



**ASSESSING TEACHER'S COMPETENCIES AND OTHER RELATED VARIABLES
TOWARD RAISING THE LEVEL OF STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

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ABSTRACT

Educators are continuing to research strategies that will enhance critical thinking in social studies to advance students and to have positive engagement in the development of society. With a solid foundation of knowledge in contemporary issues, students will be more prepared to meet the challenges of the critical thinking skills. This study attempted to assess the teacher's competencies and other related factors toward raising the students' achievement in contemporary issues. The study used descriptive and correlational research design in conducting the study. The study revealed that the respondents perceived teacher's competencies as very competent, in terms of mastery of content, achieving goals and objectives, employing teaching pedagogy and learning assessment. Likewise, the findings show that the respondents perceived other related factors in terms of schools' initiatives and issues and challenges as highly observed. Further, the study show that students' achievement in critical thinking skills exceeds expectations while mindset attributes of great extent.

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Moreover, a significant negative relationship was found between the assessed teaching competencies to students' critical thinking skills. Furthermore, the findings also revealed that the teaching competencies have significant relationship to mindset attributes. Other related factors as to schools' initiatives and issues and challenges have no significant relationship to critical thinking skills but other related factors as to schools' initiatives and issues and challenges have significant relationship to mindset attributes. Thus, this study recommends that the curriculum makers to identify other factors affecting critical thinking skills of students to enhance teaching-learning approaches in teaching contemporary issues.

Keywords: Teacher's Competencies, Students' Achievement

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Introduction

Social studies involve integrated study that represent human thinking, the law and a way of life in our society. Its main purpose is to develop the ability of young people to make informed and reasoned decisions as a good citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world as mentioned by National Council for the Social Studies, (2019). Teaching social studies in school is important to expand the students' knowledge of the world for the youth to make rational and logical decisions for the welfare and good of citizens. The Republic Act 10533 established a revised nationwide curriculum of standards that helped the framework for all K to 12 students successful in social studies. The frameworks of standards are geared for teachers, learning and administrating assessments in social studies as specified in the PPST (2017). Social studies help students to obtain greater thinking skills to make decisions in the future.

In today's social studies classrooms, students have less time to study social studies lessons. The total instructional time in teaching social studies is not the same as mathematics, sciences or language. The K-12 program in the Philippines decreased the instructional time in teaching social studies to three days. However, there are reasons for students to learn social studies to formulate solutions to the societal upheavals that they encounter at present using high level skills such as critical thinking skills, deliberation skills, judgment making and systematic thinking, Yilmaz-Ozcan and Tabak (2019).

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Teachers must be able to meet their students' needs with a competent application of methods and techniques that will result to learning. Underlying the techniques is thorough knowledge of the subject matter. Competency in teaching means that teachers must know what they have to teach not only in breadth but also in depth. This competency will prepare students to meet the challenges of the critical thinking skills and becomes active participants in their own learning by entering real worlds conversations as emphasized by Bean (2011). Critical thinking skills are learned inside the classroom and have an impact on future as mentioned by Murawski (2014). Using critical thinking as an approach to problem-solving can liberate thinking in many ways.

Critical thinking may be one of the most significant trends in education relative to the dynamic relationship between how teachers teach and how students learn as cited by Smetanová et.al. (2015). Critical teaching views content as something alive only in minds, as modes of thinking driven by questions, as existing in textbooks only to be regenerated in the minds of students. To understand content, therefore, is to understand its implications. But to understand its implications one must understand that those implications in turn have further implications, and hence must be explored thoughtfully.

The main objective of this study was to assess the level of teacher's competencies and other related variables towards students' achievement in contemporary issues. Furthermore, it aimed to assess how the student-respondents perceived the teacher's level of competencies in teaching contemporary issues be determined in terms of mastery of content, achieving goals and

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objectives, employing teaching pedagogy and learning assessment. Moreover, the study is conducted to determine the perception to other related variables in terms of schools' initiatives and issues and challenges. On the note, the study also aimed to determine the level of respondents' critical thinking skills in contemporary issues in terms of analysis, synthesis, interpret and evaluate. Further, it aimed to determine the extent of respondents' manifestations of mindset attributes. Likewise, the study aimed to test a significant relationship between the teacher's level of competencies and other related variables as to students' achievement in contemporary issues in terms of critical thinking skills and mindset attitude and if the issues and challenges met in assessing teacher's competencies and other related variables significantly related to students' achievement in contemporary issues in terms of critical thinking skills and mindset attitude.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teacher's Competencies. Teaching competencies are important in the delivery of the basic services in an educational institution. Different studies have been conducted in order to study the competence of teachers likewise their classroom practices. The concept is mostly discussed in different dimensions such as teachers' planning, implementation, assessment of the curriculum, standards for the curriculum or the school. These are related to teachers' teaching duties in the school. In this respect, teachers' competencies need to be discussed in many dimensions of competencies such as mastery of content, achieving goals and objectives, teaching pedagogy,

