

## *Chapter 4: Findings*

***“You know the nearer your destination the more you’re slip sliding away...”-Simon and Garfunkel***

Prior to the new school year starting I was developing my curriculum and I thought deeply to myself, “What are my expectations for all these students?” How do I better meet the needs of the diverse population of students that I meet with everyday? Am I just developing and implementing projects to keep students busy regardless of their skill level? Was I a project pusher? One project comes down the assembly line and here comes another and then another and another...Oh my, the horror!” I knew I had to find a new destination with my students that would take us to a magical place not found in many classrooms at my school.

I was anxious yet nervous when I implemented my newly developed curriculum. I hoped it would address issues such as increasing students’ motivational level, easing technical skill level problems, and connecting individual learners to the course content. Was I ready to let go of my traditional means of teaching? Let the old slip away and the new...well who knew?

What I found while trying to get at the hearts and souls of my students was I had to allow them access to mine. I had to be willing to meet all of our needs that were apparent, e.g. skill level, computer use, and creativity, and the not so apparent, e.g. background, interests, culture, and goals, of the individual learner. I found I had to challenge, change, and incorporate new ideas that involved the opinions and mastery of my students. I used their knowledge and needs to shape the curriculum and strengthen our classroom community. I set aside class time to reflect on our developed content and I gave students freedom to change it.

The students were able to integrate their own needs for learning and engaging themselves. Although reaching our unknown destination was sometimes a windy, stormy, rocky road and it did not come without challenges along our path, when we saw the sunrise along our journey the light in our eyes was never brighter.

***No one ever said letting go is easy-***

“Does anyone ever fail this class? What do I need to do to get through this?” –John

I wanted students to know that this multimedia elective was more than just getting a grade. I know that my elective classes contain a diverse population of students in that some of choose to take the class based on interest, others because it might have been a second choice elective, and still others who are placed by schedule demands and/or credit needs regardless of interest or choice.

As the students filed into my room I waited with excitement to see what students would be involved in the action research project class, the pioneers. I was also nervous because the enrollment numbers were low, ten students, of which two I knew would be moving to another class. How would this affect our class community? I had plans! I decided to go ahead with the preliminary background survey about each student’s individual technology skills, and did this for each entering student regardless of entry date. The initial survey data showed me the variety of skills and backgrounds that the students have.

There were many students who were already advanced, and I needed to find ways to nurture and challenge them. I also needed to know who would need extra help or would be able to create a blog or website for the class. It also helped me to get some background information on what they are most interested in doing with technology. Chart A shows the percentages of 15 students and their basic computer skills. I also asked what the students spent most of their time

doing on the computer and shockingly 50 percent (8 out of 15) stated they did creative activities. I assumed it would have been socializing, game playing, or surfing. Chart B shows responses related to the amount of time the student spends on the computer and for what purpose.

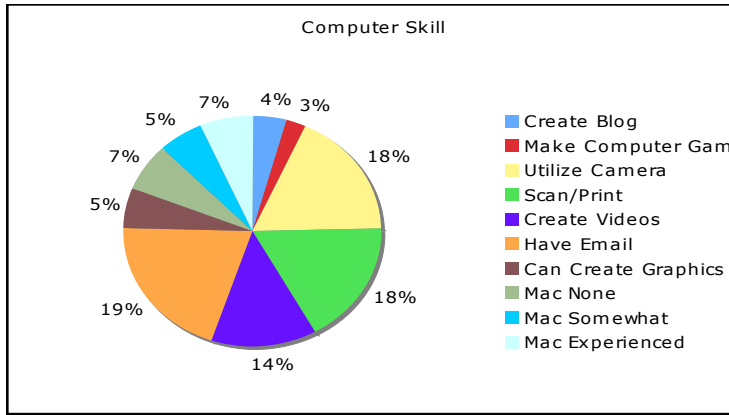


Chart A-Student interests on computer

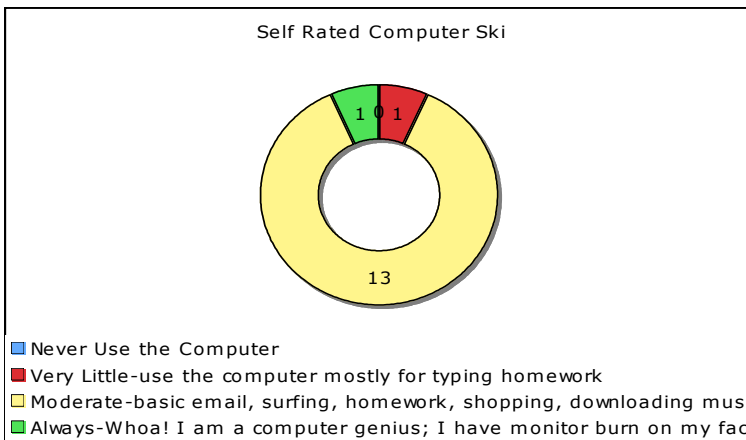


Chart B-Time spent using computer

The next question I asked the students was about their access to computers outside of school, Chart C. I found the answers to this question particularly interesting. It revealed that some students did not have regular access to a computer outside of school. At my school I believe most teachers (me included) would expect that all of the students have regular access to a computer outside of school. We assign work that assumes that students have regular access to technology. It was a bit eye opening four out of fifteen students did not have computer access. It makes me wonder how many other students still don't have regular access to technology outside

of my classroom and how they feel about that. What does this mean on a larger scale to the student population?

