

Instructional Decision-Making

In the initial planning of the unit there are many factors that are not taken into consideration when the Learning Goals and Unit objective are created. It is not until the actual implementation of a specific task or assessment that causes you to rethink the way that you are going to approach how you are going to teach this unit.

Incident 1

The first incident that made me change my course of instruction was near the beginning of my unit. In order to try to plan for more in-class activities I had decided to have the students read the play A Raisin in the Sun outside of class. I thought that more activities would help enable the student's understanding of the play and make the class more engaging. In order to assess how the students understood the play I was going to give them quizzes to see what they read and understood. The first quiz saw a definite opposition in the expected results. Most of the students did very poorly on the exam where only about six of them received a grade above an 80. Since we corrected the quizzes in class I was able to see these results right away. I posed the question to the class as why they did so poorly and they said that they did not understand what was going on in the play. I then did a review in class to try and help them understand what was going on and try to point out to them what I felt would be helpful in their understanding of future objectives. The students were very confused and said that it would help them if they could actually see or hear what was going on. I decided then that next class we would instead act out the play having people be characters and get up in front of the class to give them that visual aspect.

The next class I had students volunteer for parts and then gave them some props to try and make the experience even more real for them. The students had first had some difficulty getting into the actual performance of it but after getting further into the scene they started to pick up better on the rhythm of reading the dialogue and performing it.

Instructional Decision-Making

Strictly based upon actually looking at the students reading along with the “actors” they seemed to be getting the text more and becoming engaged with it as particular students put their own twists on certain characters. The next quiz saw a huge jump in improvement with most students scoring 80 or above with two or three grades below an 80. Even the class discussion improved because the students could see the physical action going on rather than just sitting by themselves reading trying to visualize the action while trying to get the rhythm of as many as four characters speaking.

In order to even further their understanding I decided to show clips from the film that way the students could really get a visual of the play in terms of set, action and how professional actors would present the text. This helped greatly because the students were able to see how a certain scene or character reaction should be played and help add to the character development, which would certainly help them in future tasks.

After seeing the confusion that my students were having I decided that it was more important that they understand the play itself. By having them act it out and this showed a great improvement in how they read the play and could express that understanding to me. Classroom discussion became so much more engaging because the students were able to see that visual representation. As one student said: “Mr. B it’s a play, aren’t they meant to be seen?” When I was creating the unit that thought never entered my mind. So in answer to his question, yes they are.

Incident 2

The next incident of instructional decision making that I made was geared toward one individual student but the outcome ended up benefitting the class as a whole. One student, who is very often absent or when he is in class can be very distracting and disruptive. I noticed that he almost never would participate in class discussion and his quizzes were very poor. In

Instructional Decision-Making

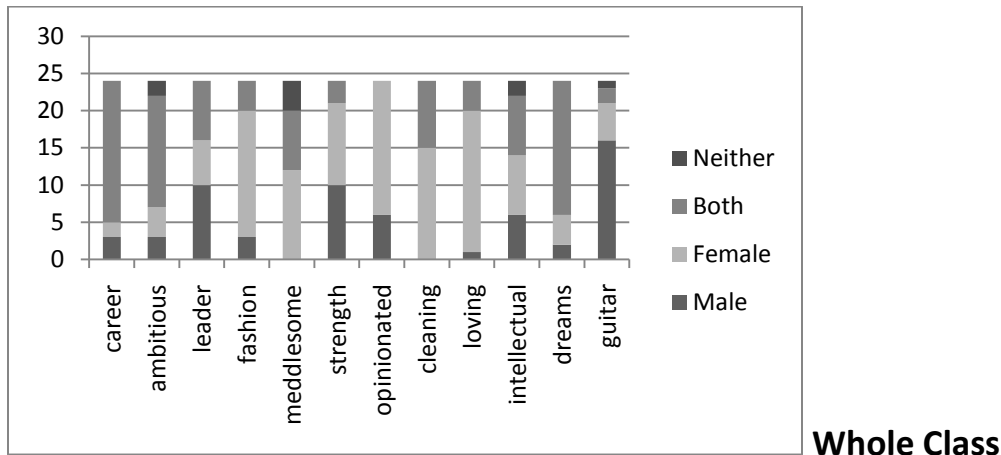
passing during one class I heard him talking to another student about his experience in the Drama Club. It was then I decided that I would use that to my advantage, since he was acting out in class why not at least act out the text. I was expecting him to fight me on this but he was actually very willing and happy to perform the role of Walter. This was a great idea because he was great. He really took the stage directions and used them to give his own performance of Walter. He especially did well whenever Walter had a real dramatic scene, he really got into it. So I decided that he would continue to perform the role of Walter anytime he was there. The class really liked to watch him get into the role and the other students that were performing liked it because it made being in front of your peers and reading a little easier and less intimidating.

Now in terms of the assessments for him it really only made half a difference. His quizzes were still not good because he either did not answer them or was absent. But his contribution to classroom discussion improved greatly. He got a lot more involved in the conversation because in his interaction with the other students reading their characters he was able to build upon that to show that he had an understanding of the action of the play and some of the themes that were being discussed. This is a student who often times does not come to class and when he does he is loud, obnoxious or asleep. By allowing him to put that energy in the performances I was allowing for an environment where the students were able to learn better and feel more comfortable.

