

# Differentiated Instruction and Critical Thinking Skills Among VI Pupils

Melfe Amor Badrina, Kert Leene Kate Abayan, Christel Alvarina, Eriann Cabanatan

(College of Education, Eastern Samar State University-Guiuan Campus, Salug, Guiuan, Eastern Samar

Email: [melfeamorcalicoy@gmail.com](mailto:melfeamorcalicoy@gmail.com))

(College of Education, Eastern Samar State University-Guiuan Campus, Salug, Guiuan, Eastern Samar

Email: [kertleene@gmail.com](mailto:kertleene@gmail.com))

(College of Education, Eastern Samar State University-Guiuan Campus, Salug, Guiuan, Eastern Samar

Email: [alvarinachristeljoy774@gmail.com](mailto:alvarinachristeljoy774@gmail.com))

(College of Education, Eastern Samar State University-Guiuan Campus, Salug, Guiuan, Eastern Samar

Email: [erianncabanatan@gmail.com](mailto:erianncabanatan@gmail.com))

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## Abstract:

This study investigated the use of differentiated instruction on student critical thinking skills among grade six pupils at Lupok Central Elementary School, Guiuan, Eastern Samar in school year 2024-2025. The research specifically examined the use of differentiated instruction on student critical thinking skills. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed, involving a total of 67 grade six pupils. The respondents in this study accomplished a questionnaire designed to determine the use of differentiated instruction on student critical thinking skills. The data gathered were tallied, tabulated, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Pearson's r was utilized to find out the significant relationship between and among the two primary variables of the study which is use of differentiated instruction on student critical thinking skills.

With regards to the perception of respondents on level of the use of differentiated instruction on student critical thinking skills is very high. Meanwhile, the relationship between the two variables of this study with a correlation coefficient of .640 and p-value of .000, use of differentiated instruction on student critical thinking skills have a low correlation and their relationship is statistically significant.

*Keywords* — Differentiated, Critical Thinking, VI Pupils, Skills

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Differentiated instruction (DI) is a teaching approach that recognizes the diverse learning needs, interests, and readiness levels of students and adapts content, process, and assessment accordingly to optimize learning outcomes. According to Balita and Salvador (2023), DI supports higher order thinking skills, including critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, by providing tiered learning activities tailoring students' diverse needs.

Critical thinking is a fundamental skill for academic success and lifelong learning. It is the ability to analyze, evaluate, and create new understanding based on information and reasoning. Globally, adaptation of critical thinking is recognized as fundamental for preparing learners to managed and survived in the modern world. However. In the Philippines, developing these skills remains a significant challenge. According to the 2018 Programmed for International Student Assessment (PISA) result, the Filipino students ranked among the lowest in literacy, numeracy, and

science, highlighting continuous deficiencies in advanced problem-solving. This gap highlights the urgent need for instructional approaches like differentiated instruction that actively engage students in meaningful and complex tasks.

The research conducted by Balita and Salvador (2023) showed differentiated instruction resulted in a marked increase in higher order thinking skills in the areas of analysis, evaluation, and creation. The study was done with senior high school students, although this study focused on senior high school students, the principles and benefits of DI are applicable and crucial at the elementary level, especially for Grade VI students who are developing those important initial critical thinking skills.

Supporting this, according to a quasi-experimental study conducted by Llorente-Odicta (2017) found that differentiated instruction had significant positive effects on both mathematics achievement and critical thinking skills in Grade 10 students. The study emphasizes that adjusting differentiated instruction improves how students learn, and readiness levels, it creates important opportunities for students to be engaged from an early age, guiding them into their own cognitive progress.

Similarly, Al-Shehri (2020) studied the influence of differentiated instruction on sixth grade science students in Saudi Arabia. Their research showed that students taught with differentiated instruction experienced a higher increase in both academic achievement and critical thinking skills than students who were taught using more traditional teaching methods. The researcher recommended the use of differentiated instruction across a variety of disciplines, and distinguishing DI implementation with training for the instructors on how to implement DI to maximize the advantages.

According to the study of Fadel (2018) he found that differentiated education methods similarly supported literary achievement among fourth grade students in history, demonstrating the value of DI education as a positive impact beyond just subjects such as math and science, but extending into language and social studies as well. This shows that DI approaches can successfully support critical thinking and facilitate success across subjects.