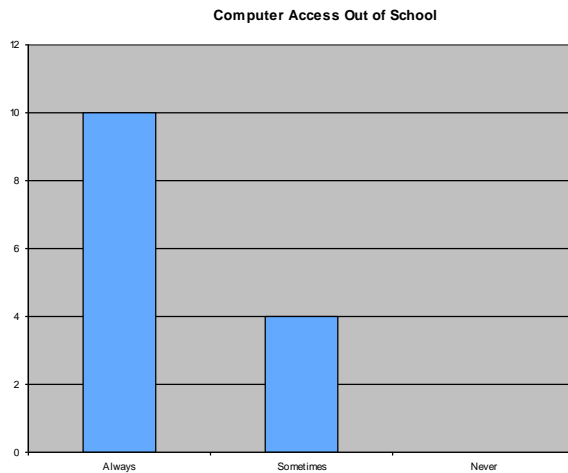


Chart C-Access outside of school

As the weeks progressed the students changed and the numbers grew to a steady core of fifteen. There was quite a mix of entry points, skill levels, and backgrounds. It was time to give out Sternberg's Triarchic Learning Styles surveys to the students, and discuss their involvement with the action research project. I used Sternberg's learning styles survey to decipher the individual student's learning styles. Sternberg's definition of human intelligence is "...a mental activity directed toward purposive adaptation to, selection and shaping of, real-world environments relevant to one's life" (Sternberg, 1985, p. 45). Each learning style has its own strengths, various ways of problem solving, and how to preserve learning new information.

After the survey I was surprised to see the number of students who resided in the creative spectrum of the Sternberg survey, Chart D. The survey in Chart E was part of the preliminary technological skills survey given at the beginning of the year before the Sternberg survey. When I compared the two I found that most of the students answered that they enjoyed

doing something creative on the computer and after the completion of the Sternberg survey it showed that most of the students had creative type learning styles. At this point I felt I had a starting point to design projects that coincided with their learning styles.

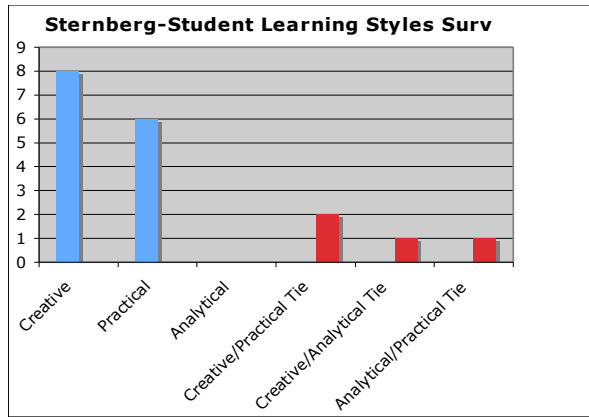


Chart D-Student results-Sternberg Survey

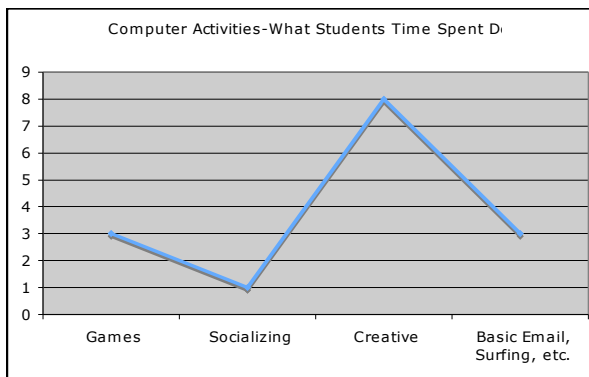


Chart E-Computer activities enjoyed by students

***It's so quiet you could hear a pin drop-***

*I don't even know that students name over there? Hi, what's your name?"-Amy*

The initial core group of students was so quiet I could hear my shoes squeak as I moved about the room. I knew I had to get them involved with each other and soon. Interaction was not limited but encouraged but when they did speak to one another they whispered. I was perplexed. How would I ever connect the minds of these students? What would break the ice? We had done a pair-share getting to know you activity, I had put them into flexible groups to discuss

animation stories yet there wasn't a sense of integration amongst the students. I practically had to push their chairs closer together. In past years the students could not wait to get near each other, talk, and share ideas, and it wasn't a change in project or content, quality of student work on the assignment, the environment, or lack of integration activities. As I continued to roam about the silent room you could hear my mind click, click, click...trying to search for an answer, idea, or spark to get the students interacting with one another, not by force but by choice. Click, click, click.

The next project was the first that I had designed with the students' learning styles in mind, hoping they would make connections with the course content, each other, and their individual interests. "If I Were a Cartoon Character/Figure What/Who Would I Be?" was not well accepted by the mostly introverted class (Appendix J). They had to think about their own personality and traits and develop a cartoon character, some sort of life form, or figurative thing that depicted themselves. They had to draw, color, and execute the cartoon character. Once complete the students then wrote why they created their type of character, what personality their character had, and included a written short story that talked about the developed drawing. As I introduced the assignment I felt like the students thought I was crazy—the look in their eyes varied from I love it; to fear and shock; to no way I'm doing this! This class was a tough sell! Click, click, click...was it going to work?

