



# Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy as Ontological Reorientation: Restructuring Power and Epistemic Relations in Ugandan Universities

Nicholas Isaac Mukwana<sup>1</sup>, Paul Muyinda Birevu<sup>2</sup> & Ghislain Maurice N. Isabwe<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Teacher Education and Extension, School of Education, Kyambogo University

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Open Distance and eLearning, College of Education and External Studies, Makerere University

<sup>3</sup>Department of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), University of Agder (UiA) Norway

**Abstract:** *Reciprocal centric pedagogy (RCP) is a contemporary pedagogical paradigm which I first introduced in my PhD thesis (Mukwana & Ssebbunga, 2024) as a departure from teacher-centered pedagogy (TCP) and learner-centered pedagogy (LCP). It focuses on changing the structure of power and epistemic relations in higher education in Uganda. It is based on Barnlund's Transactional model of Communication and Brunner's scaffolding theories. The two theories position pedagogy beyond the basic array of instructional strategies and methodologies and more deeply into issues of reciprocity, interpersonal relations and intercultural relations as channels for co-production and promotion of knowledge, power and creativity. The task of this research is to answer the big pedagogical question (who has control of the learning process? Whilst TCP places control of the learning process in the hands of the teacher and the learner is in charge of the learning process under LCP, under RCP both teacher and the learner are in control of the learning process. Reciprocal learning characteristically has the practice of dialogue as a strategy for promoting comprehension, whereas RCP extends the practice of reciprocal learning at the level of epistemic and ontological reconstruction by simultaneously establishing the teacher and the learner as co-contributing agents in the construction of knowledge and meaning. Thus, this paper theorises the concept of reciprocal centric pedagogy as a paradigm shift that connects relational ontology and transactional pedagogy with the emphasis on the responsibility of both the teacher and learner to create reality out of the experiential perspective.*

**Keywords:** *Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy, Ontological Reorientation, Epistemic Relations, Critical Pedagogy, Relational Ontology, Higher Education.*

## How to cite this work (APA):

Mukwana, N. I., Birevu, P. M. & Isabwe, G. M. N. (2026). Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy as Ontological Reorientation: Restructuring Power and Epistemic Relations in Ugandan Universities. *Journal of Research Innovation and Implications in Education*, 10(2), 697 – 707. <https://doi.org/10.59765/vpr54>

## 1. Introduction

Uganda's higher education system has been predominantly teacher-centered pedagogies with the

lecturer as a central actor, authority and source of knowledge while students are passive recipients of knowledge (Muganga & Ssenkusu 2019). The pedagogical model is rooted in colonial education that

shaped African universities and categorised knowledge traditions, which transmitted knowledge in a process rooted more in Western epistemologies than local contexts (Sakata, & Candappa, 2021).

Over the past few decades though it has been a movement towards more participatory, dialogical and decolonial practices of teaching that emphasize student participation, critical examination and the acknowledgment of multiple knowledge systems. Notwithstanding these increasing theoretical appeals in a pedagogical revolution, a sharp divide is evident between these calls for pedagogical transformation and the actual situation in many universities, where institutional structures, cultural milieus and entrenched modes of teaching serve to perpetuate lecture-dominated instruction.

In contrast, the LCP which provide a promising alternative, and as advocated by governments, educators and scholars, but which did not provide sufficient support for students especially in low resource situation such as Uganda, (and in a world of over fragmentation of knowledge has suffered). To counteract this, Reciprocal Centric Pedagogies (RCP) have become a promising solution (Mukwana, & Connie, 2024), which has drawn support from the foundational Scaffolding Theories (Bruner & Sherwood, (1966) and transactional model of communication (Barnlund, 1970).

