the researcher. Such a process lends itself to the collection and analysis of rich context-oriented information that helps to explain the worldview of the researched (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, qualitative research methods constitute an effective approach for the present study, and facilitate an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of various actors on the planned and implemented curricula of SfL and the formal school.

#### **4.6. Case Study**

I regard this research project as a case and have attempted to use the findings to draw general conclusions on how the SfL Complementary Education Programme prepares learners to function effectively in the formal school.

Stake (1995) identifies three kinds of case study: intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. An intrinsic case is studied because it is in itself interesting; an instrumental case is studied in order to inform readers on a class of phenomena of which the case is one; and a collective case study is one in which a set of phenomena are studied in order to inform readers on how they interact and relate to each other (Stake, 1995).

A more orthodox view (Yin, 1984; Nunan, 1990; Cohen and Manion, 1995) of the case study is what Stake (1995) labels 'instrumental' or 'collective'. The task here is to study a case in order to extrapolate to a wider set of cases; to inform in depth on one of a range of cases being studied; or to identify through close scrutiny of one case, a framework of factors or issues for examining a class of cases.

Macdonald and Walker (1975) provide a characterization of the instrumental case study that is particularly resonant for the present study. An instrumental case study has the potential "to reveal properties of the class to which the instant belongs;" (1975: 4) whereby such an instance is embedded in a "complex set of politically sensitive relationships;" (1975: 7) and where "at all levels of the system, what people think they are doing, what they say they are doing, what they appear to others to be doing, and what they are in fact doing, may be sources of considerable discrepancy" (1975: 8). This study could be said to explore multiple levels of an instrumental case study. On one level, the study investigates School for Life as an

example of a Complementary Education Programme and how it links up with formal schools in general. Thus this study is a case study of how School for Life implements complementary education in Ghana. Given that School for Life has been operating for about 15 years in over 20 districts in northern Ghana, the primary research sites in the Tolon District are seen as cases of what happens in SfL and the formal school system in Ghana. These multiple levels of instrumental case inquiry offer a unique opportunity to discuss the research questions in depth.

#### **4.7. Data Collection Methods**

This study utilizes a range of quantitative and qualitative methods, which, when integrated, provide answers to the research questions. The combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to any inquiry (Flick, 2002 in Denzin and Lincoln, 2008). Therefore, this is a three-stage study that incorporates documentary analysis, pupil assessment and lesson observation, and in-depth interviews with various stakeholders.

##### **4.7.1. Documentary Analysis**

Documentary analysis involved scrutiny of curriculum materials for both SfL and the formal primary school. Given that SfL graduates generally enter the formal sector at Primary 4, the assumption is that they have covered the lower primary requirements of state education. The study therefore entailed an analysis of the English Language, Ghanaian Language, and Mathematics syllabi of the lower primary school, documents that were studied alongside SfL curriculum materials, due to the fact that the CEP only supports literacy and numeracy.

Pupils' and teacher's text books used under the two systems were also examined closely to determine any thematic and/or content linkages, and to assess whether the SfL curriculum met the requirements of lower primary school. This process utilized the Sussex Scheme for Analysis of Curriculum Materials (Eraut et al., 1975) (see Appendix 4). This scheme provides the basic framework through which curriculum materials are described, and, for example, assists in identifying linkages between the syllabus and the teacher and pupil books, while ensuring that these materials meet the objectives or goals of the education system.

The following documents were analysed:

### **National Curriculum**

- English Language syllabus
- Ghanaian Language syllabus
- Mathematics syllabus
- NALAP materials
- TLMP materials

### **Pupil and Teacher Text Books (Northern and Southern Ghana)**

- English Primary 1–4
- Mathematics Primary 1–4

### **School for Life Materials**

- Literacy Primers
- Numeracy Primers
- Facilitator's Training Manual

A somewhat different kind of documentation was pupils' written work. Sample pages of their exercise books were photocopied and examined. The lesson plans of teachers whose classes were observed were photocopied and analysed in order to determine the extent to which they correlated with the requirements of the syllabus. Detailed discussion of this documentary study is undertaken in Chapter 5

While the documentary analysis generated information on the planned curricula, to assess them in practice, a combination of various qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized, which were intended to complement each another and help to fully answer the research questions.

#### **4.7.2. Pupil Assessment**

Assessing the curriculum in practice necessitated analysis of it as received by learners. This was implemented through administering English and Mathematics tests to Primary 4 and Primary 6 pupils at 10 randomly selected schools in the district. In total, 387 pupils (200



Primary 4 and 187 Primary 6) participated in the assessment, out of which 150 were SfL graduates in both grades.

The study utilized 2009 National Education Assessment (NEA) English and Mathematics test instruments, which consisted of multiple-choice questions designed to gauge pupil competence in Primary 3 and Primary 6. The tests comprised 40 and 60 test items in both subjects for Primary 3 and Primary 6 respectively. The English Language component assessed pupils in reading comprehension, listening, grammar, and speaking; while the Mathematics component assessed pupil competency in arithmetic, investigating with numbers, shapes and space, measurement, and collecting and handling data (MOE, 2009; MOE, 2012).

The study used the Primary 3 test to assess pupils in Primary 4 because most SfL graduates entered primary school at the latter grade; it was thus anticipated that candidates would perform better in the study tests than the national or regional average for this educational level. The Primary 6 test was used to assess children of the same grade level (see Appendices 6 and 7 for Primary 3 and Primary 6 test items).

#### **4.7.3. Lesson observation**

Lesson observation in particular forms a critical aspect of this study, being undertaken in two of the ten selected schools in which pupil testing took place, as well as the two School for Life classes under study.

Observation as a research method offers the researcher “an opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations” (Cohen et al., 2007: 396). In terms of validity, observational research findings are considered to be robust, as use of the technique makes it possible to capture the interface between theory and practice in the school setting (Nachmias, 2004). Moreover, Cohen et al. (2007) cite Robson (2002) in stressing that what people do is usually different from what they say they do, and direct observation is therefore the best tool for the researcher to capture the reality of a particular situation. Accordingly, such findings are considered to be highly valid due to the fact that rich data may be gathered on a particular behaviour.

No claims are made about the generalizability of observations, replicability, nor the extent to which the findings of a particular observational study might be extrapolated to other people in

other places at other times. In observational research, findings reflect a unique population and moment and therefore cannot be generalized.

Researcher bias can be an issue, and it is often considered that the researcher may only see what he or she wishes to see. The aforementioned restrictions notwithstanding, overall, observation is still regarded as a valuable research tool within the paradigm of qualitative research.

The present study adopted the classroom observation instrument designed by the EQUALL project to assess teacher and classroom effectiveness in Ghana. The rationale behind such an exercise is that teachers must develop the competency necessary to teach effectively in order to realize any noticeable improvement in the primary school system. The EQUALL classroom observation instrument has been used over a period of time and is recognized by the GES as an effective tool for the assessment of teaching. It was developed to monitor practice in both the Complementary Education Programme classroom and formal primary school, and so was suitable for my study.

The observation instrument comprises 20 elements of effective teaching, factors – including competency in the teaching of reading – being directly tied to pupil learning. The instrument is structured around the intended outcomes of teacher training, the teaching of pupils, and classroom management. These outcomes are organized into four broad performance components, each with a number of more specific elements. These four components are planning and preparation; classroom and behaviour management; the learning environment; and teaching and learning activities (see Appendix 8 for the full version of the instrument).

I used this structured observation instrument in observing two each of Primary 4, Primary 6 and School for Life classes over a two-month period, a total of approximately 240 hours of lesson observation being undertaken. Two English Language and two Mathematics lessons of 45 minutes each were observed for both Primary 4 and 6 in each of the two study schools; while SfL classes, which are conducted approximately three hours each day for five days a week, were also observed. Thus, each formal school and SfL class was observed for approximately 60 hours each.

Lesson observations were also used to document i) the physical space of the classroom: number of pupils, seating arrangements, movement within the space, and ambient phenomena perceivable in the room; ii) the temporal details of each session: what happened, at what time,

and how long it lasted; and iii) teaching and learning activities: what the teacher did, what the learners did, teacher–pupil and pupil–pupil interactions, and descriptions of teaching and learning materials.

My goal in taking these field notes, in addition to completing the observation instrument, was to document all that I could perceive. Thus lesson observation data thus provided a description of activities and interactions in the classroom that was sufficiently rich to facilitate analysis of emergent themes, but also contained a certain element of narrative as the real world of the classroom was transformed into the written word.

#### **4.7.4. Participatory Rural Appraisal**

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques were also utilised to get a better understanding of how CEP participants perceived of the programme. Participatory appraisal methods are used to “better construct a realistic picture for outsiders” (Mukherjee, 2009. 1). Participatory Rural Appraisal is used to describe a family of approaches, behaviours and methods for enabling people to do their own appraisal, analysis and planning, take their own action and do their own monitoring and evaluation (Chambers, 2002). Participatory approaches enable people who live in poverty to analyse their realities, articulate their priorities and have effective voice to influence policies.

My initial intention was to use PRA with all the key participants including parents, teachers, pupils and other community members. However, this was not possible, primarily because of time constraints. Consequently, seasonal and daily work calendar creation, and wealth ranking exercises were carried out as substitutes. In addition, several focus group discussions were held with separate sets of male and female pupils on the subjects of education, adulthood and childhood; and collective (as well as individual) discussions were held with parents regarding their perception and experiences of formal school and the Complementary Education Programme respectively.

#### **4.7.5. Semi-structured and Informal Interviews**

A range of interviews was also carried out. The decision to employ the interview as one of the main data-gathering techniques in this study rests in the words of Robson (1989), who

states that, “The interview process is the opportunity to listen, observe, question freely and, in the light of what is being said, interpret the individual’s behaviour within context” (p. 26).

As Alexander (2000) also notes:

Observation is an essential tool of classroom research, but if teaching is about the exchange of ideas and meaning, then we can discover only some of these by observing. To maximise our prospects of gaining access to these ideas and meanings, we must listen as well as look. Communication, both verbal and non-verbal, must be studied, and the language of classroom transaction must be attended to in some detail; but, especially, we must talk to those whom we watch (p. 270).

Walford (1994) captures this point elegantly. According to him, although published and documentary sources may reveal much information about policy, it is actually by talking with the participants themselves that significant gain in understanding can be, and is, fully made.

Just like any other instrument in social science research, the interview has its own strengths and weaknesses. Robson (2002) for one points out that face-to-face interviews offer the possibilities of modifying one’s line of enquiry, following up interesting responses, and investigating underlying motives in a way that postal and other self-administered questionnaires cannot. He adds that the interview is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things, and that non-verbal cues provided in the course of the dialogue, for example, give out messages that help in understanding verbal responses.

Fielding et al. (2001) also argue that the versatility of the interview is apparent in the list of uses to which the data thus obtained can be put. They hold that interviews are often used to establish the variety of opinions concerning a topic, or to establish relevant dimensions of attitudes. They add that interviews are also used to form hypotheses about the motivation underlying behaviour and attitudes, as well as to examine non-motivation, that is, why people do not do certain things.

Thus, the bottom-line, as Robson (2002) also puts it, is that observing behaviour or social phenomena is clearly a useful enquiry technique, but asking people directly about what is going on in the communities and social settings under study by interviewing them is an obvious ‘short cut’ in the quest for answers to one’s research questions.

On the other hand, as a research tool, the interview is sometimes criticized for its lack of reliability and the difficulty in ruling out interviewer fabrication and bias. Robson (2002) concedes – and reiterates these criticisms by pointing out the lack of standardization in the

interview (its semi-structured and unstructured forms in particular) implies – that it inevitably raises such concerns. However, although there are ways of dealing with these problems, they call for a degree of professionalism and competence that do not come easily; indeed, considerable skill, time and expertise are demanded if such challenges are to be effectively reduced.

Wengraf (2001) adds to such criticism by arguing that the introductory texts on in-depth interviewing more often than not turn towards a ‘social unrealism’ in which the real histories and social identities of those involved in the research enterprise, or those from whom data are collected, are in some ways ignored (p.16). Wengraf (2001) goes on to point out how taking ethical steps to safeguard the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents – the practice of assigning pseudonyms in particular – could result in the findings losing something of their significance and validity if they end up merely being presented without taking into account the backgrounds of their subjects and the context within which the study was conducted.

However, while acknowledging that because the interviewer is as much a part of the interview process as his or her interviewees, and that these weaknesses – especially lack of reliability and difficulty in ruling out interviewer bias – can be serious threat, the point also needs to be made that all these weaknesses can be minimized.

In the present study, documentary analysis was employed as a complement to interviewing, and hence provided a framework or benchmark as well as a data point for triangulation of the research findings. Below also discusses ways in which, problems associated with the use of the interview as a research tool have been minimized in this study.

In order to maximize the depth and breadth of insights to be gained from analysis of interviews, a strategy was developed that incorporated procedures and guidelines for administering semi-structured in-depth interviews (Robson et al., 1989; Kogan, 1994; Wengraf, 2001; Fielding et al., 2001; Robson, 2002; Neuman, 2004; Berg, 2004), which was carefully followed in order to keep possible problems associated with its use to a minimum. This plan took into account the personal appearance and approach of the interviewer; the introduction of the interview; the ensuring of familiarity with the interview schedule and items; question wording, content, order and style; effective communication; the maintenance of regular eye contact with the interviewee; probing and prompting; the recording of answers; and concluding remarks. Interview items were drawn from a thorough search and reflection on the wealth of literature on curriculum development and implementation, teaching and

learning, and community perspectives on effecting schooling. Below are some of the questions used in the teacher/ facilitator interviews. The full interview guide is in appendix 5.

- Did the lesson activities work as planned? (probe each of the activities in turn; elicit history of tasks and texts; explore rationale for choosing activities/tasks; elicit views on how well they worked)
- What did the lesson activities tell you about the needs/wants of the class? (probe with certain individual specific issues/moments in the session)
- What plans for the next/future lessons? (elicit outline for next session; explore rationale for tasks and activities, especially changes)
- Did my presence have any effect in the class? (on what T. did; on how T. planned; on teaching session)
- Were there any activities in this lesson(s) that you were not able to complete with learners?

The reliability, validity and clarity of items were improved by pre-testing the interview guide. Two steps were involved at this stage. The first was to submit the initial draft to my supervisors for corrections and amendments. This facilitated the identification of any poorly worded questions, those with offensive or emotive wording, and those that revealed my own biases, personal values, or blind spots.

The second step involved piloting. Several practice interviews with colleagues were conducted to assess whether the type of information being sought could actually be obtained with the research instrument (Berg, 2004: 90–91). Following the pilots, the necessary amendments and restructuring were once again made, after which the plan was finally ready for use.

Interviewees included School for Life learners, School for Life graduates in formal school, parents, teachers, and local management committee members. There were both individual and group interviews for children and community members. There were also different interview formats and question sets for different groups of interviewees. The different approaches served to triangulate some of the responses given in either of the individual or group interviews. Using this dual mode also served as follow up for further in-depth discussion on some topics that came up especially during group discussions. Interviews with learners covered their experiences during the nine-month School for Life cycle, knowledge and skills acquired, and how they prepared them for formal school. Interview questions also encouraged learners to compare their School for Life and formal school experiences in terms of learning content, teaching approaches, and linkages with local knowledge and responsibilities.

Discussions and interviews with parents and community leaders centred on their experiences in respect of SfL, and how it helped their children gain access to formal school. These groups of interviewees were given the opportunity to discuss the relevance of the CEP in terms of perceived learning gains of their children, and how they compared with those of children who enrolled directly into formal school. It was also important to discuss with these interviewees their views on the teaching approach and local content of the School for Life curriculum; how such elements made it possible for learners to integrate into formal school at the end of the cycle; and how pupils were helped to realise their potential in the community.

In total, 43 people were interviewed. These included 4 teachers, 14 pupils, 20 community members and/or parents, 3 SfL staff members and 2 GES officers. All interviews were tape-recorded, and varied in length between 45 minutes and 1 hour and 45 minutes (see Appendix 5 for detail of the interview guideline).

#### **4.8. Sampling**

The issue of sampling is crucial and lies at the heart of any good research. Smith (in Robson, 2002: 135) refers to it as “the search for typicality,” that is, the selection of subjects from whom what will be observed in a particular situation at a particular time is likely to apply more generally.

Walliman (2005) defines a sample as a selected number of cases in a population:

If you wish to assess the opinions of the members of a large union or organization, you will have to devise some way of selecting a ‘sample’--kind of subset of the members of the organization who you are able to question, and who form a fair representation of all the members of the organization, particularly if you wish to generalise from it (p. 276).

These words highlight the point that a good sample should be of a suitable type and size, and one that reflects a reasonable profile of the population it represents.

However, given the aims and purpose of the present study, the notion of sampling is taken to mean a reflection of the broad characteristics of a population (individuals studying in SfL feeder schools and classes) rather than being representative, which implies the ability to use certain statistical techniques. In line with such a definition, I adopted a purposeful sampling technique in the identification and selection of schools and interviewees.

By definition, purposeful sampling is the selection of respondents for an empirical study with a specific purpose in mind, that is, choosing participants based on the understanding that they have experience and knowledge of the case under investigation (Berg, 2004; Neuman, 2004). Walliman (2005) refers to this method of sampling as ‘theoretical sampling’, which he defines as “a method of getting information from a sample of a population that the researcher thinks knows much or has a considerable amount of knowledge about the subject in question” (p. 279).

Participants selected for this study were inclusive of, but not limited to, School for Life pupils, a cross section of parents of SfL pupils and graduates, SfL graduates in formal school, teachers and facilitators, community leaders, SfL local committee members, and SfL beneficiaries.

The study also utilized a combination of systematic and stratified random sampling to determine the selection of schools, respondent focus groups, and key informant interviewees. From 2005, SfL has run 40 CEP classes in Tolon Kumbungu; and approximately 80% of graduates of these classes have transitioned to formal schools in the district. Ten of these feeder schools were randomly selected to participate in English Language and Mathematics assessments utilizing NEA test instruments. The tests were conducted for all Primary 4 and Primary 6 pupils in the selected schools, which constituted 6.9% of a total of 145 primary schools in the district. The 2009 NEA was conducted for 3.5% of primary schools nationwide (MOE, 2009); thus, a 6.9% sample – almost twice the size of the national sample – at district level can be deemed to be sufficiently representative. Two out of the ten sampled school communities were selected for classroom observation and in-depth interviews. See table 4.2 below for linkages among research questions, methods and sampling method.



**Table 4.2: Data Linkages**

<b>Research Questions</b>	<b>Research Methods</b>	<b>Sampling Method</b>	<b>Sources/Respondents/ Focus groups</b>
<b>Research Question one</b>  <i>How is the SfL curriculum structured and delivered to provide opportunities for children to learn and transition to formal school?</i>	Curriculum materials/ documentary analysis  Classroom lesson observation  Semi structured and unstructured Interviews involving SfL staff, CEP facilitators, formal school teachers, GES staff	Systematic sampling  Stratified random sampling	GES syllabus, other curriculum materials, SfL facilitators manual, learners' primers  Current CEP beneficiaries (10)  CEP graduates (10)  Parents of CEP graduates transitioned to formal school (10)  Management committee (5)  School for Life staff (5)  CEP facilitators (2)
<b>Research Question two</b>  <i>How do SfL graduates perform in formal primary school following integration?</i>	P4/P6 Pupil Assessment in English and mathematics  Classroom lesson observation  Semi structured and unstructured Interviews involving school aged children, graduates of CEP, parents, school staff and community	Systematic sampling  Stratified random sampling	P4 and P6 formal school pupils (208)  Parents of CEP graduates transitioned to formal school (10)  School staff (21)  CEP Management committee (5)  Circuit Supervisor  School for Life staff (5)

	members.  Review of School and class record/pupil exercise books		
<b>Research Question 3</b>  <i>To what extent is the SfL curriculum key to the accelerated learning achievement of SfL learners/graduates?</i>	Curriculum materials/ documentary analysis  Classroom lesson observation  Semi structured and unstructured Interviews involving SfL staff, CEP facilitators, formal school teachers, GES staff		GES syllabus, other curriculum materials, SfL facilitators manual, learners' primers  Current CEP beneficiaries (10)  CEP graduates (10)  Management committee (5)  School for Life staff  CEP facilitators (2)
<b>Research Question 4</b>  <i>What do various stakeholders (teachers, parents and the community) perceive as unique in terms of the SfL programme?</i>	Semi structured and unstructured Interviews involving school aged children, graduates of CEP, parents, school staff and community members.		Current CEP beneficiaries (10) CEP graduates (10)  Parents of CEP graduates transitioned to formal school (10)  Management committee (5)  School for Life staff (5)  CEP facilitators (2)

#### 4.9. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data analysis in this study was descriptive, that is, conducted according to an analytic system that emerged from the research questions and data, rather than any existing set of categories or codes. The main conceptual task in understanding the data occurs at the data processing and analysis stage. This is particularly problematic for research utilizing a naturalistic framework. Miles (1979 in Lincoln and Guba, 1985) aptly characterizes the challenges thus:

Qualitative data tend to overload the researcher badly at almost every point: the sheer range of phenomena to be observed, the recorded volume of notes, the time required for write-up, coding and analysis can be overwhelming. But the most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated. For quantitative analysis there are a number of clear conventions the researcher can use. But the analyst faced with a bank of qualitative data has very few guidelines for protections against self-delusion, let alone the presentation of 'unreliable' or 'invalid' conclusions to scientific or policy-making audiences. How can we be sure that an 'earthy', 'undeniable' or 'serendipitous' finding is not, in fact, wrong? (p. 354)

In an attempt to overcome these obstacles, the present study utilized multiple complementary approaches aimed at deriving meaning from the collected data. Documentary evidence in the form of curriculum materials was analysed using the Sussex Scheme for Analysis of Curriculum Materials (see Appendix 3). The quantitative data from the pupil assessment was analysed with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, while the qualitative data from the observation and interviews were analysed descriptively.

The NEA assessment data was entered into SPSS 16.0 version with answers labelled as 'A' - 1, 'B' - 2, 'C' - 3, 'D' - 4. Syntax was developed to execute the total scores and run frequencies and answers re-coded to 1 and 0. All correct answers were coded as 1 and the others as zero. Missing values were coded as 99. In computing the score, the total score was divided by total number of questions and multiplied by 100 as a percentage. Competency level was determined by using the NEA minimum competency score of 35 and proficiency score of 55 (for competency levels 1 and 2).

Comp 1 < 35

Comp 2 < 55

Using crosstabs, data was then disaggregated by sex and student type.

#### **4.9.1. Qualitative Data Analysis**

The qualitative data analysis was continuous and cyclical. Analysis happened as the research was taking place as well as afterwards. This is because in qualitative data collection, there is the need to keep going back and forth between the research instrument, data collected and data participants in order to document emerging understandings, and revise the instrument in light of them. First, field notes taken during classroom observations were expanded by listening to audio-recordings of lessons. Details omitted from the notes were filled in and any incidents pertaining to teacher effectiveness were also noted at this stage. This process resulted in more detailed written records than the original notes.

Next, from these expanded field notes, original analytic categories were amended so that they more closely reflected what was captured by lesson observations. Repeated occurrences of significant events across classes, or those that differed greatly from place to place but which were not included in the original concepts, were noted, and new categories were constructed to accommodate these incidents. For instance the classroom observation instrument utilised categories for teacher effectiveness including lesson preparation, interaction with learners in lesson delivery and teachers' mastery over curriculum content. Given the social constructivist framework within which this research was being undertaken, it was critical to explore how lessons link up with the culture of the people and whether teachers made any effort to build on the experiences of the learners. Thus the original categories were expanded to accommodate the social constructivist framework of the research.

Last, the audio-recordings were listened to again to note the duration or count the occurrences of relevant incidents for analysis. In writing up the results, descriptions of activities could be retrieved from the field notes and the relevant segments of audio-recordings could be traced when illustrations were required.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) present a useful discussion of data analysis approaches based on a continuum elaborated by Goetz and LeCompte (1981) to represent the principal methods of processing qualitative data. This continuum illustrates the degree of convergence between general naturalistic inquiry and ethnography that is particularly evident in the domain of data analysis. The somewhat overlapping ranges on the continuum are inductive/deductive, generative/verificatory, constructive/enumerative, and subjective/objective (Goetz and LeCompte 1981).

As should be evident from the discussion so far in this chapter, this study is positioned towards the inductive/generative/constructivist/subjective pole. In other words, categories were not only taken from existing theory but developed from analysis of lesson observation notes, and then triangulated with interview and other data. I saw my research task as the identification and linking of constructs that might explain phenomena associated with classroom activity on the parts of learners and teachers. Thus the analysis emerged not only from the focus of the study and the data collection instruments utilized, but also from the perceptions and perspectives of the participants (including me, the researcher).

In the case of interviews, data obtained from the various participants was analysed using a combination of narrative, descriptive and interpretive approaches. The narrative approach treated the interview data as a story and situated account, and as an outcome of the application of the conceptual framework of the study, which is based on a constructivist view of learning, to participants' stories and experience of events (Jephcote et al., 2004). The interpretative approach allowed the researcher to "see and treat social actions and human activities as texts or as a collection of symbols expressing layers of meaning" (Berg, 2004: 266).

#### **4.10. Methodological Issues and Challenges**

##### **4.10.1. Access to Children**

The techniques I used in gaining access to children were informed by previous experience working with children in Ghana. There is also a wide body of methodological literature on access to children in development work (Valentine, 1999; Johnson et al., 1998; Ennew, 1995; Johnson and Ivan-Smith 1995). Methods recommended include visualization, and storytelling techniques in particular. However, I found out that the best approach was simply to talk to the children and let them present their own lives graphically. However, with children the extent to which one could discuss complex issues was limited. I found that children answered clearly if it was a matter of simply responding in the affirmative or negative, but more open-ended questions posed problems for the interaction. Consequently, I kept my enquiries simple and structured, and tried not to make subsequent claims about the opinions of children that could not be substantiated. I have also made it clear when it is my interpretation rather than what individuals told me by signalling respondents' own words (in translation). Yet, overall, I was extremely fortunate in my access to children and the richness of the data has much to do

with the rapport I established with them. I spent a lot of time talking with children, as well as observing them in their work activities.

#### **4.10.2. The Farming Season, and Implications for Available Time and School**

##### **Attendance**

The later part of my research period extended into the beginning of the farming season. While this had implications for school attendance and punctuality, it also affected how much time children had to spend with a researcher. Consequently, I was forced to meet participants in the evening and community members, including children, were not overly enthusiastic about engaging in intense discussion after a long day. Nevertheless, this eventuality also provided an opportunity to observe the community's evening activities and proved to be a source of valuable information on how people lived their lives.

##### **4.10.3. Translation**

Another issue relates to having to rely on an interpreter both to translate my questions and to convey participants' answers. Challenges around matters of translation are well documented (Ellen, 1984; Hammersley, 1992). However, I was very fortunate in my interpreter, who overall, was excellent and extremely conscientious, and we worked hard together at trying to avoid problems, although my competence in Dagbani, the language of the area, was never good enough to be certain of success. My interpreter was someone known to me whom I had worked with for several years on similar assignments. He was very familiar with Complementary Education Programme and School for Life, having worked on the SfL replication funded through USAID. He was also a former professional teacher and even though he was not a native Dagomba, he was fluent in Dagbani, with a university degree in Dagbani. Thus he perfectly understood both the field of enquiry and issues of translation in academic research.

In so far as is possible, the accuracy of records was ensured through checking and rechecking information in a variety of different ways and with different people. But, as with all data collection, and particularly under such circumstances, one cannot entirely rule out inexactness.

#### **4.10.4. Ethical Issues**

An additional factor relevant to this study is that it concerned a socially, economically and politically marginalized group – the ‘rural poor’ – and, within it, children; as well as issues of some sensitivity and political significance around their education. In respect of this, there are two areas in which research is an inherently political exercise: in the relation between the researcher and the researched, and in the use of research findings.

In considering the first of these areas, it was issues of consent and confidentiality that were especially important, given that the study involved children and issues of some sensitivity. The principle of informed consent demands that the researcher should inform potential participants about the nature and purpose of the study, should obtain their permission to be part of it, and should assure them of confidentiality (O’Connell et al, 1994). However, obtaining genuinely informed consent is by no means straightforward (Wilson, 1992). Gaining permission to involve an individual presupposes that the research design can be successfully explained to him or her (Burgess, 1984), a point that is of particular concern when a study involves individuals who may not be intellectually mature enough to provide such consent.

According to Mauthner (1997), children are constitutionally unable to give their consent and are formally in the care of their parents or guardians; therefore, it is necessary to obtain permission for their participation from such adults. However, this is an inadequate premise since it implies that approval from the children themselves should not be sought. Accordingly, in addition to acquiring consent from their guardians, I aimed to explain the study in terms that were comprehensible to children and in this way secure their permission as well. There are, of course, limitations to such a stance, both in light of what has been said about intellectual maturity and the fact that in my experience– as in most societies – children in Ghana are in a subordinate position, and expected to be humble, obedient and respectful of their elders (Stephens, 2000). Therefore, the degree to which child participants in this study can be said to have consented must be seen in this light.

In addition, given that issues raised may be sensitive and children may not wish their parents and teachers to be aware of what they have said (as was in fact the case), it was particularly important to pay attention to the issue of confidentiality, both in ensuring that information did not get back to adults, and in the writing of the thesis. For this reason, the names of all child respondents have been changed. The names of GES officers and community members have

also been altered; however, SfL facilitators consented to having their actual identities revealed.

The relationship between the researcher and the researched was not limited to children and their parents. Since I planned to stay in the village and become a temporary member of the community, I hoped that my collaboration with a non-governmental organization (NGO) would assist in addressing some of the ethical concerns that arose out of my relationship with the community, while simultaneously dealing with issues relating to the accumulation of knowledge that might be of no direct use to the group under study (Akeroyd, 1984). Thus, being introduced to the community by the NGO School for Life assisted in my establishment as a ratified guest in a manner that caused the least possible anxiety to the individuals concerned and avoided the raising of unrealistic expectations with regard to my role.

Nevertheless, I am aware that my presence and ignorance of certain cultural values created problems. I found myself in the situation experienced by a lot of indigenous researchers. I was an insider and an outsider at the same time. I felt I was an insider because of my familiarity with the field of enquiry and the fact that I was a Ghanaian who had worked for several years in Northern Ghana. However, once I was introduced from the district office as a doctoral candidate, I was seen differently by research participants and even people I had worked with in the past. The fact that I did not speak the local language proficiently made the issues more complicated. Although one of the advantages of prolonged fieldwork was that I did eventually build trust and acceptance – and strove hard to do so by participating in the life of the community, learning the language of greeting, showing respect for customs, etc. – this did not prevent my sojourn in these schools and communities from causing a degree of unease.

#### **4.11. Reflexivity**

Critical self-reflection or reflexivity is crucial in ensuring the accuracy of research findings. The social researcher, in particular, is faced with a lot of dilemmas given the subject of study. In this particular research, self-critical analysis and reflection were critical in ensuring that the findings of the study were true reflections of what pertained on the ground and what the people wanted to present (Roller, 2012; Macbeth, 2001). This is because social research is crucially dependent on the relationship between the researcher and the research participants (Roller, 2012; RECOUP, 2008). The interpersonal relationships that lead to the co-production



of research findings depend on the dynamics of the relationship between the researcher and the researched. Thus it is only by being reflexive can the researcher ensure that findings are accurate devoid of personal biases and not influenced by power dynamics (Roller, 2012; Valentine 1999).

In this study, there were a number of relationships and interactions that had to be negotiated to ensure that research findings were presented accurately. My relationship with the primary beneficiaries, the children, was very crucial. So were my interactions with the parents, community members and school staff. In all these interactions there were various dynamics at play and it was important for me to reflect critically on how my presence affected all these different categories of participants and the information they presented (Roller, 2012; Macbeth, 2001).

In my interactions with the children, there were the obvious ethical dilemmas of working with children, issues of consent and anonymity, as outlined in the previous section. In addition, negotiating the interactions and discussions and intruding their space were all issues that had to be considered carefully in weighing on the research responses. I was both an outsider and insider and the principle of consent was adhered to by explaining the research rationale to the children. I was, however, aware that they were more or less obligated to speak to me given that the introductions came mainly from the community leaders and the school staff. Thus the children were not in a position to refuse talking to me (Barker and Weller, 2003; Valentine, 1999). This also implied that the children will assume that I was an official of some sort either with School for Life or the Government so they were hesitant to talk and it was possible that they were not sure how the information they provided me will be used. Thus it was difficult, for instance, for the children to be critical of their experiences in the formal school. This awareness of my position of power was crucial in the efforts I put into building the trust of the children, not rushing through the research interviews and utilising the PLA methodologies that allowed the children to present their own daily lives visually (Valentine, 1999). I also found out that the children were freer to talk when I spoke to them individually.

Observing and interacting with school staff and SfL facilitators showed similar power dynamics at play. For the school staff, I was introduced by the Circuit Supervisor who accompanied me initially. Thus they were obliged to be on their best behaviour and it was only after the initial weeks that they started relaxing around me and being themselves. It is

also important to note that being introduced by School for Life also created a dilemma in terms of the accuracy of some of the data particularly the interview and observation data. In some respects, I was seen as an official of the organisation and so participants were hesitant to discuss negative aspects of the programme with me. However, as noted, these tensions and unease were reduced and done away with the longer I stayed in the schools and communities. Parents were also more relaxed when I tried to talk to them informally than during the focus group discussions. Thus varying my methods of engagement, putting people at ease and triangulating the information through the complementary research methods all helped to provide a more accurate research data.

#### **4.12. Summary**

The methodology employed in this study followed a mixed methods approach to research. It took the linkage between the School for Life Complementary Education Programme and the formal school curriculum as a case and examined it in its real-life context. In so doing, it collected data from three main sources – the planned, implemented and attained curricula. This was accomplished by using the complementary data gathering techniques of documentary study, assessment, interviews, and observation. Given the overall aim of the study, this mixture of data sources and gathering instruments was regarded as potentially advantageous, as it allowed for a thorough investigation of the research questions.

The next chapter present the findings and analysis of the documentary evidence gathered to answer the research questions.

## **Chapter 5: The School for Life Complementary Education Programme and the Ghanaian Primary School Curricula**

Given that the central question this thesis attempts to answer is how the School for Life Complementary Education Programme curriculum is structured and delivered to provide opportunities for children to learn and transition to formal school, it is important to understand the curricula of both institutions. The School for Life curriculum is designed to provide functional literacy and numeracy for out-of-school children. The curriculum was specifically written to take cognisance of the environment and context of the learners, is learner-centred and focused strictly on meeting the core objective of facilitating literacy and numeracy. To ensure that this is done effectively, the language of instruction as prescribed and laid out in the materials is in the local language with clearly scripted user friendly facilitator's manual being the core guide for literacy and numeracy instruction. The formal school curriculum however follows the traditional wider curriculum with Ghanaian language, English language and mathematics part of the larger school instructional package.

As noted in the review of the prevailing literature, an effective understanding of any curriculum entails an examination of its whole paradigm; that is, the planned, implemented and attained curriculum. This chapter looks at the planned curriculum for both School for Life and formal school. The planned curriculum captures the formal or intended purpose of the schooling process (Kelly, 2009; Shulman, 2004; Alexander, 2000; Hawes, 1979). Understanding the planned curriculum also serves as a guide to an effective assessment of how the curriculum is implemented (which is presented in the next chapter).

It is important to note that the intended curriculum is manifested in official policy documents, syllabuses, and teaching and learning materials. Accordingly, an understanding of the planned curriculum demands an analysis of all its components. Therefore, this chapter presents findings from an analysis of documentary study of all the curricula materials of both the Complementary Education Programme and the formal primary school and interviews with the developers of the programmes.

Implicit in this analysis is a comparison of the two curricula. In balancing the two models, it is hoped to give a clear picture of whether the CEP curriculum has been designed to meet the expectation of transferring learners to the formal school. However, this thesis refrains from making value judgements around the question of which is the better option, as the study does

not seek to reach conclusions with regard to choice of schooling. Rather, the comparison and analysis focus on the content of curriculum materials related to literacy and numeracy, including the general aims and objectives of the curriculum, and the logical sequence and selection of topics or lessons. It also looks at how teachers are expected to deliver this content to learners, taking into consideration methodology, time allocation and utilisation, expected language of instruction, and teacher competence.

This chapter thus analyses the intended or planned curricula of the two systems, placing the emphasis on their respective contents and how they synchronise with each other. Drawing on multiple approaches to understanding the school curriculum, the thesis utilises an adaptation of the *Sussex Scheme for Analysis of Curriculum Materials* (Eraut et al., 1975 – see Appendix 4 for a detailed scheme), which serves as guide to an initial description and understanding of the subject. As explained in Chapter 4, the Sussex Scheme helps to define the curriculum; provides basic information that helps in an understanding of its rationale; and serves as a guide to the enumeration of curriculum contents, including teacher and pupil materials, and how they are designed to complement each other to meet education objectives.

Central to this thesis and also critical to an understanding of the planned curriculum, is the social constructivist theory of teaching and learning. The analysis presented here takes cognisance of how curriculum contents create a reference point for both teachers and learners to construct knowledge. As noted in Chapter 3, social constructivist theory presupposes that curriculum materials are developed based on the experiences and culture of both teachers and learners, and that the teaching methodology implied by the use of these materials is such that an effective learning community is created (Pritchard, 2009; Gadotti, 1994; Freire, 1970; Sutherland, 1992). While the developers of the School for Life curriculum do not profess to utilise social constructivism, given the objectives, context and prescribed pedagogy, this theory best helps in understanding and analysing the programme.

This chapter has three main sections. Section 5.1 discusses the formal school curriculum. The section details the general aims and learning targets of the curriculum, the organisation of the curriculum, scope and content of the English language syllabus and the structure of the syllabus. Section 5.2 discusses the SfL curriculum, its facilitator's manual and lesson topic, structure, selection and sequencing of literacy instruction. While section 5.3 analyses the linkages between the two curricula in terms of how they fit together within the aims of

moving a pupil from School for Life to the more formal school curriculum. This is followed by the chapter summary

### **5.1. The Formal Primary School Planned Curriculum**

In reviewing the lower primary school curriculum, reference is made to its English Language, Mathematics and Ghanaian Language syllabuses only. This is because the School for Life programme focuses on literacy and numeracy (Hartwell, 2008; Casely Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007), and these three subjects together constitute the main vehicles for providing the same foundation in the formal school. However, in the main, the literacy and English Language syllabuses of the two curricula are used to illustrate the key findings of the study, as these subjects are the foundations of all learning in the formal school. In addition, the analysis focuses on lower primary school (Primary 1 to 3) because School for Life graduates generally transition to the formal school at Primary 4 or later (Hartwell, 2008; Casely Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007), and are thus deemed to have mastered the knowledge and skills requirements of Primary 1 to 3. It is also important to note that the GES seeks to ensure that all pupils achieve literacy in a Ghanaian Language and English language by the end of Primary 3 (MOE, 2008).

The formal school curriculum materials used in this study comprise English Language Syllabus, Mathematics Syllabus and Ghanaian Language Syllabus. Teacher and pupil materials analysed for this study are the English and Mathematics Pupil's Books (1–3), English and Mathematics Teacher's Books (1–3), National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) Teacher and Pupil's Books and Textbooks and Learning Materials Programme (TLMP) materials for Kindergarten. Syllabi contents consist of the key policy documents that are developed by the GES. These serve as the main guide for formal school teachers and are used as the basis for the development of weekly lesson plans. The teacher's and pupil's books are expected to be based on the syllabus.

The Ghana formal primary school curriculum lays emphasis on literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills structured under the following learning areas: English Language; Ghanaian Language; Integrated Science; Mathematics; Natural Science; Physical Education; Religious & Moral Education; Creative Arts; and ICT (GES, 2012).

The English Language syllabus emphasises the importance of English in Ghana, the developers highlighting the role it plays in national life as:

...the language of government and administration. It is the language of commerce, the learned professions and the media. As an international language, it is the most widely used on the internet and in most parts of the world (GES, 2007a:ii).

It is also proclaimed that the medium of school instruction from Primary 4 is to be the English Language (GES, 2012; GES, 2007a); thus, all subjects must henceforth be studied in this medium, the implication being that proficiency in English is a prerequisite for competency in all other subjects.

In terms of Mathematics, the primary school syllabus emphasises “mathematical knowledge and skills that should help the young person to develop basic numeracy competence to be able to function effectively in society” (GES, 2007b). The syllabus further highlights that effective societal function:

...demands that young people should be able to use numbers competently, read and interpret numeral data, reason logically, solve problems involving calculations and mathematical reasoning, as well as communicate effectively with other people using accurate mathematical data and interpretations (GES, 2007b: 2).

These are the necessary skills required of young people to enhance their chances of taking advantage of the numerous opportunities in the fields of science, engineering, technology and manufacturing. The syllabus is also intended to help pupils develop an interest in the use of mathematics and the ability to conduct investigations using mathematical concepts. It is the acquisition of these skills and the critical capability of functional numeracy that the national curriculum aims to emphasise (GES, 2007b). Accordingly, the syllabus places great importance on the development and use of basic mathematical knowledge and skills.

The major areas of mathematical content covered in all the primary grades are as follows:

- Numbers and investigation with numbers
- Shape and space
- Measurement
- Collecting and handling data
- Problem solving (GES, 2007b).

The Ghanaian Language subject is aptly named Ghanaian Language and Culture and its effective teaching is expected to contribute to the realisation of the national objectives of making Ghanaians literate in their language and knowledgeable about their culture (GES, 2007c). This subject is aimed at integrating the receptive and productive skills in the teaching and learning of Language and Culture. The three core skills: oral, reading and writing are planned to be taught throughout the six years of primary schooling beginning with oral skills (GES, 2007c).

These three subject syllabi with their accompanying teacher and pupil materials and resources thus constitute the planned curriculum of the formal primary school with regard to delivering literacy and numeracy instruction. Central to understanding the formal school system is a review and analysis of these foundational documents to ensure that they reflect current research, that they constitute a robust base for teaching and learning, and that they encourage an efficient approach to literacy and numeracy learning. The influence of the syllabi is pervasive across primary education in Ghana. Teacher preparation, curriculum and course design are built on the syllabi, teacher certification is designed around them, teachers develop their daily lesson notes based on the syllabi, and Head Teachers and circuit supervisors check the alignment of lesson notes and syllabi.

#### **5.1.1. General Aims, Learning Objectives and Targets**

The formal school syllabus has clearly stated aims and learning objectives in its introduction, as captured below.

The English language syllabus has been designed to help pupils to:

- Develop the basic language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing
- Attain high proficiency in English to help them in their study of other subjects as well as in the study of English at [a] higher level
- Cultivate the habit of [and] interest in reading
- Communicate effectively in English (GES, 2007a).

The Mathematics syllabus has also been designed to help pupils to:

- Develop basic ideas of quantity and space

- Use basic mathematics and necessary strategies for solving problems encountered in daily life by recognizing relationships between numbers
- Reason logically by selecting and applying criteria for classification and generalization
- Communicate effectively using mathematical terms and symbols
- Use appropriate instruments for various systems of measurement
- Carry out investigations using various mathematical ideas and operations
- Develop the habits of diligence, perseverance, confidence and precision as a result of their mathematical training (GES, 2007b).

The Ghanaian language subject is designed to help pupils to:

- Develop cultural and linguistic awareness
- Attain competency in speaking, reading and writing their language
- Appreciate the historical and cultural heritage of their linguistic community
- Acquire the socio-cultural values in the literature of their language (GES, 2007c).

