Introduction
The important role of critical thinking and decision making skills in the field of nursing were recognized and integrated in nursing education and practice to provide safe, effective, and efficient nursing care to their clients. Thus, nurse educators are facing great challenges in finding out the best way to enhance these two essential skills for better patient outcomes. New and better instructional strategies to equip nursing students with the highest level of critical thinking and decision making skills was the focus of this study.

Method
This descriptive-correlational research study aimed to describe the level of critical thinking and the type of decision making skills of senior nursing students as basis for designing instructional strategies in teaching a major nursing course.

Participants of the study were 241 Level IV students currently enrolled from the 10 leading colleges and universities of Nursing in Region-4A commonly known as CALABARZON.

The CEU-Lopez Critical Thinking Test and the Siklka Lauri and Sanna Salantera Nursing Decision Making Instrument were utilized to measure critical thinking and the decision making skills respectively.

In determining correlations between the NCM grades, level of critical thinking skills and type of decision making Pearson-r was used. In determining differences in the level of critical thinking skills and type of decision making skills of nursing students when grouped according to age and sex, T-test and ANOVA were used.

Results:
1. Age and Sex of Nursing Students
   The age of students ranges from 19 years old with 33.2% and 20 years old with 30.7% of the total population. Majority of the nursing students are female with 73.9% of the total population.

2. NCM Grades of Nursing Students
   Nursing Care Management (NCM) is satisfactory with a mean grade of 2.31. NCM 100 (Fundamental of Nursing Practice) ranks first and is verbally interpreted as very satisfactory. All other NCM grades are satisfactory.

3. Level of Critical Thinking Skills of Nursing Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Critical Thinking Skills</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deduction</td>
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<td>2.14</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Induction</td>
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<td>1.99</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meaning</td>
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<td>2.55</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>

Conclusions
1. Critical thinking skills of the nursing students are related in their Nursing Care Management grades.
2. Clinical decision making skills are not related to the NCM grades of nursing students.
3. Induction and types of clinical decision making skills of nursing students differs between male and female but not in age.

Recommendations
1. The use of more meaningful and highly engaging teaching and learning strategies must focus on improving the grades of students in their Nursing Care Management courses especially on medical and surgical concepts.
2. Sex as one factor that influences the development of induction and types of decision making skills must be considered in designing instructional strategies in teaching major courses in the nursing program.
3. It is recommended that the use of teaching and learning strategies in nursing must be chosen appropriately by the teachers to ensure greater impact on critical thinking and decision making skills this may include but not limited to the use of case study, case problem, case report, research case, and case scenario, concept mapping and the use of high fidelity simulation.

References