

EXPLORING THE CONCEPTS OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN A UNIVERSITY IN  
WESTERN AFRICA

by

Joan Nkansaa Nkansah

EdS, The University of West Florida, 2018

MA, Ohio University, 2015

BA, University of Ghana, 2011

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The dissertation of Joan Nkansaa Nkansah, titled Exploring the Concepts of Critical Pedagogy in a University in Western Africa, is approved:

Lydia Kyei-Blankson, PhD, Committee Member

Joseph Blankson, PhD, Committee Member

Mark Malisa, PhD, Committee Chair

Accepted for Department of Educational Research and Administration:

Diane Scott, PhD, Interim Chair

Accepted for the College of Education and Professional Studies:

William Crawley, PhD, Dean

Accepted for the University of West Florida:

Kuiyuan Li, PhD, Dean, Graduate School

## Dedication

*To my family.*

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## **Abstract**

Quality education and appropriate training that students need to become relevant to society are lacking in many Ghanaian universities. The instructional delivery techniques in these universities do not expose students to critical thinking and the development of critical consciousness. However, studies have established that when students possess critical consciousness, they improve themselves and take actions that serve the best interest of society. The identified case is a private university in Ghana that has prioritized cultivating critical thinking skills and developing critical consciousness within students. The strategies for teaching and learning at this university bear similarity with the principles of critical pedagogy. These strategies do not only set the institution apart from other universities but reflect in students' academic and career excellence. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study, therefore, was to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in the university. The study employed critical pedagogy as the conceptual framework with research questions emerging from the concepts (i.e., problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, dialogue) as well as the study's problem and purpose. Eleven purposefully selected participants provided an in-depth illumination of the subject matter. The study's findings revealed that the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in the institution through problem-based curricula content, entrepreneurial skill development, collaborative education, and leadership skill development. The study has policy implications. The findings provide resourceful information to educational leaders on future curriculum and instructional design that are appropriate for individual and national development.

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Education is the foundation for the future sustenance of individuals and society (Freire, 2008; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). This foundation is strengthened through the pursuit of higher education (Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). Higher education should prepare students to be proactive and capable of making changes in the environment to improve human life (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014). Institutions of higher education should, therefore, be more than training students to be passive observers or recipients of information (Ares, 2006; Freire, 2005, 2008). Institutions of higher education should be places of learning where students receive training on how to build and sustain a balanced life (Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). Education, particularly at the tertiary level, is deemed quality when students genuinely understand the information they receive and gain knowledge beneficial to individual and societal development (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014).

Quality education and appropriate training to meet the needs of society should be the key ingredient in the development of curriculum and instructional delivery methods (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Freire, 2008; French, 2009; Gutek, 2014). Several instructional delivery methods influence students' learning outcomes and assess the quality of education students receive in school (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). These instructional methods include traditional face-to-face lectures or expository, direction, collaboration, and discovery (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). The type of instructional delivery methods adopted determines whether students will develop a sense of open-mindedness and logical and critical consciousness required to become productive citizens that meet the needs of society (Freire, 2008; Gutek, 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015).

This research employed a qualitative descriptive case study approach to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa. Expressly, the study explored problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue as concepts informing the instructional delivery methods in this university, which will be referred to in this study as *Oduraa University* to maintain the anonymity of the institution. The strategies for teaching and learning at the institution share many similarities with the principles of critical pedagogy. Also, the uniqueness of the instructional delivery methods in the university does not only set it apart from other universities in the sub-region but also reflects in the academic and career excellence of its students.

Additionally, Oduraa University has gained many prestigious recognitions, including placing number one in Ghana and number nine in Africa on the 2020 Global Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings (MyJoyOnline, 2020; The World University Rankings, 2020). Oduraa University was also ranked among the top 400 higher education institutions in the world on the impact rankings. The rankings assessed the performance and contributions of institutions of higher educations around the world towards achieving the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The rankings also measured the impact of these institutions on global social and economic wellbeing (MyJoyOnline, 2020; The World University Rankings, 2020).

The current study has shed light on the instructional delivery methods this university has adopted and implemented and how it has benefitted its students in their learning outcomes and career success. The findings from the study are valuable to institutions of higher education that seek to address issues relative to designing curriculum and instructional methods. The study findings may also assist college administrators in implementing curriculum and instructional

designs that are meaningful to student learning outcomes. Additionally, the research findings may inform future studies about instructional delivery methods in institutions of higher education.

Chapter 1 provides the contextual background as the basis for the discussion of the contemporary problem in education the researcher seeks to explore through this study. The section will be followed by the purpose of this study, an overview of the conceptual framework, and an overview of the methodology. Subsequently will be an outline of the philosophical based overarching research question and sub-questions that will inform the inquiry. The chapter will also discuss the study's assumptions, delimitations and limitations, and significance to practice, decision-making, and literature. The chapter will provide the operational definitions of the technical terms that will be used in the study, an overview of the organizational structure of the study, and a chapter summary.

### **Background and Contextualization of the Issue**

The pursuit of higher education is a significant achievement in every society (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Kromydas, 2017; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018). It is viewed as the development of critical human capital and resources relevant to progress and societal advancement (Barnett, 2017; Owusu et al., 2016). Higher education produces educated citizenry and well-informed leadership essential for sustainable development (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Kromydas, 2017; Owusu et al., 2016). Thus, institutions of higher education are meant to preserve and guide the creation of knowledge, while providing a space that promotes lifelong learning for society (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Barnett, 2017; Foley, 2007; Kromydas, 2017; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018).

### ***The Aims of Higher Education***

Institutions of higher education offer the appropriate training to students to develop into citizens who build and sustain a stable nation (Barnett, 2017; Kromydas, 2017; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). Education at the tertiary level should, therefore, equip students with a sense of open-mindedness and logical and critical consciousness required to build productive citizens that meet societal needs (Freire, 2008; Gutek, 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). Thus, society establishes universities and colleges with the primary goal to provide services that nurture students to better themselves and eventually the society (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; Sisimwo et al., 2014).

Classroom education contributes to the overall development of individuals (Sisimwo et al., 2014). Effective instructional strategies in the classroom are essential to ensuring students receive the best out of their education in higher institutions (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Sisimwo et al., 2014). Curriculum design and instructional methods, therefore, become relevant to how students understand, learn, and live (Freire, 2008; Gutek, 2014; Sisimwo et al., 2014). Teaching methods such as traditional face-to-face lectures or expository, direction, collaboration, and discovery determine students' learning outcomes (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). These instructional methods also assess the quality of education students receive in school (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015).

Education as the foundation for future sustenance of individuals and society is closely linked to the method of instruction adopted in the intellectual transformation of students (Freire, 2008; Gibbs, 2019; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). Quality education and appropriate training to meet societal needs is essential and should be considered when designing curriculum and instructional strategies (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Freire, 2008;

French, 2009; Gutek, 2014; Kromydas, 2017). Through student-centered instructional methods, students are able to develop reasoning abilities, critical and creative thinking skills, problem-solving techniques, as well as connect knowledge and relate information to different environments and contexts (Freire, 2008; Giroux, 1998; Gutek, 2014). However, student-centered methods of instruction are gradually becoming a thing of the past in the tertiary education system of countries such as Ghana (Awidi, 2008; French, 2009).

### ***Philosophical Underpinnings in Education***

The “banking concept” was a term coined by Paulo Freire (1968) to describe the traditional teacher-centered method of teaching. Freire (1968, 2008), a Brazilian philosopher of education, interpreted this style of teaching as treating students as receptors into which teachers deposit knowledge. Freire (2005, 2008) argued that this method of instruction does not encourage critical consciousness and the ownership of knowledge in students. Freire (1973, 1988) advocated for a teaching-learning environment with a democratic process that is student-centered and incorporates dialogue, democracy, participation, activity, and affectivity as the fundamental characteristics. Freire (1988) defined the democratic learning process of students gaining critical awareness as “conscientization.” According to Freire (1973, 1988), experiences should be lived and not transplanted. Thus, it is only through reflection and action that students develop the consciousness of reality (Freire, 1973, 1988; Rugut & Osman, 2013).

The traditional teacher-centered method or banking concept (Freire, 2005, 2008) of education is a form of instruction in which the relationship between teachers and students is narrative (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014). Thus, teachers deposit information while students listen, record, memorize, and repeat (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014). Students do not have the freedom to create knowledge, and their scope of action includes receiving, filing, and storing

information (Freire, 2005, 2008). There is no creativity and transformation as students are separated from inquiry and only perform the role of listening, memorizing, and repeating the thoughts and ideas teachers narrate in the classroom (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014).

The banking concept or traditional style of teaching is an ideology of oppression (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010; Ekanem et al., 2011; Freire, 2005, 2008). The concept views students as entirely ignorant and does not make room for them to develop critical consciousness. The “banking” method preserves the authority of teachers by minimizing the creative power of students and stimulating their willingness to believe anything that is deposited in them (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010; Ekanem et al., 2011; Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014). This instructional technique creates a constant distance between teachers and students. Thus the distinct roles of students and educators remain constant as the concept does not encourage engagement and interactions among students and between teachers and students (Dale & Hyslop-Margison, 2010; Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014).

### ***Education in Ghana***

Education has always been a priority in Ghana (MacBeath, 2010; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007), although there seems to be the challenge with designing and implementing a model of education that meets the expectations for national development (Arnot, 2008; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). As a result of this challenge, the government has subjected education in Ghana to series of reforms, including the Education Act for Free Universal and Compulsory Education in 1961, the Education Act for the Whole School Development Program in 1987, and the Education Act for the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education in 1996 (MacBeath, 2010; Nudzor, 2014).

Since independence, several governments, including the First Republic, have made attempts to decolonize the minds of Ghanaians by rewriting a new form of education that has no



semblance of the colonial past but have not been entirely successful (Arnot, 2008; MacBeath, 2010). Some features of the Ghana education system can still be traced back to the British colonial past (Segura, 2009). The current instructional delivery methods practiced in Ghanaian educational institutions still bear the remnants of British colonization (Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). For instance, key elements in the dominant instructional methods in Ghana, including the rigid curriculum with limited or no discussions and interaction in the classroom, are the legacy of British colonial rule (Kumar, 1991; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). The classroom layouts with textbooks usage and rigid timetables are also British colonial education influences. Again, the traditional instructional method or banking concept of memorization and repetition in the educational system are attributes of the British colonial education legacy (Arnot, 2008; Kumar, 1991).

### ***University Education in Ghana***

Ghana's first university, the University of Ghana, formerly known as the University College of Gold Coast, was established in 1948 (Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018; Owusu et al., 2016). The University of Ghana served Ghanaians as the only institution of higher education for several decades until the late 1980s when the government formulated new educational policy reforms (Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018; Nudzor, 2014). As of 2017, Ghana had 181 accredited institutions of higher education (National Accreditation Board, 2018). These institutions range from polytechnics, technical universities, colleges of education, nurses training colleges, professional institutions, tutorial colleges, and full-fledged universities, including chartered private tertiary institutions such as Oduraa University (National Accreditation Board, 2018).

### ***Instructional Delivery Methods in Universities in Ghana***

The instructional delivery methods in many of these institutions of higher education in Ghana are the traditional face-to-face lecturing format (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). These institutions rely heavily on using textbooks and structured curriculums with little or no room for student-student or teacher-student interactions (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). These teacher-centered form of instruction restricts students' development of critical and logical thinking and problem-solving skills (Freire, 2008; MacBeath, 2010). Students pursuing higher education expected to receive the appropriate training and orientation relevant to building and sustaining a nation under these learning conditions are unable to create their own knowledge (Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015), as they memorize and reproduce information from teachers. These students lack the sense of creativity and transformation because they are separated from inquiry and only perform the role of listening, memorizing, and repeating the thoughts and ideas of teachers (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015).

Based on the literature (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010; Nggenbe, 2018; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015) and my educational experience in Ghana, teacher-centered instruction and learning characterize tertiary education in Ghana. In these college classrooms, the design of education discourages students from questioning the status quo as well as participating in classroom discussions (Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). The education system encourages students to memorize information from textbooks and teachers and reproduce this information verbatim during examinations (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010). This form of education

does not empower students with the skills to reflect on ideas and the society and to create a knowledge based on opinions and experiences (Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015).

Oduraa University, one of the private universities in Ghana, has set itself apart from the other universities with regards to the instructional delivery methods implemented in the institution (Ajah, 2020; Olting'idi, 2017; Stanford Graduate School of Business [SGSB], 2008). The university, in less than two decades of existence, has advanced in academic excellence (Olting'idi, 2017; Times Higher Education, 2020). Oduraa University maintains a record of 100% of its graduates finding jobs, starting up businesses, or furthering their studies within six months of graduation (Olting'idi, 2017; Times Higher Education, 2020). The mission of the university is to make a significant contribution to addressing the hurdles to Africa's economic progress and development as a continent by educating students to be ethical leaders and critical thinkers (Fortune, 2020; SGSB, 2008). For its many accomplishments, Oduraa University has been recognized in several capacities. The university placed first in Ghana and ninth in Africa on the 2020 Global Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings (MyJoyOnline, 2020; The World University Rankings, 2020). Also, Oduraa University was ranked as one of the top 400 universities worldwide on the impact rankings. Oduraa University gained this recognition because of its performance and contributions towards achieving the United Nations' SDGs and the institution's impact on global social and economic wellbeing (MyJoyOnline, 2020; The World University Rankings, 2020).

Compared to other universities in Ghana, Oduraa University seems to be doing well in the educational formation the institution affords its students. The literature has established that the university has diverted from the traditional teacher-centered method of education and has prioritized cultivating critical thinking skills and developing critical consciousness within

students (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). The literature has also established that the Oduraa University educational experience nurtures entrepreneurial mindsets, ethical leadership, and problem-solving abilities within students (Fortune, 2020; Olting'idi, 2017). However, the literature has not adequately addressed how Oduraa University is cultivating students' critical thinking skills. Also, the literature does not provide in-depth information on the institution's philosophical underpinnings, curriculum, and instructional delivery methods (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). This study, therefore, sought to explore the curriculum and instructional delivery methods of Oduraa University in Ghana and present in-depth, thick, rich descriptions of the teaching and learning processes. The study sought to create an understanding of how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform these strategies of Oduraa University. Further, the study sought to shed light on the kind of instruction and learning at Oduraa University and how they provide students with the training and experience essential to making headway in the social and economic development in Ghana, Africa, and beyond (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008).

### **Problem Statement**

For decades, universities in Ghana have utilized textbooks and traditional face-to-face lectures as the dominant instructional delivery methods (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). These universities have adopted the banking concept at the expense of quality education and student-centered forms of teaching and learning (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). Thus, the universities operate with a unilateral approach to education where teaching has become the emphasis instead of learning (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Sisimwo et al., 2014).

Every year, thousands of students graduate from higher institutions of learning in Ghana but do not gain employment because there is a disconnect in the relationship between education,

building human capital, and meeting the needs of society and industry (Dai et al., 2008). In 2015, about 71,000 new graduates joined the 200,000 unemployed graduates making a total of 271,000 unemployed graduates (Effah, 2016). These graduates are unemployed because they did not receive the appropriate education and training that would empower them to pursue opportunities for self-employment or become employable and sought after in the job market (Dai et al., 2008; Effah, 2016).

The World Bank in the 2018 Human Capital Index (HCI) report on Ghana revealed that in the next 18 years, approximately 56% of the country's human capital would go to waste due to the poor quality of the education in the country (African Daily Voice, 2018; Ngnenbe, 2018; The World Bank, 2018). According to the HCI report, the quality of the education system is so impoverished that it would result in the dearth of the human capacity for sustainable national development (GhanaWeb, 2018; Ngnenbe, 2018; The World Bank, 2018). The projections from the HCI report established that if measures are not taken by stakeholders to address the deplorable state of the education system, about only 44% of children would have the chance of becoming productive members of the society in their old age (African Daily Voice, 2018; GhanaWeb, 2018; Ngnenbe, 2018; The World Bank, 2018).

Since its establishment in 2002, Oduraa University has diverted from the traditional teacher-centered method or banking concept (Freire, 2005, 2008) of education (Fortune, 2020; SGSB, 2008). The university has prioritized cultivating critical thinking skills and developing critical consciousness within students. The institution seeks to become a leading provider of university “educational experience that promotes ethical leadership, entrepreneurial mindsets, and the ability to solve complex problems” (Administrative staff, personal communication). The instructional delivery methods practiced in Oduraa University offer students the education and

training that empower them to be employable and sought after in the job market across various industries. Thus, Oduraa University graduates are working in different sectors and working for the progress and transformation of Ghana and the entire African continent (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). The university continues to maintain a record of 100% of its graduates finding jobs, starting up businesses, or furthering their studies within six months of graduation (Fortune, 2020; Olting'idi, 2017).

The strategies for teaching and learning at Oduraa University and their similarities with the principles of critical pedagogy are worth exploring. The university practices teaching and learning methods that cultivate critical thinking skills and develop critical consciousness within students (International Baccalaureate, n.d.; Olting'idi, 2017), while the majority of the universities in Ghana practice the traditional teacher-centered method of instruction or banking concept (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014). The institution maintains a reputation for being different in the instructional delivery methods practiced and also in the number of its students who secure reputable positions in the job market after graduation (International Baccalaureate, n.d.; SGSB, 2008). This exploration could, therefore, serve as a teaching case that other universities can emulate in order to make meaningful contributions in their respective institutions towards students' academic excellence and professional competences.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa.

### **Overview of Conceptual Framework and Methodology**

Critical pedagogy served as the conceptual framework of the study. Critical pedagogy is an educational philosophy that seeks to empower students through thought and action (Aliakbari

& Faraji, 2011; Freire, 2008). The philosophy emphasizes the critical thinking and action of students, which leads to the transformation of society and life conditions. Freire (1968), the proponent of the philosophy, used the Frankfurt School critical theory's underlying principles of a just society with individuals controlling all aspects of their lives, whether economic, political, or cultural, to develop the premise of critical pedagogy. McLaren and Jandrić (2018) established that Freire's philosophical ideas were also informed by liberation theology. Freire addressed the role of the church in perpetuating the oppression of the people, while supporting the power of the elite. To Freire, critical consciousness could not be separated from Christian consciousness (McLaren & Jandrić, 2018). Critical pedagogy advocates for the transformation of oppressive power relations through the humanization and empowerment of students. Freire (1968, 1970) asserted that students should be subjects of their own education rather than the passive role as objects. As such, students should gear their actions toward transforming societies through problem-posing education (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1968, 1970).

In furthering the works of the Frankfurt School and Paulo Freire, scholars known as the New Left Scholars in the late 1970s began to formulate a critical pedagogy that incorporated elements of Dewey's (1938) progressive education philosophy as well as the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. These scholars, including Giroux (1981), Apple (1982), McLaren (1986), and Simon (1988), operated with the school of thought that political issues could not be separated from educational ones (Elias, 1994; Giroux, 1981, 2010) and were dedicated to the creation of awareness and understanding about the role schools play in the transmission of knowledge about life, whether social, political, or economic (Giroux, 1981, 2010). The scholars advocated for a revolutionary critical pedagogy that would allow teachers to facilitate the

formation of democratic social values to students in the classroom (Breuing, 2011; Kincheloe, 2004).

Critical pedagogy has four concepts: problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue. Problem-posing education is a form of education in which students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues in their lives (Freire, 1968, 2008). Teacher and student roles describe a critical pedagogy classroom situation where the teacher and the student are both subjects who control the educational process and develop knowledge together (Freire, 1998, 2008). Praxis explains the critical reflection and action for implementing educational processes and practices (Freire, 1968; Keesing-Styles, 2003). Dialogue defines classroom communication that creates critical inter-subjectivity between the student and the teacher and between the student and his or her world and by so doing empowers the student to reflect on what is known and what is unknown and to take actions that are critical to transforming reality (Heaney, 1995; Keesing-Styles, 2003). The problem statement of this study evolved from critical pedagogy. Also, I developed the study's purpose statement and research questions from the concepts of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy was an appropriate framework for this study because the philosophy's concepts align with the central mission of Oduraa University, which is to establish classrooms in which teachers and students learn and create knowledge together. The kind of instruction and learning in the university affords students the avenue to not only discover their voices but also their capacity to take action that leads to the betterment of society (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020), which are also what the concepts of critical pedagogy advocate (Freire, 1968; Heaney, 1995; Keesing-Styles, 2003).



A qualitative methodology was the best approach to explore the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University in Ghana. Qualitative research examines a phenomenon through a holistic approach (Polit & Beck, 2012). Qualitative research is “focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied” (Merriam, 2009, p. 1). Therefore, participants in a qualitative study include individuals who have experienced or have had exposure to the phenomenon under investigation (Rutberg & Bouikidis, 2018).

This research employed a case study design as the specific qualitative approach. A case study is a research approach in which the researcher explores a contemporary, real-life case or multiple cases as the unit of analysis to gain in-depth understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). A case study research design was appropriate for this study because the study focused on a bounded system, confined within the perimeters of a specific phenomenon or program (i.e., instructional delivery methods), which is peculiar to a specific location (i.e., Oduraa University; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Again, the study targeted specific individuals (staff, students, and faculty) who are directly involved in the phenomenon. Of the three leading authorities on case study research, Merriam (1998), Yin (1989), and Stake (1995), a descriptive case study by Merriam (1998) seemed appropriate to inform this study. Merriam’s philosophical perspective argues that constructivism is the epistemology that should orient a qualitative case study. Also, this study sought to yield a thick, rich description of the phenomenon, which aligned with Merriam’s (1998) descriptive case study design.

Additionally, the study employed face-to-face interviews, direct observations, and document review as data collection sources (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). Interviews were the best way to understand the world of a group of individuals

from their own point of view (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Through interviews, participants were able to tell their stories and uncover the meaning of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Following Merriam (1998) and Yin's (2018) recommendation of observations as one of the appropriate sources for collecting data in a case study research, I compared and crosschecked observation notes with interviews and document data for consistency (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Also, I used documents as a supplement to the observations and interview data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Documents provided rich information that was used to corroborate the data from observations and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The study used content analysis to analyze data, as argued by Merriam (1998), Patton (2015), and Yin (2018) to be the appropriate analysis techniques for a case study research. Through these analysis techniques, I searched for insights, concepts, and patterns and was able to identify the core meanings and consistencies through patterns and themes (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

### **Research Questions**

The research questions were philosophically driven and based on the problem and purpose of the study. The following overarching research question aligns with the problem and purpose of the study: How do the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa? The following four sub-questions align with the problem, purpose, and philosophical concepts:

**RQ1:** How does the concept of problem-posing education inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ2:** How does the concept of teacher and student roles inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ3:** How does the concept of praxis inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ4:** How does the concept of dialogue inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

### **Assumptions of the Study**

A study's assumptions, although may be out of the researcher's control, might render the study irrelevant if he or she does not acknowledge that they exist (Roberts, 2010; Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2018). Thus, Leedy and Ormrod (2010) explained a study's assumptions as "so basic that, without them, the research problem itself could not exist" (p. 62). In this section, I acknowledged and discussed the following assumptions relative to this study:

- The participants selected would be a true representation of the population because they meet the selection criteria and, as such, could provide thick-rich data about the phenomenon, which is a criterion for a qualitative case study research (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018).
- The participants of the study would answer the interview questions truthfully. I assumed participants would provide honest answers because they possessed deep insights into the phenomenon and would, therefore, understand the interview questions (Merriam, 1998, 2009).
- The participants would be comfortable and open during the research because I would make them understand that their participation in the research is completely voluntary, and they may leave the study at any point in time (Simon & Goes, 2018).

## **Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

Delimitations and limitations are essential to framing a study (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2018). This study has delimitations and limitations specific to methodology and generalization. The identified delimitations and limitations of the study have been discussed in the subsequent sections.

### ***Delimitations***

Delimitations refer to the boundaries the researcher has purposefully defined in order to narrow or limit the scope of the research study (Patton, 2015; Roberts, 2010; Simon, 2011). Qualitative research normally has a small sample size as a unique feature (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015; Smith, 2011). Therefore, the choice of qualitative research rather than quantitative delimited the study to a small sample size. Because the focus of this methodology is quality, much attention was given to the thick-rich data that can be generated rather than the number of cases (Patton, 2015; Smith, 2011).

Also, the choice of a case study design rather than any other qualitative subtype narrowed the research site to the Oduraa University campus, where all the participants could be accessed (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study focused on a bounded system within the perimeters of a specific phenomenon that is peculiar to a specific location (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Thus, the Oduraa University campus represented the boundaries for this single case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018).

Additionally, the choice of the participant selection strategy may delimit the study (Patton, 2015). All the students, faculty, and staff in the Academic Affairs Department of Oduraa University were eligible to participate in this study. Creswell and Poth (2018) argued that qualitative study is about researching a few participants and collecting extensive data. Yin (2018)

also recommended that for a single case study, the sample size should not be more than four or five. This number of cases makes it possible for the researcher to identify single-case themes in addition to analyzing cross-case themes (Yin, 2018). Therefore, the study's scope narrowed the number of participants to 11 faculty, students, and staff of over 18 years who were purposefully selected (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018).

### ***Limitations***

Limitations refer to factors or inherent weaknesses that are outside the researcher's control and may affect the findings of the study (Roberts, 2010; Simon, 2011). Participant selection may impose some limitations (Patton, 2015). Although the participant selection strategy was purposeful, participants were selected on a volunteer basis. Thus, it is possible some participants may or may not have been in the position to provide thick-rich data, which offered detailed insight and substantial illumination about the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). To address this limitation, I ensured the gatekeeper to the research site assisted me in recruiting participants who could provide thick, rich information about the phenomenon.

Also, one-on-one personal interviews may serve as a limitation (Patton, 2015). My presence may influence the interview responses of participants. Some participants, during the interview sessions, may attempt to exaggerate or provide responses that would please me rather than present the information as it is (Al-Yateem, 2012). Also, some participants may not be forthcoming when responding to the interview questions, thereby limiting the collection of detailed insights into the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). In such cases, the data may not reflect the true nature of the phenomenon. To address this limitation, I employed other data sources (i.e., documents and observations) to crosscheck against the data collected from the interviews.

Time may pose another limitation to the data collected in the study (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2018). The research was conducted within a specific timeframe (Simon, 2011).

Therefore, data that were collected would only be a snapshot of events happening within that interval of time. As such, the data may not be a complete reflection of the phenomenon under study (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2018). To address this limitation, I gathered documents that provided detailed information about the phenomenon.

Additionally, the choice of methodology may also limit the study (Patton, 2015; Simon, 2011). Qualitative research requires the researcher to perform the role of the instrument (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). As such, it was my responsibility as the qualitative research instrument to interpret and make meaning of participants' responses. Thus, the findings of this study may be difficult to generalize (Smith et al., 2009). To address this limitation, I employed triangulation and member checking as strategies for ensuring trustworthiness and rigor (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cypress, 2017).

### **Significance of the Study**

The current research is pertinent to the practice of quality instruction and learning strategies. The literature (e.g., Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010; Nggenbe, 2018; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015) and personal, educational experience have indicated that the instructional delivery methods practiced in many institutions of higher education in Ghana are cause for concern. This study may improve practice in the following ways: (a) the study will serve as a reference base for universities in Ghana, the sub-region, and beyond for practicing quality instructional delivery methods that reflect in the academic and career excellence of students; (b) this research study will be valuable to institutions of higher education that seek to address educational issues related to curriculum design and

instructional delivery methods; and (c) the study by exploring the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University will identify the strategies that have worked and those that have not been helpful, thereby, providing other universities guidance in adopting and implementing these techniques successfully.

The study will contribute to decision making and policy in the following ways: (a) the study will present a report on new perspectives for educational policies based on data that is current and credible; (b) the research will explore instructional delivery methods that encourage student-centered learning and are appropriate for educational development. The study, therefore, will provide resourceful information to college administrators when deciding on future curriculum and instructional designs; and (c) the study will document thick-rich data that will serve as a guide by providing insight and understanding to educational policymakers in the country. Such educational policies may also become beneficial to other countries in the sub-region and beyond facing similar challenges with curriculum and instruction at the tertiary level.

The study will also contribute to the existing literature in the following ways: (a) the study will add new perspectives to Freire's (1968) critical pedagogy. The research will explore and shed light on the uniqueness of the instructional delivery methods in Oduraa University using the concepts of problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue; (b) the study will inform future studies about the instructional delivery methods in institutions of higher education that promote student-centered learning from a qualitative perspective; and (c) there is limited research on the instructional delivery methods adopted by institutions of higher education in Ghana (French, 2009). Thus, the research study will contribute to the gap in the literature and expand the body of knowledge relative to teaching and learning strategies.

## **Definitions of Terms**

### ***Critical Pedagogy***

The term refers to “a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structure of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider society” (McLaren, 1998, p.45).

### ***Dialogue***

The term is defined as the classroom communication that creates critical inter-subjectivity between the student and the teacher and between the student and his or her world and by so doing empowers the student to reflect on what is known and what is unknown and to take actions that are critical to transforming reality (Heaney, 1995; Keesing-Styles, 2003).

### ***Gatekeeper***

The term refers to a person who is key to obtaining permission or access to a research site, documents, and participants because he or she possesses essential knowledge and information about the site, documents, and participants (Andoh-Arthur, 2019; Reeves, 2010).

### ***Instructional Delivery Methods***

The term refers to a concept involving decisions that inform what is taught in the classroom, how it is organized for learning, and how both teachers and students assess learning (Cruikshank et al., 2012).

### ***Praxis***

The term explains the critical reflection and action for implementing educational processes and practices (Freire, 1968; Keesing-Styles, 2003). In the critical pedagogy classroom, praxis connects theory to transformational action by bridging the gap between education and social transformation (Boyce, 1996; Freire, 1968).



### ***Problem-Posing Education***

The term refers to the form of education in which students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues in their lives (Freire, 1968, 2008).

Problem-posing education by design informs critical educators to assist students in questioning and understanding the reasons behind the status quo (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Degener, 2001).

### ***Teacher and Student Roles***

For this study, the term describes a critical pedagogy classroom situation where the teacher and the student are both subjects who control the educational process and develop knowledge together (Freire, 1998, 2008).

### ***Teacher/Educator/Lecturer/Faculty***

For this study, the terms refer to “an expert who is capable of imparting knowledge that will help learners to build, identify, and to acquire skills that will be used to face the challenges in life” (Senge, 2000, p. 26). The terms also describe an individual who provides learners the knowledge, skills, and values relevant to enhancing individual and societal development (Senge, 2000).

### **Organization of the Study**

The study has been organized according to the traditional five-chapter design. Chapter 1 began with the discussion of the contextual background and the contemporary problem in education the study sought to explore. The chapter further outlined the purpose of this study and the overview of the conceptual framework and methodology. Subsequently was the presentation of the philosophical based research questions and assumptions of the study. The chapter further discussed the delimitations and limitations to the study as well as the study’s significance to practice, decision-making, and literature. Chapter 1 continued with the presentation of the

definitions of the technical terms that were used in the study, the organizational structure of the study, and a chapter summary.

Chapter 2 introduces the discussion of the topical literature review of the major areas relevant to the study. The chapter also provides a detailed discussion of the conceptual framework, including the philosophy's history and evolution, concepts, criticisms, and application to empirical studies. The chapter continues with the justification of the philosophy's use in the current study and a chapter summary.

Chapter 3 provides a discussion of the research design, including the methodology and subtype, site selection, population, and participants. The chapter also discusses the participant selection, all the ethical issues acknowledged and addressed in the study, and data sources. Further is the presentation of the research protocol, field testing, data collection procedures, and researcher positionality. Chapter 3 continues with the discussion of the techniques for ensuring trustworthiness and rigor, data analysis, and a chapter summary.

Chapter 4 presents the description of participants and the presentation of findings. The chapter further discusses the synthesis and analysis of findings, as reflected against the research questions, literature review, and conceptual framework. Chapter 4 concludes with a summary of the major issues raised and a projection of what is to come in the final chapter.

Chapter 5 discusses the summary and major findings of the study, conclusions, and interpretations of findings. The chapter continues with the implications of the study, suggestions for future research, limitations, and reflexivity. Chapter 5 concludes with a summary that ties together the various sections of the study and offers final comments about the significance and possible transferability of the study's findings.

## Chapter Summary

The aim of education is more than mere learning (Ares, 2006; Freire, 2008). Education should be about the critical examination of the social world, resulting in actions that serve the best interest of society (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Ares, 2006; Freire, 2008). Education should be conducted in an environment with instructional strategies that enable the incorporation of the lived experiences, language, and knowledge of students (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Foley, 2007). Thus, education should be about making students critical thinkers who can assume roles in society (Giroux, 1998; Gutek, 2014).

The lack of quality education and appropriate training that students in many Ghanaian universities require to become relevant to society after school (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010; Ngnenbe, 2018; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015) necessitated the need for this study. Studies (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Foley, 2007; Sisimwo et al., 2014) have established that classroom education contributes to the overall development of individuals, and when students are exposed to certain instructional delivery techniques, they develop critical consciousness and learn to think critically. The assertion that students who possess critical consciousness do not only improve their individual life conditions but take actions that serve the best interest of everyone by building a more just society (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Foley, 2007) led to the purpose of this study, which was to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University in Ghana. Oduraa University is a Ghanaian private university that prioritizes cultivating critical thinking skills and developing critical consciousness within students (International Baccalaureate, n.d.; SGSB, 2008).

The study employed critical pedagogy as the framework with the research questions emerging from the concepts of the philosophy as well as the problem and purpose of the study. This study took the path of exploring and discovering meaning and understanding of how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods practiced at Oduraa University in Ghana. Thus, a qualitative research design was relevant and appropriate to answer the research questions. Additionally, the study employed case study as the specific qualitative approach because the research is confined within the perimeters of a specific phenomenon, which is peculiar to a specific location (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). This study was informed by Merriam's (1998) philosophical perspective that argues constructivism as the epistemology that orients a qualitative case study. Also, the study sought to yield a thick, rich description of the phenomenon, which aligned with Merriam's (1998) descriptive case study approach. With this clear alignment of the problem statement, purpose statement, research questions, conceptual framework, and research design, the study's findings revealed that the concepts of critical pedagogy indeed inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa through problem-based curricula content, entrepreneurial skill development, collaborative education, and leadership skill development. The study has added new perspectives to Freire's (1968) critical pedagogy. The study has also presented compelling arguments on new perspectives for educational policies that are appropriate for individual and national development.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the major areas relevant to the study. The chapter presents a discussion on the following major topics: instructional delivery methods, instructional delivery methods in universities in Ghana, the evolution of Ghana's education system, the British colonial education legacy, university education in Ghana and its historical development, and Oduraa University in Ghana. Additionally, the chapter presents a thorough discussion of critical pedagogy as the conceptual framework that narrowed the study's focus.

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a private university in Western-Africa. The major areas discussed in this chapter align with the study's problem, purpose, as well as research questions. A thorough review of the aforementioned topics establishes the background and context that situates the problem and warrants the purpose and need for this study. The in-depth review of critical pedagogy aligns with the research questions. The section presents a discussion of the following topics: history and evolution of critical pedagogy, the proponent of critical pedagogy, new left scholars, the concepts of critical pedagogy, criticisms of critical pedagogy, application of critical pedagogy in empirical studies, and the justification of critical pedagogy's suitability for this research. The literature on the concept of problem-posing education addresses RQ1. The literature on the concept of teacher and student roles addresses RQ2. The literature on the concept of praxis addresses RQ3. The literature on the concept of dialogue addresses RQ4.

### **Topical Literature Review**

The section discusses major topical areas, including instructional delivery methods and instructional delivery methods in universities in Ghana. The section also delves into the

evolution of Ghana's education system as well as the British colonial education legacy and its influences on the education system in Ghana. The discussion continues with education in Ghana, university education in Ghana, the historical development of university education in Ghana, and Oduraa University in Ghana.

### ***Instructional Delivery Methods***

Effective teaching, to a certain degree, depends on the creativity, initiative, and risk-taking ability of instructors (Mulhearn et al., 2017; Petrina, 2007). However, instructors, no matter their initiative and creativity level, should also adopt a variety of delivery methods and approaches in order to be successful teachers (Bigam & Riney, 2014; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2007). Instructional delivery methods are, therefore, essential components in education. The variability of students should be factored in the design of instructional methods, considering their differences as well as their commonalities (Mulhearn et al., 2017; Petrina, 2004, 2007). Through research, the variability of students can be accommodated into instructional methods. For example, varying instructional methods from time to time accommodate a wider variety of learning styles than consistently using one method (Brown et al., 2017; Petrina, 2004). Instruction is the complement of curriculum, and teaching or instructional methods are the complements of content (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2007). There is value in recognizing the many options and opportunities that the balance of the different instructional delivery methods offers to the education of students (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Brown et al., 2017; Petrina, 2004, 2007).