Unfortunately I had to leave for a meeting once they began and release the reins to the substitute. I hoped it would go well seeing that I was not going to be there for most of the class period. When I came back from the meeting I was in utter shock at the noise and laughter I was hearing even before I could see the students.

When I walked into the room the student activity was incredible, was I in a dream? I observed the students laughing, telling, stories to each other, and passing their cartoons around. The reactions were surprising and I enjoyed seeing the excitement and the buzz that was circulating throughout the room. I couldn't wait to hear more from the students! I was excited that the class was so into the project. At first glimpse walking around the room this is what I saw:



- Karen-her personality definitely shows in the drawing-Image A
- John-Plays sports, confident, I can see this in the drawing-Image B
- Tara-created a more reserved type quiet character yet-fits her personality-Image C
- Brian-great character, include his so called “elf” ear and developed a story around a personal piece of himself-he now has a laser ear-Image D

I couldn't wait to read the stories they wrote to accompany the drawings. I was interested in seeing how these connected with and or revealed some parts of their personality and or traits.

Here are some student-generated snippets from the above, talking about their characters'

story/personalities:

- Karen-Image A-I chose this type of character because she seems to portray myself. I don't necessarily think about candy or float on a cloud, but sometimes I feel like my personality is like that. I am really easygoing and in some ways I see myself as childlike.

The character's personality traits include: staying above the influence of becoming part of something disgusting and dead. And she sees happiness and beauty in the world around her. She offers comfort and lifts others up.

- John--Image B-...named JB...who was out in the woods one day...got stabbed by a porcupine in the foot. When he was angry he made an amazing discovery, he could control fire. Once he found out he could control fire he decided to use it to set terrorists

houses on fire. So JB went to Iraq and began wandering around in bad areas....Eventually JB set all of the terrorists on fire and ended their bad deeds permanently.

- Tara-Image C- My Character-I choose this type of character because it's my style of drawing, also it's the way I think I would look if I were to be drawn as a character based on what's on the inside.

Its personality traits are she's very lazy and doesn't do much, but when she does she's a very hard worker, she has a zipper over her mouth cause she doesn't really like to talk, she is super strong mentally and physically, and she doesn't like it when people judge one another.

- Brian-Image D- I chose this type of character because I have always wanted to fly and be a super hero. I always wanted to help those in need through my powers and abilities to be great. Super Hero's are something all kids can relate to, everyone has a role model or hero; and I've always wanted to possess those qualities. The character possesses traits of leadership, the ability to fly, the ability to spring up in the air, a laser ear, and an afro that attracts electro-magnetic waves from lightning to use as his laser and for his springs/jumping ability! He's incredible and can do anything he sets his mind/afro to! 😊

The students were engaged, interacting, and learning all at the same time, the way it was “suppose” to be in my classroom. But what had really happened? What was the trigger? Why now? The self-proclaimed character, sharing a personal story with others, being able to integrate their own interests into the drawing and story? These were all traits of differentiation, motivation, and including personal interests, but I needed more, much more. Maybe it was just a fluke—only time and execution of the next phase of the assignment would tell the truth. One thing I knew for sure was somehow our class dynamics had shifted from introverted to extraverted, and it was never the same.

### **Lights On, Lights Off, Lights On, Lights Off...**

The next piece of the “all-in-one project” would integrate the previous character drawings, align the students' individual learning styles, integrate personal ideas, and provide an

opportunity for the class to help in the creation of the proposed assignment. We would utilize Sternberg's three learning styles, creative, analytical, and practical, to shape the overall design. I put together prompts that connected their learning style and scenarios for the next animation assignment. See below:

***Practical:*** The day in the life of my cartoon character-pick one situation from daily life and put your character in the situation. What will they do? How do they react to certain "real world" situations? Storyboard and create the final animation.

***Analytical:*** Develop a story in which your figure is showing someone how to do something-the process of creating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, making a robot, how to solve a particular problem etc. Storyboard and create the final animation.

***Creative:*** Refine the story from the previous assignment and storyboard a 30 second animation that you will later create or devise a new fictional story in which your cartoon character will be involved in, storyboard and execute the final animation.

Each student received a handout along with his or her learning style circled and a provided space for feedback (Appendix K).Once complete the students turned the feedback sheets back in and I eagerly set out to read them, recreate and finalize the scenarios for the next day. Some examples of the proposed feedback included:

***Ivan-Creative-***This story should be very impossible (super powers, etc.) and not ordinary. It should be unpredictable.

***Alan-Analytical-***Not just processes, but also a logical situation where the figure must do something but logically, such as in a building on fire and a person is trapped, hand he has to figure out how to get them out.

**John-Practical**-I feel like this would be easy to relate with and make it easier to make a story out of it because you already have a skit.

The students' thoughts were invaluable and provided me with further insight and ideas to add to the designed project. I made sure to point out the changes I made from the previous day and how and where I included their responses. For the practical learner most seemed happy with the way the project was, the creative learner wanted more of an outlandish storyline or prompt, and the analytical students opened my eyes into how to incorporate the problem solving skills.

The changes (the before is mentioned above):

**Practical:** None

**Analytical:** Show some type of problem solving ability: getting something/someone out of a complex situation (something trapped and you have to analyze how to get it out). Your character might create a machine that invents crazy and wild products that can solve things like global warming, the gas crisis, environmental issues, etc.

