

Studying the Effectiveness of
Group Work for Community
Building
in an Introductory
Geosciences Class

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Goal:

To increase a sense of community (a willingness for students to share ideas with each other/teach each other)

Approach:

Used CATME to create 3-4 person groups

Multiple small-group activities were incorporated into the 100-level class

Results:

IDEA results indicated that the group activities were helpful for understanding class content

“Connectedness” “Learning” and “Classroom Community” values were similar to other studies using Rovai’s (2002) Classroom Community Survey

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Main Idea: Use small group activities to increase a “sense of community”

BACKGROUND

- **What research or other sources have shaped your thinking about this problem?**
- Discussions and group activities during the ITALI workshop in August 2019
- Information presented at the Northeast Regional Teaching Workshop on June 13, 2019 at the University of Connecticut on Teaching and Learning with Generation Z
- Methodologies described in Rovai’s 2002 article “Development of an instrument to measure classroom community”

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Main Idea: Use small group activities to increase a “sense of community”

COURSE CHANGE

- **How did you change the course?**
- I used CATME to develop small (3-4 person) stable groups
- **Group Activities:**
 - 8 in-class group discussions: Students to first work independently, then discuss the material together and, finally, present their findings to the class
 - Lecture Tutorial Assignments
 - Peer review of writing project (Groups on Eli Review)

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EVIDENCE

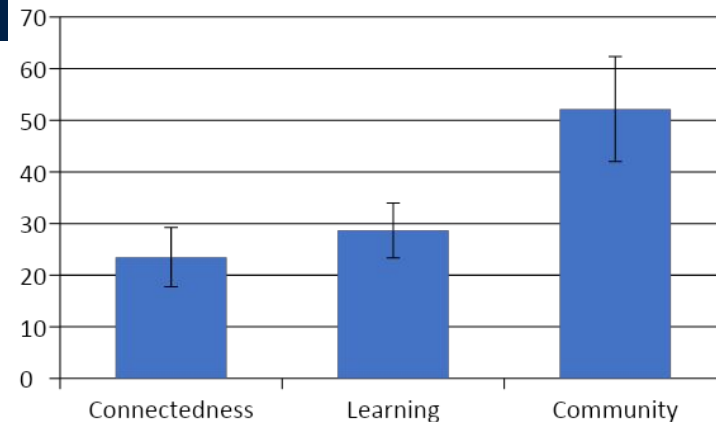
- **What evidence around student learning did you collect?**
- Rovai's (2002) "Classroom Community Scale" survey
 - 20 questions
 - Answers of strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree converted to numerical values
 - "Connectedness" subscale and the "learning" subscale values calculated. The sum of these two subscales is the "classroom community" scale.
- On the standard IDEA assessment there were opportunities for students to provide quantitative and qualitative input

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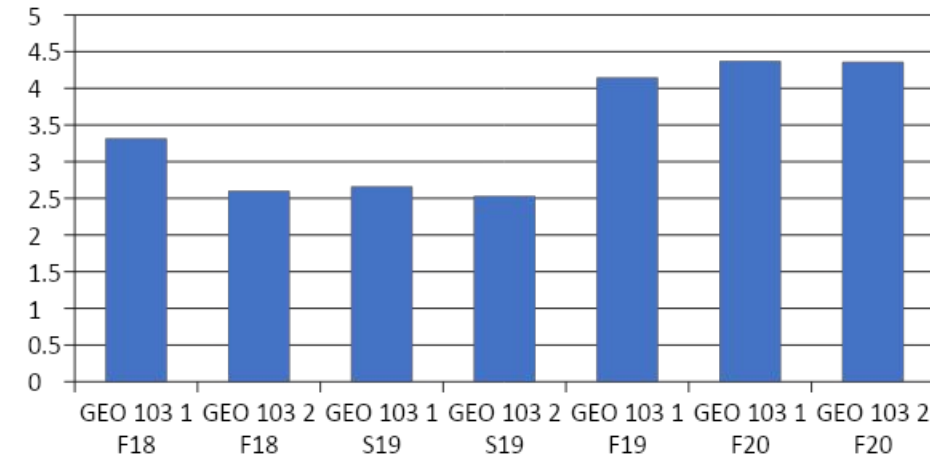
Results: Fall 2019 was the initial semester for group discussions

RESULTS

Classroom Community Survey Results GEO 103 Fall 2019



IDEA results for "Formed teams or groups to facilitate learning"



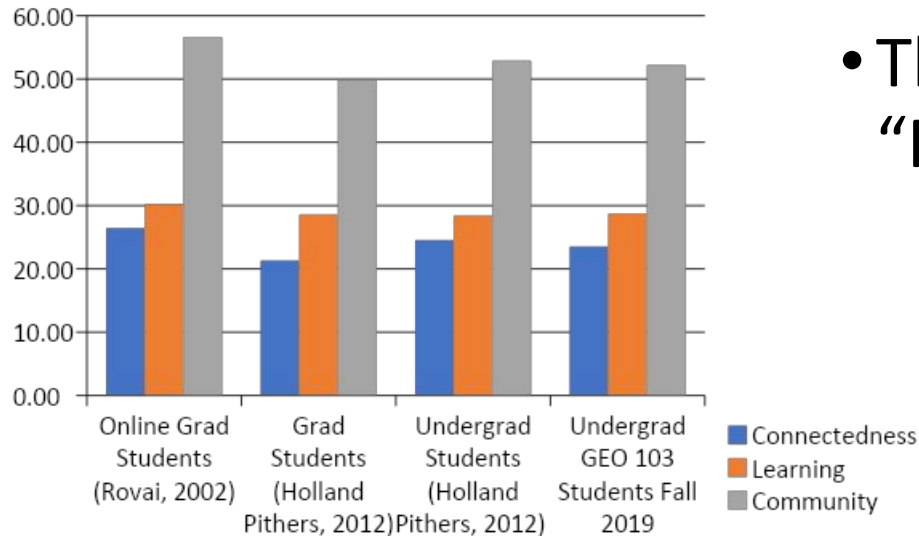
Qualitative Comments from GEO 103 1 F2019 IDEA Survey:

Student 1: I believe this is a well rounded class when it comes to lecturing vs individual or group work (LTs).

Student 2: The activities we did were great and helped with understanding, but we maybe could have benefited from more time with some of them.

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DISCUSSION



- Values for Connectedness, Learning and Community were similar to previous studies (i.e., Rovai 2002 and Holland and Pithers 2012)
- There have been higher values for the IDEA prompt “Formed teams or groups to facilitate learning”
 - Note: I have subsequently used random groups (i.e., groups by proximity, random Zoom breakout rooms) due to ease of implementation

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THANK YOU

Bryan Dewsbury

Lead Facilitator of the Inclusive Teaching and Learning Institute
Summer 2019

Anna Santucci

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