This quasi-experimental study aims at comparing the effects of film analysis course specially designed for teacher education on developing critical thinking (CT) disposition skills. 49 pre-service teachers were assigned to the course for 14 weeks. The primary outcome measure was students’ CT disposition as measured by the California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI). The overall CCTDI and sub-scale scores for the treatment group were not significantly different from those of the control group at pre-test. Compared with control group pre-service teachers in treatment group showed significantly greater improvement in Open-mindedness, Curiosity, Truth-seeking and overall CCTDI at the post-test.

KEYWORDS: teacher education, critical thinking disposition skills, film analysis

This study was funded by Scientific Research Unit at Kocaeli University.
Introduction

Critical thinking (CT) has been defined as reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do (Ennis, 1985); thinking about your thinking while you are thinking in order to make your thinking better (Paul, 1995); and the process of purposeful, self-regulatory judgment that gives reasoned consideration to evidence, contexts, conceptualization, methods, and criteria (The APA Delphi report, 1990). It is described in more detail as the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analysing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action (Scriven & Paul, 1987).

Although a variety of definitions has been offered in the intervening decades, most include the same underlying principles. CT refers to the use of cognitive skills or strategies that increase the probability of a desirable outcome. CT is the kind of thinking involved in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions. Critical thinkers use these skills appropriately, without prompting, and usually with conscious intent, in a variety of settings. That is, they are predisposed to think critically. When we think critically, we are evaluating the outcomes of our thought processes—how good a decision is or how well a problem is solved (Halpern, 1998). These definitions imply the presence of a critical spirit (Facione & Facione, 1994) that disposes one to CT. Facione & Facione described the disposition to CT as the consistent internal motivation to employ one’s own CT abilities in judging what to believe or do in any situation. Simply put, they argue that if there is no disposition toward CT, then CT will not take place, regardless of the presence or absence of the necessary skills (Sedlak, 1997).

A linear relationship between CT and its dispositions seems to suggest that teaching for CT must address the attitudinal and dispositional aspects of CT, as well as the skills and abilities in good judgment that CT involves. This would indicate that, for the pre-service teachers it is important to be engaged in CT (1) for their own academic development and to demonstrate this capacity as a part of achieving the requisite graduate attributes; (2) to understand its role in their future professional practice as teachers; and (3) to be an effective problem solver, capable of applying logical, critical and creative thinking to a range of problem.

Many educators view the promotion of CT as one of the highest priorities in higher education. For example, Williams, Oliver and Stockdale (2004) claim that few concepts have attracted more attention in higher education than the notion of CT. Lincoln (1999) underscored the importance of preparing college students who can synthesize and evaluate information and pointed to corporate employers lining up for graduates who can think effectively. The European Council has stressed the need to equip people with new skills for new jobs and to raise overall skills levels, by providing initial and continuing education (COM, 2008). The trend in school curricula is to help learners to acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary in real life situations. To acquire those competencies, what
CT has gained heightened attention in higher education in Turkey for almost ten years. In a number of official resources, such as A Draft for General Competencies of Teaching (2005) and Competencies for Primary School Teaching (2008), The National Ministry of education emphasized that teachers should practice some strategies aimed at developing students’ intellectual, social and personal growth and as well as their CT skills. However, studies conducted with pre-service teachers in higher education in Turkey indicate that pre-service teachers’ CT disposition skills are generally medium or low. In various studies conducted by Çubukçu (2006), Korkmaz (2009), Besoluk & Onder (2010) and Çetinkaya (2011) indicate that pre-service teachers’ CT disposition skills are between medium and low. These studies indicate that teacher education curricula should be revised and enriched in terms of CT skills.

1. Films as a teaching aid

The ideas that films are powerful teaching tool for developing CT skills is not new. Edwards (1940) mentioned “setting the stage” for developing CT through practical and intelligent uses of motion pictures and newspapers. In the twentieth century, film was the most recent art form standing alongside literature, theatre, painting, music, and photography. Today, films are more like books, affordable and easy to purchase, rent, and download (Monaco, 2000). It is not far-fetched to say that film is a unique medium that stands apart from other media because of the following reasons:

1. Apart from its status as art, films are also a cultural phenomenon – the one medium that everyone attends to, that holds the potential of becoming an event, raising questions and dialogue on cultural and political issues (Bishop, 1999; Giroux, 2002; Vandervelde, 2004).