**Creative:** Create a new fictional story, in which your cartoon character will be involved in some type of super natural situation, has special powers, can see into the future etc.

The class asked if they could join characters and stories into one animation and form groups. I did not see a problem with this at the time since I was allowing them to oversee the project design and providing them with choice. They were eager and excited and very social with one another, a definite change had happened with the creation of this cartoon project. I really thought I had found the connection! I really did!

We started working on the project and all seemed to be going well given the varied levels of skill we now had as a whole. This was the first larger animation project we were working on I was excited to see how it would evolve. The students were loud and social but seemed to be

mostly on task throughout the first week or so. But as we moved on into the end of the third week of the project I began to notice some behavioral and motivational changes. Some students were spending too much time socializing, doing other tasks, and not really motivated to work on the assignment. There was the core group that is always working like, Karen, Tara, and Rose. They always completed their work on time, but I even noticed that they were checking out by putting their heads down or drawing in their sketchbooks. What was I going to do with the students? I designed the project to “fit” their learning styles, and they were eager at the beginning. What had happened? These were students who had the skills to complete the project. I was glad to see that the class had a sense of closeness and community—they were accepting of one another and enjoying working together—but I did not want to let it interfere with the progress of their work.

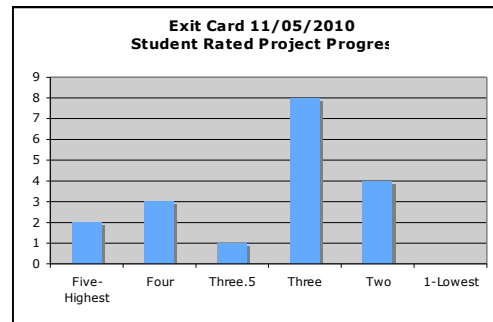
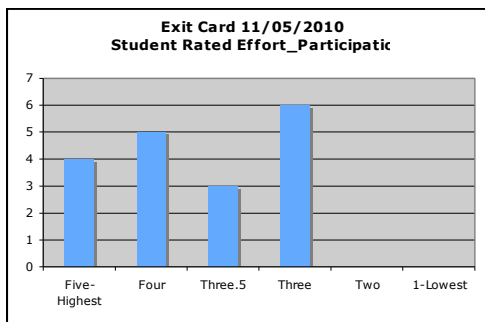
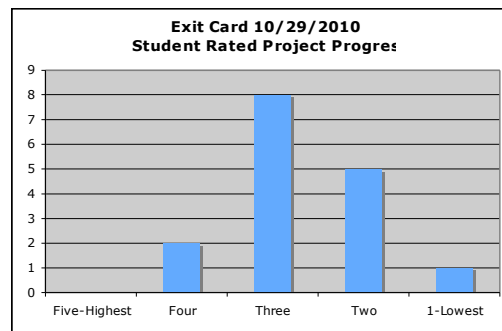
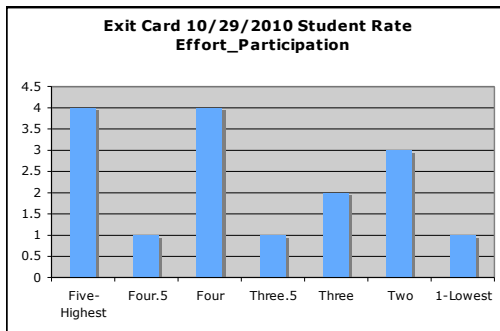
I decided to generate exit slips that might provide me with some insight on their progress and motivational level. It would allow the students to rate their own progress, performance, and state some goals they had for the next week or next steps. I explained that it was not part of their final grade and asked them to be honest. I was also hoping that the exit cards would bring some self-awareness about their projects and the work they may have put into it or still needed too.

I read the exit slips and it seemed most students rated themselves appropriately and were honest in their responses: John gave himself two out of five in self-rated progress and effort and in his goals and he stated he doesn't know what his story is? We have been working and planning this project for three weeks. Amy rated her progress and effort high but in her goals section she wrote, “HELP”! Karen stated sometimes she worked on videos for video production class-why not her animation project? Then on the other side I also received responses like Ivan, “Ready to finish”, Karina, “..my goal is to shorten the animation to get finished in time yet stay

true to the story”. I did not feel comfortable with the progress and confidence levels I was seeing in the exit cards.

I still was uncertain how I was going to get everyone to the same place on the project and a finished assignment. We had so many varied entry points that it almost seemed impossible, but I was most certainly going to try my best.

The following week the same students were off track and disruptive. I decided we needed to have a class discussion about work ethic, language use, and behavior and the effects it was having on our environment. They were respectful of what I had to say, and everyone seemed to be getting back on track. Did I give them too much control on the project? Were they taking advantage of the time, or was something else happening? I decided to implement another exit card rating their project progress and effort. But instead of stating goals I asked what they specifically needed help with or tools reviewed. Upon review of the exit cards I found an increased level of student rated progress and effort from the previous week, see the charts below:




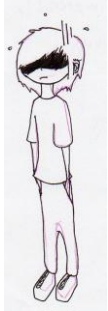





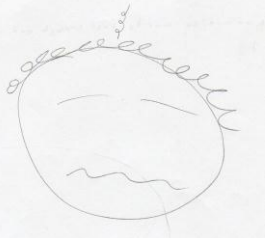


Yet I was not convinced all of the students were at a place where they were going to be able to finish the project and at the quality I was expecting from them. Many were getting further behind and seemed less motivated to complete their work. The response on the exit slips made me realize that a small bunch of students needed more skills or a review, some were in over their heads, their animations too long or complex, others were finished yet did not want to challenge themselves further, yet some were still struggling with the basic tools I had expected them to master by this time of the year.

