

**SAMPLE IPA ESSAY**  
**Standard #1 (Active Learning)**  
**Grade Nine**

When teaching literary works within a specified theme or idea, the idea of retelling experiences in this lesson plan's case, it is essential that students are able to first reach their own conclusions about a text instead of simply receiving information from the teacher. The first performance standard, "facilitating active learning," is important because it allows students to form analytical skills.

The two works used in the lesson plan detail experiences concerning a similar event, slavery. The students must decide which author wrote from a firsthand experience and which wrote about an event that he or she did not actually experience in their lifetime. Students are first asked (Activity 2, #3) to analyze each text on their own to identify what aspects of the language convinced them that the work is or is not a firsthand experience (i.e., vocabulary, enriched detail, imagery). Once they have finished, students may share what they believe in a whole class format (Activity 3, #1). Such a format gives students the opportunity to not only share their ideas, but also hear how other students perceive the same works. Perhaps some students' ideas will influence the findings of other students. The communication of knowledge does not have to take place between only teacher and students; students may take the opportunity to learn from each other, which in this case may involve analytical skills or what to look for when reading a text. Milner and Milner suggest that there are three "phases" to teaching reading: entering the text, exploring the text, and extending (p.101). Though entering is usually done before reading, I find it beneficial for "entering" exercises to involve student responses during initial reading without teacher intervention. And then, if suitable as it is in this case, allowing students to share ideas with fellow classmates. They can build on information from each other and then I can help "steer" their information in the right direction by providing the class with proper background information on both authors. Once they know which author wrote from a firsthand experience and which did not, students are put into small groups (Activity #4, #1-3) and begin to extend the lesson by discussing what elements contribute to the lives of each author. I try to always revert students back to pairs or small groups in order to engage them in discussions with somebody other than the teacher. A learner's process is always active and constructive (Kutz and Roskelly 42), so in this lesson I tried to have students communicate often, whether with the teacher or classmates, in order to keep the learning process continually active.

**Works Cited**

- Kutz, Eleanor and Hephzibah Roskelly. An Unguier Pedagogy: Transforming Practice in the English Classroom. Portsmouth: Boynton/Cook Publishers Inc., 1991.
- Milner, Joseph O'Beirne and Lucy Floyd Morcock Milner. Bridging English. 3d ed. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc., 2003.