## 1.1 Problem Statement

Globally, universities are grappling with ongoing pedagogical challenges, yet institutions in Uganda remain no exception. Teacher-centered pedagogies (TCP) are still predominant in many universities, with instructors playing the primary role in knowledge transmission while students assume passive learning roles. These approaches tend to hinder the cultivation of vital skills like critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication skills that are integral to current higher education and the modern workplace. While learner-centered pedagogies (LCP) have been supported by educationists and government departments as a means of promoting active learning and student engagement, their adoption and use in universities on the ground is poor and uneven in Uganda because student-teacher ratios are high, exposure limited, and resources limited, respectively.

This leaves a stark divide between the desired idealisation of learner-centred approaches through theory and their deployment in university classrooms (Keiler, 2018). This divergence still hampers the reform of teaching and learning in higher education. Moreover, Uganda's fast-changing circumstances of higher education, in tandem with the process of further curricular reforms, have led to a

need for pedagogical approaches that maintain an effective, and yet flexible, balance between teacher guidance and learner engagement. One of such evolving methodology is Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy (RCP), which focuses on the active interaction of teacher and learner in the co-construction of knowledge. This study consequently aims to cover this gap by conceptualizing the effectiveness of Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy at Ugandan universities. The study of its theoretical underpinnings and practical application in higher education settings will hopefully yield knowledge for educational policy, pedagogical practices and curriculum design in university teaching. This will lead to improvement in teaching and learning practices for Ugandan higher education students overall.

## 1.2 Developing RCP through Reciprocal Teaching and Reciprocal Learning

Reciprocal learning exists as a teaching strategy within classroom dialogue practices. Reciprocal centric pedagogy is a much broader pedagogic model built on transactional modal of communication and scaffolding theories revolving around reorientation of power and epistemic authority. At scope level, reciprocal learning structures interaction through dialogical devices that allow learners to scaffold understanding, with the use of formalised turn-taking roles as often used to develop cognitive strategies.

In contrast, reciprocal centric pedagogy goes beyond methodological organisation to bring in a relational lens between the teacher and the learner, reimagining both as equally constitutive epistemic agents. Its structural logic is thus not limited to procedural patterns of dialogue but is designed and oriented on reciprocal epistemic positioning where knowledge is co-constructed with and through negotiation and reflection in co-construction by mutual authority and reflective participation, not as one, or as one side but rather another. So, a theoretical goal transforms from enhancing comprehension within existing pedagogical ontologies to reconfiguring pedagogy as such, changing the ontological conditions under which teaching, learning, and knowing can become possible. It is, then, not only about practice; rather, it is a pedagogical reshaping of the relational and ontological essence of education. However, while the term reciprocal is used in different pedagogical traditions, Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy (RCP) must not be confused with previous models of reciprocal teaching or reciprocal learning.

While these approaches are all based on interaction and collaboration, they differ fundamentally in their philosophical orientation, scope, and pedagogical intent. These strategies can be considered as reciprocal teaching and reciprocal learning, where interactive opportunities, guided dialogue, peer interaction, and collaborative

problem solving are the principles used to facilitate comprehension.

In these approaches, students switch out to take the lead in instruction of certain elements of an academic topic (in groups) or provide feedback on that topic during a guided discussion (a discussion of key concepts) to build their understanding of the material. In most cases the lecturer or instructor retains ultimate epistemic authority, guiding the process and validating knowledge outcomes. RCP, by contrast with instructional technique, advocates for a change from that to a deeper ontological and epistemological reorientation of the teaching–learning relationship.

However, while RCP is concerned with collaborative learning activities in particular through the activation of

collaborative learning it also interrogates and reconstructs and questions power relations embedded in knowledge production within the university classroom. Reciprocity is not only the interaction between lecturers and students, but is also located as the base of how knowledge is produced, validated, and shared between lecturers and students. On this basis, RCP aspires to reframe the position of teachers (who are responsible for constructing epistemic knowledge as one with the learners) rather than having the individual lecturer being the sole guardian of valid information. Although reciprocal teaching normally occurs within existing curricular paradigms, RCP focuses on the extent to which students lived experiences, contextual knowledge and socio-cultural context is relevant and the contribution to knowledge construction.