The SfL curriculum has no stated general aims, although objectives are stipulated in the Facilitator's Manual for the teaching of various topics.

In clearly stating aims in the document, the formal school syllabus thus meets one of the critical definitions of the curriculum; it being a plan or an intention of what is to happen in the school or classroom (Kelly, 2009; Hawes, 1979; Kerr, 1968; Tyler, 1949). These aims also fit in the Ghana national agenda for provision of education as stated in the education reform document: the acquisition of literacy, numeracy and thinking skills are prerequisites for the development of productive citizenry (GOG, 2008). However, one would expect that they go further to set out standards and milestones to which teachers and pupils will work towards. Given that pupil assessment is seen as critical in the formal school syllabus, it will be important to have clear benchmarks to which teacher and pupil performance will be measured against or the efficiency of the curriculum could be gauged (Kelly, 2009; Schulman, 2004; Hawes, 1979). It is known that the GES has literacy standards and milestones developed since 2005 (See Appendix 11 for literacy standards and milestones). The GES Literacy Standards and Milestones and the Standards and Milestones for Speaking and Listening spell out the knowledge and skills that pupils should have at each grade level (USAID, 2012; Akyeampong et al, 2011).



The Literacy Standards and Milestones specify what pupils should know and be able to do in reading and writing at each grade band (KG1-P1, P2-P3, and P4-P6). The document also specifies the role of the L1 and L2 at the grade levels. The standards state what pupils should know and be able to do, and milestones state steps along the way to reaching the standard. The milestones are organized according to critical components of reading and writing. They state specific areas of knowledge and abilities in each of these components. These are, however, significantly absent in both the Ghanaian and English Language syllabi. Thus creating a gap in how teachers are to meet the objectives of the curriculum. The syllabus documents thus do not provide sufficient guidance and support to teachers to enable them assist children to learn to read and write and meet the core aims of the curriculum.

### **5.1.2. Organization of the Curriculum**

The formal lower primary school curriculum is structured to cover the first six years of education. Each year's work is divided into units whose topics are arranged in the sequence in which teachers are expected to teach them. No attempt has been made to break each year's work into terms (GES, 2007a; 2007b). This is preferable because it is quite difficult to predict with any degree of accuracy the rate of progress of pupils during these early stages. Moreover, curriculum developers wished to discourage teachers from forcing the instructional pace, advising them to ensure that pupils progressively acquire a good understanding and application of the material specified for each year's class work. It is thus hoped that no topics will be glossed over for lack of time, creating gaps in pupils' knowledge (GES, 2007a; GES, 2007b).

Such rationalisation of the lack of concrete termly content coverage leaves a lot of room for teachers to decide what to teach according to their pupils' pace of learning. Nevertheless, it also allows children to progress from class to class without necessarily covering the knowledge and skill requirements necessary for effective study in each subsequent year. The Ministry of Education's annual sector reports have consistently acknowledged this issue as one of the reasons why pupils do not achieve competencies at their grade level in the formal primary school system (MOE 2008; MOE, 2010).

While such seeming flexibility may be positive in empowering the teacher to take charge of the curriculum transformation process, it also does not provide guidance to the teacher in what children can and are expected to learn in concrete time periods. Teachers and pupils are

also expected to complete the year's work without exception but have no standards and milestones to work towards. It is also critical to point out that learning in schools is a planned and formalized process and does not happen by chance (Pritchard, 2009). The school curriculum and instruction processes ensure that children acquire the skills, knowledge and attitude deemed by curriculum developers as necessary to function as productive citizens of society. Teachers who are key in the transformation and implementation of the curriculum into teachable units will therefore need to be supported with clear guidelines and materials (Hawes, 1979).

### **5.1.3. Scope and Content of the English Language Syllabus**

The English Language syllabus is designed to integrate both the receptive and productive skills of the language, being divided into five sections that address the acquisition of Listening and Speaking, Grammar, Reading, Writing and Composition, and Library Study (see Appendix 3 for details of these sections). All sections are intended to be covered in a forty-week school year (Adu -Yeboah, 2011; GES, 2007a). There is a clear attempt to suggest how many lesson periods should be devoted to each section. In total, eight 40-minute periods each week are allocated for the teaching of English Language at the lower primary level (GES, 2007a).

However, this is not manifested in the classroom, as English Language competes with the subjects of Mathematics, Ghanaian Language, Social Science, Religious and Moral Education, Physical Education, and so on. The present study found that in total, actual school timetables allocated 9 hours per week to the teaching of English Language, Mathematics and Ghanaian Language combined. This compares to the 15 hours a week devoted to Literacy, Numeracy and Life Skills in SfL classes. The Ghana Ministry of Education over the years has expressed concern over the overcrowding of the primary school timetable which has prevented a clear and consistent attention to entrenching the core skills of literacy and numeracy (GOG, 2008; Nudzor, 2007).

It has been noted in chapter 2 that there is always a gap between policy and practice. This discrepancy between the plans and or intentions and its practical manifestation could be as a result of realities on the ground or the inability of the implementer to reconcile with the ideals of the planners (Kelly, 2009). In the case of the formal school curriculum, while there are clearly stated goals of prioritizing literacy and numeracy, this is not manifested in the

development of the syllabus. Literacy and numeracy could have been developed and instructed across the curriculum and its subjects such as religious and moral education and social studies. However, in the Ghana formal school curriculum, literacy and numeracy are taught only through the three subjects noted. There is therefore a competition for space and time in the available school time period. This compares to the School for Life programme where literacy and numeracy are the prime focus and is achieved through functional topics and subjects.

#### **5.1.4. Syllabus Structure: Sections and Units**

The GES syllabus is divided into sections and units. The year's work is divided into sections, each of which consists of a fairly homogeneous body of knowledge within the subject area. Within each section, there are a number of units, each of which consists of a more closely related body of knowledge and skills. For instance section one of the Ghanaian Language syllabus deals with oral skills instruction with the first unit in this section titled "The individual". The contents for this unit are: the parts of the body e.g. head; functions of the parts of the body, e.g. ear – for listening; kinship terms, e.g. mother; Home: bathroom, kitchen bedroom, living room, etc.; School: buildings, table, chair (GES, 2007c) (See table 5.1 below and Appendix 3 for details).

**Table 5.1: Ghanaian Language syllabus structure**

Unit	Specific Objectives	Content	Teaching and learning activities	Evaluation
UNIT 1  The individual	<p>The pupil will be able to:</p> <p>1.1.1 name the parts of the body.</p> <p>1.1.2 state at least one reason why every part of the body is important.</p>	<p>The parts of the body e.g. head, hand, leg, etc.</p> <p>Functions of the parts of the body, e.g. ear – for listening, eye – for seeing nose – for smelling legs – for walking etc.</p>	<p>Through dialogue, lead the pupils to point to the various parts of the body and name them.</p> <p>Teacher to assist pupils to discuss functions of any three parts of the body.</p> <p>Guide pupils to relate the importance of the parts of the body to the roles they play at home and in school.</p>	<p>Pupils to name parts of the body in a picture/drawing.</p> <p>What will happen if one part of the body doesn't function well? - What happens if one refuses to perform his/her duties at home/school?</p>

*Source : Ghanaian Language and Culture syllabus (GES, 2007c)*

The syllabus is also divided into five pedagogical aspects as follows: unit, specific objectives, content, teaching and learning activities and evaluation (See above). A description of the contents of each aspect follows. Finally teachers are encouraged to prepare effectively for each lesson. The syllabus cannot be taken as a substitute for lesson plans. It is therefore necessary that a scheme of work and lesson plans for teaching the units of the syllabus are developed (Kelly, 2009; Shulman, 2004; Alexander, 2000; Eraut et al, 1975). The syllabus thus presents a framework which has to be expanded and transformed into the actual lesson of the day, week and term. The teacher therefore becomes the implementer and manager of the syllabus at its most functional level, the classroom; ‘translating’ and ‘transforming’ the curriculum into lesson plans, tasks and activities. This approach fits into Alexander’s (2000) theory of curriculum metamorphosis discussed in Chapter 3.

The teacher thus assumes a sense of control and ownership of the curriculum which could lead to the implementation of the curriculum being tailored to meet the individual needs of

the children and the context of teaching and learning. On the other hand this approach could lead to investing in the teacher forms of pedagogy that attribute great power to the teacher and reduce the act of discovering to a mere transference of existing knowledge with the teacher becoming the specialist in transferring knowledge (Gadotti, 1994). This can be ameliorated with teacher training and orientation programmes that ensure that teachers have the skills to 'translate' and 'transform' the curriculum with the learners at the centre of this process. However, given that the developers of teacher training curriculum do not completely synchronise with those of the primary school curriculum, we also have the potential of teachers who do not have the requisite content knowledge expected to perform this curriculum management function (Adu- Yeboah, 2011; Akyeampong et al. 2011, Shulman, 2004).

As with any other subject, the English Language syllabus requires the five above mentioned aspects to be taken into account in teaching the four modalities of English: reading, writing, speaking and listening. The syllabus also includes sections on grammar, but while these are presented independently, there is an assumption that they will be integrated into the delivery of teaching and learning activities (Adu-Yeboah, 2011). The English language syllabus also concerns the teaching of English to children who are learning the language at school only; they do not speak English at home, and many of them have limited exposure to oral and written English in the community (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009; Pinnock, 2009; Adger, 2008; MOE, 2008).

The language policy in Ghana stipulates that local languages be used as medium of instruction from P1 –P3, with English Language being taught as a subject (GES, 2012). However, from P4, the medium of instruction is expected to be English across the curriculum. Thus the lack of prior knowledge of the English language already places the formal primary school pupil at a disadvantage in being able to learn both the English Language as a subject and also as a conduit to mastering the other subjects in the syllabus (MOE, 2008; Pinnock, 2009). In Chapter 3, it was stressed that for social construction of knowledge to happen in the classroom, there is the need for meaningful dialogue between teacher and pupil thorough the utilisation of a familiar language. Without this condition, the formal school curriculum becomes deficient in ensuring leaner centred education.

The English Language syllabus also makes the assumption that on reaching Primary 1, children are in a position to transfer pre-reading skills gained from two years of kindergarten (KG), the GES stating that:

As preparation for the formal study of English, it is assumed that pupils already have a two-year background of preschool language experience which has focused mainly on the acquisition of oral skills and such pre-reading and pre-writing skills as visual discrimination, visual motor, visual comprehension, visual memory, auditory discrimination, auditory comprehension, drawing, colouring, painting, patterning, pattern writing and some phonological awareness (GES, 2007a:iii).

Yet, until 2004, Kindergarten was not recognized as part of the formal education system and there was no structured programme of learning at that level (GOG, 2008).

The GES English language syllabus does not assist teaching on a daily basis, but rather it constitutes a guide to teaching content, listing the oral, reading and written domains that teachers should address at the different grade levels (Adger, 2009). The syllabus also assumes that teachers have the skills to effectively perform these tasks. The fallacy in that assumption has already been noted above given the disconnect between teacher training curriculum and the primary school curriculum. The syllabus document suggests that these domains should be taught in units, but this is misleading, as, in most cases, the various domains are designed to be addressed across the whole school year rather than in time-limited units (GES, 2007a; Adger, 2008). For example, listening, reciting and singing (Primary 1, Section 1, Unit 1) should be conducted throughout the school year rather than addressed as a single unit, as is also the case with silent reading (Primary 3, Section 3, Unit 1). However, the guideline for Primary 6 writing lists some units that could be appropriately taught in time-limited segments (GES, 2007a; Adger, 2008).

Learning theory informs us that people acquire knowledge on the basis of what they already know (Pritchard, 2009; Sefa Dei, 2004; Bigge and Shermis, 2004; Gadotti, 1994; Kolb, 1984; Friere, 1970). Therefore, any curriculum should be sequenced in order to support incremental learning in lessons. However, in the case of the Ghanaian primary school curriculum, something new is constantly being taught. If one takes a look at unit themes, as developed in the pupil's books, it may be seen that rather than building on each other, they jump around – greetings, animals, festivals, morals, etc. (GES, 2007a).

For example, in the English syllabus, the first unit in Pupil's Book 1 is 'Names, Greetings and Farewell'. This is followed by 'Things we know' and 'Numbers and shapes' (Anyidohu

et al, 2008). There does not seem to be a thematic linkage between these units. The title of Unit 27 is ‘Stop Thief’ with a picture and reading exercise centred on catching a thief; yet, the very next page shows pictures of fruit and vegetables that children are supposed to look at and name (Anyidohu et al, 2008: 78). Again, even within the same unit, it is difficult to see the linkages that will assist pupils to assimilate knowledge based on previous experience. Gadotti (1994) notes that cognitive development is dependent on the pupil’s participation in the production and discovery of knowledge in the school process which is made possible if the two processes are seen as a whole and linked to the concrete reality of the child. Gadotti further cites Paulo Friere that, “the problem of the school system is not just the lack of schools but also the lack of insertion in the social context. Without this schools give no hope” (p9).

It is also important to note that while the syllabus makes a claim that the four modalities of English (reading writing listening speaking) are integrated they are not treated as such by means of any thematic or cognitive assimilation. In the same unit described above, while the pictures used for illustration and reading practice are based on fruit and vegetables, the writing exercise goes under the heading, ‘Do not tell lies’ (Anyidohu et al, 2008: 78). Thus, the composition practice does not seem to have any bearing on the reading and picture discussion.

Again, although literacy and numeracy are the two key goals of the primary school curriculum (GOG, 2008; MOE 2008, GES 2007a; GES 2007b), neither the Ghanaian nor the English Language syllabus is designed to teach reading effectively. The Ghanaian language syllabus is structured to teach language rules, reading and cultural studies. Thus reading is just a component of that syllabus and even that is not addressed with clear strategies on how to get children to read with no reference to any of the known approaches to teaching reading (GES, 2007c). As noted in section 5.1.3, The English syllabus is also designed to teach the main rudiments of language and literacy: Listening and Speaking, Grammar, Reading, Writing and Composition, and Library Study. There is however more focus on teaching the rules of grammar and other language related skills. In chapter 3, various approaches to effective literacy instruction are discussed including findings presented in the American National Reading Panel Report (NRP). The NRP lists five key skills that need to be interactively taught to ensure effective literacy instruction: phonemic awareness and instruction, phonics instruction, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary (Akyeampong et al, 2011; NRP, 2000). There is no systematic attempt to address these literacy skills in the

English Language syllabus. Rather teachers are expected to use the “look and say” and phonics approaches for literacy instruction.

In Chapter 3, the necessity and advantage for children to begin reading in their mother tongue and transfer reading skills attained to the foreign language is discussed (Dubeck et al, 2012; Akyeampong et al, 2011; Trudell, 2007). One would expect a linkage between the Ghanaian language syllabus and the English language syllabus to create a comprehensive literacy and language syllabus that meets all that is known about effective literacy instruction. However, the two syllabi have no connection at all. Thus, the GES syllabi do not address literacy in any systematic, functional or coherent manner. Yet, the ability to read is a foundation skill for all subsequent learning; and pupils whose reading skills are weak will fall further and further behind as they move through primary and lower secondary school (Pinnock, 2009; Gadotti, 1994; Sutherland, 1992). Outside the GES syllabus, there is evidence of formalised literacy instruction in the formal primary school which is discussed in the next section.

### **5.1.5. National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP)**

As noted earlier, the Ghanaian formal school curriculum does not address literacy instruction as clearly as the CEP materials. Thus the CEP graduate enrolling in formal schools with a local language literacy competence may find themselves in a strange environment and may find it difficult to integrate. However, since 2009, an attempt has been made to introduce into the formal primary sector an early grade reading initiative referred to as the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP). While this programme is designed to teach reading in all lower primary schools in the country, it still exists independently of the main GES syllabus (Adu- Yeboah, 2011; GES, 2007a). Given its bilingual (Ghanaian and English languages) characteristic, NALAP could well serve as a smooth transitional programme for CEP graduates entering formal school.

Furthermore, the GES notes that:

The overall goal of NALAP is to equip the majority of children leaving the basic education system with the skills of literacy that will improve their learning abilities and serve as a springboard for further academic pursuit. This means that by P3, pupils would be functionally literate and would have achieved reading fluency in their local language (L1) and in English (L2) (GES, 2012).



NALAP explicitly makes a connection between the use of a child's first language (L1) and English (L2) in acquiring reading and writing skills. In linking the capacity to read and write in English to a foundation of literacy in a language that pupils understand and speak, NALAP overcomes the presumed conflict between L1 and L2 education (Hartwell, 2012; Pinnock, 2009).

The NALAP methodology and materials are reportedly founded on research into the manner in which children learn to read, and the inclusion of Ghanaian culture and life; the approach thus begins by drawing on pupils' existing experience, knowledge and interests (Hartwell, 2012; Gadotti, 1994; Sutherland, 1992). This potentially makes classroom learning engaging and interesting, since pupils are able to actively participate.

Nevertheless, NALAP also has some significant systemic weaknesses, which now threaten its sustainability. As noted, NALAP is still outside the mainstream syllabus with no linkage to the pre-service teacher training curriculum. One consequence of this is that with a high turnover of senior staff in the MOE, some new senior officers in key positions are not aware of NALAP or its approach (GES, 2012; USAID, 2012). This coupled with high levels of primary teacher turnover and a two to three-year life span for instructional materials, it is likely that the literacy approach of NALAP will soon be lost to classrooms, schools and the education system as a whole. It also important to note that USAID support to NALAP ended in 2010 and there has been no further input into the programme.

#### **5.1.6. Prescribed Teaching Methods**

The GES English Language syllabus itself does not spell out its preferred methods of pedagogy, merely stating that a variety of methods should be used and that teaching should be inspirational (GES, 2007a). It also stresses the importance of practice:

English is a subject in which rules of grammar and usage have to be learnt precisely and applied in a variety of situations. Lots of practice on the part of pupils is therefore required for mastery. The instructional model to bear in mind is understanding followed by practice (GES, 2007).

The syllabus goes on to describe four kinds of teaching method:

##### **1. Exposition**

This includes explanation by the teacher and pupils' supervised reading from their textbooks.

## 2. Discussion

This includes the teacher asking questions and interaction between pupils.

## 3. Demonstration and Experiments

This includes demonstrations by the teacher using concrete objects and models, and pupils conducting supervised experiments.

## 4. Exercise

This includes oral exercises, written exercises, doing exercises on the board, and competitions (GES, 2007a).

Thus, the GES English Language syllabus does not specify prescribed modes of teaching; indicating that the pedagogical notes therein are not intended to be exhaustive, it encourages teachers to experiment with their own methods and approaches as they think fit. Nevertheless, the syllabus does include a section under the heading ‘Teaching and Learning Activities’ for each topic. In previous sections, the concept of the teacher as the master and manager of the curriculum is discussed. This is with respect to transforming the curriculum into applicable scheme of work and lesson plans. This role is yet again confirmed in this section in allowing the teacher the latitude and flexibility to choose among different teaching methods. What is positive is that there is some guidance within which the teacher is supposed to operate and these suggested teaching methods will serve as guide and assistance in getting the teacher to plan lessons appropriately. The various methods advocated in the syllabi also suggest an effort by the developers to get teachers to lean towards more pupil engagement and activity centred lesson delivery.

The developers of the curriculum make an assumption that teachers will utilise the above methods and deliver learner-centred instruction to the children. There is however evidence in the literature that this assumption may be misplaced. We have noted in Chapter 3, the challenges of implementing learner-centred education in Ghana and other African countries. The social context of education delivery, the lack of training, the culture of the school and lack of infrastructure all combine to make it almost impossible to implement learner-centred education (Schweinfurth, 2011; Akyeampong et al, 2006; Tabulawa, 1997). The challenges inherent in the language of instruction policy which creates the environment for teacher-centred instruction is also noted in Chapter 3: an English-medium curriculum almost guarantees teacher talk lessons (Opoku-Amankwaah, 2009; Qorro, 2009; Trudell, 2007).

Thus without clear guidelines on teaching there is no guarantee that the suggested teaching methods laid out in the formal school syllabus will translate into learner-centred instruction

Chapter 5 has so far mapped out the requirements of the lower primary school curriculum with particular emphasis on acquisition of literacy skills. The discussions that the formal primary school curriculum makes literacy and numeracy the primary goals of the education process are shown to be a fallacy. Teachers are assumed to possess the necessary skills needed to effectively manage and implement the curriculum at the classroom level. Thus even though the syllabus serves as a guide, there is a lot of room left for the teacher to progress lessons according to the pace of children and to select appropriate teaching methods that are all deemed to foster learner engagement and participation. It has also been shown that there are gaps in coherence within units in the syllabus and linkages between the teacher materials and what teachers are required to teach may not always be clear. All these coupled with the lack of clarity regarding the language of instruction are likely to pose significant challenges to a new entrant midstream into the formal school of which category School for Life graduates belong. The section that follows looks at the School for Life curriculum as planned and how it enables the learner to join the formal system effectively.

## **5.2. School for Life Materials**

The School for Life Complementary Education Programme curriculum materials comprise literacy primers, numeracy materials, and a facilitator's training manual as follows: Literacy Primer 1A, Literacy Primer 1B, Literacy Primer 2, Numeracy 1, Numeracy 2 and Facilitator's Manual

The primers and numeracy materials constitute the pupil materials. Each child receives one copy of each of these, which he or she retains for the duration of the nine-month academic year cycle. The medium of these materials is the local language used for the facilitation of lessons. The primers make no reference to the formal school curriculum. They are organised according to chapters that correspond to lessons in the Facilitator's Manual. Each primer thus has 16 chapters or lessons that pupils are intended to accomplish.

The School for Life Facilitator's Manual can be treated as the main Complementary Education Programme curriculum document as it is used in the daily instruction of pupils. The topics in the manual constitute the main subjects through which the aims of the programme are realised. The manual is written in the local language and structured to match

the primers and numeracy materials that are intended to be used by facilitators for the teaching of lessons throughout the CEP cycle. All facilitators receive a personal copy of the manual during their initial training.<sup>6</sup>

The Facilitator's Manual is highly prescriptive and facilitators are required to follow it religiously in order to achieve the objectives of the programme. They are allowed the latitude of pacing their lessons according to the learning speed of their pupils, but are still encouraged to complete all lessons by the end of the cycle (School for Life, 2009).

The introduction to the manual states that target learners will be aged 8 to 14 years. Facilitators are enjoined to use the local language of the learners in all deliberations in the classroom since it is the tongue with which the children are already familiar (School for Life, 2009).

A review of the curriculum documents of the two systems in this study indicates that the intended teaching methods of the Complementary Education Programme do not differ greatly from those of the formal school, both suggesting a variety of approaches, including exposition by the teacher, questions and answers, skills practice, and practical activities (School for Life, 2009; GES, 2007a, GES, 2007b). The differences are the following:

1. Discussions between teacher and pupils are explicitly prescribed in the SfL manual but are only implied in the formal school curriculum. One possible explanation for this is that in the formal school, the teacher is still considered to be a figure of authority who imparts knowledge to his or her pupils. The true teacher–pupil relationship in formal school is thus one in which the former ‘teaches’ the latter by asking them questions to check their understanding, and never one of mutual discussion on an equal footing between the two parties.
2. Assessment of pupils is explicitly prescribed in the formal school curriculum while CEP materials do not mention learner assessment at all. This is an obvious feature of its informal nature and characteristic communal learning where children are encouraged to just learn to read and write without the additional burden of formalised assessments.

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<sup>6</sup> The initial training course lasts for 21 days and there are 2 subsequent 14-day refresher workshops during the 9-month period of the CEP cycle.

CEP facilitators are encouraged to be patient, understanding and sympathetic. They are also required to be tactful, to have sufficient knowledge about the subject matter of every lesson, and to have prepared adequately in advance. They are expected to encourage and praise the learners as often as they can. Furthermore, the introduction to the Facilitator's Manual stipulates that:

The primers will give you knowledge and information about what to teach. The information includes functional literacy materials which are intended to help the learners to improve the quality of their lives, surroundings, and to set good examples for their peer groups, parents, and community as a whole. The primers therefore contain information and knowledge that will assist them to live better and happier lives. To achieve this goal they need skills that will improve their health, the sanitation of their homes and surroundings (School for Life, 2009:2).

The facilitators are therefore given clear information as to the functionality of the programme. School for Life's Complementary Education Programme is not just any teaching and learning programme but one seeped in the living realities of the learners. The School for Life curriculum is thus like the formal school curriculum which also has an ultimate goal of making children productive members of the society. The difference is that the formal school curriculum makes a general statement without couching it in real practices that teachers can inculcate in children and link that to lessons. School for Life goes a step further by listing key behaviour, attitudes and skills that they hope their programme can influence. Facilitators are therefore enjoined by this to make a conscious effort to ensure that teaching and learning are geared towards making children more productive in their communities. The introduction to the manual also explains that teaching methodology should take the form of discussion and other participatory methods. On the other hand, facilitators are discouraged from using abstract examples:

Children can learn better and faster by seeing and doing. You therefore need to avoid teaching abstract things. Make each lesson as practical as you can with the help of teaching and learning aids. Try also to let each learner participate in every lesson fully. The discussion method can help you and the learners better. Remember to encourage the faster learners to teach the slower learners when they have completed a lesson or a reader satisfactorily. Allow each learner to learn at his or her own pace to better understand the subject (School for Life, 2009).

The methodology prescribed and encouraged in the CEP manual therefore leans towards a social constructivist view of knowledge acquisition, and there is a clear attempt to create a constructive learning community in which both facilitator and learners participate to create and discover knowledge (Pritchard, 2009; Sefa Dei, 2004; Gadotti, 1994; Perelly, 1988). It

has been noted earlier that both the SfL and formal school curriculum seek to promote teaching and learning activities that encourage participation. It is also important to stress again the fact the School for Life programme gives detailed guidance on the methodology needed to create a communal learning environment that promotes construction of knowledge and discovery learning (School for Life, 2009).

### **5.2.1. School for Life Lesson Topic, Structure, Selection and Sequence**

Two types of literacy lesson are presented in the CEP primers and emphasized in the Facilitators Manual: picture lessons and non-picture lessons. The manual then proceeds to show how each of these lessons are to be taught in a participatory manner.

In picture lessons, facilitators are given step-by-step instructions or suggestions on how to lead discussions on pictures in the primers that form the basis of the reading lesson of the day. This constitutes the first element of a three-stage process that proceeds from picture discussion, to reading instruction, to writing exercises.

At the first stage, facilitators are required to ask probing questions to elicit responses to the picture and relate it to the real life experiences of the learners. The facilitator then helps them to identify keyword(s) written under the picture. Each keyword is then to be broken down into its constituent syllables, which are subsequently used to form other relevant words. The vocabulary thus generated is finally used to form sentences.

The second stage of the lesson consists of the identification of new words formed in the previous stage, writing them on the board, using flash cards to pronounce them for pupils to listen to, and then helping learners to read the words after the facilitator. Facilitators also engage in model reading of short sentences and help the children to do the same. In the third stage, learners draw pictures related to the lesson, discuss them, and then rearrange jumbled words.

The approach to teaching reading again is detailed for the facilitator. The approach described here thus seems to lean towards a look and say approach to reading which is linked with the syllabic method. The combination of these methods engages learners in the reading instruction and given that the lesson is in local language it may be easier for learners to participate and so learn to read easier. While the formal school curriculum also attempts to encourage teachers to use look and say, the syllabus on its own does not give such detailed

instruction on how to go about the process with the assumption that teachers are already trained in the approach. The School for Life facilitator's manual is clearly scripted on the step by step approach to unravelling the lesson.

Facilitating non-picture lessons involves revising previous lessons; helping children to identify new words and writing them on the board; and drilling individuals and groups on the pronunciation of new words. This process also includes model reading by the facilitator and identification of word function by learners.

The Facilitator's Manual also makes a point of stressing key processes or activities that are essential to the delivery of a lesson. Attention is paid to questioning skills, the use of flash cards, alphabet charts, and syllabic drilling. Finally, step-by-step instructions are given on how all these activities are to be conducted in lesson delivery (See excerpt below and appendix 2 for teaching instructions).

## Box 5.1: Lesson 1 of School for Life Instructional Manual

### **Lesson 1: Cow**

**Objectives:** To make learners know how to care for cattle better and the need to boil milk before drinking it.

### **Picture Discussion**

Ask learners some questions about the picture, e.g.

1. What do you see in this picture?
2. What is the cow doing?
3. What is happening to the cow?
4. What does grass give the cow?
5. Name some of the things that cattle give us?
6. What do we do with some of the things that cattle give us?
7. Is it good to keep cattle in wet and dirty kraals?
8. What can we do to keep our cattle neat and healthy?
9. How should we treat milk before drinking it?
10. Why is it good to boil milk before drinking it?
11. Why is it good for Veterinary Officers to visit our kraals?

During the discussion remember to talk about the following:

1. Traditional and modern ways of rearing cattle.
2. How to treat sick and/or dead cattle.
3. The need for Veterinary Services

### **Keyword(s)**

This is the word through which the class is going to learn the skills of reading and writing. It has something to do with what the lesson is about e.g. cow .

1. Write down the keyword.
  2. Say it many times.
  3. Let individual learners say it after you.
  4. Let the class say it after you
  5. Let the class know that what you are pointing at is the keyword.
  6. Introduce them to the vowels and consonants of the keyword.
    - I. Let the learners know that the sounds that vibrate in the throat are called vowels i.e. **i e â a ô o u**  
The remaining sounds are called consonants e.g. **n h â b**
    - II. Break down the keyword into syllables. A syllable has a consonant and a vowel e.g /na/ as in Dagbani and Ngbanyato. It can also be a consonant, vowel and another consonant (paê/nam as in Dagbani). A syllable may also be a nasal consonant (n/m/â).
    - III. Ask the learners to tell the number of syllables that are found in the keyword (cow )
    - IV. Use the syllables to drill learners.
    - V. Ask learners to combine the consonants of the keyword with the vowels of their language to form meaningful words.
    - VI. Treat the syllable and the syllabic family through drill.
    - VII. Let the learners learn to write syllables.
    - VIII. **Meaningful words formation:**
    - IX. Ask the learners to make meaningful words with the syllables.
    - X. Guide the learners to use the first syllable of the keyword to form or build more words.
- Write each meaningful word they make on the chalkboard.

**Sentence formation:** Ask the learners to use the words they have formed in constructing simple sentences.

**Source: School for Life Facilitator's Instructional Manual**



As can be seen from Lesson 1 (see Box 1 above), the Facilitator's Manual, which also serves as the lesson plan, is prescriptive in giving a step-by-step approach to the lesson. However, no timing is provided for the overall lesson or its parts; the facilitator is expected to use his or her own judgement and pace the lesson based on the learning speed of the children. The prescriptive nature of the plans makes it easy for the facilitators, who are usually senior or junior secondary school leavers with no professional teacher training, and for whom this may be their first taste of life as a teacher.

While the topic for Lesson 1 is 'The cow', it is anticipated that this session will cover all aspects of cattle rearing, which is a major source of income and wealth in the Northern Region of Ghana. Yet, again, no reason is given for starting the Complementary Education Programme cycle with a lesson on the cow; one can only speculate that perhaps it is because of the importance of cattle in the economic and social life of the people. It may also be as a result of what this study found that a lot of the boys are out of the formal school because they have to tend to cattle for their families. Thus cattle rearing become critical in the social, cultural, economic life of the children as well as well the community served by School for Life.

As the cattle rearing process is discussed, the exercise is also used as an opportunity to learn how to read using the syllabic approach. Thus, key words from the lesson are discussed and broken down into syllables, and new words formed. This is graduated into a writing lesson. Being the first lesson of the cycle and assuming that the children will not have had any previous writing experience, it would be interesting to see how a first composition session goes. However, the manual does not give any specific instructions on how the writing part of the lesson is envisioned. The pupils are simply expected to draw what they see, that is, a cow! Nevertheless, beginning the lesson with such a picture seems to be an effective way of getting the children to talk about something they are familiar with. A look at other lessons presents a similar trend with detailed scripted lesson plans that enjoin facilitators to engage children in learning to read and write. See box 2 below for a list of some topics and their objectives.

### **Box 5.2: List of Literacy Primer Topics and Lesson Objectives**

#### **Lesson 2: Net**

**Objective for lesson 2:** To enable learners to identify different uses of the fishing net and how to take care of it.

#### **Lesson 3: Eyes**

**Objective for lesson 3:** Learners will be able to discuss how to take care of their eyes.

#### **Lesson 4: Trees**

**Objective for lesson 4:** To enable learners to identify the uses of trees and the need to plant and care for trees.

#### **Lesson 5: Grandfather**

**Objective for lesson 5:** To talk about grandfathers and their position in the family.

*Source: School for Life facilitator's Instructional Manual*

In box 2 above, the list of lesson topics and their treatment in the manual to some extent confirms the findings of other studies of the Complementary Education Programme: the contents of each lesson include familiar topics such as livestock, hygiene, sanitation and local geography; textbooks are expected to be used to facilitate classroom activities that combine practice with theory; School for Life encourages pupils to reflect on lessons after school and draw on their home experiences in their studies; everyday objects such as seeds, pebbles, farming implements, and basket-making materials – which are familiar and easy to obtain – form teaching and learning aids; local or community practices such as stories, traditional games, plays and songs are used as instructional techniques in the classroom; and School for Life classes are action-oriented with learner participation, the major focus being pupils' community experiences and knowledge base (Hartwell, 2008; Casely-Hayford and Gharthey, 2007; DeStefano et al., 2007).

The above conclusions were corroborated by the present study in discussions with Mr Abu, a lead person in the development of the Complementary Education Programme curriculum. He affirmed that the curriculum was developed to take account of the concerns, needs and interests of learners: *"Children need to read about their own activities; farming, animal rearing domestic work and their environment and the topics should be of immediate use to the learners (13/05/2011)*. This is essential in ensuring that children are involved in the learning process. Effective teaching and learning is premised on the learning content fitting into the culture and reality of the learners (Pritchard, 2009; Alexander, 2000; Gadotti, 1994;

Sutherland, 1992). Writing on Freire, Gadotti affirms that “one of first laws of learning is that of interest” (p 25). This could be interpreted as the learners being interested in the topic or liking it or having an interest or stake in the topic and process. Thus when the teaching and learning process is situated in the interest of the learners, there is the guarantee that they participate and learn effectively. School for Life thus seems to be following this theory and principle by identifying topics and content combined with a methodology that engages the interest of learners. This also crucial especially because the Complementary Education Programme learners are more or less voluntary learners with other socio economic priorities.

However, in reviewing the lessons and their sequence, it is important to note that the order is both confusing and interesting at the same time. While the treatment of individual lessons is detailed, and can lead to fruitful discussion and the acquisition of new knowledge, there does not seem to be any logical thematic sequence. On the other hand, the sequence could be considered in purely functional terms and it might be argued that the developers of the curriculum have only identified those topics or functions that are relevant to the everyday lives of the children and put these together to make up the curriculum.

While all the topics – with the exception of HIV/AIDS – will be familiar to the children, and they should thus find it easy to participate in lesson discussions, one would expect a curriculum to have some logic to the arrangement of its topics. Such an approach, however, is to apply the lens of the formal school curriculum, which is intended to gradually take learners from easy to understand to more difficult topics, that is, a progression from the known to the unknown. In the case of the HIV (AIDS) topic, whilst they might not understand (indeed there may be a degree of taboo and/or denial of its true nature amongst the population in general) or be directly affected by it, they may be aware of it in some way and have observed its effects on loved ones. As with sex education in general, one would expect any education curriculum to treat the subject of HIV/AIDS in a way that is appropriate to the age of the learners.

In the case of the Complementary Education Programme, it is assumed that the known is the topic for discussion, for example, ‘the cow’ or ‘the farm’. Children are already familiar with these topics but they are only a means to an end, which is the ability to read and write in their local language. Mr Abu asserted that, *“The curriculum was designed to teach reading, writing and numeracy; and in selecting the topics, the idea was to generate interest for*

*children to see the need for learning and use [this] as a basis for formal school entry.” (13/05/2011).*

This is a critical observation as it seeks to place the Complementary Education Programme learning process in the social constructivist milieu, in that effective teaching and learning takes place when the interest of the child is utilized in that process. In social constructivist theory, the teacher must help the child reach his or her zone of proximal development, which is conceived as the meeting point between the experiences and interests of the pupil, and those of the teacher or the education process (Pound, 2008; Sefa Dei, 2004; Glassman, 2001; Davydov, 1995; Sutherland, 1992).

Thus, while relevant, the Complementary Education Programme topics in themselves are only the conduit through which pupils learn to read and write. Indeed, there is no mention of the formal school curriculum in the Facilitator’s Manual and their training course content does not mention the fact that the programme is merely a means to an end (School for Life, 2009).

In interview, Mr Abu indicated that, *“In developing the curriculum materials, we looked at the language syllabus of the formal school and came to the realization that the contents were alien, and so they were not used.”*(13/05/2011) This acknowledgement of non-linkage between School for Life materials and the formal school curriculum is a little surprising to say the least, given that the aim of the Complementary Education Programme is to help learners enter the formal school. However, Mr Abu contended that the most important thing was for pupils to learn to read, write and calculate; and the best way of achieving this was to use materials and topics that were of significance to the learners. Whilst the above argument may be true to some extent especially given the duration of the Complementary Education Programme cycle, it is also important for pupils to be always conversant with not only what they are studying at a given time but also how the studies link up with other subjects in their future studies (Shulman, 2004).

It is also important to mention that Complementary Education Programme lessons are not arranged in any particular logical or incremental order. This is a problem because learning theory tells us that we learn by acquiring new information incrementally, based on what we know. Outside school, children gain knowledge in a range of environments. In the formal school, learning is typically organized according to subject areas — Science, Mathematics, Language, and so forth. What children learn in Maths today should follow on from what they

learned yesterday so that they build up an understanding through the academic year (Pritchard, 2009; Shulman, 2004; Bigge and Shermis, 2004). In School for Life, pupils learn life skills and literacy; in both areas, their knowledge and abilities should build incrementally. It would therefore make sense to cluster the units into related topics, such as family, food (farming, fishing, herding, hunting), animals (domestic, wild), health (doctors and nurses, traditional healing, HIV, drugs), and community (chiefs, celebrations, religions, the role of women).

A related point is the lack of coherence across parts of a lesson: there is little connection between picture discussion and reading. What follows discussion is attention to keywords rather than reading of the passage. Reading and understanding the key words in advance, may however, support the longer reading of the passage with the unfamiliar words already decoded. Thus, again, knowledge and skills are not being built sequentially. If the aim of education is to provide an opportunity for the acquisition of new knowledge, one wonders whether the Complementary Education Programme is not defective in teaching reading and writing only through existing knowledge. One also questions whether the acquisition of reading and writing via the Complementary Education Programme will enable pupils to read other materials for new knowledge. Again, given the duration of the cycle, it might well be argued that the most judicious, purposeful and effective use of the time is to ensure that children learn to read and write independently.

Nevertheless, given that Complementary Education Programme topic materials may already be known to the children, the learning would seem to come in the acquisition of literacy skills. The introduction to the manual states that the contents of lessons are provided in the primers. There is an expectation that facilitators will teach from their own experience. In some of the lessons, there are instructions to emphasize certain kinds of information. While some of this is contained in the primers, there is an assumption that both learners and facilitator are familiar with all the necessary information. There is also the assumption that pupils are supposed to learn new knowledge from trips such as that to a cattle kraal. If there is no source of new knowledge other than what is presented in the primers, a good deal of responsibility lies with the facilitator. However, Mr Abu claimed that:

*The CEP class is a learning community and the topics were selected to help the facilitator and learners think, form and share ideas. Facilitators are encouraged to consult local management committees and other community leaders to serve as resource persons for the classes where necessary. (13/05/2011)*

The conclusion that can be drawn in all this is that the lesson content and acquisition of knowledge is intended to derive from a combination of information provided in the written materials, the facilitator's knowledge, and experiences gained through field trips, elements that interact together and complement each other. This process engenders critical teaching and social construction of knowledge in that the production of new knowledge and the discovery of existing knowledge are unified (Gadotti, 1994).

### **5.2.2. Literacy Instruction in School for Life Complementary Education Programme**

Based on the contents of the Complementary Education Programme Facilitator's Manual and the primers, it appears that learning to read is not made easy for learners. The lesson objectives do not consistently address literacy acquisition, which is a stated School for Life goal; rather, lessons address the text topic. Furthermore, the mechanics of learning to read are not at the forefront of the curriculum, and what children really need to know is not always highlighted. Again, one could question the sequencing: the first lesson is overcrowded in terms of content when it should ideally form a basis for following lessons. The other side of the argument is that the literacy programme in Complementary Education Programme is grounded in the concrete reality of the children as espoused by the developers of the programme. This in itself is a positive departure from that of the programme in the formal school.

Also noticeable is that the emphasis in most lessons is on syllables, a method that would work if pupils were taught word attachment skills more effectively. Some attention is given to letter-sound correspondence, but there is no mention of blending the sounds together to pronounce words. Instead, the teaching techniques described seem to lead to rote learning, there being endless repetition to encourage pupils to memorize keywords. Rote learning does not challenge the learner or the social order of things. The learner must be able to create linkages between instruction and learning. Learners are then able to move from the mere regurgitation of facts to a "critical analysis of social and political construction of knowledge" (Sefa Dei, 2004:92).

It is probably helpful for children to learn some of the key words listed in the manual, but not all of them. It is also difficult to tell how appropriate the choice of some keywords is, for example, the word 'ingredients'; it is difficult to say whether the *Dagbani* term for

‘ingredients’ is a word that children are likely to know or whether it occurs frequently in everyday discourse.

There is also a focus on concepts that children may not need to know in order to start learning to read. The very first lesson has children learning about vowels and consonants; they do not have to know that syllables consist of a vowel and one or more consonants. Pupils are also expected to learn to recite the whole alphabet, which may be a daunting prospect for children with no previous schooling experience. While mastering the alphabet may be relevant, the process is effective if it makes use of “interactional approaches to alphabetisation” (Gadotti, 1994).

In Lesson 1, pupils begin with a drawing activity as a way of getting them to start writing. Drawing seems effective because it introduces children to representation; but it is not clear what is to be written. Each lesson indicates that they should do some written work, but there is not always any guidance on what they should be writing; sometimes, they are instructed just to write letters. Children start to write words and sentences within the first month of the programme, but it is difficult to tell whether what they write is related to lesson topics. It is also uncertain as to whether facilitators insist on correct spelling. What can be deduced, however, is that there is a conscious attempt to encourage pupils to experiment with the letters they are learning to make words and sentences. Since the lessons get them to use syllables in keywords to form new words, it is assumed that they can use this technique to write sentences and stories. However, the instructions for moving from keywords to writing sentences and stories are not given.

Picture discussion features prominently in most lessons. This can be an effective way of interesting pupils in a text before they read it. Indeed, picture reading or discussion is central to social constructive methods of learning to read, Sutherland (1992) noting that the Vygotsky concept of teaching reading involves the child interacting with the text. This technique includes reading and discussing pictures through which the child internalizes the reading process. Sutherland also cites Hickman (1985), a social constructive advocate who believes that the process of the child telling a picture story to an adult enhances the child’s acquisition and mastery of language and reading. Thus, the concept of the language experience approach to reading through picture discussion is utilized in the Complementary Education Programme curriculum.

Facilitators need to spark interest in the pictures with questions that generate discussion, but most of the suggestions in the manual do not achieve this. Occasionally, there is a good one such as, “What do you think will happen if we continue to fetch firewood without planting trees?” If the story that follows the discussion is interesting, it could form the basis of a fruitful lesson, but questions about who can be seen in the picture may not be as successful when pupils use their first language. Thus the utilisation of higher order questions that encourage critical thinking skills rather than closed ones can generate more discussion and lead to a more interactive lesson and learner-centred instruction.

