



## Development of critical attitude in fundamentals of professional care discipline: A case study<sup>☆</sup>



Roberta Waterkemper<sup>a,\*</sup>, Marta Lenise do Prado<sup>b,1</sup>, Jose Luis Moya Medina<sup>c,2</sup>, Kenya Schmidt Reibnitz<sup>b,3</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Health Sciences Federal University Porto Alegre, Sarmento leite, 245, 401A room, Downtown, Porto Alegre, RS, 90050-170, Brazil

<sup>b</sup> Santa Catarina Federal University, CNPq, Undergraduate Nursing Program, Campus Health Sciences Center, Trindade district, Florianópolis, Santa Catarina, Brazil

<sup>c</sup> Pedagogy Faculty, Department of Didactics and Education Organization, Mundet Campus, Levante Built 2nd floor, Vall d'Hebron, 171, 08035 Barcelona, Spain

### ARTICLE INFO

Article history:  
Accepted 17 July 2013

Keywords:  
Nursing student  
Nursing education  
Attitude  
Critical thinking

### SUMMARY

This is a qualitative case study to identify the contributions of a critical pedagogical technique in developing critical attitudes of graduating nursing students in Brazil. Fourteen students participated in this study. Data were collected from March to August 2010 using triangulation of non-participant observation, interview and document analysis. The collected data were transcribed to Word documents, which were subsequently imported into ATLAS.ti, version 6.2, for organisation and qualitative data analysis. The analysis was based on the work of Minayo (2010). The following three thematic analysis units were constructed: feeling free – seeking the liberty to learn to admire, admiring by curiosity and reflecting about the admired object. The results of the thematic categories reveal that the students understand that they are free to have an active role in their education, and the teacher facilitates this process; thus, the students have a *raison d'être*, or reason for being, free. Feeling free, the student can exercise their curiosity when facing the given situations and topics, which challenges them to make decisions based on their awareness of the world.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### Introduction

Critical thinking is not a concept that can be reproduced, copied, internalised or memorised: it is created by action. This act includes attitude, knowledge, context, relationships, thought, freedom, observations, curiosity, creation, re-creation and communication, making it a complex act. Critical thinking is not developed automatically, mechanically or technically, and it involves constant personal effort. This effort begins in preschool and intensifies throughout formal education. The effort does not end (Freire, 2009, 2011a). Therefore, the more a student uses critical thought in their reality, the more he or she will insert himself or herself into that reality through his or her criticality (Freire, 2011b).

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator who is involved in the Critical Pedagogy educational philosophy, had stated that a student must be conscious to be critical. Being conscious goes beyond simply knowing or having knowledge: it requires understanding the reason why one does or knows, thereby allowing the conscious subject to change reality. There is no point to education if it does not strive to change reality, and

the reality of the student, be it in education or health or any other work context. To this author, the development of a critical attitude stems from the student's own action, mediated by the professor, who acts as the guide to help one think correctly and not as a communicator of knowledge. Exercising criticality requires specific conditions to be present that allow the student to act accordingly. Among these conditions is the adoption of pedagogical techniques that are based on the freedom of the student (Freire, 2011c). Educating with freedom means that while teaching/learning, both the teacher and the student learn, abandoning the dichotomy of the teacher teaches and the student learns. From this viewpoint of education, both teacher and student are different cognitive subjects and critical agents in the act of gaining knowledge (Freire, 2011c). Therefore, students no longer represent a vessel for depositing knowledge, but they are their own agents and they are responsible for their own learning. To be a learner and not an object for receiving knowledge is the ontological vocation of man, which implies “being more” (Freire, 2001).

With the possibility of “being more”, the student has the freedom to observe reality and admire it because of the curiosity that it awakens in the student. Thinking about what they observe and making a decision on how to act based on reality lead to a critical attitude. This can be developed through educational practices that seek this goal. To develop this attitude, it is essential that schools create strategies that allow students to learn it. Learning to be critical involves relearning how to learn: studying, reading, writing, communicating, relating and researching, as well as being ethical, political, responsible, loving, humble, and independent and to make decisions and be curious (Freire, 2008, 2011a, 2011b, 2011c).

<sup>☆</sup> This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works License, which permits non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +55 51 33038858, +55 54 96254884.

E-mail address: [robwater@gmail.com](mailto:robwater@gmail.com) (R. Waterkemper).

<sup>1</sup> Tel.: +55 4837219480; fax: +55 48 37219787.

<sup>2</sup> Tel.: +34 93 4035047; fax: +34 93 4035004.

<sup>3</sup> Tel./fax: +55 483721 9787x483721 9399x483721 9480.

Once they know that they are capable of acting, the necessary conditions are present for the result of this conscious act to become critical reflection and problem-posing (Freire, 2011c). Problem-posing means to know oneself in the world and with the world and to be challenged by it. As the challenge increases, the response to it also strengthens as the student is part of the challenge and not outside of it. Because students accept this challenge by problem-posing with each other “in all its totality is not something rigid, the resulting understanding gradually becomes critical [...]” (Freire, 2011c, p.40).