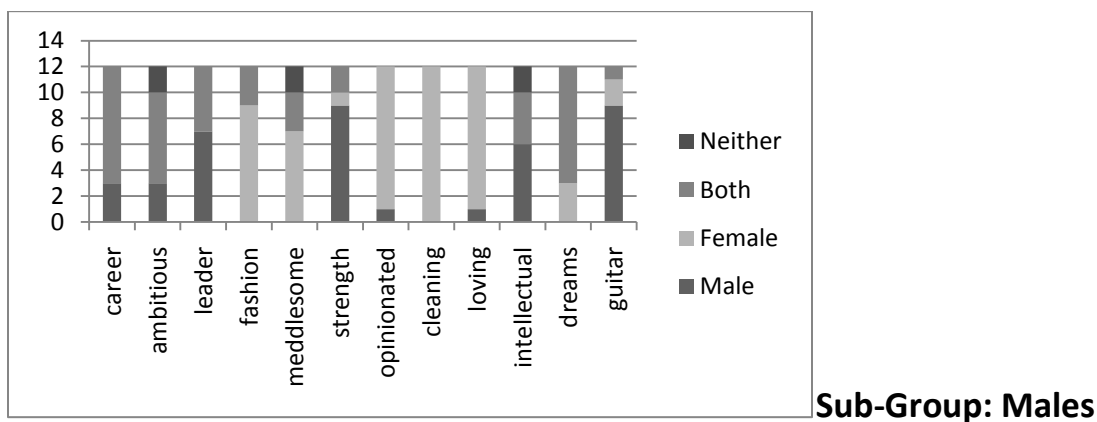
Analysis of Student Learning

Objective 3. The students will be able to analyze music videos by applying the Feminist Critical Lens.

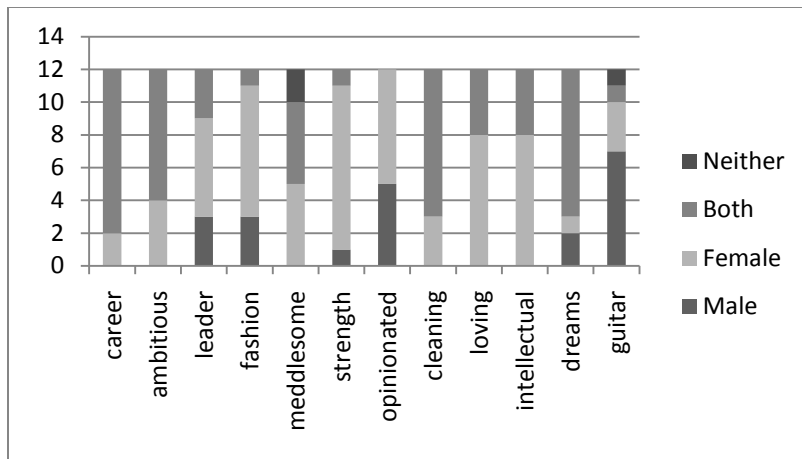
Pre-Assessment:



The pre-assessment for this objective was hard to measure because of the nature of it. It wasn't really an assessment of what they know but what they think. The word chart was composed of words (connected to the text) that would force the students to think of what, if any, gender stereotypes existed in conjunction with those words. The way that this was analyzed was by I took each word and counted how many times they were placed in specific columns. The results for the most part were a bit surprising to me. A lot of the students put words in the female column or the both column. This could be due to the abundance of female characters in the text or the perhaps the nature of the words.



Analysis of Student Learning



Sub-Group: Females

I chose to look at this assessment in terms of gender, since that is part of the main focus of the objective. In looking at the male chart you see how the males aligned a lot of the words with themselves. However, certain words had a high response of a female association with them.

The female chart shows a bit of the same pattern. The females associated all the words with their own gender, some more than others. Many words also saw a high response within the both column.

In looking at these two charts together the data again points to a high female association with a lot of the words. This again could be attributed to the text or the nature of the words.

Individual Students:

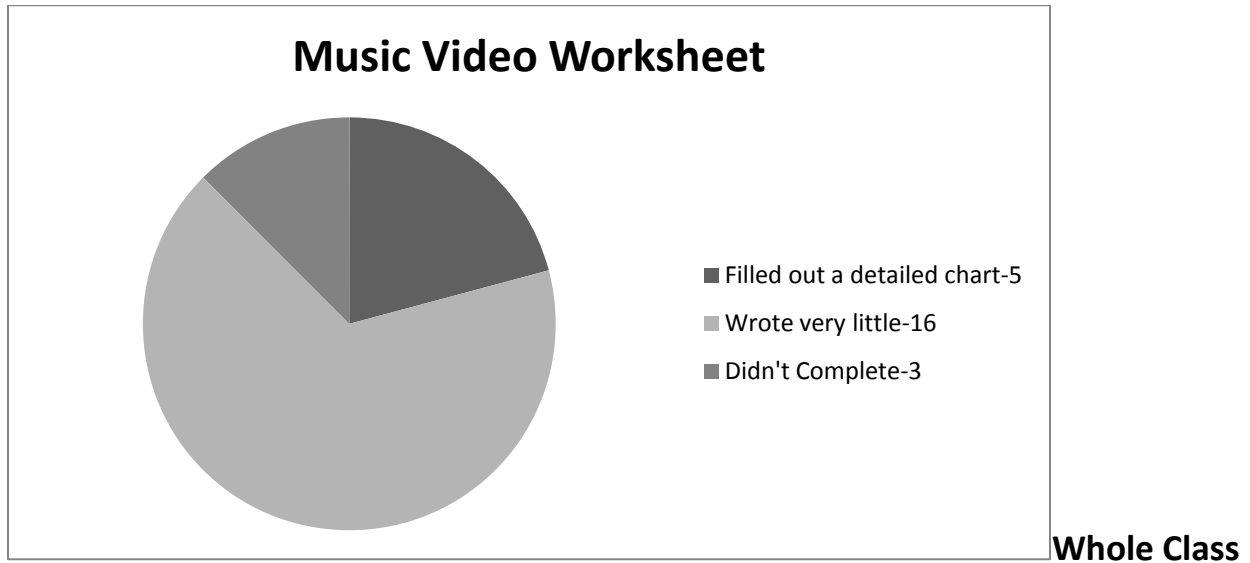
Student A

| | |
|---------|--|
| Male | Guitar, Career, Leader, Strength |
| Female | Opinionated, intellectual, Fashion, Cleaning, Loving |
| Both | Ambitious, Dreams |
| Neither | Meddlesome |

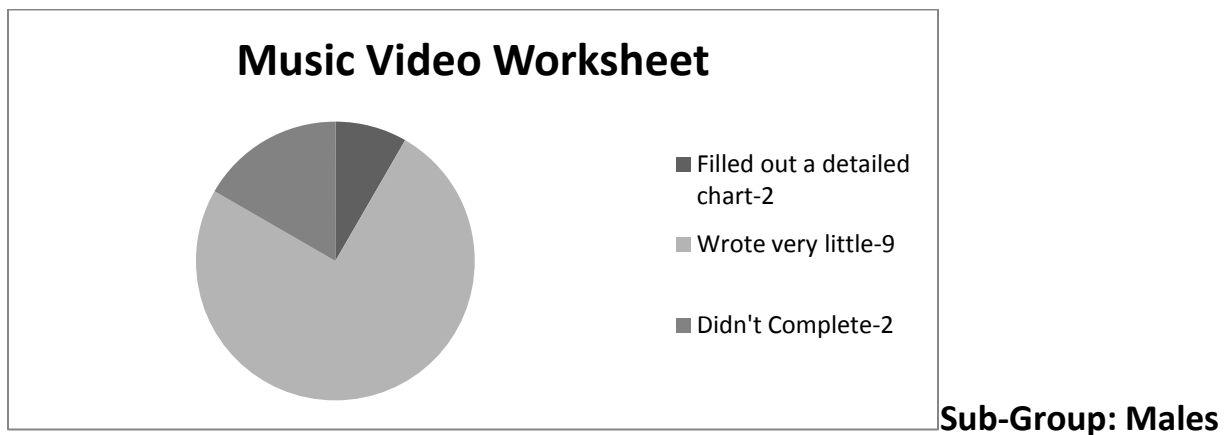
Student B

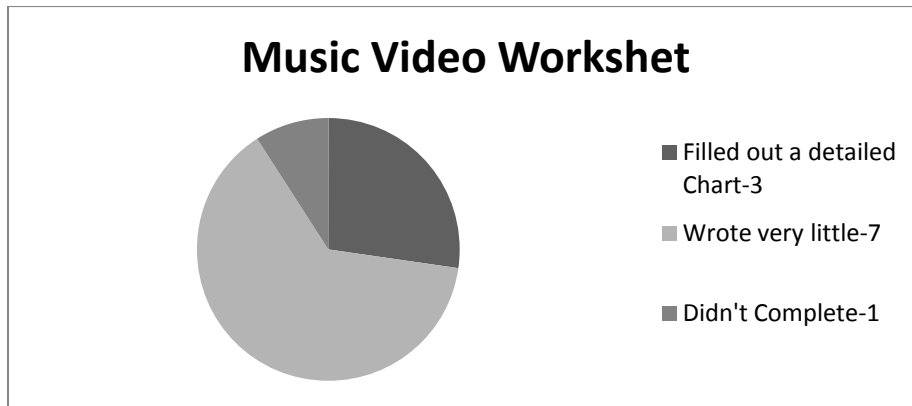
| | |
|---------|--|
| Male | Leader, Strength, Guitar |
| Female | Fashion, Cleaning |
| Both | Career, Ambitious, Opinionated, Dreams, Loving, Intellectual |
| Neither | Meddlesome |

This is a sample of two individual students' pre-assessment. In looking at the tables I believe that it is important to note that Student A is female and Student B is male. I think that it is interesting to note that the female student associated more words with her own gender while Student B answered in terms of both. This data really doesn't show their abilities yet but I think it is interesting to see how an individual student answered.

Formative Assessment:

When watching the music videos the students had to fill out a graphic organizer that asked them to describe some of the visual elements that they saw and what, if any, were some female stereotypes. Most of the charts were filled out but with little to no detail. A lot of the students just wrote down one word answers. Five of the students wrote out a detailed chart giving great descriptions. This could be due to the fact that we did discuss some of the elements as a class, showing that many of the students might have had some confusion and decided they would wait and see what others would say.