On the other hand, the fact that there is inculcation of discussion and dialogue in the prescribed lesson delivery in itself provides a platform for constructive and critical learning. Freire (1970) insists on the necessity of dialogue as a teaching strategy. The school should always listen to what their pupils say about what is taught to them. He makes a distinction between vertical and horizontal dialogue. Vertical dialogue is the kind where the person being educated only needs to listen and obey. However, in order to pass from the state of ingenious consciousness to critical consciousness, there is the need for horizontal dialogue which is fed by love, humility, hope, faith and confidence (Gadotti 1994; Freire, 1970).

### **5.3. Curricula Linkages**

The discussion so far presented in this chapter raise a number of issues that are critical in answering the research questions. First, it is important to emphasise that the School for Life programme does not follow the national curriculum, which relies on Ghanaian language and English as the medium of instruction and includes seven subjects, one of which is a Ghanaian language. The School for Life curriculum, on the other hand, is geared towards functional literacy and numeracy, which constitutes the application of achieved knowledge. This curriculum includes three areas of instruction only – literacy, numeracy and life skills (Hartwell, 2008). Thus the School for Life curriculum has a restrictive focus and all attention is geared towards ensuring that children can read, write and calculate; skills which are tied into the functional lives of the children such that learning is of everyday relevance to them but also can help them integrate into the formal school. The restrictive curriculum focus of the programme also entails that both teacher and learners are not encumbered by knowledge that has the tendency to distract them from their singular objective. It is also important that this will constitute a strategic idea to make the most use of the time available to the children.



Additionally, having a restrictive focus tends to help the programme to achieve results in that it gets children to read. This in turn will motivate both parents and children to continue to attend and learn. Pupils in the formal school, on the hand, are expected to learn a number of subjects including literacy and numeracy. While literacy and numeracy are given prime importance, they are not weaved into the overall teaching and learning curriculum as happens with the School for Life programme. It also seems that while topic contents of both curricula exhibit some cultural relevance, the School for Life topics exhibit more immediate functional relevance for the children. Thus it is not enough for the formal school curriculum to have topics that the children are familiar with. Topics may be familiar but if it is not part of their everyday living, that familiarity is lost. Urban children may for instance know about farming but that knowledge will not be same as rural children who have direct experience of farming and it is part of their everyday existence. Thus while the two curricula will exhibit similarity in having familiar topics, local relevance will be a different situation.

The School for Life's Facilitator's Manual, which serves as syllabus and lesson plan, does not make mention of the formal school curriculum in any way. Facilitators are not expected to teach to any formal school requirement. This obviously has the potential of affecting learners who go on to enter formal school. The emphasis and expectation of School for Life materials, and teaching and learning process is the acquisition of literacy and numeracy. While learners are expected to graduate from School for Life and enrol in formal school, there is no explicit guidance on how to do this. The SfL topics and their delivery also do not necessarily match those of the formal school syllabus. While there are some similarities and common areas such as family and community activities, SfL topics and their delivery are purely functional, and reflect the social, economic and community life of the learners. The assumption is that this functionality engenders interest and creates the necessary opportunity for learners to participate in lessons.

There is also an explicit intention to ensure that children can read, write and calculate at the end of the nine-month School for Life cycle. Accordingly, throughout the materials, there seems to be consistent presentation of and attention to the rudiments of reading and writing. Nevertheless, weaknesses identified in reviewing the materials notwithstanding, it is worthy of note that consistency in Complementary Education Programme presentation and delivery is a feature that probably ensures that learners acquire the skills needed to enter formal school.

However, prescriptive methodology is absent from the formal school syllabus: while some guidelines are given on how to teach, the teacher is generally allowed the space and latitude to plan lessons as he or she sees fit. Teachers are encouraged and indeed expected to develop schemes of work and lesson plans out of the syllabus. This confirms the notion of the teacher as expected of the formal school curriculum. The teacher then becomes the master of the teaching and learning process. On the other hand, the School for Life Facilitator's Manual is a scheme of work and a lesson plan on its own; and there is almost no room for deviation in the delivery of Complementary Education Programme lessons, as each lesson is set out in a mechanical detail. This is critical as it also relates to the notion of the teacher in School for Life. The School for Life facilitator, as will become clear in the following chapter, is a locally recruited teacher drawn from the community. Little or no prior training is expected apart from literacy in the local language. This essentially redefines their roles. They are not seen as masters of instruction or experts dispensing knowledge but as responsible young adults facilitating children's learning.

Adequate access to textbooks (one relevant textbook per pupil) is an important indicator of the quality of education. Under MOE policy, each pupil in basic school should have three government-designated core textbooks, namely, those for English, Mathematics and Science (MOE, 2010). Nevertheless, while textbook ratio data appear to be fragmentary and sometimes contradictory, it is estimated that, on average, a Ghanaian child has fewer than 2 textbooks at the primary school level and an average of 2.5 textbooks at the JHS level (MOE, 2010). Of equal importance is the fact that SfL pupils are provided with learning materials that they may keep, use and take home for the entire programme cycle. Thus School for Life ensures that both facilitators and learners have all the requisite materials needed to participate fully in the lessons.

#### **5.4. Summary**

Ghana's stated objective in its Education Strategy is that by Primary 3, pupils will have achieved literacy in both a local language and in English (GOG, 2008). It is critical that official syllabi and teaching and learning materials support this objective.

This chapter has presented the broad basics of curricula materials in respect of School for Life and the formal school, the analysis and illustration focusing mainly on the literacy and

English language components of the two systems. It is important to emphasize the point made in the literature that the curriculum is more than the materials. Syllabus documents in fact constitute just one of the instruments that make up the curriculum. The analysis so far shows that both curricula are culturally relevant to the learners but additionally School for Life pays attention to immediate functional relevance. Both curricula encourage teachers to use learner-centred approaches to teaching. However, the formal school curriculum allows the teacher the opportunity to plan their lessons assuming that teachers will have the skills to teach in a participatory way. School for Life, on the other hand, provides a detailed scripted guide that lays out how each step of the lesson is to be delivered. It is, however, important to stress that the chapter seeks to analyse how School for Life curriculum materials are designed to prepare learners to transition into formal school. And my analysis shows that while the SfL curriculum presents consistent routines for literacy and numeracy instruction, it does not explicitly mention the formal school curriculum. However, the consistency and clarity in presentation and guidelines coupled with the local language and functional relevance have the potential to prepare learners adequately to transfer knowledge and skills into formal school.

The next chapter presents an analysis of how School for Life Complementary Education Programme classes are implemented. It also explores how the issues raised in this chapter are manifested in practice.

## **Chapter 6: Implementing a Complementary Education Programme Curriculum to Prepare Learners for Entry into the Formal School**

In the last chapter, the planned curricula of the two systems were described and analysed in terms of their respective teaching and learning materials. The findings shed light on the intentions and aims of the two systems and of the teachers concerned, forming the basis for an analysis of the implemented curricula, which is the focus of the present chapter.

Therefore, this chapter discusses data gathered by the study that focuses on the implementation of the School for Life curriculum. Of particular importance is the manner in which the curriculum is implemented to promote accelerated learning; how learners are prepared for entry into formal school; and what actually takes place in School for Life classes. Utilising observations, interviews and discussions, the chapter examines School for Life methodology as advocated and prescribed by the developers of the Complementary Education Programme curriculum, and attempts to reconcile this with the actual classroom practices and perspectives of the actors. Where appropriate, there are attempts to compare Complementary Education Programme lessons with what occurs in formal school classes, especially with regard to how School for Life culture affects the integration of graduates into the formal school. However, the findings and analysis are focused more on the School for Life classes than the formal school so there is no direct balanced comparison in all areas.

As pointed out in Chapter 4, lesson observations focused on a list of concepts believed to constitute a measure of teacher effectiveness, but attempts were also made to take note of what happened in the classroom in as detailed a manner as possible. Lesson observations were followed by interviews with facilitators, teachers or pupils to discuss or interrogate further what transpired. Thus the analysis of this part of the study is based on data gathered in the school communities of Woribogu Kukuo and Gbulahagu, both in the Tolon Kumbungu District of Ghana's Northern Region. The arrangements for data collection are described in Chapter 4.

The analysis in this chapter is also driven by social constructivist theory that serves as the frame work for this study: the social interaction in the classroom that is crucial for learner-centeredness and critical pedagogy as practiced in the two systems. The chapter has three main sections. Section 6.1 discusses the teaching and learning environment; section 6.2

discusses the flow and delivery of lessons followed by the facilitators' and teachers' instruction and management skills, while section 6.4 discusses the pedagogical content knowledge of the facilitator and the formal school teacher.

## **6.0. Critical Pedagogy/ Learner Centred Instruction**

In Chapter 3, it is emphasised that central to social constructive theory of learning is the social interaction in the classroom that promotes critical teaching or learner-centred instruction. There is also evidence in the literature that for social construction of knowledge and learning to take place, a number of issues will have to be considered. The environment in which learning takes place is as important as the organisation of pupils, learning time, routines and learning activities (Schweisfurth, 2011; Mtika and Gates, 2010; Alexander, 2000). Thus, the following section considers the teaching and learning environment of both the Complementary Education Programme and the formal school; and how they influence critical teaching and learning, and the effective implementation of the curriculum. This is followed by an analysis of the teachers' instruction and management skills.

### **6.1. The Teaching and Learning Environment**

School for Life classes have been acclaimed as interactive and participatory by researchers (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey (2007). Given the informal reputation of the CEP, previous studies have however indicated that the SfL classroom setting is designed to suit learning and teaching practice (DeStefanao et al, 2008; Hartwell, 2008). Husein, a senior staff of School for Life indicated to me that classrooms were arranged to reflect the interactive and informal expectations of the programme. In this study, however, I observed that in practice, School for Life has little or no control over the design of its classrooms. According to Husein,

*upon the introduction of the programme to the local population, the community is consulted in order to determine the location of SfL classrooms, and if there is a formal school in the locality, discussions are held with its authorities with a view to holding SfL classes there in the afternoons (10/03/2011).*

The two School for Life classes under study were both housed in formal school classrooms. The condition of buildings, including size and level of overcrowding, has a critical influence on teaching and learning (Sefa Dei, 2004; Alexander, 2000). The Complementary Education

Programme classes in this study were housed in permanent structures with 25 pupils to a class. This compared to formal school classes where the MOE targets an average teacher to pupil ratio of 1:35 (MOE, 2010).

Mohammed, a member of the School for Life staff commented:

*The advantage in holding the classes in the formal school are [is] twofold. It bridges the gap between the formal school and the School for Life learners, who prior to enrolling in CEP, will see the formal school as a distant institution. It also creates room for community members to even enter classrooms and reduces the myth about school attendance, making it easy for the parents to enrol their children in formal school once they complete CEP (20/05/2011).*

It is important to emphasize that School for Life operates in marginalized communities, those that have traditionally not been interested in formal education, and those in which the socio-economic activities of children prevent them from attending formal school. Parents in such communities will usually see the formal school as an alien institution (Casely-Hayford and Adom Ghartey, 2007).

The two formal schools and the CEP classes under study within them did not differ in physical setting, facilities or structure, both formal schools being housed in well-constructed classroom blocks that were also used in the afternoons for CEP classes. The most obvious difference was the number of students in each class. One of the formal classes observed in this study had 59 pupils in the class. Thus in terms of class size, the School for Life classes seemed to have an advantage over the formal school classes observed. If the number of children in a class has an obvious influence on the level of interaction between teacher and pupils and lower pupil: teacher ratios help to create a more conducive environment for teaching and learning, then the formal schools seem to be at a disadvantage.

Therefore even though the two systems used the same physical structures for their studies, the number of learners in the class meant that the teacher's responsibility in terms of the number of children to facilitate learning and the ability of the children to interact and utilise the class room space was limited for the formal school children. Also important to emphasise is the fact that if School for Life learners are used to being in relatively smaller class sizes where they could interact with their teachers and peers then one tends to wonder how they will fare in a formal class that had twice the number of children they used to have in their Complementary Education Programme classes. This difference was commented upon by Abiba, a P6 pupil and a former CEP learner:

*In SfL, we knew each other and the facilitator. We were all from the same village and there were few of us so the classroom seemed big and we could even play and move around if we wanted. Here we are so many and during the hot season, it gets so hot and uncomfortable that we just want the lessons to be over so that we can go out. Also there is no opportunity or space to move around in the class. You are confined to your seat throughout the lessons (10/05/2011).*

Thus for this learner and her colleagues, the experience of being in smaller class sizes where there was a lot of interaction made it challenging for her to integrate easily in the formal school with the implication that there is loss of interest in learning. The CEP lessons observed were also conducted according to different seating arrangements. Facilitators utilized whole class instruction with students sitting in rows facing the teacher, who led all activities; sometimes, pupils sat in groups or pairs. However, there were also some peer to peer structured lessons, nearly all of which were conducted with learners sitting in groups or pairs. Such singularities in terms of class size and instructional mode with regard to CEP classes should be borne in mind in the following analysis and discussion.

It was noted that in the two formal schools, seating was arranged according to the formal rows that characterize most classrooms in Ghana. The furniture was also constructed according to the typical so-called dual-desk design: a chair and writing surface in one that seats two children (See pictures 6.1 and 6.2 below). Such items make it difficult for classes to be interactive; as these desks are unwieldy and heavy, formal school teachers are not inclined to rearrange them to make group work possible. Mr Adams, a head teacher of one of the formal primary schools in the study – elaborated:

*The desks are so heavy to lift [carry] around and it takes a lot of time to rearrange them for different lessons. Moreover, teachers find it easier to teach the children as they sit in pairs and rows since that is what they are used to. Again, with the larger class sizes, there is no room to rearrange the furniture to make an interactive class [P5 enrolment was 59] (11/05/2011).*

This confirms the obvious disincentive amongst teachers to create a communicative classroom environment when they are not required to do so by the education system. In reviewing the formal school curriculum in Chapter 5, it was noted that while the curriculum expected and encouraged teachers to create a learner-centred environment and utilise learner-centred approaches, teachers were not mandated to do so with no scripted guidelines unlike the SfL curriculum. The implication is that teachers were left to use their discretion in deciding how learner-centred they wanted their classes to be. Galton (1996 cited in Croll and Hastings, 1996) corroborates this finding in noting that for many teachers working in such an

environment, their first experience of attempting to get pupils to work in groups or in any more interactive fashion invariably leads the former to conclude that it is more trouble than it is worth. This mentality can obviously make the difference between how communicative the pupils are and how critical the quality of teaching is. Again this mentality will not promote social construction of knowledge in the classroom as this requires a process of interaction between learners and between learners and their teacher (Pritchard, 2009; Bruner, 1960). Pritchard (2009) contends that there is a difference between sitting in groups and individualized learning, and that difference is evident in how much the children get out of the learning process. He goes on to argue that collaborative learning is critical in ensuring that there is a shared task that pupils work towards the achievement of, and provision needs to be made in the teaching and learning process for interaction in pairs and groups of different sizes. This also ensures that there is co-operative learning and that success in the learning process is beneficial to the group and the community (Sefa Dei, 2004). Figure 6.1 and 6.2 below show the contrasts between a CEP class where pupils are deliberately seated in pairs and a formal school class where pupils are in pairs as a necessity.

**Figure 6.1: CEP class**



In the CEP class above, learners are seated in pairs for the class. This was a deliberate arrangement to enable the children to work in pairs and enable peer tutoring. Below is a typical formal primary school class. Whilst the pupils are also seated in pairs, this was determined by the nature of the desks and also the number of pupils in the class as it can be seen that classroom is almost filled up.



**Figure 6.2: formal primary school class**

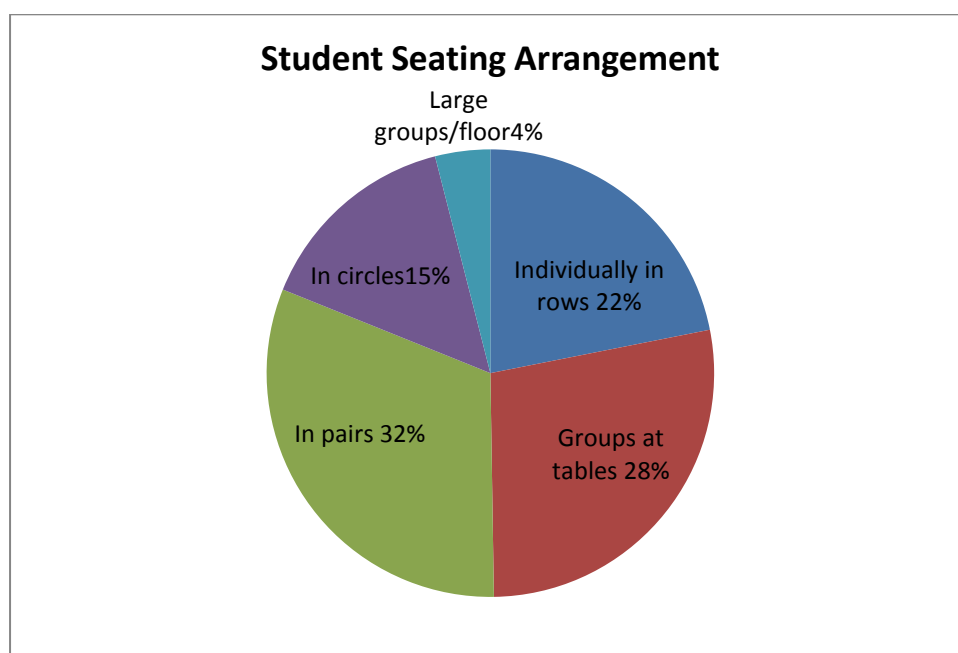


However, Mohammed of School for Life indicated to me that:

*SfL acknowledged the drawback to the traditional classroom setting and had included in its facilitator training the need to rearrange furniture to suit particular activities, and even use the whole classroom space and the floor when necessary in order to break the rigidity of the formal school (20/05/20110).*

In this study, I observed Complementary Education Programme lessons for a total of two to three hours a day, five days a week over a two-month period. This observation corroborated the position of SfL management and confirmed the flexibility that is built into the programme in terms of an interactive classroom setting. As Figure 6.3 below shows, for the total period of observation, pupils were seated at desks in pairs 32% of the time; individually in rows, 22%; in groups around desks; 28%, and in a circle, 15%.

**Figure 6.3: Pupil Seating Arrangements**



As the figure above shows, more than 70% of the lessons were delivered in some interactive mode either through group or pair seating. A lot of effort went into rearranging desks to suit various lessons, as pupils had to return furniture to its usual arrangement at the end of each CEP class for formal school use the following morning; there were occasions when this took up about half an hour of a three-hour class. Nevertheless, Abdul one of the facilitators noted that, *“The effort in rearranging the classroom was worth it because it gave the children an opportunity to make the classroom space their own, and it also helped in how lessons were delivered and teaching and learning took place.”*(09/04/2011). In a lot of lessons, pupils were asked and seen to work in pairs. The facilitator also indicated that the communal nature of the class was enhanced through group exercises and activities when they sat in a circle.

It is important to note that the intended Complementary Education Programme emphasis on group work notwithstanding, the most frequent group activity observed was that of learners sitting next to each other and discussing the class work they were doing. This happened in both CEP classes under study. This in some respects confirms the fact that facilitators followed the script developed for them. The facilitator’s manual discussed in Chapter 5 makes it clear that facilitators should get children to sit and work together. Indeed, they are instructed to include peer-to-peer tutoring in their lesson deliveries. Abdul, one of the

facilitators commented that: *during our training we were always told to let the children sit together when possible and the manual also tells us what lessons and when children should be paired to work.* It was also observed that in whole class instruction, for which children sat individually in rows, facilitators spent a relatively high proportion of time in individual questioning and asking learners to demonstrate on the board, indicating an understanding of the need for interaction and dialogue even in whole class pedagogic approaches. This again can find grounding in the lesson scripts that gave clear dialogues and questions that needed to be followed through in each lesson.

As stated earlier, formal school teachers had no incentive to go the extra effort of rearranging the class to make it interactive or utilise group seating for lessons. While the formal curriculum encouraged teachers to group and or pair pupils, unlike School for Life, it did not require them to do so. Mark, a formal school teacher commented:

*We know that it is good to get children to sit in pairs or groups. In fact we have attended several in-service training that encourages group work. We sometimes use group work when the children have to share textbooks when there not enough textbooks for a particular subject. But generally, it is easier to deliver the lesson to the whole group because when they are in smaller groups it is difficult to control them.*

Working collaboratively in pairs or small groups is an obvious social constructivist approach to learning. The converse of this is maintaining a silent classroom where contact with others is discouraged. However, as an unswerving approach to teaching and learning, such an approach ignores all we know about social constructivist learning. Galton (1996 in Croll and Hastings, 1996) argues that there are three reasons why group and cooperative activities are essential in ensuring effective teaching and learning: group learning provides a secure and supportive environment for pupils; it ensures that children are actively involved in the teaching and learning process; and it improves relationships between peers, and between the teacher and his or her pupils. These factors are all critical if a social constructivist model of education is to be espoused. The next section presents a typical Complementary Education Programme school day and how the lessons were delivered as observed.

## 6.2. The Flow of Events during the Lesson

The intention here is to present how a typical CEP class and lesson is delivered, how culturally relevant the lessons are and the various modes of interaction that take place in the classroom. This helps to situate discussion and analysis of how CEP lessons fit into the social constructivist mode. The diary extract below describes how CEP classes were conducted as observed during the research. A typical CEP lesson began with the facilitator dealing with administrative matters such as registration and making sure that pupils had the necessary materials for the afternoon's activities. The lesson proper then begins with the facilitator revising the previous lesson, usually through questioning. Then he introduces the topic of the new lesson, which is usually written on the board, and develops it at some length through explanation, sometimes incorporating questions into the process. One or more examples, usually taken from the manual or primer, are worked out on the board and discussed.

*It is 3.00 pm and I am waiting for the CEP class to begin at Gbulahagu Primary School. According to the local committee chairman, the CEP has been running in the community for the past ten years; the community really likes the CEP classes, which have become almost part of the institutional structure. Given this background, and also having gleaned from conversations with SfL staff that lessons start at 3 pm, I decide to wait for the CEP class after the close of formal school.*

*Fifteen minutes later, no CEP learners have arrived and I begin to wonder whether today day is one of the days when there is no class, as I have been given to understand that the CEP has two days off a week. Children start trickling in at 3.20. This gives me some hope that I have not been waiting in vain. In the next 10 minutes, all the children are accounted for as well the facilitator, who gets in at 3.25. There do not seem to be any worries at all on the part of either facilitator or learners that lessons are starting almost half an hour later than scheduled.*

*Surprisingly, lessons kick off immediately all the children are accounted for with very little time for formalities. The facilitator takes a couple of minutes to call the register and then immediately launches into the lesson for the day.*

*The children are involved right from the beginning of the lesson with revision of the previous week's lessons. This week, they are discussing fire. The previous week, the class discussed beans. There is therefore a recap of the lesson on beans, including how to cook beans, how to grow beans, and the nutritional value of beans. Children are called to the board to write some of the key words they learned in the beans lesson.*

*Given the fact that cooking was one of the activities discussed in the beans lesson, I thought the fire lesson would build on that and consider how fire is used for cooking. However, the picture discussion on fire is centred on hunting. I sit through the lesson on fire, which is linked to bush fires and hunting. The lesson is interesting, starting with the picture discussion, which generates lots of interest and all the children participate as they seem to have experience of bush fires and hunting. But I keep asking myself what the connection is between the previous lesson and the current*

*lesson. There is no mention of beans in this new lesson; but there is plenty of writing practice, syllabic drill, and formation of new words. (Researcher's Diary: 19/04/2011)*

The extract shows focus on the children right from the beginning of the lesson. Thus learner involvement permeated the whole lesson flow and this is critical in the discussions that follow in terms of how learner centred the CEP classes are. From time to time, the content covered was summarized and learners asked to attempt some class work. Intermittently, the facilitator asked a few learners to go to the front and write their work on the board, which was discussed and the lesson summarized again. The afternoon ends with the facilitator assigning homework. The lesson flow was invariably interspersed with singing and the occasional short break, which were usually announced when the facilitator wanted to change from literacy to a numeracy lesson. In a follow up discussion with Abdul, the facilitator he was keen to note the following:

*The revision of the previous lesson discussed beans so there was no need to bring it up again. The most important thing for this lesson was to build on the experiences of the children. This is the season of hunting and related bush fires as the crops are almost finished and people do not have food, so hunting is very popular now and because the rains haven't started there is always the danger of bush fires.*

Further discussions revealed that the facilitator was a member of the bush fire campaign team. What is critical about the lesson and the follow up discussion is the functional and cultural relevance of the topic for the day. The fact that the lesson was being delivered at the relevant time of the season and the fact that the children were familiar with hunting and bush fires obviously helped in generating the needed interaction for learning to take place. The following is an excerpt from another observation given to further illustrate lesson development, relevance of content and flow.

*Today's topic is Yendi Market. Once again, both facilitator and learners are late. The class starts at 20 past 3.00 instead of 3.00. The facilitator dispenses with the administrative task of registration and goes straight into the lesson for the day. He starts with a discussion of the previous lesson, which was farming. For once, he starts by asking the children to tell the class what they grow on their farms. This is a departure from the manual, which indicates that he should ask the pupils what Mr Aduna grows on his farm. A number of children raise their hands: I count eight children ready to give answers, five of whom are called upon to contribute to the discussion.*

*F: tell the class what you grow on your farm.*

*L1: We grow yams and millet.*

*F: Tell the class what else you grow.*

*L2: We cultivate yams, maize and millet.*

*[Five pupils give similar answers.]*

*F: who can come and write the crops they grow on the board?*

*[Several hands shoot up once again, and six children are asked to go and write various crops in turn on the board.]*

*F [to the whole class]: Use the words on the board to form your own sentences in your books.*

*[The children start writing in their exercise books. After a couple of minutes, the facilitator asks them to read out their sentences.]*

*L1: I like eating yam.*

*L2: We have a lot of maize on our farm.*

*L3: I ate yam yesterday.*

*This revision exercise takes about 30 minutes before the day's lesson starts. I notice that all the children are involved in the revision, and that the facilitator goes round as the children write their sentences in their exercise books. They seem excited talking about what they have been doing on their farms and write sentences about the food they eat.*

*At the end of the lesson, I ask the facilitator why he deviated from the manual and asked the children about their own farms instead of what the manual directed. He seems uncomfortable with my question and almost apologetic that he deviated from the lesson. I assure him that I am not judging him, but I am only curious since he usually goes by the book. He says he thought it would be more interesting for the children to talk about their own farms since the farming season had begun and all the children were involved one way or another with farming in the village. (Researcher's diary: 24/05/2011)*

Once again the functional relevance of the topic and the curriculum is confirmed in this lesson. What is also pertinent is the level of animation in the class. The fact that all children are eager to participate in the lesson through raising their hands and coming to the board to write or answer questions is a confirmation of how the relevance of the topic and the previous experiences of the children is a critical factor in promoting learner-centred instruction and thus promoting a social construction of knowledge in the classroom. The fact that the children are participating in the construction of knowledge is also evident in the types of answers given by the children above: how they respond verbally, using a variety of sentence construction and tenses, hence not just parroting or copying one another or the teacher.

The teacher's role in this process is also critical in also ensuring a functional lesson flow as in this case the facilitator is noted to come from the area, familiar with the crops that are

grown and has enough professional judgement to steer the lessons away momentarily from the manual towards a more child-centred approach and not merely learner centred. Thus the pupils are his focus of attention, not the manual or the crops. Also important to note is that construction of knowledge in these classes is practical and physical. The facilitator engages the children through the questions and answers in addition to getting them to write their responses in both their books and on the board thus getting the children to really see and demonstrate the new knowledge generated out of the this teacher pupil interaction. However, this functional and cultural relevance can only be instrumental if the teacher utilises instruction and management skills that also encourage participation in the lesson. This key component of the instructional process is presented in the next section.



**Figure 6.4: Music interlude in a CEP class**

### **6.3. Facilitators' and Teachers' Instruction and Management Skills**

While learner-centred education places the learner at the centre of education process, the teacher as the more knowledgeable other in the school is the facilitator and the guide in the process of construction of knowledge. The teacher's role in this interactive process is thus critical in how children learn. How the teacher manages the instructional process is crucial in



whether there is learner-centred or teacher-centred instruction in the classroom. The teacher is an interventionist who has to take the pupil into the zone of proximal development, challenging him or her to reach full potential. This is seen in the diary extracts discussed above which show the facilitator leading the children in the discussion of lesson topics and thereby working with the children to construct new knowledge.

The teacher has the function of stimulating dialogue and maintaining its momentum. In a very real way, the teacher engages groups and individuals in dialogue and supports the development of understanding. The term ‘scaffolding’ has been coined to denote the undertaking of this role in a planned way (Pritchard, 2009; Sutherland, 1992; Croll and Hastings, 1996; Bruner, 1960). This is illustrated in the scaffolding of learning in the diary extract discussed above with the facilitator utilising the functional lives of the children in lesson delivery. This process can however be achieved only if the facilitator utilises critical teaching approaches that foster real dialogue and lead to the social construction of knowledge. In an interview with a SfL consultant, she noted that, *“School for Life uses the participatory teaching method, which is child-centred; and the language experience approach, which is based on the mother tongue.”*(30/06/2011). Accordingly, the present study places emphasis on how Complementary Education Programme facilitators see and act out their role as more knowledgeable “other” who encourage learner-centred learning facilitated by the use of the mother tongue and how far such an approach is possible within the cultural traditions and constraints of the Ghanaian classroom.

In the study, facilitators were observed directing pupils to help other children if they had difficulty with exercises (see Figure 6.5 below). Pupils were not intimidated by the facilitator, and in an interview one learner, Alhassan, noted that *“the school is just like home to me. The facilitator is like my elder brother or my father so I am happy and being in the class is like being at home or in the village”*(12/05/2011). Thus, on one level, the facilitator is seen as the guide and leader in the teaching and learning process. He is also seen as an elder brother, which breaks the usual boundary in the traditional teacher-pupil relationship. He also allows the children to share in the teaching experience through peer tutoring by making children help each other in completing assignments thus demystifying the power of the teacher and fostering a real communal learning environment in which everyone participates. Thus the facilitator manifests in a real way how power sharing between teacher and learner, a critical ingredient in social constructivism enhances classroom interaction and learning (Sefa Dei, 2004; Gadotti, 1994; Friere, 1970).



Adams, a facilitator said: *the children are very happy when they are asked to come to the board and explain answers to the rest of the class that is why when you ask a question they all raise their hands. You see some of their family members are watching and they want to show off (24/04/2011).* The facilitators also encouraged this ‘school family’ cohesion in which both the teacher and pupils regarded each other as belonging to the same community. This open and caring relationship observed in lessons helped pupils to feel at ease in the classroom. This point was observed literally in that community members came to class to observe in the afternoon and it was not uncommon to see a parent sitting at the back of the class with other siblings some not yet in school playing around the class. Thus the community seemed to be really part of the learning process, which prompted the facilitator to remark; *parents come all the time. This has become one of their leisure activities. In the afternoons a number of them join us in the class (25/04/2011).* Asked if that did not distract the class, he noted that they are used to it and that has been the practice from the beginning. Rather, it helps the children, as some of the parents sometimes intervene in the discussions. In a conversation, one parent remarked that *I come to the class because I never went to school and so I like to come and listen to what they are learning and I can hear and follow what they are doing because it’s in our language (25/04/2011).*

Again it is important to stress the adherence to the principles of social constructivism: dialogue in the relevant language and the cultural relevance of the curriculum content. It is these that allow for parents who show interest in the schooling process and being willing to follow their children to the CEP class and observe and participate in the lessons. Thus the school family cohesion seemed to be operationalized in its literal sense and a real community of learning is facilitated which includes teachers, learners and parents. Such a close relationship between facilitator and learners was also due in part to the fact that pupils ‘identified’ with their teachers: both facilitators under study were comparatively young, indigenes of the communities and treated like older brothers by the children.

**Figure 6.5: CEP Facilitator in class**



Observations across CEP lessons indicate that facilitators made great efforts to achieve interactive classroom practice by increasing methods of learner engagement; trying to be more gender sensitive; and redoubling their provision of feedback to learners on a more consistent basis. For example, below is an excerpt of a lesson on house chores that illustrate this effort:

*F; Open your books to lesson 13 (facilitator goes round to be sure all children have opened to the correct lesson where there is picture of children working around the home)*

*F: What are the children doing?*

*L1:(boy): They are sweeping the compound*

*F: clap for him (children clap for the one who answers)*

*L2:(girl); they are going to fetch water*

*L3:(girl): they are carrying things*

*F:Why should children be responsible in cleaning their environment?(facilitator goes on to ask about four or five questions to which a lot of hands are always raised and three to four children are given the opportunity to answer. I notice that different children are always called to answer so that by the time he is done all the children have had the chance to talk in the class. Every child who gives an answer is clapped for.*

*F:Why should we clean our environment?*

*F:What do you think would happen if girls alone are always asked to clean their homes?*

*F:What do you think would happen if boys alone are always asked to clean their homes?(15/05/2011).*

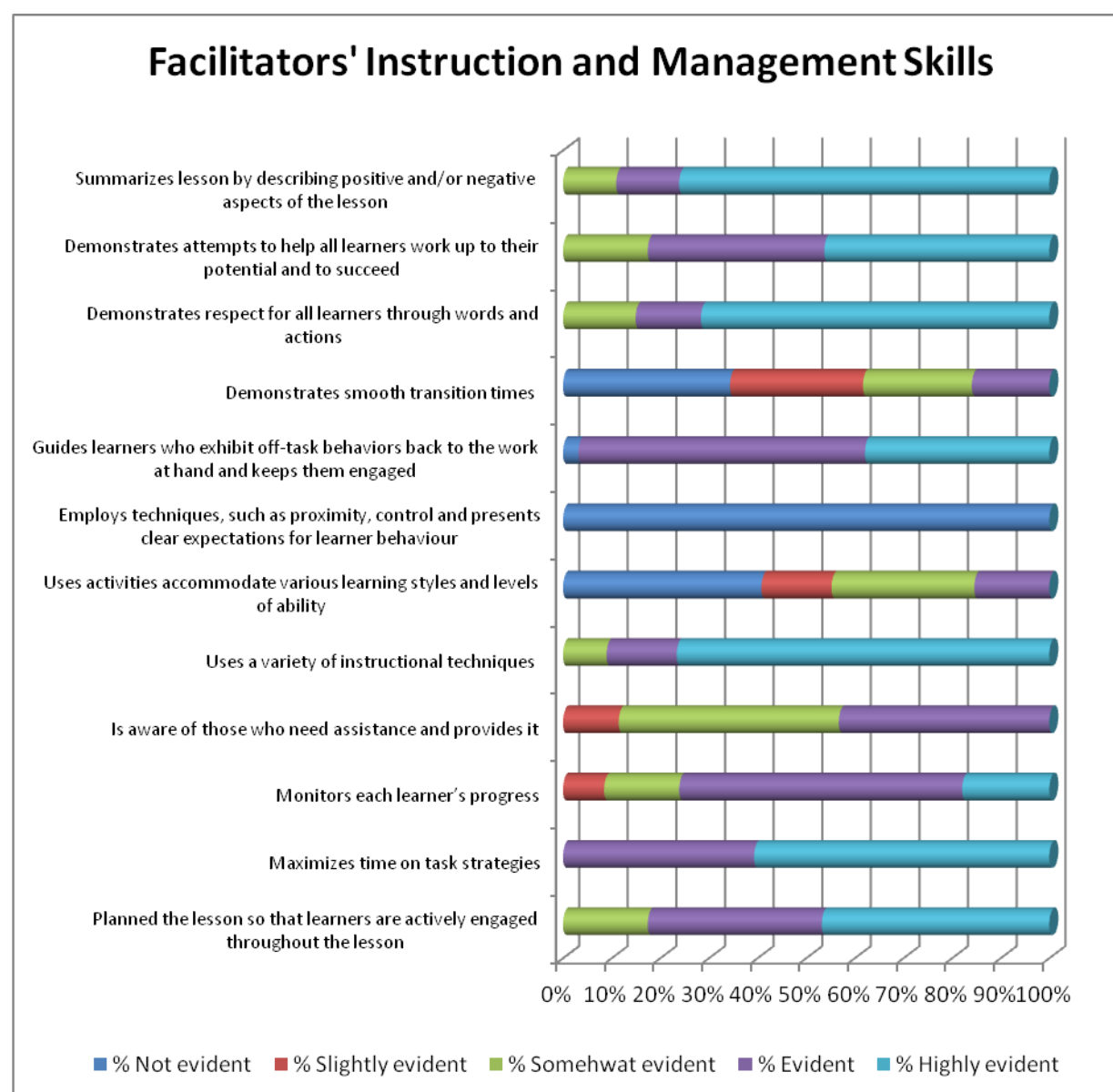
Thus the lesson is developed and presented with the involvement of the whole class. This is also made possible by the fact that the topic is functionally relevant to the learners. On the other hand, one can say that the teacher-learner interaction seen in the CEP classrooms is

always teacher initiated thus there is no real co-production of knowledge here and children will have to wait for the teacher to initiate the process before joining in. A lot of the questions are also closed which do not allow for elaborate answers which promote real dialogues or conversations in the real sense of the word. Thus even though the School for Life facilitators strive to veer away from the traditional teacher centred approaches or teacher questions and pupil answer approaches associated with many formal classrooms, one can see elements of this approach in the classes observed. This drawback is however tempered with the cultural and functional relevance of the topics which allows for more learner participation.

The School for Life curriculum as discussed in the previous chapter is about the functional lives of the learners. Literacy and numeracy are taught through real life activities and social institutions such as farming, fishing, and market etc. In the second diary extract captured in Section 6. 2, the facilitator is seen to link the lesson to the immediate economic activities of the learners that is yam farming, which helps in generating interest and participation in the lesson of the day. Thus even though the classroom discussion is initiated by the facilitator and the dialogues may be constructed because of the types of question, it can also be said that the answers produced by the children become the new knowledge that is generated in the classroom. The children can see the teacher as a partner in this knowledge construction process and their answers are crucial to the teaching and learning process. Overall, facilitators were found to create a learner-centred participatory environment.

This conclusion is borne out of the assessment of facilitators' use of participatory teaching methods in their classroom practice in terms of how often teaching skills that increased the chances of learner engagement and discovery were employed. As explained in Chapter 4, the frequency of facilitators' use of such teaching skills was gauged through two complementary processes. One was by means of observation and the rating of frequency of skills usage; and the other was in the analysis of tape-recorded lesson transcripts. In the latter, emphasis on participatory methodology was considered in terms of the type of exchange and the nature of pupil response in discourse patterns observed. Teaching skills that were considered to be significant in increasing the chances of pupil participation were recorded and further interrogated. The results are summarized in Figure 6.6 below.

**Figure 6.6: Facilitators' Instruction and Management Skills**



The skills identified in the analysis as encouraging participation, respect for learners, assisting learners to reach their potential, and thinking development skills, are presented in Figure 6.6. The figure shows the percentage of the observation period that facilitators were seen to be using various skills, and how evident their use was. From the table, it can be seen that with the exception of activities to accommodate different learning styles; setting clear expected behaviour for learners; and using control and proximity – which indicated lack of or little evidence<sup>7</sup> – there was high evidence or evidence of the facilitator utilizing all those

<sup>7</sup> Facilitators were not seen to enforce discipline and classes were at times unruly with a lot of moving around. This was discussed as part of the informal nature of the classes that ensured that children did feel restricted. This is discussed further in Chapter 7. Also while peer to peer learning was utilised to support slower children

skills that encouraged a communal learning environment, and ensured that pupils participated, and enjoyed the classes with the discovery of new skills and knowledge.

The frequent use of teaching and learning materials, practical activities, and games can be seen in Figure 6.5 in the evidence of the use of varied teaching methods depending on the complexity of the lesson. As indicated in the diary extracts presented above, facilitators utilised direct questioning and answers, getting children to demonstrate on the board, independent children's work and music all in an attempt to facilitate participatory lesson. The table shows that in almost all lessons, there was a clear attempt to maximise time on task. While classes started late a number of times as indicated elsewhere, time spent in the classrooms were utilised strictly for teaching and learning with facilitators going through their scripts and getting children to participate in answering questions, reading and writing. Facilitators were also seen to be conscious of the fact that not all children were at the same level. Thus attempts were made to ensure that children who needed assistance were catered for through peer tutoring in the pair seating and also giving individual attention to children when they were writing in their books. At the end of the each lesson, facilitators will summarise new knowledge developed for the day and based on that give assignments for children to take home. This was seen to be done in 77% of lessons observed.

At times, CEP facilitators relied on traditional instructional methods and the use of repetition in particular, with pupils individually and collectively repeating and memorizing words and phrases. Nevertheless, there was also learner discussion about the pictures in the primers, which then became a basis for class instruction including syllabic drills, reading and writing of meaningful sentences. Learners seemed animated and participated in discussions related to functional and familiar content of lessons, such as family members; types of work done in the community; and food preparation. Facilitators were observed effectively using group work, and getting pupils to practice reading from their books.

