

CRITICAL THINKING: A CONCEPT ANALYSIS

by

MIHLOTI MASHELE

submitted in fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN HEALTH STUDIES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR D VAN DER WAL

JOINT SUPERVISOR: DR E POTGIETER

NOVEMBER 2003

Student number: 679-832-2

DECLARATION

I declare that **CRITICAL THINKING: A CONCEPT ANALYSIS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

SIGNATURE

(Mihloti Mashele)

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to people whose encouragement, assistance, guidance and untiring support made the completion of this study possible! In particular:

- Dr DM Van der Wal and Dr E Potgieter, my supervisors at Unisa, for all they taught me
- Ms TA Burger, the Unisa librarian, for her invaluable assistance in finding the literature for me
- My family and friends, for their encouragement and support throughout
- Mrs R Coetzer, for finalising the typing of the dissertation
- Ms IM Cooper, for language control
- My colleagues for sharing their opinions with me to help complete this study

To you all, my sincere thanks and love. You have shown caring and love and may God bless you with His immeasurable and abounding grace, love, joy and peace and bless all your endeavours.

CRITICAL THINKING: CONCEPT ANALYSIS

STUDENT NUMBER: 679-832-2
STUDENT: MIHLOTI MASHELE
DEGREE: MASTER OF ARTS
DEPARTMENT: HEALTH STUDIES, UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
SUPERVISOR: DR DM VAN DER WAL
JOINT SUPERVISOR: DR E POTGIETER

ABSTRACT

Critical thinking ability is imperative for nurse practitioners in the multidimensional unfolding health care arena. Consensus as to what critical thinking entails has yet to be articulated. This non-empirical study thus set out to clarify the concept "critical thinking. Walker and Avant's (1995) proposal for conducting a concept analysis was used within the qualitative research paradigm. Literature selected from the fields of education, philosophy, nursing and psychology was consulted as the main source of data. Thematic and theoretical sampling of literature were also embarked upon during the later stage of the research to add density to emergent categories and themes. Categories were organised according to the Strauss and Corbin (1995) paradigmatic model; indicating the antecedents, disposition of the thinker, attributes and critical attributes, and outcomes of critical thinking. The findings indicate that critical thinking is a complex, multidimensional, dynamic, existential and context dependent mental operation. The essence of critical thinking is further illuminated by the construction of a model case and additional cases. The concept critical thinking is finally succinctly defined. The implications that critical thinking holds for nursing education and practice are spelled out.

KEY CONCEPTS

Concept, concept analysis, critical, critical thinking, critical thinking model, think.

DEDICATION

*Dedicated to the memory of
my brother Peniel Mashele
whose life will always be
remembered by the whole
family and myself as a hard
worker and dedicated
scholar.*