Building a Virtual Classroom Community

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Instructional Problem Summary

Needs Analysis Findings

When teaching virtually, teachers are struggling with how to create a classroom community. They are aware that creating a successful community takes many steps and involves multiple stakeholders. They know their classroom community is not as developed as previous in person communities but lack the training on how to create it in a virtual setting.

The survey helped identified the three themes affecting classroom community. I was able to break down the main areas that need to be addressed to begin solving the problem. The interview gave greater clarification to the themes so that instruction can be targeted to solving the biggest issues first. Between the 78 surveys and 17 interviews enough relevant data was collected to identify that there is a need. Moving forward it would be beneficial to gather additional data from the other stakeholders, students and parents. It would also prove useful to return to these teachers at the end of the first quarter or at the semester mark and see how their responses might have changed.

The data points to a clear need for training on building classroom community in a virtual setting. As mentioned previously 94% of the teachers surveyed agreed that their classroom community has been affected be the virtual environment and 100% of the teachers interviewed ranked their virtual classroom community has less developed then in their in-person classroom community from the prior year.

Goal of Instruction

Teachers will be able to build a more developed classroom community for the virtual setting. They will be provided with the tools, strategies and resources they need to strengthen their teacher-student, student-student, and teacher-parent interactions.

Learner Analysis Findings

In order to focus on the instructional goal of building a more developed classroom community, teachers should have some basic knowledge and practice with their school's video conferencing system; such as zoom, google meets, or Microsoft teams. Additionally, teachers should have knowledge of their schools learning management systems; such as Canvas or Schoology.

Teachers have previously learned about classroom community or have experience creating an in-person classroom community. These skills will help them as they transition to the virtual setting because they know what level of engagement they would like to see from their students and parents. Some of the teachers also have some experience teaching virtual during the Spring of 2020 when most schools switched from in person learning to virtual. The set up was different in the spring but did help provide those teachers with some experience in the virtual setting.

My learner group is composed of teachers who are teaching in a virtual setting for the start of the 2020-2021 school year. Although they are very similar in the sense that they are teaching virtually there are some differences to be aware of. Culturally they bring different experiences with them because they live in different regions of the United States, they teach different grade levels/subjects, they have taught for varying lengths of time and they bring their own personal background to their individual classrooms. From my needs assessment, I have

learned that these teachers are highly motivated to be successful at this task. I know this because they took the time, out of their already busy start to the school year, to complete my survey and wrote extensively about their experiences and hopes for virtual teaching. They know that their virtual community needs to improve and want to do whatever it takes to make it successful. That being said, there are a mix of attitudes towards virtual teaching in general. Some of the teachers have expressed that they are less comfortable with their systems and their ability to reach students in the virtual setting. Since all of my learners are classroom teachers, I will need to design my instruction to work around their teaching schedule.

To ensure all of my learners gain from this experience I need to ensure that I am addressing the different cultural needs of my teachers. I will need to share with them material and training that can be applied across grade levels and subject. Although they are motivated, I need to remember to respect the value of their time, by presenting material that will help them reach their goal. To address the concern of time, I will need to give clear instructions and directions throughout, so they do not get frustrated.

Planning the Design of the Instructional Unit

Task Analysis, Performance Objectives, and Learning Theories

Tasks	Performance Objectives	Learning Theories
Outline each concept and/or procedure that the learners need to know to achieve the goal.	Each performance objective should include the three parts: condition, behavior, and criterion.	Which learning theory(ies) best supports learner mastery of the objective? Include brief justification.
Task 1 - Setting goals of the training 1. What to expect from the unit. 2. Discuss current classroom community and the factors affecting it. 3. Discuss and create goal for virtual classroom community	Using a piece of paper or notebook, learners will identify the current factors affecting their virtual classroom community and create at least 1 goal related to improving their classroom community.	Constructivism: learners reflect on what real world issues their virtual classroom community is dealing with and set a goal on how to improve it.
Task 2 - Start of class procedures	Using a piece of paper or notebook, learners will design a welcome	Constructivism: learners reflect on what type of routines they need to

