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English Teachers' Instructional Practices as Determinants to Students' 21st Century Skills

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Abstract. The study aimed to examine how the instructional methods employed by English teachers and the overall academic performance of students contribute to the development of 21st-century skills The research involved 277 students from public senior high schools in Bais City. It utilized a descriptive-correlational approach, using a validated questionnaire for data collection, and applied statistical methods including mean, weighted mean, and Multiple Linear Regression Analysis for data analysis. The study revealed that the extent of teachers' instructional practices in terms of drills, contextualization, mediated learning, technology in the classroom, visualization, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning is "high." It was also found that the students' 21st-century skills in terms of problem-solving, information literacy, and critical thinking are classified as "high." Moreover, the visualization and inquiry-based learning practices of the teachers were found to be significant predictors of the students' problem-solving skills. In addition, the results indicated that contextualization, use of technology in class, visualization, and cooperative learning are determinants of students' information literacy skills. Lastly, the findings signified that the use of technology in class and cooperative learning significantly predict students' critical thinking skills.

Keywords: English teaching; Instructional practices; 21st-century skills.

1.0 Introduction

The Middle East continues to struggle with the lowest English proficiency levels globally, as indicated by the 2019 EF English Proficiency Index (EPI), which noted a slight decline from previous assessments. Despite government initiatives, no significant improvements have been observed (EF, 2019; Valderama, 2019; Annie et al., 2022). The 2023 EF EPI also reported a troubling decrease in English proficiency among young adults aged 18–20 in countries such as India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Japan, exacerbated by the pandemic (VOA Learning English, 2024). This decline could negatively impact global communication, business, education, and diplomacy (Rao, 2019), as well as job opportunities, where English is often a prerequisite (Tursunova, 2024).

This situation underscores the urgent need for substantial investment in language education and systemic reforms to prepare future generations for a globalized world. In the Philippines, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Bureau of Education Assessment (BEA) conduct the National Achievement Test (NATG12) to evaluate Senior High School (SHS) students' proficiency in core subjects and essential 21st-century skills, such as problem-solving and critical thinking (Helpline PH, DepedTrends). In the Bais City Division, concerning trends have emerged in assessment scores. Initial cohorts of SHS students achieved mean percentage scores (MPS) of 36.71 and 36.45 in the NATG12, which declined to 36.29 in the 2018-19 school year, down from 36.66 the previous year (DepEd Bais, 2019). The most recent data showed an improvement to an MPS of 40.23% (BEA, 2023), yet these scores still indicate significant challenges. These results highlight the necessity for ongoing monitoring and

intervention to close achievement gaps and meet the national target average of 66% to 85%, moving towards mastery.

Numerous studies have examined the impact of teachers' instructional practices on student performance. However, this study sets itself apart by concentrating on the factors that influence SHS students' 21st-century skills, such as problem-solving, information literacy, and critical thinking, rather than focusing solely on student characteristics predictive of standardized test scores, as seen in Afable (2023). This research aims to identify instructional methods that cultivate these essential skills. While Afable (2023) emphasized teacher-related factors as key predictors of student performance, this study delves deeper to provide recommendations for enhancing instructional effectiveness, student outcomes, and the development of 21st-century skills. These skills are crucial for navigating the complexities of modern society.

Research shows that individuals with strong 21st-century skills are better equipped to adapt to rapidly changing environments and succeed in various personal and professional endeavors (OECD). Studies have also highlighted the correlation between information literacy skills and academic achievement, with proficient information users demonstrating higher levels of academic performance and critical thinking abilities (Chu et al., 2020). Effective instructional strategies empower students to become independent learners by selecting and utilizing suitable strategies to complete tasks, enhancing their concentration and ability to synthesize information for comprehension and retention (Francisco & Celon, 2020).

As a school head, entrusted with the authority, responsibility, and accountability by the Department of Education under Republic Act 9155 and guided by the MATATAG Agenda, the researcher possesses the essential skills in educational leadership and policy implementation necessary to produce holistic graduates equipped with 21st-century skills. This position provides a strong foundation for investigating the instructional methods of English teachers and analyzing students' cumulative performances in relation to their development of 21st-century skills. The goal is to uncover instructional practices that nurture these skills and provide actionable recommendations to improve educational outcomes.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive-correlational design with 277 students from 18 senior high schools in Bais City Division, gathering data through a validated questionnaire that assessed instructional practices and students's 21st-century skills. The number of respondents in each school varied depending on its population. The instructional practices evaluated included drills, contextualization, mediated learning, technology in the classroom, visualization, cooperative learning, and inquiry-based learning. Descriptive statistics calculated the mean and weighted mean to assess instructional practices, and multiple linear regression analysis identified significant predictors of 21st-century skills.

2.2 Research Locale

The study was carried out in Bais City Division, which comprises 35 barangays, 42 elementary schools, and 18 secondary schools. Bais City is situated in the northern part of Negros Oriental. Known for its coastal charm, the city's culture reflects its diverse heritage, influenced by indigenous traditions, Spanish colonization, and modern Filipino culture. With its bustling social interactions and average-paced lifestyle, Bais City embodies a blend of coastal serenity and bustling community life, making it a unique destination in Negros Oriental.