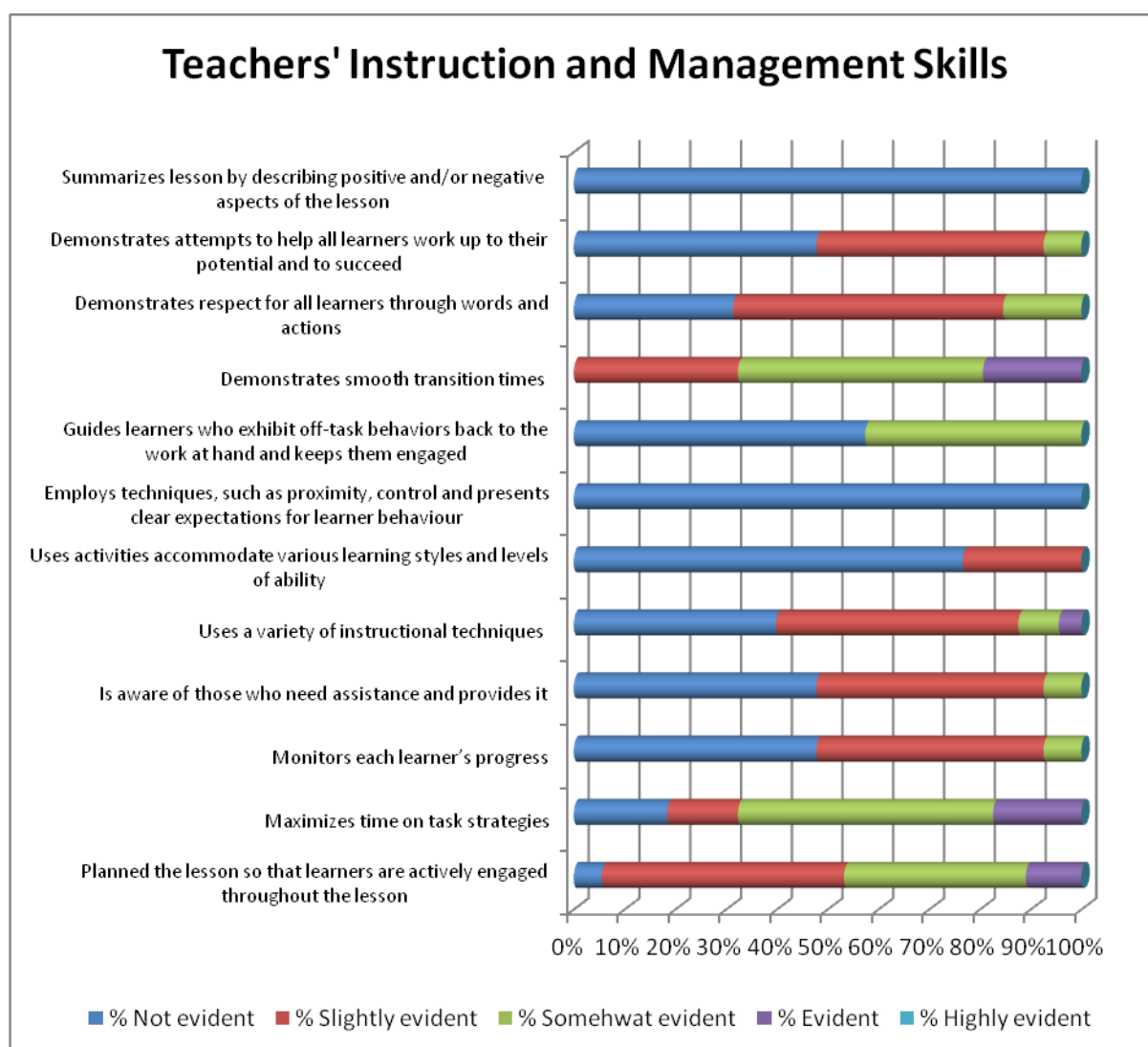
These findings indicate a contrast with formal school lessons observed during the same period, where 40% of lessons were found to be taught without teaching and learning materials; 54% did not engage pupils in practical tasks; and none of them exhibited games in teachers' lesson presentations (See figure 6.7 below). Once again, it becomes clear that while the formal curriculum encourages teachers to engage learners and utilise appropriate teaching

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there did not seem to be a real attempt to change the style to suit different learners. This is borne out of the routines in the manual which tend to assume all learners are participating.

and learning material, there is no built in requirement to do so and teachers are thus left to teach with no obligation or guidance as to how to effectively engage pupils in the instructional process. The teacher thus assumes a position of transmitter of knowledge by default with no discovery taking place in the classroom.

**Figure 6.7: Formal School teachers' Instruction and Management Skills**



Materials conveniently accessible in and around the classroom were the only teaching and learning materials used by the formal school teachers who were occasionally found to use such. Examples of such materials or resources were objects in and around the school compound such as trees, houses and animals. As a consequence of the infrequent use of teaching/learning materials and practical activities, pupils had little opportunity to ask

questions and participate. In an interview with Mr. Salia, one of the formal school teachers whose class was observed, he noted that:

*It is difficult to make our own teaching and learning materials as most of us do not have any art skills. We are also not provided with money for that and the little money from the school's capitation grant is not enough for all of us. Moreover, when you ask the children to bring items to school to be used they refuse to do that (15/06/2011).*

An examination of pupils' exercise books in the formal school revealed that exercises set by teachers were geared towards practice in lessons delivered. Thus while the CEP classes got children to discuss and construct new knowledge through the functional topics, the formal classes exercises did not demand real discussion and thinking on the part of the children. In the CEP lessons described above, the class exercises and children's work in their books were preceded by discussions of relevant topics or subjects with the children being made to write the answers they themselves had generated in their books. This makes children's work more meaningful and creates a sense of ownership for the work produced. The failure of teachers to use teaching and learning materials, practical activities or games, but to rely solely on textbook exercises implied that teaching and learning in the formal school tended to ensure passive reception rather than active participation and construction of new knowledge.

In the formal school classes, teacher-led elicitation exchanges with responses from either an individual or a large number of pupils comprised the most common form of classroom activity observed. In all formal classes, this, together with teacher-led information exchange, constituted more than 70% of lesson time. While in theory this approach does not differ from what was observed in the CEP classes, the reality is different as the topic for discussion in CEP classes generated more interest and participation because of its socio-cultural relevance and the language of interaction. That is, teachers mainly used exchanges to elicit verbal information regarding principles being learned. This difference between the CEP classes and that of the formal school is demonstrated in the following research diary extract.

*It is 1.15 in the afternoon and the children in class 5 have just come from lunch break. This school is benefitting from the free school meals programme, so all the pupils have enjoyed a lunch of yam and bean stew. Surprisingly, all the children are on time for the next lesson, but it is the afternoon and I wonder how the teacher is going to engage the attention of the pupils after their lunch break. This is an English lesson focused on computers. I am curious how he is going to do this. The next class has a Ghanaian Language lesson and I can hear the teacher next door as he shouts instructions to the pupils.*

*The class I am observing is packed with 59 pupils on a hot afternoon and the teacher has to try and deliver a lesson on computers to children who have no experience of them. As the lesson progresses, I notice that the teacher is struggling to get his message across. There is very little he can use to try and engage the attention of the pupils; the closest to a computer these children have come in contact with is a mobile phone and try as he might, the lesson is boring and the children seem be fidgeting. There are five English text books for a class of 59 and I am wondering how the teacher will use these. He distributes the books to groups of 6-10 but then the children are sitting in groups so the lesson progresses with majority of the class without access to the text.*

*At the end of the lesson, I ask the teacher how he feels the lesson went. He seems pleased with himself and his lesson delivery. When I point out that the children were not participating, he responds that he expected that because the topic was not familiar to them, but that they do participate when the topic is familiar. My conclusion is that the teacher seems to have resigned himself to the way of the school. He says he is doing his best and there is very little he can do; he just wants to get through his lesson plans for the week (Researcher's diary: 19/05/2011).*

The extract demonstrates how a non-functional topic can make the class non-participatory regardless of how much effort is put in by the teacher. Other forms of exchange – directing and checking – whose use was more likely to promote the effective learning as pupils discovered for themselves, constituted just under a quarter of the activities observed in formal classes. Thus the lesson delivery observed in the formal school confirms the notion that generally, learner-centred approaches are absent in most formal schools and teachers resort to rote learning and teacher-centred approaches which invariably had no meaning for the children (MOE, 2008; MOE, 2010).

‘Off-task’ time in the CEP class was without exception due to the late arrival of the facilitator, and so the first few minutes of each lesson were not usually used for teaching. However, after the arrival of the facilitator, there were very few off-task activities observed right up to the end of the lesson. In figures 6.6 and 6.7 the difference in the maximising time on task between the CEP classes and the formal school classes can be seen with the 61% of CEP class time maximised for lesson compared to 18% in the formal school classes. In the formal schools observed, teachers also usually arrived late for classes. In addition, many lessons ended about five minutes before the bell (the teacher would typically tell pupils to put their books away before it rang) and even during the lesson, there were occasions when the teacher was engaged in some administrative work without having assigned the pupils anything at all.

In the CEP classes, it was observed that there was a high degree of fidelity between facilitators’ conduct of classes and lesson plans as they were outlined in the Facilitator’s



Manual, and they taught all lessons by going through most of the stages prescribed for them. Facilitators in the CEP class were keen to introduce those activities that led learners to greater phonological awareness and decoding practice, but there was a certain emphasis on repetition and memorization. Facilitators themselves were fluent in the reading of the Ghanaian language texts, but rather than drawing out the meaning of the stories and other texts in the pupil materials, they tended to overstress word repetition. This is borne out of some of the weaknesses identified in the CEP lesson structure discussed in the last chapter which seemed to focus a lot on key word and syllabic drills. See below extract.

*Facilitator is teaching the lesson 'farm' today. After going through the picture discussion he writes four words on the board: 'Farm' 'mounds' 'yams' 'wisdom'*

*He then begins to pronounce them one after the other. After pronouncing every word three times he asks the whole class to pronounce after him. Following that each child is asked to pronounce the word. One after the other they all pronounce the words. Then he asks them to write the words and use them to form sentences. Each child has to read one sentence. Research diary (April 12, 2011).*

Again, teaching the CEP depended very much on the Facilitator's Manual and learner materials. Facilitators referred pupils to their literacy primers or numeracy books during the explanation of concepts or techniques, and used class practice suggested in the manual as learning activities for learners. This is at variance with what happens in the formal school as described in the following diary extract:

*School is supposed to start at 8.30 am, however, lessons start at 9.00 this morning. The first lesson in this P6 class is a mathematics lesson on 'Percent of Quantities'. The walls are bare and there are no books in front of the children. Teacher has no TLMs prepared even though his lesson plans show that he intends to use some prepared TLMs. Children walk in after the lesson starts and the teacher does not comment on their lateness. Teacher started the lesson trying to explain percentages. He talks for about 10 minutes before asking the children to participate. Even though it's the first lesson in the morning and you will expect the children to be energised, the lesson is boring with very little participation of the children except to work in their exercise books questions put on the board (11/05/2011).*

Thus while the CEP facilitator's guide was utilised religiously to ensure learner centred instruction, the formal school teacher was not obligated to follow his own lesson plans and classes were not obligated to be interactive. On the other hand, it can be said that the functionality of the topics and the scripted guide made it possible for the facilitator to have mastery over content knowledge which helped in facilitating learner centeredness. The facilitator's pedagogical content knowledge is discussed in the next section.

#### **6.4. The Facilitator's Content Knowledge**

Given that this study also seeks to ascertain the extent to which the implemented curriculum corresponds with the planned curriculum, it is also important to assess the content knowledge of the facilitators who delivered the lessons. Shulman (2004), notes that

the person who presumes to teach subject matter to children must demonstrate knowledge of that subject matter as a prerequisite to teaching. Although knowledge of the theories and methods is important, it plays a decidedly secondary role in the qualification of a teacher (p193).

Since there was no opportunity to observe the training of facilitators, the study relied on SfL management anecdotal reports. As noted earlier, after their initial training, facilitators were given regular field support throughout the course of the programme cycle. Thus, the only verifiable evidence of facilitators' content knowledge was gleaned from class observations, interviews with learners, and the facilitators themselves.

It is important to note that the two facilitators under study had both been teaching CEP classes for nearly ten years. Therefore, they were very experienced members of staff who were well versed in the rudiments of the SfL programme. Accordingly, the evidence presented in this section may not be truly representative of all CEP facilitators.

So far, the study has been able to give an account of how CEP classes are delivered and managed but this is obviously not enough in understanding how effective the programme is implemented. Shulman (2004:199) indicates that the literature of research on teaching, does not adequately answer all the questions relevant to understanding effective implementation of curriculum. He notes that the emphasis on prevailing literature is on

how teachers manage their classroom, organise activities, allocate time and turns, structure assignments, ascribe praise and blame, formulate the levels of their questions, plan lessons and judge the general student understanding. What we miss are questions about the content of the lessons taught, the questions asked and the explanations offered.

Nevertheless, Table 6.1 below shows how the facilitators under study proved themselves in terms of knowledge of the content they aimed to transmit to learners (pedagogical content knowledge). In most of the lessons observed, it was obvious that the facilitators had mastery over subject content. They were confident in their presentation and able to lead pupils to critically build on their own experiences, construct new knowledge, and get them to participate in reading, writing and numeracy exercises. Pedagogical content knowledge also

includes an understanding of what makes the learning of specific topics easy or difficult (Shulman, 2004).

**Table 6.1: CEP Facilitators Content knowledge**

<b>Content Indicator</b>	<b>% Not evident</b>	<b>% Slightly evident</b>	<b>% Somewhat evident</b>	<b>% Evident</b>	<b>% Highly evident</b>
Shows knowledge of subject matter in lesson presentation	3%	0%	0%	12%	86%
Is able to respond to learners' questions accurately	0%	0%	8%	22%	71%
Provides additional information to learners	17%	9%	17%	24%	44%
Provides clear and appropriate information	7%	0%	16%	44%	45%

As the table above shows, in all categories there was evidence that facilitators had a clear grasp of the content they were expected to deliver to learners. Learners' questions were responded to correctly 93% of the time while providing additional information 66% of the time. The lessons themselves were delivered clearly as they followed the script and so clear and appropriate information was provided 90% of the time. Thus, it can be seen that with the requisite curriculum materials as detailed in the SfL manual, it is possible for facilitators to have mastery of the learning content they deliver. Equally important is the fact made earlier about the functionality of the topics being discussed. Ali, one of the facilitators indicated:

*the topics I teach are all activities and functions that I as well as the children undertake daily. I have my own farm and some cattle so all these community topics are activities I have been engaged in since a child.*

Thus the fact that topics were derived from the local reality meant that facilitators who were also local community members will be familiar with the content of the lessons. An exception in both Complementary Education Programme classes observed was facilitators' difficulty in handling the topics of HIV/AIDS, and Information and Computer Technology (ICT), which had recently been added to the curriculum. ICT would seem to be a theoretical subject to add to the curriculum, as the schools were not equipped with computers.

Learners' questions were responded to effectively, although the lesson sequence did not lend itself to many chances for students to ask questions; even though there was a lot of pupil engagement through asking them to read sentences and write words on the board or in their exercise books. Thus even though the lessons and the classroom interactions were always teacher initiated as noted earlier, the opportunity given to the children to answer questions and reproduce their answers either on the board or in their book was instrumental in the knowledge construction process.

However, new information was not always presented to learners. In a follow-up discussion, Ali, one facilitator noted the following: *"Where we do not have all the information, we are encouraged to bring in community members to lead or support the discussion"* (24/05/2011). Mr Abu, who had been instrumental in developing the curriculum, also indicated that the facilitator was not intended to be a repository of all knowledge, and that the teaching and learning process was designed to encourage interaction between pupils and facilitators, with community members sometimes coming in to share their knowledge and experience. Yet, this was observed to take place only once during the field study.

Moreover, while the involvement of others with specialized knowledge and experience is a good idea in principle and can lead to the involvement of the community, parents and other skilled people as resource persons, it does not allow facilitators to increase their knowledge base, especially when it comes to topics they are not familiar with. Therefore, if suitable local resource persons were not available, classes could suffer, as I observed when one facilitator was attempting to teach ICT and HIV/AIDS.

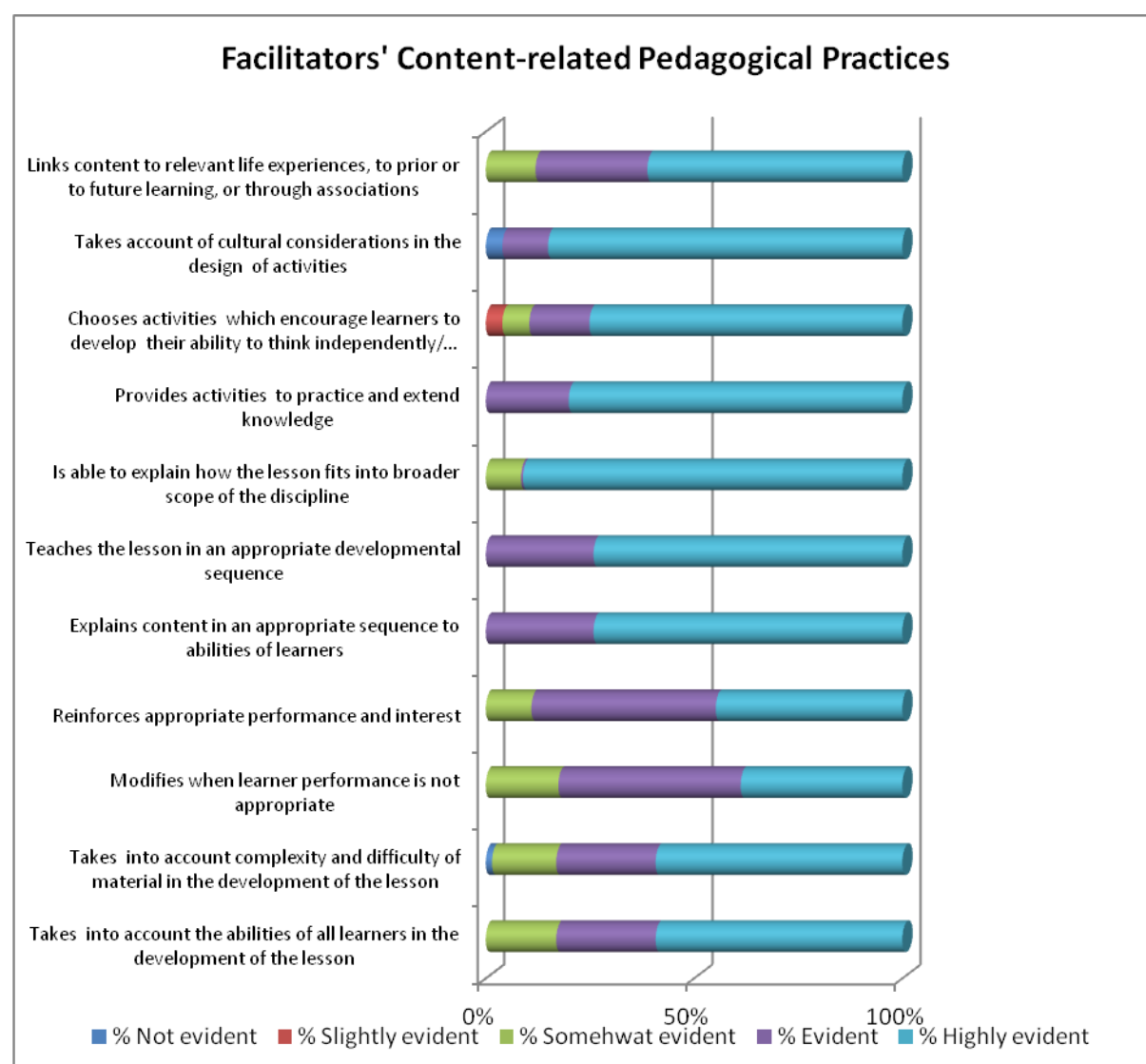
Shulman (2004:202) contends that society expects "that the subject matter content understanding of the teacher be at least equal to that of his or her lay colleague". In his view, it is important for the teacher to not only understand the subject in detail but also understand why he has to teach the subject and the benefits of teaching the subject or topic to his pupils.

Moreover, we expect the teacher to understand why a given topic is particularly central to a discipline whereas another may be somewhat peripheral. This will be important in subsequent pedagogical judgements regarding relative curricular emphasis (p202).

Indeed, Facilitators' competency in terms of the pedagogical content of lessons was highly evident in all observations. While it is important to emphasise Shulman's view that mere content knowledge is likely to be as useless pedagogically as content free skill. But to blend

properly the two aspects of teacher capacities requires that attention is paid to the content as well as elements of the teaching process. Figure 6.8 below details facilitators' performance in terms of content-related pedagogical practices that is pedagogical content knowledge.

**Figure 6.8: Facilitators' Content- related Pedagogical Practices**



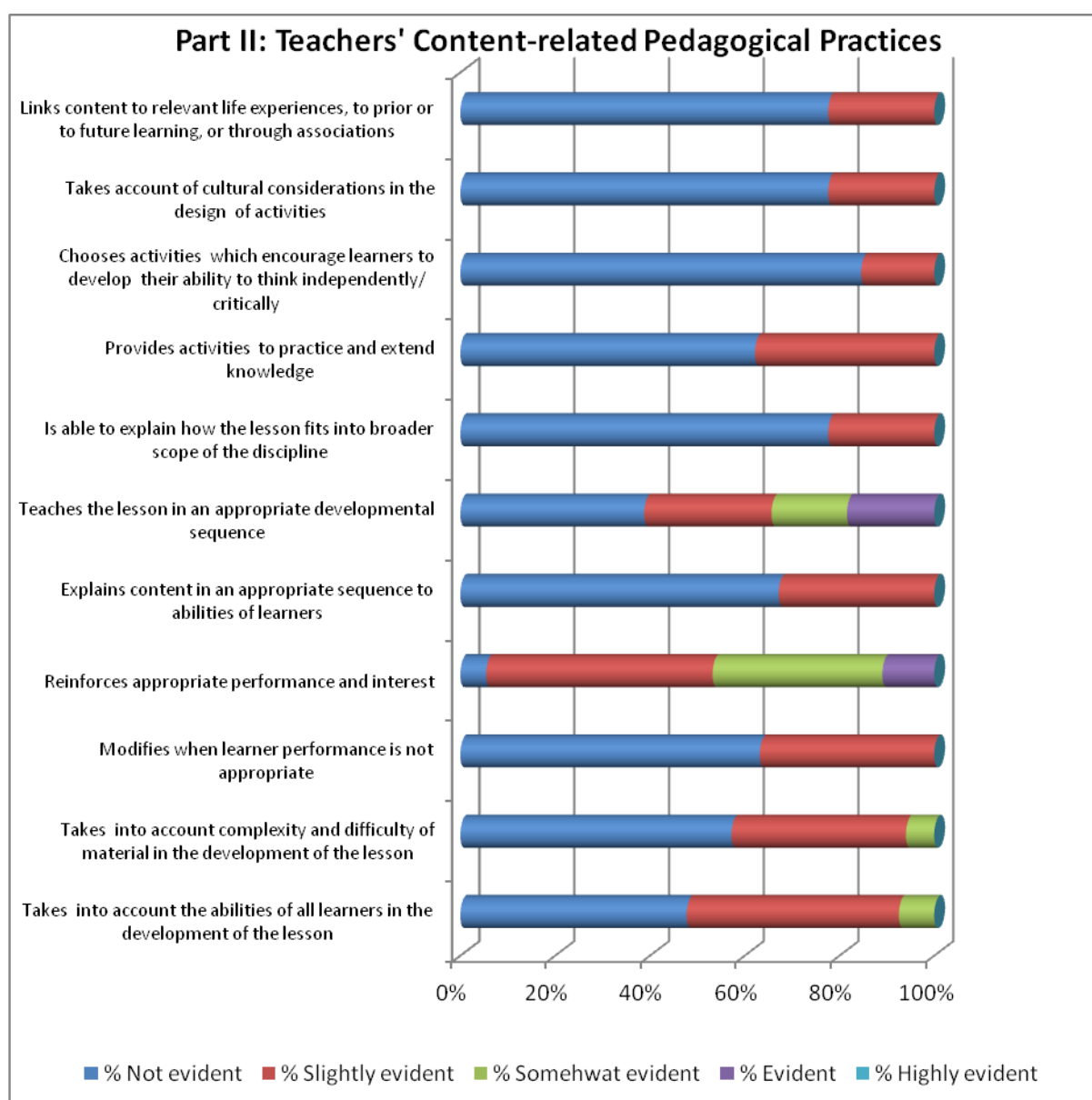
The table shows that in 81% of the observed lessons, facilitators provided activities to practice and extend knowledge; 75% of lessons showed evidence of activities that encouraged learners to develop the ability to think independently/critically; and 62% of lessons linked content to relevant life experiences, prior or future learning, or through association. It can also be seen that 60% of lessons took into account the abilities of all learners in the development of the lesson; 60% took into account the complexity and

difficulty of material in the development of the lesson; and 62% provided explanation of how the lesson fit into the broader scope of the discipline.

As noted previously, the activities listed in Figure 6.7 were prescribed in the Facilitator's Manual. Therefore there did not seem to be a lot of initiative on the part of the facilitator in devising activities aimed specifically at tackling difficult topics or subjects, and discussions with Complementary Education Programme facilitators revealed a certain hesitance to deviate from the guide. Thus, while the CEP was noted for its flexibility in accommodating the lifestyle of the community and its learners, there was a certain level of rigidity found in the manner in which instruction was managed. O'Sullivan (2004) notes the importance of prescriptive materials that guarantee teachers stay on track and facilitate learner centred lessons and it appears that is the principle being utilised in the CEP. Especially given the fact the CEP facilitator is not a professionally trained teacher, scripted guides become even more crucial in ensuring that at every step of the way, the teacher has instructions to fall back on ensuring that the gap between curriculum policy and practice which is endemic in the formal school process is drastically reduced in this instance.

In contrast to the CEP facilitators, formal school teachers observed did not seem to be on top of the lessons they were delivering. See figure 6.9 below.

**Figure 6.9: Formal School Teachers' Content-Related Pedagogical Practices**



*The above table shows the weaknesses observed in the formal classes. In general, teachers were not seen to link lessons to the lives of the children. For instance, on one occasion, I observed a reading comprehension lesson being taught through poetry in a P4 class. While the poem was in English and difficult for the children to follow, the learners did not seem to understand what was going on as the teacher kept on talking about rhyming and other literary terms without attempting to make the theme of the poem or its subject interesting to the children. Teachers were not seen attempting to change their pace or approach to ensure that learners participated in lesson. My conclusion was that teachers were just interested in running through their lesson plans prepared for the week. Thus there was no real attempt to ensure that the plans were delivered as intended which brings to the fore the issue of policy and practice in curriculum implementation the focus of the next chapter.*

## 6.5. Summary

In terms of the key aim of the present study – to understand how the Complementary Education Programme curriculum is implemented in order to prepare learners for entry into the formal school – on the one hand, there are highly operational and practical issues about how facilitators manage to utilize the CEP interactive approach and materials. Nevertheless, on the other hand, it is expected that when facilitators use the manual effectively, there will be an increase in effective classroom practices, particularly in such important instructional areas as pupil engagement and interaction in literacy tasks; the utilization of teaching and learning materials; evidence of increased pupil practice of ‘thinking’ skills rather than rote learning; and enhanced facilitator feedback to pupil performance.

The study showed that to a large extent facilitators ensured that they followed the script in the manual and this was the key factor in ensuring that there was an interactive classroom environment that promoted the social construction of knowledge. Other key factors such as the functional relevance of the topics, the facilitator’s mastery over the pedagogical content knowledge which was enhanced by its functionality for both facilitator and learners ensured that classroom interaction was animated and interesting. These factors in conjunction with the utilisation of mother tongue instruction created the platform for meaningful dialogue and knowledge construction. The functional and cultural relevance of the topics delivered via a local language also ensured that a real community of learning was created with parents, facilitator and learners coming together. Thus the CEP class was not just a school situated outside the community’s life but situated right within the structure of the community.

It is however critical to note that the study does not conclude that SfL magically creates a learner centred environment where all teaching and learning is participatory. A review of the literature on pedagogical practices across sub-Saharan African show that by and large most teaching and learning on the subcontinent is teacher centred and constrained by the history and social process of school. However the context within which School for Life operates breaks some traditional constraints and allows for a freer interaction between teachers and pupil. For the SfL learner, the CEP class is not a real school. It is more a or less a break from their economic chores and the environment of the class as indicated even by the presence of family members makes them feel more at home to participate.

This chapter has also noted in various sections how knowledge is socially constructed in the CEP class. However, a closer look at the some of the processes show that the SfL classes



share similarities with the formal school in terms of teacher-pupil elicitation and teacher-initiated discourse in the classroom. At the same time it is important to emphasise that social construction in the SfL class is not about the individual processes or parts but the sum of the disparate parts or processes coming together constructively or synergistically to create knowledge: the context of the class, the functional relevance of the topics, language of instruction (which is discussed in detail in the next chapter), meaningful dialogue and the relationship between the facilitator and learners all conspire to create a programme or lesson within which children are able to engage with and produce knowledge.

In contrast, observation carried out in the formal school showed a different situation, where there was disconnection between the intended curriculum and the implemented curriculum with very little interaction taking place as a result of the teachers' inability or refusal to implement an interactive classroom engagement. Teachers in the formal school are not obligated to ensure that learning is interactive and while lesson plans were prepared for that purpose, it did not happen in practice. For instance At SfL, children write almost daily about some aspect of the curricular focus for the day/week. Copying plays a minor role. In formal school, children copy what teachers write. So at SfL, children share in generating text. It is interactive. They read, they talk, and then they write. Their writing reflects that interaction. It is a social construction of knowledge. At formal school, they do not construct knowledge. Everyone copies the same text, which was generated by the teacher. In formal school, kids learn that writing belongs to the other; in SfL they learn that people are authors.

Crucially, what this implies as indicated by some of the comments by CEP learners was a case of two different worlds. CEP learners were taught in an interactive and communal learning environment where they learnt subjects which were relevant to their lives but this was in preparation for a system that was to a large extent at variance with their experience of learning. We have also noted in Chapter 5, that the CEP curriculum does not mention the formal school in theory. The assumption is that once they master the rudiment of literacy and numeracy, they will be able to integrate into the formal school. Thus the effort that goes into ensuring that there is a real social construction of knowledge is seen as a way of guaranteeing their survival in the formal school. How they fare in the formal school is discussed in the next chapter.

## **Chapter 7: The Performance of CEP Graduates in the Formal School**

It is known that School for Life graduates generally enter formal school at Primary 4 or above; and it has also been reported that School for Life graduates tend to perform better than the established formal school pupils they come into contact with (Casely-Hayford and Adom Gharthey, 2007; Hartwell, 2007). These reports are mainly based on interviews and some observation confirming the assertion in the literature that a number of evaluation studies do not employ detailed classroom observations to make their conclusions convincing enough (O’Sullivan, 2005). Moreover, while there is no evidence of any formal assessment that compares the performance of these two types of learner, there is also very little objective information on the factors that enable Complementary Education Programme graduates to integrate into formal school effectively. Therefore, this chapter analyses the performance of School for Life graduates in the formal school, and the characteristics of the CEP that promote accelerated learning and support integration into the formal school.

The chapter has four main sections. The first deals with the integration of CEP graduates into formal school. This is followed by an examination of evidence gleaned from the pupil assessment conducted as part of the field study. The third section discusses the factors that appear to account for the effectiveness of the School for Life Complementary Education Programme such mother tongue instruction, role of facilitators, age of learners and community engagement. This is followed by the challenges faced by graduates in the formal school. The chapter thus focuses on evidence from the assessment data, anecdotal reports, and the perspectives of various stakeholders through interviews and discussions. It attempts to reconcile the perception and reality of the Complementary Education Programme; and also assesses in detail the characteristics of the programme that enable learners to reach in a nine-month cycle a level of proficiency that allows successful integration into the middle grades of the formal primary school.

### **7.1. Integration of CEP Graduates in Formal School**

Records from the 10 participating schools, direct observation and discussion with various stakeholders during the study indicated that most School for Life graduates were admitted to P3 or P4 after an informal placement test conducted by a GES official. Discussions with

School for Life staff, formal school teachers, and GES circuit supervisors confirmed that such tests were conducted in the presence of community representatives, one of the latter explaining:

*To graduate into formal school, CEP learners are asked to write a few words, read sentences, or calculate in the local language. This takes place at a community durbar [meeting]. Based on the performance of the children, availability of space in the classes, or the ages of the children, they are enrolled in the appropriate class in the formal school.*

A circuit supervisor in the study district reported that the CEP “helped us a lot because it enrolled most of them [out-of-school children] into the formal school and helped them to learn maths and reading.” He noted that at the formal graduation ceremonies of Complementary Education Programme students, parents came forward to register their children for formal schools. Facilitators confirmed that many CEP graduates joined formal school classes following the conclusion of the program. School records and interviews with other stakeholders indicate that the majority of children who have gone through Complementary Education Programmes have already transitioned into formal school. Facilitator and teacher interviews indicate that the Complementary Education Programme graduates transitioning into formal school entered classes P3 to P5.

Such verbal evidence together with examination of school enrolment records at the research sites revealed that there were cases in which learners were enrolled in formal school at as high a level as P6 based on age and performance in the placement test. However, the study concluded that there did not seem to be any formal or rigorous assessment process to determine placement, a lot being left to the discretion of the GES official who conducted the test. Thus being enrolled in Primary 3 or 4 does not necessarily mean that School for Life graduates had mastered the requirements of that grade level. It is also important to note that discussions with heads of schools indicated that in practice, there is no standard placement test for children enrolling in formal primary schools. The practice is generally to enrol children in primary 1 and in some cases at the discretion of the head of school pupils are enrolled in higher classes based on their ages.

However, in the ten formal schools under study, an inspection of class registers revealed that promotion rates among SfL graduates were very high, ranging between 98% and 100%. Nevertheless, discussions with school authorities revealed that there is no policy or practice

of grade repetition in the Ghanaian formal primary school system; in cases in which pupils do not pass end of year examinations, there is generally simply wholesale promotion to the next grade. Thus, it is possible to conclude that the advancement of School for Life graduates to the next grade is more an indicator of their perseverance in the formal school than their performance at their respective levels.

However, teachers at the two schools where in-depth observation, interviews and discussions were held agreed that the performance of School for Life graduates tended to be high, and that they were able to compete on an equal footing with classmates who had entered the formal school system at P1 (compared to the SfL graduates who entered at P3 or 4) owing to the special methodologies used in Complementary Education Programme classes. While the teachers were unable to clearly identify what these techniques were, they did cite the use of mother tongue instruction as the key to ensuring that School for Life learners entered the formal school with high levels of confidence and determination to succeed. They also mentioned the comparatively low number of 25 School for Life pupils to a class, the availability of teaching and learning materials, and the informal interaction between the children and the facilitator as contributory factors.

In an interview with the head teacher of Woribogu Kukuo Primary, it became clear that formal school teachers held School for Life graduates in high regard. The head confirmed the popular notion that former School for Life pupils generally did better than their formal school classmates, arguing that this was because, *“The children are able to write well, they are bold to express themselves during class, and quick to answer questions posed by the teachers in class.”*

In Chapter 6, evidence is presented to corroborate the notion that the Complementary Education Programme class is interactive, learners constantly participate, they are called to write on the board, and there is a high level of engagement in reading and writing activities. Thus, the above assertion from the head teacher seems to indicate a continuation of participation from the School for Life experience. The head even recommended that all children go through School for Life before enrolling in a formal school.

The field study confirmed that parents also perceived School for Life to provide a higher quality of education delivery compared to the formal schooling system. Focus group discussions with a cross section of School for Life and non-School for Life parents revealed

their belief that CEP graduates were better able to read and write in comparison to their siblings who had attended formal school from P1. Parents spoke of how they relied on their children at School for Life to read simple instructions, letters, and other documents, as their brothers and sisters at formal school still struggled to read and write. When questioned further on how they had reached such a conclusion, it became apparent that these parents had very little contact with the formal school compared to School for Life, one of their number noting:

*We don't know what happens in the formal school and when the children come home we don't know what they have learned; but we go to the CEP classes sometimes and we see how the children are learning, and we can even understand what they are reading and writing because it's in our language.*

Such assertions notwithstanding, the study could discover no independent data to confirm or negate these pronouncements. It is also important to emphasize the point made earlier that given the long-term establishment of School for Life in these communities, the CEP had become institutionalized in them. Additionally, it provided parents with a means of circumventing the opportunity cost of sending their children to school, as they were able to harness the labour of the latter for a while longer before sending them to formal school. Thus, it is possible that parents were reluctant to say anything negative about the programme.

As noted earlier, School for Life does not conduct formal assessment, as assessment is built into the lesson delivery and the participation of the children in the lesson in answering questions, demonstrating competency and writing in their books indicates whether the children are learning or not. For example, the facilitator in Woribo Kukou said he would ask “trial questions” to see if learners knew the answers. Another facilitator said he quizzed pupils on vocabulary or used the tape scripts<sup>8</sup> to assess comprehension. The final unit also served as a sort of cumulative evaluation, as learners were supposed to apply what they learned by making posters and singing songs.

Thus previous studies of the programme have tended to rely on anecdotal and circumstantial evidence to determine the performance of CEP graduates. While the present study's lesson observations found evidence of the interactive characteristics of the Complementary Education Programme class and the professionalism of its facilitators, it is still difficult to gauge the true achievements of School for Life graduates. To ascertain the veracity of

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<sup>8</sup> Each SfL class is provided with a radio cassette player with recorded oral stories that facilitators play to the children as part of the lessons.

anecdotal claims and circumstantial evidence, I decided to assess the performance of CEP graduates in their formal school environments, the results of which are discussed in the following section.

## 7.2. CEP Graduate Assessment Results

The pupil assessment component of this study was conducted with the aid of National Education Assessment (NEA) test instruments. These tools comprise the standardized testing mechanism used to assess pupil performance in Ghanaian formal schools. The NEA assesses competence in English Language and Mathematics at Primary 3 and Primary 6. In the present study, Primary 3 instruments were used to assess Primary 4 pupils, while Primary 6 instruments were used to assess pupils in that level. As stated in chapter 3 the NEA instruments used for this study comprise 40 and 60 multiple-choice questions respectively for primary 3 and 6. The English Language test is designed to test listening comprehension, reading comprehension and grammar. In the primary 3 test for instance, pupils answer 10 listening comprehension questions. The test also includes two reading passages of 4 lines long followed by 3 questions per passage aimed at testing reading comprehension. The rest of the questions are designed to test grammar. The primary 6 English instrument also follows the same format with 60 questions, 15 for listening comprehension, two reading passages of 10 lines each followed by 5 comprehension questions per passage. The rest of the questions assess grammar. Below is an example of the reading passages and questions. See Appendix 6 and 7 for the detailed instruments used.

***Read the following passage and answer the questions on it.***

*Afua was always curious about sex. Some of her friends said they were doing it. They all said having sex was wonderful. All this time, Afua did not have a boyfriend. One weekend, she met a handsome young man called Fiifi in town. He told her she was very beautiful. Afua became so excited and before she knew it she and the young man were having sex a few days later.*

*Soon she fell ill and was diagnosed as HIV positive. She was later found to be pregnant. Afua had to stop school. Before she could have her baby, the HIV developed into AIDS. Afua realized she should have abstained from sex. She died when she was delivering her baby. The baby was safely delivered, but it had contracted HIV/AIDS and died three weeks after birth.*

38. *What was Afua curious about?*
- (A) *Friends*
  - (B) *Sex*
  - (C) *School*
  - (D) *Herself*
39. *Afua was curious about sex. Curious means \_\_\_\_\_ .*
- (A) *bored*
  - (B) *eager*
  - (C) *certain*
  - (D) *advised*
40. *Afua realized she should have abstained from sex.. Abstained from means .....*
- (A) *stayed away.*
  - (B) *engaged in.*
  - (C) *agreed to.*
  - (D) *took part in.*
41. *What happened to Afua after she became pregnant?*
- (A) *She dropped out of school.*
  - (B) *She finished her school.*
  - (C) *She was found to have HIV.*
  - (D) *She was suspended from school.*

Again, it is important to note that the study attempts to review all three levels of the curriculum: planned, implemented and received. Chapters 5 and 6 analysed the planned and implemented curriculums respectively; the received curriculum represents the knowledge obtained by pupils and this can be objectively assessed through testing their competence in each subject area. The tables below present the results of assessments in both English Language and Mathematics. The English Language results are analysed in two parts: reading comprehension and grammar. In analysing these results it is important to note that SfL graduates do not learn English before enrolling in the formal school where English is the official language of instruction from P4. The GES does not also have any standardised test of Ghanaian Language competency and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in the Ghanaian language is yet to be formally introduced into the Ghanaian education system. The

closest one comes to EGRA is the formative evaluation of the National Literacy Accelerated Programme (NALAP) conducted in three Ghanaian languages for P2 pupils.

A total of 208 Primary 4 pupils took part in the NEA assessment using instruments designed for Primary 3 pupils. As previously stated, two assumptions guided this decision. One was that Primary 4 pupils have completed the requirements of the Primary 3 syllabus in each subject and so should experience no difficulty in taking the assessment. The other was that most School for Life graduates enter formal school at Primary 4, meaning they should be in a position to undertake tests that have been designed to cover the first three years of primary education.

In the GES-administered NEA, minimum competence denotes the attainment of a score of 35% and proficiency is indicated by the achievement of 55%. The 35% minimum competence level is a collective benchmark determined by item writers with support from other subject specialists, and reflects a value of 10 percentage points above the chance score of 25%, thereby suggesting that some learning has taken place. The proficiency level of 55% – determined by the same group of educators – shows that the pupil has attained the target for his or her grade, thereby demonstrating ability to cope with the standard of work at the following level (MOE, 2010a). Tables 7.1 to 7.4 below detail the results of the comprehension and grammar assessments conducted during the study.



**Table 7.1: P4 Comprehension****Case Processing Summary**

	<b>Cases</b>					
	<b>Valid</b>		<b>Missing</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>208</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Gender Competencies/Pupil type Cross tabulation**

<b>Student type</b>			<b>Competencies</b>			<b>Total</b>
			<b>Below Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Competency Level</b>	
<b>SfL</b>	<b>Male:</b> <b>%</b> <b>gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	19 29.7%	14 21.9%	31 48.4%	64 100%
	<b>Female:</b> <b>%</b> <b>gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	8 29.8%	8 29.6%	11 40.7%	27 100%
	<b>Total:</b> <b>%</b> <b>gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	27 29.7%	22 24.2%	42 46.2%	91 100%
<b>Non SfL</b>	<b>Male:</b> <b>%</b> <b>gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	32 47.8%	12 17.9%	23 34.3%	67 100%
	<b>Female:</b> <b>%</b> <b>gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	24 48.0%	9 18.0%	17 34.0%	50 100%
	<b>Total:</b> <b>%</b> <b>gender</b>	<b>count within gender</b>	56 47.9%	21 17.9%	40 34.2%	117 100%

From the above table, it can be seen that of 208 pupils, 44% or 91 of them were School for Life graduates; and 24% of such graduates in Primary 4 managed minimum competence in the reading comprehension test, while 46% attained the target competence or proficiency level. This compares with 17% and 34% respectively with regard to regular formal school pupils.

**Table 7.2: Primary 4 Grammar****Case Processing Summary**

	<b>Cases</b>					
	<b>Valid</b>		<b>Missing</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>208</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Gender Competencies/Pupil type Cross tabulation**

<b>Student type</b>			<b>Competencies</b>			<b>Total</b>
			<b>Below Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Competency Level</b>	
<b>SfL</b>	<b>Male:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	27 42.2%	18 28.1%	19 29.7%	64 100%
	<b>Female:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	15 57.7%	5 19.2%	6 23.1%	26 100%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	42 46.7%	23 25.8%	25 27.8%	90 100%
<b>Non SfL</b>	<b>Male:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	34 48.6%	14 20.0%	22 31.4%	70 100%
	<b>Female:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	24 50.0%	11 22.9%	13 27.1%	48 100%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>count % within gender</b>	58 49.2%	25 21.2%	35 29.7%	118 100%

In terms of the grammar test, it can be seen that non-School for Life pupils performed slightly better than their School for Life counterparts, with 29.7% of the former attaining proficiency as opposed to 27.8% of the latter. Discussions with teachers and pupils revealed that while School for Life focused on reading skills, thus equipping its graduates with the ability to read and write, there was less focus on grammar in the Complementary Education Programme. Conversely, English Language lessons in the formal school seem to have focused more sharply on language usage and rules rather than teaching pupils to read. This was reflected in the results of the Primary 6 tests detailed below. While School for Life graduates performed on a par with non-School for Life pupils in reading comprehension, the former were once again behind in English Grammar. The results do not show significant difference in terms of

gender. While 29% of male School for Life graduates had competency in grammar, 23% females were competent. In the same vein, 27% non-School for Life males were competent, while 29% females were also competent in the same subject.

