

SAMPLE IPA ESSAY
Standard #6 (Understanding Content)
Grade Three

I based my instructional plan on was Lev Vygotsky's scaffolding theory. Scaffolding is the temporary support that parents, and teachers, can give a child to do a task until the child can do it on their own. Through my understanding of this theory I choose to format my instruction so that slowly the students would go from my direct instruction, to an interactive guided instruction and conclude with an independent activity. Since Vygotsky's scaffolding theory encourages adults to help students comprehend something on their own it has a direct relation to the sixth IPA standard of making content comprehensible. This standard requires the teacher to be those adult peers that can help the students understand the content by building on past experiences using various strategies.

As the adult peer I made the content comprehensible through the various steps in my lesson. This begun with providing a description that helped the students understand the connection between describing something verbally and what happens when they write descriptive paragraphs. (example 5) It was important for me to make this connection for the students because I wanted the students to understand that an everyday function of playing a guessing game of describing something to their friends can be turned into a paragraph.

The second activity involved the students reading a paragraph that was missing a topic sentence and began with the supporting detailed sentences. The purpose of this activity was to have the students work backwards and try to figure out, what the topic sentence would be based on the key words in the detailed supporting sentences. (example 6) My reason for doing this activity was to try and cater to students varying learning styles. This activity was directly towards students who are logical thinkers and like to work backwards and pick apart a large portion of information to deduct an answer. I then ask the class probing questions that helped those who could not figure out the answer on their own. (example 7) The content became comprehensible when they were able to pick out the details in the paragraph and form a topic sentence through my guidance.

The following activity was to help visual learners. This activity involved the students and myself creating a paragraph from the pre writing stage beginning with a single main idea, and some key words to create a complete paragraph including a topic sentence and supporting detailed sentences. What was visual about this activity was as a class we outlined our thought process in a brain bubble and then wrote out our paragraph on large tablet paper on the chalkboard (example 8) This way the visual students can see what the thought process might look like. This is the step that is supported by Vygotsky's scaffolding theory because it would provide students with a model and further give students the support they would later need to complete the task of writing out a well structured paragraph on their own. To conclude the lesson I asked students questions that would express the students understanding of paragraph structure (example 9). These questions also continued to determine whether or not the content was comprehensible to the students.

The final step for the students was completing worksheet (Example 11). After looking over the student's completion of the worksheet I noticed that many of the students were able to complete the worksheet with high competency, which let me know that the content was made comprehensible for them through the lesson instruction, especially the model example we completed as a class. For example Randi was able to out line his paragraph in his brain bubble and then build a strong structured paragraph from the outlines (example 10). Arthur stilled needed assistance with the topic sentence. He was able to write the detail sentences along but still needed some guidance to write the topic sentence (Example 3). Overall it is important to make content comprehensible for the students. This should happen throughout the instruction of any lesson by asking constant probing questions and evaluating the feedback that is received from the students. I felt that the probing questions and the guided activity is what helped the most to make the content in this lesson comprehensible for the students.

My lesson was connected to both reflective thinking and understanding content because the lesson was created from reflection, and the content was made comprehensible through guided instruction. The format, instruction, and learning goals of my lesson were based on the theories of Lev Vygotsky with the understanding that children learn in various ways, and need the support of adults to help them obtain the ability to complete tasks on their own. The various

components of each IPA standard were met throughout my lesson and were proven through presented evidence from the actual lesson taught and referenced throughout this report.