Recognizing the important role of critical thinking and decision making skills in the field of nursing, these two essential competencies were integrated in nursing education and practice to provide safe, effective, and efficient nursing care to their clients. Nurse educators are facing great challenges in finding out the best way to teach these skills. Reforms and innovations in instructional strategies must address the enhancement of these competencies for better patient outcomes. New and better teaching and learning strategies to equip the students with the highest level of critical thinking and decision making skills will be the focus of this study.

This descriptive-correlational research study aimed to describe the level of critical thinking and the type of decision making skills of senior nursing students. The result of the study was the basis for designing instructional strategies in teaching a major nursing course that will enhance the development of critical thinking and decision making skills among senior nursing students.

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 schools were selected based on the results of four Nurse Licensure Examinations from November 2014 to June 2016. All Level IV students were included because of the decrease number of nursing enrollees in each of the selected school.

The CEU-Lopez Critical Thinking Test and Nursing Decision Making Instrument were utilized to measure critical thinking and decision making skills respectively. The tools were adopted with the approval of the authors. The five aspects of critical thinking skills such as deduction, credibility, assumptions, induction and meaning and the six stages of critical thinking development were included in the assessment of the level of critical thinking skills. The types of decision making skills were analytical, intuitive or flexible (using both types).

In describing the profile of the nursing students to age, sex and grades in Nursing Care Management (NCM) courses as well as the level of critical thinking skills of nursing students and type of decision making skills, frequency percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation were utilized. 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.

Majority of the nursing students are 19 years old and female. The average mean grade in all 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.

Among the five aspects of critical thinking skills, nursing students are highest in assumption with a mean score of 6.87 and lowest in induction with a mean score of 3.60. While in the stages of critical thinking development, 34 % of the nursing students are in the practicing stage and 30.7% in the beginning stage of critical thinking skills.

The type of clinical decision making skills commonly used by 54.8% of the nursing students is flexible and 44.8% is analytical.
There is significant **negative low correlation** between NCM 100 grades and deduction, credibility and induction. There is significant **negative moderate correlation** between NCM 100 grades and meaning and there is **positive moderate correlation** between NCM 100 grades and the stages of critical thinking development. There is significant **negative low correlation** between NCM 101 grades and deduction and meaning while there is significant **positive low correlation** between NCM 101 grades and induction and stages of critical thinking development. There is significant **negative low correlation** between NCM 102 grades and induction, meaning, and stages of critical thinking development. There is **significant negative low correlation** between NCM 103 grades and induction and meaning while there is **significant positive low correlation** between NCM 103 grades and stages of critical thinking development. There is **significant negative low correlation** between NCM 104 grades and meaning. There is **significant negative low correlation** between the average NCM grades and deduction, induction, and meaning while there is **significant positive low correlation** between the average NCM grades and the stages of critical thinking development.

There is **significant negative low correlation** between the average NCM grades and deduction, induction, and meaning while there is **significant positive low correlation** between the average NCM grades and the stages of critical thinking development.

There is **no significant difference** in the five aspects of critical thinking skills, stages of critical thinking development, and types of clinical decision making skills of nursing students when grouped according to age. There is **significant difference** in the induction and types of decision making skills of nursing students when grouped according to sex.

It is concluded that critical thinking skills of the nursing students are related in their NCM grades. The types of clinical decision making skills are not related to the NCM grades of nursing students.

The use of more meaningful and highly engaging teaching and learning strategies must focus on improving the grades of students in their NCM courses especially on medical and surgical concepts. 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.

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.

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**Title:**
Critical Thinking and Decision-Making Skills of Nursing Students Basis for Designing Instructional Strategies

**Keywords:**
Critical thinking skills, Decision making skills and Instructional Strategies

**References:**


**Abstract Summary:**
A nurse who possesses high level of critical thinking skills can make correct clinical decisions that will ensure delivery of safe, effective and efficient nursing care to client. The study focuses on designing instructional strategies that can enhance further both critical thinking and decision making skills of nursing students.

**Content Outline:**
**Introduction**

1. Growing recognition of the need of nurses to possess the highest level of critical thinking and decision making skills to be able to provide safe, effective and efficient nursing care to client

2. The need of nursing schools to utilize various instructional strategies to promote the development of both critical thinking and decision making skills among nursing students

**Body**

**A. Main point #1** Growing recognition of critical thinking and clinical decision making skills in nursing education and nursing practice both locally and internationally

**Supporting point #1** Critical thinking and decision making skills became the focus in nursing education and practice

a) In 2003, the National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission has emphasized the inclusion of Critical Thinking in its accreditation criteria

b) The American Association of Colleges of Nursing cited Critical Thinking as one of the core competency and encouraged nursing program to include it in their curricula

c) In 2009, the Commission on Higher Education Department in the Philippines issued a memorandum (CHED Memo 14 Series of 2009) which emphasized that Critical Thinking skills must be achieved by any beginning nurses who completed a four-year program of Bachelor of Science in Nursing

**2. Supporting point #2** Critical thinking and decision making skills

a) Definition

b) Factors that influences one’s development of critical thinking and decision making skills

c) Importance of critical thinking and decision making skills to patient and significant others, to educators and to health organizations, government and health care

d) Available instruments available to assess critical thinking and decision making skills, its advantages and disadvantages
B. Main Point #2  The need to utilize instructional strategies to be utilized to enhance critical thinking and decision making skills

1. Supporting point #1  The need to assess the level of critical thinking skills and type of decision making skills

a) Use of CEU-Lopez Critical Thinking Test to assess the level of critical thinking skills in five different aspects such as deduction, credibility, assumption, induction and meaning and stages of critical thinking development from unreflective thinker, challenged thinker, beginning thinker, practicing thinker, advanced thinker and master thinker

b) Use of Nursing Decision Making Instrument by Sirkka Lauri and Sanna Salantera will describe the type of decision making whether analytical, intuitive or flexible

c) The relationship of age, sex, and grades in Nursing Care Management courses to level of critical thinking and type of decision making skills

2. Supporting point #2  Recommended instructional strategies to be utilized to enhance critical thinking and decision making skills

a) Characteristics of teaching and learning experiences to direct students towards enhancement of critical thinking and decision making skills

b) Guidelines for the teacher to encourage development of critical thinking and decision making skills

c) Steps in designing learning experiences

d) Recommended strategies like the use of reflective journals, case study, case problem, case report, research case and case scenario, concept mapping and high fidelity simulation (HFS)

Conclusion

1. Utmost importance of teaching and developing the critical thinking and decision making skills of nursing students must focus in enhancing skills on induction.

2. High level of critical thinking skills is the foundation of effective clinical decision making skills for better health outcomes thus those students who are in the unreflective, challenged and beginning stages of critical thinking development must be given opportunity to enhance these two skills

3. The challenge among nurse educators is to find the best way to teach critical thinking and decision making skills and to equip themselves in the use of the various instructional strategies

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