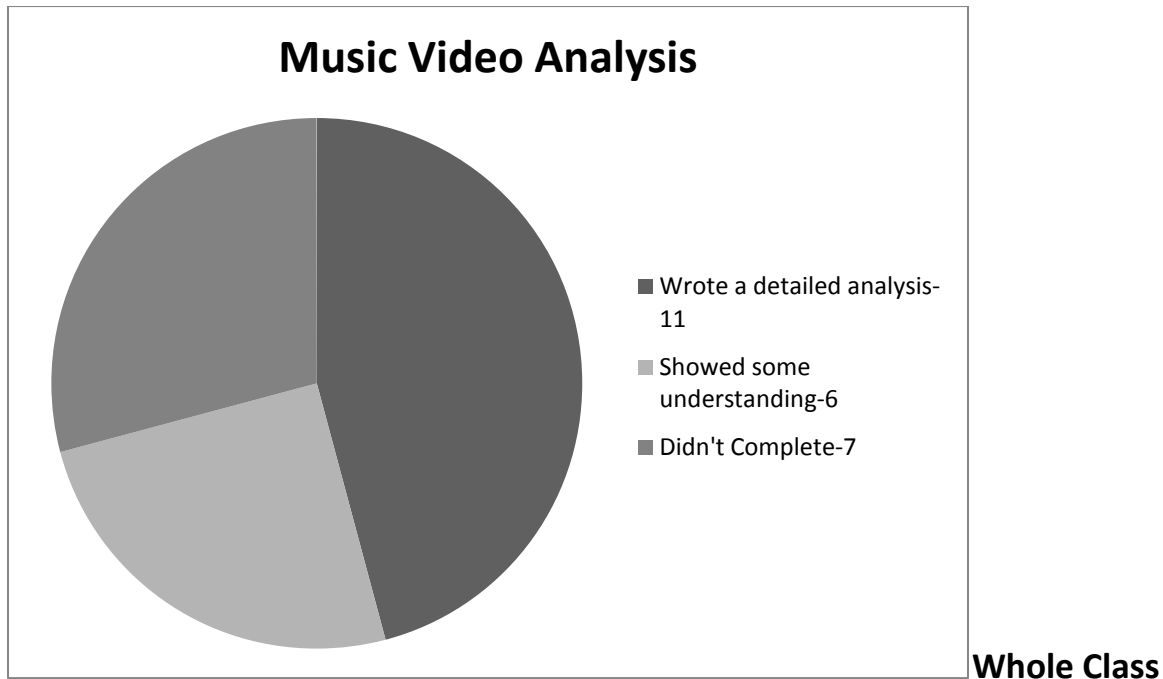
Sub-Group: Females

In looking at the data for the two sub-groups the female students did only slightly better than the male students. The female students did write more detailed charts and this could probably be due to the female nature of the music videos that were shown. The small difference between the two groups could lead me to believe that the class as a whole had trouble with the material.

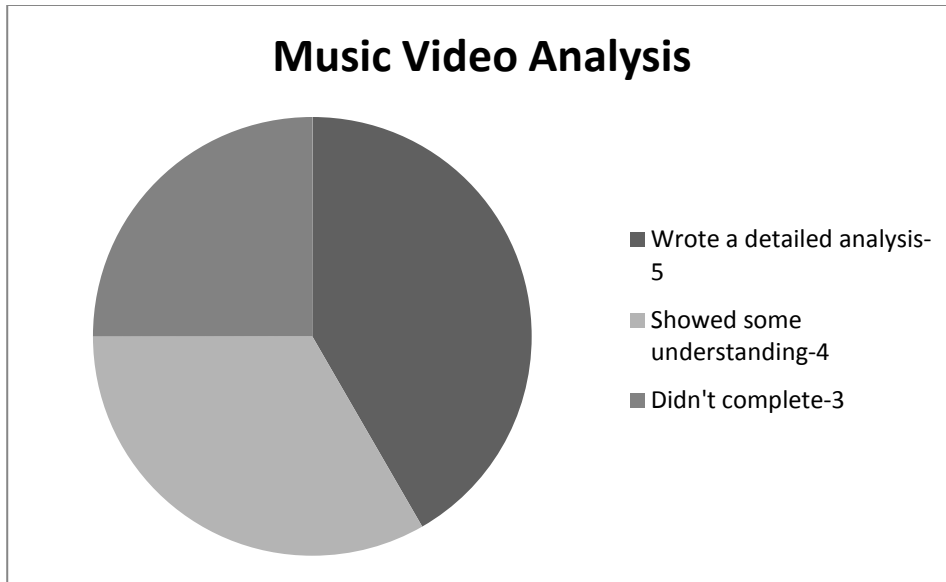
Individual Students

In looking at the work of the two individual students Student A, who is a higher performing student was one of the students who wrote a more detailed list. She incorporated many elements into writing what she saw in the videos allowing me to see that she fully grasped the concepts of the Feminist Lens. When the chart was talked about in class she was very willing to discuss hers and brought some very insightful things to the conversation. She had a lot to say about what was going on in the videos visually which helped me in getting a sense of what her understanding was because she always related it back to the feminist lens. Student B did fill out the chart but his answers were not as detailed. Student B is a lower performing student who puts very little effort into his work. His is harder to assess because, through his lack of detail it is hard to get a sense of wither he understands what is being learned in class or not. He also almost never participates in any class discussion and when he is called on he either refuses to answer or gives very short answers.