Also it was eye opening to read, “I really need help, not sure what to do next”, but this student never asked for help during class time. Or on the opposite side I also received comments like, “I love this project the best ever, I don’t need anything!” It started to become very apparent the needs of the individual students in the class. It was clear that many students needed more time working with the software, whether it was because of late entry into the class, not getting the material initially, or simply having forgotten certain skills covered earlier in the year. I thought we had addressed some of these issues when we designed the projects as a class—after all, I had given them individual choice and control.

The next week I initiated a review and brought all the students back together and renegotiated the final due date. This seemed to clear up some of the anxiety I was noticing in the students. The class as a whole had a better feel and outcome this week. The due date was now approaching for the projects (some were even finished) and I sent out one last exit card to check the students’ progress. They were to each draw me a cartoon character about how they felt about their project and write an accompanying sentence about why they felt the way they did. The returned drawings were fabulous. The answers seemed to be more truthful and this process allowed for some personal interpretation about their individual projects. The faces show the

emotions the students were feeling and I could see a connection between the students' work and their progress-check drawing. They also enjoyed creating these exit drawings as opposed to circling progress numbers on a paper or writing about how they felt on paper. Below are some of the student responses:

	 <p>I'm not going to finish it's harder than I thought. <i>Rose</i></p>
	<p><i>Karina</i>-This mouse with a thumbs up, makes me feel like I accomplished something, (something I am very proud of).</p>
	<p><i>Tara</i>-Character I created is stressed out to the max. I've been working hard to finish this by the deadline but it is impossible I can't work fast enough.</p>
	<p><i>Ivan</i>-I feel like this because I am done with my project and helping other people.</p>

	<p><i>Karen</i>-I feel this way because I understand a lot better on how to use Flash and all the tools. I'm done with my project, basically.</p>
	<p><i>Mary</i>-I feel like one half is awesome and like the other half isn't done, so it's half good half bad.</p>
	<p><i>Alan</i>-I fell stressed out in the face because I feel I won't finish fast enough. I don't think I figured how the animation works fast enough and I'm not good enough at it.</p>
	<p><i>Brian</i>-I accomplished my goals in this project in a reasonable amount of time. I hope the class enjoys my work.</p>
	<p><i>John</i>-Because I finished it, and I think it turned out good, so I am happy about it.</p>

Even though all students did not draw as elaborately as some, most gave insightful comments about how they were feeling about their project. It was interesting to see how unconfident many felt about their projects, mostly what I thought was beautiful work for a first longer animation piece. The results varied across the board. Most seemed to be happy with their animation, but some were still stressed about the due date.

At the end of this project and viewing the class projects what I found was not what I expected. The project ran on much longer than anticipated, student motivation and skill levels varied greatly; I had not solved the problem of challenging all of the learners at their own skill level. So what were we going to do next to solve these issues? Did the learning styles and differentiation strategies make any difference?

Before the next proposed project I was still looking for ways to keep all students at an equal place throughout the duration of the assignment and I wanted it to be challenging, motivating, and one that would give each student the feeling of success at the end, something each would be really proud of. As I continued to work with various learning styles and differentiation methods I knew I was going to need to further individualize student instruction that was tailored to match their individual abilities.

***By George I Think I Got It!***

This next assignment was designed to allow the students freedom in designing their own 2D digital animation that involved their individual learning styles. As I began thinking about how to structure the assignment I saw the need to really individualize and differentiate each of their projects. The skill and interest level of each student is vast and I could not see motivating and challenging each by giving them all the same exact assignment, even with various parameters set as I had done previously. I wanted to make the project very special to each

student. Many wanted to move on to claymation animation but I wanted us to create one more 2D digital animation that would really show their skills and create a lasting impression on what they had achieved thus far. They have more skills than they let on to sometimes.

I also had a strong relationship with the students at this time and felt I was able to contribute in designing a project that targeted their individual learning style, interests, and skill level. I knew each lesson had to be prescriptive to each individual student. First I had the students fill out prompts in their learning style and then also write/illustrate the ultimate assignment they wanted to create on the backside of the paper (Appendix L).

<i>Student Learning Style Prompts/Responses</i>	<i>Student Project Brainstorm</i>
<p><b>Practical prompts and responses:</b></p> <p><b>Show how to animate....</b>a background</p> <p><b>Demonstrate your ability to create...</b>multiple tweens</p> <p><b>Based on your experience with animation...</b>show how to layer different props</p> <p><b>Using your knowledge of Flash...</b>learn to pace the timing</p> <p><b>Consider the problem (your choice) and animate...</b>missing the bus and animate two character's adventures to find another way</p>	<p>A sunrise on a mountain with bird</p> <p>Setting sun with surfers and shooting stars</p> <p>Two characters miss the bus and go on an adventure to fix the problem</p>
<p><b>Creative prompts and responses:</b></p> <p><b>Find a new way to recreate...</b>old stories</p> <p><b>Use comic relief to animate...</b>to discuss a problem and make you laugh at the same time</p> <p><b>Take these animation materials to create...</b>a manga story</p>	<p>Animate a person or hero you look up to</p> <p>Animate a dream you had or a dream you remember</p> <p>Create a video game</p>