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and learning assessment. Eraut (as cited in the study of Orji & Abolarin, 2012) defined competence as the ability to perform the tasks and roles required to the expected standards. In addition, competence is the effectiveness or ability of anyone concerned to apply acquired knowledge and skill to achieve desired results. Therefore, teachers' competencies in instruction delivery is necessary input in realizing the objectives in education.

Teaching competencies reflects in the teachers' practices inside the classrooms. Li & Oliveira (2015) stated that classroom practice, as a process, involves multiple agents and their interactions within the classroom as a system. The process can be manifested in diverse formats and structures, and its effectiveness can be influenced by numerous factors both internal and external to the classroom. Moreover, Villaverde (2017) believes that when hiring teachers, one must hire those who have cognitive, emotional and practical competencies. On the other hand, Nessipbayeva (2012) believes that teaching competencies in the 21st century is composed of a) teachers demonstrates leadership; b) teachers establish a respectful environment for a diverse population of students; and c) teachers reflect on their practice. These three components of the 21st century teaching competencies demonstrates what are the things that are needed by a teacher.

Mastery of Content. The PPST for teachers defines teacher quality in the Philippines. The standards describe the expectations of teachers' increasing levels of knowledge as required to be effective in the 21st century. Quality of the teacher as stated in the 7 domains include recognizing

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the mastery of content knowledge and its interconnectedness within and across the curriculum areas. The subject matter is an essential component of teacher knowledge is neither a new nor a controversial assertion. After all, if teaching entails helping others learn, then understanding what is to be taught is a central requirement of teaching. The myriad tasks of teaching, such as selecting worthwhile learning activities, giving helpful explanations, asking productive questions, and evaluating students' learning, all depend on the teacher's understanding of what it is that students are to learn.

In addition, Ball & McDiarmid (2016) stated that although subject matter knowledge is widely acknowledged as a central component of what teachers need to know, research on teacher education has not, in the main, focused on the development of teachers' subject matter knowledge. Researchers specifically interested in how teachers develop and change have focused on other aspects of teaching and learning to teach: for example, changes in teachers' role conceptions, their beliefs about their work; their knowledge of students, curriculum, or of teaching strategies. Yet to ignore the development of teachers' subject matter knowledge seems to believe its importance in teaching and in learning to teach.

Goals and Objectives. Achieving goals and objectives are related to the understanding of the curriculum plans for the teaching and learning. These carry out such teaching roles more effectively. These are related to both theoretical and practical competencies. It is defined as learning-teaching which determines the framework of the knowledge and skills that teachers will

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gain. Without goals and objectives, it is quite difficult to produce an effective education. Lifelong learning process requires that learners take responsibility of their learning. As individuals, teachers are acting for their own learning in the lifelong learning process. Lifelong learning activity goes through the whole life continuing between individual and the world (Selvi 2010). *Teaching Pedagogy.* Teachers routinely make plan and make decisions regarding the best pedagogical methods for students' understandings about academic content. Such practices are at the root of teaching as persuasion, and have been shown to be related to academic achievement. Twenty-first century pedagogy must employ innovative and research supported teaching strategies, learning technologies and real world applications as mentioned by Saavedra and Opfer (2012). Opportunities for learners to apply twenty-first century skills across content areas are also essential for deeper understanding.

Kozma (2003), in his study examines the findings from 174 case studies of innovative pedagogical practices using technology from 28 participating countries. The study looks at how classrooms world-wide are using technology to change the practices of teachers and students. Within many of these classrooms, the use of technological tools and resources supports students as they search for information, design products, and publish results. Teachers create structure, provide advice, and monitor progress. Beyond these commonly exhibited practices, the study identifies specific patterns of classroom practice that are more likely to be associated with reports of certain desirable student outcomes.

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Learning Assessment. Assessment and reporting are the fifth domain in PPST. This relates to the processes associated with a variety of assessment tools and strategies used by teachers in monitoring, evaluating, documenting and reporting learner’s needs, progress and achievement. This also concerns with the use of assessment data in a variety of ways to inform and enhance the teaching and learning process and programs. It concerns with teachers providing learners with the necessary feedback about learning outcomes. This feedback informs the reporting cycle and enables teachers to select, organize and use sound assessment processes, (DO No. 42, s. 2017).