**Table 1: shows the difference between Reciprocal Learning and Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy**

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Reciprocal Teaching/Learning</b>	<b>Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy</b>
Nature	Instructional strategy	Pedagogical paradigm
Focus	Student cognitive strategy	Focused on teacher & learner relation
Knowledge authority	Lecturer remains primary authority	Shared epistemic authority
Scope	Classroom activity or method	Framework for teaching–learning relationships
Orientation	Turn-taking roles	Power redistribution and knowledge co-creation
Structure	Structured on turn-taking roles	Mutual epistemic positioning
Theoretical Aim	Improve comprehension	Reconfigure pedagogical ontology

### 1.3 Theories

Two theoretical frameworks offer insight into the pedagogical framework for Reciprocal Centric Pedagogies (RCP), informing this research. The Scaffolding Theory (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) provides a perspective as to how teachers can scaffold students’ learning through a gradual release of responsibility. This model is more specific to the framework of RCP, where teachers are both critical guides for teaching by engaging their learners in guided participation and mutual engagement and as expert knowledge; they become the knowledge base and hence responsible for student learning.

Secondly, the Transactional Model of Communication (Barnlund, 1970) which describes communication as a reciprocal, ongoing and dynamic process of encoding and decoding. The meaning, then, is co-created through interaction, not transmitted. This is directly in line with the tenets of RCP, which appreciate (at its core) the values of reciprocity and mutual engagement and the importance of active and respectful communication. This lens offers a dual perspective– the pedagogical lens in scaffolding where learning is about support and release of responsibility and the communicative lens where the teaching and learning process is reciprocal, meaning-making and respectful interactions.

The paper draws upon this theoretical basis and the extent of the study towards a theoretical basis and adopts a theoretical perspective that offers insight into RCP approach and develops a comprehensive perception of RCP in terms of an improving communication, teaching and learning, among other aspects of communication, instructional, academic and learning in the university classrooms in Uganda.

## 1.4 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How may Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy be understood as an ontological recontextualization of higher education, and what are its fundamental tenets with respect to power and epistemic relations?
2. ii. How does Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy reconstitute the existing power pyramids and epistemic relations in Ugandan universities?
3. How could the adoption of Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy offer new theoretical frameworks for equitable, participatory and decolonized pedagogical practices in African universities?

## 2. Literature Review

The literature guiding this research spans scholarship on reciprocal learning, critical pedagogy, postcolonial theory, and epistemic justice particularly within a higher education context. These studies together interrogate how knowledge is achieved, disseminated, and rendered legitimate in educational environments, and how teaching methods reflect or counter existing structures of epistemic hierarchies. To which in African higher education discourse concerning decolonisation and curriculum transformation has added intensity to academic scrutiny of the necessity of pedagogical practice that emphasizes conversation, reciprocal learning, and epistemic plurality (Freire, 1970; Fricker, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

This review therefore sought to analyze key theoretical debates that are a part of the study by looking at initial aspects of reciprocal learning and collaboration of the construction of knowledge. It then juxtaposes these views to the progressive conception of reciprocal-centric pedagogy, which builds on reciprocal learning by centring issues of power, epistemic justice, and the acknowledgment of multiple epistemologies. The literature review is theoretically grounded for this study through this thematic engagement.

Teacher-centred pedagogy (TCP) describes how to teach as an educational system where the teacher is central to the teaching and learning process and acts as the expert and

builder of knowledge in the classroom. The teacher is in charge of learning. Most classrooms run education through these pedagogies which emphasize lecturing, demonstrations, and over reliance on question-and-answer method in instruction which takes some form of structured learning where learners are expected to acquire, memorise, and replicate knowledge provided by their instructor (Cuban, 1993; Schweisfurth, 2013).