Instructional methods as a concept involve decisions that inform what is taught in the classroom, how it is organized for learning, and how both teachers and students assess learning (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Moore, 2015). The concept should comprise of relationships between

teachers and students and among students, conditions of teaching and learning, the processes involved, the causes and effects of the processes, and the feedback concerning the teaching and learning experience (Moore, 2015; Petrina, 2007; Romine & Sadler, 2016). It is, therefore, necessary to identify the actions of students and teachers in instructional delivery methods (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2007).

Several determinant factors influence different instructional methods or teaching strategies (Petrina, 2004, 2007). These factors include the developmental level of students, intent, goals, and objectives of the teacher, the content for the instruction, and the classroom environment (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2004). Depending on the determinant factors of a particular course, a teacher might require more than a single teaching method to meet all of the goals. Thus, identifying and addressing the different instructional delivery methods is essential and appropriate (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Cruikshank et al., 2012).

Instructional delivery methods can broadly be divided into transmissive, transactive, and transformative (Petrina, 2004, 2007). Transmissive instruction is the same as direct teaching or teacher-centered. In this type of instruction, the teacher adopts approaches such as lectures or demonstrations to deliver status quo content to students (Petrina, 2004). The teacher imparts knowledge or demonstrates some form of skill to students (Petrina, 2007; Underwood & Hernandez-Gantes, 2017). Transmissive instruction can also be termed as the traditional instructional method (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Gordon, 1998; Mulhearn et al., 2017).

Transactive instruction is the same as student-centered or indirect teaching (Petrina, 2004, 2007). This type of instruction involves the teacher working together with students to attain status quo content (Brown et al., 2017; Gordon, 1998; Petrina, 2004, 2007). The instruction content is learned through dialogue and transactions. The teacher, instead of teaching,

directly sets up strategies that create an environment for students to make meaning for themselves (Brown et al., 2017; Petrina, 2007). The instruction method can also take the form of interactive sessions where students interact with the information and materials as well as with each other. In this method, the teacher becomes an organizer and facilitator (Petrina, 2007). Thus, the teacher does not have exclusive control over the teaching and learning process (Brown et al., 2017; Gordon, 1998; Petrina, 2007).

Transformative instruction, on the other hand, is a combination of direct and indirect instruction (Petrina, 2004, 2007; Taylor, 2007). In this type of instruction, students and the teacher during the teaching and learning process discard status quo content and instead concentrate on developing knowledge and understanding that transform themselves and their world (Adebayo et al., 2015; Cranton, 2011; Taylor, 2007). Students play an active role in this type of instruction method and thus have the first-hand experience of the teaching and learning process (Adebayo et al., 2015; Petrina, 2004, 2007). Students have more interaction with content and less control from the teacher (Cranton, 2011; Taylor, 2007).

The different types of instructional methods have models that serve as guides or frameworks for designing educational environments, activities, and experiences (Cranton, 2011; Cruikshank et al., 2012). The models outline the patterns and specific teaching strategies of the different methods. The models of the different instructional methods include didactic, modeling, managerial, and dialogic (Petrina, 2004, 2007). Didactic model is direct verbal teaching, which takes the form of a presentation or a lecture from the teacher. Modeling model is direct visual teaching, which takes the form of practice and demonstration (Cranton, 2011; Petrina, 2004, 2007). Managerial model is interactive indirect teaching, which includes facilitation, group management, and individualization (Petrina, 2004, 2007). Dialogic model is interactive indirect



teaching, which includes questions, thought provocations, and Socratic Technique of dialogue. These models assist with the classification of the different types of instructional methods (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2004, 2007; Taylor, 2007).

### ***Types of Instructional Delivery Methods***

The different types of instructional delivery methods have affiliations (Cruikshank et al., 2012). Some methods lend themselves to encouraging social interaction among students (Brown et al., 2017). Other methods facilitate behavioral modification, while some encourage information processing (Mulhearn et al., 2017). Still, other methods support interpersonal and intrapersonal development. Each instructional method affiliation responds to different goals and objectives, offers different styles of teaching, and yields different learning outcomes in students (Adebayo et al., 2015; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2004, 2007).

### ***Collaborative Learning Method***

Collaborative learning is an instructional delivery method that lends itself to encouraging social interaction among students (Cruikshank et al., 2012). The method emphasizes an individual's relationship to society or to other people giving priority to students' ability to relate to other students. Collaborative learning promotes cognitive learning and social interaction in the classroom (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Rasmussen & Hagen, 2015; Vygotsky, 1962). Through collaborative learning, students create a community and depend on one another (Gokhale, 1995). The students become both social and academic support for one another as they share the responsibility of the group's success (Adebayo et al., 2015).

Collaborative learning builds accountability and heightens students' motivation to become successful (Gokhale, 1995; Ibrahim et al., 2015). Through the creation of a community in the classroom, the collaborative process further encourages students to work and become

interdependent in the group as individual student represents the whole group's success (Watanabe & Evans, 2015). Thus, students are motivated to work harder and take more risks because they know their contributions are recognized (Watanabe & Evans, 2015).

**Definition of Collaborative Learning.** Collaborative learning means “students working in pairs or small groups to achieve shared learning goals” (Barkley et al., 2005, p. 4). With an emphasis on active engagement and shared responsibility, students offer and receive help from each other with the understanding that one's success means the success of each member of the group (Gokhale, 1995; Lin, 2015; McQueen & McMillan, 2018). In a collaborative learning process, the teacher assigns students to work together to collectively solve a task (Kaendler et al., 2015). The only way students can complete this work is to share their knowledge. Thus, the objective of collaborative learning is not solely to solve the problem, but also to synthesize and analyze individuals' knowledge and the benefits each student gains from the learning experience (Kaendler et al., 2015; Roschelle, 1992).

Students depend on one another in the collaborative learning process for their unique knowledge and perspectives. Therefore, the need for students to be responsible for the knowledge they share becomes essential (Lin, 2015; Roschelle, 1992). Thus, the meaning of collaboration is more than cooperation since cooperation can mean the division of group tasks that can be solved individually and then put together to form a whole (Dillenbourg, 1999). Collaborative learning entails the synthesis and analysis of individuals' knowledge to create collective knowledge (Lin, 2015; Roschelle, 1992). The collaborative process helps students to achieve higher learning outcomes with regards to students' reasoning abilities, problem-solving techniques, critically and creatively thinking skills, synthesizing ideas, and connecting knowledge learned in different environments (Hajrah & Das, 2015; Lin, 2015).

**Evolution and Application of Collaborative Learning.** May and Doob (1937) argued that collaborative learning occurs when two or more students attempt to have a shared educational experience. Students who learn in a collaborative environment with the purpose of achieving a common goal have a higher chance of success than students who work alone (1937). Collaborative learning, therefore, enhances teamwork and team spirit and benefits students both academically and socially (May & Doob, 1937).

Dewey asserted that the process of learning should be more than training students to be passive observers or recipients of information (Gutek, 2014). Education should prepare students to be proactive and capable of making changes in the environment. The school is, therefore, defined as “a setting in which students, actively engaged in solving problems, added to their ongoing experience” (Gutek, 2014, p. 75). Dewey emphasized face to face interactions among students as a medium through which they learn to adapt to the social environment and develop their knowledge and understanding (Gutek, 2014).

Lewin (1935, 1945) posited that interdependence among members of a group is core to the group members’ ability to carry out their responsibilities. Interdependence is achieved when students share a common goal. Deutsch (1962) conceptualized positive social interdependence to describe the situation where students gain the understanding that they are equally responsible for a group and contribute to the team’s knowledge and outcomes. Johnson and Johnson (1994, 2009) also elaborated that collaborative learning promotes students’ likeness for one another, improves communication, encourages students to accept and support one another, and increases the thinking strategies of students in the group.

**Principles of Collaborative Learning.** Five principles are essential to active group learning, high learning outcomes, and effective social and cognitive skills (Ibrahim et al., 2015;

Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Roberts, 2017; Saville et al., 2012; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). These principles are positive interdependence, promotive interaction, individual accountability, the appropriate use of social skills, and group processing. The establishment of these five main variables in the classroom ensures a successful collaborative learning process (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Saville et al., 2012; Watanabe & Evans, 2015).

***Positive Interdependence.*** Students achieve higher results when there is a positive interdependence relationship (Deutsch, 1962). The idea of working to achieve a common goal motivates students to work harder (Deutsch, 1962; Ibrahim et al., 2015). The motivation to work harder also leads to the discovery of innovative ideas and insights since the students are always strategizing and putting opinions and ideas together (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Positive interdependence means students offer help, receive help, and support each other (May & Doob, 1937). Students, therefore, learn the importance of completing assigned roles for group tasks. Students gain positive interdependence when the teacher assigns group projects in which the students receive the same grade (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Saville et al., 2012). Also, the teacher can create positive interdependence in the classroom by awarding extra credit to students when each group member has scored higher than the set standard on individual tests (Saville et al., 2012). Depending on the complexity of the team assignment, students who tend to work together for a long time begin to enjoy working in teams rather than on their own. The students form a bond and begin to see themselves as a unified force (Deutsch, 1962; Ibrahim et al., 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2009; May & Doob, 1937).

***Individual Accountability.*** Positive interdependence promotes individual accountability within a group (Deutsch, 1962). Each team member understands the need to pull their weight and contribute to achieving the goals of the group (Deutsch, 1962; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). When

students feel responsible for the group, they complete their share of the work since failing the team translates into failing themselves (May & Doob, 1937; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). The students share the understanding that there is no room for social loafing, and students cannot hide behind the contributions of other members. An efficient way for the teacher to ensure individual accountability is to call upon students at random to represent and answer questions on behalf of their groups (Watanabe & Evans, 2015). When there is no accountability in the group, the students' sense of responsibility is reduced, which also reduces their individual contributions, and eventually, the bond of interdependence. Thus, in the same way positive interdependence promotes individual accountability, the increase in the latter also increases interdependence within the group (Deutsch, 1962; May & Doob, 1937; Watanabe & Evans, 2015).

***Promotive Interaction.*** Students are having a promotive interaction when they motivate and assist the efforts of one another with the purpose of achieving the goals of the group (Deutsch, 1962). Through promotive interaction, students learn to trust one another, share vital information and resources, and encourage one another to work harder towards attaining the group's goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Promotive interaction makes room for personal feedback opportunities and also encourages students to be in tune with the perspectives of one another (Deutsch, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

***The Appropriate Use of Social Skills.*** Social skills build healthy relationships among student groups (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Teachers should teach and motivate students to use interpersonal and small group skills necessary for collaborative learning. To achieve common goals through coordinated efforts, students should “get to know and trust each other, communicate accurately and without any ambiguity, accept and support each other, and resolve conflicts constructively” (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 369). Students that want to have a

productive group need social skills to hold the team together and help its members deal with the stress that comes with working with people (Deutsch, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

**Group Processing.** Group processing takes two forms. First, it assesses how group members carry out their responsibilities and identify their effectiveness towards achieving the team's goals (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Second, it determines which actions of members the group sustains and which ones they alter or replace (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; May & Doob, 1937). Every collaborative learning environment should have this processing time to reflect and ponder over members' collaborative levels and performance (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Group processing clarifies team goals, identifies the strengths and weaknesses of group members, and indicates resources available to the group (May & Doob, 1937). With all this information in the open, members of the group feel committed and involved in every process of the group (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; May & Doob, 1937).

**Strengths of Collaborative Learning.** Collaborative learning influences students' learning outcomes by enhancing their cognitive development and social skills (Lin, 2015; Vygotsky, 1978). The instructional method creates a favorable learning climate in the classroom by putting students in small groups (Gokhale, 1995; Lin, 2015). This arrangement makes students more at ease and confident to express themselves. In most cases, some students tend to be shy or fear to make mistakes when addressing the entire class (Lin, 2015). Thus, in smaller groups, these students feel more comfortable because they have to address only a smaller crowd. Students find small group interactions as safe environments where they can be themselves (Lin, 2015). Thus, collaborative learning creates an environment that makes students less anxious and able to engage in meaningful activities and share opinions and ideas (Gokhale, 1995; Lin, 2015; Lin et al., 2016).

Additionally, collaborative learning creates a platform that is conducive for students to have meaningful interactions with one another (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). As students discuss and share ideas and opinions on the subject matter, they also develop techniques for understanding and processing new concepts (Gokhale, 1995). Through collaborative learning strategies, students develop cognitive learning and interpersonal social skills, which make them able to communicate with accuracy without any ambiguity (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Lin, 2015).

Moreover, collaborative learning encourages students to develop critical thinking skills (Alexander, 2018; Lin, 2015; Lin & Shih, 2016). During problem-solving discussions, students stimulate their critical consciousness, which enables them to exchange innovative ideas and opinions (Gutek, 2014; Lin, 2015). With the learning experience based on shared participation, members of the group share their individual experiences, which are put together to create a broader experiential network (Gutek, 2014).

Collaborative learning enhances individual and collective learning by creating a community in the classroom (Watanabe & Evans, 2015). The process also encourages students to work collaboratively and become interdependent in the group as an individual student represents the whole group's success (Lin, 2015). Thus, students are motivated to work harder and take more risks because they know their contributions are recognized (Lin, 2015; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). Collaborative learning motivates students to work together, share ideas, and help one another to learn and solve problems. Working together thus increases students' learning outcomes and enhances their cognitive development and interpersonal skills (Lin, 2015; Rasmussen, 2016). Collaborative learning, therefore, enhances students' ability to develop,

improve, and maintain interdependent relationships with other students while successfully achieving group goals (Kreijns, 2004).

**Limitations of Collaborative Learning.** Collaborative learning has certain pitfalls that are noteworthy. First, teachers may encounter a couple of students who will resist collaborative learning, simply because they cannot work or do not want to work with others and would instead work alone (Saville et al., 2012). Other students may also resist because they have already learned how to attain high grades through other instructional methods and do not find the need to adapt to new ones (Kaendler et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012). For some of these students, learning may be all about getting good grades and would not want to concern themselves with certain aspects such as communication and interpersonal skills development (Kaendler et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012).

Second, teachers in the process of assigning students into groups should factor in the challenge with social loafing (Kerr, 1983). The issue of social loafing may occur when some students in the group reduce their contributions to tasks and expect others to do most of the work (Kaendler et al., 2015; Kerr, 1983). The effect of such attitudes could be an overall group output reduction because when team members believe others are taking advantage of them, they tend to reduce their effort (Kaendler et al., 2015; Kerr, 1983).

Furthermore, the clash of personality differences may occur (Ibrahim et al., 2015). Group members may not get along with one another, which will result in poor learning outcomes (Saville et al., 2012). Again, some students may have the tendencies to dominate group processes leaving others intimidated and unable to contribute their opinions and ideas (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Ness, 2016; Saville et al., 2012). Depending on how the dominated students respond to such



attitudes, the group's general performance will be affected (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012).

The different types of instructional methods have their advantages and disadvantages (Cruikshank et al., 2012). Collaborative learning, for instance, encourages the participation of everyone in the classroom (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Gutek, 2014; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). However, working in groups often leads to students getting sidetracked due to the difference in personalities and cognitive development (Kaendler et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012). Also, when the instructional method requires students to take up leadership roles and be the center of attention, some students may be too self-conscious and find it challenging projecting themselves into such situations, thereby derailing the learning process (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Lin, 2015). Additionally, working collaboratively draws on the ideas and experiences of group members to achieve a unified learning process (Saville et al., 2012). However, students with strong personalities may dominate the learning process leaving students with weaker personalities to struggle behind (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Lin, 2015). Such students are, therefore, unable to develop fully in an environment they consider unsafe and un conducive for learning (Ibrahim et al., 2015). Also, when too much focus is placed on self-directed problem solving and creativity building, little or no attention is given to the learning process. Thus, the product becomes the focus instead of the process (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Ibrahim et al., 2015).

### ***Instructional Delivery Methods in Universities in Ghana***

The instruction and learning in Ghanaian institutions of higher education have passed through several reforms since the establishment of the first university in the country. These forms of teaching and learning have evolved from educating clerks to promote the colonial agenda of the British to the Africanization of the educational system through Africa-oriented

programs after independence (Mamdani, 2007). Over the years, there has been the implementation of reforms and acts to improve the Ghanaian tertiary education. However, there remain some characteristic features in the curriculum and instruction that seem to derail the national agenda of universities serving as the formation grounds of well-equipped graduates who can elevate the country towards economic development (Nampala et al., 2016).

There has been a trend in the last two decades in institutions of higher education in Ghana where the method of instruction has focused on the traditional method or banking concept (Awidi, 2008; French, 2009). Universities in Ghana rely heavily on the utilization of textbooks and traditional face-to-face lectures as the dominant instructional delivery method (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). Also, the universities have adopted an approach to education where teaching has become the emphasis instead of learning (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Sisimwo et al., 2014).

The University of Ghana, the premier university in the country, has also started compromising on the ideal form of learning (Awidi, 2008; French, 2009). Until the last decade, the University of Ghana was “committed to the collective endeavor of improving the quality of undergraduate education” (French, 2009, p. 8). The university has abandoned the conditions of engaged learning and student-centered learning and has adopted the traditional lecture preparation and delivery strategy (French, 2009).

There has also been an increased magnitude in class sizes prompting teachers to use public address systems during lectures (Awidi, 2008; French, 2009). Thus, there is both a literal and philosophical distance between teachers and students (Awidi, 2008; French, 2009). For example, aside from the distinct roles of teachers and students, there is also the two-thirds chance that some students may not hear or follow lectures due to the large classes and even potential

system failure (Awidi, 2008). Also, students do not receive any form of feedback from instructors to help them improve academically. According to Awidi (2008), many teachers do not assess the performance of students through assignments in the course of the semester, and the few who do only provide grades without comments.

The structure and operation of Ghanaian universities and colleges should reflect the needs and aspirations for political and socio-economic development (Barnett, 2017; Kwapong et al., 1994). The instructional delivery methods currently practiced in many Ghanaian universities and colleges are, therefore, problematic. Students in these institutions should not only receive information and knowledge like receptors, but should also gain consciousness by expanding their logical, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Freire, 2005, 2008). Freire (2008) posited, “knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, and with each other” (p. 244). In other words, students learn and develop the curiosity to explore issues and ideas through communication and discussions with colleagues as well as teachers (Freire, 2005, 2008).

Additionally, education should be more than just training students to be passive observers or recipients of information (Freire, 2005, 2008). Education should prepare students to be proactive and capable of making changes in the environment to improve human life (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014; Kromydas, 2017). Students gain knowledge when they genuinely understand the information received from teachers, and students learn when they gain knowledge (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014). Thus, students in Ghanaian universities and colleges need instructional delivery methods through which they can adapt to the social environment and develop knowledge and understanding (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gibbs, 2019; Gutek, 2014).

The subsequent paragraphs delve into the educational system of Ghana and how it has evolved since the colonial era to postcolonial Ghana. Ghana's educational system has passed through several reforms over the years (MacBeath, 2010; Nudzor, 2014). Additionally, the current condition of Ghana's education system has causal roots that date back to the British colonial era. These colonial influences, after several decades of independence, continue to play a critical role in the education of Ghanaians. Thus, to understand the bigger picture of what education in Ghana is today, there is a need for a detailed discussion of these essential topics.

### ***Evolution of Ghana's Education System***

Education in Ghana has been a priority since independence in 1957 (MacBeath, 2010; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). However, the constant quest for a model of education that meets the expectations of Ghanaians and, thus, suits the needs of the country has subjected education over the years to a series of changes (MacBeath, 2010). The first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, perceived education as an opportunity to build the requisite human resources the country needed for development after independence from Britain (Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). Thus, he introduced free education and established social interventions that would assist in building the capacity of Ghanaians (MacBeath, 2010). Under his leadership, President Nkrumah established Ghana Education Trust Schools, hospitals, roads, factories, and state corporations with the intention of not only educating Ghanaians but also creating employment for them after school. With these measures in place, Ghana was set to be self-sufficient and not relying on or needing assistance from foreign countries (MacBeath, 2010; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007).

In 1961, the Education Act established the Free Universal and Compulsory Education law (MacBeath, 2010). This law increased attendance, which necessitated the need to build more elementary and middle schools. However, this era of increase in the number of schools and

attendance was short-lived with the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 (Kingsley, 2007; MacBeath, 2010). After a decade of military coup d'état accompanied by political instability, corruption, and mismanagement of public goods and services, the 1961 Education Act was no longer functioning (MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2009). Thus, by the 1980s, the educational system in Ghana was nonoperational, and the zeal and excitement of Ghanaians for education were also lost (Kingsley, 2007; MacBeath, 2010; Mfum-Mensah, 2009).

Ghana's dysfunctional education system gained some redirection by the late 1980s (MacBeath, 2010). The 1987 Education Act established the Whole School Development Programme to address the educational issues of the country. With the introduction of the new act, a national literacy campaign was launched to cater to school dropouts and adult learners. Also, the timeframe for schooling was reduced from 17 years to 12 years (Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). These new adjustments in the education system made it possible for children, whether rural or urban, rich or poor, to have access to affordable education (Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007).

In 1996, under the leadership of President Rawlings, the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Act was established to address the quality of education at the basic level (Nudzor, 2014). The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Act sought to improve quality in both teaching and learning, management efficiency, as well as increased access and participation in education (Akyeampong, 2004; Nudzor, 2014). The objectives of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education Act coincided with the goals of the 1987 Whole School Development Programme. Both reforms promoted a child-centered literacy by improving the quality of classroom teaching and learning, efficient management of resources, and community involvement and participation in the delivery of education (MacBeath, 2010; Nudzor, 2014). The aims of the two reforms, however, could not be realized due to inadequate support and human

resources (Osei, 2010). Teachers did not fully comprehend the rationale for the reforms, and therefore were not capable of engaging and implementing the necessary change. Also, teachers did not receive the support and full backing as public intellectuals charged with the important task of social and moral formation (Nudzor, 2014; Osei, 2010).

In 2007, new education reforms were launched under the leadership of President Kufuor (MacBeath, 2010). This policy introduced a new structure for the junior high school and the senior high school systems. The junior high school became an entry point to the senior high school, and the completion of senior high school had the option of pursuing tertiary education or entering into the job market (MacBeath, 2010). A key component of the reform was to modernize the courses, especially technical and vocational courses, and make them relevant for application in the job market. Thus, the 2007 education reform sought to enhance Ghana's human resources and equipped Ghanaians with the skills to address the demands of the ever-growing economy (MacBeath, 2010).

### ***The British Colonial Education Legacy***

The British, during colonization, perceived education as essential to indirect rule (Segura, 2009). The British used school as a means to educate locals who would serve as intermediaries (MacBeath, 2010; Segura, 2009). The colonial education system translated to schooling for the elite, imposing language, knowledge, and culture by creating new breeds of elites from the locals who will be loyal to the values and culture of their colonial masters (Segura, 2009). The British began importing Western formal education. Merchants seeking interpreters to promote their business served as educators (Antwi, 1992; McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The missionaries also joined the cause but were only interested in spreading information about the gospel (Antwi, 1992; McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). Soon, schools were established, and

children were separated from their families to isolated locations to pursue education. Away from their families, the children were cut off from their native culture, and the Western culture was imposed on them (MacBeath, 2010; Segura, 2009).

The British education system during colonization had the same agenda in all the colonies; to create a class of low-level bureaucrats and clerks who can occupy administrative positions that supported colonial rule (Gupta, 2006; Kumar, 1991; Segura, 2009). According to Macaulay (1835), the British did not intend to educate the masses but instead produce a class of clerks who would serve as interpreters between the local people and the British; a class of people, who although local by blood and color, have acquired English tastes, opinions, intellect, and morals (as cited in Alexander, 2001). Thus, the curriculum for instruction had no relevance to the local people and only produced a class of people who considered themselves elite and were loyal to the British Crown and its colonial agenda (Antwi, 1992; Segura, 2009).

Ghanaian governments over the years since independence have all attempted to rewrite the British colonial education legacy (Arnot, 2008; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). Starting with Nkrumah, his vision for Ghana was an independent nation with an entirely new identity without any semblance of the colonial past (Arnot, 2008; MacBeath, 2010). Nkrumah, however, did not succeed in decolonizing the minds of the Ghanaian people (Arnot, 2008; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). Over 60 years since independence, there are still features in the Ghana education system that can be traced back to the colonial past (Segura, 2009). The current instructional delivery methods practiced in Ghanaian educational institutions still bear the remnants of British colonization (Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). Elements in the dominant instructional methods in Ghana, such as rigid curriculum with limited or no discussions and interaction in the classroom, are the legacy of British colonial rule (Kumar, 1991; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). The British

established specific political structures to reinforce colonial rule (Kumar, 1991). Education was one of such structures that served the purpose of training individuals for roles that supported the colonization agenda of the British (Kumar, 1991; MacBeath, 2010; Segura, 2009).

The British designed and constructed knowledge as a tool for social control (Kumar, 1991; MacBeath, 2010). Thus, people received education to be fluent in the three R's (i.e., reading, writing, arithmetic), which could qualify them for administrative positions such as clerks in the colony (Crook, 2003). This education system restricted creative thinking and critical consciousness for both students and teachers. According to Crook (2003), the British created a core and compulsory national curriculum, thereby leaving no room or time for alternative curricula activities that would develop the critical competencies of students (MacBeath, 2010; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007).

British colonial education structures and teaching styles continue to persist in the current instructional methods in Ghana (MacBeath, 2010; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). The classroom layouts with textbooks usage and rigid timetables and starting times are all Western education influences. The traditional instructional method or banking concept of memorization and repetition in the educational system are attributes of the British colonial education legacy (Arnot, 2008; Kumar, 1991). The British were training individuals for specific roles in the colony and therefore introduced an educational system strictly based on prescribed textbooks (Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). The educational system was highly structured with a content-based curriculum. The British also introduced a government-administered national examination system that required students to reproduce textbook information (Gupta, 2006; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). Thus, the instructional delivery method was rigorously exam-oriented with an emphasis on reproductive knowledge rather than independent thinking (Gupta, 2006; MacBeath, 2010).



Education in Ghana before colonization and European influence was an informal process of community members preparing the next generation (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Obeng, 2002). The home was the first school with parents and other community elders serving as teachers imparting life as the curriculum (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975). The learning process was by observing. The purpose of the first school was to inculcate quality health and appropriate character into the younger community members. The second school involved the transfer of beliefs, culture, and history, which will equip the younger generation with the requisite skills for full involvement in the social life of the community (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995).

Education was a collective approach. It was a shared responsibility of ensuring that the younger generation learned from the older generation (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Obeng, 2002). Since the education of children was a collaborative effort, the entire community also shared in the failure or success of the learning process (MacBeath, 2010; Obeng, 2002). Fathers and mothers passed on gender roles to their sons and daughters, respectively (Odaga & Heneveld, 1995). Thus, the education of children occurred within the communities through observation and practical experience (McWilliam & Kwamena-Poh, 1975; Obeng, 2002; Odaga & Heneveld, 1995).

### ***Education System in Ghana***

Ghana's education system is divided into three educational levels: basic, second cycle, and tertiary (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018). Basic education comprises two years of kindergarten, six years of primary, and three years of junior high school. The second cycle level is made up of three years of high school. The tertiary level comprises polytechnics, colleges, and universities (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Ministry of

Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018). The tertiary education system in Ghana was established to address the following aspects of society's human capital:

- develop the intellectual and analytical capabilities of individuals;
- develop the capacity to conduct research and draw meaningful conclusions;
- produce individuals with the ability to adapt and apply research findings to the developmental needs of society;
- produce high functioning human capital with the capacity to meet the ever-changing demands of society; and
- produce individuals with nationalistic tendencies who also appreciate international relations and world peace (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Anamuah-Mensah Committee, 2002; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018).

### ***Historical Development of University Education in Ghana***

The first university in Ghana, the University College of Gold Coast, was established in 1948 (Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018; Owusu et al., 2016). For decades, the University College of Gold Coast, now the University of Ghana, was the only institution of higher education in the country. As of 1991, over 40 years after the establishment of the first university, Ghana had three universities with a total enrollment of 10,000 students (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016; Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018). The 1987 education reform, however, necessitated the diversification and expansion of higher education in the country (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001). From 1987 to 2000 is considered one of the most active periods of education policy reforms in Ghana (Nudzor, 2014). The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Ghana during this period launched the three strategic objectives (i.e., improving involvement and participation in the delivery of education,

enhancing the quality of teaching and learning, promoting efficient management of resources in the education sector) to inform and aid the execution of the several education sector policies (Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001; Nudzor, 2014). From 1992 to 1996, two more universities were established, and the 10 regional polytechnics were transformed into tertiary institutions (Anamuah-Mensah, 2007; Ansah, 2017; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018).

Since 1997, there has been further diversification in tertiary education (Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001). Six institutions for postsecondary specialist professionals have been upgraded to the tertiary level, and 49 private universities and colleges have emerged. Private sector participation in higher education creation has increased with the establishment of the National Accreditation Board (National Accreditation Board, 2018). Additionally, there have been 18 nurse's training colleges, 39 teacher's training colleges, and an additional public university that has been established (National Accreditation Board, 2018). By 2006, Ghana had six public universities, one institute of public administration, 10 polytechnics, 18 nurse's training colleges, 39 teacher's training colleges, six specialist professional institutions, and 49 private universities and colleges (National Accreditation Board, 2018).

The growth of university education in Ghana is, therefore, recent (Owusu et al., 2016). This wave of development in the educational sector was possible due to the actions and efforts of the government (Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001; Ministry of Education, Republic of Ghana, 2018). These efforts included the 1991 White Paper education reform and the establishment of the National Accreditation Board in 1993 (Effah & Mensa-Bonsu, 2001; Owusu et al., 2016). In 2017, Ghana recorded about 181 accredited institutions of higher education in the country. These institutions include four chartered private tertiary institutions, two public polytechnics, eight public technical universities, 10 public universities, one regionally-owned tertiary institution, one

distance learning institution, five private colleges of education, 11 private nurses training colleges, one private polytechnic, 65 private tertiary institutions, 41 public colleges of education, seven public degree-awarding and professional institutions, 15 public nurses training colleges, five registered foreign institutions, and five tutorial colleges (National Accreditation Board, 2018).

### ***Oduraa University in Ghana***

Oduraa University is a private, not-for-profit university in Ghana that strives to educate exceptional leaders who possess integrity and professional ethics (Ajah, 2020; International Baccalaureate, n.d.; Olting'idi, 2017). The university, since its establishment, has raised the bar for higher education in Ghana. Oduraa University seeks to make a significant contribution to addressing the hurdles to Africa's progress and development as a continent (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; SGSB, 2008). With this mission in mind, the university educates its students to be ethical leaders and critical thinkers (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; SGSB, 2008).

The philosophy of Oduraa University stems from the benefits of liberal arts education the university's president and founder received from his alma mater (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). Thus, the institution's educational focus is not on accepting problems, but solving them (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). With this entirely different mental approach to life and educational experience, students of Oduraa University excel academically as well as in the professional world (SGSB, 2008).

Oduraa University maintains a record of 100% of its graduates finding jobs, starting up businesses, or furthering their studies within six months of graduation (International Baccalaureate, n.d.; Olting'idi, 2017). According to these records, about 90% of Oduraa University graduates remain on the African continent (Olting'idi, 2017). For these and many

other accomplishments, the university has been recognized not only in Ghana but on the African continent and the world. For example, Oduraa University maintains affiliations with several reputable educational organizations, including the Association of African Universities, the Council of Independent Universities, and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (Association of African Universities, 2020). Also, the founder of Oduraa University in 2007 received the Member of the Order of the Volta award, one of Ghana's most prestigious awards given to an individual who has demonstrated ideal service to the country (Olting'idi, 2017).

Additionally, Oduraa University placed first in Ghana and ninth in Africa on the 2020 Global Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings (MyJoyOnline, 2020; The World University Rankings, 2020). Also, Oduraa University was ranked as one of the top 400 higher education institutions in the world on the impact rankings. Oduraa University gained this recognition because of its performance and contributions towards achieving the United Nations' SDGs and the institution's impact on global social and economic wellbeing (MyJoyOnline, 2020; The World University Rankings, 2020). Of the 17 SDGs, Oduraa University made the most contributions to five goals, namely no poverty, gender equality, clean water & sanitation, affordable & clean energy, and partnerships for the goals (MyJoyOnline, 2020; Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platforms, n.d.). The SDGs were adopted by all member states of the United Nations in 2015. The SDGs are a call to action in a joint effort to eliminate global poverty and hunger and meet social needs, such as universal access to education, clean water, and healthcare (Sustainable Development Goals Knowledge Platforms, n.d.; The World University Rankings, 2020).

**The History of Oduraa University.** Oduraa University became operational in 2002 with only 30 students and had ever since grown in enrollment and academic excellence (African

Leadership Academy, n.d.; Ajah, 2020; Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). The university, as of Fall 2019, had a total enrollment of 1173 students. Oduraa University features a four-year bachelor's degree program with a core curriculum in liberal arts (African Leadership Academy, n.d.). The university offers degrees in Business Administration, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Computer Engineering, Management Information Systems, Computer Science, and Mechanical Engineering (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Skoll, 2020; SGSB, 2008).

Oduraa University was established at a time Ghana's education system was in crisis. The various tertiary institutions had limited capacity to meet the increasing demand (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008). There was also the issue with underfunded and deteriorating infrastructure. More importantly, the quality of the curriculum and instruction in Ghanaian universities and colleges was poor and lacking the skills students needed to be competitive in the global economy (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008).

The inspiration for Oduraa University came from the founder and president of the university, through his experience of liberal arts education at Swarthmore College and University of California, Berkeley (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008). The founder and president, before his educational exposure outside Ghana, was accustomed to an educational system that was fundamentally based on rote memorization. The founder noted, in the Ghana education system, the independent thoughts of students are not given the space to flourish (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008). Instead, students are taught not to question or have an opinion but accept the status quo. According to the founder, during his education abroad, he learned to ask questions and think critically (Skoll, 2020; SGSB, 2008). These experiences informed his decision to establish an institution with curriculum and

instruction that will afford students the training and experience needed to advance the social and economic development of Ghana (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008).

Oduraa University started as the vision of one man who dreamed of a better education for his country and his continent (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Skoll, 2020). However, to make his dream of Oduraa University a reality, the founder needed the support of visionaries who shared his vision. The founder received support from individual donors and family foundations who, to date, continue to donate to the Oduraa University Foundation (SGSB, 2008). Also, the founder received tremendous support from Microsoft and the Haas School of Business. Microsoft made significant contributions to the strong foundation of Oduraa University. Haas School of Business was also a key player in making Oduraa University the university it is today (African Leadership Academy, n.d.).

**Microsoft.** Microsoft employed the founder as a program manager in the early 1990s (Skoll, 2020). When the founder decided to leave Microsoft and return to Ghana to start Oduraa University, he received the support of his colleagues and employers (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). The former and current employees of Microsoft saw the potential of a university of Oduraa University's kind and invested not only money but time and other resources into building Oduraa University from the ground up. To date, Microsoft continues to impact Oduraa University in several ways, including the following:

- visionary leadership – by serving on the Oduraa University board, Microsoft has contributed to transforming one man's dream into a thriving university,
- inspiration – the Microsoft norm of smart people working together find solutions to problems are evident in every classroom in Oduraa University,

- financial support – employees of Microsoft have contributed more than \$7 million to the university since the inauguration of the university in 2002,
- can-do attitude – another Microsoft norm that has found its way into the culture of Oduraa University. Students at Oduraa University are exposed to the attitude of identifying local problems and creating innovative solutions to these problems,
- strategic advice and counsel – at every stage of the university’s development, employees of Microsoft serve as advisors,
- curriculum advising – employees of Microsoft provide critical support to the university’s computer science curriculum,
- connecting the university to the Microsoft global network - the Microsoft Alumni Foundation connects Oduraa University to the vast network of Microsoft alumni doing great work across the globe,
- honoring Oduraa University’s accomplishments – Microsoft acknowledges the achievements of Oduraa University. In 2010, the Microsoft Alumni Foundation’s Integral Fellows Award was given to the president of the university,
- corporate support – in addition to serving as trustees and advisors, Microsoft has given the university matching gifts of over \$400,000, and
- thinking big – similar to the game-changing strategies that Microsoft uses to implement change, Oduraa University has adopted the approach of educating students to be ethical leaders, critical thinkers, and change agents (African Leadership Academy, n.d.).

