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CREATIVITY-CENTRED SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT: ALIGNING GHANA'S BASIC SCHOOL PRACTICES WITH CURRICULUM INTENTIONS

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Abstract

This study examines the discrepancy between the summative evaluation procedures used in basic schools and Ghana's Standards-Based Curriculum, which views creativity as a fundamental skill in the Creative Arts. Assessment still favours written theory and technical duplication despite the curriculum's emphasis on creativity, underrepresenting students' creative processes and culturally situated meaning-making. Employing a qualitative multiple-case study design across three basic schools, data were collected through classroom observations, assessment-document analysis, pupil portfolio reviews, and interviews with curriculum officers, teachers, and school administrators. Findings indicate that summative assessment is dominated by paper-based examinations, lacks explicit criteria for evaluating creativity, and inconsistently incorporates Ghanaian cultural resources. Although they acknowledged time limits, the demands of standardization, and assessment literacy, teachers showed support for creativity-oriented assessment. Designed to support validity, fairness, and cultural responsiveness in school-based assessment, the study proposes a Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework (CCSAF) that incorporates open-ended activities, portfolio and reflection evidence, analytic rubrics, and moderation procedures.

The CCSAF has been proposed but not yet piloted; its effectiveness remains to be evaluated. By aligning assessment practices with curricular intentions, it is intended to offer a pathway for strengthening Creative Arts education and fostering innovation, identity, and learner autonomy in Ghanaian basic schools.

Keywords: *Creativity assessment, visual arts education, summative, assessment, cultural validity, Ghana. standards-based curriculum*

1. Introduction

Creativity is widely recognized as a key 21st-century capability and is central to visual arts education, where learners develop the ability to generate ideas, experiment with materials, communicate meaning, and represent cultural and personal narratives (Patston et al., 2021; Calavia et al., 2020; Ahmadi et al., 2018). In visual arts, creativity is not only a learning outcome but also a means through which students interpret their worlds and participate in cultural continuity and innovation.

Despite this centrality, assessing creative outcomes remains contentious. Creativity is multifaceted, context-dependent, and often expressed through processes (exploration, revision, and risk-taking) that are not easily captured by traditional tests (Barbot & Reiter-Palmon, 2019). Globally, standardized and high-stakes assessment reforms have tended to privilege measurable outcomes, reducing time and status for arts subjects and encouraging conformity over experimentation (Spohn, 2008; Beveridge, 2009; Chapman, 2007).

In Ghana, recent curriculum reform has promoted competency-oriented learning, including creativity and problem-solving. Yet, summative assessment practices in visual arts frequently continue to emphasize technical proficiency, neatness, and recall of theory, with limited attention to originality, cultural meaning-making, or learner agency (NaCCA, 2020; Opoku-Asare et al., 2015; Ntim, 2020). This creates a misalignment between curriculum intentions and the assessment practices that shape what teachers teach and what learners come to value.

Despite growing scholarship on Creative Arts education in Ghana, most existing studies focus on teachers' instructional practices, implementation challenges, and pedagogical strategies (Agbenyo et al., 2025; Ampomah et al., 2023). There is comparatively little systematic, published work that proposes or evaluates structured frameworks for assessing creativity itself at the basic school level. Studies document what teachers do and the difficulties they face, but stop short of articulating how creativity can be assessed coherently, fairly, and consistently within everyday classroom constraints. This absence of assessment-specific frameworks represents a critical gap, particularly given the competency-oriented intentions of the Standards-Based Curriculum.

While international models (e.g., the International Baccalaureate visual arts programme) demonstrate approaches that value process, reflection, and contextual meaning, there is limited scholarship on how such approaches can be localized for Ghanaian basic-school contexts characterized by resource variation, exam-driven accountability, and culturally diverse artistic traditions (Hill, 2012; Resnik, 2018; Zeng, 2024; Gafa, 2021).

1.1 Problem Statement

While Ghana's Creative Arts curriculum emphasizes creativity, problem-solving, and cultural identity, summative assessment practices in basic schools remain misaligned with these goals.

