

Student Name (last, first): Higgs, Sheri

Instructions: Your self-evaluation will reflect if you have accomplished the learning goals you set for this class in the beginning of the semester, whether or not there are unexpected outcomes, how much you have grown in this class, and whether you will do differently in your professional development. You will give yourself a grade (on a 100 scale) based upon your own critical reflection. Your self-evaluation needs to be 400-500 words detailing your work and learning outcomes on class participation, gifting, weekly discussions, resident expert, literature review, lesson plan, and your experience of collaboration and interaction with your colleagues in this class. This project will be graded based on the genuineness, depth, and thoughtfulness of your self-evaluation. You will need to submit it to me *by 7:00 pm on May 12, 2011* by either providing a link to your E-portfolio website or sending it to the instructor via email.

The following are the learning components you'll address in your self-evaluation project.

- I. Attendance & Gifting (25 points) __25__

Reflection:

Gifting was a new class concept for me. I enjoyed and was appreciative of the “gifts” provided by my classmates. Not only did the gifts help round out concepts and give better understanding of the theories, but many provided real life examples of the theories in practice. As a visual learner, the charts and graphic organizers were of great assistance. The other benefit was to be able get to know my classmates better through their choices of gifts. I gifted articles that showed the day-to-day application of cognitive theories. These articles were from commonly available sources and were intended to not only show specific theories, but provide positive, uplifting themes.

- II. Class Orientation (50 points) __50__

Reflection:

The class orientation portion of the online courses at UTB are a wonderful way to “break the ice” with instructors and classmates. By providing pictures and a short personal introduction, we can put a face to a name and get a small sense of from where our classmates are viewing the course. The quiz on the syllabus and calendar (the mechanics of the course) is always helpful in orienting you to the direction and timeline of the course. I must admit that each time I go through this portion of the course, especially after completing it for the 10th time, I begin with “Here we go again. I’ve done this so many times”. However, once it is completed I know I have

a good handle on the course expectations and also learn interesting information about my fellow classmates. As a generally shy individual, it also provides me an opportunity to share a bit about myself without feeling awkward or ill at ease.

III. Weekly Discussion Questions and Comments (100 points) 85

Reflection:

I will admit, blogging is not my “thing”. The biggest challenge was to have two classes where blogging was an essential part of the course. Each instructor had different criteria and expectations for the blogs. Getting into the rhythm of the timing, length requirements, format and differing viewpoints of the two blogs was daunting. It was, however, interesting to see how each student got something different from the same material. There were times when the excitement about a particular concept or how it connected with me was impossible to express in 80-100 words. Reading others blogs and the responses was quite enjoyable. It was interesting to note how each of us connected with a particular chapter and the online discussions that were sparked.

IV. Resident Expert (100 points) 100

Reflection:

This was my favorite project. I love to teach and share what I have learned. Jim and I spent many hours in discussion over the chapter and what information was best to share. The presentation of the information was also a hot topic. In the end, I think our collaboration provided a clear and entertaining presentation of the material. Seeing the other presentations on the chapters was extremely helpful in increasing my understanding of the chapters. The timing of the presentations in relation to the blogs felt backwards. I would have been more comfortable with having the presentations before attempting to share my thoughts. For most chapters it wasn't until after the presentation that I could truly make a connection with my classroom.

V. Lesson Plan (50 points) 50

Reflection:

Our lesson plan attempted to combine the aspects of not only this course, but of all of the courses Jim and I have completed since entering the program. Since learning of the FACTS design, I have incorporated this lesson design in my classroom with great success. TAKS scores have risen nearly 30 percentage points for some student groups over the past two and a half years since using this design. It touches on many of the theories learned in this course and provides authentic activities on which students can build and enhanced their cognitive skills.

VI. Research Literature Review (100 points) _____95_____

Reflection:

The biggest factor that has prevented me from pursuing my Master's degree before now has been the writing aspect. I am an extremely linear, waste no words, use bullet points type of person. Any exercise involving writing has been met with trepidation. Having shared that, I will admit that I enjoy the research aspect and am becoming more comfortable with the writing portion of these projects. Collaborating with Jim, who is a wordsmith, has improved my writing and provides a sounding board for honing my writing skills. Our literature review has given us an opportunity to provide a sound argument for keeping music in our schools. My district school board has just decided to suspend the band program for a minimum of two years or until the school finance issue is resolved. I'm sharing this paper with our administration, who has expressed an interest in reading it, in hopes it will provide some sound arguments for reinstating the program.

Total Percentage Points: ___405___ Grade: ___95___

Overall Reflections:

My initial goal was to learn more about cognitive theories in order to better engage my students and provide a successful learning environment. I find myself thinking more about my students cognitive skill levels and how best to provide them the opportunity to further develop those skills. I also have begun to share with my students how they process and store information as an explanation as to why I have them perform certain tasks. My students have responded to this

information well and are more interested in completing their lessons. This course has allowed me to have additional answers to the questions “Why are we learning this?” and “When will I ever use this?”