***Haas School of Business.*** The Walter A. Haas School of Business is located at the University of California, Berkeley. The founder acknowledges his years at Haas Business School



as the foundation for developing the skills and the support that he needed to build Oduraa University. The founder expressed,

When people ask me about the inspiration behind Oduraa University, I often talk about my undergraduate education and the tremendous impact of my exposure to a world class liberal arts institution. That is the why of Oduraa University. The how of Oduraa University, how the school came to be a reality - at the heart of that story is the Haas School of Business. (The Founder, personal communication)

The founder's first step after leaving Microsoft in 1999 was to attend Haas School of Business. While pursuing an MBA degree at Haas School of Business, the founder developed the skillset for building a world-class university (Fortune, 2020). According to the founder, the school together with his classmates challenged and inspired him so much that upon completion of the school, he had a business plan and a mission for Oduraa University, which included not only the school's support but also the culture of the school (Fortune, 2020; Skoll, 2020). His co-founder, Nina Marini, was his classmate from Haas School of Business. Haas School of Business has, therefore, impacted Oduraa University in several ways, including the following:

- can-do spirit – the Haas community supported the founder's dream of starting a university in Ghana and made it a reality. This can-do spirit from Haas is also present at Oduraa University, where the dreams of students are not only accepted but supported,
- core principles of Oduraa University's design – the business plan for Oduraa University was developed at Haas. The Haas' Entrepreneurship Workshop challenged the founder to think through the plan for Oduraa University,

- belief that young people can solve problems – the belief that students need to be empowered become leaders who shape the course of society present at Oduraa University is inspired by the culture the founders experienced at Haas,
- core elements of Oduraa University's management – the founder draws from lessons from his Haas' Organizational Behavior class to manage Oduraa University. He learned to manage an organization's culture to align with its mission,
- the business curriculum – the curriculum for the Business department at Oduraa University was developed in partnership with 13 faculty members from the University of California, Berkeley,
- visionary leadership – one-third of Oduraa University's founding board is made up of alumni, leadership, and faculty of Haas who serve in several roles of management such as developing policies and procedures, fundraising, hiring, and curriculum development,
- ongoing advising support from IBD teams – a team of students from Haas every year identify and address a problem at Oduraa University,
- financial support – the Haas community provided Oduraa University donations in the form of funds and scholarships for capital and program growth. The community also contributed to establishing Oduraa University's permanent campus,
- combination of academic rigor and teamwork – the culture of teamwork in the curriculum at Oduraa University is inspired by the experiences of the founder during their time in Haas, and

- teachers-for-life – the faculty of Haas continues to support the founders of Oduraa University through visits to Oduraa University to give lectures and teach (Fortune, 2020).

**Curriculum and Instruction at Oduraa University.** The Oduraa University curriculum in the past decade has proven to foster in students an entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking, ethical leadership, and the ability to solve complex real-world problems (Ajah, 2020; Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). Through class projects and internships, the liberal arts core curriculum at Oduraa University challenges students to apply theory to practice and enhance their critical thinking and communication skills (Olting’idi, 2017). This innovative academic program enables students to develop technical excellence in their respective professional fields while gaining a deeper sense of civic responsibility. Thus, students are able to develop their full potentials as visionaries capable of navigating the world and leading the course of change (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008).

With a state-of-the-art campus that features educational technology and environmental consciousness, the university offers a variety of programs (Ajah, 2020; Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). These programs include Business Administration, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Science, Computer Engineering, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and Management Information Systems (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). The Management Information Systems degree was the last to be added to the academic programs in 2007 (SGSB, 2008).

The core curriculum at Oduraa University attracts students who seek a well-rounded education (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008). The core liberal arts curriculum is a “University Required Program” for all students. Thus, irrespective of the major or specialization, students of the university spend the initial two years completing the same courses in calculus, algebra,

economics, social theory, expository writing, and negotiation (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). Through the core curriculum courses, students develop critical thinking skills, ethics, innovativeness, and communication skills (Olting'idi, 2017). The seven learning goals guiding the liberal arts core curriculum are ethics and civic engagement, communication, critical thinking and quantitative reasoning, curiosity and skill, leadership and teamwork, technological competence, and innovation and action (Olting'idi, 2017). The founders of Oduraa University believed that students needed liberal arts education to hone the skills for a lifetime leadership career. Thus, students at Oduraa University are taught to learn how to think critically, how to approach problems curiously with problem-solving attitudes, how to ensure technological competence, how to code, and how to develop a technological understanding (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). Two of the highly-rated universities in Ghana (i.e., University of Ghana and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology) also offer University Required Programs to students. However, the University Required Program at Oduraa University offers a broad range of subject matter, which makes it unique (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008).

Furthermore, Oduraa University has a small class size, which increases the level of individualization for students' academic achievement and advancement (SGSB, 2008). The regular class size at Oduraa University ranges between 10 and 40 students to a teacher. This classroom arrangement allows teachers and students to develop meaningful academic relationships (SGSB, 2008).

Additionally, Oduraa University provides its students with career services such as resume and cover-letter writing seminars, counseling, and interviewing practice and feedback (SGSB, 2008). The career services team also in collaboration with employers in both the public and the private sector organize opportunities for internships as well as full-time employment in highly

recognized companies such as Coca-Cola, Goldman Sachs, Unilever, and Hyatt Hotels. Although it may seem that the majority of Oduraa University graduates end up in the private sector, some graduates in recent years have gained leadership positions in the government (Times Higher Education, 2020). Oduraa University, by instilling national pride and the need for talented leaders, implicitly encourages its students to stay in Ghana by helping them find good jobs in the country. Thus, Oduraa University maintains its goal of job placements for the majority of students within six months after graduation (SGSB, 2008).

Graduates from Oduraa University have been recruited by renowned companies, such as Price-water-house Coopers, Google, Unilever, Tullow Oil, Newmont Gold, and Barclays (SGSB, 2008). Surveys conducted with corporate partners that hire from all major universities in Ghana revealed that none of the graduates from the other universities compete at the same quality level as graduates from Oduraa University (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). The surveys asked the companies to rank the overall quality of students with these six categories: interview skills, professional skills, ethics, communication, poise, and business etiquette. The results indicated that Oduraa University graduates were near or at the top of the list in all six accounts (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008).

**Entrepreneurial Ecosystem.** Oduraa University encourages careers in entrepreneurship by providing training and support (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008). The institution prepares students to become employment creators (Times Higher Education, 2020). Right from the first day of school, students are immersed in a culture purposefully nurtured to develop an entrepreneurial and ethical mindset. The university provides several programs and initiatives within the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

***Foundations of Design and Entrepreneurship.*** First-year students are enrolled in this year-long course to kickstart the development of entrepreneurial skills (African Leadership Academy, n.d.). Every student enrolls in the course irrespective of their major. The course presents opportunities for students to acquire real-world experiences in developing business (African Leadership Academy, n.d.).

***Entrepreneurship Capstone.*** Oduraa University offers an optional two-quarter capstone course that takes students through an analysis of new venture ideas and the development of business plans. This class, although optional, is popular among students (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; SGSB, 2008). Through the class, students receive first-hand interactions with top business leaders and entrepreneurs in Ghana who visit the campus regularly to share their experiences and serve as role models. The university also provides ad hoc services to Oduraa University alumni who are starting up new companies (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; SGSB, 2008).

***Oduraa University Start-up Launchpad.*** The launchpad provides guidance and support to the incubator businesses of students (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; Times Higher Education, 2020). This hands-on support system engages faculty and business leaders to improve the promising ideas of students. The Oduraa University Start-up Launchpad seeks to nurture the ideas of students to bring change in their lives and make a lasting impact on society (African Leadership Academy, n.d.).

***Oduraa University D:lab.*** Oduraa University has a hub for creative problem-solving that trains students and provide a space for design thinking (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; AU External Relations Office, 2016). Oduraa University D:lab has a team of experts that assist students with design thinking techniques. The team is led by a senior lecturer with years of

experience working with the MIT D-Lab. According to him, “a design lab concept was one of the ways of growing and sustaining [his] experience in design thinking” (AU External Relations Office, 2016, para. 4). A D:lab with the mission to nurture creative problem-solvers among students creates avenues for Oduraa University to achieve creativity on multidisciplinary levels (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; Times Higher Education, 2020).

### **Conceptual Framework**

Freire’s (1968) critical pedagogy served as the conceptual framework for this study. Critical pedagogy is an educational philosophy that seeks to empower students through thought and action (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1968, 2014). The philosophy emphasizes the critical thinking and action of students, which leads to the transformation of society and life conditions. McLaren and Jandrić (2018) established that Freire’s philosophical ideas were informed by liberation theology, a social movement that questioned the church about its failure to eradicate poverty, dependency, and injustice, and instead, supporting the legitimacy and reproduction of power and authority of the elite. Freire addressed the role of the church in perpetuating the oppression of the ordinary people, while supporting the power of the bourgeoisie or elite. To Freire, conscientization or critical consciousness could not be separated from Christian consciousness (McLaren & Jandrić, 2018).

Furthermore, critical pedagogy was inspired by the critical theory of the Frankfurt school (Kincheloe, 2004; Lather, 1998; McLaren, 2003). Freire used the underlying principles of the Frankfurt School’s critical theory to develop the premise of critical pedagogy. Critical theory argues for a just society with individuals controlling all aspects of their lives, whether economic, political, or cultural (Gur-Ze’ev, 1998; Lather, 1998; Wiggershaus, 1995). Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, advocates for the transformation of oppressive power relations through

humanization and the empowerment of students (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2003; McLaren, 2003). Freire (1970) asserted that students should be subjects of their own education rather than play a passive role as objects. As such, the actions of students should be geared towards transforming societies through problem-posing education. When students are exposed to problem-posing education, they are able to question the status quo and other problematic issues, cultivate critical thinking skills, and develop critical consciousness (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2003; McLaren, 2003). Students who possess critical consciousness do not only improve their individual life conditions but takes actions that serve the best interest of everyone by building a more just society (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970, 2014).

### ***History and Evolution of Critical Pedagogy***

Critical pedagogy is perceived as a realization of the Frankfurt school's critical theory (Giroux, 2003; Kincheloe, 2004; McLaren, 2003). The Frankfurt School was established in 1923 to serve as a research institute for the study of socialism (Gur-Ze'ev, 1998; Wiggershaus, 1995). Giroux (2003) posited critical theory to be the legacy of the Frankfurt School. The development of the critical theory was influenced by the shared ideas of the Frankfurt School scholars upon their experiences with the increasing power of capitalism and radical human freedom (Giroux, 2003). The Frankfurt School scholars, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Benjamin, and Adorno, asserted that social structures such as distribution and consumption were not only historically based on social relationships but also dependent on these relationships (Giroux, 2003; Wiggershaus, 1995). The scholars lived in the time of fascism and learned from the failure of Marxism and its ideologies of absolutes and lack of self-critique (Giroux, 2003). Thus, Horkheimer, Marcuse, Benjamin, and Adorno decided on constructing their theories away from economics and gearing them towards cultural structures (Giroux, 2003; McLean, 2006; Wiggershaus, 1995).



The Frankfurt School adopted some of the views of Marxism related to schools and education but with a less unified social criticism (Breuing, 2011; Wiggershaus, 1995). The Frankfurt School theorists argued against the schooling process. According to the critical theorists, education was a disservice to students because it limited their opportunity to articulate their goals and aims for learning (Apple, 1982; Kincheloe, 2004). Schools and education encouraged dependency and the understanding of authority as a hierarchy (Breuing, 2011; Wiggershaus, 1995). Also, schools did not present a complete picture of history and provided a distorted view of several events. Thus, education undermined the kind of social consciousness students needed to develop in order to take actions towards social transformation and justice (Breuing, 2011; Eisner, 2002; Wiggershaus, 1995).

### ***Proponent of Critical Pedagogy***

Paulo Freire from Brazil is considered the inaugural philosopher and founder of critical pedagogy (Bhattacharya, 2011; McLaren, 1997; Wink, 2010). Freire dedicated his life's work to promoting literacy among popular folks (McLaren, 1989, 1997). He taught peasants to understand their social conditions and the reason for their oppression. Freire's teaching ideology was influenced by his relationships and environment (Bhattacharya, 2011). He believed people bring their individual knowledge and experience into the educational process. Freire advocated his students used words, ideas, and feelings from their immediate environment to think and understand society. Thus, the educational focus was on "reading the world" rather than "reading the word" (Wink, 2010).

Freire lived communally with groups of popular folks, which gave him the opportunity to identify generative words relative to their syllabic length, phonetic value, and social relevance (McLaren, 1997). Freire established, "we started groups we called culture circles. Instead of

teachers, we had coordinators; instead of lectures, dialogue, instead of pupils, participants” (Cox, 1990, p.76). Freire’s approach to education termed conscientization was a success. The pinnacle of his success was using 45 days to teach 300 adults how to read and write (Cox, 1990; McLaren, 1997).

Freire’s life and experiences across the globe is one reason why his lifework has a universal dimension (Glass, 2001; Kirylo, 2013). Freire had the support of the government with his work among the illiterate poor until the 1964 military coup when he was arrested after a communist and a subversive accusation (Gadotti & Torres, 2009). Upon his release from prison, Freire was exiled, which took him to Bolivia (Gadotti & Torres, 2009; Kirylo, 2013).

Freire’s exile led him on a 16 years journey to Chile, Harvard in the United States, the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, Guinea-Bissau in Africa, and finally back to Brazil (Kirylo, 2013). Freire’s emerging political and educational views were affected by his arrest and exile (Cox, 1990; Kirylo, 2013). He dedicated most of his time to research and writing. He taught, consulted, and assisted with the setup of literacy programs in many countries, including Australia, Chile, Guinea-Bissau, Mexico, Nicaragua, Tanzania, and Portugal (Cox, 1990). His time in Chile, for instance, influenced the development of works such as *Sobre la Accion Cultural*, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and the first eight chapters of *The Politics of Education* (Bhattacharya, 2011). Freire also developed ideas such as the “banking concept of education,” “problem-posing education,” and the “culture of silence” (Bhattacharya, 2011; Freire, 2008).

Freire’s philosophy and ideas argued for the deconstruction of people who fall under the category of “the oppressed” by opposing the Eurocentric nature of dominant thought (McLaren & Leonard, 1993). Thus, Freire advocated for greater diversity and the humanization of

individuals (McLaren & Leonard, 1993). Freire defined humanization as the liberation of humans (Blackburn, 2000; McLaren & Leonard, 1993). He emphasized the complete liberation of individuals requires an unending encounter with reality, which is constantly changing (Bhattacharya, 2011; Blackburn, 2000). Thus, the priority for Freire was not creating a new “liberated” society but establishing the process by which oppressed people can strive for greater humanization (Blackburn, 2000; McLaren & Leonard, 1993).

Freire argued that critical pedagogy would end the oppression cycle perpetuated by the education of social reproduction (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux, 2010). In addition to his discussion of the oppressive and counterproductive practices, Freire outlined the essential practices for a socially just classroom. Personal experiences in a critical pedagogy classroom are essential (Giroux, 2010). Through experiences, students are able to relate their personal narratives, histories, and social relationships to what is being taught. Freire challenged teachers and students to “empower themselves for social change, to advance democracy and equality as they advance their literacy and knowledge” (Shor, 1993, p. 25). Freire’s ideology of a critical pedagogy stems from the assertion that education does not only empower students but also initiate social change (Giroux, 2010; McLaren, 1997; Shor, 1993).

### ***New Left Scholars***

The term refers to the critical pedagogy scholars in North America (Breuing, 2011). In the late 1970s, critical pedagogy emerged as an educational practice and knowledge production in North America. After the works of the Frankfurt School and Paulo Freire, critical pedagogy developed further with the research and analyses of academics such as Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren, bell hooks, Maxine Greene, Jeffrey Duncan-Andrade, Ira Shor, Roger Simon, Michael

Apple, and Patti Lather who continued to articulate the aims and purpose of the educational philosophy through their writings and actions (Breuing, 2011; Elias, 1994).

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, scholars such as Giroux (1981), Apple (1982), McLaren (1986), and Simon (1988), started formulating a critical pedagogy that was more of an incorporation of elements of the progressive education philosophy of Dewey (1938) and the critical theory of the Frankfurt School. The scholars operated with the school of thought that political issues could not be separated from educational ones (Elias, 1994; Giroux, 1981, 2010). These scholars were dedicated to the creation of awareness and understanding about the role schools play in the transmission of knowledge about life, whether social, political, or economic (Giroux, 1981, 2010). The scholars believed that a revolutionary critical pedagogy would allow teachers to transmit democratic social values to students in the classroom (Breuing, 2011; Kincheloe, 2004). The scholars established that the societal structures of oppression could not be eliminated with mere talk. As such, the only way to undo these structures is by educating the oppressed to know and understand their history and their oppression (bell hooks, 2003; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Freire, 1973; Giroux, 1981, 2010; Shor, 1992).

Weiler (2001), bell hooks (1994), and Shrewsbury (1987) are among the key feminist critical pedagogues. These theorists argued that education needs to challenge the traditional social structure through transformative classroom practices. The scholars agreed with Freire's (1970) assertion that the true vocation of individuals is to be fully human and that individuals should be allowed to question the status quo, identify oppressive patterns, and seek justice. bell hooks (2003) added that educational institutions should teach individuals the tools they need to break the systems of oppression. Feminist pedagogy "emphasizes the importance of consciousness raising, the existence of oppressive social structure and the need to change it, and

the possibility of social transformation” (Weiler, 2001, p. 68). The pedagogy emphasizes that the curriculum contents are as equally essential as the methods of pedagogy used in teaching lessons. As such, it is only when educational institutions teach individuals their true vocation that they can resist systems of oppression (bell hooks, 2003; Freire, 1970).

Furthermore, Lather (1991) and her work committed to critical education focused on the relationship between feminist and feminist ethnography, poststructuralism, and critical pedagogy. Lather (1991) examined how most of the post discourses could assist critical pedagogues in exploring and critiquing power and hegemonic roles in research methods and knowledge production. Shor (1996) also researched critical pedagogy in the postsecondary classroom and made similar attempts as Lather (1991) to address concerns about the limitations of transmission-based pedagogies. Shor dedicated her work to integrating social critique notions with pedagogy classroom techniques to create innovative and transformative educational possibilities (Kincheloe, 2004). Thus, the theorist integrated critical pedagogy instruction with a classroom praxis that emphasized teachers and students acting as social change agents (Kincheloe, 2004; Shor, 1996).

Critical pedagogues, for decades, have been studying how the influence of traditional education perpetuates oppression (bell hooks, 2003; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Shor, 1992). These theorists continue to create strategies that remove the teacher from the center of attention in the classroom. These strategies of critical pedagogy in the classroom, such as democratic practices and problem-posing methodologies, have managed to put the agency in the hands of students (bell hooks, 2003; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Lather, 1991; Shor, 1992).

### *The Concepts of Critical Pedagogy*

The concepts of critical pedagogy include problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue. Problem-posing education is a form of education in which students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues in their lives (Freire, 1970, 2008). Teacher and student roles describe a critical pedagogy classroom setting where the teacher and the student are both subjects who control the educational process and develop knowledge together (Freire, 1998, 2008). Praxis explains the critical reflection and action for implementing educational processes and practices (Freire, 1970; Keesing-Styles, 2003). Dialogue defines classroom communication that creates critical inter-subjectivity between the student and the teacher and between the student and his or her world and by so doing empowers the student to reflect on what is known and what is unknown and to take actions that are critical to transforming reality (Heaney, 1995; Keesing-Styles, 2003).

**Problem-Posing Education.** Freire (1970) argued that problem-posing education develops critical consciousness. This form of education emphasizes the partnership between the teacher and the student. Students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues in their lives. This education advocates cognition and transformative learning rather than knowledge transmission (Freire, 1970; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). Thus, the literacy and engagement of students in the learning process are relevant in problem-posing education. Problem-posing education uncovers reality, incites critical thinking, develops the critical consciousness, which leads students to take actions that improve conditions of life (Freire, 1970, 1998).

According to Auerbach (1990), problem-posing education can be categorized into five phases, namely, “the listening phase, the dialogue phase, the decoding phase, the recording

phase, and the action phase” (as cited in Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018, p. 217). The teacher and the student go through the process of reflecting and acting to recreate or transform reality (Kareepadath, 2018). The different phases of this education begin in the classroom and elaborate on the participation and performances of the teacher and the student but do not end in the classroom. In the final phase, the student achieves a sense of self-reflection of his or her reality and is able to take action that will transform society (Freire, 1970; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018).

Problem-posing education is based on the realities and life conditions of students, which are meant to encourage students to ask questions. Nixon-Ponder (1995) established five steps of problem-posing that students go through; “describe the discussion content, define the problem, personalize the problem, discuss the problem, and discuss problem alternatives” (as cited in Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011, p. 78). Problem-posing education by design informs critical educators or teachers who, in their role, assist students in questioning and understanding the reasons behind the status quo (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Degener, 2001). Problem-posing education integrates educational practices geared toward the development of a culture of democracy in both the classroom and the society (Kareepadath, 2018).

**Teacher and Student Roles.** In the critical pedagogy classroom, the teacher and the student are subjects known as critical educators and critical learners (Degener, 2001; Moore & Parker, 1986). They control the educational process and develop knowledge together. The teacher is viewed as a problem poser rather than a transmitter of knowledge (Freire, 1972, 1998). The teacher listens to what the student has to say. The teacher then identifies and poses questions using situations familiar to the student. As a transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1997), the teacher learns from the student, appreciates his or her point of view, and participates in the dialogical process of learning.

Additionally, the teacher in the critical pedagogy classroom has a self-reflective role about the effects of his or her position and authority. Crabtree and Sapp (2004) defined self-reflection as “the form of questioning one’s motives, purpose, ideology, and pedagogy as informed by theory and habit” (p. 110). When a teacher goes through this process of self-reflection, he or she is able to maintain an open and equal classroom environment by making the class student-centered (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Higgins, 1996). The teacher is also able to accept feedback on educational ideas and practices that may deem unsuccessful or oppressive (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Higgins, 1996). When the teacher gives up most of the power in the title as the educator and unquestioned authority (McLaren, 1995; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018) by challenging the status quo as well as his or her personal ideologies and expectations, he or she is able to maintain a more open and friendly relationship with the student and thereby focus attention on creating knowledge together (Foley, 2007; Giroux, 1997).

Freire (1998) noted that the teacher creates classroom experiences that encourage the student to become an active agent in his or her education. The teacher and the student negotiate on classroom procedures (Izadinia, 2011; McLaren, 1995). While the teacher is uncovering reality and creating knowledge, the student is developing autonomy to critical reflection on reality. As such, the student “come[s] to see the world not as a static reality, but as reality in process, in transformation” (Freire, 1970, p. 71). Critical pedagogy in raising the critical consciousness of the student also helps the student to develop an accurate perception of life conditions and experiences (Freire, 1970, 1998). The student in the critical pedagogy classroom does not play a meek role by only allowing him or herself to be the recipient of knowledge (Freire, 1972, 1998; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). The student plays the role of a critical autonomous who criticizes, analyzes, and questions educational materials as well as realities of



society so that he or she can become an agent of progressive social change (Freire, 1998; Izadinia, 2011; Kellner, 1998; McLaren, 1995).

The student, as an active participant, reflects on his or her commonest knowledge and world. The student self-assesses the fact and makes meaning and understanding for him or herself (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Izadinia, 2011). The student has a fluid relationship with the teacher, where the learner can become the teacher and the teacher the learner. The learner does not play the role of a recipient but the creator of knowledge (Freire, 1970). The student, in collaboration with the teacher, serves to critique and raise awareness about what is lacking in education and what needs to be done to improve these conditions. Thus, in serving their roles, the student and the teacher are both research subjects and change agents (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Dheram, 2007; Freire, 1998).

**Praxis.** In the critical pedagogy classroom, praxis connects theory to transformational action by bridging the gap between education and social transformation (Boyce, 1996; Freire, 1970). Freire (1970) argued that critical consciousness is achieved through intellectual effort, reflection, and action. Thus, Freire explained praxis as the critical reflection and action for implementing educational processes and practices (Keesing-Styles, 2003). Praxis occurs through dialogical processes between partners, the educator, and the learner (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Sadeghi, 2008).

Freire (1970, 1973) advocated that the student develops praxis because learning is a continuous process of transformation. Learning starts with an action and then reflection, which is followed by more action until the student reaches the capacity to transform society. Thus, Provenzo and Renaud (2009) described praxis as “an inventive and interventive way of life that encourages free, creative reflection and thoughtful action in order to change the world, even as

the learners are transformed in the process” (p. 608). Individual and societal transformation occurs through critical dialogue and critical reflection, which leads to critical inventive or interventive action (Freire, 1970, 1973; Provenzo & Renaud, 2009).

**Dialogue.** Freire (1998) explained dialogue as the foundation of critical education. Dialogue is the means through which the student actively involves in his or her education. While dialogue reduces how much the teacher talks, it encourages the student to voice his or her opinion (Freire, 1998, 2014; Shor, 1992). Freire (1970) asserted that dialogue, which requires critical thinking, generates critical thinking. He noted, “without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education” (Freire, 1970, p. 73). It is essential to establish dialogue in education because using dialogue implies using a language that is familiar to both the student and the teacher (Freire, 1970, 1985).

Authentic classroom dialogue engages the teacher and the student in a relationship that develops into a pedagogy of knowing (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970). Dialogue in the critical pedagogy classroom creates critical inter-subjectivity between the student and the teacher and between the student and his or her world (Heaney, 1995). Dialogue balances the teacher’s authority with the input of the student (Shor, 1992). According to Shor (1992), dialogue creates an equal environment and opportunity for the student and the teacher. Heaney (1995) added that dialogue promotes acceptance and trust that is mutual between the student and the teacher. Therefore, dialogue empowers the student to reflect on what is known and what is not known and to take actions that are critical to transforming reality (Heaney, 1995; Keesing-Styles, 2003). Thus, classroom dialogical relations are central to the educational experience because communication is the medium for transferring meaning and understanding of human life (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970; Keesing-Styles, 2003).

### *Criticisms of Critical Pedagogy*

Critical pedagogy is appropriate for reviewing instructional delivery methods designed to stimulate transformative learning experience in the classroom (McLaren, 2003; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). Critical pedagogy in the classroom develops a democratic environment for a dialectic understanding of the world (Darder, 2002). It also encourages students to critically understand power and privilege in society and their hidden effects and opportunities for all individuals. Thus, there are constituents of critical pedagogy in all classroom lessons that serve to promote social justice, democracy, and freedom (Darder, 2002; McLaren, 2003).

Critical pedagogy is an educational strategy that should be applied to all levels of education (bell hooks, 2003; Giroux, 2010; Shor, 1992). Critical pedagogy is a student-centered learning strategy that challenges the construction of knowledge in school as well as society (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1981, 2010). The pedagogical approach questions long-standing educational structures by pointing out the injustices and inequalities that are socially reproduced through education (Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux, 2010). Thus, critical pedagogy does not only challenge institutional structures and the roles of the teacher and the student but also puts the agency in the hands of the student (bell hooks, 2003; Duncan-Andrade & Morrell, 2008; Giroux, 2010; Shor, 1992).

Critical pedagogy over the years has received some negative criticisms from the community of scholars. Ruiz and Fernandez-Balboa (2005) criticized critical pedagogy with their concerns about the fact that some self-identified critical pedagogues find it difficult to explain the justice-oriented nature of the philosophy. The scholars conducted a study from which the research results indicated that self-identified critical pedagogues could not clearly and logically articulate the explanation for the justice-oriented nature of critical pedagogy (Ruiz & Fernandez-

Balboa, 2005). Additionally, the majority of the participants could not articulate the aims and purpose of the educational philosophy (Ruiz & Fernandez-Balboa, 2005).

Furthermore, Breuing (2011) pointed out more than one definition exists for critical pedagogy. In his study, Breuing (2011) noticed that participants provided different definitions for the pedagogical approach. Also, the majority of the participants who had self-identified as critical pedagogues were unable to present an in-depth explanation for the social justice concept that they themselves had discussed when defining critical pedagogy (Breuing, 2011). Again, when referencing theorists of critical pedagogy, few participants mentioned the key theorists of the educational philosophy (Breuing, 2011).

In response to these criticisms, Lather (2001) and Gur-Ze'ev (1998) noted that critical pedagogues need to embrace the competing understandings, contradictory voices, and counternarratives because they all constitute critical pedagogy. According to Lather (1998), what seems like chaos to everyone is a move. A perspective that will define critical pedagogy as the “big tent” for individuals in education who consider themselves critical pedagogues and are invested in justice-oriented academic work. McLaren (1998) and Gur-Ze'ev (1998) affirmed that there are key variations in the existing theoretical and practical critical pedagogies. Although these differences may create some tension from time to time, they all possess the same fundamental objective. Therefore, critical pedagogues should be encouraged not to focus on establishing one true definition and practice of the pedagogical approach but concentrate on the uniqueness in the approach, which can be tailored depending on the needs of a particular situation (Gur-Ze'ev, 1998; Lather, 1998, 2001; McLaren, 1998).

### *Application of Critical Pedagogy in Empirical Studies*

Many contemporary scholars (Boegeman, 2013; Izadinia, 2011; Kareepadath, 2018; Ördem & Ulum, 2019; Rajesh, 2014) have argued for the premise of critical pedagogy in the social and political discourse of education and transformational social change and have applied the philosophy as a framework for their studies. Izadinia (2011) used critical pedagogy as a lens to measure teacher efficacy. The study sought to examine how the basic principles of critical pedagogy have been incorporated into the theoretical and operational components of teacher efficacy. The study sought to answer three questions: the extent to which existing teacher efficacy research addresses the basic principles of critical pedagogy; the extent to which the basic principles of critical pedagogy are factored in the measures of teacher efficacy; and how the basic principles of critical pedagogy can be incorporated into a measure of teacher efficacy. The findings of the research indicated that the incorporation of the basic principles of critical pedagogy in the measures of teacher efficacy is not a common practice (Izadinia, 2011). Considering critical pedagogy had not been given adequate recognition in existing measures of teacher efficacy, Izadinia (2011) adapted an existing measure and incorporated the tenets of critical pedagogy. The new measure was administered and tested for validity using statistical analysis and was construct validated. The researcher concluded that teacher effectiveness should include performing the roles of engaging students in educational decisions, critical dialogue, critical thinking, and power-sharing (Izadinia, 2011).

Boegeman (2013) explored high school social studies teachers' practice of critical pedagogy. The researcher sought to discover the components of critical pedagogy these teachers incorporated in their syllabus and practiced in their teaching. Using a multiple case study method, the researcher selected two unique cases to serve as the sources of thick-rich data

(Boegeman, 2013). The researcher reported not seeing many of the components of critical pedagogy in action. The teachers expressed frustrations in their inability to practice the tenets of critical pedagogy. One of the major limitations was the requirement to use a standardized curriculum and syllabus that they were not involved in creating (Boegeman, 2013). According to the researcher, although the participants knew the premise and principles of critical pedagogy in theory, the restrictions prevented them from translating the abstract tenets into practice (Boegeman, 2013). Thus, what the participants knew in theory, they lacked in practice. Therefore, Boegeman (2013) anticipated that his research would serve as a teaching case to assist teachers with overcoming some of the challenges that come with teaching critical pedagogy in an educational environment that is inherently restricted.

Another study conducted by Kareepadath (2018) used critical pedagogy to analyze the practices of teachers in the classroom. The researcher narrowed the study to focus on the critical components that relate to the work of the teacher. Kareepadath (2018) noticed that the teaching practices of the research participants were being shaped by the dialectical interactions between their subjectivity and the institutional structure. The researcher applied Freire's (1996) radical subject notion to explain this dialectical interaction that was shaping the actions of the participants. Freire (1996) discussed radicalization as an "increased commitment to the position one has chosen, and thus ever greater engagement in the effort to transform concrete, object reality" (p. 19). The teaching practices of the participants were shaped by the knowledge produced from the subjective and objective aspects of their concrete reality (Kareepadath, 2018). The researcher concludes that critical pedagogy can only thrive in schools when it is implemented organically rather than mechanically (Kareepadath, 2018).

A study by Ördem and Ulum (2019) explored the implementation of critical pedagogy in English language teaching (ELT) departments and English as a foreign language (EFL) classrooms. According to the researchers, the English language as a lingua franca has fueled business-minded textbook publishers to follow their commercial desires rather than adhere to the principles for critical education (Ördem & Ulum, 2019). Thus, although critical pedagogy has been in existence since the 1960s, the principles of this pedagogical approach are hardly incorporated into curriculums and syllabi. The study sought to document the perceptions of ELT teachers concerning the incorporation of critical social, cultural, and political topics in the curriculum (Ördem & Ulum, 2019). The research findings revealed that the critical social, cultural, and political topics that were exposed to the teacher participants were hardly used in their classroom discussions. The teachers, however, expressed interests that the critical topics be included in their curriculum and syllabus (Ördem & Ulum, 2019). The researchers, therefore, concluded that to develop a culture of direct democracy among EFL students and ELT teachers, social and political topics need to be part of the school curriculum. Social and political awareness creation is relevant to empowering students as well as teachers as citizens of the world who can champion the transformation of society through dialectic discourse (Ördem & Ulum, 2019). Additionally, the researchers pointed out that attention is needed in developing English global textbooks from a critical perspective (Ördem & Ulum, 2019).

In another study, Rajesh (2014) examined the effectiveness of critical pedagogy using the following variables: critical thinking ability, value preference, and achievement in social studies. The researcher used secondary level students as participants in this quasi-experimental study. The treatment group received instruction with the critical pedagogical approach, and the traditional method of teaching was applied to the control group (Rajesh, 2014). Treatment was

administered over six months. Instruments for the pre-test post-test data collection included a value preference scale, an achievement test, and a critical thinking ability test (Rajesh, 2014). The test results revealed significant improvement in the achievement in social studies, value preference, and critical thinking ability with the group that was exposed to the pedagogical approach. The researcher, therefore, concluded that the significance of critical pedagogy is evident and should be recommended to other schools in teaching all subjects (Rajesh, 2014).

### ***Application and Justification of Critical Pedagogy for the Current Research***

Critical pedagogy was applied to this study in the following ways: The study's problem statement evolved from the conceptual framework and aligned with the purpose of the study. Also, the research questions were developed from the concepts of critical pedagogy. The RQ1 evolved from the concept of problem-posing education. The RQ2 evolved from the concept of teacher and student roles. The RQ3 from the concept of praxis, and the RQ4 from the concept of dialogue.

Critical pedagogy was the appropriate framework for this study that explored how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University in Ghana (SGSB, 2008). The central tenets of the philosophy align with the central mission of the university, which is to establish classrooms in which teachers and students learn and create knowledge together. The university's curriculum allows for a learning environment that students find conducive to speaking with authority and questioning the status quo (Fortune, 2020; SGSB, 2008). The kind of instruction in the university allows for critical dialogue between students and teachers and students and their knowledge of the world. Through creative assignments, students are able to discover their voices and their capacity to take action that leads to the betterment of society (International Baccalaureate, n.d.; SGSB, 2008). The kind of education students receive



at Oduraa University in Ghana teaches them how to connect their thoughts to their actions by making substantial arguments about reality while finding practical and progressive ways of changing their world (Fortune, 2020; SGSB, 2008). In other words, education does not develop critical thinking and critical consciousness alone in students but also imbibe in them the sense of purpose and responsibility to society. Thus, using critical pedagogy as the lens for the study does not make only theoretical but practical sense.

### **Chapter Summary**

The chapter began with a discussion of the major topical areas, including instructional delivery methods and instructional delivery methods in universities in Ghana. The chapter also delved into the evolution of Ghana's education system as well as the British colonial education legacy and its influences on the education system in Ghana. The discussion continued with education in Ghana, university education in Ghana, the historical development of university education in Ghana, and Oduraa University. The section was followed with an in-depth literature review of critical pedagogy and the basic principles of the philosophy.

Many individuals in the Ghanaian society are educated in traditional classrooms in which the content conforms with the status quo (SGSB, 2008). These types of instructional methods minimize the critical literacy and awareness of individuals (Freire, 1998, 2008). Critical pedagogy classrooms will, therefore, inform and facilitate the development of individuals who understand their history and current situations and are equipped with the tools to participate in their society actively (bell hooks, 2003; Freire, 1970). The Ghanaian education system needs new instructional delivery methods that teach students not to be passive and compliant. The educational process should allow students to grow their critical thinking capabilities, understand

social systems, recognize political and social injustice, and act to rectify the situation (bell hooks, 2003; Giroux, 2010).

