

## ABSTRACT

**RESEARCH SUBJECT:** Critical Care Nurse Education and Critical Thinking Skills

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Nurses require well developed critical thinking skills to form clinical judgments. The expanding autonomy of nurses further necessitates the use of critical thinking abilities. This is especially true for critical care nurses. In the critical care setting, the nurse receives and must process large amounts of information to make decisions quickly. The purpose of this study is to determine if critical thinking skills of new registered nurses who complete a hospital based critical care course will be improved. A posttest design will be used. The study is a modified replication of the Rogal and Young (2008) study conducted in Australia. A purposive sample of 15 registered nurses who graduated from a baccalaureate nursing program within the last year and who have enrolled in a six month critical care course will be recruited for the study. The course consists of both didactic classroom component and supervised clinical practice rotations in the critical care areas of the hospital. Participants will complete the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) prior to the start of the course and again at the completion of the course. Study results will provide information about changes in critical thinking skills of new registered nurses after completing a critical care course. Nurse educators may be able to use the information in the development and evaluation of on the job education programs that have an objective of improving critical thinking skills.