

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**STUDENTS' CHALLENGES IN SUMMARY WRITING AT BOLGATANGA  
TECHNICAL INSTITUTE**

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**A Dissertation in the Department of Applied Linguistics,  
Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication,  
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the award of the degree of  
Master of Education  
(Teaching English as a Second Language)  
in the University of Education, Winneba**

**OCTOBER, 2020**

## DECLARATION

### Student's Declaration

I, John Bangonamo Ayeriga, declare that this dissertation with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....

### Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

DR. KWEKU OFORI (SUPERVISOR)

SIGNATURE: .....

DATE: .....



## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear wife, Mrs. Vashti Ayera, my children, Kazia Ayera, Phebe Ayera, Jael Ayera and Jehu Ayera



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am highly grateful to Almighty God for giving me divine health, protection and wisdom to come out with this dissertation. This work could not have been possible without His presence with me. I owe great depth of gratitude to Dr. Kweku Ofori who out of his busy schedules made time to patiently guide me to a successful end of this dissertation. Without him, this work could not have been possible.

I wish to thank my dear wife for all the support she gave me throughout the period of this project work.

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Asamani Peter, circuit supervisor for Bolga West A circuit for his immense contribution to the success of this project work.

I am grateful to Mr. Patrick Ania, Mr. William Nlanjebor Jaluala , Mrs. Ivy Agana, Mrs. Paulina Amoro all of English Department, Bolgatanga Technical Institute for their cooperation during the interviews I had with them.

Again I thank my students who responded to the questionnaire and contributed to the success of this research.



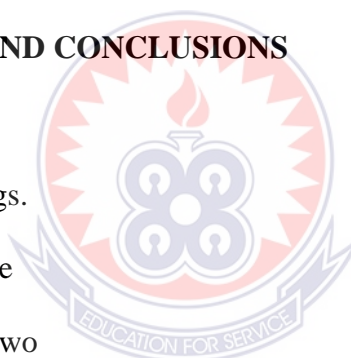
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## ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to find out the challenges students of Bolgatanga Technical Institute have in summary writing. The study also looked at the impact of the student's challenges in summary writing on their performance and how students can overcome their difficulties in summary writing. Forty students were selected comprising twenty boys and twenty girls together with four English language teachers to volunteer information for this research. The researcher used interviews, questionnaire, observation and students' exercises as instruments for data collection. The study revealed that students have difficulties in reading and in identifying main ideas in written texts. Unqualified English language teachers couple with the lack of capacity building programmes for teachers constituted a huge difficulty in students learning process. Students' difficulties in mastering summarization have affected them negatively in other areas especially in comprehension exercises. The authorities in education have been called upon to look into the training of the English language teacher and also supply the necessary logistics to make teaching and learning effective. It is recommended that school authorities should organize some award schemes for both English teachers and students to motivate them to do their best. All this can help reverse the current situation of students when it comes to summary writing.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

The importance of the English Language cannot be over emphasized. It is an international language used among many countries in the world. The universality of the English Language has helped to make communication a bit easier among many nations. The English Language is used as official language in many countries especially in Africa. In Ghana, the Language is used as a medium of instruction in the educational institutions from basic three to tertiary level.

It is also taught as a subject of study from basic one to three in school. Candidates at Senior High School level who fail the English Language paper in the West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations will not be able to gain admission into the tertiary institutions in Ghana. There are pieces of evidence that majority of candidates in Ghana who completed Senior High Schools and are not able to gain admission into tertiary institutions failed the English Language paper.

Record shows that candidates often perform poorly in the summary which is an integral part of the English Language paper of the final examinations. This assertion was confirmed as checks revealed that candidates usually find it difficult to identify key ideas in the passage and as a result they end up lifting whole paragraphs as answers.

Summary writing skill is very important to students as it helps them to condense information into a more precise and manageable forms. Summarization tests the ability of candidates to understand reading passages and their ability to display the

main ideas of the passage in their own words as much as possible. Mostly the information that students come across in their various fields come in volumes. These volumes of information may contain a lot of irrelevant materials besides the main ideas of the text. The skill of summarization will help the student to be able to identify the main ideas and put them in their own words for easy communication.

Aside improving the ability of students in understanding reading passages, summary writing also improves the reading abilities of students. This is because students must be able to read in order to understand the text they are to summarize.

Summary writing skills also trains the individuals to speak effectively and precisely. Rather than boring audience with irrelevant stuff, the speaker who is skilled in summarizing will be precise and straight to the point which will help audience gain better understanding of what is being communicated to them.

Though summary writing is so important to student and people in general, the teaching of summary writing has become problematic in our schools largely because of lack of textbooks, poor teaching method, lack of qualified teachers, perceived difficulty nature of summary writing by students and all these leads to the poor performance of students in summary of which Bolgatanga Technical Institute is not exempted. It is against this backdrop that the researcher seeks to look into the difficulties students of Bolgatanga Technical Institute face in summary writing and to find possible solutions to the problem.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The English Language paper is very crucial in the West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examinations. This is because without a good pass in the English

Language paper, candidates will not be able to gain admission into Tertiary Institutions. However, many of the candidates who write this examination usually fail in the English Language paper. Records show that students usually perform very poorly in the summary aspect of the English paper. According to records, students are normally not able to identify key ideas in the text they are to summarize and resort to lifting whole paragraphs and presenting them as answers.

Further analysis also shows that candidates mostly fail to differentiate between topic sentences and illustrations. Checks on the results of students of Bolgatanga Institute in their final year examinations over the years indicates that, students always performed below average in the English language paper. Detailed analysis of the students results points to student's inability to answer summary question as the major cause of the massive failure in the English language paper. Other factors such as lack of textbooks, unqualified teachers handling the subject, poor attitude of students towards learning the English language were also identified as causes of the failure in the English language paper.

Some studies have been done in the area of summary writing. Nakotey (2015) conducted a research on teaching summary writing skills at BM ZION Senior High School which focused on causes of students' inability to summarize written text. This study also aimed at making recommendations that can help boost students' confidence in answering summary questions. Similarly, Baiden (2016) conducted a study on improving Summary Writing Skills at Kwanyarko Senior High School. The aim of the research was to come out with innovative ways of improving the teaching and learning of summary. The two studies mentioned above did not seek to know the main



challenges students face in summary writing hence the need for this study to unearth the challenges students face when it comes to summary writing.

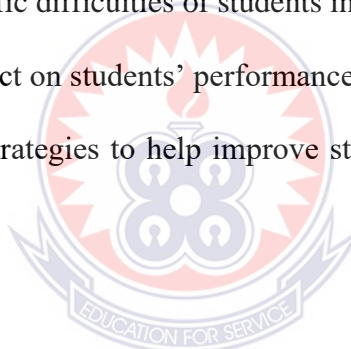
### **1.3 Aim of the Study**

This study aims at analyzing the difficulties of students in summary writing and device strategies that will help improve students' summary writing skills at Bolgatanga Technical Institute in the Bolgatanga Municipality of the Upper East Region.

### **1.4 The Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to;

1. Identify the specific difficulties of students in summary writing.
2. Find out the impact on students' performance in the English language.
3. Come out with strategies to help improve students' performance in summary writing



### **1.5 Research Questions**

The researcher wants to address the following research questions.

1. What are the difficulties students face in summary writing?
2. How does that impact on student's performance?
3. What strategies can be employed to improve students' performance in summary writing?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

It is expected that the findings of this research will bring to light the difficulties students face in mastering summary writing. These findings will be relevant because it will provide stakeholders especially those who design the curriculum for our

schools and teachers of English language with useful information regarding the appropriate methods of teaching that will help students overcome their difficulties in mastering summary writing.

The findings of this research will also contribute to the body of knowledge in the area of summary writing and will also form bases on which further studies in this field can be conducted.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

A lot of factors militated against me in the course of carrying out this study. Chief among them are time constrain and finance. Time limitation was a great set back to me and this was largely because of the fact that I had to combine my normal work as a teacher and the research work.

The other factors that also militated against the progress of this study range from none cooperative behaviour of both the students and teachers that form part of my sample unit to financial challenges which hindered me from getting in touch with other stakeholders at distant places who could contribute to the progress and success of this study. The above mentioned challenges eventually limited the coverage of this work to only students and teachers of Bolgatanga Technical Institute.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

This study with the focus on analysis of students' difficulties in summary writing covered only the Bolgatanga Municipality of the Upper East Region and was limited to second year students of Bolgatanga Technical Institute. The study focused on analyzing the difficulties of students in summary writing in Bolgatanga Technical Institute because of the fact that summary writing skill leads to improvement in the

other aspects of the English language. Though it will be unfair to generalize the results of this study for the whole of the Bolgatanga Municipality and beyond. Yet the result of this study can be a reflection of what is happening in other schools in the Municipality and beyond.

### **1.9 Organization of the Study**

This study comprises five chapters. Chapter one covers the following; background of the study, statement of the problem, aim of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, limitation of the study, and delimitation of the study. Chapter two of this study covers the review of literature relevant to the topic includes the following: Introduction, what summary is a kind of summary, why summary? steps in summary writing, how to teach summary writing, importance of summary, link between summary writing and reading comprehension, effects of summary writing on reading comprehension, why candidates perform poorly in summary writing, rules of summary writing and summary of literature review. Chapter three deals with research methodology of the study which includes the following; research design, population, sampling technique, sample size, research site, data collection, instruments for data collection, data analysis, data presentation, and summary of the chapter. Chapter four of this study presents the discussion and analysis of the main findings of the study and Chapter five presents the summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the study, recommendations and a suggested area for further research work.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

The usefulness of summary writing goes beyond just a classroom exercise. Most often, we all do summaries in our speeches or writing. In some professions summary cannot be avoided. For example, students with good summary writing skills can become good secretaries in the future. Secretaries normally rely on summary when taking minutes at meetings. This is because it will be impossible to capture in detail all that is being said while the meeting is going on. Students who will take up Journalism and news reporting as their career will excel if they have a good summary writing skills.

Furthermore, students who may become members of parliament, cabinet ministers and other public figures in future must develop good summary writing skills. This will help them in presenting precise and clear speeches rather than long and repeated speeches which turn to bore audience. All this underscores the importance of summary. This chapter therefore is devoted to look at what other authorities have said about summary under the following topics; what summary is? Kinds of summary, why summary, steps in summary, how to teach summary writing, importance of summary writing, link between summary writing reading comprehension, effects of summary writing on reading comprehension why candidates perform poorly in summary and rules of summary writing.

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

This study was based on the Process Genre Approach theoretical model for teaching writing skills (Badger and White, 2000), which recognizes that effective teaching methodology for writing needs to integrate the insights from product, process and genre approaches. Tan-germpoon (2008) claims that by integrating the three approaches, the strengths of each approach can successfully complement each other and help teachers to develop students' written competence by providing appropriate input of knowledge and skills in the writing process. It is further highlighted by Gathumbi and Masembe (2005) that the integrated approach to language teaching aims at maximizing meaningful communication and classroom interactions in meaningful situations. It fosters holistic learning such as sharing of information, experiences and development of values. It gives language skills their most meaningful, practical and relevant application, while at the same time giving the student the necessary tools for full learning.

According to Badger and White (2000), the development of writing in a process genre (integrated) approach, classroom learning takes place when teachers draw out the potential of students as well as provide appropriate input to them. It also noted that the development varies between different groups of students because they are at different stages of their writing development. For example, students who have knowledge on the production of the particular genre, and are skilled in it, may require little or no input. Some may be aware of how the potential audience recognizes what is written, while another group may lack knowledge of what language is appropriate to a particular audience. Thus, these two groups will require different input. The teacher

is, therefore, required to assess the needs of the particular group to determine the kind of input needed.

Badger and White (2000) further identify three possible sources of input in a process genre approach to teaching writing skills: teachers, learners and samples of the target genre. Teachers provide input in terms of instruction on language use and content, for instance, by asking learners to think about why they are writing a particular essay or story. An alternative to this can be a demonstration by the teacher. On the other hand, students can do the same in group discussion or observing other students' written texts. Samples from the targeted genres can also be an important source of input about contextual and linguistic knowledge. Dudley-Evans (1997) also suggests that teaching and learning resources such as flow charts can also be used to illustrate the organization of particular genres. Tan-germpoon (2008) points out that, by learning through the integrated approach, students will have less difficulties in L2 writing since they have enough input to create their writing tasks. This, therefore, implies that there is need for teachers to adopt the integrated approach to teaching writing skills in order to enable students achieve communicative competence in L2 writing.