In addition, Magableh and Abdullah (2020) discovered that the adoption of differentiated instruction improved the overall academic performance of Jordanian students. They concluded that DI supports cognitive development and increases students' engagement and motivation, which are essential for developing critical thinking skills.

Recent studies highlight's the potential of differentiated instruction to address these gaps. Differentiated Instruction, which adjusts the content, activities, and assessment based on students' readiness and learning interest, because of this, students are more engaged and better, they're able to think critically, which helps improve their critical thinking skills. For instance, Hastuti et al. (2024) their study found that using a differentiated problem-based learning approach can greatly improve students' critical thinking, especially when their learning styles are given importance, In the same way with Kettler (2022) it explains that differentiated curriculum design allows teacher to adjust the depth, scope and pace of lessons, giving students more meaningful and challenging tasks that help them think more critically.

However, despite these promising findings, there is still a research gap on the impact of differentiated instruction on the critical thinking skills of Grade VI learners in the Philippine context. Most of the studies conducted thus far have focused on secondary education or specific subjects such as mathematics and science. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence on how DI can be utilized in an elementary classroom context for deeper purpose specially to Grade VI students, such as the development of critical thinking skills.

This gap in knowledge is important because Grade VI is an important transition year for students as they will solidify basic skills in preparation for more complex learning. If educators and school administrators understand how differentiated instruction impacts critical thinking in Grade VI, they will be able to accommodate a variety of learners' needs and design higher-order thinking guidance and instructional strategies which could lead to improved academic learning and preparation

for future challenges.

### **Statement of the problem**

The study aims to determine the relationship between differentiated instruction and the critical thinking skills among Grade VI pupils. Specifically, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 Differentiated Instruction; and
  - 1.2 Critical Thinking skills.
2. Is there a significant relationship between differentiated instruction and critical thinking skills among grade VI pupils?
3. What recommendations can be drawn from this study?

### **Significance of the Study**

The result of this study benefits the following individuals; group of individuals and institutions concerned specifically the following:

**Grade VI Pupils.** The findings of this study aim to provide a clear insight into how differentiated instruction can be effectively used to improve pupils' critical thinking skills. When lessons are adjusted to match their needs, interests, and level of readiness, pupils are more likely to build stronger analytical and problem-solving abilities. These skills are important not only for doing well in school but also for lifelong learning.

**School Administrators.** The results of this study will give insights to school's leaders and curriculum developers on the need of incorporating differentiated instruction into primary curriculum.

**Teachers and Educators.** This study offers teachers practical, research-based thoughts on how to successfully implemented differentiated instruction in the classroom, encouraging teachers and educators will continue improve and develop teaching strategies that better meet the different needs of learners.

**Future Researchers.** This study can serve as a useful reference for future research on how differentiated instruction and critical thinking skills, particularly in elementary education. It also helps

discover gaps and areas that still will serve as a useful reference for further research on differentiated instruction and critical thinking skills, especially in the context of elementary education, encouraging researchers for continuous exploration and improvement of teaching approaches that support the diverse learner needs.

### **Scope and Delimitation**

The study focused on analysing the relationship between differentiated instruction and critical thinking skills among Grade VI pupils. It was conducted during the second semester of Academic Year 2025–2026. The research involved all currently enrolled Grade VI pupils, it excluded non-Grade VI students. Learners from other grade level were not part of this study. The research was limited to this specific time period, and other factors such as socio-economic background and classroom environment were not considered as main variables. Data were collected through structured survey questionnaire given to the selected participants.

### **Definition of Terms**

To provide clarity and ensure a common understanding of important terms used in this study, the following concepts are defined both conceptually and operationally:

**Critical Thinking.** According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, critical thinking refers to the act or practice of thinking critically, such as applying reason and questioning assumptions to solve problems, evaluate information, and discern biases. In this study, critical thinking refers to the pupils' ability to assess information critically, make informed decisions based on evidence, and evaluate arguments.

**Differentiated Instruction.** Differentiated instruction involves teaching in ways that address the diverse needs and interests of students through varied content, learning activities, and assessments (Stanford University). In this study, differentiated instruction refers to the process of tailoring lessons to meet each pupil's individual interests, needs, and strengths.

