

Graphic Organizers as a Power Tool: A Study Examining Critical Literacy Development among Primary Learners in Rural Ghana

Lakia M. Scott, *Yale University*, lakia.scott@yale.edu
Jessica McKamie, *Baylor University*, jess.mckamie@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the role of repetition and bilingual instructional strategies in fostering critical literacy in multilingual classrooms. Classroom observations were conducted in dual-language immersion settings, where English was used as the academic language and Twi as the native/social language. The findings reveal that while repetition is a common strategy, it is insufficient for promoting higher-order cognitive skills such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, which are essential for critical literacy. The study highlights the effectiveness of graphic organizers in supporting students' comprehension and engagement with academic texts in English, demonstrating their potential as a cost-effective tool in resource-limited environments. The research also underscores the importance of integrating both languages in bilingual education to enhance cognitive development. Based on these findings, the study recommends that educators move beyond rote learning to incorporate strategies that foster critical thinking, and that professional development programs focus on bilingual instructional practices and the use of low-cost tools like graphic organizers. The implications of this research extend to bilingual education, critical literacy, and the development of cost-effective teaching strategies in multilingual classrooms.

Key Words

critical literacy, graphic organizers, dual-language immersion, cognitive development, community-engaged scholarship

Preferred citation

Scott, L. M., & McKamie, J. (2024, December 31). Title: Subtitle. *Graphic organizers as a power tool: A study examining critical literacy development among primary learners in rural Ghana*, 1(2), 40-51.
<https://doi.org/10.70144/ls010204cs>

In contemporary educational research, community-engaged scholarship serves as a vital framework for addressing systemic challenges by fostering partnerships that prioritize mutual benefit and contextual relevance. Rooted in principles of collaboration, reciprocity, and shared knowledge creation, this approach bridges academic inquiry and community needs, ensuring that research outcomes

are both meaningful and actionable (Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). This study exemplifies these principles by engaging with teachers and students in multilingual classrooms to explore effective literacy practices within resource-limited settings. By integrating locally relevant pedagogical strategies, such as the use of Twi alongside English, and introducing graphic organizers as tools to promote critical thinking, the research aligns

with the dual goals of advancing scholarly understanding and addressing community-defined priorities. Such an approach underscores the transformative potential of community-engaged scholarship in fostering educational equity and innovation, particularly in contexts where traditional resources are limited. Through this lens, the study not only contributes to the academic discourse on literacy development but also provides a model for how research can actively support and empower local communities to achieve sustainable educational improvements (Sandmann et al., 2016).

To provide greater context, Ghana is a country in western Africa, with the southern border resting on the Gulf of Guinea. In 1957, Ghana became the first Sub-Saharan country to gain independence from the British (Central Intelligence Agency, 2023), inspiring other colonies across Africa to follow suit (BBC News, 2023). Recently, Ghana has turned its attention to the issue of country-wide illiteracy issues, considering that a recent report showed 7.9 million persons in the country aged 6 and older are illiterate (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022). A 2023 estimate puts the population at nearly 33.84 million (Central Intelligence Agency, 2023), which means that roughly 23.34 percent of the population is illiterate. As of 2020, world literacy rates were at 87 percent (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022), which means that Ghana is more than 10 percent behind the world average. Ghana is taking intentional strides to close this gap. In 2022, Ghana participated in their first International Literacy Day, the focus of which was “Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces for Quality, Equitable, and Inclusive Education for All” (Adams, 2022). In line with this focus, UNESCO’s Director-General emphasized the “need for more investment in education and increased international aid, along with more open, free, and high-quality educational resources” (Adams, 2022, para. 26).

These efforts tend to be concentrated in more densely populated areas, where it is reasonable to expect interventions to have the greatest impact. In rural Ghana, however—such as the village of Kyerekrom, where our study takes place—literacy

levels are even further behind the country’s average. This is due to several factors, including the facts that education after primary school is not mandatory, families often cannot afford secondary school, and older children typically help bear the financial burden of the family by working instead of going to school (UNICEF, 2013).

Area of Focus

Literacy rates in Ghana are below the international average, with rural literacy rates falling even lower than the country’s average (Ghana Statistical Service, 2022). It is important to note that English is the official language of Ghana (Darrah, 2023), but it is not the primary language spoken in Kyerekrom. More common is the Twi language, while English is taught in school in third grade and beyond. This means that our study with fourth through sixth grade students was done with children who have been speaking, reading, and writing in English for one to three years.

