

**DESIGN STUDIO CRITIQUE OF STUDENTS' ARTWORK IN THE  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DESIGN, KNUST**

**By**

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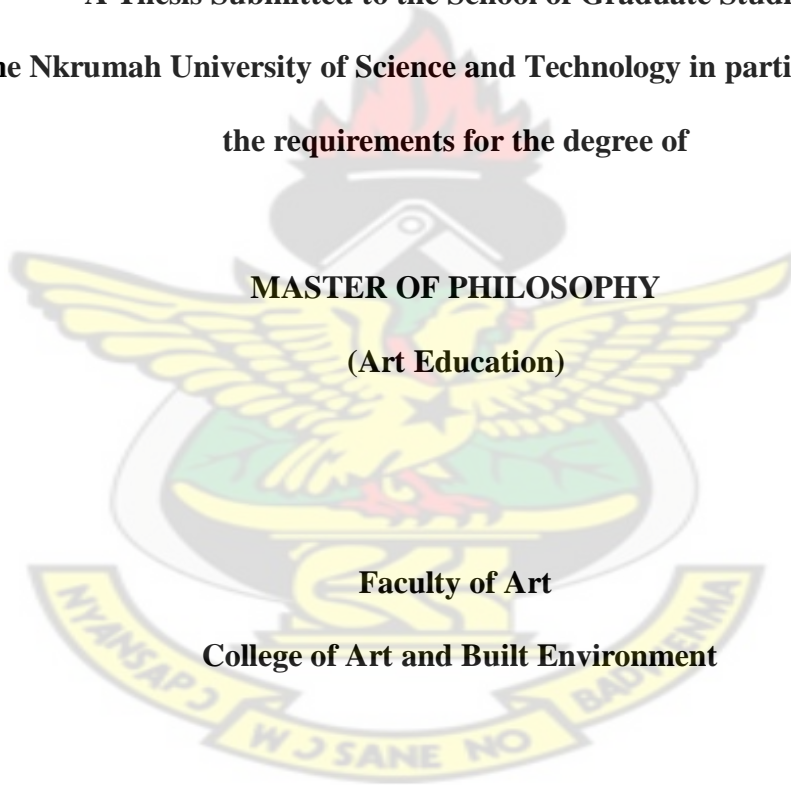
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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**(Art Education)**

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the MPhil Art Education degree and that to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published by another person, nor material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree of the university, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text.

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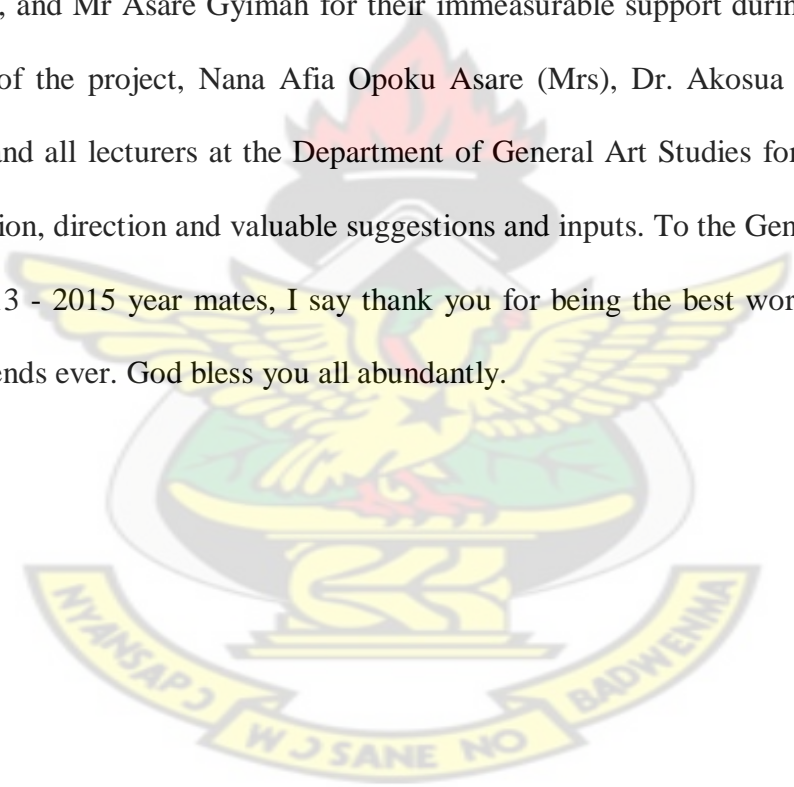
## ABSTRACT

The inability of design students to effectively and critically articulate their ideas in the professional language has been a challenge in most Ghanaian Universities. Critique which is an essential component in every design institution is undermined by most undergraduate design students in the Department of Communication Design, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology is not an exception. The activeness and enthusiasm as well as the purpose of the design critique practice is impaired. The participatory action research, descriptive and exploratory approaches under the qualitative research design were used. The data collection instruments used were: observation, questionnaire, unstructured interviews and focus group discussions. The introduction of the criteria into the design studio was expected to encourage active design critique responses and reactions in order to establish a more active teaching and learning in the design studio. Other forms of critique were also explored and this included online and written critique. These other forms of critique also helped to improve the design studio dynamics and fostered new teaching and learning approaches. Hence the introduction of the criteria boosted student-instructor interactivity as students became motivated to be active critical thinkers and learners. The level of students' involvement was increased. The teaching of design history and research was in addition recommended to be added to the foundational courses, specifically at the first year level for adequate acquisition of knowledge and understanding in the practice of critique in the department.

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A. O. B.



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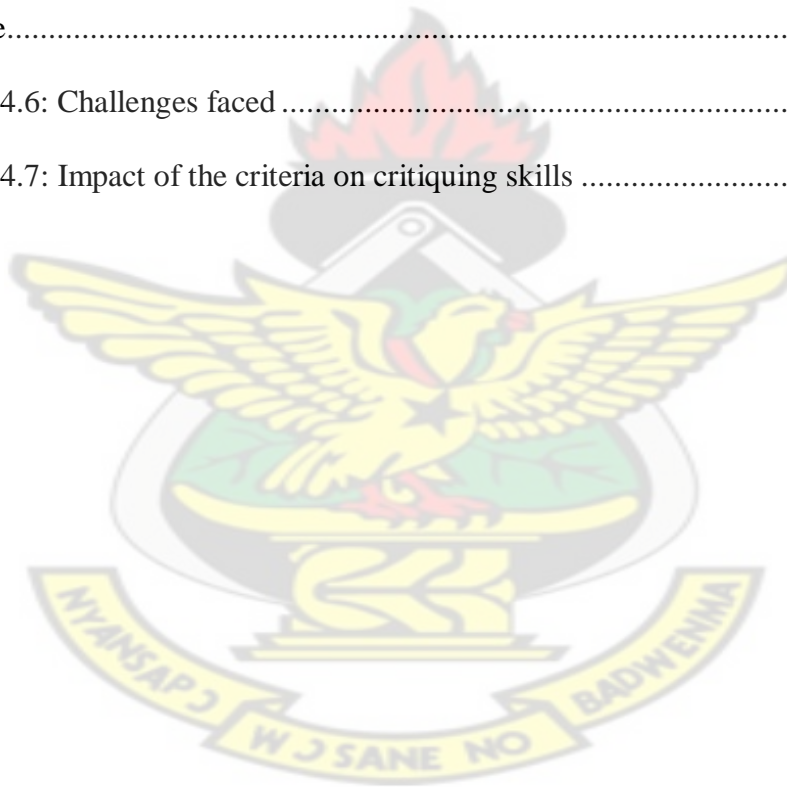
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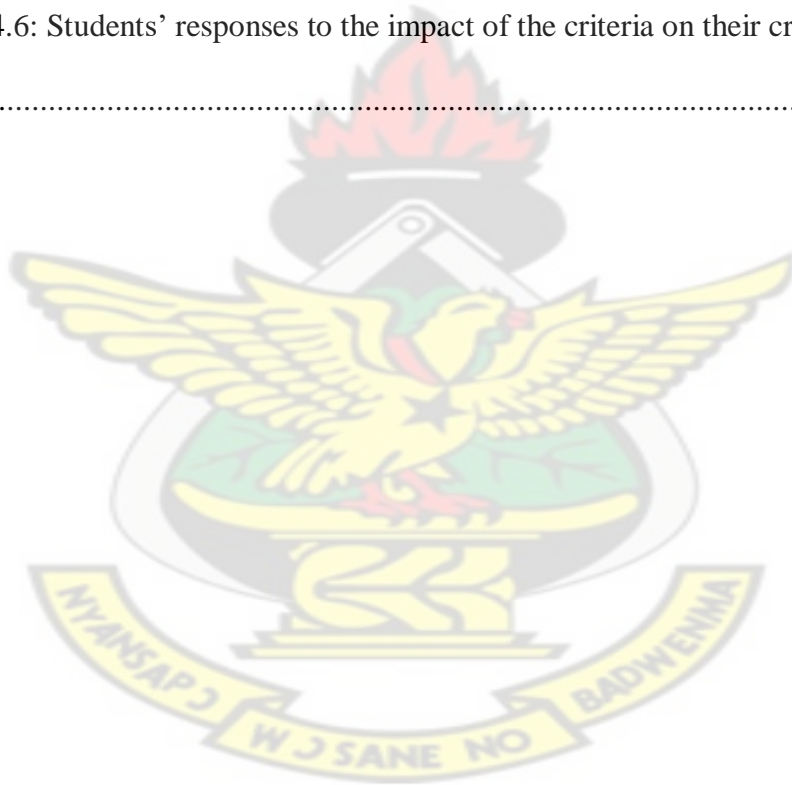
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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Overview

This provides the reader with background information on the study, research problems and objectives, the nature of the study and its significance. Terms and abbreviations used in this report have been clarified for easy understanding of the content.

### 1.2 Background to the Study

The relationship of art teacher and student has evolved over the centuries in Western civilization. The relationship between the student and the teacher is similar to that of the master-apprentice arrangement of early Europe, which employed an authoritarian approach to education (Graham, 2003). Such a relationship, based in a commerce-driven setting, left little room for critical discourse in the design studio (Estioko, Forrest, & Amos, 2006).

This system of training was introduced on the surface when the *Ecole des Beaux Arts* (School of Beautiful Arts) was established in France in the early nineteenth century. One of the earliest first examples of higher education in the arts and changed the way the trade of architecture was passed on to succeeding generations. Also the academy brought with it scholarship, research and discourse. By way of the discourse came criticism and out of criticism was borne critique (Eshun & Adu- Agyem, 2010). This new form of education ultimately waved to other forms of art and design and was imported to the United States through students educated in Europe.

Critiquing which was done in the fifties, though centuries advanced from the European master-apprentice system, continue the use of an authoritarian style of instruction. Half a century later, post modernism, Music Television (MTV) and the information age have encouraged students to become keener about feedback on their work and less likely to simply accept pronouncements originating from their colleagues and teachers. In a recent poll of graphic design students at California State University Sacramento (CSUS), 92% of respondents ranked studio critiquing as a “very important” part of the curriculum of an art/design education (the remaining 8% ranked it “important”) (Estioko, Forrest, & Amos, 2006).

It is curious that something so critical to the learning process has been left to such chance in the academic environment. The need to understand critique and its appropriate reactions from the educator’s point of view as well as the student’s point of view becomes crucial. Unfortunately, studio design critique is seen as a bother to most Ghanaian design students instead of being an integral part of each and every artist or designer. The underlying call to action is this: What are we doing in regard to critique in the studio and how can we make it better?

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Criticism has been viewed as a negative judgment or pronouncement, instead of being a necessary and positive activity (Tron, 2013). Behaviour or attitude towards the design process is quite difficult to handle in most design studios. Graham (2003, p. 5) states that, “critique is the core educational tool used in the design studio”. Art criticism is an essential curriculum component, though its application is sometimes weakened by both the students and instructors (Eshun & Adu- Agyem, 2010). The results or reactions towards criticism turn out in the negative sense because students

find themselves on the receiving end of words spoken out of frustration, disappointment and anger. Typically the reaction is to respond in the same manner with anger, sarcasm and defensiveness losing out on the essence of why there is a need for such an activity (Tron, 2013).

Design students are not trained as to how to critique a work of art in the right manner with the right attitude and choice of words towards a design work. That notwithstanding, they are not given any formal instruction about the practice which Estioko, Forrest & Amos (2006) agree to. According to Elkins (2001, p. 112) “there is also no set down guidelines for classroom critiquing”. It was further explained that there is no model, no history and no guide for art critique in the classroom and that it is important for critics to address such problems for effective critiquing in the studio.

In addition to the preliminary survey conducted, about 80% of students do not have any prior knowledge about the exponents of graphic design, their design works and techniques to enable them to make references to them and to create their own works. This prior knowledge if existed, could make them talk confidently and intelligently about their own works. The remaining 20% of students who are able to do their own works also lack the courage and right vocabulary to talk critically about their works and this fact was established after the survey conducted by the researcher and from the researcher’s experience in the design class a year ago.

It is therefore important for students to really understand criticism and have the right perception, mind-set and attitude towards a critique to avoid misunderstanding and the chaos that arises among students and teachers in the classroom. But rather establish a better understanding towards creating a critical enlightenment in the classroom. Thus to open formal discussions and communication of ideas to help



enrich each other than rather to demoralize students and disappoint teachers handling critique in the classroom (Graham, 2003).

This study therefore, intends to probe more into students and teachers' art, as well as responses in design studio critique. Is it done in the right atmosphere and environment? Are there any criteria guiding critique in the classroom? Does it improve, encourage and develop positive reactions, feedbacks or it demoralises students and/or disappoints teachers?

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

The study seeks:

1. To identify and describe the types of design studio critique being used in the design studio of the Department of Communication Design.
2. To find out how lecturers and students respond to design critiques and why they respond/react the way they do.
3. To develop and pre-test a studio design criteria for critiquing in the design studio.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What forms of design studio critique is used in the studio?
2. How is design critique done and how do students and lecturers respond to design critique in the studio?
3. In what ways can design critiquing be improved in the design studio?

#### **1.6 Delimitation**

The study is limited to the second year (2014-2015) undergraduate students offering graphic design (as a practical studio course) and the lecturers' in-charge of the course

in the Department of Communication Design, at the Faculty of Art, KNUST, Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana.

### **1.7 Limitation**

The limitation of this study is the fact that the outcome or results of the research cannot be justified generally. In other words there are limits on generalization of results but the students and lecturers in the department can justify the results.

### **1.8 Definition of Terms**

**Design:** Is a creative detailed plan of the form or structure which is skilfully or artistically made of something to emphasise features such as its appearance, convenience and effective functioning.

**Art Criticism:** It is the processes, to develop perceptual, verbal and judgemental skills used to respond to the visual world.

**Critique:** It is an intelligent, systematic, critical and objective examination of a creative work, usually done verbally or written to pronounce judgement or to give helpful opinions.

**Reaction/ Response:** It is a reply given to a question either said or written.

**Design studio:** In this study it refers to the activity of critiquing design works which happens in the studio.

**Art:** It is the skill or ability involved in producing a beautiful work through creative activity.

### **1.9 Acronyms used**

**KNUST:** Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

**DECODE:** Department of Communication Design

**ETAD:** Educational Technology and Design

**GRACODE:** A fictitious name assigned to a course in the Department of Communication Design.

**MTV:** Music Television

**CSUS:** California State University Sacramento

### **1.10 Importance of the Study**

- The research will enable the Department of Communication Design and other areas of the arts to adapt to the appropriate responses and criteria for effective critiquing in the studio or classroom.
- It will help students and teachers to develop perceptual, verbal and judgemental skills used to respond to their own designs, the designs of others and the visual world at large.
- The study will serve as a reference material for art teachers, students, art educators and the general public as well as open opportunities for more research to be done in the area of critique.

### **1.11 Organization of the rest of the Text**

#### **Chapter Two - Review of Related Literature**

In this chapter, the study is discussed and analysed in relation to what other researchers, authors and experts in this field have directly said, implied or gathered. The researcher believes new ideas would be provided for the study.

### **Chapter Three - Methodology**

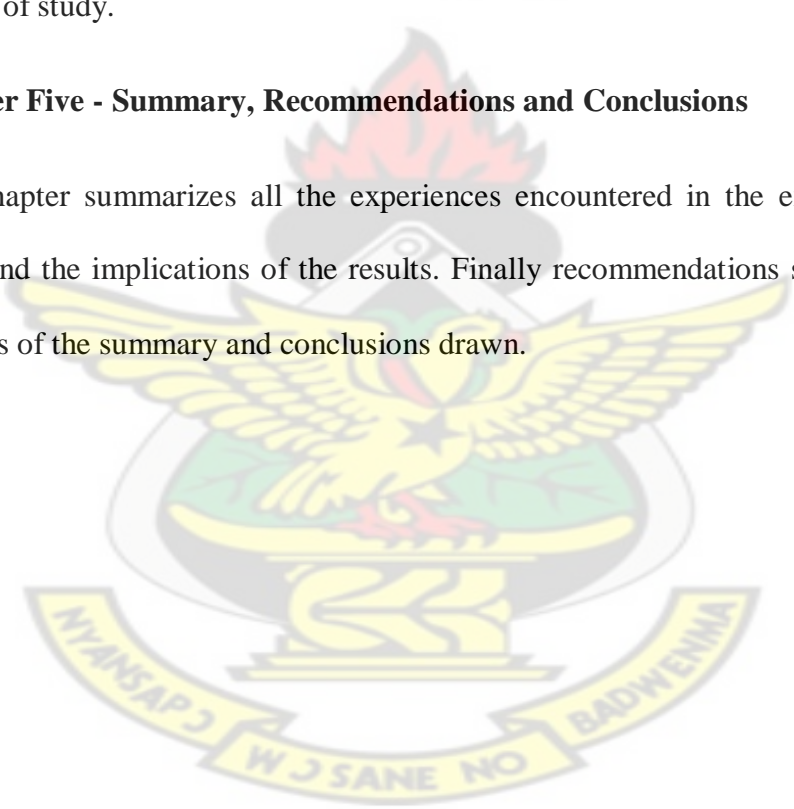
This chapter shows the procedures in coming out with the whole study from the beginning to the end. It takes into consideration the sampling techniques and how data are analysed and conclusions drawn. This chapter also shows how the research tools were used in executing the work.

### **Chapter Four – Presentation and Discussion of Findings**

Chapter four seeks to analyse the facts gathered from the investigations made on the subject of study.

### **Chapter Five - Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions**

This chapter summarizes all the experiences encountered in the execution of the study and the implications of the results. Finally recommendations set in, based on findings of the summary and conclusions drawn.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1 Overview

This chapter looks at the Review of Related Literature. It discusses the following sub-headings: The Nature of Design, The Design Studio, Design Studio Pedagogy, Design Studio Learning Environment, Theories of Criticism, and Types of Criticism, Forms of Critique (Desk crits, peer crits and Juries). The rest are Models for critiquing in the design studio, the art of the design critique and Language as a tool for design critique.

#### 2.2 The Nature of Design

It is necessary to briefly consider some concepts about the nature of design and channel the focus on the field generally understood to be design, which includes architecture, graphic design and industrial design. In numerous professions, design is adopted in some aspects. Example is found in computer science and mathematical engineering. However, this chapter focuses on design as a subset of the larger domain of graphic design.

Schön (1983, p. 40) defines design as “the process by which we define the decision to be made, the ends to be achieved and the means which may be chosen” (as cited in Hokanson, 2012). Hokanson (2012) in accordance to previous researches done in the field of design asserts that the process of design reveals observations that can be helpful to our understanding of design itself: quality comes not from following rules but rather through independent and seasoned expert judgement generally gained through designing (Cross, 1997). Design itself is a process of trying and evaluating

multiple ideas (Hokanson, 2012). He adds that it may build from ideas or develop concepts and philosophies along the way.

The design work is a continues, rapid and repeated sequence of analysis, synthesis and evaluation (McNeill et al., 1998). Akin and Lin (1995) also describes this same iterative process cycle as examining, drawing and thinking. Designers receive design briefs, examine the problem, develop possible resolutions and evaluate their own work as a regular part of their design process. This is a very internal and individual process of learning design. Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1989) and Dorst (2008) allege that “expert” performance is not generally explicit or developed easily through didactic methods, but by tacit knowledge developed through years of active and guided performance (as cited in Hokanson, 2012).

Design therefore is a gradual process that requires a system that guides and equips learners into consistent and regular development of ideas for solving real life problems.

### **2.3 The Design Studio**

Critique as a teaching and learning (pedagogical) tool in most design institutions is derived from the teaching methods that were exploited in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts (School of beautiful Arts). The Beaux-Arts system began in 1671 when Louis XIV founded the Academie Royale d’Architecture in France (Graham, 2003). The Beaux-Arts stressed drawing and classic precedents in its educational system. Although other methods of teaching, such as the craft and production focused on German Bauhaus, which surfaced in the 1920s, have prejudiced the way design is taught (Graham, 2003).



The practice of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts structure is still and heavily influencing the design studios of today. The central learning place for students of arts and architecture is the design studio. The concepts adapted for teaching in these educational institutions are borrowed from the procedures at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris some years back. The foundation of the Beaux-Arts theory of teaching is a private tutorial between a student and one who has mastered the art of design.

According to Malecha (1985), the system is made up of five main educational practices which includes: “the division of students into ‘ateliers’ or studios, the tradition of older students assisting the younger pupils, the teaching of design by practitioners and the judgement of designs by a trained jury of practitioners, the start of design education upon entering the studio, and finally the system of ‘esquisse’ or the sketching of design solutions” (Graham, 2003: p.18). The main pedagogical method used in the design studio is Criticism. The studio revolves around teacher demonstrations and explanations, desk crits given to individual students by the teacher, and juries of final design solutions. The Foundation for Critical Thinking defines criticism as “Being the examination and test of propositions of any kind which are offered for acceptance, in order to find out whether they correspond to reality or not (Paul, Elder, & Bartell, 1997).

Graham (2003) after studying closely the dialectology of the word ‘criticism’ came up with the meaning of criticism as “the discernment and shifting through a matter, and not that which would lead to a negative or unfavourable judgement” (p.18). The above fact established by Graham outlines one major importance of why criticism is adopted in design studios and that is criticism is not to lead to a negative judgement



or disapproving implication but rather to help develop ones design skills and intellect.