<p><b>Explain a new way to...make a better story</b></p> <p><b>Connect with an animator...to talk about how they do things and what they like to see</b></p> <p><b>Become a... (your choice) and animate...a person from a story and animate their life</b></p>	
<p><i>Analytical prompts and responses:</i></p> <p><b>In an animation explain why...it is important to be patient</b></p> <p><b>Show (animate) the parts of...a face</b></p> <p><b>Identify and animate the key aspects...of sounds with each action that's chosen to be drawn</b></p> <p><b>Present/animate a step by step...story</b></p> <p><b>Diagram how...an animation is made</b></p>	<p>Become an artist and animate painting a picture</p> <p>In an animation explain why tween animation is more efficient than manual/frame animation</p> <p>Animate the parts of a face</p>

From there I looked at all of the information they provided me, we discussed possibilities together, and then I designed their individual projects, each with individualized specifications, a synopsis of their past work, and a designed scenario(s) for them to create/choose from. I then printed each on a colorful sheet of paper with an enclosed exit card and used colored markers to ink their names on each paper. I thought it was such an elegant way to deliver the assignment and something I had never done before (Appendix M). Examples of each learning style and prescribed student lessons:

***Karen-Learning Style: Practical***

**Synopsis:**

You have done an awesome job so far working with the tools and animation techniques. I like the style of work you have been developing and the creative stories you come up with for the projects. Try to further challenge yourself by animating more of the character and object details. I like your magic eight ball idea but I really thought creating the adventure story of the two characters missing the bus would be a much more fun and creative project for you, seems like you could really expand the story and incorporate some challenges for yourself along the way so I included both project summaries below.

**Summary of Your Project:**

Consider the problem of two characters missing the bus on the way to school and what adventures they encounter trying to get there on time.

Using your knowledge of Flash create an animated story about a magic eight ball trying to find a home (currently stuck at the toy store).

**Amy-Learning Style: Analytical/Practical****Synopsis:**

You have been doing a great job this semester learning and using the various Flash tools and animation techniques. I also like the small fun characters you seem to develop for each project. I would like to see you create another animation continuing to challenge yourself in these areas.

**Summary of Your Project:**

Based on your experience with animation create a storyboard and animate a story of a character who realizes why it is important to be patient.

Demonstrate your ability to use tween animation to create a Public Service Announcement that informs about an environmental, social, health, school, etc. issue.

**Tara-Learning Style: Creative****Synopsis:**

I love your style of drawing and characters that you create. You have a really good sense of style and artistic ability. You have done really well learning and executing the Flash tools and animation techniques we have been covering. I know you were a bit overwhelmed with the length of the last project. Not to worry this has been known to happen to many students on their first large animation assignment. It is hard to judge how long something will take you until you have such experience. On the upcoming project try to keep the story a bit more simplified so you don't feel so burdened by trying to complete the animation on time.

**Summary of Your Project:**

Find a new way to recreate old stories. I like this idea in that you could take a piece of any story, poem, short children's book, etc. and make it come to life.



I noticed you also mentioned animating a manga character; maybe you can create an animation from an existing manga character that has not yet been animated?

I did not plan on prescribing each student with such an individualized assignment but based on Tomlinson's and Northey's differentiation strategies this particular pedagogy seemed to

align with the needs of my students and the class material at the time. I tried to specifically hone in on the students present level in the class and create not only a challenging piece for each but also one that each would create with confidence and success in the end.

After each student received their individualized projects I created an exit card that asked the students about any changes they would like to make (Appendix N). I also asked them to illustrate what their motivation level was going into this next assignment and why. This gave me an idea about how they were feeling at the beginning of the project and then I would be able to track the motivation, interest, and quality level as we proceeded throughout the project.

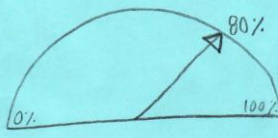
Following are some various examples:

<p>1. After reading your proposed Flash assignment what if any changes would you make to the assignment, length, subject matter, skill level, etc. <i>I love it. no changes.</i></p> <p>2. Draw your current motivational level for the next animation (on the back explain why you feel this way):</p>  <p><i>I feel like I can actually really do this well.</i></p>	<p>Text on Exit Card:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. I love it no changes.</li><li>2. I feel like I can actually really do this well.</li></ol>
<p>Exit Card 01/05/11</p> <p>1. After reading your proposed Flash assignment what if any changes would you make to the assignment, length, subject matter, skill level, etc. <i>None</i></p> <p>2. Draw a cartoon that represents your current motivational level for the next animation (on the back explain why you feel this way):</p> 	<p>Text on Exit Card:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. None</li><li>2. Scooby Doo-(on back) excited it's a good idea!</li></ol>

1. After reading your proposed Flash assignment what if any changes would you make to the assignment, length, subject matter, skill level, etc.

i want to be able to create really fun abstract characters for the bus scene.

2. Draw your current motivational level for the next animation (on the back explain why you feel this way):



i feel this way because i have a lot of ideas but im not that good at drawing so i get held back from doing it sometimes.


**Text on Exit Card:**

1. I want to be able to create really fun abstract characters for the bus scenes.
2. I feel this way because I have a lot of ideas but I'm not that good at drawing, so I get held back from doing it sometimes

1. After reading your proposed Flash assignment what if any changes would you make to the assignment, length, subject matter, skill level, etc.