**Table 7.3: Primary 6 Comprehension**

**Case Processing Summary**

	<b>Cases</b>					
	<b>Valid</b>		<b>Missing</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>186</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Gender Competencies/Pupil type Cross tabulation**

<b>Student type</b>			<b>Competencies</b>			<b>Total</b>
			<b>Below Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Competency Level</b>	
<b>SfL</b>	<b>Male:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	20 33.9%	18 30.5%	21 35.6%	59 100%
	<b>Female:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	10 27.8%	11 30.6%	15 41.7%	36 100%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	30 31.6%	29 30.5%	36 37.9%	95 100%
<b>Non SfL</b>	<b>Male:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	11 16.2%	30 44.1%	27 39.7%	68 100%
	<b>Female:</b>	<b>Count % within gender</b>	6 26.1%	8 34.8%	9 39.1%	23 100%
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>count % within gender</b>	17 18.7%	38 41.8%	36 39.6%	91 100%

**Table 7.4: Primary 6 Grammar****Case Processing Summary**

	<b>Cases</b>					
	<b>Valid</b>		<b>Missing</b>		<b>Total</b>	
	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
	<b>186</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Gender Competencies/Pupil type Cross tabulation**

<b>Student type</b>			<b>Competencies</b>			<b>Total</b>
			<b>Below Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Minimum Competencies</b>	<b>Competency Level</b>	
<b>SfL</b>	<b>Male: Count % within gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	44 78.6%	9 16.1%	3 5.4%	56 100%
	<b>Female: Count % within gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	30 76.9%	5 12.8%	4 10.3%	39 100%
	<b>Total: Count % within gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	74 77.9%	14 14.7%	7 7.4%	95 100%
<b>Non SfL</b>	<b>Male: Count % within gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	43 63.2%	15 22.1%	10 14.7%	68 100%
	<b>Female: Count % within gender</b>	<b>Count within gender</b>	17 73.9%	5 21.7%	1 4.3%	23 100%
	<b>Total: count % within gender</b>	<b>count within gender</b>	60 65.9%	20 22.0%	11 12.1%	91 100%

Comparing the P4 and P6 results in both comprehension and grammar throws up issues related to progression of learners in the formal school. While the test cannot be compared as like for like because we are not tracking the same students, the fact that they have similar backgrounds make the results necessary to point out. The results for comprehension show 46% SfL P4 graduates attaining competency against 38% of the same category of pupils attaining competency in P6. On the other hand, in Grammar, while 28% SfL graduates in P4 were competent, only 10.3% of their colleagues in P6 were competent in grammar against 29% and 12% respectively for the non SfL pupils. Thus there seems to be a consistent drop in performance for both types of pupils, indicating perhaps that pupil progression in the formal school does not correspond with performance.

It is also instructive to note that the P4 results in English are better than the P2 NALAP EGRA results noted earlier, where the findings show that P2 pupils, in each of the languages, are having major difficulties in reading acquisition and are in general not learning to read with fluency and comprehension. For example, the average child assessed in Akuapem Twi read 11.0 words per minute and answered 7.7% of comprehension questions correctly. None of the Dagbani pupils could read a single word, and therefore, the average comprehension score was 0% correct. In Fante, the average fluency score was 4.7 words per minute, with reading comprehension at 7.3% correct. Overall scores across all of the measures in all three regions were very low (USAID, 2011).

In the Mathematics tests (see appendix 12), overall, neither category of pupil performed very well, with 11% of School for Life graduates in Primary 4 achieving competence at their grade level, compared to a value of just 3% recorded for non-School for Life pupils.

It is important to note that these results do not indicate that School for Life graduates performed better than their non-School for Life counterparts. One is therefore tempted to conclude that some of the pronouncements on the performance of School for Life graduates made in previous studies are exaggerated. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that with no previous formal education experience, School for Life graduates seem to have thrived in the formal school and performed at the same level as their peers. Again it can be argued that the fact that the School for Life graduates were performing at about the same level as their counterparts who enrolled in formal school through the normal route was an indication of the level of preparation that the School for Life programme provided for its learners. If children with no prior formal school but nine months of literacy and numeracy can perform at the same level as children who have been in the formal school for three years then either they are well prepared to meet the knowledge requirements of the formal school or there is not enough adequate learning taking place in formal school by pupils enrolled in Primary 1, 2 and 3.

The Primary 4 results recorded in English Language for both sets of pupils were higher than the 2009 national average of 25%. The results in Mathematics, however, were very disappointing, especially given that participants were one grade above the level for which the test was designed. Yet, it is difficult to find an explanation for such poor performance. Teachers interviewed could not come up with any probable reason except to say that the questions were ‘difficult’, which, given that these children were a year above the test level is not really an acceptable excuse. One rationalization is that the Complementary Education

Programme might place the emphasis on literacy to the detriment of numeracy, with the potential result that pupils would graduate with comparatively weak mathematical skills.

As far as the children themselves were concerned, low literacy levels in English might have affected performance in the Mathematics test. This notion is corroborated by the GES in its assertion that the low performance of children in Mathematics results from functional illiteracy, as many test questions are set in complex sentences that demand the ability to read with a high degree of understanding in order to answer them with any accuracy (MOE, 2008; MOE, 2010). Below are examples of Maths question for P3:

*Ama has 145 oranges. Ali has 273 oranges. How many oranges do they have altogether?*

*A car has 4 tyres. How many tyres has 3 cars? (NEA test instrument).*

Thus if pupils are unable to read and understand the sentences, they will also not be able to work out the mathematical implication of the sentences.

The Independent Samples Tests conducted for this study indicates that there is no difference in the performance of the two sets of pupils (See Appendix 12). Generally, one would expect the children in the formal school to do better than those enrolling from the Complementary Education Programme especially in the case of the Primary 4 pupils who were undertaking tests designed for primary 3 pupils. However as the results indicate above, both sets of students performed on an equal footing. This confirms in some respects the argument that School for Life uses nine months to prepare children to circumvent three years of state schooling. At the same time, confirming the decision of parents to send their children to the Complementary Education Programme classes instead of enrolling them straight away into primary 1. Accordingly, the key question then shifts to an examination of the factors that allow a nine-month informal education programme to produce graduates who are able to perform on a par with children who have been through three years of state schooling. These factors are discussed in the next section.

### **7.3. The Effectiveness of School for Life**

Hawes (1979) notes that there is always the tendency to conclude that the curriculum itself is sound and that it is its implementation that creates problems for learners in adequately mastering the contents. However, Hawes (1979) goes on to argue that there are too many instances to disregard in which the contents are inappropriate, and “where the plans themselves are largely responsible for the weakness in implementation” (p95).

In the case of School for Life, the reverse may be said to be the case. While there are undoubtedly weaknesses in the planned curriculum, as demonstrated earlier, the implemented and attained curricula reveal a different outcome. The analysis of the SfL curriculum materials in Chapter 5, show that the SfL curriculum topics are not presented with any logical arrangement and the lessons do seem to encourage repetition with little coherence in the lesson parts. However, in chapter 6, observations of the lessons in practice indicate that it is the synergy of all the parts that go to ensure that the lessons are effective and children are able to learn to read. This is crucial in trying to ascertain the reasons for the performance of the performance of the CEP graduates. Thus this study identified a range of factors that helped to ensure that CEP pupils advanced to formal school and thrived there.

#### **7.3.1. Time on Task**

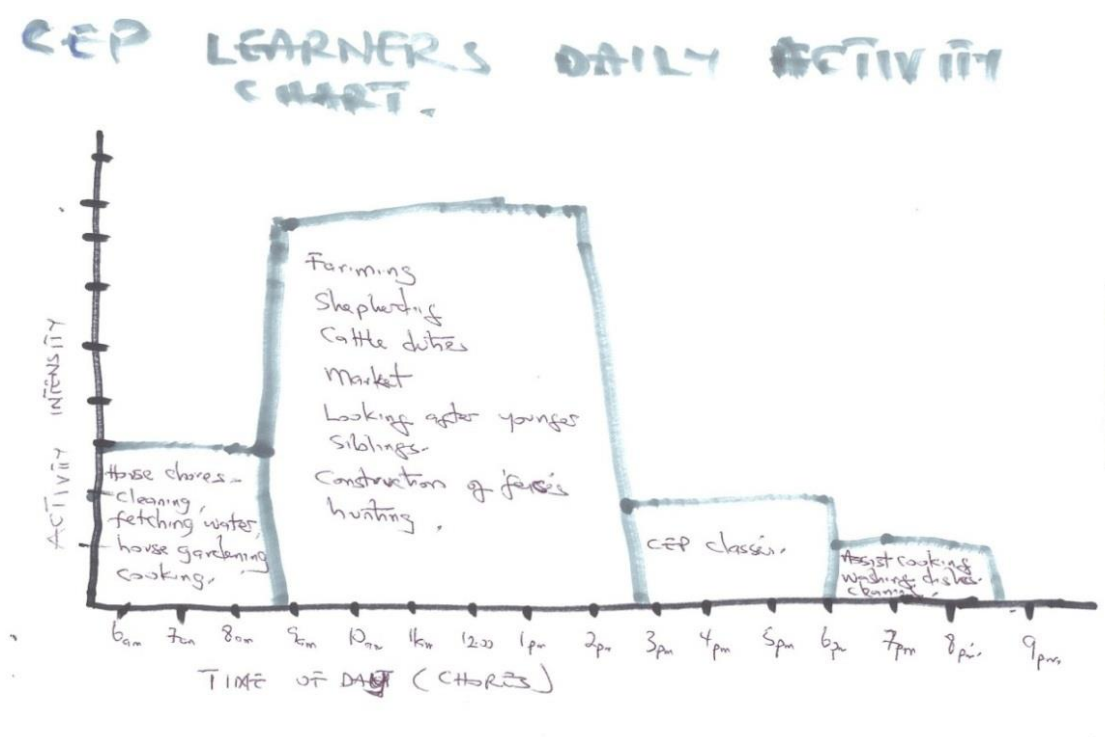
The amount of actual time devoted to teaching and learning is critical to the quality of education. Several previous studies have concluded that time on task in the Ghanaian formal school is not effectively utilized for teaching. In a report, the MOE noted that 35% of the academic year was not utilized by teachers for actual school work (MOE, 2010; DfID, 2012). Conversely, School for Life classes are conducted for two to three hours per day, five days a week; time that is dedicated exclusively to literacy and numeracy lessons with little or no absenteeism. This was observed during the study period when facilitators were present daily.

The present study found Complementary Education Programme classes to be intense and that all the time allocated for the lesson was effectively utilized. Lessons were focused and substantial, both facilitators and learners fully committed to the task for the day. While both facilitators and pupils arrived late on a number of occasions during the field study period, it was observed that the former made up for lost time and there were instances in which classes were extended well beyond the three hours demanded by the timetable. Thus, such tardiness

did not in any way affect the time spent on the tasks set for each day. In the formal school, the timetable prescribes nine hours per week for English Language, Ghanaian Language, and Mathematics; how this time is utilized is, however, a different story. Thus, while School for Life allocates and effectively utilizes 15 hours a week for literacy and numeracy instruction, the same cannot be said of time management in the formal school.

As part of the present study, children were engaged in participatory rural appraisal activities (PRA) in which they charted their daily activities. The aim of this exercise was for me to get a sense of how much time and effort they devoted to their studies while they were with the Complementary Education Programme compared to when they entered formal school (see charts 7.1 and 7.2 below). 10 CEP learners and 10 CEP graduates in formal school undertook the exercise, during which they listed all the various chores and economic activities that they did throughout the day to determine how much effort went into these activities and their effect on schooling and learning.

**Chart 7.1: A CEP Pupil's Daily Activity Chart**



The above PRA daily activity chart exemplifies how CEP pupils were tasked to plot the kinds of chores they were required to undertake against intensity on a daily basis. As can be seen, while the busiest time was from 8.00 am to 3.00 pm, when they were involved in various



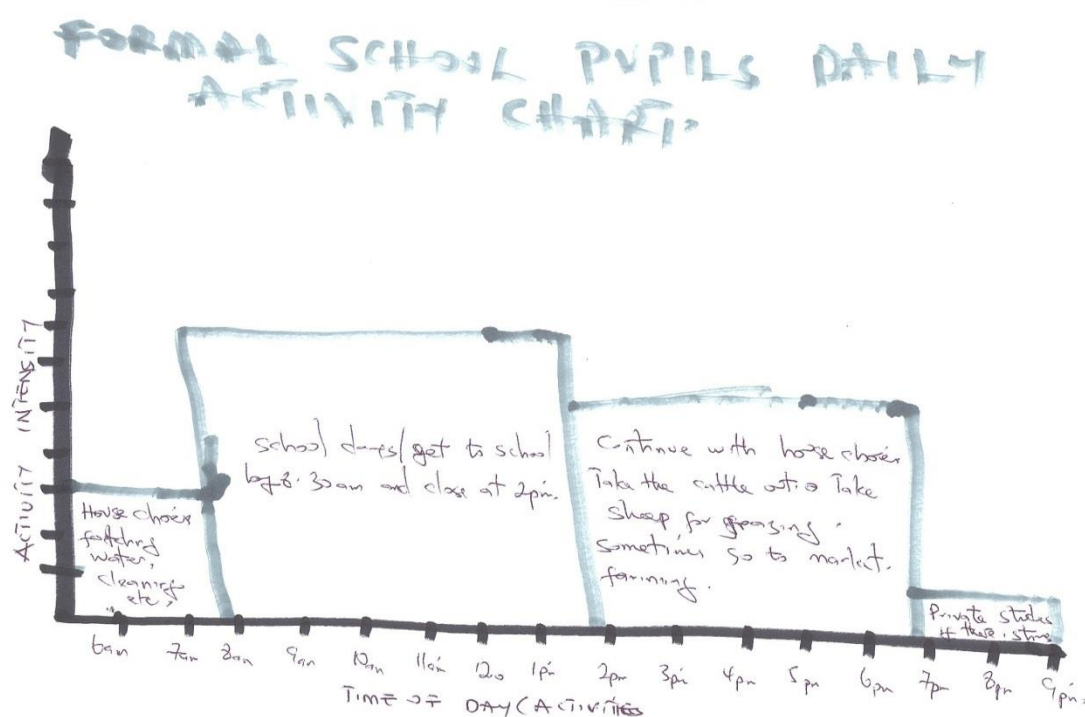
household and income-generating duties, the remainder of the afternoon up until 6.00 pm was reserved for CEP classes. The children indicated that in the mornings, they were occupied in various household chores, including cleaning and fetching water, before going to the farm, herding cattle, shepherding other livestock, or going to the market. Some of them – particularly the girls – were also obliged to look after younger siblings while their parents were working on the farm.

Asked how they still had sufficient energy to engage in lessons after such a long working day, not forgetting that there were yet more household chores to be done after class, one pupil explained:

*The farm and other chores are difficult, but we are used to it and we look forward to the CEP classes because it is a break for us. The classes are not difficult and we enjoy the classes. If we don't attend classes we will have to do more manual work. We are happy to spend more time in the CEP classes.*

This assertion is in direct contrast to the impression gained from a similar daily chart developed once CEP graduates had entered formal school (see Chart 7.2).

**Chart 7.2: CEP Graduates in Formal School Daily Activity Chart**



From the above chart, it can be seen that although the timetable was much longer, children still had to perform all their household chores before going to formal school in the morning. During the study period, it was observed that pupils were frequently late to formal school,

with some children coming to school about an hour later than expected. Study participants noted that although the formal school timetable was not as demanding as farm work, they still became tired because of the nature of the classes: they had to sit through a lot of lessons with no breaks, singing or doing other activities, and sometimes did not do much work. Yet, in the Complementary Education Programme, even the short time was used to read and write, and they learnt new words every day. While this assertion or sentiment confirms children's interest in the learning activities of CEP and how productive they were, it also serves as an indictment on the formal school system and possibly a challenge to the survival of learners in the formal school.

### **7.3.2. Teacher Selection, Training and Professional Support**

Interviews and discussions with key School for Life management staff revealed that recruitment policy was geared towards ensuring that facilitators were committed to their communities and learners, and that they were literate in the local language. The deputy director of operations, Mr Ziblim, elaborated:

*Facilitators are recruited by the community and the main requirement is that they be literate in the local language. Facilitators undergo an initial three-week training followed by a subsequent two refresher trainings in the course of the programme cycle. CEP facilitators are provided with a modest allowance by SfL, while the community supports the facilitators in kind. Facilitators are expected to be resident or natives of the communities where the CEP classes are located. This is to facilitate community ownership, facilitator identification with the children, and ensure facilitators are regular and punctual (21/03/2011).*

Thus the community always played a key role in the recruitment and selection of community facilitators. As a result there was no teacher attrition or absenteeism (although there was lateness) observed during the period of the study, weaknesses that formal schools with teachers who were not necessarily natives of the locality suffered from. This use of local knowledge and resource is deemed as a powerful cultural resource and knowledge base. The implication being that instructional practices enable learners to situate the learning process in their everyday local reality and utilise newly generated knowledge in their lives (Sefa Dei, 2004).

Mr Mohammed indicated that School for Life provided targeted teacher training – delivered by School for Life staff, Ghanaian language experts, and teacher training college tutors – that oriented facilitators to the concepts, knowledge and skills they would need in order to begin

using the Facilitator's Manual, and other teaching and learning materials. The course thus equipped them to effectively utilize the CEP approach. While SfL was not able to provide the researcher with access to its facilitator training manual, Mr Mohammed was able to come up with the following key competencies that featured in the training and preparation of facilitators:

### **CEP Concepts and Foundations**

1. All young children should be able to learn to read and write a Ghanaian language. There are enduring cognitive, cultural, social and economic benefits when such learners develop oral proficiency and literacy in their own mother tongue.
2. SfL provides a literacy programme that teaches young children to read and write in a Ghanaian language, and helps them transfer literacy skills learned in the context of a language they know well to the task of learning to understand, speak and then read a language they do not know as well, and which has very challenging spelling conventions.
3. Children already have a lot of experience speaking and listening in their mother tongue, and this is the foundation for learning to read and write in a Ghanaian language. When children learn to read and write in a language they know, there is a smoother, natural transition from home to school that also strengthens the child's identity and self-esteem.

### **Key Knowledge and Skills for Facilitators**

- Facilitation skills
- Questioning skills
- Reading skills
- Mobilizing the support of the community
- Strategies for teaching functional literacy and numeracy in a Ghanaian language using SfL CEP materials

In addition to training, facilitators received on-going support from School for Life district supervisors throughout the CEP cycle. Discussions with the former indicated that School for Life supervisors visited each class at least once a month to hold discussions with the facilitator and local management committee on the progress of the class. Supervisors also

assisted with the teaching of lessons and provided any necessary additional support. Facilitators confirmed the importance of School for Life staff visits.

### **7.3.2.1. The Facilitator's Compliance with Prescribed Policy**

Against this background, it was necessary to ascertain the extent to which Complementary Education Programme training and curriculum requirements were manifested in practice. All pupils were provided with reading and writing materials by SfL, which they were allowed to take home provided they brought them to class each day. Facilitators were observed using role play, songs, storytelling, and interactive questioning in the teaching process. Phonic/syllabic reproduction methods were the basis of the syllabus and were used to teach pupils literacy skills. This facilitated reading proficiency and attracted the admiration of parents; those interviewed expressing satisfaction with the learning that took place in the Complementary Education Programme. From the parents' perspective, seeing their children developing the ability to read and write in the mother tongue was a critical eye opener.

School for Life graduates interviewed recalled with fondness their experiences with CEP facilitators. A common topic of their reminiscences was the fact that programme facilitators did not use corporal punishment, and were friendly and easy to approach. Sadia, a former CEP pupil in Primary 6, recounted:

*The facilitator never beat us; he is my uncle on my mother's side. We were free to play and learn in CEP. In the school, we are beaten even for talking in class. We can talk only when the teacher asks a question; we fear the teachers.*

Thus it was evident that parents and community members trusted the facilitators because they saw them as one of their own. This notion is corroborated through discussions with all the local actors, that is, parents, community members, learners, and the facilitators themselves; the latter of whom regarded their reputation as a significant motivator in urging them to perform professionally and effectively. See Figure 7.1 below:

**Table 7.5: Facilitators' Professionalism**

<b>Professionalism Indicator</b>	<b>% Not evident</b>	<b>% Slightly evident</b>	<b>% Somewhat evident</b>	<b>% Evident</b>	<b>% Highly evident</b>
Models correct use of <i>spoken</i> language	1%	0%	0%	24%	76%
Models correct use of <i>written</i> language	0%	0%	12%	27%	62%
Implements designated curriculum	0%	0%	0%	13%	88%
Shows evidence of taking precautions to protect records, equipment, materials or facilities	46%	0%	36%	19%	0%

In order to further investigate facilitator professionalism, the study assessed punctuality, time management, lesson plan preparation, and enforcement of discipline (See Figure 7.2 below). These criteria are part of the qualities of effective teaching utilised in the classroom observation instrument used by the GES to measure teacher effectiveness. It was found that during the period of the field study, facilitators always used the three-hour lesson effectively, although there were occasions when classes went beyond the allotted time, which tended to occur on days when pupils seemed to be particularly highly motivated and energetic.

**Table 7.6: Compliance with Administrative Policies**

<b>Compliance Indicator</b>	<b>% Not evident</b>	<b>% Slightly evident</b>	<b>% Somewhat evident</b>	<b>% Evident</b>	<b>% Highly evident</b>
Conducts assigned classes at the scheduled time	0%	0%	0%	28%	73%
Is punctual	26%	12%	0%	38%	25%
Maintains appropriate lesson plans	0%	0%	21%	55%	25%
Enforces regulations concerning pupil conduct and discipline	0%	0%	0%	28%	73%

However, in almost 40% of the period under observation, facilitators were late, sometimes delaying the start of classes by up to 30 minutes. They explained that they did not adhere to set times every day because the learners themselves often had other duties on family farms and there was no fixed hour when they were all supposed to be present. Accordingly, it was observed that learners on average trickled in within a thirty minute time window. Punctuality was therefore not rigidly enforced. It is, however, difficult to tell whether this had an adverse effect on learning progress; in any case, it did not seem to worry the facilitators. Such an attitude was also supported by local committee members who were more interested in whether children stayed until the end of the lesson once they had arrived.

Again, there was no strict enforcement of discipline. At times, classes looked and sounded quite unruly, and pupils went out and returned at will. Younger children from the community were also often present in the classroom, which I thought could distract the learners but neither the facilitators nor the learners seemed to be bothered. Lessons seemed to be going on within the seeming chaos around the children. This was explained as part of the informal nature of the class; the learning environment was not overly restrictive as it was feared that this might deter regular attendance. Thus it was observed that there was a certain underlying order and rational to the chaos and “indiscipline” that seem to characterise the classes. On the other hand the participants were more interested in the social interaction that led to the construction of the knowledge and this social interaction was not just between the learners and the facilitator but the larger community.

The extent to which the School for Life experience helped or hindered children once they had left and entered formal education emerged in discussions with CEP graduates in primary school. In all such interviews, the perception was highlighted that there seemed to be a rigid enforcement of rules through the use of corporal punishment and verbal chastisement in the formal school that they were not used to coming from the CEP.

This point of view was partially corroborated in an interview with the School for Life consultant, who noted that, “*The absence of corporal punishment, verbal or physical abuse, or shouting at pupils in the CEP reinforces the trust and confidence learners have in their facilitators*”. However, while the School for Life facilitators under study agreed that corporal punishment was not the answer, they were of the view that a certain amount of enforcement of timekeeping and other rules would help Complementary Education Programme graduates integrate more effectively into the formal school.



**Figure 7.1: A formal school teacher at the blackboard**



*Figure 7.1 above shows a formal school teacher in front of his class with a stick. This can be compared to the CEP facilitator in figure 7.2 below where it is difficult to tell the difference between the facilitator and the learner. Also present is the SfL District Supervisor*



**Figure 7.2: Outdoor CEP class**

### 7.3.2.2. Management and Instructional Support

Instructional support and monitoring can be considered in two ways. First, teachers usually operate within a loosely coupled system: once they are alone with their pupils in the classroom, there is little accountability or oversight of what they are teaching or otherwise doing (USAID, 2011; Beeby, 1966). Teachers therefore need and the GES acknowledges the need for effective and consistent instructional management support for teachers that ensure they follow and implement the curriculum effectively (USAID, 2011; MOE, 2008; MOE, 2010). This research found that School for Life gives facilitators real incentives to implement CEP lessons in strict accordance with the manual to ensure that the goals of the programme are achieved.

The social constructivist education model demands the presence of a ‘more knowledgeable other’, which in a formal learning situation is conventionally the teacher (Pritchard, 2009; Croll and Hastings, 1996). Thus, such an individual is there to help the child reach his or her learning potential, but it is only when pupils recognize that teachers are there to provide guidance, leadership and help them further their knowledge that they will be appreciated.

However, as Hawes (1979:17) points out:

The fact that a teacher has a secondary education and a framed certificate tells us a little about his potential but practically nothing about his actual value in the classroom situation. If he is drunken and disillusioned, owns a taxi, or spends most of his time chasing higher academic qualifications with the express view of escaping from the job he is doing (all this happens frequently in practice), he will be of considerably less value to the children under his care than a man or woman with humbler qualifications but greater maturity, integrity and interest in children. Thus, if the potential competence of a teacher is an important determinant of the actual curriculum, their morale is an even greater one. The personal maturity and the will and opportunity to keep up to date are even more important.

No qualifications were necessary to become a School for Life facilitator other than mother tongue literacy, although most of those in the study areas were reported to be junior or senior secondary school graduates. With lower qualifications than their primary school teacher counterparts and no formal salary<sup>9</sup>, School for Life facilitators were respected, appreciated and loved by their pupils. Community members interviewed also attested to the good work being done by Complementary Education Programme staff. In comparing such a perception

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<sup>9</sup> Sfl facilitators received a monthly allowance or stipend equivalent and communities were expected to provide additional support through helping with their farms or donating foodstuff.



to that of the formal school teacher, most of whom were trained professionals, the children regarded them as austere authority figures, and there was a certain coldness and fear associated with them.

Thus even though CEP facilitators are not professionally trained teachers compared to their counterparts in the formal school, they are appreciated by the pupils they teach and seem to be making a difference in the lives of the learners. As noted in the literature, there are two conditions which, when prevalent, can narrow the gap between a nationally planned curriculum and the reality on the ground: the teacher is asked and expected to do a manageable job, that is, he or she operates within his or her capacity to teach a particular subject; and the teacher is confident of his or her competence in a given subject, and the pupils also have confidence in the teacher. Such a situation may be further improved if the teacher is supported with a user-friendly teacher's guide and materials. Policy and practice are also brought closer together if there is genuine interest on the part of both teacher and learners, a criterion that can be met if there are short-term goals that are clear to both parties which are seen to be achievable and being achieved (Kelly, 2009; Pritchard, 2009; Hawes, 1979).

The second way in which monitoring should be considered concerns the manner in which the system functions to ensure that teaching support is built into the system. School for Life district coordinators, supervisors and local committee members regularly visit classes to support instruction, and also to ensure some degree of accountability<sup>10</sup>. Thus, knowing that the supervisor in particular might drop in at any time not only provided facilitators with an incentive to be well prepared to teach their lessons appropriately, but also gave them the sense that they were not alone and had someone to go to for assistance when necessary. Karim noted that School for Life provided specific training to local management committee members on how to deliver support to facilitators, how to address them, and the kind of feedback that would be helpful to them. Thus, management support personnel were trained in how to give effective, specific and targeted feedback on instructional implementation. This, together with the frequency with which supervisors and local committee members visited classes, gave real meaning to the notion of institutional support. Indeed, facilitators received

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<sup>10</sup> A School for Life District supervisor oversees 20-25 schools and is expected to visit each class at least twice in a month. These visits range from cursory visits to instructional support visits and meetings with the local management committee.

consistent and frequent visits focused on their instructional methodology, and obtained feedback on their teaching.

The relationship between the School for Life facilitator and his or her pupils, and what transpires in the CEP classroom have been discussed above. However, it is important to emphasize that the effectiveness of the relationship between the facilitator and his or her pupils is enhanced by prescriptive and comprehensible teaching and learning materials, the clear and straightforward task at hand, and the respect and confidence he or she inspires in learners and the community at large (O'Sullivan, 2005; Hawes, 1979).

### **7.3.3. Teaching Approach: Language of Instruction, Literacy Instruction and Materials**

Lesson observations conducted as part of this study found that facilitators adopted participatory methods of teaching in the classroom. Discussion methods were used and pupils participated enthusiastically in the classes observed. Facilitators made their own teaching and learning aids with local materials, and displayed children's work in the classroom. The local language was used always to facilitate the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills. Observation in terms of facilitator delivery, teaching and learning materials utilized, classroom management, gender sensitivity, evaluation and feedback, and personal appearance and neatness indicated an equally high level of professionalism in Complementary Education Programme classes.

Education experts and practitioners around the world have argued for some time that the way in which language is used in school is an important factor in determining whether or not pupils succeed (Pinnock, 2009). In this regard, a key question is how close the language of instruction is to the vernacular that children grow up with in daily life. As the choice of language affects the selection, integration and choice of curriculum content in the primary or early years of schooling, one of the most important elements of the success of the CEP is its use of indigenous languages, all materials and lessons being rendered in the vernacular of the local community.

In the two CEP classes under study, the sole language utilized was Dagbani, which was the mother tongue of both facilitators and learners. In all lessons observed, it was clear that the children were active, happy and spoke up when asked questions. Even in instances in which pupils did not seem to know the answers I could still observe a willingness to communicate. Children interviewed also indicated that the use of their local language made learning easier,

and they were able to participate and understand what the facilitator was trying to get them to do. They also stated that this made it easier for them to relax in class. Amina, one of the CEP learners said that:

*at the beginning of the cycle, they had been apprehensive because they had no experience of education and going to school was an alien activity; but the use of the local language had created an environment in which they quickly felt at ease (20/04/2011).*

Interviews with children who had graduated from the Complementary Education Programme to formal school corroborated this perception. Abiba spoke with nostalgia about the use of their local language in SfL confirming that *“using Dagbani in the School for Life class had helped us to participate in class and relate to the facilitator more easily”*.

In contrast, there is a discrepancy in the formal education sector between policy and practice around language and literacy instruction. While government education guidelines state that the local language should be the medium of instruction in P1-3 “where feasible” (GoG, 2008), subject syllabi and textbooks (apart from the Ghanaian Languages textbook) do not reflect this as they are based on and written in English as the medium of instruction, which is therefore the language that pupils must initially learn to read and write. This begs the question as to how this could possibly come about, given that the MoE/GES controls input into both education policy, and the design of the national curriculum and subsequent individual subject syllabi content.

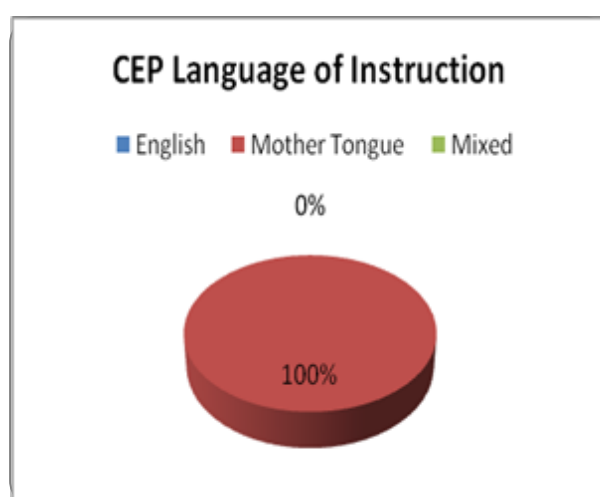
Observations of formal school classes in the same communities revealed an interesting scenario: 42% of lessons observed were conducted using a combination of the local language and English, while 44% utilized the local language. Thus, even though the majority of lessons in the formal school were conducted in the local language, in interviews, the children still associated the formal school with the English language.

Formal school lesson observations and interviews with teachers revealed that in many cases, they were compelled to resort to the local language because their pupils were not sufficiently proficient in English. Thus, some English Language and Mathematics lessons observed had to be conducted in both languages because learning materials utilized the former only. Pupils confirmed this need for bilingual lessons by affirming that even though the teacher tried to use Dagbani to explain some of the concepts, they still had to confront English texts. This

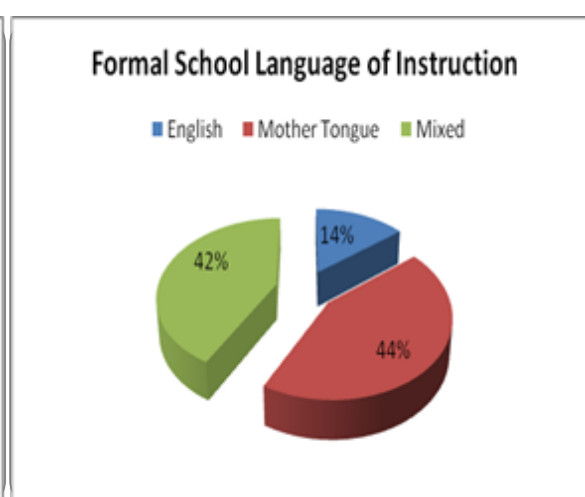
was clearly why they associated the formal school with English, whereas CEP classes were conducted solely in Dagbani with materials in the same language.

According to Mr Abu, “*mother tongue usage helped learners feel at ease, able to express themselves freely, and participate actively in lessons; it also deepened their interest in learning*” (13/05/2011). Children interviewed for the study also spoke of how they enjoyed their relationship with their teachers. Observation at classroom level revealed that facilitators were confident in presenting their lessons and engaging pupils in CEP classes. Figures 7.3 and 7.4 below show how language is used in both in the CEP and formal school respectively.

**Figure 7.3**



**Figure 7.4**



As stated earlier, the figures above indicate clearly the percentage of time that English and the Ghanaian language were used in both Complementary Education Programme and formal school. CEP classes as can be seen were conducted 100% of the time in the Dagbani. This confirms what is prescribed in the curriculum that School for Life classes are conducted solely in the mother tongue. The formal school classes observed P4 and 6 used a mix of the two languages even though the language policy expects that medium of instruction from P4 should be English. Once again we are confronted with a discrepancy between policy and practice as far the formal school curriculum is concerned. However, as noted above, this discrepancy in language use is as a result of the reality on the ground in which teachers have no option but to engage in code switching to ease communication in class.

Generally, classroom observation and discussions show that facilitators were aware of how to teach letters, syllables, word and sentence formation. They also exhibited some understanding of the notion that reading requires the use of and attention to the phonetics of individual letters, and how they are put together to construct words. Facilitators' responses to questions about phonetics and the reading of individual words showed a general understanding of syllabic instruction and the role it plays in learning to read. When asked about methodology and activities designed for pronunciation and reading practice, facilitators mentioned the use of flash cards, picture reading, singing and repeating after the teacher.

This perhaps explains the performance of the CEP graduates in reading comprehension in the formal school. In chapter 3, it is noted that for children to learn to read they have to be consistently and systematically taught and interact with the text (Dubeck et al, 2012; O' Sullivan, 2003). Classroom observation presented in Chapter 6 show the consistency in reading lessons, and children's participation in the reading and writing of words and sentences in the local language. It was also observed that all children had two primers in the local language (Dagbani). These primers were both reading and work books with picture and text stories structured after the topics of discussion and facilitators and children were seen to be constantly utilising these primers in the lesson of the day.

#### **7.4. The Role of Parents and the Community in the Complementary Education Programme**

Parents and community perspectives on the Complementary Education Programme were obtained from interviews and discussions that took place with focus groups consisting of parents who had children in the CEP or had graduated from it. There were also meetings with other community members, including representatives of the CEP local management committee. Sometimes, the researcher chanced upon a group of parents on school premises during visits and would then take the opportunity to conduct an informal group discussion. Other informal interviews took place with parents and community members who visited CEP classes.

The general position of most parents was that they were happy to have the CEP in their community. As noted previously, these two localities had been hosting the programme for a considerable amount of time and it had become institutionalized as part of village life. Parents were particularly pleased with the flexibility that the CEP offered their children,

enabling them to continue performing household and income-generating chores in between attending classes in the afternoons.



**Figure 7.5: Cross section of community members during field work**

The following is a list of reasons why parents continued to support the CEP in their communities. Given that it was compiled from data obtained through discussions with parents' focus groups, while there were generally a number of reasons for such support, this list essentially captures the interests of parents and other community members.

#### **REASONS FOR COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR THE CEP**

- Community initially against the CEP, but after some time, began to recognize a change in their children (academically for the better), so began to appreciate the programme.
- Community accepted the programme because they have seen some changes in the proficiency of children in terms of pronunciation and spelling in local language.
- Majority of community members support the programme because it facilitates mother- tongue literacy for their children. However, a few hold the view that more attention should be paid to English since it is the official language of the nation.
- Most community members of the view that the programme is a very effective way of using local language to teach children 'school knowledge'.

- Parents appreciate the fact that their children learn in their own language and as a result gain a better understanding of what is being taught.
- Community embraced the teaching of CEP and appreciates novel teaching methodology – children sing, write and draw objects within their own environment, which parents are very enthusiastic about; mother-tongue literacy facilitates the understanding of difficult concepts.

On the other hand, parents felt that the formal school did not really cater for their community at all, one of their number arguing:

*The school was built to cater for children from other big villages around us where those villages' children cannot get places. We were told to contribute to a school for our own village. So why are there children from other villages in our school? Our own children are not admitted in these schools.*

This was a common perception in Gbulahagu. The village headman told the researcher that their school served several surrounding villages. When they had started to build their own school, the GES had informed them that the government would assist in its construction. However, once the school had been completed, most of the places had been taken by children from other villages. This only strengthened the case for parents in taking ownership of the Complementary Education Programme. Schools were only viewed by parents as ‘community’ schools if they were able to provide education for their own children.

When asked about their role in the formal school, those parents who did have children enrolled in it said they were not really invited there. A few complained about the headmaster and teachers, who in most cases came from other parts of the country. Many parents begrudged having to donate money repeatedly to the school. Ghanaian formal schools were required by law to cease charging school fees in 2004, but there remain some indirect social and economic costs that parents have to consider. Accordingly, the study found that even when schooling did not incur high direct costs, poor families were often excluded due to the opportunity costs.

Discussions and interviews were also conducted with children who had graduated from the Complementary Education Programme and enrolled in formal school about their role in the community. In comparing their current situation with SfL, it was clear that most of them still looked back on their experiences in the CEP with fondness. They preferred the flexibility and the relaxed learning atmosphere, which, at the same time, also led to great productivity. While they admitted to learning new things in the formal school, they felt that they were not maximizing their time. They preferred the fact that at School for Life, they were able to learn

and also perform their roles as community members. Most pupils had to help at home with family chores, but when asked about the part they played in community development, they also appeared keen to be involved in various village projects. However, the demands of the formal school timetable left little time for other activities. Thus while School for Life graduates generally integrated well and thrived in the formal school, there was evidence that they had some challenges: challenges that were as a result of their prior experience with the Complementary Education Programme and their lives in the community. These challenges are discussed in the next section.

### **7.5 Challenges to Complementary Education Programme Graduates integration into formal school**

Three main factors were identified during the study as inhibiting or working against the integration of the CEP graduate in the formal school: the experiences and characteristics of the CEP programme, formal school practices and the attitudes and socio economy of the community. While the pupil assessment, interviews and discussions revealed that CEP graduates were thriving well in the formal school, there were still challenges that came out of the discussions with and observation of children. School records did not indicate drop out of CEP graduates and the impression created by teachers was that all CEP graduates stayed throughout the primary school.

However, it came to light that the very factors that seemed to make the CEP programme successful and accelerate the learning of the children also served sometimes as obstacles once they integrated into the formal school. Key among these are the restrictive focus of the CEP, the flexible time school schedule and the informality of the CEP and the language of instruction. While the restrictive focus of the CEP made it possible for the learners to concentrate their time and effort on literacy, there was no attempt to bridge the entry into the formal school with the introduction of linkage to formal school subjects. Thus CEP graduates were thrown into the formal school as it were from the cold especially since they enrolled in upper classes having missed three years of formal schooling. Initial entry days were always challenging for the CEP graduates and it took some time for them to settle. This was asserted by both teachers and CEP graduates with one graduate Hawa noting:

*Initially, it was really difficult because in P4 we had to learn different new subjects all at once and all the books were in English. In School for Life, all the books were in*



*Dagbani and that was all we learnt and we learnt about things in the village. So it was scary and you will sit in class the whole day and not understand anything. It took some time to adjust to the teaching and understanding the new subjects like science.*

The factors in the CEP that did not work for the graduates upon entry into formal school were exacerbated by the formal school practices which in a number of ways were directly opposite the experiences that children faced in the CEP. It has been noted earlier the relationship that learners had with facilitators which was made possible by the fact that the facilitators were local and knew the learners from home. In contrast out of the 10 teachers in Gbulahagu (including Kg), only one of them was from the community, the rest commuting to the school from Tamale, the regional capital daily. Thus even the residence of the teachers set them apart from the children, the teachers being seen as coming from the city and so not in tune with the way of life of the community and the children. This was compounded by the large class sizes that prevented teachers from interacting more with children or building a relationship with them.

Equally important as challenge to the CEP graduate is the socio economy of the community that makes CEP relevant in the community in the first place. It has been emphasized that CEP had been in both communities of study for close to 10 years and parents waited to enrol their children in the CEP among others to utilise their services in performing house chores and other economic activities such as shepherding, farming and babysitting. The daily activity charts developed by the children revealed that children still had to perform a number of daily chores before and after school and sometimes were tired from these activities to focus on school work. What also came out of the discussions with teachers and children was that once the farming season started, parents were more reluctant to allow children to come to school. Thus absenteeism increased during the farming season. While this was not peculiar to CEP graduates, it was more pronounced because they were generally older and could be of more use to the parents on the farms. Market days were also days during which children tended to be absent from school, particularly the girls, to enable them go to the market with their parents. This was observed directly during the research as the later part of the research coincided with the beginning of the farming season in May when the rains started.

## **7.6. Summary**

This chapter has discussed findings from the study that account for the performance of Complementary Education Programme graduates in the formal school. The pupil assessment conducted using NEA instruments showed that CEP graduates were able to hold their own in the formal school and, in some cases (reading comprehension), did better than their regular primary school classmates.

While this confirms in some respects the popular notion of the high performance of CEP graduates, there is a sense that some anecdotal reports are exaggerated. However, there is also evidence that the nine-month literacy and numeracy course offered by the CEP is effective and provides a foundation for children with no previous formal education experience, enabling them to go on to enrol and thrive in primary school.

It is also increasingly recognized that a major factor in Ghanaian early grade low-literacy rates is the fact that pupils are attempting to learn to read in a language that they do not understand well or speak with fluency (MOE, 2008, 2010). Whatever the official line on the medium of instruction for the early grades, the reality is that the vast majority of written materials available have traditionally been English language texts, with very limited access to materials in Ghanaian languages (Awedoba, 2001).

In Chapter 3, it was indicated that mother tongue instruction is not a guarantee for enhanced pupil achievement if other factors that support learning are not taken care of such as functional and relevant curriculum supported with materials and teacher training (Pinnock, 2009). In terms of the Complementary Education Programme, lesson observations revealed that the Ghanaian language of instruction was written, spoken and read by the facilitator with sufficient proficiency to allow him or her to make explanations varied and interesting. Indeed, it was understood that School for Life only recruited facilitators who had sufficient facility with the mother tongue to teach reading proficiently in that language.

Lesson observations revealed that all School for Life classes were equipped with pupil's books and other suitable teaching and learning materials. The children had free access to books in the local language for the duration of the programme, a factor that research has shown to be a key variable in determining whether literacy interventions are successful. It was also noted in observations that facilitators made appropriate use of their manuals and

ensured that pupils used learning materials throughout the lesson, which enhanced the probability of a positive effect on learning outcomes.