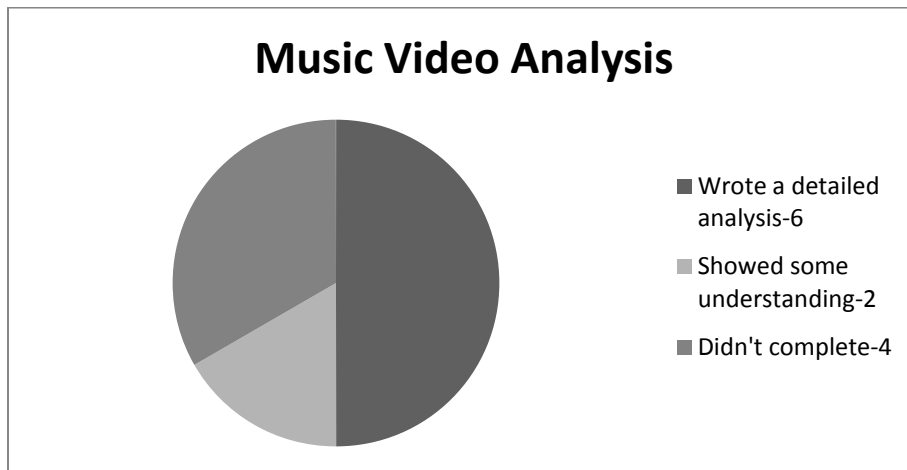
Post-Assessment:



The post-assessment proved also to be a bit challenging. The students were asked to write a one paragraph response where they write a feminist reading on the two music videos. This fared better than the chart but there were still issues with it. In this assignment more students produced detailed work. This was the first time these students were introduced to the feminist lens so I was happy with those that wrote a detailed analysis. Six of the students did not write as detailed a response but they did show understanding of the concept of the feminist lens by trying to incorporate some of the elements we had discussed during class. The one thing that I am concerned with is the high number of students that did not complete the assignment at all. Seven students handed nothing in so I have to read that as they did not understand wither what was asked of them or they were not able to grasp some of the concepts of the feminist critical lens.



Sub-Group:Males



Sub-Group:Females

In looking at the analysis between subgroups it is interesting to note the amount of female students that did not complete the assignment. They also had the highest amount of detailed written analysis. The male group though did have a higher number of students that showed somewhat of an understanding of the task.

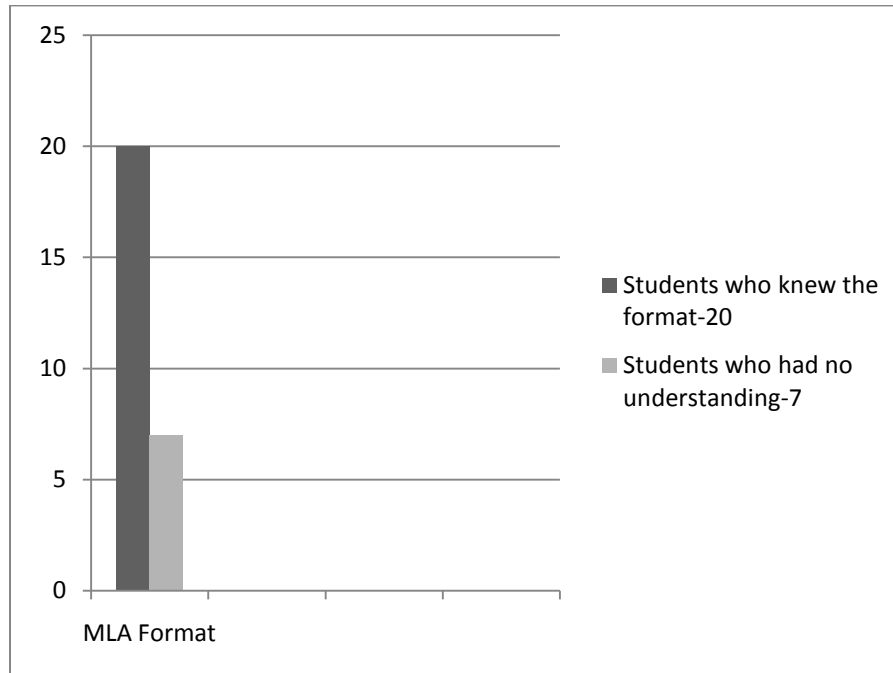
Individual Students:

In looking at the work of individual students Student A performed much higher in giving a detailed analysis of what the two videos were depicting She states specific things from the videos and uses them to show her point. Student B did show some understanding but did not really go into great detail about it. He does say how one of the videos projects a negative image but never really explains why.

