

Exhibit 1.4.g.1 Target for Impact on Student Learning

Western Connecticut State University

Teacher Work Sample

Synthesizing related texts to find an overarching idea

ED-340

Dr. James & Dr. Michael

May 5, 2013

Abstract

The following teacher work sample is meant to document my instructional decision-making and implementation of teaching literary synthesis. This sequence of lesson was executed in February 2013 with my tenth grade English 22 class. This document includes the analysis and reflection of pre and post-assessments as well as multiple formative assessments that were designed and implemented for each individual student based on need.

I. Contextual Factors

Fairfield Ludlowe High School is an enormous building with an enrollment of approximately 1500 students. Upon entering the school, one notices the calm and serene atmosphere; students are obviously comfortable in the environment at FLHS. FLHS is unique in the way administration seamlessly balances rules and structure that are imperative to running a high school with student accountability. Students are entrusted to choose their own classes from a myriad of options. This increases the accountability of all students, thus contributing to an educational culture where personal success is clearly a major priority.

FLHS is uniquely separated into three houses: Wright House, Webster House, and Warner House, each with its own Headmaster and Dean. These houses are congregated in different areas of the school and each student belongs to a specific house. These houses provide a sense of community for students because the majority of their academic classes take place in one area of the building with the same group of students. Most importantly, the Houses provide academic support for the students and a place to turn when navigating high school proves too difficult.

My classroom is shared between my cooperating teacher and another English teacher. The classroom is decorated with motivational quotations, posters made by students, and quotations from various novels read in these classes. Bookshelves line the walls and the Hindu upside down tree and Ohm symbol (the sound of the universe) is painted on the wall in the front of the classroom. This mural is not only visually appealing, but also representative of the collaborative nature of our world culture, reminding us that there is a vast and great world outside of the constraints of the classroom. The desk arrangement defaults to traditional rows, however, the desks are moved constantly into circles and

Pods in order to facilitate discussion and collaboration. While the classroom does not have a SMART board, it does have a white board and projector.

For this Teacher Work Sample, I will be examining my English 22 class. This class is the general, college prep level of sophomore English. The class has 24 students; 9 girls and 15 boys. All of my students are Caucasian except for one African-American male. I have one student who is an English Language Learner from Germany. It is his first year in America and his biggest struggle is reading comprehension because he is still learning the language. I often let him grapple with the text before providing explicit details because he does a good job comprehending reading through context clues. While his insights may not always be correct, I want to encourage this skill because it is essential for his future success. Through the reading of various novels, I have found that the lack of racial and cultural diversity in the class has negative ramifications on the learning process. While each student has individual ideas to bring to discussion, class discussion is hindered by the lack of different perspectives. In an attempt to combat this we provide novels and instructional tools that illuminate different societies and social problems, and do a great deal of research.

I have two students with IEP's. One student is on the autism spectrum and has emotional disturbance. She gets off task easily and often, as she will get stuck on an idea that she connects to and go on a tangent. In order to combat this, I have built a rapport with this student so we can distinguish the appropriate time for personal connection, and I encourage her to write her connections in her writer's notebook if she would like to share something with me so that it does not take class time. While the rest of my students are compassionate toward this student, I do have to be very consciences when grouping some

students are more patient and understanding than others. My second student has emotional disturbance issues as a result of an unstable home life as well as mild fetal alcohol syndrome. She is very thoughtful in her academic work, but struggles to stay motivated. In order to differentiate for this student I write assignments down for her in her notebook and provide extended time when needed. Additionally, I have to be very careful when grouping this student because she can become very intimidated by the strong, vocal males in the class. The rest of my students are considered on or above grade level, but about half struggle with academic discipline on any given day. As a result of this their grades do not always reflect their ability level.

II. Learning Goals

Objective:

Students will be able to synthesize the poem “Memory” by William Matthews and *Please Don’t Come Back from the Moon* by Dean Bakopoulous in order to gain insight into the novel.

Common Core State Standard alignment:

- RL.9-10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- 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.
- RL.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the

text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone

- 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.

The overarching skill this objective is applying to is the ability to synthesize texts based on a common theme or connection and articulate this connection in writing with sufficient textual evidence. Synthesis is the second highest level of learning on Bloom's taxonomy. This skill is essential to the student's success in future English classes, as per one of the 11th grade English instructors. In order for students to meet the objective, they will have to deconstruct "Memory" in order to understand the theme and track this theme through the novel. Because this class represents a wide range of abilities, students will need varying degrees of formative instruction in order to meet goal on the final summative in-class essay. Differentiated instruction is essential to the success of each student because some will need instruction at a slower pace, while others will be able to move onto new tasks more quickly.

III. Assessment Plan

Task: Identify and describe two assessments that you intend to collect from your students and analyze as evidence of student achievement.

Assessment #1

Summative pre-assessment: In order to assess students' prior knowledge the students

will independently read and annotate the poem “Memory” by William Matthews and answer questions in order to display their comprehension of the poem as well as articulate how this poem provides inside into the themes present in *Please Don’t Come Back from the Moon* by Dean Bakopoulos. Students’ level of comprehension and ability to synthesize these two texts will be considered acceptable if they receive 35/50 points on their question responses. Students who receive below a 35/50 will be required to revise their questions after the in-class discussion. Any student who receives 45/50 or above on the assignment is considered above goal and he or she will not have to submit formative assignment #2 or any other formative assignments pertaining to this skill. Every student will submit the summative post assessment.

Summative post-assessment: The summative post-assessment for this skill will be an in class essay test in which students will need to synthesize the novel *Please Don’t Come Back from the Moon* by Dean Bakopoulos and “Memory” by William Matthews. For this in class essay test students will explain why Dean Bakopoulos chose to use a portion of this poem as the epigraph to his novel and articulate what the overarching idea about memory that is supported by these two texts. Students who receive 85% or above on the in class essay test will be considered in the acceptable range.

Assessment #2

Students will participate in small group discussion pertaining to the themes in “Memory” by William Matthews and *Please Don’t Come Back from the Moon* by Dean Bakopoulos. Students will complete Jim Burke’s group work graphic organizer in order to articulate specific connections between the novel and the poem than can be supported

using textual evidence. This organizer will be used as an assessment tool and will hold all students accountable for their participation in class. The main purpose of this discussion and the organizer is to help students when rewriting the answers to the questions from the post assessment. This organizer is scored on a □, □+, and □– scale based upon the accuracy of the student’s ideas as well as their articulation of the connections between the novel and poem. A □ is considered an acceptable score.

IV. Design for Instruction

Task: Describe how you will design your unit instruction related to lesson/unit goals, students’ characteristics and needs, and the specific learning context.