Interviews and discussions also revealed that a full range of actors and stakeholders agreed on the effectiveness of this model, a perception that is attributed to the medium of instruction, that is, the mother tongue; simple and effective methodology, which can be attributed to the use of syllabic and phonic methods in the teaching of literacy; a one-to-one book ratio together with provision for children to take books home; small class sizes (a maximum of 25); a high degree of monitoring, including on-site supervision and multiple training provided by the programme; and flexible school hours tailored to the needs of the community. Thus it is possible to conclude that School for Life's effectiveness is as a result of the coming together of all these factors and how they are negotiated together to ensure that there is a social construction of teaching and learning in the classroom.

## **Chapter 8: Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

Chapter 8 concludes this study with a review of the insights that this thesis has generated. I also discuss how the study makes important empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions to the field. I then suggest implications of the study at the levels of the personal, the contextual and the theoretical. Finally, I offer suggestions for the gaps that remain in the research which future studies could fill.

### **8.1. The Research Aims and Research Questions**

This case study uses a mixed methods design to explore the linkage between complementary education programmes and the formal primary school. Locating myself within a social constructivist theoretical framework, I examined data gleaned from fieldwork in the Tolon Kumbungu District of the Northern Region of Ghana to interrogate the ways in which School for Life's Complementary Education Programme prepares learners in nine months to enter into and persevere in the formal school. Specifically, the explorations were framed according to four research questions:

- How is the SfL curriculum structured and delivered to provide opportunities for children to learn and transition to formal school?
- How do SfL graduates perform in formal primary school following integration?
- To what extent is the SfL curriculum key to the accelerated learning achievement of SfL learners/graduates?
- What do various stakeholders (teachers, parents and the community) perceive as unique in terms of the SfL programme?

The research methods employed in this study consisted of classroom observation, pupil assessment, documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. This data inventory enabled me to capture and reconstruct comprehensively the linkage between the SfL curriculum and that of the formal school. In the next section, I present the key findings of this study. My explorations, framed through the four research questions outlined above, resulted in the following findings:

### **8.1.1. Research Question 1**

*How is the School for Life curriculum structured and delivered to provide opportunities for children to learn and transition to formal school?*

In this study, the curriculum has been discussed at three levels: planned, implemented and attained. In chapter 5, I bring to the fore the materials that make up the School for Life and formal school curricula (syllabi, facilitator's manual and teachers and pupils materials). The Complementary Education Programme curriculum has been analysed at all three levels to assess whether and how it ensures that out-of-school children have the opportunity to learn within the programme cycle and transfer the skills gained to the formal school curriculum. At all levels the Complementary Education Programme curriculum has been noted to prepare learners for entry and success in formal school. This is in spite of some of the barriers to integration such as the lack of English Language. GES staff and facilitators confirmed that many CEP graduates joined formal school classes following the conclusion of the program. School records and interviews with other stakeholders indicate that the majority of children who have gone through Complementary Education Programmes have already transitioned into formal school. Facilitator and teacher interviews indicate that the Complementary Education Programme graduates transitioning into formal school entered classes P3 to P5.

The Complementary Education Programme curriculum has also been compared to the formal school curriculum particularly in the planned and implemented curriculum. The formal primary school curriculum subjects of English Language, Ghanaian Language and Mathematics were analysed because they correspond to the Complementary Education Programme mandate of literacy and numeracy instruction. The education goal of the formal school is also discussed with the Ministry of Education being emphatic as to the key goals of providing literacy and numeracy (GoG, 2008; GES, 2007a; GES, 2007b). However, it is pointed out in the analyses that the primary goal of literacy and numeracy instruction in the formal school is not adequately addressed through the GES syllabus materials and their implementation. The formal school language of instruction policy which is mother-tongue at the lower primary level does not synchronise with the materials which are scripted in English. While the formal school curriculum materials encourage teachers to use learner-centred approaches to teaching, there is no guarantee or provision made in the materials to ensure that this is done. The English language syllabus of the formal school is used to illustrate some of the challenges in the system. There is an assumption in the formal school curriculum that

teachers have the necessary skills to teach reading to children utilising various methodologies such as the look and say method. There is also an assumption that children enter primary 1 with pre reading skills. Meanwhile available research indicates that these assumptions are not valid. For instance research indicates that the teacher training college curriculum does not synchronise with that of the primary school. Thus teacher trainees do not necessarily graduate with the requisite skills and knowledge to implement the primary school curriculum. (Adu-Yeboah, 2011; Akyeampong et al, 2011). Again, until recently the kindergarten was not recognised as part of the formal primary school thus with no formalised curriculum to guarantee that children enter Primary 1 with pre reading and pre numeracy skills to study at that level. On the other hand School for Life makes no assumptions about the facilitators and learners except their ability to communicate in their own language, which is a valid one. Thus the SfL curriculum materials are clearly scripted with guidelines for the facilitator for every step of the lesson delivery.

Also crucial is the fact that both the formal school and Complementary Education Programme curricula content are familiar and relevant to the pupils. However the Complementary Education Programme curriculum content exhibits more functional relevance as it is suited to the daily lives of the learners. Facilitators and pupils reported that the Complementary Education Program's content and activities were not only appropriate to preparing them for the formal school but also well suited to the local context (Pritchard, 2009; Alexander, 2000; Hawes and Stephens, 1990; Perrelley, 1988). A review of the facilitator's manual suggests that the topics and vocabulary items are relevant to children living in rural environments who are using their existing knowledge of the world in beginning to learn to read (Trudell, 2007; Sutherland, 1992).

However, it is important to emphasise the point raised in chapter 5 that the School for Life curriculum does not mention the formal school curriculum. Facilitators are not trained to teach to the formal school requirement. The focus of the programme is to ensure that children can read and write in their local language. It has been noted that while this may sound expedient and logical given the time available, a reference to or synergy with the formal curriculum that the children are supposed to graduate into would have added an additional strength to the programme. Thus the SfL curriculum could have been strengthened with an introduction to oral English at the end of the local language literacy and an introduction to some of the subjects that children are expected to learn in the formal school including formal

school routines such as the time table. This would also make the CEP graduate's transition into formal school more explicit. Touching on this notion, Shulman (2004) makes a distinction between lateral curriculum and vertical curriculum knowledge both of which are critical in ensuring critical teaching and learning. He notes that:

The lateral curriculum knowledge . . . underlies the teacher's ability to relate the content of a given course or lesson topics or issues being discussed simultaneously in other classes. The vertical equivalent of that curriculum knowledge is familiarity with the topics and issues that have been and will be taught in the same subject area during the preceding and later years in school, and the materials that embody them (p204).

Thus while the SfL curriculum exhibits the characteristics of a lateral curriculum by linking its contents to the functional lives of the learners, it does not make the explicit vertical connection to their post SfL education by linking the curriculum to that of the formal school.

However, what the SfL curriculum materials provide are clearly scripted guides that ensure that facilitators implement a learner-centred instructional process focusing on literacy and numeracy. The consistency in the presentation of lessons, the restrictive focus of the nine-month programme that focuses only on literacy and numeracy, functional topics and the mother-tongue as the only medium of instruction supported with materials in the mother tongue combine to ensure that during the nine-month period, children are actually focused on learning literacy and numeracy.

The clarity and consistency in the structure and delivery of the Complementary Education Programme curriculum thus highlights the deficiencies in the formal school curriculum. For instance, it is noted in Chapter 5 that the formal school curriculum also makes a claim of learner-centred instruction and assumes that formal school teachers will apply learner centred methodologies in their classrooms. However, findings from discussions and observations in the formal school revealed that for the formal school teachers, learner-centred instruction or participatory learning is equated to simple teacher question and child answer. Where children find the lessons/topics difficult to grasp as indicated in Chapter 6, the reality is that children's answers are less forthcoming, hence no real social interaction and construction in the classroom. Besides, it does not allow for group work or for pupils to lead the discussion or ask questions of their own.

This study also shows that dialogue or interaction in both the formal school and complementary education programme is predominantly teacher initiated. The traditional constraints of the role of the teacher are exhibited in both systems. This confirms the

difficulties and challenges of introducing wholesale western style learner centred instructional strategies into the African classroom (Altinyelken, 2010; O’Sullivan, 2004; Tabulawa, 1997). However, what this study has shown is that School for Life is able to negotiate these challenges in creating a real community of learning where all the disparate parts of curriculum implementation – functional topics, the role of the teacher, scripted routines, local language instruction, and flexible times - are brought together to ensure learning centred instruction. Thus School for Life is able to manifest a more contextualised learner centred approach that is holistic and consequently acquires better learning outcomes. This perhaps offers a model of thinking and practicing learner centred education in African contexts (Akyeampong et al, 2006; O’Sullivan, 2004).

The SfL curriculum delivery thus presents a crucial difference between the teacher pupil interactions as manifested in the Complementary Education Programme and that of the formal school. Thus it is crucial to emphasise that teacher question and child answer or teacher-pupil interaction in the classroom should be functional and quality of interaction should be substantive and not trivial but interesting to the pupil. To ensure this, there is the need for a real social construction of knowledge in the classroom with meaningful dialogue through familiar language and functional topics (Opoku Amankwa, 2009). Thus while teacher question and child answer is an integral part of learner centred instruction, the subject of the interaction and the medium or language of interaction makes a real difference as the local language and functional topics ensure that there is meaningful classroom discourse (Opoku Amankwa, 2009; Trudell, 2009).

This study does not make a claim that all Complementary Education Programme graduates make a smooth integration into formal school. Observations, interviews and discussion brought to the fore the fact that CEP graduates entering formal school were still not weaned from the liberal and flexible structure of the Complementary Education Programme to enable them integrate without challenges into the formal school system with its expanded curriculum, fixed systems and time tables. Interactions with children showed that they still had to contend with their household and other chores making it difficult for them to work effectively in the formal school. They were also not used to the more formal personality of the formal school teacher. Crucially, the classroom environment, teaching approach, the language of instruction and the curriculum content served as challenges to some of the children. These challenges are discussed in Chapter 7.4. However, while learners, facilitators



and teachers reported that Complementary Education Programme pupils faced some difficulty transitioning from learning in the local language to learning in English, as well as learning so many new subjects in the formal school, in general, CEP graduates were able to cope, catch on and perform on an equal footing with peers who they meet in the formal school, a fact, teachers, community and pupils, attributed to the sound local language literacy, functional curriculum and participatory learning styles inherited from their CEP cycle.

### **8.1.2. Research Question 2**

*How do School for Life graduates perform at formal primary school following integration?*

It has been established in this study that School for Life does not have any formal assessment process for the Complementary Education Programme learners. However, this does not mean that pupil progress is not monitored. This research found that facilitators relied on a variety of methods to assess whether pupils were learning the material, including trial questions, vocabulary quizzes and application of lessons through posters and songs, although no formal evaluation was undertaken. The facilitator's job within the Complementary Education Programme class was to ensure that all children participated and learned during the lesson period. Thus while there is no formal assessment, the participatory nature of lesson delivery ensured that the teacher could gauge children's performance through their participation in the lessons. Children being called to the board, children being asked to read and answer questions all serve as a feedback mechanism for the facilitator to monitor children's performance. Thus social interaction is at the heart of teaching and learning, assessment and feedback in this program.

Learners who wanted to transition into formal school were assessed by a GES official or a teacher at that school. However, neither the GES nor schools have a formal test or method for assessing children who transfer into a formal school. Rather, children are usually asked to read a passage from an English language primer or complete a maths problem. Formal school teachers participating in this study were full of praise for the Complementary Education Programme graduates as they attempted to confirm assertions by other studies that CEP graduates sometimes performed better than their colleagues who were already in the formal school (Casely-Haford and Adom Ghartey, 2007; Hartwell, 2007).

This study was not able to confirm whether CEP graduates did better than regular formal school pupils. In the English and maths test administered as part of the study, (see chapter

7.2) there was no significant difference in the performance of the two types of learners. For instance the P6 English Comprehension test had 37.9% of School for Life graduates achieving the target competency against 39.6% of regular formal school pupils. In both English Comprehension and Grammar, the results for P4 were higher than that of P6 for both sets of pupils suggesting that perhaps progression in the formal school did not correspond with learning achievement. Both sets of pupils also performed poorly in mathematics with the reasoning that they suffered from functional illiteracy in English. What the results showed was that the Complementary Education Programme graduate was able to persevere in the formal school despite the late entry and challenges expected with being overage. The CEP graduates were also confident enough to make their teachers think they were capable of following in formal school as attested by some of the teachers in the study (see Chapter 7) who recount the fact the CEP graduates are bold to raise their hands and answer questions and take up responsibilities in class.

On the other hand, it is important to stress that for children with no formal schooling background, to undergo only a nine-month literacy and numeracy instruction and yet perform at the same level as peers who have undergone a three-year formal school instruction tells a lot about both the efficacy of the Complementary Education Programme and the formal school system itself. On one level, it shows that the nine-month CEP cycle ensures that the children have literacy skills that enable them to integrate and compete on an even level in the formal school. However, the systemic challenges of the formal school system such as ambiguity in language of instruction and the assumptions made about teachers' application of learner-centred methodologies means that children attending formal school are being short changed.

### **8.1.3. Research Question 3**

*To what extent is the School for Life curriculum key to the accelerated learning achievement of School for Life learners/graduates?*

It has been emphasised that a key principle of social constructivism is situating the instructional process within the cultural context of the learner. School for Life's curriculum has been shown to be functional and also locally relevant to the needs and experiences of the participants (Hawes and Stephens, 1990). Examination of the interviews with various stakeholders all point to the fact that learning is scaffolded in the programme because literacy instruction is conducted through functional topics and content. Thus learners are able to

acquire the rudiments of reading within a context that is already familiar. Learners' home and community experiences such as their farming, economic and environmental activities become the conduit through which literacy instruction is addressed.

The approach to literacy instruction itself has been shown to be effective in getting the children to read and write within the nine-month period. Despite certain weaknesses identified in chapters 5 and 6 which encourage repetition and attention to concepts like consonants and vowels that are not intrinsic to learning to read, the effective combination of syllabic and look and say approaches in literacy instruction is shown to be effective in getting children to read in their mother tongue, especially when these combined approaches are clearly scripted in the facilitator's manual to make it easy for the facilitator to go through a step-by-step approach that encourages learners to participate effectively (O'Sullivan, 2003; 2004).

Related to literacy instruction but also standing as an essential programme element on its own is the language of instruction. The research showed that School for Life classes were conducted 100% of the time through the mother tongue of the learners. All teacher and pupil materials are in the mother tongue. Thus there is a clear link between the programme's language policy and the materials used to deliver instruction. The language of instruction also bridges the gap between the local culture and the school thereby ensuring that learning takes place within the social context of the child (Pinnock, 2009; Trudell, 2009; Alexander, 2000). This is unlike the formal school curriculum where the language of instruction for lower primary is supposed to be mother tongue and yet the materials are scripted in English, thus creating discrepancy and confusion that hinders teaching and learning.

The methodology adopted in the School for Life curriculum promotes learner-centred instruction. The script in the Teacher's Guide enjoins the facilitator to engage the children in construction of knowledge. The developers of the programme do not leave learner centeredness to chance. Lesson scripts are structured such that for every lesson there are roles for both the facilitator and learners. Thus children are seen to be participating in all lessons through writing on the board, writing on their own, answering questions, asking questions, drawing and playing. Every lesson includes writing and reading exercises. Every lesson tells the teacher how to arrange the desks to promote the learning for that lesson and to ensure a balance of group, pair and individual work.

A further strength of the delivered curriculum has to do with support for the facilitators. District staff worked tirelessly to monitor Complementary Education Programme classes, traveling daily to classes and assisting facilitators as needed, a job that will be further complicated during the rainy season when roads deteriorate, making travel very difficult. Findings from the study showed that School for Life staff frequently checked on facilitators, showed concern and interest, and provided helpful and corrective suggestions. Thus apart from building into the curriculum routines that ensured interaction and learning, instructional and management support was also built into the system through an effective supervision strategy.

The study also found that the teaching and learning materials were one of the main reasons the program was so popular with facilitators and learners. First, the instructor's manual allowed facilitators to easily prepare and explain activities making it much easier for them to facilitate than if they had to prepare their own lessons from scratch. Secondly, children had their own materials to keep and take home, a practice not common with the formal school. Discussions with both learners and parents confirmed that the ownership of the materials was very important to the children. For the children, it was symbolic of their participation in the education process. The practice of taking study materials to and from classes everyday was important to their self-esteem and status as learners.

#### **8.1.4. Research Question 4**

*What do various stakeholders (teachers, parents and the community) perceive as unique in terms of the School for Life programme?*

In this study, communities were noted to be very happy with the programme because most of the children who attended the Complementary Education Programme classes would not have had the opportunity to go to school if it had not been for this program. They would have been "lost." For the community and parents, the CEP is a means to an end in their quest to get children to access basic education. They are cognisant of the importance of education. However, they are also realistic in the fact that they need the children to perform certain chores or socio economic activities and the Complementary Education Programme is able to provide that route to access education that allows them to live their lives the way they want to. Without the CEP serving as bridge to the formal school, a lot of children will not be able to enrol in school through the normal route.

Feedback from learners and communities indicates that one of the programme's strengths is that it provides children with an opportunity to learn. This is more so when compared to the learning achievements of the formal school system. One purpose of education is to broaden the mind and parents obviously send their children to school to learn new things and skills to enable their children to fit into the broader society. Results from the NEA discussed in Chapters 1 and 2 indicate that children in the formal school are not learning at the level they should with only 35% of P6 learners proficient in English (the language of the curriculum). This result for English presupposes weaknesses in the other subject areas of the formal school curriculum as children are dependent on their comprehension of English in order to do well in other subject areas. Interviews, classroom observations and pupil assessment conducted as part of the study confirm that teaching and learning in the formal school is plagued by myriad problems that work to ensure that children are not getting the best out of the school process.

When community members who participated in focus group discussions were asked why parents enrolled children in the Complementary Education Program, the majority of responses reflected parents' views regarding the importance of education. Community members said they had seen a significant (positive) difference between people who were educated at school, left the community and then came back. A parent said he wanted his child to go to school because he did not. Parents said they wanted their children to go to school so that the children will be economically independent one day. Another said the program was good because without knowledge, a human is like a "dead person." One man explained that he wanted his child to go to school because the "best farmers are educated" ones. Further discussions revealed that parents believe that even their traditional and economic activities could be enhanced with education and the introduction of modern methods of farming.

In the next section, I will discuss the empirical, theoretical and methodological contributions this study makes to the field.

## **8.2. Insights from the thesis**

This thesis developed new understanding in areas related to complementary education and formal school in Ghana that may be of interest more broadly in developing countries. More importantly it throws light on what actually happens in the planning and implementation of a Complementary Education Programme and how it prepares learners to enter formal school.

Also important is the interface between Complementary Education Programme and formal school with the Complementary Education Programme's approaches used to highlight how the formal school could be more effective or productive.

### **8.2.1. Contribution to Knowledge**

In Chapters 1 and 2, this thesis acknowledges that School for Life's Complementary Education Programme has been proposed and advocated by various actors, including the Ministry of Education (MOE), as a solution to reaching the underserved, hard to reach and poorest communities that the current formal education system has not been able to access. It is seen as Ghana's best solution to meeting the MDGs on access and gender (DfID, 2012; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008; MOE, 2008; DeStefano et al., 2007; UNICEF, 2007). This is as a result of a number of studies conducted into the programme commissioned by bilateral donors and or NGOs seeking to replicate this kind of education provision. For instance in its current programme support for Ghana, the DfID, is supporting the enrolment of up to 120,000 children into the CEP over a three year period.

Thus to a large extent, the available literature on School for Life's CEP focuses on the number of learners it is able to enrol and transition to formal school. While these studies of SfL have contributed to throwing more light on a programme that has been implemented only in the poorest regions of the country, they discuss SfL mainly in terms of ensuring physical access to education. There is very little emphasis on the programme's ability to ensure that its learners are given a real opportunity to learn and make the transition to the formal school which is the main goal of the beneficiaries. There is also very little information available about actual SfL curriculum content – the knowledge and skills that SfL graduates enter public school with.

By contrast, this thesis is concerned with understanding better the processes that lead to this transition. Focusing on the curriculum and how it is implemented, this research study makes a contribution to knowledge by linking the study of the School for Life Complementary Education Programme to not just access to education but access to quality education. Most of the current debate around children's access to schooling point to the fact that access and quality are inextricably linked as far as schooling is concerned (Chawla- Duggan and Lowe, 2010; Lewin, 2007). Definition of access to education have been broadened to include what

children actually get out of the school system and not just being physically present. Thus access to quality primary education has become almost a universal right for children (Gilles and Quijada, 2008; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008, Lewin, 2007, UNESCO, 2006).

Moreover, this research is unique in that it examines School for Life's Complementary Education Programme within a social constructivist perspective. Current discussions and debates around effective classroom teaching and learning show social constructivism as the theory that best describes how children learn effectively building on their own experiences with the teacher acting as a facilitator of knowledge (Altinyelken, 2010; Pritchard, 2009; Vygotsky, 1987). Utilising a social constructivist framework that encompasses local language of instruction, learner centred instruction and functional curriculum, this study contributes to an understanding of how learner-centred education can be presented successfully in the education context of Africa, and offers the possibility that the SfL model offers valuable insights into how this might be accomplished. The social constructivist approach adopted adds insights into the discussion and interpretation of quality education as seen through the lens of SfL that other perspectives might not possibly reveal.

This study also differentiates itself from others in terms of its contextual focus. As noted, previous studies on School for Life have focused on its potential to provide access to out-of-school children. Thus they have mostly focused on School for Life with little or no attention to the formal school, thereby decontextualizing CEP. However, it is poignant to note that for the participants, CEP is only a means to an end, the end being access to formal school. Thus any complete study of the School for Life CEP must be able to make that necessary linkage to the formal school. What this study does is to broaden the context of School for Life through a focus on its linkage with the formal school curriculum. Assessing School for Life graduates in formal school with other formal school learners using formal school instruments, observing School for Life classes and formal school classes to identify the linkages in how curriculum is implemented are unique to this study.

Thus this study looks at the contexts of learning in the two systems, the overlaps and synthesis between them with CEP graduates transiting from one to the other in the same school building but with different identities. In doing so, there is a more contextualised understanding of how CEP is implemented and perceived by the beneficiaries and the strengths and weaknesses of the Complementary Education Programme and the formal

school respectively are highlighted and CEP's potential to influence how teaching and learning can be improved in the formal school is discussed. This study is also able to show the linkage between the Complementary Education Programme curriculum and the formal school curriculum. By looking at the learning processes involved in the CEP curriculum in all its manifestations, this study addresses a crucial gap in the literature on CEP.

This study is also unique in its methodological framing and use of research methods. Most research on the Complementary Education Programme in Ghana has utilised interviews and some observation. Equally important in this regard is the fact that most of the previous studies are donor or NGO funded confirming O'Sullivan' (2004)'s argument that these studies do not employ much attention to detail due to time and budgetary constraints. However, this research has been framed as a mixed methods case study utilizing complementary data collection methods that capture all aspects of the Complementary Education Programme curriculum and its relationship with the formal school. It has used interviews, focus groups and PRA approaches to privilege the personal perspectives and interpretations of stakeholders, particularly children. It has used classroom observation and pupil assessment to get a sense of the interactional dimension of how lessons are delivered and how pupils learn. These have been backed with detailed documentary analysis. Thus while the research methods utilised in themselves are not novel, the combination under one study in this scenario makes it unique. The data inventory generated through the utilisation of these complementary approaches provides a more complete picture of the CEP. Thus while other studies project the learner centred credentials of CEP, these complementary approaches bring to the fore how the synergy of all the various elements in the CEP conspire to make learner centeredness real for the children.

This study thus provides both a more fine-tuned and comprehensive look at School for Life's CEP in that it is able to combine under one study an analysis of School for Life and formal primary school curricula, utilizing syllabi, teaching and learning aids, instructional practices, pupil achievements, and other stakeholders' perspectives. As a result, it is anticipated that the research findings will have wider implications for learner centred curriculum development and implementation, and the teaching and learning that takes place at the primary level of the formal education system. Finally, it will offer valuable information on the options available for providing high-quality basic education to marginalized communities in Ghana.



The next section will discuss the implications this study has at the levels of the personal, the contextual and the theoretical.

### **8.2.2. Personal Implications**

This study has important implications at the personal level. This research has challenged my understandings of Complementary Education Programmes and what it means for different kinds of people but more importantly what it is able to do in the lives of children for whom this is the only route to getting formal education. It has also challenged my understanding of the totality of the curriculum.

As stated in Chapter 1, my relationship with School for Life's Complementary Education Programme dates back to 2004, when I began oversight of the USAID funded replication of CEP through the EQUALL Project. Based on prevailing notions of SfL and in some respects SfL's own understanding of their mandate, the project was mainly interested in enrolling children and transitioning them into the formal school. In fact, the measure of success was more in terms of the number of children enrolled and transitioned than what they were learning. However, the project made significant efforts in ensuring that children attained local language literacy and numeracy. The project even attempted to introduce a two month oral English component, an effort that was resisted by the School for Life management because it diluted their original principles and had to be delivered in the rainy season which created challenges in terms of children's attendance. During this period, I was privileged to participate in a series of policy dialogues with the MOE/GES which resulted in the GES development of a draft Complementary Basic Education Policy document which has become the basis of support from other development partners including the current DFID proposed support for enrolling 120,000 learners into CEP. Thus my understanding of CEP was mainly an access programme even though I was involved in attempts at institutionalisation through the introduction of English and development of a national CEP policy.

This background and understanding were instrumental in my initial decision to undertake this study, particularly after the nationwide introduction of the capitation grant as part of the state's Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education programme thereby removing the only perceived barrier to access to basic education. As I reflect back on the original questions that motivated me to undertake this study, I realize that questions surrounding the relevance of

complementary education in the light of Ghana's free compulsory universal education, capitation-grant programme and beliefs about challenges that children face in accessing primary schooling were almost eliminated in the process of conducting this study. I am struck by the extent to which my thinking has developed in relation to issues of access to primary education to include the broadened scope of access which I totally believe in. Access to schooling is not just about the physical presence of children in the classroom but also about what the school is giving back to children and the community. Thus access to education implies that the school fulfils the expectations and needs of the children, parents and community by providing an education that is relevant to the needs of the children and make them more productive citizens of the community (Pryor, 2005; Hawes and Stephens, 1990).

At the personal level, an implication of this study is that I am no longer looking to discuss access to schooling within the narrow confines of physical presence and formal setting but am open to possibilities of engaging in programmes that are outside the mainstream and are working to get children to learn and be productive members of the community. My worldview has been challenged, as has my understanding of issues surrounding complementary education, curriculum and quality of education. Through this research, I have come to appreciate the complexity of the schooling process, particularly issues surrounding curriculum design and implementation. For example, the findings of the study clearly show that the curriculum is more than just the documents that are seen and designated as such. The manifest curriculum and perhaps the hidden curriculum combine to play a large role in how children learn and persist in school (Kelly, 2009; Alexander, 2000; Hawes, 1979, Eraut et al, 1975).

The theoretical framework adopted for this study sees the three levels of the curriculum that is the planned, implemented and attained curriculum being negotiated through a social constructivist framework. What this study has shown me is that School for Life is able to negotiate these three parts to create a holistic curriculum that has the child at the centre of the teaching and learning process. This study shows that this has been done by ensuring that the planned curriculum, that is the materials, have built-in mechanisms to aid the implementation of the curriculum which also has a built in assessment through participation of learners. Thus all three levels contribute to children's learning. Comparing the CEP curriculum with that of the formal school brings to the fore the fact that the curriculum as planned will always be different from how it is implemented and it is for the developers to build in fool proof

mechanisms that ensure that not only are children not short-changed but also teachers are supported, motivated and willing to deliver within the spirit and letter of the curriculum.

Moreover, these curriculum decisions are strategically performed by individuals with the capacity to influence the quality of primary schooling in a systemic way. Therefore, an important implication of this study at the level of the personal is that I have learned that it is critical to always look at issues surrounding children's access to primary schooling in a holistic, global manner with a view to identifying the best possible strategies - such as a clear local language instruction policy with related materials and teacher training and deployment - that will coalesce to benefit children and their communities.

### **8.2.3. Contextual Implications**

This study has a number of implications relative to complementary education, access to quality primary education, effective curriculum design and implementation, language of instruction and effective literacy instruction for children. First of all this study challenges the prevailing notion of the role of complementary education in Ghana. The School for Life Complementary Education Programme is only seen as a programme that assists the country by providing education access to children in marginalised communities. This study has shown that this notion is only half the story of the Complementary Education Programme. Yes, it provides education access to marginalised communities in northern Ghana. However, for the beneficiaries, this is only a means to an end in that the primary goal of the communities is that children will eventually enrol in the formal school. Thus the Complementary Education Programme is regarded only as a stop gap measure that parents resort to because it is designed to meet their socio-economic lifestyle.

The nagging question in comparing the Complementary Education Programme curriculum and formal school curriculum is why parents want to send their children to formal school given the weaknesses identified in the system in this study. What the Complementary Education Programme could become is an alternative or additional track of primary schooling that is designed to meet the socio-economic needs and other aspects of the lives of rural people and - more importantly - provide a real and consistent opportunity for children to learn. There is evidence that in some countries and regions programs like School for Life have become part of the national programme for providing education for the children. In

some regions of some countries—such as Sikasso and Koulikoro in Mali—alternative education systems are the mainstream. In Bangladesh, BRAC serves 25% of rural villages and 1 million students. Escuela Nueva has 20,000 schools and serves 1 million students in rural Colombia (Farrell and Hartwell, 2008). The Complementary Education Programme can become an additional part of the infrastructure through which quality education is delivered in Ghana. This study has shown that School for Life provides a different approach to curriculum development, education policy, implementation, and human resource utilisation in the education sector. If more children can be reached through locally initiated education programmes that are supported through collaboration and partnership with non-state actors, it becomes critical to focus on how to expand this system's capacity and utilise it for the benefit of the Ghanaian child.

School for Life and NGOs implementing Complementary Education Programmes will have to also position themselves and their programme to give the state the confidence that CEP is on the same mission as the state in providing access to quality education. For instance this research shows that the School for Life curriculum does not mention the formal school curriculum neither does it make any attempt to introduce English to the children. However, English is the official language of Ghana and parents acknowledge the importance of English. The lack of English language is also seen as one of the challenges of integration of CEP graduates into formal school. Thus the School for Life programme could be enhanced with a targeted linkage with the formal school curriculum and an introduction to basic spoken and written English. However, this should be done only after the children have acquired literacy skills in the local language. This will ease the integration of learners into the formal school or allow learners to function more effectively and confidently in official situations.

This study also challenges the prevailing notion within the education sector in Ghana relative to the design of the formal school curriculum. The general assumption is that the curriculum design is good enough but the implementation is flawed, an assumption that has been fuelled by inadequate critical and rigorous scrutiny of the formal school curriculum in the light of current research and learning theories. What has been found in analysing the CEP curriculum is that an effective curriculum design builds into it mechanisms that assure its implementation to the letter. While giving teachers the flexibility to tailor lessons to meet the immediate levels of their learners, the curriculum is structured in such way that curriculum delivery cannot fail. In this regard, it is important to note that curriculum implementation cannot be

separated from its design and the learning that takes place as a result of the implementation (Kelly, 2009; Schulman, 2004; Alexander, 2000). Thus all three levels of the curriculum must be worked on in tandem to ensure that the efficacy of the curriculum can be measured by what children learn.

This study also challenges the prevailing practices regarding the language of instruction in the primary school. The ambiguity in the wording of the national language policy and its manifestation in the classroom have been discussed in chapters 2, 3, 5 and 7. The Complementary Education Programme's language policy has also been discussed extensively. There is evidence both from this study and other studies that utilising the mother tongue in early primary instruction is critical to getting children to learn meaningfully (Opoku-Amankwa, 2009; Qorro, 2009; Pinnock, 2009). Language is inevitably tied up with cultural and usually ethnic heritage. It has been described as the soul of every culture and its people. Language is an essential repository for a people's collective consciousness since there are certain experiences which may be only comprehensible to people who share a culture and who capture their experiences most fully in their own language (Trudell, 2009). Linguists find a close and dynamic relationship between language and thought. For it is in language that custom, traditions, ethics, poetry, history, religion, rituals and other dimensions of culture are incarnated (Prah, 2009; Sutherland, 1992, Vygotsky 1987).

Various studies on language in education have established that the use of the L1 as a medium of instruction during one's early years of schooling results in improved acquisition of knowledge by pupils (Brock-Utne, 2010; Clegg, 2010; Pinnock, 2009, Qorro, 2009). Furthermore, research shows that the most suitable language for teaching basic concepts to children is their mother tongue, and children come to school with expertise in their own language. They continue to develop their L1 skills naturally if they are in a stimulating environment. Utilising the local language facilitates the teacher pupil interaction that ensures that the child is supported to reach the *zone of proximal development*. The use of the local language thus supports the scaffolding of learning that is necessary to ensure that children attain their potential and go beyond that.

What this study has also shown is that any language in education policy can only be effective when it is supported by an accompanying teacher recruitment, training and deployment strategy coupled with curriculum materials that support this policy as manifest in the Complementary Education Programme design. For the nation, this involves moving toward

onsite training and supervision of locally recruited teachers, and away from national policies and investments in traditional pre-service training programs. A crucial difference between the recruitment, training, deployment and management of the CEP facilitator and the formal school teacher can be inferred from this study. While School for Life utilises local recruits and provides short intensive training with on-going support, the formal school teacher training and deployment process is centred on a three year teacher training programme with very little support in the field (Akyeampong et al, 2011; Farrell and Hartwell, 2008).

The formal school teacher support and management system is also fraught with inefficient and ineffective supervision. Head teachers and Circuit supervisors are generally weak and poor supervision has been acclaimed as one of the principal reasons why relatively better resourced public schools continue to underperform compared to private schools (Civil Society Manifesto, 2012). This ensures that the formal school teacher unlike the CEP facilitator is isolated in the field and assumes the role of a master of curriculum. Beeby (1966) captures this scenario as one of the principal challenges facing formal school teachers in developing countries and accounting for their non-performance. This study affirms that motivated individuals, often with scant formal qualifications, can serve—and serve well—as teachers when provided with on-going professional training and support.

Critical to this debate is the reality that in Ghana, 74% of preschool and 38% of primary teachers are untrained (Civil Society Manifesto, 2012). Thus the School for Life approach to on-going instructional and management support can serve as pointers to how this same category of teachers can be supported in the formal school. While acknowledging that the professional qualification or training of a teacher does not always correspond to their performance in the classroom (Bonnet, 2009), untrained teachers still need more support both in supervision and provision of quality scripted materials as manifested in the Complementary Education Programme. O’Sullivan (2005) discusses through her research in Namibia the utility of giving new and untrained teachers templates or prescriptive lesson guides that ensure that classroom practices are learning centred. This is the approach that is adopted in School for Life and can be a useful lesson for the formal school.

Management support for teaching and learning does not need to come only from an external supervision agency. This research has shown that School for Life is able to implement a social constructive learning environment through the creation of a real learning community that includes not just the teachers and the children but also the parents and the community.

Evidence from the study points to the presence of parents and community members in the CEP classes serving as motivation to both the facilitator and the learners. The management of the process is also supported through the work of the local management committee made up of only community members who visit the classes regularly. Thus management of the classes is brought closer to the community. The community is seen to have a stake in the process and shows this with their presence and participation. This is a real case of the community mobilising their social capital to support children's learning and decentralisation in practice (Pryor, 2005). The formal school's attempt at community participation in school management has been fraught with challenges. The School Management Committees (SMC) established to serve as a bridge between the education authorities and the community has been dominated by the education authority members on the committee with the community still seeing the school as a government institution where they have very little input (Pryor 2005). There are lessons in the CEP for the GES as it attempts to decentralise education management to the community level.

This study also has implications for literacy and numeracy instruction in Ghana's primary schools. It has been shown how literacy and numeracy achievement are touted as the core goals of primary education in Ghana. However, it has also been shown in this study that the subjects that convey literacy and numeracy - that is, language and mathematics - are only part of a group of subjects that children are supposed to master in the primary school. While special attention is given, for instance, to allocating more lesson periods to English language and maths than other subjects, they still remain as subjects taught in concrete time periods just as the other subjects. However, School for Life makes literacy and numeracy the core objectives. They also ensure that the curriculum is functional and locally relevant. Therefore all instruction in the programme is geared towards getting children to read, write and calculate. The children learn to do this through various topics that cut across their daily experience.

This consistent attention to the rudiments of literacy and numeracy over the programme cycle ensures that children graduate with reading, writing and calculating skills. This approach has implications for how literacy and numeracy are organised in the formal school. Apart from the fact that instructional approaches could be strengthened, it should be possible to have a harmonised primary instruction with literacy and numeracy as core and learnt through all subjects, so that we can have literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. A starting point

could be for the GES to take a second look at the NALAP materials and methodology and through that develop a real national literacy and numeracy strategy that will be at the heart of the primary education.

#### **8.2.4. Theoretical Implications**

In undertaking this research it has become critical to review theories around how best children learn and social constructivism has been noted to be the prevailing theory which best describes what happens in the Complementary Education Programme cycle and how it prepares learners for entry into the formal school system. Studies on pedagogical renewal or reform in sub-Saharan Africa advocate for social constructivist practice. This is manifested through learner-centred instruction which has been found to be difficult to implement in most sub Saharan classroom with teachers defaulting to teacher centred instruction (Altinyelken, 2010; Tabulawa, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2004).

The theoretical framework undergirding this study sees social constructivism as the core of all teaching and learning in the Complementary Education Programme. It is the attention to the social constructive principles including critical pedagogy or learner centred instructional approaches, local language of instruction, functional literacy instruction and a functionally relevant curriculum that ensures that children graduate from CEP with the capacity to progress and survive in the formal school. In this study, children's learning in the Complementary Education Programme and progression through the formal primary school are analysed within this social constructivist framework.

The emphasis in prevailing theories around how children learn in sub Saharan Africa is on teachers' classroom practices and how they could be reformed to ensure that teachers utilise learner-centred approaches in teaching and learning (Altinyelken, 2010; Tabulawa, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2004; Akyeampong et al, 2006). This research confirms that learner centred approaches fits within the social constructivist theory of learning (Tabulawa, 2010). The thesis also contributes to a broadening of the theory by analysing the whole school curriculum within this framework, thus social constructivism manifested in the CEP begins before the actual classroom instruction. The theory of social constructivism in terms of pedagogy applies not only to learner centred pedagogy in the classroom but to the way in which the CEP curriculum is structured and delivered. The theories around social constructivism are thus broadened to include the total curriculum that is the planned,



implemented and attained curriculum and children's construction of knowledge is presented within the full cycle of the curriculum. The curriculum is seen as one whole and negotiated within a social constructivist framework utilising meaningful dialogue through a familiar or social language and functionally relevant curriculum content.

The study of School for Life's CEP within this social constructivist framework contextualises how social constructivism is manifested. It is crucial to emphasise that School for Life is implemented in Northern Ghana and thus fits within the sub-Saharan Africa where learner centred education has been known to be difficult to implement (Tabulawa, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2004). However, the study of CEP shows a contextualised definition and implementation of learner centred instruction. It has been noted that the characteristics within the CEP that is its use of local language, functional curriculum and literacy all coalesce to ensure that there is learner centred instruction.

The contextualisation of the theory throws up important lessons in terms of how learner centred instruction can be effectively manifested within African classrooms, particularly as has been noted the fact that School for Life shares the same classroom space with the formal school and enrolls about the same children from the same community. However, unlike the formal school classrooms, the CEP curriculum is structured and delivered taking cognisance of the context of the child, places the learner at the centre of curriculum development and implementation and ensures that there is social construction of learning that goes to benefit the child. This manifestation thus offers critical lessons for how learner centred instruction can be developed and delivered in the formal school taking cognisance of the context of the child and creating synergy among all aspects of the schooling process.

The study of School for Life within this framework also offers insights into how to bridge the policy and practice interface in curriculum development and implementation. Theories around curriculum development and implementation always point to the fact that there is always a gap between the curriculum as designed and how it is manifested in the classroom (Kelly, 2009; Alexander, 2000). However in different ways, School for Life is able to bridge this gap through contextualising what normally happens in the formal sector. For instance, School for Life's approach to teacher recruitment, training and support has been noted in the previous section to take cognisance of the context of the programme by ensuring that facilitators are recruited by and from the community and are literate in the local language. The facilitators also share a common background with the learners and so the curriculum

content is functional and relevant to both facilitator and learners as attested to by the facilitator in one of the study communities in Chapter 6, the fact that he also has his farms and grew up in the same environment so the topics he is handling are subjects he grew up with. On the hand, there is a disconnect in terms of formal school teacher recruitment, training, deployment and the curriculum that teachers are supposed to teach.

This has been highlighted in the previous section where formal school teachers are not expected to be competent in the local language of the areas they teach even though the language of instruction in lower primary is supposed to be the local language. Again, Teacher Training Colleges do not necessarily teach to the requirement of the primary school syllabus. Thus at different levels, the formal school teacher is seen to be relatively less prepared to teach effectively within the context of the children. Thus the SfL experiences as presented in this study points to a contextualisation of the theories around teacher professional development and how that can be structured for the benefit of the child and ensure that teachers and children are communicating to ensure there is social interaction and construction in the classroom.

This manifestation in the School for Life also throws up issues round teacher status and motivation to deliver for the benefit of the children. Research around teacher professional development points to teacher professional status as inextricably linked with their qualification even though there is also evidence that qualification of teachers do not necessarily translate into effective teaching (Bonnet, 2009). School for Life's policy of recruiting relative less educated individuals and providing them with short intensive training and on-going support has been shown to work in this study and other studies (DeStefano et al, 2007). More importantly their self-esteem and status is not based on their qualification but on the services they provide to the community. Again their motivation is generated from the appreciation of the community and the learners as shown in this study in Chapter 6 and 7, with parents and community members visiting classes and expressing appreciation for the work of the facilitators.

What is also determined in this study is that construction of knowledge in the classroom is crucial in ensuring that children have the opportunity to learn. In the CEP classes, what comes to the fore is that there is a real attempt at learner centeredness with the facilitator utilising those skills and approaches that encourage learners to participate and play meaningful roles in the classroom (Giroux, 1989). Again critical pedagogy and learner

centeredness within this social constructivist framework begins with the classroom environment. The attention to utilising various sitting arrangements built into the curriculum and the pedagogical practices and content knowledge of the teacher ensure that the children have the opportunity to build a real learning community. Social constructivist theory also envisages that effective education can only be applicable when the school links up with the home, with school teaching and learning situated in the child's familiar context (Glassman, 2001; Davydov, 1995; Sutherland, 1992). This is enhanced by the language of instruction and functional and relevant content which serve as motivation to not only the learners but also the wider community including parents to participate in the school process.

In Chapter 3, it is emphasised that critical teaching or learner centred instruction ascribes to the teachers the role of an inductor or facilitator and at the same time ensures that there is a shift from the formal rigid traditional personality of the teacher (Gadotti, 1994; Freire, 1970). This process assures the autonomy of the child and ensures that children are active in class. Learner-centred education and critical teaching involves the teacher in working with pupils, guiding them to create and interact with knowledge rather than regurgitating information from rote learning. The teacher as the facilitator also makes a shift from his transmissive role with the child in a passive role to create the environment and the opportunity for the children to particulate and thereby construct new knowledge as part of the learning process (Giroux, 1989). These approaches have been noted to come with challenges as a result of the fact that they are mainly western principles which have enjoyed prevalence in sub-Saharan Africa as result of the donor support that they carry (Altinyelken, 2010, O'Sullivan, 2004; Tabulawa, 1997). The principles being espoused do not take cognisance of the social and historical precedents of education delivery on the continent (Tabulawa, 1997).