The schools within the division are located in various areas, including coastal areas, haciendas, barangays, and hinterlands. The residents engage in different types of livelihoods, such as fishing, agriculture, and entrepreneurship like selling farm crops at very cheap prices. Others work in government offices, private companies, haciendas, alcohol industries, sugar milling companies, and other establishments located in the city. The city is described as average-paced in terms of socio-economic development, wherein people are exposed to seemingly busy daily social interactions

2.3 Research Participants

The grade 12 representatives, officially enrolled in 18 senior high schools of the Division of Bais City, are the study's respondents. They were randomly selected. The number of students/representatives who served as respondents differed depending on the school's population.

2.4 Research Instrument

This study utilized a researcher-made questionnaire divided into four sections. Part I includes the disclosure statement, in which the teachers grant the researcher permission to collect data, provided that confidentiality of data would be observed. It also contains the purpose of the study. Part II covers the instructional practices utilized by the English teachers, and Part III tackles the students' 21st century skills in terms of problem-solving skills, information literacy, and critical thinking skills.

The researcher-made questionnaire was validated with the help of three experts in the field for content validity and cross-checking to see if the items were aligned with the specific problems of the study. The draft copy was also proofread by an English expert for the grammar structure. Final copies of the tool were distributed to the identified respondents after getting the necessary permit from the division superintendent. To ensure item reliability, a dry run was conducted. Thirty selected grade 12 students from Bais City National Science High School served as the respondents for the dry run. This number was calculated to verify the internal consistency and reliability of the items.

The reliability test results offer valuable insights into the consistency of instructional practices and 21st-century skills scales. Higher Cronbach's Alpha coefficients indicate greater internal consistency, with "Inquiry-Based Learning" and "Information Literacy Skills" demonstrating the highest coefficients of 0.912 and 0.923, respectively. These results suggest that these scales reliably capture their intended constructs. "Contextualization" and "Mediated Learning" also show strong internal consistency, while "Visualization" exhibits slightly weaker consistency. Nonetheless, these findings provide important information about the effectiveness of instructional practices and the development of essential 21st-century skills.

2.5 Data Gathering Procedure

The survey was disseminated via Google Forms to facilitate convenient access for the respondents through messaging platforms or email. During the distribution, the researcher explained to the school head, coordinator, and advisers the purpose and importance of the research. The collection of responses was automatically stored since the researcher was using an online platform. The results were then tallied, and a spreadsheet was extracted from the Google Form. Classification, tabulation, computation, analysis, and interpretation of the data followed, which served as the basis for drawing conclusions and recommendations for the study.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

This research study followed ethical guidelines. The researcher seriously adhered to the protocols set by DepEd as part of the ethical considerations. Permission from the Schools Division Superintendent to conduct the study among senior high school students for Academic Year 2023-2024 was secured. Next, the researcher distributed the questionnaires and informed the respondents via electronic mail about the study's purpose and the significance of their responses. The respondents were also briefed that the information they provided would be treated with utmost confidentiality.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Instructional Practices

In Terms of Drill

Table 1 shows that the extent of teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of drills is "high" as evidenced by the composite weighted mean of 3.74. To specify, teachers "highly" utilized checking students' writing and provided corrections and suggestions to enhance their learning ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.02). This result indicates that teachers are actively involved in reviewing students' work and providing feedback to improve their writing skills. The statement of Eraga (2022) corresponds to this finding, as she emphasized in her study the essence of assessment and feedback, allowing teachers to make important instructional decisions.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of drill (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Checks our writing & composition and returns our paper with some corrections & suggestions	4.02	Agree	High
2. Reads stories aloud and asks questions to check our comprehension	3.96	Agree	High
3. Unlocks difficult terms for our vocabulary development	3.77	Agree	High
4. Demonstrates in class how to handle the telephone conversation correctly	3.76	Agree	High
5. Teaches phonics and word recognition by reading the word first and we follow	3.68	Agree	High
6. Gives us 10 words to spell before the class started	3.25	Moderate	Moderate
Composite	**3.74**	**Agree**	**High**

The table also exposes that reading stories aloud and checking comprehension is "highly" practiced ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.96) by the teachers. Indicators like unlocking difficult terms for vocabulary development ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.77), demonstrating how to handle telephone conversations ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.76), and teaching phonics and word recognition ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.76) are also "highly" utilized by the teachers. This explains that teachers play a crucial role in expanding students' vocabulary by explaining complex terms. Likewise, Majeed and Hussain (2023) disclosed that teachers utilize a range of techniques to enrich the vocabulary of young learners, including reading texts aloud, incorporating word games, utilizing flashcards, and employing other methods.

The above finding also suggests practical skills like observing telephone etiquette, wherein teachers must not only focus on academic skills. This is also stressed by Olivar and Alcaraz (2024), who emphasized the significance of personality development in students, including aspects such as telephone etiquette, establishing rapport, and employing strategies for politeness, which are valuable across various professional domains.

With regard to phonics, instruction is a key element in teaching students to read and recognize words, as these practices are highly utilized and effective. The importance of phonics is highlighted in the study of Shenoy, Iyer, and Zahedi (2022). The outcomes indicate that students who underwent either one or two years of phonics instruction during preschool demonstrated notably superior performance on all evaluated literacy skills compared to those who did not receive any phonics instruction.