The persistence of teacher-centered pedagogy in the discourse of higher education today, especially in postcolonial/Global South contexts, is also related to wider debates about epistemic authority and reproduction of dominant knowledge systems. Pedagogical models which privilege instructor authority unknowingly perpetuate hierarchical knowledge structures that are embedded in colonial educational traditions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Schweisfurth, 2013). As such, there has been a rising interest in pedagogical frames that shift away from rigid teacher-centered teaching orientations towards dialogic and participatory approaches that consider learners as active participants in productive knowledge (i.e., knowledge making).

To this end, alternative approaches, including reciprocal learning and dialogic pedagogy attempted to shift classroom relationships toward shared inquiry, critical reflections, and epistemic completeness. Learner-centered pedagogy has emerged from teacher-centred methods as an alternative by concentrating the focus of the educational process around each individual student. It is based on theories of constructivism in education, which stress students' active role and cooperation as well as an individual's power to produce content. It is argued that LCP learning is given great weight if students participate in enquiry, problem-solving and dialogue, as opposed to receiving knowledge only from their instructors (Bransford et al., 2000; Weimer, 2013). In this perspective, the role of the teacher transforms from the delivery of knowledge to the guiding hand, facilitation of learning experiences, development of critical thinking and of the means to link new knowledge to earlier experiences in an independent manner for the student.

Like the LCP generally recommended in educational reform, especially in higher education and in international development programs, there have also been practical and conceptual limitations to learner-centred pedagogy. Academics observe that LCP can be an arduous process in environments that feature large classes, few resources, inflexible curricula, and established hierarchical teaching practices (Schweisfurth, 2013).

Moreover, it is suggested that just the adoption of learner-centered pedagogical approaches is not sufficient to dissolve underlying power relationships of education systems or address issues of knowledge imperialism or

epistemic power. In this vein, there are those who argue for pedagogical models that go beyond the practice of procedural learner-centeredness in favor of more dialogic and critically attentive ones that draw on processes of power, participation and knowledge related to education (Freire, 1970; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018). In this context, RCP has an opportunity now to establish its legitimacy based on its basic tenet.

Reciprocal teaching/learning is a collaborative instructional strategy that places students and teachers in an interactive cycle of dialogue and joint strategic use. It is based on work by Palincsar and Brown (1984) where reciprocal teaching engages students in a structured process that focuses on predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarising to foster understanding through peer and teacher conversation (Palincsar & Brown as described in Reciprocal teaching, 2026; Reciprocal Teaching: A Definition, 2026). That model encourages active engagement and metacognitive growth, dialogue that breaks from passive taking of information to collective meaning making of meaning. Evidence suggests that reciprocal learning promotes enhanced comprehension, collaboration, and learners' confident management of complex texts when learners take increasing responsibility for applying cognition (Mafarja et al., 2023; Reciprocal teaching, 2026).

The limitations of traditional reciprocal learning, TCP, and LCP are summarized here. This also ensures that reciprocal learning and its practice is a valid instructional practice in terms of its empirical evidence. Yet such framing is typically one of cognitive skill development and cooperative interaction and does not adequately capture the underlying power relations and epistemic hierarchies that exist within knowledge itself. In other words, it might yet reproduce traditional paradigms where what exactly counts as knowledge, and then norms of interaction, echo dominant epistemic norms rather than authentic reciprocal

recognition of other perspectives. This interpretive gap prompts a transition towards what could be termed reciprocal-centric pedagogy.

RCP not only promotes cooperative learning, but also considers who comes to determine meaning, whose knowledge is privileged, and how power functions in the co-construction of knowledge. Conceptually, this transition resonates with postcolonial and critical pedagogies that question the assumptions, power relations and cultural norms that underlie classroom exchanges and knowledge validation. Epistemic justice, which was coined by Miranda Fricker to delineate harms done to individuals (and communities) as knowers (in turn, knowledge and knowledge producers), is a useful theoretical lens for recognizing the failings of conventional reciprocal learning and for articulating reciprocal-centred pedagogy. Accordingly, as a summary of Epistemic injustice Fricker, (2007) as summarised in Epistemic injustice, (2026) defines Epistemic injustice as systems that privilege certain ways of knowing whilst deflating others, which lead to testimonial exclusions. Scholars in higher education have demonstrated how curricula and pedagogical practices further propagate epistemic injustice, as they marginalize knowledge and how knowledge is experienced by historically marginalized communities, as in post-colonial contexts or in Global South contexts (Epistemic (in)justice and decolonisation in higher education, 2020; Omodan, 2023).