When our team reached the rural village of Kyerekrom and spent some time observing fourth through sixth grade classes at a local primary school, it was immediately evident that the values associated with pedagogical literacy practices were different from what we had previously learned about the nature of teaching and learning. A lack of funding and resources in this rural vicinity challenged pedagogical innovation, often resulting in the teachers relying on rote learning rather than building critical literacy skills beyond tacit and tangible learning styles. Sound pedagogical teaching without the resources is difficult, but not impossible.

We determined to approach the situation with an asset-based view, rather than a deficit-based view (Weiner, 2006). We considered what the teachers and schools had at their disposal, ways students are inclined to learn and retain knowledge, and strategies of teaching and learning that are easy to implement with minimal impact on a teacher’s workload. We formulated the question, “In what ways can teachers contribute to enhanced literacy experiences in order to promote secondary literacy development for young readers in Ghana?” We then tested some options and

discussed their effectiveness with the teachers and students of rural Ghana.

Literature Review

As research continues to articulate, low levels of adult literacy and poor adult attitudes about reading can be clearly linked to low levels of children's literacy (Wagner & Spratt, 1988; Gadsden, 1995; Carroll, 2013; van Bergen et al., 2015; Nkansah, 2022). As children with low literacy skills become adults with low literacy skills, they are less likely to complete their education, get jobs they want, and be involved in the community than those with stronger literacy skills (Osseo-Asare, 2021, p. 2). Breaking the cycle by engaging students in enticing literacy practices they are willing to practice, even when it is not academically required, could make a major difference in the village's literacy rates.

Armed with this motivation, we must next ask the question: What is literacy? Is it the ability to read and write, or the ability to read and write in English? Language policies in Ghana have been inconsistent from when the country gained independence in 1957 to the writing of this paper. Different policies, lasting anywhere from two years to 32 years, shifted between requiring primary schools to teach in English only or allowing classes to be taught in local languages (Osseo-Asare, 2021). The most recent policy, beginning in 2009, promotes bilingualism: students are expected to learn English, but local languages—in the case of the village we served, Twi, the native language of Ghana—are also permitted in schools (Osseo-Asare, 2021, p. 83). Even though Twi may be spoken in schools, it is more difficult to procure texts in Twi than in English. Literacy, therefore, seems to be measured in terms of a person being literate *in English* rather than literate at all. The focus on literacy, in this context, must help students increase their literacy development in the English language.

What is a literacy practice that teachers in Kyerekrom could establish, given the funds and resources at their disposal, to promote the English literacy development of their students? Graphic organizers seemed a logical choice. Graphic organizers are tools that have successfully increased reading

comprehension (DiCecco & Gleason, 2002; Xiangying, & Grabe, 2007; Manoli & Papadopoulou, 2012; Darmawan, 2013; Vásquez & Coudin, 2018), especially for students learning English as a second language (Öztürk, 2012; Praveen & Rajan, 2013; Yanhui, 2013; Heidarifard, 2014). In fact, Goldenberg (2013) listed graphic organizers as a method of instruction that is used specifically with the goal of “facilitat[ing] the learning of grade-level academic content and skills for students being instructed in English but who have limited proficiency in the language” (p. 6). Given that English is not the first language of the students in Kyerekrom, the research allows us to claim with confidence that graphic organizers would be an effective tool to promote student literacy development.

As previously addressed, the students we worked with have limited access to texts, whether in Twi or in English. This means that they are less likely to have the autonomy to choose books, or even have books available, that naturally appeal to them (Stoffelsma, 2018). A possible solution is to provide opportunities for students to interact with interesting reading material, regardless of whether the student would have chosen the text organically. It follows logically that graphic organizers could be used to increase student interest in texts that they did not choose. This is increasingly evident when you consider that graphic organizers have historically proven to be effective, not just for increasing the comprehension skills of students learning English as a second language, but also for increasing student creativity and interest (Praveen & Rajan, 2013).

