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Impact on Student Learning Analysis

**Introduction**

***1. Method:***

I chose to follow my first period over the second and final unit I taught, which was on voice in writing, using J. D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* as the accompanying text. Over the course of the unit, the students were journaling each day at the end of the lesson after discussing a chapter of the novel. Most of the time, the journals accompanied a theme from the day. The students always had the chance to write about anything else if they felt the need to do so. One formative assessment that accompanied this unit was a Writer’s Workshop, where the students worked in groups to edit two journal pieces to read in a Feather Circle. There were also two pop reading quizzes over *The Catcher in the Rye,* one of which was open book, as well as a grammar quiz. The summative assessment, a timed writing piece, was used at the end of the unit.

***General characteristics of school:***

Northview is one of four public high schools located in Johns Creek, which is in north Fulton County. The surrounding area is a very well-developed suburb with many large neighborhoods, including two country clubs. The population of the city is about 77,000. The median household income is $110,000. The city was incorporated in 2006. It should be noted that Northview is two miles away from Johns Creek High School.

***Physical features of the classroom:***

The classroom is one of a few in the school with a SmartBoard, which the instructor received after applying for a grant. The SmartBoard can connect to any computer in the room. There is also an older tube television located permanently in the classroom.

***Characteristics of students in chosen class:***

Northview has 2,800 students. The school is grades 9 through 12. The students are 47% white, 40% Asian, 7% black, 4% Hispanic, and 3% multiracial. 6% of the students have disabilities, 5% are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and 3% are limited English proficient. The student to teacher ratio is 18 to 1. The chosen class is a tenth grade on-level English class consisting of mostly fifteen- to sixteen-year-olds. In the tenth grade, the students are placed into either an on-level or honors class. To move up to the honors level, on-level students must maintain a grade of 95. In the chosen class, there are 26 students, 16 of whom are male. No students are considered gifted. Three students have been diagnosed with ADHD or ADD, but only one other student has an actual IEP and is considered to be a special education student, meaning only 5% of the class has special needs. This is close to the average of the school. One student was recently released from the English as a second language program, though she is still being monitored. It is interesting to note that 42% of the class is labeled as “Asian,” though only three still struggle with the conventions of the English language to varying extents (one being the student who was recently released from ESL.) However, the class’s numbers are almost even with the school’s averages.

This unit was interesting because many of the journal prompts asked students to talk about their backgrounds and how their foundations influence them today. While students did not have to focus on their cultures, many of them chose to anyway. It made for an interesting collection of pieces, since so many of the students are from or have parents that are from other countries. In addition, using narrative writing and voice as an assessment created a fair playing field for students of all abilities.

***Unit overview:***

The students read *The Catcher in the Rye.* Because Salinger gives Holden such a unique voice, the unit focused on narrative writing. The students learned what voice is, how to recognize it, and they also worked on developing their own voices. The majority of this was done through daily journaling that culminated in a Feather Circle.

*Enduring understandings:*

The student will understand…

* The importance of developing their own voices in their writing
* The role voice plays in a text

*Essential questions:*

* What is the importance of voice in a text?
* What role does voice play in a text?
* How can we identify voice?

*Objectives:*

The student will:

* Write a Feather Circle piece about himself or herself (Creating)
* Make inferences about the text and justify using textual evidence (Evaluating)
* Be able to examine voice in a variety of texts (Analyzing)
* Identify voice in a variety of texts (Applying)
* Demonstrate understanding of voice by discussing his or her own (Understanding)
* Be able to identify symbols and themes in the text (Remembering)

**Assessments**

***Assessments:***

We started the unit with a pre-assessment that identified what students know about voice in writing. Because the purpose of the unit is for students to identify what voice is and what their own voice is, I wanted to see what the students know, if anything, about this topic and how they would identify their own writing at this point. I asked them to write a paragraph about this and specified that it would not affect their grade.

The first and second formative assessments were reading quizzes about certain chapters from *The Catcher in the Rye.* The second quiz was open book. The next formative assessment was a Writer’s Workshop. Over the course of the unit, the students were writing journal pieces every day. They were tasked with choosing two of their favorite journal pieces to read to their small group and thoroughly edit in preparation for reading it in the Feather Circle. The final formative assessment was a grammar quiz.