Assessment continues to privilege written recall and technical accuracy, offering limited recognition of learners' creative processes, experimentation, and cultural meaning-making. In the absence of explicit creativity assessment frameworks, teachers rely heavily on personal judgement or narrowly defined marking schemes, raising concerns about validity, fairness, and transparency.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Creative Arts Assessment in Ghana

2.1.1 Summative Assessment Challenges in Visual Arts Education

Assessment in visual arts differs from assessment in many academic subjects because learning outcomes often involve processes of ideation, experimentation, aesthetic judgment, and cultural communication. Traditional summative formats, particularly timed written tests, may capture declarative knowledge about art, but they typically underrepresent studio processes and the development of creative competencies (Eisner, 2003; Steers, 2019). When summative systems prioritize easily scored products, teachers may narrow instruction toward replication and compliance, reducing opportunities for divergent thinking and authentic inquiry (Spohn, 2008; Harris & Brown, 2020).

2.1.2 Defining Creativity for Assessment in Visual Arts

Creativity is commonly treated as domain-specific and context-dependent; what counts as creative in visual arts is shaped by learners' age, exposure, cultural resources, and the constraints of the task. For school-based assessment, creativity can be operationalized as a combination of (a) originality and imaginative ideation, (b) purposeful experimentation and problem-solving, (c) coherent communication of meaning through visual form, and (d) cultural and personal relevance in concept development (Brookhart, 2013; Patston et al., 2021; Zimmerman, 2009). Because creativity is expressed in both process and product, credible summative assessment should incorporate evidence of planning, iteration, and reflective decision-making in addition to the final artefact.

2.1.3. Assessment Quality: Validity, Dependability, Fairness, and Cultural Validity

To be defensible as summative assessment, judgments about creativity should be guided by assessment quality criteria. Construct validity requires that the assessment elicits and measures the intended construct (creative thinking and meaning-making) rather than proxies such as neatness or imitation. Dependability (a qualitative analogue to reliability) requires that scoring is reasonably consistent across teachers, tasks, and contexts. Fairness requires that assessment does not systematically advantage learners with particular cultural capital or resource access. Cultural validity emphasizes that tasks and criteria should recognize culturally situated forms of artistic expression and meaning-making (Baidoo-Anu et al., 2023; Willis et al., 2013). These criteria motivate the inclusion of clear rubrics, anchor exemplars, and moderation procedures when teacher judgment is used in summative decisions.

Collectively, these studies establish a well-documented concern with Creative Arts pedagogy and teacher practice in Ghana, while simultaneously revealing a gap in assessment-focused theorisation and framework development.

2.2 International Perspectives on Creativity Assessment

2.2.1 International and Local Policy Context: IB and Ghana's Standards-Based Curriculum

The International Baccalaureate (IB) visual arts model is frequently cited as an example of assessment that values inquiry, process documentation, and reflective writing alongside studio outcomes (Hill, 2012; IBO, 2022). Learners' work is supported by explicit criteria and externally moderated judgments, which help balance flexibility with comparability. Ghana's Standards-Based Curriculum (SBC), introduced in 2019 as a competency-oriented curriculum reform, likewise emphasizes competencies such as creativity, problem-solving, collaboration, and cultural identity (NaCCA, 2019; Ministry of Education, 2019). However, alignment between competency intentions and summative assessment remains uneven in practice. The present study therefore focuses on the design problem of developing a culturally grounded summative framework that is feasible for basic schools while improving construct validity and fairness.

2.3 Research Gap

Although Creative Arts assessment has received growing attention in Ghanaian education research, existing studies primarily examine teachers' perceptions, instructional practices, and curriculum implementation challenges. There is limited systematic, published work that develops structured, contextually grounded frameworks for assessing creativity in basic schools. This gap is significant because creativity, unlike technical proficiency, requires assessment approaches that capture process, originality, reflection, and cultural meaning-making. The present study addresses this gap by moving beyond descriptive accounts to propose a Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework grounded in empirical classroom evidence and aligned with Ghana's Standards-Based Curriculum.

2.4 Aim and Research Questions

This study aimed to (a) document how summative assessment is currently conducted in Ghanaian basic-school visual arts classrooms, (b) identify how creativity and cultural meaning-making are enabled or constrained by existing summative practices, and (c) develop a Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework (CCSAF) grounded in the empirical patterns identified and aligned with contemporary assessment and creativity scholarship.