Assessments frameworks changed from testing the learning of students to assessing their learning instead. This is due to remarkable effect of assessment to student’s approach to learning. Rogier (2014) cited that reflecting on the assessment is a crucial component of the assessment tool development process. Creating exam file is encouraged after administering a test. Feedback regarding the test should also be part of the exam file. Moreover, along with the feedback form are the purpose and information about the examinees, test blueprint with learning objective alignment and the statistical tools to be used.

Schools’ Initiatives. DepEd programs focus on the strengths of learners, and the belief that through education, opportunities are created for the youth. Thus, the department is ensuring that schools are learner-friendly and creates more opportunities for the teachers and students to be successful.

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In the study of Capili (2019), results showed that putting initiative into action and practicing in the daily teaching routine brings development and improvement to partner school and through partnerships, standards of teaching and learning were improved, and pupils' performance were raise. In the same study, results revealed that LAC sessions, organizing stakeholders and inviting speakers have positive effects on the teaching-learning process

Issues and Challenges. Lack of training that provide practice in critical thinking, problem solving, decision making or other process skills are some of the problems in teaching social studies as mentioned in the study of Villaverde (2017). This is also confirms in the study of Mensah & Frimpong (2020) which revealed that 59.7 percent of teachers lacked the ability to train students in critical thinking which affected students' attitude towards the subject.

In the the classroom, active engagement in social interaction with others is vital in the teaching-learning process (Vacca & Mraz, 2011). This become a problem nowadays due to pandemic. Moreover, Kelly (2020) listed the top most concerns of the social studies teachers in today's classroom, (1) the breadth of material is impossible to cover all in one school year, (2) teaching of controversial issues or topics, (3) making connections to students lives, (4) methods of instruction, (5) avoiding rote memorization, (6) presenting different points of views, and (7) dealing with false information. To sum up, the above-cited issues and challenges in teaching social studies affects learners.

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Students' achievement. Student achievement is impacted on numerous levels including students' personal factors, their interactions with others such as parents, teachers, and administrators, and lastly the larger systems that surround the students. Academic achievement was once thought to be the most outcome of formal educational experiences (Kell, Lubinski, & Benbow, 2013). Sarmiento (2017), stated that students achievement is a challenging aspect of academic literature, and science student performance are affected due to social, psychological, economic, environmental and personal factors. These factors strongly influence on the student performance, but these factors vary from person to person and country to country. As reflected in their study, the factors that negatively affect students' performance the most are missing too many lectures and living in a crowded household.

Furthermore, Beastro (2012), cited that the necessary precursor to high levels of student achievement in deep engagement in learning, and the teacher's own engagement is the key to achieving that. Curriculum counts and technology can help. But it is teacher who inspire students and enthusiastically engaged teachers do that best. In the case of teachers, however, there is another powerful factor-the intimate ongoing relationship they have with their students as cited in the study of Sarmiento (2017). When the relationship is healthy and when students respond positively to the teacher, motivation derived from it overwhelms all other factors. Studies have shown that critical thinking skills can improve academic achievement of students.

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Critical thinking skills. Dewey perceived critical thinking as a process that begins with a problem and ends with a solution and self-interpretation. Many researchers agree with Dewey's point of view that critical thinking begins with students' engagement with a problem. Bean (2011) elaborates on this point by stating that such a problem should 'evoke students' natural curiosity and stimulate both learning and critical thought'.

Halpren & Butler (2019) states, 'Critical thinking is purposeful, reasoned, and goal-directed. It is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions. Critical thinkers use these skills appropriately, without prompting, and usually with conscious intent, in a variety of settings. In other words, when people think critically, they evaluate the outcomes of their thought processes, calculate how good a decision is, or identify how effectively a problem has been solved.

Mindset Attributes. Okafor (2019) regarded that some of the most influential people throughout history have found success because of their mindset. The mind is more powerful than we think. Different style of thinking helps them to find success and so, they have growth mindset qualities, whereby they want to succeed. In addition, mindful of who they are, how they want to grow, and constantly learning are people who have positive mindset. A growth mindset, therefore, is an approach to seeking growth as opposed to the more inward awareness orientation of mindfulness as mentioned by Okafor in her article. In a growth mindset students understand that their talents and abilities can be developed through effort, good teaching and persistence.