### Chapter 3: Procedures and Methods

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a private university in Western-Africa. The following overarching research question aligns with the problem and purpose of the study: How do the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa? The following four sub-questions align with the problem, purpose, and philosophical concepts:

**RQ1:** How does the concept of problem-posing education inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ2:** How does the concept of teacher and student roles inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ3:** How does the concept of praxis inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ4:** How does the concept of dialogue inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

Chapter 3 presents a detailed discussion and justification of the following sections: The research design section discussing the qualitative methodology and case study as the qualitative methodology approach. The section is followed by discussions of the site selection, population, participants, and participant selection. Subsequently are sections on data sources, ethical issues, as well as research protocols and instrumentation. These sections are followed by discussions on data collection procedures, researcher positionality, techniques for ensuring trustworthiness and rigor, and the specific process for data analysis. The chapter concludes with a section that summarizes the major issues that were raised.

## Research Design

### *Qualitative Paradigm*

Patton (2015) defined paradigms as “a way of understanding different perspectives in science about how best to study and understand the world” (p. 723). Patton (2015) explained the existence of paradigms debate stemming from differences in philosophy with regard to what knowledge means and how knowledge should be created. For instance, qualitative inquirers, unlike quantitative researchers, conduct research with the notion or idea of the existence of multiple realities (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative researchers, therefore, operate with the premise that “reality” is subjective, and as such, every individual based on his or her specific interactions and experiences with the external world constructs a unique and personal view of the world (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cropley, 2019). In other words, reality is made up of a set of inferences, impressions, and opinions in the mind of individuals. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to gain insights into individuals’ contracts of reality by exploring and documenting the meaning of the world through individuals’ experience, structure, and interpretation (Cropley, 2019).

Conducting social science research, however, requires studying human behavior, which is complex and cannot be controlled or experimented (Scheff, 2011). This kind of research requires human social relationships such as relationships among research subjects, including the inquirer (Liebig et al., 2015; Patton, 2015). Therefore, the researcher needs to get closer to the participants to document subjective evidence based on the participants’ opinions and experiences. Also, the researcher needs to conduct the research in the field natural to the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Applying a research approach like quantitative research to the study of human actions and behavior in the natural setting, therefore, may be problematic

(Bar-Yam, 2016; Scheff, 2011). Based on these epistemological reasons, the qualitative research approach is appropriate for this study, which takes the path an exploration and discovery of meaning and understanding in the field natural to the participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Furthermore, there is a philosophical belief in the value of qualitative research, which establishes the credibility of the paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). While other research paradigms may bring value to a study, qualitative inquiry reveals the value of a research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, the qualitative researcher acknowledges his or her positionality by reporting personal values and biases as well as the “value-laden nature” (Creswell & Poth, 2018; p. 21) of the research. With the discussion of the philosophical assumptions, I established that qualitative methodology would be appropriate for exploring the concepts of critical pedagogy in the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University in Ghana.

### ***Qualitative Methodology***

Qualitative methodology or research design is emerging (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research design is defined as “a form of systematic empirical inquiry into meaning” (Shank, 2002, p. 5). According to Shank (2002), systematic is explained as an inquiry that is “planned, ordered and public” (p. 5), through a set of rules agreed upon by the community of qualitative research. The researcher explained empirical as an inquiry that is grounded in experience. Lastly, Shank (2002) explained an inquiry into meaning as researching to understand how individuals make sense of their perceived and lived experiences.

Qualitative research design is an interpretive and naturalistic approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Researchers conducting qualitative research, thus, study phenomena in their natural settings and, by so doing, attempt to interpret or make sense of the phenomena in terms of meanings individuals bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Ospina, 2004). Qualitative

research explores the way and manner in which individuals make sense of their own concrete real-life experiences and express the meanings in their own words (Cropley, 2019).

Qualitative research design has several strengths and weaknesses. Qualitative research design, unlike the quantitative approach, is focused on the process rather than the outcome of a study (Atieno, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Therefore, the researcher does not embark on an inquiry with the intention to prove a point. Qualitative research design is “focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied” (Merriam, 2009, p. 1). Despite these strengths, qualitative research design has some weaknesses. This form of inquiry devotes time to making sense or meaning of people’s way of life, their experiences, and their world entirely (Atieno, 2009). To address this weakness, I was patient and also made provision for time as much as was possible. Also, the research approach entails fieldwork, which requires the physical presence of the researcher on the site or natural setting for data collection (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). To address this weakness, I, as the research instrument, was physically present during data collection. Again, qualitative research design is descriptive and deductive in nature and in order not to taint the process with my preconceived notions and knowledge about the phenomenon, I performed reflexivity and discussed explicitly any predispositions or biases that might exist (Atieno, 2009; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Among the five approaches to qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018), I employed case study as the appropriate qualitative approach for this study.

### ***Case Study***

A case study is a research approach in which the researcher explores a contemporary, real-life case or multiple cases as the unit of analysis to gain in-depth understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). According to Merriam (1998), “a case study design is

employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (p. 19). Therefore, the focus of a case study research should be on discovery rather than confirmation. The research approach entails the use of multiple, rich, and detailed data collection sources such as interviews, documents, observations, and audiovisual materials, which enable the researcher to generate descriptions and themes for the case under study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Although a case study research can adopt many of the data collection strategies, the research approach tends to rely heavily on interviews and direct observations (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). In this research, I directly observed the phenomenon under study, reviewed documents, and interviewed individuals involved in the phenomenon.

As a strength, case study method has the ability to implement all the data collection procedures. The method of research can consolidate evidence from interviews, direct observation, participant observation, artifacts, and documents (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). As a weakness, case study method is unable to manipulate or control behavior. Unlike experimental research, case study cannot precisely, directly, or systematically interfere with the behavioral event under study (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018).

A case study research design was appropriate for this study because the study focused on a bounded system confined within the perimeters of a specific phenomenon or program (i.e., instructional delivery methods), which is peculiar to a specific location (i.e., Oduraa University; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Also, the study targeted specific individuals (i.e., staff, students, faculty) who are directly involved in the phenomenon. Additionally, the research questions began with a “how” or “why,” seeking to explain a contemporary phenomenon and demanded an in-depth thick-rich description of a social phenomenon (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). According to Patton (2015), the “purpose drives the design [while] the design

gives a sturdy direction and focus” (p. 526). Thus, in connecting the design and analysis, a case study method was appropriate since the study focused on a contemporary phenomenon or a bounded system that qualified to be a case (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

Case study research design has three leading authorities, Merriam (1998), Yin (1989), and Stake (1995). Each authority employs different approaches to case study research based on their differing ontological and epistemological perspectives. As a result, the authorities make divergent suggestions regarding the conception of case studies, the methods of data collection, and the techniques of data analysis. Merriam’s (1998) descriptive case study informed this study. Descriptive case study explains a case study that generates a thick, rich description of the phenomenon. Generating a holistic description, including verbatim quotes, documentation of events, and elicited imagery, provides an in-depth illumination and understanding of the phenomenon. In addition, the product of a descriptive case study is based on multiple data sources and illustrates the dynamic perspectives of the individuals involved in the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998).

The philosophical perspective of Merriam also seemed appropriate for this study. According to Merriam (1998), constructivism is the epistemology that should orient a qualitative case study. Further, Merriam (1998) argued the qualitative research types should be grounded on the assumption that “reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (p. 6). Again, she asserted that qualitative research should focus on understanding the knowledge or meaning that people construct (Merriam, 1998). Employing a descriptive case study was appropriate because the study sought to yield a thick, rich description of the phenomenon. Also, the study employed multiple sources (i.e., interviews, observations, documents) for data collection.



## Site Selection

Oduraa University was the site for this study. Oduraa University is a chartered private tertiary institution that became operational in 2002 (Ajah, 2020; National Accreditation Board, 2018; Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). The university was awarded a charter in 2018, making the institution a nationally recognized degree-granting university (Times Higher Education, 2020). Oduraa University was less than two decades old when it became autonomous. The institution is recognized as the youngest university in the history of Ghana to be awarded a Presidential Charter (Times Higher Education, 2020).

Oduraa University was established at a time Ghana's education system was in crisis. The various tertiary institutions had limited capacity to meet the increasing demand (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). There was also the issue with underfunded and deteriorating infrastructure. More importantly, the quality of the curriculum and instruction in Ghanaian universities and colleges was poor and lacking the skills students needed to be competitive in the global economy (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; SGSB, 2008).

Oduraa University in Ghana strives to educate exceptional leaders and critical thinkers who possess integrity and professional ethics (Ajah, 2020; Olting'idi, 2017; Times Higher Education, 2020). Oduraa University has raised the bar for university education in Ghana with unique teaching and learning strategies. Thus, the university has made significant contributions to addressing the hurdles to Africa's development through education (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). The philosophy and educational focus of Oduraa University is to solve problems instead of accepting them (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; SGSB, 2008). This unique approach to life and educational experience reflects in the academic excellence and professional competence of Oduraa University students (Skoll, 2020; SGSB, 2008).

Additionally, Oduraa University maintains a record of 100% of its graduates finding jobs, starting up businesses, or furthering their studies within six months of graduation (Olting'idi, 2017). According to these records, about 90% of Oduraa University graduates remain on the African continent to work in different sectors for progress and transformation (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). For these and many other accomplishments, the university is recognized not only in Ghana but on the African continent and globally.

The research questions and purpose of the study required in-depth research into the instructional delivery methods practiced at Oduraa University in Ghana. It was therefore essential that the site for the research be Oduraa University. Also, Oduraa University was only not representative of the phenomenon but contained participants who were representative of the problem. Therefore, selecting Oduraa University as the research site and its students, staff, and faculty as research participants was appropriate because the participants were directly involved in this specific case under study.

Oduraa University is situated on 100 acres of land in a suburban area in the eastern part of Ghana (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). The university features a four-year bachelor's degree program with a core curriculum in liberal arts (Times Higher Education, 2020). Oduraa University has two faculties (i.e., Faculty of Business, Arts and Social Sciences and Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science). Under the Faculty of Business, Arts and Social Sciences are the Department of Human and Social Sciences, with a Multidisciplinary core curriculum as the area of study and the Department of Business Administration, which offers a degree in BSc. Business Administration. Under the Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science are two departments, the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems, with degrees in BSc. Computer Science and BSc. Management Information Systems and the Department of

Engineering, which offers degrees in BSc. Computer Engineering, BSc. Electrical & Electronic Engineering, and BSc. Mechanical Engineering (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020).

The governance and leadership of Oduraa University are led by the president, who doubles as the founder of the institution and serves as the Chief Executive Officer (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). The president is accountable to the Board of Trustees, which is made up of 15 members and the Oduraa University Foundation. The university has an eight-member Board of Directors pursuant to its status as a Company Limited by Guarantee (i.e., a private, not-for-profit, non-sectarian institution). The university also has Lifetime Trustees made up of nine members (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). The University Executive Team is made up of the President, the Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, the Dean of Students & Community Affairs, the Chief Operating Officer, and the Provost. Oduraa University has 37 faculty who are full-time, 14 adjunct faculty, and 34 teaching assistants whom the institution refers to as faculty interns (Olting'idi, 2017). The faculty-student ratio is approximately 1:20. The university has 78 administrative staff. The population of females among university employees is 41% as compared to 59% of male employees (Olting'idi, 2017).

Oduraa University opened in 2002 with 30 students but has ever since not only grown in academic excellence but also enrollment (Ajah, 2020; Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). The university, as of Fall 2019, had a total enrollment of 1173 students. The breakdown of student demographics includes 48% female and 52% male. The institution has an international student population of 17% representing over 28 countries, including Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Congo-Kinshasa, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Germany, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Swaziland, Sweden, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of

America, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Also, the university has 43% of the students, both local and international, who are enrolled in scholarships of different kinds (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008).

Before embarking on this research, I submitted an Institutional Review Board (IRB) application to Oduraa University IRB to gain access to the site. This IRB application is available on the institution's website and can be accessed by any potential researcher. Upon completion and submission of the IRB form, I corresponded with the chair of the board and made provision for any additional materials that might facilitate the decision of the board to grant me access to the site.

### **Population**

The population for the study was students, faculty, and staff of the Academic Affairs Department of Oduraa University. Information from the institution's website indicated that Oduraa University has a total student enrollment of 1173. The student population comprises of 563 females (48%) and 610 males (52%). International students comprise 17% of the student population. There is an 85 faculty population consisting of 37 full-time faculty, 14 adjunct faculty, and 34 faculty interns. The university has 78 administrative staff, four of whom are in the Academic Affairs Department.

### **Participants**

A purposefully selected faculty, students, and staff from the Academic Affairs Department of Oduraa University served as research participants because they could provide thick-rich data that would offer detailed insight and substantial illumination about the phenomenon. Creswell and Poth (2018) argued that qualitative study is about researching a few participants and collecting extensive data. Yin (2018) also recommended that for a single case study, the sample size should not be more than four or five. This number of cases makes it

possible for the researcher to identify single-case themes in addition to analyzing cross-case themes (Yin, 2018). The sample size for the study was 11, comprising two faculty, eight students, and one administrative staff from the Academic Affairs Department of Oduraa University (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). All the participants were 18 years or older. Regarding unit of analysis, I recruited individuals who had been in the university for at least two years and, as such, could provide substantial data and more profound meaning and understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Participants' characteristics (i.e., specific age, gender, educational attainment) that could be aggregated for identity were nonrelative to the study, and therefore, were not included in this section.

### **Participant Selection**

The sampling strategy for the study was purposeful. Purposeful sampling refers to the process of locating participants who can provide thick-rich data for an inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). According to Patton (2015), purposeful sampling is the process of “strategically selecting information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance can illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (p. 265). Purposeful sampling was appropriate for this study because the outcomes of this sampling method are normally information-rich cases that provide an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015). Thus, through purposeful sampling, I was able to gather in-depth information about this issue of importance.

Yin (2018) has recommended that for a single case study, the sample size should not be more than four or five participants. Patton (2015) asserted that “sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what’s at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources” (p. 244). Thus, a qualitative

researcher should not set a specific number of participants but focus on obtaining a detailed account of the phenomenon (Merriam & Associates, 2002; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). Callary et al. (2015) have affirmed that qualitative “researchers are interested in relatively small sample sizes so they can explore each case with the necessary time, energy, and rigour required for this type of analysis” (p. 66). Thus, a small sample size was preferable for this qualitative case study research. To follow the recommendations of these qualitative research authorities (Callary et al., 2015; Merriam & Associates, 2002; Patton, 2015; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Yin, 2018), the participants of the study were 11 faculty, students, and staff over the age of 18 who agreed to participate in the research.

Creswell and Poth (2018) recommended recruiting participants who can provide substantial data and deeper meaning and understanding of the phenomenon. As such, I recruited staff, students, and faculty who had been in the university for a minimum of two years and had a long experience with the phenomenon. I visited the site, and with the assistance of the gatekeeper, I was introduced to faculty members and staff from the Academic Affairs department. I sought permission from the faculty to visit their classrooms. During the class visits, I managed to build rapport with some students who could serve as potential participants. After building relationships with potential students, faculty, and staff participants, I approached them individually and requested their permission to interview. I scheduled interview sessions with the staff, students, and faculty who agreed to participate in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

### **Ethical Issues/Permissions**

As part of conducting an ethical study, I planned how anticipated ethical issues would be addressed (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). I first sought and obtained permission to

access the research site and the participants (Appendix A). Then, I obtained permission from the University of West Florida IRB (Appendix B) upon completion of the human subjects research training (Appendix C).

On the field, I obtained signed informed consent and recorded media addendum (Appendix D) from all participants. Research participants were made to understand through the informed consent and recorded media addendum that their participation in the research was completely voluntary, and they may leave the study at any time. It was clearly stated in the informed consent and recorded media addendum that if participants decided to stop participating in the study, there would be no penalty to them, nor would they lose any benefits to which they were otherwise entitled. The informed consent and recorded media addendum were read to or given to the participants to read. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered. The research proceeded once the participants were satisfied with all explanations and signed both the informed consent and recorded media addendum as evidence of their approval. Evidently, I implemented the principles of ethical research, respect for persons, justice, and concern for welfare (Creswell & Poth, 2018). These principles respected the rights of participants and protected vulnerable persons who were not in the position to defend themselves.

Additionally, I was confidential in the recording of sensitive topics and information shared by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). I also respected the privacy of participants and did not engage in any form of deception with regards to the details of information discussed before, during, and after interactions with participants. I assigned pseudonyms to individual participants and concealed their identities (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The recorded information was stored in a safe and secure place, which can only be accessed by the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

## **Data Sources**

Data collection sources in qualitative inquiry include interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Although a case study can adopt many of the data collection strategies, the approach tends to rely heavily on interviews and direct observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). The research method, however, has the ability to consolidate data from interviews, participant observations, direct observations, artifacts, and documents (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). The research questions for this study required documents, observations, and interviews to collect data. For this study, I employed interviews, direct observations, and documents as the primary data collection sources (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). These sources provided the data needed for constructing a thick-rich and holistic study, which illuminated the significance of the case (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015).

### ***Interviews***

Rubin and Rubin (2012) explained interviewing as social interaction. A conversation through which a researcher constructs knowledge with the interviewee (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews are the best way to understand the world of a group of individuals from their own point of view (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Through interviews, participants are able to tell their stories and uncover the meaning of their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The purpose of qualitative interviewing, according to Patton (2015), is to capture the worldview of individuals being interviewed. Thus, conducting a qualitative interview “begins with the assumption that the perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 341). Interviews are, therefore, conducted in order to find out individuals’



perspectives on a phenomenon with the assumption that these individuals can provide thick-rich data needed to illuminate a question or a problem (Patton, 2015).

Patton (2015) proposed four interview types for data collection, interview guide approach, informal conversational interview, closed, fixed-response interview, and standardized open-ended interview. I combined these approaches in order to enrich the interview process and yield thick-rich data. According to Patton (2015), the interview types are not mutually exclusive and can be combined to enhance flexibility in probing and exploring certain key subjects. The type of interview adopted in this research was semi-structured, open-ended, one-on-one (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Merriam (2009) explained “a semi-structured interview allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (p. 90). The semi-structured format was adopted to give participants the opportunity to express their experience in their own words and in the most convenient way possible (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This format also made room for new questions to emerge and adjustments to be made in the course of the interview. In other words, while I was asking the pre-determined questions as a prompt for the discussion, I also explored further particular themes and responses (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

The different types of interviews have their strengths as well as their weaknesses. Informal conversational interview, for instance, is built on issues related to the individuals being interviewed (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). However, this type results in different information being collected and making data organization and analysis challenging for the researcher. The standardized open-ended interview, on the other hand, ensures that participants answer the exact same questions (Patton, 2015). This type reduces bias as the researcher is able to address all the salient topics during the interview process. However, this type is not always

flexible to participants' relatability to interview questions (Patton, 2015). The best approach to address the challenges of the various types of interviews was to draw on the strengths of each type to create a combined approach (Patton, 2015).

Additionally, conducting interviews requires a set of complex skills that can be acquired through practice (Brinkmann & Kvale). The researcher needs to make several important decisions such as the interview location, the kind of questions to ask, whom to talk to, and how to get participants to open up and share essential information (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Thus, I needed to develop these skills and competence in advance in order to become a good interviewer (Brinkmann & Kvale; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### ***Observations***

Observations like interviews are popular in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Yin (2018) recommended observations as one of the appropriate tools for collecting data in a case study research. Also, I compared and cross-checked observation notes with interviews and document data for consistency (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Observation is the process of watching carefully and documenting for scientific purposes as a phenomenon unfolds in its natural setting (Angrosino, 2007; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Depending on the purpose of the study and research questions, the focus of observing could be on participants, interactions, or the setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, I was a direct observer with no involvement with neither the participants nor the activity (Bernard, 2011). The process of observing requires a set of complex skills as the researcher may face the challenge of being deceived by participants (Atkinson, 2015; Bernard, 2011). To address this challenge, I needed to follow a good observational procedure by familiarizing myself with the steps for preparing and conducting direct observations (Atkinson, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

## ***Documents***

I used documents as a supplement to the observations and interviews that were conducted in the field (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Documents were appropriate for this study not only because they provided rich information but also because they were used to corroborate the data from interviews and observations (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Reviewing documents has the advantage of generating relevant information about the institutional practices relative to teaching and learning that have been documented by the institution (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

For this study, official documents were reviewed. These documents included the institution's website, university handbook, syllabi, and reports on instructional delivery methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A challenge with document review may be accessibility since the documents may be considered private or may contain restricted data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006). Thus, to address this challenge, I secured access to the documents before data collection began by requesting access to these official documents considering all protocols for procurement. (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

## **Description of Research Protocols/Instrumentation**

I developed original interview and observation protocols (Appendices E & F) for the study. The protocols were designed based on the concepts of critical pedagogy. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), the purpose of the study and research questions determine the data collection instruments. As such, the overarching research question aligns with the problem and purpose of the study while the sub-questions align with the problem, purpose, and philosophical concepts. Thus, as a way of ensuring the data collection instruments align with the purpose and conceptual framework of the study, the research instruments I designed were based on the research sub-questions (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Both the interview and observation protocols follow the same structure (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The instruments are divided into four main sections, one for each of the concepts of the conceptual framework (i.e., problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue). I included the operational definitions of the concepts under the individual sections. Each definition is followed by four or five questions seeking to answer one of the research sub-questions. The questions are open-ended to give room for the expression of thoughts and ideas (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Thus, none of the questions requires a “yes” or “no” response. In addition to the specific line of inquiry that aligns with the research questions, I probed further in order to solicit more information to enrich my in-depth data analysis (Patton, 2015).

The semi-structured interview protocol has additional demographic questions, which served as the criteria for the selection of participants. These questions sought information about the participants’ age range and the length of duration as a staff/teacher/student in the research site. The interview and observation sessions lasted approximately 30-45 minutes.

### **Field Testing**

There was a field testing of interview and observation protocols for face validity and construct validity. I used an expert review to test for the face validity of the protocols. I consulted with my dissertation committee members, students, faculty members, and authorities in the field in order to gain their perspectives and feedback on the research protocols. I used the expert validation rubric VREP© (Appendix G) by Simon and White (2016) to assess the face validity and credibility of the research protocols. The rubric by design can measure face validity, construct validity, and content validity (Simon & White, 2016). The rubric helped with the presentation of the protocol questions and ensured that they could be used to obtain all the

information for which they were intended. The rubric also helped with the operationalization of the concepts of the study (Simon & White, 2016). Again, the rubric ensured that the questions in the protocols aligned with the concepts being measured. The authors of VREP© have granted permission to use and include the expert validation rubric in the dissertation manuscript (Simon & White, 2016).

After the expert validation of the protocols, I practiced with the protocols. I conducted interviews with three participants who, although from the study's original site, were different from the participants for the actual study. I also practiced the observation protocol in two classrooms on the research site. Data from these practices were not included in the actual study's findings. The interview and observation sessions created opportunities to use the validated protocols, while practicing the techniques of interviewing and direct observation. Conducting interviews and observations requires a set of complex skills that can be acquired through practice (Atkinson, 2015; Bernard, 2011; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Therefore, practicing with the interview and observation protocols assisted me in developing in advance the skills and competencies that I needed to become a good interviewer and observer for the actual study (Atkinson, 2015; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection procedures consist of the activities prior, during, and after the study. Prior to data collection, I obtained permission from Oduraa University's IRB to access the site and recruit participants for the study. I also received the approval letter of the IRB board at the University of West Florida after having completed the research ethics and compliance training for human subject research with the collaboration institutional training initiative.

The duration of data collection was approximately six weeks during the 2019 - 2020 academic year. In the first and second weeks, I arranged with my gatekeeper and visited the research site. With my gatekeeper introducing me to staff and faculty members, I sought permission from some faculty to visit their classrooms. I took the opportunity to observe classroom proceedings and interactions between teachers and students while building relationships with the students (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). I also practiced with the interview and observation protocols during this period (Atkinson, 2015; Bernard, 2011; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

In the third and fourth weeks of data collection, I had built a rapport with staff, faculty, and students who could potentially serve as participants in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). I began conducting one-on-one interviews after I have obtained a signed informed consent form from every participant. I recorded every interview section with a handheld voice recorder, and each section lasted approximately 30-45 minutes. In the fifth and sixth weeks of data collection, I had collected the appropriate amount of data to reach saturation. I concluded the data collection once saturation was reached (Creswell & Poth, 2018). After data collection, I kept all the data collection materials in a secure place while I prepared the data for analysis.

### **Researcher Positionality**

From a critical pedagogy philosophical worldview, I believe in the ontology of becoming (Freire, 1998) and the hope for transformation, change, and betterment. I view human beings as individuals in a continual process of becoming better versions of themselves. Thus, no condition is fixed nor predetermined, and individuals can take actions or intervene in their living conditions and create possibilities for themselves (Freire, 1998; Shudak, 2014). From the epistemological position, I view dialogue as a way of knowing. Dialogue about objects of

knowledge creates possibilities to learn with others and through others. Dialogue about objects of knowledge makes it possible to reflect on individual experiences to learn and know more about oneself, others, and the world (Freire, 1998, 2002). Also, I believe in the moral value of trust. Trust is to have faith in the goodness of others (Freire, 2002; Shudak, 2014). Trust is important to building relationships and affects the way individuals act in their relations with one another. Building relations “requires an intense faith in humankind, faith in their power to make and remake, to create and recreate, faith in their vocation to be more fully human” (Freire, 2002: pp. 90-91). Thus, dialogue requires trust, while dialogue as an existential necessity makes individuals conscious of their incompleteness and the hope of changing or becoming fully human (Freire, 1998, 2002).

Being the researcher and having lived and schooled in Ghana most of my life, I am familiar with the problem of lack of quality education and appropriate training that students in many Ghanaian universities require to become relevant to society after school (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010; Ngwenye, 2018; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015). After my educational abroad experience with other forms of curriculum and instruction, I believe in the philosophical premise that education contributes to the overall development of individuals and that when students are exposed to certain instructional delivery techniques, they are able to question the status quo, cultivate critical thinking skills, and develop critical consciousness to improve not only their individual life conditions but build a better society that serves the best interest of everyone (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Foley, 2007).

Exploring how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University in Ghana was an objective decision based on the university's

dedication to cultivating critical thinking skills and developing critical consciousness within students (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). I have no relationship of any kind with the university and its faculty, staff, and students. The significance of this study is to create awareness about the instructional delivery methods in this university, which seems to provide adequate preparation students need to become relevant and transformational members in society (Ngnenbe, 2018; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015).

### **Ensuring Trustworthiness and Rigor**

Research without credibility and rigor loses its worth and becomes fiction (Morse et al., 2002). The credibility of a research study is, therefore, an essential aspect of qualitative inquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The process ascertains that research has been informed by broad perspectives, both traditional and contemporary. A qualitative researcher, thus, ensures validity to achieve rigor and establish credibility for his or her study (Cypress, 2017).

The concept of rigor in naturalistic inquiries, such as qualitative research, has been questioned more often due to their complex and unpredictable nature (Cypress, 2017). Unlike quantitative research, which is rigid with preset designs, qualitative designs tend to be flexible or emergent with both the planning and implementation happening simultaneously (Cypress, 2017). Thus, the qualitative researcher as the only instrument and the primary means for data collection needs to ensure that he or she adheres to the appropriate activities for rigor as he or she designs a research study, analyzes and reports the findings, and determines the quality of the study (Cypress, 2017).

### ***Credibility***

Credibility is to qualitative research as internal validity is to quantitative research. Credibility involves the process of aligning the researcher's interpretation of findings with the



perspectives of the study's participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

Credibility can be ensured with a strategy such as member checking (Carlson, 2010; Simon & Goes, 2018). A researcher's credibility may affect how the audience receives his or her research findings (Patton, 2015). There is the suspicion that the qualitative inquirer might shape findings to align with his or her personal biases and predispositions (Patton, 2015). Thus, a researcher needs to ensure that any suspicions are nipped in the bud by first performing reflexivity and discussing explicitly any predispositions or biases that may exist (Patton, 2015). Reflexivity gives the researcher a platform to address issues that may question his or her credibility (Patton, 2015).

As the instrument of my study, I presented information about my background and experiences and how they affect the research (Patton, 2015). I discussed my positionality as the researcher and my connection with the topic, site, and participants (Patton, 2015). I honestly reported any information, whether personal or professional, that detracted or enhanced my ability to gather, analyze, and interpret data (Patton, 2015).

A researcher being the instrument of qualitative research makes his or her credibility central to the entire study's credibility (Patton, 2015). As such, the credibility of a study becomes as important as the credibility of the inquirer conducting the research (Patton, 2015). A reflexivity discussion by a qualitative inquirer displays his or her intellectual rigor. Thus, when a researcher reports quality reflexivity, he or she is also displaying or giving the audience access to his or her thinking processes (Patton, 2015).

**Empathic Neutrality and Mindfulness.** I showed empathic neutrality and mindfulness toward research participants (Patton, 2015). As a naturalistic inquiry, my study placed me in close proximity to people and their problems. Thus, I exhibited care, interest, and understanding

towards all participants while remaining nonjudgmental (Patton, 2015). I did not get too much involved in the lives of participants, but at the same time, I did not become too distant from the phenomenon and missed out on anything relevant to the study (Patton, 2015). With this approach, I established rapport with the participants, which facilitated and built meaningful relationships (Patton, 2015). Additionally, I was open-minded and showed impartiality (Chelimsky, 2006). Maintaining a perception of impartiality was as important as rigor and thus ensured the credibility and utility of my qualitative analysis (Chelimsky, 2006; Patton, 2015).

**Member Checking.** This validation strategy is also known as seeking participant feedback and is achieved through the lens of the participant (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I solicited the views of participants on the written analysis (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cypress, 2017). This process gave participants the role of determining how their description of the phenomenon should be analyzed, interpreted, and documented (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the process of returning written accounts of experiences to participants to determine the accuracy of the analyses is the most critical strategy for establishing credibility.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability is to qualitative research as external validity is to quantitative research. Transferability involves the process of making the inquiry generalizable (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Transferability can be ensured with a strategy such as generating a rich, thick description (Geertz, 1973; Simon & Goes, 2018). Qualitative inquiry is neither standardized nor monolithic (Patton, 2015). As such, there are no single criteria for quality judgment in the paradigm. It is, therefore, challenging to have a “one size fit all” standard for

judging quality without first being attentive to differences in cases, language, stories, worldviews, and narrative (Gordon & Patterson, 2013; Patton, 2015).

**Research Alignment.** In this study, I had a worthy topic and ensured that I present a clear purpose (Tracy, 2010). The problem statement was logically discussed, and I presented research questions that flowed from and aligned with the problem and purpose of the study (Patton, 2015). I selected a method, research design, and data collection procedure that best fitted the study. An explicit alignment between the topic, purpose, problem, and research questions drove the appropriate research design and data collection and analysis procedure to use (Patton, 2015). I acknowledged the limitations and delimitations and their implications for the research. The findings are clearly explained while maintaining the consistency between the data, analysis, and findings. I checked for trustworthiness and rigor while also upholding all ethical considerations (Tracy, 2010). Thus, I provided an ethical reflection and disclosure discussion as evidence of my compliance with ethical standards (Patton, 2015; Tracy, 2010).

**Generating a Rich, Thick Description.** This strategy for validation is achieved through the lens of the reviewer (Creswell & Poth, 2018). I have provided a detailed description of the findings to allow for the transfer of a wide range of information (Cypress, 2017). These details in the description are physical, activity, movement, and contextual. This process is intended for the reviewer to read a robust data of vivid and detailed descriptions and decide for him or herself whether the information can be transferred into other settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cypress, 2017).

### ***Dependability***

Dependability is to qualitative research as reliability is to quantitative research. Dependability involves the process of ensuring that the procedure for conducting the research is

logical or systemic, traceable, and accurately documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Dependability can be ensured with a strategy such as triangulation (Casey & Murphy, 2009; Simon & Goes, 2018). I systematically engaged and questioned the data as a way of enhancing rigor during the analytical processes. According to Patton (2015), the trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry is ensured with systemic, in-depth fieldwork, systemic and conscientious data analysis, the credibility of the researcher, and the philosophical beliefs of the research audience. There are many strategies for analyzing qualitative data; coding, identifying themes and patterns, determining the substantive significance of findings, and reporting on them (Patton, 2015). However, the issue of doubts with regards to the nature of qualitative analytical strategies persist. There is the suspicion that the qualitative inquirer might shape findings to align with his or her personal biases and predispositions (Patton, 2015). The reason for this suspicion is the judgment dependent nature of the inquiry analysis (Patton, 2015). Qualitative analysis is based on the capacity of the researcher to stay open to the data to recognize astute patterns and detect emerging themes and concepts (Patton, 2015).

I employed triangulation as the strategy for ensuring the dependability. Patton (2015) argued that no single data collection or analysis procedure could completely and adequately address rival explanations or interpretations. Because each method reveals certain unique aspects of empirical and social worldview, it is advisable to combine methods (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The combination of multiple methods of data collection and analysis provides more robust and holistic findings and is mostly acknowledged as having value and being credible (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015).

Triangulation becomes most relevant in qualitative inquiry during the data analysis (Patton, 2015). In addition to providing multiple ways of analyzing a phenomenon, triangulation

strengthens confidence in the research findings and conclusions and, by so doing, enhances credibility and dependability (Cypress, 2017). Triangulation of multiple data sources as a strategy for enhancing credibility and dependability is achieved through the lens of the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). The researcher adopts and uses different sources of data as evidence for documenting a theme or laying emphasis on a perspective (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Cypress, 2017). The multiple data sources may include literature or document review, theoretical framework, observation, interviews, and group discussions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

For this study, I employed the triangulation of qualitative data sources to enhance dependability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). I triangulated qualitative data sources by comparing and cross-checking data from observations, interviews, and documents for consistency. Besides the case study method requiring the triangulation of multiple sources of data (Yin, 2018), the process also discouraged any skepticisms that come with interpretations from a single perspective (Patton, 2015). Thus, I compared observations with interviews and check interviews against program documents and other written evidence (Patton, 2015).

Triangulation adds depth and richness to a study (Heale & Forbes, 2013). In addition to testing for consistency across multiple data sources, triangulation also offers a more profound understanding of a phenomenon from different perspectives (Patton, 2015). Triangulating data can result in inconsistencies in findings, which does not necessarily weaken a study's credibility or dependability but instead informs on the underlying relationship between the different data sources (Patton, 2015). That said, caution is needed in the interpretation of triangulated data since triangulation sometimes assumes that data from different sources can be compared for interpretation (Heale & Forbes, 2013). Also, having consistency in multiple data sets does not

always mean the data are credible or dependable. It could mean that all the different data sets have flaws (Heale & Forbes, 2013).

### ***Confirmability***

Confirmability is to qualitative research as objectivity is to quantitative research (Simon & Goes, 2018). Confirmability involves the process of demonstrating how the researcher derived the findings and interpretations from the field data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that confirmability is achieved when credibility, transferability, and dependability of the research are established. Traditionally, quantitative researchers have controlled subjectivity and maintained objectivity by being distant from their research settings and the subjects (Patton, 2015). Scriven (1972) argued rigor in qualitative research emphasizes quality, and there is a difference between objectivity and distance. Thus, quantitative study and qualitative research are not respectively synonymous with objectivity and subjectivity, as many philosophical thoughts would like to claim (Scriven, 1972). The attention for confirmability should be placed on being factual, not whether researchers are distant or closer to the phenomenon and research participants (Patton, 2015; Scriven, 1972).

**Intersubjectivity.** In this study, I ensured the confirmability of my data collection, analysis, and findings by using intersubjectivity instead of focusing on proving whether qualitative research is objective or subjective (Patton, 2015). With intersubjectivity, my attention was on knowledge built from human interactions and encounters (Patton, 2015). Qualitative research requires human social relationships; relationships among research subjects, which include the inquirer (Patton, 2015). Thus, by adopting the intersubjectivity approach, I learned and communicated my findings with the core values of qualitative research in mind (Patton, 2015).

**Systemic and Conscientious Data Analysis.** The ability of the researcher to report on how he or she engaged in systemic and conscientious data analysis enhances the confirmability of the analysis (Patton, 2015). The researcher needs to provide an in-depth report on how he or she generated and assessed divergent patterns, alternative themes, and rival explanations (Patton, 2015). The procedure for searching for rival explanations and alternative conclusions could be conducted logically or inductively. The researcher can consider other logical explanations or possibilities and ascertain whether the collected data support these possibilities (Patton, 2015). Also, the researcher may consider alternative ways of organizing that data to find out whether different findings may emerge (Patton, 2015).

In the data analysis for this study, I reported on how I engaged in systemic and conscientious data analysis as a way of enhancing the confirmability of my analysis. I investigated the existence of alternative interpretations of my research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018). I treated these alternative interpretations as rival interpretations and found evidence from the data to address them. If there were no data to address these rival arguments, they were acknowledged as loose ends and recommended for future research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018).