**Grade VI pupils.** Grade VI pupils are students enrolled in the sixth grade of elementary education; typically aged 11 to 12 years old. Under the K to 12 Basic Education System in the Philippines, elementary education consists of six grade levels (Grades 1 to 6), with Grade VI serving as the final year before junior high school (Wikipedia, 2025). In this study, Grade VI pupils refer to the respondents enrolled at Lupok Elementary School, Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

**Readiness Levels.** Readiness levels refer to students' preparedness to engage with differentiated instructional materials, considering their prior knowledge, learning skills, and individual learning needs (Lagto, 2022). In this study, readiness refers to the extent to which pupils are prepared to learn a lesson, as determined by their knowledge, skills, and learning needs, as observed by the teacher or assessed through a short diagnostic test.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES**

This chapter provides a review of important literature and studies that provide insights on the key ideas examined in this research.

### **A. Related Literature**

Anne Reeves (2020), author of "Differentiated Instruction: A Primer," presents an introductory explanation of differentiated instruction, making it easy to understand for educators who are either new to the concept or reviewing it. She highlights the key principles of effective differentiation, particularly the importance of recognizing understanding students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Reeves also describes the essential elements of a differentiated classroom, such as flexible grouping, ongoing assessment, and the adjusting content, process, and product based on students' needs. Reeves' approach is pragmatic and easy to follow. She offers clear, concrete examples of how teachers can modify their teaching strategies to address the diverse needs of learners. Reeves' work as a whole offers a useful guide for teacher who wants to incorporate differentiated instruction in a clear, organized way,

focusing on approaches that promote productive learning for all students.

According to Todd Finley (2021), in *How to Differentiate Instruction in a Mixed-Ability Classroom*, discusses the challenges teachers face when handling learners with diverse ability levels. He acknowledges the difficulty of managing such classrooms can be difficult, but he offers practical strategies to address these challenges. Finley's perspective also addresses the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where every student feels respected, valued and included in the learning process. He suggests several ways to apply differentiation, such as using of tiered assessment, diverse questioning techniques, and flexible grouping based on learners' needs. These strategies help teachers better support learners at varying levels of comprehension. He also emphasizes the importance of developing critical thinking among students, encouraging them to view complexity as opportunities and to see challenges as part of learning process. In addition, Finley highlights the importance of effective classroom management in a differentiated setting by establishing clear routines and procedures that support both independence and collaboration. Overall, his works serves as a helpful guide for teachers managing mixed- ability classes, offering practical strategies for creating a fair, supportive, and engaging learning environment.

Similarly, Hastuti et al. (2024) Highlights that combining problem-based learning with differentiated instruction aligned with students' readiness, interests, and learning styles can improve critical thinking skills. Their findings show that when learners are given meaningful real- life problems along with supported flexible grouping, as well as varied content and learning processes, they become more engaged in learning and demonstrate stronger critical thinking. They also note that allowing students to choose resources and strategies that fit their individual learning profiles also contributes to more effective and better learning outcomes.

Supporting this idea, Kettler (2022) argues that designing a differentiated curriculum is important in developing higher- order thinking skills,

including critical thinking skills. He explains that critical thinking does not naturally develop through regular or standard instruction alone; instead it requires intentional and well-planned teaching strategies. This includes setting clear critical thinking objectives, using authentic assessments, and adjusting the depth, scope, and pace of instruction based on learners' needs. Through this approach, all learners, regardless of their abilities, are given opportunities to engage in meaningful and challenging learning experiences that strengthen their critical thinking skills. Overall, these studies suggest that differentiated instruction, when thoughtfully designed to address students' varying readiness levels, interests and learning preferences, can significantly enhance their critical thinking skills.

## **B. Related Studies**

Current studies in Philippine education highlight the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in handling gaps in students' critical thinking. For instance, Balita and Salvador (2023) led a study at Laguna State Polytechnic University to investigate the effects of level instruction of grade 12 students' higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) in Understanding Culture Society, and Politics. The results presented that differentiated instruction greatly enhanced students' abilities to analyze, evaluate, and produce key components of critical thinking. The researchers concluded that combining differentiated strategies into the curriculum not only improves academic achievements but also supports the development of analytical reasoning. This finding highlights the importance of providing adequate teacher training and proactive executive support to effectively implement and broaden such practices in schools.

