

Brandon Plasch

PSY 205

Phase 1: Learning Case Study

November 14, 2018

Thomas is a nine-year-old, fourth grade boy who attends a private Catholic K-12 school in Saint Paul, Minnesota. The school has around eight hundred students in total however, in Thomas' class he has about 50 students. Thomas has eight family members 5 who live at home. His mother works for Children's Hospital and his father is an electrician. Thomas loves having a big family because he always has someone to play with or someone to talk with. His siblings also help him with his homework, after multiple times of asking. He said that "I think they all help me in different ways, but mostly mom and dad."

Thomas has been at a Catholic private school from his pre-k to fourth grade years. However, he has changed schools once going from a school size of about one hundred to eight hundred which was a huge change for him. Because he was, and still is so young, this transition has not impacted him too much, but he says, "I miss my friends sometimes, but I have made a ton of new ones." The teachers at his new school include nuns and priests which he likes.

Thomas is in the Concrete Operational stage of development according to Piaget which means that concepts are attached to concrete situations. Different things such as time, space, and quality cannot be understood as independent concepts, but can be applied. His prefrontal cortex is not fully developed and will be transitioning to the formal operative stage in development.

According to Erickson, he would be in the Industry versus Inferiority stage of development. In this stage children move towards mastering knowledge and cognitive skills or they can feel inferior during this stage. At home, Thomas is not sure of his role in the family or in life, yet which is clearly indicated in this stage. He is still trying to master knowledge in school and at home. His family definitely helps contribute to his growing knowledge of his role at home. However, his teachers are not sure where Thomas is at in terms of schooling because he tends to rush through things that could indicate his true knowledge of the material. He thinks that a way he can make friends and be well like by classmates is to make them laugh which leads to him misbehaving frequently.

His parents have an authoritative parenting style which is a reason for them being involved with his school and having great relationships with his teachers. Thomas spends most of his time with his family and does not really interact with his peers outside of the classroom. However, he is very energetic and loves to be active playing basketball, soccer, and football with other peers. Thomas loves learning about religion and reading the Bible. Thomas loves playing with his dog Mojo and takes him on walks by himself showing independence.

Thomas enjoys the social aspect of school because he “loves to make people laugh and make new friends.” He does not have a select group of friends that he hangs out with, but his best friend Mac and he are inseparable according to his mom.

Thomas is in the basic general education courses such as Science, Math, History, and English. Since he attends a private Catholic school, he is required to take Latin and Religion. His least favorite subject is Science because “sister just talks the whole time and I get bored.” He loves History with his other teacher because “he makes it fun because of all the pictures and lets us talk to each other about the pictures.” He thinks that the progress of his learning is just perfect and likes the pace it is at. His parents said his worst subjects would be Latin and Spelling because of all the new vocabulary. When I asked how he learned the new vocabulary they stated, “he makes flash cards to study the words.” According to his parents, his best subject is English because he loves to read and talk about what he has read to his classmates. Thomas goes to Title 1 which helps catch him up with the rest of his classmates in different subjects. I asked Thomas if he enjoys Title 1 and he said, “I hate it because there is no one else with me and I feel dumb.” I asked him after if he thought Title 1 was helping him or making it harder and he said both because he does not get to interact with his peers as much as the others, but his test grades and overall development has increased significantly.

Something Thomas loves is visuals. He had said that the reason he loves History class so much is because he gets to see pictures of what is going on throughout history. After thinking for a minute, I then wrote down words in Latin for his Latin test the next day and told him he should try studying by writing out the words then seeing them and continuing this technique until he felt comfortable. The next day he called me and said that

he only got one question wrong on the whole test. Thomas is definitely a visual learner and can master strategies to help him succeed in classes. I asked how he did in Science class on his test and he said he did not do the best. I then asked how the teacher taught and he said, “Sister only talks, and I sit in my desk for, what seems, hours so I don’t care about that class.” Thomas scores lower in the verbal learning area. He feels bored and left out of doing the material. I spoke to one of his other teachers who said, “Thomas doesn’t stop moving and likes to demonstrate things which helps him learn things much more quickly than through verbal instruction. I would say the majority of fourth grade boys learn best through movement and demonstration.” The pieces clicked together and after having Thomas do Math problems while walking helped him retain his multiplication facts. Thomas has an extremely high kinesthetic intelligence level which is why his parents said he never stops moving at home.

