*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.*

Throughout higher education, there are many opportunities to apply critical thinking and scientific methods of thinking regarding the issues in children’s well-being. In order to apply these skills, there must be a background in understanding these skills. As a member of the Child Development profession, I have a lot of opportunities to learn and apply critical thinking and scientific methods of thinking in the classroom. The curriculum, physical environment, and development of relationships in the classroom are all based on critical thinking and scientific methods which came from conducted research. This research allows the teachers to adapt their classrooms and curriculum to best fit the children’s needs.

One way in which I have applied scientific methods of thinking is through internships. Throughout my internships, I have taken many theories learned throughout my four years of higher education and applied them in the classrooms. For example, I have taken Ainsworth’s Attachment Theory into consideration numerous times throughout my experiences with children. Ainsworth’s Attachment Theory states that there are three attachment styles, avoidant, insecure, and secure. These attachment styles are displayed when the child is reunited with their guardian. If a child has a secure attachment, they may be positive and happy when the guardian returns, if the child has an insecure attachment, the child may approach the guardian but resist contact, and a child with an avoidant attachment may show no interest when the guardian returns. Knowing a child’s attachment style makes it easier to understand what they are feeling and how I, as a teacher, should react in that situation. Another scientific method of thinking I have applied in classrooms is temperament. There are three different types of temperaments I have learned about in my higher education. These three are easy, slow to warm up, and difficult. The easy temperament child shows regular eating habits, sleeping cycles, and adapts to change easily. A child with a slow to warm up temperament shows mild anxiety when adapting to change and has fairly regular routines. Lastly, a child with a difficult temperament shows irregular eating and sleeping patterns and displays a negative attitude towards change. Knowing the child’s temperament is really important to keep in mind when dealing with that particular child. If a child has an easy temperament, you are able to approach them in a more forward and excited way, but if a child is slow to warm up, you may have to approach them more calmly and slowly.

Another way in which I have applied scientific methods of thinking and critical thinking is through research. Throughout my higher education at Chico State, I have completed numerous research papers. In order to complete a research paper, I must know how to recognize scholarly articles and how to use these articles to create my own research. I have learned how to create my own research based question by looking at previously conducted research and what their limitations were. By looking at these limitations, I can potentially create my own research by bringing in those limitations to my research. In order to find appropriate and reliable previously conducted research, the articles must be scholarly. Important factors to consider when wondering if these articles are scholarly are if the author(s)’ credentials are listed, if there are references and citations listed, there should be no advertisements, if it is peer reviewed and if it is current. Also knowing how to conduct my own research and how to report it is important if I were to go into higher education. A research article should include an abstract, introduction, methods, discussion, results, conclusion, and references. These parts of a research article should all be included for the article to be professional and valuable.

Throughout my higher education, I have learned a plethora of ways to apply critical thinking and scientific methods of thinking. Critical thinking and scientific methods of thinking can be shown through theories and research. I have displayed this knowledge through internships provided by Chico State and by numerous opportunities to conduct and report research.

One assignment throughout my higher education that shows my knowledge of critical thinking and scientific methods of thinking is my research paper from a Methods of Inquiry course at Chico State. We looked at previously conducted research and found what research was lacking and how we could increase that research. My inquiry was about adolescents with ADHD and how it affected long-term relationships.

Another assignment that supports my knowledge of critical thinking and scientific methods of thinking is self reflections. Self- reflecting shows deep critical thinking about one’s self. Thinking critically about one’s performance is an important strategy to take into later professions.