1. Results of the pre assessment.

For this unit of study, students had to first read and comprehend the novel then read and understand a poem used as the epigraph to the novel. Students then had to synthesize both texts in order to understand why Bakopoulos chose to use this poem as the epigraph to his novel and what the two texts are generally saying about memory in order to discover an overarching idea about memory. Students were asked to read and annotate the poem and then complete various questions pertaining to their comprehension of the poem as well as the connections between both texts. The results of the pre-assessment are as follows:

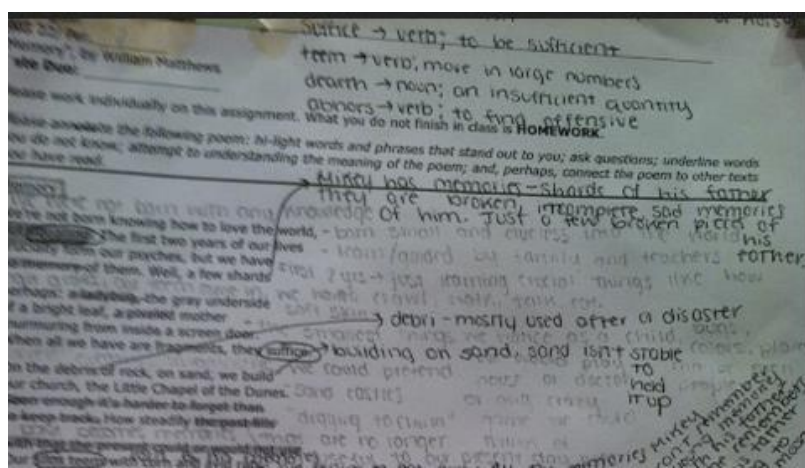
Student	Score on pre assessment out of 50 points
1	44
2	38*

3	37
4	49
5	46
6	46
7	42*
8	40
9	42
10	43*
11	26
12	45
13	40
14	31
15	35
16	41
17	32
18	38
19	30
20	31

21	48
22	39
23	45
24	39

The results of the pre-assessment indicate that 18/24 students fell into the acceptable range. Only 6 students received 45/50 or better, thus falling into the above goal range. Students who fell below 35/50 were asked to rewrite the pre-test after the in class discussion in order to show their improvement. Students with an asterisk next to their name opted to rewrite the pre-test of their own accord.

The attached document on the following two pages is a student work sample of the pre-assessment. This student was above goal on the pre-assessment and received a 49/50 on the initial assignment.



VOCABULARY:

Please look up the following words (and any other words that are unfamiliar to you). Write down the part of speech and definition:

- Squalling verb; characterized by short periods of noisy commotions
 - Psyches noun; that which is responsible for one's thoughts and feelings
 - Shards noun; a broken piece of a brittle artifact
 - Dearth noun; an insufficient quantity
 - Abhors verb; to find offensive
- stronger hate
- Based on the above words and the definitions, what do you think the mood/ tone of this poem is? How do these words impact the mood/ tone of the poem?

Based on the words above I think the mood or the tone of the poem is a lot depressive but not dark. I think the mood or tone is realistic. It's based on truth and reality. These words impact the mood giving the poem the idea that memories are not always happy.

There will be different stories you have to go through. You could be broken or you feel that you have broken things or even people. It's the way you may feel that you aren't enough and all those things affect your policies, your mind, your mood.

- Choose your favorite line or the line that stands out to you the most. Record that line below (with line numbers).

How suddenly the past fills with past the present could or could not use? (Memories lines 13-14)

- What does this line cause you to consider? What does it make you think of?

is the storm out to me because it is very realistic and thoughtful. The past is full of things that you may or may not ever use again. You've been there, done that. You want to experience new things, meet new people, go to new places. The past is filled with old memories. It's your choice if you want to revisit them or you've done things you keep moving forward, waiting for the next thing to happen in your life, you're waiting for your future while you have been used to see your past. This line reminds me of how some things may go and sometimes you just want to stay and enjoy the moment.

What is the "leaking cup" the speaker refers to in the final line?

I think the leaking cup is referring to our leaking minds. As each day goes by we forget. It's easier to forget than it is to remember. As we try to hold on to the memories we don't want to forget we are in the danger of forgetting other memories. It gets harder and harder to remember memories that are leaving us. We are all trying to remember memories that have been lost.

- Why do you think the speaker says "there's always more to lose" (line 17-18)?

This line refers to how we have a never ending list of memories and there are so many that we will lose. Memories come and go. Everyday we create new memories but build on top of our old memories. Memories keep accumulating that we lose the old ones or ones that didn't impact you. There are so many memories that you will always lose some.

- What do you think of when you hear these lines "the vacuum that dearth abhors/ is dearth" (line 19-20)?

The vacuum's job is to suck up the dirt but if there's nothing there then you have not gained anything.

Bakopoulos chose this poem as an epigraph for his novel *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon*. What is an epigraph? Why do you think he chose lines from this poem as an epigraph for his novel? How can you connect this poem to *Please Don't Come Back to the Moon*? Please use **SPECIFIC PASSAGES** from the poem and the novel. (Hint: look at Chapters 2 and 3) Fill in ALL the LINES; you may continue your response on a separate sheet of paper.

An epigraph is a quotation at the beginning of a piece of writing. Dean Bakopoulos chose the line "We all drink from a leaking cup." (Matthews 20) The line that was chosen is significant to the book "Please Don't Come Back from the Moon" by Dean Bakopoulos because it relates to the main character, Minky, his father, Ramon, and Minky's mind is trying to hold on to the small memories he has left of his father because as his life goes on the memories of his father can disappear into thin air. "Still in truth, I could remember very little about my father, Anthony, in a matter of less than a year his image had grown vague and hazy. I used the few memories I had in a notebook, afraid they might leave me." (Bakopoulos 28) As Minky grows older the part of his father is slowly disappearing just like his father memories accumulate on top of each other and it gets harder and harder to remember the old memories. There is always something new to remember and something old to forget. "There is always more to lose." (Matthews 12-18) This line of the poem relates to the passage from "Please Don't Come Back from the Moon" because they are both about losing memories and how hard it is to hold on to them when they are about to slip away. This line is saying how we have so much to remember in our lives that there is always something that we may lose that we may forget, and Minky is going through the exact thing. He is scared of losing memories of his father because he knows that he will eventually not be able to remember anymore. There are things we want to remember that we can't hold on to. I think of all the things I want to remember much more aspects of memory in the I think memory may be related to the theme of the book. Memory is a very important component.

Total: **19** / 30 points

2. Overview of sequential lessons

All lessons in this unit were designed to scaffold student learning in order

to help them achieve goal pertaining to a specific skill: synthesizing two texts. The pre-assessment questions were used to gauge students' prior knowledge by analyzing their ability to execute this skill. The specific questions were designed in order to help students think about specific lines from the poem, decipher what they mean, then connect their relevance to similar messages in *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon*. While the content of this lesson is important, I am assessing each student's ability to synthesize materials in order to understand a main idea or overarching concept.

The second lesson in this plan provided students the opportunity to discuss both texts with their peers in both small and large group settings. Students were grouped by equal ability levels and used Jim Burke's group work organizer in order to stay on task and demonstrate their participation in the discussion. The students' understanding was assessed by their completion of the group work organizer. In order to complete the organizer students had to write their peer's contributions to the discussion as well as their own contributions. In the center of the organizer students were asked to articulate the connection between "Memory" and *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon* that was illuminated by the group discussion. The organizer will be scored on a □, □+, and □– scale based upon the accuracy of the student's ideas as well as their articulation of the connections between the novel and poem. A □ is considered an acceptable score

After this discussion, students who received less than 35/50 on the packet will be asked to rewrite the pre-assessment in order to demonstrate goal. Students who feel they need more help are encouraged to meet with me for a conference

either after school or during a free class period. Out of the six students who were below goal, four students met with me after school for extra help.

The third assessment for this unit will require students to articulate the connection between the novel and the epigraph poem in their third formal reading response. In this response, students will be expected to analyze the poem and how the concepts discussed by Matthews are also present in Bakopoulos' novel. Students will also explain how the title *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon* demonstrates the theme of both texts. Students who receive an 80 or above on this portion of the in class essay test will be considered in the acceptable range.