The word criticism derives from the Greek verb, Krinein, meaning to make distinctions, or to separate (Eshun & Adu-Agyem, 2010). The evolution of the core sense of judgement attached to criticism developed from the Greek noun, Kritos or a judge (Williams, 1976). The trace of the negative connotation behind criticism is often observed in academic studios, “too often when criticism starts, excuses begin, and so defensiveness gets in the way of good, responsive work instead of threatening and intimidating, criticism can be used as a tool for generating better works” (Attoe, 1978: p. 2 as cited in Graham, 2003).

Malecha states that “in order for criticism to be used in a design studio as a valuable tool, the methods of critique must be employed and taught in a way to support understanding and should be based upon, clarity of intent and process to reinforce the private tutorial aspects of the studio”(Graham 2003, p. 18).

This is to establish that teachers or instructors are to teach critique in a way to support understanding and which should entail, providing the necessary foreknowledge about critique in the studio, history, guidance, a model or criteria for students to follow in order to achieve a successful critiquing activity in the studios and this is what this study seeks to address.

#### **2.4 Design Studio Pedagogy**

Formal design education has progressively become institutionalised (Mewburn, 2011). Design is a complicated endeavour one opposes to simple metrics or measures. In design education, instructors rely heavily on a subjective form of review known as “critique” (Cheng, 2013). The studio is at the heart of art and design education in higher education (Orr & Bloxham, 2013). Classically

undergraduate art and design students are set open-ended project briefs that direct the development of their individual art/design practice. This project-centered learning approach is what Orr and Bloxham term as the defining element of studio based pedagogy.

The project brief is interpreted by the students to carry out research and development activity that culminates in the submission of a body of work. This form of pedagogics is what Svensson and Edstrom (2011: p. 1) describe as “self-directed and very free form curriculum”. At different points over the course of study reveals studio Crits. “Crits” describes studio based formative or summative feedback in small or large situations with students and lecturers (Blythman et al., 2008). These Crits offer an opportunity for the faculty and students to discuss and evaluate the work. Therefore, there is a need to understand “disciplinary specific ways of thinking and practicing in higher education” since there is an upsurge interest in pedagogical research (Harman & McDowell, 2011: p.42). This research aims to develop a deeper understanding of the elements of studio-based teaching and learning. Svensson and Edstrom (2011) studied the role of studio conversation and its relation to artwork in the context of students studying fine art which forms the basis of this research.

Design students learn how to defend, give and receive feedback effectively because is an essential skill that extends beyond the classroom and therefore need to be taught how to go about it and this is a pertinent component of this study. From an empirical study which was drawn by Mewburn (2011), the theory of ‘reflective practice’, put the idea that the design studio teacher is a ‘coach’ who helps students align with disciplinary norms and start to think like a designer. In addition to this statement, Schön’s (1983) explanation of design teaching and learning was drawn

from the ‘actor-network theory’ as a tool of analysis and design pedagogy which gives a close scrutiny of students and teachers depicting the teacher to be but one of a host of human and non-human participants, all of whom work to assemble what we call a design studio. This brings to bear the understanding that, a design studio is made up of a group of students and a teacher who works closely together to achieve a solution and not in isolation of each other.

The design studio is a popular structure for design education and has been taken up in many countries over the last 30years (Webster, 2008). The pedagogical core of the design studio is the ‘desk crit’ a collaborative activity where the teacher and the student do design work together discussing and sketching possibilities and imagining the consequences of design choices (Mewburn, 2011). This fact established by Mewburn is a vital component that is missing in today’s design studios since that connectivity of teacher student relationship in the studio is not established. Aside from the structure and organization of the instructional activities of the course, studio-form education is different in that it involves very close working conditions for learners and instructors as mentioned early on. The structure of a studio also varies in terms of time and space (Shaffer, 2003) and in terms of pedagogical orientation. Instructors are compelled by the variations of time and space; to allow students to send their design assignments to their various comfort zones; such as their rooms, friends and other commercial designers to work on instead of working in the studios in order to learn from teachers and fellow colleagues to acquire the skill and knowledge of designing on their own. As a result of this, most students are therefore not able to communicate their ideas verbally by critically and intelligently, using the vocabulary for the profession or vocation. This is because, the collaborative activity of the student and the teacher (the facilitator) – which is to

equip the learner with the necessary confidence to share his or her ideas is not practiced in the studio as previously stated in the problem statement of this study.

The researcher agrees that Mewburn's point will help address the issue of lack of participatory responsibility of the lecturers in the design studio. In some institutions offering design as a course, Webster's idea of describing the design studio as an important structure necessary for the education of design is imperative. Webster further added that during desk crit interactions, the design teacher works to understand what the student is trying to do with his or her design work, provide feedback on these ideas and works with the student to further develop them. The repetition of the old master-apprentice model seems to be reoccurring which some argue that, is a powerful way of disciplining undergraduate students into particular professional established customs (Cuff, 1991; Webster, 2005; 2007).

But the case now is that design students do not have that regular and persistent access to the teacher in the design studio to assist in the process, the designer has access to the teacher after he/she is done with the various developments and ready to face the jury in order to move to the next stage. Modification of current study, in certain extremism and discourses of student-centred learning, have divulged on thinking about the design studio format which has been disapproved on a number of anterior: as old fashioned (Webster, 2008 as cited in Mewburn, 2011).

Dutton asserts that, this has caused damage to students well-being, as reproducing, advancing discrimination and it being full of unexamined tacit assumptions and practices which adversely affect both the students and the occupation as a whole (Mewburn, 2011). Senbel (2012, p. 450) affirms that "the most direct connection to studio teaching is of course the literature that discusses design teaching and links

between design and broader learning theories” and Schön’s work on the reflective practitioner makes it clear in this area as stated previously.

Furthermore, other significant approaches to studio teaching are problem-based learning, student-centred learning and peer-based learning. The emergence of the constructivist, experimental and social learning theories becomes particularly important. Senbal (2012) throws more light on this by stating that, each theory is advanced in terms of recognizing the importance of the individual experience of the student and the benefits of allowing each student’s unique life experience to guide her or his acquisition and cultivation of knowledge. In a critical analysis of an applied learning environment in design, all these seem relevant. Generally, scholars emphasize on highlighting exploratory approaches to design teaching and on the application of pedagogical models to studio teaching.

Schön documents the process of learning about design by analysing interactions between instructors and students in studio desk critiques (Senbal, 2012). According to Senbal (2012) the beginning design student is placed in the studio setting with no prior design or studio experience and learns the process and expectations of studio learning through continual dialogue with the studio instructor.

The student observes hands-on conceptual experiments by the instructor in the form of sketched design solutions. Throughout the interactions between instructors and students, the student develops the language of design through which they learn to communicate their design ideas. Schön refers to this give- and- take of dialogue and sketching as ‘translating knowledge’ (personal experience) and feedback (from the instructor) into action (design idea). These steps are iterative, integrated and often difficult to distinguish. This put together amounts to moments of learning and design intelligence (Senbal, 2012).



The constructivist and experimental learning theories are especially relevant to studio teaching since they have their pedigree in the practicality of education through discovery and personal experience which was first coherent by Dewey. The goal of studio based education is therefore the development of higher order and often tacit thinking skills, including the development of the capacity for seeking and solving complex problems, being able to address multiple issues and context and understanding as well as applying technological and social skills in varied and novel ways (Hokanson, 2012).

It can be inferred from the explanations cited that, there is the need to establish design studios for design students to acquire the necessary and needed skills to develop potential designs that could solve problems in our era. It can also be added that, aside from the structure and organization of the instructional activities of the course, studio-form education is different in that it involves very close working conditions for learners and instructors. Shaffer (2003) asserts that the structure of a studio also varies in terms of time and space and in terms of pedagogical orientation.

The adaptation of the essential pedagogical elements for design studio as stated must be applied in its appropriate ways in order for students and instructors to obtain the best out of the studio teaching and learning instead of the classroom experience that includes lecture as a common means of distributing information. Since the studio concentrate on direct interaction between learner and instructor much could be done and achieved.

## 2.5 Design Studio Learning Environment

The design studio approach has brought tremendous value into many areas of study (Cennamo & Brandt, 2012). The opportunities that come with courses that employ a studio design approach includes the exchange of ideas, sharing artefacts and developing community deeply and quickly (Clinton & Rieber, 2005). This can be seen commonly and successfully in the fields of multimedia and graphic design (Clinton & Rieber, 2010), architecture (Reimer & Douglas, 2003), art (Willems, 2009) and computer science (Greenberg, 2009). In accordance with Wilson (2013, p. 3), there is no indication of the design studio model being pragmatic to pure courses on video design.

The foundation of the design course was based on studio model as stated earlier, in previous headings. This was supported by the belief that, working in close proximity, and sharing the experience with other learners can make learning more effective than working without sharing or in isolation (Wilson, 2013). McGuire and Banerjee (2008) insist on three main benefits in utilizing a studio design learning environment:

1. Instruction in the studio is inherently visual, tactile and verbal.
2. Instruction in the studio is dominated by one-on-one interactions: instructors are compelled to customize the content and delivery of instruction for each student.
3. Instruction in the studio is more social than other settings: students learn as much or more from each other as they do from instructors (p. 1).

In addition to the above list of benefits, McGuire and Banerjee add that “studio critique and learning is continuous rather than solely based on evaluation of products



at key stages or upon completion” (Wilson, 2013: p. 3). The visual nature of graphic design products and the need to learn hands-on skills fit well with Wilson, McGuire and Banerjee’s understanding. Wilson (2013) affirms that “in a studio-learning environment every student has the opportunity to observe the processes that other students are using” (p. 3). The other students “not only get to hear each other’s critiques, but because they were in some sense peripheral participants in the evolution of each other’s work, they understand the thinking behind it” (Brown, 2005 p. 5). The upshot of the critique process in these courses has earned the opening to develop an understanding of the choices, concerns and the concessions that may impact the final product.

Brown also in agreement, adds that critique holds greater significance and presents learning opportunities for all the students. Not only does Brown regard studio time as effective for delving more deeply and sharing more openly with others, but also offers the opportunities to put ideas into constant practice.

Snyder, Heckman and Scialdone (2009) suggest that bringing learners into a studio setting allows them to mix technical skills with artistic skills (p. 26). They also put forward the idea of incubation where students are brought together in a location that has course content as the central focus. In a studio environment the level of distraction is reduced, and combined with openness and collegiality students learn effectively from one another. Learning from one another was at the heart of the studio experience in Educational Technology and Design (ETAD 879). The virtual and face-to-face design studios fostered the creation a learning community as well as a safe supportive environment for the students. In Magee’s (2011) study of two classrooms, she identified a similar improvement in student usage of technology. The

arts-based studios she studied blended both technology and art to offer hands-on active learning. These models depict a studio in which technology, hands-on arts-based learning, and caring are brought together to create a holistic learning environment. She described many advantages of learning in this type of setting. Three of the outcomes she identified were embedded in the design of Educational Technology and Design 879 (ETAD) specifically, improving technology skills, creating a caring peer environment and providing embedded on- going assessment. One major fraction of the studio approach was to build a learning community. According to Schwier (2011) a successful learning community allows learners and educators to facilitate formal and informal connections with a wider variety of participants in the course and beyond. This approach allows the development of “relationships with other learners and educators outside the traditional boundaries of the school. With the advancement of technologies, “virtual learning communities have evolved and are built on both synchronous and asynchronous communications media while the group learns from the construction process itself” (Kowch & Schwier, 1998, p. 2). In addition, the studio design approach also finds support from Wenger (2007) and draws on the features of community of practice from other groups and communities.

A community of practice is more than just a collection of individuals:

It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a Commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other. They develop a shared repertoire of resources:

experiences, stories, tools, and ways of addressing recurring problems, in short a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction. (p. 1 as cited in Wilson, 2013).

McDermott (1999), as cited in Wilson (2013, p. 5), adds that “the conditions that foster a community of practice when he shares his opinions that effective learning occurs when there is a defined relationship between people. He further states that,

Learning builds relationships between people. Learning is in the conditions that bring people together and organize a point of contact that allows for particular pieces of information to take on a relevance; without the points of contact, without the system of relevancies, there is not learning and there is little memory. Learning does not belong to individual persons, but to the various conversations of which they are a part” (p. 17).

From the statements made by McDermott above, the researcher deduces that one major ambition of the design course is the creation of learning space where students could create relationships around the craft and skill set for the design course and this is a major challenge facing design colleges and institutions.

## **2.6 Theories of Criticism**

Bates (2000), one of the pioneers of art criticism, defines criticism as processes to develop perceptual, verbal and judgemental skills used to respond to the visual world. The above statement is stated as an importance to this study in relation to the benefits or impacts criticism has on students and teachers at large. Students may use these skills to respond to their own art, the art of others and designs in their environment. Criticism to Hospers (1969) defined criticism as a means to an end (as cited in Graham, 2003). He further explained and maintains that, art criticism does consist of words but words about art and which are designed to help in understanding

and appreciating an art or design work (style or the period) under scrutiny. Through effective critiquing from expertise, critics and students who are critically taught and trained in the profession or course, they can offer substantial feedbacks which can help develop a design piece to an excellent design work.

The acquiring of aesthetic experience becomes apparent unless one is aware of the individual and his cultural environment, so it is perceived for criticism as well and vice versa. From previous knowledge, it has been established that when one is knowledgeable enough in a particular field of interest, it helps the individual gain an upper hand over the subject or topic under study. There is therefore the need for designers to know the background to graphic design which includes the history, exponents, styles and techniques and the emerging trends involved in their study of graphic design as a course. This will help students and instructors to relate to important information when called upon to talk and assess their design works.

Design students can therefore, face the jury with all confidence and more knowledgeable about their field of study and design works in order for them to make critical, analytical and intellectual references to some of the facts established from time back to its present state. Dewey, a twentieth century American philosopher, defines criticism as judgement and ideally as well as etymological. He stated that, the understanding of judgement is therefore the first condition for theory about the nature of criticism since the matter of aesthetic criticism is always determined by the quality of first-hand perception (Graham, 2003).

The researcher agrees with the statement because the quality of first-hand information acquired by students concerning criticism can go further to build a positive attitude towards the adaptation of criticism in the design studio since is an

integral part of studio art to enhance and develop the skill of verbal and critical analysis of design work produced by students due to the authenticity of the first-hand information received. Dewey in addition to his previous statement of criticism being judgement, extend the definition as an “act of intelligence performed upon the matter of direct perception in the interest of more adequate perception” (Dewey, 1958: p. 299 as cited in Graham, 2003: p. 6). In addition, judgement is an official review into an aesthetic experience (Graham, 2003). It can be added that, criticism is all about how one perceives an object or an artwork and his ability to intelligently communicate his ideas or opinions through critical thinking and analysis of the subject matter through a verbal means or written.

“Admitting that our opinion supply judgment with its material” (Dewey, 1958: p. 298 as cited in Graham 2003). It is therefore important to understand criticism because the material out of which judgement grows is the artwork or the object, but it is this object as it enters into the experience of the critic by interaction with his own sensitivity, knowledge and in addition to information stored from past experiences can help to interpret it inwardly. As to their content, therefore, judgements will vary with the concrete material that evokes them and must sustain them if criticism is pertinent and valid. Nevertheless, judgements have a common form because they all have certain functions to perform. According to Dewey, these functions are discrimination and unification, which should ultimately lead to an awareness of perception “a difficult process of learning to see and hear” (p. 324 as cited in Graham, 2003). Judgement has to evoke a clearer consciousness of constituent parts and to discover how consistently these parts are related to form a whole. In addition to his conclusion, he made mention that every critic, like every



artist has a bias, a predilection meaning a special preference, that is bound up with the very existence of individuality (Adu-Agyem, 1990).

One comes to learn that, the meaning and experiences one goes through under aesthetics and criticism depends solely on perception or opinions one accumulate when critically looking at a work of art. Who therefore becomes the appropriate person to criticise a work of art? An art critic according to Shakespeare “is a night watchman”. Following the indication supplied by the practitioners of the law, “a judge or a critic is one who gives an informed opinion about something or someone” (Adu- Agyem, 1990: p.13) He has in addition given a vivid description of who a critic is and even though anyone can give criticisms about something, one needs to acquire the skill and experience to do so.

In this same context of criticism and judgement, Arnold (2001) states that judging is often spoken of as the critic's one business; and so in some sense it is; but the judgment which almost insensibly forms itself in a fair and clear mind, along with fresh knowledge, is the valuable one; and thus knowledge, and ever fresh knowledge, must be the critic's great concern for himself; and it is by communicating fresh knowledge, and letting his own judgment pass along with it, but insensibly, and in the second place not the first, as a sort of companion and clue, not as an abstract lawgiver, that he will generally do most good to his readers.

Sometimes, no doubt, for the sake of establishing an author's place in literature and his relation to a central standard (and if this is not done, how are we to get at our best in the world?) Criticism may have to deal with a subject–matter as stated earlier by Dewey. There must be judgement or some form of evaluation; an enunciation and detailed application of principles. Here the great safeguard is never to let oneself

become abstract, always to retain an intimate and lively consciousness of the truth of what one is saying and the moment this fails us, one can be sure that something is wrong. Still, under all circumstances, this mere judgment and application of principles and in itself, not the most satisfactory work to the critic; like mathematics and others (Arnold, 2001).

The Academic Resource Center of the University of Utah State defines criticism as “the art of evaluating or analysing a situation or a work with knowledge and propriety”. They further explained that criticism is often delivered when one perceives there has been a failure or not lived up to expectations after evaluation and in-depth analysis. Students mostly find themselves on the receiving end of words spoken out of frustration, disappointment, anger and envy. Typically, their reaction is to respond in the same manner with anger, sarcasms and defensiveness (Tron, 2013).

Definitely, when two people communicate with each other in such an environment, a healthy, respectful relationship is not possible to be achieved at the end of the day. Therefore, it is important to understand how to deal with criticism within our relationship whether; they are intimate, casual, work or school- related and the right responses and attitude towards this vital tool used in the design studios.

Criticism therefore is a method of discussing to impart design knowledge to students, and a means to connect the theory that has been taught to the practical aspects of design. Critiques in the studio also enables the development of student’s own critical reasoning by inculcating the procedure of reflecting and responding to design intentions, which lead to their design decision choices and then reacting to the effects of each act. This indeed makes critique a key component from studio models used in art and design models as a means of giving feedback (Barrett, 2000).



The forms of critiquing are therefore essential as they enable instructors and learners to know and adopt the right type of critique in their studios. The next sub topic, reviews the types of criticism.

## **2.7 Types of Criticism**

Criticism is categorised into two main types. Criticism can be either constructive or destructive. Constructive criticism designed to provide genuine feedback in a helpful and non-threatening way in order that the person being criticised may learn and grow in some way. Usually the feedback given is typically valid, that is, it is a true criticism. For example, “I really liked the way you rendered your painting; I think it could be even better if you focused more on improving your layout”. Destructive criticism is criticism that is either not valid or true. In other words, it is criticism that is valid but delivered in an extremely unhelpful manner. It is often given by someone without much thought or can be designed to embarrass or hurt the individual being criticised. For example, “This rendering is bad, your layout is cumbersome” (Michel, 2008 p.2).

When one responds assertively to criticism, it helps to identify the difference between constructive and destructive criticism and respond appropriately. We notice that criticism about behaviour is not necessarily saying anything about the individual but the act (Michel, 2008). We do not get angry, blaming and hurtful during the periods of criticism. However, one must be calm and accept the criticism without negative emotions.

### 2.7.1 The Concept of Aesthetics

It is credible that numerous things hold aesthetic value in some extent. Among these things are our physical body, immediate environments, natural and artificial things around, food, clothes and other adornments, facial expressions and attitudes, packages, automobiles and many other objects available to us as human beings living in a society. There are diverse ways or views individuals and people hold about the nature of aesthetics.

Stecker (2010) illustrates the numerous views people hold concerning aesthetics with a meal at the restaurant. He opines that such a meal appeals to our senses in a variety of ways. First the setting of the restaurant, an ambience, in which one experiences the meal, the decorated meal, the amount of light provided, the seating arrangement, the variety of foods served, and the atmosphere in itself and so on. The variety of looks, tastes, smells, texture, colour from various meals being ordered. The rhetorical questions that Stecker raises are: Does such a meal possess aesthetic value? Does it provide aesthetic experience and does that experience potentially take in everything mentioned thus far? Many more of such questions were raised.

The fact is that some would answer “yes” and others “no” to the fact that a meal possesses an aesthetic value. Urmson (1957) as cited in Stecker (2010) belongs to the former group which the researcher is in agreement with because Urmson thinks that aesthetic value results from pleasure caused by the way things appear to the senses. Hence, a judgement that food is good is based on the way it appears to the senses is an aesthetic judgement. All the senses are potentially involved in the judgement. Taste and smell are obviously involved, but the visual appearance of food is important as its texture, which is discerned by the sense of touch activated in

chewing. Even the sense of hearing enters the picture as when eating crispy or crunchy food. Example is chewing raw carrots and hearing nothing.

On the other hand, Kant (1952), one of the most prominent philosophers on aesthetics might acknowledge the setting of a restaurant to be an object of aesthetic judgement because he would not deny the fact that the tastes, textures and smells of food are aesthetically valuable. They are simply pleasant or unpleasant. Kant opines that “the pleasure of food is a pleasurable sensation (which may be consistent with Urmson’s idea that it is pleasure derived from the way food appears to the senses, the way it tastes, smells, looks, and so on)” (Stecker, 2010, p. 5) But goes on to state that, “this is not aesthetic pleasure, which should be distinguished from the agreeable for Kant, and the judgement that the food is good is not an aesthetic judgement”.

