A study on learning flow, critical thinking and communication skills in nursing students

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Abstract. The purpose of this study was to examine the critical thinking, communication skills, and learning flow for nursing students. The data was collected by questionnaires from 104 nursing students. Learning flow and critical thinking showed a positive relationship, also learning flow and communication skills showed a positive relationship. Results show that critical thinking and communication skill has positive correlation in learning flow. This study suggests that nursing educators should build strategies to support students to have critical thinking and communication skill for learning flow in nursing education.

Keywords: learning flow, critical thinking, communication skill, student

1 Introduction

There are critical thinking and effective communication and problem-solving abilities as indicators of success in higher education [1]. Critical thinking is frequently discussed in the nursing education. Critical thinking in nursing is a purposeful, self-regulatory judgment associated in some way with clinical decision making, diagnostic reasoning, the nursing process, clinical judgment, and problem solving. Critical thinkers have seven dispositions: truth seeking, open-mindedness, analyticity, systematicity, self-confidence, inquisitiveness and cognitive maturity [2]. Communication skills have long been recognized as an important element of nursing, and nursing training, with many arguing that effective communication is fundamental to quality nursing practice [3].

The objectives of this study were to examine the critical thinking, communication skills, and learning flow for nursing students.

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2 Method

2.1 Study design

This study assesses the relationship between the learning flow, critical thinking and communication skills in nursing students.

2.2 Sampling and data collection

One hundred four nursing students at a university in D city took part in this study. Data were collected using face to face interview with a structured questionnaire. The participant in this study, who consented to participate, understood the purpose of this study, and had the complete capacity to verbally communicate in Korean.

2.3 Instruments

Learning flow: In order to determine the learning flow, a tool of the 28 questions was used which was developed by Jeong [4]. 5-point Likert scale was used. Higher score means positive perception of learning flow.

Critical thinking: The modified the tool of Choi [5] was used. It consists of 27 questions with the 5-point Likert scale. Higher score means positive perception of critical thinking.

Communication skill: In order to determine the learning flow, a tool of the 49 questions was used which was developed by Lee [6]. 5-point Likert scale was used. Higher score means positive perception of communication skill.

2.4 Data analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS Win 15.0 program. Descriptive statistics was determined for all demographic variables. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients were used to estimate internal consistency and reliability of the tools. Learning flow, critical thinking and communication skill were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The differences in learning flow, critical thinking and communication skill according to demographic data were analyzed using ANOVA and Scheffé test for post-hoc test. Pearson’s correlations were performed in order to identify the degree of relations of variables. General statistical techniques were used to analyze the data based on an alpha level of .05.
3  Result

3.1 Learning flow, critical thinking and communication skill levels

Respondents included 104 college students which aged 19-40 years. The mean age was 20.1 years (SD=2.31). The sample was predominantly female (84.6%). The descriptive statistics for the nursing students’ learning flow, critical thinking and communication skill. The mean score for the learning flow was 3.36 on a scale of 1-5. Critical thinking was 3.45 out of a total score of 5, and communication skill was 3.53 on a scale of 1-5.

3.2 Differences in learning flow, critical thinking and communication skill according to demographic characteristics

Among the characteristics, the characteristics that showed significant differences in critical thinking (F=6.91, \( p=.002 \)) and communication skill (F=3.15, \( p=.047 \)). In learning flow was GPA (F=17.66, \( p<.001 \)) and Major satisfaction (F=3.71, \( p=.028 \)).

3.3 Correlation between learning flow, critical thinking and communication skills

The overall mean learning flow score was correlated with the mean communication skill scores (\( r=.476 \) at \( p<.001 \)) and critical thinking score (\( r=.559 \) at \( p<.001 \)). Each of the critical thinking factors was significantly correlated with learning flow, with one exceptions; the factor of health skepticism (Table 1).

| Table 1. Correlation between learning flow, critical thinking and communication skills |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| **Learning flow**                                      | \( r \)           | \( p \)         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Critical thinking                                      | .559              | <.001*          |
| Health skepticism                                       | .117              | .235            |
| Intellectual fairness                                   | .237              | .015            |
| Objectivity                                             | .489              | <.001*          |
| Systematicity                                           | .334              | .001            |
| Prudence                                                | .362              | <.001*          |
| Intellectual engagement/curiosity                      | .434              | <.001*          |
| Self-confidence                                         | .444              | <.001*          |
| Communication skill                                     | .476              | <.001*          |
| Perceiving process                                      | .337              | <.001*          |
| Adapting process                                        | .192              | .051            |
| Self-presentation process                               | .304              | .002            |
| Planning process                                        | .315              | .001            |
| Coding process                                          | .442              | <.001*          |

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4 Discussion

In this study, the critical thinking and communication skill were found to be significantly correlated with learning flow. The findings of this study provide strong evidence that critical thinking and communication skill were a significant factor in nursing students’ learning flow. This is similar to the findings of previous studies [1-3].

5 Conclusion

This study examined nursing students’ learning flow, critical thinking and communication skill. Results showed that critical thinking and communication skill has positive correlation in learning flow. It is important that nursing educators develop a curriculum and classroom techniques that foster critical thinking and communication skills to enhance learning flow.

References