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They don't think anyone can be Einstein, but they believe everyone can get smarter if they work at it (Morehead 2012). Yan, et.al. (2014) also found evidence that one's mindset with respect to intelligence is related to one's habits and beliefs.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

This study utilized descriptive research design in assessing teacher's competencies and other related variables toward raising the level of students' achievement in contemporary issues. The respondents are Grade 10 students of Canda National High School for the academic year 2021-2022. Random sampling technique was utilized wherein twenty (20) students are randomly chosen from Grade 10-Commitment, twenty (20) students from Grade 10-Excellence, twenty (20) students from Grade 10-Integrity, twenty (20) students from Grade 10-Loyalty and twenty (20) students from Grade 10- Resilience.

This study used researcher made questionnaire as its main tool for gathering data. It consists of five parts: Part I dealt on teacher's level of competency in teaching contemporary issues. Part II centered on schools' initiatives. Part III was concerned on issues and challenges while Part IV tested students' critical thinking skills through a thirty (40) item test and Part V was focused on mindset attributes. The content validation of the questionnaire was checked by the head teachers and master teachers as well as the thirty (40) item test intended to check

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students' critical thinking skills. The result of the test was be the basis of the students' achievement in contemporary issues based on analysis, synthesis, interpretation, and evaluation.

There are several statistical tools used in the study. In response to the assessment of teacher's level of competencies, schools' initiatives and issues and challenges, mean and standard deviation was used. In order to present the quantitative analysis on the mindset attributes and students' achievement, mean and standard deviation was used. Lastly, to answer the inferential questions set in the study on testing whether there is a significant relationship between teacher's level of competencies in teaching of contemporary issues as to critical thinking skills and mindset attributes, whether there is significant relationship between perceived school initiatives factor and the critical thinking skills and mindset attribute of students in contemporary issues and whether issues and challenges as perceived by the respondents is significantly related to students' critical thinking skills and mindset attributes, Pearson r coefficient of correlation was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1. Perceived Teacher's Competencies in terms of Mastery of Content

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The teacher ...			
1. shows mastery in teaching contemporary issues	4.57	.66	Very Competent
2. uses variety of teaching resources such as video lessons, lectures, and radio-based instruction to cater the needs of diverse learners in learning contemporary issues	4.54	.67	Very Competent
3. manifests in-depth understanding of each topic and connect them with the present situation.	4.52	.73	Very Competent

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4. explains significant events in a coherent, organized, and logical manner to easily understand by the students.	4.63	.65	Very Competent
5. facilitates learning experiences through reflection and presentation of ideas regarding scientific discoveries, philosophies, and belief systems of different regions in the world.	4.44	.78	Competent
6. instills the value of patriotism and nationalism.	4.48	.83	Competent
7. analyzes important events and figures which have great impact in the present generation.	4.60	.74	Very Competent
8. explains strange and unfamiliar facts into logical and comprehensive manner.	4.60	.81	Very Competent
9. demonstrates an appropriate level of content knowledge for diverse learners.	4.63	.60	Very Competent
10. provides complex identity of cultures and various civilization through integration of real-life situations.	4.54	.69	Very Competent
11. explains how problems arising from industrialization led to new economic theories.	4.50	.80	Very Competent
12. analyzes the role of women in traditional societies with those in developed nations.	4.67	.71	Very Competent
Overall	4.55	.72	Very Competent

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Very Competent, 3.50-4.49 Competent, 2.50-3.49 Moderately Competent, 1.50-2.49 Slightly Competent, 1.00-1.49 Not at All

The results point out that teacher is very competent to maximize students' learning and has the ability to involve students in the learning progress. Thus, the mastery of content knowledge and its interconnectedness within and across curriculum areas is an essential component of teacher knowledge as stated in the Philippine Professional Standard for Teachers. It only means that variety of teaching resources whether video lessons, lectures, radio-based and digital learning helped students to understand the lesson well.

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Table 2. Perceived Teacher's Competencies in terms of Achieving Goals and Objectives

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The teacher ...			
1. creates a coherent system of understanding human experience by sorting historical facts.	4.65	.58	Very competent
2. develops 21 st skills and attitudes which are applicable to the present times.	4.44	.70	Competent
3. creates intelligent decision on contemporary issues out of facts and evidence.	4.64	.67	Very competent
4. analyzes environmental changes brought by relevant societal development	4.45	.76	Competent
5. intensifies social awareness on historical and social influences affecting the world.	4.49	.70	Competent
6. emphasizes the development of acceptable means in achieving social goals.	4.61	.72	Very competent
7. inculcates the significance of distinctive forms of political, social, and economic organization.	4.57	.67	Very competent
8. instills individual role and shared responsibility for global interdependence	4.59	.70	Very competent
9. develops historical methods of inquiry from contrasting arguments and philosophy	4.50	.77	Very competent
10. inculcates deep appreciation to historical discoveries and contributions	4.52	.78	Very competent
11. analyzes patterns of the past social, political, and economic challenges	4.59	.65	Very competent
12. develops leadership potentials and capabilities of the students	4.59	.68	Very competent
Overall	4.55	.70	Very competent

