Value-Added Project

**Pre-Test:** For the pre-test, the students completed a formal assessment that evaluated their comprehension levels of chapter two from *Why We Can’t Wait* by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This chapter, which is entitled “The Sword that Heals,” compares a healing sword to the nonviolence movement that the African Americans used during the Civil Rights Movement. For the formal assessment of this chapter, the students wrote a response that analyzed the phrase “a sword that heals” and its impact on the meaning and tone of the text. To fully analyze the phrase, the students pulled out textual evidence that were examples of figurative language that Dr. King used to further elaborate on “the sword that heals.” Also, the students were required to include in their response three out of the five vocabulary words covered in that week’s lessons. This response did not necessarily have to be in essay format, but the paragraph could be at least a page length if the students analyzed the phrase fully.

- **Writing Prompt:** You have just read chapter two from *Why We Can’t Wait* by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Write a response to determine the meaning of the phrase ‘a sword that heals’ and analyze the impact of related words and phrases on the meaning and tone of the chapter. Be sure to include textual evidence that supports and elaborates on the meaning of the phrase. Use other examples of figurative language as textual evidence to analyze the phrase “a sword that heals” and to explain how the author expands on this phrase throughout the text.

- **Common Core State Standards Covered in Assessment:**
  - **R1.9-10.4** – Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
  - **W.9-10.2** – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

**Post-Test:** For the post-test, the students completed a formal culminating assessment of the ten-day Protest/Oppression Poetry Unit. For this assessment, the students were given the following two “cold” poems, “Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou and “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by James Weldon Johnson. These “cold” poems are texts that the students have not read in the unit or in former English classrooms. The students were instructed to read the poems and choose one poem to analyze and find the theme. Once the students chose a poem, the students wrote a response set up in paragraph format that would discuss the theme of the poem and explain how the author develops the theme in the poem. The students were also instructed to include textual evidence and analysis of the textual evidence. This response was considered a timed writing assessment and was turned in at the end of class.
Writing Prompt: In this unit, you have been exposed to various types of poetry related to protest/oppression poetry. You have also been given “Caged Bird” by Maya Angelou and “Lift Every Voice and Sing” by James Weldon Johnson. Choose one of the poems to read and analyze. Then write a response that introduces the theme of the poem and analyzes its development over the course of the text. Remember to look at the use of diction, connotation, and figurative language. Be sure to include textual evidence that supports the theme and the author’s development of that theme.

Common Core State Standards Covered in Assessment:
RL.9-10.2 – Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
W.9-10.2 – Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Value-Added Graph

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of pre-tests given</th>
<th>22</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of post-tests given</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of post-tests that showed a gain in score</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of post-tests that showed a loss in score</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number making a passing score (post-test)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of students passing post-test</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pre-Test and Post-Test Student Scores

- Pre-Test Scores
- Post-Test Scores
**Analysis of Assessments:**

For the pre-test assessment and post-test assessment, the objectives that were chosen aligned specifically with the Common Core State Standards for the 9th and 10th grade English/Language Arts classroom. The pre-test focused on an informational text whereas the post-test concentrated on a literary text. Furthermore, the pre-test required the students to analyze an example of figurative language from the informational text whereas the post-test focused on the theme of a particular poem and development of that theme within the text. While the standards that the assessments were based on varied in purpose, the responses shared a similar writing standard that asked for an informational/explanatory response based on the text.

In grading both of these responses, I used a grading scale similar to the scale used for the 10th grade English PARCC Assessment. In using this rubric, I evaluated the responses using a scale ranging from a 0 to a 4. If a student received a 0, the student showed absolutely no understanding of the text and writing prompt and included no textual evidence. A student that received a 1 either showed little understanding of the text and gave an inadequate and inappropriate response that contained little textual evidence or gave a developed, text-based response that showed little or no awareness of the prompt. A response that received a 2 gave basic understanding of the text, addressed the prompt, showed some textual evidence, and gave some analysis of the prompt and textual evidence. A level 3 response demonstrated comprehension of the text and prompt, showed adequate textual evidence and analysis, and was very easy to follow and understand. The best score, a 4, showed complete and accurate comprehension of the text and prompt, introduced relevant textual evidence, gave extensive analysis, and established effective style and progression of ideas. Some of the students’ responses did not match completely with one particular scoring level; for example, a student may have had some components found under a 2 score and had the rest matching a level 3 score. If this type of situation occurred, the student received a 2+. Therefore, a student could earn a 0, 1, 1+, 2, 2+, 3, 3+, or 4. The actual grade that went into the gradebook used the following scoring guide depending on the rubric score: 0 equaled 50, 1 equaled 65, 1+ equaled 70, 2 equaled 75, 2+ equaled 80, 3 equaled 88, 3+ equaled 94, and 4 equaled 100.