Consequently, reciprocal-centric pedagogy transcends that which focuses on cognitive strategies that govern reciprocal learning to include a critical engagement with power, culture, and justice in both the production and exchange of knowledge, a reconstruction of epistemic justice that has particular relevance for decolonising higher education and the cultivation of more equitable intellectual worlds.

**Table 2:** Summaries of the biggest question in pedagogical inquiry. Who is in control of the learning process?

<b>Pedagogical Orientation</b>	<b>Who Controls Teaching and Learning Process</b>	<b>Indicators / Methodology</b>
Teacher centered pedagogy (TCP)	Teacher	Teacher is the expert, dictates, uses questions
Learner centered Pedagogy (LCP)	Learners	Teacher is the facilitator of knowledge, uses groups and discussions
Reciprocal teaching/learning	Learners	Teacher is a guide, remains the expert knower
Reciprocal centered Pedagogy (RCP)	Both teacher and learners	Teacher is co-learner and learners are co-teachers

## **Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy: An Institutional Reorientation for Higher Education**

Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy (RCP) is a pedagogical approach for the reorientation of knowledge production in the higher education system, which is based on the transformation of hierarchical teacher–student relationship on a basis of dialogical reciprocal relations between dialogical reciprocity, epistemic comprehensiveness, and transformative participation.

Building on critical pedagogical perspectives that call into question our traditional definitions of knowledge, teaching and the role of learners within learning frameworks, RCP is described as an ontological orientation of higher education. Education-related ontological perspectives challenge the transmission of knowledge and people’s understanding of their being and their relationships within learning contexts (Biesta, 2010). Conventional models of instruction, especially teacher-centric pedagogies, often frame learners as passive rather than active participants in the academic enterprise, where the teacher is identified as knowledge provider (Freire, 1970).

Reciprocal centric pedagogies, conversely, highlight dialogical reciprocity, relational and intercultural engagement, and relational knowledge construction between teacher and learners. Such approaches are consistent with Freire’s theory of dialogical education, foregrounding collaborative and critical reflections central to emancipatory learning. In this context, Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy can thus be recognized as a change from hierarchical knowledge sharing towards relational epistemologies wherein both educators and learners are acknowledged as actual participants in the collective knowledge production (Mukwana & Ssebbunnga, 2024).

Central to Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy are principles that challenge power relations and epistemic authority in higher education institutions. Critical pedagogy scholars, for example, argue that education systems often reproduce hegemonic social and cultural understandings by privileging some forms of knowledge while marginalizing others (Giroux, 2011). Much of what Fricker (2007) talks about as epistemic injustice exists within and against these systems, often resulting in people or communities being systematically delegitimised as knowers because of structural inequalities. This emphasis on reciprocity and dialogical engagement aims to re-formulate epistemic relationships established between educators and learners that foster a climate of learning in which multiple kinds of knowledge and engagement are held in respect. This pedagogical orientation resonates with current demands for epistemic plurality and the democratization of the production of knowledge in higher educational institutions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018).

## **3. Methodology**

This study took the conceptual and theoretical research perspective towards investigating Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy (RCP) as an ontological reorientation in higher education. The focus of the study was library-based, with a critical reading and engaging with existing scholarly literature, rather than primary empirical discovery. Conceptual research is especially suitable for research in which building theories, doing a critical reflection and interpretive rethinking of how existing knowledge systems are established are the focus, rather than constructing statistical or field-informed data (Jabareen, 2009; Gilson & Goldberg, 2015). This research therefore examined power and epistemic relationships in Ugandan universities, focusing on theoretical analysis, interpretive reasoning, and a critical synthesis of literature in relation to pedagogy, decoloniality, epistemic justice, relational learning and higher education transformation.

