Developing a Shared Vision to Improve Collaborative Learning

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Abstract

Each day Cafeteria Training students work collaboratively to perform daily tasks. However, challenges arise associated with collaboration that requires teacher intervention. An approach to address this concern was to involve students in developing a shared vision. By having students develop a shared vision this would increase classroom sense of community and therefore improve the collaborative effort of Cafeteria Training students. A quantitative study was conducted with 14 Cafeteria Training students that measured their perceived sense of community before and after developing a shared vision. Students reported noteworthy improvements to their sense of classroom community, caring for one another, student support, and the feeling of family.

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Chapter 1: Problem to be Investigated

Purpose of the Study

Teachers often ask students to work in small groups or with a partner. Various names assigned to this type of teaching are: collaborative learning, cooperative learning, peer teaching, and reciprocal teaching (Davis, 1999). When students are asked to work collaboratively a teacher may assign groups or ask students to create their own group. Students might also be asked to exchange members on a regular basis or preserve group members for an extended period of time. As a collaborative group, students might brainstorm ideas, study together, write an exam, complete in class assignments, or carry out a project over several days.

Davis (1993) argued that students who work in collaborative groups, regardless of the subject matter learn more of what is being taught and retain information longer than when the same content is presented in a traditional lecture based approach. Collaborative learning also allows students to actively work with information a teacher presents them with in meaningful ways which is quite different from classrooms that center on lecture approaches of learning (Goodsell, Maher, Tinto, Smith, & MacGegor, 1992). Simply acquiring new information presented by a teacher through lecture does not engage intellectual processing or construct meaning (Goodsell et al., 1992)

Research in the area of collaborative learning has revealed conflicting evidence, which is explained in further detail in Chapter 2. While some research confirms that students learn best through active learning among their peers, other studies suggest that students face various challenges and that collaborative work is of little benefit. And while studies have established that collaborative learning has both strengths and weaknesses, investigating how to improve collaboration is an important issue and needs exploring.

Research defining how to improve collaboration is sparse. Most empirical data describes why collaboration is beneficial or lists specific challenges students often endure. Therefore the goal of this study is to examine if student collaboration can be improved by increasing a classroom's sense of community.

Finding solutions to improve collaboration is important because students in each of my Cafeteria Training 11/12 classes work collaboratively every day. Students are partnered in groups of two, three, or four and together they prep for menu items, cook meals, sell them to students in the school, and then finish by sanitizing the kitchen. Groups are expected to be professional in nature as if working in a real restaurant and assume responsibility for completing all work that has been assigned. Collaboration is a key element as students work closely with each other, rely on one another for support, and work together to maintain high standards at all times. However, throughout the year challenging situations often arise which require teacher intervention to help renew cooperation between students. If ignored, tension increases to the point that the group members no longer work cooperatively.

Nevertheless, I believe that if students' sense of community can increase within the class, collaboration will improve. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine if students in a high school cafeteria training class could reduce the challenges that inhibit them from working collaboratively together by creating a shared vision.

Justification of the Study

Pursuing research to improve collaborative learning is relevant for the success of students who work collaboratively. Since research indicates that students benefit from working collaboratively, investigating how to improve collaboration could reveal information useful to classroom teachers.

Collaboration is vital in the classroom because students benefit by engaging in discussion with other students and become more aware of others' perspectives by listening to their contributions and engaging in conversation (Panitz, 1997; Webb, Farivar, & Mastergeorge 2001). Webb et al. (2001) also stated that students can learn from one another by "giving and receiving help, by recognizing and resolving contradictions between their own and other students' perspectives and by internalizing problem-solving processes and strategies that emerge during group work" (p. 2).

Considering Vygotsky's theory of sociocultural development, Louis (2009) suggested that social interaction is necessary for cognitive development. "If social interaction is absent, then cognitive development does not proceed; if social interaction is inefficient or ineffective, then cognitive development is hindered" (p. 21). Thus, students not working collaboratively and in effective ways are missing important cognitive opportunities.

One example of a challenge faced by students during collaborative work is explained by Livingstone and Lynch (2000) in a study that looked at students with relatively poor marks. During collaborative activities low achieving students were found to manifest feelings of injustice when they were given a poor mark for work that was completed by the entire group. Although the low achieving student would not have earned a higher mark on their own, Livingstone et al. (2000) suggested that low achieving students believe their mark would have improved had other members of their group worked harder.

In order to improve student collaboration, schools and classrooms need to embrace sense of community. Studies that focused on schools supporting sense of community found that students benefited from a variety of school experiences. Schools that support community were found to help bind students together and allowed for shared vision and a common purpose.

Without community "learning becomes problematic in school to the extent that the school focuses on learning as an endeavor in itself, rather than as a means to building social relations and engaging in meaningful activity" (Eckert, Goldman, & Wenger, 1997, p. 2). Community within a classroom supports diversity and allows for openness. Schools with a sense of community often provide students with a number of advantages, one of which can be academic achievement (Hallinan, Kubitschek, & Liu, 2009). Students who attend a school with a sense of community attain higher academic achievement and develop better academic attitudes than those in bureaucratically organized schools. Furthermore, Hallinan et al. (2009) found that students benefit socially, which is linked to positive attitudes such as interest in academics and staying in school. Hallinan et al. suggested that when teachers push students to achieve high academic goals and show a genuine concern for their well-being, students will gain positive social skills, accept social norms of the school, and therefore help them to grow cognitively, emotionally and socially. "Students who experience their school as a community enjoy school more, are more academically motivated, are absent less often, engage in less disruptive behaviour and have higher achievement than students who do not" (Battistich & Hom, 1997, Introduction).

As classrooms develop a shared vision, students' sense of community will improve as argued by Vandenberghe and Staessens (1991). In situations where schools have a high degree of shared vision, students share in a feeling of unity and identity with the school (Vandenberghe et al., 1991). It was noted that teachers who increased collaboration amongst their students allowed for more talk about their school and how to achieve school goals. Vandenberghe et al. also found that schools continually focused on shared visions were able to positively influence academic results.

Hallinger and Murphy (1995) suggested that developing cathectic goals is an important element of building a shared vision. Cathectic goals are those focused on the mission of a school and its values. They also serve to motivate students, give meaning to their work, and help bind them to one another and their school. Hallinger et al. (1995) noted that schools characterized as having a high degree of shared vision were more successful and effective than schools which simply listed specific measureable goals.

One way to build a sense of community within a classroom is for students to develop a shared vision. Creating a shared vision allows students the opportunity to work together to create a core set of values that provides a direction for the class. In a classroom that embraces a shared vision, students begin by imagining what a future picture of their classroom might look like. If students develop a concept that defines how they would like the classroom to look a genuine commitment is fostered, hence allowing students to learn because they want to, not because they are told to (Senge, 2001). As a result student collaboration becomes meaningful and an enjoyable experience, thus enabling students to work effectively and cohesively.

Showing that a link between sense of community and collaboration was only established from one article by Robertson (2006), one of the overall goals of this research was to arrive at greater understanding that a classroom which established a sense of community could improve student collaboration.

Research Question and Hypothesis

The current study explored a way to improve collaboration in a classroom by examining the impact of developing a shared vision on the classroom's sense of community. The research question explored was: "how does developing a shared vision improve collaboration amongst students in a Cafeteria Training 11/12 class?"

It is hypothesized that at the beginning of this study, students will report a lack of sense of community in the classroom and will demonstrate a variety of reasons as to why they do not enjoy collaborative work. A shared vision will be established where students begin to share in a connectedness to the class and its members. As the shared vision fosters a genuine commitment from students, a sense of community will improve, thus reducing challenges that inhibit students from working cooperatively together.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, "collaborative learning" is defined as small groups of students that work together to complete a task or create a product. These students are responsible for one another's learning as well as their own. While collaborative activities in the Cafeteria Training classroom vary in scope, the teacher does not use a lecture approach, but rather allows students to explore and apply new information modeled from short cooking demonstrations given by the teacher. **"**Sense of community" as described by McMillan and Chavis (1986) is "a feeling that members have belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together" (p. 9). "Shared vision" is a set of shared goals among students regarding the value of daily activities. Students imagine a future picture of their classroom and develop concepts that define how they would like the classroom to operate. As part of the study, students will be developing a shared vision. "Increased sense of community" is awareness that students in a collaborative group will work cooperatively with each other and maintain composure in spite of differences that arise from challenging situations. This is due to an increased dedication to one another because students feel their contributions are important to the

group. Improvement in a student's sense of community will be measured using the Classroom Community Scale Survey (See Appendix A).