Despite the fact that advantages of differentiated instruction are well-known, challenges in its implementation remain, especially in settings with limited resources. Hatmanto and Rahmawati (2023) found in their study of Filipino English language teachers that despite having good views about differentiation, educators face difficulties such as lack of resources and the different needs of students. Teachers described using

approaches like flexible grouping, tiered assessments, and cooperative learning to adapt; but these practices often require hands-on support to overcome challenges such as overcrowded classrooms and lack of materials.

According to Marquez (2017), taxonomy-based methods are insufficient for promoting critical thinking skills. Instead, he proposes a critical approach that emphasizes dialogue, reflection, and student participation. This perspective aligns with differentiated instruction, as both highlight active, student-centered learning that responds to individual needs. However, in many rural teacher education programs, traditional teaching method still predominates, showing a gap between theoretical approaches and actual classroom practices. To address this issue, curriculum design needs to be re-examined by implementing differentiated strategies.

## **Theoretical Framework**

This study is rooted in key educational theories that explain how differentiated instruction can improve the critical thinking skills of VI elementary students.

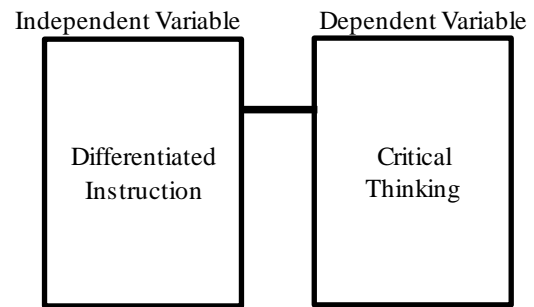
Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory (1978) explains that learning is a social process in which cognitive development is shaped through interactions with teachers, peers, and cultural tools. A key idea in this theory is the Zone of Proximal Development, which refers to the variety of tasks that learners can perform with proper guidance and support. Differentiated instruction aligns with this concept because it requires teachers to identify each learner's current level of understanding and provide appropriate framework based on their interests and needs. By adjusting lessons, activities, teachers help them move through their ZPD and gradually develop higher-order thinking skills, including critical thinking. Building on Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Carol Ann Tomlinson (1999,2005) developed an example of differentiated instruction well-founded in the idea that students learn more efficiently when teaching is responsive to their readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Her framework highlights that differentiated includes continuous assessment and purposeful adjustment of

content, process, and product to make sure that all learners are both supported and appropriately challenged. Instead being a fixed set of strategies, Tomlinson describes differentiation as a teaching philosophy that values diversity in the classroom, encourage fairness, and enhance student engagement. When integrated, these theories offer a thorough for understanding how differentiated instruction fosters critical thinking. Vygotsky provides the theoretical foundation for scaffolding and social interaction, while Tomlinson presents practical guidelines for implementing differentiation in the classroom. Together, these frameworks in fact provides the foundation for utilizing differentiated instruction to support more critical thinking with students through offering them more meaningful, relevant and accessible learning experience regardless of their starting point or learning environment. Ultimately, this combination highlights how tailored instruction can bridge gaps in cognitive development, particularly in Lupok Elementary School.

### Conceptual Framework

Developing critical thinking is especially important for elementary learners, especially in rural and resource- limited areas such as Eastern Samar. Traditional, one-size-fits-all teaching methods repeatedly fail to meet the varied learning needs of Grade 6 students, which may delay the development of higher- order thinking skills. In response to this concern, the researchers recognized differentiated instruction as a hopeful strategy to support and enhance the critical thinking abilities of Grade 6 learners.

As shown in Figure 1. In this framework, the model visibly represents the direct use of differentiated instruction and critical thinking skills among grade VI students. This framework provides the guideline and direction for the study, guiding the analysis of how tailored instructional strategies may affect critical thinking in a rural teacher education background.



**Figure 1.** *The schematic diagram of the independent and dependent variables of the study.*

### Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant relationship between differentiated instruction and critical thinking skills among grade VI pupils.

### III. METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology, research design, locale, respondents of the study, instrument of the study, data gathering process, measurement of variables, and data analysis.