Based on the qualifications of the rubric, a student could have a passing grade with a 1. However, the rubric qualifications for a 1 did not necessarily show that the student achieved the objective for the assessment. Therefore, I determined that the student must achieve a rubric score of 2 (a gradebook score of 75) in order to show that he/she has achieved the objective for the assessment. Again, a score of a 2 shows basic comprehension of the text, prompt, textual evidence, and analysis.

Using the scores from the pre-test, the results concluded that nine out of twenty-two students achieved the objectives designated for the pre-test (Common Core State Standards RI.9-10.4 and W.9-10.2). On the other hand, thirteen out of twenty-two student did not achieve the objectives designated for the pre-test. The lack of achievement could be a result of the students’ lack of reading, struggle to pay attention in class, or resistance to meet the requirements of the class. The contents and expectations of the prompt had been covered multiple times prior to the pre-test, but students may have misunderstood the expectations or simply did not understand the text/example of figurative language. When given the opportunity to rewrite, some students rewrote their response and showed growth from the first draft. Unfortunately, the majority of the students that did not achieve the objectives also did not rewrite their papers.

When presented with the post-test, the students immediately showed apprehension about the response due to the results from the post-test. Despite the students’ anxiety, they showed
growth concerning the level of achievement based on the objectives (CCSS RL.9-10.2 and W.9-10.2). The number of students who achieved the objectives of the assessment was eleven out of twenty-two. Consequently, the number of students who did not achieve the objectives was also eleven out of twenty-two. The lack of achievement could be a result of the following scenarios: not enough instructions from the teacher prior to the assessment, lack of understanding of theme and development of theme in a text, approaching the assessment with a “cold” (not previously read) text, lack of understanding of the text as a whole, etc. Overall, I was extremely pleased with the results and growth from the assessments despite the number of students that did not achieve the objectives covered in the assessments.

**Action Plan:**

After the pre-test, the students were handed back their responses and were given the opportunity to rewrite their response as an attempt to earn a better overall grade. Just like the pre-test, the students will be handed back their post-test assessment and will have the opportunity to rewrite their responses and possibly receive a better overall grade in the gradebook. However, depending upon the level of the student, he/she will receive particular feedback to help him/her achieve a higher score on the rubric. I will have a specific action plan for enrichment and remediation as well as accommodations for special needs students.

To focus on the enrichment section of students, I will give students that scores a 2+ or higher specific instructions and feedback that encourage the students to think deeper and in a more complex fashion concerning the text and prompt. Some students need to add only a few more aspects of analysis to project their scores from a 2+ to a 4; therefore, I will reread each student’s response and give specific and lengthy feedback that shows the student how to make their response more in depth to achieve the highest rubric score possible. Also, the student can request a one-on-one conference with me to ask questions and understand the specific areas in the response that the student needs to improve.

The remediation scores will range from 0 to 2 due to the lack of knowledge or basic comprehension that each student has of the text, prompt, textual evidence, or analysis. Like the enrichment students, I will give each student feedback prior to their rewrite. This feedback will not focus as much on the depth and complexity of the response as it will focus on the basic comprehension of the text, prompt, textual evidence, and analysis. I will reread each student’s response and highlight specific areas where the student has inaccurate material, shows a lack of comprehension of the prompt, and/or does not have enough textual evidence/analysis. Adding these elements to the response will help the students achieve the objectives of the assessment. If the students also wish to add more complex and in-depth textual evidence and analysis, I will be glad to give tips on developing these areas in an attempt to achieve a possible 3 or 4 rubric score. Lastly, the student can request a one-on-one conference with me to discuss his/her response and pinpoint specific sections that need improvement.

In this class, two 9th grade males have an inclusion ruling that applies to the English/Language Arts classroom. To accommodate these special needs students, I will allow each student to rewrite his response with elaborate written and oral feedback from me. The student will have the choice of rewriting in the regular classroom or in the inclusion classroom with the aid of the inclusion teacher. I will also discuss each student’s score with the inclusion teacher and highlight specific areas that the student needs to improve. With the combination of written/oral feedback from me and instructional help from the inclusion teacher, I believe that these special needs students can receive a higher rubric grade for their responses.