Drawn from this theoretical model are various variables of the integrated approach that influence the learning of L2 writing skills. Integrated approach allows for collaborative learning among students as well as effective interaction between teachers and students in L2 writing classrooms. For instance, by working in groups, learners interact freely and also develop their critical thinking. It also enables teachers to monitor students' progress at every writing stage to determine the kind of input needed, as well as using teaching and learning resources to illustrate the organization of a particular genre. Thus, adopting the integrated approach to the teaching of

summary writing skills will enhance effective learning leading to students' mastery of writing skills and achievement in summary writing. Therefore, based on the ideas and concepts of this theoretical model, researcher investigated challenges students face in learning summary writing skills in English language in Bolgatanga Technical Institute in the Bolgatanga Municipality of the Upper East Region

## **2.2. What Summary is**

Byrne (2014). A summary condenses the main points of a text, preserving in a more concise form its original focus, most important ideas and major emphases, while greatly reducing or leaving out altogether its minor details. This requires careful analysis of the structure and meaning of the original text: you must accurately identify its topic, the significant points it makes about that topic and its less important features, and on that basis decide how best to condense the material.

Note that a summary must be written in your own words; just combining selected quotations from the original text will not work. An effective summary is a condensed rewrite of the original text reflecting the depth of a person's understanding of the original text. The inability of students of Bolgatanga Technical Institute to identify the main idea of an original text normally makes them copy any part of the text down as their answers to the questions asked.

Olatunji, (2014) explains that summary can be described as the condensed form of comprehension. He adds that it is an exercise in which one is required to reproduce what one has decoded in as few of one's own words as possible. The tradition in the old days was to ask candidates to re-write a lengthy passage in a given number of sentences. But to make the task simpler, candidates are now asked leading questions,

the answer to which would form a summary of the original passage. Most of the time students who do not seem to understand the main idea of the original texts are unable to display the writer's idea in their words thereby re-writing what is in the original text which defeats the purpose of summary.

Summary writing is regarded as an integrative task that involves the interplay of the ability to understand the main idea of a text and the ability to compose a coherent restatement of a writer's idea. This achieves two important skills for the student namely comprehension and summarizing skills. Galaa (2019) posits that summary writing is the reduction of a text to its basic essentials.

### **2.3 Kinds of Summary**

Sarpong (2007) argues that, there are three types of summary; namely; main point summary, key point summary and outline summary.

#### **2.2.1. Main Point Summary**

Sarpong (2007) explains that a main point summary looks much like an article, or abstract, giving the most important facts of the text. The main point summary identifies the title, author and main points or arguments. It can also include the text's source such as book, essay, periodicals and journals. Like any other type of summary, a main point summary uses author's tags." These tags make clear the author's ideas and the text being summarized not the person who summaries. The main point type of summary may make use of a quote from the- text, but the quote should represent the text's main idea or point. This type of summary is often used when writing academic papers as a way to introduce the reader to a source and to place the main point of that source into the context of an argument or discussion of an issue.



### **2.3.1. Key Point Summary**

Sarpong (2007) claims that key point summary gives full account and complete representation of the authors entire set of ideas. One reason to use this sort of summary would be if the writer intends to respond to the author's argument using an agreed or disagreed response mood. The key point summary type also includes the reason and evidence the author uses to support the text's main idea. It also uses direct quotes of key words, phrases or sentences from the text. The summary writer uses the key point type of summary when the authors ideas must be fully explained to reader.

### **2.3.2. Outline Summary**

The outline summary type follows the structure of the text being summarized. It indicates the main points and argument the same order they appear in the original text. This technique becomes effective when to use the accompanying response will be analytical such as an evaluation of the logic or evidence used in the text. (Will, 1984).

Summary can be guided or directed. A directed or guided summary is the type in which a single complex question or instruction is given and the summarizer is required to find the three or four more ideas that are relevant and write these as answer. (Djikunu, 2000).

The fact is that if teachers of English language have in-depth knowledge of the various kinds of summary they will be in a good position to help students to master summary writing skills easily.

## **2.4 Why Summary?**

Nordquist (2019), claims that the purpose of a summary is to give a reader a condensed and objective account of the main ideas and features of a text. Usually, a

summary has between one and three paragraphs or one hundred to three hundred words, depending on the length and complexity of the original essay and the intended audience and purpose (Nordquist, 2019).

The need to summarize arises in different situations of our normal daily living. Summary takes a good percentage of total marks for a language test in public examinations. Therefore, it is an important aspect of the communication skills that must be developed (Olatunji, 2014).

Levy (2004) states that summary writing does not come naturally, and when students are told to summarize, will often either copy verbatim, write long, detailed “summaries,” or write excessively short ones missing key information. This is because students do not really know what a summary is or how to write one. If they have been told how to write one, it is usually in nonspecific terms, such as putting a story in their own words. This is not technical enough to be helpful. Summarizing is actually a specific and technical skill.

Writing a summary is an important skill that students will use throughout their academic careers. In addition, summarizing improves reading skills as students pick out the main ideas of a reading; it also helps with vocabulary skills as students paraphrase a reading, altering the vocabulary and *grammar as* they do so. In addition, critical thinking skills are improved as students decide on the main ideas of the reading to include in the summary. Finally, writing and editing skills are improved as students’ draft and edit the summary. Students can also work with peers throughout the writing and revision process, so it also helps with cooperative learning. Therefore, many benefits exist for learning summarizing skills.

(Pat, 2017) Proposes that summarizing skills will help students in the following ways;

#### **2.4.1. Improve their reading and comprehension skills**

Reading and understanding a text is important in summary writing. As often as students engage in summarization, they make use of their reading and understanding skills. It is therefore important that students do not look summary writing as a mere topic because it leads students into acquiring other skills such as reading and comprehension skills.

#### **2.4.2 Helps them filter the main ideas from details**

Students come across all kinds of information both in school and out of school. Most of these pieces of information that students come across are broad and comprises main ideas, details, illustrations and many others. It is the skill of summary writing that help students to differentiate between the main ideas and details.

#### **2. 3.3 Helps them follow argument**

Summarization makes students critically analyze passages in order to understand the view point writers. The analytical training helps students to be able to follow writers' line of argument easily.

#### **2. 4.3. It will enable them identify key ideas**

Mostly passages are divided into paragraphs with every paragraph containing a key idea and explanations that develop the key idea. When the key idea of paragraph is identified, then the meaning of the paragraph is discovered. Through summary writing students learn how to identify key ideas in sentences.

### **2. 3.5 Students will be able to understand theme**

Summary writing promotes students understanding of the theme or main idea of a text. This is what helps students to re-write original ideas in their own words as much as possible.

### **2. 4.4. It can help students analyze text**

It is often not easily to understand a complex text by just reading over it. The text has to be analyzed critically so as to discover its meaning. Summary writing helps students in this regard.

## **2. 5. Steps in Summary Writing**

The following are steps involved in summary writing;

### **2.5.1. Read**

The first step to a well-written summary is to read the original piece of work. Focus on reading the original text without taking any notes. The goal is to become familiar with the main idea of the piece while gaining insight into the author's specific style and voice. While it may be hard to resist the urge to underline when doing a first pass, reading the whole piece before dissecting it will ensure you're grasping the main idea of the text without expanding on specific details. Overall, this will aid in avoiding an excessive summary. (Leavy2019).

### **2.5.2. Gather the Main Idea**

Once you've finished reading the original piece, take time to reflect on what has been read. Think about the important points of the text and how the author constructed the sequence of events. Determine the Five Ws (who, what, where, when, why) of the story to help illuminate the essential elements of the text (Leavy2019).

### **2.5.3. Reread while Taking Notes**

Rereading means active reading. Read the story again, this time marking the important points that should be included in the summary. Underline topic sentences and significant plot points, highlight essential quotes, and number the major events as they occur.

Also, note the areas not understood. Depending on the difficulty of the text, reread until you feel like you have a solid basis for your summary (Leavy, 2019).

### **2.5.4. Organize your Notes**

Once you've actively reread the text, take a couple of minutes to organize the information you've collected. Depending on your learning style, find a way to organize your notes that will make them a reliable reference when you start writing. Go back and elaborate on the key points you noted and clarify any information that was difficult to understand. (Leavy, 2019)

### **2.5.5. Create a thesis statement**

The key to a good summary is a developed thesis statement. A thesis statement is a one-sentence claim, often in the introduction, that demonstrates your understanding of the author's original work. When writing a summary, you want to recast the author's argument, without including a personal opinion. (Leavy, 2019)

### **2.5.6. Draft a Short Paragraph**

At this point, the introduction and the body of the summary have been outlined. The thesis statement can be used as the introductory sentence to the summary while the other main points will fall into the body paragraph (Leavy, 2019)

### **2.5.7. Check for accuracy**

Once the draft is completed the summary should be rewritten to make sure one has accurately represented the author's main ideas.

Depending on the length and complexity of the original text as well as the purpose of the summary, a summary be short or long. (Leavy, 2019)

The following is a general procedure that can be used for composing a summary:

Step 1: Read the text for its main points.

Step 2: Reread carefully and make a descriptive outline.

Step 3: Write out the text's thesis or main point...

Step 4: Identify the text's major divisions or chunks. Each division develops one of the stages needed to make the whole main point...

Step 5: Try summarizing each part in one or two sentences.

Step 6: Now combine your summaries of the parts into a coherent whole, creating a condensed version of the text's main ideas in your own words (Nordquist, 2019)

Attipoe (1999) proposes the following as steps in the summary writing;

### **2.5.8. Discovering the subject matter:**

The subject matter must first be discovered, that is what the passage is about. To discover the subject matter or the main idea of the passage, the student should skim through the passage. The interest at this time should not be in the details of the passage but in having a broad, general view of the passage. A particular word or phrase that repeats itself in the passage can help identify the subject matter of the passage.

### **2.5.9. Examining the questions:**

After reading through the passage, the next step is to go through the questions asked on the passage. It is required that the summary passage should be more than once for better understand and analysis at the passage. However, after the first reading at the passage, the questions asked on the passage should be read next. In this was the reader will have a gist of what to look for in subsequent readings of the passage. This will help the reader to mark positions of the passage that are related to the questions he has just gone through. When this is done, it becomes easy to location answers to the questions asked on the passage

### **2.5.10. Locating the answers/main points:**

The passage should be read again, this time carefully, noting important details. With the questions in mind, relevant portions of the passage should be marked with pencil during the second reading of the passage. However, examples, illustrations, elaborations, repetitions and embellishments should be avoided when writing the answers down.

## **2.6. How to teach summary writing**

Levy outlines the following as steps in teaching summary writing:

1. As a class, read a short selected text. This can be either a short essay or part of one. It should be short enough that students can read it during the first session of the lesson. It is often easy to learn from simple things to complex ones. So a short text for beginners will help them to follow through the steps in summarizing easily and will also help them develop interest learning the topic.

2. Have students underlined the main ideas as they read. Take this opportunity to talk to the students about the importance of marking text as a study skill. They can use this marked text as an outline to review later for quizzes. Answers to questions often asked on summary passage are normally embedded in the main ideas located in the various paragraphs. When students therefore mark the main ideas, it helps them focus on only the marked areas to be able to find the answers easily. This helps students to do good summaries since irrelevant material will be avoided.
3. Once students have their text marked up, open the discussion of summaries. Discuss what it is. Offer a vivid example of its importance. This gets students to focus on the notion of summarizing as something they actually do in their everyday lives. In this way students get practical experience of summarization and will even practice it on their own after class because they have been told the importance of summarization.
4. Provide an example. The teacher might consider also handing out an example summary of a passage students have recently read as a model summary. This will serve as a guide to students and because they are familiar with the passage used for the model summary, it will boost their understanding of the procedure in summarizing.
5. Discuss the ideas. At this point, discuss the ideas students underlined in their readings. Call on students to share the main ideas they underlined and write them on the board. This will serve as feedback to students as they will get to know whether they were able to identify the main ideas properly. Where they made mistakes they are corrected and by so doing the students gain more experience in summarizing a text.