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Very Competent, 3.50-4.49 Competent, 2.50-3.49 Moderately Competent, 1.50-2.49 Slightly Competent, 1.00-1.49 Not at All

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The results imply that teacher's competencies in terms of achieving goals and objectives are very competent. It also entails that the goals and objectives in teaching is achieved and students become more invested in their own success. It only means that the bases of selecting meaningful and relevant activities and assessments as well as strategies in the teaching-learning process was carefully analyzed and achieved.

Table 3. Perceived Teacher's Competencies in terms of Employing Teaching Pedagogy

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The teacher			
1. creates atmosphere to allow learners share their personal beliefs on matters affecting the society	4.69	.53	Very competent
2. uses appropriate teaching infrastructure including ICT and radio-based instruction to sustain interest of the learners.	4.50	.77	Very competent
3. allows students to analyze problems and make sound judgment and intelligent decisions.	4.59	.74	Very competent
4. respects diversity of opinions and capabilities	4.64	.63	Very competent
5. provides experiential learning opportunities.	4.52	.69	Very competent
6. allows students to work collaboratively to achieve meaningful learning.	4.61	.65	Very competent
7. encourages students to learn from each other's views and ideas.	4.67	.59	Very competent
8. Allows students to acquire knowledge and skills applicable to real life situations.	4.63	.63	Very competent
9. engages students to learn by discovery and exploration	4.57	.65	Very competent

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10. uses variety of strategies applicable to the needs of diverse learners.	4.57	.73	Very competent
11. integrates effective literacy instruction across content areas to enhance student learning	4.57	.62	Very competent
12. emphasizes the teachings and contributions of great men and women in the world that helped developed modern societies.	4.57	.66	Very competent
Overall	4.60	.66	Very competent

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Very Competent, 3.50-4.49 Competent, 2.50-3.49 Moderately Competent, 1.50-2.49 Slightly Competent, 1.00-1.49 Not at All

Findings show that the teacher is very competent in terms of employing teaching pedagogy. It also reveals that the activities presented are properly made considering the level of preferences of the students. Saavedra and Opfe (2012) mentioned that twenty-first century pedagogy must employ innovative and research supported teaching strategies, learning technologies and real world applications. Innovative teaching strategies using technology is highly recommended to increase students' participation and achievement.

Table 4. Perceived Teacher's Competency in Terms of Learning Assessment

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The teacher			
1. uses variety of tools to assess students' learning styles and capabilities	4.58	.68	Very competent
2. devises appropriate rubrics to assess performance of diverse learners.	4.61	.60	Very competent
3. monitors learning progress of students during the instructional process.	4.63	.58	Very competent

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4. diagnoses students learning style and multiple intelligence	4.53	.78	Very competent
5. provides varied assessments which develop reasoning and communication skills of the students.	4.67	.53	Very competent
6. provides intervention activities for students' who experience learning difficulties.	4.57	.61	Very competent
7. considers individual differences in giving assignments and performance task.	4.52	.78	Very competent
8. encourages student to prepare portfolio of learning accomplishments	4.47	.77	Competent
9. allow students to give feedback and reflect on their academic progress.	4.60	.75	Very competent
10. analyzes students' progress and development based on their actual performances.	4.55	.69	Very competent
11. conducts conference with students and parents as need arises	4.46	.78	Competent
12. promotes self-evaluation	4.58	.65	Very competent
Overall	4.56	.69	Very competent

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Very Competent, 3.50-4.49 Competent, 2.50-3.49 Moderately Competent, 1.50-2.49 Slightly Competent, 1.00-1.49 Not at All

The results show that formative assessment including projects, diaries and journals, peer assessments, portfolios, concept maps, performance assessments comprise the classroom assessments is carefully manage during the teaching-learning process. The table also reveals that the teacher conducts conference with students and parents as need arises. This also concerns with the use of assessment data in a variety of ways to inform and enhance the teaching and

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learning process and programs. It concerns with teachers providing learners with the necessary feedback about learning outcomes.