Theoretical Framework

Critical literacy is a pedagogical approach rooted in critical theory, emphasizing the analysis and critique of texts to uncover underlying power dynamics, social inequities, and cultural biases. It challenges readers to go beyond surface-level comprehension and engage with the socio-political contexts of texts. Grounded in the works of Freire (1970), critical literacy empowers individuals to question dominant narratives, fostering critical consciousness and transformative action. By interrogating whose voices are amplified or

marginalized, this framework equips learners to become active participants in their sociocultural landscapes.

In this study, critical literacy serves as both a theoretical lens and a methodological approach to examine how participants interact with texts in diverse educational settings. By applying critical literacy, the research investigates how learners engage with texts that reflect or challenge societal norms, particularly in multicultural or multilingual contexts. This approach aligns with the study's goal of understanding how educational practices can disrupt inequities and promote inclusive, empowering pedagogies. Critical literacy not only provides a framework for analyzing textual interactions but also guides the study's design in fostering dialogic and participatory learning environments.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated the transformative potential of critical literacy in educational contexts. For instance, Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) explored how critical literacy practices in classrooms encouraged students to challenge societal stereotypes and advocate for social justice. Similarly, Vasquez (2010) examined how young children engaged in critical literacy activities to question gender roles in children's literature, showcasing its applicability across age groups. These studies highlight the capacity of critical literacy to foster critical thinking and agency among learners, making it a relevant and robust framework for this research.

This study builds on existing research by extending critical literacy to a novel context—classrooms of linguistic difference and rapid transitions—and examining its impact on learners' ability to navigate and critique complex sociocultural landscapes. By situating critical literacy within primary school settings among emerging English learners, the study contributes to the growing body of literature that underscores the importance of equipping learners with tools to analyze and challenge inequitable systems. It further aligns with calls for educational practices that prioritize equity, inclusion, and cultural

responsiveness, offering actionable insights for practitioners and policymakers.

Methods

This study was designed as a narrative case study. Case study is a form of interpretive research (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 2009) that allows us to analyze the experiences of the teachers, students, and visiting teachers who participated in this study. Narrative inquiry is a methodological approach concerned with the lived experiences, perceptions, and interpretations of the study's participants. Our analysis, therefore, was informed by Polkinghorne's (1995) definition of narrative inquiry which "uses paradigm thinking to create descriptions of themes that hold across stories or taxonomies of types of stories, and narrative analysis" (p. 31). In this way, we were able to analyze observations, interviews, and classroom artifacts for perceptual triangulation (Farquhar et al., 2020), which is "knowledge generated through multiple data sources and how this knowledge is framed by the perceptions of actors" (p. 164).

Our participants were the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students and teachers from a rural private catholic primary school in Ghana. For this study, we took observation data from a total of 200 students and 15 teachers before the intervention. Of these 200 students, we only took interview data from the students who could communicate fluently with the interviewers in English. In addition to this, there were twelve visiting teachers that came from a Texas university, whose observations and interviews added to the data of this study.

Our data was taken from three sources: observations, interviews, and classroom artifacts. The observations were done before any intervention took place. In this way, the visiting teachers were able to get a feel for classroom management, what pedagogical practices they noticed, what similarities and differences they recognized compared to their own experiences in United States (US) schools, and how they would adjust their own teaching practices as a result of what they observed. After the intervention—reading a book and completing graphic organizers—a

handful of students from each class were randomly selected for an interview about their experiences. The classroom artifacts included the two graphic organizers that each student completed, titled “Questioning the Author” and “Sketch to Stretch.”

Findings

Findings from Classroom Observations

The classroom observations generally contributed to four initial categories: general observations on teaching strategies, repetition as a primary teaching strategy, Twi vs. English usage, and available resources. The comments below are taken from the written observations of visiting teachers.

Observations on Teaching Strategies

- “As she was writing something down, she asked students what comes next.”
- “She underlined the vocab on the board.”
- “The teacher... just did question-answer responses.”
- “The teacher writes down the topic for the reading of the day and keywords on the board.”
- “The teacher... teaches at the front of the room behind a podium. She reads from a book.”

Repetition as a Primary Teaching Strategy

- “Teacher goes over the keywords, students repeat words.”
- “Teacher and I read the conversation as an example, then the students had turns doing so.” – further elaboration: “Teacher and I read the entire text before students got to practice doing so.”
- “Students repeated what was on the board verbally twice after he read it aloud.”
- “Repeating phrases to commit to memory... students didn’t practice.”
- “As she said something, she wrote it on the board and had the students recite it.”
- “Call and response for vocabulary.”