The final assessment was a summative timed writing piece. In the days leading up to the assessment, the students watched the movie *Freedom Writers.* They were asked to choose one student from the film to analyze for voice while viewing. For the essay, they were given three options: they could compare and contrast that character’s voice to Holden’s, analyze Holden’s voice, or analyze only their character’s voice from *Freedom Writers.*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pre-assessment | Reading quiz #1 | Reading quiz #2 | Grammar quiz | Writer’s Workshop | Summative assessment |
| ELACC9-10W3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ELACC9-10RL2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ELACC9-10L1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ELACC9-10SL1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

***Data and Analysis***

**2. Analyzing and Reporting the Data:**

* ***Whole group***

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Mean | Median | Mode | Standard Deviation |
| Pre-assessment | 68 | 60 | 70 | 1 |
| Reading quiz #1 | 57 | 50 | 100 | 33 |
| Reading quiz #2 | 90 | 80 | 100 | 11 |
| Grammar quiz | 81 | 72 | 88 | 14 |
| Writer’s Workshop | 99 | 90 | 100 | 4 |
| Summative assessment | 84 | 86 | 83 | 3 |

* ***Two Subgroups:***

I’ve gotten to know all of my students pretty well as students throughout my time at Northview. While I may not be close with many of them, I think I have a good idea of the type of student each one may be. I know on average what kind of grades they get, how well-behaved they are, how much effort they put into their work, how much they care, etc. It’s based on my overall opinion that I decided which students I feel are high or low performing. There are some students who seem to struggle with most things we do (mostly because of the language difference) but I know that they try, that they care, and that their grade is not suffering, so I consider them high performing. The majority of my students are considered high performing; the only students who are low performing are the ones who continually refuse to turn in work, turn in low performing work, or don’t seem to care.

All of the students are 15- or 16-years-old.The high performing group consists of eight females and fourteen males. Of these students, nine are Asian, nine are white, two are black, and one is Hispanic. Three students have been diagnosed with ADHD. One of these students was released from the ESL program last year and is currently being monitored. The low performing group consists of two females and three males. Of these students, one is Asian, two are white, and two are black. One of the students is classified as special education and has an IEP.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Mean | Median | Mode | Standard Deviation |
| **High performing** | **Pre-assessment** | **69** | **60** | **70** | **4** |
| Low performing | Pre-assessment | 66 | 60 | 70 | 7 |
| **High performing** | **Reading quiz #1** | **65** | **65** | **30, 50, 90, 100** | **30** |
| Low performing | Reading quiz #1 | 40 | 20 | 0 | 34 |
| **High performing** | **Reading quiz #2** | **93** | **90** | **100** | **8** |
| Low performing | Reading quiz #2 | 83 | 75 | n/a | 13 |
| **High performing** | **Grammar quiz** | **82** | **72** | **88** | **14** |
| Low performing | Grammar quiz | 76 | 80 | 64 | 11 |
| **High performing** | **Writer’s Workshop** | **100** | **100** | **100** | **0** |
| Low performing | Writer’s Workshop | 96 | 90 | 100 | 7 |
| **High performing** | **Summative assessment** | **85** | **86** | **83** | **3** |
| Low performing | Summative assessment | 82 | 83 | 82 | 1 |

* ***Two Individuals:***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pre-assessment | Reading quiz #1 | Reading quiz #2 | Grammar quiz | Writer’s Workshop | Summative assessment |
| Student A | 70 | 90 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 88 |
| Student B | 50 | 0 | 60 | 72 | 100 | 80 |

**Reflection**

***3. Reflection on the Data***

The first thing I notice is that there is not much difference between the scores across the board on the pre-assessment. However, the only scores students could receive on this assignment were 100, 70, or 50. No students received 100, and all but two students received 70s. As for the first reading quiz, the difference between the class’s average on the first quiz compared to the sub-groups. The high performers scored 8 points higher than the class average, while the low performers scored 17 points lower. In addition, the high performing student I chose to analyze scored 33 points higher than the average, while the low performing student chose not to answer any questions. On the next quiz, the high performing group scored 3 points higher than the class average, but the low performing group scored 7 points lower. The high performing student scored 10 points higher than the average, while the low performing student scored 30 points lower.

