

Challenges in Fostering Critical Thinking of Students in Developing Countries: Ghana as a Case Study

Christian Makafui Boso
PhD(C), MN, RN

Disclosure

- Co-authors: Christian Makafui Boso (University of Cape Coast) and Prof. Janet Gross (Global Health Services Partnership, US Peace Corps, Uganda)
- No conflict of interest to report; study sponsored by the authors
- Learner Objectives:
 - Identify challenges developing countries face in fostering critical thinking in students
 - Describe strategies to foster critical thinking skills in nurse educators and students

Outline

- Background to the Study
- Purpose Statement
- Research Questions
- Methodology
- Key Findings and Discussion
- Recommendations
- Conclusions

Background to the Study

- Nurse educators are essential element in education.
- Health care professionals' critical thinking skills directly affect patient safety (Robert & Petersen, 2013).
- In Ghana, indicators suggest lack of critical thinking skills (Adjatey, 2013; Adofo, 2010).
- Students are still taught to follow the functional model of nursing care.

Purpose Statement

- To identify barriers that hinder nurse educators from fostering critical thinking of students

Research Questions

- What instructional strategies do nursing faculty use to promote the development of critical thinking in students?
- What are the barriers that hinder nursing faculty from fostering critical thinking in students?

Methodology

- Design: multi-site cross-sectional descriptive
- Setting: 11 nursing schools in Ghana
- Target population: nurse educators in 2 types of nursing programs

Methodology (Cont'd)

- Sample size: 106 (65% retrieval rate)
- Sampling technique: cluster sampling
- Data collection tool: self-reported questionnaire
- Data Analysis: descriptive statistics & factor analysis

Key Findings/Discussion

- Teaching methods most frequently identified were:
 - Discussion (75.5%)
 - Lecture (69.8%)

Key Findings/Discussion (cont'd)

- Barriers to fostering critical thinking:
 - Course structure and materials;
 - Lack of institutional framework/support;
 - Students' characteristics;
 - Time limitations;

Barriers (cont'd)

- Faculty limitations;
- Seeing faculty as authority that should not be challenged;
- Encouraging inappropriate learning styles; and
- Desire for good grades.

Key Findings/Discussion (cont'd)

- Other barriers
 - Educational system in Ghana promotes rote learning (“chew and pour”);
 - Nursing care in Ghana focuses on task orientation;
 - Large class sizes; and
 - Lack of continuing professional development programs on critical thinking for educators.

Recommendations

- Employers should institute educational programs on critical thinking
- Nursing schools should introduce critical thinking into basic nursing curricula
- Authorities/policymakers in nursing education should prioritize teaching skills of critical thinking

Conclusion

- Nursing programs are not adequately preparing nurses with requisite skills for safe practice
- Critical thinking skills are essential for safe nursing practice
- Ghana's nursing educational system is faced with numerous barriers to the promotion of critical thinking

REFERENCES

- Adjatey E. (2013, July 29) Nursing: Dispassionate profession in Ghana. *Vibe Ghana.com*. Retrieved from <http://vibeghana.com/2013/07/29/nursing-ispassionate-prefession-in-ghana>
- Adofo R. (2010, October 12) A case of deplorable attitude of Ghana nurses: True story. *Ghanaweb*. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=19502>
- Bell, S.A., Rominski, S., Bam, V., Donkor, E., & Lori, J. (2013). Analysis of nursing education in Ghana: Priorities for scaling-up the nursing workforce, *Nursing and Health Sciences*, 15, 244–249.

REFERENCES

Robert, R. R., & Petersen, S. (2013). Critical thinking at the bedside: Providing safe passage to patients. MEDSURG Nursing, 22(2). 85-118



Thank you



Questions