Overview of Study

The goal of this study was to determine if students could reduce the challenges that inhibit them from working collaboratively by creating a shared vision. The study took place in a Cafeteria Training 11/12 class where students worked in collaborative groups on a daily basis. A pre-survey was administered to participants that measured their sense of community. Students then spent one day a week for six weeks creating a shared vision for their class. Lessons for creating a shared vision were based on several academic articles (e.g. Denton, 1997; Robertson, 2006; Senge, 1990; Vandenberghe & Staessens, 1991). Once the class completed its shared vision, a post-survey was completed that measured students' sense of community. Each survey provided a perceived community score. The scores from the pre and post-survey were compared and illustrated on a column chart.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

Collaborative Learning as an Effective Teaching Approach

Collaborative learning consists of students working together to achieve a learning goal (Johnson & Johnson, 1984). It involves structuring a class around the students by creating small groups that work together in such a way that the success of the group depends on the contributions of each person (Teed, McDaris, & Roseth, 2009). Collaborative learning is based on the idea that learning is a social act and occurs when students are given the opportunity to talk amongst themselves (Srinivas, 2008.). Studies have shown that students who engage in collaborative learning learn significantly more, remember it longer and develop better critical thinking skills than students not involved in collaborative group work (Teed et al., 2009). A study involving high school students who experienced one hour per week for sixteen months of collaborative work outperformed students on standardized tests who did not have opportunities for collaboration (Frey, Fisher, & Allan, 2009). Frey et al. (2009) established that science students with complete ideas were able to reach new understandings after being given an opportunity for collaborative review. Although it took students longer to reach accurate conclusions than the teacher-directed groups, they benefited from the kind of persistence necessary for formal scientific thought.

A study by Webb, Nemer, and Chizhik (1997) involving middle school students investigated the benefits of collaborative learning on performance assessment. The study examined the effects of collaborative work in which students completed a series of assessments, first individually, then in collaborative groups, and then individually again. The study found that collaboration had a major impact on the quality of discussion that students participated in, on the achievement test completed during group work, and on the subsequent individual test.

The assumption in the current study included the idea that involving students in collaborative work during Cafeteria Training would allow for similar benefits to these mentioned in the previous studies. Not only would cafeteria students engage in social acts that enable students to contribute to the common learning outcome of their group, but reach higher and more accurate understanding of the concepts being learned. Allowing students to collaborate when they complete their kitchen theory and daily tasks will enable them to generate conversation and share ideas so that each student profits from the contributions of one another, potentially resulting in higher marks.

In order to benefit from student collaboration, existing challenges need to be addressed. The challenge with student collaboration is that several variables exist which inhibit students from working effectively (Teed, McDaris, & Roseth, 2009). These include students who dominate a group's conversation, especially when they have expertise in a particular subject. Collaborative groups that experience shy or insecure students are often unable to involve themselves in group work (Teed et al., 2009). In addition, collaborative groups may include students with exceptionally high standards that unintentionally exclude other members. Lastly, members of a collaborative group who are good friends often find it easier to communicate with each other to the exclusion of other partners (Teed et al., 2009).

How students interact with one another is another cause for concern and a challenge when students work collaboratively. Pauli, Mohiyeddini, Bray, Michie, and Street (2007) argued that challenges with collaborative learning were the result of a student's cognitive awareness, social difficulties and cultural factors. Some students lack motivation so those unwilling to participate in a group task can become a burden and trigger conflict. Within a collaborative group, those students who lack focus often cause a failure to complete tasks (Pauli et al., 2007). With the idea

that cognitive awareness inhibits collaborative groups from working successfully, Mulryan (1992) found differences between high and low level achievers and their behaviours and attitudes toward collaborative work. The findings showed that low-achieving students were relatively passive in comparison to their high achieving peers. This study also also showed that all students did not appear to benefit from cooperative small group experiences to the same extent. High achievers were observed as having significantly more high-level task behaviour and had significantly more time on-task, whereas low-achieving students were engaged in significantly lower amounts of on-task behaviour. High-achieving students engaged in more high-level cooperative behaviour with their peers, they were more active participants, and they also provided significantly more suggestions and directions. However, there existed passivity amongst high-achieving students during cooperative work. High achieving students explained that they disengaged from cooperative work because the perceived learning task was not important, they disliked or felt uncomfortable with other students, or they felt that their peers were less competent and would require a lot of explanation (Mulryan, 1992). Mulryan (1992) establishes the fact that both high and low academic students can lack involvement during cooperative group work. While research confirms that cooperative group work provides opportunities not present in traditional lecture style settings, it establishes the fact that work needs to be conducted that focusses on students being more comfortable with one another.

Another challenge with collaboration is the time it takes for students to work effectively with one another. Blair (1991) explains that a collaborative group goes through four developing stages: Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing. Forming is when a group meets for the first time and everyone is polite and kind to one another. Group discussion is reserved and leaders are looked upon for direction. During the Storming phase a lot of group arguing ensues;

group members clash, communication is limited, and no one listens to one another. The third stage of group development is Norming. A new spirit of collaboration begins to arise as group members begin to see the value of working together. Group members begin to express their points of view openly as others start to listen. And finally the Performing stage is reached when a group feels free to express their thoughts and has developed highly supportive members. It is in the Performing stage that collaboration is most effective and enables students to share in the reliability of a well-functioning group.

As research has indicated, students who work in collaborative groups experience challenges that make it difficult to work cooperatively and effectively. Similarly, students in Cafeteria Training 11/12 face similar challenges that often inhibit them from experiencing the benefits of collaborative learning. Thus, the current study attempts to address some of these challenges in order to improve upon the benefits students experience during collaboration.

Building a Sense of Community within a Classroom

As described in Chapter 1, sense of community is a feeling that students experience when they have a sense of belonging to their class or school. A classroom will have a sense of community when students feel that others matter to one another and there is commitment that student needs will be met by being together (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Perhaps the most prevalent rationale involving community in school classrooms is derived from the literature of Bandura (1969) and Vygotsky (1978). Bandura's Social Learning Theory suggests that people learn from one another via observation, imitation, and modeling. Vygotsky' Social Development Theory argues that social interaction precedes cognitive development; therefore cognition is the end result of socialization. Similar to Bandura and Vygotsky, Lave and Wenger (1991) argue that learning is unintentional and yet exists within genuine activity, context and culture.

Therefore, learning is unintentional and occurs in everyday life. Thus, it is of great importance to increase positive social interactions among students inside the classroom by building a sense of community. The assumption in this research is that by building a sense of community, those positive social interactions will better develop, and therefore improve collaboration among students.

Building sense of community within the cafeteria classroom will help provide students with the opportunity to feel they are an integral part of the class, to have positive peer interactions, and to feel comfortable speaking openly to one another. When a sense of community is achieved collaborative groups will reach the Performing stage of group development sooner since arguing and limited conversation will be overcome. If teachers ask students to work collaboratively without having first developed sense of community students will labour through the four stages of group development and therefore lack the consistency of an effective functioning unit.

A study that assessed sense of community within a district's middle and high schools was completed by Schulte, Shanahan, Anderson, and Sides (2003). They had teachers and students complete a School Ethical Climate Index (SECI). Based on teacher and student responses, their findings were that high schools' sense of community was significantly less positive than that of middle schools. They also found that schools with a positive sense of community benefited from greater student attendance, positive social and personal attitudes, and increased motivation and engagement in schools (Schulte et al., 2003). Schulte et al. (2003) suggested that schools establish sense of community within the physical structure. Students should learn how to treat others with respect, compassion, and kindness so these interpersonal skill sets transfer from

school into the real world. They also argued that the opportunity for developing positive social skills should be integrated within classroom activities.

Research has also shown that there is a growing interest in building a sense of community within schools. Etzioni (1993) claimed that much of this interest comes from the perception that community within schools is weak. Palloff and Pratt (1999) added that a large number of schools, especially secondary schools, are moving towards an increased use of distance education which is fostering learners who are physically separated from one another. As a result, there has been considerable research compiled that has illustrated a need for community within schools because students are completing their coursework alone. Schulte et al. (2003) suggested that the consequences for not having a sense of community within a school can be severe. They argued that a lack of belonging has been associated to increased behaviour problems, violence in schools, loneliness, diminished motivation and poor academic performance.

These findings support this current study which addresses the need to build sense of community within the classroom before student collaboration can be successful. If classrooms embrace a sense of community students will feel safe and begin to fully express themselves to other students through positive interactions (Piatt-Jaeger, 2011). Therefore, this study attempts to build a sense of community within a Cafeteria Training 11/12 classroom. If a Cafeteria Training classroom shares in a sense of community, the challenges faced with collaboration will decrease. As challenges associated with collaboration decrease, it may be assumed that students will benefit from increased academic success and positive social interaction.

