

Critical Thinking Skill Practices and Level of Preparedness in Sourcing Reliable Information of GSAT Grade 11 Students: Basis for THINC Program

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ABSTRACT

To traverse huge amount of information sources available today, critical thinking skills and readiness in seeking information are required (Wallace & Jefferson 2013). However, this learning discipline is significantly hampered by erroneous information circulating online and students were fazed by isolation in observance of health protocols due to COVID 19. Gathering data for their research tasks was restricted since classes were temporarily adapted to online and modular set ups putting at stake their critical thinking skill practices and preparedness in information-seeking.

To determine the critical thinking skill practices and level of preparedness in seeking information of GSAT Grade 11 students particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, this study was conducted. Through a stratified sampling, 240 Grade 11 students were selected for the quantitative data and 5 others by purposive sampling to collect qualitative data. Since mobility in tracking information was limited, students were confined in their families, online sources, classmates, and relatives. The quantitative data were obtained from online survey and processed statistically. Consequently, the qualitative data were transcribed, discussed, analyzed, and interpreted using the thematic analysis.

Results of the survey show that students' critical thinking skill practices in brainstorming, adapting to changes in laws and programs, and problem-solving are relatively moderately practiced. Meanwhile, the students' level of preparedness in seeking information on the aspects of analytical skills, information literacy, and reasoning skills are in the average level. Further, learners could acknowledge others' opinions though they struggled in interpreting and evaluating information. Learners recognize the components of critical thinking that must be considered in gathering data from reliable sources; they are aware too of the influence of peer collaboration in boosting critical thinking and improve their skills in outlining, organizing, and validating information to obtain needed data.

Based on the results of this study, the researchers proposed the formulation of the "Thought Hierarchy Intervention for Neophyte Critiques (THINC) Program" to equip learners with apt skills and improve their information-seeking practices in preparation to their research endeavors and related learning activities.

Keywords: Critical thinking skill practices, Level of preparedness in seeking information

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

Doing research requires utmost critical thinking skills and readiness in sourcing and evaluating information. Considering the breadth of sources of information, finding and processing information is a complicated cognitive process that involves learners to verify, analyze, organize, and synthesize data from various sources (Kurt and Emiroglu, 2018). Students' capability to be critical in seeking reliable information across different sources confronts Practical Research teachers at the Glan School of Arts and Trades (GSAT).

In this new normal education, GSAT is implementing distance learning specifically online asynchronous/synchronous, and modular digital/printed modalities. In doing research, GSAT students rely on information from online sources without proper validation. On the Internet, students may come across commercial information that is unnecessary, inaccurate, or incomplete instead of finding the proper information from the plethora of information available on the Internet. Hassan et al. (2016) conducted a profiling of information-seeking behavior among distance learners whereas it was found that the distance learners have significant challenges in properly looking for information and incorporating the data into academic and scientific scholarship.

From these claims and issues on students' critical thinking skill practices and preparedness, the researchers aimed further to design a program that could guide and equip students with apt adaptable research skills and behaviour in critical thinking and readiness in information-seeking. Hence, the formulation of the Thought Hierarchy Intervention for Neophyte Critiques (THINC) Program is eyed for completion and implementation.

Action Research Questions

In this context, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What critical thinking skills are perceived in the following thinking practices?
 - 1.1. Brainstorming
 - 1.2. Adapting to changes in laws and programs
 - 1.3. Problem - Solving
2. What is the level of students' preparedness in seeking information in terms of –
 - 2.1 Analytical Skills;
 - 2.2 Information Literacy; and
 - 2.3 Reasoning Skills?
3. Is there a significant relationship between critical thinking skill practices and level of preparedness in seeking information?
4. What are the students' information seeking practices?
5. How do their critical thinking skill practices influence their information-seeking?
6. How does their level of preparedness influence their information-seeking?