However, this study has shown that in spite of these challenges, School for Life is able to circumvent these challengers and ensure learning centred instruction through the utilisation of local language instruction and clear guidelines in the curriculum materials that ensure that teachers adhere to the principles of critical pedagogy. Again knowledge is constructed in the School for life classrooms because while the discussion and the dialogue may be teacher-initiated, it is the children's answers or responses that create the new knowledge. Both speaking and writing which is the generated knowledge is produced by the children as they are constantly being made to write their own answers or constructing new sentences rather than copying from the teacher as seen in the formal school. What happens therefore is that children not only construct the new knowledge but can claim ownership of the learning

process making learning long lasting and transferrable (Sefa Dei, 2004). This manifestation of socially constructed learner centred pedagogy within the CEP highlights how the challenges in applying this theory in the formal sector could be negotiated. The study of the CEP also throws more light on this paradigm by showing that it is only when all the complementary parts of curriculum development and implementation are linked together that the theory can be seen to work and help children learn.

### **8.2.5. Policy and Research implications**

This study also has broader implications at the levels of research and policy. Key among them is the implications for research on policy regarding access when it is linked to quality - with emphasis on literacy instruction and effective curriculum design and implementation. This research shows the School for Life Complementary Education Programme as creating that link between access and quality and manifesting the expanded view of children's access to education which implies that children in school must learn and be seen to really learn. Again the School for Life programme is seen as a real complement to the efforts of the state in that the programme offers a means to an end for the beneficiaries and thus a bridge to formal school for marginalised communities. The programme therefore complements the state's function of providing access for children.

The research is also able to show how social constructivism can be applied in an African context. Much of the literature on learner centred instruction in sub Saharan Africa highlights the challenges of implementing this approach on the subcontinent due to its western antecedents and the history of education development in Africa (Altinyelken, 2010; Tabulawa, 2010, Akyeampong et al, 20006; Tabulawa, 1997). There is therefore the need for further research to understand how learner centred instruction is applied in spite of the challenges noted in other studies. This will be crucial in policy formulations regarding curriculum development and implementation and seek to bridge the gap between policy and practice in the formal school classroom. In the next section, I make suggestions for further research.

### **8.3. Further Research**

Although this research is localised in Ghana, and focused on a particular programme and locale – the School for Life Complementary Education Programme and the North of Ghana - it also highlights broader themes for further research by the international community especially within the context of post 2015 planning for MDGs. There are 5 broad areas where additional research would be valuable:

1. Further research and follow up in the area of using complementary education programmes as additional tracks not only to maximise access but also to improve the quality of primary schooling in developing countries
2. Further research on language and literacy instruction in Ghana especially within the context of countries with bilingual and multilingual education systems
3. Further research on government, private sector and civil society partnership in delivering quality primary education
4. Further research on appropriate cost-effective, local teacher recruitment, training and deployment policies and practices that can benefit developing countries
5. Further review of curriculum design and implementation strategies across the board in order to illuminate strengths and weaknesses in light of current knowledge

This research has highlighted the gaps in education provision for Ghanaian children. It exposes a gap in understanding how the total curriculum impacts on the school child. This research is a starting point, spotlighting the effectiveness of Complementary Education Programme in this direction. Further studies could help with understanding how better to provide quality education for children and bringing the world a step closer to achieving the goal of universal educational access by 2015 and beyond.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1: Fieldwork Schedule: March 2011 July 2011

Time		Activity
Month	Week	
March	1-2	Departure to Ghana/ Arranging for access to study areas, identification and training of research facilitators
March	3-4	School/ Community data collection
April	1-4	School/Community data collection
May	1-4	School/Community data collection

June	1-4	School/ Community data Collection
July	1-2	District/ School for Life data collection
July	3-4	Cleaning, coding and data entry/ transcript of interviews/ Preliminary analysis of interview data

## Appendix 2: STRUCTURE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE GES ENGLISH SYLLABUS

PRIMARY 1	PRIMARY 2	PRIMARY 3
<p><b>SECTION 1: LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b> (p. 1-6)</p> <p>Unit 1: Listening, Reciting and Singing</p> <p>Unit 2: Story telling</p> <p>Unit 3: Conversation</p> <p>Unit 4: Drama</p> <p><b>SECTION 2: GRAMMAR</b> (pg.7 – 14)</p> <p>Unit 1: Naming Words- Nouns</p>	<p><b>SECTION 1: LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b> (Pg. 24-30)</p> <p>Unit 1: Listening, Singing Songs and Reciting Rhymes and Poems</p> <p>Unit 2: Story Telling</p> <p>Unit 3: Conversation</p> <p><b>SECTION 2: GRAMMAR</b> (p. 31 – 37)</p> <p>Unit 1: Nouns – Naming Words</p>	<p><b>SECTION 1: LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b> (p. 45-50)</p> <p>Unit 1: Listening to Poems, Directions and Instructions</p> <p>Unit 2: Listening to Directions and Instructions</p> <p>Unit 3: Story Telling</p> <p>Unit 4: Conversation</p> <p>Unit 5: Drama</p> <p><b>SECTION 2: GRAMMAR</b> (p. 51 – 58)</p>

Unit 2: Doing Words – Verbs, Verb ‘to be’	Unit 2: Doing Words – Verbs	Unit 2: Nouns – Number
Unit 3: Commands/Requests	Unit 3: Questions and Responses (do, be, have)	Unit 2: Verb Tense Forms : Subject Word Agreement
Unit 4: Verb Tense Forms Simple Present Present Continuous	Unit 4: Doing Words: Present Continuous	Unit 3: Verb Tense Forms: Simple Past Past Continuous
Unit 5: Simple Prepositions in, on, under, near, behind	Unit 5: Doing Words: Simple Past	Unit 4: Prepositions: Below, above, over, in front of, behind, near
Unit 6: Questions and Responses (‘WH’ Questions) What, where, who	Unit 6: Doing words: Simple Present in Repeated (Habitual) Action	Unit 5: Expressing the Future
Unit 7: Pronouns (Personal) I, You, He, She, It, We, They	Unit 7; More Prepositions : up, down, into, in, in front of	Unit 6: Questions: and Responses (in the Future)
Unit 8: Demonstratives: This, That, These, Those		Unit 7: Simple Quantifiers Cardinals/ordinals
Unit 9: Describing Words		Unit 8: Adjectives – Describing Words Unit 9: Possessive Pronouns

PRIMARY 1	PRIMARY 2	PRIMARY 3
<p><b>SECTION 3: READING</b> (p. 15-17)</p> <p>Unit 1: Pre-Reading Activities</p> <p>Recognition/Discrimination of Objects</p> <p>Manipulating Objects (Kinaesthetics)</p> <p>Reading pictures and talking about them</p> <p>Language Games</p> <p>Turing over the pages of a book (Picture scrap books)</p> <p>Unit 2: Introduction to Formal Reading</p> <p>Phonological Awareness – Letters of the alphabet</p>	<p><b>SECTION 3: READING</b> (p. 37 - 39)</p> <p>Unit 1: Recognition of Words</p> <p>Unit 2: Phonic Work</p> <p>Recognition of sounds in known words – vowels</p> <p>Sound discrimination</p> <p>Unit 3: Introduction to Reading Comprehension</p> <p>Reading Short Sentences in Passages/Poems</p> <p><b>SECTION 4: WRITING AND COMPOSITION</b> (p. 40 – 41)</p>	<p><b>SECTION 1: READING</b> (p. 59-61)</p> <p>Unit 1: Reading Aloud</p> <p>Reading Games</p> <p>Unit 2: Silent Reading</p> <p>Unit 3: Phonic Work</p> <p>Word Attack</p> <p>Unit 4: Making and Using Picture Dictionaries</p> <p><b>SECTION 4: WRITING AND COMPOSITION</b> (p. 61 – 63)</p> <p>Unit 1: Writing: Penmanship and Copy Work</p>



<p>Picture/object word matching</p> <p>Word recognition</p> <p><b>SECTION 4: WRITING AND COMPOSITION</b></p> <p>(p.19 – 20)</p> <p>Unit 1: Writing Patterns for Muscular Control and Hand-eye Co-ordination</p> <p>Unit 2: Copying Letters and Simple Words</p> <p>Unit 3: Drawing and Labelling</p> <p>Unit 4: Copying short sentences</p> <p><b>SECTION 5: LIBRARY</b> (p.21-23)</p>	<p>Unit 1: Copy Work</p> <p>Copying words</p> <p>Lower case and Upper case letters</p> <p>Unit 2: Copying from Simple Substitution</p> <p>Tables</p> <p>The full stop</p> <p>Unit 3: Spelling and Dictation</p> <p>Supplying missing letters and words</p> <p><b>SECTION 5: LIBRARY</b> (p.42 – 45)</p>	<p>Purposeful copying of sentences, verses, words of songs, prayer</p> <p>Unit 2: Composition</p> <p>Writing short descriptions</p> <p>Punctuation – full stop and comma.</p> <p>Upper case and lower case letters</p> <p>Subject/verb Agreement</p> <p>Unit 3: Exercises Involving Substitution</p> <p>Tables</p> <p>Unit 4: Sentence Completion</p> <p><b>SECTION 5: LIBRARY</b> (p.65-67)</p>
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PRIMARY 4	PRIMARY 5	PRIMARY 6
<p><b>SECTION 3: LISTENING &amp; SPEAKING</b> (p. 68-75)</p> <p>Unit 1: Listening to Songs, Poems and Rhymes</p> <p>Unit 2: Listening to Instructions/Directions and carrying them out.</p> <p>Unit 3: Story Telling</p> <p>Unit 4: Conversation</p> <p>Unit 5: Drama</p> <p>Unit 6: Polite Request</p> <p><b>SECTION 4: GRAMMAR</b> (p.76 – 85)</p>	<p><b>SECTION 1: LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b> (p. 95-100)</p> <p>Unit 1: Listening to Songs/Poems</p> <p>Unit 2: Listening to Instructions &amp; Directions</p> <p>Unit 3: Story Telling</p> <p>Unit 4: Conversation</p> <p>Unit 5: Drama</p> <p><b>SECTION 2: GRAMMAR</b> (p. 101 – 105)</p> <p>Unit 1: Nouns: Count Nouns and Non-Count Nouns</p> <p>Unit 2: Comparison of Adjectives (Irregular)</p> <p>Unit 3: Simple Determiners: a, an, the, each,</p>	<p><b>SECTION 1: LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b> (p. 118-123)</p> <p>Unit 1: Listening to Poems (Rhymes)</p> <p>Unit 2: Listening to Instructions and Directions</p> <p>Unit 3: Story Telling</p> <p>Unit 4: Conversation</p> <p>Unit 5: Drama</p> <p><b>SECTION 2: GRAMMAR</b> (p. 122 – 133)</p> <p>Unit 1: Anomalous Finites (Modals – must, have to, should, ought to, need to)</p> <p>Unit 2: Adverbs of more than one word</p>

Unit 1: Nouns: Proper Nouns & Common Nouns Unit 2: Comparison of Adjectives (Regular) Unit 3: Verb tense Forms: Simple Past, Present Perfect Unit 4: Adverbs Unit 5: Subject-verb Agreement Unit 6: Conjunction: and, but, so, for Unit 7: Anomalous Finites: can, could, may Unit 8: Prepositions: below, above, over, behind, near	both, all. Unit 4: Quantifiers: many, more, much several, few, a few, little, a little	Unit 3: Word Groups – Phrases Unit 4: Prepositions Unit 5: Adjectives Unit 5: Direct and Reported Speech Unit 6: Determiners Unit 7: More about Quantifiers (Quantifiers – some, any, few, a few, little, a little, many, much, both, all, a majority, the majority) Unit 8: Idioms and Idiomatic Expressions Unit 10: Question and Answer Tags using auxiliary verbs, - be, do, have, can
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PRIMARY 4	PRIMARY 5	PRIMARY 6
<p><b>SECTION 3: READING</b> (p. 81-82)</p> <p>Unit 1: Reading Aloud</p> <p>Unit 2: Silent Reading</p> <p><b>SECTION 4: WRITING AND COMPOSITION</b> (p.88 – 85)</p> <p>Unit 1: Penmanship: Joint script</p> <p>Unit 2: Punctuation</p> <p>Unit 3: Constructing Sentences from Substitution Tables</p> <p>Unit 4: Arranging Events and Ideas in Logical Order</p>	<p><b>SECTION 3: LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b> (p. 106-107)</p> <p>Unit 1: Reading Aloud</p> <p>Unit 2: Reading and Comprehension</p> <p><b>SECTION 4: WRITING AND COMPOSITION</b> (p. 108 – 114)</p> <p>Unit 1: Penmanship: Joint Script</p> <p>Unit 2: Paragraph Writing</p> <p>Unit 3: Joining of Paragraphs</p> <p>Unit 4: Giving Directions in Writing</p> <p>Unit 5: Letter Writing – Friendly Letters</p> <p>Unit 6: Description of Simple Processes</p>	<p><b>SECTION 3: LISTENING AND SPEAKING</b> (p. 138-139)</p> <p>Unit 1: Listening Comprehension</p> <p>Unit 2: Reading Aloud</p> <p>Unit 3: Reading Comprehension</p> <p><b>SECTION 4: WRITING AND COMPOSITION</b> (p. 136 – 140)</p> <p>Unit 1: Penmanship: Joint Script</p> <p>Unit 2: Punctuation</p> <p>Unit 3: Letter Writing Semi-official letters Official letters</p> <p>Unit 4: Letter Writing: Official Letters</p>

Unit 5: Controlled: Simple Story Writing Composition Unit 6: Simple Purposeful Communication, Writing Requests and Commands  <b>SECTION 5: LIBRARY</b> (p.92 – 94)	Unit 7: Summary Writing  <b>SECTION 5: LIBRARY</b> (p.112 – 117)	Unit 5: Writing Simple Stories Unit 6: Writing Reports/Account of Events Unit 7: Class Magazine Work Unit 8: Argumentative Essay Unit 9: Advertisements Unit 10: Filling Forms  <b>SECTION 5: LIBRARY</b> (p.140 – 146)
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## SUGGESTED TIME ALLOCATION

Primary schools are open for 40 weeks in a year. This syllabus is expected to be completed within that time.

Suggested period allocations are as follows:

	LOWER PRIMARY (Regular)	LOWER PRIMARY (Shift)	UPPER PRIMARY (Regular)	UPPER PRIMARY (Shift)
Listening and Speaking	2	1	2	1
Reading	2	2	2	2
Writing and Composition	2	2	2	2
Grammar	1	1	1	1
Library	1	1	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>

Apart from the time allocation for the subject itself, schools are advised to provide the following recommended time for the subjects/items listed below:

➤ Physical Education	4
➤ Library Work (Reading and Research)	3
➤ SBA Project	2
➤ Worship	2

## **Appendix 3: Curriculum Analysis Scheme**

### **Cross-cultural curriculum adaptation concerns considered in the curriculum analysis**

- Are the aims of the curriculum consistent with the overall goals of primary education in Ghana?
- Is the content of the curriculum balanced with respect to the needs of pupils expressed by the overall goals of primary education in Ghana?
- Is the language of the pupils' text (length and complexity of sentence, use of foreign words and mathematical terminology, etc.) suitable for the majority of pupils?
- Does the level of complexity of the content asked for in the curriculum materials fit the ability of the majority of pupils?
- Is there a match between teachers and pupils' expectations and the roles ascribed to them by the teaching and learning activities in the curriculum materials?
- Does the structure of content presented in the official curriculum reflect current thinking about the nature of class work?
- Do the roles ascribed to teachers and pupils by the teaching and learning activities in the curriculum match the roles reflected by views on what is currently valued globally in school work?

### **The Schedule for content analysis of the Official Curriculum**

- What is the number of pages covered by topics in the official textbooks?
- What is the number of objectives stated on topics presented in the official syllabus?
- What is the number of mathematical kernels that are related to each topic presented in the official syllabus?
- What is the number of words in the official syllabus associated with the following forms of Mathematics learning tasks: applications, concepts and skills?
- What is the number of exercises set in the official textbooks on concepts, skills and applications exercises?
- What proportions of instructions in the teacher's handbooks are likely to bring about the following forms of classroom organisation: - whole-class, individual and small-groups teaching?
- What forms of classroom exchanges - eliciting, informing, directing, and checking – are emphasised by the teaching activities presented in the teacher's handbooks?

### **Basic facts**

- State briefly the author(s), title(s), publisher and prices. Where the materials consists of more than one physical resource (e.g. a book, tape, etc), list each separately and indicate its size in terms of number of pages, number of items, minutes of running time, etc. Also state whether the resource is primarily intended for pupil use or teachers use.
- What does the material in its own term, state to be the its aim and function?
- State briefly the target audience and situation; e.g. pupils age, interests and ability range, examination orientation, type of school and course duration.
- What provision, if any, was made for testing the material in draft form and revising it prior to publication?



### **Author's rationale**

- Summarise any explanation or justification for the materials provided by the author, either in the materials under analysis of, if personally relevant, in other publications.

### **Description and Analysis of the Materials**

- Describe the content of the materials, using any of the techniques listed below that seem appropriate.
  - Listing major topics; titles or groups of chapters; chapter headings; sub-chapter arrangement; recurring themes; topics listed in the index.
  - Sampling the materials by selecting typical or important sections and describing their contents at a detailed level.
  - Indicating in quantitative terms the relative emphasis given to different aspects of the subject matter.
- Describe the presentation form of the material, and relate it to the various categories and content.
- Describe the pupil exercises or tasks that are included in the material; and indicate how frequently each type of task occurs and the tasks are sequenced and/or repeated.
- List any explicit statements on pupil assessment; and note examples of tests or assessment schemes (indicating both the nature of any assessment instrument and the structure of the assessment pattern as a whole).
- List, summarise or describe any statements or purpose, aim or objectives in the pupil material.
- List and estimate the frequency and significance of directions to the pupil to refer his teacher or to use special or relatively scarce facilities.
- Where there is more than one physical resource, indicate the inter- relationships between them in terms of cross-referencing, sequencing and repetition, both of content and of pupil tasks.

### **Description of Teacher Materials**

- Indicate where material for the teacher is to be found, and describe the content of the teacher's material as a whole using any of the techniques used in describing pupil materials.
- Describe the presentation form of the materials
- Describe any additional pupil roles or tasks that are mentioned or included; and indicate the frequency and sequencing.
- List any explicit statements on pupil assessment; and note examples of tests or assessment schemes (indicating both the nature of any assessment instrument and the structure of the assessment pattern as a whole).
- List, summarise or describe any statements or purpose, aim or objectives in the teacher's material and indicate whether they refer to learning by the pupil or the teacher.
- Describe the teacher tasks and roles that are stated in the materials; and indicate the extent of their demands on the teacher's time
- List any statements about the need for further resources or special facilities.

### **Structure of the Materials**

- How do pupil materials and teacher materials fit together and are there any obvious points of conflict?

- Describe the coverage of the subject matter in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. To what extent is the material explicitly concerned with the presentation of values or the development of attitudes?
- Indicate the generality and the level of abstraction of the subject matter. Does it mainly consist of factual material or does it try to communicate specific concepts, general concepts or principles? What are the roles of illustration, application and examples? What kinds of argument and how much supporting evidence is given? Does it develop specific techniques or general patterns of behaviour?
- What pre- requisite knowledge and skills are needed by the pupil?
- How is the subject matter organised in terms of structure, sequence or cumulative build up; and how do pupil tasks change?
- What image of the subject matter is most likely to be communicated? What are its boundaries and what are its chief concerns/ what implicit values can be detected in the selection or interpretation of information?
- How do pupil tasks and teacher activities relate to each other and how do they vary with the subject matter?
- How is the assessment related to pupil tasks (congruency) and to the subject matter (uniformity of emphasis)?
- Where and if there are stated objectives how do these relate to pupil tasks and to the assessment pattern?

*Adapted from Sussex Scheme for Analysis of Curriculum Materials (Eraut et al, 1975)*

## **Appendix 4: PRA tools**

A variety of PRA methodologies or tools were utilized for the study. PRA tools used include:

### **Transect Walks**

This is usually the first activity the PRA team undertakes. The Transect/ guided walk afford an opportunity to have an overview of the community and also to visit the school. The transect walk to the school could be used as an excuse for the walk through the community. Discussions on pertinent features observed could take place both during and after the walk.

### **Community Mapping**

This is also a start up activity that is geared getting the people involved in the PRA process. The community mapping could be done before or after the Transect walk. Getting the people to draw their community map will give an opportunity to see how community members visualize their community and their social service infrastructure priorities. It will also be the starting point for other discussions.

### **Time Line/Trend Analysis**

Time lines and Trend Analysis are the main tools used to explore the historical profile of the community and the trends in education provision. These tools can be used to explore the role of the community in the establishment of the school if any and running of the school through the years. Timelines can also be used to explore significant events over the life of the community and people responsible for changes in the community over the period. These tools can also be used to the people's perception of changes in education provision over the years and the reasons associated with the changes.

### **Daily Activity Charts**

The Daily Activity Charts is a very important tool in assessing the daily routine of all segments of the community. It can be used to explore the typical day of pupils both boys and girls to assess the amount of time devoted to farm work and studies. It can also be used to explore the typical day of both men and women to assess their contribution to children's education.

### **Seasonal Activity Charts**

The Seasonal Activity Charts is also used to explore the seasonal variations in the community. It can be used to assess how the various seasons (whether occupational or festival) affects children's education.

### **Ranking and Scoring**

Ranking and Scoring are analytical tools used to explore how the people prioritize their needs and aspirations. They can also be used to assess student achievement.

## **Venn Diagrams**

Venn Diagrams or Circles of interactions is a tool used to assess interrelationships within the community. Venn diagrams can be used to assess participation in school and the relationship between teachers and students.

## **Appendix 5: Interview Guide**

### **Semi Structured Interview with Key SfL/ GES Staff/ Teachers and Children**

- Could you tell me your job title
- How have you been involved with the operations of School for Life (SfL)?
- In general what has been School for Life's goals for increasing access to education in northern Ghana?
- What approaches have been used to try and achieve these goals?
- How will you describe the curriculum of SfL?
- What are the intended objectives of the SfL curriculum?
- What principles have guided the development and implementation of the SfL curriculum?
- What transition options are available to SfL graduates?
- What programme, policy linkages and relationships are there between SfL and the Ghanaian government formal school system?
- In general how will assess the success of the approaches used in meeting your organization's goals?
- What have been the key factors in enabling SfL get to this point?
- What do you think is still needed to achieve the goals of Education for All
- What makes SfL attractive to communities and parents?
- How does SfL meet the aspirations of marginalized communities in accessing basic education?
- What are some of the challenges faced by SfL in delivering on its mandate?
- What could still be done to help SfL meet its goals?
- Is there anything that you would like to talk about that I haven't asked you?
- What is the relationship between the local seasonal calendar and the educational calendar?
- How does the annual activity pattern of the community affect children's education?
- How is a typical week structured in the community?
- How does the weekly pattern of the community affect children's education?
- How flexible is the school calendar and schedule to accommodate local seasons?
- What major local activities conflict with school's calendar and schedule?
- How can the school take into consideration the local seasons in planning school calendar and schedules?
- What are the options available for CEP graduates
- How do children transition to the formal school?
- Why do some graduates not transition to formal school
- What happens to the community chores that prevented children from accessing formal school in the past?
- What motivates CEP graduates from persisting in formal school?

### **Semi Structured Interview with Teachers**

- Did the lesson activities work as planned? (probe each of the activities in turn; elicit history of tasks and texts; explore rationale for choosing activities/tasks; elicit views on how well they worked)

- What did the lesson activities tell you about the needs/wants of the class? (probe with certain individual specific issues/moments in the session)
- What plans for the next/future lessons? (elicit outline for next session; explore rationale for tasks and activities, especially changes)
- Did my presence have any effect in the class? (on what T. did; on how T. planned; on teaching session)
- Were there any activities in this lesson(s) that you were not able to complete with learners?
- Is there anything about this lesson(s) you think should be changed or improved? (For example, vocabulary, activities, instructor's manual, format, etc.)
- At the end of this lesson, learners were able to:
- If an objective was not achieved, please explain:
- Which 2 or 3 activities were most useful in helping learners to understand today's lesson?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving this lesson (activities or content) or your facilitation?
- Were any activities not useful in helping learners to understand today's lesson, or did learners have difficulty understanding any of today's activities?
- Did learners have the opportunity to participate in all activities outlined in today's lesson?
- Please describe any challenges you or your pupils encountered during this past week (either inside or outside the classroom) (For example, attendance, participation, community support, time management, facilitation, materials, etc.) Were you able to resolve the problems, if any? If no, how do you propose to do so?
- Please list any successes or positive impacts (if any) related to the lesson delivery that occurred today/this week, either inside or outside the classroom. (For example, improvement in your teaching/facilitation, community involvement, learners' attendance or participation, etc.)
- What system(s) do you have for regular assessment of pupil performance?
- How frequent are achievement tests organised to assess pupil performance?
- Who is responsible for organising achievement tests?
- How will you compare the performance of SfL graduates in your class to that of the continuing pupils?
- What do you think accounts for the difference in performances (if any)
- Describe any support your community, parents, SfL or GES provide this week?

### **Semi Structured Interview with Pupils**

- How did the lesson activities work for you? Why appropriate / inappropriate, etc.? (Elicit perceptions of experience; explore understanding of learning rationale; explore perception of needs)
- Have you done activities like this before? (Explore previous experience of activities; how this. relates activity in question to past experiences in classrooms)
- Why do you think the teacher on this course does this kind of activity? (Explore perceptions of group needs; perceptions of teacher's view of group; extent to which they feel the T. is attending to their needs and has got it right. Also perceptions of activity as typical of institution, or of this course only)
- What kind of follow-up would be useful for you now? (probe with homework from class; independent study, and work on other courses)

- Did my presence have any effect in the class?
- Were there any activities in this lesson(s) that you were not able to complete/understand?
- Is there anything about this lesson you think should be changed or improved?
- At the end of this lesson what were you able to do?
- Which 2 or 3 activities were most useful in helping you to understand today's lesson?
- Were any activities not useful in helping you to understand today's lesson,
- Did learners have the opportunity to participate in all activities outlined in today's lesson?
- Please describe any challenges you encountered during this past week (either inside or outside the classroom) (For example, attendance, participation, community support, time management, materials, etc.) Were you able to resolve the problems, if any? If no, how do you propose to do so?
- Please list any successes or positive impacts (if any) related to the lesson delivery that occurred today/this week, either inside or outside the classroom.

### **Semi Structured Interview with Community Members/Parents**

- Why the need for Complementary education (CEP) in this community?
- What are the expectations of CEP in the community
- What function does CEP serve in the community
- Which school do you send your children to?
- Why do you send them to that particular school?
- Why did you enrol your child in SfL before they went to the formal school?
- How will you compare the SfL School to that of the formal school?
- How regular and punctual are teachers of the two systems?
- How is instructional time utilised in SfL and in the formal school?
- What measures can be put in place to ensure teachers make maximum use of instructional time?
- How does the SfL/school's curriculum reflect the culture and traditions of the people?
- In what ways has the SfL/school curriculum benefited from the culture and traditions of the community?
- Which local skills or resources are being utilised in the SfL/school?
- How often does the SfL/school utilise local resource persons?
- How can the school maximise the use of local resources?
- What are the main seasons in your community?

## Appendix 6: NEA P6 English Test

### P6 English Form 1

#### Grammar

Choose the correct word or group of words that best completes the sentence. Then, on your answer sheet, shade the box which has the same letter as the answer you have chosen.

16. I \_\_\_\_\_ buy a new school bag.

- (A) would to
- (B) has to
- (C) need to
- (D) could to

17. You \_\_\_\_\_ see the doctor at once.

- (A) ought to
- (B) have
- (C) would
- (D) would have

18. Yesterday, the train arrived\_\_\_\_\_.

- (A). every night
- (B). early night
- (C). late at night
- (D). at late night

19. The goalkeeper is the \_\_\_\_\_ boy in the team.

- (A) tallest
- (B) taller
- (C) more taller
- (D) tall

20. An aeroplane is \_\_\_\_\_ than a car.

- (A) heavy
- (B) heaviest
- (C) heavier



(D) more heavy

21. My mother left \_\_\_\_\_ the morning for shopping.

(A) in

(B) on

(C) at

(D) over

22. Abena ran \_\_\_\_\_ the street.

(A) under

(B) below

(C) after

(D) across

23. I met Kofi \_\_\_\_\_.

(A) on the rain.

(B) on the house

(C) on the road

(D) on the tree.

#### **DIRECT & REPORTED SPEECH FORMS**

You are given a sentence in the direct speech form. Then you are given four (4) other sentences marked A – D which are possible Reported Speech forms. Only one of them is correct. Choose the correct Reported Speech form. Then, on your answer sheet, shade the box which has the same letter as the answer you have chosen.

**Example:** John said to Mary, "I am hungry."

- (A). John told Mary that I am hungry.
- (B). John told Mary that you are hungry.
- (C).** John told Mary that he was hungry.

Answer questions 24 and 25 in the same way on your answer sheet.

24. "We ate fufu and palm nut soup", said the boys.

- (A) The boys said that they will eat fufu and palm nut soup.
- (B) The boys said that they have eaten fufu and palm nut soup.
- (C) The boys said that they ate fufu and palm nut soup.
- (D) The boys said that they would eat fufu and palm nut soup.

25.

"I love playing football", said Memuna.

- (A) Memuna said that she loved playing football.
- (B) Memuna said that you loved playing football.
- (C) Memuna said that I loved playing football.
- (D) Memuna said that we loved playing football.

**Choose the correct direct speech form from the alternatives below.**

26. Fatima said that she had lost her money.

- (A) "I have lost my money", said Fatima.
- (B) I lost my money, said Fatima.
- (C) Fatima said "she had lost her money".
- (D) She had lost her money, Fatima said.

27. There were \_\_\_\_\_ people on the bus so some of us had to stand in it.

- (A) a lot of
- (B) most
- (C) all
- (D) much

28. Can I get \_\_\_\_\_ salt from you please?

- (A) a few
- (B) a little
- (C) few
- (D) many

**Select the correct idiom to complete the sentence.**

29. Jane studies very hard so she's always \_\_\_\_\_ .

- (A) tip of the class.
- (B) top of the class.
- (C) face of the class.
- (D) front of the class.

30. Kwaku is fond of \_\_\_\_\_ to make him cry.

- (A) stamping his friend's feet
- (B) pulling his friend's leg
- (C) scratching his friend's back
- (D) touching his friend's nose

**Choose the correct answer that means the same as the underlined idiomatic expression.**

31. The boys have not heard from their father for the past two months. This means.....

- (A) the boys could not hear what their father said.

- (B) the boys could not hear their father speak.
- (C) the boys had not received any message from their father.
- (D) the boys' father had written to them.
32. The thief was caught red-handed.
- (A) after he had stolen
- (B) when he was going to steal
- (C) in the act of stealing
- (D) with blood on his hand
33. We \_\_\_\_\_ when fighting broke out on the field.
- (A) made out
- (B) made off
- (C) hit out
- (D) beat off

**Question Tags**

34. Daddy hasn't got much money, \_\_\_\_\_?.
- (A) has it
- (B) is it
- (C) does he
- (D) has he
35. It will rain this afternoon, \_\_\_\_\_?
- (A) will it
- (B) won't not
- (C) won't it
- (D) will it not

## **Reading**

Aboah looked left and right and made sure nobody was watching him.

He noticed that he was the only one left at that corner of the shop.

He quickly picked a perfume and hid it in his underwear.

36. What did Aboah do after he stole the perfume?

- (A) He threw it through the window.
- (B) He hid it in his back pocket.
- (C) He hid it in his underwear.
- (D) He hid it in his socks.

37. How was Aboah caught?

- (A) He made some noise at the shop.
- (B) The secret camera captured his action.
- (C) People saw him stealing.
- (D) He confessed.

**Read the following passage and answer the questions on it.**

Afua was always curious about sex. Some of her friends said they were doing it. They all said having sex was wonderful. All this time, Afua did not have a boyfriend. One weekend, she met a handsome young man called Fiifi in town. He told her she was very beautiful. Afua became so excited and before she knew it she and the young man were having sex a few days later.

Soon she fell ill and was diagnosed as HIV positive. She was later found to be pregnant. Afua had to stop school. Before she could have her baby, the HIV developed into AIDS. Afua realized she should have abstained from sex. She died when she was delivering her baby. The baby was safely delivered, but it had contracted HIV/AIDS and died three weeks after birth.

38. What was Afua curious about?
- (A) Friends
  - (B) Sex
  - (C) School
  - (D) Herself
39. Afua was curious about sex. Curious means \_\_\_\_\_ .
- (A) bored
  - (B) eager
  - (C) certain
  - (D) advised
40. Afua realized she should have abstained from sex.. Abstained from means .....
- (A) stayed away.
  - (B) engaged in.
  - (C) agreed to.
  - (D) took part in.
41. What happened to Afua after she became pregnant?
- (A) She dropped out of school.
  - (B) She finished her school.
  - (C) She was found to have HIV.
  - (D) She was suspended from school.
42. Young people should abstain from sex so that ...
- (A) they can have many children later.
  - (B) they do not get HIV/AIDS.
  - (C) they can make many friends.
  - (D) they can help their parents better.

**Read the following dialogue and answer the questions on it.**

**Lion:** Who's walking across my bridge?

**Goat:** It's a young billy goat

**Lion:** Where are you going?

**Goat:** I'm going up the hill to eat the grass and grow fat

**Lion:** No, you're not. I'm going to eat you up.

**Goat:** Please, don't do that. My brother is coming too and he's much bigger and fatter than me.

**Lion:** All right, be off

**Goat:** "I better run off before he changes his mind", thought the goat.

**Lion:** Who's walking across my bridge?

43. How many goats crossed the bridge?

- (A) Three
- (B) One
- (C) Two
- (D) Four

44. Why did the goat cross the bridge?

- (A) To eat grass
- (B) To rest on the grass
- (C) To quarrel with the lion
- (D) To deceive the lion.

45. From the passage, what do lions feed on?

- (A) Grass
- (B) Fruits
- (C) Corn
- (D) Other animals

46. Where did the lion live?

- (A) Near the road
- (B) Near the bridge
- (C) On the hill
- (D) On the grass

47. What did the fat billy goat do to the lion?

- (A) It gave him a talk.
- (B) It broke its neck.
- (C) It hit him hard
- (D) It shouted at him

**Read the following poem and answer the questions on it.**

Oh what a year we have so good,  With much rain that I have enjoyed,  To God I come in thoughtful mood,
---

48. Who's the speaker talking to?

- (A) Crops
- (B) Year
- (C) Rain
- (D) God

49. What is the speaker happy about?

- (A) Bad harvest
- (B) Good harvest
- (C) Bad weather
- (D) Good weather

50. Who is speaking in the poem?

- (A) A baker
- (B) A trader
- (C) A farmer
- (D) A cook



## WRITING AND COMPOSITION

Find the sentence which is correctly punctuated. Then, on your answer sheet, shade the box which has the same letter as the answer you have chosen.

**Example:**

Find the sentence which is correctly punctuated

- A. Esi walked home from school.
- B. Esi. walked home from school
- C. Esi walked home. from school
- D. Esi walked. home from school

**(A)** is the correct answer, so it has been shaded.

**Now, answer the question below in the same way on your answer sheet.**

51.

- (A) She is a brave girl and all. Ghanaians feel proud of her
- (B) She is a brave girl and all Ghanaians. feel proud of her
- (C) She is a brave girl and all Ghanaians feel proud of her.
- (D) She is a brave girl and. all Ghanaians feel proud of her

**Only one of the sentences has the punctuation marks correctly used. Look at the example below.**

**EXAMPLE:**

- A. Bring me a pen, a book a ruler and a duster.
- B. Bring me a pen a book, a ruler and a duster.
- C. Bring me a pen, a book, a ruler and a duster.
- D. Bring me a pen a book, a ruler and a duster

**Now answer the questions below in the same way on your answer sheet.**

52. Which of these is punctuated correctly?

- (A) "Do you like the sea" asked the shark?
- (B) "Do you like the sea?" asked the shark?
- (C) "Do you like the sea?" asked the shark.
- (D) "Do you like the sea"? asked the shark

53. Which of the following is the correct salutation for a semi-official letter?

- (A) Dear Friend
- (B) Dear Sir
- (C) Dear Madam,
- (D) Dear Mrs. Kumi

54. Which one is the best way of ending a semi-official letter?

- (A) Yours faithfully,
- (B) Your loving niece,
- (C) Yours ever,
- (D) Yours sincerely,

**The numbered features of an official letter have not been written in the right order.  
Choose the one which shows the right order.**

55.

- 1. Recipient's address
- 2. Salutation
- 3. Date
- 4. Writer's address

- (A) 1, 2, 3, 4
- (B) 2, 1, 4, 3
- (C) 3, 4, 2, 1
- (D) 4, 3, 1, 2

The numbered sentences have not been written in the right order. Choose the answer which shows the correct order.

Example :

1. Luckily a man saw him fall
2. One day Kofi went fishing
3. The man helped poor Kofi out
4. He bent over too far and fell into the river

(A) 2,4,1,3

(B) 4,3,2,1

Now choose the answer which shows the correct order.

56.    1. She ironed it.  
         2. She dried it.  
         3. Janet soaked her dress.  
         4. She washed it.

(A) 3,1,4,3

(B) 3,4,2,1

(C) 4,2,1,3

(D) 2,2,4,3

### Road Signs

57.    Road signs are meant for.....

(A) Pedestrians only

(B) Drivers only

(C) Children only

(D) Both drivers and pedestrians

58. What should you do before crossing a road?

- (A) Look left and right
- (B) Look right and left
- (C) Look left and right and left again
- (D) Look right and left and right again

59. In a debate, Kofi made the following statement, "The farmer is more important than the doctor." Mary disagreed but Ato supported it.

Who is the main speaker for the motion?

- (A) Mary
- (B) Ato
- (C) Kofi and Mary
- (D) Kofi

Choose the best advertisement.

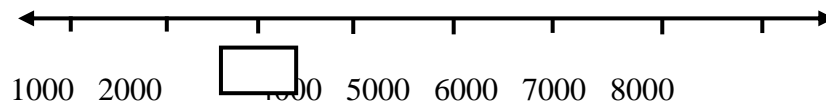
60.

- (A) "Canopies for hiring"
- (B) "Canopies to sell"
- (C) "Canopies for hire"
- (D) "Canopies for selling"

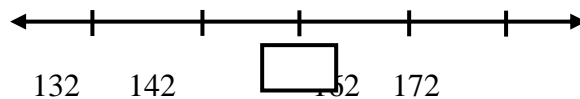
## Appendix 7: NEA P3 Mathematics Test

### P3 Mathematics Form 1

1. What is the number missing in the box?



- A. 3000
- B. 4000
- C. 5000
- D. 6000
2. What is the value of 2 in 258?
- A. 20
- B. 200
- C. 258
- D. 2000
3. What is 5,342 in words?
- A. Fifty – three thousand and forty – two
- B. Five hundred and forty – two
- C. Five thousand three forty two
- D. Five thousand, three hundred and forty – two
4. What is the number missing in the box?



- A. 142
- B. 152
- C. 162
- D. 172

5. Which sentence is true?

A.  $693 < 639$

B.  $673 > 649$

C.  $663 < 629$

D.  $639 > 693$

6. What is the missing number?

$$5 + 6 = 4 +$$

A. 5

B. 6

C. 9

D. 7

7. Add. 3452

$$\begin{array}{r} + 1361 \\ \hline \hline \end{array}$$

A. 4613

B. 4713

C. 4813

D. 4913

8. Subtract 896

$$\begin{array}{r} - 257 \\ \hline \hline \end{array}$$

A. 639

B. 641

C. 649

D. 651

9. Which symbol makes the sentence true?

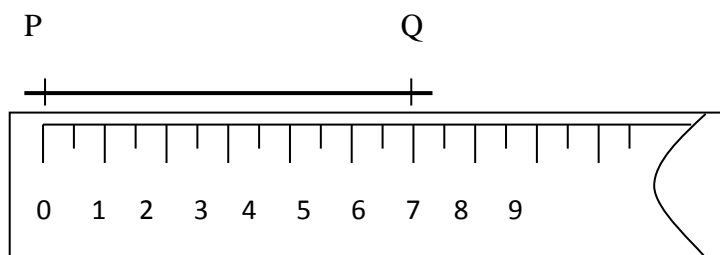
$$(20 + 2) \dots\dots (26 + 8)$$

- A. =
- B. <
- C. >
- D.  $\geq$

10. Ama has 145 oranges. Ali has 273 oranges. How many oranges do they have altogether?

- A. 318
- B. 418
- C. 528
- D. 408

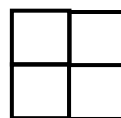
11. What is the length of line segment PQ?



- A. 5 cm
- B. 6 cm
- C. 7 cm
- D. 8 cm

12. Which surface has the same area as the shape P?

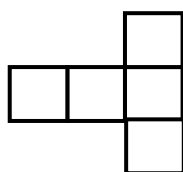
P



A



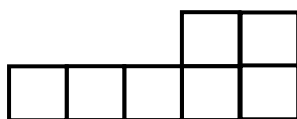
B



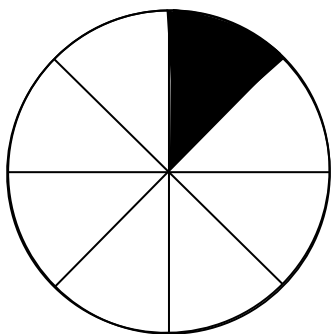
C



D



13. What fraction of this shape is shaded?



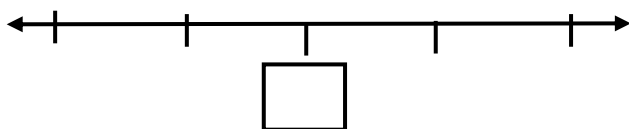
A.  $\frac{1}{4}$

B.  $\frac{1}{7}$

C.  $\frac{1}{8}$

D.  $\frac{1}{9}$

14. What is the missing number in the box?





$$\frac{1}{2} \quad \frac{2}{2} \quad \frac{4}{2} \quad \frac{5}{2}$$

A.  $\frac{2}{3}$

B.  $\frac{3}{3}$

C.  $\frac{3}{2}$

D.  $\frac{2}{1}$

15. Which symbol makes the sentence true?

$$\frac{2}{4} \text{ ----- } \frac{1}{4}$$

A.  $<$

B.  $>$

C.  $=$

D.  $\leq$

16. Which of the following sentences is true?

A.  $50 \text{ kg} > 40 \text{ kg}$

B.  $45 \text{ kg} < 35 \text{ kg}$

C.  $60 \text{ kg} < 50 \text{ kg}$

D.  $40 \text{ kg} < 30 \text{ kg}$

17. What number is missing in the box?

$$(3 \times 2) \times 4 = \square (2 \times 4)$$

A. 2

B. 3

C. 4

D. 5

18. Multiply:  $3 \times 2 \times 4$

A. 9

B. 12

C. 16

D. 24

19. Find the missing factor.

$$3 \times \square \times 4 = 24$$

A. 5

B. 3

C. 2

D. 1

20. Multiply:

$$\begin{array}{r} 14 \\ \times 2 \\ \hline \\ \hline \end{array}$$

- A. 28
- B. 24
- C. 18
- D. 16

21. Which symbol makes the sentence true?  $2 \times 3 \times 4 \dots 4 \times 3 \times 2$

- A.  $\geq$
- B.  $>$
- C.  $<$
- D.  $=$

22. A car has 4 tyres. How many tyres has 3 cars?

- A. 4
- B. 7
- C. 12
- D. 13

23.  $36 \div 3 =$

- A. 18
- B. 15
- C. 14
- D. 12



24.  $32 \div \quad = 8$

A. 6

B. 5

C. 4

D. 3

25. Which symbol makes the sentence true?

$12 \div 3 \dots\dots 16 \div 4$

A.  $\leq$

B.  $=$

C.  $>$

D.  $<$

26. There are 18 mangoes to be shared among 3 pupils equally. How many mangoes will each pupil get?

A. 3

B. 6

C. 8

D. 9

27. Which of these shapes has a right angle?



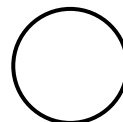
A.