Guided by the identified gap, this study pursued the following research questions:

- RQ1: How is summative assessment enacted in Ghanaian basic-school visual arts (task formats, scoring practices, and reporting)?
- RQ2: Which dimensions of creativity and cultural expression are underrepresented or undervalued in current summative approaches?
- RQ3: What design requirements emerge for a culturally grounded, creativity-centred summative assessment framework that is fair and feasible?
- RQ4: How can the proposed framework be operationalized (evidence sources, rubric, moderation) to support dependable teacher judgment in school-based summative assessment?

3. Method

3.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative case study design to generate an in-depth, contextual account of summative assessment practices in basic-school visual arts and to derive design requirements for a creativity-centred summative assessment framework. Case study was appropriate because

it supports detailed examination of assessment enactment within real classroom and school conditions, including the interaction of curriculum policy, teacher practice, and institutional constraints (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Ravitch & Carl, 2019).

3.2 Research Setting

The study was conducted in three purposively selected basic schools in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. Greater Accra was selected because it offers variation in school types (public and private), access to established visual arts provision, and proximity to curriculum and assessment stakeholders. To protect confidentiality, schools are anonymized as School A, School B, and School C. Data collection took place from 10/04/25 to 30 / 07/ 2025.

3.3 Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to include stakeholders directly involved in visual arts teaching, school-based assessment, and curriculum implementation. The sample comprised visual arts teachers, school heads/arts coordinators, curriculum officers/experts, and pupils whose artworks and portfolios were reviewed. Inclusion criteria were (a) current involvement in basic-school visual arts teaching/coordination or curriculum support, and (b) direct experience with school-based assessment practices in visual arts. Table 1 provides details on the participant groups, sample sizes, their roles in the study, and selection criteria.

Table 1: Study participants

Participant group	N	Role in the study	Selection focus
Visual arts teachers (basic schools)	10	Interviews on summative practices; assessment artifacts provided	Teaching visual arts and producing termly summative scores
School Heads/Arts Coordinators	5	Interviews on school reporting practices and constraints	Oversight of arts teaching and assessment reporting
NACCA Curriculum Officers / Curriculum Experts	3	Interviews on policy intentions and assessment guidance	Curriculum and assessment implementation support
Pupils (Primary 4–6 and JHS 1–3)	30	Portfolio/artefact review; contextual insights during observation	Learners engaged in visual arts tasks and school-based assessment

Note. Counts reflect the purposive sample used for interviews (teachers, heads/coordinators, curriculum stakeholders) and the portfolio review (pupils).

3.4 Data Sources and Collection Procedures

Multiple data sources were used to support triangulation: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, document analysis, and pupil portfolio/artefact review. Data collection proceeded iteratively; observation and document review informed subsequent interview probes, and emerging themes were checked against multiple evidence sources.

3.5 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with visual arts teachers, school heads/arts coordinators, and curriculum stakeholders. Interviews explored: (a) current summative assessment formats and marking practices; (b) perceived meanings of creativity in classroom

practice; (c) use of rubrics or marking schemes; (d) cultural integration in task design; and (e) constraints and supports for assessment reform. Interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim.

3.6 Classroom Observations

Classroom observation was conducted during visual arts instruction and during summative assessment activities where possible. An observation checklist captured indicators of creative engagement and assessment enactment, including learner autonomy, opportunities for experimentation, use of local materials, incorporation of cultural themes, feedback practices, and how assessment criteria were communicated.

3.7 Document Analysis

Assessment-related documents were collected and analyzed, including curriculum guidance documents, end-of-term assessment papers, marking schemes/rubrics where available, and report formats. Document analysis focused on the extent to which creativity, process, and cultural relevance were represented in task prompts and scoring criteria.

3.8 Pupil Portfolio and Artefact Review

Pupil artworks and portfolios were reviewed as artefacts of learning and assessment. The review attended to evidence of originality, experimentation, cultural reference, visual storytelling, and iteration (drafts and revisions), with attention to how such features were (or were not) reflected in summative scoring practices.

3.9 Data Analysis

Interview transcripts and observation notes were analyzed using thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step process (familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and reporting). Coding combined deductive categories informed by the literature on creativity and assessment quality (e.g., originality, process, cultural validity) with inductive coding to capture locally salient practices and constraints. Document and portfolio materials were examined using content analysis guided by the same construct domains to support cross-source comparison. Data management and coding were supported using qualitative analysis software where appropriate.

4. Results

Findings are presented as five themes that summarize recurring patterns in enacted summative assessment practices across the cases. Illustrative quotations are used to represent participants' perspectives; identifiers indicate participant role and school code.