#### Research Design

Research design refers to the overall strategy that guided the study in addressing the research problem and achieving its objectives (QuestionPro, 2025; Scribbr, 2021). It served as a systematic framework for data collection, measurement, and analysis, ensuring consistency and alignment between the research questions, variables, and methodological procedures (Insight7, 2024; Researcher.Life, 2024). The chosen research design was guided by the nature of the problem, which also influenced decisions on sampling methods, data collection tools, and statistical techniques used in the study (Scribbr, 2021; AmberStudent, 2025).

This study employed a correlational research design to examine the relationship between differentiated instruction and the critical thinking skills of Grade VI pupils at Lupok Elementary School, Guiuan. The correlational focused on determining the strength and direction of the relationship between the independent variable (differentiated instruction) and the dependent variable (critical thinking skills) as they naturally

occurred in the classroom setting (Sutradhar et al., 2023; TeacherPH, n.d.).

The correlational research design was design for this study because it helps the researchers determined patterns and relationships that can inform instructional practices and curriculum development (Scribbr, 2021). In this study, data were gathered through structured survey instruments that measured pupils' perceptions of differentiated instructional practices and their critical thinking skills. The collected data were statistically analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient to determine the strength and significance of the relationship between the two variables.

### **Locale of the Study**

The study was conducted in Lupok Central Elementary School, Guiuan Eastern Samar.



**Figure 2.** *Research locale of the study*

### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of this study were the Grade VI pupils enrolled at Lupok Central Elementary School in Guiuan, Eastern Samar. All pupils from Grade VI level were included in the study through the use of total population sampling, which allowed every pupil in the specified grade level to participate.

### **Research Instrument**

The researcher used a structured survey questionnaire as the main tool for gathering data on differentiated instruction and the critical thinking skills of Grade VI pupils at Lupok Central Elementary School in Guiuan, Eastern Samar. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on pupils' experiences with differentiated instruction

and their critical thinking skills, in alignment with the research objectives.

The instrument was composed of two main categories: (1) exposure to differentiated instruction and (2) critical thinking skills. The items use to measure differentiated instruction were adapted from validated surveys on classroom differentiation practices, while the items assessing critical thinking were based on established critical thinking scales used in educational research (VanTassel-Baska et al., 2019). All questionnaire items were carefully reviewed and revised to make sure they were clear and relevant to Grade VI pupils within the local context.

Each category contained 15 statements, making a total of 30 items in the questionnaire. The respondents answered each statement using a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 indicated "Strongly Agree" and 1 indicated "Strongly Disagree." This scaled helped the researcher measure and analyze the pupils' perceptions and experiences in a more organized and quantifiable manner.

### **Data Gathering Procedure**

The researchers wrote a formal request letter addressed to the school head to ask for permission to conduct their survey. The questionnaire is intended to be answered by Grade VI pupils, who served as the participants of the study. To ensure maximum participation and a 100% retrieval rate, the researchers personally distributed and collected the questionnaires, which allowed them to provide necessary clarifications and ensure the accuracy of the responses.

### **Data analysis**

The gathered data from the respondents were tallied, analyzed, and interpreted. The respondents' demographic profiles and perspectives on the utilization of instructional resources were summarized and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Pearson's  $r$  was utilized in the correlational analysis to assess the direction of the relationship between the efficacy of differentiated instruction and pupils' critical thinking skills. This approach helped determine whether there was a

significant association between the study's two main variables without implying cause and effect. To ensure the quality and reliability of the conclusions, data gathered through the structured survey questionnaire were encoded, processed, and analyzed using appropriate statistical techniques.

**Measurement of Variables**

The result of the study will be interpreted using the following numerical values:

**Table 1. Interpretation for Use of Differentiated Instruction**

Range	Scale	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
2.61 – 3.40	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Moderate
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

**Table 2. Interpretation for Critical Thinking Skills**

Range	Scale	Interpretation
4.21 – 5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
3.41 – 4.20	Agree	High
2.61 – 3.40	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Moderate
1.81 – 2.60	Disagree	Low
1.00 – 1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the statistical analysis of data gathered in this study are summarized in tables and graphs and are presented in this chapter.

**Profile of the Respondents on Differentiated Instruction**

This section provides an overview of the respondents' profiles concerning their understanding and implementation of differentiated instruction.