I wouldn't change anything. This project sounds clear and fun! I'm up to the challenge!

2. Draw a cartoon that represents your current motivational level for the next animation (on the back explain why you feel this way):



**Text on Exit Card:**

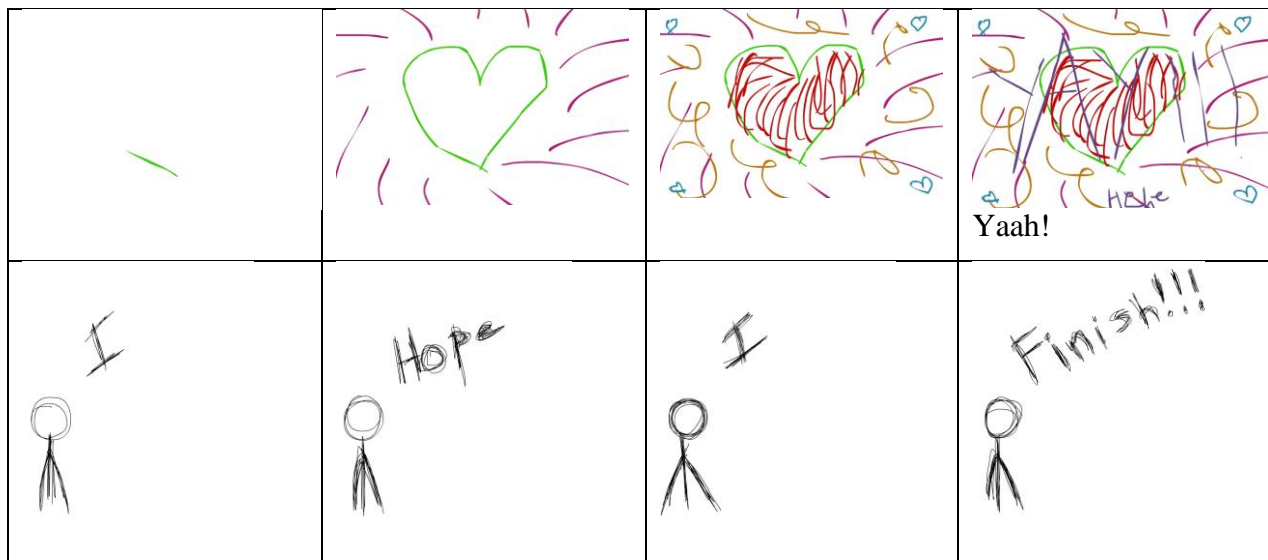
1. I wouldn't change anything. This project sounds clear and fun! I am up for the challenge!
2. Like a soldier waiting for my next mission, ready for action!

I found that overall the students were excited about starting the next assignment and that they did not make many changes to their proposed projects. When I was talking to students I could see them light up as we spoke about their next assignments, John, “ Really I can do that?”, Tara “ I am so excited to do this!”, Ellie, “I know I can accomplish this and it sounds so interesting”. Over and over I heard the same repeated comments. The students did not mention claymation again and seemed to move right into the storyboarding process. To see their motivation increase made me realize that I had made a connection because of the implementation of differentiation methods, individual interests, and learning styles. The student reactions were positive and I felt that way too. It was now apparent to me what I wanted us to accomplish and what road we needed to travel on to get there.

As we began moving through the first two weeks of the project the class was engaged and motivated to work on the beginning stages of the assignment. They were constantly sharing with

one another, helping each other, and for the most part they were all working on their projects with minimal frustration levels and increased motivational levels. I decided to give out an exit card to see how they were feeling about their projects thus far, because obviously sometimes my own observations were incorrect, as I had experienced in the last assignment. I asked the students to create an animated exit card that was three to five seconds long letting me know they felt about their progress and motivation levels. The students enjoyed creating the feedback in this manner and we all thought it was fun and different. Below are some screen shots from the exit card animations, and you can also view student work at my website @

[www.boots-gloves-hat-scarves.org](http://www.boots-gloves-hat-scarves.org).



*Top Illustrations: Mary, Bottom Illustrations: Rose*

But what I gathered so far from our experiences was much more valuable. Over the past three weeks the comfort and confidence level within our community grew, the quality of student work was increasingly beautiful every week, and the motivational level of the students was noticeably different from the previous project.

Over the following three weeks I tracked the students' progress by gathering their animations and viewing them and speaking with each student individually on Fridays to ensure competency, discuss any problems they might be having, checking for progress and continued motivation for the assignment. This also gave us a chance to further bond and increase our student-teacher relationship and build trust—there wasn't a right answer when it came to how we were all learning. Through sharing, the students became aware that it was okay if their individual projects varied from others in the class. They were addressing their individual strengths and proud of it. I just couldn't believe the transformation I was seeing throughout this project.