Their findings draw on three kinds of evidence, which are distinguished throughout: (i) assessment sessions and lessons that the researchers observe directly; (ii) practices reported by participants in interviews; and (iii) documents and pupil portfolios that were reviewed. Table 2 summarizes the evidence base by school.

Table 2: Evidence based by schools and source

Evidence source	School A	School B	School C
Teacher interviews (reported practice)	4	3	3
Observed assessment sessions (observed practice)	2	2	1
End-of-term papers and marking schemes reviewed	2	2	2

Pupil portfolios reviewed (Primary 4 - 6 /JHS 1-3)	5/5	5/5	5/5

Note: counts reflect the purposive sample: 10 teachers (4 in School A, 3 in School B, 3 in School C), 30 pupil portfolios (10 per school, evenly split between primary and JHS levels), six end-of-term papers (2 per school), and five observed assessment sessions (two in School A, two in School B, and one in School C.

4.1 Theme 1: Dominance of Conventional Testing Methods

Across the three cases, summative assessment in visual arts was reported in interviews and evident in the documents reviewed to be largely exam-oriented, with a heavy emphasis on written tests. Six end-of-term papers were examined (two per school), and in five of these the written component carried the majority of marks, typically outweighing studio-based evidence. Teachers described end-of-term assessments that required pupils to recall definitions, list materials, or describe procedures, while studio products were treated as secondary evidence. Observation corroborated this pattern: two assessment sessions in School A, two in School B, and one in School C all prioritized written tasks, with studio artefacts either omitted from scoring or given minimal weight. Thus, while interviews highlighted teachers' reliance on theory-based testing, classroom observation and document review confirm that written examinations consistently dominated summative reporting.

Observation and document review suggested that written test scores were more consistently captured in report formats than studio artefacts. Participants noted that this practice was driven by perceived expectations for standardized, easily marked evidence and by reporting conventions that prioritize numeric scores over descriptive judgments of process.

> *"We usually test them on the theory part because that is what goes into the report cards. Even if they do artwork, the marks are not emphasized."*
> (Teacher, School B)

4.2 Theme 2: Limited Integration of Ghanaian Culture and Context in Summative Tasks

Participants reported that although curriculum intentions encourage contextual relevance, summative tasks and marking practices rarely foregrounded Ghanaian cultural themes, symbols, or local artistic traditions. Of the 6th end-of-term papers reviewed (two per school), five contained no explicit cultural prompts, while only one included a question that referenced local artistic traditions. This absence of cultural criteria was consistent across Schools A and B, with the single culturally oriented prompt appearing in School C.

Teachers indicated uncertainty about how to score culturally embedded creativity fairly, especially when they lacked shared criteria or exemplars. This uncertainty contributed to conservative task design that minimized perceived subjectivity and led teachers to default to generic, non-contextual questions.

> *"The curriculum says we should relate it to culture, but during exams, we just stick to general art questions. We're not sure how to mark creativity when culture is involved."* (Teacher, School A)

4.3 Theme 3: Absence of Explicit Rubrics and Shared Standards for Creativity

Document analysis indicated that creativity was rarely operationalized through explicit criteria in school-based marking schemes. Of the six marking schemes reviewed (two per school), only

one contained a specific criterion for creativity, while the remaining five emphasized neatness, completion, and accuracy of copied designs. Teachers and coordinators described scoring practices that relied on personal judgment without a shared rubric, which increased uncertainty and reduced the transparency of summative decisions.

This gap was frequently linked to limited professional development in assessment literacy for creative disciplines and to the absence of exemplar-based moderation within schools.

> *"We don't have a specific marking scheme for creative aspects. We just go by what looks good or complete."* (Arts Coordinator, School C)

4.4 Theme 4: Learners' Creative Processes Are Undervalued in Summative Reporting

Portfolio review and classroom observations indicated that pupils could demonstrate imaginative thinking and visual storytelling, particularly when allowed autonomy in classwork projects. However, participants reported a disconnect between this creative work and the evidence recognized in termly summative scores, which were often dominated by written tests or single-occasion products. For example, in School A, one Primary 5 pupil's portfolio included a series of sketches exploring local festival motifs, culminating in a vibrant mixed-media collage. Despite clear evidence of iteration and cultural meaning-making, the portfolio was awarded only 12 out of 30 marks, with the majority of the pupils' term grade derived from a written test. Similarly, in School B, a JHS 2 pupil produced a clay model accompanied by process notes documenting material experimentation. The artefact received 8 out of 20 marks, while the written script on definitions and tools contributed 25 out of 30 marks of the final score. These examples illustrate how creative processes, i.e., planning, experimentation, and reflection, were undervalued in summative reporting, even when portfolios demonstrated originality and contextual engagement

This disconnect made the creative process largely invisible in formal reporting, even though it represents a core aspect of learning in visual arts.