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Qualitative data analysis includes the procedures and processes that a researcher uses to analyze the data with the purpose of providing understanding, explanation, or interpretation (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). There are several procedures and processes of qualitative analysis. Patton (2015) argued that although the different types of qualitative analysis are distinct, they are not mutually exclusive. Thus, qualitative data analysis usually incorporates several approaches (Patton, 2015). For this qualitative study, I applied deductive content analysis

in analyzing the data collected from the field, while following Yin's (2018) steps for case study analysis.

Merriam (1998), Patton (2015), and Yin (2018) argued for the use of content analysis in case study research. Yin (2018) posited the analysis of data in a case study research begins with designing a content analytical strategy. According to Yin (2018), the fundamental goal of data analysis is to search for insights, concepts, or patterns, and these patterns may emerge as the researcher array and display the data in different ways. Content analysis plays the role of identifying core meanings and consistencies through patterns and themes (Patton, 2015). Content analysis can, however, be extremely time consuming (Patton, 2015). The process of identifying, organizing, and categorizing themes, concepts, or patterns requires a lot of time dedication and skill. A researcher, therefore, needs to acquire this set of skills that can only be developed with time and practice (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

Yin (2018) agreed playing with the data as the starting point for any data analysis. By conducting a deductive content analysis, I examined the collected data in a way to illuminate predetermined sensitizing concepts or theoretical relationships. In this study, I relied on the theoretical proposition as the strategy for the deductive analysis (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). Through this analysis, I determined the extent to which the collected data support the philosophical concepts (Patton, 2015). In the subsequent paragraphs, I have discussed the steps Yin (2018) recommended for analyzing data for case study research.

The first step was to array and display data in different ways (Yin, 2018). After reading the observation notes and transcriptions from the interview recordings, I organized the information from the data according to the research questions. The second step was to watch for promising patterns, insights, and concepts. In order to achieve this step, I made a matrix of



chronological or contracting categories and placed the data under the corresponding categories, thereby creating a visual display for easy analysis (Yin, 2018).

The third step was to develop a general analytical strategy. In this study, I conducted a deductive analysis by sensitizing concepts as an analytical framework approach. I relied on theoretical propositions as the strategy for analyzing data (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). The conceptual framework, critical pedagogy, has led to this case study from the plan and design stages. Thus, it is justified to adopt this strategy as the objectives, and the design of the entire study was based on critical pedagogy and its concepts (Yin, 2018). Additionally, the philosophy reflects the overarching research question and sub-questions as well as the review of the literature. Using the philosophy to analyze the data yielded analytical priorities since it framed the entire study, including the data collection procedure. The philosophy guided and organized the data analysis and helped with identifying relevant themes, concepts, and patterns (Yin, 2018).

The fourth step was to address rival explanations and interpretations (Yin, 2018). I ensured that my data analysis was of the highest quality. The quality of a case study analysis depends on the technique as much as the expertise the researcher demonstrates in carrying out the analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018). Thus, I endeavored to attend to all the data collected. My analysis showed the depth of information I used, and my interpretation affirmed the use of all the data without leaving any loose end or the chance for speculation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018).

My analysis also investigated the existence of alternative interpretations of my research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018). I treated these alternative interpretations as rival interpretations and found evidence from the data to address them. If there were no data to

address these rival arguments, they were acknowledged as loose ends and recommended for future research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018).

Additionally, I made sure to stay on course and analyze the most significant aspects of my case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018). By so doing, I avoided unnecessary detours and rather focused on demonstrating my analytical skills by addressing the most critical issues. This approach made my analysis less vulnerable to contrary findings and interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018).

Furthermore, I familiarized myself with the case (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018). I conducted an extensive literature review prior to data collection in order to gain extensive personal exposure to the subject matter under study (Magaziner & Patinkin, 1989). When I became abreast of every aspect related to the case study topic, it was demonstrated in my data analysis and interpretation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Yin, 2018).

## **Chapter Summary**

From a critical pedagogy philosophical worldview, the study sought to explore how problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue as concepts inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University in Ghana. More often, social science research requires human social relationships (Liebig et al., 2015; Patton, 2015), and as such, the researcher needs to get closer to the participants in their natural setting to document subjective evidence based on the participants' opinions and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998). A qualitative research approach, therefore, became an appropriate methodology to answer the research questions for this study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Considering the nature of the phenomenon, which was within the perimeters of a specific location, a case study method became appropriate since the study focused on a contemporary phenomenon that qualified to be

a case (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). Strategies used to ensure trustworthiness and rigor of data analysis and findings include generating rich, thick descriptions, corroboration of data through triangulation, member checking, being reflexive and showing empathic neutrality, and acknowledging the inherent limitations that exist within the proposed research procedures and methods.

## **Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings**

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a private university in Western-Africa. The following overarching research question aligns with the problem and purpose of the study: How do the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa? The following four sub-questions align with the problem, purpose, and philosophical concepts:

**RQ1:** How does the concept of problem-posing education inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ2:** How does the concept of teacher and student roles inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ3:** How does the concept of praxis inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ4:** How does the concept of dialogue inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

Chapter 4 has been organized according to the research questions. I present a discussion and analysis of emergent themes from the findings to address each of the research questions. According to Patton (2015), although there exist distinct types of qualitative analysis, they are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, qualitative data analysis usually incorporates several approaches (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). In the data analysis chapter, I present a content analysis, which identifies core meanings and consistencies through patterns and themes (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). I also rely on the theoretical proposition as the strategy for a deductive analysis (Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018). With this approach, I determine the

extent to which the collected data support the concepts of critical pedagogy (Patton, 2015).

Again, I address rival explanations and interpretations to ensure that my data analysis is of the highest quality (Yin, 2018). The chapter begins with a description of the research participants, continues with the presentation and analysis of findings, and concludes with a chapter summary.

### **Description of Participants**

I recruited 11 participants over the age of 18, using the purposeful sampling technique. I recruited individuals who had been at Oduraa University for a minimum of two years in the capacity as a student, faculty, or staff in the Academic Affairs Department. The purpose was to identify participants who could provide substantial data and deeper meaning and understanding of the phenomenon (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998). To ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of each participant, I requested that participants provide a name with which they would like to be identified in the study. Thus, the participants' pseudonyms have been used in the study to conceal their identities (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). Also, Oduraa University IRB instructed that I limit the description of participants to the following information: age range, position in the university, subject, and the number of years in the university. Therefore, participants' information that could be aggregated for identity has been omitted from this section. Participants' demographics relative to the selection criteria are displayed in Table 1. The table is followed by the participants' descriptions and perspectives on the phenomenon.

**Table 1**

#### *Participants Demographics*

| Pseudonym | Age range | Position in the university | Number of years in the university |
|-----------|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Ms. AA    | Mid 30s   | Staff                      | 4                                 |
| Netgirl   | Early 20s | Student                    | 3                                 |

**Table 1***Participants Demographics (continued)*

| Pseudonym | Age range  | Position in the university | Number of years in the university |
|-----------|------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pen       | Late teens | Student                    | 3                                 |
| Mr. Yaa   | Early 20s  | Student                    | 3                                 |
| Miss X    | Early 20s  | Student                    | 4                                 |
| Ana       | Early 20s  | Student                    | 3                                 |
| Princess  | Early 20s  | Student                    | 4                                 |
| Kwame     | Early 20s  | Student                    | 4                                 |
| Adwoa     | Early 20s  | Student                    | 2                                 |
| Ms. Yaa   | Early 30s  | Faculty                    | 6                                 |
| Paulinus  | Early 40s  | Faculty                    | 3                                 |

***Ms. AA***

This participant was a staff member in the Academic Affairs Department at Oduraa University. Ms. AA was in her mid-30s and had been working in the university for four years. She attended a public university that practiced the traditional instructional methods of listening, recording, memorizing, and repeating the words of teachers. This practice is what Freire (2005, 2008) referred to as the banking concept. The instructional delivery methods at Ms. AA's alma mater were different from what she had experienced during her time at Oduraa University. According to her, Oduraa University has excellent teaching and learning strategies. Ms. AA narrated,

I did not go to Oduraa University. However, I see the transformation. And I see how I would have gained if I had attended Oduraa University because the teaching is not the same. If you are not someone who is good with memorization, being in a place like where

I schooled is very difficult. I mean, you have to give the lecturer word for word. But I know Oduraa University gives room for innovation, creativity, and creative thinking.

***Netgirl***

This participant was a Computer Science student at Oduraa University. Netgirl was in her early 20s and had been in the university for three years. Netgirl was pursuing her undergraduate degree and stated how much she was enjoying the educational experience. She believed the educational experience was nurturing her to realize her full potentials as a visionary and an agent of change. She articulated,

The university wants to make us [students] all-rounded individuals and not all about books. So let us say, you come here, you have good grades, you are a good student. Well, that is good, but it is not good enough. When you go out in the real world, it is not going to be about your books alone. Nobody is going to ask you to define something or ask what you learned in school. It is going to be real-life applications. Therefore, you need to be a balanced person. You cannot have all your books here, and when it comes to emotional intelligence, zero.

***Pen***

This participant was a student at Oduraa University. Pen was in his late teens and had been in the university for three years. Pen was pursuing his bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering and had this to say about his experience at Oduraa University;

Compared to everything I have experienced, I would say the teaching and learning here is the best in terms of how the lecturers try to make themselves so approachable. That is really key for me. I like to know that my opinions are respected. And I also do my best to let them know I appreciate them and respect their opinions.

***Mr. Yaa***

This participant was a Management and Information Systems student at Oduraa University. Mr. Yaa was in his early 20s and had been in the university for three years. He stated that compared to his junior and high school education, education at Oduraa University makes him feel like he is part of his educational process. Mr. Yaa expressed,

First, it was “this is what is in the book. Learn what is in the book”. It is not even just the way they were teaching but the kind of courses that they were teaching. But coming to Oduraa University, now the courses are not restricted to books. The courses are things in life that you can explain that you can feel that you can see. And the way that it is even taught here and the way you are able to interact with those who are teaching you and guiding you through, it is like it opens you up to education.

According to Mr. Yaa, education at Oduraa University presents the opportunity to make decisions that can inform one’s education. Students play a role in determining how they want to approach learning and apply what they are taught in class.

***Miss X***

This participant was a student at Oduraa University, pursuing a degree in Management Information Systems. Miss X was in her early 20s and had been in the university for four years. According to Miss X, the structures in place facilitates good student-teacher relationships, which enhances the teaching and learning experience. She cited an example,

There is this course that we took some time that we were supposed to go and meet the lecturer at least once a week during office hours. It was by force, so even if you do not have a question, you will go and look for a question, and you will go and ask. So, as you go to their offices regularly and you speak to them, you get familiar with them. So, with



that familiarity, when you come to the class, it is way easier for you to ease up and learn. So, now you see it as a teacher and student relationship, but then you see it as okay this teacher that I have been to their office a couple of times is the one teaching me. So, it is easier to connect.

### ***Ana***

This participant was a Computer Engineering student at Oduraa University. Ana was in her early 20s and had been in the university for three years. Ana recounted her experience with the educational process at Oduraa University. She stated,

One thing I noticed right after my freshman year was a rise in confidence. I do not know how it happened. I do not know if it was because we were doing so much group work and presentations and things. When it comes to group work, you have to deal with people whether you like it or not, so I have become more confident.

Ana also expressed having developed a stronger zeal to do things that solve issues. According to Ana, she had always had the will to solve issues around her. However, coming to Oduraa University, she has found “a community that is willing to support if you are going to step out and try to solve problems.”

### ***Princess***

This participant was a Computer Science student at Oduraa University. Princess was in her early 20s and had been in the university for four years. She shared how the Oduraa University experience has impacted her personal growth:

The experience has made a difference. I am way more open-minded now than I came freshman year. I am way more open-minded about a lot of things. I know my way around technology. And because of the group work and stuff, I know my way around people a

little bit. I know a little bit about how to behave around people. Because of the many groups, I feel like my observation sense has been a bit sparked. So, when I am in a new environment, I am always observing people, which helps me to know how to interact with people.

According to Princess, her experience at Oduraa University has prepared her for the world. She will be able to deal with issues or individuals she encounters because she has had several years of practice.

***Kwame***

This participant was a student pursuing a degree in Business Administration at Oduraa University. Kwame was in his early 20s and had been in the university for four years. Kwame shared his experience at Oduraa University and how the kind of education he was receiving from the school made it possible for him to develop exceptional entrepreneurial skills. He expressed,

I definitely credit the majority of my entrepreneurial characteristics to this school. Before I came to this school, it was in me, but I rarely acted on it. This school played a pivotal role in ensuring that I act on whatever ideas or solutions I thought I had to certain problems. But I will count the school when it comes to involving yourself in the community. I think such characteristics either will be more pronounced in you. Or you will begin to pick up different attributes that other people have that you might also be hoping to add to your list of qualities. By integrating myself into society, I definitely had some characteristics of my own pronounced and some attributes added to mine. Which I believe has made me a more fully formed person.

***Adwoa***

This participant was a Business Administration student at Oduraa University. Adwoa was in her early 20s and had been in the university for two years. Adwoa discussed the different opportunities available, which made it possible for students to practice or apply what they have learned in class. She cited an example of “a data science one-week conference which involved being able to use statistics.” Because they had just learned statistics, it was helpful for them to explore the importance of statistics in data science. In sharing her experience at Oduraa University, Adwoa stated, “I think I have become more tolerant, patient, and learned that my ideas are not always right. I have also learned that I do need people.”

***Ms. Yaa***

This participant was a faculty member teaching Finance in the Department of Business Administration at Oduraa University. Ms. Yaa was in her early 30s and had been working in the university for six years. Ms. Yaa recounted opportunities at Oduraa University, such as campus visits by experts, industry visits, and news reports, that provide students with hands-on experience and, at the same time, give validation to the contents teachers present in the classroom. Students can relate to these opportunities as they “let them see that really the things we [teachers] are talking about play out. It is the same things that the teacher is saying that the bankers are saying.”

***Paulinus***

This participant was a faculty member teaching Computer Science in the Department of Computer Science and Information Systems at Oduraa University. Paulinus was in his early 40s and had been working in the university for three years. Paulinus shared how Oduraa University is committed to employing people who will contribute to fulfilling the mission of the institution.

According to Paulinus, “it takes people and not buildings to make a great institution. Infrastructure is important, but I think the human capacity is also there to push the agenda.” He believed that although the university has made a name for itself, it continues to press forward to do even better. Paulinus noted, “Because life is not still, it is something in motion. The moment you start resting, you begin to rust. So, we continue to improve ourselves all the time.” Paulinus continues to look for the best possible ways to develop himself further and contribute to pushing the agenda of Oduraa University.

### **Presentation and Analysis of Findings**

The section presents a deep and thorough synthesis and analysis of the study’s findings organized according to research questions. The discussions under each research question are organized by the emergent themes that the findings revealed. In answering RQ1, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the emergent themes, problem-based curricula content, entrepreneurial skill development, and feedback/partnership opportunities. In answering RQ2, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the following emergent themes: collaborative education and adaptive teaching strategies. In answering RQ3, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the emergent themes, leadership skill development, internship, exchange and career opportunities, industry visits/field trips, and project work. In answering RQ4, the findings of the study are discussed in relation to the following emergent themes: interactive classroom environment, role play, class debates, and class presentations.

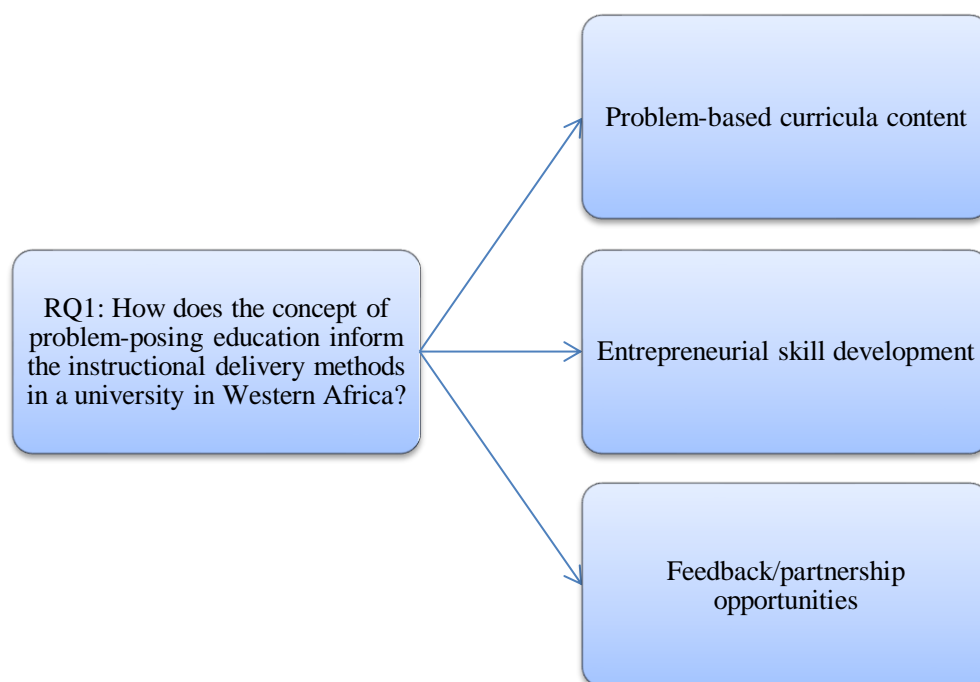
#### ***RQ1: How does the Concept of Problem-Posing Education Inform the Instructional Delivery Methods in a university in Western Africa?***

Inherent in this research question was problem-posing education, one of the tenets or concepts of critical pedagogy. This concept was defined to participants as the form of education

in which students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues around them (Freire, 1968, 2008). The data revealed the following emergent themes: problem-based curricula content, entrepreneurial skill development, and feedback/partnership opportunities, as demonstrated in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Emergent Themes Relative to RQ1*



**Problem-Based Curricula Content.** A problem-based curriculum is the foundation of Oduraa University as the goal of the institution is to educate critical thinkers, innovative leaders, and problem-solvers (Ajah, 2020; Olting’idi, 2017). Therefore, according to Ms. AA, Oduraa University does not encourage rote learning and memorization. For students to become problem-solvers, problem-based education is integrated into the Oduraa University curriculum. As such, all the courses at Oduraa University are structured to have a problem-based component. Mr. Yaa provided an explanation to support the statement of Ms. AA:

There is this particular course that you take when we come to freshman year, which sort of indoctrinates you to be a problem-solver and to actually look at things around you very critically and not on the surface level. So right from the onset, you get to see things in a different way and think in a different way. Different from I mean the traditional ways of thinking and doing stuff. So, it is something that you carry through all the courses that you will have.

All the participants acknowledged that this core value of Oduraa University is implemented through projects, which are required for every course in the institution. Sometimes students work on individual projects. Other times, they are assigned to groups of two or four. During these group or individual projects, students are tasked with identifying problems within the society and finding appropriate and cost-effective solutions to these problems. Thus, students at Oduraa University have identified many problems in the environment that are affecting people and worked to proffer solutions to them. In the course of the semester, “you have students running all over Brekuso and campus trying to find problems, and then once they found the problem, they write up how they are going to go about solving that problem,” Ms. AA noted. To support the narration of Ms. AA, Princess shared her experience with problem-solving projects:

So, you just look for a problem in your environment, either close or distant, and you do your market research, you go interact with people. So, for me like this, my group and I, we had to go to Makola Market and interact with the market women, get their insights, come and put them down, analyze them, a whole lot of work. And then come up with a solution that would best suit them. Go back and test the solution, see if they actually like it, see it is something that maybe if investors are supposed to come for it, the people that

you design it for would actually use it because you do not want to develop something that nobody will use.

Because problem-posing education emphasizes the partnership between the teacher and the student, the responsibility of the learning process is on both the teacher and the student (Freire, 1970, 1998). To support this assertion, Netgirl explained, “The thing about Oduraa University is, the lecturer does 30%, students do 70%. So, everything is on you [the student].” According to Netgirl, students need to make an effort to be impactful because the teacher does not carry the whole responsibility in the learning process. Netgirl elucidated,

If you want to be impactful, you look for a problem yourself. The lecturer is not going to be like, ‘I found this problem I want you guys to solve it.’ You look for it. Or with a group of friends you go and look for a particular problem. Or you just do research, and then you land on something interesting that you want to know more about.

Netgirl and Princess noted that once students identify the problem and begin generating a solution to it, they talk to their teachers who always willingly assist and provide insights based on knowledge and experience.

Moreover, in addition to students deciding on projects based on their discretion, Pen established that there are instances where teachers provide an outline with specifications for some class projects. Pen narrated,

We get projects or papers where we have to write about something. So, for some of the courses, the teachers give you a specific outline of how to do something. And then maybe they will just give you a few potholes, then you use your reasoning and what you understand in the class to arrive at something. And for some teachers, they would say that

you are free to do whatever you want, but then you must include or represent what we have done in the class in some way in the project, and that is at your discretion.

Problem-posing education develops students' critical consciousness (Freire, 1970, 1998).

As students strategize and try to solve problems in the environment, they are using the knowledge from the classroom. Also, students encounter real-life issues that they have not met in the classroom. In some classes, teachers require students to develop a project with many solutions. As such, instead of thinking about the problem the conventional way, students are expected to think critically and use their ingenuity to come up with different solutions. After identifying the problem, students establish how the problem is affecting the society, and whom the problem is affecting. Afterward, the students “engage with the community and find out the root cause of the problem so that they will be able to find the best solution,” Ms. AA added. The curriculum and instruction at Oduraa University ensure that students work towards achieving the institutional goal of educating critical thinkers, innovative leaders, and problem-solvers (Ajah, 2020; Times Higher Education, 2020).

Furthermore, Oduraa University has a hub for creative problem-solving known as Oduraa University D:lab. This creative problem-solving hub trains students and provides a space for design thinking. Adwoa shared this information, and Oduraa University External Relations Office confirmed it. Oduraa University D:lab has a team of experts who assist students with design thinking techniques. A D:lab with the mission to nurture creative problem-solvers among students creates avenues for Oduraa University to achieve creativity in multidisciplinary levels (AU External Relations Office, 2016; Times Higher Education, 2020). Students at Oduraa University, such as Audrey and her team, have benefitted from the D:lab experience. In the summer of 2016, these students undertook an explorative project. They used design thinking



processes to help the management of Café Kwae, a diner in the center of Accra, understand clients' experiences. Audrey detailed the primary objective of the project:

We hope to help the owner understand user experiences in a café setting in the developing world by creating a research protocol and working together with her on the research focus by employing the design thinking processes. In doing this, the use of various research methods, technology, and analysis frameworks will come to play to help Café Kwae gain competitive advantage. (AU External Relations Office, 2016, para. 3)

The purpose of the team's research project was to help the diner gain customer-centric competitive advantage. The students developed their ideas and accomplished their goals because of their participation in the design thinking culture of the Oduraa University D:lab (AU External Relations Office, 2016). Adwoa, in her two years as a student at Oduraa University, has heard of the D:lab and is considering joining. As maintained by Adwoa, Oduraa University “allows students to come up with the problems, and the D:lab helps them to realize the solutions they consider for those problems.” As established in the literature (AU External Relations Office, 2016; Times Higher Education, 2020) and confirmed by Adwoa, Oduraa University focuses attention on nurturing the culture of creativity and problem-solving among its students.

**Entrepreneurial Skill Development.** Another foundation of Oduraa University is entrepreneurship, which is ingrained in the university's curriculum (Ajah, 2020; Fortune, 2020). A pillar of Oduraa University is to promote entrepreneurship in society by preparing students to become employment creators. Right from the first day of school, students are immersed in a culture purposefully nurtured to develop an entrepreneurial and ethical mindset. This innovative academic program enables students to develop technical excellence in their respective

professional fields. Kwame and Mr. Yaa shared this information, which was confirmed by Ajah (2020) and Fortune (2020). Mr. Yaa described,

These formal structures in place make it possible for students to have this experience. On top of that, this is the culture of the place. People here have gone through that kind of system, so it has become part of their lifestyle. So, when you see it happening around you, it causes you to also think and do things the same way.

To buttress Mr. Yaa's statement, Miss X established that "as you do it continuously, and you see other people do it, you are learning from it indirectly." The university community, in itself, creates a conducive environment for the development of entrepreneurial skills (Ajah, 2020; Fortune, 2020).

Furthermore, foundations of design and entrepreneurship, according to all participants, is a year-long course that students are enrolled in freshman year to kickstart the development of entrepreneurial skills. Every student enrolls in the course irrespective of their major. The course presents opportunities for students to acquire real-world experiences in developing businesses. The course is "basically all about you, the student noticing the environment, noticing who you are, and figuring out problems and how you think you can solve them," Princess indicated. The course learning outcomes include providing students with a firm foundation for entrepreneurial studies (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Times Higher Education, 2020). Thus, the course takes students through design thinking processes that are relevant in every other course they may encounter in their respective degree programs. Princess enlightened,

Initially, when we took the class, I really thought that class was going to end there, that was it. Like I am done, I do not need you again, You go your way. I go my way. But then over the four-year period I have been here, that class has eaten into every other class I

have had. Most of my projects you realize they give you the project, and they [teachers] are like “okay now go back to your design thinking. Now use design thinking.”

In reinforcing Princess’ assertion, Mr. Yaa stated that the foundations of design and entrepreneurship course makes students

Think outside the box. To be that kind of student who can actually face what they are going to do in the second, third, and fourth year. So. It is like they set you up for what you are going to do.

Foundations of design and entrepreneurship is one of the university required core liberal arts curriculum courses for all students (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting’idi, 2017; Times Higher Education, 2020). Students experience the core liberal curriculum the most in the freshman and sophomore years, as confirmed by Mr. Yaa. He expounded, “I feel like those courses are to give you a broad understanding of not necessarily your course but of life, entrepreneurship, and leadership. They are just to set you up in a way according to the vision of Oduraa University.” The core curriculum at Oduraa University provides students with a well-rounded education (Ajah, 2020).

Moreover, Adwoa expressed that there are avenues in the institution that allow people to grow their ideas and shared how “the Oduraa University Start-up Launchpad took some clients (student businesses) and is trying to grow them on a bigger scale.” The Oduraa University Start-up Launchpad provides guidance and support to the incubator businesses of students (Olting’idi, 2017). This hands-on support system engages faculty and business leaders to improve the promising ideas of students. The Oduraa University Start-up Launchpad seeks to nurture the ideas of students to bring change in their lives and make a lasting impact on society (Olting’idi, 2017).

Additionally, the innovative solutions that students come up with during their individual and group projects sometimes go into the Oduraa University venture incubator (Olting'idi, 2017). From the incubator, students can continue running the projects until they leave the university. The university creates an environment for students to explore different opportunities until they find themselves and develop innovative ideas. Miss X shared, "If I did not get this environment to make mistakes and correct them, I would not have gotten to this stage of growth." Thus, the kind of education and exposure students receive at Oduraa University makes it possible for them to develop exceptional entrepreneurial skills. Kwame would "definitely credit the majority of [his] entrepreneurial characteristics to the school." It is, therefore, evident that Oduraa University builds students up to develop entrepreneurial skills.

**Feedback/Partnership Opportunities.** Oduraa University has a solid social capital in the form of organizations, people, excellent teachers, leaders, and thinkers. This social wealth, students benefit from throughout their years in the institution and beyond. All the participants stated that the university maintains partnerships with organizations in both the public and the private sector, with one of the reasons being to facilitate internship opportunities for students. This information was confirmed by Fortune (2020) and SGSB (2008). The university's career services center collaborates with employers of these companies to organize these internships for students. Therefore, the institution encourages students to intern with companies related to their field of study. Oduraa University keeps track of its students when they intern in the working world. Thus, the university requests students to submit a report of their experiences when they return from the internships. Oduraa University values the feedback from the students as it affects decisions for future partnerships with these companies. Princess expounded,

When we come back, the school actually take feedback on our experiences because someone could have gone out there and did not have a good experience. The number of negative feedback the school receives from a particular company will determine whether that company would be crossed off from the internship list of companies.

In addition to students' feedback on experiences, the university frequently communicates with the companies with whom the students interned. As such, "the career services office has a program where they receive feedback from employers about how the interns performed and what weaknesses they have observed," Paulinus hinted. The feedback from students and employers plays a vital role in the university's future internship and partnerships decisions.

Similarly, the culture of collaboration and sense of partnership practiced at Oduraa University makes it possible for "the administrative staff and the faculty work hand in hand in the development and formation of students," Paulinus noted. The career services center communicates to faculty whatever information it receives from employers. Again, faculty who used to work in the industry share their connections with students and the career services center. Paulinus, who worked in the telecommunication industry before Oduraa University, elaborated,

Sometimes if we [faculty] ourselves, we have connections in the industry, then we link them [students] up. So, for example, I have worked in the telecom sector, so I know some people. So sometimes I will call them to find out how people who are coming for internships are getting there. So, they will tell me, and I will also tell my students. So, it is like that. So sometimes, I am able to get a few places for my students to go by virtue of my connections. And sometimes too I channel it through the career services. I inform the career services, "okay, I know about this thing." Or, I will tell the students, and they will tell them [career services center], and they will get the letters and send them.

Partnerships and feedback are essential components at Oduraa University (Fortune, 2020). Ms. AA and Fortune (2020) both affirmed that the university values relationships and therefore believes that feedback is necessary for maintaining and strengthening relationships.

Furthermore, maintaining partnerships extends to both the culture and climate of Oduraa University (Fortune, 2020; SGSB, 2008). The study's participants confirmed that the Oduraa University community is no stranger to the culture of feedback. As such, faculty members are receptive to their colleagues visiting their class to observe and assess them while they teach. Ms. AA elaborated, "We have faculty visiting other faculty's classes. They call it peer assessment. So, the faculty sits in the colleague's class and then give feedback after the class." Faculty members are highly receptive to feedback from colleagues because they see it as an opportunity to learn something new.

Similarly, students are given the opportunity to provide feedback on their class experiences through course evaluations (Fortune, 2020). The course evaluation checks to ensure teachers are addressing all the core values of Oduraa University. Ms. AA illuminated, "We [academic affairs] have course evaluations at the end of the semester. In the course evaluation, we [academic affairs] ask questions like how this course enhances creativity or enhances critical thinking and critical consciousness." In support of Ms. AA's statement, Kwame shared that

Every course has a class evaluation. There is a class evaluation form at the end of the semesters where every course is evaluated, every teacher is evaluated, including the FIs [faculty interns]. All the stakeholders are evaluated on the lesson quality and the course quality. So, I guess they use that to determine how teachers can teach the course or teach the topics in the future. It is a way to improve the quality of the lessons in the future.

This practice invites students' input on instructional contents and strategies that work and those that need improvement or otherwise, elimination from the future curriculum of the university.

The study's findings confirm what has been established in the literature about problem-posing education (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970, 2014; Kareepadath, 2018; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). According to these authors, problem-posing education advocates cognition and transformative learning rather than knowledge transmission. This form of education, although begins in the classroom and elaborates on the participation and performances of teachers and the students, does not end in the classroom. Through this education, students achieve a sense of self-reflection of their reality and are able to take actions that transform society (Freire, 1970; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018).

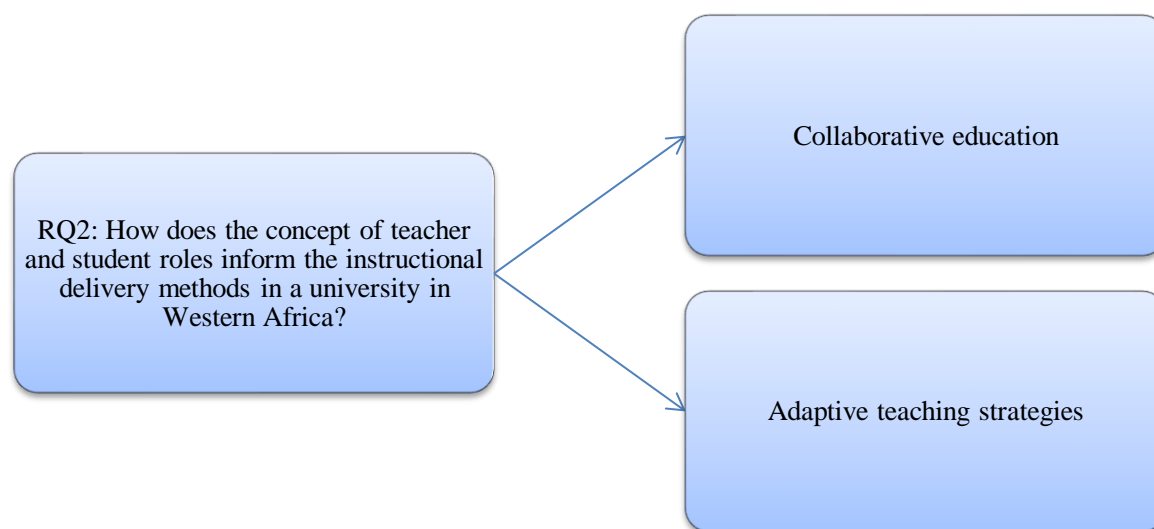
Problem-posing education integrates educational practices geared toward the development of a culture of democracy in both the classroom and the society (Freire, 1970; Kareepadath, 2018; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). The study's findings have revealed that the concept of problem-posing education indeed informs the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University through problem-based curricula content, entrepreneurial skill development, and feedback/partnership opportunities. Education at Oduraa University develops students' critical consciousness while emphasizing the partnership between teachers and students. The Oduraa University curriculum fosters in students an entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking, and the ability to solve complex real-world problems (Ajah, 2020; Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). The Oduraa University educational experience makes students' literacy and engagement in the learning process relevant (Freire, 1970, 1998, 2014).

***RQ2: How does the Concept of Teacher and Student Roles Inform the Instructional Delivery Methods in a university in Western Africa?***

Inherent in this research question was the teacher and student roles, one of the tenets or concepts of critical pedagogy. This concept was defined to participants as a classroom setting where the teacher and the student are both subjects who control the educational process and thereby develop knowledge together (Freire, 1998, 2008, 2014). The data revealed the following emergent themes: collaborative education and adaptive teaching strategies, as demonstrated in Figure 2. The theme of collaborative education further explores the following sub-themes: student-centered learning and group work.

**Figure 2**

*Emergent Themes Relative to RQ2*



**Collaborative Education.** Collaborative education is a form of education that encourages social interaction and cognitive learning (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Ibrahim et al., 2015; Vygotsky, 1962). In the critical pedagogy classroom, the teacher and the student are



subjects known as critical educators and critical learners (Degener, 2001; Moore & Parker, 1986). They control the educational process and develop knowledge together.

In Oduraa University, the educational process “is not one-way. It is something that the teacher and students do together. Everybody contributes something to the educational process,” Netgirl illuminated. The teacher does not carry responsibility for the learning process. “It is not I am [teacher] giving you [students], take. It has to be a give and take,” Ms. AA added. At Oduraa University, there is a learning experience from both the teacher and the student in the classroom. Thus, “both the teacher and the students are in charge of classroom activities,” Ana explained in support of Net girl and Ms. AA’s statements.

***Student-Centered Learning.*** The teacher in the critical pedagogy classroom maintains an open and equal classroom environment by making the class student-centered (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Higgins, 1996; Petrina, 2007). One of the core values Oduraa University encourages is student-centered learning, “where learning is happening around the student rather than the teacher,” Paulinus stated. The teacher is a facilitator rather than the embodiment of knowledge. Netgirl expressed the following to support Paulinus’ assertion:

The teacher is the facilitator. He just comes, and there is a topic he wants us to discuss, he asks, “who wants to go first?” You [student] share your view. Then from someone’s view, somebody has an argument to make, and then everything becomes connected. And then people start giving inputs. When the discussion is going off-topic, the lecturer is always there to bring the class back on track.

The instruction method takes the form of interactive sessions where students interact with the information and materials as well as with each other (Petrina, 2007). Therefore, the teacher playing the role of a facilitator does not have exclusive control over the teaching and learning

process (Brown et al., 2017; Gordon, 1998; Petrina, 2007). To support the discussions by Paulinus and Netgirl, Ms. Yaa also narrated some of her experiences with facilitating her students in the learning process. She stated,

I facilitate learning. For example, they come to me with their topics for the news report. I guide them, and we talk about their projects. I am not teaching them how to do it. We discuss, and I give them options, and then they go and look into it, and make conclusions on their own.