Reasonably, Kant maintains that aesthetic judgements are disinterested because, he thought we are indifferent to the existence of what is being contemplated, caring only for the contemplation itself. The judgements of agreeableness are interested because we care whether the objects of such judgements exist (Stecker, 2010). The characterisation of aesthetic experience is disagreed by Kant and Urmson but agree that aesthetic judgement has its basis in such experience, which, when the judgement is positive, is some sort of pleasurable experience. Stecker (2010) again explains that the bases of aesthetic judgements are located by others more in the properties of the objects than the experience they cause. If a poster becomes an aesthetic object, it is because of the layout, elements of designs and principles and the concept and idea as well as the understanding of the message it is conveying and the relations among them, rather than the experiences the properties might cause.

### 2.7.2 Aesthetic Value

Aesthetic value also raises several questions and must therefore be discussed. We evaluate art and design works as better or worse, good or bad, great or grim. A positive appraisal of an artwork is referred to as appreciation of the work and a negative appraisal as aesthetic depreciation (Prinz, 2007). What makes an artwork worthy of appreciation and less basically seems on the nature of appreciation itself. The two submissions are related, but the nature of appreciation may bear on what things are worthy of that response or at least on what things are likely to elicit it. When we say a work of art has aesthetic value, what does our praise consist in? Prinz (2007) describes terms this question as aesthetic psychology. Meaning what kind of mental state appreciation is. What state are we expressing when we say an art or design work is good and has communicated effectively or achieved its aim? Prinz in his assertions agrees to the fact that an act is considered morally good when there are expressions of emotion towards that act, but argues that an emotional account of aesthetic valuation is equally promising. The valuing of all kinds involves emotions but it cannot be claimed that artworks express emotions or even that they necessarily evoke emotions. He claims that when a work is appreciated, the appreciation consists in an emotional response.

Stecker (2010, p. 5) states that is often said that “when we think something is aesthetically good, we value it for its own sake or as an end, rather than for something else it brings about or as a means”. We may as well focus on the design of an article of clothing, examining it on its own “merits”, and on the other hand, we may wonder whether the music would be good to dance to, or suitable for a certain occasion. The idea that we value the music for its own sake is much more of a

challenge. Should this be said based on the experience of listening to it? The crucial thing to aesthetic value according to Stecker (2010) is an experience, maybe one would prefer saying that it is valued for its own sake, in that the music may have some kind of instrumental value. The challenge mentioned deals with the way we value objects of aesthetic judgements. In the eighteenth century, aesthetic judgements were called judgements of taste and most of us are torn about what constitutes taste. Kant also takes aesthetic judgements to be subjective and thus they do not make factual claims, but nevertheless thinks that they claim universal assent.

Hume (1993), who wrote earlier in the century, also thinks that judgments of taste have an essentially subjective aspect, being “derived” from the sentiment or the reactions of pleasure and displeasure, yet he argues for (an intersubjective) a standard vindicating good taste over bad. Can one really have it both ways, as Hume and Kant at least appear to want? This stated question applies to even the most standard example of the subjectivity of taste. Let us consider taste in food. Each and every individual has different and unique preferences in terms of food and once standard of taste for a particular food cannot be the same for everyone. In this case, if we can talk of a standard, it is a contingent, intersubjective, probably culturally relative one. When a work of art is evaluated, can a similar standard of it being more or less contingent, more or less relative to the taste of a group be said of it?

With these assertions on aesthetic value and judgments discussed, it can be said that, in evaluating art or design taste and preferences as well as subjective responses will be raised based on individual standards. Unless there is a particular standard developed for that artwork that must be followed in its evaluation process.



### 2.7.3 Aesthetic Appreciation

The concept of aesthetic appreciation is complicated by at least two different factors. First, it is intimately related to a number of other “aesthetic concepts: those of aesthetic experience, aesthetic property and aesthetic value. What one takes aesthetic appreciation to be depends on one’s understanding of these other concepts and on which of these concepts are most emphasized. Second, there are multiple conceptions of the aesthetic and among these, there is no uniquely correct one. Aesthetic appreciation has it in one of its theory that its proper objects are aesthetic properties. These general value properties include beauty and ugliness; formal features such as balance or diversity; expressive properties such as sadness; evocate features such as power or being awe inspiring; behavioural features such as stillness, fragility or grace; and second order perceptual features such as being vivid or gaudy. Further, the theory claims that the recognition of the most general value properties (such as beauty) is based on perceiving the other properties (formal expressive, evocative, behavioural and second order perceptual) on the list. Goldman (1995, p. 17) states that “these properties, in turn, are taken in by perceiving non-aesthetic, perceptual properties like colour and shape”.

One direct importance that Stecker (2010) draws here is that while we readily talk about beauty in nature, so much of our experience of nature that we regard as aesthetic appreciation does not seem to involve the less general aesthetic properties, but rather judgements of beauty are either based directly on first order perceptual properties or on second order properties of a non-aesthetic character. “For example, my appreciation of a dress or a flower is mainly bound up in the delight in their



colour and shape/style closely observed. Even when an aesthetic property may appear to be the source of appreciation, this may not really be so” (p. 32).

## **2.8 African Aesthetics**

In this twenty first century generation, African arts and designs are being influenced by western traditions and standards because it is believed and assumed that Western scholars can fully understand and interpret the cultures of other peoples by using only Western cultural notions, values, and standards- a claim that cannot be divorced from Western imperialistic involvement in Africa (Abiodun, 2001). By this assumption and influence most Ghanaian students have conceived over the years, has had a great effect on their output in terms of designs. Most students are unable to be original in their creativity because they have come to embrace the western lifestyle and left their cultures and are therefore unable to appreciate the African internally generated culture which they find themselves. While it may have been useful to make use of only western theoretical paradigms in the study of design and aesthetics which will form the basis of the design education. It is therefore important to search carefully how African cultures can influence students and their artworks in which they originate from and to use internally derived conceptual frameworks in any critical discourse of African art. According to Abiodun (2001: p. 16) “the current conventional anthropological and art historical approaches which emphasize direct representational reaction and formal analysis to the detriment of culturally based studies in aesthetics and art criticism, will make full use of the philosophies of the African peoples”.

According to the concept of style or tradition as opined by Abiodun (2001) is broadly conceived as any set of ways, approaches or practices that characterise a

person's behaviour or mode of work of a group of people or a period. Because "tradition emerges from the kinds of choices persons make with respect to social, political, religious and artistic modes of expression which one can make sense to say that "tradition is derived from style"(Abiodun, 2001:p. 17). When tradition is used in the artistic discourse, is referred to as a style or the result of a creative and intelligent combination of styles from a wide range of available options within the culture. So whether style or tradition is not static and unoriginal as it has been conceived by some western art historians since the concept of style embodies the need for change, initiative and creativity which are major elements in the design education.

Equally helpful in attempting to know the various influences culture has on art criticism, and particularly on how responses are given and received in the design studio. In order to enable effective communication or discourse among students and teachers to help place their work and assessment in the appropriate context. There is therefore the need to know a detailed description of who the designer is and what went into the production of the designer's work. These include data on the designer's background, lifestyle, temperaments and the client he might be dealing with as well as the target audience. In addition to this, what influences certain reactions and responses as to the type of work produced.

Aesthetics is a term used to sum up the characteristics and elements clearly present in all design/art objects and products (Belton, 1998; 2014). These elements include, for example, the resemblance of a design work or an artwork, the luminosity or smoothness of an object's surface, the youthful appearance and what it portrays, reserved or composed demeanour, the elements of design and principles present and what it communicates. Similarly, in western art, aesthetics is also the term used to

sum up the search for beauty, balance, proportion and conscientious use of materials, in order to achieve good craftsmanship in art and design products. Bromer (1981) asserts that the political, religious, historical aspects of each religion are evident in their artistic products. The similarities and differences however subtle, should help to provide students with ample materials and knowledge for their analyses, drawings and designs of the world of art.

## **2.9 Forms of Critique**

Design critique is a broad concept and has various forms and descriptors. “Critique” in general is a systematic review of a creative work, an idea, or event taking into consideration the good and bad qualities. The term used within the context of design also includes that evaluation of an idea as well as the act itself. ‘Critique’ in design is often associated with numerous terms that have similar meanings which includes ‘review’, ‘jury’ and ‘crit’ which is the shortened form of critique and the idiomatically used term. As the purpose of this research is to first define the type of critique employed in the design studio by the lecturers and students in the department, it is therefore necessary to describe the types or forms of critiques that are available in the design studio. By describing these types of critiquing, we can better understand when and how critique is used in the design studio. In addition, this study seeks to answer not only what the purpose of these critique forms are as understood by both lecturers and students but also what is occurring currently in these processes.

Blythman et al. (2007) point out various types of critique which includes: peer crits, desk crits, formative crits, online crits, reviews or group crits, industry project crits, seminars, and summative crits. In this chapter, three major types are examined as

basically central to the use of critique in design and education: namely desk crits, peer crits and final critiques. These are usually employed in the design studio.

### **2.9.1 Desk Crits**

Schön admits that the pivotal focus of studio experience and the development of the ability of the student to learn to design in thoughtful manner is the informal critique or desk crit (Hokanson, 2010). Shaffer (2003, p. 5) defines desk crit as “an extended and loosely structured interaction between designer and critic (expert or peer) involving discussion of and collaborative work on a design in progress” but Hokanson (2010) opines desk critic as a small, informal conference between a student and a critic; professor, visiting professional, or another student. The desk crit is an extreme personal engagement that reviews a student’s design and thinking process.

In order for students to bring forth excellent designs, there is a need to participate and understand the importance of desk crits in the studios. “This model or standard of social collaboration between student and instructor involves a critical dialogue about the student’s design, and usually involves both individuals working towards solving a problem” (Conanan et al. 1997, p. 2). A crit is encouraged by the nature of openness in the studio environment, which may take place at any time in the sequence of a project and encourages spur- of – the- moment interaction as well as scheduled discussions.

During studio periods, students are presented with what is called a “design brief” which contains detailed instructions on an assigned project. Desk crit is a close interaction of verbal description of ideas which is assisted by sketches and models

between the lecturer and the student. This is where the lecturer (who serves as the instructor) embark upon a dialogue with the student in which the instructor guides the student through the design process. Graham (2003) adds that the conversation is unique to each student depending upon the students' ideas and progress and states that "Desk crit is a time during which the Beaux-Arts heritage of our education is evident" (p.19).

In summary, it is said that Desk crits exemplify the master-apprentice relationship; the learn-by-doing style of teaching that the design education is based upon. One potential problem of this heritage of design education is that the development of design studio spaces (environment) to cater for the number of students, offering the design course makes it difficult for the design instructor to conduct desk crits other than the lecturer and students allow to send the studio projects to their comfort zones to work on. It is therefore essential for design institutions to create the needed space and time for learners in the design field.

### **2.9.2 The Peer Critique (Crit)**

Peer crits involve the participation of individual learners in a design class given the opportunity to offer their contributions to the design process of their colleagues. This crit allows students to share their knowledge and skills with each other by either demonstrating or directing, giving feedbacks on their works and discussing intensively how best a problem can or should be solved.

### **2.9.3 Final Critiques or Jury**

Review or jury is usually the universal name commonly used for this type of critique. Shaffer (2003 p. 5) basically explains the review or jury as "a formal group



discussion of student work: individuals display their work, present their plans, and get feedback from professionals outside the studio”. But the word ‘Jury’ in its normal use sounds intimidating or unapproachable as Graham (2003) asserts. The word ‘jury’ when looked up in a dictionary or on the internet, states that, “A body of people, who are chosen to decide the truth of factual evidence in an action or legal proceeding and, on instruction of the court, to apply the law to the facts. In other words a group of people selected to give a verdict or judge a legal case that is presented before them in a court of law (Encarta, 2009).

Graham defines a ‘design jury’ as “a spontaneous conversation about a project in which the student is allowed a short time to present his/her work in front of his/her classmates, instructors and sometimes outside interested parties, after which a panel of jurors’ discusses the project” (Graham, 2003 p. 20). Jurors usually consist of design lecturers of a faculty, teaching assistants, practitioners, and sometimes, public users, clients, or government officials. The jury system as adopted in graphic design education is borrowed from nineteenth century concepts used in the Ecole des Beaux Arts.

The exclusive aim of juries was to evaluate, “the students’ fate ultimately rested in the hands of the gods’ that is, jury members who decided whether they passed or failed” (Anthony, 1989 as cited in Graham, 2003 p. 21). The works of the students were evaluated behind closed doors (in private) during the Ecole des Beaux Arts. This was done until the jury concluded were students allowed to receive feedback on their project, which took the form of written comments and a marked grade on the project done. This system of jury being held in a closet evolved first in the United States from France through the American students who trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Anthony (1989, p. 10) stated categorically that, 500 students from



America trained there between the periods of “1850 and 1968”, when it closed”. This system continued in most universities through the 1940s (Graham, 2003; Hokanson, 2012). They added that, public presentations of design work became more common in the 1950s and most design schools now hold final presentations in public, often with visiting professionals. “Students are given the opportunity to present their completed design work one after the other in front of a group of faculty, visiting professionals, their classmates and interested passers-by. Faculty and critics publicly critique each project spontaneously and students are asked to defend their work” (Anthony, 1987, p. 3). This also serves as a didactic exercise for the full members of the course. “The stated goal of many studio instructors is to have other students learn from comparison and criticism of the course projects” (Hokanson, 2012 p.76).

According to the studies conducted by (Anthony, 1987; Percy, 2004; Blythman et al. 2007) in an amazement, the final evaluative jury or review forms the minimum efficacious aspect of studio and critique. Critiques are mainly a formative structure of interaction and evaluation on a personal basis (Hokanson 2012). Martin (2007) avows that summative critiques sarcastically, take the most time and are probably the least effective at developing ideas and learning. In addition he adds that, in an environment meant to develop abductive and forward thinking, a concluding, evaluative event is necessarily less valuable.

Anthony (1987) and Shaffer (2003) share the same sentiments towards design juries since students, lecturers and practitioners in the field feel that interim presentations are more useful learning experiences than the final reviews. Anthony’s research was on this traditional form of assessment and pedagogy which he states that slips into a

didactic and non-educational form. Blythman et al. (2007) also conducted a survey on this form of critique and reported that learner and staff participants found this form of critique to be poorly valued as an educational experience just like the other researchers.

Based on the discussions made from this session, Reviews or final jury is a form of critique that concludes on a design work. The impact that the desk crits, peer crits, seminars, and group crits would have on a particular design work involves much as compared to the final reviews. Blythman et al. (2007) declare that “group-form critiques, intermediate pinups, and seminar form critiques are seen as very effective at engaging learners in a more generative and educational environment than within a final review. Blythman et al. also found that students held seminar or group crits is the most successful since a group of students presents their work in an informally structured environment which includes a studio critic. As a generative form, the process still focuses on the improvement and development of the design project (Hokanson, 2012).

## **2.10 Models for Critique in the Design Studio**

Viewing or observing a visual image should be more than just looking and reacting without much thought. Viewing is an interaction between the viewer and the art object. Although most art and design works are constant, the interaction varies with each viewer because of the viewer’s own varied perspectives and associations. That is why critical discussions around design is as important as the design process itself. Oliver (2009) stipulates that the process of observation is not necessarily orderly; as one looks at colours, shapes, rhythm, etc. one might be mixing the processes of perceiving, thinking and feeling and are unlikely to have a coherent, all-

comprehending statement to make at the end. This is what the famous art educator, Edmund Feldman, recognized and specified that:

There is a systematic way of acting like a critic, just as there is a systematic way of behaving like a lawyer. For lawyers there is form for presenting evidence, refuting adversaries, citing precedents, appealing to jurors and so on. Although art criticism does not have the form of legal debate, it does have form. Therefore, to do criticism well, consistently, we need a form or system that makes the best use of our knowledge and intelligence and power of observation (Oliver, 2009, p.2).

Feldman proposed four basic steps to his visual arts students in criticism in order to serve as a guide for them when critiquing a work of art. This includes description, analysis, interpretation and lastly evaluation, which he stated that is applicable to observing the other forms of arts. He suggested that each step is necessary to the ones that follow and for that matter should be undertaken in order. This means that thorough and accurate description is the basis for all other aspects of criticism; judgment and opinion need to be withheld until the end of the process. Description of Feldman is simply what you see in an art work. He terms this as 'visual facts' and defines this as "the physical features of an artwork that another person can see" (Feldman, 1994 p. 23). In addition, they are the 'gross' or perceptible, manifestations of an artwork.

This focused on the individual elements of a design. Thus, colours, shapes, textures, figures and faces. He moves further to explain that naming and describing the visual facts is an important operation because it slows down and concentrates the critics' perception. It helps in achieving critical consensus and also in Dewey's words, "It

enables the critic to “have an experience” (p. 27). Analysis, on the other hand, explains how the parts fit together to make a whole. Interpretation involves a personal reading of meaning into the work of art either based on the entire work or aspects of it; this is where the critic’s imagination is fully involved in finding meaning in the work. Evaluation is said to be one’s considered judgement of the work, which may be either implicitly or explicitly stated.

Barrett (1994) also developed a model for criticizing art in his published book titled: *Understanding the Contemporary*. He also came up with a four basic step for formal analysis of a work of art just like Feldman’s. The author proposed similar sub-topics just like the once Feldman proposed above but with slight difference. They include; description, analysis, interpretation and judgement. Barrett’s description entails the type or form of art; whether is architecture, sculpture, painting, poster, or one of the minor arts, the medium used in coming up with the work of art; whether clay, stone, steel, paint as well as the technique and tools used. In addition to his description, he adds the size and scale of work which is the relationship to the person, frame or context and the context of the art work’s location and the date it was executed or made and the artist or designer who did the work. Not only the elements of design that can be seen in the composition.

Barrett’s model even though includes the elements of design in the composition, he presents them in details. For example: including identification of objects, description of axis whether vertical, portrait, landscape, diagonal, or horizontal, giving a detailed description of lines and shapes as well as the relationship between the shapes and the lines; whether the contour or line is soft, planar or jagged, thick or thin, variable,

irregular, intermittent, indistinct, large, small, overlapping, colour and colour scheme as well as execution of work.

Analysis according to Barrett is determining what the features of a composition or artwork suggest and deciding what specific ideas the artist used such features to convey. Which first includes the determination of subject matter through the naming of iconographic elements, (e.g., historical event, allegory, mythology, etc), analysis of principles of design, discussions of how elements or structural system contribute to the appearance of the image, or function and the reaction of the object or monument. Interpretation also establishes the broader context for the type of art. This step answers the question; “Why did the artist create it or what does it mean”? Meaning, this stage is where the meaning or the main idea is conveyed. Judgement, which constituent’s the last step or stage of Barrett’s model is judging a piece of work by giving a rank in relation to other works and of course considering a very important aspect of the visual arts; in terms of its originality and uniqueness

Moreover to the above models by the two authors, Bates (2000) also recommended six art criticism model after the once proposed. Upon studying her model, one realises that it is a built on and a play of words suitable to the author. Her six step model are; Motivation, Identification, Description, Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation (pp. 211-212). The newly added stages from Bates model are the Motivation and Identification. Motivation in her context entails the art form, tools and media as well as the processes or techniques used in executing a work of art. From this it could be deduced that Barrett’s description has the type of art form, tools and materials, but not the processes or techniques and this is the addition Bates makes in her motivation stage.



Furthermore, the identification aspect also outlines the composite objects that comprise the subject matter of an artwork by first identifying the subject matter and the taking of visual inventory of the objects in the composition as mentioned by Feldman and Barrett in their description. A recent art criticism model was published and developed by Saskatchewan (n.d) from the 'Incredible Art Department'. This particular model developed had seven stages for critiquing an art work. These include, preparation, first impression, description, analysis, interpretation, background information and informed judgement.

These art educators have similar models with slight differences and explanations to the various steps provided as stated previously because there is no much distinction in terms of the basis of visual art education because criticism is basically criticising what one can perceive with the senses specifically the sense of vision (visual ability). Until one sees an art or hears a song he or she cannot critique effectively about it.

Guttormson (n.d) asserts that "viewing a visual image should be more than just looking and reacting without much thought". Viewing is an interaction between the viewer and the art object. Although most art works are persistent, the interaction varies with each viewer because of the viewer's own varied perspectives and associations. Preparation here talks about a pre tutoring of students about what critiquing or criticism is all about by conducting regular activities that will engage learners to acquire the skill or practise the art of criticism in the class for them to acquire an open mind about art works and this is one major object that the researcher will be finding out on the field in order to identify if this practise do exist before the actual jury crits or is assumed that students know what they are about.



The second aspect being 'first impression' is referred to as the critic's first immediate reaction towards a work of art which is very important to be recorded because it is possible to change after the end of the process. This enables the critic to understand his or her first impression better or may even change his mind on a particular artwork because in art there is no wrong answer. The following three steps are what has been discussed above. The sixth step which she named the background information is the information about the work and the artist involved. She states that it is the stage one needs to complete after the five mentioned steps mentioned previously.

The writer's reason for making this step the sixth step is that, she believes that when you are given the thought or the answer before you experience the artwork, your own creative thinking might be shallow or bypassed and the experience with the artwork will be lessened. This stage consists of the information about the artist and what brought about the work of art. Art galleries and gallery educators are good sources of information about art and artists. Also, if the artist is close or near you can have an interview with him or her which would guarantee an authentic information.

This stage is where the researcher disagrees with the writer because the researcher believes that, the background information should have been the stage two of this model immediately after the preparations. This, she believes will offer enough insight about the artist involved and why he/she does certain things in his or her composition. This will help guide the critic in the judgement of a particular artwork and to either help one to understand or change his/her first impression about the work of art. The last step of Saskatchewan's model is the 'informed judgement'. This simply denotes that this is a knowledgeable, culminating and reflecting activity. This

is the concluding aspect, where the critic gives some remarks about the artwork based on all the information gathered and on the critics' interpretations.

Graham (2003) also came out with a six suggested framework for criticism that has the potential to be used in design juries. The suggested framework consists of the following processes: Listening and Seeing, Description, Analysis, Interpretation, Guidance and Evaluation. The added aspect of Graham's framework is the Listening and seeing, and the Guidance. In Graham's disposition, he did argue that "Criticism in a design jury should begin with actively listening to the student's intentions to understand the process that lead to the invention of the design and what situation the design is being generated for" (p. 90). It was added that recognizing the student made certain decisions and questioning what one sees would then instigate the critical inquiry needed to give criticism in a design jury.