6. Focus on five (5) main ideas. As a class decide on the top five main ideas for the summary. As learners, dealing with many main ideas at the same time may be a bit difficult for students. As students' progress in their practice they will be able to deal with as many main ideas as necessary.
7. Work on ordering the sentences and connecting them with transition words. Since the main ideas are drawn from different sections of the text and distinct from each other, it is important to connect them. This is a good time to teach some transition words. Based on the question, the main ideas have to be organized to form meaningful sentences. Students at the beginning level are often asked to summarize in sentences so they need to be familiar with transitional words like, and, but, yet, at to be able to connect words or phrases appropriately to form sentences.
8. Paraphrase the sentences. An important concept related to summarizing is changing the summary significantly from the original. Model changing the grammar and vocabulary of the sentences and have the students help with this as much as can. It is important students understand that it is good to rewrite the main ideas identified in the words of the writer. The model provided will help students see how they can change or replace the writer's vocabulary with their own and still maintain the original meaning.
9. Teach the language of summaries. At this point, the teacher might teach students some of the formulaic language of academic writing, such as the phrase "According to (the author)", "to lead into the main idea and the summary. Every subject has peculiar terminologies that go with them. The terms mentioned in point 9 are some of the terms used in summary writing. (Levy, 2012)

## 2.7 Importance of Summary

Noble (1981), states that summary is intended to develop students' ability to express economically the important parts in all kinds of writing. He suggests that students should develop their ability to summarize any type of writing they come across.

Sam (2008), claims that summary enables students to gain the ability to restate or rewrite ideas in their own words as far as possible and also to express themselves precisely and clearly what they write. To him, through summary, one is able to distinguish what is important from what is unimportant thereby recognizing the main or relevant ideas in a given text. Thus summary makes materials more concise, compact and easily absorbable.

Summary tasks facilitate the holistic development of learner's English reading and writing abilities as well as their content area study skills (Friend, 2001). Mastering summary writing leads student to acquiring other critical learning skills in their academics.

Valerie Anderson and Suzanne Hidi state that summarizing is helpful to students in understanding text and to recognize when the meaning is under clear. The attempt to recognize main ideas in the summarizing process also help students to remember those ideas (Murrell and Surber, 1987).

Summary writing is considered an essential skill not only in language learning, but also in most areas of student academic career. It is a useful skill associated with reading and writing. Summary writing skills contributes significantly to students' academic success and it also promotes dialectic thinking by forcing students to articulate ideas not their own ideas. (Lin and Maarof, 2012).

Important as the skill of summary writing is, student mostly put up negative attitude towards learning this skill. This is partly because of poor methods of teaching the skill. The stakeholders concern should consider coming out with innovative techniques that will make the learning of this skills attractive to students. Students will change their bad attitude towards summary writing when get to know the importance of it.

## **2. 8 Link between summary writing and reading comprehension**

Some writers are of the view that the interrelation between reading and writing has been taken for granted by a majority of scholars and researchers (Ferris, and Hedgecock, 1998; Lee, 2000; Nelson and Calfee 1998)

They claim compared with the research on either of the two individual skills, the studies on their connections are much fewer. The topic indeed should be paid more attention, due to the undeniable, strong connections between reading and writing. Rodrigues (2006) states that good writers are good readers, good reading is the key to becoming a good writer. Students' poor summary writing skill is as a result majorly of their poor reading skill. Once they are unable to read the text well, they cannot understand it hence their inability to summarize it.

Graham and Herbert (2011) argue that, reading is critical to students' success in and out of school. One potential means for improving students reading is writing.

A group of researchers found that both reading and writing get learners actively engaged in constructing meaning (Lee, 2000; Nelson & Calfee, 1998; Risemberg, 1996; Shen, 2007).

Noyce and Christie (1989), found that a writer utilizes the same schemata as used for reading comprehension. To write a topic, writers also need to activate their prior knowledge. To this end, reading and writing share the same component, that is, the background knowledge; they both incorporate the prior knowledge into learners' learning.

Apart from the similarity in activating readers' schemata, for adult readers, reading and writing also share other traits, one of which is that they both highly involve the three cueing systems of the language, namely, grapho-phonics, syntax, and semantics. Take the bottom-up reading model as an instance, reading generally happens in the following sequence: readers get knowledge input sequentially from the grapho-phonics (letter-sound) to the syntax (structure) and at last to the semantics (meaning). The same components are also involved in the writing process, with only a different sequence: Syntax and grapho-phonics. Therefore, as reading is a good way to get the input, and writing is an effective approach to produce output or reinforce the input. It is important to encourage students to combine the two skills together and use an interactive approach to improve their learning.

Nelson and Calfee (1998) hypothesized that a rhetorical approach helps readers and writers, by being the receiver and the sender, to increase their awareness of communication.

It is also suggested that language learners should be encouraged to use either of the two skills to compensate the other. This can be divided into two types of compensation: reading to – write and writing – to read. Researchers used to focus more on the reading –to –write strategy, because reading is more direct to get the

knowledge input and less time-consuming than writing; it is more practical for researchers to get convenient samples or for teachers to put it into classroom practice. As for reading – to – write studies, most of what we know focuses on task representation, cognition of reading – to – write, and summarizing texts (Ruiz-Funes, 1999a; 1999b; 2001).

## **2.9 Effects of Summary Writing on Reading Comprehension**

While research on summary writing gains relatively less attention from scholars, it also emerges in recent years. In a meta-analysis study, Graham and Herbert (2011) concluded that writing about material read improves students' comprehension of it; that teaching students how to write improves their reading comprehension, reading fluency, and word reading; and that increasing how much students write enhances their reading comprehension. Zhou and Siriyonthin (2008) found that reading with summary writing or journal writing could be a good way for learners to improve their reading ability.

Bangert Drowns and some scholars (2004) also found that, writing has only a small, positive impact on conventional measures of academic achievement, although the use of metacognitive prompts enhanced students' academic achievements. While some research confirmed the effect of summarization writing on reading, some other relevant studies still show no significant influence from summary writing to reader's comprehension. (Crowhurst, 1991)

## **2.10 Why Candidates perform poorly in summary?**

Attipoe (1999), states that what account for the generally poor performance of candidates in the summary test is their attitude towards the paper that summary

writing is too difficult to pass. He outlined the following also as factors that cause poor performance of candidates in summary test.

### **2.10. 1. Lack of Comprehension:**

For students to be able to handle a given passage effectively it is important that they have a good understanding of the passage. It is a good understanding of a given passage that leads students to discover answers to the question on the passage. However, most students have difficulty in understanding summary passages largely because they do not know the techniques required to deal with summary passages.

### **2.10.2. Lack of brevity and clarity:**

Another factor that leads to poor performance of students in summary writing is that, they do not present their answers briefly and clearly. Most students always include extraneous materials instead of writing down the main point only.

### **2.10.3. Disregard for instructions:**

Summary questions come with specific instructions. Students are often expected to present their answers strictly according to the instructions given. Unfortunately, however, most students often disregard these instructions hence leading to poor performance in the summary test.

## **2.11 Rules of summary writing**

Rachel Billmeyer and Mary outline the following rules for summarizing;

1. Erase things that don't matter: Delete trivial material that is unnecessary to understanding. Only write down important points. If it is not something that will help you understand or remember, then don't write it down. Think of it

this way... If you had to pay money for every word you write down, which words would, you choose to include in your notes?

2. Erase things that repeat: Delete redundant material. In note taking, time and space are precious. If a word or phrase says basically the same thing you have already written down, and then don't write it again!
3. Trade, General terms for specific names: Substitute superordinate terms for lists (e.g. flowers for daisies, tulips for roses). Focus on the big picture. Long, technical lists are hard to remember. If one word will give you the meaning, then less is more.
4. Select a topic sentence, or invent one if it is missing: Topic sentences state the main idea. Select or write down a topic sentence to focus your study on the main idea.

Related work on summary writing Baiden (2016) conducted a research on improving student's summary writing skills at Kwanyarko Senior High School. The researcher used questionnaire, interviews, and observation as the design. The study discovered that students have generally lost interest in reading. It was discovered that students find it difficult to read their notes not talk of reading extra materials. This was found to be the major reason students find it difficult to master summary writing. The research discovered that not much has been done by way studies in the areas of students challenges in summary writing and there recommended that more studies should be done in this.

Eddie (2015) carried out a study on teaching summary writing skills at WBM ZION Senior High School. It was a qualitative research and design used was interview and questionnaire. The researcher discovered poor staff development programmes as one

of the major causes of the students' inability to master the skill of summary writing. The researcher also identified issues such large class size, lack of textbooks for students and poor infrastructure as factors inhibiting students' progress in summary writing. The researcher therefore calls for the appropriate authorities to act swiftly to ensure that the right things are done. The researcher recommends that similar studies should be conducted in other schools to find better ways to improve on students summary writing skills hence the need for the current work.

### **2.11 Summary of Literature Review**

Summary writing is one of aspects of English Language that has enjoyed a lot of publication in the literature. There is a gamut of literature concerning the topic and this is certainly good in the academic environment especially. There is a lot about summary writing that students as well as teachers need to know. Students' opinion of summary over the years has not been the best as they often feel the most important reason for learning summary writing is to be able to score high marks in English language examination. Summary is more important than that and various publications on the subject of summary writing are helping to shape this negative views of students concerning the issues of summary writing.

Otoo (1999), states that summary writing serves as useful exercise which is relevant to our real lives. He adds that summary serves as an exercise that trains us to acquire the skills that help us to differentiate between most important and less important information.

Sackeyfio (1995) maintains that summary is not limited to English language alone it is part of our lives. Human beings make use of summary in daily lives either



consciously or unconsciously. Once we give reports formally or informally, narrate movies to our colleagues, we are engaged in summary. Since we cannot narrate everything from a scene or give every details of a movie, we give the most important points and that is summary. Literature is playing a great role in making us realize the relevance of summary in our world today.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The chapter three of this study focuses on the methodologies by which the researcher was able to come out with the difficulties students have in connection with summary writing and analysis of such difficulties. The chapter covers the following sub-headings; research design, research site, sampling techniques, sample size and population. The chapter also captures the instruments for data collection and data collection strategies.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Qualitative research approach was adopted by the researcher for this study. Anderson (1988) agreed in authentic setting cannot be best represented quantitatively and said, “qualitative research their natural settings and uses multi-methods to interpret, understand, explain and bring meaning to them”, similarly, Denzin and Lincoln (1988, p8) states that “qualitative research implies an emphasis on processes and meaning rather than focusing on quantity or frequency. Qualitative research emphasis the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry”.

The foregoing discussion on the qualitative approach influenced the choice of the researcher to use the qualitative approach for this study. Yin (1989), views the use of qualitative methodology in case study as being the preferred strategy for research studies dealing with contemporary phenomena within a real life context. In the light of this the researcher settled on the qualitative method of research for the conduct of

this study using Bolgatanga technical institute as a case study to find out the difficulties students face in summary writing. The study was to find out how student can overcome their summary difficulties. Asamoah – Gyimah. (2007) state that the term qualitative research describes a number of different techniques that share some common characteristics many of which can be traced to ethnography.

This study seeks answers to the following research questions;

1. What are the difficulties of students in summary writing?
2. How can students overcome the difficulties in summary writing?
3. What strategies can be employed to improve student's summary writing skills?

### **3.2 Population**

Population is said to be a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects or events that confines to specific criteria and to which a researcher intends to generalize the results of the research. (Asamoah –Gyimah,2007). Information shows that the number of students who fail the English Language final paper at Senior High School level is quite alarming and cuts across the country. The researcher would have wished to involve all students and English language teachers of Bolgatanga Technical Institute in this study but time and budget constraints would not allow that. The school has a population 2,483 students comprising 1,833 boys 650 girls. The total population of teachers stand at 144 comprising 111males and 53 males. A population of the second year students and English teachers of Bolgatanga Technical Institute in the Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly in the Upper East Region of Ghana was therefore selected. The performance of students of the institute as far as the English Language final examination is concern has over the years fallen below average. This is largely due to students' inability to answer the summary questions well.

The researcher therefore decided to conduct this study in the institute to analyze students' difficulties in summary writing and come up with ways to help students overcome their difficulties.

### **3.3 Sampling Technique**

Asamoah – Gyimah (2007) posits that sampling is for the purpose of obtaining a group of subjects who will be representative of the larger population or will provide specific information needed. To ensure accuracy and save time and cost as well as getting a manageable size for easy accessibility a small population size was used as representation of the larger population.

### **3.4 Sample Size**

Purposive sampling was used to select forty students out of a larger group consisting of twenty boys and twenty girls. The students were grouped as follows for the purpose of the study; very weak, weak and fairly good. Four English language teachers were also selected to be interviewed.