> *"We sometimes let them create their own things, but that's only during classwork. Exams are different."* (Teacher, School B)

4.5 Theme 5: Willingness for Reform Amid Systemic Constraints

Eight of the ten teacher participants expressed openness to adopting more creativity-centred approaches if practical tools and training were available. They welcomed rubrics, project-based evaluation, and culturally grounded task examples that could be defended in school reporting. At the same time, participants emphasized systemic constraints: limited time in the school calendar, pressure to produce standardized scores, resource constraints, and limited institutional guidance on creativity-focused summative assessment.

As one teacher in School A noted, *"If we are trained and given examples, we can include more creative assessments. The problem is that we don't know how to start."* This willingness suggests that reform is feasible if supported by clear frameworks, exemplars, and professional development.

Table 3 summarises the core findings from each theme and their direct implications for designing a creativity-centred summative assessment framework.

Table 3: Summary of Themes and Assessment Implications

Theme	Core finding	Implication for framework design
1. Conventional testing dominates	Summative evidence relies heavily on written theory tests.	Increase summative weight of open-ended studio performance tasks and portfolio evidence.
2. Culture underrepresented	Ghanaian cultural context is rarely explicit in prompts and scoring.	Embed cultural validity in task design and rubric criteria; provide exemplars.
3. No creativity rubric	Scoring relies on informal judgment; criteria emphasize neatness/completion.	Introduce an analytic creativity rubric with anchored descriptors and moderation.
4. Process undervalued	Iteration and creative decision-making are not captured in reporting.	Assess process via drafts, journals, and reflective statements alongside final product.
5. Willingness but barriers	Teachers support reform but lack training/time/resources.	Provide implementable routines, low-cost task options, and teacher training/moderation supports.

From Findings to Design Requirements

To ensure that the proposed CCSAF is derived from the empirical patterns identified, each theme was translated into a design requirement for summative assessment in Visual Arts. Table 4 maps findings to design requirements and corresponding framework components.

Table 4: Design Requirements Derived from Findings

Finding (theme)	Design requirement	CCSAF response
Written theory tests dominate summative scores.	Summative assessment must incorporate authentic studio performance evidence that elicits creativity.	Use open-ended performance tasks and termly portfolio evidence as core summative sources.
Cultural context is rarely present in prompts and marking.	Tasks and criteria must enable culturally grounded meaning-making and respect diverse cultural repertoires.	Include culturally grounded task prompts; add cultural validity criterion; provide exemplars from local traditions.
Absence of explicit creativity rubrics and shared standards.	Scoring criteria must be explicit, observable, and shared to support transparency and fairness.	Adopt an analytic creativity rubric with anchored descriptors; develop anchor exemplars and teacher calibration.
Creative process is largely invisible in reporting.	Process evidence (planning, experimentation, revision, reflection) must be assessed and recorded.	Require process documentation (drafts, sketches, process notes) and brief reflection/artist statement.
Teachers want reform but face systemic constraints.	Framework must be feasible (time, resources) and	Provide low-cost material options, staged tasks across

	support dependable judgment.	term, and moderation routines (within-school).

The Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework (CCSAF)

The CCSAF is a structured yet flexible framework intended to improve the construct validity, fairness, and usability of summative assessment in basic-school visual arts. It retains the practical need for teacher judgment in studio contexts while strengthening transparency and dependability through explicit criteria, multiple evidence sources, and moderation routines. The framework is designed to align with Ghana's Standards-Based Curriculum emphasis on creativity, problem-solving, and cultural awareness (NaCCA, 2019; NaCCA, 2020).

CCSAF Logic Model

Figure 1 presents the Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework (CCSAF), which synthesises the study's empirical findings into a coherent model for designing and judging summative assessment of creativity in basic-school visual arts.