Creating a Shared Vision to Improve Student Collaboration

For a sense of community to exist, students will work together and create a vision of how they want their classroom to operate in relation to where it is at the current moment. These

visions are based on past experiences where students were involved in ideal group learning situations. Shared visions emerge from these individual experiences which help to create long term commitment of students (Jacobs, 2007). A study by Roberson (2006) aimed to create beneficial learning opportunities for students by integrating field trips into the science curriculum for an elementary school. A key recommendation from the study was to first develop a shared vision before successful collaboration could occur, (Robertson, 2006). Robertson (2006) argued that students benefitted cognitively and socially from the field trips, but it was the process of developing a shared vision that was really valuable. In this study it was not students that created the shared vision but rather what the researcher called "the collaborators". The collaborators were adults involved in helping to integrate field trips into the science curriculum. Through the process of creating a shared vision, the collaborators developed new ideas about teaching and learning because of the intense amount of communication, negotiation and understanding of others' perspectives that was required (Robertson, 2006). As the process went on, the collaborators found that their shared vision was too large and needed changes in order to become attainable and more realistic. This resulted in helping the collaborators become more focused, they were able to find more effective ways of doing things, and were able to distribute jobs better.

Having a lack of a shared vision in a classroom can be an obstacle for positive change. Schlechty (1990) argued that social structures can be deeply embedded in systems of values and beliefs held by students. It is these structures that can compromise the culture of a classroom; therefore attending to relationships and classroom values is necessary for change to occur. As collaborative groups are based on the functioning relationships of students and the core values each member embraces, having students create a shared vision can help to bring their belief

systems into alignment. Huffman (2003) argued that simply declaring a vision for students will not develop the energy and commitment to make change. In addition, it was also noted that in the event a teacher created a shared vision for the class it led to the teacher bouncing from one innovation to the next, leading to a fragmented effort and less commitment by the teacher (Huffman, 2003).

It is critical to understand that the emergence of a strong, shared vision based on the collective values of students provides the foundation for commitment and success (Huffman, 2003). Senge (1990) suggested that shared visions are effective because of the reinforcing process that occurs. He argued that enthusiasm and commitment rubs off on others, and as students talk, the vision grows clearer, and so do the benefits of the vision. Senge (1990) also suggested that for a shared vision to be achieved, members of a group need to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine capacity of dialogue. Validating the benefits of dialogue is also recognized in the research done by Edgar Schein. Schein (1993) found that people are taught to not only acknowledge and pay attention to others, but to grant them what they claim, for example, responding with a laugh when a joke is told or by answering optimistically to someone who asks how they look. While the joke may not have been funny or the person might not have looked particularly good, Schein (1993) argued that people are taught mutual face saving. To save face people will say what is appropriate for the situation by responding with what is less hurtful. Schein (1993) believed that these cultural rules consequently undermine valid communication and create defensive routines. As a result these defensive routines undermine the relationship building process between students. Therefore, dialogue is an important consideration when creating a shared vision so that students can better express themselves and be listened to.

A study by Vandenberghe and Staessens (1991) looked at nine schools in Belgium that were involved in school improvement. Schools with high-vision were compared to schools with low-vision. Interviews with 63 principals and staff members revealed that schools with high-vision had clear goal consensus while schools with low-vision were characterized as having a low awareness of school goals outside their own classrooms (Vandenberghe & Staessens, 1991). The study also found that for a vision to be successful, or to create change within the vision, it was necessary that those involved were able to collaborate with one another. Aiming at increasing collaboration among teachers showed positive impact because they could talk and think about goals that were important to them and the school. The researcher suggested that teachers who attended to the vision through daily activities helped the development of the shared vision and consensus amongst those involved.

Given this literature review on the benefits of creating a shared vision, the current researcher has chosen this method in order to develop a sense of community in his classroom. Creating a shared vision will give Cafeteria Training students the opportunity to discuss common values and beliefs about how they believe their class should operate. By doing so, students will participate in positive social interaction that will create a sense of community within the classroom. Creating a shared vision will also generate a willingness to work together which will improve student collaboration. If Cafeteria students are to work together with genuine commitment of helping one another, and they are to feel safe expressing thoughts and feelings, a shared vision needs to be created.

Chapter 3: Procedures and Methods

Research Design

Quantitative research methods were used to establish if developing a shared vision within a classroom increased a sense of community among students and therefore improved their collaborative work. The independent variable in this study was the development of a shared vision, while the dependent variable was sense of community. Data was initially collected through a survey used at the beginning of the study to measure how students rated their sense of community in a classroom. Students and their teacher then developed and implemented a shared vision for the classroom that consisted of several steps described in greater detail later in this chapter. The same initial survey was then conducted at the end of the study to measure change in students' sense of community.

Sample

The population for this study was comprised of high school students enrolled in Cafeteria Training 11/12 in a rural high school within School District 68 – Nanaimo/Ladysmith. As the principal researcher was also the teacher, the researcher used a convenience sampling of his own students from two Cafeteria Training classes with an enrollment of seven students per class, for a total of fourteen students. The students in the sample varied by gender and ages ranged from fifteen to eighteen. Students that participated in the research varied in classroom experience. Six students were previously enrolled in Cafeteria Training while eight were newly enrolled students.

Instrument Used

The instrument used in this study was a survey developed by Alfred Rovai (2002). The twenty question survey was developed, refined, and field-tested using three hundred seventy-five

graduate students enrolled in online courses (see Appendix A for the survey). The survey was designed to generate a classroom community score by using two subscales that measured "connectedness" and "learning." Connectedness represented all students' feelings in regards to their connectedness to the classroom such as: cohesion, trust, and interdependence. Learning represented feelings that students had toward other members of the community concerning their interactions with each other and sharing of values and beliefs concerning the extent to which their educational goals were satisfied (Rovai, 2002). Rovai (2002) performed a factor analysis which confirmed that connectedness and learning correlated with each other providing additional evidence of validity. The survey was found to be a valid measure of a student's sense of community both in traditional classroom settings and online courses. The survey also possesses high reliability and indicates a student's connectedness and learning to their class. While the validity of the instrument is high for graduate students, the current study will survey high school students which may threaten the validity of the instrument.

The survey consisted of 20 questions followed by a five point Likert-type scale of potential responses: *strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree.* Half of the questions were negatively worded and reverse scored so that the most favourable answer was assigned a value of four and the least favourable answer was assigned a value of zero. The scores were calculated by adding points that were assigned to each of the five point items. A higher score represented a higher sense of community.

Procedure for Scoring the Classroom Community Scale

For questions 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 13, 15, 16, and 19 the following scoring scale was use: strongly agree = 4, agree = 3, neutral = 2, disagree = 1, strongly disagree = 0. For questions 4, 5,

8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 18, and 20: the following scoring scale was used: strongly agree = 0, agree = 1, neutral = 2, disagree = 3, strongly disagree = 4.

To obtain the overall Classroom Community Scale score, one must add the weights of all 20 items. Total raw scores ranged from a maximum of 40 to a minimum of 0. Subscale raw scores for connectedness and learning ranged from a maximum of 20 to a minimum of 0. To calculate the connectedness subscale score, the scores of odd Classroom Community Scale questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, and 19 were added together. Similarly, to calculate the learning subscale score, the scores of the remaining even Classroom Community Scale questions were added together.

Study Procedures

Students in Cafeteria Training 11/12 classes were given the opportunity to participate in research focusing on improving collaborative learning. Ms. Black (pseudonym name), who is a teacher that works in the same school, provided students with a rationale for the study and an explanation that participation was voluntary and anonymous. It was also made clear that students could withdraw from the study at any point. Ms. Black handed out Parental Consent forms to all students to take home, have signed, and then returned to her (See Appendix B). Student Assent forms were also handed out (See Appendix D). Completed Consent and Assent forms were asked to be returned to Ms. Black who kept them in a locked desk until handing them over to the researcher once the study was complete and analysis of the data was began. In order to minimize the amount of coercion students might feel to participate, the researcher, their teacher, was given no information regarding the students who were participating; only Ms. Black and the other classmates knew who was participating. During the consent process, students were informed that students in their class would have knowledge of whether they consented or not.

After obtaining free and informed consent from students they were given a pre-survey to complete during their regular class time (See Appendix A).

Surveys were handed out to participating students during their regularly scheduled class. Those who did not consent were asked to complete homework, either in Cafeteria or another class. Surveys were collected by Ms. Black, placed into a marked envelope, sealed and placed in a locked filing cabinet to ensure privacy of materials.

Beginning in October and continuing for six weeks, all Cafeteria Training students took part in building a shared vision for the classroom. The researcher elected to wait until October because students were overwhelmed with information regarding kitchen safety, daily tasks, and safe equipment handling. Waiting until October also gave students the opportunity to familiarize themselves with one another. Lessons were held every Monday (See Table 3.1). The process for building a shared vision was based on academic literature (e.g., Denton, 1997; Robertson, 2006; Senge, 1990; Vandenburghe & Staessens, 1991). All sessions took place in the cafeteria classroom during students' regular class time. During these classes, students engaged in activities that helped to build a shared vision using the model of appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 1999). This model encouraged students to share positive aspects of past learning experiences. The result of employing an appreciative inquiry model was to provide students the opportunity to avoid deficit aspects of their learning; allowing students the opportunity to create a shared vision that was based on positive experiences. In addition to creating a shared vision, the goal of each session was to create a culture in the classroom that aimed to increase the students' sense of community.

