Practice Data Set: Grade 5

Grade Level: Grade 5

Critical Question: How can I create a cohesive classroom community among 30 fifth graders separated by language and gender?

Context:

The context for the study is in a rural but growing community, once largely agricultural but fast becoming anchored by industry and urban commuters.

This particular data were generated during a Colonial America group work project, as well as from team building exercises during the same time period. To read the actual study this data comes from, see Cindy’s action research project, Facilitating Student Learning through Collaboration: A Fifth Grade Journey to Classroom Community, also on this website.

The purpose of using the data here is to illustrate how a student teacher/researcher might use data in ongoing analysis.

Data Set Components:

1. Observation of a small group work
2. Artifact: Student journal entries
3. Group leader interviews
4. Collection of artifacts on students’ definition of “community”

Instructions:

Read through each of the four data set components and answer the questions under the heading “Considering the Data” that follow each one.
Observation of Small Group Work

The class was broken into small groups for work. My mentor was asked to make general observations, but also to focus on interactions with ESL students, positive/negative means of communication, and difficulties in the groups. The observations were made at the first gathering of these groups for a major group project, where students decided their roles/jobs in the group. The groups were designed based upon information gathered previously from a sociogram.

Team leaders were identified as “stars” in the sociogram and include: S 26 (female, English first speaker), S 1 (female, bilingual), and S 20 (male, bilingual). One student, S 21 (male, Spanish speaker) is an “isolate” based upon the sociogram results. S 28 (male, Spanish first speaker) and S 29 (male, Spanish first speaker) are marginally isolated based on the sociogram results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group #1</th>
<th>Group #2</th>
<th>Group #3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S 26 went to Raul to include him in group</td>
<td>S 1 asks group “who wants …”</td>
<td>Four of the group members are not participating</td>
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<tr>
<td>S 26 asks for clarification</td>
<td>S 1 asks for clarification</td>
<td>Southern group not working together</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most members actively participating</td>
<td>S 2 sitting behind group</td>
<td>S 28 kicks bottom of S 29’s foot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quickly assigned tasks and S 26 recorded</td>
<td>S 21 not involved</td>
<td>S 20: “Tell me what you want to do”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Group attempting to compromise</td>
<td>Group shouts out responses</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Try to find a spot for S 8 (who is absent)</td>
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Considering the data:
- If you were the student teacher/researcher, what might you conclude from this observation?
- What interventions, if any, might you enact?
- What would your plan be for the next day based upon this data?
Artifact: Student Journal Entries

I selected five students to respond to the following journal prompt at the end of their major group project: *When you were working in your colonial region group, what was difficult and what was easy or good? Did you work well with your partner? What would have helped you work better with your partner or other people in your group?*

S 22 (male, E, group 1): “Me and my partner couldn’t find the right book and when we did we couldn’t find the right page. We knew some stuff already. I did not work well with my partner because we talked a lot. If we wouldn’t have been together it would have been better.”

S 19 (male, S, group 2): “I feel good with my group and with my partner. The good thing is that my partner is working good with me. Yes I am working good with my partner. The hard thing is that he didn’t want to work with me and now he is working good. The easy thing is that now he is working good and give me a lot of information.”

S 23 (male, E, group 3): “I didn’t like working with my partner. Nothing could have helped except if he were nicer. It was difficult that he cursed to me all the time in Spanish.”

S 9 (female, E, group 3): “The easy part was typing it out. The hard part was finding all the pages and getting the answers we want. Yes, I worked well with my partner. But we both wanted to type if we would have had more information resources and work a little longer.”

S 12 (female, E, group 3): “When I was working in my colonial region group it was difficult to find information on the region. It was easy for me to work with most of my group and it was good we worked together and got it done. Yes, I worked well with my partner. It would have helped if my partner would do more and my group would get along.”

Considering the data

The student journal entries were gathered near the end of the project. Read through this data, highlighting repeating patterns or themes that correspond with the student teacher/researcher’s questions. (E = English first-language speaker; S = Spanish first-language speaker; B = bilingual).
3  **Group Leader Interviews**

Upon completion of the colonial group project, I interviewed each of the team leaders with the following questions:

1. What problems did you notice in your group?
2. What difficulties did you face as you tried to divide the group into partners?
3. How did you feel about being given the responsibility/role of team leader?

**S 26 (Group 1 leader)**

1. One of the problems was S 22 and S 18 kept losing their questions, which was really frustrating. Also it was frustrating that I could not help everyone at once and the teacher couldn’t either.
2. It was difficult to get people paired up because everyone couldn’t be with who they wanted to be with.
3. I was happy to have someone feel I was responsible enough to handle it.

**S 1 (Group 2 leader)**

1. It was hard when S 2 wasn’t here and S 21 felt like she couldn’t do the work and then stopped working.
2. It was hard to choose – but I gave options of what they wanted to do.
3. I didn’t mind it. I felt good for being chosen, and I was a little nervous because I didn’t know exactly what I was supposed to do.

**S 20 (Group 3 leader)**

1. We had a hard time finding answers. S 23 and S 28 were not willing to work together and were arguing over answers.
2. Some kids weren’t willing to work with each other. I’m used to leadership because I finish early a lot of times and then get to help the other people who aren’t finished yet. It was kinda hard sometimes to be the lead, but I liked it.

**Considering the data:**

- If you were the student teacher/researcher, what insights would you gain from these journal entries and the interviews with group leaders?
- What interventions, if any, would you enact prior to the next group project?
- What additional information would you need to know?
- How might insight from the literature, or distant colleagues, inform your study at this point?

4  **Collection of Artifacts on Students’ Definition of “Community”**

**Class brainstorming**

What are the characteristics of your ideal community?

- Fun
- Helping
- Sharing/working together
- Place w/ house and river
- A ranch w/ horses
- Big group of people
- Family
- Love
- Giving joy
- Religion/faith
- Friends
- Money
- Jobs for everyone
- Friendly neighbors
- Kids can play together
- Clean house

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Student artwork depicting an ideal community:
Instruction given to students: “Draw a picture of your ideal community (or symbolizing it) and write a few sentences describing the characteristics of your ideal community.”

“We live out of the city and everybody has a job and we share food. To get food we have to go to the city. We have a lot of money to buy food. Family is important to me.”

In my ideal community it is important to have family and friends around and to have fun. There is one school and a bunch of churches. No one gets left behind.

In my picture I show children playing and having fun; a church/churches where people can believe whatever they want. There is no slavery in this town. Everybody in the town is helpful and likes each other’s company. Lots of money and jobs for everybody. The town is near the mountains and rivers. The schools have nice and loving teachers!

“Esta es mi comunidad en esta comunidad esiste la amistad la alegra nos apoyamos unos a los otros.”
otros tambien podemos salir ala calle ir al mar sin nigun peligro. Tambien en mi cominidad poseemos divertirmos con la arena cuando estamos de vacasiones o tambien nos divertimos en la escuela.”

This is my community. In my community there is friendship and happiness. Everybody helps each other and we can go out in the street without danger. Also in my community we can have fun playing at the beach in the sand when we’re vacationing or we have fun at school.
**Considering the data:**
Complete the following chart based upon your analysis of the data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do children value in “community”?</th>
<th>What barriers do children identify to “community”?</th>
<th>Review the data from the first three components of the data set (observation of a small group work, student journal entries, and group leader interviews). Compare this data to the final data component about ideal community. What insights or direction do the combined data sets provide for you? What additional questions do they raise?</th>
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