Figure 1: CCSAF Logic Model

Guiding Principles

- *Creativity is multidimensional:* Originality, imaginative ideation, problem-solving, and expressive communication are assessed.
- *Process matters as much as product*: Planning, experimentation, iteration, and reflection are part of summative evidence
- *Assessment is culturally grounded:* Criteria and tasks validate Ghanaian cultural resources and diverse learner identities
- *Rubric-based judgment supports transparency and fairness:* Criteria are explicit and observable, with shared performance descriptors
- *Learner voice is integral:* Pupils explain intentions, choices, and learning through brief reflective statements (oral or written).

Evidence Sources in CCSAF

CCSAF uses multiple evidence sources to reduce over-reliance on any single artefact and to make creative processes visible. Recommended evidence sources include:

- *Open-ended studio performance task(s):* At least one major task per term designed to elicit originality and cultural meaning-making.
- *Portfolio evidence:* A curated collection of drafts, experiments, and final pieces demonstrating progress and range.
- *Reflection/artist statement:* Brief explanation of inspiration, cultural references, material choices, challenges, and learning (oral or written, age-appropriate).
- *Peer critique/self-assessment:* Structured feedback moments that support metacognition and can contribute small summative weight when feasible.
- *Optional contextual knowledge check:* Short, low-weight assessment of relevant art concepts/material knowledge (to avoid crowding out creativity)

Task Design Guidelines

To elicit creativity in summative tasks, prompts should be open-ended and allow multiple pathways while still linking to curriculum outcomes. Tasks should:

- Invite multiple solutions and media choices (drawing, painting, collage, assemblage, textile, or found materials).
- Integrate culturally relevant themes (e.g., festivals, proverbs, Adinkra symbols, Kente patterns, local environmental issues, community stories).
- Include a problem-solving constraint that encourages innovation (e.g., use recycled materials; communicate a message; combine two techniques).
- Require visible process evidence (thumbnail sketches, material tests, or short process notes).
- Provide accessibility options for learners with limited materials.

Analytic Rubric for Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment

The CCSAF rubric operationalizes creativity through observable criteria. Originality is judged relative to learners' age and instructional exposure; it does not require novelty in an absolute sense. Cultural validity is operationalized as purposeful, respectful use of cultural references and meaning-making rather than token inclusion. Table 5 presents a sample analytic rubric with criteria and performance level descriptors that can be adapted by grade level and local context.

Cultural meaning-making is scored only where a task is designed to elicit it, for example, a task on community or festival themes as in Appendix A. In such tasks pupils can meet the criterion through their own context (family, community, faith, urban or rural life, or personal identity), and no prescribed symbol, motif, or tradition is required. The absence of a particular symbol, such as an Adinkra motif, is therefore not treated as weak creativity. The criterion asks whether the pupil connects the work to a context that matters to them and communicates that meaning. For open tasks in which cultural meaning is not an intended outcome, the criterion is omitted, and its weight is shared across the remaining criteria, so that pupils are not penalized for unrelated choices

Table 5: Sample CCSAF Analytic Rubric (Adaptable by Level)

Criteria	Level 4 (Excellent)	Level 3 (Good)	Level 2 (Fair)	Level 1 (Developing)
Originality & imagination	Generates a distinctive idea or novel combination of	Shows personal choices and some risk-taking; idea	Idea shows limited originality; relies heavily	Work largely imitates an exemplar; minimal

	elements; takes creative risks beyond provided exemplars.	extends or adapts exemplars.	on exemplars with minor variation.	personal decision-making.
Cultural meaning-making (cultural validity; where the task intends it)	Cultural or contextual references, drawn from the pupils' own setting or identity, are purposeful, well-integrated, and communicate meaning or narrative clearly.	References to the pupil's cultural or personal context are appropriate and mostly integrated; meaning is generally clear.	References to cultural or personal context are present but superficial or weakly connected to meaning.	When the task calls for cultural meaning-making, no connection to a cultural or personal context is evident or explained. No particular symbol or tradition is required.
Use of materials & techniques	Uses materials skilfully and inventively; craftsmanship supports intention.	Uses materials competently; some experimentation is evident.	Basic control of materials; limited experimentation or unresolved technique.	Limited control of materials; technique inhibits communication of intention.
Creative process (planning, iteration, reflection)	Clear evidence of planning, experimentation, and revision; documents choices and learning.	Some evidence of planning and exploration; limited revision or documentation.	Minimal planning or exploration; limited documentation of decisions.	No visible process evidence; work appears rushed or unplanned.
Artistic communication (expression & coherence)	Strong visual impact; composition and elements coherently communicate an idea/story/feeling.	Communication is clear overall; minor issues with coherence or development.	Idea/theme is present but unclear or weakly developed.	No clear theme or intention is communicated.

