

EFFECTIVENESS OF SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION ON CRITICAL THINKING, SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING, AND LEARNING SATISFACTION OF THAI NURSING STUDENTS

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Purpose of the study: This study aimed to compare mean scores on critical thinking, self-directed learning, and learning satisfaction of the third-year students who participated in small group discussion to those who attended lecture in a Thai undergraduate nursing program.

Design: The quasi-experimental study design was conducted.

Methods: The study participants included 68 students who attended the course, "Nursing Care of Persons with Health Deviation I", during May to October 2006. Small group discussion was performed as a teaching method in the experimental group (n = 34), while lecturing was delivered in the control group (n = 34). Critical thinking and self-directed learning were measured before and after the teaching methods. Learning satisfaction was measured after the teaching methods.

Main findings: Mean score changes (pretest-posttest mean differences) in critical thinking, and self-directed learning in the experimental group were statistically higher than those in the control group. Students' learning satisfaction means in the experimental group was statistically higher than that in the control group. In the control group, students' critical thinking mean decreased following the lecturing. However, in the experimental group, students' self-directed learning mean increased following small group discussion.

Conclusion: Small group discussion could increase students' critical thinking, self-directed learning, and learning satisfaction. Thai nurse educators should incorporate small group discussion while teaching their nursing students when applicable.

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