Guidance according to Graham (2003) should be followed by interpretation because the criticism should offer suggestions for future design decision to inform the student of what to do next to improve his or her design.

Furthermore in the line of models for art criticism was "Broudy's Aesthetics Scanning" in 1990. Broudy was most often associated with art criticism within the Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE). He developed a procedure similar to Feldman's, in which students attend to the visual qualities of an art object. He named his method "aesthetic scanning" (p. 210). This procedure includes: Technical Properties, Sensory properties, Formal properties, Expressive properties. The technical properties focused on a work to discover how it was made in terms of processes and media used. Sensory properties focused on art or design elements, an aspect Feldman addresses as part of his description step. Formal properties which

addresses the design principles is discussed in previous models mentioned earlier on. The last which is the expressive properties which touches on those qualities having to do with mood, emotion, feeling as addressed in Feldman’s interpretation step. The first of three models addressing the teaching of art criticism, aesthetics and art history. It combines Feldman and Broudy’s approaches in a six –step procedure. This model is presented in a form of a diagram in figure 2.1.

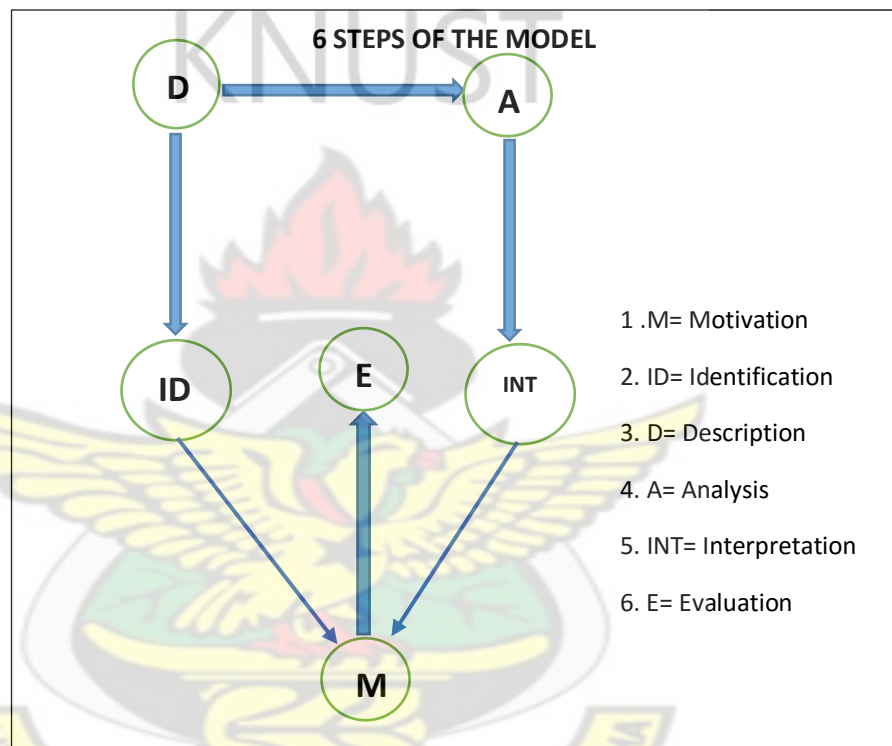


Figure 2.1: Steps of the art criticism teaching model (Broudy, 1990; Feldman, 1994)

1. M= Motivation : This includes the presentation of work
2. ID= Identification of objects comprising the subject matter
3. D= Description of elements of design or art.
4. A=Analysis of design principles
5. INT= Interpretation of meaning. (p. 211)

The art criticism teaching model was constructed or designed to lead students through productive experiences, they were designed to lead students through experiences within the response domains of art education. This section presents the art criticism teaching model addressing the teaching of art criticism, aesthetics and art history. Marc Treib as cited in (Graham, 2003 p. 85) states that “Criticism is essentially an optimistic enterprise. No matter how scathing the comments, there is still the underlying belief in the perfectibility of human activity, with some assumption that if we can just understand the picture more completely, we can design in a better way”.

Based on what has been discussed so far about the models or processes involved in critiquing or offering criticisms about an artwork or product, it could be said that one can develop a model based on another author’s creation by either modifying and applying these steps in a way that will best fit and solve a particular problem in the arts education. Based on this, the researcher will modify and combine two of these models to develop a criteria to solve the objective three of this project.

### **2.11 The Art (Skill) Of the Design Critique**

Critical discussion around design is as important as the design process itself. The receiving and giving out of feedback from colleagues can keep one challenged and can push an individual to improve. It could also demoralise a person. Despite its value to the outcome of the design process, it’s far too often avoided because we subconsciously feel criticism of our work is not just a reflection of our design, but is a spotlight upon our personal shortcomings. Nothing could be farther than the truth. Proper design criticism focus on goals, outcomes and the needs of the users. How then does one become constructive when giving criticism? (Treehouse, 2011)

## 2.12 Language as a Tool for Design Critique

There is a need to understand “disciplinary specific ways of thinking and practicing in higher education” since there is an upsurge interest in pedagogical research (Harman & McDowell, 2011: p. 42). This research aims to develop a deeper understanding of the elements of studio-based teaching and learning to enhance critique. Svensson and Edstrom (2011) studied the role of studio conversation and its relation to artwork in the context of students studying art and design. Their study emphasises on the centrality of language in art and design assessment. Within a Crit the judgements made about students’ artwork are communicated through language. Elkins (2001) explains the importance of dialogue in art and design education. In a chapter on the Crit, in a book with the teasing title of “Why Art Cannot Be Taught”, Elkins talks about the ultimate terms of art critiques: they are the final goals, the ideals, the ultimate terms of praise (2001: p.113). Elkins gives the examples of the following terms that might be used to evaluate student work in a Crit: “Interesting, compelling, moving, strong, and powerful” (2001; p.113). He calls these words “rhetorical criteria” because the words used do not tell you what the work looks like, but the words do tell those who are used to reading them how the work can make you feel. Thus, one cannot evoke the specifics of the artwork by looking at the “rhetorical criteria” used.

The function of language in art and design education is foregrounded in Shreeve et al.’s (2010) study of art and design signature pedagogies, which characterises art and design teaching and learning as “a kind of exchange” (Orr & Bloxham, 2013). Student work is therefore given a principle or an idea for the non-verbal artefact, but



according to Orr & Bloxham, the central truth of the discipline is in the exchange about the work of art. In a limited study of the language of a Crit in design, Mitchell (1998: p. 30) discusses the ways that students are prepared to enter the “discourse of design”. The reality of the design according to Mitchell exists in and through the exchange (1998: p. 32). Design making itself may be non-verbal but the message and meaning being conveyed resides in language. According to Orr and Bloxham, Mitchell uses this case study to explore the relationship between verbalising and non-verbal making and she comments on the role of language in the assessment of art and design: “Language is playing a constructive as much as a representational role.

It is being used to actively create and clarify the design” (Mitchell, 1998: p. 31). This is a view of language as constructive rather than representational; “it is as though the word as it is transacted between speakers both allows for shared meanings and yet remains to be interpreted”(Mitchell, 1998:p. 32). The constructive role of language means that “talk can bring objects into being and allow them to be continually made and remade” (1998: p. 34). Mitchell concludes her paper with the claim that “the work only begins to be art when talk breaks out” (1998: p. 34). These reviews suggest that an analysis of assessment of talk will offer useful insight into art and design approaches to assessment.

Using assessment talk as research information is a particularly efficient way to elucidate assessment judgement. Schön & Vygotsky (1983) also outline how design critiques are moderated by language as well as the physical materials available. These writers added that, participants in a design review engage in what they term as “reflective conversation with the materials”. That means, as participants interact with



each other and with the tools available to them to them (for example, specialized vocabulary or a sketch pad), they also react to feedback from the colleagues and instructors and sometimes the environment in an unexpected ways (Conanan, 2001).

Conanan (2001, p.8) states clearly that “language not only serves the function of explicitly communicating about design but also of providing a model of how designers use speech as a tool for practice. This idea indeed suggests that students must have access to others with expect ideas and contributions about design and the management of studio activities in order to learn from their skills, choice of words, speech, mannerism and ways of designing and giving out feedbacks professionally and effectively.

### **2.13 How to Conduct a Critique**

It is advisable to begin critique with some ground rules to guide the activity. Each and everyone needs to participate (as cited in Treehouse, 2011). When students or learners are subject to criticism, it will feel less like anyone is being singled out, and it becomes less stressful for all. Sometimes, students tend to let criticism stray into the realm of the personal. In times like this, the instructor or teacher is to call out on it and remind students of how best to direct their criticism in order to help each designer improve (Tron, 2013). Giving and receiving criticism should be taught before beginning the practice of critique in order to prevent nervousness in case there are visiting students from other departments who have no idea about critique. Critical discourse is an art that requires some practice in order to feel comfortable on either side of the discussion.

The designer or student presenting is to provide a brief explanation of their thought process to create some context for discussion, but it should not be too extensive. The

more explanation is offered, the more it will shape the feedback given. It will make people more inclined to simply parrot back the designer's intention rather than offering a gut reaction to what the critic sees.

You will inevitably encounter points at which some feedback stings a bit, but that is okay. Fostering open communication in your team even when the feedback is hard to hear is, in the long term, a healthy thing. Though you want to steer clear of personal attacks, you have to facilitate honest communication and create an environment where people truly know when they are heading down the right path, or are way off base. If everyone gets a pat on the back, you encourage mediocrity, and let people know that okay is good enough.

Critique therefore becomes a must for design students being trained to become professional designers in future. One cannot call him or herself a designer if he cannot give and take criticism. It is said that even the greatest designers of all time are subject to some criticism. When we stop evaluating our work, we stop growing. The sting you might feel from criticism of your work is just a growing pain as your mind expands. Embrace it, because it's going to lead you to new heights in your career.

#### **2.14 Giving Constructive Criticism**

Criticism must be honest and constructive. Meaning it must be carefully considered in order to help enhance the design process. The goal of every critique is to discover how to make a design better, not for perfection. However, when perfection is attained it is appreciated. If feedbacks are tough, then one is advised to start with the positive feedbacks. As Poppins once advised, "A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down" (as cited in Treehouse, 2011 p.1). Critical feedbacks must be

connected to the goals and needs of the design being criticised. The possibility that an initial research has been conducted on the persona is elevated. The qualities or image is placed on the same pedestal and design concepts viewed in accordance to the needs of your audience and not your personal biases. This helps in the articulation of your observations and recommendations, as it will keep one from giving direct feedbacks that are inappropriate. Design accomplishments may involve the observation of style. Style is discussed in terms of the goal as it tends to be seen as a reflection of a personal viewpoint (Cheng, 2013). The consideration to the style in relation to the brand, to competitors and the emotions that it will invoke must be considered carefully. Pertinent questions such as; is it appropriate for the client? Does it effectively shape customer perceptions? Must be asked.

### **2.15 Receiving Criticism**

The recipient of design critique, must consider the number one rule, which is 'listen'. One's first reaction might be to defend each and every criticism but that will not help the discourse and will prevent the opportunity to really consider the suggestions offered. It is therefore necessary that one listens carefully and take each and every statement gently and afterwards can provide your thoughtful response after colleagues have spoken. Recipients response should not always be "no". There are useful feedbacks that will make your designs better (Cheng, 2013).

There's a rule in improvisational acting that states, "Never say no", as it kills the flow of ideas. The same is true in critical design discussions. Instead, you can keep the conversation going with a response like "That's an interesting idea that I also considered, and here's my thinking on that ...". This gives your colleagues the opportunity to see your thought process, and potentially help you take your line of

thinking further. It is advisable to bring to the critique a notebook and keep detailed notes on the suggestions you receive. Not only does this help you remember the direction you should take when sit back down to work, but it also shows your colleagues that their input is valuable. When you've received helpful feedback, don't be shy about offering thanks. Thanking someone for feedback, rewards their contribution, and wins an ally in the cause of improving your designs. Knowing that your designs are subject to critical feedback will change the way you design. When you are designing, it's a smart idea to jot down some notes that will help you express to your colleagues how you arrived at your final design (Conanan & Pinkard, n.d).



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Overview**

This chapter outlines and clarifies the research design, the structure known as the “glue” that holds all of the elements in a research project together (Amoako-Agyeman, 2011). It includes the population for the study, sampling techniques, and data collection instruments. In addition, administration of instruments, ethical considerations, data collection procedures, and data analysis plan were also discussed. These were used to achieve the results of the study.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

##### **3.2.1 Qualitative Research Design**

The researcher made use of the qualitative research design to explore the practice of critiquing as a pedagogical tool within the second year graphic design studio. Fraenkel & Wallen (2009) define qualitative research as the research that deals with investigations into quality of relationships, activities, situations or materials rather than quantity. A similar view is shared by Qualitative Research Consultants Association (2013) that, qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience’s range of behaviour and perceptions that drive it with reference to specific topics or issues by using in-depth studies of small groups of people to guide and support the construction of hypothesis. The descriptive, exploratory, and participatory action research methods under qualitative approach were used for the study.

### **3.3 Exploratory Research Method**

Exploratory research is conducted to provide a better understanding of a situation. It is not designed to come up with final answers or decisions. Through this form of research, researchers hope to produce hypotheses about what is going on in a situation (Cengage Learning, 2012). Researchers with a single broad purpose use this research method to: clarify the research questions that guide the entire research project. This form of research method was used for the study because it provided information and insight into the researcher pertaining to the practice of design studio critique in the said department understudied. The entire notion of exploratory research is that it precedes a larger, more formal research project.

Therefore, a pilot study was conducted through focus group discussion and personal interviews of three (3) lecturers and twenty (20) students in the department to really clarify whether the problem still persist in the department and how best it could be improved before the carrying out of the actual study.

### **3.4 Descriptive Research Method**

Descriptive research relates to Leedy & Ormrod (2005) as that which examines a situation as it is. It does not aim at modifying or changing the situation under investigation but rather allows for an intense and vivid description of details of the phenomenon under investigation in words than in figures. The descriptive method was adopted to describe how lecturers and students go about design critiquing in the studio as well as the processes involved in the activity, how prepared they are and the knowledge acquired before the practice. It describes the instructional activity which both the lecturer and students engage in the studio prior to the beginning and practising of the design critique to promote active teaching and learning of critique in the studio. The said activities were observed.



This research method enabled the researcher to accomplish the research objectives set for the study. Vivid explanations were given as to the happenings in the design studio and why it was so.

### **3.5 Action Research Method**

According to Mills (2003, p. 4), action research is “any systematic inquiry conducted by one or two individuals or researchers to gather information about the ways that a school operates; how they teach and how well students learn in which they are personally involved”. This research method is intended to create knowledge, propose and implement change and improve practice as well as performance in the design studio (Stringer, 2000). This research method was employed because it is participatory and the researcher was involved. In this engagement the researcher took part in introducing and implementing the proposed criteria designed for students and the lecturer to help improve students’ and lecturer’s responses during critiquing in the design studio. A desk crit approach was used to help introduce the system to students as they worked individually and in groups to help them look critically at what they are doing in order to help them articulate their ideas well and effectively when asked to do so during critiquing periods. The practical and participatory action research was used for the study because the courses offering the design critique was a practical course and it involved the lecturer, the researcher and the students.

### **3.6 Advantages of Action Research**

Action research involves numerous advantages to individuals or groups that decide to use it in a study to improve or help solve a problem in a gradual process. These advantages include:

- The potential to fill the gap between theory and practice (Johnson, 2012).

- The improvement of educational practice and the creation of better professionals since it offers teachers the opportunity to reflect critically on their practice (Hodgson, 2013).
- The development of new ways by educators to improve their craft.
- The systematic identification of problems by the researcher.
- The ability of action research to lead to the development of research-oriented individuals, through collaboration render action research methodology a worthwhile professional activity for teachers (Hine, 2013).

As a result of the involvement of the lecturer in charge of design studio critiquing and the researcher in the study much was achieved and this is discussed in details in the subsequent chapter.

### **3.7 Disadvantages of Action Research**

- Action research almost always focuses on a particular group or individual.
- Internal validity: Threats in action research are greater because of collector bias. The source of data is also the researcher.
- External validity: Results in action research cannot be generalised.

### **3.8 Reasons for Adopting Action Research**

The research is focused on determining how design studio critique in relation to students and lecturers responses in the studio can be improved in the Department of Communication Design. There was a need to look at how students can confidently, critically and intelligently articulate their design ideas for better understanding since the course involves effective communication to the general public through the print media and screen media.

Therefore there was the need to find out what actually goes on in the studio, the deployment of content by lecturers, the forms of critique adopted, how is critiquing done and the responses/reactions received and why students and lecturers react the way they do during those periods and also how best it can be improved. Hence the need to adopt an action research approach to this study. The latter approach addresses problems in educational practice and has the potential to generate real and continued improvements in organizations. Moreover, it helps text and explore the new generated criteria of how students should view their design works and to assess its effectiveness.

### **3.9 Population for the Study**

Population is defined as the larger group from which one hopes to apply the results to after obtaining data from a smaller group referred to as sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). In addition to the above definition, Kumekpor (2002) also defines population as “the total number of all units of the phenomenon to be investigated that exists in the area of investigation” (p.). However, the population is the group of interest to the researcher, to whom the researcher would like to generalize the results of the study. The population for the study were lecturers and undergraduate students who are in the department of Communication Design, Faculty of Art, KNUST Kumasi. (See Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Population of Department of Communication Design

<b>Academic Years</b>	<b>Number of students</b>	<b>Lecturers</b>
Year 1	158	7
Year 2	185	6
Year 3	182	
Year 4	100	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>625</b>	

### 3.9.1 Accessible Population

The accessible population for the study was second year undergraduate lecturers and students, teaching and offering practical design studio courses, in the department of Communication Design, KNUST.

### 3.10 Sampling Design

Latham (2007, p. 2) opines that sampling “involves taking a representative selection of the population and using the data collected as a research information”. A sample therefore is, the group from which information is acquired from (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). The purposive and convenience sampling methods were used for the study. They were used to select two practical studio courses, namely graphic design and typography which were handled by one lecturer in the second year level and were practising critique as a major component in the studio.

The main aim that influenced the use of purposive sampling method was because the second year undergraduate students were the group the researcher deemed appropriate and fit for the study since they were all offering active practical design studio course and were practicing design critique in the studio. Also, they were in their formative year or level and can easily adopt the skill and knowledge of aesthetics and criticism for critiquing their work effectively, before they climb higher in the academic ladder where the practice is more intense. They were readily available to the researcher because the researcher had been with the department since her student days through to her teaching assistantship and professional teaching practice for the past six years. For these reasons, it enabled the researcher to obtain the necessary data for the study. There were eight (8) courses being offered in the second year with five (5) of the courses being studio oriented. Out of the five (5) courses only two (2) were practising critique and these two courses were taught by one (1) lecturer. Therefore the two courses were sampled with the lecturer in charge. The total number of the students offering these courses were 185 and all of them were sampled.

### **3.11 Instrumentation**

Hsu and Sandford (2010) refer to instrumentation as the means by which researchers attempt to measure variables of interest in the data-collection process. There are a number of research instruments. However, considering the nature of the study and the data required, observations, questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussion were combined and found to be most suitable for the purpose of triangulation. Guion, Diehl and McDonald (2013) explain triangulation as the use of two or more methods of data collection techniques in a study to increase its validity.

In accordance with this, the researcher adopted the use of observations, questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions as a means of collecting primary data for the study. The characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of these instruments were also taken into account in employing them to gather the requisite data for the study.

### **3.12 Data Collection**

Primary data collected for this study focused on the undergraduate students and lecturers from the Department of Communication Design offering practical studio courses. The researcher's key instruments of data collection were by means of personal interviews (survey), field notes, conversations, on-site visits to the various studio lessons and observing practical teaching and learning at the design studios, how studio course content was deployed, students and lecturers' responses during critique sessions and what equipment were available and being used in the studio. Secondary data were gathered from books, journals, and online documents, published and unpublished theses. School records and other documents that related directly to the use of critique in the design studio.

#### **3.12.1 Observation**

According to Kawulich (2005), participant observation has been used in a variety of disciplines as a tool for collecting data about people, processes and cultures in qualitative research. Kawulich further explained that, observation enables the researcher to describe existing situations using the five senses, providing a written photography of the situation under study. For this research, observation provided the researcher with first-hand information on real situations in the selected studios with reference to the involvement of lecturers and students in the studio activity and the



type of critique employed and how it is conducted in the design studios of the department of communication design.

### **3.12.2 Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed to cover a wide range of open-ended and close-ended questions (Appendix 1A and 1B). It is a two page questionnaire. It was categorized into two main sections; section A and section B. Like most questionnaires section A started with demographic information such as the person's age, gender, department and course. This is to uncover what groups there are in the population and also to give a complete picture of the characteristics of each of the sections. Section B dealt with their responses to questions related to the involvement of aesthetics and criticism in the teaching and learning process in the design studio and its effectiveness. The questionnaire was given to the supervisor of the research, peers, fellow researchers and students who had similar attributes to test its validity.

### **3.12.3 Interviews**

Brinkmann explained interview as a conversational practice where knowledge is produced through the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee (Academia, 2014). With an interview guide, interviews conducted for the study were informal and in the form of conversations with three (3) lecturers and thirty (30) students. The interviews which were conducted personally by the researcher primarily sought to find what the underlying reasons why they do not respond the way they should when they are asked to talk or ask questions about their design works during critiquing periods. It also sought to find out from the lecturer what he thinks is preventing students and himself from responding and receiving the right attitude and enthusiasm for the studio activity. Also to find out if he has some

measures put in place to help improve the situation. For example, if they teach aesthetics and criticism as a course to help prepare students before the actual practice or there is a model that students follow when critically studying a design work. Moreover, if he has knowledge of any learning management system and how he would like to interact with his students on their works before going to the studio.

#### **3.12.4 Focus Group Discussion**

Focus Group method was chosen because it is considered one of the most effective methods for in-depth exploration of the knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs of various audiences (Fern, 2001). Sherraden (2001) also explains focus group as an exploratory research tool which is structured to explore people's thoughts and feelings to obtain detailed information about a particular topic or issue. Focus groups bring together a small number of participants from a well-defined target population (Amoako-Agyeman, 2011), focused because it involves some kind of collective activity to explore and discuss a set of pre-selected topics under the guidance of a moderator (Morgan, 1988).