During the first session participants were paired up to interview one another. Students asked their partner to describe key attributes of a time in their life when they were engaged in a

passionate, energized, and effective learning experience. Students were then asked to describe their greatest strengths, what they valued most about being students, and what they valued most about school. Lastly, students were asked to envision their high school graduation and describe what experiences led to positive growth and change.

During the second session students shared with the rest of the class highlights of what they learned from their partner. Each group introduced their partner to the class, shared a story that resonated with them, described their partner's peak learning experience, shared their strengths and values, and lastly described how high school made an impact on their partner.

The third session involved students establishing common values and beliefs they recognized from each of their interviews. Groups were paired up with another group then asked to create a list of core values, strengths, attributes, and beliefs that were most important to each member. Each group then generated a list on poster paper and reported their generated list back to the class. From each generated list a master list was developed that encompassed all students' values, strengths, attributes, and beliefs that were most important to them. Lastly, each group displayed their master list in the classroom.

During the fourth session students created a shared vision statement using the master list. These vision statements were carried out in groups of four and reflected on the future of their cafeteria program. The vision statements reflected their group's common vision of the ideal cafeteria program using practical statements, positive words, and strong beliefs. Each group first presented their vision statement to the class and then pinned it up in the classroom with their master list.

The fifth session engaged students in discussions of where they were at the present moment in relation to their shared vision. The following six questions were asked: What is our

group's role in creating this vision? What forces affect our work and our team? What changes will we experience as a team? Who or what influences the things we value? What aspects of our group empower people? What aspects of our group disempower people?

Lastly, the sixth session was used to generate practical goals and actions that were needed to reach each group's shared vision. Each group agreed to three concrete steps that were written down and added to their vision statement on the wall. Finally, a moment was given to reflect on their vision statement and to view all other vision statements around the room.

A post-survey was conducted after the six sessions. The post-survey was conducted in exactly the same manner as the pre-survey explained earlier in the chapter. Data from the pre-survey and post survey were summarized in Chapter 4 which illustrates a classroom community score.

Table 3.1

Schedule of Shared Vision Development

Session #	**Topic**
1	Appreciative Interviews
2	Discover One Another – Sharing our interview responses with class
3	Creation of a Dream Board – Establish common values and beliefs of class
4	Shared Vision Statement – Creating statements that reflect group members
5	Getting There From Here – Where we are in relation to the shared vision
6	What Will We Do Next? Creating practical goals and actions

Validity

In order to reduce threats to validity the survey was administered by Ms. Black, a teacher who volunteered to help with the study. The survey was handed to all students, while those not participating in the study completed homework or caught up on work in the cafeteria. Ms. Black spent time explaining the rationale behind the survey and that participation was completely

voluntary and anonymous. Ms. Black also explained that students could withdraw at any point during the study.

To increase validity the survey used in the study was developed by Alfred Rovai (2002). The survey consisted of 20 questions that were based on the concept of community found in professional literature (e.g., McMillan & Chavis, 1986). To evaluate the survey for content validity three university professors who taught educational psychology were given the survey and asked to evaluate the original pool of 40 questions. The review deleted 20 questions and refined the remaining 20 questions so they were completely relevant for measuring sense of community in a classroom. "Two internal consistency estimates of reliability were calculated for the Classroom Community Scale: Cronback's coefficient and the split-half coefficient corrected by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula" (Rovia, 2002, p. 206). Both tests indicated excellent reliability.

Participation of some high school students enrolled in the researcher's class may be a threat to internal validity. There may have been some students enrolled in the Cafeteria Training because it was the only class available to them or because they really enjoyed the class in a previous semester. This could have affected students' behavior and attitudes in the class. There was also the problem of having a small student sample. To increase validity the researcher attempted to increase student curiosity by emphasizing the importance of the study and results could lead to recommendations that better support the class.

Since students were given the rationale for the study, there was a chance they might have skewed the results by answering the survey in such a way that gave answers the researcher was looking for. This was due to the fact that the principal investigator was also their teacher. There was also a maturation threat in this study. A sense of community may have naturally developed

over the course of the study as students worked together and got to know one another. This was somewhat mitigated by making the length of the study only six weeks to increase the likelihood that an improved sense of community was due to the intervention.

Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data collected through the Classroom Community Scale was reported in terms of a possible score out of 40. Within the survey were two subscales that measured "connectedness" and "learning" and were reported in terms of a possible score out of 20. Higher scores in the post-survey indicated that students felt a stronger sense of community to their classroom. Higher scores in the post-survey were interpreted as indicating that building a shared vision contributed positively to changing students' sense of community. Data from the pre-survey and post-survey were summarized on column charts in Chapter 4. The results from these charts were then used to determine any change to students' sense of community and two subscales measuring connectedness and learning.

Chapter Four: Results

The purpose of this study was to determine if students enrolled in Cafeteria Training at a rural high school within School District 68 developed a greater sense of community within their class after developing a shared vision. To determine the change in sense of community, a twenty question survey followed by a five point Likert-type scale (Appendix A) was administered two times during the study. Two Cafeteria Training 11/12 classes were used in the study. Both classes were taught the same curriculum and during the same time period. The first survey was administered the beginning of October after students had become familiar with classroom routines, completed their food safe course, and the cafeteria had been open and in operation for a short while. There were 14 participant students out of a possible 35, which indicates a 40% volunteer rate. Of the 14 students, eight students were in a class together and six students were in another class together. Of the students, seven were female, seven were male and their ages ranged from 15 to 18. A volunteer teacher was used to distribute and collect the pre- and post-surveys to ensure student anonymity from the researcher.

The pre-intervention survey provided a baseline from which any changes would be measured. The survey was used to determine a student's sense of community in their classroom using an instrument that scored students' overall sense of classroom community on a scale out of 80. The instrument of consisted two subscales which were each scored out of 40. The first subscale consisted of 10 questions related to feelings of connectedness and the second subscale had 10 questions related to learning. Seven weeks after students completed the pre-intervention survey, a post-intervention survey was administered to measure students' sense of community. Changes from the pre-survey to the post-survey were calculated to measure any change in

students' sense of community. The same fourteen students that completed the pre-survey also completed the post-survey.

Table 4.1 shows the overall classroom community shift based on all 14 student responses. The statistical data found in table 4.1 are based on the survey score maximum of 80 for each student's sense of community. A percentage which reflects the strength of students' sense of community was calculated for each student where 100% would reflect a maximum sense of community score of 80. Mean percentage scores for all participants on the pre- and post-survey were calculated, indicating the shift in students' sense of community for their cafeteria class. Table 4.1 shows an increase in the mean score on the post-survey. There was an 8.4% increase in the mean score from the pre-survey to the post-survey indicating an improved classroom sense of community.

Table 4.1

Overall Mean for Sense of Classroom Community for all Participants (N=14)

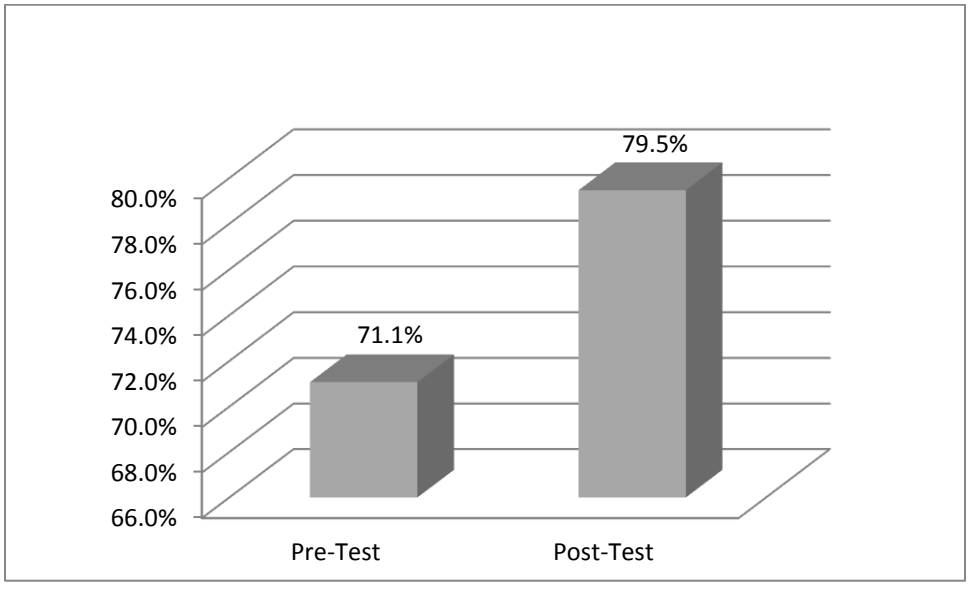
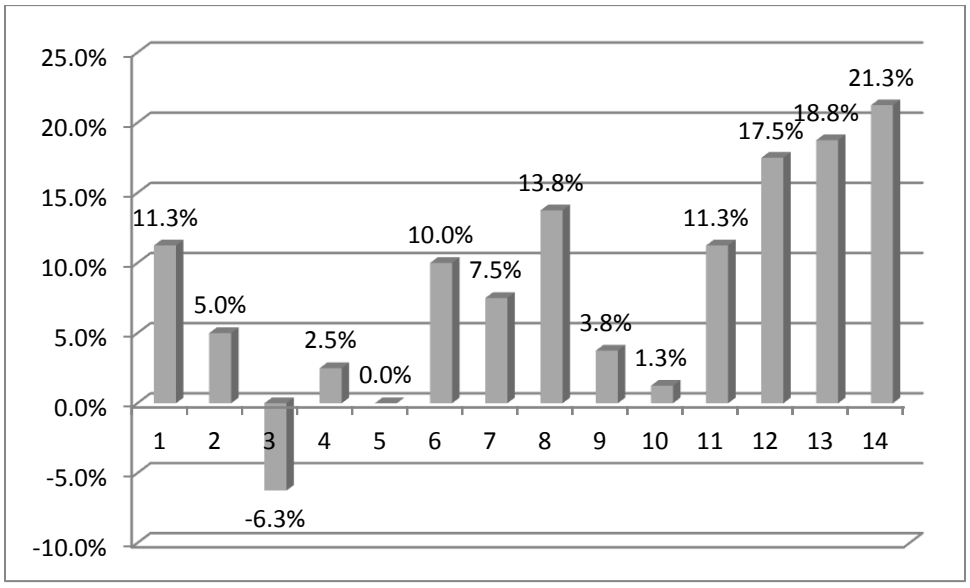