Analysis of Student Learning

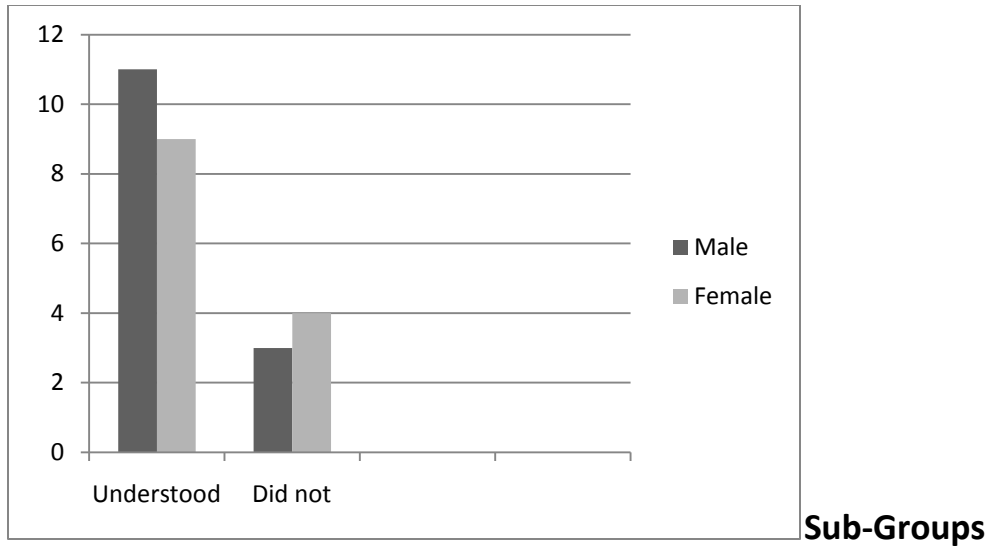
Objective 5. The Students will be able to compose a Character Analysis where, in the form of a paper (with proper MLA), they analyze a character of their choice from A Raisin In The Sun.

Pre-Assesment:



The pre-assessment for objective 5 was just a question and answer session about what the students knew about MLA Format. Since they had to use it for their Capstone project many of the students already had a working knowledge of what the format was and how it worked. Since the post-assessment is a paper and asks them to use MLA format it is important to see what they know about it and to determine if a mini lesson needs to be taught.

Analysis of Student Learning



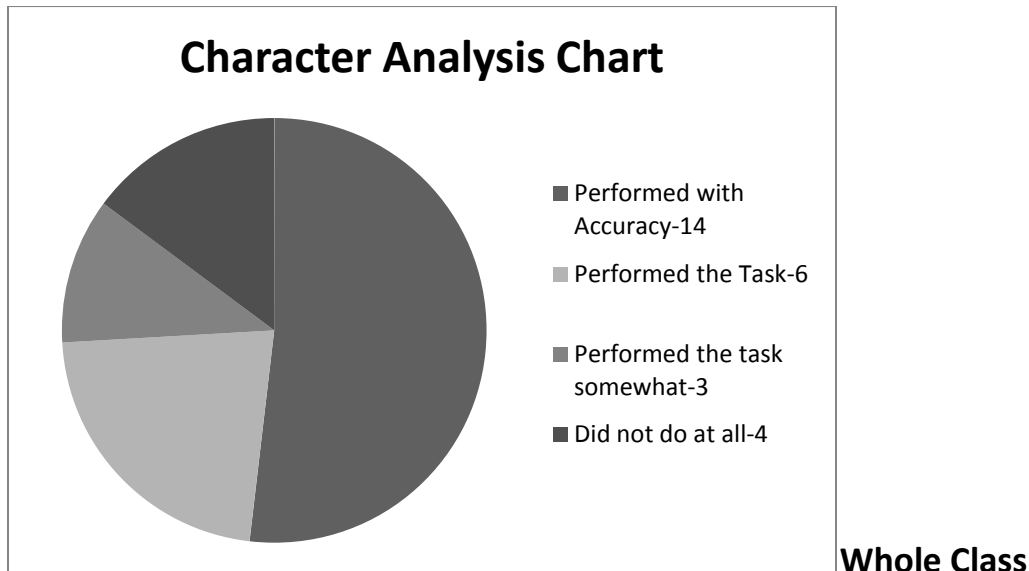
In looking at how the sub-groups understood more males understood the format of MLA. Eleven male students showed an understanding while three did not. In terms of the females nine students understood while three did not.

Individual Students:

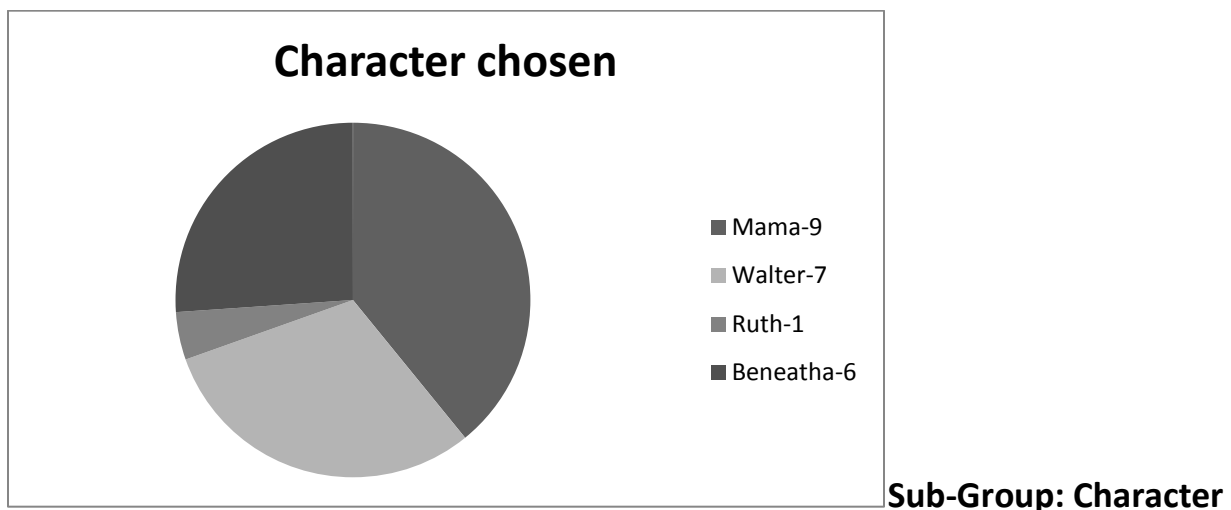
| | Understood | Did Not Understand |
|------------------|------------|--------------------|
| Student A | ➤ | |
| Student B | ➤ | |

In looking at the analysis of the individual students both Student A and Student B understood what MLA Format was and participated vocally in the question and answer session.