2. Unlike backdrop media, films demand a certain level of engagement for its particular narratives, subject positions, and ideologies to develop. Giroux (2002) claims that in a ninety-minute to two-hour format, film may offer a deeper pedagogical register than a three-minute pop song or a twenty-two minute sitcom.

3. Like other visual media, film’s textuality is one of image and sound, using similar signifying systems to communicate. This other media, however, may not incorporate these elements to the extent that film does as a part of their discourse (Shoos, George & Comprone, 1993; Fehlman, 1994; Turner, 1999; Giroux, 2002; Golden, 2001). The combination of sound and moving image
in film provides a unique means of accessing settings, subject matter and styles that might otherwise prove difficult to comprehend. In watching a movie, the viewing process is informed by a wider spectrum of cinematic discourse (e.g. camera angles, editing techniques, cinematography, and lighting). In this way, film has a larger vocabulary, if one will, that cues and constrains viewer response (Fehlman, 1994).

4. Films are an economical substitute for field trips and other real world visits. While most films are fiction, they can offer powerful experiences that students are unlikely to have in a classroom. Such experiences take less time than field trips and do not have the expense of travel (Champoux, 2007).

5. In 2006, the Motion Picture Association (MPA) estimates that about thirty-seven percent of frequent (i.e., at least once per month) and occasional (i.e., at least once in six months) moviegoers were ages twelve to twenty-four. This shows that films for the younger generation are a more familiar text than reading print – watching a movie is seemingly easier to read than reading a book. Yet the act of seeing or looking is not a passive activity but it is a highly interpretative act (Foreman & Shumway, 1992). Narrative films seem easier to read because they speak laterally rather than down to its audiences (Masterman, 1985). This is not to say that film does not have the capacity to speak down to its audience but that, generally speaking, its intent is to communicate to a wide audience. It draws on cultural myths, icons, and symbolism to communicate ideas and arguments quickly.

6. Films can serve many functions in one’s teaching program. Research suggests that one of the best ways to teach critical thinking is by using cases because they force students to develop many solutions not just one (Lloyd, Slater & Robbs, 2000). Case analysis is an obvious use of films and perhaps the first that one thinks of when considering film. Film with a solid plot and coherent story will work well as a case. Scenes from a well-acted and well-directed film present material more dramatically and engagingly than a print case. Well-chosen films as cases are believed to help develop the students’ analytical skills. Some films allow a predictive case approach that can lead to rich discussion about different issues. For example, three separate scenes from the film show the entry of a new manager into the factory, the proposed changes, and the reaction of workers to the changes. The scenes show these phases of organizational change in a delightfully charming way. The scenes are complex enough to test students’ analytical skills in these topical areas. They also are sufficiently complex to provoke extended discussion (Champoux, 2007).

Films are, because of these features, one of the best ways for developing CT skills. It should be integrated into teacher education curricula in order to develop pre-service teachers’ thinking skills. While most teachers believe that developing CT in their students is of primary importance (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Paul, Elder, & Batell, 1997) few have an idea exactly what it is, how it should be taught.
2. The purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to determine if the course on film analysis in teacher education curriculum improving CT disposition skills with six dimensions of pre-service teachers. The questions under the main purpose of the study are as follows:

1. Does the course improve truth-seeking skills of pre-service teachers?
2. Does the course improve analyticity skills of pre-service teachers?
3. Does the course improve open-mindedness skills of pre-service teachers?
4. Does the course improve CT self-confidence skills of pre-service teachers?
5. Does the course improve systematicity skills of pre-service teachers?
6. Does the course improve curiosity skills of pre-service teachers?

3. Framework for the course

A framework (see appendix) adapted from Teasley & Wilder (1997) and Eken (2003) was used since it provided a rich source for examining different aspects of a film. Cultural aspect is added to the original framework because films are accepted as a cultural phenomenon (Bishop, 1999; Giroux, 2002; Vandervelde, 2004); teaching aspect is added to the framework since pre-service teachers could get benefit from films as authentic materials in their classes when they become teachers.