The study utilized secondary data from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, policy documents, institutional reports and theoretical works on pedagogy and epistemology. Literature also served as a purposive source of its significance to the concepts included: reciprocal learning, power relations in education, decolonial pedagogies, student agency, critical thinking, and epistemic inclusion. For selected literature, purposive selection enabled the researcher to determine sources of strong conceptual and theoretical significance to the study goals (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Such literature is thought to offer critical perspectives, critical interrogations, participatory, emancipatory, and dialogical perspectives regarding knowledge systems prevalent in higher education (Giroux, 1988; Hooks, 1994).

The data was analyzed using thematic and interpretive synthesis. The researcher conducted a systematic review of the literature in order to note consistent arguments, conceptual convergences, tensions and gaps about pedagogical authority, epistemic power and student engagement in knowledge production. The approach of thematic analysis allowed the concatenation of ideas into cohesive analytical categories, whereas interpretive synthesis facilitated profound theoretical interaction with the meanings and implications inherent within the literature (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Utilizing comparative analytical and theoretical work, this research integrated the various academic perspectives within a single, consistent theory concerning RCP as an educational philosophy and a transformative methodological perspective.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Key Aspects of Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy (RCP)

From the literature, several key aspects emerged that indicated that Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy (RCP) is based on dialogic reciprocity, the idea of learning with one another and that teaching and learning is a mutual process. In contrast to classroom or teacher-centered pedagogies centered on the teacher as expert to all knowledge production, RCP sees learning as mutually realistic that happens between teacher and learner through active co-creation of meaning. This value is grounded in dialogical epistemologies of education that emphasize communication, reflection, and collaborative inquiry as necessary, meaningful educational practices for learning (Freire, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978). Dialogue serves not merely as a teaching function in RCP but becomes a central process of shared construction of knowledge in RCP. In this sense, RCP strives to change school social life from knowledge passing hierarchically to knowledge transferring towards collaborative discourse.

Second in the RCP is the concept of epistemic relations, a concept which acknowledges the diversity of knowledge content and epistemic perception as a multi-faceted phenomena during learning. Certain epistemological traditions based on Western intellectual frameworks have often had epistemic privilege at higher education institutions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018; Mbembe, 2016). To combat this disparity, RCP promotes pedagogical interventions that recognise multiple epistemic insights into students, communities, and local contexts. In the pedagogy resonates with theoretical perspectives regarding epistemic justice that stress the need to recognize marginalized knowers as well as the dismantling of ways that knowledge hierarchies inhibit equitable engagement in academic dialogue (Fricker, 2007). By means of its epistemic relations, RCP aspires to bring forth learning spaces where knowledge is not imposed from a single authoritative point of view but becomes materialized as the products of the interaction between multiple intellectual streams and lived experiences.

The third principle underlying RCP is transformative participation. Through this approach, students take back

the power of knowledge from one educational form and contribute to the process, actively shaping what the learning process entails and where it takes place. Through questioning central ideas (such as those held by the author and its referents) by others, RCP promotes critical consciousness among learners and encourages learning within that process itself. This focus mirrors the goal of critical pedagogy where education is seen as a space for instilling democratic engagement, social responsibility, and critical reflection (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 2011), thus aligning with transformative ideals of critical pedagogy.

Transformative participation not only aligns with calls toward better knowledge systems that would benefit the decolonization of knowledge systems and democratizing the institutions of higher education in Africa, but it also echoes with the desire for change in higher education in the country. Ontological reorientation.

