*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.*

This objective embodies the statistical and analytical aspects of Child Development, when I think of applying critical thinking and scientific methods to issues regarding Child Development, I immediately think of data collection, analysis and computation of the data. This aspect of Child Development is imperative. By collecting data, computing it and using the scientific method we are able to study children's behavior and put it into data form. By transferring qualitative and quantitative data into statistical form we are able to discover ways to best work with children, and even learn about their development. There was one course in which I learned and applied critical thinking and scientific method to its fullest extent. This course was Child Development 353, Methods of Inquiry, this course was focused on learning methods of data collection, analysis and computation.

Within Child Development 353 we were expected to complete an assignment where we took data and used computer programs to compute the data, we then wrote a research paper analyzing the data and computing the results into a research format. We began by using the scientific method and hypothesizing about a correlation between three factors, parent barriers to involvement, school and child anxiety and interpersonal relationships. We then took pre collected data and entered it into SPSS, a statistical software that computes data into a manageable form. We then took the statistical data and organized it into a research paper that included a literature review, graphs, and results of the data. Within this process I learned critical thinking, when it comes to data, as well as how to use software and scientific methods to evaluate and interpret data. The end result was an extensive research paper that explained the correlations between the three factors. This experience facilitated my growth and understanding of critical thinking and the scientific method.

Child Development 353 helped me to grow in the area of critical thinking and the scientific method, but it was not without struggle and perseverance. I chose the Child Development major because I am a relationship builder, I desire to build relationships with children as well as care for people of all ages. So taking a class that dealt mostly with computers and statistical software was a struggle to wrap my mind around. This was my biggest struggle within this area, focusing on computer data and not stories and people. However, the professor for Child Development 353, Dr. Shepherd, began the class by discussing the importance of statistical data. She emphasized that even though the computer was showing us numbers, those numbers had significance in the people who were surveyed, and that those numbers would help us to understand children and families better. This helped to turn a class that was a struggle for me into a class where I gained invaluable experience in the interpretation of data and the importance of that data's impact on children and families.

As a member of the Child Development profession I have many things to offer, two of these would be my relationship skills and my passion for families. I have always known that I wanted to work with families, I think that families are such important parts of our society, they raise our children and are complex system to understand. I think that by building relationships with not just the child, but the whole family as a system, we can better serve the children, and have more of an impact on their lives. Data collection and critical thinking are ways in which we can study these relationships between families and children, making scientific analysis and critical thinking an integral part of all aspects of the Child Development profession.