Innovation, Intervention, and Strategy

Research is a continuous process of addressing concurrent needs, issues, and concerns that need appropriate immediate action. This mirrors the essence of innovative discretion, meaning, new or modified way in dealing a condition or situation after a thorough analysis is made. Intervention comes in to fix emerging unfavorable issue or discontentment; bridging gaps of needs to smoothen flow of activities toward desired outcomes.

Undergoing innovations and interventions, strategic plan is a must. Strategy discloses the manner of doing or getting into a condition or situation in order to reach the expected results. These three elements form a triad of considerable action to undertake in doing research. Guided by three distinct questions WHAT-WHY-HOW, seeking for reliable information for instance in a research task would be light and profitable.

As an intervention of the emerging challenges of critical thinking skills of the students during distance learning, Thought Hierarchy Intervention for Neophyte Critiques “THINC” program will be implemented. This 3-month program aims to help learners become equipped in information seeking practices in preparation for research endeavors.

The researchers have planned to incorporate activities such as book critiquing, annotating bibliography, and literature reviewing to enhance the students’ critical thinking skills in seeking information through a Blended learning modality with the aid of contextualized instructional materials.

Action Research Methods

Research Design

Mixed methods explanatory sequential design was used which implied collecting and analyzing quantitative and then qualitative data in two consecutive phases within one study (Creswell et al. 2003) The mixed methods legend is QUAN → QUAL which denotes that this is both equally quantitative and qualitative driven study.

Participants and/ or other Sources of Data and Information

Stratified sampling was employed in this study. The respondents were Grade 11 Senior High School students of Glan School of Arts and Trades with a total sample size of 240 students which was determined using the Slovin’s formula as shown in the table below.

| Track/Strand | Population | Percentage | Sample Size |
|-----------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Academic Track-HUMSS Strand | 246 | 41 | 99 |
| Academic Track-STEM Strand | 40 | 7 | 16 |
| Academic Track-ABM Strand | 50 | 8 | 19 |
| TVL Track | 268 | 44 | 106 |
| Total | 604 | 100 | 240 |

For the qualitative data, 5 respondents were identified afterwards.

Data Gathering Methods

The researchers secured permission from the school authorities and participants for voluntary participation in the study. The primary-data gathering method is a survey via google forms with an informed consent sent to the respondents of the study.

To gather the qualitative data, purposive sampling was utilized and in-depth interview vis-à-vis audio and video recording was the gathering method observed. The interview was conducted via phone or in person, based on participant’s preference. Interviews were conversational in nature but grounded by the main research questions aiming to know how students’ practices in critical thinking skills and level of preparedness influence their information seeking.

Statistical Treatment

The data collected from the responses on the validated questionnaires were analyzed through percentage, mean, and correlation. To determine the extent of practice of critical thinking skills of students, the following interpretation scale was used in treating the data of this study.

| Numerical Rating | Description | Interpretation |
|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| 4.20 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree | Highly Practiced |
| 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree | Practiced |
| 2.60 – 3.39 | Neither agree nor disagree | Moderately Practiced |
| 1.80 – 2.59 | Disagree | Less Practiced |
| 1.00 – 1.79 | Strongly disagree | Least Practiced |

To determine the level of preparedness in sourcing information of grade 11 students, the following interpretation scale was used in treating the data of this study.

| Numerical Rating | Description | Interpretation |
|------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 4.20 – 5.00 | Strongly Agree | Highly prepared in seeking |
| 3.40 – 4.19 | Agree | Prepared in seeking |
| 2.60 – 3.39 | Neither agree nor disagree | Moderately prepared in seeking |
| 1.0 – 2.59 | Disagree | Less prepared in seeking |
| 1.00 – 1.79 | Strongly disagree | Least prepared in seeking |

Correlational analysis was used to find out the significant relationship between critical thinking skill practices and level of preparedness in sourcing information of grade 11 students of GSAT. The researchers adopt the scale patterned from Sanchez (2007) below.