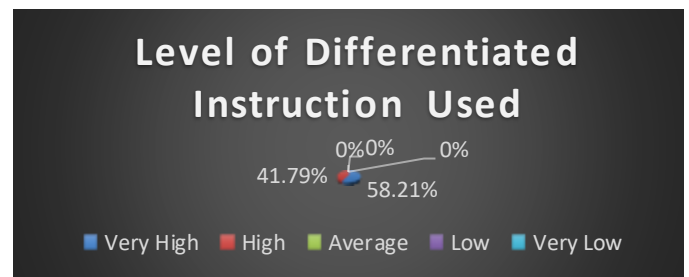
**Table 3. Differentiated Instruction;**

Statement	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. The differentiated instruction used in class helps me identify my strengths and weaknesses.	4.42	Strongly Agree	Very High
2. I feel engaged when using differentiated instructions that cater to my learning styles.	4.28	Strongly Agree	Very High
3. My teacher uses various learning materials and activities.	4.16	Agree	High
4. Differentiated instruction helps me understand the lesson better.	4.24	Strongly Agree	Very High
5. Learning feels more meaningful when	4.30	Strongly Agree	Very High

activities are connected to my interest.				e my understanding of concepts.			
<b>6.</b> The differentiated instructions help me develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter.	4.10	Agree	High	<b>12.</b> My teacher allowed me to discover key ideas individually through structured activities and/or questions.	4.09	Agree	High
<b>7.</b> Our classroom environment encourages active participation.	4.39	Strongly Agree	Very High	<b>13.</b> My teacher provides opportunities for independent and group learning to promote depth understanding.	4.18	Agree	High
<b>8.</b> Differentiated instruction helps me learn effectively.	4.43	Strongly Agree	Very High	<b>14.</b> My teacher uses evidence-based instruction such as graphic organizers to enhance my higher-level thinking.	4.43	Strongly Agree	Very High
<b>9.</b> I feel supported and challenged in my learning.	4.22	Strongly Agree	Very High	<b>15.</b> My teacher encouraged multiple interpretations of events and situations.	4.24	Strongly Agree	Very High
<b>10.</b> I have opportunities to learn in ways that suit my strengths.	4.10	Agree	High	<b>Grand Mean</b>	4.25	Strongly Agree	Very High
<b>11.</b> I have choices on how I demonstrate	4.14	Agree	High				

Table 3 presents the respondents' perceptions regarding differentiated instruction. The table indicates that item no. 8 and 14 obtained the highest mean score of 4.43, indicating a "Strongly Agree" level. This suggests that the majority of respondents strongly agree that differentiated instruction helps them learn effectively, and that their teachers use evidence-based instruction such as graphic organizers to enhance their higher-level thinking. Conversely, item no. 12 received the lowest mean score of 4.09, still reflecting an "Agree" level. Despite its lower score, this indicates that respondents agree that their teacher allows them to discover key ideas individually through structured activities and/or questions. The overall mean score for this dimension of differentiated instruction is 4.25, signifying a "Strongly Agree" level among the respondents. These results suggest that teachers in these schools show a very high level of implementation of differentiated instruction.

**Table 4.** Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to the Level of Differentiated Instruction Used



Level of Differentiated Instruction Used	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	39	58.21%
High	28	41.79%
Moderate	0	0%
Low	0	0%
Very Low	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 2.** Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to the Level of Differentiated Instruction Used

The figure above shows that most Grade VI pupils perceived a high level of implementation of differentiated instruction, as reflected in the score distribution. This suggests that pupils were able to recognize their teachers' efforts to using varied instructional strategies tailored to their individual learning needs. Overall, the positive perception of Grade VI pupils highlights the importance of differentiated instruction in addressing diverse learning styles and in creating more effective and inclusive classroom experiences.

**Profile of the Respondents on Critical Thinking Skills**

This section presents the levels of critical thinking skills demonstrated by the Grade VI pupils.