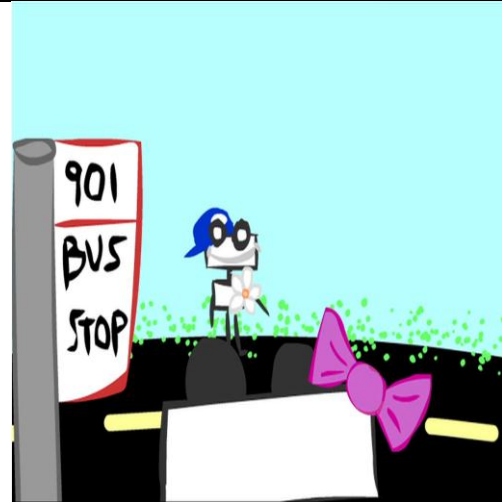
### ***The grass is greener on the other side....***

The final class screenings of the projects approached and I was so excited to see all of them together as a whole. The students were each given a slip of paper to give constructive feedback for each animation viewed. Each student would be responsible for naming one strength in the piece and one element that might have been improved upon. They would then turn in the responses to me anonymously and they would be given to each student afterwards.

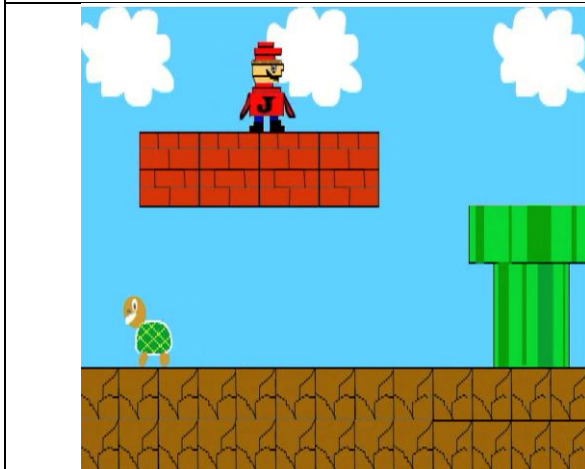
As we viewed the animations I was so astounded by the quality, stories, and growth of every student. I thought back to the previous assignment and the before and after of John, Tara, Karen, and Ivan. The work had paid off for all of us, and it showed! Below are screen shots of the finished product but you can view all of the [www.bootsgloveshatsscarves.org](http://www.bootsgloveshatsscarves.org).



Ivan



Karen



John



Tara

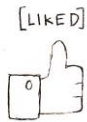
The students were clapping and cheering for each other, while at the prior project screening this was not so. I collected the student comments and read them before giving them back to the students; they were kind, thoughtful, and insightful. My heart pounding and teary eyed I sat back and thought about the students and their journey with me, how lucky I was to be a part of their lives this past year. How much they had taught me. Did they even know that?

I wanted to end the project with a reflection and ask the students questions regarding the process and feelings about their past animation assignment. I wanted to give them a chance to express themselves in a different way when responding, not just answering questions in a

typed up document. I decided to buy small blank sketchbooks and colored sparkly pencils for each student to respond to the proposed questions I was going to ask of them. That way they would be comfortable. They could draw, write, and create whatever and however they wanted to respond to the reflection questions. The final results were a mix of written, drawn and even one animated flipbook response. I included the final reflection data and images of Karen's book reflections:

**1. At the beginning of this project did you like or dislike that you were part of the design phase?**

1. In the beginning I



that I was part of the design phase

14 of 15 students responded that they liked being part of the design phase.

**2. Did you feel you had control of your own final project, idea, and outcome?**

2. I felt that I did have control of my own project, ideas, and outcome.



15 out of 15 students felt they had personal control of their project

**3. More specifically did the final intended assignment you received involve your interests, skills and learning style (creative, practical, analytical)?**



15 out of 15 said they thought the project involved individual interests, learning styles, and skills.

**4. What was your biggest challenge? Why?**



Responses: Time, drawing, staying on track, became tedious, using the tools, and completing the final on time.

**5. What are you most proud of in your final animation?**



Responses: Story, quality of animation, effort, music score, doing a good job, finishing on time, and creating a message.

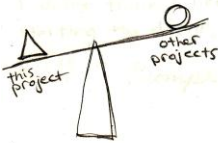
**6. Overall how motivated were you throughout the process of creating your final animation?**



11 out of 15 said they were highly motivated to complete the project and 4 stated they were moderately motivated, 0 stated they were unmotivated.

**7. How did this project compare to others you have done? Any similarities or differences?**

7.



In this one I had to really think about what I wanted to do. Sometimes I need guidance or a little starting push.

Responses: I knew more, put in more effort, liked having my own control, really worked hard at it, and wanted to do more.

**8. Would you like to be able to help design more projects in the future?**

8.

In the FUTURE  
I don't think I like starting the design, I like a Prompt.

13 out of 15 said they would like to help design future projects.

**9. Are you willing to share your final project outside of the class?**

9.



12 out of 15 would be willing to share their project outside of class.

**10. Final thoughts and or feelings?**

10.



Responses: Very proud of my work, one month of work paid off, cool class, like animation, enjoyed piecing together the final and seeing the outcome, did my best, and I really enjoyed this project.

Outside of the data about motivation and project design the students' responses allowed me to look deeper into their thoughts and feelings, and the feedback was honest and valuable, beautifully constructed. I was elated to see evidence of increased self-awareness involving intrinsic motivation. The students took ownership and pride, and the vast improvement in overall quality was amazing. Even the three students that responded negatively about their projects produced wonderful animations and made obvious advancements from the previous assignment in skill, motivation, content, and quality. When asked what animation they wanted to contribute to the film and animation festival all three students chose this particular project, so my thoughts are that inside they were actually pleased with the outcome of the project. My golden eggs, every last one of them.