

*This writer has included both his IPA essay and some of the supporting materials he plans to submit. The writer does an excellent job of demonstrating how his lesson plan fulfills the standard requirements while explaining the theoretical underpinnings of his decision. The inclusion of the supporting materials provides a useful glimpse of the “whole package” required by the IPA.*

### **SAMPLE IPA ESSAY**

#### **Standard #3 (Critical/Creative Thinking) & Standard #6 (Subject-Matter Content) Grade Two**

The lesson I have chosen incorporates the standards of critical / creative thinking and understanding of subject matter. The standards are met through teaching the lesson with the approach of Lev Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory of development.

The lesson was taught in small groups so that the two interactions -- interaction between individual students and the interaction between teacher and all students -- were maximized. This format encompasses Vygotsky’s idea the social interaction enhances a child’s mental development. By children sharing their ideas and point of views, all children can gain new insights to the topic being discussed.

Several times throughout the lesson, there are opportunities in which I promote critical or creative thinking. By asking the children the question on page 4, line 9, the students were required to think about the writing process. They needed to mentally visualize the formal process of prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. The students needed to come to the conclusion that an author begins with establishing a main idea. Another opportunity of critical thinking arises when the students “brainstorm” for facts that match the main idea (The Zoo). Students needed to draw upon their prior knowledge and select facts that were associated with the main idea. When asking questions such as those on page 5 line 24 and examining answers that students gave, students were required to think and develop arguments, construct explanations, and draw conclusions on why their answers are or are not correct. Creative thinking was required when students were required to develop to take the “brainstorming” facts and transform them into sentences for the paragraph. For example, Mohammad wanted to put a cheetah in the paragraph. He came up the sentence “A cheetah was at the zoo”. I told him it was a good sentence, but together we can turn it into a great sentence. I asked Mohammad to think about other things we could say about cheetahs. He made the comment that they run really fast. He then changed his sentence to “The cheetah ran so fast and he couldn’t stop”. Through my

coaching, he changed a simple sentence to a more complex one. This is referred to by Vygotsky's as "scaffolding" the process of providing assistance of some kind that enables students to complete tasks they can not complete independently.

The lesson was taught so that subject matter was understandable. By asking the students questions about answers I proposed and answers from other students, their answers were evident that they understood the concept of main idea. I asked the students if "Jake has a sister named Betty" could be included in the paragraph. I suggested that since Jake is the story, the sentence could go in the paragraph. Bryan explained to me that Jake is in the story but his sister has nothing to do with the main idea, the zoo. In order for Bryan to draw that conclusion, understanding of the main idea had to be achieved. Individual assessment for understanding of the objective could have been achieved by giving a worksheet as the extended activity. The original worksheet submitted with lesson plan (see worksheet A, page 6) does involve establishing the main idea, but does not give independent practice for the corresponding lesson completed. A more appropriate worksheet (see worksheet B, page 7) would have the students distinguishing which sentences do or do not support the main idea. By presenting the students with this new format, they will need a complete understanding of main idea, to complete the worksheet. The worksheet is the reversed thought processes used in the guided activity. Rather than developing ideas and sentences to complete a finished product they are presented with the finished product and they are to analysis the paragraph for sentence coherence.

By teaching the students to have an understanding of main idea, the concept will exceed their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky defines ZPD as the area of development that represents the range of tasks that children can not do independently but can do when helped by a more competent person-teacher, adult, or another child. By achieving the objective of this lesson, students can independently establish a main idea. Therefore the concept and process will no longer fall in the students' ZPD.

In concluding, it can be seen that the standard for critical/creative thinking and the standard for understanding subject content has been fulfilled through the lesson and its assessments.

**Writing Process Lesson Plan**

**2nd Grade**

**Cooperating Teacher:** Mrs. Smith

**Practicum Students:** Student A  
Student B

Lesson Date: November 4, 2003

Estimated Time: 20 minutes

Group Size: 5/6 students

Materials: one extra large notepad  
one marker

**Objective:** (1) Students will understand the concept of main idea and its role in the first stage of the writing process, prewriting. (2) Students will practice “brainstorming” before writing a short story.

**Standards:** (3) The objectives of the lesson fulfill the standards #5, #6, and #12 as explained in the Temple University Reading & Language Arts Practicum Course Packet.

**Introduction:** (4) The lesson will be introduced to the students with a discussion about their favorite stories. (5) The teacher can begin the lesson by asking each student in the group “What is your favorite story that you have read?” (6) The teacher can then ask “How do you think the author wrote that story?” (7) Pose the scenario: Do you think the author just sat down, picked up a pen and started writing. (8) Explain that before an author can write a story he has to plan it out.

**Procedure:** (9) The teacher can ask “What is the first thing an author has to do before writing a story?” (10) Listen to the student’s answers and coach them to answering correctly with establishing a main idea. (11) Review with the students that the main ideas is what the entire paragraph is about. (12) It can be in the first sentence of a paragraph or can be in the title of the paragraph or story. (13) Explain to the students that together we are to write a short paragraph. (14) But before we do, we need to come up with a main idea. (15) The teacher can give the students a main idea or let the student decide on one. (16) After choosing a main idea, the teacher will write it on the large notepad with the marker. (17) Next, the students will come up with facts that support the main idea. (18) The teacher will write the facts on the same sheet of paper with the main idea. (19) Starting with a new sheet of paper, have the students come up with sentences for the facts that support the main idea. (20) Before writing them on the paper, discuss with the students which facts should placed where in the paragraph. (21) Review with the students that we must be sure all of the sentences are about the main ideas. (22) After writing the paragraph allow each student to sign their name at the bottom of the paper.

**Assessment:** (23) Assessment will be completed during the guided activity of brainstorming and writing the paragraph along with the students. (24) While brainstorming with the students ask questions like “Should we write about the sun in the story?” or “How about the sentence, Jake wore his red sweater, can we use it in the paragraph?”

**Extending Activity:** Students will review the concept of main idea by doing a worksheet.

**Bibliography**

Clemens Warrick, Karen. Main Idea Using topics and details to see the big picture, 2000, Instructional Fair, Michigan.

**WORKSHEET A**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**A Rainbow of My Own**

Jacob and Trevor looked out the window. The rain had stopped. The sun was shining. "Look! A rainbow!" said Jacob. "We can make our own rainbow," said Trevor. "My teacher gave us a recipe. All we need is a hose and the sun." The boys pulled on their jackets and boots and hurried outside. Trevor stood with the sun behind him. He sprayed water up in the air. "I see it," Jacob yelled. "Red, orange, yellow. Wow! Just like a rainbow in the sky." Then he opened the umbrella and ran toward the rainbow. "What are you doing?" asked Trevor. "I want to find the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow" said Jacob.

Circle the correct answer.

The main idea of the story is.....

kids make a rainbow

rainbows in the sky

the pot of gold

What did Jacob and Trevor need to make a rainbow?

A pot of gold

the sun and a water hose

jackets and boots

**WORKSHEET B**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Read the paragraph below. Cross out the sentences that do not tell about the topic.

Cactus plants that live in the desert must adapt to hot and cold temperatures and little rainfall. When it rains in the desert there is often a rainbow. These plants have shallow roots that spread out just under the top of the soil. These roots quickly soak up rain when it falls. Sponges soak up water, too. Water is stored in the cactus plant's thick, pleated stem. My mom thinks it looks like an accordion. When there is a lot of rain, the cactus stem expands. When there hasn't been enough rain, the cactus stem shrinks. That's because the plant is using the water it stored. The cactus's spine covered body also has a thick, waxy skin that keeps water from evaporating. My grandmother has a cactus in her backyard.