The role of pre-service teachers in literary aspect is to read the movie as though it were a piece of literature. They discussed plot, characters, setting, themes, point of view, recurring images, and symbols with their groups. Some examples of the questions they dealt with in literary aspect are “Briefly summarize the plot”, “What symbols do you notice and what do you think they represent?” Their role in dramatic aspect is to read the movie as though they were a member of the Academy. They looked at the dramatic aspects of acting, script, costuming and make-up, set design, music and direction. Some of the questions they dealt with are “How does the music contribute to the storytelling?”, “How well are the characters portrayed?” Their role in cinematic aspect is to read the movie as though they were filming it. They looked at the technical aspects, sound, editing, and special visual effects, of the film. Some questions in this aspect are “How do the camera angles and movements help or hinder the story?”, “What vivid visual images did you note and how did they make you feel or think about?” Their role in cultural aspect is to read the movie as though they were a sociologist or anthropologist and do a research about that culture being filmed. Some questions in this aspect are “What conclusions did you draw about the socio-historical background of the film?”, “What examples in the film show the political factors that may cause its making”. Their role in language aspect is to read the movie as though they were a linguist. Some questions are “How are the forms of language used in the film?”, “Are the dialogues or non-verbal language more effective to understand the message”. Their role in teaching aspect is to read the film as educational aid for their future career. One of the activities related to this as-
pect is “Plan and organize a 15-minute-activity in any topic for any level using a frame, a sound, a scene etc. in the film”.

4. Method

4.1 Study design

The study reported in this paper is a part of a broader study carried out by the author. It is a quasi-experimental, pre-test/post-test control group designed to determine whether critical thinking performance in the treatment group differed significantly from the control group. Often in educational research, it is simply not possible for investigators to undertake true experiments, e.g. in random assignment of participants to control or experimental groups (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Since this study is limited to the participants who volunteered the course, a true experimental research is not possible to conduct.

4.2 Participants

The participants of the study are pre-service teachers enrolled in the four-year English Language Teaching program at a university in the north of Turkey. The mean age of the participants was 22.7 years (SD = 1.28; range = 19–26). Of the participants 35 were female and 14 were male in the treatment group and 36 were female and 17 were male in the control group. While pre-service teachers in the treatment group take “Film analysis” course, pre-service teachers in the control group take their regular courses in the curriculum.

4.3 Data Collection Tool

The California Critical Thinking Disposition Inventory (CCTDI) was used before and after the treatment in the study. The original CCTDI developed by Facione, Sanchez and Facione (1994) is comprised of 75 items and seven sub-scales (Truth-seeking, Analyticity, Open-mindedness, Self-confidence, Systematicity, Curiosity and Maturity) to which students indicate their level of agreement or disagreement on a six-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”. The inventory was translated into Turkish and was subjected to the required validity and reliability analysis by Kokdemir (Kokdemir, 2003). Composed of a total of six subscales (Open-mindedness and maturity in the original scale becomes one sub-scale and called open-mindedness) and 51 items, the new version of the inventory had an internal consistency coefficient (Cronbach alpha) of 0.88. The total variance explained by the inventory was found to be 36.13. The total score indicates whether a person is generally disposed to think critically—whether the individual habitually exhibits the characteristics of an ideal critical thinker. In every subscale score under 40 indicates low CT disposition, above 50 indicates high CT disposition. Students who score less than 240 are defined as negatively disposed toward CT, students with scores between 240 and 300 are defined as ambivalently disposed, and students with scores above 300 are defined as positively disposed (Kökdemir, 2003).
5. Data analysis

5.1 Before the treatment

An important component of the quasi-experimental study is the use of pretesting or analysis of prior achievement to establish group equivalence (Ross, Morrison & Lowther, 2005). Statistical procedures to control differences between both groups are as follows:

**CCTDI pre-test results**

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare CT disposition skills of treatment and control group before the treatment. Results show that there was not a significant difference in the pre-test scores for CCTDI for treatment group (x=209, S=18.08) and control group (x=204, S=17.50) conditions; t(100)=1.235, \( p = .220 \).

**Academic achievement results of both groups**

Some studies show that there is a positive relationship between academic success and CTS. In order to control possible effect of academic success on CTS, the mean scores for academic achievement of both groups were calculated. The pre-test and post-test scores of the students whose academic achievement was above 3.75 and below 2.00 out of 4.00 were not included in data analysis since those scores may destroy the reliability of total scores. Therefore, the scores of academic achievement of three students in the treatment and four students of control group were not included in the scores of CCTDI. Independent sample T-test was used in order to understand if there is statistically significant difference between two groups. T-test results show that there is no significant difference between two groups in their academic achievement (t=-560, df=100, sig-2-tailed= .577).

5.2 After the treatment

Data were analysed using independent-sample t-tests to compare CCTDI scores in treatment and control groups and paired sample t-test was used in order to test if each group made progress. A test of hypothesis with P-value<5 was considered as significant.

