Critical Thinking in Computer Students Considering Virtual and Traditional Forms of Education

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Background & Objective: Developments in science and technology together with rapid obsolescence in findings and previous information necessitates a type of education in which students are continuously engaged in learning and problem solving and enjoy interfacing changes. This study was aimed to assess critical thinking in students of virtual and traditional education.

Methods: In this cross-sectional study, two groups including 40 senior computer students from Shiraz University (virtual education) and 40 ones from Islamic Azad University (traditional education) participated. Data was collected using Watson Glaser Critical Thinking Test including 80 questions in five subscales including inference, recognition of assumptions, deduction, interpretation and evaluation of arguments.

Results: The mean score (± SD) of critical thinking which was 36.77(± 3.59) in virtual education happened to be higher than traditional education’s mean score which was 35.15(±6.94) while there was no significant difference. In all five subscales of critical thinking, the mean score of interpretation skill was significantly higher in virtual education (7.9) compared to 6.95 for traditional education (p=0.0001).

Conclusion: Considering improvements of critical thinking in virtual education and according to its multiple advantages like adding to one’s self confidence, self esteem and independent learning, it is suggested to use this type of education alongside the traditional method or as a replacement for teaching theoretical lessons in university courses.

Key words: Virtual education, Traditional education, Critical thinking

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