These particular students and teachers were selected because the researcher believed that they could offer useful information that can help achieve the purpose of this study.

### **3.5 Research Site**

This Research was conducted at Bolgatanga Technical Institute. The Institute is one of the highly populated technical schools in the Upper East Region. The Bolgatanga Technical Institute was established in 1985. The institute offers various technical programmes as well as the four Core-subjects namely; English Language, Mathematics, Integrated Science and Social Studies.

The choice of the institute for this research was based on the following factors;

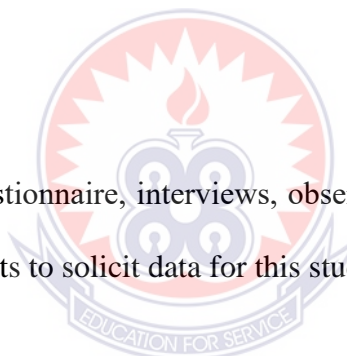
It is one of the few technical schools in the region; the school offers English Language as a core subject of study and also the fact that the researcher is a teacher in the school which will make the work a little bit convenient to him.

### **3.6 Data Collection**

In research work data collection is an important aspect. It is data gathered and analyzed that leads to finding solutions to the problem being investigated. The researcher chooses the type of data collection techniques to use, the sources from which to collect data and the procedures to be used to administer the data collection tools.

### **3.7 Instrumentation**

The researcher used questionnaire, interviews, observation and students' exercises as data collection instruments to solicit data for this study.



#### **3.7.1. Questionnaire**

Questionnaires are said to constitute the first attempts at true scaling. Questionnaires are particularly advantageous when the sample size is large enough to make it expensive and time consuming to observe or interview every subject ( Asamoah – Gyimah, 2007).

The researcher used the open ended questionnaire type to obtain answers from students to given questions. The questionnaire contained fifteen questions and the students were required to answer all the questions. The number of students to whom

the questionnaire was administered was forty (40) of whom twenty (20) were boys and twenty (20) girls.

### **3.7.2. Interview:**

This tool of data collection was to afford the researcher face to face verbal interaction with the respondents so as to get answers to questions prepared by the researcher in advance. Personal interviewing is the most usual method of collecting data in social surveys. It is very similar in nature and purpose to questionnaire and, except for certain relative advantages the two techniques are essentially interchangeable (Asamoah –Gyimaa, 2007).

The researcher interviewed four English language teachers who were part of the sample for the study. The teachers were made up of two males and two females in order to save time and reduce cost

The researcher used the structured type of interview. An interview schedule was prepared with a planned sequence of questions. The interviewees were then given the interview schedules so that at their own convenient time they will respond to the questions without necessarily having to meet the interviewer face to face. The interviewees then returned the forms to the researcher after responding to the questions.

The researcher built cordial relationship with the teachers which made them to freely respond to the questions and also asked for clarification where they were in doubt. The cordial relationship between the researcher and the teachers interviewed helped him to receive the most appropriate responses to the questions asked.

### **3.7.3. Observation**

Observation is one of the approaches in selecting a data. Spardley (1980) posits that observations are frequently used to collect data because it assumes different roles in process. I had the opportunity to observe two teachers when they were teaching. The classroom conditions, teaching itself and the teacher learner relationship were all observed. The first teacher gave out a printed material to the students. Students were asked to read the passage on two occasions and the teacher finally guided them to answer the questions.

Again, the second made them to read the passage alright and he explained all the difficult words to them but failed to teach them how to answer the questions based on the passage.

### **3.8 Ethical Consideration**

Punch (2000 P75) posits that, “all social research involves consent; access and associated ethical issues, since it is based on data from people about people”. Fowler (2014, p.140) maintains that ethical consideration is “a manner in which research is carried out so that no individual suffers any adverse consequences as a result of the study”. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) see ethical consideration as a question of right and wrong in conducting a study singleton (2010) states that ethical consideration is an act of in moral and responsible ways. In line with best practices, permission to conduct this study was duly sought from the authorities of Bolgatanga Technical Institute. The principal at a meeting with the researcher granted the researcher permission to conduct the research in the school. The consent of participants was also sought and they consented to participate freely in the study. Cordial relationship was established between the researcher and participants, and contact numbers were

exchanged between researcher and participants to make communication easier between them. The rights of participants were respected because participants could decide without being forced, to respond to any issue. Participants reserved the right not to answer any question they find discomforting to them, to disclose or not to disclose personal information. The researcher promised not to disrupt participants' daily activities because of the study. Privacy, Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were maintained because no participant names were mentioned in the study.

### **3.9 Data Analysis**

The collected data by the researcher from the various sources were put together and categorized under the following sub-headings; students' difficulties, impact on performance and possible solutions to the problem.

### **3.10 Data Presentation**

The researcher presents in the next chapter, the data collected in a narrative style in order to ensure maximum comprehension of what has been presented.

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter looked at the methodology used for the study through the following sub-headings; research design, population, sampling techniques, sampling size, research site, data collection, questionnaire, interviews, observation, data analysis and data presentation.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

#### 4.0. Introduction

Chapter four of this study deals with the analysis and discussion of the data collected in the cause of this study. The analysis will be based on data collected through the interviews, questionnaire observations, and students' exercises conducted by the researcher during the study. The analysis of the data has been done extensively with the aim of answering the research questions posed in chapter one of this study.

#### 4.1. Levels of English language teachers Qualification in Bolgatanga Technical Institute

The number of English language teachers with first degree not in English and those without first degree at all in Bolgatanga Technical Institute is illustrated in the table below.



**Table 1:** Number of English language teachers with first degree not in English Language and those without first degree at all.

**Table 1: Teachers level of qualifications**

Characteristics	Number of Teachers	Percentage %
English teachers with first degree not in English Language	4	100
English Language teacher without first degree at all	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100</b>

Currently the least qualification for teaching at Senior High School level in Ghana is first degree. Teachers with first degree have attained enough and the appropriate training in their subject areas which will enable them to teach the understanding of students. This means that English language teachers with first degree in English language are in a better position to teach students to understand and master summary writing skills than those teachers who do not have degree in English language. The problem of shortage of teachers in the system has compelled educational authorities to post teachers with diploma and in some cases teachers with first degree but in different fields to teach English language.

Vacca and Vacca (1989), state that teachers can teach students how to summarize information through strategies such as Guided Reading Procedure (GRP). This means that it is not just any English Language teacher at all that can teach students how to summarize. It takes teachers who have received the requisite training at the University as they may major in English Language at the first degree level. Teachers who do not have first degree in English Language will lack the competence to help students in technical areas such as summary writing skills.

This in no doubt contributes significantly to the poor performance of students in English language in general and particularly in summary writing.

The issue of unqualified teachers of English language contributing to poor performance of student was also discovered by a similar study conducted by Nakotey Anthony Eddie in 2015. The researchers commented that “ the heavy presence of non- professional teachers has negatively affected the teaching of summary writing in

the school hence the poor students' performance in summary writing in English language paper 2 at the WASSCE''.

The number of teachers with First and Second Degrees in English Language in Bolgatanga Technical Institute is displaced in the table 2 below;

**Table 2: English language teachers with first and second degrees in English**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
English language Teachers with First Degree in English Language	0	0
English Language Teachers with Second Degree in English Language	1	25
English Language Teachers Without Second Degree In English Language	3	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 presents the number of teachers with First and Second Degrees in English Language. The results from the table above show that none of the four teachers interviewed by the researcher representing 0% studied English language at the First Degree level. All four teachers representing 100% had the First degrees in different areas of study. English language is a specialized area of study and this specialization is done at the First Degree level to qualify teachers to teach at the Senior High School level. The fact that the four teachers interviewed are all without first degree in English language explains why the students they teach have challenges mastering summary writing skills.

The teachers lack the requisite training to teach English language at the Senior High School level. Teachers who studied English language at the University as an area of specialization did not only learn content but are also equipped with methodology in teaching English language. Students taught by these teachers are very likely not going to have challenges in mastering summary writing.

The responses of the four teachers interviewed by the researcher as displayed in the table above also indicate that only one out of the four teacher representing 25% has Second Degree in English language and the rest of the three representing 75% do not have Second Degrees. Teachers with Second Degree no doubt would have gained total mastering not only in teaching the English language but also to explain very technical issues of the English language that students find it difficult to understand. One such technical area for students in the Senior High School level is summary writing. In the case of Bolgatanga technical Institute, the 25% and 75% representing teachers who have Second Degree in English language and those who do not have respectively will not help students much in mastering summary writing.

Banjo and Bisong (1985) argue that the rules and procedures for writing a summary are complicated such that it takes extensive teacher guidance, for students to improve upon their ability to summarize information in the light of these teachers of English Language need to build on the training they received at the first degree by undertaking the second degree in the subject. The teacher discovers more about the subject at that level and also get more exposure as they research further into the subject. Teachers gain more competence and are able to help students out of their difficulties in any area of the English Language including summary writing

## 4.2 Student's Responses:

Student's views were also sought and illustrated in the table 3 below.

**Table 3: Students views on the notion that, summary writing is difficult**

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Number of Teachers</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Students who disagree with the statement	36	90
Students who disagree with the statement	4	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 indicates number of student who agrees that summary writing is generally a difficult exercise and those who disagree with such notion. Out of the forty students who responded to the questionnaire, thirty-six (36) students representing 90% agree with the notion that summary writing is generally a difficult exercise while four (4) students representing 10% disagree with the notion. This indicates that largely, students are of the opinion that summary writing is very difficult to learn. This notion among students kills their interest in learning summary writing hence their challenges in summary writing. The few students who disagree with notion reflect the small number of students who normally score pass mark in summary test. Unlike the majority who entertain the notion that summary writing is difficult a topic and shy away from it, make no effort to master the skill and some cases refuse to sit in class when teacher begins to treat summary writing. The minority of the students who do not share in that notion show interest in the topic, make efforts to master the skill, attend classes regularly and sit through summary writing lessons hence they have less difficulties when it comes to summary writing. It is therefore clear that the negative notion held by majority of students is what accounts their difficulties in mastering

summary writing skills. It will be difficult even for the best teacher in the world to teach students to master a skill such as summary writing when such students make up their mind not to learn.

**Table 4:** Students' views on teachers' motivation to students as an encouragement to learn.

The numbers of students participating in the questionnaire who agree with the assertion that teachers motivating their students help them learn and those who disagree with the assertion is illustrated in the table below:

**Table 4: Students response to the assertion that English teachers' motivation to students can help them develop interest in summary writing**

Characteristics	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Students who agree with the assertion	38	95
Students who disagree with the assertion	2	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table four (4) depicts the number of students who agree with the assertion that when students are motivated by the English language teacher, it will help them master summary writing skills easily and those who disagree with the assertion. Of the forty students who responded to the questionnaire, thirty-eight (38) representing 95% agree with the above assertion while two (2) students representing 5% disagree with the assertion. This implies that to a large extent when teachers encourage students by giving them the necessary motivation such as showing interest in knowing and helping students out of the learning challenge, talking to the students to let them know

they can master the skills in summary writing, giving students exercises, marking and correcting their mistakes regularly. This will go a long way to arouse student's interest and motivate them to make efforts to master summary writing skills. On the other hand, the 5% that disagree with the assertion implies that teacher's motivation to students can fail to get them learn. This can happen because students may misunderstand the motive of the teacher. Some students too may take teachers motivation for granted. In this regard, teachers' motivation may not help students to master summary writing skills.

#### **4.3. Research Question One**

What are student's difficulties in Summary Writing?

Analysis of data collected during this study reveals the following as the difficulties of students in summary writing.

##### **4.3.1 Teacher quality**

One of the major challenges in inhibiting students' ability to master summary writing skills bothers on the quality of the teachers handling English Language in our Senior High Schools. Interviews conducted during this study with teachers of English language reveal that most of the teachers teaching English language at the Senior High School Level were not trained to teach English language. The researcher interviewed four teachers in the English department of Bolgatanga Technical Institute and discovered that all the four teachers' interviewed had their first degree in different areas of study rather than English Language. None of the teachers interviewed studied English Language specifically at the first degree level which is a limitation as to how well they can handle the subject especially when it comes to teaching summary writing skills.

This study also found out that only one out of the four teachers interviewed has a second degree in English Language. The rest are at various levels of attaining their second degrees.