| Range | Description |
|---------------|---|
| ±0.91 - ±1.00 | Very highly correlational, dependable relationship |
| ±0.71 – ±0.90 | High correlational, marked relationship |
| ±0.41 – ±0.70 | Fair correlation, substantial relationship |
| ±0.21 – ±0.40 | Slight correlation, definite but small relationship |
| ±0.10 – ±0.20 | Low correlation, almost negligence relationship |

Thematic approach was used for the qualitative responses of the learners.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND REFLECTIONS

The succeeding tables show the identified critical thinking skills practices rated relatively as less practiced and the level of preparedness in seeking information of Grade 11 students. (See the thorough analysis in Appendices).

Table 1: Critical Thinking Skills Practices

| Practices | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|------|----------------|
| Brainstorming | | |
| I prefer doing brainstorming on my own. | 2.49 | Less Practiced |
| Adaptability | | |

| | | |
|---|------|----------------|
| I can adapt newly implemented laws or programs. | 2.42 | Less Practiced |
| I acknowledge that change is inevitable. | 2.49 | Less Practiced |
| Problem Solving | | |
| I can easily identify the problem and its root cause. | 2.40 | Less Practiced |
| I solve problems step-by-step. | 2.47 | Less Practiced |

Legend:(1.00 – 1.79=Least practiced; 1.80 – 2.59=Less practiced; 2.60 – 3.39= Moderately practiced; 3.40 – 4.19= Practiced; 4.20 – 5.00= Highly practiced)

Table 1 shows the less practiced critical thinking skills namely: Brainstorming, Adaptability, and Problem Solving. Findings imply that students do not brainstorm on their own, they cannot easily adapt to changes in newly implemented laws or programs, and, they cannot easily identify and solve problems.

Table 2. Over-all Rating of Critical Thinking Skills Practices

| Practices | Section Mean | Interpretation |
|-------------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Brainstorming | 3.55 | Moderately Practiced |
| Adaptability | 3.26 | Moderately Practiced |
| Problem Solving | 3.43 | Moderately Practiced |
| Grand Mean | 3.41 | Practiced |

Legend:(1.00 – 1.79=Least practiced; 1.80 – 2.59=Less practiced; 2.60 – 3.39= Moderately practiced; 3.40 – 4.19= Practiced; 4.20 – 5.00= Highly practiced)

Table 2 shows the overall rating of Critical Thinking Skills Practices in seeking information that were rated Moderately Practiced with a grand mean of 3.41.

Table 3. Level of Preparedness in Seeking Information

| Aspects | Mean | Interpretation |
|---|------|--------------------------|
| Analytical Skills | | |
| I often ask follow-up questions. | 2.49 | Less Prepared in Seeking |
| Information Literacy | | |
| I can easily interpret results. | 2.49 | Less Prepared in Seeking |
| Reasoning Skills | | |
| I can easily evaluate someone else’s point of view. | 2.49 | Less Prepared in Seeking |

Legend:(1.00 – 1.79=Least prepared in seeking; 1.80 – 2.59=Less prepared in seeking; 2.60 – 3.39= Moderately Prepared in seeking; 3.40 – 4.19= Prepared in seeking; 4.20 – 5.00= Highly prepared in seeking)

Table 3 shows the less prepared aspects of preparedness in seeking information - analytical skills, Information literacy, and reasoning skills. Findings of this study disclose that students do not often ask follow-up questions, cannot easily interpret results, and cannot easily evaluate someone’s point of view.

