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ATTITUDE SUPPORT THINKING / NURSING EDUCATION

SURATTANA TOSSANOOT : THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SELECTED  
FACTORS AND CRITICAL THINKING ABILITY OF THE FIRST YEAR NURSING STUDENTS  
OF NURSING COLLEGES IN THE CENTRAL REGION , MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH.

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The purpose of this descriptive research was to investigate the relationships between the selected factors of learning cycle, learning style and attitude support thinking which enhance the critical thinking ability of nursing students. The sample consisted of 120 first year nursing students of Nursing Colleges in the central region, under The Ministry of Public Health. Data were collected using questionnaires and The Critical Thinking Appraisal Manual . Data analysis was performed with Chi-Square and Pearson's product moment correlation.

The results showed that for students learning cycles the concrete experience ( $\bar{x} = 26.09$ ) was the most common step in the learning process used by nursing students. For learning style analysis, it was found that the assimilative type (31.7%) was the most common learning style. It was also found that most nursing students had good attitude support thinking levels (54.2%). The student's critical thinking ability in five aspects - inferences, recognition of assumption, deduction, interpretation and evaluation of arguments - were at a moderate level (64.2 %) and at a good level (20.8 %) . The recognition of assumption had the highest score ( $\bar{x} = 11.7$ ) and the inferences had the lowest score ( $\bar{x} = 5.3$  ). There was a positively significant correlation between the abstract conceptualization step and recognition of assumption ( $r = 0.19$ ,  $p \text{ value} < 0.05$ ). There was also positively significant correlations between the reflective observation step and recognition of assumption ( $r = 0.24$ ,  $p \text{ value} < 0.01$ ) and interpretation ( $r = 0.18$ ,  $p \text{ value} < 0.05$  ). There were no correlations between attitude support thinking and critical thinking ability, and between learning style and critical thinking.

The results of this study recommended that nursing faculty and nursing education administrator emphasize development of critical thinking ability in freshman nursing students. Learning cycle and individual differences should also be taken in to consideration in order for nursing programs to relate to nursing students characteristics.