A Cohort's Culture of Learning

Kelly Visnak, University of Wyoming
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Abstract

This study explored the social and cultural impact of a graduate cohort program, focusing on the development of systemic thinking and learning culture. A qualitative design was used, with 141 respondents from a 2-year MLS online cohort program. Data collection included interviews and surveys, with analysis guided by Creswell’s (2009) six steps of data analysis. Findings showed that systemic thinking and a culture of learning were evident in the cohort, as they valued learning as much as, or more than, completing assignments. The study highlights the role of learning leaders in fostering a community of professional practice, and provides insights for future research.

Statement of the Research Problem

The Cohort Model
- Blended Learning
- Schein’s (2010) ten dimensions of a learning culture
- Resonant Themes
- Commitment to Cultural Diversity
- Commitment to Truth through Pragmatism and Inquiry
- Proactivity
- Positive Orientation toward the Future
- Commitment to Learning to Learn
- Commitment to Serving Others
- Commitment to Creating a Dynamic Environment
- Commitment to Continuous Improvement
- Commitment to Developing a Worldview

Literature Review

- The Cohort Model
- Digital Education: Course Formats
- Blended Learning
- Learning Environments
- Assessments of the Cohort Experience on the Influence of Learning Culture
- Communication of Members
- Online Learning Communities and Small Group Dynamics
- Culture of Learning/Environment

Data Collection and Analysis

- Survey Questionnaire
- Interview Prompts
- Interview Findings
- Data Analysis
- Schein’s (2010) ten dimensions of a learning culture

Survey Questionnaire

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<th>Likert 5 Point Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 - Strongly Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 - Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 - Neutral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - Strongly Agree</td>
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Interview Findings

1. My cohort, as a group, valued the process of learning new material as much as, or more than, simply completing assignments. How do they feel about this?
2. The library profession is a small, established, and well connected profession that extends worldwide. What influence does this have on the cohort’s culture of learning?
3. In the second year of the cohort, did you feel more connected to the library profession and how did you work with others?
4. Someone asked me, “Why do you ever do that?” Of course, being a library professional is not a job to do but you do it (as a matter of course) you probably will. Could you see the light bulb go on for those who never worked in a library or had only worked in a large public library? It never occurred to them that there might be a time when the library itself has one person in it.

Further Research

~Additional Questions~

- Studied additional cohort populations
- Study of how systemic thinking can be fostered in the library profession
- Additional studies on blended learning
- Unique findings in smaller and larger institutions

Acknowledgements

Dissertation Chair: Dominick Livneh, PhD; Co-Chair: Erin K. Zoch, PhD
Committee Members: Dominick Livneh, Erin K. Zoch, and Brian K. Holmberg
Graduate Program Director: Dominick Livneh, PhD
Robert Corner: University of Wyoming; Lauren Dean & A.C. President Candidate Stagg Family and Associate Dean for Libraries

Posters

Publication

Researcher’s Role

Semi-structured Interviews

- Interview Prompts
- Interview Questions

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