Students should not be limited by what the teacher knows. “They should even do better because they are exposed to more opportunities and more resources,” Paulinus suggested. Gone were the days when the teacher was the embodiment of all knowledge, and whatever the teacher said was final. According to Paulinus and Adwoa, the educational process has changed, and so has the role of the teacher. The acquisition of knowledge is more democratic in recent times, and students expect more from teachers than what can be found in textbooks. Paulinus explained,

I see it more like the lecturer being a facilitator for learning. We have had eras where the teacher was the embodiment of all knowledge. And then whatever he said was final. And whether he made mistakes or not, it did not matter. But I think knowledge is now democratized, and students are looking for that which they cannot read easily in books, online, or in other resources.

There should never be a situation where teachers are bothered because their students are performing better, even “better than they did when they were the students’ age,” Paulinus stated. Teachers need to prepare students to “rather do better because when they go out, they are going to face problems they the teachers have not faced.” Thus, the learning process should be used as

a screen board to develop students' innate potentials. To support Paulinus' claims, Mr. Yaa revealed the following:

One thing I have realized is that when they are [teachers] teaching, they are always referring you to the industry. It is like they actually care about what you are going to do after school. So, if they give you the theory, they are going to tell you, "oh, so outside this is how it is. It is not something that we will hide from you. This is what is going to happen." So, it makes it feel as if oh, this guy [teacher] actually cares about what is going to happen to me out there.

To Mr. Yaa, teachers are people guiding him through his education and preparing him for life after school.

In student-centered learning, the "facilitator could be a student or a teacher," Netgirl indicated. Therefore, the teacher is able to accept feedback on educational ideas and practices that may deem unsuccessful or oppressive (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Higgins, 1996). Students are able to confidently express their opinions about issues and know that the teacher will not judge them or push over their ideas. Teachers afford students this opportunity. In the classroom, students can argue with teachers constructively about a matter or a response that they feel is inadequate or lacking context. Princess described how it happens in the classroom; "if the lecturer says something at any point in time and you do not agree, you can just tell him, you do not agree, and you point out your opinion." There are no rigid rules, and students can feel free and simply flow with the class. Students, however, need to maintain a respectful atmosphere for everyone to enjoy the classroom interactions. Because the teacher gives students room to operate, "they do not necessarily see the lecturers as high power. Students just see them as coaches, people who are guiding them through the course," Mr. Yaa stated. For a student like

Pen, the humility and receptiveness of teachers are very encouraging, especially for class participation. He shared, “that encourages us more to participate because we know that our ideas are not going to be ridiculed or rubbished.” Both teachers and students experience a healthy educational environment in which they play the role of critical educators and critical learners (Degener, 2001; Moore & Parker, 1986).

When teachers give up most of the power in the title as educators and unquestioned authorities (McLaren, 1995; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018) by challenging the status quo as well as their personal ideologies and expectations, they are able to maintain a more open and friendly relationship with students and thereby focus attention on creating knowledge together (Foley, 2007; Giroux, 1997). Thus, there is “a deeper connection rather than just a master-servant relationship” between teachers and students, Mr. Yaa added. Miss X articulated in affirmation, “some teachers are very relaxed. Some sit among us, and if you come, you do not even realize that this is a teacher because you will think that the person is one of us.” I was able to confirm Miss X’s statement during the class observations. The layouts in the classrooms that I visited were either circular or semi-circular. This sitting arrangement facilitated collaboration and interaction during class sessions.

Furthermore, when there are no rigid rules to restrict the teaching and learning process, the teacher and students decide on the flow of the class and how they want the class to go. Princess explicated,

Like my information systems science class, the lecturer told us how he wanted the class to go and asked us how we want the class to go. Then we deliberated over it, and we both reached an agreement that we were both comfortable with.

Because there are no restrictions on the flow of the class, the teacher and the students can always go back to the drawing board and revise how the class should go. Princess clarified,

At a point time in the semester, he [the teacher] said okay what we agreed was not working for him based on our attitudes. So, he wanted us to change it. So, we had a discussion again, and we came to another agreement on how we both wanted the class to go. So, the class setting is more like let us talk about it. Let us decide. Let us see what works for each other.

Ms. Yaa incorporates her students in decisions regarding how the class should go. She runs a lot of class activities by them for their inputs. So, although sometimes she goes to class with an outline, she makes sure to give her students a voice by incorporating some of their suggestions.

Ms. Yaa narrated,

There are times when I come to them [students], and I say, “okay, we could do this, or we could do it this way. Which of the two would you have us do?” and then they decide, and then we work along with it.

Normally, Ms. Yaa and her students vote on the matter. “So, then we all vote on it and giving the majority feedback I get, I go ahead, and then they own the decision,” Ms. Yaa stated. Students and teachers at Oduraa University practice a democratic education where the opinion of everyone matters in the educational process.

The above discussions about teacher and student roles confirm Freire’s (1998) assertion about the teacher and the student in the critical pedagogy classroom. According to Freire (1998), the teacher creates experiences that encourage students to become active agents in their education. The teacher and the students negotiate on classroom procedures (Izadinia, 2011; McLaren, 1995). The students do not play a meek role by only allowing themselves to be

recipients of knowledge (Freire, 1972, 1998; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). The students play the role of a critical autonomous who criticizes, analyzes, and questions educational materials as well as realities of society so that they can become agents of progressive social change (Freire, 1998; Izadinia, 2011; Kellner, 1998; McLaren, 1995). While the teacher is uncovering reality and creating knowledge, the student is developing autonomy to critical reflection on reality (Freire, 1970, 1998).

**Group Work.** Group work or collaborative learning means “students working in pairs or small groups to achieve shared learning goals” (Barkley et al., 2005, p. 4). In a collaborative learning process, the teacher assigns students to work together to collectively complete a task or solve a problem (Kaendler et al., 2015). The only way students can complete this work is to share their knowledge. Thus, the objective of collaborative learning is not solely to solve the problem, but also to synthesize and analyze individuals’ knowledge and the benefits each student gains from learning the experience (Kaendler et al., 2015; Roschelle, 1992).

Group work is the core of Oduraa University. According to Kwame, “one of the main tenets the school tries to promote, is teamwork and collaboration. Oduraa University helps and improves our teamwork skills as we go on through the different years.” Kwame explained further. “We have been in team-focused projects and team-centered projects since the first year, so I can say that my ability to work in a team has improved.” Because of Kwame’s teamwork experiences at Oduraa University, he prefers working in a group than alone. Kwame shared. “I often favor team assignments to individual assignments because I can leverage off other people’s time, skills, and perspectives.” Collaborative learning creates a platform that is conducive for students to have meaningful interactions with one another (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). As

students discuss and share ideas and opinions on the subject matter, they also develop techniques for understanding and processing new concepts (Gokhale, 1995).

Many students like Adwoa before Oduraa University did not like group work. Nevertheless, they now appreciate group work as a learning experience that helps students see things from other people's perspectives. Adwoa explained, "it helps you to see how different people think. Sometimes it helps you to refine what you also think about ideas and everything." Through collaborative learning, students create a community and depend on one another (Gokhale, 1995). The students become both social and academic support for one another as they share the responsibility for success (Adebayo et al., 2015). Adwoa confirmed, "I used to not enjoy learning collaboratively before university, but you really cannot do things by yourself. You will not pass if you are a little island. You need other people to help because you do not know everything." Students achieve higher results when there is a positive interdependence relationship (Deutsch, 1962). The idea of working to achieve a common goal motivates students to work harder, which yields positive outcomes (Deutsch, 1962; Ibrahim et al., 2015; Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Students depend on one another in the collaborative learning process for their unique knowledge and perspectives (Lin, 2015; Roschelle, 1992). Collaborative learning entails the synthesis and analysis of individuals' knowledge to create collective knowledge (Lin, 2015; Roschelle, 1992). The collaborative process helps students to achieve higher learning outcomes with regards to students' reasoning abilities, problem-solving techniques, critically and creatively thinking skills, synthesizing ideas, and connecting knowledge learned in different environments (Hajrah & Das, 2015; Lin, 2015). Because of group work, Adwoa understands and passes her courses. Although she initially did not want to participate in a group study, she has realized the

importance of the learning process. She shared, “at first, I did not want to do a group study, but I really do need it because my members are really helpful. So, it is very helpful.”

Moreover, group work builds accountability (Gokhale, 1995; Ibrahim et al., 2015) and imbibes a sense of responsibility in students (Lin, 2015; Roschelle, 1992). Each team member understands the need to pull their weight and contribute to achieving the goals of the group (Deutsch, 1962; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). When students feel responsible for the group, they complete their share of the work since failing the team translates into failing themselves (May & Doob, 1937; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). Pen explained how group work at Oduraa University makes students accountable:

In every project assignment giving to us, we do a peer assessment, so the lecturer gets to know how the projects went. As in who gave the project their all and who did not. Those who really participated and who did not.

Peer assessment is a measure of accountability (Ibrahim et al., 2015). The review process rewards group members that did the work and penalizes members that did not contribute. It sorts of relieves the burden of students that worked alone because they wanted to understand the work and also get good grades. Miss X elaborated,

So, that is like a payback for the work they did not do. Sometimes it is satisfying because they have put me under a lot of pressure because sometimes when the lecturers split up the teams, they know the workload they have given us. They [lecturers] know that maybe a number of four or five students will suffice. So, if two of the five people are not working, then it means that their workload is on the remaining three. That means my other courses are bleeding. So, because of the peer assessment, a lot of students sit up.



Miss X also shared other strategies her group uses to deal with the challenges that come with working in a group, saying

In my course like this, when we start a group project, we have group dos and don'ts. We as a team, we sit down and say that we are going to have meetings this way. Especially if it is a semester-long project, we are going to have meetings twice every week within this time. We ask everybody. If it works with their schedules, we set up a venue. Then we agree that we are always going to meet at this time and this venue so come.

When there is no accountability in the group, the students' sense of responsibility is reduced, which also reduces their individual contributions to the group's success (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Lin, 2015; Watanabe & Evans, 2015).

Additionally, group work creates a favorable learning climate in the classroom (Gokhale, 1995; Lin, 2015). Working in teams in smaller numbers makes students more at ease and confident to express themselves. In most cases, some students tend to be shy or afraid they will make mistakes when addressing the entire class (Lin, 2015). Thus, in smaller groups, these students feel more comfortable because they have to address only a smaller crowd. Mr. Yaa's experience with group work confirms what has been established in the literature. Mr. Yaa shared,

Experience with teamwork has opened my mind. It has opened me to a lot of things. I was not really the sociable type. I was not really the one who will come out and talk. But working with these people, now I am barely even shy of anyone. Because if you are shy of someone, they may put you in a group with the person, and you would have to work with the person. So, socially, it has really had an impact on me. I have really grown to an extent, and I feel like that is something that I was lacking for a long time. It has enriched my social life because now I know how to work with people. I know how to network.

It is indeed true that students find small group interactions as safe environments where they can be themselves (Lin, 2015). Group work creates an environment that makes students less anxious and able to engage in meaningful activities and share opinions and ideas (Gokhale, 1995; Lin, 2015). Collaborative learning develops students' interpersonal social skills, which makes them able to communicate with accuracy without any ambiguity (Johnson & Johnson, 2009; Lin, 2015). Also, the continuous practice of working in groups and sometimes serving as group leaders are experiences that may be relevant and give students an upper hand when it comes to going out into the professional or corporate world and dealing with everyday situations.

Furthermore, according to Saville et al. (2012), some students resist collaborative learning or group work either because they cannot work or do not want to work with others and would rather work alone. For some of these students, learning may be all about getting good grades and would not want to concern themselves with certain aspects of learning, such as communication and interpersonal skills development (Kaendler et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012). The perceptions of Pen regarding collaborative learning or group work confirm this assertion literature. Pen would prefer to work alone on assignments because of his past experiences with group work. Because some members in his group refused to pull their weight and contribute to the success of the group, Pen had to witness his grades fall and not being able to do anything. He narrated,

Situations where people do not pull their weight; it is so painful to watch your entire grade go down the toilet because someone or two people decided not to pull their weight. And then you try and cover for them as much as doing their work. And it does not go well because you were so busy doing yours and trying to add theirs to your work.

Pen stated that he would have liked the concept of learning collaboratively and has enjoyed working in a group in a few instances when his group members pulled their weight. However, his many bad experiences have discouraged him. To Pen, “it is horrible when you have done all or the large share of the work, and you still get a bad grade because your group did not work together.” For a student like Pen, getting good grades is a priority.

Moreover, Pen’s experiences with group work also confirm the literature on social loafing as a weakness in collaborative learning processes (Kaendler et al., 2015; Kerr, 1983). The issue of social loafing may occur when some students in the group reduce their contributions to tasks and expect others to do most of the work (Kaendler et al., 2015; Kerr, 1983). The effect of such attitudes could lead to an overall group output reduction (Kaendler et al., 2015; Kerr, 1983).

Furthermore, data revealed information that was inconsistent with existing literature. Literature has established that working collaboratively enhances individual and collective learning by creating a community in the classroom (Watanabe & Evans, 2015). The process also encourages students to work together and become interdependent in the group as an individual student represents the whole group’s success (Lin, 2015). Thus, students are motivated to work harder and take more risks because they know their contributions are recognized (Lin, 2015; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). The study’s findings revealed that this assertion is not always true because some students may not be cooperative even when there are measures such as peer assessment that checks for member’s accountability and participation. Mr. Yaa illuminated,

Although there are peer assessments to help check some of the challenges with working in a team, it is not always effective. We have had peer assessments since the beginning, but some teamwork is not effective, and the work done is really poor.

Contrary to the literature (Lin, 2015; Watanabe & Evans, 2015), group work does not always motivate students to work together, share ideas, and help one another to learn and solve problems. Also, when students fail in working together, their learning outcomes are negatively affected. Mr. Yaa summarized, “If working in a team does not work out, then you are doomed.” When group work fails, both students who cooperate and students who do not suffer from the consequences of the failure.

Additionally, the data revealed that group work only enhances students’ ability to develop, improve and maintain interdependent relationships with other students while successfully achieving group goals (Kreijns, 2004) when the teachers allow students to choose their own teammates. Mr. Yaa explained,

There have been times that working collaboratively with my peers has been very beneficial. There was this particular course that I got to choose my team members. I realized that because we were already friends, we knew our strengths, what we could do, and what we could not do. So, the sharing of the work was easier. We did not have to now build the relationship before getting to the work. We could just go straight to work and get the work done, and we came out well.

Working in groups becomes challenging for students when the teachers assign them to teams instead of allowing them to form the groups themselves. Students that want to have a productive group need social skills to hold the team together and help its members deal with the stress that comes with working with people (Deutsch, 1962; Johnson & Johnson, 2009). To achieve common goals through coordinated efforts, students should “get to know and trust each other, communicate accurately and without any ambiguity, accept and support each other, and resolve conflicts constructively” (Johnson & Johnson, 2009, p. 369). Therefore, when students have to

work in teams that they did not get to choose, it creates a situation where they now have to make a conscious effort to get to know each other in order to create an environment where everybody is emotionally sound and safe to work. When students are coming together to work, they need to find level ground for every to work and deliver the best results, and the process takes time.

**Adaptive Teaching Strategies.** Effective teaching, to a certain degree, depends on the creativity, initiative, and risk-taking ability of teachers (Mulhearn et al., 2017; Petrina, 2007). However, teachers, no matter their initiative and creativity level, should also adopt a variety of delivery methods and approaches in order to be successful (Bigham & Riney, 2014; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2007). Instructional delivery methods are, therefore, essential components in education.

All the study's participants agreed that the curriculum at Oduraa University is not rigid, and therefore, gives teachers room to operate. The teachers create a leveled playing field for all students to benefit. Teachers make the class as practical as possible, breaking the contents down to the barest form so that students can understand. Oduraa University teachers assess the learning styles of students and then adopt different teaching methods to suit the learning needs of students. Netgirl provided her perspective on the subject matter:

When lecturers evaluate, they come to the class and see, okay, this is the number. And then they assess the students and say, okay, I can see how the students are, and they know what to do for this session, for this course, for this particular year group. However, a different year group might come, and then the students are different. They act differently, and the lecturer would say, okay, this is the best way to teach them.

The curriculum at Oduraa University University affords teachers the flexibility to explore adaptive teaching approaches. In the role of a teacher and a facilitator of learning, "it is important

to identify the different classes of learners in your class,” Paulinus noted. Paulinus further articulated,

We have to identify the different types of students that we have. Sometimes there is the tendency to linger on with those that are not learning fast or to go with those that are learning very fast. However, everybody is in the class to learn, and they are not the same.

In support of Paulinus’ statements Ms. AA presented this account:

I know a faculty member who, for the first class of the year, he would do a test in class to gauge the academic strengths of the class. So, depending on where the class stands, he structures the class appropriately. So that those who are very smart will not feel too bored, and those who are slow learners will not feel like the lecturer is running too fast.

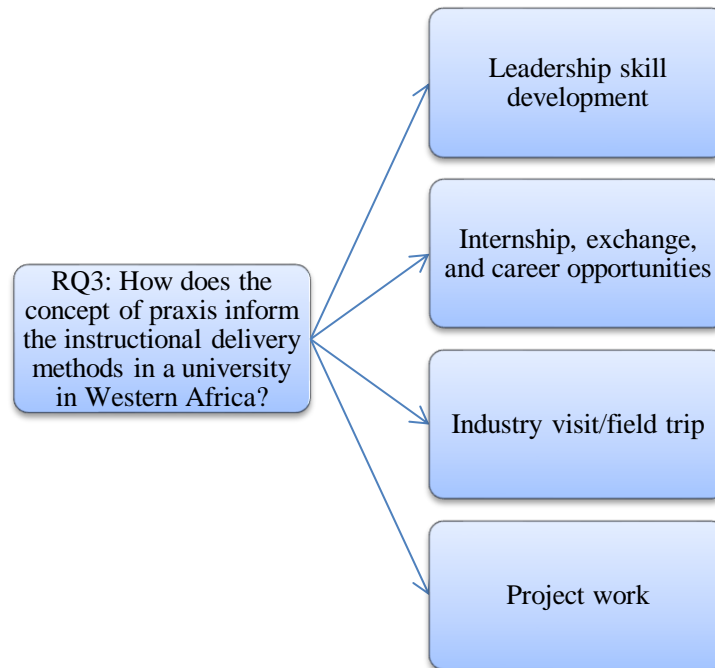
The role of the teacher is to figure out what works for the different classes of students and create an environment that supports that. Paulinus expressed the role of the teacher from this perspective; “creating the motivation for students to learn, creating the environment for them to flourish, and creating the avenue for them to discover themselves and to go beyond what you even teach.” Because students of today are exposed to many opportunities and resources, their education should not be limited by what the teacher knows or what is taught in the classroom.

Furthermore, the above discussions on adaptive teaching strategies confirm what has been established in the literature. Petrina (2004, 2007) argued that several determinant factors influence different instructional methods or teaching strategies. These factors include the developmental level of students, intent, goals, and objectives of the teacher, the content for the instruction, and the classroom environment (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2004). Therefore, the variability of students considering their differences and commonalities is a critical factor in the design of instructional methods (Mulhearn et al., 2017;

Petrina, 2004, 2007). Through research, the variability of students can be accommodated into instructional methods. For example, varying instructional methods from time to time accommodate a broader variety of learning styles than consistently using one method (Brown et al., 2017; Petrina, 2004). Instruction is the complement of curriculum, and teaching or instructional methods are the complements of content (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2007). There is value in recognizing the many options and opportunities that the balance of the different instructional delivery methods offers to the education of students (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Brown et al., 2017; Petrina, 2004, 2007).

***RQ3: How does the Concept of Praxis Inform the Instructional Delivery Methods in a university in Western Africa?***

Inherent in this research question was praxis, one of the tenets or concepts of critical pedagogy. This concept was defined to participants as transforming theory into practice (Freire, 1968; Keesing-Styles, 2003). The data revealed the following emergent themes: leadership skill development, internship, exchange, and career opportunities, industry visit/field trip, and project work, as demonstrated in Figure 3.

**Figure 3***Emergent Themes Relative to RQ3*

**Leadership Skill Development.** The mission of Oduraa University is “to train a new generation of ethical and entrepreneurial leaders,” according to Ms. AA. Thus, the university offers academic courses and opportunities for extracurricular programs that cultivate and nurture the leadership potentials of students (Ajah, 2020; International Baccalaureate, n.d.). The core liberal curriculum at Oduraa University imbibes in students a broad understanding of life as well as leadership. The curriculum sets students up with ethics, leadership, and analytical skills, according to the vision and mission of Oduraa University. The university enrolls students in leadership courses to orient them about leadership, “especially leadership in a society like Africa,” Mr. Yaa noted.

Four leadership courses run over a period of four years (International Baccalaureate, n.d.; Times Higher Education, 2020). Each leadership course builds upon the knowledge from the previous course, making the courses cumulative. Thus, in the final leadership course, students do



a project, which in addition to testing the ability to apply their knowledge, is also supposed to help them synthesize all the knowledge over the four years into one project that should impact society positively. Kwame narrated his experience with the leadership courses:

Leadership has been my most favorite class in my four years in school. I think I learned a great deal from that course. Also, the project I did was of great interest to me. I was the project leader for that group, so it tested my leadership qualities, and I think I did a great job. We did a great job of delivering whatever service we were hoping to deliver and whatever impact we were hoping to have on the community we were helping.

Kwame expressed the growth he has gained from the four-year leadership courses as he assessed himself from freshman year up to the final year.

Moreover, Oduraa University students practice leadership on campus through student governance and club activities. There are the Oduraa University Students Council and the Oduraa University Judicial Committee. These two student bodies preside over student misconduct cases and determine the appropriate punishment should a student be found guilty of a crime. Netgirl illuminated,

If a student is caught doing like sexual misconduct or academic misconduct and they are sent to the Oduraa University Judicial Committee. Some students are recognized as judicial president, council president, or vice president, who are the heads of that committee. They lead such cases. So, there they facilitate, and they speak with other people like representatives from the student body and then come to a conclusion on what the person's sentence/sanction should be in a particular situation if they are found guilty.

Oduraa University prides itself on educating ethical leaders (Ajah, 2020; Times Higher Education, 2020; SGSB, 2008). Therefore, the institution does not condone any kind of misconduct and always ensures that the appropriate sanctions are carried out.

Furthermore, Oduraa University has several clubs that engage students outside the classroom (Ajah, 2020). These clubs include sports clubs, business clubs, photography clubs, and outreach clubs. Every club has executives that are students who facilitate the running of the clubs. In the drama club, for instance, there is the director. Although a student, the director, is in charge of writing scripts as well as directing members during play rehearsals. Students are not restricted to the number of clubs they can join. In fact, according to the university's student handbook, every student is supposed to join at least two clubs or societies. However, each student shares a unique reason for joining a club. Pen disclosed,

My motivation for joining clubs is not academic in any way because I want myself to exist outside academics. I do not want my life to be solely hinged on academics. So, I have been a member of a few clubs. Almost every club I have been joined has been about outreach because I would like to help underprivileged people. So sometimes I go teach underprivileged kids. I donate and stuff.

Oduraa University educate students to embrace civic responsibility and take transformative actions for the betterment of society (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020)

Again, working in groups develop students' leadership skills, especially since students get turns at becoming leaders of their groups. Mr. Yaa elucidated,

When you have been a leader in certain groups, you have been a leader in a group that was easy, another that was difficult; you learn to adjust to situations.

All these experiences give you a relevant upper hand when it comes to going out into the professional or corporate world.

Group work, although a common practice at Oduraa University, is not common in other institutions of higher education in Ghana. Students in these other Ghanaian universities do not get the opportunity to work collaboratively with their colleagues and, as such, lack this asset (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014). As mentioned by Pen and Mr. Yaa, working collaboratively helps students to assess situations and devise innovative strategies for tackling them. Additionally, working with people becomes more manageable because they have interacted with individuals with different personalities, unlike their counterparts from other universities. Thus, as Mr. Yaa hinted, “there is a clear difference in the social life that students from Oduraa University have compared to students from other universities,” which transcends to their lives in the professional world.

**Internship, Exchange, and Career Opportunities.** As part of the curriculum at Oduraa University, students gain hands-on experience through internships, exchange programs, and career-building opportunities (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). The university has a career services center that is vibrant in providing opportunities for hands-on experiences. In March of every year, the center organizes an event called Career Day, and invite over many industries to campus to interact with students. Mr. Yaa shared,

We have something called Career Day, where more than 60-80 companies come on campus. We get to interact with them. We get to know what they do. There are always representative companies for all the courses at Oduraa University, so you will find your fit. If you are looking for help in finding your perfect fit, you can go to the career center, and it is something that everybody knows.

All the participants affirmed that the career services center does a great job of encouraging students to do internships. The center assists students in securing internship placements with companies. To Mr. Yaa, “you cannot overstate how much Oduraa University emphasizes internships.” Although it is not a university requirement to intern before graduation, Oduraa University highly encourages students to intern before they graduate. Both Mr. Yaa and Negirl agreed that completing at least two internships before graduation is very important. Netgirl shared,

By hook or crook, you have to find a way to intern so that they can see that aside from your projects, you can actually implement what you have been taught. They can actually see that you have made a real-life application because projects are not enough. Internship involves actual people whose lives are going to be affected if you do something wrong.

Internship as part of the university’s structure is really helpful.

Thus, students are constantly on the lookout for internships, and the career services center is always there to assist them. According to Princess,

The career services center always encourages us. It wants us to find internships. Every break, the center wants us to do something. Even during mid-semester breaks, if it was up to the center, we would actually go out there and work with a company. So, the center always finds ways to connect us to companies. Also, when we find companies that we need help to connect to the center helps us to do so.

Oduraa University also maintains partnerships and relationships with certain companies with whom students intern during the vacation (Times Higher Education, 2020). Ms. AA’s explanation supported this statement; “during the long and short vacations, the companies we partner with ask us to recruit students on their behalf to do internships with them.” The entire

university community, particularly students, benefits from the partnerships the institution maintains with external organizations.

Furthermore, Oduraa University provides students with a list of international opportunities through exchange programs (Times Higher Education, 2020). Students who take advantage of such opportunities travel in the summer to a university abroad for training and specialization short courses. These courses normally take a duration of two months. Netgirl shared her summer abroad experience:

So, I went to Instituto de Empresa University in Spain to do a pre-masters program in innovation technology. It was not a paid exchange program. I learned with a group of international students on how to implement certain solutions in innovation technology.

The opportunity also comes with a discount should I decide to do my master's degree in this university.

These international exchange opportunities are open to all students of Oduraa University. Also, Oduraa University students can get scholarships for both the summer program and further studies through the program. At least 90% of the student body do international exchange opportunities before they leave Oduraa University. Because Oduraa University is a small school and cannot offer every educational advantage to students, the university highly encourages its students to pursue these international opportunities.

Moreover, the career services center, according to all the study's participants, has a system that assists students in intentionally mapping out their careers. Many students begin Oduraa University with no idea of what they want to do after school in terms of career. Thus, the center provides coaching and advising services to students while they design their career paths. Students at Oduraa University are immersed in a culture purposefully nurtured to develop an

entrepreneurial and ethical mindset (Fortune, 2020; SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). Thus, through coursework and other extracurricular advantages, students begin to develop entrepreneurial skills and business ideas.

Also, some students enroll at Oduraa University with a business idea in mind, which they are able to implement through coursework and career coaching (AU External Relations Office, 2016; Times Higher Education, 2020). Ana shared her story to support this information from the literature:

I have a business that I am running. I did not design the business from class. But I feel like there are a few concepts like getting the customer base and ensuring that you keep your first customers, and they will keep promoting your products were some of the things I picked from class. Aside from the customer base thing, they were like the few customers that I have now, I should just make sure that I am in touch with them. That was one of the concepts that we learned from the foundations of design and entrepreneurship course. Keeping in touch with your first customers because if some of them do not like the products later, they might leave. But then a few of them that stay would share with others, and that is one of the points by which the business can grow. I have not paid attention to other things that I may have learned from the class that I am applying to my business, but there may be other concepts. So far, I am sure of the customer base thing.

Besides the courses, there are other avenues available on campus, such as the Oduraa University D:lab and the Oduraa University start-up launchpad, that assist students in developing their ideas and growing their businesses on a larger scale (AU External Relations Office, 2016).

Additionally, Oduraa University presents students with access to learning opportunities that prepare them for the working world (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017; Times Higher

Education, 2020). Students are exposed to several hands-on experiences, including conducting real-life projects, designing business plans, using coding languages and programs to model prototypes, and completing internships. All these additional exposures make Oduraa University students all-rounded and ready for life after school. Netgirl illuminated,

I am doing a lot of things right now, usually with the languages that I learned. So, with the program languages, I just try to implement something because I realized that it looks good on my CV. I do not have work experience, but if I have all these projects on my CV, then employers can see that yeah, I have practical experience.

Oduraa University challenges students to apply theory to practice and enhance their critical thinking and communication skills (Olting'idi, 2017). This innovative academic program enables students to develop technical excellence in their respective professional fields. Thus, students are able to develop their full potentials as visionaries capable of navigating the world and leading the course of change (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008).

**Industry Visit/Field Trip.** Oduraa University either brings the industry to the classroom or arranges field trips for students to visit industries in their field of study and have a feel of how things are done in the working world (Times Higher Education, 2020). Ms. AA explained,

Faculty brings industry players to their class so that students can actually hear from these individuals who are in the industry about what is happening there. Students can easily relate what they are learning in class to whatever is happening in the industry so that what they are taught in class does not remain abstract from their reality.

Ms. Yaa expounded further to reinforce the statement from Ms. AA:

In the finance class, we had investment bankers come and talk to them [students]. And then they relate and let them see that really the things we [teachers] are talking about

plays out. It is the same things that the teacher is saying that the bankers are saying. So, it gives validation. Moreover, the students do not feel like they are just learning anything because they hear the bankers talking about the same contents that we discuss with them in class.

Teachers at Oduraa University support the concept of inviting industry players into the classroom to engage with students. It gives them the satisfaction knowing that they are not leading students astray by teaching them topics that are not relevant in the working world.

In addition to having resource persons come and interact with students, teachers organize trips for students to go out and have a feel of the real world, according to Ms. Yaa, Paulinus, Kwame, and Miss X. Field trips are a way of giving students additional perspectives on concepts they have learned in the classroom. Ms. Yaa sometimes takes her students out for a commodity exchange trip. According to Ms. Yaa, these practical steps do not only give students the chance to see how trading is done but also an understanding of how it is done. Kwame articulated how going on field trips has been helpful with understanding concepts in his finance classes. He shared,

The lecturers we have had in finance have done their best to improve student's understanding of finance courses by making the concepts practical through organized trips for us to go to various institutions that are responsible for setting financial ropes in our country. So, they give us a good appreciation for what we are learning in class.

Miss X also narrated her experience on a field trip and how the insights from the trip were applied to a class project:

I remember in one of my courses, branding, we actually went to some of the branding agencies to see how they work. We had to ask questions. That was hands-on plus the



theory-based project that allows you to apply things that you have learned. So, we went there. We spoke to real people who are already in the industry. We got insight from them. When we came back, we were supposed to write a report on it and then use the insight that we had gotten from the trip in our projects.

Industry visits/field trips are considered a new scholarship. This emergent theme that does not confirm nor contradict information that has already been established in the literature. Also, I did not encounter any studies or reports on the subject matter during the review of the literature.

**Project Work.** At Oduraa University, students do “a lot of practical sessions that are supposed to help them translate whatever theory they learn into practice,” Ms. AA established. According to Paulinus, projects are “able to engage students beyond just thinking. Through projects, students are able to synthesize knowledge into a product or a solution.” Faculty gives students project work that requires that they “use whatever information they get from class to apply to whatever project work they are doing,” Ms. AA added. With courses such as foundations of design and entrepreneurship, intermediate computer programming, data systems, students “get the chance to work on projects which can be related to real-life,” Pen noted. In support, Miss X shared, “so, they [teachers] give you the opportunity to just look around you, find a problem that you are really concerned about, and based on the skills that you have generated, you apply it.” Thus, students get the opportunity to apply the knowledge they acquire in the classroom to real-life situations. Princess recounted,

We do get to work on projects. I have had a class where that class alone I had four projects. We had an individual project. We had a mid-semester project, we had an end of semester project, and we had a before exams project. One class, we had all these projects, which were worth a huge percentage of our final grade. It was very, very demanding. So,

we do projects. Some of the projects are sort of limited to your computer. Some of them require you to interact with people. I am a computer science student, but I have had projects where I had to do sales, where I had to talk to people and sell my project to them. Princess, like many other students, has completed projects in their classes since enrolling at Oduraa University. Every class in the institution requires at least two projects, an individual and a group project. According to Princess, “you cannot run away from projects at Oduraa University.” To Kwame, Oduraa University is “synonymous with projects.” Kwame explained, “We have a project in every single course that we do. It is overwhelming. That is what it is, and it is always long. It is a variation of long-term and short-term. That is what I think students struggle with the most in this school, completing projects that have concurrent submission dates or that are running concurrently. When it comes to project work, this school does enough to occupy us with them.”

Both Princess and Kwame agreed that Oduraa University does an excellent job of making sure students engage in projects.

The foundations of design and entrepreneurship course, for instance, mandates students to work on completing a year-long hands-on project (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). Every student at Oduraa University takes this course and thus gain this hands-on experience. Netgirl shared how she learned “about MVP (minimum value product), how to set up a business, business model canvas, those nine blocks of designing, and many other planning and implementation strategies” from the course. For the project, students were grouped and tasked with finding a problem in society and developing an intervention using some of the theories and concepts they have learned from the course. Thus, sometimes students step out of the Oduraa

University campus and go into Brekuso township to engage with the people there to be able to get information to help them with their project work.

Every course at Oduraa University has a project component attached to it that is supposed to help students see how a theory can be applied in a real-life situation (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). Pen explained the transition between theory and practice in one of his classes:

Initially, when we started studying data structures and algorithms, they all seemed like just numbers and all data structures because we are talking about the big limitation and how to make a program go faster and all that. So, I was kind of wondering how we were going to relate to real-life instances. The lecturer did a really amazing job doing that, telling us how the speed of the program is really relevant and how it can deter or encourage people to use the application.

The teachers at Oduraa University do a great job of guiding students through the learning process. They do not only provide knowledge to students but also ensure there are avenues for students to apply the knowledge and concepts from the classroom. Princess explained how, as a computer science student, it is critical to have a practical component since a topic such as coding cannot be taught only in abstraction. She elaborated,

For all my coding classes, there are always a lot of assignments that are given on a weekly basis. Sometimes on a daily basis, depending on the lecturers' mood. And then, you are required to practice and submit it for a grade. And it helps. I have had lecturers in my classes for the coding instead of just putting the code on the board and telling you to read it; they will step through the coding construct with you in class so that you all reason together. Sometimes the lecturer already knows the answer, but she will allow us to think

through the process. So, we code along with the lecturers, and they give us extra coding assignments to practice on our own outside the classroom. So, it makes it easy to transfer the theory into practice.

The teachers in as much as ensure that the classes are practical also emphasize on students learning the theory. Therefore, the teachers strike a balance between students learning the theories and being able to apply or practice them. Princess pointed,

The lecturer always talks about how if you do not know the theory, then how do you practice. So, he balances the class in a way that the 1 hour 30 minutes we use 45 minutes for theory and the remaining minutes for practice. So, it kind of makes it easy to transition between theory and practice.

Thus, the teachers at Oduraa University make efforts to incorporate practical components in all courses, particularly theory-based courses. Mr. Yaa shared,

One of my courses, which is one of the most theoretical courses that we have, luckily for us our lecturer is in the industry. He actually has company and things in the industry. So, everything we are doing, he links it to what they have done before, giving us information on how it is on the ground. So, we are always able to see the divide and connect between what we are learning and what is actually happening in real life.

All the participants confirmed that teachers explain to students theories, their foundations, and how they are applied in the real world so that students are not detached from practice and end up learning abstracts concepts that have no relevance in the working world.

Projects attached to courses could be either pseudo cases or real-life cases. The nature of the projects varies from working with real companies or developing a new project. Mr. Yaa elaborated,

For some of our courses, you actually get to work with real companies or go out and develop a project on your own outside and bring a report on what you have done, people that you worked with, proof that you have worked with an external party, people outside the school. Sometimes you are given case scenarios and things to work on. So, practicality is there. The source of project topics varies. Sometimes the teacher suggests some topics. Sometimes he tells you to come up with a topic, and then he will approve. There are some particular courses that the lecturers will tell you to come up with your topic, you submit it to the lecturers, and they will approve. If the topic is not good, they will add stuff and make sure it is improved. And there are some courses that the teachers give the students the topics.