**Table 4.** Critical Thinking Skills

Statement	Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. My teacher	4.48	Strongly Agree	Very High

encourages me to analyze information and form my own conclusions.									
<b>2.</b> I am given opportunities to solve complex problems and make decisions.	4.25	Strongly Agree	Very High						
<b>3.</b> I am encouraged to evaluate different perspectives and viewpoints.	4.15	Agree	High						
<b>4.</b> My teacher asks open-ended questions that promote deeper thinking.	4.21	Strongly Agree	High						
<b>5.</b> My teacher engages me in comparing ideas (e.g. analyzing generated ideas).	4.24	Strongly Agree	Very High						
				<b>6.</b> My teacher provides opportunities to generalize from concrete data or information to the abstract.	4.03	Agree	High		
				<b>7.</b> My teacher encouraged me to synthesis or summary of information within or across disciplines.	4.27	Strongly Agree	Very High		
				<b>8.</b> I feel confident in my ability to think critically and solve problems.	4.22	Strongly Agree	Very High		
				<b>9.</b> I am given opportunities to justify my reasoning and support my claims with evidence.	4.52	Strongly Agree	Very High		

10. I am frequently encouraged to think critically and analyze information in class.	4.39	Strongly Agree	Very High	g my own ideas.				
				14. I feel more confident in my ability to think critically.	4.06	Agree	High	
11. I am given frequent opportunities to analyze information, solve problems, and make decisions.	4.30	Strongly Agree	Very High	15. The differentiated instructions used in class help me develop a critical perspective.	4.19	Agree	High	
12. I am able to evaluate different perspectives, consider evidence, and form my own well-reasoned opinions.	4.18	Agree	High	<b>Grand Mean</b>	4.24	Strongly Agree	Very High	
13. I am comfortable asking clarifying questions, challenging assumptions, and expressing	4.15	Agree	High					

Table 4 presents the respondents' perceptions regarding critical thinking. According to the table, item no. 9 obtained the highest mean score of 4.52, indicating a "Strongly Agree" level. This suggests that respondents strongly agree that they are given opportunities to justify their reasoning and support their claims with evidence.

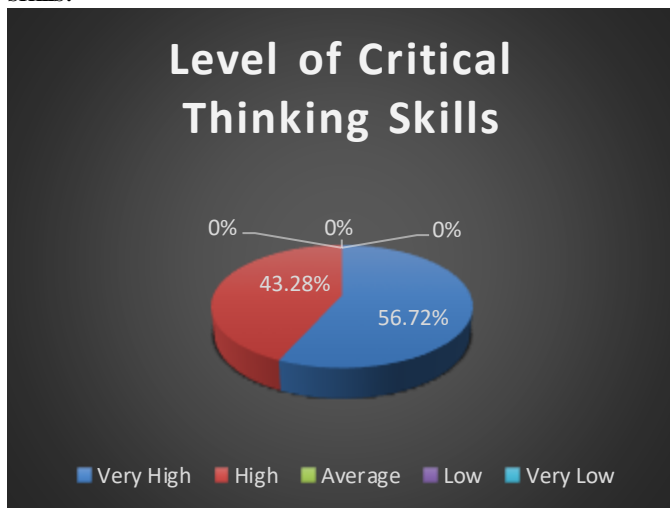
Conversely, item no. 6 and 14 received the lowest mean score; 4.03 and 4.06 respectively, reflecting an "Agree" level. Despite its slightly lower score, this indicates that respondents agree that their teacher provides opportunities to generalize from concrete data or information to the abstract and they feel more confident in their ability to think critically.

Overall, this area received an average mean score of 4.24, indicating that the respondents generally "Strongly Agree" which reflects a high level of critical thinking. The results highlight how participants place strong importance on analyzing ideas, solving problems, and forming logical, well-supported arguments. among the respondents.

**Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to the Level of Critical Thinking Skills**

Level of Critical Thinking Skills	Frequency	Percentage
Very High	38	56.72%
High	29	43.28%
Moderate	0	0%
Low	0	0%
Very Low	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 5 indicates that the majority of respondents exhibit a very high level of critical thinking. This is evident in their results, as many achieved strong ratings across various areas, showing consistent and well-developed thinking skills. This is reflected in their scores, where many obtained high ratings across different aspects of critical thinking. This indicates that the participants in the study generally possess strong critical thinking skills.



**Figure 3.** Frequency Distribution of Respondents according to the Level of Critical Thinking

### Relationship between Differentiated Instruction and Critical Thinking Skills

This final part of this chapter looks how differentiated instruction connects with critical thinking, based on the experiences and perspectives of students from the public schools included in the study.

**Table 6.** Correlation between Differentiated Instructional and Critical Thinking Skills

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation	P-value	Interpretation
Differentiated Instruction	Critical Thinking Skills	.640	Moderate Correlation	.000	Significant

Table 6 illustrates the relationship between Differentiated Instruction and Critical Thinking Skills. With a computed p-value of .000 at a 5% significance level, the correlation is deemed statistically significant, supported by a correlation coefficient of .640, indicating a moderate relationship.

