

## **Cohorts, Communities of Inquiry, and Course Delivery: Best Practices in Learning**

With the recent interest in communities of practice, learning communities, and critical inquiry theory, along with the global increase in distance and online instruction, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has developed, implemented and studied the relationship of community and the cohort model taught through traditional, distance, and hybrid methodologies. This session will share information about successes and opportunities for improvement that have been learned over the past ten years. Masters, education specialist, and doctoral level learners have participated in various forms of face-to-face and distance cohort programs. Over the decade, the university has modified delivery methodology to enhance the learning communities through the most effective and efficient mix of instructional methods. An important part of this presentation will address factors related to retention, academic rigor, and persistence to the degree (student success).

Particular attention will be given to self-directed learning as it relates to adult learners, communities of inquiry, and the positive learning effects of deeper socialization of communities of learners. Data will be presented comparing and contrasting program efficacy between cohort and non-cohort enrollment models, as well as traditional versus online versus hybrid delivery of instruction.

In addition, the cohort model and its relationship to existing affinity groups will be explored and discussed. These affinity groups include education institutions, corporate entities, non-profits, as well as community partners.

### **Presenters:**

Dr. David Rausch, Associate Professor and Director

Dr. Valerie Rutledge, Professor and Head

Dr. Beth Dodd, Assistant Professor