

## 6) Analysis of Student Learning

In the Appendix is a bar graph comparing my pre-assessment and my summative assessment for learning outcome A (Appendix A-9). Some students were out for co-curriculars and one student was on home hospital and so they were not assessed fully for my teaching sample project. The blue on the graph marks the pre-assessment and the black marks the post assessment.

My goal for this unit was primarily learning outcome A, which requested that the students know 4 of the 6 syntactical devices. This graph shows that only 2 students did not meet the mark, and two were absent and did not make up the summative assessment. The majority of the students showed major progress. The most admirable being student #27. This student was not absent on the day of the pre-assessment, instead this person had scored a zero at first and managed to score 100% on the summative assessment.

The bulk of the students grew by two meaning they scored a two on the first assessment and a passing four on the final assessment for this particular unit. I'm happy to see how many students were able to meet my learning outcome despite the adjustments that had to be made partway through the unit. I feel if I had asked the students to create the round robin posters at the end of the unit than at the beginning, I would have more viable artwork to use as decor in the classroom!

In hindsight, I regret my choice of assessments. I decided to do matching quizzes because it was what was suggesting in the ENGL 182 seminar. However, it is not really the best way to assess what students really know. Matching quizzes are very much probability and process of elimination. Three students scored a six on the pre-assessment, and it's not that they aren't capable, but two went down a level on the summative assessment. I suspect that these students were very lucky on the first go-around and walked away with every answer correct.

In going over the response frequency results (Appendix A-10) and the knowledge that was being questioned, I was not especially surprised by the results. The students performed exactly as I would expect them to. The class scored 96% correct for identification of onomatopoeia. They were consistently enthusiastic about saying this word and the multitude of sound effects that goes along with it. The class scored at an average level for the subject complements which very much pleased me. I could only imagine how low their scores may have been had we not taken time away for an additional lesson.

The students performed fairly well with the identification of pleonasm, which also pleases me. One of the mini-discussions that was had focused on pleonasm being a result of bad style for young writers, specifically high schoolers. The class has now begun to notice when they have pleonasm in their own writing and are quick to correct it. And if I speak a pleonasm, there is no hesitation in calling me out immediately, whether or not it is the appropriate time.

Only 65% of the students correctly identified synecdoche. This somewhat upset me, considering we had spent a good amount of time double checking that it was identifiable. Still, it can be a tricky device. The other element in play is my regrettable use of a matching exam. The students who missed this question may have answered incorrectly else where, and through the process of elimination, caused themselves to incorrectly "synecdoche." I know this sounds like I'm making excuses, but the students confided shortly after the summative quiz that they found it difficult. This comment at first surprised me, but the more I contemplated the difficulty of the quiz the less empathy I had for my students. They are a generation unnaturally gifted at test-taking. This quiz, on the other hand, caused them to really think and access what they have learned. The typical test taking strategies fail with matching.

So while, a truly knowledgeable student could master an exam such as this one, I would have preferred to use another means if I could redo the assignment. I'm not entirely comfortable with my results being an accurate display of the class's knowledge acquisition.

I have a unique class in that there are no students with special needs or English Language Learners. In analyzing the achievement of two subgroups for Learning Outcome A, I have chosen to look closer at the gender gap and examine the learning differences between boys and girls, and I have also chosen to monitor the learning of students that I would label as "unmotivated" or "at-risk."

My first focus is on the timeless boys vs. girls battle. Though my class is generally pretty evenly balanced, more boys tested than girls for this assessment. Still, the results strikingly similar. Of the 20 boys tested, 19 met the objective, and of the 15 girls tested, 14 met the objective. The girl who did not meet the standard is new to the country this year, and is struggling with the American school system more than the material. She's told me numerous times that the rigor here is not what she is accustomed to.

When I tallied up the gender scorings, I thought there would be a more definitive difference. Actually, the feminist in me was hoping that the girls would meet the standards more than the boys. Upon further speculation, the feminist in me is defeated. Though only one student within each group did not meet the objective, overall, the boys scored higher than the girls. It seems that the majority of 5/6 scores and 6/6 scores were made by the males in my class and the majority of the 4/6 scores were attained by the females in the class. I'm not one to discriminate against gender, so I have to finalize this with, no matter what the smarter gender may be for this unit, I'm happy that the bulk of the class was successful in the unit.

I was most intrigued by the scores of my “at-risk,” or “unmotivated” students. I would say I have about 4 in this period. Two of the four are labeled by the school as “high-risk” of being a high school drop out, but I am lumping them with two other students, because the four of them all tend to be unmotivated in the classroom. They use my period to sleep, disrupt the class, or simply not complete work.

Of this group, I noted some interesting things in the results. The first is that the unmotivated, but not at-risk, student did not show any improvement, nor did he meet the standard. However, this student is heavily involved in band on campus, and is required to maintain a high GPA. After this unit, I will be keeping a closer eye on him because I am curious as to how he continues to perform and compete if he does not offer any work ethic in the classroom.

The other extremely interesting thing that arose is that the student who is most at-risk in my class received a perfect score on his summative assessment. He is a quiet student who lays his head down in class far too much and rarely participates. But this is one of those lights in the darkness that tells me he really is paying attention. I recently learned this student wants to be a Marine when he graduates. I’m assuming there are other underlying factors at play in his personal life, because it’s obvious that though his drive is often nonexistent, the intelligence is present.

What I will take from this assignment to apply to future units is to keep an eye out for my at-risk kids. I need to work a little harder to keep motivation up for everyone. I also now know that the at-risk students are more than capable of meeting the objectives I set and excelling in the classroom. I intend to be their guide more frequently than I have been.