There is also some discrepancy between the scores on the grammar quiz—the class average was an 81, and the high performing group only scored 1 point better. However, the low performing group scored 5 points lower. The high performing student scored 19 points higher than the average, while the low performing student scored 9 points lower. However, the scores for the Writer’s Workshop again even out across the board, with the only slight difference being that the low performing group scored 3 points lower than the class average. This was a participation grade (due to an issue with previous activities), so students could only receive 100, 80, or 60. All but one student (my low performer) scored 100.

Finally, there is not much of a difference for the summative assessment. The high performing group scored 1 point higher than the class average, while the low performing group only scored 2 points lower. However, the high performing individual scored 4 points higher and the low performing student scored 4 points lower. It’s interesting to compare the pre-assessment with the summative assessment: the class average gained 16 points, while the high and low performing groups both gained 16 points, as well. The high performing student scored 18 points higher, and the low performing student scored 30 points higher.

In the future, I would choose to score the Workshop differently. I had little say in setting up the rubric for this assignment; if it were up to me, it would still be a participation grade, but those who chose not to participate would have received a 50 instead of a 60, and those who chose to participate minimally would have received a 70 instead of an 80. This way, this assessment would have lined up with the scoring of the pre-assessment. Other than that, I’m very happy with the way these assessments turned out.

The reason I would have changed the possible scores to align with the above is because I don’t believe in rewarding students who are doing the minimal amount of work with a B. I believe in passing them, but just barely. In addition, I do not believe in giving students a 0 (as long as they show up and turn something in), but if students choose not to participate, the maximum they should receive is a 50.

In addition, I most likely would not allow students three options on the summative assessment, but again, this was not my decision. Perhaps two options would be okay, but three is too many. While there were some extenuating circumstances, what ended up happening with the final assessment was that students were given the option to completely forget about *The Catcher in the Rye,* the reason this unit took five weeks, and just write about a movie they had spent three days on. While the final outcome was the same—they had to understand what voice is—it appeared that the students were confused about the purpose of reading an entire novel with no assessment in the end, and rightfully so.

Allowing the students to use their books on the second reading quiz obviously allowed for a great change in the scores. While there were, of course, students who were not reading, allowing students to use their books (and giving them a strict time limit) still makes it obvious who read and who did not. However, the way the quizzes were set-up did require the students to recall pretty specific information from the novel that may or may not have remembered from their reading the night before. While I don’t believe this is a great form of assessment, I do believe it is necessary to “inspire” students to do their reading—which obviously does work, as the grades drastically improved. I do believe this assessment taught students to take responsibility.

Obviously, there was a great difference between the scores on the pre-assessment and the summative assessment. This was a five-week unit, in which we explicitly discussed voice in writing every single day. One would hope the students would not only learn what voice is, but also be able to identify and examine voice, as well. I feel the students were successful in learning about voice, and that they took an interest in the topic, as well. Because of this, I do feel that my teaching was effective, as the desired end result occurred. I’m very happy with a mid-B average.

My students were most successful on the Writer’s Workshop, though, as mentioned before, this was a participation grade. However, I am still happy (and was pleasantly surprised) that all but one student came fully-prepared, and that the one student who was not prepared still chose to participate. I believe the students learned that writing can be fun—they enjoyed writing narratives about themselves and exploring their thoughts.

The students were also successful on the second reading quiz; though I think their grades were improved by the ability to use their books, I think it helped that they knew they could be given a pop quiz at any moment, and were attempting to be prepared for it. With that being said, the students were least successful on the first reading quiz. This was not much of a surprise, as these students tend to forget about their homework or attempt to get by on either not reading or relying on Sparknotes. Again, as stated previously, these reading quizzes were set up to be very specific, which could pose a problem even for students who had read.

As my ESL-monitored student is one of my high performers and scored well on all of my assessments, I’d like to think this makes my assessments accessible to students of all language abilities. In addition, my student from the special education program, though in my low performer group, scored pretty well on all of the assessments, as well. Again, I’d like to think this means my assessments are accessible for the wide range of student abilities one will get in any given class.

***4. Reflection on Possibilities for Professional Development***

The first thing I realized from this unit is that I would like to focus on clarity in assignments. Initially, I was planning on having at least three literature circles that served as formative assessments. However, the first two were disastrous, and it would not have been fair to assign the students the grades they received. Instead, I ended up throwing out the whole idea in the end. I do like the idea of literature circles, and I think they play an important role in the classroom, but I did not set up the assignment well either time. It’s important to thoroughly explain every single aspect of an assignment to students, and I made the mistake of making too many assumptions about their understanding of the assignment.

