Sudarshan Srirangapatanam

April 15, 2016

**First Field Visit (4.15.16) (Note 5)**

**Meta-Data**

* Place: Our Lady of the Rosary, Union City
* Date and Time: Wednesday, April 13, 2016 from 3:00PM to 6:00PM (after school)
* Interactions: Ms. America (Teacher), Hannah (7th Grade boy), Mr. B.
* Activities: Homework time, math club, Chat.
* Ideas to focus on: Interacting/Mentoring Kids

**Context**

As I entered the site students from junior high (6th-8th graders) and their younger peers were enjoying their play time. I joined the group of teachers who were talking, as I joined the group two girls joined us. I saw them there for the first time and they came from a high school and told that they were there for volunteering. They were told by Mr. B to watch younger students and try to keep them from fighting.

Group of boys started playing basketball as usual and were helping each other out by being very supportive. A group of girls with some 1st graders gathered around a long skip rope and started to play. Some boys joined the girls and since the rope was very long the girls helping the group had a hard time spinning the rope. The girls took turns to fix this problem and a boys started to skip first. The long rope made it hard for the skipper to continue skipping in irregular pattern. Hannah and a few other wanted to try skipping as well since they took it as a challenge.

As a few 1st graders attempted to skip, the junior high students encouraged them by clapping and shouting their names but the first grader gave up quickly. After an hour of outdoor activities, students were asked to move into a classroom and students slowly moved to get their bags. And we entered 7th grade classroom for homework and math practice, and they couldn’t go to Ms. Wolly’s class for math club since she wasn’t available for the day.

During math club everyone were given laptop for their online math practice as Ms. Wolly’s does, and were given another option to complete their math homework instead. A few opted in to complete their math homework, but most of them chose to select the computer version. After a while the 8th graders were taken out by a new teacher for a special practice, and I didn’t know the details regarding this practice.

Everyone left finished their homework, and were waiting for their parents to pick them up. Mr. B joined us after a while and we all started to chat regarding general issue and Hannah asked for help on their speech. We helped Hannah get a general idea of speech and talked about it for a while.

**Detailing the Interaction**

During the first third of the session most of the interactions were between students, encouraging and helping each other complete a certain task. One example of this is when Hannah was encouraging a 1st grader to continue to skip rope. This did kind of help the 1st grader to keep trying but didn’t, however, help her complete the task she was attempting. As Hannah started to clap, others surrounding her started as well.

During the second third of the session everyone were given a laptop to complete their session of math club using mobymax, IXL, or khan academy. During this time however everyone started to google random queries unrelated to the math subject. Some of the queries read “Funny Cat Memes”. And a few students, especially 8th graders, used YouTube instead of the math sites and therefore were given a warning by Ms. A to stop what they were doing or they could continue to work in the office.

This warning settled some of the students down and majority of the students worked on math practice using mobymax, an online practice which bases practice on their previous progress. Despite the warning a few 8th graders especially Joshua, Adrien and Justin continued to distract the whole class but they were quickly taken away by a new teacher to a new room for a practice, practice to get them up to the level of graduating this year.

After continuing got work on math practice and their homework, students started to gather around us, me and Ms. A, and started to talk about the student body election that was coming up. Hannah, who was running for president asked us to help her on her speech. We suggested her to come up with a good intro, and she replied “I do not want to end up doing the same thing as everyone else”. So we asked her to concentrate on what makes her special to the school, and asked her “What do you bring to the table”. After a while she told us that she was running unopposed and we all suggested her to not worry about it much since she was running unopposed to begin with.

Mr. B joined us after a while and Hannah continued to ask him the same questions and he told her that she has to first find an approach. Hannah started to continue planning her speech but was quickly distracted by a video played by Mounica. After the distraction she grabbed her laptop and started to browse Tumblr, and she told that she liked to use it, she told that it teacher her a lot of stuff. She also said, “don’t worry my dad knows I have an account”

After a while her dad came to pick her up and she started to gather her belongings together. Before leaving she came back to the desk where the laptops were piled up, she found her laptop and was quick to sign out of Tumblr and her laptop claiming that the boys would get their hands on her account if she left it.

**Reflection**

Learning focus for this week’s session was to engage students in the field of math and to help them in all of their academic discourses indirectly by helping them complete their homework. As every other session, this week’s session was setup to give students some free time, which can be characterized as unstructured time, and then introduce them to study time with a specific focus and a lesson plan, characterized as structured time, and then provide them with another set of free time where they are still in the environment of a classroom but are free to engage in any activity, another kind of unstructured time.

This setup has two sets of unstructured time that differ greatly with respect to the tools available for students and the environment they experience it in. The first encounter of unstructured time is outdoor, in a playground where students are given tools such as basketball, football, dodgeball, and skip rope. This time shows us that students come up with creative ways to engage with these tools and also are very supportive to each other. Each students responds to another and encourage them to complete a task, similar to Hannah’s engagement with 1st graders. The students organize their own groups and play with the tools available to them with little to no teacher intervention, and in doing so they are utilizing the Freirean concept of problem-posing model.

The second encounter of unstructured time these students gain is indoors in a traditional classroom setting. Tools available to them are academic material, whiteboard, computer, laptop, and iPad. The amount of students is also important to consider in this setting, since students leave the program as they get picked up by their parents throughout the day. Using technology, students gain insight into events at distance places by utilizing connective tools such as Tumblr. Hannah’s used it to gain insight into the social norms and also to learn about things around the world.

In having low amount of peers, students also engage with the teacher. This time also uphold Freirean problem-posing model since it focuses on student’s designing their own learning, with respect to the topic that they decide to learn. In this week’s case, we can see that students could have continued to do their homework, or use a computer to play, or have a conversation with the teacher, or get help on another topic. While some students like Hannah chose to get help with the student body election, others like Mounica decided to use technology for their entertainment.

During the second session, students were in a traditional classroom setting with tools such as pen and paper, laptop and computers available to them. Since the student were forced to use these tools in a very specific way, in today’s example, use of computers to access mobymax and select few tools online, and using pen and paper to complete their homework they were being banked on as described by Freire. The role of tools here very important to consider since it allowed them to complete their task as well as distracted them from the task at play. For example, when Joshua and his peers decided to play YouTube videos instead of using the technology to their benefit, they were deviating from the task and this was a result of technology. When completing their homework using pen and paper there far less distractions since there is nothing much students can use pen and paper for.