5.3 Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>95% CI for Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>208.63</td>
<td>18.04</td>
<td>216.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>204.28</td>
<td>17.50</td>
<td>206.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* \( p < .05 \).

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics and paired sample t-test Results for CCTDI
A paired-sample t-test was conducted to compare CCTDI at the first and at the second time-points both in treatment and control groups. As shown in Table 1 for treatment group, there was a significant difference in the scores for CCTDI (M=8.30, SD=15.08) t(48)=-3.85, p = 0.000. For control group, there was not a significant difference in the scores for CCTDI (M=2.00, SD=9.33) t(48) = 1.56, p=0.125.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment (n=49)</th>
<th>Control (n=53)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Pre-test</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truth-seeking</td>
<td>26.04</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyticity</td>
<td>44.67</td>
<td>5.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>46.75</td>
<td>4.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Systematicity</td>
<td>23.91</td>
<td>4.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>27.75</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>36.35</td>
<td>5.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCTDI overall score</td>
<td>208.63</td>
<td>18.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Mean Differences for Pre-Test and Post-Test on CCTDI

Table 2 outlines means, standard deviations, and mean differences for pre-test and post-test on CCTDI. The pre-test scores indicated that the pre-service teachers in the treatment group have low disposition towards truth-seeking, systematicity and self-confidence as well as in the control group. For analyticity, open-mindedness and curiosity both treatment and control groups were positively disposed. Post-test results show that scores of the treatment group ranged from low to ambivalent or from ambivalent to high dispositions in all scales while those of the control group ranged from ambivalent to negative in four subscales, truth-seeking, analyticity, curiosity and open-mindedness.
Table 3 shows results for independent-sample t-tests for comparing the overall CCTDI and subscale scores between two groups. Participants had achieved a significant difference for overall CCTDI and the sub-scales of open-mindedness, curiosity and truth-seeking. For overall CCTDI and the other sub-scales, analyticity, systematicity and self-confidence they did not have a significant difference. The results of effect size (η^2) also indicate that the effect of this course is low level on curiosity and truth-seeking. On the other hand, the effect of this course on open-mindedness and overall CT is medium.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of this study, the dispositions of truth-seeking seems to be the least flexible characteristics for both groups; a small change from low to ambivalent in treatment group and from ambivalent to low in control group. Truth-seeking (as in the CCTDI) targets the disposition of being eager to seek the best knowledge in a given context, courageous about asking questions, honest and objective about pursuing inquiry even if the findings do not support one’s self-interests or preconceived opinions. It may be because of the pressure of the preparation for the National examination called KPSS, (Public Staff Selection Test) consisting of multiple-choice items, graduates are supposed to pass in order to be assigned a teacher to public schools.

Analyticity targets prizing the application of reasoning and the use of evidence to resolve problems, anticipating potential conceptual or practical difficulties, and consistently being alert to the need to intervene. While control group seem to have negative inclination towards this disposition, treatment group showed progress on this scale. Systematicity scale, on the other hand, measures being organized, orderly, focused, and diligent in inquiry. Treatment group seems to have a positive inclination towards this scale while the control group shows a small inclination towards this disposition. Still, there is no significant difference
between both groups in these two scales. It shows that these two dispositions can be developed more in a longer application of thinking modules or courses. Although control group showed progress in curiosity disposition, treatment group showed higher progress on that scale. Curiosity (as in the CCTDI) measures intellectual curiosity and the intention to learn things even if their immediate application is not apparent (Facione & Facione, 1994, p.12). It means that film analysis course may develop pre-service teachers’ intellectual curiosity. The most important difference between treatment group and control group seems to be in open-mindedness disposition. Open-mindedness is crucial for citizens of a pluralistic, multi-cultural society which values tolerance and understanding of the beliefs and lifestyles of others. Interestingly, treatment group showed the most relevant progress on this scale. Thanks to discussion and debates about different genres from different countries may help develop their open-mindedness while control group have negative inclination on this scale.

One of the drawbacks of this study is not to question pre-service teachers’ frequency of watching films. Studies about the relationship between the frequency of watching films and their level of CT disposition skills may help our understandings about watching films or the methods adapted to film analysis help develop their CT disposition skills. The results of this preliminary study cannot be generalized to the whole population of pre-service teachers in Turkey due to the nature of the small sample size, which is another limitation for this study. The improvement in CT disposition however, can have a far-reaching impact because as these 49 teachers disperse throughout Turkey, they could help provide a rippling effect that move the nation towards a thinking nation. If critical thinking disposition is an indication towards thinking critically, the teachers already have a good start on their road to become the key agent to teach thinking skills in the classroom context. There were differences in the development of CT disposition between the two groups of students. An analysis of the differences in the sub-scale scores over time between the treatment and control groups may cast some light on how the course may facilitate students’ critical thinking development. Despite the students’ educational backgrounds, which were predominantly examination-oriented, they demonstrated an ability to sustain self-competence and to acquire a critical approach during the course. Such an encouraging development may be related to self-regulated learning and the effect of visual literacy. Further studies including self-regulated learning through visual aids could help develop our understandings about CT skills.