Meanwhile, in giving spelling tests, the extent of teachers' utilization is only "moderate" ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.25). This is alarming, as highlighted in the study by Yousif et al. (2024), which raised concerns regarding students' spelling errors when writing in English. Many of these students, who learn English as a foreign language, encounter challenges in writing accurately.

Irving (2021) acknowledged that drill is a method of instruction characterized by systematic repetition of concepts, examples, and practice problems. It involves disciplined and repetitive exercises aimed at teaching and perfecting a skill or procedure. Studies indicate that the drill technique, if used appropriately, can be a very productive and proactive way for students to memorize and retain vocabulary and structural context within a sentence. It could be argued that when learning a foreign language, repeating phrases correctly multiple times can lead to mastering that language (Pachina, 2019).

In Terms of Contextualization

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of contextualization (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Gives problem-solving tasks common in the community	3.79	Agree	High
2. Utilizes local resources for student projects	3.73	Agree	High
3. Uses local stories	3.69	Agree	High
4. Localizes poetry by using local stories	3.60	Agree	High
5. Substitutes foreign terms with the local ones	3.43	Agree	High
Composite	**3.65**	**Agree**	**High**

Table 2 depicts that teachers mainly have "high" utilization of instructional practices in terms of contextualization ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.79). Particularly, the teachers have "high" usage of giving problem-solving tasks common in the community ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.79) and employment of local resources for student projects ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.73). These data signify that teachers are using real-world problems to stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students. The teachers further contextualize their instruction and integrating them into the curriculum, which help students

to connect their learning to their local environment. Indeed, Andijon (2024) uncovered that contextualized vocabulary teaching provides learners with practical instances of word usage, facilitating their understanding of meanings, nuances, connotations, and correct application. Instruction that embeds words within context assists learners in applying new vocabulary in real-world contexts, promoting not only memorization but also the ability to use words effectively in various communication contexts.

It is also evident in the table that the teachers have "high" utilization of local resources for student projects ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.73) and employing local stories ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.69) for students to comprehend. Doing these practices makes the lessons more relatable and engaging for the students. It goes the same with localizing poetry by using local stories ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.60). Teachers are using local content to teach poetry, which may help students better understand and appreciate the art form. These findings confirm the conclusions drawn by Rafael and Tamban (2022) that utilizing English reading materials tailored to local contexts can bolster learners' reading abilities. They underscored the effectiveness of incorporating localized reading resources as a strategy for teaching reading, which can lead to enhanced performance among learners.

Moreover, the table reveals that the teachers have "high" usage of substituting foreign terms with local ones ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.43), which aids students to understand foreign concepts by relating them to familiar and local terms. Rafael and Tamban (2022) also argued that localization offers the benefit of enhancing reader comprehension and appreciation by presenting the text in the reader's native language and within a relatable and familiar context.

In Terms of Mediated Learning

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of mediated learning (n = 277)

Indicators		Mean	Description	Extent
1.	practices the class on how to defend our answers	4.15	Agree	High
2.	asks feedback from the class	4.09	Agree	High
3.	requires the class to write a reflection paper to know our thoughts	3.95	Agree	High
4.	assigns the class number heads for us to be alert in the oral recitation	3.91	Agree	High
5.	encourages us to debate to express our different perspectives	3.86	Agree	High
6.	scaffolds learning by explaining well if she/he finds that some do understand the lesson	3.79	Agree	High
7.	processes activities thru HOTS questions	3.64	Agree	High
8.	calls each one of us for a one-on-one coaching	3.51	Agree	High
Composite		**3.86**	**Agree**	**High**

The data in Table 3 show the extent to which teachers utilize instructional practices related to mediated learning. The table includes various practices and their corresponding composite $w\bar{x}$ of 3.86 signified a "high" level of practice. Explicitly, teachers have "high" utilization of the following: practicing the class on how to defend answers ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.15), asking for feedback from the class ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.09), requiring reflection papers to understand students' thoughts ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.95), and assigning number heads for oral recitation ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.91). These results entail that teachers want the students to express their thoughts that will enable them to think critically. With these practices, it is clear that teachers are guiding the students to connect to the lessons. Tzuriel (2019) suggests that critical skills, such as drawing connections between lessons across different domains, can be effectively taught through the process of mediation.

Meanwhile, the table also specifies that teachers have "high" utilization of the following instructional practices: encouraging debates to express different perspectives ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.86), scaffolding learning by explaining concepts ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.79), processing activities through higher-order thinking skills (HOTS) questions ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.64), and providing one-on-one coaching ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.51). It is recognized by Farrell, Alani, and Mikroyannidis (2022) that teachers' utilization of mediated learning can have positive effects on student learning outcomes and engagement.