Table 5. Summary of Perceived Teacher’s Competency

Competencies	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Mastery of Content	4.55	.72	Very competent
Achieving Goals and objectives	4.55	.70	Very competent
Employing Teaching Pedagogies	4.60	.66	Very competent
Learning Assessment	4.56	.65	Very competent
Total	4.57	.68	Very competent

Legend: 4.50-5.00 Very Competent, 3.50-4.49 Competent, 2.50-3.49 Moderately Competent, 1.50-2.49 Slightly Competent, 1.00-1.49 Not at All

The table describes that the teachers’ expertise to maximize students learning and the ability to involve students in the learning progress was carried out effectively. Eraut (as cited in the study of Orji & Abolarin, 2012) defined competence as the ability to perform the tasks and roles required to the expected standards. In addition, competence is the effectiveness or ability of anyone concerned to apply acquired knowledge and skill to achieve desired results. Therefore teachers’ competencies in instruction delivery is necessary input in realizing the objectives in education.

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Table 6. Perception on Other Related Variables in Terms of Schools' Initiatives

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
<i>The school is....</i>			
1. conducting training program and LAC session to teachers to help them become acquainted on the contemporary issues	3.66	.54	Strongly agree
2. encouraging faculty members to plan and select teaching strategies and content along the standards	3.64	.50	Strongly agree
3. benchmarking with other institutions or visiting other schools on the best practices of fully integrating the standards	3.56	.54	Strongly agree
4. sending Ap teachers to the different seminars to better understand the concept and content of AP 10/contemporary issues learning guide	3.71	.46	Strongly agree
5. realigning the different courses of the programs on the K to 12 standards	3.75	.48	Strongly agree
6. developing instructional materials, manuals, books and the like	3.70	.50	Strongly agree
7. conducting wide consultation with key academic stakeholders	3.70	.50	Strongly agree
8. inviting resource speakers whose expertise can help faculty deeply acquire and strengthen the skills of teachers	3.68	.57	Strongly agree
9. exhausting/using the institution's resources to adapt the K to 12 requirements	3.68	.55	Strongly agree
10. developing programs in support to principles and relevance of contemporary issues	3.70	.52	Strongly agree
11. integrating the diversity of the learners domain in the different academic and non-academic activities	3.59	.59	Strongly agree
12. supporting teaching and learning activities related to contemporary issues.	3.78	.48	Strongly agree

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Overall	3.68	.52	Strongly agree
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Legend: 3.50-4.00 Strongly agree/highly observe, 2.50-3.49 Agree/observe, 1.50-2.49 Disagree/less observe, 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree/not observe

The results indicate that the students perceived that supporting teaching and learning activities related to contemporary issues is highly observed. Canda National High page is accessible to the learners and it posted activities similarly to benchmarking or visiting other schools especially activities related to safety management against covid-19. The result is also gleaned in the study of Capili (2019), that putting initiative into action and practicing in the daily teaching routine brings development and improvement to the partner school and through partnerships, standards of teaching and learning were improved, and pupils performance were raised.

Table 7. Perception on Other Related Variables in Terms of Issues and Challenges

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
The teacher is facing challenges in/with.....			
1. teaching and contact time with the learner specially during the modular distance learning	3.69	.53	Strongly agree
2. learning materials of the students such as modules, answer sheets, etc.	3.64	.58	Strongly agree
3. attitude of the learners towards the subject matter	3.63	.56	Strongly agree
4. training of the teachers during pandemic to support instruction appropriate for 21st century students	3.60	.57	Strongly agree
5. numerous duties and paperwork of teachers	3.55	.66	Strongly agree

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6. technology and audio-visual equipment	3.59	.60	Strongly agree
7. availability of learning facilities	3.56	.64	Strongly agree
8. diversity of learners	3.56	.59	Strongly agree
9. modular distance learning	3.60	.60	Strongly agree
10. attention span and enthusiasm of the students	3.53	.70	Strongly agree
11. number of students per class	3.56	.61	Strongly agree
12. parental support and guidance especially during the distribution and retrieval of modules	3.63	.63	Strongly agree
Overall	3.60	.61	Strongly agree

Legend: 3.50-4.00 Strongly agree/highly observed, 2.50-3.49 Agree/observed, 1.50-2.49 Disagree/less observed, 1.00-1.49 Strongly Disagree/not observed

The results affirm that respondents clearly understand that the constraints met by teacher in the delivery of contemporary issues instruction especially during the pandemic is highly observed. Teaching and contact time with the learners in time of pandemic is one of the issues and challenges experienced by most of the teachers of Canda National High Schools. Some of the pointed reasons were the parents were the one who submitted the modules and not all of the students have cellphones to communicate with the teachers.