- “Some more repetition of vocabulary takes place.”
- “Teacher defines sacred scripture on the board and students copy it down.”
- “Teacher is quiet as she writes on the board and students quietly copy what she is writing down.”
- “She reads from a book and occasionally the students repeat a phrase.”

Twi vs. English

- “[Teacher] spoke in a mix of Twi and English.”
- “She explained things in more detail in Twi.”
- “Teacher begins in Twi but writes on the board in English.”
- “Teacher reads from the textbook but then explains in simpler terms they can understand. He gives some examples in Twi as well.”
- “Teacher recites scripture in Twi, students finish out the verse.”
- “Co-teacher talks to students in Twi as they are writing down the definition.”
- “Despite several ‘speak English’ signs, she gives lessons in Twi.”

Available Resources

- “After going over the vocab, students got out the English books and looked at the pictures first (students shared books).”
- “Some of the students seem to have the English book.”
- “No notebooks/books – purely oral learning (listening).”
- “Less materials – Kids have no books.”
- “Nothing on walls but a few posters. Not every student had a book. No hands-on manipulatives.”
- “Students do not have books – teacher reads to them.”

The first category was observations on teaching strategies. The field notes that fell into this category demonstrated that pedagogical practices that were

being exercised did not provide critical thinking that research shows is needed in class to help students in school and beyond (Case & Wright, 1997; Paul, 1984; Pithers & Soden, 2000; Lai, 2011; Liang & Fung, 2021; Lim, 2014; Živković, 2016; Enciso et al., 2017). Since critical thinking is a skill that will enhance literacy experiences for the students of Kyerekrom, and since graphic organizers are known to promote critical thinking, these observations made us eager to incorporate the graphic organizers.

The second category was repetition as a primary teaching strategy. Each visiting teacher made one, if not several, comments in their field notes about teachers reading or reciting information, and students immediately mimicking it back. While some research does support repetition, especially in the acquisition of language skills (Etemadfar et al., 2019; Kuliahana & Marzuki, 2020), repetition falls under the lowest category of Bloom's Taxonomy (Figure 1). This makes it the least complex type of task to require of a student, because it demands the least amount of critical thinking. Introducing graphic organizers offered us a great way to require more complex thinking from the students without causing extra work for the teachers.

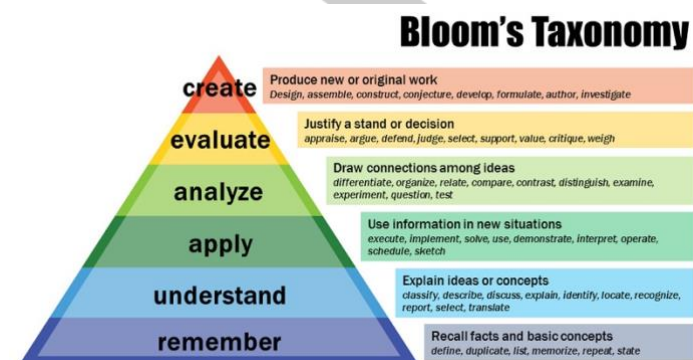


Figure 1: Bloom's Taxonomy. Vanderbilt University Center for Teaching.

The third category was Twi vs. English. Even though the current educational policy affecting language in classrooms has been in place since 2009 (Osseo-Asare, 2021), there is still obvious tension between the languages and their roles in the classroom. Most teachers used both, but for different roles. From the visiting teachers' field notes, it seemed

that English was considered the "academic" language, while Twi was social or conversational. Since we have established that literacy for the country is measured in terms of English literacy, it is important that our pursuit of enhancing literacy experiences in order to promote secondary literacy development for these students should promote English literacy. The graphic organizers we elected to use were in English. The questions were generic enough that they could be used on a wide variety of texts, while still asking students to apply critical thinking skills and articulate their responses in English.