Even the teacher who has the Second Degree in English Language in Bolgatanga Technical School does not still meet the standard qualification to teach English Language in the Senior High School. The reason being that the said teacher has attained the First Degree in a different field. This means that his training is not complete and as such can pose challenges to students who depend largely on their teacher's experiences to be able to must summary writing skills. Ideally, the First and Second Degrees should be in English language so that the English language teacher will be properly trained to be able to handle the subject without difficulties. Students' success in learning especially those with poor academic background depends so much on the experiences of their teachers. Students usually believe their teachers know everything pertaining to the subjects they teach. In this case if the teacher lacks the required knowledge to teach a particular skill such as summary writing skill, it will affect the students understanding of the skill.

#### **4. 3.2 Teacher Skill Upgrading**

Building the capacity of teachers who are already in the field can help refresh their skills of teaching and equip them with new skills which can enhance their teaching which will also translate into the improvement of students understanding especially in summary writing. However, the researcher's interaction with the English teachers showed that there has never been a single in-service training for members of the department since they started teaching in the school. The lack of in-service training



for teachers slows down students' ability to acquire learning skills such as summary writing skills.

The methods of teaching English language keep changing according to the dynamics of the language. The methods that are used today in teaching English language may not be useful few years to come due to new discoveries that may be made in the study of the language.

When this happens, teachers of the language will need to update their teaching methods and also equip themselves with new methods of teaching in order to be able to teach their students in line with new changes in the language. Where there is no in-service training for teachers already in the service, teachers will lack these new methods which will impact negatively on their teaching of language skills including summary writing skills. The situation in Bolgatanga technical institute where teachers interviewed mentioned they have never had any in-service training since they started teaching in the school can be one of the reasons the students in that school have challenges in summary writing. Some of the teachers said they have been teaching in the school since 2015 and yet have not experienced a single in-service training to update their teaching skills.

#### **4.3.3. Students misconception about summary writing**

Another major difficulty student face when it comes to mastering summary writing skill as the researcher found out has to do with the wrong notion generally held by students that summary writing is a difficult topic to study. After administering the questionnaire, thirty-six (36) students representing 90% out of the forty (40) students who participated agreed with the assertion that summary writing is a very difficult

topic to study. This misconception among students makes them to lose interest in the first place in learning summary writing. Interest is an important factor in learning and so it will really be difficult for students to master summary writing as they lack interest in the topic as a result of misconception that summary writing is a difficult topic to study.

The four English teachers interviewed affirmed that the notion among students that summary writing is a difficult topic to study possess a big challenge in learning the skill. In fact, one of the teachers commented “with the notion that summary writing is a difficult topic, most students do not even make efforts to study and understand the topic”.

One of the topics under English language that is misconceived among students the most is summary writing. One of such misconceptions is that, summary writing is extremely difficult to understand.

Students believe that no matter how much teachers teach summary writing or no matter how hard students study the topic, students will never understand it. Another misconception that students have about summary writing is that summary writing is not important after school. Students believe that summary writing is only meant for examination. In fact, it is interesting to note that students believe examiners only bring summary write in examination to punish students.

These misconceptions about summary writing led to students giving the topic funny names such as “almighty summary” meaning summary writing is as “strong” as almighty God. Students also name summary writing as the “zero zone” which means when it comes to the English paper, students score zero marks in summary. Summary

writing has also been nicknamed by students as the “no go area” by these students imply that summary writing is an area one should not tackle either when studying or when writing the English paper. This misconception caused students to dread the topic and this is what contributes to their challenges in mastering summary writing.

The study also reveals the following as difficulties students face in learning summary writing. They include; students’ inability to read and to comprehend passages to be summarized.

In response to whether students’ inability to read summary passages constitutes a difficulty in mastering summary writing skill, thirty-seven (37) representing 93% out of the forty (40) students who responded to the questionnaire agree that their inability to read the summary passages constitute a difficulty in mastering summary writing skills.

Concerning the issue of not often able to comprehend the summary passages, thirty – five (35) representing 88% of the forty students who participated in the questionnaire agree that their inability to normally comprehend the summary passages is a big difficulty they encounter in mastering summary writing skills. Most of the students were also of the view that passages meant for summary work are usually very difficult to deal with. Twenty –seven (27) students out of forty (40) students disagree with an assertion that summary passages are not normally above average. This idea does not help them to easily master the summary writing skills.

#### **4.3.4. Understanding the demands of summary**

In the course of this study, the researcher discovered that one of the difficulties students face when it comes to summary writing exercise is their inability to

understand the demands of the summary questions. Out of the forty (40) students who responded to the questionnaire, twenty –two (22) students representing 55% agreed that students are often not very clear with the demands of the summary questions and this causes them to write irrelevant things down as answers. This makes them easily score low marks in summary exercises which is a demotivation to them in trying to master summary writing.

Understanding the demands of a question leads to answering the questions appropriately. On the other hand, if the demands of the questions are not clear to students, there is no way the students can make a head way in answering the questions. For example, a question demands students to summarize in three sentences one for each, the three major common feature third world countries possess. Students answered this question by stating the three major common features in one long sentence. This clearly shows that the students did not clearly understand the demands of the question. Where students even identify the main idea of the text, presenting the main idea according to the requirement of the question is a challenge to students.

#### **4.3.5. How to identify main ideas / topic sentences?**

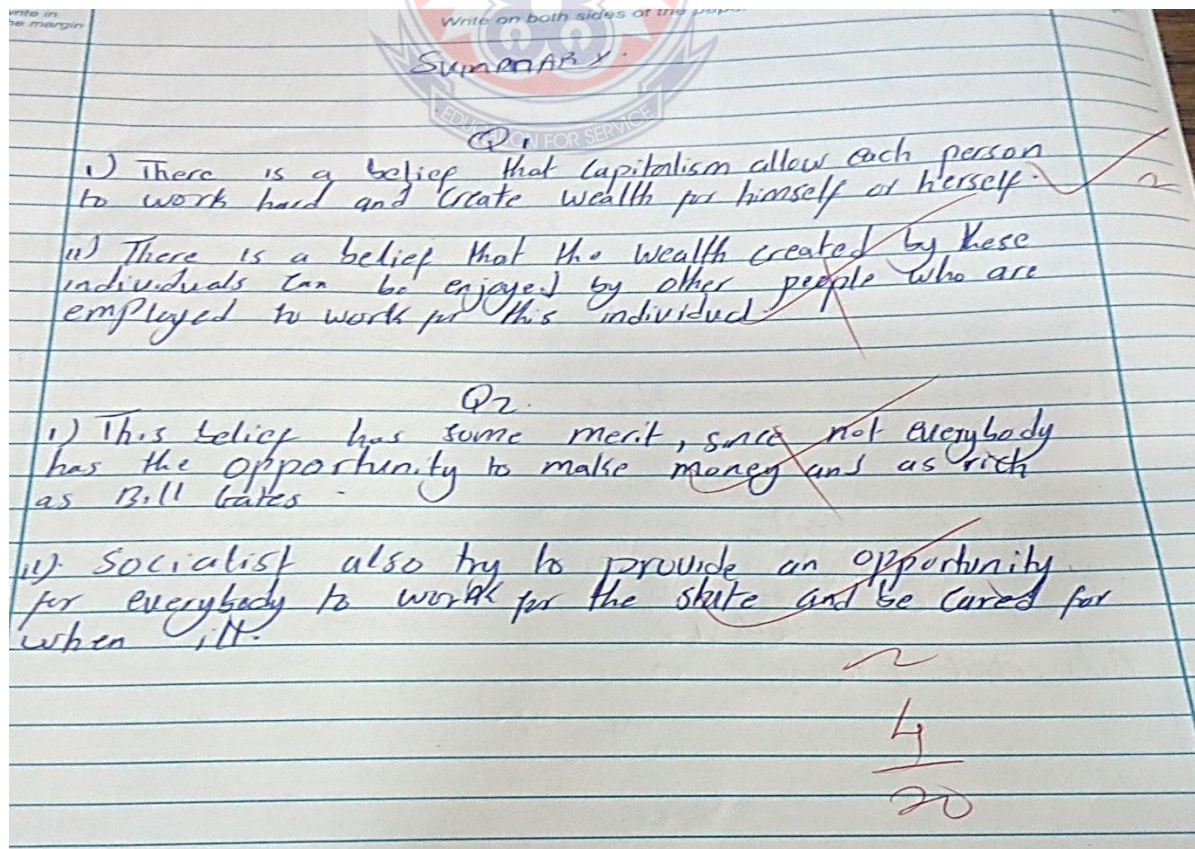
Another difficulty that students face in learning how to summarize a text as was discovered in this study has to do with students' inability to identify the main ideas in the text. Twenty –seven (27) students representing 68% out of forty (40) students who partook in the questionnaire agreed that it is difficult identifying answers in a passage to questions that are often asked.

The main task about summary writing is to identify the main ideas in a text and rewrite these ideas in one's own words as much as possible. Summary passages are

usually written in paragraphs and each paragraph contains a central ideas followed by explanations of the central idea. Students are then supposed to read carefully and identify the main ideas write them in their own words as such as possible in answer to the questions that will be ask on the passage. However, it was discovered that majority of students have difficulty usually identifying the main ideas in a text.

Failure to identify the central ideas of the text to be summarized is what accounts for students copying whole paragraphs down as answers or write complete chaff as answers to summary questions. This difficulty of students was amply demonstrated in a summary exercise they did. As part of this study, students were given a text to summarize and they could not properly identify the main idea in the text to be summarized.

Below are marked students exercises;





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Question No. ....

SECTION A

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~~1) Comprehension~~

SUMMARY

1) In capitalist countries like America there is a belief that capitalism allow each person to work hard and create wealth for himself or herself. Capitalist nations argue that it is not wrong for individuals to be very rich when they are able to look after other people in the society.

2) Socialist nations look at things slightly differently. However, socialist nations have not achieved what they have not been able to wipe out poverty.

$\frac{1}{20}$

The first question is in two folds, (I and II). The student failed to follow this order in presenting his answers. Besides, he re-wrote some parts of the passages down as his answers.

This is because, the student could not identify the main idea in the text where the answer is centered. The second question is also in two folds (I and II); Here the student had deviated totally from the main idea and presented irrelevant information as answer to the question. This student also did not understand the demands of the question which requires him to have stated the answer in two clear separate sentences. The above samples amply indicate that the student has a problem identifying the main idea in the text.

In the case of the second student, he understood that each question is in two folds thus he stated his answers in two separate sentences. However, the student failed to present precise answers to the question. He wrote down some portions of the passage word for word as answers. This makes his answers unnecessarily long thereby defeating the idea of summary. The main problem of this student is his inability to differentiate between the main idea and the supporting sentences.

The difficulties of students in summary writing can be reversed. However, for this to happen, it will take the efforts of all stakeholders in education such as the educational authorities, teachers, parents, Non-governmental Organizations and students themselves.

#### **4.4 Research Question Two**

How do the difficulties students of Bolgatanga Technical Institute face in summary writing impact on their performance? The researcher at this point wanted to find out

how the difficulties students face in summarizing texts impact on their performance. Engagement with the English Language teachers revealed the issues discussed below;

#### **4.4.1. Scoring low marks in summary writing reduces Students total marks in the English Language Paper**

Teachers' views were sought through interviews on how student's poor performance in summary writing impact on their general performance. It was revealed by the teachers that students' weakness in summary writing impacts negatively on their performance in the English Language paper. This they said is because summary as a component of the English paper usually takes up to thirty (30) marks, and most students often score little or no marks at all in the summary. This often leads to poor performance in the paper.

Some response of the teachers in this regard are as follows;

One teacher said "the summary part of the English paper carries a lot of marks and so student's inability to answer summary passages well lead to no or low marks". Marks scored in summary influences the overall marks of the English language paper in the sense that summary carries equal marks as the essay and comprehensions do depending on what examination it is. If students therefore scored zero in summary, it will negatively affect the overall performance. This is more so because it is not likely the students will score so high marks in the other aspect of the paper to make up for the loss marks in summary. Another teacher had this to say "summary is critical component of the English language paper so any student who performs poorly in summary writing is likely to fail the paper or perform poorly in it. This comment still buttresses the fact that a student's score in summary can either make or mar his or her overall performance in the English Paper.



The point is that summary is so important a part of the English paper and until students take it serious, it will continue to affect their performance in the English paper negatively. A teacher also said “student’s low performance in summary writing majorly affects their responses to comprehension passages there by leading to their poor overall performance in the English paper”. There is a link between summary and comprehension which is reading. Once a student is able to read a text and identify the main idea and present the main idea in his or her own words as much as possible as often required in summary exercise, it become easier for such students to handle comprehension exercise which also requires reading a text, understanding the text and using the understanding to answer any questions that are asked on the passage that has been read.