At the same time, this study adds to previous findings by revealing pre-service teachers’ development in the six dimensions of CT disposition. By doing so, it reveals students’ strengths and weaknesses in the different dimensions, thus making it possible for intervention. For example, as students in this study were observed to be weak in the dimension of systematicity, self-confidence and analyticity, a remedial program could be implemented to help them seek the best knowledge objectively. By making the measurement of CT disposition coincide closely with what the intervention seeks to change, a more sensitive approach could be developed to achieve the specific changes desired.
This study is a quantitative one. However, a qualitative study about how and which parts of the course are effective on developing students’ CT skills especially on their curiosity, open-mindedness and trustworthiness is recommended as a further study. The results of qualitative study will help scholars and teachers who are interested in developing students’ CT skills have a deeper understanding about how media tools such as films affect CT skills and how to implement these tools into our courses.

The results from this study allowed for some useful implications. Firstly, the most obvious implication is that critical thinking disposition, and thus a general thinking disposition can be improved through deliberate courses/modules. Thanks to specially designed courses based on visual aids combining with appropriate techniques, it is possible to develop students’ CT skills. This finding of the study is similar to the findings of the study conducted on a course including analysis of one film the whole term in terms of different aspects by Eken (2003). He states that the course helps develop their CT skills as well as language skills.

Secondly, critical thinking dispositions can be improved among the adults. The age group of pre-service teachers who participated in this study was between 21-26 years old. The implication is that it is never too late to improve thinking dispositions. Similarly, a one-year-long study conducted by Tiwari, Patrick Mike & Kwan (2006) revealed that problem based learning affected nursing students’ Truth-seeking, Analyticity, Systematicity and CT Self-confidence at different time points.

Thirdly, critical thinking disposition can be improved in a relatively short period of 14-week module, even if these changes are small. Courses based on authentic visual aids and activities based on analysing a visual text are effective on developing students’ curiosity, truth-seeking and especially open-mindedness. The findings are similar to the 10-week study conducted by Kong (2004) aiming at examining the effects of a thinking module on the CT dispositions of the pre-service teachers. The results of the study indicated that participants in the treatment group scored significantly higher in three subscales of their CCTDI post-test. This is exciting because the teachers in Turkey can be equipped in their short time of pre-service as well as in-service training in order to prepare them for teaching thinking skills in the classroom context. This result supports the results of a qualitative study conducted by Tanriverdi, Ulusoy & Turan (2012) with the pre-service teachers which indicated that pre-service teachers think that teacher education curricula should be enriched with the courses or topics in different courses based on media analysis.

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Kong, L.S. Critical Thinking Dispositions of Pre-service Teachers in Singapore: A Preliminary 

Belgin Tanriverdi


## Appendix

### Course outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literary Aspects</th>
<th>Dramatic Aspects</th>
<th>Cinematic Aspects</th>
<th>Cultural Aspects</th>
<th>Language Aspect</th>
<th>Teaching aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>Acting</td>
<td>Camera angles</td>
<td>Cultural quotations and conversation used in the film (how they reflect family relations, traditions etc.)</td>
<td>How the forms of language are used in the film, memorable quotes, metaphors, symbols, ellipsis, contrast etc.</td>
<td>Integrated activities which can be used inside and outside the classroom to improve language skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>Costumes</td>
<td>Sound and vision</td>
<td>the socio-historical background to the film, economic and political factors that conditioned its making and explain its existence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting</td>
<td>Make-up</td>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Cultural quotations and conversation used in the film (how they reflect family relations, traditions etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural quotations and conversation used in the film (how they reflect family relations, traditions etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the socio-historical background to the film, economic and political factors that conditioned its making and explain its existence</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>How the forms of language are used in the film, memorable quotes, metaphors, symbols, ellipsis, contrast etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(their contribution to our understandings)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cultural quotations and conversation used in the film (how they reflect family relations, traditions etc.)</td>
<td></td>
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