Table 4.2 illustrates each participating student, coded by number, and their shift from the pre-survey to the post-survey. The shift illustrates any change for each student's sense of

classroom community. The percentage shift was calculated by subtracting the mean average score of the pre-survey from the mean average score of the post-survey. Table 4.2 shows that 12 out of 14 students had an increase in their overall classroom community to the cafeteria classroom. The smallest increase was 1.3% and the largest increase was 21.3%. There was however a decrease in classroom community for one student by 6.3% and one student with no change after completing the post-survey. Of those students who had an improved sense of classroom community that measured less than 5%, two were male and three were female. The top three students who reported the greatest improvement in their sense of classroom community were all males. As indicated earlier, the mean overall classroom community shift was 8.4% however; table 4.2 shows a large variation in shifts among participating students.

Table 4.2

Classroom Community Shift Percentage for Each Student

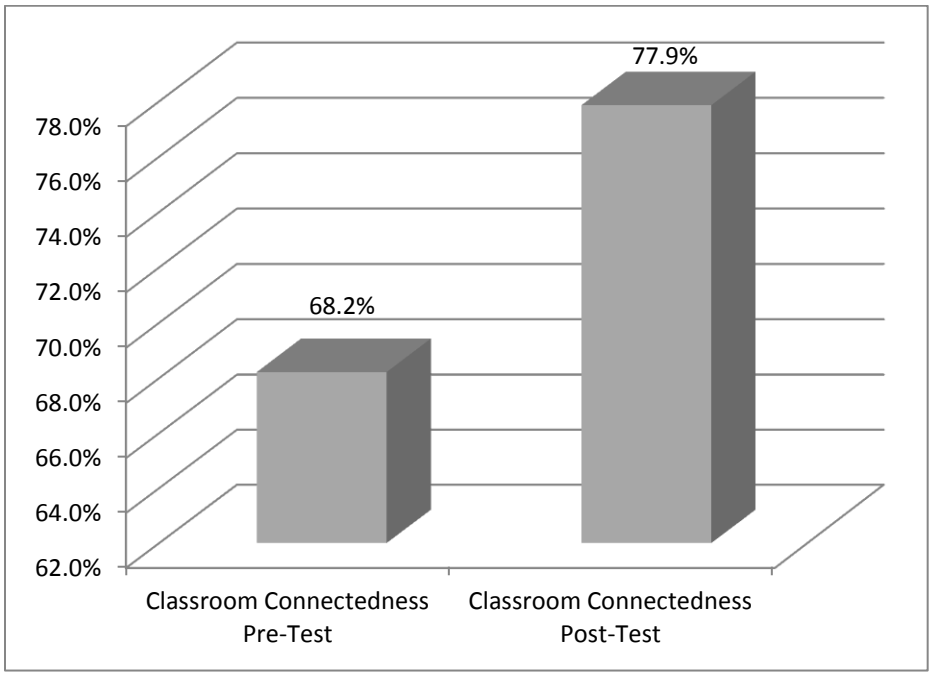


The overall classroom community shift was measured using two subscales, one measured student connectedness and the other student learning. For the purpose of this research, items related to each of the subscales, feelings of connectedness and feelings of learning were

examined to learn more about specific changes to students' sense of community. Table 4.3 illustrates that students' classroom connectedness mean percentage score during the pre-survey was 68.2%. This percentage was calculated by dividing each student's classroom connectedness score by 40 which is the maximum score for this particular subscale. Post-survey results indicate that for the 14 participating students, their mean percentage score was 77.9%, which resulted in a classroom connectedness shift of 9.6%.

Table 4.3

Overall Mean for Classroom Connectedness Subscale Shift for all Participants (N=14)



Results show that while the classroom connectedness shift was slightly greater than the classroom community shift, fewer students reported an improvement in classroom connectedness. While classroom connectedness improved 9.6%, Table 4.4 indicates that four students reported no improvement. Of those four students that reported no change in their connectedness to the classroom, two were male and two were female. Two other students indicated little change in their connectedness to the classroom with 5% and 3%; one student

being male and the other female. The top three students who reported the greatest improvement in their connectedness to the classroom were all males. These top three shifts were much higher than the top three overall and are responsible for driving up the high shift for connectedness.

Table 4.4

Sense of Connectedness Shift Percentage for Each Student

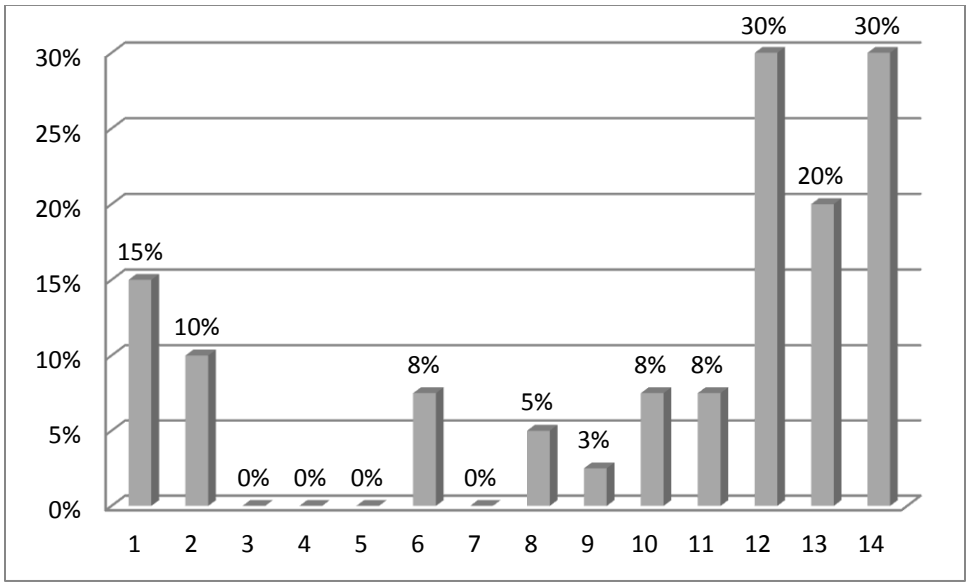


Table 4.5 illustrates the results for the survey subscale that measured student learning. Student learning is defined as "feelings regarding the use of interaction within the community to construct understanding and the extent to which learning goals are being satisfied within the classroom setting" (Rovai, 2002, p. 202). While the heading used for this data is titled Student Learning, the definition pertaining to this instrument is important to understand because student learning is tied to students' feelings and their interactions within the classroom, not just their content learning. Table 4.5 illustrates an overall shift of 7% in students' learning from the pre-survey to the post-survey. Table 4.6 shows each student's overall shift percentage from the pre-survey to the post-survey. As illustrated in Table 4.6, two students had no change in their student learning and two students had a decrease in their student learning. Six out of the fourteen

students had an increase in student learning of between 10% and 22.5%. Of the four students who either measured no change or a decrease in student learning, two were male and two were female. Of the students who reported the greatest improvement in student learning, three were female and one was male.