Ms. Yaa narrated some of the strategies she uses to transition her students between theory and practice. In most of her classes, she uses written cases about real companies and news report analyses. Ms. Yaa explained,

These strategies cause them [students] to engage with materials outside of the classroom. They choose topics from the outline. They are supposed to find news articles which correspond with what is taught in the classroom and then find ways of relating or picking out the theory from the real-life news article then they come and present it in the class by telling us the story, telling us the theory, and how the theory is found in the story. That is also another opportunity for them to move out of the class.

Although students normally work in teams on project works, there are situations where the teacher may ask students to develop individual projects. In some courses, students do up to three projects in the semester. Miss X expounded,

The first two projects you do it alone because they [teachers] want to test that you the student you understand. And then maybe the last one you do it in a group. It may be paired programming. It is mostly between two and five or two and four. They do not really make the groups bigger because people will not work.

Miss X further recounted her experience on an individual project. In one of her courses, the teacher, after a lesson, took the students on a field trip and, upon returning, asked them to use the insights from the trip and the lesson in their projects. This approach was a different twist to the hands-on experience. Miss X explained further,

So, in the projects, we were supposed to just look for something that we were interested in and then use the information that we had gotten and then just the general material that we had from class and use to apply to it.

Netgirl also narrated how an individual project facilitated her to becoming a critical thinker and innovator:

In my freshman year, the second semester, the lecturer just came to class and said, I am going to teach you a programming language, but then at the end of the semester, what I want you to do is look for a problem in the Oduraa University community and solve it.

For students like Netgirl and her classmates who were coming from a completely different educational background, the teacher's statement was confusing. Critical thinking was a foreign concept to them. However, when the students were put on the spot by the teacher, they began to research and think analytical and were able to identify some issues in the environment that needed solving. Netgirl recounted,

So, I realized we had to some research again, speak to faculty, students. I realized there was a problem with getting a change from the Oduraa University transport service. Most

people did not like to use cash, and that was the only option. I went to the logistics department and realized they would like to collect their revenue every single day from the bus. So, I said okay, let me build a PIEPOM program where I can industrialize the permit since people have an ID card and students have money on them for use. Faculty also have some amount of money. So, I realized that okay, that amount of money they can use to pay. When they just pull on the bus, they can just enter their ID number, transaction made. A prompt will ask whether it should be deducted from their salary, whether they want to pay through a debit card, mobile money, or if it should be deducted from their card immediately, and then problem solved. Nobody has to complain about change. Because they are all adults and they patronize these services, and they carry huge denominations, nobody carries one cedi. And then you have to take coins. Nobody wants coins as change also. And the bus driver will be like there is no change because everybody is giving him 10 cedis or 20 cedis. So, I just had to solve that problem using the PIEPOM project.

Netgirl has since been improving upon the system she built her freshman year. She explained, “in my second year, when I learned XQ, I created a database using my XQ program language to manage the system I had built. Right now, I am doing another programming language, but I have not implemented it yet.” Netgirl looks forward to applying every new program she learns to the original program.

All the participants agreed that students at Oduraa University receive the best of project work experience in both working as a team and working as an individual. In most cases, students work in teams on projects so that they can exchange ideas. However, the nature and complexity of the project may determine whether teamwork or working solo is the best choice. Also,

teachers factor in the pros and cons of working in a group or alone. Thus, in as much as teachers want students to learn to work in groups, they also consider the fact that not all students participate on the same level when put in teams. So, depending on the task and its complexity, some projects are completed alone, others in pairs, or maximum a group of four. According to Paulinus, “this arrangement provides a balance in learning to work in a team and trying to face a problem alone because it is not everything in life you will face in a team.” In the real world, there are times students will have to work and solve problems alone. Thus, teachers at Oduraa University have both worlds represented in the learning experience.

Praxis is “an inventive and interventive way of life that encourages free, creative reflection and thoughtful action in order to change the world, even as the learners are transformed in the process” (Provenzo & Renaud, 2009, p. 608). Critical consciousness is achieved through intellectual effort, reflection, and action (Freire, 1970). The application of theory in practical situations challenges students to think outside the box. Netgirl believed,

The experience has been really helpful because you challenge yourself. There is not a lot of things you would learn in class. And as you try to apply them, you realize that okay, I have to do some self-learning; I have to learn new languages, new libraries, new frameworks to apply this to a particular project, website application that I am working on. Because you know that okay book knowledge or whatever you are getting in class is never enough. You always have to think outside the box.

Students develop praxis because learning is a continuous process of transformation (Freire, 1970, 1973). Knowledge acquired from books or from the classroom is not enough to develop the full potentials of students. Thus, learning starts with an action and then reflection, which is followed



by more action until the student reaches the capacity to transform society (Freire, 1970, 1973).

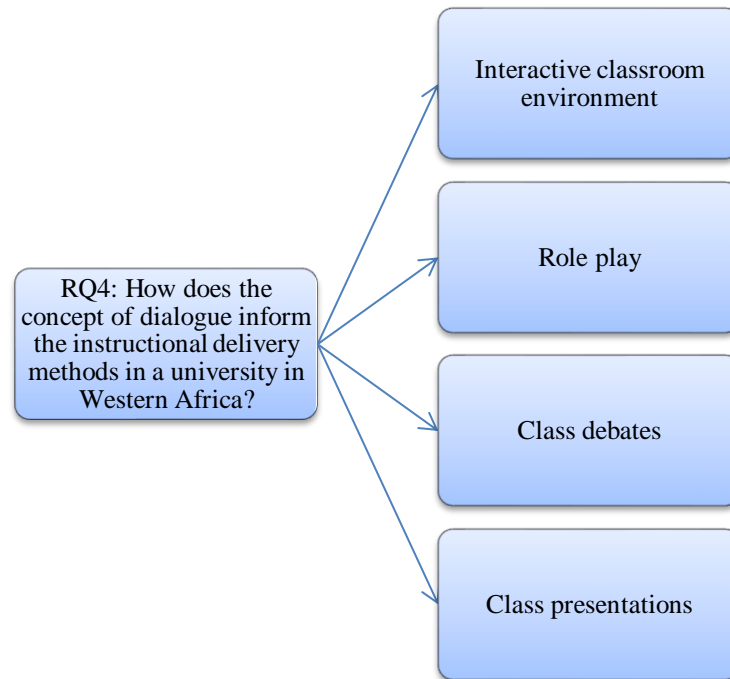
Netgirl expounded,

You always have to learn more. You always have to challenge yourself. If you do not challenge yourself, you do not know if you have a passion for actually learning something. You do not get the actual knowledge. When you leave school, it is like you are nothing. All you have is a paper showing that, okay, I have completed four years of college. I have a degree, but you cannot do anything. That is the downside to it. So, applying the knowledge really gives people the advantage of getting employment. Not only getting employment but also knowing what they are being taught and what they are capable of doing to transform society.

Learning is a continuous process of transformation (Freire, 1970). Individual and societal transformation only occurs through critical dialogue and critical reflection, which leads to critical inventive or interventive action (Freire, 1970, 1973; Provenzo & Renaud, 2009).

***RQ4: How does the concept of dialogue inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?***

Inherent in this research question was dialogue, one of the tenets or concepts of critical pedagogy. This concept was defined to participants as classroom communication between the student and the teacher (Heaney, 1995; Keesing-Styles, 2003). The data revealed the following emergent themes: interactive classroom environment, role play, class debates, and class presentations, as demonstrated in Figure 4.

**Figure 4***Emergent Themes Relative to RQ4*

**Interactive Classroom Environment.** Dialogue is the foundation of critical education (Freire, 1998). Authentic classroom interaction or dialogue engages the teacher and the students in a relationship that develops into a pedagogy of knowing (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970). Dialogue is the means through which students get actively involved in their education. While dialogue reduces how much the teacher talks, it encourages students to voice their opinions (Shor, 1992; Freire, 1998, 2014).

Oduraa University has established an interactive classroom environment where teachers and students work together in creating knowledge. In a typical classroom, “the lecturer teaches, and students ask a lot of questions,” Ana noted. Also, the teacher engages the students based on the readings the students have been given before the class. Mr. Yaa narrated,

I really like to ask questions because when I am doing something, I would like to make sure I understand what is going on and that I have a connection with the lecturer or whoever is giving me such information. The closer I get to understanding the lecturer, the better I will understand and get into the course.

Teachers also encourage students to talk and participate in class. Princess described, “teachers always want you to talk. If you do not talk, you are basically in trouble. Or they will find ways for you to talk.” The teacher will typically introduce a topic and then ask students for their thoughts and suggestions. According to Kwame, teachers always manage to maintain quality and interactive atmosphere in the class while ensuring that students understand the course contents. Classroom dialogical relations are, therefore, central to the educational experience because communication is the medium for transferring meaning and understanding human life (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970; Keesing-Styles, 2003).

The concept of dialogue and classroom interaction practiced at Oduraa University is different from what is done in other institutions of education in Ghana. While the majority of the institutions in Ghana practice the traditional teacher-centered method of instruction or banking concept (Freire, 2005, 2008), Oduraa University’s curriculum allows for a learning environment that students find conducive to speak with authority and question the status quo (Fortune, 2020; SGSB, 2008). The kind of instruction in the university allows for critical dialogue between students and teachers. Mr. Yaa shared his experience with dialogue:

I feel like it has been very good here in Oduraa University. I did not have that interactive class in my high school. It was something that, when I came here, I realized oh you could actually ask the teacher a question, and he is going to answer. If you have follow-ups, you can ask just to make sure you understand.

Mr. Yaa, when comparing his high school educational experience, has noticed the difference in curriculum and instruction at Oduraa University. Netgirl affirmed Mr. Yaa's assertion by stating the following:

Usually, the typical Ghanaian classroom setting, they [teachers] have to ask you [student] a question, you raise up your hand and answer. But then when I got to Oduraa University, I realized its slightly different. So, I do not know if it is because it is a university or because they are adopting the liberal arts method, using the abroad system instead of the Ghanaian system of teaching.

Netgirl alluded that the Oduraa University learning experience to the liberal arts core curriculum background.

Moreover, students at the beginning of the semester receive a course outline with the readings and other course materials. Therefore, the students know what they need to study and prepare before coming to class. Netgirl described the classroom proceedings:

When you [student] come to the class, the lecturer is going to be like okay, so today's topic, according to the course outline, is this. Let us discuss, what are your insights on this? I want to know your reflections. What is your view on this issue that was raised in the paper? And then, the interaction just starts like that.

At this point in the class, everybody shares his or her inputs, both the teacher and students alike.

In addition, Netgirl has come to experience a system where the teacher gives students the readings before class with the instruction, "read and then when we come to class, we all discuss." If there is anything that the students do not understand, the teacher explains. In the opinion of Netgirl, the educational process is very interactive. There is always a dialogue between teachers

and students as everybody participates in the classroom. In support of Netgirl's discussion, Ms. Yaa recounted how she engages in dialogue with her students:

For myself, I teach, I ask questions, and they ask questions. I ask questions to test their understanding. They ask questions to clarify issues they do not understand. Sometimes, they would have contributions to whatever topic I am teaching. The way I teach does not hinder them from having examples or any thoughts on the topic. The way I teach allows them to share.

The positive attitude towards learning makes the classroom environment conducive for teacher-students and students-students dialogue. According to Princess, students normally participate in class because teachers make it easy to do so. Princess expounded,

In my social theory class, the last class I wanted to talk so much it got to a point the lecturer did not even want to call me anymore. It is like every time he brings up a topic, I am just eager to say something about it.

Students notice that the approach with which teachers introduce them to participate in class is not forced. Because teachers maintain a positive attitude, students are always eager to be part of the conversation.

**Role Play.** At Oduraa University, both teachers and students play the role of subjects of the educational process, also known as critical educators and critical learners (Degener, 2001; Moore & Parker, 1986). Therefore, students sometimes assume the role of critical educators or facilitators and prepare materials to lead classroom discussions. Netgirl described. "A lecturer could come in and say, who wants to volunteer to facilitate today's discussion?" Students prepare before class and thus are not hesitant to lead the class on a discussion. Netgirl elaborated,

A student will come, give a brief summary of the discussion topic, their views, and ask what other people think about them. And then, through them, we will just build a conversation. Everything hops off what someone else has said about the argument that they had made.

Classroom interactions are not rigid. A facilitator could be a student or a teacher depending on the course or the topic for the discussion. Ana affirmed Netgirl's claim and explained how sometimes students group up and prepare materials to facilitate classroom discussions; "every group research their assigned lesson and come to present and teach. After the group is done presenting, then the rest of the class asks questions." Ana explained,

Each group is assigned to study specific parts of the syllabus. However, the groups decide how they will present and teach their sections to the class. Normally, they divide the topics so that each person would be responsible for a part of the discussion. During the discussion section, the group asks the class questions, and the class also asks the group questions based on what they have all read because although a group has been assigned to the topic, the entire class is expected to read the materials before class. Thus, all the students read the class materials that other students are presenting on. So, it becomes a discussion where students make reference to topics that have been mentioned in the readings and ask questions based on what has been presented in class.

Ms. Yaa, in her classes, gives out topics to her students and asks them to research and present the topics to the rest of the class. In another instance, she informed students whose theses topics coincided with the lesson to teach those topics to the class. Ms. Yaa stated,

I have students working on behavioral finance theses. So, when I got to that topic, I let them know a week ahead that they would teach that. So, they prepared slides, and I sat down, and they led that seminar, and I interjected whenever I needed to.

Paulinus also uses the tutorial approach to achieve this concept of role-playing. Every so often, he calls upon students to assume the role of facilitators and explain concepts to their colleagues in class.

**Class Debates.** Students at Oduraa University are not only given the opportunity to interact with their peers but also their teachers (Fortune, 2020; Times Higher Education, 2020). Teachers give students room to operate and express their opinions even if these opinions go contrary to their own. Ms. AA indicated that “students can constructively argue with faculty in class over a particular response or a topic that they were not on the same page. And the teachers normally give the students room to express themselves”. Miss X explained further,

Over here, you are given the opportunity to not only speak to your peers, but you are speaking to the lecturers too. Sometimes during class discussions, you ask lecturers to prove exactly what they are saying because sometimes you are not convinced that what they are saying corresponds with factual knowledge, and you want further clarification.

Students also argue among themselves when they share different opinions about a topic. The teacher provides an enabling environment for such healthy debates where everyone gives inputs on an issue.

Moreover, a conducive environment for healthy debates has its benefits. One advantage of debates or class arguments is that it makes it easy to commit things to memory. Netgirl elaborated,

Let us say you are writing a test. You can recollect a conversation you had with somebody or an argument you had with a classmate in class or with the whole class. And such things they really stick in the memory. There is a topic that has been given, and then everybody has different views, and then there is a really interesting conversation, some people even start arguing in the class. The lecturer gives input, and everyone gives input. Such things really stick in your mind. So, it is very easy to bring out the answers when it is time for tests. It is a really good way of learning. It really helps to retain information. Teachers like Paulinus allow his students to argue and express their opinions about class topics. He sometimes asks questions just to encourage such intellectual debates among his students. Paulinus explained,

One strategy I use is to ask questions. Some obvious, others, not so obvious. It could be something they have read. I make it clear to students that if they have read something outside the class, they should share it. If a student says something, I do not know it is not a problem for me because even textbooks are not exhaustive. We now have a lot of information on the internet. It is possible for students to read something I have not met before. The different perspectives bring a new dynamic into the class discussion.

Oduraa University creates a conducive atmosphere for intellectual debates that stimulates students' critical thinking and an opportunity for sharing creative and innovative ideas.

**Class Presentations.** From freshman year, students at Oduraa University are introduced to class presentations (Times Higher Education, 2020). Class presentations can be random, formal, or informal, and cut across in all classes. Mr. Yaa noted, “there is a mix of presentations. We do group and individual presentations, but it is mostly groups. I would say eight out of 10 are group presentations. Also, there are multiple presentations depending on the course.” An



advantage for students presenting so many times in front of their classmates is the confidence they develop. Miss X narrated,

For the shy people, it really makes you come out of your shell. When I came to Oduraa University, every time I have to stand in front of my classmate, I am like these people are my classmates, so why am I shivering. But then I would shiver and get very sweaty. But I still have to do it because my grades depend on it. So, I have to play some mind games and tell myself that I can do it. Mostly after I have passed my first two sentences, everything gets better.

Miss X also acknowledge the support and encouragement of her friends as they lived these experiences together. She explained,

When you are presenting in class, and you look at your friends' faces, most of them are encouraging you to keep moving because they also understand that when it gets to their turn, they would need other people to smile and cheer them on.

In the opinion of Miss X, presenting in class is “a very good practice because it trains you and builds your confidence to the point that when you go out into the midst of other people, it is easier for you to find your voice to speak.” Miss X elaborated,

Right now I would not say that I am extremely perfect, but I had some presentations two days ago and me of all people I went to stand there, and it was not like I had chewed (memorized) my lines, but I just knew what I was going to say and I just went and said it, got out of there and that was all. If it had been me in my freshman year, I would have never been able to do that. I would have had to look in the mirror practice every time.

Class presentations teach students confidence, how to speak, and how to use words wisely.

Also, through class presentations, students are able to grasp concepts and better understand topics in the course, the study's participants expressed. Because students present on topics from class readings that everyone is familiar with, the presentations provide further understanding. Ana shared,

Presentations I think is also one of the ways in which we understand concepts because when our classmates are talking, it is kind of sometimes easier to listen. If we are presenting on group projects, we are kind of interested in what other groups are doing. And sometimes it involves class concepts. So then, aside from the interest in what they are doing, we also kind of beef up on what we have done in class. Also, just hearing someone else explain something that we have done in class already is easier.

According to Ana, students can gain some understanding of class concepts from the presentations, even when they have not done the class readings.

Dialogue at Oduraa University is not limited to the classroom. As Netgirl stated, “dialogue happens everywhere in Oduraa University.” Outside the classroom, the university organizes seminars for students to interact with people from outside the university community. These seminars could be in the form of business forums, lectures by scholars from other universities, and many others, that usually take the approach of an interactive section.

Again, students at Oduraa University experience dialogue through extracurricular activities such as clubs, teams, and societies. Netgirl elaborated,

I am in the theatre society, and I am an actress. There is a director, other actors, and there are crew members. So, when we go for meetings, usually when there is a script, it is not just given to us, and the director says, “learn it.” The director will say, “okay, there is supposed to be 10 minutes for a table reading.” After table reading, we discuss our views

on the characters and what we think the characters should have. Everything is not directly given to us or handed down. We always have to interact and discuss and agree together to come to a conclusion on something.

The Oduraa University community loves sports and patronizes all sporting events. For instance, the university has its own basketball and football leagues. Pen explained,

In this school, we really love sports, and we really patronize sports, especially football and basketball. We have our own league. I know that once in a while they do play a lot of volleyball as well. I mean, we do have foosball tables and Ping-Pong tables around. So, people will just get around and play those things. They also provide us with televisions in our hostels. So, yeah, we get the chance to get around each other on weekends and watch local sports and stuff like the premier league and just argue our weekends away.

Oduraa University creates some of these avenues for students so that they can have a holistic experience (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). The university wants its students to all-rounded individuals and not all about books with zero emotional intelligence.

The kind of instruction in the university allows for critical dialogue between students and teachers and students and their knowledge of the world (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). Oduraa University practices what the literature refers to as transformative instruction. According to Petrina (2007) and Taylor (2007), transformative instruction is a combination of direct and indirect instruction. The teacher and students during the teaching and learning process discard status quo content and instead concentrate on developing knowledge and understanding (Adebayo et al., 2015; Cranton, 2011; Taylor, 2007). Students play an active role in this type of instruction method and thus have the first-hand experience of the teaching and learning process

(Adebayo et al., 2015; Petrina, 2007). Students have more interaction with content and less control from the teacher (Cranton, 2011; Taylor, 2007).

The transformative instructional method adopts the dialogic models as a framework for designing educational environments, activities, and experiences (Cranton, 2011; Cruikshank et al., 2012). Dialogic model is interactive indirect teaching, which includes questions, thought provocations, and Socratic techniques of dialogue (Petrina, 2007). Just as the data has revealed, both teachers and students at Oduraa University play the role as subjects of the educational process, with students sometimes assuming the role of facilitators of the learning process. Both teachers and students ask a lot of questions that stimulate critical thinking, intellectual discourse, and the creation of innovative ideas.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the data analysis and findings. The presentation and analysis of the study's findings were discussed according to the four research questions. The data revealed the following emergent themes: problem-based curricula content, entrepreneurial skill development, and feedback/partnership opportunities for RQ1. For RQ2, the data revealed the following emergent themes: collaborative education and adaptive teaching strategies. The theme of collaborative education further explored the following sub-themes: student-centered learning and group work. The data revealed the following emergent themes: leadership skill development, internship, exchange, and career opportunities, industry visit/field trip, and project work for RQ3. For RQ4, the data revealed the following emergent themes: interactive classroom environment, role play, class debates, and class presentations.

The instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University foster in students an entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking, ethical leadership, and the ability to solve complex

real-world problems (Ajah, 2020; Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). The university has an innovative academic program that enables students to develop technical excellence in their respective professional fields while gaining a more profound sense of civic responsibility. Thus, students are able to develop their full potentials as visionaries capable of navigating the world and leading the course of change (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008). Opportunities such as class projects, class presentations, and internships challenge students to apply theory to practice and enhance their critical thinking and communication skills (Olting'idi, 2017).

The concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University. Oduraa University has a teaching and learning environment that is student-centered and incorporates dialogue, democracy, participation, activity, and affectivity as the fundamental characteristics (Freire, 1973, 1988). Similar to critical pedagogy, the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University encourage critical consciousness and the ownership of knowledge in students (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014). The final chapter of the study presents the summary, conclusions, interpretations, and implications of the findings.

## **Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Suggestions for Future Research**

Chapter 5 is the final chapter of the study. The chapter discusses the study's summary and major findings, conclusions, and interpretations of the findings. Subsequently, the chapter discusses the study's implications to theory, policy, practice, and unexpected study outcomes. The chapter further addresses the suggestions made for future research, the study's limitations, the researcher's reflexivity, and a chapter summary.

### **Summary and Major Findings**

Thousands of students graduate from higher institutions of learning in Ghana but do not gain employment due to a missing link between formal education, building human capital, and meeting the needs of society (Dai et al., 2008). There seem to be a lack of appropriate education and training that would empower students to be able to pursue opportunities for self-employment or become employable and sought after in the job market after graduation (Dai et al., 2008; Effah, 2016). The 2018 World Bank Human Capital Index (HCI) report revealed that in the next 18 years approximately 56% of Ghana's human capital would go to waste due to the poor quality of the education in the country (African Daily Voice, 2018; Nggenbe, 2018; The World Bank, 2018). According to the HCI report, the poor quality of the education system would result in the dearth of the human capacity for sustainable national development (GhanaWeb, 2018; Nggenbe, 2018; The World Bank, 2018).

There seems to be a trend of these characteristics in many universities in Ghana: The utilization of textbooks and traditional face-to-face lectures as the dominant instructional delivery method (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). The adoption of a unilateral approach to education where teaching has become the emphasis instead of learning (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Sisimwo et al., 2014). The heavy reliance on structured

curriculum with little or no room for student-student or teacher-student interactions (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). The restriction on the cultivation of critical and logical thinking and the development of problem-solving skills within students (Freire, 2008; MacBeath, 2010). However, one private university in Ghana, Oduraa University, is doing something different that is yielding results.

The strategies for teaching and learning at Oduraa University seem to mirror the basic principles of critical pedagogy. The university has prioritized the cultivation of critical thinking skills and the development of critical consciousness within students. The school has carved a niche of being a leading provider of university educational experience that promotes ethical leadership, entrepreneurial mindsets, and the ability to solve complex problems (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008). The instructional delivery methods practiced in Oduraa University offer students the education and training that empower them to be employable and sought after in the job market across various industries. The university continues to maintain a record of 100% of its graduates finding jobs, starting up businesses, or furthering their studies within six months of graduation (Olting'idi, 2017).

The strategies for teaching and learning at Oduraa University are worth exploring. By choosing to be unique in the instructional delivery methods practiced, the institution has maintained a reputation for being the only university with many students securing prominent positions in the job market after graduation and working for the progress and transformation of Ghana and the entire African continent (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). Therefore, exploring Oduraa University and its instructional delivery methods could serve as a teaching case for other universities to emulate in order to make meaningful contributions to students' academic excellence and professional competences.

The purpose of this qualitative descriptive case study was to explore how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a private university in Western-Africa. The research questions were philosophically driven and based on the problem and purpose of the study. The following overarching research question aligns with the problem and purpose of the study: How do the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa? The following four sub-questions align with the problem, purpose, and philosophical concepts:

**RQ1:** How does the concept of problem-posing education inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ2:** How does the concept of teacher and student roles inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ3:** How does the concept of praxis inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

**RQ4:** How does the concept of dialogue inform the instructional delivery methods in a university in Western Africa?

Findings from the literature revealed the following statements: Students should be subjects of their own education rather than play a passive role as objects. The actions of students should be geared toward transforming societies through problem-posing education. When students are exposed to problem-posing education, they are able to question the status quo and other problematic issues, cultivate critical thinking skills, and develop critical consciousness (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2003; McLaren, 2003). Students who possess critical consciousness do not only improve their individual life conditions but take actions that



serve the best interest of everyone by building a more just society (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 1970, 2014).

Inherent in this study are the concepts of critical pedagogy, which served as the conceptual framework. Critical pedagogy is an educational philosophy that seeks to empower students through thought and action (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Freire, 2008). The philosophy emphasizes the critical thinking and action of students that leads to the transformation of society and life conditions. Critical concepts include problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue. Critical pedagogy was an appropriate framework for this study because the concepts aligned with the central mission of Oduraa University. The kind of instruction and learning in Oduraa University affords students the avenue to not only discover their voices but also their capacity to take action that leads to the betterment of society (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020). A qualitative methodology was the best approach to explore the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University in Ghana. Qualitative research examines a phenomenon through a holistic approach (Polit & Beck, 2012). Qualitative research is “focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied” (Merriam, 2009, p. 1). Also, the study employed a case study design as a qualitative subtype. A case study was appropriate because the approach explores a contemporary, real-life case or multiple cases as the unit of analysis to gain in-depth understanding (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2018). Of the three leading authorities on case study research, Merriam (1998), Yin (1989), and Stake (1995), a descriptive case study by Merriam (1998), seemed fitting to inform this research. Merriam’s (1998) philosophical perspective argues that constructivism is the epistemology that should orient a qualitative case study. Also, this research sought to yield a thick, rich description of the phenomenon, which aligned with Merriam’s

(1998) descriptive case study design. The study used content analysis and deductive analysis to analyze data, as argued by Merriam (1998), Patton (2015), and Yin (2018) to be the appropriate analysis techniques for a case study research. Through these analysis techniques, I searched for insights, concepts, and patterns and was able to identify the core meanings and consistencies through patterns and themes (Merriam, 1998; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2018).

The major findings in this study revealed that the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University. For the concept of problem-posing education, the data revealed the following themes: problem-based curricula content, entrepreneurial skill development, and feedback/partnership opportunities. Oduraa University students strategize and solve problems in their immediate environment using the knowledge they have acquired in the classroom. In every course, teachers require students to solve an identified problem in the community and develop a solution. As such, students are expected to think critically and use their ingenuity to come up with solutions to the problems they identify. After identifying a problem, students establish how the problem is affecting the society, and whom the problem is affecting. Afterward, the students are expected to engage with the community and find out the root cause of the problem so that they will be able to find the most appropriate solution.

Additionally, the data revealed the following themes: collaborative education and adaptive teaching strategies to explain how the concept of teacher and student roles inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University. At Oduraa University, the facilitator could be a student or a teacher. Therefore, the teachers are able to accept feedback on educational ideas and practices that may deem unsuccessful or oppressive (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2011; Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Higgins, 1996). Students are able to confidently express their opinions about issues

and know that teachers will not judge them or push over their ideas. Because the teachers give students room to operate, students do not necessarily see the teachers as high power. Students instead see them as coaches, people who are guiding them through the course. Both teachers and students experience a healthy educational environment in which they play the role of critical educators and critical learners (Degener, 2001; Moore & Parker, 1986).

For the concept of praxis, the data revealed the following themes: leadership skill development, internship, exchange, career opportunities, industry visits/field trips, and project work. All the participants agreed that students at Oduraa University receive the best of project work experience in both working as a team and working as an individual. In most cases, students work in teams on projects so that they can exchange ideas. However, the nature and complexity of the project may determine whether teamwork or working solo is the best choice. Also, teachers factor in the pros and cons of working in a group or alone. Thus, in as much as teachers want students to learn to work in groups, they also consider the fact that not all students participate on the same level when put in teams. So, depending on the task and its complexity, some projects are completed alone, others in pairs, or maximum a group of four. According to Paulinus, one of the teacher participants, “this arrangement provides a balance in learning to work in a team and trying to face a problem alone because it is not everything in life you will face in a team.” In the real world, there are times students will have to work and solve problems alone. Thus, teachers at Oduraa University have both worlds represented in the learning experience.

Furthermore, the data revealed an interactive classroom environment, role play, class debates, and class presentations to explain how the concept of dialogue informs the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University. At Oduraa University, both teachers and students play

the role of subjects of the educational process (Degener, 2001; Moore & Parker, 1986).

Therefore, students sometimes assume the role of critical facilitators and prepare materials to lead classroom discussions. On a typical day, a teacher could come to class and ask a student to volunteer to facilitate the day's lesson and discussions. Because students prepare before class, they do not hesitate to lead the discussion. Sometimes in the classroom, students can debate or argue with teachers constructively about a matter or a response that they feel is inadequate or lacking context. Because there are no rigid rules, students can feel free and simply flow with the class. Students, however, are expected to maintain a respectful atmosphere for everyone to enjoy the classroom interactions.

Oduraa University has a teaching and learning environment that is student-centered and incorporates dialogue, democracy, participation, activity, and affectivity, which forms the fundamental characteristics of Freire's (1973, 1988) philosophy. Similar to critical pedagogy (Freire, 2005, 2008; Gutek, 2014), the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University encourage critical consciousness and the ownership of knowledge in students. The education does not develop critical thinking and critical consciousness alone in students but also imbibe in them the sense of purpose and responsibility to society.

## **Conclusions**

The concepts of critical pedagogy indeed inform the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University. Oduraa University's education of critical thinkers, innovative leaders, and problem-solvers reflects Freire's (1970) concept of problem-posing education. Oduraa University has a teaching and learning environment that is student-centered and incorporates characteristics of the critical pedagogical concepts of problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue (Freire, 1973, 2014). The mission of Oduraa University is to

educate critical thinkers, innovative leaders, and problem-solvers, which reflects Freire's (1970) concept of problem-posing education. Students at Oduraa University are assigned to groups and tasked with identifying problematic issues within the society and finding appropriate, cost-effective solutions to these problems. Thus, Oduraa University students have identified many problems in the environment that are impacting lives negatively in the community and have worked to proffer solutions to these problems. Problem-posing education develops critical consciousness through cognition and transformative learning (Freire, 1970; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). Students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues in their lives. Problem-posing education begins in the classroom and elaborates on the participation and performances of teachers and students but does not end in the classroom. As such, teachers and students go through the process of reflecting and acting to recreate or transform reality (Kareepadath, 2018). Problem-posing education uncovers reality, incites critical thinking, and develops the critical consciousness, which leads students to take actions that improve conditions of life (Freire, 1970, 1998).

Furthermore, the teachers at Oduraa University can be viewed as problem-posers rather than transmitters of knowledge as elaborated by Freire (1998, 2014). The teachers listen to what the students have to say. The teachers then identify and pose questions using situations familiar to the students. As transformative intellectuals (Giroux, 1997), the teachers learn from the students, appreciate their point of view, and participate in the dialogical process of learning. Students at Oduraa University enjoy the teaching and learning process the most because of how much they find their teachers approachable. The students appreciate how teachers receive and respect their opinions and afford teachers the same level of respect and decorum. Students subscribe to the notion that a teacher who is always right and does not create a classroom

environment conducive for discussion and sharing of opinions and ideas is not a transformative intellectual (Giroux, 1997). In sum, students at Oduraa University believe they play a role in the educational process because they contribute to decisions that inform their education.

Additionally, praxis connects theory to transformational action (Boyce, 1996; Freire, 1970), just as Oduraa University students apply classroom knowledge to transform real-life situations. Praxis connects theory to transformational action by bridging the gap between education and social transformation (Boyce, 1996; Freire, 1970, 1998). Freire explained praxis as the critical reflection and action for implementing educational processes and practices (Keesing-Styles, 2003). At Oduraa University, students do a lot of practical sessions to help them translate theory into practice. Projects, for instance, engage students beyond thinking. Through projects, students are able to synthesize knowledge into a product or a solution. Courses such as foundations of design and entrepreneurship give students the chance to work on projects that are related to real-life situations. Students are required to look in their immediate environment and find a problem that they are really concerned about, and then use the skills they have generated to apply to the situation. Thus, students get the opportunity to apply the knowledge they acquire in the classroom to transform real-life situations.

Moreover, Oduraa University's interactive classroom environment strategy reflects Freire's (1970) concept of dialogue because it creates an equal environment and opportunity for teachers and students to interact and create knowledge together. Dialogue creates an equal environment and opportunity for students and teachers through mutual acceptance and trust (Heaney, 1995; Shor, 1992). Oduraa University has established an interactive classroom environment where teachers and students work together to create knowledge. Teachers encourage students to talk and participate in class by finding exciting ways of engagement. In a

typical classroom, the teacher may introduce a topic and then ask students for their thoughts and suggestions. The teachers at Oduraa University always manage to maintain quality and interactive atmosphere in the classroom, while ensuring that students understand the course contents. Paulinus, a teacher and one of the study's participants, hinted using weekly lab sessions to promote dialogue among his students. These labs are designed purposely for discussions so that students can talk more and participate more. Dialogue reduces how much teachers talk and encourages how much students voice their opinions (Freire, 1998, 2014; Shor, 1992). Dialogue creates critical inter-subjectivity between students and teachers (Heaney, 1995), and balances teachers' authority with the input of students (Shor, 1992).

### **Interpretation of Findings**

I began this inquiry on a premise, based on the literature (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010; Ngenbe, 2018; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015) and my educational experience in Ghana, that teacher-centered instruction and learning characterize tertiary education in Ghana. The education discourages students from questioning the status quo and participating in classroom discussions (Freire, 2008; Gutek, 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015), and instead encourages students memorizing information from textbooks and teachers and reproducing this information verbatim during examinations (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010). The literature also established that Oduraa University in Ghana had distinguished itself from the other universities with the instructional delivery methods the institution uses in educating students to be ethical leaders, critical thinkers, and problem-solvers (Ajah, 2020; Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). Therefore, it was fulfilling to witness through this research the numerous teaching and learning strategies Oduraa University has implemented to enhance students' educational experience.

Since this section in the manuscript allows me to explore the study's findings and conclusions from a more subjective perspective, I will discuss the concepts and strategies that stood out to me.

First, I will discuss the concept of having a grade for class attendance and participation at Oduraa University in Ghana. The end of semester examination at Oduraa University caters to 40% of students' final grades. The remaining 60% have been spread out to cover other students' efforts, including class attendance and participation (Olting'idi, 2017). All the participants affirmed that class attendance and participation grade is 10% of students' final grade. Teachers normally use their discretion to allocate the marks. The 10% grade for class attendance and participation is a big deal for students, considering their midsemester exam normally carries 15% of their final grade. Therefore, it is a real incentive to get students to participate in class. Pen, one of the study's participants, added, "because students know when they participate in class, they are sure of the 10% mark; they are motivated to do that. And, teachers encourage the participation of students." Pen, aside securing his 10% also participates in class because he likes to let his voice be heard. He also speaks and asks a lot of questions because he likes to let his teachers know that he is paying attention in class. In the opinion of Pen, participating in class is a way of letting his teachers know that he appreciates them. The allocation of a grade for class attendance and participation promotes the concepts of critical pedagogy in the classroom, particularly the concept of dialogue (Freire, 1998, 2014).

Second, I will discuss the concept of project work at Oduraa University in Ghana. Project work is also a student effort included in the remaining 60% of students' final grades (Olting'idi, 2017). All the participants affirmed that Oduraa University does an excellent job of making sure students engage in projects. Every class in the institution requires at least two projects, an



individual and a group project. Therefore, each course at Oduraa University has a project component to help students see how a theory can be applied in a real-life situation. To many of the student participants, critical thinking was a foreign concept until they enrolled at Oduraa University. However, with constant practice, they began to research and think analytical about the “what” and the “how” of situations and issues in the environment that needed solutions.