As the results of the knowledge obtained through various writings, the researcher conducted three focus group discussions upon which she moderated in order to create an open and permissible atmosphere in which each person feels free to share his or her point of view on the reason why they do not respond to the lecturer and their design works during critiquing periods. The focus groups offered the opportunity for students to have the presence of group interaction in response to researchers' questions. The group participants providing audience for each other, encouraged a greater variety of communication which is buttressed by Morgan (1993) who stated that the exchanges among participants however, helped them to

clarify for themselves just what it is that their opinion or behaviour depends on. Also the interaction created a cuing phenomenon that helped for extracting more information.

### **3.13 Ethical Considerations**

Prior to the study, the researcher sought permission from the administration of the selected department (Department of Communication Design, Faculty of Art, KNUST) and the purpose of the research was clearly stated. An official letter from the Department of General Art Studies (the researcher's department) was also submitted to the Department and the purpose of the project specified and explained. Permission was granted before the field work was undertaken. For purposes of confidentiality, the course is called GRACODE, a fictitious name. The selection of the department and the course was purposive based on "the researcher's judgement as to typicality or interest" (Robson, 2002).

In purposive selection of particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices (Maxwell, 2005). "Although this method can be very useful for specific research goals, the researcher will not necessarily be able to generalize the results to a larger population" (Denton & Smith, 2001, p. 7).

### **3.14 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher had a specific purpose of interviewing 10 selected students from each of the GRACODE groups to answer specific questions and the lecturer teaching studio design critique as they were chosen for specific information. This helped the researcher to select appropriate practical courses for the study. The lecturer in charge had formal education in Aesthetics and Criticism at the Department of General Art

Studies KNUST with a Ph.D degree in Art Education with expertise in studio critique.

Direct interviews were conducted with respondents. The interviews were carried out on a one on one basis in selected places on KNUST campus in a form of a conversation. The researcher used unstructured interview schedule with open ended questions. Through observation, the researcher physically assessed and examined the various types of critique used in the studio. The methods, processes, history, the language and responses from both the instructor and the students concerning their design works. Some pictures were taken with a digital camera to enable the researcher capture images documented for comparison and assessment.

### **3.15 Data Analysis Plan**

The processes of analysis of data from observation, interviews, questionnaires and focus group discussions are outlined below. The goal of data collection and analysis is to make inferences from the sample that properly applies to the population (Bumham & Anderson, 2002).

#### **3.15.1 Qualitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative analysis is the process of resolving data into its constituent components, to reveal characteristic elements and structure with the aim of describing, interpreting, explaining and understanding the objects or event to which the data refers (Amoako-Agyeman, 2011 p. 117). Qualitative data were transcribed and analysed following Miles & Huberman (1994) framework which involves three processes: data reduction, data display and drawing and verifying conclusions. These three components, according to Punch (2005) involve three main operations which are not sequential: coding, memoing and developing propositions.

Braun & Clarke (2006) opines that, coding begins as central in the analysis process directed at discovering regularities in the data finding which counts as a pattern of meaning and issues of potential interest, whilst memoing (recording reflective notes about what the researcher was learning and observing) links coding with the developing of propositions to show what they imply towards drawing conclusion (Punch, 2005). Writing according to Amoako-Agyeman (2011, p. 117) “is an integral part of analysis, beginning in phase one, with the jotting down of ideas and potential coding schemes, and continue right through the entire coding/analysis process. Analysis involves sifting through of the entire data collection by moving back and forth, the coded excerpts of the data that you are analysing, and the analysis of the data that you are producing (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the process of analysis it was realised that comparative and contrasting cases were identified. In accordance with Braun & Clarke (2006), the system of thematic analysis reveals a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data, common and new themes from the discussions were identified. In addition, it negligibly organises and describes data set in rich detail. Furthermore, in the assertions made by Braun & Clarke (2006), they opine six phases of analysis which serves as a guide through the process of data transcribing, coding, enumeration, creating hierarchical category system, showing relationships among categories and looking for evidence for the regression model. “The phases are data familiarizing, generating initial codes, searching for themes by collating encryptions (codes) into potential themes, reviewing themes in relation to the coded extracts, defining and naming themes, and producing the report by selecting vivid, compelling extract examples, relating analysis to research questions and literature.



Advantages of Using Thematic Analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006 as cited in Amoako-Agyemang, 2011). They are as follows:

- It has flexibility and is relatively easy and quick method to learn, and do; accessible to researchers with little or no experience of qualitative research.
- Results are generally accessible to the educated general public; useful method for working with participatory research paradigm, with participants as collaborators; can usefully summarize the key features of a large body of data, and/or offer a “thick description” of the data set; can highlight similarities and differences across the data set.
- Also, in addition to the above statement, it can generate unanticipated insights; allows for social as well as psychological interpretations of data and can be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development.
- It also helps in creating and sustaining an atmosphere that promotes meaningful interaction.
- It also conveys a humane sensitivity, a willingness to listen without being defensive, and a respect for opposing views that are unique and beneficial in these emotionally charged environments (p. 18)

The main disadvantage is that their findings cannot be extended to wider populations with the same degree of certainty that quantitative analyses can: findings are not tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or due to chance.

### **3.16 Design and Development of Criteria**

Inputs and responses from written literature, lecturers, experts in the field of criticism and students on how the critique criteria should be developed to help



improve critiquing in the design studio was sought from the interviews, discussions and questionnaires. The criteria served as a guide for students in viewing and analysing their design works and the designs of others. After it was developed, a copy was given out to the lecturers and experts to proofread and make changes and corrections where necessary before it was introduced to the students and the lecturer. Students and lecturer's responses to the criteria proposed were observed and noted during critiquing sessions. The effectiveness or otherwise of the developed criteria in viewing students' work and helping them to critically articulate their ideas was then ascertained.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Overview

This chapter consists of the results and the data analysis of the qualitative data approach, involving four data gathering instruments: Observation, questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions of students offering design critique. The study investigates, the type of studio and forms of design critique adopted by the lecturer and students, offering practical design studio course and exactly what pertains in the studio; relationships between students and lecturer as well as attitudes, reactions and responses towards critiquing in the studio. It also discusses how critiquing responses can be improved in the design studio. It also provides discussion of research findings and builds bridges between objectives, findings and relevant literature. It further identifies the importance of teaching aesthetics and criticism and, design history in a design course to help serve as a guide for subsequent practices of emerging trends in graphic design critique.

#### 4.2 Presentation of Findings

The analytical process was done and presented in four phases. First, is the discussion phase, here there is a conversation between lecturers and students pertaining to the types of critique they adopt and what goes on in the studio before the practice of critique. This phase addresses the first objective of the study. Second, is the interaction phase, it gives a vivid description of how the lecturer and students respond to critique and the reasons why certain reactions occur during critique. The students were asked if they were conversant with any criteria or model that guides them when critiquing their design works. Also, how students' responses could be

improved for effective teaching and learning were also addressed. Third, the adaptation phase; which is the design and development of a proposed criteria to help guide students as they observe to critique their works and how they used the criteria. The students were asked if they were conversant with the criteria and how productive it was. Finally, reflective phase, students had the opportunity to reflect on their experience of adopting the criteria as a guide for critiquing their works.

### **4.3 Discussion Phase**

This sub section discusses what the researcher observed in the studio. Detailing the observations that were done.

#### **4.3.1 Observation**

Three sets of observations were held for all the three groups: Group A comprised 52 students: males and females, with females dominating in number. Group B was also made up of the same mixed gender but propositionally balanced with 62 students. Group C consisted of males and females as well but with males dominating in number to some few females and for that particular group the ratio was 80:5 to be precise. Meaning 80 males to 5 females. This describes how large the groups were. The observations were done for two semesters (September, 2014 to April, 2015), three days in a week since the researcher was on a professional teaching practice and for that matter became a participant observer.

These students were all offering the GRACODE course, but were grouped into three because of differences in specialization. The time scheduled for the studio classes were as follows: The GRACODE group 'A' was for Advertising and Media Management and they met on Mondays from 8:00 am to 12:30pm whiles GRACODE group 'B' was for Visual Communication and they met Tuesdays at

1:30pm to 6:00pm and on Wednesdays at 8:00am to 6:00pm for typography by the same lecturer and the same visual communication group. The GRACODE group 'C' was for Film and Animation and they were meeting on Mondays at 1:30pm to 6:00pm.

Things that were observed included; the knowledge of students in design history, aesthetics and criticism, the forms of critique that were being adopted, students and teacher relationship in the studio, how students and teacher responded to design critique, the pedagogy in the studio, facilities and how responses were given and received (see Appendix A).

Schön (1983) observed that the process of design reveals observations that can be helpful to our understanding of design itself. Therefore, there was a need to observe the processes that go on in the design studio to enhance the understanding of design in the studio. From the observations, the researcher observed the studio environment or space, since it is the central learning place or structure for students of design (Graham, 2003). The design studio was not very spacious for students due to the number of students that visit the studio. The major facilities and equipment available to students in the studio were tables and stools on which they sit to work, mounting boards for mounting their works for critiquing, electricity (power), plugs for charging their laptops, fans and a white board. Students provided their own materials and tools for their works. Also, there was the consistent provision of a projector by the lecturer for display of students' design works and presentations. These were basically the facilities and equipment available.

#### 4.3.2 Studio Access

First of all, the design studio is the main structure design students work and must have access to the facility as propounded by Hokanson (2012). To allow for effective design critique, students and lecturers need space and time as well as assistance to enable them work effectively and comfortably since these things also affect students' responses to critiquing. Therefore accessibility to facilities, assistance, space and time spent at the studio was also looked at. Students visit or access the studio as a class and due to their large numbers they usually work in groups and sometimes individually. Students spend 3 to 5 hours and sometimes the whole day in the studio. Out of the 170 questionnaires administered to all the three GRACODE groups/classes, 150 were retrieved.

Among the 150 questionnaires answered, 82 students ticked yes for permanent availability of facilitator or assistance at the studio whiles working, 30 students ticked no, 38 specified that the teaching assistant is always there to assist whiles 9 specified the lecturer, 24 students ticked both whiles 31 ticked yes or no but did not specify. From the above information, one can attest to the fact that, there is always a permanent attendant at the studio to assist students as they work and this is encouraging since it is necessary to receive guidance from either the lecturer in charge or the older students who have been through the system before. Figure 4.1 gives the summary of the outcome of the questionnaires administered for students' opinion on the availability of assistants during their studio work.

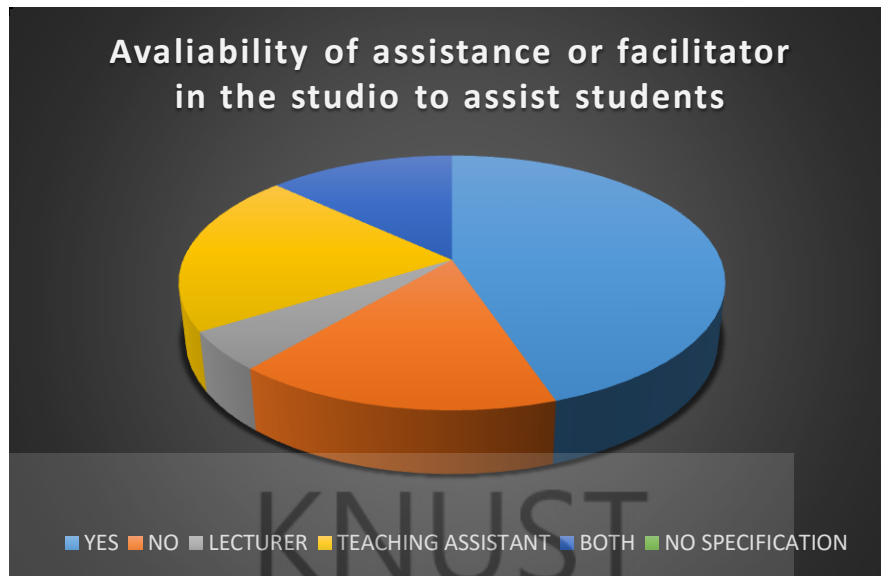


Figure 4.1: Availability of assistance during studio work

#### **4.3.3 Equipment, facilities, materials and tools availability**

The available equipment, materials and tools were: tables, stools, personal laptops, mounting boards, projectors, fans, plugs and sockets for charging laptops. Students stated that materials and tools are purchased by themselves and brought to the studio everyday. Materials and tools included: Portfolio bags, colours, pencils, pens, various kinds of papers, rulers, protractors, rapidograph pens, tool kit, mobile phones, reference materials, magazines, sketch pads, cutters and brushes.

#### **4.3.4 Level of students understanding in the Studio**

To help students communicate effectively about their ideas, their understanding during lectures must be evaluated. Students must understand what the lecturer teaches them in order to apply it effectively in their works. This helps in effective articulation of their ideas during critiquing. Response to questions and contributions from students help facilitate teaching and learning, but from the researcher's observations students were not forthcoming in responding to questions and contributions pertaining to their works. Students were asked to state if they



understand the lecturer when he teaches them in the studio. Fifty-seven students ticked “sometimes”, 37 students ticked “yes” and 42 students opted for “no” but 10 students did not respond. The percentage summary of the students’ opinions is shown in Figure 4.2.

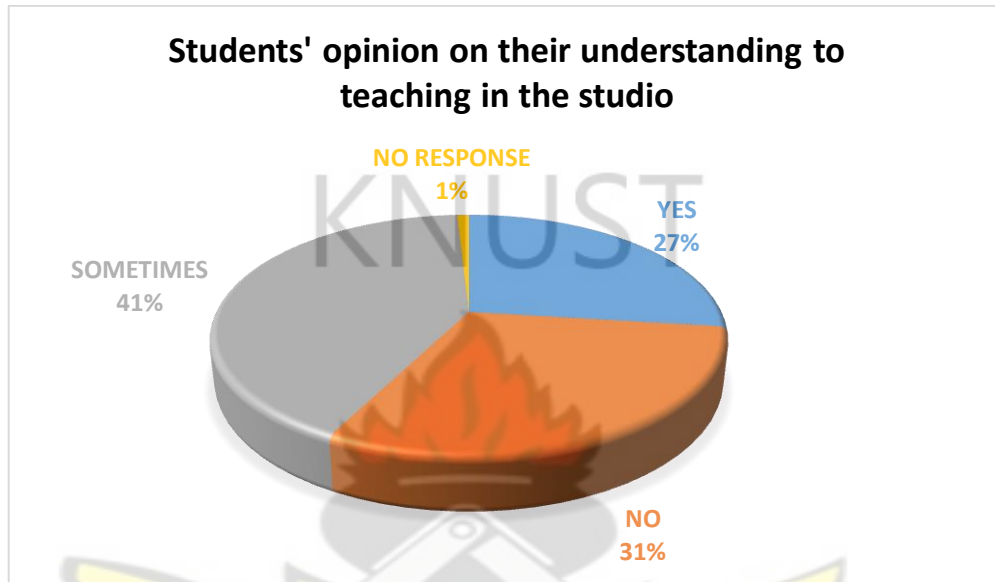


Figure 4.2: Students’ opinion on their understanding to teaching in the studio

#### 4.3.5 Knowledge in design history, trends, aesthetics and criticism

For students to be able to respond intelligently and critically to their design works and the works of others, they should have a fair idea about the design course they are pursuing and the practice since critique is a major tool that is used in the studio as Eshun and Adu-Agyem (2010) propounded that art criticism is an essential curriculum component in the teaching of design. Based on the above statement, the researcher deemed it necessary to inquire from students if they are taught design history, trends, aesthetics and criticism in their previous year or if there is a course that teaches them the above topics before they move on to the practice of critiquing in the studio. The following responses were given according to the three GRACODE groups. From the observations and interviews conducted by the researcher, aesthetics

and criticism was not taught in their previous year as a course. However, it was gathered that a particular course lecturer introduced it. Hence, from the discussions and interviews from the three groups, it was deduced that students had a fair idea about aesthetics and criticism but, in design history and trends students had little or no knowledge in these areas. Below shows excerpts from the three GRACODE groups and their focus group discussion pertaining to this question and their opinion about the teaching of aesthetics and criticism.

GRACODE A Group (Advertising and Media Management)

Norris: Aesthetics and Criticism was taught and I learnt not to condemn a work of design.

Jake: It was taught. However, in the practice, I learnt that it is good to be judgmental because it helps you to realize that you have not achieved your aim as a designer.

Vichy: Even though it was mentioned once a while in first year, it was supposed to have been taught well and considered important so that students do not take criticisms personal and get offended when their works are criticized.

Joe: Aesthetics and Criticism was supposed to have been taught, it would have helped us.

Van: The course is interesting, but some people do not know what to say when asked to respond because we lack the knowledge and guide in talking about our works.

Jesse: What am I to talk about? The course is deep and it needs thinking before you talk.

Papa: We were not taught as a course, but the lecturer expects us to know certain things that we don't know because the teaching of it is not clear.

Mat: I learnt appreciation in SHS but is just a surface teaching the teacher did and I don't know much, but I learnt in a particular class in first year to talk about layout, and visual analysis of a design based on some terminologies when asked to respond to my work.

GRACODE B (Visual Communication)

Emma: No, we were not taught but from my own understanding is about giving comments.

Papa: I have heard a lecturer mention aesthetics in his speech, but we were not taught aesthetics and criticism as a course but in general criticism is criticizing works.

Andy: Aesthetics from my SHS class was about beauty, but don't really know much about it.

Petty: We were taught and I studied perception and how to understand designs in a conceptual way.

Nana: Yes were taught I learnt is the beauty of works of art and how to analyse and access works based on the explanation given to designs that are made.

Akua: I think it was mentioned, but is not a course taught and I remember learning about how to talk about someone's work with respect to the principles and terminologies.

Naana: Yes, we were. I know about layout and visual analysis.

Ama: No, it wasn't taught, but it was once a while mentioned.

GRACODE C Group (Film and Animation)

Kuks: No, it wasn't taught, but this course is very deep.

Peter: It wasn't taught!

Yaw: No, I wasn't!

Anas: No, it wasn't!

Freda: It was mentioned. Consider your layout as a designer and also the clarity of your design.

Kwaku: No, it was in a different context but we were not specifically taught aesthetics and criticism as a course.

Kwame: I have a fair idea of what it is, based on a particular course in first year and is how to arrange and plan a design within a frame.

Kwabena: Yes, I think it was taught and I studied visual organization (i.e. type layout, visual appeal, grid layout).

Amoah: Yes, I even learnt that when you see a work or art piece, you should not criticise just like that, but you should rather try and understand the concepts behind the work.

Gilbert: Terms used by designers and elements of design were mentioned.

**Objective One** - To identify and describe the types of design studio critique being used in the design studio of the Department of Communication Design.

#### 4.3.6 Studio Activity

Before the design “brief” is given, there is an introduction to the topic to be worked on through a PowerPoint presentation by the lecturer where explanations are given in a form of a lecture. Students are further asked to react in a form of questions or contributions after the introduction. The lecturer then reads out the project brief to the class for the exercise to begin. A sample of the design brief is shown in appendix 1E. It was noticed and realized that students had no foreknowledge about what the whole design studio activity involves and the history behind the practice and what goes into critiquing even though they have been working and practising critique in the studio. As a result, some students saw the practice as irrelevant and a bother.

In addition, it was observed that most students do not write the details of the design brief down and it was not distributed to students for referencing in case there is a confusion or misunderstanding in terms of what to do. It was later on gathered, after an informal conversation with the lecturer in charge, who stated that, he stopped printing it out for students because students do not refer to it while working and therefore put a stop to it and decided to read and explain the brief out to them.

Moreover, most of the students, about 80% do not understand the lecturer when he teaches, but are not able to go forth and ask questions pertaining to their difficulty for further explanations to be given by the lecturer. The questions are left with only a handful of students who usually gather the courage to ask questions and to contribute.

The forms of critique adopted by the lecturer and students in the design studio were; the desk crit, peer crit and the final jury or review where students are finally assessed.



- Desk Crit: The lecturer adopts desk crit as a tool and part of his activities to help gain better understanding into the ideas and progress of work students are coming up with in order to guide and suggest informed advice as to how the work could solve the problem presented to them. This tool builds a cordial and free atmosphere between the lecturer and the students. Hokanson (2010) buttresses the above statement by adding that this model of social interaction is small, informal conference between the student and the critic (instructor) involved in an intense and critical conversation about the student's design and thinking processes. But from the observations and discussions gathered, some students hide their design works from the lecturer because they think is not up to the required standard, others also avoid doing the work because they think they are not up to the task given so they wait till the close of the studio and send the work to other friends for assistance. In addition to the above, it was observed and gathered that the lecturer was not frequently and always involved in a desk crit with students due to his busy schedule as the Head of Department. However, he made ample time to explain and discuss students' ideas one on one when the need and time is available. It was noticed that due to the absence sometimes by the lecturer, it took the seriousness and focus of studio activity away. From what was gathered from the study, students' felt it was a waste of time to sit in the studio working on a project whiles it could be done in their comfort zones due to poor weather and studio conditions.

Also, due to the large class size of the second year students, the researcher found that the group sizes within the class was also quite a larger number,

and the lecturer found it challenging to conduct desk crit for each and every student. On the contrary, he managed to have personal conversations with some students and groups who approached him for further explanations. In addition most of the desk crits are done by the teaching assistant who is frequently available in the studio to assist students as they on their projects. Below is the lecturer and the teaching assistant involved in a desk crit with students (see Plates 4.1 to 4.6).



Plate 4.1: Lecturer engaged in a desk crit



Plate 4.2: Lecturer involved in a group discussion (desk crit)



Plate 4.3: Researcher involved in a desk crit





Plate 4.4: Researcher involved in one-on-one conversation with students concerning their design ideas.



Plate 4.5: Researcher involved in a discussion with students on how to effectively communicate their ideas in a group.