Table 4.5

Overall Mean for Classroom Learning Subscale Shift for all Participants (N=14)

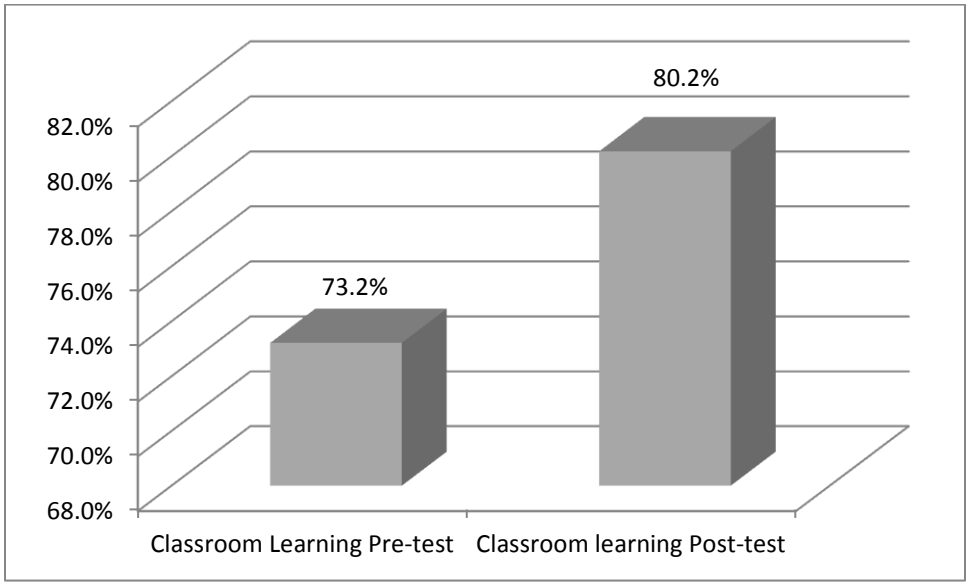


Table 4.6

Learning Shift Percentage for Each Student

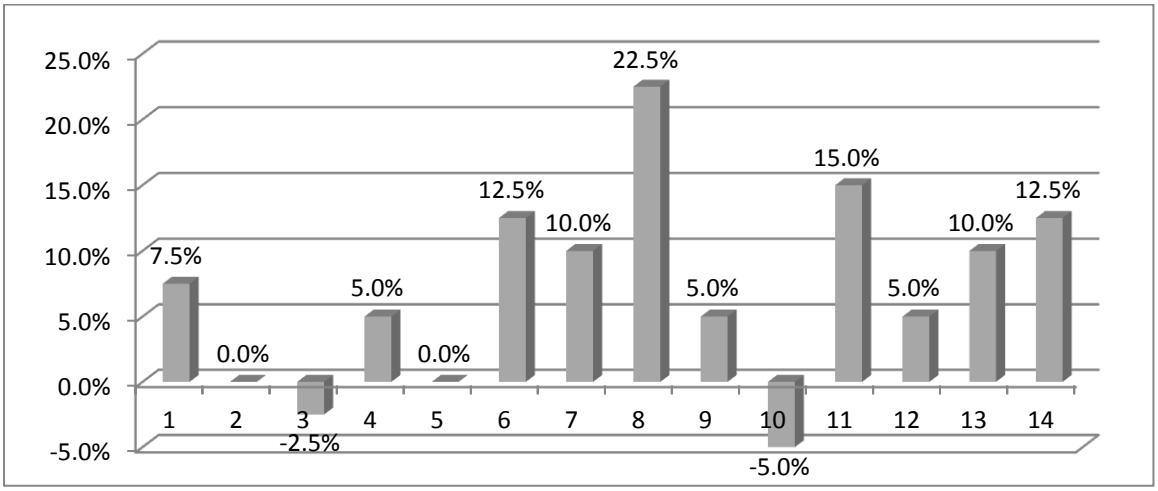


Table 4.7 shows the shift percentage for each question based on the mean scores of student responses. It is important to note that these percentage shifts do not reflect the score of each response only the shift in student responses. Therefore, Table 4.8 was included to illustrate student responses from the pre- and post-survey. For example, question number nine from Table 4.7 had a 4% shift which is low when compared to other percentage shifts. Table 4.8 illustrates that response rates for this question were very high in the pre-survey and the post-survey. Therefore, a low shift does not always represent concern for the researcher. A low response in the pre-survey followed by a low response in the post-survey would warrant concern and possible further investigation.

Represented in Table 4.7, question number one had the greatest shift of all survey questions and is discussed further in Chapter 5. Also discussed in Chapter 5 are question number seven and nineteen which examined classroom student trust and the feeling of family in the classroom. Discussed in Chapter 5 and of particular concern was question fifteen which asked "I feel that members of this course depend on me." There was a 2% shift in student responses in addition to the second lowest overall percentage mean for the pre- and post-survey.

Question twelve asked "I feel that this course results in only modest learning." This question had a 0% shift as indicated in Table 4.7 along with the smallest mean in both the pre- and post-survey as indicated in Table 4.8. Further consideration of this question was presented in Chapter 5.

Table 4.7

Shift Percentage for Each Survey Question

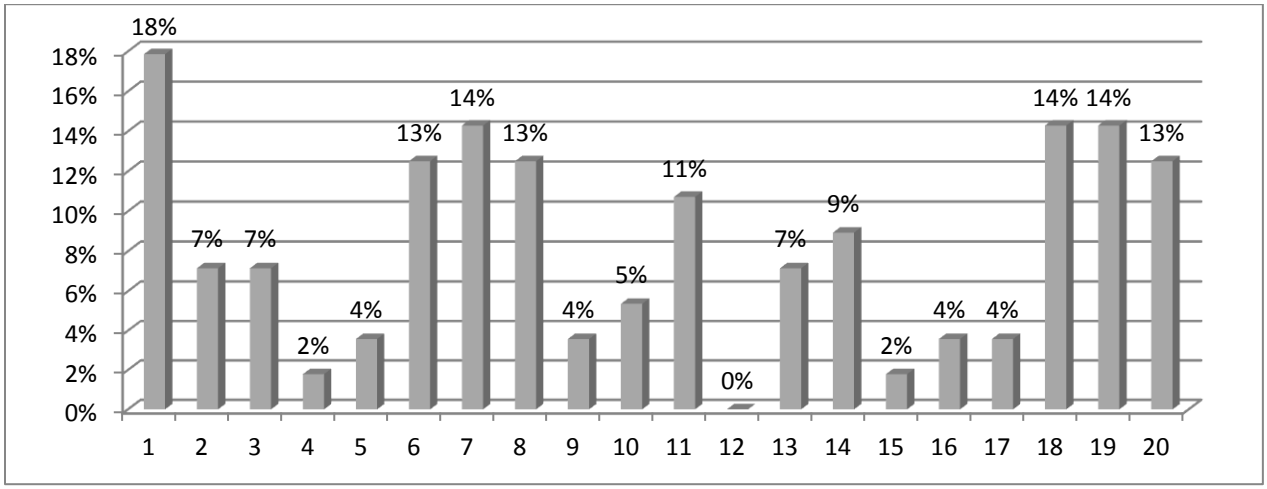
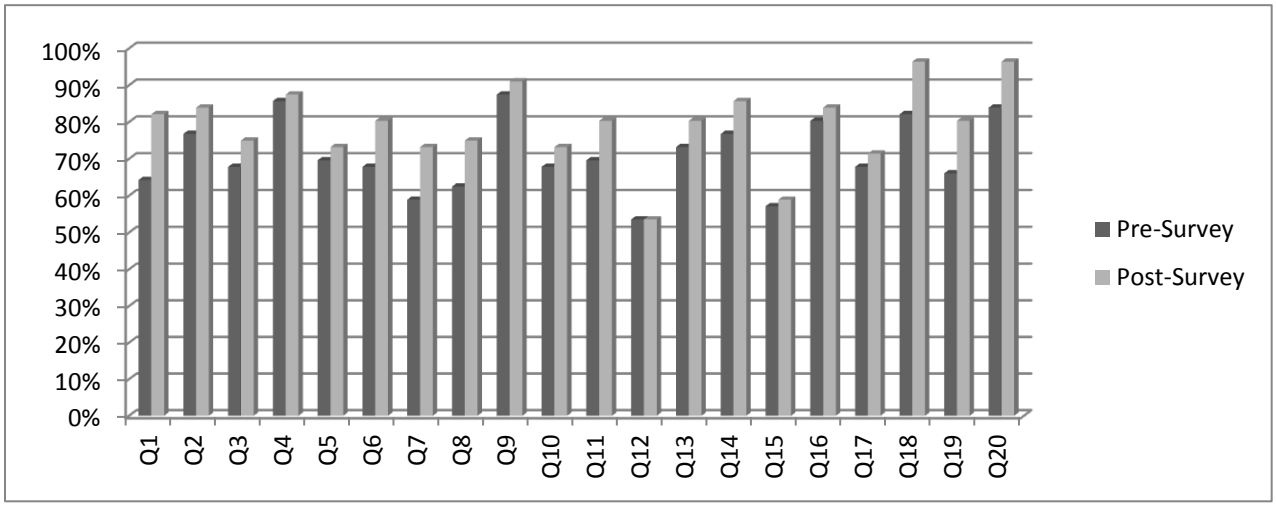


Table 4.8

Overall Percentage Mean for Pre- and Post-Survey Questions



Reviewing the overall results, the survey measured a mean increase of 8.4% in the overall sense of community. 13 out of 14 students indicated an increase in their sense of classroom community. The two subscale results indicated a mean improvement of 9.6% for student connectedness and 7% for student learning. 10 out of 14 students had an increase in their classroom connectedness as well as student learning.

