The unemployment rate in Lame Deer, Montana is a staggering 78% with 87% of the population living below the poverty line. The average life expectancy is only 57 years old with 63% of the population under the age of 18 years old (Wolf, 2016). With this in mind, I wanted to address the reasons more of the young people choose not to go to a four year university to raise the living conditions of their families. Students at CDKC often express concern in transferring into a university setting. They also have a staggering 78% unemployment rate. For research purposes, I had the opportunity to spend time working with students at CDKC. This allowed me to study how students have a hard time asking their peers for help and learning how to work together in groups.

In addition, I had four sub questions:
- “Do students perform better on assessments as a result of working in a group?”
- “How will working in a group solidify concepts for complete understanding and retention of material?”
- “How do students feel about moving forward in their education as a result of working in groups?”

My study was directed by one main question:
- “How does team and group work elicit a sense of community among students?”

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For the remainder of the semester, the observation checklist was completed during the lab sessions as well as during the independent group work sessions. Summative assessments were given over the same material as previous sections. I wrote student comments, suggestions for lessons, pros and cons of specific labs and notes for future sections in the reflexive journal.

**STUDENT COMMENTS BEFORE THE TREATMENT:**
- “I feel like all the people in this class will work really well together so I am okay with the group work”.
- “I don’t mind working in a group. It just sucks when the teacher chooses the group”.
- “I don’t know if people refuse to contribute or not but I am going to get the work done. I am in the class to learn and I will do whatever it takes to get there”.
- “I am really excited to do this!! All of the students in here are smart and it will be fun to get to know them better”.
- “I would not have answered the [group work continuum] questions the way I did if I was in a different class. It is because of these specific students I feel confident working in a group”.

**TREATMENT**

Four distinct phases were applied during this study. They are outlined in the flow chart above along with the assessment methods that were used during the study. The chart also includes the measurement tools that were used. The most important part of the treatment was students working together in groups outside of the classroom.

**DATA COLLECTION**

Data was collected using Likert-type surveys, observation checklists, a reflexive journal and with summative assessments. The Likert-type survey was given at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester. The observation checklist was completed during the lab sessions as well as during the independent group work sessions. Summative assessments were given over the same material as previous sections. I wrote student comments, suggestions for lessons, pros and cons of specific labs and notes for future sections in the reflexive journal.

**RESULTS AND CONCLUSION**

Though student assessment scores did not increase, the students were able to work through more material than the previous sections of the class. Students also spent more time working with each other and less time relying on me as an instructor.

**STUDENT COMMENTS AT CONCLUSION OF TREATMENT:**
- “I called her this weekend and she always has an excuse why she can’t come do the work”.
- “I don’t mind helping but I cannot teach them from the beginning”.
- “I want to find people that are determined to take advantage to help each other succeed”.

**VALUES AND FUTURE WORK**

One of the most valuable parts of this work was remembering what it was like to be a student! I also learned that the students can handle WAY more than what I have been expecting of them. I will continue this process in future sections of this class and other classes with some modifications:
- I will keep track of how often students come to me individually with questions.
- I will keep track of students overall perceptions of each other as group members formally and more frequently.
- I will give specific expectations for the group work sessions until students understand how to be productive.
- I will add a weekly check in for students about their satisfaction with the work the group is doing.
- I will have students complete the survey more frequently.
- I will keep the reflexive journal with me in the classroom and write in it IMMEDIATELY when I have information to record.

**WORKS CITED**

http://www.cheyennchildrenservices.com/Poverty/Figures.html

Mary Noel Chief Dull Knife College Lame Deer, Montana

**BACKGROUND**

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Baby Cleveland. His mother came back to class after having him because her group would not let withdraw from the class. Permission to use photo Given by Brooke Whitewolf