The fourth category was available resources. Each visiting teacher observed that students shared desks because there were not enough for each student to have one. Students also shared textbooks. No manipulatives were evident, and teachers read books aloud to students because there was often only one copy. The lack of resources makes it challenging for teachers to contribute to enhanced literacy experiences in order to promote secondary literacy development, but it is not impossible. Graphic organizers use very little consumable resources, making them an ideal learning strategy for this school.

Findings from Interviews

In interviewing the students after they had used the graphic organizers, one key question they were asked was, "What are some fun ways your teacher can do to help you develop your reading skills?" This question did not directly address the graphic organizers. This was done intentionally. Our goal was to determine how teachers can contribute to enhanced literacy experiences in order to promote secondary literacy development for these young readers. We wanted to know, from their personal experiences, what they found to be engaging and helpful. Data from these interviews offered five categories: Modeling, rereading, collaborative experiences, drawing, and text variety.

We were delighted to find that these requests from students could be fulfilled with the incorporation of graphic organizers. Modeling is a key component of any lesson (Gonulal & Loewen, 2018). When the graphic organizers were introduced, their use was explicitly

modeled. Completing a graphic organizer requires the student to reread the book closely for key information. Graphic organizers can be done as a class, in small groups, or individually, making them flexibly collaborative or independent. Some graphic organizers, such as the “Sketch to Stretch” one that was used for this study, require drawing. This allows students to express their creativity and comprehension at the same time. Finally, graphic organizers can be used with a wide variety of texts. While we cannot influence the number of texts available to the students, we can give them a wider variety of interactions with the texts they have by using different graphic organizers for different strategies to be employed. Overall, each of the things that students suggested would contribute to enhanced literacy experiences can be accomplished with graphic organizers.

Findings from Classroom Artifacts

We used two graphic organizers over the course of our visit: “Questioning the Author” and “Sketch to Stretch.” We compared the critical thinking skills required by the graphic organizers to the types of questions that were evident in the classrooms before the graphic organizers were introduced. The graphic organizer questions were found to use more critical thinking skills than many of the questions the students had been asked during observations.

Next, we checked the graphic organizers to see if students demonstrated comprehension of the book in their responses. The majority of students answered the questions thoroughly and with the level of critical thinking that the graphic organizer required. This showed us that the graphic organizers aided in a deeper comprehension of the book than simple recall questions would have, which suggests that graphic organizers are one way that teachers can contribute to enhanced literacy experiences to promote secondary literacy development of young readers in Ghana.

Discussion

The findings from the classroom observations suggest that repetition, while a common teaching strategy, may not be sufficient for fostering critical

literacy skills. Although repetition is often used in language acquisition, research indicates that it primarily supports lower-level cognitive tasks, such as memorization, rather than higher-order thinking (Schmitt, 2010; Ellis, 2012). This finding is consistent with studies that have highlighted the importance of incorporating more complex cognitive strategies to engage students in critical thinking (Pithers & Soden, 2000). For example, research on critical thinking frameworks emphasizes that tasks such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis are crucial for developing deeper comprehension and literacy (Facione, 2015). Therefore, while repetition can aid in initial stages of language acquisition, it should be supplemented with strategies that require students to engage critically with the material.

The dual-language dynamic observed in the classrooms, with English as the academic language and Twi used for social interactions, reflects the broader challenges faced in multilingual education settings. Studies have shown that bilingual education can enhance literacy development when both languages are utilized effectively (Cummins, 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002). In this study, the use of graphic organizers in English helped bridge the gap between students' native language and the academic language, allowing for deeper engagement with texts. This finding supports the notion that bilingual learners can benefit from instructional strategies that promote cognitive engagement in both languages (García & Wei, 2014).

Finally, the lack of resources in the classrooms emphasizes the need for cost-effective instructional strategies. Research indicates that graphic organizers are an effective tool in resource-limited settings, as they require minimal materials while promoting critical thinking and comprehension (Bromley, 2007; Swanson & Deshler, 2003). The findings from this study suggest that graphic organizers can be a valuable addition to the pedagogical toolkit in low-resource environments, helping to improve literacy outcomes without requiring extensive resources.

Implications

The findings of this study suggest that repetition alone is insufficient for fostering critical literacy. Educators should consider incorporating strategies that promote higher-order cognitive skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which are essential for deep comprehension and critical thinking (Facione, 2015). Graphic organizers, as demonstrated in this study, provide a practical tool for engaging students in these types of cognitive tasks. Professional development programs for teachers should focus on strategies that move beyond rote learning and encourage active, critical engagement with texts.