In Terms of Technology in the Classroom

Table 4 on the next page depicts that teachers predominantly have "high" extent of utilizing technology in the classroom as shown in the composite $w\bar{x}$ = 3.82. Specifically, the teachers have a "high" integration of educational apps or games as interactive aids ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.17) and PowerPoint presentations ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.14). These practices enhance lesson delivery and engage students in an interactive learning experience. These results align with the findings of

Farrell et al. (2022), indicating that the use of technology in teaching and learning promotes the swift recovery of knowledge and enhances engagement among both teachers and students.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of the teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of technology in the classroom (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Utilizes apps or games as interactive aid in explaining well the lesson	4.17	Agree	High
2. Uses powerpoint presentation to aid her/his lesson	4.14	Agree	High
3. Shows videos to introduce her lesson	3.98	Agree	High
4. Gives the class the chance to make short movie-making	3.89	Agree	High
5. Shows the movie and let the class make a review after	3.80	Agree	High
6. Allows us to experience radio and tv broadcasting	3.58	Agree	High
7. Trains the class in writing a blog	3.53	Agree	High
8. Uses zip grade assessment	3.45	Agree	High
Composite	**3.82**	**Agree**	**High**

Furthermore, the teachers also have "high" utilization of visual aids to support their lessons and facilitate better understanding among students like showing videos to introduce lessons ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.98). The use of videos as a multimedia tool to capture students' attention and provide real-life examples related to the lesson allows the class to make short movies ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.89). These strategies not only enhance student engagement but also promote critical thinking and collaborative skills. According to Rasheed and Shoukat (2024), educators employed multimedia tools such as projectors, images, sound clips, and animations to enrich students' learning experiences. Their research further revealed that 35% of respondents acknowledged that the utilization of multimedia by teachers aided in their comprehension of various subjects.

Another strategy in using technology in the classroom that is "highly" utilized by the teachers is showing movies and conducting reviews ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.80). Using films stimulates students' critical thinking and encourages students to analyze and reflect on the content. This corresponds with the findings of Marissa and Anasse (2024), that movies offer students contextualized language input, promote cultural awareness, and ignite their enthusiasm for learning English. Additionally, Walay (2022) highlighted that movies present a distinctive opportunity for language acquisition and cross-cultural comprehension owing to their abundant audiovisual content, cultural context, and complex narratives.

Moreover, the teachers "highly" provide opportunities for students to experience radio and TV broadcasting ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.58) and train the class in writing blogs ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.53). These strategies allow students to explore different media platforms and gain practical knowledge of communication. Incorporating blogging as a writing activity improves students' digital literacy skills and encourages self-expression. Using zip-grade assessment ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.45), which is also "highly" practiced by the teachers to simplify the grading process, provides timely feedback to students and facilitates data analysis for teachers.

Kosimov's study (2023) underscores the growing use of TV shows, movies, and news broadcasts in language classrooms as authentic and engaging learning materials. These multimedia resources provide students with exposure to real-life language use and cultural contexts, thereby facilitating the enhancement of listening, speaking, and vocabulary skills.

Regarding blogging, Al-shaboul (2023) acknowledges the importance of blogging sites within Web 2.0 technology for language learning. Beyond serving as mere sources of information, these platforms provide language learners with readily available materials and a user-friendly platform for acquiring language skills. Moreover, Mikroyannidis (2022) emphasized that the widespread adoption of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has shifted learners into the realm of digital learning, prompting educators to incorporate technology into their teaching methods.

In Terms of Visualization

Table 5 presents that collectively the teachers have a "high" extent of utilization of instructional practices in terms of visualization. To specify, the teachers have a "high" utilization of showing pictures and allowing the class to share their visual interpretations ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.98). This result indicates that teachers encourage students to engage with

visual content and promote active participation. With this approach of sharing their interpretations, students can develop their visual literacy skills and critical thinking abilities.

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of the teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of visualization (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Shows picture and let the class share their visual interpretations	3.98	Agree	High
2. Encourages students to engage their imagination to use sensory details from the text and construct mental images of scenes, characters, and concepts	3.96	Agree	High
3. Asks students to illustrate their understanding of the lesson through creative drawings	3.91	Agree	High
Composite	**3.95**	**Agree**	**High**

By employing visual aids, educators can create a more engaging and effective learning environment for idiomatic expressions, fostering comprehension and application among language learners. The initial findings from Ulusoy's (2024) investigation suggest that contemporary students highly value and expect visual aids in educational environments. Visuals are instrumental in fostering active and meaningful engagement during classroom discussions.

On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest score is asking students to illustrate their understanding of the lesson through creative drawings, with a composite $w\bar{x}$ = 3.91. Although this score is still relatively "high," it suggests that there is slightly less utilization of this strategy compared to the other two practices. However, it is important to note that this practice still demonstrates a significant level of implementation, indicating that teachers are providing opportunities for students to visually represent their knowledge and promote creativity. Overall, the results suggest that teachers are effectively incorporating visualization techniques into their instruction, fostering deeper understanding and engagement among students. Correspondingly, research has shown that the use of visual aids in the classroom supports the development of visual literacy skills. Visual literacy refers to the ability to interpret and create visual messages, and it is becoming increasingly important in today's visually-oriented society (Hobbs, 2017).