Thomas is not very attentive and loses focus very quickly. I asked him to memorize a set of words most fourth grade students would know, and he could not get past the third word. He needs to take breaks while memorizing, studying, or doing something that he does not enjoy doing or learning. His teacher said that he asked Thomas to take a break to read something or walk around the room then come back to the Math problem. After doing so, Thomas got the answer and moved on to do the next problems. Thomas can learn things very quickly, but for him to retain information he must take breaks and then come back to the material presented to him.

Thomas’ spelling grades are somewhat low for his age. I asked him if he used to be good at Spelling and he said, “I was the best in my class.” I then proceeded to ask what changed during his study habits in which he stated, “Mom and Dad stopped helping me practice out loud before spelling tests.” He now only uses flash cards to learn new words. Thomas can also remember many many things about past events such as his surgery when he was five years old, or when he has family dinners with the whole family over when his grandpa was living. He remembers things that he can relate back to himself and his emotions. That is one of the biggest influences in his learning.

The final question I asked Thomas was, “How do you think you learn best. Seeing, Hearing, or Doing?” He said all of them because each of us needs some form of all the different instructional styles for learners. Obviously with Thomas, he learns best with visuals and movements, whereas someone else in his class like to hear things about the subject. He would be considered a Kinesthetic and Visual learner which is very common according to Mr. Smith his teacher. After performing this examination on Thomas, I began to wonder how teachers do this or more specific, how teachers learn each individual student learning preference. Having positive relationships with students is the biggest part in this because how else can you grow a relationship without knowledge of the person regardless of what aspect in life it is. Every person has a different style for learning, but it is up to us teachers to learn about what our students are like before we can ask them to learn from us.

Phase III Learning Case Study: PSY 205 Educational Psychology
Project-Based & Problem-Based Learning Learning Plan Template

Teacher Name: Brandon Plasch	Grade & Subject: 3
<p>Name of School: Background of School ("culture"): St. Andrew's Catholic school is a private school grades Pre-k to 6th, in Duluth Minnesota. Duluth is one of the largest cities in Minnesota and our school consists of 300 students primarily Caucasian. The goal of our school is to create a community that involves our low SES to medium SES families. Our mission is to focus on community, virtue, and moral values in the Catholic Tradition. Our school offers scholarships for lower-income families and families in special circumstances. The parents and families of the students at St. Andrew's are expected to be highly involved in the school community, the student's academic endeavors, and upholding the values of the Catholic faith. The students are held to high standards in their academic and extracurricular performances.</p>	
PBL Unit Name: DREAM VACATION: How do you take a trip?	Specific Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use single-operation input-output rules to represent patterns and relationships and to solve real-world and mathematical problems. Add and subtract multi-digit whole numbers; represent multiplication and division in various ways; solve real-world and mathematical problems using arithmetic. Use time, money and temperature to solve real-world and mathematical problems.
What Resources Will the Students Need (describe all resources and learning materials necessary for your project (e.g., Internet sites, colored paper, graduated cylinders, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internet Access/ Computer Lab Time. Poster Boards Markers Money- coins and bills. Paper- colored for the project and scrap paper for math calculations. Money manager worksheet. 	
What Resources Will the Students Need (describe all the resources/materials needed for your students to learn):	