Plate 4.6: Researcher demonstrating to students during desk crit

- Peer Crit: during peer crit students were allowed to critique their fellow colleague's works by pairing up. With one of the student being an assessor and the other the assessee. Here they listen to each other's explanations and contributions about the works and suggest ways their works can be made better after which they were assessed based on the following: oral presentation, content, clarity of ideas, effective integration of textbook concepts, essay structure, grammar, mechanics, spelling and responding effectively to at least two other students' reports. Plates 4.7 and 4.8 show students having peer crit at the studio.





Plate 4.7: Students involved in a peer crit



Plate 4.8: Students involved in a group discussion (peer crit)

- Final Jury or Review: After students had gone through desk crit and the peer crit, a date for the final jury or review was scheduled. At this stage students come to the studio for an official presentation of all the processes, procedures, research, thumbnails, mind maps and every activity they went

through in coming out with the solution. The lecturer in-charge, invites another lecturer from the department to help assist in assessing student's works. The lecturer presents the students with a rubric and an assessment criteria for them to do a self-assessment or peer assessment. The latter is followed by the assessment of the instructor and the invited lecturer. What is being assessed is spelt out for students and the audience to know.

Next, the results or marks are read out according to groups if the work is done in groups for each student or group to know his or her performance. Group leaders and members are also given the opportunity to assess the performance of each and every student in the group. Plate 4.9 shows a picture of the lecturer and a visiting lecturer assessing students' work during final jury.



Plate 4.9: Lecturers' involved in a final review or jury with a student

**Objective Two** - To find out how lecturers and students respond to design critiques and why they respond/react the way they do.

#### 4.3.7 Lecturer's responses/reactions towards design studio critique

The lecturer's responses through interviews (personal conversations) and observations were categorized into three main sections namely; major themes, minor themes and labels (based on reflections). The responses were grouped under three main headings which were, the teaching of design, what the lecturer considers about the learner/student in the studio when teaching and lastly the way forward as to how the students' responses to design studio critique can be improved. Table 4.1 shows a detailed explanation of the responses received.

Table 4.1: Lecturer's Responses

Major Themes	Minor Themes	Labels
1. Teaching of design	Motive	Happy to teach, contribution to development and solving real life problems.  Encouraging and motivating students to be critical thinkers and an opportunity to help students come up with great designs that can go global.
	Enthusiasm	Concern and affection for young designers.  Natural- interest in design, Mandated, passionate, apathetic, punctual and duty conscious,  Interest based on critical thinking in coming out with great ideas to solve real problems.
	Confidence & Comfort	Very confident, bold in response to student questions, comfortable talking about youthful experiences and relationships in the class.  Cultural sensitivity and western

		influences on design.
	Role & Responsibilities	Busy schedule sometimes because of his position as head of department. Very responsible and time conscious. Takes his teaching periods seriously. Very knowledgeable in the field of graphic design.
	Training	Travelling for conferences and seminars in design schools in other countries. Organising training and seminars for lecturers in the field of graphic design.
	Studio Environment	Graphic design is the major subject discussed in the studio, students go through the design processes in order to be good professionals for the industry. The studio is always active with students working on their exercises.
2.The learner/student	Student's responses	<p>Students are not getting information that will help them to be creative and innovative. Students are motivated frequently to go the extra mile in performance.</p> <p>Students are unable to apply previous knowledge in subsequent exercises and lecturer has to remind students and this slows down activities at the studio.</p> <p>Poor responses because of pre-conceived ideas from family and friends about lecturer, the course and departmental conditions.</p>
	Syllabus/Timetable	Restructuring of syllabus to introduce design history, aesthetics and criticism as a course to be taught in first year in order to prepare students adequately for the subsequent years.



	Time/Size	<p>Limited time for students to talk about their works.</p> <p>Large class sizes</p> <p>Limited time to critique each student's work.</p>
	Materials/ Facilities and Equipment	<p>Lack of funds for materials, internet connection difficulties are being addressed, Students are made to purchase their own materials due to lack of funds.</p> <p>The department is gradually putting things into place to enhance the assimilation of information and audio-visuals to make the studio teaching and learning more prudent.</p>
3. The Way Forward	Other professionals/educators/sources	<p>Design books, design blogs, web pages are given to students to refer to in their learning process. Field trips are organized sometimes, getting professionals in the industry and resource persons to educate students are also encouraged.</p>
	Their learning abilities, temperaments, culture, upbringing, student-teacher relationship, experiences.	<p>Lecturer considers the learning styles in the studio but the constructivist learning theory is dominated in the studio. But individual learning styles are really not considered.</p>
	Career goals and interests	<p>Career opportunities are spelt out clearly to students, Guidelines or models are given to students to serve as a guide for students in the design studio but students don't usually apply it.</p> <p>Teaching students what the whole activity of design studio involves for better understanding and active participation.</p> <p>The change in curriculum and introduction of design history.</p> <p>Certain facilities are being put in place for students to practice what</p>



		<p>they have learnt in the lecture rooms.</p> <p>Continuous motivation of students in a form of awards, and continuous organisation of design competitions to keep students active in their learning process.</p> <p>Students must be open-minded and renew their minds towards the GRACODE course.</p>
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#### 4.3.8 Students' Responses and Attitude to studio activity and critiquing

The responses of students in the studio and during critiquing was not encouraging and forthcoming as expected from design students in the studio. Fifty-six percent of students' punctuality and appearance to studio was not very encouraging but the remaining 44% was on the average. The studio activity starts at 8:00am in the morning, but students are usually unable to finish their exercises and assignments due to the power outage problem in the country. As a result of that, students are allowed to use an hour for preparation and finalizing of their design works before mounting for discussions and critiquing. Students on several occasions came to class unprepared for the day's activity and did not know what was going to happen in the studio. One would ask, are students not having the course outline? The course outline was read out to students by the lecturer in charge at the beginning of the semester. However, about 90% of the students did not jot it down for reference in case they lose track of activities along the semester. Students were also supposed to have had copies of the course outline by requesting for a copy or the lecturer distributing it out to them but it was not done. In addition to students responses are indicated below:

The unpreparedness and inability of students to respond to design studio activity and critiquing were due to the following reasons and responses given by students:

- Fifty percent of students complained that the lecturer's expectations for them was too high and lecturer should understand that they are now maturing in the field of graphic design and is a gradual process.
- Ten students in an interview stated categorically that "The lecturer talks so much about his experiences and what he has seen in other design schools outside the country and we lose track of what is being taught sometimes".
- Eighty percent representing 148 students added that the practical assignments given to them within the semester are too much for them and do not get the chance to read the theory aspect of the course as well.
- They further added that they are also unable to reflect and review what they have learnt at the end of the semester because all they have in mind is the number of assignments to present in a given day and semester.
- Moreover, students in a focus group discussion complained that "the hours spent in the studio for the course is too long and therefore get tired and bored during the sessions in the studio so they lose concentration and feel reluctant to respond to critiques".
- Furthermore, students added in an interview session that by the time they get to their hostels, it would have been late in the evening and are unable to revise what had been taught in class and they forget some of the assignments given.
- They also added that due to the energy crisis in the country, they are unable to meet deadlines because by the time they finish their assignments the lights would have gone off and could not print out their assignments on time.
- Poor weather conditions and uncomfortable studio furniture were also a hindrance to effective responses for critiquing during the afternoons.

- In addition, students complained that they do not know what to talk about when looking at their works.
- They further added that lecturer's delivery in teaching is not clear and they need a lot of thinking to understand before responding appropriately.
- They also added that they find it difficult in the choice of the words and the right vocabulary to use in explaining themselves and their ideas.

#### **4.3.9 Students' difficulty in verbal critiquing**

From the interviews, observations and focus group discussions in all the three GRACODE groups. It was noticed and confirmed that students indeed find it difficult to express themselves and their ideas concerning their works due to the following reasons and reactions in the studio during critiquing: shyness, fear, lack of self-confidence, lack of guide, anger, taking of responses personal, ignorant of what to talk about, the use of offensive and impolite comments and feedbacks, lack of vocabulary, forgetfulness, lack of design history and good research information, a sense of failure, defensive of ideas, disappointment, resistant to take advice and the inability to achieve the standard of work required and also inability to apply previous knowledge.

#### **4.3.10 Availability of a guide for talking about students' works**

Out of the 150 questionnaires retrieved 74 students representing 49.3% ticked YES, 44 students representing 29.3% ticked No and 32 students representing 21.3% did not respond. Those who ticked "yes" were unable to write a criteria down that indeed shows that there is a guide or criteria they follow to explain their works. For the 44 students who ticked "No" to the unavailability of a guide or criteria, their responses were as follows:

- They are not spelled out clearly as a guide or criteria which guides us in talking about our works but to follow in doing the work.
- A guide or criteria should be known to all students, but in this case it is not known.
- If there was a guide, we would not have sat quietly anytime we are asked to talk about our work.

#### **4.3.11 Sampled students' opinion on criteria availability**

Ninety percent of the students in the second year undergraduate design studio stipulated that it would be very helpful and necessary if a criteria or format is spelt out for students to follow. This was made known when they were asked to respond to their design works and the works of others during critiquing sessions.

#### **4.3.12 Sampled Students' opinion on how design studio critique could be improved**

Students were given the opportunity to suggest ways, as to how their responses to studio activities and critiquing could be improved. The opinions and suggestions provided were categorized into six different sub headings. Namely: Provision of Guidelines/criteria, teaching and delivery, Attitudinal changes, Experience, studio condition and motivation. (See Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Students' opinion on how design studio critique can be improved

Themes	Labels
Provision of Guidelines/criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guide should be put in place for students to follow when criticizing their works.</li> <li>• Guidelines to criticism must be taught.</li> <li>• The lecturer should guide how to go about it</li> </ul>

Teaching and Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecturer’s delivery must be clear and precise in order to grasp the concept. This way, students will not hesitate to talk about their works.</li> <li>• Design critique must be taught in details and explained for better understanding.</li> <li>• Students must be given a foreknowledge about the practice.</li> <li>• The thorough study of the course itself (design critique and aesthetics) should be taught as a whole course to prepare and enable positive critique responses.</li> <li>• Giving of assignments, regular oral presentations to boost students’ confidence and the provision of terminologies to enhance students’ vocabulary.</li> </ul>
Attitudinal changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be loyal, acceptance of flaws, students must be more responsible, open minded in critiquing, passionate and affectionate.</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When they get to experience more of what happens on the field of graphic design in the industry.</li> <li>• Presentation and demonstration of various design works that has been through criticism and their outcomes.</li> <li>• Frequent practice</li> </ul>
Studio Condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of tools, materials, equipment to access our studio.</li> <li>• Improvement of studio conditions</li> <li>• Availability of internet access</li> </ul>
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criticism must be encouraged, rewarding students who actively participate in studio activities, making it fun and involving to practice</li> </ul>



#### **4.3.13 Sampled Lecturer's opinion on how design studio critique could be improved**

The sampled lecturer's opinion on how design studio critique could be improved were:

- When students are passionate about graphic design and the course they are pursuing.
- Constant perfect practice and acquiring of knowledge by surfing for information in their field of design to enhance their vocabulary as they present their ideas.
- Being inquisitive in the design world to find out the emerging trends in design.
- Students' setting for themselves objectives they would want to achieve at the end of their study and every semester as they work hard to achieve those objectives.
- Reviewing the curriculum to add some more important courses like design history to make students more knowledgeable in the field of design.

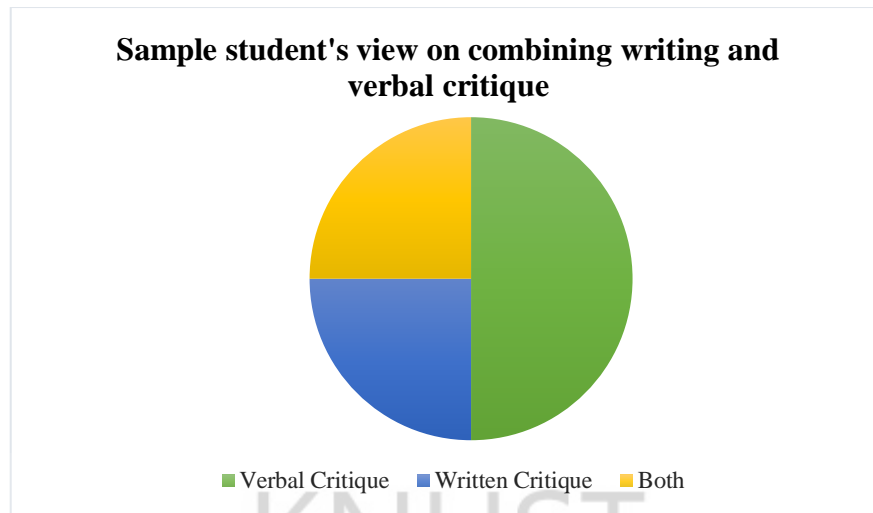


Figure 4.3: Students' views on combining written and verbal critique

In Figure 4.3 students were asked their views concerning the combining of written and verbal critique in the studio. From the pie-chart, one could deduce that 130 students opted for the verbal critique representing 70% while 35% opted for written critique. The remaining 35% opted for the combination of both forms in the design studio respectively. The reasons students gave for the combination of the two were:

- For verbal, one cannot remember all that he/she wants to talk about. However, when the two are combined, one can write all that he could not mention while talking.
- As graphic design students, we are being trained to communicate effectively not only with our products but also in speech and in writing because one would not know the opportunities life has to offer.
- Both in the sense that it serves as a guide in speech
- Also, it helps improve and develop one's confidence verbally and also in writing skills

- It is also presumed that design students only design products and that they do not know much about the core technicalities in English writing or report writing. However, combining both could help clear that mentality from people's minds.

Table 4.3 outlines the various views students offered for the verbal and written critique.

Table 4.3: Students' views on written and verbal critique

Verbal Critique Responses	Written Critique Responses
1. When one is asked to respond to his/her work, the eyes see extra things you can talk about and you are not limited	It helps to keep regular track of your progress because there is an opportunity to redo.  In writing one is limited
2. Verbally when talking one can be a bit informal.	Writing requires formality and there is much critical thinking that goes into it.
3. Ghanaians are more willing to listen than to read.	Written critique serves as a reference to the things you intend to verbalize.
4. One gets to see what he is saying and he or she is forced to be sincere.	But in writing extra things could be added from extra readings elsewhere to enhance and enrich your ideas.
5. With verbal, an individual expresses herself freely and emotions are clearly seen.	Writing requires much detailed analysis and the necessary technicalities must be put down
6. Verbal critiquing hurts when it is negative but motivates when it is positive.	Written is helpful in the sense that it also gives opportunity for shy students who cannot come out to express themselves to do that through writings.
7. Verbal critique is free and fair in the sense that judgment and feedbacks are given based on the mounted work and what the student explains verbally.	Written critique is unfair in the sense that during assessment, the assesse is still required to verbalize his ideas whiles the assessor questions the assesse based on what he or she sees in the work and what has been said, the assessor

	therefore do not read vividly what the assessee has written down.
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#### **4.4 Interaction Phase**

Based on the identified challenges and opinions' as well as views and contributions from both lecturer and students, the researcher came up with a criteria to serve as a guide for students in their responses to their design works during critiquing sessions. Interviews conducted revealed that sampled students and lecturers wanted a platform where students' works can be uploaded and discussed for contributions and assistance before going to the studio for their final jury presentations. The lecturer had taken the initiative of getting websites on design so that students can visit these sites with ease to help in their learning. The sampled lecturer in charge of design studio critique wanted to get interactive with his students after the studio sessions and to help improve upon students' responses at the studio. Based on this, the developed criteria and an online critique platform were introduced to him and his students through an online teaching and learning management system called "Edmodo".

Edmodo is a software application used to plan, implement and assess a specific learning process. It provides a safe and easy way for a class to connect and collaborate, share content and assess assignments, grades and school notices. Students practising critique, uploaded their works on this platform and were assessed by lecturer to address and contribute or suggest ways students' works can be improved. The lecturer also used this platform to send links across to students as reference materials on their assignments.

Students who found it difficult to contribute or respond to their works in the studio patronised this platform to respond to their work through typing. Students who were shy and could not come forth with questions seized the opportunity to open up on this platform. In addition, students whose works could not be assessed or checked during the traditional studio sessions were attended to on this platform and feedbacks were given to them by the lecturer and the researcher who served as a teaching assistant to the lecturer. Ideas were shared and discussions were held using the online virtual studio created on this platform. Plates 4.10 and 4.11 shows snapshots of the virtual studio online and responses given by the researcher and students concerning their works.

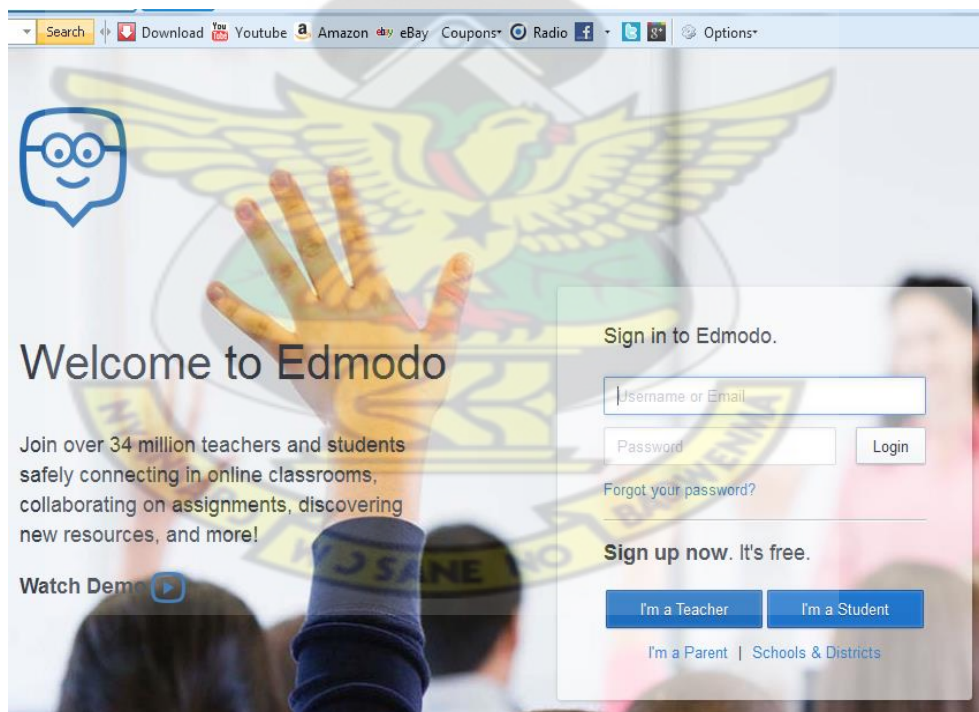


Plate 4.10: Snapshot of edmodo welcome screen.



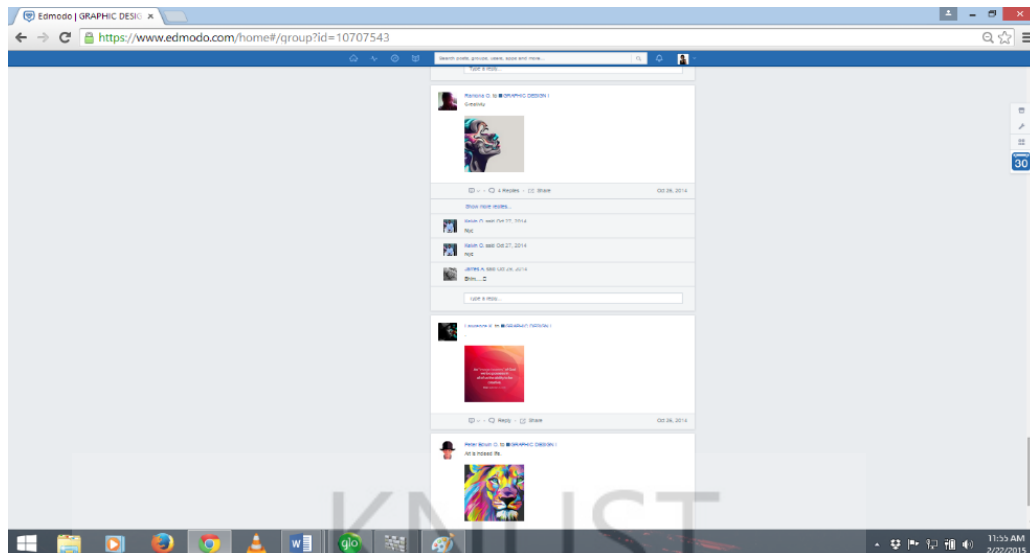


Plate 4.11: Snapshot of conversions between researcher and students on uploaded work on Edmodo

**Objective Three** - To develop and pre-test a studio design criteria for critiquing in the design studio.

#### 4.4.1 Design and development of the criteria

After going through the various writings, analysing models, assimilating and reflecting through the different ideas and opinions of experts in the various fields of art education: philosophers, graphic designers in the industry, design students and design critics (lecturers) of design and the researcher's own experience, enabled the researcher to come out with a criteria or model for critiquing in the design studio to help improve students' responses to their design works during critiquing and final juries in the studio. This model was developed based on all the models discussed in Chapter Two of the study, but with specifics on the model developed by Guttormson (n.d.) in the institution of Saskatchewan Design Department and Graham's framework of criticism. With these two procedures put together and considered, the

researcher came up with a seven step criteria that has the likelihood to be used in design critique. The suggested criteria consist of the following processes:

- Insight
- Motivation
- Description
- Analysis
- Interpretation
- Guidance
- Informed Evaluation

Before Criticism can be effectively adopted as a major tool in a design institution or class, design students are supposed to know what criticism in the studio is and what it is about in the design studio and what goes into the activity. The history through a detailed background of the practice (what brought about the design studio and the first individuals or group to begin the practice of criticism), the exponents who initiated it, the trends and developments it has gone through to this present day through the art education must be made available to students. The impact and benefits it has made on the creativity of students and their artworks, instructors, lecturers and art educators at large. This is what the researcher terms as “**Insight**”.

Educating design students by adequately preparing them into the practice that they are about adopting in the studio in order for them to be well equipped in knowledge as to what they intend to do and what they must know before entering into the structure called “design studio”. They would have had a first-hand idea (information) of what aesthetics and criticism is all about. In simple terms, one would say

preparing their minds for them to get the maximum understanding of the activity in the design studio.