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, Limitations, and Recommendations

Summary

This study began by exploring research that would serve to improve the efforts of students as they worked collaboratively in a high school cafeteria training class. It was evident to the researcher that students who attended the cafeteria class were subject to the challenges that existed among students who worked in collaborative groups. While this research demonstrated the potential benefits of collaborative learning, there still persists a body of literature that illustrates negative attitudes toward collaborative work (Pauli, Mohiyeddini, Bray, Michie, & Street, 2008). As Pauli, et al. (2008) argued, students who are asked to work collaboratively are prone to potential conflict between group members, for example: students not doing their share of work, having an incompetent partner, a group member who is a bully, or a group that has difficulty managing their workload. And so a literature review was commenced to further understand the complications that students experienced when they worked in collaborative settings and to find a relevant approach that would serve to improve the collaborative efforts of high school students in a Cafeteria Training class.

The focus of this research considered various methods that would help to improve collaboration among high school cafeteria students who worked in collaborative groups. Creating a shared vision was a model that held promise for helping to improve collaboration between partners in the event of having to deal with difficult situations. Having a shared vision articulates what students in a collaborative group believe, what they value, and what they seek to create (Huffman, 2003). If students share in a deeper commitment towards each other by appreciating the different strengths and values they bring to their group, then members will be able to deal with challenging circumstances that arise.

Research in a high school Cafeteria Training class sought to address the question "If students developed a shared vision, could this lead to a greater sense of classroom community that further improved collaborative work?" A pre-survey was conducted to measure student sense of classroom community followed by a six week intervention where students in the Cafeteria Training class took part in developing a shared vision. During each session students were engaged in activities that helped to develop a shared vision in addition to creating a culture within the classroom that aimed to increase students' sense of community. The model used to employ the shared vision was implemented through appreciative inquiry where students shared positive aspects of their education and learning experiences. The result of employing an appreciative inquiry model for developing a shared vision provided students the opportunity to develop a shared vision that was positive and based on affirmative past experiences rather than deficit aspects of their learning.

Discussion

The present study investigated the relationship between developing a classroom shared vision and the effect it might have on increasing classroom sense of community. While the research is minimal, a study by Robertson (2006) suggested that if a sense of classroom community can be established then collaborative group work can improve. And so the researcher hypothesized that by developing a shared vision, it would improve the collaborative work of a high school Cafeteria Training class. The findings from this research showed that the overall sense of classroom community increased by 8.4% among fourteen participants. Two subscales within the survey measuring sense of classroom community were also used to measure learning and connectedness. Student learning increased 7% and student connectedness increased

9.6%. Results indicated that a positive relationship existed between creating a shared vision and increasing the sense of classroom community.

The results of this study demonstrated that building a shared vision had a positive influence on increasing students' classroom sense of community. Of particular interest were the themes that emerged from the research findings which indicated noteworthy improvements related to caring, the feeling of family, and student support.

After developing a shared vision, results indicated a greater feeling that students in the Cafeteria class cared more for one other. Survey question number one asked students: "I feel that students in this course care about each other." This question had the highest shift of all twenty survey questions with an increase of 18%. An important note was the fact that no student answered this particular question with a response of "disagree" or "strongly disagree." The increased caring among group members might be linked to an increase in personal investment. With regard to building a shared vision, group members might feel they have earned a place in their group, and as a consequence feel a greater strength in group cohesiveness, thus becoming more invested and potentially more caring toward one other (McMillan and Chavis, 1986).

Of further interest were the results from survey question number seven which asked students: "I feel that this course is like a family." Ten out of fourteen students responded to this question with "agree" or "strongly agree" while an additional three students reported a "neutral" answer. Before developing a shared vision, 59% of students reported that the class felt like a family. After developing the shared vision, 73% of students reported that the class felt like a family. It seems likely that after spending six weeks developing their shared vision, students had a greater sense of belonging and identification to their class. When taking time to work collaboratively to create a shared vision, students find a place in their class, they feel accepted,

and ultimately identify with students in ways they weren't able to before creating a shared vision.

Lastly, question number nineteen asked students "I feel confident that others will support me." The survey results indicated that no student responded to this question with "disagree" or "strongly disagree." Thirteen out of fourteen students responded to this question with "agree" or "strongly agree" and one student reported a "neutral" answer. The idea that a greater number of students feel they are supported after completing a shared vision is confirmation to the importance of students building a shared vision in order to improve collaboration. When a student feels confident that other group members will support them, the benefits of collaborative group work will increase. Students who participated in creating a shared vision benefited from learning as it became increasingly social by way of students supporting one another through supportive and engaged conversation.

Explanation for the previous three findings indicates that building a shared vision resulted in positive feelings of student connectedness to the Cafeteria class. The three survey questions were tied to the connectedness subscale which experienced the largest shift of the two subscales with an increase of 9.6%

Another related finding in this research was the increase in student trust. Students reported a shift of 11%. More importantly, no student reported a negative response with regards to trusting other students in the Cafeteria class. A reason for the increase in student trust through the shared vision process might be that group members worked on establishing common values, beliefs, and statements that reflected and included each member. Each of the six sessions required students to work closely and negotiate common bonds that would propel them closer to a shared vision. Ultimately a greater trust was formed within each collaborative group that might

not have existed had they not been given the opportunity to work through the process of creating a shared vision.

Developing a sense of community is particularly important for reducing challenges associated with collaborative work as perceived by some students. This research demonstrated that developing a shared vision had a positive impact on improving student collaboration. Developing a shared vision among collaborative groups could possibly improve negative student perceptions toward collaborative work. Since these negative perceptions are often the result of past collaborative experiences, students arrive with a preconceived negative perception when they are asked to work collaboratively. Similar research was conducted by Mulryan (1992) who found that high achieving students tended to dominate a group when asked to work collaboratively. Ultimately, some students manifested passive behaviours during collaborative work with minimal involvement in activities. For some students, the negative experience of being dominated by a high achieving student led to a negative perception toward collaborative work. By having students develop a shared vision, this study demonstrated that a sense of community, trust, and student support is achieved which in turn might improve student perceptions. Students who successfully collaborate with their peers will then likely benefit from the learning opportunities supported through collaboration.

Considering this research has indicated an increase in students' sense of classroom community, similar findings suggest that benefits extend beyond improved student collaboration. Secondary schools that experience a sense of community demonstrate that students and staff members contribute to create a greater school experience. The school becomes a better place for students who attend there, a greater commitment is fostered, intrinsic rewards are developed, and lastly, students benefit socially and academically (Bryk & Driscoll, 1988). Therefore it is

possible that Cafeteria students in this study experienced similar rewards that emerge from having a sense of classroom community. The researcher noted that the climate within Cafeteria classroom transformed in that a greater communal spirit among students had developed through their attitudes and through their behaviours. Students became more accepting of one another which in turn helped them cultivate a greater emotional and social awareness.

Limitations

While this study yielded positive results given that creating a shared vision led to improving classroom sense of community, the limitations of this research must be addressed. Particularly important was the relatively small sample size. This study occurred in two Cafeteria Training classes with only fourteen students choosing to participate. This relatively small sample size does not necessarily reflect the thinking of all Cafeteria Training students and therefore cannot be considered a powerful data set. Caution should also be exercised when generalizing the sense of community scores to those of other classes, schools, or age categories.

Students who participated in this study may not reflect the different types of students that attended the Cafeteria Training class. While the intention of the recruitment process was to acquire as many students as possible, it is possible that a large number of disconnected students chose to not participate. It might then be assumed that disconnected students who did not participate in this study failed to influence the results. Failing to include the contributions of both connected and disconnected students in this study could have significantly altered the results of the study; particularly with the sample size being relatively small.

Similarly, it is possible that the fourteen participants volunteered in the study because they were interested in improving their collaborative efforts. Because there is a culture of collaboration in the Cafeteria Training classroom, it is likely that these students fully embraced

the idea of working with other students throughout the semester. For many years the Cafeteria Training class has immersed students in collaborative work, thus the fourteen participants may have been receptive to collaboration and were willing to put forth a greater effort to make it successful. As a result, it is difficult to determine if the positive changes to students' sense of community were due solely to developing a shared vision, students' personal efforts, or a combination of the two.