The fourth main principle is ontological Reorientation, fundamental rethinking about reality, existence or being. It's about altering how learners see and connect and experience the world. This agrees with Laininen, (2018) who argues that there is need to entail a shift of awareness, and consciousness of the worldview. It shares an important resemblance with, among other things: paradigm shift, mindset change, and conceptual revolution. For instance, to establish interaction in the classroom with an ontological reorientation perspective, a teacher may utilize open-ended questions that force students to expand their assumptions, invite debates and discussions on challenging ideas, draw on lived experiences to bring abstract ideas under the surface, and create a space for students to share their voices. The dialogues through which we engage with teaching spaces (re)constructing pedagogical relationships and ideas around equitable knowledge production through processes such as dialogue reciprocity, epistemic relations, transformative participation and ontological reorientation provide an ontological lens through which to critically appraise pedagogical contexts in pedagogical practice. Developing the conceptual framework of Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy (RCP). This model can guide curriculum design, teaching strategies, and institutional reforms, ensuring that pedagogy addresses both learning and social transformation goals.

**Table 3:** Summary of how the Four Principles Interact

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Interaction with Others</b>
<b>Dialogical Reciprocity</b>	Mutual engagement between teachers and learners; co-creation of meaning.	Enables Epistemic Comprehensiveness by creating a space where all voices can be heard; strengthens Transformative Participation by encouraging active learner involvement
<b>Epistemic Relations</b>	Recognition of multiple knowledge systems such as indigenous that lead to co-construction of knowledge.	Supports Dialogical Reciprocity by providing diverse content for discussion; strengthens Transformative Participation by validating learners' contributions to learning and social change
<b>Transformative Participation</b>	Learners actively shape content, process, and social outcomes.	Reinforces Dialogical Reciprocity by promoting ongoing interaction; reinforces Epistemic Comprehensiveness by ensuring all perspectives are integrated into practice.
<b>Ontological Reorientation</b>	Paradigm shift in understanding of reality.	Encourages openness, debates, knowledge sharing and use of real-life scenario based on learner experiences.

### **Pedagogical and Institutional Applications Of RCP**

Literature indicates that RCP can be utilized in higher education classrooms by setting up co-participatory learning environments where both teachers and pupils build up the content, process, and the consequent results of learning. Lecturers (Freire, 1970; Vygotsky, 1978 & Cote, 2017) can implement collaborative units in the form of real-time projects, peer-to-peer mentorship, and problem-based learning modes, where both participants in a class take the time to think, reflect, and share in decision-making. Such practices cultivate dialogical reciprocity through which learners are able to critically engage with both the curriculum and their own realities and critique the traditional hierarchical model of teacher-centered education. In the instance of the Ugandan universities, this might mean working into class discussion of materials from outside the community or indigenous knowledge systems, such that students know their own epistemic development is valid and relevant. At an institutional level, RCP can also contribute to the policy makers' design of policy and curriculum in prioritising epistemic relations and participatory governance.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

This paper proposed Reciprocal-Centric Pedagogy (RCP) as a framework for rethinking Higher Education in African context, particularly in Uganda. As such, the incorporation of dialogical reciprocity, epistemic relations, transformative participation and ontological reorientation in this research is intended

to fulfill crucial gaps in entrenched Pedagogical Practices, and their role as reproducers of dominant Power structures and epistemic injustices. The framework advocates for knowledge as co-construction between teachers and learners, embraces diverse epistemologies, and promotes the active learning of students as critical agents who affect not only learning but also institutional arrangements. Hence, RCP views pedagogy as cognitive, effective, psychomotor for social transformation process. The possible applications and consequences of RCP also illustrate its promise to revamp teaching, learning and organizational culture for the future.

RCP is premised on participatory curricula, collaborative learning and incorporation of local knowledge systems; universities that may provide habitats wherein power structures are less oppressive with the possibility of leveling the epistemic ground. Second, institutional endorsement of RCP through policy reform, resource development, and faculty training might buttress the sustainability of such pedagogic shifts in general. This approach would ensure that African universities would produce not only academically sound graduates who are socially literate but would grow socially literate citizens who are ready to participate in the production of knowledge that serves the diversity, and nature of the countries and populations in Africa.