According to the National Curriculum Requirements for Nursing Education in Brazil, critical frameworks should be constructed that account for such concepts as autonomy, the ability to make decisions, problem-solving, the ability to communicate and interpersonal relationships (Brasil, 2001; Silva and Pedro, 2010). Brazilian scientific studies of nursing education have shown that there are still few graduate nursing courses that adhere to the national curriculum for the development of this critical profile; there is only 72% compliance, which is low and reveals the need for these courses to make the requisite changes (Neto et al., 2007). However, the handful of schools with pedagogical plans that seek to incorporate the national curriculum goals and requirements strive to plan and carry out projects that develop teaching and learning practices that successfully form or develop these attitudes in their students.

Within a national and international context, one of the major teaching methods highlighted in the literature for developing critical attitudes and critical thinking is the use of information technology (IT) to aid simulation. This simulation is observed both in care-giving environments, such as laboratories equipped with hi-tech equipment, and class curricula that are designed to cover topics that extend across the diverse areas of nursing knowledge (Waterkemper and Prado, 2011). These innovative lesson plans that create a new teaching/learning context contribute to the educational goals for nursing in Brazil and in the international context regarding nursing education. Historically, in a traditional teaching model, the teacher and student are instructed to construct specific and distinct roles, i.e., the teacher teaches, and the student learns (Freire, 2011e, 2011f; Gadotti, 1995).

The aim of the present study was to identify how teaching Foundation for Professional Care courses within the context of a critical pedagogy curriculum contributes to the development of a critical attitude in the student.

## Methods

This study is a qualitative case study as defined by Ludke and André (1986). This case consists of the experience of students in Foundations for Professional Care courses in the Graduate Nursing Programme at a Federal University in the south of Brazil, which has developed its teaching methods based on the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire since 2005 (Freire, 2005). This course implements these principles using the Maguerez Arch<sup>4</sup> (Bordenave and Pereira, 2010) and active teaching and learning methods. To implement this curriculum, the courses are organised throughout the semester into three knowledge units that are designed to cover the theoretical learning of the course. This knowledge unit is developed through activities, such as small group discussions, experiences in a care setting, socialisation, independent study, simulation exercises for clinical laboratory skill development and the built of a portfolio to learning registration process. Fourteen students enrolled in this course participated in this study. The sample was assembled by a progressive sample selection process (Minayo, 2010) of students who were found during field observations to be more communicative in the observed environments as they are the best informants;

<sup>4</sup> The Maguerez Arch is a pedagogical technique proposed by Bordenave and Pereira (2010) that suggests to develop the knowledge of students from identified problems in reality. Such a method is developed in five steps: observation of reality, identifying key points, teorization, possible solutions and application of reality.

these students were enrolled in the course and agreed to participate voluntarily. Students who did not speak much or not at all during the observation were excluded. The triangulation of non-participant observation, interview scripts and document analysis (portfolios) was used to collect the data. The amount of data collected was limited using the data saturation criterion. The analysis was performed based on the content analysis steps outlined by Minayo and was organised in three major phases: pre-analysis, exploration of the material and result processing (Minayo, 2010), based on the thoughts of Paulo Freire on critical and liberating education. This study was reviewed by the Research Ethics Committee and approved under process number 474 and protocol number 305209 on November 30, 2009. To maintain the anonymity of the participants, they were identified by the letter A (aluno, Portuguese for student) followed by a sequential number.

## Results and Discussion

The development of a critical attitude created the following three thematic units: feeling free – seeking the liberty to learn to admire, admiring by curiosity and reflecting about the admired object.

### *Feeling Free – Seeking the Liberty to Learn to Admire*

In an educational programme that seeks to develop the students' critical attitude, one cannot work in an inflexible and oppressive environment as the criticality of a student is developed when he or she is free to be himself or herself, to see himself or herself as an incomplete being and to learn from his or her own *raison d'être*, i.e., his or her own reason for being (Freire, 2001). This liberty, as observed by the student, can be found in their reports and in their entries in their portfolio when they say that they feel at ease or are free to express themselves in class. The liberty can also be observed in their choices in how they seek out information and study.

“[...] The discussion itself is [...] good because [...] we discussed what basically everyone had researched independently, [...] so, if everyone had researched something, a student or another student [...] had information that I did not have, and it complemented our knowledge. This in itself builds knowledge, and thus in small groups, [...] we were all able to share what we had researched and [...] what our questions were; [...] if we were in a large group, then a lot of information could be missed, and if the person remained quiet without saying what they had learned, then they went unnoticed [...]”

“[...] After a lot of research, I decided to look for a scientific article that had a broader vision of care, instead of simply reporting some patient care technique, and I decided to read the article.”

In these portfolio selections, one can see that the students understand that they have the freedom to act in their learning environment and that the teacher facilitates this process. Since 1980, nursing education internationally has been strongly influenced by theories that support the need to stimulate the student's autonomy in their education (Darbyshire and Fleming, 2008; Ponto, 2011). This fact is confirmed by the changes in Political Pedagogical Projects (PPP) at universities, which are promoted by educational legislation. The main guiding principle underlying these projects is to change the roles of the teacher and student during the teaching/learning process. Distancing themselves from the traditional teaching model built on the precepts of the linearity of positivist, Cartesian, mechanical and technical rationality, the professor takes on the role of a facilitator, and the student becomes the one responsible for their learning (Darbyshire and Fleming, 2008; Pires et al., 2009), but they are given a space for freedom of action.

Authoritarian teaching conflicts with the ideas of emancipation and autonomy that permeate the current educational discussion (Darbyshire

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/10316478>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/10316478>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)