These results suggest a clear meaningful connection that is unlikely to be due to chance. The correlation coefficient shows a strong relationship between the variables, supporting and aligns with findings from earlier studies.

The results of this study are consistent with earlier research, including the findings of Thahir, Nawir, and Natsir's (2025) which shows a significant positive effect of differentiated instruction in improving the critical thinking skills among Islamic Elementary School students. Their study emphasized that tailoring instructional content and processes to students' individual learning readiness and interests promotes critical thinking development effectively. In the same way, Al-Shehri (2020) found that differentiated instruction is an effective approach for enhancing critical thinking by accommodating diverse learner needs and enhancing active engagement in the classroom.

These findings emphasize the importance of recognizing and developing critical thinking skills through differentiated instruction. This approach effectively addresses individual students' diverse learning needs, encouraging deeper cognitive engagement and the development of higher-order thinking skills. By integrating differentiation strategies into teaching practices, educators are provided with valuable opportunities to strengthen

students' critical thinking skills, which can lead to improved academic performance and more meaningful learning experience.

## **V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations based on the results of the study.

### **Summary**

This study aimed to determine the relationship between differentiated instructional materials and the critical thinking skills of Grade VI pupils. Specifically, it sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 differentiated instruction; and
  - 1.2 critical thinking?
2. Is there a significant relationship between differentiated instructional materials and the critical thinking skills of Grade VI pupils?
3. What recommendations can be drawn from the findings of the study?

The researcher used a survey questionnaire consisting of three parts: where the first part focused on differentiated instruction, and the second part focused on critical thinking skills. A total of 67 Grade VI pupils served as respondents in the study. Based on the presented and analyzed data, the following findings were revealed:

1. Differentiated instruction helped improve pupils' critical thinking skills by providing learning experiences that promote reasoning, reflection, and independent thinking.
2. The overall mean score for the level of differentiated instruction implementation was 4.25, which was interpreted as very high. This indicated that the application of differentiated instruction made lessons more engaging, improved pupils' comprehension, and made learning more meaningful.

3. In terms of pupils' critical thinking skills, the overall mean score was 4.24, which was also interpreted as very high. This indicated that pupils demonstrated a strong critical thinking, particularly when differentiated instruction was implemented in the teaching and learning process, leading to increased engagement and motivation to learn.
4. There was a statistically significant correlation between differentiated instruction and critical thinking skills. The relationship between these variables showed a correlation coefficient of 0.640 with a *p*-value of 0.000, indicating a strong positive association.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the data presented and discussed, the researcher concluded that the level of implementation of differentiated instruction was very high and corresponded with the similarly high level of pupils' critical thinking skills. Overall, the findings suggest that differentiated instruction plays an important role in enhancing the critical thinking abilities of Grade VI pupils in Lupok, Guiuan, Eastern Samar. Additionally, teachers were found to apply differentiated instruction strategies in teaching Grade VI learners. Furthermore, the strong and significant correlation between differentiated instruction and critical thinking further supports the results of the study, reinforcing the importance of this approach in developing pupils' higher-order thinking skills.

### **Recommendation**

The following recommendations were drawn from the results of the study:

1. The researcher recommended that teachers continue to explore and integrate differentiated instructional strategies, such as varied learning activities, projects-based, and peer collaboration, to further enhance pupils' critical thinking skills. Teachers are also encouraged to take part in professional development programs that focused on

innovative teaching approaches and effective assessment techniques.

2. The researcher further recommended that school administrators provide adequate resources to support teachers' professional development through regular training, workshops, and seminars focused on effective differentiated instruction practices that promote and enhance critical thinking skills.
3. The researcher also encouraged future researchers to explore the long-term effects of differentiated instruction on the development of critical thinking across various educational levels and contexts. Such studies may offer deeper insights into best practices and innovative strategies for enhancing critical thinking through differentiated teaching approaches.
4. The researcher further suggested conducting qualitative studies to explore teachers' and pupils' perceptions of the impact of differentiated instruction on critical thinking. This would add valuable perspectives for understanding the nuanced effects and practical applications of differentiated teaching strategies in diverse classroom settings.

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