The dual-language dynamic observed in the classrooms highlights the need for a more integrated approach to bilingual education. Research has shown that bilingual learners benefit from instructional strategies that leverage both languages in ways that promote cognitive development (Cummins, 2000). Teachers should be trained to use both languages strategically, ensuring that students can navigate academic content in English while maintaining their proficiency in their native language. The use of graphic organizers in English, as observed in this study, can serve as a bridge between these two languages, promoting literacy development in both.

Given the resource constraints in many classrooms, it is crucial to explore cost-effective instructional strategies that can improve literacy outcomes. Graphic organizers are a low-cost, high-impact strategy that can be easily integrated into existing curricula (Bromley, 2007). Schools and policymakers should prioritize professional development on the use of graphic organizers and other low-resource strategies to maximize the impact of available materials. Additionally, schools should explore opportunities for resource-sharing and collaboration to ensure that all students have access to quality literacy instruction.

Recommendations

The findings of this study have several important implications for literacy education in resource-constrained environments, particularly in

multilingual contexts like Ghana. The observed benefits of integrating critical literacy practices, such as graphic organizers, underscore the potential for these strategies to address challenges in traditional teacher-centered classrooms. By adopting these recommendations, stakeholders can create more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environments that promote critical literacy and empower students to thrive academically and socially. The recommendations are as follows:

Promoting Higher-Order Thinking Skills: The use of graphic organizers demonstrated their ability to foster critical thinking and comprehension, moving students beyond rote memorization. This suggests that critical literacy practices can significantly enhance cognitive engagement and prepare students for complex academic tasks.

Bridging Linguistic Gaps: The interplay of Twi and English in classrooms reflects broader sociolinguistic dynamics. By leveraging critical literacy tools, educators can bridge linguistic divides, ensuring students gain proficiency in English while maintaining their cultural and linguistic identities.

Addressing Resource Limitations: The adaptability of critical literacy strategies, such as graphic organizers, highlights their effectiveness in low-resource settings. These tools enable meaningful learning experiences without reliance on extensive materials, making them accessible and equitable.

Empowering Educators and Students: Critical literacy approaches empower teachers to adopt innovative, student-centered practices and enable students to engage actively with content, fostering autonomy and agency in learning.

Professional Development for Teachers: Teachers should receive training on integrating critical literacy practices into their pedagogy. Workshops and professional development sessions can focus on using

graphic organizers and other strategies to foster higher-order thinking and engagement.

Curriculum Integration: Education policymakers should incorporate critical literacy practices into the curriculum, emphasizing their role in developing critical thinking and literacy skills. Graphic organizers should be included as standard tools for lesson planning and execution.

Multilingual Literacy Support: Programs should be designed to support the dual-language environment in Ghanaian classrooms. Materials and activities should incorporate both Twi and English to strengthen bilingual literacy and cultural relevance.

Resource Development and Distribution: Ministries of Education and non-governmental organizations should prioritize the development and distribution of low-cost, high-impact resources like graphic organizers. Digital and print versions of these tools can ensure widespread accessibility.

Ongoing Research and Evaluation: Further studies should explore the long-term impacts of critical literacy practices on student outcomes across diverse educational contexts. Evaluating the effectiveness of these strategies in various settings will help refine and scale successful interventions.

Conclusion

This study highlights the transformative potential of critical literacy practices, particularly the use of graphic organizers, in enhancing literacy experiences and promoting secondary literacy development among students in resource-constrained, multilingual classrooms. The findings from classroom observations, interviews, and artifacts reveal that traditional teaching strategies, such as repetition and rote memorization, while valuable for foundational learning, fall short in fostering the critical thinking skills necessary for navigating complex sociocultural and academic landscapes.

The integration of graphic organizers demonstrated their ability to address these gaps by encouraging higher-order thinking, supporting bilingual literacy development, and making effective use of limited classroom resources. Students engaged more deeply with texts, demonstrated improved comprehension, and expressed enthusiasm for interactive and creative learning approaches. These outcomes underscore the importance of shifting towards more student-centered pedagogies that prioritize critical literacy as a cornerstone of effective education.

