

2007 Christian Adult Higher Education Association Conference  
CREATING A CARING LEARNING COMMUNITY



By

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BACKGROUND  
INFORMATION ON THE  
MANAGEMENT &  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT (MOD)  
PROGRAM



# Purpose of Study

- ***How did six community-building elements in the MOD program help students achieve their goal of obtaining a college degree?***



# The Six Elements of “Community”

- ***Weekly Devotions***
- ***Dinner Break***
- ***E- Mail Communication***
- ***Secret Supporter***
- ***Facilitation Style***
- ***Unifying Goal***



# The Five Research Questions

- ***Was “community” created?***
- ***Ranking in importance of the six “community” items***
- ***What else contributed to the creation of “community”?***
- ***Was the creation of “community” a significant factor in helping the student obtain a college degree?***
- ***Why was the creation of “community” a significant factor in helping the student obtain a college degree?***



# Methodology

- ***Self Developed Questionnaire***
- ***39 MOD Students Identified for Sample***
- ***Statistical Testing***



# Major Findings

- ***ALL 39 RESPONDENTS (100.0 PERCENT) PERCEIVE A GENUINE FEELING OF “COMMUNITY” WAS CREATED IN THEIR MOD COHORT SETTING***



# Major Findings

- ***RANKING RESULTS:***
- ***#1: WEEKLY DEVOTIONS***
- ***#2: HAVING A UNIFYING GOAL***
- ***#3: FACILITATION STYLE***
- ***#4: DINNER BREAK***
- ***#5: SECRET SUPPORTER***
- ***#6: E-MAIL COMMUNICATION***



# MAJOR FINDINGS

- ***Other items contributing to the creation of “community” in the MOD program:***
- ***Sharing life experiences (15% of responses)***
- ***Starting a study group (10% of responses)***
- ***Positive dynamics created within the group (30% of responses)***



# MAJOR FINDINGS

- ***87 % OF RESPONDENTS PERCEIVE “COMMUNITY” WAS SIGNIFICANT IN HELPING THEM OBTAIN THEIR COLLEGE DEGREE***



# MAJOR FINDINGS: Why was the creation of “community” significant?

- ***SUPPORT FROM CLASSMATES (40.4 PERCENT)***
- ***ENCOURAGEMENT FROM CLASSMATES (21.4 PERCENT)***
- ***FRIENDSHIP, CLOSENESS, AFFECTION OR LOVE FROM CLASSMATES (9.6 PERCENT)***
- ***MOTIVATION RECEIVED FROM CLASSMATES (7.7 PERCENT)***
- ***CAMARADERIE CREATED WITHIN THEIR GROUP (4.7 PERCENT)***
- ***SUPPORT FROM THE MOD FACILITATOR (4.7 PERCENT)***



# Conclusions

- ***POSITIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS & GROUP COHESIVENESS LEADING TO A SENSE OF COMMUNITY MAY INCREASE STUDENT RETENTION IN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CLASSROOM LEARNING SETTINGS***



# Conclusions

- ***CREATING A GENUINE, CARING COMMUNITY OF LEARNERS IN A CHRISTIAN COLLEGE LEARNING SETTING CAN SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE STUDENT RETENTION***



# TEACHING SUGGESTIONS TO CREATE COMMUNITY IN THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CLASSROOM

- *CREATE SOCIAL GATHERINGS –DINNER BREAK; HOME VISITS*
- *IDENTIFY COMMON STUDENT GOALS EARLY AMONG NEW CLASS GROUPS*
- *INCLUDE WEEKLY ICE-BREAKERS FOR NEW CLASS GROUPS*
- *ENCOURAGE STUDENT LEARNING GROUPS OUTSIDE OF CLASS*
- *CREATE SUPPORTIVE VS. COMPETITIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENTS*
- *USE TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT ADULT STUDENTS TO THE UNIVERSITY SETTING –E-MAIL AND CAMPUS CRUISER*



# TEACHING SUGGESTIONS TO CREATE COMMUNITY IN THE CHRISTIAN COLLEGE CLASSROOM

- *INCLUDE A SHORT TIME IN EACH CLASS FOR PERSONAL SHARING BY STUDENTS*
- *THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AS A SUPPORTIVE AND TRUSTED FACILITATOR IS CRITICAL! ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE CHRIST-LIKE SERVANT-LEADERSHIP TO YOUR STUDENTS – WALK YOUR TALK! –MODEL GENUINE RESPECT, CARE & CONCERN FOR ALL STUDENTS*
- *MIX NEW GROUPS OF STUDENTS OFTEN: DYADS, TRIADS, AND SMALL GROUP ASSIGNMENTS – CREATE NEW SEATING FOR STUDENTS ON A WEEKLY BASIS*
- *ASSIGN ROLE OF STUDENT CLASSROOM LEADER*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- *What teaching approaches have you found effective to create a caring learning “community” in your Christian classroom setting?*
- *Can a sense of “community” be created in other Christian classroom settings besides the cohort model?*