The final summative post-assessment for this skill will be an in class essay test in which students will need to synthesize the novel *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon* by Dean Bakopoulos and "Memory" by William Matthews. For this in class essay test students will explain why Dean Bakopoulos chose to use a portion of this poem as the epigraph to his novel and articulate what the overarching idea about memory that is supported by these two texts. The in class essay test will be scored on a □, □+, and □– scale based upon the accuracy of the student's ideas as well as their articulation of the connections between the novel and poem. A □ is considered an acceptable score.

3. Activities

The activities for teaching this skill were designed to meet each student's specific learning needs. Prior to the implementation of this module I was aware that many students would be proficient at the skill relatively quickly and without much teacher instruction, whereas other students would need a great deal of teacher

assistance. Therefore, when planning these lessons, I knew that time spent on each assessment needed to be flexible for each students.

a. *Contents relation to instructional goals*

The content for these lessons helps students to achieve a greater understanding of how memory functions in the novel, and how people have difficulty holding onto memories as they get older. However, this level of understanding is secondary to the primary goal of this lesson. The content drives the instruction of this lesson because the content is being used to develop a difficult skill. The ability to synthesize information is necessary for all 21st century learners because students must be able to sift through information in order to develop an understanding of an overarching concept that is articulated through various texts and medias. The content is used to help students understand the novel and practice analyzing poetry while teaching them how to synthesize information.

b. *Activities stem from pre-assessment and contextual factors*

Activities in this unit all stem from the pre-assessment and contextual factors. The pre-assessment illuminated that many students met goal on this skill and only needed practice in their articulation. However, the pre-assessment also confirmed that many students needed extra help with this skill and six students in particular needed swift intervention. Therefore, it was apparent that instructional activities needed to be diversified for each student. In order to achieve this goal

I decided to give students written feedback on their pre-assessment and require all students who did not meet goal to rewrite the assessment after the class discussion. By doing this, students were able to use teacher feedback, class discussion, and any one-on-one instruction in order to improve the specific questions they were deficient in.

c. Materials and technology

For the implementation of this unit students will need:

- Computers
- Packet with poem and questions
- Blank paper for creation of graphic organizer

d. Assessment of student learning

I plan to assess student learning through the use of various formative assessments. Each student will have a pre and post assessment, the graphic organizer, and their formal reading response. From the pre-assessment, it is apparent that some students will need more formative assessments than others, therefore, additional formative assessments and instruction will be administered based upon as needed basis.

These assessments consist of the re-write on the pre-assessment based on feedback as well as out of class instruction.

V. Analysis of Student Learning

Task: Analyze your assessment data, including pre/post assessments and formative assessments to determine students' progress related to the unit learning goals. Use visual representations and narrative to communicate the performance of the whole class, subgroups, and two individual students. Conclusions drawn from this analysis should be provided in the "Reflection and Self-Evaluation" section.

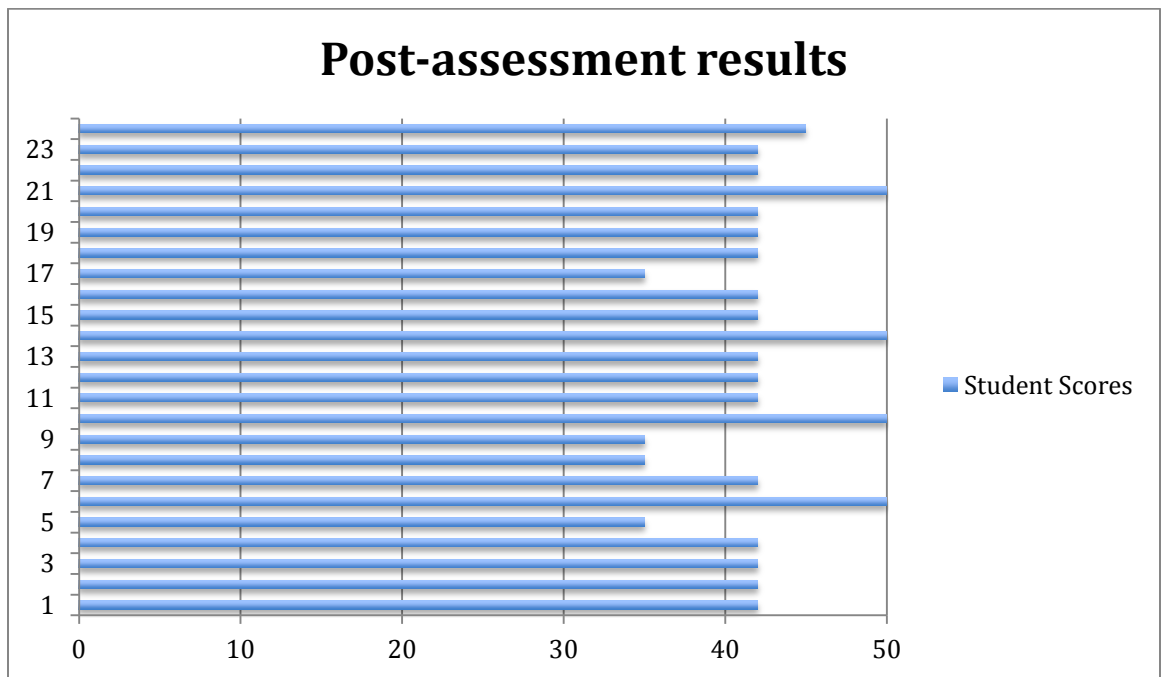
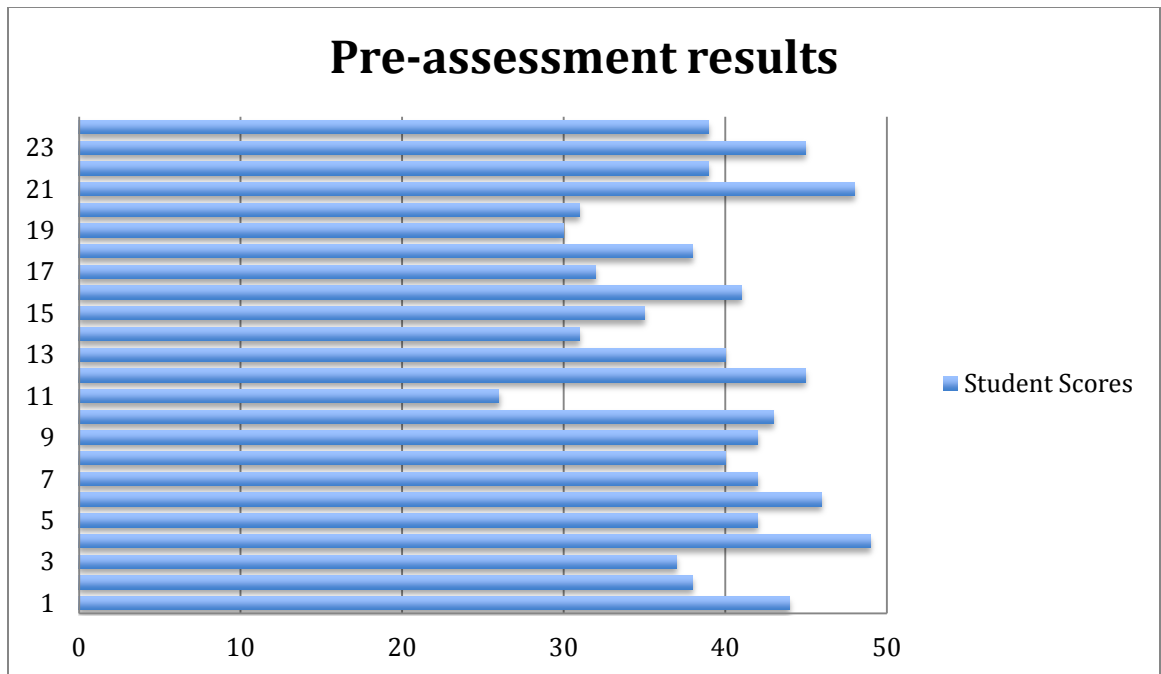
Overall Assessment of Student Learning