My second professional learning goal is to focus on the art of assessing, specifically. I found when creating the rubrics for these assessments that I was really struggling to articulate what I wanted to see as an end result from my students. It’s so important to have clear goals for the students so they know how to try to perform for you. There was an issue with the first rubric I attempted to use for the literature circle where most students would have really struggled to pass; at times, the rubrics I created were very unrealistic.

Because I now know that I’d like to focus on things, I think the first thing I will work on doing once I am in my own classroom will be writing down for every single thing we do the steps that are required, the goal for the task, how it will be graded, what I expect, and what materials will be required—even if it is a small task. This should help with my second goal—if I am able to articulate, from the very beginning of an assignment, what I am looking for, it should be easier to create a rubric. In addition, I will focus more on the breakdown of each criterion from the rubric to ensure I am setting students up for success. This will consist of making sure students who deserve to do well will do well and can get the maximum amount of points possible for their efforts.

**Voice in Writing (Pre-assessment)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UNDERSTANDS VOICE COMPLETELY** | **UNDERSTANDS VOICE SOMEWHAT** | **DOES NOT UNDERSTAND VOICE** |
| Student understands that voice incorporates an individual’s personality into writing (tone). Student knows voice incorporates diction, details, and imagery. Student knows to pay attention to syntax. | Student recognizes that his or her own personality is important in writing or knows that diction, details, and/or imagery play a key role in identifying voice. | Student does not recognize that personality plays a role in voice and does not understand that diction, details, and imagery are important in voice. |

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*The Catcher in the Rye* Quiz

1. How does Holden feel about Ackley?

2. Why does Holden say Ackley dislikes Stradlater?

3. Describe Stradlater.

4. What does Stradlater want Holden to do for him?

5. How does Holden know Stradlater’s date?

6. What did Holden buy while he was in New York?

7. Describe Ackley.

8. What does Stradlater want to borrow from Holden?

9. What is Holden trying to do when Ackley interrupts him?

10. How do we see Holden use stream of consciousness in his narration of the text?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Period: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chapter 8 Quiz

1. When he leaves Pencey Prep, where does Holden immediately go?

2. Who sits by Holden on the train?

3. How does Holden describe her?

4. What does Holden tell her about her son?

5. What does Holden tell the woman is his reason for being out of school early?

6. What does Holden say he normally does on the train?

7. Where does Holden invite the woman to go with him on the train?

8. What does the woman tell Holden he’s not allowed to do on the train?

9. Why does Holden say he had to stop talking to the woman?

10. What examples do we see of Holden being an unreliable narrator in this or in previous chapters?

Feather Circle

In preparation for our Feather Circle this Friday, March 23rd, we will be doing a Writer’s Workshop on Thursday, March 22nd. Tonight, you should pick out two pieces you have written during this unit that you would be willing to read to the class on Friday. You should then come up with three questions for each piece, six questions total, that you would like to ask your group during the workshop about your piece.

For the actual workshop, you will be put into groups. Each person will get a turn to read his or pieces to the rest of the group. While these pieces are being read, everyone else is expected to be silent and pay attention. Once each group member has commenced reading, the other members of the group should offer that person their opinion on his or her work. Remember to keep comments constructive! Finally, choose one of the two pieces you would like to read on Friday and continue to work on that piece.

**Writer’s Workshop**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Effort:** Brings journal pieces. Reads journal pieces to group members.  **Group collaboration:** Pays attention to others. Offers constructive criticism/opinion to others.  **Further work:** Continues to work on own pieces. | **FULFILLS EXPECTATIONS**  **100** | **SOME EFFORT**  **80** | **VERY LITTLE EFFORT**  **60** |

Timed Writing

Read all instructions carefully. You may use any notes or handouts from class, as well as your copy of *The Catcher in the Rye.* Use at least three direct quotations to support your explanation of voice; make sure your quotations come from the novel and/or *Freedom Writers*.You have three options for this timed writing:

**Option 1:** Write an essay comparing and contrasting the voice of Holden with the voice of one of the characters from *Freedom Writers,* considering ONLY ONE of the following: diction, details, OR tone. You must include one or more quotes from *Catcher* in your essay.

