

CRITHINKEDU

Critical Thinking Across the European Higher Education Curricula

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CRITICAL THINKING IN NURSING HIGHER EDUCATION: PERCEPTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT. A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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Development of critical thinking is one of the most central objectives of education and one of the most remarkable results that can have (Van Gelder, 2001, 2005).

At the same time perhaps is the most important of the key competences required in 21st century society (Karagiozidis, 2013).

The general aims of almost all courses of the curriculum include the development of students' critical and creative thinking (NAP, 2010).



According to Scriven and Paul, (2003), with the term critical thinking we mean the "intellectual process of active and skillful perception, analysis, synthesis and assessment of information gathered or derived from observation, experience, reasoning, justification or communication leading to belief.



According to Simpson & Courtney (2002), critical thinking is vital not only for the clinical practice but also within the curricula of nursing-education programs, in order all nurses to develop critical thinking skills.

While other researchers arguing that critical thinking (CT) and its dispositions are a critical competent for higher performance in nursing clinical practice (Chang et al., 2011; Chan, 2013; Papathanasiou et al., 2014).



Despite the fact that the development of critical thinking in nursing is a focal point of higher education, few studies are focusing on nursing educators' perceptions of this concept as well as the techniques that use it for its development.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the notion of critical thinking through the perceptions of nursing tertiary education teachers. As well as the techniques they use to develop it.



Methodology

A qualitative design was used for this study with a hermeneutic approach. A purposive sample of 4 nursing professors was interviewed.



Participants

4 female nursing professors from 2 higher education institutions

- *01: M.L., Associate Professor; 12 years of teaching experience in HEIs.*
- *02: M.K., Associate Professor; 21 years of teaching experience in HEIs.*
- *03: E.V., Associate Professor; 20 years of teaching experience in HEIs.*
- *04:A.T., Assistant Professor; 13 years of teaching experience in HEIs.*



Critical Thinking: Conception

Understanding CT as a competency

“I think that critical thinking is applicable to clinical practice more, where there are several aspects that a nurse should see and should treat a patient accordingly and appropriately”

Understanding CT as a set of skills or/and dispositions

“Critical Thinking is for the students to be capable of using their judgment and their reason in order to solve some problems, both in the clinical practice and referring to certain topics that we presented to them in the workshop and the theory sessions”

“I mean, when we have a topic that may be theoretical, we want to see whether we, in education, i.e. a student can understand the essence of this topic and if s/he can analyze and synthesize the topic. (S/he should) have this ability, which means very good understanding so that s/he can use it later on”



Critical Thinking: Aims

to develop CT Skills in order to

- *“To go deeper into a text or something they see. Because in this way they can have complex thinking, to see what lies behind the things that, we say, we promote. To see.”*
- *‘To think critically towards a text.’*
- *“to be able to distinguish ... see what is true or what a lie, according to each one's beliefs. Because something looks real or fake, depending also on the point of view from which someone looks at it.”*
- *“I believe that they need to be able to set priorities, to develop their critical thinking in such way as to be able to set priorities in the clinical practice. That is, they should be able to understand that they have to put an emergency event first rather than an ordinary one, and they have to use their thinking, i.e. their judgment, regarding using what they have already learnt on their patients”.*
- *“Part of what they are been taught is not to be used as much, but they (the students) need to develop their critical thinking in such a way as to be able to realize that what they have learnt will be used referring to certain groups of patients rather than others.”*



Facilitating the Development Of CT

- **Overall approach**

“Another example I have been using with my students is that I give them clinical cases (rates) and I ask the students to solve them, with the use of the nursing theory method which requires some prioritising and. therefore, they will need to use their critical thinking.”

“I usually try to help my students by recalling prior knowledge, repeating, let’s say, what they should have already learnt, and get them to come to the conclusion together. In a way, to get the conclusion out of (elicit the conclusion from) them.”

“small groups with which we are working with scenarios or various hypothetical plans, so that the student can see what he has been taught in theory, to get it through the scenario that we give them. So, we give some suggestions and it is it comes to analyze.”



Facilitating the Development Of CT

- **Specific type of interventions**

“Usually in the classroom I use cases from my own clinical nursing background. Cases which were real incidents when I was a practising nurse, I relate the cases and tell them: What is your opinion? How would you do this in this case?.... At that time when we do such clinical cases, a lot of discussion is being generated.”

“We give them the information and let them think, make out the details, which have to come out, and tell us afterwards the following conclusions.”

“The Socratic Method.”

“I also put them in buzz groups and with discussion very much”



Facilitating the Development Of CT

- **Learning materials**

- “I have prepared the clinical case and I give them the photocopy”...
- “I do not use anything special, the oral speech and we start a discussion”....
- “Mainly scenarios. We also use role-playing games. And through role-playing we understand that the student can see something”....



Conclusions

- Critical thinking in nursing has a diverse range of applications. It is widely agreed that nurses must have versatile knowledge to navigate in the different situations they face during their shift, face constant changes in an environment of stress with constantly changing circumstances, and make important decisions using critical thinking to collect and to interpret the information required to make a decision.
- Critical thinking combined with creativity as nurses must find specialized solutions to specific problems with creativity taking place where traditional interventions are not effective. Even with creativity, nurses produce new ideas quickly, they are flexible and natural, they create authentic solutions to problems, act independently and with confidence even under pressure to demonstrate originality.

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