Ultimately, this study underscores the urgent need for educational stakeholders to invest in teacher training, resource development, and curriculum reform that incorporates critical literacy practices. By doing so, educators can empower students to become critical thinkers and active participants in their learning, equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to succeed in school and beyond. This work provides a foundation for further exploration of innovative strategies to address the unique challenges faced by schools in similar contexts worldwide.

References

- Adams, C. N. (2022, September 12). *Ghana: Promoting literacy to spur development*. AllAfrica. <https://allafrica.com/stories/202209120482.html>
- BBC News (2023, April 14). *Ghana country profile*. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13433790>
- Bringle, R. G., & Hatcher, J. A. (2002). Campus-community partnerships: The terms of engagement. *Journal of Social Issues, 58*(3), 503–516.
- Bromley, K. (2007). *Graphic organizers: The essential guide to literacy instruction*. Scholastic.
- Carroll, C. (2013). *The effects of parental literacy involvement and child reading interest on the*

development of emergent literacy skills (3601364) [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee]. ProQuest.

Case, R., & Wright, I. (1997). Taking seriously the teaching of critical thinking. *North York*, 32(1), 12-19.

Central Intelligence Agency (2023, August 15). *Ghana – Country Summary*. The World Factbook. <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/ghana/summaries>

Cummins, J. (2000). Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire. *Multilingual Matters*.

Darrah, P. (2023, April 5). *What language is spoken in Ghana?* Global Vision International. <https://www.gviusa.com/blog/smb-what-language-is-spoken-in-ghana/#:~:text=Ghana%20is%20a%20multilingual%20country,spoken%20fluently%20by%20many%20Ghanaians>.

DiCecco, V. M., & Gleason, M. M. (2002). Using graphic organizers to attain relational knowledge from expository text. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 35(4), 290-383.

Darmawan, S. L. (2013). Promoting students; explicit information skill in reading comprehension through graphic organizers. *Journal of English Education and Applied Linguistics*, 2(2), 112-119.

Ellis, R. (2012). *Language teaching research and language pedagogy*. Wiley-Blackwell.

Enciso, P., Rogers, T., & Genishi, C. (2017). *The power of narrative in multicultural education*. Teachers College Press.

Etemadfar, P., Namaziandost, E., & Banari, R. (2019). The impact of different output-based task repetition conditions on producing speech acts among Iranian advanced EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in*

Language Studies, 9(12), 1541-1549. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0912.10>

Facione, P. A. (2015). *Critical thinking: A statement of expert consensus for purposes of educational assessment and instruction*. The Delphi Report: Insight Assessment.

Farquhar, J., Michels, N., & Robson, J. (2020). Triangulation in industrial qualitative case study research: Widening the scope. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 87, 160-170. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.indmarman.2020.02.001>

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Penguin Classics.

Gadsden, V. L. (1995). Literacy and poverty: Intergenerational issues within African American families. In Zuckerman, B. S., Fitzgerald, H. E., & Lester, B. M. (Eds.), *Children of Poverty* (pp. 85-119). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315861623>

García, O., & Wei, L. (2014). *Translanguaging: Language, bilingualism and education*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Ghana Statistical Service (2022, September 9). *About 8 million persons in Ghana are illiterate*. Statistics Infobank. <https://statsghana.gov.gh/infobankdetails.php?infobank=Mj15NjA1MzU3Mi43NTU1/infodesk/249ssp0p7r>

Goldenberg, C. (2013). Unlocking the research on English learners: What we know—don't know yet—about effective instruction. *American Educator*, Summer 2013. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1014021.pdf>

Gonulal, T., & Loewen, S. (2018). Scaffolding technique. In Liantas, J. I. (Ed.), *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Heidarifard, M. (2014). The effect of graphic organizers on L2 learners' reading comprehension. *Journal of American Science*, 10(3), 62-72.

https://www.jofamericanscience.org/journals/am-sci/am1003s/008_24009am1003s14_62_72.pdf

Kuliahana, A., & Marzuki, A. G. (2020). Repetition technique in an EFL speaking class in Islamic higher education in Indonesia. *Academic Journal Perspective: Education, Language, and Literature*, 8(1).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.33603/perspective.v8i1.3295>

Lai, E. R. (2011). Critical thinking: A literature review. *Pearson's Research Reports*, 6(1).

