

This writer's IPA essay demonstrates a clear understanding of the impact of educational theorists on her classroom practice. She integrates references to these theories throughout her essay in a fairly sophisticated manner, so that the references are neither disruptive nor left to speak for themselves. Her particular strength lies in applying the theory to her specific lesson. This IPA Essay could use some work on clarity, but overall this writer has accomplished her goals.

SAMPLE IPA ESSAY

Standard #2 (Coherence/Continuity) & Standard #3 (Critical/Creative Thinking) Grade Four

Standard 2 Coherence & Continuity

The lesson plan I choose to exemplify coherence and continuity is Lesson 1: Using Circle Graphs for Precipitation Totals (see attached lesson plan). This lesson was one of various lessons taught on weather and graphing. My lesson connected to previous lessons of bar graphs, measurement and temperature. The students' previous knowledge of different weather elements helped me to expand on the vocabulary used. My lesson on circle graphs will help the students with future lessons in science on collecting and organizing data for line graphs and bar graphs. The objectives in my lesson were accomplished through class participation and individual student work. I based the lesson on precipitation in the Philadelphia area for the year 2002-2003. This helped the children rely on their knowledge of how much precipitation they have actually seen.

A major theme in the theoretical framework of Jerome Bruner is that learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based upon their current/past knowledge. In my lesson, the children were introduced to the different types of precipitation by looking at pictures and discussing what was happening in the pictures. On page 3, line 38 I showed the students the pictures of precipitation. The students responded correctly. Breanna said, "That is a picture of snow", when I showed a picture with snow. Kenneth replied, "A thunderstorm", when I showed rain. The students were able to correctly identify the different types of precipitation relying on real world experiences.

Lev Vygotskys' theory states that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition. I provided the 'scaffolding' for this lesson and adjusted it according to the students' level of ability. The children were shown a circle graph with the precipitation totals for the four seasons. I went over the information and handed out a class worksheet that contained

the same graph (see attached Class Worksheet). The students filled out the worksheet. They were able to recall the information and draw conclusions based on the circle graph.

The final activity we performed was to create a circle graph showing individual precipitation preferences (see attached precipitation circle). This activity demonstrated Bloom's Taxonomy. This activity illustrates the students' knowledge, comprehension and application of precipitation. The students received a paper plate and they had to illustrate their favorite type of precipitation. The circle had to be broken down into $\frac{1}{2}$'s, $\frac{1}{3}$'s, or $\frac{1}{4}$'s. The students applied their knowledge and comprehension of precipitation by drawing pictures of precipitation.

In conclusion, my lesson demonstrates coherence and continuity in all of the activities that were performed. The students' understanding of the concepts of precipitation through real world connects helps them to relate realistically to the lesson. The previous and future lessons relating to weather and graphing exemplify continuity by using multiple approaches and intelligences to teach the students. The assessments I used in my lesson were activities 2 and 3. Assessment methods need to take into account the diversity of intelligences, as well as self-assessment tools that help students understand their intelligences (Howard Gardner). The activities I planned guided the students into achieving the objectives (Page 2, lines 13-15).

Standard 3 Critical/ Creative Thinking

My lesson plan 2: Place Value (see attached lesson plan) proves that the students used critical and creative thinking to understand the concepts. In my lesson I use a constructivist approach by building upon the students' knowledge. "Constructivism is an ongoing process in which children engage in experiences that challenge their view of the world. Children are given opportunities to investigate, test, and create their own knowledge" (El. Ed. 231 Cooperating Teachers). Place value is an important and difficult concept for children to understand. Previous and future lessons on graphs, measurement and number stories are precisely linked to the understanding of number sense and reasoning of numbers.

Lesson 2 is a vast example of Lev Vygotsky's cooperative learning. Vygotsky states they are five aspects to cooperative learning. First, there is positive interdependence, second, face-to-face interaction, third, individual accountability, fourth, small group and interpersonal skills and fifth, group self-evaluation. The final activity in my lesson exhibits all of the features of cooperative learning. The children are dependent on each other to get the correct results. They

are individually responsible for the placement of the numbers. Furthermore, the activity encompasses small group skills and group self-evaluation.

I started my lesson by questioning the students on their knowledge of numbers (page 4, line 40-42). I then continued my lesson by reading a story, *How Much Is A Million?* by David M. Schwartz. This story shows the students real world connections in relation to one million. It helps to promote their critical/creative thinking by showing them how large the amount one million really is. The students showed interest in the facts of the story by expressing their amazement. One student exclaimed, "Wow do you see how big the fishbowl is?"

The second activity I implemented was to verbally assess the students' knowledge of place value. I executed this activity by calling out a number in word or standard form and the students wrote the answer on a piece of paper. The second activity demonstrates the individual students' ability to apply their knowledge and comprehension of place value (Bloom's Taxonomy). This activity reveals the students critical thinking and proved they were able to comprehend the material. The student's were required to listen and analyze what I was saying to attain the correct answer.

Our final activity was a place value game. This activity allowed the student's to think critically and creatively through role playing. I randomly gave individual student's a number card with one digit and then called out a number (page 6, line 65-66). For example, 623,478, the student's then went up to the board with their card and stood in the correct place value position. After the student's organized themselves I called on a volunteer to read the number and decide if they were in the correct order.

In conclusion my lesson on place value exhibits critical/creative thinking through the activities we completed. The students had to use critical thinking to analyze the numbers that were given to properly write the word or standard form. The students utilized creative thinking when they played the place value game. As an end result the students were able to assess one another's knowledge and comprehension. For the closing activity (page 7, line 69-72) the students discussed and reflected on the placement of numbers and why it is important. The assessment method I utilized was observation of the student's performance in written, verbal and hands on activities. My goals in this lesson (page 2, line 13-15) were fulfilled when the activities were completed.