B.

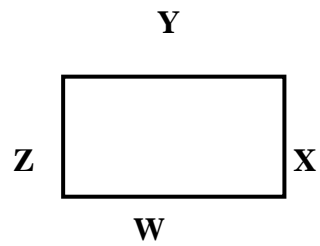


C.

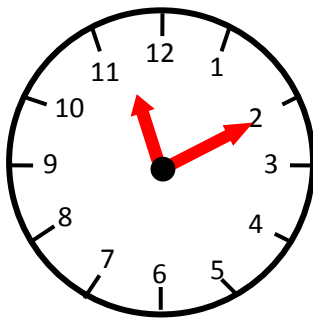


D.

28. Which side of the rectangle is equal to the side marked W?



- A. X  
B. Y  
C. W  
D. Z
29. What is the time?



- A. 11:10 a.m.  
B. 11:15 a.m.  
C. 11:20 a.m.  
D. 11:25 a.m.

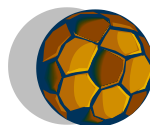
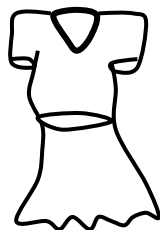
The calendar below is for March, 2008. Study it and answer question 30.

Sunday		2	9	16	23	30
Monday		3	10	17	24	31
Tuesday		4	11	18	25	
Wednesday		5	12	19	26	
Thursday		6	13	20	27	
Friday		7	14	21	28	
Saturday	1	8	15	22	29	

30. How many Saturdays are in the month of March 2008?

- A. 4
- B. 5
- C. 6
- D. 7

### ITEMS



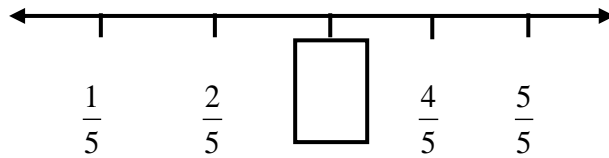
**GH¢5.000**

**GH¢4.00**

31. What is the total price of the dress and the ball?

- A. GH¢ 4.00
- B. GH¢ 5.00
- C. GH¢ 9.00
- D. GH¢ 10.00

32. What is the fraction in the box?



- A.  $\frac{2}{5}$
- B.  $\frac{3}{5}$
- C.  $\frac{4}{5}$
- D.  $\frac{5}{5}$

33.  $\frac{1}{3} + \frac{1}{3} = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$

A.  $\frac{1}{6}$

B.  $\frac{2}{6}$

C.  $\frac{2}{3}$

D.  $\frac{1}{9}$

34.  $\frac{5}{8} - \frac{3}{8} = \boxed{\phantom{00}}$

A.  $\frac{2}{8}$

B.  $\frac{3}{8}$

C.  $\frac{5}{8}$

D.  $\frac{6}{8}$

The table below shows the number of pupils born within the first six (6) months of the year.

Month	Number of Pupils
January	6
February	8
March	14



April	9
May	7
June	5

35. In which month were **most** pupils born?

- A. April
- B. May
- C. March
- D. June

36. How many pupils were born in June?

- A. 7
- B. 6
- C. 8
- D. 5

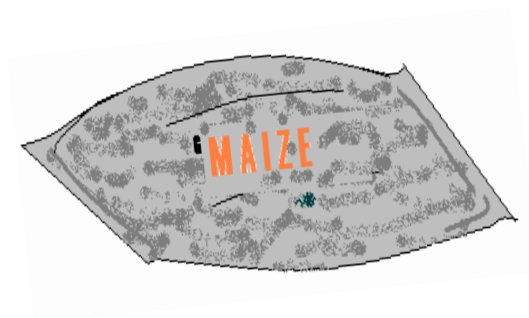
37. Which is the expanded form of the number 450?

- A.  $4 + 50 + 0$
- B.  $40 + 50 + 0$
- C.  $45 + 50 + 0$
- D.  $400 + 50 + 0$

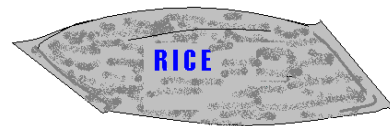
38. A boy has 10 pencils. If 5 of the pencils are red, what fraction of the pencils is red?

- A.  $\frac{1}{2}$

- B.        1
- $\pm$
- C.
- 1
- D.



Maize (13 kg)



Rice (5 kg)

39. What is the total weight of 2 bags of rice and a bag of maize?
- A.        8 kg
- B.        10 kg
- C.        20 kg
- D.        23 kg
40. What is the total weight of a bag of sugar, a bag of maize and a bag of cement?
- A.        25 kg
- B.        40 kg
- C.        65 kg
- D.        90 kg

## Appendix 8: Classroom Observation Guide

**Purpose of this observation tool:** This instrument allows you to record your observations of assigned teachers for the purposes of assessing their classroom performance as part of GES/TED's evaluation of the Untrained Teachers Diploma in Basic Education (UTDBE) program.

**How to conduct an observation:** You will be assigned an observation partner and with that person will observe a series of teachers for a defined amount of time. Each of the observers should sit on diagonally opposite sides of the classroom so together you can see the entire class.

Since you are an observer, and we want to capture how the trainee actually teaches--*you should not in any way interfere with the teaching*—even if you don't like how the teacher or children are behaving—by making comments to the teacher or students, by talking with the teacher during class, by walking in and out of the class or by correcting the teacher or student. *Doing so will bias the observation.* Simply sit quietly, watch what's going on, record your notes in Section II of this tool, thank the teacher (without commenting on the lesson after class) and with your partner, keep your comments to the form only, and complete Section III of this tool after class.

**How to use this tool:** This observation form is divided into 4 sections:

- **Section I: Demographic information**—Complete this information during class. Either before or after class—not during class—you may need to ask the teacher for some information.
- **Section II: Notes**—Record your notes during class. This will help you complete Section III after class.
- **Section III: Scaled evaluation**--This is the heart of the evaluation form and should be completed after class, out of sight of all school personnel, with your partner observer. Refer to Notes section to help you complete Section III. This section assesses teacher (trainee's) content knowledge; content-specific pedagogical practices; instruction and management skills; compliance with policies; and overall professionalism. For each category, there are specific indicators with performance levels from 0 to 4 with 0 being the lowest performance level and 4 the highest. 0 indicates that the quality is not evident; 1=slightly evident, 2=somewhat evident, 3=evident, 4=highly evident. For each indicator, circle the number that best assesses the teacher's performance level in this area.
- **Additional Comments:** This is a space for any additional information you want to provide.

You will return the jointly-completed form (just one) to TED.

At the bottom of each page of the classroom observation form, please record your name, the number of times you have observed this particular teacher, the date and the observation start time and end time. In case the form becomes separated, we can use this information to piece the pages back together again.

**Section I:** Please complete the following demographic information about school, students and teacher. You may need to ask the teacher some of this information before or after—not during—the class.

### I. Student and School Information

**a. Class/Grade**

**b. School**

**c. Enrolment:** \_\_\_\_\_

**d. Gender:** M (1) \_\_\_\_\_ F (2) \_\_\_\_\_

### II. Teacher Information

**a. Teacher Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **b. Gender of Teacher:** (1) M ☐ (2) F ☐

**c. Language of instruction** ☐ (1) English ☐ (2) Mother Tongue ☐ (3) Both (Mixed)

**d. Level of qualification** ☐ (1) Diploma ☐ (2) Certificate ☐ (3) Trainee \_\_\_\_\_

**e. Length of service** \_\_\_\_\_ years

### III. Classroom Environment

**a. Class Location:** (1) ☐ Classroom (2) ☐ Open air (3) ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**b. Content Area**

☐ (1) Ghanaian Language ☐ (2) English ☐ (3) Maths ☐ (4) Environmental Studies ☐ (5) Integrated Science

☐ (6) Social Studies

**c. Student seating arrangement:** (1) ☐ Individually in rows (2) ☐ Groups at Tables/Desks

(3) ☐ Pairs at Tables/Desks    (4) ☐ Circle    (5) ☐ One large group on floor    (6) ☐ Several small groups floor

(7) ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**d. What is the objective of the lesson?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Section II--Notes:** Use this section to write down notes *during* your classroom observation (e.g., what the teacher is doing, what students are doing, learning activity, etc.). This section will help you complete Section III.

**Section III: Instructional Practice:** (*To be completed **after class** out of sight of teacher, head teacher and principal*). With your fellow observer, please complete the following observation form. Circle the most appropriate performance level for each indicator. You will turn in one copy between you to TED.

<b>I. Knowledge of Content: The Teacher demonstrates adequate knowledge of the content area. He/she:</b>					
Indicator	Scale 0-4 (0=not evident, 1=slightly evident, 2=somewhat evident, 3=evident, 4=highly evident) Circle most appropriate number				
(1.1) Shows knowledge of subject matter in lesson presentation	0	1	2	3	4
(1.2) Is able to respond to learners' questions accurately	0	1	2	3	4
(1.3) Provides additional information to learners	0	1	2	3	4
(1.4) Provides clear and appropriate information	0	1	2	3	4
<b>II. Content-related pedagogy: The Teacher presents content in an appropriate manner for all learners. He/she:</b>					
(2.1) Shows evidence of taking into account the <i>abilities</i> of all learners in the development of the lesson	0	1	2	3	4
(2.2) Shows evidence of taking into account the <i>complexity and difficulty</i> of material in the development of the lesson	0	1	2	3	4
(2.3) Makes modifications when learner performance is not appropriate	0	1	2	3	4
(2.4) Reinforces appropriate performance and interest	0	1	2	3	4

(2.5) Explains, discusses and reviews content in an appropriate sequence to abilities of learners	0	1	2	3	4
(2.6) Teaches the lesson in an appropriate developmental sequence	0	1	2	3	4
(2.7) Is able to explain how the lesson fits into broader scope of the discipline	0	1	2	3	4
(2.8) Provides activities for learners which offer opportunities to practice and extend knowledge	0	1	2	3	4
(2.9) Chooses activities which encourage learners to develop and have confidence in their ability to think independently, creatively and/or critically	0	1	2	3	4
(2.10) Appears to have taken account of cultural considerations in the design of activities	0	1	2	3	4
(2.11) Makes content easy to learn and remember by linking it to relevant life experiences, to prior or to future learning, or through associations	0	1	2	3	4
<b>III. Instruction and Management: The Teacher makes appropriate use of instructional time. He/she:</b>					
(3.1) Shows evidence of having planned the lesson so that learners are actively engaged throughout the lesson	0	1	2	3	4
(3.2) Maximizes time on task on instructional activities through effective time management and organizational strategies	0	1	2	3	4
(3.3) Monitors each learner's progress	0	1	2	3	4
(3.4) Is aware of those who need assistance and provides it	0	1	2	3	4
(3.5) Uses a variety of instructional techniques to accommodate various learning styles of all students including slow, disabled and advanced learners	0	1	2	3	4
(3.6) Uses activities accommodate various learning styles and levels of ability	0	1	2	3	4
(3.7) Employs techniques, such as proximity, control and presents clear expectations for learner behavior	0	1	2	3	4

(3.8) Guides learners who exhibit off-task behaviors back to the work at hand and keeps them engaged	0	1	2	3	4
(3.9) Demonstrates smooth transition times from one activity to another or one lesson to another	0	1	2	3	4
(3.10) Demonstrates respect for all learners through words and actions	0	1	2	3	4
(3.11) Demonstrates attempts to help all learners work up to their potential and to succeed	0	1	2	3	4
(3.12) Following completion of the lessons, the teacher accurately describes the positive and/or negative aspects of the lesson as they relate to the goals and objectives	0	1	2	3	4
<b>IV. Compliance with Established Policies: The Teacher complies with national, district and school administrative regulations. He/she:</b>					
(4.1) Conducts assigned classes at the scheduled time	0	1	2	3	4
(4.2) Is punctual	0	1	2	3	4
(4.3) Maintains appropriate lesson plans	0	1	2	3	4
(4.4) Enforces regulations concerning pupil conduct and discipline	0	1	2	3	4
<b>V. Professionalism: The Teacher demonstrates professional duties and responsibilities He/she:</b>					
(5.1) Models correct use of <i>spoken</i> language	0	1	2	3	4
(5.2) Models correct use of <i>written</i> language	0	1	2	3	4
(5.3) Implements designated curriculum	0	1	2	3	4
(5.4) Shows evidence of taking precautions to protect records, equipment, materials or facilities	0	1	2	3	4



(5.5) Conducts himself/herself ethically with students	0	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---	---

**Additional Comments:** Please use this section to note any additional comments—your overall appraisal of the lesson, unusual or noteworthy activities, comments to the above indicators, etc.

## **Classroom Observations Instrument: Best Practices Assessment**

### **Background Information**

**School Name:**

**Teacher's Name:**

**Qualification:**

**Pre Service Training:**

**Length of Service:**

**Class Observed:**

**Number on Roll (Male/Female):**

**Number Present (Male /Female):**

**Subject Observed:**

**Start Time:**

**End Time:**

**Language of Instruction:**

**Date of Observation:**

## **Classroom Observation Instrument: Best Practices Assessment**

### **PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 1: PLANNING & PREPARATION**

**Element 1.1: Lesson Planning**

### **PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 2: CLASSROOM & BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

**Element 2.1: Use of Class Time**

**Element 2.2: Preparation of Materials**

**Element 2.3: Classroom Routines**

**Element 2.4: Learner Engagement**

**Element 2.5: Managing Learner Task-Related Behaviour**

**Element 2.6: Managing Learner Behaviour**

### **PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 3: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

**Element 3.1: Arrangement of Learners**

**Element 3.2: Classroom Displays**

**Element 3.3: Teacher Encourages Learners**

**Element 3.4: Gender Sensitivity**

**Element 3.5: Learner Interaction**

### **PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 4: TEACHING & LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

**Element 4.1: Use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) by Teacher**

**Element 4.2: Use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) by Learners**

**Element 4.3: Content Accuracy**

**Element 4.4: Thinking Skills**

**Element 4.5: Monitoring Learners' Understanding During Lesson**

**Element 4.6: Feedback**

**Element 4.7: Oral & Written Communication in Mother Tongue of the Learner**

**Element 4.8: Oral & Written Communication in English**

## Classroom Observation Instrument: Best Practices Baseline Assessment

### PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 1: PLANNING & PREPARATION

#### Element 1.1: Lesson Planning

**BEST PRACTICE:** A good lesson starts with good planning. Lesson plans have *at least* a clear description of the following parts:

- (1) relevant previous knowledge;
- (2) lesson objectives (what the learners will know and be able to do);
- (3) teacher and learner activities;
- (4) teaching and learning materials;
- (5) how learning will be assessed (checklist, evaluation sheet etc.); and
- (6) how individual needs will be met. **NOTE:** There do not need to be individual plans for each learner, but the plans should indicate how individual differences will be addressed (different tasks for different groups, etc.)

*This component is assessed by examining the teacher's lesson plan before the observation.*

**NOTE:** CEP classes are not assessed on this Component.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
No lesson plan <i>or</i> lesson plan contains only 1 part.	Lesson plan contains 2 parts, clearly described.	Lesson plan contains 3-5 parts, clearly described.	Lesson plan contains all 6 parts, clearly described.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

## PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 2: CLASSROOM & BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

### Element 2.1: Use of Class Time

**BEST PRACTICE:** Class time for teaching and learning is maximized by starting class on time, attending to interruptions quickly and achieving tasks on time.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
Teacher and learner activities do not begin on time; interruptions not handled efficiently; <i>and/or</i> much time is wasted.	Some time is wasted due to late beginning of lesson; interruptions not handled efficiently.	Teacher and learner activities begin promptly; interruptions are handled partially; most time is used for teaching and learning.	Teacher and learner activities begin promptly and interruptions are handled quickly. Class time for teaching and learning is maximized. Tasks are achieved on time.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

### Element 2.2: Preparation of Materials

**BEST PRACTICE:** Teaching and learning materials (TLMs) are ready to use and easily accessible. Time is saved for teaching and learning; there is no time wasted in preparing, displaying, distributing or collecting TLMs.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
No teaching and learning materials are planned <i>or</i> teaching and learning materials are not ready to use or easily accessible.	<i>Some</i> teaching and learning materials are ready to use and easily accessible.	<i>Most</i> teaching and learning materials are ready to use and easily accessible.	<i>All</i> teaching and learning materials are ready to use and easily accessible.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

### Element 2.3: Classroom Routines

**BEST PRACTICE:** Time for teaching and learning is maximized when teachers have classroom routines for handling tasks such as displaying, distributing and collecting learning materials, changing groups, sharpening pencils, etc. These routines include learners as leaders, and all learners know the routines.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
No classroom routines <i>and/or</i> a lot of time is wasted taking care of routine tasks.	Classroom routines do not involve learners as leaders <i>and/or</i> some time is wasted.	Classroom routines involve learners as leaders but some time is wasted.	Classroom routines involve learners as leaders. There is no time wasted.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

### Element 2.4: Learner Engagement

**BEST PRACTICE:** Teacher ensures that all learners actively participate in the lesson (either individually, in pairs, in groups, or with the whole class). Learner participation in lesson activities helps learners to grasp the concepts and is directly related to learner achievement.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
Learners sit passively and listen to the teacher.	<i>Few</i> learners actively participate and most learners watch.	<i>Most</i> learners actively participate in learning activities. A <i>few</i> only watch.	<i>All</i> learners actively participate directly in learning activities.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

### Element 2.5: Managing Learner Task-Related Behaviour

**BEST PRACTICE:** Learning is maximized when learners are on-task. Teachers use strategies to arouse attention at the beginning of the class and sustain attention during the lesson.

On-task behaviour is defined as “learners are doing what the teacher expects them to be doing at the time,” such as reading, using TLMs, listening to the teacher, working in a group, etc.

Off-task behaviour includes sleeping, daydreaming, not paying attention, etc.

**NOTE: Off-task behaviour is not necessarily misbehaviour; the child may not be disturbing others, but he/she may be off-task.**

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
<i>Many</i> learners are <i>off-task</i> , looking around, daydreaming, not doing what the teacher expects. The teacher does not get them on-task.	<i>Some</i> learners are <i>off-task</i> . The teacher notices and tries to get them on-task.	<i>Few</i> learners are <i>off-task</i> . The teacher gets some of them on-task.	<i>All</i> learners are <i>on-task</i> , doing what the teacher expects <i>or</i> the teacher notices off-task learners and gets all of them on-task.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

## Element 2.6: Managing Learner Behaviour

**BEST PRACTICE:** The teacher manages learner behaviour proactively by setting expectations for good behaviour. When learners misbehave, the teacher uses positive means such as reasoning with the learner, giving them more challenging work or responsibilities, etc.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
Teacher shouts, gives stern looks, punishes learners <i>or</i> ignores misbehaviour.	Teacher begins to investigate <i>some</i> learner misbehaviour and attempts some positive corrective measures. No punishment is used.	Teacher investigates <i>most</i> misbehaviour and positively corrects the learners.	Teacher uses positive means to set expectations for good behaviour and prevent misbehaviour. When learners misbehave, the teacher reasons with the learners, involves them in learning or uses other positive means.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

## PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 3: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

### Element 3.1: Arrangement of Learners

**BEST PRACTICE:** The physical learning environment enhances learning for all learners. The arrangement of furniture (if available) and/or learners allows for interaction among learners and contributes to a stimulating environment for learning.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
Learners sit facing the teacher.	Learners sit in groups but work as whole class.	Learners sit in groups during the lesson and work as a group, in pairs, or individually.	Classroom arrangement allows for group work with the teacher, group or pair work for learners and whole class.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

### Element 3.2: Classroom Displays

**BEST PRACTICE:** Classroom displays of learners' work and teaching and learning materials create a stimulating environment for learning.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
<i>Little or no</i> learner work <i>or</i> teaching and learning materials displayed.	<i>Some</i> learners' work <i>or</i> teaching and learning materials displayed.	<i>Both</i> learners' work <i>and</i> teaching and learning materials are present but not well displayed.	<i>Both</i> learners' work <i>and</i> teaching and learning materials are displayed attractively and are related to ongoing work in the classroom.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

### Element 3.3: Teacher Encourages Learners

**BEST PRACTICE:** Teachers encourage positive interpersonal relationships in learning environment where learners feel comfortable and accepted. Through verbal and non



verbal behaviours, the teacher shows enthusiasm and interest in learning and encourages learners to be actively involved.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
Teacher is rigid, punishes learners, and/or learners seem afraid of the teacher.	Teacher is neither rigid nor friendly. Learners do not fear teacher.	Teacher is warm, friendly and approachable.	Teacher is warm, friendly and approachable; teacher interacts with learners and encourages them to succeed.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

#### Element 3.4: Gender Sensitivity

**BEST PRACTICE:** Teachers and classrooms are gender-sensitive. Teachers treat girls and boys equally. They call on girls, encourage girls to succeed, give girls roles as group leaders, use girl-friendly TLMs, etc.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
Teacher ignores girls.	Teacher calls on some girls to participate but boys are preferred.	Teacher calls on girls and encourages girls equally with boys.	Teacher treats girls and boys equally-- calls on girls, encourages girls to succeed, gives girls roles as group leaders, uses girl-friendly TLMs, etc.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

#### Element 3.5: Learner Interaction

**BEST PRACTICE:** Children learn by interacting with others about the concept being taught. Learning is enhanced when teachers encourage interaction among learners and learners are free to move purposefully around the classroom to get materials, to work with others, etc.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
<i>Little or no</i> interaction among learners. Teacher does not encourage learner interaction.	Learners are allowed to interact with each other but do not move from their assigned places or their movement is not purposeful. <i>Some</i> learners interact with each other.	<i>Most</i> learners interact with each other and move around as directed by the teacher.	Classroom is active and lively; learners have free movement and move purposefully to get materials, work with others, etc.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

#### PERFORMANCE COMPONENT 4: TEACHING & LEARNING ACTIVITIES

##### Element 4.1: Use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) by Teacher

**BEST PRACTICE:** The *use* of appropriate TLMs by the teacher engages learners in the lesson and helps to explain concepts. Teacher selects appropriate TLMs and includes them in the lesson plan. TLMs are related to the lesson and appropriate for the level of the learners.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
Teacher uses no TLMs or only chalk and chalkboard.	Teacher uses at least one TLM in addition to chalk and chalkboard.	Teacher uses at least two TLMs in addition to chalk and chalkboard.	Teacher uses three or more TLMs (in addition to chalk and chalkboard) that are related to the lesson and appropriate to the learners.

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

#### Element 4.2: Use of Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs) by Learner

**BEST PRACTICE:** The *use* of appropriate TLMs by learners enhances learning. The teacher selects appropriate TLMs for learners to use and includes them in the lesson plan. TLMs are related to the lesson and appropriate for the level of the learners.

Not Yet Started	Getting Started	Moving Along	Showing Results
No learners use TLMs except the chalkboard, exercise books and pencils.	A <i>few</i> learners use TLMs and others watch.	<i>Most</i> learners use TLMs (individually, in pairs, small groups, or whole class).	<i>All</i> learners use TLMs (individually, in pairs, small groups, or whole class).

**EVIDENCE:** [Explain and give examples to support your rating.]

## **Appendix 9: GES Literacy Standards and Milestones**

### **Ghana Education Service**

#### **Literacy Standards and Milestones**

**October 12, 2006**

#### **Standards**

##### **Reading Standard One**

A reader uses knowledge, skills, and techniques (e.g., skimming, *scanning*) to read.

##### **Reading Standard Two**

A reader uses knowledge, skills, and techniques of reading to understand, interpret, and appreciate a variety of literary texts.

##### **Reading Standard Three**

A reader uses knowledge, skills, and techniques of reading to understand, interpret, and appreciate a variety of informational texts (e.g., newspapers, magazines, etc.).

##### **Writing Standard One**

Proficient writers use the general skills and strategies of the *writing process* to communicate meaningfully.

##### **Writing Standard Two**

Proficient writers use knowledge, skills, and techniques to write literary forms (stories, poetry, drama, etc.).

##### **Writing Standard Three**

Proficient writers use knowledge, skills, and techniques for informational (non-fiction, academic, *research*, biography, newspapers, etc.) writing.

##### **Writing Standard Four**

Proficient writers use grammatical and mechanical conventions in written composition (e.g., punctuation, capitalization, etc.).

##### **Writing Standard Five**

Proficient writers use writing skills for research purposes.

\* These standards and milestones were developed by the Literacy Standards and Milestones Working Group in 2005. In identifying milestones, the group looked at core objectives of the GES English syllabus. They also considered the GES syllabus for Ghanaian languages. In addition, they used the McREL Standards and Benchmarks for Language Arts ([www.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=7&standardID=5](http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/standardDetails.asp?subjectID=7&standardID=5)) to identify milestones essential to determining progress toward each standard. Feedback from the Review Committee and stakeholder validation meetings has been incorporated. Terms in *italics* are defined in the glossary.

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## Introduction to the Literacy Standards

Standards state what pupils should know and be able to do, and milestones state steps along the way to reaching the standard.

The milestones are organized according to critical components of reading and writing. They state specific areas of knowledge and abilities in each of these components. Often the same components appear across the grade bands because pupils are expected to continue developing skills and knowledge in that area. However, in some cases a component is added or removed after the first grade band. This table shows the components and the grade bands. X indicates mother tongue and E indicates the second language.

	Grade Bands		
<b>Reading Components</b>	<b>KG-P1</b>	<b>P2-P3</b>	<b>P4-P6</b>
Print Concepts	<b>X E</b>		
- Print awareness	<b>X E</b>		
- Letter knowledge	<b>X E</b>		
- Alphabetic principle	<b>X E</b>		
Phonological Awareness	<b>X E</b>	<b>E</b>	
Decoding and Word Analysis	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
Vocabulary	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
Comprehension	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
Fluency		<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>
Selecting texts			<b>X E</b>
<b>Writing Components</b>			
Writing Concepts	<b>X E</b>		
Writing Process			
- Preparing to Write		<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Drafting and Revising		<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Editing		<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>
- <i>Publishing</i>		<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>
Using Descriptive Language	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	
Writing Various Forms	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
Kinds of Informational Writing	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
Grammar and Mechanical Conventions			
- Grammar	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Spelling	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Capitalization	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Punctuation	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Conventions of print	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>	<b>X E</b>
Research			
- Uses of Research Materials	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Planning for Research		<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>
- Presenting Research	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X E</b>

## **Appendix 10: LIST OF SCHOOLS FOR PUPIL ASSESSMENT**

- 1. GALINKEPEGU PRIMARY(SfL classes)**
- 2. GOLINGA PRIMARY(SfL classes)**
- 3. GBULALIGU PRIMARY(SfL classes)**
4. JIZAAGUNDA PRIMARY
5. KPALISSOGU KPANA PRIMARY
6. KPALISAGU PRIMARY
- 7. WORIBOGU KUKUO PRIMARY(SfL classes)**
8. DINDO PRIMARY
- 9. GBULINI PRIMARY (SfL classes)**
10. TONJIN PRIMARY

## **Appendix 11: Approval/ Consent Letters**

**UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WORK  
BRIGHTON, UK**

**COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN: A STUDY OF THE LINKAGE  
BETWEEN THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE PROGRAMME AND THE FORMAL SCHOOL IN GHANA**

The Director and Staff

School for Life

Tamale

This is to formally invite you and your staff to participate in this research study as part of my doctoral programme at the University of Sussex. I am interested in researching into the curriculum content and pedagogy of SfL in practice and how it prepares children to qualify for entry into the formal school at grade 4 and beyond. I aim to study the two curricula of the systems i.e. SfL and the formal school in practice to understand how they are both implemented and the lessons that can be learnt thereof. The study will be based in the Tolon Kumbungu district of the Northern Region.

As you aware, School for Life has in the last ten years integrated over a hundred thousand students into the formal primary school, children who will otherwise not have had the opportunity of schooling. As a result, there has been a lot of calls for the programme to be replicated to cover all marginalised communities in Northern Ghana. While there has been other studies on School for Life, much of the what we know centre on the numbers and the ability of the programme to enrol children. There is very little information on what is actually learned over the programme cycle and how the programme is able to prepare children for nine months to qualify to enter grade four of the formal primary school. This research will attempt to fill that gap by investigating the School for Life curriculum and pedagogy in practice and its linkage with the curriculum of the formal primary school.

It is anticipated that the study will involve interviews and discussions with you and your staff, GES staff, parents of SfL graduates, teachers and facilitators of SfL learners and graduates, community members and SfL graduates. I also aim to observe SfL classes and lower primary classes to understand how the lessons are actually delivered. The study will be done over a four month period. I anticipate two or three interview and discussion schedules with School for Life staff lasting approximately one hour each. Your involvement is to provide information on content of the SfL curriculum and the principles that have guided its development and implementation.

Your participation is voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw at any point in time during the study. If you agree to participate, you will be given a consent form to sign. The study will be undertaken taking cognisance of due ethical guidelines of the University of Sussex and where applicable confidentiality and anonymity of your participation will be duly respected.

It is expected that this study will add to what we already know about School for Life. A study of the linkage between the School for Life curriculum and that of the formal school will offer invaluable knowledge and experience on ways of providing accelerated learning for children in marginalised communities and integrating them into the formal school. The results from this study will be used in my doctoral thesis which will be submitted to the University of Sussex. It will also serve as a basis for continued dialogue with the Ministry of Education in Ghana on strategies for replicating School for Life and improving the pedagogy of primary education in Ghana.

As I have indicated, this study is being undertaken by me as a doctoral student of the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex. The research has also been approved by the Social Science Cluster Based Research Ethics Committee. If there is the need any for any further information or clarification do not hesitate to contact my supervisor:

Dr. Kwame Akyeampong

School of Education and Social work

University of Sussex

Brighton

Thank you

January 18, 2011

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**COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN: A STUDY OF THE LINKAGE  
BETWEEN THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE PROGRAMME AND THE FORMAL SCHOOL IN GHANA**

**Parents of School for Life Graduates/ Beneficiaries**

This is to formally invite you as a parent of a School for Life graduate to participate in this research study as part of my doctoral programme at the University of Sussex. I am interested in researching into the curriculum content and pedagogy of SfL in practice and how it prepares children to qualify for entry into the formal school at grade 4 and beyond. I aim to study the two curricula of the systems i.e. SfL and the formal school in practice to understand how they are both implemented and the lessons that can be learnt thereof. The study will be based in the Tolon Kumbungu district of the Northern Region.

As you aware, School for Life has in the last ten years integrated over a hundred thousand students into the formal primary school, children who will otherwise not have had the opportunity of schooling. As a result, there has been a lot of calls for the programme to be replicated to cover all marginalised communities in Northern Ghana. While there has been other studies on School for Life, much of the what we know centre on the numbers and the ability of the programme to enrol children. There is very little information on what is actually learned over the programme cycle and how the programme is able to prepare children for nine months to qualify to enter grade four of the formal primary school. This research will attempt to fill that gap by investigating the School for Life curriculum and pedagogy in practice and its linkage with the curriculum of the formal primary school.

It is anticipated that the study will involve interviews and discussions with you as parents of SfL graduates who will be able share your experiences on what you know of the SfL curriculum and its linkage with the formal school. The study will also involve teachers and facilitators of SfL learners and graduates, community members and SfL graduates. I also aim to observe SfL classes and lower primary classes to understand how the lessons are actually delivered. The study will be done over a four month period. I anticipate two or three interview and discussion schedules with you lasting approximately one hour each. Your involvement is to provide information on content of the SfL curriculum, the implementation approach and how as parents it meets your expectations of getting children to school. .

You have been randomly selected from among parents of SfL graduates/beneficiaries. Your participation is voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw at any point in time during the study. If you agree to participate, you will be given a consent form to sign. The study will be undertaken taking cognisance of due ethical guidelines of the University of Sussex and the confidentiality and anonymity of your participation will be duly respected.

It is expected that this study will add to what we already know about School for Life. A study of the linkage between the School for Life curriculum and that of the formal school will offer invaluable knowledge and experience on ways of providing accelerated learning for children in marginalised communities and integrating them into the formal school. The results from this study will be used in my doctoral thesis which will be submitted to the University of Sussex. It will also serve as a basis for continued dialogue with the Ministry of Education in Ghana on strategies for replicating School for Life and improving the pedagogy of primary education in Ghana.

As I have indicated, this study is being undertaken by me as a doctoral student of the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex. The research has also been approved by the Social Science Cluster Based Research Ethics Committee. If there is the need any for any further information or clarification do not hesitate to contact my supervisor:

Dr. Kwame Akyeampong

School of Education and Social work

University of Sussex

Brighton

Thank you

March 14, 2011

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**COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN: A STUDY OF THE LINKAGE  
BETWEEN THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE PROGRAMME AND THE FORMAL SCHOOL IN GHANA**

**HEADTEACHERS/TEACHERS/FACILITAOTRS OF SCHOOL FOR LIFE  
GRADUATES/BENFICIARIES**

This is to formally invite you as a teacher or facilitator of School for Life graduates or beneficiaries to participate in this research study as part of my doctoral programme at the University of Sussex. I am interested in researching into the curriculum content and pedagogy of SfL in practice and how it prepares children to qualify for entry into the formal school at grade 4 and beyond. I aim to study the two curricula of the systems i.e. SfL and the formal school in practice to understand how they are both implemented and the lessons that can be learnt thereof. The study will be based in the Tolon Kumbungu district of the Northern Region.

As you aware, School for Life has in the last ten years integrated over a hundred thousand students into the formal primary school, children who will otherwise not have had the opportunity of schooling. As a result, there has been a lot of calls for the programme to be replicated to cover all marginalised communities in Northern Ghana. While there has been other studies on School for Life, much of the what we know centre on the numbers and the ability of the programme to enrol children. There is very little information on what is actually learned over the programme cycle and how the programme is able to prepare children for nine months to qualify to enter grade four of the formal primary school. This research will attempt to fill that gap by investigating the School for Life curriculum and pedagogy in practice and its linkage with the curriculum of the formal primary school.

It is anticipated that the study will involve interviews and discussions with you, parents of SfL graduates, Sfl staff, community members and SfL graduates. I also aim to observe SfL classes and lower primary classes to understand how the lessons are actually delivered. The study will be done over a four month period. I anticipate two or three interview and discussion schedules with teachers and facilitators lasting approximately one hour each. Your involvement is to provide information on content of the SfL curriculum and lower primary school curriculum, how they are linked and how they are implemented.

Your participation is voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw at any point in time during the study. If you agree to participate, you will be given a consent form to sign. The study will be

undertaken taking cognisance of due ethical guidelines of the University of Sussex and where applicable confidentiality and anonymity of your participation will be duly respected.

It is expected that this study will add to what we already know about School for Life. A study of the linkage between the School for Life curriculum and that of the formal school will offer invaluable knowledge and experience on ways of providing accelerated learning for children in marginalised communities and integrating them into the formal school. The results from this study will be used in my doctoral thesis which will be submitted to the University of Sussex. It will also serve as a basis for continued dialogue with the Ministry of Education in Ghana on strategies for replicating School for Life and improving the pedagogy of primary education in Ghana.

As I have indicated, this study is being undertaken by me as a doctoral student of the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex. The research has also been approved by the Social Science Cluster Based Research Ethics Committee. If there is the need any for any further information or clarification do not hesitate to contact my supervisor:

Dr. Kwame Akyeampong

School of Education and Social work

University of Sussex

Brighton

Thank you

March 14, 2011

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**COMPLEMENTARY EDUCATION AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN: A STUDY OF THE LINKAGE  
BETWEEN THE SCHOOL FOR LIFE PROGRAMME AND THE FORMAL SCHOOL IN GHANA**

**GRADUATES/ BENEFICIARIES OF SCHOOL FOR LIFE**

This is to formally invite you as a graduate or beneficiary of School for Life to participate in this research study as part of my doctoral programme at the University of Sussex. I am interested in researching into the curriculum content and pedagogy of SfL in practice and how it prepares children to qualify for entry into the formal school at grade 4 and beyond. I aim to study the two curricula of the systems i.e. SfL and the formal school in practice to understand how they are both implemented and the lessons that can be learnt thereof. The study will be based in the Tolon Kumbungu district of the Northern Region.

As you aware, School for Life has in the last ten years integrated over a hundred thousand students into the formal primary school, children who will otherwise not have had the opportunity of schooling. As a result, there has been a lot of calls for the programme to be replicated to cover all marginalised communities in Northern Ghana. While there has been other studies on School for Life, much of the what we know centre on the numbers and the ability of the programme to enrol children. There is very little information on what is actually learned over the programme cycle and how the programme is able to prepare children for nine months to qualify to enter grade four of the formal primary school. This research will attempt to fill that gap by investigating the School for Life curriculum and pedagogy in practice and its linkage with the curriculum of the formal primary school.

It is anticipated that the study will involve interviews and discussions with parents of SfL graduates, teachers and facilitators of SfL learners and graduates, community members and SfL graduates. I also aim to observe SfL classes and lower primary classes to understand how the lessons are actually delivered. The study will be done over a four month period. I anticipate two or three interview and discussion schedules with you lasting approximately one hour each. Your involvement is to provide information on content of the SfL curriculum and the formal school curriculum and the linkage between the two. As graduate, I will also be interested in learning from you your experiences of how the two curricular are delivered and how the nine months school for life programme made it possible for you to qualify to enter grade four or beyond in the formal school.

You have been randomly selected from a list of School for Life graduates in the formal school. Your participation is voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw at any point in time during the study. Before you will participate, I will need the consent of your parents and or teachers. The study will be undertaken taking cognisance of due ethical guidelines of the University of Sussex and where applicable confidentiality and anonymity of your participation will be duly respected.

It is expected that this study will add to what we already know about School for Life. A study of the linkage between the School for Life curriculum and that of the formal school will offer invaluable knowledge and experience on ways of providing accelerated learning for children in marginalised communities and integrating them into the formal school. The results from this study will be used in my doctoral thesis which will be submitted to the University of Sussex. It will also serve as a basis for continued dialogue with the Ministry of Education in Ghana on strategies for replicating School for Life and improving the pedagogy of primary education in Ghana.

As I have indicated, this study is being undertaken by me as a doctoral student of the School of Education and Social Work, University of Sussex. The research has also been approved by the Social Science Cluster Based Research Ethics Committee. If there is the need any for any further information or clarification do not hesitate to contact my supervisor:

Dr. Kwame Akyeampong

School of Education and Social work

University of Sussex

Brighton

Thank you

March 14, 2011

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## Appendix 12: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
		F	Sig.
Competencies	Equal variances assumed	.172	.679
	Equal variances not assumed		

### Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Competencies	Equal variances assumed	.207	196	.836	.00523
	Equal variances not assumed	.211	163.835	.833	.00523

### Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
Competencies	Equal variances assumed	.02531	-.04468	.05514
	Equal variances not assumed	.02478	-.04370	.05416

### Group Statistics

school type		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Competencies	SfL	77	.0260	.16010	.01825
	non SfL	93	.0108	.10370	.01075

### Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	
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		F	Sig.
Competencies	Equal variances assumed	2.256	.135
	Equal variances not assumed		

#### Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means			
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Competencies	Equal variances assumed	.747	168	.456	.01522
	Equal variances not assumed	.719	125.459	.474	.01522

#### Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			Lower	Upper
Competencies	Equal variances assumed	.02037	-.02500	.05544
	Equal variances not assumed	.02118	-.02669	.05713



## Primary 4 Mathematics

### Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Gender–Competence–Pupil type*	163	78.4%	45	21.6%	208	100.0%

### \*Gender–Competence–Pupil Type Cross-tabulation

Pupil type				Competence			Total
				Below Minimum Competency	Minimum Competency	Competency	
SfL	Gender	Male	Count	20	23	4	47
			% within gender	42.6%	48.9%	8.5%	100.0%
		Female	Count	24	5	5	34
			% within gender	70.6%	14.7%	14.7%	100.0%
	Total		Count	44	28	9	81
			% within gender	54.3%	34.6%	11.1%	100.0%
Non-SfL	Gender	Male	Count	27	19	5	51
			% within gender	52.9%	37.3%	9.8%	100.0%
		Female	Count	16	14	1	31
			% within gender	51.6%	45.2%	3.2%	100.0%
	Total		Count	43	33	6	82
			% within gender	52.4%	40.2%	7.3%	100.0%

## Primary 6 Mathematics

### Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Sex–Competence–Pupil type*	185	99.5%	1	.5%	186	100.0%

### \*Sex–competence–Pupil Type Cross-tabulation

Pupil type				Competence		Total
				Below Minimum Competency	Minimum Competency	
SfL	Sex	Male	Count	51	4	55
			% within sex	92.7%	7.3%	100.0%
		Female	Count	29	5	34
			% within sex	85.3%	14.7%	100.0%
	Total		Count	80	9	89
			% within sex	89.9%	10.1%	100.0%
Non-SfL	Sex	Male	Count	61	4	65
			% within sex	93.8%	6.2%	100.0%
		Female	Count	31	0	31
			% within sex	100.0%	.0%	100.0%
	Total		Count	92	4	96
			% within sex	95.8%	4.2%	100.0%

**Group Statistics**

gender		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Competencies	male	124	.0323	.17740	.01593
	female	74	.0270	.16327	.01898

## **Appendix 13 List of Primer Topics and Lesson Objectives**

The following is a list of topics to be covered in primer one

### **Lesson 2: net**

**Objective for lesson 2:** To enable learners identify different uses of fishing net and how to take care of it.

### **Lesson 3: eyes**

**Objective for lesson 3:** Learners will be able to discuss how to take care of their eyes.

### **Lesson 4: Trees**

**Lesson objective:** To enable learners identify the uses of trees and the need to plant and care for trees.

### **Lesson 5: grandfather**

**Objective:** To talk about the grandfather and his position in the family.

### **Lesson 6: drum**

**Objective:** To help learners read in groups.

- **Note:**

**After lesson 6, repeat all the previous 5 lessons to ensure that the slow learners can read them well. Also use group work for this practice. Remember the slow readers.**

### **Lesson 7: woman**

**Objective:** To help learners appreciate the role women play in the society.

### **Lesson 8: wood**

**Objective:** To enable learners identify the uses of firewood.

### **Lesson 9: farm**

**Objective:** To enable learners talk about the importance of farming.

### **Lesson 10: pan**

**Objective:** To enable learners identify the uses of the pan.

**Lesson 11: Makayili**

**Objective:** To enable learners discuss the importance of working together.

**Lesson 12: HIV/AIDS**

**Objectives:** To enable learners discuss HIV/AIDS; Learners will be able to identify modes of HIV/AIDS transmission.

**Lesson 13: Duties and responsibilities of children at home**

**Objectives:** To enable learners identify their roles and responsibilities at home.

**Lesson 14: Kukoo**

**Objectives:** To enable learners identify their roles and responsibilities at home.

**Lesson 16: Evaluation**