Table 4. Over-all Rating in Level of Preparedness in Seeking Information

| Aspects | Section Mean | Interpretation |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------|
| Analytical Skills | 3.45 | Prepared in Seeking |
| Information Literacy | 3.75 | Prepared in Seeking |
| Reasoning Skills | 3.63 | Prepared in Seeking |
| Grand Mean | 3.61 | Prepared in Seeking |

Legend:(1.00 – 1.79=Least prepared in seeking; 1.80 – 2.59=Less prepared in seeking; 2.60 – 3.39= Moderately Prepared in seeking; 3.40 – 4.19= Prepared in seeking; 4.20 – 5.0skills0= Highly prepared in seeking)

Table 4 shows the overall rating in the Level of Preparedness in seeking information in terms of analytical skills, information literacy, and reasoning skills rated Prepared in Seeking with a grand mean of 3.61.

Table 5. Correlation Analysis of Critical Thinking Skills Practices and Level of Preparedness in Seeking Information

| Correlated Variable | Computed R-value | p-value | Degree of Relationship | Interpretation |
|---|------------------|---------|---|----------------|
| Practice of Critical Thinking Skills and Level of Preparedness in Seeking Information | 0.7504 | <.00001 | High correlational, marked relationship | Significant |
| Level of Significance at α 0.05 | | | | |

Table 5 shows the Correlation Analysis of Critical Thinking Skills Practices and Level of Preparedness in Seeking Information.

The computed r value is 0.7504, this means that there is a High Correlation, marked relationship between Practice of Critical Thinking Skills and Level of Preparedness in Seeking Information. Furthermore, the p-value is less <0.00001 and it is significant at $p < 0.05$. Therefore, there is a significant High Correlation relationship between Practice of Critical Thinking Skills and Level of Preparedness in Seeking Information.

The discussion and analysis of the qualitative data were presented in a table to show the thematic analysis and extract from the interview transcriptions. To substantiate our research, we are presenting our informants using code names “A1”, “J2”, “G3”, “J4”, and “K5”.

4. The first specific question is

What are your information seeking practices?

| Responses | Translation | Emergent Themes |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| A1: "Usahay naga search ko sa study document, slideshare, ug google sir. Usahay google scholar" | Sometimes I search information from study document, SlideShare, and google. Sometimes, from google scholar. | Digital sources utilization |
| J2: "Google lang akong ginagamit sir" | I only use Google. | |
| G3: "Magresearch sa Google ug Firefox sir kay dili man mi kagamit sa library kay pandemic" | I research from Google and Firefox since we can't utilize library due to pandemic | |
| J4: "magresearch ko through internet sir" | I research through internet | |
| K5: "mangita ko sa google sir katong mga sites na trustworthy" | I search on sites that are trustworthy from google. | |
| A1: "usahay ginapangutana nako akong ate ug kuya sir kay kabalo man sila unsaon ang research" | Sometimes, I ask my sister and brother since they know about research. | Communal sources |
| G3: "Nagpatabang ko sa akong amiga sir" | I asked help from my friend. | |
| J4: "Nagapangutana ko sa akong tita sir" | I ask from my aunt. | |

An analysis of students' responses generated 2 emerging themes which are Digital, and Communal sources utilization. Jegan & Jayaprakash (2018) found in their study that majority of their respondents use search engines to look for information.

The second specific question is

How do your critical thinking skills influence you in seeking information?

| Responses | Translation | Emergent Themes |
|---|--|-----------------------------|
| A1: "ginaconsider nako ang opinion sa akong kauban pag brainstorming mi" | I consider my group mates' opinion whenever we are brainstorming. | Peer collaboration |
| G3: "makahunahuna mi kauban sa akong groupmates unsa among iresearch through groupchat" | I can brainstorm with my groupmates what to research through group chat | |
| J4: "magamit ang brainstorming para sa group collaboration" | Brainstorming can be used for group collaboration. | |
| J2: "Gihunahuna osa ang impormasyon nga nakalap bago kuhaon kung asa ang mas pwede" | I analyzed information that I have gathered before deciding what to accept. | Outlining competence |
| J4: "Nakainfluence akong critical thinking para ma-narrow down or mabal-an nako ang mga trusted source of information" | My critical thinking skills influenced me in narrowing down and identifying trusted source of information. | |
| K5: "murag maenhance akong reading comprehension, diba pag magresearch ta ginabasa nato para masabtan maayo. Maong makapili ko ug tama nga information na iinclude" | Somehow, it enhances my reading comprehension. When we research, we usually comprehend what to read which is why we can choose information to include. | |

