SLO V. Critical Thinking

Students will apply critical thinking and scientific methods of thinking (including logical and empirical reasoning) to issues regarding children’s well-being.

Critical thinking is a critical part of working with children and families because not everything is the way it seems. There are a lot of factors we do not see when we first meet someone I did not think much about this until I stated my child development journey. The first class that I learned about critical thinking in was actually a philosophy class. This class really changed the way I think. I started looking at situations closer and examining what is not seen with a quick glance. This has been very beneficial in my internships because I work with young children and they cannot communicate which causes me to think more critically.

A class that required me to think using the scientific method was methods of inquiry in child development. In this class we looked at all different studies that used the scientific method and analyzed the steps in the scientific method. We related the scientific method to child development by looking at research that included children and come up with our own research using the scientific method. This class really helped me understand that the scientific method was still important to my field of study even though it is not science. I knew the scientific method before college but I only knew it using things such as chemistry and physics. This class really helped me understand that the scientific method can be used for many different things. I also learned a lot about empirical and logical thinking during this class. I analyzed a data from past studies in order to create my own study that will obtain all new data.

One class that I used empirical and logical thinking was issues in assessment for children and families. In this class I analyzed many assessments and looked at the data they collected. I was able to see how the data would be used and how it was collected. I used logical thinking to assess how the results could be used in different environments or ages. This class also helped me think more critically about assessment and how they are important when working with anyone especially children and families.

Another class that helped me think critically was observational techniques. In this class I observed children in their preschool classroom and I had to write about their behavior using the observation techniques ABC or antecedent, behavior and consequence. I had to think critically about what happened before the behavior to cause it and it was not always clear the first time the behavior happened. I had to use higher levels of thinking to see all the elements of the environment. This is very useful when working with children and families because stimuli that cause a behavior can be completely obvious or completely hidden to others in the situation. This is a very important element of thinking critically in the world of child development.

I struggled with critical thinking when I first started my undergraduate degree but after many classes and a lot of studying I have started to understand it. The part of critical thinking I struggled with the most was seeing beyond the obvious. An example of this would be only a child dropped a toy and that is why they are crying and not realizing that they dropped the toy because another child was close to them. As a critical thinker I now examine the whole situation and see that the other child caused the specific child that is now crying to drop the toy for some reason. I also am now able to understand that it might not be that child’s fault but something the crying child has learned to do.

I will use these skills for the rest of my career in child development and other aspects of my life. I have already seen aspects of my life where I can use these skills of critical thinking and even the scientific method. As a lifelong learner I want to learn more was to use the scientific method.

The first assignment that shows my use of critical thinking is a self-reflection from child development practicum. I wrote this paper is reflection of what I had learned so far during the semester. I reflected on skills I had developed and ones I still needed to work on. I thought critically about everything I had already done and the things I still needed to do.

The second assignment is a behavior guidance observation. I observed an event then had to analyze what actually happened and how the teacher dealt with it. I used information from other assignments to analyze if the teacher responded correctly or if there were changes that needed to be made.