In Terms of Cooperative Learning

Table 6. Descriptive statistics of the teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of cooperative learning (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Gives a scenario to students and lets them role-play	4.11	Agree	High
2. Allows students to experience clock partnership for an activity	3.66	Agree	High
3. Gives activities like Jigsaw puzzle	3.58	Agree	High
4. Groups students by two to do the Think-Pair-Share	3.57	Agree	High
5. Groups students in dyad or triad	3.55	Agree	High
6. Conducts speech choir by grouping the class	3.55	Agree	High
Composite	**3.67**	**Agree**	**High**

Table 6 presents the extent of teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of cooperative learning. One of the most "highly" utilized practices is giving scenarios to students and allowing them to role-play ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.11). Role-playing activities provide students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in real-life situations, enhancing their understanding and communication abilities. Clock partnership, where students work in pairs for a specific activity, is another practice that teachers frequently employ ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.66). This strategy promotes peer interaction and collaboration, as students support and learn from each other. Khan et al. (2024) back up these results claiming that cooperative learning positively influences social behavior.

It is also seen in the table that activities like jigsaw puzzles ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.58) are "highly" used by the teachers since these promote cooperative learning. In Jigsaw activities, students are divided into small groups, and each group becomes an expert on a specific topic. They then share their knowledge with the rest of the class, fostering a sense of interdependence and collective learning. According to Pan et al. (2023), the general agreement within theories of human learning is that collaborative learning produces superior outcomes compared to solitary learning efforts. Other practices include grouping students in pairs or triads ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.55), conducting speech choir by grouping the class ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.55), and implementing the Think-Pair-Share strategy ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.57). These practices create opportunities for students to collaborate, exchange ideas, and learn from one another. The composite score ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.67) suggests

that English teachers are highly utilizing cooperative learning practices in their classrooms, coinciding with the findings of Smith et al. (2021). This implies that these teachers are effectively implementing strategies that involve students working together in small groups or teams, which is a key component of cooperative learning.

According to Gray (2021), teachers can create projects that encourage students to collaborate and deeply engage in their work, even during distance learning. Research has consistently shown that cooperative learning can lead to higher academic achievement, better interpersonal relationships, and improved self-esteem among students. Moreover, research by Gillies (2016) suggests that when teachers receive training and support in implementing cooperative learning practices, they are more likely to use these strategies effectively in their classrooms. This highlights the importance of professional development and ongoing support for teachers in enhancing the effectiveness of cooperative learning.

In Terms of Inquiry-based Learning

Table 7. Descriptive statistics of the teachers' utilization of instructional practices in terms of inquiry-based learning (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Teaches the class how to conduct the three-Step Interview	4.16	Agree	High
2. Teaches the class how to conduct a case study	4.08	Agree	High
3. Guides students in conducting symposium	4.04	Agree	High
4. Encourages the class to brainstorm in a group study	3.77	Agree	High
5. Explains and guides students in conducting action research	3.28	Agree	High
Composite	**3.86**	**Agree**	**High**

Table 7 presents that the extent of teachers' utilization of inquiry-based learning is "high" as reflected in the composite weighted mean of 3.86. To reiterate, the teachers have a "high" utilization in terms of teaching the class how to conduct the three-step interview ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.16), case study ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.08), symposium ($w\bar{x}$ = 4.04), brainstorming in a group study ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.77), and action research ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.28). By incorporating these practices, students are encouraged to become active participants in their own learning process, promoting a deeper understanding, problem-solving skills, and collaboration. Worgan (2023) acknowledged that this method can help students feel more engaged in the class and more in charge of their own learning. Kasuba et al. (2023) also recognized that inquiry-based learning plays a crucial role in improving students' English vocabulary skills.

3.2 Students' 21st Century Skills

In Terms of Problem-Solving

Table 8. Descriptive statistics of the students' 21st century skills in terms of problem-solving (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Presents all work in an exceptionally clear, neat, organized, and course-specific manner using technology and/or a variety of resources to communicate information.	3.96	Agree	High
2. Demonstrates the ability to construct a clear and insightful problem statement and to identify multiple approaches to solve a problem	3.88	Agree	High
3. Reviews results relative to the problem with specific consideration of the need for further investigation.	3.84	Agree	High
4. Interprets, draws logical conclusions, reflects, and clearly & confidently communicates results.	3.82	Agree	High
5. Selects and applies highly efficient problem-solving strategies to find a solution.	3.77	Agree	High
6. Analyzes all of the relevant data in great detail	3.75		
7. Solves correctly the problem with a logical and sequential written response that integrates substantial and pertinent information, important details, and concepts	3.75	Agree	High
8. Indicates insightful comprehension of the problem & carefully addresses multiple contextual factors	3.70	Agree	High
9. Comprehends the problem and carefully addresses multiple contextual factors and thoroughly reviews results relative to the problem with specific consideration of need for further work.	3.70	Agree	High
10. Faces a problem, I try to analyze all the facts and put them in systematic order	3.67	Agree	High
Composite	**3.78**	**Agree**	**High**

Based on Table 8, generally, the students' displayed a "high" extent of problem-solving skills as revealed in the composite w$\bar{x}$ of 4.08. To point out, students are able to present an exceptionally clear, neat, and organized manner using technology and varied resources to relay information (w$\bar{x}$ = 3.96). These are "highly" manifested by the students. These findings mean that students have developed the ability to effectively utilize available tools. They are capable of conveying complex ideas in a coherent and engaging manner, which is essential for success in various academic and professional settings. Additionally, their proficiency in utilizing diverse resources highlights their adaptability and resourcefulness. This finding aligns with the importance of technology integration in enhancing communication skills and presentation abilities emphasized by Smith et al. (2021).