Following insight is “**Motivation**”. Motivation here is equally helpful in attempting to know the various influences culture has on design criticism and particularly on how responses are given and received in the studio. Under the second step participants or students are given the opportunity to view design works of exponents in the field of graphic design from old to the present day graphic design works by discussing and comparing them in the studio. To help gain an open mind about various design works in their field and the tremendous impact of change on them over the years. To help students’ make references to and compare then contrast the similarities and differences in them. Also to come out with assumptions that they think the artist or designer is communicating based on the designs produced.

The second portion under the motivation is what is termed as the label or background information about the design work. This involves the name of the designer, a brief information about the designer, title of work, and the location of design work or the purpose on which the work was done and what is intended to communicate or the problem is to solve. This section is very important because this is solely research. The research information about the kind of design work you intend to do and the designers who have done similar works previously can help acquire adequate skill, knowledge and confidence when one is to come forth with his/her explanations.

Design firms, art educators and critics, lecturers and designers in the field, libraries, online and websites on graphic design are good sources of information about the design work and the artist or designer involved. Find out as much about the work, the problem, the target audience and the designer as you can. It is important to complete

this stage before beginning the work and proceeding on to the subsequent steps. The design work should provoke thought and understanding in the viewer or target audience. If you are given the thought or the answer before you experience the design work, your own creative thinking might be bypassed and your experience with the design work will be lessened.

The third step where most students find themselves fumbling and quite challenging is the “**description stage**”, which is basically, the stage of taking inventory. At this stage, it is required that the student responding to his or her work, mentions or comes up with a list of everything he or she sees in the work. Verbally and vividly giving an account of what one sees and one’s responses to the design. Guttormson (n. d.) states that simply stick to the facts. This is a long and detailed section.

According to Graham (2003) there are three things that affect how a critic describes an object or a design work: the critic’s own perception, different ways of describing and the sharing of different aesthetic experiences. The various elements that constitute a description, includes: form of art, (whether architecture, sculpture, painting, printing or one or more minor arts), medium of work, size and scale of work, and elements of general shapes in the composition.

The fourth step is on how one is advised to view a design work “**Analysis**”. This is another objective activity to contemplate how the characteristics of the work that have been identified and described are organized. This step is where the viewer tries to figure out what the designer has done to achieve certain effects. The analysis stage is where the elements and principles of design are critically examined in the design work. That is; how colour, lines, shapes, textures, space, form and value (both seen elements and transparent elements like format, orientation, grids, eye movement and

theme) are used to achieve harmony, balance, unity, movement/rhythm, variety, contrast, alignment, proximity, repetition and emphasis. This is what is termed as the visual organization of the entire design work. Dabner et al. (2014) states that successful designers are masters of the fundamentals that underlie all aspects of design. Elements on a page, web, in motion or in three dimensions, should always be led by concern for spacing, visual organization, style and the size and format of the finished work.

The choice of materials used and the focal point (what grabs the attention of the viewer) in the composition or layout must be discussed. Also, where the designer decided to emphasize in the design work as well as the relationship between the things listed during the description stage and how they are communicating effectively in the design work. The mood or feeling (reaction) one gets when looking at the work. In other words, the qualities you see in the work. Analysis should incorporate issues of context, including: cultural, historical, geographical, ecological, social and political context to better understand the work (Hopkins, 1994). The process of analysis would allow the opportunity for discussion of differing viewpoints on the broader issues related to the solution of the problem stated in the “designer’s brief” to be exchanged between lecturers and students. All these are explained in the analysis stage.

The fifth step is termed as “**interpretation**”. This is where an accurate assessment of the formal “objective” qualities in the work of art is critically discerned. What the work expresses. The emotions and thoughts evoked by our contemplation of the work and this should be based upon what can actually be observed. Interpretation consists of explaining or clarifying the meaning of the design (Graham, 2003).



Interpretation helps to explain the meaning of the work, forms or style, based upon the critic's own beliefs, culture, values and experiences. It may also include the critic's emotional or intuitive response to the design work (Hopkins, 1994).

**Guidance** is what follows interpretation. Guidance according to Graham (2003) is a stage whereby suggestions are offered for future design decision to inform the student. He further states that it should be a differentiating aspect between criticism of a work in a gallery and criticism given to a student. As discussed by Treib (1998) that criticism is essentially an optimistic enterprise. Graham (2003) added that "No matter how scathing the comments, there is still the underlying belief in the perfectibility of human activity, with some assumption that if we can just understand the picture more completely, we can design in a better way" (p. 85).

The guidance a student obtains from lecturers goes a long way to help improve students design ability. This will go a long way to instil the faculty for self-criticism in a student. Attoe (1989) opines that "the ends of criticism should be beginnings. If criticism does not have a forward-looking bias, it will be of little use and fact of only passing interest. After-the-fact, harangues, and gushes of approval mean little if they do not relate to future issues, future problems and aspirations for a future" (p. 165).

In addition to guidance, the researcher also thought it very important to introduce the online system to help enhance teaching and learning in the design studio. The online critique is introduced through a teaching and learning management platform designed for students and lecturers. It could be very useful due to the large number of students in the studio and the lack of time to comment on each and every student's work to offer guidance. The introduction of "Edmodo" which is the teaching and learning management system the researcher proposes to help offer the platform to

lecturers and students to have access to each other and their works even after studio activities so that students work can be reviewed as work is in progress. This could be done by students by uploading their works on the platform for assistance, contributions, comments, questions from lecturers, teaching assistants, colleagues and assistant lecturers before the actual final jury or review is held at the studio.

Guidance is followed by “**informed evaluation**”. Most of the pioneers in art education normally used the term “Judgment” and it sounded a bit scary as to what one’s fate in a design work is. But in the context of this study, evaluation will be used. Evaluation is simply a summary of a design work in order to ascertain a value or worth total of a student’s design work and to help others form an opinion (Darracott, 1991 and Bates, 2000). Pablo Picasso also buttressed this statement by stating that an evaluation is given to a student if others realize his/her intentions (Graham, 2003). Baxandall (1985) also asserts that Intentions are not sufficient, what one does is what counts and not what one had the intention of doing. The researcher tends to agree with Graham (2003) on the fact concerning evaluation, where he states that “the stage of evaluation should not occur during a public situation of a jury for the reasons outlined below that:

- If a jury is to be focused upon a discourse between faculty and students, the misconception that a jury evaluates a student’s project should be eradicated by not allowing a verbal evaluation to be a component of verbal criticism a student receives during a jury.
- Secondly, Graham states that most instructors admit that a critique of students’ work in a jury happens too quickly and spontaneously to adequately evaluate the students project (p. 86)

The researcher believes that verbal evaluations given to students after jury sometimes dampen the spirits of some students who are unable to get favourable remarks concerning their design works and might prevent them from going through the jury sessions on subsequent occasions. The researcher therefore buttresses Graham's point of giving out written and informed evaluation to students during critiquing sessions and after the jury sessions. This would allow the student to reflect better by considering and analysing the comments or feedbacks he/she received.

This criteria was reshaped on a two page sheet of paper with printed terminologies to serve as a guide for students as they verbalize and analyse their design works.

This may help the student to form an informed self- evaluation and learn from other people's opinions. In addition, the written evaluation of the student's project from the lecturer could be given to the student through an online platform where there is regular interaction between students and lecturers after the lecturer have had adequate time to review all of the processes of the project. Example is through the student's mail or a teaching and learning management platform like "Edmodo" where it offers that opportunity for teachers to assess their students and vice versa and with edmodo's motivational awards that the platform offers to hardworking students, punctuality, good assistance and contributors, students would like to perform well and come out with their best. This the researcher thinks would satisfy students through specific comments given and how well objectives were meant as well as the shortcomings that could be improved upon.

This was the proposed criteria developed and introduced to the second year design students in the design studio to help improve upon their critiquing skills and

responses. This criteria was ran by the lecturer in charge and the researcher for two semesters in the design studio. (See Figure 4.12).



Plate 4.12: The researcher introducing the criteria to students in the studio.

#### **4.4.2 Planning and running of the developed criteria**

The major stakeholders were undergraduate students and lecturers offering practical design studio critique in the Department of Communication Design, Faculty of Art, KNUST. The specific benefits to stakeholders are that students and instructors can share ideas based on the detailed analysis students provide concerning their design works in the studio. Secondly, the instructor can teach the most important aspects in design that were not likely mentioned during the lecture periods to add to the knowledge of students. In using this criteria the lecturer and students can:

- Acquire as much knowledge in design history since it is not taught as a course
- Boost their confidence in speech by using the technical terms



- The ability for students to express themselves using the language of the profession
- Help students be critical thinkers and intelligent in viewing design as a whole
- Develops students in their profession
- Groom students and lecturers to pitch for bigger and beneficial contracts that will help improve the design department
- Get students to interrupt and socialize through teaching and learning
- Also boost students argumentative skills
- Help students to construct meaning for themselves as they work in the studio

Below is a sample of the activity plan for the lecturer and the researcher (see table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Activity Plan for Lecturer/ Researcher

Course Objectives	
Upon completion of this course the student should be able to:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify, define, and solve problems</li> <li>2. Locate and critically evaluate information</li> <li>3. Have mastered a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry</li> <li>4. Communicate effectively with visuals</li> <li>5. Develop an understanding of the language of graphic design, which includes critical theory, critique, history, technology and craftsmanship.</li> </ol>	
Weekly Schedule	
Week One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction, Syllabus, Course Overview</li> <li>• Review Supply List</li> <li>• Discuss classroom procedures</li> <li>• Reading assignments</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define set of terms and turn in next class</li> </ul>
Week Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Presentation: Research and Concepts</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Begin Project One</li> <li>• Work in class: on project one</li> <li>• In Class critique</li> <li>• Reading assignment</li> </ul>
Week Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Presentation: Sanitation; Ebola; Use Energy Wisely</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Begin stage two: Concept development</li> <li>• Work in class: on project two</li> <li>• In class critique</li> <li>• Reading assignment</li> </ul>
Week Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Presentation: Concept development</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Begin project one</li> <li>• Work in class: on stage three- Prototyping</li> <li>• In class critique</li> <li>• Reading assignment</li> </ul>
Week Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group Presentation: Final Designs</li> <li>• Discussion: In class critique</li> <li>• Assessment</li> <li>• Reading assignment</li> </ul>

The activity plan set by the lecturer for the design studio course and for the semester. Since it is a participatory research to improve students' performance in studio critiquing responses, the researcher took part in the planning. The developed criteria was introduced to the three GRACODE groups in their various project groups. This enabled the researcher to explain further and demonstrate with examples to students for them to understand what they were practising and how best their ideas could be communicated in the professional language according to the developed criteria.

Table 4.5, is a sample of the activity plan designed by the lecturer for the students.

Table 4.5: Activity plan for students

Objective: Understand the design Process	
Presentation: Group Presentations	
Team Work: Research and reading activities on design process	
Experience: Team building and Interaction	
Activity for the day	
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the design process</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group presentations</li> </ul>
Team Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and reading activities on design process</li> </ul>
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team building and interaction</li> <li>• Research Skills: Looking for information, selecting exemplars as learning materials</li> <li>• Setting assessment parameters and criteria</li> </ul>
Team Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team presentation on design process: Team discussions what they discovered and learned through team discussions and learning.</li> </ul>
Topics Shared among groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Basic of research</li> <li>• Linear reasoning/ lateral thinking</li> <li>• Exploratory drawing</li> <li>• Visualizing ideas</li> <li>• Theories of image and text</li> <li>• Audience, markets and concepts</li> <li>• Scheduling, organizing and finalizing</li> </ul>
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General class discussion on new projects and other relevant issues to be raised</li> <li>• Questions, answers and contributions from instructor and students.</li> </ul>
References	<p>Google Search</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic Design School. The Principles and Practice of Graphic design (5<sup>th</sup> Edition)</li> <li>• A Century of Graphic Design- Graphic</li> </ul>

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**4.5 Adaptation Phase**

This section shows images and responses from students as they practiced critiquing following the criteria developed in a form of group and individual presentations, and written critique (analysis) by students on a print advert. (See plates 4.13 to 4.15).



Plate 4.13: A student involved in a verbal critique



Plate 4.14: A group involved in a verbal presentation on their research and ideas.

#### **4.5.1 Sample of a student's written critique on a print advert**

Plate 4.15 is a print ad, advertising Gilbeys' of Ireland product known as Baileys. An Irish whiskey and cream based liqueur. The Ad was published in Ghana' Daily Graphic newspaper in February 2015. It was published mainly for the upcoming Valentine's Day. The print Ad is made up of a photo (baileys' branded bottle and glass cup), logo, brand name, body copy and a slogan.



Plate 4.15: A print ad in the daily graphic.

Colours used in this Ad include black, wine, golden brown, cream and white. Black is the dominant colour which is associated with power, elegance and formality. It also gives a feeling of perspective and depth. The black background has made the visual elements stand out. The brown colour also makes the image more down –to-earth, suggesting stability and a sense of belonging.

The designer used the silhouette layout in using geometric proportions, used the rule of fifths thus (3 x 5 portrait). Also the layout is a levelled composition with the dominant element positioned at the minimum stress area. The brand name, and logo show sharpening, but at the maximized stress area. The print ad is a diagonal direction field layout suggesting opposite formulation and unstable directional force. The entire visual layout is asymmetrically balanced offering variety and informality. Also the related items which were grouped and unrelated were separated. The designer showed the link between the bottle and glass cups by placing them together.



The visual elements have coordinated placement, making it easy to scan and appear orderly.

With the typography, the upper case letters used for the brand name and logo make it look formal and conservative. The lower case letters used for the slogan, “cream with spirit” as well as the body copy, suggest friendliness and also down-to-earth. The typeface used is bold, clear and simple. The text was placed at the maximized stress area. The designer used present tense and active verb for the body copy.

The image used is clear and bold. There are good colour tone, and appropriate resolution. Good quality photo was used and clarity of thought. The designer used white light around the bottle, creating an illusion of depth. The rule of thirds was used in the positioning of the image.

In relation to the advertiser objective, the main objective for the Ad is to advertise the Baileys product for the upcoming Valentine’s Day and also to the general public. With the body copy the advertiser puts to his audience, the product being the ULTIMATE gift for the valentine. The “get HER Baileys” suggests the main target audience being Males precisely Above 18 with the text provided at the bottom part of the visual field (Drink responsibly 18+) , who have female friends or lovers. This makes the female the second target audience. Also in relation to the advertiser’s target audience, the design layout is said to be successful in terms of colours used, the dominant colour (black) used suggests how elegant the product is and also suggesting sexiness and vogue. The entire colours used is down -to-earth, friendly and also appeal to the senses; there was an alignment of text, creating visual relief; generous space was provided making the layout comfortable and easier to parse. In terms of proportion, there is a spatial relationship existing between the design parts.

With the optical weighing well applied. The dark colours are known to weigh more and the use of irregular shapes make the ad attract attention.

With emphasis, the dominant element is the Baileys bottle and glass cups and also emphasis was laid on the text below the visual field using small typeface as well the caution sign image. The designer also used repetition in the design layout. Thus the repetition of the glass cups. Also, repetition of lines and shapes. There is unity between all the design elements, where all design elements are related. Continuation occurs in the ad where the viewer's eye will naturally flow from the bottle to the glass cups. The designer also used the closure principle, where, although the bottle is not complete, enough is present for the eye to complete the image. This makes the image interesting. The visual layout is simple. The Z-pattern (visual direction) was used. The typeface used is bold and friendly which makes the body copy (text) convey the intended message to the target audience. The body copy is short, has a friendly tone and simple enough for the viewer to get the message conveyed. The body copy is successful because it involves the audience. The slogan and brand logo is prominent

In conclusion, the ad copy is creative, simple and content-driven, the use of lines, shapes, colour, and form into a unified whole and application of the principles of design makes the ad appear creative and attracts attention. The entire layout is off centered and the use of active space, makes the ad very exciting. The ad is persuasive enough and conveys the intended message to the consumer. The ad is effective for its intended purpose, the whole design layout including the message will attract the target audience to get Baileys for their valentine.

#### 4.5.2 Questionnaires Administered

Out of the 185 copies of questionnaires administered to students, 170 (92%) were retrieved. However, 20 contained missing values. As such, a total of 150 questionnaires representing 81.1% of the total number of questionnaires administered, were used in the analysis (Figure 4.4). The lecturer was cooperative.

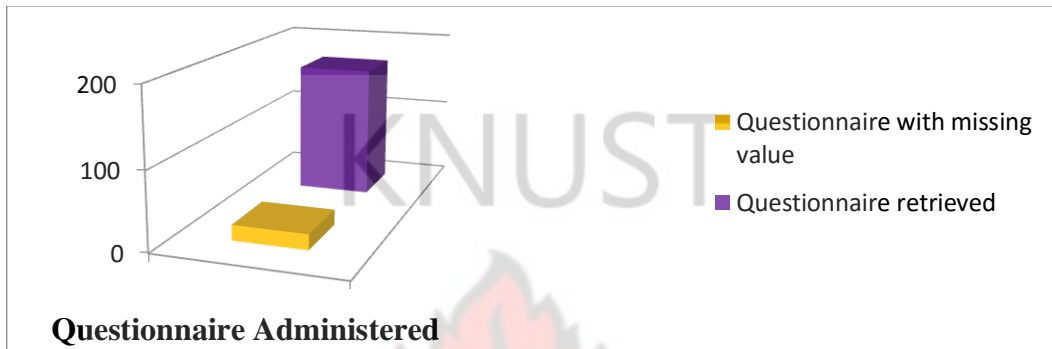


Figure 4.4: Questionnaire administered

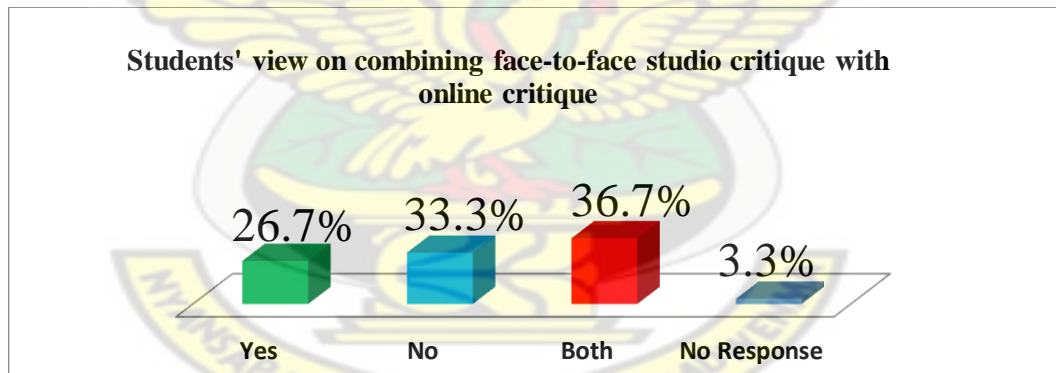


Figure 4.5: Students' view on combining face-to-face critique to online studio critique

Looking at Figure 4.5, 40 students representing 26.7% were with the view of combining the face-to-face studio critique with the online whiles 50 students representing 33.3% disagreed whereas 55 students representing 36.7% agreed with the combination of both systems but 5 students representing 3.3% did not respond.

The reasons why students disagreed with the online studio critique are outlined below:

1. Internet connections on campus and outside campus is difficult and expensive.
2. Inconsistent power supply is a huge problem in our country now.
3. Some students would hide their works for critiquing, thinking that other students would copy their ideas.
4. People might hide behind the online sessions and give unnecessary comments which might not help in the smooth running of the platform.
5. Most of these smart phones do not have strong battery lives and should your phone go off it will be quite challenging to contribute as expected.
6. Online takes time
7. The professional skill of meeting the client is missing
8. Immediate responses might not be forthcoming due to technical problems.
9. Interactivity between students and lecturer is inconsistent due to busy schedules of lecturer.

Other students who agreed to the fact that both should be incorporated in teaching and learning at the studio had the following reasons and suggestions to offer:

1. If it is combined, it will offer students the opportunity to work better based on earlier feedbacks and assistance received online before the face-to-face critique at the studio.
2. It was in addition added that if there is going to be an online critique, then participants should be anonymous so that individuals contributing can be free and fair in their judgment's and comments.

3. Personal influences might influence comments on the face-to-face critiquing sessions, but online, the rate at which students feel offended will minimize.
4. Face- to- face critique is helpful in the sense that as student designers, we are being trained to deal with good and bad criticisms and the regular hiding behind the computer would not be the best.
5. Also the combination of both gives one some sense of confidence and it builds us up as individuals preparing for professionalism.
6. Seeing and meeting people (clients) portrays an impression and it makes an impact, so I think it should start from somewhere.
7. Both would avoid the regular redo of one specific assignment.
8. As communication designers, we are trained to communicate effectively not only through our graphic materials and services, but also as individuals being prepared to compete with the world out there in pitching. As a matter of fact, it will be very necessary if both face-to-face and online critique are adopted.

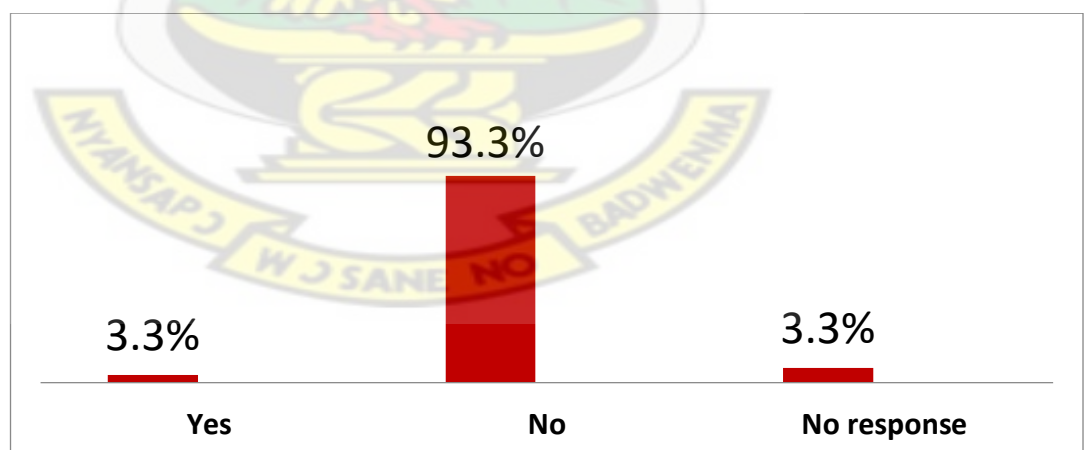


Figure 4.6: Challenges faced

In Figure 4.6, 140 students representing 93.3% had no challenges following the criteria developed, 5 students representing 3.3% encountered some few challenges



and 5 students representing 3.3% did not respond. The few students who had challenges were due to the following factors outlined: Absenteeism and the fact that it involves much writing. In conclusion, it could be said that the proposed criteria was effective in its use by students and it did help improve on their critiquing skills by verbally expressing themselves.