Table 8. Level of Students Critical Thinking Skills in Contemporary Issues in terms of Analysis

Analysis	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	Interpretation
9-10	25	25%	Exceptional
7-8	32	32%	Exceeds Expectations

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5-6	17	17%	Fully meets expectations
3-4	20	2%	Needs Development
0-2	6	6%	Unsatisfactory
Overall	100	100%	

Legend: 9-10 exceptional, 7-8 Exceeds Expectations, 5-6 Fully Meets Expectations, 3-4 Needs Improvement, 0-2 Unsatisfactory

The results mean that most of the learner has the ability to distinguish between parts and determine how they relate to one another, and to the overall structure and purpose of the topic. Analysis on how to manage environmental issues and gender discrimination exceeds expectations but economic and issues on citizenship needs development. Bean (2011) elaborates that problems should 'evoke students' natural curiosity and stimulate both learning and critical thought'. In that way, teacher gave situations that helped students to analyze and formulate solutions on topics in contemporary issues.

Table 9. Level of Students Critical Thinking Skills in Contemporary Issues in terms of Synthesis

Synthesis	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	Interpretation
9-10	18	18%	Exceptional
7-8	40	40%	Exceeds Expectations
5-6	28	28%	Fully meets expectations
3-4	7	7%	Needs Development
0-2	7	7%	Unsatisfactory
Overall	100	100%	

Legend: 9-10 exceptional, 7-8 Exceeds Expectations, 5-6 Fully Meets Expectations, 3-4 Needs Improvement, 0-2 Unsatisfactory

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The results reveal student-respondents exceeds expectations by 40% and there are 7% of the respondents who scored unsatisfactory in the synthesis type of critical thinking skills test. This means that there are 40 students out of 100 respondents who can process on pulling together the prior knowledge, newly learned ideas, connections, inferences and summaries into a complete and original understanding of the lesson.

Table 10. Level of Students Critical Thinking Skills in Contemporary Issues in terms of Interpret

Interpret	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	Interpretation
9-10	8	8%	Exceptional
7-8	57	57%	Exceeds Expectations
5-6	20	20%	Fully meets expectations
3-4	12	12%	Needs Development
0-2	3	3%	Unsatisfactory
Overall	100	100%	

Legend: 9-10 exceptional, 7-8 Exceeds Expectations, 5-6 Fully Meets Expectations, 3-4 Needs Improvement, 0-2 Unsatisfactory

The results summarize that most of the respondents can explain or show own understanding of the lessons. The ability to interpret material from the past is a vital skill in the social studies classroom. Providing structured strategies for developing critical thinking skills to create dynamic lessons that bring historical events to life for students is very important to enhance

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students skills. To do this, creativity and use of different sources that reach beyond the textbook is advisable.

Table 11. Level of Students Critical Thinking Skills in Contemporary Issues in terms of Evaluate

Evaluate	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE	Interpretation
9-10	28	28%	Exceptional
7-8	36	36%	Exceeds Expectations
5-6	12	12%	Fully meets expectations
3-4	19	19%	Needs Development
0-2	5	5%	Unsatisfactory
Overall	100	100%	

Legend: 9-10 exceptional, 7-8 Exceeds Expectations, 5-6 Fully Meets Expectations, 3-4 Needs Improvement, 0-2 Unsatisfactory

Results show that *most of the students exceeds expectations. It means that students have a systematic determination of a result, judgment and critically examination of a given problem or situation in contemporary issues.* Halpren & Butler (2019) believed that when people think critically, they evaluate the outcomes of their thought processes, calculate how good a decision is, or identify how effectively a problem has been solved.

Table 12. Level of Students' Achievement in terms of Mindset Attributes

Indicators	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Realize the value of shared responsibility and accountability.	3.75	.50	Great Extent

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2. Consider feedback as opportunity to grow and learn something new.	3.61	.58	Great Extent
3. Assume responsibility for own actions and decisions	3.69	.60	Great Extent
4. Turn challenges into opportunities and learning experiences.	3.59	.62	Great Extent
5 Display confidence and positivity in dealing with the challenges at all time.	3.60	.65	Great Extent
6. Realize the value of common good rather than personal gain or recognition.	3.73	.49	Great Extent
7. Demonstrate enthusiasm to improve skills and potentials.	3.56	.61	Great Extent
8. Seek continuous improvement and innovative actions.	3.68	.58	Great Extent
9. Shows initiative to help	3.63	.56	Great Extent
10.Learn from mistakes and develop resiliency and perseverance	3.65	.59	Great Extent
11.Build positive relationship with peers and others	3.60	.68	Great Extent
12. Act with tolerance in dealing individual differences.	3.58	.67	Great Extent
Overall	3.64	.60	Great Extent

Legend: 3.50-4.00 Great Extent 2.50-3.49 Moderate Extent, 1.50-2.49 Slight extent, 1.00-1.49 Not at All

The results show that student-respondents believed to great extent that contemporary issues helped them to collect thoughts, opinion and beliefs that further shapes up *attitude* towards a particular thing or a person. Learning experiences provide students opportunities to reflect and assume responsibility for own actions and decisions.