The table also unveils that students "highly" demonstrate the ability to construct a clear and insightful problem statement and to identify multiple approaches to solve a problem (w$\bar{x}$ = 3.88). The students likewise manifest "high" extent of skills to review results relative to the problem with specific consideration of the need for further investigation (w$\bar{x}$ = 3.84) and interpret, draw logical conclusions, reflect, and confidently communicate results (w$\bar{x}$ = 3.82). This shows that students possess a strong sense of critical evaluation and research acumen and that they are capable of processing complex information, synthesizing it effectively, and articulating their insights with clarity and conviction.

The "high" extent of skills highlights the need to further enhance students' strategic thinking and decision-making skills in problem-solving contexts (Jones & Johnson, 2018). Smith et al. (2021) also stressed the importance of developing well-rounded problem-solving skills among students to thrive in the 21st-century context.

In Terms of Information Literacy

Table 9. Descriptive statistics of the students' 21st century skills in terms of information technology literacy (n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. I recognize the need for information.	4.13	Agree	High
2. I recognize that accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision making.	4.07	Agree	High
3. I can use information in critical and problem solving.	3.84	Agree	High
4. I have access sources of computer-based information	3.80	Agree	High
5. I have developed successful search strategies.	3.78	Agree	High
6. I can identify potential sources of information.	3.73		
7. I can evaluate information	3.73	Agree	High
8. I can organize information for practical applications.	3.70	Agree	High
9. I can integrate new information into an existing body of knowledge	3.70	Agree	High
Composite	**3.83**	**Agree**	**High**

Table 9 shows that students have acquired a "high" extent of information literacy as evident in the composite weighted mean of 3.83. To highlight, the students have a "high" extent of skills in recognizing the need for information (w$\bar{x}$ = 4.13) and accurate and complete information is the basis for intelligent decision-making (w$\bar{x}$ = 4.07). This connotes that the students have ideas that fundamental to intelligent decision-making process and that they are well-prepared to navigate complex situations and make informed choices. They must have a strong understanding of the importance of thorough research and data analysis which guide them in making wise judgments. This discovery corresponds with the outcomes of Muaňa's (2023) study, which revealed that students possess "high" proficiency in identifying credible and authentic sources. Additionally, she observed that students are adept at efficiently sharing the information they gather online.

On the other hand, the table reflects that the students display "high" skills in evaluating information (w$\bar{x}$ = 3.73), organizing information for practical applications (w$\bar{x}$ = 3.70), and integrating new information into an existing body of knowledge (w$\bar{x}$ = 3.70). This proficiency suggests that students possess strong critical thinking abilities, enabling them to assess the reliability and relevance of information effectively. The minor changes in technology, even if they follow typical learning patterns, can lead to unexpected transformations. The ability to analyze and convert human tasks into software code affects skill needs. This underscores the importance of effectively evaluating information, as seemingly small developments can greatly impact society and employment Ciarli et al. (2021). Developing strong information literacy skills equips students with the ability to critically evaluate and apply information in various contexts, contributing to their academic and professional success. These findings are

consistent with the results of a study by Estera et al. (2020), indicating that students exhibit a strong proficiency in media and information literacy. Contrary to the present findings, Bulangis (2021) reported that students' information literacy skills were rated as "low," particularly in their capacity to manage, identify, and communicate information effectively. This assertion is supported by the research of Arifah, Suyitno, and Dewi (2020), which revealed that numerous students produced incomplete or irrational conclusions due to their failure to consider pertinent information.

In Terms of Critical Thinking

Table 10. Descriptive statistics of the students' 21st century skills in terms of critical thinking(n = 277)

Indicators	Mean	Description	Extent
1. Ensure to stay updated with crucial information	3.83	Agree	High
2. Share the newly gained information	3.82	Agree	High
3. Recall information about which I once read	3.81	Agree	High
4. Combine information from different texts	3.70	Agree	High
5. Try to use practical examples to justify my answer when discussing	3.62	Agree	High
6. Repeat important threads from the text	3.60		
7. Express same content in many different ways	3.58	Agree	High
8. Understand texts from various fields	3.55	Agree	High
9. Give many examples when explaining	3.50	Agree	High
10. In-depth analyses of reality are a waste of life	2.62	Moderate	Moderate
Composite	**3.56**	**Agree**	**High**

The data presented in Table 10 provides insights into the extent of 21st-century skills exhibited by the students in terms of critical thinking. Collectively, the students display a "high" extent of critical thinking skills. Clearly, the students have "high" skills in ensuring to stay updated with crucial information ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.56), sharing the newly gained information ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.82), and recalling information they once read ($w\bar{x}$ = 3.81). These findings point out that students demonstrate a high level of awareness regarding the importance of staying updated with crucial information, a willingness to share newly gained knowledge, and the ability to recall information from past readings.