An analysis of students’ responses generated 2 emerging themes which are Peer collaboration and Outlining competence. Sladana (2016) offered a critical thinking model in which it was stated that employing conversation in classroom allows students to work in a collaborative and cooperative group setting. It allows students to increase participation, acquire interpersonal and oral communication skills, and develop better understanding of issues at hand.

The third specific question is

How does your Level of preparedness influence you in seeking information?

| Responses | Translation | Emergent Themes |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| A1: “Makabalo ko sa Do’s and Don’ts sa pagpangita ug information” | I can discern the Do’s and Don’ts in searching information. | Reliability of Information |
| J2: “Naka base akong mga research sa facts” | My research are based on facts. | |
| G3: “Makampante ko sa akong giresearch na information sir” | I became confident to information I researched. | |
| J4: “naenhance akong analytical skills sa pag analyze maayo ug information sir” | It enhanced my analytical skills in analyzing information. | |
| K5: “Naka-help siya para maidentify ang isa ka information kung trusted o dili” | It helps in identifying information if it is trusted or not. | |

An analysis of students’ responses generated 1 emerging theme which is Reliability of information. Forzani (2019) supports this finding, rather than presuming information accuracy, students should be able to examine different indicators inside proactively and critically across all three tiers which are content, source, and context.

After the results of the surveys and series of interviews, the researcher arrived at the following realizations that prompted the conclusions and recommendations of this research:

1. The students opted to seek information from Online sources and utilize people sources to search with ease.
2. It was evident that critical thinking skills enable students to be more efficient in searching and validating information
3. It is implicit that students can ascertain reliability of information that they gathered.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the discussions, these are the conclusions of the study:

1. Students’ critical thinking skills are challenged by their inability to brainstorm independently, adapt to changes to laws and programs, and incompetence in identifying root causes and solutions to problems.
2. Learners cannot easily interpret and evaluate sought information despite their capability in acknowledging others’ opinions.
3. Learners commonly acquire information from secondary sources due to Department of Health imposed restrictions. Peers, family, and relatives were utilized as Primary Sources.
4. Peer collaboration fosters development of critical thinking skills through discussion, clarification, and evaluation of others’ ideas. It enhances outlining competence to validate and organize ideas to gather relevant information.
5. Learners acknowledge important aspects that are essential in validating information.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the recommendations are as follows:

1. Formulation of the Thought Hierarchy Intervention for Neophyte Critiques (THINC) Program that aims to equip learners with practicable critical thinking skills.
2. Provision of an internet websites' guide on how and where to access information that will help students to know specific and reliable sites beneficial for their research endeavors.

