Sudarshan Srirangapatanam

April 23, 2016

**First Field Visit (4.23.16) (Note 6)**

**Meta-Data**

* Place: Our Lady of the Rosary, Union City
* Date and Time: Wednesday, April 20, 2016 from 3:00PM to 6:00PM (after school)
* Interactions: Ms. America (Teacher), 6th grade students, Ms. Wolly, Adrian, Joshua
* Activities: Homework time, Math puzzle.
* Ideas to focus on: Interacting/Mentoring Kids

**Context**

As I entered the class, Ms. America was angry at students for their behavior. They were all gathered inside a gym and the reason for Ms. America’s behavior was comments of Adrian and Joshua. They were all asked to line up where Daniella was leading the line. She asked if anyone wanted to go home and told them if they wanted to they could call their parents. “Who wants to call their parents right now”, phrase was used multiple times with a angry voice and a hand stretched with a phone in her palm.

As the whispers and noise settled down, Joshua and Adrian made a small comment and they were asked to run laps inside the gym and they were later asked to join the group. In order to test their discipline they were told that they’ll have to show her that they can walk in a line. Ms. America ordered them to walk around the playground in a line lead by Daniella and if they continued to “goof around”, she would increase the time.

Daniella led the line out of the gym and into the playground, initially she led the line to the end of the parking lot towards the entrance of the church. She eventually returned around to form a big circle, and Ms. A increased the time they were required to walk since one of the kids, Arturo, decided to leave the line. Eve tough this was supposed to be punishment, the students enjoyed it and some of the other students asked Ms. A is they could join the line. The only thing the students lost in this task was their choice in choosing the activities.

Students were given 10 minutes to enjoy the playtime, however, they decided not to completely utilize the time and were just walking around the parking lot. They were all taken to the 8th grade classroom for math club and waited for Ms. Wolly’s arrival. In the meantime some students started their homework and asked me for help, while other continued to argue with Ms. A for their earlier behavior and other just use this time to chat.

After a while Ms. Wolly arrived and opened the door to her room, this time she accepted all of the students since there were less 20 students. Everyone was asked to login to mobymax for their practice, and after the practice was a contest for everyone in the class. After 5 they were all asked to go the homework session for about 30 minutes, and the last 30 minutes was dedicated to waiting and playing on a laptop.

**Detailing the Interaction**

As we entered the classroom for students’ math club everyone was asked to grab a computer and students promptly did, while most of them took a place at the computer a few 8th graders as well as a few 7th graders used a laptop. Ms. Wolly gave me description of what they were doing as “an enrichment” activity to help them gain interest in math as well as to help them on their hard subject.

She explained that they were all given an assessment test at the begging of the year and based on that the computer decided the objective they would have to focus on. She asked me if I was okay with helping students on their math, and I gladly accepted since math is one of my favorite subjects as well. I was asked to help Alejandra on her work and help any other students that raised their hand.

Each student focused on their own activity and Ms. Wolly helped the students with laptops and I helped students at a computer. Alejandra was working on word problems where she would have to keep track of gaining an object, losing some and finally figuring out what she began with. I started helping her out with an equation and I was quickly stopped by Ms. Wolly and was informed that 6th graders did not have instruction in equations yet.

After gaining some insights onto the knowledge they have, I started out by change the objects mentioned in the problems to everyday objects so that she can easily relate to them. I started changing bicycles to books and pennies to chocolates, Alejandra continued working on the same set of problems and I asked her to try some on her own. I went ahead and helped out Arturo who was having problems with his 3digit subtraction, even though I didn’t teach him the method or tricks, he was able to solve the problems. All I did was, I asked him a series of questions and asked him to “try again”, when he had a wring answer.

Alejandra called me over again to get some help on her next problem set, this problem set was an extension of the previous where she had to deal with number line. I told her, “use the same method and try again, if you can’t get it I can help you”, and she quickly applied the same method and got a right answer. After I knew that the students were having no difficulty answering the problems, but needed help in rephrasing the words, I started helping the students by rewording the questions.

Alejandra, at times, looked over to Adrian’s screen to her right in an attempt to solve some of his division problems, and Arturo’s towards her right to answer his problem set. I let her help her peers for some time but asked her to stay focused so that she can get her work done as well, and assured her that I could help them out.

After about 45 minutes of practice, Ms. Wolly asked the students to complete the last set they were working on and asked the groups to go to a certain URL for a quick game. Students were asked to leave the desktops and take a seat at the table in groups of 3 or 4. Students who were working on the laptop quickly formed a groups with their neighbors and students at a desktops joined some groups on their laptop. The winners were told that they will be given a glue stick as a prize. All of the groups quickly joined the contest and started working on the “matching game”.

**Reflection**

This week’s learning focus was to be able to gain math skills with the use of technology and the internet. In order to practice and gain interest in math, students were introduced to an online community at the beginning of the year and they continued to work in this platform gaining new skills for every problem set they complete. Technology used was of two forms, a computer and a laptop. Each were used for the same purpose, however, one attracted a certain group more than others. Laptops were used majorly by 8th graders and only a few 7th graders, and all of the 6th graders used a desktop computer.

All of the students were on the same website and therefore can be considered as using same technology. Technology here was facilitating [affording] new learning opportunities by providing tools for students to achieve success in their academic discourses. It helped them gain skills in math, and the whole learning experience for them was somewhat mediated through the teacher and the technology itself. We can also see the presence and influence of technology, myself and Ms. Wolly in their learning experience since they actively received help from all three.

All three resources can be considered as Vygotsky’s scaffold for them, but technology takes a special place since it is a blend of both scaffold as well as a tool. In receive help form me and Ms. Wolly, students were being scaffolder in specific ways to help them complete their problem sets. And the problem sets themselves were a scaffold used by the technology to help them attain the skills required as them move forward in their academic career.

In addition to the use of technology in structured time dedicated to academic learning, students were also given an opportunity to use the technology and connect socially with conte3st at the end of learning session. This session used the technology to help students connect with each other in an attempt to solve a particular problem at hand. Students shared their ideas, helped each other analyze the problem and together were able to win their prize. Another scaffold can be observed here, since students were acting as each other scaffold in helping them achieve a certain place.

