**Student Learning Objective 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.

 Thinking critically about the issues that affect children, families, and their well-being is something that is extremely important in the field of Child Development. Throughout my higher education at California State University, Chico I have had much experience in applying scientific methods of thinking when observing children as well as understanding what those observations mean for the child based off of empirical research and practices. I have also had experience in using computer programs that allowed me to create my own data from an empirical research study and analyze the statistical significance of the results regarding children and their families.

 Observations, to me, are probably one of the most important things a Child Development professional can excel in. So much can be learned through observing a child or family in any setting and when done objectively, one is able to understand what may or may not be affecting their well-being. Leaving your personal theories of how families should be or how children should be cared for is one thing that has stuck with me throughout my college career which is something I learned in my Child Development Practicum course. Being subjective when doing any kind of research or observation is something that can affect results significantly if you are conducting a study. Adding in your own personal touch to an observation of a particular child who may have a behavioral problem and could later on need to be diagnosed could be detrimental to the results of the whole observation session as well as intervention for the child.

 While conducting observations correctly is very important, being able to interpret the results and determine whether they are significant is also very important. This is something that I am glad to have practiced in my Methods of Inquiry course. I was able to get the experience of using both qualitative and qualitative research designs and interpreting the results into a complete scientific research paper. This class both enhanced my writing skills as well as my ability to really think critically about the results of the study. Being able to determine if the findings from a study were statistically significant is important to determine if a specific intervention program actually works on children with depression or anxiety. In order to do this, you must be able to do empirical research on the subject, need to be up to date with statistics programing to help find outcomes of the study, and be able to interpret those results.

Getting more practice and experience with conducting a research study and interpreting the results is something that I would really be interested in. With that type of critical thinking, I believe it is something that is always evolving that way you are always learning something new. I would also really like to work on and get better at is observations. There are different styles of observational techniques that you can use to record a child or families actions and each one of them has to be objective. I’ve learned that over time being completely objective is something that you learn through repetition and practice. This is something that I hope happens throughout my time in the field of child development.

As a member of the Child Development profession, I can offer a fresh look at new observation techniques, recent empirical research articles, along with growing issues that could potentially end up affecting children, families, and their well-being. Being fresh out of college, I believe I can offer up to date scientific methods of thinking based on empirical research and best practices.