Lewison, M., Flint, A. S., & Van Sluys, K. (2002). Taking on critical literacy: The journey of newcomers and novices. *Language Arts*, 79(5), 382-392.

Liang, W., & Fung, D. (2021). Fostering critical thinking in English-as-a-second-language classrooms: Challenges and opportunities. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 39.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2020.100769>

Lim, L. (2014). Critical thinking, social education and the curriculum: Foregrounding a social and relational epistemology. *The Curriculum Journal*, 26(1), 4-23.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09585176.2014.975733>

Manoli, P., & Papadopoulou, M. (2012). Graphic organizers as a reading strategy: Research findings and issues. *Creative Education*, 3(3), 348-356.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/ce.2012.33055>

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. Jossey-Bass.

Nkansah, T. (2022). The role of adult literacy in community development in Ghana: Perceptions and experiences of two rural communities. *The International Journal of Community and Social*

Development, 4(3), 272-293.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/25166026221110728>

Osseo-Asare, P. (2021). *The impacts of language and literacy policy on teaching practices in Ghana: Postcolonial perspectives on early literacy and instruction*. Routledge.

Öztürk, Ö. (2012). The effects of graphic organizers on reading comprehension achievement of EFL learners. *Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 32(2), 37-45.

Paul, R. W. (1984). Critical thinking: Fundamental to education for a free society. *Educational Leadership*, 42(1), 4-14.

Pithers, R. T., & Soden, R. (2000). Critical thinking in education: A review. *Educational Research*, 42(3), 237-249. <https://doi.org/10.1080/001318800440579>

Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5-23.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0951839950080103>

Praveen, S. D., & Rahan, P. (2013). Using graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skills for the middle school ESL students. *English Language Teaching*, 6(2), 155-170.
<https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n2p155>

Sandmann, L. R., Thornton, C. H., & Jaeger, A. J. (Eds.). (2016). *Institutionalizing community engagement in higher education: The first wave of Carnegie classified institutions*. Jossey-Bass.

Schmitt, N. (2010). *Researching vocabulary: A vocabulary research manual*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. SAGE Publications.

Stoffelsma, L. (2018). Short-term gains, long-term losses? A diary study on literacy practices in Ghana.

Journal of Research in Reading, 41(1), 66-84.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9817.12136>

Swanson, H. L., & Deshler, D. D. (2003). Instructing adolescents with learning disabilities: The role of reading and writing. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36(6), 532-538.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/00222194030360060601>

Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. P. (2002). A national study of school effectiveness for language minority students' long-term academic achievement. *Final Report: Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence*.

UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2022, October 24). *Literacy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)*. The World Bank.

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.ADT.LITR.ZS>

UNICEF. (2013). At a glance: Ghana.

http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ghana_statistics.html

van Bergen, E., Bishop, D., van Zuijen, T., & de Jong, P. F. (2015). How does parental reading influence children's reading? A study of cognitive mediation. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 19(5), 325-339. DOI: 10.1080/10888438.2015.1050103

Vasquez, V. (2010). *Getting beyond "I like the book": Creating spaces for critical literacy in K-6 classrooms*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.

Vásquez, J. M. V., & Coudin, R. Z. (2018). Graphic organizers as a teaching strategy for improved comprehension of argumentative texts in English. *Actualidades Investigativas en Educación*, 18(2).
<http://dx.doi.org/10.15517/aie.v18i2.33028>

Wagner, D. A., & Spratt, J. E. (1988). Intergenerational literacy: Effects of parental literacy and attitudes on

children's reading achievement in Morocco. *Human Development*, 31(6), 359-369.

<https://doi.org/10.1159/000276335>

Weiner, L. (2006). Challenging deficit thinking. *Educational Leadership*, 64(1), 42-45.

Xiangying, J., & Grabe, W. (2007). Graphic organizers in reading instruction: Research findings and issues. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 19(1), 34-55.

Yanhui, P. (2013). Graphic organizers and other visual strategies to improve young ELL's reading comprehension. *New England Reading Association Journal*, 48(2), 52-88.

Živković, S. (2016). A model of critical thinking as an important attribute for success in the 21st century. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 232, 102-108.