#### **4.4.2. Students difficulty in summary writing negatively affect their ability to handle reading comprehension exercises**

It was discovered through interviews with the teachers that students who do not perform well in summary writing exercises also do not normally do well in comprehension exercises too. This means that student’s inability in summarizing negatively impact on their performance in reading comprehension exercise. Reading comprehension and summarization are closely linked. The ability to handle summary or comprehension exercise depends on how well a student is able to read and understand a written text. Students who therefore have a difficulty in understanding the main idea of a text will find it difficult to answer comprehension questions correctly. Thirty – one (31) students representing 78% of the forty (40) students participating in the questionnaire agree that mastering summary writing skills makes reading comprehension exercise simple.

Also, out of the forty (40) students who responded to the questionnaire, thirty-two (32) students representing 80% agreed that majority of students do score low marks in summary during examinations and thirty (30) students representing 75% also agreed that the poor performance in summary negatively impact on their overall performance in the English Language paper. The students revealed that the huge mark they lose in summary reduces significantly their overall marks leading to failure.

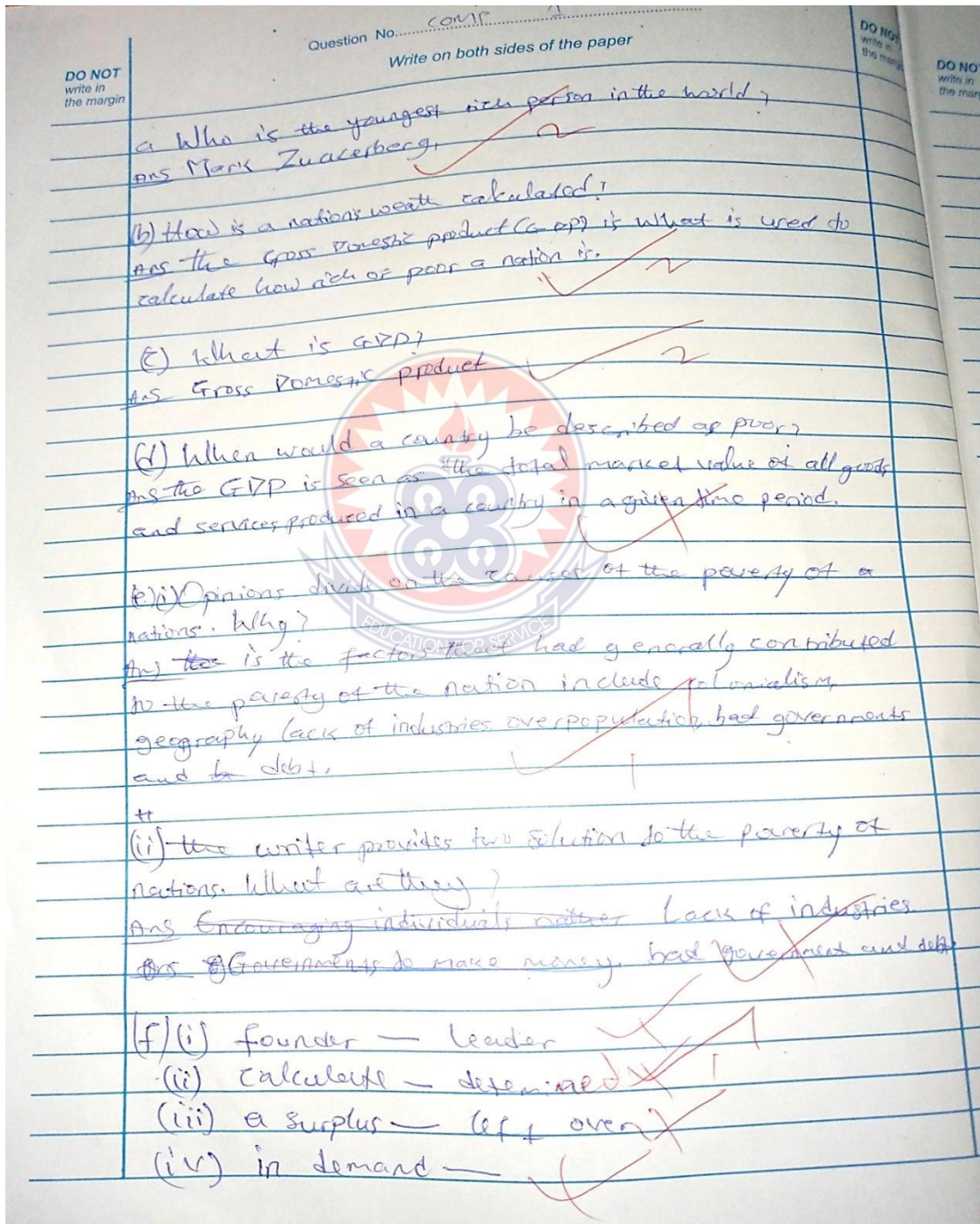
When teachers of English language were asked whether or not the inability of students in summary writing negatively affect them in other aspects of the subject, they commented as follows;

One teacher said, ‘‘ in other areas of the English language, students who cannot summarize properly may fill the writing especially essay, with irrelevant material or information’’.

Another teacher has this say ‘‘ comparatively, student’s inability in summary writing adversely affect them also in the area of answering comprehension questions.

From the comments of the teachers of English language interviewed, it is abundantly clear that the weakness of students in summary does not only affect them summarization but also in comprehension exercises. This is so because both summary and comprehension require similar process in arriving at answers to the questions often asked. The two exercises require students to be able to read the passage, clearly understand what the passage is about, be able to analyze the passage and explain the main ideas in their own words as much as possible. In this case, if a student is unable to read, understand, explain briefly the main ideas of a passage, such student can neither summarize that text nor answer comprehension questions.

Below are samples of students' comprehension exercises. These samples provide evidence of how student difficulties in summary writing impacts negatively on their ability in doing comprehension exercise. The connection is that summary writing develops student ability to think critically, analyze and interpret written text and the same qualities are also required in comprehension exercises





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Question No.....

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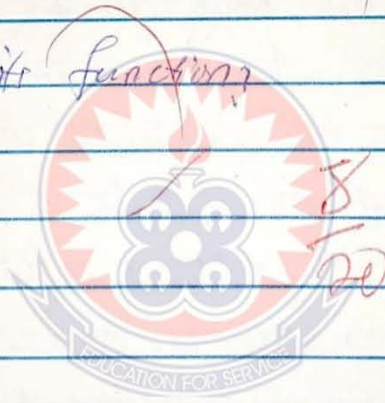
v. the bulk → needs ✓

vi. object — abdate ✓

g. Greedy and often corrupt individuals ✓

(i) What grammatical name is given to this expression? ✓

(ii) What is its function? ✓



Question No. Section A

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### Comprehension

(1) # Mark Zuckerberg ✓

(2) The Gross Domestic Product ✓

(3) GDP is what is used to calculate how rich or poor a nation is. ✓

(a) Colonisation, geography, like lack of industries over solution.

(b)

(c) For instance, many of the poor nations of the world are becoming poorer and rich nations are growing richer.

(d) They are

(i) Tourist services, (ii) medical services ✓

f

(i) pounds ✓

(ii) calculated ✓

(iii) surplus ✓

(iv) in demand ✓

(v) the bulk ✓

(vi) subject ✓

#

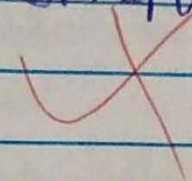


Question No.....

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① Greedy and often corrupt individuals.

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Question No. 1

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## Comprehension

(a) Mark Zuckerberg ✓

(b) The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is what is used to calculate how rich or poor a nation is. ✓

(c) GDP  $\Rightarrow$  is seen as "the total market value of all goods and services produced in a country in a given time period." ✓

(d) A country would be describe as poor when the GDP per Capital of 765 or less is defined as a low-income or poor country. ✓

(e) The factors that had generally contributed to the poverty of these late nation include Colonialism, geography, lack of industry, overpopulation, bad governments and debt. ✓

(ii) you must produce enough to satisfy home consumption needs Greedy and often corrupt individuals ✓

(iii) and have a surplus for export.

F(i) founder  $\Rightarrow$  Owner ✓(ii) calculate  $\Rightarrow$  Count ✓(iii) a surplus  $\Rightarrow$  remaining / left ✓



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Question No.....

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- (iv) In demand  $\Rightarrow$  based on
- (v) the bulk  $\Rightarrow$  country/nation
- (vi) object  $\Rightarrow$  great

g- Free Greedy and often corrupt individuals  $\Rightarrow$  selfish and stealing others.

- (i) How ~~a nation~~ to know whether a nation is rich or poor
- ii:

6  
20





Observing the exercise of students above, it confirms the comments of the teachers that students' inability to read written text, understand the main ideas of the text and interpret such ideas in their words as required in summary, also affects them negatively in doing comprehension. From the students exercise it can be realized that where the question does not demand explanation but just names of persons or things and simple definitions as in questions 'a' and 'b' above, students were able to find the correct answers. On the other hand, it is also realized from the exercises above that where questions demand a little explanation on the writer's ideas expressed in the passage, students were found wanting. In such cases students resorted to copying parts of the passage down for answers as seen in questions 'd' and 'e' in the sample above. Students skipped some of the questions not because time was beating them, but because they could not understand the passage and so did not know what to write. In order not to leave the paper blank, students resorted to writing irrelevant information both from the passage and out of the passage in answer to the questions asked on the passage. Good summary writing skills will not only help these students in summarization but also in doing comprehension exercise.

#### **4.4.3. How difficulties in summary writing impact on other areas of study apart from English Language.**

All the four English teachers interviewed admitted that summary writing skill has a link to all areas of study. The students also affirmed this in their response to the questionnaire. Both teachers and students are of the view that since summarizing improves an individual's ability to think critically, analyze and interpret an original text, difficulties in summarizing will therefore negatively impact on all other areas of study since almost all subjects of study require critical thinking, understanding,

analysis, and interpretation. One of the teachers interviewed commented “students find it difficult to appropriately respond to fill in types of question which normally demand brief statement of the salient ideas”.

The fill in types of questions normally demand precise responses that will answer the question correctly when put in the space provided. A student, who has the skill of summarization which also deals with precision in writing, is in a better position to answer these types of question than one with poor summarization skills.

The impacts of students’ difficulties in summary writing also affect their abilities in other areas such as comprehension fill in type of tests, essays and other areas of study besides English language.

#### **4.5. Research Questions Three**

How can students overcome difficulties in summary writing?

The researcher sought to find out from both teachers and students, how the difficulties students of Bolgatanga Technical Institute face in summary writing can be overcome and their opinions were expressed as follows;

##### **4.5.1. Improving Students reading ability**

All the teachers interviewed pointed out that for students to be able to overcome their difficulties in summary writing, their reading ability must be worked on.

The teachers revealed that reading is key in mastering summarization. This is because students must be able to read the text to be summarized, understand it so as to be able to rewrite it in their own words briefly. One of the teachers had this to say “Students can only overcome their difficulties in summary writing if teachers will painstakingly

assist them to first of all overcome their reading difficulties”. It should be however noted that, improving students reading ability will take the collective efforts of teachers, students, parents and educational authorities.

Each of these stakeholders has their roles to play. The teacher should be ready to teach to the best of his or her ability and be opened enough for students to be able to approach him or her to help them out of their learning difficulties. The teachers should be innovative and motivating enough and able to use all resources at his disposal to make teaching and learning enjoyable for his students. Students too have an important role to play to help themselves overcome their summary writing difficulties. Students must love and appreciate the importance of the topic. They must be willing to stay in class and actively participate in summary writing lessons, they should do the class exercises and assignments their teachers give them in summary writing. On the part of parents, their role does not just end in ensuring their wards are given enough provisions to go to school.

Parents should also be interested in what their ward are learning in school. They can do this in a number of ways. They can check their wards exercise and notes when they come from school, they should also look at the test papers their wards bring home at the end the term. This will help parents see the learning difficulties their wards may be having including difficulties in summary writing. With this they will know the steps to take to arrest the situation. The educational authorities have the biggest role to play; they must provide all the facilities needed for teaching and learning. They must also employ qualified teachers who will teach students effectively. The education authorities should particularly stock school libraries with current and good reading

materials. This will help students cultivate the habit of reading which will go a long way to solve their summary writing challenges.

