*Critical Thinking*

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

Empirical reasoning is basically making sense of all the data you have gathered from research. You organize the data, analyze it with finding statistics, graphs and qualitative methods, and then visualize it with graphs or charts for the presentation. Logical reasoning uses statements, arguments and premises to determine if a statement is true or false. There are three different kinds of reasoning, deduction, induction, and abduction. Deduction reasoning is a logical process of reasoning from one or more statements to reach a logically certain conclusion. Inductive reasoning is reasoning where the statements seek to supply strong evidence for the truth of the conclusion. Abduction reasoning is where the statements do not guarantee the conclusion. I remember learning about these terms in many Child Development and Psychology classes but mostly in methods of inquiry of child development. We learned about qualitative (descriptions) and quantitative (numbers) research methods in different studies. We had to have a lot of statistical knowledge to use SPSS and understand the data. We learned to review, evaluate, and communicate research to others.

With all the classes I’ve taken these past four years, I feel like I know how to conduct research, find scholarly articles, and understand them for the most part. I feel like I have a good understanding of how to use technology and the programs we’ve used in the past. Learning SPSS was a little concerning but I eventually grasped the concept of inputting statistical data and learned how to correctly do assignments. I have struggled with the math part of understanding data but using programs that really do most of the work for you, was very helpful.

The Child Development course on observational techniques had an assignment where we choose a target child and observed them throughout the semester. This class taught us the basic observation skills regarding children’s physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Using those skills, we went to the observation lab and observed our target child to complete our assignments. We learned how to correctly write an observation note without being biased on how the child is feeling by their looks. We learned to use different techniques on organizing notes and activities that the child was doing. We didn’t have any background information on the child besides knowing their birthday so we really couldn’t be biased on their home life. We used knowledge from previous courses in our papers about the children, families and their well-being.