Students at Oduraa University receive the best of project work experience in both working as a team and working as an individual (Olting’idi, 2017). In most cases, students work on team projects so that they can exchange ideas and perspectives. However, the nature and complexity of the project may determine whether teamwork or individual work is the best choice. Students’ completion of projects promotes the concepts of critical pedagogy, particularly the concepts of problem-posing education and praxis (Freire, 1998, 2014).

Third, I will discuss the concept of class presentations at Oduraa University in Ghana. Class presentation is another student effort that is included in the remaining 60% of students’ final grades in the semester (Olting’idi, 2017). All the participants affirmed that students at Oduraa University are introduced to class presentations right from freshman year. Class presentations are required in every course and are either an individual or a group assignment. Class presentations teach students confidence, the art of public speaking, and the skill of using words wisely. Working with colleagues on class presentations enhances students’ social skills and ability to deal with people and complex situations. Also, through class presentations, students are able to grasp concepts and better understand course topics. The reason being that because students present on topics from class readings that everyone is familiar with, the presentations provide further illumination and understanding.

Additionally, there is another opportunity for students to do presentations in front of a broader audience. Students sometimes do presentations in front of the whole school, where they design presentation boards for their projects (Olting'idi, 2017). During such events, the university invites external individuals to interact with the projects, assess the projects, give ideas, and grade the projects. My class observations confirmed this information. I witnessed a project presentation workshop during my visit to Oduraa University. Students displayed their presentation boards and presented and explained their capstone projects to the audience.

Also, Oduraa University students in the last semester of their final year complete a final-year capstone project that they are mandated to present to the entire school (Olting'idi, 2017). Again, the presentation of final-year projects is open to the public. Thus, the university typically invites investors and prominent people in the industry who might be interested in the projects or the solutions to the problems the students have identified. Oduraa University believes that students need an education that hones their skills for a lifetime leadership career (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). Thus, the university maintains a connection between formal education, building human capital, and meeting industrial needs.

Fourth, I will discuss the concept of internships at Oduraa University in Ghana. Oduraa University provides its students with career services, such as resume and cover-letter writing seminars, counseling, and interviewing practice and feedback (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008). Ms. AA and Mr. Yaa confirmed that every year in March, the career services center organizes an event called Career Day, during which about 60-80 companies are invited to interact with students on campus. The career services center also in collaboration with employers in both the public and the private sector organize opportunities for internships during the long and short vacations. Although completing an internship is not a university requirement for graduation,

students appreciate the importance of having this hands-on experience. Students understand that internships are a way of demonstrating that aside class projects, they can implement what they have been taught. To Oduraa University students, internships are real-life applications of knowledge and working with people whose lives are affected by their decisions and actions. Opportunities for internships promote the concepts of critical pedagogy, particularly the concept of praxis (Freire, 1998, 2014).

Fifth, I will discuss some of the personal development opportunities at Oduraa University in Ghana. Oduraa University's goal is to raise a new generation of ethical, entrepreneurial leaders by advocating for students an all-rounded quality education (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). The commitment of the university's leadership and community to this goal is paramount. Also, the university understands that it cannot achieve this mission without the cooperation and support of its faculty and staff. Therefore, the university ensures that all loopholes or setbacks are taken care of promptly. For example, since the majority of the teachers did not go through the Oduraa University educational experience, the university tries to bridge the gap with workshops, seminars, and other interactive sessions.

Oduraa University organizes faculty development workshops for teachers where they are introduced to the Oduraa University way of teaching and learning (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). Oduraa University, in recent years, has introduced an annual faculty workshop during which the university brings in experts to engage faculty and orient them on various teaching and learning strategies. As maintained by Ms. AA, one of the study's participants, in 2017, the university invited Cliff Kussmaul to orient faculty on how to use the process-oriented guided inquiry learning model, popularly known as the POGIL model. The training workshop helped teachers to broaden their scope and knowledge on engaging students in the classroom.

Again, some of the faculty meetings are used as platforms to present new teaching and learning approaches so that teachers could learn and improve their crafts.

According to the study's participants, teachers at Oduraa University are extremely receptive to the assistance the institution provides through workshops and training. These teachers do an excellent job of conceptualizing and adapting the strategies to suit their courses. To these faculty, the responsibility of teaching is grave because they play a critical role in the formation of students. Knowing and accepting that they are modeling people for the future is essential to achieving practical results. Thus, these teachers see teaching beyond a means of livelihood. They focus on creating the motivation for students to learn, creating the environment for them to flourish, and creating the avenue for them to discover themselves and go beyond what teachers teach in the classroom.

Besides teachers, students also gain an additional self-development from the Oduraa University experience. Students in the years of coursework find out they have become more open-minded than they began freshman year. The problem-based curricula content creates an enabling environment for critical thinking and critical consciousness (Ajah, 2020; Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). As retained by Freire (1970, 1998), critical pedagogy, while raising the critical consciousness of students, also helps the students to develop an accurate perception of life conditions and experiences. All the study's participants affirmed that the problem-based curricula content indoctrinates students to become problem-solvers and to assess issues happening around critically rather than on the surface level. Thus, students learn to see issues differently and think differently.

Again, students at Oduraa University are more technologically entuned because of the constant exposure to technology. To ensure technological competence, Oduraa University

students are taught how to code and develop a technological understanding (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). The students also possess social skills that they develop from working in teams and interacting with one another on a regular basis. Again, the culture of maintaining an interactive classroom environment and presenting or leading topics in class builds students' confidence to the point that they are able to find their voice and speak when in the midst of other people. Adwoa, one of the student participants, noted that her experience at Oduraa University has made her more tolerant, patient, and humble. She has grown to understand that her ideas are not always right and that she needs people if she wants to succeed. These educational opportunities promote the concepts of critical pedagogy, particularly the concepts of problem-posing education, dialogue, teacher and student roles, and praxis (Freire, 1998, 2014).

Sixth, I will discuss some of the useful resources available to students at Oduraa University in Ghana. Students at Oduraa University have access to resources that facilitate their academic success and personal development (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). The participants confirmed that the university subscribes to online library resources, such as the New York Times, JSTOR, R-squared, Association for Computing Machinery Digital Library, Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Journal, Sage Journals, and many other services to help students to connect to the broader world in a better way. Therefore, students within the Oduraa University campus can assess these resources. They can look up research papers and journals in their fields for insights and ideas for their individual and group projects. The Oduraa University Library has both physical books and eBooks that students can access and use. Every student has a personal portal that they use to sign on to the library system to view and request for eBooks. Oduraa University students patronize Google and YouTube resources. According to Princess and

Miss X, two of the study's participants, YouTube is the go-to place for students when they do not understand an assignment or a topic for class because YouTube has vast content.

Also, students use CAMO, an eLearning platform, and have access to Microsoft Office and Wi-Fi to facilitate academic work and communication in general. Oduraa University students also use online video platforms such as Zoom and Skype for conference calls so that everybody can join meetings from different locations and still get interactive. Students usually use these platforms for group assignment meetings when they have to meet late into the night. These platforms facilitate meetings without any inconvenience for students that do not reside on campus.

Additionally, Oduraa University has a university generated email system for students, faculty, and staff of the institution. The participants confirmed that this mailing system is the primary medium of communication in the university. Information from the administration is disseminated to the school body through this medium. Students, therefore, understand the urgency in frequenting their emails because that is where all forms of communication are done. Correspondence between students and teachers are sent through this email. Also, the career service center sends students information about opportunities for conferences, careers, internships, or exchange programs through the school email (Olting'idi, 2017; SGSB, 2008).

Furthermore, Oduraa University also offers tutorial sessions to students (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). Students sign up as tutors for their junior course mates. As such, juniors can sign up to tutor sophomores and help them with their courses. The university again has paid tutor programs where students can enroll and receive tutoring from their peers. The university employs students in various subject areas to assist other students through this program. Aside from these formal forms of tutoring, some students reach out to friends or classmates for help

with their courses. In case any of these students' resources are not available, students can directly email teachers or faculty interns for assistance.

Moreover, teachers schedule office hours twice a week to meet with students (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). Teachers usually make office hours visit compulsory for students. For some teachers, students must come and see them in the office for a discussion at least once a week. Students, therefore, try to come up with questions to ask in order to facilitate meaningful discussions during office hours. All these measures, such as office hours, meeting with teachers once a week, play a role in informing the kind of interactions that happens in the classroom. These teacher-student interactions build familiarity that extends to the classroom. Thus, students are able to ease up and learn because they have a working relationship with teachers from the office hours visits.

Besides, teachers do not restrict students to the office hour times indicated in the syllabus. Students can stop by the office of a faculty or a faculty intern for assistance at any time. The participants confirmed that teachers and students sometimes extend classroom conversations to the office when the explanation is dragging out or taking all the class time. Sometimes teachers invite students to the office to continue an interesting conversation that started in the classroom. All these opportunities promote the concepts of critical pedagogy both inside and outside the classroom, particularly the concept of dialogue (Freire, 1998, 2014).

## **Implications**

### ***Implications for Theory/Scholarly Literature***

The study has implications for theory and scholarly literature in several ways. First, the study has added new perspectives to Freire's (1968) critical pedagogy. The research explored and shed light on the uniqueness of the instructional delivery methods in Oduraa University

using the concepts of problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, praxis, and dialogue. The study's findings support the concepts and principles of critical pedagogy. Many studies have supported the principles of critical pedagogy (Boegeman, 2013; Izadinia, 2011; Kareepadath, 2018; Ördem & Ulum, 2019; Rajesh, 2014). However, the current study adds a new piece to the body of literature from a unique, single case.

Second, the study has implications for future studies about the instructional delivery methods in institutions of higher education that promote student-centered learning from a qualitative perspective. Many scholars adopted different methodologies including, the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology to conduct research on student-centered learning (Adebayo et al., 2015; Ibrahim et al., 2015; Kaendler et al., 2015; Lin, 2015; Saville et al., 2012; Watanabe & Evans, 2015). However, this study does not only add to research from a qualitative perspective but also using a descriptive case study design as the qualitative subtype.

Third, the study has implications for expanding the limited research on the instructional delivery methods in Ghanaian institutions of higher education (French, 2009). As revealed in the literature review in Chapter 2, current instructional delivery methods practiced in the majority of tertiary institutions in Ghana still bear the remnants of British colonial education (MacBeath, 2010; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). For example, the classroom layouts, textbooks usage, and rigid timetables are British colonial education influences that are still being practiced. There is a dearth in the contemporary literature relative to the instructional delivery methods that could break this trend. Thus, this study contributes to the gap in the literature and expand the body of knowledge relative to teaching and learning strategies that discourage the traditional instructional method or banking concept of memorization and repetition of knowledge (Freire, 2008; Gutek, 2014; Rugut & Osman, 2013).



### ***Implications for Policy***

The study has implications for decision making and policy in several ways. First, the study findings present a report on new perspectives for educational policies based on data that is current and credible. The literature has established how education has been a priority in Ghana (MacBeath, 2010; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). However, there seems to be a challenge with designing and implementing a model of education that meets the expectations for national development (Arnot, 2008; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007). As such, many governments, since independence, have subjected education in Ghana to a series of reforms that never met the expectations of the people. The findings of this study present compelling arguments on new perspectives for educational policies that are appropriate for individual and national development.

Second, the research explored instructional delivery methods that encourage student-centered learning and are appropriate for educational development. Oduraa University has implemented a liberal arts curriculum to foster in students an entrepreneurial mindset, critical thinking, ethical leadership, and the ability to solve complex real-world problems (Ajah, 2020; Duthiers & Ellis, 2013). Through class projects and internships, the liberal arts core curriculum at Oduraa University challenges students to apply theory to practice and enhance their critical thinking and communication skills (Olting'idi, 2017; Times Higher Education, 2020). These innovative academic programs and strategies are elaborated through the study's findings. This study, therefore, provides resourceful information to college administrators in their curriculum and instructional decisions.

Third, the study has documented thick-rich data that may provide insight and understanding for educational policymakers. As qualitative methodology demands, the study's

findings present an in-depth, thick, rich descriptions of the teaching and learning process at Oduraa University and how these strategies are informed by the concepts of critical pedagogy (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Freire, 1968; Patton, 2015). In a country such as Ghana, this report is an invaluable document that departments of education, the Ministry of Education, and other educational bodies may find useful when making policies in the field. Such educational policies may also become beneficial to other countries in the sub-region and beyond that are facing similar challenges with curriculum and instruction at the tertiary level.

### ***Implications for Practice***

The current research is pertinent to the practice of quality instruction and learning strategies. Literature (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009; MacBeath, 2010; Ngnenbe, 2018; Sisimwo et al., 2014; Yusuf & Oladimeji, 2015) and personal, educational experience have indicated that the instructional delivery methods practiced in many institutions of higher education in Ghana are cause for concern. This study has implications for practice in several ways. First, the study will serve as a reference base for universities in Ghana, the sub-region, and beyond for practicing quality instructional delivery methods that reflect in the academic excellence and career competence of students.

Second, this research study will be valuable to institutions of higher education that seek to address educational issues relative to curriculum design and instructional delivery methods. Many institutions struggle with the unilateral approach with an emphasis on teaching instead of learning (Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; Sisimwo et al., 2014). There is also a heavy reliance on structured curriculums with little or no room for student-student or teacher-student interactions (Awidi, 2008; Badu-Nyarko & Torto, 2014; French, 2009). Thus, the study presents new perspectives that could be explored by these institutions.

Third, the study by exploring the instructional delivery methods at Oduraa University identified the strategies that have worked and those that have not been helpful, thereby providing other universities with guidance when adopting and implementing these techniques. Conducting a qualitative study made it possible to dig deep into the basics of the instructional delivery methods practiced at Oduraa University. Therefore, the study's findings revealed the strategies that work for all the stakeholders in the educational process, including students, teachers, and the administrative staff.

### ***Unexpected Study Outcomes***

The study revealed a couple of unexpected participants' responses and research findings. First, existing literature has established that the clash of personality differences is a common occurrence in teamwork (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012), as group members may not get along with one another, resulting in poor learning outcomes (Saville et al., 2012). These studies went on to argue that some students may have the tendencies to dominate group processes leaving others intimidated and unable to contribute their opinions and ideas (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012), and the group's general performance is affected depending on how the dominated students respond to such attitudes (Ibrahim et al., 2015; Saville et al., 2012). A participant's response in this study, however, revealed unexpected findings with regard to the clash of personality differences. The data revealed that students who are outspoken or very good at public speaking tend to show off during general classroom discussions. These students would raise their hands during discussions, present their views, and then go in-depth, giving evidence to support their claim. This behavior tends to intimidate other students who are not very confident in speaking in front of the class. However, this confident personality becomes valuable and positive when it comes to group assignments. Because these students are not only confident but

also knowledgeable, they provide the group with many insights. Instead of taking over the group and overshadowing other members, they are more like the critical thinkers who ensure that everybody's efforts are acknowledged. According to this participant's response, the different personalities may be a downside when it comes to general class discussions. However, when it comes to group assignments, they are beneficial because students learn a lot from different personalities.

The findings also revealed that the degree of classroom interactions differ from course to course. While the majority of the student participants indicated that they played a major role in classroom decisions relative to teaching and learning, one of the students expressed that he had never encountered a situation where the teacher asked students for their input on how to teaching a class. This student was used to teachers having a preplanned schedule for lessons, making it difficult for students to have input. This response was unique and inconsistent with the majority of the responses. All the other students discussed a more democratic classroom where teachers and students make teaching and learning decisions together. Princess, one of the student participants, narrated a typical scenario from one of her computer science courses:

The lecturer told us how he wanted the class to go and asked us how we want the class to go. Then we deliberated over it, and we both reached an agreement that we were both comfortable with. At a point time in the semester, he said okay what we agreed was not working for him based on our attitudes. So, he wanted us to change it. So, we had a discussion again, and we came to another agreement on how we both wanted the class to go. So, the class setting is more like let us talk about it. Let us decide. Let us see what works for each other.

More also, it has become evident that students at Oduraa University get different learning experiences depending on their program of study. Kwame, a fourth-year Business Administration student, shared,

Teachers in a lot of the nonfinance courses do a very good job of teaching students. They make it interesting. They make it fun. They make it easily relatable. They use projects as a way to practicalize the contents they have taught. I think they do a very good job of keeping the lessons very lively just to ensure that the students are interested in what they are talking about and are not bored out of their minds.

Kwame has come to appreciate the way the nonfinance courses have been taught in the last four years. He wishes he had had the same experience with the finance courses from freshman year, but that has not been the case. Most of the finance courses were taught in a hypothetical sense, and the teachers barely made any applications. This instructional delivery strategy was not favorable to many of the students. Giving how difficult finance could be, more practical sessions would have helped Kwame and his colleagues to understand concepts better. Kwame explained

How the finance courses have been taught in the past definitely had a detrimental quality on the courses. I think that giving that finance is a major part of our degree it is important that the people who are teaching finance are not only competent in their knowledge but in the way they can deliver the information.

Kwame, in his fourth year now, has begun to enjoy his finance classes. He eagerly noted,

This year, my final year, the lecturers we have had in finance have done their best to improve students' understanding of finance courses by making the concepts practical. These practical opportunities give us a good appreciation for what we are learning in class. I would say this year has been quite good.

Teaching and learning at Oduraa University have been exciting for Kwame. However, it has been exciting in certain courses more than others. He only wished he had had a similar experience across his courses.

Deducing from Kwame's responses, his experiences in the finance courses were an indication of inefficient instructional delivery strategies being implemented. Instructional delivery methods are essential components of education (Mulhearn et al., 2017; Petrina, 2007). Instructional methods involve decisions that inform what is taught in the classroom, how it is organized for learning, and how both teachers and students assess learning (Cruikshank et al., 2012; Moore, 2015). Instruction is the complement of curriculum, and teaching or instructional methods are the complements of content (Alstete & Beutell, 2016; Cruikshank et al., 2012; Petrina, 2007). Therefore, these principles, the relationships between teachers and students and among students, the conditions of teaching and learning, the processes involved, the causes and effects of the processes, and the feedback concerning the teaching and learning experience, are crucial elements to implementing efficient instructional delivery strategies (Moore, 2015; Petrina, 2007; Romine & Sadler, 2016).

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study explored how the concepts of critical pedagogy inform the instructional delivery methods practiced at Oduraa University in Ghana. Critical pedagogy is a teaching approach that empowers students with critical thinking and critical action, leading to the transformation of society. Therefore, critical pedagogy is essential to individual and national development. Future research may consider replicating this study in diverse geographical locations and institutions to determine how the philosophy is informing teaching and learning in these different contexts.

The study's major findings may serve as the first step to extending the research on dialogue, problem-posing education, teacher and student roles, and praxis in other institutions of higher education in Ghana. There are certain key elements in the dominant instructional methods in Ghana, such as the rigid curriculum with limited or no discussions and interaction in the classroom (Kumar, 1991; Sefa Dei & Opini, 2007) that call for further research and investigations. This traditional instructional method or banking concept attributes of the British colonial education legacy (Arnot, 2008; Kumar, 1991) present an uncharted area for future research.

Freire (1998) established that dialogue is the foundation of critical education. Freire further noted that “without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education” (Freire, 1970, p. 73). In the current study, I noticed the interrelationship among the four concepts of critical pedagogy and how each concept relies on dialogue to function. Future research may conduct a correlational study focusing on the relationship and causality among the four constructs using the quantitative methodology.

### **Limitations and Reflexivity**

Time constraints may serve as limitations to the data collected in this study (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2018). The data collection was conducted within a specific timeframe because I needed to travel across continents to the research site (Simon, 2011). Therefore, data that were collected was only a snapshot of events happening within that interval of time I was present on the site. As such, the data may reveal findings that are not a complete reflection of the phenomenon (Simon, 2011; Simon & Goes, 2018).

Additionally, the study's small sample size due to the choice of methodology may present certain limitations (Patton, 2015; Simon, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). I recruited 11 participants,

eight students, two teachers, and one administrator per Creswell and Poth's (2018) argument about researching a few participants and collecting extensive data in a qualitative study. The focus was on generating thick, rich data rather than the number of cases (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2015). As such, the study's findings may be difficult to generalize to a broader population (Smith et al., 2009).

Pursuing a doctoral degree and conducting an empirical study has been complex yet fulfilling. As a student aspiring to work in academia, I have gained invaluable perspectives from this research journey. I have read extensively on the qualitative methodology and performed an in-depth review of the literature on the study's topic. I have learned that adequate preparation is key to conducting a successful thick-rich qualitative inquiry. As a professional, I have a broad and deeper understanding of critical pedagogy and how to incorporate critical pedagogical strategies in the classroom for teaching and learning. As a scholar, I have learned that research is not exhaustive. Research is a continuous process of discovering new information and adding to the body of knowledge. I look forward to extending my research on curriculum and instruction and contributing my bit to the community of scholars.

Furthermore, there are some approaches that worked and others that did not work so well in this research journey. First, conceptualizing and designing the study within a framework was an approach that worked. The study's problem evolved from the philosophy of critical pedagogy. Also, I developed the study's purpose statement and research questions from the critical pedagogy conceptual framework. This approach clearly defined the scope of the study for easy execution. Second, I realized that effective communication with my dissertation committee was a helpful approach in ensuring that we were always on the same page in all aspects of the doctoral journey. Third, I found it helpful when I discussed and brainstormed ideas with my colleagues.



Having individuals who understood the challenges of the doctoral process created a support system. Fourth, I realized that it is good to make allowances for unforeseen contingencies in the timeline for a research study because plans change. In hindsight, I would have liked to have spent a longer period in the field for data collection. Spending more time in the field to collect data could have yielded a more in-depth insight into the phenomenon. However, traveling across continents to the research site and meeting the dissertation deadline did not make it possible. I would, therefore, consider a longer period for data collection in my next empirical research.

### **Chapter Summary**

The final chapter of the study discussed the study's summary and major findings, conclusions, and interpretations of the findings. Subsequently, the chapter discussed the study's implications to theory, policy, practice, and unexpected study outcomes. The chapter further addressed the suggestions made for future research, the study's limitations, and the researcher's reflexivity.

This study explored and shed light on the instructional delivery methods practiced at Oduraa University in Ghana through the lens of critical pedagogy. Critical pedagogy was an appropriate conceptual framework for exploring instructional delivery methods designed to stimulate transformative learning experience inside and outside the classroom (Freire, 1970; McLaren, 2003; Zokaeieh & Alamdari, 2018). Oduraa University has established an interactive learning environment where teachers and students learn and create knowledge together. The university's problem-based curricula content allows a conducive atmosphere for students to speak with authority and question the status quo (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008). Through creative assignments, such as projects, group work, and presentations, students are able to discover their voices and their capacity to take action that leads to the betterment of society (SGSB, 2008;

Times Higher Education, 2020). The Oduraa University education teaches students how to connect their thoughts to their actions through substantial arguments about reality while finding practical and progressive ways of changing the world (SGSB, 2008; Times Higher Education, 2020).

The educational focus of Oduraa University is on solving problems rather than accepting them (African Leadership Academy, n.d.; SGSB, 2008). The leadership of Oduraa University believes that students need liberal arts education to hone the skills for a lifetime leadership career. Thus, students at Oduraa University are taught to learn how to think critically, how to curiously approach problems with problem-solving attitudes, and to ensure technological competence, how to code, and develop a technological understanding (Duthiers & Ellis, 2013; Olting'idi, 2017). With this entirely different mental approach to life and educational experience, students of Oduraa University excel academically as well as professionally (Ajah, 2020; SGSB, 2008).

The study's findings present compelling arguments on new perspectives for educational research, policies, and practice that are appropriate for individual and national development. The innovative academic programs and strategies that have been elaborated in the study provide resourceful information that is current and credible. This study is going to serve as a curriculum and instruction reference base for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners in the field.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A: Oduraa University IRB Approval**



Dear Joan Nkansah,

**Project:** Exploring the Concepts of Critical Pedagogy in a Private University in Ghana

**IRB Number:** 0402019

Thank you for your application to [REDACTED] IRB committee. Upon careful human subject review of the work above, I am pleased to confirm that your project **has been approved**. You can proceed with your study.

Also, please take note of the following:

Approval is valid till date **2020-03-20**. After which another review will be required if study is to continue.

- Any substantive modification after review decision must be brought to the attention of the committee by the supervisor or investigator(s) and may warrant further ethical review

Regards  
David Sampah  
IRB Chair

*Notice of Confidentiality*

*The content of this email may be privileged and are confidential. It may not be disclosed to or used by anyone other than the intended person, nor copied in any way. If received in error, please notify the sender and then delete it from your system. Thank you.*

**Appendix B: UWF IRB Approval**



Research Administration and Engagement  
11000 University Parkway  
Building 11, Office 110  
Pensacola, FL 32514

Ms. Joan Nkansah

November 08, 2019

Dear Ms. Nkansah:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Research Participants Protection has completed its review of your proposal number IRB 2020-091 titled, "Exploring the Concepts of Critical Pedagogy in a Private University in Western-Africa," as it relates to the protection of human participants used in research, and granted approval for you to proceed with your study on 11-08-2019. As a research investigator, please be aware of the following:

- \* You will immediately report to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to human participants.
- \* You acknowledge and accept your responsibility for protecting the rights and welfare of human research participants and for complying with all parts of 45 CFR Part 46, the UWF IRB Policy and Procedures, and the decisions of the IRB. You may view these documents on the Research and Sponsored Programs web page at <http://research.uwf.edu>. You acknowledge completion of the IRB ethical training requirements for researchers as attested in the IRB application.
- \* You will ensure that legally effective informed consent is obtained and documented. If written consent is required, the consent form must be signed by the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative. A copy is to be given to the person signing the form and a copy kept for your file.
- \* You will promptly report any proposed changes in previously approved human participant research activities to Research and Sponsored Programs. The proposed changes will not be initiated without IRB review and approval, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the participants.
- \* **You are responsible for reporting progress of approved research to Research and Sponsored Programs at the end of the project period 11-01-2020. If the data phase of your project continues beyond the approved end date, you must receive an extension approval from the IRB.**
- \* If using electronic communication for your study, you will first obtain approval from the authority listed on the following web page:  
<https://uwf.edu/offices/institutional-communications/resources/broadcast-distribution-standards/>.

Good luck in your research endeavors. If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact Research and Sponsored Programs at 850-857-6203 or [irb@uwf.edu](mailto:irb@uwf.edu).

Sincerely,

Dr. Matthew Schwartz, Assistant Vice President  
Research Administration

Dr. Carla Thompson, Chair, IRB for  
Human Research Participant Protection



**Appendix C: Human Subjects Research Training Certificate**



**Appendix D: Informed Consent and Recorded Media Addendum**

## **Informed Consent**

**Title of Research:** Exploring the Concepts of Critical Pedagogy in a Private University in Western-Africa

**Researcher:** Joan Nkansaa Nkansah

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this study, you should understand what the research is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

### **Explanation of Study**

This study is being conducted to explore instructional delivery methods practiced at [REDACTED] University in Ghana. The study will explore and shed light on the uniqueness of the instructional delivery methods in [REDACTED] University.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked a series of questions about the instructional delivery methods in your institution. Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may leave the study at any time. There will be no penalty should you decide to stop participating in the study. Your participation in the study will last approximately 45-60 minutes.

### **Risks and Discomforts**

No risks or discomforts are anticipated.

### **Benefits**

This study will shed light on the uniqueness of the instructional delivery methods in [REDACTED] University, which has not only set the institution apart from other universities in the sub-region but has also reflected in the academic excellence of its students. Additionally, you will be given the opportunity tell your story from your individual perspective.

### **Confidentiality and Records**

Information generated in support of this study will be kept confidential. Data will be recorded without possibility of identification. Recorded interviews and field notes will be stored in a secure, locked laptop which can only be accessed by the researcher. Recordings will be destroyed two years after data collection.

### **Compensation**

No compensation.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact the researcher at [jnn9@students.uwf.edu](mailto:jnn9@students.uwf.edu) or the chair Dr. Mark Malisa at [mmalisa@uwf.edu](mailto:mmalisa@uwf.edu).

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact [REDACTED] University HSRC at irb@[REDACTED].edu.gh or University of West Florida IRB at irb@uwf.edu.

**Consent**

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you understand [REDACTED] University/University of West Florida has no funds set aside for any injuries you might receive as a result of participating in this study
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you may leave the study at any time. If you decide to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name\_\_\_\_\_

### Recorded Media Addendum to Informed Consent

**For use with general informed consent documents for studies that involve audio, video, photographic, or any other recording (hereafter referred to as recording) of research subjects.**

Project Title: *Exploring the Concepts of Critical Pedagogy in a Private University in Western-Africa* Date: 10-29-2019

Investigator: Joan Nkansaa Nkansah

Email Address: jnn9@students.uwf.edu

Phone: 740-331-9653

#### **Description and Purpose of Recording:**

The researcher would also like to take audio recordings during the interview, which will be used for accurate presentation of your participation in the research.

#### **Confidentiality:**

Information generated from the audio recordings will be kept confidential. Data will be recorded without possibility of identification. Recorded interviews will be stored in a secure, locked laptop which can only be accessed by the researcher. Recordings will be destroyed two years after data collection.

#### **Voluntary Consent:**

By signing below, you are granting to the researcher the right to use information from your interview recording in presenting this research. No use of recorded media will be made other than for the reasons stated herein.

Your participation is voluntary and your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

You may discontinue participation and withdraw this consent at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any questions, please contact:

The investigator at [jnn9@students.uwf.edu](mailto:jnn9@students.uwf.edu)

University of West Florida Institutional Review Board  
11000 University Parkway, Building 11  
Pensacola, FL 32514  
(850) 857-6378  
[irb@uwf.edu](mailto:irb@uwf.edu)

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| <b>Subject's Printed Name &amp; Signature</b>      | <b>Date</b> |
| <b>Investigator's Printed Name &amp; Signature</b> | <b>Date</b> |

## **Appendix E: Interview Protocol**



## **Interview Protocol**

### ***Introduction:***

1. Hello. My name is Joan Nkansah. I am doing a research on teaching and learning, and I would like to ask you a few questions. Will that be okay?

### ***Participant selection criteria:***

2. Can you answer the following questions about yourself?
  - a. Teacher participant: Your age range and how long you have been teaching in the school.
  - b. Student participant: Your age range and how long you have been studying in the school.
  - c. Staff participant: Your age range and how long you have been working in the school

### ***Anonymity:***

3. As a way of respecting your privacy and protecting your identity, I cannot use your real name in my report. How would you like me to call you for the purpose of this research?

### ***Dialogue:***

In the context of this research, dialogue means classroom communication between the student and the teacher.

4. How do you engage in dialogue in the classroom?
5. How has dialogue informed the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning?
6. How does dialogue play out on a typical day in class?
7. What other teaching and learning methods have you experienced inside and outside the classroom would you say have been informed by the concept of dialogue?
8. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experience with dialogue?

### ***Praxis:***

In the context of this research, praxis means transforming theory into practice.

9. What has been your experience with praxis?
10. How has praxis informed the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning in the classroom?
11. What other teaching and learning methods have you experienced inside and outside the classroom would you have been informed by the concept of praxis?
12. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experience with praxis?

### ***Problem- posing education:***

In the context of this research, problem-posing education means the form of education in which students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues around them.

13. What has been your experience with problem-posing education?
14. How has problem-posing education informed the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning?
15. What other teaching and learning methods have you experienced inside and outside the classroom would you say have been informed by problem-posing education?
16. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experience with problem-posing education?

***Teacher and student roles:***

In the context of this research, teacher and student roles mean the teacher and the student are both subjects who control the educational process and thereby develop knowledge together.

17. What has been your experience with teacher and student roles?
18. How has teacher and student roles informed the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning?
19. What other teaching and learning opportunities have you experienced inside and outside the classroom would you say have been informed by teacher and student roles?
20. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about your experience with teacher and student roles?

***Conclusion:***

21. Is there anything you would want to add?
22. Thank you for your time, and I wish you the very best in your endeavors.

**Appendix F: Observation Protocol**

## **Observation Protocol**

### ***Dialogue:***

In the context of this research, dialogue means classroom communication between the student and the teacher.

1. How do the student and the teacher engage in dialogue?
2. How does dialogue inform the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning?
3. What other teaching and learning methods do you observe inside and/or outside the classroom would you say have been informed by the concept of dialogue?
4. Is there anything else you observe relative to classroom communication between the student and the teacher?

### ***Praxis:***

In the context of this research, praxis means transforming theory into practice.

5. How do the teacher and the student transform theory into practice?
6. How does praxis inform the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning in the classroom?
7. What other teaching and learning methods do you observe inside and/or outside the classroom would you say have been informed by the concept of praxis?
8. Is there anything else you observe relative to transforming theory into practice?

### ***Problem-posing education:***

In the context of this research, problem-posing education means the form of education in which students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues around them.

9. How do the teacher and the student engage in problem-posing education?
10. How does problem-posing education inform the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning?
11. What other teaching and learning methods do you observe inside and/or outside the classroom would you say have been informed by the concept of problem-posing education?
12. Is there anything else you observe relative to problem-posing education?

### ***Teacher and student roles:***

In the context of this research, teacher and student roles mean the teacher and the student are both subjects who control the educational process and thereby develop knowledge together.

13. How do the teacher and the student assume the roles as subjects in charge of the educational process?
14. How do teacher and student roles inform the plans and processes (formal or informal) for teaching and learning?
15. What other teaching and learning methods do you observe inside and/or outside the classroom would you say have been informed by the concept of teacher and student roles?
16. Is there anything else you observe relative to the teacher and student develop knowledge together?

**Appendix G: Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - VREP©**

### Survey/Interview Validation Rubric for Expert Panel - VREP®

By Marilyn K. Simon with input from Jacquelyn White

<http://dissertationrecipes.com/>

| Criteria              | Operational Definitions  | Score   |  |   |  | Questions NOT meeting standard (List page and question number) and need to be revised. Please use the comments and suggestions section to recommend revisions. |
|-----------------------|--|---|--|---|--|--|
|                       |  | 1=Not Acceptable (major modifications needed) | 2=Below Expectations (some modifications needed) | 3=Meets Expectations (no modifications needed but could be improved with minor changes) | 4=Exceeds Expectations (no modifications needed) |  |
|                       |  | 1   | 2  | 3   | 4  |  |
| Clarity               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questions are direct and specific.</li> <li>Only one question is asked at a time.</li> <li>The participants can understand what is being asked.</li> <li>There are no <i>double-barreled</i> questions (two questions in one).</li> </ul> |   |  |   |  |  |
| Wordiness             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions are concise.</li> <li>There are no unnecessary words.</li> </ul>  |   |  |   |  |  |
| Negative Wording      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions are asked using the affirmative (e.g., Instead of asking, "Which methods are not used?", the researcher asks, "Which methods <i>are</i> used?")</li> </ul>  |   |  |   |  |  |
| Overlapping Responses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No response covers more than one choice.</li> <li>All possibilities are considered.</li> <li>There are no ambiguous questions.</li> </ul>   |   |  |   |  |  |
| Balance               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questions are unbiased and do not lead the participants to a response. The questions are asked using a neutral tone.</li> </ul>   |   |  |   |  |  |
| Use of Jargon         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The terms used are understandable by the target population.</li> <li>There are no clichés or hyperbole in the wording of the questions.</li> </ul>  |   |  |   |  |  |
| Appropriateness       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The choices listed allow participants to</li> </ul>   |   |  |   |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| of Responses Listed                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>respond appropriately.</li> <li>The responses apply to all situations or offer a way for those to respond with unique situations.</li> </ul>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Use of Technical Language                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The use of technical language is minimal and appropriate.</li> <li>All acronyms are defined.</li> </ul>   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Application to Praxis                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questions asked relate to the daily practices or expertise of the potential participants.</li> </ul>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Relationship to Problem                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questions are sufficient to resolve the problem in the study.</li> <li>The questions are sufficient to answer the research questions.</li> <li>The questions are sufficient to obtain the purpose of the study.</li> </ul>      |  |  |  |  |  |
| Measure of Concept: A: (Dialogue)                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interview adequately measures this concept. <i>[dialogue means classroom communication between the student and the teacher]</i></li> </ul>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Measure of Concept: B: (Praxis)                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interview adequately measures this concept. <i>[praxis means transforming theory into practice]</i></li> </ul>  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Measure of Construct: C: (Problem-posing education)  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interview adequately measures this concept. <i>[problem-posing education means the form of education in which students develop knowledge by questioning the status quo and other problematic issues around them]</i></li> </ul> |  |  |  |  |  |
| Measure of Construct: D: (Teacher and student roles) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interview adequately measures this concept. <i>[teacher and student roles mean the teacher and the student are both subjects who control the educational process and thereby develop knowledge together]</i></li> </ul>         |  |  |  |  |  |

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**Comments and Suggestions**