Finally, the recommendations and avenues for future research discussed in this paper offer theoretical opportunities for fine-tuning and empirical confirmation of the role and potential implementation of RCP, as well as potential for innovative scholarship and practice by providing a new lens for equitable, participatory, and decolonized pedagogy.

RCP does so in several fundamental respects that promote a holistic perspective of higher education reform, one that links theoretical reflection with practice, centered on epistemic justice, and reorients pedagogy in both its individual and collective aspects to transformative learning pathways.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

Considering the insights and theoretical approaches to the questions presented in this study, the research identifies the following recommendations for universities, policymakers, educators, curriculum developers, and future researchers aspiring to move forward the idea of fairness and decolonization in higher education through Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy (RCP).

### **1. Embrace Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy (RCP) in educational institutions**

Universities should formally adopt and institutionalize Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy (RCP) as a teaching and learning framework. This calls for going beyond lecturer-centred instruction to structured reciprocal, dialogical, and co-constructive pedagogy in which students and educators are placed as epistemic partners. There should be clear frameworks to facilitate institutional uptake through explicit policy directives, staff training, and mechanisms to ensure consistent implementation, as well as quality assurance mechanisms that guarantee delivery standards across the academic institution. It would help to institutionalize and reconfigure power relations in classrooms, give student agency more impetus, support more equitable and decolonizing practices of higher education, and move them beyond simple ‘colonized’ education.

### **2. Professional Development for Academic Staff**

Universities ought to reinforce pedagogical development for academic faculty so as to develop teaching practices that work out in mutual agreement between universities and students. Lecturers should be encouraged in cultivating the skills of dialogical pedagogy, collaborative learning, critical facilitation, and inclusive classroom engagement. This kind of education would, it would be hoped, help shift classroom life from a culture of hierarchical knowledge transmission to one of collective thought and joint learning.

### **3. Institutional Policies that Promote Participatory Learning**

Higher education institutions in Africa and Uganda in particular should formulate and implement policies that encourage participatory and reciprocal centric pedagogical environments. Institutional frameworks should support democratic classroom engagement, critical dialogue, student voice, and collaborative knowledge production. Policies that reward innovative and inclusive pedagogical approaches may further encourage lecturers to adopt transformative teaching practices aligned with the principles of RCP.

### **4. More Empirical Study on Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy**

As this research was conceptual and theoretical in nature, subsequent studies need to empirically evaluate the applicability, effectiveness, and challenges of implementing Reciprocal Centric Pedagogy in African university contexts. Extensive empirical studies with lecturers, students, and institutional leaders offer potentially rich insight into how reciprocal pedagogical practices influence classroom interactions, student learning outcomes, epistemic relations, and institutional transformation processes.

### **Acknowledgement**

The author gratefully acknowledges the financial and institutional support of the NORHED programme through University of Agder and Makerere University. Special appreciation is extended to Prof. Muyinda Birevu and Prof. Ghislain Maurice N. Isabwe for their mentorship, intellectual guidance, and constructive feedback throughout the postdoctoral research process.

### **Author’s Contributions**

Nicholas Isaac Mukwana (PhD) conceptualized the study, synthesized the literature, and prepared the original manuscript draft as part of postdoctoral research. Prof. Paul Muyinda Birevu and Prof. Ghislain Maurice N. Isabwe supervised the work, provided scholarly mentorship, and critically reviewed and guided the manuscript. All authors approved the final version of the manuscript.

### **Data Accessibility Statement**

There were no datasets generated since this is a purely conceptual paper

## Ethics and Consent

Ethical approval and participant consent were not required in this study since it was a conceptual study based on published literature.

## Funding Information

This postdoctoral research was supported by the Norwegian Programme for Capacity Development in Higher Education and Research (NORHED) programme in collaboration with the University of Adger and Makerere University.

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