Sudarshan Srirangapatanam

April 30, 2016

**First Field Visit (4.30.16) (Note 7)**

**Meta-Data**

* Place: Our Lady of the Rosary, Union City
* Date and Time: Tuesday, April 26, 2016 from 3:00PM to 6:00PM (after school)
* Interactions: Ms. America (Teacher), Alejandra, Diana, Jaden and other 6th grade students
* Activities: Homework time, Math puzzle.
* Ideas to focus on: Interacting/Mentoring Kids

**Context**

Enter my field site and met Ms. Jamie to let her know about my next week’s schedule, and after agreeing to the schedule she asked me to inform Ms. America that the group is not going to have Ms. Wolly today since she left early. I went to inside gym and waited for Ms. America’s arrival to inform her what Ms. Jamie told me. Ms. America then asked all of the students to line up and told them that they were not having Ms. Wolly and every reacted happily. Some even said “thank god”. As Ms. America started to talk again with “but”, everyone started to groan.

Some quickly said, “what about the homework we have today”, and Ms. America confirmed with other students and told them they can do it during the homework time, which will be extended today. Everyone were given 30 minutes to enjoy their free time outside, and most of them opted in to untied a tangled rope which was left tied at the end of the 30 minutes. They were all asked to collect their bags and meet at the front of 7th grade classroom for their homework time. Most of the 8th graders requested for a laptop and were given permission to get them.

Students entered the classroom and a few 6th graders selected a desktop computer to complete their homework. Joshua, Adrian and other 8th graders used laptop and sat at a desk. As soon as they opened up their laptops, 8th graders went to YouTube and started to play some music, funny videos and other videos that were irrelevant at the time. As a result, Ms. America warned them that she will take the laptops away if they continue. Despite her warning, Joshua continued and therefore, Ms. America asked everyone to return their laptop, and a few 7th graders explained that their homework involved used of a computer. She allowed everyone expect Adrian, Joshua and few other who were distracting the class to use a computer or a laptop.

I was sitting near a computer to help anyone in the class who needed help on their homework, and a few students clustered around me to select a computer to finish their homework. They started on their homework on the same software as last week but they all had the same problem set to complete. Almost all of the students were just skipping the question by submitting a wring answer without even attempting to solve the problem. After a while I went ahead and approached Alejandra to help and quickly Jaden asked for help as well, with them two on the right track, other asked for help as well. I helped the students with different strategies and some students like a few better than the others, but each were able to grasp the concept.

**Detailing the Interaction**

One of the major interaction with respect to the questions at hand was during the study session, where 6th graders were working on a particular problem set that involved geometry. The problem set involved finding area of a compound figure, i.e. a figure constructed using two other figures. All of the figures were of two rectangles combined to form an “L” shape so that the students would have to intelligently construct two shapes and find two areas and decides whether to add or subtract. Every single student at first was struggling to find the exact construction of two figures, therefore, were entering random numbers to get the explanation behind the problem.

After watching them for a while, I offered them help by collectively constructing two rectangles with them and helping them find the number themselves. Even though this worked for while I was there to help them, as soon as I left to help another student [Diana], the first student [Jaden] would fail to get the answer right. I asked everyone to stop entering random number and wait for me, I first started with Jaden and the following conversation went ahead.

Me: “There are two ways to solve this problem, by addition or by subtraction, which one would you like?”  
Jaden: “Let’s try the subtraction, addition is not working for me”  
Me: You see how this “L” has bigger one and a smaller one  
Jaden: “Yes”  
Me: All you have to do is, Take the bigger L and find big rectangle, then subtract the smaller one  
Jaden: Wait so I take these two number multiply, then take these tow numbers and multiply, and then do bigger one minus the smaller one right.  
Me: “Correct”, this works just like addition, in addition you take two shape and add, here you take a big shape and take some parts of it out.  
Jaden: Wow, this is so easy. Why does Ms. Wolly make it complicated…

After helping him out, I went ahead to help Diana, who was next in line and she opted-in for addition method. Even though this involved multiple ways, I gave her the choice to select the number herself and would help her construct the equation. She was struggle at first but eventually was bale to get it.

Alejandra on the other hand wanted to use addition method but found he equation method hard, therefore, I asked her to visualize the rectangles. I used my hand to cover some parts of the rectangle first and then revealed it, later I asked her to do it on her own and she followed the exact method I thought her, and was able to solve the problem set. Occasionally, they raised their hands for help but otherwise, they were able to finish the problem set.

After finishing the problem set, the students brought their paper homework which was similar to the online problem set, so I asked them to use the same strategies they used online ot help them solve the questions. I asked Alejandra, who liked the geometrical approach to draw a line instead of covering so that she can better visualize.

**Reflection**

This week’s learning focus was to help the students develop academically, this was established by letting students work on their homework for an extended period of time. Almost all of the students used some kind of technology to achieve this, but today is a great example as to how the technology can both afford and disrupt the learning opportunities.

Technology at the beginning of the session was misused by certain groups that is they were used for the purposes of personal joy and social awareness, where students engaged in learning current social situations and popular culture through the use of YouTube in accessing new songs. However, this was not the primary focus of the lesson plan and as a result this behavior was deemed unnecessary and technology from these groups were taken away. This use of technology afforded specific learning opportunities students were interested in but disrupted others’ opportunities since they were more interested in finishing their academic work.

One the other hand, technology used by 6th graders aligned with lesson plan as well as afforded learning opportunities they were interested in, finishing their homework. One other important thing they were able to achieve was that their use in no way disrupted the learning environment of others.

Technology in this site earlier was seen as Vygotskian tool but it is important to consider that the technology on itself failed to scaffold the students, and it required an additional external support [me] to achieve its purpose. Also the technology used had a shortcut for the students to use and this shortcut whose purpose was to help students understand the concept turned to disrupt the opportunity.

