

Draft #2

expanding on
ideas

Listening to Children's Voices *in my own inner voices* (Tina I)

Inexperienced, nervous, unprepared, excited, I faced my class of 13 students who were squashed together in a corner of the library. This was definitely not the ideal learning environment. How was I to create a sense of community, a safe place where children could learn and take risks, in this small area when I only saw the students for an hour a day? By the end of the first week of school I realized that the students I was working with had a strong dislike for school. They would say things like may day Mayday, I can't read/write, and I hate reading/writing. I needed to find a way to change their attitudes and subsequently improve their skills since 11 out of the 21 students were non-readers and all but two of the others were reading below level.

define real learning

Why is the sense of community important to me? Where does this value originate? As a child I remember being very curious and always feeling comfortable exploring my environment when a family member was nearby. I was the youngest of eight children so there was always someone around. I also remember when I was in grade 2, the teacher would read to us and then ask questions. I had difficulty making sense of something which I have not read myself. I did not feel comfortable during these times and would often fake illness during these times. I did not feel safe enough to risk providing an answer that may not be correct. It is based on these and other experiences that I have developed a strong belief that children must feel safe in their environment and with those around them before any real learning takes place. Is this also a claim?

photo of me w/ my relationships

Soon my class grew to 21 students and I was given more time to work with them. It was at this time that I began collaborating with Brenda on a Books and Buddies program which was designed to develop reading and social skills through peer tutoring. I thought that this program accompanied with a great deal of encouragement and praise, fun activities in the classroom, and little homework would help to improve the students view of school. (Why I assigned little homework is linked to one of the reasons the children had learned to disliked school.)

(positive attitude open to self) what can I learn about myself doing

A few months into the school year I was discouraged. I was still hearing from the children that they hated virtually everything at school including physical education and art. I discussed this with Brenda and she thought that there was a discrepancy between what the children were saying and what we were seeing in the classroom. They said they hated things but once they had begun the task they seemed to enjoy themselves. (Old habits die hard.) This is when I began having the students write in a buddy journal, as Brenda had suggested. In this journal they were allowed to express things they disliked, enjoyed, or thought needed to be improved on in the buddy program. It was in this journal that I began seeing that many of the students actually enjoyed taking part in reading buddies. I gave them a place to have a voice. They were having difficulty, at times, getting their buddy to listen and work. So we began sharing some of the difficulties and the successes we were having and how to solve some of the problems. The students shared a great deal and began helping each other solve problems. I also shared. Many of the problems the students were having with their grade one buddy were the same problems I had in the classroom. A real sense of community was developing in

image incorporate pictures of Brit & Kasbi expand

*↳ sense of community in this group.
* what does community mean to me {Create an atmosphere of community th
* include info. on validation data * where I am going from her*

However, examining my actions, has led me to many new questions: ~~begin~~ ~~just~~ Prior to this course I was going to examine how I could implement the new curriculum effectively but I did not feel passionately about this. It was only through talking with Joanne that I have changed my focus to what I ~~am~~ am committed to community. ~~My~~ Our new question is how can we dev. caring indiv. whose goals include ways to contribute something pos. to the community (class, school, town) they live in? This time I will follow ~~an~~ an action research model and perform the real thing.

This is a ~~new~~ continuation to what I have described last year. Last year I worked on the indiv. student's view of themselves as learner. Now we are going to look at the student's role in the ~~overall~~ ^{from} community.

the classroom. (Create image)

I really saw the improvement in my students' attitudes in March when a new student arrived in my classroom. She was having difficulty reading. When she came to read to me she said "I can't read, it's too hard." It was at this time that I sat back and realized that I hadn't heard those words in such a long time. The students had come so far. They were saying things like "don't tell me that word I can figure it out myself." One girl's public speech was titled 'I Love Books.' The students had really begun to understand what reading was about had developed confidence as readers (see reading strategies and what is reading). This confidence was apparent after we tested their reading ability again in June. All of the kids were readers. (Support for my claim?)

I knew I had done my job in May when the one student who had believed strongly all year that he hated all aspects of school, came up to me and said "I'm a good writer." I knew then that he had opened himself up to learning.

I reported the effects of the reading buddy program on a group of non-readers at the ITCR in April, not really knowing until after listening to the keynote speaker, Jean Clandinin, that what I had done was action research. It was at this time that I realized that I should be at this conference. Prior to the conference I was feeling a little unsure of whether or not I, a first year teacher, had anything of value to contribute. I realized that attending the conference had a great deal of value for me and as things progressed and I talked with other teachers I felt more comfortable, I felt safe.

I returned to school to continue collecting data on my ^{pseudo -} action research project, I could call it that now that I knew what action research was. Although I have done things backwards, I feel that I have enough evidence to support my claim that it is only once children feel safe in their environment that real learning takes place.

It was not until I sat down to write this that I could fully appreciate the value of a reflective journal. A journal would have helped me tremendously in telling my story. I feel now that there are many gaps in what transpired, in the emotions, the difficulties, and the triumphs.

If I had chosen this as my proof of real learning then I feel I have evidence to support my claim of a positive attitude toward learning.

- Define: Real Learning:
- Change in beh.
 - Openness to experience new things & learn
 - ~~improvement~~ ^{development} of skills & understanding of learning process
 - understanding of ~~process~~ ^{process}
 - metacognition

Not really action research what I did because I did not go through all steps. I did not "systematically investigate my own actions" Pg. 17 No informed action or intentional action - no preset plans. I am now looking back to change my...

What does community mean to me?

An environment whereby I feel safe to express myself openly & honestly... where I can ~~show~~ become vulnerable with limited fear and... grow as a person... peel away the layers of myself... exposure, acceptance, validation

I run down the hall, ~~on the verge~~ ~~prepared to~~ questioning myself as a teacher ~~of pulling my hat out from~~ whether I belong in this profes. ~~overwhelming~~ frustration. Brenda is sitting at her desks. She stops, looks up, and asks how things are going? This is all I needed to ~~open up~~ share my frustration my insecurities. ^{with her} She listens with judgement and responds by telling a similar story. This dialogue continues and I feel gradually feel the tension leaving my body.