On the other hand, the table reveals that students "moderately agree" that in-depth analysis of reality is not a waste of life" ($w\bar{x}$ = 2.62). This indicates that students may have a lower inclination towards engaging in in-depth analyses of reality. It suggests that they may not prioritize or see value in exploring complex issues deeply, which could be an area for improvement in their critical thinking skills. Smith (2020) found that students demonstrated a high level of critical thinking skills in the area of inference, while Johnson et al. (2020) reported that students have a strong ability to analyze information. Additionally, students showed a good level of critical thinking skills in understanding and interpreting information, according to Brown et al. (2019). Furthermore, students exhibited a moderate level of critical thinking skills in providing explanations. On the contrary, Brown et al. (2019) exposed that students struggled to provide clear and comprehensive explanations, while Smith (2020) highlighted that students' critical thinking skills were still very low when it came to systematic answers and recall of information.

3.3 Relationship Between Teachers' Instructional Practice and Students' Problem-Solving Skills

Table 11. Relationship between teachers' utilization of the instructional practices and students' problem-solving skills (n = 277)

Variables	Coefficients	SE	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	0.802	0.181	4.431	<0.001
Drill	0.099	0.098	1.019	0.309
Contextualization	0.074	0.094	0.793	0.429
Mediated Learning	0.01	0.093	0.105	0.916
Technology in the Classroom	-0.131	0.087	-1.51	0.132
Visualization	0.384	0.069	5.568	<0.001
Cooperative Learning	0.039	0.079	0.489	0.625
Inquiry-Based Learning	0.286	0.077	3.696	<0.001
R = 0.762				
R^2 = 0.581				
adjusted R^2 = 0.57				
F-ratio = 53.286				
p-value = <0.001 (significant)				

Table 11 shows the data in identifying the relationship between the extent of teachers' utilization of the seven instructional practices in teaching English and the students' 21st-century skills in terms of problem-solving. Using Multiple Linear Regression Analysis, the study reveals that the overall F-test is significant (p<.001). Every p-value of the explanatory variables also depicts that among the seven instructional practices in teaching English, only practices such as visualization (p<.001) and inquiry-based learning (p<.001) can significantly predict the students' problem-solving skills. This finding implies that teachers who utilize these practices to a high level tend to have students who acquire and exhibit better problem-solving skills and vice versa. In the study by Olayvar 2021, it was found that students lacking problem-solving skills tend to view problems as daunting challenges, resulting in diminished confidence in their ability to solve them.

The data also point out that teachers' instructional practices like drill, contextualization, mediated learning, technology utilization in class, and cooperative learning do not significantly relate to students' problem-solving skills (0.05). This result connotes that the shifts in the extent of teachers' utilization of the aforementioned practices are not associated with the changes in the extent of problem-solving skills exhibited by the students, and these instructional practices do not show a substantial impact on the development of problem-solving skills in English. Research suggests that drill-based learning primarily focuses on repetitive practice rather than critical thinking. Contextualization, while enhancing understanding, may not directly develop problem-solving skills as it may lack specific strategies for complex problem-solving. Mediated learning, although effective in facilitating understanding, may need to be combined with other strategies. The same goes with cooperative learning, though it promotes social skills and knowledge sharing, may not consistently impact problem-solving skills due to various factors such as task nature and student roles within the group. Technology in the classroom also, if not purposefully integrated, becomes ineffective. That is why, these practices might not substantially improve students' problem-solving skills (Bucu, 2022). Consequently, in developing problem-solving skills effectively, it is crucial to incorporate strategies that specifically target critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and real-world application.

3.4 Relationship Between Teachers' Instructional Practice and Students' Literacy Skills

Table 12. Relationship between teachers' utilization of the instructional practices and students' literacy skills (n = 277)

Variables	Coefficients	SE	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	0.402	0.147	2.735	0.007
Drill	0.057	0.079	0.723	0.47
Contextualization	0.228	0.076	2.982	0.003
Mediated Learning	-0.036	0.076	-0.478	0.633
Technology in the Classroom	0.174	0.071	2.46	0.015
Visualization	0.165	0.056	2.949	0.003
Cooperative Learning	0.256	0.065	3.965	<0.001
Inquiry-Based Learning	0.068	0.063	1.074	0.284
R = 0.837				
R^2 = 0.701				
adjusted R^2 = 0.693				
F-ratio = 90.073				
p-value = <0.001 (significant)				

Table 12 discloses that out of the seven areas of teachers' instructional practices, only contextualization (p = 0.003), technology in the class (p = 0.015, visualization (p = 0.003), and cooperative learning (p<.001) are found to be significant determinants of students' information literacy skills. In other words, teachers who utilize the enumerated instructional practices more often tend to have students who manifest higher information literacy skills than those teachers who utilize them less. Cooperative Learning has the highest coefficient of 0.256, indicating a significant positive relationship with literacy skills.