Twenty –three (23) of the students representing 58% out of the forty (40) who respondents to the questionnaire alluded to the fact that improving students reading ability will make summary writing easy.

#### **4.5.2. The use of appropriate teaching and learning materials and modern techniques of teaching.**

The teachers during the interview revealed that using appropriate teaching and learning materials will enhance students understanding and facilitate their mastery of summary writing. The teachers lamented that the lack of teaching and learning materials compel teachers to teach abstractly which does not enhance students understanding. According to the teachers, English language teachers should update their techniques and skills of teaching summary writing regularly. The teachers are of the view that modern techniques and methods of teaching summary writing can help students understand the concept and technicalities involved in summary writing. It was revealed that the lack of in–service training for teachers of English Language in Senior High Schools (SHS) does not help matters at all as far as updating of teachers’ skills is concerned.

Regular in-service training will help teachers of English Language acquire new and better methods of teaching the subject especially summarization for students to understand. Talking about improving teacher’s skills, thirty –two (32) out of the forty (40) students’ participation in the questionnaire representing 80% sided with the view

that when teachers are equipped with new skills of teaching summarization, students can overcome their difficulties in summary writing.

The need for in-service training for serving teachers is now more pronounced due to the shifts in language teaching methods. Teachers must be abreast with these methods so they can apply them instead of still using the traditional methods. Another factor that makes in-service training indispensable is the issue of technology. There are innumerable advantages technology presents to the teacher today. These advantages include; teaching and learning materials, simple lesson planning and delivery programmes, faster teaching and learning process among others. Technology has improved access to information, places, and other resources a teacher may want to use in the teaching and learning process. All this valuable information can be accessed on the internet by educational authorities and used to equip teachers through in-service training programmes. This will definitely make teaching and learning effective including the teaching of summary writing.

#### **4.5.3. Student motivation**

Teachers of English language motivating their students were discovered by the researchers as one of the factors that can help students overcome their difficulties in summary writing. In responding to the questionnaire, thirty-three (33) students of forty (40) students representing 83% agreed that when they are motivated by their teachers it arouses their interest in summary writing and that can help them overcome any difficulty they face in mastering the skill. The motivation can be done in various ways as the teachers interviewed revealed. They believe that giving regular summary exercises, marking and explaining students' difficulties to them will motivate the students to work hard to overcome their difficulties in summary writing. One of the

teachers said “Reading clubs in schools can be formed and students encouraged to join and participate in. Adequate reading materials should be supplied to students to encourage them read.”

Students will also be motivated when teachers talk to them regularly on the need to take summary writing seriously pointing out to them some benefits they stand to gain from summary writing skills even after school life. Also, organizing some competitions in summary writing for students and giving tokens to winners can motivate students to get more interested in learning the topic which can help them overcome their challenges in summary writing.

Improving students reading ability facilitates their understanding of what they read thereby reducing the difficulties they face when summarizing.

#### **4.5.4. Qualification of teachers**

This study has discovered that if students will overcome the difficulties they face in summary writing, then the qualification of teachers of English language must be looked at.

The researcher found out that none of the four teachers interviewed has studied English Language at the first degree level and only one teacher of the four has a second degree.

The situation of the teachers here does not meet the required qualification for English teachers at Senior High School level. Teachers with sound background in the English language will be able to teach students better to overcome their difficulties in summarizing a text. Twenty –two (22) students out of the forty (40) students that

responded to the questionnaire agreed with the view that English teachers with good background in English language can help them overcome the difficult.

The situation where we find teachers who did not study English language in the University but are teaching English language in our Senior High School is as a result of shortage of qualified English language teachers in the system. Educational authorities can roll out a programme which will grant study leave to all teachers teaching English language in Senior High School without holding degree in English language. Incentive packages should also be made available to attract teachers to go to the University and study English language. All these measures can help improve the qualification of teachers teaching English language in the Senior High Schools.

#### **4.5.5 Provision of Reading facilities by educational authorities**

The teachers interviewed mentioned that the poor vocabulary base of students is as a result of the limited reading material available to them. This situation kills students' interest in reading hence the difficulties they face in mastering summary writing. Facilities such as well stocked libraries, text books, dictionaries and internet services when provided in our Senior High Schools will arouse students' interest in reading and increase their vocabulary. Reading improves once writing. This is because, reading is equips us with vocabulary and once a person is rich in vocabulary he/she is able to express him/herself clearly. Unfortunately, however, most of our Senior High Schools in Ghana do not either have libraries or have poorly stocked libraries that cannot help students. A situation like this reduces students' interest in reading. On the other hand, if the schools are stocked with good reading materials, it sustains students' interest in reading and those students who do not even like reading, will be

motivated to read. When students become readers, they become good summarizers too.

#### **4.5.6 Avoid teaching summary writing abstractly**

For students to overcome their difficulties in summary writing, teachers of English Language must avoid teaching summary writing abstractly. During observation the researcher discovered that the common method that is used among the teachers of English language at Bolgatanga Technical Institute in teaching summary writing is abstract method of teaching.

It was observed that teachers come to teach summary writing without copies of the passage to be summarized given to the students to follow.

The teacher reads a passage while the students listen after which the teacher explains the passage and mentions some step in summary writing to students. Students are then instructed to summarize the passage under discussion mostly in a number of sentences. This way of teaching summary writing will definitely make it difficult for students to master summary writing skills.

Teachers of English Language should avoid teaching summary writing abstractly and normally ensure that all the students have the passage for discussion. Students should be involved in the reading and explanation of the passage. The students should be guided practically to learn how to identify topic sentences or main ideas in each paragraph of the passage. This will help students overcome the problem of not being able identify main ideas in written text.



#### **4.6. Section Summary**

From the discussion of the findings of this study, it is clear that students really have challenges when it comes to mastering summary writing skills. Both teachers and students share the view that the problem exist. The picture of the problem from both teachers and student does suggest that the problem is getting any better. The blame for this problem is not on one party but a number of stakeholders in education including Ministry of Education, Ghana Education Service, School Heads, Teachers, Students and Parents. It is concluded that if all these parties play their roles as expected of them, the problem of students having challenges in mastering summary writing can be solved. The qualification for teaching English language at Senior High School level has been compromised as a result of the acute shortages of English language teachers in the system. To worsen the case, there are no regular in-service training programmes to fill the gap. Through in-service training programs, teachers can be given capacity building which will make them more efficient. Summary is an everyday practice either in a formal or informal way. Once the skill is acquired it remains useful throughout a person's life. It is not limited to academic exercises in the classroom as students sometimes think. The research work in summary writing was therefore a welcoming news to both teachers and students as they considered the benefits they stand to gain.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter is the last section of this study. The chapter is made up of the overview of the research findings, recommendations and conclusions.

#### 5.1 Summary of findings.

The conduct of this research was triggered by the quest of the researcher to find answers to the following research questions:

1. What are students' difficulties in summary writing?
2. How do the difficulties students face in summary writing impact on their performance?
3. How can students overcome difficulties in summary writing?

#### 5.2 Reach Question One

What are students' difficulties in summary writing?

A number of difficulties students face in mastering summary writing skills were discovered by the researcher during this study. The discovery of these compelled the researcher to dig deep into the situation to find out how these difficulties faced by students in learning summary writing impact on their performance and see how students can be helped to overcome the difficulties they face. Through the interviews, questionnaire, observation and exercises conducted for students by the researcher, a number of factors were revealed as the difficulties students face in summary writing. The English language background of most of the teachers handling English Language in the Senior High School present a huge difficulty for students in learning English

Language especially summary writing skills. Four teachers of English Language were interviewed during this study and it was revealed that all four teachers studied different subjects at first degree level. This means that all these teachers were not trained to teach English language and might not be able to help students to understand the subject well.

The researcher again discovered that there was no regular in-service training for teachers of English Language to upgrade their skills and equip them with new method of teaching. Further, the study discovered that students' misconception about the topic 'summary writing' constitutes a difficulty in their mastering of the skill. One of the teachers interviewed commented that because of the notion among students that summary writing is difficult many students do not even make the effort to study it. It also came to light that students have a difficulty in understanding demands of summary exercises. Fifty-Five percent (55%) of students participating in the questionnaire agreed that students are not often clear with the demand of summary task. The researcher also discovered that students have a difficulty in identifying the main idea in a text. Sixty-eight percent of (68%) of the students who took part in the questionnaire agree that it is often difficult to find the main idea of a text.

### **5.3 Research question two**

How do the difficulties students face in summary writing impact on their performance? It was discovered through teachers of English language that students' inability in summary writing results in scoring low marks and sometime zero mark in the summary questions which consequently affect their performance in English language test negatively. The researcher also discovered that students who are weak in summary writing are also weak in reading and comprehension work. It came to

light that the inability of students to identify main ideas in text as required in summary writing is also seen in their reading and comprehension exercises. Seventy-percent (70%) of the students who participated in the questionnaire agreed that mastering summary will make reading and comprehension exercises simple for students. Another discovery by this study is that the difficulties students have in summary writing affect them negatively in other subjects apart from English Language. The teachers of English language that were interviewed commented that students who are unable to analyze passages critically to be able to identify main ideas as is the case in summary writing are equally unable to perform well in related subjects.

#### **5.4 Research Question Three**

How can students overcome their difficulties in summary writing?

From the teachers of English and students interviewed by the researcher, it was discovered that one major factor that can help students overcome their weakness in summary writing is to improve upon their reading ability. The teachers noted that good reading is key in mastering summary writing. This is because students must be able to read the text, understand it so as to be able to rewrite it in their own words. One of the teachers had this to say 'Students can only overcome their difficulties in summary writing if teachers will painstakingly assist them to first of all overcome their reading difficulties'. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the students through the questionnaire alluded to the fact that improving students reading ability will help them master summary writing easily. Another discovery was that appropriate teaching and learning materials and usage by teachers of English Language couple with modern teaching techniques will enhance students understanding and facilitate their mastering

of summary writing. Eighty percent of students through the questionnaire affirmed that equipping teachers with new skills of teaching summarization will help students overcome their difficulties in summary writing. Motivating students to learn was also mentioned by both teachers and students as one of the things that can help overcome their difficulties in summary. Giving regular summary exercises, marking and explaining students' difficulties to them will motivate students to work hard.

The researcher also discovered that if teachers of English Language have good background in the subject, they will be able to help students overcome their challenges in summary writing. Fifty-five percent (55%) of the students responding to the questionnaire agreed to the view that teachers with good background in English language can help them better in overcoming their difficulties in summary writing. It was also revealed that provision of good reading materials and other related teaching and learning facilities for English language will help students a great deal in overcoming their challenges in summary writing.

Also it came to light that, if English language teachers will avoid teaching summary writing abstractly and make their teaching practical by using appropriate teaching and learning materials, it will enhance students understanding of the skill and help them overcome their difficulties in summary writing.

### **5.5 Recommendation**

The researcher made the following recommendations following the findings revealed by the study.

1. Qualification for teachers of English language should be restrictive. Only teachers who have studied English language in accredited Universities and

have acquired the prescribed certificate should be allowed to teach English language in our Senior High Schools.

2. Teachers already in the service should regularly be given in-service training. This will refresh their teaching skills and equip them with new techniques and methods of teaching summary writing.
3. School authorities should motivate teachers of English language by instituting award schemes for them to engender competition among them.
4. Educational authorities such as Ghana Education service (GES) should regularly provide textbooks and other reading materials to schools. This will help aroused students interest in reading which is key to mastering summary writing.
5. More research work should be done in the area of summary writing in order to unearth all the challenges in teaching and learning summary writing.
6. School authorities should to cause clubs such as reading and debate clubs to be formed in schools to encourage students to read and this will improve their ability in summarization.
7. Class sizes should not be large as is the case currently in schools. Class sizes should not exceed thirty-five (35) for effective classroom management.
8. Teachers should always motivate students to learn summary writing by regularly attending to their weaknesses and encouraging them to practice.
9. Teachers of English language should up their game by being regular and punctual in class, giving equal attention to the various aspects of the English language including summary writing.

### **5.6. An Area for Further Research**

Due to time and financial constraints, this study could not touch on the relevance of summary skills beyond the classroom. It was realized that students were ignorant of the relevance of summary writing skills in the world of work. Further study in this regard is, therefore is needed to motivate students especially in Bolgatanga Technical Institute to appreciate the relevance of summary skills in the world of work.