Action Plan

Working Plan/Tutorial Sessions

| Activity/ies | Objectives | Modality | Time Frame | Person Involved | Budgetary Requirements | Source of Fund | Expected Output |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|----------------|--|
| 1. Goal-setting | To come up plans for future direction of the intervention program. | Face to face/Online Meeting | Third Week of May 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | None | None | Craft Intervention Program |
| 2. Approval of the Program Intervention | To seek approval from the higher authority of the intervention program. | Channeling of the submission of the intervention program to the concern offices for approval. | First Week of June 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | None | None | Approved Intervention Program |
| 3. Identifying Stakeholders for Support System of the Intervention Program | To identify possible stakeholders to support the program. | Advocacy Campaign for the said program. | Second Week of June 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Stakeholders | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | List of Stakeholders to Support the Program. |
| 4. Mapping and Identifying learners. | To come up list of learners for the program | Face to face/Online | Second Week of June 2022 | The Researcher and Language Teacher | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | List of Learners |
| 5. Development of Learning Materials for the intervention Program | To develop learning materials needed for the program to address the needs of the learners. | Face to face/Online | Third Week of June | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | 2,000.00 | MOOE | Contextualized Learning Materials |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--------------------------|---|--------------------------|------|---|
| 6. Orientation of the Students and parents | To orient the leaners and parents regarding the program. | Face to face/Online Meeting | Second Week of July 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Students Parents and Stakeholders | 1,000.00 | MOOE | Program Awareness |
| 7. Launching of the Program | To formally open the program to the beneficiary and to the community. | Face to face/Online | Second Week of July 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Students Parents and Stakeholders | 1,000.00 | MOOE | Program Awareness |
| 8. Pre-Test | To assess the prior knowledge of the learners. | Face to face/Online | Third Week of July 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | None | None | Test Result basis for the teacher in delivery of instruction. |
| 9. Implementation of the Program/ Enhancement Session 1: Annotating Bibliography | To summarize the references; and explains its importance in addressing the research questions | Face to face/Online with the aid of Contextualized Learning Materials | Third Week of July 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Summary and synthesis of different sources |
| 10. Implementation of the Program/ Enhancement Session 2: Reviewing a Book | To evaluate the contribution to knowledge of scholarly works such as academic books and journal article. | Face to face/Online with the aid of Contextualized Learning Materials | Fourth Week of July 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Book Review |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|----------------------------|--|--------------------------|------|---|
| 11. Implementation of the Program/ Enhancement Session 3: Reviewing Reliable Literature | To survey scholarly works (i.e. academic books); and To critically analyze the relationship among the scholarly works and the current works. | Face to face/Online with the aid of Contextualized Learning Materials | First Week of August 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Students | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Literature Review |
| 12. Feedbacking/ Monitoring of the Program | To constant monitor the program and get feedback from the learners and teachers from the daily session. | Face to face/Online | First Week of August 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Students | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | M and E Result for the Improvement of the day to day session. |
| 13. Post-Test | To evaluate the students' progress. | Face to face/Online | First Week of August 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Students | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Post Test Result |
| 14. Documentation and Progress Report and Evaluation of the Program | To prepare the reports and conduct evaluation to assess the implementation of the program. | Face to face/Online | Second Week of August 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Data needed for the report. |
| 15. Closing Program | To recognize the achievement and services rendered by the teachers and stakeholders for the success of the program. | Face to face/Online | Second Week of August 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Students Parents and Stakeholders | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Recognition Program |
| 16. Making of the Executive Summary of the Intervention Program | To finalized the report of the implemented program. | Face to face/Online | Second Week of August 2022 | The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Executive Summary Report |
| 17. Submission of the Report to the Higher Authorities | To submit the result of the program to the higher authorities. | Face to face/Online | Second Week of August 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers SDS | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Comprehensive Report of the Program |
| 18. Presentation and Information Dissemination of the Result of the Intervention to the School Head, Teachers, Students, PTA and parents. | To formally present the result to the School Community for improvement of the program. | Face to face/Online | Second Week of August 2022 | VSA II SHS Department Head The Researchers and SHS Language Teachers Students Parents and Stakeholders | Depends on arising need. | MOOE | Plan Adjustment of the Program |

Mode of Assessment/Evaluation- Formative (before, during, after) and summative assessment plus performance-based and authentic assessments. Evaluation results will determine the extent of the Enhancement Program implementation and students' progress.

Reflections

Along the emergence of the COVID-19, the Department of Health has imposed restrictions to mitigate the spread of the virus which limits the activities of individuals such as learners' information seeking practices where they have sought usually in secondary sources (i.e. online articles, journals, and other digital information) and primary sources. Additionally, peer collaboration, outlining competence, and reliability of information proved to be beneficial to the learners in treading the perils and herculean tasks of distance education.

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