**Option 2:** Write an essay about the voice of Holden, focusing on only TWO of the following: diction, details, imagery, syntax, and/or tone. You must include three or more quotes from *Catcher* in your essay.

**Option 3:** Write an essay about the voice of one character from *Freedom Writers,* focusing on only TWO of the following: diction, details, and/or tone. You do not need to include any quotes in your essay.

**Requirements:** MLA format

Three or more total quotations

Introduction, conclusion, and body paragraphs (your discretion)

Thesis statement

Formal writing

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Exceeds the Standard (10 pts)** | **Meets the Standard (8 pts)** | **Approaches the Standard (7 pts)** | **Does Not Meet the Standard (5-6 pts)** |
| CONTENT  40% of total score  \_\_\_\_\_\_/40 | **\_\_\_**Analysis of assigned essay question is correct and insightful.  \_\_\_Effective introduction: provides clear and sophisticated purpose in response to topic  \_\_\_Effective conclusion: an elegant, connected end to the essay, no new information introduced  \_\_\_Effective body paragraphs: analyses are interpretive and are fully elaborated with specific examples, quotes, and details. All aspects of the question answered. | \_\_\_Analysis of assigned essay question is correct.  \_\_\_A good introduction: provides clear purpose in response to topic  \_\_\_Effective conclusion: connected end to the essay, no new information introduced  \_\_\_Effective body paragraphs: analyses are interpretive and there is good elaboration with specific examples, quotes, and details. Most aspects of the question answered. | \_\_\_Analysis of assigned essay questions shows some misunderstanding.  \_\_\_Introduction: May retell story or included unnecessary details.  \_\_\_Conclusion: contains new information or is not a clear ending to the essay.  \_\_\_Body paragraphs: little interpretation; student may retell the story OR specific examples, quotes, and details are missing or incorrectly used in support of response. | \_\_\_Misunderstood assigned essay question.  \_\_\_Introduction: Little connection to question or student response.  \_\_\_Conclusion: no definitive conclusion to indicate end of discussion of the question.  \_\_\_Body paragraphs: no interpretation, student may retell the story OR no specific examples, quotes, and details in support of response. |
| ORGANIZATION  20% of total score  \_\_\_\_\_\_/10 | \_\_\_Organization creates cohesion of thought. | \_\_\_Organization creates a clear, easily readable essay. | \_\_\_Organization leaves reader confused. Lacks logic. | \_\_\_No structure  \_\_\_No paragraphs  \_\_\_Rambling |
| QUOTE INTEGRATION  \_\_\_\_\_\_/10 | \_\_\_Quotes are well-integrated into sentence and quotes are explained with correct citation. | \_\_\_Student quotes from text but drops quote or doesn’t explain its use in the writing or incorrect format for citation. | \_\_\_Student does not quote but does reference the text. Student may not include page number. | \_\_\_Little to no referencing of text to support discussion.  . |
| STYLE  20% of total score  \_\_\_\_\_ /20 | \_\_\_Word choice is formal, varied, and precise  \_\_\_Sentences vary in length and structure | \_\_\_Word choice is formal and engaging  \_\_\_Some variation in sentence length and structure | \_\_\_Word choices may be simple or repetitive  \_\_\_Little variation in sentence length and structure | \_\_\_Word choice is elementary or informal  \_\_\_Lacks variation in sentence length and structure |
| CONVENTIONS  Appropriate to a timed writing assessment  20% of total score | \_\_\_Sentence formation, usage, and mechanics are consistently correct. Errors are minor. Essay is almost error free.  \_\_\_Text length is evidence of student’s ability to be eloquent, brief, and thorough in timed writing environment. | \_\_\_Sentence formation, usage, and mechanics are generally correct. Errors do not interfere with meaning.  \_\_\_Text is either a little too long (getting wordy) or perhaps missing support to truly clarify thinking. | \_\_\_Multiple errors in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics. Errors may interfere or obscure meaning.  \_\_\_Brevity of response may limit demonstration of competence. Essay is too long resulting in repetitive information. | \_\_\_Frequent errors in sentence formation, usage, and mechanics  \_\_\_Errors interfere or obscure meaning  \_\_\_Text’s length indicates clear lack of knowledge of subject matter |

**FINAL SCORE = \_\_\_\_\_\_\_/100**