1. Establish routines to provide your students with clear structure for the start of virtual class. 2. Create a bank of questions to encourage students to engage in conversation with other students during the warmup.	screen to display at the start of class with what students need to accomplish at the start of class. Using a discussion, learners will know of at least ten questions for students to engage with other students at the start of class.	establish for their specific classroom and students.
Task 3 - Live lesson interactions 1. Identify what types of responses their students can complete. 2. Create a list of ways those interactions can be used in their classroom.	Using a chart, learners will list at least three types of student responses during a live lesson and brainstorm at least two examples of how learner can elicit those responses from students.	Constructivism: learners reflect on how they can better gage their students understanding using the real-world responses available to them.
Task 4 - Giving individual feedback 1. Identify the types of feedback learners can provide. 2. Evaluated the effectiveness of the different types of feedback learners can provide.	Using a piece of paper or notebook, learners will identify at least five types of feedback they can provide their students. Given a list of types of feedback, learners will be able to explain the effectiveness of at least three types of feedback.	Constructivism: learners are evaluating the types of feedback based on their potentially effectiveness in their real classroom.
Task 5 - Games during class 1. Identify games and interactive activities for live lessons.	Given a list of games and activities, learners will be able to adapt at least one game or activity in their virtual classroom.	Constructivism: learners are evaluating the usefulness of the games and activities for their real-world classroom and modifying it to fit their own class.
Task 6 - Games outside of virtual class 1. Adapt a game or interactive activity for self-paced student activity.	Using a piece of paper or notebook, learners will adapt at least one previous in person game/activity into a self-paced student activity.	Constructivism: learners are using their own experiences to adapt activities to their new environment.
Task 7 - Group assignments 1. Create a collaborative project.	Given a list of ways to collaborate on a virtual project, learners will adapt at least one for a group project for their students.	Constructivism: learners are able to use their teaching content to create a real group project their students can complete.
Task 8 - Providing rewards 1. Identify free rewards 2. Identify low cost rewards	Given the opportunity to work in groups, learners will create a list of at least five free rewards and five low cost rewards for their students.	Constructivism: learners work together through a discussion to brainstorm reward ideas for students.
Task 9 - Communications with parents 1. Identify ways to communicate with individual parents 2. Identify ways to involve parents in the community	Using a piece of paper or notebook, learners will identify at least five ways to communicate with parents. Given a list of ways to involve parents in the classroom community, learners will identify two ways they can attempt in their classroom.	Constructivism: learners are identifying ways to communicate that work for their real-life classroom and are adapting the list of ideas to fit the needs of their specific classroom.

Lesson Plan #1 Title: Start of class procedures

Performance Objective: Using a piece of paper or notebook, learners will design a welcome screen to display at the start of class with what students need to accomplish at the start of class. Using a discussion, learners will know of at least ten questions for students to engage with other students at the start of class.

Resources or Materials Needed: Paper, computers, video conferencing program, sample warm up slide

Time: 60 minutes

Step 1: Pre-Instructional Activities: Hook – model first five minutes of virtual class

Learners are reflecting on the hook in their notebook by responding to the following questions:

- If you were a student would you feel engaged?

- If you were a student, are there clear directions on what you should do?

Step 2: Content Presentation:

Review the various strategies demonstrated in the hook: clear directions, music, engaging question, sense of routine, etc.

As we go the learner will fill out a paper identifying the following information:

- What do I as the teacher need to accomplish in the first five minutes of class?

- As I am working on my beginning of class responsibilities, how can I have students interactive in a low-pressure way.

- What do I need to do to create an inviting environment, especially if I cannot always greet each student individually?

Step 3: Learner Participation: Learners will brainstorm different questions to ask students at the start of the virtual class to start conversation.

Step 4: Assessment: Learners will design their own welcome screen template and write out their plan for the first five minutes of class.

Step 5: Follow-Through Activities: Within a week, learners will use their new beginning of class procedure in their actual virtual classroom at least once. Afterwards they will reflect on the success of it on their paper or in their notebook.

Lesson Plan Summary: This lesson plan is written in the Constructivism learning theory. The instructional strategies are based on Teaching for Understanding which links well to constructivism. In this lesson in particular the learners are able to provide connect to the lesson by designing the plan for the start of their virtual class period. Learners are given the opportunity to brainstorm and collaborate with fellow learners on questions. These instructional strategies support the Constructivism learning theory because the learners are applying the lesson to their real virtual classroom and provide them the opportunity to generate ideas.

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Lesson Plan #2 Title: Live lesson interactions

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Performance Objective: Using a chart, learners will list at least three types of student responses during a live lesson and brainstorm at least two examples of how learner can elicit those responses from students.

Resources or Materials Needed: paper, chart, and video conferencing software

Time: 60 minutes

Step 1: Pre-Instructional Activities: Hook – model a nonresponsive classroom with a frustrated teacher.