Student	Pre-assessment 50 points	Group discussion □, □+, and □–	Pre-assessment Rewrite 50 points	Formal Reading Response 10 points	Post-assessment 50 points
1	44	□+		8	42
2	38	□	41	8	42
3	37	□	40	7	42
4	49	□+		10	42
5	42	□		9	35
6	46	□+		10	50
7	42	□+		9	42
8	40	□–		8	35
9	42	□		8	35
10	43	□+		10	50
11	26	□+	32	9	42
12	45	□		8	42
13	40	□		8	42
14	31	□+	42	10	50
15	35	□+	35	8	42

16	41	□+		8	42
17	32	□	47	7	35
18	38	□+		8	42
19	30	□-		7	42
20	31	□	44	9	42
21	48	□+		10	50
22	39	□+		8	42
23	45	□+		8	42
24	39	□+		8	45

Highlighted rows indicate students who were below goal on the initial pre-assessment and required additional intervention.

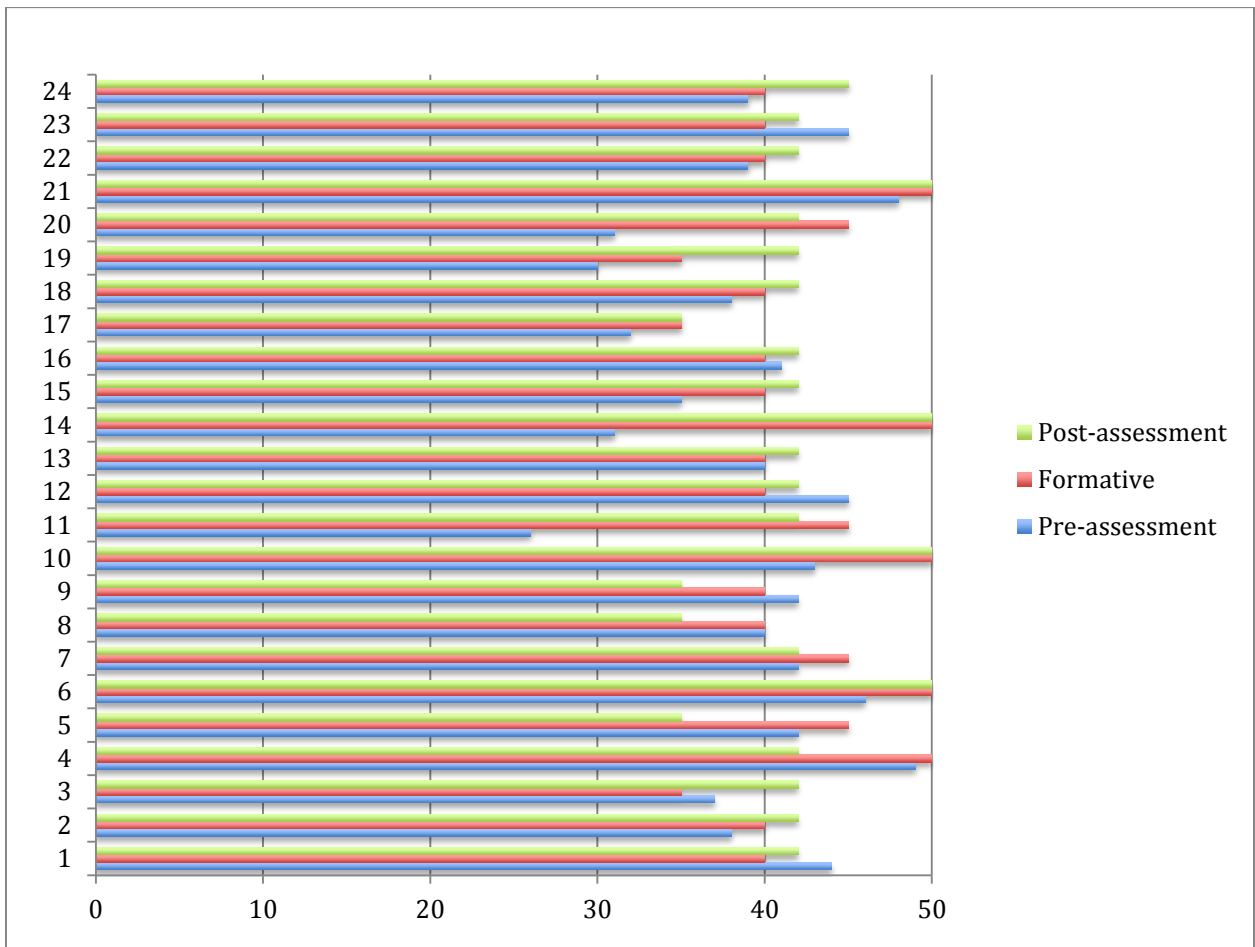
Below, please find a graphic representation of assessment findings:



Above are graphic representations of the pre and post-assessment scores for each student. These scores are out of 50 points. Both pre and post assessment graphs

indicate to me that students have displayed growth between the pre and post-assessment.