#### 4.6 Reflective Phase

This section dealt with the impact of the developed criteria on critiquing responses at the studio and the challenges students encountered.

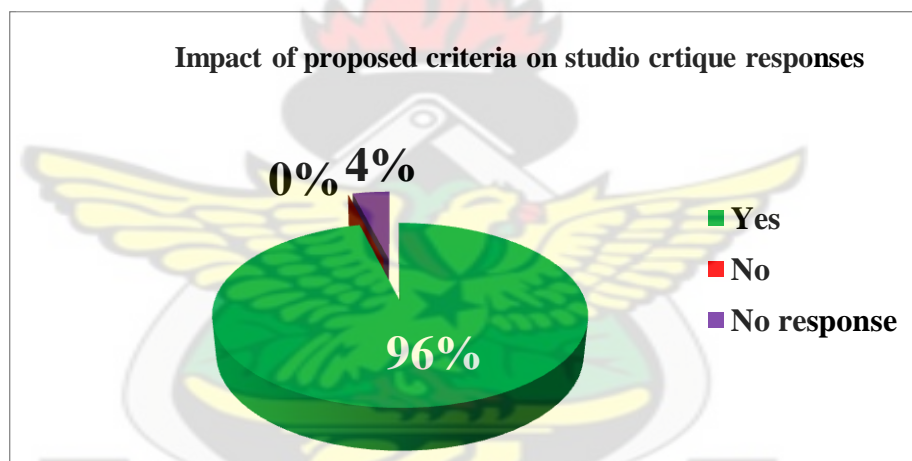


Figure 4.7: Impact of the criteria on critiquing skills

Figure 4.7 brings to bare the percentage of students who were impacted by the use of the criteria on their response to critiquing in the studio. Ninety-six percent of the students clearly stated that the criteria helped them to know what to look out for when asked to talk about their work and that of others. The remaining 4 percent said they were not impacted by the criteria. Hence zero percent for no response. Table 4.6 also shows the specific themes under which students were said to have been impacted on by the criteria.

Table 4.6: Students' responses to the impact of the criteria on their critiquing skills

Theme	Label
Acquired skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learnt how to talk as a professionals and writing skills improved,</li> <li>• Broadened their scope of design and critiquing, improved their public speaking and confidence, critical thinking, the use of appropriate vocabulary in communicating.</li> </ul>
Improved performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved skills (thinking skills, research, knowledge, team work, patience and the best way to tolerate people.</li> <li>• Constructive criticism, technical terms in speech and writing, communication and problem solving skills, conceptual and fascinating ideas are now expressed and explained well.</li> <li>• Answering questions in a short time accurately; they know what to look out for when working on their works; no more the usual phrase “this is my work or your work is nice”.</li> <li>• Increased confidence level in answering questions;</li> <li>• Conscious of class activities and prepare their thoughts and ideas before critiquing, made them time conscious because each student wants his/her work to be critiqued and work on schedule in order to meet deadlines.</li> <li>• It has helped to become more pro-active and critical</li> </ul>
Boost in interactivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraged students to contact lecturers and other colleagues for clarification and assistances, socializing, has improved tremendously, boredom is broken, when difficulties encountered studying course materials; Made it easier to contribute in class and respond as design students should, built strong friendship</li> </ul>

The lecturer's responses were as follows:

- Teaching and Learning became interesting because it engaged and challenged them to come forth to respond to each other's design work;
- Increased collaboration among students in a sense that every idea a group member brought up was critically looked at and analysed before the final decision was made;
- It gave students the confidence they needed to express themselves in the language of the profession.
- Improved students' argumentative skills, collaboration, communication, interactivity, open-minded, free and fair in their assessment of each other's work, valuing each other's unique skills and problem solving skills.
- The online critique platform gave lecturer a different feel of the actual studio and saw the impact it had on students who were shy and timid during actual studio critiquing sessions coming out of their shell to comment and to upload their works.
- Lecturer decided to use the opportunity to begin working on how to expose students' works to the outside world.

Lastly, one other thing that made the design studio critique effective was the additional motivation proposed by the lecturer. He latter proposed that whenever a student makes a contribution or respond to his or other students' design work, he or she will be awarded some marks. This motivated students to read and learn a lot about the layout styles in design, design history, terminologies and the appropriate language of the profession to help enhance their speech as they communicated verbally through group or individual presentations and in writing as they explained

their ideas. Also, the online platform encouraged students who could not come out to express themselves through the typing of their ideas for positive responses.

All these mentioned above, brought about positive vibes in the studio. Honestly, this strategy got most students involved in studio discussions and critiquing sessions and enhanced teaching and learning.

# KNUST



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Overview

The chapter outlines the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations.

#### 5.2 Summary

The study aimed at identifying the reasons why students find it difficult to intelligently and critically articulate their ideas in their design works in the studio during critiquing sessions at the Department of Communication Design at the Faculty of Art. The objectives guiding the research were: to identify and describe the various types of critique being used by the lecturer and students in the design studio; and to find out how the lecturer and students respond to critiques and why they react the way they do; and lastly to develop and pre-test a studio design criteria for critiquing students' work in the studio to help improve their responses.

Participant observations, interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussion were used to collect data for the study from lecturers and students. The research involved taking selected students and lecturers who offer and teach practical studio courses and practiced critique in the studio. The literature and this study confirm that most students find it difficult to critique intelligently and critically when it comes to explaining their ideas in the work they produce. The literature also confirms that when a well-developed system or criteria is developed to serve as a guide for the student from the beginning of the course with regular assistance in the practice of



critiquing, it enhances his or her critical thinking, practice, confidence and articulation. Sampled students and lecturers at the Department of Communication;

- Have a fair knowledge of what design critique is all about. Students, on the other hand knew less about aesthetics and criticism as well as design history and the basis for the establishment of the design school and its evolution. The types of critique we have and how to view a design work even though it is mentioned sometimes during lecture periods.
- Agreed on the integration and use of online critiquing platform to help provide more time for critiquing in the design studio since they have a large number of students with limited time to critique each other's work.
- Enjoyed using the online learning management system called "Edmodo" to upload their design work and practiced critiquing online because the interface was friendly and easy to use though there were some few challenges in the early stages.
- Enjoyed using the developed criteria because they understood how to view their design works more critically and they knew what to talk about when observing their works and the works of others.
- Agreed that it improved their confidence, articulation and critical thinking as they observe other design works.
- Enjoyed the experience of analysing a design work through writing skills.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

It is evident from the research that, the identified problem which was the difficulty students encounter in responding to their design works through communication of their ideas; using the right vocabulary and intelligently and critically making

important references during critique sessions in the design studio has been addressed. Both undergraduate students and lecturer at the Department of Communication Design have improved in terms of responding to their design works in the studio and now have a better understanding of what critiquing is all about. The Selected lecturer who teaches undergraduate practical design studio course and is practicing critique is benefiting from the developed criteria. However, the same cannot be said for the other lecturers teaching studio courses because critique is not practiced. Besides, not all lecturers have mastery over aesthetics and criticism and the models involved in criticism that can be adopted to enhance students' articulation skills. This is so because aesthetics and criticism and design history which are supposed to be a foundational course to be a taught at the first year is not included in the syllabus. Unfortunately, students are drawn into the practice of critiquing without any prior preparation of what it entails but acquire the experience and knowledge in the process of practice. This is also the core of the establishment of the design studio from the Ecole Des Beaux Arts era. The aim, was for students to construct meaning and solve real life problems by themselves through assistance from instructors and older students.

Even though books and pdf files on the history of graphic design and typography is given to students in a form of lecture, students do not take it seriously because they thought history is irrelevant to their study. The lecturer in charge mentions it in his lecture and gives hand-outs in a soft copy for students to do their own studies on them but students do not pay attention to it. As a matter of fact, they are unable to refer to them in their explanations where it is needed most in defending their ideas and concepts. The exponents and trends in design are also limited on the part of students because they are not research oriented. They have a limited idea of what

research is all about and this is evident in the basic research they conduct when a design brief is given to them to find solutions to. Therefore, much preparation is important to be established for students before climbing higher in the academic ladder. Access to the internet is a huge challenge in the design studio and as a result, students find it difficult to look for information on things pertaining to design as they work. The department also needs funding and staff need re-training to be more functional to teach and handle current crop of students to study and be more resourceful when talking critically about their design works.

There is a need to re-focus on more professional development and invitation of individuals in the graphic art industry to visit the department and offer talks and insights in a form of seminars for students and lecturers studying and preparing students for the job industry since we all know that teachers play a fundamental role in changing the face of education in the design studio and in education as a whole.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations could be implemented:

- The Faculty and department should consider the teaching of basic research right from the first year before the third year where more advanced research is done on design brief to help students find design solutions. It is an established fact that, the quality of research done helps one to come out with the best solution to a problem.
- Review of Curriculum: The teaching of aesthetics and criticism as well as design history should be introduced and taught as a course in the department to help equip and prepare students' for the practice. It is believed that when students, are well informed in knowledge in terms of the history of graphic

design, the exponents in the field of design, their creative works, techniques, style and creativity; it can help enrich students' critical thinking abilities and make intelligent analysis of their works when asked to do so.

- The world is now advanced in technology in so many aspects and this includes our educational sector. To help enhance the teaching and learning of critique in the studio, it is recommended that the adaptation of the online studio critique platform should be considered by lecturers handling studio critique so that due to the large number of students in the studio, students could still have access to the contributions and feedbacks on their work as they work from their lecturers before going into the traditional studio setting.
- Also, for easy accessibility to the internet, access points should be increased by the faculty authorities and placed at vantage areas within the faculty so that surfing the internet for information on graphic design information will be easily accessed.
- Finally, the Faculty of Art and its various departments offering practical studio courses can adapt the proposed criteria in teaching and learning at the studio to improve interactivity and responses at the studio.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX 1A: INTERVIEW GUIDE ON DESIGN STUDIO CRITIQUE OF STUDENTS' ART AT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DESIGN, KNUST

This is a project being undertaken by Abena Omenaa Boachie an MPHIL. Art Education student in the Department of General Art Students, KNUST. This is to seek information and opinions from students on the view of design studio critique and the various responses/reactions of students towards critiquing of their design work in the design studio of the Department of Communication design. Information provided is totally confidential and solely for academic purposes. This is to help improve the teaching and learning of students in the design studio.

#### SECTION A: Demographics

Department: .....

Name: .....

Year: .....

Course: .....

Gender: Male [  ]

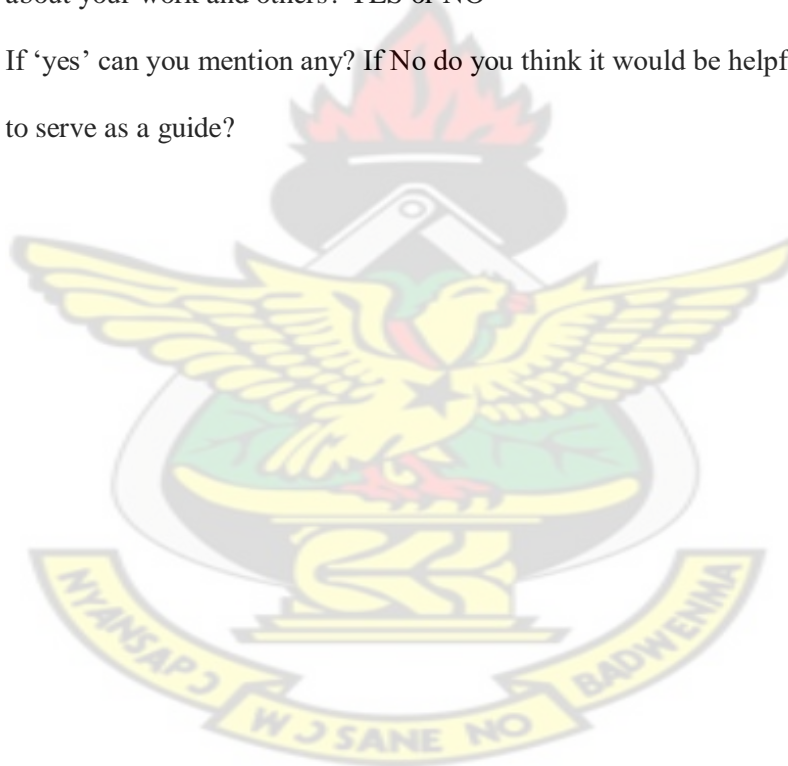
Female: [  ]

Group: .....

#### SECTION B

1. What is your opinion about the graphic course?
2. Do you understand the lecturer when he is teaching?
3. Were you taught aesthetics, criticism and design history in your previous year?
4. In your own words can you explain what critique is?

5. Do you know what goes into critique and the forms of critique that design students adopt?
6. If you do can you mention a few?
7. Do you find it difficult to explain or talk about your work when asked to? YES, NO, SOMETIMES.
8. If 'yes' can you give a reason?
9. What prevents you from responding to other student's works during critiquing sessions?
10. Do you know of a criteria, format or guide that serves as a guide for you to talk about your work and others? YES or NO
11. If 'yes' can you mention any? If No do you think it would be helpful to get a criteria to serve as a guide?



**APPENDIX 1B: QUESTIONNAIRE ON DESIGN STUDIO CRITIQUE OF  
STUDENTS' ART AT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DESIGN  
KNUST**

This project is undertaken by Abena Omenaa Boachie an MPHIL. Art Education student in the Department of General Art Students, KNUST. This is to seek information from second year undergraduate students offering graphic design as a practical studio design course in the department of communication design. Information provided is totally confidential and solely for academic purposes. This is to help improve the teaching and learning of student's and lecturers in the design studio.

**SECTION A**

Department: .....

Year: .....

Course: ..... Gender: Male [ ] Female:  
[ ]

**SECTION B**

1. Do you visit the studio as a/an

Class	Group	Individual

Are you put in groups or you work individually? Please specify.....

2. How long do you spend in the design studio?

1hr-2hrs	3hrs-5hrs	The whole day



3. Is there a permanent attendant or facilitator who is always available at the studio to assist as you work?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

Please specify if is the lecturer or the teaching assistant (TA).....

4. Do you have the available equipment, materials and tools that students use at the studio?

YES		NO		SOMETIMES	
-----	--	----	--	-----------	--

If YES, please list some

.....

5. Do you understand what the lecturer teaches in the design studio?

YES	SOMETIMES	NO

If NO please state

reasons.....

6. Do you find it difficult to talk/explain/respond to your design works when asked to do so?

YES		NO		SOMETIMES	
-----	--	----	--	-----------	--

If NO, what could be the reason? Please

specify.....

If SOMETIMES, what could be the reason? Please

specify.....

7. Is the course lecturer always present at the studio as you work?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

8. Are you taught aesthetics and criticism as a course in your previous year?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

If YES, what are some of the things that you learnt? Please be specific.

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. Do you practice design critique?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

10. In your own words, what do you know or understand about design critique?

.....

.....

.....

.....

11. Are you aware of the types of critiques that you practice in the design studio?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

b. If YES, please be specific on the once practiced in your studio.....

12. Are there guidelines, criteria or model that you follow or adopt in critiquing works of students in the studio?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

13. Would it be helpful if there is a criteria or guide that can help students follow to explain or talk about their design works during critiquing?

YES		NO	
-----	--	----	--

14. In your opinion what would you suggest could improve design studio critique in your department and encourage students to respond more positively towards critiques and studio activities?

.....

.....

.....

.....

KNUST



**APPENDIX 1C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON  
DESIGN STUDIO CRITIQUE OF STUDENTS' ART AT THE DEPARTMENT OF  
COMMUNICATION DESIGN KNUST**

This is a project being undertaken by Abena Omenaa Boachie an MPHIL. Art Education student in the Department of General Art Students, KNUST. This is to seek information and opinions from second year undergraduate students offering graphic design as a practical studio design course in the department of communication design. Information provided is totally confidential and solely for academic purposes. This is to help improve the teaching and learning of students and lecturers in the design studio.

**SECTION A**

Department: .....

Year: .....

Course: .....

Gender: Male [  ]

Female: [  ]

Group: .....

**SECTION B**

1. In general I would like to ask how you see/perceive the graphic design studio course.
2. Were you taught aesthetics and criticism in your previous year?
3. If YES, what are some of the things that you learnt? Can you please specify?
4. Have you noticed or identified any available equipment, materials and tools in your studio?
5. If I may ask, why do you sit silently and quietly when you are asked to respond or react to your own design works?
6. In your own words can you explain what design critique is?
7. Are you aware of what goes into critiquing?

8. Can you mention the types of critiques that are available in the design studio?
9. If yes can you specify by mentioning the once you practice in your studio.
10. Are you given any guide, criteria or model that you follow or adopt in critiquing design works of students?
11. Do you think it will be helpful if there is a criteria or guide that students follow to help them explain and articulate freely and fluently about their design works during critiquing periods?
12. What can you suggest as a design student to improve design studio critique in your department and encourage students to respond more positively towards critique and studio activities?





**APPENDIX 1D: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENT’S FOCUS GROUP**  
**DISCUSSIONS ON DESIGN STUDIO CRITIQUE OF STUDENTS’ ART AT THE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION DESIGN KNUST**

This is a project being undertaken by Abena Omenaa Boachie an MPHIL. Art Education student in the Department of General Art Students, KNUST. This questionnaire is to seek information from second year undergraduate students on the view of how effective the criteria proposed or developed for critiquing design works helped in the design studio in the department of Communication design KNUST.

**SECTION A**

Department..... Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]

1. Which of these age range do you belong?  
16-20 [ ] 21-30 [ ] 31-40 [ ] 41-50 [ ] Other (Please Specify) [ ]
2. Did you enjoy the online studio critique system of teaching and learning employed by your lecturer this semester? (Combining face to face critique and online critique).  
.....  
.....
3. How did you find the use of Edmodo as the platform for the online critique?  
.....  
.....
4. How did you find the use of the criteria developed by your lecturer and the researcher for analysing your work and the print ad?  
.....  
.....
5. Did you encounter any challenges using the criteria? YES [ ] NO [ ] If yes how? If no why

.....  
.....

6. What are some of the things you have learnt from the use of the criteria?

.....

7. What are some of the skills you have acquired through written and verbal critique?

.....

8. Do you think there is a need to adopt both written and verbal critique in the design studio?

YES [  ] NO [  ] If yes how? If no why

.....

9. Has the introduction of the criteria as a guide enhanced your critiquing responses?

.....

10. What do you think can be done to enhance the criteria for effective use at the studio?

.....

11. Have you noticed any negative side to the use of the criteria in teaching and learning of your course?

.....

.....



## APPENDIX 1E: SAMPLE OF STUDENTS' DESIGN BRIEF

This is a sample of student's design brief which serves as an official documented given to them by the client (lecturer) who has awarded them a contract to help solve a given problem in our society.

<b>Course: Gracode 1</b>	<b>Project: Communication Design</b>
Semester: 1 (2014/2015)	Project No: 1
Year: 2	Semester Week: 2
Date: 29 <sup>th</sup> - 30 <sup>th</sup> September, 2014	Duration: 4 weeks
Name of Lecturer:	

**PROBLEM STATEMENT:** The Kumasi Metropolitan area is bedevilled with many social and environmental challenges. The KNUST community is no exception. Design a graphic and communication tool for the whole Ghanaian owned higher educational institution for solving one such problem.

**CLIENT PROFILE:** To provide quality higher education in several disciplines in Ghana and other West African countries. The KNUST is committed to applying new science, art and technology to efficiently and effectively solve many of the developmental challenges facing the neighbouring communities. KNUST intend to take its social responsibilities to another mutual benefit levels.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:** The main aims and objectives of the project are as follows:

- Increase and deepen students' basic research activities
- Show that KNUST is a friend to the communities
- Develop students' critical thinking skills
- Develop effective graphic communication materials.

### **DELIVERABLES**

The client will receive the following:

- Presentations
- Graphic communication materials

### **PROJECT TIMELINE**

Initial concepts are to be presented to the client by October 6, 2014. Final approval from client is needed by October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

## OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Department.....

Lecturer.....

Course.....

Date.....

Time.....

KNUST

1. Check the size of the studio
2. Check how large the class size is.
3. Check the number of students at the studio
4. Observe the kinds of equipment, materials and tools present or available for students?
5. Observe the presentation of lessons and explanations.
6. Check/Observe examples given and if they are related to student's knowledge and interests
7. Check the use of hand-outs.
8. Observe if audio/visual aids were used and discussed.
9. Were the audio/visual aids on graphic design helpful in conveying the subjects matter and developing understanding?
10. Was the lecturer clearly heard by all students and did lecturer have command over the class?
11. Observe students' and lecturer's responses and reactions towards critiquing hours?
12. Were the right graphic design and criticism terms (terminologies) used to critique works of art?
13. Observe lecturer's command over the subject matter?



14. Did the lecturer present the material in a lively and enthusiastic way and were the students interested in the subject matter?
15. Observe lecturer's participation in the studio practical activity?
16. Observe the lecturer's facilitation of interaction in the studio and student –teacher relationship in the studio.
17. Observe the assessment of students' work if it was free and fair from both students, peers and the lecturer?
18. Were there opportunities for questions, comments and feedbacks and also for students' interest, concerns or experience to be drawn upon?
19. Observe the lecturer's innovative skills and if he was successful.
20. Were students critiquing skills improved and what more can be done?