This research finding supports the notion that cooperative learning can be an effective instructional approach for promoting achievements in reading and writing. It aligns with the growing interest in cooperative learning as a method to enhance various aspects of education, including conceptual development in science, problem-solving in mathematics, and higher-level thinking and reasoning (Cooperative Learning: Developments in Research-Ed). In the study of Harianingsih, I., & Jusoh, Z. (2022,) cooperative learning is viewed as a widely used instructional

approach that emphasizes group work and peer interaction to promote student learning and achievement. While there is a large body of research on the effects of cooperative learning on education, the findings have been mixed and often inconclusive due to variations in study design, sample characteristics, and outcome measures Roseth et al., (2023). Therefore, a systematic and rigorous synthesis of the existing evidence is needed to provide a more reliable estimate of the overall effect of cooperative learning on student achievement.

Moreover, the current data show that the non-significant relationship between the extent of teachers' utilization of instructional practices like drill, mediated learning, and inquiry-based learning and the students' information literacy skills (all p-values > $\alpha = 0.05$) would mean that these practices cannot predict the extent of students' information literacy skills. Instructional practices like drill-based learning, mediated learning, and inquiry-based learning have been widely used in educational settings. Each of these methods has its distinct characteristics and potential impacts on the learning experience of students.

The drill method is regarded as a suitable approach for instructing learning content to enhance practical abilities. According to the literature, it has been observed that employing the drill method helps students become proficient and adept in the material being taught and this could be an analytical component to information literacy (Pramesti, 2020) Inquiry-based learning, on the other hand, encourages students to ask questions and seek answers. It has been found to be effective in promoting learning outcomes such as deep thinking and the ability to apply knowledge and reasoning skills (School Libraries Worldwide, n.d.).

3.5 Relationship Between Teachers' Instructional Practice and Students' Critical Thinking Skills

Table 13. Relationship between teachers' utilization of the instructional practices and students' critical thinking skills (n = 277)

Variables	Coefficients	SE	t Stat	P-value
Intercept	0.346	0.164	2.112	0.036
Drill	0.165	0.088	1.862	0.064
Contextualization	0.128	0.085	1.499	0.135
Mediated Learning	-0.022	0.085	-0.263	0.793
Technology in the Classroom	0.271	0.079	3.441	0.001
Visualization	0.073	0.062	1.173	0.242
Cooperative Learning	0.269	0.072	3.744	0.000
Inquiry-Based Learning	-0.004	0.07	-0.052	0.959
R = 0.79				
$R^2 = 0.624$				
adjusted $R^2 = 0.614$				
F-ratio = 63.734				
p-value = <0.001 (significant)				

Table 13 illustrates that out of the seven areas of instructional practices of the teachers, only technology utilization in classroom ($p < .001$) and cooperative learning ($p < .001$) can be related to the extent of students' critical thinking skills. This connotes that the shifts in the extent of teachers' utilization of these two instructional practices in teaching English correspond to the changes in the extent of students' critical thinking skills. The results show that several instructional practices have a significant relationship with students' critical thinking skills. Technology in the class and cooperative learning have positive coefficients (0.271 and 0.269, respectively), indicating a positive relationship with critical thinking skills. This finding suggests that when teachers utilize these instructional practices in their English teaching, students tend to exhibit better critical thinking skills.

Additionally, it means that teachers often use instructional practices like storytelling to engage students and assess their understanding of the material. This finding coincides with the result of Nair and Yunus (2021), which also showed that engaging students through storytelling improves their comprehension of concepts and enhances their retention of information. In Laabidi's (2023) research, titled "The Role of Technology in Fostering Critical Thinking Skills," the focus is on investigating how the incorporation of technology in education impacts students' critical thinking capabilities. The study also examined the beneficial outcomes of utilizing cooperative learning methods in enhancing students' critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. These findings highlight the importance of utilizing certain instructional practices, such as technology integration and cooperative learning, to enhance students' critical thinking skills in English education.

4.0 Conclusion

The study underscores the importance of employing diverse instructional practices to enhance critical 21st-century skills among students in English subjects and the utilization of effective strategies to promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and information literacy skills. In terms of the relationship between instructional practices and 21st-century skills, visualization and inquiry-based learning are significant predictors of students' problem-solving abilities. Contextualization, technology integration, and cooperative learning also play important roles in influencing students' information literacy skills. Additionally, technology integration and cooperative learning are crucial factors in developing students' critical thinking skills.

5.0 Contributions of Authors

The following authors have the following contributions:

Dr. Groselie B. Ragay managed the study's conceptualization, designing the overall framework and objectives. She was actively involved in writing the manuscript, ensuring that the ideas were clearly and effectively communicated. Additionally, Dr. Ragay conducted the data collection, gathering the necessary information and materials for the research. She also performed data analysis, interpreting the collected data to draw meaningful conclusions.

Meanwhile, Dr. Maria Chona Z. Futalan handled the treatment of the data, applying appropriate methodologies to process and prepare the data for analysis. She contributed significantly to the analysis, examining the data to identify relationships, and perceptions. Dr. Futalan also took charge of editing the manuscript, refining the content for clarity, coherence, and academic precision. She provided a critical review of the manuscript, ensuring the study's validity and reliability. Furthermore, she supervised the entire research study, guiding the research process and ensuring adherence to the standards.

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The authors state that there are no conflicts of interest related to the execution of the research study. None of the authors have financial or personal ties that could impact the impartiality of the study results

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