Formative Assessment:



The task asked the students to fill out a character analysis chart that asked them to pick three traits for the character of their choice and the find evidence of that trait, and then provide a quote. The students did well with this task. A little bit over half of them were able to perform it with accuracy. I did not collect this chart because it was meant for them to use for their final paper. I did go around and look to make sure that each student was on track and able to produce the work. The students who performed the task were either missing one or two elements, but ran out of time. A few students really were struggling with trying to find quotes so I gave them some suggestions and helped guide them in the direction of where they could find them. Four students did not do it all.



In looking at their character traits I think it is interesting to divide that up into what character they choose. The most popular choice, interestingly, was Mama. Ruth was the least popular. This made me reflect back on our readings and the students had a lot more to say about Mama

Analysis of Student Learning

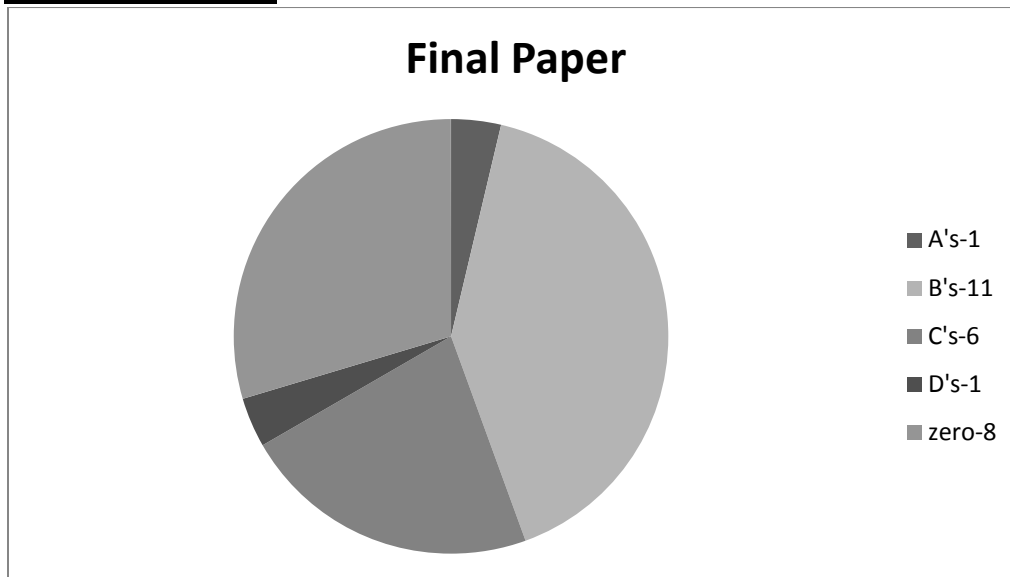
and Walter than Ruth. I think that it is interesting that they chose or identify more with two of the stronger characters in the play.

Individual Students:

| | Character | Completion of Chart |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------|
| Student A | Beneatha | Successful |
| Student B | Walter | Did not do |

The individual results were interesting because Student A chose to do her analysis on Beneatha and was very successful at completing the chart. Student B chose to do Walter but did not fill out the chart at all. When I asked him why he didn't do it he simply stated he didn't need to. This is often an answer with this student who usually does not participate in class.

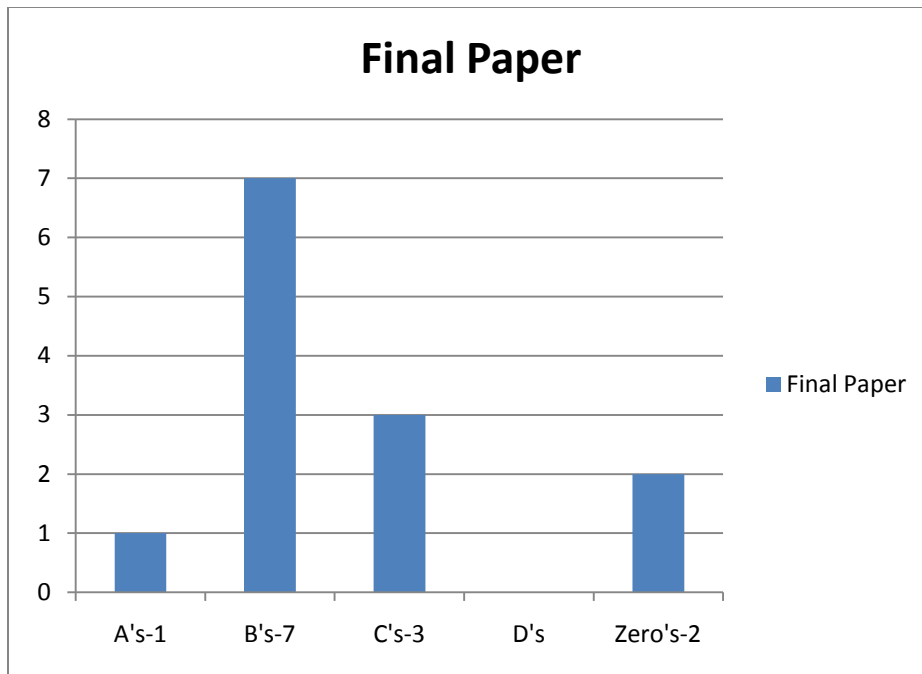
Post-Assessment:



Whole Class

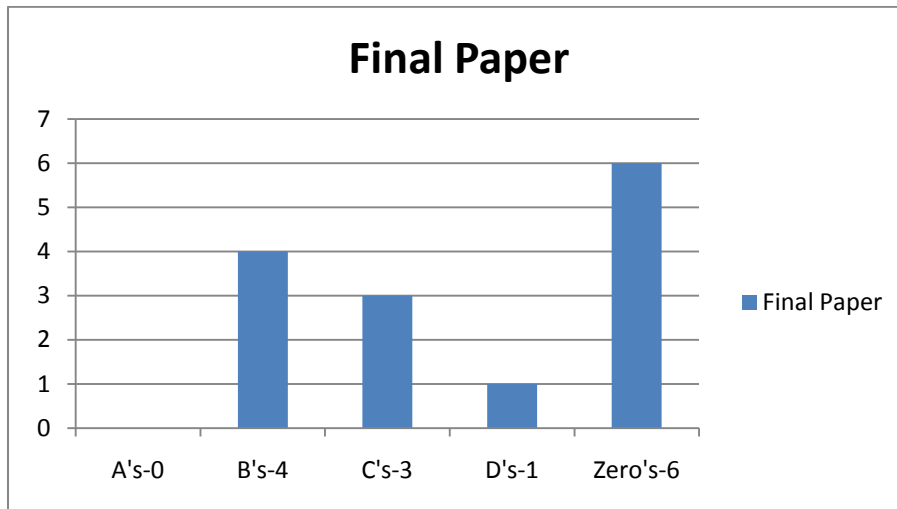
The final results of the paper were interesting because of the grade range. As a whole the class averaged in the B range. There was one A, six C's and one D. The startling result though is the amount of zeros, eight. That is an extremely large chunk of the class. In looking over it it is strange because some of the student's that did not hand it in are often participate a great deal.

Analysis of Student Learning



Sub-Group Female

In looking at how the female students did they mostly were in the B range. The only A in the class was written by a female and she tends to do very good work. Overall I think that the female student's successfully completed the assignment.



Sub-Group Male

The male sub-group did not achieve the same successful standards as the female group. Most of the grades for the males were zeros. This is interesting because often times the male students are very active and participate in class.

Analysis of Student Learning

Individual Students:

| | Grade |
|------------------|-------|
| Student A | B+ |
| Student B | D+ |

This data coincides with the sub-group data. Student A is a female student who actively participates in class and always hands in assignments. Student B is a male student, that is very bright but never applies himself and often times misses assignments. The biggest overall problem with Student B's paper was the structure and lack of quotes from the text. The purpose was to use quotes from the text as a way to give evidence of your findings. He did not do this.

Final Rationale

In looking at the overall data of the student's work I think that the objective that the students most successfully meet was Objective 3 where they were asked to analyze a music video using the feminist critical lens. I think that overall the students did successfully understand the material pertaining to the Feminist lens but it was just their lack of detail that was an issue. Since this is a Level 2 class I was more concerned with the fact that they understood the basic concept of this extremely complicated material. Using a critical lens is not often taught in high schools so I was very happy with the results that the students produced. In looking back I think the reason that this objective was so successful was because of the use of visual aids. A PowerPoint was used to aid the students in their understanding and introduce the material to them. This class is an extremely visual class when it comes to learning and that was shown in their engagement of the lesson and the active participation that they displayed. I also find it interesting that in looking at the sub-groups the number were very similar. There really was not a huge difference in terms of understanding between males and females. Again I would attribute this to the visual element of it. Also this assignment was counted but it was a

Analysis of Student Learning

low stakes assignment. There was no real sense of pressure for the students to perform well on it.

Objective 5 was the one that I feel the students had the most trouble with. I believe the reason for that is the post-assessment and summative assessment of the unit is a paper. With this class writing is an issue so I think that is why they were not able to achieve the success that I would have hoped they would. In looking at the sub-groups the female students seemed to outperform the male students. The majority of students who did not hand the assignment in were male. Again I think that this appeals to the visual aspect or the lack there if in terms of this objective. It might also be interesting to note that many of the males in the class are involved with sports so that might be an issue. I tried to keep much of the work done in class but perhaps more time would have been needed to ensure that the students have sufficient time to successfully complete this objective. In looking at how I would have changed things in order to make this objective more successful would have been to instead have done some sort of creative project. I think the students would have enjoyed that more. Writing is important but maybe not an assignment that is strictly writing based. I think looking back now if the students were able to produce something more concrete there would have been more successful completions.