**What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?**

Annoyance, distaste, and ununited. Those were our feelings every Friday at 2:30 pm. It was our school’s weekly student-teacher games event. What was meant to strengthened our relationship turned out to be the opposite: only about half of the students showed up, while the rest left to enjoy their weekend 45 minutes early.

The teachers would set up games and have us form groups to compete by class. It’s a good concept, but the games were too cheesy and childish for us. After years of these, I was fed up. As the student council’s VP, I wanted to make a change for the better; something that would really strengthened the student – teacher relationship. So, I voiced my concerns to the student council. With the students attendance records and a school-wide survey of the weekly event, I finally received the school’s approval for reforming this event.

Empathizing with the student body came first: surveys and interviews were done to gain insights on the most appropriate activities that could accomplish the event’s goals. Identifying the problem came next once the data was collected: sports, arts, culinary, and trivial games (Jenga, Twister, etc.) were the most popular activities preferred by both students and teachers. Too many activity options for a 45-minute event were not practical. The student council and I need to brainstorm for the best solution: after simulating endless scenarios, we proposed a full-day “Games Day” before mid-semester break instead of weekly events. This event comprised of a “Harry Potter” style “house” competition and point system plus “winner takes all” incentive to build excitement and camaraderie. Google form was used to keep track of students’ activities and attendance.

As I nervously inquire the stakeholders’ response, the reformed student – teacher event received positive reviews; even the school principal agreed to make this a permanent new tradition. A strong togetherness started to form from the students’ and teachers’ competitive spirit throughout the day. Who would’ve thought that the scientific problem solving approach I learned in my Science classes could be applied to making my school a more fun and unified environment.