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## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE FOR TEACHERS IN ENGLISH

#### DEPARTMENT-BOLGATANGA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

This interview is being administered to gather information for a study that is investigating student difficulties in summary writing. Please be assured that data collected is only for the purpose of the research.

1. In your view what are the difficulties students have when it comes to summarizing text/passage?

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2. Students have a general notion that summary writing is a difficult topic, in your view how does this affect students' ability to master the skill?

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3. Is students' inability to read well a challenge to them in mastering summary writing?

Yes/No If yes, how?

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4. How does students' low performance in summary affect their overall performance in the English paper?



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5. How does students' inability in summary writing affect them in other areas of study?

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6. Summary writing skill promotes critical thinking and analysis. In your view, how does the lack of this skill impact negatively on students' academics?

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7. Please what course did you do at your first degree level?

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8. Do you have second degree please? Yes/No

If yes, which area of study?

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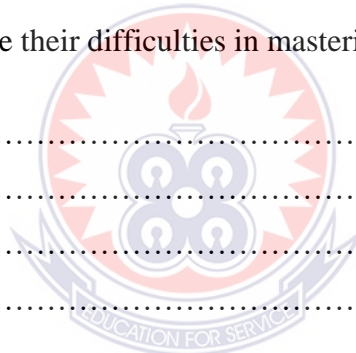


9. In your candid view, how can teachers of English Language help students overcome their difficulties in summary writing?

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10. What do you think the educational authorities concerned should do to help students overcome their difficulties in mastering summary writing skill?

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THANK YOU

## APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

DEPARTMENT OF APPLIED LINGUISTIC

### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire is being administered to collect information on the difficulties students face in summary writing in Bolgatanga Technical Institute in the Bolgatanga Municipality. This exercise is purely for academic purpose and as a respondent you are assured of confidentiality. Your unbiased responses to the questions below will help ensure a successful completion of this study.

Please tick where appropriate []

#### Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your gender? Male (  ) Female (  )
2. What is your age range? 15 – 16 years (  ) 17 – 18 years (  ) 19 or more (  )
3. Which class are you? 1<sup>st</sup> Year (  ) 2<sup>nd</sup> Year (  ) 3<sup>rd</sup> Year (  )

#### Section B: Students difficulties in summary writing

4. Please tick [] to indicate your level of agreement to the statements below.

Use the following keys; strongly agree (SA) – 4; Agree (A) – 3; Disagree (D) – 2; Strongly disagree (SD) – 1

<b>No. Statement</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
a) Summary Writing is a difficult exercise				
b) Passages to be summarized are usually difficult to comprehend.				
c) Students' inability to read text makes summary work difficult				
d) Texts to be summarized are usually very difficult making summary work difficult to deal with.				
e) Summary questions are often not clear to students.				

- f) It is often very difficult to identify answers in the passage to questions.
- g) Summary passages are not normally above average

1

**Section C: How does difficulty in summary writing impact on student's performance in exams?**

5. Please tick [√] to indicate the extent to which you agree to the statements below.

Use the key 5 – Strongly agree; 4 – Agree; 3 – Not certain, 2 – Disagree; 1 – Strongly Disagree

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a)	Majority of candidates score very low marks in summary during exam.					
b)	Low score in summary affects students overall performance negatively.					
c)	Summary writing skill has a link to other areas of study.					
d)	Total score for summary is insignificant and does not impact on students' performance.					
e)	Summarizing require critical thinking which promotes understanding.					
f)	Mastering summary writing skills makes reading and comprehension exercise simple.					

**SECTION D: How can students overcome challenges in summary writing?**

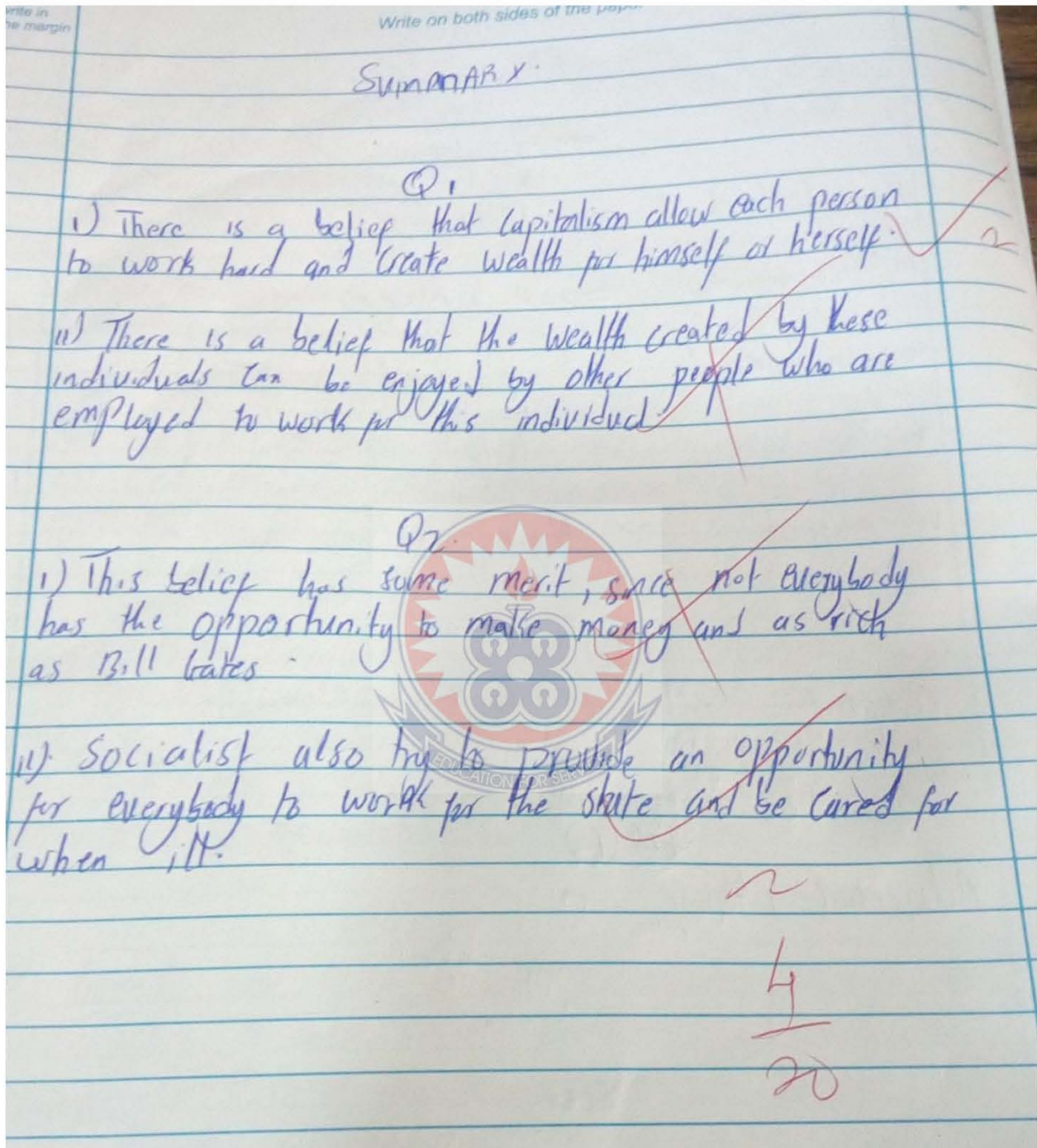
6. Please tick [√] to indicate your level of agreement, to the statements below;

Use the key 5 – Strongly agree; 4 – Agree; 3 – Not certain, 2 – Disagree; 1 – Strongly Disagree

No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
a)	Teachers should be equipped with new skills in teaching summary writing.					
b)	Students' must reject the notion that summarizing is a difficult task.					
c)	Only qualified teachers with good background in the English language should be allowed to teach the subject.					
d)	Summary writing should not be part of the topics to be studied.					
e)	If students' reading ability is improved it will be easy to acquire summary writing skills.					
f)	Reading comprehension and summary writing have no link at all.					
g)	Teacher motivation to students can help them master summary writing.					



### APPENDIX C





~~What is Capitalism~~

## SUMMARY

1- In capitalist countries like America there is a belief that capitalism allows each person to work hard and create wealth for himself or herself. Capitalist nations agree that it is not wrong for individuals to be very rich when they are able to look after other people in the society.

2- Of the 100 things single by differently socialists nations have not achieved however is that they have not been able to wipe out poverty.

1/20

Question No. 1  
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Comprehension

(a) Mark Zuckerberg ✓

(b) The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is what is used to calculate how rich or poor a nation is. ✓

(c) GDP  $\Rightarrow$  is seen as "the total market value of all goods and services produced in a country in a given time period." ✓

(d) A country would be describe as poor when the GDP per Capital of 765 or less is defined as a low-income or poor country. ✓

(e) The Factors that had generally Contributed to the poverty of these lactote nation Include Colonialism, geography, lack of Industry, Overpopulation, bad governments and debt. ✓

(ii) you must produce enough to satisfy home consumption needs Greedy and often Corrupt Individuals ✓

(iii) and have a surplus for export. ✓

(f) founder  $\Rightarrow$  Owner ✓

(ii) Calculate  $\Rightarrow$  Count ✓

(iii) a surplus  $\Rightarrow$  remaining / left ✓



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Question No.....


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(iv) In demand  $\Rightarrow$  based on  
(v) the bulk  $\Rightarrow$  country/nation  
(vi) object  $\Rightarrow$  great

g- Greedy and often corrupt individuals  $\Rightarrow$  selfish  
and stealing others.

(i) How ~~a nation~~ to know whether a nation is rich or poor  
ii:



The logo of the University of Education, Winneba, is a circular emblem. It features a central sun-like symbol with rays, surrounded by a wreath. Below the wreath, the motto "EDUCATION FOR SERVICE" is inscribed on a banner. The entire emblem is rendered in a light, semi-transparent watermark style.

Question No. COM1  
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a) Who is the youngest rich person in the world?  
Ans: Mark Zuckerberg

b) How is a nation's wealth calculated?  
Ans: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is what is used to calculate how rich or poor a nation is.

c) What is GDP?  
Ans: Gross Domestic Product

d) When would a country be described as poor?  
Ans: The GDP is seen as "the total market value of all goods and services produced in a country in a given time period."

e) Opinions divide on the causes of the poverty of a nation. Why?

Ans: The factors that have generally contributed to the poverty of the nation include colonialism, geography, lack of industries, overpopulation, bad governments and in debt.

ii) The writer provides two solutions to the poverty of nations. What are they?

Ans: Encouraging individuals rather than lack of industries.  
Ans: Governments do not make money, bad governments and debt.

f) (i) founder — leader

(ii) calculate — determined

(iii) a surplus — left over

(iv) in demand —



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Question No.....

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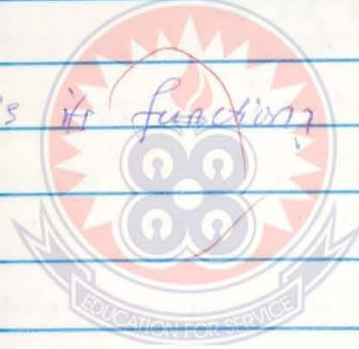
v. the bulk - needs

vi. object - abdate

g. Greedy and often corrupt individuals

ii. What grammatical name is given to this expression?

iii. What is its function?



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Question No. Saebon A

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### Comprehension

- (A) Mark Zuckerberg ✓
- (B) The Gross Domestic Product ✓
- (C) GDP is what is used to calculate how rich or poor a nation is. ✓

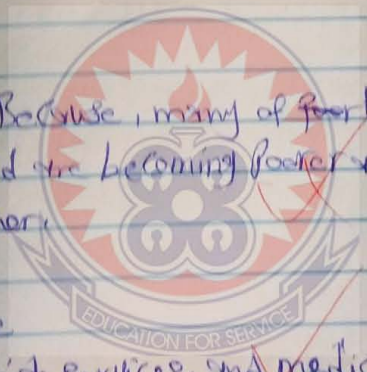
(a) Colonialism, geography, the lack of industries over population.

(b)

(c) For instance, many of the poor nations of the world are becoming poorer and rich nations are growing richer.

(d) They are  
tourist services, and medical services

- (i) found ✓
- (ii) calculated ✓
- (iii) surplus ✓
- (iv) in demand ✓
- (v) the bulk ✓
- (vi) subject ✓





Question No.....

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① Greedy and often corrupt individuals.

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