Note: Teachers may adapt descriptors and add curriculum-specific criteria (e.g., perspective, colour mixing) provided that creativity and cultural meaning-making remain visible in scoring.

Evidence Weighing

To support feasibility and comparability, CCSAF recommends explicit weightings across evidence sources. Schools may adapt the percentages, but large imbalances (e.g., over-weighting written tests) should be avoided to preserve construct coverage. Table 6 provides recommended weightings for each evidence source in termly summative assessment, along with practical notes for implementation.

Table 6 gives two allocations so that the marks total 100% whether or not the optional knowledge check is used. When the check is omitted, its 10% is shared equally between the portfolios and peer/self-assessment. The major performance task is scored once and is excluded from the portfolio mark, so no piece of work is counted twice.

Table 6: Recommended Evidence Weighting for Termly Summative Assessment

Evidence source	Weighting with knowledge check	Weighting without knowledge check	Notes
Portfolio (process + selected products)	40%	45%	Scores process evidence (drafts, experiments, process notes) and completed piece other than the performance task.
Major open-ended performance task (final product)	25%	25%	Scored once with the CCSAF rubric; not also counted in the portfolio mark.
Reflection/artist statement (oral or written)	15%	15%	Age-appropriate; can be audio-recorded or teacher-noted for younger pupils.
Peer critique/self-assessment evidence	10%	15%	Scores the quality of participation in structured critique and self-review; small weight to avoid penalizing learners for peer dynamics.
Contextual knowledge check (optional)	10%	Not used	Short, low-stakes test of key concepts/material knowledge.
Total	**100%**	**100%**	

Moderation and Scoring Dependability

Because creativity scoring can vary across markers, CCSAF includes moderation routines to support dependable teacher judgment. A feasible within-school moderation cycle includes:

- *Calibration:* Teachers score 3–5 anchor exemplars together using the rubric and discuss interpretations of each criterion.
- *Double marking (sample):* A small sample of portfolios (e.g., 10–20%) is scored by a second teacher; discrepancies are resolved through discussion.
- *Record keeping*: Brief moderation notes document agreed interpretations and any rubric adaptations used for the term.
- *Periodic review*: Schools retain anonymized anchor exemplars to support continuity across terms.

Implementation Considerations

Implementation requires attention to teacher capacity, time, and resources. CCSAF is designed to be scalable by emphasizing low-cost materials and staged tasks embedded across the term rather than end-loaded projects. Key supports include teacher professional development in rubric use, exemplars of culturally grounded tasks, and school-level schedules that allocate time for portfolio curation and moderation. Table 7 outlines anticipated implementation challenges and corresponding mitigation strategies to support schools in adopting the CCSAF.

Table 7: Anticipated Implementation Challenges and Mitigation Strategies

Challenge	Mitigation strategy
Limited teacher assessment literacy for creativity	Targeted professional development; simple rubric guides and anchor exemplars.
Pressure for standardization and exam alignment	Advocacy for school-based assessment recognition; moderation and documentation to defend judgments.
Time constraints in the academic calendar	Staged tasks across the term; portfolio curation embedded in lessons.
Resource limitations	Use found/recycled/local materials; design tasks with multiple material options and accessible alternatives.

Across the cases, learners' creative engagement was visible in studio activity and portfolio artefacts, yet this evidence was weakly translated into summative judgments. This disconnect between observed creativity and reported assessment outcomes underscores the need for a structured framework capable of making creativity visible, assessable, and defensible within school-based summative systems.

5. Discussion

In the three cases studied, this study indicates a misalignment between creativity-oriented curriculum intentions and enacted summative assessment practices in Ghanaian basic-school visual arts. While policy frameworks emphasize creativity, cultural identity, and learner agency, assessment practices continue to prioritize easily measurable outcomes. These findings extend existing Ghanaian scholarship by shifting attention from instructional challenges toward the structural problem of assessment design.