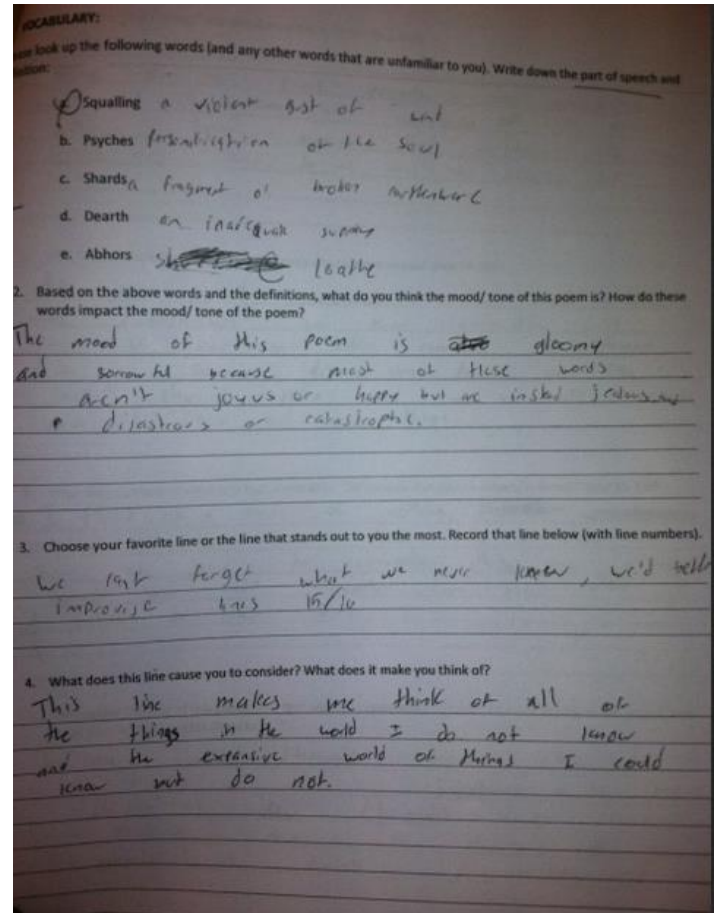
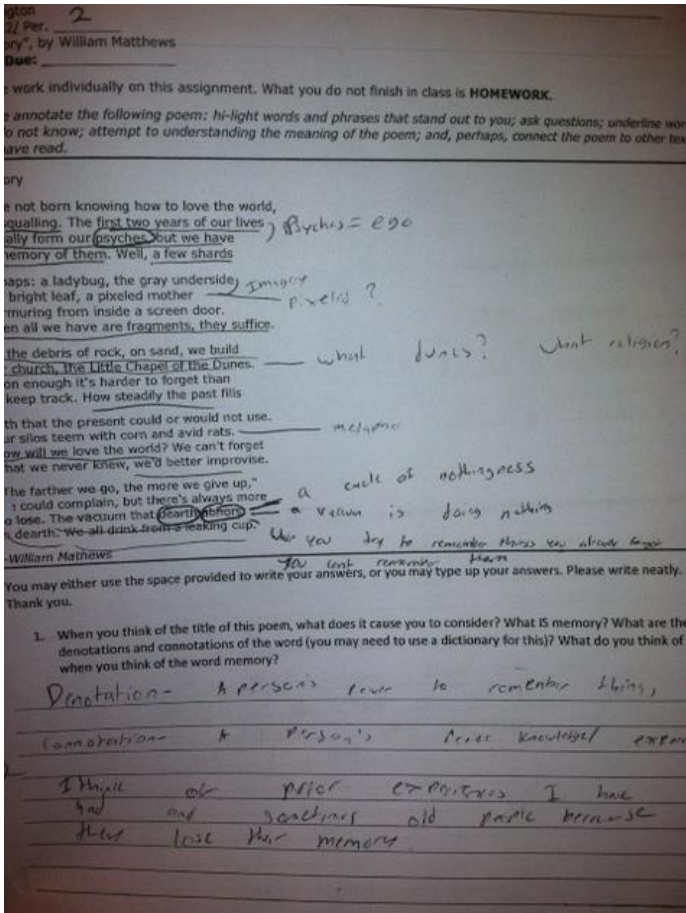
Student's Progress Through Assessments

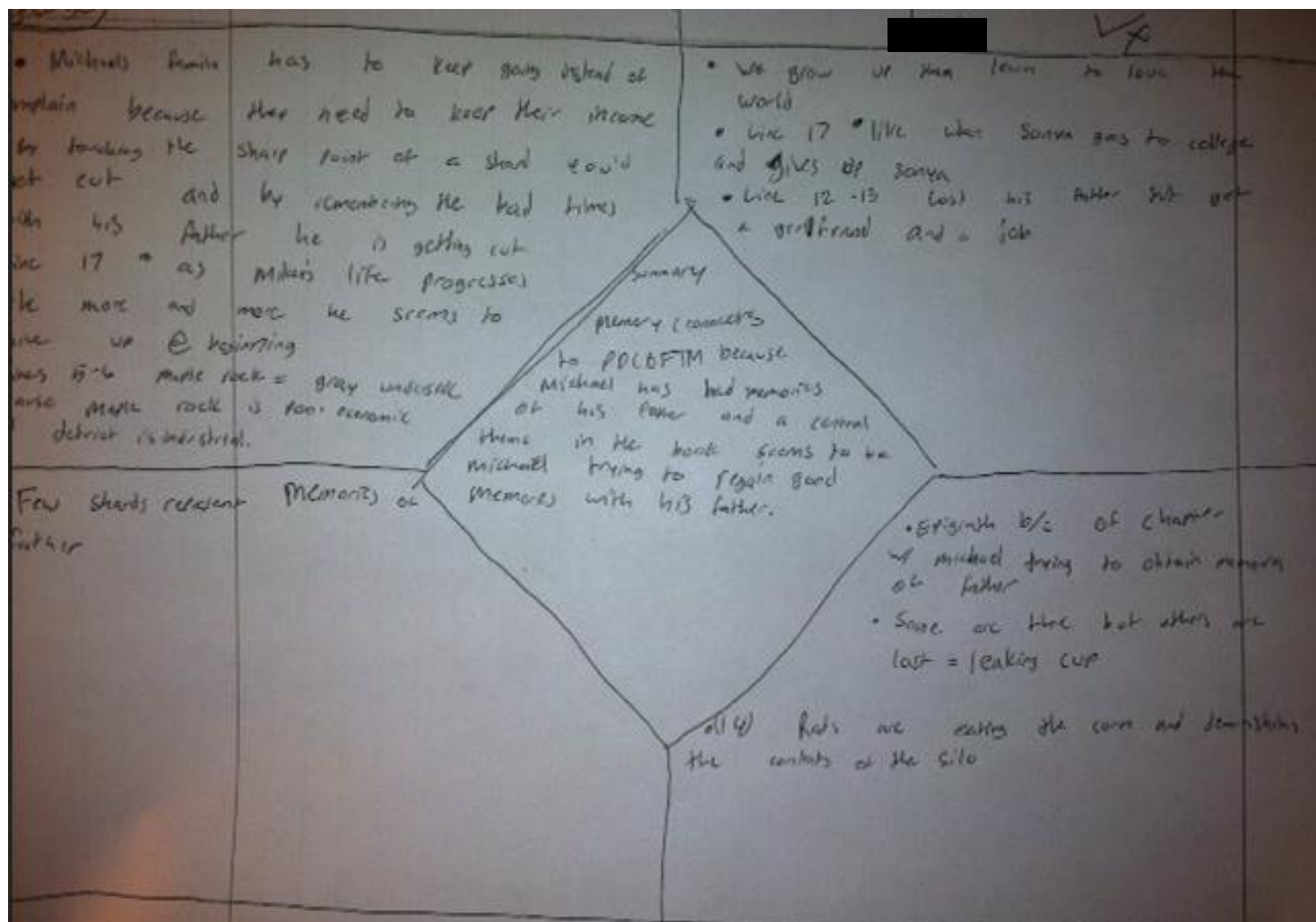


Student progress throughout this unit of study is graphed above. The graph represents students' scores on the pre and post assessment as well as an average of all formative assignments pertaining to this unit of study. Please notice students' overall growth from their pre to post-assessment. The blue bar represents students' score on their initial pre-assessment packet and the green

bar represents each score on their final in class essay post-assessment. The red bar is an average of students' scores on all formative assignments prior to the in-class essay.

Student number 14 has shown terrific growth and improvement throughout the course of this unit. Typically, this student is a very high-level critical thinker, but struggled significantly on the pre-assessment. A copy of student 14's pre-assessment is pictured below:





Student number 14 received a 50/50 on his in class essay test. This test displayed extremely high-level critical thinking. The student extended the metaphor used in Matthew's poem and then applied it to the main character in *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon*.

It is critical to understand this student because based upon his critical thinking he needs to be treated as if he were on the honors level. However, he has difficulty with his academic discipline if he is not invested or engaged in the task. For example, I believe that his poor achievement on the pre-assessment is the result of lack of investment in the

assignment. However, once the student began drafting his in-class essay in which he eloquently extended Matthew's metaphor, student number 14 was focused and articulate, which resulted in a perfect score on the essay and six pages of informative synthesis between the two texts.

The second student I am tracking for this teacher work sample is student number 17.

This student struggles with critical thinking, reading comprehension, and academic discipline. Picture below are the results of his initial pre-assessment:

Worksheet 1: Memory by William Matthews

22/ Per. 2
Memory, by William Matthews
Due:

We work individually on this assignment. What you do not finish in class is **HOMEWORK**.