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Table 13. Correlation between Teacher’s Level of Competencies and Students’ achievement as to Critical Thinking and Mindset Attributes

Teacher’s Level of Competencies	Critical Thinking Skills				mindset attributes
	Analysis	Synthesis	Interpret	Evaluate	Mindset attributes
Mastery of Content	.077	.143	.049	.045	.703**
Achieving Goals and Objectives	.052	.088	-.024	.013	.702**
Employing Teaching Pedagogy	-.039	-.028	-.073	-.050	.667**
Learning Assessment	.044	.059	.016	.035	.762**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table indicates that the level of teachers’ competencies as to mastery of content, achieving goals and objectives, employing teaching pedagogy and learning assessment has no significant relationships to critical thinking skills of the student-respondents as to analysis, synthesis, interpret and evaluate. The results summarized that no matter how competent teachers are, it will not reflect on students’ achievement in terms of critical thinking skills.

Table 14. Correlation between School initiatives and Critical Thinking Skills and Mindset Attributes

Other Related Variables	Critical Thinking Skills				mindset attributes
	Analysis	Synthesis	Interpret	Evaluate	Mindset attributes
Schools’ Initiatives	-.074	-.006	-.095	-.032	.665**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

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The table determines that other related variables as to schools' initiatives has no significant relationships to critical thinking skills of the student-respondents as to analysis, synthesis, interpret and evaluate. The result tallied that the schools' initiatives will not reflect on students' achievement in terms of critical thinking skills. Further, the table also showed that other related variables as to schools' initiatives has significant relationships to mindset attributes of the students. This means that when the schools initiatives is highly observed it will reflect on students' mindset attributes. In the study of Capili (2019) results revealed that LAC sessions, organizing stakeholders and inviting speakers have positive effects on the teaching-learning process.

Table 15. Correlation between Issues and Challenges and Critical Thinking Skills and Mindset Attributes

Other Related Variables	Critical Thinking Skills				mindset attributes
	Analysis	Synthesis	Interpret	Evaluate	Mindset attributes
Issues and Challenges	-.074	-.006	-.095	-.032	.665**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results show that issues and challenges has no significant relationships to critical thinking skills of the student-respondents as to analysis, synthesis, interpret and evaluate. Result justified that the issues and challenges will not reflect on students' achievement in terms of critical thinking skills. This concluded that the constraints met teachers in the delivery of

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contemporary issues instruction do not reflect the critical thinking skills of the students. Notably, the table also revealed that issues and challenges has significant relationships to mindset attributes of the students. This means that when the issues and challenges is highly observed it will reflect on students' mindset attributes.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions are drawn. The teacher's level of competencies were very competent in teaching contemporary issues in terms of mastery of content, achieving goals and objectives, employing teaching pedagogy, and learning assessment. Respondents perception on other related variables as to schools initiatives and issues and challenges were described as to highly observed.

The study also revealed that the level of respondents' critical thinking skills in contemporary issues was obtained as follows: analysis with exceeds expectations, contribution synthesis with exceeds expectations, interpret with exceeds expectations, and evaluate with exceeds expectations. This explains that the student-respondents described the critical thinking skills as to exceeds expectations. On student-respondents' perception of mindset attributes, all of the statements fall under with great extent.

The data gathered showed that the assessed teacher's level of competencies in teaching contemporary issues has no significant relationship to critical thinking skills. However, teacher's

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level of competencies in teaching contemporary issues has significant relationship to mindset attributes. It implies that no matter how competent teachers are it has no relationship to critical thinking skills but teacher's competencies greatly affect the mindset attributes.

Other related variables in terms of schools initiatives has no significant relationship to critical thinking skills. However the other related variables in terms of schools initiatives showed that it has significant relationship to mindset attributes of the students. *The issues and challenges met in assessing teacher's competencies and other related variables is not significantly related to critical thinking skills but has significant relationship to mindset attributes in contemporary issues.*

The results suggest that social studies teachers may identify other factors on how students learn effectively. Teachers may work with school administrators or supervisors to study more effective teaching strategies to enhance critical thinking skills of the students. More specifically, *curriculum makers may consider new teaching-learning strategies in teaching contemporary issues. Lastly,* a parallel study may be conducted using the same variables or variables not included in this study to identify other factors enhancing students critical thinking skills in contemporary issues.

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