



Peer Review Report Form

Manuscript Title:	Critical Thinking Skills of Education Students in a State University: Insights and Implications for Curriculum Development
Type of Article:	Original Article

FIRST ROUND

Editor

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The reviewers acknowledge the significance of your manuscript and recommend several revisions to further improve its clarity, coherence, organization, and overall scholarly quality. In addition, you are advised to thoroughly review and validate all references included in the manuscript. Please ensure that all cited sources are accurate, accessible, and retrievable through Google Scholar to uphold the credibility and reliability of the study. Furthermore, only sources that are cited within the manuscript should appear in the References section, and all entries listed in the References section must also be cited in the text. For example, if 20 unique sources are cited in the manuscript, then only those 20 sources should be included in the References section. Please also note that repeated citations of the same source within the text are counted as a single reference entry; therefore, the total number of references may be lower than the total number of in-text citations.

Reviewer 1

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
The manuscript is timely and relevant because critical thinking is very important in teacher education, and the study has useful intention to connect the findings with curriculum development. The paper is also generally clear in presenting the quantitative and qualitative results.

<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
My main concern is the alignment and depth of the mixed-methods design, especially how the qualitative findings really explain the quantitative results. The study says it used an explanatory mixed-methods design, but the qualitative part seems mostly a listing of instructional strategies and frequencies, not yet a deeper explanation of why students have only satisfactory critical thinking levels, or why creating and analyzing differ by specialization and age. Because of this, the mixed-methods claim is not yet fully convincing. The authors may strengthen the paper by clearly showing how the qualitative responses explain the important statistical results, especially the significant differences in creating and analyzing. For example, the discussion can connect specific instructional strategies to the weaker or stronger domains of critical thinking, and explain why some specializations may develop more creating or analyzing skills



than others. This will make the study more useful for curriculum development and not only descriptive. I suggest that the authors revise mainly this part by improving the integration of the quantitative and qualitative findings, so the conclusion and recommendations will be more strongly supported by the actual data.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

Reviewer 2

<u>General Comments and Recommendations</u>
Thank you for the opportunity to read this manuscript. The study tackles an important and relevant topic, which is the critical thinking skills of our future educators. The paper is generally well-structured, and the quantitative data analysis is straightforward.
<u>Specific Comments and Recommendations</u>
In your Introduction, the primary gap you identified is the "limited research on the critical thinking skills of education students in state universities, particularly in the context of President Ramon Magsaysay State University (PRMSU)". While this is useful for institutional quality assurance, it is not a strong enough rationale for a scientific journal. You need to frame the problem within a broader national or theoretical context. Why does the broader Philippine educational landscape need this specific study right now?
You explicitly stated that you used an "explanatory mixed-methods research design". In a true explanatory sequential design, the qualitative data is supposed to explain or dive deeper into the quantitative findings (e.g., explaining why the "Creating" domain was the lowest, or why age and specialization caused significant differences). However, your quantitative phase measured students' critical thinking levels, while your qualitative phase suddenly shifted to assessing the instructional strategies used by the faculty. These are two different variables. The qualitative thematic analysis does not explain your quantitative results at all. Furthermore, relying on a single "open-ended item on instructional strategies" at the end of a survey is too superficial to be considered a robust qualitative phase.
Your methodology mentions using "stratified random sampling", and your tables show a total sample size of N=196. However, you failed to mention the total population size and how this specific sample size was determined. Was a power analysis or Slovin's formula used? This is critical for establishing the reliability of your quantitative claims.
In Table 9, you presented frequencies for your themes based on narrative responses. Some of the representative statements provided are very unnatural for raw open-ended survey responses. For example, a quote states: "incorporate gamified quizzes and competitive tasks that keep students motivated and actively thinking". This sounds more like a textbook definition



or a generated text rather than an actual student's raw feedback. Please review your raw data for authenticity and ensure you are capturing the actual voices of your respondents.

The reference list needs a thorough checking. Several entries are incomplete. For instance, the Dupri et al. (2021) citation is missing the journal name entirely, and Batty (2020) only has "306" listed at the end. More importantly, there is an unusually high number of references from 2024 and 2025. Given the timeline of the publication process, please double-check the veracity of these recent citations to ensure they are actual published works and not AI hallucinations.

Please indicate your recommendation by checking the appropriate box below.

<u>Decision</u>	
	Accept the manuscript for publication.
/	Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.
	Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.

SECOND ROUND

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Editor</u>	<u>Reviewer 1</u>	<u>Reviewer 2</u>
Accept the manuscript for publication.	/	/	/
Reconsider the manuscript after the authors have satisfactorily addressed and complied with the reviewers' comments and recommendations.			
Reject the manuscript, as it is not suitable for publication.			