We annotate the following poem: highlight words and phrases that stand out to you; ask questions; underline what you do not know; attempt to understand the meaning of the poem; and, perhaps, connect the poem to other texts you have read.

Memory

We're not born knowing how to love the world,
squalling. The first two years of our lives
specially form our psyches, but we have
memory of them. Well, a few shards

Perhaps: a ladybug, the gray underside
of a bright leaf, a pixelated mother
murmuring from inside a screen door.
When all we have are fragments, they suffice.

In the debris of rock, on sand, we build
our church, the Little Chapel of the Dunes.
Soon enough it's harder to forget than
to keep track. How steadily the past fills

With that the present could or would not use.
Our silos teem with corn and avid rats.
How will we love the world? We can't forget
what we never knew, we'd better improvise.

The farther we go, the more we give up
a could complain, but there's always more
to lose. The vacuum that dearth abhors
is dearth. We all drink from a leaking cup.

-William Matthews

You may either use the space provided to write your answers, or you may type up your answers. Please write neatly. Thank you.

1. When you think of the title of this poem, what does it cause you to consider? What is memory? What are the denotations and connotations of the word (you may need to use a dictionary for this)? What do you think of when you think of the word memory?

Memory is about the new and old memories he has. The memory in this poem are about the ones that were with his father. He is now letting go of the memories of his father. The denotations are the past even when he is the only one left. The connotation is that he is alone. He spent his life with his father. When I think of the word memory I think of past events that were fun. When the structure was a cup. He was happy with some things. I look up to like both the characters fathers.

Vocabulary:

Please look up the following words (and any other words that are unfamiliar to you). Write down the part of speech and definition:

- Squalling
- Psyches
- Shards - a fragment of broken material
- Dearth - a lack of supply
- Abhors - hate

2. Based on the above words and the definitions, what do you think the mood/ tone of this poem is? How do the words impact the mood/ tone of the poem?

The mood / tone of this poem is about the author's life. He is thinking of all the things that were lost. The poem talks about the loss of memories like the bad memories or the good ones that get lost. The poem has a dark mood. Because it shows the negative side of forgetting things.

3. Choose your favorite line or the line that stands out to you the most. Record that line below (with line number).

The vacuum that dearth abhors is dearth (line)

4. What does this line cause you to consider? What does it make you think of?

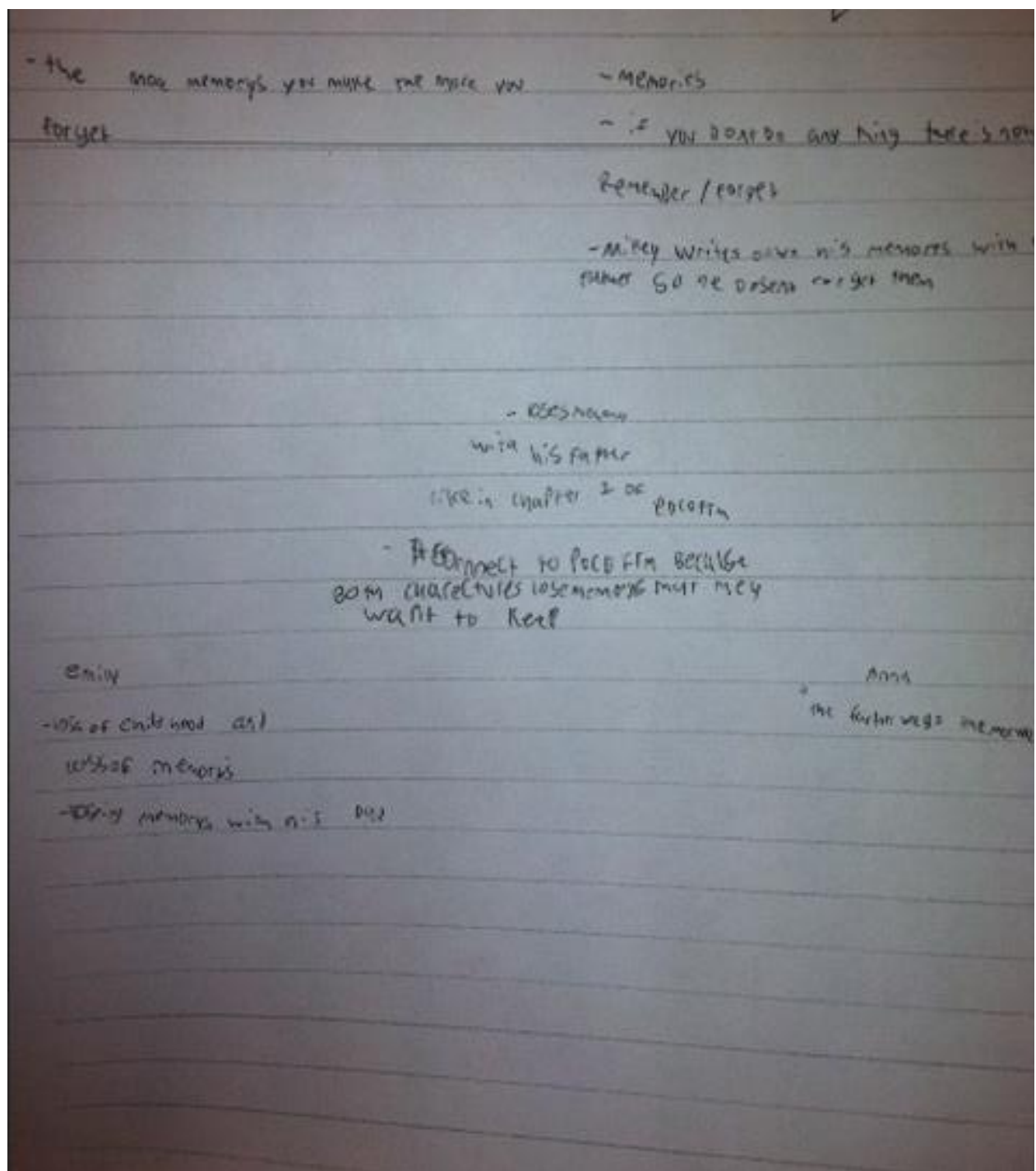
The vacuum is sucking up everything and it has nothing. The vacuum goes through a cycle of hate. There is a lack of supply of hate that makes the author hate more and this results in the loss of memories. This represents emptyness and feeling empty. I'm sorry from. Please don't come back from the moon. I struggle with the same issue as he did. Since Mike's father left he is losing the memory of his father.

5. What is the "leaking cup" the speaker refers to in the final line?
- Every one is lacking in their life and the things are the things they have lost. The more in the cup could represent the memories that people have lost. Like the protagonist of this poem or Mikey from Please Don't Come Back from the Moon. When it says "we all drink from a leaking cup" it means that every one loses their memories not just Mikey and the protagonist.
6. Why do you think the speaker says "there's always more to lose" (line 17-18)?
- The author means that when you gain memories you will lose memories too. This quote connects to another quote that says in this poem "the leaking cup" which also represents how when more memories are gained some are also lost. The protagonist gains new memories and loses them from Mikey. Don't come back from the moon also struggles with this too.
7. What do you think of when you hear these lines "the vacuum that dearth abhors/ is dearth" (line 19-20)?
- The vacuum is not sucking up any more things like and it is stuck in this cycle of having more memories get lost from Mikey and getting more. There is an infinite supply of more which makes the author hate more which results in a loss of memories.
8. Reconsider the title of this poem, now that you have been asked to look a bit more closely at this poem, how have your initial thoughts changed?
- At first I thought this poem was about growth and development of memories but now I know that it is about getting new memories and losing old memories. Also the book connects to the book Please Don't Come Back from the Moon because both of the main characters lose memories of their

Bakopoulos chose this poem as an epigraph for his novel *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon*. What is an epigraph? Why do you think he chose lines from this poem as an epigraph for his novel? How can you connect this poem to *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon*? Please use SPECIFIC PASSAGES from the poem and the novel. (Hint: look at Chapters 2 and 3) Fill in ALL the LINES; you may continue your response on a separate sheet of paper.

