Critical Thinking in Nursing Education: 
Anatomy of a Course

Abstract

This study aimed to determine student opinions before and after the Critical Thinking course included in the curriculum of a school of nursing in Turkey. The study employed a descriptive phenomenological qualitative method and purposeful sampling. The study population consisted of a total of seven students attending the Critical Thinking course. Research data were collected through the Individual In-depth Interview technique and analyzed with the use of a descriptive analysis method. The findings revealed that the critical thinking course had a positive effect on students’ opinions about critical thinking. To sum up, critical thinking should be offered as a separate course within curriculum, its efficiency should be subject to continuous assessment and the course should be continuously improved.

Key words: thinking, critical thinking, nursing students, nursing education, qualitative research.

1. Introduction

Critical thinking today is a basic skill desired to be achieved in the nursing discipline and education. The institutions and organizations in the nursing profession regard critical thinking skills as a universal attribute desired in nursing (National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission – NLNAC, 2002; American Association of Colleges of Nursing – AACN 2008).