The instrument used in this study was a 20 question Likert-type scale survey. The survey had a Flesch Reading Ease score of 68.4 out of 100. The higher the score the easier a document is to understand. In particular, this survey has a grade level reading score of 6.6. However, the researcher noted that the survey had potential to confuse some participants. In the Cafeteria Training class there were students with a range of reading and comprehension abilities. Although the survey had a grade level reading score of 6.6, it might have been difficult for some students to read. Adding to the level of complication, half of the survey questions were negatively worded. Some participants might have failed to differentiate between the positive and negative statements of the survey, therefore unintentionally answering a question with an inaccurate answer.

Recommendations

This study suggested that students who developed a shared vision benefited from an increased sense of classroom community and improvements in collaborative learning. However, a study that included a larger sample size of cafeteria students would offer further evidence to support the researcher's hypothesis. This study was limited to two Cafeteria Training classes but further investigation with Cafeteria Training classes in the following semester might reveal further evidence to either support or refute the current findings.

Additional research should be conducted that explores reasons why students believe a shared vision increased their sense of classroom community. The quantitative methodology used was limited because the survey focused on Likert-type responses. The survey asked twenty questions and provided five answers for potential response but left no room for additional comment. Consideration for further research should provide participants space for anecdotal comments which may help to reveal specific reasons as to why developing a shared vision impacts sense of classroom community.

Further research exploring reasons why there existed a small shift and low percentage mean regarding question fifteen which asked students "I feel that members of this course depend on me" is also recommended. Although results indicated a 9.6% increase in student connectedness to their class, further investigation should be conducted to reveal possible reasons why student responses to question fifteen were low. If a student believes others don't rely on him or her, this might indicate a lack of confidence in oneself. Further investigation might reveal that developing confidence in each student in addition to developing a shared vision might help to propel students' sense of community beyond that of the current study.

The results of this study can be used to support teacher discussion around ways to improve a school's sense of community. Schulte, Shanahan, Anderson, & Sides (2003) argued that students who attended schools characterized by a strong sense of community had greater personal attitudes, increased participation, motivation, engagement, and academic success. Therefore, a reasonable effort should be made by teachers to ensure that a sense of community exists among all students. This study not only illustrates that having a sense of community is important but also reveals that having classrooms develop a shared vision would likely help to achieve a greater sense of school community.

In addition to the recommendation for future research and teacher practice that this research supports, the researcher will use the positive findings of the study to facilitate discussion with colleagues in exploring how they might use these strategies in their own practice. A number of teachers have expressed interest with regards to the findings of this study and indicated that they would be interested in learning how their students could develop a shared vision to improve their own collaborative work.

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Classroom Community Scale Survey

Appendix A

Demographic Information – Please Circle the Appropriate Answer:

Gender: F M

Age: 15 16 17 18 19

Below, you will see a series of statements concerning Cafeteria Training 11/12 you are presently taking. Read each statement carefully and fill in the correct bubble that comes closest to indicate how you feel about the course. You may use pencil or pen. There are no correct or incorrect responses. If you neither agree nor disagree with a statement or are uncertain, fill in the neutral bubble. Do not spend too much time on any one statement, but give the response that seems to describe how you feel. Please respond to all items.

1. I feel that students in this course care about each other.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

2. I feel that I am encouraged to ask questions.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

3. I feel connected to others in this course.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

4. I feel that it is hard to get help when I have a question.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

5. I do not feel spirit of community.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

6. I feel that I receive timely feedback.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

7. I feel that this course is like a family.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

8. I feel uneasy exposing gaps in my understanding.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

9. I feel isolated in this course.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

10. I feel reluctant to speak openly.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

11. I trust others in this course.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

12. I feel that this course results in only modest learning.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

13. I feel that I can rely on others in this course.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

14. I feel that other students do not help me learn.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

15. I feel that members of this course depend on me.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

16. I feel that I am given ample opportunities to learn.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

17. I feel uncertain about others in this course.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

18. I feel that my educational needs are not being met.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

19. I feel confident that others will support me.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

20. I feel that this course does not promote a desire to learn.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

Appendix D

ASSENT FORM

DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION TO IMPROVE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

April 1, 2012

Tony Wilson, Student Masters in Educational Leadership Vancouver Island University twilson@sd68.bc.ca 250-751-7649	Harry Janzen, Supervisor Dean of Education Vancouver Island University Harry.Janzen@viu.ca 250-740-6220

I am currently enrolled at Vancouver Island University in the Masters in Educational Leadership Program. As partial fulfillments of program requirements, I have designed a research project to measure how developing a shared vision improves collaboration among high school students.

During this study you will be asked to complete two surveys concerning the sense of community you perceive exists within a high school classroom. The first survey will be completed at the beginning of the study. The second survey will be completed at the end of the study. You will be asked to provide your gender and age then answer the 20 question survey. Your participation will require 15 minutes of time for each survey.

There are no known risks associated with your participation in this research. The potential benefits include improving student collaboration among peers and the recommendations for teachers that will result from the study.

All records of participation will be kept strictly confidential, such that only I and my supervisor will have access to the information. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet within my office at home. Data will be destroyed approximately two years after the completion of the project. The results from this study will be reported in a written research report and an oral

presentation. Information about the project will not be made public in any way that identifies individual participants.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may discontinue participation at any time for any reason without explanation and without penalty. If you have questions at any point during the research you may contact me or my supervisor. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Officer by telephone at 250-753-3245 (ext, 2665) or by email at reb@viu.ca

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Consent

I have read the above form, understand the information, and understand that I can ask questions or withdraw at any time. I consent to participate in this research study.

_____

Student's Name

_____ _____

Student's Signature Date

VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

Appendix B

PARENT CONSENT FORM

DEVELOPING A SHARED VISION TO IMPROVE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

April 1, 2012

Tony Wilson, Student Masters in Educational Leadership Vancouver Island University twilson@sd68.bc.ca 250-751-7649	Harry Janzen, Supervisor Dean of Education Vancouver Island University Harry.Janzen@viu.ca 250-740-6220

I am currently enrolled at Vancouver Island University in the Masters in Educational Leadership Program. As partial fulfillments of program requirements, I have designed a research project to measure how developing a shared vision improves collaboration among high school students.

During this study your son or daughter will be asked to complete two surveys concerning the sense of community they perceive exists within their high school classroom. The first survey will be completed at the beginning of the study. The second survey will be completed at the end of the study. Your son or daughter will be asked to provide their gender and age, and then complete the 20 question survey. Their participation will require 15 minutes of time for each survey.

There are no known risks associated with your son or daughter's participation in this research. The potential benefits include improving student collaboration among their peers and the recommendations for teachers that will result from the study.

All records of participation will be kept strictly confidential, such that only I and my supervisor will have access to the information. Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet within my office at home. Data will be destroyed approximately two years after the completion of the project. The results from this study will be reported in a written research report and an oral

presentation. Information about the project will not be made public in any way that identifies individual participants.

Participation is completely voluntary. Your son or daughter may discontinue participation at any time for any reason without explanation and without penalty. If you have questions at any point during the research you may contact me or my supervisor. If you have any concerns about your son or daughter's treatment as a research participant in this study, please contact the VIU Research Ethics Officer by telephone at 250-753-3245 (ext, 2665) or by email at reb@viu.ca

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Consent

I have read the above form, understand the information, and understand that I can ask questions or have my son or daughter withdraw at any time. I consent to having my son or daughter participate in this research study.

_____

Student's Name

_____ _____

Parent's Signature Date

VANCOUVER ISLAND UNIVERSITY

Recruitment Script

Appendix C

Hello, my name is Ms. Pennell and I am helping Mr. Wilson by explaining to you a research project he is working on. Mr. Wilson is currently working on his Masters of Education in Educational Leadership. As a required component, he has to complete a research project and is looking for student participants.

Mr. Wilson is studying how building a shared vision with students improves collaboration among one another. To explain it another way, students in Mr. Wilson's cafeteria class will work together to establish common values and beliefs. Groups of students will then create vision statements that reflect their common vision of the ideal cafeteria program. By doing this he believes that students will feel as though they belong and share in an emotional connection to the class and each of its students. And when students feel welcomed and appreciated by others they work better with one another.

If you volunteer as a participant in this study Mr. Wilson will have you fill out a 20 question survey before the class begins working on a shared vision, then fill out the same survey when the shared vision is complete. The survey only takes about 15 minutes to fill out. The surveys are going to be handed out to students during one of your Monday theory days.

Mr. Wilson would like to assure you that there are no known risks associated with your participation in this research. The study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Ethics Board at Vancouver Island University. However, the potential benefits include improving student collaboration among peers and the recommendations for teachers that will result from the study.

Participation is completely voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any point without having to explain to Mr. Wilson why, you just tell him you'd like to withdraw from the study…no questions will be asked.

If you are interested in participating, please return the Assent Form and Parent Consent Form that I will hand out. Make sure to give the Parent Consent Form to your parents for them to read

over. If they allow you to participate then bring it back with a parent signature and your signature on the Assent Form. You can hand them in to me over the next few days. If you have any questions you can ask Mr. Wilson.