Lesson Ideas shared by Amanda Harmon, Zionsville Community Schools

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Indiana Students and Teachers of Psychology (ISTOP) Conference

These lessons relate to the Indiana Department of Education’s Social Studies Standards for Psychology. Each of these lesson ideas connects to a specific proficiency outlined in the State Standards.

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| Standard 8: Psychological Thinking |

Students explore how to think like a psychologist and expand critical thinking skills needed in the day-to-day life of a psychologist.

**P.8.1** Understand the six steps involved in critical thinking; knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

**Lesson Idea:** To address this standard, consider using a classroom debate. [Taking Sides](http://www.mhhe.com/cls/UsingTS2.pdf) in the classroom is a guide for using debate as a classroom activity. Have your class(es) brainstorm interesting topics for psychology students to debate. As the facilitator, consider your audience. Some teachers avoid certain topics because of their sensitivity. Possibilities might include Child Development issues – discipline – daycare – parenting styles; gender issues; using animals in research… There are limitless possibilities.

Intentionally have students consider the 6 steps of critical thinking as they frame their arguments and prepare for their debates. What do they know about the topic? How will they foster an understanding of their position? Can they apply this topic to a real-life scenario that supports their position? Can they consider counter arguments and prepare rebuttals?

This is an instructional strategy that doesn’t have to be used as a “stand alone” standard. This can be integrated and infused throughout the year in different units where appropriate. Encourage students to take ownership by asking them to brainstorm topics that interest them. Allow them to choose their side, or challenge them to argue the opposite side after they’ve identified their position.

**P.8.2** Locate and analyze primary sources of landmark experiments in psychology and other counter arguments.

**Lesson Idea:** *Sources* by Terry Pettijohn and *40 Studies that Changed Psychology***,** by Roger Hockhave wonderful primary source material gathered in one place. There is a corresponding *Instructor’s Manual for “Sources”* that includes teaching and assessment suggestions. In this manual you’ll find a synopsis of each article, discussion prompts, comprehension questions, and essay questions. These primary sources are organized by topic, so you’ll have, for instance, several on Learning, others on Memory, a selection on Development, and many more! You can also use the Inspire Database here in Indiana or other research databases and allow students to locate primary sources on their own.

Primary source videos and photos exist of the Stanford Prison Experiment, Pavlov’s Dog, Watson and Raynor’s Little Albert study, Milgram’s obedience study, Bandura’s bobo doll experiment, and Harlow’s monkeys, to name a few. Have students create psychology exhibits on landmark study. During “gallery walks” the teacher and guests visit displays, ask questions, and have students identify the primary sources they used in their research.

**P.8.3** Construct a testable hypothesis and apply the principles of research design to an appropriate experiment.

**Lesson Idea:** *Psychology* by the Center for Learning includes lessons on our various curricular topics. Lesson 2 is included in the packet. Depending on your school or corporation rules, you may be permitted to let students engage in conducting research for educational purposes, but always check on your building’s policy about this with regard to permission slip or even internal review board policies you may have. This lesson provides examples of psychological studies. Students are encouraged to analyze the different components of the studies that are shared. Then they are encouraged to develop their own studies using appropriate experimental research design, as modeled in the examples.