5.1 Interpreting the Themes in Relation to Assessment Quality

The dominance of theory-heavy testing raises construct validity concerns: written tests can capture knowledge about art but are unlikely to adequately capture creative production, experimentation, and visual communication. The absence of explicit creativity rubrics and shared standards undermines transparency and dependability, leaving learners uncertain about expectations and teachers uncertain about defensible grading. Similarly, minimal integration of cultural context risks cultural invalidity by treating culturally situated meaning-making as peripheral rather than central to visual arts learning in Ghana.

5.2 Theoretical and Practical Contribution of the CCSAF

This study offers three key contributions to assessment scholarship and practice. First, it provides an account, grounded in three cases, of how summative assessment is enacted in Ghanaian basic-school visual arts, indicating misalignments between creativity-oriented curriculum intentions and assessment practices. Second, it articulates explicit design requirements for summative assessment that attend simultaneously to creativity, cultural validity, and feasibility under typical school constraints. Third, the study moves beyond descriptive accounts by proposing the Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework (CCSAF), a structured model, proposed but not yet piloted, that integrates open-ended performance tasks, portfolio and reflection evidence, analytic rubrics, and moderation supports to make creativity and cultural meaning-making visible and defensible in summative judgements.

At the policy level, the CCSAF is designed as a mechanism through which competency-based curriculum intentions could be translated into credible school-based summative assessment practices. Whether it achieves this depends on piloting and evaluation.

5.3 Implications for Teachers, Schools, Policy, and Teacher Education

- **Teachers** are encouraged to adopt open-ended performance tasks, explicitly teach creativity-oriented rubric criteria, and systematically collect process evidence such as drafts, experiments, and reflective notes to make learners' creative thinking visible in assessment.
- **At the school level**, reporting routines should be revised to accommodate portfolio evidence and narrative feedback alongside numeric grades. Schools should also allocate protected time for within-school moderation to support dependable teacher judgement.
- **For curriculum and assessment authorities**, the findings underscore the need for exemplar tasks, annotated portfolios, and assessment guides that align Standards-Based Curriculum creative competencies with summative reporting requirements. Greater recognition of school-based evidence could help balance high-stakes examination pressures.

- **Initial teacher education and professional development programmes** should strengthen assessment literacy for creative disciplines, with particular emphasis on rubric design, moderation practices, and culturally responsive assessment.

5.4 Limitations and Future Research

The CCSAF was proposed, not piloted, so claims about its validity, fairness, and dependability are design intentions rather than findings. Further work is needed to pilot the CCSAF in diverse regions and school contexts (including rural and resource-constrained schools) and to evaluate outcomes such as learner engagement, perceived fairness, and the dependability of scoring across teachers. Quantitative studies could complement qualitative insights by examining inter-rater agreement under moderation and by tracking the impact of CCSAF-aligned assessment on learner performance and motivation over time.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to address a persistent gap between creativity-oriented curriculum intentions and summative assessment practices in Ghanaian basic-school visual arts. Drawing on empirical evidence from multiple school contexts, it showed, in the cases studied, how creativity and cultural meaning-making are frequently visible in classroom practice yet weakly represented in summative judgements. By articulating clear design requirements and proposing the Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework (CCSAF), the study offers a contextually grounded model that is designed to support valid, fair, and dependable assessment of creativity within school-based systems. The CCSAF was proposed rather than piloted; whether it achieves these outcomes remains for future evaluation. While the framework was developed within the Ghanaian Standards-Based Curriculum, its underlying principles may be relevant to other competency-oriented reforms seeking to reconcile creativity with accountability. Future research should examine the enactment of the CCSAF across diverse school contexts and explore how creativity-centred evidence can be integrated into broader assessment and reporting systems. Recommendations for implementation include piloting the Creativity-Centred Summative Assessment Framework (CCSAF) across varied school contexts, using iterative teacher and learner feedback to refine tasks, rubrics, and moderation

routines. Implementation should be supported by targeted professional development in creativity assessment literacy, including rubric calibration, moderation, and culturally responsive task design. At the system level, national or district guidebooks with sample tasks, annotated exemplars, and moderation protocols aligned with the Standards-Based Curriculum would enhance consistency across schools. Finally, reporting formats should be adapted to accommodate portfolio and reflective evidence, reducing reliance on written tests and better capturing learners' creative processes and outcomes.

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