I think Bakopoulos chose this poem as an epigraph because the character goes up to the father like Mikey.

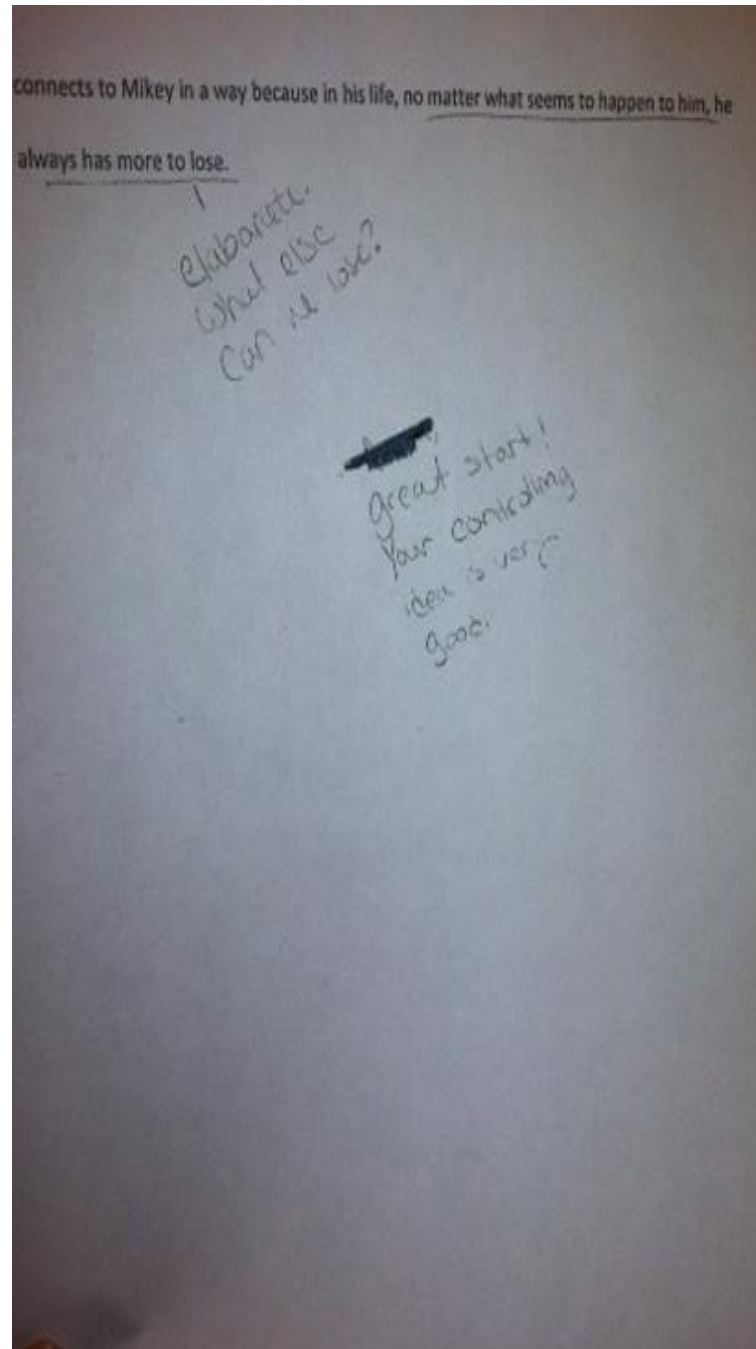
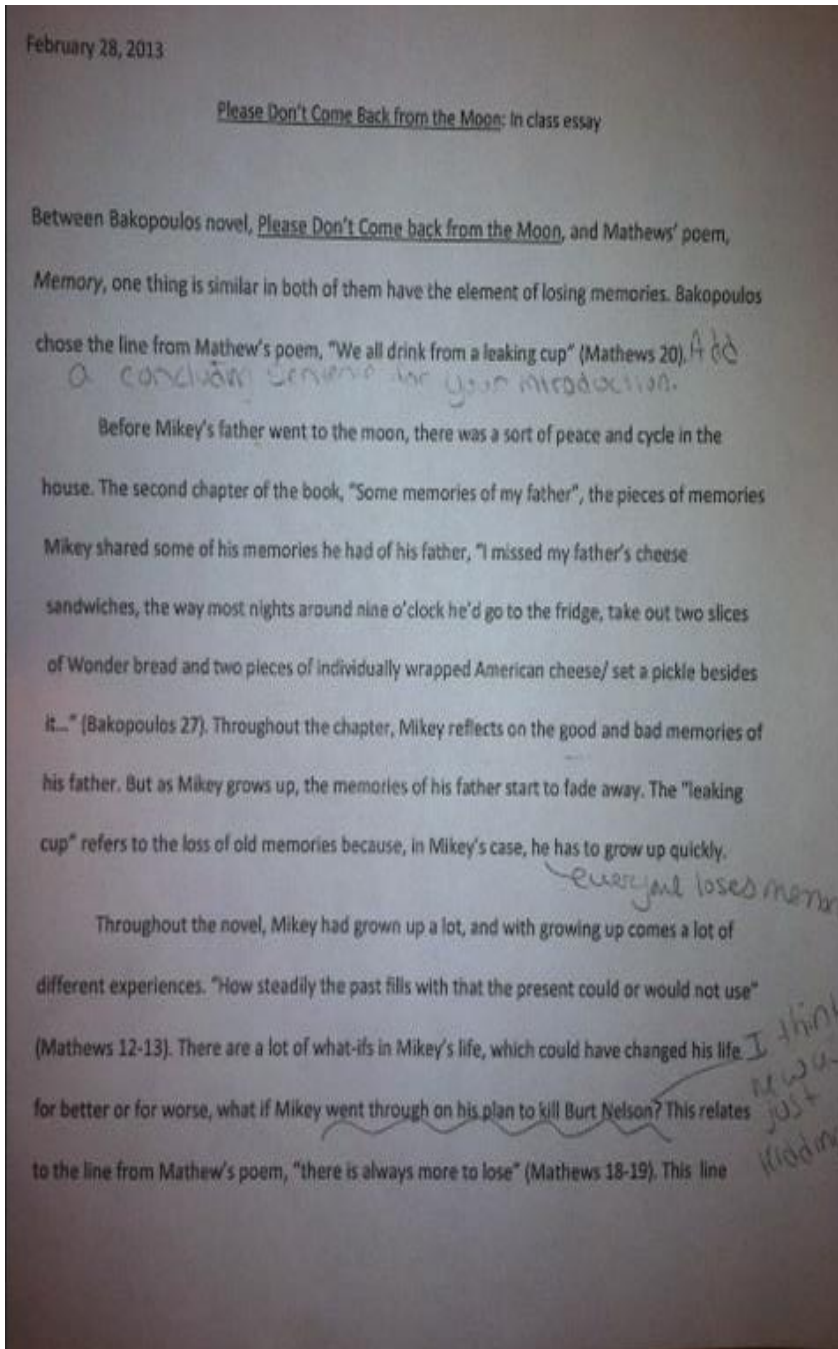
Student 17's discussion organizer is depicted below. This discussion organizer does not display the high level of engagement that I expect and have seen in other student's work. After analyzing the organizers developed by the other students in this group it is apparent that the group had a strong discussion, but student 17 did not adequately translate the discussion to his organizer.