Learners are reflecting on the hook in their notebook by responding to the following questions:

- If you were a student would you feel comfortable in this classroom?

- What role does the teacher's attitude play in students' wiliness to respond?

Step 2: Content Presentation: Model the various verbal and nonverbal responses that the teacher in the hook could have used:

- Verbal – individual response, whole group response, break out rooms,

- Nonverbal - reactions, using the chat, polls, individual chat messages, screensharing, whiteboard, virtual backgrounds, brainstorming, interactive presentations

As we go the learner will write down at least 3 responses they want to focus on using.

Step 3: Learner Participation: Learners will share what responses they wanted to focus on. As a group they will brainstorm ways they can elicit that response from their students.

Step 4: Assessment: Learners will fill out a chart with at least 5 examples of how they can elicit the three types of responses from their students.

Step 5: Follow-Through Activities: Learners will attempt the three student responses during a live teaching within the week. Afterwards they will reflect on the success of the attempts on their paper or in their notebook.

Lesson Plan Summary: This lesson plan is written in the Constructivism learning theory. The instructional strategies are based on Teaching for Understanding which links well to constructivism. In this lesson in particular the learners are able to brainstorm with other learners on how to implement the different types of student response. From there learners can self-reflect on what will work best for their specific group of students and live session set up. These instructional strategies support the Constructivism learning theory because the learners are applying the lesson to their real virtual classroom and provide them the opportunity to generate ideas.

<div align="center">Lesson Plan #3 Title: Giving individual feedback</div>

Performance Objective: Using a piece of paper or notebook, learners will identify at least five types of feedback they can provide their students. Given a list of types of feedback, learners will be able to explain the effectiveness of at least three types of feedback.

Resources or Materials Needed: paper and list of types of feedback

Time: 60 minutes

Step 1: Pre-Instructional Activities: Hook – examples of good, bad and lazy feedback. Learners are asked to describe how the examples make them feel.

Step 2: Content Presentation: The instructor will demonstrate various types of feedback: audio, video, text response, whole group, email with student and/or parent, conferencing. The instructor will provide examples of good feedback vs. bad or lazy feedback. Good feedback should be personalized, clear expectations on how to correct/improve work, and timely. The instructor will demonstrate how peer feedback can be developed in a virtual setting with clear expectations.

Step 3: Learner Participation: With the lists of potential ways to provide feedback, learners will reflect on the effectiveness and feasibility of the them for their classroom.

Step 4: Assessment: Learners will share their top three ways they plan on providing feedback and explain why those will work best for their classroom.

Step 5: Follow-Through Activities: Learners will attempt at least one type of feedback within a week. Afterwards they will reflect on the success of it on their paper or in their notebook.

Lesson Plan Summary: This lesson plan is written in the Constructivism learning theory. The instructional strategies are based on Teaching for Understanding which links well to constructivism. In this lesson in particular the learners are able to provide connect to the lesson by analyzing and reflecting on the types of feedback they can provide in the virtual setting. This instructional strategy supports the Constructivism learning theory because the learners are applying the lesson to their real virtual classroom and provide them the opportunity to generate ideas.

Assessment and Evaluation Method

In lesson 2 using a chart, learners will list at least three types of student responses during a live lesson and brainstorm at least two examples of how learner can elicit those responses from students.

Directions for learners– During the lesson and group discussion, write down the types of responses you want to elicit from your students. Reflect on your students, content and virtual classroom set up to identify two examples of ways you can elicit for each of the responses you selected.

Type of response you want to elicit from your student	Example #1	Example #2
1.		
2.		
3.		

Instructional Unit Revisions

The instructional unit was shared with a middle school language arts and math teacher. She has taught four eight years, is tech savvy, and are currently teaching virtually. I asked for her input because she has experience in the two core content areas that I do not teach. I thought she would provide valuable insight into how the unit would look. The initial instruction unit plan and sample lesson was emailed to her and then we discussed her feedback.

She felt that the flow of the unit was strong and had a natural build up for teachers. She did recommend the possibility of creating two separate versions of the unit depending on the learners' confidence level with technology. If I were to use this unit with an entire school staff I agree with her recommendation to provide an accelerated version of the unit for those who can move at a quicker pace. Additionally, she suggested creating a central place for teachers to go back to review the material taught in the course. From her suggestion, I plan on creating a resource area that learners can reference back to after they complete the course (Bridgit Gargin, personal communication, September 25, 2020).

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