- Student 1 (THOMAS): Thomas has needed help in the past to catch up to his classmates in math. This project will involve peer collaboration which will help Thomas understand the concept of a budget and money. He has needed extra help from a Title 1 instructor, and for her, the only previous knowledge Thomas will need will be a better understanding of money. Parental Communication will be key in Thomas' learning of the project as well as the overall presentation. He will need to be monitored to ensure his continual concentration on the project. Another thing will be Thomas will need to take breaks during the project which will help him stay on track. He is a very visual learner and can thrive during the final presentation part of the project.
- Student 2 (MADDY): In this PBL, Maddy will do best if she is the social butterfly, she is regardless of different groups. Collaborative learning is something that can help her when she is stuck on a problem. Maddy will also need to help others in the group because she is a very good leader. The final visual piece of the project will appeal to Maddy because she is a visual learner but could be difficult. The mathematical portion of the project will also be a place Maddy can thrive and help others in subtraction and addition of money. She will also need to be challenged more within the project to continue a good ZPD.
- Student 3 (PENELOPE): Penelope has had some struggles with Math in the past and finds it somewhat difficult. For paring students together, Penelope and Maddy would be great for each other because each would help each other with their difficulties (Penelope- presentation portion, Maddy- mathematical budgeting.) Like Thomas, she will need to be monitored to ensure her focusing on the project and to make sure she doesn't have an emotional outburst. With the math portion, the teacher might need to teacher her a more than others to make sure she is understanding the materials.
- Student 4 (CHARLES): In this PBL, one key aspect is peer learning. This will be the most difficult part for Charles. He is very smart for his age and his ZPD is below it should be, so he will need to be challenged not only academically, but socially. His knowledge of Math is incredible and will be a leader in the math portion. However, he will need to be paired with someone like Thomas because of his lack of social interaction. The project will be difficult because he might see the assignment as being dumb and not worthwhile. To help with that, extrinsic motivation will be needed.
- Student 5 (ANNA): Anna will have a lot of fun with this project. She is a very Logical learner and will thrive during the math portion of the project. Although her ZPD is lower than her peers, she will still learn concepts and ideas that will help her do well in this project. She is a social butterfly and might struggle with peer interactions and staying focused. If she is paired with someone like Charles, she can help during the project and interaction portion of the project. She might need breaks to stay focused on the project but will devout a lot of time to the project.

Students Will Do (describe what will be done during the unit in the order they will be done):
 Students will previously have been taught concepts on what money is and how much each type of currency is worth.

Describe How This Will be Developmentally Appropriate for:

- **Brain Development:** These students are in their final years of childhood or very close to it, which means their prefrontal cortex is not fully developed. However, the connections they

They will then learn about adding and subtracting money in real-world situations. This will then lead to them doing the PBL. Students will apply what they have learned in previous classes and choose a place they would like to take a vacation to. They will formulate a budget for the vacation only using \$1000. They will need to research hotels, travel expenses, food, and other factors. After, they will create PowerPoints, poster boards, or any kind of oral presentation that can show the pros and cons in taking this trip.

Students will be grouped together based on strengths and weaknesses along with the amount of social interactions they have with each other. Parents will be invited to see students' presentations with a brief reception after the presentations. Because this requires previous knowledge, this project will occur towards the end of the year as sort of a final project.

make are increasing every day. The math PBL will invoke these connections and make real world problems, handling money or budgeting, easier to handle when placed in these situations. Connecting these students' emotions to the project will keep them all focused on the project, involving their families on the trips, and can help them truly see the realistic aspect of the project. It also helps that the project is fun, I did something similar when I was in 4th grade, which will help the social aspect of students.

- **Cognitive Developmental Stage:** The 5 students all exhibit characteristics described in Piaget's Concrete Operational Stage of Development. Obviously, not all 5 of these students are at the same point in this stage, however, they will all be expected to apply the information they have learned in the Concrete Operational way. During this project students will be able to continue to grow towards mastering this stage of development and move towards Adult Formal Operational Stage of Development. The main focus or part I, as the teacher, will be looking for is the progression from entry level in learning to the proficient level. Using each other, and myself, students will be able to face challenges and increase their ZPD.
- **Emotional Developmental Stage:** According to Erickson, these children should be in the Industry versus Inferiority Stage. Using peer collaboration will help students challenge each other asking questions and developing answers they will remember. One key aspect that I want to involve is parental participation within the project through a weekly journal, stating where the students are at and what they can expect to hear from their children. Students will primarily do this project in class with the help of each other to boost their understanding, which will lead to their emotional stability. The

student to keep an eye out for would be Penelope, because she could have an emotional outburst. Even so, with the interaction with her peers and friends will keep her calm and focused while having fun.

- **Identity Development:** This portion will not really be relevant because the students are between the ages of 7-9, so it's unlikely that any of them will have a specific identity. However, with this project students will be able to explore the things they value, (living area, food expenses, and many other aspects.) Depending on where they place most of the money, they can understand themselves indirectly. Students will be introduced to aspects of identity at an early age and then will be able to develop what they hold dear to themselves later in life through this project.
- **Moral Development:** According to Kohlberg, these students are at the Conventional Level of Moral Reasoning meaning they have internal standards with the addition of outside standards given by other, myself and their parents. Trusting in their group and others feedback will be the greatest representation of this. Real world situations and economical status' will teach them how they can make differences within their day, (showing less saving money.) Understanding cultures and other nations currencies or ways of life will teach them moral obligations ultimately helping each other succeeding in this project.