Student number 17 met with the teacher during an after school group extra help session in order to develop our understanding of the questions and connections between the two texts. In the after school session I witnessed student 17 taking diligent notes and asking

questions in order to further his understanding. After the discussions in school and after school help this student achieved a 47/50 on the packet re-write.

Pictured below is student number 17's in class essay test. He scored a 35/50:



For the purposes of this teacher work sample I thought that it was important to track

student number 17 because he struggles in a variety of areas such as critical thinking, academic discipline, and focus. While I was disappointed in student 17's pre-assessment and in class discussion participation, I was incredibly impressed by his discipline in the after school discussion and ability to articulate a controlling idea in his in class essay.

VI. Instructional decision-making

Task: Provide two examples of instructional decision-making based on students' learning or responses.

During the collection of this data I had one student who severely injured his right wrist and was unable to write or type for many weeks. This student was not able to write his formal reading response as well as his in class essay test. Because of the student's ability to successfully meet goal on his pre-assessment re-write and his discussion participation I decided to exempt him from the formal reading response. When the time came to write the in class essay this student's hand was still injured. Therefore, I gave this student an oral post assessment in order to gauge his ability to articulate this skill. I felt that this was a better decision than exempting him from the assignment because then I would have no data for this student, or I could have waited until his hand was healed to complete the essay but I didn't want to make the student wait an unknown amount of time to make up the assignment. While this did not impact the other students in the class, I believe that this decision provided my student the opportunity to articulate his knowledge in another format in order to accommodate his needs.

I had six students who fell into the A range on the initial pre-assessment. These students did not have to participate in the formative re-write of the pre-assessment

after the discussion, but I challenged these students further by grouping them together for the group discussion. Most of the class was still struggling to find the connections between the novel and poem and discussed these issues in class. The six high-achieving students were encouraged to go into the novel as well as the poem and collect evidence to enhance the credibility of their connections for their in class essay test because they had already demonstrated the ability to clearly articulate how the novel and the poem relate.

My lessons were also modified when I met with students who were struggling either during free periods, after school, or during group work in order to help them understand the poem and improve their pre-assessment responses. By far, the most challenging part of this process for many students was interpreting the poem. Once they understood the poem they were able to connect its thematic significance with *Please Don't Come Back from the Moon* with relative ease. Therefore, interpreting this poem led to a great deal of discussion and revising for some students. Student number 20 required a lot of assistance with basic interpretation and I spent a lot of time helping him dissect the figurative language in the poem. Student 20 had a total of three drafts for this initial questions packet and he improved on each submission. Student number 11 also showed tremendous improvements throughout the process of interpreting the poem and revising the packet. This student struggled similarly to student 20 and seemed able to synthesize the two pieces of literature once he dissected and understood the language. Student number 14 and 17 are very interesting to me because they improved their packets exponentially with little guidance from the teacher. This leads me to believe that they did not put a great deal of effort into the

initial packet and then worked harder the second time or this may be a testament to my written feedback. I strive to give feedback that is clear and helpful to the students in a timely manner. I believe that they used this written feedback to help them clarify initial misunderstandings and become invested in the process.

VII. Reflection and self-evaluation

Task: Reflect on your performance as a teacher and link your performance to student learning results. Evaluate your performance and identify future actions for improved practice and professional growth.

At the completion of this series of lessons I can reflect upon my abilities as a teacher as well as my students' achievement of the learning objective and learning goals. This class is made up of a diverse group of personalities with very different learning styles, learning speeds, strengths, weaknesses, and levels of academic discipline. While meeting so many different needs is difficult, I know that all of my students were able to adequately display the ability to synthesize information and form an opinion as to what is being said. I choose to collect data specifically for this teacher work sample because I believe that this is one of the most important skills taught in the English classroom. In the digital age students are constantly bombarded with information that they need to sift through, evaluate, and synthesize in order to create their own conclusions about a specific topic. When looking at all of the assessments in this series of lessons I feel as though there is enough evidence to support my students' ability to synthesize information.

At the conclusion of these lessons, however, I am a bit disappointed in my post-assessment. While I do feel it is an accurate measure of the skill that is similar to the

pre-assessment, I think that some students may have struggled with the assessment because it was an essay. I think this was particularly the case with students 5, 8, and 9. I have been working with my students to build their writing stamina, but these three students struggle with focusing in class and articulating their ideas in a well-developed essay. Based on the pre-assessment scores of these students, as well as their formative assessments, I believe that these students do understand how to synthesize information but are struggling with essay writing. Because of these findings I decided to do a mini lesson on the parts of an essay in order to help students who struggle with this skill. Provided the opportunity to repeat these lessons I would have done this mini lesson on essay writing prior to the post assessment to help these students who struggle with articulation through writing.

I appreciated the sequencing of these lessons. There was adequate scaffolding in place to encourage student success. By having the independent pre-assessment before we discussed the poem or the novel I got a clear picture of the students prior knowledge and ability to interoperate poetry and synthesize information. By having the discussion after the assessment but before the rewrite was due I was able to assess these findings and group the students based on their ability to interoperate the texts. This discussion helped students who were struggling to understand the poem and draw connections between the texts so that many students could improve their work without a great deal of teacher instruction. After this discussion, some students who were not required to rewrite based on their score actually decided to do so of their own accord in order to display their new understanding. I then had the time and opportunity to work with students on an individual level to either challenge them further or assist them with their

struggles. By the time I scored the formal reading responses I had a firm idea of how each student would do on the post assessment and was pleased to find that most of my students were in the goal or above goal range. If I could do these lessons again I would like to have a second small group discussion after the formal reading responses were due because I think that the students could have benefitted from sharing the knowledge they had gained with their peers. Unfortunately, for this teacher work sample time did not permit doing so but I believe that students are very invested in learning from their peers.

In terms of my own professional development I would like to improve on my questioning techniques. I always want to challenge my students to think deeply and figure things out on their own even when it is difficult. However, I do struggle with balancing what is too much information and what is not enough information to give the students. I enjoy giving them little to no information at the start and seeing where they end up because it gives me a true benchmark of what my students already knew without any teacher intervention. However, many students simply do not know where to start when investigating a foreign text and need a bit more guidance. Therefore, this balance is different for every student. Some students need a bit of background or initial information in order to motivate them to move forward with the task. If they do not readily see the connections they are trying to make they are inclined to give up, and this may be what initially happened with students 14 and 17. I truly believe that as a teacher it is my job to help students discover, not simply give them information because I do not know all the answers. For example, student number 14 struggled immensely with the pre-assessment but went on to receive a perfect score on the post-assessment. He wrote an eloquent essay that went above expectation when he discussed the leaking cup that

Matthews' uses as a metaphor for losing memories in his poem. This student's thinking went above and beyond anything I could have ever imagined because I had never considered these possibilities myself. Instead of the leaking cup metaphor simply leaking water, this student explained the separation of oil, water, and honey within the cup and how these liquids represent different types of memories. This is how my students constantly astonish me when I am teaching and want to increase everyone's ability to question and think on their own. Learning about different questioning techniques and getting students to initiate the questioning process on their own is something that truly fascinates me.